

NATION AND RELIGION

PERSPECTIVES ON EUROPE AND ASIA

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26. Linda Colley, *Britons: Forging the Nation, 1707–1837* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1992).

27. Cf. Peter van der Veer, "Writing Violence," in David Ludden, ed., *Contesting the Nation* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1996), 250–70.

28. See also Don Handelman *Models and Mirrors: Towards an Anthropology of Public Events* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990).

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The Moral State: Religion, Nation, and Empire in Victorian Britain and British India

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IN 1988, when British Muslims petitioned their government to ban Salman Rushdie's *Satanic Verses*, they discovered that the existing blasphemy law did not prohibit insults to the prophet Muhammad. It applied only to Christianity, and accordingly, the government rejected the petition. The home minister for race relations, John Patten, subsequently wrote a document lecturing the Muslims and the general public "on being British." Talal Asad has brilliantly analyzed the political implications of the liberal views expressed in this text. One of its crucial aims was to delineate "a common national culture." According to Patten, this commonality was to be found in "our democracy and our laws, the English language, and the history that has shaped modern Britain."¹ In this essay I address two things that are erased in Patten's discussion of "being British": Christianity and empire. It is, of course, quite understandable that a politician would not mention Christianity as a major component of British culture at the height of the Rushdie affair. Nevertheless, the laws to which Patten referred included a blasphemy law that protected only Christian sentiments. Moreover, no one doubts that Christianity is a crucial element in the history that shaped Britain.

Similarly, there is a silent assumption in Patten's document that being British has nothing to do with empire. In other words, the problem of conflicting values, as it emerged in the Rushdie case, was a new problem, brought to Britain by immigration; it had to do with empire only insofar as the immigrants came from the former empire, another instance of "the empire strikes back." Nevertheless, it could well be argued that Patten's arguments, calling for acceptance of a common national culture, as well as those of Muslim leaders, calling for the religious neutrality of the state, as shown by the political protection of the beliefs of all religious communities, are rooted in the same history of empire but as experienced on opposite sides of the colonizing process. It is sometimes said that the British are unaware of their history, because it took place elsewhere. My own readings in British history suggest, that the imperial connection is indeed

too seldom consciously reflected upon by historians of Britain, let alone British politicians. Historians of India are much more aware of the imperial connection, but tend to ignore the developments in the metropolis, afraid of making the history of the colony into a footnote of European history. In this essay I attempt to show some structural similarities and differences between the development of religion and nationalism in Britain and India.

That Patten could get away with not mentioning Christianity as a component of Britain's national culture is due to the fact that organized Christianity has been gradually marginalized in British society over the course of the twentieth century. Britain is now a so-called secular society, in which Christianity, allegedly, has become a private matter for individuals, with no political relevance in the public sphere. Without denying significant changes in the location of religion in British society in this century I am wary of the assumptions inherent in the concept of secularity. One major element in that concept is the separation of church and state. However, as we know, this element is not found in Britain. The Church of England is the National Church of England. The queen is still head of that state church and the bishops, appointed by the Crown on the recommendation of the prime minister, are present in the House of Lords. Even in 1980 a leading article in the *Times* argued that it would be undesirable for the prince of Wales to marry a Roman Catholic.² In the meantime a number of undesirable things appear to have happened in the British royal house and one wonders whether this particular opinion would be expressed today. Nevertheless, this quite recent opinion from a leading newspaper in a so-called secular society is quite remarkable in its insistence on the Protestant nature of the state.

Another way of looking at secularity is developed in the secularization thesis, about which I have some general doubts. The boredom that takes hold of almost any audience when one speaks about contemporary religion is perhaps the most striking effect of the thesis, which basically expresses that we already know everything there is to be known about religion—namely, that it declines. The success of industrialization, science, and technology has made religion in the modern world obsolete. In sociological theories of modernity the transition from the premodern, rural community to the modern, industrial, and urbanized society is said to be marked by the decline of religion as an expression of the moral unity of society.

In the European discussion of secularization decline of church attendance and numbers of churches are good indicators of change. Starting with the last decades of the nineteenth century, there seems to be such a decline in England, although there is considerable debate about periodization and interpretation of that decline. Catholicism, for instance, contin-

ued to grow substantially until World War II. In the Netherlands—to take another European example—decline began only in the 1950s. In the United States it all looks somewhat different. American churches have always been very creative in recruiting church members, as witnessed over the last decades by televangelism. For Christianity, church membership and church attendance are good indicators and from them we can only conclude that the historical picture is rather different from one Western society to another, so that a generalized secularization story will not do. This is true not only for the facts and figures of church attendance and membership but also for the causal explanations of industrialization and rationalization offered by secularization theory. For example, there is more evidence for religious expansion during the Industrial Revolution in England than for secularization. Similarly, there is currently a consensus among historians that the impact of scientific discoveries, such as those of Darwin, on the decline of religion has previously been much exaggerated.

If the secularization thesis does not account for the history of Western Christianity, it is even less applicable to the history of Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, and most other religions. In the latter cases the question about church attendance and membership cannot even be raised, since there are no churches. The organization of religion, the place of religion in society, and the patterns of recruitment are so different that not only secularization theory itself but also the empirical and theoretical problems derived from it in the context of Western Christianity become meaningless. This has not prevented social scientists from universalizing the ill-founded story about the West to include the rest. Since all societies modernize and secularization is an intrinsic part of modernization, all societies secularize. So the rhetoric, dressed up as argument, goes.

In recent years much doubt has been thrown on the secularization of India and the ultimate triumph of secularism. The anthropologist T. N. Madan has, for instance, argued that "secularism as a widely shared worldview has failed to make headway in India."³ Since Indians are Hindus, Muslims, Buddhists, or Sikhs, they are not Protestant Christians. They cannot and will not privatize their religion.⁴ Madan points out that in sociological theory, especially that of Max Weber, there is an essential linkage between Protestantism, individualism, and secularization.⁵ He argues, accordingly, that secularism is a "gift of Christianity to mankind" and that it is part of Europe's unique history.⁶ Madan expresses what appears to be a general consensus among both social scientists and the general public that the modern West is uniquely secular and the East uniquely religious. The problem is that this reduces complex and diverse histories to the binary opposition of secularity and religiosity. We have already seen that the history of secularity in Western societies is varied and complex; the same can be said about the development of religious

institutions in India. Nevertheless, the appeal of these essentializations cannot be dismissed by providing ever more complicated narratives of social change. It is in fact hard to go beyond theories of modernization and secularization, however much one tries to get away from them. One is forced to address the conceptual complexities and contradictions involved in them.

In my view the crucial relationship to be analyzed is that of state, nation, and religion. The modern state is a nation-state; the hyphen indicates that the modern state requires a nation and vice versa. Although Britain and India are now both nation-states, in the colonial period only Britain was a nation-state, whereas India was a colony. This, at least, seems to indicate a time lag, in which colonizing Britain was an established nation-state and colonized India became one—perhaps as a result of colonization. However, one has to remember that the nation is a nineteenth-century historical formation, so that the time lag is relatively minor. Another way of putting this is to say that while Britain was colonizing India, England was colonizing Great Britain, trying to unify what was not yet (and would only partially be) the united kingdom. We can see the historical outcome of the latter process even today in Northern Ireland and Scotland. I do not want to make too much of this but simply want to point out that a notion of time lag, in which blueprints of a finished nation-state are exported to less evolved societies via colonialism, may lead us to miss the gradual and differential nature of nation-state formation—and to miss that this process involved Britain and India simultaneously, within the same historical period.

Often the question is raised, what comes first in this hyphenated phenomenon, nation or state? Does the state produce the people or the people the state? I agree with Marcel Mauss, who in his unfinished work on “the nation” argues that the idea of the nation combines in the collective spirit the idea of the fatherland (*patrie*) and the idea of the citizen:

[T]hese two notions of fatherland and citizen are ultimately nothing but a single institution, one and the same rule of practical and ideal morals and, in reality, one and the same central fact which gives the modern republic all its originality, all its novelty and its incomparable moral dignity. . . . The individual—every individual—is born in political life. . . . A society in its entirety has to some extent become the State, the sovereign political body; it is the totality of citizens.”⁷

In his provocative and profound way Mauss does away with any sharp distinction between state and society. Where Renan had suggested that the nation was a daily plebiscite, a deliberate choice, Mauss argued that it was a collective belief in homogeneity, as if the nation were a primitive clan, supposedly composed of equal citizens, symbolized by its flag (its

totem), having a cult of the fatherland, just as the primitive clan has its ancestor cults.⁸ In Mauss’s view the modern nation believes in its race (“it is because the nation creates race that one believes that the race creates the nation”), its language, its civilization, its national character. This collective belief is recent, modern, and to a very considerable extent the result of public, obligatory education. The idea of national character is intimately tied to the idea of progress.⁹

What we find in Mauss is a rejection of the common distinction between civil ties and primordial bonds, between citizenship and ideas of ethnicity, race, language, and religion. In his view they all go together in a complex transformation of society into the nation-state. For Mauss one of the most interesting aspects of this process is that it produces the individual and the nation simultaneously. In Foucault’s terms, the state is totalizing and individualizing at the same time. The boundaries of the state are notoriously difficult to define. The state appears to be a sovereign authority above and outside society, but Foucault has pointed out that the modern state works internally through disciplinary power, not by constraining individuals and their actions but by producing them. The individual, civil political subject is produced in churches, schools, and factories. Timothy Mitchell has recently argued that it is the peculiarity of the modern state phenomenon that “at the same time as power relations become internal in this way, and by the same methods, they now appear to take the novel form of external structures.”¹⁰ The state is thus to be analyzed as a structural effect.

Where does this leave religion? In Mauss (as in Durkheim) there are constant allusions to the idea that nationalism is the religion of modern society, just as clan totemism is the religion of primitive society. If that is the case, could one then say that Christianity (or Hinduism, Islam, Buddhism) is the religion of the ancien régime and nationalism the secular religion of modern society? Our previous argument about the secularization thesis has already shown that this is a much too simple idea of one thing replacing another. An implication of Mauss’s argument appears to be that what happened to race and language in the age of nationalism also happened to religion. It becomes a defining feature of the nation and for that purpose it is transformed in a certain direction. Religion is nationalized, so to speak. It becomes one of the fields of disciplinary practice in which the modern civil subject is produced. Not the only one, obviously, since language, literature, race, and civilization are all other fields producing what Mauss called “the national character.”

That religion is important in producing the modern subject should not sound too strange for those familiar with Weber’s discussion of the Protestant ethic. That it also is important in producing the modern public is perhaps more startling, especially if one stresses that in the nineteenth

century not only Protestantism is nationalized but also Catholicism and many other religions, such as Islam and Hinduism in India. One can hear the immediate objection that Protestantism became the national religion of England and the Low Countries by the sixteenth century. However, I would suggest that in the early-modern period there were Protestant state churches in these countries, but since they were not yet nation-states there was no national religion. In other words, in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries there were major changes in religion underway that affected its organization, its impact, its reach. These changes had to do with the rise of that hyphenated phenomenon, the nation-state.

Implicit in my argument thus far is that the modern subject is produced together with the modern public. Consequently, religion is important not only in the shaping of individual conscience and civilized conduct, but also in the creation of the public sphere. This may come as a surprise to those who accept Jürgen Habermas's understanding of the rise of "the public sphere." In his *Strukturwandlung der Öffentlichkeit* Habermas argued that private individuals assembled into a public body began to discuss the exercise of political power by the state critically in the eighteenth century. These citizens had free access to information and expressed their opinion in a rational and domination-free (*herrschaftsfreie*) manner. In my view Habermas's analysis of the Enlightenment tradition very much belongs, at the theoretical level, to a discourse of modern, European self-representation. A striking element in this self-representation is the neglect of religious, public opinion that cannot be regarded as "rational" and "critical."¹¹

In Habermas's model we have a picture of European development in which secularity is one of the distinguishing features of modernity. This picture is simply false. Enlightenment did not kill religion in Europe. On the contrary, in the eighteenth century there was a direct connection between natural science and natural religion. As Margaret Jacob has recently argued: "Habermas's individuals are far too secularized."¹² Jacob focuses on the new religiosity of the enlightened few, such as the Deists in England.¹³ I would, however, like to draw attention to the organizational activities that developed out of eighteenth century evangelism. While early evangelism—for example, Methodism—was already developing new communication networks, this development received a very strong impetus at the turn of the century. I am thinking here of antislavery societies, Bible societies, and missionary societies around 1900 that—at least in Britain (the prime subject of Habermas's analysis)—were instrumental in creating a modern public sphere on which the nation-state could be built. I would therefore suggest that the notions of publicity, the public, and public opinion, captured by Habermas's concept of the public sphere

are important and can be used for comparative purposes if we are not going to be constrained by Habermas's Enlightenment perspective.

In the remainder of this essay I look at the nationalization of religion in Britain and India. I hope to show that developments in the metropolis and in the colony had important features in common, but that there were also substantial differences that had to do with the way state, nation, and religion are related in these two sites of the empire.

The Moral State in Britain

In nineteenth-century Britain two major religious developments connect religion to nationalism. The first is the enormous growth and impact of evangelicalism on the entire religious culture of Britain. The second is the inclusion and enfranchisement of Catholics in the nation. Let me start with evangelicalism. Evangelical Revival starts conventionally with John Wesley in the first half of the eighteenth century, but there was an important second wave in the 1790s, which lasted into the nineteenth century.¹⁴ The growth of evangelical movements in the first half of the nineteenth century is spectacular, but more significant than these numbers is the considerable impact evangelicalism had on religious groups and individuals of every kind. The evangelical expansion coincided largely with that of the Industrial Revolution, which has led to all kinds of more or less economic causal explanations, ranging from those given by Élie Halévy to those offered by Edward Thompson.¹⁵ All these explanations have subsequently been subjected to substantial criticisms, which I prefer not to explore here. Whatever the causalities involved it is important for my purpose to point out that evangelicalism aimed at inward conversion, but also at an outward activity in converting others. Itinerant preachers and later Bible and missionary societies reached far and deep. What one has here is a strong civilizing and educational effort aimed at transforming people's personal lives. There can be little doubt about evangelicalism's importance in producing modern, civil, and hard-working individuals.

At the same time evangelicalism had a very significant political impact. Obviously the term *evangelicalism*, covers a broad range of ideas and attitudes, but its campaign for the abolition of slavery in the first decades of the nineteenth century shows how evangelicalism, despite its diversity, could have a strong political message. Here we see also how evangelicalism at home was connected to the empire, as exemplified in the words of William Wilberforce, one of the leaders of the evangelical Clapham sect:

I consider it my duty to endeavour to deliver these poor creatures from their present darkness and degradation, not merely out of a direct regard for their

well being . . . but also from a direct persuasion that both the colonists and we ourselves shall be otherwise the sufferers. The judicial and penal visitations of Providence occur commonly in the way of natural consequence and it is in that way I should expect the evils to occur.¹⁶

David Brion Davis suggests that the abolition of the slave trade in 1807 and of slavery in 1833 were "genuine rituals," evoking fantasies of death and rebirth, and "designed to revitalize Christianity and atone for national guilt."¹⁷

These attitudes toward the rest of the world were new and thoroughly modern. Until the 1790s there was hardly any interest in missionization abroad. The 1790s proved a turning point, however, perhaps best captured in the title of William Carey's book *An Enquiry into the Obligations of Christians to Use Means for the Conversion of the Heathens*.¹⁸ A great number of missionary societies were founded, including the well-known London Missionary Society (LMS) and Church Missionary Society (CMS). All saw themselves engaged in a battle against idolatry and an endeavor to save heathen souls. Not only were these souls thought to go to hell, if not saved, but it came to be seen as a Christian duty to save them. One can only wonder about the extent to which Christian imagination in Britain was fueled by the imagery of the poor Hindus, Muslims, and others being lost for eternity. We do know that one of every two missionary speakers at provincial anniversary meetings of missionary societies between 1838 to 1873 came from India.¹⁹ There can be little doubt that the simultaneous evangelical activities of Bible societies, missionary societies, and Sunday schools created a public awareness of a particular kind of world and of an imperial duty of British Christians in the empire.

I see evangelicalism as a very broad, religious force, active both within and outside the established church. By 1850 about one-third of Anglican clergymen, including many of the best, brightest, and could be designated evangelical and so could the vast majority of Nonconformists.²⁰ I take this to imply that the earlier strong divide between the established church and Nonconformism was, to some extent, bridged by evangelicalism. This divide obviously continued to exist in political debates about church-state relations, but Dissent appears to have lost its radical antiestablishment politics within evangelicalism, which basically promoted a middle-class piety with strong elements of civil and frugal behavior and national honor. Certainly, one can point at the extremist elements within the movement with their millenarian, adventist antinomianism that seem to perpetuate the earlier characteristics of eighteenth-century Dissent. These elements remained significant throughout the nineteenth century and into the twentieth century. In a number of cases their outbursts of religious fervor pushed influential men, like the Liberal leader Gladstone (1809–98), from

evangelicalism toward High Church. Nevertheless, one can see in Gladstone a strong evangelical streak that informed his political views and actions.²¹ Similarly, several generations later, C. F. Andrews (1871–1940), missionary and later friend of Tagore and Gandhi, left the Irvingite congregation, in which his father was a minister, for High Church, only to become a missionary and later a moralist supporter of Indian nationalism. Andrews did not feel close to the religious atmosphere in which his father, who had the powers of prophesy and healing, conducted his services. Nevertheless, he became a missionary who soon felt the constraints of High Church Anglicanism as too limiting. One can easily see the influence of evangelical moralism in C. F. Andrews's positions.²²

In mainstream evangelicalism religious enthusiasm was channeled into public activity, spreading middle-class values over the larger population. By and large it does not seem correct to see the evangelical movement as antirational. Rather it tried to combine rational thought and religious feeling, sense and sensibility. In that and other aspects I interpret it as a typical nationalist movement that tries to combine enlightenment with romanticism. While there is constant debate between utilitarian liberals and evangelicals there is considerable evidence of the common ground between them in the way John Stuart Mill tried to distance himself from his father's hyperrationalism.²³ The evangelical project was to convert the people to a morally inspired existence, in which individual conscience of sins and atonement are catchwords, within a nation with a mission.

Gladstone is an interesting example of the combination of liberalism and evangelical moralism. Brought up in a devoutly evangelical family, he began his career under the influence of the poet-philosopher Coleridge's book *On the Constitution of the Church and State*.²⁴ To defend the established church in the aftermath of Catholic Emancipation, he wrote a book titled *The State in Its Relations with the Church*, in which he endowed the state with a conscience that transcends that of individuals.²⁵ In this treatise he not only argued for a strong tie between church and state, but endowed the state with high moral qualities:

[T]he State is properly and according to its nature, moral. . . . It means that the general action of the State is under a moral law. . . . In the government and laws of a country we find not a mere aggregation of individual acts but a composite agency. . . . This composite agency represents the personality of the nation; and, as a great distinct moral reality, demands a worship of its own, namely, the worship of the State, represented in its living and governing members, and therefore a public and joint worship. To sum up then in a few words the result of these considerations, religion is applicable to the State, because it is the office of the State in its personality to evolve the social life of man, which social life is essentially moral in the ends it contemplates, in the subject-matter on which

it feeds, and in the restraints and motives it requires; and which can only be effectually moral when it is religious. Or, religion is directly necessary to the right employment of the energies of the State.²⁶

Since Gladstone later in his career became a defendant of the rights of Dissenters and Catholics, it has been argued that he completely repudiated his earlier views.²⁷ I would, however, suggest that we see in Gladstone a shift from the early-modern view of the public church to the moral nation-state, in which not the state bureaucracy but individual and national conscience were paramount. What remains constant is the moral/religious nature of political activity. Instead of excluding others from this moral life of the nation, he wanted to include them all. This meant a repudiation of a strictly Calvinist notion of the "few elect" to be replaced by a moral universalism that extended grace to all the inhabitants of the world. This vision of a national church or the nation as a church goes beyond the visible, institutional Church of England.

Such a fusion of church and nation-state was also crucial to the civilizing mission, as envisioned by Thomas Arnold in his *Principles of Church Reform*.²⁸ While Arnold was still doubtful of the desirability of including Roman Catholics (Irish barbarians) and the chance that dissenting groups would join this Christianizing and civilizing mission, these concerns were soon overtaken by new realities. The liberal doctrine of the improvement of society fits extraordinarily well with Arnold's Christian moralism. He derived his ideas from Coleridge, who also influenced Gladstone and, interestingly, John Stuart Mill, principal spokesman of liberal ideas in the nineteenth century.²⁹ In Gladstone, there is a liberal view of progress instead of the usual evangelical views of damnation and the end of times, but added to this is the notion that progress is the Christian improvement of society and that in such progress we see the hand of God. This mixture of liberal and evangelical ideas leads to a quite general emphasis on the moral character of the English people and their duty to lead the world.³⁰ These views of progress and grace for all were not confined to the British isles, but included the "white man's burden" to bring the gospel to the colonies.

The shift from an Anglican exclusivist vision of the nation to an inclusivist nationalism is reflected in the other major religious development of the period, the emancipation of the Catholics. Eighteenth-century England had been very much a Protestant state, but the creation of the British nation-state required the inclusion of the Catholic minority. There was a considerable history of anti-Catholic hostility in England, which resulted in excluding Catholics from most areas of public life. From 1800 Roman Catholicism, like evangelicalism, experienced tremendous growth. In England this was the result of both an increase of English Catholics and a

great influx of Irish immigrants. In Ireland there was an expansion of Roman Catholic activity, marked by the foundation of an Irish priest-training college at Maynooth in 1795. Roman Catholicism, like evangelicalism, also had an influence outside its fold. This is most clear in the Oxford movement (also called the Tractarians), from 1833 onward a movement toward emphasizing the Catholicity of the Church of England, called Anglo-Catholicism. John Henry Newman (1801–90), one of the movement's luminaries, replaced "Anglo" with "Roman" in 1845 and rose to become a Roman Catholic cardinal in 1879.

Evangelicals saw the growth in numbers of Roman Catholics as a threat that was compounded by their understandable fear for "the enemy within" constituted by the Oxford movement. In the 1820s the political struggle was about Roman Catholics' right to sit in the united Parliament of Great Britain and Ireland, which was decided in 1829 by the emancipation. Not only Roman Catholics were now allowed to become part of the nation, but also Dissenters whose civil disabilities were revoked by the Test and Corporation Acts in 1828. One has to interpret Coleridge, Arnold, and Gladstone in the light of these events, which definitely served to transform the religious and political character of British society in significant ways.

The enfranchisement of the Catholic minority in the British isles did little, however, little to prevent the strong connection that grew between Roman Catholicism and Irish nationalism.³¹ This connection emerged very clearly in the repeal agitation of 1843, in which the Roman Catholic clergy and Irish nationalists worked hand in hand to attack the legislative union between Britain and Ireland. This movement, supported by Roman Catholic organizational structures, drew huge popular support. It is not exaggerated to see Irish nationalism as the strongest example of religious nationalism in Greater Britain. The emancipation of Catholics had thus not succeeded in drawing in the Irish Catholics into the British nation, which continued to have a too strong English character. Likewise, the Scottish Presbyterians were not immediately inclined to be part of an English/British nation, which was marked by the disruption in 1843, when half of the established church's clergy left to form the Free Church of Scotland. As in England, evangelicalism worked here to promote the cause of nationalism, but this time it was Scottish nationalism. The main inspiration to form the Free Church was an evangelical urge to be close to "the people," but, as a corollary, the disruption was marked by anti-English sentiments (which remain strong until the present day) as expressed in opposition to Westminster as well as to anglicized landlords. Not nearly as strong as in Ireland, nationalism in Scotland was nevertheless also marked by religious overtones. The same may be true for the connection between Welsh linguistic nationalism and Nonconformist religion.

The Catholic Emancipation undid any illusion people like Thomas Arnold may have had about Britain as a Protestant nation. Anti-Catholic feelings among the Protestant majority did not prevent Roman-Catholics from becoming the largest single church in England in the twentieth century.³² At the same time, building "Greater Britain," including Ireland, into a nation proved impossible in the face of the successful combination of Roman Catholicism and Irish nationalism. Anti-Catholicism was very strong in the evangelical movement, but I want to emphasize that both Catholicism and evangelicalism—in a dynamic fed by mutual rivalry—expanded substantially in the first half of the nineteenth century. Both movements were simultaneously expanding and trying to dominate an emerging public sphere, which made nationalism possible. Evangelical Awakening and Roman Catholic Revival are most profitably seen as two connected movements that derived much of their expansionist energy from their mutual rivalry.³³ In this connection it is interesting to note that evangelicalism, despite its anti-Catholicism, even influenced the nineteenth century's most famous convert to Catholicism, John Henry Newman, as he candidly admitted in his *Apologia Pro Vita Sua*.³⁴

From the 1830s to the 1860s anti-Catholicism and antiritualism within the Anglican Church were major themes of what John Wolffe has called "the Protestant Crusade."³⁵ This implied widespread agitation and popular mobilization of both Protestants and Catholics. Again, I would suggest that we see them in their interaction. Both evangelicals and Catholics were eager to underline their nationalism. Protestants in particular liked to emphasize their link to the paramount symbol of imperial nationalism, Queen Victoria.³⁶ While Irish Catholics obviously emphasized their Irishness, English Catholics were trying even harder to distance themselves from allegations of antinational allegiance to the pope. My contention is that both movements helped significantly in creating an imperial and missionary nationalism, characterized by superior national qualities of a ruling race: a nation with a mission. As Mandell Creighton, Anglican bishop of London, asserted at the turn of the century, "the question of the future of the world is the existence of Anglo-Saxon civilisation on a religious basis."³⁷ Creighton explicitly had the Church of England in mind when speaking about the conquest of the world, but I would suggest that religious diversity was encompassed by a notion of the duties of a superior race.

The notion of racial superiority in the second half of the nineteenth century depended to an important extent on comparison. Civilization was defined by its antithesis, barbarism or savagery. The internal rivalries, animosities, and political conflicts within British Christianity faded into the background of what came to be seen as the difference between British Christian civilization and the barbarity of the colonized peoples. The bib-

lical affirmation that humankind was one, derived from a single pair in the Garden of Eden, as well as the Enlightenment notion of universal sameness and equality were rapidly giving way to ideas of radical racial difference in the second half of the nineteenth century.³⁸ Philologists like Renan and Max Müller equated race and language, and Renan asserted the right of superior races to colonize inferior ones. Where Thomas Arnold had been very concerned about the relation between religion and nation, his son Matthew Arnold, the author of *Culture and Anarchy*, relocated that concern by emphasizing a racialized view of culture. That the Arnoldian view of culture continued to be religiously inspired should be clear from the following quotation from *Culture and Anarchy*:

The aim of culture [is to set] ourselves to ascertain what perfection is and to make it prevail; but also, in determining generally, in what perfection consists, religion comes to a conclusion identical with that which culture . . . likewise reaches. Religion says: The Kingdom of God is within you; and culture, in like manner, places human perfection in an internal condition, in the growth and predominance of our humanity proper, as distinguished from our animality. . . . Not a having and a resting, but a growing and a becoming, is the character of perfection as culture conceives it; and here, too, it coincides with religion.³⁹

It is important to note that Arnold was the inspector of schools and in that capacity responsible for the education of the British in the nation's new racialized mission. Modern science supported this ideological formation of national culture, in which language and race took central stage and the culture of the colonized was turned into an object of academic study, with its own university chair.⁴⁰ Gradually race came to take precedence over religion as the dominant element in British nationalism in the second part of the nineteenth century.

The Colonial Mission in India

One of the great policy debates in the East India Company in the early nineteenth century was between orientalist who argued that the company should continue its policy of supporting native religious and educational institutions, and Anglicists who argued that there was little of value in these native institutions, which should be replaced by the more civilized and advanced institutions of England. This was clearly a complex debate, more or less decisively won by the Anglicists, when Thomas Babington Macaulay's *Minute on Indian Education* of 1835 was accepted as the basis of official policy. In this battle evangelicals sided with Anglicists. Evangelicals, such as those of the Clapham sect (William Wilberforce, Zachary Macaulay, John Venn, Samuel Thornton, Charles Grant)

prominent in the antislavery campaign, were indignant at the support the company had given to Hinduism and Islam in India. They concurred with the utilitarian Anglicists in their disdain for the native institutions and literatures of India. William Wilberforce told the English Parliament that the orientalist were as skeptical about Christianity as the French revolutionaries whose actions it regarded with horror.⁴¹ Not only should the company allow missionaries to work in India (which it did after 1813), but it should stop the support of native institutions.

In the early decades of the nineteenth century the company was still giving patronage to Hindu temples and festivals, especially in the south. Under strong pressure from the evangelicals the company had to withdraw from that policy. It did so very hesitantly. Even as late as 1838 a committee had to be formed in England for the purpose of "diffusing information relative to the connection of the East India Company's Government with the superstitious idolatrous systems of the natives, and for promoting the dissolution of that connection."⁴² We have to see this as a withdrawal of sorts, however, since the British became active in setting up systems and committees to manage religious endowments. These committees became important arenas for organizing the public sphere, for both Hindus and Muslims. As such, it was another instance of a new colonial politics of representation that replaced the older patronage networks, in which the company had participated to further its prime purpose; trade.

Utilitarians and evangelicals agreed that the religious institutions of India needed to be dismantled and replaced by Christian civilization. They disagreed, however, on how to bring civilization to the natives. Religious neutrality was seen as essential first for trading purposes and later to British rule in India. The company continued to resist direct support for missionary projects. The Anglican Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts (est. 1701) had always been a colonial church providing clergy for the British in the colonies until it was transformed in the 1830s under evangelical influence.⁴³ Serious missionary activity among the natives originated only in the nineteenth century outside the company in evangelical circles, which raised money from the British public. The company's neutrality, however, did nothing to prevent attempts to reform Indian society through education, an endeavor fully supported by the utilitarian Anglicists. This, however, turned out to be a field in which missionaries were extremely active.

Whatever the debates between evangelicals and utilitarians—and they were considerable—none of them would have denied that civil society and the forms of knowledge on which it was based were ultimately part and parcel of Christian civilization. Gauri Viswanathan has argued forcefully that the teaching of secular English literature, as recommended in

Macaulay's *Minute*, amounts to a relocation of cultural value from belief and dogma to language, experience, and history.⁴⁴ This relocation can be detected in the intellectual differences that simultaneously divide and connect Matthew Arnold and his father, Thomas, as well as Thomas Babington Macaulay and his father, Zachary. Despite their differences, these people occupied the same moral universe. Their differences were not about the moral mission of the state, but about matters of policy. The developments in that universe were similar in Britain and among the British in India. For evangelicals and utilitarians the world was no longer limited to England or Greater Britain. The antislavery campaigns had made the British public aware of Britain's role in a larger world. This role had to be one of reform and uplift, friend and foe agreed.

However much the British tried to hide the Christian roots of their colonial policies behind the mask of religious neutrality, the colonized "natives" were not to be fooled. It is often observed that there were great differences between the operations of the missionary societies in India and those of the state, but these were within a shared colonizing project. It is certainly true that the officers of the company and later the colonial state looked down upon the missionaries and that, in general, there was a substantial social gap between them. Nevertheless, their concerns coluded in the crucial fields of education and reform, as they did back home in Britain. The real difference was, obviously, not between the colonial state and the missionaries, but between the colonizing British and the colonized Indians. Where in Britain the state would gradually occupy the social spaces opened up by the religious organizations, in India these spaces were occupied by rival religious organizations of native "subjects." Their ideas and actions could not be incorporated in a British nation characterized by its Christian civilization. In due course they became oppositional toward the colonial state and, by the same token, bearers of Indian nationalism.

Despite the official policy of religious neutrality, the British interfered with every aspect of Indian religion and society. Considering the nature of the colonial project there was actually no choice and the tropes of withdrawal, secularity, and neutrality only tried to hide that discursively. I have to limit myself here to a discussion of the British involvement with Hinduism and its consequences, but I want to suggest that the developments that took place in Indian Islam and Sikhism were not altogether different.⁴⁵ British policies set off a whole chain of reformist reaction in Hinduism. As in the case of the evangelical Awakening in Britain, the causalities involved are extremely complex and Reform should not be viewed merely as a reaction to the colonial project. I would like to draw attention to the creation of a public sphere by reformist organizations in a way that reminds one of the evangelical activities in Britain. I want

to look briefly at the construction of Hindu spirituality in the Brahmo Samaj and the Ramakrishna mission as well as at the construction of the Aryan race in the Arya Samaj.

One of the early instances of a Hindu public responding to colonial rule is the abolition of sati (widow immolation) by the British in 1829. Sati was perhaps the most definite sign of Hindu depravity and Christian moral superiority that evangelicals could get. Consequently they focused their campaign against native institutions on the abolition of this particular practice. They succeeded in convincing governor-general William Bentinck, who later also enacted Macaulay's Anglicist proposals for Indian education. A statue for Bentinck, erected soon after his departure from India in 1835, showed a sati scene under Bentinck's stern figure, and in an inscription on the rear of its base, it was recorded that Britain was now committed to "elevat[ing] the moral and intellectual character" of the Indian subjects.⁴⁶ Beneath the evangelical moralism, however, one may well detect a sexual fantasy of "white men saving brown women from brown men."⁴⁷

More important than the evangelical actions and the government's responses is the position taken by "enlightened" citizens of Calcutta. Rammohan Roy (1772–1833), sometimes called "the father of the Bengal Renaissance," wrote a great deal on this subject between 1818 and 1832. In January 1830 Rammohan, together with three hundred residents of Calcutta, presented a petition to Bentinck in support of the regulation prohibiting sati. Rammohan rejected the practice on the basis of his reading of Hindu scripture. He distinguished authoritative sources (such as the Vedas) from other sources. It is interesting to note that he did not refer to any authoritative interpretation of these sources by learned gurus but relied entirely on his private, rational judgment. This is certainly an important step in the laicization of Hinduism. What we also see here is that scriptural authority can be referred to by a layperson without mediation of a sacred interpreter. One of Rammohan's most important objectives was to abolish the rules of the caste-based, hereditary qualification to study the Veda.⁴⁸ Following Lata Mani, I would suggest that the colonialist insistence on the unmediated authority of written evidence for Indian traditions, enabled by the orientalist study of these texts, made possible a gradual shift in emphasis from the spoken to the written in Hinduism.⁴⁹ I would add, however, that the centrality of the text was also insisted upon by the evangelicals who railed against the sati practice. Rammohan's position participated in both the orientalist and the Protestant ways of thinking. His privileging of his own rational judgment, based on reading and discussion, enabled the rise of a public and a certain kind of public debate in Habermas's sense.

Rammohan was strongly influenced by English and American unitarianism, a Christian creed characterized by a rational and universalist theology as well as a social reformist conscience. He contributed to its theology an interesting tract, called *The Precepts of Jesus*, published in 1820. He was very interested in Christian theology and, to a certain degree, he was a unitarian, but as his involvement in the sati debate shows, he also remained a Hindu. In 1828 Rammohan founded the Brahmo Samaj. This was a small movement, propagating a deist and universalist kind of religion, based, however, on Hindu sources and especially the Upanishads and the philosophical commentaries on the Upanishads (together known as the Vedanta). It was particularly opposed to "superstitious customs" of "ignorant people," deceived by their Brahman leaders. The deception by Brahmans is a crucial point. It is, of course, tempting to see it as a straightforward adoption of British attacks on Brahmans, as, for example, in James Mill's *History of British India*, but I would suggest that it is a bit more complex. Roy himself came from a Brahman family and his attack is based on his reading of Brahmanical sources. The British attack on Brahman priests gave support to a particular argument against priesthood in a Brahmanical debate about religious authority. Christian rational religion and certain Brahmanical arguments, of long standing, fitted together quite well as the basis of a Hindu rational religion. Reason and "the dignity of human beings" became as important as for its Christian counterparts in Europe. Also interesting was its attempt to come to a universal religion, reminiscent of the Deist view that the great truths of religion were all universal and that true religion was ultimately natural religion, not bound to particular historical events of revelation that divided one religious community from another.⁵⁰

I would like to stress the strong parallelism of the development of Indian and European "rational religion." There is, however, a crucial difference: whereas the European Christians tried to universalize their Christian tradition, Indian Hindus did the same with their Hindu tradition. This reproduced the Hindu-Christian opposition, which was also the colonized-colonizer opposition. Colonialism provides the discursive frame in which Hindu rational religion emerges. As Ranajit Guha demonstrates, this is also clear in the work of someone outside the circle of the Brahmo Samaj, the humanist thinker Bankimchandra Chattopadhyay (1838–94), who was very much influenced by August Comte.⁵¹ Bankimchandra (again a Brahman), like many European thinkers, centers his view of "humanness" (*manusyatva*) on the notion of the perfectibility of man. In contrast to European thinkers, however, he thought it possible to give examples of *Adarsa Purush*, "ideal man," whose perfection had to be emulated. These examples were taken from Hindu religious history with, at the highest rank, the god Krishna. The most perfect man was thus a Hindu god.

The Enlightenment question about the nature of man had found in the colonial setting a particular answer in terms of religious nationalism.

The intellectual Vedantic and unitarian views of the Brahmos left them to an important extent isolated from the larger Bengali Hindu society. In this larger environment a particular Bengali brand of Vaishnava devotionism had become important since the sixteenth century. This devotionism focused on the god Krishna and on gurus who descended from the disciples of the great sixteenth-century guru Chaitanya. It is interesting to see that in the second half of the nineteenth century this devotional tradition had begun to exercise considerable influence on the rational religion of the Brahmos. In the 1860s Keshabchandra Sen (1838—84), one of the most influential Brahma leaders, introduced devotional singing in the Brahma congregational meetings.⁵² He also no longer spoke English but Bengali. He moved to the rural outskirts of Calcutta and introduced an ascetic lifestyle among his followers. The next step seems to have been his encounter with the contemporary guru Ramakrishna (1836—86), a priest in a temple for the mother goddess Kali in Calcutta. In his two newspapers (one in English, one in Bengali) he introduced Ramakrishna to the wider, reading public as a true saint in the authentic Hindu tradition. In that way he authorized this illiterate Hindu ascetic as an acceptable guru for the Hindu middle classes. In a recent book on Indian nationalism Partha Chatterjee portrays the meeting of these two personalities as constituting the “middle ground” occupied by the emergent middle classes, between European rational philosophy and Hindu religious discourse. In his view this “middle ground” enables the anticolonial nationalists to divide the world into two domains—the material, outer world, which is dominated by Western science, and the spiritual, inner world of the home, which is dominated by Hindu values.⁵³

The spirituality of Hindu civilization, however, is not only signified by the home, but also by reformist and political action, such as much later in Gandhi's nonviolent action (*satyagraha*). The theme of Hindu spirituality in opposition to Western materialism definitely becomes the principal theme in Hindu nationalist discourse from this period onward. A major step in the popularization of Hindu reformist ideas was made by linking it to emergent nationalism. Hindu spirituality had to be defended against the onslaught of colonial modernity. Perhaps the most important expounder of the doctrine of Hindu spirituality has been the founder of the Ramakrishna mission, Vivekananda (1863—1902). Vivekananda was an extremely talented student who had been thoroughly educated in contemporary Western thought. He joined the Brahma Samaj briefly before he met Ramakrishna.

The encounter with Ramakrishna had a transformative impact on the young Narendranath Datta, who adopted the name Vivekananda when he took his ascetic vows. As Tapan Raychaudhuri emphasizes, Viveka-

nanda was “more than anything else a mystic in quest of the Ultimate Reality within a specific Indian tradition.”⁵⁴ This tradition was vividly presented to Vivekananda not by learned discourse in which he himself was a master, but by the charismatic presence of a guru, Ramakrishna, whose trances had first been treated as insanity, but later became regarded as possession by the goddess. I want to argue that the articulation of Brahma rational religion with the religious discourse of Ramakrishna produced the specific brand of Hindu spirituality that Vivekananda came to propagate.

The typical strategy of Vivekananda was to systematize a disparate set of traditions, make it intellectually available for a Westernized audience and defensible against Western critique, and incorporate it in the notion of Hindu spirituality carried by the Hindu nation, which was superior to Western materialism, brought to India by an aggressive and arrogant British nation. His major achievement was to transform the project to ground Hindu spirituality in a systematic interpretation of the Vedanta (the Upanishads and the tradition of their interpretation). This project, started with Rammohan Roy and which had produced rational Hinduism, was now combined with disciplines to attain perfection from the ascetic traditions in what Vivekananda called “practical Vedanta.” The practical side also included participation in social reform. This kind of spiritual Hinduism was later carried forward by Mahatma Gandhi and Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan, but it has also become a main inspiration for the current brand of Hindu nationalism today.

A good example of the construction of Hindu spirituality are Vivekananda's efforts to systematize disparate notions of ascetic practice in an ancient system of yoga that is now India's main export article on the spirituality market. Yoga is a Sanskrit word that can be translated as “discipline.” The classical text is Patanjali's *Yoga-Sutras*, probably composed around the fifth century A.D. Vivekananda systematized this tradition in a doctrine of salvation, in which rational thought, Patanjali's ideas on meditation, social action, and religious devotion were combined. This is a new doctrine, although Vivekananda emphasized that it was “ancient wisdom.” It is a remarkable step in systematizing Hindu spirituality as healthy for body and spirit. It is also noteworthy that Vivekananda's project got a major impetus when he was enthusiastically received in Europe and the United States. His visit to the World's Congress of Religions in Chicago in 1893 made him a celebrity in the United States and consequently in India also. His new status as international guru strengthened his view of India's contribution to world civilization.

A major element of Vivekananda's message was nationalist. He saw his project very much in terms of a revitalization of the Hindu nation. In 1897 he founded an ascetic order, the Ramakrishna mission, to make ascetics available for the nationalist task. National self-determination,

social reform, and spiritual awakening were all linked in his perception. The Ramakrishna mission established itself throughout India and also outside India. It did not become a mass movement, but Vivekananda's rhetoric of spiritualism exerted an immense influence on the way Hindu gurus in the twentieth century came to communicate their message. Vivekananda transformed Hindu discourse on asceticism, devotion, and worship into the nationalist idiom of "service to the nation" for both men and women.

Vivekananda's construction of Hindu spirituality gave notion of self-sacrifice a new meaning that drew simultaneously from Hindu traditions of devotion (*bhakti*) and evangelical notions of female morality. In this complex mixture, femininity is the signifier of Hindu spirituality, while actual women should be self-sacrificing in accordance with both Victorian notions of domesticity and Hindu notions of total devotion to their husbands. The abolition of sati by the colonial government thus set a far-reaching series of Hindu responses in motion, which ultimately led to the formation of a modern conception of spirituality through which the Hindu nation got defined.

While gender was the dominant issue in the prohibition of sati and crucial to the definition of Hindu spirituality with its emphasis on feminine devotion and self-sacrifice,⁵⁵ race and caste formed the dominant issue in the formation of Hindu Aryanism. The mutiny of sepoys of the Bengal army and the ensuing revolt in northern India in 1857 as well as its suppression in 1858 contributed immensely to the notion of racial and religious difference between the colonizers and the colonized. In this period of great anxiety about the loss of control over India, stories about inhuman atrocities inflicted on British women and children were rapidly circulated throughout Britain and confirmed the general view of the barbarity of the Indians already established in the depiction of sati. The suppression of the revolt demonstrated once and for all to the British that they were a superior race. This feeling was most clearly (and outrageously) expressed by Charles Dickens:

I wish I were commander in Chief in India. The first thing I would do to strike that Oriental race with amazement (not in the least regarding them as if they lived in the Strand, London, or at Camden Town) should be to proclaim to them in their language, that I considered my holding that appointment by the leave of God, to mean that I should do my utmost to exterminate the Race upon whom the stain of the late cruelties rested; and that I was . . . now proceeding, with all convenient dispatch and merciful swiftness of execution, to blot it out of humankind and raze it off the face of the earth."⁵⁶

Evangelicals, however, argued that the British had not taken their civilizing mission as a superior race serious enough. They took the events as divine judgment upon Britain for her sins as a nation. These sins consisted

largely of a neglect by the company to promote the gospel. On Sunday, 7 October 1857, a great number of churches in Britain, both Anglican and Nonconformist, participated in "a day of national humiliation," proclaimed by Queen Victoria.⁵⁷ In the sermons of that day almost every preacher agreed to the necessity of wiping out that humiliation, repressing the revolt by military means, and inflicting retribution on the Indian population. The Christian qualities of some of the British officers during the revolt were extolled at great length, just as Henry Havelock attributed his victory at Fatehpur "to the blessing of Almighty God on a most righteous cause, the cause of justice, humanity, truth, and good government in India."⁵⁸ In the longer run, however, the revolt convinced most colonial officers that conversion to Christianity was an uphill struggle and reinforced the idea that religious neutrality was essential to colonial rule. For them it became difficult to see how the Indian barbarians would ever become equal to British Christians. Lord Canning dismissed the evangelical Herbert Edwardes, commissioner of Peshawar, as "exactly what Mahomet would have been if born at Clapham instead of Mecca."⁵⁹ Racial difference between the British and the colonized, and among the colonized themselves, became the explanation and legitimation of colonial rule.

While this reinvigorated racism in India colluded with the rise of racial nationalism in the metropolis, at the level of scientific thought the notion that the higher castes of India belonged to the same Aryan race as the British was widely accepted. In India the idea of race had to be combined with that of culture or civilization to explain why the British as "younger brothers" of the Aryan family had to guide the "older brothers" to civilization. This intervening cultural element continued to be religious difference. The story of the Aryan race in India was a story of decline, caused by a variety of things, such as racial mixing or climate, but especially by the inherent barbarity of Hindu polytheism.

Ideas of race were not exclusively theoretical, but also informed recruiting patterns for the army, which included "martial" races, such as the Punjabi Sikhs, and excluded "effeminate" races, such as the Bengalis. Another important distinction was between the Aryans and the Dravidians in southern India. The missionary Robert Caldwell based his linguistic and ethnological theories about Dravidian languages and peoples on that distinction. In the second half of the nineteenth century he developed a myth of the Aryan (Brahmanical) invasion of southern India and the subsequent subjection of the Dravidian people to a Hindu caste system in which the invaders were on top. His argument was meant to support his own missionary work among the "original" Dravidian population by delegitimizing Brahman priests, but ultimately his theory of a Dravidian race was used in the south for political purposes that had nothing to do with Christian conversion.⁶⁰

The Aryan race theory was taken up in northern India by Hinduism's most important reformist movement, the Arya Samaj. Its founder, Swami Dayananda Sarasvati (1824–83), was one of India's many gurus in the nineteenth century. He was initiated in the order of the Shivaite Dashanamis, a prestigious Hindu ascetic order that allowed only Brahmans to take the ascetic vows. Like other ascetics of his order, Dayananda traveled through India, visiting sacred places. He became rather successful and seemed on his way to form his own, limited community of ascetic and lay followers. In 1872 Dayananda visited the Brahmo leader Debendranath Tagore in Calcutta for four months. This visit seems to have transformed his style. He abandoned his ascetic robe and exchanged his use of Sanskrit oratory for Hindi.⁶¹

Dayananda did already have a strong reformist sense that Hindu religion had degenerated and that it had to be revitalized. In his own representation he had been summoned by his own, blind guru of the Dashanami order to campaign for a return to a pristine Hinduism based on the Vedas. This was a command entirely within the Hindu discursive tradition, in which the Vedas are seen as the ultimate, authoritative source of knowledge. Before Dayananda appeared on the stage, it was, however, more or less an imaginary source. Knowledge of the Vedas was transmitted in Brahman families, largely orally, with some help from manuscripts. Moreover, the Vedas are lengthy, obscure texts, riddled with internal contradictions, by no means a straightforward source for authorization of human practice. In this period, however, Max Muller, the towering figure of orientalist scholarship in Britain, had provided a definitive edition and translation of the Rg-Veda, financially underwritten by the East India Company. This was one of the major gifts brought to India by the prince of Wales on his tour in 1875–76. Dayananda thus accepted the degeneration doctrine, implicit in the Aryan theory. Hinduism as it actually existed was a degeneration of a pristine Aryan religion, as laid down in the Vedas.

It is not possible to follow here in any detail the development of Dayananda's thinking and of the movement, Arya Samaj (the Society of Aryans), that he founded in Bombay in 1875. Let me just summarize the points that made Dayananda's Aryan religion (*Arya Dharm*) a radically new religious program. First of all, he proposed to get back to the basic Vedic texts, to supersede the traditional commentators of these texts. He provided his own Sanskrit commentaries to these texts, in which he sought to show that all the scientific knowledge of the West in fact was already present in the Vedic revelation. He spoke of the Vedic teachings of telecommunications, about the construction of ships and aircraft, and about gravity and gravitational attraction. The importance given to science and its appropriation is, of course, extremely significant. Vedic religion was a universal, rational religion of an Aryan people. It was the

cradle of all human civilization. In this we can see the influence of the rational religion arguments in Calcutta.

Like the Brahmos, Dayananda argued that the Vedic revelation was monotheistic. A monistic argument could very well be developed from an early medieval interpretation of the Upanishads by Shankara, the founder of the Dashanamis, the order to which Dayananda belonged. Moreover, there is also a monotheistic tendency in the ascetic orders that focus their meditation on one god. Dayananda, however, wanted to obscure the reference to many gods in the Vedic hymns. He did not use the traditional Hindu argument that one particular god is higher than all the other gods (or that he encompasses all the others). He wanted to get rid of the Hindu pantheon and the practice of image worship.

In the nineteenth-century European evolutionary worldview monotheism was seen as the highest form of religion. A religion had to be monotheistic to be rational and to allow a scientific understanding of the world. In that sense Dayananda's discourse on Hindu monotheism looks derivative, but I would like to draw attention to the very specific Hindu, discursive underpinnings. The reference to the Vedas, the monism of the Vedanta, and the monotheism of the Shivaite and their depreciation of image worship are all present in Dayananda's thinking. The lay response to Dayananda's message was also very much predetermined by existing Hindu discursive frames. Dayananda's rejection of image worship limited the appeal of his message considerably. Image worship is dominant in popular Hinduism and it is inconceivable that a radical iconoclastic movement would succeed in India. The Arya Samaj did, however, have a considerable following in the Punjab, where one finds a long history of imageless worship.

Second, an important point in Dayananda's program was an attack on the caste system, which he saw as a degeneration of the original, natural ordering of Vedic society in four functional groups: priests, warriors, traders, and servants. This natural order was entirely rational and functional, if only because it was based on achievement rather than ascription. Dayananda's privileging of this ancient social hierarchy may have been related to the fact that the census operations, starting in the 1870s, tried to use it to rank actual castes (whose social relations were only salient on a regional basis) hierarchically on an all-India basis. As Bernard Cohn has powerfully argued, the census operations enhanced the importance of caste distinctions in the new arenas for competition created by the British. Dayananda's solution to take over the all-India grid of the census, explain it in functional terms, and do away with actual hereditary caste relations was original and radical. It was used much later in Gandhi's social philosophy to include the untouchables in the Hindu nation.⁶²

More than anything else this meant in the Arya Samaj that everyone—regardless of caste—could become priest and officiate in the principal rite of the Arya Samaj, the Vedic sacrifice, which is commonly the strict prerogative of Brahmans. Despite his emphasis on Brahmanical scripture and Brahmanical ritual, Dayananda launched a direct attack on the ritual hegemony of Brahman priests. Dayananda continued a discourse on priesthood that, as we have seen with Rammohan Roy, has its roots both in Brahmanical debates and in colonial attacks on Brahmans. Dayananda took his attack one crucial step further by allowing non-Brahmans to perform the Vedic sacrifice. While this had a *Wahlverwantschaft* with the aspirations of a new class of English-educated Indian officials, Dayananda's program was too radical for many. Again, it had most of its appeal in the Punjab, where religions like Sikhism had done away not only with the worship of images but also with Brahman priesthood. We have to see the radical novelty of Dayananda's program: the Arya Samaj became a religious community in which all religious power gravitated toward the laity. After his death, Dayananda was not succeeded by another guru but by a committee of lay members.

A third important point of innovation was the great emphasis the Arya Samaj put on education. A large number of schools were founded in the Punjab and elsewhere that continue to attract many non-Arya Hindu students. This kind of social activity made the Arya Samaj, into a strong competitor of the Christian missions. Following the Arya Samaj a great number of religious movements, with or without a core of ascetic gurus, entered the quickly expanding fields of education, social welfare, and medical care. The Arya Samaj had discovered the larger Indian public as the target of internal missionization. Special rituals were devised to purify those who had been converted to other religions and to bring them back to the Hindu fold. The larger Indian public also came to include those who had left India as indentured laborers to work in British plantations overseas. Arya Samaji missionaries were sent to these areas and had considerable success in them.

What we see here is that the Arya Samaj became an important factor in creating a Hindu public. It brought the debate about the nature of Hinduism in a much more direct manner to the popular masses than Rammohan or Bankim had been able to do. Dayananda's message developed in the colonial context from important Hindu discursive traditions and remained close to them. Dayananda was a prolific writer and talker constantly in debate with other Hindu leaders, following again an old tradition of the public contestation of religious opinion (*shastrartha*). At the end of his life he found the revolutionary issue, the protection of Mother Cow against British and Muslim butchers, which introduced mass participation in the public sphere.

Conclusion

I hope to have conveyed that (1) religion has been crucial in the making of the modern nation-state in both Britain and India; (2) the processes of nation building in these two countries have been connected through empire; and (3) the imperial relation has affected the location of religion in Britain and India. The modern state depends in liberal theory on the formation of a civil society, consisting of free but civilized subjects, as well as on the formation of a public sphere for the conduct of rational debate. In that theory the notions of freedom and rationality are defined in terms of secularity. I have tried to show that, contrary to theory, religion is a major source of rational, moral subjects and a major organizational aspect of the public spheres they create. Antislavery societies, Bible societies, anti-Catholic agitation, antisati petitions, Ramakrishna missions, cow-protection movements—what they all have in common is the creation of public spheres of political interaction central to the formation of national identities. The moral tenor of these movements is essential to understanding the mission of empire as well as the mission of anticolonial nationalism.

I hope also to have demonstrated that the supposition that the British polity is secular and the Indian religious is false. I have suggested that a sharp, structural distinction between nation and state cannot be made. In the modern period the nation-state is produced as a hyphenated entity, that is to say that they go together. There is, of course, a liberal notion that the state is outside civil society and can be criticized by civil society, which limits the power of the state, but it seems to me that the modern state is not an entity but a nexus of projects and arrangements through which society is organized. The externality of the state is an effect of these projects. It is especially through the project of education and through legal arrangements that the modern subject is formed. As Mauss suggested, language, race, and religion are also constructed in the process of nation-state formation. This is true for both the metropolis and the colony. The moral mission of the modern state is to organize the health, wealth and welfare of its citizens, and to be able to do that, it has to get to know them through various projects of documentation, such as the census.⁶³ The extent to which this knowledge is gathered through religious categories and the extent to which distribution of power and services is done through religious organizations are perhaps indices of the religiosity or secularity of a particular society.

I have not dealt with this here, but it might be the case that in the twentieth century, churches and other religious organizations gradually lost their previous importance in the organization of the nation-state in

Britain as compared to labor organizations and political parties. Such a shift might be enabled by the growing centrality of scientific race theories in the definition of the British nation as compared to Christianity. Britain's growing imperial power in the second half of the nineteenth century certainly allowed for racial fantasies of superiority. Moreover, the conceit of religious neutrality that was thought essential to imperial rule (perhaps even more after the revolt of 1857 than before) made race a better marker of difference than religion. At least it allowed some government officials to steer away from the constant evangelical pressure to promote Christianity in India. These imperial designs of religious neutrality (a neutrality it did not have in the metropolis), however, did not prevent Indians from seeing it as a moral state with a definite Christian morality.

Obviously, the crucial difference between the modern state in the metropolis and in the colony is that in the former, political legitimacy is in terms of the nation, citizenship, and national identity, whereas in the latter, the subjects are excluded from citizenship, while their national identity is either denied or denigrated. Religious and racial difference are both legitimations of differences of power. That is why anticolonial nationalisms are not only struggles for power in the political arena, but also attempt to counter the cultural hegemony of the colonial theory of difference. They often do so, as in the cases discussed here, by posing an alternative interpretation of the grounds of hegemony, whether religion or race. Vivekananda posed the superiority of Hinduism's spirituality over and against Western materialism. In doing so he denied that Britain's Christianity possessed a superior morality that allowed the British to rule India. Britain's ascendancy was, in his view, only a material one, which in fact had jeopardized the spiritual value British Christianity might have had. Dayananda took the Aryan race theory over from orientalism, but instead of accepting the theory that Christianity was to redeem the "fallen state" of Hindu civilization, he proposed a return to Vedic religion, which had preceded Christianity and was the very origin of all morality.

Notes

1. Quoted in Talal Asad, *Genealogies of Religion: Discipline and Reasons of Power in Christianity and Islam* (Baltimore, Md.: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993), 244.
2. Quoted in Keith Robbins, "Religion and Identity in Modern British History," in Stuart Mews, ed., *Religion and National Identity*, Studies in Church History, vol. 18 (Oxford: Blackwell, 1982), 465.
3. T. N. Madan, "Secularism in Its Place," *Journal of Asian Studies* 46 (1987): 748.
4. *Ibid.*, 749.

5. *Ibid.*, 753.
6. *Ibid.*, 753–54.
7. Marcel Mauss, "La nation," in *Oeuvres* (Paris: Les Editions de Minuit, 1969), 3: 592–93.
8. *Ibid.*, 596.
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