
**INFLUENCING THE ‘PLASTIC MIND’: CATECHETICS OF IMPERIALISM IN
INSTITUTING ENGLISH LITERARY STUDIES IN BRITISH PUNJAB**

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Abstract: *This paper pivots on catechetics of imperialism which were identified in an archival study of question papers of MA English examinations which were conducted by Punjab University, Lahore, between 1882 and 1918. This catechetical strategy, the study reveals, was needed due to imperial pedagogical needs of the discipline and rested on the double-helical foundation of imperial literature and history. The double-helical foundation, the paper argues, was necessitated because of the exclusive and imperial conception of the discipline which was resistant to any initiatives which might disturb this arrangement. A couple of aberrations in this formulation, a book of translated poems from local literature which was made part of the poetry curriculum in 1884, and the subject of Comparative Grammar were thus quickly dispensed with. The exclusive focus on English writers, culture, literature, and history created a metanarrative of English cultural prowess and enabled the creation of pliant subjectivities suitable for the fulfilment of colonial operations. The study relies on a tranche of question papers for the masters in English degree. The paper is thus an attempt to reveal clandestine, grand narratives of cultural imperialism that lurk beneath the innocuous texts that are stockpiled in a curriculum which are disseminated through a catechetical strategy.*

Keywords: colonial pedagogy, Institutionalization of literary study, Pakistan

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Introduction

This paper is part of a doctoral study that traced the institutionalization of English literature in Pakistan. In it the process of the exclusive curricular formation is discussed and the pedagogical strategy that suited the imperial objectives is highlighted. The paper, first of all, traces some of the initial developments that might have put the programme onto an inclusivetrack where local translated texts, and English literary works were studied simultaneously. However, as the paper establishes, such a possibility could not sustain itself due to the imperial needs of the colonial administration. This study also samples various questions that have since been asked between 1882 and 1918 in the examination papers with the intent of transforming students into subjects “Indian in blood and colour, but English in taste, in opinions, in morals, and in intellect” (Macaulay, 1835).

The discourse pertaining to the institutionalization of literary study has been an important concern of literary theory and postcolonial societies have been trying to understand the genealogy of colonial institutions through various methods. The present study is based on the archival method since no historicizations of the discipline of English in Pakistan are available. The rationale for such a study in the context of Pakistan has been discussed in a previous article entitled ‘To Terrify and Harmonize:’ On the Need of Historicizing the Emergence of the ‘Fatal Discipline’ in Pakistan (Khan, 2020). A tranche of question papers of the MA programme from 1882 to 1918 was available at the Punjab University’s main library. These

question papers were accessed and analysed from the postcolonial perspective.

Given the imperial politics that surrounded the possession of a library in Macaulay’s minute: “...who could deny that a single shelf of a good European library was worth the whole native literature of India and Arabia” (Macaulay, 1835), the ideologically loaded nature of the followingquestion, asked in the paper of prose¹ in 1907, cannotnot be underestimated:

“English readers before the close of the sixteenth century were in possession of a cosmopolitan library in their mother tongue, including choice specimens of ancient and modern masterpieces.” Illustrate this statement fully (PUC 1907-08, 1907, p. cxcix).

Illustrating it fully must have meant accepting it as a historical fact so when the next time Macaulay’s minute was invoked, it was backed by this ‘fact’ of history. The statement in the question above is excerpted from John Addington Symonds’ essay published in *The Fortnightly Review* in 1889, and omits the first few words of the sentences: “The Age favoured translation, and the English readers” (Symonds, 1889), but the age in which this statement was presented to the examinees who were asked to *illustrate it fully* did not favour translations from the Indian languages, as a book of translations from native poetry was made part of the poetry curriculum in 1884 but was dispensed with the very next year.

¹ There were six subjects of study/papers in the Masters in English Programme which was instituted at University of the Punjab in 1882.

Initially, in the first few years of the inception of the MA English programme at Punjab University, the discipline seemed to have dabbled with the idea of developing in the direction of comparative poetics. A poetry textbook, *Indian Idylls*, (Arnold, 1883) comprising of translated tracts of poetry from local languages, was included in the paper on poetry in 1888 (PUC 1887-8, 1887, p. 172). Similarly, there was another complete paper, entitled, Comparative Grammar which was included in the six-paper curriculum at the beginning of the discipline in 1882. *Indian Idylls*, however, was dropped from the curriculum in 1889, while the paper on Comparative Poetics ceased to be part of the curriculum in 1912.

When *Indian Idylls* was taught for a year, the question asked examinees: “What Oriental features do you notice in the epic extracts translated by Edwin Arnold distinguishing them from ordinary English narrative poems” (PUC 1888-9, 1888, p. 115). Such a juxtaposition, however oriental in character, would still have had the potential to disturb the otherwise exclusive nature of the curriculum. The inclusion and then the exclusion of this text in the poetry curriculum is perhaps the most interesting event of the earliest history of English’s institutionalization. Had it continued to maintain its presence; it would have put the discipline onto an exciting path of comparative poetics.

Sir Edwin Arnold, the translator of the poems and creator of the book, was a poet himself, a fellow of the Royal Asiatic Society, who also became the Principal of Deccan Sanskrit College at Poona in 1856 before returning to England where he worked with a leading newspaper for the rest of his life (Robinson 1).

Although he imaginatively reconceived, reconceptualised, religious and moral texts of Indian origins, his works were quite popular in his times (Robinson, 2009, p. 3). That perhaps has been the reason why his work was included in the poetry paper. While his translation also could not have transcended the limits of Orientalist projects, the continued inclusion of his translations would have provided an enormous opportunity in terms of engaging with the proximal concerns within which the educational institutions were located. It would have opened up the possibility of ontological inclusion of local students in the activity of the classroom.

The curious case of dispensing with Arnold’s translations becomes more interesting when analysed from the perspective of the history of translations of local texts. William Jones had, more than a century ago, translated poems of Sadi, plays of Kalidasa, especially *Sakuntala* and his translations were quite popular in the west. Charles Wilkins had translated *Bhagavad Gita* whose introduction was written by the first Governor-General of India (Khawaja). So, by 1882, the tradition of translation was very strong and there must have been quite a few of these translations available to the academic administrators, to Dr. Leitner himself, who also became the first registrar of the university, yet lack of accommodation of translated texts in the English curriculum demands further scrutiny.

One possible and probable reason in the context of disciplinary history for this lack of accommodation of local, translated, texts can be found in later history of the University. In 1933, the University historian F. L. Bruce lamented that, while the University was unique in “combining an oriental and a western type

of institution”, regrettably, it “isolated these two functions in parallel, self-contained institutions, and that it has never seriously attempted to combine them to their mutual advantage” (1933, p. 101). Even while concluding his history of the university, he reiterated that to him this segregation between the oriental and the western portions of the university—the fact that they “have not been allowed to suffuse each other”—has been “regrettable”(1933, p. 178). On a side note, however, this should not be understood as a genuine sympathy for the local literature, since the historian could not help divulging his imperial desire to “impregnate[-]”“the vernacular heavily” with English to create “a sufficient medium” (1933, p. 178).

To understand this solidification of exclusivity, one can look at Sara Suleri’s *The Rhetoric of English India* where she considers the “undecipherability of the “Oriental curriculum” unmanageable for the colonizers because of which Macaulay had advocated “banishing [it] to the pale of colonized orality” (Suleri, 1992, p. 22). The act of not engaging with the native texts, not even in translated form, is itself resonant of Macaulay and Mill, “who were”, in the words of Suleri, “completely impervious to the possibility of cultural sympathy”(Suleri, 1992, p. 33). She even traced it back to Edmund Burke, who in a discussion on the “question of India” (Suleri, 1992, p. 26), offered “an alternative reading in which the subject of India breaks each attempt to put it to an inventory”(1992, p. 26). It can thus be stated that this curricular event of inclusion and then exclusion of *Indian Idylls*, reveals that the initial colonial desire to engage with the local texts could not sustain because first, it did not adjust well with the disciplinary

objectives they had in mind, namely creation of pliant subjectivities to ensure the creation of a bureaucratic workforce and because of their lack of pedagogic capacity to manage the cultural diversity and prowess of the native texts which would have disturbed the exclusive presence of English ideas, history, biographies, and people which was crucial for imperial reasons.

This colonial desire, to make room for an uncomplicated curricular space, compelled the discipline to also do away with Comparative Grammar. This paper had a short life as it was offered from 1882 to 1912 as compared to the other subjects: Poetry, Drama, Prose, later novel, History of English Language, Translation and Essay Writing, and later History and Principles of Literary Criticism have continued their long presence in the curriculum and expect for History of English Language and Literature, the rest of the subjects are still present in the MA curriculum. Comparative Grammar offered pedagogic subjects an opportunity in which they could read about their own linguistic culture as it asked them to comment on local grammars and juxtapose them with European languages. In the very first paper of Comparative Grammar, the candidates were asked to: “explain the method of the science of language, give reasons for the most probable theory of the origin of language, discuss the theory of a primitive body of mono-syllabic roots as the historical beginnings of Indo-European speech development, give specific proofs of affinity between, Sanskrit, Greek, Latin, and English, explain and illustrate the statement that all the parts of speech are but the modifications of two, the noun and the verb” (PUC 1884-5, 1884, pp. 201-2)

The papers of Comparative Grammar were the only papers in the entire curriculum, apart from those on Translation, where native words like Hindustani, Sanskrit, Dravidian, and local names like Panini, a Sanskrit philologist, grammarian, of ancient India, were employed: “Show that in Hindustani “the genitive is treated as an adjective,” and that this is also true of other languages (PUC 1888-9, 1888, pp. 120-1). Similarly, in this period between 1882 to 1912, within this curricular space, there are lots of examples of cultural encounters and even cultural interdependence. In the paper of 1892, for instance, students were asked to: “Prove that the Sanskrit and the English language had a common origin”; In 1892, “State briefly the Grimm’s law in its main features, and illustrate it from English as compared with Sanskrit” (PUC 1892-1893, 1892, pp. cviii-ix). Similarly, in 1894, the following question follows a similar pattern: State the grounds for believing all the Indo-European languages to be derived from a primitive parent speech. (PUC 1894-95, 1894, p. cxxv). Though even here, out of a total of seven questions, only one accommodated this comparison with something local. The rest compared different aspects of European languages. In the paper of Comparative Grammar in 1907, a question about the native languages was: “State what is meant by the Dravidian group of languages; name the principal dialects, and give some account of the literature possessed by them. Characterise the structure of these languages and define their relation to Scythian group” (PUC 1907-08, 1907, p. cc). The development here, from Comparative Grammar to History of English language, also lends itself to the critique offered, namely, that any efforts of cultural

dialogue within the curriculum were systematically eradicated in favour of an exclusivist curriculum and this was used to create subjectivities that were pliant for colonial governance.

What seems to have propelled literary engagement of the exclusive variety which kept comparative literary studies at bay is the ‘English mind’ which had to be created out of native subjectivities, which could not only justify prolonged colonization but also do the bureaucratic bidding. The model that was chosen for the colonial university was thus London University because it offered an “impartial mode of testing” for Government service” (Dawson, 1927, p. 525), a fact amply highlighted and satirized by a prominent Urdu poet Akbar Allah Abadi (1846-1921):

How can a child be an image of his parents?

He has taken boxed milk and has acquired government’s education.²(Allahabadi, 2012)

The education that is given to us is mere market’s

The intellect that is taught is merely governmental(Allahabadi, 2012)

English literary studies seem to be at the forefront of this project of epistemological transformation to ensure, what Bruce called, “superior employment” of graduates (Bruce, 1933, p. 116). Professor Garrett mentioned in his history of Government College: “By 1873-74 the graduates of the College were beginning to distinguish themselves in the various Government departments. During the year one became an Extra Assistant

²Poetic extracts of Akbar Allah Abadi are taken from his Collected Poetry cited at the end. Translation mine.

Commissioner” (1964, pp. 17-8), by 1880 “distinguished students of the college were appointed to responsible Government posts” (40). Three members first selected for the Native Civil Service were also students of Government College, Lahore³ (40).

At the beginning of English literary inception in the institutional setting, we observe the afore-mentioned imperatives functioning. In the context of this, we can scrutinize respective curricula and reconstruct patterns of pedagogical engagement evident in the question papers of Poetry, Drama, Prose, Novel, and History of English Literature, a process which can help reveal the political dimensions of colonial pedagogy.

In the first curriculum of poetry, we see a list of English poets from Chaucer to Wordsworth. This arrangement in which English poets are featured in succession has endured minor adjustments in the discipline since then.

The scrutiny into the reasons for the endurance of this curricular structure for the paper on poetry takes us back to 1833, when Alexander Blair, after succeeding Thomas Dale⁴ at University College London proposed “the reading of our greater poets in succession from Chaucer to the present day” (Palmer, 1965, p. 25). This strong *national* dynamic that necessitated such early engagement with English literature in the context of England, where the nascent discipline was trying to make room for itself, was reinforced later by A. J. Scott, a professor of English Language and Literature at University College, London,

³Before the establishment of Punjab University and for the first few years of its establishment many colleges which were earlier affiliated with University of Calcutta continued to appear in examinations conducted by the first colonial University.

⁴He was the first professor of English literature at University College, London (Palmer, 1965, p. 21).

who in his inaugural lecture argued for “the ‘academical study’ of English literature because of the ‘lack of recognition in the public mind of the propriety of making the literature of England enter into the academic course’ and called for its ‘vast education power’ to be harnessed (Johnson, 2011, p. 87). In his lecture *On the Academical Study of a Vernacular Literature* (1848), A. J. Scott had also called for a focus on the ‘vernacular [English] literature’ because of the potential it offered of insights into the ‘national mind’; and to know about “the character and the circumstances of our own people” (Scott, 1848, p. 11). He also called for a more “historical approach to literature, as distinct from the rhetorical approach or facts about literary history” (Palmer, 1965, p. 26). He declared that “A poet of the first order is the voice of a great era”(Palmer, 1965, p. 4).

The chrono-logic of poetry curriculum, originally conceived at the London University to serve a national purpose, was later utilized in the colonial setting to assert imperial-historical narrative. Since nationalistic motives are always in need of a supportive history, this double helix of history and nationalism found its way into the institutionalization of English literature in colonial India. Together, they formed an imperialist narrative within the disciplinary identity of English literature. This literary-historico ‘knowledge’ about the English became a ‘power’ of sorts which was conferred upon the native students of English (Viswanathan, 1989, p. 168). The discipline of English thus fulfilled a need which was created by the colonial machinery, the need to be familiar with the English history—the need became the benchmark, the rites of passage, the discipline of English fulfilled the

responsibility of initiation. The arbitrary and circular logic of coloniality can be seen manifest here in the discipline and demanded a catechetical mode of pedagogy.

Hence the responses that are elicited from examinees in various papers of the MA programme, from 1884 to 1918, reveal an inevitable connection between English literature and English nationalism. In the very first paper of poetry in 1883, the first question asked examinees to evaluate a statement that was extracted from a book *The Origin and History of English Language* by George P. Marsh (PUC 1884-5, 1884, p. 186) and began with the statement “Chaucer may fairly be said to be not only the earliest dramatic genius of modern Europe...” (PUC 1884-85 186). While the statement echoes the nationalistic assertion of the country in the context of Europe, in the context of Punjab, it yields a colonial demand i.e. to return the “true” answer. Some other questions, in the first paper on poetry, asked candidates how *Paradise Lost* reflected the political struggle of Milton’s time (PUC 1884-5, 1884, p. 190); to offer an account of the legends of Arthur, explaining their origin and development. A similar pattern is followed throughout these years. For example, in 1892-93, some of the questions asked candidates to explain Chaucer as England’s first national poet, and as the forerunner of Shakespeare (PUC 1892-1893, 1892, pp. ciii-iv). Shelley’s exile from England and English society and its impact on his poetry became the subject of another question in 1894. (PUC 1894-95, 1894, p. cxx). Similarly, there is a question about the chief persons satirized in *Absalom and Achitophel*, and on “aptness of portraiture” in the text (PUC 1895-6, 1895, p. CXXI). In 1913, examinees were asked to explain the

allegorical meanings in *Faerie Queen*, about the grounds on which *Paradise Lost* is ranked as one of the greatest poems in English literature, and to comment on Tennyson as a truly representative poet of his age (PUC 1913-4, 1913, pp. ccxlii-iii).

This “field-coverage model” (Graff, 2008, p. viii), proved to be immensely helpful as it “cover[ed] a predefined period of field—the principle created a system in which the job of instruction could proceed as if on automatic pilot, without the need for instructors to debate aims and methods.” It also imposed a system of “assimilation” which allowed “entrenched thinking” to “assimilate new ideas, subjects, and methods” (Scholes, 1985, p. 33). It seems as if the objectives that were achieved through catechetical strategies employed in the question papers was averse to the discussion on the actual craft of literary texts and the historical method of engagement enabled the discipline to play a colonial role i.e. to strengthen the image of the colonizer in the mind of the colonized.

The factors highlighted above, namely, engagement with English nationalism and history also abound in the papers of Drama during this time. In the earlier exams conducted, examinees were asked to show how “the relation of *Richard III* to its sources illustrates Shakespeare’s relation to national history.” They were also asked to explain allusions to English history in various excerpts from Shakespeare’s historical plays (PUC 1894-95, 1894, p. 193). Later, examinees were asked to “Justify historically” the characters “Shakespeare has given to Richard III and to Julius Caesar” (PUC 1891-92, 1891, p. xcvi). In 1894-95, in a paper on Drama set by M. J. White, the first question that was asked

highlighted the same interface: “Compare the mode of treatment of an historical subject by the dramatist with that of the same subject by the historian” (PUC 1894-95, 1894, p. cxxi).

The responses that are elicited show Englishness as a major concern and the English context plays an important role in passing the exams. In 1918, for instance, a question went like this, “It has been said that the mind of Shakespeare contained within it the mind of Scott; it remains to be observed that it also contained the mind of Keats.” Candidates appearing for the exam had to “show the truth in the statement: “Shakespeare had a keen sense of national character” (PUC 1918-19, 1918, p. cccxxxii). Illustrate from *King Henry IV (parts I and II)* the characteristics of the Shakespearean “History” (PUC 1921-22, 1921, p. ccclxxxvi). In the absence of any comparative study, literary or historical, the exclusive focus on the cultural prowess of England must have had the potential to alter the cognitive frame of referencing and examinees must have made everything English a standard frame of reference.

English Literature and its Ideology

The very first year after Punjab University’s establishment in 1884, the paper of Prose was included as Paper III in the Six-Paper Framework adapted from the Calcutta University Model. It is in this curricular space, that English literature became most ostentatiously ideological. In it, one can discern a spectacular display of ideas that have emanated from the island nation. Their statesmen were celebrated in all papers and their thoughts and philosophies were ennobled and presented as something of enduring value. In the Prose paper of 1884, a question, steeped

in English history and politics, emblematic of nationalistic assertion, was presented in the following words: “In the general spirit and character of his administration, Cromwell was far superior to Napoleon.” Ideologically remarkable is the following question statement: “Explain the fascination of Macaulay’s style: and write after Macaulay an account of the political events that took place in Bengal in 1756-7” (PUC 1884-5, 1884, p. 196). Quite obviously, this referred to the first major victory of the East India Company in 1757, “when Siraj-ud-Daula of Bengal, through a combination of superior artillery and even more superior chicanery” (Tharoor, 2016, p. 5) was defeated and Bengal was taken over by the company. While literature resists being called an ideology, one can see the attempt to render invisible the native perspective of history which viewed this event as the start of colonial subjugation. Similar questions were asked, particularly in the Paper of Prose, which amounted to a clear effort at ideological indoctrination. With the fraught personage of Macaulay, whose opinion has long been debated in the history of South Asia, its past and present, occupying a centre-stage in the curriculum of prose, the question cannot be justified in any other way except as an effort meant to subjugate any other understanding of history which the native students would have had in their minds.

The question regarding the history of Bengal shared above can also be taken as a specimen of the kind of pedagogy which must have played its part in stifling critical opinion as the students had no option but to write in favour of how they were ‘fascinated by his style’ and not just that but also had to ‘write after him’ about a crucial historical event which led to the brute

colonization of their land. The irony of the following statement by Professor Bruce could be fully appreciated at this juncture. While concluding his history, he wrote:

once the student [of Punjab University] mastered the foreign language..., he had open to the whole body of systematic modern knowledge. Its influence on his plastic mind reproduced in him many of the mental attitude which have developed in Europe since Renaissance (1933, p. 178).

It also tells us how the institutionalization of English literature as a colonial project supported other knowledge projects, such as the history project. So English literature here stops being purely an aesthetic exercise, rather, very directly, becomes a tool of colonial subjugation. The student is forced into writing responses that support the statement of the question. Even when there is a direct focus on some aesthetical aspect, it too is steeped in English national tradition and the candidates, with hardly any first-hand knowledge of the culture, or the politics of that nation, is bound to reproduce what he has read in books or has heard from his teachers.

Embedded in such questions were the details not only about the imperial nation's political history but also its culture and humour. That is why, the degrees of BA and MA were considered emblematic of a mind trained for colonial service, thus when Leitner, through the Society for Diffusion of Useful Knowledge⁵, which was another name of

Anjuman-i-Punjab, wanted to award the same degrees to those who would only be acquainted with eastern forms of knowledge, the idea was fiercely resisted by the imperialist, Dyal Singh (Education in the Punjab II, IV, 2012, p. 14). This knowledge about English politics and history was thus the power that was conferred upon the select few who could then form the native workforce at the sub-colonial level. The exam-question, quoted above, can thus be stated as a specimen that would explain the kind of engagement that was required by a native student to clear the exam.

Another question asked the same year reveals another important aspect of the self-enclosed thought system that English literature imposed on the native subjects who engaged with it in an institutional setting. The question was: "What are the principal Moral lessons included in Carlyle's Lectures on Heroes? Do you think that writer himself practised what he preached? (PUC 1888-9, 1888, p. 118). A smokescreen is being created here. The interrogative, "Do you think" sounds very empowering, but in the absence of any critical apparatus, the subjects were supposed to simply reproduce what they had been taught in their lectures or what they had read in their books. This is the precise artificiality and "cram work" against which, in the words of Garrett, Leitner had launched a "crusade" (Garrett, 1964, p. 3) and wanted to establish a university where education was not so artificial as it was at Calcutta University.

Before 1918, the Novel was not taught as a separate genre but as part of the paper on Prose. Walter Scott's novel *Ivanhoe* (1819) was taught in this course. Scott's presence in the curriculum, particularly works like *Ivanhoe*

⁵A society by the same name was also setup in UK in 1830s by Lord Brougham and Charles Knight (Amigoni, 1993, 2002, p. 21)

could not be attributed to his popularity alone. Rather, it too can be understood as part of cultural self-representation. It is pertinent to mention here that Scott was considered the first man who “turned men’s minds in the direction of middle ages” according to John Henry Newman whose own writings were also part of the prose curriculum (1864, p. 185). The novel’s presence in the text becomes important as a national identifier since it is set in 12th century England, an obvious reference to England’s ancientness to instil ideas of its self-worth in the native minds. If we couple this fact with the anxiety that the colonialists felt while facing India’s ancientness or as James Mill’s said in his history of British India that

rude nations seem to derive a particular gratification from pretensions to a remote antiquity As a boastful and turgid vanity distinguishes remarkably the oriental nations they have in most instances carried their claims extravagantly high (187, p. 133).

Mill’s history appeared in 1817, while the novel was published in 1819. Collation of both these facts, i.e. Mill brushing aside India’s claim to ancientness and engagement with a text which is set, not in an ancient England, yet in a remote past can be seen in the deeper context of cultural and racial politics. A question in the paper of prose also accentuates the role of the “valiant warriors” in the novel (PUC 1888-9, 1888, p. 118), an oblique reference to England’s remote past. Balz Engler further explains the connection of texts like *Ivanhoe* with that of English identity. He

says that the English would understand themselves and their characteristic virtues as having descended from the Angles and the Saxons, virtues that were usually highlighted in stories about the struggle against the seemingly non-Germanic, French-speaking Normans. In literature such ideas were supported by historical romances, beginning with Scott’s *Ivanhoe* (Engler, 2000, p. 341).

Even though the three major subjects of Poetry, Drama, and Prose, all encompassed predominantly a historical approach, yet there was a separate paper devoted to History of English Language and Literature since the inception of the programme in 1882. Here again, the approach used predominantly was accessing history through historical personalities, men of letters. In the first exam, questions about language pertained to characteristics of the old English dialect before and after the Norman Conquest, the principle works written in each, which one developed into modern dialect, Norman-French element in English; while questions on English literature were about the following: the condition of English Literature at the beginning of the Sixteenth century, change that took place in English poetry from the age of Milton to Pope, an account of the Prose written during this period, writings of Grote, Stuart Mill, Thackeray, Dickens, George Eliot, and Tennyson (PUC 1884-5, 1884, pp. 202-204).

This paper on the History of English language and literature while adhering to the field-coverage model (Graff, 2008, p. viii), mentioned earlier, also accomplished something more. If it is juxtaposed with two major developments that were underway in England, its efficacy in the overall context of

the imperial curriculum could be further appreciated. These two developments are amply covered in two important works: David Amigoni's *Victorian Biography and the Ordering of Discourse* and Brian Doyle's *English and Englishness*. The first significant fact is that during the last quarter of the nineteenth century, the project of Englishness was in full swing in England. Major national institutions were being set up for the first time. Dictionary of National Biography was being written between 1885 to 1900, the National Portrait Gallery was established in 1896 (Doyle, 1989, pp. 22-3). Especially of interest is the Dictionary of National Biography, along with the *English Men of Letters Series*, which was also included in this paper's curriculum (PUC 1913-4, 1913, p. 313), and which Nicholson called a "biography for students" (Nicholson, 1927, pp. 129-31). Together, these formed, 'powerful tradition of biographical pedagogic initiatives' which was also rhetorical and ideological (Amigoni, 1993, 2002, p. 21). He then goes on to add that these initiatives were "ideological" in nature and "biographical writing" as having "ideological force" (Amigoni, 1993, 2002, p. 21). These biographies abound in this course and since "biography shapes its reader's relationship to certain views of spoken and written language in quite systematic ways" (Amigoni, 1993, 2002, p. 22), the curriculum found a conducive curricular framework in which it ensconced itself. Thus in 1888, we find that students had to write brief accounts of any of the six authors out of a list of fourteen. Similarly, they were asked to write biographical or critical accounts of Carlyle, Macaulay, Dryden, and Byron (PUC 1888-9, 1888, pp. 119-20). Along with these short biographies which

students had to write, other questions pertained to the texts that were studied in other subjects. So by 1894, the engagement patterns revolved around the following issues: acquaintance with authors, rise of allegorical literature, prose, and verse, in England, the value of translations at the various phases of a nation's literature, the influence of European politics on the writings of Milton, Addison, Swift, Burke, Byron, and Wordsworth (PUC 1894-95, 1894, p. cxxvii). The most prominent feature of the course remains biographies of prominent men of England. By 1902, we observe that the focus remains on English authors, their works, and the emergence of various genres of literature. In this year, the authors who had to be written upon, among others were Erasmus Darwin, John Henry Newman, Edward Fitzgerald, and William Blake. Questions were also asked about the relation between English and French poetry, biographical and critical accounts on authors John Ruskin, Jeremy Taylor, Smollett, Robert Burton, English Ballad's history had to be traced (PUC 1902-03, 1902, pp. ccxvi-vii).

Conclusion

Thus, the history of engagement with English literary texts through the first four decadestells us the story of imperial instrumentalism. As shown in this paper, the curriculum and pedagogical strategies as revealed via the questions asked were loaded with ideological content whose chief aim was to ensure the indoctrination of native minds so that they were prepared and trained for government/colonial jobs. They could not have functioned well in a colonial setup that ran on demeaning the natives and creating a huge chasm between the ruler and the ruled. These,

as we have seen, were first enacted in an institutional setting.

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