THE BIOPOLITICS OF LIBERAL COLONIALISM IN INDIA

A Thesis Submitted to the College of

Graduate Studies and Research

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements

For the Degree of Master of Arts

In the Department of History

University of Saskatchewan

Saskatoon

By

MATTHEW GRAVLIN

Copyright Matthew Gravlin, December, 2014, All Rights Reserved

Permission to Use

In presenting this thesis/dissertation in partial fulfillment of the requirements for a Postgraduate degree from the University of Saskatchewan, I agree that the Libraries of this University may make it freely available for inspection. I further agree that permission for copying of this thesis/dissertation in any manner, in whole or in part, for scholarly purposes may be granted by the professor or professors who supervised my thesis/dissertation work or, in their absence, by the Head of the Department or the Dean of the College in which my thesis work was done. It is understood that any copying or publication or use of this thesis/dissertation or parts thereof for financial gain shall not be allowed without my written permission. It is also understood that due recognition shall be given to me and to the University of Saskatchewan in any scholarly use which may be made of any material in my thesis/dissertation.

Requests for permission to copy or to make other uses of materials in this thesis/dissertation in whole or part should be addressed to:

Head of the Department of History
University of Saskatchewan
Saskatoon, Saskatchewan S7N 5A5
Canada

OR

Dean
College of Graduate Studies and Research
University of Saskatchewan
107 Administration Place
Saskatoon, Saskatchewan S7N 5A2
Canada

Abstract

The history of colonialism is generally associated with the authoritarian regimes of the sixteenth century that expanded their reign for the purpose of material aggrandizement. Problems arise, however, when colonial regimes espouse explicit concern for the welfare of the subject population. Through a reading of British colonial discourse on India, as represented by the *Economist* newspaper, John Stuart Mill, George Campbell, and John William Kaye, I argue that market capitalism was seen as the means by which 'backward' Indian subjects would be 'improved.' But this 'civilizing mission' exposed Indian society to unprecedented violence as the British sought to enforce its conformity to a system of proprietorship and commercial production. To explain the paradox inherent to liberal colonialism I will employ the concept of biopolitics as developed by Michel Foucault. Biopolitics explains how the prioritization of 'life' leads, not to peaceful existence, but to efforts to eliminate elements of human activity deemed inimical to the reproduction of the species. In colonial India this took the form of adjudicating subjects' ability to adapt to, and create, the circumstances for industry to flourish, showing that at its core, British rule in India represented an assault on the indeterminacy of life itself.

Preface and Acknowledgements

I would like to preface this thesis stating my gratitude to my supervisor, Dr. Jim Handy, and the Department of History at the University of Saskatchewan for giving me the opportunity to pursue this degree. I am also thankful for the financial support I received from the Social Science and Humanities Research Council of Canada. I have learned a lot during my time in this program, I must therefore also acknowledge the insight I received from other professors, faculty, and colleagues. And of course, this would not be possible without the support of my family and friends.

What drove my interest in this topic is a contemporary phenomenon. Namely, the continual authorization of mass violence by states most committed to liberty and peace, and the ease with which support for these campaigns is mobilized. The criminal acts of the West in the so-called War on Terror became a great concern to me. I wanted to know why, in a world that is increasingly defined by international cooperation, is there a simultaneous rise in military aggression, and why is this violence performed with such proficiency? To answer this question in an academic setting was to help me fulfill my own engagement with radical politics and identification with social justice movements.

While reading literature on this topic during my undergraduate degree in international studies, I was exposed to the thought of Michel Foucault, and developed a particularly strong interest in the concept of biopolitics, meaning 'life' as the referent object of political power. I became partial to the explanation that this problem exists precisely because 'life' has been prioritized; that the proliferation of violence, in other words, is linked to efforts to secure the biological existence of humanity and ensure its reproduction.

I realized that this phenomenon is shaped by a fundamental paradox that exists in liberalism. My awareness of Foucault's thought also coincided with an interest in postcolonial theory and the history of colonialism generally speaking. Beginning this thesis, my goal was to ask, and answer the questions of why liberalism, or political regimes that were influenced by liberal ideas, employ violence in the form of colonial intervention, and how did the colonial experience shape liberal technologies of government?

British colonialism in India has thus served as a case study with which to examine the history of this phenomenon in the nineteenth century. The subject of my thesis is therefore thematic, as opposed to geographically focused on India. Nor is my thesis informed by the tradition of national histories. It is less about the British Empire than the liberal ideas that it represented and put into practice. The British Empire, in this sense, existed as a conduit for the expansion of liberalism. The ideas and practices I discuss were not fundamentally British, nor attached to any form of nationality. And although I use evidence that provides a British perspective on this colonial experience, my goal was not to address their shortcomings or failures. I was not interested in, for example, explanations of the Indian mutiny-rebellion that explore what the British could have done to prevent it. I believe this only serves to rationalize colonial rule and reinforce ethnocentric attitudes. As such, I avoided any systematic analysis of the inner-workings of the East India Company, or Government of India, but rather considered their effects on Indian society.

Colonial India proved to be an excellent case study to work with, especially considering Professor Handy's knowledge of the history of colonialism, peasants,

capitalism and modernity, not to mention his understanding of the theory I use. My thesis is indeed theoretically informed and somewhat 'outside the box' in the sense that I pushed the boundaries of the discipline.

It has three main arguments. The first is that colonialism in India, from the East India Company's conquest of Bengal forward, was biopolitical. Meaning, it was concerned primarily with the welfare of colonial subjects, inasmuch as their improvement was essential to the security of the human species. The second is that the commercial dynamics of liberal political economy – or a capitalist order based on modes of private property, marketized production and the circulation of commodities, were thought to promote the life of Indian subjects. The third is that this intervention and attempt to reorganize Indian society was driven by liberalism's desire to secure peaceful existence.

These arguments correspond to the three main chapters in my thesis, each with their own sub-arguments. In chapter 1 I discuss the origins of liberal society in the late eighteenth century. I believe there were numerous specific conflicts in early modern Europe that stimulated a desire for peace, but I refer to the anti-imperialism of Scottish Enlightenment figure and classical political economist Adam Smith, arguing that imperialism took on the same connotation as war. Conversely, imperialism became an expression of liberalism's militarized origins. Liberty, on the other hand, could be achieved through the correct economic organization of society. By the nineteenth century, though, this vision was inverted such that societies that did not exhibit the formula for peace were targeted for intervention – hence the justification to act against the 'threat' of 'oriental despotism.'

In chapter 2 I show how the construction of liberal political economy was perceived by nineteenth century liberals to improve the life of Indian subjects. According to the *Economist* newspaper, John Stuart Mill, and John William Kaye, it was the material prosperity resulting from this capitalist order that allowed Indian society to reproduce liberal, or 'civilized' forms of life. Political economy thus acted as a form of governance for the East India Company. By apparently increasing their ability to consume, making them productive, and encouraging them to act according to their self-interest, as opposed to "feudal" obligations, Indian subjects, it was thought, could effectively govern themselves during the era of what is now termed 'indirect rule.'

Chapter 3 discusses the opposition to liberal political economy as represented by the Indian mutiny-rebellion. This revolt led to an ethnological movement that sought to contain anti-colonial resistance through an increased knowledge of Indian races. While it may appear that this knowledge of race was independent of any economic factors, it was in fact a pseudo-science that invented categories of human capabilities, and linked race to the ability to perform labour. This is evident in the *Economist* and the work of George Campbell, which show how race became a means of codifying the population, and separating who was fit for inclusion in the liberal order, and who should be excluded by with justice or death, thereby demonstrating the biopolitics of liberal colonialism.

Ideologically speaking, my position is that colonialism was inherently violent, and in to case benevolent. In India, it was not only violent because of the atrocities committed during the 1857 rebellion and subsequent counter insurgency, but also the systemic violence of dispossession and exposure to the international market, and, importantly, the targeting of Indian society as a threat to liberal universalism.

To make these arguments I used evidence from the colonial discourse of the British liberals mentioned above. The primary sources I used were published works that were all available at the University of Saskatchewan. I should mention that my research process was significantly aided by the work Professor Handy and PhD student Carla Fehr did going through the *Economist*, finding everything that was written about India.
The result, I believe, is a blend of intellectual and socio-political history. Meaning, my evidence comes from the history of ideas found in published works, but only makes sense against the backdrop of the historical changes that occurred in India. To see how I have done this requires an acceptance of theory as a methodology. None of these sources, for example, state explicitly that colonialism in India was biopolitical. Biopolitics is instead the descriptive tool used in my interpretation of what British rule in India was.

This thesis is only a small reflection of what I have learned in my research and what I would like to say about this topic. I realize that is the reality of a Master's thesis. I know I should hesitate to make any claims that go beyond the context of British rule in India during the time frame I studied. With that said, I think there are larger implications that are worth noting, and that could possibly lead to future research. For example, reflecting one of my concluding points, I believe that the liberal colonial experience led to the development of technologies of government to the point that today's liberalism is a product of it. Meaning that liberalism cannot exist independently from its colonial encounters because it was fundamentally shaped by it.

History is and will always be important. My greatest sense of accomplishment after writing this thesis comes from what studying the past has taught me about the present.

Table of Contents

Permission to Use i

Abstract ii

Preface and Acknowledgments iii

Table of Contents viii

INTRODUCTION: COLONIALISM AND LIBERAL MODERNITY 1

1. THE 'MORAL SENTIMENTS': LIBERAL PEACE, BIOPOLITICS, AND THE THREAT OF 'ORIENTAL DESPOTISM' 19

2. THE CONSTRUCTION OF LIBERAL POLITICAL ECONOMY: ACCUMULATION BY DISPOSSESSION AND THE 'PROCESS OF BECOMING CITIZENS' 39

3. THE MUTINY-REBELLION OF 1857: KNOWLEDGE, RACE, AND THE "NECROPOLITICAL AUDIT" OF 'LIFE' 62

CONCLUSION: THE CIVILIZATION OF SPECIES-BEING 83

References 95

INTRODUCTION: COLONIALISM AND LIBERAL MODERNITY

The history of colonialism is commonly associated with the authoritarian regimes of the sixteenth century that expanded their reign in foreign territories for the purpose of resource extraction and religious crusade. These imperial powers often exploited the labour of indigenous populations or actively engaged in their extermination.[1] Problems arise, however, when colonial regimes espouse explicit concern for the welfare of the subject population. How should colonialism be understood, in other words, when its motivations derive from ideas of individual freedom, equality, and democracy – the principles that supposedly give rise, that is, to the pacific aims of liberalism? This thesis responds to this question through an examination of the colonial discourse of British liberals, as expressed by the *Economist* newspaper, John Stuart Mill, George Campbell, and John William Kaye. These thinkers sought to distinguish colonial policy and practice in India – from the establishment of the East India Company's (EIC) Permanent Settlement of Bengal in 1793, to the aftermath of the Indian mutiny-rebellion of 1857 – by its mandate to 'improve' the life of the subject population. During this period, Britain was moving toward a quasi-democratic society based on liberal institutions.[2] The intellectual arguments that influenced this moderate reform were also used to justify the subjugation of colonized populations through military occupation.[3] A central component of Britain's 'civilizing mission' in India was to advance the supposed backwardness of peasant existence by integrating their labour into a system of private property, commodity production, and wage labour.

[1] Robert J.C. Young, *Postcolonialism: An Historical Introduction*, (Malden: Blackwell Publishing, 2001), 20, 21.
[2] Ibid., 34.
[3] Ibid.

The rise of this decidedly liberal colonialism paralleled a shift in the British Empire when slavery was replaced with new forms of labour management. In the postemancipation era, market incentives were required as a means to maintain the labour that fuelled Britain's industrialization.[4] This period subsequently provoked a new imperial vision among liberal political economists, ethnologists, and philosophers. According to this vision, Europe represented the pinnacle of a universal history – a vantage point thought to grant Europeans the knowledge and moral authority to impose progress on 'backward' societies, using coercion and violence when deemed necessary.[5] While establishing the basis for civil society in Europe, these 'moral sentiments' simultaneously found expression in nineteenth century imperialism and the despoliation of non-Western peoples. But unlike earlier examples of colonialism, the consolidation of EIC rule in the nineteenth century was understood as a humanitarian duty.[6]

Contrary to narratives that understand liberal colonialism as an aberration in an otherwise benevolent, if not ideal, form of social, economic, and political organization, I argue that colonialism was in fact essential to the historical development of liberalism. By this I mean that, while liberalism claimed to free society from the political oppression and economic restrictions of autocratic rule, it depended on the violent reordering of peasant-based societies, whose very existence was viewed as an impediment to the universality on which liberalism seeks legitimacy. The imperative to emancipate

---

[4] Theodore Koditschek, "Capitalism, Race and Evolution in Imperial Britain", in Theodore Koditschek, Sundiata Keita Cha-Jua, and Helen A. Neville (eds), *Race Struggles*, (Illinois: University of Illinois Press, 2009) 50, 60, 61.
[5] Jennifer Pitts, *A Turn to Empire: The Rise of Imperial Liberalism in Britain and France*, (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2005), 21.
[6] Mark Duffield and Vernon Hewitt, "Introduction", in Duffield and Hewitt (eds.), *Empire Development and Colonialism: The Past in the Present*, (Woodbridge: James Curry, 2009), 9, Young, 19, 20.

humanity has thus paradoxically encouraged violent intervention into 'uncivilized' societies in order to enforce their conformity to the 'virtues' of liberal political economy.

Recent scholarship in political science supports this view. Theorist Julian Reid, for example, argues that if liberalism is understood as a project "dedicated to the projection of peace through the dissemination of principles of individual liberty, democracy, and market capitalism," then what is striking is not only liberalism's failure to achieve this end, but also the unprecedented means that liberal regimes now have to destroy life technologically.[7] But this problem is by no means unique to the twenty-first century. It is a recurring theme throughout the history of liberalism, and has been raised by numerous scholars. Theodore Koditschek's *Liberalism, Imperialism, and the Historical Imagination*, and Jennifer Pitts's *A Turn To Empire,* for example, document the authorization of violence throughout liberalism's protracted history, and question its ability to emancipate humanity due to its endorsement of imperialism, slavery, and war.[8] As Pitts states, "if liberalism can be said to rest on a commitment to human dignity and equality, the support for empire among nineteenth century liberals poses a theoretical problem that requires explanation."[9] This is certainly true. However, although the main arguments in these works identify the contradictory aspects of liberal thought and practice, they fail to adequately account for why such discontinuity exists. In their view, liberalism is discredited as hypocritical – having not yet realized its ideals of freedom and

---

[7] Julian Reid, "War, Liberalism, and Modernity: The Biopolitical Provocations of 'Empire'", in *Cambridge Review of International Affairs*, (Vol. 17, No. 1, April 2004, pg. 63-78), 65.
[8] Theodore Koditschek, *Liberalism, Imperialism and the Historical Imagination: Nineteenth-Century Visions of a Greater Britain*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), and Jennifer Pitts, *A Turn to Empire: The Rise of Imperial Liberalism in Britain and France*, (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2005).
[9] Pitts, *A Turn To Empire*, 4.

equality, due to the unfortunately violent means through which it has sought to achieve them. The problem with this argument is that it treats the liberal commitment to peace as a "rhetorical device" that disguises ulterior, materially driven agendas.[10] This ultimately reinforces the widely held belief that liberalism can serve the best interests of humanity if its engagement with violence is reduced to a minimum.

Uday Singh Mehta's groundbreaking work *Liberalism and Empire*, on the other hand, rejects the question of there being a gap between liberal thought and practice, and instead suggests that the "inclusionary pretentions" of liberalism correlate directly to the "exclusionary effects" of its practices.[11] "More specifically," states Singh Mehta,

> one must consider whether the exclusionary thrust of liberal history stems from the misapprehension of the generative basis of liberal universalism or whether, in contrast, liberal history projects with greater focus and onto a larger canvas the theoretically veiled and qualified truth of liberal universalism.[12]

Singh Mehta's analysis provides a more critical perspective. It remains necessary, though, to trace the development of liberal regimes back, as Reid suggests

> to the origins of their emergence in the 18th century and the development of the techniques with which they first set out to posit a solution to the problem of war through the pacification of life and the imposition of liberal accounts of humanity within their own and other societies.[13]

This paradox, in other words, does not simply exist on the surface of liberalism, but lies at the heart of liberal modernity.[14] Modernity is a complex topic that refers to a diverse set of political, economic, and cultural circumstances. Its liberal component,

---

[10] Julian Reid, *The Biopolitics of the War on Terror: Life Struggles, Liberal Modernity, and the Defence of Logistical Societies*, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2006), 5.
[11] Uday Singh Mehta, *Liberalism and Empire: A Study in Nineteenth Century British Liberal Thought*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999), 46.
[12] Ibid.
[13] Reid, *The Biopolitics of the War on Terror*, 6.
[14] Ibid.

though, can be identified as the moment when, plagued by ongoing conflict, European regimes sought to remove life from the conditions of war.[15] Although this juncture is difficult to locate, historian Michael Howard suggests that the growth of the "liberal conscience" occurred from 1500 to 1792. Specifically, Howard states, "it is from the end of the Napoleonic Wars that one can date the beginning of what was to become known as 'the Peace Movement'; that is, the political organization of middle-class liberals on a transnational basis to secure…the abolition of war.[16] It was in 1795, furthermore, when German philosopher Immanuel Kant famously claimed that a new liberal era would fulfill the universal human destiny toward "perpetual peace."[17] This project was indeed embraced in a variety of dynamic ways across time and space. In Britain, it was manifested as a philosophy, a partisan movement, and a set of policies.[18] From approximately 1830 to 1850, liberal ideas began to dominate politics in Britain. This was best represented in 1846 when the Corn Laws were repealed by the Conservative government of Robert Peel, who also legislated several other reforms said to push Britain in the direction of a stable, prosperous democracy.[19] As Hannah Arendt notes, "citizens

---

[15] Ibid., F.H. Hinsley, *Power and the Pursuit of Peace: Theory and Practice in the History of Relations Between States*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1963), 1.
[16] Michael Howard, *War and the Liberal Conscience*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1981), 13, 36.
[17] Immanuel Kant, "Toward Perpetual Peace: A Philosophical Sketch", in Pauline Kleingeld (ed.) and David L. Colclasure (trans.), *Toward Perpetual Peace and Other Writings on Politics, Peace, and History*, (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2006), 67.
[18] W.C. Lubenow, "Mediating 'the Chaos of Incident' and 'the Cosmos of Sentiment': Liberalism in Britain, 1815-1914," in *The Journal of British Studies*, (Vol. 10, No. 3, 2008, 492-504), 493.
[19] Roy Jenkins, *The British Liberal Tradition: From Gladstone to Young Churchill, Asquith, and Lloyd George – Is Blair Their Heir?*, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2001), 16-17.

with opinions about, and interests in the handling of public affairs" constituted the organizational means for liberalism in countries such as Britain.[20]

However, for the purpose of this thesis, the emergence of Britain as a liberal regime is better understood as a 'process,' rather than an isolated event, that was inseparable from the experience of its "imperial century."[21] The intellectual arguments for colonial rule by those nineteenth century liberals who shared an aspiration for peace show that the advent of liberal modernity multiplied the reasons to use force by expanding the criteria that defined the non-liberal 'other.' The violent tendencies of liberal regimes, this sense, do not deviate from their stated ideals, but are instead productive of the conditions called for to advance the supposedly degenerate forms human life that exist outside the orbit of 'civilization,' and render them compatible with the demand to live peacefully. The process of creating of liberal subjects, then, whether via the contemporary War on Terror, or the violence wrought by the British Empire in the nineteenth century, amounts to a struggle to dictate the political constitution of life itself. Thus, although the British conquest and rule of India cannot be isolated from the entire history of colonialism that was destructive every moment of the day for hundreds of years, it can be said to have exhibited a peculiar form of violence informed by the liberal conceptualization of what it means to be human.

I seek to show how colonialism was formative to the liberal project by employing the concept of biopolitics as developed by Michel Foucault. In *The History of Sexuality Vol. 1*. Foucault explains that biopolitics emerged in eighteenth century Europe when the

---

[20] Totalitarian regimes, in contrast, command and rely on mass support, Hanna Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, (New York: Harcourt Inc., 1968), 306-307, 308.

[21] Timothy Parsons, *The British Imperial Century, 1815-1914*, (New York: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 1999), 1.

sovereign right to deprive a populace or dispose of it outright was replaced by "a power bent on generating forces, making them grow, and ordering them, rather than one dedicated to impeding them, making them submit, or destroying them."[22] But the emergence of a form of power that attempts to exert control over life does not lead to peace, but to the intensification of violence that targets life's aleatory – or random – features.[23] As he states with reference to the mass barbarism of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries:

> Wars are no longer waged in the name of a sovereign who must be defended; they are waged on behalf of the existence of everyone; entire populations are mobilized for the purpose of wholesale slaughter in the name of life necessity: massacres have become vital. It is as managers of life and survival, of bodies and the race, that so many regimes have been able to wage so many wars.[24]

Foucault elaborates on biopolitics in a series of lectures titled *Security, Territory, Population*. In these lectures, Foucault explains that as the natural phenomena that constitute populations, such as birth and death rates, health status, and life span, gradually became the referent object of knowledge and power, liberal regimes historically devised technologies of security to protect human life and oversee its development.[25] "For the first time in history," wrote Foucault, "biological existence was reflected in political existence."[26]

In contrast to the government of individual subjects, whose obedience to the law could be enforced through disciplinary tactics, population, understood as a social body,

---

[22] Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality, Volume 1: An Introduction*, Robert Hurley (trans), (New York: Random House, 1978), 136.
[23] Michel Foucault, *Security, Territory, Population: Lectures at the Collège de France 1977-1978*, Michel Senellart (ed), Graham Burchell (trans), (Hampshire and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 137.
[24] Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*, 136.
[25] Ibid.

[26] Ibid., 142.

had to be normalized in order to prevent and compensate for the risks and dangers inherent to the survival of biological life.[27] The government of population, in other words, seeks to produce unfettered subjects suited to furthering the productive capacities of the human species. In order to optimize human life, biopolitical regimes constantly adjudicate, and if necessary, apply lethal force to forms of life that are perceived as unfit to the enhancement of human capabilities. Biopolitics, then, while concerned with the promotion of life, is simultaneously a politics of death.[28]

In another lecture series titled *Society Must Be Defended*, Foucault states that "racism first develops with colonization, or in other words, with colonizing genocide."[29] This is important because, as Stephen Morton notes, "it raises a question about the extent to which Foucault's model of biopolitical power can account for the political foundation of the European colony."[30] Although this passage of his work is often overlooked, as Foucault himself did not develop a systematic analysis of imperialism, the link between biopolitics and colonialism has been developed in other important works.[31] In *Race and the Education of Desire: Foucault's History of Sexuality and the Colonial Order of Things*, Ann Laura Stoler problematizes Foucault's 'genealogy' of racism in relation to the history of colonialism. Stoler is sympathetic to Foucault's argument in the *History of*

---

[27] Thomas Lemke, *Biopolitics: An Advanced Introduction*, (New York: New York University Press, 2011) 36, 37.
[28] Michel Foucault, *"Society Must Be Defended": Lectures at the Collège de France 1975-1976*, Mauro Bertani and Alessandro Fontana (eds), David Macy (trans), (New York: Picador, 2003).

[29] Ibid., 257.
[30] Stephen Morton, "Torture, Terrorism and Colonial Sovereignty", in Stephen Morton and Stephen Bygrave, eds. *Foucault in an Age of Terror: Essays on Biopolitics and the Defence of Society*, (Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), 183.
[31] Thomas Lemke, *Biopolitics: An Advanced Introduction*.

Sexuality that "the affirmation of the bourgeois self was secured through specific technologies centered on sexuality."[32] She extends his analysis by saying that the discursive incitement to speak about sexuality that produced the self-regulating norms of modern society were not limited to Europe, but existed in imperial relations between the European, bourgeois 'Self,' and the sexualized 'Other.'[33] According to Stoler, it is possible to see that race, as well as sexuality, played a normalizing role that is particularly evident in imperial projects with the deployment of a racialized discourse of "internal enemies" that threaten biopoliticized life.[34]

In his essay "Necropolitics," Achille Mbembe argues that the function of biopolitics to determine who can live and who must die is the ultimate expression of political sovereignty. Mbembe extends Foucault's analysis by relating biopolitics to the 'state of exception,' or the continuous appeal to emergency and "fictionalized notion of the enemy."[35] The state of exception stands outside the rule of law, and uses the biopolitical logic of racism to regulate the distribution of death. According to Mbembe, "race has been the ever-present shadow in Western political thought and practice, especially when it comes to imagining the inhumanity of, or rule over, foreign peoples."[36] While Foucault stated that biopolitics reached its most violent expression in the state racism of Nazi Germany, Mbembe points out that such violence was also inherent to

---

[32] Ann Laura Stoler, *Race and the Education of Desire: Foucault's History of Sexuality and the Colonial Order of Things*, (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1995), 92.
[33] Ibid., 3, 91, 92.
[34] Ibid., 92, 93.
[35] Achille Mbembe, "Necropolitics", in Stephen Morton and Stephen Bygrave (eds), *Foucault in an Age of Terror: Essays on Biopolitics and the Defence of Society*, (Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), 156.
[36] Ibid., 157.

European imperialism. Mbembe notes that there is no legal basis for colonial warfare – it is not subject to any institutional rules. The only 'rule' involved is the notion that the life of the species depends on the correction, exclusion, or death of the 'inferior' racialized 'Other.'[37]

Indeed, as Paul Gilroy notes, "a fuller appreciation of specifically colonial input into modern statecraft promises an altogether different sense of where biopolitical procedures and anthropological hierarchies might fit into an amended history of modernity."[38] Although contemporary political scientists invoke history as a necessary means to understand the paradox of liberal modernity, claiming that it was in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries that "liberal regimes first discovered the means by which to seize and manipulate the life of their societies in hitherto unprecedented ways," their work is only cursorily historical.[39] This paradox therefore demands a precise historical investigation that examines the link between violence and distinctively liberal accounts of humanity. This is necessary to understand how liberalism – the most hegemonic system of our time – was shaped alongside the expansion of its frontier.

I aim to demonstrate the validity of Foucault's theory of modernity by looking at how liberal thinkers conceptualized and legitimated colonial rule. In doing so, it becomes evident that British rule in India was essentially a biopolitical project in which the promotion of life could not be separated from the construction of liberal political economy. The subjugation of Indian society to the commercial dynamics of capitalism was seen as a means to increase the innovative capacities of human life in a world

---

[37] Ibid., 163.
[38] Paul Gilroy, *After Empire: Melancholia or convivial culture*, (Abingdon: Routledge, 2004), 48.
[39] Reid, *Biopolitics of War on Terror*, x, 6.

defined by expanding industry. When Indian society resisted conformity to liberal political economy, it was met with exclusion, or in the case of the vengeful repression of the mutiny-rebellion of 1857, mass destruction. The case of India is by no means unique within the history of European imperialism, and several other equally atrocious examples of colonial violence can be drawn from its diverse history.[40] It was, however, the 'jewel in the crown' of the British Empire, and therefore serves as an appealing site for this study. More importantly, the application of such theory helps to explain how colonial violence in India operated in tandem with the apparent concern for human life, and the economic conditions supposedly needed to insure its proliferation – a historical problem for which existing literature has failed to account for adequately. That is not to say that there does not exist very important works in the historiography of colonial India. Ranajit Guha, Edward Said, Bernard Cohn, and Nicholas Dirks all wrote within a context dominated by questions concerning land, race, and knowledge, and thus provide an ideal basis for the reading of this colonial discourse.

Guha's *A Rule of Property for Bengal: An Essay on the Idea of Permanent Settlement* examines the EIC's goal to impose Western political economy on Indian peasants in order to foster capitalist agriculture.[41] Guha focuses on the role of private property – as derived from classical political economists during the eighteenth century – and how it served as a means to organize and govern Indian society.[42] Guha's work was one of the first to address the experience of colonization from the Indian perspective. While acknowledging the role of the British and their colonization of India, Guha

---

[40] Paul Gilroy, *After Empire*, 50.
[41] Ranajit Guha, *A Rule of Property for Bengal: An Essay on the Idea of Permanent Settlement*, (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1996).
[42] Ibid., 8.

challenges Western conceptions of modernity by showing that the principles of liberal political economy are not 'universal.' The imposition of Western economic practices on colonial subjects harmed a society that already had its own history and forms of social organization.[43] Guha's work is essential, not only for demonstrating the processes of exploitation inherent to British imperialism for the expansion of capitalism in India, but also for acknowledging the history, culture, and knowledge of 'subaltern' groups. While Guha is informed by the Marxist tradition, his work is also an essential text in postcolonialism, a field for which Said's *Orientalism* is a founding work.

In *Orientalism* Said discusses the cultural construction of difference between the European 'Self' and the non-European 'Other.' Said argues that the 'Orient' was a European invention that Europeans used to define themselves as 'civilized.'[44] According to Said, colonial power did not simply operate through military and political domination, but also through the production of knowledge about the colonized 'Other.' Colonized populations – their racial differences, cultural expressions, forms of social and political organization, and interaction with the space they inhabit – became the object of a colonial knowledge, which in turn reproduced perceived notions of difference and 'inferiority' that served to rationalize colonial subjugation. This perspective highlights the close relationship between knowledge and power that Foucault stressed, and the process through which power creates 'truth' in order to legitimate itself. As Said notes, the 'true' knowledge of the colonized as 'uncivilized' and 'traditional' justified the colonial project because it was created through modern 'scientific' rationality.[45] This led to the belief that

---

[43] Ibid.
[44] Edward Said, *Orientalism*, (New York: Vintage Books, 1979).
[45] Ibid., 10.

colonization was not political. It did not, in other words, benefit Europeans at the expense of the 'Other,' but instead became Europeans' moral obligation for the sake of colonized peoples' 'improvement.'[46]

Dirks's *Castes of Mind* and Cohn's *Colonialism and its Forms of Knowledge* make similar arguments about how colonialism depended on and produced new forms of knowledge. Cohn, for example, argues that the British maintained dominance in India through the dissemination of what were perceived to be facts about India's past – its ancient cultures and political developments. This informed a teleological view of Indian history that culminated with the arrival of modernity.[47] Cohn also explains how anthropological evidence of Indian society was generated through mechanisms such as the census.[48] The Indian census, conducted in the late nineteenth century, reinforced social categories that the British assumed represented basic sociological facts. This deepened their justification for divisive colonial rule.[49] Cohn's work also highlights how India served as an experimental space for the creation and testing of governmental strategies.[50] This is important because it reveals how colonialism consolidated the power of the modern nation-state.

Building on these works I will analyze the writings of James Wilson – the founder and long-term editor the *Economist* newspaper from 1843-1860, which was the prototypical liberal publication on nineteenth-century political economy. Wilson became a member of the British House of Commons in 1847, and acquired his first ministerial job

---

[46] Ibid.
[47] Bernard Cohn, *Colonialism and its Forms of Knowledge: The British in India*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996).
[48] Cohn, 8.
[49] Ibid.
[50] Ibid.

in 1848 at the India Board of Control.[51] The writings of Wilson provide insight into how a certain sector of British capitalists thought about India, and their moral justification for its colonization. In this respect, the work of political economist and philosopher John Stuart Mill is also of crucial importance. Mill, whose father James wrote the famous *History of British India*, like his father, held office in the India Board of Control from 1823 to 1858 and wrote about Indian society and British colonial rule. His social and political writings on colonial rule provide further insight into how the British perceived India, and emphasized the need for 'progress' through the installment of liberal capitalism.[52] Mill's successor as secretary of the political and secret department of the India Office, John William Kaye, also wrote extensively on British rule in India. His books *The Administration of the East India Company: A History of Indian Progress*, and *History of the Indian Mutiny of 1857-8* are essential works in this colonial discourse. Additionally, the work of Sir George Campbell – the Lieutenant Governor of Bengal from 1871 to 1874 – provides crucial insight into how the British perceived and constructed racial difference in India during the aftermath of the mutiny-rebellion.

It has been sufficiently documented that British political and economic thought was an important factor that shaped the mental attitudes of colonial policy makers in nineteenth century India – especially so considering the cultural significance and impact of the *Economist*.[53] In fact, many administrators in India had knowledge of classical political economy, most importantly the arguments of Adam Smith, J.S. Mill, and

---

[51] Ruth Dudley Edwards, *The Pursuit of Reason: The Economist 1843-1993,* (Harvard: Harvard Business Review Press, 1995), 207.
[52] John Stuart Mill, *Writings on India*, John M. Robson, Martin Moir and Zawahir Moir (eds), (Toronto: University of Toronto Press), 1990.
[53] Jim Handy and Carla Fehr, "'The Free Exercise of Self-Love': Capitalism and the *Economist* on Ireland," in *Studies in Political Economy* (No. 94, 2014, 85-110), 92.

Thomas Robert Malthus. The court of directors even went as far as to incorporate a study of these 'immutable laws of society and economy' into the training of officials who were to rule in India, and to likewise arm ordinary civil servants with such knowledge.[54] However, my intention is not to elaborate on how British intellectual thought influenced colonial policies in India. Regardless of the value that political economy had in the formulation of policies, my aim is to show how the works of these liberal writers justified attempts to reorganize Indian society. Although they address the role of the British, the peasantry, race, labour, and the expansion of capital in their own way, they all share an apparent commitment to human dignity, freedom, the rule of law, and representative government.[55] Their writings converge, ultimately, to reveal the tension between violence and progress that was inherent to colonial rule in India. By subjecting this discourse to a biopolitical critique, it becomes evident that, although Indian administrators indeed accepted the ideologies of political economists, the rule of liberal political economy in India was bound up with the emerging category of 'life', which, according to Foucault, formed the basis for the exercise of modern power.[56] It is through Foucault, in other words, that analysis can move beyond an understanding of liberal colonialism as simply an instrument for the "material aggrandizement" of empire, and instead view it as a means to pacify the various forms of life that liberalism perceived as threatening to its universal claim to liberate humanity.[57]

---

[54] S. Ambirajan, *Classical Political Economy and British Policy in India*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 9, 11.
[55] Jennifer Pitts, *A Turn to Empire*, 3.
[56] Foucault, *History of Sexuality*, 135-159.
[57] Reid, *Biopolitics of the War on Terror*, 6.

The first chapter of this thesis further develops the theoretical framework put forward here. It explains the difference between the classical political economic thought of Adam Smith in the late eighteenth century, and that of the mid nineteenth century. This era of the Enlightenment experienced a transition that was influenced by what I term the 'moral sentiments.' The demand to live peacefully that was expressed by liberal economic thinkers in the late eighteenth century, I argue, gave rise to the universalism of nineteenth century liberalism. As such, non-liberal societies such as India were targeted for colonial intervention. This is evident in the writings of J.S. Mill and the *Economis*t, both of which disparaged India, and although sensitive to European motives for peace, stressed the coercive rule over the 'backward' subjects of India. Here I will elaborate on the thought of Foucault in greater detail, and explain how it was precisely the pursuit of liberal peace in Europe that demanded the biopolitical assault on Indian society.

Chapter two discusses the changes that occurred as the EIC fostered capitalist agriculture and introduced the technological components of liberal political economy in India. The writings of the *Economist*, J.S. Mill, and John William Kaye will be taken up and analyzed in terms of their opinions on peasants, and how political economy was seen as the only vehicle to improve their existence. Here I will address the problems associated with the liberal arguments about the development of capitalism. According to political economists from the eighteenth century onward, the development of capitalism was a 'natural' stage in the progress of humanity, which added to the justification for the exploitation of Indian peasants. However, evidence shows that the rise of capitalism in Britain and India was process of, as David Harvey terms it, "accumulation by

dispossession."[58] The dispossession of peasants from their land was necessary not only as a means to induce them to labour, but also to transform them into liberal subjects who could enjoy a newfound 'self-interest.' The main argument in this chapter is that the liberal subject of political economy was seen as ideally suited to reproducing liberal forms of life. The construction of political economy in India thus reveals the biopolitics of liberal colonialism.

Chapter three examines the Indian mutiny-rebellion of 1857. It argues, first of all, that the uprising symbolized resistance to the liberal account of humanity imposed British authority. Here I will examine the writings of the *Economist* and George Campbell in significant detail. In these writings it becomes apparent that with the 1857 mutiny-rebellion, the perceived ability to adapt to liberal forms of life became intertwined with race. It was at this point, in other words, that race and political economy became indistinguishable in the liberal colonial discourse of the British. While the British repressed the revolt, they were able to enhance their understanding of biopoliticized life according to the racialized hierarchy that formed the basis of colonial sovereignty.

This thesis concludes that the biopolitics of modern liberal regimes did not develop independently of their colonial relationships. The moral sentiments expressed by Adam Smith and other classical political economists reoriented the juridical power of the British state toward peace, but motivated, paradoxically, the intervention into societies said to exist beyond the boundaries of liberal rule. An analysis of colonial India, as read through the nineteenth century discourse on progress, demonstrates that the British preoccupation with race, knowledge, and classification contributed to their understanding

---

[58] David Harvey, *The New Imperialism*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 143,

of humans as part of a biological species, and the emergence, therefore, of biopolitics. These biopolitical strategies of power were not limited to the colonial setting. Nor were they simply exported from Europe to its colonial peripheries. India, rather, served as a "laboratory of modernity" – a testing ground in which the subjugation of life to governmental controls was practiced.[59] In fact, the modern process of state building in Britain was closely linked to its rise as an imperial power in the nineteenth century.[60] Far from being an accomplishment, the liberal biopolitics that developed within this continuum constituted an assault on the indeterminacy of life.

---

[59] Stoler, *Race and the Education of Desire*.

[60] Cohn, *Colonialism and its Forms of Knowledge*, 3.

THE 'MORAL SENTIMENTS': LIBERAL PEACE, BIOPOLITICS, AND THE THREAT OF 'ORIENTAL DESPOTISM'

"There is no liberalism without a culture of danger." – Michel Foucault

This chapter builds on the theoretical framework put forward in the introduction by discussing the historical link between motives for liberal peace in the eighteenth century, and the consolidation of British imperialism and colonial rule in the nineteenth century. This link is necessary in order to understand how two seemingly contradictory processes merged to produce liberal colonialism in India. The pursuit to secure the welfare of modern societies was born out of the intellectual arguments of the Enlightenment. Of particular importance was the thought of the Scottish classical political economist Adam Smith, who argued that economic freedom is what enabled individuals to peacefully coexist. This period produced what I term the 'moral sentiments,' which defined the proliferation of imperial aggression and violence in the nineteenth century. After having presented the arguments of Smith, this chapter returns to Foucault's analysis and critique of the methods used to pacify modern societies, which differs significantly from the formula described by the Scottish Enlightenment. This discussion of Foucault's thought is necessary, not only as a step in tracing the paradox of liberal modernity to its origins in the eighteenth century, but also to develop a more detailed explanation of the biopolitical foundations of liberalism. With Foucault's interpretation in mind, it becomes more clear how nineteenth century liberals, who, although influenced by Smith and informed by the desire for peace, justified the alien rule of the British over Indian subjects. It is through the help of Foucault, in other words, that the liberal support for violence and imperialism appears as a direct consequence of

how liberalism originally sought to order society according to a biopolitical account of humanity.

This argument is supported by the thought John Stuart Mill and the *Economist*, as well as the liberal tradition broadly conceived in the nineteenth century. An essential aspect of their disparaging attitudes toward India was the apparent lack of a commercial system involving private property and wage labour. While the influence of Smith is clear in their writings, both J.S. Mill and the *Economist* extend the 'proper' organization of society to Britain's colonial frontier. Through an analysis of their writings on political economy and India, I argue that British rule in India sought to 'pacify' non-liberal forms of life, and incorporate them into a universal vision of progress. In order to complete the theoretical framework from which this thesis proceeds, this chapter concludes by further explaining the unique character of liberal colonialism – as derived from the preoccupations of J.S. Mill and the *Economist*. It was the universalism at the core of their ideology that speaks to Britain's 'civilizing mission', which sought to improve the life of Indian subjects, and protect modern society from the peril of their 'traditional' customs.

According to Immanuel Kant, it was the state of continuous conflict experienced in Europe during the early modern period that "stimulated a desire to escape from a condition of perpetual bloodshed."[61] This desire to realize a moral revolution was expressed by numerous liberal thinkers in the eighteenth century. Central to the pursuit of liberal peace was the drive to liberate the "commercial spirit," which, wrote Kant,

---

[61] Armstrong Starkey, *War in the Age of Enlightenment, 1700-1789*, (Westport: Praeger, 2003), 10.

"cannot co-exist with war."[62] While Kant is recognized for his personal contribution to modern political thought, he shares similarities with the tradition of the Scottish Enlightenment, which also linked peace to the facilitation of commerce and free trade. The Scottish Enlightenment was an intellectual movement that lasted most of the eighteenth century, and whose particular focus on economics had significant reverberations throughout the world. Adam Smith was amongst its foremost figures and advocates for governmental reform. According to Smith, the restrictive powers of centralized monarchies debased the entrepreneurial ability of human beings. As he states in his famous treatise on political economy *The Wealth of Nations*: "To prohibit a great people…from making all that they can of every part of their own produce, or from employing their stock and industry in the way that they judge most advantageous to themselves, is a manifest violation of the most sacred rights of mankind."[63] In contrast, the facilitation of commerce amongst free individuals increased the general welfare of society.[64]

In *The Wealth of Nations* Smith lays out his ideal vision of "commercial society." Arguing against the dominant mercantilist system of the time, which promoted the ability to monopolize markets, thereby restricting other individuals' economic interests, Smith instead believed that society was best served by removing governmental barriers to allow individual actors to pursue their own improvement.[65] According to Smith, in such a situation, there appears an "invisible hand" that balances the wealth of society, based on

---

[62] Kant.
[63] Adam Smith, *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes* of *The Wealth of Nations*, (Hampshire: Harriman House, 2007), 372.
[64] Edwin van de Haar, *Classical Liberalism and International Relations Theory: Hume, Smith, Mises, and Hayek*, (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 61.
[65] Smith, *The Wealth of Nations*, introduction, xi.

the human urge to create order and progress.[66] This "system of natural liberty," as Smith termed it, is achievable only through private property and wage labour – the tenets that form laissez-faire capitalism. As Smith states: "The property which every man has in his own labour…is the most sacred and inviolable."[67] Furthermore, when "all systems, either of preference or of restraint," are "completely taken away, the obvious and simple system of natural liberty establishes itself of its own accord."[68] Although individuals are encouraged to compete against each other under this system, the result is to the benefit of the public interest. At the time of writing *The Wealth of Nations*, Smith believed that the actions of the "invisible hand" made the pursuit of self-interest favourable to Britain's economic growth through the creation and distribution of wealth.

The classical political economy of Smith was an important contribution to liberal ideology in the eighteenth century, or as I term it, the 'moral sentiments.' This is not to be confused with Smith's earlier work titled *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*, but rather refers to a general concept that defines the attempt to free the innovative capacities of individuals from autocratic rule, and establish the economic linkages that were to act as the unifying force of liberal modernity.[69] Indeed, Smith makes altogether different arguments in *The Wealth of Nations* than he does in *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*. In *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*, for example, Smith addresses the ethical foundations of human society in the philosophical realm. Smith's main argument is that human actions are guided by natural instincts. These instincts, such as the desire to promote personal

---

[66] Ibid., x.
[67] Smith, *The Wealth of Nations*, 80.
[68] Ibid., 444.
[69] Andrew Wyatt-Walter, "Adam Smith and the Liberal Tradition in International Relations", in *Review of International Studies*, (Vol.22, No. 1, 1996, pg. 5-28), 6.

well-being, and the well-being of others, help to create social harmony as individuals develop a moral conscience.[70] Although Smith does not address the economic realm in *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*, he does criticize the destructive power of autocratic rule. The focus, though, is far more on the virtues of "benevolence" in the creation of a just society. By employing benevolence, "the wise and virtuous man," writes Smith, " is at all times willing that his own private interest should be sacrificed to the public interest of his own particular order or society."[71] *The Wealth of Nations*, in contrast, emphasizes the importance of self-interest in this regard. In Smith's later view,

> Man has almost constant occasion for the help of his brethren, and it is in vain for him to expect it from their benevolence only…It is not from the benevolence of the butcher, the brewer, or the baker, that we expect our dinner, but from their regard to their own interest…Nobody but a beggar chooses to depend chiefly upon the benevolence of his fellow-citizens.[72]

Although Smith makes different arguments in these works, the spirit of his work combined – from his thought in moral philosophy to political economy – speaks to the motives of liberal peace. As he states:

> The violence and injustice of the rulers of mankind is an ancient evil, for which, I am afraid, the nature of human affairs can scarce admit of a remedy. But the mean rapacity, the monopolizing spirit, of merchants and manufacturers, who neither are, nor ought to be the rulers of mankind, though it cannot perhaps be corrected, may very easily be prevented from disturbing the tranquility of anybody but themselves.[73]

Importantly, as Smith came to identify absolute power with the ability to restrict individuals economically through monopolies, his formula for commercial society

---

[70] Smith, *Wealth of Nations*, Introduction, x.
[71] Adam Smith, *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*, Knud Haakonssen (ed.), (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 277.
[72] Smith, The *Wealth of Nations*, 9-10.
[73] Ibid, 318.

centered on liberal capitalism. If not directly concerned with the elimination of violence in society, Smith was at least arguing for the reform necessary to guarantee the right for individuals to engage in commerce, which "ought naturally to be, among nations, as among individuals, a bond of union and friendship."[74] Smith's ideas were certainly influential in promoting concepts of economic liberalism, which began to dominate British economic and political thought in the early nineteenth century.[75] By the 1840s, for example, the 'science' of political economy articulated by Smith was being championed by the *Economist*. Adhering staunchly to Smith's classical liberal arguments, the paper encouraged free trade in agricultural goods in Britain, and rigorously opposed the Corn Laws.[76] Importantly, this formula for the correct organization of society, which centered on permitting the 'natural' functions of the market, was also given an imperial dimension, as it increasingly became the basis on which nineteenth century liberals rationalized Britain's rule over foreign subjects.[77] It is in this sense that Smith's work was an integral aspect of the 'moral sentiments' that informed the British Empire's attempt to right the world according to the principles of liberal political economy.

The pacification of Western societies also plays a key role in Foucault's critique of liberal modernity. According to Foucault, the process by which regimes attempted to institute sustained peace through the development of a 'moral community' began in England, and was enabled by modern military science. In the middle Ages, the English nobility was an extremely militarized and predatory class. It was distinguished from its

[74] Smith, *The Wealth of Nations.*
[75] Handy and Fehr, 88, 89.
[76] Ibid., 7, 8.
[77] Ibid., 7.

European counterparts by its constant external aggression. Such campaigns were not carried out by a professional army, but rather relied on indentured companies that owed allegiance to the monarchy.[78] The popular demands of the English Revolution, though, led to the gradual modernization of society. In *Discipline and Punish*, notes Julian Reid, Foucault challenges the traditional rationality of military science, which he argues, resides not simply in the ends toward which military force is ultimately deployed, but also, if not more importantly, the nature of military organization itself, which, by the time of the Commonwealth period in England, served as an ideal framework for the social organization of society.[79] What distinguishes modern military organization, argues Foucault, is the emergence of a range of various "disciplinary" techniques such as enclosure, partitioning, ranking and serialization.[80] As Foucault states:

> By the late eighteenth century, the soldier has become something that can be made: out of a formless clay, an inapt body, the machine required can be constructed; posture is gradually corrected; a calculated constraint runs slowly through each part of the body, mastering it, making it pliable, ready at all times, turning silently into the automatism of habit; in short, one has 'got rid of the peasant' and given him 'the air of the soldier.[81]

Although such techniques originated in the military as a means with which to control mass armies, they were gradually adjusted and applied, argues Foucault, to societies as a whole.[82] As such: "In the great 18th century states, the army guaranteed

---

[78] Perry Anderson, *Lineages of the Absolutist State*, (London: Atlantic Highlands: Humanities Press, 1974), 116.
[79] Julian Reid, "Life Struggles: War, Discipline and Biopolitics in the Thought of Michel Foucault", in Stephen Morton and Stephen Bygrave (eds.), *Foucault in an Age of Terror: Essays on Biopolitics and the Defence of Society*, (Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), 17.
[80] Ibid.
[81] Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, Alan Sheridan (trans), (New York: Vintage Books, 1979).
[82] Ibid.

civil peace no doubt because it was a real force, an ever threatening sword, but also because it was a technique and a body of knowledge that could project their schema over the social body."[83] The object of this new disciplinary power was the individuated body, whose subjection was made possible by the physiological knowledge generated in the military sciences.[84] *Discipline and Punish* shows how liberal peace operates by establishing "uniform docility among individualized bodies."[85]

This was made possible through the alliance between the military and life sciences, which, "in constituting the natural body as the object of disciplinary power…also began to conceive of populations themselves as species bodies defined by a common genesis, evolutionary patterns and survival rates."[86] With industrialization, modern regimes were confronted with a host of new problems surrounding population such as birthrate, longevity, and public health. Disciplinary power, then, was accompanied by "an explosion of numerous and diverse techniques for achieving the subjugation of bodies and the control of populations, marking the beginning of an era of biopower."[87] The ability to segment and divide society gave way to the ability to normalize the population. Biopower did not displace disciplinary power altogether, but developed alongside disciplinary power's engagement with the life sciences. As Foucault puts it:

> Power over life evolved in two basic forms; these forms were not antithetical, however; they constituted rather two poles of development linked together by a whole intermediary cluster of relations. One of these poles – the first to be formed, it seems – centered on the body as a machine; its disciplining, the

---

[83] Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, 168.
[84] Reid, *Life Struggles*, 20.
[85] Ibid., 22.
[86] Reid, *Life Struggles*, 21.
[87] Foucault, *History of Sexuality*, 140.

> optimization of its capabilities, the extortion of its forces, the parallel increase of its usefulness and its docility, its integration into systems of efficient and economic controls, all this was ensured by the procedures of power that characterized the disciplines: an anatomo-politics of the human body. The second, formed somewhat later, focused on the species body, the body imbued with the mechanics of life and serving as the basis of the biological processes: propagation, births and mortality, the level of health, life expectancy and longevity, with all the conditions that can cause these to vary. Their supervision was effected through an entire series of interventions and regulatory controls: a biopolitics of the population. The disciplines of the body and the regulations of the population constituted the two poles around which the organization of power over life was deployed.[88]

According to Foucault, this power over life was essential to the development of "capitalism… [which] would not have been possible without the controlled insertion of bodies into the machinery of production."[89] The excision of 'the peasant' was quite literal during the expansion of Britain's rural capitalist sector in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The enclosure of common land during this period was meant to induce peasants to labour.[90] However, with the development of disciplinary techniques, power was no longer based on the sovereign's exploitation of bodies for their surpluses. Rather, as the "right of seizure," was replaced by the power to "make live", its aim was to "assure and regulate the correct procedure by which the body carries out its labour as an end in itself."[91] In this schema, life itself becomes an instrument in the expansion of productive forces. In this sense, everyone becomes 'a soldier,' mobilized in defense of the conditions that secure the peaceful existence of humanity.

---

[88] Ibid.
[89] Foucault, *History of Sexuality*, 141.
[90] Jim Handy, "'Almost Idiotic Wretchedness': a long history of blaming peasants," in *The Journal of Peasant Studies*, (Vol. 36, No. 2, 2009, 325-344), 327. For a history and description of enclosure policies see Thomas Edward Scrutton, *Commons and Common Fields: The History and Policy of the Laws Relating To Commons and Enclosures in England*, (New York: Burt Franklin, 1887).
[91] Reid, *Life Struggles*, 18-20.

The processes of liberal peace were accelerated by the collapse of the old regime in Europe. With the rise of the Commonwealth in Britain, and republicanism in France – which served as a model for the political transformation of Western states – the liberal project to secure the biological existence of humanity emerged. Writing in 1791, the famous liberal thinker Thomas Paine stated that: "As the barbarism of the present old governments expires, the moral condition of nations with respect to each other will be changed. Man will not be brought up with the savage idea of considering his species as his enemy."[92] But contrary to Paine's optimism, the prioritization of 'life' produced irreconcilable antagonisms between liberal rule and its subjects. "The paradox of this early enunciation of liberalism" notes political scientist Michael Dillon, "was not that it brought an end to war, but that it multiplied the reasons for making war."[93] Despite the enormous influence of liberal thought, modernity has nonetheless been defined by the proliferation of war and violence. The reason the 'moral sentiments' were not able to reconcile this problem was because they led to an increasingly narrow sense of what it meant to live peacefully. As this thesis will demonstrate, liberal regimes became intent on eliminating elements of human existence, both within and beyond their societies that were identified as threats to the construction of peace. The 'moral sentiments' served to limit the grounds for war, but the demand to live according to the system of natural liberty made the violence of liberal regimes a necessity – universalizing force in order to

---

[92] Thomas Paine, *The Rights of Man,* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1969).
[93] Michael Dillon, "Ten Years of War on Terror", http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M4FLOGSgn8Y, 2011.

pursue the international stability required for individual liberty to prosper.[94] The fundamental difference, as Reid points out, is that "traditionally, war functioned as a means of resolving disputes between sovereigns whose power was based on a fundamental disjuncture between themselves and their subjects."[95] In a biopolitical context, however, war was instead made in defense and promotion of human populations. As Foucault clarifies:

> The existence in question is no longer the juridical existence of sovereignty; at stake is the biological existence of a population. If genocide is indeed the dream of modern powers, this is not because of a recent return of the ancient right to kill; it is because power is situated and exercised at the level of life, the species, the race, and the large-scale phenomena of population.[96]

While the intensity of violence certainly continued to increase within modern Europe – culminating in the atrocities of the first and second world wars – the fundamental principles that guided liberal warfare were also present in the violence inherent to British imperialism and colonial rule in India. Again, the importance of this argument does not lie specifically in the phenomenon of war, but rather in the fact that liberal regimes are prone to violence. With that said, there is very little distinction between the liberal justification for armed conflict, and the colonization of non-Western peoples. In this sense, British rule in India should be seen as a warlike enterprise. In imperialism, though, the conflict does not occur on a 'field' in the usual sense of the

---

[94] Brian Bond notes that between 1837 and 1900, Britain engaged in seventy four military interventions, Brian Bond, *Victorian Military Campaigns*, (New York and Washington: Frederick A. Praeger, 1967), 309-311.
[95] Reid, *Life Struggles*, 24.
[96] Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*.

term, but rather exists as a means of distinguishing ‘friend’ from ‘enemy,’ and is derived directly from the unique manner in which liberalism construes peace.[97]

Just as Smith and other liberal thinkers in the eighteenth century argued against mercantilism – the system of state intervention into the economy – they were equally critical of colonialism. With reference to the colonization of the Americas, for example, Smith states:

> Folly and injustice seem to have been the principles which presided over and directed the first project of establishing those colonies; the folly of hunting after gold and silver mines, the injustice of coveting the possession of a country whose harmless natives, far from having ever injured the people of Europe, had received the first adventurers with every mark of kindness and hospitality…Upon all these different occasions it was, not the wisdom and policy, but the disorder and injustice of the European governments, which peopled and cultivated America.[98]

In their view, Europeans were in no position to disseminate their culture or institutions through colonialism. This was a view articulated by thinkers who had already experienced the injustice of autocratic rule within Europe, and saw the mistake of exporting it to other regions of the world.[99] The imperialism of the EIC and its mercantilist policies thus represented an arbitrary authority.[100] However, although contested by eighteenth century liberals, the justification for colonial rule was renewed in the nineteenth century. The contrast between eighteenth century liberals and their successors in the nineteenth century was the fact that their sense of cultural superiority increased dramatically. The liberal “turn to empire” experienced in this period was

---

[97] Michael J. Shapiro, *Reading “Adam Smith”*: *Desire, History and Value*, (Newbury Park: Sage Publications, 1993), 15.
[98] Smith, *The Wealth of Nations*, 380.
[99] Jennifer Pitts, *A Turn to Empire*, 15.
[100] Ibid., 2.

accompanied by the development of "more contemptuous notions of backwardness and a cruder dichotomy between barbarity and civilization."[101]

J.S. Mill was a prominent thinker amongst this generation of liberals. Throughout his career, he displayed support for the colonial governments in Ireland and India, and served as an official in the EIC's Board of Control from 1822 to 1856. Like Smith, J.S. Mill was not outwardly concerned with the problem of war, but was nonetheless sensitive to the liberal cause for peace. For example, J.S. Mill noted that the influence of liberalism on European society had served to better protect individuals against the "violence and rapacity of one another," and the "arbitrary exercise of the power of government."[102] For Mill, the progress of civilized society is characterized by the increase of "security," which allows for the pursuit of material prosperity, thus eliminating the need for violence.[103] However, although J.S. Mill was informed by this formula for liberal peace, the increase of cultural superiority is evident in his thought. J.S. Mill disparaged the "barbarism" of Native Americans and "Negros." Slavery, though, was for J.S. Mill, a detestable institution because it did not lead to any improvement of human capabilities. It does not provide, as liberalism does, for the overall progress of modern society.

J.S. Mill was certainly influenced by his father, James Mill, and both were members of the so-called 'utilitarian' school of philosophy. James Mill, with his *History of British India*, initiated a legitimizing discourse about Britain's role as a 'civilizing'

---

[101] Ibid.
[102] John Stuart Mill, *Principles of Political Economy: with Some of Their Applications to Social Philosophy*, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1965), 707.
[103] Ibid.

force in India that his son helped to carry forward.[104] Although J.S. Mill did not write about India as extensively as his father did, his "encounter" with India framed his ideas on political economy, which were also directly influenced by Adam Smith.[105] His *Principles of Political Economy* was published in 1848, and used examples from India and Ireland to serve his arguments about how rural populations should progress under the correct system of proprietorship. The progress of India was to rely on the creation of a prosperous and independent class of farmers. J.S. Mill's concern to lift 'backward' subjects out of poverty, though, depended on the violent rule of the EIC. Furthermore, Mill recognized that war, by the mid nineteenth century, was confined to "those distant and outlying possessions at which it comes into contact with savages."[106] In such cases, despotic rule over colonial subjects was legitimate, provided the end is their improvement.[107]

Similarly, James Wilson, the founder and editor of the *Economist*, was a disciple of Smith's doctrine that public good is served best when individuals are free to look after themselves, since government interference upsets the creation of wealth.[108] Like J.S. Mill, Wilson was involved in the administration of India, serving in the India Board of Control – the department tasked to supervise the activities of the East India Company – from 1848 to 1852. Wilson's support for colonial rule in India is evident in the *Economist*, which, beginning in the 1840s, wrote extensively on the necessity of fostering

[104] Cohn, 6.
[105] Martin I. Moir, Douglas M. Peers, and Lynn Zastoupil (eds.), *J.S. Mill's Encounter With India*, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999).
[106] J.S. Mill, *Principles of Political Economy*, 707.
[107] J.S. Mill, "On Liberty", in John Gray (ed), *John Stuart Mill: On Liberty and Other Essays*, (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1991).
[108] Edwards, 6.

a liberal order and economy in India. The paper, like liberal rule itself, ostensibly reflected the interests of Indian subjects rather than profit, and therefore promoted the colonial regime as an engine for progress.[109]

Since the first articulation of the moral sentiments in the eighteenth century, then, which gradually reoriented sovereignty toward the needs of society; there emerged a universal concept of progress that eclipsed the desire to escape from conditions of war and imperialism. Of particular relevance was the targeting of "Oriental despotism" – a broad category of non-liberal existence that, since the Enlightenment, "came to suggest the idea of unchecked power of an agrarian empire supported by the labour of slaves."[110] In India, 'Oriental despotism' was associated with the Mughal Empire, which the EIC first encountered at its height in the seventeenth century. The British viewed the Mughal regime as even "more oppressive" than its European counterparts. It represented the harshest form of power. Amongst India's supposed afflictions during this period were political and economic instability, irrationality, and developmental stasis.[111] J.S Mill stated that:

> At some period, however, of their history, almost every people, now civilized, have consisted, in majority, of slaves. A people in that condition require to raise them out of it a very different polity from a nation of savages. If they are energetic by nature, and especially if there be associated with them in the same community an industrious class who are neither slaves nor slave-owners…they need, probably no more to ensure their improvement than to make them free:

---

[109] Ibid, 210.
[110] Mia Carter and Barbara Harlow, "Oriental Despotisms and Political Economies", in Barbara Harlow and Mia Carter (eds), *Archives of Empire Volume 1: From the East India Company to the Suez Canal*, (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2003), 89.
[111] Ibid, 3.

> when freed, they may often be fit, like Roman freedmen, to be admitted at once into the full rights of citizenship.[112]

Furthermore, 'Oriental despotism' was regarded as the absence of private property. In *Principles of Political Economy*, J.S. Mill makes it clear that private property was the only means a backward society could ever progress.[113] It was necessary to give expression to the individual subject and break the union between public and private spheres that existed in the so-called Indian "village system."[114] As described by Karl Marx, the village system was comprised of family communities based on domestic industry, shared labour, and self-supporting power.[115] They were, in other words, communities of rural cultivators who employed family labour in order to produce for their own subsistence – or what is generally understood as the peasantry.[116] Just as the peasantry was subject to disciplinary techniques of 'pacification' in England, peasants were even more vilified as enemies of liberal modernity in India. In fact, they were "perceived to have the deepest attachments to the most dangerous elements of pre-colonial society."[117] Operating firmly within a modern framework, Marx echoed the sentiments of nineteenth century liberals, writing that:

> We must not forget that these idyllic village communities, inoffensive though they may appear, had always been the solid foundation of Oriental Despotism, that

---

[112] John Stuart Mill, "Considerations on Representative Government", in John Gray (ed), *John Stuart Mill: On Liberty and Other Essays*, (Oxford and New York: Oxford University press, 1991).
[113] John Stuart Mill, *Principles of Political economy: With Some of Their Applications to Social Philosophy*, (Forging the Raj, 27).
[114]Amiya Kumar Bagchi, *Colonialism and the Indian Economy*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 195.
[115] Karl Marx, "The British Rule in India", 1853, in Carter and Harlow (eds) *Archive of Empire*, (Durham and London: Duke University Press), 122.
[116] Handy, "'Almost Idiotic Wretchedness',1.
[117] Ibid., 326.

> they restrained the human mind within the smallest possible compass, making it the unresisting tool of superstition, enslaving it beneath traditional rules, depriving it of all grandeur and historical energies.[118]

The *Economist*, too, although it could not have differed any more greatly from Marx's account of capitalist development, was intent on eliminating "traditional" elements of Indian society. The *Economist*'s writings on India simultaneously disparaged Indian society and promoted the value of British influence, fearful of what India may become if left independent. "We cannot doubt," stated the paper, "that the arbitrary and onerous character of their religious customs, and the superstitious timidity of their general character, will be eventually and deeply influenced by the introduction of the new European arts."[119] According to the *Economist*, the mere existence of Indian customs, simply because they differed from the "moral" character of the British, were the "spring of all tyranny." Whereas the universal laws of modern political economy and the free individual would become, "if studied, trusted, and obeyed, the source of enlarging power and freedom."[120] By exposing Indian society to the civilizing influence of commerce, colonial subjects would be freed from their perceived servitude, and the "Asiatic mode of production" would be replaced by a more equitable, orderly, and rational system of political economy.

The integration of Indian society into the circuits of capitalist production created a "Euro-Asiatic" interrelationship that colonial rule protected from "internal threats."[121] Liberal colonialism therefore produces a racialized state of exception in which the

---

[118] Marx, "The British Rule in India", 122.
[119] The *Economist*, "The Indian Railways", (Nov. 21, 1857).
[120] Ibid.
[121] Bell and Evans, "From Terrorism to Insurgency", 383, George Campbell, *India as it May Be: A Proposed Government and Policy*, (London, 1853, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1964).

security of the human species depends on the 'improvement' of the colonized other.[122] The discourse of inferiority embedded in the 'civilizing mission' represents the belief that 'backward' societies are inimical to the biopolitical foundations of liberal modernity. Here, it is evident what lies at the heart of liberal modernity is a pathology that demands liberalism to necessarily impose its account of humanity on colonized populations. If liberalism is the only system capable of securing the welfare of the human species, as liberals claimed, it follows that everything else is understood as an obstruction. Since the declared constituency of liberalism is all of human kind, the 'threats' that it seeks to negate have no delimiting boundary.[123] The improvement liberalism seeks to impose is thus fundamentally unattainable, as there will always be something that lies 'beyond the pale'.[124] In colonial India, liberals confronted the inherent incompleteness of their project by 'scientifically' codifying 'uncivilized' forms of life. This exacerbated the violence projected on the subject population, which was defined not only by the initial rupture of conquest, but also the increasingly rationalized, systemic violence carried out against those who are judged incompatible with the liberal priority to further the reproduction of the species. The prejudices carried by nineteenth century liberals do not deviate from liberal values, but affirm them, and continually reproduce, in the manner described by Edward Said in *Orientalism*, the discursive justification for colonial rule.[125]

Liberalism is constantly preoccupied with how to establish control over societies without governing too much. The "liberal way of rule" succeeds by instituting the freedom of self-rule – by transforming subjects into individual agents that self-rule

---

[122] Duffield and Hewitt, 10.
[123] Singh, *Liberalism and Empire*, 51.
[124] Lemke, *Biopolitics: An Advanced Introduction*.
[125] Dillon and Reid, 31, Said.

through their interaction with the market.[126] The idea of laissez-faire economics takes on another meaning here. The unfettered individual is not only the means through which people are free to seek profit, but also represents the 'success' of producing the governable subjects that liberalism desires. Liberalism, then, is not simply an economic theory, but is above all an "art of government," as Foucault defined it, that incorporates the economics of market capitalism as its main technology. [127]

The theory established in this chapter stems from the preoccupations of liberal thinkers, first, in the eighteenth century and then into the nineteenth century. Although not necessarily concerned with the problem of war in modernity, Adam Smith and other thinkers of the Scottish Enlightenment presented a formula for the proper ordering of society. Their vision centered on the role of the individual, who, if left to pursue their own self-interest without government interference, could thrive amidst justice and liberty. It follows, therefore, that if society is just and individuals are not confined by the arbitrary restrictions of autocratic regimes, then the conditions that create violence are eliminated, and the unifying bond of liberalism is established. What is liberty, after all, if not the absence of harm in society? Smith did, however, argue against colonialism and the mercantilist policies of the EIC in a more explicit manner. With the help of Foucault, whose work compels a reinterpretation of liberal modernity, I have argued that the 'moral sentiments' that defined the attempt to remove life from the conditions of war legitimated the very violence they sought to eliminate, making it possible for liberal regimes to increasingly embody the warlike tendencies more typically associated with

[126] Ibid., 38.
[127] Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences*, (London and New York: Routledge, 1989), Dillon and Reid, 24.

authoritarianism. This is evident in the fact that Britain reached its height of imperial power in the nineteenth century. The ‘moral sentiments’ thus morphed, as the support J.S. Mill and the *Economist* declared for colonial rule in India shows, into the ‘civilizing mission’ of British imperialism – giving expression to the martial drivers of liberalism that were born in the eighteenth century. This theory does not only shed light on the thought of British liberals, but is also essential for understanding what I believe is an otherwise unexplainable phenomenon in history: the process through which the demand for peace encouraged imperial aggression. Although this thesis is primarily concerned with the nineteenth century, a discussion of eighteenth century liberal ideas was necessary because it served as an antecedent to colonial rule in India. More importantly, though, the effort to promote the capacities of humanity became increasingly attached to the biological life of the species. As I will show in the next chapter, this promotion of life depended on exposing society to the dynamics of liberal political economy, which was the primary motive for re-ordering Indian society in the nineteenth century.

THE CONSTRUCTION OF LIBERAL POLITICAL ECONOMY: ACCUMULATION BY DISPOSSESSION AND THE 'PROCESS OF BECOMING CITIZENS'

"In truth, an infinite field of improvement lies before us." – George Campbell

This chapter examines the establishment of the permanent settlement of Bengal, the increased market orientation of peasant production, and the construction of a railroad network, which together constituted the most important elements of liberal political economy in nineteenth century India. Although this transformation arguably did not improve existing conditions in India, the introduction of an economic system modeled after the European imagination was necessary, as British liberals claimed, to teach Indian subjects the lessons of 'civilization.' To demonstrate this, I will analyze the writings of the *Economist*, J.S. Mill, and John William Kaye. Each of these liberal proponents had differing concerns regarding property, railroads, and race. It is evident throughout their discourse, though, that the commercial dynamics of capitalism were understood to be necessary for the welfare of Indian society. This welfare was dependent on Indian subjects defined by three corresponding factors. The first was the ability to consume commodities. This factor figured prominently in the *Economist*'s discussion of the EIC's permanent settlement model of property, and the new privileges it apparently granted peasants. The second was the imperative to perform labour as an end in itself, which was a primary concern of J.S. Mill in his *Principles of Political Economy*. The third was the ability to self-govern. That is, to regulate oneself in a marketized society. Conformity to these factors combined is what allowed 'life' to flourish under the EIC's system of 'indirect rule.' It was necessary, moreover, as a means to enable liberal order to continually reproduce itself – a process, though, that was never complete and always

contested. To begin, an overview of the EIC, and the historical changes produced by liberal political economy in nineteenth century India is necessary.

The EIC was founded on December 31, 1600. It emerged amidst competition for imperial and mercantilist dominance between other European empires. Spain, Portugal, and Holland were all adversaries to the British Empire. The establishment of the EIC by Royal Charter in 1600 thus served to meet the demand of English merchants, who, wanting to challenge rival European trade, successfully petitioned the Crown. It was intended to be a joint-stock company with exclusive rights to trade in the east, with only restricted military powers.[128] It followed a model set by the Dutch East India Company – its main rival for trade in the subcontinent. From its inception, the EIC combined commercial and military methods to maintain a heavily armed colonial empire.[129] It began as a European trading venture that sought to acquire riches from the east, but became, after one hundred and fifty years, a regime of outright conquest. The EIC had been involved in several military skirmishes as a means to aggressively maintain its monopoly. Although it established its presence in India during the seventeenth century, the eighteenth century represented the pinnacle of profitability for the EIC. Its rise to prominence proved to be vitally important to the British state.

These developments transformed dramatically as the Mughal Empire was faced with several major crises. The emergence of powerful regional polities seeking to challenge the authority of the Mughal Empire created rivalries between new regional

---

[128] Anthony Webster, *The Twilight of the East India Company: The Evolution of Anglo-Asian Commerce and Politics 1790-1860*, (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2009), 19.
[129] Mia Carter, "Adventure Capitalism: Mercantilism, Militarism, and the British East India Company, in Barbara Harlow and Mia Carter (eds), *Archives of Empire Volume 1: From the East India Company to the Suez Canal*, (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2003), 13.

states. Competition for resources, trade routes, and other sources of revenue led to internalized warfare. But the presence of rival European powers also weakened the Mughal Empire, as they tried to exploit local instability to their own advantage.[130] This led to the increased militarization of the EIC, which, in an attempt to maintain its competitive advantage and defend itself against local military confrontations, found itself amassing military forces. This also led to the EIC's more direct engagement in Indian affairs and politics. Of particular importance was the conquest of Bengal – India's richest province, and the first large territory acquired by the EIC in 1757. This was prompted in 1756, when the Nawab of Bengal seized Calcutta in an attempt to defend the region from a suspected overthrow by the British. Many company servants were imprisoned and died in what is known as the "Black Hole" incident.[131] Whether or not the British planned a takeover or not, they used the incident as an example of Indian cruelty, in order to justify violent intervention in Bengal. After the army of Colonel Robert Clive defeated the Nawab's armies the Battle of Plassey, the EIC was installed as the state's effective rulers.[132]

This initiated a succession of wars that inaugurated the EIC as a regime of colonial conquest. The resources acquired after gaining control of Bengal allowed the EIC to dominate contests among other regional states.[133] Secured revenue collecting rights and unimpeded trading access throughout the region created a larger financial base

---

[130] Ibid., 22.
[131] Ibid., Partha Chaterjee, *The Black Hole of Empire: History of a Global Practice of Power*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2012).
[132] Ibid., 22.
[133] Barbara D. Metcalf and Thomas R. Metcalf, *A Concise History of Modern India*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 55.

that it used to expand its capacity to rule.[134] Charges of Indian misgovernment became the rationale for the ongoing seizure of land.[135] In 1794, an East India Company Act designed to subordinate EIC authority directly to the British government was passed, and a Board of Control was established to supervise its activities. Importantly, both James Wilson and J.S. Mill were intimately connected to the Board of Control. Wilson served as Secretary of Finance, and J.S. Mill – following his father James – served as the 'reader' who reviewed all correspondence between the EIC's Court of Directors and British agents in India.[136] In 1813, an act was passed to end the EIC's monopoly. From then on it made most of its income from land revenue, not trade. And in 1833, The Government of India Act was passed, which exemplified a new administrative focus.[137]

It was during this time that the EIC made its final conquests. Having extended its frontier to Burma in the east, and Nepal in the north by the mid-nineteenth century, the EIC sought to annex the Punjab, where local disputes created an opportunity for intervention.[138] This led to the first Sikh War in 1845, and the eventual installation of British authority in the western province.[139] The EIC's turn to conquest represented a significant shift within the British Empire. With the conquest of the Punjab, the EIC brought the whole subcontinent under its control.[140] By 1850, the former trading venture was a colonial regime that ruled over a vast indigenous population. Capable of waging

---

[134] Ibid., 52-55.
[135] Carter, 14, Webster, 22.
[136] Jim Handy, "The 'Non-Economy' and the Radical Dreams of Food Sovereignty", (Conference Paper for "Food Sovereignty: A Critical Dialogue" International Conference, Sept. 14-25, 2013, p. 1-20), 10.
[137] Carter, 14.
[138] Metcalf and Metcalf, 90.
[139] Ibid.
[140] Ibid., 90-91.

war and administering justice, the EIC came to resemble a modern state in European terms.[141] Although the ideal nature of governance for its subjects was a matter of debate, one thing was certain: the institution of property. It was with the establishment of the permanent settlement that property became "the basic principle of government" in colonial India.[142] As historian Mike Davis has demonstrated, far from making agriculture more efficient, the 'improvement' encouraged by securing property in land was entirely detrimental to the existing agrarian order and social life in India.[143]

When the permanent settlement was established, notes Ranajit Guha, the British knew nothing about the agrarian system in India. As he stated, its "quasi-feudal" rights and obligations "defied any attempt at interpretation in Western terms."[144] It was precisely because of the unfamiliarity of the agrarian system of India that the British sought to impose liberal order, and enforce conformity to the liberal norm of property. Without property, "improvements," wrote supreme council of Bengal member Sir Philip Francis, "are not to be expected; for who will employ his money or his labour in the cultivation of a soil that does not belong to him."[145] Instead, the British dismissed the capacities of the existing system, reflecting Francis's statement that Bengal had been "ruined by the rapacity of imprudent farmers."[146] It was only by instituting, as the

---

[141] Bernard S. Cohn, *Colonialism and its Forms of Knowledge: The British in India*, (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press), 58.
[142] Guha, *A Rule of Property for Bengal*, 9.
[143] The extraction of revenue through property combined with increased exports of Indian goods to Britain produced several famines between 1876 -1908, that killed an estimated total of 18 million Indians. This is stated authoritatively in Mike Davis, *Late Victorian Holocausts: El Nino Famines and the Making of the Third World,* (London and New York: Verso, 2001), 50-299.
[144] Ibid., 3.
[145] Francis quoted in Guha, *A Rule of Property for Bengal*, 115.
[146] Ibid., 8.

founders of the permanent settlement claimed, 'a rule of property,' that British landlords could make Indian peasants productive.

Contrary to the arguments presented in Orientalist literature, markets did exist in precolonial India. In fact, precolonial Bengal was one of the most commercialized and market oriented agricultural systems in the world. The reason it defied interpretation in Western terms, then, was not due to a lack of property, but rather because its complexity and sophistication escaped the narrow confines of liberal universalism. The EIC thus sought to simplify the agrarian system in Bengal, and having conquered the region, render it conducive to a European system of political economy. But the EIC did not want to establish its dominion by directly controlling landed property. The enormous distance between Britain and India, combined with doubts as to whether the climate of India could support a European 'colony,' instead led the EIC to entrust landed property to a class of indigenous entrepreneurs known as Zamindars, who were also tax collectors under the Mughal Empire. Zamindars were hired for periods of twenty to thirty years, to serve the role of property owners who collected revenue from peasants who cultivated the land directly.

The institution of property greatly exacerbated peasant insecurity. The historiography of this period holds that the permanent settlement rapidly diminished the size of peasant land holdings to the point that they were unable to sustain themselves with subsistence crops.[147] If peasants were unable to pay this revenue from their earnings, due to the volatility of the market economy, they were forced to take credit from

---

[147] See, for example, Hamza Alavi, "India: Transition From Feudalism to Colonial Capitalism," in, *Journal of Contemporary Asia,* (Vol. 10, No. 4, Pgs. 359-400, 1980).

moneylenders, leading to a cycle of indebtedness.[148] This alienation then led to the effective 'proletarianization' of the peasantry, who, if not forced from their land completely, became modern agricultural workers. This argument, however, maintains the Orientalist vision held by nineteenth century British liberals – that agrarian Bengal was not advanced enough to adapt to the production of cash crops. Peasants in Bengal certainly became indebted, but for much different reasons. In the Zamindar system of precolonial India, taxes fluctuated depending on the weather and value of the crops. The EIC though, in order to generate profits, imposed a fixed rate of taxation that Zamindars were to collect from peasants, regardless of how good the harvest was. This system was made worse for peasant farmers because The EIC used its dominance to reduce the price of Indian cotton. This encouraged the growth of long staple cotton, which demanded more water and was more vulnerable to drought. In reality, peasants rarely lost access to their land and seldom became wage labourers simply put. Their increased poverty instead stemmed from artificially inflated taxes, and the ability of the EIC to influence the marketing of their products.

The process of creating European models of property that began in Bengal spread over a long period as the British extended their rule over different regions of India.[149] Property in land also took on different forms than the permanent settlement model. The Raiyatawari system, for example, gave peasants themselves control of the land in return for a payment to the Government of India.[150] In much of Northern India, this rent was

---

[148] Amiya Kumar Bagchi, *Colonialism and the Indian Economy*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 203.
[149] Alavi, 372.
[150] Bagchi, 197. There are many spellings of Raiyatawari, including Raiyatwari, and the most common, Anglicized version, Ryotwari – and the farmers called ryots.

changed to a village payment. Debate surrounding these models amongst British officials had to do with the length of term, the amount of rent, and who, be it Zamindar or 'Ryot,' paid it to whom. Both systems, though, were designed to induce peasants to produce more for the market.

Railroads were another instrument of liberal political economy. Between 1845 and 1875, British companies invested 95 million pounds in the construction of Indian railroads – the largest international flow of capital in the nineteenth century.[151] This contributed to the construction of 25,936 miles of railroad by the year 1900.[152] The government of India was explicitly concerned about the need to facilitate improved methods of transport of primary commodities for both internal and external markets.[153] In order to stimulate the export of Indian cotton and other raw materials to England, the EIC, as the effective government of India, guaranteed a five percent return for British companies investing in Indian railroads. This meant that the return was paid for primarily through taxes imposed on Indian peasants.[154] Interestingly, it was James Wilson as Secretary of Finance who recommended this guarantee to the Board of Control. Between 1834 and 1850, British imports of raw material from India, such as cotton and wool, more than quadrupled.[155] This increase in production was undoubtedly a result of the new systems of land ownership, but was certainly aided by Wilson's

---

[151] W.J. Macpherson, "*Investment in Indian Railways, 1845-1875*", in , The Economic History Review, New Series, (Vol. 8, No. 2, 1955, pp. 177-186), 177. Daniel R. Headrick, *The Tools of Empire: Technology and European Imperialism in the Nineteenth Century*, (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1981), 181.
[152] Theodore Koditschek, "Capitalism, Race and Evolution in Imperial Britain", in Theodore Koditschek, Sundiata Keita Cha-Jua, Helen A. Neville (eds), *Race Struggles*, (Illinois: University of Illinois Press, 2009), 53.
[153] Macpherson, 178.
[154] Jim Handy, "The 'Non-Economy'," 10.
[155] Ibid.

railroad scheme that "fostered increased British penetration of interior markets of India, and provided a risk free vent for surplus capital for British capitalists."[156] Furthermore, railroads were a military endeavor. They were used to accelerate the means of communication and security in an increasingly surveillant colonial state.

Now, having outlined these historical changes, I will discuss how they figured into the writings of the *Economist*, J.S. Mill, and Kaye. The *Economist* was a particularly strong advocate of the permanent settlement, and, regardless of the damage caused by the EIC in Bengal, denied its exploitative nature. "We," wrote the *Economist* on behalf of the British, "are endeavouring to improve India into full commercial civilization."[157] Therefore, "the incessant and inextricable *insertion* of capital into land" is required.[158] Contrary to much criticism of the permanent – or "perpetual" – settlement that also emerged during this period, the *Economist* argued that the only way to intensify agricultural production in India was to give individuals – rather than the state – the ownership of rent. Indeed, the paper's adamant defense of this system was spurred by numerous attacks against it. In its reaction, the *Economist* notes that Asian societies, particularly India, had adopted a system whereby the state owned the land, whereas in Europe, individuals had appropriated land.[159] Other prominent liberal thinkers such as James Mill, noted the paper, believed that it was preferable to build a colonial government on this model of "Asiatic" land ownership. If so, the colonial regime could simply replace Indian authorities and extract revenue in the same manner. The

---

[156] Ibid.
[157] The *Economist*, Sir C. Wood's Despatch Recommending the Perpetual Settlement of the Land Revenue of India, (September 13, 1862).
[158] Ibid.
[159] Ibid.

Economist's concern with enhancing the capacities of Indian subjects, though, meant that it understood the state's claim to ultimate ownership of the land as the principal cause of India's "arrested civilization."[160] By leasing the land to Zamindars, production would increase because of their incentive to draw capital to the soil, and improve the land they owned 'privately.' Here, the *Economist* is essentially making an argument for no state intervention into the Indian economy. Although the paper certainly misunderstood the degree to which land in precolonial India was owned by the state, it was in favour of the permanent settlement because it embodied a system in which individuals were encouraged to increase the quantity of their production and pursue profits. "No landowner would dare to spend a shilling on the improvement of his estate," after all, if there was no economic incentive to do so. It is for this reason that the *Economist* denounced any imposed and "arbitrary" exaction of rent."[161] As the paper stated:

> In so far, therefore, as we day by day improve India into the state to which we ought to improve it, and are anxiously endeavoring to improve it, in so far shall we find it needful to abandon our principle of preserving the rent, or the augmented rent of land for the use of the government.[162]

The progress of India had been impeded, in other words, by the customs of 'Oriental despotism,' which prohibited individuals from realizing their self-interest. There was a stark difference, however, between what the *Economist* thought was happening in India and the reality of the permanent settlement. The paper expressed that the rapid increase in production was a result of subjects' newfound ability to pursue their economic interests. The increased economic welfare of subjects, in turn, allowed the EIC

[160] Ibid.
[161] Ibid.
[162] Ibid.

to tax peasants and Zamindars in order to generate the revenue necessary to fund its colonial regime. But this was actually prompted by the regime's entirely contradictory fixed rate of taxation, which, along with the ability of the EIC to influence prices, culminated in the "single most important act in the dispossession of Indian peasants."[163] This process was not, in other words, the result of letting the 'natural' stages of capitalist development unfold. It was rather the product of the government "exactions" that the *Economist* so adamantly denounced. "It is a notorious fact, known to everyone who has the slightest acquaintance with India," wrote the *Economist*, "that the terms upon which land was formerly held…have undergone great modification and improvement."[164] Thus, the large increase in quantities of Indian goods imported to Britain instead provided, for the paper, "proof of the improved condition of the cultivators of the soil."[165] Moreover, the permanent settlement model of property in land encouraged what was thought to be the correct pattern of human development. In defending the Government of India from charges of prejudice and abuse, the *Economist* cited the developmental influence of the permanent settlement on the people of India:

> When it is asserted…that the natives of British India are not only poor, but are in a declining state, and are becoming every year poorer, we believe such assertions to be contrary to well-known and admitted facts. All trustworthy evidence goes to prove that not only are the condition of the great masses of the people infinitely better than it was when they became British subjects, but also than that of the people of any of the native states.[166]

[163] Handy, "The 'Non-Economy'", 11.
[164] The *Economist*, "The India Committee" (April 24, 1852).
[165] Ibid.
[166] The *Economist*, "The India Committee."

The *Economist* also reduced any Indian opposition to the permanent settlement as a product of India's cultural stasis – its reluctance to accept 'change' and modernity.[167] In reality, Indian subjects' resistance to the EIC's regime of property was a legitimate defense of their livelihood. An important aspect of the permanent settlement's developmental properties, according to the *Economist*, was its ability to create a new class of Indian consumers. While the paper rejected the argument that government exactions were the cause of the country's increasing production during the early to mid nineteenth century, it pointed to the "fact" that the increased exports to Britain were accompanied by "increased [British] exports to India for the use of the natives."[168] As production increased, so too did the means of the people, who, with their increased profits, could enjoy the amenities of commercial civilization. The *Economist* saw in India "the demand for the consumption of the people, of foreign productions…steadily and greatly augmenting."[169] Even though the permanent settlement jeopardized the welfare of Indian peasants more than any other measure taken by the British, the *Economist* asserted that it "secured" the cultivator, who was now free to "obtain" all the "advantages" that came along with the enhanced value of the land.[170] Whether the permanent settlement helped to facilitate a new class of Indian consumers, or simply increased the abundance of European products for an already existing class of consumers, the perceived transformation of 'backward' peasants into consumers of material goods, via their dispossession, was one of the desired effects in the reorganization of Indian society. It is evident in the *Economist*, in other words, that one of the aspects that

[167] The *Economist*, Sept. 13.
[168] The *Economist*, "The India Committee"
[169] Ibid.
[170] Ibid.

comprised the ideal liberal subject is the ability to consume. Not only, as a means for them to maintain the cycle of capitalist production, but also to ensure their welfare through material prosperity. Private property – or "the striking contrast to the old way of assessing the land according the nature of the crop upon it" – was the driving force behind this transformation.[171]

The Raiyatawari system, on the other hand, was viewed as far more favourable to the permanent settlement by the 'utilitarian' school of liberals, including J.S. Mill. In *The Principles of Political Economy*, J.S. Mill criticizes the permanent settlement, stating that:

> England being accustomed to great estates and great landlords…took it for granted that India must possess the like; and looking round for some set of people who might be taken for the objects of their search, they pitched upon a sort of tax-gatherers called Zamindars.[172]

In fact, J.S. Mill recognized the complexity of precolonial India's economy to a much greater degree than the *Economist*, and certainly most colonial administrators. He attributed the EIC's "mistakes" in Bengal to "the inability of ordinary minds to imagine a state of social relations fundamentally different from those with which they are practically familiar."[173] As such, the permanent settlement did not do enough to enhance the agency of peasant cultivators, and instead endowed "a useless body of great landlords with gifts from the public revenue."[174] As the Raiyatawari model spread, most notably in the Madras and Bombay Presidencies, it supposedly enhanced the position of peasants by

[171] Ibid.
[172] John Stuart Mill, *Principles of Political Economy*, 320-321.
[173] Ibid., 320.
[174] Ibid., 322.

reducing their dependence on the Zamindari class.[175] For J.S. Mill, this form of peasant proprietorship worked to "free" peasants from their "traditional" restraints, allowing them to be more independent in their pursuit of self-interest. However, although J.S. Mill's critique of the permanent settlement seemingly stemmed from a more compassionate position, the direct peasant proprietorship that the Raiyatawari system offered was also destructive. J.S. Mill was clear that an even more individualistic model best served the welfare of Indian peasants. To foster this agency, though, was not a matter of ending colonialism, but was entirely dependent on colonial rule. For J.S. Mill, colonialism, historically speaking, was essentially a means to induce subject populations to labour for their own benefit.[176] Importantly, the labour that British rule in India was meant to induce, was not simply meant to serve the regime's goal of extracting surplus value. Rather, as a specifically liberal form colonialism, EIC rule sought to turn peasants into instruments for social progress.[177] That is, to make life itself "productive."

J.S. Mill was certainly confused about the state of productivity in India prior to EIC rule, which was indeed, highly efficient, though to see it this way requires us to jettison the liberal understanding of productive labour. To be sure, J.S. Mill's thought rests on the assumption that in order to be legitimate, the labour of Indian peasants needed to embody the notion of productivity according to liberal ideology. "To civilize a savage," wrote J.S. Mill, "he must be inspired with new wants and desires, even if not a very elevated kind, provided that their gratification can be a motive to steady and regular

[175] Metcalf, 198.
[176] J.S. Mill, *Principles of Political Economy*, 103
[177] Thomas R. Metcalf, *Forging the Raj: Essays on British India in the Heyday of Empire*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 26, 27, 29.

exertion."[178] It was not enough, in other words, that the interests of Indian peasants are served, but that their labour, regardless of its role in their actual welfare, is an end in itself. Furthermore, "A state of mere indolence is the most fruitless and hopeless condition of a human being. It is the most obstinate of hindrances to improvement; almost any means are good for getting rid of it."[179] Indian peasants, of course, were by no means "indolent." To the contrary, they did what they could to survive under the colonial regime's expanding influence and power, and historically adapted to a variety of circumstances. The perception of India as underdeveloped in its productive capacities instead stemmed from the universalism ascribed to liberal political economy, and the distinction between "productive" and "unproductive" labour. According to J.S. Mill: "Unproductive labour…will be understood as labour which does not terminate in the creation of material wealth; which, however largely or successfully practiced, does not render the community, and the world at large, richer in material products.[180]

Although J.S. Mill disagreed with the benefits of the permanent settlement that the *Economist* championed, his thought echoes the paper's sentiment that the British needed to instill the "effective desire of accumulation" in Indian subjects.[181] "Backward" societies such as India were, according to J.S. Mill, deficient in this desire. The role of the British was thus to provide the proper guidance for Indian subjects, who although being developed as 'free' individuals, "cannot be trusted to govern themselves."[182] For J.S. Mill, it is precisely this notion of productive labour that defines the ideal liberal

---

[178] J.S. Mill, *Principles of Political Economy*, 104.
[179] Ibid.
[180] Ibid., 50.
[181] Ibid., 164.
[182] J.S. Mill, *Writings on India*, 201, *Principles of Political Economy*, 164.

subject. In becoming productive, India could follow "the leading countries of the world" toward the progress of modern society, defined by increasing economic capacities of individuals.[183]

This utilitarianism speaks to the alliance between the economic and the biological that exists in liberalism. According to J.S. Mill, political economy was an extremely modern phenomenon in the nineteenth century. The subject with which it deals – the "condition of mankind" – however, was an age-old dilemma. By modernizing this problematic, political economy came to find that human well-being was best enabled through the increase of economic wealth and material prosperity.[184] That British rule in India was a biopolitical project is demonstrated in the way that liberal political economy was defined as a means to increase the innovative capacities of human life. Economic and biological production were thus attached inasmuch as one leads to the other. As J.S. Mill states:

> All know that it is one thing to be rich, another thing to be enlightened, brave, or humane; that the questions how a nation is made wealthy, and how it is made free, or virtuous, or eminent in literature, in the fine arts, in arms, or in polity, are totally distinct enquiries. Those things, indeed, are all indirectly connected, and react upon one another.[185]

The benefits that extend to the social realm were to be consolidated under a regime of private property, which, for J.S. Mill, signified the beginning of progress:

> The political economist, for a considerable time to come, will be chiefly concerned with the conditions of existence and progress belonging to a society founded on private property and individual competition; and that the object to be principally aimed at in the present stage of human improvement, is not the subversion of the system of individual property, but the improvement of it, and the full participation of every member of the community in its benefits.[186]

---

[183] J.S. Mill, *Principles of Political Economy*, 706, 707.
[184] Ibid., 3.
[185] Ibid.
[186] Ibid., 214.

For J.S. Mill, the industrial capacities of India were limited by a "deficiency of town population."[187] Meaning that India supposedly lacked a large urban population that would be conducive to industrial capitalism. Instead:

> The agriculture of India is conducted entirely on the system of small holdings. There is, however, a considerable amount of combination of labour. The village institutions and customs, which are the real framework of Indian society, make provision for joint action in the cases in which it is seen to be necessary...The implements and processes of agriculture are however so wretched, that the produce of the soil, in spite of great natural fertility and a climate highly favourable to vegetation, is miserably small.[188]

In order to stimulate population growth and "develop the productive resources of India," J.S. Mill suggested that India rapidly increase the quantities of agricultural products exported to European markets.[189] The increased market orientation of Indian peasants – like property in one form or another – received practically universal support amongst liberal thinkers because it helped to shape the self-governing individual.

This element of liberal subjectivity was stated particularly well in the work of Kaye. By creating liberal subjects through the installation of political economy, the British were able, in his words, to "make the rude barbarians themselves the agents of their own civilization."[190] During its period of 'indirect rule,' the EIC worked to establish a system of liberal governance in which subjects were freed through the institution of property, and subsequently enabled to better their own material conditions through the marketization of their production. "The servants of the Company," wrote

---

[187] Ibid., 121.
[188] Ibid.
[189] Ibid.
[190] John William Kaye, *The Administration of the Eat India Company: A History of India Progress*, (London: R. Bentley, 1853), 466.

Kaye, “have reclaimed men whose savage propensities had been aggravated and seemingly perpetuated by the cruel discipline, the unscrupulous oppression of their masters.”[191] The EIC could “remedy” this “evil”, not by governing directly, but rather by installing liberal political economy.[192] The goal of liberal governance in India was, in other words, to insert subjects into the machinery of marketized production. The transformation occurred, according to Kaye, when Indian peasants no longer suffered under the oppression of their previously despotic rulers, and were taught the virtues of financial prosperity. In such as system, peasants were guided by their own self-interest, rather than any perceived allegiance “to the most degraded superstitions.”[193] Indeed, the success of liberal governance depended on the degree to which individuals could regulate themselves.

But of course, the installation of political economy in India was inseparable from violence. Although Kaye perceived “the plough” to be the “chief civilizer,” the British nevertheless relied on a coercive machinery in order to ensure, for example, that taxes were paid.[194] As such, although the British sought to “abstain” from displays of outright violence, Kaye also recognized that it was necessary, on certain occasions “to habituate them to the customs of civilized life.”[195] The ability of the EIC to rule indirectly, too, depended on the everyday violence of dispossession. By no means could liberal rule simply adhere to its stated ideals and let Indian society exist without interference. Instead, the colonial efforts of the EIC in the first half of the nineteenth century, which

[191] Ibid., 492.
[192] Ibid., 468.
[193] Ibid., 465.
[194] Bagchi, 199.
[195] Kaye, *The Administration of the East India Company*, 466.

appear to contradict the liberal idea of individual liberty, provide an example of liberal principles in full effect. In India, such actions were experimental, inasmuch as India served as a testing ground for the creation of a liberal society through the application of violence.

The construction of railroads in India also constituted an act of dispossession celebrated by the *Economist*. The paper wrote that "we rejoice in being able at length to congratulate the commercial and manufacturing public of this country, and all who are in any way connected with, or interested in, the progress of our Indian empire, that arrangements have been at length definitely completed for the introduction of railways."[196] This enthusiasm can certainly be attributed to the benefits that England received from improved transportation in India. But railroads were also said to have an incredibly civilizing effect in India. According to the *Economist*: "Among these principles some of the most remarkable have been the systematic efforts of Lord Dalhousie's Government to render railways not merely a successful commercial speculation, but a widely civilizing influence."[197] Above all, "the social results of the Indian railways will be at least as great and penetrating as the commercial results."[198]

The regime of private property and the construction of railroads raise one of the most fundamental contradictions of the liberal colonial state. Proponents of political economy argued that capitalist development was a 'natural' process. That it occurred, in other words, without governmental interference, and was stimulated by people whose liberty allowed them to create economic progress. In reality, the construction of political

[196] The *Economist*, "East India Railway Companies", (Aug 4, 1849).
[197] The *Economist*, "Indian Railways", (July 25, 1857).
[198] Ibid.

economy as a form of liberal governance required not only the forceful dispossession of peasants, but also the direct intervention of the colonial state. The rise of capitalist relations of production, then, is better understood as a process of primitive accumulation, or "accumulation by dispossession."[199]

Accumulation by dispossession refers to the process through which capital is created. Building on Karl Marx's original argument made in *Capital*, David Harvey argues that the initial requirements for capitalism such as raw materials and empty land, did not, historically speaking, exist naturally. Instead, they were produced by the forceful expulsion of peasant populations and the conversion of common land into private property.[200] This occurred in India as the British manipulated existing markets in Bengal by introducing a fixed rate of taxation. This process was also evident in the state's guaranteed return on railroad investment. Railroads were definitely a central concern of the *Economist*. According to the paper, the five percent return on investment was "wise," not simply because it was Wilson's suggestion, but as a means to stimulate industry in a country where, because of its indolence, there was no commercial demand.[201] As the paper stated:

> We hold this undertaking, and the support it has received from the East India Company to be of the first importance. Not only as a source of supply for cotton and other valuable raw material, but as a market for our manufactures. Our possessions in India hold out prospects of increase yet undeveloped, of which, even our present extensive trade gives no adequate notion.[202]

---

[199] Harvey, 143.
[200] Ibid., 143, 145.
[201] The *Economist*, "Indian Railways", (July 25, 1857).
[202] The *Economist*, (Dec. 5th, 1846).

Perhaps surprisingly, Wilson, who also felt that government interference in the market caused "the greatest social inconveniences", made this argument.[203] The *Economist* referred to racial and religious difference to excuse the colonial regime's use of force and heavy government legislation.[204] As the paper stated:

> Railways cannot but exercise a remarkable influence in giving the Hindus a fresh sense at once of the narrowness of their circle of time-honoured thoughts, and of the vast results of the study of physical science which they have as yet so completely neglected. We cannot doubt that the arbitrary and onerous character of their religious customs, and the superstitious timidity of their general character, will be eventually and deeply influenced by the introduction of the new European arts.[205]

While race was certainly a factor in the Government of India's intervention into the economy, the objective of those liberal commentators who talked about EIC rule in India was not simply to excuse a regime that exploited Indian society for material gain. Liberal colonialism in India, in other words, was not founded on the need to provide Britain with raw materials, markets, and space for profitable investment, as many theories of capitalist imperialism hold.[206] Dispossession and intervention into the economy was rather a microcosm of liberal colonialism as a whole. Capitalism was integral to the biopolitical conceptualization of life. As the British attempted to universalize industrial capitalism in the nineteenth century, their understanding of how society should to be organized was increasingly confined, with the goal of having life replicate, or at least mimic the processes of capitalist production.

---

[203] The *Economist*, (April 20th, 1844).
[204] Handy, "The 'Non-Economy'",11.
[205] The Economist, "The Indian Railways", (Nov 21, 1857).
[206] Wolfgang J. Mommsen, *Theories of Imperialism*, P.S. Falla (Trans.), (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982), 9, 29.

In this chapter I have shown how the construction of liberal political economy was essential to the humanitarian motives and biopolitics of liberal colonialism in India. Together, the permanent settlement of Bengal and the Raiytwari systems of property, the increased market orientation of peasant production, and railroad technology, helped to shape Indian society according to liberalism's limited account of humanity. According to the writings of the *Economist*, J.S. Mill and Kaye, life was improved by increasing Indian subjects' ability to consume, labour, and self-govern. These were the requirements, in other words, needed to create subjects ideally suited to furthering the productive capacities of the species. Political economy was therefore the main principle of colonial organization to which peasants needed to simultaneously adapt and work to create, in order to maintain the 'indirect rule' of the EIC. The colonial reordering of India reflected what Foucault described as the 'process of becoming citizens.'[207] The dispossession that occurred by exposing Indian peasants to the commercial dynamics of capitalism did not defy the liberal ideals expressed in colonial discourse. Though a contradiction, the violence of colonial intervention was simply the cost required to enable Indian subjects' pursuit of material prosperity, and insert them into machinery ultimately designed for the "preservation of peace."[208] By 1850, the British Empire encompassed approximately 350,000,000 inhabitants and 6, 539, 685 square miles.[209] At this time, the majority of its subjects were subsistence peasants.[210] The industrial development of England that the *Economist* attributed to its "commercial spirit" was significantly aided through the exploitation of peasants under the colonial state's regime of property. Industrialization

---

[207] Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*.
[208] Mill, *Considerations on Representative Government*, 218.
[209] Koditschek, "Capitalism, Race and Evolution in Imperial Britain", 51.
[210] Ibid.

enabled Britain to finance its empire, which, in the nineteenth century was threatened by various anti-colonial movements. Among the most significant was the Indian mutiny-rebellion of 1857. As will be shown further in the next chapter, it was the preoccupation with conformity to political economy – as the means to promote life – that drove extensive and overt colonial violence.

THE MUTINY-REBELLION OF 1857: KNOWLEDGE, RACE, AND THE "NECROPOLITICAL AUDIT" OF 'LIFE'

"Colonial knowledge both enabled conquest and was produced by it." – Bernard Cohn

This chapter examines the Indian mutiny-rebellion of 1857 that led to the ouster of the EIC, and the direct rule of India by the British government in 1858. It demonstrates how the uprising symbolized an act of resistance against the forces of liberal political economy that reorganized the constitution of life in India. As discussed in the previous chapter, the rule of property, the marketization of peasant production, and the ability to self-govern were together understood to enhance the lives of Indian subjects. It follows, therefore, that those subjects who rejected their subjugation to this regime represented a biopolitical threat to the construction of liberal order. In its defense of the measures taken by the Government of India to suppress the revolt, the *Economist* insisted that the rebellion was isolated amongst unruly mutineers. Indeed, as a powerful voice of political economy, the paper wanted to preserve the liberal policies enacted in India, and deny the revolt's more widespread character. Although the *Economist* could not admit to the deteriorating conditions that liberal political economy actually produced for Indian peasants, the paper contradicted itself by stating that the rebellion helped to reinforce British authority – which was necessary for the proper development of Indian society – suggesting that the mutiny-rebellion was in fact a generalized revolt. I argue, however, that the Government of India's vengeful response to the rebellion represented an attack on Indian subjects who sought to escape the confines of liberal order, and define the constitution of life in their own terms.

Importantly, violence in the post-rebellion state was increasingly racialized. In an effort to more effectively contain anticolonial resistance, the British developed a colonial

knowledge system that linked the industrial capacities of Indian subjects to their physical characteristics. This process was marked by a rapid increase in ethnological literature and practices. The writings of George Campbell, for example, provide evidence of the racial ideology that took shape during the aftermath of the mutiny-rebellion. The *Economist* also perceived race to be the ultimate indicator of economic abilities, and therefore relentlessly encouraged political economy as a means to manage the "darker races."[211] Through an analysis of these writings, and with reference to John William Kaye and J.S. Mill, I argue that the generation of knowledge in India served as a form of liberal-colonial governance. As these sources indicate, political economy itself acted as a means to survey the population. Those that fell outside its gaze were viewed as inimical to the reproduction of the species and needed to be reintegrated – it was argued, into the system of capitalist production that codified their position within the colonial hierarchy.

The Indian mutiny-rebellion was born out of grievances among Indian members of the Bengal Army known as Sepoys. On May 9, 1857, mutineers in the town of Meerut broke into two jails to release prisoners. Over the course of 1857, rebels attacked a total of 41 prisons, and released over 23,000 prisoners. During the rebellion, one hundred thousand troops in the Bengal Army mutinied.[212] This mutiny quickly spread, however, to encompass other disaffected groups within Indian society. Social unrest spread across the Northwest provinces of India as the largest rebellion in the history of the nineteenth century British Empire developed.[213] The mutiny-rebellion has attracted considerable

---

[211] The *Economist*, "The Economic Value of Justice to the Dark Races," (December 9, 1865).
[212] Clare Anderson, *The Indian Uprising of 1857-8: Prisons, Prisoners and Rebellion*, (New York: Anthem Press, 2007), 1-2.
[213] Ibid., 3.

controversy. Indeed, its multi-faceted character has produced various explanations among historians. Leading up to the revolt, landholders, landlords, and tenants had all been involved in riots, and in 1857 huge amounts of the North Indian peasantry rebelled. This revolt – and the disputes that preceded it – was sparked by a diverse combination of local concerns about the economic hardship produced by the EIC's revenue demands. Each episode can be traced, in other words, to the Company's policy to increase revenue and monopolize its political authority.[214] The colonial discourse of British chroniclers, however, in an effort to reduce the significance of Indian grievances with EIC policy, dismissed the extent of this civil rebellion.[215]

The *Economist*, for example, insisted that the rebellion was connected exclusively to the Bengal army, and did not represent an anticolonial revolt.[216] To whatever degree the *Economist* chose to ignore the diversity of resistance in order to quell concern about the colonial regime's status, and preserve the paradigm of liberal rule in India, the paper's position reflects the historiographical construction of Indian peoples – especially peasants – as having no historical agency whatsoever. The *Economist* argued that the social benefits and developmental effect of British rule were too important to be sacrificed. "For what better purpose do we hold India," wrote the paper, "than its gradual enlightenment and the judicious amelioration of the native character, institutions, and customs?"[217] Faced with this crisis, the *Economist* argued that to relinquish control of India would be to sacrifice the moral obligations of the British to improve the lives of

---

[214] Ibid., 10.
[215] Ibid., 8.
[216] The *Economist*, "Theorizing on Indian Affairs," (August 1, 1857).
[217] Ibid., The *Economist*, "Indian Railways," (November 21, 1857).

Indian subjects, and abandon the march of civilization in a "strangely petrified" world.[218]

Furthermore:

> The India Company aided by the Government, has acquired the whole of India, and, having acquired it, we have no alternative but to maintain possession. For all the world, not merely for England and India, the gradual extension of our dominion there has been very advantageous, and the commotion that threatens our power, and will impede the traffic between India and other countries, is nothing less than a great social calamity.[219]

The paper's position held that the rebellion could not have been an expression of anticolonialism because Indian subjects simply did not possess the political faculties to do so. The rebellion was thus viewed as fundamentally apolitical. Indeed, colonial rule was justified, as the *Economist* demonstrates, on the presumed absence of political communities in India.[220]

The fact that the paper dismissed the magnitude of the Indian mutiny-rebellion suggests, though, that it did pose a legitimate threat to British dominion. Evidence shows that the rebellion, despite efforts to minimize its effects, did in fact involve numerous sectors of Indian society. This raises the issue addressed by Subaltern Studies as to how to portray historically oppressed classes without speaking for them or appropriating their cause.[221] Indeed, historians have grappled with the issue of how to "extract" subaltern experiences and perspectives from colonial archives.[222] As such, in my explanation of

---

[218] The *Economist*, "Theorizing on Indian Affairs," (August 1, 1857), The *Economist*, "Indian Railways," (November 21, 1857).
[219] The *Economist*, "Our Trade With India," (August 1, 1857).
[220] Uday Sing Mehta, *Liberalism and Empire: A Study in Nineteenth-Century British Liberal Thought*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999), 121.
[221] Gayatri Spivak, "Can the Subaltern Speak?", in Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths, and Helen Tiffin (eds.), *The Post-Colonial Studies Reader*, (New York: Routledge, 2006, 29-38).
[222] Anderson, *The Indian Uprising*, 12.

the rebellion, I do not attempt to speak for Indian peasants and their reasons for resistance against British rule. I do, however, follow the line of argument made by Ranajit Guha in *Elementary Aspects of Peasant Insurgency in Colonial India*, that amongst its diverse forces, the rebellion displayed an overall 'political' character that not only refuted the European notion of linear progress, but also sought to disrupt the foundations of colonial sovereignty.[223]

To be political, notes Julian Reid is to possess the desire to create change and overcome conditions of hardship. To claim that the Indian mutiny-rebellion was an act of anticolonial resistance is not to speak for the Indian subjects who were engaged in it. Nor is it an attempt to capture the essence of the revolt in a "singular" manner.[224] Rather, it is to identify its undeniably political character that demonstrates the agency of Indian subjects. This political character, according to Guha, was represented through attacks on symbols of British rule such as telegraph offices, railways, factories, and importantly, prisons.[225] Prisons, of course, were attacked for practical purposes – as a means to mobilize support for the rebellion. But they were also attacked for symbolic reasons, as Indian mutineers and rebels viewed them as one of the principal instruments of colonial rule and its multiple cultural transgressions.[226] These crimes were also fundamentally attached to liberal political economy – the main vehicle driving the biopolitical reorganization of colonial India in the nineteenth century. Thus, although the revolt

[223] Ranajit Guha, *Elementary Aspects of Peasant Insurgency in Colonial India,* (Delhi, Oxford University Press, 1983).
[224] Anderson, *The Indian Uprising*, 1.
[225] Guha, 25, Barbara D. Metcalf and Thomas R. Metcalf, *A Concise History of Modern India*, second edition, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 140, 141.
[226] Anderson, *The Indian Uprising*, 2.

encompassed many diverse motives, it represented an act of resistance against the regime of capital imposed by the EIC, and its diffuse effects that reverberated throughout India.

Certain events and processes in the reorganization of Indian society support this argument. In 1856, for example, the EIC annexed the province of Awadh on the grounds that its ruler had mismanaged the territory to the point of corruption. Due to the pernicious effects of the Company's new land settlement, local resentment grew such that Awadh became one of the main centres in the rebellion.[227] Furthermore, the shift in the structure of trade was an important factor in the stimulus of unrest. EIC policy fundamentally altered the pattern of Indian trade by drawing the subcontinent into the instability of the global economy. By the time of the mutiny-rebellion, local patterns of production and consumption had changed to the point that India's trading position was reversed. Instead of exporting finished products, India exported its raw materials such as cotton and opium.[228] The effects of annexation, land settlement, and market orientation pressured communities that were already on the margins of society. Their acts of resistance in the rebellion were therefore an expression of livelihoods lost.[229]

Interestingly, the *Economist* argued that Indian Sepoys mutinied because they were institutionally isolated from the 'improvements' taking place throughout the country. The paper cited irrigation, canals, roads, railroads, and schools as examples of examples of India's 'prosperity.' Furthermore, it was the 'freedom' to labour that supposedly pacified Indian subjects. It was therefore the 'unoccupied lives of Sepoy soldiers, who, removed from these modern amenities, rose up in anger. They were not, in

[227] Ibid., 8.
[228] Ibid., 9.
[229] Ibid.

other words, inserted into the machinery of liberal political economy to the same degree as the peasantry. The logic of this argument is by all means flawed, not only because Sepoys fulfilled a necessary role in the maintenance of British rule, but also because it was precisely the subjugation to capital that exacerbated peasant insecurity and ultimately led to their involvement in the revolt.[230]

This does, however, speak to the notion of production as synonymous with the improvement of human life. If Indian peasants resisted EIC rule because of its exploitative policies, it follows that what they were resisting was their biopolitical subjugation: the system, that is, that attempted to reduce their existence to the instruments necessary to secure liberal forms of life – the subject that labours, consumes, and self-regulates. That which defies this liberal norm was inimical to the colonial regime. The takeover of India by the British government itself in 1858 resulted in the complete remilitarization of the colonial state, and culminated in the blasting of prisoners to death by tying their bodies over the mouths of cannons.[231] This response was supported by the *Economist* because, as the paper wrote, "The Hindus are like young children; they have no distinct idea of what they want; they know they are miserably poor and wretched; they abide and seek no remedy."[232] The British had a responsibility to repress the rebellion, in other words, in order to "save India from herself."[233]

Reflecting in 1858 on the "crisis" that unfolded in the past year, the paper stated that because of the brutality committed by Indian rebels, British rule now had unanimous

---

[230] Eric Stokes, C.A. Bayly (ed.), *The Peasant Armed: The Indian Revolt of 1857*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1986), 218.
[231] Paul Gilroy, *After Empire: Melancholia or Convivial Culture*, (London: Routledge, 2004), 50.
[232] The *Economist*, "India Railways," (July 25, 1857).
[233] The *Economist*, The Indian Crisis of the Past Year, (Jan 2nd, 1858.)

support from Britain and all other nations. "No events less horrible," wrote the paper, "could have strengthened our hand so powerfully."[234] Although the paper dismissed the revolt as an isolated incident within the Bengal Army, its support for the displacement of the EIC and a stronger hand for Britain in India suggest that the rebellion was indeed a general insurrection. While it certainly could not have been both, the contradiction presented by the *Economist* demonstrates the liberal ideology that the installation of political economy could not have elicited anticolonial sentiment among Indian subjects. By repressing the rebellion, the paper stated, "we are preserving for the Hindoos social law, social morality, and keeping open their only access to a deeper civilization. We are subduing that conflagration of passions…we are witnesses for order against violence and murder; for labourious commerce against grasping avarice."[235] The remilitarization of the colonial state was necessary, then, to preserve the liberal order that was required for the development of 'backward' races that had not yet succumbed to the influence of such commerce. All European nations see, claimed the *Economist*,

> How helpless are the Indian races to restrain their own superstitions and their own passions – that no reverence for law, and civil order, and social obligations, adequate for the rudest form of self-government, is yet written in their minds – that all their superficial civilization must unravel at once, unless a far steadier and stronger hand hold among them the scales of justice.[236]

For the *Economist*, the mutiny-rebellion revealed an "ungovernable" element within Indian society, which was driven by the desire to overcome the economic, social, and political conditions of liberal governance.[237] The British sought to contain this

[234] Ibid.
[235] Ibid.
[236] Ibid.
[237] Ibid.

unpredictability, in many cases, though mass killing. As further described by John William Kaye in his *History of the Sepoy War*, subjects were killed "amidst every possible indignity that could be put upon them by our soldiers under the approving smiles of their officers."[238] Similar to the contradiction presented by the *Economist*, the indiscriminate killing described by Kaye speaks to how the preservation of colonial order – and its supposed benefits to all – in India was combined with a peculiar mix of terror. "Our chief source of solicitude," wrote Kaye with reference to such episodes of violence, was to "improve" the "social condition" of subjects, "and in all respects to administer their comfort and welfare."[239]

The British also sought to control Indian subjects by harnessing natural science and increasing their knowledge of race. The generation of this knowledge was aided by the creation of an industrial capitalist system that integrated Indian peasants into the modern world economy.[240] As Theodore Koditschek explains, much of European colonial discourse before 1850 focused on race as a fixed category. People of colour were viewed as backward, but innocent "children," in need of instruction and guidance from their more culturally sophisticated brethren of a whiter skin, in order to prepare them for the modern market age.[241] But in the period between 1775-1850, the colonial metropolis of London was drawn into an accelerating vortex of revolutionary economic

[238] John William Kaye, *History of the Sepoy War in India, 1857-58* (London: Longmans, 1896), Gilroy, 49.
[239] Kaye, *The Administration of the East India Company,* 466.
[240] Theodore Koditschek, "Capitalism, Race and Evolution in Imperial Britain," in Theodore Koditschek, Sundiata Keita Cha-Jua, and Helen A. Neville (eds), *Race Struggles*, (Illinois: University of Illinois Press, 2009), 50.
[241] Ibid., 48.

and demographic change.[242] The driving forces behind this industrial revolution were the factory, steamship, and railroad – which dramatically changed the organization of British colonies.[243] This massive demographic and industrial growth demanded biopolitical tools of normalization in both colonial frontiers and the metropolis. Industry was thus to act in service of the needs of 'life' – as a means to maintain governance over populations. But as the economic value of India became increasingly apparent to British liberals, it also became harder to rule, because resistance, as the mutiny-rebellion demonstrates, became more effective and intense.[244] It was thus "no accident" that a corresponding enlargement of British natural science and ethnology followed the globalization of British capitalism, and static views of race were replaced with a more evolutionary form of thinking.[245] While it may appear that this shift was enabled by the ascendancy of the 'scientific racism' associated with 'social Darwinism,' the influence of this doctrine can easily be overstated. Published in 1959, Charles Darwin's *On the Origin of Species* – a work grounded in genuine scientific inquiry – was diverted for ideological ends in the second half of the nineteenth century in efforts to naturalize racial inequality.[246] Although Darwin's evolutionary theory was drawn on by certain sectors of Britain's imperial project, it is misleading, argues Koditschek, to view this change as a product of racialized science. Instead, the application of pseudo-science in the British Empire grew out of the processes of social and economic change that preceded it.[247] In India, colonial ethnology

---

[242] Ibid., 51.
[243] Ibid., 53.
[244] Ibid., 53.
[245] Koditschek, "Capitalism, Race, and Evolution in Imperial Britain," 62.
[246] Ibid., 49, 63-64.
[247] Ibid., 49.

was shaped by the demand to maintain liberal political economy as a form of governance in the postemancipation era of British imperialism.

George Campbell was an ethnologist whose thinking was deeply affected by the mutiny-rebellion. He believed that a greater knowledge of Indian races was essential in the maintenance of British rule. Campbell was in fact an advocate for colonial knowledge of all kinds. Language, for example, was essential to Campbell's schema: "I do not think that any man can really understand the natives who is ignorant of their language and is thus altogether debarred from communication with them."[248] More importantly, though, Campbell's work linked the perceived economic capacities of Indian subjects to their race. "Perhaps the most important point in distinguishing the character of different races," wrote Campbell, "is that of industrial energy."[249]

Race itself thus became an object of progress in the colonial order. Racial categorization was enhanced in the 1840s and 1870s through the founding of anthropological associations that sought to reclassify a host of alien 'others' whose newfound proximity to the liberal world rendered them essential to the realization of the Greater British scheme.[250] Campbell was by all means centered in this development as an imperial scholar. Among his numerous works that classified Indian races, his essay titled "On the races of India as Traced in Existing Tribes and Castes," published in *The Journal of the Ethnological Society of London*, particularly embraced this racial ideology. This essay argues, first of all, that "the larger acquaintance we are obtaining of the pre-Aryan population, ought to have important bearing on the destinies of our Indian Empire,

---

[248] George Campbell, *India as it May be*, (London: John Murray, 1853), xvii.
[249] Campbell, *Modern India*, (London, 1852).
[250] Koditschek, 62.

it is an imperative duty to elevate these long-oppressed races, to enable them to assume their just position in the regeneration of their country."[251] Here, Campbell is speaking to the races of "highest civilization" in India – most related to white people, as identified by their physical characteristics and apparent industrial energy. It was these "neglected people," who, because of their "truthfulness, honesty, and bravery," should be incorporated into the colonial regime, because their racial characteristics "afford the best materials for useful administrators and faithful soldiers."[252] Campbell's schema of racial categorization denoted "Aryan" races as most closely related to Europeans. "Hindoos" represented the next stage of the imperial hierarchy, followed by a plethora of races in the category of "uncivilized." "In the North," wrote Campbell, "we have a caste called Khatrees…an extremely vigorous and energetic race, and a great support to the country. By them almost exclusively is capital accumulated and circulated.[253] Campbell clearly embraced the evolutionary theory of race, writing, "the black aboriginal tribes found in the centre and South of India, certainly supply links to the history of mankind."[254] Furthermore:

> It will suffice for me to say, that they may be generally characterized as small, slight, and dark, with very thick prominent lips, and faces which to the most casual observer cannot for a moment be mistaken for those of Hindoos or other Aryans. Many of the tribes are in the very lowest stage of barbarism; in fact, are modern representatives of one of the earliest phases of the history of mankind – human beings who live in the woods almost without civilized arts, and without clothing of any kind beyond the occasional use of a vegetable tassel, scarcely equal to the fig leaves used by our original parents in their degraded condition.[255]

---

[251] Campbell, "On the Races of India as Traced in Existing Tribes and Castes," in *The Journal of the Ethnological Society of London,* (Vol. 1, No. 2, 1869, pp. 128-140), 128.
[252] Ibid., 28.
[253] Campbell, *Modern India*, 53.
[254] Ibid., 28.
[255] Ibid., 28, 29.

It is these races, in contrast, that need improvement and correction in order to fit the liberal norm. According to Campbell, "certain political characteristics are indelibly stamped on particular races," and "those who are open to Western government are along the surest path of civilization."[256] Campbell was of the opinion that the political development of the races of India compared with that of Britain, began from the same point. Based on this, he asked, "Why should the East not be raised to a similar level of progress? Why, commencing from a similar level, should it not be raised as the West had been raised?"[257] For Campbell, there were certainly signs to point to India's "progress," noting that many "tribes" had adopted the arts of agriculture and industry and make the best labourers."[258] It was this sort of classification and racial ideology that underwrote the colonial state in the mid nineteenth century. As Koditschek notes, "By applying the new techniques of evolutionary and ethnological study, the liberal imperialist could discern the racial character of a given people. And thereby devise the precise regime of discipline by which they could be most controlled."[259] The type of knowledge generated by Campbell, in other words, was to serve as a guide to determine which races were capable of being reintegrated into the liberal order, and which needed to be excised all together.

The *Economist*, like Campbell, became a proponent of such racialized theories of economic production and justice. In an article titled "The Economic Value of Justice to the Dark Races," the *Economist* presents a schema for the organization of labour according to the inherent qualities of certain races. This article, published in the wake of

---

[256] Campbell, "On the Races of India," 120.
[257] Campbell, *India as it May Be*, xii.
[258] Campbell, "On the Races of India," 129.
[259] Koditschek, *Liberalism, Imperialism, and the Historical Imagination*, 210.

an anticolonial revolt in Jamaica, is ripe with the liberal moralism of the postemancipation era. Slavery, as the Jamaican revolt demonstrated to the *Economist*, was no longer viable in a world dominated by liberal ideals. No longer viable, moreover, as a means to maintain colonial labour, which needed to be secured at all costs.[260] But the *Economist* recognized the efficacy of slavery, stating that "for the mere execution of great works cheaply no organization could be equal to that which placed the skilled European at the top, and made him the despotic master of the half-skilled black or copper coloured labourer below."[261] But this system also had moral and social consequences entirely injurious to 'civilization.'[262] Vested in the evolutionary logic of this period, the *Economist* argued that "the one necessity essential to the development of these new sources of prosperity is the arrangement of some industrial system under which very large bodies of dark labourers will work willingly under a very few European supervisors." The argument put forward in this article is that economic incentives needed to be provided. This argument helped to justify the liberal control of colonized peoples because they were apparently treated equally. But the "justice" provided by British supervisors was not enacted according to fixed ideas of justice, but rather in terms of what was appropriate to different races on the evolutionary scale. It was not simply a matter of providing wages where earned, but how to completely and properly administer "dark races." According to the *Economist*:

> It is quite certain that for the next hundred years the average black will not catch up to the average white, that for that space of time white leadership will save time, power, and money. Fortunately for the world there is no mental reluctance

---

[260] The *Economist*, "The Economic Value of Justice to the Dark Races," (December 9, 1865).
[261] Ibid.
[262] Ibid.

> to accept that leadership. Some dark races such as the Bengalese, honestly prefer it, as less worrying than their habit of indecision – others as the Chinese recognize its superior efficacy – others as the Africans accept it as natural law.[263]

Furthermore,

> An Asiatic…does not deny the justice of allowing his employer to fine him as an Englishmen would, but insists that before he is fined he shall have committed a fault which he previously knew would be so punished. An African is not irritated because larceny is punished with flogging, though an Asiatic is, but he wants a fair hearing first. In fact, he wants to be assured that he is subject to a law, however severe, and not to individual caprice.[264]

It was through such as system of racialized administration that the *Economis*t argued would allow the British to mobilize "dark races," such as those in India, to labour without disruption or revolt – an objective made even more pressing with the mutiny-rebellion.

The clearest example of this racial ideology was in the British manipulation of the Indian caste system – a process that connected the physical characteristics of certain castes to the "occupational and social character of all its constituent members."[265] As such, certain castes were identified as 'martial.' Meaning, they possessed certain characteristics – echoing Campbell's observation – that were conducive to the functions of the military. Whereas some races were said to labour well, others were identified as 'criminal.' As the basis of civil society in the post rebellion colonial state, caste not only reinforced what the British thought to be essential qualities of a given group, but also legitimized the exclusion of Indian subjects that refused biopolitical subjugation.[266] Supposed 'criminal tribes' were vilified for being 'lazy' and 'unproductive,' and became the target of an increasing colonial interventionism. Above all, they represented a rival

---

[263] Ibid.
[264] Ibid.
[265] Nicholas Dirks, *Castes of Mind: Colonialism and the Making of Modern India*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001), 181.
[266] Ibid., 16, 181.

alternative to the liberal organization of Indian society.[267] The solution, according to the Criminal Tribes Act of 1871, was to assimilate these deviant subjects to a regime of private property and convert them into productive members of the economy.[268] The policy reflected the alleged ability of liberal colonialism to reclaim 'savage' peoples from their 'criminality.' As Kaye described the 1821 conquest of a region in which "neither life nor property were secure:"

> It was a matter of astonishment to behold the rapid change produced by the liberal system of Government, in a race of miserable beings, who without a rag to cover their backs, were now fat and sleek and decently clad…The Bheel now feels a relish for that industry which renders subsistence secure, and life peaceful.[269]

The revolt had a significant effect on liberal ideology in the mid nineteenth century. It led to an incremental perspective on racial development that helped the British to question whether racial 'others' could be transformed into liberal subjects at all. It demonstrated that even 'semi-civilized' races under British rule could 'degenerate' back into savagery.[270] The Criminal Tribes Act, as a measure taken in the post rebellion state, signified the attempt to salvage the civilization of deviant Indian subjects, while those whose actions lay beyond liberal governability were further marginalized.

It should come as no surprise, then, that those castes that remained loyal to the British during the rebellion were praised because their labour conformed to the colonial order. The *Economist* stated "with that confident sense of authority which enables our stronger race to lead the willing and not ungrateful Hindus wherever the latter have

---

[267] David Arnold, *Police Power and Colonial Rule: Madras 1859-1947,* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987), 142.
[268] Ibid.
[269] Kaye, *The Administration of the East India Company*, 487.
[270] Koditschek, 214.

neither sufficient leisure nor sufficient organization to gain by effective concert the strength which in individual character they do not possess."[271] In the post-rebellion state, the system of labour and production envisaged was directly linked to the production of knowledge. As the *Economist* stated:

> It is not only individual labour which is required, but organized labour, labour so scientifically arranged that the maximum of result shall be obtained at a minimum of cost, that immense sudden efforts, such as are required in tunnel cutting, cotton picking, and many other operations, shall be possible without strikes or quarrels.[272]

Here, the paper implies that the knowledge of supposed racial attributes permits a 'scientific' organization of labour that considers what certain races are good at and how they should correspondingly be awarded. In "The Economic Value of Justice to the Darker Races," the *Economist* notes that "strikes," and "those accidental temptations to desert work," were a great impediment to the maintenance of labour and production in India. A new scientific management of labour was thus needed after the rebellion as a means to prevent this, as well as outright revolt. In order to remove such "deterrents," what was necessary, "as might have been expected," was a system "based upon perfect freedom and mutual self-interest."[273] The interest of Britain, that is, in maintaining its colonies and cultivating their resources, and the interests of Indian subjects, who, if treated correctly according to their racial attributes, would become the biopoliticized subject that self-regulates and governs without disrupting the liberal order. The *Economist* championed the implementation of such liberal forms of labour management:

> The Indian railways, for example, have had, all circumstances considered, wonderfully little difficulty obtaining labour. The contractors were generally

[271] The *Economis*t, "Civil Over Military Government in India, (Aug, 22, 1857).
[272] The *Economist*, "On the Economic Value of the Darker Races."
[273] Ibid.

> sensible persons, who resolved that wages should be paid as in England and half-savage tribes, quite as capricious as Negroes and far fiercer, when they found out that fact, came in to work with docile regularity.[274]

This should be viewed in terms of the pacifying role that institutionalizing labour was said to have. Whereas, "the dislike caused by the sense of compulsion produces too much laziness, too much cheating, too many revolts, and too many deaths to be profitable to the state which employs it, even in the pecuniary sense," a system that enforced "justice" was preferable. [275]

Although knowledge had played a role in the British rule of India from the outset, from the appropriation of India's history, to the "mapping" of India's geography, it took on a decidedly different form when it was discovered to be insufficient in the maintenance of rule. The Indian mutiny-rebellion signified that an even deeper knowledge was compulsory.[276] As Nicholas Dirks notes, "after the rebellion, historical knowledge increasingly yielded to anthropological knowledge."[277] Ultimately, during this period of racial knowledge, "the colonized subject was first and foremost a body, to be known, and controlled through the measurement and interpretation of subjects organized into categories of caste."[278] This was at once physical/racial and social/economic. While political economy had always served as a central component in the making and managing economic relations, in 19th century India, it became a method for understanding and organizing race as well.[279] Although J.S. Mill did not comment on

---

[274] Ibid.
[275] Ibid.
[276] Matthew H. Edney, *Mapping an Empire: The Geographical Construction of British India, 1765-1843*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997).
[277] Dirks, 194.
[278] Ibid., 193.
[279] Frank Trentmann and Martin Daunton, "Worlds of Political Economy: Knowledge, Practices and Contestation," in Martin Daunton and Frank Trentmann (eds), *Worlds of*

race to the same degree as colonial ethnologists such Campbell, or the *Economist*, he did allude to it in *Principles of Political Economy*. Race, for example, factors into J.S. Mill's critique of unproductive labour. In a fashion typical of nineteenth century political economists, J.S. Mill insisted that 'productivity' is eased and encouraged by "natural advantages."[280] "Successful production," continues Mill, "like most other kinds of success, depends more on the qualities of the human agents, than on the circumstances in which they work."[281] For J.S. Mill, those who possessed the lowest "energy of labour," were indigenous, colonized, and enslaved peoples – Native Americans, Africans, and the "barbarous" subjects of British India. "Industrial excellence," and "efficiency of labour," on the other hand, was an inherent quality of the English character.[282] Although J.S. Mill was in favour of maintaining EIC rule in India, his writings nevertheless reflect the authorization of violence, and the measures enacted by the regime to pacify Indian rebels by inducing them to labour. "Uncivilized races," wrote Mill, "are averse to continuous labour of an unexciting kind. Yet all real civilization is at this price; without such labour, neither can the mind be disciplined into the habits required by civilized society, nor the material world prepared to receive it."[283]

British racism and colonial ethnology thus served as a means to separate which forms of life were fit for the production and continuation of liberal order and which were not. This process was definitive of the biopolitics that formed the colonial civil society in

---

Political Economy: Knowledge and Power in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries, (Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), 1.
[280] John Stuart Mill, *Principles of Political Economy*, 101.
[281] Ibid., 103.
[282] Ibid., 104.
[283] Mill, "On Liberty," "Considerations on Representative Government," in John Gray (ed), *John Stuart Mill, On Liberty and Other Essays*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991) 232.

India. Here, Foucault's comments on race in *Society Must be Defended* are particularly relevant. According to Foucault, racism is essential to the operation of biopower. This is not because biopower espouses any particular racist ideology, but rather because racism itself is derived from the biopolitical logic of classification.[284] According to Foucault, race is:

> Primarily a way of introducing a break into the domain of life that is under power's control, the break between what must live and what must die. The appearance within the biological continuum of the human race of races, the distinction among races, the hierarchy of races, the fact that certain races are described as good and that others, in contrast, are described as inferior: all this is a way of fragmenting the field of the biological that power controls. It is a way of separating out the groups that exist within a population.[285]

He goes on to say that "racism justifies the death function in the economy of biopower by appealing to the principle that the death of others makes one biologically stronger insofar as one is a member of a race or population, insofar as one is an element in a unitary living plurality."[286] This does not mean physical death only. As Foucault clarifies: "When I say killing I obviously do not mean simply murder as such, but also every form of indirect murder: the fact of exposing someone to death, increasing the risk of death for some people, or quite simply political death, expulsion, rejection and so on."[287] In India, the "death" of colonized subjects certainly involved cases of outright murder, such as the state's immediate response to the mutiny-rebellion. But it also involved the systematic exclusion of those subjects who the British could not reassimilate

---

[284] Michael Dillon, "Security, Race and War", in Michael Dillon and Andrew W. Neal (eds), *Foucault on Politics, Security and War*, (Hampshire, Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), pg. 176-196, 178,179.
[285] Foucault, *Society Must Be Defended*, 254-255.
[286] Ibid., 258.
[287] Ibid., 256.

into the liberal order, and thus constituted a biopolitical threat. This speaks to the argument that the liberalism informing colonial rule in India did not universally serve human life by unchaining it from oppressive conditions, whether they are social, political, or economic. It rather operated as a strategy to enhance human capabilities, inevitably excluding those forms of life that did not conform to its narrowly defined account of humanity. The colonial forms of knowledge generated in India were thus used to perform a "necropolitical audit" of 'life.' Necropolitical, that is, in the sense that colonial rule in India was inseparable from efforts to eliminate forms of life that were perceived as inimical to the reproduction of the species. Race became the primary marker of life's eligibilities for inclusion within the liberal order.[288]

This chapter has explained how race became the primary tool for control of India during the aftermath of the mutiny-rebellion of 1857. As the writings of the *Economist*, and George Campbell demonstrate, the effort to promote life in nineteenth century India demanded an albeit distorted epistemology through which the British judged subjects on their ability or reluctance to perform the labour required of them in a marketized colonial economy. Ultimately, the British sorted life into racially inscribed categories as a means to decide who can live and who must die in order to preserve biopoliticized life from that which threatens it.[289]

[288] Dillon, 168.
[289] Ibid, 177.

CONCLUSION: THE CIVILIZATION OF SPECIES-BEING

In this thesis I have argued that colonial rule in India during the nineteenth century – first by the EIC from 1793 to 1857, and from the British Government then on – was essentially a biopolitical project driven by a uniquely liberal conceptualization of what it is to be human. This project had its origins in the early history of liberalism beginning in the eighteenth century, when modern liberal regimes sought to secure human welfare. This occurred simultaneously while the categories of political and juridical existence that defined monarchial authority were replaced by the category of biological existence. It was the category of biological – all that is living – that provided liberalism with its claim to be the sole purveyor of human well-being. This, in turn, drove liberal regimes, particularly Britain, to expand its reign in foreign territories in the pursuit of 'peace.' The goal of this liberal colonialism, in other words, was to eliminate 'threats' to the universality on which liberalism was founded, and render 'other' forms of life compatible with the logistical demands of a liberal society.

This argument stands in contrast to narratives that understand the purpose of 'late' European colonialism to be the extraction of raw materials and the exploitation of labour. This was certainly an important aspect of colonial rule in India, but that Britain expanded its territory to fulfill its own materially driven agendas, however, is not an adequate explanation for an entirely contradictory phenomenon. It ignores the explicitly stated principles of liberalism that apparently give rise to its pacific aims. Or it assumes, at least, that the principles of individual liberty, equality, and democracy were readily abandoned in the face of Britain's material aggrandizement. This is far better explained, I argue, by showing how the ideals of liberalism were instead embedded in Britain's

‘civilizing mission.’ It was precisely the motive to liberate humanity from arbitrary authority, in other words, which engendered violent intervention into non-liberal societies.

To help explain this historical paradox I have developed a theoretical framework informed by the thought of Michel Foucault. According to Foucault, liberal modernity was shaped by efforts to promote and enhance the capabilities of human life. To govern, that is, by providing for the well-being of society and reducing its exposure to conditions of violence. This was aided by an increasing scientific knowledge of human life and the emergence of “population” as an object of control. To administer population not only required developments in medicine and education, but also political economy as a new area of inquiry. This is evident in the eighteenth century explosion of literature in political economy, which collectively argued that the progress of society was best served through managing and maintaining proper population levels. It was also determined that population was most effectively controlled through conceptually attaching life processes to systems of material production. The rise of industrial capitalism, then, not only allowed life to flourish with expanding material possibilities, but also acted as a model into which life itself was inserted and organized around. To quote Foucauldian scholar Melinda Cooper, from the late eighteenth century on “political economy [analyzed] the processes of labour and of production in tandem with those of human biological reproduction – and sex, and race, as the limiting conditions of reproduction will lie at the heart of biopolitical strategies of power.”[290]

---

[290] Cooper quoted in Dillon and Reid, *The Liberal Way of War*, 28.

The emergence of biopolitics though, as Foucault demonstrates, led to an intensification of violence against forms of life that did not exhibit these 'productive' properties. In the *History of Sexuality*, Foucault notes that biopolitical violence reached its height in the state racism of Nazi Germany.[291] And indeed, there were numerous other examples of mass violence during the twentieth century, biopolitical or otherwise. However, although biopolitics was by no means unique to liberalism – with Nazism and Soviet Russia being examples of fascist and authoritarian applications – there is no liberalism, importantly, that is not biopolitical. This is because liberalism, as a form of political, social, and economic organization, was from its outset, uniquely tasked with the protection of human life, for which it relies on a continually evolving knowledge.[292] The history of liberalism is thus problematized, and comes to a head when confronted with the parallel history of the violence it has perpetrated. For this reason, a theoretically sophisticated framework was necessary. With the help of Foucault, in other words, I have been able to make a new argument in historical scholarship.

Foucault, however, was notorious for omitting discussions of modern power with reference to European imperialism. In my view, though, Foucault's concept of biopolitics translates to the colonial experience as well. It is a means to explain the violence inherent to colonial intervention and rule, and the subsequent forms of dispossession and brutality it entailed. This thesis thus addresses the paradox of liberal modernity through a case study in the history of colonialism. This is useful in developing an argument about how colonialism was not an aberration, but an integral part in the development of liberal technologies of government. Not chosen arbitrarily, though, India

[291] Foucault, *History of Sexuality*.
[292] Dillon and Reid.

serves as an excellent example for many reasons. Although not unique to India, the biopolitical organization of society through liberal political economy was essential to Britain's colonial regime in the nineteenth century. Furthermore, there are certain aspects of India's colonial histories that require more theoretically driven approaches than the historiography provides. My methodology is thus not only a point of departure with Foucault – whose thought I argue beyond – but also with existing literature on colonial India.

To elucidate this argument, I have provided evidence from the writings and thought of British liberal philosophers, political economists, and ethnologists. Beginning with the context of the Scottish Enlightenment in the eighteenth century, I discussed the thought of classical political economist Adam Smith. Smith's vision of a peaceful society – or "system of natural liberty" – hinged on fostering the entrepreneurial abilities of human beings. To free, that is, the creative potential of humanity from the restraints of autocratic rule. For Smith, this was a step in the 'progress' of society, which reached its highest stage in "commercial civilization." In such a stage, human actions were guided by their self-interest, and regulated by the "invisible hand" of the market to create a state of social harmony. Interestingly, although Smith was vested in the logic of 'progress' and 'civilization,' he argued against imperialism. He saw the British colonies in the Americas and the EIC's mercantilist ventures in Asia as a manifestation of the type of power that obstructed commercial development.

Building on the logic of liberalism found in the thought of Smith, I then discussed how the opposition that liberalism held toward colonialism was increasingly transformed throughout the nineteenth century. James Wilson, the long term editor of the *Economist*,

and John Stuart Mill were both political economists directly influenced by Smith, and part of a new generation of nineteenth century liberals who encouraged colonial rule in 'backward' societies. Influential in their own right, the writings of the *Economist* and J.S. Mill are particularly important because of the close connection they each had with the EIC administration. Their work thus not only illustrates the core aspects of liberalism, but also how they viewed the development of liberal society in India. The *Economist*, for example, was adamant that if India was left uncolonized, it would pose a danger to human welfare – in India and beyond – because of the influence of "Oriental despotism." It can be argued that the *Economist* advocated colonial rule for its own gain. The paper certainly represented Britain's privileged class, whose wealth was fuelled through the exploitation of British colonies. But the paper always reflected what was at least ostensibly a concern for the subject population. This was not simply a disguise. The benefits Britain received from the introduction of liberal political economy in India was rather a by-product of the need to organize Indian society according the universal principles of liberalism.

The dispossession that resulted from the permanent settlement of Bengal and the construction of railroads in India was thus necessary in order for the EIC to develop its 'indirect rule' as a form of liberal governance. The paper was definitely wrong about the reasons for increased production in the nineteenth century. It was not a result of Indian subjects' newfound self-interest, but rather the taxation of land in the Zamindari model of property. Nevertheless, the *Economist* understood the formation of capitalism in India to create a new class of Indian consumers, and 'improve' their overall well-being of colonial subjects. Similarly, J.S. Mill believed that colonial rule over 'backward' subjects was

necessary in order to induce them to labour. For J.S. Mill, the ability to be productive served as an end in itself in the development of the "civilized form of life."[293] For this reason, J.S. Mill was in favour of the Raiyatawari model of property that also spread throughout colonial India. Although it was only marginally different than the Zamindari system in the sense that it also encouraged peasants to produce more for the market, the direct control of the land that the Raiyatawari system granted Indian peasants was seen by J.S. Mill as more beneficial. In this system, peasants themselves became the agents of social progress. This productivity was necessary in order to overcome the 'indolence' of 'backward' races that obstructed the smooth functioning of liberal society, and its benefits that apparently extended to all. J.S. Mill was also guided by liberalism's inherent concern for, and promotion of human well-being. He felt, though, that securing this status should come at any cost, whether it is 'despotic' or peaceful.

Importantly, this colonial discourse held that Indian subjects were to realize their self-interest through the increased market orientation of production. The chronicler John William Kaye believed that the newfound ability of Indian peasants to pursue their own material gain, as opposed to serving their traditional 'masters,' would allow them to be self-governing. The influence of liberal political economy alone would compel subjects to perform the functions necessary to liberal society. These conditions would successfully establish the 'indirect rule' of the colonial regime. But if subjects were reluctant to accept the 'civilizing' influence of liberal political economy, argued Kaye, the colonial regime should violently intervene until such habits were effectively learned. This was the case with the Indian mutiny-rebellion of 1857. The revolt demonstrated that

---

[293] J.S. Mill, *Principles of Political Economy*, 708.

liberal political economy was antithetical to the welfare of Indian society. Its threat required the direct intervention of the Government of India, culminating in the establishment of 'direct' colonial rule by the British government.

On this point, the writings of British ethnologist George Campbell were particularly insightful. Campbell believed that in order to maintain liberal governance over Indian subjects, a deeper knowledge of race was important. The threat posed by the mutiny-rebellion, in other words, exposed the shortcomings of liberal rule up until 1857. Thus, in order to re-establish a successful form of rule that did not simply rely on violence, the regime needed a better understanding of the aptitudes of its subject races. The ethnological work of Campbell represented the movement to link the perceived industrial capacities of Indian subjects to their racial and physical characteristics. His writings provide an example of the racial categorization that occurred during the "anthropological turn" of the post 1857 era. These categories served to inform the regime of what races best embodied the ideal liberal subject that was supposedly created through the installation of liberal political economy.

These main arguments of the colonial discourse formed by the *Economist*, J.S. Mill, Kaye, and Campbell, reflect the liberal demand to biopolitically organize society: to create, in other words, the conditions most favourable to the maintenance of liberal subjects. The abilities to labour, consume, and self-govern under the influence of liberal political economy, were seen as the only way to preserve and protect liberal order. The reproduction of this order subsequently expanded the capabilities of human population, which was 'improved' through the 'progress' of commercial society and material prosperity. While the body of work produced by these writers was immense, and much

more could be made of their overall arguments, I have chosen to deal with the sources most pertinent to colonial India in the nineteenth century. If this discourse were dissected further, in other words, there would appear a variety of specific views on progress, improvement, security, capitalism, and race. With that said, each of these writers shared a commitment to an Orientalist worldview. Their formulas for the development of India were inspired by a deep seated sense of European cultural superiority. Importantly, the dichotomy between 'civilization' and 'barbarism' that these writers represented was not used as a simple excuse to justify colonial rule. Rather, although it did aid the rationalization for colonial actions, their racialized discourse of inferiority had its roots in the origins of liberal modernity. It was founded on liberalism's direct opposition to any other form of organization. As liberalism developed from the eighteenth century and throughout the nineteenth century, it became ever more pressing to colonize because of the weight of its universalism. The concern for subject populations that liberalism exudes does not therefore stem from a legitimately compassionate position. It instead stems from the ability ascribed to liberalism to universally secure the well-being of humanity. This is something these liberal writers grappled with. There is a preoccupation evident in their work with how to properly oversee this process without governing 'too much.' Excessive authority, it was determined, could be used when subjects were resistant in accepting and adapting to liberal political economy. It was those who were deemed incompatible with the liberal demand to live 'peacefully' that were excised. This was the process of how humanitarian impulses translated into violence – an essential aspect of biopolitics and the colonial experience in India.

The reading of theses sources provided in this thesis reflects the historical changes that occurred in nineteenth century India. The biopolitics of British intervention in India also manifested itself in numerous ways. It began with the initial rupture of the EIC's conquest of Indian territory. This territory eventually became a site for the installation of liberal political economy, which was to benefit the people of India and save them from the grip of 'Oriental despotism.' As discussed, the Zamindari model of property ownership that resulted from the EIC's permanent settlement of Bengal was designed to teach Indian peasants to work for themselves. In reality peasants were taxed in order to fund the colonial regime. The ongoing dispossession and exploitation of peasants was nonetheless necessary for capitalism to succeed. Above all, the institution of colonial property regimes – Zamindari or Raiyatawari – created an idealized world in which Indian subjects were supposedly empowered. The harder they worked, the greater access they would have to imported European commodities. This was important because in modern liberal society, the production, circulation, and consumption of material goods come to replace the role of government.[294] Or rather, "government" takes the form of providing for people who are free to pursue their own well-being. The biopolitical organization of Indian society that describes the historical changes of the nineteenth century was also aided by the construction of railroads. In a similar fashion to the taxation of land, Indian subjects also essentially paid for the development of this technology in the subcontinent. Railroads were a means to facilitate the administration of the region. Quite literally, of course, as they enabled the swift transport of officials and

[294] Foucault, "Governmentality," in Graham Burchell, Colin Gordon, Peter Miller, (eds.), *The Foucault Effect: Studies in Governmentality*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991).

the military, increasing the presence of the colonial regime.[295] Railroads also provided for the circulation of wealth and correct movement of society. They were a technology of progress, developed to advance the supposedly 'static' position of Indian subjects.

The Indian mutiny-rebellion was a direct result of this reorganization of society. The influence of liberal political economy created a diffuse form of 'indirect rule.' As such, the revolt was comprised of many diverse grievances that were in one way or another connected to British presence. This breach in colonial sovereignty created awareness that certain expressions of living were fundamentally incompatible with liberal order. To identify these threats with more 'accuracy,' there was an effort to increase knowledge of Indian races. The manipulation of the Indian caste system during the aftermath of the mutiny-rebellion served to inform the Government of India which races were prone to certain behaviours; which, in other words, were 'industrious,' 'martial,' or 'criminal.' Those who did not adapt to liberal order through their participation in the revolt and who could not be reintegrated into the system of production were viewed as inimical to the maintenance of liberal order, and were incarcerated or killed.

The suppression of the mutiny-rebellion thus signified a turn in the development of biopolitics in colonial India. The demand for the colonial regime to codify Indian races contributed to the understanding of human beings as part of a biological species. This transformation required power to be exercised on the biological mass that constitutes the species rather than individuals. A technology, as Foucault explained,

> Which is centered not upon the body but upon life, a technology which brings together the mass effects characteristic of a population, which tries to control the series of random events that can occur in a living mass, a technology which tries

---

[295] Handy, "The 'Non-Economy'", 10.

> to predict the probability of those events (by modifying it, if necessary) or at least to compensate for their effects.[296]

This categorical change, and its corresponding technologies of government, did not occur independently of the colonial experience. It instead grew there, and was used to reinforce colonial authority, inasmuch as India was a zone of experimentation. Foucault, who did not comment on imperialism in depth, surprisingly noted this connection. According to Foucault:

> At the end of the sixteenth century we have, if not the first, at least an early example of political structures of the West. It should never forgotten that while colonization, with its techniques of political and juridical weapons, obviously transported European models to other continents, it also had a considerable boomerang effect on the mechanisms of power in the West, and on the apparatuses, institutions and techniques of power. A whole series of colonial models was brought back to the West, and the result was that the West could practice something resembling colonization…on itself.[297]

Although Foucault did not develop this idea in any systematic fashion, he was right that liberal technologies of government were not simply exported from Europe to the colonial world. They rather developed within the imperial continuum between colony and metropole, and had a considerable effect on European statecraft. This is evident in the fact that the first British census – as a means to codify the population – was preceded and modeled on the Indian census of 1872, which was introduced by the British as a means to further survey the subject population, and an integral aspect of colonial rule in the post 1857 era.[298] The Indian census, which categorized race and caste, is thus an example of how colonial practices literally informed the development of liberalism by expanding

---

[296] Foucault, *Society Must be Defended*, 249.
[297] Ibid., 103.
[298] Metcalf and Metcalf, 112.

knowledge of what is to be governed. This had cultural inputs as well. As Edward Said has argued, the whole of liberal European identity, or that which constitutes 'Europe,' was dependent on constructing the non-European 'other' as its enemy.[299]

As a final point of conclusion, I argue that British colonial rule did not violate the species life of Indian subjects. In what is commonly understood by critics as a form of 'de-humanization,' colonial subjugation can be argued to be an "enterprise that mandated the reduction of the native to a status below that of an animal."[300] However, through my examination of colonial India from 1793 to 1857, I have determined that British racism was instead the product of a biopolitical logic to which the 'humanity' of Indian subjects was formative. This argument does not seek to diminish the horrors of colonialism; indeed, my ideological stance could not further oppose the historical existence of colonial regimes. Instead, it emphasizes the devastating effects that occur when the improvement of life becomes the object of a political strategy. Far from being an accomplishment, the knowledge developed by the British in India about how to order society by subjugating life to the principles of liberal political economy produced irreconcilable antagonisms because of the simple fact that life is not a datum. The rationality to codify living beings and reduce their existence to the instruments necessary to guarantee their survival represented a contested assault on the natural indeterminacy of life. This is, as the terror endured by Indian subjects in the nineteenth century demonstrates, the tragedy of liberal modernity.

---

[299] Said.
[300] Gilroy, 53.

<u>Bibliography</u>

Primary sources:

Campbell, George. *The Ethnology of India*. London, 1865.

Campbell, George. *India as it May Be: A Proposed Government and Policy*. London, 1853. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1964.

Campbell, George. *Modern India*. London, 1852.

Campbell, George. "On the Races of India as Traced in Existing Tribes and Castes." In *The Journal of the Ethnological Society of London.* Vol. 1, No. 2, 1869, pp. 128-140.

Cromer, Earl. "On The Government of Subject Races". London, 1913.

Kaye, John William. *The Administration of the East India Company: A History of Indian Progress*. London: R. Bentley, 1853.

Kaye, John William. *A History of the Sepoy War in India, 1857-58*. London: Longmans, 1896.

Marx, Karl. "The British Rule in India", 1853. In Mia Carter and Barbara Harlow (eds) *Archive of Empire Volume 1: From the East India Company to the Suez Canal*. Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2003.

Marx, Karl. "The Future Results of British Rule in India", 1853. In Carter and Harlow (eds), *Archives of Empire*. Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2003.

Mill, John Stuart. "Considerations on Representative Government". In John Gray (ed), *John Stuart Mill: On Liberty and Other Essays*. Oxford and New York: Oxford University press, 1991.

Mill, John Stuart. "On Liberty". In John Gray (ed), *John Stuart Mill: On Liberty and Other Essays*. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1991.

Mill, John Stuart. *Principles of Political Economy: with Some of Their Applications to Social Philosophy*. Toronto: Toronto University Press, 1965.

Mill, John Stuart. *Writings on India*, John M. Robson, Martin Moir and Zawahir Moir (eds). Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1990.

Wilson, James, and Bagehot, Walter. The *Economist*, 1844-1865.

Secondary Sources:

Alavi, Hamza. "India: Transition From Feudalism to Colonial Capitalism." In, *Journal of Contemporary Asia.* Vol. 10, No. 4, Pgs. 359-400, 1980.

Ambirajan, S. *Classical Political Economy and British Policy in India*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978

Anderson, Clare. *The Indian Uprising of 1857-8: Prisons, Prisoners and Rebellion*. New York: Anthem Press, 2007.

Anderson, Perry. *Lineages of the Absolutist State*. London: Atlantic Highlands: Humanities Press, 1974.

Arendt, Hannah. *The Origins of Totalitarianism*. New York: Harcourt Inc., 1968.

Arnold, David. *Police Power and Colonial Rule: Madras 1859-1947*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987.

Bagchi, Amiya Kumar. *Colonialism and the Indian Economy*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010.

Bayly, C.A. *Information and Empire: Intelligence Gathering and Social Communication in India, 1780-1870*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000.

Bell, Colleen, and Evans. "From Terrorism to Insurgency: Mapping the Post-Intervention Security Terrain". In *Journal of Intervention and Statebuilding*. Vol. 4, No. 4, 2010, pg. 371-390.

Bond, Brian. *Victorian Military Campaigns*. New York and Washington: Frederick A. Praeger, 1967.

Carter, Mia. "From the Company to the Canal". In Carter and Harlow (eds), *Archives of Empire*. Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2003.

Carter, Mia and Harlow, Barbara. "Oriental Despotisms and Political Economies". In Barbara Harlow and Mia Carter (eds), *Archives of Empire Volume 1: From the East India Company to the Suez Canal*,. Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2003.

Chaterjee, Partha. *The Black Hole of Empire: History of a Global Practice of Power*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2012.

Cohn, Bernard S. *Colonialism and its Forms of Knowledge: The British in India*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996.

Darwin, Charles. *The Origin of Species*. New York: Bantam Dell, 1999.

Davis, Mike. *Late Victorian Holocausts: El Nino Famines and the Making of the Third World.* London and New York: Verso, 2001.

Dillon, Michael. "Security, Race and War". In Michael Dillon and Andrew W. Neal (eds), *Foucault on Politics, Security and War*. Hampshire, Palgrave Macmillan, 2008, pg. 176-196.

Dillon, Michael. "Ten Years of War on Terror". http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M4FLOGSgn8Y, 2011.

Dillon, Michael and Reid, Julian. *The Liberal Way of War: Killing to Make Life Live*. London and New York: Routledge, 2009.

Dirks, Nicholas. *Castes of Mind: Colonialism and the Making of Modern India*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001.

Duffield, Mark and Hewitt Vernon. "Introduction." In Duffield and Hewitt (eds.), *Empire Development and Colonialism: The Past in the Present*. Woodbridge: James Curry, 2009.

Edney, Matthew H. *Mapping an Empire: The Geographical Construction of British India, 1765-1843*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997.

Edwards, Dudley Ruth. *The Pursuit of Reason:* The Economist *1843-1993*. London: Hamish Hamilton, 1993.

Evans, Brad. *Liberal Terror*. Cambridge: Polity, 2013.

Evans, Brad. "Liberal War Thesis: Introducing the Ten Key Principles of Twenty-First Century Biopolitical Warfare". In *South Atlantic Quarterly – Against the Day*. Vol. 110. No. 3, 2011.

Fanon, Frantz. *The Wretched of the Earth*. New York: Grove Press, 2005.

Foucault, Michel. *The Birth of Biopolitics: Lectures at the Collège de France 1978-1979,* Michel Senellart (ed), Graham Burchell (trans). New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004.

Foucault, Michel. *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of The Prison*, Alan Sheridan (trans). New York: Vintage Books, 1979.

Foucault, Michel. "Governmentality." In Graham Burchell, Colin Gordon, Peter Miller, (eds.), *The Foucault Effect: Studies in Governmentality*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991.

Foucault, Michel. *The History of Sexuality, Volume 1: An Introduction*, Robert Hurley (trans). New York: Random House, 1978.

Foucault, Michel. *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences*. London and New York: Routledge, 1989.

Foucault, Michel "On the Genealogy of Ethics: An Overview of Work in Progress", in Paul Rainbow (ed), *The Foucault Reader*. New York: Pantheon Books, 1984.

Foucault, Michel. *Security, Territory, Population: Lectures at the Collège de France 1977-1978*, Michel Senellart (ed), Graham Burchell (trans). Hampshire and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007.

Foucault, Michel. *"Society Must Be Defended": Lectures at the Collège de France 1975-1976*, Mauro Bertani and Alessandro Fontana (eds), David Macy (trans). New York: Picador, 2003.

Gilroy, Paul. *After Empire: Melancholia or Convivial Culture*. London: Routledge, 2004.

Guha, Ranajit. *A Rule of Property for Bengal: An Essay on the Idea of Permanent Settlement*. Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1996.

Handy, Jim. "'Almost Idiotic Wretchedness': a long history of blaming peasants." In *The Journal of Peasant Studies*. Vol. 36, No. 2, 2009, 325-344.

Handy, Jim. "The 'Non-Economy' and the Radical Dreams of Food Sovereignty". Conference Paper for "Food Sovereignty: A Critical Dialogue" International Conference, Sept. 14-25, 2013, p. 1-20.

Handy, Jim and Fehr, Carla. "'The Free Exercise of Self-Love': Capitalism and the *Economist* on Ireland." In *Studies in Political Economy*, No. 94, 2014, 85-110.

Hinsley, F.H. *Power and the Pursuit of Peace: Theory and Practice in the History of Relations Between States*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1963.

Howard, Michael. *War and the Liberal Conscience*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1981.

Jenkins, Roy. *The British Liberal Tradition: From Gladstone to Young Churchill, Asquith, and Lloyd George – Is Blair Their Heir?* Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2001.

Kant, Immanuel. "Toward Perpetual Peace: A Philosophical Sketch." In Pauline Kleingeld (ed.) and David L. Colclasure (trans.), *Toward Perpetual Peace and Other Writings on Politics, Peace, and History*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006.

Koditschek, Theodore. *Liberalism, Imperialism, and the Historical Imagination*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011.

Lemke, Thomas. *Biopolitics: An Advanced Introduction*, Eric Frederick Trump (trans). New York and London: New York University press, 2011.

Losurdo, Domenico. *Liberalism: A Counter-History*. London: Verso, 2011.

Lubenow, W.C. "Mediating 'the Chaos of Incident' and 'the Cosmos of Sentiment': Liberalism in Britain, 1815-1914." In *The Journal of British Studies*, Vol. 10, No. 3, 2008, 492-504.

Mbembe, Achille. “Necropolitics”, in Stephen Morton and Stephen Bygrave (eds), *Foucault in an Age of Terror*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008.

Mbembe, Achille. *On the Postcolony*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001.

Metcalf, Barbara D. and Metcalf, Thomas R. *A Concise History of Modern India*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001.

Moir, Martin I., Douglas, Peers M., Zastoupil, Lynn (eds.). *J.S. Mill’s Encounter With India*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999.

Mommsen, Wolfgang J. *Theories of Imperialism*, P.S. Falla (Trans.). Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982).

Morton, Stephen. “Torture, Terrorism and Colonial Sovereignty”, in Stephen Morton and Stephen Bygrave, eds. *Foucault in an Age of Terror: Essays on Biopolitics and the Defence of Society*. Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008.

Paine, Thomas. *The Rights of Man*. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1969.

Parsons, Timothy. *The British Imperial Century, 1815-1914*. New York: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 1999.

Pitts, Jennifer. *A Turn to Empire: The Rise of Imperial Liberalism in Britain and France*. Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2005.

Reid, Julian. “The Biopoliticization of Humanitarianism: From Saving Bare Life to Securing the Biohuman in Post-Interventionary Societies”. In *Journal of Intervention and Statebuilding*, 4:4, 391-411.

Reid, Julian. *The Biopolitics of War on Terror: Life Struggles, Liberal Modernity, and the Defence of Logistical Societies*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2006.

Reid, Julian. “Life Struggles: War, Discipline and Biopolitics in the Thought of Michel Foucault, in Stephen Morton and Stephen Bygrave (eds), *Foucault in an Age of Terror: Essays on Biopolitics and the Defence of Society*. Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008.

Reid, Julian. “War, Liberalism, and Modernity: The Biopolitical Provocations of ‘Empire’”, in *Cambridge Review of International Affairs*, Vol. 17, No. 1, April 2004, pg. 63-78.

Said, Edward. *Orientalism*. New York: Vintage Books, 1979.

Scrutton, Thomas Edward. *Commons and Common Fields: The History and Policy of the Laws Relating To Commons and Enclosures in England*. New York: Burt Franklin, 1887.

Shapiro, Michael J. Reading *"Adam Smith": Desire, History and Value*. Newbury Park: Sage Publications, 1993.

Singh Mehta, Uday. *Liberalism and Empire: A Study in Nineteenth-Century British Liberal Thought*. Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1999.

Smith, Adam. *An Inquiry in to the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations*. Hampshire: Harriman House, 2007.

Smith, Adam. *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*, Knud Haakonssen (ed). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002.

Spivak, Gayatri. "Can the Subaltern Speak?" In Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths, and Helen Tiffin (eds.), *The Post-Colonial Studies Reader*. New York: Routledge, 2006.

Starkey, Armstrong. *War in the Age of Enlightenment, 1700-1789*. Westport: Praeger, 2003.

Stokes, Eric. *The Peasant Armed: The Indian Revolt of 1857*, C.A. Bayly (ed.). Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1986.

Stoler, Ann Laura. *Race and the Education of Desire: Foucault's History of Sexuality and the Colonial Order of Things*. Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1995.

Trentmann, Frank and Daunton, Martin. "Worlds of Political Economy: Knowledge, Practices and Contestation." In Martin Daunton and Frank Trentmann (eds), *Worlds of Political Economy: Knowledge and Power in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries*. Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004.

van de Haar, Edwin. *Classical Liberalism and International Relations Theory: Hume, Smith, Mises, and Hayek*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009.

Wyatt-Walter, Andrew "Adam Smith and the Liberal Tradition in International Relations." In *Review of International Studies*. Vol.22, No. 1, 1996, 5-28.

Young, Robert J.C. *Postcolonialism: An Historical Introduction*. Malden: Blackwell Publishing, 2001.

Zastoupil, Lynn. *John Stuart Mill and India*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1994.