The Contemporary Relevance of the Raj Politico-Religious Strategy and (~~Post~~)colonial Discourse in Alfred, Lord Tennyson's "Akbar's Dream"

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Abstract

Applying Heidegger's *under erasure* to (~~post~~)colonialism denotes double understanding of the Raj politico-religious strategy as both colonial and/or postcolonial discourse in Tennyson's "Akbar's Dream". On one hand, the 'alien' British race poured into India to accomplish the uncompleted mission of Akbar. In this sense, Tennyson, the Empire's Poet Laureate draws Akbar as a replica of the British Raj for both shoulder the responsibility of setting right, as European Hamlets, an historical moment in which 'time is out of joint' when the temple of collective religions was divided 'stone from stone' by religious fanatics. As messianic figures, Akbar and the Raj, attempt to destroy and renounce a malignant, demonized, diabolized force, most often an evil-doing spirit, a spectre, a kind of religious-based ghost which risks coming back. On the other hand, what is actually accomplished is not a noble mission but an omission or consumption of the Orient which is not itself anymore. The Europeans create a mimic Orient which is built on the presumptions of their imperial *white mythology* to justify colonialism. On these contradictory discourses, the paper is structured seeking a better understanding of the lifelong relation between politics, religion and violence/resistance which contours the contemporary situation in many places of the world.

Key words: Akbar; (post)colonialism; Raj; Tennyson; toleration.

الأهمية المعاصرة لاستراتيجية الراج الدينية والخطاب (ما بعد) الاستعماري في "حلم أكبر" لألفريد اللورد تينيسون

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ملخص

يدل مفهوم (ما بعد) الاستعمارية على فهم مزدوج لاستراتيجية الراج الدينية كخطاب استعماري و/أو ما بعد استعماري في قصيدة "حلم أكبر" لتينيسون. فمن جهة، تدفق العرق البريطاني "الغريب" إلى الهند لإنجاز مهمة جلال الدين محمد أكبر، الذي يُعتبر مصلحًا شرقيًا نموذجيًا، يرسم من خلاله شاعر البلاط الإمبراطوري نسخةً من الحكم البريطاني، إذ حمل على عاتقه المسؤولية السياسية والدينية لتصحيح لحظةً تاريخيةً "انقلب فيها الزمان رأسًا على عقب" حين فُصل معبد الأديان الجماعية "حجرًا عن حجر" على يد المتعصبين الدينيين، نوعًا من الأشباح الدينية التي تُهدد بالعودة. من ناحيةٍ أخرى، ما يُنجز في الواقع ليس مهمةً نبيلة، بل إغفالًا أو استهلاكًا للشرق الذي لم يعد هو نفسه حيث يخلق الأوروبيون شرقًا مبنيًا على افتراضات أساطيرهم الاستعمارية البيضاء لتبرير الاستعمار على أسس طبيعية وتاريخية. بناءً على هذه الاتجاهات الفكرية البديهية المتناقضة، تُبنى هذه الورقة البحثية سعيًا لفهمٍ أفضل للعلاقة الدائمة بين السياسة والدين والعنف التي تُشكل الوضع العالمي المعاصر

الكلمات المفتاحية: أكبر ؛ الاستعمار (ما بعد الاستعمار)؛ الراج؛ تينيسون؛ التسامح

1. Introduction: 'Communication by Land'[1]

As language, land can be used as an important semiotic system of communication, which supplies its own signs and symbols to convey specific messages, and as language also, land shapes man's way of thinking;[2] it imposes its own paradigms on every creature living on it, prospering and sometimes punishing severely by its intolerable nature. Theology and science inform us that land was created before man, yet it is for man and by man cultivated and built to produce gradually the sort of philosophical 'dwelling thinking' that man possesses on earth.[3] According to Heidegger, 'the manner in which we humans *are* on the earth, is *Buan,* dwelling. To be a human being means to be on the earth as a mortal. It means to dwell'. Land is the 'domain to which everything that *is belongs'.*[4] It is the place where the being builds his house, has a job, begets children, rises them up and finally dies. In terms of language which is 'the only semiotic system capable of *interpreting* another semiotic system',[5] land signifies belonging, shelter, and dwelling. It means also to till the soil, to cultivate the growing things, to stay in one place or remain in peace, preserved from harm. Being land-bound means staying with things as things, 'in their presencing'. Land is occupied by mortals and things, so it comes to existence only by virtue of those beings or things. The piece of occupied land determines 'the localities and ways by which a space is provided for'. Land provides a space cleared for dwelling and structured within a boundary not to stop it, within land's structures emerges 'that from which something *begins its presencing*'. Thus, there are 'dwelling' peculiarities that humans share with other organisms like animals and plants which re-appropriated themselves to survive in specific local areas.

Darwin tells another story of dwelling thinking, it is the story of struggle among species for the sake of survival. 'The realization of the gradual change in the earth' indicates a Darwinian notion of 'the cruelty of nature'.[6] However, what was first thought as a nasty process of 'natural selection' to preserve or mutate away certain traits or creatures, a 'universal tragedy' imposed by the phesio-chemical nature of land itself on land-creatures was relieved gradually by Western modernist belief that the universe functions without direct intervention from a divine power and man is the only creature who can decide the overall destiny of existence; i.e. creation is going on or it is not completed yet. The 'zoological cycle' ends with the perfection of the 'supreme Caucasian mind' [Tennyson's "The Palace of Art"] which can now control the biogenetic laws of nature to produce the best possible creatures. This view imposes the concept of the 'supreme race', which breeds the best people who have the right to

rule over all other races that remain 'half-devil and half-child' [Kipling's "The White Man's Burden"]. The notion of 'the white man's burden' is both theoretical and historical, which took political shape by means of the British Empire. Derived 'from the Latin *imperium*', says Nathan K. Hensley, 'the word "empire" denotes both power in general and, in the political domain, the authority of one state or constituency over a wider group of peoples, nations, or territories. It was in this latter usage especially that empire became a live topic in the Victorian era'.[7] The rise of the Victorian middle class and its urgent need to exploit new lands are moments of historical significance in which the new European profane Exodus started to sketch a 'global political map' that became a huge sign in which Great Britain would mark every zone as a satellite following London as its epicentre. In this sense, the struggle over power and space led to the emergence of geo-political discourse which orchestrates 'the relationship between physical earth and politics'.[8] As Heidegger noted philosophically, geopolitics evokes 'a spatial way of thinking that arranges different actors, elements and locations simultaneously on a global chessboard'. It is a multidimensional field of knowledge, working contrapuntally between a dominant source land and other inferior target lands, or a new world order of land divided according to power relations. Thus, the 19th-century British people started to think in terms of whole 'earth' rather than in terms of England, Europe, Old World or New World.

Britain's loss of America (1776) and gradual domination of India (1799) denote, according to Halford J. Mackinder, the godfather of Imperial geo-political discourse, the birth of a post-Columbian imperial thinking of spaces that are worldwide, of God-like global view of land, and of geography's shaping role in history and politics.[9] It is a new era of land power that enables a small number of people to govern others. However, as the British invaded India, they had to confront the problem of how to govern this far-reaching and densely-peopled land and how to justify a legitimate governance of India for themselves? They encompassed their imperial project with a bunch of philosophies of history and ethics as well as political philosophy. British ethic philosophy provides systematic discussions on 'the existence or non-existence of free will and its bearing on notions of moral responsibility'.[10] They were busy with the question whether man is a free agent or he behaves against his free will, and settled certain principles which shaped their views of themselves and the others. David Theo Goldberg proclaims that 'the racial rule' was legitimated in Europe either through 'naturalist' or 'historicist' patterns. The naturalist tradition, which was adopted by Hobbes, Rousseau, Kant, Hegel and Carlyle, assumes that the Westerners are superior due to natural,

biological and inherited features; yet, for other philosophers such as Locke, Comte, Marx and J.S. Mill, the Western features of superiority were gained by a long process of historicist, evolutionary and developmental schooling and this process must be carried onward by the Europeans themselves to improve the other races in the same pattern.[11] They stripped the indigenous people from their heritage and attempt to recreate them in the image of progressive Western ideals; i.e. they did not respect cultural differences in the new paradigms they tried to build. Their distinction between the Caucasian melancholic thinker who carries the responsibility of the world and the colonized slaves who are reduced into sensational 'body' produced categorization of racial groups that pass even to the present day, drawing a map of meaning designed to make a new sense of the land; however, it is highly ethnocentric. For Derrida, this ethnocentrism is the crystallization of 'the white mythology which reassembles and reflects the culture of the West: the white man takes his own mythology, Indo-European mythology, his own *logos*, that is the *mythos* of his idiom, for the universal form of that he must still wish to call Reason'. It is a fabulous scene of the West in general and Great Britain in particular 'inscribed in white ink'.[12] Tennyson expresses this supremacist attitude widely in his poetry; he assumes the 'supposed "natural" supremacy of men over women; the white race over other races; European civilization over non-European civilization'. He had spent tremendous efforts to justify his racist, sexist and ethnic nationalist views of the supremacy of the 'Caucasian mind' [in "The Palace of Art"], of men [in "The Princess"] and of England [in "Locksley Hall"].

2. Imperial Hubris or Global Mission of Civilization?

From the early Renaissance, the British were represented as a peculiar race elected mysteriously to perform a specific task during a crucial era in the history of mankind. After all the vanities achieved during the reign of Elizabeth I, God of the Reformation seemed to appoint the British race to subdue the other inferior, excitable and unstable races, to improve them and tame their wildness or 'unpredictableness'. It was the new European spirit of Enlightenment that distinguished the West in general and Great Britain in particular as the land of Christendom and freedom from Eastern barbarism and despotism. British racism was justified by moral and religious inclinations to rescue the 'other' cultures from their backwardness. Thus, imperialism was supported by Victorian Christianity that sees all human beings as having the potential of salvation, so missionary societies worked side by side with British colonial authorities. However, religious conversion was not the only justification for

British imperialism; there were also political and historical justifications which pursued the aboriginals in the direction of liberal democracy and material progress. During the 'imperial' 19th century, money relations and self-interest theories made Britain seize a massive space of land under its control and transform local cultures in its own image because it assumed that the rest of the globe cannot go unaided by the British to improve and 'liberate' itself from the shackles of the past. The British found themselves suddenly responsible for the burden of setting free all mankind from their despotic rulers, conquering the world in the name of freedom. Their main aim was to build up 'an educated, Christian, progressive and, in the end, self-governing indigenous society', an aim which remains forever far-fetched and never has been fulfilled. Nevertheless, it continued to the present day and was very vital in the two Gulf Wars, the US-led invasion of Afghanistan and Iraq, and the global war against terrorism. The White/Male Westerners think that they are dominant agents in the Darwinian process of 'evolution' towards a future universal civilization, the supreme race that would lead to the improvement of 'other' unprivileged or under-standard races.

The Empire was supported by a grand discourse called 'Orientalisim', which made a consensus of what the colonials are and how do they define the colonized. The positive relationship between knowledge and power, which Foucault emphasizes in his writings, was early diagnosed by the 19th-century Orientalists who achieved very dynamic 'structures of knowledge', or archival work to penetrate into the lands their armies wanted to occupy and to 'justify their own power and authority over subject populations'. They succeeded to establish a master narrative, an acknowledged universal 'we' that has the right of 'controlling the dominant discourse'.[13] Their awareness of their British identity went hand in hand with the massive extension of Empire, showing that military structures of power create epistemic structures of knowledge which made them feel themselves special, modern, civilized and superior. To speak in the name of everyone, to erase the other, the minor, the weak and to justify this erasure were the aims of imperial discourse. As white and male geo-politicians, the imperialist elite considered themselves the mastering agents of land, seeking new concepts of 'expansionism and securing empire'. In worldwide conviction, they thought that 'their way of life was superior to that of others; their ideals were the ideals of all of "mankind" or humanity'. This schema was followed in the Oriental colonies, especially in India. The British thought that the Indians were lacking proper laws, so they denied them property or rights, yet, ironically, the British considered themselves as legitimate inheritors of the Indian past. The East India Company and the Asiatic Society involved special experts to

translate and study the ancient history of India. Their mission was to protect the British Raj by re-appropriating it with Indian history and to re-shape India in the new progressive Western image. The 19th-century Orientalists had a powerful impact on the subsequent political, literary and historical discourse. They were the 'archons', 'first of all the documents' guardians', but 'they do not only ensure the physical security of what is deposited and the substrate. They are also accorded the hermeneutic right and competence. They have the power to interpret the archives'. Guarded by such archons, 'these documents in effect state the law: they recall the law and call on or impose the law'.[14] The Orientalists were mostly a directorate of paid professional scholars enlisted by the British armies of India. They were official 'communities of interpretation', or 'prodigious techno-socio-political machine'[15] whose representation of the Orient created unending and irremediable future 'clash of civilizations'. Many contemporary Western politicians and intellectuals are still highly effected by the Orientalist political, ethical, literary and epistemological contexts of the Orient/Occident distinction.[16] For them, 'The Orient' is still 'a style of thought based on an ontological and epistemological distinction between "the Orient" and ... "the Occident"' , the 'we' and 'they', or the self and other.[17]

Tennyson was highly influenced by 'the Orientalist Tradition'[18], which shaped his poetry differently throughout his life. Based on 'the two Tennysons theory', Emily A. Haddad distinguishes two types of Orientalist discourses in Tennyson's poetry: one is the product of his post-romantic imagination representing 'the East as a world apart, untouched by time',[19] an exotic dream-land where the dreamer is passively watching the 'Eastern wealth ... divorced from the political and economic realities of empire'. The other Orientalist discourse is more 'politically motivated';[20] it is rendered 'within the framework of empire' as Tennyson became Poet Laureate; or when 'the poet of a purely private emotion become[s] the poet of a public order'.[21] Gradually, he turned to be the master of Victorian imperial ideology. As a laureate, his association with the Orient becomes more politically activated. He is no longer a romantic dreamer who gazes passively at the seductive East, he gains agency from his name as the laureate of a powerful Empire. The 'name' that he made for himself, like Ulysses' name, turns to be his 'burden and strength', shaping his identity and mixing his poetics with politics. The name mediates the work itself, and instead of having 'no signification', as a proper name, Lord Tennyson's name turns to be a 'sign' in itself.[22] Thus, his Orientalism can be studied in the context of his developing name. His signature becomes step by step more Victorian and particularly more imperial, he felt himself more responsible to the fate of his country and the

world in general. He shoulders the responsibility of representing the West and non-West, the modern and non-modern, the Christian and non-Christian together from one-sided imperial point of view which is a deflection in the objectivity of Western discourse that Edward W. Said identified in his *Orientalism* (1978). According to Said, the Occident/Orient and West/East binaries have no 'ontological stability; each is made of human effort, partly affirmation, partly identification of the other'.[23] The Orient is a European 'invention' or 'representation', an 'other' that helps the Europeans to define themselves, creating a field of knowledge called Orientalism which supplied interpretive and hermeneutic basis for a traditional understanding of 19th-century imperial discourse.[24] Thus, Said patronized a new postcolonial discourse which is built on notions of difference raised by Derrida and Delleuze. It challenges 'the basic distinction between East and West as the starting point for elaborate theories, epics, novels, social descriptions, and political accounts concerning the Orient, its people, customs, "mind", destiny, and so on'. Said emphasized the invalidity of certain imperial patterns such as 'bringing civilization to primitive or barbaric peoples', or that they 'deserved to be ruled' by others,[25] as a result, cultural anti-colonial resistance appeared to concentrate not on the colonized local heritage only, but even to re-interpret colonial literature itself. Said calls for a critical tradition, working 'contrapuntally' between the source and target cultures together 'to see some sort of whole instead of the defensive little patch offered by one's own culture, literature, and history'.[26] He motivates the scholars to deal with critical issues from both sides, that of the colonized and the colonizer, to stop dealing with Europe as the sovereign Subject and present the viewpoints of 'pluralized' subjects instead. He influenced a universal dialogue to see the whole picture, to hear a multi-voiced orchestra, to have a comprehensive vision. Thus, many attempts were made to relocate the canon of imperial discourse by following a postmodern deconstructive methods of textual re-interpretation.[27]

Postcolonial theory appeared as a reaction to 'the political and cultural monotheism of the colonial enterprise'. 'In pushing the colonial world to the margins of experience', say Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin, 'the "centre" pushed consciousness beyond the point at which monotheism in all spheres of thought could be accepted without question'. Relegating the colonized people to the marginality of world experience 'turned upon itself and acted to push that world through a kind of mental barrier into a position from which all experience could be viewed as uncentred, pluralistic, and multifarious. Marginality thus became an unprecedented source of creative energy'.[28] According to Derrida, the 'margin' is an active invisible area,

'where the text 'thinks its other'. The text's other is 'that which limits it, and from which it derives its essence, its definition, its production'.[29] Derrida's margin is a dynamic territory for the 'implied reader', providing potential hermeneutic (im)possibilities to the text that lay eventually beyond what the text's author understands himself to say or intends to mean. It is beyond 'the "conscious intention" of the author as a reader of his "own" text'. It interrogates the meaning of the text, being the fertile source of its 'polysemia', or plurality of meaning(s). If we concentrate on the colonial text and neglect its postcolonial margins, we will miss an essential part of its meaning, 'or rather one misses (the) missing (of) it, which as concerns the other, always amounts to the same'. Thus, it is important for Derrida to 'blur the line which separates a text from its controlled margin'. Beyond the text, 'there is not a blank, virgin, empty margin, but another text, a weave of differences of forces without any present centre of reference'. The margin is an 'homogenous, and negative space, leaving its outside outside'; it is 'that which cannot lend itself to being heard or read, or being seen'. It is 'the unthought, the suppressed, the repressed' part of the text. As the *a* of *différance,* it cannot be 'exposed' or 'presented as such', 'it exceeds the order of truth at a certain precise point', 'it would be exposed to disappearing as disappearance. It would risk appearing: disappearing'.[30] Thus, in the postcolonial 'margin' of Tennyson's "Akbar's Dream" (1892), the active 'reader', or the 'implied' audience of this dramatic monologue can find an Anglophone dream manufactured by adhering to Oriental archival material consciously interpreted to go well with imperial hubris without taking into consideration the unexpected reign of terror which follows eventually. This makes a new 'adventurous' reading of the poem necessary.

3. Colonialism/Postcolonialism in Tennyson's "Akbar's Dream"

The British Raj faced the same problem that Muslim Mughal Emperors challenged in 'all the warring world of Hindustan,' which is the difficulty of 'ruling over mixed races'. This colonial obstruction was carefully considered by Jala-ul-Din Mohammed Akbar (1542-1605) and his minister Sheik Abul Fazl ibn Mubarak (1551-1602) who wrote the *Akbarna'mah* (the chronicle of Akbar). Akbar, the son of Humayun and descendant of Chengiz Khan ruled India from 1556 to 1605, he did not believe that conquering people should be followed by converting them from their aboriginal religions: 'To drive / A people from their ancient fold of faith, / And wall them up perforce in mine - unwise, / Unkinglike'.[31] According to Ehsan Ghodratollahi, Akbar 'was so far ahead of his age' to grasp the inseparable relationship between politics and religion.[32] For him, religion, or the 'distinct ways of binding people

together by rituals and beliefs, has been recognized ... to comprehend a plurality of cultures'. He was aware, as the Raj after him, that the most dangerous demarcation line which separates the Indians from the ruling regimes is a rigorous difference of faith, so he recommends a new religion of universal peace and toleration that put the Tudors 'to shame', says Tennyson in his prolonged prose notes to his poem, "Akbar's Dream". The title figure is projected to lecture on some kind of early political equality and religious toleration, saying:

> In the King's garden, gathering here and there
>
> From each plant the blossom choicest-grown
>
> To wreath a crown not only for the king
>
> But in due time for every Mussulman,
>
> Brahmin, and Buddhist, Christian, and Parseee,
>
> Throu' all the warring world of Hindustan.

Akbar 'invented a new eclectic religion by which he hoped to unite all creeds, castes and peoples', he calls it *Dini I lahi* or *Solh-i-Koll* (world-religion). It is a multi-religio-cultural policy that he tried to practice in India, but it failed after his death. In the 19th-century, the British colonizers grasped the importance of Akbar's religious reformation, it became 'a potential instrument', or a political strategy for the Raj to control India. The British were very keen to the role religion plays to guarantee the Empire's well-fair, so their bureaucrat officers tried to re-establish the 'inter-faith dialogue', which was initiated by Akbar. There was a new 'opportunity for the modern West to complete what the ancient East began'. The British thought that their imperial secularism can succeed by molding, like Akbar, the local temples and rituals in one cosmopolitan, non-dogmatic religion which embraces 'the best in all creeds'. Thus, Benjamin Jowett, the Oxford theologian and classicist sent Tennyson Blochmenn's translation (1872-77) of the *Ain-i-Akbari* (annals of Akbar) and urged him to write a poem on the theme that 'all religions are one'. Hence, not everything in the poem is dream-like; the poem as well as its subsequent prose notes are more than the product of one man's dream, they are facts derived from 'research in the archives of colonial government'.[33] Blochmann comments on the significance of his translation, saying:

> The Ain I Akbari is the third volume of the Akbarna'mah, by Sheik Abulfazl,
>
> and is by far the greatest work in the whole series of Muhammadan histories
>
> of India....The concluding volume, the Ain I Akbari, contains the
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> information regarding Akbar's reign which, though not strictly historical, is

yet essential to a correct understanding of the times, and embodies, therefore those facts for which, in *modern times*, we would turn to Administration Reports, Statistical compilations, or Gazetteers' (Italics mine).[34]

Tennyson relies on the historical reports and accounts of Sheik Abul Fazl as they were translated by Blochmann. Thus, archival translation has its impact on the formation of the poem and its colonial significance to the Victorian audience. Translation transforms the archives from one system of signifiers to another, and the semiotic systems differ here as the imperial culture that Blochmann and Tennyson wrote for is 'supposed' to be more intellectual, highly interested in the pragmatic benefit from the histories translated rather than in the narrative itself. The translator, says Hegel, 'immediately converts all events into reports for intellectual representation'.[35] His translation is 'more instructive' in its 'accounts of methods and conditions'. Both Blochmann and Tennyson can be categorized as statecraft intellectuals for whom 'the East is a career', says Benjamin Disraeli. They used Akbar's archives, in poetry and prose, as landmarks for the British imperialists to follow if they want to monopolize over India. They presented above all a 'problem solving' strategy to the Empire, 'taking the existent institutions and organization of state power as they find them and theorizing from the perspective of these institutions and relations of power'.[36] They spoke about Oriental subjects with the interest of Great Britain in their minds, helping the British management of India.

"Akbar's Dream" can be considered as part of the genre called 'advice to the prince' literature, which is 'embedded within certain institutional structures and social networks of power, privilege and access' called 'Orientalist' discourse. It instructs that, in the time of restructuring the world power-relations as in contemporary politics, we need to find some pattern or rational meaning in the hoaxes of history. Hence, the fact that Akbar is a historical rather than mythical figure makes him stand on a 'firmer ground' and provides him with 'firm individuality'. 'In original history', says Hegel, 'we are concerned with peoples who knew what they were and what they wanted'.[37] Moreover, 'only from a superior position', Hegel continues, 'can one truly see things for what they are and see everything, not when one has to peer upward from below, through a narrow opening'. As such, Akbar's superiority enables him to see that driving 'people from their ancient fold of faith' is 'unwise', which is, for the Victorians, a shocking anti-Medievalist, anti-missionary and anti-Christian idea. He recommends an eclectic liberal strategy 'to let men worship as they will'. He collects 'from

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every faith and race the best / And bravest soul for counsellor and friend'. Instead of the 'sword' and 'stake', he proposes the religion of Love and the cult of losing oneself 'in Allah', as it was advocated by Abu Said Abul Khayr, the Persian Sufi poet who used the common forms of love-poetry to express his mysticism. But Abu Said's saying: 'Fade in the noon of heaven, when creed and race / Shall bear false witness, each of each, no more' contradicts Akbar's prophecy at the end of his dramatic monologue, saying: "All praise to Allah by whatever Hands / My mission be accomplished", foreshadowing that 'an alien race' would come from 'the sunset', or the West to complete his mission of religious reformation. He summons 'an alien race' to accomplish his liberal mission, to bring light into 'the night' of his kingdom, and to rebuild his 'sacred fane'. Here, Tennyson read and interpreted India in terms of Western universal philosophy of progress and democracy, omitting its local orientation. Thus, the poem should be approached from a postcolonial perspective to let the inside statecraft intellectual get outside his discursive power/knowledge structures.

Tennyson could not 'cross generic, historical, and cultural boundaries' in constructing his Oriental hero, Akbar who was inspired by the Anglo-Saxon image of King Arthur. Arthur and Akbar, both built sublime empires, yet the pseudo-idealism of both empires was destroyed after their death. They were betrayed by their knights who could not estimate the moral standards of their monarchs. Salim, as Lancelot of the *Idylls*, sabotaged the kingdom. However, Tennyson's "Akbar's Dream" produces, in Homi Bhabha's terms, 'colonial mimicry' of the real Orient. The poet attempts to make Akbar an Oriental copy of Arthur, '*a subject of a difference that is almost the same, but not quite'.*[38] They both stand for the divination of the political, the 'hero worship' that Carlyle preached in the 19th century. Yet, Akbar, as a mimic figure, is 'the sign of double articulation', an imitation of an imitation, an Occidental copy of the Oriental origin. He 'is constructed around ambivalence', re-appropriating the Mogul reformer and assimilating him to the grand march of Western Empire. The poet presents a Victorian fantasy of the real Akbar, which makes the resulted figure 'incomplete' and 'virtual'. Thus, beside the hegemonic imperial voices which are centralized in "Akbar's Dream", there are other voices which 'are marginalized, ignored and silenced by dominant discourses', and they have to be reactivated. In fact, Akbar himself is part of this self-conscious process of marginalization. He pretends to be real, but he mimics the post-Enlightenment man, speaking like a melancholic reformer tired of the backward conditions of his native people who accused his reformations of heresy. Tennyson mocks history by partially re-presenting its figure, disturbing the notions of identity and ending with

a quasi-Victorian hero who is neither the European 'self', nor the non-European 'other'. In this sense, 'the observer becomes the observed', or the Indian subject plays a crucial part in fashioning British identity, he becomes a 'mirror stage' for the British subject to define himself. By being Westernized, the historic Akbar is castrated, and his real color is absented in 'white presence'. Akbar is 'whitewashed', he speaks as an Englishman, copying the methods of Western patterns of government. The poet speaks of India not to India, which disavows the poem's premises of world-religion, or 'unity in diversity'. He speaks to the British through Akbar, showing them the mechanism by which they are estranged from themselves, 'the realization that religious toleration, one of Western modernity's essential, self-defining concepts, is neither peculiarly Western nor modern'.[39]

Akbar's toleration is multifaceted, it illuminates a contemporary use in shaping the political, sociological, religious and ethnic relationship between the dominant state power and the dominated. He maintains a 'free Hall, where each philosophy / And mood of faith may hold its own'. His free religious decrees; such as regarding the dog clean, allowing tasting swine-flesh and drinking wine, forbidding Sati and child-marriage put him in an antagonistic opposition with Muslim and Hindu religious authorities. He describes religious dogma as 'furious formalisms' and narrow-mindedness, which goes against the natural law of variety. For him, religious variations are inseparable from natural variations in flowers, plants, fruits and stars. So, no religious sect has the right to say 'I am on the Perfect Way, / All else is to perdition'. He separates religious dogma from the essence of God, which he thinks only the heart of a true mystic can feel: 'the dust of the rose-petal belongs to the heart of the perfume seller.' He dispatches God from all religious nominations and replaces all religions into *Dini Ilahi*. It seems to be a religion, but in fact it is a problem-solving political strategy that Great Britain needed in order to govern the vast and populous India. Thus, Tennyson mixes the word religion with the word crown in the poem, saying that the crown is not for kings only, but 'for every Mussulman, Brahmin, and Buddhist, Christian, and Parsee'. For Tennyson, who psychoanalyzes Akbar, the Mogul reformer becomes an icon or an archetypal 'metaphor for that deep yearning that exists in all mankind for an end to wars, whether military or ideological'.[40] Although the Raj administers approved Akbar's attempt to assimilate all these religions together, they did not understand the reasons that led to the failure of Akbar's unifying project. They could not see the complete picture that the more politics tries to discard religion, the stronger religion comes back to the political scene with violent practices of fanaticism and sectarianism. Akbar's free religious practices create enemies for him

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represented in the 'Ulama' (clergy men), who 'sitting on green sofas contemplate / The torment of the damn'd', 'like wild brutes new-caged ---- the narrower / The cage, the more their fury'. They accused him of heresy, of bringing 'a new Koran / From heaven', and of being 'the Prophet' of a new religion they could not understand because they concentrated on blind dogma and were unable to comprehend the essence of the Word of God. They call it a new Quran because it presents a new meaning they do not get from the Quran itself. As spiritual leaders, they have a very powerful impact on the masses; hence, after Akbar's death, 'trampled millions' led by his son, Saleem, 'loosen, stone from stone' the 'sacred fane' which is the symbol of Akbar's multi-religious Empire: it was 'A temple, neither Pagod, Mosque, nor Church, / But loftier, simpler, always open-door'd / To every breath from heaven, and Truth and Peace / And Love and Justice came and dwelt therein'. Fanaticism responded violently to Akbar's quest, but it would be completed, as he dreamt, by the foreign race 'who fitted stone to stone again' his Temple. The British Raj is supposed to track earnestly Akbar's reforming policy, his project of 'world religions'; however, were they able to get rid of the violent sectarian reactions to their unconditional religious liberty? Did they absorb the mob's deep spiritual loyalties? Negative answers to these questions were given in the successive violent insurgencies the Indians led against the Raj and the final Muslim-Hindu struggle which broke into a violent civil war in 1947 and still waging the Indian-Pakistani struggles.

In 'the postmodern turn', a return to Akbar's 'religion without religion', or religion of 'other Testaments' is advocated. The Western institutions of global or geopolitical experts diagnosed the integral relationship between religion and politics and its dynamic role to reshape the new imperial 'world order'. Liberal democracy assumes having a moral responsibility to do the hard work, the 'burden' of bringing freedom to the rest of the world, the way the United States is shouldering this responsibility nowadays in the globe. Thus, for Tennyson and Hegel, as for Kojeve and Fukuyama, 'the West is the culmination of all historical progress'.[41] They decode Akbar's social and religious democracy in Western terms, and simplified the actual existing contradictions between source and target cultures. For them, the West reaches the culmination of civilized human history and the fulfilment of ultimate destiny of mankind, the 'end of history', unlike the East which is still struggling in 'the historical'. Thus linking the new Empire project with the prophetic vision gives some kind of divine nature to the imperial task, pronouncing 'from upon high about the meaning of world politics'.[42] Religious motivation was also used, according to Homi Bhabha, as a supplement to colonial detribalization because religion is the easiest way to agitate the mob.

Karl Marx advocated, in *The Jewish Question* (1844), a general exclusion of the religious identity in order to lead the march of free humanity, and Fanon referred since the 1960s to the impact of religious mythical heroism and its devastating impact on the mob. So changing the demographic map, building new geography on religious and sectarian basis can be one of the new chapters in the development of human history as foreshadowed by Derrida who speaks, prophetically, of the 'return' of religion and the religious. This time, *land-communication* is performed by religious impulses to achieve political expansionism. Today this detribalization is continued by military power as by multinational financial system and technology, which communicates 'virtual' signatures of power and meaning as real as 'the old order of ideals'.

4. The End: Toleration or Terror?

The politico-religious paradigm which Tennyson presents in "Akbar's Dream" starts in medias res of the 'phobic myth', the 'political panic' of the reign of terror after the failure of toleration. It was Abul Fazl and his brother, Faizi who influenced Akbar to adopt the policy of toleration which was considered by some Muslims and non-Muslims as an apostasy from Islam. The two brothers, as their father Sheik Mubarak, showed intellectual strength to accept many heterodox ideas as part of Islam, so orthodoxy considered them as heretics. They possessed encyclopaedic spiritual knowledge and were genuine *Mujaddid* figures, dynamic reformers of the *shari'a*, Islamic laws depending on new reading/meaning conceived from the Qur'an which is considered by all Muslims as the origin of Islamic laws. The *Mujaddid* figures revitalize Islamic orthodoxy, but they are violently resisted, if not killed, by the rigid people who follow strict interpretations of Islam. In the court of Agrah, the capital of the Mogul Empire, the new *Mujaddids* encouraged Akbar to introduce the doctrine of universal faith for both religious and political motives to bridge the gap between the ruling class and common people who embraced different faiths. The court usually kept a class of spiritually learned people known as 'Ulama' led by *Qadi-al-*Qudat (chief judge) and *Sadr-al-Sudur* (cheif theologian) who had powerful impact on the court, so they were the most prominent enemies of Akbar's new policy. Mubarak and his sons encouraged Akbar to 'enquire' beyond the Hanafi law which most Muslims adopt and to learn the laws of other Muslim and non-Muslim sects. Thus, Akbar started to think that 'there were sensible men in all religions, and abstemious thinkers and men endowed with miraculous power among all the nations', which is not an apostasy from Islam as it is a different understanding of the Islamic major source which is the Qur'an. Instead of insisting on a narrow understanding of Islamic doctrine, Akbar

adopted a wider and more comprehensive philosophy which is still Islamic but closer the spirit of tolerant Islam rather than to what the partial Islamic 'fundamentalism' has acknowledged. Almighty Allah says in the Qur'an: 'We have made you races and tribes that you may get mutually acquainted. Surely the most honourable among you in the Providence of Allah are the most pious' (49: 13). This means that Muslims do not have priority over other forms of worship, He says also: 'Surely (the ones) who have believed and the ones who have Judaized and the Nasara [Christians] and the Sabaeans whoever have believed in Allah and the Last Day and done righteousness, then they will have their reward in the Providence of their Lord, and no fear will be on them, neither will they grieve' (2: 62 and the same content repeated in (5:69). This estimation of individualism which is built on a deeper understanding of the Qur'anic textual meaning endangered the rank and status of the learned court theologians, so in order to balance their official power, the Emperor was assigned the title of 'Mujtahid' (infallible authority in all matters relating to Islam) not because he was 'a just ruler' as Blochmann says, rather any well-learned and impartial man, regardless of his being a king, can become the 'only source of legislation'.[43] But in the case of Akbar, he mingled the temporal and spiritual powers in his hand in the same example that Prophet Mohammed and his cousin, Imam Ali were in their own time, leading a maximal system both political and religious *where all sects are accepted unless they want to fight Islam.* Abul Fazl describes Akbar's remarkable reign, saying: 'The Court became a gathering place of the sages and learned of all creeds; the good doctrines of all religious systems were recognized, and their defects were not allowed to obscure their good features'. This court is not a manifestation of 'secular Islam in India', as Feroza Jussawalla suggests,[44] but the comprehensive tolerant views of a Muslim mystic who thinks that Allah's 'elect have no dealings with either heresy or orthodoxy; for neither of them stands behind the screen of ... truth'. 'Heresy to the heretic', says Abul Fazl, 'and religion to the orthodox, / But the dust of the rose-petal belongs to the heart of the perfume seller' (25-6).

Consequently, in the time of restructuring the world power-relations, one of the legitimate questions is the ultimate relationship (Hegelian 'logical necessity') between imperialism and terror and the subsequent relation between religion and terror. To approach this question a special keenness to concrete history seems to be inevitable. Historically speaking, although the East had experienced spiritual perfection and political democracy before the West in specific moments of its history; such as in Akbar's reign, it had not reached what Hegel, Kojeve and Fukuyama considered as 'the end of history'. It is still struggling in

'the historical' so it is inappropriate to say that the West becomes 'post-historical' simply because it conquered the world, it cannot control the return of the unpredictable reign of terror. Moreover, in Tennyson's "Akbar's Dream", an Anglophone dream of perfection can be seen. The monologist-dreamer is depicted as a Westernized Oriental reformer who read and interpreted India in terms of Occidental philosophy of progress and democracy, omitting its local points of reference. Beside the hegemonic voice which is centralized in the poem, there are other 'subaltern' voices which 'are marginalized, ignored and silenced by dominant discourses'. Thus, it is important to blur the line which separates the text of the poem from its controlled margin(s).

Notes

1**Karl Marx and Frederick Engels**, "Manifesto of the Communist Party" (1848), trans. Samuel Moore, *Marx/Engels Selected Works*, vol. 1, Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1969 rep. 2010, p. 100.

2'Language', says Derrida, 'provides the fundamental configuration of the properties of things as recognized by the mind', in "The Supplement of Copula: Philosophy before Linguistics", *Margins of Philosophy*, trans. Alan Bass (Sussex: The Harvester Press, 1972 rep. 1986), p.189.

3**Martin Heidegger**, *Poetry, Language, Thought*, trans. Albert Hofstadter (New York: Harperperennial Modern Classic, 1971 rep. 2001), 143.

4Ibid., 145.

5**Roland Barthes**, "The Grain of the Voice", in *Image Music Text,* trans. Stephen Heath (London: Fontana Press, 1977), 179.

6**Kenneth M. Weiss**, "'Nature Red in Tooth and Claw', So What?", in *Evolutionary Anthropology* 19 (2010), 41.

7**Nathan K. Hensley**, "Empire", in *The Blackwell Encyclopedia of Victorian Literature*.

8**Gearoid O Tuathail**, "Introduction: Thinking Critically about Geopolitics", in *The Geopolitics Reader*, ed.s Gearoid O. Tuathail, Simon Dalby and Paul Routledge (London: Routledge, 1998), 1.

9Ibid., 16.

10**Alan Montefiore**, *A Modern Introduction to Moral Philosophy* (London: Compton Printing Limited, 1958), 5.

11**David Theo Goldberg**, "Racial Rule", in *Relocating Postcolonialism* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 2002), 82.

12**Jacques Derrida**, "White Mythology: Metaphor in the Text of Philosophy", in *Margins of Philosophy*, 213.

13**Tuathail**, 4.

14**Jacques Derrida**, "Archive Fever: A Freudian Impression", trans. Eric Prenowitz in *Diacritics* (25: 2, 1995), 10.

15**Jacques Derrida**, "Autoimmunity: Real and Symbolic Suicide", trans.s Pascale-Anne Brault and Michael Nass, in *Philosophy in A Time of Terror* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2003), 86.

16**George Bush**, "The Hard Work of Freedom" (1992); **Francis Fucuyama**, "The End of History" (1989); and **Samuel P. Huntington**, "The Clash of Civilization" (1993), in *The Geopolitics Reader.*

17**Edward W. Said**, *Orientalism* (London: Penguin Books, 1978 rep. 2003), 2.

18**Paul Stevens and Rahul Sapra**, "Akbar's Dream: Moghul Toleration and English/British Orientalism", in *Modern Philology* (2007), 393.

19**Emily A. Haddad**, "Tennyson, Arnold, and The Wealth of The East", in *Victorian Literature and Culture* (2004), 373.

20**Roger Ebbatson**, "Knowing the Orient: The Young Tennyson", in *Nineteenth-Century Contexts* (36: 2, 2014), 126.

21**Valerie Pitt**, *Tennyson Laureate* (London: Barrie and Rockliff, 1962), 15.

22**Anna Barton**, *Tennyson's Name: Identity and Responsibility in the Poetry of Alfred Lord Tennyson* (Hampshire: Ashgate, 2008), 3.

23**Edward W. Said**, *Orientalism*, xii.

24**Edward W. Said,** "Orientalism Reconsidered", in *Cultural Critique*, (1, 1985), 90.

25**Edward W. Said,** *Culture and Imperialism* (New York: Vintage Books, 1994), xii.

26**Edward Said**, "Discrepant Experiences", in *Postcolonial Discourses: An Anthology*, ed. Gregory Castle (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 2001), 36.

27A leading attempt to re-locate *Jane Eyre* in the imperial cannon is **Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak's** "Three Women's Texts and A Critique of Imperialism", in *Critical Inquiry* (12, 1, 1985), 243-261.

28**Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin**, *The Empire Writes Back: Theory and Practice in Post-Colonial Literatures* (London: Routledge, 1989), 12.

29**Derrida**, *Margins of Philosophy,* x.

30Ibid., 6.

31All references to the poem and its notes are quoted from *The Complete Works of Alfred, Lord Tennyson* (New York: Frederick A. Stokes Company Publishers, 1891).

32**Ehsan Ghodratollahi,** "Akbar, the Doctrine of Solh-i-Kol and Hindu-Muslim Relations," in *Journal of Religious Thought* (2007, 4), https://doi.org/10.22099/jrt.2013.1324.

33**H. Blochmann**, "Introduction" to his translation of *Ain I Akbari* by Abul Fazl 'Allami (Calcutta: Baptist Mission Press, 1873), iii.

34Ibid.

35**G.W.F. Hegel**, *Introduction to the Philosophy of History*, trans. Leo Rauch (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 1988), 4.

36**Tuathail**, 8.

37**Hegel**, 506.

38**Homi Bhabha,** "Of Mimicry and Man: The Ambivalence of Colonial Discourse," in *The MIT* (1984, 125-133).

39**Gustavo Benavides**, "Western Religion and the Self-Cancelling of Modernity" (2008), in *Journal of Religion in Europe* (85-115), https://doi.org/10.1163/187489208X285486.

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41**Tuathail**, 104.

42Ibid., 105.

43**Blochmann**, 12.

44**Feroza Jussawalla**, "Are Cultural Rights Bad for Multicultural Societies?" in *The South Atlantic Quarterly* (2001, 962-980).