

From Templegantine to the Golden Temple: religion, empire, and Max Arthur Macauliffe

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This essay addresses aspects of the role of religion in colonial situations, especially some of the problems raised by religious conversion in such a context. It will focus on the extraordinary example of Max Arthur Macauliffe, a native of Limerick, who became a judge in the Indian Civil Service, converted to the Sikh religion, and did the classic translation of the *Granth*, the sacred book of the Sikhs, into English.

In the discourse of colonization (to be distinguished from that of colonialism) in the nineteenth century, the enterprise was frequently conceived of in missionary terms. Indeed, religious missionaries were seen, and saw themselves, as being, unproblematically, adjuncts to secular colonization. Imperial attitudes to indigenous religions varied generally from outright hostility to grudging toleration. From the foundation of the National Colonization Society in 1830, which propagated the ideas of Edward Gibbon Wakefield, colonization was theorized and justified totally in economic terms. Though there was occasional semantic slippage, a 'colony' was primarily a people rather than a place. A colony was a group of, say, British people who abandoned their 'home' for, in effect, 'a home away from home.' It was the economic, political, social, and cultural destiny of this colony that was almost the only focus of the discourse of colonization. The cultural fate of indigenous peoples was of little or no analytical, or indeed any other, importance. They were seen variously as natural hazards, impediments to the march of empire, or as potential 'labour' when rescued from their 'savagery' or 'barbarity'.

The National Colonization Society engaged in two related activities: the promotion of 'systematic colonization' rather than sporadic and random emigration, and the theorization of colonization by means of the new 'science' of political economy. The Society complained that colonization was once a noble, even heroic, activity engaged in by the highest in the land; now the colonies were used, in the words of Charles Buller, for 'shovelling out paupers' or as dumping grounds for criminals. The idea of colonization was to 'plant' new English nations abroad ('plantation' was an earlier name for colonization), so the colony had to be its exact 'representative', a child of the 'Mother Country', complete with family resemblances. But with the emigration of, overwhelmingly, members of the lower classes and with convict colonization (planting with 'nettle-seed', as Archbishop Richard Whately of Dublin, a member of the

Society, picturesquely put it in 1832),¹ the new 'English' nations would scarcely be clones of the original stock but rather a 'monstrous family'.² What the Society advocated, as against this horizontal segment of plebeian British society, was a vertical cross-section, ideally including representatives of all classes.

The original function of missionaries was to service the colony, that is, the settlers. John Elliot Cairnes stated that the 'grand object' of the governments of England in its early period of colonization or 'plantation' [1492–1776] was to 'enforce uniformity' of religion at home.³ But a variety of religions was exported to the colonies, such as puritanism to New England, Quakerism to Pennsylvania, and Roman Catholicism to Maryland, while in Virginia and Carolina, the Church of England was established by law. The religious belief prevailing in a colony was reflected in its legislative assembly and embodied in its laws.⁴ However, according to Herman Merivale, 'With unity of religious belief at home, such questions need not be debated; but in the present condition of the British community they become of most pressing and practical interest.'⁵ In the latter part of the nineteenth century, with the predicted domination of the doctrine of free trade and the apparently irreversible movement towards colonial self-government, the economic and political bonds which had 'unified' the empire had, in the view of many, to be replaced by cultural bonds. In the words of Cairnes, 'Instead of a great political, we shall be a great moral, unity; bound together no longer indeed by Imperial ligaments supplied from the Colonial Office, but by the stronger bonds of blood, language, and religion.'⁶ According to Merivale and others, the imperial and colonial governments also had a duty of promoting the 'civilization' of native tribes in the colonies. He claimed that in history 'no instance can be shown of the reclaiming of savages by any other influence than that of religion.'⁷ This view was generally accepted by the colonizers; the only debate centred on whether the natives should be civilized before being Christianized or vice versa. The spectre of conversion in the other direction was rarely, if ever, broached in these texts.

In Britain, enthusiasts for *laissez-faire* often neglected to apply their doctrine to the relationship between religion and the state. It is sometimes difficult to distinguish between a principled liberal distaste for church establishment and a calculated pragmatism fearful of its possible consequences. State support for churches, ranging from full establishment to aid of various kinds, did not neces-

1 Quoted in John Elliot Cairnes, 'Colonization and colonial government,' in Tom Boylan and Tadhg Foley (eds), John Elliot Cairnes, *Collected works*, 6 vols (London and New York: Routledge, 2004), iii, *Political essays*, p. 29. I am extremely grateful to Dr Maureen O'Connor for the unstinting help she has given me with this essay. 2 *Ibid.*, p. 25, quoting Samuel Hinds, bishop of Norwich. 3 Cairnes, 'Colonization and colonial government', p. 19. 4 *Ibid.*, pp 18–19. 5 Herman Merivale, *Lectures on colonization and colonies, delivered before the University of Oxford in 1839, 1840, and 1841* (London: Longman, Green, Longman, and Roberts, 1861), p. 599. 6 Cairnes, 'Colonization and colonial government', p. 58. 7 Merivale, *Colonization and colonies*, p. 294.

sarily have the same consequences at 'home' and in the colonies. Writing before the disestablishment of the Church of Ireland, Merivale observed that endowment would make other churches more tenacious of their own faith and could provide a 'bond of union to innumerable sects, which have no natural motive for seeking each other's alliance, to combine civil with ecclesiastical opposition [...] to unite all the scattered force of the majority against the governing body.'⁸ While there was much truth in this in 'old' (that is colonizing) countries, 'every part of it applies with tenfold force to the circumstances of new ones,' while, 'dissent itself is materially changed in its character by transplantation. Sects acquire in a more marked degree the external character of churches.'⁹ 'It would,' concluded Merivale, 'be extremely difficult, and of very doubtful policy, to establish and endow a branch of the national Church, under such circumstances, even in colonies not possessing a free government.'¹⁰ By 1860, he noted that state aid had been 'almost wholly withdrawn from the service of religion in the colonies.'¹¹

In 1869, in conformity with the notion of 'governing Ireland according to Irish ideas,' Gladstone disestablished the Church of Ireland. In Britain, Newman and some of his colleagues from the Oxford Movement, as converts to Catholicism were, not surprisingly, opposed to the control of religion by the state. But in the context of Sikhism and India, Macauliffe strongly defended the doctrine of Erastianism. Rejecting religious *laissez-faire*, he described Sikhism as a 'comparatively young religion',¹² and so, in terms of Mill's 'infant industry' argument, in need of state protection. Opposing the civil policy of 'religious neutrality',¹³ he believed that priests and religious leaders should be 'kept in proper subordination to civil authority,' though for him this meant that the state had a reciprocal duty of protection.¹⁴ According to Macauliffe some religions 'make for loyalty and others for what we may call independence. Some religions appear to require state support, while others have sufficient vitality to dispense with it.'¹⁵ He claimed that just as Buddhism without state support had 'completely lost its hold in India, so it is apprehended that without State support Sikhism will also be lost in the great chaos of Indian religious systems.'¹⁶ Popular Hinduism seemed so diverse, complicated, and contradictory that it almost defied analysis. As Tony Ballantyne puts it, '[l]ike the jungle it was so often compared to, Hinduism seemed wild, exuberant and threatening to nineteenth-century observers.'¹⁷

8 Ibid., p. 601. 9 Ibid. 10 Ibid., p. 602. 11 Ibid., p. 607, footnote. 12 Max Arthur Macauliffe, 'The Sikh religion under Banda and its present condition', *Calcutta Review*, 73 (1881), pp 155–68, reprinted in Darshan Singh (ed.), *Western image of the Sikh religion: a source book* (New Delhi: National Book Organisation, 1999), pp 269–84; p. 283, and reproduced in Max Arthur Macauliffe, *The Sikh religion: its gurus, sacred writings and authors*, 6 vols (1909; Delhi: Low Price Publications, 1998), 'Introduction', i, p. lvii. 13 Macauliffe, *Sikh religion*, 'Preface', i, p. xxv. 14 Macauliffe, 'Sikh religion under Banda', p. 271. 15 Macauliffe, *Sikh religion*, 'Preface', i, p. lv. 16 Ibid., i, p. lvi. 17 Tony Ballantyne, *Orientalism and race: Aryanism in the British empire* (Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave, 2002), p. 101. I am very grateful to Dr Ballantyne for his expert advice and encouragement when he taught at NUI, Galway.

Max Arthur Macauliffe is a name unknown in the west. It does not appear in the *Dictionary of national biography* and, though he died in England, he is not mentioned in *Who was who?* In his 1999 'source book', *Western image of the Sikh religion*, an anthology of writings on Sikhism by western writers from the eighteenth to the twentieth centuries, out of twenty essays, the editor, Darshan Singh, reprinted no fewer than seven by Macauliffe.¹⁸ A contemporary authority, W.H. McLeod, speaks with surprise of the 'paucity of scholarly studies of Macauliffe's contribution,' though he was a prominent reformer of nineteenth-century Sikhism and he produced the classic translation of the *Guru Granth Sahib*, the holy book of the Sikhs. This translation was contained in what McLeod described as Macauliffe's 'famous and enduring work', *The Sikh religion: its gurus, sacred writings and authors*, published in six volumes in 1909 by the Clarendon Press, Oxford, and running to almost 2,500 pages.¹⁹ Apparently it has never gone out of print. Harbans Singh, one of the few scholars who have written on Macauliffe, described him as 'a young English [*sic*] civilian' whose translation was the result of a 'sustained and monumental labour of love,' a 'work of recognized excellence and dignity' which, over the years, had been 'a beacon in the Sikh literary world.' According to Singh, Macauliffe's translation of the Sikh scriptures and his lives of the Gurus still remained 'unsurpassed':

For as long as there is anyone wanting to explore this faith through the medium of the English language, Max Arthur Macauliffe's name will live [...]. He is today remembered in the Punjab with much affection and reverence as an example of a civilian who [...] devoted himself to research and learning for the restoration or interpretation of some aspect of the Eastern culture.²⁰

His work made the Sikh religion 'more extensively known and created among its votaries a new intellectual ferment. The publication in 1909 of *The Sikh religion* laid the foundation of Sikh literature in English.'²¹

Macauliffe's embrace of 'Indian ideas' was such that he converted to the Sikh religion and was a leading member of Tat Khalsa, the western-influenced radical section of the Singh Sabha reform movement, founded in Amritsar in 1873. Though his translation was undoubtedly uncritical, according to McLeod, 'its influence has been profound. No other work has so effectively instructed western readers about Sikhism, with the result that the Tat Khalsa interpretation of the Sikh faith and community has been firmly fixed in the western understanding.'²²

¹⁸ Singh (ed.), *Western image*, *passim*. ¹⁹ W.H. McLeod, 'II. Religious studies in the UK: Profile (9): Max Arthur Macauliffe (September 29, 1837–March 15, 1913),' *Occasional papers: British association for the study of religions*, 78 (1996), pp 6–12. ²⁰ Harbans Singh, 'English translation of the Sikh scriptures – an arduous mission of a Punjab civilian,' in K.S. Bedi and S.S. Bal (eds), *Essays on history, literature, art and culture: presented to Dr M.S. Randhava on his sixtieth birthday by his friends and admirers* (New Delhi: Atma Ram, 1970), p. 139. ²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 144. ²² McLeod, 'Macauliffe',

All commentators on Macauliffe are mistaken about the date and exact place of his birth, and none of them is aware that the original version of his name was Michael McAuliffe. He was born in Glenmore, Monagea, Co. Limerick, on 11 September 1838. He was educated at Glenmore and Templeglantine schools (his father taught at both schools, becoming headmaster at the latter), at Springfield College, Ennis, Co. Clare, and at Queen's College Galway, where he graduated in languages in 1860. In 1862 he joined the Indian Civil Service and was posted to the Punjab, where he eventually became a judge. Based in Amritsar, he began translating the *Granth* into English; in 1893 he resigned from his official position to engage full-time in this great enterprise. Harbans Lal states that, as well as this *magnum opus*, Macauliffe published widely over almost forty years and spoke before gatherings of scholars in India, Italy, France, and England.²³ He died in London on 15 March 1913.

An almost exclusively culturalist postcolonial theory finds it difficult to deal with a colonial regime that can celebrate an indigenous system of belief in the interest of its own political and economic ambitions. In the case of the Sikhs, not only was subaltern speech allowed, it was in many cases manifestly encouraged. It is understandable that one might be suspicious of an imperial trajectory that begins with the denigration and ends with the glorification of the 'other'. This was a divide-and-conquer strategy, a 'killing with kindness', which was linked to the incorporation of Sikh military prowess as guardians of the Raj. In his valuable book, *Orientalism and race: Aryanism in the British empire*, Tony Ballantyne's project is to decentre the empire, seeing it as a complex network, a web instead of a spoked wheel. He plays down the dominance of the centre over the peripheries and emphasizes the agency of the colonies especially in the construction of knowledge. According to Ballantyne, '[l]ate eighteenth-century Orientalists imbued by cosmopolitanism and convinced by the unity of humanity, found many affinities between Hindu and Christian belief.'²⁴ This is doubtlessly true. But surely the purpose of this homage to Hinduism is the political and economic subjugation of Hindus. Though Ballantyne's targets are Edward Said and Gauri Viswanathan, his own perspective is basically culturalist, not acknowledging that the celebration of, indeed the complete identification with, a culture (as in Macauliffe's case) is not incompatible with, indeed may well be one of the best modes of achieving, political domination. As in the oriental art of judo, the opponents' own strength and weight are used to defeat them.

In language that recalls Sir Henry Maine's reiterations of the trope of the 'timeless East', with its 'darkness', its 'night', its 'torpor', its 'sleep', and its doubtless dogmatic 'slumber' – a vision of India as a stagnant and unchanging society communicated to thousands of young men entering the Indian Civil Service²⁵

p. 10. ²³ Harbans Lal, 'The western gateway to Sikhism: the life and works of Max Arthur Macauliffe', in Kerry Brown (ed.), *Sikh art and literature* (London and New York: Routledge, 1999), pp 129–30. ²⁴ Ballantyne, *Orientalism and race*, p. 117. ²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 52.

– Macauliffe concluded his essay, ‘How the Sikhs became a militant people’, with these words regarding the Sikh Gurus:

In them the East shook off the torpor of ages, and unburdened itself of the heavy weight of ultra-conservatism which has paralysed the genius and intelligence of its people. Only those who know India by actual experience, can adequately appreciate the difficulties the Gurus encountered in their efforts to reform and awaken the sleeping nation [...] I am not without hope that when enlightened nations become acquainted with the merits of the Sikh religion, they will not willingly let it perish in the great abyss in which so many creeds have been engulfed.²⁶

Macauliffe saw the Sikhs as India’s indigenous ‘English’. He summed up ‘some of the moral and political merits’ of the Sikh religion as follows:

It prohibits idolatry, hypocrisy, caste exclusiveness, the concremation of widows, the immurement of women, the use of wine and other intoxicants, tobacco-smoking, infanticide, slander, pilgrimages to sacred rivers and tanks of the Hindus; and it inculcates loyalty, gratitude for all favours received, philanthropy, justice, impartiality, truth, honesty, and all the moral and domestic virtues known to the holiest citizens of any country.²⁷

Central to Macauliffe’s later thinking was the view that Sikhism was independent of Hinduism, in western terms, a ‘reformation’ of it, indeed, the Anglicanism of the Orient.²⁸ He wrote, however, in 1881 that ‘[n]otwithstanding the exertions of the gurus, the Sikhs of the Punjab have now completely relapsed into idolatry, and [...] their worship in all respects resembles that of the Hindus.’ But, he claimed, the Hindu corruptions of the religion of Nanak and Gobind were now ‘bitterly deplored by all educated and intelligent Sikhs’.²⁹ He saw ‘a wonderful analogy between the spiritual condition of Europe and Asia’ in the middle ages:

In Europe and Asia all learning was in the hands of the priesthood, and this admittedly led to serious abuses in both continents. But when things are at their worst they often mend. During the very period that Wycliffe and Luther and Calvin in Europe were warning men of the errors that had crept into Christianity, men like Kabir and Guru Nanak were denouncing priestcraft and idolatry in India, and with very considerable success. Most of the medieval saints who led the crusade against super-

²⁶ Max Arthur Macauliffe, *How the Sikhs became a militant people* (1905), in Singh (ed.), *Western image*, pp 357–79; pp 378–9. This passage is reproduced almost word-for-word in Macauliffe, *Sikh religion*, ‘Introduction’, i, pp lxxxvii–iii. ²⁷ Macauliffe, *Sikh religion*, ‘Preface’, i, p. xxiii. ²⁸ Max Arthur Macauliffe, *The holy writings of the Sikhs*, in Singh (ed.), *Western image*, pp 285–326; p. 286. ²⁹ Macauliffe, ‘Sikh religion under Banda’, p. 277.

stition founded sects which still survive, but the most numerous [and] powerful of all is the great Sikh sect founded by Baba Nanak.³⁰

For Macauliffe Sikhism emphasized inner individual formation before outward rituals, structures, professions of faith. He quoted Milton, without naming him: God preferred '[b]efore all temples the upright heart and pure'.³¹ He rejected the approaches of the Scribes who idolized the letter of the law as against its spirit and of the Pharisees who stood on ceremony and outward show and whose related belief in 'impurity and defilement' made them, like the Hindus, 'a sect apart'. Macauliffe then quoted Christ's statement that '[t]here is nothing from without a man that entering him can defile him, but the things which come out of him, these are the things which defile a man.' By this statement Christ 'emancipated his followers for ever from the thralldom of caste, and opened the portals of progress and enlightenment to his fellow creatures.'³² Sikhs 'rejected the idolatry and superstitions of the Hindus, [and] taught that God was one alone.'³³ Sikhism rejected the excessive ritualism of the Hindus, on the one hand, and their excessive penances and austerities, on the other. 'Contrary to the practice of the ancient Indian ascetics,' Macauliffe wrote, 'the Gurus held that man might obtain eternal happiness without forsaking his ordinary worldly duties.'³⁴ Guru Nanak taught that 'a man who married, attended to his secular avocations, and neglected not at the same time the duties of his religion, was as surely pursuing the noble path as the cenobite and the anchorite.'³⁵

While the majority of Sikhs in the 1870s would have seen Sikhism as derived from Hinduism,³⁶ Macauliffe spoke of Hinduism as being related to Sikhism as Roman Catholicism was to Protestantism. He saw Hinduism as

like the boa-constrictor of the Indian forests. When a petty enemy appears to worry it, it winds round its opponent, crushes it in its folds, and finally causes it to disappear in its capacious interior [...] Hinduism has embraced Sikhism in its folds; the still comparatively young religion is making a vigorous struggle for life, but its ultimate destruction and assimilation in the body of the huge and resistless leviathan is inevitable. Notwithstanding the Sikh Guru's virulent denunciation of Brahmins, secular Sikhs, as we have seen, now rarely do anything without their assistance. Brahmins help them to be born, help them to wed, help them to die, and help their souls after death to obtain a state of bliss. And

30 Macauliffe, *Writings of the Sikhs*, p. 287. 31 *Ibid.*, p. 289, quoting *Paradise lost*, i, l. 18. 32 Macauliffe, 'The Sikh religion', in Singh (ed.), *Western image*, pp 327-55; p. 337. Christ's statement is from Mark 7:15. 33 Macauliffe, *Holy writings*, p. 294. 34 Macauliffe, *Sikh religion*, 'Introduction', i, p. lxiv. 35 Max Arthur Macauliffe, 'The Diwali at Amritsar: the religion of the Sikhs', in Singh (ed.), *Western image*, pp 229-46; p. 237. 36 N.G. Barrier, 'Trumpp and Macauliffe: western students of Sikh history and religion', in Fauja Singh (ed.), *Historians and historiography of the Sikhs* (New Delhi: Oriental Publishers and Distributors, 1978), pp 166-85; pp 172-3.

Brahmins, with all the deftness of Roman Catholic missionaries in Protestant countries, have partially succeeded in persuading the Sikhs to restore to their niches the images of Devi, the Queen of Heaven, and of the saints and gods of the ancient faith.³⁷

Pace Isaiah, it would appear that the only circumstances in which the lion could lie down with the lamb was when the lamb was securely lodged in the belly of the lion.

The distinction between sacred and profane languages and the controversies between Catholics and Protestants in the west about vernacular versions of the sacred scripture had their analogues in the east. According to Macauliffe, the 'great Pandits and Brahmans of Hinduism communicated their instructions in Sanskrit, which they deemed the language of the gods. The Gurus thought it would be of more general advantage to present their messages in the dialects of their age,'³⁸ to be taught to all people, castes, and classes. A Brahman, however, had urged '[t]hat religious instruction ought not to be communicated to every one, it being forbidden to instruct Sudars and women in the sacred lore.'³⁹ The greatest religious reforms, in Macauliffe's view, had 'been effected by the laity.' The clergy, 'apart from their vested interests', were 'too wedded to ancient systems, and dare not impugn their utility or authority.'⁴⁰

The India Office had commissioned a German missionary, Dr Ernest Trumpp, to translate the *Granth* into English but the partial translation, which appeared in 1877, was unacceptable, indeed offensive, to many Sikhs. Macauliffe undertook a new translation as an act of reparation to the Sikh people. It soon became obvious that he could not combine this work with his official duties. He received financial support from various Sikh sources that enabled him to resign from the Indian Civil Service in 1893. He was bitterly disappointed when his requests for patronage from the Punjab government were either rejected outright or were responded to parsimoniously. He incurred extra expense by employing *gyanis* (professional interpreters of the Sikh scriptures) to help him with his great task, reputedly spending two lakhs [200,000] of rupees out of his own pocket. For Macauliffe, writing and translation were collaborative acts and the frontispiece to his *Sikh religion* consists of portraits of Macauliffe and of four of his Sikh assistants. He worked closely with Sikh scholars, sending them every line of his translations and revising his drafts in response to their recommendations. This, he believed, was an entirely novel plan, for not even the most eminent oriental scholars in the west submitted their translations to native scrutiny nor were their works accepted by indigenous scholars. Clearly Macauliffe had in mind here the most eminent of all western scholars of the orient, the German-born professor of comparative philology at Oxford, Max Müller,

³⁷ Macauliffe, 'The Sikh religion under Banda', p. 283. ³⁸ Macauliffe, *Sikh religion*, 'Introduction', i, p. 1. ³⁹ Ibid. 'Sudars' or Sudras: lowest of four great Hindu castes. ⁴⁰ Ibid., i, p. liv.

whose translations of the Hindu scriptures had brought honour and glory to that religion in the west. Müller never visited India and presumably he never acquired the services of native scholars. When his work was completed, Macauliffe asked that it be scrutinized by a committee of Sikh scriptural scholars who suggested various emendations and gave it their seal of approval, both linguistic and theological. As well as translating the *Granth*, he decided to include biographies of the ten Gurus of Sikhism and of the Bhagats, the Sant poets whose works also appear in the *Granth*. It was the first published exegetical work on the Sikh scriptures as previous expositions had come down by word of mouth through, for instance, hereditary *gyanis*.

Trumpp's translation had been commissioned by the Secretary of State for India, but not so Macauliffe's. His *Lecture on the Sikh religion and its advantages to the state* dealt specifically with this question. According to N.G. Barrier:

Sikh loyalty to the *raj* had been mentioned briefly in other essays, but the lecture especially underscored this dimension of recent Sikh experience. A 'bulwark of British power in the land', the Sikhs would continue to remain friendly allies. The only danger, said Macauliffe, was the erosion of Sikh power through inadequate education and a decline in population. The British consequently should take immediate steps to provide the Sikhs with more patronage. Implicit throughout the lecture was a message that such support also should be extended to Macauliffe.⁴¹

Though Macauliffe saw his labours as serving the political interests of the Sikhs, he by no means saw them as anti-imperial. Indeed, his public lecture, 'How the Sikhs became a militant people', was presided over by no less a figure than Lord Kitchener of Khartoum. In the introduction to *The Sikh religion*, he enumerated some of the 'advantages of the Sikh religion to the State'.⁴² He stated that according to Guru Gobind Singh, the English would come and be joined by the Khalsa [initiated Sikhs], rule in the east as well as in the west:

The combined armies of the English and the Sikhs shall be very powerful, as long as they rule with united councils. The empire of the British shall vastly increase, and they shall in every way obtain prosperity [...] Then in every house shall be wealth, in every house religion, in every house learning, and in every house happiness.⁴³

It was, continued Macauliffe, 'such prophecies as these, combined with the monotheism, the absence of superstition and restraint in the matter of food,

⁴¹ Barrier, 'Trumpp and Macauliffe', p. 179. ⁴² Macauliffe, *Sikh religion*, 'Preface', i, p. xviii.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, i, p. xix. In other versions of this text Macauliffe has instead of 'in every house happiness', substituted 'in every house a woman'. There was, it seems, no woman in Macauliffe's house; certainly there is no indication that he ever married.

which have made the Sikhs among the bravest, the most loyal and devoted subjects of the British Crown.’⁴⁴ In a further passage he stated that

It is admitted that a knowledge of the religions of the people of India is a desideratum for the British officials who administer its affairs and indirectly for the people who are governed by them so that mutual sympathy may be produced. It seems, at any rate, politic to place before the Sikh soldiery their Guru’s prophecies in favour of the English and the texts of their sacred writings which foster their loyalty.⁴⁵

Speaking of the Sikh religion and ‘its prophecies in favour of the English’,⁴⁶ he said that recognition of Punjabi as an official or optional official language of the Punjab, ‘instead of the alien Urdu, would be a most powerful means of preserving the Sikh religion.’⁴⁷ A main function of his translation was to promote ‘a knowledge throughout the world of the excellence of their religion’ which ‘would enhance even the present regard with which [Sikhs] are entertained, and that thus my work would be at least of political advantage to them.’⁴⁸

Ireland had an anomalous position in the nineteenth century as, after the Act of Union of 1800, it was constitutionally a ‘sister kingdom’ and an intrinsic part of the United Kingdom. Though officially a part of the apparatus of empire, in most other respects Ireland was a colony in all but name. Both India and Ireland were submitted to a secular, briskly modernizing dose of political economy, securely underpinned by the doctrine of utilitarianism, to awaken them from the torpor of indigenous, superstitious religious beliefs. Later in the century, the universalist pretensions of these imperial schemes were impugned and seen as ‘English ideas’; there was a renewed valorization of indigenous institutions, practices, and values. In the popular idiom of the time, India and Ireland were to be governed by, respectively, ‘Indian’ and ‘Irish ideas’.

In the sixteenth century, Spenser saw the Irish as irredeemably other, suitable only for subjection; in the nineteenth century, Whately saw them as merely historically backward rather than as ontologically inferior. They could be assimilated, especially through education, to proper English civilization, though this involved the task of changing Irish character. The Irish national character he saw as feminine and as such unsuited to modernity and Whately’s project was nothing less than a re-gendering of Ireland. In the 1860s, Arnold delighted many a Celt by not only accepting but celebrating their difference. His Celticism celebrated Ireland’s femininity, but in the interest not of autonomy but of union, the ideal marriage partner for the solid, rational, if prosaic, John Bull.⁴⁹

44 *Ibid.*, i, p. xix. 45 *Ibid.*, i, p. xxii. 46 *Ibid.*, i, p. xxiii. 47 *Ibid.*, i, p. xxiv. 48 *Ibid.*, i, p. vii. 49 See Timothy P. Foley, ‘Public sphere and domestic circle: gender and political economy in nineteenth-century Ireland’, in Margaret Kelleher and James H. Murphy (eds), *Gender perspectives in nineteenth-century Ireland: public and private spheres* (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 1007). pp 21–4.

Cairnes, in a series of articles in the *Economist* in 1865 found 'English theory' at variance with 'Irish ideas' about landed property and insufficient to explain Irish 'fact'.⁵⁰ In his review of James Anthony Froude's *The English in Ireland in the eighteenth century*, Cairnes wrote of the 'marked deference' Anglo-Indian rule

has invariably shown towards the laws, institutions, and traditions of the people of India. Every custom, not positively criminal, has been respected; the native religions have not only been tolerated, but in many instances endowed; the Hindoo and Mohammedan codes have been incorporated into the jurisprudence administered in our courts; the land settlements are elaborate attempts made, with whatever success, certainly in good faith, to give effect to the ancient traditions and practices of the country. If this method of government has been found efficacious in India, why should it not have been attended with equal benefit to Ireland?⁵¹

Cairnes contrasted Froude's views unfavourably with those of Sir George Campbell: 'Mr. Froude says that no regard should be paid to Irish ideas and practices. Sir George Campbell tells us, on the contrary, to take Irish ideas and practices as the basis of our land legislation.'⁵² In his 1868 pamphlet, *Ireland and England*, Mill declared that Ireland should be governed by Irish ideas. India, he wrote, was now governed 'with a full perception and recognition of its differences from England. What has been done for India has now to be done for Ireland.'⁵³ Justin McCarthy, in his *History of our own times*, has a chapter entitled 'Irish ideas'. The parliament, he wrote, 'which was called together in the close of 1868 was known to have before it this great task of endeavouring to govern Ireland according to Irish ideas.'⁵⁴ With Gladstone, the doctrine of governing Ireland according to Irish ideas had become official wisdom, especially as enshrined in the 1881 Irish Land Act.

The best known cultural version of this approach is Arnold's Celticism. While *Punch* and other organs, in the wake of Darwin's *The origin of species* (1859), were simianizing the Irish, Arnold, in his lectures published in 1867, when Fenianism was at its height, flattered Celts by finding them imaginative and sensitive. This love-bombing of the Celts, instead of the cold, legalistic Act of Union, called for a 'union of hearts', hegemony was to replace coercion, carrots were to replace sticks. This is the genesis of the doctrine of 'constructive Unionism'. When home

⁵⁰ John Elliot Cairnes, 'Ireland in transition', in Boylan and Foley (eds), Cairnes, *Collected works*, vi, pp 208–50; p. 231. See also Thomas A. Boylan and Timothy P. Foley, *Political economy and colonial Ireland: the propagation and ideological function of economic discourse in the nineteenth century* (London and New York: Routledge, 1992), chapter 6. ⁵¹ John Elliot Cairnes, 'Froude's *English in Ireland*', in Boylan and Foley (eds), Cairnes, *Collected works*, vi, pp 324–44; pp 337–8. ⁵² *Ibid.*, vi, p. 338. Campbell was an Indian civil servant whose book, *The Irish land act* (London: Trubner, 1869), greatly influenced Gladstone's 1870 Irish Land Act. ⁵³ J.S. Mill, *Ireland and England* (1868), in John Stuart Mill, *Collected works*, 33 vols (Toronto: Toronto UP and London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1982), vi, pp 507–32; p. 519. ⁵⁴ Justin McCarthy, *A history of our own times*, 4 vols (London: Chatto and Windus, 1881), iv, p. 257.

rule was later to be 'killed with kindness', the 'kindness' and not the 'killing' was emphasized. It should be noted that while Arnold was delivering these lectures at Oxford which popularized the gender-based distinction between rational, masculine Saxons and sensitive, feminine Celts, his colleague at Oxford, the celebrated oriental scholar, Max Müller, was deploying exactly the same set of categories with reference to India, distinguishing between the Aryan north, masculine, tall, militaristic, meat-eating, monotheistic, and the Dravidian south, effeminate, short, lazy, vegetarian, polytheistic. The Punjab, situated in the north, was the first home of the Aryans in India.⁵⁵ Macauliffe wrote that under the early Gurus the Sikh religion was 'a system of quietism' but that Guru Har Gobind was the first who gave 'a martial direction to the religion'. It was, however, 'in the person of Guru Gobind Singh that the Sikh religion acquired its highest martial character – a character which is still impressed on it, and which has rendered the Sikhs some of the finest soldiers of the East.'⁵⁶ He had written in one of his first essays that the 'meekness and passive submission of the religion of Nanak were changed under Har Gobind into independence and heroic activity.'⁵⁷ The indigenous peoples of colonized countries were almost invariably feminized by the imperial and colonial powers. However, in the case of the Sikhs, Macauliffe was anxious to emphasize their vigorous masculinity, indeed their military prowess and the corresponding muscularity of their religion; they were physically and spiritually worthy of being collaborators with the British in ruling India.

Like Matthew Arnold's flattering representations of the Irish, Macauliffe's magnificent contribution to Sikhism was also, and ultimately, in the interests of empire. Embracing Sikhism could be seen as ruling India by Indian ideas, though, of course, actual Indians would have had little involvement in the enterprise. But Macauliffe had it both ways. Seeing Sikhism as an oriental version of Protestantism, he could also claim to be ruling India by *English* ideas. Embracing the other, as in Oscar Wilde's prose poem on the subject of Narcissus, 'The Disciple', Macauliffe had the very great pleasure of embracing himself. The romance of empire was at once auto-erotic and homo-erotic. His fellow Irish, James and Margaret Cousins, converts to theosophy, who had emigrated to India, took a different position on empire. As Gauri Viswanathan puts it in her book, *Outside the fold: conversion, modernity, and belief*, James Cousins 'found himself drawn to the larger project of establishing the common foundations of Irish-Indian culture as the first step toward the overthrow of colonial rule in both countries.'⁵⁸ As the Sikhs got more interested in Indian nationalism, the British, for some reason, tended to lose interest in them and in their religion.

⁵⁵ This north-south stereotype also came to be applied to Ireland: northern people were held to be industrious, with an eye for the main chance, and emotionally and linguistically reserved while southern people were seen as lazy, improvident, loose-lipped, and emotionally incontinent.

⁵⁶ Macauliffe, *Holy writings*, p. 310. ⁵⁷ Macauliffe, 'The rise of Amritsar and the alterations of the Sikh religion', in Singh (ed.), *Western image*, pp 247–68; p. 253. ⁵⁸ Gauri Viswanathan, *Outside the fold: conversion, modernity, and belief* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1998), p. 205.