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The Anglo-Indian Novel, 1774-1825:

Ameliorative Imperialisms

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the  
requirements for the degree Doctor of Philosophy

in English

by

Samir M Soni

2016

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

The Anglo-Indian Novel, 1774-1825:

Ameliorative Imperialisms

by

Samir M Soni

Doctor of Philosophy in English

University of California, Los Angeles, 2016

Professor Felicity A. Nussbaum, Chair

This dissertation suggests we regard critics of empire as belonging to a subcategory of the dominant paradigm of ambivalence I call “ameliorative imperialists,” a term borrowed from the West-Indian slavery debate to describe those Britons who offered sympathetic approaches to colonialism in India, proposing solutions to ameliorate or improve the conditions of British, Indian, and other residents of the subcontinent.

By studying the early Anglo-Indian novel beginning with the first, C.W.’s *Memoirs of a Gentleman* (1774), and ending with a comparison between Mary Martha Sherwood’s evangelical children’s novels and the first decolonization Anglo-Indian novel, Sydney Owenson’s *The Missionary* (1811), this dissertation offers a cultural history of some minority ameliorative imperialisms in the Romantic era. This dissertation follows arguments among often conflicting philosophies of empire, including, for example, competing interests that propose to craft India

into an “ancient” Eden or a “modern” utopia. It also demonstrates a contest between the causes of early protofeminism and transnational equality, suggesting that many British women writers attempted to differentiate British women from Indian men and women in order to assert their own utility in the empire abroad. Rather than allying with Indians as mutual subjects of British men, British women largely sided with British men in subjugating Indians, though they purported to offer more kindness to their Indian subjects. I conclude with a discussion of ameliorative imperialism’s manifestation in the early nineteenth-century missionary debate, in which evangelists justified the empire in India by claiming that it ultimately helped to save Indian souls.

The dissertation of Samir M Soni is approved.

Helen E. Deutsch

Jenny Sharpe

Vinay Lal

Felicity A. Nussbaum, Committee Chair

University of California, Los Angeles

2016

For Bethany, my family, my friends, and my colleagues

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<i>Curriculum Vitae</i>	vii
Introduction: The Acolytes of Empire	1
Chapter 1: Transnational Masculinity in C.W.'s <i>Memoirs of a Gentleman</i> (1774): "Without knowledge or habits in cultivated life"	39
Chapter 2: "Caresses are her orders, tears are her menaces:" Gender/Genre Colonization in Phebe Gibbes <i>Hartly House Calcutta</i> (1789)	62
Chapter 3: Fictions of Indian Things: The Ameliorative Imperialism of Helenus Scott, Elizabeth Hamilton, and Mary Pilkington	93
Chapter 4: Loss of Caste and the Missionary Debate in Sydney Owenson's <i>The Missionary</i> (1813) and Mary Martha Sherwood's Indian Novels	137
Afterword: The Death of the Palanquin Bearer	173
Bibliography	178



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Western Society for Eighteenth-Century Studies (WSECS), February 14, 2015

## Introduction: The Acolytes of Empire

*For, my Lords, cannot be conceived – God forbid that it should be conceived – that the business of this day is the business of this man [Warren Hastings]. The question is, not solely whether the prisoner at the bar be found innocent or be found guilty, but whether millions of mankind shall be miserable or happy. You do not decide the case only; you fix a rule. For your Lordships will undoubtedly see, in the course of this cause, that there is not only a long, connected, systematic, course of misdemeanours [sic], but an equally connected system of maxims and principles invented to justify them, upon which your Lordships must judge. It is according to the judgment that you shall pronounce upon the past transactions of India, connected with those principles, that the whole rule, tenure, tendency and character, of our future government in India is to be finally decided.*

-Edmund Burke's Speech in the Trial of Warren Hastings, 1778<sup>1</sup>

Edmund Burke's understanding of culpability for the actions of his countrymen in India seems simple enough. He blamed the failure of justice in India on both his countrymen and the "system of maxims and principles invented to justify" misdemeanors, a developed socioeconomic apparatus intended to excuse the crimes of both Europeans and Indians. By recognizing the Governor General's crimes, Burke intended to obviate the larger scope of the East India Company's dealings in India, intending a paradigm shift with regard to colonialism in the East. By publicly exposing these crimes, Burke implied that the slate could be wiped clean, that the cancer could be excised, and, in the future, the British Empire in India could proceed according to the principles of justice many English people at home believed they championed. By ascribing guilt to a *distant* "system" of rationalizing violence, Burke attempted to distinguish his audience's moral rectitude from the East India Company's corruption, an ethical distinction matched by the geographical distance between London and India. Still, his attempt to ensure "our future government in India" helped bring about that the institutions that would continue the

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<sup>1</sup> Edmund Burke, *Speeches of the Managers and Counsel in the Trial of Warren Hastings*, ed. E.A. Bond (London: Longman, Brown, Green, Longmans, and Roberts, 1859), 2, 3.

subjugation of a large number of people. Thus, though Burke condemned the actions of the EIC in India, he supported the empire itself.

Burke's speeches in the impeachment came after the Company attained unprecedented power on the subcontinent. In the 1750s, the British East India Company experienced a number of humiliating losses at the hands of the existing Mughal government. Siraj-ud-Dowlah, the last independent nawab or prince of Bengal, captured Fort William, the seat of the Company's power in Calcutta. Shortly afterward, England was appalled by reports of the infamous "Black Hole of Calcutta," popularized by John Z. Holwell, in which Mughal soldiers purportedly imprisoned 146 British soldiers and officers in a 14x18 foot cell from which only 23 survived. Despite Holwell's dubious account,<sup>2</sup> the Black Hole became a founding myth for the empire in Bengal, an emblem of the horrors that might be perpetrated in India against the British. Robert Clive's subsequent military victories ended with Siraj-ud-Dowlah's defeat at the Battle of Plassey in 1757 and the EIC's acquisition of the "diwani," the right of taxation, in Bengal, granting the Company de facto rulership over a large population of Indians.

As Company territories continued to expand, it became very clear that the EIC was no longer only a commercial interest, but also an occupying military force and a governing body. The British also recognized that India was an ancient and populous country, so commentators in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries cast about to justify Company rule in light of their reverence for India. As early as 1764, a tract published anonymously lamented the militarization of the EIC and its officers' exploitation of Indians, remarking, "happy... for this company, happy for the nation" if "commerce had still been at this day the sole business of

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<sup>2</sup> For a critique of the veracity of Holwell's account, see Iris Macfarlane, *The Black Hole: or, The Makings of a Legend* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1975).

Englishmen in India.”<sup>3</sup> The author, however, stops short of offering any recommendations to change the military character of the EIC or to end British rule, claiming, “though I have taken upon me to act as surgeon or a prober, yet will I not, as not having been regularly graduated, presume to practice in the higher character of physician; that is the province of more skillful head and hands.”<sup>4</sup> Such accusations of cruelty towards Indians and concerns for the profitability of the Company brought about a series of critical reforms to the EIC and its government in Bengal. The Regulating Act of 1773 renewed the EIC’s monopoly on trade in India in exchange for Warren Hastings’ oversight as Governor-General as well as an annual stipend of £400,000 to the British government, signaling a developing intimacy between the EIC and the government. Charges of inefficiency and corruption leveled against the Company’s leadership led to Hastings’ impeachment hearings in 1788, in which Burke, among others, delivered theatrical speeches decrying the atrocities EIC officers perpetrated against Indians.

Sara Suleri and Kate Teltscher describe Burke’s speeches as the central performance of imperial critique in the late eighteenth century.<sup>5</sup> This important scholarship also describes Burke’s critique as a result and cause of debates on policy regarding the East India Company (EIC), a discourse that helped shape and sustain the empire. Virtually all contemporary historians and literary critics who study British India in the eighteenth century interrogate the relationship between language and policy in commentaries such as Burke’s. As Jack P. Greene observes, the “language of humanity and justice” became “some of the main languages Britons used to

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<sup>3</sup> Anon., *Reflections on the Present State of Our East India Affairs: With Many Interesting Anecdotes, Never Before Made Public* (London: T. Lownds, 1764), 17, 21-22.

<sup>4</sup> *Reflections*, 73. Note that the author can be characterized as “ambivalent” towards empire, but does not offer an ameliorative imperialism to counteract the activities he describes.

<sup>5</sup> Sara Suleri, *The Rhetoric of English India* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), 26. Kate Teltscher, *India Inscribed: European and British Writing on India, 1600-1800* (New York: Oxford UP, 1995), 157.

comprehend and represent the empire.”<sup>6</sup> The rhetoric of these debates indeed often included affective pleas for compassion towards Indians, but imperial policy and practice rarely reflected such humanity. The EIC, through frequent military and political maneuvering, continued to expand its territories despite such outcries. Most scholars, such as Suleri and Nicholas B. Dirks, incorporate such affective rhetoric into the greater project of imperialism.<sup>7</sup> They argue that such language worked to fuel, excuse, or encourage continued British operations in India rather than counteract the continuing empire, supplying the empire with just the sort of “system of maxims and principles” that Burke railed against. By distinguishing themselves and other like-minded Britons from those they accused of cruelty, critics of the empire claimed that their own humanitarian interests in India relative to their predecessors justified their stewardship of the empire going forward, continuing British rule.

Dirks argues that part of the remarkable longevity of the empire in India was because critics were able to concentrate colonial guilt within individuals supposedly responsible for the crimes of the past, providing a mechanism to avert more significant humanitarian crises:

The scandals of Clive, Hastings, and Benfield were both parables of the larger structure of imperial greed and exploitation, and only the most extreme examples of imperial business as usual. If the early scandals of empire had been taken seriously, empire itself would have been the victim rather than Hastings. Not only was empire hardly abandoned; it was reformed precisely so that the private and idiosyncratic excesses of venality and corruption attached to particular individuals could be transformed into the national interest, both metaphorically and literally. As it turns out, the most egregious scandals of empire played a critical role in making the empire safe for Britain – and for that matter much of Europe as well –

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<sup>6</sup> Jack P. Greene, *Evaluating Empire and Confronting Colonialism in Eighteenth-Century Britain* (New York: Cambridge UP, 2013), 120-1.

<sup>7</sup> Suleri, 26. Nicholas B. Dirks, *The Scandal of Empire: India and the Creation of Imperial Britain* (Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard UP, 2006). Scholarship that has attributed “anti-imperialism” to British critics at home in the eighteenth century, such as Sankar Muthu’s *Enlightenment Against Empire*, is, I believe, inaccurate, since these critics voiced their outrage at current institutions within the EIC not to suspend or discontinue the empire in India, but rather to improve and strengthen it. Sankar Muthu, *Enlightenment Against Empire* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 2003), 4-5.

in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, for it was precisely the grandeur and scope of eighteenth-century scandal that allowed Burke to perform such political magic. In the rhetorical excess – and as the historian Seeley would later say, “unreasonable violence” – of Burke’s assault on Hastings, a century of “unreasonable violence” against the imperial subjects of India could be not only justified, but also institutionalized for an imperial future that would last another hundred and fifty years. Without scandal, in other words, it is possible that empire would not have emerged as so dominant a force in the history of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. By the same token, it would have taken much more than these scandals to bring down the British empire. Scandal both allowed empire to be “reformed” and made empire itself far less the issue than the scandals themselves.<sup>8</sup>

I agree with Dirks’ convincing argument that periodic scandals protected and renewed the empire at large, but Burke, as I show above, did not ascribe blame to Hastings alone. Rather, Burke ascribed blame to the “system of maxims and principles” that excused the crimes of the British in India, implanting the nation’s colonial guilt not (entirely) into Hastings nor the empire itself, but rather into the existing epistemes and ethics that constructed the system of British colonialism in his time. Therefore, Burke didn’t blame an individual; he blamed a body of knowledge and morals, and this allowed the empire to reconstruct itself and continue.

Of course, to claim that there is a knowable “system” among the British in India presumes a Hobbesian metaphor for society, that is, that society in India resembles a single body or machine in which people or groups act as parts with definitive functions that work together to form a complex whole. As Ronald Inden argues, the metaphor of society-as-machine to describe India was common not only among Indologists and imperialists, but also among the empire’s critics.<sup>9</sup> Because they asserted the same fundamental construct of society as previous

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<sup>8</sup> Dirks, *Scandal of Empire*, 30-1.

<sup>9</sup> Inden’s *Imagining India* interrogates the essentialism critical to metaphors of society-as-machine, the assumption that people and societies are composed of knowable “essences,” which determine their actions. Instead, he proposes an anti-essentialist model for Indologists, in which, “far from embodying simple, unchanging essences, all agents are relatively complex and shifting” and “they make and remake one another through dialectical processes in changing situations.” According to Inden, the Romantics were the “loyal opposition,” who agreed with dominant framework



imperialists, these critics posed no significant threat to the empire itself. Here, we can turn to Raghavan Iyer's excellent description of various incarnations of what Burke called the "system[s] of maxims and principles" in the empire:

British imperialism in India was thus compounded of diverse and even contradictory elements, the chief of which were the Roman (or Asokan<sup>10</sup> or Buddhist) element of peace under law; the Semitic (or Brahmin) element of racial exclusiveness and destiny; the Prussian (or Mogul or Kautilyan<sup>11</sup>) element of militancy and firmness; and the nonconformist Radical (or Christian or Hindu) element of penance and expiation.

...

The state of muddle was even more complicated over the entire period of British rule in India. There were, at least, four distinct strands – the Burkean doctrine of imperial trusteeship, the utilitarian theory of state activity that was propounded mainly by Bentham but also by the two Mills, the Platonic conception of a ruling elite that would act as wise guardians, and the Evangelical zeal to spread the gospel so as to elevate the character and save the souls of even perversely unwilling people. Each of these strands had several aspects and assumed a variety of forms, with differing degrees of theoretical purity and practical debasement.<sup>12</sup>

Over the centuries, the character of the government in India oscillated between the latter four doctrines. Nevertheless, as Iyer suggests, we must not forget that the system was "a centralized, enlightened despotism that was transformed in time into an elaborate, autocratic bureaucracy," though "the despotism was softened by a spirit of tolerance, [and] the bureaucracy was tamed by a tradition of equity."<sup>13</sup>

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of utilitarianism in that there existed "a single reality, a single human nature or a single typology of human societies." Ronald Inden, *Imagining India* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1990), 2, 7-22, 66-9.

<sup>10</sup> Iyer here refers to the Indian emperor, Ashoka, who reigned from 268-232 BCE

<sup>11</sup> Kautilya, also known as Chanakya or Vishnugupt was an Indian philosopher in the fourth century BCE famous for his treatise on government, *The Arthashastra*.

<sup>12</sup> Raghavan Iyer, *Utilitarianism and All That: The Political Theory of British Imperialism* (London: Concord Grove Press, 1983), 23, 28.

<sup>13</sup> Iyer, 88.

Each doctrine, it seems, justified its own implementation by the failures of the previous. Burke's advocacy for imperial trusteeship was, of course, intended to change the "system of maxims and principles" that had nourished injustice among young Englishmen overseas. James Mill, according to Javed Majeed, posited utilitarianism as a replacement for the revitalized conservatism (of which Burke was a prominent voice) that resulted from a reaction to the French Revolution in imperial politics.<sup>14</sup> If, as Iyer suggests, these doctrines were what sustained a handful of Englishmen's dominion over a vast, diverse, ancient, resilient, and laudable culture,<sup>15</sup> the reforms that brought these imperial ideologies about were part of that supporting mechanism. Throughout the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, the central tenet of empire, that of domination for the Indians' own good, remained, despite scandal and reform, which, as Dirks shows, merely reassigned colonial guilt.

It is, however, unfair to separate the empire's critics' intentions from their results, for though they worked to sustain the empire, it often came from a genuine desire to improve the lives of Indians. As Ashis Nandy argues in *The Intimate Enemy*, in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the non-West constructed an "alternative West," different from the "West's dominant self," and in so doing, the non-West invited Westerners to an alliance against both imperial domination and the subaltern's "authorized" violence that legitimized the West's continued rule.<sup>16</sup> Borrowing a term from psychoanalyst Rollo May, colonialism was defeated by "authentic

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<sup>14</sup> For a discussion of British utilitarianism and India, see Javed Majeed, *Ungoverned Imaginings: James Mill's The History of British India and Orientalism* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992).

<sup>15</sup> Iyer, 6

<sup>16</sup> That is to say, Nandy argues that colonialism in India was sustained by not only the West's intent to rule the East, but also by the Indian violence that allowed for and strengthened imperial resolve. The Mutiny of 1857, for example, was used as justification for Queen Victoria to establish the British Raj in 1858. Ashis Nandy, *The Intimate Enemy: Loss and Recovery of Self under Colonialism* (Delhi: Oxford UP, 1983), vii-viii.

innocence... which includes the vulnerability of a child, but which has not lost the realism of its perception of evil or that of its own ‘complicity’ with that evil.” Furthermore, as Nandy argues, colonialism attempted to transform Western consciousness to suit its own purposes just as it did Eastern consciousness, suggesting the empire’s critics were also victimized by empire.<sup>17</sup> Thus, their genuine intent to improve Indians’ lives was corrupted by the epistemes that were produced by and sustained the empire. Yet, while there were no significant English voices at home calling for the end to empire in the eighteenth century, we could say that figures like Burke laid the affective groundwork for what would become decolonization.

Though Said postulated the ubiquitous European construction of oppositional identities in which the Occident was masculine, civilized, and moral while the Orient was feminine, chaotic, and tyrannical, scholars in the 1990s accentuated the indeterminacy of the British self in order to complicate Said’s colonizer/colonized binary.<sup>18</sup> Most notably, Suleri’s *The Rhetoric of English India*, challenged the stability of British demarcations between imperial domination and native subordination by suggesting that the literature of British India has embedded within it a paranoid and “schizophrenic” consciousness of both its writers’ condemnation of and complicity in empire.<sup>19</sup> This shift from the paradigm of alterity to one of ambivalence made way for a conceptual adjustment in postcolonial literature to allow for the vacillations of the British self.

Postcolonial scholarship in the 1990s was also instrumental in demonstrating that the empire abroad had a critical role in the development of eighteenth-century British literature. Nigel Leask, for example, argued that the rhetoric of Romanticism derived from not only a

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<sup>17</sup> Nandy, 71-73.

<sup>18</sup> Edward W. Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Vintage Books, 1978), 1.

<sup>19</sup> Suleri, 2-6.

response to French Revolutionary politics and a sense of the imprisonment of language, but also from the anxieties, unease, and ambivalence within the discourse of empire, ascribing the canonical Romantic-era paradigm shift often taught in literature courses to colonialism.<sup>20</sup> Though it readily adopts the language of ambivalence and particularly Mary Louise Pratt's very useful terminology for relationships in the "contact zone,"<sup>21</sup> work on the literature of British India in the past decade has had a tendency to applaud authors who, like Burke, propose changes to the status quo, but don't oppose empire. For example, Michael J. Franklin, the editor of the recent edition of Phebe Gibbes' *Hartly House, Calcutta* (1789) that has revitalized interest in the Anglo-Indian novel, lionizes Gibbes in suggesting that the novel's "revolutionary revision of the relationships of gender, race and culture, could perhaps only have been contemplated in the brief Jonesian period of sympathetic and syncretic admiration for India termed by Raymond Schwab, 'the Sacontala age.'"<sup>22</sup> Though Gibbes does present an interesting portrayal of the British in India, it is hardly "revolutionary," as reverence for Hindu culture was common at the time. Furthermore, such regard for Indian culture was possible and even likely in many periods throughout the course of the empire in India. While it is admirable for its protofeminism and its depiction of British society in India, *Hartly House, Calcutta's* Orientalism was just as banal as its outright defense of Hastings.

Yet we should not use these critics as scapegoats for the atrocities committed in the empire, since, as Iyer notes, "The search for scapegoats whose crucifixion can atone for monstrous systems of error and evil is itself based, however, on an unduly rationalistic faith in

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<sup>20</sup> Nigel Leask, *British Romantic Writers and the East: Anxieties of Empire* (New York: Cambridge UP, 1992).

<sup>21</sup> Pratt, Mary Louise. *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation, Second Edition*. New York: Routledge, 2008.

<sup>22</sup> Michael J. Franklin, "Introduction" to Phebe Gibbes, *Hartly House, Calcutta* (New Delhi: Oxford UP, 2007).

the influence of theory and on an absurdly simple view of both the individual and national character.”<sup>23</sup> It is with this in mind that I propose a subcategory to the paradigm of ambivalence, an ideological construct I call “ameliorative imperialism.”<sup>24</sup> I define ameliorative imperialism as an ideology that opposes previous constructions of Indian culture and the role of the empire, but doesn’t oppose the continued existence of the empire. These ideologies periodically emerged to justify the existence of the empire by acknowledging the crimes of the past. Ameliorative imperialists are figures like Burke and James Mill, who desired the improvement of Indians’ lives, yet fell short of advocating for decolonization. Though they may have laid the groundwork for it, they did not have much of the “authentic innocence” that Nandy suggests helped to defeat British colonialism. The use of the term thus acknowledges both their complicity in and objections to empire, though they often rejected that which would have given them “authentic innocence,” the consciousness that imperialism itself contradicts their highest ideals of liberty and justice. Ameliorative imperialism, then, is a model by which we may more aptly describe those literary figures we are inclined to appreciate without assigning the radical change we might hope from them, a radical change that might be implied by the admittedly vague term by which I referred to these commentators above, “critics of empire.” Though, as noted above, Burke objected to the “system of maxims and principles invented to justify” British crimes in India, he nevertheless attempted to further the empire according to a different set of principles, what Iyer calls “Burkean imperial trusteeship.” Thus, without dropping one of the central tenets of British imperialism, the metaphor of society-as-machine that Inden elucidates, he attempts to improve conditions in India for both the British and the Indians.

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<sup>23</sup> Iyer, 15.

<sup>24</sup> Thanks to Felicity A. Nussbaum for helping me to articulate this concept.

Though Iyer aptly describes the dominant systems of justification for the empire, he does not include all of the vast *mélange* of fascinating minority ideologies that sought to both improve conditions for Indians and maintain the empire. These ameliorative imperialisms were often amalgamations of familiar ideologies and conceptions of society borrowed from various aspects of British constructions of identity. Though she objects to Burke's characterization of Hastings, Phebe Gibbes implicitly agrees with the "Burkean imperial trusteeship" in her praise of Cornwallis for punishing a British rapist and murderer, justifying continued British rule by implying that the criminal is an outlier and that Cornwallis acted appropriately with the power entrusted in him.<sup>25</sup> Additionally, as I discuss in my second chapter, she proposes that the presence of educated Englishwomen could improve the morality of Englishmen in India, justifying the continuation of empire by bracing it with familial relations and sentiment.

The term is, of course, borrowed from the language of the West-Indian slavery debate; accordingly, it implies two related positions. "Exploitative imperialists" were those who advocated maintaining existing colonial institutions, often with full knowledge of the atrocities committed under the existing imperial rationale. For the most part, exploitative imperialists are hard to find, given that it seems few to none in the eighteenth century believed that the empire did not need at least some form of improvement. Those who might be described as "abolitionist" toward empire in India advocated the complete evacuation of British governing bodies such as the EIC after the Battle of Plassey or the seat of the governor-general and the Calcutta council after 1773, that is, decolonization, though not necessarily the forced removal of British residents in India, since not all British residents had controlling interests in the Company. Of course,

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<sup>25</sup> Raghavan Iyer defines the Burkean doctrine of trusteeship: "All political power set over men and all privileges claimed against the natural equality of mankind ought to be some way or other exercised ultimately for their benefit." Iyer, 31.

imperial abolition could easily be found among Indians, but it is much more difficult to find among eighteenth-century Britons. Imperial abolition in British fiction took the form of decolonization narratives in the nineteenth century, a plot in which the removal of foreign institutions and power from India resulted in bettering the lives of Indians, a plot that doesn't appear until Sydney Owenson's *The Missionary* in 1811. Though it was absent from the Anglo-Indian novels of the eighteenth century, an understanding of this position is, I believe, useful to help us imagine the possibility of the more laudable "authentic innocence."

Ameliorative imperialism in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries took the form of an affective or sympathetic approach that ultimately worked to enable the empire's exploitation of conquered peoples. Whereas the term "ambivalence" can be applied to those Britons who had a range of often inconsistent visions for the future of the empire, "ameliorative imperialists," as I argue in this dissertation, are a subsection of those ambivalent commentators who both actively advocated change to the systems of justification that maintained the empire and expressed sympathy for Indians. One of the key distinctions to ameliorative imperialists is, I propose, activism. Though I would call the unnamed narrator and protagonist of C.W.'s *Memoirs of a Gentleman* ambivalent for his vacillations between using his power as an educated European in India to seduce women and condemning those Europeans and Muslims that abuse their power, I would not call him an ameliorative imperialist, since he does not seem to propose a coherent rationale for the continuation of empire. Furthermore, C.W.'s ambivalence is not a vacillation between desires to continue and cease the empire as some literary critics might expect. Rather, it is a vacillation between a desire to exploit empire for his own purposes and to condemn such crimes in order to improve morality on the subcontinent, a key distinction I will show is also common among ameliorative imperialists. Sydney Owenson, the author of the first

decolonization narrative in the Anglo-Indian novel genre, *The Missionary* (1811), is also not an ameliorative imperialist, or indeed, an imperialist of any kind.

The goal of this study is to propose a narrative to describe the emergence of the Anglo-Indian novel in terms of the ameliorative imperialism of their authors (or lack thereof, in the cases of C.W. and Sydney Owenson). The next section will attempt a definition of the Anglo-Indian novel, as many have done with the novel in general, as existing in a continuum with other forms, both contributing to and developing from genres such as Oriental tales and travelogues. The third section will discuss the difficulties that authors encountered in developing a language to encapsulate India's religious diversity. My fourth section will interrogate women writers' roles in the empire and to challenge the growing sense of a "feminist" imperialism in recent criticism. I conclude with a short description of each of my chapters.

### Towards a Foundation for the Anglo-Indian Novel

*In the extensive plan which is carried on under the direction of the great Governor of the Universe, an attentive observer will frequently perceive the most unexpected ends, accomplished by means the most improbable, and events branch out into effects which were neither foreseen, nor intended by the agents which produced them. A slight view of the consequences which have hitherto resulted from our intercourse with the East-Indies, will sufficiently evince the truth of this assertion.*

*The thirst of conquest and the desire of gain, which first drew the attention of the most powerful, and enlightened nations of Europe toward the fruitful regions of Hindoostan, have been the means of opening sources of knowledge and information to the learned, and the curious, and have added to the stock of the literary world, treasures, which if not so substantial, are of a nature more permanent than those which have enriched the commercial.*

*The many elegant translations from the different Oriental languages with which the world has been favoured within these last few years, have not failed to attract merited attention; and the curiosity awakened by those productions, concerning the people with whom they originated, has been gratified by the labours of men, who have enjoyed the first rank in literary fame.*



-Elizabeth Hamilton, Preliminary Dissertation to *Translation of the Letters of a Hindoo Rajah*, 1796<sup>26</sup>

Hamilton's preliminary dissertation begins with this interesting history of Anglo-Indian literature. The description of God as "Governor" suggests that the greed that led to colonialism was preordained, a means to produce a greater order. In sum, the actions of greedy European men have unwittingly produced curiosity among "literary men," who were enabled to create literary treasures. Hamilton proposes that the commercial capital extracted from India brought with it a sort of cultural capital as a byproduct, ascribing to European writers a role in sublimating the empire's evils into good for "the world." Thus, though not necessarily approving of the conquest of India, Hamilton suggests its benefits to literature might make amends for its horrors. Of course, to contemporary critics, the expansion of literature and awakening of curiosity among European authors do not justify or even require the conquest mentioned in the second paragraph. Nevertheless, Hamilton's fictional history of British conquest suggests that she too was an ameliorative imperialist.

To a certain extent, ameliorative imperialisms are based on not only in socioeconomic theories, but also in fictional narratives of how those systems came about and how they work to the benefit of the British and Indians. By connecting the parts of these systems, Hamilton, like Burke, constructed an elaborate narrative of the functioning of colonialism. Anglo-Indian fiction is unique in that the narratives of these works iterate the justifications of empire that constitute ameliorative imperialisms, and though the authors no doubt operated with the understanding that these are fictions, they nevertheless insist that they represent "reality" in India. The plots of many Anglo-Indian fictions rehearse, whether implicitly or explicitly, Hamilton's ameliorative

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<sup>26</sup> Elizabeth Hamilton, *Translation of the Letters of a Hindoo Rajah*, eds. Pamela Perkins and Shannon Russell (Petersborough, Ontario: Broadview Press, 1999), 55.

imperialism, that conscientious European observers can sublimate the greed of a few evil European men into positive cultural production. For example, Sophia Goldbourne, the protagonist and only letter-writer in Phebe Gibbes' *Hartly House, Calcutta* (1789), begins her first letter in the epistolary novel by describing India as the "grave of thousands," a reference to the Britons who have died to secure colonial interests.<sup>27</sup> Throughout the novel, however, she finds in India an anthropological treasure trove, and in her "bramin" teacher a model for ideal sensibility, a means to expand her knowledge and understanding. She then brings her ideological awakening back to England by teaching her interpretation of Indian sensibility to the recipient of her letters, Arabella, and her new husband, an EIC officer named Doyly. Hamilton and Gibbes both cast the British imagination as a vehicle by which "the literary world" may learn of a supposedly unknown India, valorizing British literary production as a means to compensate for the crimes of the empire.

The narrative of the worst of imperial commercialism transformed into an ethereal and permanent cultural gain is, as noted above, a myth. Though Hamilton suggests that the literary production of India came after its conquest, distancing her own novel from European greed in time, Bernard Cohn and other historians have shown that both India's subjugation and its literary production happened simultaneously, demonstrating that "the conquest of India was a conquest of knowledge."<sup>28</sup> Ashok Malhotra's very recent book on Anglo-Indian literature in this period historicizes representations of India to produce an ideological history of colonial India in Britain. As a historian, Malhotra is interested in how India affected metropolitan culture in Britain and

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<sup>27</sup> Phebe Gibbes, *Hartly House, Calcutta*, ed. Michael J. Franklin (New Delhi: Oxford UP, 2007), 3.

<sup>28</sup> Bernard S. Cohn, *Colonialism and Its Forms of Knowledge: The British in India* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1996), 16.

suggests that the publication of novels influenced British and EIC policy in India in turn.<sup>29</sup>

Daniel O'Quinn makes a similar claim regarding representations of India in Britain, showing that the London stage was a medium through which the anxieties of empire were played out, imperial constructions of race and class were consolidated, and inequalities were enacted by disciplining and regulating audiences. In contrast to Malhotra, O'Quinn suggests a much more specific means by which the ideological production of India became imprinted onto British audiences: O'Quinn argues that the stage was autoethnographic, enacting constructions of British identity by contrast to "other" identities in order to critique and implant them into the audience's psyche. He cites, for example, Elizabeth Inchbald's *The Mogul Tale; or, the Descent of the Balloon* (1784), in which an intelligent Mughal emperor plays upon stereotypes of Islamic tyranny in order to fool credulous Englishmen, critiquing and reconstructing British and Muslim identities by ridiculing common British misconceptions of Muslim identity.<sup>30</sup> Thus, as Cohn, Malhotra, O'Quinn, and many other contemporary critics and historians show, literary productions of India came to be one of the primary influences on Britons' imagination of India, controlling perceptions of the empire. By contrast to Hamilton's differentiation between "literary men" who imagined India and "European powers" who conquered India, contemporary scholars have shown that these entities were intertwined and sometimes one and the same. Thus, we can begin to define the Anglo-Indian fiction as, in part, both a byproduct of and a means to the growth of the empire.

Locating the development of the Anglo-Indian novel genre within the broader category of Anglo-Indian fiction is, however, much more complicated. In addition to the reciprocal

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<sup>29</sup> Ashok Malhotra, *Making British Indian Fictions, 1772-1823* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012).

<sup>30</sup> Daniel O'Quinn, *Staging Governance: Theatrical Imperialism in London, 1770-1800* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 2005), 27.

production of imagination and empire, Anglo-Indian novels derive from previous forms of fiction and an increasing number of first-hand accounts. Considering that the most skillful British novelists had only read about India in fictions, translations, and reports, these novels are often representations of representations of India.<sup>31</sup> Furthermore, criticism in the past decade has complicated definitions of the novel genre by challenging the “rise of the novel,” developed by Watt and McKeon, as an entirely European phenomenon. Jean Viviés, for example, describes the development of novel as dependent on the development of travel writing.<sup>32</sup> Srinivas Aravamudan shows that, though novels would seem to be an entirely European invention due to their foundation in European domesticity, Oriental tales, whether translated or invented by Europeans, were significant as both an autonomous, popular form and as a factor in the development of the novel.<sup>33</sup> The “rise of the novel” was therefore at least partially indebted to non-European sources. Despite its relative scarcity in the late eighteenth century in relation to the prolific publication of other forms of fiction, the Anglo-Indian novel is interesting because it tested the novel’s capacity to assimilate the exoticism and fantasy of Oriental tales and other romances into British subjectivities while rendering a certain degree of familiarity and realism.

Malhotra and Norbert Shürer make a case for the importance of Anglo-Indian literature in both the eighteenth-century canon and the empire itself. Malhotra demonstrates that the combination of an influx of Indian goods, British men returning from India, and Indian

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<sup>31</sup> Phebe Gibbes, Elizabeth Hamilton, and Sydney Owenson had never been to India, though they had access to other source material.

<sup>32</sup> Jean Viviés, *English Travel Narratives in the Eighteenth Century: Exploring Genres* (Burlington, Vt.: Ashgate, 2002), 25.

<sup>33</sup> Srinivas Aravamudan, *Enlightenment Orientalism: Resisting the Rise of the Novel* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2012), 8.

immigrants impacted British society at all levels.<sup>34</sup> Translations and Indian grammars, according to Malhotra, were displayed in the libraries of elites to impress visitors. The first Anglo-Indian novel was, however, somewhat lowbrow: In 1780 *Memoirs of a Gentleman*, a novel featuring a young man's often sexual adventures through India, was reprinted as *The Indian Adventurer*, by William Lane, the (in)famous founder of the circulating library, The Minerva Press.<sup>35</sup> Despite its lowly origins, as Malhotra notes, the Anglo-Indian novel matured as the status of the novelist rose in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.<sup>36</sup> He also suggests that Anglo-Indian novels brought India into "sharper focus" by naming specific regions of India, giving Britons a sense of the subcontinent as a "territorially defined space."<sup>37</sup> Shürer notes that the loss of the American colonies made India the most important of the empire's holdings.<sup>38</sup> According to Shürer, though the number of Anglo-Indian novels published in the late eighteenth century is small, they have received significant attention from critics of late, especially the recently republished *Hartly House, Calcutta* by Phebe Gibbes. Thus, though perhaps not as widely read as other novel genres, it warrants attention.

Given their numerous references to Eastern romances such as *The Arabian Nights Entertainments* (1706) and because fiction and myth source material on Hindus was relatively sparse at the time, Anglo-Indian novels relied heavily on largely Islam-centered Oriental tales. Aravamudan demonstrates that Oriental tales helped solidify a European sense of a "largely

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<sup>34</sup> Malhotra, 21-36

<sup>35</sup> I discuss the publication history of this novel in more detail in my first chapter.

<sup>36</sup> Malhotra, 121-127.

<sup>37</sup> Malhotra, 53-4.

<sup>38</sup> Norbert Shürer, "Surveying the Eighteenth-Century Anglo-Indian Canon," *Literature Compass* 7.7 (2010): 598-600.

imaginary East,” and that this “imagination was experimental, prospective, and antifoundational.” These fictions “overrode” the Occident in the eighteenth century until the experiment ended due to “generic exhaustion” and “a rising nationalistic tide that combined self-contemplative narcissism with intense xenophobia.”<sup>39</sup> Anglo-Indian novels often brought up the magic elements of Oriental tales, but also included fascinated European characters who, with their understanding of Western science and philosophy, debunk the magic, expressing appreciation for the inventiveness of Eastern fantasy while undermining its validity. These novels portray Hinduism alternately as a few patriarchs’ smoke and mirrors to exploit the common folk and as a deeply ancient and profound religion. Lady Nugent, for example, alternates between these extremes within the same sentence when she observes of Hindu food restrictions, “Poor creatures! [the Hindu’s] prejudices seem to be very ridiculous, but I cannot help but admire that sense of religion, (if it is such), which would lead a man to starve in the midst of plenty, rather than violate what he conceives to be religious duty.”<sup>40</sup> Enabled by India’s pluralism and particularly the mythos and fantasies produced by translations and accounts of Indian literature, Anglo-Indian novels both celebrate the exoticism and imagination of Oriental tales and critique their supposed absurdity.

Because they featured Europeans travelling in an Indian setting, Anglo-Indian novels often masqueraded as travelogues. According to Joan Pau Rubiés’, ethnography was generated by travel writing to fulfill an Enlightenment desire for information. Rubiés observes, “perhaps the most fundamental form [of travel writing] was the ‘relation,’ a synthetically descriptive

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<sup>39</sup> Aravamudan, 4.

<sup>40</sup> Lady Maria Nugent, *Lady Nugent’s East India Journal: A Critical Edition*, ed. Ashley L. Cohen (New Delhi: Oxford UP, 2014), 31.

account which could be narrative or analytical.”<sup>41</sup> “Relation,” here, also functions with the word’s implied meaning, “connection,” that is, the connection between the author’s home culture and that which he or she visits. Travel writing was also vastly cross-generic. Jan Borm examines the hybridity of travel writing in both its fictive and referential elements (“referential” meaning claiming validity by reference to actuality), to argue that it is not so much a unitary genre as “a collective term for a variety of texts both predominantly fictional and non-fictional whose main theme is travel.”<sup>42</sup> Jean Viviés deepens the connection between the novel and the travel writing in the eighteenth century by arguing that these genres cannot be interpreted as distinct, but in fact existed as parts of the same continuum and developed concurrently.<sup>43</sup> Furthermore, historiography sometimes prefaced Anglo-Indian novels as in, for example, Elizabeth Hamilton’s *Translation of the Letters of a Hindu Rajah*. Therefore, the Anglo-Indian novel was a production of the complex interplay among travel writing, ethnography, historiography, as well as Oriental tales and the domestic realism peculiar to novels, which all collude to fulfill a desire for information about India.

The question arises then, why focus on the novel given the largely democratized and complex nature of contemporary literary historical critique? No genre is an island, so why categorize so rigidly when genre has been shown to be the product of the incorporation of multiple forms in a complex hodge-podge of psycho-social interconnections? Though I agree that we should keep such intricate webs of relationships in mind, I believe generic distinctions

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<sup>41</sup> Joan Pau Rubiés, “Travel Writing and Ethnography,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Travel Writing*, eds. Peter Hulme and Tim Youngs (Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge UP, 2002), 244.

<sup>42</sup> Jan Borm, “Defining Travel: on the Travel Book, Travel Writing and Terminology,” in *Perspectives on Travel Writing*, eds. Glenn Hooper and Tim Youngs (Aldershot, England: Ashgate, 2004), 13.

<sup>43</sup> Viviés, 25.

remain useful as heuristic devices that allow scholars to share a language with which we can teach and communicate. When we echo Suleri in describing the “rhetoric” of British India, it would be more accurate to pluralize the term. There was no singular narrative that can describe British imperial rhetoric across these decades; there are multiple narratives varying according to different political affiliations, fields of study, genres, and other delineations. A history of the early Anglo-Indian novel may be considered a significant one among them.

It is impossible to deny Hamilton’s claim that the history of British India created new possibilities for fictions of the eighteenth century and later. This history gives Anglo-Indian fiction in general a foundation cultural contact; that is, in the history of race and gender relations in British India. Likewise, multiple voices involved in the novel genre helped explore and popularize issues of gender, complexion, and religion that were involved in cultural contact. In other words, identity in the eighteenth century was informed by the heteroglossia of the novel, and the novel’s heteroglossia was in turn enriched by India’s pluralism. Though British writers often attempted to congeal colonial archetypes into rational certainties, British identity was certainly not unitary in this period, so multiple voices define seemingly singular identifiers (e.g. “nabob”) often in contrasting ways. The Anglo-Indian novel expressed, explored, and experimented with British identities, often producing new coinages and interesting delineations specific to British India. For example, Gibbes coins the term “nabobess” to signify a British woman who returns from India possessed of great wealth after marrying an EIC officer,<sup>44</sup> an identity replete with implications of complexion, gender, class, marital status, and, perhaps most importantly, moral rectitude. The very neologisms and themes created by the early Anglo Indian novel justify its study.

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<sup>44</sup> Gibbes, 6.



Furthermore, in addition to new British and Muslim archetypes, the Anglo-Indian novel developed the broad religious and racial identifier, “Hindu,” to an extent never before seen in Britain. Whereas tropes relating to Muslims in Anglo-Indian novels were well-established by this time, tropes relating to various other Indian religions had to be created or imported from ethnographic materials, travel literature, myth, rumor, or conjecture.<sup>45</sup> What we see in this genre, then, is the creation of a new set of colonial archetypes founded on a new understanding of entirely foreign cultural difference: the noble, ancient, gentle, and/or feminine Hindu contrasts to the savage, masculine, and lascivious Muslim. For example, we see helpless Hindu women enslaved in the seraglio by an aggressive, powerful Muslim nawab in C.W.’s *Memoirs of a Gentleman* (1774), and the venerable calm of an old Brahmin man in contrast with the fiery ambition of a young Mughal prince in Sydney Owenson’s *The Missionary*.<sup>46</sup> Thus, while the British regarded their own identity within the empire with ambivalence, they represented difference between these two predominant Indian religions, often in terms resembling the Saidian paradigm of alterity. As a consequence of a deepening understanding of India’s pluralism, the population of “the Orient” could likewise no longer be represented as uniform. The Congo might not be entirely populated by Muslims as in Diderot’s *The Indiscreet Jewels* (1748), nor would Ala-a-din become a “sultan” in China in *The Arabian Nights Entertainments* (1706).<sup>47</sup> Unable to define British identity by contrast to a single race or nationality in a specific

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<sup>45</sup> Note that British novels at this time often neglect other racial or religious groups in India such as Sikhs or Parsis. British authors sometimes mistook Hindu practice and myth for that of another religion.

<sup>46</sup> C.W., *Memoirs of a Gentleman, who Resided Several Years in the East Indies During the Late Revolutions, and Most Important Events in that Part of the World; Containing Several Anecdotes of a Public as Well as Private Nature, Never Before Published* (London: J. Donaldson, 1774), 119. Sydney Owenson, *The Missionary*, ed. Julia M. Wright, (Ontario: Broadview, 2002), 164, 188.

<sup>47</sup> Denis Diderot, *The Indiscreet Jewels*, trans. Sophie Hawkes (New York: Marsilio, 1993), 1. Antoine Galland, *The Arabian Nights Entertainments* (Chicago: Rand McNally and Company, 1914), 215.

part of the world, novelists sometimes struggled to describe their British characters in relation to those of other nationalities.

Hindu archetypes in the Anglo-Indian novels of the late eighteenth century were often turned to support the growing empire. Often portraying Hindus as a victim race of various other aggressors throughout history, British representations capitalized on sentiment to justify the Hindus “defense” against Muslim nawabs or other European powers despite that, according to this logic, Britain was merely the latest in a long line of conquerors. In Gibbes’ *Hartly House, Calcutta*, for example, Sophia praises Warren Hastings as a purveyor of justice for imprisoning a soldier who raped a Hindu woman and murdered her father, playing upon sympathy for Hindus to justify Hastings’ tenure as Governor-general. Of course, because the criminal is British, the unstated implication is that this crime is a symptom of Britain’s conquest of India, akin to the horrors Mughals were presumed to have committed against Hindus. This seemingly willful myopia allowed the British at home to feel for Hindus while distancing themselves from “previous” conquerors.

Sentiment and sympathy were therefore very important to the encounter in the contact zone, as we see in Lynn Festa’s important study *Sentimental Figures of Empire in Eighteenth-Century Britain and France*. Festa argues that sentimental fiction created tropes to allow readers to conceptualize the world abroad with humanity while undertaking to maintain control over those areas. Though sensibility created for British readers sympathy for the empire’s subjects, it also ironically outlined distinctions between the elevated “self” and the suffering “other.”<sup>48</sup>

Andrew Rudd observes that India was an object of humanitarian concern in eighteenth-century

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<sup>48</sup> Lynn Festa, *Sentimental Figures of Empire in Eighteenth-Century Britain and France* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 2006), 2-4.

Britain and posits sympathy as a function of distance: a greater geographic distance impeded emotional transfer between Britain and India, reducing the readers' sympathy for Indians by comparison to those closer to home.<sup>49</sup> Ros Ballaster suggests that Western readers of translations of Eastern tales saw themselves as observers "from the sidelines of the dynamics of an Eastern despotism." These observers were "emboldened to produce 'new' visions of the future of the East" due to "distance, disengagement, and comparative weakness."<sup>50</sup> Ballaster also argues that the development of the novel during colonial expansion resembled that of Hindu transmigration: novel readers imagined not only a movement inward to differentiate the "self" from the "other," but also a move outward, to imagine themselves "serially in the place of the 'other.'"<sup>51</sup> Sentimentalism therefore worked to conceptually distance and familiarize Britons and Hindus until it began to be replaced by utilitarianism after 1820.

Unsurprisingly, with the uptick in the production of Indian and Anglo-Indian literature and art in Britain, the aesthetics of the subcontinent's depictions underwent dramatic shifts in this period. Nigel Leask traces the evolution of travel writing from a source of knowledge (scientific) to a source of aesthetics (literary) in the nineteenth century. He reveals a Romantic "curiosity," or wonder, in various "antique" lands in British literature and art.<sup>52</sup> Pramod K. Nayar argues that two distinct Romantic aesthetic categories functioned in Indian travel narratives in this period. The first is what he calls the "Imperial Sublime," in which the traveler's subjectivity transformed India from a landscape of awe-inspiring desolation into one of potential agricultural

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<sup>49</sup> Andrew Rudd, *Sympathy and India in British Literature, 1770-1830* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 15.

<sup>50</sup> Ros Ballaster, *Fabulous Orient: Fictions of the East in England, 1665-1785* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2005), 5-7.

<sup>51</sup> Ballaster, 14.

<sup>52</sup> Nigel Leask, *Curiosity and the Aesthetics of Travel Writing, 1770-1840: "from an Antique Land"* (New York: Oxford UP, 2002).

improvement between 1750 and 1820. The traveler witnessed the landscape's infertility, emptiness, and waste so that it could be renewed by an attribution of meaning.<sup>53</sup> The second is what he calls the "Missionary Picturesque," which described the Indian landscape as possessed of fertility and fullness to be cultivated, elucidating a desire to transform India from an immoral landscape to a moral Christian landscape between 1790 and 1860.<sup>54</sup> Both formed an impetus to continue the empire, justifying imperial domination as "improvement."

Thus, the Anglo-Indian novel is both exciting in its generic complexity and deeply troubling in its claims to authority on and over India. These novels seem to act as envoys of the empire to its people in England, a façade that claims foundation in universal and unitary truth about culture in the subcontinent. The irony is that these fictions often originated at home, having been written largely by novelists who had never been to the subcontinent. Postcolonial critics therefore appropriately read fictional plots in Anglo-Indian novels as allegories and propaganda concerning the empire. Elizabeth A. Bohls, for example, reads Luxima, the heroine of Sydney Owenson's *The Missionary*, as a representation of India itself, her youth and beauty reflecting the land's fertility and value, obsessed with and ruined by the ambition of the eponymous missionary, Hilarion, a representative of European power.<sup>55</sup> The common re-positioning of the European as a central figure in the lives of Indians is enough to register a national narcissism about these fictions.

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<sup>53</sup> Pramod K. Nayar, *English Writing and India, 1600-1920: Colonizing Aesthetics* (London: Routledge, 2008), 63-93.

<sup>54</sup> Nayar, 94-131.

<sup>55</sup> Elizabeth A Bohls, *Women Travel Writers and the Language of Aesthetics, 1716-1818* (New York: Cambridge UP, 1995), 144.

## India's Pluralism and Defining "Hindu:"

*On the other side of the river [from Fort William in Calcutta] there are docks for repairing and careening the ships; near which, the Armenians have a good garden... All religions were tolerated in [Calcutta], for the idolators [sic] carry'd their idols in procession through the town; the Mohommedans [sic] are not discountenanced, and the Roman-Catholics have a church.*

*-The Gentleman's Magazine, 1757<sup>56</sup>*

*"This is what the story says in [our] history book[s], that Parsis came from Iran years ago, when we [Hindus] used to have kings as rulers. They left their country for religious freedom, to save their religion. They landed in the same city where I grew up [Surat], where they have a big port. I visited that port many, many times because my college was there. So they came in a boat and asked for permission to settle in the area... The king sent them a glass of milk [to signify that their country was full and could not support the Parsis] and the Parsis put sugar in it and sent it back. I interpret this as a message that [they would] mix in [that] society the same as sugar in the milk... The relationship will be even sweeter. So they are saying that we are not here to cause any trouble. We are peaceful people... I grew up with so many Parsis around. We had Parsi families in the small village of Kododara. [In] Surat, so many Parsis now, and they spread to so many cities. But not a single time [have I] heard any incident that they are troublemakers. In my experience, they are the most peaceful people that I've ever seen... I'm comparing that to any race, any people, even the Indians, [we] that live there... So they lived up to their first message: sugar in the milk. They lived up to that."*

*-My Mother, Shobhana Soni, February 13, 2016<sup>57</sup>*

The increased contact between Britain and India in the late eighteenth century fomented British interest in the subcontinent and led to attempts to conceptualize Indian culture, both in its past and its present. For example, after his publication of his famous account of the "Black Hole of Calcutta," John Z. Holwell published a tract often cited by his contemporaries entitled

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<sup>56</sup> *The Gentleman's Magazine*, v.27 (1757), 307-8.

<sup>57</sup> Shobhana Soni, in discussion with the author, February 13, 2016. This is a popular Parsi legend concerning king Jádi Rana, who received Zoroastrians fleeing from religious persecution in Persia. According to the legend, the king sent the Parsis a full glass of milk to signify that the kingdom was full. The Parsis carefully added sugar to the milk without letting the glass overflow and sent it back, suggesting that they would only make the kingdom sweeter. Impressed by the display, the king allowed them to settle and practice their religion in peace so long as they conformed to Indian customs in certain ways. My mother told me this story when I was a child. Scholars often describe this as a patently Parsi legend, but my mother suggests that it was popular among other Indians as well. See, for example, Peter J. Claus, Sarah Diamond, Margaret Ann Mills, *South Asian Folklore, an Encyclopedia: Afghanistan, Bangladesh, India, Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka* (New York: Routledge, 2003), 464.

*Interesting Historical Events, Relative to the Provinces of Bengal, and the Empire of Indostan...*  
*As also the mythology and cosmogony, fasts and festivals of the Gentoo's, followers of the*  
*Shastah...* (1765).<sup>58</sup> Novelists such as Phebe Gibbes and Elizabeth Hamilton capitalized on the growing availability of information, citing, paraphrasing, or plagiarizing first-hand accounts. Because of its growing popularity in British media, India was both an exotic and familiar setting for narratives in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Like London, the British portrayed Indian cities like Calcutta in *Hartly House*, *Calcutta* and Goa in *The Missionary* as remarkably pluralistic,<sup>59</sup> giving India a reputation for religious diversity in particular. As the quotes above show, India's openness to other cultures was recognized by the British and celebrated by contemporary Indians. Accordingly, India, in its complexity as a "contact zone," that is a space where geographically and historically distinct peoples meet and interact,<sup>60</sup> warrants examination in the Anglo-Indian novel.

The subcontinent's cultural makeup was complicated by the history of the word "Hindu," which, in the eighteenth century, was less a definite cultural identity than a vague European term for those thought to be descended from the most ancient inhabitants of India. Contemporary scholarship has shown that the British "invented" Hinduism as a coherent and unified religion,

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<sup>58</sup> John Z. Holwell, *Interesting Historical Events, Relative to the Provinces of Bengal, and the Empire of Indostan: With a Seasonable Hint and Perswasive [sic] to the Honorable the Court of Directors of the East India Company. As also the Mythology and Cosmogony, Fasts and Festivals of the Gentoo's, Followers of the Shastah. And a Dissertation on the Metempsychosis, Commonly, Though Erroneously, Called the Pythagorean Doctrine* (London: T. Becket and P.A. De Hondt, 1765).

<sup>59</sup> I use the term "pluralism" instead of "cosmopolitanism" or "multiculturalism" because the latter terms have implications of "modernity," a concept created by the more pernicious aspects of the West to describe its own exceptionalism. Rather, I believe "pluralism" better captures various forms of common, "Western," diversities grounded in history, and, as Ashis Nandy observes in the Indian city of Cochin, an "alternative cosmopolitanism" grounded in a shared mythic identity. Thanks to Vinay Lal for suggesting this term. Ashis Nandy, "Time Travel to a Possible Self: Searching for the Alternative Cosmopolitanism of Cochin," *Japanese Journal of Political Science* 1.2 (2000): 295-327.

<sup>60</sup> Pratt, 8-9.

piecing it together it from various different accounts, misunderstanding it as a text-based religion, and using it to guide Indian policy.<sup>61</sup> Urs App proposes that the modern understanding of Hinduism was, in fact, invented by John Z. Holwell in the second volume of his *Interesting Historical Events*.<sup>62</sup> This is particularly troubling considering that Holwell, according to App, probably forged his translation of the untraceable “*Chartah Bhade Shastah*,” the source for Holwell’s description of Hinduism.<sup>63</sup> The identification “Hindu” inaccurately described a larger group in which, as Nicholas B. Dirks’ case study in *The Hollow Crown* shows, the state was actually subordinate to village communes and caste when it came to identifiers of community and culture.<sup>64</sup> That is to say, outside of villages and communities, those the British called “Hindu” largely did not identify with one another, rendering a European sense of nationalism inapplicable.

Furthermore, descriptions of Hinduism were often contested and reinterpreted in this period among Europeans. Crébillon Fils’ *The Sofa: A Moral Tale* (1742) refers to those who would later be called Hindu only as “sectateurs de Brama” (followers of Brahma).<sup>65</sup> Holwell presented his *Interesting Historical Events* as a correction to all other texts “from Arrian to Abbé de Guyon,” pronouncing “them all very defective, fallacious, and unsatisfactory to an inquisitive searcher of the truth,” and he accuses his contemporaries, particularly the “Romish” authors, of

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<sup>61</sup> For a description of the codification of British interpretations of Indian religions, see Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, “Can the Subaltern Speak?” *Colonial Discourse and Post-Colonial Theory: A Reader*, eds. Patrick Williams and Laura Chrisman (Hemel Hempstead: Harvester, 1993), 281.

<sup>62</sup> Urs App, *The Birth of Orientalism* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2010), 359-62.

<sup>63</sup> App, 297-300.

<sup>64</sup> Nicholas B. Dirks, *The Hollow Crown: Ethnohistory of an Indian Kingdom* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1987).

<sup>65</sup> Crébillon le Fils, *Le Sopha: Conte Moral* (Brussels: Ch. Gilliet, 1881), 12.

representing “the race of Hindoos as a race of stupid and gross idolators [sic].”<sup>66</sup> Alexander Dow suggested that travelers’ false descriptions of Hinduism “proceed from that common partiality which Europeans, as well as less enlightened nations, entertain for the religion and philosophy of their own country, or from a judgement formed upon some external ceremonies of the Hindoos.”<sup>67</sup> Even the spelling of the word was contested, having been written as “Gentoo,” “Gentu,” “Hindoo,” and “Hindu.” Nathaniel Brassey Halhed surmises that the word “Hindostan” may be a corruption of the “Indus” River, the Portuguese “Gentile,” or the Persian “Hind,” a supposed son of Ham, but notes that those who were identified as such never used those terms to describe themselves.<sup>68</sup> Hamilton suggests that the word “Hindoo” comes from the Persian “hind,” or “black.” Since there was no consensus among the British as to what these Indians should be called, it is no wonder that European descriptions of the tenets of the religion often conflicted.

British descriptions of caste among Hindus elucidate a cultural encounter that was asymmetrical according to multiple identifiers. Dow describes the rigidity with which he believed all Hindus regarded caste:

But indeed it is contrary to the inviolable laws of the Hindoos that any person should rise from an inferior cast [sic] into a higher tribe. If any therefore should be excommunicated from any of the tribes, he and his posterity are forever shut out from society of every body in the nation, excepting that of the Harri cast, who are held in detestation by all the other tribes, and are employed only in the meanest and vilest offices. This circumstance renders excommunication so dreadful, that any Hindoo will suffer the torture, and even death itself, rather than deviate from one article of his faith. This severity prevented all intermixture of

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<sup>66</sup> Holwell, *Interesting Historical Events*, 5-6.

<sup>67</sup> Alexander Dow, *The History of Hindostan from the Earliest Account of Time, to the Death of Akbar* (London: T. Becket and P.A. De Hondt, 1768-70), xxii.

<sup>68</sup> Nathaniel Brassey Halhed, *A Code of Gentoo Laws, or, Ordinations of the Pundits, from a Persian Translation, Made from the Original, Written in the Shanscrit Language* (London: [publisher not identified], 1776), xxi.-xxiii.



blood between the tribes [or castes], so that, in their appearance, they seem rather four different nations, than members of the same community.<sup>69</sup>

Dow indicates a British understanding of caste not, as we might expect, as an analogue of class so much as nationality. Thus, it was not unheard of for middling class Europeans, those that are most often represented in Anglo-Indian novels, to freely interact with the higher castes of Hindu society. In *Hartly House, Calcutta*, for example, Sophia, a middling class Englishwoman refers to her only Indian friend by his supposedly elevated caste, “bramin,” rather than giving his name, and she appears to have no significant interactions with Hindus of other castes save for cursory references to servants. As in *Hartly House, Calcutta*, the significance of caste was often overstated by the British: an incomplete understanding of Indian characters’ castes were commonly their primary identifiers. Thus, when we look closely at ethnography in Anglo-Indian novels, we find that not only was the British “self” schizophrenic as Suleri shows, but the Hindu “other” was also uncertain and in flux at this time. Nevertheless, permutations of the word “Hindu” clearly became the primary identifiers of “native” Indians and Indian religion in British fiction, despite the presence of other religions that originated in India such as Sikhism, Jainism, and Buddhism.

In Anglo-Indian novels, we see distinct encounters between Hindus and Muslims, Muslims and Christians, and Hindus and Christians, as well as non-dualistic Christian, Hindu, and Muslim relationships, which were sometimes expressed, curiously enough, as love triangles as in *The Missionary*.<sup>70</sup> The inclusion of a Muslim population originating in Persia also

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<sup>69</sup> Dow, xxxii.

<sup>70</sup> In *The Missionary*, the Franciscan priest Hilarion and the Muslim prince Solyman come to blows over the attentions of the Hindu Brahmin woman Luxima. Sydney Owenson, *The Missionary*, ed. Julia M. Wright (Ontario: Broadview, 2002), 164.

conceptually challenged binary East/West distinctions, in that India became a sort of “further East,” geographically, topographically, and demographically distinct from early eighteenth-century European conceptions of an Islamic Orient. Indeed, the definition of “Indian” for writers in this period was more often Hindu than Muslim or any other religion, revealing a distinction of supposed origin in differentiating between settled peoples on the subcontinent.

Miscegenation further muddied boundaries in British Indian society, but mixed-race identities were often regarded with unease. Jemima Kindersley, for example, described those with European fathers and Indian mothers, often called “half-caste” or “country-born,” as having “what is called a Portuguese mother,” effacing their Indian identities to assimilate into British Indian society.<sup>71</sup> George Annesley expressed anxiety at the increase of mixed-race peoples, which “tended to the ruin of” countries because, though Britons have “nothing to fear from the sloth of the Indians and the rapidly declining consequence of the Musselmauns [sic], yet it may be justly apprehended that [mixed-race people] may hereafter become too powerful for control.”<sup>72</sup> Because the British “self,” the Hindu “other,” and, for that matter, the Muslim “other” were indeterminate, opposition between descriptors of Muslim and Hindu identities was inconsistent across Anglo-Indian novels. Rather, we can only identify instances of alterity between Muslims and Hindus within a single text.

Early Anglo-Indian novels most often described the British in India as a society and culture distinct from that of the British at home. Returned Britons were often referred to as “Indian.” For example, Jemima Kindersley remarks, “The mode of living, from the religion of

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<sup>71</sup> Jemima Kindersley, *Letters from the Island of Teneriffe, Brazil, the Cape of Good Hope, and the East Indies* (London: J. Nourse, 1777), 272.

<sup>72</sup> George Annesley, Viscount Valentia, *Voyages and Travels to India, Ceylon, the Red Sea, Abyssinia, and Egypt, in the Years 1802, 1803, 1804, 1805, and 1806* (London: William Miller, 1809), 241.

their servants, the heat of the climate, and other circumstances, is so extraordinary, that I can scarcely believe myself among English people,” but omits her reasons for writing thus.<sup>73</sup> There was a stigma about “nabobs,” those who returned from India with great wealth, often suspected of “going native,” being corrupted by wealth, or oppressing Indians. Even the titles of publications reveal this opprobrium in, for example, Richard Clarke’s satirical poem, “The Nabob: Or Asiatic Plunderers” (1773), and Henry Fred Thompson’s tirade against Richard Barwell, *The Intrigues of a Nabob: or Bengal the Fittest Soil for the Growth of Lust, Injustice and Dishonesty* (1780). Such was not always the case, though. In Mary Julia Young’s *The East Indian; or Clifford Priory* (1799), a returned nabob, Mr. Clifford, though he is “accustomed to Eastern luxury and a numerous retinue,” treats others with compassion.<sup>74</sup> The ease with which the Clifford family attains wealth in India is, nevertheless, elided, as the novel only notes that Mr. Clifford’s father “acquired, in a few years, an immense fortune but with a bilious complaint that embittered [sic] all his happiness, and made him determine to quit a climate so unfavorable for Europeans.”<sup>75</sup> In England, the Cliffords are, quite simply, fish out of water, identifying the British in India as belonging to a different culture. Thus, British society in India add to the pluralism that British travelers found there, giving novelists ample subjects for their narratives.

#### The Colonial Hierarchies of Protofeminist Imperialism:

*Prepared as I was to expect very little from Mussulman ladies, I could not help being shocked to see them so totally void of cultivation as I found them. They mutter their prayers, and some of them read the koran [sic], but not one in a thousand understands it. Still fewer can read their own language, or write at all,*

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<sup>73</sup> Kindersley, 80.

<sup>74</sup> Mary Julia Young, *The East Indian; or Clifford Priory* (London: Earle and Hemet, 1799), 2.

<sup>75</sup> Young, 7.

*and the only work they do is a little embroidery. They thread beads, plait colored threads, sleep, quarrel, make pastry, and chew betel, in the same daily round; and it is only at a death, a birth, or a marriage, that the monotony of their lives is ever interrupted.*

-Maria Graham, 1809<sup>76</sup>

Both Indian and British women, according to Suleri, were important in Burke's impeachment speeches, the former as figures for India itself and the latter as spectators to react to his speeches. Burke's portrayal of violence towards Indian women, in which nipples were torn off and virgins were raped in the light of day, graphically illustrated alleged crimes of Hastings' government. These depictions of rape and torture were punctuated by their profound effects on his audience, among whom British women were said to have fainted away. Suleri, in her otherwise excellent book, *The Rhetoric of English India*, fails to accentuate British and Indian women's very different roles in these speeches, treating them instead as a gendered whole.<sup>77</sup> As Suleri notes, the presence of fashionable British women threatened to distract the public from Burke's violated Indian virgins as evidenced by newspapers' focus on the audience's attire.<sup>78</sup> As a result, in Burke's speeches, British and Indian women were at odds in the spectacle of the trial, competing for the spotlight, so to speak. As in the excerpt from Maria Graham's journal above, many Englishwomen writers attempted to differentiate themselves from Indian women. Maria Graham's description of Muslim women in the zenana pointedly contrasts her own self-representation as a learned, literary woman. Thus, Graham differentiates herself from these

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<sup>76</sup> Maria Graham, *Journal of a Residence in India* (Edinburgh: Archibald Constable and Company; and Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme, and Brown, 1813), 18-9.

<sup>77</sup> Suleri, 60-1. Suleri does, however, emphasize this distinction in her chapter on the nineteenth-century "feminine picturesque," in which, by rendering British India as still-life, British women defined and allayed their anxieties towards empire in the mid-nineteenth century. She notes, "the Anglo-Indian woman could not be protected from her own fear of native women – a fear of proximity rather than of difference – which she must urgently work to transform into the obscure discourse of the picturesque" (77).

<sup>78</sup> Suleri, 59.

Indian women, showing her sense of the primacy of racial difference over similarity in gender. That is to say, it seems Graham identifies with British men more than she does with Indian women. In this section, I discuss the complex relationships between British and Indian women, and particularly many British women writers' efforts to differentiate themselves from Indian women and ally themselves to British men.

Though the rape of Indian women was a major theme in Burke's speeches in the eighteenth century, discourse in the nineteenth century shifted focus to the rape of British women. Jenny Sharpe posits that the empire in India was predicated on the fear of the rape of white women by Indian men after the 1857 Mutiny, a discourse of violence and feminism. She argues that before the Mutiny, however, "the European fear of interracial rape [did] not exist so long as there [was] a belief that colonial structures of power [were] firmly in place." Because the bodies of white women became metonyms for the violation of the colonial government by Indian rebels after 1857, figurations of British women were instrumental in "shifting a colonial system of meaning from self-interest and moral superiority to self-sacrifice and racial superiority."<sup>79</sup> Thus, the Mutiny signaled a change in metaphors in the discourse of colonialism. Before the Mutiny, Indian women's bodies were figured as India itself and British men represented the colonial government. After the Mutiny, British women's bodies were symbols of the colonial government, and Indian men were symbols of India itself. In both cases, though Indian virgins were conceptually differentiated from British ladies, women were figures for victims in the contact zone, suggesting that women's power was limited in the empire.

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<sup>79</sup> Jenny Sharpe, *Allegories of Empire: the Figure of Woman in the Colonial Text* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993), 3-4.

Nonetheless, differentiating themselves from Indians was one of the means by which British women sought to demonstrate their agency. A brief look at British women's travel accounts obviates the importance of European wives, mothers, and daughters in India. When Marian Hastings, Warren Hastings' wife, accused Eliza Fay of travelling to India out of "mere curiosity," Fay revealed that she did so in order to preserve her "husband from destruction, for had [she] not accompanied him, and in many instances restrained his extravagance and dissipated habits, he would never, never, [she is] convinced, have reached Bengal, but have fallen a wretched sacrifice to them on the way, or perhaps through the violence of his temper been involved in some dispute, which he was too ready to provoke."<sup>80</sup> Fay's reply to Mrs. Hastings suggests that British women attempted to locate their own agency in and usefulness to the empire in enforcing morality and reigning in temptation among men. Rather than performing violence against Indians as her husband might, her power was in limiting the violence of the otherwise corruptible man, a check or correction to his agency that was reactive rather than active, perhaps a form of imperial "no-saying." Thus, though she did not quite liken her role in India to that of her husband, she nevertheless expressed a certain degree of power, and used that power to support him. Mrs. Hastings' accusation, however, exemplifies common suspicions of women travelers.

Thus, British women in India were alternately regarded as necessary and suspect. The EIC, on multiple occasions, paid for women's passage to India to encourage them to marry and tame otherwise wild young British men, who engaged in illicit relations with Indian women or squandered their money on frivolity. In a country where British men outnumbered British

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<sup>80</sup> Eliza Fay, *Original Letters from India*, ed. Simon Winchester (New York: New York Review of Books, 2010), 175.

women considerably, women were also suspected of husband-hunting and fortune-seeking. Unmarried travelers were counted among the “fishing fleet,” a pejorative term for otherwise undesirable women who supposedly went to India to prey on lonely British men.<sup>81</sup> The popularity of the “fishing fleet” stereotype is evident in Sophia’s first letter in *Hartly House, Calcutta*. Sophia’s only vow before her departure is to not marry in India, fearing that courtship would distract her from her purpose in travelling: to support her father.<sup>82</sup> In Gibbes’ novel, British women demonstrate their utility in India by their successful management of domestic affairs and interpersonal relationships. For example, when a drunk British man makes advances on Mrs. D——, an India-born Englishwoman courted by Sophia’s father, she asks Sophia not to mention the incident to her father, for “the quarrels of men are so alarming, that whoever wishes to prevent mischief, must be cautious how they breathe inflammatory complaints before the sex, lest some idle or fatal point of honour should make them conceive themselves bound to resent or even remonstrate with the other party.”<sup>83</sup> British men’s jealousy, violence, and lack of restraint thus justify the British women’s presence abroad. This, however, suggests that British women travelers were dependent upon the presence of British men in India, not only for protection, but also for purpose, undercutting the feminist implications of this form of power.<sup>84</sup>

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<sup>81</sup> Anne de Courcy, *The Fishing Fleet: Husband-Hunting in the Raj* (London: Weidenfield and Nicholson, 2012).

<sup>82</sup> Gibbes, 6.

<sup>83</sup> Gibbes, 124.

<sup>84</sup> It is because the term “feminism” was not available as a term in the eighteenth century that I call this “protofeminism.” Though this form of mediated protofeminism was common in the eighteenth century, writers like Mary Wollstonecraft expressed an ideology more akin to contemporary feminism, one that did not depend on mediation. The fact that Wollstonecraft’s *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* was very popular in the eighteenth century suggests this sense of unmediated protofeminism was also widespread in the eighteenth century. British women, of course, were not always limited in India to their management of men. In the early nineteenth century, Eliza Fay twice returned to India without her (former) husband to pursue business interests, demonstrating her sense that her power went beyond her association with men later in her life.

Scholarship has appropriately highlighted British women's power in the empire, but we should be careful as to how we interpret that power in relation to that of British men. Felicity A. Nussbaum argues for a globalizing protofeminism in which figures such as Eliza Fay and Phebe Gibbes, who described the necessity of British women's domestic power in India, were not entirely complicit in imperialism, but rather opposed masculine oppression everywhere. She notes, however, that "the stories of the Indian woman and the Englishwoman may not be coequal or possess an identity," though Indian women and Englishwomen are nevertheless "complexly bound within a system of oppression."<sup>85</sup> If protofeminism was indeed a global phenomenon that used empire as a vehicle to combat gender inequities abroad, it would also implicitly reify the hierarchies of British colonialism in doing so. Empire was predicated on the inequities of nationality and race, but not necessarily the inequities of gender, so for protofeminism to use imperialism to counteract gender inequality would be to capitalize on national exceptionalism to promote women's rights. Eliza Fay asserted her own power and importance for the prevention of her husband's destruction, but this enabled his role in support of the exploitation of Indians. Despite her efforts, or perhaps even because her presence prolonged his death or return to Britain, he ultimately fathered a child by an Indian woman, destroying their marriage. *Hartly House, Calcutta's Mrs. D*—, in exerting her power to prevent violence among British men to stave off their deaths, allows the drunk man who makes advances on her to continue at his post in the EIC rather than attempting to oust this obviously immoral, but powerful man. Though they are not directly complicit in British men's exploitation of Indians, they are certainly not entirely

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<sup>85</sup> Felicity A. Nussbaum, *Torrid Zones: Maternity, Sexuality, and Empire in Eighteenth-Century English Narratives* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1995), 191. Nussbaum here engages texts such as Gayatri Spivak, "Three Women's Texts" and "Theory in the Margin: Coetzee's Foe Reading of Defoe's *Crusoe/Roxana*," in *Consequences of Theory: Selected Papers from the English Institute, 1987-88*.



opposed to it, and they even indirectly help to enable it, just as, according to Dirks, scandals discipline but continue the empire.

Thus, I contend that the tentative and often non-committal trend among contemporary scholars to ascribe to British women writers a notion of a “feminist imperialism” distinct from or opposed to that of men is inaccurate. On the other hand, I argue that “protofeminist imperialism,” in which women writers expressed a sense of power through their husbands, fathers, and son, is concerned with equating British women to British men, but not necessarily either to Indian men or women. Rather than distancing itself from masculine imperialism, protofeminist imperialism sought to improve colonial masters, espousing more “perfect” ameliorative imperialisms. Furthermore, women’s powers and duties in India, as described above, were linked often to the management and support of men and particularly EIC officers, another link in the chain that connects protofeminist and masculine imperialism. As Denise Kendall Comer explains, women writers masked their participation in empire by couching it in the more acceptable genre of fiction, exemplifying the mitigated nature of protofeminist imperialism that I describe here..<sup>86</sup>

What protofeminist imperialism does contest, however, is gendering Indian men female, differentiating sex discrimination from the nationalistic inequities necessary for imperial rule. Following Said’s recognition of Western descriptions of the East as female, Michael J. Franklin’s “Radically Feminizing India” likewise reads Indian men, and particularly the Bramin in *Hartly House, Calcutta*, as feminine for their sentimentalism, so that Sophia can be empowered by comparison.<sup>87</sup> This interpretation would suggest that the novel likened Indian

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<sup>86</sup> Denise Kendall Comer, *Fictions of Empire: British Women’s Travel Narratives in India, 1779-1854* (PhD diss., University of South Carolina, 1999), iv.-v.

<sup>87</sup> Michael J. Franklin, “Radically Feminizing India: Phebe Gibbes’s *Hartly House, Calcutta* (1789) and Sydney Owenson’s *The Missionary: An Indian Tale* (1811),” in *Romantic Representations of British India*, ed. Michael J. Franklin (London: Routledge, 2006), 156.

men to British women. Franklin, however, misreads sentimentalism in this novel as feminine, though it is clear that Sophia suggests that sentiment should ideally be accessed by both British men and women. Sophia describes her father, a character of great sensibility and judgement, as “the model of him I could ever love, or ever wish to unite my destiny with,” the pinnacle of both patriarchy and masculinity.<sup>88</sup> Furthermore, she intends to teach the Bramin’s tenets and presumably his sentimentalism to her intended husband, Doyly.<sup>89</sup> Felicity A. Nussbaum’s more recent essay, “Women Writing the East after 1750: Revisiting a ‘Feminine’ Orient” accordingly demonstrates that the East was not consistently gendered female, especially among women writers.<sup>90</sup> Though some British women overtly described Indian men’s features as feminine, they nevertheless took pains to distance these men from themselves. Lady Maria Nugent comments that Indian men’s small hands and feet gave them the appearance of women, but she also describes them as animalistic, noting that they “squatted down like monkeys,” and using other such bestial analogies.<sup>91</sup> As I have argued above, women writers often sought to differentiate themselves from Indian women, so when Lady Nugent compares Indian men to “women,” we can ask of which women does she speak. More to the point, I contend that it is much more likely that women writers compared Indian men not to British women so much as to Indian women.

British men seemed to willfully turn a blind eye to their own exploitation of Indian women. Even as they condemned seraglios, British men often dreamt of indulging in the sexual

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<sup>88</sup> Gibbes, 41.

<sup>89</sup> Gibbes, 151.

<sup>90</sup> Felicity A. Nussbaum, “British Women Write the East after 1750: Revisiting a ‘Feminine’ Orient,” in *British Women’s Writing in the Long Eighteenth Century: Authorship, Politics, and History*, ed. Jennie Bachelor and Cora Kaplan (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2005), 121-139.

<sup>91</sup> Nugent, 31-2.

excess they believed these sites represented, not only with Indian women, but also with British women, reiterating the sexual objectification of women in general. Shuchi Kapila examines nineteenth-century Anglo-Indian romances in which relationships between British men and Indian women produce interesting uncertainties regarding the imperial project in India. Though the compliant Indian woman represents the ideal colonial subject, the same woman becomes a threat when she accrues enough power in the household to influence the Englishman. As such, Indian women in these romances represent objects of desire that occupy a position between peaceful collaboration with and violent threat to their British masters.<sup>92</sup> In the confusion that results from such desires, women writers side with their countrymen, reasoning that women's vigilance might keep them from cruelty towards Indians, but they ultimately support and enable such desire by masking it with British domesticity. In short, British protofeminists' unwillingness to ally themselves with Indian women may have subverted their attempts for more gender equality. By allying themselves to British men and espousing a measured imperialism, women writers like Nugent and Gibbes helped continued the empire as much as male ameliorative imperialists, and both attempted to reformed the empire with the belief that it was in the Indians' best interests.

To conclude this introduction, this dissertation argues that Anglo-Indian novelists' ameliorative imperialisms in the later eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries is owing to inconsistencies to self-reflection in both condemning and enacting empire, and attempting to navigate treacherous territory in balancing mercantile capitalism with humanistic compassion. The seeds of the racial and gender discrimination of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries were

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<sup>92</sup> Shuchi Kapila, *Educating Seeta: Anglo-Indian Family Romance and the Poetics of Indirect Rule* (Columbus: Ohio State UP, 2010), 3-6.

much more prevalent and ubiquitous in the eighteenth century than previously assumed. My first chapter sets the stage, so to speak, with an analysis of the first Anglo-Indian novel, *Memoirs of a Gentleman* (1774) by the otherwise anonymous C.W. This novel portrays India as a place of erotic adventure, where a young man may sow his wild oats as he might during his Grand Tour. By exploiting Indians, particularly Indian women, the unnamed protagonist upholds the common stereotype that European men in India were morally bankrupt, a precedent to which later women writers will respond. Chapter two analyzes Phebe Gibbes' *Hartly House, Calcutta* (1789), a much more well-constructed novel that has recently drawn a great deal of critical attention. The protagonist of the novel, Sophia, attempts to implant a greater sensibility into her paramour and future husband, an East India Company Officer named Doyly. By describing high society in Calcutta as polished and glamorous, though sometimes disturbed by certain unscrupulous men, Gibbes portrays India as a place amenable not just to young men, but also to British women and older men. My third chapter considers three Anglo-Indian novels, Helenus Scott's *Adventures of a Rupee* (1782), Elizabeth Hamilton's *Translation of the Letters of a Hindoo Rajah* (1796), and Mary Pilkington's *The Asiatic Princess* (1800), in relation to the ongoing parliamentary debates on India. By setting these novels against the political and moral questions that appear in these debates, this chapter elucidates the unintended slippage between EIC property and Indian people that is involved in these novels' ameliorative imperialism. My fourth chapter examines Sydney Owenson's *The Missionary* (1811) and Mary Sherwood's children's novels to theorize on British representations of the loss of caste among Hindus in the early nineteenth century. Rather than improving the lives of Indians by encouraging British women to reform colonial masters as they did in the late eighteenth century, women writers took on a more active role in the preservation of Indians. Written during the missionary debate, in which Britons considered whether or not to

allow their own evangelists into India, these novels address important moral concerns with crafting the Indian subject. I conclude with a brief afterword, looking forward toward the racial injustice that characterized the empire in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

Chapter 1: Transnational Masculinity in C.W.'s *Memoirs of a Gentleman* (1774): "Without knowledge or habits in cultivated life"

*This gentleman's Memoirs are neither interesting nor amusing, and before he attempts to give again his thoughts to the public, we recommend to him to give an attentive perusal to Greenwood's Grammar.*<sup>1</sup>

-*Town and Country*, 1774<sup>2</sup>

*'Never before published! There are two reasons to be given why they ought not to have been published at all. The Gentleman, who declares himself to be a German, is not qualified to write in English or perhaps in any other language; and his memoirs, whether true or false, were not worth writing. The title indeed promises some anecdotes of a public and private nature, but the Author is too ignorant to relate anything that merits reading.*

-*The Monthly Review*, 1774<sup>3</sup>

Reviews of the first Anglo-Indian novel, *Memoirs of a Gentleman* (1774) by the otherwise anonymous C.W., were clearly less than glowing. Both *The Town and Country* and *The Monthly Review* deliver not-so-subtle jabs at the author's intellect. "Whether true or false," the *Memoirs* itself claims that the Gentleman, the novel's protagonist and narrator, worked for various powers in India, including the British East India Company (EIC). This may lead its readers to ask: If such "ignorant" men are working, governing, and reporting in India, what hope is there for the empire? Burke echoes this sentiment in his opening speech in the impeachment of Warren Hastings:

My Lords, the next circumstance which distinguishes the East India Company is the youth of the persons employed in the system of that service. They have almost universally been sent out at that period of life, to begin their career and service in active life and in the use of power, which in all other places has been employed in the course of rigid education. They have been sent there in fact – to put it in a few words – with a perilous independence, with too inordinate expectations, and with

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<sup>1</sup> "Greenwood's Grammar" was intended for children. James Greenwood, *An Essay towards a practical English Grammar: Describing the genius and nature of the English tongue: giving likewise a rational and plain account of grammar in general, with familiar explanation of its terms* (London: R. Tookey, 1711).

<sup>2</sup> *The Town and Country Magazine* 6 (1774), 45.

<sup>3</sup> *The Monthly Review*, v. 50 (Dec. 1773-July 1774): 71.

boundless power. They are schoolboys without tutors; they are minors without guardians. The world is let loose upon them with all the powers despotism can give. This is the situation of the Company's servants.<sup>4</sup>

Burke goes on to describe these young men as “without maturity, without education, without knowledge or habits in cultivated life,” and “without the smallest study of any law, either general or municipal.”<sup>5</sup> To Burke, these unlearned and uncultured young men, who should be at home under the care of their tutors, guardians and families, exert their inordinate, Company-authorized power to extort Indians and supply their meager salaries. In India, according to Burke, these uneducated, presumptuous young men are “no longer a burden on their friends and parents,” but are instead a burden on Indian people.<sup>6</sup>

Though not nearly as well-wrought as Phebe Gibbes' *Hartly House, Calcutta* (1789) or Elizabeth Hamilton's *Translation of the Letters of a Hindu Rajah* (1796), the *Memoirs* nevertheless set the stage for the development of the Anglo-Indian novel genre. Though contemporary scholars such as Kate Teltscher and Ashok Malhotra describe the *Memoirs* as involved in imperial critique, the *Memoirs* is, predictably, more apolitical than Anglo-Indian novels published after Hastings' trial highlighted young British men's failings in India. Because it is largely apolitical, it does not express an ameliorative imperialism. In this novel, India is more a sexual playground for young, shiftless European men than a significant political conundrum. Young men's ignorance and lust would become, in one way or another, a major theme in many Anglo-Indian novels in the decades to come, corrected in *Hartly House, Calcutta*, and punished in Sydney Owenson's *The Missionary* (1813). In the *Memoirs*, however, masculine

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<sup>4</sup> Edmund Burke, *Speeches of the Managers and Counsel in the Trial of Warren Hastings*, ed. E.A. Bond (London: Longman, Brown, Green, Longmans, and Roberts, 1859), 20.

<sup>5</sup> Burke, 20-1.

<sup>6</sup> Burke, 25.

desire, free from the tethers of society and family at home, is indulged rather than reprobated. I argue that, though it occasionally expresses ambivalence toward the empire in India, the somewhat execrable *Memoirs* comes close to exploitative imperialism in its insensitivity and ignorance of colonial politics, setting the bar low, so to speak, so that, to present-day scholars, the novels that follow seem deceptively meritorious by comparison for advocating ameliorative imperialism.

Though the title page claims the *Memoirs* was published in 1774, *The Critical Review's* assessment appears in 1773, suggesting that the novel was postdated.<sup>7</sup> The *Memoirs'* publisher, John Donaldson and his brother, the more famous Alexander Donaldson, were the proprietors of "Cheap Books" on Arundel Street in London, where patrons could purchase titles published in Scotland at a discount. The Donaldsons are known for having been prosecuted for publishing an unlicensed version of *The Seasons* by James Thomson, but appealed, leading to the Donaldson v. Becket copyright battle. The House of Lords ruled in favor of the Donaldsons and established a limit on copyrights.<sup>8</sup> The *Memoirs* was republished as *The Indian Adventurer; or History of Mr. Vanneck, a Novel, Founded in Facts* in 1780 by William Lane, who later founded the famous publishing house and circulating library, The Minerva Press. Lane is known to have postdated novels and engaged in other unsavory publishing practices in this time.<sup>9</sup> Given that copies of *The Indian Adventurer* are identical to the *Memoirs*, complete with the same printing and language errors, type, and chapter break design (though the *Memoirs'* dedication was replaced with a second title page), it is likely that Lane merely appended a false title page to existing copies of

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<sup>7</sup> *The Critical Review*, v. 36 (July-Dec. 1773): 477

<sup>8</sup> Robert Taylor Skinner, *A Notable Family of Scots Printers* (Edinburgh: T. and A. Constable, 1927).

<sup>9</sup> Dorothy Blakey, *The Minerva Press, 1790-1820* (London: Oxford UP, 1939).



the *Memoirs* to pass them off as new publications, possibly without the author's consent. Copies of *The Indian Adventurer* are therefore likely to be forgeries, and should not be described as the original text, though they are otherwise identical.<sup>10</sup> Also, "Mr. Vanneck" may not be C.W.'s true identity. After extensive research that I have not been able to identify the *Memoirs*' author. We only know that he signs a letter as "C—— W——s" (23).<sup>11</sup>

The German protagonist and narrator is himself a shiftless and somewhat benighted young man who leaves university before completing his education in medicine to travel. After he averts impressment by criminals working for the Dutch East India Company, he nevertheless decides to travel East, working as a physician's assistant, despite the fact that he is ill-suited to the job for not yet knowing how to shave. Upon arriving in Jakarta he finds that the uncle with whom he wished to stay had died, so he sets off for India. He briefly works as a surgeon for the tyrannical and rapacious Siraj-ud-Daula, the last independent nawab of Bengal. When Siraj-ud-Daula is ousted by the EIC, he works for his successors, the even-handed Mir Jaffar and then the even more tyrannical and rapacious Mir Cossim. After several disastrous encounters with the nawabs and their soldiers, he works for either for the EIC or independently.

### Defining Young Masculinity in Transnational Ramblings

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<sup>10</sup> Ashok Malhotra mistakenly takes *The Indian Adventurer* to be an original text. Ashok Malhotra, *Making British Indian Fictions, 1772-1823* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 124.

<sup>11</sup> C.W., *Memoirs of a Gentleman, who Resided Several Years in the East Indies During the Late Revolutions, and Most Important Events in that Part of the World; Containing Several Anecdotes of a Public as Well as Private Nature, Never Before Published* (London: J. Donaldson, 1774), 23. Further references to this edition will appear parenthetically in the text. In an obvious oversight, Lane retained the signature "C—— W——s" on the same page of *The Indian Adventurer* (23), rendering the name "Mr. Vanneck" to be most likely false. Though unlikely, the signature does recall the name "Charles Wilkins," a famous Orientalist and translator in the late eighteenth century.

In Germany, before he sets off for his university, the young Gentleman befriends an Englishman:

While things were getting ready for my departure [to the university], an operator an English gentleman happened to arrive at our city. He had been making a tour of Europe, but was one of the greatest coxcombs I ever saw: his whole attention was fixed on his dress, and he considered every lady whom he met in the streets, as so much in love with him, that they would prefer him to every other object. His appearance was genteel; but so much was he addicted to ridiculous customs, or fashions, that he changed his dress every hour. This gentleman performed his operations very well, and had very fine instruments. (10)

The Gentleman delays his education in order to assist in the Englishman's "operations," helping him seduce women, married or otherwise. The Englishman on his Grand Tour, a common figure of lascivious dissipation and transgressive desire, is an early model for the Gentleman's career in libertinism. This Englishman is also a "fop," as defined by Thomas A. King, who, obsessed with excess display, fails to display an adequate sense of privacy by sharing personal details involved in creating his own image.<sup>12</sup> The Gentleman is quick to critique the young Englishman, but nevertheless participates in his seductions, opting instead for a likewise amorous disposition without such *visual* display, more aptly described as a rake. According to Erin Mackie, "Representations of the fop, on the one hand, record a precious, narcissistic, affectedly refined sort of bad masculinity, or 'queerness'; those of the rake, on the other hand, portray a ruthless, sometimes violent, predatory, dangerously antisocial sort." While the fop is mocked for his excess display, the rake is valued for his performance, deriving prestige from nostalgic fantasies of a time when this form of masculinity was authorized.<sup>13</sup> The narrator's first adventure ends in

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<sup>12</sup> Thomas A. King, *The Gendering of Men, 1600-1750*, v. 1, *The English Phallus* (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 2004), 234.

<sup>13</sup> Erin Mackie, *Rakes, Highwaymen, and Pirates: The Making of the Modern Gentleman in the Eighteenth Century* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 2009), 35-8, 44.

his first conquest, when, in a humorous turn, a lady the Englishman pursues is more interested in the Gentleman himself. The young men's sexual transgressions are ultimately punished when the Englishman is caught with a kettle-drummer's wife and is forced to flee the country to avoid prosecution, leading to the arrest of the Gentleman instead (16-8). Thus, in Germany, the patriarchy punishes young men's bravado, protecting marriages by disciplining those that prey upon it.

Travel encourages the exercise of masculine sexual desire, which intrudes on the private space of the marriage bed, but the novel describes these misdeeds with a playful tone that belies the seriousness of the offenses. The suggestion is that the Gentleman's sexual transgressions are merely enjoyable antics "of both a public and private nature" (as in the novel's full title) that result from his bravado, a not-so-subtle means to gain prestige as a rake. According to Karen Harvey, the polite gentleman, "in contrast to the libertine, strove for restraint," so the title "Gentleman" contradicts the protagonist's willingness to expose his sexual behavior publicly, making a mockery of the mannered gentleman's authorized young masculinity.<sup>14</sup> Thus, though the *Memoirs* portrays these young men as public chaff whose flaunting of illicit behavior causes chaos, the Gentleman counter-intuitively seems proud of his youthful reveries. By letting the Englishman loose in his home country, Germany, and then letting the unprincipled and incompletely educated Gentleman loose in India, the *Memoirs* implies that travel provides a means by which Britain can relieve itself of such men and their destructive desires while maintaining its patriarchal institutions and the status quo.

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<sup>14</sup> Karen Harvey, "The History of Masculinity, Circa 1650-1800," *Journal of British Studies*, vol. 44 no.2 (April 2005), 302.

Though we might expect Indian families in the novel to suffer from the invasion of these young men's very public desire, it is instead absorbed by India without much comment or punishment because of a sense that, in the Muslim seraglio and the Gentoo practice of sati, marriage has already been monstrously deformed, at least, according to European standards. The rake's offenses pale in comparison to a type he encounters in India, the Muslim tyrant, exemplified by the nawab, Meer Cossim (Kasim Ali Khan), who was appointed by the EIC:

[Meer Cossim] began his reign in such a manner, that his subjects had no reason to form great hopes of clemency. Like most other tyrants, he exacted exorbitant taxes from the people, that they could not really pay them; and because they would not comply with conditions utterly impossible to fulfil [sic], the men were severely whipped and put into irons, while their daughters were taken into the Nabob's seraglio. The old women were made slaves, and obliged to be witness to the prostitution of their daughters; for the Nabob had no less than five hundred of these girls confined in the seraglio, and all the handsomest that can be procured. (119)

The nawab's violations go far beyond the rake's: the latter focuses his predatory sexuality, however publicly, on one woman in a given moment, but the former violently demands all women for all time, bringing his own orgiastic excess into the public sphere and defending it with the might of his army. While the rake uses existing patriarchal institutions that limit excess to accrue prestige, the nawab's masculinity is predicated on the excess of power, uniquely enabled by Mughal governing institutions. According to the novel, what in Europe is a corrective patriarchy is in India institutionalized public rape.

Though we might expect the Gentleman to be disgusted by the nawab's sexual excess, we find that he is instead rather jealous. When he tries to save a beautiful young girl from Meer Cossim's seraglio, the nawab's soldiers thwart his plan and seize her. The Gentleman then dissolves into a funk because the nawab "had taken [the Gentleman's] Jewel, in whose favor [he] had ventured [his] life" (125). His objection is not to her sexual enslavement in the seraglio, but

rather that “his” girl was forcibly “taken into the seraglio, where none but women were permitted to speak to her” (124). Masculine competition for sex, that is, jealousy, creates strife among the men. When the nawab gives him “letters of power up the country, to buy girls superior at least to those whom [he] had lost” (125-6), he forgets his “Jewel” because he “wanted to make presents of slaves to some English and French Ladies, with whom [he] had been some time acquainted” (126). Thus, the prospect of sexual remuneration with a slave or possibly a conquest among European ladies relieves his outrage. In India, in the absence of a punitive European patriarchy, young men are left to police one another, but do so imperfectly.

At the Gentleman’s university, a culture dominated by young men, a punitive European patriarchy is likewise absent, but masculine competition restricts sex to a certain degree. Before he goes to his university, a young woman, Miss Spenceb, falls in love with him. In order to facilitate their “romance,” he and his friend Standby contrive to dress her as a young boy and keep her in their apartment at the university.<sup>15</sup> This arrangement resembles the beginnings of a seraglio: the Gentleman here “keeps” a woman for sexual purposes, but, of course, it doesn’t match the orgiastic excess of Meer Cossim’s seraglio. Their scheme is foiled, however, by the jealousy of other men; Standby attempts to rape Miss Spenceb, and, when “the [other] students got notice of the affair,” they call up to the Gentleman’s apartment, “There is a fellow who keeps his play-thing to himself, and won’t admit his friend to share” (34). The other men object to his refusal to circulate the woman on the assumption that the Gentleman attempts to “hoard” her sexual favors to himself, as if Miss Spenceb’s body is a commodity that would be bedded by other men had the Gentleman not kept her locked up. Thus, masculine sexual competition in this

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<sup>15</sup> When he first meets his friend, the narrator calls his friend “Stanley” (5) but later calls him “Standby” (22), perhaps as a not-so-subtle intimation of his friendship in the pun “stand by,” which is ironic, considering that Standby soon betrays him.

novel is both significant and, predictably, extremely misogynistic. The Gentleman is forced to send her away, suggesting that even the initial stages of establishing a seraglio are difficult to maintain due to sexual competition among young European men of comparable status. Like a capitalistic market, the system corrects itself, given that all players express relatively equal powers in the pursuit of women.

Not so in India, where, though the Mir Cossim dominates the sexual market in Calcutta, the Gentleman finds little sexual competition elsewhere because he is European, and, in fact, he finds allies in his sexual predations. The Gentleman's desire for a seraglio becomes a reality when he befriends a surgeon, who, because he is in the EIC's service, is most likely British, though his nationality isn't stated explicitly.<sup>16</sup> The surgeon "was debauched in his morals, and he left nothing undone to keep [the Gentleman] as bad as himself, for he kept a seraglio of women consisting of no less than sixteen in number, and at the same time built one for [the Gentleman], finished in the most elegant manner" (143). The Gentleman participates in the surgeon's schemes:

[The surgeon] was one of the drollest fellows I ever met with, and extremely fat, but for all that he often took long walks into the country, among the cottagers, and, if he found men out of the way, he was sure to cuckold them. In many of these excursions, he took me along with him, and it was our constant practice to pick up as many black women as we could find, whom we took home in our carriages to our lodgings. (143)

The phrase "pick up" recalls the gentleman's description of a German impressment gang, which convinces young men to go to India by telling them "that gold is scattered in such plenty, that they have no more to do than stoop and pick it up" (55). Though the novel shows that gold

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<sup>16</sup> Malhotra mistakenly describes the surgeon as Danish. (Malhotra, 150). Though the Gentleman meets the surgeon at the Danish settlement of "Cossimbuzar," the surgeon works for "the Company" (143). Also, given that the army fights Meer Cossim and both Cossimbuzar and the army are within the EIC territories in Bengal, it is clear that "the Company" is, in fact, the British East India Company.

cannot be readily “picked up” in India, Indian women can be, indicating that they are more attracted to European men than to their Indian husbands. In this sense, India is a land of plenty for young European rakes. In this novel, though the nawab’s power tips the scale in his own favor to a great degree, the European’s status, knowledge, and riches in India allows him access to more women than he could otherwise accumulate in the capitalistic, largely self-regulating, and “fair” market of Europe. The surgeon is punished only for his cruelty to his Indian servants, carried out by the Gentleman himself: The Gentleman employs some “stout black fellows with drawn sword” to appear at his bedside to frighten him into believing “that he was reduced from a petty tyrant to that of a prisoner” (145), but this causes him to lash out against his servants. Whereas in Germany, the ruling forces discipline the Gentleman and the Englishman with imprisonment and banishment respectively, the surgeon is merely the victim of a prank, and the Indians suffer for it.

In the *Memoirs*’ portrayal of India, where excessive desire is institutionalized by nawabs, and where the greed of the EIC authorizes the nawab’s excesses, European and Mughal men, both foreigners that have settled in and attained power over India, are sometimes allies in exploitation. After finding himself lost from his ship in an ill-fated attempt at trade mercantilism and a dangerous run-in with a tiger, the Gentleman is invited into a hermit’s cave, which is comfortably arrayed and protected from incursions by wild animals. In a candid moment, the hermit reveals that he is really a Muslim who only pretends to be a Hindu holy man. When some women “of a brownish complexion, with flat noses, but in many respects not altogether disagreeable” (192) approach the cave, the hermit asks the Gentleman to hide. The Gentleman observes:

The mistress told the hermit that she was extremely unhappy because she had no children, and for that reason she had brought him these presents, in order to have

the opportunity of kissing his privy parts, not doubting but such an experiment would make her a joyful mother. Such are the perverted notions the women in that part of the world imbibe in their early youth, and they are similar to what the vulgar in Europe entertain concerning the doctrine of witchcraft. (192-3)

In describing the sexual act of kissing the hermit's "privy parts," the Gentleman equates the elevated of India, the presumably wealthy Indian lady, to the ignorant of Europe. The Gentleman goes on to note, "The Hermit, who was as artful as a Jesuit, told her, that if she had brought two goats instead of one, she would have had two children, viz. a boy and a girl, but as she only brought one, so she would only have a girl" (193). The Gentleman goes on to describe the ritualistic kissing of "privy parts" as similar to the "Popish Devotee" kissing "the rotten bones that are constantly dug up from the tombs of Rome" in that they both "tend towards promoting idolatry" (195), applying anti-Catholic prejudice to his judgment of native Indian ritual.<sup>17</sup> Clearly, Gento women in this novel are easily exploitable for the resourceful and unbiased outsider.

Predictably, the Gentleman participates in the hermit's sexual exploitation. The Hermit tells the woman that she must send her "waiting maid" to him for a few days, and, when the young woman arrives, the Gentleman only says, "but what we did in that time can be no ways entertaining to the reader, and therefore I shall only observe in this place, that my Hermit became even fonder of me than ever" (195-6). The Gentleman even considers adopting the Hermit's lifestyle due to the "generosity" and "kindness" the Hermit shows him (205). The hermit's scheme is foiled, however, when we see the consequences of his actions:

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<sup>17</sup> According to Ashok Malhotra, *The Indian Adventurer* capitalizes on anti-Catholic discourses and Catholicism's conflation with pornography to reflect Brahmins' corruption. He describes *The Indian Adventurer* as a "tempered assault on conventional morality" and Protestantism in the novel as more amenable to Enlightenment discourses of empiricism (Malhotra, 149.) We find a similar anti-Catholic sentiment in Helenus Scott's *Adventures of a Rupee*, in which Hindu Bramins cheat people "like Catholic monks." Helenus Scott, *The Adventures of a Rupee. Wherein Are Interspersed Various Anecdotes Asiatic and European* (London: J. Murray, 1782), 11.



“You remember (said [the Hermit]) that when [the Gentoo woman] came here to offer her devotions to the god priapism, I treated her in the most courteous manner, not doubting but I should see her again. A few days ago she came again to this cave, and told me that the gods must have committed a mistake, for the maid whom she brought along with her, had proved with child instead. I know not how such an accident should happen, and if it is true, then I am afraid I shall lose my credit by it, which I have so long preserved inviolate.”

I told him, that in order to prevent the gods from making any mistakes, he should have kept the mistress two or three days in place of the maid, and then there would not have been the least doubt of a pregnancy taking place in regular time. (213-4)

Once again, the man’s punishment for sexual transgression is light and carried out independent of any notable patriarchy. The Gentleman’s “bit of raillery” (214) here indicates his casual disregard for the Indian serving girl, especially given that the Gentleman may have caused the pregnancy himself. Rather, the Gentleman leaves within the hour, never to see the Hermit or the maid again, free of penalty and culpability. Rather than condemning the immorality he finds among men in India, the Gentleman tends to revel in it, foregoing what could be a notable critique of empire in order to indulge in sexual adventures. This subject position, however, proves ideal for the novel’s articulations of European masculine sexual fantasies, implicating the earliest of the Anglo-Indian novel genre in the toleration of sexual transgression.

### The Rescue Fantasy

Though the *Memoirs* portrays India as a sexual utopia for European rakes, it can be a land of sexual terror to beautiful Indian women. Indeed, Meer Cossim’s seraglio is a locus for the institutionalization of slavery, rape, and prostitution for the most beautiful young girls (119). One man even drowns his wife and her attendants rather than let them be taken into the nawab’s seraglio (204). As a result, the novel uses sexual slavery in the seraglio as a means of incurring a sort of sentimental nausea, which justifies the Gentleman’s sexual exploitation as a welcome

alternative. Eastern sexual mores in this novel are therefore disgusting, and justifies the rake's disruptions. As I will demonstrate in this section, though the Gentleman objects to some Indian practices, the *Memoirs* shows women's subjection on the subcontinent as a boon for the European man by giving him a pretext by which to impose on Eastern domestic spaces such as the seraglio. Such a scheme allegorically asserts the most simplistic of moral justifications for empire. As Gayatri Spivak pertinently summarized, "White men are saving brown women from brown men."<sup>18</sup>

When residing in a room whose window adjoins the neighboring palace, the Gentleman gains access to a Muslim seraglio, a forbidden Eastern domestic space characterized by both sexual excess and Oriental tyranny. The Gentleman takes the opportunity to seduce his neighbor's young wife, later named Calivaginda, by playing some European and Indian tunes on his German flute (160) and performing some common novelistic seduction:

I told her that nothing in the world could give me more pleasure, than to see as often as possible, a lady so handsome as herself. She made me a low bow, and at the same time darted such a look, as struck me to the heart; like Cupid's darts I read love in her eyes, for they sparkled with desire the most expressive... I was so much taken up with the impression her beauty had made upon me, that I had not been able to close my eyes the whole night; nor had I so much as tasted any victuals. It was the same for her, as she told me; for she could not forget the enchanting sound of the music, with which I had entertained her. (161)

The Gentleman uses the language of European literary sentiment to describe their romance: the Indian beauty's "voice is the language of her heart" so that she speaks "in the language of love" (163). Accordingly, the Gentleman plays the part of the sentimental lover, for, when she asks if he is manipulating her, he says, "I am dying of love... and you can only preserve my life, by admitting of my addresses, and giving me leave in the raptures of my heart to call you mine"

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<sup>18</sup> Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, "Can the Subaltern Speak?" *Colonial Discourse and Post-Colonial Theory: A Reader*, eds. Patrick Williams and Laura Chrisman (Hemel Hempstead: Harvester, 1993), 93.

(164). Thus, as Mackie notes, the rake persona is both interesting and justifiable in his performative mastery.<sup>19</sup> In this sense, his European experience in romance aids in his seduction, for, though he tells Calivaginda that he felt as deeply for her as she tells him with “sincerity” (164) that she feels for him, he never tells the reader that his feeling is genuine. European learning and culture are thus very useful in manipulating this Indian woman:

“But what signifies that to me, (said she) for I am told that the women in your country are much handsomer and beautiful than here.” I knew that she did not speak as she thought; for it is utterly inconsistent with the character of women to deprecate their own charms; let their deformity either by nature or accident be ever so great, yet still they cannot endure to hear another represented handsomer than themselves. (162)

Her apartment is “a part of the house into which the merchant her husband never came; for the great Moormen, when they want their wives, they send a message by one of their slaves, desiring them to wait on them in another part of the house” (167).<sup>20</sup> Instead, her husband leaves only an inept old woman to keep her from other men. Their relationship is consummated, for, one evening, he enters her apartment by the window, “and there [they were] as intimate as [they] could wish” (167). In this novel, the relatively oppressive institution of the seraglio thus makes lonely women easy prey for an observant and intelligent European rake.

In this episode, however, European machinations of “modern” sentiment not only undermine Oriental tyranny, but also place the Indian woman in danger. In a letter to the Gentleman, Calivaginda complains, “The rule of matrimony are so strick [sic] in this country, that had Gottam Mahomet my husband, known that I was along with you, I would have been put to death” (166). Though the Gentleman affects sympathy for her situation, he capitalizes on her

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<sup>19</sup> Mackie, 35-6.

<sup>20</sup> Note that the pagination is off in the original.

close confinement until they are nearly found out, when the passion he engenders causes her to come to him through the gap between their windows “in too great a hurry” (167), and she falls into the river far below. Doubting “not that she was drowned” (167), the Gentleman recovers her in a boat, but she is “afraid to go along with [him] to the castle, least [sic] any person should see her” (168). Calivaginda’s credulous husband believes that she had merely fallen asleep while reading at her window and fell, and he rewards the Gentleman with valuable presents for “saving her life” (168). Thus, though the Indian woman nearly loses her life, the European man is rewarded for his cleverness, and the Gentleman never sees her again, freeing him to pursue other romances.

In this novel, Spivak’s famous allegory of white men saving brown women from brown men is not necessarily a justification for empire so much as an explanation for Indian women’s cleaving to European men. The British “rescue fantasy” is a vindication for miscegenation, a defense of men who take on Indian mistresses or wives. As Freud notes in his description of such fantasies, “The man is convinced that [the woman he loves] is in need of him, that without him, she would lose all moral control and rapidly sink to a lamentable level.”<sup>21</sup> The imperial rescue fantasy is therefore most clearly expressed in literary articulations of British interruptions of sati. In this novel, the Gentleman justifies his “rescue” by claiming that his measured morality and freedom from superstition are highly desirable to Indian women, a middle ground between Muslim men’s institutionalized rape in the seraglio described above and Gentoo men’s callous ritualism in the practice of widow burning, described here:

The Bramins [sic], that is, the priests of the East Indies, have inculcated it as a doctrine, that she who is not willing to be burned alive with the dead body of her husband is not fit to be a member of the society, so she is turned out of the family,

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<sup>21</sup> Sigmund Freud, “A Special Type of Choice of Object Made by Men” in *The Freud Reader*, ed. Peter Gay (New York: Norton, 1989), 389.

and obliged either to be a slave or a prostitute. A most shocking instance of how far men will proceed in wickedness, when they have once deviated from the truth. (98)

The Gentleman recruits two “well armed” Frenchmen, and, given that “the inhabitants being mostly Gentoos, who will not fight, [they] did not doubt but three Europeans, properly armed, would put them all to flight, nor will they attempt to rescue a woman after a European, or any person who is not of their religion, has touched her hand” (99). Rather, the Gentoos’ violence is directed toward the woman:

A parcel of inhabitants, vile fellows, whom they employ to hang malefactors attended with clubs in their hands: and the reason they do so is, that if a woman should attempt to make her escape, they are to bring her back to the fire; but they are such cowardly fellows, that few need to be afraid of them. When the wood is kindled, if the woman seeks to escape, they knock her down, and keep her fixed to the bed with sticks. (102)

The Gentleman’s not-so-subtle flexing indicates European men’s heroic potency by comparison to the Gentoos’ cowardly weakness, and the Gentoos’ cruelty towards the woman functions as a justification for the Gentleman to use violence against them. The novel uses this dynamic to explain this Indian woman’s desire for the brave European man:

In coming round the bed for the first time, she saw me, and fixed her eyes upon me in the most wishful manner, as if desirous that I would save her. At that instant I thought her in my arms, while my two Europeans, and my other servants, prevented anyone from following me. My carriage or palanquin was ready at a little distance, and when I told her that she should be treated with every mark of respect, she seemed contented, declaring that she was willing to put herself into my protection. (102-3)

Despite his apparent selfless heroism, however, the Gentleman describes the widow as “extremely pretty, and only about seventeen years of age” (98), clearly indicating that the Gentleman is also motivated by his sexual desire.

Spivak's deliberately simplistic phrase, "White men are saving brown women from brown men," is particularly apt here, given the Gentleman's primal, simpleminded motivations.<sup>22</sup>

The Gentleman's potency is, however, potentially matched by that of the Frenchmen and Moormen assisting him:

Upon that I placed her on my palanquin, and walked on foot behind it, followed by the two Europeans, and the Moormen, my servants, whom I took care to make as chearful [sic] as possible, by giving them plenty of liquor. I humored them lest they should take away my prize. However, the next morning, when I got up, I found that the Europeans, and two of my Moormen, had deserted, and taking with them all they could lay hold of. (103)

The lawlessness that facilitates his heroism brings with it the threat of attack, presenting a description of India that is comparable to the self-reliant hyper-masculinity in contemporary American fantasies of the "Wild West." Here, the Frenchmen and Moormen exhibit bravado without morality, taking advantage of India's lawlessness and their own relative potency to indulge their desires, thereby suggesting the Gentleman deserves the "prize" by comparison to the other "brave" men. The distinction between the Gentleman and the Frenchmen is important here not only because it follows from the novel's ongoing anti-Catholic remarks, but also because it shows that the novel differentiates the protagonist's gentility from previous notions of British masculinity derived from French courtliness. As Michèle Cohen observes, though in the seventeenth century the British derived the rake persona from impressions of French aristocracy, they sought to dissociate British rakes from the French in the eighteenth century.<sup>23</sup> The British victory in the Seven-Years War settled questions of colonial domain in India between the French

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<sup>22</sup> Spivak, 93.

<sup>23</sup> For a discussion of the importance French courtliness as a model and foil for British masculinity, see Michèle Cohen, *Fashioning Masculinity: National Identity and Language in the Eighteenth Century* (London: Routledge 1996).

and British, but here, sexual domain continues to be contested. Though the Gentleman would seem to be left destitute, having paid for his “prize” by losing all his possessions, “the first place [they] came to, the lady sold her bracelets set with diamonds, pearls, and emeralds for fifteen hundred rupees, with some of which she bought fashionable cloaths [sic] in the European taste, according to the directions I had given her” (103-4), “Westernizing” her appearance. As Felicity A. Nussbaum notes, the Gentleman’s “rescues” thus have a commercial aspect, and the Gentleman excuses his own exploitative sexuality with cultural superiority.<sup>24</sup>

Teltscher describes sati as the exception to the English representation of Hindu women as sexual objects in the preceding century: “As an erasure of the widow’s sexuality, sati bears a distant affinity with the ideal life of chastity and fidelity prescribed for (though rarely practised by) seventeenth-century English widows.”<sup>25</sup> We can contrast seventeenth-century impressions of sati to an eighteenth-century description of Job Charnock, the supposed founder of Calcutta:

This Charnock was more absolute than a Rajah and treated the poor ignorant natives with great severity. But, going one day with his soldiers to see a young widow burn herself with her deceased husband, as was the custom of the country, he was so moved with compassion, and captivated with her beauty, that he sent his men to take her away by force, and conducted her to his own lodgings. They lived happily together many years, and when she died he built her a tomb, and on the anniversary day of her death every year, sacrificed a cock according to the pagan idolatry, to which she had converted him.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> Felicity A. Nussbaum, *Torrid Zones: Maternity, Sexuality, and Empire in Eighteenth-Century English Narratives* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1995), 169-70.

<sup>25</sup> Kate Teltscher, *India Inscribed: European and British Writing on India, 1600-1800* (New York: Oxford UP, 1995), 51-67. Teltscher traces the origin of the Charnock myth to Alexander Hamilton’s *A New Account of the East Indies* (1727).

<sup>26</sup> *The Gentleman's Magazine*, no. 27 1757, p. 307. Note that, according to the *Oxford DNB*, Job Charnock married his Indian mistress, but did not necessarily save her from sati or convert to her religion. I. B. Watson, ‘Charnock, Job (c.1630–1693)’, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford UP, last modified 2004, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/5169>.

Charnock's intervention in sati causes his reform and the creation of a family, exchanging public cruelty for private harmony. Rather than a seventeenth-century model for ideal domestic obedience, sati, both in this novel and in this account of Charnock, is a publicly attempted erasure of domestic possibility, destroying the woman's body to forbid what we might call her "recirculation." In this novel, eighteenth-century moral sentiment acts as a motivation and justification for the application of force, and it implicitly authorizes European men's sexual desire in India.

The widow and the Gentleman live together for some time, but, upon inviting an English captain and his family to dine, her presence becomes socially disastrous:

...and although [the widow] behaved in general very well, yet I could see that her jealousy took fire, when she saw me sit in company with another woman. I told her that it was an established custom among strangers, and after dinner good manners induced me to kiss the young Lady, who had come to visit me with her parents, but my mistress flew into a violent passion, that the company took their leave of me, very much disquieted at her behavior. (138-9)

The primal nature of the sati's jealousy reflects the Gentleman's primal motivations in rescuing her, but her behavior conflicts with the English middling-class formal space of the dinner party. Unable to conform to Protestant society, she is convinced by the captain's wife to convert to Catholicism and marry a sergeant, who leaves her over 15,000 pounds upon his death (139-40). Thus, the novel attempts to justify the Gentleman's betrayal by granting her an authorized widowhood and a private independence. Given that the Gentleman equates Catholicism to Gentoism in his encounter with the hermit, however, the Gentleman has essentially rescued the woman from the Gentoos' violent superstition only to deliver her to Catholic superstition when she cannot be adequately "Westernized." Therefore, for all its rationalizations, the novel nonetheless fails to sufficiently justify the rake's adventures in India upon close consideration.



## Reform and Marriage

The Gentleman's reform possibly comes when he falls in love for the first time. At the French settlement of Chandernagor, the Gentleman provides "assistance" to a number of the widows whose husbands died in the war, for, as he notes, "most of them were extremely agreeable, both in persons and manners" (225). There, he befriends a wealthy French widow who raised two English-born orphans, and, even though "they were both brought up in the Roman catholick [sic] religion," he finds that "the youngest of the two, whose name was Julia was extremely handsome." Whereas the Gentleman qualifies Calivaginda's beauty with the phrase "although her complexion was dark" (162), Julia is perfect:

She was seventeen years of age, and had a large share of wit, accompanied with a most unaffected modesty; she was of middle size, with a fine shape, and beautiful dark eyes, with fine brown hair. Her skin was so extremely white, that the fine blew veins gave it a most beautiful appearance, so as if nature had contrived how to frame so lovely an object. The whiteness of her well set teeth, contributed toward displaying the natural crimson of her cheeks; her arms were as round, as if they had been turned by the hand of the most ingenious artist, her fingers were of a proportionable size, and she had a foot the most beautiful I ever beheld. (228-9)

Leaving aside the clumsy blazon, the Gentleman describes her as if she were a Greek marble statue, "turned by the hand of an ingenious artist" and "extremely white," highlighting her European origin. Ironically, it is in India where he seems to encounter a pure articulation of European beauty, so pure, in fact, that it seems to turn him from his libertinism. The Gentleman tells us, "This was the first time that I ever knew love in all its tenderness, for whatever might have been my enjoyments before, I was an utter stranger to those delights that arise from congenial hearts" (235). He also seems to give over his desire for a justified form of Meer Cossim's sexual excess, noting, "I could have laid all my treasure at her feet, had I been in possession of the riches of the Nabob" (229), and, "the happiness I enjoyed in her company,

seemed to me far superior to all those delights that Mahomet has promised to his followers in Heaven” (231), that is, the promise of virgins.

Here, the novel takes a distinctive turn, for it is no longer the young man who threatens families, but the adoptive parents who avert domestic bliss. Their relationship is never assuredly consummated, as their meetings are soon blocked by her guardian, though the Gentleman attributes the girl’s eventual reticence to meet with him “to motives of religion” (234), even more anti-Catholic sentiment. She consorts with him because she believes him to be English (230) due to the Gentleman’s proficiency with English. Her Catholicism thus provides a pretext for another potential rescue fantasy. Indeed, his passion arises to the point that he is certain he would carry “her off and [marry] her.” He refrains, however, and appears to undergo a sudden transition to maturity, for it is only toward the end of the novel that the Gentleman finally exhibits regret: “I can assure the reader that all the unlawful pleasures I ever yet was engaged in, proved bitter to me in the end. I may justly say, that they carried along with them a sting, and always became their own punishment. For as virtue has its reward, so has vice its deserts” (222). Thus, the Gentleman’s genuine love results in his coming-of-age. We do see a possibility for the continuation of the relationship by the end of the volume, for, even though he is called away to administer to the British army, he continues to correspond with her and waits for an opportunity so that he can “support her in a way becoming of her rank” (236-7). We can only presume that, had there been a second volume to this novel, we might be able to see the fruits of his reform. Thus, as in many eighteenth-century fictions, the rake undergoes reform by the end, establishing an authorized masculinity after scandalous violations of virtue and chastity.

To conclude, the *Memoirs*, the first Anglo-Indian novel, is exceptionally concerned with authorizing the presence of the European rake in India, but not with any of the larger political

issues addressed in the ameliorative imperialists' novels to come. As such, travel to India can be read as a solution to the threat that licentious young men represent to European families. This preoccupation with young men's morality in India reappears in the other Anglo-Indian novels written by men in this period. In Helenus Scott's *Adventures of a Rupee* (1782), for example, an older Englishman offers this advice when his son sets off for India:

My son, you now go to a land where, of all others, your good qualities may be of most use, and where your bad will have the most room to do mischief. The laws, at such a distance from the fountain of government, cannot be supposed to be executed with such regularity as in this country. However pure the constitution may be, the executive parts must often be trusted to interested individuals, who are little subject to the detection or controul of a superior power... I believe you will never make the mere circumstances of colour, a reason for treating your fellow creatures with injustice, or with rigour... Your particular province is to protect the trade of your country, against the insults of European powers, or of the Indian nations, who, ignorant of the blessings that commerce diffuses, even to themselves, are often disposed to interrupt its equitable course. The prosperity therefore of trade, is what you are to have in view, not the extension of settlement, and much less your private advantage. Your profits will be sufficient for your wants, and if your good behavior allows you to advance to a high rank, they may even enable you to return to your country with honourable wealth. In this station in India, my son, you may enjoy the honor of rectifying particular abuses; you may be blessed by those nations, that have so often cursed our rapacity; and the heart of your old father may beat high with the idea of having given life to a benefactor of mankind.<sup>27</sup>

The old man thus attempts to turn the young man's inordinate power in India into a force for good. In the only Anglo-Indian novel most likely written by an Englishman in the forty-year period following *Adventures of a Rupee*, *The Life and Travels of James Tudor Owen* (1801), Englishwomen are remarkably absent abroad.<sup>28</sup> Having been impressed into the EIC's service, Owen is forced to participate in a war against India's "copper-coloured natives, who, being worn

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<sup>27</sup> Helenus Scott, *The Adventures of a Rupee. Wherein Are Interspersed Various Anecdotes Asiatic and European* (London: J. Murray, 1782), 51-4.

<sup>28</sup> Though written as if it were a true account, the unlikelihood of its plot, which includes an improbable inheritance, leads most scholars who are familiar with the text to believe it fictional.

out with the rapacity and extortion of their white oppressors, had dared to unite in defence [sic] of themselves and their injured families.”<sup>29</sup> After his unit brutally attacks a village and slaughters every “man, woman, and child” before burning the village to the ground, he contrives to leave the army.<sup>30</sup> Still, in his continuing travels among Arab thieves and Native American warriors, he commits similar atrocities. Though he seems to indicate the necessity of some of his violence, he voluntarily enlists to fight in the American Revolutionary War against the Americans, demonstrating a remarkable lack of self-consciousness. These novels, however, differ markedly from the Anglo-Indian novels written by women to come, not only because these women’s novels are much more masterful by comparison, but also because, whereas the Gentleman seems to equate Indian and British women in his lust, women writers take pains to differentiate them. Also, as I discuss in my next chapter on Phebe Gibbes’ *Hartly House, Calcutta*, the presence of British women in India can be a means to reform young EIC officers.

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<sup>29</sup> *The Life and Travels of James Tudor Owen; who Amidst a variety of other Interesting Particulars, gives an account of his being in East Indian Campaign; and his Singular Adventures while among the Hindoos; as also his Voyage, Shipwreck, and Journey with a troop of Wild Roving Arabs over immense Burning Sands, and Trackless Desarts. He embarks from the Egyptian Shore for Ireland; and there, during the late War with America, gains an Ensigncy to go with the British Forces against that Country. Is Wounded in Battle, and taken by the Agiguans, a Warlike Nation inhabiting the Wilds of America in The Garland Library of Narratives of North American Indian Captivities* vol. 25, ed. Wilcomb E. Washburn (New York: Garland, 1977), 40. The title should suffice for a summary of the novella itself.

<sup>30</sup> Owen, 6-7.

Chapter 2: “Caresses are her orders, tears are her menaces:” Gender/Genre Colonization in Phebe Gibbes *Hartly House Calcutta* (1789)

*Has a good woman no influence over her husband? I answer, that that very simple virtue of submission, can be turned to good account. A man indeed bears rule over his wife’s person and conduct: his will is law. Providence, however, has provided her with a means to bear rule over his will. He governs by law; she by persuasion. Nor can her influence ever fail, if supported by sweetness of temper and zeal to make him happy. Rousseau says charmingly, “Her’s [sic] is a sovereignty founded on compliance and address: caresses are her orders, tears are her menaces. She governs in the family as a minister does in the state, procuring commands to be laid on her for doing what she inclines to do.*

-Lord Kames, reprinted in *The Calcutta Gazette*, 21 October 1784<sup>1</sup>

*[Mrs. Hastings] received me civilly and insisted on my staying dinner, which I had no inclination to refuse, but she seemed not to evince much sympathy when I slightly touched on the misfortunes which had befallen me; nay she even hinted that I had brought them on myself, by imprudently venturing on such an expedition out of mere curiosity.<sup>2</sup> Alas! Mrs. H— could not know what you are well acquainted with, that I undertook the journey with a view of preserving my husband from destruction, for had I not accompanied him, and in many instances restrained his extravagance and dissipated habits, he would never, never, I am convinced, have reached Bengal, but have fallen a wretched sacrifice to them on the way, or perhaps through the violence of his temper been involved in some dispute, which he was too ready to provoke.*

-Eliza Fay, 1780<sup>3</sup>

Eliza Fay and *The Calcutta Gazette* (citing Henry Home, Lord Kames’ *Loose Hints upon Education*, 1781) both suggest that British women are the means to control the lascivious, ill-tempered, uncultured, and uneducated British men that commentators such as Burke suggested were brutalizing Indians.<sup>4</sup> Wives presumably had the ability to control their husbands, protecting

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<sup>1</sup> “Extract from Lord Kaims’s [sic] Hints on Education,” *The Calcutta Gazette; or, Oriental Advertiser*, October 21, 1784.

<sup>2</sup> “Mrs. Hastings” here is Warren Hastings second wife, Anna Maria Appolonia Hastings. Hyder Ali, the king of Mysore, imprisoned Eliza Fay and her husband for three months in Calicut in 1779.

<sup>3</sup> Eliza Fay, *Original Letters from India* (1925), ed. Simon Winchester (New York: New York Review of Books, 2010), 175.

<sup>4</sup> See chapter 1 for my discussion of Burke’s objections to uneducated British young men in India.

these men from harm and preventing them from committing violence upon the Indians they command, allowing some women to attain a certain degree of their husbands' political agency. Fay's responsibility to "restrain" her husband's vices is also her impetus to travel, justifying her participation in the voyage, a journey usually undertaken only by men. Her sense of moral duty differentiates her from an earlier woman travel writer, Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, who famously travelled to the Orient to satisfy the "mere curiosity" that Mrs. Hastings ascribes to Fay.<sup>5</sup> Her sense of responsibility indicates a resolve to women's travel, a supposition that she was useful to empire at large. Unfortunately, Fay's presence was not enough to keep her husband from wrongdoing, as he ultimately fathered an illegitimate child by an Indian woman, destroying their marriage. Nevertheless, her experiences encouraged her to risk three returns to India to pursue her own business prospects.

Sophia Goldborne, the protagonist and only letter writer in Phebe Gibbes' epistolary novel, *Hartly House, Calcutta: A Novel of the Days of Warren Hastings* (1789), likewise travels to India to support a man, her father. Like Fay, Sophia claims that she doesn't travel for "the wild curiosity of seeing foreign sights," but rather so that "somewhat of [her] suggesting" might be "salutary" to prolong her father's "valued life," taking responsibility for his well-being in the absence of her deceased mother.<sup>6</sup> Though her father requires less supervision than Fay's husband, Sophia's purpose in travel is to preserve her remaining family. By the end of the novel, Sophia marries an EIC officer, Edmund Doyly, and encourages her father to marry his intended, Mrs. D—, alongside her, reconstituting her dwindling family by replacing her deceased mother

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<sup>5</sup> See Lady Mary Wortley Montagu's *The Turkish Embassy Letters* (1763).

<sup>6</sup> Phebe Gibbes, *Hartly House, Calcutta*, ed. Michael J. Franklin (New Delhi: Oxford UP, 2007), 5. Further references to this edition will appear parenthetically in the text.

and adding siblings and in-laws. Sophia's "vivacious"<sup>7</sup> letters recount her time in Calcutta to Arabella, her friend in England, presenting imaginative descriptions of both the British and Indians. In addition, the novel features a subplot in which Sophia takes it upon herself to learn sensibility from an unnamed Gentoo "Bramin"<sup>8</sup> and imparts these lessons to Doyly. In this as yet under-critiqued novel, we find not only an interesting piece for the study of the literature of empire, but also a significant development in the progress of the Anglo-Indian novel genre. In the previous chapter, I explored imperial masculine fantasies produced by libidinous and uneducated young men in C.W.'s *Memoirs of a Gentleman* (1774). Here I argue that *Hartly House, Calcutta* portrays a fantasy in which women critique and reform such men, dispossessing them of their ridiculous and dangerous fantasies of wealth and sex, thereby indirectly influencing the empire's peripheries. European fantasies portrayed in these early Anglo-Indian novels are therefore significantly gendered. This constitutes a profeminist ameliorative imperialism, justifying the presence and power of British women in India.

Both the Gentleman in the *Memoirs* and Sophia in *Hartly House* bring desires that mimic stereotypes of tyrannical Islamic greed and sexuality to India, but whereas the Gentleman succumbs to temptation, Sophia successfully resists it. Despite her virtuous intentions, however, she is often given to a vanity that threatens her chastity. As one of the few beautiful, unattached young British coquettes in India, her desire for romantic conquest at first produces dangerous jealousy among the men who vie for her hand. Her ability to charm men thus uncomfortably resembles the power that European men have over Indian women in the *Memoirs*. But she finds a

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<sup>7</sup> Mary Wollstonecraft, *Analytical Review*, v. 4 (1789): 149.

<sup>8</sup> Note Gibbes' spelling the word "Brahmin" as "Bramin." I use the word "Bramin" to refer to this character and "Brahmin" to refer to the caste.

means to control her vanity and coquetry by learning from her experiences in India. With her newfound self-control, she is able to restrain Doyly's potentially violent jealousy so that he becomes so gentle "that he will not hurt a butterfly, nor can he dispatch a troublesome musketto without a corresponding pang" (150). Sophia also applies influence rather than domination to exert power within her family without entirely disrupting patriarchal norms. In *Hartly House*, though India may be a place where young European men can be degenerate,<sup>9</sup> India can be a place where young British women can learn to exercise power responsibly.

I argue that, to Gibbes, a sense of responsibility to the men of Empire not only enabled women's political efficacy in India, but also authorized the female imagination as an effective guide to imperial manners for the Anglo-Indian novel genre. Sophia demonstrates that educated women of sentiment such as she have a positive or reformatory effect on British men abroad. This representation of the palliative effect of women's travel suggests a shift in the purposes of the Anglo-Indian novel from satisfying Enlightenment "curiosity" to achieving sentimental and moral reform among men in India. Whereas men continued to dominate reports and translations of Indian poetry, mythology, and history, women writers began to claim authority for imagining India in fiction. Consequently, with the publication of *Hartly House*, I suggest that the Anglo-Indian novel became something of a protofeminist form and, given that the vast majority of Anglo-Indian novels in this period were written by women, it remained so well into the nineteenth century. I also contest interpretations that suggest that Sophia's attitude towards race in the empire was uniquely progressive as some critics have argued. In short, I give credit where

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<sup>9</sup> As in the case of the EIC officer who commits murder and rape (157-8) or the young Englishman who loses his fortune gambling (149-50), young men in this novel are prone to becoming more evil in India without the influence of virtuous women.



credit is due: though this novel can be read as a well-written piece of protofeminist literature, it fails to render anything more progressive than ameliorative imperialism.

With the advent of women writing fictions of India, the publication of Gibbes' *Hartly House*, the genre took a decidedly more professional and masterful turn, given that Gibbes' novel is so much better written than the novels by men that preceded it.

### Defining Women in India: "Country born," "Nabobess," and Filial Responsibility

Much has been made of Sophia's first reaction to Calcutta: "My foolish heart was in the bugero,<sup>10</sup> before my father, at the earnest solicitations of his friends, and a look of desire from me, assisted me to descend from the ship; but, when descended, my astonishment and delight so abundantly increased at each advanced step, that the European world faded before my eyes, and I became orientalis'd at all points" (7-8). Andrew Rudd, for example, claims that Sophia immediately integrates into Indian culture, but the death of the Bramin and her return to England restore her European identity so that she is "purged of her sympathetic immersion in the East."<sup>11</sup> Though a cursory examination of this statement might suggest that she undergoes a challenge to or a shift in her national identity, the next paragraph clarifies the statement: her party consisted of eight men and four women so that "it would be well worth any woman's while, who has a tolerable person, to make the voyage I have done, in order to enjoy unbounded homage" (8). Furthermore, that her "heart was in the bugero... at the earnest solicitations of [her father's] friends" and that merely her "look of desire" was enough to incur their service indicate her

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<sup>10</sup> A "bugero" is an Indian boat. Franklin's note, 161.

<sup>11</sup> Andrew Rudd, *Sympathy and India in British Literature, 1770-1830* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 104-5.

immersion involves her power over these men. “Orientalised,” in context, is therefore a circumlocution of the flattery she experiences among the British men in India. Thus, the statement is a playful commentary on the sexual dynamics of Calcutta’s society rather than a declaration of her own ambivalent or fluid nationality. Though many critics have cited this passage as a critical point in the novel’s commentary on complexion and culture in the empire, I argue that it is more of an indication of novel’s investment in the unique gender dynamics among the British at Calcutta. Sophia, by becoming “Orientalised,” indicates her status as an object of exotic spectacle in India, a young, unattached Englishwoman among British men abroad.

The sexual economy of British society at Calcutta is therefore central to the novel, perhaps more so than Sophia’s interactions with Gentoos, especially given that the Bramin is the only Gentoos to feature prominently in the novel. In fact, Sophia shows more interest in detailing the habits of “country-born” (11) ladies, mixed race women who have become a part of British society,<sup>12</sup> than her Indian servants, who barely register in her letters at all. While British society

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<sup>12</sup> I believe “country-born” in this novel refers to those with British fathers and Indian mothers, but many critics interpret it otherwise. Michael J. Franklin describes “country-born” women as those with European parents, but born in India, explaining that it only came to mean mixed-race later (Franklin’s note, *Hartly House*, 164). By contrast, Jemima Kindersley, a contemporary of Gibbes, describes “country-born” people as having European fathers, but so-called “Portuguese mothers,” so as to mask the identities of their Indian mothers. Jemima Kindersley, *Letters from the Island of Teneriffe, Brazil, the Cape of Good Hope, and the East Indies* (London: J. Nourse, 1777), 272. Given Sophia’s pains to distinguish the country-born ladies’ “dark complexions,” from Europeans’ “paleness and languor” which “told the country of [Sophia’s] birth” (118), I interpret “country-born” as code for mixed-race, though Sophia may be unaware of such a distinction. Though it was common for English people at home to refer to those who have travelled to India as dark-skinned, Mrs. D—’s “father and mother were both English, but she was born at Calcutta” (73), yet Sophia never calls her “country-born.”

Additionally, in this novel, we hear of “country-born” women, but not of “country-born” men. Kindersley comments:

“the [country-born] boys we seldom hear anything about; but the girls, who are sometimes born in wedlock, and sometimes not, as they are fairer than their mothers, are fond of being called English, French, &c.; and, if pretty, often marry to Europeans, who sometimes arise to be people of consequence; their children, being another remove from black do not like to have their descent remembered; and nothing is so great an affront as to class them amongst the Portuguese; although, from education and example, and perhaps from constitution, they often retain the indolence and cunning peculiar to the natives of this country.” (272)

European men’s desire and the value they place on beauty can therefore overcome limitations of race. Furthermore, though European men can bring mixed-race women into British society, European women cannot bring mixed-race

was certainly influenced by Indians, in the novel it remains largely distinct from Indian communities, and, as one whose concerns are largely within the British social and domestic spheres, Sophia rarely interacts with Indians outside of her and her friends' homes.<sup>13</sup> Even her relationship with the Bramin is unusual in that it results from an atypical attachment between her father and his "Sekar," but there is no indication that either Gentoo wishes to become part of British society at large (51).<sup>14</sup> Instead, Sophia and other middling class Englishwomen, appear to be insulated from much of India within the bubble of British society, a protection that seems to mitigate the dangers of travel.

The flattery they receive combines with the opulence of India to form a measured advocacy for women's travel to Calcutta. The novel begins with the telling exclamation, "The grave of thousands!" seeming to allude to her mother's death in India.<sup>15</sup> But Sophia here justifies her intent to brave dangers of India's climate, claiming instead that her mother's death resulted in an illness that originated in England. She also argues that India is a land of "exhaustless wealth,"

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men into British society due to a gendered stigma to miscegenation. It seems that mixed-race boys are either hidden away or quietly mix among Indians.

<sup>13</sup> I use "British society" in the singular to stress the exceptionalism implied by the word "society," according to Sophia. Though hers is the only British community that Sophia describes in this novel, she does hint at the presence of other British men in India who do not appear to belong to this society. The British murderer and rapist she describes at the end of the novel, for example, is not only execrable to Sophia, but also doesn't seem to belong within her circle. He does, however, perform evil among Indians, and Sophia suggests that such crimes are commonly committed by such British men in Indian communities (157-8). Sophia implies an interesting conflation between race and class. For a discussion of racializing internal spaces within the metropolis, see Saree Makdisi's recent work, *Making England Western: Occidentalism, Race, and Culture* (Chicago: Chicago UP, 2014).

<sup>14</sup> A "sircar" or "banya" is a sort of house-steward and keeper of books for British households. *Hartly House, Calcutta*, Franklin's note, 185-6. Sircars act as middle-men between the British and their Gentoo servants and are often regarded with contempt and distrust. Burke says of the banya: "They have subverted the first houses; totally ruined and undone the country; cheated and defrauded the revenue; and kept people in India under a miserable state of beggary; until something or other has relieved them from this servitude." *Speeches of the Managers and Counsel in the Trial of Warren Hastings*, ed. E.A. Bond (London: Longman, Brown, Green, Longmans, and Roberts, 1859), 26.

<sup>15</sup> Many critics read Sophia's mother's death as related to Gibbes' son's death in India. Here we find a curious inversion: rather than the son's death we begin with the mother's death.

(3) immediately outlining the novel's two competing characterizations of the subcontinent: it is a land of danger and riches, of dreadful suffering and exorbitant luxury. According to Sophia, Gentooservants are inexpensive and "seem created for the sole purpose and sole ambition of serving the Europeans" (24), and, "however low rated [she is] in England, [she is] a sovereign princess here" (137). Even so, Sophia mitigates her advocacy with warnings of India's harsh climate, which not only destroys beauty, but also threatens life (23). She acknowledges, "in the true faith of the European – the faith confirmed by all around [her] – that there is no climate more salubrious than Britain, no people more blessed – no days more pleasurable, or nights more tranquil than her temperate air bestows" (95). Hence, while proclaiming her wonder for India, she nevertheless maintains her nostalgia for England. Ultimately, the opulence, danger, and excitement of India, combined with the aforementioned sexual power over British men and the insular, but novel, British society in India, constitute an adventure for the young Englishwoman akin to the young Englishman's grand tour. Travel and adventure were more often masculine genres, but here, it is a young woman who embarks on a journey of self-discovery. Travel itself therefore entails a degree of gender experimentation for Sophia.

In this sense, *Hartly House* is similar to C.W.'s *Memoirs of a Gentleman* in that they both advocate travel to India by comparing it to the Englishman's grand tour in Europe.<sup>16</sup> While the *Memoirs* advertises the relative abundance of Indian women by contrast to European men, *Hartly House* advertises the relative abundance of British men by contrast to British women in India. Though we might expect British and mixed-race women to have to compete with Indian women for British men's attentions, Indian women are largely absent from *Hartly House*. In one instance in which Indian women do appear, Sophia observes that, while her own singing is highly

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<sup>16</sup> See chapter 1 for my discussion of *Memoirs of a Gentleman*.

regarded, the Indian “notch-girls” sing with “a jingling of unaccustomed sounds to [her] ears” that are “unintelligible” (26).<sup>17</sup> Rather, European women compete with country-born women in the Calcutta Theatre:

Several country-born ladies figured away in the boxes, and by the candle-light had absolutely the advantage of the Europeans; for their dark complexions and sparkling eyes gave them an appearance of animation and health, the Europeans had no pretensions to; and their persons are genteel, and their dress magnificent. Whereas, on the other hand (speaking of [herself] at least) paleness and languor told the country of [Sophia’s] birth, and were not to be concealed or compensated by all that polite negligence, or accomplished manners, could do. (118)

Of course, the very existence of mixed-race women implies a certain degree of miscegenation between British men and Indian women that Sophia, whether by intention or ignorance, seems to overlook. European gentlemen seem to pursue her in droves due to the scarcity of British women in India, rendering European women as metaphorical commodities, but Sophia turns this attention to her advantage. The relative freedom with which men court and flatter Sophia requires that she protect herself with “no-saying,” rebuffing men as a means to assert her power over her own body (32). Thus, Sophia perhaps naively or narcissistically advertises the relative social capital and power that British women, particularly herself, possess in India.

Whereas a young gentleman’s grand tour was largely a means by which he could supposedly become more worldly and sow his wild oats (with obvious sexual connotations), *Hartly House* suggests that the young gentlewoman’s travel can indulge her vanity and avarice, desires with which Sophia struggles. In her first letter, she declares, “This letter shall therefore be constituted the repository of a private vow I have entered into with myself, never to marry in Indostan, lest it should become difficult, at some future period, to ascertain, my genuine impulse for quitting the country of my birth; a vow, take notice, Arabella, I will not violate to be a

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<sup>17</sup> “Notch-girls” is an English term for Indian “nautch” dancing girls. Franklin’s note, 172.

nabobess” (5-6). Here, rather than refuting Mrs. Hastings accusation of travelling for “mere curiosity” as does Eliza Fay, she differentiates herself from another stereotype of women travelers, the so-called “fishing fleet,” women who travel to India to marry rich. Marriage in India therefore represents a threat to her responsibility toward her father, at least at the beginning of the novel, for she insinuates that pursuing marriage will distract her from the attention she believes her father needs.<sup>18</sup> Nevertheless, her narcissistic tendencies get the better of her. Even a cursory reading of Sophia’s attentions reveals that her sexuality is intimately tied up with her vanity: she obviously seeks out and revels in romantic conquest. Sophia repeatedly points out that British society in Calcutta routinely offers kindling to a young woman’s vanity: “The attention and court paid to me was astonishing; my smile was meaning, and my articulation melody: in a word, mirrors are almost useless things at Calcutta, and self-adoration idle; for your looks are reflected in the pleasure of the beholder, and your claims to first-rate distinction confessed by all who approach you” (22). *Hartly House* therefore implies that travelling due to filial devotion entails feminine morality, but indulging in vanity and greed is akin in delinquency to the young rake’s lasciviousness. In other words, I compare the contest between a young woman’s vanity and filial responsibility to the contest between the masculine constructs, the “gentleman” and the “rake,” that I have discussed in chapter one.

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<sup>18</sup> Sophia never uses the term “fishing fleet” herself. Instead, she uses the term “nabobess” to describe fortune-hunting women in India. Likewise, I use the term “nabobess” in this chapter to refer to such fortune-hunters. The EIC and the British government periodically encouraged or funded women’s travel to the subcontinent, believing marriage to British women would have a reformatory effect on EIC officers. India developed a reputation as a place where plain or poor women, who otherwise couldn’t make a good match in England, could marry well. *The Fishing Fleet: Husband-Hunting in the Raj* (London: Weidenfield and Nicolson, 2012), 9. See also Joan Mickelson Gaughan, *The Incumberances: British Women in India 1615-1856* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2013), 103-16.

### Sophia's Bramin and Sterne's Bramine

Perhaps the most popular element of *Hartly House* among contemporary critics is the relationship between Sophia and the Gentoo man she calls "my Bramin." Michael J. Franklin reads this relationship as mutually romantic and therefore argues that *Hartly House* is racially and sexually transgressive: instead of the more common relationship between European men and Indian women, he contends that we see a unique relationship between a European woman and an Indian man. According to Franklin, their relationship is interrupted only by the Bramin's death, leaving Sophia to marry Doyly.<sup>19</sup> Likewise, Kathryn S. Freeman argues that Sophia's love for the Bramin is, in part, symptomatic of Gibbes' racial and sexual ambivalences, and the Bramin's death is necessary to reassert her British nationality.<sup>20</sup> But Franklin and Freeman overstate the relationship. According to Isobel Grundy, to say that Sophia settles for Doyly as second best to the Bramin is an exaggeration.<sup>21</sup> Indeed, she expresses romantic interest in Doyly even before the Bramin's death, as is evident from her heartache upon Doyly's leaving for England (102-4). Rather, as I argue in this section, the relationship is one-sided: the Bramin is attracted to her, and his desire threatens both their friendship and his body, making their relationship less racially transgressive than a comment on the dangers of vanity.

I also challenge critical readings that suggest this novel genders Gentooism. Franklin affirms a Saidian Orient/Occident binary by positing Sophia's Bramin as a feminine figure

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<sup>19</sup> Michael J. Franklin, "Radically Feminizing India: Phebe Gibbes's *Hartly House* (1789) and Sydney Owenson's *The Missionary: An Indian Tale* (1811)," in *Romantic Representations of British India*, ed. Michael J. Franklin (London Routledge, 2006), 156.

<sup>20</sup> Kathryn S. Freeman, "'She had eyes and chose me': Ambivalence and Miscegenation in Phebe Gibbes' *Hartly House, Calcutta* (1789)," *European Romantic Review*, 22:1 (2011), 35-47.

<sup>21</sup> Isobel Grundy, "'The barbarous character we give them': White Women Travelers Report on Other Races," *Studies in Eighteenth-Century Culture*, 22 (1992): 80.

against which she can experiment with gender.<sup>22</sup> Franklin's argument assumes that the Bramin's sensibility identifies him as feminine, but the association between sensibility and femininity was challenged by many women writers.<sup>23</sup> For example, in Sarah Scott's *The History of Sir George Ellison* (1766), the eponymous protagonist is both extremely sensible for his empathy with the less fortunate and very masculine in his patriarchal influence in his community. Recognizing this distinction, Grundy disputes this element of Saidian binarism, suggesting instead that eighteenth-century women writers such as Gibbes and Lady Mary Wortley Montagu recognized and contested the association between Eastern men and femininity.<sup>24</sup> In *Hartly House*, immoral men differ from morally flawed women in that the former are characterized by violence (like Mr. Emson) and the latter vanity (like Sophia). In contrast, both good men (Mr. Goldborne) and good women (Mrs. D—) are endowed with sensibility, suggesting sentiment is not gendered. Thus, as Grundy and other critics point out, among women writers like Gibbes, the East and eastern men were not consistently represented as feminine for their feelings.

Rather than regarding him as a feminized antithesis, Sophia intends to use the Bramin to educate and improve herself. Observing that the Gentoos live by their "Pythagorean tenets" that teach them "from their earliest infancy the lesson of kindness and benevolence," Sophia takes it

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<sup>22</sup> Franklin, "Radically Feminizing India," 156.

<sup>23</sup> Franklin cites Felicity A. Nussbaum earlier book, *Torrid Zones*, in which she attributes William Hodges's description of Indian men dressed in clothes that appear feminine as the "feminized binary against which Englishwomen can experiment with unorthodox femininity." Hodges' description, however, bears only a loose connection with *Hartly House*, especially considering that British men and women described Indian men in different ways (see my introduction). Felicity A. Nussbaum, *Torrid Zones: Maternity, Sexuality, and Empire in Eighteenth-Century English Narratives* (Baltimore: John Hopkins UP, 1995), 176-77. Nussbaum has clarified her position on the feminization of Indian men in her more recent piece, "British Women Write the East after 1750: Revisiting a 'Feminine Orient,'" in *British Women's Writing in the Long Eighteenth Century: Authorship, Politics, and History*, ed. Jennie Batchelor and Cora Kaplan (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005). She joins with Isobel Grundy to argue that the Orient was not uniformly gendered female, especially among women writers.

<sup>24</sup> Grundy, 75.



upon herself to learn “all possible intelligence of a people so peculiar, and so distinct from the rest of the world” (50). Before they first meet, she decides to contrive an introduction to a young Bramin, predicting that her “good dispositions would be cultivated and brought forward by such an acquaintance, and [her] bad ones corrected; and as celibacy is [the Brahmins’] engagement, the soul would be the only object of attachment and admiration.” Her goal is simply “to become an humble copy of [the Gentoos’] exemplary and beautiful simplicity” (50-1), an attempt to differentiate herself from the vanity and ostentation of her “nabobess” stereotype. Additionally, she uses him to resolve her grief for her mother and justify her care for her father: upon discussing the virtues of love, Sophia asks, “but what cure have you for the wounds your sensibility must receive by the dissolution of the tenderest, ties of friendship, the survival of your dearest connections?”<sup>25</sup> The Bramin simply replies, “We resolve every event... into the divine appointment, and dare not repine” (104). To Sophia, the Bramin thus offers a model for simplicity and a means to eschew her desires more than a means to kindle them.

In their efforts to describe miscegenation in her relationship with the Bramin, many critics disregard Sophia’s frequent references to sentimental literary tropes. Daniel E. White briefly touches upon the fact that “for Sophia, Hinduism (like India) is saturated with European literary conventions.”<sup>26</sup> She references the sentimental giant, Laurence Sterne, to describe the Bramin:

What a sweet picture would the pen of Sterne have drawn of this young man’s person! But such is the European narrowness of sentiment that if I was to attempt to do it, you would instantly conclude,

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<sup>25</sup> We can imagine Gibbes asking herself the same question upon the death of her son.

<sup>26</sup> Daniel E. White, *From Little London to Little Bengal: Religion, Print, and Modernity in Early British India, 1793-1835* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 2013), 167.

I love the precepts for the teacher's sake.<sup>27</sup>  
But love, I assure you, is not so spontaneous an effect (in general) of a friendship between the sexes, in India as in England; the object of admiration being mental charms, which bid defiance to decay. (111)

The connection between Sterne and the Bramin is far from incidental. As White points out, Gibbes filters Yorick's description of the old monk's revered figure in Sterne's *A Sentimental Journey* (1768):<sup>28</sup>

[The monk's] was one of those heads, which Guido has often painted – mild, pale – penetrating, free from all common-place ideas of fat contented ignorance looking downwards upon the earth – it look'd forwards; but look'd, as if it look'd at something beyond this world. How one of his order came by it, heaven above, who let it fall upon the monk's shoulders, best knows; but it would have suited a Bramin, and had I met it upon the plains of Indostan, I had revered it.<sup>29</sup>

Though many critics catch the connection between the Bramin and the monk, few critics, if any, understand the connections between Sophia's relationship with the Bramin and Elizabeth Draper's relationship with Sterne. Sophia refers to the Bramin as "my Bramin," just as Draper refers to Sterne in his posthumously published *Letters from Yorick to Eliza* (1773) and her *Letters from Eliza to Yorick* (1775). Sterne calls Draper "my Bramine" to indicate both their intimacy and her discipleship, mirroring Sophia's relationship with the Bramin.<sup>30</sup> These letters

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<sup>27</sup> This is a reference to George Farquhar's *The Constant Couple*: "Charming woman can true converts make, / We love the precept for the teacher's sake. / Virtue in them appears so bright, so gay, / We hear with transport, and with pride obey" (Franklin's note, 206).

<sup>28</sup> White, 167.

<sup>29</sup> Laurence Sterne, *A Sentimental Journey*, ed. Ian Jack (New York: Oxford UP, 1968), 5-6.

<sup>30</sup> Laurence Sterne, *Letters from Yorick to Eliza* (London: W. Johnston, 1773), and Elizabeth Draper, *Letters from Eliza to Yorick* (London: William Combe, 1775). Though both Sterne and Draper were married before they first met, Sterne hoped to wed her after their spouses' deaths (Sterne, *Letters*, 54). Draper, however, probably did not have the same romantic feelings for him. Sterne's daughter, Lydia, edited these letters from the original, but they nevertheless offer an insight into Sterne's mindset while he was writing *A Sentimental Journey* soon before his death. Gibbes may have also read William Combe's fictional *Letters Supposed to Have been Written between Yorick and Eliza* (Dublin: Messrs. Price, Sheppard, Wilkinson, Williams, Potts, Corcoran, Chamberlaine, Jenkin, Walker, Wilson, Exshaw, E. Cross, Beatty, Higly, and Byrne, 1780). It is unlikely that Gibbes had read Sterne's *The Bramine's Journal* (*Journal to Eliza*), ed. Wilbur L. Cross (New York: J.F. Taylor & Company, 1904), however, since it was published after her death. Although, given that it was Thomas Washbourne Gibbs who first brought the manuscript of *The Bramine's Journal* to the attention of the public when he found it among his father's papers later in the

also reveal that Sterne fell deeply in love with Draper upon her temporary visit from India just as the Bramin falls for Sophia on her visit from England. Both the Bramin and Sterne die soon after the attachment.<sup>31</sup>

The parallels don't end there. Just as Sophia is attracted to the Bramin for his "mental charms" (111), Draper would wish to "wed [Sterne's] soul' so that her "mind would adopt [his] sentiments."<sup>32</sup> Just as Sophia vows not to marry a wealthy nabob in India (5-6) and is "ashamed of the manners of modern Christianity" (111), Draper would not marry a nabob upon becoming a widow because she "despise[s] them all – those pretending to be Christians."<sup>33</sup> Sophia even elides her teacher's name by only calling him "her Bramin" seeming to subsume his identity in his connection with Sterne. In fact, Sophia's letters reflect the literary erudition and vivacity of Draper's letters. Although, to suggest that Sophia's character is entirely based on Draper is a mistake: though she traveled to Britain, Draper was born and lived in India, but Sophia only travels to India for a short time. It is, however, clear that there is a link between Sterne and the Bramin.

The association between Sophia and Draper challenges assumptions of Sophia's romantic interest in the Bramin, given that Draper was probably not interested in Sterne as a romantic partner. Sterne was simultaneously a figure of both sentiment and satire, of deep, earnest feeling and light, tongue-in-cheek humor. As such, Sterne's novels are both confounding and fascinating

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nineteenth century, we can speculate as to whether or not the manuscript may have passed into Phebe Gibbes' possession. See the Introduction to Melvyn New and Geoffrey Day ed. *The Florida Edition of the Works of Laurence Sterne*, vol. 6 (Gainesville, Fla.: UP of Florida, 2002).

<sup>31</sup> Draper was born in India and lived there with her husband and children.

<sup>32</sup> Draper, 55.

<sup>33</sup> Draper, 53.

to contemporary scholars. Sterne's connection with Sophia's Bramin evokes some of the same puzzling interest in *Hartly House*. The Bramin himself is as much a figure of sentiment as he is a representative of Gentoism. Despite his celibacy, the Bramin is somewhat romantically inclined, for, in an awkwardly candid moment, the Bramin surprises Sophia with the compliment, "that [she is] the loveliest of women, he acknowledges with pious resignation," causing embarrassment all around (104). Rather than considering a relationship with him, she goes on to regret her newest conquest: "Wretch that I am, Arabella! this confession, which I shall ever remember with pain, did I, in the idle gaiety of my heart, ardently aspire after. – O how I lament, that young men and women (with few exceptions, I am afraid) cannot form a friendship of the tranquil and liberal kind, a friendship that ends not in an exclusion of all other attachments, I mean as to precedence!" Her realization of this conquest, however, becomes a teaching moment for Sophia, demonstrating the destructiveness of "idle gaiety" and her own vanity.

Unlike Yorick, Sophia does not include racy double entendre. Rather, Sophia's chaste references to Sterne reflect her growing control over her own desires and over sentimental tropes, culminating in her commodification of sentiment upon the Bramin's death:

I have, by my father, begged the Sekar to procure, if that indulgence is not incompatible with the Gento customs, a lock of his hair, for the purpose, my dear girl, of making it a mental talisman, like the poor monk's box and Yorick, against all irregularities to which we Christians are subject. You want such a shield the least of any person I do or ever did know; yet, Arabella, you shall have a locket set with pearls, with some device suitable to the occasion, and wear it near your heart, for its virtues will be abundant. (135)

Though we might be tempted to interpret Sophia's desire for the lock as a symbol of sexual conquest, passing it along as a gift to Arabella turns it into a sentimental object instead, intended for the circulation of feeling. According to Lynn Festa, copies of the monk's snuffbox from A

*Sentimental Journey* were circulated in the eighteenth century to inspire fellow feeling among members of various social circles. Festa observes that the selling point of such objects was their sentimental value, though turning them into commodities would seem to contradict the sentimentality for which they stood.<sup>34</sup> Sophia intends to enclose the lock of hair within a “locket set with pearls,” artfully dressing up the lock to maximize both the meaning and value of the Bramin. Here, her creation and control of this sentimental object shows her ability to generate and transmit sentimental meaning.

Sophia’s mastery of sentiment, from this point on, allows her to better resist the vanity that British society in Calcutta inspires within her. Using sentimental language to internalize her understanding of the Bramin, Sophia “will raise a pagoda to [the Bramin’s] memory in [her] heart, that shall endure till that heart beats no more” (135). She also sets aside the vanity that initially caused her to desire his conquest: “I would not, Arabella, believe, at this moment, that any attachment he felt for me, was the cause of the slightest pain to him, for the world – and henceforth, be all my vanity subdued. –Tyrants of every kind, are the terror and disgrace of their species; but the victories of vanity, like those of the grand enemy of mankind, are marked by devastation, and enjoyed without other delight, than the delight of a malign and baneful soul” (136). Sophia’s comparing vanity to tyranny is powerful, given the weight that the word “tyranny” holds among British perceptions of India, especially in its use in the Hastings trial and its association with Muslim rule.

Sophia’s brief interaction with the nawab of Bengal, Mubark ud-Daulah, towards the end of the novel tests her mastery of the Bramin’s sentiment and simplicity. The magnificence of the

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<sup>34</sup> Lynn Festa, *Sentimental Figures of Empire in Eighteenth-Century Britain and France* Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 2006), 69.

nawab's train<sup>35</sup> causes Sophia to note that "she would have given the world to be a Nabobess" (153), tempting her to break her vow not to marry in India for money. Sophia finds herself seduced by India's wealth once again:

I was stationed nearly on a level with the throne as it passed along; – and judge, Arabella, if you can, of the ambitious throbs my heart experienced, when I saw the Nabob's eyes, sparkling with admiration, fixed on my face! – Doyly turned pale, and the procession advanced – yet were my charms unforgotten by him; for he twice or thrice looked back, and constituted for me the envy of the women, and the torture of the men; in a word, my conquest was as evident as the noon-day sun: and who could dream of a mortal female's refusing an enthroned adorer, with the wealth of India at his feet? (153)

In her vanity, British men's jealousy translates into triumph:

My friends... tell me, a ship now on the stocks... will be launched in a few days... –It will, no doubt, be a brilliant day; –but whether it will be thought safe to trust me to be a spectator, or not, lest the Nabob should form plans of carrying me off, is uncertain, until I have heard the opinion of my male friends. That Doyly was frightened, is most certain; – but an Englishwoman<sup>36</sup> was not born to fear giant knights, or enchanted castles; and the more especially, where an army would stand forth in her protection and defence [sic]. It would flatter my vanity to find them alarmed. – Ha! ha! ha! Arabella – did you ever imagine your friend would make so magnificent a conquest? – Poor Doyly, how small he has felt himself since! – Forgive my folly – I recollect my Bramin and I am myself again. (155)

The novel renders women's empowerment by jealousy not only dangerous, but also ridiculous as evident from her humorously triumphant language and written laughter, only to be corrected by her memory of the Bramin. The Muslim nawab and the Hindu Brahmin are here described in terms of a binary opposition, the former representing wealth and desire and the latter embodying simplicity and morality. The tautological self-reflection, "I am myself again," recalls her vow not to wed in India for wealth. Though she eventually violates her vow when she marries Doyly

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<sup>35</sup> Gibbes largely plagiarized her description of the nawab's train from *The New Annual Register*. Franklin's note, 215.

<sup>36</sup> Note that Franklin misquotes this word to read "Englishman" in "Radically Feminizing India," 164.

before returning to England, she maintains its spirit, marrying for love rather than for money, and preserving and multiplying her relations rather than allowing them to diminish.<sup>37</sup>

### Crafting Women to Craft Men

*Hartly House* also represents young British men who, due to their immaturity and immorality, come to India expecting to make a fortune only to fall victim to their own greed and desires. For example, Sophia gives a brief account of a young man who, due to his gambling losses, has become a “fugitive among fugitives” as “the victim of premature, unbounded prosperity.” Such wealth without wisdom “too often” causes “an amiable wife” and “a lovely offspring” to be “involved in the crushing misfortune” (149-50).<sup>38</sup> The management of men’s desires therefore falls to the women who rely on such men for their well-being. As noted earlier, Sophia travels so that “somewhat of [her] suggesting might [be] salutary” to prolong her father’s “valued life” (5). In qualifying her power over her father by “suggesting” her advice “might not” help, she insinuates out of love rather than commanding from tyranny. Sophia’s is therefore a “gentler” means of control, akin to the domestic power Rousseau, Lord Kames, and *The Calcutta Gazette* assign to women, cited at the beginning of this chapter. As such, her influence on her father also resembles common recommendations on EIC political practices among Orientalists: rather than tyrannizing India to exploit its wealth, commentators such as John Zephaniah Holwell recommended the EIC employ a gentler form of governance to encourage trade.<sup>39</sup> In this section,

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<sup>37</sup> Doyly accepts employment in England in order to make his fortune (91-2), indicating that he is not rich. It is ironic that Doyly should find his fortune in England rather than India, given British stereotypes of nabobism.

<sup>38</sup> This critique is even more interesting considering that Gibbes father-in-law had left she and her husband destitute due to his gambling. Michael J. Franklin, “Introduction” to *Hartly House, Calcutta*, xiii.

<sup>39</sup> John Z. Holwell’s *Interesting Historical Events, Relative to the Provinces of Bengal, and the Empire of Indostan* (London: T. Becket and P.A. De Hondt, 1765).

I discuss women's attempts to control men in this novel without disrupting patriarchal norms and imperial pursuits. Women's influence on British men without interrupting their control over India constitutes their political efficacy in this novel, however indirect: what I call protofeminist ameliorative imperialism.

Though the novel proposes that British women's power over men in India can be turned to good, it can also be a significant threat to those men in the hands of an inexperienced young woman. Before her "conversion" to the Bramin's principles, Sophia is both thankful and humorously ashamed that her own charms have never occasioned a duel:

If dueling is, as I am assured, the fashionable propensity, I shudder to think what dire ills a young and beautiful coquet might cause in this land! – But, for the peace of society, coquetry is practised at Calcutta in a new style; for the handsome young women (except myself Arabella) are all wives; and their adorers, you perceive, could not, with any decent pretext, cut each other's throats; and few husbands are disturbed at the innocent freedoms of either manner or conversation in their *cara sposas*. (54)

According to Franklin, the "new style" here is ironic, considering that the practice of marrying to prevent dueling derives from medieval practices.<sup>40</sup> Sophia goes on to joke that she would raise an army against Arabella for the affections of the nawab should Arabella come to Calcutta, recalling French romances or perhaps Nathaniel Lee's *The Rival Queens* (1677). Sophia's father describes her situation as a beautiful and unmarried young woman in Calcutta as "awkward," urging her to consider the many proposals she has received (63). Sophia's vanity and predilection for romantic "conquests" further exacerbates the danger she poses to men. Vain unattached British women in India are therefore a potential object of violence due to the sexual power they hold over men, and the solution is to marry them off posthaste. Sophia, however, resists marriage at first, as it would

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<sup>40</sup> It is also interesting to note that, though the most famous duel in India, that of Warren Hastings and Phillip Francis, was fought for political reasons, Sophia naïvely attributes dueling among men only to matters of love. See *Hartly House, Calcutta* Franklin's notes, 186-7.



interfere with her intent to support her father. She also harbors jealousy for Mrs. D——’s attachment to Mr. Goldborne, both for her deceased mother’s sake and for fear that she would herself be replaced by the older woman as Mr. Goldborne’s only family and comfort. Thus, Sophia is pressured both to become amenable to her own marriage to prevent jealousy among men and to relinquish her own jealousy toward Mrs. D——. One of the major problems the novel addresses is how to craft such a young woman into one who can, in turn, craft responsible young men.

Sophia’s first trial in managing jealousy among men comes in a contest between her fortuneless paramour, Doyly, and the incorrigible and dangerous nabob, Mr. Emson. Soon after Sophia first meets Doyly, she notes that Doyly’s “person is so pastoral, and his sensibility so oriental – had he the Moguls diadem, he would place it, I am confident, upon my head, and, though entitled to all the privileges of a Mussulman, live for me alone” (91). The “priveleges of a Musselman,” of course, refers to stereotypes of Eastern sexuality such as the seraglio, multiple marriage, excessive masculine desire, which contrasts Doyly’s resemblance to the Western “pastoral.” As their bugeros pass one another, Mr. Emson, “having drank too freely,” asks to kiss Sophia’s hand, and upon being pressured to comply, she leans forward, only to have him attempt to “salute” her “to the equal surprise and offence of the whole party.”<sup>41</sup> Doyly, “fired at this boldness,” repulses Mr. Emson “with indignation,” upon which both men both fall overboard. Sophia, unfortunately, “faint[s] away” (91), responding to Doyly’s masculine chivalric honor with the feminine frailty appropriate to romance. The scene is, of course, altogether ridiculous in this more modern form, the sentimental novel. Mr. Goldborne skillfully repairs Doyly’s

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<sup>41</sup> The meaning of “salute” here is somewhat ambiguous. It could be a military salute, but given its offensive effect, it most likely means that the man attempts to kiss her, presumably, on her mouth or cheek rather than her hand (*OED*).

wounded honor by allowing him to kiss Sophia's hand, bestowing upon him the privilege that Mr. Emson desired. Here we see the contrast between Doyly's chivalric masculinity and Mr. Goldborne's social graces. Mr. Emson, an incompetent rake, represents the destructive excess and debauchery that the wealth of India might inspire. Together, the three men exemplify archetypes for British masculinity in India.

Sophia learns to correct and prevent jealousy among men from Mrs. D—, a sensible, mature woman who models a more effective way to handle the quarrel in the bugero. Mr. Emson attempts to correct his offense on the boat by offering Doyly a promising position in England with which he can make his fortune (91-2). Later, however, Mr. Emson takes advantage of Doyly's absence in another drunken offense: "Doyly's patron was so generous (having dispatched him, poor fellow, across the ocean on an embassy) to declare himself his rival." He forcibly seats himself between Sophia and Mrs. D— and declares that he would have one of them. Mrs. D— diffuses the situation by allowing him to kiss her on the cheek, voluntarily offering him the favor that he attempted to steal from Sophia in the bugero, in exchange for giving up his seat to Mr. Hartly (118-9). Even after become ill for the scare Mr. Emson had given her, Mrs. D— suggests that she and Sophia should not tell Mr. Goldborne of the incident because "the quarrels of men are so alarming, that whoever wishes to prevent mischief, must be cautious how they breathe inflammatory complaints before the sex, lest some idle or fatal point of honour should make them conceive themselves bound to resent or even remonstrate with the other party" (124). The women thus exhibit a sense of responsibility for managing these men, and the novel thus demonstrates how polite women in India can quell rather than inspire violence in India.

Nicole Reynolds argues that Gibbes' representation of British women in India complicates the sexual politics of Burke's speeches in the impeachment of Warren Hastings. Burke used images of suffering Indian women as rhetorical devices to assert a sense of chivalric masculinity, which dictates that British men defend Indian women, turning imperial tyranny into masculine competition.<sup>42</sup> To add to Reynolds' argument, I would suggest that the novel offers Mr. Goldborne as the counterpoint to Burke's and Doyly's antiquated chivalric masculinity. Thus, Gibbes rejects Burke's ameliorative imperialism and asserts one of her own, one in which masculinity in the empire is governed by sensibility and manners toward British women rather than chivalry and "rescue fantasies" involving Indian women. For Gibbes' ameliorative imperialism, the impetus to just governance is to live up to the sentimental novel's vision of the ideal man. Sophia's ideal husband is someone like her father, simultaneously a sentimental and patriarchal figure: "In a word Arabella, my father is the model of him I can ever love, or ever wish to unite my destiny with" (41). Sophia emphasizes her father's social power while insisting on his wisdom and virtuousness: "It is well for the world at large, and happy for me, that all [Mr. Goldborne's] arts are honest ones, and all his frauds pious; for, had a bad man his endowments, his collected mind, his command of face, who would be able to stand against him" (71). She thus casts him as somewhat liberal, both a controlling agent and a rational and sensible model for behavior, recalling Sarah Scott's eponymous sentimental patriarch in *The History of Sir George Ellison* (1766). Of course, this Mr. Goldbourne is unique in his endowments, an image Doyly could never live up to, given his in-born limitations. Therefore, Sophia attempts to impart to Doyly the sensibility of the young Bramin instead.

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<sup>42</sup> Nicole Reynolds, "Phebe Gibbes, Edmund Burke, and the Trials of Empire," *Eighteenth Century Fiction* 20.2 (Winter 2007-8): 151-176. Reynolds cites Sara Suleri's excellent interrogation of Burke's "sexual metaphors." Sara Suleri, *The Rhetoric of English India* (Chicago: Chicago UP, 1992), 61.

Having been educated in the Bramin's perfect sentiment and in Mrs. D——'s conscientious influence, Sophia attempts to craft Doyle into a more responsible man:

...as for my part, *simplex munditiis*<sup>43</sup> shall be my motto, which requires as much skill to hit off without being under or over dressed in a single article, as any female etiquette I know. Moreover, so altered am I in my views and wishes, that I have, settled with myself to affect a Gentoo air, which is an assemblage of all the soft and winning graces priests or poets have yet devised a name for, and Doyle shall figure away as my Bramin; and so well have I instructed him in every humane tenet of that humane religion, that he will not hurt a butterfly, nor can dispatch even a troublesome musketto [sic] without a correspondent pang – and habit, you know, is said to give as a second nature; - but it is to do Mr [sic] Doyle barely justice to say, that no savage climate, not even the climate of his, mine, or your created ancestors, has power to render him aught but the friend of all created nature, and the universal admirer of all Nature's productions; - but, as Sterne says, I am not celebrating the man, but the sentiment. (150-1)

Thus, by the end of the novel, Sophia notably changes: instead of indulging in the ostentatious luxury and eroticism that India purportedly offers, she favors her interpretation of the Bramin's semi-celibate asceticism. Rather than converting to Gentooism, she becomes a convert to sentimentalism, as evident from her emphasis on the latter's principles rather than on the former's belief. Her attitude here, however, suggests a sense of power over her husband, a protofeminist statement that contradicts her intent to influence rather than command, which I explore in the next section.

### Protofeminism in the Nascent Anglo-Indian Novel

We can carry the comparison between Sophia's father and Sir George Ellison further to problematize the novel's conceptualization of ideal masculinity. Both are "ideal" imperialists, exporting sensibility abroad to improve the otherwise corrupt societies they find at the

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<sup>43</sup> Franklin's note: "'L., lit. simple in your adornments' (Horace, Odes I. v. 5). Unostentatiously beautiful; elegantly simple, OED" (215).

peripheries of the empire. Of course, this constitutes a significant portion of Gibbes' ameliorative imperialism: she justifies the empire by suggesting that sentimental imperialists would work to improve the world, and educated, moral women could turn otherwise ignorant young Englishmen into sentimental imperialists. Furthermore, just as Ellison empowers women by modeling his slave community on the feminist utopian community he finds at Millenium Hall, Mr. Goldborne transports his daughter to another sort of profeminist utopia, India, where the preponderance of British men gives Englishwomen power. As Shawn Lisa Maurer argues, however, the unrealistic characteristics that make Ellison fit for emulation are natural rather than learned, making him a masculine ideal which cannot be created, but is, rather, "too good to be true."<sup>44</sup> Likewise, Mr. Goldborne's goodness is not learned, and, rather than attempting to impart a semblance of her father's goodness to Doyly, Sophia instead teaches him the learnable principles of the Bramin, which she herself has already adopted. According to Maurer, "This no man's land of ideal masculinity represents... a powerful site for these mid-eighteenth-century women writers, who manipulate narrative and generic conventions to express deep desire as well as unconscious disappointment," that is, desire for and disappointment in the impossibility of a profeminist patriarch.<sup>45</sup> In this section, I explore the similarly problematic expression of profeminism in *Hartly House, Calcutta*, a profeminism that relies on an unrealistic ideal masculinity as its counterpart that ultimately betrays a sense of its own frustration towards the unattainable prerequisites for its goal.

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<sup>44</sup> Shawn Lisa Maurer, "Happy Men?: Mid-Eighteenth-Century Women Writers and Ideal Masculinity," in *Women Constructing Men: Female Novelists and Their Male Characters, 1750-2000*, ed. Sarah S. G. Frantz and Katharina Rennhak (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2010), 11-30.

<sup>45</sup> Maurer, 14. Here, "profeminist patriarch" fits better than "feminist patriarch," since the latter would be an oxymoron.

Once again, the abundance of British men by comparison to British women in this novel signifies a notable contrast to the alleged sexual availability of Indian women to European men articulated in the first Anglo-Indian novel I have discussed, *Memoirs of a Gentleman*. This, I believe, signals a curious inversion of gender roles in the early Anglo-Indian novel. Felicity A. Nussbaum points out the sexual hybridity exhibited by both British and “country-born” women who participate in more masculine behaviors and dress in men’s clothing in *Hartly House*. Sophia notes that “the manners of ladies of Calcutta are somewhat contradictory – now all softness and femininity, and now all courage and resolution,” and they are “so little attentive to female decorum, and so fearless of danger, that a scarlet riding dress, which gives them most the appearance of the other sex, enraptures them” (40). In contrast, Sophia describes British men as potentially feminine, noting that women’s roles in the Calcutta Theatre are played by men, and she “was as well entertained as if the female parts had been sustained by females – and again wish, in the cause of morality, the custom could be reestablished in England” (117). Furthermore, one of the female roles is played by Mr. Emson, the immoral villain she and Mrs. D—— resist. Thus, the novel gives the impression that Sophia experiments not against a feminized Indian Brahmin as Franklin has argued,<sup>46</sup> but rather against feminized British men.

This hybridity, however, clashes with Sophia’s acquiescence to her father’s wishes in marriage. All of the drama Sophia sees at the Calcutta theatre, that is, Richard Steele’s *The Conscious Lovers*, Isaac Bickerstaff’s *Lionel and Clarissa* and *Love in a Village*, and Aaron Hill’s *The Tragedy of Zara*, involve parental interference in marriage. At one point, she expects her father and Mrs. D—— to force her to marry “a booby heir,” Mrs. D——’s son (70), reminiscent of the plot of Richardson’s *Clarissa* (1748). In retribution for their machinations, she

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<sup>46</sup> Franklin, “Radically Feminizing India,” 156.

teases that she is “tempted to embrace the narrow and illiberal faith of the sons of Omar,” who, despite their supposed ill treatment of women, would still value her more than she believes her family and friends do, defending her right to choose by naïvely misconstruing her relations’ intentions. The specter of forced marriage, however, never materializes, for, when she reflects on *The Tragedy of Zara*, Sophia recognizes her good fortune in that her preference in marriage aligns with her father’s will.<sup>47</sup> Thus, the expected conflict never comes, and Sophia is simply saved by her father’s unlikely perfection, a convenient coincidence rather than a feminist point of conflict. Gibbes therefore suspiciously averts what might seem earlier in the novel to be an inevitable contest between filial duty and personal liberty, that is, Zara’s dilemma. In short, the novel’s main plot is not a feminist tragedy, and Sophia’s agency is never threatened, perhaps because, once again, Sophia’s India is a protofeminist utopia.

Yet when we consider at what we know of Gibbes’ life and the novel’s subplots, we see a very different image of patriarchy in both England and India. In Gibbes’ letters to the Royal Literary Fund, she explains that she writes novels in part “from the wish to enlarge a slender provision, in consequence to the bad management of [her] husband’s father.”<sup>48</sup> Her father-in-law’s gambling and her son’s death in the Company’s service away from her guidance give her ample reason to agitate for women’s power over men. Furthermore, by contrast to Sophia, Mrs. D——’s history confirms lessons from *Zara* and *Clarissa*:

Her father and mother were both English, but she was born at Calcutta; they conspired, Arabella, at a tender age, to sacrifice their child for wealth. A marriage (if it could be so called, that was a violence to the heart) was agreed to by them,

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<sup>47</sup> Sophia sees the English version of Voltaire’s *Zaire* (1732), *Zara: A Tragedy*, trans. Aaron Hill (1736). Zara, a Christian Princess, is captured by the Islamic sultan, Osman, in Jerusalem. Zara and Osman fall in love with one another, but her father and brother both oppose the marriage to prevent her conversion to Islam. Ultimately, her family’s pressure and Osman’s jealousy cause both Zara’s and Osman’s deaths.

<sup>48</sup> Phebe Gibbes, “Letter to The Royal Literary Fund” (October 14, 1804). Thanks to Dr. Jennie Batchelor for generously sharing her transcription of these letters.

when Mrs D—— was only twelve years old, with a military character, whose manners were ferocious, his person deformed. Nine years did he live, the tyrant and oppressor of all who knew him. A library was the sole support of her spirit, and the sole relaxation she was permitted to enjoy. She bore all without complaint; for she was sensible complaint would be unavailing. (73-4)

Sophia goes on to indicate that Mrs. D——’s husband kept all others, including her parents, from speaking with her because “she was his property.” For Mrs. D——, filial devotion and her parents’ injunction in marriage resulted in her enslavement, creating an image of India that dramatically contrasts Sophia’s profeminist utopia. When her husband informed Mrs. D—— of their deaths, he laughed at her tears and said, “You could not love them... it is impossible; the matrimonial sale they made of you renders it impossible; to enrich themselves, they were wholly regardless of your fate” (74). The theme of mistreatment at the hands of careless parents and tyrannical husbands constitutes a critique of patriarchal dominion and casts Mrs. D—— as a sentimental novel heroine in a feminist tragedy. Just as she suffers for her parents, she protects Sophia from Mr. Emson when both Doyly and her father are absent by interposing her own body, receiving his kiss (118-9) despite that the scare renders her bedridden (124). The novel therefore presents her power in terms of self-sacrifice, ennobling women’s suffering. The sense that we get is that it is because of the older woman’s strength that Sophia’s understanding of India as a profeminist utopia can continue.

Reading, in this novel, is as also bound up in women’s empowerment, for Sophia finds power in her literary knowledge. In her visit to the Hartly Bungilo where Mrs. Hartly keeps her children, she is surprised to see statues of James Thomson, Samuel Johnson, and “all the literary characters, to which the British empire has given birth.” Her encounter with British authors abroad reveals to her for the first time, “the fund of literary knowledge [she is] mistress of” (84). Since, strangely enough, she only learns of her expertise in British literature in India, Sophia’s



measured advocacy for women's travel is also tangentially an argument for women's liberal education. Furthermore, Sophia notes that the part of Mrs. Deborah Woodcock in *Love in a Village* was played by the immoral Mr. Emson (114), associating the novel-hating misogynistic villain of the play with the dangerous libertine of the novel.<sup>49</sup>

Though a "feminist comedy" is almost a contradiction in terms in the eighteenth century, Sophia's marriage in India constitutes a protofeminist statement in itself by preserving the power she acquires in travel, before the very "air of [her] native country gives [her] sufficient resolution to constitute Mr. Doyly [her] sovereign lord" (156). In spite of Sophia's initial resistance to her father's marriage to Mrs. D—, she later comes to understand its necessity and the benefits of a strong woman to fill the role of her deceased mother. In fact, the argument between Sophia and Mrs. D— over a double marriage in India (156-7) is itself a measured statement of women's empowerment, given that the grooms, Doyly and Mr. Goldborne, are surprisingly absent from the discussion. Interestingly enough, this is also the first argument that Sophia wins against Mrs. D—, and they both eventually marry at Hartly House, signifying a notable change in the protagonist's disposition, rationale, and influence. Furthermore, Sophia brings about this change by violating the vow she made at the outset of the novel not to marry in India, an ironic surrender-turned-victory that constitutes the culmination of Sophia's authority.

The question is, then, why cloak the dark undercurrent of misogyny under the gaudy veil of India's wealth and excess? That is to say, why feature protofeminism in "A Novel of the Days

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<sup>49</sup> Deborah Woodcock, at one point in the play, comments that the young heroine, Lucinda, sings "romantic stuff," concluding that she learns "it out of [her] play books and novels." She continues, "I never looked into a book, but when I said my prayers, except it was the complete housewife, or the great family receipt book; whereas you are always at your studies! Ah, I never knew a woman come to good, that was fond of reading." Deborah Woodcock here exemplifies authorized femininity, managing a home rather than employing her imagination. Isaac Bickerstaff, *Love in a Village; A Comic Opera: As it is Performed at the Theatre Royal in Covent Garden* (London: J. Newberry, R. Baldwin, T. Caslon, W. Griffin, W. Nicoll, T. Lownds, and Becket and DeHondt, 1767), 65.

of Warren Hastings” as in the novel’s subtitle? Sophia’s nationality and gender entail power in India, but travel involves potential danger, a danger which is necessary to Sophia’s coming of age and the novel’s protofeminism. She charms the Nabob, but she imagines him carrying her off. The EIC army protects her from the Nabob (155), but the army itself can be a threat when populated by immoral men:

He is, my dear, an officer in the army – who having, in some of his country rides, discovered an old man’s daughter to be lovely beyond whatever this country has produced, cruelly and basely resolved to rob him of her...  
Yes! Arabella! the man whose profession it was to protect, thus brutally and barbarously destroyed! – May his name be branded with infamy! – and his death equally unpitied and ignominious. – I now rejoice, more than ever, that I am about to leave a country, where fiend-like acts are, I fear, much oftener perpetrated than detected; for, the grave complains not, and gold can unnerve the arm of justice. – Lord C[ornwallis] will not, however, stain his noble deeds, by suffering the villain to escape; and the facts I have related are too well known, and too glaringly confirmed to be palliated, or atoned by less than the life of him who could devise deeds of such turpitude; or, when even devised, could have the savage nature to carry them into effect. – I am all indignation, terror, compassion, and agitation: – the young woman survives, however, to appal [sic] the guilty wretch by her melancholy testimony. (157-8)

As Felicity A. Nussbaum remarks, the army that Sophia thought would protect her turns out to be a threat to her, and this hastens her desire to leave India.<sup>50</sup> Here, both the family unit and womanhood are violated by the British officer’s unfathomable cruelty. Though many critics have read the young woman as Indian, she may be mixed-race. Sophia doesn’t mention her nationality directly, but that the woman is “lovely beyond whatever this country has produced” implies that the girl might not be Indian. It is unlikely that she is British, however, since the officer finds her in one of his “country rides,” which recalls the term “country-born,” perhaps a mixed-race woman who lives apart from Sophia’s society at Calcutta.

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<sup>50</sup> Nussbaum, *Torrid Zones*, 177.

Indeed, this digression seems out of place, as if it were inserted as an afterthought for its conflict with her earlier lessons in sentiment. Sophia's "terror" indicates that she feels personally threatened, colluding with the woman's "melancholy testimony" to abjure the rapist. Her desire for capital punishment, however, would seem to contradict the gentleness she learns from the Bramin. Sophia therefore attempts to mitigate her involvement by ascribing the violence of retribution to a male agent, Lord Cornwallis, commending his "noble deeds," condoning rather than enacting chivalric masculine violence, using the man as a shield to differentiate herself from the true horrors of imperialism. Thus, not only does chivalric imperial masculinity return in the novel when women's sentiment fails to regulate men, but Sophia can also no longer sustain her image of India as a protofeminist utopia. Here, to recall Spivak's phrase, we see white women allowing white men to save brown women.<sup>51</sup>

The end of the novel brings about the reconstitution of Sophia's family, broken from the outset of the novel by the death of her mother. She notes, "so abundantly are my family connections enlarged, that I have a mother I am proud to acknowledge, and sisters and brothers, in consequence of my change of condition" (158). She even finds that Arabella is related to Doyly (145) so that the marriages result in the inclusion of all major British characters in the novel into Sophia's family. India, by contrast, remains a place where "fiend-like acts are... much oftener perpetrated than detected." While the British benefit from their experience in India with wealth and relations, India and Indians remain the victims of both metaphorical and actual rape. Thus, though it is a text that testifies to Englishwomen's potency, *Hartly House* exemplifies a progressive allure to Gibbes' ameliorative imperialism, perhaps to counter the conservatism of

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<sup>51</sup> Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, "Can the Subaltern Speak?" *Colonial Discourse and Post-Colonial Theory: A Reader*, eds. Patrick Williams and Laura Chrisman (Hemel Hempstead: Harvester, 1993), 93.

Burke's ameliorative imperialism. As British women become more inimical to the empire, India becomes more subjugated. Women improve the empire's morality and practices only to better control its Indian subjects. Although Sophia borrows from Gentoo ideology to reform a British imperialist, her actions do not signify collusion between Indian men and British women. Rather, the British woman here assumes the responsibility to mine, filter, and polish Indian culture, using Indian men as a tool by which to empower herself. To illustrate the fact, Sophia entirely effaces the Bramin's name and instead lays claim on him as only "her" Bramin.

In *Hartly House*, the inclusion of an English female subjectivity in the Anglo-Indian novel provides an alternative to the masculine perspectives that dominated India at this time. In the previous chapter, I argued that immoral European masculine desire functions as a narrative device in the first Anglo-Indian novel, *Memoirs of a Gentleman*. The possibility of marriage between the Gentleman and the hyper-European woman at the end of the *Memoirs* presents a means for the Gentleman's moral reform as well as the resolution of the plot. Likewise, in *Hartly House*, we find women's influence posited as a corrective to masculine immorality, though with an uncertainty toward the feasibility of the project expressed by Sophia's account of rape and murder. This intent to reform renegotiates the terms of the genre to assuage the low criminality of the picaresque in the two previous Anglo-Indian novels written by men (*Memoirs of a Gentleman*, 1774, and Helenus Scott's *Adventures of a Rupee*, 1782). With *Hartly House*, India in novels begins to be a setting for morality and reform rather than sex and wealth. The genre went from tacitly celebrating licentious adventuring to promoting the discovery of virtue abroad. To put it simply, women writers elevated the Anglo-Indian novel by populating it with British women.

Viewing the colonial project as a means of controlling a particular gender rather than other races changes the scope and politics of the contact zone. The encounter is not just an encounter between the European and the Indian, but also an encounter between the Englishwoman and the Englishman. In this sense, we find that the culture of Englishwomen may be conceptualized as sometimes distinct from that of Englishmen in this Anglo-Indian novel. Rather than using gender to describe race relations as in the Saidian model, this form of contact uses race to complicate gender relations. What Sophia found in British society in India was a culture largely populated by upwardly mobile Englishmen, but partially dominated by English and country-born women. Thus, it seems we find a conceptualization of another British colonial event in this period: as Englishwomen increasingly take part in the colonial project, they imaginatively colonize and “modernize” the mostly male British society already present in India. Although their presence in India was empowering, Englishwomen only attempted to influence rather than dominate Englishmen in India. With this influence, they could potentially have an effect on Indians. Women’s imaginative forays into India were therefore not just a subtle challenge to male forms of control within the family, but also an application of a colonial project that was both distinct from and dependent upon that of British men.

In previous Anglo-Indian novels written by men, Englishmen played out heroic fantasies upon the bodies of Indian women. In *Hartly House* and other Anglo-Indian novels written by women, we see Englishwomen playing out sentimental fantasies on the sensibilities of Englishmen. By this logic, employing the framework of colonialism to describe both gender relations and genre development is particularly appropriate. Men continued to dominate information on India and translations of Indian texts, but Gibbes used that information to transform men’s “empirical” reading of India into a fictional profeminist utopia. This

transformation seems to indicate some women writers' developing claim on the imaginary in India and perhaps in the empire as a whole. It was not particularly common to find Englishwomen in India and even less common to find Englishwomen writing in India, but novel-writing became a means for, at the very least, women's imaginative imperialism.

Chapter 3: Fictions of Indian Things: The Ameliorative Imperialism of Helenus Scott, Elizabeth Hamilton, and Mary Pilkington

*In the evening drove through the great bazaar, or market, and were much amused as well as astonished at the odd mixture of people and things we saw there. Copper vessels, crockery, rice, sugar, gods and goddesses, knives, muslins, silks, &c. &c. were all displayed together – all sorts of coloured turbans, and all sorts of coloured people – the crowd immense – the sacred Brahmin bull walking about and mixing with the multitude...*

–Lady Nugent's East India Journal, 1812<sup>1</sup>

*It reminds one of the Arabian Nights Entertainments to go through the bazaar of the evening. The whole fronts of the shops are taken down and converted into benches, on which the goods are disposed, and each shop is lighted with at least two lamps. Here you see grain of every description heaped up in earthen jars; there, sweetmeats of all sorts and shapes, disposed in piles on benches, or hung in festoons about the top and sides of the shop, which is commonly lined with chintz or dyed cotton. Farther on, fruits and vegetables are laid out to the best advantage; then you come to the paung, or betel leaf, nut, and chunam, ready for chewing, or the separate materials;<sup>2</sup> beyond are shops of perfumes, linens, oils, toys, brass, and earthen ware, all set out in order, and the owner sitting bolt upright in the middle of his sweetmeats or grain, waiting for custom. The shops of the schroffs, or bankers, are numerous in the bazaar; you see the master sitting in the middle of the money-table, with scales for weighing the rupees and other coins presented for change. But it is the barber's shop that is the most crowded, being, particularly at night, the great resort for gossip and news, on which account the natives call it gup shop; the barbers themselves seem to enjoy a prescriptive right to be lively, witty, and good story-tellers. I have seen some excellent buffoons among them, and a slap given to a bald new-shaven pate, in the proper part of the story, has set half a bazaar in a roar. The barbers keep every body's holidays – Hindoos, Jews, Musselmans, Armenians, Portuguese, and English – and reap a good harvest at each by their comic way of begging.*

–Maria Graham, Journal of a Residence in India, 1812<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Maria Nugent, Lady, *Lady Nugent's East India Journal: A Critical Edition*, ed. Ashley L. Cohen (New Delhi: Oxford UP, 2014), 50.

<sup>2</sup> More commonly known as “paan,” Graham defines “paung,” as “a mixture of shell-lime and betel nut wrapped in the leaf of an aromatic plant.” Maria Graham, *Journal of a Residence in India* (Edinburgh: Archibald Constable and Company; and Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme, and Brown, 1813), xii. Paan can include tobacco or opium. It is chewed and either spat or swallowed.

<sup>3</sup> Maria Graham, 33-4.

The Oriental bazaar was an object of increasing fascination to the British in the later eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, not only as a commercial center, but also as a microcosm of Oriental culture. In addition to the catalogue of Indian curiosities in their descriptions of bazaars, two English visitors, Lady Nugent and Maria Graham, recount a curious slippage between the peoples and the objects they find among the shops. Having travelled to India with her husband, Sir George Nugent, the Commander-in-Chief of the British army in India, Lady Nugent parallels “all sorts of coloured turbans” with “all sorts of coloured peoples,” highlighting the exoticism of the objects and fashions of the bazaar in the same breath as the “otherness” of the people in attendance. Maria Graham, travelling with her father, an East India Company (EIC) officer, offers the image of various shopkeepers waiting, “sitting bolt upright in the middle” of their wares, the stillness of the merchants akin to that of the objects they sell. Just as she likens Indian objects to Indian people in the bazaar, she relates the marketplace itself to Indian culture and entertainment: the bazaar’s barbers are “buffoons” and “fools,” akin to characters in English theatrical farce. Popular English drama therefore frames her report, presenting the bazaar as both a marketplace and stage, supplying entertaining characters for potential consumption by her British readers. The Indians themselves are fetishized as much as their turbans or the myriad saleable goods that originate in India.

In order to supply a more complete picture of Indian people and culture, the British at home sought travelers’ accounts, but, as Graham points out, those perspectives were often written for readers with commercial interests in India:

...Almost all our modern publications on the subject of India, are entirely occupied with its political and military history, – details and suggestions upon its trade and commercial resources, – and occasionally with discussions upon the more recondite parts of its literary or mythological antiquities. Notwithstanding the great number of these books, therefore, and the unquestionable excellence of many of them, there still seemed to be room for a more popular work on the



subject of this great country, – a work which, without entangling its readers in the thorny walks of politics or commercial speculation, should bring before them much of what strikes the eye and the mind of an observant stranger...”<sup>4</sup>

Graham instead sets out to describe the “manners and habits of [India’s] natives and colonial residents,”<sup>5</sup> but “commercial speculation” nevertheless creeps into her representations of Indian tradesmen:

In Bombay there were a good many Banyans, or travelling merchants, who come mostly from Guzerat, and roam about the country with muslins, cotton cloth, and shawls to sell. On opening one of their bales, I was surprised to find at least half of its contents of British manufacture, and such articles were much cheaper than those of equal fineness from Bengal and Madras. Excepting a particular kind of Chintz made at Poonah, and painted with gold and silver, there are no fine cotton cloths made on this side of the peninsula; yet still it seems strange, that cotton carried to England, manufactured, and returned to this country, should undersell the fabrics of India, where labour is so cheap. But I believe this is owing partly to the uncertainty and difficulty of carriage here, although the use of machinery at home must be the main cause.<sup>6</sup>

Whereas Joseph Addison’s famous pamphlet “The Royal Exchange” (1711) represents England as a destination for the world’s goods, Graham observes that England is also a source for goods sold in India.<sup>7</sup> The effect of Graham’s commentary is to suggest that British “machinery” and infrastructure expand markets in India, increasing productivity and allowing for cheaper prices. Consequently, Graham imagines that Indian people benefit from British manufacturing and technology, so that the British consumption of raw materials from India is also favorable to Indian consumers.

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<sup>4</sup> Graham, vi.

<sup>5</sup> Graham, v.

<sup>6</sup> Graham, 33.

<sup>7</sup> Joseph Addison, *The Spectator*, ed. Donald Frederic Bond (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1965), 293-5.

The morality of trade with India was, however, hotly contested in the 1780s and 1790s. Like Graham, political commentators and historians often described British mercantilism as beneficial to the Indians, tying sympathy for Indians to the management of transnational markets and goods. Furthermore, continued commerce in India prevented a French monopoly on trade that might turn India against the British. On the other hand, commentators like Edmund Burke argued that the Company's commercial self-interest caused it to oppress Indians and corrupt its British officers, identifying mercantile trade as diametrically opposed to sympathy.<sup>8</sup> The pursuit of wealth, he argued, ruined the Indian aristocracy and exploited the Indian lower classes, enabling banyans, or Indian stewards in English households, to exert inordinate power over their own countrymen, disrupting natural and necessary hierarchies in India.<sup>9</sup> He also argued that low pay, lax education, and unlimited power have caused young British men to oppress Indians in their pursuit of wealth.<sup>10</sup> One of the major questions of this period was therefore whether or not the Company's uncanny combination of trade and policy was beneficial to both the British and Indian peoples.

Other critics have sufficiently traced connections between Burke's speeches in Hastings' impeachment hearings and Anglo-Indian fiction.<sup>11</sup> This chapter seeks to build upon this work by considering the connection between the often shifting political positions of important

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<sup>8</sup> Edmund Burke, *Speeches of the Managers and Counsel in the Trial of Warren Hastings*, ed. E.A. Bond (London: Longman, Brown, Green, Longmans, and Roberts, 1859), 9.

<sup>9</sup> Of course, Burke, like many other Englishmen, assumed Indian society was organized akin to English society, or at least ancient English society. Burke says of the banya: "They have subverted the first houses; totally ruined and undone the country; cheated and defrauded the revenue; and kept people in India under a miserable state of beggary; until something or other has relieved them from this servitude." *Speeches of the Managers and Counsel in the Trial of Warren Hastings*, ed. E.A. Bond (London: Longman, Brown, Green, Longmans, and Roberts, 1859), 26.

<sup>10</sup> Burke, *Speeches*, 19-22.

<sup>11</sup> See, for example, Siraj Ahmed's *The Stillbirth of Capital*, Jenny Sharpe's *Allegories of Empire*, and Kate Teltscher's *India Inscribed*.

Parliamentary figures prior to the impeachment and the confusion between Indian people and Indian objects exhibited by writers such as Graham and Nugent in the decades to come. It is clear that Indians themselves were often represented as metonyms for Indian land, Indian wealth, Indian goods, and Indian markets in various forms of literature well into the nineteenth century. I argue that this prolific metonymy is owing in part to writers and commentators, who, in the late eighteenth century, disguised their interest in India's wealth with concern for Indian people and vice-versa, in order to construct ameliorative imperialisms. In Helenus Scott's *The Adventures of a Rupee* (1782) and Elizabeth Hamilton's *Translation of the Letters of a Hindoo Rajah* (1796), the better treatment of Indians justifies the improvement of revenues and wealth extracted from India so that there results a melding of two previously contending political ideologies: benevolence toward Indians and rights to private property and trade. *The Adventures of a Rupee* attempts to balance what is ultimately an inconsistent attitude towards wealth and trade that culminates in the transmission of wealth from India to England for the good of both the Indians and the British. Though the initial call for rights to private property in India was intended to justify EIC shareholders' claims to Indian territory, *Translation of the Letters of a Hindoo Rajah* counter-intuitively suggests that instituting British property rights in India is a means to restore ancient Hindu nobility's rights to land and power.

Tracing shifting opinions and political affiliations in parliamentary debates on the East India Company is no small task. After Clive's victory at the Battle of Plassey in 1757 and the EIC's acquisition of Bengal, the Company transformed from a primarily mercantile organization into a combined commercial and governing entity. The Company relied on Parliament to renew its charter, but the House of Commons was involved in an ongoing contest concerning the extent of the EIC's power in India. The Company's shareholders, motivated by personal profit,

attempted to retain the Company's Indian territories and used their powerful lobby in Parliament to obstruct attempts at reform, arguing for their rights to free trade and private property. Critics of the Company, seeking to increase the British public's revenues from the EIC, argued that its officers' personal interests outweighed its concern for the welfare of the British and Indian residents on the subcontinent and pushed for the nationalization of EIC territories.<sup>12</sup> The dispute was, however, merely an internal power struggle among factions within Parliament. If there was a movement that advocated for the British to remove their institutions from India altogether, it did not have a noteworthy voice in either the Company's leadership or Parliament.

Despite the shareholders' influence, the government gained increasing control over the EIC until its territories were finally nationalized with the establishment of the British Raj in 1858. As Burke noted in his opening speeches to the impeachment of Warren Hastings in 1788, the House of Commons had held a number of debates involving the Company since 1774.<sup>13</sup> In the preceding year, the Regulating Act of 1773 marked the first major reform of the Company since Plassey, appointing Warren Hastings as the Governor-General of India, who, with the Calcutta Council, dictated policy and authorized the Company's wars, a forced government reorganization of the questionably private EIC. After the Regulating Act, the shareholders capitalized on party politics and Parliamentary infighting to prevent or postpone further reforms, beginning with the Parliamentary debates over the Tea Act. The Tea Act of 1773 was intended to allow the Company to resume paying the British government its yearly annuity for retaining its monopoly on trade in India, which it had not been able to pay since 1768. Because an uptick in

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<sup>12</sup> See, for example, Burke's conclusion to his brief history of the EIC: "...the India Company became what it is, a great empire carrying on subordinately under the public authority a great commerce; it became that thing which was supposed by the Roman law so unsuitable – the same power was a trader, the same power was a Lord." Burke, *Speeches*, 15-6.

<sup>13</sup> Burke, *Speeches*, 6.

the sale of smuggled Dutch tea in the American colonies cut into the Company's revenues, Parliament attempted to help the EIC compete by excising the duty on its tea imports to the Americas, allowing it to sell tea that was rotting in warehouses in Britain. Though the Act lowered the price of tea, the American colonists resented Parliamentary impositions, responding with the Boston Tea Party and a halt in the export of goods from the colonies. As a result, "London merchants" submitted a petition to parliament in 1774, asking it to nullify the Tea Act, arguing that every time the government touched trade, profits stagnated. The debate that followed was polarized along party lines: Burke, Fox, and other Rockingham Whigs as well as EIC supporters sided with the colonies and the merchants in limiting government involvement in trade against Prime Minister Lord North and the Tory majority. In response to Burke's accusations, North replied, "...the great quantity of tea in the warehouses of the East-India Company, as appeared by the report of the secret committee, made it necessary to do something for the benefit of the company" and "it was impossible for him to foretell the Americans would resist being able to drink their tea at nine-pence in the pound cheaper."<sup>14</sup> Despite the Tea Act's designs to benefit the EIC, the London merchants' petition that parliament "enter into a full and immediate examination of that system of commercial policy, which was formerly adopted, and uniformly maintained" exemplified the Company shareholders' arguments against reform that would echo throughout the ensuing decades.<sup>15</sup>

The contending factions in the House of Commons' earlier debates, Lord North's Tories and Burke and Charles James Fox's Whigs, both made arguments in favor of the welfare of

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<sup>14</sup> For a transcript of the debate, see *The Parliamentary Register; or, History of the Proceedings and Debates of the House of Commons... during the First Session of the Fourteenth Parliament of Great Britain* (London: John Stockdale, J. Walker, R. Lea, and J. Nunn, 1802), January 23, 1775, v. 1, 111-119.

<sup>15</sup> *The Parliamentary Register*, January 23, 1775, v. 1, 111.

Indians and resident colonists, but their political allegiances caused them to habitually oppose one another. In 1777, for example, a resolution to approve of Lord Pigot and condemn the councilmen who imprisoned him in Madras spurred a debate that lasted until the early morning hours. George Pigot was appointed governor of Madras in 1775 and began a series of reforms under the orders of the Company directors. Among these reforms was the restoration of the Rajah of Tanjore, whose lands had been seized by the Nawab of Arcot, an action that no doubt would have pleased Burke, given his investment in restoring the Indian aristocracy. A number of British councilmen in Madras who were invested in the Nawab and receiving loan payments from the Rajah of Tanjore's seized properties opposed and eventually imprisoned Pigot.<sup>16</sup> Both Pigot's supporters and opponents applied to Parliament for a resolution, but in the debate that ensued, Lord Pigot, the Rajah of Tanjore, and the Nawab of Arcot all became political footballs in the Commons' rivalries; the Rockingham Whigs argued in favor of Lord Pigot and the Rajah of Tanjore, and the Tories sided with the Madras councilmen and the Nawab of Arcot. While Fox "gave the highest encomiums on the virtues and military talents of Lord Pigot," North described the Nawab as "a poor, needy, miserable, ill-treated, dependent prince, without power, protection, or internal resources."<sup>17</sup> Ultimately, Lord Pigot was vindicated, and both sides made use of pathos that would again be deployed in the Impeachment of Warren Hastings.

Parliamentarians loyal to the Company shareholders formed a third party in the Commons that both sides in the Lord Pigot debate would later oppose. When North proposed nationalizing trade in the East or replacing the EIC with a better, more efficient, and more

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<sup>16</sup> "Pigot, George," P.J. Marshall, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford UP, first published 2004, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/22244>.

<sup>17</sup> *Parliamentary Register*, May 22, 1777, v. 6, 220-33

conscientious company in 1780, Burke described the proposal as “the most wicked, absurd, abandoned, profligate, mad, and drunken intention, that was ever formed.”<sup>18</sup> In 1783, however, Fox and Burke joined with North to attempt to nationalize EIC territories as a result of their mutual opposition to the new Prime Minister, Lord Shelburne, and the EIC’s ruling committees, the Court of Directors and the Court of Proprietors.<sup>19</sup> Fox’s East India Bill garnered the support of North and his allies in order to both rescue the Company from its supposedly imminent bankruptcy and save the Hindus from the Company’s numerous wars. Fox noted that two committees of parliamentarians of various affiliations had agreed that “the farther they proceeded in their enquiries, the more it became evident that all the distress and difficulty of the Company was ascribable to the disobedience of the orders of the Court of Directors, and the rapacity of the Company’s servants in India.”<sup>20</sup> Fox suggested that there was an alliance between Hastings and the Proprietors, motivated by personal wealth and political gain rather than the Company’s well-being and the British public’s benefit.<sup>21</sup> William Pitt, who came to be the primary opponent to the Fox-North Coalition in the Commons, countered that Fox’s charges were fallacious and that

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<sup>18</sup> *Parliamentary Register*, March 21, 1780, v. 17, 30.

<sup>19</sup> The Court of Proprietors consisted of Company shareholders, and it appointed members to the Court of Directors. The Court of Directors was responsible for appointing or recalling the Governor-General of the EIC. The Proprietors and Directors were often successful in delaying Parliament’s attempts to nationalize and control the Company. When, for example, Parliament ordered the Court of Directors to recall Hastings earlier in 1783, the Directors applied to the Court of Proprietors for approval, but the Proprietors prevented the recall in order to maintain the status quo. *Parliamentary Register*, April 14, 1783, ser. 2 v. 9, 608-13.

<sup>20</sup> *Parliamentary Register*, ser. 2, v. 10, November 18, 1783, 31-4.

<sup>21</sup> Burke’s and Fox’s antipathy towards Hastings is also due to the influence of Sir Phillip Francis, a member of the Calcutta Council with designs on Hastings’ position as Governor-General. Francis, whose father served Fox’s family as a chaplain, communicated his criticism of Hastings to his friends in England during his tenure in India. After continual clashes in which Hastings was accused of accepting bribes and Francis of illicit affairs, they fought a duel that left Francis wounded. Francis returned to England in 1780, formed a close relationship with Burke, and acted as a witness in Burke’s Select Committee on Indian Affairs, presenting documents that turned Burke against Hastings. See Jeremy Bernstein, *Dawning of the Raj: The Life and Trials of Warren Hastings* (Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, 2000), 82, 148-169 and Nicholas B. Dirks, *The Scandal of Empire: India and the Creation of Imperial Britain* (Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard UP, 2006), 94-100.

Parliament should not attempt to alleviate oppression abroad by introducing oppression at home, that is, by seizing private property.<sup>22</sup>

The debate on Fox's East India Bill refined, tested, and solidified new political alliances and narratives that would be used in the impeachment of Warren Hastings. Pitt, his allies, and the Company's shareholders claimed the bill violated the "chartered rights of man" and feared the precedent it would set for government intrusions into private property.<sup>23</sup> Burke brilliantly countered that it was the Company's charter that violated the rights of man by granting only certain men a monopoly in India. Fox's bill, Burke argued, was "intended to form the *Magna Charta* [sic] of Hindostan," that is, to grant British notions of civil and property rights to Indians in Company territories.<sup>24</sup> Though it passed the Commons, the bill was rejected in the House of Lords, but the debate established talking points regarding rights to property, authority of government, definitions of private and public, and, perhaps most importantly, opposing views on the relationship between mercantilism and humanism. The next year, Pitt would be appointed Prime Minister, and, readily admitting his concurrence with the Court of Proprietors in the matter, Pitt proposed his own much weaker India bill. Explaining his reasons for proposing his own bill so soon after Fox's, Pitt admitted with obvious sarcasm that he was merely "so weak as to pay respect to the chartered rights of men, and that in proposing a new system of government and regulation, he did not disdain to consult with those, who having the greatest stake in the

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<sup>22</sup> *Parliamentary Register*, ser. 2 v. 12, November 26, 1783, 110-203

<sup>23</sup> Lord Temple, one of the most vocal members of the opposition to the bill, opened debate in the House of Lords by declaring, "it was a stretch of power that was truly alarming; it went near to seize upon the most inestimable part of our constitution, our chartered rights." The opposition to the bill was supported in part by the "Merchants of England Trading to the East Indies," presumably the EIC shareholders, who petitioned "that the bill destroys the constitution and wholly subverts the rights and privileges granted to [the merchants] by charter." *A Full and Accurate Account of the Debates on the East-India Bill, in the House of Lords...* (London: J. Stockdale, 1784), 2, 19.

<sup>24</sup> *Parliamentary Register*, ser. 2 v. 12, December 1, 1783, 213.



matter to be new-modelled, were likely to be the best capable of giving advice,” that is, the Company shareholders.<sup>25</sup>

In addition to censuring Hastings, the impeachment was meant to embarrass Pitt, who had previously approved of Hastings’ policies, and to provide a measured critique of imperial mercantilism.<sup>26</sup> As Siraj Ahmed argues, Burke’s understanding of “nation” was founded on an idealized ancient constitution, in actuality no more than a rhetorical construct. Likewise, his speeches were intended to inspire the British people to mimic the morality that this idealized ancient constitution entails.<sup>27</sup> If, as according to Burke, Fox’s East India Bill was “intended to form the *Magna Charta* [sic] of Hindostan,” Fox and Burke also conspired to invent Indian nationality, complete with a British notion of ancient chartered rights and a means for individuals to both acknowledge and resist its governing body, the British government.<sup>28</sup> In this sense, Burke’s intent was to create a faux Indian autonomy, imbuing the natives with the right to appeal the rulers’ decisions, but not to create the rulers themselves, circumscribing a potential Indian nationality within a greater British imperial identity. This, I believe, is the epitome of Burke’s ameliorative imperialism. Like the amelioration of slavery in the colonies, ameliorative imperialism often derived from a compromise between arguments concerning rights to private property and the fair treatment of human beings. Additionally, like the amelioration of slavery, ameliorative imperialisms attempted to recognize subjected peoples as both sources of profit and as beings invested with certain rights. While Burke’s brand of ameliorative imperialism sought to

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<sup>25</sup> *Parliamentary Register*, ser. 2 v. 17, January 14, 1783, 542-3.

<sup>26</sup> Patrick Turnbull, *Warren Hastings* (London: New English Library, 1975), 204-5.

<sup>27</sup> Siraj Ahmed, *The Stillbirth of Capital: Enlightenment Writing and Colonial India* (Stanford: Stanford UP, 2012), 136-40.

<sup>28</sup> *Parliamentary Register*, ser. 2 v. 12, December 1, 1783, 213.

improve the lives of Indians, it stopped short of granting them full autonomy, patching the leaks in the Empire's ship of state rather than allowing it to sink.

Strangely enough, it is because of these political and ideological attacks against Company officials and supporters that EIC territories continued to expand. As Nicolas B. Dirks argues, "public scandals become the ritual moments in which the sacrifice of the reputation of one or more individuals allows many more to continue their scandalous ways." Thus, the scandals involving Hastings and the Empire in India "allowed Burke to perform such powerful political magic" and "allowed empire to be 'reformed'" so that "empire itself [was] far less the issue than the scandals themselves."<sup>29</sup> As Kate Teltscher shows, Burke's speeches in the impeachment of Warren Hastings capitalized on sentimental portrayals of supposed horrors committed upon the Indian people, a position intended to exploit colonial guilt.<sup>30</sup> As an exemplary ameliorative imperialist, Burke produced testimonials from Gentoos, but only by proxy, speaking for Gentoos rather than allowing them to speak for themselves. Burke claimed that "that very element which, while appearing to disconnect, unites mankind – I mean the sea – is to them a forbidden element," causing them to forfeit caste if they were to travel to London.<sup>31</sup> Burke claimed that "if any Gentoo were to be prevailed upon to come to England, he was to be considered a person disregarding all obligations of religion, and consequently not entitled to credit as a witness."<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> Nicolas B. Dirks, *The Scandal of Empire: India and the Creation of imperial Britain* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard UP, 2006), 30-31.

<sup>30</sup> Kate Teltscher, *India Inscribed: European and British Writing on India 1600-1800* (New York: Oxford UP, 1995), 167.

<sup>31</sup> Burke, *Speeches*, 34.

<sup>32</sup> *The History of the Trial of Warren Hastings, Esq., Late Governor-General of Bengal: Before the High Court of Parliament in Westminster-Hall, on an Impeachment by the Commons of Great-Britain, for High Crimes and Misdemeanours, Containing the Whole of the Proceedings and Debates in Both Houses of Parliament, Relating to that Celebrated Prosecution, from Feb. 7, 1786, Until His Acquittal, April 23, 1795, to which is Added, an Account*

This marvelous piece of sophistry is based on three problematic assumptions: first, the Orientalists' common supposition of a single unified practice called "Gentooism,"<sup>33</sup> second, that irreligion or offenses against one's native religion constitutes unreliability as a witness, and third, that he is expert enough an Orientalist to make such a claim, an argument from authority that supersedes Indians' claims to authority on their own culture. The contradiction here is that of Orientalism itself: Orientalists' advocacy for a return to the ancient Gentoo governance that was meant to liberate the Gentoos from the Mughals actually subordinated them to British interpretations of Gentoo law and culture and therefore prevented Gentoos from speaking and acting for themselves. It goes without saying that because ancient India was ruled by Indians, the Orientalists' intent to restore ancient India is therefore impossible without granting India true autonomy. Burke's ameliorative imperialism renders Indians essentially voiceless, representing them as objects of sympathy rather than allowing them to be agents of their own liberation. While it is unclear whether or not Burke's sources were reliable or real, British commentators commonly either translated or invented Indian testimonials in order to supply reports from Gentoos that were sympathetic to their own political causes.

I am interested, then, in the invention of Indian characters and Indian testimonials to support such British political standpoints, their ameliorative imperialisms. The Anglo-Indian novels of the 1780s and 90s were very much entrenched in ameliorative imperialisms, and, like Burke, authors routinely created Indian perspectives to lend support to their politics. Phebe

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*of the Proceedings of Various General Courts of the Honourable United East-India Company, Held in Consequence of His Acquittal* (London: J. Debrett and Vernor and Hood, 1796), v. 2, 56.

<sup>33</sup> Recall Urs App's argument that John Z. Holwell invented Hinduism as a unified practice consumable and understandable by British Orientalists based on his observations of Indian culture in his *Interesting Historical Events, Relative to the Provinces of Bengal, and the Empire of Hindostan* (1765). Urs App, *The Birth of Orientalism* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2010).

Gibbes' *Hartly House, Calcutta* (1789), for example, praises Lord Cornwallis as an agent of justice who punishes an EIC officer for crimes against a fictional wronged Indian family, one of whom acts as a "witness" against the accused.<sup>34</sup> Though the officer's violence is horrendous, Gibbes does not posit the crime as a reason to liberate India so much as an absurd argument to continue the work of empire: British power is necessary to combat the potential atrocities of British power in India. This chapter analyzes three novels that invent Indian characters to support their own political and ideological positions. I argue that, despite their disparate genres, the "it" narrative in *Adventures of a Rupee* (1782), the satirical *Translation of the Letters of a Hindoo Rajah* (1796), and the children's novel, *The Asiatic Princess* (1800), are similar in that they all create perspectives of the "other" founded in a British sense of fundamental "chartered" rights. The novels thus legitimize particular brands of ameliorative imperialism. Interestingly enough, these schemes resemble the multifarious arguments presented in Parliament between the Regulating Act of 1773 and the end of the impeachment of Warren Hastings in 1795. The legitimacy that these created Indian characters offer to these schemes, however, are doubly unstable, not only because they are literary fictions constructed upon political fictions, but also because those political fictions were constantly changing. The result is a confusion between the Parliamentary narrative of responsible governance and its echo, that of British individuals' right to private property in India. This confusion in turn confounds these novels' representations of Indian people, Indian objects, and Indian marketplaces.

My first section, "A Fearful Idol and a Dangerous Fetish," that is, wealth, explores the national identity of the eponymous narrator of *Adventures of a Rupee* to suggest that the rupee is not so much Indian as it is "curious" and a "curiosity:" the Indian object is interested in

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<sup>34</sup> Phebe Gibbes, *Hartly House, Calcutta*, ed. Michael J. Franklin (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2007), 105-6, 158.

“Britishness” as much as the British are interested in “Indianness” and desires to be possessed by British people. Since *Adventures* portrays wealth, trade, and greed as forces that both harm and improve British and Indian societies, *Adventures of a Rupee* exhibits uncertainty as to the morality of British imperialism and mercantilism. Its ameliorative imperialism counter-intuitively calls for the continued movement of wealth from India to Britain for the betterment of India. My second section, “The Manufactured Indian Traveler,” examines *Translations of a Hindoo Rajah* to contextualize the thinly veiled English subjectivity of the fictional Hindoo. Hamilton ventriloquizes a Hindoo traveler, the witness that Burke failed to produce in the impeachment of Warren Hastings, as a means to justify writing British property rights into Indian law. My third section, “The Adopted ~~Slave~~ ~~Servant~~ Child,” describes the slippage between Indian children, servants, and slaves in *The Asiatick Princess* as well as the sensibility and charity they might engender in the British people. Ultimately, these novels demonstrate British writers’ confusion between the Indians themselves and the wealth that India can produce.

#### A Fearful Idol and a Dangerous Fetish:

Published in 1782 when Burke’s campaign against Hastings was in its formative years, Helenus Scott’s *The Adventures of a Rupee*, true to its title, is narrated by the spirit that inhabits an Indian gold coin. Like many other authors, Scott had not yet gone to India before writing *Adventures of a Rupee*.<sup>35</sup> The rupee begins its history with a description of its humble beginnings as an indistinct clod of dirt. It is then melted down and formed into a coin, whereupon it finds its way to the King of Mysore, an English pawn shop, and finally a storehouse for a society of

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<sup>35</sup> Scott would go to India in service to the EIC as a military surgeon after the novel’s publication. Ashok Malhotra, *Making British Indian Fictions, 1772-1823* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 124-5.

antiquarians, telling stories of the people it encounters along the way. This particular object narrative is interesting in that the narrator, the rupee, is literally Indian wealth, and it embodies the “commercial interest” exhibited by many commentators on India, according to Graham. Furthermore, though it exhibits a questionable “Indianness,” it assumes the perspective of the “other,” resembling the second major concern among ameliorative imperialists, Indian people. Like many other object narratives, the rupee reports the histories of its owners as it changes hands, thereby incorporating multiple perspectives on Indian and English culture.

Known primarily for his work in medicine, Scott is rarely recognized by eighteenth-century scholars for his novels. According to Ashok Malhotra, his rupee is “a metonym of modern global exchanges of commerce, finance, and colonialism” in which wealth flows from East to West just as the rupee itself travels from India to England. As an object, it can “transgress cultural and national boundaries,” and Scott “espouses a commercial rather than military empire.”<sup>36</sup> Felicity A. Nussbaum mentions it briefly as one example among many in which “claims to universalism mask the Europeans’ attitude of superiority to Indians, which is oddly combined with an adulation of Hindu spirituality and a fascination with the transmigration of the soul.”<sup>37</sup> As both primordial material and crafted artifact, the rupee’s objecthood suggests its claim to impartiality, but the rupee nevertheless affirms colonial hierarchies of ideology and complexion.

Despite the fact that the rupee originates in India, it exhibits a distinctly ancient Greek worldview. The rupee recounts that before it was melted down into a rupee, it “was then

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<sup>36</sup> Malhotra, 126.

<sup>37</sup> Felicity A. Nussbaum, *Torrid Zones: Maternity, Sexuality, and Empire in Eighteenth-Century English Narratives* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1995), 169

undistinguished from the clods that surrounded [it] by the splendour of [its] appearance, or the ductility of [its] substance; but [it] contained within [itself] the principles of [its] future form,” demonstrating an Epicurean approach to matter in suggesting that it retained its inherent properties before its shape was changed.<sup>38</sup> By invoking ancient Greek philosophy, it connects its ideology to Britain, in the British Enlightenment’s claim to intellectual descent from ancient Greece, and to India, in Orientalists’ assertion of the similarity between Indian and ancient Greek mythology. As such, it implies that spiritual truth lies in a universal primordial metaphysics. Upon discovering that man is “superior to all the other animals in the qualities [sic] of his mind,” it endeavors to gain notice by reflecting sunlight in order to make itself conspicuous (3) and continues:

It must be observed before we continue farther, that every piece of gold contains within itself a certain number of spirits, which men have foolishly called qualities.<sup>39</sup> These spirits are known amongst mortals by the names of ductility, malleability, fusibility, &c. &c. and over these there is a superior spirit, to which they are all subordinate. This superior is myself, the Author of this History. The Ancients called me Phlogiston; and by some of the Moderns I am named the principle of Inflammability.<sup>40</sup> But, whatever appellation you give to the God of gold, it is certain that I am who the Persians formerly worshipped, and whom all the nations of the earth adore at present. (10)

The spirit of the rupee is universally recognized, rendering it amenable to Eastern and Western philosophies both modern and ancient. The rupee thus proposes a universalism that suggests a fluidity between the metaphysics and mythos of various peoples around the world, which in turn implies the rupee’s deism. Likewise, it represents itself as, “at present,” adored by all “nations of

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<sup>38</sup> Helenus Scott, *The Adventures of a Rupee. Wherein Are Interspersed Various Anecdotes Asiatic and European* (London: J. Murray, 1782), 1-2. Further references to this edition will appear parenthetically in the text.

<sup>39</sup> Here, the rupee refers to the Ancient Greek Philosophers’ problem of the universals, in which they questioned whether relational qualities exist in reality or are simply mental constructs.

<sup>40</sup> “Phlogiston” is the element of fire that the Ancient Greeks supposed were contained in objects and released during combustion. The “God of gold” is therefore the personification of fire.

the earth,” uniting all nations in the interest of capital for better or worse. Furthermore, its supposed godhead lends further credence to the rupee’s claim to a unitary spiritual truth. The rupee’s implication regarding the connection between ancient Greece and India resembles that of the British Orientalists’ insistence on Indian culture’s semblance to various ancient European cultures. In short, the rupee takes British Orientalism and deism a step further to imagine Indian mythology as closely descended from a primordial culture, a culture that understood universal spiritual truth. Though at one point the rupee notes that England is a place “where men, I have been told, are acquainted with true religion” (24-26), the qualification “I have been told” and the lack of specificity of the “true religion” suggests an uncertainty as to whether Anglicanism or any form of Christianity holds universal truth. Also, the rupee ends its travels in a British antiquarian society’s storehouse, implicating it as an artifact of universal truth observable by the British.

The rupee not only renders its own ideology as elevated above all others, but it also presumes the moral high ground in its portrayal of human nature; though the rupee itself has no desire to add to its own wealth, it has a unique insight into greed. According to the rupee, avarice is common to all cultures, given that all nations worship gold, but this unity in avarice also creates strife. When two Indians first discover it, the soon-to-be rupee causes an argument in which “blows succeeded words” and “an old acquaintance, and the firmest ties that friendship can form, was dissolved in an instant on [its] account” (5). Humorously enough, as a result of the conflict, the rupee is “elated at the discovery of [its] consequence” (6). It therefore sets itself apart from its masters by both its unique perspective and its exceptionalism, identifying itself as foreign to Indian culture and taking humanity as its object of study. The rupee goes on to describe the villainy of Jaffier Kan, a Hindu holy man who uses religion to “seduce young



women under pretence [sic] of curing their souls,” and “when he was consulted about stolen goods, took the opportunity of stealing” (12). Clearly, though the young women are fooled by the performance, the rupee is able to see through Jaffier’s corruption to paint him as the archetypal religious charlatan, a trope common to satires on religion. Instead of proclaiming the falsity or corruption of Gentoism, the rupee notes that “no garb is more deceitful than the religious one” (12), using the word “religious” to keep from specifying Gentoism, implicating all religion in this form of corruption. In recounting his acquisition of valuables, Jaffier notes that he received a “watch from a dishonourable servant of the East India Company, for frightening an honest man’s wife into a dishonest deed,” incriminating the Briton with the Indian to suggest the potential degeneracy of both complexions and nationalities. Like Burke in his speeches in the trial of Warren Hastings, the rupee both recognizes the corrupting influence of wealth on nations the world over and casts itself as an idealized Orientalist who is above colonial prejudices.

The rupee exhibits a preference for England above all other nations. After witnessing the false piety of fakirs, Hindu priests who supposedly prey on gullible common folk, the rupee wishes “that fortune may some time or other carry [it] to England; for without doubt, that great East India Company, which can keep black men in such good order at so great a distance, will not be so priest-ridden at home” (13). The rupee assumes that distance is an impediment to governance so that it both qualifies the failures of EIC policy and enhances the Company’s merits, allying itself with the EIC without specifying which officers or leaders it supports. Thus, though the rupee describes individual officers’ corruption, it attests to the overall virtue of the Company. An industrious young man later in the novel praises the Company’s meritocracy in a critique of nepotism in the British army: “May we not account for the great success of the India Company, by the manner their officers attain a high command. It is not because a man is of a

noble family, or has a weighty purse; it is known abilities and former services that entitle him to a distinguished rank” (209). The novel therefore elevates one British institution over another, qualifying its praise of some aspects of Britain with some critiques; it describes Britain as imperfect, but better than India.

The novel’s brand of ameliorative imperialism justifies the Company’s acquisition of wealth by praising British “modern” free-trade practices by comparison to antiquated and duplicitous Indian systems of transaction, as demonstrated by the way the rupee moves through in India. After being “squeezed into a dirty purse and hid below the earth” (6) for several years, perhaps a reference to the parable of the talents, implying that capital uninvested or unspent as immoral, a poor Indian gives the rupee to the fakir and con-man, Jaffier Kan, as charity.<sup>41</sup> It then moves to Hyder Alli, who “was of a very different complexion from [Jaffier Kan]; he was as far raised above the last in real merit, as fortune had placed him in station” (35).<sup>42</sup> “Complexion” here, though seemingly an indication of racial bias, refers to his morality rather than his skin color, though tying “different complexion” to virtue is somewhat suspicious. In an act of supposed benevolence, Hyder invites Jaffier and other fakirs to dine and drink at his palace, but, knowing that they hide their wealth in their old tattered clothes, Hyder insists that they trade their rags for new garments. For fear that the duplicity of their vows of poverty will be revealed, they agree to the exchange, and the rupee passes on. Its third transaction completes its migration from masters of darker complexions to those of lighter complexion: in an act of philanthropy, Hyder, moved by the plaintive story of a Scotswoman captured in battle and newly admitted to his

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<sup>41</sup> See Matthew 25:14-30.

<sup>42</sup> Hyder Ali was king of Mysore between 1761 and 1782. After two his wars with the EIC, his successor, Tipoo Sultan, lost control of Mysore to the Company. Oddly, the rupee first praises Hyder Ali for his charity, valor, and sensibility (22, 66, 78), but it later describes him as vicious and bloodthirsty (197) upon seeing the comparative benevolence of the royal family of Great Britain.

seraglio, releases her, her lover, and her brother and gives them some rupees to make their way home. After it passes into the hands of Europeans, it moves largely by trade and charity rather than duplicity, suggesting a morality to Westerners' trade by comparison to Easterners' fraud. Though the rupee does not prefer the inherent value of one nation's people to another, it does espouse British bourgeois mercantilist ethics, and the novel links this ethics in trade to nationality.

The history of the Scotswoman, Maria Melville, suggests some interesting commentary on nationality and gender as well. When her brother and lover enlist as Company officers and her father dies, Maria is forced to reside with a jealous aunt, who attempts to marry her to a coxcomb. After refusing his hand, her aunt treats her with coldness, and she resolves to join her brother and her lover in India. On the voyage, a sailor attempts to rape her, and after he is prevented from doing so by her cries for help, he spreads lies about her complicity in the assault, which "was believed by all the female passengers" (75). Reunited with her brother and lover in Madras, she has no choice but to attend them on a campaign against Hyder Alli. Hyder's forces prove victorious, and she presumes her relations dead when Hyder takes her into his seraglio. Moved by her account of her travails, Hyder reunites her with her brother and intended husband, whom were being held in prison, and Maria marries her lover while still a virgin. Though the novel clearly implicates India as a site of horrendous masculine tyranny, Maria's attempted prostitution at the hands of her aunt hardly casts Scotland as a locus for gender equality. In any case, it is clear that the novel positions Scotland as somewhat more equitable towards women than India, given that Maria is able to refuse the coxcomb's proposal, but not Hyder Alli's seraglio. The rupee prefaces Hyder and Maria's conversation by referring the reader to Montesquieu's *The Persian Letters* for a picture of the seraglio and by addressing the "Happy

women of England, whom custom and religion have made the equals of men!” (38), differentiating England from India by characterizing the seraglio as a locus of masculine tyranny.<sup>43</sup> Though expectations of the seraglio as a place where women are enslaved are mitigated by Hyder’s kindness, Maria is nevertheless treated as a spoil of war, echoing Montesquieu’s representation of Islamic attitudes towards women. Thus, we find degrees in gender equality according to locale, ranging from enslavement in the Indian seraglio to ill-treatment in Scotland to alleged equality in England. This deliberate subordination of Scotland to England is strange, considering that Scott was born and educated in Scotland. We should note, however, that the rupee proves itself misogynistic immediately after touting England’s supposed gender equality, differentiating this Anglo-Indian novel from those written by women with the infantilizing sentiment, “The little impulses which nature dictates, the gentle desires which a new object may excite, are no crimes in you [Englishwomen]!” (39).

Though the rupee’s movement west suggests that wealth is better kept in England than in India for its ethics in both trade and equality, the novel counter-intuitively portrays British mercantilism and the migration of capital to England as beneficial in India. Upon sending his son to India as a Company officer, Maria’s father gives her brother this advice:

Your particular province is to protect the trade of your country, against the insults of European powers, or of the Indian nations, who, ignorant of the blessings that commerce diffuses, even to themselves, are often disposed to interrupt its equitable course. The prosperity therefore of trade, is what you are to have in view, not the extension of settlement, and much less your private advantage. Your profits will be sufficient for your wants, and if your good behavior allows you to advance to a high rank, they may even enable you to return to your country with honourable wealth. In this station in India, my son, you may enjoy the honor of rectifying particular abuses; you may be blessed by those nations, that have so often cursed our rapacity; and the heart of your old father may beat high with the idea of having given life to a benefactor of mankind. (51-4)

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<sup>43</sup> For a more in-depth look at Montesquieu’s characterization of the seraglio, see E.J. Hundert, “Sexual Politics and the Allegory of identity in Montesquieu’s ‘Persian Letters,’” *The Eighteenth Century*, 31:2 (1990): 101-115.

We can compare the old man's advice to Burke's call for greater morality and oversight during the impeachment of Warren Hastings:

Situated as [England] is – an object, thank God! of envy to the rest of the world for its greatness and power – its conduct in that very elevated position will undoubtedly be scrutinized. It is well known that great wealth has poured into this country from India; and it is no derogation to suppose the possibility of being corrupted by that [wealth] by which great empires have been corrupted, and by which assemblies almost as respectable and venerable as your Lordships' have been known to be indirectly shaken.<sup>44</sup>

Both the old man and Burke recognize the corrupting influence of the money and power the British attain in India. Likewise, both acknowledge the potential for young men to be corrupted in the Company's service due to legal laxities and temptations to immorality in India.<sup>45</sup> While acknowledging the "rapacity" the British have exhibited, however, the old man nevertheless holds to the supposition that British commerce in India is beneficial to the Indians.

The novel's argument that the movement of wealth from India to England is beneficial to Indians is based on the supposition that the presence of great wealth in India is the cause of infighting among Indian and European powers, and therefore, the removal of wealth from India would alleviate strife. In short, the novel suggests that India is better off poor. The removal of wealth from the hands of Indians may ultimately prevent their corruption, but it remains a potentially corrupting influence on the young British men who acquire said wealth. The combination of the rupee's importance and its propensity to divide people from one another identify it, and by extension Indian wealth in general, as a fearful idol and a dangerous fetish: it is a powerful thing that can ruin people and cultures if used improperly, but can also be used to

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<sup>44</sup> Burke, *Speeches... in the Trial of Warren Hastings*, 9.

<sup>45</sup> See Burke, *Speeches*, 19-21.

improve people's lives around the world. The fraud and violence it inspires among greedy Indians and the conscientious Scottish family's more justifiable need for it suggests that the British are more capable of using it to advantage, while to Indians it is often harmful. Nevertheless, the Scottish family's attempt to alleviate India of its wealth in battle meets with dangerous opposition among resistant Indians, resulting in their imprisonment. Wealth in this novel is a veritable "white man's burden," but the "white man" is uniquely endowed to control it.

Although the rupee speaks positively about British mercantilism in India, its later descriptions of the rich preying upon the poor would seem to contradict its assertion as to the beneficial nature of Indian wealth when it arrives in England. Signor Antonio, a good Italian man exiled to England, upon recounting his journey through "Inspruck" (176), exclaims, "Tyrolefians... your situation and poverty defend you against oppression! Tyrolefians you have no science, but you have innocence, you have no politics, but you have happiness" (177). This description of poverty as a means to prevent subjugation is consistent with eighteenth-century histories of India, which tend to characterize India's wealth as irresistible to conquerors. Poverty, however, is not a consistent defense against the predation of greed. Upon being questioned as to why he had no front teeth, a twelve-year-old chimney sweep replies, "my mother sold them when I was young, to a dentist, who transplanted them into the head of an old lady of quality. But I had the pleasure of hearing since, that her gums, rotten with disease and sweetmeats, did not long retain my property, for they fell down her throat, one night when she was asleep, and she never once awakened since that time." Whatever triumph we may find in this darkly comic satire on wealth and class is negated by the chimney sweep's sister, who "is much worse off than [he] is, for she has nothing in her head but her naked jaws, since she was nine years of age. It is but poor comfort to her that her teeth are at court, while she lives at home on slops, without any

hopes of a husband” (184-5). Though poverty protects Inspruck from oppression, it occasions horrors perpetrated on the poor of England in a scene loaded with the pathos common to sentimental literature, a pathos typical of an author’s call for sensibility. Thus the novel seems to advocate an odd blend of mercantilism in its praise of trade and paternalism in its call for sentiment and benefaction from those with wealth and power. Its mercantilism is consistent with EIC lobbyists’ claims as to the benefits of the present system of Company rule, while its paternalism seems consistent with the Burke’s insistence on the corrupting influence of wealth and its call for working towards ameliorative imperialism by improving individuals. The multiple perspectives in these interpolated stories thus corroborate the conflicting political values of the right to private property and the need for government oversight, reflecting the myriad inconsistent opinions on trade and government in India at this time, and rendering the feasibility and logic of its ameliorative imperialism particularly questionable.

The novel, however, takes pains to differentiate English wealth from Indian wealth: while it represents English wealth as a cause for the callous oppression of the English poor, it affords Indian wealth positive affect as a sentimental object when transmitted to England. Upon its arrival in England, the rupee is largely divested of its intrinsic value since it cannot easily be exchanged as currency, but it instead becomes invested with sentimental value. The rupee notes its first exchange in England: “As I was no longer a current coin, but a kind of curiosity, Jack resolved to keep me, for a present of true love, as he called it, to Molly Black” (39).

Unfortunately, Jack finds himself destitute on a visit to his mother in London, and he instead sells the rupee to a pawn shop with a pang, “for the idea of Molly Black, to whom he now had nothing left to give, returned in its full vigour” (118). The rupee cannot be spent, but it can be sold, expressing a complex identity as both sentimental object and commercial asset. In the pawn

shop, we find that the paradoxical nature of sentimental objects, that is, the contradiction between an object's commercial value and its sentimental value, reflects the paradox of the novel's praise for British mercantilism and its call for paternalism. If, as Lynn Festa argues, "by relegating possession of [sentimental] objects to a purely private domain," sentimentality "acts as if objects were bound to individuals through exclusively affective ties," we can ask whether or not the marketplace can effectively transmit sentimental value when it is resold.<sup>46</sup>

To answer this question, we can consider what of the objects' histories the pawn shop can retain and transmit to potential buyers. In the pawn shop, the rupee becomes both a curiosity and an agent of sentiment, relaying the woes of the shop's visitors. The rupee describes its surroundings in catalogues similar to that of Graham's description of an Indian bazaar, but the shop "inspires [the rupee] with a sort of horror [it] has never seen before" (118):

First then, take a view of that window, where such variety of trinkets are displayed. Those watches that were wont to mark the course of chearful [sic] hours, are now silent at the lapse of time, which they were designed to measure. They point at different parts of their circle, you see, according as they were last animated by their unfortunate masters. That ring was perhaps in remembrance of the purest flame that love can excite, and may have been worn by some gentle maid. This one is a wedding ring; it has been witness of the fairest pleasures that heaven bestows on mortals. Sad misfortunes alone could force its mistress to expose it to sale; perhaps this was the only one by which she could support the helpless offspring of that union it was to celebrate. (119-20)

If Graham's Indian bazaar resembles an English comedy, the rupee's pawn shop engenders tragedy. The pawn shop is a sink hole for objects that have been stripped of their sentimental value, a sort of graveyard for sentiment. Since the histories of these objects do not increase the price at which they can be sold, these objects cannot translate sentimental value into commercial value. Graham's bazaar is associated with feelings of energy and curiosity, even more so than the

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<sup>46</sup> Lynn Festa, *Sentimental Figures of Empire in Eighteenth-Century Britain and France* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 2006), 94.



greed and materialism we might expect to find in such a marketplace. By contrast, the pawn shop in England is a locus for “sad misfortunes,” invoking feelings of loss and decay. In this sense, objects load their marketplaces with different forms of affect just as marketplaces load their goods with disparate sentiments. The rupee leaves the shop when it is sold to a dealer in gold, presumably for the value of its material rather than its sentimental value, and then moves on to a series of false lovers. The novel therefore represents the rupee as a failed sentimental object in that its sentimental value is lost in its transmission.

Though we might be tempted to surmise that assigning sentimental value to the rupee is the mechanism by which the English can redeem otherwise dangerous Indian wealth, the pawn shop indicates otherwise. Where the rupee becomes most effective and beneficial is in possession of the British public and when it is kept for understanding rather than remaining in private and kept for sentiment or as a commodity. The rupee eventually makes its way to the Princess, where it contrasts Hyder Alli, who “was constantly forming designs to accomplish his bloody purpose” (197) to “Britannia’s queen,” who “wishes well to all mankind, and that they may be happy she points out the road of virtue in her own practice, by which alone they can attain it” (198). Though it never sees the king, the rupee praises him as well, declaring, “Great monarch, into whatever country your free born subjects move, they will carry in their hands both victory and law!” The “subjects,” in imitating their rulers, are the purveyors of order, proposing that British nationalism is intrinsically valuable to the world. The suggestion is clear: the greatest good that Indian wealth can accomplish is when it is in the hands of the British royal family, and when in possession by the royal family, it acts to the benefit of the British public and the world by extension. By the end of the novel, the rupee finds itself in “the storehouse of a society of antiquarians, where, with medals, busts, inscriptions, and other of [its] learned brethren, [it]

spends its hours in separating truth from the ashes of time” (222). It is invested with cultural and historical value, and it becomes a cultural historian itself, similar to an Orientalist, finishing the novel as an expert on human nature to legitimize its preceding observations.

Ultimately, the rupee’s character is determined by its context and the value that others assign to it: it wishes to be traded when regarded as a commodity, it becomes sentimental in the pawn shop, and it becomes a cultural historian in the antiquarian society. The rupee’s paradoxical descriptions of commerce and sympathy also reflect the varied interests of the EIC’s supporters and opponents. Ultimately, it is in possession of the British public that Indian wealth becomes an agent for good, seeming to support ameliorative imperialists like Burke on the necessity of nationalizing the EIC. Representations of commerce between individuals in India are, nevertheless, offered in a favorable light and are the means by which Indian wealth is ultimately transmitted to the British public. This odd compromise between opposing positions in debates on India, between sensibility and trade, leaves the novel rife with inconsistencies, but the novel nevertheless attempts to justify the British acquisition of Indian wealth.

### The Manufactured Indian Traveler

Published one year after the end of Hastings’ trial, Elizabeth Hamilton’s *Translation of the Letters of a Hindoo Rajah* (1796) is an epistolary novel that controverts Burke’s assertion of Hastings’ villainy. Whereas Burke failed to produce an Indian witness, reasoning that for such a witness to leave India would violate a Gentoo’s faith so that any testimony at the impeachment hearings would be unreliable, Hamilton shores up her support for Hastings by imagining Hindoo travelers narrating their experiences in Europe. *Translation* features the young Rajah of Almora, a nobleman named Zaarmilla, who, after encountering a virtuous Englishman, becomes

fascinated with European culture. Despite the objections of Maandaara, a zamindar, and Sheermaal, a Brahmin, Zaarmilla travels to England and reports his observations to Maandaara. Zaarmilla writes, “It is by the breath of Ganesa, that the flame of curiosity has been kindled in my bosom.”<sup>47</sup> Curiosity here is an important drive for Zaarmilla, as it was to many British travelers who ventured to India, but Zaarmilla endows it with a religious significance. Perhaps an implicit response to Burke’s argument against Indian witnesses, the novel plays up Zaarmilla’s devotion to indicate his reliability as a potential witness for Hastings’ defense. Once in England, Zaarmilla is appalled when he is falsely assumed to have travelled in order to speak for the prosecution against Hastings. After some time in England, his initial impressions of the novelty and brilliance of England fades, and he comes to moderate his initial impression of the English with experience. The novel concludes with a critique of the skepticism and atheism of such radical figures as David Hume, in line with Hamilton’s conservatism.

Recent criticism has sufficiently demonstrated that Hamilton was not strictly supportive of British imperial policy, nor was she an exemplar of British conservatism. Zaarmilla’s initial praise for the “benevolent people of England” who visited India “to rescue [his] nation from the hands of the oppressor” (84), the Muslim Rohillas, had been misread as Hamilton’s tacit support

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<sup>47</sup> Hamilton defines “Zimeendar” as “A landowner,” but it was formerly a term for revenue collectors (*OED*). Though Hamilton doesn’t define “rajah” in her glossary, it was originally the word for an Indian king, but came to be extended to petty chiefs, landowners, or Hindu nobility (*OED*). From the context of the novel, though Zaarmilla may be elevated over his friend Maandaara, it is clear they both own land and manage prominent households. “Zemindar, n.,” *OED Online*, accessed September 2015, Oxford UP, <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/232770?redirectedFrom=zamindar> (accessed October 08, 2015). “Raja, n.1,” *OED Online*, September 2015, Oxford UP, <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/157633?rskey=0ODvf5&result=1&isAdvanced=false> (accessed October 08, 2015).

“Ganesa,” or Ganesha, is the elephant-headed God of Wisdom, in contemporary Hinduism. Elizabeth Hamilton, *Translation of the Letters of a Hindoo Rajah*, ed. Pamela Perkins and Shannon Russell (Petersborough, Ontario: Broadview Press, 1999), 99. Further references to this edition will appear parenthetically in the text.

for the British imperial project, but recent work has repeatedly shown this passage to be ironic.<sup>48</sup> Srinivas Aravamudan, for example, points out the contradiction between Zaarmilla's misunderstanding of British intent and Hamilton's preliminary dissertation, which acknowledges that "the thirst for conquest and desire of gain" is what initially drew "the enlightened regions of Europe toward the fruitful regions of Hindoostan" (55).<sup>49</sup> Reading *Translation* as much more critical of empire, Sonja Lawrenson suggests that, as a Scottish woman born in Belfast who spent 4 months in Ireland surrounded by Jacobins and Irish revolutionaries, Hamilton writes from the peripheries of the Empire in a much more complex engagement with colonial and political issues.<sup>50</sup> Consequently, Lawrenson calls Hamilton's supposed anti-Jacobinism into question. Likewise, recent criticism has controverted Hamilton's anti-feminism to cast her as a more of a progressive figure than previously thought. Mona Narain describes Hamilton's novel as a critique of the problematic masculinist empire constructed by Burke's paternalism, but the novel's eventual reiteration of the possibility of Britain rescuing a feminized India allows the narrative to be coopted by the imperial imagination.<sup>51</sup>

Therefore, the general bent of recent criticism has been to evince Hamilton's sense of comradery with Indians as fellow feminized members of the periphery of the Empire, but the novel doesn't go so far as to advocate for Indian autonomy. If Hamilton did indeed intend a

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<sup>48</sup> For a more in depth discussion of the misinterpretation of this passage, see Julie Straight "Promoting Liberty through Universal Benevolence in Elizabeth Hamilton's *Translation of the Letters of a Hindoo Rajah*," *Eighteenth-Century Fiction*, 25:3 (Spring 2013): 602-9.

<sup>49</sup> Srinivas Aravamudan, *Enlightenment Orientalism: Resisting the Rise of the Novel* Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2012), 104.

<sup>50</sup> Sonja Lawrenson, "Revolution, Rebellion, and a Rajah from Rohilkhand: Recontextualizing Elizabeth Hamilton's *Translation of the Letters of a Hindoo Rajah*," *Studies in Romanticism*, 51:2 (Summer 2012): 131, 134-5.

<sup>51</sup> Mona Narain, "Colonial Desires: The Fantasy of Empire and Elizabeth Hamilton's *Translation of the Letters of a Hindoo Rajah*," *Studies in Romanticism*, 45:4 (Winter 2006): 587.

sense of fellowship among Scottish women, Irish revolutionaries, and Indians, any support for Indian autonomy is impossible due to her reliance on the two opposing political positions in and around the Hastings trial. Hamilton corroborates William Pitt's arguments regarding rights to private property and joins them with Burke's exhortation to benevolence towards the Gentoos to suggest yet another form of ameliorative imperialism. As Siraj Ahmed argues, the novel reiterates the "Orientalist model of colonialist rule: it joins Indian myth to English political economy," and "the novel defends British rule by arguing that it alone possessed the scholarly competence to align ancient mysteries with global modernism."<sup>52</sup> By "English political economy," Ahmed refers to Lord Cornwallis' 1793 Act of Permanent Settlement, which ushered in a new system of taxation in which zamindars were officially granted ownership of their property and guaranteed that their taxes would not be increased in order to encourage them to improve their lands' future productivity by improving its infrastructure. As Ahmed points out, this scheme was intended to create a class of land-owning Indian entrepreneurs, transforming "native elites into gentleman farmers" and melding existing Indian bureaucracy with a British sense of property rights in what Ahmed calls "aristocratic capitalism."<sup>53</sup> He goes on to describe Zaarmilla's movement from India to the English countryside, where the Indian traveler sees aristocratic capitalism first-hand. His observations of the "agricultural improvements" (293) of the benevolent landowner, Mr. Darnley, is symbolic of the means by which Indians' understanding of aristocratic capitalism could alleviate the ravages of the British mercantilism. Thus, Ahmed suggests that Hamilton advocates the restoration of Indian aristocracy while

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<sup>52</sup> Siraj Ahmed, *The Stillbirth of Capital: Enlightenment Writing and Colonial India* (Stanford: Stanford UP, 2012), 183.

<sup>53</sup> Ahmed, *The Stillbirth of Capital*, 181-2.

justifying continued British dominion in India, an echo of the Lord Pigot debate in which British Parliamentarians took it upon themselves to determine which Indian ruler should control contested lands. Though Romantic Irish and Scottish narratives tend to celebrate attempts for autonomy from England, Hamilton's novel shows the potential alliance between the peripheries of the Empire to ameliorate rather than combat British imperialism.

Establishing Indians' rights to private property is more prominent in this novel than would seem at first glance. The novel begins in the aftermath of the Battle of Cutterah, the decisive victory that won the Rohilla War for the EIC. As Pamela Perkins and Shannon Russell point out, the image of the Rohilla War was central to Hamilton's critique of Burke's charges against Hastings. While Burke aggrandized the Muslim Rohillas as benevolent rulers, Hamilton demonstrates Hastings' generosity toward Hindus affected by Rohilla tyranny.<sup>54</sup> As Aravamudan notes, Hamilton depicts the British restoring zamindars to ascendancy in their own lands.<sup>55</sup> According to Zaarmilla, the "sons of mercy," the British, by checking "the fury of the Afgan [sic] Khans," allow the rajah to resume communication with Maandaara (78). Soon after, Maandaara is restored to his own zamindary, so that he "mayest return in peace to the land of [his] fathers" and "spread his feast for the poor, and afford shelter to the oppressed" (138), a trickle-down effect of charity. Zaarmilla had rejoiced to hear that with the fall of the Rohillas also came the restoration of Beass Raye, "that pious Hindoo who had shed so many tears over the misfortunes of his country" and wrote of Rohilla oppression "in such true, and lively colors" (146). Though he notes that Beass Raye later oppressed the Rohillas in turn, Zaarmilla aligns

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<sup>54</sup> Pamela Perkins and Shannon Russell, "Introduction" to Elizabeth Hamilton's, *Translation of the Letters of a Hindoo Rajah* (Petersborough, Ontario: Broadview, 1999), 25-8.

<sup>55</sup> Aravamudan, *Enlightenment Orientalism*, 102-3.

Raye's sentimental literary efforts with the restoration of his land, allying the cause of granting Hindoos property rights with affect. Therefore, though she acknowledges that self-interest incited the British presence in India, Hamilton implies that one of the consequences of British intervention was the restoration of ancient Hindoo claims to land. The novel represents Zaarmilla himself as an elevated zamindar, the semblance of a British landed noble, and a significant proprietor of private wealth. As such, he is given more agency than we would expect of an Indian character in an eighteenth-century novel, but his power is nevertheless protected and enabled by British imperialism.

With the Permanent Settlement, Cornwallis attempted to generate positive representations of zamindaries, but Hamilton crafts them into makeshift parishes, streamlining taxation and bureaucracy by assigning zamindars accountability for the lands they manage within a Christian framework. Siraj Ahmed describes Hamilton's figuration of aristocratic capitalists as "inspired not by the private interests that generate a modern economy, but rather by the Christian principles that underpin the contemporary cult of domesticity," and as a result, "the novel argues that the mediation of the aristocratic capitalist alone will insure that civil society and empire serve progress."<sup>56</sup> Near the end of the novel, Zaarmilla exhorts the zamindar, Maandaara, to employ "Wisdom and Virtue... in scattering the sweet blossoms of domestic peace" and concludes:

Of the various religions of the English, I have given you a full and distinct account. You will perceive by it, that notwithstanding the progress of philosophy [of skeptics], and the report of Sheermaal, that that of Christianity is not *yet entirely extinct*; but that, like Virtue and Wisdom, it still has some adherents, in the retired scenes of life. – You will, perhaps, not have been able to discover how the practices enjoined by its precepts can be injurious to society; and inclined to think, that the love of a Being of infinite wisdom and goodness, and such a

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<sup>56</sup> Siraj Ahmed, "The Pure Soil of Benevolence: The Rule of Property and the Rise of an Imperial Ideology in the 1790s," *Eighteenth-Century Ireland*, 15 (2000): 139-40.

government of the passions, as enable a man to love his neighbor as himself, can do no harm to the world. – Obnoxious as the precepts which command purity of heart, unfeigned humility, sanctity of morals, and simplicity of manners, may be to the philosopher; you will conclude, that they have, in reality, been found as little detrimental to the repose of the individual, as the expectation of everlasting felicity has been to his happiness. (307)

Zaarmilla here allies Christian “Virtue and Wisdom” with retirement and domesticity, suggesting a model for Maandara’s zamindari based on English countryside parishes. Just as the British consumed Indian raw materials to return some manufactured goods to Indian markets, Indian land could be manufactured by British property law and Christian morality into makeshift parishes. Of course, without widespread Christian doctrine in India, Hamilton’s vision is impossible, and therefore, the novel implies that Christian proselytizing may be a key to imperial reform, echoing the missionary impulse among the British that was at this time gaining traction.<sup>57</sup>

Like British nobility, zamindars would be purveyors of wealth and charity in this scheme, but, despite Hamilton’s artistry in rendering him, we must not forget that Zaarmilla is the creation of a British author, who, though she may write from the peripheries of the Empire, nevertheless supports the continuation of British colonialism. As such, Hamilton’s creation of the Hindoo rajah as a mouthpiece through which she can speak is akin to Burke’s speaking for Gentoos himself, and like Burke, Hamilton reiterates the Orientalists’ paradox, that is, that Orientalists advocate for a restoration of ancient India without allowing Indians to act or speak for themselves.<sup>58</sup> As Susan B. Egenolf points out, Zaarmilla does control the novel’s gaze and even reverses the image of feminized Indians to feminize British men in his description of

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<sup>57</sup> See chapter 4 for a more in-depth discussion of missionaries in India.

<sup>58</sup> See above, for my discussion of Burke’s sophistry in speaking for the Gentoos.



“effeminate men” in “military garb” (225),<sup>59</sup> but I contest that, because his subjectivity is always circumscribed by Hamilton’s satire, Zaarmilla, with all his power and nobility, is merely a product of her ameliorative imperialism.

By providing a picture of a powerful and rational, though understandably biased, Indian man in the character of Zaarmilla, however, *Translation* does work to destabilize and contest some gendered and complexion-based prejudice as some scholars have demonstrated,<sup>60</sup> but only within the bounds of British preconceived notions of sensible masculinity. The novel characterizes Zaarmilla as a good judge of character and a well-educated ruler in India, just as qualified to report on Britain as British travelers are to report on India. Furthermore, he is fluent in various Indian languages in addition to English, rendering him a model Orientalist. Hamilton renders the Hindoo in a position to rescue both British and Muslim men fleeing from the Battle of Cutterah rather than reiterating the familiar narratives of the British man rescuing the Hindoo (as we see in C.W.’s *Memoirs of a Gentleman*, for example) or the Hindoo at the mercy of British or Muslim men (as we see in both *Memoirs* and Phebe Gibbes’ *Hartly House, Calcutta*). Upon witnessing soldiers fleeing the battle, he spots an injured Rohilla carrying his father on his back, and instead of giving them the “stroke of death” that they expect, he tells them, “Whatever your offenses... your filial piety has in my eyes made atonement: turn, therefore, to the shelter of my fortress, where you may remain in safety till times of peace” (80). The power and charity that Zaarmilla expresses is compounded by his magnanimous treatment of a British soldier, Captain

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<sup>59</sup> Susan B. Egenolf, *The Art of Political Fiction in Hamilton, Edgeworth, and Owenson* Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2009), 36-40

<sup>60</sup> See Claire Grogan, “Crossing Genre, Gender and Race in Elizabeth Hamilton’s *Translation of the Letters of a Hindoo Rajah*,” *Studies in the Novel*, 34:1 (Spring 2002): 21-42; and Anne Mellor, “Romantic Orientalism Begins at Home: Elizabeth Hamilton’s *Translation of the Letters of a Hindoo Rajah*,” *Studies in Romanticism*, 44.2 (Summer 2005): 151-164 for discussions on race and gender in this novel.

Percy, whom he saves from immediate death to keep in comfort in his last months (80-95). The sense of paternalism that Burke insists the British government should use in the treatment of Gentoos is the same masculine protection that the Hindoo rajah offers both peoples who have conquered his country, the British and Muslims. Zaarmilla himself comments that people of all races are alike in their potential subjection to the powerful: “To the great body of people I never could perceive that it made any difference who it was that held the scorpion whip of oppression, as into whatever hand it was by them conveyed, they were equally certain of feeling the severity of its sting” (82). Hamilton is, nevertheless, careful to bracket Zaarmilla’s power and benevolence within that of the British, who defeated the Rohillas in the Battle of Cutterah and enabled Zaarmilla to express such power in the first place. Zaarmilla’s cookie-cutter British masculine sensibility is therefore indebted to Percy’s British masculine sensibility, repaying the supposed large-scale charity of the Company’s conquest with instances of benevolence on the part of the gratefully protected Indian landowner.

Even the Indians’ very “Oriental” misinterpretations of English science and culture that lie at the heart of the novel’s satire are overtly circumscribed by British constructions of Indian thought. This form of manufacturing India again undercuts the possibility of an argument for Indian autonomy or self-creation. For example, when Sheermaal observes an Englishman demonstrating electricity and a magic lantern show,<sup>61</sup> he mistakes it for sorcery, noting that “surely there are jugglers enough in Hindostan who would for a small reward instruct him in the mysteries of the magic art” (102). Sheermaal’s misunderstanding is consistent with popular images of Indians’ stagnation in the sciences. The novel, however, seems to be internally conscious of at least some of the presumptions it makes in crafting Indians. Sheermaal,

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<sup>61</sup> A “magic lantern” was a device that projected an image by reflecting light through a sheet of glass.

influenced by hearsay, assumes that in “the northern regions of this united kingdom of Britain,” that is, Scotland, “the original Casts into which these, as well as other nations, had been divided at their creation, were here preserved in their original purity and perfection,” rendering the Scottish as primordial Britons (122-3). Here, the “ancientness” usually assigned to Indians is turned upon the Scottish, and though it suggests a similarity between their cultures, it also shows the Indian’s gaze crafting Hamilton’s own culture just as she does his. Just as Hamilton portrays Indians as “ancient,” Sheermaal, in his often mistaken account of Europe, portrays the Scottish as ancient, signifying that Hamilton may be aware that she is likewise operating on biases.

The novel makes a direct reference to the Hastings’ impeachment in Zaarmilla’s encounter with a misguided Englishman, and, as Ashok Malhotra notes, it critiques the commodification of culture.<sup>62</sup> Zaarmilla is mortified to find an Englishman in a coffee shop, who, believing Zaarmilla to have come to England to testify for the prosecution in the Hastings trial, begs him to understand that Britain “is not a *nation* of monsters,” but that “through [him], [Zaarmilla’s] wrongs shall find a tongue” (244-5). Zaarmilla finds this false belief to be a product of a paid article in a newspaper, and he asks “is it then in the power of a piece of gold, to procure circulation to whatever untruths the base malignity of envy or of hatred may choose to dictate?” (247), censuring the intrusion of private wealth upon the public sphere. Of course, the incident also critiques Burke’s sensationalizing the empire in India as well, showing the sentimental fervor that results. Whereas Burke’s fictional Hindus cannot participate in Hastings’ impeachment due to restrictions of religion, Hamilton’s fictional Hindu merely refuses to participate in such absurd politicking, rendering the proceedings more a question of internal

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<sup>62</sup> Malhotra, 140.

squabbles within the British government than a transnational moral quagmire as Burke would have it.

Nevertheless, the underpinnings of Hamilton's understanding of culture and history are remarkably similar to Burke's, and both commentators complain of corruption in the private and public spheres. The thesis of Hamilton's "Preliminary Dissertation" is ostensibly to praise Hindoo states for their longevity despite their conquest and oppression at the hands of their Islamic antagonists, the Mughals and Rohillas. We can compare Hamilton's dissertation to Burke's assertion of the remarkable longevity of Hindu culture in his opening speech in the impeachment hearings, that "through all these revolutions and changes in circumstances, a Hindu policy and a Hindu government existed in that country till given up finally to be destroyed by Mr. Hastings."<sup>63</sup> Where Hamilton's understanding of history diverges from Burke's is that, after establishing the longevity of Hindoo culture and the depredations of Muslims, she goes on to describe Hastings' and his successors' tenures as "a happy change" (70). Whereas Burke described Bengal as belonging to the EIC, Hamilton describes those territories as the "dominion of Great Britain" (70). Thus, the difference of opinion between Hamilton and Burke arises from Hamilton's characterization of Hastings' government as not so much a private commercial empire as a public governing body, regulating and granting private property to Indians rather than owning territory. Both Hamilton and Burke are uncomfortable with the public and private spheres' intrusions upon one another, but only Burke argues that Hastings contaminated one with the other by rendering formerly "private" Indian property into "public" EIC property. Hamilton, by contrast, represents zamindars in direct control of private estates under the protection of

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<sup>63</sup> Burke, *Speeches*, 43.

British property rights. Though on different sides of the India debate, both Hamilton and Burke operate from premises that inevitably support the continued British control of India.

### The Adopted Slave Servant Child

Perhaps one of the most telling examples of the commodification of Indian people comes in Mary Pilkington's children's novel, *The Asiatic Princess* (1800). The novel follows the travels of Princess Merjee of Siam, clearly a stand-in for Princess Charlotte of Wales (1796-1817), to whom the book is dedicated. Princess Charlotte's parents, the Prince Regent and Caroline of Brunswick, separated soon after her birth (1797), and she was largely left to the care of her governess and servants.<sup>64</sup> Pilkington intended the novel to instruct and entertain the Princess of Wales, presumably by setting out a model for the benevolent treatment of servants and other inferiors.<sup>65</sup> Princess Merjee's mother, the queen of Siam, doted upon her daughter to excess so that, "instead of trying to *curb* her *passions*, she did every thing that was likely to *increase* them" (I, 3-4).<sup>66</sup> After her mother's death, the Princess forms an attachment with a visiting Englishwoman, the kind, beautiful, and morally upright Lady Emma. Her father allows her to travel with Lady Emma and her husband, Sir Charles Corbet, so that she may "observe the manners of different countries, that she might be the better able to improve [her] own" (I, 9), and "introduce such laws and customs, as are most likely to tend to the happiness of those people, whom at a future period it may be [her] fate to govern" (I, 14). Despite their differing ranks, "the

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<sup>64</sup> Judith Shneid Lewis, "Charlotte Augusta, Princess," *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford UP, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/5160>.

<sup>65</sup> Mary Pilkington, *The Asiatic Princess* (London: Vernor and Hood, 1800), vol. 1, vi. Further references to this edition will appear parenthetically in the text.

<sup>66</sup> The novel portrays Princess Merje's mother as dissipated and her father, a stand-in for the Prince Regent, as kind and sensible, despite the Prince Regent's reputation.

Princess, instead of disliking Lady Emma for those proofs of her friendship and regard, seemed to feel her affection increase” (I, 7) and the Princess soon adopts the habit of calling Lady Emma “mamma.”

What is particularly interesting about this novel is the relationship between Lady Emma, Princess Merjee, and a slave girl they take on as a servant in India. Upon their arrival at Calcutta, Lady Emma and the Princess find a sailor attempting to sooth “a negro child” (I, 33), later named Bangilore, whose father was sold to a diamond trader in Golconda, separating him from his wife and daughter.<sup>67</sup> Unable to bear the separation, her mother escaped her master with Bangilore and procured passage on a ship for herself and her child, but she died along the way, leaving the child alone. Exhibiting remarkable compassion, Lady Emma takes “the child under her protection, and by a uniform conduct of kindness and affection, [prevents] her from feeling the loss she had so recently sustained” (I, 36). Lady Emma refuses to return her to her father for fear that the diamond trader would force her to work in his mines. The novel plays the sentiment of the scene against its representation of India as a horrific country, not only for the subcontinent’s continual toleration of slavery, but also because of the infamous Black Hole of Calcutta. Lady Emma tells Princess Merjee of the attack of “the viceroy of Bengal,” a “vindictive man,” on a British fort, where “Mr. Holwell, a young man of great courage, resolved to defend it against the attack, and behaved with uncommon bravery” (I, 30). Ultimately, he, “with an hundred and forty-six of his friends,” at the mercy of their “inhuman guards,” were “wedged so close together, that they could neither move nor stir” and “died in the greatest torture from thirst and suffocation” (I, 30-31). Lady Emma provides such an affecting “picture of suffering and oppression” in the East “that every sentiment of feeling and compassion was awakened by it,” and the Princess

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<sup>67</sup> Golconda is located towards the center of the Indian peninsula.

“promises to love [Bangilore] next to her dear mamma, if [Bangilore] would neither cry nor look unhappy” (I, 38). Thus, the intent is to show the removal of the girl from India as a selfless act of kindness, resembling an adoption of an all-but-orphaned child rather than the hiring of a servant.

The novel, however, immediately marks the ascendancy of Princess Merjee and Lady Emma by comparison to Bangilore, distinguishing the girl as a servant who, upon their first meeting, bends “her body as a mark of respect” and kisses “the frock of her little consoler,” the Princess (I, 38). Indeed, the novel points out Bangilore’s inferiority to nearly all other characters quite frequently. When, for example, the Princess becomes jealous of the attention Bangilore receives from Lady Emma for being sick, she demands that Emma “nurse [her], and love [her]” for “Bangilore is only a slave, and I am a — — —” (I, 46). Lady Emma chides her for her jealousy, instructing “Do as you would be done by,” and admonishes the Princess to regard Bangilore as an object of sentiment, “a poor, ill-fated child, whom pity taught [her] both to love and cherish” (I, 47). The lesson is ultimately that the lower classes should be treated with kindness, but the novel nevertheless emphasizes class, noting that Bangilore’s “situation in life is beneath” the Princess’ (I, 48). Lady Emma refuses Bangilore the appearance of an equal in public, “for though [Bangilore] is one of the most amiable people in the world, and a very nice companion for [Princess Merjee] at home, yet custom has introduced distinction into society; and those who were unacquainted with her intrinsic virtues, might think [she] permitted [the Princess] to associate with a vulgar mind” (II, 7). In Germany, when the Princess adopts the supposedly German tendency to carry “pride of birth... to so ridiculous or weak an excess,” Lady Emma scolds her for her “haughtiness” (I, 72-3), but Bangilore is nevertheless not allowed to travel with the family to see “the different palaces with which [Vienna] abounds” only because “German carriages are by no means pleasant or convenient” (I, 75). When they leave Vienna,

Lady Emma allows Bangilore “to make one of the party” (I, 75), but only so that she can elicit haughtiness from Princess Merjee and teach her a lesson. Bangilore’s primary function in the novel is to be both a companion to Princess Merjee of her own age and a means by which to teach the Princess condescension without pride. In exchange for Bangilore’s service in this respect, Lady Emma gives her affection and kindness. Thus, though Bangilore is not given a salary, she is nevertheless regarded as a servant.

In addition to its apologetic classism, the novel draws connections between Bangilore’s dark complexion and African slavery. Although she is initially called “negro,” she is later called “Indian” (144), and the name “Bangilore” recalls the city Bangalore, which affirms her Indianness. But her description as a “negro” nevertheless indicates that her complexion is dark, eliciting a confusion between African and Indian complexions that associates her with African slavery. Bangilore also speaks a sort of pidgin English, replacing the subject pronoun “I” with the object “me,” which has been attributed to both native Africans and Indians. Indeed, eighteenth-century British commentators commonly described Indians as “black.”<sup>68</sup> Pilkington, having never been to India, may have been confused by the sometimes conflicting accounts of complexion she undoubtedly read in *The Lady’s Monthly Museum*, to which she was a regular contributor.<sup>69</sup>

The novel insists on equality between people of different skin colors despite its clear hierarchy of beauty based on complexion, complicating Bangilore and Princess Merjee’s status by comparison to Lady Emma’s. Bangilore, at one point, falls off a swing and receives a terrible

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<sup>68</sup> C.W.’s *Memoirs of a Gentleman...* (London: J. Donaldson, 1774), for example, frequently describes Indians as “black.”

<sup>69</sup> See S.J. Skedd, “Pilkington, Mary Susanna,” *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*. Oxford UP, first published 2004, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/22273>.



head wound, but upon waking, the first thing she says is that she is glad that the Princess hadn't fallen instead of her. Elated at her display of so "disinterested a mind," Lady Emma exclaims, "Who... that heard *that speech*, could be liberal enough to think that *virtue* depended upon the *colour of skin*?" (II, 22-3). The surgeon replies, "Ah, madam! who indeed? ... but if you have witnessed as many noble actions as have come within my knowledge, you would say, that if *virtue* was attached to any *particular colour*, it must be the *sable hue*" (II, 3). The novel, however, qualifies the Princess' beauty by her skin color, noting that "though her complexion was *dark*, her features were beautiful, and a look of intelligence beamed from her eyes which convinced [the Holy Roman Emperor and Empress] her mind had been cultured and improved" (I, 69). The Princess even absorbs this denigration of darker complexions, as the novel notes, "amongst the failings which was attached to the Princess, that of *personal vanity* was the most conspicuous, and though she was perfectly satisfied with the *beauty* of her *features*, she frequently lamented the colour of her skin" (II, 105). Thus, the novel frequently contradicts its own statements as to complexion parity in addition to those of class equality.

With the suggestion of Bangilore's blackness and inferiority comes the inevitable implication of slavery when combined with the derision she endures, not only at the hands of Princess Merjee, but also from those she encounters in Europe. In Italy, Lady Emma schemes to reveal the inhumanity of a young Italian Count towards his sister's pet squirrel, whom he kidnapped and killed, but the Count's mother's rage falls upon Bangilore, wrongly accused. Having promised Lady Emma she would not reveal the crime, Bangilore, "thus tortured between the fear of offending, and her love of truth; she threw herself on her knees before the Marchioness, intreating [sic] she might be punished in whatever way she thought proper, for daring to disobey her commands, but declared she was resolved not to answer the questions" (I,

137). As if the image of a dark-skinned girl on her knees begging punishment for disobeying a white woman is not enough to suggest an ongoing slavery, the scene continues, “Threats and intreaties [sic] were alike unavailing; and the Marchioness no longer able to control her rage, aimed a violent blow at the object of her resentment, who instantly fell senseless at her feet” (I, 137-8).

Displays of sentiment and generosity towards Bangilore also betray the novel’s insinuation of the inferiority and objecthood of the Indian. When a slave within the Governor’s household in Calcutta loses her children in the woods, Lady Emma finds that Princess Merjee had gone somewhere with the housekeeper without her knowing. When she returns, the Princess explains, “I only went to the Governor’s house-keeper, to see one of the slaves who is very ill from fretting after the children which she lost; so I thought, if I gave her money, she could buy some more” (I, 61). Rather than chiding the Princess for believing that money can replace a mother’s children, Lady Emma only warns her never to leave without her permission. Thus, the novel’s claims to the quality of different complexions masks a buried class/complexion bias in which the status of the Indian girl is never truly resolved, rendering it an overture to what may be a particularly odious form of ameliorative imperialism. Indeed, Bangilore resembles the “grateful negro” when she says, “Me always love mine dear young lady; me let her do as she like with Bangilore, but me happy when she love me, and say me *good Bangilore*” (I, 50).

In all of these novels, ameliorative imperialisms take the form of narratives of corrupted sentiment, in which high-flown opinions of unity and equality attempt to compromise with ideologies of colonial hierarchy and mercantilism. While the earlier Anglo-Indian novels took up the argument between the Company’s right to property and the proper governance of Indians, *The Asiatic Princess* signals a transition from Orientalists’ solution to the India problem as

compromise between two political positions to a solution based on Christian morality. Many of Lady Emma's lessons are based on Biblical mores. This narrative, I believe, flows smoothly into the increased missionary work in India in the early nineteenth century. In all the linguistic machinations of these forms of ameliorative imperialisms, however, the analogue to the abolition movement, that is, the argument for decolonization and Indian autonomy, seems to be completely absent.

Chapter 4: Loss of Caste and the Missionary Debate in Sydney Owenson's *The Missionary* (1811) and Mary Martha Sherwood's Indian Novels

*CHIEF-BRAHMIN: Alas, my Country!  
Art thou condemn'd to bear a victor's yoke?  
To groan beneath Oppression's iron rod,  
And lavish all thy precious stores to feed  
The av'rice of thy Lords? – Vindictive Brahma!  
If, for the crimes of this once-favour'd Land,  
Thy arm be stretched against us, let here the blood  
Of thy still faithful Servant, – here devoted  
A sacrifice to thee, – O let it turn  
Thy vengeful ire to mercy! ...  
To 'appease the wrath divine and free myself  
From hated Christian chains. (He stabs himself.)*

...  
*RAYMOND: There fled a soul which, had Religion's sun  
Unclouded beam'd upon it, might have graced  
And comforted the land. – My Indamora,  
This genial sun shall shed his rays on thee;  
Make all thy budding virtues blossom fair,  
And, with their fruits, bless Raymond and thy country.  
Whilst thou, young Priest, who, 'spite of Error's mists,  
Discover'd and pursu'd bright Virtue's paths,  
Thou in yon Temple reign supreme,  
And, on its altars, fix the Christian Cross.*

-Mariana Starke, *The Widow of Malabar*, 1796<sup>1</sup>

In the drama *The Widow of Malabar*, Mariana Starke allies Christianity to romantic love and pits both against Hinduism. The Indian widow Indamora is trapped in Malabar, where the chief Brahmin intends to burn her on the funeral pyre of her husband according to the rite of sati. She and the hero of the drama, Raymond, a general in the British army, are in love, but Malabar is at war with the British. Though a young Brahmin priest takes pity on Indamora, he is powerless to prevent the sati because of the chief Brahmin's obstinacy. Before she can be immolated, Raymond, assuming the moral high ground, invades the city and mounts a daring rescue. Though the chief Brahmin sacrifices himself to his God to avert Malabar's domination by

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<sup>1</sup> Mariana Starke, *The Widow of Malabar, a Tragedy* (London: J. Barker, 1796), 46.

the British, Raymond nevertheless prevails in the attack and intends a mass conversion of the remaining Hindus. Indamora finds in Raymond a new husband and discovers that the young Brahmin Priest is her brother, reconstituting her broken family with both Indian and British men. Whereas in most rescue fantasies the European man merely removes the Indian woman from Indian society, here, the intervention of the British general results in a sea-change in both the spiritual life of the city and the family unit.

However neat this ending may seem on paper, the chief Brahmin's corpse remains on stage throughout Raymond's resolution, depicting a striking complication. The chief Brahmin, ostensibly the villain of the drama, stabs himself in what he believes to be a heroic self-sacrifice, dying to appease his God's wrath and save his country. Though the chief Brahmin sinks "in gulphs of fire" and begs mercy of heaven just before he finally dies, his intent is nonetheless noble, and his fault is merely that he had "err'd."<sup>2</sup> He therefore resembles a tragic hero, complete with a fatal flaw, challenging the play's insistence on the white man's comparative moral superiority. The tragedy is compounded by the fact that the chief Brahmin could not be incorporated into Raymond's vision of Malabar as a Christian utopia, staining the general's triumph with the Indian's blood. Thus, though it follows common characterizations of the dangers of Hinduism, the drama reveals a complication to the typically simplistic narrative of the rescue fantasy, suggesting nuance to imperial conquest and Evangelism in Indian resistance to conversion.

This chapter discusses how Sydney Owenson's *The Missionary: An Indian Tale* (1811) and Mary Martha Sherwood's children's novellas, *The History of Little Henry and his Bearer* (1814) and *Little Lucy and her Dhaye* (1825), addressed Indian resistance to conversion to put

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<sup>2</sup> Starke, *Widow of Malabar*, 47.

forward very contrasting views of empire. As I discussed in chapter two, Phebe Gibbes' *Hartly House, Calcutta* (1789) portrays women as responsible for supporting and reforming British men in India, indirectly improving the lives of Indians by making East India Company officers more sensible to their mistreatment. Here, I argue that in Anglo-Indian fictions of the early nineteenth-century, British women writers took a more direct interest in Hindus than women writers of the eighteenth century did, particularly concerning their spiritual and social well-being. Owenson argues against heavy-handed proselytizing in India, suggesting that it results in Indian rebellion and death. By contrast, Sherwood justifies British evangelism by insisting that Indian resistance to Christianity is a trivial hurdle to their eternal bliss in heaven. In Owenson's and Sherwood's novels, British missionaries have to overcome Indians' fear of being shunned by their existing families and communities for converting. According to many British missionaries, this ostracism, often called "loss of caste," resulted from the Hindu belief that deviating from the religion of one's birth entailed impurity. As a result of loss of caste, the converts' families and communities supposedly left them to fend for themselves, negating their social status and barring them from employment.

Historically, the EIC was reticent to allow British missionaries into India because it feared that proselytizing would antagonize Indians and interfere with trade as a result. Rather, the Company incorporated its interpretations of Hindu and Muslim law into its state functions, maintaining relations with its Indian denizens by claiming that it preserved and supported India's religious traditions. The EIC's Charter of 1698 required that the Company establish proper places of Christian worship and install Anglican and Presbyterian chaplains who could instruct the Gentoos in Christianity. The EIC, however, was able to sidestep Parliament's demands because its Charter also allowed the Company to prevent disruptive influences, including

Anglican missionaries, from operating in the lands they controlled.<sup>3</sup> The EIC's profit margins therefore justified the limitations it imposed on British cultural exports to India. Since the 1689 Toleration Act required the EIC to allow Catholics to worship freely and proselytize in India, Anglicans were able to tout their own relative tolerance of Indian religions by contrast to the supposedly coercive Roman Catholic Portuguese, who dominated trade with India before the British and still maintained a significant presence.<sup>4</sup> Thus, the EIC's policy of barring British missionaries from India held for over a century.

In the 1790s, factions within the British Parliament fomented an increasing urgency to officially install the Anglican Church in India due to fears that Roman Catholics and Dissenters actively proselytizing in EIC territories would indoctrinate Indians against Anglicanism. These factions thought it necessary to allow Anglican missionaries leeway to convert the masses, contesting the EIC's policy of religious non-interference. Though the Governor-General of India, Lord Cornwallis, could not actively support the evangelical movement in India, he would not oppose it either. Officially, the Company maintained that it continued to rule India according to Hindu and Muslim traditions, but, because these traditions were not fully understood, EIC policy was inconsistent.<sup>5</sup> In 1792, William Carey, an English Baptist minister, published a pamphlet entitled "An Enquiry into the Obligations of Christians to Use Means for the Conversion of the Heathens," which led to the founding of the Baptist Missionary Society in the same year, the

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<sup>3</sup> Hillary M. Carey, *God's Empire: Religion and Colonialism in the British World, c.1801–1908* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2011), 63.

<sup>4</sup> Penelope Carson, *The East India Company and Religion, 1698-1858* (Rochester, NY: Boydell, 2012), 8, 14-6.

<sup>5</sup> Penelope Carson, "The British Raj and the Awakening of the Evangelical Conscience," *Christian Missions and the Enlightenment*, ed. Brian Stanley (Grand Rapids, Mich.: W.B. Eerdmans Pub., 2001), 45-70.

London Missionary Society in 1795, and the Church Missionary Society in 1799.<sup>6</sup> In 1800, Carey went to Serampore, a Danish settlement north of Calcutta, and joined with fellow missionaries Joshua Marshman and William Ward. Together, they came to be known as the “Serampore Trio,” and devoted their efforts to converting the native population away from the watchful eye of the EIC.<sup>7</sup> In addition to publishing translations of the Bible in various Indian tongues, they were responsible for producing grammars of Indian languages and translations of Indian texts, adding significantly to British scholarship on India.<sup>8</sup> British missionaries were thus becoming more influential in both India and in Britain, and Evangelicals formed a power lobby within Parliament intent on converting Indians to Christianity.

In 1806, 1,800 sepoys, or Indian soldiers working for the EIC, killed their British commanders and took control of the fort at Vellore in what would come to be known as the Vellore Mutiny. Because the sepoys were paid only about one-sixth of the English soldiers’ salaries, the son of the former king of Mysore was able to rally the sepoys against their British masters by promising them better pay.<sup>9</sup> The mutiny was, however, spun by Company officials to support the EIC’s ongoing policy of religious non-interference. Reports were circulated that the sepoys rebelled due to the imposition of uniform codes that conflicted with Hindu and Muslim religious observances, preventing Hindu soldiers from wearing turbans or marks on their

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<sup>6</sup> Brian Stanley, “Carey, William (1761–1834)”, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford UP, first published 2004, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/4657>. Lata Mani, *Contentious Traditions: The Debate on Sati in Colonial India* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), 84.

<sup>7</sup> Stanley, “Carey, William (1761–1834).”

<sup>8</sup> Mani, 84.

<sup>9</sup> The EIC conquered Mysore and killed its king, Tipu Sultan, after a series of wars in 1799.



foreheads and ordering Muslim soldiers to shave their beards.<sup>10</sup> Governor-General William Bentick later repealed the new regulations, taking advantage of the mutiny in order to defend the EIC's religious policies against government impositions and distract from more deep-seated issues in the empire.<sup>11</sup>

When, in 1813, the time came to again renew the Company's charter, Parliament was involved in a contest between the EIC lobby, bent on maintaining the Company shareholders' profits, and the Evangelical lobby, determined to convert Indians to Christianity. Capitalists within Parliament also intended to end the EIC's monopoly on trade with India in order to introduce more competition, secure the flow of raw materials into Europe, and increase profits. These capitalists appealed to Evangelicals in order to achieve their mutual purposes. The result was the Charter Act of 1813, which both dissolved the Company's monopoly on trade in India and allowed British missionaries into India, a compromise that appealed to both secular interests within Parliament and the religious concerns of Evangelicals. Thus, Francis G. Hutchins demonstrates that, in this period, Utilitarianism was often allied with Evangelism to justify permanent British rule in India.<sup>12</sup> The Act ended the Company's long stint of religious non-

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<sup>10</sup> This explanation for the Vellore Mutiny prefigures the British explanation for the infamous Indian Rebellion of 1857, in which sepoys rebelled in part due to similarly religious reasons: the ammunition cartridges they were supplied were greased with products derived from pigs and cows, offensive to Muslims and Hindus respectively.

<sup>11</sup> Siraj Ahmed, *The Stillbirth of Capital: Enlightenment Writing and Colonial India* (Stanford: Stanford UP, 2012), 202-3. See also Perumal Chinnian, *The Vellore Mutiny: the First Uprising Against the British* (Madras: P. Chinnian, 1982). The company's propaganda concerning the Vellore Mutiny is still prevalent. According to the Wikipedia entry for the Vellore Mutiny, for example, "the immediate causes of the mutiny revolved mainly around resentment felt towards changes in the sepoy dress code introduced in November 1805." "Vellore Mutiny," *Wikipedia*, last modified March 16, 2015, [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vellore\\_Mutiny](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vellore_Mutiny). The entry cites Phillip Mason, *A Matter of Honour: an Account of the Indian Army, its Officers and Men* (London: Macmillan, 1974). Mason was himself a former servant of the British Raj and a high ranking advisor in the British army in India before independence. Roland Oliver, "Mason, Phillip (1906-1999)," *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford UP, first published 2004, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/71993>.

<sup>12</sup> Francis G. Hutchins, *The Illusion of Permanence: British Imperialism in India* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton UP, 1967), 6-9. Hutchins shows that James Mill's *The History of British India* (1817) relied just as much on Evangelism as it did on Utilitarianism.

interference and ushered in a new era of Britain's cultural influence on India. As Gauri Viswanathan and other scholars demonstrate, the Charter Act of 1813 was part of the British government's sense of its responsibility to educate and "civilize" India in order to remake it into a utopian iteration of Britain, and Christianizing the subcontinent was part of this responsibility.<sup>13</sup> The Act was also symptomatic of the British government's increasingly direct dominion over India, which culminated in the establishment of the British Raj in 1858.

The intent to convert Indians to Christianity was also part of an ongoing effort to institutionalize England's sense of cultural superiority in its policy on India. As I argued in my third chapter, Elizabeth Hamilton's *Translation of the Letters of a Hindoo Rajah* (1796) attempted to synthesize opposing arguments in the contest between British rights to private property in India and the betterment of Indians by suggesting that the British teach Indian landowners the economic practices of the English countryside. In the nineteenth century, rather than limiting themselves to promoting English property law, English writers promoted the value of English culture as a whole in the nineteenth century. Imperialists could claim that the British control of property in India is a means to transmit English culture to Indians, benefiting the people of the subcontinent. It allowed them to resume imperial domination and claim that they modernize India and save Indian souls, making for a more perfect ameliorative imperialism. The missionary debate in the early nineteenth century is therefore a worthy locus for the study of attitudes toward the British Empire in India in the early nineteenth century.

Lata Mani draws upon the letters of the "Serampore Trio" among others to describe the methods that missionaries used to proselytize in the streets of Indian cities. Though they brought

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<sup>13</sup> Gauri Viswanathan, *Masks of Conquest: Literary Study and British Rule in India* (New York: Columbia UP, 1989), 23-4.

about some conversions, she describes the missionaries as remarkably ineffectual because they failed to understand Indian society as it actually existed. Instead, they conceptualized a “textual India,” one founded on the Brahminical teachings of the Vedas, just as Christianity was grounded in the Bible. As a result, Indians often resisted Christian missionaries on ideological grounds, but also ignored, spurned, and physically attacked them.<sup>14</sup> According to Mani, Indians exhibited a kind of “relativism” rather than believing in the universal truth of their religious texts, denying the supremacy of Christianity over Hinduism by arguing that each people had its own religion and that one was as good as another.<sup>15</sup> The missionaries were also frustrated by the Indians’ refusal to differentiate between the spiritual and material realms, thereby denying the Christian primacy of the soul over secular concerns.<sup>16</sup> According to Mani, missionaries used the fear of loss of caste to justify their lack of converts in order to bolster funding for additional missionary endeavors, masking their failure to understand Indian ideology by reinforcing existing narratives of the restrictiveness of Hindu culture.<sup>17</sup> The importance of caste was already well known in the British Isles, and, as this chapter will demonstrate, loss of caste also came to permeate British representations of Indians in Anglo-Indian novels.

Nicholas B. Dirks points out that eighteenth-century British descriptions of caste were sparse and abstract because caste did not seem “particularly striking, important or fixed.”<sup>18</sup> Caste

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<sup>14</sup> Mani, 105.

<sup>15</sup> Mani, 103.

<sup>16</sup> Mani, 105.

<sup>17</sup> Mani, 134.

<sup>18</sup> Nicholas B. Dirks, *Castes of Mind: Colonialism and the Making of Modern India* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 2001), 20. We should, however, note that Dirks is sometimes read as suggesting that the British invented caste, which is, of course, not the case.

involves the division of Hindu society into four groups based on tradition and profession, which I (simplistically) list here in order of importance: the Brahmin priests, the Kshatriya soldiers, the Vaishya merchants, and the Sudra laborers. Those who have suffered a form of excommunication from Hinduism were said to have “lost caste.” Travelers and ethnographers in the late eighteenth century described loss of caste as resulting from disparate breaches of conduct, but all attest to the Hindus’ aversion to it. John Z. Holwell claims that excommunication results from allowing others “into the pale of their communion,” that is, admitting converts to Gentoism. He describes “the loss of their Cast [sic]” as “a disgrace which every Gento would rather suffer death than incur,” and, as a result of their fear of losing caste, Gento society “to this day remains unmixed with any other race of people.”<sup>19</sup> In his recommendations on EIC policy, Alexander Dow warns that “the least breach” of the Hindoos’ religious practices and prejudices “may be productive of an expulsion from the society, a more dreadful punishment Draco himself could not devise.”<sup>20</sup> According to Jemima Kindersley, a Hindu man who does not follow his father’s occupation or marries or eats with someone outside of his caste has “lost cast [sic], and can never again be received into their own, or any other, tribe of Hindoos.” Kindersley also notes, “The loss of cast is more dreaded than the loss of life; therefore these rules have been observed with such exactness, that the highest and lower casts may be distinguished from each other by their features, complexion, and turn of countenance.”<sup>21</sup> Even Burke insisted that excommunication can result from sacrilege forced upon them, and accused Hastings of controlling Hindus by

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<sup>19</sup> John Z. Holwell, *Interesting Historical Events, Relative to the Provinces of Bengal, and the Empire of Hindostan, Part II* (London: T. Becket and P. A. De Hondt, 1765), 28.

<sup>20</sup> Alexander Dow, “An Enquiry into the State of Bengal” in *The History of Hindostan from the Death of Akbar, to the Complete Settlement of the Empire under Aurungzebe* (London: T. Becket and P. A. De Hondt, 1772), cxxix.

<sup>21</sup> Jemima Kindersley, *Letters from the Islands of Teneriffe, Brazil, the Cape of Good Hope, and the East Indies* (London: J. Nourse, 1777), 111-2

threatening to make them pollute themselves.<sup>22</sup> It is interesting that these accounts give very little detail as to the consequences of losing caste save to note that of expulsion from their family and society. Charles Grant, for example, only goes so far as to note that “transgressions of the innumerable rules of caste... are commonly punished by fines or excommunication.”<sup>23</sup> Though European conceptions of the caste system were widespread, loss of caste was not so well understood by the British in the eighteenth-century. More often than not, it was described as a dreadful punishment perpetrated by the Hindus upon their own people, a result of the strictures of their religion. As such, loss of caste was often framed as a reason to prevent cultural pressures on India in the eighteenth century.

Missionary accounts of the early nineteenth century, by contrast, sometimes describe loss of caste as a reason to increase British cultural pressures on Indian society, suggesting that caste is an evil that should be wholly abolished. William Staughton, for example, describes caste as “a great mountain... that lifts its head against the circulation of the gospel of Christ” because if a Hindu “touch with a missionary the bread and wine of the Lord’s supper,” he loses caste, “his relatives desert and millions reject him for ever.”<sup>24</sup> As George Annesley notes, one of the greatest obstacles to conversion “is the admission of the Parias [sic] into our church, among whom the chief conversions had been made, since nothing can be more shocking to their ideas

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<sup>22</sup> Edmund Burke, *Speeches of the Managers and Counsel in the Trial of Warren Hastings*, ed. E.A. Bond (London: Longman, Brown, Green, Longmans, and Roberts, 1859), 35.

<sup>23</sup> Charles Grant, *Observations on the State of Society among the Asiatic Subjects of Great-Britain, Particularly with Respect to Morals; and on the Means of Improving It, Written Chiefly in 1792* (London: East India House, 1797), 79.

<sup>24</sup> William Staughton, *The Baptist Missions in India Containing a Narrative of its Rise, Progress, and Present Condition; a Statement of the Physical and Moral Character of the Hindoos, with a Very Interesting Description of Bengal* (Philadelphia: Hellings and Aithen, 1811), 109, 112.

than the equality thus produced between the higher and lower castes.”<sup>25</sup> The caste system was thus often described as evidence for the degeneracy of Hinduism in British accounts throughout the nineteenth century. James Mill, for example, prefaces his discussion of the Brahmin caste with such a denunciation: “It is only in rude and ignorant times that men are so overwhelmed with the power of superstition as to pay unbounded veneration and obedience to those who artfully clothe themselves with the terrors of religion.” In a footnote, he compares the caste system to several other antiquated hierarchies, and, though he includes ancient Britain among them, he strategically overlooks inequalities within his own society in the present-day.<sup>26</sup> Maria Graham declaims the treatment of “pariahs,” whose “minds are degraded in proportion to their personal situation” so that “they are filthy in all their habits, and do not scruple to use as food any dead animal they can find; it is even said that, in some places, they do not reject human bodies.”<sup>27</sup>

Representations of loss of caste therefore constitute a fecund object for the study of Anglo-Indian literature in the early nineteenth century. Since very little work has been done to address the literary history of loss of caste in this period, this chapter will supply a much-needed investigation of its importance to fiction in the British Empire. As we see in Sydney Owenson’s and Mary Martha Sherwood’s Anglo-Indian novels, Indian resistance to Christianity was attributed not only to the Hindus’ religious relativism, but also to the fundamental social

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<sup>25</sup> George Annesley, Viscount Valentia, *Voyages and Travels to India, Ceylon, the Red Sea, Abyssinia, and Egypt in the Years 1802, 1803, 1804, 1805, and 1806* (London: William Miller, 1809), 246. Robert Caldwell later lamented that the vast majority of Indian Christian converts were lower caste or pariahs who became Christian to avert caste oppression. Robert Caldwell, *Reminiscences of Bishop Caldwell* ed. J.L. Wyatt (Madras: Addison, 1894), 190.

<sup>26</sup> James Mill, *The History of British India, Second Edition* (London: Baldwin, Cradock, and Joy, 1820), 159.

<sup>27</sup> Maria Graham, *Journal of a Residence in India* (Edinburgh: Archibald Constable and Company; and Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme, and Brown, 1813), 15.

strictures of caste. Loss of caste in these novels also represents a threat to European paternalism and families in India. Both Owenson and Sherwood were literary celebrities in the 1810s,<sup>28</sup> and since Owenson censures missionaries while Sherwood advocates for evangelizing, a study of these novels also elucidates opposing viewpoints in the missionary debate.

### Empires of Allegory

The daughter of a tradesman and born and educated in Dublin, Owenson, later known as Lady Morgan, achieved literary celebrity with her novel, *The Wild Irish Girl; A National Tale* (1806). This epistolary novel features Horatio, the son of an absentee landowner, who visits his father's holdings in Ireland and eventually marries the eponymous Irish princess, Glorvina, whose family his father deposed. An interesting portrayal of Irish culture and nationalism in the early nineteenth century, *The Wild Irish Girl* also suggests a connection between Ireland and the Orient. In a footnote, Owenson explains that her father "remembers to have seen the heads of the female peasantry encircled with folds of linen in the form of a turban," and she postulates that these headdresses originate in Egypt.<sup>29</sup> Glorvina first appears in the novel wearing a veil, which Owenson footnotes "was probably merely oriental."<sup>30</sup> *The Wild Irish Girl* admitted Owenson into fashionable English society to perform on the Irish harp in the person of Glorvina, complete in Irish dress, which most likely included Oriental elements as well. As Julia M. Wright observes, Owenson's letters express her distaste at being asked to embody or represent Irishness at parties because "the theatricality of her presentation was deemed of more importance than her

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<sup>28</sup> Ashok Malhotra, *Making British Indian Fictions, 1772-1823* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 130.

<sup>29</sup> Sydney Owenson, *The Wild Irish Girl: A National Tale* (London: Pickering & Chatto, 2000), 44.

<sup>30</sup> Owenson, *The Wild Irish Girl*, 47.

comfort as a guest.”<sup>31</sup> Thus, the “wildness” of her Irishness was sometimes favored over her accomplishments as an author, suggesting her unease with embodying exoticism among the English.

By contrast to Sydney Owenson’s Irish novels, *The Missionary* (1811) features a young Portuguese Franciscan monk, Hilarion, who, in the early seventeenth century, travels to the subcontinent as the apostolic nuncio of India in order to convert the Hindu masses. In the midst of Spain’s occupation of Portugal, Hilarion’s Portuguese Franciscan superiors send him to India so that his success in converting the Indians would embarrass their Jesuit rivals. Upon first arriving in Lahore, a prominent religious city, Hilarion attempts to preach to the gathered Hindus only to be controverted and dismissed by the Guru of Cashmire (Kasmir). Hilarion’s language instructor, a deist Pundit or teacher, advises him to convert the prominent Hindu priestess, Brahmin widow, and only granddaughter to the Guru, Luxima, reasoning that since she is revered among the Hindus for her beauty, virginity, and holiness, she will effect a mass conversion among her people. Following Luxima to Cashmire, Hilarion contrives to preach to Luxima in her solitary devotions at the meeting of two rivers. However, they develop romantic feelings forbidden by their respective religions. Unable to part with Hilarion, Luxima agrees to follow him, and is promptly excommunicated by her own grandfather. Pitying Luxima for her loss of caste, Hilarion decides to commit her to a nunnery in Lahore, but along the way, he is imprisoned by his Jesuit rival, the former apostolic nuncio of India, for speaking against Jesuit missionaries’ practices. The Pundit rescues Luxima from the nunnery, and, on the day of Hilarion’s scheduled execution, Luxima, mimicking sati, throws herself upon the pyre on which Hilarion is to be burned. In combination with the Pundit’s agitating through the crowd, the

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<sup>31</sup> Julia M. Wright, “Introduction” to *The Missionary* (Ontario: Broadview, 2002), 11-2.



affective display incites a riot among the Hindus. Though Hilarion saves her from the pyre, Luxima is wounded by a Spanish soldier and declares herself to have always been Hindu before she dies in Hilarion's arms. Hilarion, chastened and heartbroken, terminates his mission, resigns his power as apostolic nuncio, and remains in India as an unknown hermit.

*The Missionary* relies on heavy allegory in which characters from Portugal, Spain, and India in the seventeenth century represent Ireland, England, and India in the nineteenth century. Balachandra Rajan was the first to observe that representations of a feminine Ireland prefigure those of a feminine India, and that, in *The Missionary*, India functions as a surrogate for Ireland. In this scheme, the European missionary, Hilarion, represents England, and performs a figurative conquest of India/Ireland by seducing and converting the Hindu priestess, Luxima.<sup>32</sup> As Julia M. Wright observes, however, though Ireland and India were both peripheries of the British Empire, in this novel, Portugal parallels Ireland more than India does.<sup>33</sup> Just as Ireland was occupied and dominated by England in Owenson's time, Portugal is subject to Spain in this novel, though the Portuguese are on the cusp of retaking their sovereignty and dominating trade with India. Likewise, the tensions between Franciscans and Jesuits mirror the animus between Irish Catholics and English Protestants. As Ina Ferris notes, the exclusion of Irish Catholics from Parliament and the continued suppression of emancipation spurred the mantra of an "incomplete union" between Ireland and England. Ferris continues, "thus cast in terms of lack, it served as an incitement to intervention and discourse, promoting re-accentuation of established discursive forms (e.g. travel writing periodical reviews, lyric poetry, memoirs) along with the production of

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<sup>32</sup> Balachandra Rajan, *Under Western Eyes: India from Milton to Macaulay* (Durham, NC: Duke UP, 1999), 4-6.

<sup>33</sup> Wright, "Introduction," 19-29.

new ones, notably the national tale,” as in, for example, Owenson’s Irish novels.<sup>34</sup> Thus, in keeping with Owenson’s Irish novels, *The Missionary* provides commentary on Irish nationalism.

Michael J. Franklin confirms Wright’s reading, suggesting that *The Missionary* represents a more complicated relationship in which Ireland/Portugal is both an imperial power in India and a colonial subject to England/Spain.<sup>35</sup> Hilarion, a Franciscan monk related to both Portuguese royalty and powerful figures within the resistance to Spain, intends an ideological conquest akin to empire. Since, according to Ashok Malhotra, “the Irish, while a colonized people,” were a “major component of the British forces that went out to conquer and govern overseas,” *The Missionary* “problematizes and decenters colonial hegemony by focusing on a colonial power, the Portuguese, which itself is colonized by the Spanish.”<sup>36</sup> Hilarion’s Portuguese Franciscan superiors, however, intend his religious conquest to “confound and expose” the “heretical tenets of the [Spanish] Jesuits.”<sup>37</sup> The Evangelical impulse among the Franciscans thus masks a deeper contest between European nations and religions. The conclusion of the novel projects that in Portugal, “the spring of national liberty, receiving its impulse from the very pressure of the tyranny which crushed it, already recovered something of that tone of force and elasticity which finally produced one of the most singular and perfect revolutions, which the history of nations has recorded” (71), implying that Ireland would likewise achieve independence from England.

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<sup>34</sup> Ina Ferris, *The Romantic National Tale and the Question of Ireland* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2002), 6.

<sup>35</sup> Michael J. Franklin, “‘Passion’s Empire’: Sydney Owenson’s ‘Indian Venture,’ Phoenicianism, Orientalism, and Binarism,” *Studies in Romanticism*, 45:2 (Summer 2006): 187-8.

<sup>36</sup> Malhotra, 85-6.

<sup>37</sup> Sydney Owenson, *The Missionary*, ed. Julia M. Wright (Ontario: Broadview, 2002), 77. Further references to this edition will appear parenthetically in the text.

The timeliness of *The Missionary*'s publication relative to major events in British India indicates that the novel comments on recent British-Indian issues as much as it does on Anglo-Irish relations. As Cólín Parsons points out, both Owenson's 1811 publication of *The Missionary* and her 1859 "greatly altered" revision, *Luxima, the Prophetess: A Tale of India*, were responses to major events in the empire, the former a reaction to the missionary debate and the Vellore Mutiny of 1806, and the latter a response to the Indian rebellion of 1857.<sup>38</sup> Furthermore, the novel allegorically projects Ireland's potential as an independent trading power on the subcontinent in the future: "In the short space of *twenty* years, the mighty had fallen, and the lowly were elevated; the lash of oppression had passed alternately from the hand of the persecutor to the hand of the persecuted; the slave had seized the scepter, and the tyrant had submitted to the chain. Portugal, resuming her independence, carried the standard of her triumph to the remote shores of the Indian Ocean" (259). Though we might expect the novel to describe Portuguese colonialism here, the novel instead goes on to outline Aurangzeb's conquests to establish "the most powerful and despotic dynasty of the earth" (259) in the wake of the novel's events, ascribing conquest to the Mughal Empire rather than Portugal/Ireland after Hilarion resigns his power in India. Thus, I argue that with *The Missionary*, we see the first Anglo-Indian novel that figuratively expresses a sort of decolonization narrative, in which an imperial power, Portugal, removes its key colonial institutions, government, and cultural hegemony, though not necessarily its people, from a subject country, signified by the end of Hilarion's mission. Indeed, in the end, the Indians comment that Hilarion's "religion was unknown" (260), suggesting an end to both his power and his proselytizing in India.

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<sup>38</sup> Cólín Parsons, "'Greatly Altered': The Life of Sydney Owenson's Indian Novel," *Victorian Literature and Culture*, 38 (2010): 373-4.

Owenson's innovative articulation of a decolonization narrative, is, I believe, at least partially owing to her Irish nationalism. As Julia Anne Miller points out, the marriage at the end of Owenson's first novel, *The Wild Irish Girl* (1806), is uneven, as the Irish princess, Glorvina, gains only protection from poverty, while the English son of an absentee landowner, Horatio, gains legitimacy to his otherwise questionable claim on the estate in Ireland.<sup>39</sup> As one who was acutely aware of subjection under British colonialism, Owenson was likely to have a sense of the problems of a potential Irish colonialism from the perspective of an Indian colonial subject. Upon first seeing Glorvina in procession, Horatio pines to uncover her face, lamenting, "But oh! not once was the face turned round to that side where I stood. And when I shifted my position, the envious veil intercepted the ardent glance which eagerly sought the fancied charms it concealed: for it was possible to doubt the face would not 'keep the promise that the form had made.'"<sup>40</sup> Likewise, Hilarion, upon first seeing Luxima's procession, is enticed by her mystery, "for, indistinctly seen through the transparent veil of the palanquin, appeared the most sacred of vestals, the Prophetess and Brachmachira of Cashmire. Her perfect form, thus shrouded, caught, from the circumstance, a mysterious charm" (90). Both Horatio's and Hilarion's voyeurisms symbolize the imperial desire for conquest, but whereas Horatio goes out of his way to steal a glance, Hilarion retreats into his "solitary tent," filled with "horror and disgust" at his own desire, suggesting that the very thought of self-interest in his allegorical colonization of India pollutes his intention (91). Hilarion is rather a product of the assumed cultural superiority of Europeans, blinded by his youthful ambition to the tyrannical implications of his desire to

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<sup>39</sup> Julia Ann Miller, "Acts of Union: Family Violence and National Courtship in Maria Edgeworth's *The Absentee* and Sydney Owenson's *The Wild Irish Girl*," in *Border Crossings: Irish Women Writers and National Identities*, ed. Kathryn Kirkpatrick (Tuscaloosa, AL: The University of Alabama Press, 2000), 28.

<sup>40</sup> Owenson, *The Wild Irish Girl*, 47.

convert Indians. His mission, though genuinely intended to save Indians and ameliorate empire, is itself an act of empire, a byproduct of the political contest between the Spanish Inquisition and the Portuguese Franciscans' resistance to it. By showing Hilarion's ameliorative imperialism fail, Owenson critiques such justifications of empire, instead promoting decolonization.

*The Missionary* also includes an interesting but little studied figure, the Indian Pundit and rebel, who appears briefly in this novel to both incite Hilarion's efforts to convert Luxima and help resolve the novel's conflicts before its conclusion. Although he is never given a name other than "the Pundit," he is a complex figure, embodying many of the oppositional binaries that the novel allegorizes. His general morality and unaware self-righteousness reflects Hilarion's, for though "naturally humane and benevolent," he is "unprincipled and corrupt to a certain degree, when a dereliction from right favoured the views of his interests, or established the justness of his opinions" (244). Though deist, he expresses incredulity "as to the truth or influence of [Hilarion's and Luxima's] respective doctrines, when opposed to the feelings of nature," which resembles the novel's contest between romantic love and religious duty. The Pundit considers "himself as the remote cause of [Hilarion's] destruction" as well, and he feels "compassion and remorse," identifying him as a sympathetic, though guilty, party (243-4). As one of the causes of Hilarion and Luxima's suffering and as an agent of resistance to empire, the Pundit deserves more critical attention, especially in the context of the novel's allegorical figuration of tensions between England, Ireland, and India.

The Pundit, a radical figure, resists allegory by rejecting stereotypical characterizations of Indians as docile, Hindu, and "ancient" or backwards in their worldviews. We find in the Pundit a character more commonly ascribed to Europeans: the forward-thinking secularist rebel. Indeed, the Pundit's impetuous radicalism can be said to resemble that of an Irish revolutionary.

Furthermore, the Pundit's "confirmed deism set all hope of conversion at defiance" (87-8). Though he "secretly despised" it, the Pundit professes Hinduism for fear "of 'loss of caste' (an excommunication which involves every worldly evil)," and, when he "rescues" Luxima from the nunnery, he places her in the care of his lover, a "Jewess," who, like the Pundit in his faux Hinduism, professes Christianity to keep from persecution. The authoritative impositions of both Hinduism and Christianity victimize the Pundit and the Jewess, framing his rebellion as secular in nature. Also, the suggestion of a romantic relationship between an Indian man and a Jewish woman bucks the trend, given that most literature on British India limits miscegenation to European men and Indian women. The Pundit, the agent of change in this novel, is, I argue, the catalyst that eventually causes the nationalistic allegory to break down.

#### Excommunicating the Nationalistic Allegory

Though, as I show above, they represent particular nations in the greater scheme of the novel's allegory, Hilarion and Luxima are also described as overtly gendered personifications of the vague regions "East" and "West" upon their first meeting:

Silently gazing, in wonder, upon each other, they stood finely opposed, the noblest specimen of the human species, as it appears in the most opposite regions of the earth; she, like the East, lovely and luxuriant; he, like the West, lofty and commanding: the one, radiant in all the lustre, attractive in all the softness which distinguishes her native regions; the other, towering in all the energy, imposing in all the vigour, which marks his ruder latitudes: she, looking like a creature formed to feel and submit; he like a being created to resist and to command: while both appeared as the ministers and representatives of the two most powerful religions of the earth; the one no less enthusiastic in her brilliant errors, than the other confident in his immutable truth. (109)

Hilarion and Luxima are presented here in terms of a suspiciously clichéd dual binarism: a simplistic East-West opposition represented as a gendered dyad that confutes its earlier elucidations of nuance to European nationalities and Indian religious diversity. Hilarion is

powerful, bold, and masculine, while Luxima is submissive, beautiful, and feminine, consistent with common figurations of Europe and India respectively. The sexual puns on Luxima's "native regions" and Hilarion's "runder latitudes" further exaggerates their sexual distinctiveness, a sort of brute-force metaphor that borders on low humor. If, as some scholars suggest, the East-West binarism here is an attempt to mislead, masking Owenson's deconstruction of East and West into a subtler understanding of competing interests in Europe and India,<sup>41</sup> we can ask why Owenson would here describe Hilarion and Luxima as embodiments of West and East? As I argue in this section, *The Missionary* deliberately overloads its characters with variegated figurations in Lahore and then collapses them into this simplistic East-West binarism when Hilarion and Luxima are alone in the wilderness. Ultimately, Hilarion's and Luxima's excommunications by the Inquisition and loss of caste respectively signify the allegory's breakdown so that they can no longer represent East, West, their countries, or their religions. The effect is a critique of allegory that goes beyond deconstructing monolithic representations of East and West, instead challenging the central conceit of the national tale, that is, that individuals can represent nationality, when the nation in question, Ireland, is the imperial ruler. In turn, the breakdown of the allegory reflects the breakdown of national identity when the Irishman attempts to act as a colonial master.

Before he goes to Cashmire, Hilarion is not as clear or unitary an articulation of ideal "Western" masculinity as he might at first seem. Though he is possessed of physical, social, intellectual, and sexual power, the novel compares him to a number of conflicting figures. He is named after St. Hilarion, noted for resisting carnal temptations, which is appropriate given his

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<sup>41</sup> See, for example, Franklin, "Passion's Empire," and Elizabeth A. Bohls, *Romantic Literature and Postcolonial Studies* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh UP, 2013), 143-4.

attempts to stave off his desire for Luxima. Sterne's *Tristram Shandy* refers to "an expression of Hilarion the Hermit; who, in speaking of his abstinence, his watchings, flagellations, and other instrumental parts of his religion – would say – tho' with more facetiousness than became an hermit – 'That they were the means he used, to make his ass (meaning his body) leave off kicking.'"<sup>42</sup> The novel also notes that Hilarion resembles the famous conquerors of India, Tamarlane (80) and Alexander the Great (85). This predilection for conquest, however, does not sit well with his proclivity towards Christ-like self-sacrifice, "to watch, to pray, to fast, and to suffer for all" (79). The novel thus emphasizes the contradiction between his meekness and his authoritative demeanor. Additionally, given the numerous references to Milton's *Paradise Lost*, the most frequently recurring figures for Hilarion are Adam and Satan, characters that, though similar in some ways, actively oppose one another. The novel describes Cashmire and the "confluence of streams" as a natural paradise, an Eden. Hilarion and Luxima's solitude in this natural setting recalls that of Adam and Eve, but his movement into and out of Cashmire resembles Satan travelling to and from Eden. Hilarion's attempts to suppress his desire for Luxima and convert her instead, however, handicaps the Miltonic allusion.<sup>43</sup> Both humble and adversarial, a commander and a hermit, Hilarion manifests European figures for both the tyrant and the subject.

Luxima is likewise overloaded with meaning in Lahore. According to John Drew, because Owenson borrowed heavily from Sir William Jones, "Luxima is manifestly the

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<sup>42</sup> Lawrence Sterne, *The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy, Gentleman* (New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 2007), 472. Sterne's novel goes on to make a crude joke in which Tristram's father asks Toby about his "ass," that is, his success in repressing his passion for Mrs. Wadman. Toby humorously mistakes Mr. Shandy's inquiry as relating to a blister on his nether regions.

<sup>43</sup> See also Rajan, *Under Western Eyes*, 130-6 for an excellent reading of *The Missionary's* references to Milton, including analogies between Hilarion and Adam or Satan.



embodiment of the mystical philosophy to which she adheres,” that is, she represents Jones’ understanding of Hinduism.<sup>44</sup> To Hilarion, she first appears in the novel as a beautiful silhouette “indistinctly seen through the transparent veil of the palanquin,” a tantalizing vision of Eastern mystery and promise. Furthermore, as a sexual being, she comes to represent a threat to Hilarion’s chastity and therefore his religion and status as a priest. The Pundit represents her as a figurehead for Hinduism to Hilarion, her adulation identifying her as an empty “graven image” for the European to destroy, yet imbued with signification by her own people. To the Hindus, by contrast, she is endowed with real religious significance (90-1). Luxima derives agency from the combination of her position within the Hindu caste system, her elevation as a priestess, and her status as a virginal woman. Her palanquin is “guarded by a number of pilgrim women” and followed by “native troops,” so that she also marshals a great deal of power. The novel immediately punctuates her importance: “the Indians of the most distinguished rank drew back as [her procession] approached, lest their very breath should pollute that region of purity her respiration consecrated” (90-1). Her virginal holiness is conflated with her feminine beauty, which, according to the Pundit, “is sometimes mistaken for the influence of the zeal which belongs to her profession; and perhaps the Priestess too often receives an homage which the woman only excites” (97).<sup>45</sup> Womanhood, to the Hindus in this novel, entails holiness and power, whereas to the Christian, it entails empty worship and pernicious desire.

Hilarion’s intrusions in Cashmire confounds Luxima with various European figures, often associating womanhood with weakness and inaction. After her encounter with Hilarion, the novel rewrites her in the image of Indamora, the Indian widow who falls in love with a European

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<sup>44</sup> John Drew, *India and the Romantic Imagination* (Delhi: Oxford UP, 1987), 242.

<sup>45</sup> Owenson cites two sources, Bernier and Grose, on the link between holiness and beauty in Hinduism.

conqueror and must be rescued by him in *The Widow of Malabar*, as well as Eve, whose fertile body represents the future of the land itself. Luxima succumbs to Hilarion's paternalism, falling into a pattern of colonial binary oppositions: it is only upon his explanation that he wishes to guide her as would a father that "the countenance of Luxima" softens, for he addresses "her, not as the priest of a religion she feared, but as a man, whom it was impossible to listen to, or to behold, without interest" (119). Luxima resists Hilarion's proselytizing, but with difficulty.

When he berates her for her "folly and incongruity of a faith so vacillating:"

She fell at his feet – she trembled – she wept. The feelings of the woman, and the prejudices of the idolatress, equally at variance in her tender and erring mind; fearing equally to banish from her sight the preacher or to embrace the tenets he proposed to her belief, she said, 'It were better to die, than to live under the curse of my nation; it were better to suffer the tortures of Narekah [Owenson's note: The Brahminical hell.] than on earth to *lose cast* [sic], and become a wretched Chancalas [sic]. (143).

Luxima's quagmire is Zara's dilemma intensified: rather than merely losing her family, she faces a fate worse than damnation for even remaining with Hilarion. Loss of caste is also involved in the ongoing bifurcation of Luxima's identity: her attraction to Hilarion conflicts with her duties and beliefs, pitting the woman against the priestess. As we might expect from a Romantic novel, her love overtakes her fear of losing caste, and she attempts to resolve her identity crisis by turning her religious devotion from the Hindu Gods to Hilarion himself. When a Muslim Prince declares himself a rival for Luxima's love, she declares that "it is [her] religion now to [love Hilarion]," but, when the Prince tells her she will lose caste to become a Christian, she exclaims, "I am not a Christian! not *all* a Christian! His God is indeed mine; but Brahma still receives my homage" (167). Hilarion unwittingly effects Luxima's supposed conversion by confusing her love with religion. Such a conversion is appropriate given that, in her duties as a priestess, she

performs devotions to “Camdeo, the God of mystic love” (90); her love for Hilarion is itself an iteration of her adherence to Hinduism.

Loss of caste and excommunication hollow out the novel’s nationalistic allegory, symbolically ending Hilarion and Luxima’s representations of Portugal/Ireland/West and India/East respectively by cutting them off from their respective peoples. When Hilarion finally offers her an ultimatum, to go with him and convert, or to stay and part with him forever, Luxima faints away, and Hilarion carries her to the Hindu temple where the Hindu priests perform her “Brahminical excommunication” (186). In a terrifying scene, surrounded by the “hideous and grotesque images” of the Hindu idols, Luxima’s grandfather himself pronounces her sentence:

Luxima...having justly forfeited cast, is doomed by the word of Brahma, and the law of Menu, to become Chancalas [sic], a wanderer, and an outcast upon earth! – with none to pray with her, none to sacrifice with her, none to read with her, and none to speak to her; none to be allied by friendship or marriage to her, none to eat, none to drink, and none to pray with her.<sup>46</sup> Abject let her live, excluded from all social duties; let her wander over the earth, deserted by all, trusted by none, by none received with affection, by none treated with confidence, and apostate from her religion, and an alien to her country, branded with the stamp of infamy and of shame, the curse of Heaven and the hatred of all good men. (188)

Owenson here effectively cultivates sentimental horror toward the aftermath of conversion, divesting her of her previous social identity as Brachmachira. No longer influential among her own people, she is unable to convert the Indian populace as Hilarion had hoped, supplying the novel with dreadful irony.

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<sup>46</sup> By “the law of Menu,” Owenson refers to the codification of Hindu law collected and translated by Sir William Jones entitled *Institutes of Hindu Law; or, the ordinances of Menu* (1794). Translated from the *Manusmriti*, the “Laws of Menu” were used to guide EIC governance in India. Like the “Serampore Trio” according to Lata Mani (see above), Owenson mistakenly conceptualizes a “textual India,” one that is founded on religious texts. Note that “none to pray with her” is repeated. I don’t know whether this is deliberate or a typographical error.

As Kathryn S. Freeman observes, “the disastrous consequences of Luxima’s decision to follow Hilarion unfold because of what Owenson shows to be the inextricable link between caste and epistemology,” masking issues of paternalism and imperialism with the persistence of caste.<sup>47</sup> Hilarion attempts to downplay the effects of her ostracism by inducting her into a new, Christian family, styling her into a nun and shutting her away. He is, however, obstructed by his own failure to reintegrate among European imperialists. In the presence of disguised Jesuits, he critiques “not the zeal” of Jesuit missionaries, but rather “the mediums by which it manifests itself” and notes that the “coercion and artifice” they employ “frequently impel the Hindus to resistance” rather than conversion. He argues that true conversion can only be accomplished by teaching Hindus to love Christians and appreciate Christian virtues so that the Hindus would have “confidence in [their] doctrine” (226). Blinded by his investment in his mission, he fails to understand that love can be a form of coercion itself. Accused of violating his vow of celibacy and speaking against the Jesuits, he is arrested and sentenced to die as a heretic (234). Like Luxima, Hilarion finds himself ostracized and condemned. The novel describes the prison in Goa to which he is confined as a “mansion of horror and superstition,” in which “dark mysterious deeds are performed,” giving the prison the same tone of awful mystery as the Hindu temple in which Luxima lost her caste (240). Also, like Luxima, he loses his influence as a religious dignitary, the apostolic nuncio of India, so that he no longer represents his faith or his people in India. Before he is burned at the stake, Luxima, in a fit of passion, enters the flames herself, attempting a sati for Hilarion and provoking a disastrous rebellion among the Hindus in the audience. As Francis Botkin argues, *The Missionary* examines “the Hindu woman’s vexed status

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<sup>47</sup> Kathryn S. Freeman, *British Women Writers and the Asiatic Society of Bengal, 1785-1835: Reorienting Anglo-India* (Farnham, Surrey: Ashgate, 2014), 87.

as a repository of culture” by exploring “the ritual space of sati as a gendered site for the articulation of colonial resistance.”<sup>48</sup> She thus finally rewrites herself with her sati and death, returning to Hinduism though dispossessed of her power as a priestess. Her last words are, “I die as Brahmin women die, a Hindu in my feelings and in my faith – dying for him I loved, and believing as my fathers believed” (257). Her conversion to Christianity ultimately proves superficial, revealing the persistence of her core religious beliefs.

Ultimately, the interaction between cultures in a time of tumult and rebellion presents too many difficulties for such transculturation to succeed harmoniously. Hilarion is too convinced of his own religious superiority to the Hindus to even attempt to integrate himself into Luxima’s culture, and Luxima is too indoctrinated in Hinduism to successfully integrate into Christian culture. *The Missionary*’s main characters are therefore deceptively over-determined, seeming to repeat familiar European figures, but later confounding them to critique the European sense of cultural superiority. Hilarion and Luxima also lose their allegorical representations of Portugal/Ireland and India respectively as a result of colonialism and conversion. Because Owenson challenges these national identity categories, the figuration of Hilarion as “West” and Luxima as “East” in Cashmire are also deceptively simple. Whereas proponents of empire like Mariana Starke attempt to mask their own ambivalence towards empire by presenting simple resolutions to Indian resistance, Owenson moves in the opposite direction to over-ambiguate questions of the morality of empire. Divested of his association with Portuguese institutions, that is, the Franciscan church and Portuguese royalty, Hilarion becomes merely a private individual, living demurely in India, without recourse to the dominion of empire, nor intending to make converts of the Indians. In short, he becomes a resident Indian himself. The tone of this ending

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<sup>48</sup> Frances Botkin, “Burning Down the Big House,” *Colloquy: Text, Theory, Critique*, 15 (2008), 36.

is, perhaps, somewhat rueful, but only because he spends the remainder of his life in repentance, trading blissful conviction for melancholy wisdom.

### Adopted Hybrids and Transgressive Families

Though often overlooked in contemporary studies of children's literature and Anglo-Indian novels, Mary Martha Sherwood was well known in her own time, having produced over four hundred titles.<sup>49</sup> Raised an Anglican and influenced by the prominent missionary, Henry Martyn, Sherwood is notable for her novels' religious moralizing.<sup>50</sup> Ketaki Kushari Dyson notes that her children's books dominated "British nurseries until the advent of Lewis Carroll" and identifies her autobiography later in life as "an important source of information on the domestic aspects of British life in India, on the difficulties of child rearing, the hiring of wet-nurses, the clandestine administration of opium by nurses to the infants in their charge to put them to sleep, the soldiers' orphans, the stresses in the lives of the soldiers' wives, instances of child neglect in regimental life, the native mistresses of the soldiers, the sadness in their lives, and the problems of half-caste offspring."<sup>51</sup> In 1805, Sherwood left her first child with her relatives in England to travel with her husband, Captain Henry Sherwood, to India. While there, Sherwood gave birth to a son and daughter, Henry and Lucy, both of whom died as infants and whom she immortalized in her Anglo-Indian novels, *The History of Little Henry and his Bearer* (1814) and *The History*

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<sup>49</sup> Supriya Goswami, *Colonial India in Children's Literature* (New York: Routledge, 2012), 16.

<sup>50</sup> Jacqueline M. Labbe, "Mary Martha Sherwood," *Oxford Reference*, accessed March 9, 2015, <http://www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/acref/9780195146561.001.0001/acref-9780195146561-e-2957>.

<sup>51</sup> By "half-caste," Dyson means mixed-race. Ketaki Kushari Dyson, *A Various Universe: A Study of the Journals and Memoirs of British Men and Women in the Indian Subcontinent, 1765-1856* (Delhi: Oxford UP, 1978), 169, 173.

of *Little Lucy and her Dhaye* (1825).<sup>52</sup> M. Nancy Cutt notes that Sherwood's novels shaped a generation of English-speaking children, including those who would become the imperialists of the Victorian era.<sup>53</sup>

By contrast to Owenson's *The Missionary*, Sherwood's novels shed a favorable light on missionaries in India, thus constructing an ameliorative imperialism. The children in Sherwood's *Little Henry* and *Lucy and her Dhaye* successfully convert their Indian surrogate parents to Christianity. Henry, having been orphaned soon after his birth, is adopted by a neglectful English lady, whom he calls "mamma." With no one else to care for him, he develops an attachment to his palanquin bearer, Boosy, who becomes his primary caregiver. After a "pious" Englishwoman takes it upon herself to teach him English and Christianize him when he is five, Henry turns all his efforts to Boosy's conversion, which is only realized after Henry's death. In *Lucy and her Dhaye*, the eponymous protagonist's mother dies when she is an infant, and, since her father is largely occupied by his business in India, her dhaye, a wet nurse named Piarée, cares for Lucy. When her father is recalled to England, Piarée and Lucy are painfully separated. After learning English and becoming Christian at school, she takes it upon herself to ensure that English missionaries convert Piarée so that they might be reunited in heaven. Lucy later becomes ill and dies.

Sherwood attempts to reify new Anglo-Indian figures by detaching parentage from English nationality and culture, taking up a Lockean "blank slate" attitude toward knowledge,<sup>54</sup> but she takes advantage of bodily markers of English supremacy to facilitate conversion.

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<sup>52</sup> Joyce Grossman, "Ayahs, Dhayes, and Bearers: Mary Sherwood's Indian Experience and 'Constructions of Subordinated Others,'" *South Atlantic Review*, v. 66 (Spring 2001): 15-6.

<sup>53</sup> M. Nancy Cutt, *Mrs. Sherwood and Her Books for Children* (London: Oxford UP, 1974), ix.

<sup>54</sup> That is, children's identities and knowledge are formed by their education and experiences.

Because Henry speaks only Hindostani before he becomes Christian, “no one could have told by his behaviour or manner of speaking that he was not native.”<sup>55</sup> Rather, Henry’s origin is known only because of his “pretty light hair and blue eyes” (5). Likewise, Lucy’s parentage is recognizable by her “delicately fair” complexion.<sup>56</sup> Though they are later educated to become Christian, they maintain no particular national distinction to make them conscious of enacting an imperialist agenda. Rather, as cultural hybrids, they are alienated from others of their own nationality: Henry has little contact with his English adoptive “mamma”, and Lucy, in the image on the title page, appears to be resisting a white woman. Henry’s body, though, is notably English, and it suffers from the disadvantages and benefits of being English in India. Capitalizing on the supposition that the Indian climate is harmful to English constitutions, Sherwood ascribes Henry’s death to a fever resulting from the “excessively hot” weather (29). Before he dies, Henry arranges to send Boosy to a pious English acquaintance, Mr. Smith, with a lock of his hair “when [Boosy] had lost cast [sic] for becoming a Christian” (33-4). The boy’s hair is therefore a marker to indicate Boosy’s exceptionalism, granting him preferment largely for his comparative importance to the white child, an attempt to replace Boosy’s social standing after he loses caste. Thus, though conversion seems to take precedence over the hierarchies of race and empire, Sherwood does not fail to justify existing colonial biases.

In these novels, death is less a tragedy than a passage into heaven and an opportunity to convert others, both means of reconstituting families in heaven. On her deathbed, Lucy offers her father a consolation: “Papa... don’t be uneasy – I am very happy; I know that my redeemer

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<sup>55</sup> Mary Martha Sherwood, *The History of Little Henry and his Bearer* (Boston: Lincoln and Edmands, 1818), 4-5. Further references to this edition will appear parenthetically in the text.

<sup>56</sup> Mary Martha Sherwood, *The History of Little Lucy and her Dhaye* (Wellington, Salop: F. Houlstin & Son, 1823), 40. Further references to this edition will appear parenthetically in the text.



liveth; –I know that I am going to him; –I know that my salvation is sure. Papa, we shall meet in heaven, never to part, and my Dhaye will be in heaven with my first mamma” (132). In both *Lucy and her Dhaye* and *Little Henry*, the protagonists are much more concerned with their Indian caregivers’ entry into heaven than their happiness on earth. The implication is that the absence of their Indian parents might diminish their own happiness in heaven. Paradise therefore entails a complete family unit, and the creation of families composed of English and Indian members leads to the Indians’ admission into paradise in turn. For Sherwood, all people, regardless of nationality, are important because they are members of the greater family of humankind. In *The Ayah and Lady* (1813), for example, the Lady tells the Ayah that an outcaste woman is her sister because:

[God] made, at first, one man, and one woman, called Adam and Eve, from which first pair, all the men and women that ever were on the face of the earth are descended; so that there is not a human being, high or low, rich or poor, that does not bear the relation brother or sister to [the Ayah]; for Adam was the common father of all, as Eve was the mother; for God hath made of one blood all nations under heaven.<sup>57</sup>

The implication is that Christian conversion, which allows for passage into heaven, is also a means by which the greater family of humankind can be united. The Christian family united in heaven therefore takes center stage in Sherwood’s Indian novels as the goal to which her protagonists aspire and the key to harmonious transculturation. In Sherwood’s novels, though nationality and status dictate relative hierarchies of ruler and subject on earth, only familial relations persist in heaven. The family is the locus for a contest between the secular and the spiritual, and the novels avert the Indian convert’s fear of the loss of his family and caste as a

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<sup>57</sup> Mary Martha Sherwood and William Radcliff, *The Ayah and Lady: An Indian Story* (Wellington, Salop: F. Houlston and Son, 1822), 11.

result of conversion by providing him a surrogate family in heaven. Thus, Sherwood attempts to justify cultural impositions on Indians where Owenson does not.

Unlike *The Missionary*, *Little Henry* and *Lucy and her Dhaye* both end with Boosy and Piarée's conversions, sidestepping the problems that might result from loss of caste. She attempts to downplay the issue as secular and temporary by comparison to eternity in heaven. Soon before Henry's death, when Henry expresses his dying wish for Boosy to convert, "Boosy would have told Henry that he was not quite determined to be a Christian, and that he could not think of losing cast [sic]; but Henry, guessing what he was going to say, put his hand upon his mouth" (34). Henry's physical act of silencing counter-arguments to conversion indicates Sherwood's single-minded confidence in her evangelical project. The end of *Little Henry* notes only that Boosy eventually "renounced cast [sic], and declared himself a Christian." By contrast, the sequel, *The Last Days of Boosy* (1842), published three decades later, offers a much more detailed representation of Boosy's loss of caste. He converts only after considerable suffering due to the double bind of honoring Henry's last wish and being unable to openly convert for fear that he will be cast out of his own family. In the context of Sherwood's notion of reuniting families in heaven, the Indian's loss of his own family is ironic, perhaps implying that Henry is Boosy's true family. Thus, Sherwood, though confident in the ends of proselytizing, also eventually expresses some sympathy for those who suffer as a result of conversion.<sup>58</sup>

Many critics describe Sherwood's Indian novels as means to train English children to convert Indians in order to make boys and girls into agents of empire. Dara Rossman Regaignon, for example, argues that Sherwood's novels attempt to transform English children's susceptibility to Indian influences into a means to Anglicize Indians, thereby transforming a

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<sup>58</sup> I discuss *The Last Days of Boosy* in more detail in my afterword.

threat to imperial identity into a means to reinforce it.<sup>59</sup> Similarly, Denise K. Comer argues that, in the early nineteenth century, English women and children took leading roles in enacting empire, contradicting other scholars' notions of their passivity in the imperial project. *Little Henry*, according to Comer, features a British child who actively subordinates Indians.<sup>60</sup> Other scholars take an opposing position on Sherwood's views on empire. Joyce Grossman, for example, claims that "Sherwood's uncertainty about colonial values resonates even as she derogates Hindus and Muslims, and touts her nationalistic superiority." According to Grossman, though Boosy is threatening in his feminizing influence on Henry, Boosy's conversion represents a harmonious, uncoerced relationship between the colonizer and the colonized. Furthermore, Grossman reports that Sherwood's autobiography recounts scenes that contradict other critics' contentions that she is an outright racist.<sup>61</sup> Supriya Goswami argues that *Little Henry* is both overtly triumphant and covertly doubt-ridden, since the English child is deployed to combat powerful forces of both native resistance and East India Company hostility toward missionaries. To Goswami, the weakness of the ailing boy represents the weakness of the missionary project, and Boosy's conversion, according to Goswami, is consequently half-hearted.<sup>62</sup>

Hence, there is disagreement as to the extent to which Sherwood recruits children to the cause of empire: they are either decisive agents of control as in Regaignon's and Comer's articles or emblematic of colonial ambivalence as in Grossman's and Goswami's. Though I

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<sup>59</sup> Dara Rossman Raigaignon, "Intimacy's Empire: Children, Servants, and Missionaries in Mary Martha Sherwood's 'Little Henry and his Bearer,'" *Children's Literature Association Quarterly*, 26:2 (Summer, 2005): 84.

<sup>60</sup> Denise K. Comer, "'White child is Good, Black Child his [or her] Slave': Women, Children, and Empire in Early Nineteenth-Century India," *European Romantic Review*, 16:1 (2006): 41, 52.

<sup>61</sup> Grossman, 15, 19-27.

<sup>62</sup> Goswami, 17, 32-9.

consider Sherwood more sympathetic to Indians than Regaignon and Comer do, I argue that, given her unwavering devotion to Christianity, Sherwood's primary concern is not with the empire at all. In fact, she attempts to derogate empire by comparison to faith, attempting (perhaps naïvely) to detach Anglicanism from the empire, and trumping secular concerns for loss of caste with the spiritual matters of heaven. The kindness of the Indian caregivers by comparison to the children's neglectful English parents demonstrates that moral superiority is not endemic to nationality. Henry's English adoptive mother, for example, would not "suffer Henry to give her the least trouble, nor would she endure the smallest inconvenience on his account," while his Indian servant, Boosy, "did everything for [Henry] as if he had been his own child" (34). Therefore, despite that the Indians are servants to the English, Sherwood implies that English ascendancy is not always assumed or deserved. Rather, Sherwood's novels exhibit more ambivalence than advocacy for the imperial project, but support it as a means to an end.

In fact, *Little Henry* takes pains to critique colonialists' assumptions of the West's secularism and modernity. Henry remarks:

[India] is a very good country: that is, [India] would be a very good country, if the people were Christians. Then they would not be so idle as they now are; and they would agree together, and clear the jungles, and build churches to worship God in. It will be pleasant to see the people, when they are Christians, all going on a Sunday morning to some pretty church built among those hills, and to see them in an evening sitting at the door of their houses reading the shaster<sup>63</sup> – I do not mean your shaster, but our shaster, God's book. (22)

Predictably, Henry ascribes industriousness to Christianity and idleness to Hinduism, but the measure for industriousness is that which is in service to the Christian God, rather than any utilitarian or capitalist interest in increasing productivity and trade. His vision of a utopian India resembles an antiquated European countryside rather than a progressive modern cosmopolis.

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<sup>63</sup> Sherwood's note: "The Hindoo religious books."

When Boosy says he dreams of a time when there would be no caste, Henry says, “There is a country now... where there are no casts; and where we all shall be alike as dear brothers. It is a better country than this; there are no evil beasts; there is no more hunger, no more thirst; there the waters are sure; there the sun does not scorch by day, nor the moon smite by night. It is a country I hope to go to very soon: I wish, Boosy, you would be persuaded either to go with me or follow me” (22). While Boosy assumes that he speaks of England, Henry says he is instead speaking of heaven. Here, the novel deliberately averts favoritism for the imperial power to differentiate missionary work from the work of empire, again separating concerns of heaven from those of earth.

Sherwood’s missionaries make use of relationships between Indians and Europeans to convert Indians just as Hilarion advocates proselytizing by making Indians love them in *The Missionary*. With *Little Henry*, however, Sherwood advocates for the conversion of hybrid children to effect a conversion by degrees, seeming to target those who bear relations to both sides of the colonial hierarchy as a conduit for evangelism. Because these children have greater access to Indian culture than British missionaries, they are better positioned to influence their Indian servants. The hybrid children’s transformations also simulate a conversion among their own, but without the consequences of loss of caste. The first obstacle to Henry’s and Lucy’s conversions, however, has to do with removing them from the presence of their Indian caretakers, a separation that is framed as somewhat violent and intrusive. Henry is initially resistant to the missionary, but she entices him with trinkets and pictures to lure him away from Boosy (6). Lucy is converted only after moving with her father to England, which involves a tearful separation from Piarée. From that point on, the children are given to using the pronouns “us” and “them” as references to the Christians and Hindus respectively, performing a linguistic

and ideological differentiation that signifies a degree of distance. In essence, the identities of these hybrid children are significantly, heartbreakingly, changed upon their conversions, benevolently sacrificing a piece of their relationships with their caregivers in order to save the Indians' souls.

The novels praise Indians for their extremely gentle treatment of children, which makes them more amenable to adopting European children and creating racially transgressive families than English adults. *Lucy and her Dhaye* notes that “instances have been brought forward, by different writers, of the attachment evinced by the natives of India, for the children of European parents placed under their care” (6), implying that tenderness for European children is common to Indians. In turn, this tenderness can become the means by which to access the Indians' emotions and attention in order to convert them. These novels also condemn the Hindus' remarkable religious tolerance: Boosy, for example, responds to Henry's incessant attempts to convert him without being “disrespectful or ill-humoured to his little master” (20). Instead, he merely responds with the understanding that so confounded missionaries: “There are many brooks and rivers of water, but they all run into the sea at last; so there are a great many religions, but they all lead to heaven: there is the Musselmaun's way to heaven, and the Hindoo's way, and the Christian's way: and one is as good as another” (20). As Supriya Goswami notes, *Little Henry* attempts to contain and diffuse these arguments by quoting the Bible, attempting to establish a textual hegemony,<sup>64</sup> but this comes across as potentially abusive on the part of both the Christian missionaries and the hybrid children, especially by comparison to the Hindus' gentleness and charity. Interestingly, the attempts to overcome Boosy's reasoning takes the form of hard-headed proselytizing: the narrator simply writes off Boosy's river metaphor as “foolish”

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<sup>64</sup> Goswami, 39.

(20). The novel notably uses violent language in Henry's attempts to convert Boosy, for "although he might be silenced at one time, yet he would often... begin the attack again" (20). Furthermore, Mr. Smith, an English friend of Henry's mother, recommends that Henry not "argue and dispute with [Boosy] about religion" but rather "only read the Bible to him, and pray for him continually; leaving the rest with God" (28). Indeed, Sherwood's novels reinforce such simplistic evangelism, often presenting only passages from the Bible to justify its moralizing. Boosy's conversion is finally completed upon Henry's deathbed, in the midst of the Indian's great emotional turmoil. These novels therefore take advantage of Indian sentiments, essentially advocating for the emotional manipulation that ruined Luxima in *The Missionary*.

Sherwood therefore attempts to separate spiritual universalism and equality in heaven from secular bias and national identity, advocating for a vision of India that resembles pre-Enlightenment England. She relegates both the biases of empire and the Hindu fear of loss of caste to the secular, then takes advantage of the former and downplays the latter to advocate for what is to her a superior motive, Indian conversion. Consequently, her novels take on the tone of a moral tale or Christian allegory.<sup>65</sup> Though Owenson and Sherwood differ in their opinions on the effectiveness of missionaries, both stress the potency of developing interpersonal relations between Europeans and Indians. According to Sherwood, the spiritual well-being of the Indians justifies continued empire, while Owenson argues that missionary work is not only ineffective, it also leads to the corruption of its European proponents. *The Missionary* and Sherwood's India novels therefore present an interesting contrast between contemporaneous imperial abolition and ameliorative imperialist narratives.

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<sup>65</sup> In 1818, Sherwood would publish a Christian allegory, *The Indian Pilgrim*, an adaptation of Bunyan's *The Pilgrim's Progress*.

## Afterword: The Death of the Palanquin Bearer

*“But the wet-nurse’s baby,” I remarked; “what can be done for the little black infant?” “Oh!” replied the amiable white woman, “something handsome is always paid for their being reared; but they commonly die.” “My lady,” she added, “has had six nurses for different children, and the babies have one and all died.” “Died!” I remember I exclaimed, “but this is murder.” She answered coolly, “But this can’t be helped; the mothers never fret after them. Whenever they nurse a white baby, they cease to care for their own; they say ‘White child is good; black child his slave.’”*

*I still inquired “whether this might not be avoided?” “Only,” she answered, “by a lady taking the trouble of keeping the infant within her compound and seeing it daily.”*

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*I was made very unhappy one morning, on being suddenly informed that the Dhaye’s poor baby was dead...<sup>1</sup> I felt much for the mother, and begged they would not tell her till she had dined. When I looked through the venetians of the children’s room, and saw her sitting placidly taking her food as usual, I remembered that I withdrew and cried bitterly, till Miss Corrie came to me and said, “Wipe away your tears on the mother’s account, she had known of her child’s death since the morning, and all the comment she made upon it was, ‘I hope the Beebee Sahib [the Lady of the House, Mrs. Sherwood] will not be vexed.” After this of course I was comforted, or, as my journal says, I became entirely reconciled, for this poor babe has gone to Him who made it and loved it, after a very short suffering. Its very sudden death excited in my mind painful conjectures.*

...

*It was in consequence of the strong affection of my Lucy for her Piarée that I was induced to write the little tale of “Lucy and her Dhaye,” which is, in many points, true. Again I address myself to the children of English parents born in India, who owe perhaps their very existence now to the poor natives of those Eastern climes. Do not forget them, but remember, if you are allowed to owe them an earthly life, implore permission to repay them by aiding the means used to shew them the way to gain a heavenly life.*

*-The Life of Mrs. Sherwood<sup>2</sup>*

Mary Martha Sherwood’s *Life*, an autobiography published posthumously by her daughter, elucidates a history of sentiment corrupted by Sherwood’s sense of cultural superiority.

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<sup>1</sup> A “dhaye” is a wet-nurse, in this case, the wet-nurse for Sherwood’s infant daughter, Lucy.

<sup>2</sup> Mary Martha Sherwood, *The Life of Mrs. Sherwood, Chiefly Autobiographical with Extracts from Mr Sherwood’s Journal during his Imprisonment in France and Residence in India*, ed. Sophia Kelly (London: Darton and Co., 1857), 378-9, 389, 470



In what Sara Suleri calls “the economy of the borrowed breast,” Indian dhayes sacrificed their own children for the benefit of their master’s children, the adopted English child functioning as a preferred replacement for the blood relation.<sup>3</sup> Nevertheless, upon reflection, Sherwood notes that Indian wet-nurses were necessary to keep English children alive in the harsh Indian climate.<sup>4</sup> The young Sherwood no doubt felt the loss of the dhaye’s child keenly, having herself lost two infants to disease in India. The dhaye’s interest in her English master’s comfort was, however, greater than her concern for her own child, consistent with imperial fantasies of Indian gratitude to their English masters. This fantasy, combined with her assurance in the will of God, worked to allay her potential guilt at causing the dhaye to neglect her own child, but Sherwood nevertheless includes the cryptic intimation that the child’s death “excited in [her] mind painful conjectures,” perhaps a hint at some subtle remorse.<sup>5</sup>

Though the loss of her son, Henry, and her encounters with the prominent missionary, Henry Martyn, led to her noble interest in the well-being of children, it also induced her to evangelize.<sup>6</sup> An advocate for neglected children, Sherwood adopted several offspring of English soldiers and established a school for English and Indian children. Despite that her shock at the “handsome” price Indian women pay to raise English children does illicit a sense of gratitude toward Indian caregivers, that thankfulness is tarnished by her sense that the greatest good Englishmen can do for Indians is to convert them to Christianity. Thus, what could have been a

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<sup>3</sup> Sara Suleri, *The Rhetoric of English India* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), 81.

<sup>4</sup> Sherwood, *Life*, 379. See also Mary Martha Sherwood, *The History of Little Lucy and her Dhaye* (Wellington, Salop: F. Houlstin & Son, 1823), 5.

<sup>5</sup> For an in-depth look at Sherwood’s attitudes toward child-rearing and empire in the context of her *Life*, see Joyce Grossman, “Ayahs, Dhayes, and Bearers: Mary Sherwood’s Indian Experience and ‘Constructions of Subordinated Others,’” *South Atlantic Review* v. 66 (Spring 2001), 14-44.

<sup>6</sup> Sherwood, *Life*, 303-9.

purser humanitarian effort on her part came with strings attached: Sherwood taught British children that Christianity is better than Hinduism and Islam, a sense of Western cultural superiority that might turn these children into agents of empire.

Sherwood, however, later expresses concern for the effects of conversion on Indian caregivers as portrayed in her sequel to her famous *The History of Little Henry and his Bearer* (1814), *The Last Days of Boosy* (1842). Though Henry convinces Boosy to convert to Christianity at the end of *Little Henry*, *The Last Days of Boosy* shows the Indian caregiver's struggles with his promise to convert and the problems that arise from loss of caste. He not only faces censure from his own people for even attempting to convert, he also has difficulty changing his worldview and believing in a Christian God. Setting aside his conversion, Boosy enlists as a bearer for another English child, Edward, to attempt to replace Henry in his heart, but he is dismayed to find that his new little English master is nothing like the cherubic Henry. Finding no consolation in the spoiled little boy, he again attempts to renounce Hinduism in order to keep his promise to Henry. Unfortunately, this causes Boosy to be driven out of the house, distrusted by both his fellow Indian servants and his English masters, for, as both servants and masters agree, "Hindoo is good, and Musselmaun is good, and Christian very good; black child is good, and white child is very good; but half and half is not good, and he that is not sincere in the religion of his fathers and his people is not to be trusted."<sup>7</sup> He does, however, find consolation in his orphaned grandson, whom he had named "Henry," after his former master. A good child, the Indian Henry receives Boosy's training in Christian principles well. It isn't until he is upon his deathbed that Boosy publicly avows Christianity.

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<sup>7</sup> Mary Martha Sherwood, *The Last Days of Boosy; the bearer of little Henry* (London: Houlston and Stoneman, 1847), 67. Further references to this edition will appear parenthetically in the text.

In the context of the Suleri's "economy of the borrowed breast," *The Last Days of Boosy* is particularly telling. Just as Sherwood's Indian dhaye sacrifices her own child to care for Sherwood's English infant, Boosy forgoes his own grandson to care for an English child, "for his heart was wholly with the English, and he seemed, as it were, to have lost all affection for his own race" (46). Though Edward "has the fair hair and slender form of him for whom" Boosy mourns, he proves to be a poor replacement for Henry, having been spoiled by his parents. Interestingly enough, it is the Indian Henry who becomes a sufficient stand-in for Boosy's former master. Like the English Henry, the Indian Henry is orphaned, Boosy's son and daughter-in-law having died. The Indian Henry therefore relies wholly on Boosy for his care when taken from his self-interested maternal grandmother. This allows Boosy to impart to him the English Henry's morality, whereas Edward's parents don't allow Boosy to instruct or correct the child. Thus, Sherwood attempts to reverse the "economy of the borrowed breast" by causing the Indian caregiver to substitute his adopted child for his blood relation, his Indian grandson. The restitution of the kind Indian's family, however, resembles a reward for the tenderness offered to the English child, an innate right to family masquerading as a gift. Even so, Sherwood's closed-minded proselytizing interrupts the reunion, for the relationship is continually harassed as a result of the ostracism that Boosy suffers at having promised to convert.

The counterintuitive desire to replace the adopted English child with the Indian's descendant, the real family acting as a stand-in for the figurative family, is emblematic of the contradictions within pre-Mutiny ameliorative imperialism. Both the Indian, Boosy, and the English narrator, Mr. Smith, are convinced that the English Henry is Boosy's true family. Furthermore, Sherwood represents the Indian Henry as a mere stand-in for the original, for upon Boosy's deathbed, when the Indian Henry expresses his love for Boosy, Boosy "knew not the

boy, but fancied it was [his] own sweet sahib [the English Henry] come back to [him], expressing his joy, his holy joy, at [Boosy's] acknowledgment of our God" (156). Ultimately, even the Indian child comes into the possession of the Englishman. When Mr. Smith appears to Boosy in his last moments, Boosy "tried to speak, but [Mr. Smith] prevented him." Instead, the Englishman usurps Boosy's words and intent: "'I understand you,' I said, 'you give this boy [the Indian Henry] to me;' and I laid the dimpled swarthy hand of the child in that poor man's, holding my own near that he should transfer it to mine" (174). Eliding both Boosy's words and the symbolic transfer of the Indian child, Mr. Smith continues, "It is done then,' I said; 'the boy is mine; and I call upon the God whom I adore to witness the gift'" (174). The "gift" is that of the Indian peoples' souls, made conscionable by a fantasy of their bestowal into the guiding hands of conscientious Englishmen by the Indians themselves.

The goal of this study was to penetrate some of the lesser known ameliorative imperialisms, those of Anglo-Indian fictions, that were founded in fantasies of India and, with perhaps the exception of Sherwood's evangelism largely influenced by Henry Martyn, not quite implemented on a larger scale. Though many scholars turn their attentions to Burke's or James Mill's justifications for the empire (appropriately so, given that these critiques were much more influential than those elucidated here), it is nevertheless interesting to study those that fell by the wayside, or that may have contributed to a larger sense of identity in the empire. The scope of this study is, however, limited to a few of those fictions produced in this key time in the empire's development. Indeed, a study of drama or poetry in the empire in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries could fill more dissertations. Nevertheless, by calling attention to these ameliorative imperialisms and, to a certain extent, levelling them with commentaries such as

Burke's and Mill's, I believe this dissertation helps open the way for the study of the great many systems of justification for the empire that arose in this time.

If, as some might claim, the arguments of Burke and Mill had little in common with the arguments of authors like Gibbes and Hamilton, I would disagree. Both ameliorative imperialist fiction writers and (in)famous authors of critical interrogations of the empire formulated their justifications for colonialism on the same fundamental principles, as Ronald Inden shows: a sense that there exists a knowable "system" to empire and society in India, one that can be manipulated for the betterment of Indian and/or British people. Inden demonstrates that these metaphors obviate an essentialism to commentaries on empire, that is, that there are unchanging "essences" to things in nature that determine definitions of "individual" or "nation."<sup>8</sup> It is, I believe, an ardent belief in manipulable systems that continued to buttress the empire for so long. If one system of governance was insufficient, there may have been a sense that another could substitute that would be sufficient, given time to test and refine it. Given the number of proposals for systems of governance in India, these various ameliorative imperialisms, it would be no wonder that the empire continued as it did for so long despite its various contradictory premises. I will leave this as idle speculation, for to connect these minority ameliorative imperialisms of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries to the fervor that sustained and then brought down the empire is a task better left for historians.

It goes without saying that ameliorative imperialisms shaped conceptions of British India in the centuries to come. Imperialist discourse in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries can be described as largely affective. While it mourned for India's past, it pitied Indians in the present and directed India's future, often speaking about and for Indians in the

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<sup>8</sup> Ronald Inden, *Imagining India* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1990), 2.

same breath. Thus, the Englishman appropriates the Indian's voice out of genuine compassion, believing that the Indian is unable to speak for or represent himself. Even the desire to disseminate "truth" about India among Orientalists often stemmed from a sense that information would generate sympathy for Indians. Burke, for example, purported to be an expert on India in his speeches, giving his audience emotionally charged reports to remedy abuses, but refraining from allowing Indian witnesses. Feeling, however, developed into one of the primary strategic tools for maintaining British dominion in India, stirring people at home to speak for India since it was supposedly unable to speak, repeating the appropriation of the Indian's voice out of a sense of kindness. When we penetrate the sympathy that oiled the gears of the empire, we find a number of competing interests bound up in not only transnational relations, but also in centuries-old tensions at home. Even as the class biases of English landed nobility became a model by which the British could delegate power among Indian elites, there was a sense that British women and children could take on an even greater role in the empire, mitigating young British men's inordinate power over Indians and revising characterizations of Indian men as akin to British women. Yet sentiment remained in both discourses, since, for example, Hamilton's desire to create an Indian ruling class and the Gibbes' push for women's empowerment in India were both produced by real sympathy for Indians, a desire to improve their conditions. Despite the nobility of such fellow-feeling, this emotion constructed hierarchies, perpetrated violence, and consolidated power in the empire.

I would like to conclude this dissertation by reiterating Ashis Nandy's case for an "alternative West," one that came to end British colonialism in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The "authentic innocents" in the East and West, those who acknowledged and mourned their complicity in the empire, were perhaps influenced by the ameliorative imperialists

of the past.<sup>9</sup> Indeed, colonial guilt disseminated in impassioned speeches like Burke's may have laid the groundwork for those who conceived of an end to British dominion in India. If I seem harsh in my critique of these men and women, it isn't out of spite so much as mutual guilt, for, as Nandy points out, both colonizer and colonized were victimized by the epistemes that the empire enforced, just as both the imperialists who enacted empire and subalterns who combatted empire both fell into the patterns that perpetuated empire.<sup>10</sup> As a product of Western ideology, but descended from Indian people, I am no doubt influenced by the pervasive remnants of British colonialism. Nevertheless, it is just such an encounter with the self that is endemic to any interaction with cultural history.

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<sup>9</sup> Ashis Nandy, *The Intimate Enemy: Loss and Recovery of Self under Colonialism* (Delhi: Oxford UP, 1983), xii-xiii.

<sup>10</sup> Nandy, 1-4, 72.

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