

The Making of British India Fictions, 1772-1823

By Ashok Malhotra

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Abstract

This thesis investigates British fictional representations of India in novels, plays and poetry from 1772 to 1823. Rather than simply correlating literary portrayals to shifting colonial context and binary power relationships, the project relates representations to the impact of India on British popular culture, and print capitalism's role in defining and promulgating national identity and proto-global awareness. The study contends that the internal historical development of the literary modes – the stage play, the novel and verse – as well as consumer expectations, were hugely influential in shaping fictional portrayals of the subcontinent. In addition, it argues that the literary representations of India were contingent upon authors' gender, class and their lived or lack of lived experience in the subcontinent.

The project seeks to use literary texts as case studies to explore the growing commoditisation of culture, the developing literary marketplace and an emerging sense of national identity. The thesis proposes that the aforementioned discourses and anxieties are embodied within the very literary forms of British India narratives. In addition, it seeks to determine shifts in how Britain's relationship with the subcontinent was imagined and how events in colonial India were perceived by the general public. Furthermore, the project utilises literary texts as sites to explore the discursive and epistemological strategies that Britons engaged in to either justify or confront their country's role as a colonising nation.

Declaration

I confirm that this thesis is entirely of my own composition and represents my own original research.

Signed:

Ashok Pratap Malhotra

Acknowledgments

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Abbreviations

JMLB/NLS – John Murray Books held at the National Library of Scotland,

Fig. - Figure

R.L.F – Royal Literary Fund

V & A Museum – Victoria and Albert Museum

E.I.C – East India Company

Introduction

This thesis provides a survey of British fictional representations of the Subcontinent from 1772-1823. Although it discusses the consumption of oriental goods and the development of oriental tales in early eighteenth-century Britain, the study of British India fictional texts really begins with Samuel Foote's *The Nabob* (1772). It is appropriate that the journey begins in 1772 as this was a year when the autonomy of the East India Company (E.I.C) in the subcontinent was being debated by its stockholders in London.¹ In addition, this date has particular significance given that the E.I.C's revenue collections and nefarious trading practices in Bengal were coming to the attention of the metropolitan press and were hotly debated in the immediate aftermath of the Bengal Famine (1770-1), and during Robert Clive's trial for corruption in Britain.² It also marks an era when Britain's empire was still at its formative stages. Despite the fact that the Company at this time was the major European power in India, with strong footholds in Bengal, Madras and Bombay and, furthermore, held the rights to collect and administer land revenue in Bengal, it had yet to expand into Central and Southern India.³

Although our starting point is the year 1772, the study will end in 1823, when William Thomas Moncrieff's *The Cataract of the Ganges*, was performed. These fifty one years were significant in so far that they bore witness to a period of dramatic changes both in terms of colonial context and in relation to cultural

¹ *London Evening Post* (1772: Aug. 27)

² Romesh Chunder Dutt, *The Economic History of India Under Early British Rule: From the Rise of British Power in 1757 to the Accession of Queen Victoria in 1837* (London: Routledge & Keegan, 1950) pp. 19-51

³ P. J. Marshall, 'Western Arms in Maritime Asia in the Early Phases of Expansion' in *Modern Asian Studies* vol. 14 no. 1 (Cambridge University, 1980) pp. 26-28. In 1765 the Company acquired a *Diwani* from the Moghul Emperor Shah Alam, which meant they had the right to collect land revenues in Bengal. See Ronald Findlay & Kevin H. O'Rourke, *Power and Plenty: Trade, War and the World Economy in the Second Millennium* (Oxford: Princeton University, 2007) p. 267

developments taking place within the metropole. Throughout the successive decades there occurred transformations in attitudes and styles within the colonial administration, a growing military presence in India, increasing missionary activity, greater controls placed on the Company by the Crown, and more concerted efforts to know and ethnographically differentiate the Indian population. Although in the late eighteenth century the British were still one of several powers within the region, by the 1820s the E.I.C had defeated her major rivals, the Maratha Empire and Kingdom of Mysore, and had all but secured her dominance within the subcontinent.⁴

Notwithstanding the shifts in colonial context, important socio-cultural trends were emerging within Britain. In the 1780s we begin to see more specific knowledges and images of India, embodied in the oriental scholarship of Company men and the paintings of British artists, filtering their way back to the metropole, which in turn helped shape fictional representations of the subcontinent. In the following decades the impact of Asian motifs, the consumption of Indian goods and immigrants from the subcontinent became increasingly influential upon metropolitan culture. The proliferation of newspapers and journals and their increased reportage on colonial issues and conflicts, furthermore, led to an increasing number of Britons becoming more acquainted with Indian affairs.⁵

In addition to the changes in the colonial power dynamic in the subcontinent and the increased awareness of Indian issues and consumption of oriental aesthetic motifs within the metropole, the British literary marketplace was also undergoing radical transformation. The 1774 Copyright Act broke up the monopolies of big publishing houses, leading to a more competitive literary

⁴ The shifting colonial context during this period is explored more in chapters one, two, three and four.

⁵ These socio-cultural trends are discussed more extensively in chapter one.

marketplace and a plethora of new novels, editions of poetry and theatrical productions being published.

During the period, 1772-1823 the differing literary modes were transformed. Larger theatre sizes, the growth of illegitimate theatres and developments in visual technologies meant that stage productions were increasingly concerned with attracting audiences through spectacle.⁶ The novel and verse underwent dramatic changes. The prevalent eighteenth-century perception of novel writing being a lowbrow and feminine occupation pursued by anonymous hack workers was significantly eroded by the 1820s, with the literary mode gaining in cultural status and publishers realising the value of the copyrights of novels as literary property. Mary Sherwood's *The History of George Desmond* (1821) is where our discussion of British India novels ends. We conclude with a novel by Sherwood because she was the very first novelist who drew upon direct experience of living in the subcontinent and was successfully marketed as such by her publisher. In this respect she marks the dawning of an era of more acculturated British India novelists such as Philip Meadows Taylor, Rudyard Kipling and Fanny Parks; Sherwood is thus a useful point to complete our discussion of 'India' novels.⁷ In terms of poetry in the mid 1770s we see publications of verse written by Company men such as Eyles Irwin, who lived and worked in colonial India. This was later to be followed in the mid 1780s by the poems of William Jones, who utilised Indian mythology and imagery to break away from reliance upon classical poetic conventions and norms. In the closing years of the eighteenth century and early decades of the nineteenth century the Romantic Movement, however, became influential upon metropolitan poetry.

⁶ The impact of increased theatre sizes on theatrical representations of India is discussed in detail in chapter three.

⁷ The rising cultural status of novels and the birth of the acculturated British India novel are explored more thoroughly in chapter four.

Moreover, as will be demonstrated, representations of the subcontinent by poets writing in Britain were strongly shaped by Romantic concerns, as well as being deliberately packaged and marketed by publishers for a literary audience.⁸

It is the intention of this thesis to utilise India narratives, amongst other sources, as historical documents. They are case studies that provide valuable insights into a developing print culture and its role in defining national identity, the impact of the subcontinent on the metropole in terms of its effects on visual culture and shaping aesthetic debates, the growing commoditisation of culture, the shifting relationship between coloniser and colonised, and popular perceptions of encounters between Britain and India. It is also the intention of this discussion to engage in a comparative study across the literary modes of representations of the subcontinent. A prime aim of this work is to determine whether and how the demands and internal historical development of the novel, verse or the theatre, and the status of the author, affected portrayals of India. The discussion utilises literary forms as evidence of historical shifts in ideology and print culture.

There has been a broad range of worthy critical studies of representations of India in British fiction around this period. Amal Chatterjee's *Representations of India* and Kate Teltscher's *India Inscribed* have approached literary depictions of India from a Saidian perspective, contextualising them in relation to the shifting relationship between coloniser and colonised.⁹ Javed Majeed, in his comparative study of James Mill, has related the poetry of British Romantic

⁸ The poetic productions of Company men and the influence of the Romantic Movement upon British metropolitan representations of India in verse are given a more detailed overview in chapter two.

⁹ Amal Chatterjee, *Representations of India, 1740-1840: The Creation of India in the Colonial Imagination* (London: Macmillan, 1998) pp. 4-5 & Kate Teltscher, *India Inscribed: European and British Writing on India 1600-1800* (Oxford: Oxford University, 1995) pp. 6-7

poets to political and aesthetic debates taking place within the metropole.¹⁰ Michael Franklin - who has extensively explored the poetry of William Jones and interrogated the depiction of India by women authors such as Sydney Owenson and Phebe Gibbes - has treated texts sympathetically stating that Jones' portrayals were aimed at garnering intellectual sympathy for Indian culture within Britain¹¹ and that women novelists were often deploying India as a feminised space to critique the metropole.¹² Nandini Bhattacharya, in *Reading the Splendid Body*, looks at fictional portrayals of India from the perspective of their treatment of subaltern women, arguing that authors projected onto Indian or 'Indianised' British women threatening libidinal and consumerist drives, which ran counter to the normative ideal of the Anglo-centric gendered division between public and private spheres.¹³ Daniel O'Quinn in contrast has focused upon representations of India on the stage situating them in relation to the development of visual and staging technologies during this period. He argues that they reflected the Foucauldian aims of theatre directors and playwrights to instil an imperial subjectivity upon audiences.¹⁴

Whilst previous studies, have engaged in fruitful and insightful discussion, they have not provided a comparative study of the literary modes to show how the internal historical development of verse, the novel and the theatre shaped representations of the subcontinent. Scholars have not related later India fictions to their precursor, the oriental tale imported from France in Antoine Galland's *Arabian*

¹⁰ Javed Majeed, *Ungoverned Imaginings: James Mill's The History of British India and Orientalism* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992) pp. 3-5

¹¹ 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. by Michael J. Franklin] (Routledge: London, 2006) pp. 154-173

¹² Michael J. Franklin, 'Accessing India: Orientalism, anti-'Indianism' and the rhetoric of Jones and Burke' in *Romanticism and Colonialism* [eds. by Tim Fulford & Peter J. Kitson] (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1998) pp. 56-57

¹³ Nandini Bhattacharya, *Reading the Splendid Body: Gender and Consumerism in Eighteenth-Century British Writing on India* (London: Associated University, 1998) pp. 13-22

¹⁴ Daniel O'Quinn, *Staging Governance: Theatrical Imperialism in London, 1770-1800* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University, 2005) pp. 6-7

Nights (1704-1771) and then developed in the British periodical by Samuel Johnson, Joseph Addison and John Hawkesworth. Such earlier fictional representations of the orient, as will be demonstrated, formed the template for the verse productions of William Jones and the British romantic poets, Robert Southey and Thomas Moore. Previous literary criticism has not sufficiently determined to what extent depictions of India were market driven. In addition, whilst Majeed has convincingly pointed out the extent that the British romantic poets and William Jones were influenced by metropolitan aesthetic and political debates, his criticism has overlooked the degree to which more populist consumption of the orient and Indian immigration within the metropole affected literary depictions. Scholars more often than not have related fictional portrayals to the orientalist scholarship of the *Asiatic Society*. This thesis, in contrast, builds on the work of socio-economic and socio-cultural historians such as Maxine Berg, Dawn Jacobson and David Porter by relating fictional portrayals to the growing consumption of ‘Chinoiserie’ and the commoditisation of oriental and Indian motifs within the metropole. It contextualises literary representations alongside what historians of Asian Britain such as Rozina Visram and Michael Fischer have noted to be the visible presence of Indian immigrants and travellers within Britain and the debates and concerns that this caused within the metropole.¹⁵ In addition, it demonstrates how controversy about returned British nabobs, and the attention paid by the British press to the Warren Hastings trial affected popular perceptions about Britain’s role in the subcontinent.

Benedict Anderson and Kathleen Wilson have argued that print culture played a huge role in defining and promulgating national identities, and that British readers of newspapers and magazines, which reported on events in other parts of the

¹⁵ See Rozina Visram, *Asians in Britain: 400 years of History* (London: Pluto Press, 2002) pp. 6-43 & Michael H. Fisher, *Counterflows to Colonialism, Indian Travellers and Settlers in Britain 1600-1857* (Delhi: Permanent Black, 2004) pp. 15-19

globe, were instilled with a sense they were somehow connected and networked to these distant occurrences.¹⁶ Linda Colley has argued that ‘Britishness’ was superimposed over ‘a patchwork of uncertain elements of Welshness, Scottishness and Englishness’ during the eighteenth and early nineteenth century.¹⁷ She views Protestantism, anti-catholicism, and warfare with European neighbours and in the colonies, as the forces which created a collective identity amongst Britons.¹⁸ The aim of this study is to illustrate how various authors played out or reacted to formulations of nationality or proto-global awareness within their very narratives. It is the contention of this thesis that these very anxieties and concerns are embodied within the literary forms of fictional tales.

There has been extensive literature by book historians such as Richard D. Altick, Terry Lovell and William St. Clair chronicling the rising book trade and the commercialisation of print culture in the eighteenth and nineteenth century. The thesis situates representations of India in relation to the growing commercialisation of print within the literary marketplace, to ascertain the degree to which shifting representations of India were market driven and reflected changing notions of authorship and consumer expectations. It also builds on the work of historians of the theatre such as Daniel O’Quinn, Joseph Donahue and Charles Beecher Morgan by contextualising depictions of India to the development of visual and staging technology and the changing demands and pressures placed on the theatre during this period.

¹⁶ See Kathleen Wilson, *The Island Race: Englishness, Empire and Gender in the Eighteenth Century* (Routledge: London, 2003) pp. 32-33 & Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 1983) pp. 40-49

¹⁷ Colley argues that not only were Scotland, England and Wales divided from one another, but that Scotland itself was not a united nation with Scottish lowlanders having more in common with the inhabitants of Northern England than Scottish highlanders, who they regarded as inferior. See Linda Colley, *Britons Forging the Nation, 1707-1837* (London: Pimlico, 1992) p. 17

¹⁸ Colley, *Britons Forging the Nation*, pp. 18-23

The project differentiates between the production of the differing literary modes, the novel, the play and verse, and seeks to establish the class, gender and experiences of various authors. The aim of engaging in such an analysis is to determine if authors played out their anxieties about authorship within texts and to what extent authors' representations of the subcontinent can be correlated to the changing internal demands of literary modes. It seeks to establish whether the internal historical developments of literary modes and the changing status of authors of novels, plays and poems impacted upon their depictions of the subcontinent.

Although previous literary scholars have embarked upon in-depth textual analysis, they have neglected to explore invaluable material that sheds light upon the fictional productions. Scholars engaging in textual analysis of representations of India, during this period, have largely ignored the John Murray and Longman archives, and the Stone Collection of toy theatre drawings. They have, with the notable exception of Michael Franklin, overlooked the outgoing and incoming correspondence of the Royal Literary Fund.¹⁹ By examining archival source material, such as the letter books of the contemporary publishing firms John Murray and Longman, this historical study of the literature illuminates upon issues concerning authorial intention, as well as the conditions in which texts were produced. We will use the outgoing and incoming correspondence of the publishing firms John Murray and Longman to demonstrate the differing levels of status of novelists and poets, and the effort, or lack of effort, which was made by publishers to market and push certain texts. We will, in addition, focus on contemporary on-the-spot drawings of a production in 1830 of *The Cataract of the Ganges*, that were produced for children's

¹⁹ Michael Franklin has used the Royal Literary Fund records for biographical information about Phebes Gibbes, the author of *Hartly House* (1789). See Michael J Franklin, 'Introduction' in Phebes Gibbes, *Hartly House, Calcutta* [ed. by Michael J. Franklin] (Oxford: Oxford University, 2007) pp. xi-lvii

toy theatres, to explore the visual elements of the performance such as the costuming and scenery that went into the staging of India. By analysing these drawings we will establish how theatre directors and stage artists utilised India as a dramatic space.

Our survey of literary representations of India spans across novels, verse and theatre whilst being careful to outline how the internal dynamics and the historical development of the literary modes affected representations of the subcontinent. Whilst we do not neglect the influence of orientalist scholarship on British fictional portrayals, we argue that the differing literary modes drew upon such discourses to varying degrees. The intention here is to problematise modes of postcolonial literary analysis that view fictional portrayals under the rubric of shifting colonial context, the power dynamic between the coloniser and colonised or reflecting Foucauldian objectives. The study aims to demonstrate that a dialogue, albeit an unequal one, was taking place between the two cultures in the metropole, to which authors responded and reacted.

Whilst the argument relates fictional portrayals of the subcontinent to the changing demands of the literary marketplace and the commoditisation and consumption of Indian motifs within the metropole, it does not neglect to align portrayals to shifting colonial context. Fictional portrayals of India often refer to real events, debates and conflicts taking place in colonial India. The literature provides invaluable source material into how these historical shifts were imagined, perceived or in some cases distorted in popular perception. Yet the study is careful to differentiate between authors on the basis of their lived or lack of lived experience in the subcontinent, whether they were outsiders or insiders within the colonial administration and their varying level of access to accurate information and scholarship about India. It is important to make such a distinction in order to

determine whether authors were regurgitating popular perceptions and accounts from journalism or whether they were espousing and reflecting the views of the colonial administration.

Notwithstanding our attempt to relate literary productions to the author's class and socio-historical context, the analysis of fictional narratives allows for a certain flexibility in that we recognise that an artistic imagination can buck trends or liberate itself from the common consensus. It thus does not reduce all texts to being products of their time and can recognise the exceptionality of literary texts. The study, furthermore, aims to not fall into the trap of taking texts at their face value and to reinforce what most probably would be in many cases the author's intention to reinforce images of British colonial superiority and dominance over Indians.

This study does not solely rely on texts and archival sources. It intends to engage in a much broader approach than hitherto attempted by literary scholars that have investigated representations of India in British fiction during this period. In our examination of literary texts we embrace a rich array of sources that are visual, delineating broader shifts in the way Indian motifs were utilised as a means of challenging British aesthetic norms. We will thus examine the paintings of East India Company men, toy theatre drawings, chinoiserie items in people's homes, in addition to images of the British buildings constructed in an Indian style. The study looks at material associated with book production, patronage and reception of literary texts such as the letter books of publishers, the records of literary funding bodies and contemporary critical reviews.

The thesis will utilise an interdisciplinary approach and draw from a broad range of perspectives in its study of fictional representations of the subcontinent. We deploy a socio-economic historical approach to trace the increased

consumption of Indian goods in Britain. To investigate how the development of a commercialised literary marketplace and print capitalism affected literary portrayals of India, we draw upon a book-history methodology, looking at correspondence between publishers and authors and contextualising 'India' texts to prevailing trends in the book market. Of course, our examination adopts an imperial and Asian Britain historical viewpoint by ensuring representations are related to the shifting relationship between coloniser and colonised in the subcontinent and the growing influence of Indian culture and immigrants within Britain. Due to the fact that we are looking at fictional narratives and visual sources, we also draw on the techniques of literary and art criticism to tease out the meaning of texts and pictures.

Though the selection of literary texts discussed in this thesis is broad, it is by no means comprehensive. This selection has been chosen on the basis that an Indian setting is a primary concern within texts. For this reason Mary Pilkington's *Asiatic Princess* has not been included, as India is only one of the many countries that the 'Princess Merjee' and her western companions travel to and is by no means of central importance. Amelia Opie's *Hindoo Airs* (1800) and Anna Maria Jones' *The Poems of Anna Maria* (1793) have been overlooked on the basis that, while the poems are based in India, they have little engagement with the subcontinent. I have deliberately selected a cross section of representative texts that illustrate the themes that I wish to explore in each chapter. This has been done to avoid repetition of thematic matter. Thus poems by East India Company officers such as *Calcutta: A Poem* (1811), *India: a Poem in Four Cantos* (1812) and *The Grand Master: or the Adventures of Qui Hi in Hindostan: A Hudibastic Poem in Eight Cantos* (1816) have not been investigated because the themes of alienation and exile are sufficiently explored in my analysis of the poems of Thomas Medwin, John Hobart Caunter and

John Leyden. Similarly, James Cobb's stage play *Love in the East: or, Adventures of Twelve Hours* (1788) has been overlooked because India as a site to perform gender transgression and homoerotic desire is sufficiently dealt with in my exploration of *Ramah Droog* (1798) and *The Cataract of the Ganges; or Saving the Rajah's Daughter* (1823). Novels such as Mary Sherwood's *The Ayah and Lady* (1813), *The History of Little Henry and his Bearer* (1814) and *The Indian Pilgrim* (1818), although referred to in a tangential and cursory fashion to illustrate broader historical trends, will not be given an in-depth exploration in this study. The basis for not providing textual analyses of the aforementioned novels is that, whilst Sherwoods' religious novels are of interest in studies by Nandini Bhattacharya and Joyce Grossman, their function as primarily catechetical and didactical texts makes them too distinct from the India novels that this study will focus on to provide fruitful comparison. The thesis similarly avoids poems and plays that draw on abolitionist discourse such as Fanny Burney's *A Busy Day* (1801) or Timothy Touchstone's *Tea and Sugar, or the Nabob and the Creole* (1792). Whilst the texts are of considerable interest an exploration of these themes would take this thesis on tangential issues that are far from its primary concerns.

Literary texts are arranged within differing chapters according to which literary mode they belong in order to determine how the internal historical development of the theatre, novel or verse impacted upon representations of the subcontinent. In addition, chapters are divided upon a thematic basis with literary texts deployed as case studies to support the specific arguments and concerns of each section. Whilst Sati, Missionary and Utilitarian discourses can be outlined across the literary modes, for the sake of avoiding repetition an in depth exploration of these issues for every brand of fiction is not embarked upon. Moreover, whilst texts are

generally placed in chapters according to the literary modes to which they belong, there is an exception; Sydney Owenson's *The Missionary: An Indian Tale* (1811) is explored in both the novel and poetry chapter. The text, although a novel, is fruitful for comparative study within the poetry chapter due to the extent of its incorporation of poetic motifs such as the sublime and because its utilisation of India as a space to critique English dominion over Ireland allows it to be situated alongside Thomas Moore's *Lalla Rookh*.

Chapter one lays the foundations for the argument by providing a historical overview of the cultural elements that would provide the basis for later India fictions. It discusses the development of a literary marketplace, differentiating the demands placed upon authors and the perceived cultural status of the varying literary modes. We look at the consumption of the orient and the oriental tale in Britain and the way the development of an 'Indian' taste in popular culture both caused debates within the metropole and participated in a reappraisal of aesthetic norms. The study also investigates how Indian immigrants represented themselves and how they were portrayed in the British press. It will demonstrate how this vast array of different cultural elements dialogued to form a hybrid mish-mash of motifs, which would provide the basis of later India fictions.

Chapter two looks at representations of India in British verse. The reasons for focusing on British poetry before dramatic productions and novels is that this literary mode, which was predominantly written by either men who worked in India for the East India Company or British metropolitan poets who prided themselves on following India affairs, more closely corresponds to shifts in official and colonial attitudes toward the subcontinent than the other literary modes. The survey of British poetic representations thus serves as a useful yardstick for the later explorations of

novels and plays, which are not so closely aligned to changes in the colonial context. Although the discussion will engage in a comparative study of British India poets during this period it will nevertheless be careful to differentiate between poets who worked for the E.I.C and those who wrote from Britain. It makes a distinction between the Company soldier and administrator poets, who attempted to portray contemporary concerns of working in the contact zone, and other poets such as William Jones, Robert Southey and Thomas Moore, who used India as a dreamscape to produce sublime effects. By exploring the letter books of the publisher Longman and private correspondence of the pertinent authors, when discussing the poetry of Moore and Southey, we will attempt to determine the extent to which publishing firms marketed and drove the India productions of British Romantic authors. The discussion will, in addition, seek to show how a range of European intercontinental and proto-global issues were projected onto their depictions of the subcontinent. The poetry of soldiers, however, is deployed in a different manner. As the poets worked in a colonial context, their verse is related to a greater degree than any other type of fiction to shifting attitudes within the administration towards Indians, specific conflicts taking place at the time within the subcontinent, and to the particular concerns and anxieties of a British soldier in a foreign land, away from his family and friends.

Chapter three focuses upon theatrical representations of India. As well as engaging in textual analysis of spoken dialogue and monologues within dramas, it examines the varying texts' stage directions in addition to primary archive material, such as contemporary reviews of plays and toy theatre drawings of particular productions. It embarks upon such an endeavour in order to determine how these performances were received by eighteenth and early-nineteenth century audiences, and in what manner India was visually imagined and constructed for the British stage.

Furthermore, the discussion contextualises the sceneography of India plays in relation to broader changes in stage productions and the development of visual technologies. Of importance here will be to determine the extent to which performances drew on the visual material of British India propaganda art and how playwrights and theatre directors used the subcontinent as a space to formulate and play with notions of English masculinity, race, gender and heteronormative behaviour. The chapter demonstrates the degree to which shifting representations were tied to debates about the ideal modes of colonial governance, Anglo-Indian society²⁰ or to theatre's innate obsession with alterity.

Chapter four looks at representations of India in the novel. The discussion engages in a biographical survey of novelists to see if their depictions of India were influenced by their varying class, gender or contact/non contact with the subcontinent. The cultural standing of British novelists is verified by a number of sources including primary archive material, such as the John Murray letter books and the transactions of the Royal Literary Fund. By situating the literary texts alongside these sources, the study will then seek to determine whether portrayals were in any way aligned to the changing status of authors of novels. This chapter wishes to uncover how and from where various novelists derived their information about India, and whether this changed over time. It explores the depictions of relationships between Britons and Indians, focusing upon interracial sexual relationships and master-servant power dynamics. The aim is to establish any historical transition within such portrayals and whether any changes in representation was related to shifts in colonial attitudes towards colonised subjects, to increased missionary activity in the subcontinent or to changing readers' expectations of novels.

²⁰ The term Anglo-Indian here is deployed in the eighteenth and early nineteenth-century sense to describe British people living in the subcontinent, rather than deploying the term to denote its contemporary meaning of people of a mixed British and Indian race.

The thesis will conclude by establishing whether there were any inherent distinctions between the way novels, poetry and stage plays portrayed India. It will demonstrate how and to what extent the specific internal historical development of literary modes affected depictions. The conclusion aims finally to underline the commonalities that cut across the literary modes in order to map out definite shifts in the way Britain imagined its encounter with India and her colonised subjects.

1. Encountering the Orient and India in Metropolitan Culture and the Print Market

The significance of print capitalism and the consumption of oriental goods in terms of informing British representations of the orient are best illustrated by two well-reputed eighteenth-century British authors of oriental tales, Oliver Goldsmith and Joseph Addison, in the following quotations:

It is usual for booksellers here, when a book has given universal pleasure upon one subject, to bring on several in the same manner upon the same plan; which are sure to have purchasers, and readers from that desire which all men have to view, a pleasing object on every side...²¹ (Lien-Chi Altangi in *Citizen of the World*)

At the End of the *Folio's* (which were finely bound and gilt) were great jars of *China* placed one above another in a very noble piece of Architecture. The *Quarto's* were separated from the *Octavo's* by a pile of smaller vessels which rose in a delightful pyramid. The *Octavo's* which were bound by Tea Dishes of all shapes, colours and sizes, which were so disposed on a wooden frame, that they looked like one continued Pillar indented the finest sculpture, and stained with the greatest variety of Dyes...²² (The character, the Spectator in *The Spectator*)

Lien-Chi Altangi's comments in Oliver Goldsmith's *Citizen of the World* and those of the Spectator, in Joseph Addison's *Spectator*, are revealing on multiple levels. Altangi, presumably the voice piece of Goldsmith here, is directly critiquing the literary marketplace which produces generic texts in order to please the demands of a mass readership. The fact that Goldsmith's *Citizen of the World* is itself a generic text, following the sub-genre of the oriental traveller in Britain, which had been deployed before by authors such as George Lyttleton in *Letters from a Persian to his Friend at Isaphan* (1735) and Addison in the *Spectator*, inadvertently points to how the author

²¹ Oliver Goldsmith, *The Citizen of the World: the Bee* (London: J.M. Dent & Sons, 1970) p. 262

²² Joseph Addison, *The Spectator vol. 1*, Thursday April 12 1711 [ed. by Daniel F. Bond] (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1965) p. 153

has depicted the orient according to stock tropes and genres engendered by print capitalism. The scene of the Chinese man entering into a British home can also be related to the influx in the eighteenth century of a select number of travellers from Asia who interacted with fashionable metropolitan socialites and represented their respective native countries to western onlookers.²³ The second quotation is taken from the fictional character of the Spectator when visiting a lady's library. It is worth noting because it conflates female reading with the consumption of trivial oriental luxuries such as 'Dyes', 'China' and 'tea dishes', thus to an extent bringing into question both oriental aesthetics and the right of women to be arbiters of taste. On a macro-level it alludes to the way that most people came into contact with the orient – through the interiors of people's homes rather than through journeys to Asia.

This chapter will seek to show how the master narrative of the oriental tale, the consumption of oriental goods, the development of the 'Indian taste' in Britain, print capitalism and representations of the subcontinent in visual arts are the determining factors when we endeavour to come to an understanding of what shaped representations of India in eighteenth and early nineteenth century British fiction. It argues that to understand why authors depicted India in a certain way one must first look at how Britain reacted to the way the orient transformed its social habits and visual culture. Moreover, this chapter proposes that when investigating literary depictions of the subcontinent it is important to bear in mind that authors were working within pre-existing genres that catered to the prevailing tastes of the literary market.

Previous studies such as Amal Chatterjee's *Representations of India* and Kate Teltscher's *India Inscribed* have approached literary depictions of India by

²³ See B. Sprague Allen, *Tides in English Taste: A Background for the Study of Literature (1619-1800)* vol. 2 p. 18 & Fisher, *Counterflows to Colonialism*, pp. 104-109

contextualising them in relation to the shifting relationship between coloniser and colonised taking place within the subcontinent.²⁴ Whilst Chatterjee and Teltscher have provided many valuable insights into the literature of the period, they have ignored the fact that many of the authors who represented India in populist fiction had never been to India and in any case had a very limited knowledge of the colonial context. Their approach has consequently to a large extent overlooked the principal factors that shaped representations of India. The argument here aims to contextualise depictions of India in relation to the pre-existing structures and demands of the literary market place, and differentiates novelistic, dramatic and poetic depictions of India from one another. It correlates fictional depictions of the subcontinent to oriental products coming into Britain and informing aesthetic and artistic debates within the country. Another further concern will be the emergence of an 'Indian taste' in paintings, architecture and popular culture. We will begin by charting the development of print culture and the literary market through the eighteenth, and into the early nineteenth centuries. We will then focus on the importing of oriental goods in the early eighteenth century to the consumption of Indian collector items and the arrival of British Nabobs and Indian immigrants in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. After providing this aforementioned historical overview it will be pertinent to look at how India was depicted by British artists and what effects this had on popular culture and architecture within Britain. The chapter will then proceed to chart the consumption of a more specific consumer good, the oriental tale, tracing its beginnings in Grub Street, through translations of French oriental tales, to its appropriation by British periodical writers. The discussion is informed by a mode of analysis where Chinoiserie, the oriental tales, and the emergence of an Indian taste in

²⁴ See Chatterjee, *Representations of India*, pp. 4-5 & Teltscher, *India Inscribed*, pp. 6-7

Britain are seen as resulting from a dialogical relationship between the metropole and the orient where disparate oriental motifs become dialogised and hybridised with British cultural elements. We will conclude by tying together these four narrative threads.

1.1 Development of a Literary Market in Britain

Throughout the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, the relationship between the reader and author was being reformulated and a competitive publishing industry was beginning to take shape. No longer was it an almost certainty that the author was a member of the university-educated intelligentsia writing exclusively for the aristocracy. Middle-class men and women were now entering print culture as both authors and readers, and authors were increasingly selling the work to a public audience rather than solely relying on members of the aristocracy for patronage. Moreover, publishing firms were developing sophisticated cultural apparatuses to disseminate the literary text.

It is important to recognise the laborious and costly nature of book manufacturing in the eighteenth and early nineteenth century, given the fact that books were produced by ostensibly the same handicraft measures that had been used in the fifteenth century. The method for making paper was slow and expensive. It was only in the 1820s and 1830s that there was significant mechanisation of the technology used in the process of manufacturing books and that the deployment of steam power in mills made the production of paper plentiful and inexpensive. Moreover, the distribution of books was a time consuming and arduous process given that books were disseminated across the country using carts, wagons and sometimes

by chapmen who carried them on their backs.²⁵ Thus, the publishing norm for the eighteenth and the early part of the nineteenth century was to publish a large number of titles with high-unit cost and to produce novels in expensive three-decker editions, on good quality paper with generous margins at a price which almost nobody could afford.²⁶

During the period before the 1774 Copyright Act the major London publishing firms – Baldwin, Cooper, Lownds, Dodsley, Millar and Cadell, the Noble brothers and Becket and De Hondt – made little effort to keep prices down as they did not face serious competition from Scotland and Ireland and because profits were relatively stable. In fact the firms, who without exception were all known to each other and were also involved in wholesale bookselling and printing, cooperated together to set prices on manufacturing, print binding and engraving, and on resale and price minimums.²⁷ Publishers and booksellers formed a very close knit cartel with firm stipulations about who could join. As William St. Clair puts it:

In order to join the cartel... a London bookseller had first to make himself acceptable to the existing cartel either by being a family member or by showing a track record of commercial success. For a bookseller who wished to publish, this usually meant having successfully published a number of new titles on his own account and often titles declined by members of the cartel...²⁸

The cartel effectively created a monopoly on book manufacturing, resisted technological innovation and deliberately kept prices high by making books larger and the paper whiter.²⁹ The booksellers and publishers also combined to buy shares in

²⁵ For a discussion on book manufacturing and distribution in Britain during the romantic period, see William St. Clair, *The Reading Nation in the Romantic Period* (Cambridge: Cambridge University 2004) p. 87 & p. 37

²⁶ Terry Lovell, *Consuming Fiction* (London: Verso, 1987) p. 76

²⁷ James Raven, 'The Publication of Fiction in Britain and in Ireland' in *Publishing History XXIV* (ed. by) Michael Turner (Cambridge: Chadwyck-Healey, 1988) p. 43

²⁸ St. Clair, *The Reading Nation*, p. 97

²⁹ Lovell, *Consuming Fiction*, p. 76

existing copyrights and rounded on Irish and Scottish booksellers who tried to sell reprints of books by threatening to sue those who evaded copyright law.³⁰

Nevertheless, despite these obstacles to the cultivation of a mass market for books the publishing industry profoundly changed throughout the eighteenth and commencing years of the nineteenth century.

In the early stages of the eighteenth century, in order for an author to have a literary text published he or she usually relied on patronage from an aristocratic or upper-class man. Consequently, authors were relatively autonomous from the tastes and demands of the mass literary market. Up until 1724 there were only three daily newspapers and six weekly journals in London alone. It was only through the 1720s with the success of Jonathan Swift's *Gulliver's Travels* (1726) and Alexander Pope's *The Dunciad* (1728) that authors began to realise that they could sell their work to a literary market for profit rather than rely on patronage. There was also a growth in newspapers throughout this period as testified to by the fact that in 1729 coffee-house owners in London complained that newspapers had become too numerous for them to stock.³¹ As Kathleen Wilson argues, newspapers, which reported on events in the British colonies, helped organise 'distant and proximate events according to calendrical simultaneity' and consequently helped 'readers to coordinate social time and space, and thus to think relations to others across countries'.³² The proliferation of newspapers is indicative of a broader trend towards what the Marxist historian Benedict Anderson has termed print capitalism. According

³⁰ Mark Rose, 'Literary Property Determined' in *The Book History Reader* [eds. by] David Finklestein and Alistair McCleary (London: Routledge, 2002) p. 231

³¹ For a discussion on the proliferation of eighteenth-century London newspapers, and on the increasing number of authors who were able to derive the substantial part of their living from profits made by their works, rather than on the patronage of individual aristocrats, see A. S. Collins, 'The Growth of the Reading Public during the Eighteenth Century' in *The Review of English Studies*, vol. 2, No. 7. (Oxford: Oxford University, 1926) pp. 287-288

³² Wilson, *The Island Race*, pp. 32-33

to Anderson the commoditisation and democratisation of print culture helped forge a feeling of national homogeneity amongst British readers and made them contemplate how they were distinct from but also related to others from different nations.³³

Between 1731 and 1780, there were no less than sixty magazines published in London, ten in Scotland and Ireland, with the western counties having their own as well.³⁴ The Publications of novels also grew. At the beginning of the eighteenth century, there were no more than a dozen or so novels published annually, whilst fifty years later this had risen to an estimated fifty works per annum. This figure further increased, especially in the last quarter of the eighteenth and beginnings of the nineteenth century. The market for cheaper forms of literature such as penny dreadfuls, chapbooks and broadsides also boomed within this period.³⁵

There were a number of reasons why there was a growing audience for the printed text. Between 1700-1801, the population of England and Wales had risen from an estimated 5,500,000 to 8,893,000³⁶ with literacy in London and other cities at this time increasing markedly.³⁷ Rapid population growth in market towns led to a middle class with more leisure time. They were desirous to find ways to occupy their spare hours and thus they were a readership waiting to be cultivated.³⁸ Book clubs, reading societies and prepared subscription lists became the cultural apparatuses to create a public audience, and the practice of reading aloud, that was still prevalent in the eighteenth and early nineteenth century, meant that the content of texts were still sometimes received by more people than just the reader of the written script.

³³ Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, pp. 40-49

³⁴ Collins, *Growth of Reading Public*, pp. 289-290

³⁵ Julie Peakman, *Mighty Lewd Books: The Development of Pornography in Eighteenth-Century England* (Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003) p. 24

³⁶ Richard D. Altick, *The English Common Reader: A Social History of the Mass Reading Public, 1800-1900* (Chicago, University of Chicago, 1963) p. 30

³⁷ J. Paul Hunter, *Before Novels: The Cultural Contexts of Eighteenth-Century English Fiction* (London: W. W. Norton & Company, 1990) p. 83

³⁸ James Raven, 'The Book Trades' in *Books and Readers in Eighteenth-Century England: New Essays* [ed. by Isabel Rivers] (Leicester: Leicester University, 1982) p. 2

Moreover, the 1774 Copyright Act helped accelerate the already growing literary marketplace by allowing for cheap reprints of older literary works and by breaking up the monopoly of the small band of London publishers paving the way for competition from Scottish and Irish publishers.³⁹ The Act meant that for publishers to survive they had to try to cut down the price of books to be competitive. As a result of the Copyright Act, the British book industry boomed. Between 1780-1830, there were 5,000 new books of verse, 10,000 new editions written by about 2,000 living poets as well as three thousand new prose titles published between the years 1790-1830.⁴⁰

Even though eighty per cent of texts carried by circulating libraries were non fiction, fiction of a trashy and ephemeral nature was borrowed most frequently. Of the fiction borrowed, novels rated as the type most in demand with theatrical publications in second place.⁴¹ Much in the same way that publishers involved themselves in audience formation for the novel, theatre managers attempted to reach out to a wider audience. Theatres such as Drury Lane and the Old Theatre were extensively rebuilt in the eighteenth century to accommodate a larger audience and to increase takings. Moreover, the number of plays performed greatly increased, with 1095 plays being produced between 1700-1750, and 2,117 in the last half of the century. Theatre managers, in addition, tried to reach out to a low paid audience by putting on 'after hour' performances at cheaper rates.⁴²

In the context of a cultural environment where the written text was being proliferated and disseminated at a greater rate, and in which there was a general

³⁹ John Brewer, *Pleasures of the Imagination: English Culture in the Eighteenth Century* (London: Harper Collins, 1993) p. 134

⁴⁰ For a discussion of how publishers responded to the 1774 Copyright Act, and the vast amount of new prose and poetry titles published following the act, see St Clair, *The Reading Nation*, p. 116 & p. 173

⁴¹ Neil McKendrick, John Brewer & J.H. Plumb, *The Birth of a Consumer Society: the Commercialisation of Eighteenth Century England* (London: Europa, 1982) p. 72

⁴² For a discussion of the popularity of novels and theatre, and attempts by theatre managers to increase potential audiences, see McKendrick, Brewer & Plumb, *The Birth of a Consumer Society*, pp. 272-276

progression towards the commercialisation of literature, authorship itself changed. Authors during this period were deriving more of their income from the reading public. This meant that older forms of patronage, where an author relied mainly upon an individual aristocratic patron for financial aid, were becoming less prevalent. It would, however, be mistaken to assume that patronage was being completely swept away by an increasingly commercialised print market. The majority of authors were unable to live solely off selling their work in the literary marketplace and still had to rely on aristocratic individuals to provide money and connections until the early nineteenth century. The influence of patronage is apparent in certain literary representations of India. This is especially the case when one considers that East India Company poets, like William Jones, John Leyden and Thomas Medwin, were dependent on the Company for patronage of their scholarship and advancement in their careers. The corollary between official attitudes towards India and the poetry of East India Company men, which is discussed in chapter two of this thesis, is thus unsurprising when it is considered that it was not in their interests to express views, even if they were inclined to do so, that contravened official positions. Moreover, patronage adopted a more indirect influence upon literary representations of the subcontinent. As will be discussed later in this chapter, East India Company patronage of visual artists influenced metropolitan popular perceptions of India, and in turn helped shaped literary representations of India.

Notwithstanding the prevailing influence of patronage during this period, a number of factors led to its diminishing influence upon writers. Booksellers and publishers, who became more organised and collectively richer during the mid to

late eighteenth century, challenged the economic domination of individual patrons.⁴³ There were, furthermore, alternative forms of patronage and incomes becoming available to authors, which led to a shifting downward of patronage with an increasingly wealthy middle class seeking to ape the practices of the upper classes and exert influence over writers through subscription lists.⁴⁴ Financial autonomy from individual patrons carried with it cultural autonomy from such individuals, with authors and publishers realising that a favourable review in an influential literary journal would be more beneficial than the approval of an aristocratic man in terms of endowing in the reading public a sense of the artistic merits of a particular literary work.⁴⁵

Although the literary marketplace became more commercialised during this period, a distinction nevertheless began to arise between two types of authors – the populist authors, the novelist and the playwright, and the highbrow author, the poet. What novels and plays both had in common was their specific attempts to target a wider audience and to package culture as a commodity for mass consumption. The writers of plays and novels in the eighteenth century were generally not aiming at lasting literary fame but to entertain, amuse and make a profit. This explains the fact that most novelists never gave attribution to their work and imitated specific models in a haphazard fashion. Nevertheless, as Garside argues, in the eighteenth century

⁴³ Dustin Griffin, *Literary Patronage in England, 1650-1800* (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1996) p. 282

⁴⁴ See Griffin, *Literary Patronage in England*, pp. 248-268. Dustin Griffin has, in addition, noted that an author, in the late eighteenth century, might receive financial aid through ‘copy money from a bookseller, fees for journalistic services, payments from subscribers, an author’s “third night” at the playhouse, outright gifts, assistance paid directly to printers, salary from a sinecure or from an appointment in church or government secured through the efforts of a patron, or an annual pension’. See Griffin, *Literary Patronage in England*, p. 255. Moreover, as will be demonstrated in chapter four, novelists in Britain, such as Phebes Gibbes and Mary Pilkington, had to rely on funding bodies such as the *Royal Literary Fund* for patronage.

⁴⁵ Griffin, *Literary Patronage in England*, p. 282. In chapter two, we will also discuss at greater length how Robert Southey and Thomas Moore’s publisher, Longman, went to great lengths in order to obtain favourable reviews, whether it was by, in Southey’s case, private correspondence to a friend pressing him to write a good review, or, in the case of Longman, by attempting to buy a complimentary review of Moore’s poem *Lalla Rookh* (1811).

‘producers of the novel made obvious appeals to a modish and leisured audience and allowed readers to identify’ with ‘that implied readership’ and hence domestic heroines and heroes were set amidst the very latest metropolitan fashion toys’.⁴⁶ Similarly, playwrights often reverted to stock plots and amusing two-dimensional and stereotypical depictions of foreigners.⁴⁷ So, with the construction of a public audience and its demand for particular tropes and genres, novelists and playwrights often carefully repackaged formulaic and pre-existing literary representations for public consumption, leading to greater homogeneity within the marketplace.

In addition to consumers driving demand for certain literary tropes, the profusion of printed material, as the eighteenth century progressed, led to a change in the way members of the literate public made use of written texts. There was a shift away from ‘intensive reading’ among the middle classes, where household owners possessed a few books which they read closely, to ‘extensive’ reading, where there was such a multitude of printed material available in coffee houses and circulation libraries that reading became an entertaining past time.⁴⁸ The desacrilizing of the printed text was looked upon with suspicion by some upper-class conservative men such as John Brown, who lambasted the way that reading had become relegated to a morning’s entertainment, and argued that it led to the lowering of the standards of literary culture.⁴⁹ Central to this discourse was the belief that aesthetics and cultural taste should be left to upper-class men and not be opened up to the middle classes or to women. It was feared by many in the upper-class elites that public spheres such as

⁴⁶ For a discussion on how the novel was considered a lowbrow literary form and was deliberately packaged for metropolitan consumers, see Peter Garside, *The English Novel 1770-1829: a Bibliographical Survey of Prose Fiction Published in the British Isles* [gen. eds.] Peter Garside, James Raven & Elaine Showerling (Oxford: Oxford University, 2000) p. 16, p. 41, p. 31 & p. 100

⁴⁷ Brewer, *Pleasures of the Imagination*, p. 393

⁴⁸ Brewer, *Pleasures of the Imagination*, p. 169

⁴⁹ John Brown, *An Estimate of the Manners and Principles of the Times* (London, L. Davis & C. Reymers, 1757) p. 43

coffee houses were hotbeds of atheism and radicalism that could threaten the existing moral order. Moreover, there was a widespread anxiety amongst male conservative elites that the proliferation of trashy fiction was having a morally debilitating effect on young impressionable women by filling their heads with ideas of unrestrained love,⁵⁰ which in turn might make them less compliant to their husbands or their fathers. It could be argued that the novel, which was increasingly read by people alone and in private spaces, aroused further suspicion as it contradicted Scottish enlightenment philosophers such as David Hume and Adam Smith who espoused the virtues of the sociable man. The suspicion of the solitary figure engaging in private pleasures can be seen in eighteenth-century medical discourses that warned against the moral and physical dangers of masturbation.⁵¹ A correlation between female reading and masturbation was particularly made in this period.⁵²

A feature of the new print culture that developed in the eighteenth century was its intrusion into the domestic realm, with periodicals and reviews which attempting to police the reading habits of men and women by prescribing literature that they deemed was in good taste and morally improving.⁵³ Yet, as St. Clair has argued, such attempts were often ill fated as reading as a habit cannot be controlled given that readers have the tendency to pick up a book when they feel like and skip or concentrate on whichever parts of the text they prefer.⁵⁴ Furthermore, readers were often active participants in constructing the meaning of a text in that they could choose to interpret it in a way that the author did not originally intend. This in turn

⁵⁰ Lovell, *Consuming Fiction*, p. 9

⁵¹ Thomas Lacquer, *Solitary Sex: A Cultural History of Masturbation* (New York: Zone, 2003) pp. 267 - 358

⁵² Karen Harvey, 'Spaces of Erotic Delight' in *Georgian Geographies: Essays on Space, Place and Landscape in the Eighteenth Century* [eds. by Miles Ogborn & Charles W. J. Withers] (Manchester: Manchester University, 2004) p. 142

⁵³ Kathryn Shevelow, *Women and Print Culture: The Construction of Femininity in the Early Periodical* (London: Routledge, 1989) p. 4

⁵⁴ St. Clair, *The Reading Nation*, p. 5

meant that attempts by essay writers and novelists of this time to prescribe a moral meaning to their works may often have been overlooked with readers focusing on the more sensationalistic and gratifying aspects of authors' narratives.

Novels differed from other literary modes in the eighteenth century in terms of the vast proportion of women who were their authors. As Terry Lovell argues, those 'daughters of tradesmen or businessmen who failed or refused to marry'⁵⁵ and who needed to support their families novel writing was one of the few occupations left open for them to pursue. This was generally not the case for poets, who were perceived as gentlemen proud to attribute the work to themselves, and often publishing books of poetry and distributing it their friends at their own personal expense. In contrast novelists, between the mid to late eighteenth century, were seen as anonymous, genderless, hack writers, and thus, whilst the poetry of the eighteenth century was supply-pushed by authors and patrons, novels were driven by demands of the reading public.⁵⁶ Novelists who were perceived to trade their work for mere profit were looked down upon and hence poets such as Byron correlated inferior literary work with femininity and the mass market.⁵⁷ Playwrights, in terms of their cultural status, fell somewhere in between novelists and poets, in that they were deemed to be more creative than novelists yet not on the same level as authors of verse who were considered to be the custodians of highbrow culture, who distanced themselves from the capitalistic processes of the literary marketplace. The ranking of poetry over the novel and the play was in no small part due to widely-held perceptions about gender

⁵⁵ Lovell, *Consuming Fiction*, p. 42

⁵⁶ For a discussion of the widespread perception that the poet had a higher cultural status than the novelist, see St. Clair, *The Reading Nation*, p. 12 & p. 176

⁵⁷ Jacqueline Pearson, *Women's Reading in Britain 1750-1836: A Dangerous Recreation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1999) p. 39. While the perception that that there were a far greater proportion of women amongst novelists than poets was true, the notion that poets came exclusively from the upper classes seems to be false. From the survey of poets who depicted India, as shown in chapter 4 of this thesis, a large proportion of the poets, although given a classical education, came from the middling or the lower classes. Robert Southey was the son of a linen draper, Thomas Moore the son of a grocer and John Leyden was the son of a shepherd.

and class. Poetry was perceived to be predominantly written by upper-class men versed in the classics whilst novels were mainly authored by women from the middle classes catering to a less exclusive audience.⁵⁸ A definition of a true creative artist was also taking shape at this time. As Terry Lovell puts it ‘the artistic producer was an individual creator’ or a ‘genius’.⁵⁹ Moreover, an author’s cultural worth was often measured in terms of his or her ability to operate outside of the bourgeois capitalist literary marketplace and upon their capacity to resist trading their literary productions for mere profit. The fact that a novelist was generally firmly embedded in the bourgeois capitalist world was thus a reflection upon his or her limited artistic ability and cultural worth.

Notwithstanding the widely-held perception that novelists were hack workers and poets were highbrow cultural producers operating outside of a commercial print market, authors of verse in reality almost always had to pander to a publishing market and cater to an audience in a similar fashion to novelists, although possibly to a lesser degree. As William St. Clair says ‘most authors were obliged to operate within a commercial system in which they, their advisers, and their publishers attempted to judge what the market wanted and how best to supply it’. Moreover, literary works ‘were not, for the most part, works of individual creation, but socially produced by authors, family friends, advisers, publishers, editors, printers and others in a collective commercial enterprise’.⁶⁰ Networking in coffee houses and literary associations was often vital in getting a work published and it being well received. Coffeehouses, as Jurgen Habermas has argued, provided a public sphere where people could discuss the latest news and where a person was ultimately judged on their

⁵⁸ St. Clair, *The Reading Nation*, p. 12

⁵⁹ Lovell, *Consuming Fiction*, p. 28

⁶⁰ For more on how authors operated within a commercial system and were dependent on others for their creative output, see St.Clair, *The Reading Nation*, p. 161 & p. 182

ability to make an argument rather than on their social position.⁶¹ John Brewer argues that ‘in these informal surroundings an introduction or witty remark could lead to acquaintance, and acquaintance to friendship with an established author or critic whose circle of influence might include booksellers, newspaper proprietors and the literary managers of a magazine’.⁶² The notion that poets were more or less autonomous from the demands of commercial enterprise, then, cannot really be substantiated.

The higher status of poetry has more to do with class and gender and the fact that the novel was a relatively new medium that had yet to accumulate cultural value. British publishers and booksellers were in some senses the driving force behind the relatively higher status of verse and the poet in relation to the novelist and the novel or the playwright and the play. As Thomas Bonnell states, Scottish booksellers’ publications in the 1770s, such as John Bell’s *The Poets of Great Britain* and Jacob Tonsen’s editions of Spenser, Shakespeare, Milton, Dryden, Rochester and Steele, had the effect of creating a coherent British poetry heritage on a par with the classical Greek and Roman canon.⁶³ If one looks at the eighteenth-century publisher John Murray’s letter books one can see that whilst he took the trouble to engrave the portrait of the poet on the cover of his or her work no such trouble was taken for the novelist.⁶⁴ This reflects a widespread perception that there was a personal relationship between the poet and his product which was more or less lacking for the novelist’s and the playwright’s productions. Moreover, throughout the

⁶¹ Jurgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society* [trans. by] Thomas Burgen & Frederick Lawrence (Massachusetts: Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 1989) p. 105

⁶² Brewer, *Pleasures of the Imagination*, p. 116

⁶³ Thomas F. Bonnell, ‘Bookselling and Canon-Making: The Trade Rivalry over the English Poets, 1776-1783’ in *Studies in Eighteenth-Century Culture vol. 19* (London: Colleagues Press, 1989) p. 54

⁶⁴ As evidence of this phenomenon, see; Letter to Reverend Mr Biduke April 25 1803 *John Murray Letter Books* in the *National Library of Scotland* [hereafter; *JMLB/NLS*] *MS. 41904* & Letter to Dr. Dunbar, November 13 1781 *JMLB/NLS MS.41903*

eighteenth century well-established and respected poets such as Alexander Pope and John Dryden were able to negotiate contracts with publishers in favour of themselves, thereby helping to raise the status and power of the poet.⁶⁵ As will be demonstrated in this thesis, however, the distinction between poetry as being upper-class male and author driven and the novel as anonymous, feminine and market driven became more blurred as time progressed.

The homogeneity that print capitalism produced in terms of replicating tropes had important consequences for the way the orient was portrayed. There were, however, other factors that shaped fictional representations of the East and specifically India during this period. These include such socio-historical trends as the importing of Asian Goods into Britain and the return of East India Company men, who were perceived to have brought back with them easternised ways. One should also not neglect the manner in which Indian immigrants contributed to aesthetic and political discourses within Britain.

1.2 Oriental Goods, Indian Taste, British Nabobs, and Indian immigration into Britain

The importing of Asian goods into Europe was not a new phenomenon. The Romans had imported silk from Asia, and, in the Middle Ages, Europe was known to import spices such as pepper, cinnamon and cloves.⁶⁶ The extension of maritime trade led to an unprecedented level of imported Asian goods with calicoes,

⁶⁵ James McLaverty, 'Pope and the Book Trade' in *The Cambridge Companion to Alexander Pope* [ed. by Pat Rogers] (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 2007) p. 186

⁶⁶ John E. Wills, 'European Consumption and Asian Production in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries' in *Consumption and the World of Goods* [eds. by John Brewer & Roy Porter] (London: Routledge, 1993) p. 133

porcelain, lacquered ware, tea and wallpaper making their way to Britain.⁶⁷ This in turn profoundly affected the visual culture of Britain and radically altered her consumption and production processes.

It is important to remember that there were already well developed consumer cultures and interregional trade in Japan, China and India before the Europeans started importing goods from these countries. China and Japan were highly urbanised with large domestic markets existing for their own goods. In India, luxury markets were orientated around the Moghul courts. Moreover, there were high degrees of regional differentiation in the products produced across India. Within the Asian market, the Chinese already traded great quantities of porcelain, and, similarly, a continuous and stable demand for Indian cotton textiles existed.⁶⁸ The British in the seventeenth century and for much of the eighteenth century had to adjust themselves to Asian production processes as they were just one of the countries that consumed Japanese, Chinese and Indian products.⁶⁹ That being said, Chinese and Indian producers were well equipped to specialise their products for British tastes with the East India Company sending out designs to the Chinese porcelain makers and Indian weavers to suit the prevailing fashions in the metropole.⁷⁰ The Asian products thus coming into Britain were often hybridised goods. Often these goods would contain a mish-mash of Oriental and British motifs, or sometimes ‘Chinoiserie’ was specifically made to satiate the cultural preconceptions or essentialisations that the British had of Asia by overemphasising exotic oriental motifs and cultural difference.⁷¹

⁶⁷ Maxine Berg, ‘Asian Luxuries and the making of the European Consumer Revolution in Luxury’ in *Luxury in the Eighteenth Century: Debates, Desires and Delectable Goods* [eds. by Maxine Berg & Elizabeth Eger] (London: Palgrave Macmillan Ltd., 2003) p. 229

⁶⁸ For a discussion of material and consumer cultures in China, Japan and India during this period, see Berg, *Asian Luxuries*, pp. 232-234

⁶⁹ Wills, *European Consumption*, p. 134

⁷⁰ Berg, *Asian Luxuries*, p. 239

⁷¹ David L. Porter, ‘Monstrous Beauty: Eighteenth-Century Fashion and the Aesthetics of the Chinese Taste’ in *Eighteenth Century Studies* vol. 35, no 3 (2002) p. 404

Despite fears that Britain's economy was being drained and restrictions placed upon the importing of Asian goods,⁷² the influx and consumption of Chinoiserie continued unabated from the seventeenth century and up until the latter stages of the eighteenth century. This phenomenon transformed the social habits and domestic space of the British public. In the 1690s, tea drinking started out as a habit in urban centres and by the 1720s it really took off, spreading across Britain.⁷³ It is estimated that between 1710 and 1750 imports of tea increased fivefold with it becoming inextricably linked to British domestic life.⁷⁴ Indian chintz was increasingly used as wall and bedroom hangings,⁷⁵ and imports of Chinese porcelain and wallpaper, which had begun to be imported in the first decades of the eighteenth century, had become a common feature in British middle-class homes with walls being decorated by Chinese wallpaper and porcelain being placed on mantelpieces.⁷⁶ Chinese designers often designed chinoiserie with a European consumer in mind. This phenomenon can be clearly seen in **fig. 1** which shows a panel of wallpapers for a 'Chinese room' in a European house. The fanciful and overly elaborate depiction of fruits, animals and birds catered to European preconceptions and essentialisations of a Chinese style. Yet it was not only in relation to household furniture that the Chinese influence was becoming apparent. British gardens throughout the eighteenth century were influenced by Chinese gardens, with the formal geometry, symmetry and order of classical gardens being abandoned for a freer, more natural landscape. By the

⁷² Following riots by textile workers, whose livelihoods were affected by Asian imports, there was a ban placed on imported Asian goods, which in turn led to the illegal smuggling into Britain of 'Chinoiserie'. There were also anxieties from some quarters in British society that the British economy was being drained, since, up until the latter stages of the eighteenth century, vast amounts of silver bullion was being used to pay for these products. For a discussion regarding British anxieties about the importing of Asian goods, and her responses to the phenomenon, see Wills, *European Consumption*, p. 142

⁷³ *Ibid.*

⁷⁴ James Walvin, *Fruits of Empire: Exotic Produce and British Taste, 1660-1800* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1997) p. 16

⁷⁵ Allen, *Tides in English Taste vol. 1*, p. 219

⁷⁶ Porter, *Monstrous Beauty*, p. 396

1750s, gardens, with pagodas and Chinese bridges, were becoming increasingly in vogue in landscape architecture. As one can see in **fig. 2**, which shows an eighteenth century pagoda at Kew Gardens in London, designed by the famous architect William Chambers, Chinoiserie was becoming a visible presence on British gardens.⁷⁷



Fig 1. Chinese Wallpaper, in the Victoria and Albert Museum [hereafter; V. A. Museum], Museum no. E2853 -1913 CT no. 16380



Fig. 2. Chinese Pagoda, Kew Gardens. Licensor www.scran.ac.uk, Scran Id. 000-000-674-746-C [accessed 05/12/07]

The importance of Asian goods and styles entering the domestic space is two-fold. At one level it is significant because it is how the majority of the British public, if they came into contact with the orient at all, were to experience its influence. Thus they were much more likely to form ideas about Asia through oriental goods coming into their own homes or those of their acquaintances than through any specific historical or geographical information about the various locales. Britons, through the observation of chinoiserie items in homes, had the opportunity to formulate assumptions about the aesthetic preferences, philosophies and everyday

⁷⁷ Dawn Jacobson, *Chinoiserie* (London: Phaidon Press, 1993) p. 153 & p. 160

practices of the inhabitants of oriental countries. At another level the imports of Asian goods challenged prevailing discourses about taste and led to fears in some quarters from the elites that the British character was becoming effeminised and corrupted by foreign luxuries. The conservative critic John Brown, in *An Estimate of the Manners and Principles of the Time* (1757) argued that ‘warm hangings’ and ‘warm carpets’ effeminised the British man,⁷⁸ whilst the philosopher the Earl of Shaftesbury argued that taste and beauty should be founded on principles such as symmetry, proportion and order which only the man of knowledge could discern.⁷⁹ Consumption and veneration of oriental goods and art also, according to Shaftesbury, was potentially damaging because it threatened the cultural supremacy of ancient Greece and modern Europe and did nothing to morally uplift consumers.⁸⁰

Notwithstanding the criticism of the chinoiserie by such men as John Brown and the Earl of Shaftesbury, there were proponents of the use of an oriental style on a more limited scale. The architect William Chambers and the periodical essayist Joseph Addison venerated the Chinese garden, and implored British gardeners to follow the Chinese style.⁸¹ Moreover, the classical and Baroque taste which associated itself with proportion, geometry and order was increasingly going out of fashion with Rococo aesthetics increasingly prevailing as the eighteenth century progressed. Oriental wallpaper and porcelain designs were much more allied to the artistically freer precepts of Rococo and thus many oriental motifs were

⁷⁸ Brown, *Estimate of the Manners*, p. 37

⁷⁹ Anthony Ashley Cooper 3rd Earl of Shaftesbury, *Characteristics of Men, Manners and Opinions* vol. 2 [ed. by] Philip Ayre (Oxford: Oxford University, 1999) p. 215

⁸⁰ Shaftesbury, *Characteristics of Men*, p. 195 & p. 206

⁸¹ William Chambers in *A Dissertation on Oriental Gardening* (1772) attacked British Gardens for being too formal and argued that British landscape architects could learn from the variety and playfulness of Chinese gardens. See Jacobson, *Chinoiserie*, pp. 163-164. Addison also held Chinese gardens in high esteem. See Joseph Addison, *The Spectator* vol. 2, Wednesday June 25, 1712, pp. 550-552

naturally assimilated into rococo.⁸² In **fig. 3**, which shows an image of a mirror made between the years 1750-60, one can see the blending of the two styles with Rococo scrollwork being combined with fanciful Chinese figures and animals. The mirror illustrates how the two styles were combined by British furniture designers and manufactures thus challenging prevailing normative styles in the metropole.



Fig 3. Photograph of mirror designed between the years 1750-60; V. & A. Museum no. W.23.1949

The classicist's critique of the consumption of oriental luxuries was intersected by discourses of class and gender. Whereas in the sixteenth and seventeenth century foreign luxuries were the mark of social status, growing prosperity had led to luxuries being affordable to the middle class, thus blurring the distinction between different social groups.⁸³ Moreover, whilst taste used to be the preserve of the upper-class man, middle-class women and men were now challenging the purportedly universalist-classicist conceptions of taste by their consumption of chinoiserie. It is thus no coincidence that in much of the fiction of the time women of

⁸² Allen, *Tides in English Taste vol. 1*, p. 180

⁸³ Maxine Berg, 'New Commodities, Luxuries and Consumers in Eighteenth-Century England' in *Consumers and Luxury: Consumer Culture in Europe 1650-1850* [eds. by Maxine Berg and Helen Clifford] (Manchester: Manchester University, 1999) p. 63

pretensions above their station in life are associated with the consumption of foreign luxuries by writers such as Alexander Pope, Oliver Goldsmith and George Lyttleton.⁸⁴

Although from as early as the late seventeenth century Moghul images had a small elite market within the metropole, a more culturally specific Indian taste only really took off with the extension of the East India Company's rule in Bengal in the latter stages of the eighteenth century.⁸⁵ East India Company men through looting, prizes and gifts had collected Indian novelties such as Moghul paintings, huqqas, peacock fans and ivory deities to decorate their homes in Britain or to sell to Chinamen⁸⁶ in London, who would then sell and circulate their products within the British marketplace. The collecting of Indian antiquities and novelties further reflects a growing attempt by East India Company men to master indigenous Indian art by owning, taxonomising and displaying these objects within their homes. It was not just in houses of returned British nabobs that Indian objects became fashionable. The vogue for Indian images is demonstrated by Christie's auction catalogues where Indian pictures appeared in as many as twenty per cent of house sales in the 1770s and 1780s, thus indicating the widespread appeal of Indian images amongst the upper classes.⁸⁷

The influence of India not only made an impact through the importing inanimate goods, but also through East India Company men coming back to the

⁸⁴ In Alexander Pope's *The Rape of the Lock* (1714), the vain Belinda opens up a cosmetic box to reveal gems from 'India' and scents from Arabia. See Alexander Pope, *The Rape of the Lock* [ed. by Cynthia Wall] (London: Macmillan, 1998) p. 57. In George Lyttleton's *Letters from a Persian to his Friend at Isaphan* and Oliver Goldsmith's *Citizen of the World* oriental travellers enter the homes of ladies who possess pretentious and inauthentic oriental goods. See Goldsmith, *Citizen of the World*, pp. 36-38 & George Lyttleton, *Letters from a Persian in England to his Friend at Isaphan*. The Fourth Edition, corrected (London: 1735). Eighteenth Century Collections Online. Gale Group. <http://galenet.galegroup.com/servlet/ECCO>, p. 216

⁸⁵ Natasha Eaton, 'Nostalgia for the Exotic, Creating an Imperial Art in London, 1750-1793' in *Eighteenth Century Studies* vol. 39, Iss. 2 (Baltimore, Winter 2006) pp. 227-252

⁸⁶ I use Chinamen here to describe British men who specialised in the distribution of chinoiserie, rather than Chinese men.

⁸⁷ For further discussion on the collection and circulation of Indian antiquities and novelty items within the metropole, see Eaton, *Nostalgia for the Exotic*, pp. 234-240

metropole and bringing with them wealth and habits from the subcontinent. There was a particular anxiety within metropolitan elites that Company men of a relatively lower-class status were amassing large illicit fortunes in India from exploiting the indigenous population and returning to their homeland to purchase huge estates and assume the role of the landed gentry. Such depictions were fuelled by well-publicised reports of E.I.C administrators such as General Richard Smith, Thomas Rumbold and Lord Clive, who had returned to Britain with a vast amount of money and had acquired status, yet were rumoured to have derived their wealth from the exploitation of Indians.⁸⁸ Later on, in the closing decades of the eighteenth century, the trial in Britain of Warren Hastings (1788-1795), for alleged corruption and atrocities committed during his tenureship in India received much attention in the press.⁸⁹ Representations in newspapers of returned nabobs such as Clive, Hastings and Rumbold, although misrepresentative of the vast majority of E.I.C men who returned with modest wealth, gave birth to fictional representations of the returned British *nabob* who contaminated British culture with his new-found wealth, easternised ways and corruption.⁹⁰ Anxieties about returned Company men coming back to the metropole, only to have negative effects on British culture, were expressed in the fiction of the late-eighteenth century. Samuel Foote's Matthew Mite in *The Nabob* (1772) and Henry Mackenzie's Mr and Mrs. Mushroom, in his periodical *The Lounger* (1785-86), are two such examples of portrayals of this largely imaginary threat.

⁸⁸ P.J. Marshall, 'The Personal Fortune of Warren Hastings' in *Trade and Conquest: Studies of British Dominion in India* [ed. by] P.J. Marshall (Hampshire: Varorium, 1993) p. 299

⁸⁹ Franklin, *Accessing India: Orientalism, anti 'Indianism'*, p. 55

⁹⁰ See Tillman W. Nechtman, 'Nabobinas, Luxury, Gender and the Sexual Politics of British Imperialism in India in the Late Eighteenth Century' in *Journal of Women's History* 18.4 (2006) p. 10 & E. M. Collingham, *Imperial Bodies: The Physical Experience of the Raj, C.1800-1947* (London: Polity Press, 2001) p. 13

Samuel Foote's drama *The Nabob* was staged at the Haymarket in 1772 in the same year that there were reports in British newspapers that stockholders of the East India Company, out of a fear that its officials in the subcontinent were acting out of hand, were placing greater controls over appointments in India. According to the *London Evening Post* August 27 edition, the proprietors agreed that 'the affairs of the Presidencies of Bengal Fort St. George, and Bombay, do require a superintending commission, with extraordinary powers; and that Directors do prepare the same, with a recommendation of supervisors, from thence referred to a general court'. Furthermore, the article reported that one proprietor in the meeting stated that 'persons' sent out to India were 'in no way initiated in mercantile affairs – mere macaroni merchants – fit only for capering in a ladies *chambert* with a view to plunder and increase their fortunes'.⁹¹ Thus class anxieties, reports of East India Company corruption, fears that the metropole did not have a firm grip on India and the correlation of East India man with the effeminised Macaroni formed the background for the performance of *The Nabob*.

In Foote's play, Matthew Mite, the lowly-born son of 'pie maker John and Marjory Mite'⁹² and former tearaway dunce at school, returns from India a wealthy *nabob* only to wreak havoc on the aristocratic Oldham family and their surrounding borough. As a result of his financial manipulations, he threatens the Oldham family with bankruptcy and eviction unless they agree to hand over their daughter in marriage to him as part of an agreement that he calls a 'jagghire'.⁹³ The

⁹¹ *London Evening Post* (1772: Aug. 27)

⁹² Samuel Foote, *The Nabob; A Comedy in Three Acts as it is performed at the Theatre-Royal in the Haymarket* (Dublin: 1778) Eighteenth Century Collections Online. Gale Group. <http://galenet.galegroup.com/servlet/ECCO> p. 48

⁹³ Foote, *The Nabob*, p14. The term of course brings to mind Robert Clive's *Jagir*, where Clive awarded himself £27,000 pounds a year from Meer Jaffer, paid for by a tax levied on the Bengali population. See Bruce Lenman & Philip Lawson, 'Robert Clive, The 'Black Jagir,' and British Politics' in *The Historical Journal* (Cambridge: Cambridge University: 1983) p. 812

matriarch of the family, Lady Oldham, is outraged at ‘the dismal shocking reverse’ in which ‘Sir Matthew Mite, came thundering among us, and profusely smattering the spoils of the mined provinces, corrupted the virtue and alienated the affection of all the old friends of the family’.⁹⁴ Sir John Oldham, with the reservations of Lady Oldham, who argues that a trader would not understand the ‘nicety’ and delicacy of such a case, calls on his brother, the merchant Thomas Oldham, for help. His aid proves invaluable, as he alone understands the nuances and subtleties of Mite’s proposed deal which in Thomas’s words is ‘an over-match for a plain English gentleman’.⁹⁵ After reading the treaty Thomas propels himself into action. He bribes the *nabob*’s underlings so he can meet Mite and find out his exact terms. He consults with Sophy, the daughter of John and Lady Oldham, to discover her feelings on the matter and finally pays off the family’s debt to Mite in return for the Oldhams giving their blessing that their daughter can marry his son. The alliance naturally meets with the approval of Young Oldham and Sophy, who have had a long-standing affection for each other. The play concludes with the merchant’s son and the daughter of the aristocratic Oldhams promised to be wed, and Mite marginalised and rebuked.

The promised union between Young Oldham and Sophy, and Thomas’ much-needed intervention illustrates the need for the decaying aristocracy to draw on the mercantile classes if they are to survive. Lady Oldham’s condescending view that ‘considered commerce’ is a ‘pretty resource for the younger shoots of the family’ is given a sharp rebuke when her husband replies: ‘younger shoots have flourished’ when the ‘reverend trunk has decayed’.⁹⁶ Yet the marriage between the merchant’s son and Oldham’s daughter prevents the much more radical class subversion which would be the lower-class Mite marrying Sophy. Foote’s text thus advocates an

⁹⁴ Foote, *The Nabob*, p. 11

⁹⁵ Foote, *The Nabob*, p. 15

⁹⁶ Foote, *The Nabob*, p. 12

accommodation between the mercantile and aristocratic classes in order to oppose the more marked class displacement.

The Nabob explores the inversion of normative class hierarchies and the relationship between metropole and colony. The scene which best illustrates this is where two porters refuse to perform their functions for a London Leadenhall East India Company director.

Janus: No, sit still! That is some awkward body out of the city; one of our people from Leadenhall Street, perhaps a director, I shan't stir for him.

Conserve: Not a director? I thought he was the commanding officer, the great captain.

Janus: No, no, quite the reverse; the tables are turned. Mr

Conserve: In acknowledgement for appointing us their servants abroad we are so obliging as to make them directors at home...⁹⁷

The exchange maps class insubordination and the inversion of the relationship between metropole and colony onto one another. It is the Indian subcontinent, though, which provides a space for the lower-class Mite to amass wealth and come back to England to buy status and power. The subcontinent is a terrain where values that run counter to contemporary British notions of honour are imported. As Lady Oldham states; 'with the wealth of the East, we have too imported the worst of its vices'.⁹⁸ It is not only in the realm of financial dealings that Mite operates outwith contemporary bourgeois notions of honour. The *Nabob's* sexual values and practices convey a threat to metropolitan culture. Mite is a sexually predatory figure who plans to establish a seraglio in England and continue an affair with Miss Match'em even after he marries Sophy.

Footo's play employs a range of visual material to convey the threat of Indian wealth and the *nabob* in Britain. The distinctive props that feature are used

⁹⁷ Footo, *The Nabob*, p. 21

⁹⁸ Footo, *The Nabob*, p. 17

when describing Matthew Mite, the Indianised British *nabob*, just returned from India. Mite is dressed in a ‘Macaroni dress’, holding ‘a bouqueat’ of yellow flowers that makes him look like he has got ‘jaundice’.⁹⁹ Depictions of India can be linked to an anxiety that contact with the East led to effeminisation, the spreading of disease, racial corruption, along with a much more general contemporary fear, expressed in print culture, that British masculinity was being corrupted and emasculated by its commoditisation and Europeanisation. For instance, **Fig. 4** shows ‘The Simpling Macaroni’ drawn in the same year and just before *The Nabob* was being performed. In the drawing one can see a correlation between what the artist and Foote were depicting – an absurd, effeminate fop carrying flowers and dressed in the latest continental fashion. Similarly in a contemporary article in *The Morning Chronicle and London Advertiser* May 26 1772, the writer defines macaronis as ‘despicable miscreants’ who ‘seem to be of doubtful gender and are at once the disgrace of men and the contempt of women’. A Macaroni sips ‘his tea, French soups’ and wears a ‘capillaire and his flip flops’. Furthermore, according to the article: ‘the coxcomb affects music, but’ is ‘destitute of sense and patience to learn’, and ‘impotently aims to be thought of as a connoisseur in pictures’.¹⁰⁰ Indeed, Matthew Mite demonstrates himself as a coxcomb who affects learning in his contributions to the antiquarian society, which consist of a ‘piece of lava from the mountain Vesuvius’, a ‘green chamber pot’ and a ‘Roman urn’.¹⁰¹ The absurd props on stage ridicule how the commoditisation of culture has led to the circulation of trivialities in place of high culture. The convergence between the newspapers, printed images and theatrical

⁹⁹ Foote, *The Nabob*, p. 28. It was purported in medical and physiognomic discourses in the late eighteenth century that the experience of living in India was physically visible on the British *nabob* through boils, yellow skin and mosquito bites. Such discourses argued that the body was in a state of flux with the changing environment. See Collingham, *Imperial Bodies*, p. 2

¹⁰⁰ *Morning Chronicle and London Advertiser* (London: May 26 1772)

¹⁰¹ Foote, *The Nabob*, p. 44

representation of the macaroni testifies to how these three forms informed each other in the formulation of the trope.



Fig. 4. Drawing of a Macaroni in British Museum online. Object reg. no: PD 1868,0808.4477 accessed 14/10/2007

Henry Mackenzie's portrayal of the fictional Mr and Mrs Mushroom, in his periodical *The Lounger: a Periodical Paper* (1786), likewise, provides a disparaging account of Britons returned from the subcontinent. In Mackenzie's narrative the fictitious and honest Brit, John Homespun, writes to the periodical bemoaning how his neighbours, Mr. Mushroom and Mrs Mushroom, have just returned from India with a fortune of one hundred thousand pounds only to infect his impressionable wife and daughters with their pretensions and extravagance. This is all naturally to the detriment of Homespun's peace of mind. Homespun complains:

Every thing we now put on, or eat, or drink, is immediately brought into comparison with the dress, provisions, and liquors at Mushroom-House, for so they have new-christened my neighbour's farm-house. My girls home-made gowns of which they were lately so proud, have been thrown by with contempt since they saw Mrs Mushroom's muslins from Bengal; our barn door fowls we use to say were so fat and well tasted, we now make awkward attempts by garlic and pepper to turn into the form of *Curries* and *Peelaws*; and the old October we were wont to brag all our neighbours with, none of the family but myself will condescend to taste, since they drank Mr Mushroom's

Indian Madeira...¹⁰²

Samuel Foote and Henry Mackenzie's texts reflect wider concerns that returned *nabobs* and the mercantile classes from India have brought back with them vast wealth and pretensions above their station. The names of the *nabob* protagonists suggest their capacity to contaminate, with 'Mushroom' conveying something that spreads out like a fungus and pops out of nowhere to envelop other life forces, and 'Mite' suggesting a parasitic insect that preys on others. The authors project onto the returned *nabobs* emerging forms of consumption and cosmopolitanism that are portrayed as subversive to British upper and middle-class identity. Mite and the Mushrooms become the loci for expressing concerns not solely to do with the corruptive influence of India, but, in addition fears about the Europeanisation of culture and an emerging commodity culture that has the potential to create an insatiable appetite for foreign trivialities. Such trends are portrayed as damaging because they have the potential to displace desire for age-old staple goods and foods, that one would associate with everyday British life. The fact that the Mite and Mushroom have happened to have been in India is convenient for the respective authors, as it provides the means to 'other' these metropolitan trends and ascribe them to be symptoms of a foreign contagion. Yet there is a difference in the two depictions. In Mackenzie's text the fads are portrayed as particularly infectious to impressionable women, namely Homespun's wife and daughters. The author as well as denigrating the influence of returned *nabobs*, seems to lament a new system of economy where women are consumers, and one which can cause dissatisfaction with one's social sphere and lot in life. Mackenzie's portrayal of the Homespun women capitalised on what we have already demonstrated was an already well-established trope in the

¹⁰² John Mackenzie, *The Lounger: a Periodical Paper vol. 1* (Edinburgh: 1785 & 1786) p. 68. Italics are in the original quotation.

eighteenth century of correlating women with the desire for oriental luxuries. In addition, his portrayal of the Homespun's wife and daughters, can be attributed to the increasing denigration that was taking place in the closing decades of the eighteenth century of British *nabobinas* and their love of Indian luxury goods.¹⁰³

Though the wealth of returned nabobs was overestimated and largely imagined by the popular press and within fiction, the plunder that the British obtained from the Mysore ruler Tipu Sultan was very real. Following the British victory over Tipu in 1799 at the battle of Seringapatam, the British acquired the equivalent of three million pounds in gold, as well as stripping the Mysore ruler of a vast range of luxuries and personal possessions.¹⁰⁴ The most striking of Tipu's possessions (see **fig. 5**), obtained by the British and sent to England, was a life-size sculpture of a Bengal tiger straddling an English officer and tearing into his flesh. The tiger featured a handle which was connected to pipes and a keyboard. When the handle was turned it caused the man's arms to move to the realistic sounds of growls and moans. The sculpture had deliberate symbolic resonances. At one level, it referred to a well-publicised incident of a tiger mauling to death in 1793 the son of the British officer Hector Munro, who had engaged in ruthless military campaigns against Tipu's father Hyder Ali. The sculpture, which was created at great personal expense to Tipu Sultan, thus expressed the ruler's satisfaction at Munro's ignominious end. In light of the fact that Tipu Sultan was often described as being the Tiger of Mysore and had a great love for tigers, the work took on another meaning. The tiger and the mauling of the British officer thus served as a metonym for the military might of the Kingdom of

¹⁰³ This will be discussed at greater length in Chapter 3.

¹⁰⁴ An estimated three million pounds in gold coins were seized by the British East India Company. The British also appropriated such goods as Tipu Sultan's gold tiger decorations, his silver howdah, his crown jewels, his hookah, carpets and silks. His library was also sent to British headquarters in Calcutta. See Hermoine de Almeida & George M. Gilpin, *Indian Renaissance: British Romantic Art and the Prospect of India* (London: Ashgate, 2005) p. 35

Mysore and the desire on the part of the ruler to drive the British out of the region. After his defeat Tipu's toy, which had been a joke display for visitors to his court, was sent to the foyer of the East India House in Leadenhall, where it was displayed free of charge to the British public. The exhibit was useful propaganda for the East India Company as it ostensibly served to illustrate Tipu's cruelty and sadism. On a macro-level the image represented the savagery of India, and, consequently, it was used to justify further territorial expansion into western and southern India. Furthermore, by displaying it to British viewers, following Tipu's defeat, it inverted the original symbolic resonances of representing the Mysore ruler's power. Thus, whilst the consumption of oriental luxuries was often portrayed as a threat to the British metropole, the possession of Tipu's tiger, was an empowering one as it could be used to signify British military power in the subcontinent. The importance of the sculpture lies in the fact that it subsequently inspired in Britain a series of stories involving tigers and a number of visual images of dead tigers, tigers encaged tigers being mauled by lions to illustrate the British victory over Tipu and British dominion over India.¹⁰⁵



Fig. 5 'Tippoo's Tiger' Emblematic organ India 1790 in the V& A Museum. Museum no. 2545(IS).

¹⁰⁵ For a discussion of the making of Tipu's toy tiger, its transfer to Britain and the symbolic resonances of the item, see Almeida & Gilpin, *Indian Renaissance*, pp. 35-38 & Linda Colley, *Captives: Britain, Empire and the World, 1600-1850* (London: Pimlico, 2002) pp. 265-266

Eighteenth-Century Britain did not just come into contact with India via material goods, loot from territorial campaigns and returned British Nabobs, but through Indian immigrants or Indian travellers in Britain. Britons returning home from India often brought Indian servants to attend them and their children, or to cook Indian cuisine. Often such servants were illegally smuggled into the country by their masters to avoid paying the mandatory bond dictated by the East India Company in a similar fashion to the way oriental goods such as tea and chintz were illegally smuggled in order to evade tax duties. As Michael Fisher has demonstrated by looking at contemporary portraits of British households, servants were not always there as ornamental background features that simply testified to their owners' wealth, but were also individuals who had agency and were to some extent incorporated within the family.¹⁰⁶

The most prominent form of Indian immigrant was the Lascar – the Indian seaman who had been contracted as labour for British ships coming from India to Britain. The Indian seamen, due to the nature of company trade and the imbalance of exports against imports from India, were often forced to remain in England for months on end before the ships were ready to take them back to the subcontinent.¹⁰⁷ The increase of Indian seamen travelling to India was a consequence of growing world trade. Yet, since no adequate provision was made until the latter stages of the eighteenth century, many Lascars were left homeless parading the streets of London. They were a burden to the East India Directors who were obligated to provide accommodation, food, clothing, and, eventually transportation back to India. Often they caused further embarrassment to the East India Company by begging, resorting

¹⁰⁶ For further information about Indian servants in Britain, see Fisher, *Counterflows to Colonialism*, p. 54, p. 217 & p. 62

¹⁰⁷ Visram, *Asians in Britain*, p. 17

to petty theft, rioting and involving themselves in tussles with Chinese sailors. Furthermore, as a significant number of Indian Lascars frequented taverns and were attracted to the sex workers of London, they were associated with the seedier side of London life. Although most of the Lascars remained in the London docklands, some migrated to other British towns and countryside villages. The poorhouses, which housed the occasional stray Indian seaman, lobbied the East India Company for reimbursement for the money that was spent on their maintenance. In an effort to deal with the problem, the East India Directors paid private lodging keepers and then later two contractors John Anthony and Abraham Gole to feed, clothe and shelter foreign sailors for their sojourn in Britain. Whilst purpose-built depots were built, the contractors could not contain all the Lascars at peak time and many of the sailors overflowed onto the streets. Whilst some amongst the British public campaigned for Lascars they generally elicited a negative reaction from many of the London inhabitants who resented their presence, particularly in the autumn of 1813 when confrontations and rioting took place. It is worth pointing out that the lascars were for Londoners the most visible markers of India.¹⁰⁸

Not all Indians, coming into Britain, in the eighteenth and nineteenth century were so limited in the way they represented themselves. Indians residing or travelling in Britain could by their dress, diet, manners and language, to a certain extent, shape the way they were perceived by the British. There were occasional visits by Indian nobleman or diplomats coming to visit Britain or campaign for Indian issues. Such notables sought to shape British colonial policies, often testifying before parliamentary committees and allowing their views be reported in the British

¹⁰⁸ For a discussion on the treatment of *Lascars* and the debates and anxieties centering of the Indian seamen during this period, see Fisher, *Counterflows to Colonialism*, pp. 146-163

newspapers.¹⁰⁹ During their visits to Britain they were often paraded round the metropolitan social venues, conversing with upper-class elites. There were also the four Indian scholars who came to teach British cadets languages such as Sanskrit, Bengali or Persian that would be helpful in Indian administration at Haileybury College (1806-23) and the Military College at Adiscombe.¹¹⁰ The four represented themselves in the print world by leaving a voluminous collection of letters, papers and petitions in English.¹¹¹ Indians, such as Sake Dean Mahomed, advertised themselves in pamphlets and newspapers and played up their exoticness and otherness in order to promote their various business ventures. A select band of Indians even made forays into the British literary market: Dean Mahomed wrote an autobiography in English and the visiting diplomat, Mirza-Talib Khan, published a narrative of his experiences in the metropole in Persian, which was subsequently translated into English and disseminated in the London literary market.¹¹²

By 1784, curry and rice was a specialty in the fashionable British *Piccadilly Restaurant* in London.¹¹³ In 1810, the first Indian restaurant, *The Hindostanee Coffee House*, also established by the Bengali immigrant Sake Dean Mahomet in a prominent London location, was designed specifically to cater for returned British nabobs who wanted to resample the delights of Indian cooking. The restaurant served up Indian vegetable and meat dishes to customers who would be seated on bamboo-cane sofas surrounded by paintings of Indian landscapes and images. The *Hindostanee Coffee House*, although, taking a while to be successful and

¹⁰⁹ Michael H. Fisher, 'Migration to Britain from South Asia, 1600s-1850s' in *History Compass* 3:1 (Blackwell: 2005) [<http://www.blackwell-synergy.com/doi/abs/10.1111/j.1478-0542.2005.00180.x/>, accessed on May 5th 2009] pp. 2-3

¹¹⁰ Fisher, *Counterflows to Colonialism*, pp. 104-110

¹¹¹ Fisher, *Migration to Britain*, p. 2

¹¹² For more on how Indians represented themselves in the British print culture, see Fisher, *Counterflows to Colonialism*, p. 15, p. 54 & p. 108

¹¹³ Visram, *Asians in Britain*, p. 6

changing ownership in the process, eventually became a popular restaurant and was still in existence up till 1832.¹¹⁴

Whilst the influence of the returned British nabob has received much attention, the significance of the consumption of chinoiserie, the development of the 'Indian taste' and the eighteenth century Indian immigrant coming into Britain has largely been overlooked by literary scholars. However, it is crucial to keep in mind that the impressions of the orient that informed many in Britain were formed by the visually defamiliarising chinoiserie, returned British nabobs, and through Indian immigrants living in Britain, rather than through any specific knowledge of colonial circumstances in India. It is thus vital to correlate authors' depictions of the subcontinent to these factors.

1.3 *British Representations of India in Art*

The popularity of Indian images was to a large extent due to a number of European artists going over to the subcontinent and bringing back images of India for British consumption. Between 1769 and 1785, fifteen European artists went to India including such people as John Zoffany and William Hodges.¹¹⁵ During the last decade of the eighteenth century and into the early nineteenth century, more artists came to India. East India Company patronage of artists was hugely influential in terms of shaping visual representations of the subcontinent, which is underlined by the fact that shifting portrayals of India and her inhabitants were closely aligned to the changing administrative styles and concerns of differing Governor Generals during

¹¹⁴ For a fuller discussion on Dean Mahomed's Indian restaurant, see Michel H. Fisher, *The First Indian Author in English: Dean Mahomed (1759-1851) in India, Ireland and England* (Oxford: Oxford University, 1996) pp. 257-260

¹¹⁵ Eaton, *Nostalgia for the Exotic*, p. 231

this period. The influence of East India Company patronage shaped the way Britons in the subcontinent perceived India and probably influenced popular metropolitan perceptions of the colonised land. This is especially so when one considers that many of the paintings that depicted Indian landscapes, peoples and customs were translated into aquatint prints which subsequently gained a widespread appeal amongst the upper and middle classes. This new technology facilitated the increased dissemination of images of India, as it replicated the quality of watercolour prints with accuracy and could be produced by assembly-like methods.¹¹⁶ The proliferation of these images, as will be demonstrated, influenced British architectural styles and thus contributed to shaping Britain's visual culture.

Out of the initial band of British artists sent over to India, William Hodges was the most influential, with his work being exhibited upon his return to Britain in the Royal Academy.¹¹⁷ Hodges had been influenced by the sublime movement which encouraged artists to travel and depict scenes which would evoke fear and wonder in viewers.¹¹⁸ The artist had, when accompanying Captain Cook on his second voyage around the South Seas (1772-1775), developed a naturalistic style which would involve him making an initial sketch in the open which he would later develop and expand upon.¹¹⁹ The artist would often avoid claustrophobic views of urban crowds, tending instead to depict picturesque and panoramic views of Indian landscapes, Indian palaces, tombs and idealised depictions of Indians. India was

¹¹⁶ Carl J. Weinhardt Jr, 'The Indian Taste' in *The Metropolitan Museum of Art Bulletin, New Series vol 16. No. 7* (March, 1958) p. 210

¹¹⁷ Geoff Quilley, 'William Hodges, Artist of Empire' in *William Hodges 1744-1797: The Art of Exploration* [eds. by Geoff Quilley and John Bonehill] (Greenwich: National Maritime Museum, 2004) pp. 12-14

¹¹⁸ Almeida & Gilpin, *Indian Renaissance*, p. 116

¹¹⁹ David Bindman, "'Philanthropy Seems Natural to Mankind'" Hodges and Captain Cook's Second Voyage to the South Seas' in *William Hodges 1744-1797: The Art of Exploration* [eds. by Geoff Quilley and John Bonehill] (Greenwich: National Maritime Museum, 2004) pp. 75-76

presented as a paradisiacal timeless Eden.¹²⁰ His depictions of the subcontinent also seemed to align with the interests and concerns of his patron Warren Hastings in that his paintings aimed at creating a sense of harmony between India and Britain. William Hodges' *Natives drawing Water from a Pond with Warren Hastings' House at Alipur in the Distance* (1781), as shown in **fig. 6**, depicts a banyan tree providing shade and shelter to the Indians who are bathing, and meditating. The tree seems to encompass and embrace Hastings' neoclassical house, conveying Hastings' form of government as assimilating into the culture of India. Thus, rather than India being dominated by Britain, the two cultures complement each other. Such a depiction mirrored Hastings' avowedly unobtrusive form of administration which utilised prevailing Islamic and Brahmin laws, rather than imposing British laws upon Indians.¹²¹



Fig. 6 William Hodges, *Natives drawing Water from a Pond with Warren Hastings' House at Alipur in the Distance*, 1781, Oil Painting, Private Collection taken from Almeida & Gilpin, *Indian Renaissance*, p121

As Warren Hastings' governance of India came to an end, British artists tended to be influenced by the more anglicised administrative styles and imperial concerns of Cornwallis and Wellesley. They also responded to the new

¹²⁰ For a more on how British artists, of this period, presented India as a pre-lapsarian land and idealised the landscapes, see Almeida & Gilpin, *Indian Renaissance*, pp. 114-126

¹²¹ Eugene F. Irshick, *Dialogue and History: Constructing South India, 1795-1895* (California: University of California, 1994) p. 75

artistic style of the picturesque.¹²² The artist William and his nephew Thomas Daniell arrived at the time when the East India Company was keen to patronise artists who would produce images that could be utilised in their propaganda campaigns to garner support from the British public for territorial expansion into the subcontinent. The Daniells duly obliged and followed British troops across Southern parts of India drawing pictures mainly of forts that had been captured by the Company's armies. In **fig. 7** one can see a typical example of William and Thomas Daniell's work. The picture depicts the hill fort, Verapadroog. The *droog*, which had previously been in the possession of Tipu Sultan, was in British hands at the time the picture was composed, with Cornwallis having successfully managed to drive the Mysore ruler's forces out.¹²³ A British flag is shown at the top of the fortification to illustrate British dominance. The depiction of this fort is typical of the work of contemporary British artists such as the Daniells, Robert H. Colebrooke and Alexander Allan, in that it aimed to convey to the British public both a vision of military superiority and the panoptical illusion that the British could survey the India population from above whilst unobserved themselves.¹²⁴ The Daniells' picturesque style was a marked departure from Hodges sublime depictions of Indian landscapes. The Picturesque was associated with a certain genteel 'Englishness', aimed at creating symmetry and proportion in what it depicted. To create this effect the artists utilised visual technological devices like the 'camera obscura' and 'perambulator'. The usage of this equipment meant that the artists could claim by providing a more accurate representation and knowledges of the subcontinent than Hodges, who composed his

¹²² Robert L. Hardgrave Jr., *A Portrait of the Hindus: Balthazar Solvyns & the European Image of India 1760-1824* (Oxford: Oxford University, 2004) p. 6

¹²³ For more on the way the Daniells followed British forces across India to depict Indian forts, see Almeida & Gilpin, *Indian Renaissance*, pp. 192-205

¹²⁴ Almeida & Gilpin, *Indian Renaissance*, pp. 176-180

sketches freehand. Their work participated in a growing attempt to map, survey and know the subcontinent.¹²⁵

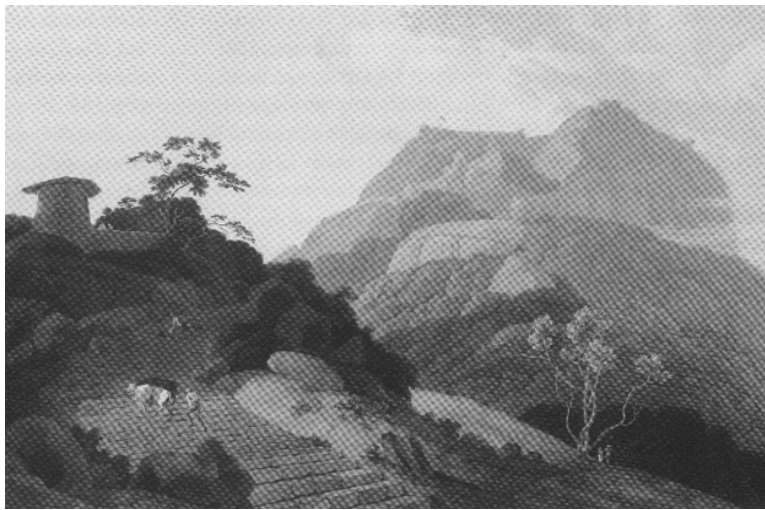


Fig 7. Thomas and William Daniell, *Verapadroog, in the Barramah'l*, 1802, Aquatint, *Oriental Scenery* 111, Plate 13, Yale Centre for British Art taken from Almeida & Gilpin, *Indian Renaissance*, p205

In addition to depicting forts, British eighteenth and early nineteenth-century artists contributed to the East India Company's propaganda campaign by producing images that celebrated the British defeat of Tipu Sultan (1793) in the third Anglo-Mysore war and the taking of his two sons as hostages.¹²⁶ After a report in the *Madras Courier* (1793) concerning Cornwallis' generosity to the two princes, a spate of similar reports came out in the British press.¹²⁷ This was in turn followed by artists, who received sponsorship from the East India Company, depicting the handing over of the two princes. **Figure 8**, which is an oil painting by Henry Singleton entitled *Lord Cornwallis receiving the sons of Tipu Sultan as Hostages* (1793), is typical of British artists' depiction of the scene. In the portrait, a *Vakil* gently pushes the two

¹²⁵ For a discussion on the styles and techniques deployed by the Daniells, see Almeida & Gilpin, *Indian Renaissance*, pp. 189-190

¹²⁶ Almeida & Gilpin, *Indian Renaissance*, pp. 147-154

¹²⁷ P.J. Marshall, "'Cornwallis Triumphant' War in India and the British Public in the Late Eighteenth Century' in Lawrence Freedman, Paul Hayes & Robert O'Neill, *War, Strategy and International Politics in the Late Eighteenth Century* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992) p. 59

boys to Lord Cornwallis who has his arms outstretched.¹²⁸ The lame *Vakil* stooping contrasts with the towering strong figure of Cornwallis. The portrayal has a calm serenity about it which elides the emotional trauma inherent in two boys being separated from their father and being taken hostages by his enemy. The portrait served as a metonym for the way Britain now viewed itself as a patriarch to India, kindly bestowing its munificence upon it and conveyed the sense that India could no longer be trusted to govern herself and needed the intervention of the British. Pictures of Cornwallis' generosity to Tipu's children not only found themselves in British galleries but in more populist visual culture such as tea trays, glass paintings and medallions.¹²⁹ The image, which depicts Britain as a kindly patriarch to childlike India, also filtered into contemporary fiction of the time, as will be demonstrated in later chapters.



Fig. 8 Henry Singleton, *Lord Cornwallis receiving the sons of Tipu Sultan as hostages*, 1793, Oil Painting, Sotheby's 23 November 1977, taken from Almeida & Gilpin, *Indian Renaissance*, p150

¹²⁸ Mather Brown, *Marquis Cornwallis Receiving the Sons of Tippoo Sultan as Hostages*, 173, Engraving after Brown, East India Collections, British Library, London, in Almeida & Gilpin, *Indian Renaissance*, p. 151

¹²⁹ Marshall, *Cornwallis Triumphant*, p. 64

Later on, towards the closing decade of the eighteenth and into the early years of the nineteenth century, another shift occurs with regard to artistic depictions of India. British artists, rather than depicting forts and natural landscapes, began to make a greater attempt to ethnographically portray the peoples, customs and urban centres of India. Such a trend reflects the more overtly imperial projects of the Governor General Wellesley. It was also indicative of the growing demand in the metropole for displays of visual spectacles and curiosities from abroad.¹³⁰ Depictions of India's inherent barbarity were propagated in missionary discourse¹³¹ and in the emerging European pseudo-sciences of phrenology and physiognomy; both of which validated ideas that India and Indians were inherently inferior and backwards.¹³²

Charles Gold's on-site sketches of Indian people, customs and animals must be related to the changing concerns of British colonial administrators, the growing demand in the metropole for foreign curiosities, and to both missionary and pseudo scientific discourses which endorsed views that Indians were inherently inferior. His pictures abound in misshapen bodies and barbarous Hindu customs implying that freakishness and oddity was a common sight in India. Gold's *A Gentoo Zealot* (1806), as shown in **fig. 9** below, portrays a Hindu ascetic with wild, large and

¹³⁰ Governor General Wellesley in particular embarked on a project of territorial expansion into India. He also set up the institution for the promotion of natural history in 1804 in Calcutta. The institution would collect knowledge of the natural productions of British territories in the subcontinent. The institution would utilise new imperial knowledges to catalogue India's distinct wildlife and botany. There was, in addition, a growing demand for foreign curiosities and natural history freak shows in late eighteenth and early nineteenth-century Britain. Shows exhibiting human curiosities from around the world were extremely popular in the metropole. Moreover Bullock's museum boasted over 15,000 curiosities in 1810. Shows and exhibitions such as this conflated foreignness with the non normative and freakishness. See Almeida & Gilpin, *Indian Renaissance*, pp. 222-223

¹³¹ In order to get support for their missions in India missionary caravans toured Britain with magazines and artefacts from the colonies which emphasized the sensationalistic aspects of India culture. They depicted Indians as inherently backward people who engaged in idolatry and human sacrifice. See Susan Thorne, *Congregational Missions and the Making of an Imperial Culture in Nineteenth-Century England* (California: Stanford, 1999) p. 6

¹³² Influential European phrenologists such as J.C. Spurzheim and physiognomists like J.C. Lavatar propagated essentialisations about the inherent racial characteristics of 'natives' from the colonies and also argued such locales were more prone to producing freaks and human curiosities. See Almeida & Gilpin, *Indian Renaissance*, p. 223

credulous eyes lying on the floor as part of some inexplicable religious rite. The picture depicts a Hindu ascetic who has chosen to travel from a Brahmin temple at Trichinopoly to one on the hill of Palney, one hundred miles away, by rolling on his side the whole way. It is notable that the religious ascetic is defined and categorised clearly by his costume of a loin cloth. Such a depiction was indicative of a growing fad at the time by European artists to depict Indians solely in terms of their occupation or caste.¹³³ In this way European artists could neatly categorise and compartmentalise the Indian. The *Barbarous Ceremony in honour of Mariatale, Goddess of Smallpox*, as shown in **fig. 10** below, more clearly illustrates this point. The picture provides a depiction of members of the 'Pariah Caste' crowding round to honour a Hindu God. Credulous believers surround and look on in reverence as a man is swung on a pole with hook sinking into his flesh, conveying a sense that self mutilation and fanaticism are an inherent aspect of Hindu religious devotional practices.¹³⁴

¹³³ The Flemish artist Balthazar Solvyns two years later was to embark on a similar survey of Indians, categorising them mainly according to caste, occupation, religion and physiognomy. His pictures proved influential and popular in France and Britain. See Hardgrave Jr., *A Portrait of the Hindus*, pp. 31-39

¹³⁴ Hookswinging was a practice prevalent in Bengal and central India in the nineteenth century. Devotees of Shiva would be swung by a hook in front of crowds at religious festivals to appease the God Shiva. Whilst missionaries and certain East India Company men stressed the fanaticism, superstition and barbarity of the practice, there were often financial motivations for the ritual. The young men, usually from the lower castes, obtained financial remuneration for being swung as well as kudos within their community. Moreover, Landlords and managers of the temples, who patronised the spectacle, often made significant profits from the huge crowds that the ceremony attracted, which could in turn be invested in the village or town the ceremony was taking place. See Geoffrey Oddie, *Popular Religion, Elites and Reform: Hook-Swinging and its Prohibition in Colonial India, 1800-1914* (Delhi: Manohar, 1995) p. 24 & pp. 70-71



Fig. 9 Charles Gold, *A Gentoo Zealot*, 1806, Coloured Engraving, *Oriental Drawings*, no. 4, Yale Centre for British Art, Almeida & Gilpin, *Indian Renaissance*, p216

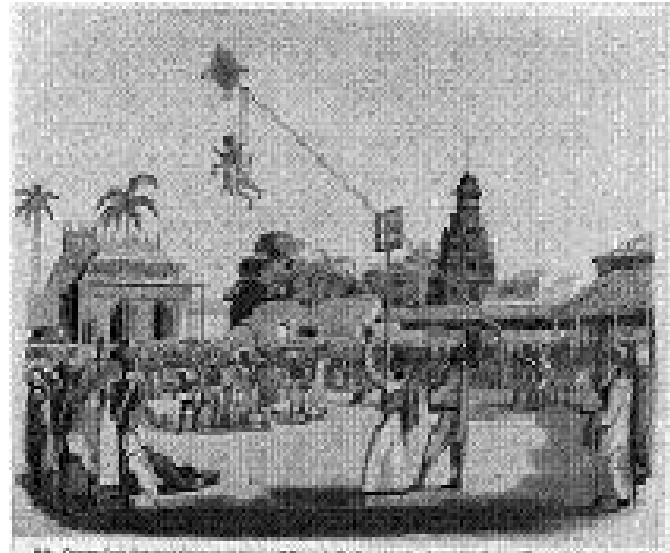


Fig. 10 Charles Gold, *Barbarous Ceremony: in honour of Mariatale, Goddess of Smallpox*, 1806, Coloured Engraving, *Oriental Drawings*, no. 35, Yale Centre for British Art in Almeida & Gilpin, *Indian Renaissance*, p219

Whilst Gold represented Indian ascetics and Hinduism's barbarous customs, the Scottish artist James Baillie Fraser focused more on the cities of British India. Between the years 1813-21, Fraser travelled extensively through Madras, Calcutta, Lucknow, Agra, Delhi, Bombay and Gwalior (Madhya Pradesh, Northern India).¹³⁵ Often in Fraser's depictions, Indian cities are polluted and crowded. For instance, *A View of the Bazaar, leading to the Chitpore Road* (1824-6), as shown in **fig. 11** below, portrays a dirty crowded street in Calcutta full of makeshift, rickety market stalls and half-naked ascetics. It contrasts heavily with the majestic and ordered buildings and monuments that dominate the architecture of British Calcutta.¹³⁶

What is significant about Gold's and Fraser's artistic depictions of India is the way they differ from both Daniell's and Hodges' work, which avoided

¹³⁵ Almeida & Gilpin, *Indian Renaissance*, p. 234

¹³⁶ Almeida & Gilpin, *Indian Renaissance*, p. 238

close up views of urban spaces, favouring instead panoramic views. British artists of India in the early nineteenth century no longer avoided urban crowds and the ethnographic customs of India. Gold focused on the perceived barbarous ethnographic practices and oddities of Hinduism conveying to impressionable British viewers that barbarity, freakishness and credulity were the norm of India. Moreover, Fraser's work contrasted heavily with the work of Hodges, who had attempted to create harmony between British buildings and Indian landscapes. In Fraser's drawings, British buildings stood for order and grandeur whilst Indian urban spaces stood for chaos and squalor. In Gold's and Fraser's work India's customs, buildings and people are portrayed as alien and 'other' with a clear divide and distinction being established between British and Indian landmarks.



Fig. 11 James Baillie Fraser, *A View of the Bazaar, leading to Chitpore Road*, 1824-6, Aquatint, *Views of Calcutta and its Environs*, no. 24. Yale Center for British Art, taken from Almeida & Gilpin, *Indian Renaissance*, p. 238

At a time a clear distinction was being made between Britain and India by British artists of the subcontinent, the 'Indian taste' was making its influence increasingly visible on metropolitan architecture and popular culture. A dialogical relationship formed between prints and architecture within Britain. William and Thomas Daniell's prints, paintings and books were exhibited in the Royal Academy and subsequently influenced many artists and architects. The Indian taste soon became a fashionable mode when it came to designing buildings in Britain. By 1800

Thomas Daniell had designed an Indian temple in Melchet and in 1803 William Porden received royal backing to build a new stable and rotunda at the Prince of Wales' villa. Porden based his design on prints of drawings taken by the Daniell brothers of buildings in Agra and Delhi. In 1805, Sir Charles Cockerell employed Humphrey Repton, a famous landscape gardener, and Thomas Daniell to build the hideaway house for his second wife. The main house was loosely based on the mausoleum of Hyder Ali Khan which had been popularised in Daniell's and Colebrooke's prints.¹³⁷ Later on John Nash, after competing with Humphrey Repton for the role, made the most famous contribution to British oriental architecture – Brighton pavilion.¹³⁸ The pavilion (shown in **fig. 12**), which featured domes and lattices, was emblematic of the British hybridised version of the Indian style. Sake Dean Mahomed, an Indian immigrant from Bengal, made his contribution to Brighton's oriental architecture by building in 1822 the Mahomed's bathhouse on a prominent cliff top in the city. The building was from the outside a combination of Classical Greek and oriental exotica. Inside, the entrance room was covered with murals featuring great Moghuls and Janisseries from India's past, whilst its reading rooms were decorated with paintings of *Jagannaths*, Brahmins, Rajahs' mausoleums and Indian landscapes. Mahomed's bathhouse was considered at the time to be the epitome of fashion in Brighton.¹³⁹ The influence of India can further be seen to have been incorporated in more populist forms of British culture. Playing cards and shop fronts were increasingly designed in the Indian taste with Hindu jugglers in London in

¹³⁷ For further information on how the 'Indian taste' influenced British architecture and specific buildings in the metropole, see Weinhardt, *The Indian Taste*, pp. 211-212

¹³⁸ Prudence R. Myer, 'Images and Influences of Oriental Art: A Study of European Taste' in *Art Journal* vol. 20., no. 4 (Summer, 1961) p. 209

¹³⁹ For a description of the architecture and interior of Dean Mahomed's bathhouse, see Fisher, *First Indian Author*, pp. 275-281

1813 becoming all the rage.¹⁴⁰ Moreover, exotic animals with specially trained animal tamers made their way to Britain to be exhibited to the British public.¹⁴¹ These populist images of India in Britain created the sense that India was a land of playfulness, child-like deceptiveness and exoticism.



Fig. 12 Brighton Pavilion, designed by Humphrey Repton in 1810, Scran Id. 000-000-671-760-C www.scran.ac.uk

From the late eighteenth century to the early nineteenth a shift occurred in the way the subcontinent was depicted. Whilst William Hodges pictures conveyed harmony between Britain and India, often integrating the two, and also provided idealistic depictions of Indian natural landscapes and peoples, this was not the case for the works of later artists. Following the defeat of Tipu Sultan, the East India Company patronised artists such as Henry Singleton to represent Britain as the kindly patriarch to India, who needed their guidance and care. Moreover, in the later works of the Daniells, Charles Gold and James Baillie Fraser, British and Indian sites were divided and differentiated from one another to convey superiority and British dominion. An attempt to ethnographically categorise Indians is apparent in the works of Gold and Fraser. The shift to portraying Britain as a patriarch to India and to representing Indians as ethnologically distinct and backward in relation to Britons is

¹⁴⁰ Weinhardt, *The Indian Taste*, p. 214

¹⁴¹ Fisher, *Counterflows to Colonialism*, p. 63

paralleled, as will be demonstrated in subsequent chapters, to emerging trends in British fiction, indicating that the former influenced the latter. Ironically, though whilst British artists in India were making evermore distinctions between British and Indian landmarks in the subcontinent, a ‘dialogue’ was taking place between ‘Indian’ and metropolitan tastes within the metropole. The dialogue resulted in a hybridised style that became all too visible in British architecture and populist culture.

1.4 *The Oriental Tale in England*

The commercialisation of literature and the higher cultural status of poets over novelists and playwrights, which were discussed at the beginning of this chapter, has important ramifications as to how the orient was depicted in the fiction of the time. Novelists’ and playwrights’ engagement with the orient was often at a surface level, having little effect on narrative structure and form. This is in contrast to poets, who because of their higher status, were more likely to present depictions of the orient that were less predicated on the demands of the literary marketplace. Since many of the British poets were actually orientalists or derived much of their information from British oriental scholarship, they had a much more sophisticated and nuanced understanding. Yet that is not to say their depictions of the orient were accurate. In many ways their importation of oriental themes in the poetry of this time was similar to the importing of Asian goods for the British public. In both cases the orient was specially packaged and altered in ways that rendered it suitable for consumption in the British domestic space and within polite society. They became goods in transit to be packaged, bartered and sold in the marketplace, and dislocated

from their original context. Representations of India in verse also drew heavily on the conventions and tropes of the British and French oriental tale.

Antoine Galland was the first European translator of the *Arabian Nights* (1704-1717) and was responsible for popularising them within Europe. Galland had studied Greek and Latin at the College Royal at the Sorbonne in Paris. In 1670 he was sent on a French mission to the Ottoman Turkish Sultan and from 1670-1675 he worked as an interpreter after studying Turkish and modern Greek.¹⁴² In 1692 he assisted Barthelemy d'Herbelot in creating the *Bibliothèque Orientale La Connaissance des Peuples de L'Orient* (1697), a reference book that compiled illustrative anecdotes from Turkish and Persian chronicles and aimed to educate Europeans about the manners and customs of the Arabs. Galland's *The Seven Voyages of Sinbad the Sailor* (1701) and *Arabian Nights* (1704-1717) stories, were, as well as aiming to amuse and divert French readers, also meant to educate Europeans about Arab manners and customs. Thus in the French literary market there was a marked corollary between the oriental tale and oriental anthropology with Galland actually weaving accounts by European travellers into *Arabian Nights* to provide more authenticity to its depiction of locales.¹⁴³ The importance of the *Arabian Nights* was not just as a source of fiction. Travellers to the orient, such as Lady Montagu,¹⁴⁴ testified to the veracity of the *Arabian Nights*' representation of the east which indicates that there was a dialogical relationship between the oriental tale and oriental anthropology, and in turn suggesting that the boundaries between fictional portrayals and travelogues had yet to be formulated with both genres informing the other.

¹⁴² Robert Irwin, *The Arabian Nights: A Companion* (London: Penguin, 1994) p. 14

¹⁴³ For a discussion on Galland's early translations of oriental tales and the aims and ambitions behind such efforts, see Irwin, *Nights: A Companion*, pp. 18-19

¹⁴⁴ Lady Mary Montagu, *Embassy to Constantinople, the Travels of Lady Mary Montagu* [ed. by Christopher Pick] (London: Century Hutchinson, 1892) p. 167

Although the *Nights* had aspirations of documenting the habits and manners of Arabs, Galland's translation was not, however, a strict rendition of the Syrian manuscripts he used. This was not uncommon as translations in the eighteenth century often aimed to improve the original text and only remained faithful to the extent that they endeavoured to convey the general spirit of the author. Galland attempted to tailor and alter *Arabian Nights* to cater to the tastes of eighteenth century French polite society. He excised many of the pornographic parts in the original, explained unfamiliar objects and inserted accounts from Classical Latin and Greek texts. It is worth pointing out that in the very act of adapting an oriental fable for European print consumption the tales were changed. Whilst in their indigenous context the tales were most likely read aloud to a large audience, Galland had altered the tales for the solitary European reader who in all probability read silently. Thus many of the repetitions and poetical rhetorical devices to enable the attendees of an oral performance to keep track of what was going on and many of the performative aspects of the *Nights* were dispensed with to suit the western European reader.¹⁴⁵

Arabian Nights became a huge success in France after the immediate publication of the first volume. It inspired Petis De La Croix's *Turkish Tales* (1707) and *A Thousand and One Days: Persian Tales* (1710-12), as well as a vast number of novels by different authors revolving around the amorous adventures of the Sultan and the harem. In many ways the central conceit behind these texts mirrored, on a macro-level, the project of the modern print medium, in that these tales were told in private domestic spaces of the harem or seraglio but yet imaginatively projected themselves outwards transgressing temporal, spatial and territorial boundaries. This was similar to the way that literary texts were being increasingly read in private

¹⁴⁵ For a discussion on how Galland adapted his translations for a European audience, see Irwin, *Nights: A Companion*, p. 19

spaces within one's own home whilst imaginatively transporting the readers to different locales and temporalities. *Moghul Tales*, *Chinese Tales*, *Persian Tales* and *Turkish Tales*, within France, increased in popularity throughout the first half of the eighteenth century accounting for an estimated 30 percent of novels during the 1740s, peaking again in the 1760s and 1770s.¹⁴⁶

In Britain, the oriental tale had similarly taken the London literary market by storm, and the London booksellers depended upon France for these fashionable continental tales.¹⁴⁷ *The Arabian Nights* was first translated into English in the first decade of the eighteenth century, and, by as early as 1715, the Grub-Street translation of Galland's text had reached its third edition. In 1723, the *London News*, a thrice-weekly newsheet, serialised the *Nights* over three years.¹⁴⁸ The success of the *Arabian Nights* was remarkable when it is considered most English fictional texts never managed to make it to a second edition and run to a series of five hundred copies.¹⁴⁹ This in turn shows that the *Arabian Nights* was a phenomenon at the forefront of the literary market. The oriental tale subsequently became a mainstay of London magazine and periodical fiction after Joseph Addison first adopted the form in *The Spectator* (1711-1714) with Samuel Johnson in *The Rambler* (1750-1752) and John Hawkesworth in *The Adventurer* (1752-1754) following suit. By the 1750s, the oriental tale was the favourite item of magazine fiction.¹⁵⁰ The periodicals were a vital cultural apparatus for disseminating oriental prose fiction as the cost of producing

¹⁴⁶ For more on the literary conceits within the French oriental tale and the proliferation of oriental tales in the first half of the eighteenth century, see Thomas Kaiser, 'The Evil Empire? The Debate on Turkish Despotism in Eighteenth-Century French Political Culture', in *The Journal of Modern History*, vol. 72 no 1, p. 16

¹⁴⁷ Martha Pike Conant, *Oriental Tale in England in the Eighteenth Century* (New York: Columbia University, 1966) p. 67

¹⁴⁸ Peter Caraciolla, *The Arabian Nights in English Literature* (London: Macmillan, 1988) p. 3

¹⁴⁹ Garside, *The English Novel*, p. 35

¹⁵⁰ Collins, *Growth of Reading Public*, p. 292

paper made books unaffordable to all but the very rich.¹⁵¹ Periodicals, which were made on poorer quality paper in a multi-columned format, were, by contrast, consequently much cheaper to produce and buy.

Joseph Addison, editor of *The Spectator*, Samuel Johnson, editor of *The Rambler*, and John Hawkesworth, editor of *The Adventurer*, were the key players in terms of developing a popular and accessible prose fiction and in cultivating a literary marketplace in the eighteenth century. Their deployment of the oriental tale shows that the genre was not marginal to the emergence of print capitalism but firmly embodied within the project.

In addition to the oriental tale becoming in vogue in the British periodical during the eighteenth century, travel books became increasingly popular and influential. Often these travel narratives, many of which were likely to have been fabrications, provided readymade sets of tropes such as ‘shipwrecks’, ‘pirates’, voyages and ‘memoirs’ that novelists such as Defoe, Swift and Johnson deployed. Many novelists drew heavily from travel writings to add local colour to their narratives and the boundaries between travel writing and the novel were hazy with authors of novels sometimes claiming that their works of fictions were actually travel narratives.¹⁵²

There was from the beginning a lack of cultural specificity to depictions of the orient in print culture. Both Addison’s and Johnson’s depictions of the orient are extremely vague with the only eastern attribute of their narratives being the unfamiliar nomenclature deployed. The tales were usually adopted to convey some universal moral truth, and the adoption of an oriental setting seems to serve the purpose of conveying to the reader a fable-like grandeur. Addison, who was the first

¹⁵¹ Lovell, *Consuming Fiction*, p. 77

¹⁵² For a discussion on the popularity of travel writing and its impact upon novels during this period, see Hunter, *Before the Novel*, pp. 351-353

of the three to deploy the genre, advocated the use of the oriental fable in order to convey moral truths to the reader. He argued that the genre avoided didacticism which would repel the reader whilst flattering the reader into thinking that he or she could independently decode the message of the fable without the need for authorial intervention.¹⁵³ Thus in the earliest deployment of the oriental tale by British writers in the eighteenth century, the genre was specifically adapted to convey occidental morality and truths.

In order to demonstrate how the eighteenth-century British oriental tale was designed to expound European morality it will be pertinent to look at two case studies – Joseph Addison’s *Vision of Mirzah* (1711) and Samuel Johnson’s *Hamet and Rashid* (1750). In Addison’s *Vision of Mirzah*, Mirzah has a vision of a great bridge with some people falling over into the sea below and some successfully crossing. The tale serves as an allegory for people leading a good life on earth and successfully reaching heaven and the unrighteous falling into the abyss of hell. In Johnson’s *Hamet and Rashid* (1750), the oriental tale is subsidiary as approximately three quarters of the narrative focuses on exploring moral maxims about adopting the middle way and not being avaricious. It is only in the last quarter of the narrative that Johnson begins with the fable which, in turn, illustrates the maxims that he has previously explored. In the narrative Hamet and Raschid, are two shepherds living in India. A genii comes down and grants each of them a wish. Hamet’s wish is modest, only desiring a little brook that never dries. Raschid, on the other hand, is much more ambitious, requesting that the Ganges comes running through his grounds. The narrative of course concludes with Raschid’s grounds being flooded and Hamet’s prospering. Johnson similarly explores the dangers of wealth in *Nouradin and*

¹⁵³ Addison, *The Spectator vol. 3* October 17, 1712, p. 317

Almoulin (1751). The fact that the tale begins with Latin quotations demonstrates that Johnson is attempting to give classical authority to the tale. The story is set at the time of Jenghiz Khan in the city of Samarkand. Nouradin, a merchant, falls fatally ill and, upon dying, he bequeaths to his son inexhaustible riches. Almoulin, his son, subsequently gives ‘loose to his desires’ and starts to ‘revel in enjoyment’.¹⁵⁴ He is, however, although later acquitted, falsely accused of a crime he did not commit and suffers disillusionment from the fact that his friends did not help him out in his time of need and that wealth has not brought him happiness. He subsequently meets a sage near the river Oxus who advises him that wealth can bring happiness if used altruistically to relieve the suffering of the poor and afflicted.

The trope of the young man squandering his inheritance recurs in the oriental fiction of this time. Authors are preoccupied with the misuse of wealth. The east serves as a site on which to project British eighteenth century concerns about the debilitating effects of luxury. This is unsurprising at a time when Britain was importing luxury goods from Asia at an unprecedented scale and the mercantile classes were perceived to be gaining in political and economic prominence in Britain and thus undercutting existing class hierarchies.

In Johnson and Addison’s deployment of the oriental tale, no oriental form has been adopted to relay the oriental content of the tales. The orient is conveyed through the standard British didactic prose style and format that they both used in most of the other tales in their respective periodicals. The two authors relayed the orient through three modes of narrative – the transmigratory tale, the fable and the dream-vision. The only oriental feature in them is the unfamiliar nomenclature of

¹⁵⁴ Samuel Johnson, ‘Nouradin and Almoulin’ *vol. 3 no. 120 11 May 1751 in The Rambler in Four Volumes* (London: J. Walker, 1795) p. 275

oriental cities and names of the central protagonists.¹⁵⁵ Whilst the regions and peoples of India, Iraq, Persia, China and Ottoman Turkey were of course vastly distinct from one another, authors of oriental tales in Britain did not culturally and geographically demarcate between them. As Ros Ballaster states, the only tropes that really distinguish these locales are certain concept metaphors which the authors use when setting their tales, such as India being a duplicitous fiction, China being ‘dull’ and Turkey being the home of the seraglio and despotism.¹⁵⁶ The function of these settings is to convey a fable-like grandeur and timelessness which in turn allows the writers to make universal moral generalisations which could not be made if the authors were using European locales as the setting for their narratives. Yet although Johnson and Addison were advocating a strong moral in their tales, it is difficult to apprehend the extent to which readers took on board these moral messages. It is perhaps far more likely that readers were attracted to British oriental stories because they offered escapism and revelled in the transgression of moral boundaries.

The format of the British oriental narrative was utilised by eighteenth century British poets as well as prose writers. William Collins was the first influential eighteenth century poet to deploy the orient as an imaginative space to produce a pastoral form of poetry that escaped reliance on classical forms. Collins was born in 1721 at Chichester, Sussex, the son of William Collins – a vendor of hats. In 1734, he was admitted to Winchester College, where he developed a talent for poetry and love

¹⁵⁵ The names of the characters in the British oriental tales, although, not seeming to be real names from oriental locales seem to bear some vague approximation to Islamic nomenclature – e.g. Nouradin, Almoulin, Rashid, Hamet and Mirzah. That British authors should revert to Islamic-sounding names is unsurprising given that Britain had a longer history of interacting with Muslims than any other non-Christian group. Britain had diplomatic links with the Ottoman Empire, North African regencies of Tunisia, Algeria, Libya and Morocco as early as the Renaissance period. Moreover, Muslims were the most widely visible non-Christian people on English soil in the Renaissance and Reformation period. Thus British authors were more familiar with Islamic-sounding names than names derived from other oriental regions that were dominated by peoples from a different religion. See Nabil Matar, *Turks, Moors, and Englishmen in the Age of Discovery* (New York: Columbia, 1993) p. 3

¹⁵⁶ Ros Ballaster, *Fabulous Orient: Fictions of the East in England 1662-1785* (Oxford: Oxford University, 2005) p. 31

for the imaginary magical world of fairies, geniis and monsters.¹⁵⁷ Collins, upon completing his schooling, went to Oxford University where he formed friendships with such literary notables as Samuel Johnson, Samuel Foote and John Armstrong, publishing *Persian Eclogues* in 1742 with a second edition of the work that was re-branded as *Oriental Eclogues* coming out in 1757.¹⁵⁸

Collins' *Persian Eclogues* draws heavily upon the conventions of the oriental prose tales as established by Samuel Johnson and Joseph Addison in the British periodical. Given his close friendship with Johnson, it would seem likely that they discussed the uses and possible direction that the oriental tale would take. The poet's four eclogues purport to have been written by an oriental writer, 'Mahamed' a 'native of Tauris' who wrote them at the 'Beginning of Sha Sultan Hosseyn's reign'.¹⁵⁹ He claims that the text passed into his hands centuries later through a merchant who specialized in the trade of 'silks and carpets of the Persians'.¹⁶⁰ By correlating the importation of the oriental tale with Eastern luxuries, Collins draws attention to the decorative and ornamental nature of the poems. The oriental carpets are a luxury to be applied to the floors of British homes, and silks are to be worn by British upper-class women, just as the oriental features of the eclogues are used to enhance Collins' pastoral. The use of the orient is thus at a surface level. Yet it is convenient as it allows for Collins to engage in a wild and decorative form of poetry that would be deemed inappropriate if the narratives were set in Britain. As Collins states in the preface, 'the Stile of my countrymen is as naturally Strong and Nervous,

¹⁵⁷ For an account of William Collins' origins and his early fascination with fairies and geniis, see *European Magazine, or, Literary Amusement*, 54 (1781: Dec) pp. 353-354

¹⁵⁸ For more on Collins' university career, his associations with Johnson, Foote and Armstrong and early literary career, see Dustin Griffin, 'Collins, William (1721-1759)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/5957>, accessed 12 Aug 2008]

¹⁵⁹ William Collins, *Persian Eclogues: Written Originally for the Entertainment of the Ladies of Tauris. And Now Translated*, (London, 1742). Eighteenth Century Collections Online. Gale Group. <http://galenet.galegroup.com/servlet/ECCO>, p. iv

¹⁶⁰ Collins, *Persian Eclogues*, pp. iii-iv

as that of an Arabian or Persian is rich and figurative' and that 'our Genius's are so much too cold' for the 'Elegancy and Wildness of Thought which recommends all their compositions'.¹⁶¹ The purported eastern location and essentialisations about the national character of oriental peoples based on the climate in which they live, opens up a space for Collins to engage in an unrestrained, wild and ornate form of verse and enables him to break away from British aesthetic norms whilst simultaneously reinforcing cultural preconceptions.

In a similar fashion to Johnson's and Addison's tales, the oriental locales are depicted as hazily drawn out stock landscapes. Hence the four eclogues are respectively set in: 'a valley in Bagdat', 'the desert' in Arabia, the 'forest' in Georgia and a 'mountain in Circassia'.¹⁶² Moreover, each poem demonstrates the morality of being reconciled with one's position in life. In *Selim; or the Shepherd's Moral* the Shepherd advises the maids to hold onto their virtue and chastity and not allure men by affectation or feminine guile. The folly of greed is explored in *Hassan; or the Camel Driver* as Hassan leaves his family, friends and idyllic rural home in search of 'gold and silver', only to find himself lost in the desert surrounded by 'rocks and tasteless sands' and in danger of being eaten by lions, tigers and wolves.¹⁶³ In each of the eclogues oriental locales are depicted as unaffected natural landscapes. More often than not the scenes depicted are pastoral idylls. Georgia's green land is packed full of 'breezy mountains' and the valley in Bagdat is 'sweet and o'drous' like a 'virgin bride'.¹⁶⁴ The oriental settings are not regionally specific but function as idealised pre-lapsarian dreamscapes of unaffected natural beauty. Collins projected onto eastern settings a timeless, static and idyllic quality onto oriental locales. The fact that his

¹⁶¹ Collins, *Persian Eclogues*, piii. Capital letters are in original text.

¹⁶² Collins, *Persian Eclogues*, p. 5, p. 10, p. 15 & p. 20

¹⁶³ Collins, *Persian Eclogues*, p. 12 & p. 11

¹⁶⁴ Collins, *Persian Eclogues*, p. 17 & p. 6

protagonists warn or are warned against worldly gain is significant when contrasted with a time where there was unprecedented growth in metropolitan urban centres and when Britain's class structure was radically transforming.¹⁶⁵ The eclogues thus construct an imaginative space which is unaffected by social change and urbanisation, that contrasts with urban and modern Britain.

Collins' eclogues were highly influential with John Scott and William Jones drawing heavily upon the format. British oriental poetry was, however, reshaped after William Jones took up his post as Judge in Bengal and head of the *Asiatic Society* (1784). His *Hindu Hymns* - which were informed by his and other members of the *Asiatic Society's* scholarly research into Hindu mythology, Sanskrit, botany and culturally specific issues - broke free, to an extent, from the strictures and conventions of the British oriental tale. This development will be explored more fully in chapter four.

The orient being relayed through British tropes and conventions was not just a feature of the tales in the periodical and Collins' oriental verse tales but in the novel as well. The British oriental novel, for most of the eighteenth century, usually fell into three categories: the oriental traveller travelling in Britain and commenting upon its inconstancies, the moralistic oriental fable and the transmigratory tale. George Lyttleton's *Letters from a Persian in England to his friend at Isaphan* (1735) is in the tradition of the oriental traveller travelling in Europe. The novel was very popular and survived to a fifth edition in 1744.¹⁶⁶ *Letters*

¹⁶⁵ Urban growth in Britain expanded at an unprecedented rate during the eighteenth century. Between the last quarter of the seventeenth century and mid-eighteenth century urban dwellers in Britain rose from 13.5 per cent to 21 per cent and continued to rise during the eighteenth century. Manufacturing growth and increase in trade also led to the increase of importance of manufacturers and industrialists from middling backgrounds. See Nancy Fowler Koehn, *The Power of Commerce and Governance in the First British Empire* (London: Cornell University, 1994) pp. 46-49

¹⁶⁶ Jerry C. Beasley, 'Portraits of a Monster: Robert Walpole and Early English Prose Fiction' in *Eighteenth Century Studies* vol. 14 no. 4 (Summer, 1981) p. 420

from a Persian engages in a satire of Walpole's England. In terms of genre, it was directly modelled on Montesquieu's *Persian Letters* with Lyttleton drawing attention to the intertextual nature of the work by referring to the central characters in *Persian Letters* and by making his main protagonists comment on their friendship with the main character in Montesquieu's work, Usbek.¹⁶⁷ The text replicates the trope, established in *Persian Letters*, of an oriental man commenting on a European country. There are, however, important differences between the two texts. Whilst Montesquieu's text depicts Usbek's seraglio, *Letters from a Persian Friend* is wholly concerned with satirising England through a Persian's eyes. The most notable difference between Lyttleton and Montesquieu's narratives is that there is far less of an engagement with Persia or the Seraglio, with the narrative being entirely set in London. The novel is also much more satirical in tone. This is symptomatic of the differences between the British and French oriental tale in the early to mid-eighteenth century. The British oriental tale is not so much interested in constructing an exoticised east but rather in drawing out a sketchy depiction of the east that would serve as a vantage point from which to view Britain or as a means of articulating universal and timeless values.

Oliver Goldsmith in *Citizen of the World* (1760-61), almost follows an identical format to that laid down in *Letters from Persian to his friend at Isaphan*, except that it is a Chinese traveller, Lien Chi Altangi, writing to the first President of the Ceremonial in China. Like Lyttleton, Goldsmith takes on print culture by targeting the daily gazettes and the booksellers, arguing that, whilst gifted literary men receive little patronage, critics and booksellers form an alliance with mercenary booksellers to

¹⁶⁷ Lyttleton, *Letters from a Persian in England to his friend at Isaphan*, p. 2

promote formulaic literary texts.¹⁶⁸ It is ironic that Goldsmith adopts such a strong position given that he follows a formulaic pattern laid down by Montesquieu and Lyttleton. At one point he even plagiarises the episode in *Letters from a Persian* where Selim meets a lady of distinction who claims to know the orient better than a Persian, with the lady in *Citizen of the World* claiming to know China better than the Chinese man.¹⁶⁹ It is a paradox at the very heart of the project of British Orientalism that whilst authors decry the print market replicating well-established tropes, their very texts conform to the generic formulations and tropes that print capitalism has engendered. Thus the orient in many of these tales becomes a site in which the authors' alienation from their work and the profit motives behind their forays into the literary market are transcribed.

Notwithstanding the generic stock tropes, the British oriental tale did alter in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century. In John Hawkesworth's *Amurath* and *Almorán and Hamet*, and Frances Sheridan's *History of Nourjahad*, there is a shift away from the moral didacticism of earlier oriental tales with the orient now becoming a site to pander to readers' desire for gratuitous depictions of wealth and individual transgression. John Hawkesworth deploys the well established trope of the misuse of inheritance in *Amurath* (1753). Amurath inherits a kingdom from his father, the Sultan, Abradin. A genii gives him a magic ring that contracts and gives pain whenever Amurath sins or makes an error in judgement. Gradually, however, he ignores the warning signs of the ring and starts misusing his power by surrounding himself with flatterers, being vindictive to his critics and trying to lure an innocent girl into voluntary prostitution. When the ring gives him so much pain that he throws it away, he is punished by the genii, who transforms him into a half-man half-

¹⁶⁸ Goldsmith, *Citizen of the World*, p. 262

¹⁶⁹ See Goldsmith, *Citizen of the World*, pp. 36-38 & Lyttleton, *Letters from a Persian in England to his Friend at Isaphan*, p. 216

monster. As he becomes more virtuous, he is progressively transformed into a series of higher life forms until he is transformed into his original form, a Sultan, by which time he has learnt to be a compassionate and responsible ruler. In *Almorán and Hamet* (1761), Hawkesworth again explores the abuse of power and inheritance. Almorán and Hamet are two twins that inherit the throne of Persia from their father. Their temperaments are completely different: Hamet is patient, compassionate and gentle, whilst Almorán, the older of the two twins, is ambitious, scheming, vengeful and lustful. Almorán ends up coveting his brother's share of the kingdom and his prospective fiancé. A genii subsequently gives him a talisman which enables him to transform into the body of anybody he desires. His transformations into the body of Hamet, in an attempt to seduce Almeida, and into his own servant, however, only results in failure and the awareness that he himself is despised. When he snatches the charm, offered but refused by Hamet on the grounds that it is dark magic not sanctioned by Allah, Almorán dies painfully.

Amurath and *Almorán and Hamet* both illustrate the moral that unrestrained appetite leads to sin and self destruction. The tales are, however, different from those of Johnson's and Addison's in that there is a greater character development and more of an attempt to portray the inner life. Even as characters engage in evil and sinful acts, the author, to some extent, is making the reader identify with the protagonists. Almorán, when he is transformed into Hamet or his servant Osmyn, realizes how despised he is by his servants and the women he loves, and sees himself as he really appears to others. Through that time of alienation from himself, Almorán is given a chance to examine his 'self' through others' eyes and consequently introspects. Similarly, in *Amurath*, the pain that is inflicted upon the central protagonist by the ring as he commits sin and his subsequent transmigrations

are devices used by Hawkesworth to explore the character's feelings of guilt and the degeneration of his character. The use of the good and evil twin is also a device via which Hawkesworth can interrogate the divided self – Hamet signifying the morally upright and rational self and Almorán the avaricious and animalistic self. The tale with its frequent blurring of these two identities signals a crisis of selfhood and identity and the possibility that at any point the good and rational self could degenerate. It thus may refer to the unstable ground that the western rational self is predicated upon.

In Frances Sheridan's *History of Nourjahad* (1765) Shemzeddin, a newly-crowned Sultan of Persia, is pondering whether to make his closest friend, Nourjahad, his chief advisor. He subsequently asks Nourjahad what his greatest wish is in order to test whether his friend is capable of the role. Nourjahad responds by telling him that he wishes to be immortal and have inexhaustible riches, which in turn infuriates the Sultan. Later on that night, a genii seemingly grants Nourjahad his wishes whilst instructing him that whenever he commits a sin he will experience long bouts of sleep. The bouts of sleep are similar to Amurath's ring contractions in that they are signifiers of an inner state or feelings of guilt. Nourjahad subsequently lives a life of excess and luxury, but is punished by a succession of comas, two of which last for decades. His character, over the course of the narrative, progressively degenerates. He abuses his wives, his servants and stabs his most favoured mistress, Cadiga. Nourjahad is distraught and full of remorse, upon which point the King Schemzeddin reveals to Nourjahad that it was an elaborate hoax and that he is not immortal or does not have inexhaustible wealth and that rather than decades having gone by, only a total of fourteen months have passed.

The level of identification with guilt-ridden characters in the *History of Nourjahad*, *Amurath* and *Almorán and Hamet* is symptomatic of the novel's growing concern, especially with the advent of the Gothic novel, beginning with Horace Walpole's *Castle of Otranto* (1764), in depicting inner life and portraying the darker side of the human psyche. This in turn has implications for the way the orient is depicted in fiction. Instead of the authors using the orient to make universalistic moral generalizations, the orient becomes a site for subjectivity and inner desire.

The oriental fiction of the last quarter of the eighteenth century and early nineteenth century must be contextualised in relation to the shift in trading patterns with the east and to the emergence of British oriental scholarship in Bengal. As British manufacturers developed the technology and the know how to imitate Asian products such as chinoiserie and chintz imports of these products declined with the East India Company's main import being tea.¹⁷⁰ Moreover, there was less of a perceived danger of the Britain's economy being drained of silver bullion since the East India Company's income through the development of the opium trade and their revenues coming from the Bengali population were now sufficient to pay for these products. As a result of these factors, the British who had previously had to adapt themselves to Asian indigenous industries and products were now dictating terms to them.¹⁷¹ The consumption of chinoiserie which was previously perceived in some quarters as a threat to British culture diminishes with the returned British merchant from India, with his ill-gotten gains and his corrupted foreign ways disrupting the class structure, now displacing this threat.

In the last quarter of the eighteenth century oriental scholarship in Bengal, patronised by Warren Hastings, had profound consequences for British

¹⁷⁰ For a discussion on British manufacturers' increasing ability to imitate Asian products, and shifts in trading patterns between East and West, see Berg, *Asian Luxuries*, p. 242 & p. 235

¹⁷¹ Wills, *European Consumption*, p. 140

fiction. For the first time, oriental scholars such as William Jones, Nathaniel Halhed and Alexander Dow were involved in translating Bengali and Sanskrit texts and bringing back specific knowledge of the subcontinent, which was then published in Britain. John Murray, in particular, was a publisher keen to establish networks with British authors in India and was responsible for publishing a number of dictionaries of Indian languages, oriental scholarship, and medical books on Indian tropical diseases.¹⁷² The publication of these works led to previously esoteric information about the subcontinent being put into circulation in the metropole. They become rather like the luxury Moghul collectors items looted by East India Company men, in that such books were collected and displayed in the libraries of the British elites to impress visitors. Moreover, due to the publication of some of the Indological scholarship in the *Asiatic Miscellany* and *Asiatic Researches*, and the regular reportage of events in British India in the press, more specific information about the subcontinent came to the British reading public in the closing decades of the eighteenth century.¹⁷³

The effect of increasingly specific writings regarding the subcontinent becoming available in the metropole was that authors of fiction began in their narratives to demonstrate an evermore sophisticated geographical awareness of the subcontinent. One can see this as early as 1780 in the lowbrow novel, *The Indian Adventurer: or, History of Mr Vanneck*. Whilst the author is grossly inaccurate or unconcerned about the tenets of Brahminism and Indian nomenclature, confusing a

¹⁷² William Zachs, *The First John Murray and the Late Eighteenth-Century London Book Trade* (Oxford: Oxford University, 1998) p. 231

¹⁷³ John D. Yohannan, 'The Persian Poetry Fad in England, 1770-1825' in *Comparative Literature* vol. 4, no. 2 (Oregon University: 1952) p137. The *Asiatic Miscellany* and *Asiatic Researches* were journals which published the Indological scholarship of British officers and administrators who were members of *The Asiatic Society*. This will be discussed at greater length in chapter two.

vague approximation of Hindu nomenclature with Islamic nomenclature,¹⁷⁴ he is surprisingly specific and correct about India's regional provinces. The central protagonist of the story Mr Vanneck, for instance, travels to Delhi, Patna, Calcutta and Cossimbuzaar and comments that the 'Kingdom of Assam' was 'divided from the province by a large river, and the other side by lofty mountains'.¹⁷⁵ Given that the novel was published before even the *Asiatic Society* had been established,¹⁷⁶ never mind made its findings available to the British public, demonstrates that even at this early stage authors had access to reasonably accurate geographical information about India from other sources. Nor was the author of the *Indian Adventurer* in the minority. Novelists, playwrights and poets in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century, as we shall discover in the later chapters, increasingly named specific regions in India and made attempts to portray, whether it be prose, sceneography or poetic imagery, the distinct landscapes and wildlife of those areas. That is not to suggest, though, that such portrayals were accurate or representative, merely, that they were indicative of authors increasingly imagining India as a geographically demarcated and distinct space, with its own regions, as opposed to a hazily drawn out locale that was vaguely different to other oriental countries.¹⁷⁷

¹⁷⁴ Whilst the novel's vague conflation of Brahmin and Islamic-sounding names most likely reflects ignorance of the differences between the two religions, it is also indicative of a period before representations of Indians were liable to conform towards colonial ethnographic and clear-cut distinctions between Brahmins and Muslims. It is thus representative of a time where Indians were not categorised within British discourses in such rigid terms on the basis of their religion. The generalised nomenclature within the British India novel is discussed at greater length in chapter 4.

¹⁷⁵ Anonymous, *The Indian Adventurer; or History of Mr Vanneck, a Novel Founded on Facts*. London: W. Lane, 1780. Eighteenth Century Collections Online. Gale Group. <http://galenet.galegroup.com/servlet/ECCO>, p. 178

¹⁷⁶ The *Asiatic Society* was established in 1784.

¹⁷⁷ The depiction in fiction of India as a geographically distinct and self-contained space with its own regions prefigures what Manu Goswami describes as more formalised political ideas of India as a bounded colonial-state space that occurred in the wake of the Indian uprisings of 1857. Goswami argues from then on through a 'massive web of transportation and irrigation structures' and by the creation of an 'imperial economy' the British created the idea of 'India as a hierarchically subordinate space within the Britain-centred globally imperialized economy'. See Manu Goswami, *Producing India: From Colonial Economy to National State* (London: University of Chicago, 2004) pp. 8-9

The fact that British fiction had begun to place the subcontinent under sharper focus as a territorially-defined space by the 1780s can be accounted for when one considers Britain's growing political and economic involvement within India.¹⁷⁸ Following the battle of Plassey 1757 and the granting of Diwani to the East India Company in 1764, there were greater efforts to map the region through cartography. Matthew Edney has argued that in the 1760s and 1770s, with the decline of the Mughals, India was established as a region where rival imperialisms – the Marathas in central western India, the Kingdom of Mysore in Southern India and the British – were competing with one another to secure and expand their influence into areas that had been previously controlled by the dynasty.¹⁷⁹ Furthermore, one should take into account that with the loss of the American colonies in 1776 the E.I.C's territorial acquisitions in the subcontinent had become Britain's most economically and politically significant colonial lands, which in turn led to greater metropolitan interest in the region.¹⁸⁰ It thus became important for the E.I.C to establish its own borders and territories and conversely those of other powers competing for dominance within the subcontinent - the Marathas, the Kingdom of Mysore, the Mughals, the Afghans and the French. Paradoxically though, whilst the cartographic imagining of India was spurred on by Mughal decline, the empire at its peak, in terms of the territorial size it

¹⁷⁸ David Livingstone has argued that interest in mapping was spurred on by the Enlightenment and the natural sciences' emphasis on the value of empirical observation and the collection of data from around the world. He furthermore argues cartography of foreign lands and the scientific cataloguing of its wildlife, flora and landscapes was inextricably linked to British expansion of trading routes into Asia, as well as, voyages of discovery and imperial endeavours in the south pacific by such individuals as Captain James Cooke. See David N. Livingstone, *The Geographical Tradition: Episodes in the History of a Contested Enterprise* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1992) pp. 125-128

¹⁷⁹ The highly influential maps were compiled and collected from data provided by British army columns on campaign. Rennell managed, from the huge amount of material he collected, to provide a far more detailed map on the subcontinent than had ever been attempted before. See Matthew Edney, *The Geographical Construction of British India 1765-1843* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1997) p9. Major James Rennell's ability to construct such a detailed map must be also contextualised in relation to advances in the eighteenth century in mathematics, instrumentation for surveying and field mapping which led to great advances in cartography accuracy that were in turn exhibited in Rennell's maps. See Livingstone, *The Geographical Tradition*, p126

¹⁸⁰ Jon Wilson, *The Domination of Strangers: Modern Governance in Eastern India* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008) pp. 48-51

encompassed under the emperor Aurangzeb in 1707, was conflated in British geographical discourses with an emerging idea of India as a demarcated bounded space in its own right.¹⁸¹ Edney argues that Major James Rennell, who was appointed by East India Company to provide maps for the subcontinent, established 'India as a meaningful, if still ambiguous, geographical entity' in his *Atlas for Bengal* (1777) and in the maps of India that accompanied his geographical memoirs of India, *Memoir of a Map of Hindoostan; or the Mughal's Empire* (1783). In the fiction of this period, it is evident that there is a parallel movement towards a conceptualisation of India as a defined self-contained region, which in turn suggests that authors had access to, or were aware, on some level, of more detailed maps of the subcontinent.

Conclusion

Authors' depictions of India were shaped to a large degree by the changing demands of the literary marketplace, eastern luxuries coming into Britain, metropolitan perceptions of returned East India Company men and Indian immigrants, and shifting visual representations of India. They were, in addition, influenced by the development of the oriental tale within Britain. Furthermore, understanding of India amongst authors, especially in the populist literature of the time, was determined to a great extent by imaginative works such as the *Arabian Nights* and the importing of Asian and Indian goods into Britain, rather than through any accurate knowledge of the shifting relationship between the coloniser and colonised. Rather like the Indian goods that came into Britain, the oriental tales were originally designed by their producers to cater to British tastes or preconceptions of India, rather than to replicate

¹⁸¹ For a more in-depth discussion of the greater efforts to map and define India as a space by Britain in 1760s and 1770s see Edney, *The Geographical Construction of British India*, pp. 3-9

an authentic Indian product. In addition a distinction needs to be made between poetic depictions of India and representations of the subcontinent in novels and plays.

Novelists and playwrights, because of their perceived lower status, were more likely to depict India according to pre-existing tropes and genres engendered by print capitalism, whilst poets, due to their perceived higher cultural status, were more likely to push forward their own individualistic visions of India.

2. Poeticising India: Exile in the Periphery and Sublime Experiments in Verse

Although British India Romantic poetry evolved out of the oriental escapist verse tales of William Collins, verse, whether written by the Romantic poets or East India Company officers and administrators, was the first out of the literary modes to draw upon and respond to specific colonial discourses and events taking place in colonial India. The interest of poets in issues of colonial governance was a feature that was sustained throughout this period, from Jones' *Hindu Hymns*, to the British Romantic authors' verse tales and the amateur poetry of Company men. There were a number of reasons why this was the case. Firstly, poetry was perceived as a male and highbrow literary form and, consequently, poets were less shamefaced about tackling political and ideological discourses. Secondly, the majority of the British India poets were either men who worked in the contact zone, or metropolitan Romantic authors who prided themselves on having become 'experts' on India. Yet in spite of poetry's keen interest with issues of colonial governance during this period, there were major differences between the way authors writing from Britain and those writing in the contact zone responded to the shifting colonial contexts.

Authors, who had experience of working and living in the contact zone, reflect in their narratives broader official shifts in the attitude of the East India Company administration toward India and her inhabitants. When looking at the poetry of British officers and administrators, one can observe a general pattern emerge. There is a movement away from depicting the subcontinent within a universalistic framework and justifying Britain's role as coloniser in terms of her capacity to preserve the culture of India in the late eighteenth century, to early nineteenth-century

authors portraying the colonised subjects and their cultural traditions as ethnographically distinct and 'other'. British metropolitan poetry, on the other hand, did not follow the same pattern. Robert Southey and Thomas Moore's representations reflect their varying political stances. Southey, a conservative and missionary sympathiser, adopted an unsympathetic stance towards Indian culture, viewing Hinduism as barbaric and in need of replacement by Christianity. Moore, in contrast, was an Irish man who had close allegiances to nationalists who sought the independence of their motherland. He consequently used India as a space to critique English colonialism and intolerance in Ireland. Moreover, both authors, rather than merely portraying India's relationship with Britain, configured their portrayals of the subcontinent within a nexus of European intercontinental conflict and emerging global awareness. Whilst British romantic verse had a broader focus than poetry written by East India men, they shared the same aesthetic ambitions of William Jones in that they sought to reshape metropolitan poetic aesthetics by incorporating Hindu imagery and mythology into their productions. In contrast, the poetry of East India men, with the exception of course of Jones, was less concerned with producing sublime effects and more interested in portraying the poets' own experiences of exile while living in the subcontinent, in addition to depicting the perceived ethnographic practices of Indians.

Although there has been a prolific amount of literary criticism of the poetry of British India during this period, such scholarship has tended to be compartmentalised, focusing upon the orientalist poetry of William Jones, the Romantic verse tales of Robert Southey and Thomas Moore, or alternatively the amateur poetry of East India Company men such as John Leyden and Thomas Medwin. Kate Teltscher, in *India Inscribed*, has focused upon the late eighteenth

century-poetry of William Jones, Eyles Irwin and John Scott, relating portrayals of the subcontinent to Saidian issues of power/knowledge and colonial hegemony.¹⁸²

Michael Franklin and Garland Cannon have worked extensively on William Jones, arguing that Jones' work was aimed at garnering British metropolitan cultural empathy towards Indian culture.¹⁸³ In contrast, Janardan Prasad Singh has charted Jones' development of oriental verse, relating the oriental scholar's portrayals to pre-existing European philosophical and political debates.¹⁸⁴ Javed Majeed has taken a similar approach, but encompassed the works of William Jones, Robert Southey and Thomas Moore in a comparative study with James Mill.¹⁸⁵ Nigel Leask, in contrast to previous scholarship, has focused specifically on the writings of professional British soldiers working for the East India Company in a colonial context. He argues that authors in the early nineteenth century, such as John Leyden and Thomas Medwin, were less eager to adopt an oriental style and wrote predominantly about the feelings of exile and alienation that a British soldier was likely to experience in a colonial context.¹⁸⁶

This discussion will examine a broader selection of texts than previous literary scholarship, and provide a comparative analysis of how authors with different objectives and experiences utilised India as a poetic space. We will begin by focusing on the origins of the British oriental verse tale from John Scott's eclogues and William Jones' poems written in Britain to its development in Jones' *Hindu hymns*, exploring both alterations to the format and continuities. We will then proceed by

¹⁸² Teltscher, *India Inscribed*, pp. 134-142

¹⁸³ See Garland Cannon, *The Life and Mind of Oriental Jones: Sir William Jones, the Father of Modern Linguistics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1990) pp. 232-235 & Franklin, *Accessing India: Orientalism, anti-‘Indianism’*, pp. 56-57

¹⁸⁴ Janardan Prasad Singh, *Sir William Jones: His Mind and Art* (Delhi: S. Chand & Company, 1992) pp. 25-62

¹⁸⁵ See Majeed, *Ungoverned Imaginings*, pp. 3-5

¹⁸⁶ Nigel Leask, 'Towards an Anglo-Indian Poetry? The Colonial Muse in the Writings of John Leyden, Thomas Medwin and Charles D'Oyly' in *Writing India 1757-1990: The Literature of British India* [ed. by Bart Moore-Gilbert] (Manchester: Manchester University, 1996) pp. 52-86

looking at British Romantic authors such as Robert Southey, Sydney Owenson and Thomas Moore. By juxtaposing British romantic productions with Jones' *Hindu Hymns* we aim to demonstrate a historical shift in the way the oriental-verse tale evolved from hazy escapist depictions of eastern locales to those that deployed culturally specific mythologies, histories and landscapes, and those that utilised India as an allegorical space to discuss global conflicts. Moreover, we will demonstrate, by examining the outgoing and incoming correspondence of the firm Longman, the extent to which the publisher drove and marketed oriental verse by the British Romantic poets. It will be furthermore established through looking at contemporary reviews of *The Curse of Kehama* and *Lalla Rookh*, the extent to which the poems challenged prevailing metropolitan poetic aesthetic norms. The discussion will then move its focus towards an altogether different British poet with less status within the British literary market – the East India Company writer and soldier with actual experience of living and working in colonial India. We are going to explore how East India Company poets attempted to depict contemporary India and document the anxieties and preoccupations that a Company man faced working in the subcontinent. This will be contrasted to William Jones and the British Romantic authors, who retreated into India's distant past or mythology. Moreover, it will be a central concern of the discussion to show how the authors portrayed perceived ethnographic practices such as Sati, infanticide and the alleged bloodthirsty rites to the lord Jagannath at Puri. Also of interest will be to explore how the poets depicted regionally specific locales and contemporary events in a colonial context. Yet, in contrast to Leask's study, it will be argued that British poets writing in India were more informed by the development of the oriental verse tale than Leask has suggested.

2.1 *The development of the Oriental Verse Tale: William Jones and John Scott*

In the eighteenth century, the influence of Classical Greece and Rome was entrenched in the education of the upper-class British Gentleman. The verse of literary giants such as John Dryden and Alexander Pope was steeped in classical forms, motifs and imagery with both poets engaging in translations of classical texts. The emphasis was on imitating the grand masters and meeting pre-existing aesthetic standards of balance, order and proportion.¹⁸⁷ As the eighteenth century progressed, however, certain poets challenged such aesthetic norms and turned to the rural world to construct a simpler, more direct and passionate verse that would offer an alternative to the urban sophisticated verse that imitated classical models. James Thomson in *The Seasons* (1730) turned to nature using Lockean empiricism to describe mankind's relationship to the natural world.¹⁸⁸ Such poetry sought to describe phenomena as they really appeared to the sight rather than altering the surrounding environment so that it would accord with pre-existing aesthetic notions of order and symmetry. William Collins, as has been discussed in chapter one, drew on the conventions of the British oriental prose tale, as established by Samuel Johnson and Joseph Addison to break away from classical forms and produce a pastoral form of poetry that provided escapism from modernity. Edmund Burke, in *Philosophical Enquiry into the Origins of our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful* (1757), stressed the potential for art to aim for the sublime, which he categorised as invoking terror and awe, and operating

¹⁸⁷ Both Pope and Dryden had embarked upon translations of classical texts. Dryden had translated Virgil's *Aeneid*, and Pope translated Homer's *Iliad*. For further discussion of the influence of the Classics on British upper-class culture and poetic aesthetics, see David Hopkins, 'The Classical Inheritance' in *A Companion to Eighteenth Century Poetry* [ed. by Christine Gerrard] (Oxford: Blackwell, 2006) pp. 458-459

¹⁸⁸ Thomas Woodman, 'Augustanism and Pre-Romanticism' in *A Companion to Eighteenth Century Poetry* [ed. by Christine Gerrard] (Oxford: Blackwell, 2006) p. 478

outwith the range of reason, knowledge and intelligibility.¹⁸⁹ Burke's concept of the sublime proved influential in terms of how William Jones and the British Romantic writers such as Robert Southey, Thomas Moore and Sydney Owenson portrayed India.

William Jones, the son of a Welsh mathematician, also called William, and Mary Nix, was born in Westminster, London, in 1746. He was sent to Harrow where he demonstrated a flair for languages. Jones later studied at University College, Oxford, from 1764-73, where he developed an interest in Middle Eastern languages and culture. During this time he studied Persian and under the guidance of his Syrian roommate, Mirza, learnt Arabic.¹⁹⁰ In spite of studying law, he gained renown throughout Europe, between the years 1770-73, as an oriental scholar publishing works such as *Histoire de Nader Chah* (1770), *Traite sur La Posie Oriental* (1770), *Dissertation Sur La Litterature Oriental* (1771), *Grammar of the Persian Language* (1771) and *Poems Consisting Chiefly of Translations from the Asiatick Languages* (1772).¹⁹¹ His fame as an oriental scholar was so well established that he dined and conversed with eighteenth-century intellectuals such as Samuel Johnson, Oliver Goldsmith, Joshua Reynolds and Edmund Burke, and was formally elected into Johnson's literary club in 1773.¹⁹²

Despite Jones' accomplishments as an oriental linguist his conceptualisations of Asian poetry in his early career display a lack of regional specificity when it came to depicting eastern locales. William Jones initially drew

¹⁸⁹ Shaun Irlam, 'The Sublime' in *A Companion to Eighteenth Century Poetry* [ed. by Christine Gerrard] (Oxford: Blackwell, 2006) p. 518

¹⁹⁰ For an account of Jones's origins, school career and his early interest in Persian at Oxford University, see Cannon, *The Life and Mind of Oriental Jones*, pp. 1-10

¹⁹¹ Janadan Prasad Singh, *Sir William Jones: His Mind and Art* (New Delhi: S. Chand & Company ltd, 1982) p. 8

¹⁹² Michael J. Franklin, 'Introduction' in *The European Discovery of India: Key Indological Sources of Romanticism vol. 3* (London: Ganesha Publishing, 2001) p. viii

heavily upon the conventions of the oriental verse tale established by William Collins in that he depicted oriental regions as hazily drawn out and unreal idylls, and used them as convenient spaces to espouse occidental morality. Although his writings claim to be a study of Asiatic poetry his prime focus is Arabia and Persia, with India being more or less dismissed alongside other Asian countries as imitating Arabian poetry. In *On the Poetry of Eastern Nations* (1772), Jones argues that the high quality of Arabian poetry is due to their mild climate and manners. Moreover, according to the oriental scholar, the Arabs' nomadic lifestyle meant that they were closer to the natural world and could thus produce beautiful images of what they aimed to depict. As well as being able to portray pastoral idylls, the profusion of extreme landscapes such as deserts, mountains and forests, according to Jones, provided the Arabs with the natural elements to produce sublime imagery that would convey fear and awe to readers.¹⁹³ In addition, in *On the Arts Commonly called Imitative* (1772) he argues that poems should not merely aim to imitate forms of Classical poets such as Horace and Virgil, arguing that the finest poetry should be 'a strong, and animated expression of human passions'. Poetry, according to Jones, should be like music in its capacity to have a lyrical and harmonic quality.¹⁹⁴

One can see the results of Jones' theorisation of aesthetics in his translations and in his own pseudo-oriental verse. Jones' *A Persian Song to Hafiz*¹⁹⁵ accords with the scholar's essentialisations about the unaffected beauty of the oriental landscapes and their people. There is a harmony between the natural landscape and

¹⁹³ For Jones's explanation for the high quality of Arabian poetry, see; William Jones, 'Essay 1: On the Poetry of Eastern Nations' in *Poems Consisting Chiefly of Translations From the Asiatick Languages To Which are Added Two Essays* (Oxford: 1772) Eighteenth Century Collections Online. Gale Group. <http://galenet.galegroup.com/servlet/ECCO>, pp. 174-187

¹⁹⁴ Jones, 'Essay 2: On the Arts Commonly Called Imitative', in *Poems Consisting Chiefly of Translations*, pp. 202-203

¹⁹⁵ Jones' translations are not strict translations. His aim was to convert oriental poetry into decent European poetry rather than verbatim translations. As such his translations are as much his own as Hafiz's and can thus be used to demonstrate Jones' poetic aesthetic. See Cannon, *The Life and Mind of Oriental Jones*, p. 39

the Persian maid that the poet addresses; hence she has a ‘lilly hand’ and ‘rosy cheeks’. It is ‘nature’, rather than artificial cosmetics, that spreads ‘the riches dyes over her cheeks’.¹⁹⁶ Jones’ own early verse tales featured pastoral idylls. If one looks at *The Palace of Fortune, an Indian Tale* (1769), one can see how the orient is deployed as a dreamscape that has little relation to the location being portrayed. The poem although it purports to be Indian is set in Tibet. In the narrative, the daughter of a shepherd, discontented with her lot in life, wanders through the ‘musky shades’¹⁹⁷ when suddenly a flash of light blazes and a goddess appears in a carriage in the sky. The young maid subsequently awakes in an expanse of ‘Fresh lawns and Sunny Banks’.¹⁹⁸ She sees three visions of men approaching the goddess with worldly wishes: a young handsome man desirous to experience carnal pleasure, a knight wishing to embark on territorial conquest and glory, and an old man who desires all the gold that he can possibly imagine. While the goddess grants each of the three their wishes, each of them suffers the consequences of their earthly desires. Adders sting the young man after he has his fill of sexual pleasure, a lowly page murders the knight for being a tyrant, and the old man dies from the burden of carrying the gold. The maid, after seeing these visions and learning the folly of worldly desire, is duly transported back to her parents where she lives reconciled with her position in life.¹⁹⁹

The early usage of the form of the oriental verse tale by Jones has much in common with the oriental tales of Joseph Addison, Oliver Goldsmith, Samuel Johnson and of course William Collins’ *Persian Eclogues*. Oriental locales serve as hazily drawn out imaginative spaces on which to project forbidden desires and

¹⁹⁶ Jones, *Poems Consisting Chiefly of Translations*, p. 71

¹⁹⁷ Jones, *Poems Consisting Chiefly of Translations*, p. 9

¹⁹⁸ Jones, *Poems Consisting Chiefly of Translations*, p. 13

¹⁹⁹ The use of the oriental locales as an illusionary land of pleasure was by no means untypical for Jones. He pursues a similar strategy in *Seven Fountains an Eastern Allegory* (1767). See Jones, ‘Seven Fountains an Eastern Allegory’ in *Poems Consisting Chiefly of Translations*, pp. 39-69

fantasies, only to be deflated in the end by showing them to be illusory and by espousing universal morality. In a similar fashion to the previous oriental tales, eastern locales function as static unchanging lands unburdened by civilisation and social change. That Jones should adopt the conventions of the British oriental tale is unsurprising given his association with Johnson and Goldsmith and at the point of constructing the verse had yet to visit any part of Asia. His later translation of *The Moallakat: or Seven Arabian Poets* (1782) demonstrates a more scholarly approach to the poems and a greater attempt to portray culturally specific Bedouin culture. Jones commences his translation with a genealogical table tracing the ancestry of the pre-Islamic Arabian poets and each of the seven poems begins with an argument, with Jones providing a summary of the scene laid out before the readers. If one of the tales ‘The Poem of Amriolkais’, where the poet reminisces about his previous lovers, is taken as a case study, it is apparent that Jones’ translation retains the culturally specific images and metaphors of the Arabian poets. Thus Fathima’s ‘long coal black hair’ is: ‘thick and diffused like bunches of dates clustering on the palm-tree’ and her ‘languishing eyes, like those of a roe in *the groves of WEGERA*²⁰⁰ looking tenderly at her young’.²⁰¹ The similies are indicative of Jones attempting to defamiliarize British readers with fresh nomadic Arabic images. Yet in Jones’ translation of the poem there remains a fetishisation and romanticising of the perceived primitivism of a nomadic people riding on camels overwhelmed by feelings of love and emotion. Moreover,

²⁰⁰ The Italics and capital letters, within the quotation, are in the original text.

²⁰¹ William Jones, *The Moallakat; or Seven Arabian Poems , which were suspended on the temple at Mecca; with a translation, a preliminary discourse, and notes critical, philological, explanatory* (London: 1782) Eighteenth Century Collections Online. Gale Group.
<http://galenet.galegroup.com/servlet/ECCO>, p. 8

whilst he translates culturally specific metaphors in the poems, Jones simultaneously imposes a pastoral and Ovidian framework onto the narrative.²⁰²

William Collins' format for the oriental verse tale was drawn upon and to an extent refashioned by John Scott. Scott was the son of Samuel Scott, a linen draper and Quaker preacher, and Martha Collins. Whilst given no formal schooling, he studied Latin under John Chartier and took to writing verse at an early age. Between the years 1753-58, he contributed regularly to *Gentleman's Magazine*. On a trip to London in 1766, he formed friendships with Samuel Johnson and William Jones, who may have been influential in the formation of his subsequent *Oriental Eclogues*.²⁰³ Scott acknowledged his debt to William Collins in the preface to his eclogues.²⁰⁴ Indeed, at first glance Scott, in a similar fashion to Collins, has a tendency to depict oriental locales as idylls – with the only culturally specific element to them being the unfamiliar nomenclature. *Li-Po; or, the Good Governor: A Chinese Eclogue* is set in 'groves of ever green', surrounded by 'Hanan's hills' and 'Xifa's lake',²⁰⁵ in China and *Zerad; or The Absent Lover: An Arabian Eclogue* is located in 'Zenan's pastures',²⁰⁶ in Yemen. Yet, on closer inspection, Scott's involvement with his oriental subject matter goes beyond surface level. The footnotes to his eclogues demonstrate a broad reading of contemporary European travelogues and histories of the differing regions depicted in his poems. He draws for instance on such works as Du Halde's *History of China*, Vide Usbeck's *Voyage to China*, William Bolts' *Consideration On India Affairs* and Alexander Dow's *History of Indostan*. Moreover,

²⁰² Jones even refers to Amriolkais as the Ovid of Arabia in his dedication to John Paradise. See Jones, *The Moallakat*, p. 6

²⁰³ For a biographical account of John Scott's life, see; Anne McWhir, 'Scott, John (1730-1783)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/24891>, accessed 12 Aug 2008]

²⁰⁴ John Scott, 'The Poetical Works of John Scott Esq'. London, 1782. *Eighteenth Century Collections Online*. Gale Group. <http://galenet.galegroup.com/servlet/ECCO>, p. 123

²⁰⁵ Scott, 'Li-Po; or the good governor' in *The Poetical Works of John Scott*, p. 155

²⁰⁶ Scott, 'Zerad; or the Absent Lover: An Arabian Eclogue' in *The Poetical Works of John Scott*, p. 127

in *Zerad or the Absent Lover: An Arabian Eclogue* he cites the scholarship of William Jones to demonstrate that the plot of Zerad crossing the desert to be reunited with his lover after being parted is in fact a commonplace occurrence in Arabia.²⁰⁷ Scott's oriental poems thus utilise and draw upon oriental scholarship to an extent not attempted by Collins.

It is Scott's eclogue *Serim; or the Artificial Famine* which makes the severest break with the conventions and boundaries of the British oriental verse-tale. In the poem *Serim*, a Brahmin, bitterly attacks the British invaders of his country who have caused famine and widespread devastation in Bengal.

‘Ye Fiends! Ye have ravish’d all our little store;
 ‘Ye see we perish, yet ye ask for more!
 ‘Go dive where pearls beneath the ocean Shine!
 ‘What right have you to plague our peaceful land?
 ‘No ships of ours e’er sought Western strand!
 ‘Ne’er from your fields we snatch’d their crops
 ‘away..’²⁰⁸

According to *Serim*, the greed and rapacity of the British invaders is unrivalled in Indian history, with even the purported Islamic tyrant Aurungzebe using his own personal wealth to bring provisions from elsewhere in times of drought. The Brahmin then goes on to catalogue the crimes committed by the British that culminated in famine – high inflexible revenue levels and the forcing by *Gomasthas* of Indian weavers to produce silk at extremely low prices for East India Company merchants. Moreover, *Serim* witnesses the Indian victims of British violence such as the ‘white rob’d Bramin’ and his ‘wives’ and ‘children’ who lay dead by his side.²⁰⁹

²⁰⁷ Scott, ‘Zerad; or the Absent Lover: An Arabian Eclogue’ in *The Poetical Works of John Scott*, p. 126

²⁰⁸ Scott, ‘Serim; or the Artificial Famine’ in *The Poetical Works of John Scott*, p. 140

²⁰⁹ *Ibid.*

The Hindu God Birmah²¹⁰ seeing Serim in anguish appears to the Brahmin and reassures him that the British will be punished for their crimes. Birmah tells Serim that at night, while the East India Company men sleep in their luxurious palaces, obtained by wealth exploited out of innocent Indians, apparitions of their victims will visit them:

‘Sad sounds shall issue from your guilty walls
 ‘The Widow’d wife’s, the soulless mother’s calls;
 ‘And infant Rajah’s bleeding forms shall rise’
 ‘And lift to you their supplicating eyes...’²¹¹

According to Birmah the British will be so guilt ridden that they will commit suicide by their ‘own hands with avenging steel’.²¹² Unfortunately, though, Serim never lives long enough for Birmah’s prophecy to come true as a ‘British ruffian’²¹³ takes the Brahmin unawares and throws him off the cliff into a river.

Serim; or the Artificial Famine is distinct from both Scott’s other eclogues and Collins’ oriental verse tales in the way it incorporates a contemporary socio-economic critique of East India Company policy leading up to the Bengal Famine of 1770-1. The poem, written in 1782, comes in the wake of well-publicised attacks blaming the East India Company for the famine, such as Alexander Dow’s *History of Hindostan* and William Bolts’ *Consideration of India Affairs*. Dow, an officer and an orientalist within the East India Company, and Bolts, a Dutch merchant for the company, launched scathing critiques of colonial policy within Bengal. Dow argued in *History of Hindostan* (1772) that India was suffering from ‘ruinous

²¹⁰ Birmah is an eighteenth century spelling variation for the god Bramah. John Holwell was an eighteenth century British orientalist who used such nomenclature. See J. Z. Holwell, *A Review of the Principles, Religions and Morals of the Ancient Bramins: Comprehending an Account of the Mythology, Cosmogony* (London: 1799) *Eighteenth Century Collections Online*. Gale Group. <http://galenet.galegroup.com/servlet/ECCO>, p. 6

²¹¹ Scott, ‘Serim; or the Artificial Famine’ in *The Poetical Works of John Scott*, p. 150

²¹² Ibid. This may be a reference to the well-publicised suicide of Robert Clive who died in 1774 after stabbing himself repeatedly with a penknife. Although, the exact reasons for his suicide are unknown the firm implication in Scott’s poem is that he took his own life out of guilt for the Indians that he had exploited.

²¹³ Scott, ‘Serim or the Artificial Famine’ in *The Poetical Works of John Scott*, p. 152

commerce with Europe'.²¹⁴ It is, however, noteworthy that the poet chooses a Brahmin narrator for his poem. It demonstrates Scott's confidence that he can identify with the concerns of an indigenous man. Yet the Brahmin, being unwittingly thrown to his death, conversely shows that Scott saw Indian people of that religious persuasion as victims that were too weak to fend off an attack by the more brutal and stronger British soldier. Brahminism thus came synonymous with victimhood.

The accounts that Scott had relied upon for constructing this poem were largely accurate accounts of East India Company rule leading up to the famine. The East India Company merchants were illegally using *dastaks*, Company tax exemptions, for their own private trade meaning that indigenous traders could not compete and that monopolies could be established of key Indian resources such as salt, beetle nut and silk. East India Company dominance in Bengal gave soldiers and merchants the leverage to employ Indian agents (*Gomasthas*) to force weavers through intimidation and violence in to produce products which they would buy at a fraction of the price and then sell on to Indian merchants for an extortionate amount of money. The Company's collection of revenues was used to maintain its presence in India or for its own profits, meaning that little wealth was reinvested into the province of Bengal. This meant that in times of severe drought, as in 1770-1, when prices soared relatively few Indians had the resources or money to buy provisions from outside the state as, leading to mass starvation. The fact that revenue collection went on at an undiminished rate whilst the famine was taking place led to further charges of exploitation and callousness on the part of the Company.²¹⁵

²¹⁴ Muhammad Firishtah, Qasim Hindu Shah Astarabadi, *The History of Hindostan Translated from the Persian the Third Edition* vol. 3 (London: 1792) *Eighteenth Century Collections Online*. Gale Group. <http://galenet.galegroup.com/servlet/ECCO>, p. liv

²¹⁵ For a further analysis of the causes and consequences of the Bengal famine, see Dutt, *Economic History of India*, pp. 19-51

Whilst there had been British poems that critiqued East India Company policy such as *The Nabob: Or the Asiatic Plunderers* (1773) and *The East India Culprits* (1774), they had adopted the form of neo-classical satires, rather than of the pseudo oriental verse tale. Thus *Serim* is the first poem that reproves colonial policy through the Indian voice of the Brahmin narrator. William Jones, in contrast to John Scott, however, was not concerned with interweaving contemporary events or biting socio-economic critiques of colonial rule into his oriental verse tales. There are continuities and disjunctions between Jones' oriental verse tales and translations written in Britain with that of Jones' later poetry written in India. Although his *Hindu Hymns* is much more culturally specific in its appropriation of Hindu mythology the poems still use India as an unreal dreamscape continuing a trend that was established in his British pseudo oriental verse and translations. His development of the genre, however, was hugely influential in determining the direction that the oriental verse tale was to adopt in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century.

Jones' Hindoo Hymns

Jones secured a position as a judge in Bengal in 1783, after proving himself as a barrister in Wales and Oxford.²¹⁶ In Bengal, he entered a colonial administration under Warren Hastings, which aimed to govern India according to its own laws and was relatively sympathetic to Indian culture.²¹⁷ It was initially out of a frustration with having to rely on pandits for court decisions that Jones learnt Sanskrit

²¹⁶ Michael J. Franklin, 'Jones, Sir William (1746-1794)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, Sept 2004; online edn., May 2006
[<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/15105>, accessed 27 August 2007]

²¹⁷ Rosane Rocher, *Orientalism, Poetry, and the Millennium; the Checkered Life of Nathaniel Brassey Halhed, 1751-1839* (Delhi: Motilal Banarasidass, 1983) p. 48

under the guidance of a Brahmin instructor.²¹⁸ This in turn led to an interest in Indian mythology and literature. On June 22nd 1784, William Jones wrote to Charles Wilkins, the translator of the *Bhagvadgita*, 'I am in love with the *Gopia*, charmed with *Crishen*, an admirer of *Ram*, an admirer of other warriors of the M'habharat'.²¹⁹ In addition, he developed a fondness for the dramas of Khalidasa.²²⁰ Moreover on the basis of his linguistic proficiency and his renown in Europe, Jones was appointed the president of *The Asiatick Society* in January 1784. The society was composed of British administrators and soldiers in Bengal, who in their spare time embarked upon India scholarship in fields as wide ranging as botany, mythology, medicine, geography, languages and music which would then be published in the Society's Journal. Jones's own work included papers on such diverse interests as chess, a comparative study of the classical Greek and Indian Gods, music, zoology, Hindu mythological chronology, botany and medicine.²²¹

Whilst Jones' first poem in India, *The Enchanted Fruit, or the Hindu Wife; an Antedeluvian Tale: Written in the Province of Bihar* (1784), conforms to the form of the British oriental verse tale the author experimented with a new poetic format in his later India verse. He invented a sub-genre of hymns addressed to Hindu Gods. Jones' more culturally specific Hindu hymns need to be correlated to his own scholarship in the *Asiatick Society* which aimed to provide a comprehensive overview of Indian culture and to establish comparative links between Europe and India's

²¹⁸ Michael J. Franklin, 'Jones, Sir William (1746-1794)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, Sept 2004; online edn., May 2006
[<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/15105>, accessed 27 August 2007]

²¹⁹ William Jones, *The Letters of Sir William Jones* [ed. by Garland Cannon] (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1970) p. 652

²²⁰ Cannon, *The Life and Mind of Oriental Jones*, p. 274

²²¹ For a discussion of the output of *The Asiatick Society* and Jones' contributions, see J.M. Steadman, 'The Asiatick Society of Bengal' in *Eighteenth Century Studies* vol. 10 no. 4 (Summer, 1977) pp. 464-83

distant past.²²² In addition, his poetry needs to be situated alongside his translations of the *Laws of Manu* which sought to codify and present a comprehensive catalogue of Hindu law.²²³ The juxtaposition of the hymns with arguments, explaining the context of his work indicates that his poems were extensions of his scholarship. Jones' deployment of arguments thus evolved from their usage in *The Moallakat*, where they mainly provided summaries of the forthcoming plot. The poems are no longer self-contained but are literary enactments of his theories about Hinduism. As Tim Fulford has convincingly argued, Jones adopted a Linnean methodology in terms of his Eurocentric classification and comparative study of Hindu Gods.²²⁴ There are frequent attempts in his work to find commonality between polytheistic mythologies. For instance, in *A Hymn to Camdeo* (1784) he compares the Hindu God *Kama* to the Grecian *Eros* and the Roman *Cupid*.²²⁵ In a *Hymn to Narayena* (1785), he links the mythology of the *Puranas* to Persian and Egyptian mythology.²²⁶ He aspires throughout his hymns for scholarly accuracy, hence his frequent correspondence with Charles Wilkins to obtain the correct nomenclature for Hindu gods and mythical figures.²²⁷

²²² Steadman, *The Asiatick Society of Bengal*, p. 467

²²³ Michael J. Franklin, 'Cultural Possession, Imperial Control and Comparative Religion: The Calcutta Perspectives of Sir William Jones and Nathaniel Brassey Halhed' in *The Yearbook of English Studies*, vol. 32 *Children in Literature* (2002) p. 8

²²⁴ Jones as well as being a linguist, Judge and poet was an accomplished botanist. He collected and categorised plants in India and corresponded with Sir Joseph Banks in Britain. See Tim Fulford, 'Poetic Flowers / Indian bowers' in Michael J. Franklin, *Romantic Representations of British India* [ed. by] Michael J. Franklin (London: Routledge, 2006) pp. 121-128

²²⁵ William Jones, 'Hymn to Camdeo' in *The Works of William Jones in Six Volumes vol. 6* (London: 1799) *Eighteenth Century Collections Online*. Gale Group. <http://galenet.galegroup.com/servlet/ECCO>, p. 313

²²⁶ Jones, 'Hymn to Narayena' in *Works of William Jones vol. 6*, p. 367

²²⁷ In a letter dated January 6th 1784 to Charles Wilkins, Jones writes; 'I trouble with you with a proof of my Hymn to *Camdeo*, and earnestly request you send it back with the freest corrections' See Jones, *Letters of Sir William Jones vol 2*, p625, and, in another letter dated May 11th 1765 Jones writes; 'Narayena waits on you, and Indra requests, that (when you have leisure from your inquiry at Chitpur and your studies at home) you supply this humble votary with his most poetical names, his parentage, attributes, and attendants' See Jones, *Letters of Sir William Jones vol 2*, p. 678

In Jones' *Hymns*, as Michael Franklin and Garland Cannon have pointed out, there is an attempt to garner intellectual sympathy for Indian culture within the metropole.²²⁸ To this end, Jones neglects to depict the standard sensationalistic Hindu practices such as Sati, infanticide and the spectacular rites of worship at the temple of *Jagannath* at Puri, Orissa, upon which eighteenth and early nineteenth-century British travel writers and novelists tended to focus. His hymns to Hindu goddesses such as: Bhavani, Seraswati, Durga and Lachsmi, rather than portraying enslaved women, feature independent and assertive female protagonists. This is most evident in a *Hymn to Durga* (1788).

In a *Hymn to Durga* Parvati, the daughter of Himilaya dutifully pays homage to the God Shiva up above. Shiva, who is watching 'half-smiling, half-severe' at the 'prostrate maid' only for Kama, god of love, and Vasant, the god of spring, to shoot the arrow of love into 'Siva's heart'.²²⁹ Shiva, outraged by this daring effrontery, turns Kama to ashes and curses Vasant that he may only visit the earth once a year. In the meantime, Parvati is counselled by her friends and family to stop pining after the God, Shiva. An old Brahmin later appears to her and asks Parvati why she pays homage to the 'rude and wild' Shiva, when she could worship more aesthetically beautiful Gods.²³⁰ The Brahmin calls Shiva: 'That three-eyed monster, hideous, fierce and untam'd'.²³¹ The nymph is so shocked by this blasphemy that she throws herself off the rocks as penance for the Brahmin's sin at which point she is caught by 'clouds of perfume' and borne by them to the old Brahmin, who lo and behold transforms into Lord Shiva.²³² The two duly make love and marry. At their

²²⁸ See Cannon, *The Life and Mind of Oriental Jones*, pp. 232-235 & Franklin, *Accessing India: Orientalism, anti-'Indianism'*, pp. 56-57

²²⁹ Jones, 'Hymn to Durga' in *The Works of William Jones vol. 6*, p. 325

²³⁰ Jones, 'Hymn to Durga' in *The Works of William Jones vol. 6*, p. 327

²³¹ Ibid.

²³² Jones, 'Hymn to Durga' in *The Works of William Jones vol. 6*, p. 328

wedding party the God Vrishapati reveals the coming together of Siva and Parvati was conceived of by Brahma so that Parvati would give birth to the warrior son Cumara who would crush the mighty tyrant Ta'raca who is causing havoc on earth. Moreover, he announces that Kama and Vasant were agents working under Indra to instigate the union. Shiva duly restores Kama to life and makes love to Parvati in order to give birth to the 'triumphant son' and 'Hell's future dread'.²³³

Jones' hymn is notable in that it does not delve into the more sensationalistic and darker sides of Durga's character such as her role as *Kali*, the goddess of death. Whilst early-nineteenth century British missionary tracts frequently featured sensationalistic descriptions of the human sacrifices made in *Kali's* honour and her ghoulish appearance,²³⁴ Jones makes no mention of that aspect of Durga. As Michael Franklin has convincingly argued, Jones does not dwell on these facets as they had the potential to discourage British metropolitan interest in Hindu culture that the oriental scholar was keen to promulgate.²³⁵ Thus Jones depicts Durga in a more positive light as the assertive and independent Parvati who worships Shiva, in spite of her friends and family, and the tamer of the wild ascetic Shiva.

The hymns of Jones, whilst attempting to garner intellectual sympathy towards Hinduism conversely allude to the eclipsed glory of Indian civilisation. Indeed, Kate Teltscher has argued that Jones' representations of Hindu Gods are linked to Saidian issues of power and knowledge. She argues that the correlation of Hindu deities with the Classical pantheon demonstrates the inferior status of the Hindu Gods. Moreover, she demonstrates how Jones depicted himself as the European scholar who could lay a greater claim to knowing Indian mythology than

²³³ Jones, 'Hymn to Durga' in *The Works of William Jones vol. 6*, p. 331

²³⁴ Rachel Fell McDermott & Jeffrey John Kripal, *Encountering Kali: In the Margins, at the Center, in the West* (London: University of California, 2003) p. 174

²³⁵ Franklin, *Accessing India: Orientalism, anti- "Indianism"*, p. 57

the Brahmin pandits.²³⁶ Indeed, after close inspection of Jones' hymns it can be seen that Teltscher's Saidian analysis holds water in certain respects. In a *Hymn to Durga* (1786), it is foretold that the tyrant Ta'raca will be crushed by the even mightier but yet to be born Cumara. In *Hymn to Indra* the mighty 'Cloud-riding mountain-piercing, thousand-eyed'²³⁷ God Indra feels his insignificance when he sees Krishna lift a mountain with one finger. Thus whilst Franklin and Cannon have correctly pointed out Jones' attempt to foster British sympathy with India they have neglected to demonstrate the way that Jones' depictions also present India's glory as fading and in the process of being eclipsed.

The bygone glory depicted in the hymns metonymically alludes to Hindu civilisation being eclipsed by British civilisation. This is most explicitly spelt out in *Hymn to Ganga* (1785) where a Brahmin in India's distant mythological past predicts British rule in India:

Nor frown, dread Goddess, on a peerless race
With lib'ral heart and martial grace,
Washed from colder isles remote:
As they preserve our law, and bid our terror cease,
So he their daring laws preserv'd in wealth, in joy, in peace...²³⁸

The Hindu sage creates the impression that India is a sedentary society that will welcome colonial intervention as long as the colonisers preserve pre-existing traditions. Good governance for an Indian, according to Jones, is about maintaining pre-existing cultural traditions. That Jones should adopt such a stance is unsurprising given that he was a Judge in the East India Company and thus at the very centre of administrative and legal processes within colonial India, responsible for codifying the *Laws of Manu*, an ancient body of Hindu laws, and the Mohammedan Law of

²³⁶ For Teltscher's arguments concerning how Jones deploys Hindu mythology to the ends of demonstrating western superiority, see Teltscher, *India Inscribed*, pp. 207-219

²³⁷ Jones, 'Hymn to Indra' in *The Works of William Jones vol. 6*, p. 342

²³⁸ Jones, 'Hymn to Ganga' in *The Works of William Jones vol. 6*, p. 392

successions.²³⁹ Yet such a portrayal of Indians desiring to keep their religious traditions intact was ideologically convenient to East India Company interests as it cultivated the idea of the Indian as an irrational traditionalist who was not really bothered about being economically or politically exploited.

The *Hymn to Ganga* is significant in that it is tied to justifying a present and a future of British colonial rule, and because the poem collapses linear notions of time. By back projecting onto India's distant mythological past, Jones validates British colonial rule by arguing that it was foretold and supported by a wise Hindu sage. The usage of Hindu mythology in Jones' poems for espousing the British colonial agenda is mirrored in Jones' scholarship where he uses Hindu creation myths in the *Puranas* to validate Noachic chronologies and the Biblical version of the past.²⁴⁰ By applying a Benjaminian mode of analysis, it can be argued that Jones' poetry and mythological scholarship blasts India's mythological past out of the continuum of time and posits onto it British colonial agendas and interests.²⁴¹ The appropriation and distortion of Hindu mythology is significant in that Jones' hymns and mythological scholarship is in itself reflective of the historian's problematic distinction between past, present and future. His study of India's past can only be shaped by present anxieties and a desire to shape its future in a particular fashion.

²³⁹ William Jones' compilation and codification of the Mohammedan Laws of succession and the Hindu *Laws of Manu* sought to enable British Judges to rule using indigenous laws when settling issues between either Muslims or Hindus. The codification was designed to take away the power from Brahmin pandits or Imam Interpreters, who British Judges previously relied upon. The codification of laws, though, had the effect of fixing laws which had been previously more loosely applied by indigenous arbitrators. See David Ibbetson, 'Sir William Jones as Comparative Lawyer' in *Sir William Jones 1746-1794: A Commemoration* [ed. by Alexander Murray] (Oxford: Oxford University, 1998) pp. 22-23

²⁴⁰ See William Jones, 'A Supplement to the Essay on Indian Chronology' in *The Works of Sir William Jones. In Six Volumes. Vol. 1* (London: 1799) *Eighteenth Century Collections Online*. Gale Group. <http://galenet.galegroup.com/servlet/ECCO>, pp. 355-370

²⁴¹ My reading of Jones' hymns and his appropriation of Hindu myth is here informed by Walter Benjamin's proposition that the act of history writing is unavoidably shaped by contemporary anxieties and concerns. See Walter Benjamin, 'Theses on the Philosophy of History' in Walter Benjamin, *Illuminations* [ed. By Hannah Arendt] [Trans. by Harry Zorn] (London: Pimlico, 1999) pp. 254-255

The focusing upon Hindu myths and deities, rather than on contemporary events or the social conditions of Indians living in a colonial context, is convenient for multiple reasons. Mythology is malleable and subject to revision, remoulding and reinterpretation in a way that, whilst possible, would prove more difficult for events in the present or India's recent past. The preoccupation with myth in the hymns, in addition, creates the impression that India is a land lost in its own mythology and the obfuscation of Brahminism. It is thus in desperate need of outside intervention in order to be awakened from its sleep. One can see this in a *Hymn to Lachsmi* (1788) where the poet sees it as Britain's role to wave 'the wand of empire' and magically awake the dreamy Hindus from the pernicious spell the Brahmins have cast.²⁴² There is, however, more to Jones' poetry than ideological issues of colonial control. The deployment of India and Indian motifs was also aesthetically motivated. Jones was aiming to fulfil artistic aims. His hymns, as Javed Majeed has convincingly argued, are preoccupied with creation.²⁴³ Thus in *A Hymn to Durga*, after Parvati and Shiva have coupled, they give birth to the warrior God Cumara, and in *A Hymn to Ganga* the river Ganga bursts out of the forehead of Shiva cascading down into the mountains. The preoccupation with creation in the hymns mirrors Jones' aspirations of giving birth to a new aesthetic. He uses Hindu deification and personification of natural forces as a convenient means to convey the power and sublimity of natural forces.²⁴⁴ Thus in a *Hymn to Ganga*, 'the giant bands/ Advance with venom darting

²⁴² Jones, 'Hymn to Lachsmi' in *The Works of William Jones vol. 6*, p. 365

²⁴³ Majeed, *Ungoverned Imaginings*, p. 38

²⁴⁴ Jones was clearly influenced by Edmund Burke's notions of the sublime and utilised it to good effect in the *Hindu Hymns*. Although, the relationship cooled after Burke's well publicised impeachment of Warren Hastings and Jones's appointment in India, the oriental scholar had established a closed friendship with Burke as early as 1773 and they regularly dined and corresponded with each other in England. It would seem likely that Jones conversed with Burke about the aesthetic usages of the sublime. See Garland Cannon, 'Sir William Jones and Edmund Burke' in *Modern Philology*, vol. 53 no. 3 (Feb., 1957) p. 166

hand/ Led by their own malignant rills'²⁴⁵ and in a *Hymn to Surya* (1786) Surya, the sun god, is a 'Fountain of living light/ that o'er all nature streams'.²⁴⁶

Notwithstanding Jones' attempts to create a new aesthetic, his hymns are indicative of an external power naturalising and assimilating the Hindu mythology, rather than one of cultural synthesis or immersion. He wished for Indian mythology to be bound within European conventions and forms. Jones conveys Indian mythology, motifs and imagery through poetic forms established by British literary notables such as Thomas Gray and John Milton.²⁴⁷ The Hindu images and mythology of the hymns are firmly rooted in British literary conventions. Jones deploys rhyming couplets and notions of sublime and draws together the varying strands of eastern motifs within the fabric of a British literary style. This was remarked upon in a contemporary review in the *Critical Review, or, Annals of Literature* which stated that 'the metaphors, and the descriptions are sufficiently Asiatic to be pleasing and new' and if 'they are not wholly Eastern, they are something better'.²⁴⁸ He goes on to write in reference to the *Hymn to Narayena* (1785): 'the following stanzas are found to be highly sublime, the effect, on a little reflection will appear to arise from the splendour of eastern mythology, joined to the majestic energy of Milton'.²⁴⁹ The deployment of an English Miltonian style is most evident in Jones' *Hymn to Surya*. In a *Hymn to Surya*, the 'Malignant Rahu', who resembles Satan in *Paradise Lost* (1667), has from the 'deepest shade'²⁵⁰ invaded the moon and dared to wear Surya's form, but is

²⁴⁵ Jones, 'Hymn to Ganga' in *The Works of William Jones vol. 6*, p. 388

²⁴⁶ Jones, 'Hymn to Surya' in *The Works of William Jones vol. 6*, p. 347

²⁴⁷ Cannon, *Life and Mind of Oriental Jones*, p. 237

²⁴⁸ See review of 'The Asiatic Miscellany, Consisting of Translations, Imitations, Fugitive Pieces, Original Productions, and Extracts from Curious Publications' in *Critical Review, or, Annals of Literature*, 63 (London: April 1787) (1787: April) p. 266

²⁴⁹ *Critical Review, or, Annals of Literature*, 63 (1787: April) p. 267

²⁵⁰ Jones, 'Hymn to Surya' in *The Works of William Jones vol. 6*, p. 349

eventually defeated by the Sun god. In the poem, Jones emphasises his own exteriority to Hindu tradition.

He came; and lisp[ing] our celestial tongue,
Though not from *Brahma* sprung,
Draws Orient knowledge from its fountains pure,
Through caves obstructed long, and paths too long obscure²⁵¹

The poem makes clear the inferior status of the worship of Surya to the ‘Unmov’d, unrival’d, undefil’d’²⁵² god of Christianity. Jones’ exteriority and the purported inferiority of Hinduism privileges him to recover a lost tradition that has been despoiled by Brahmin ritualism and dogma and allows him to be the white hero come to rescue Hindu culture from obscurity and oblivion. It is thus Jones, the British Christian scholar and poet, as opposed to the Brahmins that can truly harmonize, understand and bring order to India’s mythology.

A censoring of the sexuality of Hindu deities takes place in Jones’ hymns. In Jones’ *A Hymn to Durga*, he deliberately censors the sexual coupling of Shiva and Parvati as it may offend European sensibilities.²⁵³ Moreover, the God Kama is described merely as the god of love rather than of sexual energy. However, it is not simply a straightforward act of censoring, as literary critics such as Teltscher have suggested, since Jones’ drawing attention to the act of evading the sexual act in *Hymn to Durga* would quite possibly heighten the readers lurid expectations of what was not being described in the poem. Thus the poet’s strategy is canny in that he has it both ways – whilst purportedly not describing the erotic, he draws attention to the obscene potentialities of the poem. Indeed, as Franklin has argued, Jones’ hymns to independent and assertive Hindu Goddesses such as Lakshmi and Durga draw on ancient Brahmin concepts of *Prakriti* which emphasise the active aspects of female

²⁵¹ Jones, ‘Hymn to Surya’ in *The Works of William Jones vol. 6*, p. 353

²⁵² Jones, ‘Hymn to Surya’ in *The Works of William Jones vol. 6*, p. 354

²⁵³ Cannon, *The Life and Mind of Oriental Jones*, p. 304

sexuality.²⁵⁴ His exploration of *Prakriti* needs to be contextualised in relation to the growing scholarly interest in the late eighteenth century in the erotic ancient imagery of classical Greece and the sexual rites practised by pagan societies in the East and South America.²⁵⁵ ‘Primitive cultures’ thus provided the occident with a space to address such controversial themes.

Jones’ hymns, which were composed in India, demonstrate a transition from the earlier British oriental verse tales of Collins, Jones and Scott in terms of their culturally specific references to Indian geography, botany, music and mythology. They also intersect with issues of colonial rule, which were absent in the previous oriental poems, with the exception of *Serim: or An Artificial Famine*. There are, however, certain continuities between the oriental verse tales and Jones’ *Hindu Hymns*. Although Scott was distinct in that he aimed to depict an event in the recent past and portrayed present day Indians and their sufferings, Jones’ work both in India and in Britain, in a similar fashion to Collins’ verses, shows little interest in depicting present realities. They were essentially interested in using the orient as dreamscapes or pastoral idylls. They used India to express the unreal and as imaginative escapism from the ‘reality’ of western civilisation.

2.2 *The Global Configuration of the Subcontinent by British Romantic Authors*

Throughout the late eighteenth century and into the early nineteenth century, orientalism was making greater inroads into the British literary market. An

²⁵⁴ Franklin, *Accessing India: Orientalism, anti-“Indianism”*, p. 59

²⁵⁵ Majeed, *Ungoverned Imaginings*, p. 116

abbreviated version of the *Asiatic Miscellany*²⁵⁶ appeared in Britain as early as 1787 with successive versions of the *Asiatick Researches* being released in the 1790s.²⁵⁷ William Jones' dramatic verse tales were influential in terms of shaping British Romantic representations of India, and his translation of *Kalidasa* made a significant impact on intellectual and literary circles in Western Europe.²⁵⁸ Reader demand for more accultured depictions of the subcontinent in the early nineteenth century must be contextualised in relation to a growing military and missionary presence in India, oriental scholarship filtering its way into the British literary market and interest in the East being sparked by Napoleon's expedition in Egypt (1798-1799) and events in colonial India such as the Vellore mutiny (1806). The growth of critical periodical journals such as the *Quarterly Review*, *English Review* and *Edinburgh Review* formed the apparatus to make readers aware of previously esoteric scholarship and travelogues in a cheap and digestible fashion.²⁵⁹ Translations of oriental authors, travelogues and scholarship as well as the hymns and verse tales of William Jones provided material for Romantic authors who wished to produce sublime effects and reshape aestheticism in Britain. Robert Southey's *Thalaba the Destroyer* (1801) both demonstrated how oriental material could be utilised in poetry and that there was a definite market for such depictions.²⁶⁰ The scope for deploying the orient for

²⁵⁶ Michael J. Franklin, 'Introduction' in *The European Discovery of India: Key Indological Sources of Romanticism Selected with a New Introduction by Michael Franklin vol. 2: The Asiatic Miscellany* [ed. by Francis Gladwin] (London: Ganesa Publishing, 2001) p. viii

²⁵⁷ The first volume of the *Asiatic Researches* appeared in 1788 with successive editions coming out in the 1790s. The demand was so great that a pirated edition was brought out in England in 1798. See Singh, *Sir William Jones*, p. 244

²⁵⁸ Jones' translation of Kalidasa's *Sakuntala* was translated into German and received the plaudits of such German literary giants, Goethe and Herder. See Teltscher, *India Inscribed*, p. 213

²⁵⁹ Kenneth Curry, *Southey* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1975) [Curry, *Southey*] p. 16

²⁶⁰ Wallace Cable Brown, 'Robert Southey and English Interest in the Near East' in *ELH*, vol. 5, no. 3 (Sep, 1938) p. 218

Romantic literary material is also testified to by Lord Byron's famous advice to Thomas Moore to turn to the East.²⁶¹

The publisher Longman recognised the appeal of literary publications concerning India. The firm published memoirs of British men who had lived in India such as Robert Grenville Wallace's *Fifteen years in India: Or, Sketches of a Soldier's Life* (1822)²⁶² and capitalised on the potential demand for romantic representations of the orient by publishing Robert Southey's *The Curse of Kehama* (1810) and Thomas Moore's *Lalla Rookh* (1817). There was a deliberate packaging of the East for British consumption. Typographical and printing innovations were established to attract readers' eyes to the genre. This was so apparent that the *Quarterly Review* remarked upon the 'novel and beautiful manner'²⁶³ in which *The Curse of Kehama* was printed.

The centre of each verse is so placed as to preserve an equal breadth of margin on every side, and to give the page a kind of lapidary appearance, which is singularly striking and agreeable...²⁶⁴

Thomas Moore's *Lalla Rookh* was similarly printed in the latest printing technology and fashion - the quarto volume with gorgeous illustrations accompanying the text.²⁶⁵

The publisher was so convinced about the marketability and potential demand for Moore's oriental verse that he offered the poet an unprecedented three thousand pounds before Moore had even commenced writing the poem.²⁶⁶ Longman spared no efforts to ensure the success of *Lalla Rookh*. He delayed the publication of the poem for a year as the publisher wished to release the poem at the optimum time for

²⁶¹ Michael J. Franklin, 'Introduction' in *The European Discovery of India: Key Indological Sources of Romanticism vol. 3* (London: Ganesha Publishing, 2001) p. xxxxi

²⁶² See *Longman Archives* held in Reading University Special Collections.

²⁶³ *Quarterly Review* 5:9 (London: Feb. 1811) p. 61

²⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁶⁵ Andrew James Symington, *Thomas Moore: The Poet, his Life and Works* (London: Blackie & Son, 1880) p. 59

²⁶⁶ James Perry, acting as an agent on Thomas Moore's behalf, negotiated a three thousand pounds advance from Longman for Moore's intended *Lalla Rookh*. See Thomas Moore, *Memoirs, Journal and Correspondence of Thomas Moore* [ed. by Lord John Russell] (London: Longman, Green, Longman and Roberts, 1860) p. 118

potential sales.²⁶⁷ Moreover, a letter from the Longman publishing archive reveals that he actually bribed one Reverend Shepherd to write a favourable review for the *Quarterly Review*. In a letter to Reverend W. Shepherd dated November, 17 1817, Longman states:

As we are deeply interested in the success of Moore's *Lalla Rookh* & As we have some reason to think that were a good spirited review of the work sent through a pertinent channel to the Editor of the *Quarterly Rev.* It wd be adopted by him. We shall feel particularly obliged if you would write a pretty full review of the work, for we know no one so competent of the undertaking; and we shall be most happy to remunerate you liberally. You must have in mind the politics of the Review. Pray do not refuse us. Of course the matter must be entirely entre nous.²⁶⁸

Although there is no evidence that Reverend Shepherd's article made it into the *Quarterly Review*, Longman's bribe demonstrates the extent that the publisher was prepared to go in order to ensure a successful publication. Moreover, it conveys how important reviews were in terms of their potential to increase sales.²⁶⁹

Robert Southey and Thomas Moore had greater prominence and status in the literary world than the playwrights, novelists and other poets (with the possible exception of William Jones) that are investigated in this study. Southey was born in Bristol 1774, the oldest child of Thomas Southey, the owner of a linen draper shop. He was sent to Westminster school where he was given a classical education. Southey subsequently went to Oxford where he befriended Samuel Taylor Coleridge. The author's early literary career was a success; writing *Thalaba the Destroyer* (1801), numerous well-paid articles for periodical reviews and gaining a reputation for his

²⁶⁷ Moore, *Memoirs, Journal and Correspondence*, p. 147

²⁶⁸ See Longman Archives held at Reading Special Collections MS139 *Longman 1 vol. 4 100 no. 173*

²⁶⁹ Robert Southey similarly requested a friend Charles Bedford to 'Insert something' in a review about the morally elevating nature of the work to save Southey from the 'imputation of having written a poem of 5000 lines for the purpose of teaching Hindoo mythology'. The review subsequently appeared in the *Quarterly Review* with lines to this effect. See Robert Southey, *New Letters of Robert Southey* [ed. by Kenneth Curry] vol. 2 1792-1810 (London: Columbia University, 1965) p. 1

histories.²⁷⁰ In contrast, Thomas Moore was born in 1780 in Dublin to Roman Catholic parents. As the son of a grocer, he came from a relatively undistinguished background. From childhood, however, he demonstrated a talent for lyric verse and music. After completing his studies he achieved literary fame with *Irish Melodies* (1807) and was thrust into the London fashionable and intellectual circles, befriending Lord Byron and Edmund Burke.²⁷¹

At the time of writing their respective narratives, Robert Southey, Thomas Moore, and Sydney Owenson,²⁷² the author of *The Missionary*, were well established romantic authors at the centre of the London literary scene. Southey and Moore had high aesthetic and literary ambitions for their work. The poet, after reading Bernard Picart's *Ceremonies et Costumes Religieuses des tous les peuples du Monde* (1723-1743) at the age of fifteen, had conceived of no less worthy an aim than exhibiting the world's most remarkable mythology.²⁷³ *The Curse of Kehama* was an effort to transcribe Hindu mythology with a 'story consistent upon the superstition which it is built'.²⁷⁴ Southey was only too aware of the novelty and defamiliarising nature of his poem, writing in a letter to John Murray 11, dated May 26th 1810, about his construction of *The Curse of Kehama*.

I have the disadvantages of a mythology known only to a few – a story though perfectly in keeping with the mythology, more wild and extravagant has have never been attempted in prose or or rhymes – & a mode of versification more sure to offend because it is original...²⁷⁵

²⁷⁰ For an account of Robert Southey's early life and literary career, see Curry, *Southey*, pp. 4-23, p. 126 & p. 130

²⁷¹ For an account of Thomas Moore's childhood, university life and first success, see; Symington, *Thomas Moore*, pp. 9-18. Lord Byron had made a dedication to Thomas Moore in his poem *Corsair* (1814). See Moore, *Memoirs, Journal and Correspondence of Thomas Moore*, p. 111

²⁷² Sydney Owenson's life as an author will be discussed at greater length in chapter 4.

²⁷³ Lynda Pratt, "'Where... Success [is] Certain?' Southey the Literary East Indiaman'" in *Romantic Representations of India* [ed. by Michael J. Franklin] (London: Routledge, 2006) p. 131

²⁷⁴ Robert Southey, *The Curse of Kehama* (London: Cassell & Company Ltd, 1888) p. 9

²⁷⁵ Letter to John Murray the second dated May 26th 1810 in *JMLB/NLS MS. 42550 (449B)*

Moore had high aspirations for *Lalla Rookh*, hoping that it would ‘place’ him ‘above the vulgar herd of wordlings and critics’.²⁷⁶ Sydney Owenson’s incorporation of poetic motifs such as the sublime and her retreat into seventeenth-century India make her distinct from the other British novelists writing about India at the time.²⁷⁷ The setting of *The Missionary* in India at the time of Aurungzeb must be compared with Moore’s later text *Lalla Rookh* which is also set during the reign of the infamous Mughal emperor. *Lalla Rookh* also allegorises one of the major preoccupations of Owenson’s text – Ireland’s domination by England. Whilst there is no definitive evidence that Moore read the novel, his correspondence documents an awareness that it existed.²⁷⁸ It would be a safe assumption, that, by the time of completing *Lalla Rookh* he would have been familiar with or at least been aware of its content, given the level of corollary of themes and settings in *Lalla Rookh* and *The Missionary*.

The approach of Southey, Moore and Owenson to the construction of their texts was similar. They all derived their information about the orient or India from extensive research of a broad and cosmopolitan range of travelogues, translations of oriental texts, orientalist scholarship and missionary material in Britain. Both Moore and Southey claimed to know the orient from Britain to an extent that meant actually travelling there would be superfluous.²⁷⁹ Such an assertion was by no

²⁷⁶ Moore expresses this desire in a letter to his friend Miss Godfrey on September 11, 1811. See Moore, *Memoirs, Journal and Correspondence*, p. 82

²⁷⁷ *The Missionary* is replete with sublime descriptions of the Indian landscape. Kashmir is described as a land where ‘Purple mists hung upon the lustre of its enchanting scenes’ and the ‘mountains of Thibet’ are portrayed, ‘rising like a magnificent amphitheatre to the east’. See Sydney Owenson, *The Missionary: An Indian Tale* (London: Broadview, 2002) pp. 104 & p107. The Romantic poet Percy Shelley was an admirer of the novel and encouraged his friends to read it. See Julia M. Wright, ‘Introduction’ in Owenson, *The Missionary*, p. 42

²⁷⁸ In a letter to his mother in May 1811 Moore shows himself to be aware of the existence of Owenson’s novel. See Moore, *Memoirs, Journal and Correspondence*, p. 79

²⁷⁹ Moore claims in the preface to *Lalla Rookh*; ‘I took the whole range of all such oriental reading as was accessible to me; and became, for the time, indeed more conversant with all relating to that distant region, than I have ever been with scenery, productions, or modes of life of any of those countries lying most within me’. See Thomas Moore, *Lalla Rookh an Oriental Romance* (London: Longman, Brown, Green and Longman, 1854) pxi. Interestingly, both Robert Southey and Thomas Moore had considered a posting in India. Thomas Moore had expectations of a position in India when Lord Moira was

means untypical for this period. James Mill, in *The History of British India* (1817), argued that he obtained a truer picture of the subcontinent from studying texts in Britain than if he actually lived there as he could view the country more objectively.²⁸⁰ The bold assertion of Mill, Southey and Moore reflects a confidence in the profusion of oriental materials that were available for the first time in British libraries. This claim to knowing had profound implications for the content of the British romantic texts. *The Curse of Kehama*, *The Missionary* and *Lalla Rookh*, in a similar fashion to Jones' *Hindu Hymns*, are thus filled with attempts to taxonomise the distinct wildlife, botany and landscape. Yet, unlike William Jones, the authors made no great effort to use culturally specific nomenclature for their Indian protagonists.

The critical response to the *The Curse of Kehama*, *The Missionary* and *Lalla Rookh* was varied. Contemporary reviews almost universally damned *The Curse of Kehama* for its assault to British aesthetic standards. *The Monthly Review* argued; 'If this poem were to be tolerated, all things after it may demand impunity, and it will be vain to contend for any established rule of poetry'.²⁸¹ Reviews criticised Southey for not sufficiently distancing himself from his Hindu subject matter and for adopting Hindu mythology as the framework of his narrative.²⁸² The reviews of *Lalla Rookh* and *The Missionary*, whilst being generally more favourable, similarly criticised the poem for being self indulgent and affected. One reviewer stated that whilst: 'Miss Owenson has displayed great force of expression and a strong glow of rich colouring'

appointed as Governor General of India, but never received the opportunity. See Moore, *Memoirs, Journal and Correspondence*, p. 96. Robert Southey actually turned down a position in the bar in India after deciding that he did not want to be removed from his family and friends in Britain. See Robert Southey, *New Letters of Robert Southey vol. 1 1792-1810* [ed. by Kenneth Curry] (London: Columbia University, 1965) p. 229

²⁸⁰ James Mill, *The History of British India vol. 1* (London: Routledge/Thoemmes, 1997) pp. xx-xxvii

²⁸¹ *Monthly Review* 65 (London: May 1811) p. 56

²⁸² A reviewer for the *Quarterly Review* states: 'We have been scarcely able to find a passage, in which we are reminded that the bard is an European. The ornaments, the landscape, the animals, the similies, the sentiments are oriental' and criticises Southey for adopting 'the vast and clumsy fabric of Hindu mythology'. See *Quarterly Review* 5:9 (London: Feb. 1811) p. 59

her novel has ‘numerous conceits’, ‘affected phraseology’ and ‘luxuriant redundancies.’²⁸³ The *Edinburgh Review or, Critical Journal* (1817: Nov.), when commenting upon *Lalla Rookh*, writes that Moore: ‘is too lavish of his gems and sweets’,²⁸⁴ and the *British Review and London Critical Journal* states that the surfeit of ‘delicious scenery and beautiful forms’ has a ‘wearing’ effect upon the reader.²⁸⁵ Moreover, the reviewer made a more general attack on the oriental verse tale for providing a space where authors could engage in a form of eroticism and obscenity that would not be tolerated if the narrative were set in Britain. He warns, in addition, of the capacity of the tales to potentially emasculate the British character.²⁸⁶ At the heart of the criticism seems to be an attack on the excessiveness, self-indulgence and overly escapist quality of the various Romantic texts.

If one takes Moore’s poem *Lalla Rookh* as a case study it can be seen that elements of excess, escapism and idealisation of oriental locales are an inherent part of the narrative. The text is more self-aware than previous oriental tales. Moore deploys the meta-fictional device of having Fadladeen, the pompous critic, in the frame tale pre-empting many of the subsequent criticisms of *Lalla Rookh* that were made in periodical reviews, condemning the tales as ‘frivolous’ and for their ‘profusion of flowers and birds’.²⁸⁷ Moore’s narrative, whilst not directly disputing the specific points of criticism of the tales, satirises and debunks critics through the portrayal of Fadladeen. The pompous self-appointed critic Fadladeen is shown to be disingenuous and swayed by social rank, when upon finding that the poet is the King of Bucharia, he quickly changes his mind about the poems and subsequently lauds the King as a great poet. In addition, whilst the pompous Fadladeen is a severe critic of

²⁸³ *Critical Review, or, Annals of Literature*, 23:2 (London: June 1811) p. 195

²⁸⁴ *Edinburgh Review, or Critical Journal*, 29:57 (Edinburgh: Nov. 1817) p. 3

²⁸⁵ *British Review, and London Critical Journal*, 10:19 (London: Aug. 1817) p. 33

²⁸⁶ *British Review, and London Critical Journal*, 10:19 (London: Aug. 1817) p. 54

²⁸⁷ Moore, *Lalla Rookh*, p. 279

the work, the sincere Princess and ladies in waiting are admirers of Feramorz's poems and listen attentively. Moore's narrative thus preferences the admiration of the reading public over the critic, who is swayed by his own self-importance and the social rank of the author being reviewed. It privileges emotional engagement with the text, as typified by Lalla Rookh's reaction to the tales, over an intellectual response.

Lalla Rookh narrates the journey of Aurangzeb's daughter the beautiful princess Lalla Rookh, who has been sent off to Kashmir from Delhi by her father to marry the young king of Bucharia. She is accompanied on her journey with attendants, maids, dancing girls and Fadladeen – the Chamberlain of the Harem. Her father has also enlisted a 'young poet of Cashmere' Feramorz, who is as graceful as that 'idol of women, Krishna' to entertain the party during their trek.²⁸⁸ On their trip the group passes through Lahore, the Ganges, the 'rich valley of Nasoum and Abdaul',²⁸⁹ finally arriving in Kashmir. To relieve the boredom along the way Feramorz tells the party a series of tales: 'The Veiled Prophet of Khorassan', 'The Fire Worshippers', 'The Paradise of Peri' and 'The Light of the Haram'. The young princess is so overawed by the poems and the poet that she falls in love. Much to her pleasant surprise it is revealed at the wedding, held in the Kashmirian valley, that the King of Bucharia and Feramorz are one and the same, with the young noble having adopted the guise of a story teller in order to become acquainted with his future bride. The tale ends on an idyllic note with Feramorz and Lalla Rookh living happily ever after.

Thomas Moore's narrative was a return to the format of Antoine Galland's *Arabian Nights* in its deployment of a frame tale, where a storyteller tells a series of stories to the listener who subsequently falls in love with the storyteller.

²⁸⁸ Moore, *Lalla Rookh*, p. 7

²⁸⁹ Moore, *Lalla Rookh*, p. 241

Moreover, whilst the frame tale is set in India, the tales themselves span different regions of the Middle East and the subcontinent. Yet unlike Galland's text, where different regions of Asia are only differentiated by generic concept metaphors, *Lalla Rookh* attempts to blend and harmonise differing culturally specific images. Though the narrative is held together by the totalising framework of Islam - with the the frame tale and 'The Light of the Haram' set in Moghul India, and 'The Fire Worshippers' and 'The Veiled Prophet of Korassan' both set in Persia under Islamic rule - throughout the narrative, culturally specific practices and images of Hinduism and Zoroastrianism are incorporated. Moreover, the text is replete with descriptions that weave together regionally specific oriental motifs. Hence, Azim enters Mokanna's Persian palace grounds in 'The Veiled Prophet of Khorassan' and sees 'mats of Cairo', 'bowers of Tibet', 'MECCA's blue sacred pigeon' and 'the thrush of Indostan'.²⁹⁰ Similarly, in the 'The Light of the Haram' the prince Jehanghir has 'Maids from the west, with sun bright hair, / And from the Garden of the NILE / Delicate as the roses there, / Daughters from Cyprus' rocks'.²⁹¹

In *Lalla Rookh* and *The Missionary*, Kashmir is presented as a pre-lapsarian land that is ideal for the fruition of romantic love. In Owenson's text, Kashmir is described as presenting 'to the wondering eye scenes of picturesque and glowing beauty'²⁹² and in *Lalla Rookh* the land is portrayed as having 'fountains as clear / As the love-lighted eyes that hang over their wave'.²⁹³ In both narratives, Kashmir is the locale where the central protagonists experience romantic love. Luxima and Hilarion, in *The Missionary*, fall deeply in love with each other, Jehanghir rekindles his affection for Nourmahal in 'The Light of the Haram' and

²⁹⁰ Moore, *Lalla Rookh*, p. 47, p. 48

²⁹¹ Moore, *Lalla Rookh*, p. 268. Capitals are in the original text.

²⁹² Owenson, *The Missionary*, p. 105

²⁹³ Moore, *Lalla Rookh*, p. 245

Lalla Rookh marries her beloved Feramorz in the frame tale. Thus Kashmir opens up a space to project idealised forms of beauty, love and eroticism. That both authors should portray Kashmir in this light is understandable given that they relied heavily on Bernier's idealistic depiction of the land as a place of unprecedented natural beauty.²⁹⁴

Southey, in contrast to Moore and Owenson, did not portray India sympathetically. Nor was he concerned with blending oriental motifs and religions together. He instead focuses upon Hindu mythology, portraying it as monstrous and grotesque. The author's own attitude towards Hinduism is reflected in a letter in 1802 to John Rickman where he writes of the necessity of 'government sanction' to grant the right to Baptist missions to stamp out Hinduism and replace it with Christianity. Southey further argues that; 'The Hindoo system is the worst ever devised for cramping human intellect' and that he considers it 'desirable' to 'destroy it'.²⁹⁵ Southey's derisory stance that Hinduism was inherently grotesque can be seen in utilitarian and missionary discourses at the time, which argued that Hinduism's structures were holding back civilisation in India and consequently needed to be eradicated. The author's negative stance had implications for the plot and substance of *The Curse of Kehama*.

In *The Curse of Kehama*, Kehama, the evil Rajah, has gained dominion over the world with ambitions of conquering heaven, the underworld and drinking from the cup of immortality. The poem begins with the funeral of the Rajah's son, the wicked Arvalan, who was slain by the peasant Ladurlad after he attempted to rape his chaste daughter Kailyal. At the ceremony, Arvalan's ghost appears to his grief-stricken father demanding revenge against Kailyal and Ladurlad. Kehama duly grants

²⁹⁴ Drew, *India and the Romantic Imagination*, pp. 240-241 & pp. 262-263

²⁹⁵ Southey, *New Letters of Robert Southey vol. 1*, p. 291

his son's wishes and curses Ladurlad that he has to live the rest of his life in 'pain',²⁹⁶ adding that whilst the old man will be protected from injury by animals and weapons he will be permanently dislocated from the natural world - never being able to come into contact with the natural elements.

A despondent Ladurlad finds some comfort after rescuing his daughter Kailyal from a lake, after a struggle with Kehama's soldiers. The old man, however, 'selfish in misery', flees his daughter while she is asleep, leaving her at the mercy of the advances of Arvalan's ghost.²⁹⁷ The desperate maid runs for sanctuary to a nearby temple of the elephant God Pollier. When the lust-crazed Arvalan tries to seize the young maid in the temple, the statue of the God comes to life and throws the demon over the forest.

Later on, a hovering Glendover, Eeerenie, sees the maid lying motionless in the forest. Eeerenie flies off with her and takes the young maid to the bower of bliss and subsequently reunites her with Ladurlad. Kehama, meanwhile, has gained greater powers and consequently embarks with his evil genii hordes to conquer heaven. Ladurlad and Kailyal upon hearing of Kehama's immanent attack on heaven, retreat from their hideout to a brook. Unfortunately though, a band of *Yogis* who are looking for a beautiful young virgin to be sacrificed as a bride of Jagannath, come across Kailyal and snatch her away.

Kailyal is subsequently 'uprer'd' on the twenty-wheeled bridal car as thousands of Brahmins drag it through the city while 'self devoted' fanatics plunge themselves underneath the chariot as it proceeds through the city.²⁹⁸ In the midst of the procession Arvalan tries to seize Kailyal, only for Eeerenie to come to her rescue. But this time Arvalan's evil apprentice, Lorrinite, summons up a host of demons to

²⁹⁶ Robert Southey, *The Curse of Kehama* (London: Cassell & Company Ltd, 1888) p. 23

²⁹⁷ Southey *The Curse of Kehama*, p. 39

²⁹⁸ Southey *The Curse of Kehama*, pp. 109-110

subdue the Glendover. Eeerenie is banished to the Kingdom of Sepulchres which lies at the bottom of the ocean. At the moment that Arvalan is left alone with Kailyal and is ready to rape the maid, she sets the pagoda on fire. Ladurlad arrives on the scene in the nick of time to save Kailyal from being burnt.

The old man, in an effort to rescue Eeerenie, sets off to the Kingdom of Sepulchres beneath the sea. He subsequently finds Eeerenie chained at the bottom of the sea and after battling with the half-reptilian and half-human sea monster that guards the Glendover, manages to free Eeerenie. However, whilst Kailyal is waiting for her father, Arvalan, with Lorrinite's help, adopts the form of Ladurlad in order to trick the young maid. This time it is the wandering king of Padalon, Baly, who comes to the aid of the damsel in distress, seizing hold of Arvalan and Lorrinite and plunging them both into the depths of hell. The mighty tyrant Kehama, who has just conquered heaven, hears the screams and comes thundering down into the kingdom of Padalon. Upon seeing the beautiful Kailyal, Kehama becomes besotted with the maid and promises her that she will be the queen of earth and drink the cup of immortality with him if she agrees to be his bride. Both Kailyal and Ladurlad, who has just arrived on the scene, contemptuously reject the offer. Kehama, in a fit of rage, curses her with leprosy and proceeds on his way to attempt to conquer the underworld of Yamen.

Eeerenie, Kailyal and Ladurlad follow Kehama down to the kingdom of Yamen. Kehama duly seizes the throne of the King of Yamen, casting him aside, and drinks from the cup of Amreeta. The cup, however, instead of making him immortal and all-powerful, transforms him into a statue and he thus joins the three other lifeless statues of demons, who for daring to take on heaven have been punished by Shiva to bear the weight of the world on their shoulders for eternity. Kailyal, on the other hand, upon drinking from the cup is turned into an immortal spirit wedded to

Eererie in paradise. The poem concludes with Ladurlad falling into a deep rest to awake in paradise with his daughter.

Javed Majeed has pointed out that the narrative is replete with images of weights suppressing individuals, lifeless statues coming to life, reanimated corpses and plumbing depths or piercing vaults. Majeed has convincingly argued that the profusion of such tropes within the text reflects the poet's attempts to reanimate and pierce the vaults of a buried and lifeless Hindu mythology. In addition, they convey Hindu mythology as a stagnant force that suppresses the creativities and individual energies of the Indian people.²⁹⁹ Indeed, the central protagonists, Ladurlad and Kailyal, desperately struggle to find a haven in which to live in peace away from the burden of Hindu mythology and Kehama's assaults. At the heart of the text is the universalist belief in reason, personified in Ladurlad and Kailyal, who resist the tyranny of Kehama and 'barbarous' Hindu practices such as *Jagannath*.

Whilst William Jones deliberately evaded describing Sati and the alleged sacrificial rites to god Jagannath in *Hindu Hymns*, Southey focuses upon such practices and sensationalises them within the narrative to convey the inherent grotesqueness and barbarity of the religion. Rather than portraying the Sati victim as the silent and dignified woman, as Eyles Irwin's eighteenth-century poem *Bedukah; or the Self Devoted* depicted, Southey portrays Azla, Arvalan's wife, being burnt with an expression on her 'face' of 'supplication and agony'.³⁰⁰ Moreover, although Southey deploys the sublime, as does Jones, it is to instil horror within the British reader, rather than awe and wonder. He thus describes the thousands of Hindu fanatics throwing themselves under the twenty-wheeled chariot upon which Kailyal is

²⁹⁹ Majeed, *Ungoverned Imaginings*, p. 79

³⁰⁰ Southey, *The Curse of Kehama*, p. 16

mounted next to an image of the lord Jagannath.³⁰¹ The movement away from viewing the Sati as a heroic act, where the widow as agency, to a grotesque one, in which the woman is a silent passive victim, needs to be related to the transition from orientalist discourses of the eighteenth century, which aspired to intellectual sympathy towards Hinduism, to the missionary and utilitarian discourses of the early nineteenth century, which stressed the inherent backwardness and barbarity of the religion.³⁰² The denigration of Sati and its correlation with Brahminism was discursively useful for the East India Company as it provided the moral justification for intervention in Brahmin law.³⁰³

It would be reductive to view *The Curse of Kehama* as simply a denigration of Hindu mythology and a call for its replacement with Christianity, as it would not correlate the text to the author's broader concerns and interests, and to the Lake poets' denigration of Napoleon. Southey, as a reviewer for the *English Review* and the *Quarterly Review*, reviewed the latest travelogues, histories, scholarly and missionary tracts concerning Europe, South America, Central America, Asia, the West Indies and Africa.³⁰⁴ He also took a keen interest in history, delivering lectures³⁰⁵ and writing histories of countries. Southey, in the midst of writing *The*

³⁰¹ Southey has clearly sensationalised the ceremony in order to garner a horrified emotive response from his readers. Women were not usually recorded to have been placed on the chariot at the annual *Rath Yatra* festival at the Jagannath temple in Puri, Orissa. Moreover, as Crispin Bates has argued, that whilst many British accounts alleged that Indian devotees sacrificed themselves by throwing themselves under the wheels of chariot-driven idols no real substantive evidence or first hand witnesses supported such allegations. Bates argues that the evidence that was made to support voluntary human sacrifice was as tenuous as that given to support the existence in central Indian of the so-called Thuggee bandits, who supposedly strangled travellers in propitiation to the goddess Kali and the allegations of human sacrifice committed by the Hill tribes in Bastar, later in the nineteenth century. See Crispin Bates, 'Human Sacrifice in Colonial Central India: Myth, Agency, and Representation' in *Beyond Representation: Colonial and Postcolonial Constructions on Indian Identity* [ed. by Crispin Bates] (New Delhi: Oxford University, 2006) pp. 19-54

³⁰² Andrea Major, *Pious Flames: European Encounters with Sati 1500-1830* (Oxford: Oxford University, 2006) pp. 125-129

³⁰³ Major, *Pious Flames*, p. 185

³⁰⁴ Curry, *Southey*, pp. 130-134

³⁰⁵ Both Samuel Taylor Coleridge and Robert Southey delivered lectures in History at Bristol. See Curry, *Southey*, p. 276

Curse of Kehama, between 1801-1810, was plugged into the latest news and information available in the metropole about global events and empire, and aware of the varying histories of nations across the globe. He first began considering writing *The Curse of Kehama* between the period 1800-1, while researching for his intended *History of Portugal* and coming across material about Portugal's colonisation of India.³⁰⁶ The importance of this lies in the fact that Southey arrived at an interest in the subcontinent circuitously rather than directly. Its construction from the beginning was posited and layered with European intercontinental concerns and a comparative study of European colonialisms. It would also seem reasonable to assume that his denigration of Hinduism was linked to an antagonism to Catholicism as practised in Spain and Portugal.³⁰⁷ Moreover, when Southey was to take up writing the text again between the years 1806-1810, after setting aside the project for several years, the narrative absorbed contemporary British anxieties about the rise and dominance of Napoleon in Europe. In this respect *The Curse of the Kehama* needs to be situated alongside attempts by the Lake Romantic poets, Wordsworth and Coleridge, to mythologise history in an effort to denigrate Napoleon.³⁰⁸

The Curse of Kehama was written during a period where Napoleon was threatening to be the dominant force in Europe, having conquered vast areas of Europe and seeking to undermine Britain's economic dominance in the continent. Spain was under French rule, with Spanish guerrilla forces attempting to wage a war of resistance against Napoleon's army of invasion. Although Romantic poets such as

³⁰⁶ Pratt, "Where... Success [is] Certain?" *Southey the Literary East Indiaman*", p. 139

³⁰⁷ From his travels in Portugal and his research of Spain and Portugal, Southey had gained a distrust of the Roman Catholic Church. See Curry, *Southey*, p33. Southey was against Catholic emancipation in Britain and Ireland. He argued that Catholicism was intolerant and dogmatic and could not be reconciled with rational Protestantism. See Majeed, *Ungoverned Imaginings*, p. 65. Southey's denigration of the ritualism and barbaric practices thus also indirectly alluded to Catholicism. The correlation between Catholicism and Hinduism was a prevalent literary trope in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century. This will be explored in greater detail in chapter 4 of this thesis.

³⁰⁸ Simon Bainbridge, *Napoleon and English Romanticism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1993) p. 14

Southey, Wordsworth and Coleridge were initially sympathetic towards Napoleon during his expedition to Egypt, they had become progressively more hostile as Napoleon established a coup in France and made subsequent invasions into Italy, Austria, Prussia and Spain.³⁰⁹ In 1807, the Portuguese royal family fled to the colony of Brazil as Napoleon marched on Lisbon.³¹⁰ Following the *Convention of Cintra* (1808), whereby Britain signed a treaty allowing French forces to retreat from Portugal on British ships with loot obtained from their conquest, William Wordsworth had written well-publicised attacks on Napoleon such as *The Convention of Cintra* (1808) and *Sonnets dedication to National Independence and Liberty* (1802).³¹¹ In such attacks Wordsworth deployed the Miltonic device of Satanising Napoleon. Southey, a close confidante of Wordsworth and someone who considered himself an expert of Spanish and Portuguese matters, followed suit.³¹² The text transcribes a pro-Spanish and anti-Napoleonic agenda into an oriental epic romance. Kehama is described in the text as ‘master of mankind’³¹³ and ‘Tyrant of Earth’³¹⁴ who, in a similar fashion to Satan in *Paradise Lost*, dares to take on heaven. The fact that he is defeated like other tyrants before him, though, has the effect of reducing the conflict with Napoleon to a predetermined battle between good and evil, with good destined to prevail. The reduction of the complication of history to fable must be located within a broader attempt by the Romantic writers to mythologize history in order to strike the

³⁰⁹ For a discussion of the Lake poets’ response to Napoleon, see Bainbridge, *Napoleon and English Romanticism*, pp. 20-22 & p. 97

³¹⁰ Wright, *Introduction to the Missionary*, p. 20

³¹¹ Bainbridge, *Napoleon and English Romanticism*, p. 111

³¹² Robert Southey had an uncle, Reverend Hill, who was a British Chaplain in Portugal. He subsequently visited his uncle and gained knowledge of Spain and Portugal through his travels and learnt Spanish and Portuguese. At the time of writing *The Curse of Kehama*, he had researched extensively on Portugal, Spain and the Portuguese colony, Brazil, for intended histories of these locales and was considered as a European authority upon these matters. See Curry, *Southey*, pp. 31-41

³¹³ Southey, *The Curse of Kehama*, p. 14

³¹⁴ Southey, *The Curse of Kehama*, p. 45

imagination of the reader and to make him or her have a stronger engagement with events of the recent past.

Thomas Moore wrote *Lalla Rookh* in the midst of the demise of Napoleon, 1812-16. During this period, Napoleon was in decline following a catastrophic campaign in Russia (1812). The campaign resulted in catastrophic losses and to a weakening of the French army. The sixth coalition finally defeated his forces in 1814 forcing him to abdicate and go into exile on Elba, and appointed Louis XVIII as King of France in his place. Napoleon, however, made a brief comeback, escaping from Elba, and drawing together an army. In a letter to lady Donegal on March 27, 1815, Moore writes how Napoleon approached an army sent by Louis XVIII to face his forces, convincing them to stand down and join his cause.

If ever a tyrant deserved to be worshipped, it is he:
Milton's Satan is nothing to him for portentous
magnificence – for sublimity of mischief! If that account
in the papers be true, of his driving down in his carriage
like lightning toward the royal army embattled against
him, bare-headed, vanguarded, it is all the confidence of
irresistibility – it is a fact far sublimer than any fiction
has ever invented ...³¹⁵

Napoleon's return to glory was, however, short lived when, after a brief restoration to Emperor, he was finally defeated at Waterloo, and exiled to the island of St. Helena, where he was to remain until his death.³¹⁶

Despite Bonaparte's defeat, Napoleon's perceived satanic qualities, his 'portentous magnificence' and 'sublimity', were drawn upon in Moore's portrayal of

³¹⁵ Letter to Lady Donegal March 27, 1815 in Moore, *Memoirs, Journal and Correspondence of Thomas Moore*, p. 129

³¹⁶ For a discussion of Napoleon's disastrous campaign in Russia, see Vincent Cronin, *Napoleon* (London: Fontana Paperbacks, 1990) pp. 320-351. For an account of his abdication and exile on Elba, see Cronin, *Napoleon*, pp. 352-373. For more on his escape from Elba and his drawing together of an army, and his subsequent defeat at Waterloo, see Cronin, *Napoleon*, pp. 389-402

the imposter prophet in the ‘Veiled Prophet of Khorassan’.³¹⁷ Mokanna rallies young idealistic followers to his cause using the slogan, ‘freedom to the world’ and inspires them through his sublime speeches. Thus like Napoleon he presents himself to be the leader of a revolution bringing in a new age. Moreover, Mokanna’s ability to rouse his army, which is composed of dying wretches, even though he is convinced of defeat, is perhaps reminiscent of Napoleon’s ill fated campaigns in Russia and his final battle at Waterloo. Yet, as in Southey’s text, the Napoleonic figure is demonised. Behind his rhetoric and veil is nothing more than a deformed power driven maniac. The last throes of battle against the Caliph are motivated by a misanthropic desire to cause destruction and chaos, rather than due to innate courage.

In Southey’s and Moore’s respective portrayals of Kehama and Mokanna, Napoleon becomes a figure of the imagination taking on Satanic dimensions. He is caricatured as a misanthropic monster. Yet, simultaneously he is a tyrant whose defeat is predetermined and foretold. Moore, however, along with Sydney Owenson, differs from Southey in his use of eastern locales to critique Ireland’s relationship with England.

Ireland and the East

In 1798, there had been a major uprising in Ireland against British colonial rule which was forcefully put down by British forces. England subsequently

³¹⁷ Moore’s depiction of Mokanna, as well as drawing on the figure of Napoleon, also relied heavily upon a trope within British discourse of representing Muhammad as a false prophet and an imposter, that had flourished since the fourteenth century and was recirculated in the eighteenth century by the scholars Voltaire and George Sale, the man who first translated *The Quaran* into English. Moreover, in response to conflicts with Turkey in the sixteenth century, Turkey had been stereotyped as the home of absolute despotism, which in turn helped negatively shape the west’s perception of Islam. See Mohammed Sharafuddin, *Islam and Romantic Orientalism Literary Encounters with the Orient* (London: I. B. Tauris, 1994) pp. xv-xxix

established the *Act of Union*, which abolished the Irish parliament and put the country under the direct control of England.³¹⁸ Irish Catholics were excluded from positions of economic and political power within the state.³¹⁹ Both Owenson and Moore were Irish and had links and sympathies with the Irish Nationalist cause. Owenson's father, the Irish Catholic actor Robert Owenson, was friends with many prominent Irish nationalists. The young Sydney Owenson would have been introduced to many of them growing up.³²⁰ Moore, the son of two Irish Catholic parents, had close associations with the nationalist cause. He was friends with prominent members of the United Irishmen and had written - as a student at Trinity College, Dublin, between 1797-1798 - two articles for a prominent Irish nationalist newspaper in favour of Irish independence.³²¹ As celebrated authors in London, both would have negotiated between and performed a marginal Irish identity and a metropolitan one at different occasions. They would have been both further aware of a tradition in Irish scholarship, which speculated about the ancient Phoenician colonialism of Ireland and the links between Scythian and the Celtic language. The tradition also sought to make parallels between the round towers in Ireland and ancient structures in the Orient.³²² Such theories about the eastern origins of Ireland were drawn upon in Irish nationalist discourses as it was a convenient means of challenging Anglo-centricism and

³¹⁸ Wright, *Introduction to the Missionary*, p. 20

³¹⁹ Joseph Lennon, *Irish Orientalism: A Literary and Intellectual History* (New York: Syracuse University, 2004) p. 49

³²⁰ Wright, *Introduction to the Missionary*, p. 11

³²¹ Majeed, *Ungoverned Imaginings*, p. 88

³²² In the eighteenth-century antiquarian scholars such as Charles Vallancey, Whitley Boswell and Roderick O'Flaherty gave support to age-old Irish origin legends which espoused the eastern origins of Irish civilisation. Eighteenth-century antiquarian scholars, who argued that the Phoenicians and Scytho-Celts had colonised Ireland, conducted philological researches, which stressed the affinity of the Irish language with oriental languages such as Sanskrit, Hindustani and Egyptian. Moreover, they emphasized the similarity between the Irish round towers and the ancient Egyptian pyramids, to support the theory that the Irish round towers were of Eastern origin. Whilst much of the antiquarian speculation in the nineteenth century was disproved, the eastern origins of Ireland was a trope that was drawn upon by Irish literary and nationalist discourses to challenge Anglo-centricism and to allegorise Ireland's struggle against England. For a fuller discussion of these issues, see Majeed, *Ungoverned Imaginings*, pp. 93-100 & Lennon, *Irish Orientalism*, pp. 5-117

espousing national pride. By arguing for the ancient oriental origins of their motherland, Irish nationalists could argue that Irish civilisation predated Anglo-Saxon culture and that there was an older form of colonialism in Ireland that was cosmopolitan and tolerant, thus contrasting with English protestant hegemony.

Although in the nineteenth century, antiquarian speculation was regarded in scholarly circles with growing suspicion, authors of fiction such as Sydney Owenson and Thomas Moore deployed the semiotic link between the East and Ireland that antiquarians had helped establish to allegorise the the Irish nationalist cause.³²³ Thomas Moore even implies in his preface to *Lalla Rookh* that he was finding the composition of *Lalla Rookh* arduous until he came up with the idea of correlating *The Fire Worshippers* as an independence struggle against the Muslim invaders with the situation in Ireland.

But, at last, fortunately, as it proved, the thought occurred to me of founding a story on the fierce struggle so maintained between the Ghebers, or ancient fire-worshippers of Persia, and their haughty Muslim masters. From that moment, a new and deep interest in the whole task took possession of me. The cause of tolerance was again my inspiring theme, and the spirit that had spoken in the melodies of Ireland soon found itself at home in the East...³²⁴

In *The Fire Worshippers*, the Irish national struggle is embodied within the very fabric of the narrative. Iran and its native inhabitants are under the sway of the Islamic despotic invader, Al Hassan. Iran's pride is 'crush'd' and her 'sons' made 'willing slaves', in 'their own land' to 'crouch beneath a stranger's throne'.³²⁵ Yet the Arabic leader still faces a significant opposition in the form of the fire worshippers who form a guerrilla army resisting his rule. Hafed, the Gheber leader, in an attempt to assassinate Al Hassan, climbs into his tower fortress by the sea only to enter

³²³ Lennon, *Irish Orientalism*, p. 117

³²⁴ Moore, *Lalla Rookh*, p. x

³²⁵ Moore, *Lalla Rookh*, p. 148

through the private chambers of the beautiful and innocent tyrant's daughter, Hinda. The two immediately fall in love, with Hinda being unaware that her mystery lover is her father's enemy. They both surreptitiously liase with one another until Hafed one day breaks off the relationship on the grounds that he comes from the Gheber tribe that is sworn to resist the Arabs.

As time progresses, however, Al Hassan makes greater inroads into swamping out Gheber resistance. The Gheber forces retreat to a hideout in the form of a 'ruin'd Temple' so high in the hills that it 'seem'd above the grasp of Time'.³²⁶ It is here where Hafed and his troops retreat. Whilst Al Hassan is evermore determined to crush the Ghebers, Hinda gains in sympathy for their cause and becomes fearful after overhearing that a traitor has revealed where the secret location of the hideout is to her father. When she takes her leave of her father on an Arab vessel, it is boarded by Gheber forces who take her captive. Her captors escort her blindfolded to their secret hideout in the hills. Upon arriving there, the princess' blindfold is taken off and it is revealed that her Gheber lover is in fact the leader, Hafed. A protective Hinda warns him that Al Hassan and is arriving with a vast army. Hafed rouses his forces to make a last stand, and a bloody battle ensues, but only for the Ghebers to be 'crush'd down by that vast multitude'.³²⁷ Hafed and a loyal soldier, seeing that all is lost, climb the summit of the towers to burn themselves in the fire. In the meanwhile, Hinda, having been placed on a vessel with a band of Ghebers protecting her, hears Hafed's dying howls of pain. Upon realising that her lover has committed suicide she plunges into the sea.

In the narrative the proud rebel Ghebers fighting a doomed battle against the haughty and intolerant invading Arabic Muslim forces is an allegory for

³²⁶ Moore, *Lalla Rookh*, p. 176

³²⁷ Moore, *Lalla Rookh*, p. 229

Irish nationalist struggle against England. The intolerant zealot Al Hassan has crushed his opposition and attempted to stamp out Zoroastrianism, the older religion of the Ghebers. The displacement of Zoroastrianism with Islam metonymically alludes to the Catholics being stripped of economic and political power in Ireland. The Arabs do not simply wage a military war against the Ghebers but also a cultural one. The Ghebers are portrayed by the Arabs as savages and infidels. Yet the text progressively deconstructs these stereotypes with Hinda being treated with kindness and respect by the Gheber captors. The removal of her blindfold to see that the feared leader Hafed is her Gheber lover functions to show how her cultural prejudices and preconceptions have finally being removed. A central feature of the narrative is the Gheber towers which stand 'above the grasp of time'.³²⁸ It is a structural feature that would have resonance to an astute contemporary reader versed in Irish nationalism as it would bring to mind the Irish round towers. The fact that the flame for ever burns is a symbol that the Ghebers, and by implication, Irish culture can never be conquered by foreign invaders.

Sydney Owenson's *The Missionary*, in a similar fashion to deployment of Iran in *Lalla Rookh*, uses India as a space to critique the intolerance of English Protestantism and colonialism in Ireland. The tolerance of Indian religions contrasts firmly with Owenson's depiction of Spanish Catholic intolerance, in both Goa and Portugal. In Lahore, Jesuits are tolerated by Indians and allowed to perform their rituals, with Hilarion even being given the opportunity to enter into theological disputes with Hindus and Muslims alike. Similarly, a caravan from Lahore to Kashmir is composed of those from different religions including Sikhs, Catholics and Hindus. Yet Owenson's text differs from Moore's narrative in the way it portrays the complex

³²⁸ Moore, *Lalla Rookh*, p. 176

colonial situation of Ireland. Whilst lower-class Irish people were negatively caricatured and stereotyped, Irish intellectuals and authors such as Jonathan Swift, Laurence Sterne, Thomas Moore and Sydney Owenson were recognised as having made a significant contribution to British literary culture. In addition, the Irish, whilst a colonised people, synonymously formed a major component of the British forces that went out to conquer and govern colonies overseas, with positions in the British empire offering Irish men and women careers and economic opportunities, that more often than not, were unavailable in their mother land. Irish men formed a disproportionately large component of officers in the British army abroad. A significant number of them were to be found in respected posts within the East India Civil Service, the imperial administration, and in the missionaries that went over to evangelise within the subcontinent.³²⁹ Owenson's depiction of seventeenth-century Portugal, being under Spanish rule, but yet a colonising power in India, metonymically draws attention to Ireland's contradictory role in imperial history. The Jesuit dominance over the Franciscan sect also indirectly alludes to English Protestant dominance over Catholicism in Ireland, with the Jesuits being portrayed as a tyrannical force in the subcontinent and in Portugal. Owenson's *The Missionary* thus problematises and decentres colonial hegemony by focusing on a colonial power, the Portuguese, which is itself colonised under the Spanish.

Representations of India by Southey, Owenson and Moore are configured in relation to European intercontinental conflicts or to other colonial peripheries, rather than viewed autonomously. The commonality between the authors can be accounted for when one considers how the various authors constructed their texts from a vast range of materials and sources. The dialogising of other concerns

³²⁹ Kevin Kenny, 'Introduction' in *Ireland and the British Empire* [ed. by Kevin Kenny]: *The Oxford History of the British Empire Companion Series* [ed. in chief: William Roger Louis] (Oxford: Oxford University, 2004) p. 16

and histories into the narratives also reflects broader trends. Print culture in Britain through newspapers, reviews and periodicals reported about different locales in Asia, Europe, America and Africa often in the same issue. It thus created an illusory sense of global awareness where differing locales across the world were somehow interconnected with the British reader through the medium and the reader being networked to global events and histories. The British Romantic tales thus have inscribed within them a form of proto-global consciousness.

The British romantic authors of the early nineteenth century, like William Jones before them, utilised the east to produce the sublime effects and a new aesthetic. They, in a similar fashion to Jones, depicted India's past or its mythology rather than the present colonial context, whilst paradoxically describing in great detail its distinct botany, landscape and wildlife. Yet there was a key shift in this period. Publishers pushed forward oriental Romantic poetry, pioneering new printing formats for oriental verse tale and establishing networks with reviewers. The nineteenth-century authors were less concerned with intellectual sympathy with Indian motifs per se. Southey sensationalised Hindu mythology to convey its grotesqueness and backwardness and Moore wished to blend Indian motifs within a larger oriental framework. Moreover, Owenson, Moore and Southey used India as a space to allegorise contemporary European conflicts such as Ireland's domination by England or the threat of Napoleon in Europe.

2.3 *Exile, Ethnography and Company Life: The Poetry of East India Company Men*

In contrast to the poetry of British Romantic authors and of William Jones the verse of less prominent East India Company men working in a colonial context has received scant critical attention. Kate Teltscher has examined the late eighteenth-century poetry of Eyles Irwin and John Horsford, relating Irwin's portrayals of the subcontinent to neo-classical critiques of colonialism and Horsford's to Saidian issues of power and knowledge.³³⁰ In addition, Nigel Leask has explored early nineteenth-century British India poets, such as John Leyden, Thomas Medwin and Charles D'Oyly, convincingly relating their depictions to themes of exile, alienation and growing hostility on the part of the British colonial administration towards Indian culture. Leask has argued that the British India authors, in contrast to British metropolitan poets, turned away from assimilating Indian mythology, imagery and motifs in their depictions of the subcontinent.³³¹ This discussion, in contrast to Teltscher's and Leask's study, will look at East India Company poets from both the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century. It will show that the poets were distinct from the other brands of authors that are explored in this thesis in that they were all insiders working in the contact zone. As they aimed to portray regionally specific circumstances, contemporary events, perceived ethnographic practices and interregional conflicts their work can be related to shifts in the varying colonial administrations attitudes towards Indians, and to the specific conflicts and concerns of colonial India. Whilst it is important to recognise the distinction between British India poets and metropolitan poets we will, however, problematise Leask's assertion that British India poets turned away from Indian mythology and motifs, demonstrating that British India authors were informed and influenced by the metropolitan oriental verse tale.

³³⁰ Teltscher, *India Inscribed*, pp. 220-221

³³¹ Nigel Leask, *Towards an Anglo-Indian Poetry?*, p. 57

Eyles Irwin was the first East India man to attempt to portray the ethnographic practices of Indians. Irwin was born in Calcutta, the son of an Irish man, Captain James Irwin and wife Sarah in 1751. He was sent to England where he was educated at a school in Sussex. When he came of age he enlisted as a writer in the East India Company in 1766 and was stationed in Fort St. George, Madras. He progressed in rank over the years becoming a factor in 1774 and a junior merchant two years later. Irwin had closer contact with Indians than most East India Company administrators given that he had been appointed superintendent to survey the black towns belonging to Madras. He rendered a relatively sympathetic portrayal of the perceived ethnographic practices of ‘Gentoo’s’.³³² Irwin’s *Bedukah: or the Self Devoted* (1776) describes a Sati that takes place at the Coast of Coromandel, Madras, where a white European, called Lycon, witnesses the fifteen-year old Bedukah being led by a band of Brahmins and accompanied by her friends and family to the funeral pyre. Upon reaching the fire Bedukah’s mother pleads with her not to commit suicide and to escape with her to a foreign land. The young girl, whilst being affected by her mother’s pleas, refuses on the grounds that she does not wish to ‘lead a life of shame’ and be ‘false’ to her ‘love’.³³³ Just before throwing herself on the pyre she says to the Lycon; ‘The choice was mine – no pity is due’.³³⁴ She dies enveloped in the ‘black clouds of smoke’.³³⁵

Though Sati is denigrated as a cruel custom and the motivation of Bedukah, as Irwin states in the preface, is ‘pride’ and ‘vanity’, the young girl is not coerced by Brahmins into the act. She is the agent of her own destiny, who makes the

³³² For an account of Eyles Irwin’s life and career, see; ‘Memoirs of Eyles Irwin, ESQ’., *European Magazine and London Review*, 15 (London: Mar. 1789) p. 180

³³³ Eyles Irwin, *Bedukah: or the Self Devoted, an Indian Pastoral* (London: 1776) *Eighteenth Century Collections Online*. Gale Group. <http://galenet.galegroup.com/servlet/ECCO>, p. 24

³³⁴ Irwin, *Bedukah: or the Self Devoted*, p. 28

³³⁵ Irwin, *Bedukah: or the Self Devoted*, p. 24, p. 28 & p. 30

voluntary choice of committing Sati. Bedukah is not a passive silent victim, but one who voices the multiple reasons of why she wishes to commit Sati. The poet lends an aesthetic and theatrical grace to the scene. As Bedukah proceeds to her death, ‘every motion majesty reveals’ and she is described as having ‘faultless limbs’ dressed in ‘purest white’.³³⁶ Irwin portrays the scene with a certain classical grandeur. The European who witnesses the incident is given the ancient Greek name, Lycon, and the poem is layered with classical Greek and Roman references to ‘Dido’, ‘Lucia’, ‘Delia’ and ‘Astrides’.³³⁷ Moreover, Bedukah’s Sati brings to mind the noble suicides of Socrates and Seneca, thus conveying that the young girl is very much in the mould of a classical heroine.³³⁸ The neo-classical framework imposed upon the poem has the effect of locating the act within a European theological framework, rather than simply othering it as barbaric. It is notable that there is no description of the pain that Bedukah would have likely experienced, as this would run counter to the poet’s attempt to convey the scene with a classical aesthetic.

Irwin’s classicist account is reasonably representative of ambivalent East India Company attitudes towards Sati during the 1770s and 1780s. Whilst many British accounts disapproved of the act they were willing to concede the heroic nature, sociological motivations and agency of the widow in question.³³⁹ It was only later in the closing years of the eighteenth century and beginning of the nineteenth century when official attitudes hardened. Hostility towards the practice where increasingly shaped by metropolitan debates taking place within Britain around issues of gender, suicide and penal reform. An increasingly voluminous number of evangelical middle-class citizens pressed for the gendered division of public and private spheres, with

³³⁶ Irwin, *Bedukah: or the Self Devoted*, p. vi, p. 17 & p. 18

³³⁷ Irwin, *Bedukah: or the Self Devoted*, p. 15, p. 12, p. 12 & p. 17

³³⁸ Irwin, *Bedukah: or the Self Devoted*, p. 30

³³⁹ Major, *Pious Flames*, pp. 99-105

women being consigned to the domestic sphere as mothers, wives or daughters. The silent and passive Sati victim thus intersected with constructions of women lacking autonomy in Britain. Representations in British print of the crazed-Sati victim devoid of the mental fortitude to resist being coerced by Brahmin priests were linked to medical discourses, in the early nineteenth century, being predisposed to correlate madness with women, and which espoused essentialisations about the frailty of female intellect. Furthermore, increasingly derisory depictions of Sati come at a time when British society was becoming more and more sensitized to public spectacles of pain and in which social commentators such as Samuel Romilly and William Eden pressed for a reform of the penal code and measured a civilised society by its lack of visible torture-inflicting punishments.³⁴⁰

In Eyles Irwin's *Ramah: or the Bramin* (1780), a suicide is once again depicted. Rama, the Brahmin, has climbed a pagoda in Conjevurum, whilst the town looks on. At the top of the temple he makes a final cry against the British:

‘Attend your favour to the Tartar race
That weight remov'd which poison'd Indostan's scale
Against your cross the crescent shall prevail’

The Brahmin then kills himself by throwing himself off the temple to give a ‘lesson to the British throne’. What is notable is that whilst Ramah is portrayed as a ‘zealot’ he has a legitimate grievance³⁴¹. The poem portrays Hindu protests about the British backing the tyrannical Muslim over the mild and inoffensive Gentoo. It is not a critique of the British presence in India per se as the Brahmin prefers the British to the ‘proud Gaul’ or ‘Hollander’,³⁴² but an attack on the East India Company for favouring

³⁴⁰ For more on how debates concerning gender and penal reform in Britain affected shifting attitudes toward Sati, see Major, *Pious Flames*, pp. 149-155, pp. 161-163 & pp. 133-142

³⁴¹ Eyles Irwin, *Eastern Eclogues; written during a tour through Arabia, Egypt, and other parts of Asia and Africa, in the year M.DCC.LXXVII*. (London : 1780) Eighteenth Century Collections Online. Gale Group. <http://galenet.galegroup.com/servlet/ECCO>, p. 19 & p. 25

³⁴² Irwin, *Eastern Eclogues*, p. 23

an Islamic over a Hindu leader. The text is indicative of a trend in eighteenth-century British orientalist discourse of representing Hindus as a harmless and passive race that were in need of a British presence in the subcontinent to protect them from the tyranny of Islam.³⁴³ It is furthermore noteworthy in both *Bedukah: or the Self Devoted* and *Ramah: or the Brahmin* the main conscious acts that the protagonists engage in are suicides, which implies that any agency that the Hindu has is ultimately self defeating and futile.

The poem, of course, though, refers to a specific historical event. In 1772-73, despite having guaranteed the region's borders in a treaty in 1762, the British had backed the invasion by the Islamic Nawab of Arcot of the Hindu principality of Tanjore, in return for financial remuneration. The Nawab of Arcot subsequently incurred debts during his two-year long occupation of the province. A huge strain was placed on the state, which in turn led to the Nawab enforcing a high level of taxation on lands in order to pay off his debt to the British. When Lord Pigot resumed his post as Governor General of Madras, after more than a decade away, he pressed for a reinstatement of the deposed Rajah Tulasi. Other company officials with a vested interest in the Nawab of Arcot staged a coup, deposing Lord Pigot and imprisoning the Governor General.³⁴⁴ Irwin, a firm ally of Pigot, escaped and made his way back to England through the Middle East to sue the East India Company for Pigot's re-instatement.³⁴⁵ Irwin's poem, rather than focusing upon the in-fighting within the East India Company government of Madras, reframes the debate in terms

³⁴³ See Thomas R. Metcalf, *Ideologies of the Raj The New Cambridge History of India 111. 4* (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1994) pp. 7-9 & Robert Travers, *Ideology and Empire in Eighteenth Century India: The British in Bengal* (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 2007) p. 5 & p. 28

³⁴⁴ For an account of the British-backed invasion by the Nawab of Arcot into the Hindu principality of Tanjore and the subsequent controversy surrounding it, see Dutt, *Economic History of India*, pp. 107-110

³⁴⁵ *European Magazine and London Review*, 15, p. 180

of the Company failing in its ethical responsibility to protect the innocent Hindus from the tyranny of Islam. The discursive strategy is convenient as it enables Irwin to obfuscate that it was in his own personal interests to adopt Pigot's position when it came to the issue of Tanjore, especially if one considers that he was allied to Governor General, and his very career was dependent upon suing for his patron's case.

Though simplifications of Indians were at work in Irwin's poems, his poems are distinct from later representations in that there was at least some attempt to provide motivation for ethnographic practices such as Sati and to acknowledge the adverse consequences of East India Company interventions or policy. In later poems, there is a movement away from portraying the Hindus as a mild and inoffensive religious community that are in need of protection from Muslims. In John Hobart Caunter's *The Cadet* (1814) and John Leyden's *Verses: Written at the Island of Sagur Mouth of the Ganges* (1807) sacrificial acts are ascribed to the inherent fanaticism and gullibility of the Hindus. In *The Cadet*, Sati is portrayed as coerced by 'the crafty Bramin' with the woman just being a passive victim.³⁴⁶ In addition, *The Cadet* catalogues devotees sacrificing themselves to crocodiles and hookswinging, without ascribing them to any motivation other than fanaticism. Similarly, in John Leyden's *Verses*, the mother who displays 'not one maternal tear' when she throws her baby on a 'water bier'³⁴⁷ to appease Kali is nothing more than an unnaturally cruel and superstitious woman. For Leyden Hindu theology is thus so unnatural that it breaks and overturns the bond between a mother and child.³⁴⁸

³⁴⁶ Anonymous, *The Cadet; A Poem, in Six Parts: Containing Remarks on British India. To which is added, Egbert and Amelia; in four parts with other poems* (London: Robert Jennings, 1814) p. 120

³⁴⁷ John Leyden, *The Poetical Works of Dr John Leyden with a Memoir by Thomas Brown* (London: William P. Nimmo, 1875) p. 253

³⁴⁸ The cataloguing and descriptions of Hinduism's 'fanatical' and 'barbaric' (my quotation marks) customs in Caunter and Leyden's verse, prefigures similar attempts by James Peggs. Peggs, in a series

In early nineteenth-century British India poetry, the respective authors either evade or are unaware of the East India Company's responsibility for causing economic and social problems within the subcontinent. While in *The Cadet* there are the stereotypical tropes of suffering brought about by famines, such as the; 'Groans, dying shrieks', the 'thousands forced to leave their lands of birth' and the daughter forced to 'whoredom's arms', there is a complete evasion of what may have caused such famines to occur.³⁴⁹ Instead of ascribing famine to likely causes – high and inflexible revenue rates set by the British, the restructuring of landlord and tenant relations, or the draining of the internal wealth of the state – the phenomenon is simply described as an inherent aspect of India. Thus the narrator of the *Cadet* says; 'In India's deserts wild Famine, has oftener frowned than plenty smiled'.³⁵⁰ In a similar fashion, bandits and robbers that 'swarm and live on the lawless spoils' and exist solely 'on what their pillage yields' are denied any contextualisation within the narrative, merely seeming to swarm the land like parasitic beasts.³⁵¹ This is convenient as it evades how East India Company policies, set in motion by Governor General Cornwallis, led to rising crime and banditry in central and northern India.³⁵²

Thomas Medwin's *The Pindaris*, although more ethnographically detailed than John Hobart Caunter's *The Cadet*, similarly evades the causes of

of pamphlets, used examples of Hinduism's inherent barbarity to advocate further colonial and missionary intervention in the Subcontinent, and to raise money for his own missionary work. See James Peggs, *India's cries to British humanity, relative to infanticide, British connection with idolatry, Ghaut murders, Suttee, slavery, and colonization in India; to which are added, humane hints for the melioration of the state of society in British India. Third Edition* (London: 1832)

³⁴⁹ Anonymous, *The Cadet*, p. 104, p. 108, p. 115

³⁵⁰ Anonymous, *The Cadet*, p. 117

³⁵¹ Anonymous, *The Cadet*, p. 78

³⁵² John McLane has convincingly correlated rising gang robbery in British India to Cornwallis' reforms which led to the public auction and forfeiture of lands leading to disgruntled *Zamindars* willing to encourage banditry. Moreover, the Company's reorganisation of law and order, by taking it away from the hands of the *Zamindar* and placing it into their own hands, also indirectly led to an increase in banditry. Between 1803-1807, there were reports of increased banditry with an average of 1481 dacoities and 406 wilful murders per year. Bandits particularly operated on pilgrimage routes and across rivers. See John McLane, 'Bengali Bandits, Police and Landlords after the Permanent Settlement' in Anand A. Yang, *Crime and Criminality in British India* (Arizona: Arizona University, 1985) pp. 27-46

banditry. Medwin was born in 1788 in Sussex, the son of a prominent lawyer.³⁵³ He was the second cousin of Percy Shelley and also went to the same school as the future Romantic poet.³⁵⁴ After accumulating gambling debts in England he joined the light dragoons in India.³⁵⁵ Medwin participated in the war against the Pindaris under Lord Hastings³⁵⁶ and was also a learned orientalist, writing articles in French on the Ellora temples which were later published in the *Geneva Bibliothéque Universelle*, April and September, 1821.³⁵⁷ Medwin was also a friend of General John Malcolm who later wrote *A Memoir of Central India* (1824) and was considered somewhat an expert on the Pindaris. Given the common stereotypes of the bandits in both texts it would seem likely that Malcolm and Medwin discussed the Pindaris.³⁵⁸

The Pindaris (1821) begins with the poet describing the disordered camp of the bandits. They are depicted eating ‘a simple feast of vegetable fare’ with boiled rice complimented with ‘Arabia’s spices’.³⁵⁹ The *Pindari* band led by their ruthless chief Zalim,³⁶⁰ are described as an animalistic pack; ‘with the blood of wolves and tigers running through them’.³⁶¹ The casteless band composed of different races laysiege to ‘defenceless towns’,³⁶² robbing and murdering their inhabitants and then living off their ill-gotten gains. They are an anarchic band and as their leader,

³⁵³ Donald H. Reiman, ‘Introduction’ in *Oswald and Edwin and other Poems: A Garland Series, Romantic Context: Poetry 1789-1830* [ed. by Donald H. Reiman] (London: Garland, 1978) p. v

³⁵⁴ Ibid.

³⁵⁵ Leask, *Towards an Anglo-Indian Poetry?*, p. 64

³⁵⁶ Reiman, *Introduction to Oswald and Edwin*, p. v

³⁵⁷ Leask, *Towards an Anglo-Indian Poetry?*, p. 63

³⁵⁸ John Malcolm had similarly dehumanised the Pindaris. He described them as; ‘Like swarms of locusts acting from instinct, they destroyed and left waste whatever province they visited’. See John Malcolm, *A Memoir of Central India, Including Malwa and Adjoining Provinces with the History, and Copious Illustrations, of the Past and Present Condition of that Country vol. 2* (Calcutta: Thacker, Spink, and Co., 1980) p. 348

³⁵⁹ Thomas Medwin, *Oswald and Edwin and Other Poems: A Garland Series, Romantic Context: Poetry 1789-1830* [ed. by Donald H. Reiman] (London: Garland, 1978) p. 48

³⁶⁰ Medwin’s awareness of indigenous languages, through his oriental scholarship, is testified to in his choice of the name Zalim for the leader of the Pindaris. The word Zalim in the Indian language Urdu literally means cruel. Thus the fact that Medwin has chosen the Urdu word as a signifier for the ruthless leader of the bandit tribe and foe of the British is no accident.

³⁶¹ Medwin, *Oswald and Edwin*, p. 51

³⁶² Medwin, *Oswald and Edwin*, p. 55

Zalim, says they are; 'Free as the wind' and not bound the laws of either the 'Prophet's or Siva's heaven'.³⁶³

The narrative then jumps to portray the British officer, Oswald, who has gone in search of his beloved Seeta after hearing that her village has been raised to the ground by the *Pindaris*. As he stands on an elevated terrace he hears the sounds of battle and screams below as the *Pindaris* lay siege to a village. When Oswald arrives at the village the young British officer witnesses the utter destruction. He manages to find Seeta lying in safety. Upon hearing that her brother may be in danger, Oswald takes his leave of Seeta to join the British forces in their attack upon the *Pindaris*. After the British successfully destroy the enemy forces, the young British officer makes his way back to Seeta only to find out that she has killed herself, after falsely hearing that her beloved Oswald has been slain. Oswald subsequently lives the rest of his life in India a grief-stricken shell of a man.

Medwin's text refers to the East India Company's campaign against the *Pindaris*. The *Pindaris* were, as Medwin suggests, a casteless band of bandits and mercaneries who laid siege to villages plundering and murdering.³⁶⁴ After they had made several incursions into British territories in Central India, the Governor General Lord Hastings organised a campaign to wipe them out, making alliances with neighbouring Rajahs to ensure an effective campaign.³⁶⁵ As their territories were invaded the Peshwa of Pune, and the Holkar Rajah of Indore in the following year rose up against the British. There was, however, a total annihilation by the British of

³⁶³ Medwin, *Oswald and Edwin*, p. 57 & p. 58

³⁶⁴ D.M.P. Roy, *Origin Growth and Suppression of the Pindaris* (New Delhi: Sterling Publishers, 1973) pp. 23-28 & D. H. A. Kolff, *Naukar, Rajput, and Sepoy the Ethnohistory of the Military Labour Market in Hindustan, 1450-1850* (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1990) p. 9

³⁶⁵ Roy, *Origin Growth and Suppression of the Pindaris*, p. 173

opposing forces in the third Anglo-Maratha war, with the E.I.C formally dissolving the Maratha Empire and dividing it into princely states.³⁶⁶

Though the poem focuses on the criminal aspects of the Pindaris and their subsequent defeat at the hands of the British, it evades any historical explanation of the Pindaris, preferring to portray them as savage animals. The so-called Pindaris were initially probably of Pathan ancestry who primarily operated in the districts of Bijapur and subsequently spread out into the neighbouring Muslim kingdoms. They were initially utilised in the late eighteenth century as an auxiliary force to the Marathas – laying waste and plundering an enemy territory before the main forces of the Marathas attacked.³⁶⁷ The Second Anglo-Maratha war had led to a weakening of Maratha power and thus the Pindaris gained a level of autonomy from them, with the Scindia Shah and Holkar Shah unable to exert the same pressure upon the bandits.³⁶⁸ The crushing defeat of the Marathas and the harsh terms dictated to them by the British had led to a general economic and agricultural decline in the region.³⁶⁹ There was no economic security for agricultural labourers and thus some of them joined the Pindaris. Moreover, given the weakened state of the Maratha powers the Pindaris often received tacit backing from the Marathas in their incursion into enemy British territories.³⁷⁰

Medwin's poem, which was written in 1821, coincided with the increased militarization in the 1820s of the Anglo-Indian administration. Influential East India Company insiders and administrators, such as Thomas Munro in Madras, Monstuart Elphinstone in Bombay, Charles Metcalfe in Bengal, and John Malcolm in

³⁶⁶ Roy, *Origin Growth and Suppression of the Pindaris*, p. 319

³⁶⁷ Roy, *Origin Growth and Suppression of the Pindaris*, pp. 3-6

³⁶⁸ Roy, *Origin Growth and Suppression of the Pindaris*, p. 97

³⁶⁹ For the punitive measures imposed on the Marathas following the second Anglo-Maratha War, see Stuart Gordon, *The Marathas 1600-1818 New Cambridge History 11.4* (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1993) p176 & Roy, *Origin Growth and Suppression of the Pindaris*, pp. 98-99

³⁷⁰ Roy, *Origin Growth and Suppression of the Pindaris*, p. 198

London and later Bombay, pushed forward through published writings and official policies increasingly militaristic attitudes within the colonial administration. They argued that the enhancement of the military was vital to the survival of British dominion in India.³⁷¹ Given that Medwin was a close friend of John Malcolm and an insider within the colonial state, it is unsurprising that *The Pindaris* has embedded within it a portrayal of the military as the agents of law and order against a savagely cruel and amoral band of Indian bandits that cause devastation to defenceless Indian villages. This is ideologically convenient as it portrays military expansionism resulting out of a need to protect defenceless Indians and to protect India from herself, rather than due to self-interest on the part of the colonial powers. Moreover, *The Pindaris* reflects colonial anxieties about their inability to categorise and control. Whilst Medwin attempts to depict the everyday habits of the Pindaris with ethnographic detail he fails to categorise them. The Pindaris were composed of people from different races, castes, religions and thus evaded reductive essentialisations that the colonial state was liable to make about tribes or castes. The heterogeneous composition of the band made them difficult to divide and control, contain, survey and order.³⁷² Yet they were simultaneously convenient for the British as their lawlessness provided the seeming justification and ‘state of exception’ for colonial intervention and territorial expansion.³⁷³

³⁷¹ Douglas Peers, ‘Between Mars and Mammon; the East India Company and Efforts to reform its Army, 1796-1832’ in *The Historical Journal*, 33, 2 (1990) p. 387

³⁷² Nicholas Dirks has remarked upon the growing desire by the colonial state to ethnologically categorise and essentialise Indian peoples from the early to late nineteenth century. See Nicholas. B. Dirks, *Castes of Mind: Colonialism and the Making of Modern India* (New Jersey: Princeton University, 2001) p. 5

³⁷³ The political theorist Giorgio Agamben gave birth to the term *Homo Sacer*. According to Agamben, *Homo Sacer* is a bandit that is deemed by the state or the powers that be to be outside of religious and political life and thus denied basic human rights granted to ordinary citizens. He or she is reduced to ‘bare life’ with anybody having the right to kill him or her. Yet whilst the *Homo Sacer* lives outwith the state and is perpetually in flight, he or she is bound and limited by being ‘a state of exception’ that justifies the state taking their life at any moment. Agamben’s definition of *Homo Sacer* can be used

In contrast to Thomas Medwin, John Leyden's origins were humble. Leyden was born in the Scottish village of Denholm, Teviotdale, the son of a shepherd. At the age of 10 he was sent to a reading school where he learnt Latin and was considered something of a prodigy. His parents had hopes that he would become a Clergyman and he was sent to the College of Edinburgh where he was considered a polymath at University excelling in Greek, Latin, Spanish and Hebrew, as well as developing an interest in the natural sciences and poetry. Although ordained a preacher of the gospel in 1800, Leyden's diverse interests led him elsewhere. After learning of an opening as a surgeon in the East India Company in India, Leyden seized the opportunity training and qualifying as a surgeon under John Bill. In 1803, he arrived in Madras, and at great expense to himself employed indigenous teachers to instruct him in a vast range of Indian languages. He had a prolific career in the subcontinent, being appointed as a medical assistant to the Mysore survey.³⁷⁴ During his travels in India, he was reported to have taken a great interest in the architecture, history, ethnography and religions of India.³⁷⁵ His proficiency in Indian languages and his reputation as an oriental scholar were testified to by the fact that in 1807 he was admitted to *The Asiatick Society* and appointed a professor of Hindostanee at the Fort William College in Bengal.³⁷⁶ Yet in spite of his scholarly interest, he had a low opinion of Indians categorising them as 'utterly worthless, and devoid of probity, as their religion is wicked, shameless, impudent, and obscene'.³⁷⁷

In both Thomas Medwin's and John Leyden's poems there is a degree of ethnographic specificity and 'costume' not present in Eyles Irwin's and Hobart

quite aptly to describe the Pindaris and the East India Company's attitude toward them. See Giorgio Agamben, *Homo Sacer, Sovereign Power and Bare Life* (California: Stanford University, 1995) p. 183

³⁷⁴ For an account of John Leyden's early life, university days and early career in India, see Biographical Memoir of John Leyden, M.D., *Edinburgh Annual Register*, 4 (1811: Jan), pp. pxli-lxxii

³⁷⁵ *Eclectic Review*, 12, p. 279

³⁷⁶ *Eclectic Review*, 12, p. 280

³⁷⁷ *Eclectic Review*, 12, p. 283

Caunter's *The Cadet*. Medwin incorporates an array of Hindustani terms into his narrative, such as 'Bolee', 'ghee' and 'Holee'.³⁷⁸ Moreover, Leyden depicts perceived ethnographic and culturally specific practices such as infanticide in honour of the goddess *Kali*. The difference between the two poets and Caunter was that both poets were learned orientalists who had knowledge of Indian languages and ethnographic practices, whereas Caunter, although writing at a similar time as John Leyden, was a lowly cadet with little interest or knowledge in Indian culture. The distinction between the two poets and Eyles Irwin, however, reflects shifts in colonial administration and attitudes. Whereas Warren Hastings and the oriental scholars patronised under his administration were sympathetic to Indian culture stressing comparative links with European civilisations, later colonial administrations of Wellesley and Lord Hastings were less sympathetic and stressed British colonial superiority and cultural differences.³⁷⁹ In addition, poetic portrayals of Indians need to be situated alongside growing attempts to survey the natural landscapes, animals and ethnographic practices of Indians, which simultaneously had the effect of decontextualising such information and portraying them as freakish curiosities.³⁸⁰

Nigel Leask has argued that British India poets were less inclined to absorb Indian mythology, motifs and images than their British based Romantic counterparts. Indeed, this is true to an extent. British India authors did not usually put Indian mythology or oriental motifs at the front of their narratives to create escapist dreamscapes. Yet that is not to say the poets did not draw upon culturally specific Indian material in an innovative way. Thomas Medwin's *The Pindaris* is loaded with Hindustani terms which would have been defamiliarising for the British metropolitan reader. His incorporation of them also stood in the face of advice from his esteemed

³⁷⁸ Medwin, *Oswald and Edwin*, p. 48

³⁷⁹ Thorne, *Congregation Missions*, p. 37

³⁸⁰ Refer to chapter 1.

friend, the English Romantic poet Percy Shelley.³⁸¹ The fact that he kept the Hindustanee terms in, despite Shelley's advice, demonstrates how he valued their capacity to produce an impression of ethnographic authenticity and their aesthetic capability of defamiliarising a contemporary English reader. Moreover, in *Oswald and Edwin*, Medwin engages in a description of Edwin lying out in the open of an Indian night, which shares similar features to oriental dreamscapes portrayed in the British Romantic oriental verse tales.

With the wind's faintest sighs, that serve to awake
The Accacia's sleep, and its blossoms shake
Balsamic sweets, that the rapt sense take
And o'er then pour such soul-dissolving gleams,
As Moslems have of Houris in their dreams...³⁸²

The sweetness and illusory dreamlike quality of the description evokes comparison with *Lalla Rookh*. That Medwin's narrative should deploy commonalities with the British oriental verse tale is unsurprising given his close associations with Romantic poets such as Percy Shelley and Lord Byron, and that Shelley had actually advised and made corrections to *Oswald and Edwin* and *The Pindaris*. John Leyden's India poetry also shares some features with the British Romantic verse tale in his usage of Indian mythology. In *Lament for Rama* he portrays the myth of Rama's exile from Ayudya³⁸³ leaving his family and friends behind after being unjustly banished.³⁸⁴

Similarly, in *Verses: Written at the Island of Sagur Mouth of the Ganges* (1807),

Leyden's portrayal of the 'Dark Goddess' *Kali* as a; 'Flesh terror! Quaffing life-blood

³⁸¹ In a letter that Shelley addresses to Medwin, he writes; 'The only general error, if it be such in your poem, seems to be the employment of Indian words in the body of the piece & the relegation of meaning to the notes. Strictly, I imagine, every expression in a poem ought to be in itself an intelligible picture'. See Percy Shelley, *The Letters of Percy Bysshe Shelley vol. 2 Shelley in Italy* [ed. by Frederick L. Jones] (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1964) pp. 183-184

³⁸² Medwin, *Oswald and Edwin*, p. 4

³⁸³ Rama is the central figure in the ancient Hindu scripture, the Ramayana. He is the Crown Prince, and seventh incarnation of the god Vishnu, who is unjustly banished from his homeland Ayudya and forced into exile. See Romesh Dutt, *The Ramayana and Mahabharata: condensed into English Verse* (London: J. M. Dent, 2002) pp. 14-31

³⁸⁴ John Leyden, *The Poetical Works of Dr John Leyden with a Memoir by Thomas Brown* (London: William P. Nimmo, 1875) pp. 253-254

warm' draws on the sublime to convey the monstrosity and terror of the Hindu divinity.³⁸⁵

The usage of Hindu mythology by Leyden and the deployment of the oriental dreamscape by Medwin suggest that the two India poets were informed and influenced by the British oriental verse tale. Both authors were well networked literary authors. Leyden was a close friend of the esteemed poet George Ellis, and even before arriving in the subcontinent, he had established himself as a poet of some reputation in Scotland.³⁸⁶ Medwin was a close friend of Percy Shelley and Lord Byron. Yet although I would argue that Nigel Leask's compartmentalisation of British India poets and Romantic poets is a touch too reductive a distinction still needs to be drawn. British India poets drew on Indian mythology and images but did not structure their narratives upon orientalist dreamscapes or mythology. Medwin's dreamlike night-time setting is only mentioned in passing by the poet in *Oswald and Edwin* with the main focus of the narrative being on the two British officers and the ensuing hunt. John Leyden's deployment of Kali in *Verses* functions to denigrate the perceived practice of infanticide, rather than as interest in the Hindu deity for its own sake. Moreover, Leyden uses the myth of Rama's exodus from Ayodhya as a metaphor to express the feelings of alienation and displacement that a British East India Company man was likely to undergo living away from his family and friends in the subcontinent.³⁸⁷ That Leyden draws upon Hindu mythology to express his feelings of exile is revealing because by using the episode of Rama's exodus to comment upon his very personal experiences of alienation he paradoxically draws attention to the extent of his acculturation within India and his Indianisation. Rather than distancing himself from Hindu mythology, he is so familiar and comfortable with it that he can

³⁸⁵ Leyden, *The Poetical Works of Dr John Leyden*, p. 176

³⁸⁶ *Edinburgh Annual Register*, 4, p. lvii

³⁸⁷ Leyden, *The Poetical Works of Dr John Leyden*, pp. 253-254

use it quite naturally to express his own subjectivity and anxieties. That being said, however, in contrast to the British Romantic poets, the India authors do not as opposed to Southey's in *The Curse of Kehama* or Jones in *Hindu Hymns* centre their narratives on Hindu mythology but rather draw upon it as a vehicle to express subjective experiences or distaste for the specific ethnographic practices of Hindus.

A continuity running through the poetry of East India Company officers and writers is their preoccupation with the themes of exile and alienation. The feelings that a white European experiences, while living in the foreign land of India, were first explored by Eyles Irwin *Saint Thomas's Mount* (1774). The first canto of the poem provides a catalogue of hostile animals stalking Madras – tigers, cheetahs and elephants. The narrative then goes on to describe the life of St. Thomas. St. Thomas is told upon being visited by God in a vision to; “Go-teach the Indian to revere my name/ Teach him for me idolatry to leave”³⁸⁸. St. Thomas, upon God's instruction, travels to India where he achieves fame for his miracles and the patronage of the noble Indian King Sagamo. Although initially a close confidante of the King, their relationship turns sour when the Hindu priests, jealous of the Christian's growing influence, conspire against him with the monarch. He is duly banished from Sagamo's kingdom, making his way to a retreat in the mountains where he lives as a hermit. Thomas' religious presence is so inspiring that 'wond'ring natives' flock around him to hear his wise words, bearing gifts of fresh milk and food for the Christian.³⁸⁹ In return for these gifts the saint relieves the deluded Indians from their 'clouds of superstitions', illuminating them with the true faith.³⁹⁰ Unfortunately,

³⁸⁸ Eyles Irwin, *St. Thomas' Mount; written by a gentleman in India* (London: 1774) Eighteenth Century Collections Online. Gale Group. <http://galenet.galegroup.com/servlet/ECCO>, p. 22

³⁸⁹ Irwin, *St. Thomas' Mount*, p. 26

³⁹⁰ Ibid.

though, not all the Indians are grateful for his presence, as one Indian - who is described as like a tiger - cruelly assassinates St. Thomas.

Although the poem at first glance is a hagiography of the Christian martyr St. Thomas, it has embodied within it the anxieties of the British East India Company man. Like St. Thomas, the British soldier, writer or merchant was away from home in a foreign land. It is no coincidence that Irwin describes the hostile predatory animals in the first canto and then, in the second, focuses on Thomas's execution by an Indian who is compared to a tiger. The strategy can similarly be seen in Thomas Medwin's *Sketches of Indostan*, where the first poem *Oswald and Edwin* describes a hunting scene where Edwin is eaten alive, and the second poem *The Pindaris* describes an animalistic band of bandits. The juxtaposition conveys that the British were an unwanted presence in a hostile land, in danger of being destroyed by savage Indians. The preoccupation with predatory animals must also be contextualised in relation to the prevalence of the hobby of hunting among East India Company men, and it being used as a metaphor for colonial domination, with the animals representing Indian resisters that needed to be subdued.³⁹¹ It is interesting though in *St. Thomas's Mount* that the Saint is assassinated out of bigotry, rather than any rational or self-interested reason. Thus the narrative implies indigenous resentment or resistance to the British is irrational. Moreover, St. Thomas' fate of living and dying alone in a foreign land alludes - as do the central British protagonists in *The Cadet*, *Oswald and Edwin* and *The Pindaris* - to the destinies of many British East India Company men who due to lack of financial resources and high mortality rates died alone in the subcontinent.³⁹²

³⁹¹ Almeida & Gilpin, *Indian Renaissance*, p. 38

³⁹² Mortality rates for East India Company men were extremely high in the eighteenth century, although they did slightly improve during the last two decades of the eighteenth century and into the

Whilst Irwin addresses these issues through allegory, John Hobart Caunter's *The Cadet* deals with them directly. Caunter was born in Dittisham, Devon in 1792.³⁹³ His father was George Caunter, Governor of Penang, and his mother Harriet Georgina.³⁹⁴ Unfortunately, as Caunter was educated and raised in England, he grew up away from the presence of his father. One of Caunter's reasons for initially enlisting in the 34th regiment of the East India Company, in 1810, was the hope that he might get a chance to become acquainted with his father.³⁹⁵ Unfortunately, by the time he arrived in the subcontinent his father had died and his subsequent experiences of working as a soldier in the East India Company proved bitter. He was to draw on his experience in his poem, *The Cadet*.

The Cadet focuses mainly on the 'DELUDED Youth' who after hearing 'treach'rous tales' of the 'wealth' of India and in the expectation of a life of 'luxurious ease' enlists as a cadet in the Company.³⁹⁶ Upon landing in the subcontinent, though, instead of finding a fertile and prosperous country he sees a 'spacious land adust' that 'mourns at Nature's scanty trust.'³⁹⁷ The Cadet finds British society in India a cutthroat world full of infighting and scandals, where soldiers wait in anticipation for the death of a fellow officer as it might lead to the possibility of promotion. As a military cadet he finds his freedom taken away and that he is conditioned into a military machine at Cadet School. He is 'MARSHALL'D each morning by some driving fool' and 'Tutor'd to march, to wheel, to dress, to halt,

nineteenth century. See T. M. Devine, *Scotland's Empire, 1600-1815* (London: Allen Lane, 2003) p. 254

³⁹³ H. C. G. Matthew, 'Caunter, John Hobart (1792-1851)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004 (<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/4913>, accessed 15 July 2008)

³⁹⁴ H. C. G. Matthew, 'Caunter, John Hobart (1792-1851)'

³⁹⁵ Anonymous, *The Cadet*, p. viii

³⁹⁶ Anonymous, *The Cadet*, p. 1, p. 5 & p. 4. Capitals are in original text.

³⁹⁷ Anonymous, *The Cadet*, p. 8

Depress the Shoulders'.³⁹⁸ As a 'young soldier honourably born', he also balks under the insults of lowly born officers.³⁹⁹

In the midst of being away from family and friends, 'melancholy spreads her wings'.⁴⁰⁰ He remembers England nostalgically as the 'fond isle' where 'summer ever reigns' and the stream in Dartmore where he caught 'trout along the streamlet's side'.⁴⁰¹ After completing cadet training his hopes that the situation will improve are dashed. The prospects of promotion are limited with gold being the 'sole passport to society'.⁴⁰² Moreover, an attack by Indian robbers whilst marching with British forces in Gujarat leaves him penniless. Forced to borrow money from Indian moneylenders he falls into debt and is thrown into prison, where he witnesses all kinds of horrors. Upon being released he has to face the stigma and scandal of having gone to gaol and turns to the 'poisonous bottle', only to drink himself to an early grave where he 'bloated, lies disgusting to the view'.⁴⁰³

While the poem focuses mainly on this cadet, it also explores the lives of other fictional East India men, who, whilst not facing the extreme and untimely deaths of this unfortunate specimen, nevertheless lead tragic existences in the subcontinent. The narrator, for instance, explores the life of the East India Company officer who, after many years of misery in India, marries a mercenary woman who cuckolds him and treats him with contempt. The old man, disillusioned, finds illusory comforts away from his wife such as hunting and drinking with his male comrades, only to die from ill health. The poem, in addition, tracks the life of an officer who manages to come back to England after twenty years; 'His body wan by ailings

³⁹⁸ Anonymous, *The Cadet*, p. 37. Capitals are in original text.

³⁹⁹ Anonymous, *The Cadet*, p. 38

⁴⁰⁰ Anonymous, *The Cadet*, p. 31

⁴⁰¹ Anonymous, *The Cadet*, p. 6, p. 8 & p. 56

⁴⁰² Anonymous, *The Cadet*, p. 100

⁴⁰³ Anonymous, *The Cadet*, p. 94 & p. 96

manifold, sadly infirm, and wasted by disease'.⁴⁰⁴ The England that he remembers has gone with the 'customs new', with his friends and family passed away. His life terminates alone and unloved in England in a 'wretched end'.⁴⁰⁵

The Cadet is a direct refutation to British oriental tales that exaggerate India's wealth, fertility and the economic prospects it holds for East India company officers. Though the narrative explores the careers of various East India men, they all share common features; the men die alone alienated and disillusioned. The poem depicts a situation where corruption is rife, with commanding officers extorting money out of the cadets. The society in Colonial India is portrayed as narrow and riddled with internal conflict given that officers are constantly backbiting. The promotion prospects within the company are limited with only gold and wealth being the passport for advancement.⁴⁰⁶ Moreover, a young man bored from the narrowness of society away from family constraints was liable to fall into dissolute habits such as excessive drinking and eating, which would in turn lead to debt.⁴⁰⁷

The freedom of a cadet was limited, with their individuality and autonomy stripped from them as they were conditioned into military machines.⁴⁰⁸ Caunter's cadetship in Bengal coincided with the colonial state placing ever greater controls on the space of the military cantonments. In 1809, the colonial state of

⁴⁰⁴ Anonymous, *The Cadet*, p. 153

⁴⁰⁵ Anonymous, *The Cadet*, p. 152 & p. 159

⁴⁰⁶ Suresh Chandra Ghosh reports that: 'the reforms of 1796 were designed to expand promotion prospects, but even so there were over 140 Bengal subalterns of 14 or 15 years standing, who had virtually no hope of promotion' See Ghosh, *The Social Condition of the British Community in Bengal*, p. 66

⁴⁰⁷ East India Company men often overindulged in drink and food with ruinous consequences for their health. See Ghosh, *The Social Condition of the British Community in Bengal*, p. 123. Moreover, many British soldiers and administrators in the East India Company fell into debt in order to maintain an extravagant lifestyle in the subcontinent. See Ghosh, *The Social Condition of the British Community in Bengal*, p. 73

⁴⁰⁸ The colonial administrations in India post-Cornwallis controlled and curtailed the freedom of the Cadets in an effort to ensure their limited interaction with the perceived corruptive influence of India. See Ghosh, *The Social Condition of the British Community in Bengal*, p. 122

Bengal enacted Regulation III⁴⁰⁹ and in 1810 Regulation XX.⁴¹⁰ The acts had the effect of increasing police powers to limit the access of Indian suppliers of spirits to such spaces and enhancing the demarcation between Indian Bazars and cantonments. They, moreover, prevented the free movement of British officers and cadets outside the protective and sanctioned space of the cantonment. The measures reflected an anxiety that excessive alcohol consumption was to the detriment of the efficacy of British forces, and contact with Indians was causing moral and physical damage to cadets and soldiers. It is interesting, though, that the measures were primarily aimed at punishing the Indian suppliers who infiltrated the cantonment, rather than British cadets or officers, as such a stance lay the blame for alcoholism on the ‘natives’ selling the product, rather than on any moral or character defects on the part of the consumers. This is a trope that can be seen in Caunter’s *The Cadet* where alcoholism is an inevitable result of a life in India.

In direct contrast to the British Oriental verse tales, it is the metropole that functions as a form of pre-lapsarian landscape. In India, the memory of England is inextricably bound up with childhood and innocence. The memory of home proves doubly painful as it is tainted with the present of a life of everyday drudgery and isolation in colonial India and a present ‘self’ that has been corrupted by living in India. Home, of course, is an illusory place that can never be recovered. It is associated with a wholeness of identity that has been fragmented and shattered in the

⁴⁰⁹ Regulation III, 1809 was: ‘A Regulation for the Support of the Police in the Cantonments and Military Bazars, for Defining the Powers of Civil and Military Officers in the Performance of the Duty; and for Fixing the Local Limits of the said Cantonments and Bazars’. See Richard Clarke [ed. by], *The Regulations of the Government of Fort William in Bengal, in Force at the End of 1853; to which are Added, the Acts of Government of India in Force in that Presidency vol. 2* (London, 1854) p. 97

⁴¹⁰ Regulation XX, 1810 was: ‘A Regulation for Subjecting Persons Attached to the Military Establishment to Martial Law in Certain Cases, and for Better Government of the Retainers and Dependents of the Army Receiving Public Pay on Fixed Establishments and of Persons seeking a Livelihood by Supplying the Troops in the Garrison, Cantonment, and Station Military Bazars, or Attached to Bazars or Corps’ in Clarke, *The Regulations of the Government of Fort William in Bengal, in Force at the End of 1853 vol. 2*, p. 154

subcontinent, and can never be pieced together again. The process of imagination distorts home and gives it imaginary qualities that it never had, building ‘castles in the air’⁴¹¹ only to have them ruthlessly laid siege to upon return to England.

Nostalgia, however, takes a different form in John Leyden’s *Ode to Leaving Vellore* (1807) in that he engages in an act of mental trickery in order to see the mountains of his native Scotland in the Indian mountains that are in his immediate view:⁴¹²

Here first my, soul to cheat
Fairly pourtray’d in vision sweet
The mountains of my native land...⁴¹³

Leyden’s equating the mountains of India to those of his homeland is a way of highlighting and recovering a Scottish nationality which is in danger of being subsumed within the Company or within a colonial context. In a moment of a self reflexivity and self consciousness he recognises that he has produced a fiction. He becomes aware that he has cheated himself in the past into believing that the mountains before him resemble those in his native Scotland so that he can alleviate feelings of cultural displacement and dislocation.

The poetry of East India Company, however, did not always portray disillusionment and alienation. Officers working in an all-male military environment in a foreign land could often form strong attachments to other officers and develop a sense of jingoistic pride in their country and military unit. In Medwin’s *Oswald and Edwin* one gets the sense of the intense homosocial bond between the two protagonists, with Oswald mourning Edwin’s death. The tone of jingoistic self-

⁴¹¹ Anonymous, *The Cadet*, p. 157

⁴¹² John Leyden was one of a disproportionately large number of Scots that enlisted in the East India Company in the eighteenth and nineteenth century. The bulk of the Scots, unlike Leyden who was the son of a shepherd, came from middling and mercantile families who enlisted for service in India due to limited economic prospects back in Scotland. See Devine, *Scotland’s Empire*, pp. 251-252

⁴¹³ P. Seshadri, *An Anglo-Indian Poet: John Leyden* (Madras: Higginbotham & Co., 1912) p. 51

congratulation is all too apparent in John Leyden's *Battle of Assaye* (1803) about the decisive victory by the British army, led by Arthur Wellesley at Assaye (a village in South Central India), in the Second Anglo Maratha war. The poem calls on Britain to 'Shout' for 'the battle of Assaye' and to 'Hail Wellesley', and states that the names of those Britons that died in the battle 'Shall live to endless time!'⁴¹⁴

John Horsford, an officer in the East India Company who fought in the campaigns against Tipu Sultan, also engaged in propaganda poems. In *The Prospect* (1796) he portrays Tipu as engaging in 'tyranny with' an 'iron hand'⁴¹⁵ and the British as rescuing the inhabitants of Mysore from tyranny.⁴¹⁶ John Horsford revels in a jingoistic appreciation of military splendour in *Dum to Dum to Captain G-* (1790) when he talks of; 'BENGALLA's army standing in array / With martial pride here her artillery shines, / In files, divisions and embattled lines'.⁴¹⁷ Horsford thus unashamedly espouses the colonial domination with Indian soldiers being neatly ordered, divided and controlled. He also contrasts the British General G-, who 'seeks no weakening couch to loll away / In stupid indolence the lazy day' favourably against the indolent Indian.⁴¹⁸ A martial activism is espoused over the luxury and indolence of the corrupted and emasculated *nabob*. It is, moreover, notable how Horsford aligns himself with the colonial administration of Cornwallis. In *To his Excellency Charles Marquis Cornwallis* (1790), he calls 'imperial' Britain the 'land of freedom' and says that Cornwallis has an 'honest mind' and holds the 'scales of justice and sword of war' with 'cautious care'.⁴¹⁹

⁴¹⁴ Leyden, *The Poetical Works of Dr John Leyden*, p. 172, p. 173 & p. 174

⁴¹⁵ John Horsford, *A Collection of Poems Written in the East Indies with Miscellaneous Remarks, in Real Life* (Calcutta: J. Cooper, 1796) p. 31

⁴¹⁶ The British of course did not finally defeat Tipu Sultan until 1799.

⁴¹⁷ Horsford, *A Collection of Poems Written in the East Indies*, p. 19. Capitals are in the original text.

⁴¹⁸ *Ibid.*

⁴¹⁹ Horsford, *A Collection of Poems Written in the East Indies*, p. 15 & p. 16

In Horsford's and Leyden's military poems individual identity and subjectivity is subsumed by a collective identity of a regiment or a nation. At the time of military conquest or battle, national pride resurfaces and feelings of cultural dislocation and displacement are momentarily alleviated.⁴²⁰ Thus the re-establishment of national pride and a corporate ethos comes only at a time of military domination and conquest. Such feelings are by their very nature temporary and are liable to subside when the glory of military victory fades, leaving only feelings of alienation and displacement.

Conclusion

The *Hindu Hymns* of William Jones and the British Romantic verse tales of Southey and Moore evolved out of the format of the British oriental periodical tales of the eighteenth century and Collins' *Persian Eclogues*. Jones, Southey and Moore utilised India as a poetic space from which to challenge and reshape prevailing British aesthetic norms in verse. They were not concerned with depicting contemporary events in colonial India but rather portraying India as a mythical land or an idealised dreamscape. Yet a distinction can be drawn between Jones' *Hindu Hymns* and the British romantic verse tale. Jones' hymns use Hindu myth to depict India as a land lost in its own mythology and in need of British colonial intervention. The British Romantic authors, however, use India as a convenient site to explore much broader concerns, such as European intercontinental conflict and, in Moore's and Owenson's cases, Ireland's national struggle against England. Such a distinction can be explained by the development within Britain of a print culture that increasingly

⁴²⁰ Linda Colley has remarked upon the capacity of warfare to garner a British identity in face of a foreign threat. Her analysis is particularly apt when one considers that John Leyden's Scottish identity is subsumed by an imperial British one when he espouses the glory of the Battle of Assaye. See Colley, *Britons Forging the Nation*, p. 5

networked readers and authors with events across the globe, thus creating a newfound sense that they were somehow interconnected to distant countries. It also gave authors a newfound confidence to collate culturally specific knowledge of locales without ever leaving Britain. The transition from Jones' *Hindu hymns* to the British Romantic verse tales is indicative of a greater drive by publishing firms to push oriental Romantic productions upon consumers by inventing new printing formats, developing networks with reviewers and offering authors unprecedented advances.

The poetry of Company writers and officers are distinct from the poetry of William Jones and the Romantic productions of Southey, Owenson and Moore. The poets were less concerned with retreating into India's pre-colonial past or mythology, preferring to represent the contemporary colonial situation or the perceived ethnographic practices of Indians. A continuity running right through the poetry of the East India Company man is the preoccupation with the feelings and anxieties that a British man was likely to experience whilst working in the contact zone – alienation, exile, nostalgia or jingoistic attachment to one's regiment or country of origin. Yet there was nevertheless a historical shift in the way the ethnographic practices of Indians or colonial circumstances were depicted. Whilst the late eighteenth century poetry provides a context or motivation for Indian ethnographic practices, the poetry of the nineteenth century ascribes those practices to the inherent gullibility, fanaticism and savagery of the Indian people. Moreover, there was also a shift away from accepting the East India Company's responsibility for social problems and colonial conflicts to later poetry depicting them as inherent aspects of Indian society.

The poetry of the East India Company man is aligned clearly to shifts in colonial administrations and to increasingly hostile attitudes to indigenous culture

caused by the growing utilitarian and missionary influence in India. That the poetry and administrative attitudes are aligned is unsurprising given that the authors were insiders within the East India Company. The attitude of metropolitan authors such as Southey, Moore and Owenson to India, however, is more representative of their varying individual attitudes towards the subcontinent. Southey, a social conservative and an English protestant with missionary sympathies, was hostile and antagonistic to India. Moore and Owenson, as Irish authors with nationalist sympathies, use India or the orient sympathetically as a space to challenge English protestant intolerance. Yet that is not to say a dialogue did not take place between metropolitan Romantic authors and the British India poets. The later poets, John Leyden and Thomas Medwin, had close links with metropolitan poets and were informed by Romantic interest in mythology. Medwin also drew on the Romantic use of Indian landscapes as dreamscapes in *Oswald and Edwin*. The distinction, though, is that they never allow their narrative to be subsumed by such concerns, preferring to depict a perceived colonial present.

3. Staging India: A Convenient Pretext for Visual Effects, Gender Transgression and Homoerotic Desire

Dramatic productions performed on stage had the immediacy of viewers seeing action unfold before their eyes, rather than imaginatively having to transport themselves to another world, as they would if they read a novel or verse. There was a temporal and three-dimensional element that was lacking in other literary modes. Physical bodies (i.e. the actors) performed on a set in real time, and sounds - such as the performers' voices, background music, clashing swords of battle and noises that imitated natural phenomenon - could be heard by the audience. Colours and smells, which have to be imagined in other modes of fiction, could possess a real presence on the stage. Moreover, plays performed on stage were aimed at an audience with a collective identity, unlike poems and novels, which were more often than not constructed for the solitary reader. Performed plays had an element of interactivity not present in other literary modes. Spectators could respond by heckling, applauding, laughing or rioting, which in turn could affect how the actors performed. Moreover, given that the audience were largely composed of Britons, self representations of nationhood, 'others' and conflicts in the colonial world, when depicted live on stage to a largely British audience, could often cohere and provoke a collective patriotic response. Theatrical representations of India, therefore, need to be treated differently from other literary forms. Consequently this investigation of dramatic representations of India will not just provide a textual analysis of words on the page, but will conceptualise how India or 'Indianness' was given a physical presence by playwrights and stage artists, and determine from where those visual representations of India were

derived. It will also seek to explore the varying receptions of performances of ‘India’ plays.

There has been wide-ranging scholarship that engages in textual analysis of specific eighteenth and early nineteenth-century British plays concerning India. Nandini Bhattacharya, in *Reading the Splendid Body*, has focused on Samuel Foote’s *The Nabob*, Starke’s *The Sword of Peace; or Voyage of Love* and Fanny Burney’s *A Busy Day* relating such depictions of India to gender and anti-slavery discourses.⁴²¹ Jeanne Moskal has similarly engaged in a textual analysis of Starke’s *Sword of Peace* arguing that the narrative calls for a re-masculinized colonial regime in India which rejects cultural hybridity and cosmopolitanism for a pure and unadulterated English identity.⁴²² Moreover, she argues that the text espouses the gendered division between public and private spheres with the virtuous English women standing against the commoditisation of their sex. While Bhattacharya’s and Moskal’s gender readings of the dramas have been insightful, they overlook the visual and staging elements of the productions. To a certain extent this oversight has been redressed in Daniel O’Quinn’s and Betsy Bolton’s scholarship. Daniel O’Quinn, in his monograph *Staging Governance* and essay *Theatre and Empire*, has provided comprehensive studies of dramatic representations of India during this period, contextualising portrayals of India to broader developments in staging and visual technology within the metropole. O’Quinn has adopted the Foucauldian approach of viewing productions as an attempt to instil a normative metropolitan identity and a new form of imperial subjectivity into audiences. Betsy Bolton has remarked, in her study of *The Cataract of the Ganges*, about the capacity of the staging technology and

⁴²¹ Bhattacharya, *Reading the Splendid Body*, pp. 107-126

⁴²² Jeanne Moskal, ‘English National Identity in Mariana Starke’s “The Sword of Peace”, India, Abolition and the Rights of Women’ in *Women in British Romantic Theatre: Drama, Performance and Society, 1790-1840* [ed. by Catherine Burroughs] (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 2000) p. 109

visual effects, exhibited in productions of the play, to overawe contemporary audiences. She has also commented upon the play's revisions and reworking of history.⁴²³

This study builds on the work of O'Quinn and Bolton by investigating the visual elements and staging of productions. By looking at the varying contemporary reviews, however, it problematises O'Quinn and Bolton's assumption that the visual spectacle and technologies of the plays overawed audiences. The argument utilises previously unexamined drawings of a contemporary performance of *The Cataract of the Ganges* for toy theatres.⁴²⁴ The drawings, which were drawn as a performance was being staged at Drury Lane, provide invaluable insights into the staging and costuming of the play. In addition to delving into the visual aspects of the productions, we relate theatrical depictions to issues of gender, Anglo-Indian high society in the colonial metropolises, and shifting attitudes within the East India Company administration towards India. While previous criticism argues that directors and playwrights depicted non-normative masculinity and homoeroticism of the East to show its inferiority and threat to British society, our argument proposes that something more complex was occurring. It proposes that India gave theatre directors, stage artists and playwrights the freedom to experiment with historical processes, gender, class and racial norms in a way that would not be accepted if the plays were

⁴²³ Betsy Bolton, 'Saving the Rajah's Daughter: Spectacular Logic in Moncrieff's *Cataract of the Ganges*' in *European Romantic Review*, 17:4 Oct. 2006, p. 479

⁴²⁴ Toy theatre drawings were composed from rough sketches taken by artists whilst a performance was occurring. Artists would depict various scenes of the play. They would also provide a visual record of the costumes, the poses and expressions struck by the actors. These would then be published so that juveniles and adolescents could cut out scenes from the play and mount them on miniature models of the theatres, in order to re-enact for their own amusement performances in their own homes. Toy theatres were popular during the early to mid nineteenth century, falling out of fashion in the latter stages of the century. The drawings of productions are, however, a valuable visual record of specific productions. Unfortunately, out of the British India productions under discussion, toy theatre drawings were only taken for the play *The Cataract of the Ganges*. They are to be found in the Stone Collection at the *Victoria and Albert Museum*. For a further discussion of toy theatres in the nineteenth century, I would recommend George Speaight, *Juvenile Drama: The History of English Toy Theatre* (London: Macdonald & Co., 1946) p. 21 & pp. 67-74

set in Britain. Within this context India provided the stage with a convenient site to explore gender transgressions, interracial love affairs and homoerotic desire. Thus the subcontinent provided the theatre with the means to re-enact its long obsession with alterity and subverting gender norms, without being in danger of contravening British bourgeois morality.

The discussion will begin by focusing on the legitimate dramas *The Sword of Peace; or Voyage of Love* (1788), *A Mogul Tale* (1784), *The Widow of Malabar* (1791). We will engage in a textual analysis of the aforementioned texts. It focuses upon the dramas of the late eighteenth century correlating them specifically to contemporary anxieties about British national identity and existing gender norms being under threat from foreign influences, and debates about what form colonial rule should adopt. We will then proceed by looking at the comic opera *Ramah Droog; A Comic Opera* (1798) and the melodrama *The Cataract of the Ganges; or Saving the Rajah's Daughter* (1823). It will be of particular interest to explore the tendency of theatrical representations to remould, refashion and distort events in colonial India, and to interrogate British drama's complicity or resistance to the hegemonic impulses of empire. A concern will be to uncover how the two texts dealt with issues of gender, sexuality and marginal identities. We will also explore shifts in the way the orient was depicted on stage, contextualising portrayals with developments in sceneography and visual technologies. By focusing on the sceneography and costuming of the 'India' plays, it will then be demonstrated how illegitimate dramatic productions, held at unlicensed theatres, accelerated the tendency for the East to be viewed as a spectacle.

3.1 *Englishness in The Sword of Peace, The Widow of Malabar and A Mogul Tale*

Mariana Starke's *The Sword of Peace; or Voyage of Love* (1788) engages with some of the same concerns as Samuel Foote's *The Nabob*, which was explored in Chapter 1. Both texts view India as a space where the lower classes can rise above their station and see prolonged contact with India as morally corrupting and disruptive to normative gender roles and national identity. Yet Starke, as an author, needs to be treated differently to Foote. On one level she had direct contact with India and the Anglo-Indian community in India since her father was Richard Starke, Governor General of Fort St. George in Madras, and she spent most of her childhood in the subcontinent.⁴²⁵ Starke's text draws on her experience of living within the Anglo-Indian community in Madras.

One also has to acknowledge that Starke, as a woman writer, occupied a marginal space in the literary world – a fact that she makes her audience all too aware of in her play. For instance, she begins with a preface in which the fictional Mrs Languish, Colonel Prattle, and Mrs Gabble speculate about the author of the forthcoming play. Mrs Languish for instance says she 'is a grocer's daughter in Thames Street, that has returned an unsuccessful candidate from India for gold' and 'lacks of rupees' and Mrs Gabble says she has 'run away with a strolling player'.⁴²⁶ In addition, she has begged 'the manager in the Haymarket to bring out' the play 'as the

⁴²⁵ Moskal, 'English National Identity in Mariana Starke's "The Sword of Peace"', p. 102

⁴²⁶ Mariana Starke, *The Sword of Peace; or A Voyage of Love; A Comedy in Five Acts, performed at the Theatre Royal in the Haymarket* (London: 1789) Eighteenth Century Collections Online. Gale Group. <http://galenet.galegroup.com/servlet/ECCO>, p. v

only means to prevent herself, her husband, and six children from starving'.⁴²⁷ In the midst of the slanderous rumours the author intervenes and addresses the audience:

When a woman is known to write, if in company she converses with vivacity, she is immediately condemned as thinking “no one can speak but herself.” If she is silent “ih! She’s employed taking off the company!” – Thus, can she neither speak, laugh, nor be serious with impunity; every action is misconstrued, and her features, dress, person & c. the constant topic with those who have not abilities to judge, nor candour sufficient to praise her...⁴²⁸

The notion of writing being an unrespectable occupation for a woman, and of women as public figures being misconstrued or looked down upon was not an unjustifiable assertion for the time.⁴²⁹ Starke’s preface is thus an attempt to counter criticism in advance. She herself, in the closing stages of her address to the audience, remarks: ‘To the press I now commit the *Sword of Peace*; where though divested of the brilliance of acting, I humbly trust it will not be found to disgrace the judgement which so kindly brought it forward’.⁴³⁰ The allusion is illuminating as it reflects the anxieties of women playwrights who feared a hostile reception before an unsympathetic audience. Clairville’s sword and Starke’s play both require a hospitable reception. The meta-literary reference to the text is doubly revealing given that it brings to mind Clairville’s sword within the narrative. Just as Clairville’s sword requires a place of honour in his father’s home, Starke’s play needs a performance in a theatre to an enthusiastic audience.

The title of the play, *The Sword of Peace*, relays a sense of the text as a weapon – a weapon that presumably defends itself against male critics and launches satirical thrusts at the Anglo-India community and a specific mode of colonial

⁴²⁷ Starke, *Sword of Peace*, p. v

⁴²⁸ Starke, *Sword of Peace*, p. vi

⁴²⁹ Elizabeth Hamilton expresses the same fear through the character Charlotte Percy. See Elizabeth Hamilton, *Translations of the Letters of a Hindoo Raj* [ed. by Pamela Perkins & Shannon Russell] (London: Broadview, 1999) p. 303

⁴³⁰ Starke, *Sword of Peace*, p. vi

government associated with Warren Hastings. The transfer of the sword within the narrative symbolises the restoration of civility and an English masculine code of honour within Anglo-Indian society. Yet the title also oxymoronically offers peace as a substitute to an imperialism based on conflict.

Starke's desire that her play meet a favourable reception was not totally fulfilled in one performance of the play at the Haymarket. *The Morning Chronicle* on August 11 1788 noted that:

The play was received, generally speaking with applause
Some few of the auditors hissed during the performance,
but they must have been either peculiarly ill-natured,
or fuddled or foolish, because no one incident in the
piece deserved reprobation...⁴³¹

The review is revealing as it shows that whilst plays were often aimed at evoking a collective response of approval, a significant minority could evade being subsumed within a collective identity and could interpret the narrative against the grain and break free from consensus opinion. It shows a disparity between the review measuring the worth of a play in terms of it promulgating moral standards and spectators' expectations.

The play charts the story of two morally upstanding cousins as they come in contact with Anglo-Indian society. Eliza and Louisa arrive in Fort St. George, Madras, in India distinct from what the prologue states as 'those' women 'enroll'd who barter English charms for Eastern Gold' and who marry 'for rupees'.⁴³² Both of them have in fact arrived in the subcontinent for worthy causes. Eliza wishes to reunite with her long-lost love, Edwards, whose parents sent him away to India, because they deemed Eliza 'friendless and penniless',⁴³³ and thus an unsuitable match for her son. She is accompanied by Louisa, who has arrived in India to obtain the

⁴³¹ *The Morning Chronicle* (London: Aug. 11 1788)

⁴³² Starke, *Sword of Peace*, p. 2

⁴³³ *Ibid.*

sword of the recently deceased British officer Clairville for his father Lord Clairville, who wants to make amends for abandoning his honourable son. The restoration of rights and making amends for abandonment on a micro-level is mapped onto the macronarrative of the re-establishment of English civility in colonial India, where English residents have been contaminated by prolonged contact with the subcontinent. The two characters who both embody this corruption are the Banyan-wearing corrupt Resident (representing Warren Hastings, the Governor General of India) and the lethargic, dark skinned and sexually predatory Mrs Tartar, to whom the Resident has entrusted the care of Eliza and Louisa. Whilst Louisa and Eliza find themselves at loggerheads with Mrs Tartar on the issue of whether they should allow themselves to be flirted with by Company men and the Resident over issues of colonial governance and honour, they find a like-minded soul in the lowly officer Dormer, to whom the dying Clairville gave his sword. When Louisa offers to give Dormer five thousand pounds for the sword, as agreed by Lord Clairville, Dormer refuses financial remuneration and hands her over the weapon for free. The chivalrous conduct of Dormer meets with Eliza's approval and specifically that of Louisa, who falls in love with the young officer.

The Resident meanwhile, who wants Eliza for himself, plots with his obsequious apprentice, Supple, to prevent her reunion with Edwards. Supple, acting on behalf of the Resident, coerces an Indian merchant to have Edwards thrown in jail for not paying off his debt. Stricken with guilt, the moneylender approaches Louisa and Eliza offering them the money to release Edwards. In a timely fashion, the honourable Lord Northcote (representing Lord Cornwallis) arrives on the scene, personally pays for Edwards' release and promises to house Eliza and Louisa. The transfer of Eliza and Louisa into his care precedes the announcement that he is to take

over as Governor General, with the Resident himself being summoned to England to face corruption charges. The play concludes with the promised marriages between the two love interests, and as the servant Jeffery says: ‘the whole place’ run ‘wild for joy’ with ‘blacks and whites, masters and slaves, half casts and blue casts, Gentoos and Mussulmen, Hindoos and Bramins, officers and soldiers, sailors and captains’ all celebrating Northcote’s appointment.⁴³⁴

Starke’s play is on one level a satire of the sexual openness and triviality of Anglo-Indian society. Louisa and Eliza are taken aback by the way East India men feel they have the right to openly approach women and kiss them. Mrs Tartar and the Resident both typify the sexual predatory nature that is accounted for by prolonged contact with India. In Starke’s portrayal of Anglo-Indian life, low-class origins and racial hybridity overlap. The dark-skinned Mrs Tartar is the daughter of a tallow chandler and a black merchant’s daughter and other characters such as Mrs Garnish have ‘brown skin’. They thus unlike Eliza and Louisa are not of racially pure English upper-class stock and this in no small part accounts for their degenerate nature. The morally suspect Anglo-Indian characters are caricatures whose very names allude to their superficiality and triviality – Mrs Bronze, Mrs Gobble and Supple. Starke’s point thus seems to be that India has allowed a space for the lower classes to make naked marriages of alliance with members of the Indian community, thereby eroding class hierarchies and the racial purity of the English in the subcontinent. Furthermore, this has resulted in a rather trivial and decadent society that has broken free from prevailing bourgeois notions of morality and sexual propriety.

⁴³⁴ Starke, *Sword of Peace*, p. 63

The representation of the sexually promiscuous Resident and Mrs Tartar and their insinuated sexual relationship needs to be correlated to the real-life scandal between Warren Hastings and the German-born Anna Maria Appolonia von Imhoff. Anna von Imhoff had met Warren Hastings on board the *Duke of Grafton* in 1768 whilst accompanying her husband the painter Baron Carl Imhoff and young son to resettle in Madras. Hastings, who had just been appointed to the Council at Fort St. George, Madras, and the young woman fell in love during the journey. Hastings persuaded Carl Von Imhoff to leave Madras after giving him ten thousand pounds. Anna Von Imhoff subsequently stayed with Warren Hastings outside of wedlock until 1772, when her divorce with Carl Von Imhoff came through and Hastings was promoted to the head of the government of India. At this point the two married and Anna von Imhoff came to be known as Marian Hastings. The affair and liaison between the two caused a scandal and was widely reported in the British press. It propagated the idea in conservative circles within the metropole that the journey to India and the space of India provided a site for sexual freedom outwith conjugal marriage and for sexually assertive women to gain a position of empowerment, thus overturning male patriarchy.⁴³⁵

Anna Von Imhoff's abandonment of her husband and pursuit of the powerful Warren Hastings gave fuel to the stereotype of British women going to India in the mercenary expectation of allying themselves to wealthy Company men. Contemporary British newspapers such as *The English Chronicle* and *The General Evening Post* commented on the surfeit of British women, who could not find husbands in their own country, travelling to India in the expectation that they could

⁴³⁵ For an in-depth discussion of the Warren Hastings and Anna Von Imhoff affair and metropolitan reactions to it, see Tillman W. Nechtman, 'Nabobinas: Luxury, Gender, and the Sexual Politics of British Imperialism in India in the Late Eighteenth Century', in *Journal of Women's History* 18:4 (2006) p. 15

attach themselves to wealthy East India Company men. As Tillman Nechtman correctly observes, reports by such newspapers, denigrated women who travelled to India by arguing they were motivated by financial gain, rather than love, and were thus leading to a commoditisation of sex.⁴³⁶ The reasons why they provoked such hostility within certain British newspapers were twofold. At one level, the women who came out to India challenged the gendered division between public and private spheres by openly coming out to look for husbands. On another level, there was a fear that the number of women coming to India would exceed the amount of eligible British men, and this would in turn lead to them co-habiting with Indians.⁴³⁷ This in turn, according to commentators, would cause racial miscegenation.⁴³⁸ Starke's text clearly responds to these anxieties by making it clear at the opening of the text that her two female characters have not come to look for wealthy East India Company men and by making them resolutely resist any advances made to them by dishonourable officers. Furthermore, Starke's overlapping of racial hybridity and moral corruption in her portrayal of Mrs. Tartar and other *nabobinas* functions as a warning against interbreeding between the two races.

The *Sword of Peace* is not just a satire of Anglo-Indian society and British women who emigrated to the subcontinent. It is also a critique of colonial rule under the previous Governor General Warren Hastings who at the time of the performance of Starke's play was being tried in England for alleged corruption and atrocities committed during his tenureship in India.⁴³⁹ Reports of Edmund Burke's accusations against Warren Hastings and his alleged misdemeanours proliferated in

⁴³⁶ Nechtman, *Nabobinas: Luxury, Gender, and the Sexual Politics of British Imperialism*, pp. 20-21

⁴³⁷ The fears, as it turns out, were unjustified, as in fact the number of British women in India remained only a fraction of British men in the subcontinent. See Ghosh, *The Social Condition of the British Community in Bengal*, p. 61

⁴³⁸ Nechtman, *Nabobinas: Luxury, Gender, and the Sexual Politics of British Imperialism*, p. 21

⁴³⁹ P.J. Marshall, *The launching of the Hastings Impeachment 1786-1788* [ed. by] P.J. Marshall (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991) p. 14

the press which paid close attention to Hastings' trial.⁴⁴⁰ For many of the British public, this was the first time they were confronted with a detailed knowledge of events in colonial India. The trial itself was something of a theatrical spectacle with the more exclusive Londoners paying a notable amount of money for seats in court. Burke's hyperbolic oratory was so affecting that the famous eighteenth-century playwright and novelist Francis Sheridan was reported to have fainted after hearing about the alleged atrocities committed under Warren Hastings' governorship.⁴⁴¹

Starke's Banyan-wearing, corrupt and sexually predatory Resident is clearly meant to represent Hastings. In the text, the Resident's underhandedness and corrupt ways are demonstrated through such incidents as in his advice to Louisa that she should not give Dormer the full five thousand pounds for his sword and in his coercing of an Indian merchant to throw Edwards, his rival for Eliza's affections, into gaol for not paying off a debt. The fact that he is able to imprison Edwards for such a matter refers to a time before the reforms of Lord Cornwallis when British merchants were dependent on financial loans from Indian merchants.⁴⁴²

The eventual replacement of the Resident (Hastings) in the text with the morally upright Lord Northcote (Cornwallis) is a structural device by Starke which indicates she supported the Anglicised form of colonial government over Hastings' accultured and Indianised style of colonial rule.⁴⁴³ Northcote, unlike the Resident, is a man of honour who feels for 'the name and character of an Englishman'

⁴⁴⁰ Fisher, *Counterflows to Colonialism*, pp. 92-93

⁴⁴¹ For an account of the emotive and theatrical nature of Hastings' trial, see Franklin, *Accessing India: Orientalism, anti "Indianism"*, p. 55

⁴⁴² One of Cornwallis' measures as Governor General was to increase the wage of Company men thereby making them less reliant on Indian money lenders and on illegal trade for a living. See P.A. Roberts, *History of British India Under the Company and the Crown* (Clarendon: Oxford, 1923) p. 226

⁴⁴³ Cornwallis upon becoming Governor General of India was less sympathetic to Indian culture than Hastings and made major steps in replacing Indian administrators with British ones. See P.J. Marshall, 'Indian Officials under the East India Company in Eighteenth-Century Bengal' in *Trade and Conquest: Studies on the Rise of British Dominance in India* (London: Variorum, 1993) p. 116

who is not driven by ‘the power of gold, prejudice, nor partiality’.⁴⁴⁴ Furthermore, he takes into account the ‘lives and properties, or even happiness of others’ and has always ‘regarded the impulse of humanity’.⁴⁴⁵

Central to Northcote’s sense of honour is a constructed notion of Englishness which is unproblematically linked to selflessness, humanity and generosity. The servant Jeffrey, upon releasing the black slave Caesar from slavery,⁴⁴⁶ elaborates on the traits of an Englishman:

Jeff. Well we won’t fall out about that now; but you dog, I must make you a lad of spirit, like an Englishman, or else, what’s your liberty good for?
 Caesar. Ah Massa, I free! I like you! – Am I an Englishman? – oh teach me be an Englishman.
 Jef. That I will you rogue – An Englishman – ay he lives as he likes – lives where he likes – works if he likes – lets it alone if he likes – starves if he likes – “abuses who he likes thinks what he likes – boxes who he likes”...⁴⁴⁷

Jeffrey conflates liberty and masculine hardiness with Englishness, arguing that there can be no point in Caesar being free unless he subscribes wholeheartedly to Englishness. Jeffrey granting freedom to Caesar needs to be related to abolitionist discourse that pressed for the eradication of slavery in the British colonies.⁴⁴⁸ His liberation of Caesar can be linked to abolitionist discourses that pressed for the eradication of slavery in the British colonies.⁴⁴⁹ To a contemporary reader Starke’s

⁴⁴⁴ Starke, *Sword of Peace*, p. 57

⁴⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁴⁶ Although most slaves in India were indigenous, there were African slaves in the subcontinent at the time Starke was writing the play. African slaves generally came from Madagascar in English ships or from the Red Sea through Arab traders. See Moskal, *English National Identity in Mariana Starke’s “The Sword of Peace”*, p. 123

⁴⁴⁷ Starke, *Sword of Peace*, p. 30

⁴⁴⁸ *The Sword of Peace* was written when the anti-slavery cause was gathering momentum in Britain. Hannah Moore’s *Slavery, A Poem* (1788) and William Cowper’s *Pity for Poor Africans* (1788) both espoused the abolitionist cause and gained a wide readership. William Pitt had also persuaded the House of Commons to agree that the abolition of the Slave trade would at least be debated. See Moskal, *English National Identity in Mariana Starke’s “The Sword of Peace”*, p. 123

⁴⁴⁹ *The Sword of Peace* was written when the anti-slavery cause was gathering momentum in Britain. Hannah Moore’s *Slavery, A Poem* (1788) and William Cowper’s *Pity for Poor Africans* (1788) both espoused the abolitionist cause and gained a wide readership. William Pitt had also persuaded the

notion of freedom is questionable. Caesar and Jeffrey still have to recognise that they are servants and obey existing normative class structures and similarly Louisa and Eliza, at the conclusion of the play, recognise their place in bourgeois society, by willingly becoming the wives of East India Company men and consigning themselves to the domestic sphere.

Starke's notion of Britain being particularly liberated at a time when freedom of the press was limited, Catholics were disenfranchised, and when there were curtailments of public meetings and trade unions might seem contradictory to a twenty-first century reader. Yet that would not take account of late eighteenth-century English Tory perceptions of liberty. English conservative thinkers such as Edmund Burke prided England, in contrast to her Continental neighbours, as being particularly liberated on the basis that she had a longer history of security of property, freedom to travel, and various legal rights such *habeus corpus* and trial by jury. English antiquarians, moreover, cited Anglo-Saxon precedents, such as the *Magna Carta* and the Arthurian legends of the Round Table, to argue that England had a long tradition of freedom and constitutional government. Moreover, England, as a Protestant nation, had the tendency to look down on France, Spain and Italy as still being dominated by popish superstitions. In the wake of the American and French Revolution when radical ideas were gaining greater currency and being propagated within the metropole by British political commentators such as Thomas Paine, it became even more important for a conservative such as Burke, to cite, in his *Reflections on the French Revolution* (1790), the nation's glorious history of freedom, and to denigrate the French revolutionary idea of liberty as unnatural and tantamount to overturning the natural order. Starke's conflation of liberty with nationalism and rigid gender/class

House of Commons to agree that the abolition of the Slave trade would at least be debated. See Moskal, *English National Identity in Mariana Starke's "The Sword of Peace"*, p. 123

hierarchies is thus quite in keeping with contemporary English Tory notions of freedom.⁴⁵⁰

Although *The Sword of Peace* concerns itself with grand themes such as English liberty it, in addition, makes direct parallels between personal morality and modes of government. In Starke's text sexual impropriety overlaps with colonial mismanagement and an Englishman's behaviour in the domestic sphere is directly paralleled to his behaviour in the public sphere of colonial governance. The Resident, in addition, to lusting after Eliza and having an affair with the married woman, Mrs. Tartar, is guilty of colonial and financial mismanagement. By aligning personal sexual transgressions with a flawed form of colonial enterprise, Starke implies that the evils and exploitative practices of colonialism could be remedied by applying the principles of self government on a macro level. The exploitation of Indians, rather than being an inevitable consequence of colonialism, is ascribed to morally corrupt and racially suspect British individuals who do not subscribe to Anglicised bourgeois notions of morality.

In contrast to the *Sword of Peace*, which satirises the Anglo-Indian community in colonial India, Starke's *The Widow of Malabar* attacks Brahminism and the practice of Sati. The play opens with a prologue which bemoans that in India 'a custom reigns' where a 'widow, warm in youth must yield her breadth' and plunge herself into a funeral pyre with the corpse of her dead husband unless she wants to be 'driven by her caste' and disowned by those whom she owes her birth'.⁴⁵¹ Indians are described as an 'Unhappy race! By double chains confined, oppres'd in body, and

⁴⁵⁰ For a further discussion of English conservative constructions of liberty and the overlapping of nationalist and libertarian discourses, see E.P. Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class* (London: Penguin, 1991) pp. 85-97

⁴⁵¹ Mariana Starke, *The Widow of Malabar: A Tragedy in Three Acts as performed at the Theatre Royal Covent Garden* (Dublin: 1791) Eighteenth Century Collections Online. Gale Group. <http://galenet.galegroup.com/servlet/ECCO>, p. 70

enslav'd in mind; For ever doom'd some tyrant to obey, The Priest's the Despot's, or the stranger's prey'.⁴⁵² In contrast, the prologue portrays England as a land 'where FREEDOM long has made her glorious stand' and where the nation by 'laws themselves created only bound'.⁴⁵³ It, furthermore calls upon 'Europe's sons' to let 'them with Reason's power subdue the breast, Inform the Erring, and relieve the opprest'.⁴⁵⁴ The text thus espouses colonial intervention by Britain and presses for the use of reason to enlighten the misguided Indians who have been enslaved by the tyranny of Brahminism. The play's stated anti-Sati purposes ensured it was highly topical with one contemporary review in the *St. James' Chronicle or the British Evening Post* stating that the; 'tragedy was founded on the Gentoo custom of sacrificing the deceased husband' and that the 'story was told with historick truth'. The reviewer picked up on the fact that Mariana Starke was 'the daughter of an Indian Governour',⁴⁵⁵ in turn implying that this somehow added veracity to her depiction. Starke's play thus, according to its prologue, aims to provide an examination of the barbaric customs of Brahminism and to call polemically for the eradication of the Hindu custom. Moreover, that it was taken by at least one reviewer as historically and ethnographically accurate testifies to the power of theatrical representation to convey the illusion of authenticity.

The text narrates the story of the prospective Sati of a young Hindu widow, Indamora, with the events taking place in one day. The narrative commences with the Chief Bramin ordering the Young Bramin⁴⁵⁶ to persuade Indamora to burn herself alongside the corpse of her husband. The Young Bramin is reluctant to engage

⁴⁵² Starke, *Widow of Malabar*, p. 8

⁴⁵³ *Ibid.* Capital letters are in original quotation.

⁴⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

⁴⁵⁵ *St. James' Chronicle or the British Evening Post* (London: Jan. 13 1791)

⁴⁵⁶ I am using here the spelling of the characters in the play i.e. The Young Bramin and The Chief Bramin, rather than the modern spelling, Brahmin.

in the task, yet he ends up agreeing to do it out of a misplaced sense of duty. When he meets Indamora, who does not want to sacrifice herself because she hated her husband and is in love with a young British officer, he is struck with pity. The two get to conversing and they find out in an improbable plot twist that they are in fact brother and sister who have been separated since birth. When he finds out that they are siblings, the Young Bramin is determined to save his sister and put an end to the practice. To prevent the Sati the Bramin approaches a British officer, Raymond, and informs him of the proposed ceremony. Raymond learns in this exchange that it is his long-lost love that will be burnt to death. The young officer explodes in a fit of anger:

I come:
 But, mark me, tell these treach'rous Priests of
 BRAMA
 These vile Assasins, Indamora stands
 A shield 'twixt them and should they destroy,
 Her,
 By Heav'n I'll sweep their bloody Race from the earth
 Their friends, their altars, nay, their very altars,
 Shall feel my utmost rage – This splendid Temple
 I'll make a smoking heap of dust and ruins,
 And the whole city one huge Funeral Pyre...⁴⁵⁷

After Raymond's fantasy of inflicting genocide on Hindu India, the action of the play moves to the evening Sati procession. The Chief Bramin makes the audience aware that he has broken the treaty with the British, burnt their fleet, with the British chief Raymond apparently killed. Unknown to the Bramins though, the young officer and his troops are still alive, with Raymond having circulated the rumour in order to give his opponents a false sense of security. Just as Indamora is about to throw herself on the flames he arrives at the head of his troops to stop the act. Indamora and Raymond are reunited and the Chief Bramin, in the midst of defeat, kills himself. The young Bramin requests that the British 'teach' the Hindus 'the precepts of a faith which lifts

⁴⁵⁷ Starke, *Widow of Malabar*, p. 39. Capital letters are in original quotation.

mankind above humanity'.⁴⁵⁸ Raymond duly agrees and, in the concluding remarks of the play tells the young Brahmin: 'in yon Temple, henceforth reign supreme, And on its altars fix the CHRISTIAN CROSS'.⁴⁵⁹

Starke's narrative depicts Brahmin doctrine as enslaving the Indian population to cruel customs and backward superstitions.⁴⁶⁰ This, of course calls, for the need of the intervention of British colonial power, in the form of Raymond. Indamora's rescue from being burned serves as a metonym that refers to the master narrative of Britain intervening in India to save it from itself. *The Widow of Malabar* also uses the values of universal reason to attack Brahminism. It is notable that it is the young Bramin that tells the Chief Bramin that 'Reason's strong axe shall fell it to the earth'.⁴⁶¹ There is thus an intergenerational conflict between the young Brahmin, who is critical of Brahminism and is a British sympathiser, and the Chief Bramin, who is an Anglophobe and dogmatic 'Gentoo'. The dialectical conflict is a device by which Starke respectively aligns the forces of colonialism with the progressive elements within colonised societies and its opposition to regressive characteristics such as dogmatism, superstition and tyranny. Yet the conflation of reason with England seems to be inadvertently contradicted within the narrative when Raymond at one point, in a manly fit of anger, expresses a wish to inflict genocide on the Indian people.

It is curious that whilst *The Sword of Peace* and *The Widow of Malabar* share similar features, such as the alliance of the forces of modernity with an Anglicised mode of colonial administration and the propagation of a revitalised English masculinity, the two plays are distinct from each other in certain respects. On

⁴⁵⁸ Starke, *Widow of Malabar*, p. 57

⁴⁵⁹ Starke, *Widow of Malabar*, p. 59. Capital letters are in original text.

⁴⁶⁰ Starke's stance upon the customs of Hinduism is very similar to that of later missionary discourse upon the matter. See Thorne, *Congregational Missions*, p. 7

⁴⁶¹ Starke, *Widow of Malabar*, p. 47

the surface *The Sword of Peace* denigrates interracial sexual relations and intermarriages as potentially damaging to racial purity. On the other hand, *The Widow of Malabar* endorses the romance between Indamora and Raymond. The differing stances can be accounted for, if one views Starke's stance in *The Sword of Peace* as not simply a denigration of interracial relationships per se, but rather an attack on the way interracial marriages can provide a space by which the lower classes can rise in status and wealth by marrying rich natives. Moreover, in *The Widow of Malabar*, Raymond's romance with Indamora is an empowering one in that he saves the Hindu woman, which in turn is a metonym for the saving of Indians from an innately backward culture.

One key difference between the two texts is their slightly different stances on how the colonised respond to British colonial rule. *The Sword of Peace* presents the fiction that the rule of Northcote (i.e. Cornwallis) and his Anglicised form of colonial administration is universally celebrated by Indians. In *The Widow of Malabar* there are, however, counter voices to the imposition of English rule upon the subcontinent. The Chief Bramin's dying words for instance are:

Our very Bramins, traitors to their Gods!
 Oh I have liv'd too long! – Alas my country!
 Art thou condemn'd to bear a victor's yoke?
 And lavish all the precious stores to
 av'rice of thy lords ⁴⁶²

The Brahmin's stance signifies the awareness by Starke of an alternate view whereby colonialism in spite of all its high-minded rhetoric, is primarily an exploitative and destructive force of oppression. Yet such a counternarrative is drowned out by the other characters' endorsement of British intervention and the replacement of a backward superstitious tyranny of Brahminism with Christianity. In Elizabeth

⁴⁶² Starke, *Widow of Malabar*, p. 58

Inchbald's farce, *A Mogul Tale* (1784), performed seven years before *The Widow of Malabar*, the counterview of the Indian is brought to the fore.

Elizabeth Inchbald, the daughter of a Roman Catholic family in Suffolk, was steeped in the theatre. From the age of nineteen she began performing on the London stage in numerous roles and was known to have developed friendships and associations with eighteenth century celebrity actors such as Sarah Siddons and John Philip Kemble.⁴⁶³ Her first play, *A Mogul Tale*, was a two-act afterpiece performed at the Haymarket. As Daniel O'Quinn has argued, it was both informed by and a response to an earlier play by Isaac Bickerstaff, *The Sultan: or a Peep into Seraglio* (1775), in which Inchbald herself had played the title female role of Roxlana, the female slave. As O'Quinn points out, both farces feature 'a sultan, a eunuch and three ladies of the harem'.⁴⁶⁴ Yet whilst Bickerstaff's play ends in an affirmation of British values with the clear resolution of the sultan being instructed in ideas of love and liberty, with him setting the female slave, Roxlana, free; *A Mogul Tale* presents an altogether different representation of Britishness.

In *A Mogul Tale*, three Brits – Johnny, Fanny and the Doctor – arrive by accident in a hot air balloon in the gardens of the Moghul emperor. Upon realising that they have landed in India, they express orientalist preconceptions about what might happen to them, with the Doctor fearful that they may 'be amongst people, who pay, no regard to genius, science, or invention' and thus may put them to death for being 'three witches that ride in the air'.⁴⁶⁵ In contrast to their complacent understandings of the supremacy of Western knowledge, the Mogul is shown to the

⁴⁶³ For an account of Elizabeth Inchbald's early life and theatrical career, see; Jane Spencer, 'Inchbald, Elizabeth (1753-1821)' in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/index/101014374>, accessed on Nov 9th 2007]

⁴⁶⁴ O'Quinn, *Staging Governance*, pp. 17-18

⁴⁶⁵ Elizabeth Inchbald, *A Mogul Tale or; The Descent of the Balloon. A Farce as it is Acted at the Theatre Royal Smoke Alley* (Dublin: 1788) Eighteenth Century Collections Online. Gale Group. <http://galenet.galegroup.com/servlet/ECCO>, p. 3

audience to be well aware of the European technologies. Furthermore, for his own amusement he decides to play up to their negative stereotypes of oriental despotism, telling his eunuchs to: ‘Agrivate their fears, as much as possible, tell them, I am the abstract of cruelty, the essence of tyranny’.⁴⁶⁶ The three Brits, who too readily believe the Mogul’s constructed image, project hyperbolic self-representations before the emperor in an attempt to ward off potential execution. The Doctor pretends to be the Ambassador for the King of England and Johnny, the Cobbler, impersonates the Pope. The Emperor, who is distinctly unimpressed, responds by telling the gullible three that he is going to execute the two men using ‘boiling oil – the cages of hot iron and the trampling elephants’,⁴⁶⁷ and that Fanny will be one of his concubines. Just at the moment that the three are convinced of their ill-awaited fates, the Mogul reveals that they have been part of an elaborate practical joke. In the Mogul’s closing remarks he turns orientalist stereotypes on their head, extending courtesy to the travellers and closing with a damning indictment of British colonialism in India:

I am an Indian, a Mahometan – You have imposed upon me, and attempt to defraud me, but know that I have been taught mercy and compassion for the sufferings of human nature; however differing in laws, temper and colour from myself. Yes from you christians whose laws teach charity to all the world, have I learn’d these virtues? For your countrymen’s cruelty to the poor Gentoos have shewn me tyranny in so foul a light, that I was determined henceforth to be only mild, just and merciful – You have done wrong, but you are strangers, you are destitute...⁴⁶⁸

Inherent here is an inversion of images of Islamic despotism and tyranny with the Mogul emperor being magnanimous and undermining the notion that Christian Britain is humane by directly chastising colonial cruelty towards the Hindus. The narrative thus deconstructs British orientalist attempts to depict themselves as the protectors of Hindus from despotic Moghul rule.

⁴⁶⁶ Inchbald, *A Mogul Tale*, p. 7

⁴⁶⁷ Inchbald, *A Mogul Tale*, p. 18

⁴⁶⁸ Inchbald, *A Mogul Tale*, p. 20

It is not simply orientalist stereotypes or tropes that Inchbald's play is satirising but also British hyperbolic self-representation. In the farce the lowly cobbler impersonates the Pope and the Doctor of Music pretends to be the ambassador of England. The provinciality of the characters and their inflated self-representations are juxtaposed in order to create an absurd comical effect. This is most aptly conveyed when the doctor tells the Mogul that he is the ambassador for the 'King of Great Britain, France, Ireland, Scotland, Northumberland, Lincolnshire, Sheffield, and Birmingham' and the 'Prince of the River Thames, Trent, Severn Thyne, New River, Fleet Ditch and the Tweed'.⁴⁶⁹ The mocking of the characters' pretensions is linked by Inchbald to the masternarrative of Britain's projected image of herself as an imperial power. Moreover, in contrast to idealised depictions of English manhood in *The Sword of Peace* and *The Widow of Malabar*, English masculinity is deconstructed and satirised within the text. The eunuchs continually dupe Johnny and the Doctor. Their constant visual proximity to them on stage would most likely have served as visual markers to imply the Brits own emasculation and powerlessness. Moreover, the impotency of both Johnny and the Doctor are made apparent in the text when the inebriated Johnny makes failed sexual advances to the concubines, and when Johnny tells the audience that the Doctor has 'no longer any inflammable air about him, either in his balloon or himself'.⁴⁷⁰

In the plays *The Sword of Peace*, *The Widow of Malabar* and *A Mogul Tale*, India was an arena for playwrights to explore Englishness and modes of Empire. In *The Sword of Peace*, India is a space which can disrupt normative class hierarchies and English identity, and thus the play argues the need for a revitalised English ruling class to counter this threat. Whilst the drama critiques the way the colonial endeavour

⁴⁶⁹ Inchbald, *A Mogul Tale*, pp. 9-10

⁴⁷⁰ Inchbald, *A Mogul Tale*, p. 4

can create a space for the lower classes to rise above their station that is not to say colonialism per se is being critiqued. As long as the colonial endeavour is based upon principles of English bourgeois notions of ‘gentility’, then it is strongly validated in both texts. In *The Widow of Malabar*, rather than India corrupting Britain, the subcontinent provides a space for propagating an idealised version of Protestant England that contrasts with a backwards and superstitious Brahminised India. Thus the play strongly endorses the colonial endeavour and advocates that Hinduism should be eradicated and replaced with Christianity. Inchbald’s *A Mogul Tale*, however, mocks the British imperial mission and orientalist essentialisations about India. The subcontinent thus serves as a site for deconstructing English masculinity and the colonising mission.

3.2 *Gender, Sexuality and Oddity in Ramah Droog and The Cataract of the Ganges*

Whilst the earlier play *The Sword of Peace; or Voyage of Love* explored the way contact with colonial India could disrupt normative Englishness, gender roles and class hierarchies, in the early nineteenth-century comic opera *Ramah Droog* and the melodrama *The Cataract of the Ganges* something quite different occurred. In these two stage productions, India provided a space where heteronormative norms and historical processes could be suspended, and where marginal British identities such as the Irish could be managed and accommodated within a colonial ethos. Thus, whilst as the gender historian Dror Wahrman has pointed out that from the 1780s to well into the nineteenth century, dramas tended to emphasize the fixity of gender categories with cross dressing going out of fashion, it

will become apparent in this section that such a trend did not cross over into British portrayals of India in theatres.⁴⁷¹ Indeed, India seems to have served as a site where not only categories of gender could be toyed with but also the history of Britain's role in India.

In *Ramah Droog*, Surooj Singh has usurped the throne of an Indian kingdom by murdering the rightful king and his family – with the exception of the King's daughter Zelma, who has been secreted away by a travelling Prince, Zemaun, to a discreet hideaway. Upon hearing of this bloody coup, a troop of British soldiers, headed by Captain Sydney, are sent into battle against Singh's forces. They are, however, defeated with Sydney and his troops being taken prisoners and only, Sydney's wife, Eliza, and his Irish sergeant, Liffey, managing to evade capture. The captive prisoners are cruelly treated by the King's second in command, Chellinghoe, who locks them up in a dungeon, permitting them a daily allowance of rice and water and extorting out of the men their few remaining possessions. In the meantime, Liffey and Eliza, who have concealed themselves in a nearby wood, out of extreme hunger surrender themselves to a group of tiger hunters who take them to Surooj Singh's fortress, Ramah Droog. Liffey, afraid of being recognised as a soldier, disguises himself as a physician, with Eliza deciding to impersonate his servant. Upon arriving at Ramah Droog he is given the task of curing the King who has fallen ill, upon pain of death should he fail. Out of a sense of desperation, he offers the Rajah a potato, under the pretence that it is medicine. Ironically, Surooj Singh, who, as it turns out to Liffey's and the audience's amusement, was only suffering a hangover after mistakenly drinking some red wine, immediately improves. The grateful Rajah rewards Liffey by appointing him to various offices of state. In the meantime, the

⁴⁷¹ Dror Wahrman, *The Making of Modern Self: Identity and Culture in Eighteenth-Century England* (London: Yale University, 2004) p. 52

Rajah's daughter, Princess Alminah, has been spurned by Captain Sydney, a man she had formed an intense infatuation for and with whom she wanted to escape and elope. When she finds out, through a blunder by Liffey, that he is already married to Eliza, she plots their destruction. Her malicious intentions are thwarted, when Margaret, Liffey's battle-axe wife, upon being released by Zemaun, joins the British second detachment and leads them to Ramah Droog. The play concludes with the British storming the fort, releasing the prisoners and restoring the rightful Princess Zelma to the throne.

On a superficial level the comic opera seems to promulgate a notion of commonality and brotherhood between England and Ireland. When the Rajah asks Liffey if he is an Englishman, Liffey, replies: 'I am an Irishman, which is the same thing'.⁴⁷² Moreover he adds:

An Irishman is an Englishman with another name. Why now, for instance, there is my brother Tody, his name is Tody, and I am Barney, but then our interests are the same, and we are like two arms, when one needs defence, the other naturally comes to his assistance...⁴⁷³

Liffey's comments seem to endorse the *Act of Union* whereby Ireland was incorporated into Great Britain.⁴⁷⁴ Liffey's unquestioning loyalty to and brotherhood with England, though, evades the fact that in 1798 there was a bloody extermination by English forces of the united Irishmen who rose up against English rule.⁴⁷⁵ The space of colonial India and the theatre is thus used by Cobb to project a sense of harmony and accord between England and Ireland which overlooked the reality of a

⁴⁷² James Cobb, *Ramah Droog: A Comedy in Three Acts; as performed at the Theatre Royal, Covent Garden* (London: T. N. Longman and O. Rees, 1800) Eighteenth Century Collections Online. Gale Group. <http://galenet.galegroup.com/servlet/ECCO>, p. 46

⁴⁷³ Ibid.

⁴⁷⁴ J.S. Bratton, Richard Allen Cave, Breandon Gregory, Heidi J. Holder and Michael Pickering, *Acts of Supremacy: The British Empire and the Stage, 1790-1930* (Manchester: Manchester University, 1991) p. 69

⁴⁷⁵ Thomas Bartlett, 'Ireland, Empire and Union, 1690-1801' in *Ireland and the British Empire* [ed. by Kevin Kenny] *The Oxford History of the British Empire Companion Series* [ed. in chief: Wm. Roger Louis] (Oxford: Oxford University, 2004) pp. 81-82

much more fraught relationship. The brotherhood constructed within the text is mitigated by the fact that Cobb clearly depicts England as the older brother in the relationship. It is notable that Liffey, the Irish sergeant, loyally obeys his English Captain Sydney. In addition, Liffey, with his Irish antics and sayings, is a comedy figure for much of the play.⁴⁷⁶ His adversarial relationship with his battle-axe wife is contrasted with the more mature relationship between Eliza and Sydney. In addition, throughout most of the performance he is effeminised by wearing an Indian *Khelaut*.

India provides a space where normative gender roles are disrupted. The lustful Princess wishes to elope with Captain Sydney. Both Margaret and Eliza adopt male attire. Eliza impersonates a male servant, and Margaret wears male breeches and totes a pistol. The main difference between Eliza and Margaret, though, is that whilst Eliza reveals her femininity at the end of the opera, Margaret still storms the fortress wearing breeches. Thus as Daniel O'Quinn has argued despite the fact there is a restoration of normative gender roles of the English characters with the siege of Ramah Droog, Ireland remains subtly linked to India as a site for non-normative gender roles. Yet it could be alternatively argued that the very fact that Eliza could successfully adopt a male garb is revealing as it illustrates that India offered playwrights, stage artists and actors a space in which they could play with categories of gender in a way in which would have been deemed unacceptable if the opera was set in Britain.⁴⁷⁷

⁴⁷⁶ *The Morning Herald* review commented that Liffey's 'Irish pleasantries' helped to 'frequently enliven the scene and convulse the audience with laughter'. See *The Morning Herald* (London: Nov. 13 1798)

⁴⁷⁷ In an earlier play by James Cobb entitled *Love in the East; or Adventures of Twelve Hours* (1788) colonial India provides a space where characters within the narrative masquerade as members of another nationality, class or gender. Twist the Tailor pretends, for instance, to be the Frenchman Colonel Baton, Colonel Baton pretends to be Twist the Tailor, and the lady Eliza pretends to be the Scottish highlander Mr. McProteus. See James Cobb, *Love in the East; or Adventures of Twelve Hours as Performed at Drury Lane*. The Second Edition Corrected (London: 1788) Eighteenth Century Collections Online. Gale Group. <http://galenet.galegroup.com/servlet/ECCO> pp. 1-81

William Thomas Moncrieff's *The Cataract of the Ganges: or Saving the Rajah's Daughter* was performed in 1823, twenty five years after the first performance of *Ramah Droog*. During that time, British discourse about Hinduism had become progressively more hardline.⁴⁷⁸ Missionary and Utilitarian writings often argued that Hinduism was an innately backward and superstitious religion that needed eradication. Missionaries had pressed for its replacement with Christianity, and Utilitarians, such as James Mill, argued for the implementation of British rule of law and government.⁴⁷⁹ Missionaries and Utilitarians focused upon and circulated in the British print market depictions of Indian customs such as Sati and female infanticide to support their argument that Hinduism was innately backward.⁴⁸⁰ Such portrayals in print culture had the effect of mobilising widespread support from sections of the British public to pressure the government to directly intervene and put an end to the practice. In June 1823, Thomas Buxton presented a petition signed by 2,400 inhabitants to the House of Commons calling on the government to eradicate the practice and also for the release of all governmental documents relating to infanticide in the subcontinent.⁴⁸¹ Missionary and Utilitarian campaigns against Brahminism and their conflation of the practises of Sati and female infanticide informs William Thomas Moncrieff's *The Cataract of the Ganges*.

In *The Cataract of the Ganges*, the Rajah of Gujarat, Jam Saheb, has managed to fend off an attack from his 'haughty foe, the Emperor Akbar'⁴⁸² yet still is conscious of the fact that Akbar's forces are still strong and are in all likelihood going to launch another attack. The Rajah requests his ally the English chief Mordaunt to

⁴⁷⁸ Major, *Pious Flames*, p126

⁴⁷⁹ Bolton, *Saving the Rajah's Daughter*, p. 489

⁴⁸⁰ Chatterjee, *Representations of India*, pp. 111-124

⁴⁸¹ Bolton, 'Saving the Rajah's Daughter', p. 489

⁴⁸² William Thomas Moncrieff, *The Cataract of the Ganges; or Saving he Rajah's Daughter. A Grand Romantic Drama in Two Acts* (New York: Samuel French, 1860) p. 10

press the Mahrathas for aid whilst he goes on a mission for backup from the Scindians. Jam Saheb leaves his kingdom unwisely in the hands of his Machiavellian Brahmin advisor, Mokarra. He entrusts his daughter Zamine, who has been cunningly disguised from birth by the King as a man to prevent her infanticide, to the safe hands of Jack Robinson and Robinson's adoring Indian female helper, Ubra. Whilst the Rajah is away, the plotting Mokarra, unaware that Zamine is in fact a woman, takes the opportunity to cement his power by agreeing to a treaty with Akbar which entails the marriage of the princess Zamine with Akbar's daughter Princess Dessa. After being signalled by Jack Robinson, the Rajah returns to stop the marriage revealing that Zamine is in fact a woman who he disguised, upon his wife's dying request, in order to prevent her being executed at birth, according to customs of Hinduism. Mokarra responds to the revelation by telling Jam Saheb that he must sacrifice Zamine. In order to save his daughter the Rajah states that he is willing to abdicate from the throne and concede his throne to the Emperor Akbar. Mokarra and Akbar duly agree, with the Brahmin taking Zamine as his slave. The Brahmin, after unsuccessfully attempting to seduce Zamine, decides that she will be taken to the cataract of the Ganges where she will be executed.

The British, in the meantime, have enlisted Maratha aid, to help restore Jam Saheb and save his daughter. When the British and the Mahratha troops are confronted by superior Jahrejah troops, Mordaunt has to resort to rhetoric in order to convince them the error of their ways. Mordaunt tells them:

Jahrejahs, husbands, fathers, men – what is't you do? You stand in arms against your lawful sovereign – and why? Because, unswayed by lustful priestcraft, he, as a husband, cherished the fond pledge of love a faithful wife presented – because he, as a father, did not destroy the helpless innocent, that smilingly looked in his face for safety and affection – and, as a man, redeems your forfeit claim to that proud title, by rooting this foul crime for ever from you. For this, throw off your allegiance. Murderers of children,

you have not hearts to combat with true men! Obey your Sovereign!
Lay down your arms...⁴⁸³

The Jahrejahs are overpowered by Mordaunt's words and subsequently join forces with the British and the Marathas. They arrive at the Cataract of the Ganges just before Zamine's execution, and a battle breaks out between the two forces. Eventually, Mokarra and his troops are overcome, with Mokarra being killed. The opera concludes with the victorious Rajah joining the hands of Zamine and Iran together, implying there will be an eventual marriage between the two.

The melodrama provides a damning portrayal of Hinduism. Moncrieff allegorises India being led astray by Brahminism through Mokarra's betrayal of the Rajah Jem Zaheb, who has entrusted the priest with maintaining his kingdom while he is away. Mokarra is a hypocrite who disobeys the tenets of his religion by indulging in alcohol, having worldly ambition and being sexually predatory. His pagoda is full of gold, presumably extorted out of his gullible followers. He is also the one who presses for the barbarous Indian customs to be executed, condemning the Rajah for not committing infanticide and then preparing to sacrifice Zamine. Britain, in contrast, the staunch ideological foe of Brahminism, shows herself to be a loyal ally to the Rajah of Gujarat and protector of Zamine. Colonel Mordaunt, at the moment when it seems the Brahmin is triumphant in entrenching his power and possessing Zamine, tells

Mokarra:

The mighty army for just principles in on the march to sweep
for you ever from the earth. Britain is foremost in the righteous
bend; nature and reason have too long slumbered; but awake to
deal an ample retribution – I tell thee ruffian priest, the hour
approaches when you must yield your vast misgotten stores and
bow to toleration...⁴⁸⁴

⁴⁸³ Moncrieff, *The Cataract of the Ganges*, p. 40

⁴⁸⁴ Moncrieff, *The Cataract of the Ganges*, p. 26

Inherent in Mordaunt's rebuke is the contradiction of the Brahmin being forced to bow to 'toleration' and handing over his misbegotten wealth exploited out of the Indian devotees to the British. Mordaunt's words unwittingly reveal the profit motive behind colonial intervention and that beneath all the high minded rhetoric lurks the threat of force. The text attempts to lead the audience into believing that the British in India are essentially a benevolent force. The English Colonel is the friend of the beleaguered Rajah who helps restore him to his rightful throne. Moreover, he defeats the Jahrejah warriors with rhetoric rather than force. The recasting of the British as merely agents who restore rightful rulers to the throne is an evasion of the intent behind colonial conquest. Britain is recast as being dragged unwittingly into Indian affairs in order to protect wronged indigenous leaders. Yet subsumed within the text is the narrative of colonial violence and hegemony. Robinson, for instance, steps on the sacred Hindu idols in order to make his escape – an image which conveys a sense of sacrilege, desecration and contempt towards Hindu culture, and is at odds with Mordaunt viewing England as being a force for tolerance.

Betsy Bolton has argued that *The Cataract of the Ganges* is an 'anachronistic tableau' whereby historical events in colonial India have been distorted and compressed. She points out that in the narrative the British are a significant presence and 'Akbar remains poised for a successful conquest of Guzerat', whereas the historical reality was that Akbar conquered Gujarat 'some 30 years before the English arrived in India'.⁴⁸⁵ Moreover, in the melodrama, Colonel Mordaunt has been requested by the Rajah to secure aid from the Marathas. Yet as Bolton points out in 1817 and 1818, 'in the audience's living memory, the British had waged war against the Maratha forces', and thus Moncrieff's historical confusion 'recasts the Mahrattas

⁴⁸⁵ Bolton, *Saving the Rajah's Daughter*, p. 479. Bolton uses the spelling Guzerat for Gujarat.

as willing allies rather than forced conquests', thereby helping 'invoke and erase Anglo-Indian conflict'.⁴⁸⁶ Thus the revisions of historical processes in *The Cataract of Ganges* is symptomatic of the colonial objectives to rewrite the history of the colonised, imposing the colonisers' own centrality and absolving themselves of blame.

The construction of India within British drama did not always simply reflect Foucauldian power objectives. India provided a space where directors, writers and actors could break free from the bourgeois British cultural norms. It is notable that at a time when cross dressing was going out of fashion⁴⁸⁷ on the stage and gender was evermore inextricably linked to sex in British print culture,⁴⁸⁸ India was a safe terrain to explore gender transgression and sexual taboos. Thus Zamine, in *The Cataract of the Ganges*, can successfully disguise herself as a man, and Liffey, Eliza and Margaret in *Ramah Droog* all cross dress. Same-sex desire is likewise explored in *The Cataract of the Ganges* with Iran upon learning that Zamine is in fact a woman saying: 'What wild hopes break o'er my soul'⁴⁸⁹ implying of course that he desired Zamine when he thought she was a man.

Whilst O'Quinn and Bolton argue that the gender transgressions and exploration of sexual taboos are symptomatic of India disrupting British heteronormative norms, it would be more pertinent to suggest that India provided a convenient means for playwrights to circumvent British censorship laws and address concerns and interests that had dominated British theatre since Elizabethan and

⁴⁸⁶ Ibid

⁴⁸⁷ Dror Wahrman, *The Making of the Modern Self: Identity and Culture in Eighteenth-Century England* (London: Yale University, 2004) p. 48

⁴⁸⁸ When I use the term 'sex' here I use it to describe the categorisations 'male' or 'female' based on physical and genital characteristics, whereas for gender I mean the cultural practices that denote masculine or feminine.

⁴⁸⁹ Moncrieff, *The Cataract of the Ganges*, p. 25

Restoration times.⁴⁹⁰ As Laurence Senelick has argued, the theatre is a literary form that is inherently receptive to the performance of cross dressing and gender transgression. He points out that in many pre-modern cultures, whilst the theatre was often called upon to endorse social norms and ‘convey the establishment ethos in a public forum’, actors were considered to be outsiders engaging in a disreputable occupation.⁴⁹¹ He argues this was due to the fact that they commodified their bodies for the common gaze or because they pretended or feigned to be someone of a different social rank. Yet it was precisely because of these factors that cross dressing becomes a very appropriate mode of self expression and performance for actors since it could be a suitable gendered metaphor for their marginal and subservient role within society (if it was a male actor impersonating a woman) or because it drew attention to the enigma of the actor’s own identity or sexual preferences.⁴⁹² Cross dressing could be thus an act of defiance against prevalent social norms and expectations, as well as being a means to positively reaffirm the actor’s outsider status.

In light of what Laurence Senelick has observed to be the theatre’s innate interest in cross dressing and gender transgression, the space of India and the depiction of Indian peoples were liberating in that they allowed the stage director to explore issues that would be considered taboo if the play was set in Britain during this specific period. What is evident in texts is that whilst gender transgressions are projected onto Indian space they are not necessarily denigrated. Thus Iran, who engages in same-sex desire for Zamine fights nobly side by side with the British in

⁴⁹⁰ For a more in-depth investigation of the popularity of cross dressing and gender transgression in Shakespearean and Restoration England I would refer you to Beth H. Friedman-Romell, ‘Breaking the Code: Toward a Reception Theory of Theatrical Cross-Dressing in Eighteenth-Century London’ in *Theatre Journal*, vol. 47, No. 4 *Eighteenth-Century Representations*, (Dec., 1995) pp. 459-479.

⁴⁹¹ Laurence Senelick, *The Changing Room: Sex, Drag and Theatre* (London: Routledge, 2000) p. 9

⁴⁹² Senelick, *The Changing Room*, pp. 6-10

The Cataract of the Ganges. This is also apparent in **Fig. 13**, which depicts a scene where a procession of Indian guards march attired in tight shorts with indelicate protrusions and their long legs displayed. The spectacle is clearly aimed at provoking sexual interest in both the female and male members of the audience. Thus, rather than being distanced from the effeminate Indian, the play's intention seems to make male members of the audience complicit within process of same-sex desire, through first having Zamine the female beauty dressed as a man and by parading the guards in unmanly costumes. Whilst the production's intention is to evoke same sex desire within the male members of the audience, the male spectator is absolved from the possible guilt of homoerotic desire as the feelings are being projected onto Indians, who, according to British colonial masculine discourse are not fully men. Yet, conversely, the theatre director has engaged in a sleight of hand when one considers that it is not the Indian male body that becomes the locus of homoerotic desire but the British actor performing 'Indianness'. He thus has managed to push forward transgressive agendas without seemingly contravening the boundaries of British bourgeois moral respectability.



Fig. 13. Procession of guards at Zamine's and the Princess Dessa's wedding in *The Cataract of the Ganges* Stone Collection 6 West Hodgson & Co. 86-105 THM/234 picture 2 in the Toy Theatre Collection at the V & A Museum

It is notable that the heroes and heroines of both texts are absurd figures. The comical Irish sergeant Liffey and his battle-axe wife Margaret, in *Ramah Droog*, and the silly Jack Robinson who models his life on the character Robinson Crusoe in *The Cataract of the Ganges* are not figures that one would associate with an earnest colonial enterprise. Thus the spectacle play, rather than deploying India as a space within which to propagate an idealised notion of Britishness and masculinity, utilises the subcontinent as a terrain where these colourful characters can entertain the audience through their eccentricities and oddities. Moreover, the quirkiness of the characters, it can be argued, complements the camp and colourful visual spectacles, rather than espouses an idealised notion of British masculine identity.

3.3 *The Staging of India: Did Theatre Directors Manage to Instil an Imperial Subjectivity into Audiences?*

In 1737, Robert Walpole, in response to a subversive play written by Henry Fielding, enacted the 1737 Licensing Act, which ensured a system of textual censorship whereby all plays along with their epilogues and prologues had to be examined five days before their performance by the Lord Chamberlain for any subversive or obscene content. It further ensured that in the city of London only Covent Garden and Drury Lane were allowed to perform dramatic productions. Their duopoly was only broken in 1766 when the Duke of York, after a riding accident which resulted in the loss of Samuel Foote's leg, gave Foote a patent for the

Haymarket theatre to put on theatrical performances in the summer, when both Covent Garden and Drury Lane had closed for the year.⁴⁹³

Due to the fact that Covent Garden, Drury Lane and The Haymarket serviced the whole of London for the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century, there were huge demands placed upon the patent theatres. During the period 1776 to 1800, nearly 1,200 ‘mainpieces’ and ‘afterpieces’ were performed, with 750 of them being new productions and the average number of new plays each season was ten.⁴⁹⁴ A typical night in Covent Garden and Drury Lane would consist of a five-act mainpiece and between two and five two-act afterpieces,⁴⁹⁵ which were designed to accompany the main five-act play as part of the evening’s scheduled entertainment.⁴⁹⁶

To cope with increasing demand, Covent Garden and Drury Lane were rebuilt numerous times in the eighteenth century. In 1733 Drury Lane could only house 1,000 people.⁴⁹⁷ However, between 1791-4 the theatre was enlarged with the stage now measuring 83 feet wide, 92 feet long and 108 feet high and could now hold an estimated 3,600 people. Similarly Covent Garden was enlarged, based on the designs of Henry Holland from a capacity of 2,170 in 1782 to 3,015 in 1792.⁴⁹⁸ The rebuilding of the theatres had important ramifications for viewers. As theatres grew, it became increasingly difficult for members of the audience at the furthest end of the hall to have a clear view of the stage. It was also doubly more difficult, when one

⁴⁹³ For a discussion of the consequences of the 1737 Licensing Act, and a patent later being granted to Samuel Foote’s Haymarket theatre, see Joseph Donahue, ‘Chronology’ in Donahue, *The Cambridge History of British Theatre vol. 2*, pp. xxxiii-xl

⁴⁹⁴ Charles Beecher Morgan, *The London Stage 1660-1800 A Calendar of Plays, Entertainments & Afterpieces Together with Casts, Box-Receipts and Contemporary Comment Compiled from the Playbills, Newspapers and Theatrical Diaries of the Period Part 5: 1776-1800* (Illinois: South Illinois University, 1967) p. clxvii

⁴⁹⁵ Morgan, *The London Stage part 5*, p. xxxvi.

⁴⁹⁶ Gregg, *Representing the Nabob*, p. 21

⁴⁹⁷ Robert D. Hume, ‘The Multifarious Forms of Eighteenth-Century Comedy’ in *The Stage and the Page London’s “Whole Show” in the Eighteenth Century Theatre* [ed. by Geo Winchester Stone] (London: University of California, 1981) p. 7

⁴⁹⁸ For information on the stage dimensions of Drury Land and Covent Garden, see Joseph Donahue, ‘Chronology’ in Donahue, *The Cambridge History of British Theatre vol. 2*, p. li

considers that, for most of the eighteenth century, stages were poorly lit by candle-light. Actors had to compensate for poor acoustics, rowdy audiences and limited visibility by becoming louder, more unsophisticated in their performances and enacting caricatures rather than nuanced characters.⁴⁹⁹ Due to the poor visibility the backscene had to be more coarse and fanciful to make an impression on viewers.⁵⁰⁰ The extension of theatres and the effects this had on performances led to critics bemoaning the lowering standards of productions and attacks from conservatives that theatre directors were pandering to the lowly masses.⁵⁰¹

In the early to mid eighteenth century the settings tended to be anonymous. Instead of actors performing within a three-dimensional set they performed in front of generic perspective paintings of city walls, gates, temples, palaces and forests painted on the wings, borders and backshutters at the rear of the stage.⁵⁰² Such set paintings were anonymous so that they could easily be transferred from one play to another. The lack of visual control over performances is further evident in a situation where costuming decisions were not centrally organised and often the idiosyncratic choice of performers. When David Garrick took control over Drury Lane a change began to occur in terms of the visual aspects of the theatre. Garrick took costuming decisions out of the hands of male actors, making sure they were centrally controlled. He experimented with lighting by shining light through

⁴⁹⁹ For a discussion on how the increase in theatre size affected performances, see Allardyce Nicoll, *A History of English Drama 1660-1900 vol. 111 Late Eighteenth Century Drama* (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1952) p. 23

⁵⁰⁰ Donald C. Mullin, 'Theatre Structure and its Effect on Production' in Stone, *Stage and the Page*, p. 86

⁵⁰¹ Jane Moody, 'Theatrical Revolution of Illegitimate Dramatic Forms' in Donahue, *The Cambridge History of British Theatre vol. 2*, p. 208

⁵⁰² Robert D Hume, 'Theatres and Reportory' in Donahue, *The Cambridge History of British Theatre vol. 2*, p. 162

dyed silk and gauze to create coloured lighting effects.⁵⁰³ His real innovation, however, was to appoint the Alsatian painter Philip James De Loutherbourg to be responsible for all the visual effects of performances – thereby leading for the first time to the concept of the stage artist.⁵⁰⁴ During Loutherbourg's career in England he strove to make theatrical scenery more realistic and his work marks a shift from neoclassical stage scenery to romantic scenery that aimed to depict real natural landscapes.⁵⁰⁵ The stage artist attempted to bring a three dimensional element to sets using ramps, levels, cut out scenes, and painted transparencies.⁵⁰⁶ Moreover, even though he was hampered as gas lighting had not yet been invented, Loutherbourg experimented with lighting effects by illuminating the auditorium using footlights, oil lamps, hanging rings of candles above the stage and by stretching silk screens of different colours working in pivots in front of intense light to create the illusion of clouds and storms.⁵⁰⁷

Between the years 1772 to 1823, plays concerning India responded to the increasing developments in visual and staging technology. In the earlier plays such as *The Nabob* and the *Sword of Peace or Voyage of Love*, India or rather the Indian style was first represented in stage directions in order to demonstrate a disruption of normative British identity. The 'excess' in stage descriptions for depicting India or 'Indianness' through costumes, body types and interiors was used pejoratively to convey a dissolute and deceptive world that contrasted with plain and honest Britain, which was denoted on stage through a 'lack' of visual signifiers.

⁵⁰³ For relevant information on the changes that David Garrick made to the costuming of productions and his innovations in the field of stage lighting during this period, see Morgan, *The London Stage part 5*, pp. lxvi-lxviii

⁵⁰⁴ Robert D. Hume, 'Theatres and Reportory: the Theatre from 1660-1800' [hereafter;Theatres and Reportory] in Donahue, *Cambridge History of British Theatre vol. 2*, p. 162

⁵⁰⁵ Vera Mowry Roberts, 'New Viewpoints on Nineteenth Century Scene Design' in *Educational Theatre Journal*, vol. 18 no. 1 (Mar, 1966) p. 42

⁵⁰⁶ Robert D. Hume, 'Theatres and Reportory' in Donahue, *Cambridge History of British Theatre vol. 2*, p. 162

⁵⁰⁷ Morgan, *The London Stage part 5*, p. lxvi

In a similar fashion to *The Nabob*, which has been discussed in Chapter one, *The Sword of Peace; or Voyage of Love* deploys elaborate stage directions and overdressing to convey a visual impression of a British self that has been corrupted and racialised through extensive habitation in India. This is most evident in the scene which features the greatest amount of stage directions in the play – the Anglo-Indian ball. The scene features ‘three tables on a side ranged with gentlemen and ladies’ who are either ‘skeletons’ or ‘very fat’ and a door opening into a ball room.⁵⁰⁸ Inside the ball room there is ‘Mrs Garnish with her natural brown complexion her dark hair dressed with a number of jewels and her whole dress as fine, and overloaded with as much finery as possible’ and the Resident who is also ‘over dressed’.⁵⁰⁹ In contrast, the morally upright and newly arrived Eliza and Louisa later enter the ball ‘dress’d with the utmost simplicity and Elegance of Taste, and Fashion’.⁵¹⁰ The unusual body shapes, the elaborate costuming, ornamentation and the dark skin are markers that Starke deploys to signify a corruption of English identity through prolonged contact with the East. Eliza and Louisa offer a profound contrast, signifying a normative English identity that visually contrasts with the corrupted Anglo-Indian figures. Normative English identity *The Sword of Peace or Voyage of Love* is thus marked by an absence of detailed stage directions, props and elaborate costumes, whilst a corrupted ‘Indianized’ identity is marked by the very need on stage for an excess of distinctive visual markers. The depictions of Indianised British women wearing elaborate dresses and jewelry needs also to be related to contemporary fashions of the *nabobina* living in colonial India.⁵¹¹

⁵⁰⁸ Starke, *The Sword of Peace*, p. 33

⁵⁰⁹ Starke, *The Sword of Peace*, p. 35

⁵¹⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹¹ Marian Hastings, Warren Hastings wife, was known to wear elaborate dress, rings, necklaces; which were reported in anti-Hastings discourse to be obtained through the misbegotten imperial spoils of her

It is significant that, in *The Nabob*, Matthew Mite is in gaming dress learning how to play cards and many of the British residents at the ball in *The Sword of Peace or Voyage of Love* are playing a game of cards, since the wagering and bluffing in the games can also function as a metonym for the speculation and private credit that traders continued to practise in the subcontinent. Like the game of cards where participants have to wager and bluff without the necessary resources to back them up, colonial trade was based before the Cornwallis reforms of the 1790s on individual traders relying on credit from Indian financiers and through illegally using *dastaks* for their own private trade that were explicitly meant for company trade.⁵¹²

In Elizabeth Inchbald's *A Mogul Tale; Or Descent of a Balloon* (1784), the scenery, costumes and central prop convey an ever greater sense of the unstable ground that the colonial enterprise was founded upon. The most distinctive visual item is a balloon that lacks inflatable air and has fallen to the ground – a metonym for impotence of colonial rule. Inchbald's use of the balloon needs to be contextualised in relation to the hot air balloon being displayed in a number of performances in the period just after its invention⁵¹³ and to it being deployed as a recurring trope in British print culture to depict the colonial enterprise.⁵¹⁴ The image was particularly apt as it conveyed that the colonial enterprise was an endeavour that was not grounded on any firm financial footing and could burst at anytime. In addition to the hot air balloon, Inchbald's text features well-worn scenes to depict Mogul India such as the Mogul garden, the Seraglio and the emperor seated on the throne surrounded by eunuchs. Yet

husband. See Nechtman, *Nabobinas: Luxury, Gender, and the Sexual Politics of British Imperialism*, pp. 17-18

⁵¹² Dutt, *The Economic History of India*, p. 19

⁵¹³ Morgan, *The London Stage part 5*, p. lxxxvii

⁵¹⁴ As Daniel O'Quinn has convincingly argued the image of the descending balloon was used in a series of satirical prints in 1783, to depict the failure of Charles James Fox's *East India Bill* to be passed as a piece of legislation by the House of Lords (1783). The bill had attempted to place limits on the power and autonomy of the East India Company, by making it more responsible to parliament. See O'Quinn, *Staging Governance*, pp. 20-21

the stereotypical stock sets and visual essentialisations that one would usually associate with the tyranny of Islamic rule, contrast with the actions and words of the Moghul himself. Thus Inchbald's use of scenery is subversive as it serves to show how ill suited were British stock oriental tropes and conceptualisations in any attempt to accurately represent the Indian characters in the play.

Ethnographic and military displays in The Widow of Malabar, Ramah Droog and The Cataract of the Ganges

Whilst the sets and stage designs of *The Sword of Peace*, *The Nabob* and *The Moghul Tale* were primarily concerned with showing the effects of Indianisation on the British and replicating stock tropes about India or contesting them, later sets attempted to engage with ethnographic concerns, following a general trend in British visual representations of India at this time. The increased interest in depicting Indian landscapes, ethnography and cultural practices can be related to a number of factors. With the British gaining a greater foothold in India, there was a greater attempt to 'know India'. The East India Company patronised landscape painters, ethnographers and oriental scholars whose work was later popularised in the metropole and informed representations of India in the theatre.

It must be taken into consideration how the rise in illegitimate theatre led to innovations in terms of staging. Illegitimate theatres such as Sadler's Wells, the Lyceum, the Astley and others managed to circumvent the Licensing Act's stipulations that only Drury Lane, Covent Garden and the Haymarket could stage dramas by producing operettas, burlettas and historical spectacles. The Burlettas and

Operettas managed to circumnavigate the laws by combining narrative, spoken dialogue and music. The new and smaller theatres, with their increased number of *flats*, were better equipped to dazzle audiences with spectacular effects, quick scene changes and modern machinery.⁵¹⁵ Spectators were treated to visual spectacles such as dancers, acrobats, staged military battles and the latest inventions on the stage.⁵¹⁶ The patent theatres, in order to compete, had to appropriate many of the visual effects of the illegitimate theatre. Theatrical stage scenery had to respond to expectations of audiences who were habituated to the spectacles that were created through the newly invented *panoramas* and *dioramas* that were all the rage in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century.⁵¹⁷

There was a definite trend towards more sophisticated set scenery as the nineteenth century progressed. John Kemble, manager of Drury Lane (1787-1802) and Covent Garden (1817), in collaboration with his trusted stage designer William Capon, deployed models of buildings with towers, battlements, drawbridges and archways on set.⁵¹⁸ Kemble and Capon also brought the ancient world to the stage by depicting important landmarks.⁵¹⁹ Although his scenes were not by any means accurate archaeological depictions of the past, they created the illusion of realistic verisimilitude. Moreover, in John O’Keefe’s pantomime *Omai, or a Trip around the World* (1785), staged at Covent Garden, Louthembourg’s set designs initiated a trend for the way the Orient was portrayed on stage. The stage artist’s set designs, props and costumes for the play, which is set partly in Tahiti, had actually been influenced

⁵¹⁵ For a fuller discussion on how illegitimate theatres managed to circumvent the Licensing Act (1737) and dazzle audiences with more spectacular effects, see Jane Moody, ‘Theatrical Revolution of Illegitimate Dramatic Forms’ in Donahue, *Cambridge History of British Theatre vol. 2*, pp. 202-214

⁵¹⁶ Morgan, *The London Stage part 5*, p. lxxxvii

⁵¹⁷ Moody, *Illegitimate Theatre in London, 1770-1840* (London: Cambridge University, 2000) p. 6

⁵¹⁸ Morgan, *The London Stage*, p. xlv

⁵¹⁹ Christopher Baugh, ‘Stage Design from Louthembourg to Poel’ in Donahue, *Cambridge History of British Theatre vol. 2*, p. 314

by John Webber, the chief illustrator on Cooke's third journey to the South Sea, and William Hodges, the reputed landscape painter. Webber provided Loutherboung with guidance on how to dress the Tahitian characters in *Omai*, and Hodges' drawings were drawn upon for the stage artists' depictions of Tahitian life. Loutherboung also drew on the collection of South Pacific costumes and objects in the nearby Sir Ashton Lever's museum as models for stage designs.⁵²⁰ He thus brought a museological approach to the way distant spaces were depicted on the British stage to lend a certain authenticity and documentary quality to the stage scenery. Plays focused on natives' quaint cultural practices often exoticising them in the process and relegating indigenous peoples to components of a visual display that lacked agency.⁵²¹ Similarly panoramas and dioramas which often reproduced colonial spaces were compared by reviewers to actual journeys to the east.⁵²² The stage popularised and disseminated knowledge of colonial conflicts in the metropole. For instance, between 1791 to 1793 there were three large scale shows of Cornwallis' battles with Tipu Sultan at Seringapatam and in 1800 Robert Ker Porter's commemorative 120-foot-long panorama covering 2550 square feet of canvas of the storming of Seringapatam was displayed for viewers at the Lyceum theatre.⁵²³

The developments and innovations in staging and visual technology had important consequences for how the orient and India were depicted in the legitimate theatre. With the extension of theatres and decrease in the audibility and visibility of performances, there was a tendency for theatre directors to grab audiences' attention with outlandish spectacles. The trend towards more elaborate visual effects in patent theatres was also influenced by dioramas, panoramas and by

⁵²⁰ For a discussion on how Loutherboung sought to bring a documentary authenticity to his set designs of *Omai*, see O'Quinn, *Staging Governance*, pp. 90-92

⁵²¹ O'Quinn, *Staging Governance*, p. 342

⁵²² Edward Ziter, *The Orient on the Victorian Stage* (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 2003) p. 10

⁵²³ Almeida & Gilpin, *Indian Renaissance*, p. 156

techniques cultivated in illegitimate theatres. The orient, which since the Restoration period had been a space the stage associated with colour, alterity and pageantry, became an ideal site in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century where advances in staging technology could be utilised.⁵²⁴

Panoramas and the documentation of cultural practices on stage had the effect of disseminating images of British domination of colonial spaces and creating a heightened sense that the British could represent, survey and visually order colonial locales. As Kathleen Wilson argues, the new visual technologies ‘made the fictive and illusory into the “exact” representation as it really was’ and constructed ‘a visual regime of historical authenticity’.⁵²⁵ Furthermore, Stage re-enactments of battles at the illegitimate Astley amphitheatre and Sadler’s such as *Tippoo Saib, or British Valour in India* (1791), *Tippoo Sultan, or, the Siege of Bangalore* (1792) and *Tippoo Saib or the East India Campaigning* (1792) reflected more aggressively militarily expansionist attitudes within the colonial administration and the metropole.⁵²⁶

The beginnings of an attempt to ethnographically replicate perceived Indian religious practices and spaces can be traced in Mariana Starke’s *The Widow of Malabar*. The scene that contains the most detailed stage descriptions and set scenery is the Sati scene where Indamora, the beautiful young Hindu widow, prepares to throw herself on the sacrificial pyre:

A spacious quadrangle, surrounded with rocks, at the further end,
the pagod of Eswara, A funeral pile in the middle of the

⁵²⁴ The theatre since the Shakespearian and Restoration period had an interest in the orient. Christopher Marlowe’s *Tamberlaine* (1587) and John Dryden’s *Aurung-zebe* (1675) were both set in the East and used the East as a site for pageantry, eloquence and diffracting Western obsessions. See Richard Barbour, *Before Orientalism: London’s Theatre of the East 1576-1626* (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 2003) pp. 37-42

⁵²⁵ Wilson, *The Island Race*, p. 88

⁵²⁶ Daniel O’Quinn, ‘Theatre and Empire’ in *The Cambridge Companion to British Theatre, 1730-1830* [eds. by Jane Moody and Daniel O’Quinn] (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 2007) p. 241

Quadrangle with a platform leading from the steps of the pagod to the top of the pile. The sea at a distance – Time Evening – The rising moon discovers the English fleet standing out at sea. Procession continues with Oriental music. The chief Bramin and his train advance from the Pagod. A number of Indians crowd the Quadrangle.

Indamora advances veiled in white from the Pagod of Eswara, led by the second Bramin followed by two women. The Bramin lights the funeral pile (soft and solemn music in the background). Indamora advances towards the pile – The mirror and dart are thrown on it. Slaves throw in oil and incense. Bramins kneel to Indamora who waves her hand as if to bless them. Indamora stops when she reaches the background, stands ready to caste herself on the pile...⁵²⁷

The stage description has a pseudo-ethnographic specificity to it with the ‘pagod of Eswara’, ‘the spacious quadrangle’ and slaves throwing in ‘oil and incense’. Yet the scene has also been staged to look and sound aesthetically pleasing to the audience. There is ‘a rising moon’ and ‘soft and solemn music’ in the background. The widow, Indamora, is a beautiful young Indian woman ‘veiled in white’ walking to the pyre with calm grace. Sati in the play thus becomes a centre-stage spectacle for the consumption of the British audience. While the three-dimensional set with its ethnographic props and the music in the background would most likely have seemed a powerful and convincing representation of Sati and served as actual knowledge of the practice for many viewers of the play, the scene depicting a beautiful young Hindu woman compelled to perform Sati by Brahmin priests, yet saved at the last minute by a British officer, assimilated into a rescue fantasy trope in British fiction.

The rescue trope of the British man saving the young Indian woman, however, contrasts with the contemporary situation of the East India Company being desirous, up to 1829, not to place a ban on Sati for fear it might offend indigenous religious sensibilities.⁵²⁸ The scene was also disingenuous because it was just as

⁵²⁷ Starke, *The Widow of Malabar*, p. 40

⁵²⁸ The E.I.C, furthermore, limited their interventions to those Satis which were deemed to have been coerced and therefore ‘illegal’ because they contravened Brahmin scriptural law. This was in keeping

likely, if not more, that an old woman was likely to perform Sati as a young woman, and more often than not the widow in question did not wish to be saved.⁵²⁹

Moreover, the trope recasts the custom in purely religious terms, seeing it as a Brahmin-led custom, rather than exploring the socio-cultural and economic motivations for Sati. The victim Indamora, thus, can be used as a metonym for India, which needs rescuing from Brahmin dogmatism by the British.

In the comic opera *Ramah Droog* and the melodrama *The Cataract of the Ganges* the narrative takes second place to visual spectacle and pageantry. The stage scenery provided *Ramah Droog* with what a contemporary reviewer in *The Morning Chronicle* described as ‘a dazzling display of Eastern splendour’,⁵³⁰ with such scenes as the Rajah being seated on the throne and surrounded by dancing girls. The musical score by Mazzinghi and Reeve provided the background for this visual spectacle. Similarly the review in *The Times* stated that *The Cataract of the Ganges* abounds ‘in conflicts and conflagrations, in marchings and countermarchings.’⁵³¹ The visual and musical elements took primary importance in the staging of the opera with the narrative taking second place. According to one contemporary reviewer, the story was ‘not essential to the character of the opera’.⁵³² Likewise, *The Morning Chronicle* reviewer for *The Cataract of the Ganges* stated that the ‘parts were written most probably for the scenery’ and that the ‘dialogue’ was ‘almost too unimportant to

with British stated policy in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century of non-interference in indigenous religious practices and of ruling according to indigenous Hindu and Muslim laws. See Lata Mani, ‘Contentious Traditions: The Debate on Sati in Colonial India’ in *Cultural Critique no. 7 The Nature and Context of Minority Discourse 11* (Autumn: 1987) p. 126

⁵²⁹ Although stories abounded that Job Charnock, the founder of Calcutta, had in the late seventeenth century, rescued a grateful young beautiful Hindu widow from Sati and subsequently took her as a wife, this departed from the norm. Hindu widows who were intent on committing Sati could often resent being saved by a white European as they were dishonoured by not completing the sacrifice. Being touched by a foreigner’s hands was also in violation of caste stipulations. These factors could lead to them being shunned by their families and local communities. See Major, *Pious Flames*, pp. 99-100

⁵³⁰ *The Morning Chronicle* (London: Nov. 13 1798)

⁵³¹ *The Times* (London: Oct. 28 1823)

⁵³² *The Morning Chronicle* (London: Nov. 13 1798)

notice'.⁵³³ Both plays thus mark the way India was a convenient means for gratifying audiences' desires for spectacle and pageantry. That the subcontinent should be deployed in such a way is unsurprising given that European artists had already supplied a range of readymade visual tropes upon which sceneographers could draw upon, and marked the region as an exotic land whose peoples wore a range of elaborate costumes and were divided by castes.

Yet the visual elements of the opera *Ramah Droog* were strongly informed by contemporary British depictions of India in painting and in print culture. The central stage feature of the play, the fort, was also a prominent feature in the work of landscape painters who followed Lord Cornwallis and the army in their various sieges of forts.⁵³⁴ John Inigo Richards' sketch for the stage scenery of *Ramah Droog* which is described in the play as a 'Plain with a distant view of the Rajah's Hill Fort',⁵³⁵ (fig. 14 below) is said to have been based on engravings by Thomas and William Daniells who had followed British forces in South India.⁵³⁶

⁵³³ *The Morning Chronicle* (London: Oct. 23 1823)

⁵³⁴ O'Quinn, *Staging Governance*, p. 337

⁵³⁵ Cobb, *Ramah Droog*, p. 16

⁵³⁶ The Daniell brothers had painted a series of Indian forts and a number of famous views of forts of the rock of Trichinopoly that were engraved and in circulation less than three months before the opening of *Ramah Droog*. See O'Quinn, *Staging Governance*, p. 336. James Cobb had also earlier used drawings, by the artist William Hodges that depicted a view of Calcutta with a number of Indians and Europeans walking on the shore for his opening scene in *Love in the East*. The use of India prints demonstrates how stage artists and directors drew upon the work of British India artists who had visited India to lay claim to a greater authenticity. See O'Quinn, *Theatre and Empire*, p. 240



Fig. 14 John Inigo Richards, Set design for James Cobb's *Ramah Droog*. Department of Prints and Drawings, Einthoven Collection, Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Taken from O'Quinn, *Staging Governance*, p337

The opening set scene, where British prisoners are being held in an Indian dungeon by a cruel Rajah and his loyal servant, needs to be contextualised in relation to the vast number of British officers and soldiers held captive by Tipu Sultan in Mysore in the late eighteenth century. Imprisoned Britons, who recorded their experiences of captivity, documented harsh conditions in cells, long exposure to the sun, assaults and humiliation at the hands of Indian guards, and in some cases the indignity of being circumcised.⁵³⁷ The trope of white British officers being imprisoned by Indian captors inverted colonial power relations. It had proved popular and struck fear within the British imagination ever since John Holwell's narrative of the Black Hole of Calcutta had been published in 1758.⁵³⁸ Yet, as Linda Colley has pointed out, British officers, who were a source of embarrassment while Tipu Sultan was still in power, became useful propaganda for the Company in the aftermath of the Mysore leader's defeat. Their stories and experiences were used to portray the cruelty and capriciousness of Indian leaders and thus helped justify further expansion into the subcontinent. The Company began interviewing escapees from Mysore imprisonment in order to both gain military information and to uncover any emotive stories of stoic suffering at the hands of the brutal Indians. It then patronised and published Mysore captivity narratives for the purposes of garnering popular support within the

⁵³⁷ Colley, *Captives*, pp. 282-286

⁵³⁸ Kate Teltscher, "The Fearful name of the Black Hole': Fashioning an Imperial Myth" in *Writing India: 1757-1990* [ed. by Bart-Moore Gilbert] (Manchester: Manchester University, 1996) pp. 30-49

metropole.⁵³⁹ The deployment of the captivity trope in *Ramah Droog* illustrates how successful the Company's propaganda campaign could be in terms of influencing popular metropolitan conceptions of India.

Audiences in the later plays were bombarded with a plethora of visual detail that combined images of oriental splendour, ethnographic specificity and sheer spectacle gimmickry. The following scene, from *Ramah Droog*, in which the Rajah returns from his palace after a tiger-hunting expedition is described as follows:

Enter the Rajah on an elephant, returning from hunting the Tiger, preceded by his Hircarrahs or Military messengers, and his state Palanquin – The Princess in a Gaurie, drawn by Buffaloes – The RAJAH is attended by an Ambassador from Tipoo Sultaun in a Palanquin, also by Nairs or soldiers from the South of India – Poligars, or inhabitants of hilly districts, with their hunting dogs other Indians carrying a dead Tiger, and young Tigers in a cage – a number of sepoy. Musicians on camels and on foot – Dancing girls.⁵⁴⁰

It is worth pointing out that the amount of stage direction, expense and logistical effort to compress such a range of visual material on the stage would have been immense. First there would have been the problem of bringing in imitations or real elephants,⁵⁴¹ buffaloes, tigers and camels onto the stage.⁵⁴² Careful costuming would also be required for the ethnographic distinctions between 'poligars' from the hilly districts and soldiers from the south of India. The choreography involved in coordinating the dancing girls, the palanquin and the *Gaurie* would also have been no mean feat. Yet such a scene testifies to the new trend in the theatre to attempt to

⁵³⁹ For a discussion on how the East India Company deployed captivity narratives for propaganda purposes, see Colley, *Captives*, pp. 296-297

⁵⁴⁰ Cobb, *Ramah Droog*, p. 52

⁵⁴¹ The mechanical elephant was a selling point of the production with handbills advertising the ingenuity of the elephant's mechanism. In an 1805 production of *Ramah Droog* there was the even greater attraction for the audience of seeing a real-life elephant on stage. See O'Quinn, *Staging Governance*, p. 333.

⁵⁴² Dead tigers and encaged tigers have a further significance when it is considered how the tiger was associated in visual art with Tipu Sultan, thus the dead and the two encaged tiger cubs could be taken as a metaphor for how Tipu Sultan was no longer a threat at this time, and that his sons were taken into British captivity. For further information on how Tipu Sultan was linked visually to a tiger, see Almeida & Gilpin, *Indian Renaissance*, p. 37

spatially manage, categorise and survey India's distinct ethnicities, diversity and wildlife on stage for the consumption of British audiences.

The distinctiveness, specificity and lavishness of the costumes for Indians in *The Cataract of the Ganges* was likewise as ambitious and prescriptive as those in *Ramah Droog*, if not more so. According to the pictures composed for the toy theatre (see **fig. 15 below**) and the stage directions, the Brahmin Mokarra wears 'a white cashmere from neck to ankle',⁵⁴³ Akbar a 'broad trimmed tunic' with 'white full trousers', Jam Saheb a 'velvet Robe cloak' and Iran is dressed as 'an Indian warrior – with sword – belt – boots – turban'.⁵⁴⁴ As can be seen in **figs. 15 and 16**, the distinctive costumes mirror the trend by British artists in India to depict Indians according to the distinctive occupations they performed. Thus the low-caste servant, whose face and features are blackened and racialised, in **fig. 16**, is wearing white shorts and garishly striped leggings, in contrast to the higher ranked soldier, Brahmin, and royalty portrayed in **fig. 15** who are elegantly dressed and have fairer skin and nobler features. Moreover, while the Moghul emperor, Akbar (on the far right) and the Rajah of Gujarat, Jam Saheb (the figure below him), are decorously attired, the figure of the soldier (on the bottom left) and Iran (on the top left) are more simply attired, as befitting their lower status. Costume and clothing is deployed, in a similar fashion to Balthazar Solvyns' drawings of Indian peoples, to differentiate Indian peoples according to their relevant social status, rank and caste.

⁵⁴³ Moncrieff, *The Cataract of the Ganges*, p. 8

⁵⁴⁴ Cobb, *Ramah Droog*, p. 8



Fig. 15 The differing characters and costumes of characters in *The Cataract of the Ganges* – Iran (top left), Mokarra (top centre), Akbar (top right), Soldier (bottom left) Iran again (bottom centre), Jam Saheb (bottom right) Stone Collection 6 West Hodgson & Co. 86-105 THM/234 picture 15 in the Toy Theatre Collection at the V&A Museum, London.



Fig. 16 Depiction of a slave in *The Cataract of the Ganges*. Stone Collection 6 West Hodgson & Co. 86-105 THM/234 picture 16 in the Toy Theatre Collection at the V&A Museum, London.

The costumisation effectively categorises Indians for display to the British audience and denies them of agency or any empathy from the audience – thus continuing a trend that Loutherbourog had established. The extent to which Indians are there for visual display is evident in the opening scene which depicts the aftermath of a battle near Ahmedabad between Gujarat and Delhi; ‘where the moon glitters on the cannon, arms, and accoutrements on the fallen wounded and dead Hindu and Muslim warriors’. The visual sight rather than being distressing and horrific to viewers instead has an aesthetic beauty, with the moon glittering on warriors and the music expressive of the ‘wounded and dying’.⁵⁴⁵

Daniel O’Quinn and Betsy Bolton have emphasised the overawing spectacle that the staging and technologies demonstrated in *The Cataract of the Ganges* would have on an early nineteenth-century metropolitan theatre goer. Indeed,

⁵⁴⁵ For the sceneography of the opening scene, see Cobb, *Ramah Droog*, p. 9

the staging technology and scenery William Moncrieff deploys in *The Cataract of the Ganges* could only have been imagined by the stage designer of *Ramah Droog*. There is a total of nine distinctive scenes; featuring such sites as: a palace, the bloody aftermath of a battle, the interior of a grand Brahmin temple filled with golden idols and the beach of Cambay, and a final scene which mimics the cascading waters emanating from the cataract of the Ganges and a burning forest. The capability and capacity to mount such a range of scenes and to engage in swift scene changes is a testament to how far theatre and stage technology had advanced by 1823. Two scenes in particular would have been difficult to stage. In Act 1 scene VI a procession of Akbar's 'Mogul troops', 'Native European troops', and Jahrejah troops with their respective 'orchestra bands' and horses join in 'one grand flourish'.⁵⁴⁶ Moreover, as shown in **fig. 17**, real horses, accompanied by attendants, drove Princess Dessa's chariot to meet with Zamine at the prospective wedding. A successful enactment of this scene would have needed in-depth stage management and access to military knowledge. Moreover the final scene, which mimicked the cascading waters emanating from the cataract of the Ganges and a burning forest, required the deployment of pyrotechnic technology and water being poured through the ceiling of the theatre.

⁵⁴⁶ Cobb, *Ramah Droog*, p. 23



Fig. 17 Depiction of a battle scene between Jack Robinson, Iran, Colonel Mordaunt and the opposing forces of Mokarra's troops. Stone Collection 6 West Hodgson & Co. 86-105 THM/234 picture 14 in the Toy Theatre Collection at the V & A Museum, London.



Fig. 18 Depiction of Princess Dessa and Akbar being driven by a horse driven chariot to her prospective marriage. Stone Collection 6 West Hodgson & Co. (137) THM/234 picture 1 in the Toy Theatre Collection at the V & A Museum, London.

O'Quinn has espoused the capacity of plays such as *Ramah Droog* and *The Cataract of the Ganges* to 'generate intense fantasies of imperial supremacy through the enchantment of military discipline in an enclosed space'.⁵⁴⁷ Indeed, **fig. 17**, which depicts a battle scene in the play between Jack Robinson, Iran, Colonel Mordaunt and the opposing forces, headed by the evil Brahmin, Mokarra, is indicative of the play's intent to engage in a form of military triumphalism and jingoistic self-congratulation. It is important, though, not to overemphasize the capacity of such technology to instil a new form of imperial subjectivity into metropolitan theatre

⁵⁴⁷ O'Quinn, *Theatre and Empire*, p. 241

goers as not all viewers were impressed. A contemporary reviewer for *London Magazine* was singularly underwhelmed, commenting that whilst the play was supposed to be a ‘mighty Afterpiece, which was to bestride the theatrical world like a colossus’, it was in fact nothing more than ‘an empty expensive and glittering toy’.⁵⁴⁸ The reviewer was likewise derisory about the play’s climax, where armed forces seemed to fight amidst a burning forest and the cataract of the Ganges. Whilst the scene was advertised as the height of staging effects, the reviewer remarks that; ‘the cataract itself rather disappointed us as a waterfall’ with it being ‘something like the pouring of a good tea pot’.⁵⁴⁹

It would seem plausible to suggest the possibility that attempts to overawe theatre audiences with imperial technologies and stage effects may have on occasion fallen short of being totally effective, with more critical members of the audience failing to be hypnotised by the scene that lay before them. This would seem likely given that maintaining a standard of staging technology for each performance was wrought with difficulties with the possibility that on any performance the choreography or the technology could break down, leading to farcical results. At such points, it may have been possible that both the stage direction and the imperial endeavour could inadvertently look ridiculous, or as underwhelming as the ‘pouring of a good tea pot’. Rather than reflecting colonial dominance or hegemony to audiences, the theatre performance had the potential to thus inadvertently reflect the more likely scenario of imperfect colonial military structures and technologies that could never totally dominate India, and, moreover could never totally impress upon every section of the British public the need to engage in colonial expansion. It is worth pointing out that a performance might achieve different receptions depending

⁵⁴⁸ *London Magazine*, 8 (London: Dec. 1823) p. 637 & p. 638

⁵⁴⁹ *London Magazine*, 8 (London: Dec. 1823) p. 638

on where it was staged. Lavish theatrical productions performed outside the London metropole could sometimes have the potential to overawe a provincial audience that was not habituated to metropolitan visual technologies.⁵⁵⁰ Thus, whilst O’Quinn has suggested that London audiences through metropolitan visual technologies, were instilled with imperial subjectivities and thus more receptive to stage productions of colonial conflicts, it may be possible to argue that the reverse is true. In other words, metropolitan audiences habituated to elaborate visual displays could be less likely to be impressed than provincial audiences who had relatively less experience of such technologies.

Conclusion

Whereas India, in the 1770s and 1780s, was represented in terms of its ‘excess’ and being a threat to British normative identity, in the 1790s and early 1800s it became a means of illustrating Britain’s capacity to represent and know India. India and the orient became a site upon which stage artists could show off the latest advances in staging and visual tricks, thus grabbing the attention of audiences. That is not to say, however, that audiences were uniformly overawed by performances since more critical members of the audience could break away from consensus opinion or be unimpressed by the visual and imperial technologies. Moreover, whilst in earlier plays such as *The Sword of Peace* (1788) and *The Widow of Malabar* (1791), India serves as a backdrop to project idealised notions of British identity and colonial rule,

⁵⁵⁰ This was something a contemporary review of a performance of *The Cataract of the Ganges* at Litchfield remarked upon, when commenting that the play was; ‘was produced in a style of magnificence quite unknown here’. See Thoa Cross, ‘Drama of *Cataract of the Ganges*’ in *Country Theatricals* (London: Aug. 1824) p. 316. Another reviewer remarked that in Liverpool the ‘amphitheatre’ was ‘literally *crammed* each night; so great is the anxiety to witness the superb manner in which this interesting piece has been got up’. See *Bell’s Life in London and Sporting Chronicle* (London: Jan. 31 1830). Italics are in the original text.

this is not the case for James Cobb's *Ramah Droog* (1798) and William Moncrieff's *The Cataract of the Ganges* (1823). India becomes a convenient site upon which to explore gender transgression, homoerotic desire and quirkiness. Whilst in the late eighteenth century explorations of these issues were seen as a symptoms resulting from Indian contamination of Britain, no such denigration takes place in these later plays. India is in fact a liberating space because it sanctions the homoerotic gaze and cross dressing. In addition, theatrical performances, in contrast to novels and verse, where Indian female or male suitors are eventually killed or separated from their white lovers, allowed for the possibility for interracial relationships as long as they were empowering for the British male characters.

4. The Novel Market: Interracial Desire, the Commoditisation of Culture, and Master-Servant Relationships

The novel in the eighteenth century was still an emerging literary mode of lowbrow cultural status in comparison to classics or verse. Yet between 1780-1825, a steady rise in prestige for the novel and novelist occurred and a shift took place with the sentimental genre being displaced by the gothic as the dominant genre. The transition had implications for the way the subcontinent was portrayed. Whilst previous authors retreated from direct criticism of colonial governance and played out their dislocation from their texts in the very form their narratives adopted, later novelists were less shamefaced about critiquing colonial policy, often tackling them head on. Moreover, whilst authors in the late eighteenth century saw India within a universalistic framework assimilating India into a travelogue and equating colonial Calcutta with metropolitan London, nineteenth century authors were more prone to seeing India and its inhabitants as culturally ‘other’, or the transgressive and darker side of the European self.

There has been some noteworthy scholarship concerning British India novels of this period. Nandini Bhattacharya and Joyce Grossman have examined the catechetical novels of Mary Sherwood, focusing on the relationships between British *Memsahibs* and *Sahibs* and their Indian servants.⁵⁵¹ Other studies by Michael Franklin, Balachandra Rajan and Kate Teltscher, however focus primarily on three novels: *Hartly House*, *Translations of the Letters of a Hindoo Raj* and *The*

⁵⁵¹ Joyce Grossman, ‘Ayah, Dhayes and Bearers: Mary Sherwood’s Indian Experience and “Constructions of Subordinate Others” in *South Atlantic Review*, vol. 66, no. 2, *Being Global: From the Enlightenment to the Age of Information* (Spring, 2001) pp. 14-44 & Bhattacharya, *Reading the Splendid Body*, pp. 134-142

Missionary: An Indian Tale. Their critiques of the narratives tend to polarise around the fact that the women authors of the aforementioned texts utilised India as a feminised space from which to critique or reaffirm the masculine colonial endeavour. Teltscher adopts the view that representations of India in *Hartly House* and *Translations of the Letters of a Hindoo Raj* function primarily to reinforce British cultural superiority.⁵⁵² Conversely, Franklin argues that in *Hartly House* and *The Missionary*, India provides a feminised space to provide a critique and alternative to male patriarchal British society.⁵⁵³ Rajan adopts the view that whilst *Hartly House* renders a positive portrayal of Brahminism, *The Missionary* reaffirms western masculine dominance over the subcontinent.⁵⁵⁴ Whilst Teltscher, Franklin, Rajan and Bhattacharya have provided valuable insights into how authors used India as a space to challenge or reaffirm metropolitan gender norms, this chapter in contrast focuses upon a broader selection of novels and novelists and seeks to determine broader historiographical shifts pertaining to issues of authorship, the novel market and the emergence of new public spheres. It will also demonstrate that whilst in the eighteenth century interaction with the Indian was portrayed as empowering, in the nineteenth century cross-cultural contact was depicted as potentially causing the disempowerment and fragmentation of the western 'self'. Such changes will be correlated to shifts in the literary marketplace and to progressive attempts by both the colonial administrators and missionaries to preserve the British 'self' from contamination by India.

This survey of British novels representing India will primarily focus upon the *Indian Adventurer; or History of Mr. Vanneck* (1780), Helenus Scott's *The*

⁵⁵² Teltscher, *India Inscribed*, pp. 134-142

⁵⁵³ Franklin, *Radically Feminizing India*, pp. 154-173

⁵⁵⁴ Balachandra Rajan, *Under Western Eyes: India from Milton to Macaulay* (London: Dale University, 1999) p. 131

Adventures of a Rupee (1782), Phebe Gibbes' *Hartly House, Calcutta* (1789), Elizabeth Hamilton's *Translations of the Letters of a Hindoo Raj* (1796), Sydney Owenson's *The Missionary: An India Tale* (1811) and Mary Sherwood's *The History of George Desmond* (1821). The chapter is divided upon a thematic basis with literary texts deployed as case studies to support the specific arguments and concerns of each section. We will firstly relate the lives of authors to the developing literary marketplace and global trade. The purpose of this methodology is to help demonstrate that the depictions of India within the novel were largely determined by the demands of the print market and to the rising cultural status of the novelist. After exploring these issues, the discussion will move on to focusing on where various novelists derived their information of India from, how they depicted the relationship between colonial India and the metropole, and what they considered to be suitable consumption of Indian culture in Britain. We will then proceed to explore relationships between the British and Indian characters in the novels, with particular reference to issues of sex, religion, and the master-servant power dynamic.

4.1 *The Novel Market, Authors of India and Global Trade*

The rising status of the novel and novelists from the late eighteenth to the early nineteenth century can be demonstrated by looking at the lives of the respective British authors of India. By perusing the John Murray letter books, the applications to the Royal Literary Fund and in some cases the actual novels themselves, one can come to an understanding of the marginal status of many of the earlier novelists and the conditions in which they wrote their texts. Also of interest is the way earlier novels allude to emerging forces of global trade and print capitalism,

with texts such as *Adventures of a Rupee*, *Hartly House* and *Translations of the Letters of a Hindoo Raj* mirroring these processes in the very form the narratives adopt. Yet, as will be demonstrated, when the eighteenth century drew to a close and the nineteenth century progressed there arose the phenomenon of the celebrity author who had newfound confidence in the literary merit of his or her work. Such shifts in the literary marketplace had implications for the way they incorporated Indian elements in texts and marketed works as India novels.

The majority of novelists for much of the eighteenth century were not aiming at lasting literary fame but rather to entertain and amuse. They did not consider themselves as artists or creators of a work, which accounts for the fact that only a small proportion of them attached their names to the novels.⁵⁵⁵ Novelists, between the mid to late eighteenth century, were seen as ‘anonymous, genderless, low skilled, low paid piece workers’.⁵⁵⁶ The low estimation with which novelists often viewed their own work was commonly shared by publishers. If one looks, for instance, at the John Murray letter books one can see that the publisher was eager to engrave a portrait of the head of authors of verse and histories on their respective editions in order to promote sales.⁵⁵⁷ Whilst Murray cultivated a personal and direct relationship between the author and the text in the case of poets, scholars and historians, he did not consider it necessary to do so for the novelist. Murray’s stance was quite in keeping with the widely-perceived view that the novel was a lowbrow and disembodied form of fiction. As Peter Garside states, the ‘majority of writers’ of novels ‘imitated specific models’ and ‘all too many’ of them ‘seem, to have been put

⁵⁵⁵ Garside, *The English Novel*, p. 41

⁵⁵⁶ St. Clair, *The Reading Nation*, p. 176

⁵⁵⁷ In a letter to Reverend Mr Biduke, dated April 25 1803, John Murray asks for a frontispiece and etchings for the cover of an edition of poems, and in a letter to Mr Beddoes Nov. 29th concerning a publication of William Jones’ poetry, he expresses the need for the engraved head of the author on the front cover of the copy. See *JMLB/NLS MS. 41904*

together above the print room'.⁵⁵⁸ Publishers and circulating libraries demanded greater homogeneity in terms of the genre of novel authors produced between the 1770s and 1790s.⁵⁵⁹ This explains the fact that, between 1770 and 1790, at least 30 percent of all novels were in epistolary format with it accounting for at least 40 percent of the annual output in the years 1776, 1777, 1779, 1780, 1781 and 1784. Moreover, most of the novel output was dominated by the sentimental romance genre where women were prone to swooning and fainting. The turning point for the epistolary novel's domination of the literary market is 1791 where they only account for about a fifth of the output, and this figure was to further decline by a total of 10 percent for each of the three years between 1797-1799. By the beginning of the nineteenth century, it was replaced in terms of popularity by the gothic genre.⁵⁶⁰ Nevertheless, as Garside argues, what can be seen especially in the late eighteenth century is that 'producers of the novel made obvious appeals to a modish and leisured audience and allowed readers to identify' with 'that implied readership'.⁵⁶¹

As time progressed the distinction between poetry as being upper class, male and author driven, and the novel as anonymous, feminine and market driven became more blurred. In the 1790s, more novels were beginning to be published with admitted authorship, with the figure being 38 percent as opposed to the 20 percent in the 1770s and 1780s.⁵⁶² The number of novelists who attributed works to themselves was to progressively increase throughout the nineteenth century. Moreover, as novel writing became increasingly more profitable more men became authors of the novel leading to a decrease in the widely-held view that it was a predominantly feminine

⁵⁵⁸ Garside, *The English Novel*, p. 31

⁵⁵⁹ St. Clair, *The Reading Nation*, p. 175

⁵⁶⁰ For a discussion of the shift from the epistolary and sentimental novel's domination of the literary market to its displacement by the gothic genre, and the relevant figures pertaining to this trend, see Garside, *The English Novel*, p. 31

⁵⁶¹ Garside, *The English Novel*, p. 100

⁵⁶² Garside, *The English Novel*, p. 41

discipline, thereby increasing the status of the occupation for both men and women novelists. Walter Scott's *Waverly* novels showed the power of the novel in terms of its commercial viability and in many ways were precursors to modern-day bestsellers. The first *Waverly* novel, which was published in 1814 went through eight editions and sold 11,500 copies in seven years.⁵⁶³ As a novelist, Scott, asserted power over the publisher often making a succession of contracts with different publishers in his favour, thus overturning the eighteenth-century trend of the firm dictating terms to the individual author.⁵⁶⁴

The broader shift in the status of the novelist can be seen in respective novelists of India. The earlier novels published in the 1780s - *The Indian Adventurer; or: History of Mr Vanneck, Adventures of a Rupee* and *Hartly House* - were all published anonymously. Whilst nothing is known about the author of *The Indian Adventurer* except that he or she wrote for Minerva Press, which was a publishing firm that was perceived at the time as producing titillating and disreputable fiction, some information can be gleaned about the respective authors of *Adventures of a Rupee* and *Hartly House*.

John Murray's letter books reveal the author of *Adventures of a Rupee* was one Helenus Scott. What can be subsequently uncovered about Scott revolves around his medical career, rather than his brief foray into the literary marketplace. Scott was born in Dundee and studied medicine at Edinburgh University.⁵⁶⁵ The university was widely regarded at the time as setting the standard for professional

⁵⁶³ Altick, *English Common Reader*, p. 292

⁵⁶⁴ Peter Garside, 'Rob's Last Raid: Scott and the Publication of the *Waverly* Novels' in *Author/Publisher Relations during the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries* (eds. by Robin Myers and Michael Harris) (Oxford: Oxford Polytechnic, 1983) p. 91

⁵⁶⁵ *The Gentleman's Magazine: and Historical Chronicle* from January to June, 1822 volume xcii (London: John Harris and Son, 1822) p. 276

excellence in the field, with English universities lagging behind.⁵⁶⁶ Yet medicine was still a field that was emerging as a respectable profession with surgeons and apothecaries usually coming from middling classes and with the former in the late eighteenth century still keen to differentiate themselves from barbers.⁵⁶⁷ After his studies Scott enlisted as a cadet in the East India Company becoming an assistant surgeon in 1783.⁵⁶⁸ He was stationed in Bombay which was considered at the time a lesser relation to the other colonial cities, Madras and Calcutta. Bombay, with its high mortality rate for British residents and lacking in the landmark buildings and ostentatious expatriate social gatherings of the other two cities, was considered by East India cadets to be the least favourable colonial metropolis in which to be stationed.⁵⁶⁹ As six extra battalions were detached to Bombay between the years 1778-1784, there was a need for extra medical officers such as Scott.⁵⁷⁰ Scott was to have an extremely successful career in the Bombay presidency as a surgeon. Stationed in the island of Salsette, just north of Bombay, the doctor initiated a successful vaccination programme among the local inhabitants.⁵⁷¹ In addition to his skills as a physician he was also known for his scientific researches; cultivating a superior form of hemp that was used for rope in the British shipping industry⁵⁷² and introducing a new kind of alkali that was an agent for the manufacture of gunpowder.⁵⁷³ Scott was also well networked with the scientific community back in England, corresponding

⁵⁶⁶ Bernice Hamilton, 'The Medical Professions in the Eighteenth Century' in *The Economic History Review second series vol. 4* (1951) pp. 147-148

⁵⁶⁷ For much of the eighteenth century the occupation of a surgeon had not yet gained the status of a respectable middle class profession with surgeons being expected to perform the role of barber as well as medical surgery. See Hamilton, 'The Medical Professions', p. 141

⁵⁶⁸ D.G. Crawford, *History of the Indian Medical Services 1600-1913 vol. 1* (London: W. Thacker & CO., 1914) p. 238

⁵⁶⁹ Percival Spear, *The Nabobs: A Study of the Social Life of the English in Eighteenth-Century India* (Oxford: Oxford University, 1998) p. 68

⁵⁷⁰ Crawford, *History of the Indian Medical Services*, p. 203

⁵⁷¹ Anne Bulley, *The Bombay Country Ships 1790-1853* (London: Curzon, 2000) p. 99

⁵⁷² Bulley, *Bombay Country Ships 1790-1853*, p. 99

⁵⁷³ Crawford, *History of the Indian Medical Services*, p. 238

with Joseph Banks, the president of the Royal Society, and the famous Bristol scientist, John Beddoes.⁵⁷⁴ In 1801, he became a second member of the Indian medical board and president in 1806.⁵⁷⁵ He was to die in 1821 on a voyage to New South Wales, Australia. His subsequent obituary in *Gentleman's Magazine* (1822) commented on the 'scientific acquirements' of the 'enlightened philosopher' and noted that as 'a physician his authority was highly estimated' throughout 'the whole of British India'.⁵⁷⁶ However, no mention was made of his novel *Adventures of a Rupee*. His efforts as a novelist were thus not considered worth mentioning alongside an illustrious career as a doctor and scientist.

Helenus Scott's novel was a sideline embarked upon without much pride or effort. Hence Scott, in the preface of the novel, provides the reader with an insight as to why he did not attribute the work to himself:

The following pages in my own opinion are so insignificant, that to them I should blush to prefix my name: but I think they may bear some rank among the performances of the same species – which every hour engenders - My work is barren of incident, and what incident it has, may not be in its kind of importance...⁵⁷⁷

Both the publisher and critics shared Scott's view that the work was trivial and derivative. John Murray, the publisher, in a letter to Dr. Dunbar dated November 13, 1781, writes that the novel is 'a juvenile performance but not destitute of spirit and fancy'.⁵⁷⁸ Similarly, the *Critical Review* upon the release of *Adventures of a Rupee* (1782) remarked upon the formulaic nature of the novel.

This mode... is grown so fashionable, that few months pass which do not bring one of them under our inspection...⁵⁷⁹

⁵⁷⁴ *Gentleman's Magazine* vol. xcii, p. 276

⁵⁷⁵ Crawford, *History of the Indian Medical Services*, p. 238

⁵⁷⁶ *Gentleman's Magazine* vol. xcii, p. 276

⁵⁷⁷ Helenus Scott, *Adventures of a Rupee. Wherein are Interspersed Various Anecdotes Asiatic and European* (Dublin, 1782) Eighteenth Century Collections Online. Gale Group.

<http://galenet.galegroup.com/servlet/ECCO>, pp. iv-v

⁵⁷⁸ Letter to Dr. Dunbar November 13 1781 in *JM LB/NLS MS.41903*

⁵⁷⁹ Garside, *The English Novel*, p. 314

The reviewer was indeed correct in pointing out the formulaic and generic nature of the novel given that there was a spate of novels in the 1770s and 1780s that recounted the adventures of a non-human protagonist such as a watch, a banknote and a cart as it embarked upon various adventures. Scott's narrative, though, is nevertheless significant in that it alludes to both an emerging globalisation of trade and print capitalism. The narrative thus demonstrates the way that capitalism serves to dislocate a material product from its producer, and a text from its author.

The Adventures of a Rupee recounts the tale of the Rupee, the object-narrator of the story. The rupee narrates how it originated as an ignoble lump of earth in Tibet and was transformed into gold over the course of two thousand years. The coin is carried away by the Ganges to Benares, India, where it is melted down into a rupee. As a rupee, it passes through the hands of many owners; first travelling with a group of fakhirs, then the Mysore military general Hyder Ali, to Mr Melvil, a British gentleman, journeying on its way through China and Java and finally arriving in London where it ends up in a pawnbroker's shop. Scott's use of a rupee is significant in that it functions as a metonym for modern global exchanges of commerce, finance and colonialism. Its deployment as the object-narrator privileges currency as a means of transcending and transgressing cultural and national boundaries. Scott is thus espousing a commercial empire rather than a military empire, and India's relationship with Britain is envisaged in terms of global trade rather than the subordination of India through force. The movement of the rupee from Tibet to England is further significant in that it seems to demonstrate Scott's awareness of a trading system where goods mainly moved from east to west, rather than visa versa.⁵⁸⁰

⁵⁸⁰ Whilst the rupee's journey is symbolic on a wider level of the economic relationship between Britain and India, such a conception in all likelihood was unrepresentative of where rupees were produced and in which direction they moved. The East India Company was able to pay for goods in India due to the vast amount of silver bullion mined by the Spanish in the South Americas, which the

The use of an inanimate manufactured object, by Scott, as well as alluding to perceived unequal global exchanges between east and west, reflected a sense of dislocation between authors and texts and of a loss of ownership over their tales, with authors being aware that their books were cultural commodities to be constantly exchanged and owned within the marketplace. As Christopher Flint points out in *Speaking Objects: The Circulation of Stories in Eighteenth-Century Fiction*, the narrative's use of circulating objects must be contextualised in relation to the prevailing eighteenth century literary marketplace where there was confusion over who owned a literary text and in which both the 1709 and 1774 Copyright Act sought to define who had ownership over a published work.⁵⁸¹

The literary texts of the late eighteenth century all point to an emerging commercial empire and increasing global trade. Moreover, in the majority of the earlier novels global exchange and circulation is embodied within the very literary form that these novels adopt. *Adventures of a Rupee* utilises the sub genre of an inanimate object which transgresses and transcends national borders. *Hartly House* and *Translations of the Letters of a Hindoo Raj* deploy the epistolary mode where the narrator's letters move across continents. In the *Asiatic Princess*, the central protagonists travel from Asia to Europe. Such figurations are unsurprising in a time dominated by worldwide trade and in an age of print capitalism where written texts were increasingly being circulated and exchanged in coffee houses, taverns and

British were able to buy relatively cheaply and then sell at a higher price in India as there was a limited supply of silver in the subcontinent, and that was the traditional method of exchange. So rather than the rupee moving from Tibet via India to Britain, the material reality was that the rupee was most likely to have been made from silver mined in Spanish America and brought to India from Britain. The disparity between the imagined movement of rupees in the text and the socio-historical reality is, however, typical of the tendency of fiction of this time to simplify very convoluted and problematic colonial encounters. See L. Stuart Sutherland, 'The Accounts of an Eighteenth Century Merchant: The Portuguese Adventures of William Braund' in *The Economic History Review* (1932), p. 370

⁵⁸¹ Christopher Flint, 'Speaking Objects: The Circulation of Stories in Eighteenth Century Prose Fiction' in *PMLA* 113 (March, 1998) p. 214

circulation libraries.⁵⁸² Letters arriving in England from India in *Hartly House* and the rupee moving from the subcontinent to Europe and ending up in England also metonymically allude to an age where Britain was receiving imports such as Chinese porcelain, Japanese lacquers and Indian calicoes from Asia on an unprecedented scale. In 1700, the value of exports to the whole of Asia was £114,000 while that of imports was £775,000. The imports later rose to £2,200,000 in 1772-3 and to approximately £5,800,000 by 1798.⁵⁸³

Whilst in both *Hartly House* and *Translations of the Letters of a Hindoo Raj* the movement of letters mirror the processes of trade, they also reflect the way that their respective authors, who both lived in Britain, relied upon the correspondence of male relatives working and later dying whilst serving in the subcontinent.⁵⁸⁴ Moreover, the transcontinental exchange of letters needs to be located within a much wider exchange of written texts between the Subcontinent and Britain. It is apparent at this time, from an examination of John Murray's letter books, that the publisher derived a great deal of his profits from sending over and selling the latest publications from Britain to Company men and also in publishing a whole range of texts by British authors in India, which included medical treatises, histories, a novel and dictionaries of Indian languages. Thus embodied, especially in the earlier texts, is a form and narrative that reflects global exchanges in both commercial goods and written texts.

Though texts were increasingly distributed to a British reading public, novelists in the late eighteenth century often found it difficult to make a living from

⁵⁸² Jurgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Enquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society* [trans. by] Thomas Burgen and Frederick Lawrence (Massachusetts, MIT, 1989) p. 105

⁵⁸³ Chatterjee, *Representations of India*, p. 20

⁵⁸⁴ Letters being sent from India to Britain and visa versa would take an estimated 5-8 months to reach their respective recipient. See Franklin, *Radically Feminising India*, p. 155

their work. The financial precariousness of novelists, especially female novelists, can be seen in the applications of Phebes Gibbes, author of *Hartly House*, and Mary Pilkington, author of *Asiatic Princess*, to the Royal Literary Fund (R.L.F).⁵⁸⁵ Phebes Gibbes in her letters to the R.L.F states in her claim for patronage that she is a widow who is in financial distress due to ‘bad management of her husband’s finances’.⁵⁸⁶ What is notable about her application is the way she has to emphasize the moral rectitude of her character and the educative function of her works. She states that as a respectable ‘domestic woman’ she never would be prevailed to put her name on ‘any’ of her productions.⁵⁸⁷ Moreover, she argues that her literary efforts were borne out of the ‘ardent desire to convey some moral vehicles for amusing literature to inexperienced minds as an antidote’.⁵⁸⁸ Gibbes makes clear that she has published a diverse range of literary materials concerning ‘natural history, poetical subjects, translations’ and ‘children’s books’ as well as ‘two little dramas’ which received the approval of ‘judges of the theatre’.⁵⁸⁹ It is revealing that Gibbes plays down her role as a novelist, instead emphasizing her forays into poetry, theatre and natural history. It implies that in devising her application Gibbes thought that her novels would work against her securing funding and thus it was necessary to stress the educative and moral function of her works. Indeed, although Gibbes was supplied funding by the

⁵⁸⁵ The R.L.F was established in 1790. Its function was to support worthy authors or their impoverished relatives, who were in financial distress. The R.L.F provided a fund which was funded by subscribers. The business of R.L.F was executed by the treasurer, a register, a committee of fifteen and a council of fifty. The usual procedure was for authors or relatives of deceased authors who applied for funding to provide a history of their lives, particularly drawing attention to how they, through no fault of their own, had fallen on hard times and providing evidence that they or a relevant relative had written the literary works that they claimed. In addition, they would have to justify the literary merit of their work. See Royal Corporation of the Literary Fund, *Constitution of a society to support authors in distress; and to afford temporary relief to the widows and children of those who have any claim on public gratitude or humanity from literary merit or industry* (London, 1790)

⁵⁸⁶ British Library [hereafter; BL] MSS: *Royal Literary Fund 2: 74, letter of 14 October 1804*

⁵⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁸⁹ Ibid.

institution, the R.L.F later regretted its donation, stating in a review of Gibbes' application:

The committee of investigation reported to the general committee that the claims of 74 persons appeared to be of so questionable a nature they ought on any future application to be returned to a committee of enquiry. Among, those was the name of Mrs Phebes Gibbes...⁵⁹⁰

In contrast to Gibbes, Mary Pilkington received funding several times from the R.L.F. Pilkington according to the letter to the fund was the daughter of an 'eminent surgeon'.⁵⁹¹ She explains further that she was left 'destitute upon the world with only a few hundred pounds' to support herself and her mentally ill mother, after her uncle cheated her of her rightful inheritance.⁵⁹² Pilkington was forced to make a living as a governess after her husband mismanaged his business as a surgeon and died. Due to an incurable illness, however, Pilkington was forced to become an author after the death of her husband. Pilkington states in her first application to the Royal Literary Fund:

I resolved to convert those talents which had been cultivated for amusements into the means of support; & from that period sir any time & attention have been chiefly devoted to the improvement of the rising generation though by way of diversifying my occupation I have written a Biographical Dictionary of celebrated female characters & two or three moral novels...⁵⁹³

Mary was to receive ten guineas from the institution. After further illness, though, she applied again to the R.L.F stating that since receiving funding she had contributed to 'Periodical publications, particularly the Female Preceptor', wrote 'several sermons' and penned another 'moral work' for 'young persons'.⁵⁹⁴

⁵⁹⁰ BL. MSS: *Royal Literary Fund 2: 74, Review of Gibbes' application 11 August 1806*

⁵⁹¹ BL. MSS: *Royal Literary Fund 7, letter of June 2nd 1811*

⁵⁹² Ibid.

⁵⁹³ Ibid.

⁵⁹⁴ BL. MSS: *Royal Literary Fund 7, Feb. 7th 1815*. Capitals are in original quotation

The applications of Mary Pilkington and Phebes Gibbes allude to the motives of many women who took up novel writing as an occupation. Both authors' entrance into the literary world indicate that for most of the middle-class women who took up authoring novels it was the last resort brought upon by hard times. That Gibbes and Pilkington, who were relatively commercially successful novelists in their day, had to resort to the R.L.F demonstrates that novel writing was not a lucrative profession. Women writers were forced to write in order to support their families. In order to secure institutional funding, they had to place emphasis upon the moral and educative function of their work. Conversely, they had to play down that they were novelists, instead attempting to show that they had written a diverse body of literature and that they were 'literary women' rather than professional hack authors.

The fears that Gibbes and Pilkington displayed for being perceived as women novelists were also voiced by the character Charlotte Percy in Elizabeth Hamilton's *Translations of the Letters of a Hindoo Raj*. Hamilton uses Charlotte Percy as a voice piece to express the anxieties that many women authors felt when entering the literary marketplace. When pressed by her uncle, Mr Denbeigh, to start a career as an author to console herself over the loss of her brother in India and in order to financially support herself, responds: 'You know how female writers are looked down upon. The women fear and hate, the men ridicule, and dislike them'.⁵⁹⁵ Charlotte's comments reveal the prejudice and suspicion with which women writers were treated when they entered the print market. The real-life Charlotte Percy, Elizabeth Hamilton, did not, however, suffer the same fate that her fictional voice piece anticipated, or, indeed, the obscurity and financial impoverishment that Gibbes and Pilkington experienced.

⁵⁹⁵ Elizabeth Hamilton, *Translations of the Letters of a Hindoo Raj* (London: Broadview, 1999) p. 303

Elizabeth Hamilton was born in Belfast in 1758, the youngest child of a Scottish merchant and Irish wife. She was raised by her aunt and uncle and attended school near Sterling. After completing her schooling, Hamilton looked after her family home and lived in rural isolation until the death of her brother, the reputed orientalist, Charles Hamilton in 1792. She subsequently took to writing on an impressive variety of subjects, including India, contemporary philosophy, educational thought, Classical Rome and rural Scottish life. Hamilton was part of a new crop of women novelists who had courage to thrust themselves into literary circles. In contrast to Gibbes, Pilkington, Scott and the author of *The Indian Adventurer*, she was confident enough to publish her first novel *Translations of the Letters of a Hindoo Raj* under her own name. Her novel received critical respect and went through a number of editions. Moreover, upon publishing the novel she networked into literary circles in Scotland, associating with famous authors such as Sir Walter Scott and James Hogg.⁵⁹⁶ Hamilton thus belonged to a new breed of women celebrity novelists who paved the way for early nineteenth century lady novelists such as Sydney Owenson and Mary Sherwood. In a similar fashion to Hamilton, Owenson and Sherwood were literary celebrities in their own right. They were not afraid to enter the public spheres and accredit works to themselves.

Sydney Owenson was the oldest daughter of Robert Owenson an Irish Catholic actor and Jane Hill, an English Protestant.⁵⁹⁷ From an early age she was exposed, as the daughter of Robert Owenson and Jane Hill, to a bilingual, binational and bireligious household that hosted the most influential Irish writers, politicians and musicians of the day. As her father was close friends with many Irish nationalists of the late eighteenth century she would have been well acquainted with Irish nationalist

⁵⁹⁶ For an account of Hamilton's childhood and early literary career, see Pamela Perkins and Shannon Russell, *Introduction to Translations of the Letters of a Hindoo Raj*, pp. 7-11

⁵⁹⁷ Julia M. Wright, 'Introduction' in Owenson, *The Missionary*, p. 17

rhetoric.⁵⁹⁸ Owenson subsequently went to a series of boarding schools until her mother's death in 1789.⁵⁹⁹ Due to her father's long stint of unemployment Owenson was forced, like Phebes Gibbes and Mary Pilkington before her, to become a family breadwinner, first as a governess and later as an author.⁶⁰⁰ Her second novel, *The Wild Irish Girl* (1806) though, was greeted with enormous critical success. She subsequently engaged with literary circles in Dublin and London, associating with the likes of Lord Byron, Percy Shelley and Caroline Lamb.⁶⁰¹ Her third novel, *The Missionary: An Indian Tale* (1811), was similarly a huge success and critically well received, inspiring the Romantic poet Percy Shelley. It was reprinted four times in the space of a year by its publisher, Stockdale, who ensured that copies had a portrait of the author attached.⁶⁰² Stockdale's efforts to ensure that a portrait of the author was placed on the novel reflect a cultural shift from Gibbes or Scott's day, when authors of novels were deemed to be anonymous figures and when publishers such as John Murray made no effort to cultivate a direct link between novelists and their works.

Unlike the previous authors examined in this survey, Mary Sherwood had the distinction of being the first novelist to have achieved both literary notoriety and to have had lived experience in India. Sherwood was born in 1775 at Stanford rectory, Worcestershire.⁶⁰³ As the oldest child of Reverend George Butt, she was brought up in a strict but relatively prosperous home, with her mother ensuring that she was inculcated with rigorous Anglican Christian values.⁶⁰⁴ Mary was subsequently sent to the Abbey School for girls at Reading. Having published her first

⁵⁹⁸ For a discussion of the cosmopolitan nature of the Owenson household, see Wright, *Introduction to The Missionary*, p. 17

⁵⁹⁹ Mary Campbell, *Lady Morgan: The Life and Times of Sydney Owenson* (London: Unwin ltd., 1988) pp. 16-17

⁶⁰⁰ Campbell, *Lady Morgan*, pp. 38-59

⁶⁰¹ Wright, *Introduction to The Missionary*, p. 9

⁶⁰² Campbell, *Lady Morgan*, pp. 107-108

⁶⁰³ M. Nancy Cutt, *Mrs Sherwood and her Books for Children* (London: Oxford University, 1994) p. 1

⁶⁰⁴ Grossman, *Ayah, Dhayes and Bearers*, pp. 14-44

story in 1794 she married her cousin Captain Henry Sherwood in 1803 and later accompanied him to India.⁶⁰⁵ In her eleven-year long stay in the subcontinent, Mary accompanied her husband, who was paymaster with the fifty-third regiment,⁶⁰⁶ to the differing military barracks in which he was stationed. These included: Calcutta, Dinapore, Berhampur, Kanpur and Meerut.⁶⁰⁷ As a *memsahib*, her experiences of India in certain respects were typical of many *memsahibs* in terms of being left alone while their husbands went on administrative tasks around India and having to struggle bringing up their children in a land where infant mortality rates were high.⁶⁰⁸ Moreover, lacking for much of the time a husband or relatives to press for assistance in times of need, Mary's interaction with Indians was more often than not with lower class Indian servants who she would depend upon in order to maintain her house and for the health of her children.

Yet Sherwood saw herself as much more than a *memsahib*, viewing herself as a devout Church proselyte with a moral mission in the subcontinent. After forming a friendship in India with Henry Martyn, a missionary associated with the Cambridge Evangelical movement, she was convinced by him to establish Christian schools for the orphans of military officers and half-caste children in the vicinity of the military posts in which her husband was stationed.⁶⁰⁹ Moreover, Sherwood became an author of novels and short stories with a strongly evangelical bent, publishing a total of four novels with an Indian setting between the years 1811-1821: *The History of Little Henry and His Bearer*, *The Ayah and Lady*, *The Indian Pilgrim* and *The History of George Desmond*. She had a long standing arrangement with the

⁶⁰⁵ For an account of Sherwood's schooling and marriage, see Cutt, *Mrs Sherwood*, pp. 1-2

⁶⁰⁶ Grossman, *Ayah, Dhayes and Bearers*, p. 15

⁶⁰⁷ Grossman, *Ayah, Dhayes and Bearers*, p. 17

⁶⁰⁸ Indeed Mary was to suffer the tragic loss of her son Henry, who died in 1807 of a whooping cough, and Lucy who died of dysentery. See Grossman, *Ayah, Dhayes and Bearers*, p. 23

⁶⁰⁹ Cutt, *Mrs Sherwood*, p. 14

publisher Edward Houlston who held a monopoly on the copyrights of her texts.⁶¹⁰ Sherwood's works were immensely popular with *Little Henry and his Bearer* running to thirty editions by 1840, translated into multiple languages and circulated in different countries across the globe.⁶¹¹ When the author seriously considered getting her works published by another firm, Houlston raised the sum of money they gave to Sherwood from the standard price of £5 to £25 for the *Indian Pilgrim* which demonstrates how much the firm valued her texts as literary property. Indeed, the firm of F. Houlston published a total of 38 of Sherwood's books.⁶¹²

Edward Houlston recognised the marketability of the Indian element of the author's texts. When the *Salopian Magazine*, in a review, advised the author to eliminate the Hindustani terms, Houlston was adamant that they remain in the text as this was one of the main attractions for the reading public.⁶¹³ Moreover, a study of how Houlston advertised Sherwood's novels is illuminating. The advert for the *Indian Pilgrim* states that the text was 'primarily intended for publication in a very remote land, in the year 1810, during the author's residence in that far country' and was meant to be 'an Indian Pilgrim's Progress, adapted to the taste, the manners, and particular prejudices of Hindoustaun'.⁶¹⁴ In the *Ayah and the Lady*, the advertisement states it 'was written expressly for the use of servants in the families of English gentlemen residing in India, and was adapted, as much as possible, to the idiom of the Hindustani language into which it has been translated.'⁶¹⁵ It also claims that the Hindustani 'style' is 'evident' in the narrative and most of the episodes in the novel

⁶¹⁰ Cutt, *Mrs Sherwood*, p. 33

⁶¹¹ Grossman, *Ayah, Dhayes and Bearers*, p. 16

⁶¹² Cutt, *Mrs Sherwood*, pp. 117-123

⁶¹³ *Ibid.*

⁶¹⁴ Mary Sherwood, *The Indian Pilgrim; or, the Progress of the Pilgrim Nazarenee (formerly called Goonah Purist, or the Slave of Sin) from the City of the Wrath of God to the City of Mount Zion Delivered Under the Similitude of a Dream* (London: Houlston and Son, 1832) p. vi

⁶¹⁵ Mary Sherwood, *The Ayah and Lady: An Indian Story* (F. Houlston: Wellington & Salop, 1820) p. 5

were based on ‘real scenes which passed before the eyes of the author’.⁶¹⁶ What seems evident in both advertisements is the attempt to draw attention to the authenticity and accultured nature of these narratives and to illustrate how these texts were expressly designed in a Hindoostaunee style for the benefit of Indians. The adoption of a Hindoostaunee style for the purpose of converting the indigenous population seems a little disingenuous though, since Sherwood’s chief readership was in Europe. The attention drawn to Sherwood having been a long standing resident of India⁶¹⁷ and the purported adoption of an Indian style, it can be argued, was a cunning marketing strategy pandering to a readership who wished to read seemingly more culturally specific narratives. In this respect, in the manner she was marketed as having lived in India and in the way her texts self consciously deploy the Hindoostaunee terms for British consumption, Sherwood pre-empted the works of Philip Meadows Taylor and Rudyard Kipling.

The period between the years 1780-1821 saw the progressively increasing status of novelists. Whilst the late eighteenth-century novelists were dislocated from their product, often refusing to attribute works to themselves and playing out their dislocation from their creations in their narratives, this was not the case for early nineteenth-century British authors such as Sydney Owenson and Mary Sherwood who were more financially independent and able to dictate terms to publishers. The increasing prestige of British novelists in turn had implications for the way they depicted the subcontinent. Nineteenth-century ‘India’ novelists, in contrast to the earlier authors of novels, often viewed themselves as creators of a work and thus pushed forward more idiosyncratic depictions of India. They relied less on

⁶¹⁶ Ibid.

⁶¹⁷ It is revealing that whilst Houlston drew attention to Mary Sherwood’s life experience in India the publisher John Murray made no such attempt when publishing Helenus Scott’s *The Adventures of a Rupee*. It demonstrates how in the nineteenth century, publishers realized that an author’s experience in India could be a selling point for readers.

accounts in popular journalism, and were more willing to enter into debates about what form colonial rule should adopt.

4.2 *Colonial Rule, Sources and Metropolitan Consumption*

It seems clear from a survey of texts of the eighteenth century that the novel drew extensively from reportage of events in the British press of battles and conflicts in colonial India. Texts such as *The Indian Adventurer*, *Hartly House* and *The Asiatic Princess* uncritically replicated accounts of recent events in British India. John Holwell's largely inaccurate account of Siraj-ud-Daulah interfering in British trade and cruelly imprisoning a troop of British soldiers in the black hole of Calcutta (1756), Robert Clive's victory at Plassey (1757) and the replacement of Mir Jafir with Mir Kasim Ali Khan (1760) are all interweaved into the narratives.⁶¹⁸ The novels thus draw on British propaganda which served to create the impression that Britain's growing entrenchment and extension of power in the subcontinent was a response to the capriciousness and cruelty of indigenous rulers rather than a result of rapacity and deliberate intent on their part.

Whilst the eighteenth-century texts all drew on generic British accounts of colonial events, a shift nevertheless occurs within the late eighteenth century. In *The Indian Adventurer* and *Adventures of a Rupee*, Britain is perceived as having a primarily commercial empire rather than having dominion and territorial status. In *The Indian Adventurer*, Britain is one among a few colonial powers,

⁶¹⁸ See Anonymous, *The Indian Adventurer*, pp. 115-118 & *Hartly House, Calcutta in Three Volumes vol. 3* (London: J. Dodsley, 1789) Eighteenth Century Collections Online. Gale Group <http://galenet.galegroup.com/servlet/ECCO> [hereafter; Gibbes, *Hartly House*] p. 53 & Mary Pilkington, *The Asiatic Princess. Dedicated by Permission, to Her Royal Highness Princess Charlotte of Wales. By Mrs. Pilkington* (London, 1800) Eighteenth Century Collections Online. Gale Group. <http://galenet.galegroup.com/servlet/ECCO>, pp. 29-31

including the Danish, the Dutch and French, that are competing with each other and in which the German surgeon narrator of the narrative enlists his services. Similarly, in *Adventures of a Rupee* the British are facing a fierce opponent in the figure of the able and noble Mysore military general Hyder Ali. At first glance, the text seems to denigrate conceptions of Britain as a territorial power in the episode where a father gives advice to his son who is about to enlist in the East India Company:

‘Your particular province is to protect the trade of your country, against the insults of European powers, or of the Indian natives, who ignorant of the blessings that commerce diffuses, even to themselves are often disposed to interrupt its equitable course. The prosperity of trade is to what you are to have in view, not the extension of settlement and much less your private advantage...’⁶¹⁹

The father’s advice to his son should not, however, be taken at face value as a wholehearted debunking of colonial extension into India. Inherent in the father’s comments is the idea that ‘trade’, if opposed by the indigenous population, should be enforced by military force if necessary. Moreover, the father also infers that Indians who resent or oppose British trading in the subcontinent are not motivated by any reasonable rationale but by obstinate and wilful ignorance.

What is apparent, unlike in the majority of the later texts, is the lack of embodied scholarship in *Adventures of a Rupee* and *Indian Adventurer: or, History of Mr Vanneck*, concerning Brahminism or Indian culture. Consequently, Vanneck argues that polygamy amongst Brahmins is the norm and that women who do not perform sati when their husbands die have to resort to becoming prostitutes or slaves. In a similar fashion, the rupee observes that the practices of the Brahmins do not differ markedly from those of corrupt catholic priests in Southern Europe. In many of the later texts, however, authors attempted to incorporate contemporary scholarship.

⁶¹⁹ Scott, *Adventures of a Rupee*, p. 52

Sophia Goldburne's reflections upon Hinduism in *Hartly House* were plagiarised from William Guthries' *A New Geographical, Historical and Commercial Grammar* (1786).⁶²⁰ Elizabeth Hamilton, in the preliminary dissertation of *Translations of the Letters of a Hindoo Raj*, draws on the work of her brother Charles Hamilton, the translator of the *Hedaya* (a code of Muslim laws), as well as British oriental scholars such as William Jones, Charles Wilkins and Thomas Maurice. In the nineteenth century Sydney Owenson draws on the oriental library of her friend and former lover, Sir Charles Ormsby.⁶²¹ *The Missionary: An Indian Tale* packages oriental scholarship for a British reading public eager to experience the sublime. Her descriptions of Indian flora and Indian landscapes can thus be viewed as a packaging of oriental tropes for a British literary market that was desirous for such motifs.

The increased incorporation of oriental scholarship in novels must be situated in relation to the efforts of William Jones, who argued that poets should draw on Indian mythology and imagery to rejuvenate verse and the Romantic Movement which duly attempted to appropriate oriental scholarship in order to create a sublime effect.⁶²² Lord Byron, Robert Southey and Percy Shelley had all deployed the scholarship of Indologists such as Henry Colebrooke and William Jones to create a sense of awe within the European reader.⁶²³ This shift demonstrates how oriental scholarship was becoming more available to the British readership and that novelists, with the exception of Mary Sherwood, were increasingly becoming more ready to popularise the findings of scholars in their narratives. It is, though, important not to

⁶²⁰ Michael Franklin, 'Introduction' in Phebes Gibbes, *Hartly House, Calcutta* [ed. by Michael J. Franklin] (Oxford: Oxford University, 2007) p. xxxviii

⁶²¹ Franklin, *Radically Feminising India*, p. 166

⁶²² William Jones had done much to popularise Indian imagery and mythology in Britain. Between 1784 and 1789 he wrote a series of 'Hymns to Hindu Deities' which was published in Calcutta and London. See; Franklin, *Introduction to Hartly House*, pxxv. Jones also translated Kalidasa's *Sakuntala* in 1789 which was to be reissued five times in the following decades, taking Europe by storm. See Teltscher, *India Inscribed*, p. 213

⁶²³ For a discussion on the adoption of Orientalist scholarship by the Romantic Poets, see John Drew, *India and the Romantic Imagination* (Oxford: Oxford University, 1998)

overemphasize the novelists' engagement with Indian culture. Throughout the eighteenth and early nineteenth century, British novelists betrayed an ignorance of the correct use of Indian nomenclature, often making up Indian names.⁶²⁴ Furthermore, it must be noted that the novel, with its concern for everyday life, never incorporated the Indian imagery and mythology to the extent that was found in British verse.

Although Owenson and Hamilton both drew on oriental sources for their narratives it is nevertheless important to differentiate which oriental sources specific novelists drew upon in their narratives. For instance, Hamilton stuck rigidly to the Anglocentric oriental scholarship of William Jones, Charles Wilkins, Thomas Maurice and William Hodges,⁶²⁵ whereas Owenson, in addition to utilising English scholarship, drew upon the works of Western European scholars such as Voltaire, Anquetil Duperron and Thevenot.⁶²⁶ Hamilton's reluctance to utilise European sources can be ascribed to a suspicion of the corrosive deist doctrines of European philosophers and the desire to segregate British culture from European influence. Owenson, on the other hand, as an author with Irish nationalist sympathies was deeply critical of English cultural hegemony, hence her absorption of a vast array of European sources accords with her cosmopolitan stance and espousal of cultural tolerance. The fact that Owenson was able to get her hands on a vast array of oriental sources within Sir Charles Ormsby's personal library shows how, by 1811, previously esoteric scholarship was becoming increasingly available for public consumption.

⁶²⁴ The author of *The History of Mr Vanneck*, for instance gives the name 'Caliviganda' to a Muslim woman and 'Gotam Mahomet' to her husband. Elizabeth Hamilton's Hindu Rajah in *Translations of the Letters of a Hindoo Raj* is provided with the Islamic sounding name, Zarmillah. Phebes Gibbes does not even bother naming the Brahmin man in *Hartly House*. In *The Missionary*, the Hindu high priestess is given the fake Hindu name Luxima. The name Luxima is most probably derived from Lackshmi, the Hindu goddess of wealth. In *The History of George Desmond* there is a similar made up name of Shumsheer for Desmond's head servant.

⁶²⁵ Pamela Perkins & Shannon Russell, *Introduction to Translations of the Letters of a Hindoo Raj*, p. 31

⁶²⁶ Julia Wright, 'Introduction' in Sydney Owenson, *The Missionary: An Indian Tale* [ed. by Julia Wright] (Lancashire: Broadview, 2002) p. 9

In addition to drawing upon oriental scholarship, *Hartly House* and *Translations of the Letters of a Hindoo Raj* are significant texts in that it would seem plausible to suggest that the respective authors would have been likely to have relied to a degree on information concerning Calcutta in the correspondence of male relatives enlisted as officers in colonial Bengal. Both Phebes Gibbes' son⁶²⁷ and Elizabeth Hamilton's brother, Charles Hamilton, enlisted in the East India Company. As soldiers working in the East India Company, which was under the governorship of Warren Hastings, they would have experienced living in a small but closeknit British community of White Calcutta. They would have borne witness to a wealthy community that spent lavishly on dress, horses and carriages and who were surrounded by the grandeur of colonial buildings. Moreover, the officers would have experienced and participated in metropolitan entertainments and leisure facilities such as the theatre, concerts, coffee houses and public balls that could rival those of an English town.⁶²⁸ Whilst their interaction with Indians would most likely have been limited to financial dealings with *Banians*, domestic servants and attending the odd dinner arranged by Nawabs they would be working under a colonial administration that was more sympathetic on a cultural and intellectual level to India. Charles Hamilton was an oriental scholar who received patronage from the Governor General Warren Hastings and associated with orientalist such as William Jones. During his stay in the subcontinent he became deeply interested in Classical Indian texts and was involved in translating a code of Muslim laws known as the *Hedayat*. As one can see in the two texts, the experiences of the male soldiers living in British India were

⁶²⁷ Phebe Gibbes in her application to the Royal Literary Fund acknowledges she has a son who died in India. See *BL MSS: Royal Literary Fund 2: 74, letter of 14 October 1804*

⁶²⁸ For a fuller account of the British community in Calcutta, see P.J. Marshall, 'The White Town of Calcutta under the Rule of the East India Company' in *Modern Asian Studies* vol. 34, no. 2 (May 2000) pp. 309-325

heavily drawn upon in the two narratives and the novels, in certain respects, provide a document to readers of White Calcutta at this time.

Phebes Gibbes' *Hartly House* adopts the form of a series of letters between an adolescent girl, Sophia Goldburne, to her friend Arabella. The one-way correspondence chronicles, how, after her mother dies, Sophie decides to accompany her father on a business venture to Calcutta, where they stay at the home of age-old family friends – the Hartlys. In colonial Calcutta, under the 'unostentatious and sensible'⁶²⁹ Governor (meant to represent Warren Hastings), Sophia is in her element attending a whole range of metropolitan entertainments – dinners, balls, the theatre and the races. She has the pleasure of being admired as a beautiful young women and being besieged by a vast array of Company men. Sophia is only too aware of her power, writing to Arabella: '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 for your looks are reflected in the pleasure of the beholder'.⁶³⁰ Sophia, though, who is still in mourning for her mother, has her peace of mind disrupted by the attachment that her father has formed to the wealthy widow Mrs. D.

The romantic element of the narrative is given another dimension in that Mrs. D has an eligible young son D'Oyly, who is an officer in the East India Company. The prospective romance and courtship of Sophia with the young officer is, however, cut short by D'Oyly having to return to England in order to secure his career interests. Yet this allows Sophia the time to make further inroads into understanding Indian history and Hindu culture. Through her father's *Sarkar* she strikes up a friendship with a young Brahmin man who instructs her upon the sublime tenets of

⁶²⁹ Phebe Gibbes, *Hartly House, Calcutta in Three Volumes vol. 2* (London: J. Dodsley, 1789) Eighteenth Century Collections Online. Gale Group. <http://galenet.galegroup.com/servlet/ECCO>, p. 16

⁶³⁰ Gibbes, *Hartly House vol. 1*, p. 63

Hinduism and Indian history. As a testament to her power of pleasing she decides to court the adoration of the young man. She succeeds in gaining his admiration and having compliments paid to her beauty. Their mutual infatuation is, however, abruptly ended by the narrative when the Brahmin tragically dies of fever. The young Sophia is not left long to mourn his loss as D'Oyly makes a surprise return to India to sue for Sophia's hand. The plot resolves itself with the two promised marriages of Mrs D. and Mr Goldburne - after Sophia has warmed to the idea – and Sophia and D'Oyly, with the two couples deciding to head off back to England. Upon leaving India, a new Governor (Cornwallis) arrives to replace the previous Governor General (Hastings) who has been summoned back to Britain to face impeachment charges. Sophia, upon her journey back to England, and, presumably, a life of conjugal and domestic bliss, decides she will affect the 'gentoo air'⁶³¹ and will wear a lock of her deceased Brahmin's hair in her precious locket around her neck.

Elizabeth Hamilton's *Translations of the Letters of a Hindoo Raj*, like Gibbes' narrative, is an epistolary novel. The text is composed of two parts – a preliminary dissertation in which the fictitious editor of the letters provides oriental scholarship on Hindu culture and India's recent history, and the narrative which is relayed through a series of epistolary exchanges between the Rajah Zarmillah, Rajah Mandaara and the Brahmin Shermaal. The two main Indian protagonists, Zarmillah and Mandaara, are minor Indian sovereigns who have been affected by Rohilla Afghan invaders – Zarmillah has fallen under the yoke of their tyranny, and Mandaara has been completely banished from his kingdom.

The plot commences with Zarmillah recounting to Mandaara of how he came to the aid of an injured British officer. The Rajah, whilst being unable to save

⁶³¹ Gibbes, *Hartly House* vol. 3, p. 144

the mortally wounded Captain Percy, manages to befriend him in his last days, during which time Percy instructs the Hindu Rajah in the ideals and values behind Christian Britain – liberty, equality and the emancipation of women. Mandaara, though, upon examining his friend’s positive portrayal of Britain, in letters addressed to him, is deeply sceptical. In an effort to prevent Zarmillah from having too high an estimation of British culture he passes on the letters of his Brahmin friend, Shermaal, who has had experience of working on British ships and of residing in Britain for ten years.

Shermaal relays his experience of witnessing ‘white savages’⁶³² cruelly oppress their black slaves on the British ship. The Brahmin, rather than providing testament of a fair society, argues, in his account of living in Britain, that Britain has a caste system that is similar to that in India; the caste system being composed of: ‘People of Family, People of no Family and People of Style’.⁶³³ Moreover, he argues that the British legal system actively discriminates against those who are not born into the right family. The supposed education of British women that Percy testifies to is satirised by Shermaal, who points out that the education of British girls is superficial as they are merely sent to seminaries, where they are taught how to dress and a smattering of French phrases. The Brahmin further disputes Percy’s account concerning how the British follow the Christian Shaster of the Bible, arguing that the only religious devotions that he saw upper-class families engage in was the ‘poojah of cards’⁶³⁴ and the attendance of a few dry ceremonies at church.

Zarmillah, upon reading Shermaal’s observations, is incredulous, and when his wife dies, the Rajah decides to go on a quest to find out more about the British. He begins by accompanying British troops around Benares, Patna and Calcutta. The Rajah provides a glowing testimony to the prosperity of the British-

⁶³² Hamilton, *Translations of the Letters of a Hindoo Raj*, p. 112

⁶³³ Hamilton, *Translations of the Letters of a Hindoo Raj*, p. 122

⁶³⁴ Ibid.

controlled parts of India, which according to Zarmillah, contrasts heavily with those under Islamic rule. He is particularly impressed by the imperial grandeur of Calcutta, witnessing during his sojourn in the colonial metropolis the coffee houses and public balls. The Rajah's experience of hearing the trivial, frivolous and immoral conversation of the British ladies there pre-empt his later experiences in Britain.

The Hindu Rajah's account of metropolitan London provides an unwittingly satirical critique of the commoditisation and trivialisation of British culture. He witnesses people going into shops to buy whatever they want, newspapers which circulate lies and theatres that merely produce generic sentimental comedies in the place of high quality drama. Zarmillah finds that he himself becomes a commodified spectacle for consumption within the metropole, especially after the newspaper propagates the lie that he has come to Britain to protest against the injustices carried out by the Governor General Warren Hastings. Hamilton's most scathing criticism, though, is reserved for the deist philosopher characters – Axiom, Puzzledorf and Caprice Ardent - who follow the idols of atheism and the *poojah* of systems. In Zarmillah's travels with the deist philosophers to Ardent House, he encounters their sneers against Christianity and their silly futile experiments such as 'changing sparrows to honey bees'.⁶³⁵ Eventually the narrative completely debunks the deist project and the immorality inherent in it by showing the elopement of Axiom and Lady Ardent, and in Caprice Ardent's suicide following the seduction of his adolescent cousin and Ardent's subsequent chastisement by his father. Zarmillah's positive encounters with Britain seem to come when he takes his leave of the philosophers and is away from London. His experiences of visiting and staying with the family of Mr Denbeigh is altogether different in that the family is a modest and

⁶³⁵ Hamilton, *Translations of the Letters of a Hindoo Raj*, p. 266

humble one that still pay adherence to the Bible. Moreover, the female members of the family have been educated to a high standard without being vain. Thus Zarmillah, upon returning to India at the close of the narrative, relays to his friend Mandaara the impossibility of judging British society by any single standard.

Both *Hartly House* and *Translations of the Letters of a Hindoo Raj* align themselves with Warren Hastings' accultured form of colonial administration in British India. They consequently accept Hastings' sympathetic stance towards Brahminism, adopting the view that the British are protecting the mild and gentle gentoo race from the tyranny of Islam. It is significant that Hamilton dedicates her novel to the former Governor General,⁶³⁶ whilst the character Sophia Golburne, in *Hartly House*, writes to her friend Arabella upon Hastings leaving India in the narrative: 'The Company it is affirmed by those who appear well informed will be deprived of a faithful and able servant, the poor of a compassionate and generous friend, the genteel circles of the best ornament and Hartly House a revered guest'.⁶³⁷ The two texts provide, by and large, a glowing testimony to British rule in India. Gibbes relays an impression of a prosperous and thriving Calcutta. Similarly, Zarmillah during his travels comments upon the economic prosperity of British owned areas in contrast to those under Islamic rule. Moreover, the Brahmin Shermaal and the Hindu Rajah Mandaara, who are deeply critical of British society, acknowledge the superiority of British rule in India.

The fact that *Hartly House* and *Translations of the Letters of a Hindoo Raj* render a positive portrayal of British colonial administration under Hastings is significant. As they were both written at a time when Hastings had been recalled to Britain and was facing impeachment charges for alleged corruption and atrocities

⁶³⁶ Hamilton, *Translations of the Letters of a Hindoo Raj*, p. 54

⁶³⁷ Gibbes, *Hartly House* vol. 2, p. 159

committed during his tenureship, the narratives serve to denigrate such allegations.⁶³⁸ Sophia Goldburne denies any wrongdoing by Hastings arguing that the recall of Hastings was due to the ‘envy, malice and uncharitableness’⁶³⁹ of his rivals in Calcutta, who are bidding for power. In a similar fashion, Hamilton satirises the accusations levelled at Hastings. This is particularly apparent in the episode where a British gentleman harangues Zarmillah at a coffee house about the outrages the East India Company have committed in India using rhetoric similar to that deployed by Edmund Burke during Warren Hastings’ impeachment. That the British gentleman could take Zarmillah to be a critic of Hastings is understandable when one considers that there were well-publicised reports of the Indian Brahmin emissary Hanumantrao testifying in Burke’s prosecution of Hastings in the British press of that time.⁶⁴⁰ Yet by having Zarmillah, a rajah of a province of Rohilkhand – a kingdom where Hastings’ was alleged to have committed atrocities – being baffled at the man’s comments is a narrative device by which Hamilton debunks and trivialises the attacks levelled upon the former Governor General.

It would be misguided, though, to interpret Zarmillah’s puzzlement upon hearing the man’s harangue simply as Hamilton siding with Warren Hastings in the face of his critics. A reductive reading such as this would fail to contextualise the episode in relation to the author’s much broader attack upon the commoditisation of culture. It is significant that the gentleman has received the false account that

⁶³⁸ From 1786-1795, Warren Hastings was on trial in Britain for alleged atrocities committed during his Governorship in India, with Edmund Burke leading the prosecution. The trial received huge attention in the British Press, and dignitaries paid for seats to witness the proceedings. Edmund Burke’s prosecution was highly rhetorical and emotive, providing graphic accounts of outrages such as beatings, tortures and rapes committed by British soldiers. For the many British spectators who followed Indian affairs, this was the first time they would have been exposed to alleged exploitative practices of colonial rule in India. For further accounts of the Hastings trial, see Teltscher, *India Inscribed*, pp. 165-172 & Geoffrey Carnall, ‘Burke as Modern Cicero’ in *The Impeachment of Warren Hastings: Papers from a Bicentenary Commemoration* [eds. by Geoffrey Carnall & Colin Nicholson] (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University, 1989) pp. 76-88

⁶³⁹ Gibbes, *Hartly House* vol. 2, p. 16

⁶⁴⁰ Fisher, *Counterflows to Colonialism*, p. 93

Zarmillah has come to England to complain about Hastings' misrule from a newspaper and that the harangue takes place in a coffee house. Hamilton, through the incident, is both critiquing the new public spheres and, as Zarmillah remarks, the 'power of a piece of gold, to procure circulation to whatever untruths'⁶⁴¹ a news writer is ready to perpetuate. Indeed, the narrative is saturated with attacks upon the consumption of culture within metropolitan Britain. Zarmillah, for instance, observes that there are theatres 'which are paid for by the visitors',⁶⁴² coffee houses 'which are met with in every quarter of London' and shops where 'females' go to 'purchase what they want'.⁶⁴³ There is a corollary drawn by the text between the metropolitan public spaces and the lowering of cultural and moral standards within Britain. Metropolitan Britain, according to the narrative, is a land which produces generic sentimental comedies on the stage, formulaic histories and novels in the book market, and where critics regurgitate nonsense about literature.

Elizabeth Hamilton suggests that the proliferation of these new public spheres provides an opportunity for the pernicious doctrines of atheism and deism to spread amongst fashionable upper-class elites. Such doctrines as the 'poojah of systems' and the 'idols of atheism',⁶⁴⁴ according to Hamilton prevent fellow feeling between men and substitute absurd abstraction for common sense. Consequently, through Zarmillah's eyes, the reader is given a sense of the corrosion of moral standards amongst metropolitan elites. Hence, in Calcutta, British ladies can gossip about the affairs of women with great men and, in Britain, Zarmillah encounters the libertine Lady Ardent having a sexual liaison with the deist philosopher Axiom, and Caprice Ardent seducing his young cousin out of wedlock. Hamilton sees the lack of a

⁶⁴¹ Hamilton, *Translations of the Letters of a Hindoo Raj*, p. 247

⁶⁴² Hamilton, *Translations of the Letters of a Hindoo Raj*, p. 227

⁶⁴³ Hamilton, *Translations of the Letters of a Hindoo Raj*, pp. 209-210

⁶⁴⁴ Hamilton, *Translations of the Letters of a Hindoo Raj*, p. 254

religious education as responsible for the decline in moral standards in the upper classes. Zarmillah encounters the true moral centre of Britain in the country, in the home of the middle-class Denbeigh family. It is here where the Bible is still paid reverence and where daughters are given a high standard of education yet inculcated with a religious idealism, which emphasizes humility and modesty. At the heart of Hamilton's text is the dichotomy between the city, the seat of Deist fashionable elites, immorality and mass consumption of culture, and the country, which stands as a bulwark for Christianity, modesty and traditional values. Her attack on Ardent, Axiom and Puzzledorf is thus an attack on Deism's attempt to fashion legal and societal principles outwith the Church.⁶⁴⁵ For Hamilton such attempts are incompatible with common sense, the preservation of a moral society and prevailing social structures.

Translations of the Letters of a Hindoo Raj attempts to establish what constitutes an acceptable consumption of India in the metropole. Hamilton alludes to this issue in several episodes in the narrative. Zarmillah visits the house of Caprice Ardent where he notices a mish-mash of oriental motifs. He observes in Caprice Ardent a complete ignorance about India and Hindu culture. Ardent for instance asks Zarmillah, 'has the Emperor of China done anything new of late', and whether the Hindu Rajah can provide him with 'a plan of a mosque'.⁶⁴⁶ In an additional incident later on, Zarmillah, after being falsely advertised in a newspaper as a critic of Warren Hastings, finds himself marketed as a spectacle in nightly entertainments. Hamilton's

⁶⁴⁵ The character of Puzzledorf is a parody of the seventeenth-century German philosopher Samuel Von Pufendorf who, whilst a Christian, advocated in *De Habitu Religionis Christianae Ad Vitam Civilem* (1687) for a greater distinction between ecclesiastical and State matters, proposing that the State should be given supremacy in matters of law. See Coleman Phillipson, 'Samuel Pufendorf' in *Journal of the Society of Comparative Legislation, New Series, vol. 12 no. 2* (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1912) p. 236. Caprice Ardent, on the basis of his suicide and defence of suicide, seems to be a parody of the eighteenth-century British Deist philosopher David Hume who wrote a philosophical essay defending suicide. See David Hume, *Essays on Suicide, and the Immortality of the Soul, Ascribed to the Late David Hume* (London: 1783) Eighteenth Century Collections Online. Gale Group. <http://galenet.galegroup.com/servlet/ECCO> (London: 1783)

⁶⁴⁶ Hamilton, *Translations of the Letters of a Hindoo Raj*, p. 210 & p. 213

larger point here seems to be that the commodification of the orient for spectacle in the metropole is leading to inaccurate, glib and undignified depictions of what it aims to represent. Yet Hamilton's narrative too is guilty, to a degree, of the same lack of cultural specificity she points out in Caprice Ardent's depictions of the orient. Hamilton, for instance, gives the Hindu Rajah narrator the Islamic-sounding name, Zarmillah. In addition, the text follows a very formulaic sub-genre that had been especially in vogue in the early part of the eighteenth century, of the oriental tale where an oriental traveller visits Britain and comments upon its society. Indeed, the episodes where Zarmillah visits Caprice Ardent's home and finds himself as a spectacle for the British consumer are incidents which almost identically occur in previous narratives of this sub-genre.⁶⁴⁷ Thus, even though Hamilton had access to more scholarly and regionally specific information and railed against the commoditisation of the orient, her narrative reverts to the generic conceptualisations and tropes established at a time when authors had far less access than Hamilton to accurate knowledge of the regions they were depicting.

Whilst Hamilton is avowedly critical of Calcutta and metropolitan entertainments, Gibbes' text revels in descriptions of fashionable Calcutta. The narrator, Sophia Goldburne, immerses herself in the social scene of Calcutta attending the races, the theatre, balls arranged by the Governor and the occasional banquet hosted by the *Nawab*. Sophia even sees British India theatre and newspapers as superior to their counterparts in the metropole given that the 'Calcutta Advertiser' and 'Calcutta Chronicle' still produce topical articles and the stages in the colonial

⁶⁴⁷ In Oliver Goldsmith's *Citizen of the World* (1760-1), Lien Chi Altangi, the Chinese narrator, goes into the home of a British lady who has a room designed in the oriental fashion which confuses and bastardises many oriental motifs. Goldsmith, *Citizen of the World*, pp. 36-38. In George Lyttleton's, *Letters From a Persian to his friend at Isaphan* (1736) an almost identical episode occurs, only this time it is the Persian protagonist, Selim, who meets a British lady. See Lyttleton, *Letters from a Persian in England to his Friend at Isaphan*, p. 216

metropolis have not yet followed the European continental fashion of ‘allowing female performers on stage’.⁶⁴⁸ Gibbes, in contrast to Hamilton, who makes a direct and unequivocal attack on metropolitan consumption, uses Calcutta as a space to propagate an ideal functioning of public spheres, which London has fallen short of fulfilling. In both texts, however, there is nothing ‘other’ to the metropolitan space of Calcutta, with both Hamilton and Gibbes drawing parallels between the colonial metropolis and London.

British India and particularly Calcutta are deployed within *Hartly House* as fashionable locales for an otherwise generic sentimental epistolary novel. The novel which describes the outing and coming of age of an adolescent girl, who is besieged by a range of gentleman suitors, yet settles upon a young British Officer, was by no means a groundbreaking plot.⁶⁴⁹ Moreover, the central character, Sophia, was clearly created by Gibbes in the mode of sentimental heroines given to fainting, sighing and weeping. What makes the text distinctive is the unusual setting, which has been tailored to suit British tastes. The narrative thus provides a plethora of descriptions of a lavish Indian lifestyle. Sophia writes to Arabella of the palanquin bearers, the sedan bearers and the hookah bearers who attend her, and ruminates on scenes such as an Indian women smoking a hookah pipe and the *Nawab* hosting a banquet for British guests. Yet depictions of India and its customs in this manner only provide surface-level aestheticising rather than analysis of the unfamiliar sights, practices and sounds of the subcontinent. It is significant that no Indian is actually

⁶⁴⁸ Gibbes, *Hartly House* vol. 1, pp. 62-63

⁶⁴⁹ The eighteenth and early nineteenth century genre, known as the *Bildungsroman*, charted the outing of a young woman in polite society and her path to maturity. The genre was pioneered by Fanny Burney in *Evelina: or the History of a Young Lady's Entrance into the World* (1778). The novel set a precursor for works by authors such as Jane Austen, Maria Edgeworth and Phebes Gibbes. See Mitzi Myers, ‘The Dilemmas of Gender as Double Voiced Narrative: or, Maria Edgeworth Mothers the *Bildungsroman*’ in *The Idea of the Novel in the Eighteenth Century* [ed. by] Robert W. Uphaus (Suffolk: Colleagues Press, 1988) pp. 67-96

named in the text. The young Brahmin man she befriends and attracts seems to accord with an eighteenth century British gentleman paying compliments to his suitor.

Sophia writes to Arabella: 'What a sweet picture would the pen of Sterne have drawn of this young man's person! But such is the narrowness of sentiment, that if I was to attempt to do it you would instantly conclude, I love the precepts for the teacher's sake'.⁶⁵⁰ The mention of Sterne, by Sophia, illustrates how Gibbes has created the Brahmin along the sentimental model, whilst the allusion of drawing a picture conveys the static and two-dimensional quality of the Brahmin, with the artist shaping and manipulating his image and denying him any temporal agency or life outside the rigid borders of the picture.

It is noticeable that the relationship between Sophia and the Brahmin is not one of parity. Sophia decides upon first meeting the Brahmin that she wants to 'be an object of admiration in his eyes' as it would be a testament to her 'mental charms'.⁶⁵¹ She subsequently refers to him as 'my Brahmin' and tells Arabella that she is amused by the 'little sallies that take place between them'.⁶⁵² When Sophia obtains the Brahmin's attention she realises that she has played a dangerous game and subsequently regrets having sought his affections. The Brahmin is subsequently killed off by fever. At the end of the narrative, upon returning home with her fiancé, D'Oyly, she decides, as a token of remembrance of the Brahmin, to keep a lock of his hair in a locket which she wears round her and to 'affect the Gentoo air which is an assemblage of all the soft and winning graces priests and poets have yet devised a name for'.⁶⁵³ Thus, by the end of the narrative, Brahminism has become mere ornamental decoration for Sophia, with its principal function being to supplement her

⁶⁵⁰ Gibbes, *Hartly House* vol. 3, p. 2

⁶⁵¹ Gibbes, *Hartly House* vol. 1, p. 156

⁶⁵² Gibbes, *Hartly House* vol. 2, pp. 144-145

⁶⁵³ Gibbes, *Hartly House* vol. 3, p. 144

attractions and to captivate the gaze of the British onlooker. Sophia's engagement with Brahmin culture mirrors the author's in that Gibbes uses Brahminism and an Indian setting merely as an appendage or a supplement. Moreover, as Michael Franklin has argued India provides 'a transgressive space' for 'bourgeois young women' where they could break free from 'the confines of domestic femininity if not traditional boundaries'.⁶⁵⁴ India is convenient to Gibbes as it provides her female character the sanction and freedom to behave in an assertive fashion that would not be tolerated if the novel was set in England, as conventional bourgeois morality at this time asserted the need for the gendered division between private and public spheres.

In both *Hartly House* (1789) and *Translations of the Letters of a Hindoo Raj* (1796), Indian spaces and culture represent no real threat to the European psyche. Both authors are able to neatly package mild and gentle Indian characters and stock orientalist spaces for British consumption. As the nineteenth century progressed novels increasingly portrayed Indian spaces to reflect the fragmentation of the British self. In addition, Indian culture, when not contained and controlled, was portrayed as having a potentially contaminating effect upon the British consumer. The shift in the representation of Indian spaces can be accounted for in several ways. On one level it reflected the British colonial administration becoming progressively more Anglicised and less sympathetic to Indian culture, in turn leading to greater efforts to demarcate and delineate between the white and black areas of the colonial metropolises. A transition also occurred in the British novel market with the Gothic displacing the Sentimental novel as the dominant genre in terms of popularity. The Gothic novel, a genre which was cultivated by such authors as Horace Walpole and Anne Radcliffe, explored the self and sites of subjectivity using landscape, the supernatural,

⁶⁵⁴ Franklin, *Introduction to Hartly House*, p. xxxi

architecture and doubling to portray the inner life of the central protagonists. The influence of the Gothic is evident in Mary Sherwood's *The History of George Desmond* (1821).

In *The History of George Desmond*, the central protagonist of the narrative and its narrator, George Desmond, comes from upper-class stock. Due to financial reasons, his father, the son of a baronet of an ancient family, decides to marry the daughter of a banker out of economic necessity, rather than love.⁶⁵⁵ After his first wife dies, following a few years of marriage, he is left free to marry an exceedingly beautiful and accomplished woman who later gives birth to George and his three sisters. The father, however, dies leaving George's mother a widow with a slender provision to raise her children. She makes sure that her youngest son is provided with the education of a gentleman and is taught the classics. Yet much to George's later regret in life, she neglects his Christian education and instead nurtures his vain hopes and ambitions. When George comes of age, he is firmly pushed by his mother to accept a position as a writer in Bengal, secured through Mr John Fairfax – a contact of his mother, over a 'living of moderate value'⁶⁵⁶ in a nearby rectory. As part of his training for India he spends a year in Mr Fairfax's home in Berkshire to be instructed in Indian languages, and there meets his host's lovely niece Emily, for whom George develops a fondness.

After completing his studies, the young man embarks from Portsmouth to India. On board ship he is prevented from having his health and reputation ruined

⁶⁵⁵ Sherwood's critique of a marriage motivated by wealth must be contextualised in relation to a widespread denigration in evangelical middle class circles of upper-class marriages of alliances, rather than love, especially after the Queen Caroline affair. See Leonore Davidoff & Catherine Hall, *Family Fortunes: Men and Women of the English Middle Class, 1780-1830* (London: Hutchinson, 1987) p. 148

⁶⁵⁶ Anonymous, *The History of George Desmond which Occurred in the East Indies, and Now Published as a Useful Caution to Young Men Going Out to that Country* (London: Wellington & Salop, 1821) p. 15

by excessive drinking by the timely intervention of the Chaplain Mr Melmoth, who Desmond befriends during his journey. Upon arriving in Calcutta he forms a friendship with the thin, sallow and world-weary John Fairfax, brother of Mr Fairfax and father of Emily, and his socialite wife Mrs. Fairfax. In the home of the Fairfax's and in British Calcutta, Desmond encounters a superficial British community, lax moral codes and overly indulgent lifestyles. Having proved his skill in Indian languages, though, he receives a promotion and is stationed in the outpost which he calls 'Junglepore'.⁶⁵⁷ On the young man's journey to his new posting he stops in a civil station at Berhampore, where he is invited to dinner by a British civilian. After drinking copious amounts of alcohol at the feast of the 'old profligate',⁶⁵⁸ Desmond becomes intoxicated and witnesses a *nautch*⁶⁵⁹ and is allured by one of the dancing girls, Amena. Although at the old profligate's home, Desmond is too intoxicated to have intercourse with the girl, it is arranged, unbeknownst to him, that Amena and her purported brother Shumsheer accompany him on his journey to Junglepore. During his three-year stay at the outpost he leads a dissolute and easternised existence – smoking the hookah, hunting tigers and lounging on the sofa. Shumsheer and Amena gain a greater hold of him with Shumsheer becoming his head servant and Amena apparently giving birth to his child.

Desmond eventually receives a letter from John Fairfax saying that he has secured for him a more eligible position and he has to leave Junglepore for Calcutta, where he is to await further instructions. Leaving Amena behind, he arrives

⁶⁵⁷ Anonymous, *The History of George Desmond*, p. 86

⁶⁵⁸ Anonymous, *The History of George Desmond*, p. 96

⁶⁵⁹ In the *nautch* dance Indian dancers performed in front of a largely male audience. The dance was often associated with sex work as the dancers would solicit spectators after a performance. In the eighteenth and early nineteenth century British East India company men often attended such performances or held them in their homes. Whilst in the eighteenth century British colonial administrators turned a blind eye to British attendance, in the nineteenth century British spectatorship at such events was often frowned upon by both missionaries and the British colonial administration. See Bhattacharya, *Reading the Splendid Body*, pp. 130-135

with Shumsheer at the Fairfax home, where he encounters the grown-up Emily with whom he falls in love with. After Desmond unexpectedly comes into an inheritance, he successfully asks John Fairfax for his daughter's hand in marriage. Emily and George duly go to establish their home in George's new post only to find that George's sinful past catches up with him. The jilted Amena, after unsuccessfully pressing George to see her again, arranges through the family Ayah to have Emily poisoned. Subsequent to Emily's dying, Desmond is driven out of his senses, with Shumsheer and Amena taking the opportunity to drug the grief-stricken widowed husband. When Desmond finally regains some measure of sanity, he dispenses with Amena and finds himself a new position in a desolate post between Dacca and Calcutta. He lives there in a degraded 'Indianised' state witnessing nautches, riding an elephant every morning and maintaining an entourage of sycophant servants, with his evil servant Shumsheer plunging him further into debt. The situation comes to a head only when Emily's friends, who by a stroke of luck have captured the guilty Ayah, call for Desmond's presence in her trial at Calcutta. At the hearing the Ayah confesses she poisoned Emily at the instigation of Amena and Shumsheer, who have long since fled. Moreover, she reveals how Desmond had been duped in that Shumsheer and Amena were lovers, rather than siblings, and that the child that George thought was his was in all probability Shumsheer's. After the trial, a shocked Desmond falls into a life-threatening fever. He is only saved from death by his long-lost chaplain friend Mr Melmoth, who, with the aid of his wife, brings him back to health and converts him to evangelical Christianity. The repentant and reformed East India man stays in Calcutta to work off his debts and upon his return home decides that he will attempt to convert his mother and sisters back in England.

The History of George Desmond depicts the corrosive effects that a life in India has on the soul of a young British officer. Throughout the narrative Indianised spaces are deployed by Sherwood to reflect the progressive fragmentation of Desmond's identity. Upon George's first arrival in India, he encounters government buildings in Calcutta. George observes that 'the walls were not painted as in England, but merely whitewashed', there was an 'immense mirror' and the floor was 'covered with a glossy kind of matting'.⁶⁶⁰ The illusory and insubstantial surfaces that George describes create the impression that he is adrift in an unreal world and unable to root his self on firm ground. It is noticeable that the post in which Desmond wastes three years of his life married to Amena is called by George 'Junglepore' – the name pointing to a moral wilderness. Moreover, after Emily dies and at a time George is most alienated from British culture, he resides in a house of 'ruinous appearance' with 'a few stagnant pools and here and there a few swampy plains'.⁶⁶¹ The derelict Indian house obviously functions as a metonym for the stagnation of his soul and alienation from British culture. The element of unreality present in Indian landscapes is mirrored by the plot contrivance of the hero discovering at the Ayah's trial that Shumsheer and Amena are not siblings but lovers, and that the daughter Desmond thought was his was in fact Shumsheer's. Sherwood's plot revelation has the effect of revealing to both Desmond and the reader an awareness they have been duped by the illusory falsehood of India.

Mary Sherwood's text skilfully doubles English and Indian spaces and characters, using India to represent the darker and transgressive side to the British self. For instance, the world-weary India residing civil servant John Fairfax is contrasted to his exuberant and morally earnest brother in Britain, Mr. Fairfax. The

⁶⁶⁰ Anonymous, *The History of George Desmond*, p. 61

⁶⁶¹ Anonymous, *The History of George Desmond*, p. 249

devout, chaste and delicate Emily is doubled against her polar opposite, the sexually voracious and conniving Amena. Moreover, Mr Fairfax's 'elegant and modern villa' which is decorated tastefully in the oriental manner has its opposite in the living quarters of the old India hand that corrupts George, which is decorated completely in accordance with the 'native air'.⁶⁶² The doubling of pure British characters with their Indian or Indianised British counterparts has the effect of producing ambivalence and slippage. This further serves to demonstrate the disruption and rupturing of the ideal of a totalising and holistic English national identity in the colonial periphery. Contact with life in India thus has a warping and fracturing effect on the British self.

Whilst Sherwood uses Indianised landmarks and characters to portray the 'other' to the British rational self, sites of transgression, and the fracturing of British identity, she is also pressing for Britain to differentiate and distance herself from India and Indian culture. Consequently, the only acceptable consumption of India and Indian motifs can be seen in Mr Fairfax's home in England that 'contained as many Eastern exotics as could be brought to endure the temperature of England; so that the perfume of these together with the appearance of many pieces of furniture which adorned the house, cast a kind of oriental character over the whole little domain'.⁶⁶³ Thus the tasteful consumption of the orient can take place in the metropole where it can be controlled, contained and ordered by a discriminating British eye. It is significant that George makes greater headway as a student of Indian languages under Mr. Fairfax in Britain rather than under the Brahmin pandits in India. This taps into the wider political discourses that Indian culture was better studied in the metropole. James Mill for instance argued that as an historian of India he was more advantaged than British scholars living in the subcontinent as he could look at

⁶⁶² Anonymous, *The History of George Desmond*, p. 96

⁶⁶³ Anonymous, *The History of George Desmond*, p. 23

India impartially and objectively.⁶⁶⁴ Moreover, Haileybury College in Britain, for the training of Cadets for administration, was founded as a panacea for Fort William in Bengal, in that whilst the college supplied Indian language courses, it also provided religious moral training to prevent cadets from being Indianised and corrupted in the subcontinent.⁶⁶⁵ Thus in *The History of George Desmond* there is a denigration of notions of the British elite becoming acculturated and adapted to an Indian environment, which in turn represents a rejection of Warren Hastings' mode of administration. The text thus needs to be related to the progressive Anglicization of colonial administrations subsequent to Hastings.⁶⁶⁶

It is worth noting that not all nineteenth-century British novelists aligned themselves to more hard-line East India Company attitudes towards Indian culture. *The Missionary: An Indian Tale* (1811), as we have discussed in chapter 2, used the subcontinent as a space to project contemporary Irish nationalist concerns about Ireland's relations. Yet despite the major differences between the way Sherwood and Owenson positioned themselves in relation to official attitudes towards the subcontinent, there are certain common motifs running through the two nineteenth century texts *The Missionary* and *The History of George Desmond*. The use of Indian landscapes to portray the inner life of characters is a feature of Owenson's text with the barren terrain and harsh winds of Lahore, post Luxima's excommunication, pointing to the inner state of turmoil of the protagonists. The deployment of landscape

⁶⁶⁴ Majeed, *Ungoverned Imaginings*, p. 135

⁶⁶⁵ David Kopf, *British Orientalism and the Bengal Renaissance: The Dynamics of Indian Modernization, 1773-1835* (Berkeley: University of California, 1969) p. 103

⁶⁶⁶ Following on from the end of Warren Hastings' tenureship as Governor General in 1786, successive administrations under Lord Cornwallis, Lord Wellesley, Lord Minto, the Marquis of Hastings and Lord Amherst made great efforts to anglicise the colonial executive, making sure Indians were excluded from senior ranks of the colonial elites. See P.J. Marshall, *Bengal: The British Bridgehead. Eastern India 1740-1828: The New Cambridge History of India 11.2* (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1987) p. 101

to portray the inner life of characters represents a shift from the way Indian spaces were depicted in the late eighteenth-century novel.

In the earlier texts of the 1780s and 1790s, Indian spaces and culture represent no real threat to British culture. Whilst *Translations of the Letters of a Hindoo Raj* derides metropolitan consumption of India, it does so within the wider rubric of its broader attacks on the commoditisation of culture and the proliferation of public spheres. In *Hartly House*, Gibbes neatly packages Brahminism and picturesque Indian scenes for a British reading public, even using Calcutta as an idealised space for metropolitan consumption, to which London can only aspire. Both *Hartly House* and *Translations of the Letters of a Hindoo Raj* in their alignment to Warren Hastings' mode of administration, reflect sympathy to Indian culture. *The History of George Desmond*, written decades afterwards, is illustrative of successive colonial administrations becoming less sympathetic to Indian culture and a shift from the sentimental genre to the gothic with its concern for portraying inner life. Whilst this section has discussed at length shifts in colonial attitudes, the commoditisation of India in the metropole and the displacement of the sentimental with the gothic, it will be left to the next section to discuss changes in British discourses about religion, interracial sexual relationships and relationships between the indigenous population and the British.

4.3 *Religion, Sex and Relationships with the Natives*

Indian religions posed no real menace to the British psyche in late eighteenth-century British novels. In *Hartly House* (1789) and *Translations of the Letters of a Hindoo Raj* (1796), Brahminism is depicted as a sublime doctrine with the

Gentoos being a mild and gentle race. Although the corrupt and deviant practices of Brahminism and Brahmin pandits are portrayed within *Indian Adventurer* (1780) and *Adventures of a Rupee* (1781), they represent no real menace to the British with their deviant and corrupt ways being equated to the Catholicism and Catholic priests of Southern Europe. In a similar fashion, whilst Islam is portrayed as tyrannical, fierce and despotic it represents no real threat to colonial rule and to some extent is even useful to the colonisers as they can portray themselves as the natural inheritors to the Mughals, and the protectors of the mild and gentle Gentoos from the tyranny of Islam. In eighteenth-century novels, interracial romantic relationships between men and women are portrayed as empowering for the European or at the very least an amusing diversion until he or she embarks upon a more substantive encounter with a white European. Moreover, in these earlier narratives Indian servants are background figures who are obedient to their masters. As the nineteenth century progresses, however, Indian religions, interracial sexual desire and British relationships with their servants become more problematic sites to explore. Such a shift, as will be demonstrated, was due to the growth of missionary influence in the subcontinent, increasing numbers of Britons coming into closer contact with servants, and shifts in colonial attitudes towards Indians. This section will begin, however, by looking at the earliest of the texts that this section will be investigating *The Indian Adventurer; or History of Mr Vanneck*.

In the *Indian Adventurer; or History of Mr Vanneck*, the first-person German surgeon narrator recounts the history of his life.⁶⁶⁷ Vanneck, the son of a

⁶⁶⁷ The author deploys a German surgeon narrator, I would argue, to perform a dual function of providing the British reader with both a means of cultural differentiation and conversely cultural empathy. Britain and Germany in the eighteenth century shared a perceived racial commonality of being descended from the Anglo-Saxon race. In addition, the Hanoverian dynasty in Britain came from Germany. Yet a positive sense of shared racial heritage was somewhat countered by the fact that many British carried with them age-old preconceptions from medieval times that Germans were boorish and

middling family after coming of age decides, with his father's consent, to enrol as a medical student. The hero has an ill-spent university career engaging in sexual encounters with local girls and going on leaves of absences with fellow rakes. Upon completing his studies, he decides to go on a voyage around Europe with his friend Standby. Vanneck, in spite of seeing innocent passers by being press ganged into serving in the Dutch East India Company, decides to enlist himself. His ship passes through the Cape of Good Hope and then Batavia, from where he is ordered to go to Bengal, India. Though a qualified surgeon, he fails to secure a permanent position and consequently moves from post to post, offering his services to various parties. During his stay in India he works as a surgeon for a Rajah, the Prince of Delhi, the Dutch East India Company, the Danish East India Company and the French. He moves, in the course of the narrative, to Delhi, Patna, Calcutta, Cossimbazaar, even working for a short period as a trader and as an accomplice to a Hindu Hermit charlatan. Whilst occupying various posts, he has time to offer his medical services free of charge to the poor⁶⁶⁸ and engage in numerous sexual encounters with Indian women. Vanneck for instance rescues an extremely pretty Indian girl from Sati and cohabits with her for some time until she makes a nuisance of herself, at which point she is passed off onto a sergeant. When stationed in Cossimbazaar, he goes on excursions with a Danish friend to pick up as many black women as they can find to lure back to their hut for

prone to bouts of drunkenness. Hence, the deployment of the German surgeon by the author allowed British readers to identify with Mr. Vanneck more than they would if he or she had chosen a Spanish, Italian or French hero, whilst at the same time distancing the British reader sufficiently to account for the hero's morally licentious sexual adventures. Moreover, by using a German, who at that time had no fixed state and no significant independent colonial presence in the subcontinent, the author could provide the reader with a protagonist that could readily move from one colonial settlement to another. For further discussion on eighteenth-century British attitudes to Germans, see Panikos Panayi, 'Germans in Eighteenth Century Britain' in *Germans in Britain since 1500* [ed. by Panikos Panayi] (London: Hambledon Press, 1996) pp. 36-44

⁶⁶⁸ Western 'knowledges' such as medicine and science were frequently used in colonial narratives as testament to the coloniser's superiority and thus justified his or her right to intervene in colonised spaces. See David Arnold, *Science, Technology and Medicine in Colonial India: The New Cambridge History of India 111 5* (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 2000) p. 15

sexual purposes. In addition, Vanneck, along with a Hindu hermit, has sexual encounters with slave girls. The surgeon also manages to cuckold a Muslim man of his beautiful wife, 'Calavaginda'.⁶⁶⁹ At the end of the narrative, however, the surgeon falls for a chaste and 'extremely white'⁶⁷⁰ English Catholic girl, Julia. The novel ends uncertainly with Vanneck very much in love with Julia, but having to take his leave of her when he is posted to another part of India.

Indian women are amusing diversions until Vanneck meets the love of his life, an English lady. In each of his liaisons with Indian women it is Vanneck that seduces the native women. The surgeon rescues a pretty seventeen year old girl from *Sati* and then cohabits with her, he picks up black women with his Danish friend to have sex with in their huts, and he cuckolds a Muslim man of his beautiful young wife, after seducing her with melodic tunes he plays on his flute. It is the white Vanneck that is empowered in the scenarios with the Indian women being mere passing and disposable conquests. Moreover, more often than not, indigenous women are smitten by the irresistible charms of the white European with the implication being that Indian men are ill equipped to sexually satisfy and provide for their women, thus providing a space for the western European man to fulfil their needs. In the end, however, it is only the English lady Julia that can civilise Vanneck and make him aspire to morally improve himself, which in turn implies that the values of femininity are needed to be drawn upon if the masculine colonial endeavour is to be reformed and tempered.⁶⁷¹

⁶⁶⁹ Anonymous, *The Indian Adventurer*, p. 167

⁶⁷⁰ Anonymous, *The Indian Adventurer*, p. 229

⁶⁷¹ There is a similar validation of the femininity of white English women acting as a reforming and moderating influence upon the colonial endeavour in Starke's play *Sword of Peace* where Eliza and Louisa critique the Resident for his corrupted values and resolutely propagate English notions of gentility and honour. Similarly, in *Hartly House* Sophia Goldburne ends by affecting 'a gentoo air' and espousing a cosmopolitan and tolerant colonialism. Whilst Gibbes has a radically different notion of what form colonial rule should adopt she seems to share the faith of Starke and the author of the *Indian*

There is embodied, within the narrative, a correlation between the corrupt and sexual manipulations of Brahmin priests with those of Catholic priests in Southern Europe. The Hindu hermit, actually of Muslim origin, obtains the sexual favours and gifts of a Gentoo devotee in return for blessing her that she will become pregnant. Vanneck describes the hermit 'as artful as a Jesuit' and that the 'East India hermit' makes the same assurances to his devotee as 'the monk in Spain'.⁶⁷² It is likewise revealing when the female devotee kisses the 'private parts' of the hermit 'with as much devotion, as ever a Popish Devotee did the rotten bones that are constantly dug up from the tombs of Rome'.⁶⁷³ Although there is not an outright condemnation of Catholicism in the text per se, given that Vanneck is attracted to the morally superior English Roman Catholic girl, Julia, there is a denigration of the perceived dogmatic Catholicism as practised in Southern Europe. There is a similar equation between Brahminism and Southern European Catholicism in Helenus Scott's *Adventures of a Rupee*. The rupee, on its travels, derides the Brahmins 'who deceive the vulgar into belief' and extort money out of them. Yet it sees nothing unique about their practices and equates them to 'monks in Catholic countries'.⁶⁷⁴ Hence, the Brahmin leader Jaffier and his group of Fakhirs seduce young 'women under the pretence of curing their souls'⁶⁷⁵ and, like the hermit in the *Indian Adventurer*, devise their manipulations in enclosed caverns outside the purveyance of civilised society. It is significant that the corrupt activities of the Fakhirs take place in caves and caverns

Adventurer in the capacity of white English women to temper and civilise the colonial enterprise in India.

⁶⁷² Anonymous, *The Indian Adventurer*, p. 193

⁶⁷³ Anonymous, *The Indian Adventurer*, p. 195

⁶⁷⁴ Scott, *Adventures of a Rupee*, p. 11

⁶⁷⁵ Anonymous, *The Indian Adventurer*, p. 13

in that, like confession boxes, they are enclosed spaces of privacy in which a range of activities can occur between two people, unperceived by the outside world.⁶⁷⁶

The correlation between Brahminism and Catholicism needs to be situated in relation to the profusion of printed material that linked sexual and financial manipulation to Catholicism in the eighteenth century. There was already a well-established tradition of political and popular distrust of Catholicism with the Gunpowder Plot (1605), the Jacobite rebellion (1715 and 1745), and the Gordon Riots (1780) which printed material could capitalise on.⁶⁷⁷ The sexual activities of priests, female devotees, monks and nuns, however, became a major preoccupation in the eighteenth century with well-popularised reports in the 1720s of French priests such as Abbes des Rue and Father Girard's seductions of young women being disseminated in Grub Street. The scandals of these two priests were often embellished and provided the basis for many pornographic materials with French texts being translated within England and stimulating similar production in Britain.⁶⁷⁸ The intersection of pornography and anti-catholic discourses tapped into Protestant anxieties about Catholic spiritual and sexual corruption. Furthermore, it distanced British protestant culture from sexual vice whilst at the same time providing the pretext for presenting lurid accounts of perverse activities. Brahminised depictions of sexual corruption in *Indian Adventurer* and *Adventures of a Rupee*, I will argue, must be situated in relation to anti-catholic pornography which commodified sex in the print market for profit. *The Indian Adventurer's* sexual licentiousness should also be located in the period just before there was a crackdown on sexually graphic material with William

⁶⁷⁶ Enclosed spaces such as these also tapped into eighteenth-century anxieties about London's increasing urban development allowing for more privacy for individuals. This trend contravened the espousal of the sociable man and public spheres within eighteenth-century enlightenment philosophy. See Peakman, *Mighty Lewd Books*, p. 146

⁶⁷⁷ For a discussion of popular distrust of Catholics within Britain, and the denigration of Catholics within print culture, see Peakman, *Mighty Lewd Books*, pp. 126-129

⁶⁷⁸ Peakman, *Mighty Lewd Books*, p. 41

Wilberforce's *Proclamation For the Encouragement of Piety and Virtue, and for the Preventing and Punishing of Vice, Profaneness and Immorality* being issued in 1787 and the wave of prosecutions against printers and publishers producing obscene material occurring in the 1790s.⁶⁷⁹

Although in *The Indian Adventurer* and *Adventures of a Rupee* it is apparent that depictions of Brahminism must be located within a larger discourse that denigrated Catholicism, as practiced in Southern Europe, in the slightly later texts of *Hartly House* and *Translations of the Letters of a Hindoo Raj* there is a movement away from such a trend. Yet in both Hamilton and Gibbes' narratives Britain is configured as being dominant over the subcontinent. Captain Percy, for instance, instructs Zarmillah upon the sublime tenets of Christianity and, although Zarmillah's narrative is a critique of British society, it is by and large unwittingly ironic, with the Hindu rajah ill equipped to be able to pinpoint the inconsistencies and hypocrisy of the British, and it being left to the more discriminating British reader to read in between the lines. In *Hartly House*, as previously explored earlier in this chapter, Sophia is the empowered one in the relationship with the Brahmin. Moreover, although at one point in the narrative she expresses a sexual desire that the Muslim *Nawab* 'should form plans' of 'carrying' her off and abducting her, it is with the full knowledge that she is protected by the British fort and garrison.⁶⁸⁰ The fact that the sexual danger is clearly posed by the British is underlined by the brutal rape of a *Gentoo* woman and the subsequent murder of her father by a British soldier.⁶⁸¹

⁶⁷⁹ Peakman, *Mighty Lewd Books*, p. 42

⁶⁸⁰ Gibbes, *Hartly House* vol. 3, p. 155

⁶⁸¹ Gibbes, *Hartly House* vol. 3, p. 164. Physical rape often figured as a metaphor for British misrule in India in the late eighteenth century. Edmund Burke, in his prosecution of Warren Hastings, brought attention to the rape of Indian women by British officers under Hastings' administration. Whilst drawing attention to British colonial misrule, the metonym of India being a raped woman also had the effect of denying India and its inhabitants agency and the power to resist. India thus is constructed as a passive subject unable to prevent herself from being violated. See Franklin, '*Radically Feminising India*', pp 164-165, Teltscher, *India Inscribed*, pp. 165-172 & Geoffrey Carnall, 'Burke as Modern

Moreover, Indian servants are background and peripheral figures who obediently obey their masters in the eighteenth-century British novels.

In the nineteenth century text *The History of George Desmond* (1821), the power dynamic underlying relationships between British masters and Indian servants and interracial sexual relationships are inverted. Desmond, for instance, becomes ever more dependent on his head servant Shumsheer, who manages his finances, controls his household and with the aid of Amena plies his master with drugs to keep him docile. The family Ayah, under Shumsheer and Amena's instructions, poisons his beloved wife, Emily. In addition, there is an even greater threat posed within the narrative by eastern sexuality. Whilst in previous texts interracial desire is empowering for the coloniser, it is paradoxically the colonised subject that is empowered in *The History of George Desmond*. This is most apparent in the scene where Desmond witnesses a *nautch* dance at the house of the old India hand. George describes the three dancing girls as under the 'the mask of voluptuous gaiety' presenting the 'expression of habitual and determined malignity'⁶⁸² and some of the movements they made as being 'overstrained and unnatural'.⁶⁸³ Moreover, during the dance Desmond describes himself lured in and unable to shift his gaze from the spectacle.

Unsuspectingly however as I continued to look on, I Imperceptibly became not indeed amused, or pleased for- for such was not the character of my feelings, my reason and my taste being both offended – but *fascinated, enthralled* and *bewitched*.

Though not without some sensations of fatigue, I continued to gaze till I had no power all the while possessed and wrapt by a strange fascinating kind of

Cicero' in *The Impeachment of Warren Hastings: Papers from a Bicentenary Commemoration* [ed. by Geoffrey Carnall & Colin Nicholson] pp. 76-88

⁶⁸² Anonymous, *The History of George Desmond*, p. 100

⁶⁸³ Anonymous, *The History of George Desmond*, p. 105

influence which I can suppose to have been aided by some Satanic power...⁶⁸⁴

It is significant that Desmond is passive throughout the dance and it is his gaze that is captivated and possessed. There is an alien and otherworldly quality that defies European taste and rationality. Moreover, it is indeterminable whether the dance and the dancers are actually beautiful or ghastly. The depiction of a British person witnessing a *nautch* is markedly different from Sophia Goldburne's description of a *nautch* girl in *Hartly House* (1789).

A jingling of unaccustomed sounds to my ears now interrupted my eulogiums, and immediately six or seven black girls were brought in, dressed in white muslin, loaded with ribbands of three gold rings in their noses, by way of ornaments, and silver casnets at their ankles and wrists, with which they beat time very agreeably to the tambourines that attended them. These are called *notch girls*, (the word for dance) and their performance is called *notchee*. They sang very lively and tender compositions alternately as was apparent by the movement of their eyes and hands; but to me otherwise unintelligible; danced with good effect; and, I could perceive were very well rewarded...⁶⁸⁵

Sophia's gaze, in contrast to George's, is not disempowered by the spectacle of the *nautch* girls. She can thus sit back and focus on the way they dress and ornament themselves. They are a spectacle for her, which Sophia can objectify, with the dancers undifferentiated from each other and the mere sum of their bodily components of eyes and hands and of the movement itself. The *nautch* dancers, unlike in *The History of George Desmond*, have no faces or expressions that are identifiable or that convey a threat or menace to the British 'self' and there is nothing unnatural or demonic about the dance. The difference reflects that as time progressed, Indian sexuality conveyed more of a threat within British discourse. The progressive British fear of Indian sexuality, as can be seen in the differing representations of the *nautch* dance, found

⁶⁸⁴ Anonymous, *The History of George Desmond*, p. 106

⁶⁸⁵ Gibbes, *Hartly House* vol. 1, pp. 76-77

parallels as in the British visual arts as can be seen in **figs. 19** and **20** below. In Tilly Kettle's portrait (1780), the British Colonel Polier, in the costume and pose of an Indian *Nawab*, reclines on cushions as he watches a trio of *nautch* dancers in a detached and respectful manner. The Indian *nautch* girls have delicate feminine features, are beautifully attired and are more or less static. In Charles D'Oyly's portrait (1813), however, a group of British men, clearly dressed in conventional British suits, view the spectacle with apparent interest which is bordering upon lust. Moreover, the *nautch* dancer is slightly mannish and unattractive, implying that the Indian woman would be no match for a beautiful English lady. She is depicted in full movement in contrast to the *nautch* dancers in Kettle's portrait. The difference in the clothing of the British men in **figs. 19** and **20** can also be ascribed to oriental clothing going out of fashion for East India Company men in the early nineteenth century, which in turn is indicative of greater attempts by later administrations to discourage their officers and writers from going 'native'.



Fig. 19 Tilly Kettle, 'Colonel Antoine Polier Watching a Nautch, c1780', Gauche after Kettle, Private Collection. Taken from Almeida & Gilpin, *Indian Renaissance*, p. 79

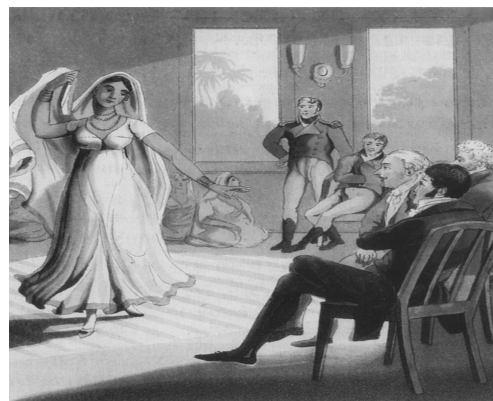


Fig. 20 Charles D'Oyly, A Dancing Woman of Lucknow Exhibiting Before an European Family, 1813, Colored Lithograph, *The European in India and the Costumes and Customs of India*, Yale Centre for British Art. Taken from Almeida & Gilpin, *Indian Renaissance*, p. 258

Nandini Bhattacharya has convincingly argued in *Reading the Splendid Body* that the *nautch* dance and ‘the subaltern female body in its consumeristic and ‘display’ mode was seen as destructive’ to ‘Western capitalist patriarchy as well as to the powers and potential of colonialist British women’.⁶⁸⁶ Furthermore, the public nature of women performing sexuality contravened the British metropolitan propagation of separate spheres for the sexes with men operating the public sphere and women consigned to the private domestic sphere. The *nautch* girl who performs her sexuality out in the open for financial gain is contrasted with the chaste British woman who recognises her modest role in the home. Thus the *nautch* dance and subaltern body is perceived as a danger as women are entering into the male sphere of capitalism as well as threatening British women’s position in the home.

Bhattacharya’s argument, though, goes on to establish a clear binarism between male authors who portray subaltern bodies as a site for erotic conquest and women who wish to police Indian female sexuality.⁶⁸⁷ Such an arbitrary delineation, however, does not account for how Phebes Gibbes viewed the *nautch* dance as relatively unthreatening in 1789. It would thus be more pertinent to understand the shift to other reasons than any fixed or inherent gender binarism. One such reason could be that the denigration of Indian sexuality was aligned the growth of missionary movements and shifts in colonial attitudes towards interracial relationships between Company men and Indian mistress as the nineteenth century progressed. The more derogatory portrayal of the *nautch* dancer could, moreover, be indicative of the diminishing

⁶⁸⁶ Bhattacharya, *Reading the Splendid Body*, p. 135

⁶⁸⁷ For Battacharya’s arguments concerning the *nautch* dance, see Bhattacharya, *Reading the Splendid Body*, pp. 132-135

cultural status of the art form which in turn could be attributed to a decline in court and temple patronage for the dancers during this period.⁶⁸⁸

The 1790s saw an expansion of evangelicalism in Britain.⁶⁸⁹ The Clapham sect, a group of Evangelicals residing in Clapham and consisting of such people as Henry Thornton, John Venn and William Wilberforce, became prominent campaigners in British political and religious discourse.⁶⁹⁰ Such evangelicals advocated for a more literal interpretation of the Bible and a wholehearted transformation of morality and manners within Britain. The rising popularity of evangelicalism in the early nineteenth century is unsurprising in a context where there was widespread economic distress as a result of war with France and in a political climate where many conservatives were arguing that deism and atheism had eroded the religious faith of Britons. The phenomenon can further be accounted for by contextualising it in relation to the increasing industrialisation of Britain during this period, which led to a shift away in economic power from the landed gentry to middle-class manufacturers and entrepreneurs. The growing importance of such social classes led to many of them seeking avenues to contest and critique the values of the aristocracy and traditional landed gentry. Evangelical discourses thus presented a political oppositional tool and outlet for such discourses, in addition to of course being the means to express personal belief and faith.⁶⁹¹ With its simple clarity and rigid moral codes, Evangelicalism offered comforting certainties, at a time dominated by uncertainties. The movement had a widespread appeal among the middle classes who were wooed by evangelical publications such as the *Evangelical Magazine* and

⁶⁸⁸ Leela Venkataraman & Avinash Pasricha, *Indian Classical Dance: Tradition in Transition* (Delhi: Roli & Janssen, 2002) p. 211

⁶⁸⁹ Doreen M. Rosman, *Evangelicals and Culture* (London: Croom Helm Ltd., 1984) p. 20

⁶⁹⁰ Rosman, *Evangelicals and Culture*, p20 & Thorne, *Congregational Missions*, pp. 5-7

⁶⁹¹ For a discussion of the effect of the French Revolution and industrialisation on the missionary movements, see Cutt, *Mrs Sherwood*, p. 9 & Davidoff and Hall, *Family Fortunes*, p. 148

the *Baptist Magazine*⁶⁹² and by authors such as William Cowper and Hannah Moore, who advocated the values of domesticity, contemplative religion and separate spheres for men and women.⁶⁹³

During the same period that the evangelical movement was gaining greater ground in the metropole the Protestant missionary movements were also beginning to flourish with the establishment of the *Baptist Missionary Society* (1792), *London Missionary Society* (1795) and the *Methodist Missionary Society* (1813). Whilst these organisations had relatively little impact in India in terms of converting the indigenous population, they had considerable influence in shaping the public's perception of the subcontinent within the metropole itself. The missionary movements'⁶⁹⁴ propaganda output about India was considerable with the Baptist Missionary Society producing annual reports of events in the colonies, many of which were subsequently appended to religious journals such as the *Evangelical Magazine*. Travelling missionary caravans touring Britain with magazines and artefacts from the colonies emphasized the sensationalistic aspects of Indian culture. The emphasis on hookswinging, Sati, female infanticide and *Kali* worship can be ascribed to feelings of genuine shock by missionaries from Britain who were being confronted with something completely alien to their experience. It can also equally be explained as a deliberate strategy by missionary societies to secure funding from the British public by portraying Indians as fanatical heathens in desperate need of enlightenment.⁶⁹⁵

⁶⁹² Rosman, *Evangelicals and Culture*, p. 20

⁶⁹³ Davidoff and Hall, *Family Fortunes*, p. 155

⁶⁹⁴ It is important not to portray the missionary movement as one movement. There were varying missionary movements based on differing denominations within India with different methods and that competed against one another for resources and spheres of influence. However, whilst their methods and organisational structure differed their broad objectives of converting Indians to Christians make them fit for comparison. See Jeffrey Cox, *Imperial Fault Lines: Christianity and Colonial Power in India, 1818-1940* (California: Stanford University, 2002) p. 3

⁶⁹⁵ For a discussion of the British missionary propaganda output in the metropole and the strategies that lay behind such efforts, see Thorne, *Congregational Missions*, pp. 5-7

The growth of missionaries in the early nineteenth century came at a time when there was a growing Anglicisation of the colonial executive, with indigenous elites being displaced and a growing contempt for indigenous culture being exercised by British administrators in India.⁶⁹⁶ Interracial sexual relationships were frowned upon and the East India Company and colonial administrators consequently made greater efforts to physically separate the official elites and Indians by planning civil stations adjoined to, but separate from, Indian towns.⁶⁹⁷ Paradoxically though, whilst the British attempted to segregate officials and families from intermingling with Indians, the single storey open bungalow design of houses meant that the private sphere was open to the gaze and constant trespassing from servants to an extent not seen in British homes in the metropole.⁶⁹⁸ Moreover, since British masters were often not fluent in Indian languages they had to depend heavily on Indian servants for their dealings.

Although both the E.I.C and the varying missionary movements had developed hardline attitudes towards Indian culture and its inhabitants this does not imply, however, that the missionary movements and the East India Company's interests were one and the same. Indeed, the movement's activities in India were also an oppositional tool for the middle-classes who used the subcontinent as a backdrop to propagate bourgeoisie modes of civility and morality, whilst in turn critiquing the values of the gentlemanly capitalist elites.⁶⁹⁹ The East India Company and the British Government, even after granting the charter to missionaries in 1813 to proselytise in

⁶⁹⁶ For a discussion of the utilitarian and missionaries' growing influence in terms of shaping East India Company policy and its attitudes towards Indian culture in the early nineteenth century, see Eric Stokes, *The English Utilitarians and India* (Oxford: Oxford University, 1959) pp. xi-xvi & Thorne, *Congregational Missions*, p. 37

⁶⁹⁷ Kenneth Ballhatchet, *Race, Sex and Class Under the Raj: Imperial Attitudes and Policies and their Critics, 1793-1905* (New Delhi: Vikas, 1979) p. 2

⁶⁹⁸ E.M. Collingham, *Imperial Bodies: The Physical Experience of the Raj C. 1800-1947* (London: Polity Press, 2001) p. 103

⁶⁹⁹ Thorne, *Congregational Missions*, p. 73

India, were often wary that missionary activities would cause widespread unrest amongst Indians,⁷⁰⁰ especially after the Vellore Mutiny of 1806.⁷⁰¹ As a consequence, the missionary experience in India was an alienating and disruptive one. Missionaries faced huge difficulties in spreading the word such as translating the Bible into indigenous languages, conflicts with the East India Company and the resistance of Indians who resented proselytising.⁷⁰² As Susan Thorne states, ‘foreign missionary experience was one of cultural isolation, political marginalization and general rejection’ in which failure was often ‘embraced as a badge of honor’.⁷⁰³

Mary Sherwood’s *The History of George Desmond* was written in 1821 at a time when the missionary movements had gained considerable influence in Britain, drawing in a significant cross section of middle class and upper-class society.⁷⁰⁴ Sherwood was herself the product of a thriving evangelical middle-class home and her ten-year stay and arrival in India coincided with those of serious Company chaplains such as Daniel Corrie, Joseph Parson and Henry Martyn, who pressed for the wholesale imposition of Christianity on India.⁷⁰⁵ She was firmly aligned to the evangelical camp and set up religious schools wherever she was posted. Sherwood, having lived in India for eleven years had direct experience of dealing with Indian servants unlike the aforementioned novelists, with the exception of Helenus Scott. The missionary subtext of *The History of George Desmond* is apparent. Desmond’s regret in later life that whilst his mother provided him with an elegant education she neglected his spiritual education and firmly pressed him to opt for an

⁷⁰⁰ Penelope Carson, ‘Missionaries, Bureaucrats and the People of India 1793-1833’ in *Orientalism, Evangelicalism and Military Cantonment in Early Nineteenth Century India* [ed. by Nancy Gardner Cassels] (Lampeter, Edwin Mellen, 1991) p. 125

⁷⁰¹ There was a heightening of company sensitivity to Indian religious customs and belief in the wake of the Vellore Mutiny (1806), when sepoy rebels killed or wounded two hundred Europeans. See; Carson, *Missionaries, Bureaucrats and the People of India*, p. 132

⁷⁰² Carson, *Missionaries, Bureaucrats and the People of India*, pp. 125-155

⁷⁰³ Thorne, *Congregational Missions*, p. 78

⁷⁰⁴ Cutt, *Mrs Sherwood*, p. 6

⁷⁰⁵ Cutt, *Mrs Sherwood*, p. 14

India career over a position in a country rectory is the means by which Sherwood provides an evangelical middle-class critique of the upbringing of upper-class man and a denigration of worldly ambition. Thus that it should be left to the middle class Cambridge educated Chaplain,⁷⁰⁶ Mr. Melmoth, to reform Desmond and show him the path to God is significant as it demonstrates the need for a middle-class morality to reform the dissolute quasi-secular upper classes. The text also reflects growing hostility to Indians and hence when the newly-wedded couple Emily and George go on a boat tour around picturesque parts of India they note that the ‘cottagers were filthy and disgusting in the extreme’ and that ‘their countenance betrayed something of the grossness of conception and habit which invariably grows out of the abominations of idolatry’.⁷⁰⁷ Emily’s attempt to convince her husband of the benefits of converting the Indian heathens to Christianity and his less than enthusiastic response are indicative of the evangelical petitions for colonial administrators to make more concerted efforts to convert the Indians falling upon deaf ears.

Although *The History of George Desmond* adopts a clear evangelical stance, its portrayal of a master and servant relationship is more acute. This is in contrast to Phebe Gibbes’ *Hartly House*, where servants are background or peripheral figures, or Mary Sherwood’s more didactical narratives such as *Lady and her Ayah* and *Little Henry and his Bearer*, which portrayed masters and mistresses in control of their respectful and, by and large, compliant servants. In the text the evil head servant Shumsheer gains a greater power over Desmond’s household as the narrative progresses, taking care of his financial dealings, controlling his household and

⁷⁰⁶ It is significant that Mr. Melmoth was Cambridge educated as the Cambridge evangelicals were at the forefront of the evangelical movement in India. Mary Sherwood’s friend and mentor Henry Martyn was from the Cambridge evangelical school. See Grossman, *Ayahs, Dhayes, and Bearers*, p. 18

⁷⁰⁷ Anonymous, *The History of George Desmond*, p. 191

through manipulation ensuring that his wife Emily is poisoned. The power dynamic between *Sahib* and servant is thus inverted in the text.

The contrast between *Hartly House* and *The History of George Desmond*, in terms of its portrayal of the master and servant relationship, can be accounted for when one considers that Sherwood ran different households in various parts of India and had direct relationships with Indian servants, unlike Gibbes.⁷⁰⁸ The power dynamic between British *Sahibs* and *Memsahibs* and their Indian servants was never straightforward as servants could to an extent evade British mastery over them by executing a task poorly, by pretending they could not understand their masters, stealing or manipulating situations in their favour.⁷⁰⁹ Whilst Sherwood in her catechetical narratives such as *Lady and her Ayah* and *Little Henry and his Bearer*, emphasised the British characters' dominance over their servants for the sake of clear religious instruction, in *The History of George Desmond* she provides a study of the power that Indian servants had over their masters and mistresses. It is notable, though, that whilst both Sherwood's catechetical texts and her quasi-gothic novel present contrasting depictions of the power dynamic between master and servant, they both nevertheless avoid portraying what was in all probability the commonplace scenario of British masters and mistresses maltreating and exploiting their Indian employees.

In a similar fashion to *The History of George Desmond*, Sydney Owenson's *The Missionary: An Indian Tale* explores the complexities behind the relationship between the coloniser and colonised. The narrative begins in seventeenth-century Portugal, which is under the yoke of Spanish tyranny. It describes a situation where the Portuguese elites are riven by factional rivalries, between the Spanish

⁷⁰⁸ Sherwood's real life experiences of Indian servants were bitter as she suspected her Ayah actually poisoned her son, which was the probable inspiration for the poisoning of Emily by the family Ayah in *The History of George Desmond*. See Grossman, *Ayahs, Dhayes, and Bearers*, p. 18

⁷⁰⁹ Collingham, *Imperial Bodies*, p. 136

partisans and Portuguese Patriots, and where religious doctrinal disputes between the Franciscans and Jesuits play a significant part in exacerbating this conflict. Hilarion, the hero of a narrative, is a young monk who resides in a St. Franciscan monastery in Portugal. The young man is a descendant of a dispossessed royal family and consequently has some influential and powerful family relations, given that his brother is a state minister and his uncle, Archbishop of Lisbon. The zealous and devout young monk, after a period of unrest, successfully requests his uncle and brother's permission to embark on a mission in India. They duly agree and he sets off with great aspirations, seeing himself in the mould of historical conquerors, such as Alexander, Tamberlane and Mahomet. Hilarion arrives at Goa, the seat of Portuguese power in India, and gains permission from the cold, distant and pompous Grand Inquisitor to embark on a mission that passes through Lahore and Kashmir.

At Lahore, Hilarion pitches his tent on the outskirts of the city where under the tutelage of a Brahmin pandit he learns Indian languages and geography. When the Guru Rah Singh, accompanied by his grand-daughter, the high priestess Luxima, arrives in Lahore, he initiates a festival which allows men of different faiths to preach their doctrines to the listening masses. Although Hilarion makes an impressive and eloquent speech, he fails to make any converts. The disappointed young man, having listened to his pandit's advice, decides that if he is to achieve the mass conversion of the Indian population he must first convert the high priestess, Luxima. He consequently sets off to Kashmir, where he establishes his home in a cave on the outskirts of the region. Even though Hilarion initially offends Luxima, he begins to make a more favourable impression upon her after he tends to her injured wolf. The two begin meeting up, and progressively fall in love with each other. Hilarion, whilst resisting his feelings, makes ever greater attempts to convert Luxima

to Christianity, who is resistant for fear of breaking caste. The young monk however has to face a combatant for the high priestess' affections in the figure of Prince Solyman Sheiko, with Hilarion, the Christian, prevailing over his Muslim rival.

Though Hilarion's and Luxima's relationship remains unconsummated all this time they still arouse the suspicions of the local Brahmin community. After being excommunicated by a band of Brahmins in the Elephanta caves, Luxima willingly follows Hilarion who, unknown to the former High Priestess, wants to take her to a convent. The two traverse through stormy and difficult terrain until they join a caravan of different nations and religions on their journey to Goa. During their journey they are followed by two mysterious hooded figures who aggressively question Hilarion about his beliefs and relationship with the beautiful Luxima. The menacing pursuers later turn out to be officers of the Inquisition who have come to arrest Hilarion. After a brief tussle, Hilarion willingly follows the officers to be tried in Goa for heresy and the seduction of a neophyte, whilst Luxima is taken to a convent. The Grand Inquisitor in Goa finds him guilty and sentences him to be burnt at the stake. A craze-driven Luxima, having escaped from the convent, sees Hilarion being burnt, and thinking it is her Sati, leaps onto the fire. The crowd's sympathy at this point is mobilised and they rescue the two and revolt against the Portuguese forces. Unfortunately though, the mortally wounded Luxima dies in Hilarion's arms, with her dying request to Hilarion being that he retains his faith and attempt to temper the sword of Christianity. Despite this, and contrary to her wishes, the narrative ends with a European philosopher decades later stumbling upon the cave of a deceased hermit, who it is revealed is Hilarion, who worshipped the stars and the moon until his death.

Balachandra Rajan, in his reading of *The Missionary*, has argued that ‘the best the East can offer’ seems only to be to ‘yield’ to the ‘towering superiority of the West’.⁷¹⁰ Such criticism is, however, blinkered given that the proselytising mission is progressively deconstructed within the text. Hilarion commences his mission in India full of ‘devotional zeal and fervid enthusiasm,’⁷¹¹ convinced in his belief that he can transform the indigenous population.⁷¹² In the closing stages of the narrative, Hilarion in riposte to his two inquisitors acknowledges the impossibility ‘to effect a change in the religion of sixty millions of people, whose doctrines claim their authority from the records of the most ancient nations, - whose faith is guided by the pride of rank, the interest of priesthood...’.⁷¹³ His final fate as a recluse who engages in animist beliefs signals the final defeat for the attempts of Christianity within the text. The consequences for Luxima’s conversion to Christianity are also dire. She forfeits her high caste and is abandoned by her people.⁷¹⁴ For both Luxima and Hilarion the missionary project serves to dislocate and alienate them from their respective nations and religions. Both the proselytiser and the prospective convert are disempowered by their interaction, hence Hilarion becomes a hermit worshipping the sun and the stars and Luxima dies following the Christian Hilarion but secretly clinging onto the tenets of Hinduism. The outcome for both characters is that they come to believe in a mish-mash and bastardised blend of both Hinduism and Christianity.

⁷¹⁰ Rajan, *Under Western Eyes*, p. 131

⁷¹¹ Owenson, *The Missionary*, p. 74

⁷¹² Hilarion’s attempts to learn Indian languages such as Sanskrit and Persian must be viewed in the context of missionaries such as William Carey who learnt Indian languages in order to spread the word to Indians. See Thorne, *Congregational Missions*, p. 25

⁷¹³ Owenson, *The Missionary*, p. 226

⁷¹⁴ Luxima’s excommunication is reflective of the socio-historical reality of the way the few Indians that converted to Christianity faced persecution, ostracism and violence from their local communities. See Carson, *Missionaries, Bureaucrats and the People of India*, pp. 125-155

It is revealing, though, to look at the methods by which Hilarion attempts to convert Luxima. He realises that he cannot defeat her in a debate about religion:

To argue with her was impossible: for there was an incoherence in her ideas which was not to be reconciled, or replied to. To listen to her was dangerous, for the eloquence of genius and feeling, and the particular tenets of her sect, gave force to her errors...⁷¹⁵

The ‘incoherence’ of her points is a way for Owenson to show how Hilarion cannot cohere a convincing argument to undermine hers and that as an Indian, Luxima will not play by the rules of his logocentric arguments. He only starts to make headway, when he appeals to her in the ‘language of sentiment’⁷¹⁶ – a language which, on principle, he is opposed to and which cannot be reconciled to his avowedly chaste Christianity. Hilarion thus unwittingly manipulates the romantically inclined Luxima through the gentle arts of seduction rather than through simple tenets of the Bible. Thus in Owenson’s narrative, subterfuge, albeit unconsciously, is at the heart of the Priest’s methods to convert the Hindu Priestess. In *The Missionary*, transracial desire for the Indian and missionary attempts to convert the heathen Hindu are intermeshed in Hilarion’s encounter with Luxima. The dovetailing of the two, by Owenson, implies an underlying similarity in so much as they can be identified in terms of a desire by the occident to occupy, possess and inhabit the space of the feminised Hindu ‘other’. By having the Muslim Prince Solyman Sheik and the Christian missionary Hilarion battle for the love of Luxima, with Hilarion prevailing Owenson provides a figurative allusion to the displacement of Moghul rule by British dominion. Yet the fact that Hilarion never consummates the relationship and is equally disempowered by

⁷¹⁵ Owenson, *The Missionary*, p. 127

⁷¹⁶ Owenson, *The Missionary*, p. 117

Luxima shows the failure of a colonial project which seeks to dominate and possess the other.

Conclusion

The period bore witness to a definite increase in the prestige of the occupation of novel writing. This led to women novelists being more willing to engage with and critique masculine discourses of empire. In addition, eighteenth-century novelists underplayed cultural dissonance viewing India within sentimental universalistic frameworks or at least equating Indian religious practices with the relatively dogmatic practices of Southern Europe. Indian culture with its exotic *Nawabs*, its vast array of servants and Gentoo doctrines could be neatly packaged for a British reading public. Indigenous women and servants were there to amuse and serve their European masters and mistresses and were pushed to the peripheries of narratives, with no real power to resist. Moreover, Indian spaces were neatly aesthetised and represented no real threat to the British psyche. As the nineteenth century progressed, however, the gothic becomes the dominant novel genre, colonial administrations become increasingly more anglicised and missionary discourses come to the fore. India, consequently, becomes a site for transgression that the white European must distance himself or herself from if he or she wants to preserve the 'self' from fragmentation. Indian women and servants are no longer in the liminal spheres of narratives. The sexuality of indigenous women became a real danger and menace to the unwitting victim. White masters and mistresses evermore acknowledge their dependence on servants in a foreign land. At a time when Britain was gaining a greater foothold in the subcontinent, Britons paradoxically became aware that they

were an unwanted presence amongst the indigenous population and within the space of India.⁷¹⁷

⁷¹⁷ Christopher Bayly makes the point that the 'British never controlled the bulk of capital, the means of production or the means of persuasion in the subcontinent.' Moreover, he argues that they lacked the reliable indigenous intelligence gatherers that were necessary to engage in effective colonial surveillance endeavours or Foucauldian power objectives. See C. A. Bayly, *Empire and Information: Intelligence Gathering and Social Communication in India, 1780-1870* (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1996) p. 7

Conclusion

The dialogic orientation of discourse is a phenomenon that is of course, a property of *any* discourse. It is the natural orientation of any living discourse. On all its various routes toward the object, in all its directions, the word encounters an alien word and cannot help encountering it in a living, tension-filled interaction...⁷¹⁸
(Mikhail Bakhtin – *Discourse in the Novel*)

In selecting a form, then, the writer finds his choice already ideologically circumscribed. He may combine and transmute form available to him from a literary tradition, but these forms themselves, as well as his permutation of them, are ideologically significant..⁷¹⁹ (Terry Eagleton – *Marxism and Literary Criticism*)

The above quotations by the Marxist literary theorists Mikhail Bakhtin and Terry Eagleton go to the heart of the concerns of this thesis. Bakhtin, in a rhetorical flourish, reveals that while an author may appear to be focusing upon a particular topic or writing within a specific discursive tradition, his or her writings are never monological. Before the word or meaning is transplanted onto the page it dialogues with other words, concepts and meanings, often of a contradictory nature and then conjures up another multitude of permutations when read again. To understand any writings, according to the Marxist theorist, is to embark on a study of the dialogisation of a multitude of discourses and socio-cultural interactions. Eagleton, in contrast, argues the literary form that a particular author adopts, is both ideologically determined and delimiting. Artistic form, rather than being independent of historical processes and ideology, is a manifestation of these processes. Thus to investigate literary forms can only lead in the end to a study of ideology or what Marx would term as ‘superstructure’.

⁷¹⁸ Bakhtin, *Discourse in the Novel*, p. 279. Italics are in original quotation.

⁷¹⁹ Terry Eagleton, *Marxism and Literary Criticism* (London: Methuen & Co., 1976) p. 26

Both Bakhtin's and Eagleton's comments have relevance to our arguments. As this thesis has argued British fictional portrayals of India do not simply and solely reflect the shifting relationship between coloniser and colonised. 'India' fictions arose out of a range of socio-cultural and socio-economic trends that became prominent in the eighteenth century. They were borne out of the development of a literary marketplace and print capitalism's role in defining national identity and promulgating global awareness, oriental scholarship and the development of the British oriental tale. In addition, the consumption of oriental goods and the commoditisation of an Indian aesthetic in visual and popular metropolitan culture were influential in shaping India fictions. These cultural elements blended and 'dialogued' with perceptions concerning the shifting relationship between coloniser and colonised, and were in turn dialogised and embodied within fictional portrayals of the subcontinent during this period. The portrayals of India were also greatly shaped by the demands and internal historical development of the novel, verse or the theatre, and the status of the author. Moreover, the specific mode that a particular author adopted, to portray the subcontinent with, was often loaded with distinctive gendered or class-based assumptions about the subcontinent.

In the late eighteenth century, novels were not generally considered to be highbrow cultural products. Novelists did not really perceive themselves as artists who wished to reshape aesthetic expectations, but rather as anonymous hack workers who patched together their fictions from journalism, letters and pre-existing tropes. Moreover, the India novelists were predominantly middle-class women who had no direct experience of the colonial context and thus were more likely to reflect bourgeois conceptions about the subcontinent.

However, as the nineteenth century progressed and the status of novelists rose, authors pushed through more individualistic visions by either, in Sydney Owenson's case, incorporating oriental scholarship to create sublime effects or, as Mary Sherwood's did, by interweaving Hindoustanee terms to give the narratives an accultured flavour. There was a shift away from novelists commoditising and packaging India neatly for cultural consumption to perceiving the subcontinent as threatening to destabilise the British self. This transition, in addition, to reflecting shifts in the power dynamic between coloniser and colonised, was linked to the displacement of the Sentimental by the Gothic as the most popular brand of novel. Whilst the Sentimental genre approached India within a universalistic and comparative framework, the Gothic used India and Indians as a means to explore transgression and the darker side of the human psyche.

Whilst there were no doubt changes in the way novelists depicted the subcontinent during this period, there were certain continuities. Throughout this period, interracial relationships were denigrated in the novel as either, in the eighteenth century, merely an amusing diversion before a more substantive relationship with another white European took place, or in the nineteenth century, an encounter that could potentially fragment the western self. Resistance to the fruition of such relationships can be accounted for when one looks at the internal mechanics of the novel. The novel, a mode of fiction associated with middle-class domesticity and respectability, naturally placed barriers for interracial romantic relationships to flourish. The sexuality of Indian women provided a counterpoint to the ideal gendered division between private and public spheres. Mary Sherwood's *History of George Desmond*, however, portrayed, in a more acute fashion than any text investigated in this period, the everyday relationships between Britons in the subcontinent and their

Indian servants and mistresses. Shumsheer and Amena, although inherently malicious, have a real power and agency within the household. This was due of course to Mary Sherwood having lived in India and having managed households where she dealt with Indian servants and was exposed to British *Sahibs* engaging in sexual affairs with Indian mistresses. Yet Sherwood's nuanced portrayal of those encounters, in addition, was also partly due to the novel's innate interest in and capacity to represent everyday encounters and relationships in the domestic space.⁷²⁰

The theatrical representation of India and Indian motifs does not follow the same historical development of the novel. Plays, to a greater extent than the novel or verse, respond and react to the metropolitan consumption of the orient and the Indianisation of English culture. The earlier plays portray Britain's interaction with India as threatening to normative class hierarchies and sexual norms. Later India plays draw upon and utilise emerging visual effects and developments in staging technology and have a dialogical relationship with military propaganda and ethnographic paintings by East India Company artists. Theatre directors, for spectacle plays such as *Ramah Droog* or *The Cataract of the Ganges*, drew on visual technologies and the work of British India painters to create the illusion of authenticity and attempted to overawe audiences with an impression of British imperial dominance. Yet the plays, rather than impressing upon viewers a new imperial subjectivity, had the capacity to sometimes do something quite the reverse.

⁷²⁰ Mikhail Bakhtin has argued that the novel has an innate capacity to absorb and reflect a multiplicity of social voices and discourses ranging from moral, philosophical, literary, semi-literary and stylised speeches of individual characters. He argues that this contrasts with poetry, where such discourses have to be subsumed to the poet's individuality and a unitary poetic form. Whilst Bakhtin's distinction between novels and poetry is problematic when used to look at modernist and postmodern poetry, which self consciously disrupt the unity of poetic form, his conceptualisation has applicability when approaching fiction of the late eighteenth and nineteenth century. See Bakhtin, *Discourse in the Novel*, pp. 259-282

Theatrical enactments of imperial technologies did not always impress British national superiority upon every viewer and were liable at times to look rather ridiculous. Moreover, the theatre directors and playwrights of *Ramah Droog* and *The Cataract of the Ganges*, rather than instilling a form of Anglicised imperial hyper-masculinity, used India as a convenient space to explore gender transgression, homoerotic sexual attraction and interracial desire. In this respect, the early nineteenth century stage productions were distinct from verse and the novel. The difference can be ascribed to the varying internal dynamics of the literary modes. The novel, a breed of fiction, associated with bourgeois modes of civility and domesticity, and verse, perceived to be the preserve of the upper-class gentlemen, did not place such issues at the forefront of their India narratives. The stage, in contrast, was a site which had, since the Restoration period, provided a space for actors to perform different genders and playwrights to explore alterity and non-normative modes of behaviour. It thus was a medium that was historically more receptive to the exploration of such themes. India in fact, in the early nineteenth century, was utilised to explore homoeroticism and gender transgression at a time when bourgeois expectations and notions of respectability were placing greater moral restrictions on plays representing Britain. The idea propagated in colonial discourse that Indian men were not fully masculine gave theatre directors and playwrights the pretext and leverage to perform non-normative modes of masculinity, femininity and sexual desire on stage, by simply getting British actors and actresses to adopt the guise of Indians.

Poetic representations of India as highbrow literary constructions differ from the relatively lowbrow theatrical and novelistic productions. British verse was given a higher status than other literary modes as it was perceived to be written by upper-class men versed in the classics. The India poets, however, greatly differed

from one another depending on whether they had any experience of working and living in the contact zone. Poets who actually worked for the East India Company, with the exception of William Jones, transcribed feelings of alienation, nostalgia and cultural dislocation into their poetry. They attempted to depict the perceived ethnographic practices of Indians. Given that the poets were insiders within the colonial administration their works, during this period, reflect to a greater degree than any other brand of author, the shifting relationship between coloniser and colonised, from one of cultural sympathy to more hardline attitudes in the nineteenth century.

Even though William Jones worked as a Judge in Bengal, he was less concerned with depicting everyday feelings of alienation or depicting a contemporary colonial context. Jones' *Hindu Hymns* drew heavily upon the conventions of the British oriental tale and orientalist scholarship. The synthesising of these two elements within his verse was an attempt to reshape metropolitan poetic aesthetics by incorporating Indian mythology to create sublime effects. Yet the dreamscapes and retreat into Hindu mythology was ideologically convenient as it conveyed the impression that India was a land stuck in the past that needed outside intervention in order to be revived.

What is notable about the Romantic poets Robert Southey and Thomas Moore is the extent to which the publishing firms marketed and pushed their products with new typographical formats being invented for their oriental-verse tales. In Moore's case, a five-thousand pound advance was given to secure a publishing deal, and a bribe was given to a reviewer to provide a favourable review of *Lalla Rookh*. As opposed to any other brand of India author, Southey and Moore were insiders within the literary marketplace who exerted influence over publishers and reviewers.

The India poetry of the two British Romantic poets drew upon the work of Jones and oriental scholarship in order to reshape and subvert metropolitan poetic conventions, and aim for the sublime. However, in contrast to Jones' work, which centred on Hindu mythology, or the work of British India poets, who focused on ethnographic practices or specific concerns related to working and living in the subcontinent, the India productions of Southey and Moore encompassed much broader concerns. These included such issues as Ireland's problematic relationship with Britain, the perceived threat of Napoleonic France, and the Portuguese and Spanish independence struggle. The dialogisation of such issues within the fabric of their texts is indicative of the way the British Romantic author was networked to global issues and the way the development of a print culture created the impression of global interconnectedness, which the respective authors tapped into when constructing their India fictions.

Unlike the poetry of the East India Company men, the verse of Southey and Moore was not clearly aligned to shifts in colonial agendas and seemed to adhere to the more individualistic political agendas of the two poets. Southey - a social conservative, anti-catholic and missionary sympathiser - adopted a hardline and unsympathetic stance towards Hindu mythology in *The Curse of Kehama*, depicting it as grotesque, superstitious and inherently backward. Thomas Moore, in contrast, an Irish Catholic with nationalist sympathies, used India and the orient as a space from which to critique colonialism and protestant dominion of Ireland. In fact, an author's nationality played a key part in their constructions of India. It is a factor that crosses over the literary modes. Sydney Owenson's *The Missionary* depicts Goa and Franciscan Portugal being dominated by Spanish Jesuit authorities to allegorize the contemporary political and economic dispossession of Irish Catholic elites by

Protestant England. John Leyden, the Scottish poet, utilised Indian landscape to recover a Scottish identity in *Ode to Leaving Vellore* (1807). India thus could be used by non-English authors to define and help formulate regional identities. Thus defining 'self' and 'other' in India was not simply a binary relationship between the British and India, but also about using the subcontinent as a testing ground to construct one's relationships to other Britons.

Although it has been established that literary constructions of the subcontinent could vary hugely depending upon what literary mode an author was writing within, the sub-groups of authors within that literary format, their lived or lack of lived experience within the subcontinent, and the nationality of author, there are some broad historical shifts and commonalities that can be outlined. The literary market and consumer expectations drove fictional portrayals of India. This, however, did not occur without reference to the colonial context. Shifts in the varying colonial administrations' attitudes and scholarship, from viewing India and her people within a culturally comparative framework in the late eighteenth century to seeing Indians as ethnographically other and inferior in the nineteenth century, was represented in the fiction of this period. Literary representations of India were also influenced by increasing missionary activity within the subcontinent and the growing influence of utilitarian political discourses within India.

In British fiction during this period, a broad shift in attitude can be outlined from the late eighteenth century, from accepting, to an extent responsibility for the negative effects of colonialism, to, in the early nineteenth century, depicting India's social-economic problems and conflicts as inherent, with the British recast as either victims, who were corrupted by the experience of living in India, or unwilling heroes forced to intervene in Indian affairs to save her from herself. The emergence

of such tropes in the early nineteenth century were not merely indicative of ideological shifts but also due to anxieties that the subcontinent, and the experience of colonialism, was forcing Britain into a situation and direction that they could no longer control, and which was having an undue influence on political discourses within Britain. This is understandable when one considers that there was a growing British presence in India. There were thus an increasing number of British men and women settling in the subcontinent for longer that were increasingly dependent on Indian agents and servants to manage their existence. Moreover, missionary movements, while having relatively little impact at this time in converting Indians, were using India as a means to increase their importance within Britain.

It is important to realise, however, that historical developments in colonial context and political discourses were not unproblematically transcribed within British fiction. They interacted with more populist assumptions about India and then became refracted and distorted by the internal dynamics of the varying literary modes, and the varying author's attempts to satiate or confound the expectations of literary consumers. In exceptional cases, authors could buck trends and unchain themselves from the conventions of a literary genre. John Scott's *Serim: or an Artificial Famine*, for instance, broke free from the conventions of the oriental-verse tale by interweaving contemporary critiques of colonial economic policy. Similarly, *The Missionary* deployed the poetic aesthetic of the sublime to a degree unusual for the novel.

Part of the problem of historicising literary productions or relating them to shifts in colonial policy is reducing an author's work to a product of its times, when in some cases authors can sometimes take pride in imaginatively transcending socio-historical context. Yet, however imaginative an author, his fictional

constructions do not emerge out of nowhere. The author's imagination interacts with a heteroglossia of discourses, as can be seen in the India fictions. To examine the India fictions is thus a historically invaluable exercise as the texts and performances provide documentary evidence as to how colonial encounters were both perceived and imagined. The fabrication of events within India's colonial past such as the Black Hole of Calcutta, evasions of economic exploitation, and the fictive notions of British Governor Generals being welcomed by the Indian populace, as well as the blatant historical anachronism present in the India fictions, are illuminating because they demonstrate epistemological and discursive strategies that were used to justify British colonial rule and exploitation in India. Literary representations of the subcontinent are a vital source of information of how Britons confronted, justified or evaded their country's role in colonial exploitation, and the extent to which fiction was complicit in colonial hegemonic discourse. They are fertile sites for historical study in that they provide insights into how print-culture formed a proto-global consciousness with Britons defining and imagining their relationship to Europeans, Indians, Asians and other Britons.

Appendix

Glossary

Ayah – An Indian woman servant who looks after her European master's or mistress' children.

Banians – People belonging to a Hindu caste that were predominantly traders and merchants.

Camera Obscura - The Camera Obscura was a device that could minutely focus on the specifics of a landscape. It was a box containing mirrors and lenses for optical refraction, which also had a platform for sketching. The image of a particular scene was projected by the Camera Obscura onto the sketch paper mounted on it. The artist could then trace round the image to capture a precise outline of the objects in view.

Dastak- An exemption that the Moghul Emperor gave to the East India Company from tax duties on traded goods.

Diorama – An early nineteenth-century metropolitan visual technology, whereby a scene was reproduced on cloth transparencies with various lights shining through the cloths to produce changes in effect, intended for viewing at a distance.

Diwani – The right to collect and administer land revenues in a Mughal province.

Droog – A Droog is an Indian fort.

Fakhir – A Fakhir is a Muslim religious ascetic. However, in eighteenth and early nineteenth century British fiction the term was more broadly and vaguely applied to both Hindu and Muslim religious mendicants.

Flats - A flat is a theatrical term for a wooden frame covered with a canvas painted with scenery.

Gaurie – A Gaurie is an Indian cart.

Gomastah / '*Goomostah*' – An Indian agent who was employed by the British to intimidate and engage in acts of violence on the local Indian population in order to force them to produce certain goods or to extort money out of them.

Grub Street – The term refers to a street in London which was famed in the eighteenth and nineteenth century for being an area where publishers, journalists and authors operated.

Jagir – The right to collect revenues from a district.

Jagannath / '*Juggernaught*' refers to the Hindu god Juggernath. Once a year at the Jagannath temple in Puri, Orissa, a religious festival is held where giant statues of the Lord Jagannath are paraded across the streets mounted on a chariot. British

missionaries in the eighteenth and nineteenth century alleged that devotees in an act of penance sacrificed themselves by throwing themselves under the chariots wheels as the vehicle passed. No substantive evidence was, however, found to support such allegations.

Khelaut – A Khelaut is an Indian shawl.

Macaroni – A Macaroni in the eighteenth and early nineteenth century was a term often used in a derisory fashion to describe a well-travelled upper class Englishman who affected foreign customs and manners after having embarked on a grand tour of Europe.

Memsahib – A white European lady within India who was usually the wife of a colonial official.

Nabob – Another word for a Nawab or an Indian ruler. However, British East India Company men were sometimes derogatorily referred to as nabobs within Britain to indicate that they had been corrupted by the experience of India and were behaving in a despotic fashion and prone to overly extravagant behaviour.

Nabobina – The wife of an Indian ruler. It could refer, however, to an extravagant wife of a colonial official. Mariana Hastings for instance was often referred to as a *Nabobina*.

Nawab – A governor in India during the Moghul Empire.

Panorama – The term describes a late eighteenth and early nineteenth century metropolitan visual technology. The panorama was a narrative scene or landscape painted to conform to a curved or flat background, which surrounded or was unrolled before the viewer.

The Perambulator – This was a wheeled instrument to determine the distances between sketching points. It was a device frequently used by surveyors and cartographers.

Pujah / 'Poojah' – A Hindu term for worship.

Prakriti – A Sanskrit term for the active principle of nature. Prakriti is personified in the Hindu Puranas as the divine mother that embraces and gives comfort to all things.

Puranas – The Hindu creation myths.

Sarkar / 'Serkar' – In the eighteenth-century sense the term denoted the government or personel working for the government.

Vakil – An Indian ambassador or agent.

Yogi – A Hindu religious Ascetic.

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