

**A MORAL EMPIRE? ANXIETIES ABOUT MASCULINITY AND  
COLONIAL GOVERNANCE IN COMPANY INDIA, CA. 1780-1857**

**by**

**JOSEPH SRAMEK**

A dissertation submitted to the Graduate Faculty in History in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, The City University of New York

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## Abstract

A MORAL EMPIRE? ANXIETIES ABOUT MASCULINITY AND  
COLONIAL GOVERNANCE IN COMPANY INDIA, CA. 1780-1857

by

Joseph Sramek

Advisor: Professor Timothy Alborn

This dissertation explores the interplay between British concerns about colonial governance and masculinity in India between 1780 and 1857. During this period, many Britons believed that their Indian empire was one of “opinion,” founded upon their supposed racial and cultural superiority over the Indians they ruled. At the same time, many wanted to believe that this empire was a “moral” one, particularly when compared with prior centuries of Muslim and Hindu rule. Paradoxically, Britons in India found that they had to rule mostly with the help of Indian subordinates, even as they doubted whether Indian clerks and sepoy (soldiers) could be trusted with many of the day-to-day responsibilities of colonial governance. This dissertation argues that such doubts about the trustworthiness of Indian subordinates, along with broader ones about the fitness of the East India Company and its agents to govern India, help to explain in large part why there was considerable attention paid to the personal conduct of British covenanted servants, military officers, and soldiers throughout the first half of the nineteenth century. Many Britons in India believed that only by acting as “moral” and “manly” men themselves would they best ensure that Britain’s “empire of opinion” in India was

maintained and that Indians stayed loyal.

Particularly close attention is paid to the Company's colonial bureaucracy and its sepoy armies. In learning how to govern what was arguably Britain's most important colony, Britons in India also had to define what it meant to be "manly," particularly vis-à-vis Indian bureaucratic and military elites whom they co-opted in order to rule. Thus, colonial administration—both civil and military—offers a prime site for further understanding British and Indian gender formation between 1780 and 1857. At the same time, this dissertation seeks to reinvigorate the study of colonial governance by emphasizing the personal dimensions of colonial rule. It concludes that the establishment by the Company of a system of mainly indirect colonial rule over India during the first half of the nineteenth century was as much an ideological and cultural process, fraught with tension, as one simply about political and administrative necessity.

To the memory of Helen Komisar Sramek (1923-2004)

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List of Abbreviations Used throughout the Text:

|             |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
|-------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| HBI         | James Mill, <i>The History of British India</i> , ed. with introduction by John Kenneth Galbraith (1817; New York: Chelsea House Publishers, 1968 reprint ed. of 1858 ed. [5 <sup>th</sup> ed.] with commentary by Horace Hayman Wilson, 6 vols.). |
| BL/APAC/IOR | British Library, Asia, Pacific, and Africa Collections, India Office Records, London England.                                                                                                                                                      |
| PP          | Parliamentary Papers                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| WS          | Edmund Burke, <i>The Writings and Speeches of Edmund Burke</i> , ed. P.J. Marshall (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1980-2000, 9 vols.)                                                                                                                   |

## Introduction

*[B]y degrees I discovered that the object of their admiration was neither our arts, our arms, nor our science, but our moral qualities; and that, to speak the truth from the heart, to promise even to our own hurt, and not to disappoint, was the real object of their respect. It is this superior morality which enables every young writer [colonial bureaucrat] on his first arrival in a district, although very inferior to many of the natives both in point of experience and intelligence to command a degree of attention and confidence in his decisions which does not belong to any of those natives. It is this which is the real bond which secures to us the attachment of our native army; for, although we rule India by the sword, it is this reputation for good faith, and this entire reliance upon our fulfillment of our undertakings to the native soldiers, as to their pay and pensions which keeps the sword in our hands; to speak more generally, it is this which has prevented the native States from ever making any effectual combination against us. While they distrust each other, they all rally round us; and it is the absence of this quality which unfits the natives at present for taking part in the actual government of India.<sup>1</sup>*

On 16 June 1853, Sir Charles Edward Trevelyan, then a Treasury official but soon to become the famous co-author of the *Northcote-Trevelyan Report* (1854) advocating British civil service reform, insisted that the bedrock of British colonial rule over India was the supposedly superior morality of British colonial bureaucrats and military officers over their Indian counterparts. Testifying before a select committee of the House of Lords investigating the East India Company's administration of India, Trevelyan conceded that Indians had "very considerable administrative qualities" and were generally the equals of British officials in terms of talent. Indeed, drawing upon his own experience as a deputy-secretary in the Bengal government during the mid-1830s, the civil service reformer maintained that the "great patience, great industry, great acuteness and intelligence" of Indian clerks as well as their "perfect knowledge of the country and

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<sup>1</sup> Evidence of Sir Charles Edward Trevelyan, 16 June 1853, PP, 1852-3, *Second Report from Select Committee of House of Lords on Operation of Act for better Government of H.M. Indian Territories*, XXXII (627-I), pp. 140-1, q. 6572.

of the people” was indispensable to British colonial rule. Nevertheless, Trevelyan contended that Indians lacked the “superior grade of morality of Christians and Englishmen” to be able to govern themselves. He insisted that they would only become so under the continued tutelage of British colonial officials and military officers who remained pure “in the midst of great temptations to corruption” and who devoted themselves to “the public interests confided” to them.<sup>2</sup>

In both his belittling of Indians for being incapable of governing themselves as well as his belief that they would eventually be capable of doing so as a result of British guidance, Trevelyan displayed a confidence about the justice of colonialism which was common among other nineteenth-century liberals.<sup>3</sup> At the same time, Trevelyan’s confidence about the superior morality and manliness of British covenanted servants, military officers, and soldiers over their Indian counterparts was a relatively recent development.<sup>4</sup> Only sixty-five years before, for instance, Edmund Burke, then a Whig M.P. but soon to become the famous author of *Reflections on the Revolution in France* (1790), had reached the exact opposite conclusion about the alleged need for Britons to moralize Indians. In his February 1788 speech before the House of Lords commencing the impeachment trial of Governor-General Warren Hastings, Burke argued that Indian “morality [was] equal” to that of Britons. Not only that, but Burke contended that neither Lord Robert Clive, nor Hastings, nor the East India Company could be said to have governed India according to “solid principles of State morality” during the three decades

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<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 141, 142; Evidence of Trevelyan, 28 June 1853, *Second Report*, p. 211, q. 6888.

<sup>3</sup> Uday Singh Mehta, *Liberalism and Empire: A Study in Nineteenth-Century Liberal Thought* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1999), *passim*.

<sup>4</sup> “Covenanted servants” referred to British officials appointed directly by the Court of Directors in London to their positions in India as opposed to the much greater number of mainly Indian “uncovenanted servants” who were directly appointed to their positions by the three presidencies of Bengal, Madras, and Bombay. Beginning in 1674, Company employees were required upon commencement of their employment to sign covenants protecting the Company from financial embarrassment.



since Clive had won Britain its Indian empire at the Battle of Plassey in June 1757.<sup>5</sup>

Indeed, if anything, Burke insisted that Indians were not the ones who needed to be moralized, but rather their British overlords. Four years earlier in December 1783, during the parliamentary debate over then-Prime Minister Charles James Fox's India Bill, Burke complained about the misconduct of Company officials, comparing them to "[y]oung men (boys almost)." These officials lacked both the proper maturity and manliness to govern in the best interests of the people, being actuated instead to obtain sordid profits by "all the avarice of age, and all the impetuosity of youth." The end result of this, Burke warned, was that the Company's rule over India was "in its best state a grievance." Burke insisted that only when the responsibilities of ruling India were entrusted to "men sanguine, warm, and even impassioned in the cause" of governing for the benefit of Indians instead of relegated to "English boys [who]... are full grown in fortune before they are ripe in principle" would British colonial rule be based on firm moral foundations.<sup>6</sup>

### **The Historical Context: The East India Company in the 18th and 19th Centuries**

Imperial commentators from Burke to Trevelyan considered the personal conduct of colonial officials to be intimately connected with colonial rule in no small part because of the institutional peculiarity of British rule over India during this period. Remarkably, the British Empire's "crown jewel" was neither conquered nor directly administered during its first century by the British State. Rather, the "business of empire" was conducted between 1765 and 1858 by the United Company of English Merchants Trading

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<sup>5</sup> Edmund Burke, "Speech on Opening of Impeachment" (15 and 19 February 1788), *WS*, 6: 272, 476.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, "Speech on Fox's India Bill" (1 December 1783), 5: 402, 403.

to the East Indies, or the East India Company, a private commercial organization which since 1600 had held a monopoly over British trade with Asia. As Huw Bowen has rightly observed, “[n]o commercial body has ever extended its reach so far or become so fully preoccupied with the business of empire” than the East India Company did during the second half of the eighteenth and the first half of the nineteenth centuries.<sup>7</sup>

Although a relative latecomer to the profitable spice trade of Asia—only obtaining a royal charter in 1600, several decades after the Portuguese and Dutch East India Companies—the East India Company managed by the close of the seventeenth century to become the largest and most profitable of European trading companies. A key reason for this was the Company’s success early on in “imposing a centralized and bureaucratically directed system of exchange and distribution on markets that were traditionally decentralized, fragmented, and oriented toward individual efforts.”<sup>8</sup> In order to accomplish this, however, Company directors needed to create what historical sociologist Charles Tilly has recently termed a “trust network” which would enable them to trust their employees some 12,000 miles and half a year’s sea journey away.<sup>9</sup> The Company’s trust network, developed by the 1670s, had two main components. First, despite their monopoly over all British trade with Asia, Company directors informally allowed their employees in Asia to engage in their own private trade in intra-Indian and

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<sup>7</sup> H.V. Bowen, *The Business of Empire: The East India Company and Imperial Britain, 1756-1833* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 1.

<sup>8</sup> K.N. Chaudhuri, *The Trading World of Asia and the English East India Company, 1660-1760* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1978), 121.

<sup>9</sup> For Tilly, “[t]rust consists of placing valued outcomes at risk to others’ malfeasance, mistakes or failures” while trust networks are “collective enterprises” wherein individual members or groups place confidence in one another in spite of the various attendant risks of doing so. Although Tilly does not include institutions patronized by governments in his analysis—such as the Company, which not only held a Crown monopoly but which frequently lent money to the State—I would argue that the Company acted very much like a “trust network” in its interactions with its employees. Charles Tilly, *Trust and Rule* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 4, 12, 43.

intra-Asian “country” trade so long as they did not compete with the larger trade between Asia and Europe.<sup>10</sup> Secondly, beginning in 1674, Company directors required all their employees to sign covenants protecting the Company from potential future loss before beginning their employment. With each promotion to higher rank, Company servants were required to sign new covenants of increasingly higher amounts which also further restricted the commodities in which they were allowed to trade.<sup>11</sup>

While this trust network worked fairly well during the seventeenth century, over the course of the first half of the eighteenth century it began to gradually unravel, having fateful consequences for why concerns about the personal morality of Company officials were important throughout the first half of the nineteenth century. A key reason for this was the concurrent political and military collapse of the Mughal Empire which began in earnest with the death of Aurangzeb (r. 1658-1707). Most historians of India no longer explain the eighteenth century simply in terms of Mughal imperial decline as many once did.<sup>12</sup> Even so, it is undeniable that the increased political instability of the first half of the century allowed British (and other European) private traders to gain an increased market share in Bengal and north Indian trade. They managed this mainly by abusing an

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<sup>10</sup> For more on the private British “country” trade during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, see Chaudhuri, *Trading World of Asia*, chap. 9; P.J. Marshall, *East Indian Fortunes: The British in Bengal in the Eighteenth Century* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1976); and I.B. Watson, *Foundations for Empire: English Private Trade in India, 1659-1760* (New Delhi: Vikas Publishing House, 1980).

<sup>11</sup> B.B. Misra, *The Central Administration of the East India Company, 1773-1834* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1959), 379-81. Initially these covenants were for £500. In 1714, the amount required of beginning employees was doubled to £1,000.

<sup>12</sup> For leading examples of the historiographical shift since the 1980s on this issue, which stresses the dynamic role of regional states over the decaying imperial center during the eighteenth century, see Richard B. Barnett, *North India Between Empires: Awadh, the Mughals, and the British, 1720-1801* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980); C.A. Bayly, *Rulers, Townsmen and Bazaars: North Indian Society in the Age of British Expansion, 1770-1870* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1983); Muzaffar Alam, *The Crisis of Empire in Mughal North India: Awadh and the Punjab, 1707-48* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1986); Michael H. Fisher, *A Clash of Cultures: Awadh, the British, and the Mughals* (Riverdale, MD: Riverdale Co., 1987); and Stewart Gordon, *Marathas, Marauders, and State Formation in Eighteenth-Century India* (Delhi and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994).

imperial edict (*farman*) granted by Furrukhsiyar (r. 1713-9) to the Company in 1717 which accorded it customs-free trading privileges within the empire provided that the goods traded were duly registered with permits (*dastaks*). This trading privilege was technically limited only to Company trade. Nevertheless, by mid-century, Company employees acting in their private capacity as traders “brandish[ed] this investiture, asking the local... representatives of political order to assist them in their trade at every turn.” Permits officially exempting trade from customs were being “translated and circulated as freely as money” and not only benefited Company servants but also their Indian trading partners.<sup>13</sup> As an extensive, illicit, customs-free trade developed in Bengal by mid-century, Company employees in India started to become more their own men and less the pliant agents of the Company, placing great strains upon the Company’s trust network.

Indeed, it was the illicit trading activities of Britons in India, more than any other cause, which set in train the Company’s conquest of Bengal in the late 1750s. Upon assuming the governorship of Bengal in early 1756, Siraj-ad-Daula (r. 1756-7) decided to provoke a confrontation with the Company over the profusion of illegal *dastaks*. Using what he considered to be the generally insolent character of Company employees in Bengal as a pretext, he stormed and, after a brief siege, captured Calcutta at the end of June 1756.<sup>14</sup> Although Calcutta was recaptured by Colonel Robert Clive seven months later and Siraj-ad-Daula soon agreed to a “generous restoration” of pre-1756 Company trading privileges, British aims expanded during the spring of 1757 to include his

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<sup>13</sup> Sudipta Sen, *Empire of Free Trade: The East India Company and the Making of the Colonial Marketplace* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1998), chap. 2, quotations are from pp. 62-3; Nicholas B. Dirks, *The Scandal of Empire: India and the Creation of Imperial Britain* (Cambridge, MA and London: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2006), 45, 171-2.

<sup>14</sup> The Company had recently begun improving its fortifications of Calcutta to protect it against French attack, without requesting the permission of Siraj-ad-Daula. The Bengal *nawab* was also offended by the failure of the British to attend his accession earlier in the year and supply him with customary presents, which they now considered to be extortionate. Sen, *Empire of Free Trade*, 74.

overthrow. By the end of May, Clive had reached an agreement with several prominent Calcutta financiers such as Jagath Seth and Armichand to overthrow Siraj-ad-Daula and replace him with Mir Jafar, one of his generals.<sup>15</sup> Three weeks later on 23 June, Clive's expeditionary force of about 3,000 soldiers and sailors fought a short, anticlimactic "battle" at Plassey, thirty miles north of Calcutta, consisting mainly of "limited... artillery exchanges" against troops loyal to Siraj and French artillerymen. At a crucial interval in the battle, as had been agreed upon in advance, Mir Jafar deserted along with most of Siraj's army, thus ensuring the Bengal governor's overthrow.<sup>16</sup>

The Battle of Plassey inaugurated a revolutionary change in the role of the Company in India although few realized it at the time. The Court of Directors avoided assuming the imperial mandate (or *diwani*) to govern Bengal for another eight years, preferring instead to use the new revenues of Bengal to help finance its burgeoning Chinese tea trade instead of importing silver from the Spanish Empire and gold from Brazil as had previously been the case.<sup>17</sup> Accordingly, a situation developed where Company officials in India were able to play the role of "kingmaker," deposing three nominally independent Bengal governors over the following eight years while refusing to accept direct responsibility for governing. Thus, over the next decade and a half, the already "precarious standards of official honesty in India" were placed under heavy strain,

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<sup>15</sup> These financiers had made sizable fortunes over the preceding half-century through tax farming prosperous districts, controlling the Bengal mint, as well as linking themselves with the growing commercial power of the Company and its employees. They now feared, however, that Siraj-ad-Daula would target them (and their wealth) next.

<sup>16</sup> Sen, *Empire of Free Trade*, chap. 2; Marshall, *Bengal: The British Bridgehead: Eastern India, 1740-1828* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 77-8; Bayly, *Indian Society and the Making of the British Empire* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 49-50.

<sup>17</sup> Chaudhuri, *Trading World*; Holden Furber, *John Company at Work: A Study of European Expansion in India in the Late Eighteenth Century* (1948; New York: Octagon Books, 1970 reprint ed.); Artur Attman, *American Bullion in the European World Trade, 1600-1800* (Göteborg, Sweden: Göteborgs Universitetsbibliotek, 1986).

if not destroyed, as Company officials in India proceeded to greatly enrich themselves. As P.J. Marshall has calculated, between the Battle of Plassey in 1757 and the passage of the Regulating Act sixteen years later in 1773, around £2,500,000 was distributed by Bengal rulers and other Bengalis in the form of gifts and presents, most of it ending up in the pockets of various Company employees. The Company's trust network had clearly broken down, explaining to a large degree why the conduct of Company officials was an important concern throughout the late eighteenth and the first half of the nineteenth century.<sup>18</sup>

#### *Various Eighteenth-Century Efforts at Reform*

Just as the Company's older trust network gradually broke down over the course of the first half of the eighteenth century, reform was slow-going during the second half of the century. Company directors and British politicians began to take notice of the vast and ill-gotten fortunes made by certain Company employees as early as the 1760s. However, it was not until two decades later that a newer, more durable trust network started to be cobbled together that would, in time, enable mid-nineteenth century commentators like Trevelyan to boast of the superior morality of Company officials and for boosters of the Company to brag about its virtuosity. In the meantime, the general failure of Company directors to control the actions of their personnel in India led many to question whether the Company and its agents ought to be entrusted with the responsibilities of colonial governance.

Beginning in the 1760s, the Company attempted several piecemeal reforms to

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<sup>18</sup> Lucy S. Sutherland, *The East India Company in Eighteenth-Century Politics* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1952), 81; Marshall, *East Indian Fortunes*, 160-79.

police the behavior of its employees in India. Company directors instituted several purges of dishonest Company employees, even appointing the swashbuckling Clive—who by conservative estimates had returned from India in 1760 with a fortune of around £300,000—to a second stint as president of Bengal in 1764 and granting him the plenary authority to dismiss corrupt officials.<sup>19</sup> When this failed to solve the problem of corruption, Company directors appointed three outside commissioners who sailed for India in 1769, but their ship tragically disappeared en-route. Finally, the Court of Directors issued numerous directives throughout the 1760s and 1770s prohibiting certain activities which they had once tolerated such as Company employees “lending” money to Indian princes. These purported loans were often merely facades to justify receiving extensive “presents or gratuities” from princes and court officials “by way of exorbitant Interest on monies lent, or said to be lent to them by our Servants.” The fact that Company directors kept issuing such directives in almost verbatim form until the end of the century and that several Madras “nabobs” such as Paul Benfield and Madras governor Thomas Rumsbold kept returning to England from India with substantial fortunes into the 1780s suggests that these directives had little effect.<sup>20</sup>

Despite the good intentions of Company directors, meaningful reform was often stymied from the late 1750s through to the early 1770s by the explosion of “shareholder

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<sup>19</sup> In addition, Mir Jafar granted him a *jagir* (or grant of tax-free lands) estimated as yielding an income of £27,000 a year, which Clive was allowed to retain until May 1774. Sutherland, *East India Company*, 81-3, 85; and Bruce P. Lenman and Philip Lawson, “Robert Clive, The ‘Black Jagir’ and British Politics,” *Historical Journal* 26 (1983): 801-29.

<sup>20</sup> Bowen, *Revenue and Reform: The Indian Problem in British Politics, 1757-1773* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 82-7; Sutherland, *East India Company*, 136-7, 195-200; Court of Directors to Madras, 17 May 1766, BL/APAC/IOH/261 (7); Dirks, *Scandal of Empire*, 61-78 *passim*. Benfield’s claims against the South Indian Nawab of Arcot were said to range between £500,000 and £800,000 while Rumsbold, who held office as governor of Madras for just two years between 1778 and 1780, returned to England with a fortune of around £750,000, of which nearly £200,000 consisted of claims against the Nawab of Arcot.

democracy” within the Company during this period.<sup>21</sup> Although the Company’s steady commercial performance guaranteed a generally stable stock price as well as a generally complaisant General Court of Proprietors during the first half of the eighteenth century, both these things changed radically in the 1760s. Not only did speculators caused stock prices to fluctuate widely depending upon good or bad news from India, but Company shareholders also became more fractious than before.<sup>22</sup> While in previous decades, the annual election of Company directors had typically resulted in an oligarchy perpetuating itself, during the late 1760s and early 1770s, there was considerable annual turnover in the Court of Directors as many directors failed to win re-election the following year. The restlessness of Company shareholders during this period was also manifested in the marked increase in meetings of the General Court as well as in the number of official ballots on actions taken by the Court of Directors.<sup>23</sup> In such an environment, there was little that Company directors could do to police the activities of their employees in India, particularly when, as a result of the Company’s patronage system, many of these employees were the relatives or friends of Company shareholders.

The inability of Company directors to properly govern their servants during the 1760s and early 1770s—let alone India—finally led to a reluctant Parliament intervening in Company affairs by 1772 with the grant of an emergency state loan of £1.4 million to

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<sup>21</sup> Timothy L. Alborn, *Conceiving Companies: Joint-Stock Politics in Victorian England* (London and New York: Routledge, 1998), 22.

<sup>22</sup> For example, the price for a share of Company stock jumped 30% from £165 in January 1766 to £214 only six months later in July following the news that Clive had accepted the *diwani* of Bengal. Similarly, as a result of unfounded rumors that Hyder Ali of Mysore had conquered Madras, the price declined 16% within one month between April and May 1769 from £274 to £230. Bowen, *Business of Empire*, 57-8.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, 63-8. In the fifty years between 1715 and 1765, there had only been seven official recorded votes by the General Court on decisions taken by the Court of Directors. By contrast, in the seven years between 1766 and 1773, there were forty-five such ballots. Similarly, although the tendency during the first half of the eighteenth century was to hold the statutory minimum of five meetings a year of the General Court, the number of annual meetings dramatically increased during the 1760s and early 1770s, reaching an all-time high of forty-eight in 1773.



stave off the Company's imminent bankruptcy, the ill-fated passage of the Tea Act—which indirectly led to the Boston Tea Party in Massachusetts the following year—and finally, the passage of the Regulating Act in 1773. Although the Regulating Act helped to minimize the disruptive effects of the explosion of shareholder participation in Company affairs by staggering the terms of Company directors and raising the amount of stock required to vote in Company elections from £500 to £1,000, its reforms to colonial governance were generally ineffective. For example, although higher salaries were granted to various high ranking Company employees to discourage them from engaging in private trade—which was thought to be corrupting—the far greater problem of the low salaries of lower-level Company functionaries was not addressed at all.<sup>24</sup> More disastrously, Parliament created the post of governor-general to supervise the three presidential governments of Bengal, Madras, and Bombay and appointed then-Bengal president Warren Hastings to it. However, fearful that too much power in Hastings's hands would continue to foster corruption, Parliament appointed a council to serve alongside him. Despite the best intentions of MPs, though, this council, consisting of two Company employees (Hastings and Richard Barwell) and three ministerial appointees (General Clavering, Colonel Monson, and Philip Francis), did not yield a more responsible government of India but rather immediately disintegrated into internecine warfare between Hastings and Francis and their respective factions, drawing many of the battle lines that would resurface fifteen years later in Hastings's impeachment trial.<sup>25</sup>

#### The Regulating Act's failure to successfully reform colonial governance

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<sup>24</sup> Under the Act, the governor-general received an annual salary of £25,000, the councilors £10,000, the Chief Justice, £6,000 and £5,000 to other officers, including judges. See Bowen, *Revenue and Reform*, 179.

<sup>25</sup> Sutherland, *East India Company*, 268, 330-1; Bowen, *Revenue and Reform*, 187; Philip Lawson, *The East India Company: A History* (London and New York: Longman, 1993), 121.

prompted Parliament to enact more significant legislation a decade later, with the prod to action once again being the looming threat of Company bankruptcy.<sup>26</sup> First, the Fox-North Coalition, largely under Edmund Burke's leadership—who held office as paymaster-general—drafted what came to be referred to as Fox's India Bill between July and September 1783. The bill stripped the Company of all political and military authority in India and placed these responsibilities in the hands of an independent parliamentary commission. Despite active and frantic lobbying against the legislation by the Company and other "City" institutions such as the Bank of England and fears that, if enacted, it would grant Prime Minister Charles James Fox, Edmund Burke and their fellow Whigs a major partisan advantage by giving them control over large amounts of Indian patronage, the bill passed the House of Commons in the first week of December by a majority of over 100. It was only narrowly defeated two weeks later on 17 December in the House of Lords when George III, nursing an active dislike of the Fox-North Coalition which had been forced on him earlier in the year, threatened the loss of Crown patronage to any peer who voted for the legislation. Having thus obtained the defeat of Fox's India Bill, the king promptly demanded Fox's resignation, sending instead for William Pitt, who thus began his eighteen-year long premiership.<sup>27</sup>

Although the Company dodged a bullet by helping to orchestrate the defeat of Fox's India Bill and the downfall of his government, the widely-perceived need for Parliament to enact meaningful reform did not disappear. Seven months later, after Pitt won a landslide general election, Parliament enacted his India Act, which, while not as

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<sup>26</sup> Bowen, *Business of Empire*, 36.

<sup>27</sup> John Cannon, *The Fox-North Coalition: Crisis of the Constitution, 1782-4* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1969), chaps. 6-7 *passim*; Sutherland, *East India Company*, 405-6; Alborn, *Conceiving Companies*, 25-6.

sweeping as Fox's India Bill, was still "one of the most important measures passed by Parliament" in the 1780s.<sup>28</sup> Among other things, the India Act created the Board of Commissioners for the Affairs of India (or Board of Control), consisting of six members of the privy-council (of whom at least three were to be members of the cabinet) to supervise the Company's management of political and military affairs in India. This "double government" of the Board of Control and the Court of Directors continued with few changes until the Company's abolition following the Sepoy Rebellion in 1858.

*Burke's Impeachment of Hastings and Nineteenth-Century Reform*

Over time, the India Act would create a framework in which the Company could implement several important reforms which helped it earn back some of the public confidence in its fitness to rule India which it had lost between the 1750s and the 1780s. At the same time, as Nicholas Dirks has rightly observed, the India Act could never by itself "restore moral authority for Britain's imperial ambitions." Rather, Edmund Burke's "aggressive prosecution" of Warren Hastings for nearly a decade from 1786 to 1795 "did what no regulating act could... exhorting [Britain] to take responsibility for its imperial ambitions." Although Burke's impeachment of Hastings was a failure in that he did not gain the former governor-general's conviction for any of the twenty-two charges he was impeached for, the nearly decade-long impeachment trial afforded Burke a major "platform on which to make clear that empire was a sacred responsibility" as well as to articulate a moralizing agenda by which empire could cease being scandalous.<sup>29</sup>

Throughout his Indian speeches, Burke framed empire as being "a sacred

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<sup>28</sup> Dirks, *Scandal of Empire*, 10.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, 125, 162, 236.

responsibility” for Britons in two important ways, both of which were gendered. First, as Anna Clark has recently argued, through “using metaphors of victimized females and emasculated princes” as well as his strategic use of the term “feminine” to describe Indians rather than “effeminate” in his opening impeachment speech, Burke evoked the need for British men to “protect” womanish Indians. By using such rhetoric, Burke clearly “contributed to emergent racial stereotyping and helped rationalize the empire by depicting Indians as powerless creatures who needed to be rescued.”<sup>30</sup> Secondly, as Frederick Whelan and Richard Bourke have noted with regard to Burke’s broader political thought, Burke believed that rule was a sacred “trust” and that rulers “had a moral duty (to God)” to govern “justly and beneficently” on behalf of their subjects.<sup>31</sup> Burke insisted that Britain had been given such a responsibility by God in India which made it incumbent that the colonial officials who were sent out to govern were manly enough to be able to govern in the best interests of Indians. As he made clear in his December 1783 speech on Fox’s India Bill, empire required “men sanguine, warm, and even impassioned in the cause” of governing for the benefit of Indians, not “English boys” who were “full grown in fortune before they [were] ripe in principle.”<sup>32</sup>

While Burke was stressing the need to send out to India mature and responsible colonial officials so that Britain’s sacred “trust” to govern for the benefit of Indians could be successfully discharged, the Company sought to demonstrate in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century that it was the proper institution to be entrusted with this

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<sup>30</sup> Anna Clark, *Scandal: The Sexual Politics of the British Constitution* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2004), 98, 99, 111. In his opening impeachment speech, Burke describes Indians as “people who are the softest in their manners, approaching almost to feminine.” Burke, “Speech on Opening of Impeachment” (15 February 1788), *WS*, 6: 307.

<sup>31</sup> Frederick G. Whelan, *Edmund Burke and India: Political Morality and Empire* (Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1996), 23-5, 279-80, 295-6, quotation from p. 23; Richard Bourke, “Liberty, Authority, and Trust in Burke’s Idea of Empire,” *Journal of the History of Ideas* 63, no. 1 (2000): 453-71.

<sup>32</sup> Burke, “Speech on Fox’s India Bill” (1 December 1783), *WS*, 5: 402, 403.

responsibility through spearheading various administrative reforms. For example, under the aegis of Governor-General Lord Charles Cornwallis, the British sought to guarantee the perpetuity of land rights in Bengal by the Permanent Settlement, enacted in 1793, which permanently fixed land taxes and granted full title to the land for the first time to *zamindars* (or landholders).<sup>33</sup> In the same year, Cornwallis also significantly raised the official salaries of covenanted servants while banning them from engaging in private trade, arguing that “the honor and interest of the British Nation [would] be safe in India” only when the “Company’s Servants [were] confined to public business.”<sup>34</sup> Other examples of administrative reform during this period include the establishment of Haileybury College in 1804—one of the first educational institutions in the world solely dedicated to the training of colonial bureaucrats—as well as the creation of what Huw Bowen has termed an “increasingly well-regulated paper empire” within the Company’s London headquarters. By insisting that “their overseas servants record and report every single local action and event,” Company directors aimed to present the image that they provided India with “an efficient and enlightened colonial administration that paid due attention to the happiness, protection, and well-being of the people of India.”<sup>35</sup>

Alongside these efforts by the Company to reform its colonial administration of India, there were two other important changes during the early decades of the nineteenth century which aided proponents of the Company in asserting that it was the appropriate governing institution to continue ruling India. First, the Company ceased being a

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<sup>33</sup> The classic work on the ideological underpinnings and practical effects of Cornwallis’ Permanent Settlement remains Ranajit Guha, *A Rule of Property for Bengal: An Essay on the Idea of Permanent Settlement*, with forward by Amartya Sen (1963; Durham, NC and London: Duke University Press, 1996 reprint ed.). Despite Cornwallis’s belief that he was permanently guaranteeing the land rights of Indian landholders, close to half of the land in Bengal changed hands within a decade of the Permanent Settlement.

<sup>34</sup> Cornwallis to Court of Directors, 2 May 1792, BL/APAC/IOR/H/79 (11).

<sup>35</sup> Bowen, *Business of Empire*, 180.

commercial body: in 1813, Parliament stripped the Company of its trading monopoly except for Chinese tea; twenty years later in 1833, it prohibited the Company from trading at all. Once Adam Smith's favorite example of the problems of mixing trade with empire, by the 1830s the general consensus had become that the Company "exercised good, responsible, economic rule that bestowed considerable benefits upon the people of India."<sup>36</sup>

Secondly, but no less important, favorable late eighteenth-century British views of Indian culture by British Orientalists such as philologist Sir William Jones were gradually eclipsed in the early decades of the nineteenth century by harsher views emanating from Evangelicals like Charles Grant and Utilitarians like James Mill.<sup>37</sup> In his "Observations on the State of Society among the Asiatic Subjects of Great Britain" (1792), Grant, a prominent Company official and Evangelical, castigated Hinduism for its "abandoned selfishness" and utter lack of principle.<sup>38</sup> Similarly, a quarter-century later, Mill disparaged Indians in his six-volume *History of British India* (1817) for being moral children, arguing that "[w]ith respect to morals or duty, it appears not that any theory has ever been constructed by the Hindus."<sup>39</sup> Although there were important differences between missionary endeavors to convert heathen souls and the secular Utilitarian program of implementing more rational law codes and taxation structures, both Evangelicalism and Utilitarianism converged in framing the Company's rule over India

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<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, 297.

<sup>37</sup> In 1786, Sir William Jones discovered the linguistic similarities between Sanskrit, Ancient Greek, and Latin, thus laying the intellectual foundations for what would later become known as the Indo-European language family. For a comparison of Jones' thought (and other British Orientalists) with James Mill's, see Javed Majeed, *Ungoverned Imaginings: James Mill's The History of British India and Orientalism* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992).

<sup>38</sup> Charles Grant, "Observations on the State of Society among the Asiatic Subjects of Great Britain" (1792), reprinted in PP, 1812-3, X.

<sup>39</sup> James Mill, *HBI*, 2: 60.

largely as a “civilizing mission” which would require Britons to rule Indians for the unforeseeable future.<sup>40</sup>

Nicholas Dirks has recently argued that with the introduction of British missionaries to India in 1813, missionaries took the lead in helping to vindicate empire and erase its scandalous origins by focusing greater attention on the supposed *immorality* of “Indian tradition.” By attacking such caste rituals as *sati* (widow self-immolation) and *thagi* (ritual murder by highway robbers), as well as later, female infanticide and hook-swinging, missionaries sought “to clothe the British empire with the moral cloak of Christianity.”<sup>41</sup> While Dirks is correct in contending that sustained focus on “Indian tradition” by missionaries and others helped change the subject as far as the rampant British abuses and personal misconduct in the eighteenth century were concerned, I shall argue in this dissertation that concerns about British conduct still remained important throughout the first half of the nineteenth century. Although by mid-century, colonial officials such as Trevelyan would boast of the superior morality of Britons over the Indians they ruled, many officials nevertheless worried throughout the first half of the nineteenth century, for example, that covenanted servants who fell into debt paying for the various vices of Calcutta, or military officers and soldiers who drank in front of their Indian soldiers, would undermine broader moral justifications for British rule. Fearing that Indians would not stay loyal unless they were governed by virtuous men, many colonial officials argued through to the Sepoy Rebellion in 1857 that the very stability of British colonial rule depended upon covenanted servants, military officers, and soldiers being manly enough to govern and being perceived as such by the Indians they ruled.

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<sup>40</sup> As first noted by Francis G. Hutchins, *The Illusion of Permanence: British Imperialism in India* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1967), chap. 1.

<sup>41</sup> Dirks, *Scandal of Empire*, 301.

## **The State of the Historiography**

Interestingly enough, what was a clear connection for imperial commentators from Burke to Trevelyan between the personal conduct of Britons in India and colonial rule has gone largely unexplored by historians. Scholars have recognized various parts of the picture, but not the whole. My discussion of the existing historiography shall be divided into two sections: the first covering historians of British gender; the second scholars who have written about colonialism in India during the Company period. Despite appearing to be topics having little in common with one another, I will argue that gender and colonial rule are intimately connected to one another and can only be fully understood when placed within a common analytical field.

### *Gender*

Various historians have argued for the importance of morality to the construction of British manliness during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. For example, David Kuchta has contended that “manly virtue was a crucial ideological trope in English political culture” throughout the three centuries between 1550 and 1850 and was frequently employed by political elites “to directly exclude from power all other men.” By adopting the sartorially modest three-piece suit in place of earlier, more elaborate, and luxurious fashion patterns by the close of the seventeenth century, elite men sought to demonstrate that they possessed the proper virtues to lead the nation.<sup>42</sup> Likewise, Linda Colley and Philip Harling have shown how aristocratic men sought to fend off radical critiques of their privileged position within British society during the French

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<sup>42</sup> David Kuchta, *The Three-Piece Suit and Modern Masculinity: England, 1550-1850* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, and London: University of California Press, 2002), 11, chaps. 5-6 *passim*.



Revolutionary and Napoleonic era by displaying an “ostentatious patriotism,” along with “relentless hard work, complete professionalism, [and] an uncompromising private virtue” on behalf of the nation. At a time when “a great many Britons seriously questioned [their] authority” to govern, Harling maintains that aristocratic politicians co-opted reform by spearheading “fiscal and military reforms that made the offices of central government less lucrative to insiders and less expensive to taxpayers,” thereby ensuring their dominant position within British political life well into the late nineteenth century.<sup>43</sup>

While Kuchta, Colley, and Harling have stressed the important role played by upper-class elites in the development of a morally-informed British manliness during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, which was later emulated by the middle class, other scholars such as Margaret Hunt, Boyd Hilton, Leonore Davidoff, and Catherine Hall have argued that moral manliness was more of a middle-class phenomenon during both centuries. Rather than emulating the aristocracy, Hunt contends that men and women of the “middling sort” during the eighteenth century often condemned aristocrats for their luxurious and overly-French behavior and sought to “mend the morals of the high born” by emphasizing commercial virtues such as prudence, “plain speaking, usefulness, perseverance in the face of adversity, rationality, [and a] systematic pursuit of virtue.” Similarly, Hilton argues that the “distinctive middle-class piety” of Evangelicalism was crucial during the first half of the nineteenth century in fostering “new concepts of public

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<sup>43</sup> Linda Colley, *Britons: Forging the Nation, 1707-1837* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1992), chap. 4 *passim*, quotes on pp. 153, 184 and 193; Philip Harling, *The Waning of “Old Corruption”: The Politics of Economical Reform in Britain, 1779-1846* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), 4-5. On the broader success of the British aristocracy in maintaining its privileged position within British society through the end of the nineteenth century, see David Cannadine, *The Decline and Fall of the British Aristocracy* (New Haven, CT and London: Yale University Press, 1990). Cannadine has recently revised his argument, contending that only since decolonization in the 1960s has the British upper class been in terminal decline. Cannadine, *Ornamentalism: How the British Saw Their Empire* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2001).

probity and national honor, based on ideas of economy, frugality, professionalism, and financial rectitude.” Likewise, Davidoff and Hall maintain that religion was “central to the articulation and diffusion of new beliefs and practices relating to manliness and femininity” among the middle class as well as provided middle-class men and women with a “certainty about their claims and a reason for rejecting some of the values of the aristocracy.”<sup>44</sup> Dror Wahrman, John Tosh, and Callum Brown have more recently complicated this picture, arguing that moral manliness was more of an unrealized ideal than something actually achieved by many middle-class men during the nineteenth century, “taint[ed]” as they were by the “moral contamination [of] the market-place.” Nevertheless, all three maintain that that the ideal was very important to many Victorians as shown by the rise of Muscular Christianity at mid-century and by the efforts of such institutions as the YMCA, the Salvation Army, and the Boy Scouts at the end of the nineteenth century to “contain, capture, restrain and discipline masculinity.”<sup>45</sup>

Missing in these various accounts of British manliness, however, is much, if any, discussion of empire. Despite Mrinalini Sinha’s challenge more than a decade ago to historians of British gender to more fully recognize “[t]he constitutive impact of the colonial experience in the making of British masculinity” (and femininity),<sup>46</sup> too often the

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<sup>44</sup> Margaret R. Hunt, *The Middling Sort: Commerce, Gender, and the Family in England, 1680-1780* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, and London: University of California Press, 1996), 71, 203; Boyd Hilton, *The Age of Atonement: The Influence of Evangelicalism on Social and Economic Thought, 1795-1865* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988), 7; Leonore Davidoff and Catherine Hall, *Family Fortunes: Men and Women of the English Middle Class, 1780-1850* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1987), 77, 149.

<sup>45</sup> Dror Wahrman, “‘Middle-Class’ Domesticity Goes Public: Gender, Class, and Politics from Queen Caroline to Queen Victoria,” *Journal of British Studies* 32 (1993): 396-432; John Tosh, *A Man’s Place: Masculinity and the Middle-Class Home in Victorian England* (New Haven, CT and London: Yale University Press, 1999), 67; Callum Brown, *The Death of Christian Britain: Understanding Secularization, 1800-2000* (London and New York: Routledge, 2001), 88, 98.

<sup>46</sup> Mrinalini Sinha, *Colonial Masculinity: The “Manly Englishman” and the “Effeminate Bengali” in the Late Nineteenth Century* (Manchester: Manchester University Press; New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1995), 10; see also *idem.*, “Mapping an Imperial Social Formation: A Modest Proposal for Feminist Historiography,” *Signs* 25, no. 4 (Summer 2000): 1077-82.

British Empire is still treated as distinct from British history, as “out there” as opposed to part of a single analytic frame.<sup>47</sup> However, in order to attain a more complete picture of how British masculinity was formed during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the Empire needs to be written into the story more than it has been thus far.

To some extent, this is beginning to occur. Over the past decade or so, Antoinette Burton, Catherine Hall, Philippa Levine, and Kathleen Wilson, among other historians, have produced gendered histories of British imperialism which, together with scholarship influenced by post-colonialism, have helped to revitalize imperial historiography.<sup>48</sup>

Other historians such as Bill Schwarz, Susan Thorne, and Andrew Thompson—along with Burton, Hall, and Wilson—have interrogated the distinction between “British” and “imperial” history.<sup>49</sup> Still, important questions remain to be answered. For example, historians now know a lot about how masculinity operated within the British family,

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<sup>47</sup> See, for example, a recent symposium on masculinity in British history since 1500 in the *Journal of British Studies*. Despite several articles which touched upon the empire in passing (e.g., John Tosh, “Masculinities in an Industrializing Society: Britain, 1800-1914,” 330-342), there is hardly any mention of the empire’s impact upon British gender over the past five centuries. *Journal of British Studies* 44, no. 2 (April 2005): 274-362.

<sup>48</sup> Antoinette Burton, *Burdens of History: British Feminists, Indian Women, and Imperial Culture 1865-1915* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1994); and *idem.*, ed., *Gender, Sexuality and Colonial Modernities* (London: Routledge, 1999); Catherine Hall, *White, Male and Middle Class: Explorations in Feminism and History* (New York: Routledge, 1992), esp. chaps. 9 and 10; *idem.*, Keith McClelland and Jane Rendall, eds., *Defining the Victorian Nation: Class, Race, Gender and the British Reform Act of 1867* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000); and *idem.*, *Civilising Subjects: Metropole and Colony in the English Imagination, 1830-1867* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2002); Philippa Levine, *Prostitution, Race & Politics: Policing Venereal Disease in the British Empire* (New York and London: Routledge, 2003); and *idem.*, ed., *Gender and Empire: The Oxford History of the British Empire Companion Series* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2004); and Kathleen Wilson, *The Island Race: Englishness, Empire and Gender in the Eighteenth Century* (London and New York: Routledge, 2003). For a useful historical overview of postcolonial thought, see Robert J.C. Young, *Postcolonialism: An Historical Introduction* (Malden, MA; Oxford; and Victoria, Australia: Blackwell, 2001).

<sup>49</sup> Bill Schwarz, ed., *The Expansion of England: Race, Ethnicity and Cultural History* (London and New York: Routledge, 1996); Susan Thorne, *Congregational Missions and the Making of an Imperial Culture in Nineteenth-Century England* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1999); Andrew Thompson, *The Empire Strikes Back? The Impact of Imperialism on Britain from the Mid-Nineteenth Century* (Harlow, UK: Pearson, 2005); Burton, ed., *After the Imperial Turn: Thinking with and through the Nation* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2003); Hall, *Civilising Subjects*; and Wilson, ed., *A New Imperial History: Culture, Identity and Modernity in Britain and the Empire, 1660-1840* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004).

whether aristocratic, middle class, or working class.<sup>50</sup> However, as Karen Harvey and Alexandra Shepard rightly point out, British gender historians thus far have had “relatively little to say about masculinity and formal state or institutional politics.”<sup>51</sup>

With the exception of Sinha, who has explored the connections between colonial governance and masculinity in late nineteenth-century colonial India, few have probed the relationships between gender and British colonial administration and vice-versa.

The general approach I use in this dissertation broadly parallels Sinha's. Like Sinha, I mainly focus on the colonial bureaucracy and the army as sites for the construction of masculinity in colonial India. I also agree with Sinha, Kuchta, George Mosse, and Susan Kingsley Kent, among other scholars, who have contended that ideologies of masculinity were (and still are) often bound up with political power and function generally to justify the full or partial exclusion of various groups of men (and women) from the wider body politic.<sup>52</sup> Ultimately, in Company India as well as under the British Raj which replaced the Company after 1858, only Britons could be fully men. By “unmanning” Indian men through belittling them as immoral children or as womanish

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<sup>50</sup> Randolph Trumbach, *The Rise of the Egalitarian Family: Aristocratic Kinship and Domestic Relations in Eighteenth-Century England* (New York, San Francisco, and London: Academic Press, 1978); Lawrence Stone, *Family, Sex, and Marriage in Early Modern England, 1500-1800* (New York: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1977); Davidoff and Hall, *Family Fortunes*; Tosh, *A Man's Place*; Clark, *The Struggle for the Breeches: Gender and the Making of the British Working Class* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1995); and Ellen Ross, *Love and Toil: Motherhood in Outcast London, 1870-1918* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1993). More work remains to be done with regard to the history of the family in the empire, particularly before 1850, but see Mary A. Procida, *Married to the Empire: Gender, Politics and Imperialism in India, 1883-1947* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2002); Elizabeth Buettner, *Empire Families: Britons and Late Imperial India* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2004); Fiona Paisley, “Childhood and Race: Growing up in the Empire,” in Levine, ed., *Gender and Empire*, 240-59; and Patricia Grimshaw, “Faith, Missionary Life, and the Family,” in Levine, ed., *Gender and Empire*, 260-80.

<sup>51</sup> Karen Harvey and Alexandra Shepard, “What Have Historians Done with Masculinity? Reflections on Five Centuries of British History, circa 1500-1950,” *Journal of British Studies* 44, no. 2 (April 2005): 276.

<sup>52</sup> Sinha, *Colonial Masculinity*; Kuchta, *Three-Piece Suit and Modern Masculinity*; George L. Mosse, *The Image of Man: the Creation of Modern Masculinity* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1996); and Susan Kingsley Kent, *Gender and Power in Britain, 1640-1990* (London and New York: Routledge, 1999).

men in need of being “rescued,” Britons in India sought to justify and reaffirm both their right to rule and their superior positions within the colonial bureaucracy and the army.

Where I differ from Sinha is in terms of chronology. I focus on the East India Company’s rule over India from circa 1780 to the Sepoy Rebellion in 1857 while Sinha examines the decade of the late 1880s and early 1890s when British colonialism was overtly challenged for the first time by nascent Indian nationalism. This chronological difference is not trivial at all but rather has profound consequences for my interpretation of colonial masculinity vis-à-vis Sinha’s. Sinha largely tells a story of how the British colonial state managed various challenges to its rule during the latter decades of the nineteenth century by employing racialized categories of masculinity such as the “manly Englishman” and the “effeminate Bengali.” Bengali clerks within the colonial bureaucracy employed various tactics to challenge these colonial categories, but because they did not overtly challenge the constellation of stereotypes embedded in the ideology and praxis of colonial masculinity but rather only their particular position within it as “effeminate Bengalis,” Sinha concludes that the British were able, at least initially, to neutralize the threat to their rule posed by Indian nationalism.

The East India Company also faced various threats to its rule over India, but not from Indian nationalism or disgruntled Indian bureaucrats. Rather, the main issue from the late eighteenth through the middle decades of the nineteenth century was whether the East India Company and its agents—both British and Indian—could be trusted to govern India responsibly. I argue in this dissertation that colonial masculinity was primarily framed in moral terms throughout the Company period, in part because such concerns were present within metropolitan British society during this period, but mainly because of

this wider concern about the Company's rule. By paying close attention to the interplay between concerns about the personal conduct of colonial officials and wider anxieties about colonial rule, this dissertation fills an important gap in scholarly understanding of British gender during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

### *Colonial Rule*

Just as British gender historians have generally neglected colonial administration as a site of British gender formation during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, historians of British colonial rule in India have, likewise, not typically acknowledged the ways in which colonial governance was gendered. Again, scholars have recognized some parts of the picture but not the whole. For example, Douglas Peers has noted the importance of the notion of India as an "empire of opinion" to nineteenth-century colonial officials. Not only did British policymakers take seriously the need to make the British "appear as omnipotent as possible"—with British soldiers being outnumbered about five to one throughout the Company period by sepoys<sup>53</sup>—but they also frequently employed the "empire of opinion" argument "[t]o explain the apparent willingness of Indians to serve foreign masters."<sup>54</sup> Other scholars such as Martha McLaren and Lynn Zastoupil have likewise shown how this idea of "opinion," if expressed in somewhat different terms, was also articulated by several leading nineteenth-century colonial

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<sup>53</sup> In 1857, there were 45,522 British soldiers in India, of which approximately 24,000 were in the British Army and 21,500 in the Company's three European armies. This compared to 232,224 sepoys in the Company's three Indian armies (135,767 sepoys in the Bengal Army, 51,244 in the Madras Army, and 45,213 in the Bombay Army). Generally, though, during the Company period, the total number of British soldiers (whether in the British Army or the Company's) typically did not exceed 40,000. Douglas M. Peers, *Between Mars and Mammon: Colonial Armies and the Garrison State in Early Nineteenth-Century India* (London and New York: I.B. Tauris, 1995), 257; David Omissi, *The Sepoy and the Raj: The Indian Army, 1860-1940* (Houndsmills, UK: Macmillan, 1994), 133.

<sup>54</sup> Peers, *Between Mars and Mammon*, 62, 87.

policymakers such as Sir Thomas Munro, Sir John Malcolm, and Mountstuart Elphinstone. Munro, Malcolm, and Elphinstone, along with many other colonial officials during the nineteenth century, believed that Indians would remain loyal to British rule so long as British rulers gained their consent “by governing them in a way that would bring improvement to the quality of their lives, however marginally.”<sup>55</sup>

Although various historians of British colonialism in India have recognized the importance of the ideology of “opinion” (and of paternalism more generally) for colonial rule during the first half of the nineteenth century, little attention thus far has been paid to the *personal* dimensions of this.<sup>56</sup> This is surprising given that non-historians from George Orwell to Frantz Fanon, Albert Memmi, and Ashis Nandy have long recognized that colonialism placed psychic demands upon colonizers (as well as colonized peoples) to act in certain ways and not others.<sup>57</sup> Informed by this insight, I argue in this dissertation that concerns about the personal conduct of British covenanted servants,

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<sup>55</sup> Martha McLaren, *British India & British Scotland, 1780-1830: Career Building, Empire Building, and a Scottish School of Thought on Indian Governance* (Akron, OH: University of Akron Press, 2001), 188; also see Lynn Zastoupil, *John Stuart Mill and India* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1994), chap. 3. Both McLaren and Zastoupil credit metropolitan influences such as the Scottish Enlightenment and the eighteenth-century Whig notion that “government rested in large part upon public opinion, or the habits, feelings, and prejudices that made people loyal to the existing order” for the imperial thought of Munro, Malcolm, and Elphinstone. Zastoupil, *John Stuart Mill*, 56. For more on the Whig notion of “opinion,” see J.W. Burrow, *Whigs and Liberals: Continuity and Change in English Political Thought* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988), chap. 3.

<sup>56</sup> In addition to Peers, McLaren, and Zastoupil, for studies which stress the importance of the idea of paternalism for colonial rule during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, see: T.H. Beaglehole, *Thomas Munro and the Development of Administrative Policy in Madras, 1792-1818: The Origins of “The Munro System”* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1966); Burton Stein, *Thomas Munro: The Origins of the Colonial State and His Vision of Empire* (Delhi, Oxford, and New York: Oxford University Press, 1989); Seema Alavi, *The Sepoys and the Company: Tradition and Transition in Northern India, 1770-1830* (Delhi and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), part. chap. 3; and Sen, “Liberal Empire and Illiberal Trade: The Political Economy of ‘Responsible Government’ in Early British India,” in Wilson, ed., *A New Imperial History*, 136-54.

<sup>57</sup> George Orwell, *Shooting an Elephant and Other Essays* (London: Secker and Warburg, 1950); Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, trans. Charles Lam Markmann (1952; New York: Grove Press, 1967); and *idem.*, *The Wretched of the Earth*, trans. Richard Philcox with commentary by Jean-Paul Sartre and Homi K. Bhabha (1962; New York: Grove Press, 2004); Albert Memmi, *The Colonizer and the Colonized*, trans. by Howard Greenfeld, with intro. by Jean-Paul Sartre and afterward by Susan Gilson Miller (1957; Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 1991); Ashis Nandy, *The Intimate Enemy: Loss and Recovery of Self Under Colonialism* (Delhi and New York: Oxford University Press, 1983).

military officers and soldiers, far from being unrelated to British notions that their rule was one of “opinion,” were intimately connected to them. Only by understanding the ideology of “empire of opinion” as also encompassing, for example, colonial concerns about covenanted servants who accepted gifts from prominent Indian landowners in their districts, or anxieties about British military officers and soldiers who drank in front of their Indian soldiers, will it be possible to more fully recognize that this colonial ideology, while sounding self-serving and confident, actually betrays grave concerns by colonial officials about the “instability and vulnerability” of their rule over India.<sup>58</sup>

By focusing on the interplay between gender anxieties among colonial officials and broader concerns about colonial rule, this dissertation also contributes to wider debates within British imperial historiography regarding the role of the center versus that of the periphery in imperial expansion and policy development. On one side of this debate stand Peter Cain, Anthony Hopkins, and Huw Bowen, who have argued that British imperial expansion was directed by and for the benefit of London-based moneyed elites—whom Cain and Hopkins have termed “gentlemanly capitalists”—in alliance with the landed aristocracy. Although Cain and Hopkins concede that “Clive’s actions were not directed from London,” they nevertheless insist that British imperial expansion in India in the eighteenth century “cannot be understood unless [it is] placed in the broader context of the financial revolution” of the late seventeenth century as well as “the expansionist forces that it generated and the problems these forces experienced on distant frontiers.” Although Bowen has qualified some of Cain and Hopkins’ arguments, for example, arguing that there was more friction between moneyed men and the landed elite

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<sup>58</sup> Ann Laura Stoler, *Carnal Knowledge and Imperial Power: Race and the Intimate in Colonial Rule* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, and London: University of California Press, 2002), 10.



than Cain and Hopkins have allowed for, he is in broad agreement with their general thesis about British imperial expansion. The eighteenth-century empire—as well as the nineteenth-century one which followed—Bowen insists, should be “seen not as a series of discrete geographical areas or units scattered across the globe, but rather as a commercial, cultural and social body of reasonably sharp definition which had its roots very firmly placed in metropolitan culture.”<sup>59</sup>

Other historians, “sniping from the periphery,” have questioned this emphasis on the metropole and, in particular, London financiers and policymakers, arguing instead that Indian conditions were often more important in the development of British colonialism in India than decisions made in London.<sup>60</sup> Examining the century before Plassey, Ian Watson maintains that British private traders “established the conditions within which the Company was forced to intervene in Indian politics,” insisting that it was only because of “mercantile interpenetration” by Britons in the Indian economy that the Company was able to “establish an empire in India.” Likewise, Christopher Bayly stresses the importance of Indian conditions in determining the shape of British colonialism in India during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries although he focuses less on the efforts of British traders and more on the roles that Indian merchants, bankers, and other “middlemen” played in this process. Similarly, scholars working on the nineteenth century such as Douglas Peers have contended that local Indian conditions continued to play a dominant role in the development of British colonialism. Efforts by

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<sup>59</sup> P.J. Cain and A.G. Hopkins, *British Imperialism, 1688-2000* (1993; Harlow, UK: Longman, 2002, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed.), 94; Bowen, *Elites, Enterprise and the Making of the British Overseas Empire, 1688-1775* (Houndsmills, UK: Macmillan Press; New York: St. Martin's Press, 1996), x. Also see David Hancock's study on the Atlantic world economy during the eighteenth century, which makes a similar argument: *Citizens of the World: London Merchants and the Integration of the British Atlantic Community, 1735-1785* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995).

<sup>60</sup> The phrase is Shula Marks's: Marks, “History, the Nation and Empire: Sniping from the Periphery,” *History Workshop* 29 (1990): 111-9.

Company directors to rein in military expenses and to dictate a policy of non-conquest, Peers argues, were continually undercut during the first half of the nineteenth century by colonial officials who devised the alternative political economy of “military-fiscalism” based primarily on “the maintenance of an army ready to deal with any threat, internal or external or both.”<sup>61</sup>

In this dissertation, I adopt a mainly peripheralist approach. The East India Company may very well have been a prime “institutional manifestation” of London-based gentlemanly capitalism but Company officials in India often took the initiative in proposing and implementing reforms aimed at improving the morality of covenanted servants, military officers, and soldiers.<sup>62</sup> For example, it was Cornwallis, while governor-general in India, who pressed the need to significantly raise the salaries of covenanted servants and prohibit them from engaging in private trade. Likewise, the idea that colonial officials ought to undergo several years of administrative training before being allowed to assume their positions was the brainchild of Governor-General Lord Wellesley who established Fort William College in Calcutta for precisely that purpose in 1800, four years before Company directors followed suit in establishing Haileybury College. The same is largely true with regard to Company efforts to diminish soldier drunkenness in its European regiments. As will be shown in Chapter 5, nearly all of the reforms aimed at altering the conduct of British soldiers which the Company undertook in the nineteenth century—from establishing regulated canteens to paying soldiers for their unused liquor rations to building regimental libraries—were proposed initially by officers on the ground in India and agreed to by Company officials in London, not the

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<sup>61</sup> Watson, *Foundation for Empire*, ix, 26-7; Bayly, *Rulers, Townsmen and Bazaars*, chap. 6; and *idem.*, *Indian Society and the Making of the British Empire*, chap. 2; Peers, *Between Mars and Mammon*, 243.

<sup>62</sup> Bowen, *Business of Empire*, 30.

other way around. Like the Company's policy of "military-fiscalism," the Company's various nineteenth-century efforts to reform the conduct of its agents in India were generally driven more by local needs and governing priorities than those of distant Company officials in London.

Finally, by examining gender anxieties among covenanted servants, military officers, and soldiers within a broader context of British concerns about colonial rule and vice-versa, this dissertation contributes to scholarly debates about how colonial governance worked during the Company period. During this period as well as the later British Raj, British rule was mostly indirect and limited, involving no more than a thousand covenanted servants and no more than 45,000 British soldiers at the time of the Sepoy Rebellion in 1857 compared to perhaps 175 to 200 times that number of Indian clerks in the colonial bureaucracy and about five times that number of sepoys in the Company's three armies.<sup>63</sup> As Robert Eric Frykenberg, Thomas Metcalf, Peter Marshall, and Anand Yang have each shown in their local studies of colonial rule in Madras, the Upper Provinces, Bengal, and Bihar, respectively, the relatively tiny number of Britons on the ground involved in colonial administration allowed for considerable Indian agency in policy development, particularly by local elites, but also by Indian bureaucrats.<sup>64</sup> Similarly, with regard to British efforts to attain colonial knowledge about India, Eugene Irschick and Christopher Bayly have contended that these efforts were often limited and

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<sup>63</sup> Robert Eric Frykenberg, *Guntur District, 1788-1848: A History of Local Influence and Central Authority in South India* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1965), 7.

<sup>64</sup> Frykenberg, *Guntur District*; Thomas R. Metcalf, *Land, Landlords, and the British Raj: Northern India in the Nineteenth Century* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, and London: University of California Press, 1979); Marshall, *Bengal: The British Bridgehead*; Anand Yang, *The Limited Raj: Agrarian Relations in Colonial India, Saran District, 1793-1920* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989).

heavily dependent upon “dialogic interactions” with Indians.<sup>65</sup> British rule over India, Yang rightly notes, was in many respects a “limited raj” and one mediated to a large degree by various Indian elites.

However, while numerous scholars have pointed to the limits of British rule and to the fact that Britons largely depended upon their Indian subordinates in governing India, few have probed the tenor of the relationships between British colonial officials, military officers, and soldiers, on the one hand, and subordinate Indian clerks and soldiers, on the other. Doing so, though, is necessary before coming to any conclusions about indirect rule and how it worked. After all, just because Britons in India were forced to greatly rely upon Indian subordinates in order to govern does not mean that they often wished to do so or that their interactions with Indians were generally positive. Indeed, I argue in this dissertation that these interactions generally were not, typically being suffused by a lack of trust on the part of British colonial officials and military officers toward their Indian subordinates. This general inability to trust not only often made for fraught relations between Britons and Indians in the governing of India during the nineteenth century but also contributed to, if not directly caused in many cases, colonial anxieties about the personal conduct of covenanted servants, military officers, and soldiers. By paying close attention to these concerns about trust and personal conduct and placing them within their wider context of colonial rule, this dissertation will shed further light on how colonialism “worked” during the Company period.

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<sup>65</sup> Eugene Irschick, *Dialogue and History: Constructing South India, 1795-1895* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994); Bayly, *Empire and Information: Intelligence Gathering and Social Communication in India, 1780-1870* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996).

## Scope of the Argument

Over the course of six chapters, this dissertation will explore the interplay between concerns about the personal conduct of British covenanted servants, military officers, and soldiers and broader anxieties about colonial rule during the period from circa 1780 to the Sepoy Rebellion in 1857. In so doing, I will show how issues of trust and morality played a key role not only in formulating British and Indian masculine identities within the colonial bureaucracy and the Company's three armies during this period but also in shaping the nature of colonial rule itself.

In Chapter 1, I examine the nineteenth-century debate over the fitness of the East India Company to govern India. I argue that commentators on empire throughout the period from the 1780s to the 1850s frequently employed history to justify or to condemn the Company's rule over India, very fitting for an age which was "the high noon of European historiography" and which saw history-writing begin to come into its own as a professionalized discipline in Britain.<sup>66</sup> Various nineteenth-century critics of the Company followed Edmund Burke in condemning the Company for governing India rapaciously, maintaining that Muslim and Hindu rulers of prior centuries generally ruled India in a humane and paternal fashion by comparison. By contrast, a second group of historians and commentators who were more sympathetic to the Company contended that its rule over India was more virtuous than that of previous Muslim and Hindu rulers who were overly greedy, bigoted, and licentious. Presenting a third point of view, but perhaps the most significant one for British colonial rule, was Utilitarian historian James Mill.

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<sup>66</sup> Mehta, *Liberalism and Empire*, 82; Levine, *The Amateur and the Professional: Antiquarians, Historians and Archaeologists in Victorian England, 1838-1886* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986). Several of the great historians (e.g., Edward Gibbon, Adam Ferguson, David Hume, Francois Guizot, Johann Gottfried von Herder, Leopold von Ranke, Thomas Babington Macaulay, and Auguste Comte) wrote their multi-volume histories during this period.

Throughout his six-volume *History of British India* (1817), Mill belittled Indians for being “moral children” who were incapable of governing themselves in any other way but despotically. Muslim rulers of preceding centuries had brought civilized rule to India which it was the duty of the British to continue. Anticipating Sir Charles Edward Trevelyan and other mid-century liberals, Mill contended that, provided the Company and its employees in India could be sufficiently moralized to do the work of civilizational uplift, they would be needed to govern India for a long time to come.

In Chapters 2 and 3, I consider the implications of this debate about the morality of Company rule for the formation of colonial masculinity within the colonial bureaucracy. In the second chapter, I explore the prolonged debate over “Indianization” of the colonial bureaucracy during the first half of the nineteenth century. Actuated by the goal of making the Company’s rule over India more virtuous, Governor-General Lord Charles Cornwallis excluded Indians from the covenanted service in 1793 on the supposed grounds that they were universally corrupt and dishonest. However, in the decades to follow, British governance of India became more cumbersome and unwieldy than before, eventually resulting in colonial policymakers advocating entrusting subordinate Indian officials with greater responsibilities of colonial governance by the 1830s. At the same time, though, there were real limits to how far the British were willing to go. I end the chapter by considering the 1853 debate over continued Indian exclusion from the covenanted service, arguing that British colonial officials resisted efforts to further Indianize the colonial bureaucracy largely because they sought to maintain distinct racial and gendered differences between themselves and their Indian subordinates.

Chapter 3 follows from the discussion in Chapter 2, examining various anxieties about masculinity among British covenanted servants during the first half of the nineteenth century relating to colonial governance. During the period between 1793 and 1831, when British covenanted servants were expected to govern India by themselves, financial improprieties such as borrowing money from Indian creditors or accepting gifts from Indians were thought to reflect poorly upon the “mastery” of British officials over their districts. After 1831, when Governor-General Lord William Bentinck partially Indianized the colonial bureaucracy, concerns about the manliness of covenanted servants shifted along with their roles. Once covenanted servants had metaphorically “grown up” and learned how to govern India more effectively by entrusting many of the day-to-day responsibilities of governance to Indian subordinates, colonial officials now deemed it necessary that they prove they were manly enough to rule over Indians and provide them with good government. Instead of worrying so much about the immorality of immature Company bureaucrats, colonial officials now concerned themselves more with the broader question of whether the right *sort* of British men were being sent out to rule India, ultimately leading to the introduction of competitive examinations for the covenanted service in 1853.

In Chapter 4, I examine the development of “martial races” thinking among British military policymakers during the first half of the nineteenth century. Unlike the colonial bureaucracy, where British officials generally did not trust Indian clerks, Bengal Army military officials during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries generally trusted their high-caste sepoys, believing them to be Indian equivalents of “English gentlemen.” Consequently, significant autonomy was accorded to Indian soldiers within

the Bengal Army, helping the Company to become the paramount military and political power in South Asia by 1820.

Beginning in the 1820s, though, British officers started to become disillusioned with their predominantly high-caste army. Concerned that they were losing control over the army to Brahmins and to caste rituals which they deemed prejudicial to military discipline, several British military officers began to look more favorably than before upon soldiers from the other two, more caste-diverse armies of Madras and Bombay. They also started to regard Gurkhas, Sikhs, and Muslim soldiers as being better soldiers than high-caste Hindus, and began to praise their relative, if not total absence of caste prejudice. Although the recruitment policies of the Bengal Army did not change until after the Sepoy Rebellion in 1857—a mass revolt of high-caste Hindu soldiers in that army—I contend that many of the ideas behind the “martial races” recruitment policy of the British Raj were articulated before 1857.

Chapter 5 follows from the discussion in Chapter 4, focusing on anxieties about the personal conduct of British army officers and soldiers during the first half of the nineteenth century. As a result of concerns about governance within the Bengal Army from the 1820s on, colonial officials deemed it necessary that British officers and soldiers always act virtuous. Officers who fell into debt or who dishonored themselves by being habitually drunk or, worse, who physical abused Indians, were thought to lose the moral authority necessary to retain the loyalties of sepoys to British rule. Likewise, soldier drunkenness was a major concern, prompting several efforts by the Company during the 1820s and 1830s to combat this problem through establishing regulated canteens, paying soldiers for their unused liquor rations, building libraries, offering alternative sporting



activities, and establishing savings banks to encourage sobriety among their soldiers.

I end the dissertation in Chapter 6 with a discussion of British tiger hunting during the first three quarters of the nineteenth century. Britons hunted tigers during this period partly to emulate Indian princes and the Mughals, partly to conquer Indian nature, and partly to “protect” Indian men, women, and children from the “savage tiger” and thus display their chivalrous manhood. For these various reasons, British hunters routinely denigrated the hunting efforts of Indian rajas and laymen. However, their interactions with Indian trackers and hunting guides (*shikaris*) were different. Because of the limited weaponry which existed prior to the 1870s which made hunting tigers far more dangerous and harder than it would become after the introduction of the high-velocity hunting rifle, it was necessary for hunters to rely extensively upon Indian expertise. In order to hunt Indian tigers successfully and safely and thus display their manliness and moral fitness to rule India, British hunters *had* to trust subordinate Indians, perhaps even with their own lives.

In examining the relationships between concerns about the conduct of various agents of empire—whether British or Indian—and wider anxieties about colonial rule between circa 1780 and the Sepoy Rebellion in 1857, this dissertation not only sheds important light upon how Company India “worked” but also on the making of the British Raj which followed. Scholars have generally tended so far to think about the British Raj as emerging out of the crucible of the Sepoy Rebellion and have accordingly attributed much of the racism of British rule between 1858 and 1947 to that conflagration. By contrast, I will contend in this dissertation that much of the mistrust of Indian subordinates found in the Raj period, for example, as well as many of the Raj’s racist

governance structures initially grew out of British anxieties during the Company period about indirect rule. The events of 1857 were certainly important, but I would argue that their significance lays more in further augmenting Company-era developments than in “making” the British Raj *per se*. By taking seriously the first century of British colonial rule of India, when the “business of empire” was handled not by the British State but by the East India Company, this dissertation will fill a significant gap in scholarly understanding of British gender and colonial rule as well as their intimate relationship to one another.

### **Sources and Methodology**

In exploring the interrelationship between nineteenth-century British concerns about colonial rule and anxieties about the masculinity of British covenanted servants, military officers, and soldiers, this dissertation uses a wide variety of sources. First, the dissertation relies upon various archival documents generated by the East India Company and the government-appointed Board of Control in the late eighteenth and the first half of the nineteenth centuries while governing India which are housed today in the Asia, Pacific, and Africa Collections of the British Library in London, formerly known as the Oriental and India Office Collections. These documents can be further divided into three types. Documents found in the Military Department files have been of great use for the two military chapters in this dissertation. Another major archival source—for both the military as well as civil service chapters—has been the Home Miscellaneous Series, so-named because they consist of spare files which were not catalogued when India Office archivists devised the modern-day archival system in the late nineteenth century. The

Home Miscellaneous Series also consists of official papers which the Court of Directors periodically submitted to Parliament between the mid-1750s and the passage of the India Act in 1784 which are absolutely indispensable when writing about this earlier period in the Company's history.

The majority of archival documents which I have consulted when writing this dissertation, though, have been files which are found in the Board of Control Collections. The India Act of 1784 established a government-appointed board to supervise the Company's political and military affairs in India. Officially known as the Board of Commissioners for the Affairs of India but more commonly known as the Board of Control, it had an automatic right under the India Act to see all political and military correspondence which passed between the Court of Directors in London and the three presidential governments of Bengal, Madras, and Bombay. The Board of Control Collections are, accordingly, facsimiles of select documents found elsewhere in the India Office Records (as well as the National Archives of India and regional archives in India) under various other headings such as the public, military, revenue, diplomatic, ecclesiastical, legal, and commercial proceedings of the Bengal, Madras, and Bombay presidential governments; correspondence from the Court of Directors to India and vice-versa; correspondence between the Court of Directors and the Board of Control; and, lastly, the minutes of Board of Control meetings. Not only is the breadth of these files of great use to scholars examining the period between 1794 and 1841; these files are arranged topically rather than strictly chronologically, thus making it easy, for example, for the researcher to examine the development of a particular policy from beginning to end or to investigate a bribery case involving a British covenanted servant from initial

charge to the official's removal from office.<sup>67</sup>

A second major “political” source which this dissertation relies upon, particularly for the period between 1842 and 1860, when it becomes difficult to use the Board of Control Collections, is parliamentary testimony given by several leading Company officials before various committees of the House of Commons and the House of Lords which investigated the East India Company's governance of India during 1852 and 1853 in the lead-up to passage of the Charter Act of 1853. Similarly, this dissertation draws upon the parliamentary testimony and evidence compiled by the Peel Commission in 1858 and 1859 which it used to investigate the causes of the Sepoy Rebellion as well as propose changes in military recruitment policy. Like archival documents found in the Board of Control Collections, the primary virtue of parliamentary reports and testimony as a source for the researcher lay in the fact that they are typically arranged in a topical rather than a strictly chronological manner.

In addition to examining traditional “political” sources such as the archives of the East India Company and various parliamentary reports, this dissertation also uses “intellectual” sources such as the writings and speeches of important late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century statesmen and Company officials such as Edmund Burke, James Mill, Thomas Robert Malthus, Sir John Malcolm and Thomas Babington Macaulay. Burke and Mill are particularly important for this study. More than any other thinker, Burke established a direct connection between the personal conduct of Company officials

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<sup>67</sup> Although the Board of Control was created by the India Act in July of 1784, a late nineteenth-century fire destroyed the Board of Control files between the years 1784 and mid-1794. Regarding the later date, to date, archivists at the Asia, Pacific, and Africa Collections of the British Library have only completed cataloguing the Board of Control Collections through the year 1841. While it is possible to consult files in the Board of Control Collections for the remaining seventeen years of the Board's existence between 1842 and 1858—when both the Board of Control and the East India Company were replaced by the India Office—a researcher must know the exact file number.

in India and the Company's colonial rule over India which had an enormous influence over how many Britons in India during the first half of the nineteenth century thought about colonial governance. By contrast, Mill's importance lays primarily in the implications of his disparagement of Hindus and Hinduism throughout his six-volume *History of British India* (1817) for the creation and furtherance of paternalistic justifications for British colonial rule. For instance, while partial "Indianization" of the colonial bureaucracy—the subject of Chapter 2—was pushed through in 1831 despite Mill's vehement opposition, various mid-century policymakers invoked Mill's views about the "immorality" of Hinduism and Hindus as a reason for keeping Indian clerks subordinated within the uncovenanted service of the colonial bureaucracy.

Another major "intellectual" source which this dissertation draws upon is several histories of India which were written by Britons in the late eighteenth and the first half of the nineteenth century. In grappling with the questions posed by Burke and others about whether or not the East India Company governed India in a "moral" manner, most polemicists—whether supporting or criticizing the Company—thought historically, comparing the Company's rule of India with previous centuries of Muslim and Hindu rule. How various eighteenth- and nineteenth-century British historians drew upon the Indian past either to justify or to condemn the Company rule of India is the primary focus of the first chapter. Even so, authors of Indian histories also had a significant impact upon how Britons in India during the first half of the nineteenth century thought about their own conduct in India in relation to British colonial rule there. Historical questions such as how Lord Robert Clive conquered Bengal in the late 1750s, the nature of Governor-General Warren Hastings's rule over India in the 1770s and early 1780s, or

how many Hindu temples Muslim conquerors such as Mahmud of Ghazni and Timur were supposed to have sacked drew their importance, more than anything else, from the “moral” lessons which Britons in India during the nineteenth century believed they exemplified.

Finally, this dissertation draws upon travel memoirs and other personal narratives written by Britons in India during the late eighteenth and the first half of the nineteenth century. I draw upon these more “cultural” sources for several reasons. First, despite the inherent biases of authors, travel narratives purport to be—unlike novels—truthful accounts of one’s experiences in an “exotic” locale. Thus, they were instrumental in creating many European perceptions and stereotypes about India and Indians which mattered greatly in how Britons governed India in the nineteenth century. Secondly, often being published versions of diaries, travel narratives have “unique advantages in demonstrating the genesis of certain attitudes as the direct results of experience... tak[ing] us straight into the *why* and *how* of the birth of a prejudice.”<sup>68</sup> As the British writer and politician Sir Arthur Ponsonby argued more than eight decades ago, diarists “cannot help explaining themselves” however unintentionally or incompletely.<sup>69</sup> The same is true for many Britons who went off to govern India during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and who wrote narratives of their personal experiences on the subcontinent.

My inclusion of an ostensibly *personal* source such as a travel narrative alongside more traditional sources for studying the East India Company’s governance of India such as official archives, parliamentary reports, histories, and the speeches and writings of Burke, Mill, and other important thinkers may initially seem odd. However, the

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<sup>68</sup> Ketaki Kushari Dyson, *A Various Universe: A Study of the Journals and Memoirs of British Men and Women in the Indian Subcontinent, 1765-1856* (Delhi and New York: Oxford University Press, 1978), 33.

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*, citing Sir Arthur Ponsonby, *English Diaries* (London: Methuen & Co., Ltd., 1923), 31-2.

juxtaposition is deliberate. For, in including this type of source alongside more august ones, a major aim of this dissertation is to underscore the fact that Britons in India—throughout the Company period as well as later during the British Raj—often thought of their rule over India in personal terms. The most prominent manifestation of this way of thinking about colonial governance was the concept of the “Man on the Spot.” More fundamentally, though, British colonial rule in India was predicated by a series of quotidian personal relationships between British covenanted servants, military officers and soldiers, on the one hand, and Indian uncovenanted servants, sepoys, princes, peasants and *shikaris*, on the other. Personal narratives written by Britons in India during the late eighteenth and the first half of the nineteenth centuries, then, are an important source for understanding the British “colonial mindset” during that period.

The record of these encounters and interactions was not just limited to the narrative form, though. Rather, it is expressed throughout the whole array of sources which modern-day historians have at their command in studying British imperialism in India (as well as other places). One only has to look. By starting with the most ostensibly *personal* source—the travel narrative—and gradually adding in other sources such as archival documents, parliamentary testimony, histories, and the speeches and writings of important officials, which do not appear at first glance to have much, if any, personal content, my method throughout this dissertation will be to recover, whenever possible, the moral dilemmas of colonial rule. Whatever may have been the ultimate nature of the Company’s colonial rule over India, it is important to realize that for Trevelyan and Burke—as well as many countless and nameless Britons involved in governing India during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries—the personal

conduct of British covenanted servants, military officers, and soldiers seemed to matter greatly. In the following chapters of this dissertation, I will aim to explain why this was as well as examine the implications of this belief for colonial governance as well as the construction of British masculinity during the Company period.



**Chapter 1. A Moral Empire? Nineteenth-Century Debates about  
Indian History and the East India Company's Rule over India**

*We now have done with this business, the most atrocious that is known in the history of mankind, which has stained throughout all Asia the British name, which has forfeited our fame for honour and integrity, which has forfeited our name for the public faith, and which has introduced us as breakers of faith, destroyers of Treaties, plundering the unhappy and unprotected, which has dishonoured and will for ever dishonour the British name.<sup>1</sup>*

Can an empire ever be “moral”? Could the East India Company and its agents in India be trusted to govern the colony in such a manner that would not “dishonour the British name” or “forfeit [Britain’s] fame for honour and integrity?” These were questions which Edmund Burke brought into sharp relief for the first time in any systematic manner in his various parliamentary speeches on Indian affairs during the 1780s and 1790s. A Rockingham Whig, in opposition to George III and his various ministries for much of his long parliamentary career from 1767 to 1795, Burke focused a great deal of his attention on imperial issues. In addition to advocating the American colonialist cause in Parliament during the late 1760s and the early 1770s as well as the cause of political reform in his native Ireland, Burke focused his greatest attention as a parliamentarian and public intellectual on the administration of India by the Company.<sup>2</sup>

Burke was initially sympathetic to the Company, opposing, for example, Lord North’s Regulating Act of 1773 for being an egregious violation of the nearly-sacrosanct

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<sup>1</sup> Edmund Burke, “Speech in Reply to the *Report on Lords’ Journals*” (11 June 1794), *WS*, 7: 523.

<sup>2</sup> Indeed, Uday Mehta asserts that “[i]n sheer volume, [Burke’s] writings on India constitute a majority of his published works by a substantial margin. Neither the French Revolution, his native Ireland, America, nor parliamentary reform—all of which were causes on which he felt passionately—involved the febrile intensity and gravity of purpose that India did for Burke.” Uday Singh Mehta, *Liberalism and Empire: A Study in Nineteenth-Century Liberal Thought* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1999), 166. I am in basic agreement with Mehta and other Burke scholars who argue that Burke’s Indian speeches are an important—perhaps the *most* important—part of his corpus and not an embarrassing interlude before his “serious” work on the French Revolution, which is how many previous scholars have treated the issue.

rights of a chartered company as well as a dangerous increase in Crown patronage.<sup>3</sup> By the early 1780s, however, Burke came to regard Company employees as being too venal and mercantilist-minded to be trusted with colonial governance.<sup>4</sup> He had come full circle by 1786, arguing that the Company's rule of India since Lord Robert Clive had won the Battle of Plassey in 1757 had been one continuous "scene of peculation, rapine, fraud, injustice, and disgrace." This misgovernment not only "sullied [the] national honour" but, more dreadfully for Burke, caused Britain's good name to suffer "greatly in the estimation of the native Princes of the East, and indeed in the estimation of all Europe."<sup>5</sup>

For this sordid state of affairs, Burke mainly blamed Governor-General Warren Hastings. Burke did not oppose British imperialism *per se*, nor did he completely preclude the possibility that British rule over India could be made more virtuous over time. But before that could happen, a culprit would be needed to be made personally responsible for the collective sins of empire.<sup>6</sup> Thus, a year later in 1787, Burke convinced the House of Commons to impeach Hastings, and for the next seven years, between 1788 and 1795, he served as the main House of Commons manager in the subsequent impeachment trial in the House of Lords.

Burke sought to hold Hastings personally responsible for some twenty-two

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<sup>3</sup> The Act, in addition to regulating the affairs of the Company in India for the first time, gave the Crown the right to appoint the governor-general of the Bengal Presidency and the governors of the two subordinate presidencies of Madras and Bombay. In addition, the government was given the right of appointing judges on appeal courts. Suspicious already of George III and his various ministries, Burke regarded this as a dangerous increase in the Crown's power vis-à-vis Parliament.

<sup>4</sup> Several scholars have noted this shift in Burke's political stance toward the Company. See, for example: Lucy S. Sutherland, *The East India Company in Eighteenth-Century Politics* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1952), 367-8; John Cannon, *The Fox-North Coalition: Crisis of the Constitution, 1782-4* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1969), 106-7; and H.V. Bowen, *Revenue and Reform: The Indian Problem in British Politics, 1757-1773* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 182-3.

<sup>5</sup> Burke, "Motion for Papers on Hastings" (17 February 1786), *WS*, 6: 54.

<sup>6</sup> Mehta, *Liberalism and Empire*, 157; Jennifer Pitts, *A Turn to Empire: The Rise of Imperial Liberalism in Britain and France* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2005), 60, 73; Frederick G. Whelan, *Edmund Burke and India: Political Morality and Empire* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1996), 6-7.

charges ranging from systematic corruption and misgovernment to accepting extensive bribes from various Indian potentates. However, he also set his sights higher than merely gaining the public conviction of a high-ranking colonial official. In addition to deciding Hastings' innocence or guilt, he hoped the tribunal would settle a more fundamental question he posed in 1788: "whether millions of mankind shall be miserable or happy?" Burke repeatedly insisted over the course of the seven-year long trial that only by the House of Lords finding Hastings guilty for his various "crimes" of empire would British rule in India be based "upon solid principles of State morality." Only in that way would the Lords enable Britons over time to recover their good name.<sup>7</sup>

In his prosecution of Hastings for not governing India according to "solid principles of State morality," Burke appealed often to Indian history and tradition—not all that surprising for the "father" of conservative thought.<sup>8</sup> But, so too, did Hastings. In his defense, the governor-general had argued that he only acted according to pre-established Indian modes of rule. Because "[t]he whole history of Asia [was] nothing more than precedents to prove the invariable exercise of arbitrary power" by despotic rulers, Hastings did not see anything particularly wrong with governing himself in that manner.<sup>9</sup> Burke rejected this historical interpretation of previous centuries of Muslim and Hindu rule. Most Muslim and Hindu monarchs of previous centuries were not tyrants but rather paternal rulers. No Indian prince had ever "claimed to [himself] a right to act by arbitrary will," something which could not be said about Hastings.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Burke, "Speech on Opening of Impeachment" (15 February 1788), *WS*, 6: 270, 271, 272.

<sup>8</sup> Uday Mehta has written at some length on Burke's overall use of history in his Indian speeches. See *Liberalism and Empire*, part. 132-43 and chap. 5 *passim*.

<sup>9</sup> Warren Hastings, cited by Burke, "Speech on Opening of Impeachment" (19 February 1788), *WS*, 6: 448, 451.

<sup>10</sup> Burke, "Speech on Opening of Impeachment" (16 and 19 February 1788), *WS*, 6: 353, 476.

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Ultimately, the House of Lords acquitted Hastings in 1795 of all twenty-two charges against him. To a large degree, this outcome was the result of Burke's seemingly endless prosecution as well as his frequently overwrought and incendiary rhetoric.<sup>11</sup> From the conclusion of the trial through to the middle decades of the nineteenth century, mainly as a result of the trial, Burke generally fell out of popular favor. As Jennifer Pitts has recently noted, immediately after the trial ended in 1795, "Burke and his fellow managers of the impeachment were seen as vengeful, irresponsible, and disloyal to the British nation."<sup>12</sup> The verdict of many nineteenth-century historians was not particularly kind, either. Whig historian Thomas Babington Macaulay, who agreed with Burke that much had occurred in the first few decades following Plassey to leave "on the fame of the East India Company a stain, not wholly effaced by many years of just and humane government," nevertheless attacked him for running wild with his imagination in his accusations against Hastings. Others such as Oxford don Horace Hayman Wilson, who updated and annotated James Mill's *History of British India* (1817) in the 1850s, were harsher. Wilson conceded that Hastings occasionally "judged erroneously" and "acted wrongly" like most other statesmen but insisted that none of this justified Burke's "almost insane virulence" toward him.<sup>13</sup>

Even so, I shall argue in this chapter that most nineteenth-century commentators

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<sup>11</sup> P.J. Marshall, *The Impeachment of Warren Hastings* (London, Oxford, and New York: Oxford University Press, 1965), 189-91; Sara Suleri, *The Rhetoric of English India* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), 49-50, 56. Also see Mehta, who writes that "[t]here was indeed something excessive in the tenacity that Burke brought to bear on Indian issues," a tenacity which greatly contributed to Burke's greater ostracization as well as the failure of his impeachment against Hastings. Mehta, *Liberalism and Empire*, 167-8.

<sup>12</sup> Pitts, *A Turn to Empire*, 64.

<sup>13</sup> Thomas Babington Macaulay, "Warren Hastings," *Edinburgh Review* (October 1841), reprinted in *Macaulay: Prose and Poetry*, ed. G.M. Young (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1967), 379, 447; Horace Hayman Wilson, ed., *HBI*, 4: 369, n.

on empire could not ignore what Burke had to say on the subject. For, in the course of the impeachment trial, Burke had developed a powerful and historically-grounded moral critique of the Company's rule over India. Moreover, although many disagreed with him, Burke largely set the terms of the debate by posing two main questions during the impeachment trial which many in later decades found themselves forced to address. First, was the Company's rule of India virtuous and morally just? And secondly, what was the nature of previous centuries of Muslim and Hindu rule of India by comparison?

In the course of answering these questions, nineteenth-century commentators on empire, like Burke, appealed to history. As Uday Mehta suggests, this, too, was not all that surprising: "The period from the mid-eighteenth to the mid-nineteenth century," he writes, was "the high noon of European historiography." Moreover, much of this historical writing was "cosmopolitan and global" in orientation.<sup>14</sup> Thus, it is not all that surprising that many commentators on empire would choose to write Indian histories during this period. The main aim of this chapter will be to examine how the past—either that of previous centuries of Hindu and Muslim rulers or the more recent British past during the eighteenth century—was deployed either to justify or to condemn the Company's rule over India during the first half of the nineteenth century.

At the risk of oversimplification, I contend that there were three major schools of thought on these issues during the first half of the nineteenth century. First, Burke and his nineteenth-century followers condemned the Company's rule for being unjust. John Company could care less about governing in the best interest of its Indian subjects; rather, like other joint-stock companies, its main priority was to maximize its profits. The

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<sup>14</sup> Mehta, *Liberalism and Empire*, 82. Several of the great historians (*e.g.* Edward Gibbon, Adam Ferguson, David Hume, Francois Guizot, Johann Gottfried von Herder, Leopold von Ranke, Thomas Babington Macaulay, and Auguste Comte) wrote their multi-volume histories during this period.

immoral and grasping nature of the institution was only reinforced by that of individuals like Lord Clive and Governor-General Hastings who dishonorably forged treaties and plundered India. By marked contrast, Burke and his nineteenth-century followers argued that previous Hindu and Muslim rulers were milder and more just.

By contrast, a second group of commentators on empire argued that the Company generally provided India with good government, particularly compared with previous centuries of Muslim and Hindu rulers. For example, Sir John Malcolm, then a leading Company diplomatic official, insisted in his *Political History of India* (1826) that “[n]o government has ever evinced a greater disposition towards a just and humane rule than that of the East India Company.” In contrast to previous centuries of Muslim rulers, the Company guaranteed Indians “a tranquility more durable than what they had ever enjoyed” as well as “gave toleration to their religion [and] security to their property.” Malcolm was more critical of Clive and Hastings, insisting in Clive’s case that “deceitful professions, promises, and engagements can never be defended but in... extreme cases.” Even so, he argued that in the lead-up to the Battle of Plassey in 1757, Clive was dealing with dishonest rogues who had “broke[n] faith” first. Therefore, he was under no obligation to act as he would toward other British gentlemen.<sup>15</sup>

I shall end the chapter by examining the thought of Utilitarian historian James Mill. Mill fits uneasily in either of the first two camps of thinkers on empire, in part because he sought middle ground on many of the questions that divided these other commentators, but largely because of his overly negative stance toward Hindu culture

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<sup>15</sup> Sir John Malcolm, *The Political History of India, From 1784 to 1823*, ed. K.N. Panikhar (1826; New Delhi: Associated Publishing House, 1970 reprint ed., 2 vols.), 1: 3, 328; 2: 64; *idem.*, *The Life of Robert, Lord Clive: Collected from the Family Papers Communicated by the Earl of Powis*, ed. Charlotte Malcolm (London: John Murray, 1836, 3 vols.), 1: 140, 142, 151, 293, 294-5.

and society. Thus, James Mill largely agreed with Edmund Burke and other critics of the Company that preceding centuries of Muslim rule were relatively benign if not progressive. He also decried the actions of Clive and Hastings as being highly immoral. At the same time, though, Mill neither shared Burke's ethical objections to the Company's continued rule of India nor his favorable view of Hindu culture. Rather, Mill belittled Indians for being morally incapable of governing themselves in any other way but despotically. Provided the Company and its agents in India could be sufficiently moralized to do the work of uplift, it would be needed to govern India for a long time to come. I contend in this chapter that Mill's ultimate importance as an imperial thinker lays in the implications of his historical thought for colonial governance as well as the formation of colonial masculinity within the colonial bureaucracy and the army during the second quarter of the nineteenth century and afterwards.

### **“To Name a Mahometan Government is to Name a Government by Law”: Edmund Burke's Favorable Interpretation of Previous Centuries of Indian Rulers**

Throughout Edmund Burke's nearly decade-long impeachment of Warren Hastings, he developed an interpretation of previous centuries of Muslim and Hindu rule which was relatively favorable, particularly compared with views put forward by various historians sympathetic to the Company. As I have already noted in the introduction, Hastings had attempted to explain away his “arbitrary” conduct while governing India as being in the tradition of earlier Muslim and Hindu rulers who were just as despotic, if not more so. By contrast, Burke contended that most Indian monarchs of prior centuries were not tyrants and oppressive despots but rather paternal rulers. Burke accused Hastings of being too much of an innovator, departing from the “true morality and

wisdom” of Muslim and Hindu precedents and governing in a most arbitrary and oppressive manner instead of benignly as many previous rulers of India did.<sup>16</sup>

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Burke’s views regarding previous centuries of Muslim rule evolved between the mid-1770s and the mid-1790s mainly as a result of his shifting opinion of Hastings. In the 1770s and early 1780s, Burke was still mildly supportive of the Company and did not yet find much reason to condemn Hastings’s governance of India. He was, therefore, more critical of Muslim rulers of prior centuries than he would later become. For example, he argued in 1779 against the Company’s alliances with Muslim powers on the Indian subcontinent by stating that the “intolerable burden of the Mahometan yoke” on the Indian people was a major reason why the Company ought not to ally itself with Muslim powers, let alone fight their wars. However bad “European oppression” might be, Burke insisted that it was still had “some traits of mildness in it,” particularly compared with Muslim rule which was entirely tyrannical and despotic.<sup>17</sup>

By December 1783, when Burke delivered his famous speech in support of then-Prime Minister Charles James Fox’s India Bill, he had become more critical of both the Company as well as Hastings than he had been in 1779. Even so, he still described previous Muslim invasions of India as being “for the greater part, ferocious, bloody, and wasteful in the extreme.” Muslim rulers were excessively greedy and driven by sheer avarice “to acts of rapacity or tyranny.” This “rapacity or tyranny” was only mitigated by the fact that Muslim monarchs spent their riches liberally in India thus “restoring” their

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<sup>16</sup> Burke, “Speech on Opening of Impeachment” (19 February 1788), *WS*, 6: 476.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, “Policy of Making Conquests for the Mahometans” (1779), 5: 114, 119.



loot “to the people.” By contrast, British greed was considerably worse because the personnel sent out from Britain to govern India were often little older than “young men (boys almost)” and they planned on returning to Britain as soon as possible with their new-found fortunes:

Animated with all the avarice of age, and all the impetuosity of youth, they roll in one after another; wave after wave; and there is nothing before the eyes of the natives but an endless, hopeless prospect of new flights of birds of prey and passage, with appetites continually renewing for a food that is continually wasting.

Already by 1783, then, Burke was developing a devastating moral critique of the Company’s rule of India. Anticipating by more than a half-century Lord Acton’s famous dictum about the corrupting influences of absolute power, Burke worried about “English youth in India [drinking] the intoxicating draught of authority and dominion before their heads [were] able to bear it... [and] long before they [were] ripe in principle.” By allowing “school boys without tutors, minors without guardians” to go out to India and govern it before they were mature enough to do so, Burke insisted that both the Company and its governor-general were morally complicit in their criminality.<sup>18</sup>

Burke also alleged in his speech on Fox’s India Bill that the Company’s rule over India was rapacious. In the three decades since the Company had begun governing Indians, Burke argued that the Company spent very little, if any, money for their benefit, desiring only to maximize its profits by squeezing as much revenue out of Indian peasants as was possible. This policy was in marked contrast to that of previous Muslim rulers who actually cared about their subjects:

England has erected no churches, no hospitals, no palaces, no schools; England has built no bridges, made no high roads, cut no navigations, dug out no reservoirs. Every other conqueror of every other description has left some monument, either of state or beneficence, behind him. Were we to be driven out

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<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, “Speech on Fox’s India Bill” (1 December 1783), 5: 401, 402-3.

of India this day, nothing would remain, to tell that it had been possessed, during the inglorious period of our dominion, by any thing better than the ouran-outang or the tiger.

The Company's rule over India, therefore, was "in its best state a grievance." Burke insisted that only when its responsibility for governing the colony were transferred to other Britons who were more "sanguine, warm, and even impassioned in the cause" of working for the greater benefit of Indians would British imperial control over India be more secure as well as more moral.<sup>19</sup>

As a direct result of his growing ethical objections to the East India Company being allowed to continue governing India, Burke's historical judgments regarding previous centuries of Muslim rulers became more positive in subsequent years. This can be seen most strikingly in several of his impeachment speeches. For example, in a June 1786 speech during the parliamentary debate over the Rohilla War impeachment charge, Burke claimed that although India did not possess a "Magna Charta," it was still a country which was generally governed according to the rule of law.<sup>20</sup> Even if Muslim monarchs of prior centuries were occasionally oppressive, Burke insisted they could not have governed in that fashion for very long without being overthrown by their subjects.<sup>21</sup>

Two years later, in his opening impeachment speech, Burke went considerably further. Directly challenging Montesquieu, who had originally articulated the idea of "Oriental Despotism" in his *Persian Letters* (1721), Burke contended that there was no such thing. No Indian princes, let alone Muslim ones, had ever "claimed to themselves a

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<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, 402, 403.

<sup>20</sup> This charge referred to Hastings's lending of British troops to support Awadh in its conquest of neighboring Rohilkhand in 1774. Burke alleged that Hastings sold out these virtuous people in exchange for a hefty bribe from the ruler of Awadh. Given the embarrassment of many nineteenth-century British historians regarding Hastings's conduct in this affair, even among those who were otherwise supportive of the Company and sympathetic to Hastings, this was one of the stronger of the twenty-two offenses for which the governor-general was tried before the House of Lords.

<sup>21</sup> Burke, "Speech on Rohilla War Charge" (1 June 1786), *WS*, 6: 109.

right to act by arbitrary will.” Indeed, Burke insisted that Muslim rule was grounded in totally different theoretical foundations. Citing from the Qu’ran, Burke argued that “to name a Mahometan Government [was] to name a Government by law,” indeed a law “enforced by stronger sanctions than any law that... bind[ed] an European Sovereign.” Burke contended that the Qu’ran did not in any way “authorize... an arbitrary power in the Government” such as Hastings had claimed for himself.<sup>22</sup>

As further proof for his contention that Muslim rule was distinctly non-arbitrary and non-despotic, Burke also cited from the *Institutes of Tamerlane*.<sup>23</sup> There was “no book in the world,” Burke claimed, “which contain[ed] nobler, more just, more manly, more pious, principles of Government than... the Institutions of Tamerlane.” Rather than governing India in a despotic manner, Burke contended, Muslim rulers from Timur onward continually strove to govern according to the “noble principles” and the “grand, bold and manly maxims” found in the *Institutes of Tamerlane*. For Burke, Hastings’s great fault was in failing to follow the “true morality and wisdom” of the Qur’an or the *Institutes*. Instead, Hastings governed India in a tyrannical and oppressive manner radically departing from previous Muslim precedents.<sup>24</sup>

Burke more fully articulated this critique of Hastings’s conduct six years later in his concluding speech in the impeachment trial. There, he relied again on a close reading of the *Institutes of Tamerlane* and insisted that Hastings’s governance of India was far outside of the mainstream of prior Muslim rulers of India:

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<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, “Speech on Opening of Impeachment” (16 February 1788), 353.

<sup>23</sup> This was said to be an oral compilation of the political precepts of Timur or “Tamerlane” (r. 1370-1405), the founder of the Mughal dynasty, who sacked Delhi in 1399 CE. However, it was not likely written down until the seventeenth century, more than two centuries after the Muslim monarch’s death. Beatrice Forbes Manz, “Tamerlane’s Career and its Uses,” *Journal of World History* 13, no. 1 (2002): 13-4. It is likely that Burke was referring to Major Davy, *Institutes, Political and Military, written originally in the Mongol Language, by the great Timour* (Oxford, 1783), a recent English translation.

<sup>24</sup> Burke, “Speech on Opening of Impeachment” (16 February 1788), *WS*, 6: 355-6, 361.

...if Tamerlane... did not claim or assume to [himself] any such power, what shall you think of this man [Hastings] so bloated with corruption, so bloated with the insolence of undeserved and unmerited power, declaring that the people have no rights, no property, no laws, and that it were not possible to be bound by an English Act of Parliament, respecting the laws and customs of the people, that he was an arbitrary Sovereign that could exact what penalties he pleased from the people at the expense of liberty, property and life itself?

Burke conceded that Timur was a violent conqueror of India and was particularly

“ferocious as a Mahometan [in] making his crusades for the propagation of religion.”

However, he also insisted that Timur was far from being an arbitrary despot, although he could easily have become one if he wanted. Rather, Burke claimed that neither Timur, nor other later Muslim rulers of India, “ever claimed such a power as Mr. Hastings.”<sup>25</sup>

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This begged another question, though: if the rule of previous centuries of Muslim rulers was not “despotic,” what about that of Hindu kings before Muslim conquests of the Indian subcontinent commenced in the eleventh century CE? Regarding this latter question, Burke generally argued—as in the case of Muslim rulers—that previous Hindu kings did not govern the country tyrannically. In his 1779 speech against the Company’s policy of supporting Muslim rulers in India, Burke declared that the ancient Hindus as well as eighteenth-century Maratha monarchs must have been good rulers because their subjects were “industrious” and “tractable.” Indeed, he claimed that Hindu monarchs were better rulers than most Muslim kings who caused, through their oppression, their subjects to become “depressed” and “the corrupted instruments of their tyranny.”<sup>26</sup>

As I have already noted, by the time of his opening impeachment speech nine

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<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, “Speech in Reply to the *Report on Lords’ Journals*” (28 May 1794), 7: 271, 272.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, “Policy of Making Conquests for the Mahometans” (1779), 5: 113.

years later, Burke had adopted a different point of view regarding previous centuries of Muslim rule. At the same time, he continued to regard the rule of previous centuries of Hindu rulers as being largely benign and non-oppressive. Citing from Nathaniel Halhed's *A Code of Gentoo Laws* (1776)—an early British compilation of ancient Hindu laws—Burke contended in his February 1788 opening impeachment speech that the ancient Hindus were “governed, not by the arbitrary power of any one, but by laws and institutions in which there [was] the substance of a whole body of equity, diversified by the manners and customs of the people.” Thus, the rule of ancient Hindu monarchs was not despotic at all but was instead guided by “great principles of jurisprudence, both civil and criminal.” Summing up, Burke maintained that Hastings's conduct could not be justified according to any established convention of governance, whether Indian or Western: “let him have Eastern or Western Law; you will find everywhere arbitrary power and peculation of Governors proscribed and horridly punished; more so than I should ever wish to punish any human creature.” India's rulers in the past—whether Muslim or Hindu—had provided useful and wise precedents for governing India which Hastings had foolishly and wantonly disregarded.<sup>27</sup>

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Finally, in addition to not following Muslim and Hindu legal precedents, which Burke claimed proscribed distinctly non-arbitrary modes of rule, Burke alleged that Hastings governed the country through the wrong group of Indians. Instead of employing high-caste Hindus who had typically served previous Indian monarchs, Burke accused Hastings of ruling through “Banyans” (*banians*, or clerks) of questionable, if not “low”

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<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, “Speech on Opening of Impeachment” (16 February 1788), 6: 365-6.

caste status.<sup>28</sup> As he warned in 1782, “Banyans” had a general disposition “to seek Refuge against the Abuses of Station, rather in low Intrigues, and the miserable Arts and Subterfuges of Servitude, than in a manly Assertion of their Rights.” Nearly two years later in his December 1783 speech in favor of Fox’s India Bill, Burke went further, describing Banyans as being “a people habitually made to concealment.” Because of these unmanly habits, Burke argued that it was impossible to trust Indian officials as “the thickest shades of night surround all their transactions.” What made things even worse for Burke was the fact that there generally was “no means of detecting fraud, mismanagement, or misrepresentation” by these clerks.<sup>29</sup>

Four years later during his opening impeachment speech, Burke warned that oppression and misgovernment was the natural result of Hastings’s decision to govern India with *banians*. Burke mainly employed a class-based argument: being drawn from “that class of natives who, by being habituated to misery and subjection, can submit to any orders, and are fit for any of the basest Services,” *banians* were not only the wrong people to be entrusted with the responsibilities of colonial governance, but, even worse, threatened to be “the instruments of the ruination of British character”.<sup>30</sup>

Having been themselves subject to oppression, they are fitted perfectly (for that is the true education); they are fit to oppress others. They serve an apprenticeship of servitude to qualify them for the trade of tyranny.... They know, they themselves being trained in that way, they know all the ways, all the little frauds, all the defensive armour, all the artifices and contrivances, by which abject slavery secures itself against the violence of power. They know all the lurking holes, all the winding resources of the unfortunate, and they hunt out distress and misery

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<sup>28</sup> As Nicholas Dirks rightly notes, “[e]ven by the standards of eighteenth-century knowledge about India in Britain, [Burke’s] statements [about “Banyans”] reveal serious confusion about the social position of the men who stood as agents, translators, and brokers for Company servants.” Nicholas Dirks, *The Scandal of Empire: India and the Creation of Imperial Britain* (Cambridge, MA and London: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2006), 354, n. 43.

<sup>29</sup> Burke, “Observations on *First Report of Select Committee*” (5 February 1782), *WS*, 5: 184; *idem.*, “Speech on Fox’s India Bill” (1 December 1783), 430.

<sup>30</sup> Dirks, *Scandal of Empire*, 110.

even to its last retreats. They know the way they have suffered themselves, and, far from being taught by those sufferings to abstain, they have only learned the way of afflicting others.

Thus, even a year before the French Revolution, when Burke's critique of "revolutions from below" would become most thoroughly articulated, he warned that despotic and corrupt government would likely result from individuals of the *wrong* social class gaining too much unbridled power. Because Hastings had decided to entrust such individuals with government responsibilities that should only have been given to Indian elites, he placed British rule upon dangerously immoral foundations.<sup>31</sup>

**"Our Conduct is More Allied to Vandalism than to Civilization": Nineteenth-Century Critiques of the Company, Robert Clive, and Warren Hastings**

During the half-century after Burke complained about the tyrannical and rapacious nature of the Company's governance of India and of its governor-general, policymakers enacted various reforms aimed both at making the Company less of a trading company and more of a responsible government as well as a more "moral" government vis-à-vis previous centuries of Muslim and Hindu rule.<sup>32</sup> However, despite these reforms, various critics of the Company continued to complain during the first half of the nineteenth century that it governed India rapaciously, only caring about maximizing its profits. For example, Bengal judge Frederick John Shore, the second son of Governor-General Lord John Shore (1793-8) and a leading opponent of Governor-General Lord William Bentinck's during the mid-1830s, castigated the Company's government in 1833 for being "one of the most extortionate and oppressive that [has] ever existed in India." John Company could care less about governing for the "welfare of

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<sup>31</sup> Burke, "Speech on Opening of Impeachment" (15 and 19 February 1788), *WS*, 6: 292-3, 433, 456.

<sup>32</sup> See Introduction.

the people”; rather, like other joint-stock companies, its main priority was to “realize as large a profit as possible.” This led to Company directors trying to minimize administrative expenses by sending only “as few servants to India as could possibly manage their concerns” instead of providing India with good government. Consequently, Shore asked why it was any wonder that Company rule has resulted in “the establishment of a system of misrule, oppression, and injustice, toward the people of India” that was far worse than anything they had suffered under before?<sup>33</sup>

Although Shore had little to say directly about previous centuries of Hindu or Muslim rule, thus making much of his critique of the Company’s rule peripheral to the central thrust of this chapter, his main importance as a critic of Company rule lays in the fact that he extended Burke’s moral critique to its logical extreme, foreclosing the possibility of *any* British imperial government over India being just. Other nineteenth-century critics of the Company did not go so far. Even so, their critiques of the Company’s rule were damning enough and followed many of the same themes which Burke had laid out in his impeachment speeches. For example, Bengal Army surgeon Henry Harpur Spry followed Burke in negatively comparing the Company’s rule over India with that of previous Muslim monarchs. In his 1837 tract, Spry insisted that even if one assumed that most Muslim rulers of prior centuries “were tyrannical and oppressive,” they still were generally “attentive” to the needs of their Hindu subjects. Muslim monarchs thus planted mango groves which were “so much delighted in by all classes” as well as built Hindu temples and reservoirs. Furthermore, in times of scarcity, Spry approvingly noted how Muslim monarchs often lessened their taxation demands on

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<sup>33</sup> Frederick John Shore, “On the Government of British India,” *Indian Gazette* (10 February 1833), reprinted in Shore, ed., *Notes on Indian Affairs* (London: John W. Parker, 1837, 2 vols.), 1: 114-5, 116.



Indian peasants.<sup>34</sup>

Spry argued that the Company's rule over India was established on wholly different principles. The Company was only "intent... upon augmenting its net surplus revenue" for its shareholders back in the British Isles and, indeed, was so miserly and so committed to "gathering into the garner of its treasury all that it can scrape together" from Indian peasants that Company officials "arrested every local disbursement" and rejected needed expenditures. Money for "such useful purposes" as building roads, digging canals, and other public works projects, Spry complained, were routinely denied by parsimonious Company directors. Indeed, Spry bitterly asserted that "those nations who are unfriendly to us, might with justice declare our conduct to be more allied to Vandalism than to civilization." In arguing this, he echoed Adam Smith, who five decades earlier had argued that the Company was "altogether unfit to govern its territorial possessions" because it regarded the "character of the sovereign as but an appendix to that of the merchant [and] as something which ought to be made subservient to it."<sup>35</sup>

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Both Shore and Spry followed Burke in critiquing the Company's rule over India while not calling outright for the takeover of its Indian territories by the British State. Such was not to be the case, though, with Cobdenite reformer John Dickinson. Writing in 1853, Dickinson attacked the Company, like Burke, Shore, and Spry, for governing India in an immoral fashion. Like Burke and other critics, he claimed that "the natives

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<sup>34</sup> Henry Harpur Spry, *Modern India; With Illustrations of the Resources and Capabilities of Hindustan* (London: Whittaker and Company, 1837, 2 vols.), 2: 13-4.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, 14-5, 17, 19-20; Adam Smith, *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations*, ed. Edwin Cannan (1784, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed., New York: Modern Library, 1937 reprint ed.), 602, 711.

were happier, not merely under their good princes, but happier under the average of their native sovereigns” than they have been under the Company’s rule. Like Burke and Spry, Dickinson generally regarded Muslim rule of prior centuries as being generally benign and non-oppressive. Most Muslim monarchs “respected the customs, and religion, and private landed property of the people,” as well as truly cared about their subjects. The Mughals often spent “great sums of the taxes for the people, on public works and grants for education.”<sup>36</sup>

By contrast, the Company’s rule was predicated on baser principles. Not only did the Company “divid[e] the community into two distinct bodies of privileged foreigners and native serfs” as well as “systematically degrade[d] a whole people,” but it also governed India rapaciously. For Dickinson, the leading example of this was Governor-General Cornwallis’s Permanent Settlement of 1793, which established Western private property rights in land for the first time in Bengal. Cornwallis believed that he was restoring ancient property rights which had been undone under previous centuries of supposed Muslim oppression.<sup>37</sup> What Cornwallis actually did, though, was implant a Western model of private property rights onto an Indian system which was more communal in nature as well as distinguished between various overlapping rights of ownership to the land. Although Dickinson did not directly accuse Cornwallis of misreading the history of previous centuries of Muslim rule, the implicit assumptions about prior Muslim governance of India behind Cornwallis’s Permanent Settlement had

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<sup>36</sup> John Dickinson, *India: Its Government Under a Bureaucracy* (London: Saunders and Stanford, 1853), 151, 152, 153.

<sup>37</sup> By “restoring” the inviolate nature of private property, Cornwallis claimed that he was helping to “restore confidence in property” so that landowners would be “induc[ed]” to invest large amounts of “capital in land.” Ranajit Guha, *A Rule of Property for Bengal: An Essay on the Idea of Permanent Settlement*, with forward by Amartya Sen (1963; Durham, NC and London: Duke University Press, 1996 reprint ed.), part. pp. 181-3.

dire consequences. As Dickinson argued, the Permanent Settlement resulted in “one of the most sweeping confiscations [of land] the world ever saw,” immorally “transferring the whole landed property of the community to a body of tax gatherers; but under such conditions that this body of newly invented landlords were ruined almost to a man.”<sup>38</sup> About the only thing as criminal in Dickinson’s view was the Company’s inaction throughout the nineteenth century in mitigating some of the abuses which arose out of Cornwallis’s policy. Despite promising to enact legislation to protect the now-landless tenants from the rapacity of their absentee *zamindar* landlords, the Company did nothing to help its Indian subjects.<sup>39</sup>

Dickinson claimed that the Company governed rapaciously in other respects as well. Unlike previous centuries of Muslim and Hindu rulers, John Company imposed “great taxes on the people” and “drain[ed] away one-seventh” of the national product of the country back home to Britain. Even worse was the Company’s profligacy, particularly in terms of military spending, which caused Indians to be saddled with a national debt “for the first time in their history.” Although the Company had brought peace to the Indian subcontinent, this sole benefit of its rule was not enough to counterbalance the “systematic impoverishment and degradation of a whole people”

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<sup>38</sup> Before 1793, *zamindars* were local tax farmers who generally had a right to a certain share in the produce of the land which they tax farmed, but did not “own” it. In 1793, they were given full title to the land so long as they promptly paid the permanently-fixed land taxes. This arrangement failed to create a stable landowning class, though. As Nicholas Dirks has argued, over half of the land in Bengal changed hands within the two decades of the Permanent Settlement’s implementation. A similar amount of land changed hands in the Benares region as well, where the Permanent Settlement was implemented in 1795. In both cases, many *zamindars* defaulted on their revenue obligations to the colonial government which were often set too high for what the land actually produced. Dirks, *Scandal of Empire*, 151-2; Bernard S. Cohn, “The Initial British Impact on India: A Case Study of the Benares Region,” *An Anthropologist among the Historians and Other Essays* (Delhi, Oxford, and New York: Oxford University Press, 1987), 336.

<sup>39</sup> Dickinson, *India: Its Government Under a Bureaucracy*, 156-7.

brought about by its “selfish policy in India.”<sup>40</sup>

In attacking the Company for its “selfish policy,” Dickinson also drew attention to the personal greed of the empire’s founder, Lord Robert Clive. For Dickinson, the Battle of Plassey in June 1757 was “a dark page of English history” of unbounded rapacity, a moment “when it was possible for a young Englishman” such as Clive “to go out with nothing at all, and return at the age of thirty-four with a fortune of a million sterling.”<sup>41</sup> Similarly, James Silk Buckingham, a vociferous critic of the Company who had been expelled from India in the mid-1820s for criticizing Governor-General Lord William Amherst, sharply condemned Clive’s conduct in his 1853 reform tract. He argued that it was morally disingenuous to condemn the rapacity of Napoleon or other European conquerors while having “nothing but praise and self-congratulation to bestow on our own countrymen for the equally criminal conquest of India.” Motivated mainly by a boundless avarice, Clive had been the first of a long line of Britons in India who engaged in disgraceful conduct, the like of which Britons rightly and “loudly condemn in others.”<sup>42</sup>

### **“The Hand of Despotism... No Longer Desolates This Once Oppressed Race”: Pro-Company Historians and the Writing of Indian History**

Although Burke and various nineteenth-century commentators of empire who followed him presented serious critiques of the Company’s rule which could not be

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<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, 153, 154.

<sup>41</sup> This was an over-exaggeration of the true size of Clive’s wealth. Rather, Clive returned from India in 1760 with a fortune estimated in size of almost £300,000, along with a *jagir* (or grant of tax-free lands) estimated yielding an income of £27,000 a year, granted to him by Mir Jafar, which he was allowed to retain until May 1774. Sutherland, *East India Company*, 81-3, 85; and Bruce P. Lenman and Philip Lawson, “Robert Clive, The ‘Black Jagir’ and British Politics,” *Historical Journal* 26 (1983): 801-29.

<sup>42</sup> Dickinson, *India: Its Government Under a Bureaucracy*, 73-4; James Silk Buckingham, “Plan for the Future Government of India,” in Buckingham, ed., *A New Series of Tracts for the Times, Addressed to the Public and Parliament of 1854* (London: Partridge, Oakly & Co., 1854, 3rd ed.), 221.

ignored, they nevertheless expressed minority points of view regarding both Indian history as well as whether the Company provided India with good government. Far more commonplace, if expressed generally by lesser figures than Burke, were defenders of the East India Company's rule. These people claimed that if the Company's rule was not perfect, it was at least more virtuous than that of previous Muslim rulers of India as well as most Hindu princes.

A good example of this can be found in Bengal Army Lieutenant Adam White's *Considerations on the State of British India* (1822). There, White contrasted the "brutal oppression" suffered by Indians under the rule of prior Muslim princes "educated in the school of Asiatic mis-government" with the great "benefits to the great body of the people" under the Company's rule. John Company occasionally squeezed too much revenue from its subjects and its officials now and then erred in judgment, inadvertently oppressing Indians under their control. Nevertheless, the Company's rule of India was a relative blessing compared with the "grievous outrages and lawless extortions" of previous Muslim rulers. Indeed, White argued that much of the difference in governance stemmed from contrasting priorities. Throughout Asia, White claimed, "the interests of the people are nothing—their happiness altogether subordinate to that of the prince." By contrast, the Company primarily sought to improve the "happiness" of Indians.<sup>43</sup>

In attacking various prior Muslim rulers for their "brutal oppression" and their "grievous outrages and lawless extortions," Adam White and other pro-Company commentators during the nineteenth century focused particularly on three themes. First, many argued for the absence of private property rights under Muslim rule, contending

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<sup>43</sup> Adam White, *Considerations on the State of British India* (Edinburgh: Bell and Bradfute, W. and C. Tait, and A. Allardice; Glasgow: James Brash and Co.; London: J.M. Richardson, 1822), 237-8.

that this enabled Muslim rulers in prior centuries to govern despotically. Secondly, various pro-Company historians portrayed Muslim monarchs as being religious bigots toward their predominantly Hindu subjects, destroying many Hindu temples and religious icons. Finally, many pro-Company commentators focused on the reputedly lax personal morality and sensuousness of many Muslim monarchs, contending that because these monarchs were so obsessed with sex, they often delegated authority to despotic and greedy Brahmin underlings.

*“Indeterminate” Property Rights versus the Permanent Settlement*

Various nineteenth-century historians sympathetic to the Company joined Cornwallis in claiming that Muslim rulers in prior centuries had generally denied Indians their private property rights, particularly in land. As I argued in the last section, this was a gross misunderstanding of Indian conceptions of property which allowed for multiple persons holding overlapping rights to the land as opposed to Western notions which provided only for a single owner. Even so, various supporters of the Company contended that the absence of clearly defined private property rights enabled Muslim rulers to govern their predominantly Hindu subjects in an excessively greedy and tyrannical manner. For instance, Sir Robert Patton, a historian and later the governor of the East India Company’s colony of St. Helena, argued in 1801 that Muslim rulers were particularly tyrannical whenever they “knew” of the existence of considerable “property, particularly... landed property” which was owned by wealthy Hindus. Similarly, Bombay revenue official James Forbes contended in 1813 that the houses of wealthy Indians in many Indian towns were typically unimposing, largely because of the

“despotism and avarice” of various Muslim rulers over the centuries, who “prevent[ed] their subjects from making that display of fortune, which wealth and station authorize in other countries.” Forbes insisted that because “property [was] never secure” under Muslim rulers, wealthy Indians were often afraid of even being “reputed rich” lest they should be liable to systematic plundering by Muslim monarchs or their officials.<sup>44</sup>

In the next chapter, I shall discuss at greater length various nineteenth-century British discourses about the supposed connection between this “history” of prior Muslim oppression and the reputedly widespread immorality of Indian clerks within the colonial bureaucracy. It should suffice here to point out that most British commentators generally alleged that the avarice of Muslim monarchs was directly responsible for the dishonesty of Indian clerks. More fundamentally, various historians sympathetic to the Company also regarded the supposedly greedy policies of Muslim monarchs to be barbaric and immoral and ones which British rule should avoid replicating if at all possible. For instance, historian Mark Wilks insisted in 1810 that:

Institutions derived from the best practices of a code [Islam] which inculcates war against infidels as a religious duty, condemns the women and children of the vanquished to slavery, and the men to death, and condescends to accept submission and the highest possible tribute as a merciful commutation for liberty and life, do not seem to be very proper objects of imitation for an English government.

Rather, it was absolutely imperative that British rule be just. Wilks argued that one main means by which this could occur was by granting full security to the property rights of

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<sup>44</sup> Robert Patton, *The Principles of Asiatic Monarchies, Politically and Historically Investigated, and Contrasted with those of the Monarchies of Europe* (London: J. Debrett, 1801), 5; James Forbes, *Oriental Memoirs: A Narrative of Seventeen Years Residence in India* (1813; London: Richard Bentley, 1834, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., 2 vols.), 1: 165, 239.

Indians as Cornwallis had done in Bengal in his Permanent Settlement.<sup>45</sup>

While critics of the Company such as Dickinson condemned Cornwallis's Permanent Settlement of 1793 for being an overly despotic and oppressive policy which unjustly stripped Bengal peasants of their pre-1793 common rights in land, supporters of the Company's rule, by contrast, generally sidestepped the issue of whether or not Cornwallis had stripped Bengali peasants of land. Instead, they claimed that that the policy was morally just in a broader sense because it limited the despotic authority of government. For example, in his 1832 tract on Indian jurisprudence, Bengal official Sir Archibald Galloway argued that Cornwallis restrained the potentially despotic authority of government by granting permanent property rights in land to Indians. Indian landowners were thus "protected... from the consequences of corrupt administration" and irregular exactions. Similarly, Company director Henry St. George Tucker argued in 1853 that it was only during Cornwallis's tenure as governor-general "that the Government of India assumed a more determinate and legitimate character." This was largely because Cornwallis ensured through the Permanent Settlement and other reforms that the Company and its various officials would be primarily guided by considerations of moral virtue in their actions instead of by personal greed.<sup>46</sup>

### *Supposed Muslim Religious Bigotry versus British Religious Toleration*

A second main criticism which many pro-Company historians made regarding Muslim rulers of previous centuries was that they were religious bigots. By contrast, they

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<sup>45</sup> Mark Wilks, *Historical Sketches of the South of India, in an Attempt to Trace the History of Mysoor; From the Origin of the Hindoo Government of that State, to the Extinction of the Mohammedan Dynasty in 1799* (London: Longman, Hurst, Rees, and Orme, 1810-17, 3 vols.), 1: 185.

<sup>46</sup> Sir Archibald Galloway, *Observations on the Law and Constitution, and Present Government of India* (London: Parbury, Allen, & Co., 1832), 419-20; Tucker, *Memorials of Indian Government*, 13-4.



argued, the Company protected the rights of Indians to freely worship, paid for the upkeep of important temples and religious sites, and sponsored major religious festivals. A good example is Edward Scott Waring, a protégé of Warren Hastings's during the impeachment trial and later the author of the first English-language history of the Marathas. Waring insisted in this history, published in 1810, that "few circumstances can more strongly mark the difference between the religion of men, and the religion of God, than a comparison between the intemperate and inhuman efforts of the Mooslim, with the steady and earnest labours of the Christian." Compared to the mildness of British rule, Waring contended that previous centuries of Muslim rulers had "extirpated" numerous towns and cities as well as "whole provinces... because the unoffending inhabitants had not heard the name of Mahomet, or hearing, had not instantly believed." Similarly, in his 1818 memoir, Royal Dragoons Major William Thorn compared "the mild and liberal temper of Christianity" to the "dark and ferocious bigotry of Islamism" in discussing the relative virtue of British rule over that of previous Muslim rulers.<sup>47</sup>

In stressing the religious toleration of the Company versus the intolerance of previous Muslim conquerors, various pro-Company commentators focused particularly on the extensive destruction of Hindu temples by successive waves of Muslim conquerors from about 1000 CE onward. This repulsed many nineteenth-century British commentators including even some who were otherwise inclined to think of Hinduism as being a gross, sensuous, and superstitious religion. For example, British Army Lieutenant-Colonel George Augustus Frederick Fitzclarence, the eldest illegitimate son of William IV, stated that he was appalled at the "gross superstition" of Hinduism. Even

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<sup>47</sup> Edward Scott Waring, *A History of the Mahrattas* (London: John Richardson, 1810), 7-8; William Thorn, *Memoir of the War in India* (London: T. Egerton, 1818), 177.

so, he was grateful that the temple in the Elora caves of western India which he visited “successfully withstood the barbarous attempts of the Mahometans,” thereby allowing him to fully appreciate “a labour so immense and remarkable.” Likewise, Bengal diplomatic official and historian James Tod was upset from seeing statues in Hindu temples “bearing the marks of violence” on their flanks and which were “so mutilated” by the “hammer of the Mooslem” that only a few “fragments” remained. He explained that there were, in some instances, still enough left of the original to obtain an idea of how beautiful the object must have been in the past. Nevertheless, it was still a tragedy that that the “chisel of Islam” had utterly ruined, in the name of religious bigotry, many once-beautiful temples and art objects.<sup>48</sup>

In discussing the destruction of Hindu temples by previous Muslim rulers, many supporters of the Company focused particularly on the destructions of temples said to have occurred under the orders of Mahmud of Ghazni (r. 998-1030), the first Muslim invader of the Indian subcontinent, who led seventeen incursions into India between 1001 and 1026 CE. For instance, in his 1792 history, Bengal Army surveyor James Rennell described Mahmud as a “monster” who delighted in seeing Hindus tortured and maimed and their temples destroyed. Rennell contrasted the religious tolerance of British Christian rule with the intolerance of Muslim rulers such as Mahmud, stating that “nothing offends our feelings more, than the progress of destruction urged by *religious zeal*.” Rennell argued that the wanton disregard for the religious beliefs of Hindus by Mahmud and other Muslim rulers which actuated them to destroy Hindu temples in the name of God was blasphemous in the extreme. This was so not only because Mahmud

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<sup>48</sup> George Augustus Frederick Fitzclarence, *Journal of a Route Across India, through Egypt, to England in the Latter End of the Year 1817 and the Beginning of 1818* (London: John Murray, 1819), 193-4; James Tod, *Travels in West India* (1839; Delhi: Oriental Publishers, 1971 reprint ed.), 87, 340, 423.

and other Muslim rulers “suppose[ed] themselves agents of the Divinity” but also because, by doing so, they cloaked their “ordinary villainy” in divine garbs.<sup>49</sup>

In the nineteenth century, pro-Company commentators generally took a different tack, emphasizing Mahmud’s more secular motives for destroying Hindu temples such as base avarice and a lust for power. For example, Forbes maintained that the goal of “converting the Hindoos to the tenets of the Koran” was merely a “pretense” for Mahmud’s real object, which was to “plunder them of the wealth which had been accumulating for ages.” Likewise, William Westall, a lithographer and amateur historian, focused on Mahmud’s lust for political power. Westall conceded in his 1847 history of “the Hindoos” that Mahmud vowed on ascending his throne “that he would grant neither truce nor peace to the Hindoos” until all their temples and idols were destroyed by his hand. Even so, the Muslim conqueror was mainly interested in gaining the political power of various Hindu princes whose lands he coveted.<sup>50</sup>

As the first Muslim conqueror of India, Mahmud was particularly singled out by pro-Company historians for destroying several Hindu temples and religious icons. However, nineteenth-century British historians who were sympathetic to the Company also attacked other Muslim conquerors of India for religious bigotry. For example, several focused on the terror caused by Timur during his sacking of Delhi in 1399 CE. Unlike Burke, who praised Timur for governing according to “noble principles” and “grand, bold and manly maxims,” Rennell condemned Timur for his religious bigotry. Indeed, he included the Muslim conqueror in his indictment of Mahmud for being

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<sup>49</sup> James Rennell, *Memoir of a Map of Hindoostan* (London: G. Nicol and W. Richardson, 1792), xlv. Emphasis in original.

<sup>50</sup> Forbes, *Oriental Memoirs*, 1: 65-6; William Westall, *The Hindoos: Including a General Description of India, Its Government, Religion, Manners, and Customs: The Fine Arts, Architecture, and Literature With a General Outline of the History of Hindoostan* (London: Nattali and Bond, 1847, 2 vols.), 2: 334-5.

blasphemous in presuming himself the implementer of divine will when ransacking the temples of non-believers. Similarly, Evangelical historian J.W. Massie described Timur in his 1840 history of India as the “greatest wholesale butcher of our species ever heard of by mankind.” Not only did Timur bring nothing but “blood, desolation, famine, and pestilence” in his wake, he also systematically “plundered” and “massacred” Indians, including women and children.<sup>51</sup>

Company apologists also focused on the religious intolerance of Mughal emperors such as Aurangzeb (r. 1658-1707), even while conceding that other Mughal monarchs like his great-grandfather Akbar the Great (r. 1556-1605) had been relatively tolerant. Thus, Bombay military official John B. Seely insisted in his 1825 memoir that it was “well known” that Aurangzeb “squeezed his Hindoo subjects most unmercifully” by reintroducing the poll tax (or *jiziya*) on Hindus and other “non-believers” in 1679. Instead of honoring the religious toleration of his great-grandfather Akbar, who had abolished the tax a century earlier, Aurangzeb sought both to gratify his avarice as well as humiliate Hindus by reintroducing it. Likewise, British missionary William Buyers condemned Aurangzeb’s construction of a Muslim mosque in the city of Benares, the holiest city in Hinduism. Noting that the mosque was “very little used for worship,” Buyers contended that its sole purpose in being built was to humiliate Hindus, something which he insisted that India’s Christian rulers would never do.<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>51</sup> Rennell, *Memoir of a Map*, xlvi; J.W. Massie, *Continental India* (London: Thomas Ward & Co., 1840, 2 vols.), 1: 291.

<sup>52</sup> John B. Seely, *The Wonders of Elora; or, the Narrative of a Journey to the Temples and Dwellings Escavated out of a Mountain of Granite* (London: Geo. B. Whittaker, 1825, 2nd ed.), 251; William Buyers, *Recollections of Northern India* (London: J. Snow; Glasgow: W. Collins, 1848), 256.

*The “Licentiousness” of Muslim Monarchs*

A final theme which many pro-Company historians employed in their efforts to de-legitimize previous centuries of Muslim rule vis-à-vis that of the Company was the purportedly lax personal morality of many Muslim princes themselves. Highlighting their supposedly sensuous or licentious habits, various British commentators not only characterized Muslim rulers as being overly “effeminate” but, as such, wholly incapable of governing their subjects in a proper or dignified manner. For example, Company historian Robert Orme argued in 1782 that Muslim monarchs were prone to a “love of ease” and luxury which invariably led them into becoming “lost in voluptuousness” the moment they obtained power. Employing then-popular climatological theories of degeneracy which held that sustained exposure to tropical heat led to physical and moral decay, Orme contented that Indian Muslims had degenerated over time from initially being courageous and physically manly to being “vain and lordly” and generally effeminate.<sup>53</sup> This decline, he claimed, could be readily seen in the fact that many Muslim monarchs were more interested in gratifying their “sensual appetites” than in governing their subjects.<sup>54</sup>

Similarly, former Bombay Governor Mountstuart Elphinstone asserted in his *History of India* (1843) that the decline of the Mughal Empire in the first half of the eighteenth century could be directly attributed to a gradual “softening” of the “character of the northern conquerors of India.” Elphinstone mainly attributed this gradual decay in

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<sup>53</sup> Thomas R. Metcalf, *Ideologies of the Raj* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 8-9. Metcalf argues that British ideas about tropical heat leading to moral and physical decay were heavily influenced by the writings of Montesquieu on the subject, particularly his *Spirit of the Laws*.

<sup>54</sup> Robert Orme, *Historical Fragments of the Mogul Empire, of the Morattoes, and of the English Concerns in Indostan, From the Year MDCLIX; Origin of the English Establishment, and of the Company's Trade at Broach and Surat; and, A General Idea of the Government and People of Indostan* (1782; New Delhi: Associated Pub. House, 1974 reprint ed. of 1805 2<sup>nd</sup> ed.), Book III, 268, 269, 279.

the manliness of Muslims in India to the subcontinent's "enervating" climate. Whereas Muslim conquerors were once virile and courageous, by the eighteenth century they were now "slothful" and effeminate. This could be adduced from their going into battle against the Marathas and other foes "in coats of wadding, that would resist a sword, and over that chain or plate armour." Moreover, when they were not fighting, they were engaged in utter "insolence and licence" which only further debilitated them.<sup>55</sup>

In portraying Muslim rulers as being overly "slothful" and effeminate, various commentators focused on their supposed obsession with sex. Of course, by the early nineteenth century, the trope of Muslim sensuality, and, in particular, the harem, had become a major part of Western discourses about the Muslim world.<sup>56</sup> At the same time, pro-Company historians focused on the large harems of Muslim monarchs not simply to make general statements about the supposed moral superiority of Christianity over Islam or even for voyeuristic reasons. Aside from these general usages, various commentators also sought to employ the supposed hyper-sexuality of Muslim rulers to de-legitimize their rule. Supposing Muslim rulers of India to be so obsessed with sex, British commentators argued they could not possibly have governed their subjects well.

In making this argument, apologists for the Company focused mainly on Mughal monarchs during the period of the empire's decline in the early decades of the eighteenth century. For example, in a speech during the parliamentary debate over the renewal of the East India Company's charter in 1833, Thomas Babington Macaulay compared the sexual depravity of Muhammad Farrukhsiyar (r. 1713-9) and other early eighteenth-

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<sup>55</sup> Mountstuart Elphinstone, *The History of India* (London: John Murray, 1843, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., 2 vols.), 1: 377; 2: 493, 495.

<sup>56</sup> Billie Melman, *Women's Orients: English Women and the Middle East, 1718-1918: Sexuality, Religion, and Work* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1992); Leslie Penn Peirce, *The Imperial Harem: Women and Sovereignty in the Ottoman Empire* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1993).

century Mughal emperors with the libidinousness of Roman emperors during and immediately after the fall of the Roman Empire in the fifth and early sixth centuries CE. Macaulay argued that both empires at their moment of collapse were “sinking under the vices of a bad internal administration.” This problem was only made worse, though, by their “mock sovereigns” who were “suffered to indulge in every sensual pleasure.” Meanwhile, Roman subjects in the fifth and sixth centuries and Indians in the early eighteenth century groaned under an anarchy from which these nominal rulers were incapable of protecting them.<sup>57</sup>

For other Company apologists, though, the chief problem with Muslim monarchs who were “suffered to indulge in every sensual pleasure” was that they often ceded governing responsibilities to even more despotic and corrupt Brahmin underlings.<sup>58</sup> For example, in discussing the rule of a seventeenth-century Muslim sultan of the central Indian sultanate of Golconda, Orme argued in 1782 that because the sultan was “weak and voluptuous,” his kingdom was “entirely governed” by two Brahmin officials whose rule was “insolent, mean and avaricious.” Waring made a similar point almost three decades later. Focusing on the typical Muslim princely upbringing in the *zenana* (or female quarters of the royal residence), Waring argued this mode of princely education was destructive. Not only did it often result in the prince adopting licentious habits which were highly unmanly, it also poorly prepared him for governing:

The want of education which the prince usually labors... of course, exposes him to the worst impressions, and to the vilest artifices. Nursed in the lap of sensuality, and unable to judge for himself, women and eunuchs govern his mind,

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<sup>57</sup> Macaulay, “Government of India: A Speech Delivered in the House of Commons on the 10th of July, 1833,” *Macaulay: Prose and Poetry*, 702.

<sup>58</sup> Because Muslim rulers were often illiterate, the office of prime minister (or *divan*) and most other important posts of government in Muslim Indian polities were typically held by Brahmins or other high-caste Hindus who would have been literate.

and direct his acts. Timid, yet rash, he often excites the rebellion of his subjects, without possessing the courage to subdue it.

Too often, the Muslim ruler was more “immersed in the vilest sensuality” instead of focused on governing. As a result, he was typically a cipher, serving as the “pageant of an artful minister, or an able general” who really controlled the government.<sup>59</sup>

### *Company Apologists and Their Views of Hindu Rulers of India*

In criticizing previous centuries of Muslim monarchs of India for their unbridled greed, their religious fanaticism, and finally for their licentiousness, several apologists for the Company also criticized ancient Hindu and eighteenth-century Maratha rulers for similar lapses in their conduct. There was less uniformity, though, among pro-Company historians in their opinions of previous centuries of Hindu rule. Some condemned all Indian rulers prior to the British for governing in an immoral manner, while others who were more Orientalist in orientation carefully discriminated between Hindu rulers and Muslim ones, arguing that the former provided India with a “civilized” form of government which was then lost during centuries of Muslim rule.<sup>60</sup>

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<sup>59</sup> Orme, *Historical Fragments of the Mogul Empire*, Book I, 101; Waring, *History of the Mahrattas*, 30-1.

<sup>60</sup> Orientalism was a late eighteenth-century British (and later German) scholarly movement which praised ancient Hindu culture for being one of the great world civilizations. Its most famous practitioner was Sir William Jones, who discovered the linguistic similarities between Sanskrit, Ancient Greek, and Latin in 1786, thus laying the intellectual foundations for what would later become known as the Indo-European language family. See David Kopf, *British Orientalism and the Bengal Renaissance: The Dynamics of Indian Modernization, 1773-1835* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1969); Javed Majeed, *Ungoverned Imaginings: James Mill's The History of British India and Orientalism* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992), chaps. 1-3; and Kelli Michele Kobor, “Orientalism, the Construction of Race, and the Politics of Identity in British India, 1800-1930” (Ph.D. dissertation, history, Duke University, 1998), chaps. 1-2. For the connection between Orientalism and European racial thinking, particularly regarding “Aryan” races, see, in addition to the above: Tony Ballantyne, *Orientalism and Race: Aryanism in the British Empire* (Houndsmills, UK and New York: Palgrave, 2002), intro. and chap. 1; Thomas R. Trautmann, *Aryans and British India* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997); Léon Poliakov, *The Aryan Myth: A History of Racist and Nationalist Ideas in Europe*, trans. Edmund Howard (1971; New York: Basic Books, 1974); and Joan Leopold, “British Applications of the Aryan Theory of Race to India, 1850-1870,” *The English Historical Review* 89, no. 352 (July 1974): 578-603.



In their criticisms of previous centuries of Hindu rulers—both those before the Muslim conquests of the Indian subcontinent commenced in the eleventh century CE and the eighteenth century—apologists for the Company’s governance of India focused on the same three themes for which they castigated previous centuries of Muslim rulers. For example, several pro-Company historians argued that Hindu monarchs were just as greedy as Muslim ones. James Forbes argued in 1813 that the “system of the Mahratta government” of various eighteenth-century *peshwas* was “so universally oppressive, that it appears extraordinary to hear of a mild or equitable administration.” Rather, “if the sovereign requires money, the men in office, and governors of provinces, must supply it, fleec[ing] the manufacturers and farmers” to satiate the demands of the Hindu monarch. Similarly, Malcolm maintained in his 1832 history of central India that Hindu rulers of prior centuries commonly employed “torture” to “compel men to reveal [their] wealth.”<sup>61</sup>

Other Company apologists argued that previous Hindu rulers were intolerant or overly cruel rulers, although perhaps not to the point of destroying religious temples as they accused many Muslim rulers of doing. For example, Marianne Young, the wife of a Bombay Army captain, argued in 1839 that “[t]he history of religious sectarianism in India proves, that the followers of Budda were grievously persecuted by the Brahmins.” Ancient Hindu rulers, she claimed, “inflicted on them every depiction of merciless torture, regarding them as infidels, and their religion as an unpardonable heresy.” Other proponents of the Company’s rule focused more broadly on the cruelty of many Hindu monarchs. Thus, military historian Horace Stebbing Roscoe St. John maintained in 1852 that Hindu princes were “[f]rom their infancy... familiarised with every species of

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<sup>61</sup> Forbes, *Oriental Memoirs*, 1: 113; 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* (London: Parbury, Allen, & Co., 1832, 2 vols., 3rd ed.), 1: 575.

barbaric cruelty” and were not above “commit[ing] wholesale slaughter, bloody murders, and other lawless oppressions.” He surmised that Indians must be happy to be under the Company’s rule, being as the “[c]ivilization” which it brought to India was “rapidly eradicating these tyrannical proceedings, from not India only but the entire East.”<sup>62</sup>

Finally, many proponents of Company imperialism focused on the supposed licentiousness of many Hindu kings. For instance, Forbes described one Maratha ruler in 1813 as being “a weak indolent prince” who engaged in “the enfeebling pleasures of the haram” instead of the business of governing his subjects. A “stranger to every noble virtue, and a slave to sensuality,” this particular Hindu prince “lavished immense sums on dancing girls, fire works, and similar pursuits” and “squandered the immense treasures amassed by his predecessors for the emergencies of the state.” Similarly, Bombay Army Captain and Maratha historian James Grant-Duff depicted an eighteenth-century Brahmin Maratha ruler (*peshwa*) in his 1826 history as spending a great deal of his time engaged in “the encouragement of the grossest debauchery” instead of attending to the affairs of government. Likewise, Bombay judge Sir Thomas Erskine Perry argued in 1855 that many “Hindu rajas” had “too frequently forgotten the path of duty, and have manifested themselves as sensual or ruthless despots, rather than as beneficent rulers.” He asserted this was largely so because their “submissive Hindu” subjects accept such misconduct as the natural order of things instead of complaining.<sup>63</sup>

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<sup>62</sup> Marianne Young, *Western India in 1838* (London: Saunders and Otley, 1839, 2 vols.), 2: 37-8; Horace Stebbing Roscoe St. John, *History of the British Conquests of India* (London: Colburn and Co., Publishers, 1852, 2 vols.), 1: 260, 261.

<sup>63</sup> Forbes, *Oriental Memoirs*, 1: 299, 300; James Grant-Duff, *A History of the Mahrattas* (1826; London and New York: Oxford University Press, 1921 reprint ed., 2 vols.), 2: 430; Sir [Thomas] Erskine Perry, *Bird's Eye View of India* (London: John Murray, 1855), 91-2.

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Although many pro-Company commentators attacked previous Muslim as well as Hindu rulers for governing India in a comparatively immoral fashion, not everyone did so. There were some apologists of the Company who carefully distinguished between Muslim and Hindu monarchs, arguing that the former were oppressive and tyrannical while the latter governed India in a more benign manner. For example, Sir Henry Pottinger, a lieutenant-general in the Bombay Army and later governor of Madras between 1847 and 1855, argued in 1816 that the Hindu rulers of Sind administered the country in a “very equitable” manner, “affording every possible encouragement to merchants or other sojourners in their territories.” This was in marked contrast to the more oppressive Muslim rulers who replaced them after the seventh century CE. Similarly, J.W. Massie made a careful distinction between the tyranny of many Muslim rulers and the comparative benign governance of Hindu Maratha rulers in the eighteenth century. Unlike other pro-Company historians, Massie’s Maratha rulers “conducted themselves in a conciliatory manner towards the inhabitants.” Instead of being extortionate monarchs, “their exactions were moderate, and their authority soon acquired a strength which had not been possessed by the Moguls for many years.” Likewise, referring to the ancient Hindus, Elphinstone adduced from the great cultural advances of ancient Indian civilization that ancient Hindu monarchs must not have been tyrants but rather were mild rulers. Indeed, until the various Muslim conquests of India commenced around 1000 CE, Elphinstone claimed that Indians suffered little from despotism. Where it existed, it “was less oppressive and degrading than in most Asiatic countries.”<sup>64</sup>

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<sup>64</sup> Henry Pottinger, *Travels in Beloochistan and Sinde* (1816; Karachi: Indus Publications, 1976 reprint ed.), 276; Massie, *Continental India*, 1: 351; Elphinstone, *History*, 1: 391-2.

Other apologists for the Company such as Grant-Duff and Malcolm, who condemned Hindu monarchs at times for governing like many Muslim ones, generally argued that Hindu rulers had governed India in a benign manner. Thus, while Grant-Duff argued that many illiterate eighteenth-century Maratha chiefs were “wholly dependent” on their “Brahmin accountant[s],” thus opening up their rule to their “excessive cunning” and oppression, this was not the nature of Hindu Maratha rule in all cases. In particular, Grant-Duff mentioned one late eighteenth-century Maratha ruler, Ram Shastri, who possessed much “manly candour” and who stood “alone on Maratha record as an upright and pure judge” possessing great “character.” Similarly, Malcolm mentioned the examples of eighteenth-century Maratha chiefs Mulhar Row and Zalim Singh who both possessed “manly courage” as well as were capable and fair rulers, “[b]red to [the] business” of government and possessing a “tone...of fairness and moderation.” Moreover, unlike bigoted Muslim rulers who governed capriciously toward their Hindu subjects, Hindu princes, in ancient times as well as during the eighteenth century, were religiously tolerant. For Malcolm, this was because “[i]ntolerance [was] not a defect of the Hindu religion” whereas Malcolm claimed it was in Islam.<sup>65</sup>

More fundamentally, Malcolm dismissed the idea that Hindu princes in the Indian past were automatically despots. Although he conceded “the power of the ruler is absolute” in a theoretical sense, in practice he argued that Hindu kings “exercise[d] their authority under many restraints.” Thinking in European terms, Malcolm argued that Hindu rule was often “feudal” in nature, which clamped down greatly on the possibility of monarchs to be despotic. Where there was despotic rule, it was often “a loose despotic government [and an]... administration” which was “conducted with vigilance, and upon

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<sup>65</sup> Grant-Duff, *History of the Mahrattas*, 1: 543, 564; Malcolm, *Memoir of Central India*, 1: 155, 194, 491.

tolerably just principles.” Thus, despite their reputation for rapine, eighteenth-century Hindu Maratha rulers of central India collected “revenue...and carried [it] to account under the usual heads.” Proof of the relatively benign nature of their rule could be adduced, Malcolm claimed, from the widespread agrarian prosperity of central India during this period.<sup>66</sup>

*Pro-Company Historians and their Apologias for Robert Clive and Warren Hastings*

When criticizing previous centuries of Muslim and, less consistently, Hindu monarchs for their unbridled greed, their religious fanaticism, or their licentiousness, apologists for the Company asserted that such behavior was distinctively *Indian*. This only worked to a certain extent, though. For, in characterizing previous Muslim and Hindu rulers of India as being immoral, both personally as well as in how they governed more broadly, while at the same time also lauding the Company’s governance, pro-Company commentators ran into a similar problem as critics. Just as supporters of the Company could always present examples of the Company’s supposed tolerance of Indian religion or assert that it protected private property rights to answer critiques of its rule of India, the other side could also find instances when Britons acted unethically.

Nowhere was this more true than with regard to the conduct of Robert Clive and Warren Hastings. Historians sympathetic to the Company generally sought to defend the conduct of Robert Clive and Warren Hastings in two ways. First, many argued that they had to be judged, not according to some abstract sense of British morality, but rather in terms of the Indian political environment in which they were forced to act. Following from this, several historians contended that various actions taken by Clive and Hastings,

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<sup>66</sup> Malcolm, *Memoir of Central India*, 1: 530, 545; 2: 48, 52.

while being considered morally odious vis-à-vis fellow Europeans, were perfectly acceptable in light of the rank immorality of their Indian antagonists.

With regard to Clive, pro-Company historians—like critics—generally focused on his various machinations during the months preceding the Battle of Plassey in June of 1757. However, unlike critics of the Company, who contended that Clive was motivated largely by personal greed to plot against Bengal Nawab Siraj-ad-Daula, various defenders of the Company's rule maintained that the British general was actuated more by purer motives of patriotism. As White argued, Clive was up against an Indian ruler who had just stormed Calcutta the year before and who perversely considered aggrandizement by any means to be a “manly, honourable, and legitimate course of action.” Therefore, Clive was completely justified in not acting with “dignified forbearance and exemplary moderation” in his various actions with the Bengal ruler. His conduct, while not that which one would generally expect from a British gentleman, was necessary to defend the Company's interests in India against an untrustworthy aggressor.<sup>67</sup>

Likewise, Macaulay sought to explain away Clive's conduct by casting aspersions on the morality of Siraj-ad-Daula. He insisted that because the nawab of Bengal had already proved himself to be untrustworthy on more than one occasion, there was no particular reason why Clive should have sought to reach an accommodation with him in the spring of 1757. Rather, in participating in “a game in which nothing was unfair,” Clive had to deal with men such as Siraj who were completely “destitute of what in Europe is called honour” and who “would give any promise without hesitation and break any promise without shame.” Consequently, Clive, who otherwise was “an honourable English gentleman and soldier, was no sooner matched against an Indian intriguer, than

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<sup>67</sup> White, *Considerations on the State of British India*, 128, 129.

he became himself an Indian intriguer.”<sup>68</sup>

Apologists for the Company had a harder time defending Hastings than they did Clive, largely because Burke and others mercilessly had attacked him for over a decade during the lead-up to the impeachment trial as well as during the trial itself. Therefore, in their attempts to rehabilitate the governor-general during the first half of the nineteenth century, pro-Company historians had to address Burke’s detailed moral critique of Hastings’s conduct in India. Many sought to do so by arguing that Burke wrongly judged Hastings according to abstract British standards of morality which often did not apply to India. Thus, Malcolm admitted that Hastings presided over a system of government which was “corrupt, and full of abuses.” Nevertheless, Malcolm insisted that Hastings ought to be understood as an Indian statesman acting in an Indian environment. Burke did not do this. Rather, the parliamentary orator and his followers only

...listened to [Hastings’s] enemies and accusers, and who, when drawing their general inferences from particular facts, have given little, if any, attention to the extraordinary circumstances in which he was placed, the necessity under which he acted, and the obstacles which he had to overcome.

Moreover, Hastings had tried to implement reforms, particularly in the collection of revenue and the judiciary. If these reforms were not quite successful, they nevertheless paved the way for further, more substantive reforms under later governors-general. Thus, it was exceedingly unfair as well as obtuse to criticize Hastings for not acting always according to British standards of public morality while governing India. He tried his best in an alien political environment.<sup>69</sup>

Others, like Macaulay, asserted that Burke simply had his facts wrong. Although Burke claimed that Hastings received several hundred thousands of pounds in personal

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<sup>68</sup> Macaulay, “Lord Clive,” *Edinburgh Review* (January 1840), *Macaulay: Prose and Poetry*, 333-4.

<sup>69</sup> Malcolm, *Political History*, 2: 21, 24.

bribes and presents from various Indian monarchs, Macaulay insisted that such assertions were not sufficiently supported by hard evidence. Indeed, Macaulay argued that had Hastings been guilty of such speculation, he could very easily “have returned to his country the richest subject in Europe” rather than bringing “home a fortune such as a Governor-General, fond of state, and careless of thrift, might easily, during so long a tenure of office, save out of his legal salary.” Although Hastings might have been “unscrupulous” and “perhaps [even] an unprincipled statesman,” Macaulay still considered him to be a “statesman.” The governor-general was not the “freebooter” whom Burke imagined that he was impeaching before the bar of the House of Lords. Rather, believing “that it was absolutely necessary for him to disregard either the moral discourses or the pecuniary requisitions of his employers” back in London, Hastings pragmatically chose to “neglect the sermons and find the rupees.”<sup>70</sup>

None of this completely justified Hastings’s actions in Macaulay’s view, and, indeed, Macaulay shuddered at the governor-general’s ruthlessness in executing the various policy directives of Company directors back in London. Even so, Macaulay generally sought to explain away Hastings’s lack of moral virtue as being the price to pay for having an exceptionally able colonial official govern such an important colony as India. Although it would have been nice if Hastings had always governed morally, what was more important for Macaulay and other supporters of the Company was that Hastings governed in a manner best calculated to secure Britain’s hold over India. This they asserted he did, and did so with great aplomb.

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<sup>70</sup> Macaulay, “Warren Hastings,” *Edinburgh Review* (October 1841), *Macaulay: Prose and Poetry*, 380, 390-1, 439-40.



The main weakness in many of the apologias for the conduct of Clive and Hastings in India put forth by pro-Company historians during the first half of the nineteenth century was that they failed to address seriously the moral critique put forth by Burke and other critics of the Company's rule. Macaulay—the sole apologist for the Company who did so—maintained that Hastings's occasionally immoral conduct, along with Clive's, was an unfortunate but necessary by-product of colonial rule. This lack of serious engagement with Burke's moral criticism was particularly surprising given the fact that pro-Company historians frequently employed moral critiques in their criticisms of previous centuries of Muslim and Hindu rule. In their discussions of Clive and Hastings, though, most pro-Company historians shied away from moral arguments altogether, mainly contending that such concerns were irrelevant to the Indian political environment in which both British statesmen operated. Whenever the question of morality intruded into their discussions of Clive or Hastings, pro-Company historians argued that since Clive and Hastings's Indian antagonists did not possess the honor or integrity of a British gentleman, Clive and Hastings were not required to act as one either.

However, by dismissing the need to defend the various actions of Clive and Hastings during the eighteenth century in moral terms while also condemning prior rulers of India for governing immorally, apologists for the Company opened themselves up to the charge of inconsistency. Critics of the Company could always point to the conduct of Clive and Hastings in their moral critiques of the Company's rule and argue that because the Company's rule was established on immoral foundations from the very beginning by the actions of these two individuals, it was irredeemable in the nineteenth century. By choosing not to engage in a serious way with the question of whether Clive or Hastings

acted morally during the eighteenth century, pro-Company historians risked undermining their broader claims about the virtuosity of the Company's rule vis-à-vis previous centuries of Hindu and Muslim rulers. This was not to be a problem, though, for Utilitarian historian James Mill. Rather, Mill managed in his six-volume *History of British India* (1817) to condemn the behavior of Clive and Hastings while at the same time also formulating a new rationale for continued British imperial rule over India.

### **James Mill's Alternative Interpretation of Indian History**

In his *History of British India*, James Mill elided the seemingly mutually exclusive perspectives of condemning the conduct of Clive and Hastings and interpreting Muslim rule of prior centuries as generally benign, if not progressive, with an unabashed support for British imperialism. He did so by adopting an overly negative view toward Hinduism and Hindu rulers. Mill followed important Scottish Enlightenment thinkers such as Adam Smith and Adam Ferguson in employing a "universal history" framework in his *History* which argued that all human societies progressed through a variety of stages of social development. However, Mill parted company with these thinkers in crudely applying fixed ideas of utility to rank various civilizations in terms of moral progress and civilizational advance.<sup>71</sup>

In his stadial framework, Mill ranked the ancient Hindus close to the bottom of world civilizations. Not only were their religious beliefs "loose, vague, wavering, obscure, and inconsistent" but Mill claimed that Hindus had barely failed to advance as a culture in other respects as well. For example, he declared that "[w]ith respect to morals or duty, it appears not that any theory has ever been constructed by the Hindus." Mill

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<sup>71</sup> Pitt, *Turn to Empire*, 127; Mehta, *Liberalism and Empire*, 84, 88.

further argued that the “habitual contempt” toward women among the ancient Hindus was a key marker of their low civilizational advance. Insisting that only “rude peoples” such as the Hindus treat their women “as wretches of the most base and vicious inclinations” while “civilized people” such as Britons and other Europeans “exalt” them, Mill maintained that the Hindus had barely progressed as a civilization prior to the Muslim conquest of India.<sup>72</sup>

Mill’s overly negative view of ancient Hindu culture had significant implications for his wider interpretation of Indian history as well as for his theory of colonial governance. Mill parted company with both Orientalist apologists for the Company such as Malcolm and Elphinstone as well as Burke, who more than once stated during the Hastings’ impeachment trial that Indian “morality is equal to ours” and generally praised ancient Hindu monarchs for being guided by “equity and great principles of jurisprudence.”<sup>73</sup> Rather, for Mill, Muslim rulers first brought civilized rule to India which it was the duty of the British to continue and to improve upon. Indeed, Mill insisted that this historical “fact” had to be properly understood if the British were to provide India with good government in the nineteenth century. “No scheme of government can happily conduce to the ends of government,” he declared, “unless it is adapted to the state of the people for whose use it is intended.” Therefore, it would be no good if British historians and colonial officials misjudged the “Hindus to be a people of high civilization, while they have, in reality, made but a few of the earliest steps in the progress to civilization.”<sup>74</sup>

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<sup>72</sup> Mill, *HBI*, 1: 242, 309, 311; 2: 60.

<sup>73</sup> Burke, “Speech on Opening of Impeachment” (16 and 19 February 1788), *WS*, 6: 365, 476.

<sup>74</sup> Mill, *HBI*, 2: 107.

*Mill's Stadiad View of Indian History: Muslim Rule as a Transitional Phase between "Hindu Despotism" and "British Civilization"*

In his *History*, Mill largely agreed with Burke's interpretation of preceding centuries of Muslim rule. Mill contended, like Burke, that Muslim rulers had generally been benign and paternal rulers, if not progressive ones. At the same time, there was an important difference between the two thinkers. Burke portrayed both Muslim and Hindu rulers of prior centuries as governing according to "noble principles" and "grand, bold and manly maxims" mainly in order to attack Clive, Hastings, and the Company for not doing so. By contrast, Mill only praised Muslim rulers for doing so and, indeed, belittled Hindus for being incapable of governing themselves in any manner but despotically:

Under the Mohammedan sovereigns there was a regular distribution of the functions of government to certain fixed and regular officers.... Under the Hindu sovereigns, there appears to have been a confusion of all things together in one heterogeneous mass. The sovereign governed by a sort of council, composed of Brahmens, who exercised the powers of government according to no pre-established plan, but according as each, by intrigue or by reputation, could obtain an ascendancy among the rest. The natural and common order of things, in this situation, was, that some one individual acquired a predominant influence, and employed the rest as merely his instruments.<sup>75</sup>

Not only did Mill assert that there was more room for Brahminical intrigue and the machinations of ambitious subordinates under Hindu monarchs than under Muslim rulers, he also maintained that Hindu governments were often more despotic as well. Specifically, he argued that there were two major checks on a Muslim king's power that were largely absent among Hindu rulers: first, religion as a separate autonomous power base within society; and secondly, the threat of insurrection from rebellious subjects if the king acted despotically. With regard to the first, Mill argued that in Hindu polities "the power of the sovereign" almost always was practically "transferred into the hands of the

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<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*, 344-5.

priests.” This had the effect of making the Brahmins allies of the king and complicit in his oppression instead of the champions of the people. By contrast, Mill asserted that “under Mohammedan sovereigns, the priests have little political power,” an important distinction which accorded Islamic imams and other religious leaders sufficient autonomy from the affairs of government. Consequently, imams were not typically “allied with those who abuse the sovereign power” nor did they usually “yield them... protection” from the ire of their subjects when they governed despotically.<sup>76</sup>

Mill also cited the greater willingness of Muslim Indian subjects to revolt against bad kings as dramatically lessening the chance of despotism among previous Muslim rulers of India. Other British commentators interpreted the chronic insurrections of Muslim kingdoms as proof of the despotism and oppression of their rulers. By contrast, Mill regarded the proclivity of Muslim Indians to revolt as evidence for the generally non-oppressive rule of Muslim rulers of India during previous centuries:

[I]n a situation where the mass of the people have nothing to lose, it is seldom difficult to excite them to insurrection. The sovereigns of the East find, by experience, that the people, if oppressed beyond a certain limit, are apt to rebel, never want leaders of capacity in such a case to conduct them, and are very apt to read their present race of oppressors under their feet. This prospect lays these rulers under a certain degree of restraint, and is the main-spring of that portion of goodness which anywhere appears in the practical state of the despotisms of the East.<sup>77</sup>

However, Mill claimed that this salutary “degree of restraint” was totally lacking among Hindu kings. In large part, Mill insisted this was so because Hindus were slavishly loyal and possessed an “apathy and patience under suffering” which was seldom “exceeded [among] any other specimen of the human race.” Muslims were markedly different, known more for their “spirit... excitability, and courage” than for slavish

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<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*, 345, 346.

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid.*, 346.

fidelity. Mill also framed the difference in explicitly gendered terms:

There was, in the manners of the Mohammedan conquerors of India, an activity, a manliness, an independence, which render it less easy for despotism to sink, among them, to that disgusting state of weak and profligate barbarism, which is the natural condition of government among such a passive people as the Hindus.

Consequently, Mill insisted that Muslim monarchs in India had a “motive to good government,” knowing if they acted overly despotically that their manly Muslim subjects would rise up in revolt. Precisely because “the Mohammedan is more manly [and] more vigorous” than the “passive” Hindu, Mill claimed that prior centuries of Muslim rule over the subcontinent was not generally despotic whereas Hindu government invariably was.<sup>78</sup>

In addition to alleging that there were universal distinctions between Hindu and Muslim modes of rule, Mill was generally favorable in his treatment of various Muslim kings in Indian history such as Timur. Like Burke, who described Timur’s *Institutes of Tamerlane* as containing “noble principles” and “grand, bold and manly maxims” of government, Mill contended that the late fourteenth-century Muslim monarch demonstrated in his *Institutes* a “degree of beneficent contrivance, with which he laid down the plan of his administration.” Rather than the historical accounts of Timur written by Company apologists who focused on the Muslim monarch’s bloodthirstiness, intolerance, and rapaciousness, Mill’s Timur provided the country with a systematic form of government. Although many of Timur’s initiatives were “very incomplete,” enough “progress” was made “in the art and science of government” for Mill to be able to insist that “the Hindus had much to gain by a change of masters.”<sup>79</sup>

For Mill, then, previous centuries of Muslim rule played a largely positive role in the political, social, and moral development of India. Muslim rulers such as Timur and

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<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*, 346-7, 366.

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*, 348, 349, 352.

his Mughal descendants provided India with its first government which was “considerably removed from the lowest barbarism.”<sup>80</sup> British rule was still generally an improvement over Muslim rule. However, according to Mill’s stadial framework, previous Muslim monarchs such as Timur helped to “civilize” Hindus and paved the way for their even greater betterment under British auspices. To use Uday Mehta’s catchy phrase: “For Mill, Hindu civilization is plainly in need of a double row.”<sup>81</sup>

### *Mill’s Critique of Clive and Hastings*

At the same time, James Mill did not excuse or seek to downplay Clive’s and Hastings’s misconduct in India during the eighteenth century as did many apologists for the Company. Rather, the reverse was true. As Javed Majeed has persuasively argued, one of Mill’s main aims in writing his *History of British India*, along with correcting favorable British attitudes toward ancient Hindu culture put forth by Indian philologist Sir William Jones and other prominent Orientalists, was to catalogue the various abuses committed by the British in the eighteenth century. Mill’s *History* was thus as much a sustained critique of the status quo at home in Britain as anything else.<sup>82</sup> Again, like his interpretation of preceding centuries of Muslim rule, Mill agreed with Burke that Clive and Hastings had done several disgraceful things. Unlike Burke and other critics, though, Mill did not conclude from this that the Company’s rule was irredeemable.

Like many Company apologists, Mill admired Clive’s strategic acumen. Clive had “a coolness and presence of mind, [along] with a readiness of resource in the midst of danger” which proved essential in many battles as well as an admirable “presence of

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<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*, 351.

<sup>81</sup> Mehta, *Liberalism and Empire*, 95.

<sup>82</sup> Majeed, *Ungoverned Imaginings*, intro.

mind and [a] steady courage, which never deserted [him] in sudden emergencies.” At the same time, Mill condemned Clive for his cupidity. Mill insisted that Clive participated in the plot against Siraj-ad-Daula solely because of the “profligate” presents promised to him by Mir Jafar, “rigidly” insisting that the new Bengal *nawab* pay him his promised presents in full after the Battle of Plassey despite the fact that doing so would bankrupt the Bengal treasury. Clive’s avarice manifested itself in other ways as well. Believing that the Company’s “overflowing of... gratitude” for the British victory at Plassey was entirely “towards himself,” Clive thought that he was justified in accepting these presents from Mir Jafar in spite of “covenants executed by the servants of the Company, not to receive any presents from the natives.” Particularly questionable, in Mill’s view, was Clive’s acceptance of a bequest left to him by the Bengal *nawab* in his will, worth an estimated £60,000. Although having the appearance of a bequest given freely in gratitude by Mir Jafar, Mill charged Clive with extorting this present and “artfully” disguising it as a bequest to evade the restrictions placed on receiving personal gifts.<sup>83</sup>

Mill also accused Warren Hastings of governing India in an overly greedy manner. For example, in recounting the governor-general’s extortionate conduct toward the Raja of Benares, Mill wrote:

Mr. Hastings imposes a heavy burden upon a native prince. His right, in point of law or justice is a matter of doubt. The Prince shows reluctance to submit to what he very naturally regards as oppression: and by some little and ordinary artifices he endeavours to elude the demand. To this reluctance and these little artifices, Mr. Hastings attaches the name of guilt. Having sufficiently attached to them the name of guilt, he holds it requisite that guilt should meet with punishment: and as it is the dignity of the state against which the offense has been committed; the dignity of the state, which is infinite, requires that punishment should be adequately severe. If this be justice, a way may be found for inflicting any punishment justly at any time, upon any human being.<sup>84</sup>

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<sup>83</sup> Mill, *HBI*, 3: 82, 122, 187-8, 304.

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*, 4: 268.



Despite the governor-general's presumption that the prince in question had "vast riches" which the Company could freely use for its own needs, however, Mill insisted that he "looked in vain for the proof" of the raja's supposed riches. The prince's "riches," Mill contended, were probably "nothing more than a part of the vain imagination of the unbounded opulence of India." However, this was not the point. Even if the raja were as rich as Hastings believed him to be, it still was not right for the governor-general to have "prosecuted a man to his ruin" simply to obtain his reputed wealth. Such conduct expressly violated the "compact, by which the Company had bound themselves to exact from this man... no more than his annual tribute." Not only that, but even if the Raja of Benares had been an ordinary Indian peasant instead of being a prince, Mill insisted that Hastings's conduct toward him would still have been unseemly and tantamount to "plunder."<sup>85</sup>

*Toward a New Governing Ideology: the Significance of Mill's History for British Rule*

Despite the fact that both Clive and Hastings had done several disgraceful things while establishing the Company's empire in India, Mill did not foreclose the possibility that British rule could be righted. This was largely because of his negative view of Hindus and Hinduism. Unlike Burke, who viewed Indians as having a "morality [which] is equal to ours," Mill viewed Indians as being morally incapable of governing themselves. Thus, while Burke was ambivalent about the justness of British rule over India, Mill did not have similar compunctions about it. The Company and its agents in India may have acted immorally at times, but they could be moralized sufficiently to do

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<sup>85</sup> *Ibid.*, 272, 273.

the work of uplift that India so desperately needed.<sup>86</sup>

Indeed, Mill would be one of the reformers. In 1819, two years after his *History of British India* was published, he gained employment with the East India Company in its London offices as an examiner of British-Indian correspondence. By 1830, he rose to become the head examiner of all correspondence between the Company and its three presidential governments in India. His more famous son, John Stuart Mill, likewise, worked for the Company in a similar capacity for thirty-five years between 1823 and the Company's abolition in 1858. As Lynn Zastoupil has argued, by the time of his death in 1836, James Mill's position on a whole range of imperial matters relating to India "was considered a most important one for the shaping of British power in India."<sup>87</sup>

Mill and his fellow Benthamites had, therefore, successfully colonized the East India Company and its governance of India, a story which has been well told by Eric Stokes and other scholars.<sup>88</sup> As Horace Hayman Wilson bemoaned in his preface to the fourth edition of Mill's *History*, published in 1840: "there is reason to fear that... a harsh and illiberal spirit has of late years prevailed in the conduct and councils of the rising service in India, which owes its origin to impressions imbibed in early life from the *History* of Mr. Mill." Similarly, Thomas Babington Macaulay, no great friend of the

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<sup>86</sup> Burke, "Speech on Opening of Impeachment" (19 February 1788), *WS*, 6: 476; *idem.*, "Speech on Fox's India Bill" (1 December 1783), 5: 438.

<sup>87</sup> Lynn Zastoupil, *John Stuart Mill and India* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1994), chap. 1 *passim*, quote on p. 7.

<sup>88</sup> The classic account of the Benthamite influence on colonial policymaking is Eric Stokes, *The English Utilitarians and India* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1959). Stoke's argument that Lord William Bentinck and other 1830s policymakers were deeply influenced by Mill and Bentham was forcefully challenged two decades later by John Rosselli in his biography of the governor-general: Rosselli, *Lord William Bentinck: The Making of a Liberal Imperialist, 1774-1839* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1974). However, in the last two or so decades, various scholars have generally restated Stokes' thesis, focusing now on the wide diffusion of Mill's views among colonial bureaucrats, for example, for whom the text was a required reading on Indian history for much of the nineteenth century. See Mehta, *Liberalism and Empire*, 89-90; and Ronald Inden, *Imagining India* (Oxford and Cambridge, MA: Blackwell, 1990), 44-6.

Utilitarian historian, deemed Mill's *History* to be "on the whole the greatest historical work which has appeared in our language since that of Gibbon." Perhaps the greatest testament to the importance of Mill's *History*, though, was the fact that it was a required textbook in Indian history for much of the remainder of the nineteenth century for British colonial officials.<sup>89</sup>

Clearly, then, James Mill's *History of British India* had a significant influence. What were the implications of his thought for British colonial governance? One answer to this question has already been presented by postcolonial scholars such as Ronald Inden and Nicholas Dirks who have reassessed the impact of British colonialism upon South Asian societies and cultures. According to these scholars, Mill's *History* was a foundational text for many Western misconceptions about India. Inden has argued that Mill's cruel insensitivity toward Hinduism and Indian culture played a key role in the Western "imagining" of India as being a largely backward, caste-ridden, and timeless place which has largely endured to the present day. Dirks has likewise contended that these ideas were instrumental in the formation of various colonial policies such as the Raj's "martial races" recruitment policy and the institution of laws against the supposed "criminal castes," to name two prominent examples.<sup>90</sup> Other scholars have disputed the degree of importance which Inden and Dirks attribute to Mill's *History*. Rather, they have argued instead that colonial knowledge emerged more from what Eugene Irschick terms "dialogic interactions" between Britons and indigenous experts than from

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<sup>89</sup> Mehta, *Liberalism and Empire*, 89-90.

<sup>90</sup> Inden, *Imagining India*, *passim*; Dirks, *Castes of Mind: Colonialism and the Making of Modern India* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2001), 31-8, chaps. 7-9 *passim*.

“epistemological conquests” by Mill and other scholar-officials.<sup>91</sup>

Whatever may have been Mill’s ultimate impact upon the construction of caste and other aspects of Indian society, I would contend that Mill’s primary importance for British colonial rule lays not so much in what he had to say about caste or Hinduism *per se* as in the wider implications of these beliefs for colonial governance. By belittling Indians for being morally incapable of governing themselves, Mill presented a way out of the ethical dilemma posed by Burke regarding British imperial rule over India. By infantilizing Indians as being “immoral children” by arguing that their religion and their culture had barely progressed prior to the eleventh-century Muslim conquest of the subcontinent, Mill did not need to defend the misdeeds of Clive or Hastings in order to justify the Company’s governance of India. Nor did he have to condemn previous centuries of Muslim rule, either. Rather, by shifting the perspectives of historians who were both critical of the Company as well as those who were supportive, Mill was able to advance a new compelling rationale for British imperial rule. Provided that the Company and its agents could be sufficiently moralized, it had the duty of civilizing India, of continuing the process initiated by previous centuries of Muslim rulers. This new theory of colonial governance would have significant implications not only for colonial governance during the remainder of the Company period and beyond but also for the construction of colonial masculinity in the colonial bureaucracy and the army. Through

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<sup>91</sup> For leading scholars who offer differing interpretations from Inden, see Eugene Irschick, *Dialogue and History: Constructing South India, 1795-1895* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994); Richard H. Grove, *Green Imperialism: Colonial Expansion, Tropical Island Edens and the Origins of Environmentalism, 1600-1860* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995); C.A. Bayly, *Empire and Information: Intelligence Gathering and Social Communication in India, 1780-1870* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996); Susan Bayly, *Caste, Society and Politics in India from the Eighteenth Century to the Modern Age* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999); Peter Robb, ed., *The Concept of Race in South Asia* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1995); and John M. MacKenzie, *Orientalism: History, Theory and the Arts* (Manchester: Manchester University Press; New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1995).

such policies as Governor-General Bentinck's partial "Indianization" of the colonial bureaucracy or plans to broaden recruitment of the Bengal Army put forth by military reformers in the decades before 1857, just to name two important examples that will be discussed in later chapters, many colonial officials deployed an overly patronizing attitude toward Indians which owed much to James Mill.

## **Conclusion**

Throughout this chapter, I have shown how the question of whether or not the Company's rule of India was "moral" was central to British debates about Indian history during the Company period. Critics of the Company such as Edmund Burke, Henry Harpur Spry, and John Dickinson argued that the Company governed India in a despotic and immoral fashion vis-à-vis preceding centuries of Muslim and Hindu rule. The misdeeds of Clive and Hastings were employed by critics to call the morality of British rule over India into question, or at the very least, that of the Company. By contrast, pro-Company historians such as Adam White, Thomas Babington Macaulay, and Sir John Malcolm asserted that the Company, generally speaking, governed India in a moral fashion, particularly compared with prior centuries of "Muhammedan oppression," or, less uniformly, Hindu rule. Less convincingly, these historians tried to excuse the behavior of Clive and Hastings by asserting that both statesmen had to be understood primarily in their Indian context and that they were up against untrustworthy and underhanded Indian antagonists. Alone of British historians writing Indian history during the nineteenth century, James Mill was able to transcend this debate by belittling Indians for being "moral children" and, thus, incapable of governing themselves. By conceding

that Clive and Hastings, among other Britons in India during the eighteenth century, had done several disgraceful things without arguing, as Burke and other critics did, that the Company was therefore irredeemable, Mill provided a way out of the Burkean ethical dilemma surrounding British imperial rule in India. Provided the Company could be reformed so that it did the work of uplift, the British could pick up where preceding centuries of Muslim rule left off and finish the job of civilizing India.

What were the broader implications of this nineteenth-century debate about the morality of Company imperialism? In particular, how did this discussion about the justness of British colonial governance of India affect the construction of masculine identities in the colonial bureaucracy and the army for Britons and Indians during the first half of the nineteenth century? As I shall argue in the following chapters, colonial masculinity in the Company's bureaucracy and its army was mainly defined during the Company period in moral terms. Proper moral conduct by British covenanted servants in the Company's bureaucracy or officers and soldiers in the Company's armies were considered to mark the "manly" status of Britons in India. Conversely, inappropriate behavior such as private debt or accepting gifts and presents in the case of covenanted servants, private debt and drunkenness among officers, or drunkenness among soldiers was regarded as calling British masculinity into question.

At the same time, I argue in later chapters that Britons feared that the improper conduct of British covenanted servants, military officers, and soldiers not just because such behavior was thought to negatively reflect on the manliness of Britons but also fed into wider concerns about governance. Rather, ruling India indirectly, through the extensive agency of Indian uncovenanted servants and sepoys, many government

officials deemed it absolutely imperative both that British governance as well as British rulers themselves always be seen as morally virtuous. Otherwise, officials frequently asked, why would Indians accept the dominion of strangers?

As the next chapter shows, these concerns, in turn, raised additional issues. Did not the very fact that Britons needed to rely so heavily on reputedly dishonest Indian subordinates in order to govern inevitably lead to immoral government? Might it be necessary to ban Indians from serving in positions of executive authority precisely because they were supposedly so immoral? Conversely, others asked whether a policy to deny high office to Indians because of their alleged dishonesty was, in itself, deeply immoral as it would permanently consign Indians to such a degraded position. In the next chapter I shall examine these various questions by charting the “Indianization” debate of the first half of the nineteenth century, showing how concerns about the morality of rule explored in this chapter directly affected day-to-day governance in the colonial bureaucracy.

**Chapter 2. Indianize the Indian Civil Service? Concerns  
about the Morality of Colonial Rule, Paternalism, and the  
Indianization Debate of the Mid-Nineteenth Century**

*No nation ever existed in which corruption was not practised to a certain extent by the subordinate officers of Government: we cannot expect that India is in this point to form an exception. But though we cannot eradicate corruption, we may so far restrict it as to prevent it from causing any serious injury to the public interest. We must for this purpose adopt the same means as are usually found most efficacious in other countries; we must treat the natives with courtesy, we must place confidence in them, we must make their official situations respectable, and raise them in some degree beyond temptation, by making their official allowances adequate to the support of their station in society....*

*Even if we could suppose that it were practicable without the aid of a single native, to conduct the whole affairs of the country, both in the higher and in all the subordinate offices, by means of Europeans, it ought not to be done, because it would be both politically and morally wrong.<sup>1</sup>*

As Madras Governor Sir Thomas Munro indicated in an 1824 minute to fellow members of the Madras government, concerns about the morality of the East India Company's rule over India had ramifications for colonial governance that extended well beyond scholarly discussions among British historians. How could the British best establish their colonial control over India on "moral" foundations? What did it mean, practically speaking, to construct such a government? What role were Indians to play in their own government? Was it just to exclude Indians from serving in high positions of trust because of their supposed dishonesty? Or, rather, would British rule remain immoral so long as such individuals held high positions within the colonial administration? These were all questions which Munro and other colonial officials grappled with throughout the first half of the nineteenth century in their attempts to

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<sup>1</sup> Sir Thomas Munro, "Minute by Sir Thomas Munro, on the State of the Country, and the Condition of the People" (31 December 1824), George Robert Gleig, *The Life of Major-General Sir Thomas Munro, Bart., and K.C.B., Late Governor of Madras, With Extracts from his Correspondence and Private Papers* (London: Henry Colburn and Richard Bentley, 1830, 3 vols.), 3: 359-60, 362.



establish British rule upon firm, but also moral, foundations.

For Munro, this meant widening the scope of Indian employment within the colonial bureaucracy. Munro was a Tory paternalist who believed in the permanence or near-permanence of British imperial control over India.<sup>2</sup> However, he also argued that “all offices that can be left in the hands of natives without danger to our power” should be entrusted to qualified Indians. For the Madras governor, Indians were generally “better accountants” as well as “more patient and laborious, more intimately acquainted with the state of the country and the manners and customs of the inhabitants, and... altogether more efficient men of business.” Thus, it was wise for the British to actively employ their services. However, Munro also argued that extending the scope of Indian employment within the colonial bureaucracy was the morally correct thing to do. Excluding Indians from serving in “every important office” solely because they were suspected of being generally dishonest, for Munro, unjustly “pass[ed] a sentence of degradation on a whole people, for which no benefit” provided by British rule “can ever compensate.” Indeed, Munro asserted that “[i]t would certainly be more desirable that [Britons] should be expelled from the country altogether, than that the result of [their] system of government should be such a debasement of a whole people.”<sup>3</sup>

By contrast, Sir Archibald Galloway, a member of the Bengal presidential government during the 1830s, argued in 1832 that attempts by the British to “bribe the natives of India to be honest” by paying them high salaries not only would cost the government significantly more money, it would not be money well spent. Galloway

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<sup>2</sup> For more on the contours of this general idea of British permanence or semi-permanence in India, see Francis G. Hutchins, *The Illusion of Permanence: British Imperialism in India* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1967).

<sup>3</sup> Munro, “Minute,” *Life of Major-General Sir Thomas Munro*, 3: 358, 360, 362.

maintained that Indians generally were “misguided children in morals.” Consequently, he insisted that trusting Indians with greater responsibilities of government would be foolish because “we see every day that neither extent of trust, nor of emolument, has any other effect than to extend that sphere of corruption around them.” It would be an exercise in futility to “look... for integrity” in their actions until “their moral character, as a nation, shall be raised.” Although Galloway conceded that for pragmatic reasons, large numbers of subordinate Indian clerks were needed to run the empire, he cautioned that they should only be employed “under [the] vigilant control” of their British superiors. In particular, Galloway urged that they should never be entrusted with any autonomous decision-making authority. After all, the British wanted to “discourage vice,” not “furnish the means of being more vicious.”<sup>4</sup>

In this chapter, I shall chart the so-called Indianization debate of the first half of the nineteenth century, in which colonial officials such as Munro and Galloway argued over whether or not Indian uncovenanted servants could be sufficiently trusted to assume greater responsibilities of colonial governance. I shall make two, interrelated, arguments: the first about governance and the second about British discourses about uncovenanted servants. Regarding the first issue, I maintain that concerns about the morality of rule explored in the first chapter were integral to discussions among British colonial officials in the first half of the nineteenth century about how much, if at all, to trust subordinate Indian civil servants with the day-to-day governing of India. B.B. Misra has interpreted the process by which British officials decided upon governing India in a largely indirect manner by delegating many duties of governance to Indian uncovenanted servants

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<sup>4</sup> Sir Archibald Galloway, *Observations on the Law and Constitution, and Present Government of India* (London: Parbury, Allen, & Co., 1832), 323.

between the 1790s and the 1830s as one mainly driven by administrative necessity.<sup>5</sup>

While not incorrect, this only tells part of the story. For, in addition to being driven by administrative necessity, the British establishment of a system of indirect rule over India during the first half of the nineteenth century was also deeply charged ideologically.

Colonial policymakers did not just debate how much authority to devolve to Indian subordinates during these decades; they also crafted ideological justifications for limiting the scope of Indianization.

The second argument of this chapter relates to how concerns about the morality of rule during this period affected British discourses about Indian clerks in the colonial bureaucracy as well as, more broadly, the construction of colonial masculinity among British colonial bureaucrats. This question will also be taken up in the next chapter as well, where I shall examine how anxieties about colonial governance had a direct impact upon the construction of masculine identities by British colonial officials. In the present chapter, I chart the emergence of British paternalistic attitudes toward Indian clerks during the first half of the nineteenth century. In the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, British officials such as Cornwallis mainly talked about Indian venality and corruption, arguing that all Indian clerks were morally suspect and untrustworthy, and, therefore, ought not to be entrusted with the responsibilities of colonial governance. By contrast, after the 1820s various colonial officials began to regard Indian clerks more as “moral children” who, under the tutelage of morally superior British covenanted servants, could gradually learn how properly to rule. I contend in this chapter that this shift in focus was a direct result of the gradual acceptance among British officials of the

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<sup>5</sup> B.B. Misra, *The Central Administration of the East India Company, 1773-1834* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1959).

desirability of delegating greater responsibilities of colonial governance to Indian subordinates over the first third of the nineteenth century. Since the goal was no longer to prohibit Indians from serving in high positions within the colonial bureaucracy because of their supposedly widespread dishonesty and corruption but rather to subordinate them to British officials, a new stereotype which denied these Indian clerks a full manhood vis-à-vis their British superiors proved more useful from a British point of view.

In arguing about the merits of entrusting greater responsibilities of governance to Indian subordinates, several colonial officials and authors took different sides than those discussed in the first chapter. For example, Sir John Malcolm and Henry Harpur Spry differed in their assessment of the Company's rule vis-à-vis previous centuries of Hindu and Muslim rule. Both, however, supported Indianization. As a Tory paternalist, Malcolm supported Indianization because it would create a "safety-valve" of esteem among Indian elites for the Company, while critics of the Company such as Spry were in favor of the policy because it would moralize the Company's subjects, demonstrating that the British were in India not simply to increase the Company's profits. Similarly strange bedfellows can be found among those who opposed entrusting Indian subordinates with greater authority within the colonial government. Thus, Edmund Burke opposed relying upon Indian "Banyans" (*banians* or clerks) to do most of the day-to-day responsibilities of governing because they were of the *wrong* social class, various Company apologists such as Adam White were against the idea because Indians had supposedly suffered centuries of Muslim "oppression" and thus were prone to "unmanly expedients" such as dishonesty, while Evangelical Charles Grant and Utilitarian historian James Mill thought the idea perverse because of what they regarded as the gross immorality of Hinduism and,

by extension, Indians. Just as there were many different points of view regarding whether the Company's rule over India was more or less virtuous than that of previous centuries of Hindu and Muslim rulers, so too was there wide disagreement about whether or not Indianization was a just policy which would result in an improvement in the morality of Indian subordinates in the colonial bureaucracy.

### **Setting the Stage: Burke's Impeachment Speeches and Cornwallis's Administrative Reforms**

Again, as in the previous chapter, Edmund Burke played an important role in framing British discussions about the supposedly widespread corruption and dishonesty of Indian clerks in the colonial bureaucracy. As I argued in the previous chapter, among Edmund Burke's main attacks on Warren Hastings's rule over India—in addition to not following Hindu or Muslim political precedents in ruling the country non-oppressively—was that he entrusted many responsibilities of colonial governance to “Banyans” of questionable social status instead of customary Indian administrative elites. *Banians*, Burke continually insisted throughout his various speeches on India during the 1780s and 1790s, were entirely the wrong people to govern India, being prone to seek “Refuge against the Abuse of Station, rather in low Intrigues, and the miserable Arts and Subterfuges of Servitude, than in a manly Assertion of their Rights.” Hastings's use of such unmanly Indians to perform many of the functions of the Company's administration, Burke claimed on 19 February 1788 toward the end of his opening speech in Hastings's impeachment trial, had completely deleterious consequences. These included the total “ruin of the landed interest of a Province, the destruction of the husbandmen and the ruin of all the people in it” as well as general “oppression, rack and ruin, cruel exactions and

horrible tortures.” By selecting, as his Indian agents, men “generally chosen out of that class of natives who, by being habituated to misery and subjection, can submit to any orders, and are fit for any of the basest Services” instead of individuals drawn from the traditional Indian (and mainly Hindu) governing elite, Burke charged that Hastings not only had placed British rule over India on immoral foundations, but more serious for the “father” of conservatism, had also undermined India’s social fabric.<sup>6</sup>

Burke’s disparagement of Banyans played into wider justifications of British rule being formulated for the first time during the late eighteenth century. As Anna Clark has recently argued, “by portraying” Indian bureaucrats “as effeminate and corrupt, Burke undermined the possibility that they could rule themselves.”<sup>7</sup> From there, it was not far to argue, as Governor-General Lord Cornwallis did in 1793, that Indians *should not* participate in their own government at all because they were uniformly corrupt. Believing that “every native of Hindustan is corrupt,” Cornwallis sought, in his various administrative reforms, promulgated in 1793, to insulate British officials from the influence of their Indian underlings so that British covenanted servants might, over time, become more honest. More broadly, though, the governor-general believed that total British control over the administration of India was needed if British imperial rule were ever to rest on permanent foundations. As he wrote to the Court of Directors in 1789, the long-term survival of British rule in India would be doubtful without “a large and well-

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<sup>6</sup> Edmund Burke, “Observations on *First Report of Select Committee*” (5 February 1782); “Speech on Opening of Impeachment” (15 and 19 February 1788), *WS*, 5: 184; 6: 292, 433, 456. For more on Burke’s concern that British imperialism was undermining India’s “traditional” social fabric, see Uday Singh Mehta, *Liberalism and Empire: A Study in Nineteenth-Century British Liberal Thought* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1999), 132-44 and chap. 5 *passim*.

<sup>7</sup> Anna Clark, *Scandal: The Sexual Politics of the British Constitution* (Princeton, NJ and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2004), 101. Also see Nicholas B. Dirks, *The Scandal of Empire: India and the Creation of Imperial Britain* (Cambridge, MA and London: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2006), 109-10, which makes a similar argument.

regulated body of Europeans.”<sup>8</sup>

In addition to his Permanent Settlement, Cornwallis implemented several major administrative reforms in 1793. As the next chapter will further discuss, he raised the official salaries of British covenanted servants, closely delineated the duties of revenue collectors and judges, and banned British colonial officials from accepting gifts or engaging in private trade. Most relevant for this chapter, though, was the governor-general’s simultaneous racial ban on Indians from serving in positions which held any executive authority. Only by removing Indians from positions which held any kind of power within the colonial administration, Cornwallis believed, would it be possible to trust British covenanted servants with the responsibility of governing while also ensuring that this governance was carried on in the most honorable and proper manner possible.

Some of Cornwallis’s other 1793 reforms such as his Permanent Settlement may have been “defensive forms of Anglicization” as Eric Stokes has argued, particularly when compared with later reforms in the nineteenth century instigated by Utilitarian and liberal reformers.<sup>9</sup> However, as several other scholars have pointed out, the governor-general’s racial ban on Indians serving in the covenanted service was a “radical break” from the policies of his predecessors who sought to govern India by relying heavily on Indian officials.<sup>10</sup> As such, it had two fateful consequences for the development of nineteenth-century British discourses about the supposedly widespread corruption of

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<sup>8</sup> Percival Spear, *The Nabobs* (1932; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1963), 137; Cornwallis to Court of Directors, 18 August 1789, cited in T.H. Beaglehole, *Thomas Munro and the Development of Administrative Policy in Madras, 1792-1818: The Origins of “The Munro System”* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1966), 6.

<sup>9</sup> Eric Stokes, *The English Utilitarians and India* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1959), 3.

<sup>10</sup> Beaglehole, *Munro and the Development of Administrative Policy*, 2; Burton Stein, *Thomas Munro: The Origins of the Colonial State and His Vision of Empire* (Delhi, Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), 38; also see Misra, *Central Administration*, 8, who refers to Cornwallis’s reforms as “a complete break with the past.”

Indian bureaucrats as well as for British colonial rule over India more generally.

First, there were major demographic changes within the Indian-dominated uncovenanted service during the nearly four decades after 1793 when Cornwallis's racial ban was in effect. Before 1793, a Persian-educated administrative elite comprised mainly of upper-caste Hindus had generally dominated the administrative organs of the Mughal Empire as well as the empire's various eighteenth-century successor states.<sup>11</sup> After 1793, nearly all the positions within the Company's bureaucracy still open to Indians became clerical in nature. Consequently, English-educated Indians of lesser social status gradually replaced higher-caste Hindus within the Company's colonial bureaucracy in succeeding decades.<sup>12</sup> By the 1820s, English-educated Bengalis started to be employed in large numbers in subordinate positions within the colonial administration, eventually by mid-century constituting the majority of Indian colonial bureaucrats.<sup>13</sup>

Secondly, many of Cornwallis's administrative reforms failed to provide an adequate government for India. One telling example was the considerable growth in the case backlog in Bengal civil courts. Believing in the sanctity of private property rights, and not generally trusting British judges on account of widespread British corruption

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<sup>11</sup> Persian was the official court language of the Mughals as well as the official language in which the Company transacted Indian business until 1835. In that year, largely as a result of Thomas Babington Macaulay's "Minute on Indian Education," Governor-General Lord William Bentinck changed the Company's official language to English as well as cut government subsidies to Sanskrit and Arabic schools.

<sup>12</sup> This demographic change does not appear to have occurred so much in the political service, where, as Michael H. Fisher shows, a Persian-educated elite consisting both of upper-caste Hindus and upper-class Muslims dominated the higher Indian positions in the Company's various residencies throughout the first half of the nineteenth century. See *Indirect Rule in India: Residents and the Residency System, 1764-1858* (1991; Delhi, Calcutta, Chennai, and Mumbai: Oxford University Press, 1998), chap. 8.

<sup>13</sup> C.J. Hawes, *Poor Relations: The Making of a Eurasian Community in British India, 1773-1833* (Surrey, UK: Curzon Press, 1996), 37-8; Misra, *Central Administration*, 259; and *idem.*, *The Indian Middle Classes: Their Growth in Modern Times* (London, New York and Bombay: Oxford University Press, 1961), intro. These demographic changes may have been confined to urban areas, though, as an older Brahmin-dominated civil service seems to have persisted in the countryside. Robert Eric Frykenberg, *Guntur District, 1788-1848: A History of Local Influence and Central Authority in South India* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1965).



during the eighteenth century, Cornwallis allowed a virtually unlimited number of appeals of judicial decisions by Indians. At the same time, however, Cornwallis banned Indians from all positions of judicial authority, meaning that almost every case had to be formally decided by a British judge. Thus, at the very same time that there was a significant increase in civil litigation, the number of officials who could formally decide these cases sharply declined. This problem was only made worse by the continual failure of the Court of Directors to send out sufficient numbers of British covenanted servants to govern India during the early decades of the nineteenth century. Consequently, the case backlog in Bengal courts nearly tripled in the decade after 1793, rising from just under 60,000 cases in 1792 to over 160,000 by 1803 before gradually declining to approximately 130,000 to 140,000 cases throughout the 1820s, 1830s, and 1840s.<sup>14</sup>

### **British Discourses about Indian Dishonesty before ca. 1820**

Ultimately, the failure of Cornwallis' various administrative reforms to provide adequate governance of India would lead several colonial officials such as Munro during the 1820s and 1830s to call for the greater Indianization of the colonial bureaucracy to provide better governance of India. Initially, however, the failures of Cornwallis's reforms had the opposite effect: further bolstering several of the notions of general Indian corruption which had prompted Cornwallis to ban Indians from holding executive positions in the colonial government in the first place.

Various colonial officials during the first quarter of the nineteenth century followed Burke in worrying about the supposedly widespread dishonesty and corruption of Indian clerks. For example, Bengal judge Alexander Fraser Tytler contended in 1813

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<sup>14</sup> Misra, *Central Administration*, 9-10, 245-60, 270-84, 406-8.

that there was a “total disregard for truth among the Indians” which he claimed was not found in Britain or in the rest of Europe. Likewise, Madras judge James Wilson wrote that same year in a letter to Madras Judicial Secretary David Hill that nearly all Indian court officials possessed an inability to “understand the reciprocal obligations between probity and true honour.” Similar beliefs in the universal dishonesty of Indian clerks were articulated by other British colonial officials as well during the 1810s and early 1820s. Thus, Madras revenue officials in 1813 attributed the cause of the embezzlement of a significant sum of money by Indian revenue officers in the Madras district of Chingleput to “the Corrupt propensities of the Native Servants.” Likewise, a Bombay judicial official described Indian clerks eight years later in 1821 as being “pliable” and prone to “chicanery.” The Bombay official argued that because of the rank dishonesty of Indian officials, they should never be employed in positions within the colonial bureaucracy unless they were under the direct supervision of British officials.<sup>15</sup>

It is important to note that while British officials during this period commonly believed that their Indian underlings were generally predisposed toward dishonesty and corruption, they mainly provided non-racialist reasons for these supposed traits. They argued for two causes for this general disposition toward dishonesty among Indians. First, several contended that a supposed prior history of suffering oppression under centuries of “tyrannical” Muslim rulers was to blame. This group included several apologists for the Company such as Robert Patton, Henry St. George Tucker, and Adam White who

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<sup>15</sup> Alexander Fraser Tytler, *Considerations on the Present Political State of India* (1813; London: Black, Parbury, & Allen, 1816, 2nd ed., 2 vols.), 1: 199; Wilson to Hill, n.d., but probably early June 1813, cited in Madras Judicial Consultations, 15 June 1813, BL/APAC/IOR/F/4/538/12922; Madras Board of Revenue to Madras Government, 14 December 1813, cited in Madras Revenue Consultations, 22 February 1814, BL/APAC/IOR/F/4/505/12185; Registrar of the Sadr Adalat to Bombay Judicial Secretary Farish, 14 May 1821, cited in Bombay Judicial Consultations, 22 May 1821, BL/APAC/IOR/F/4/768/20878.

disagreed with Burke's general positive position about the nature of prior centuries of Muslim rule over India but agreed with him regarding the corrupt tendencies of Indian clerks. Secondly, several officials such as prominent Evangelical and Company official Charles Grant as well as Utilitarian James Mill attacked Hinduism and, specifically, Brahmins for encouraging Indians to be dishonest.

Burke was important in setting the contours of the first argument. As noted in the first chapter, he warned the House of Lords in 1788 that Indian Banyans were adept at "all the little frauds, all the defensive armour, all the artifices and contrivances, by which abject slavery secures itself against the violence of power." Various apologists for the Company further extended this argument in the nineteenth century. Thus, Robert Patton, a historian and later the governor of St. Helena, argued in 1801 that the experience of being "doomed to live under" prior centuries of Muslim despotism helped cause "the avaricious, merciless disposition of the higher and middling orders" of Indians who generally served as clerks in the colonial bureaucracy. Similarly, Company director Henry St. George Tucker contended two decades later that "servility and meanness are the natural offspring of an arbitrary and oppressive Government." Consequently, Tucker urged that the tendency toward dishonesty and corrupt practices among Indians had to be broadly understood as being "the arms resorted to by the weak against the strong."<sup>16</sup>

The most thorough articulation of this interpretation during the early decades of the nineteenth century, though, was by Adam White, an obscure Bengal Army lieutenant.

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<sup>16</sup> Burke, "Speech on Opening of Impeachment" (15 February 1788), *WS*, 6: 292-3; Robert Patton, *The Principles of Asiatic Monarchies, Politically and Historically Investigated, and Contrasted with those of the Monarchies of Europe* (London: J. Debrett, 1801), 215; Henry St. George Tucker, "Character of the Natives of India" (1821), reprinted in *Memorials of Indian Government; Being a Selection from the Papers of Henry St. George Tucker, Late Director of the East India Company*, ed. John W. Kaye (London: Richard Bentley, 1853), 481. Interestingly enough, Tucker's conception is broadly similar to James C. Scott's "weapons of the weak." See Scott, *Weapons of the Weak: Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985).

Like other Company apologists, White broadly disagreed with Burke's generally stated position about prior centuries of Muslim rule while sharing his fears about trusting Indian clerks. In his *Considerations on the State of British India* (1822), White thus argued that the "cruel misgovernment and oppression [of] the Mahomedan system of rule [had] eradicated all generous and patriotic sentiments in [the] hearts" of Indians. This "oppression" had the chief effect of corrupting "their morals" as well as "creating habits of mendacity, duplicity, and fraud" among Indians. White contended that nothing existed in Indian society "like that public spirit and enlarged social feeling which animates the higher and middle classes of English society," as well as British civil servants at home, to be honest and trustworthy.<sup>17</sup> Rather, White asserted, because Indian civil servants were "exposed" to centuries of "cruel rapacity, and unable to retaliate by force,"

...they were compelled to resort to every unmanly expedient, in order to escape its merciless exactions. Every thing which could be effected by subterfuge, craft, insinuation, or flattery, was deemed lawful to repel unjust attacks upon property. Hence their habitual want of veracity—their instinctive distrust and fear of persons invested with authority—and that heartless apathy and indifference to the general cause of humanity.

White further claimed a few pages later that "the European undauntedly speaks the truth" largely because "there is no dread of power to restrain him." Rather, "he is honest in his dealings, because the circumstances in which he is placed have not created habits of fraud, and because the law will compel him to fulfil his engagements." Consequently, it was far easier to entrust a British covenanted servant with the duty of governing India than his Indian underling, who, because of centuries of suffering Muslim oppression, would be

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<sup>17</sup> This was a misleading argument, considering the debates about "Old Corruption" in Britain during the early decades of the nineteenth century. See Philip Harling, *The Waning of "Old Corruption": The Politics of Economical Reform in Britain, 1779-1846* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996).

more prone to employ various corrupt and “unmanly expedients.”<sup>18</sup>

While Patton, Tucker, and White generally blamed the “unmanly expedients” of dishonesty and corruption among Indian civil servants on a supposedly prior history of oppression by Muslim rulers, others attributed these problems to broader “problems” within Indian society such as Hinduism and the influence of Brahmins. The first systematic attack on Hinduism written by a Briton was prominent Evangelical and Company official Charles Grant’s “Observations on the State of Society among the Asiatic Subjects of Great Britain,” first written in 1792 but only published in 1813 during the parliamentary debates over the renewal of the Company’s charter. Hinduism, Grant claimed, fostered an “abandoned selfishness” in Indians which made them prone to all “the effects of selfishness unrestrained by principles” such as “discord, hatred, abuse, slanders, injuries, complaints [and] litigation.” So long as Indians remained Hindu, they were condemned to suffer its despotism. Consequently, they would be doomed to live an unmanly “life of abject slavery, and unparalleled depravity,” continually under the thrall of Brahmins and their “acute, subtle and penetrating” minds.<sup>19</sup>

Grant’s religious outlook as an Evangelical Christian not only directly informed his negative opinions regarding Hinduism but it also motivated his active support of the introduction of missionaries into India. From his influential perch as both a Member of Parliament and a Company director during the first two decades of the nineteenth century, Grant played an important role in helping to achieve the introduction of British

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<sup>18</sup> Adam White, *Considerations on the State of British India* (Edinburgh: Bell and Bradfute, W. and C. Tait, and A. Alladrice; Glasgow: James Brash and Co.; London: J. M. Richardson, 1822), 62-3, 69.

<sup>19</sup> Charles Grant, “Observations on the State of Society among the Asiatic Subjects of Great Britain” (1792), reprinted in PP, 1812-3, X, pp. 27-9, 44, 60-1.

missionaries into India in 1813.<sup>20</sup> Alas, the wide hopes that Grant and other Evangelicals had for converting large numbers of Hindus to Christianity miserably failed to pan out in ensuing decades. However, Evangelicals were successful in getting the Company to ban, on the grounds of immorality, Indian customs such as *sati* (widow immolation) and *thagi* (ritual murder by highway robbers) during the first half of the nineteenth century.<sup>21</sup>

Grant also played an important role along with Burke in framing nineteenth-century debates about Indian corruption in the colonial bureaucracy. Several officials echoed him when they argued that Hinduism generally, and Brahmins specifically, engendered much corruption among Indian clerks. For instance, Governor-General Lord Minto argued in 1811 that he had “little doubt... [that] the prevalence of the Crimes of perjury and forgery... [was] in a great measure ascribable [in] Hindus to a want of due instruction” in proper “moral and religious tenets.” Similarly, James Mill argued six years later that Hinduism was largely to blame for Indian dishonesty, along with the supposed lack of moral virtue in Indians. As proof for this assertion, Mill cited the flippant disregard for truthfulness among Hindus. Indians were largely dishonest because their religion treated perjury “as a very trifling and venial offense” instead of with the seriousness which Europeans did.<sup>22</sup>

In addition to blaming Hinduism for Indian dishonesty, various colonial officials during the early decades of the nineteenth century also condemned the great influence of Brahmins upon other Indians. Thus, Tytler argued in 1813 that while Indian

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<sup>20</sup> George D. Bearce, *British Attitudes Towards India, 1784-1858* (1961; Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1982 reprint ed.), 61, 78-9; Stokes, *English Utilitarians and India*, 40. On Grant’s important role in colonial Indian history during this period, the classic treatment remains Ainslie Thomas Embree, *Charles Grant and British Rule in India* (London: G. Allen, 1962).

<sup>21</sup> Lata Mani, *Contentious Traditions: The Debate on Sati in Colonial India* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1998); Dirks, *Scandal of Empire*, chap. 8, *passim*.

<sup>22</sup> Minto Minute, Bengal Revenue Consultations, 6 March 1811, BL/APAC/IOR/F/4/408/10172; Mill, *HBI*, 5: 433.

uncovenanted servants “will not steal and rob openly, or commit other bad actions which might lower them in the public eye,” these officials were not above accepting bribes or “defraud[ing] their masters by false accounts” when such behavior could “be concealed.” They also readily made “use of their power in office [to]... extort sums in the most paltry and mean way from all who have any transaction with them.” Tytler warned that they were further encouraged in their dishonest deeds by the bad example which Brahmins showed by their “complete want of proper religious and moral principle.”<sup>23</sup>

Likewise, various authors of government reform tracts such as Adam White cited the influence of Brahmins to explain why many Indian officials possessed such a lack of moral virtue. Generally castigating Hinduism as a whole for “creating habits of fraud” among Indians, White essentially employed an anti-papist argument. For White, the main problem was slavish Hindus who unquestioningly followed their Brahmin priests. Thus, Indian society suffered from a “triumph of religion” comparable to that endured by Europeans under Roman Catholicism. By contrast, White maintained that Protestant Europeans since the Reformation generally did not have this problem as they were “unfettered by priestcraft.” Consequently, he insisted, they had a greater respect for public and private virtue as well as greater habits of honesty and manliness in all their public as well as private actions.<sup>24</sup>

### **Tentative Steps toward Indianization during the 1810s and Early 1820s: Doubts about Cornwallis’s Administrative System**

While various colonial officials during the early decades of the nineteenth century

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<sup>23</sup> Tytler, *Considerations on the Present Political State of India*, 264.

<sup>24</sup> White, *Considerations on the State of British India*, 69, 70. Lata Mani has argued that British discourses about *sati* during the early nineteenth century were often inflected by a similar comparison between Roman Catholic priests and Hindu Brahmins. See Mani, *Contentious Traditions*, chap. 1.

argued that Indians were generally dishonest and corrupt, and hence not trustworthy enough to hold positions of executive authority, others began during the 1810s and early 1820s to openly express concerns about whether many of Cornwallis's reforms could work. Various critics started to argue that these reforms had not the effect of insulating British colonial administration from the effects of Indian dishonesty but rather, paradoxically enough, of fostering it.

Even officials who advanced various arguments cited in the previous section regarding the proneness of Indians toward dishonesty and corruption expressed doubts about many of Cornwallis's reforms. For example, although James Mill blamed Hinduism for causing Indian clerks to be generally dishonest, he also condemned the judicial system which Cornwallis introduced. As a Utilitarian reformer, Mill certainly had no problem with remaking Indian society in a Western image. Rather, for Mill, the chief problem of Cornwallis's various judicial reforms were that they were too convoluted to be of any practical use to India. The introduction of British judicial forms such as having a single British judge decide cases as well as British rules regarding the use of evidence, Mill argued, did not improve justice but only caused further "destructive anarchy" in Bengal.<sup>25</sup> Rather, Mill insisted that systematic reform of Hindu and Muslim laws was also needed. Mill also criticized Cornwallis's system for being too labyrinthine, perversely insuring "that universal encouragement is given to one man to withhold from another what is his due, by the certainty of delay." By contrast, Mill opined, had

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<sup>25</sup> Until the introduction of uniform Indian Penal and Civil Codes in the 1860s, British courts administered two separate legal systems for civil cases, using "Hindu" law for Hindus and "Islamic" law for Muslims, as well as British laws in some cases. Following Mughal precedent, Islamic criminal laws were generally used in criminal cases for both Hindus and Muslims. Bernard S. Cohn, *Colonialism and its Forms of Knowledge: The British in India* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996), chap. 3 *passim*; and Stokes, *English Utilitarians and India*, pp. 223-33 *passim*.



Cornwallis introduced a much simpler system in 1793, the British would already be seeing a noticeable decline in “the vices, intellectual or moral, of the people.”<sup>26</sup>

Giving Mill’s concerns about Cornwallis’s administrative reforms greater force, though, was the fact that extensive Indian agency was becoming an everyday reality of the administration of local Indian districts by the 1820s.<sup>27</sup> In spite of the governor-general’s formal ban in 1793 on Indians holding positions of executive authority, much informal power in succeeding decades was delegated by overworked British officials to their Indian subordinates. Even so, many British officials during this period were still quite uneasy about the degree of informal power and influence that was starting to be given by default to reputedly corrupt Indian officials. For example, Tytler argued in 1813 that because there were so many backlogs in Bengal courts, “notoriously” corrupt Indian court officials (*amlas*) had much power. Tytler contended that a major consequence of this informal ceding of power to Indian clerks was that “the European character suffers in the eyes of the natives.” This was so, the Bengal judge maintained, largely because of the “suspicion which it is in the interest of the *Aumilah* to create, viz. of our partaking of their gains.” If the particular local British district official was lazy or incompetent as well, things were made even worse. In such cases, Tytler urged, the British official’s “extreme supineness and apathy” inevitably served to “prevent our taking any measures for the suppression of an evil so destructive of all justice.”<sup>28</sup>

Similar concerns were expressed by other government officials during this period

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<sup>26</sup> Mill, *HBI*, 5: 432.

<sup>27</sup> This made much practical sense, given the considerably greater numbers of Indian clerks to British officials in the colonial bureaucracy. As Robert Frykenberg has estimated, there were between 175 and 200 Indian uncovenanted servants on average to every British covenanted servant during the first half of the nineteenth century. In the so-called settled districts in Lower Bengal and the parts of the Madras presidency where Cornwallis’s Permanent Settlement or variants of it were in operation, the disparity was even greater. Frykenberg, *Guntur District*, 7.

<sup>28</sup> Tytler, *Considerations on the Present Political State of India*, 1: 266. Emphasis in original.

as well, particularly as several corruption cases involving Indian officials came to light during the 1810s. For instance, Madras district judge Alexander Wilson uncovered extensive corruption in his court committed by several Indian officials in 1813. These officials, by “intimidating and threatening the people,” had managed to extort several thousands of Stars Pagoda (the regional currency) in the form of bribes from both plaintiffs as well as defendants for a series of preceding years. Both Wilson and his successor as district judge, T.H. Baber, argued that this sustained corruption had deleterious consequences for British rule in the district. As Baber wrote in his final report two years later in 1815, “much [of] the weight and authority of the Court must have been lowered in the eyes of the people” because an entire “System of Rapine & extortion” occurred “throughout” the district for several years. Because of extensive corruption by subordinate Indian officials, the level of trust placed in British judicial officials and institutions by ordinary Indians was thought to have suffered.<sup>29</sup>

Likewise, in his investigative report about the conditions of the civil courts in the Bengal province of Cuttack, written three years later in 1818, Bengal judge Walter Ewer warned of the pervasive influence which Indian *amlas* had. He insisted that because “the people [were] fully convinced, that the Amlah was under the protection of the Court and could not be convicted and punished,” there was a persistent belief among Indian laymen in the district that the *amlas* “possessed general influence over the proceedings of the Judicial Officers.” Such a belief, Ewer warned, had the pernicious result of “totally destroying... that confidence in the Justice of our Laws, and the impartiality of our Courts.” He claimed Indians had possessed this “confidence” in British rule in previous

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<sup>29</sup> Wilson to Madras Judicial Secretary David Hill, 9 May 1813, cited in Madras Judicial Consultations, 21 May 1813, BL/APAC/IOR/F/4/538/12922; Baber to Hill, 31 January 1815, cited in Madras Judicial Consultations, 21 February 1815, BL/APAC/IOR/F/4/538/12923.

decades. Ewer cautioned that it was “almost impossible” for British judges, “however vigilant, to detect all the tricks” of corrupt Indian officials. However, greater vigilance by British officials as well as greater interaction with Indians in their districts would go a long way in preventing most abuses from occurring, thereby restoring trust in British colonial institutions as well as in British rule more generally.<sup>30</sup>

### **The Indianization Debate of the 1820s and Early 1830s**

These various anxieties regarding the presumed harmful impact which the corrupt activities of Indian uncovenanted servants could have on the reputations of British officials as well as upon the colonial regime were not new. Rather, they were strikingly similar to ones expressed by Burke and Cornwallis, among others, a generation earlier. However, two crucial changes had occurred between the 1790s and the early 1820s. First, many of Cornwallis’s 1793 reforms failed to create anything close to an adequate government for India. Secondly, and even more importantly, there was a growing willingness by London officials by the mid-1810s—both within the Company as well as the Board of Control—to consider implementing changes to Cornwallis’s administrative framework.

The most prominent example of this was Sir Thomas Munro’s ability to convince Company officials in London as well as in India by 1813 to overturn Cornwallis’s Permanent Settlement in Madras. Given the direct mandate in 1814 to devise an alternative taxation system which would be fairer to south Indian peasants, Munro implemented the *ryotwari* settlement while governor of Madras between 1819 and 1827.

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<sup>30</sup> Ewer to Bayley, 7 February 1818, cited in Bengal Judicial Consultations, 3 March 1818, BL/APAC/IOR/F/4/584/14182(2); Ewer to Bayley, 27 February 1818, cited in Bengal Judicial Consultations, 28 April 1818, BL/APAC/IOR/F/4/584/14182(1).

This different mode of land taxation (or variants of it), whereby Indian peasants were taxed directly by the Company and its agents as opposed to indirectly through Indian landowners (*zamindars*) as under Cornwallis's Permanent Settlement, was adopted in Bombay as well as the Upper Provinces of Bengal in succeeding decades. Thus, by the 1840s, Cornwallis's Permanent Settlement was only operational in the Lower Provinces of Bengal and in six northern districts of the Madras Presidency where it had been implemented by Governor-General Lord Richard Wellesley in 1800.<sup>31</sup>

In addition to advocating the partial or total overturning of Cornwallis's Permanent Settlement, Munro and other colonial officials also began to argue against the governor-general's racial ban on Indians serving in higher positions within the colonial administration during the 1820s and early 1830s. In doing so, they challenged many of the arguments buttressing this policy which presupposed dishonest and corrupt tendencies by Indian uncovenanted servants. These traits, Munro and others insisted, had ultimately very little to do with suffering from centuries of supposed Muslim oppression or even from a thralldom to the "acute, subtle and penetrating" minds of Brahmins. Rather, the chief causes of corruption among Indian officials, various Indianizers argued, were ones far more mundane: chiefly, they were neither paid nor trusted enough. That being said, Munro and other colonial officials supported granting wider responsibilities of governance to Indian subordinates and paying them more mainly for conservative reasons. Although improving the morality of Indian subordinates was also important, for the most part Indianization was actuated by the goal of stabilizing British rule over India.

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<sup>31</sup> Beaglehole, *Thomas Munro and the Development of Administrative Policy*, chap. 4; and, Stein, *Thomas Munro*, chap. 4. One such district of the Madras Presidency where Cornwallis's Permanent Settlement was implemented in 1800 by Wellesley, Guntur, has been studied by Robert Frykenberg. See Frykenberg, *Guntur District*.

### *Proponents of Indianization*

Several government officials argued during the 1820s and 1830s that the low pay of Indian uncovenanted servants was a major cause of their supposed predilection to be dishonest. For instance, Munro argued in an 1824 minute to other members of the Madras government that the only true way to foster honesty among Indian officials was to “treat [them] with courtesy” as well as “place confidence in them.” Ultimately, this required that the Company “render their official situations respectable, and raise them in some degree beyond temptation, by making their official allowances adequate to the support of their station in society.” The Madras governor was careful to acknowledge that “instances of corruption among Europeans” still occurred “notwithstanding their liberal allowances.” Nevertheless, he argued that only paying Indian officials salaries even remotely commensurate with their official duties would increase the possibility that they would be honest. Likewise, Mr. Ross, a member of the Bengal government, insisted in an 1829 minute that so long as Indian clerks continued to be paid desultory salaries, they would continue to be dishonest. The Bengal official argued that only “liberal pay would procure” Indians of “respectable character” for the colonial administration.<sup>32</sup>

Various colonial officials put forth similar arguments during the early 1830s. For example, Lord Ellenborough, then-President of the Board of Control and later governor-general of India during the early 1840s, insisted in 1830 that it was only right that Indian uncovenanted servants “should act ostensibly, with the honour, the responsibility, and the emoluments of office” considering they already did so much of the work of actually governing India. Only then could British officials expect to be able to “govern [India]

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<sup>32</sup> Munro, “Minute,” *Life of Major-General Sir Thomas Munro*, 3: 359, 360; Minute by Ross, 20 November 1829, cited in Bengal Judicial Consultations, 8 January 1830, BL/APAC/IOF/4/1366/54353.

well.” Likewise, Holt Mackenzie, a member of the Bengal government during the 1820s and 1830s, testified a year later before Parliament that it was “essential that the natives should be trusted more and paid better” by the Company. Only then, he insisted, would the British actually encourage their subordinate Indian underlings in the bureaucracy to become more honest.<sup>33</sup>

Likewise, Sir John Malcolm argued in *The Government of India* (1833) that Indian uncovenanted servants would only start to have “the character” which the British expected of bureaucrats once they were able to “obtain a respectable livelihood.” As a Tory paternalist, suspicious not just of missionaries but also of Utilitarian and liberal reformers, Malcolm believed that much of the work of encouraging Indians to be more honest “must be wrought by the society itself.” The British could certainly help, but only through “raising into consideration and distinction those of the native population whose services, superior talent and integrity, or weight and influence with their countrymen, make it wise and politic to elevate.” This, however, required paying them higher salaries commensurate with their status in society.<sup>34</sup>

A similar argument in favor of increasing the salaries of Indian clerks in the colonial bureaucracy was made four years later by Henry Harpur Spry, a surgeon in the Bengal Army. In the last chapter, I discussed Spry as following Burke in attacking the Company for governing India rapaciously, particularly vis-à-vis previous centuries of Muslim rulers who planted mango groves and spent large sums of money building Hindu temples and reservoirs which were “so much delighted in by all classes.” When it came to entrusting Indian subordinates within the colonial bureaucracy with greater

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<sup>33</sup> Both quoted from John Rosselli, *Lord William Bentinck: The Making of a Liberal Imperialist, 1774-1839* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1974), 202.

<sup>34</sup> Sir John Malcolm, *The Government of India* (London: John Murray, 1833), 95-6, 180-1.

responsibilities of governance, however, Spry disagreed with Burke. Spry recognized the validity of Burke's (and others') fears about trusting Indians who possessed "notorious habits of dishonesty and peculation." But he reminded his readers that "[t]he early history of our rule in India teems with European acts of corruption and malpractices" despite the "high moral superiority and intelligence" of Britons. It was only when Cornwallis and other Company officials "purchased integrity in [their] high public officers" by greatly increasing their official salaries that British covenanted servants became more honorable. To "procure" honorable and trustworthy Indian officials, Spry insisted that the Company had to "adopt the like policy." Only when "the same price be given" to "purchase" the honesty of Indian officials as was given for British covenanted servants in 1793, Spry maintained, would the British "as readily find [honesty] among the natives of the country as among the Europeans themselves."<sup>35</sup>

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Besides citing low pay, various proponents of Indianization during the 1820s and 1830s argued that Indian uncovenanted servants were generally dishonest and corrupt because they were not trusted enough with the various responsibilities of colonial administration. Munro conceded Cornwallis's point that the "preservation of our dominion" in India "requires that all the higher offices, civil and military, should be filled with Europeans." However, he also maintained that "all offices that can be left in the hands of natives without danger to our power, might with advantage be left to them." Indeed, Munro insisted that good government would only come about by extensively

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<sup>35</sup> Henry Harpur Spry, *Modern India; With Illustrations of the Resources and Capabilities of Hindustan* (London: Whittaker and Company, 1837, 2 vols.), 2: 9-10, 13-4.

relying upon Indian subordinates:

We are arrogant enough to suppose that we can with our limited numbers do the work of a nation. Had we ten times more we should only do it so much worse. We already occupy every office of importance. Were we to descend to those which are more humble, and now filled by natives, we should lower our character, and not perform the duties so well.

Ultimately, Munro maintained that the British would only be successful in providing India with good government as well as “improving the character” of Indians if they “open[ed] the road to wealth, and honour, and public employment.”<sup>36</sup>

To some degree, as Burton Stein has argued in his biography of Munro, the Madras governor employed cynical rationales in his 1824 minute advocating the wider employment of Indians. As a Tory paternalist deeply committed to the premise of the permanence or semi-permanence of British rule in India, Munro was mainly concerned above all else with preserving the image and reputations of British officials in India. He largely couched his support for expanding the scope of Indian bureaucratic employment accordingly. For example, in directly broaching the issue of “Indian corruption,” Munro asserted, rather cynically:

If we are to have corruption, it is better that it should be among the natives than among ourselves, because the natives will throw the blame of the evil upon their countrymen; they will still retain their high opinion of our superior integrity; and our character, which is one of the strongest supports of our power, will be maintained.

Thus, Munro insisted, the proper role of the British covenanted servant was not to try to do everything, as Cornwallis desired. Rather, Munro urged British officials to lead by example and thereby gradually inculcate greater honesty among their Indian underlings. This would require both widening the scope of Indian employment within the colonial bureaucracy as well as increasing their pay. British officials would also have to trust

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<sup>36</sup> Munro, “Minute,” *Life of Major-General Sir Thomas Munro*, 3: 358, 361.



subordinate Indian clerks far more than at present.<sup>37</sup>

Writing two years later, Malcolm provided more extensive arguments for widening the scope of Indian employment within the colonial bureaucracy. Like Munro, Malcolm was a Tory paternalist concerned above all else with permanently or semi-permanently securing British rule in India. Thus, he argued in 1826 that the British were “compelled by policy to limit [the] ambition [of Indians], both in the civil administration and in the army.” However, Malcolm also maintained that Indians should be employed “in every manner that is unattended with danger” to the stability of British rule in India. Moreover, he was sharply critical of Cornwallis, arguing that the governor-general’s 1793 ban on Indians holding positions of executive authority was ultimately detrimental to British authority in India because it uniformly “exclud[ed] the higher classes of our native subjects from any participation in the government of their own country.” The continued degradation of these “higher classes,” Malcolm warned, would “either rouse them to efforts against our authority, or sink them into a state of abject submission, and leaving them with few objects in life beyond indolence and sensual indulgence.” Neither of these outcomes, Malcolm warned, would benefit British rule over India.<sup>38</sup>

Moving beyond his concerns for the stability of British rule in India, though, Malcolm also argued that “raising a superior class of natives, from whose rank and responsibility we may look for aid in the internal rule” of India would best inculcate honesty among Indian uncovenanted servants. In an 1830 minute, the Bombay governor asserted that the “vanity and love of distinction” of Indians was “excessive.”

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<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, 359. For more on this aspect of Munro’s argument in his 1824 minute, which Burton Stein has termed “pragmatic, or even cunning,” see Stein, *Thomas Munro*, 290.

<sup>38</sup> Malcolm, *The Political History of India, From 1784 to 1823*, ed. K.N. Panikhar (1826; New Delhi: Associated Publishing House, 1970 reprint ed., 2 vols.), 2: 78.

Consequently, he insisted that “a politic gratification of such feelings” by British officials “may be made a powerful means of creating and preserving a native aristocracy, worthy of the name.” This, Malcolm maintained, would “excit[e]” Indian functionaries toward more “honourable actions.” Such encouragement, the Bombay governor believed, could only “tend to elevate them in society, to give them estimation in their own minds” as well as “supply those motives, which as far as our system of administration is concerned” are needed “to render them virtuous and good men, as well as useful and attached Subjects.” Only by trusting Indian uncovenanted servants with greater responsibilities in the colonial administration, Malcolm insisted, would they be “prompted” to “practice virtue” in their public and private conduct. Malcolm contended that the British first needed to encourage this improved public morality among Indian clerks before any “real improvement... in the character and condition of the higher Classes of our Native subjects” would be achieved.<sup>39</sup>

Malcolm returned to many of these arguments in his *Government of India* (1833). There, he inverted various arguments advanced by many in earlier decades for excluding Indians from the higher echelons of the colonial administration. Malcolm stated that he could never personally “believe in such an unfavourable character of our native subjects.” Moreover, he dismissed whatever concerns his readers might have about employing reputedly dishonest Indians in more important administrative positions. He asked: what “better means of their improvement [can] be devised than the impression which must be made upon this community by granting our confidence, and by giving honourable employment to its more distinguished members?” Indeed, Malcolm insisted,

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<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, 2: 95; *idem.*, “Minute by the Honourable the Governor, 30 November, 1830,” reprinted as Appendix A in *Government of India*, 13; see also, BL/APAC/IOR/F/4/1409/55623.

prophetically as it turned out with regard to the Sepoy Rebellion in 1857 and the nearly universal loyalty of Indian colonial bureaucrats to Company rule during that conflagration, it was only by employing more Indian bureaucrats in more responsible positions that the British would enjoy a “safety-valve” of Indian esteem for British rule, particularly from Indian elites. Without this rapport with the upper orders of Indian society, Malcolm feared that the British could not “hope to preserve for any long period” their control over India.<sup>40</sup>

Malcolm also argued that increasing the scope of Indian participation in the civil administration of India would be beneficial to Indian society as a whole because it would serve to increase Indian honesty. He argued that “there can be no doubt that the admixture of natives in the administration of our laws would lead to their being better understood and appreciated.” Greater Indian participation in their own government would also, in Malcolm’s view, “creat[e] an interest in our judicial proceedings that does not now exist.” Providing the specific example of perjury in the courts, Malcolm argued that with Indian judges trying many of the cases,

...witnesses would not only fear detection in falsehood from the more minute examination of their countrymen, but they would give their testimony under very different feelings when before men upon whose estimation their future happiness and credit in life depended, than when questioned by a foreign judge whom they never saw before, and who, during their lives, it was not probable they should ever see again.

Malcolm insisted that over time, such an active involvement in the administration of India by Indian officials must “have an influence on the character of the population,” one which he imagined would largely be beneficial.<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, *Government of India*, 56, 57-8.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, 55-6.

### *Opponents of Indianization*

As I have just shown, several prominent colonial officials argued during the 1820s and 1830s on behalf of paying Indian uncovenanted servants higher salaries as well as increasing their scope of employment within the colonial bureaucracy. Others, though, were considerably less sanguine about whether these proposed changes would actually result in Indian officials becoming more honest. However, unlike proponents of Indianization who argued that Cornwallis's own policies were largely to blame for whatever Indian dishonesty and corruption there might be and thus suggested the remedy of partial Indianization, opponents of Indianization failed to offer any meaningful solution to the problems of governance posed by the failures of Cornwallis's system other than more of the same. This would prove to be a fatal weakness in their arguments against entrusting Indian subordinates with greater responsibilities of governance.

Playing a key role in arguing against proposals to Indianize the colonial bureaucracy, interestingly enough, were British indigo planters who feared they had much to lose in any significant devolution of judicial responsibilities to Indian court officials. As "private" Britons not employed by the Company, planters feared that if their cases against itinerant Bengali laborers were tried by Indians instead of Britons, they would be denied all justice. Thus, planter William Huggins warned in 1824 that "perjury is made use of, bribery is made use of, and forgery is made use of... without shame or remorse by Indian court officials." Delegating greater control in Indian courts to these officials, he insisted, would result in the denial of all justice. This was because they would be motivated either by avarice or by affinity toward other Indians when deciding

their cases instead of by a true regard for honor and integrity.<sup>42</sup>

Many of these arguments were also articulated by various other British indigo planters in north India who wrote letters to Company officials in London sharply critical of the idea of Indianization. These letters were compiled in 1831 by planter John Crawford. In several of these letters there are references to the widespread “corruption and venality of the native officers” who sway particular court cases solely based on who provided the largest bribe. Among other faults with the Company’s rule, indigo planters complained that subordinate Indian court officials were so rapacious that several had “the cravings... [of] vultures.”<sup>43</sup> Consequently, the authors of these letters insisted they could not be safely trusted without close supervision by British officials. Indeed, if anything, the problem was that Indian clerks were already trusted too much. Crawford and other planters insisted this was largely the case because there were not nearly enough British covenanted servants to properly supervise the activities of their Indian underlings, let alone actually manage the numerous duties imposed upon them.<sup>44</sup>

Huggins and Crawford, among other indigo planters, conceded that Cornwallis’s judicial system was woefully inefficient. However, they contended the solution to the problem was not to delegate greater responsibilities to overly venal and corrupt subordinates. Doing so, they argued, would be entirely hopeless, particularly if the goal were to make these subordinates more honest by trusting them with the day-to-day governance of India. Rather, fully buying into discourses about universal Indian venality

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<sup>42</sup> William Huggins, *Sketches in India, Treating on Subjects Connected with the Government; Civil and Military Establishments; Characters of the European, and Customs of the Native Inhabitants* (London: John Letts, 1824), 34.

<sup>43</sup> Interestingly, this is rather analogous to Burke’s imagery of “birds of prey” in his famous December 1783 speech in support of Fox’s India Bill.

<sup>44</sup> John Crawford, ed., *Letters from British Settlers in the Interior of India, Descriptive of Their Own Condition, and that of the Native Inhabitants under the Government of the East India Company* (London: James Ridgway, 1831), 69, 91.

and corruption, various planters suggested that private Britons in the various districts (such as themselves) be employed as assistants to British judges instead.<sup>45</sup>

Of course, this was self-serving, particularly given the lesser social status which many planters and other non-Company-employed Britons in India held. At the same time, planters such as Crawford were buying into the same discourses about Indian corruption which had led to Cornwallis banning Indians from the higher echelons of the colonial bureaucracy in 1793. In focusing so much on the venality and corruption of Indian clerks, Bengal planters completely glossed over the fact that Cornwallis's judicial reforms were largely responsible for the problems of governance which were the targets of their bitter criticism.

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Indigo planters were one major constituency opposed to Indianization of the colonial bureaucracy. However, there were other more influential critics of the idea. For example, following from his overly negative views of Hinduism put forth in *History of British India*—discussed in the first chapter—James Mill testified before parliament in 1831 that it would be the “most dangerous *Hindophilism*” to attempt “to make individuals chosen from among the most proverbially unprincipled race in the world honest by a government order.” Breaking with other Utilitarians such as Holt Mackenzie who supported expanding Indian agency in the colonial administration of India, Mill asserted that Indians could not safely be trusted with anything close to self-government. Instead of attempting to increase the scope of Indian employment within the bureaucracy, which Mill argued would prove to be futile, Mill argued that all that was needed to rule India

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<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*

well was a benevolent British despotism. In Mill's view, such a government would protect Indians and particularly "the effects of [their] own industry" which would "never fail" in stimulating so-called backward peoples such as the Indians, particularly "when the protection is good."<sup>46</sup>

Various colonial officials in India made similar arguments. Thus, Mr. Romer, a member of the Bengal government, warned fellow members of the government in 1831 that Indian uncovenanted servants had a "proneness to corruption" as well as an "utter ignorance of what we understand by good principles." He also worried that the "lamentable want of integrity" among Indian clerks would make devolving greater responsibilities upon them a dangerous proposition. Indeed, such was the level of mistrust among British colonial officials of subordinate Indian clerks that both the Bengal and the Madras governments enacted various regulations between 1829 and 1833 banning certain corrupt practices by Indian uncovenanted servants. These various practices included the forgery of documents, the "unlawful and malicious obliteration or destruction" of judicial documents by Indian court officials, and finally, Indian revenue officials being allowed to purchase lands sold at public foreclosure auctions for landowners who failed to punctually pay their land taxes. Regarding the latter activity, officials worried about Indian revenue officials taking advantage of the system by "converting" the land revenues "into a Source of fraudulent traffic."<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>46</sup> Evidence of James Mill, 4 August 1831, PP, 1831-2, cited from Stokes, *English Utilitarians*, 64. Emphasis in original.

<sup>47</sup> Romer Minute, enclosed in Judicial Letter from Bengal to Court of Directors, 2 June 1831, BL/APAC/IOR/F/4/1339/53201; Judicial Letter from Madras to Court of Directors, 26 July 1830, BL/APAC/IOR/F/4/1262/50820; Acting Madras Government Secretary T.R. Wheatley, Esq. to Judges of Madras Sadr Adalat, 30 December 1831, cited in Madras Revenue Consultations, 30 December 1831, BL/APAC/IOR/F/4/1485/58566; Judicial Letter from Court of Directors to Bengal, 4 December 1833; Legislative Letter from India [Bengal] to Court of Directors, 24 August 1835, both documents, BL/APAC/IOR/F/4/1746/71062.

In addition to following Burke in attacking the supposedly universal dishonesty and corruption of Indian uncovenanted servants, several opponents of Indianization followed Grant in continuing to argue that Indians should not be trusted with wider government responsibilities because of their supposed religious immorality. Thus, Mr. Rattray, a member of the Bombay government during the late 1820s and early 1830s, warned about the supposedly pernicious influence of Brahmins two years earlier in a December 1828 minute. Rattray opposed Malcolm's (then-governor of Bombay) proposed introduction of Indian juries in Bombay civil and criminal cases, arguing that it would be entirely unworkable given the widespread dishonesty and corruption of Indians. This tendency among Indians toward dishonest and corrupt behavior, Rattray believed, was caused mainly by the perverse examples which Brahmins presented in their moral conduct to other Indians. Asserting that there was "no Country on earth, in which the sanctity of an oath is less respected... particularly by the Brahmens," Rattray wrote of Brahmins who shamelessly "encouraged falsehood and even perjury." For Rattray, what was even worse, though, was Brahmins engaging in Jesuit-like casuistry by viewing deliberate falsehood as being a "vice no doubt, when used for ordinary purposes, but as virtue in the highest degree when employed for the advantage of the Caste." For the Bombay official, the typical Brahmin priest was an "ant's nest of lies and impostures," who encouraged, through his immoral conduct, the commission of various "acts of collusion" by Indian clerks. Rattray focused particularly on the "secret presents" which he believed Indian clerks routinely received, warning that these gifts often "dictated" the decisions of British judges.<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>48</sup> Rattray Minute, 20 December 1828, cited in Bombay Judicial Consultations, 8 January 1830, BL/APAC/IOR/F/4/1366/54353.



For these various reasons, several government officials questioned the wisdom of entrusting greater government responsibilities to Indian subordinates. They also challenged the idea that paying Indian clerks more money would necessarily result in them becoming more honest. However, these various arguments against greater Indianization of the Company's bureaucracy had a fatal weakness. Rather than considering the possibility that Cornwallis's own policies might be to blame, opponents of Indianization were trapped in a circular argument which misperceived the corruption and woeful inefficiency of Bengal's colonial government as proof of universal Indian dishonesty. Consequently, when the emerging consensus in favor of reform finally met a reforming governor-general in the late 1820s in the person of Lord William Bentinck, opponents of Indianization found themselves fighting a mostly futile battle to preserve a racial ban which many now considered to be a complete failure.

#### *Partial Indianization under Bentinck*

The momentum for reform finally prevailed during the early 1830s under Lord William Bentinck's leadership. By this point the governor-general's position on this issue had radically changed. A quarter-century earlier, while governor of Madras, Bentinck was hostile to the idea of entrusting greater responsibilities of governance to Indian subordinates. He argued that it was hard enough to promote "honesty and integrity" among British covenanted servants without also trying to attempt what he deemed the even more Herculean task of reforming Indian clerks among whom "universal corruption prevails." By the time Bentinck assumed the reins of the Bengal government in 1828, however, he viewed things differently. In a December 1828 minute,

Bentinck favorably compared the qualifications of Indian clerks with their British superiors, stating that while “with the natives, office follows qualification, in England... the writer precedes it.” Not only did the governor-general now come to believe that Indians were far more capable of performing many of the duties of civil administration than the greenest British covenanted servant sent out to India, but four years later in a December 1832 letter to Charles Grant, son of the Evangelical and then the Whig President of the Board of Control, he thought it a “monstrous absurdity” to “commit the government of sixty millions of people to less than 400 strangers.” This “monstrous absurdity” was only topped, in Bentinck’s view, by “the still more monstrous rapacity of seizing for the benefit of this incapable few all the honours and emoluments of the administration, to the exclusion of the native and natural agency of the country.”<sup>49</sup>

By the early 1830s, therefore, Bentinck had become a complete convert to the cause of Indianization, both on practical as well as ideological and moral grounds. This was important, because as various historians of Company India have noted, despite periodic efforts at reform, the general tendency throughout the century-long period when the Company governed India (as well as for the later Raj) was more one of “expediency and inertia.”<sup>50</sup> Having an active, reforming governor-general who fully supported the idea of entrusting greater responsibilities of governance to subordinate Indian clerks thus augured well for the success of these efforts.

Bentinck was also motivated to partially Indianize the colonial bureaucracy by economic reasons. By the late 1820s, both the Company’s expenditures as well as its debt were spiraling out of control. Nicknamed “the Clipping Dutchman” by critics in the

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<sup>49</sup> Quoted from Rosselli, *Lord William Bentinck*, 203, 204.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, 202; also see Stokes, *English Utilitarians*, particularly pp. 234-43, who argues that the ambitious program of the Utilitarians mostly floundered during the late 1830s for similar reasons.

military and the covenanted service who resented his economizing drives, Bentinck was sent out to India in the late 1820s by Company officials in London who were anxious to rein in the costs of government.<sup>51</sup> Most of these added expenditures were military-related, since his two immediate predecessors as governor-general (the Marquess of Hastings and Lord Amherst) had launched three major wars in a fifteen-year period.<sup>52</sup> Bentinck's cost-saving attention, therefore, was primarily focused on the military. Among other economizing measures, Bentinck eliminated special regimental pay for officers (known as *batta*) as well as sharply reduced the troop strength of the Company's three armies.<sup>53</sup>

Bentinck also looked for considerable savings in the civil administration of India. Thus, in November 1828, soon after assuming the duties of governor-general, Bentinck appointed a civil finance committee to examine possible savings to be gained from reforming the civil service. The committee concluded fairly early on that only by significantly increasing the formal responsibilities of Indian uncovenanted servants would the costs of government administration be reduced (as Indian officials were paid considerably less than British ones). Even so, it took almost three years before Bentinck could achieve consensus on how much government responsibilities were to be entrusted to Indian subordinates. In the end, the various reforms promulgated in November 1831 by the Bengal government were less than Bentinck had hoped for. For example,

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<sup>51</sup> This nickname was a derisive attack on Bentinck's Dutch origins. William's great-great grandfather, Hans Bentinck, arrived in Britain as part of William of Orange's conquest in 1688. Bentinck was firmly a member of the British aristocracy as the second son of the third Duke of Portland, as well as through his mother, related to the Dukes of Devonshire. Nevertheless, his family's title was only created in 1716. Rosselli, *Lord William Bentinck*, 20, 24.

<sup>52</sup> These three wars were, respectively, the Anglo-Nepal War of 1814-6, the Third Anglo-Maratha War of 1817-8, and the First Anglo-Burmese War of 1824-6. Douglas Peers has estimated that the Company's military expenditures increased 69% between 1813 and 1826. Douglas M. Peers, "Between Mars and Mammon: The East India Company and Efforts to Reform its Army, 1796-1832," *Historical Journal* 33 (1990): 396.

<sup>53</sup> Peers, *Between Mars and Mammon: Colonial Armies and the Garrison State in Early Nineteenth-Century India* (London and New York: I.B. Tauris Publishers, 1995), chap. 8.

Bentinck wanted to completely turn over cognizance of civil suits to Indian judges, leaving only criminal matters in the purview of British judges (with revenue suits now being handled entirely by revenue collectors). However, fellow members of the Bengal government overruled him. They opted instead to increase the monetary limit of trials over which Indian judges were allowed to preside from Rs. 150 to Rs. 5,000. This was a considerable reform, but much less than Bentinck had proposed. Similarly, Bentinck had proposed increasing the maximum salaries of Indian uncovenanted servants ten-fold, from a maximum salary previously of Rs. 100 per month to one of Rs. 1,000 per month, while his colleagues in the Bengal government bargained this down to Rs. 400 per month.<sup>54</sup> This latter action caused Bentinck to gripe in a letter to Grant in 1832 that the new top salary which an Indian official was entitled to was no more than what “your wretched incapable [British] writer” receives as his initial salary.<sup>55</sup>

### **The Emergence of British Paternalist Attitudes toward Indian Clerks after 1830**

John Rosselli has characterized Bentinck’s partial Indianization of the colonial bureaucracy in 1831 as a “half-way” reform, midway between the one extreme of Cornwallis’s 1793 racial ban on Indians holding executive positions in the colonial bureaucracy and the other of even further Indianization of the colonial administration during the first two decades of the twentieth century.<sup>56</sup> This is an apt description of what

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<sup>54</sup> Misra, *Central Administration*, 283. Using a rough conversion ratio of eight rupees to the pound, which generally obtained during the first half of the nineteenth century, the increase in the monetary cap on Indian civil suits over which Indian judges were allowed to preside is equivalent to an increase from about £19 to £625. Similarly, the top salary of Indian clerks increased from the equivalent of about £13 per month to £50 per month. For the conversion ratio of approximately eight rupees to the pound, see Nicholas B. Dirks, *The Scandal of Empire: India and the Creation of Imperial Britain* (Cambridge, MA and London: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2006), 233.

<sup>55</sup> Quoted from Rosselli, *Lord William Bentinck*, 204.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, 269.

Bentinck accomplished. Even so, one should not overlook the broader significance of Bentinck's reforms during the 1830s, for ultimately they demonstrated the limited relevance of late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century discourses about supposedly universal Indian dishonesty and corruption. As many of Cornwallis's other administrative reforms generally became seen by the 1820s as failing to provide anything close to an adequate, but also cheap government for India, several began to question the basic premises buttressing these policies. This questioning culminated in Bentinck's partial Indianization of the colonial bureaucracy in 1831. By 1831, Bentinck and other government officials had recognized that substantial Indian involvement in the governing of India was essential if India were to be governed most efficiently and at the least cost to the Company.

To be sure, there were several colonial officers and authors who continued to argue, as before, that Indian clerks were universally dishonest and corrupt and, hence, completely untrustworthy. Madras revenue official Walter Elliot insisted in 1846 that there were "strong feelings inherent in the Native mind [toward]... secrecy." He further maintained that "the observance of good faith in transactions destitute of every principle of truth and honesty is a point of honor in Native society." Likewise, liberal Indian reformer John Chapman characterized the "native agency in Government" in 1853 as being wholly "untrustworthy." He warned that continuing to allow Indian officials to hold positions of responsibility and authority within the colonial bureaucracy would ultimately lead "to the enervation of... Government" itself. Chapman worried that this would, in turn, result in Britain's government of India becoming the most "profitable refuge for the worst" of Indian scoundrels and rogues. Under such a situation, Chapman

feared that the colonial state would be unable to do anything “in its own interest, either by force or by manly representation [for] ...its whole resort must be to corruption.”<sup>57</sup>

Increasingly, though, the main issue in the latter decades of the Company period was not whether or not Indians ought to be trusted with greater responsibilities of colonial governance. This issue had been decisively settled by the Bengal presidential government under Bentinck in November of 1831 and reaffirmed by Parliament in its renewal of the Company’s charter two years later with Thomas Babington Macaulay’s Clause 87, which formally overturned Cornwallis’s racial ban on Indian employment within executive positions in the colonial bureaucracy. Rather, the reigning colonial imperative from the mid-1820s onward was to govern India as cheaply and as efficiently as possible. Having defeated the last major Indian threat to their power in the form of the Marathas in 1818, the Company now sought to establish a government which could both govern India as cheaply as possible as well as would be efficient enough to maximize the tax revenues to be extracted from Indian peasants. To be sure, as Douglas Peers has demonstrated when it came to the general inability of colonial officials such as Bentinck to rein in military spending on any long-term basis, these were goals that were not generally realized in the last four decades of the Company’s existence. Nevertheless, they still were the main goals now of British colonialism.<sup>58</sup>

This meant that Indian subordinates would have to be trusted with many of the responsibilities of colonial governance. Consequently, the post-1831 debate about Indianization largely revolved around the question of what ought to be the limits of the

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<sup>57</sup> Madras Board of Revenue Member Walter Elliot to Chief Madras Government Secretary J.T. Thomas, 14 April 1846, cited in Madras Revenue Consultations, 7 December 1847, BL/APAC/IOR/F/4/2272/116221; John Chapman, “Principles of Indian Reform: Being Brief Hints” (London: John Chapman, 1853), 30.

<sup>58</sup> Peers, *Between Mars and Mammon*, *passim*.

policy. Related to this question were concerns about how best to ensure that Indian clerks remained subordinated to British covenanted servants, resulting in a subtle, though important shift in British attitudes about Indian colonial bureaucrats after the 1820s. Instead of focusing on the supposedly general venality and corruption of Indians as primary reasons for excluding them from positions of authority and responsibility in the colonial government, British colonial officials in the second quarter of the nineteenth century more commonly argued that Indians were “moral children” who could only be taught how to govern themselves under British tutelage. Partial Indianization along the lines set forth by Bentinck in 1831, these officials now argued, was to be the main means by which this was to be accomplished.

Much of this new paternalist focus involved English-educated Bengalis who began to staff the colonial bureaucracy in large numbers by the 1830s. Despite the generally favorable attitudes toward Indian clerks of many Indianizers—at least compared with the rhetoric of anti-Indianizers—several of the most negative descriptions of Bengali civil servants as being “moral children” came from the Indianizers themselves. For example, although Henry Harpur Spry supported Indianization as a policy which would train Indians to become more honest, he insisted that this training would have to be long-term in the case of Bengalis, being that they were “a degenerate class of people” who were “notorious for low cunning and deceit, and for the readiness with which they will enter into schemes of fraud and treachery.” In the meantime, Spry argued that Bengalis were incapable of governing other Indians, particularly the “martial races” of northern and central India, being “a race distinct in many respects from [these other] people.” In this way he anticipated Raj-era attacks against inept and contemptible

Bengali district commissioners by Rudyard Kipling and others.<sup>59</sup>

Similar attitudes were expressed also by various witnesses who gave testimony before Parliament in 1853. For example, Bengal official Frederick James Halliday supported paying Indian judges higher salaries to encourage their honesty, insisting that the only way to ensure that Indian courtrooms would not be corrupt was by “pay[ing] the lower classes of judges better, so that they might be more trusted.” Nevertheless, he warned that Bengalis needed considerably more moral training before they could be entirely trustworthy. In the meantime, even the “intelligent natives of Bengal” preferred to be “governed by Englishmen” than put under the control of their corrupt countrymen. Likewise, missionary Alexander Duff asserted that few Bengali judges or other officials “appear to me to have improved” much “in their moral character” since partial Indianization took effect. Still, Duff conceded it was early in their moral training, and, in the meantime, argued that there were concrete advantages to be gained from allowing Indians to become judges and revenue officials: for one thing, Duff insisted that Indian judges were better than British ones at detecting various “evils” such as the forgery of documents and perjury by witnesses.<sup>60</sup>

Finally, in this period, Britons in India also began to belittle Bengalis for being “effeminate” in ways which prefigured more prevalent discourses about Bengali effeminacy during the Raj period charted by Mrinalini Sinha.<sup>61</sup> Thomas Babington

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<sup>59</sup> Spry, *Modern India*, 1: 3; Rudyard Kipling, “The Head of the District,” *Life’s Handicap: Being Stories of Mine Own People* (London and New York: Macmillan, 1891), 184-211.

<sup>60</sup> Evidence of Frederick James Halliday, 10 March 1853, PP, 1852-3, *First Report from the Select Committee on Indian Territories; Together with the Minutes of Evidence*, XXVII (426), p. 107, q. 1624; *idem.*, 18 March 1853, 162, q. 2067; Evidence of Rev. Alexander Duff, 19 April 1853, PP, 1852-3, *First Report from the Select Committee of House of Lords of Act for better Government of H.M. Indian Territories*, XXXI (627), p. 459, q. 4161; p. 473, q. 4225; p. 478, q. 4253.

<sup>61</sup> Mrinalini Sinha, *Colonial Masculinity: The “Manly Englishman” and the “Effeminate Bengali” in the Late Nineteenth Century* (Manchester: Manchester University Press; New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1995).



Macaulay argued in his famous *Minute on English Education* (1835) that English-educated Bengalis were useful to the colonial state, being “a class who may be interpreters between us and the millions whom we govern; a class of persons, Indian in blood and colour, but English in taste, in opinion, in morals, and in intellect.” However, five years later he asserted that Bengalis were among the more “effeminate” groups of Indian men. Not only were they “enervated by a soft climate and accustomed to peaceful avocations” but because of this, Macaulay warned that “whatever the Bengalee does he does languidly,” except for “the war of chicane[ry]” in which he was “singularly pertinacious.” Similar, if more implicit, attitudes were expressed by Macaulay’s brother-in-law Sir Charles Edward Trevelyan, who served as a deputy-secretary in the Bengal presidential government during the mid-1830s and who was later the co-author of the *Northcote-Trevelyan Report* (1854) on British civil service reform as well as a governor of Madras. In 1853, Trevelyan asserted before a parliamentary committee that India’s “men of the sword” would never “bear to be governed by the men of the book in Bengal.”<sup>62</sup>

**“If the Natives Were Competent, From Their Moral Qualities”: The 1853 Debate over Continued Indian Exclusion from the Covenanted Service**

*Be it enacted, that no native of the said territories, nor any natural-born subject of his Majesty resident therein, shall, by reason only of his religion, place of birth, descent, colour, or any of them, be disabled from holding any place, office or employment under the said Company.*<sup>63</sup>

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<sup>62</sup> Thomas Babington Macaulay, “Minute on Indian Education, 2 February 1835,” reprinted in *Macaulay: Prose and Poetry*, ed. G.M. Young (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1967), 729; *idem.*, “Lord Clive,” *Edinburgh Review* (January 1840), *Macaulay: Prose and Poetry*, 329; Evidence of Sir Charles Edward Trevelyan, 23 June 1853, PP, 1852-3, *Second Report from Select Committee of House of Lords on Operation of Act for better Government of H.M. Indian Territories*, XXXII (627-I), p. 173, q. 6722.

<sup>63</sup> 3 & 4 Will. 4, c. 85, s. 87.

In the last quarter-century of the Company's existence, as Bentinck and other colonial officials conceded the principle that Indians ought to play a major, though subordinate role in Indian colonial governance, policymakers were confronted with the question of what were the limits of Indianization. As I showed in the last section, one major way that British colonial officials tried to police the boundaries between British covenanted and Indian uncovenanted servants was by arguing that the latter were "moral children" who needed to be trained how properly to govern by morally superior British officials or, less so, that they were too "effeminate" to govern other Indian men, particularly the "men of the sword" of northern India. Nevertheless, the problem of maintaining a distinction between covenanted and uncovenanted servants remained, and, indeed, gained a greater urgency after 1831. Now that Indian judges handled nearly all civil cases and Indian revenue officials were largely responsible for the collection of revenue and the devising of revenue settlements, was there any meaningful difference left between covenanted and uncovenanted servants? Ought not Indians be allowed to join the covenanted service, particularly if they were qualified?

These questions featured prominently in debates over the renewal of the Company's charter in 1853. Twenty years earlier, Macaulay, then a Whig Member of Parliament and the Secretary of the Board of Control, had inserted Clause 87 into the Charter Act, making Indian men legally eligible for positions within the covenanted service. However, not a single Indian had been appointed by the Court of Directors to the covenanted service in the interim, a fact which angered various Members of Parliament. In a lengthy and rancorous exchange during the 10 May 1852 testimony of Company Secretary Sir James Cosmo Melvill before the Select Committee of the House of Lords,

various peers accused the Company of willfully ignoring the law and of general bad faith toward Indians. One peer wondered whether there was a meaningful “distinction with respect to moral character which... fits the natives at this moment for the discharge of duties of a judicial character, and at the same time renders them unfit for the duties of covenanted servants of the Company.” Another peer argued that since the job of a judge “require[d] higher moral properties” than most other government positions, it made no sense, practically speaking, for Indians to continue to be excluded from the covenanted service. If Indians were morally eligible to become judges, the lord asked, why were they not eligible to become covenanted servants?<sup>64</sup>

That various members of the committee grilled Melvill over the Company’s failure to appoint a single Indian to the covenanted service since the enactment of the Charter Act nineteen years earlier was doubly interesting given his expressed support of Bentinck’s partial Indianization of the colonial bureaucracy in 1831 earlier that day. The Company functionary had asserted that Cornwallis’s racial ban in 1793 was a complete failure which not only impeded good governance but which played a key role in further debasing the moral character of Indian clerks. “[B]y not trusting the natives” in the decades prior to 1831, Melvill insisted, “we were making them not trustworthy.” Melvill also believed that Indian clerks could be made more honest and moral over time, particularly under the guidance of British officials.<sup>65</sup> In both of these statements, Melvill echoed many of the arguments made by various pro-Indianizers during the 1820s and early 1830s in favor of entrusting greater responsibilities of government to Indian clerks as well as paying them higher salaries.

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<sup>64</sup> Evidence of Sir James Cosmo Melvill, 10 May 1852, PP, 1852-3, *Report from the Select Committee of the House of Lords*, XXIX (41), p. 53, q. 565; p. 56, qq. 597, 599.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid*, p. 49, q. 520-1.

However, Melvill did not support opening up the covenanted service to Indians. He insisted that such an action would be detrimental to Britain's "first and chief duty" which was "to provide [Indians with] a good government." He conceded that if Indians "were competent, from their moral qualities... their exclusion would be a practical wrong." However, this was not yet the case. Although the British had made great strides in improving the "moral character" of Indian subordinates, more still needed to be done to improve Indian morality before Indians could be truly trusted with a position within the covenanted service.<sup>66</sup>

Indeed, Melvill employed the conceit of time in rationalizing continued Indian exclusion from the covenanted service in a way broadly similar to what Uday Mehta has argued was a central plank in nineteenth-century liberal justifications of British imperialism.<sup>67</sup> Asserting that gradual Indianization along the lines set forth by Bentinck in 1831 was working, Melvill insisted that it was more desirable to gradually employ Indians in positions of greater authority rather than to prematurely admit them into the covenanted service:

[T]he question seems to me to be one only of time; and attempts unduly to accelerate it might be prejudicial to the natives themselves, and injurious to the Government. The encouragement now given to the employment of natives in situations of trust, affords, I think, ample evidence that there is no disposition to exclusiveness further than what is necessary for the public good.

By optimistically stating that Indians would *eventually* be morally capable of joining the

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<sup>66</sup> Evidence of Sir James Cosmo Melvill, 10 May 1852, PP, 1852-3, *Report from the Select Committee of the House of Lords*, XXIX (41), p. 53, q. 564.

<sup>67</sup> Uday Singh Mehta, *Liberalism and Empire: A Study in Nineteenth-Century Liberal Thought* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1999), 30. Mehta wryly observes that the "temporizing" of many liberal thinkers "between educating Indians but *not yet* deeming them worthy of autonomy, in the penumbra between crafting responsible government but *not yet* giving Indians self-government—in the morally, politically, and rationally justified ambivalence of liberalism for the *time being* remaining imperial" was an "infinitely patient" project, one "perhaps even secretly counting on its own extended incompetence, of not getting *there* and hence permanently remaining in between."

covenanted service, but not *now*, Company officials like Melvill sought to reassure themselves that they were succeeding, gradually but surely, in moralizing Indian civil servants through partial Indianization. It was only a matter of time.<sup>68</sup>

Likewise, then-Company official John Stuart Mill also had grave doubts about whether Indians were moral enough to become eligible for the covenanted service. Unlike his father, who attacked Bentinck's partial Indianization of the colonial bureaucracy in 1831 as being the "most dangerous *Hindophilism*," John Stuart Mill thought that it was "of the great importance to admit the natives to all situations for which they are fit."<sup>69</sup> However, like his India House colleague Sir James Cosmo Melvill, Mill's broad support of partial Indianization did not extend to allowing Indians to join the covenanted service. Mill conceded that the Company was not strictly following the dictates of the Charter Act which "took away all legal disabilities" from Indians. Nevertheless, he insisted that the Company's unwillingness to appoint Indian covenanted servants was "a practical exclusion" which must obtain "until the natives are very much improved in character." Until Indians were "sufficiently qualified in point of trustworthiness," Mill thought it unwise to allow them to become covenanted servants. Like his father, therefore, John Stuart Mill displayed a patronizing attitude toward Indians when he asserted that they were not yet ready to govern themselves and, indeed, would need British superiors to train them in how to be more trustworthy for a long time to come.<sup>70</sup>

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<sup>68</sup> Evidence of Sir James Cosmo Melvill, 10 May 1852, PP, 1852-3, *Report from the Select Committee of the House of Lords*, XXIX (41), p. 53, q. 564.

<sup>69</sup> Evidence of James Mill, 4 August 1831, PP, 1831-2, cited from Stokes, *English Utilitarians*, 64. Emphasis in original.

<sup>70</sup> Evidence of John Stuart Mill, 22 June 1852, PP, 1852-3, *Report from the Select Committee of the House of Lords*, XXIX (41), pp. 324-5, qq. 3110-1.

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In addition to belittling Indians for supposedly not being moral enough to be trusted as covenanted servants, various Company officials who testified before Parliament in 1852 and 1853 also worried that British rule would be undermined if Bentinck's partial Indianization of the colonial bureaucracy were carried to its next logical step in the appointment of Indians as covenanted servants. Again, by and large, these arguments were made by individuals who otherwise broadly subscribed to the principle of substantial Indian involvement in the day-to-day governing of India. Thus, Melvill insisted that allowing Indians into the covenanted service before they were ready would seriously compromise "the salutary deference now paid to Europeans" which he saw as essential to the maintenance of British colonial rule. Likewise, Frederic Millett, the secretary of the Indian Law Commission, testified that Indianization had generally been "a beneficial system" which had worked to "great[ly] ameliorate" the large case backlog in Indian courts. Nevertheless, he worried about the ability of British covenanted servants to "maintain their superiority" over their Indian subordinates if the distinction between the two services was broken down. Given that "English education is fast spreading amongst the natives of India," particularly among those "largely employed in responsible offices," Millett insisted that it "behoove[d]" British covenanted servants to maintain their superiority over their Indian underlings however possible, even if it meant still excluding Indians from the covenanted service.<sup>71</sup>

Similarly, Bengal official William Wilberforce Bird broadly supported Bentinck's

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<sup>71</sup> Evidence of Sir James Cosmo Melvill, 10 May 1852, PP, 1852-3, *Report from the Select Committee of the House of Lords*, XXIX (41), p. 53, q. 564; Evidence of Frederic Millett, 24 May 1852, *ibid.*, p. 134, qq. 1405, 1412-3; *idem.*, 28 May 1852, PP, 1852, *Report from the Select Committee on Indian Territories*, X (533), p. 160, q. 1651.

partial Indianization in 1831, stating that it was “but fair to the natives in the country that they should have some share in the administration of it, and that it should not be monopolized entirely by strangers.” Even so, he was against allowing Indians into the covenanted service, insisting that it was absolutely necessary “to maintain at present on the part of the natives a general impression of the superiority of Europeans.” It was more beneficial to British rule that the racial distinction between British covenanted servants and Indian uncovenanted servants be preserved. British civil servants ought to be sent out who were “fit for the exercise of superior duties; the natives should be employed in the subordinate positions, and as long as that rule is preserved, there should be no interference between one class and the other.”<sup>72</sup>

## Conclusion

Bird’s half-way solution for colonial governance of Indian agency and British supervision, with the maintenance of a rigid division between the covenanted and the uncovenanted services, effectively illustrates many of the tensions embedded in the Indianization project as well as many of its limitations. Bird, after all, was not *opposed* to Indian civil servants being entrusted with many of the day-to-day duties of governance. Rather, he regarded partial Indianization as the only morally just course of action for the British to take. It was “but fair to the natives in the country that they should have some share in the administration of it, and that it should not be monopolized entirely by strangers.” However, there were limits to what that “share” should be. Certainly, the covenanted service, for at least the unforeseeable future, must be “monopolized entirely

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<sup>72</sup> Evidence of William Wilberforce Bird, 18 May 1852, PP, 1852-3, *Report from the Select Committee of the House of Lords*, XXIX (41), p. 117, q. 1203; p. 118, qq. 1206-7.

by strangers.” The maintenance of British superiority depended upon it.<sup>73</sup>

Nor was Bird alone in asserting the necessity of continued exclusion of Indians from the covenanted service. Nearly every witness who gave testimony before a parliamentary committee on the topic in 1852 and 1853, ranging from already-prominent liberal thinker John Stuart Mill to his more obscure India House<sup>74</sup> colleague Sir James Cosmo Melvill to Frederic Millett, the secretary of the Indian Law Commission, asserted that Indians were simply not ready to join the covenanted service. Despite being deemed morally fit enough to be appointed as civil judges handling the vast majority of civil suits, Burkean discourses that Indian clerks were not trustworthy enough were wheeled out in support of their continued exclusion from the covenanted service. To these longstanding notions of the corrupt and dishonest tendencies of Indian officials were added new paternalist and liberal rationales for Indian exclusion: under British auspices, Indians were gradually becoming more honest, but they were not *yet* so. It was only a matter of time, though, before they would be. In the meantime, the covenanted service ought to remain closed to them.

The process by which the British developed a system of indirect rule within the colonial bureaucracy between the 1790s and the 1850s, then, was driven by far more than simple administrative necessity or pragmatism. To be sure, several proponents of employing Indians within responsible positions in the colonial government did couch their arguments in such terms. Bentinck’s partial Indianization, particularly of the courts, was widely supported in 1853 because it *worked*. Now that the majority of civil cases were tried by Indian judges instead of British ones, the case backlog which had once

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<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 118, q. 1207.

<sup>74</sup> The Company’s London headquarters on Leadenhall Street were generally referred to during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries as “India House.”



clogged Indian courts was generally seen as a thing of the past.

However, examining the emergence of a system of indirect rule within the colonial bureaucracy as something which was driven simply or even mainly by administrative necessity, without paying close attention to the ideological dimensions of this process, ignores most of the story. Cornwallis's decision in 1793 to ban Indians from all positions of executive authority within the colonial government may have been a "faulty assumption" which made colonial governance considerably harder in the decades to follow.<sup>75</sup> But Cornwallis's racial ban only makes sense as a policy if one analyzes it as mainly being driven by an ideological motivation to establish British colonial rule upon more moral foundations. Similarly, it is correct to say that Bentinck's partial Indianization of the colonial bureaucracy in 1831 was motivated by pragmatic reasons of governance. At the same time, one should not lose sight of the fact that he was also angered by the injustice of banning Indians from positions within the government of their own country. Given the general tendency among Britons in India—regardless of time period—toward administrative lethargy, without Bentinck's fervent belief in the moral necessity of Indianization, it might very well never have been implemented in the early 1830s. In these respects as well as others, concerns about the morality of rule were just as important as practical considerations about governance in the formation of a system of indirect rule in Company India during the first half of the nineteenth century, if not more so.

Indeed, the debate over continued Indian exclusion from the covenanted service during the 1850s only makes sense if viewed as being primarily driven by a concern to govern India morally. Several officials such as Frederic Millett conceded that continuing

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<sup>75</sup> Misra, *Central Administration*, 8.

to exclude Indians from the covenanted service did not make sense from a strictly practical point-of-view being that “English education [was] fast spreading amongst the natives of India.” Other witnesses such as Alexander Duff insisted that Indian judges were better than British ones at detecting various “evils” such as the forgery of documents and perjury by witnesses.<sup>76</sup> Even so, fearing that Bengali clerks within the colonial bureaucracy were too corrupt and dishonest to be entirely trusted, along with being concerned about the maintenance of British prestige, many colonial officials supported the continued exclusion of Indians from the covenanted service. Believing that only they could provide India with “good government,” various colonial officials advocated the continuation of a British-only covenanted service even in the face of a statutory mandate to accord Indians full access to all positions within the colonial government.

Finally, understanding the process of Indianization of the colonial bureaucracy as being informed more by ideological concerns than simple pragmatic necessity helps explain where many of the gendered ideological underpinnings of the Raj’s governance structure initially came from. As Mrinalini Sinha has shown, even after Satyendra Nath Tagore succeeded a decade later in 1863 in becoming the first Indian to gain an appointment to the covenanted service, ideological concerns often trumped pragmatic ones in the formation of policies relating to the colonial administration. The British tried various expedients in the latter decades of the nineteenth century to ensure that further Indians—and, especially, Bengalis such as Tagore—failed to qualify for the covenanted

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<sup>76</sup> Evidence of Frederic Millett, 28 May 1852, PP, 1852, *Report from the Select Committee on Indian Territories*, X (533), p. 160, q. 1651; Evidence of Rev. Alexander Duff, 19 April 1853, PP, 1852-3, *First Report from the Select Committee on Operation of Act for better Government of H.M. Indian Territories*, XXXI (627), p. 473, q. 4225.

service. The upper-age limit at which a candidate would be eligible to take the open examination for entry into the covenanted service was progressively lowered so that only British candidates attending Oxbridge would be eligible. These examinations were also only given in London, only tested topics which were taught at British universities, and were continually tweaked so to emphasize subjects at which it was thought that Indians could not “cram.” Finally, a horse riding test was introduced, designed to weed out all those who were not proper “English gentlemen.”<sup>77</sup>

None of these actions of the colonial government had much, if anything, to do with ensuring that India was efficiently governed by those most qualified. Rather, the British were primarily driven by an ideological concern to keep “weak-kneed, effeminate, effete Bengalees” from the covenanted service.<sup>78</sup> In the end, then, the question “Indianize the Indian Civil Service?” was far more than simply a question about administrative necessity. It was a profoundly moral question as well, and how British colonial officials in India chose to answer it during the first half of the nineteenth century—as well as afterwards—had significant implications for colonial governance as well as the construction of their own masculinity.

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<sup>77</sup> Sinha, *Colonial Masculinity*, 103-4.

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*, 104.

### **Chapter 3. “The Master is No Longer a Master”: Anxieties about Colonial Governance and the Masculinity of Covenanted Servants**

On 15 February 1788, the first day of Edmund Burke’s speech commencing the impeachment trial of Warren Hastings, Burke warned the House of Lords of the dangerous consequences for British rule in India of colonial officials ceding authority over their districts to subordinate Indian “Banyans” (*banians*, or clerks). Banyans had greater “knowledge of the country” than the young Company functionaries sent out to govern India. Thus, Burke feared that it was very easy for these Indian subordinates to “take possession” of British officials and thereby put British power and authority to ill-use. Burke worried that this subjection of Company employees to the presumed nefarious private ends of Indians was rendered even easier by failings in the public or private conduct of British officials. “The Master is no longer a Master,” Burke apprized the Lords, when he contracted private debts to Indian creditors or who accepted gifts from Indians subject to his executive authority. Neither was the British official exerting true “mastery” over his district when he proved himself mentally or physically incapable of governing, thereby having to rely extensively upon his Indian subordinates. Burke warned that British control in such cases was merely a fiction: “it is not the Englishman, but... the black Banyan that is the Master.” Only by always acting virtuously, Burke insisted, could British officials maintain their country’s fragile control over India.<sup>1</sup>

That Burke believed British officials had not generally acted virtuously in governing India is evident in several of his India speeches. For example, in his December 1783 speech in support of Fox’s India Bill, Burke compared Company employees to “birds of prey and passage” who possessed “appetites continually

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<sup>1</sup> Edmund Burke, “Speech on Opening of Impeachment” (15 February 1788), *WS*, 6: 292-3.

renewing.” These functionaries were generally very immature; indeed, earlier in the speech Burke referred to them as being “young men (boys almost).” Thus, it was particularly unfortunate both for India as well as for British reputations more generally that they drank “the intoxicating draught of authority and dominion before their heads are able to bear it” and acquired considerable fortunes “long before they [were] ripe in principle.” Five and a half years later in May 1789 Burke brought the point closer to home, arguing that nothing less than the general reputation of Britons for being “an open hearted, candid, liberal, plain, sincere people” was at stake. If the misconduct of British officials in India was allowed to go without sharp rebuke, Burke warned, “the character of England, that character which more than our arms and more than our commerce have made us a great nation... will be gone and lost.”<sup>2</sup>

As I discussed in Chapter 1, Burke was totally unsuccessful in gaining Hastings’s conviction for systematic corruption and misgovernment. Nevertheless, I shall contend in this chapter that he played a major role in establishing the issue of proper moral conduct by British officials in India as a major concern during the first half of the nineteenth century for colonial governance. Nameless bureaucrats as well as high-profile advocates of civil service reform, conservatives as well as Utilitarian reformers, supporters as well as opponents of the East India Company’s administration in India, shared many of his concerns about the fragility of British rule in India and the close relationship between the “character” of British bureaucrats and its long-term stability. For example, high-ranking Bengal official and Company director Henry Thoby Prinsep asserted in 1853 that “in India... the character of the functionary determines the quality

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<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, “Speech on Fox’s India Bill” (1 December 1783), 5: 402; *idem.*, “Speech on Sixth Article: Presents” (7 May 1789), 7: 63.

of his administration for good or for ill.” Similarly, writing that same year, Bengal judge and later Liberal MP Sir George Campbell contended that because “the official chain is so connected,” the public and private conduct of British officials was direly important for “if a single link be rotten and bad the whole becomes useless.”<sup>3</sup>

The second argument of this chapter has to do with the construction of manliness within the covenanted service during the Company period. Following from my discussion in the previous chapter, I contend that Governor-General Cornwallis’s attempt to govern India “morally” by excluding Indians from holding any position of executive authority within the colonial bureaucracy placed almost impossible burdens upon British colonial bureaucrats always to act virtuously. Rather than blaming Cornwallis’s various policies such as the Permanent Settlement or his judicial reforms for being largely responsible for the woeful inefficiency and corruption of colonial governance, colonial officials continually reproached British civil servants for lapses in their personal conduct between the 1790s and the 1830s. Britons in India worried particularly during this period about financial entanglements between covenanted servants and their Indian underlings. In large part due to a general failure to trust Indian subordinates during this period, colonial officials feared that Britons who fell into debt or who accepted gifts from Indians would lose “mastery” over their districts. Only by avoiding material relationships with Indians which would open the door to their private and presumably corrupting influence, Britons in India continually insisted during the first third of the nineteenth century, would covenanted servants be able to govern India morally.

After 1831, when Governor-General Bentinck partially Indianized the colonial

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<sup>3</sup> Henry Thoby Prinsep, *The India Question in 1853* (London: Wm. H. Allen & Co., 1853), 53-4; George Campbell, *India as it May Be; An Outline of a Proposed Government and Policy* (London: John Murray, 1853), 256.

bureaucracy, there was a shift in the definition of British bureaucratic manliness. As the role of covenanted servants in India changed from one where they were—at least in theory—entirely responsible for governing to one now more of supervising subordinate Indian clerks in the colonial bureaucracy, Britons in India placed greater emphasis than before on the mental and physical capacity of covenanted servants for strenuous work. Simultaneously, Burkean and Malthusian concerns about immature Company bureaucrats compromising British “mastery” over India by falling into debt or by accepting gifts became less important than before. Like middle-class men in Victorian Britain who were expected, upon marriage, to put their bachelor ways behind them and assume the sobering responsibilities of being good fathers and family providers, a similar transformation was now expected of covenanted servants in India.<sup>4</sup> Once British colonial bureaucrats had metaphorically “grown up” and learned how to govern India more effectively by entrusting many of the day-to-day responsibilities of governance to Indian subordinates, colonial officials now deemed it necessary that they prove they were manly enough to rule over Indians—stereotyped now as “moral children” or, less so, as “effeminate”—and provide them with good government. Instead of worrying so much about the individual morality of immature officials who fell into debt or accepted gifts from Indians, colonial officials now concerned themselves more with the broader question of whether the right *sort* of men were being sent out to rule India. Ultimately, this concern helped lead to the introduction of competitive examinations for the Indian Civil Service in 1853.

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<sup>4</sup> John Tosh, *A Man's Place: Masculinity and the Middle-Class Home in Victorian England* (New Haven, CT and London: Yale University Press, 1999).

### **Creating a “Moral” Covenanted Service: Cornwallis’s 1793 Reforms, Wellesley’s Pedagogical Ideas, and the Establishment of Haileybury College**

In the course of his 1788 opening impeachment speech, Edmund Burke surveyed the recent history of the East India Company in India. The Company, Burke declared, “began in commerce and ended in Empire.” Or, at least, it should have. But instead of developing new forms of administration to govern this new empire, Burke alleged that the Company in 1788 was “a State in disguise of a Merchant” which still maintained much more the feel of a “[c]ounting-house” than of a government responsible for ruling over several millions of Indians.<sup>5</sup> Rather than paying its employees official salaries fully equal to their new administrative responsibilities, the Company still continued to miserly reward its employees as it had done since the early seventeenth century while allowing them to engage in their own private intra-Indian and intra-Asian “country” trade.<sup>6</sup>

In an era when back-and-forth communication between Great Britain and India often took at least a year and when there was no real possibility for effective oversight over the doings of Company employees in Asia by Company directors in London, this was perhaps the only sensible way to run a global joint-stock trading company. But surely, Burke protested, it was no way to run an empire. It was one thing not to pay “honest emoluments” to Company servants whose main source of income came from their own private trade. It was quite another when these same employees now “administered... revenues truly royal.” By not paying its functionaries a decent official salary, Burke argued, the Company in effect gave them an “unbounded license to plunder

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<sup>5</sup> Burke, “Speech on Opening of Impeachment” (15 February 1788), *WS*, 6: 283.

<sup>6</sup> For more on private British trade in Asia during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, see K.N. Chaudhuri, *The Trading World of Asia and the English East India Company, 1660-1760* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1978), chap. 9; P.J. Marshall, *East Indian Fortunes: The British in Bengal in the Eighteenth Century* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1976); and I.B. Watson, *Foundations for Empire: English Private Trade in India, 1659-1760* (New Delhi: Vikas Publishing House, 1980).



India.” This implicit mandate was made even worse when the responsibility for governing India was entrusted to Company officials who were so young and unrestrained that they resembled “schoolboys without Tutors.”<sup>7</sup>

In this trenchant critique of the Company’s administration of India, Burke was joined by Adam Smith. For Smith, the Company was *the* primary example of the evils of mercantilism. “No two characters seem[ed] more inconsistent than those of trader and sovereign.” On the one hand, because of its continued mercantile focus, the Company and its servants in India considered their responsibilities of imperial governance to be “but an appendix to that of a merchant.” On the other hand, the Company was a weird anomaly wherein the logic of the marketplace generally did not apply. Shareholders bought the minimum required £1,000 in Company stock which entitled them to a vote in the Company’s General Court of Proprietors, not principally to earn dividends, but rather to gain “a share, though not in the plunder, yet in the appointment of the plunderers of India” through the Company’s patronage system. Smith insisted that had the normal logic of the marketplace operated, “the negligence, profusion, and malversation” of the Company’s employees in India would surely have been punished. Instead, shareholders were largely complicit in the theft committed by their friends and relatives in India. The Company could not be trusted to police the actions of its own employees in India, a failure which had tragic consequences for moral governance.<sup>8</sup>

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By the 1780s, the extensive corruption and misbehavior by Company employees

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<sup>7</sup> Burke, “Speech on Opening of Impeachment” (15 February 1788), *WS*, 6: 287, 288.

<sup>8</sup> Adam Smith, *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations*, ed. Edwin Cannan (1784, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed.; New York: Modern Library, 1937 reprint ed.), 602, 710, 712, 771.

in India had become scandalous. Not only did the rapacious behavior of Britons in India prompt Burke's high-profile impeachment of Hastings but it also caused the British State to take a more active role in the governance of India. Although William Pitt's 1784 India Act was not as drastic a reform measure as Charles James Fox's India Bill would have been had it been enacted the previous year, it nevertheless put the Company and its functionaries in India on notice that their old ways would no longer be tolerated. Indeed, immediately upon learning of the new provisions of the law in early 1785, Hastings promptly resigned as governor-general before he could be recalled.<sup>9</sup> After extensive deliberation with the Court of Directors, in early 1786 the Crown appointed a governor-general in the person of Lord Cornwallis who was committed to implementing major reforms.

During his first term as governor-general from 1786 to 1793, Cornwallis implemented several major reforms to the Company's bureaucracy which had lasting importance for the rest of the Company period. One of his most important changes was the removal of Indians from all positions of executive authority in the colonial administration which I discussed in the previous chapter. Although Cornwallis excluded Indians mainly with the hope of insulating British rulers from the supposedly contaminating effects of "Indian corruption" and, over time, improving British morality, he also believed that British civil servants would continue to be corrupt so long as they were still paid low official salaries and were allowed to engage in private trade. In 1792, the governor-general argued in a letter to the Court of Directors that "the Company will never be well served... and the honor and interest of the British Nation will never be safe

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<sup>9</sup> Nicholas B. Dirks, *The Scandal of Empire: India and the Creation of Imperial Britain* (Cambridge, MA and London: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2006), 100.

in India” until the “Company’s Servants shall be confined to public business only.” In exchange for prohibiting British civil servants in India from “engaging in private Commerce,” Cornwallis urged Company directors to “take care... that the allowed Emoluments... should be suited to the importance of their Stations.”<sup>10</sup> After receiving approval from London a year later to proceed with the reforms, the governor-general significantly raised the official salaries of covenanted servants while completely banning them from engaging in private trade.<sup>11</sup>

Although many of Cornwallis’s reforms sought to answer major criticisms lobbed against the Company by Burke, Smith, and other critics, they did not address every problem. Chief among the problems left unresolved by Cornwallis was the thorny one of Company patronage, which would continue to bedevil both Company officials and members of parliament until the mid-1850s. Indeed, if anything, he made the problem worse. By requiring after 1793 that all executive positions within the colonial bureaucracy only be filled by British covenanted servants, he made the nature of their training a much more important issue than it previously had been. However, for the remainder of the 1790s, little was done to insure that British officials were even qualified to govern their districts. Aside from Cornwallis’ institution of small monetary grants to

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<sup>10</sup> Cornwallis to Court of Directors, 2 May 1792, BL/APAC/IOR/H/79 (11).

<sup>11</sup> The average official salaries of Company employees in India increased from less than £150 a year in the mid-eighteenth century to just under £2,600 by the 1820s. Much of this increase resulted from reforms implemented first by Hastings and then, more systematically, by Cornwallis. H.V. Bowen, *The Business of Empire: The East India Company and Imperial Britain, 1756-1833* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 213-4. However, what a covenanted servant would have received at any given point in his career after Cornwallis’s 1793 reforms is hard to calculate. B.B. Misra has estimated that a post carrying an annual salary of £500 a year required a minimum of three years’ service, a post paying a salary of £1,500 a year six years’ service, a post paying a salary of £3,000 nine years’ service, and a post paying a salary of £4,000 a year twelve years’ service. However, these were only the minimum number of years required service in India to be eligible for these positions, not what individual employees actually were paid. One suspects, given the slow pace of promotion and that promotion was strictly according to seniority within the three presidential covenanted services, that actual salaries were less, but there does not yet exist sufficient data to confirm or deny this point. B.B. Misra, *The Bureaucracy in India: An Historical Analysis of Development up to 1947* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1977), 48.

junior civil servants to partially defray the expenses of hiring private *munshis* (or language teachers) to teach them Persian and other Indian languages in 1790, very little was implemented in the way of reform until Marquess Richard Wellesley became governor-general in 1798.<sup>12</sup>

Wellesley was one of the first governors-general to arrive in India with a fervent belief in British imperial grandeur. Writing to the Court of Directors in July 1800, Wellesley declared that:

Duty, policy and honour require that [India] should not be administered as a temporary and precarious acquisition, as an empire conquered by prosperous adventure and extended by fortunate accident, of which the tenure is as uncertain as the original conquest and successive extensions were extraordinary; it must be considered as a sacred trust and a permanent possession.

Such an empire required “able magistrates, wise and honest judges, and skilled statesmen properly qualified to conduct the ordinary movements of the great machine of Government.” Only then, he explained, would the British possess “a wise and well-regulated Government” capable of governing such an important colony as India.<sup>13</sup>

More broadly, Wellesley shared Burke’s mistrust of Indian clerks, worrying about comparatively ill-informed British officials losing “mastery” over their districts to Indian underlings who were both more knowledgeable as well as more corrupt. Consequently, the governor-general insisted that only by undergoing comprehensive training at the onset of their careers would covenanted servants become wholly “equal to their prescribed duties” and not at the mercy of their Indian subordinates. In another minute to Company directors a month later, he proposed that all newly-arrived covenanted servants in India

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<sup>12</sup> Misra, *The Central Administration of the East India Company, 1773-1834* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1959), 383.

<sup>13</sup> Wellesley to Court of Directors, 10 July 1800, *The Despatches, Minutes & Correspondence of the Marquess Wellesley during His Administration in India*, ed. Robert Montgomery Martin (1836-7; New Delhi: Inter-India Publications, 1984, 2 vols.), 2: 339-40.

be required to undergo three years of training at Fort William College in Calcutta. He proposed that students at the college be required to learn various Indian languages, Hindu and Islamic law, various government regulations, European history, classics, and other subjects before being allowed to take up their positions in the Company's bureaucracy.<sup>14</sup>

Although there was to be a heavy dose of academic training in these proposals for Fort William College, Wellesley focused just as much attention on moral education. Under his proposed plan for the college, students would study, eat, and lodge together under the close supervision of a provost and a vice-provost, both of whom were to be Anglican clergymen. Although these arrangements would be expensive, the governor-general urged the Court of Directors to support them anyways as methods most likely to "establish the British Empire in India on the solid foundation of ability, integrity, virtue, and religion." Only by exercising discipline over the students of the college, he argued, could college authorities protect them from "the dangers of profusion, extravagance and Excess" as well as establish in them "useful knowledge, cultivated talents and disciplined morals," all traits he deemed necessary in colonial officials charged with the "sacred" duty of governing India.<sup>15</sup>

To properly achieve this, Wellesley insisted that the young men who would be students at the college would need to be "effectually guarded" against the various "temptations and corruptions" of India which he warned would "surround and assail them in every station, especially upon their first arrival in India." Thus, the governor-general contended two years later in 1802 that "enforcing a due system of discipline & study"

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<sup>14</sup> Wellesley to Court of Directors, 18 August 1800, BL/APAC/IOR/H/487 (4); Letter from Bengal to Court of Directors with enclosure of Regulation IX (1800), 15 July 1807, BL/APAC/IOR/F/4/259/5664.

<sup>15</sup> Wellesley to Court of Directors, 18 August 1800, BL/APAC/IOR/H/487 (4); Wellesley to Court of Directors, 10 July 1800, *Despatches, Minutes & Correspondence of the Marquess Wellesley*, 2: 339-40.

was absolutely essential. Only then, he argued, would such Indian “temptations” as “habitual indolence, dissipation, and licentious indulgence” be kept strictly in check. Anything less in the way of formal supervision, Wellesley warned, would lead to students soon falling into “ruinous courses of dissipation, licentiousness, and expense” to the detriment of the proper regard for “[p]ublic Honor.”<sup>16</sup>

The Court of Directors rejected Wellesley’s plans for Fort William College seventeen months later in January 1802. In part, Company directors rejected the governor-general’s plans for the college because of the expenses involved but mainly out of a suspicion that it would mean the loss of some of their prerogatives over Company patronage. Furthermore, by 1802, many directors resented Wellesley’s “high-handed manner, expansionist policies and support for private traders,” all of which “were anathema to them.”<sup>17</sup> However, while Company directors rejected the governor-general’s plans for Fort William College, they did not entirely deny the need to provide professional bureaucratic training for their employees.<sup>18</sup> Two and a half years later in September 1804, the Court of Directors voted to establish the East India College (Haileybury) in Hertfordshire, England which graduated its first students three years later.

For the next half-century, until the college’s abolition in 1854 following the implementation of competitive examinations for the covenanted service, Haileybury was responsible for training covenanted servants in Indian languages and legal systems as well as in various European subjects. Each of the three presidencies of Bengal, Madras,

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<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*; Wellesley to Court of Directors, 5 August 1802, BL/APAC/IOR/H/488 (1).

<sup>17</sup> J.M. Bourne, *Patronage and Society in Nineteenth-Century England* (London: Edward Arnold, 1986), 100. Indeed, the Court of Directors would eventually recall Wellesley three years later in 1805.

<sup>18</sup> Unlike, say, large numbers of shareholders who resented the delays which mandatory college training would mean for their relatives and friends in commencing their Indian careers as well as the expenses of the college itself, which would reduce the Company’s profits and consequently their dividends. Timothy L. Alborn, “Boys to Men: Moral Restraint at Haileybury College,” Brian Dolan, ed., *Malthus, Medicine & Morality: “Malthusianism” after 1798* (Amsterdam; Atlanta: Rodopi, 2000), 38-9.

and Bombay also maintained colleges to further train Company employees in Indian languages upon their arrival in India. In promulgating this system of training for covenanted servants, the Court of Directors echoed many of Burke's fears of the supposed corrupting influences of India and Indians on otherwise honorable Britons. Indeed, to further reduce and eventually eliminate whatever lingering proclivities still existed to "plunder India" among Company employees, Haileybury was intended by the Court of Directors to instill future officials with "good Christian" moral virtues along with training them in Indian languages and legal systems. Company directors furthered this aim by appointing political economist and moral thinker Thomas Robert Malthus to a chair in history and political economy at the college in 1805, a post which he held until his death in 1834.<sup>19</sup>

As Timothy Alborn has argued, Malthus used the college to implement some of his broader ideas regarding moral restraint. Unlike many public schools and Oxford and Cambridge—or even, for that matter, Wellesley's proposed Fort William College—which still had extensive rules and regulations, Haileybury was notable for its relative laxity in supervision. This was deliberate. In 1817, when Malthus publicly defended the college against vocal criticisms from Company shareholders who sought its abolition, he explained that the intent of college officials was "to inculcate gradually, manly feelings, manly studies, and manly self-controul, rather earlier than usual." Fully buying into Burke's and Wellesley's fears of Indian temptation corrupting British officials in India, Malthus asserted that "those who go out to India, must and will be men the moment they

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<sup>19</sup> Court of Directors to Wellesley, 27 January 1802, BL/APAC/IOR/H/487 (5); Misra, *Central Administration*, 391-4, 397-8; Bernard S. Cohn, "Recruitment and Training of British Civil Servants in India, 1600-1860," Ralph Braibanti, ed., *Asian Bureaucratic Systems Emergent from the British Imperial Tradition* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1966), 114-7.

reach the country.” But this would only occur if students were taught proper moral restraint and self-discipline now, while in Britain, so that they later would be able to resist the “temptations of no common magnitude and danger” of India. Malthus believed that the risk of unruly behavior by students at Haileybury was well worth the risk if it exposed, while still in Britain, students not morally fit to rule India.<sup>20</sup>

It was one thing for Malthus and other colonial officials to assert that all it took for British covenanted servants in India to “be men” was a healthy amount of individual moral self-restraint. It was quite another thing entirely for covenanted servants always to behave virtuously, particularly when trying to cope with their nearly-impossible duties of governing India. The impossibility for British colonial bureaucrats throughout the first half of the nineteenth century always to live up to the high expectations placed upon them can be seen most clearly in colonial anxieties about covenanted servants falling into debt and British officials accepting gifts from Indians in their districts.

### **The Problems of Private Debt**

One of the two types of behavior by covenanted servants in India which raised the most uncomfortable doubts about their manliness was private indebtedness. Colonial officials continually worried how easily it was for Indian creditors to corrupt young Company employees, who in one or only a few momentary lapses of judgment contracted impossibly large amounts of debt which they were forever unable to repay. These concerns were given additional force by the fact that, according to at least one survey commissioned by the Bengal government in the mid-1820s, perhaps as many as half of the covenanted servants in the Bengal Presidency were still in debt decades after they

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<sup>20</sup> Alborn, “Boys to Men,” 38-43; also see Cohn, “Recruitment and Training,” 116.



arrived in India.<sup>21</sup> Threatening to undo efforts by the Company to create a more moral and manly covenanted service, the specter of private debt haunted the imaginations of colonial officials and various authors of government reform tracts throughout the first half of the nineteenth century.

Burke led the way in framing much of this discussion. In the course of his 1788 opening impeachment speech, Burke warned the House of Lords that the British colonial official in debt to an Indian “Banyan” was fully subject to all his whims:

[H]e is the tool in the hands of this man. Actions the most abhorrent to his nature he must see done before his face and thousands and thousands worse are done in his absence, and he dares not complain of them. The Banyan extorts, robs, murders and gives him what proportion of it he pleases.

Should the indebted British official even “murmur” against the injustices being thus committed in his name, Burke griped, the *banian* still had the upper hand. Later proponents of British imperialism in India such as James Mill and Thomas Babington Macaulay would advocate the introduction of British courts and law codes as a “blessing.” However, for Burke, British courts only added to the problems facing Britons in debt, making “the recovery of debts more easy” by giving “ten thousand times more power to the Banyan.” By contracting private debt, covenanted servants ran the real risk of rendering themselves not the rulers of India but rather “nothing but the inferior tools and miserable instruments of the tyranny which now the lower part of the natives exercise, to the disgrace of the British power.”<sup>22</sup>

To a large degree, Edmund Burke’s warnings were exaggerated, even melodramatic, rhetorically serving his broader purpose of indicting Warren Hastings.

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<sup>21</sup> According to a study commissioned by the Bengal Council in 1825 of 33 employees who attended Fort William College between 1808 and 1810, nearly half (16) were still in debt fifteen years later, with over a third (12) being severely so. Minute by W.B. Bayley, 2 April 1825, BL/APAC/IOF/4/916/25818.

<sup>22</sup> Burke, “Speech on Opening of Impeachment” (15 February 1788), *WS*, 6: 293-4.

Nevertheless, his concerns about private debt contracted by British covenanted servants leading to Indian creditors corrupting them deeply resonated with Britons in India throughout the first half of the nineteenth century. For example, Bengal Army Captain Thomas Williamson argued in 1810 that the precise intention of Indian creditors was to gain influence over young covenanted servants through lending them large sums of money. Indian bankers sought to “attach [themselves] firmly to the rising sun” and thereby be in a position to reap future profits. Likewise, Bengal Army Lieutenant Adam White warned in 1822 that Indian creditors “entertain views of profit much beyond the legal advantage” of just the loan. By lending lavish amounts of money to newly arrived Company employees, they were buying influence. White explained that when these officials were appointed to a position, their Indian creditors insist “upon being employed in some official situation, or that one of [their] relations should be provided for.” However, unless the British colonial official was in a position to immediately repay his loan, he had no effective recourse other than to accede to whatever demands the Indian creditor placed upon him. Soon enough, these demands had “pernicious effects” which led to the “shameless prostitution” of British power for the private ends of Indians to whom the covenanted servant owed money.<sup>23</sup>

Similar fears of pernicious Indian influence arising out of British private debt were expressed by colonial officials as well. For example, the Court of Directors wrote to the Bengal government in 1811 that it was “self evident” that a young Company official, “embarrassed in his circumstances and indebted perhaps to a Native in a

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<sup>23</sup> Thomas Williamson, *The East India Vade-Mecum; or, Complete Guide to Gentlemen Intended for the Civil, Military, or Naval Service of the Hon. East India Company* (London: Black, Parry, and Kingsbury, 1810, 2 vols.), 1: 205; Adam White, *Considerations on the State of British India* (Edinburgh: Bell and Bradfute, W. and C. Tait, and A. Allardice; Glasgow: James Brash and Co.; London: J. M. Richardson, 1822), 350, 351.

considerable Sum of money, cannot be equally independent with him, and commence his career in life free from such incumbrances.” Indeed, based on this concern, the Bengal government, in its capacity as the Supreme Government in India,<sup>24</sup> promulgated Regulation VII twelve years later, prohibiting Company officials throughout India from borrowing money from individuals under their authority.<sup>25</sup> Such an interdiction was necessary, Bengal Political Secretary Holt Mackenzie argued in a letter to the Bengal Board of Revenue for the Lower Provinces on 9 May 1823, to free British officials from “pecuniary obligations” to their Indian creditors. More importantly, though, Mackenzie insisted that the prohibition was necessary to eliminate even the appearance of impropriety, which, in the Bengal official’s view, was just as “hurtful to the public service and injurious to the good name of the officers of Government.” Based largely on these concerns, the Bengal government enacted a modified version of the proposed regulation later in the year which required all British officials in debt either to repay their debts in full within one year or to transfer to districts where they would not be under the sway of their Indian creditors. Covenanted servants who failed to comply with either one of these provisions were liable to dismissal from their positions.<sup>26</sup>

Such a penalty was meted out to Madras judge Henry Turner Bushby a decade later in 1834. Although Bushby only borrowed Rs. 500 (about £60)<sup>27</sup> to pay for travel

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<sup>24</sup> Under the 1773 Regulating Act, Bengal was given supervisory authority over the other two presidencies of Madras and Bombay, a prerogative which was occasionally used—as in this case—by the Bengal government to set overall policy in India in the absence of directives from London authorities.

<sup>25</sup> This was interpreted rather widely not only to mean Indian uncovenanted servants working under a covenanted servant’s immediate authority, but any Indian subject to his executive authority, which in practice meant any person residing in the British official’s district.

<sup>26</sup> Public Letter from Court of Directors to Bengal, 22 May 1811, BL/APAC/IOR/F/4/916/25818; Mackenzie to Board of Revenue, 9 May 1823, cited in Bengal Judicial Consultations, 12 June 1823; Bengal Judicial Consultations, 30 October 1823; both documents, BL/APAC/IOR/F/4/954/27087.

<sup>27</sup> Throughout the first half of the nineteenth century, a conversion ratio of approximately eight Indian rupees per British pound generally obtained. Dirks, *Scandal of Empire*, 233.

expenses needed to convalesce, he was dismissed from his position largely because he signed a bond to repay the loan over a two-year period. By doing so, Madras Governor Frederick Adam thundered in an April 1834 minute to fellow members of the Madras government recommending Bushby's removal from the service, Bushby had "laid himself under obligation to a Native under his protection in a manner calculated to subject himself to unworthy imputations and the Government to loss of reputation and authority."<sup>28</sup> Such a harsh penalty as the loss of official position for private debt, however, was not universally applied. For example, David Elliot, a younger colleague of Bushby's at the court, was also found to have borrowed a small sum of money (in his case Rs. 200) from an Indian court official under his supervision. However, Adam only reprimanded Elliot. In his minute, Adam explained that he treated Elliot differently in part because of his relative inexperience compared to Bushby but largely because the younger official promptly repaid the money he borrowed within two weeks and did not promise his Indian creditors anything.<sup>29</sup>

### *Education and Debt*

In both the cases of Henry Turner Bushby and David Elliot, debt was contracted to meet emergency travel expenses and was for relatively small amounts of money. In both these respects, Bushby's and Elliot's cases were *atypical* of the types of private debt which most colonial officials focused on during the first half of the nineteenth century. Rather, officials paid far greater concern to instances where covenanted servants

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<sup>28</sup> As Adam argued, this was so because the Indian official lent the money to Bushby anticipating that a relative of his would "obtain a situation" in the local district court as a result of his loan. Adam Minute, 22 April 1834, cited in Madras Judicial Consultations, 3 June 1834, BL/APAC/IOR/F/4/1480/58265.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*

contracted large debts over a period of many years. In trying to understand how and why these bureaucrats became mired in debt, many did not focus on such mundane short-term expenses as covenanted servants needing money for emergency traveling expenses but rather on more long-term reasons such as the chronic indebtedness that resulted from the “dissipation and extravagance” of students at Fort William College in Calcutta and the other two presidency colleges at Madras and Bombay. In doing so, they were forced to confront a fundamental disconnect between Malthusian expectations that all covenanted servants would exert “manly self-controul” while in India and the actual reality which was not always so ideal.

After graduating from Haileybury, Company employees were granted their official appointments to the Bengal, Madras, or Bombay covenanted services but still were required to spend up to two additional years learning Indian languages at the presidential college. Like Malthus’s Haileybury, students at the three presidency colleges were subject to little if any real supervision.<sup>30</sup> However, while Malthus saw this as an effective pedagogical method to inculcate “manly self-controul” in his students at home before sending them off to govern India, many colonial officials in India were less trusting in the manliness of young students, particularly given the temptations of the three presidency towns. For example, the Fort William College Council argued in an 1812 minute that the chief consequence of a lack of effective supervision over students was that “a large body of young Men” were allowed “at the most critical period of Life [to be] under very light restraint and with too much command of money.” The main effects of this, they insisted, were visibly evident in a general “Spirit of disorder” as well as “emulation in dissipation and extravagance” by these students. Particularly worrisome in

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<sup>30</sup> Public Letter from Bengal to Court of Directors, 15 June 1807, BL/APAC/IOF/4/259/5664.

the view of college officials was the fact that many students promptly fell into debt in order to afford their “dissipation and extravagance.”<sup>31</sup>

To avoid this problem altogether, several colonial officials recommended that young covenanted servants not be exposed to the “dangers” of the presidency towns of Calcutta, Madras, or Bombay but rather that they learn their required Indian languages either at their eventual posts or during a fourth year spent at Haileybury. Bengal Accountant-General Wood argued in 1824 that Bengal officials would only remain influenced by the “fine honorable feelings” which they “bring with them from their Native Country” if colonial officials “preserved [them] from being influenced by the Debts contracted by them... during the first six months of their residence in Calcutta” by appointing them directly to their posts. Holt Mackenzie recommended that covenanted servants spend an additional year at Haileybury for similar reasons. By avoiding the temptations of Calcutta altogether by spending a fourth year at Haileybury, the Bengal official and former member of the Fort William College Council insisted that young Bengal officials would retain “habits of greater sobriety and manliness” than would otherwise have been the case.<sup>32</sup>

What kinds of behavior caused young Company employees in Calcutta or the other two presidency towns to quickly fall into debt to Indian creditors? It appears that many young Company officials—mainly the sons of merchants, bankers, and professionals who owned Company stock, or what Peter Cain and Anthony Hopkins have described as “gentlemanly capitalists”—acted like spendthrift aristocrats while in India,

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<sup>31</sup> Fort William College Council to Governor-General Lord Minto, 29 December 1812, cited in Bengal Public Consultations, 1 April 1814, BL/APAC/IOR/F/4/488/11845.

<sup>32</sup> Wood to Mackenzie, 28 October 1824, cited in Bengal Public Consultations, 16 December 1824; Mackenzie Minute, 21 April 1825, cited in Bengal Public Consultations, 21 April 1825; both documents, BL/APAC/IOR/F/4/916/25818.

something readily recognized by several Britons in India at the time.<sup>33</sup> For example, British traveler James Cordiner noted in his 1820 memoir that covenanted servants were “looked upon as the nobility of India” and generally acted as such, “assum[ing] an air of much consequence.” Likewise, Bengal indigo planter William Huggins observed four years later that many colonial bureaucrats adopted “a luxurious style of living, which equals that of noblemen in England.” However, such a lifestyle could not generally be afforded out of the modest salaries that many beginning (or even middle-ranking) Company employees received. Covenanted servants who aspired to “noble” status while in India usually were only able to partake in such “extravagance” by borrowing money from Indian creditors.<sup>34</sup>

In particular, various authors specifically mentioned two kinds of expenditures likely to involve young covenanted servants in debt: sumptuous living; and more scandalously, having sexual relations with Indian women. Regarding the first, Cordiner argued that “all classes of European society” in India—but covenanted servants especially—“live sumptuously... expend[ing] from two to ten thousand pounds each annually, in maintaining their households.” Much of this expenditure, Cordiner estimated, resulted from British officials eating the best meats and drinking the best Madeira wine and port available. Likewise, Huggins railed against young covenanted servants who got

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<sup>33</sup> P.J. Cain and A.G. Hopkins, *British Imperialism, 1688-2000* (1993; Harlow, UK and New York: Longman, 2002, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed.), 73, 279-80, 283, 649. For aristocratic attitudes toward debt during the late eighteenth and the first half of the nineteenth century, see John Habakkuk, *Marriage, Debt, and the Estates System: English Landownership, 1650-1950* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994), chap. 4; and David Cannadine, “Aristocratic Indebtedness in the Nineteenth Century,” *Aspects of Aristocracy: Grandeur and Decline in Modern Britain* (New Haven, CT and London: Yale University Press, 1994), 37-54. Cannadine summarizes as well as updates with newer research an older debate on aristocratic indebtedness during the nineteenth century between David Spring and F.M.L. Thompson.

<sup>34</sup> James Cordiner, *A Voyage to India* (Aberdeen: A. Brown and Co.; London: Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme, and Brown, 1820), 104; William Huggins, *Sketches in India, Treating on Subjects Connected with the Government; Civil and Military Establishments; Characters of the European, and Customs of the Native Inhabitants* (London: John Letts, 1824), 61.

carried away with their desire to live like landed gentlemen and aristocrats despite the fact that they could not often afford such extravagance on their modest salaries alone:

Arabs, English blood-horses, Pegu ponies, curricles and phaetons, come prancing before them with most bewitching fascination. Their pay, three hundred rupees per month, is quite sufficient to keep them respectably, but not at all sufficient to purchase all these fine things. How are they to be procured?—These young gentlemen who have got excellent situations in expectancy, upon their arrival in Calcutta, generally find some wealthy baboo [*babu*, or gentleman] to advance them large sums at an exorbitant interest, or else obtain a credit with some house of agency; so that like young birds, which dirty their wings in the mire, and are rendered incapable of flying, these youngsters incur a burthen, galling to them many a day afterwards; they make their appearance at the course on high-mettled horses, or in equipages; go to balls, dressed out in all the puppyism of dandies; keep the first company; drink claret and champagne; have horses at Garden Reach; in fine, live far beyond their means; debts accumulate, and the economising judge often regrets the follies of the writer.

Huggins conceded that the “manners” of covenanted servants in India by and large were “inoffensive.” For example, he argued that the “rows and quarrels so frequent among young men in Europe” at universities, many of them the sons of aristocrats, were rare among Company employees at the three presidency colleges in India. Even so, there were more than enough covenanted servants who acted as if they were spendthrift aristocratic heirs to cause Huggins and other Britons in India grave concern. Like young aristocrats, many covenanted servants borrowed heavily to pay for various “levities of foppery and voluptuous lounge.” Unlike them, though, British officials in India did not have estates which were strictly settled; only “excellent situations” within the colonial bureaucracy which they stood to eventually “inherit.” By falling into debt while young, the fear of Huggins and many colonial officials was that spendthrift Company employees risked opening the door to pernicious Indian influence over their actions in later years whereas the profligate aristocrats whom they were emulating generally were able to



inherit their strictly settled estates and, up to a point, ignore their youthful indiscretions.<sup>35</sup>

The second source of much youthful debt among covenanted servants in India appears to have been their sexual relationships with Indian women. Before 1850, perhaps as many as three-quarters of British men were unmarried when they first arrived in India.<sup>36</sup> This does not necessarily mean, as Ronald Hyam has claimed, that Britons went out to India and other places in the Empire with the main goal of having sex.<sup>37</sup> What it does suggest, though, is that several young and unmarried Company employees during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries would have frequented Indian prostitutes as well as took Indian mistresses.<sup>38</sup>

These sexual relationships cost money and often led to debt. As Thomas Williamson warned in his *East India Vade-Mecum* (1810), apparently designed “to be a manual or guide for young men planning to go out to India in the service of the East India Company,” there were serious “expenses attendant upon concubinage in the East.”<sup>39</sup> Not

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<sup>35</sup> Cordiner, *Voyages to India*, 110; Huggins, *Sketches in India*, 63-4. On the development of the British aristocratic and gentry institution of the strict settlement, see Habakkuk, *Marriage, Debt, and the Estates System*, chap. 1, and, regarding youthful profligacy, pp. 294-9. On p. 312, Habakkuk writes that “much of the debt of the great profligates was probably never discharged,” particularly if their estates were strictly settled for these legal agreements greatly limited the purposes for which family lands could be sold or mortgaged.

<sup>36</sup> C.J. Hawes, *Poor Relations: The Making of a Eurasian Community in British India, 1773-1833* (Surrey, UK: Curzon Press, 1996), 4.

<sup>37</sup> Ronald Hyam, *Empire and Sexuality: The British Experience* (Manchester: Manchester University Press; New York: St. Martin's Press, 1990).

<sup>38</sup> This topic has been well investigated in the last two decades or so by various scholars. In what is by now an extensive list, see particularly Kenneth Ballhatchet, *Race, Sex, and Class under the Raj: Imperial Attitudes and Policies and their Critics, 1793-1905* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1980); Betty Joseph, *Reading the East India Company, 1720-1840: Colonial Currencies of Gender* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004), chap. 3; William Dalrymple, *White Mughals: Love and Betrayal in Eighteenth-Century India* (London: HarperCollins, 2002); Hawes, *Poor Relations*, chap. 1 and *passim*; Durba Ghosh, “Colonial Companions: Bibis, Begums, and Concubines of the British in North India, 1760-1830” (Ph.D. diss., history, University of California-Berkeley, 2000); and *idem.*, *Colonial Companions: Sexual Transgression, Racial Mixing and Gendered Order in Early Colonial India, 1760-1840* (Cambridge University Press, forthcoming 2006); Sumanta Banerjee, *Under the Raj: Prostitution in Colonial Bengal* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1998); and Philippa Levine, *Prostitution, Race, and Politics: Policing Venereal Disease in the British Empire* (New York: Routledge, 2003).

<sup>39</sup> Joseph, *Reading the East India Company*, 101.

only did covenanted servants and other British men involved in such relationships typically have to pay for “two, or three, female attendants” as well as provide for “an allowance for bettle [sic], tobacco... shoes, cloaths, and *gynahs* [gold and silver ornaments],” but they could not get away with being cheap. As Williamson explained, this was because “[t]he natives are very scrupulous, and hold it the highest disgrace, for a woman to be retained, without due attendance, suitable cloathing, and a participation of the comforts, if not of the luxuries of life.” It is likely that young covenanted servants involved in such “dissipation” fell into debt attending to the “luxuries of life” of their Indian lovers as they would not generally have been able to afford such “extravagances” out of their salaries alone.<sup>40</sup>

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In addition to the controversies surrounding what young covenanted servants were borrowing money to enjoy, another question fraught with moral ambiguity surfaced in the 1820s: Should indebted covenanted servants in India be held personally responsible for their own debts? For some, such as Adam White, students who contracted significant debts “ought to be dismissed [from] the service” as their profligacy represented such a “serious abasement of the national dignity.”<sup>41</sup> Bengal officials, on the other hand, were more resistant to the idea of holding indebted covenanted servants fully responsible for their private debts. Consequently, they were not as consistent in their approach to private debt as was White. On the one hand, government officials were alarmed by the high percentage (nearly half) of Bengal covenanted servants who were found to be still in debt,

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<sup>40</sup> Williamson, *East India Vade-Mecum*, 1: 414, 415. For an interesting gendered reading of Williamson’s *East India Vade-Mecum*, see Joseph, *Reading the East India Company*, 100-7.

<sup>41</sup> White, *Considerations on the State of British India*, 351.

some 15 years after they graduated from Fort William College.<sup>42</sup> Thus, the Bengal government resolved in December 1824 in very similar language to White's:

Those who are incapable of exercising in the commencement of their career that degree of self-denial which every man of a well-regulated mind would be expected to exercise if placed in a similar position of society at home, will have themselves to blame, if they are denied that confidence in the force and integrity of their character which every one seeking important public trusts is bound to cultivate.<sup>43</sup>

However, despite this resolution's forceful Malthusian rhetoric, Governor-General Amherst and other members of the Bengal government did not follow through in their insistence on personal responsibility to its logical conclusion. Rather than insisting that indebted covenanted servants repay their debts themselves, they considered this problem to be beyond being solved through private initiative alone. Moreover, Amherst and other members of the Bengal government were concerned with protecting Indians from the widespread corruption they feared resulted from British bureaucrats falling into debt to Indian creditors. Thus, they proposed to the Court of Directors in late 1824 that a government fund be established to help indebted employees "who have been awakened, though late, to a sense of [the] evils" of private debt to gradually repay their loans. The Bengal government proposed that the Company repay ten per cent of the principal of the debts owed by indebted covenanted servants per year until they were retired.<sup>44</sup>

This proposal, however, the Court of Directors did not countenance. Rather, Company directors were fully convinced that the indebted covenanted servant who contracted debts "without knowing when he shall be able to discharge the obligation... [was] derelict of moral principle." Thus, they argued in a letter to Bengal officials

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<sup>42</sup> W.B. Bayley Minute, 2 April 1825, BL/APAC/IOR/F/4/916/25818.

<sup>43</sup> Bengal Council Resolution, 6 December 1824, BL/APAC/IOR/F/4/916/25818.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*

seventeen months later in May 1826 that only the “strict discharge in a public Functionary of moral obligations in his private capacity” guaranteed that “the confidence reposed in him will not be abused.” The covenanted servant who abused this confidence by incurring large debts, the Court argued, was “not likely to administer an important Office either with credit to himself, or with advantage to the Service.”<sup>45</sup>

By repaying the debts of their indebted employees, then, the Court of Directors feared it would be setting the wrong example by creating “the expectation of similar relief in future cases.” Company directors warned that this would naturally make “junior servants even less apprehensive of the inconvenience and disgrace of getting into Debt” as well as “afford increased inducement to money Lenders to pursue their ensnaring and pernicious traffic.” Thus, rather than helping its indebted employees get out of debt by repaying their loans, the Court of Directors adopted the harder Malthusian tack of ordering Bengal officials to bar indebted Company officials from future promotion until they had fully discharged their debts. Such a punishment, or the fear of it, Company directors believed, would be “a most efficient method” of forcing covenanted servants to own up to their responsibilities as men. They also believed that this measure would also “counteract habits of carelessness and extravagance” which often led to such embarrassments in the first place.<sup>46</sup>

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It is hard to know whether the Court of Directors’ alternative strategy for combating private indebtedness among British covenanted servants was successful in

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<sup>45</sup> Public Letter from Court of Directors to Bengal, 17 May 1826, BL/APAC/IOR/L/MIL/5/419/363.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*

diminishing the number of covenanted servants who were in debt. Nearly three decades later, in 1852 and 1853, witnesses gave conflicting testimony on the subject of British bureaucratic indebtedness before various parliamentary committees investigating the East India Company's colonial governance of India. Some colonial officials, such as former Board of Control President and Governor-General Lord Ellenborough, thought that indebtedness by covenanted servants was still a major problem which prevented many from being able "to save anything at all until the late years of their service." Likewise, John Pollard Willoughby, a member of the Bombay government, stated that many British officials fell into debt trying to purchase out senior officials blocking their promotion. To discourage the practice, Willoughby favored a two-pronged approach. The Bombay government should follow Bengal in establishing a "bonus fund" for the express "purpose of purchasing out their seniors." However, at the same time, Willoughby also supported barring Bombay officials in debt from future promotion, particularly "if a person was seriously involved in his pecuniary circumstances by his own fault."<sup>47</sup>

Other officials, however, asserted that indebtedness was not so much a problem as it once may have been. Bengal official Frederick James Halliday conceded that having young covenanted servants study Indian languages in Calcutta was far from ideal. Many students "put off study to the last," knowing that they had at least two years before they had to demonstrate proficiency in two Indian languages. Even so, he insisted that

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<sup>47</sup> Evidence of Edward Law, Earl Ellenborough, 18 June 1852, PP, 1852, *Report from the Select Committee on Indian Territories*, X (533), p. 235, q. 2302; Evidence of John Pollard Willoughby, 28 May 1852, *ibid.*, p. 145, q. 1495; p. 148, qq. 1510-1; p. 154, q. 1584. Willoughby's position was consistent with limited liability and bankruptcy legislation passed during the 1850s which distinguished between blameworthy and innocent insolvency. See G.R. Searle, *Morality and the Market in Victorian Britain* (Oxford: Clarendon Press; New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), chap. 5. For the wide influence of Evangelical attitudes toward indebtedness well into the middle decades of the nineteenth century, which held that bankruptcy was divine punishment for worldly excess, see Boyd Hilton, *The Age of Atonement: The Influence of Evangelicalism on Social and Economic Thought, 1795-1865* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988), 135-46.

indebtedness among British covenanted servants was not the problem which it once had been, stating on 8 April 1853 that “what is now called excessive pecuniary difficulty is quite a joke compared to what it used to be in former times.” Similarly, fellow Bengal official John Clarke Marshman stated a month later that indebtedness was not much of a problem. Some covenanted servants in the course of their language training at the presidency colleges still fell into debt, “but not to the extent they formerly did.” Moreover, these debts generally were not large. Few debtors owed more than £1,000 after their stint at Fort William College was over, while in previous decades reckless students were known to have racked up debts totaling more than £5,000.<sup>48</sup>

This disagreement among various colonial officials regarding the incidence of private indebtedness among covenanted servants may exaggerate the degree of overall disagreement on this issue. In the course of his testimony, Halliday had noted that various buildings in Calcutta which were owned by the colonial government, where students in previous decades were able to stay, had all been sold off by Governor-General Bentinck in the mid-1830s. When asked whether this had resulted in “an improvement in the behaviour of the young men,” Halliday answered the question affirmatively. In the two decades since Bentinck had forced Fort William College students to find their own accommodations in Calcutta, he could perceive a marked improvement in the conduct of young covenanted servants “as regards [their] pecuniary difficulties and debts.”<sup>49</sup> It is not clear whether in fact student indebtedness declined as a result of students having to find their own housing; presumably, it is just as likely (if not more so) that the reverse

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<sup>48</sup> Evidence of Frederick James Halliday, 8 April 1853, PP, 1852-3, *First Report from the Select Committee of House of Lords on Operation of Act for better Government of H.M. Indian Territories*, XXXI (627), p. 373, q. 3416; Evidence of John Clark Marshman, 3 May 1853, PP, 1852-3, *ibid.*, p. 564, q. 5039.

<sup>49</sup> Evidence of Frederick James Halliday, 8 April 1853, PP, 1852-3, *First Report from the Select Committee*, XXXI (627), p. 373, q. 3423.

occurred. Even so, the fact that Halliday and other officials believed to this be so demonstrates the importance of Malthusian ideas of self-restraint in the construction of British bureaucratic masculinity throughout the first half of the nineteenth century.

### **“Vexatious Expenses” and “Moral Obligations”: The Problems of Gift-Giving**

Another type of behavior by covenanted servants which caused much anxiety among colonial officials was the giving and receiving of presents. Like their dread of private debt, colonial officials feared that the exchange of presents between British bureaucrats and Indians under their authority could adversely affect their conduct by obligating those who accepted gifts to return the favor. Like British fears that Indian creditors lent money to young covenanted servants in order to gain influence over them in later years, many thought that Indians were trying to buy influence through gift-giving.

Again, as with nineteenth-century discussions about private debt, Edmund Burke set many of the terms of the debate. For example, in the *Eleventh Report* of the Select Parliamentary Committee on Indian Affairs published in November 1783, which he is generally believed to have authored, presents given by Indians were described as being “pretended Free Gifts” tendered mainly “with a rational Hope, of some Mitigation in the oppressive Requisitions” of British officials. This characterization of gifts was further developed in his later impeachment speeches. In his speech commencing the impeachment trial of Hastings, Burke thus indicted the governor-general for, among other things, not strictly enforcing the Company’s 1765 ban on the accepting of presents. Burke argued that British officials in India had a “moral obligation” not to accept gifts from Indians subject to their authority, one which was “inherent in the duty of their

office.” Six years later in June 1794, long after it had become clear that the House of Lords was not going to convict Hastings, Burke accused the Lords of ignoring “a gross, horrid, piece of corruption” by accepting the claims of Hastings and others that such behavior was merely “the custom of the Country.” Allowing such behavior to continue to go unpunished, he accosted the Lords, was “an affront to Justice” as well as “an infinite aggravation of the crime” of bribery itself.<sup>50</sup>

Several nineteenth-century commentators, following Burke’s lead, drew direct links between gift-giving and the bribery of covenanted servants. For example, in 1822 White argued that gift-giving stemmed from the gross “venality [of] the administration of justice” under Indian rulers, which rendered it “always customary with the wealthy suitors to propitiate the judge with a present” in exchange for favorable decisions. Similarly, Huggins warned two years later that British judges should beware wealthy Indians in their districts. These local notables, Huggins asserted, often “endeavour[ed], by attendance and obsequiousness, to gain a personal interest with the judge” through presenting him with gifts and thereby win their “numerous causes pending in court.”<sup>51</sup>

Similar concerns that Indians through the giving of presents sought to influence the decisions of British officials were expressed by colonial officials in India. For example, Madras officials argued in 1822 that Indian gift-givers were often “influenced by the hope of favor or the fear of spite” thus “virtually render[ing]” the exchange of gifts between Britons and Indians “extortion in the powerful party and bribery or corruption in the weak.” They considered the accepting of gifts by covenanted servants from Indians subject to their executive authority to be a “breach of public duty,” which threatened the

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<sup>50</sup> Burke, *Eleventh Report of Select Committee* (18 November 1783), *WS*, 5: 334, 343; *idem.*, “Speech on Opening” (18 February 1788), 6: 380; *idem.*, “Speech in Reply to Report” (16 June 1794), 7: 657, 659.

<sup>51</sup> White, *Considerations on the State of British India*, 293; Huggins, *Sketches in India*, 62.



“estimation which the government and its servants are... held by the people,” and undermined the “reciprocal duties of protection and allegiance between Government and its subjects.” Indian subjects, they concluded, would naturally interpret the actions of British officials who accepted gifts as being more driven by “intimate relations of private interest,” which could only be detrimental to British rule. Only British officials who refused to accept gifts could truly be trusted to act impartially.<sup>52</sup>

Indeed, to avoid even the appearance of impropriety in the public conduct of British officials, both the Bengal and Madras governments issued various directives during the 1820s banning their covenanted servants from receiving all presents from Indians, even customary ones such as “Nuzzers [small gifts] in money, and Trays of fruit and other articles.” Such gifts were seen to “operate as a heavy tax upon the party offering the compliment.” They were also deemed as “needlessly subjecting those who give the gifts to useless and frequently vexatious expence, and to extortion on the part of menial Servants and Dependants.”<sup>53</sup> Indeed, taking this ban on the accepting of presents by British officials even further, Bentinck issued a circular letter in 1833 to all Bengal officials instructing them to restrict as much as possible their personal contact with high-ranking Indians in their districts.<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>52</sup> Madras Government Resolution, cited in Madras Revenue Consultations, 22 November 1822, BL/APAC/IOR/F/4/1480/58265.

<sup>53</sup> Minute of Governor-General Bentinck, 28 May 1829, Bengal Public Consultations, 2 June 1829, IOR/F/4/1308/51984; Government Advertisement, General Department, Madras, 10 July 1829, cited in Madras Public Consultations, 10 July 1829, BL/APAC/IOR/F/4/1293/51689; for examples of other directives issued during this period see BL/APAC/IOR/F/4/783/21081 and BL/APAC/IOR/F/4/1376/54921.

<sup>54</sup> Political Letter from Bengal to Court of Directors, 21 November 1833, BL/APAC/IOR/F/4/1511/59576. Like covenanted servants who fell into debt to Indian subordinates, bans on the acceptance of gifts were occasionally enforced by the removal of officials from their posts. See pp. 184-186 below.

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In recent decades, various historians of India such as Sudipta Sen, Bernard Cohn, and Nicholas Dirks have argued that British concerns about Indian corruption arising from the exchange of presents between Indians and Britons were a gross misunderstanding by British officials of Indian gift-giving practices. Rather than the exchange of gifts between officials and supplicants or between higher and lesser ranked officials being essentially material exchanges and thus tantamount to bribery, Sen has argued that Indian gift-giving was fundamentally a political and social transaction, serving to mediate relationships between Indian princes and “influential noblemen or eminent merchants.” Gift-giving by Indian rulers, Cohn has contended, was not merely a “contractual exchange” rewarding the recipient for an immediate service performed by him or her, but also reflected gratitude for services performed in the past as well as those to be performed in the future. Indeed, as Dirks insists, the giving and receiving of presents in Indian society was “basic to [Indian] statecraft,” representing the process by which subjects became “not just subjects of but subjects to their kings.” Prior to the British conquest of India, Sen, Cohn, and Dirks argue, gift-giving in Indian society was mainly a political and social transaction having little to do with material exchange.<sup>55</sup>

These arguments about the main purposes of gift-exchange in pre-colonial Indian society are persuasive. Less convincing, however, are broader arguments that British officials totally or mostly misunderstood these exchanges. To some degree, they did, as

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<sup>55</sup> Sudipta Sen, *Empire of Free Trade: The East India Company and the Making of the Colonial Marketplace* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1998), chap. 2, quote on p. 67; Cohn, *Colonialism and its Forms of Knowledge: The British in India* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996), 113-21, quote on p. 118; also see *idem.*, “Representing Authority in Victorian India,” in Cohn, ed., *An Anthropologist among the Historians and Other Essays* (Delhi, Oxford, and New York: Oxford University Press, 1987), 635-7; Dirks, *The Hollow Crown: Ethno-History of an Indian Kingdom* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1987), chap. 4, quotes on pp. 128 and 136.

was perhaps inevitable in attempting to render comprehensible practices of a different culture from theirs. What Sen, Cohn, and Dirks fail to adequately account for, however, is *why* the British generally considered gift-giving to be such a corrupting practice which (like private debt obligations to Indian creditors) they feared as threatening their moral virtue.

The answer cannot have been a lack of British understanding of gift-exchange for a parallel gift-giving economy existed in Britain during the same period. As both Margot Finn and Amanda Vickery have argued, gift-giving was “widely pervasive” in British society during the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, where “it worked at once to mark social distinctions and to maintain social solidarity.” Local notables, through giving presents to the poor and servants, as well as gifts to local yeoman farmers, exerted social power and influence. The function of the gift was also quite similar to that in Indian culture. Presents given by notables to their servants, for instance, “were calculated to reward past service, to promote future deference and to underline the lesser status of the recipient.” Gifts exchanged between social equals, by contrast, “sustained the horizontal ties of polite friendship.” This fundamentally social process of customary gift-giving between Britons of varying social classes served in many respects to “acknowledge and perpetuate the values and behaviors of a hierarchical society.” Receivers of presents as well as their givers were thus imbricated in a web of deference, reciprocity, and social and moral obligation during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries largely existing outside the market economy.<sup>56</sup>

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<sup>56</sup> Margot Finn, *The Character of Credit: Personal Debt in English Culture, 1740-1914* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 76-89, quotes on pp. 81 and 84; Amanda Vickery, *The Gentleman's Daughter: Women's Lives in Georgian England* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1998), *passim*, quote on p. 209.

Rather than completely misunderstanding Indian gift-giving, I would argue that what many Britons objected to was not gift-giving itself but rather the receiving of gifts from Indians over whom they ruled. Fearing the perceived obligations they would owe to gift-givers, Britons in India worried that these obligations, like private debts owed to Indian creditors, would be corrupting influences on their conduct. Furthermore, in such cases, British covenanted servants would not likely retain British “mastery” over India. By accepting gifts from Indians subject to their authority, then, British colonial officials contradicted broader British efforts to present themselves as governing India morally.

*Reality versus Discourse: Bribery and Corruption Cases Involving Covenanted Servants*

Indeed, several authors and colonial officials during the first half of the nineteenth century generally argued that covenanted servants were so virtuous that they generally avoided presents. This was largely so, as Huggins claimed in 1824, because the “government [was] well acquainted with the different avenues to corruption, and has blocked them up.” Consequently, while Huggins conceded that several Company employees in the eighteenth century “acquired wealth, by disgraceful and dishonest practices,” he argued that their nineteenth-century descendants had “generally pure hands, and discharge[d] their duties uprightly.” Bribery among covenanted servants, he claimed, was “rare compared to the extent of the service and number of persons employed.”<sup>57</sup>

Various colonial officials during the first half of the nineteenth century presented similar arguments. Thus, William Butterworth Bayley, a member of the Bengal government throughout most of the 1820s and 1830s, extolled the virtues of covenanted servants in an 1829 minute replying to Bentinck’s which banned the accepting of fruit

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<sup>57</sup> Huggins, *Sketches in India*, 70.

and other small gifts given to British officials by Indians. He confidently stated that he “imagine[d] no public functionary ever accepts a Nuzur of money, however trifling, when offered by a Native.” Similarly, Henry Lushington, formerly the governor of Malta, also uniformly praised British judges in India for generally not accepting bribes in his 1853 tract on Indian civil service reform. While he conceded that they “may fail in doing justice from error” he baldly stated that such failure was never the result of taking bribes, from which “an Englishman would blush.” Indeed, he argued that British officials in India were the “standard of a higher manhood,” particularly compared to their Indian underlings who “will embezzle, take bribes, and lie, almost without compunction or shame.” In making this argument he was joined by civil service reformer Sir Charles Edward Trevelyan who insisted in 1853 that it was “only justice” to remark that British covenanted servants were known for their “purity in the midst of great temptations to corruption” as well as for their “devotion to the public interest” and for their “prevailing public spirit.”<sup>58</sup>

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While Bayley and Lushington baldly asserted that covenanted servants “would blush” if offered presents from Indians, the reality, of course, was not always so simple or so favorable to their reputations. One type of behavior which continually bedeviled both London and Madras officials for much of the latter half of the eighteenth century was the

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<sup>58</sup> Minute by W.B. Bayley, Member of the Bengal Council, 28 May 1829, cited in Bengal Public Consultations, 2 June 1829, BL/APAC/IOR/F/4/1308/51984; Henry Lushington, *The Double Government, the Civil Service, and the India Reform Agitation* (London: Wm. H. Allen & Co., 1853), 52; Evidence of Sir Charles Edward Trevelyan, 28 June 1853, PP, 1852-3, *Second Report from Select Committee of House of Lords on Operation of Act for better Government of H.M. Indian Territories*, XXXII (627-I), p. 211, q. 6888.

supposed lending of money by Company officials to Indian princes or their various court officials. In many cases the loans were simply facades to extort gifts in the form of “interest” payments, something readily recognized at the time. For example, as early as 1766, the Court of Directors ordered its employees in Madras to cease this practice, despairing that they had received “presents or gratuities” from *nawabs* or their ministers “by way of exorbitant Interest on monies lent, or said to be lent to them by our Servants.” The directive was written in a peremptory tone, threatening any servant who persisted in “lending” money to Indians with suspension from the service.<sup>59</sup>

However, it is unlikely that British officials in India paid much heed to these warnings. Very similar directives were issued over the next few decades explaining, to little avail, why such loans were “extortions” and “exactions” unbecoming of British colonial bureaucrats. As late as 1799, more than three decades after the practice of covenanted servants lending money to Indian princes had been banned by Company directors in London, directors still complained to Madras officials of the continuance of the “ruinous practice.” They expressed particular concern over the duplicitous and “artful manner in which these Transactions are said to be carried on through the Secret Agency of Native Dubashes [*dabashes*, or clerks] and others.”<sup>60</sup>

More threatening to various efforts by government officials and authors to project a uniform public image of British bureaucratic honesty and probity during the first half of the nineteenth century were cases where covenanted servants either gave or took bribes. In July 1814, for instance, upon discovering that Indian revenue officers under his employ had embezzled large sums of money from the public treasury, Thomas Warden, a

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<sup>59</sup> Court of Directors to Madras, 17 May 1766, BL/APAC/IOR/H/261 (7).

<sup>60</sup> Political Letter from Madras to Court of Directors, 9 October 1800; Public Letter from Court of Directors to Madras, 5 June 1799; both documents, BL/APAC/IOR/F/4/94/1905.

Madras revenue collector, attempted to recoup some of the money stolen through bribing the bankers whom the Indian officials used to launder the money to inform him where it was hidden. This behavior received the sharp censure of the superintending Madras Board of Revenue which recommended three months later that disciplinary proceedings be initiated against Warden. While the original embezzlement by Indian revenue officers was bad enough, Warden's highly unorthodox method of trying to recover the money stolen was not "creditable to a public Officer holding a high and responsible charge."<sup>61</sup>

Higher authorities were even more livid about Warden's behavior. A month later, the Governor of Madras, with the approval of other members of the Madras government, removed Warden from office. In the accompanying minute ordering Warden's dismissal, the Madras governor explained that he had "too near a concern in the respectability of Mr. Warden's Office, and, in the integrity of his public Servants to suffer conduct by which either of these may be impaired to pass without animadversion." Justifying their removal of Warden from office to the Court of Directors four months later in March 1815, the Madras government wrote that Warden had "take[n] measures which we considered calculated to reflect discredit on his Office and to corrupt the morals of the Servants acting under him."<sup>62</sup>

Perhaps most threatening to British projections of their superior morality vis-à-vis Indian colonial bureaucrats, though, was the case of Mordaunt Ricketts, British Resident (ambassador) to the Awadhi court at Lucknao during the mid and late 1820s. Soon after he left office, charges surfaced that he had extorted significant sums of money and numerous presents from the king and other court officials. Sir Thomas Herbert Maddock,

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<sup>61</sup> Madras Board of Revenue Proceedings, 17 October 1814, BL/APAC/IOR/F/4/505/12184.

<sup>62</sup> Madras Political Secretary David Hill to Madras Board of Revenue, 15 November 1814; Revenue Letter from Madras to Court of Directors, 1 March 1815; both documents, BL/APAC/IOR/F/4/505/12184.

his successor as Resident, was at first reluctant to believe these charges when they were first brought to his attention in January 1831, in large part because of his belief in the nearly universal dishonesty of Indians. However, further evidence surfaced within the next four years which definitively proved Ricketts's guilt.<sup>63</sup>

In addition to removing Ricketts from the covenanted service in November 1834, the Bengal government sought to make an example of Ricketts's "public disgrace" by issuing a salutary warning to other covenanted servants. Thus, Trevelyan, then a deputy-secretary in the Bengal government, instructed Lieutenant-Colonel Sir John Low, Maddock's replacement as Resident, to explain to the king of Awadh that "bribery and corruption are considered by the highest authorities both in England and in this Country as detestable crimes." Moreover, Trevelyan ordered Low to inform the king that "all upright men" consider the receipt of presents to be "disgracing" to both the giver as well as the receiver. In executing these instructions, Low waxed historical, stressing his belief in a letter to the king of Awadh a month later that "[c]orruption should be prevented by all practicable means because the whole History of the World has proved that in those states where it has existed for any length of time unpunished by the Rulers all prosperity has ceased and Ruin has rapidly followed."<sup>64</sup>

### **"Our Service Presents a Vast Deal of Rough Hard Work": Concerns about Company Patronage after 1830**

The fact that private debt, gift-giving, and corruption were such salient issues during the first third of the nineteenth century for covenanted servants in India had much

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<sup>63</sup> T.H. Maddock to Bengal, 15 January 1831, BL/APAC/IOF/4/1418/55994.

<sup>64</sup> Trevelyan to Low, 6 November 1834; translation of letter from Low to His Majesty the King of Oudh, 8 December 1834, both documents cited in Political Letter from Bengal to Court of Directors, 20 April 1835, BL/APAC/IOF/4/1527/60298.



to do with various anxieties about moral governance explored in the last chapter. So long as British bureaucrats were expected to govern India by themselves, as was the case between 1793 and 1831, colonial officials expressed great concern about financial improprieties among covenanted servants such as private indebtedness to Indian creditors or accepting gifts from Indians subject to their authority, fearing that either activity might endanger British “mastery” over India. Only by always acting virtuously, eschewing both private debt obligations to Indian creditors as well as gifts proffered by Indians subject to their direct authority, would British colonial officials prevent supposedly corrupt private Indian influence from adversely affecting their decision-making.

After 1831, however, when Governor-General Bentinck formally devolved many of the responsibilities of colonial governance to subordinate Indian clerks, British expectations regarding the conduct of covenanted servants shifted along with their roles. No longer entirely responsible by themselves for governing their districts, now the main role of British colonial bureaucrats was to supervise subordinate Indian officials. Having, metaphorically speaking, “grown up” and learned how to rule in a more effective manner by entrusting many day-to-day responsibilities of governance to Indian subordinates, now it was imperative that covenanted servants demonstrate that they were manlier than Indian revenue and judicial officials whom they supervised—whom Britons began to routinely belittle as needing to be trained by themselves how properly to govern. Consequently, greater attention than before was paid to the Company’s patronage system and whether the right sort of British men were being sent out to govern India.

*The Problem of Physically Incapable Covenanted Servants: The Case of James Fraser*

As the previous section on British concerns about gift-giving demonstrated with the Ricketts case, the 1830s was a period of transition when older concerns about the personal morality of British officials—particularly regarding their financial relationships with Indians—still resonated. These concerns coexisted with newer ones about the physical and mental capacity of Company bureaucrats to govern. Both types of British anxiety about covenanted servants can be seen at work in the furor of Bengal officials over the case of Bengal judge James Fraser in 1831. For several months in 1830 because of personal illness, Fraser only held sporadic court sessions, devolving nearly all the judicial business in his district to Indian judicial officials under his employ. Because only the *amlas* of the court [the chief Indian judicial officials] could visit Fraser, they had such power that “they do as they please” as an Indian named “Abdulah” complained to the Bengal government in a December 1830 petition. Consequently, murders and robberies, among other crimes, went unpunished, as there was “nothing but mismanagement of the Courts, and oppression on the people.”<sup>65</sup>

Two months later in early March 1831 when Abdulah’s charges were wholly substantiated, Bengal officials were livid. Bentinck strongly condemned Fraser on 30 March in a minute to fellow members of the Bengal government. The governor-general argued that any “public officer” such as Fraser, “who could betray such utter indifference to the welfare of the Community living under his protection... must be consider unfit for any important trust.” Bentinck directed nearly as much ire, however, at the local revenue collector, Mr. Ainslie, as well as members of the Benares Court of Appeals which were

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<sup>65</sup> Petition of Abdulah, 29 December 1830, cited in Bengal Judicial Consultations, 12 July 1831, BL/APAC/IOR/F/4/1305/51789.

supposed to exert immediate supervision over Fraser. He sharply condemned their “culpable disinclination to expose the misconduct of a fellow Servant” which needlessly “subjected to jeopardy the interests of a large and populous District and betrayed the Sacred trust reposed in [them] by [their] employers.” Considering there to be a “considerable laxity of discipline in some Departments of the Civil Service,” Bentinck advocated issuing a circular letter to all Bengal officials stating “the displeasure of Government.” He believed that such an action would “have the effect of preventing the recurrence of such negligence.”<sup>66</sup>

Other members of the Bengal government, however, while certainly sharing the same level of anger toward both Fraser’s conduct as well as that of others who helped to shield it from scrutiny for several months, were not so keen to issue a blanket public condemnation of Fraser, Ainslie, or any of the members of the Benares appeals court. For example, William Blunt argued on 13 April that “any public notification in which the Official character even of an Individual is concerned, should be restricted to cases of gross delinquency.” Considering the dismissal of Fraser to be punishment enough, he considered a public condemnation of his behavior to be gratuitous. Not only was such a public statement from government not necessary, for Blunt believed that Bentinck’s concerns about “the relaxation of discipline in the Civil Service” and the “disposition” of bureaucrats to “overlook the demerits of their fellow Servants” to be greatly exaggerated, but bespeaking new concerns about the reputation of British colonial bureaucrats as a whole, Blunt feared that it would be injurious to “the character of the Civil Service in the estimation of the public [among] both Europeans and Natives.” Ultimately, Blunt

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<sup>66</sup> W.H. Macnaghten, Secretary to the Governor General, to Mr. Judicial Deputy Secretary Thomason, 30 March 1831, cited in Bengal Judicial Consultations, 12 July 1831, BL/APAC/IOR/F/4/1305/51789.

convinced Metcalfe and Bentinck as well as other members of the Bengal government to adopt the lesser course of action two days later on 15 April of simply dismissing Fraser from the service and writing a private letter reproaching Ainslie. A month later, Bentinck wrote Ainslie reprimanding him for failing to immediately report Fraser's misconduct to higher authorities and thereby allowing "the Inhabitants of the district [to be] unnecessarily denied all access to justice."<sup>67</sup>

*Broader Concerns about Company Patronage and the Manliness of Covenanted Servants*

In his scathing March 1831 minute recommending the public condemnation of Fraser, Ainslie, and the members of the Bengal Court of Appeals by the Bengal government for their official misconduct, Bentinck implied that had these individuals properly informed the Bengal government about Fraser's misconduct earlier, the people of Bundelkund (Fraser's district) would not have suffered "an entire denial of justice."<sup>68</sup> It is hard to know how true or not this may have been in actual fact. What is clear, though, is that several Britons in India during the second quarter of the nineteenth century began attacking the Company's patronage system for producing such "bad bargains" as Fraser. Several contended that the only reason why incapable officials such as Fraser were even sent out to India at all was because they happened to know a Company director or an influential shareholder, *not* because they were actually capable of governing.

These concerns about Company patronage were augmented by the fact that the East India Company lost all its remaining mercantile functions two years later in 1833.

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<sup>67</sup> Minute of William Blunt, 13 April 1831; Minute of the Vice President, 15 April 1831; Macnaghten to M. Ainslie, Commissioner of Revenue and Circuit for the 8<sup>th</sup> or Humeerpore Division, 13 May 1831; all three documents cited in Bengal Judicial Consultations, 12 July 1831, BL/APAC/IOR/F/4/1305/51789.

<sup>68</sup> Macnaghten to Thomason, 30 March 1831, cited in Bengal Judicial Consultations, 12 July 1831, BL/APAC/IOR/F/4/1305/51789.

So long as the Company retained some of its commercial trading rights, its “commercial line” was generally filled by Company employees who were “known and ascertained to be fools before they left England.” These incapable Company employees, as George Campbell explained in his 1853 reform tract, were “safely shelved in comfortable sinecures” to avoid their doing harm to the more important business of governing India. Now that this was no longer possible, it was absolutely essential that only fully qualified covenanted servants be selected to go out to India. As Sir Thomas Edward Colebrooke insisted in 1852, it was an absolute “absurdity [to] suppose” that Britain could “govern a country like India by an average mediocrity.” India demanded an “administration [which] kept pace with the increasing demands of the country” as well as administrators who were more than able to keep up.<sup>69</sup>

Although Campbell and Colebrooke focused on the question of whether Company employees in India were capable and efficient enough to govern, others expressed more overtly gendered complaints about the covenanted service. For example, Company director Henry St. George Tucker complained nine years earlier about the overly academic nature of the training which all covenanted servants received at Haileybury before they were sent out to India:

Our excellent and accomplished professors at Haileybury wish to send forth men, like themselves, eminent and highly-finished scholars; but this is not what we want. We do not require *literary razors* to cut blocks. Our service presents a vast deal of rough hard work, for which *intellectual hatchets* are more suitable.

Instead of erudite scholars, what India most required from Britain was “men of good understanding, of moral character, and of industrious habits.” Tucker asserted that in the eighteenth century, before Company employees were required to undergo extensive

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<sup>69</sup> Campbell, *India as it May Be*, 256; Sir Thomas Edward Colebrooke, “A Letter to Thos. Baring, Esq., M.P. on the Indian Civil Service” (London: Upham and Beet, 1852), 12, 14, 21, 22.

bureaucratic training, Britain sent out to India “men of vigorous intellect, and of a masculine character, fully equal in every attribute of statesmen to those who have succeeded.” Indeed, further underscoring his anti-intellectualism, Tucker argued that “if our first soldiers and civilians” had possessed the amount of learning they were now required to attain, “India, I suspect, would never have been conquered by us; or, if conquered, would not long have been retained by the force of erudition.” In short, Tucker argued, India required *real* men to rule it, not covenanted servants who possessed bureaucratic *éclat*.<sup>70</sup>

Similar concerns about the manliness of Company employees were expressed by various witnesses who testified before parliamentary committees during 1852 and 1853. These discussions frequently overlapped with debates over whether Indians ought to be allowed to join the covenanted service which I examined in the last chapter. For example, in explaining his opposition to further Indianization of the colonial bureaucracy in May 1852, Bengal official William Wilberforce Bird also stressed the importance of sending out the right sort of British men to rule India: only those who were “fit for the exercise of superior duties” would do. Only then would the British continue to “maintain... on the part of the natives a general impression of the superiority of Europeans.” Likewise, Lord Ellenborough insisted a month later that more manly Britons needed to be sent out to India than the family relations or connections of Company directors and shareholders:

The Committee must recollect that our hold upon India rests altogether upon the superior ability and the superior character of the European. If that be diminished, in the same degree, our hold over the country is diminished, and if that should altogether go, it will be perfectly impossible for us to retain our power over the country.

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<sup>70</sup> Henry St. George Tucker, “The Education of the Civil Service” (1843), *Memorials of Indian Government; Being a Selection from the Papers of Henry St. George Tucker, Late Director of the East India Company*, ed. John W. Kaye (London: Richard Bentley, 1853), 430, 431. Emphasis in original.

Complaining that the Company's patronage system rewarded too many "middle-class" Britons who had ties to Company directors for the greater good of colonial governance, Ellenborough insisted that more English "gentlemen" needed to be sent out to India than were being appointed by Company directors. "The higher the class from which you take the officers of the Indian Government," the former governor-general argued, "the greater the security for the constant connexion between India and England." Only covenanted servants chosen from among the gentry and aristocracy, he maintained, would likely be manly enough to rule over Indians.<sup>71</sup>

Most defenders of the Company's patronage system, by contrast, did not focus so heavily on the question of whether the covenanted servants being sent out to India were manly enough to govern, more concerned as they were then with preserving the Company's rights vis-à-vis the British State's. More common, therefore, were Company directors and officials who argued that the Company's patronage system generally resulted in men of ability being sent out to India and that if there were occasional problems, they were the fault more of Company officials in India than in London. For example, Company director William Henry Sykes congratulated himself and other directors by asserting that their "distribution of the patronage" was "perfectly harmless." Similarly, Melvill argued that most Company directors "regard their patronage as a serious trust" and generally only bestowed it on individuals who "seemed entitled to consideration." Other witnesses such as John Stuart Mill, then a high-ranking Company official, admitted that there were problems with patronage but insisted that Company directors were generally blameless. Mill maintained that "neither a Director, nor any one

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<sup>71</sup> Evidence of William Wilberforce Bird, 18 May 1852, PP, 1852-3, *Report from the Select Committee of the House of Lords*, XXIX (41), p. 117, q. 1203; p. 118, q. 1206; Evidence of Earl Ellenborough, 18 June 1852, PP, 1852, *Report from the Select Committee on Indian Territories*, X (533), p. 239, q. 2307.

else connected with the Home Government, has it in his power to appoint an unfit person to any situation in India.” Instead of blaming Company directors for sending out incapable Company functionaries, Mill insisted that the real blame for the problem existed in India with the three presidential governments which made the final appointments.<sup>72</sup>

Other defenders of the Company’s patronage system did employ more overtly gendered arguments in favor of retaining it. For example, in countering Ellenborough’s complaints about the “middle-class” orientation of the covenanted service and the insufficient numbers of aristocrats and “gentlemen” among its ranks, Bombay governor Sir George Russell Clerk argued that there was no group more “peculiarly suitable” for employment in the colonial bureaucracy than the mercantile, banking, and professional families who generally benefited from Company patronage. He did not know of other Britons who “educate[d] their children in more honourable principles” than this “class of society.” Despite isolated instances here and there of covenanted servants who fall into debt or accept gifts, by and large, colonial bureaucrats were known for their “integrity” and their manliness, generally regarding “peculation and [the accepting of] perquisites” as being “filth[y]” and unmanly behavior.<sup>73</sup>

Similarly, Bombay official John Pollard Willoughby supported the retention of the Company’s patronage system, claiming that it encouraged manliness among covenanted servants in India. Not only were covenanted servants “more efficient in the

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<sup>72</sup> Evidence of Colonel William Henry Sykes, 28 May 1852, PP, 1852, *Report from the Select Committee on Indian Territories*, X (533), p. 169, q. 1759; Evidence of Sir James Cosmo Melvill, 4 May 1852, *ibid.*, p. 22, q. 245; Evidence of John Stuart Mill, 21 June 1852, PP, 1852-3, *Report from the Select Committee of the House of Lords*, XXIX (41), p. 304, q. 2940.

<sup>73</sup> Evidence of Sir George Russell Clerk, 5 April 1853, PP, 1852-3, *First Report from the Select Committee on Indian Territories*, XXVII (426), p. 181, q. 2211.



discharge of the peculiar duties devolving upon them than could safely be calculated upon under any other system” but Willoughby also argued that a major “offset to the inconvenience of an exclusive service” was the “conviction” among many civil servants in India that their promotion was “in no way dependent upon the arbitrary will or caprice of men in power.”<sup>74</sup> This greatly fostered “a tone of manly independence” among covenanted servants which was in danger of being lost.<sup>75</sup>

### **Would Exams Create Manly I.C.S. Men? The 1853 Debate over the Introduction of Competitive Examinations in the Indian Civil Service**

Despite the various arguments put forth by Company directors, India House officials, and Company sympathizers like Clerk and Willoughby in favor of the continuation of the Company’s patronage system, Board of Control President Sir Charles Wood (1852-5), aided by Macaulay, Trevelyan, and Benjamin Jowett, the Master of Oxford’s Balliol College, abolished patronage in 1853 with relative ease, replacing it with open competitive examinations. As a result, historians have generally portrayed the debate in 1853 as being more about other issues than the introduction of competitive examinations *per se*. For example, R.J. Moore has framed the 1853 parliamentary debate largely in terms of the question of whether Haileybury College ought to be retained. Although Wood initially favored maintaining the college, Jowett succeeded in lobbying other members of the government to implement clauses in the Charter Act which allowed

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<sup>74</sup> As John Bourne explains, this was a typical feature of patronage. Although personal interest played a large role in whether or not a particular candidate gained patronage at the outset, once the post had been awarded, the patronage dispenser generally had no control over the future promotion prospects of the patronage recipient. This would have remained so regardless of whether or not the Company’s patronage was abolished. However, this point was not recognized by Willoughby and other defenders of the Company’s patronage at the time. Bourne, *Patronage and Society*, 106-7.

<sup>75</sup> Evidence of John Pollard Willoughby, 27 May 1852, PP, 1852, *Report from the Select Committee on Indian Territories*, X (533), pp. 143, 144, 145, q. 1494.

all university students to compete for the covenanted service regardless of whether or not they attended Haileybury. Seeing the handwriting on the wall, Wood closed Haileybury a year later and over the next few decades, much as Jowett had desired, the covenanted service had become dominated by Oxbridge. As a result, the ancient universities obtained a new role in British society as the training grounds of the bureaucracy, first in India and then, once examinations became introduced for the British State bureaucracy in 1870, in Britain as well.<sup>76</sup>

Other historians such as Timothy Alborn have located the 1853 patronage debate within a wider political struggle between radicals and Whigs during the middle decades of the nineteenth century. In Alborn's view, Wood and fellow Whigs implemented competitive examinations in 1853 in an attempt to outflank "Young India" radicals like John Bright and Richard Cobden. Bright and Cobden sought to abolish the Company outright to make colonial administration democratically accountable, a goal which was too radical for the liking of Wood and other fellow Whigs. However, in abolishing Company patronage, Wood removed the last remaining justification for the Company's continued existence. Only five years later, after the Company had shown gross incompetence in its handling of the Sepoy Rebellion, Lord Palmerston's government liquidated it with relative ease. Wood's reform in 1853, although intended to be a "gentle nudge" toward reforming the Company into a more accountable organ of colonial government so that it could successfully withstand the attacks of Bright and Cobden, ultimately ended up being "a prelude to terminating the Company" outright five years

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<sup>76</sup> R.J. Moore, "The Abolition of Patronage in the Indian Civil Service and the Closure of Haileybury College," *Historical Journal* 7, no. 2 (1964): 246-57; and *idem*, *Sir Charles Wood's Indian Policy, 1853-66* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1966), 86-91. Also see Clive Dewey, "The Education of a Ruling Caste: The Indian Civil Service in the Era of Competitive Examination," *English Historical Review* 88, no. 247 (1973): 262-85, part. 263-8; and Bourne, *Patronage and Society*, 32-5.

later.<sup>77</sup>

The abolition of the East India Company's bureaucratic patronage in 1853 was all of these things.<sup>78</sup> At the same time, there was considerable debate in 1853 and thereafter over whether competitive examinations would ensure that "manly Englishmen" would be selected to go out to govern India. Some officials thought that competitive examinations would reward those candidates who possessed superior manliness and morality. Thus, although Melvill supported the retention of the Company's patronage in order to "prevent party and home politics from exercising a most pernicious influence on the administration of affairs in India," he also thought that competitive examinations would tend to promote a "manliness and mental enlargement" among would-be colonial bureaucrats. Likewise, Trevelyan argued that competitive examinations would keep out the "idle and ignorant," whom he generally considered to be men of "inferior moral character." Only those who possessed "industry, perseverance, self-denial and courage" would be selected for the covenanted service, thus ensuring that India was governed only by men who possessed "considerable moral qualities."<sup>79</sup>

Similarly, James Silk Buckingham made similar arguments in favor of competitive examinations for the covenanted service a year later. Buckingham had been expelled from India in the mid-1820s for criticizing then-Governor-General Lord Amherst, and from that time onward had been an unflagging Company opponent. In his

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<sup>77</sup> Albion, *Conceiving Companies: Joint-Stock Politics in Victorian England* (London and New York: Routledge, 1998), 14, 40, 48-50.

<sup>78</sup> The Company's military patronage remained untouched by the Charter Act of 1853, being abolished only when the Company was dissolved by Parliament five years later in 1858.

<sup>79</sup> Evidence of Sir James Cosmo Melvill, 4 May 1852, *Report from the Select Committee on Indian Territories*, X (533), p. 22, q. 246; *idem.*, 10 May 1852, PP, 1852-3, *Report from the Select Committee of the House of Lords*, XXIX (41), p. 44, q. 460; Evidence of Sir Charles Edward Trevelyan, 28 June 1853, PP, 1852-3, *Second Report from Select Committee of House of Lords on Operation of Act for better Government of H.M. Indian Territories*, XXXII (627-I), p. 216, q. 6904.

1854 Indian reform tract, he argued that “nothing” could be better for the improvement of Britain’s colonial government of India than to make entry into the covenanted service “the reward of the highest merit, in open competition.” Buckingham did caution that competitive exams would not necessarily be a panacea: for one thing, there would be no guarantee that those who would qualify for bureaucratic positions in India would actually possess “high moral character.” Even so, the Indian reformer held far greater hope in examinations rewarding men who possessed these traits than the Company’s patronage system. Buckingham contended that “as a general rule, it may be safely admitted that where such early proofs of ability are given, the chances of subsequent excellence are far greater than where they are not; and therefore it is the safest rule that can be followed.”<sup>80</sup>

Other colonial officials were more ambivalent about whether competitive examinations would ensure that British colonial officials sent out to India were manly enough to govern. For example, Bombay judicial official Sir Thomas Erskine Perry worried that too many “book-worms” would be selected for the covenanted service. Echoing Tucker, he insisted that ruling India did not require men who possessed academic prowess but rather “men who can get on a horse and ride thirty miles before breakfast.” To ensure that India’s rulers were manly enough to govern the colony, Perry recommended not selecting them according to competitive examination but rather drawing them from the army. Only then would British officials ensure that covenanted servants possessed both the “physical qualities as well as [the] mental” ones needed to be

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<sup>80</sup> James Silk Buckingham, “Plan for the Future Government of India,” in Buckingham, ed., *A New Series of Tracts for the Times, Addressed to the Public and Parliament of 1854* (1853; London: Partridge, Oakly & Co., 1854, 3rd ed.), 174.

capable of governing.<sup>81</sup>

Similarly, other colonial officials such as Bengal judge George Campbell and Company director Henry Thoby Prinsep were uneasy about covenanted servants being selected by competitive examination. Campbell conceded the importance of having covenanted servants who were competent enough to govern: the incompetent and incapable British bureaucrat, he warned, “not only [drew] a salary for which he does not return competent labour, but he [did] inconceivable injury by mismanaging important offices.” Even so, he worried that a “service composed exclusively of men of very brilliant and forward genius” would be unmanageable. Instead of selecting men with these qualities, the Bengal judge thought it more important to have covenanted servants who were manly enough to govern. Above all, Campbell insisted that British officials in India ought to be “very bold and confident... in the first instance” as well as “honest, willing, [and] discreet men of reasonably good abilities.”<sup>82</sup>

Likewise, Prinsep asserted that selecting British colonial officials solely according to superior intellectual ability would not always ensure that the best candidates were chosen. He warned that policymakers needed to be “especially careful not to base the selection for Indian service too exclusively on book-learning” for this could potentially enable Indians to gain entry into the covenanted service. Although Prinsep insisted that it was important that British covenanted servants be “well versed in the literature and science of the day, and not ashamed to meet the *élèves* of Indian seminaries,” this was not the most important trait or traits which a covenanted servant ought to possess. Rather,

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<sup>81</sup> Evidence of Sir [Thomas] Erskine Perry, 15 March 1853, PP, 1852-3, *First Report from the Select Committee of House of Lords on Operation of Act for better Government of H.M. Indian Territories*, XXXI (627), pp. 264-5, qq. 2606-7, 2611-2.

<sup>82</sup> Campbell, *India as it May Be*, 256, 257, 263, 264.

the Company director recommended that “men of energy and of action” who possessed “character” be appointed to positions of high trust in India. In short, he contended, British colonial officials needed to possess those “qualities in which the natives of India know themselves to be deficient.”<sup>83</sup> There was no guarantee that these “qualities”—whatever they might be—would be demonstrated in an academic examination.

## Conclusion

These doubts about whether competitive examinations selected the *right* type of British men to govern India would only intensify after 1853. Despite the efforts of Trevelyan and other reformers to “capture” the Indian Civil Service for “the finest products of the great universities,” thoroughly “English gentlemen” like himself, the covenanted service became dominated by “men of very brilliant and forward genius” just as Campbell had predicted would be the case.<sup>84</sup> Ironically enough, it was George Otto Trevelyan, the son of the civil service reformer, who most forcefully pointed out the shortcomings of his father’s strategy. In *The Competition Wallah* (1864), his screed on the covenanted service, Trevelyan lampooned the manliness of the Oxbridge scholar-cum-covenanted servant. This official was known more for his “pedantic, unpractical turn of mind” and his “sedentary effeminate habit of body” than for being manly. Many “competition wallahs,” Trevelyan moaned, lacked the “physical dash and the athletic habits that are so essential in India.” In particular, officials “who suffer[ed] from [a] headache in a badly-ventilated courthouse” were utterly “useless.” Rather, echoing many of the same concerns of Tucker and Perry, Trevelyan contended that the only British

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<sup>83</sup> Prinsep, *The India Question*, 71, 72.

<sup>84</sup> Bourne, *Patronage and Society*, 33.

officials who should be sent out to India were those who were “ready at need to ride fifty miles on end without seeking for roads or bridge.” For the son of the civil service reformer, maintaining the supposed racial superiority of Britons over the Indians they ruled depended upon sending out British officials who were manly enough to govern.<sup>85</sup>

Implicit in Trevelyan’s critique of the “competition wallah” was the danger of Indians being able to qualify for the covenanted service now as a result of competitive examination, something which, as the last chapter demonstrated, was a major concern of many participants in the 1853 debate over the renewal of the Company’s charter. Indeed, only a year before Trevelyan’s book was published, Satyendra Nath Tagore successfully broke the racial barrier in becoming the first Indian to qualify for the covenanted service. As more Indians, and particularly, Bengalis, qualified for the Indian Civil Service in later decades, the colonial state tried a variety of expedients to ensure that only “manly Englishmen” gained entry. Colonial officials introduced a horse riding test, lowered the age limit for the examination, and chose subjects they believed only Oxbridge-educated British gentlemen would be likely to know.<sup>86</sup>

Many of these new concerns about whether Oxbridge-educated “competition wallahs” could be relied upon to maintain supposed British racial superiority over the Indians they ruled reflected governing priorities which emerged in the decades after 1830. Despite the fact that Indian officials now handled most of the day-to-day responsibilities of governing India, it was nevertheless deemed imperative that British officials demonstrate that they were manlier than their Indian subordinates. In one major respect,

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<sup>85</sup> G.O. Trevelyan, *The Competition Wallah* (1864; London and Cambridge: Macmillan and Co., 1866, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed.), 8-9, 14.

<sup>86</sup> Mrinalini Sinha, *Colonial Masculinity: The “Manly Englishman” and the “Effeminate Bengali” in the Late Nineteenth Century* (Manchester: Manchester University Press; New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1995), 103-4.

though, Trevelyan's concern that British colonial bureaucrats were not manly enough to govern India resonated with earlier Burkean doubts about whether covenanted servants could be trusted to act morally while in India. In both cases, the "character" of British officials was deemed to be crucial to the maintenance of British imperial control over India. Without British covenanted servants of the proper character, it was feared that Britain's "mastery" over its Indian empire would be put in jeopardy of being lost.

Ironically enough, these concerns would turn out to be totally misplaced.

Ultimately, it was the Sepoy Rebellion in 1857, a mass revolt within the Bengal Army, which nearly brought British rule in India to an end, not any of the supposed failings of British colonial bureaucrats. Indeed, during the spring and early summer of 1857, when all appeared lost, it was covenanted servants governing districts in unaffected areas—such as George Campbell in the Punjab, to give an important example—who helped contain the revolt and prevented it from spreading, thereby helping to save Britain's Indian Empire. Crucially, Bengali clerks in the colonial bureaucracy also stayed uniformly loyal, helping to ensure that British colonial governance did not completely break down during the first few months when much hung in the balance. Despite frequent British fears about their colonial bureaucracy throughout the Company period, the Sepoy Rebellion never became an all-out Indian "war of independence" in large part because the British had successfully Anglicized India's colonial administration. Paradoxically, precisely because colonial officials lacked sufficient trust in both Indian clerks and British covenanted servants always to act morally during the late eighteenth century, they implemented various reforms in the half-century before 1857 which resulted in the colonial bureaucracy becoming the sturdiest prop buttressing British rule during the



## Sepoy Rebellion.

By contrast, the British never successfully Anglicized the Bengal Army, by far the largest and most important of the three presidential armies. Unlike the colonial bureaucracy, no attempt was ever made to do without the extensive services of Indian soldiers. Rather, conflating caste with class during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century, colonial officials and military officers commonly imagined the high-caste sepoys (soldiers) of the Bengal Army as being the rough Indian equivalents of English country squires. In large part because the British trusted their “gentlemen” Indian soldiers more than they ever trusted their Indian clerks—or themselves, for that matter—colonial officials devolved considerable control over the Bengal Army to its sepoys throughout the Company period. Only in the latter decades of the Company period did various military officials start to worry about the lack of real British control over this army and propose changes to recruitment practices that would give British officers more control over their regiments. However, these proposed changes were largely ignored by colonial officials, almost costing the British their empire in India in 1857. Like the civil service, I shall show in the next two chapters how the ability of military officials to trust or *not* to trust Indian soldiers had significant implications for colonial governance as well as the construction of colonial masculinity during the first half of the nineteenth century.

**Chapter 4. An Empire of Sepoys: Anxieties about Indirect Rule in the Bengal Army and the Origins of the “Martial Races” Idea in Company India**

In the previous two chapters, I have shown how British concerns about the morality of the Company’s rule over India during the first half of the nineteenth century had a direct impact upon colonial governance as well as the construction of British and Indian masculine identities within the colonial bureaucracy. Such concerns also played an important role in British discussions of their sepoy armies during this period. At the same time, there were three important differences between the colonial bureaucracy and the sepoy armies of the Bengal, Madras, and Bombay presidencies.

First, most British colonial officials and military officers regarded sepoys (soldiers) as indispensable to British rule over India. Unlike the colonial bureaucracy, where Governor-General Cornwallis and his successors attempted to govern India without Indian officials between 1793 and 1831, few, if any, British military officers or colonial officials ever suggested that the British try to hold the colony with British troops alone. Indeed, most military officers and colonial officials insisted—as did Walter Badenach, an officer in the Bengal Army, in 1813—that the East India Company’s “hold on India principally depends” upon the continued “attachment” of its sepoys, without which its “tenure of Hindostan is not worth three years’ purchase.” Likewise, in an 1825 minute to fellow members of the Bengal government, Bengal military official John Fendall argued that the “continuance of our Empire must almost entirely depend” upon the continued “fidelity” of sepoys. “Any general feeling of want of confidence” by sepoys toward their British officers or the Company as a whole, he warned, would be

“marked as the beginning of the decline of the British Power in India.”<sup>1</sup>

Secondly, there was a difference in the level of trust of Indian subordinates.

Colonial officials and military officers mainly rationalized their reliance upon sepoys by imagining the Brahmin and Rajput soldiers of the Bengal Army as being “the sons of men of landed property or large farmers,” if not “men of some property themselves.”<sup>2</sup> As such, various officers and military officials assured themselves during the first half of the nineteenth century, Bengal Army sepoys must be eminently trustworthy. Before the 1820s, indirect rule in the largest of the three colonial armies was less of a problem for British officials than it was in the colonial bureaucracy largely because Britons generally trusted sepoys whereas such trust was mostly lacking in Indian clerks during this period.

However, this began to change after the 1820s, providing the third major difference between the colonial bureaucracy and the three sepoy armies: a difference in the timing of British anxieties about colonial rule. As I showed in Chapter 2, during the 1820s and 1830s various prominent colonial officials such as Sir Thomas Munro and Sir

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<sup>1</sup> Walter Badenach, *Inquiry into the State of the Indian Army, with Suggestions for its Improvement, and the Establishment of a Military Police for India* (1813; London: William Clowes, 1826, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed.), 104; Fendall Minute, cited in Bengal Military Consultations, 29 December 1825, BL/APAC/IOR/H/665 (3).

<sup>2</sup> Badenach, *Inquiry into the State of Indian Army*, 110. The British were correct in perceiving that the high-caste sepoys in the Bengal Army were generally landowners, and by dint of their high-caste status, part of the north Indian rural elite. It is doubtful, though, how “landed” the families of these soldiers were. It is likely that many of the Brahmin and Rajput sepoys in the Bengal Army were small yeoman farmers who, because of partible and co-parcenary inheritance which heavily subdivided landholdings as well as high population density in many regions along the Ganges River, were being pinched generation after generation. But, precisely because Brahmin (priest) and Kshatriya or Rajput (warrior) caste statuses forbade the plowing of land—which was typically done by low-caste peasants of Shudra (servant) caste status—military service offered a respectable way for poorer Brahmins and Rajputs to maintain their caste statuses. Alternatively, as Dirk Kolff has argued, fighting in war-bands was a way in which upperly-mobile Indians could attain “Rajput” status over time. Either way, military service from at least the Mughal period was a main way of demonstrating Brahmin or Rajput caste status. See Dirk K.A. Kolff, *Naukar, Rajput and Sepoy: The Ethnohistory of the Military Labour Market in Hindustan, 1450-1850* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1990); Eric Stokes, *The Peasant and the Raj: Studies in Agrarian Society and Peasant Rebellion in Colonial India* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1978), 33-4, 42-3, and chap. 3 *passim*; *idem.*, *The Peasant Armed: The Indian Revolt of 1857*, ed. by C.A. Bayly (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1986), chaps. 2-3; and William R. Pinch, *Peasants and Monks in British India* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, and London: University of California Press, 1996), chap. 3.

John Malcolm began to argue that it would be more beneficial for the British to trust subordinate Indian clerks with a greater amount of the responsibilities of colonial governance. Ironically enough, during these very same decades, several prominent Britons in India, including even some of the same people who supported Indianization of the colonial bureaucracy, started to worry about the lack of British control over the Bengal Army and that sepoys were being trusted *too* much. In particular, various colonial officials and military officers started to fear that caste was a problem for military discipline in the army and that there were too many Brahmin sepoys. Likewise, as I shall argue in the next chapter, it was after the 1820s that anxieties about the moral conduct of British officers and soldiers in India were most acute.

Various scholars in recent decades, largely drawing upon the insights of Edward Said and other postcolonial thinkers, have interpreted the martial races policy of the Raj as being a prime example of an Orientalist “imagination” of India by mid- to late-nineteenth century British scholar-officials.<sup>3</sup> Scholars have also stressed the importance of the Sepoy Rebellion, arguing that the Rebellion was “a crucial moment in the articulation of martial race masculinity” and “a crucible through which ideologies of both British and Indian masculinities were renegotiated.” According to this view, imperial policymakers only started to concern themselves about which groups of Indian men were supposedly more martial than others after 1857 when they had to recruit anew a Bengal Army in which sixty-nine of its seventy-four regiments either mutinied or were disbanded

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<sup>3</sup> Nicholas B. Dirks, *Castes of Mind: Colonialism and the Making of Modern India* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001), 176-80; Thomas R. Metcalf, *Ideologies of the Raj* (Cambridge and New York, Cambridge University Press, 1994), 84-93, 104-5, 125-8; Richard G. Fox, *Lions of the Punjab: Culture in the Making* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, and London: University of California Press, 1985), chap. 8; and Lionel Caplan, “‘Bravest of the Brave’: Representations of ‘The Gurkha’ in British Military Writings,” *Modern Asian Studies* 25, no. 3 (1991): 571-97; and idem., *Warrior Gentlemen: “Gurkhas” in the Western Imagination* (Providence, RI and Oxford: Berghahn Books, 1995).

by British officers in 1857 fearing their sepoys would join the rebels.<sup>4</sup>

While not entirely incorrect, I wish in this chapter to qualify these interpretations in two respects. First, rather than being formulated in the immediate post-1857 period as a direct result of the Sepoy Rebellion, I join Douglas Peers and other scholars in contending that much of British martial races thinking emerged initially out of “bureaucratic panics”—to use Christopher Bayly’s useful term—by various British military officers and colonial officials during the last three decades of the Company period regarding the lack of British control over the Bengal Army.<sup>5</sup> As a result of greater fears about caste and the number of Brahmin soldiers in the Bengal Army after the 1820s, various colonial officials and military officers began to recommend the greater recruitment of Gurkhas, Sikhs, and Muslims into the army to act as more trustworthy “counterpoises” to Brahmin and Rajput sepoys. All three groups, from a British point of view, had the added virtue of having a partial (in the case of Gurkhas) or a total lack of caste prejudice (in the case of the other two groups).

Secondly, with regard to the contention of several scholars that the British created “martial species” out of men from Nepal and the Punjab during the second half of the nineteenth century by discerning *true* Gurkhas and Sikhs from *false* ones, I contend that the British began to regard both groups as martial races long *before* they were in a

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<sup>4</sup> Heather Streets, *Martial Races: The Military, Race and Masculinity in British Imperial Culture, 1857-1914* (Manchester: Manchester University Press; New York: Palgrave, 2004), 11, 19; Pradeep P. Barua, *Gentlemen of the Raj: The Indian Army Officer Corps, 1817-1949* (Westport, CT and London: Praeger, 2003), 1-2; and *idem*, “Inventing Race: The British and India’s Martial Races,” *The Historian* 58, no. 1 (Autumn 1995): 110.

<sup>5</sup> Douglas M. Peers, “‘Those Noble Exemplars of the True Military Tradition’: Constructions of the Indian Army in the Mid-Victorian Press,” *Modern Asian Studies* 31, no. 1 (1997): 109-42; C.A. Bayly, *Empire and Information: Intelligence Gathering and Social Communication in India, 1780-1870* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 168.

position of power to enact their ideas of what a proper Gurkha or Sikh soldier should be.<sup>6</sup> I am by no means denying the importance of various efforts of mid- and late-nineteenth century imperial policymakers or authors of caste recruiting manuals to discern which Indian groups were supposedly more innately martial than others. What I *am* arguing, though, is that these Raj-era efforts need to be contextualized within a broader story which includes treatment of the preceding century of Company rule.

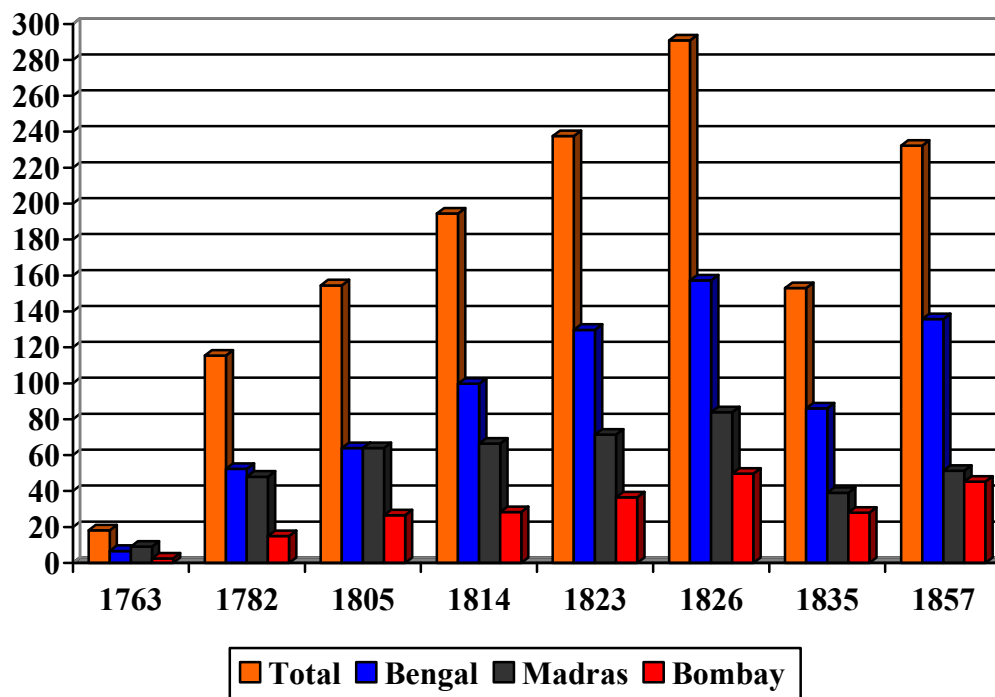
### **Company Recruitment Policies: Indirect Rule in the Company's Armies**

The British did not recruit sepoys themselves during the Company period but, rather, trusted Indian soldiers to recruit themselves. This was largely necessary given the meteoric rise of the Company as a political and military power on the Indian subcontinent after the 1750s. Nearly continuous warfare from 1765 until 1818 against various Indian powers such as Mysore, the Maratha Confederacy, and Nepal, among others, resulted in a great expansion in the Company's armies during this period. During the sixty-three years between 1763 and 1826, the size of the Company's three armies ballooned from 18,430 to 290,834 Indian soldiers, an almost sixteen-fold increase (see Chart 4-1). This increase took place despite numerous but futile efforts by Company directors to cut political and military expenses during this period. During Bentinck's governor-generalship (1828-35), these efforts at fiscal retrenchment were finally successful, but only briefly. The total number of Indian sepoys in the three armies under Bentinck was cut almost in half, reaching a low of 152,948 sepoys in 1835. However, by the 1840s, as a result of a series of wars against Afghanistan (1839-42), China (1842-3), Sind (1843), the Punjab (1845-6 and 1848-9), and Persia (1856), the size of the three armies recovered somewhat,

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<sup>6</sup> See, for example, Fox, *Lions of the Punjab*; Dirks, *Castes of Mind*; and Caplan, *Warrior Gentlemen*.

**Chart 4-1. Number of Sepoys (in Thousands) in the Bengal, Madras, and Bombay Armies, 1763-1857\***



reaching a total of 232,224 sepoy soldiers by the Sepoy Rebellion in 1857.<sup>7</sup>

Providing the manpower for the Company's three Indian armies, which together comprised "the largest all-volunteer mercenary army in the world" in the nineteenth

\* For 1763, 1782, and 1805 data, see Raymond Callahan, *The East India Company and Army Reform, 1783-1798* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1972), 7; for 1814, 1823, and 1826 data, see Peers, *Between Mars and Mammon: Colonial Armies and the Garrison State in Early Nineteenth-Century India* (London and New York: I.B. Tauris, 1995), 133, 189; for 1857 data, see David Omissi, *The Sepoy and the Raj: The Indian Army, 1860-1940* (London: Macmillan, 1994), 133. According to Henry Thoby Prinsep, a high-ranking Company official during the 1830s, there were a total of 152,948 sepoy soldiers in the Company's three armies in 1835, although he does not provide precise breakdowns for the three armies. Prinsep, *The India Question in 1853* (London: Wm. H. Allen & Co., 1853), 20. Thus, I have approximated troop strengths of the three armies for 1835 by taking the percentages from the 1826 and 1857 data for the three armies and averaging them (e.g., the Bengal Army comprised 54.07% of all sepoy soldiers in 1826 and 58.46% in 1857; therefore, the notional figure for 1835 would be 56.27% of 152,948 sepoy soldiers, or 86,058; for Madras, the percentages are 28.82% in 1826 and 22.07% in 1857, thus a notional figure for 1835 of 25.45% of 152,948 sepoy soldiers, or 38,918; for Bombay, the percentages are 17.11% in 1826 and 19.47% in 1857, thus a notional figure for 1835 of 18.29% of 152,948 sepoy soldiers, or 27,972).

<sup>7</sup> Peers, *Between Mars and Mammon*, chap. 5; Peter Stanley, *White Mutiny: British Military Culture in India, 1825-1875* (London: Hurst & Company; New York: New York University Press, 1998), 9-10; Eric Stokes, *The Peasant Armed: The Indian Revolt of 1857*, ed. C.A. Bayly (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1986), 19; Prinsep, *The India Question in 1853*, 20, 30.

century, would have been very difficult if not outright impossible without extensively utilizing preexisting Indian recruitment practices and customs.<sup>8</sup> Thus, all three armies sought, whenever possible, to work within indigenous recruitment traditions when recruiting their sepoy armies. Still, there were important differences among the three presidency armies both in terms of demographic background of soldiers as well as their overall recruitment strategies.

Beginning as early as the late 1760s, the Bengal Army—the largest of the Company’s three Indian armies after 1805—developed into a largely homogenous army in terms of social and ethno-religious makeup, heavily comprised of north Indian high-caste Hindus.<sup>9</sup> Due to the lack of overall British statistics on Bengal Army recruitment before 1842—in and of itself a statement of the largely indirect nature of its recruitment system—precise numbers of soldiers belonging to particular ethnic, racial, caste, or socio-religious groups before that date are only available for a small handful of regiments. Based on these returns, various military historians have estimated that somewhere between 65 and 80 per cent of Indian sepoys serving in the Bengal Army were Brahmins and Rajputs from southern Awadh (Oudh) and northern Bihar, or the areas between the cities of Lucknao (Lucknow) and Patna on both sides of the Ganges River (see Map 4-1). North Indian Muslims of *ashraf* or “respectable” status comprised between 10 and 15 per cent of the army, with all other middle and low-caste Hindu groups making up another 10 to 15 per cent of the army. Few, if any, recruits came from Bengal proper, or the delta region of the Ganges and Brahmaputra rivers, a fact which both reflected and reinforced

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<sup>8</sup> Streets, *Martial Races*, 24.

<sup>9</sup> See Chart 4-1 above. Beginning in 1813-4 and continuing through to 1857, the Bengal Army consistently comprised over half of the total number of sepoys overall, making up 58.46% of the total number of sepoys in Company armies by 1857.





Map 4-1. Bengal Presidency and Oudh [Awadh], 1804.

British prejudices against Bengalis.<sup>10</sup>

By contrast, the other two smaller armies were more heterogeneous. In the case of Madras, south Indian Muslims constituted the largest group of soldiers, but they amounted to only about a third of the army. Other groups serving in the army included north Indian Brahmins and Rajputs, Telugus from the Circars, and various low-caste Hindus. The Bombay Army—the smallest of the three in the first half of the nineteenth

<sup>10</sup> Seema Alavi, *The Sepoys and the Company: Tradition and Transition in Northern India, 1770-1830* (Delhi and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 49-55, also chap. 2; Amiya Barat, *The Bengal Native Infantry: Its Organization and Discipline, 1796-1852* (Calcutta: Firma K.L. Mukhopadhyay, 1962), 118-26; Peers, *Between Mars and Mammon*, 88-90; *idem.*, “‘The Habitual Nobility of Being’: British Officers and the Social Construction of the Bengal Army in the Early Nineteenth Century,” *Modern Asian Studies* 25, no. 3 (1991): 549-50; Channa Wickremesekera, “‘Best Black Troops in the World’: British Perceptions and the Making of the Sepoy, 1746-1805 (Delhi: Manohar, 2002), 100-1; Papers Received from Colonel Keith Young, Bengal Army Judge Advocate-General, July 1858, PP, 1859, *Papers Connected with the Re-Organization of the Army in India, supplementary to the Report of the Army Commission* [Peel Commission], VIII (2541), p. 143, q. 2.

century—was even more diverse. By far “the most cosmopolitan of the three armies,” it was composed of Marathas and north Indian Brahmins and Rajputs, as well as other groups which historically had not served in an Indian army such as Jews, various low-caste Hindus, and Eurasians (or individuals of mixed European and Indian ancestry).<sup>11</sup>

It does not appear that these dramatic differences in the social composition of the three armies resulted from sepoy recruitment *per se*. For instance, all three armies generally relied upon the same recruitment method, known as the “levy system,” to supply the bulk of their soldiers. While on furlough, sepoys were expected to bring back new recruits. Depending upon the particular needs of regiments, this system would sometimes be modified by extending furloughs or by sending special recruitment parties, as Bombay Army Colonel J. Kerr colorfully put it in an 1802 letter to Bombay Army Commander-in-Chief R.C. Nicolls, “to go a hunting after new Men.”<sup>12</sup> Officers occasionally granted rewards in the form of bonus money or promotion to sepoys who brought in many new recruits. Finally, they often established recruiting depots in districts where it was considered likely that a significant number of prospective candidates would present themselves for enlistment.<sup>13</sup> In all these cases, it appears that the direct involvement of British regimental officers in recruitment was limited to having the final say regarding the men presented to them for enrollment and enforcing certain

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<sup>11</sup> Papers Received from Sir Mark Cubbon, Resident at Mysore, 24 July 1858, PP, 1859, *Papers Connected with the Re-Organization of the Army in India*, 104, q. 1; H. Dodwell, *Sepoy Recruitment in the Old Madras Army* (Calcutta: Superintendent Government Printing, India, 1922), 15-6, 25, 53; Peers, *Between Mars and Mammon*, 92-3; Stephen Peter Rosen, *Societies and Military Power: India and its Armies* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1996), 178.

<sup>12</sup> Kerr to Nicolls, 10 December 1802; Captain William Young to Nicolls, 11 December 1802, both cited in Bombay Military Consultations, 14 December 1802, BL/APAC/IOR/F/4/167/2901. Emphasis in original.

<sup>13</sup> Bengal Army Deputy Adjutant-General W.J. Watson to Bengal Military Secretary, Bengal Military Consultations, 5 April 1825, BL/APAC/IOR/F/4/898/23428; Military Letter from Bengal to Court of Directors, 4 October 1825, BL/APAC/IOR/F/4/913/25761.

age and height requirements. There is little evidence which suggests that British officers directly recruited Indian soldiers before the 1860s.<sup>14</sup>

If not recruitment *per se*, then, what does account for the Bengal Army's distinctive social homogeneity and pattern of recruitment? In large part, the answer to this question lays in the close proximity of Bengal to various regions in northern India which for centuries had constituted the main "military labor market" of the subcontinent as a whole. Thus, the Bengal Presidency was best situated to tap into this labor market when it became a political and military power in its own right on the subcontinent after the late 1750s.<sup>15</sup> The other two presidency armies also sought to recruit sepoys from northern India. For example, Madras sought to recruit many of its soldiers from the numerous "Warlike Classes" of northern India while Bombay routinely sent recruiting parties into the Bengal presidency to tap into "the fertile Recruiting Sources of Hindoostan" until Bengal military officials got the Court of Directors to forbid the practice in the mid-1820s.<sup>16</sup> But only Bengal succeeded in recruiting sufficient numbers of able-bodied recruits for its army throughout the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century, the period of the army's greatest expansion.

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<sup>14</sup> Sita Ram Pandey, *From Sepoy to Subedar: Being the Life and Adventures of Subedar Sita Ram, a Native Officer of the Bengal Army*, ed. James Lunt (1873; Delhi, Bombay and Bangalore: Vikas Publications, 1970 reprint ed.), 12, 13-4. Various age and height requirements were set out in various army recruitment codes, viz., General Orders, 16 July 1795, citing *Bengal Military Code*, vol. 2, 121; General Orders, 13 August 1796, citing *Bengal Military Code*, vol. 2, 190, both cited in Bombay Military Consultations, 14 September 1804; *General Regulation*, cited in Bombay Military Consultations, 11 April 1807, all three documents, BL/APAC/IOF/F/4/271/6010; Madras Army Deputy Adjutant-General E.W. Snow to Lieutenant-Colonel Scott, Commander, Nagpur Subsidiary Force, 2 January 1819, cited in Bengal Military Consultations, 2 January 1819, BL/APAC/IOF/F/4/624/15946. Bengal required recruits to be above the height of 5'6" while Madras and Bombay were more lenient, allowing recruits above the height of 5'3" to enroll.

<sup>15</sup> Wickremesekera, *Best Black Troops*, 160; Kolff, *Naukar, Rajput and Sepoy*, chaps. 5-6.

<sup>16</sup> Military Letter from Madras to Court of Directors, 16 August 1796, BL/APAC/IOF/F/4/649; Military Letter from Bengal, 26 June 1819, with enclosure of Bengal Military Consultations, 2 January 1819, both documents cited in BL/APAC/IOF/F/4/624/15946; Bombay Army Commander-in-Chief Lieutenant-General Charles Colville to Bombay Government, 9 July 1824, cited in Bombay Military Consultations, 28 July 1824, BL/APAC/IOF/F/4/928/26106.

Largely because of the plentiful supply of sepoys from north India, there was little incentive among Bengal military officials to implement any major changes to indigenous recruitment methods. Indeed, if anything, Bengal military officials enacted policies during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries aimed at further fostering social exclusivity within the army, thereby attempting to win and maintain the loyalty of north Indian “political and social elites” to their rule.<sup>17</sup> For example, the Company exempted Bengal Army sepoys and their families from paying the pilgrim taxes levied at several important northern India Hindu religious sites. The army also sanctioned various religious festivals within cantonment as well as catered to the dietary restrictions of high-caste Hindu sepoys.<sup>18</sup> Finally, but just as important given the woeful inefficiency of Bengal Presidency courts explored in Chapter 2, Bengal officials accorded sepoys and their families special legal status, both within the Bengal Presidency as well as in neighboring Awadh. Sepoys and their families were allowed to “adjudicate any civil suits much more quickly” than otherwise would have been the case.<sup>19</sup>

By contrast, locally-based sepoy recruitment largely failed in the other two armies to yield a “sufficient Supply of Recruits, either in Number or Quality,” as Madras officials complained in 1796.<sup>20</sup> As a result, both armies experimented with various changes to their recruitment processes. First, as I have already noted, both the Madras and Bombay armies broadened the geographical scope of recruitment by sending

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<sup>17</sup> Wickremesekera, *Best Black Troops*, 160.

<sup>18</sup> Alavi, *Sepoys and the Company*, 75-94; Peers, *Between Mars and Mammon*, 90-1.

<sup>19</sup> Michael H. Fisher, *Indirect Rule in India: Residents and the Residency System, 1764-1858* (1991; Delhi, Calcutta, Chennai, and Mumbai: Oxford University Press, 1998), 383; Sita Ram, *From Sepoy to Subedar*, 5. At the time of Sita Ram’s enrollment in the Bengal Army (1812), his father was facing a lawsuit in Awadhi courts over some disputed land in his village. Ram’s father believed that having his son in the Bengal Army would ensure a favorable outcome to the lawsuit. Alas, Sita Ram does not reveal how the lawsuit turned out.

<sup>20</sup> Military Letter from Madras to Court of Directors, 16 August 1796, BL/APAC/IOR/F/4/4/649.

recruiting parties into the Bengal Presidency. Secondly, both armies established a “pension boy” establishment whereby the sons or nephews of enlisted sepoys were guaranteed spots within the army should their fathers or uncles die in battle. Such a policy was considered by various policymakers such as Bombay Governor Jonathan Duncan as providing a “nursery for good and useful Soldiers.”<sup>21</sup>

Thirdly, and perhaps the greatest point of contrast with the Bengal Army, both the Madras and Bombay armies opened recruitment to a wider cross-section of Indian society. In addition to recruiting sepoys from north Indian high-caste Hindu groups which had commonly served in Indian armies, Madras officials also opened recruitment to south Indian ethnic groups such as Talugas as well as, more reluctantly, low-caste Hindus. Bombay military officials went even further, allowing groups which had not historically served in any Indian army such as low-caste Hindus, Jews, and Eurasians to serve in the army. But whereas the Madras Army followed Bengal in organizing regiments largely along caste and religious lines, various Bombay officials sought to encourage a “most salutary mixture of castes” by “keeping up a mixture of Casts in each Battalion.”<sup>22</sup> This would later prove to be an important difference between the Bombay and Bengal armies toward the end of the Company period. Bombay officers were far less laudatory of Brahmin and other high-caste sepoys as well as more critical of caste than their counterparts in the Bengal Army. Precisely because Bombay officials had the comparative luxury vis-à-vis Bengal of having alternative sources of soldiers than high-caste men from Awadh and Bihar, they felt less need to kowtow to the caste prejudices of Brahmins and Rajputs from these north Indian regions.

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<sup>21</sup> Duncan to Governor-General Lord Richard Wellesley, 20 April 1803, BL/APAC/IOR/F/4/173/3034.

<sup>22</sup> Newnham to Casement, 13 November 1823, BL/APAC/IOR/F/4/835/22321.

### **From “Warlike Classes” and “Martial Races” to Suspicions about Caste and Brahmins: The Evolution of British Perceptions of Bengal Army Sepoys during the First Half of the Nineteenth Century**

Ultimately, the dramatic difference in recruitment patterns among the three presidential armies as well as the different recruitment strategies which each army adopted would have a profound effect upon anxieties by British colonial officials and military officers about control over the Bengal Army after the 1820s. Concerned with a lack of effective British control over the army, various military officers and colonial officers after the 1820s would begin to view the high-caste status of Bengal Army sepoys as being not so much indicative of a superior class or racial status but rather as a marker of religion.<sup>23</sup> Initially, however, most Bengal officials and military officers lauded the predominantly high-caste Brahmin and Rajput sepoys in the Bengal Army as being ideal soldiers. They argued that high-caste Hindu soldiers belonged either to a rough Indian equivalent of the English country squirearchy or to a “martial race.”

#### *“A Superior Class to That Which Usually Furnishes Recruits for the British Army”: Pre-1820 British Perceptions of High-Caste Sepoys in the Bengal Army*

During the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century many colonial officials and military officers interpreted the high-caste status of Bengal Army sepoys as being indicative of a superior *class* status, particularly compared with the predominantly working-class British soldiers in the Company’s European regiments and the British Army. These discussions mainly employed an idyllic and pre-industrial sense of class as

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<sup>23</sup> At the same time as this change in military attitudes was occurring, Nicholas Dirks has argued that Western missionaries were beginning to interpret caste as being a predominantly religious phenomenon. In large part because of their efforts to convert “heathen” Hindus, missionaries compiled many of the first Western ethnographic manuals relating to caste. Dirks, *Castes of Mind*, chap. 2.

something “occupational and hereditary, organic and unchanging.”<sup>24</sup> For instance, British Army Lieutenant-General Alexander Dirom described Rajputs in 1793 as leaving “the arts of peace to the other classes of people” as their only “occupation is that of arms.” As a result, Dirom argued, they “are a more active, animated, and warlike people, than perhaps any on the [Indian] Peninsula.” Likewise, Madras officials explained to the Court of Directors in 1796 that they were sending several recruiting parties into various north Indian districts to recruit those “[m]en of the Warlike Classes” who were not required by the Bengal Army. These men, Madras officials believed, were “eminently fitted by nature with every requisite for the Military profession.” Madras officials also asserted that they “possess[ed] more of the Energy of the European Character than any of the other natives of India.”<sup>25</sup>

Similar arguments were made during the early decades of the nineteenth century. In 1805, for instance, Bengal Army officer and Persian scholar William Francklin argued in his biography of military adventurer George Thomas that “[n]o Rajpoot engages in trade, or any mechanical occupation whatsoever: they are all, without exception, either soldiers or husbandmen.” Writing eight years later, Badenach went considerably further:

In the Bengal service...most of the native soldiers are men of high caste—many of the highest. I have known regiments, nearly half of the rank and file of which were Brahmins.... Without looking to their religious ideas of rank, the Bengal soldier is drawn from a superior class to that which usually furnishes recruits for the British army.

This was largely because high-caste Bengal Army sepoys were generally “the sons of men of landed property or large farmers,” if not “men of some property themselves,”

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<sup>24</sup> Asa Briggs, “The Language of ‘Class’ in Early Nineteenth Century England,” M.W. Flinn and T.C. Smout, eds., *Essays in Social History* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1974, 2 vols.), 1: 155.

<sup>25</sup> Alexander Dirom, *Narrative of the Campaign in India, Which Terminated the War with Tippoo Sultan in 1792* (London: W. Bulmer and Co., 1793), 92; Military Letter from Madras to Court of Directors, 16 August 1796, BL/APAC/IOR/F/4/4/649.

thereby constituting, for Badenach, a veritable north Indian squirearchy roughly equivalent to that of Britain.<sup>26</sup>

Such comparisons between high-caste Hindu sepoys in the Bengal Army and English landed gentlemen were given added force by a contemporaneous militarization of the British upper classes which took place in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century in response to the French Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars. As Linda Colley has shown, numerous elite Britons volunteered for military service against France between 1792 and 1815. For example, nearly half of the individuals who sat as Members of Parliament between 1790 and 1820 were officers in the Territorials. A further fifth were British Army officers. By employing an “ostentatious patriotism,” along with “relentless hard work, complete professionalism, [and] an uncompromising private virtue,” the British upper class attempted to fend off radical critiques of their privileged position within society during these decades while reasserting, at the same time, their “right to rule.”<sup>27</sup>

By characterizing the high-caste sepoys of the Bengal Army as being the rough Indian equivalents of British landed elites, colonial officials and military officers suggested that sepoys had more in common with upper-class Britons at home than with British soldiers serving in India. Various colonial officials and authors further equated British officers at home with Indian soldiers serving in the Bengal Army by lauding other supposed gentlemanly qualities of Brahmin and Rajput sepoys during this period such as their bravery, honor, and fidelity. For example, Francklin asserted in 1805 that Rajputs

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<sup>26</sup> William Francklin, ed., *Military Memoirs of Mr. George Thomas* (London: John Stockdale, 1805), 138; Badenach, *Inquiry into the State of the Indian Army*, 109, 110.

<sup>27</sup> Linda Colley, *Britons: Forging the Nation, 1707-1837* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1992), chap. 4 *passim*, quotes on pp. 153, 184 and 193.



were among the more “honourable, brave, and faithful” groups of Indian men. He further maintained that all individuals “of upright manners cannot associate with a better companion than a Rajpoot” because of their “high sense of honour” as well as “natural politeness” and honesty. Likewise, British Army Lieutenant-Colonel George Augustus Frederick Fitzclarence, the eldest illegitimate son of William IV, focused on the chivalry of Bengal Army sepoy in his 1819 memoir. In the very same decade that the chivalrous tradition was being “reinvented” back in Britain by romantics such as Sir Walter Scott, Fitzclarence described an instance when a group of sepoy defended several “helpless villagers” against a herd of rampaging elephants.<sup>28</sup> These “brave Rajahpoots, rendered more valiant by desperation, crowded round the elephants, seized them by their tusks, and inflicted upon them unavailing wounds.” By defending the villagers in this way, the Rajput sepoy saved the villagers from an almost certain death otherwise.<sup>29</sup>

*From “Martial Class” to “Martial Race”: The Racialization of British Attitudes toward High-Caste Bengal Army Sepoy after ca. 1820*

Beginning in the 1820s, colonial officials and military officers started to employ a more racist language to explain and justify the dominance of the Bengal Army by high-caste Hindus. However, the transition from class to race in British descriptions of Brahmin and Rajput sepoy was a gradual one. Thus, one can easily find examples of Britons in India still imagining these sepoy as being the rough Indian equivalents of

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<sup>28</sup> For more on the revival of the chivalric tradition during the first half of the nineteenth century, see: Mark Girouard, *The Return to Camelot: Chivalry and the English Gentleman* (New Haven, CT and London: Yale University Press, 1981). The concept of “invented tradition” comes from Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger, eds., *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1983).

<sup>29</sup> Francklin, *Military Memoirs*, 139, 143, 243; George Augustus Frederick Fitzclarence, *Journal of a Route Across India, through Egypt, to England in the Latter End of the Year 1817 and the Beginning of 1818* (London: John Murray, 1819), 138.

English country gentlemen after the 1820s. Thus, Bengal Army Lieutenant Adam White argued in 1822 that “the profession of a soldier is deemed far more honourable in India than in England.” As a result, the Bengal Army generally “attracts a number of individuals from the better classes of society,” if not the “flower of its population.” Likewise, throughout a three-volume history of Rajputs published between 1829 and 1832, Bengal Army Lieutenant-Colonel James Tod described Rajputs as being a “military class,” a “martial class” or as “martial vassals.” In one such description he further added that even the “poorest Rajput...retains all the pride of ancestry” by holding on to such “aristocratic ideas” as refusing to “hold the plough, or to use his lance but on horseback.” Even as late as the 1850s, one can still find references in parliamentary testimony and various official reports where high-caste Hindu sepoys are described as comprising a “military class” or profession.<sup>30</sup>

Various authors and government officials also lauded upper-caste Hindu sepoys for being “gentlemen” in other respects. For example, White praised Bengal Army sepoys for having superior moral virtue, particularly compared with working-class British soldiers. He argued that that “the manners” of Brahmin and Rajput soldiers were “uniformly mild and decorous” by comparison to the behavior of most British soldiers. High-caste Hindu sepoys, in White’s view, practiced to a far greater degree “the virtues of moral restraint, prudence, and economy” which Malthus and other Britons from this

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<sup>30</sup> Adam White, *Considerations on the State of British India* (Edinburgh: Bell and Bradfute, W. and C. Tait, and A. Allardice; Glasgow: James Brash and Co.; London: J. M. Richardson, 1822), 75; James Tod, *Annals and Antiquities of Rajasthan; or, the Central and Western Rajput States of India*, ed. William Crooke (1829-32; Delhi, Varanasi, and Patna: Motilal Banarsidass, 1971 reprint ed. of 1920 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., 3 vols.), 1: 35, 43, 81, 85, 162, 170, 310; 2: 619, 637, 652, 764, 964, 979, 1032; 3: 1493; Evidence of Sir Charles Edward Trevelyan, 16 June 1853, PP, 1852-3, *Second Report from Select Committee of House of Lords on Operation of Act for better Government of H.M. Indian Territories*, XXXII (627-I), p. 143, q. 6581; Papers Received from Sir John Lawrence, Brigadier-General Chamberlain, and Colonel Edwardes, 24 June 1858, PP, 1859, *Papers Connected with the Re-Organization of the Army in India*, p. 5.

period deemed to be the hallmark of proper manliness.<sup>31</sup> White cited in evidence for this assertion the tendency of sepoys to send money home to their families instead of wasting it on the “low course of drinking and debauchery in which the European soldiery (and generally speaking, the English populace,) squander their savings.” In his discussion of the Anglo-Gurkha War (1814-6), White also stressed that there were many instances where sepoys could “have deserted to their homes” when the going got tough. Rather than doing so, though, Indian soldiers considered it more “honourable... that they passed through this ordeal without any stain upon their character.”<sup>32</sup>

Compared to White’s negative opinions of Indian clerks discussed in Chapter 2, the Bengal officer was far more charitable in his descriptions of Brahmin and Rajput soldiers. While White attacked Indian civil servants for engaging in such “unmanly expedients” as dishonesty and corruption, he lauded the relative manliness of high-caste Hindu sepoys in the Bengal Army. Because they came from “the better classes of society” and acted like gentlemen, they must be manlier than other groups of Indians, particularly the servile and corrupt Indian clerks of the colonial bureaucracy.<sup>33</sup>

Various colonial officials during this period also praised high-caste Hindu sepoys for being gentlemen. Some focused, like White, on their relative sobriety vis-à-vis British soldiers. For example, Sir John Malcolm, the governor of Bombay from 1827 to 1830, praised Indian soldiers in his *Political History of India* (1826) as being “almost all sober, and of good conduct in private life.” Similarly, Mountstuart Elphinstone, Malcolm’s predecessor as governor of Bombay, conceded in 1843 that Indian soldiers had a comparative “freedom from gross debauchery,” along with an “absence of

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<sup>31</sup> See Chapter 3.

<sup>32</sup> White, *Considerations on the State of British India*, 71, 72, 73.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, 63, 164-5.

drunkenness” and an “immodesty in...other vices” which was utterly lacking among British soldiers. Such a disparity in moral conduct, Elphinstone embarrassingly admitted, leaves “the superiority in purity of manners on the side least flattering to our self-esteem.”<sup>34</sup>

Like White, Elphinstone also drew direct connections between the superior moral conduct of Brahmin and Rajput sepoy and their masculinity. In general, the former Bombay governor castigated Indians in his *History of India* (1843) for suffering from a complete “want of manliness.” However, Bengal Army sepoy were different. Elphinstone asserted that north Indian Brahmin and Rajput soldiers possessed a “high spirit...enthusiastic courage, and generous self-devotion.” These traits, along with “a gentleness of manners and a softness of heart” rendered them, in Elphinstone’s view, “incomparably superior to most other Asiatics in courage, discipline, and fidelity.”<sup>35</sup>

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While colonial officials and military officers continued to describe high-caste sepoy of the Bengal Army as being Indian gentlemen, they also began to employ a more consciously racist language to explain and justify the dominance of the Bengal Army by high-caste Hindus. Thus, Fitzclarence declared in his 1819 memoir that while Bengal officials had a “choice of men” from all over north India to recruit, they:

...of course, prefer the hardy and martial races of Upper India for the material of the army, where the most powerful and finest men perhaps in the world are nurtured—men, who, by the most violent and athletic exercises, maintain to the

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<sup>34</sup> Sir John Malcolm, *The Political History of India, From 1784 to 1823*, ed. K.N. Panikhar (New Delhi: Associated Publishing House, 1970 reprint ed., 1826, 2 vols.), 2: 128; Mountstuart Elphinstone, *The History of India* (London: John Murray, 1843, 2 vols.), 1: 388.

<sup>35</sup> Elphinstone, *History of India*, 1: 158, 381, 383, 386.

last their muscular force and physical energies.<sup>36</sup>

Other colonial officials and military officers in the 1820s and thereafter also employed similar, if not identical language. For example, Tod continually described Rajputs in his three-volume history as being a “warlike” or “martial race.” Similarly, Malcolm argued in his 1832 memoir that Rajputs were “as brave and hardy soldiers as any in India” and, as a people, were “in their dress, manners, and usages, distinct from the other inhabitants of the country.” All of these differences, he averred, “denote[d] them [as] a superior race” to others in India. Finally, Bengal judicial official Sir Erskine Perry asserted in 1855 that Rajputs were the “dominant race” of north India and “they look it, both in looks and manner.” Indeed, he claimed that a high-caste Hindu could readily be distinguished from other north Indian men by his “free, independent, soldiery bearing” and his “good looks, manners, and gentility.”<sup>37</sup>

Various Britons in India also started to draw upon nascent “Aryan race” ideas in their racialized descriptions of Brahmin and Rajput sepoys during this period. By the second quarter of the nineteenth century, north Indian Brahmins and Rajputs, in addition to speaking Indo-European languages, were commonly thought to be descended from the ancient invaders of the Indian peninsula.<sup>38</sup> As such, according to various prominent scholars such as Oxford Sanskritist Friedrich Max Müller, north Indians of high-caste

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<sup>36</sup> Fitzclarence, *Journal of a Route Across India*, 249-50.

<sup>37</sup> Tod, *Annals and Antiquities of Rajasthan*, 1: lx, 23, 68, 86, 97, 310, 397; 2: 619, 637, 653, 979, 1123; 3: 1442, 1443, 1444; Malcolm, *Memoir*, 1: 485; 2: 144; Sir Erskine Perry, *Bird's Eye View of India* (London: John Murray, 1855), 119, 139.

<sup>38</sup> For more on the general contours of the “Aryan race” idea and its Indian origins, see: Tony Ballantyne, *Orientalism and Race: Aryanism in the British Empire* (Houndsmills, UK and New York: Palgrave, 2002), intro. and chap. 1; Thomas R. Trautmann, *Aryans and British India* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997); and Susan Bayly, “Caste and ‘Race’ in the Colonial Ethnography of India,” in Peter Robb, ed., *The Concept of Race in South Asia* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1995), 165-218.

background were the “Arian brethren” of Europeans, including Britons.<sup>39</sup>

Britons in India made similar claims during the second quarter of the nineteenth century. Thus, Tod prefaced his three-volume history of the Rajputs by stating that one of the central aims of his historical research was to “affirm and endeavour to prove the common origin of the martial tribes of Rajasthan and those of ancient Europe.” He further surmised that there must have been “a common origin between the Rajput and early races of Europe” on the basis of such common “martial manners” as their “delicacy toward females” and their shared “feudal” history. Similarly, Reginald Heber, the Bishop of Calcutta from 1823 to his death in 1826, argued in his posthumously published 1829 memoir that north Indian Brahmins and Rajputs were descended from the “northern conquerors” of India. Likewise, north Indian missionary William Buyers asserted in 1848 that high-caste Hindus were “the very men fit to be soldiers.” This was because they were the descendants of “the proper Caucasian races, who for ages continued to pour down, on the rich and fertile districts of Gangetic India, by the fords of the Indus, and the passes of the Himalaya” from the northwest.<sup>40</sup>

Finally and perhaps most vividly, several authors and colonial officials also began during the 1820s and thereafter to pay closer attention to the skin colors and physical bodies of high-caste Hindu sepoys. They started to draw connections between the two and postulate that comparatively lighter-skinned north Indian Brahmins and Rajputs were

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<sup>39</sup> In an 1847 speech before the British Association for the Advancement of Science, Max Müller stated that modern-day speakers of Indo-European languages were the “Arian brethren” of Britons and Europeans. Seven years later he went considerably further, arguing that Sir Robert Clive and his British soldiers had “the same blood” running through their veins as the “dark Bengalese” soldiers they defeated at the Battle of Plassey in 1757. Quoted from Trautmann, *Aryans and British India*, 194.

<sup>40</sup> Tod, *Annals and Antiquities of Rajasthan*, 1: lxiv-lxv, 72, 84, 153; 2: 964, 1032; Reginald Heber, *Narrative of a Journey Through the Upper Provinces of India* (Philadelphia: Carea, Lea, and Carey, 1829, 2 vols.), 1: 232; William Buyers, *Recollections of Northern India* (London: J. Snow; Glasgow: W. Collins, 1848), 167, 249-50, 455.

more manly than other Indians. These comparisons were made most typically with Bengalis, who were commonly derided by this period for being the most effeminate of all Indians. Thus, Bengal Army Lieutenant-Colonel Thomas Skinner asserted in 1833 how easily it was “to perceive a change in the people” once one left Bengal proper and traveled north and west along the Ganges River. Instead of having the “coal-black forms” and the “generally... fawning manner and effeminate figure” of Bengalis, north Indian Brahmins and Rajputs were “of larger stature and more manly in their appearance... and preserve a gravity of manner that gives them an air of great superiority over the Bengalees.” Similarly, Mountstuart Elphinstone argued in 1843 that north Indian high-caste Hindus were “the tallest, fairest, and most warlike and manly of the Indians.” By contrast, Bengalis were “small, black, and effeminate in appearance; remarkable for timidity and superstition, as well as for subtlety and art.” Likewise, Lord John Elphinstone, the governor of Madras between 1837 and 1842 and the nephew of Mountstuart Elphinstone, asserted in his 1852 parliamentary testimony that “the people in the North-western provinces [were] generally a more energetic race than the Bengalese or the people in the south of India.”<sup>41</sup>

*British Anxieties about Caste and Brahmin Sepoys in the Bengal Army after ca. 1820*

So far, I have shown how several British colonial officials and military officers, during the first half of the nineteenth century, understood the high-caste status of Indian soldiers in the Bengal Army as either indicating their superior class or racial status. In

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<sup>41</sup> Thomas Skinner, *Excursions in India* (London: Richard Bentley, 1833, 2 vols.), 1: 32, 136; Elphinstone, *History of India*, 1: 331, 332; Evidence of Lord Elphinstone, 11 June 1852, PP, 1852, *Report from the Select Committee on Indian Territories; Together with the Proceedings of the Committee, Minutes of Evidence, Appendix and Index*, X (533), p. 211, q. 2115.

earlier decades, many Britons in India described north Indian Brahmins and Rajputs who dominated the Bengal Army as coming from a rough north Indian equivalent of the English country squirearchy. By the second quarter of the nineteenth century, they started to perceive upper-caste Hindus from north India as comprising a “martial race.” Either way, though, British descriptions of Bengal Army sepoys were generally positive for most of the first half of the nineteenth century and offer a striking contrast to British characterizations of Indian clerks in their colonial bureaucracy during this same period.

It would be easy to interpret these various British perceptions of high-caste Hindu sepoys in the Bengal Army—not to mention those of Indian clerks—as simply being Western “imaginings” by scholar-officials for the purposes of colonial control. After all, most Britons during the Company period understood caste in Western terms as being either indicative of class or racial status rather than trying to make sense of it on its own terms. At the same time, as Christopher Bayly has perceptively observed, much of what the British thought they knew about India during the first half of the nineteenth century—about caste as well as other subjects—were “conceptual fig-leaves to conceal desperate ignorance.” Rather than mainly emerging from the pens of confident scholar-officials such as James Mill engaging in “epistemological conquest,” Bayly has contended that much British knowledge of India during the first half of the nineteenth century resulted from “bureaucratic panics” about the lack of sufficient information about India in the first place.<sup>42</sup>

Looked at this way, the fact that many Bengal officials and military officers conceived their high-caste sepoys as being of a superior class or racial status, akin to their own, suggests that they believed what they wanted to be true. Given that they had no

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<sup>42</sup> Bayly, *Empire and Information*, 52, 168.



direct control over military recruitment in the Bengal Army, and thus little say over which men ended up being recruited, there was little else for Bengal officials to do but hope for the best. So long as letting sepoys self-select themselves worked in steadily providing adequate troops for an army which by itself was one of the largest standing armies of the world by the 1820s, British perceptions of Bengal Army sepoys would remain largely positive. Indeed, if anything, the Bengal Army's sepoy-based recruitment system worked *too* well. After the 1818 defeat of the Marathas, there was no remaining Indian military power which posed a threat to British hegemony over the subcontinent. This very success, though, was achieved through allowing Indian sepoys to have significant control over the inner workings of the army. Thus, paradoxically enough, at the very moment when the British had achieved military and political paramountcy in South Asia, they had little direct control over the very army which largely had made this possible.

Seema Alavi and Douglas Peers, among other military historians, have contended that the Bengal Army's efforts to foster social exclusivity among its soldiers started to "backfire on the Company" beginning in the 1820s. In promoting a sense of social superiority among their high-caste sepoys by allowing sepoys to recruit themselves and by ostentatiously respecting their religious beliefs, Bengal officials had hoped to cement the loyalty of north Indian political and social elites to the Company's rule. Instead, what appears to have occurred during the early decades of the nineteenth century was a "sanskritization" of the Bengal Army. By the 1820s, Brahmin and Rajput soldiers had become jealous "toward the slightest infringement" of "ritual rules" by their British military officers, even if many of these customs had been fostered and in some cases

initiated by the British. Sepoys increasingly “came specifically to define their own status and identity” according to a highly ritualized sense of caste, increasingly at odds with military discipline. A climate of increased misunderstanding and mistrust accordingly began to develop in ensuing decades between British officers and their Indian soldiers which would ultimately contribute to the Sepoy Rebellion in 1857.<sup>43</sup>

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Beginning in the 1820s, several colonial officials and military officers began to worry about caste prejudices interfering with military discipline and with the personal relationships of British officers with their men. Military officials in Bombay began to express these concerns first. Bombay military officials attacked their counterparts in Bengal for kowtowing to the caste prejudices of their high-caste sepoys, contrasting the Bombay Army’s considerably lesser reliance upon Brahmin sepoys. Apprehensions about caste were not just limited to Bombay Army officials, though. By the early 1850s, several leading Bengal officials and military officers also began to express public concern about caste interfering with military discipline.

One consequence of these apprehensions about caste, as I shall show in the next chapter, was that several authors and colonial officials began to argue that British officers needed always to act virtuously around their men. At the same time, several military officers argued that British officers needed to be overly respectful of the religious beliefs of their men. For example, Bombay Army officer John B. Seely argued in 1825 that the

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<sup>43</sup> Alavi, *Sepoys and the Company*, chap. 2 *passim*, quotes on pp. 75-6 and 90; Peers, “The Habitual Nobility of Being,” esp. pp. 558-61. Peers argues that British confidence in sepoys from the Bengal Army began to falter after the mid-1820s as a result of the disastrous opening campaigns in the war against Burma.

unswerving loyalty of “our own mild, obedient, and faithful Siphaupees” was not an automatic given. Rather, it largely depended upon British officers not interfering with their “religious prejudices and customs.” The British officer who interfered with the religious practices of his high-caste soldiers, Seely feared, would naturally result in their sepoy “shun[ning] him as a pestilence and avoid[ing] him as an enemy.” Such a situation, Seely warned, could only result in the undermining of military discipline within the regiment, thus, endangering British rule. Similarly, British Army Lieutenant John Shipp argued four years later that the Company’s Indian sepoy were “good soldiers and loyal and faithful subjects.” However, at the same time, they also required “a little humouring,” particularly in “the free exercise of their religious rights.” It was imperative that British officers not in any way offend the caste sensibilities of Indian soldiers serving in their regiments.<sup>44</sup>

Although Seely and Shipp argued that British military officers scrupulously needed to respect the religious practices of their sepoy, others such as Sir John Malcolm feared that caste was already too pervasive an influence within the Company’s armies. In a January 1830 minute to fellow members of the Bombay government, Malcolm conceded that “some of the Provinces of Bengal abound in Recruits, and vacancies can at once [be] supplied by eligible men.” At the same time he argued that “there were several drawbacks to recruiting north Indian high-caste Hindus,” chiefly among them their caste prejudices. Brahmins and Rajputs from these districts may have been more “eligible” to become sepoy from their “robustness of frame, and Military habits.” They might also

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<sup>44</sup> John B. Seely, *The Wonders of Elora; or, the Narrative of a Journey to the Temples and Dwellings Excavated out of a Mountain of Granite* (London: Geo. B. Whittaker, 1825, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed.), 519; John Shipp, *Memoirs of the Extraordinary Military Career of John Shipp* (London: Hurst, Chance, and Co., 1829, 3 vols.), 3: 34.

have been “almost all sober, and of good conduct in private life,” as Malcolm insisted they were four years earlier in his *Political History of India*. However, now the Bombay governor worried that Brahmin and Rajput soldiers from northern India could not be trusted to remain loyal. Rather, they were “mere mercenaries” who would likely desert at the first opportunity because they “have a dislike to those embark[a]tions to which the Troops of Bombay are so liable.”<sup>45</sup>

In a minute written to Governor-General Bentinck in November of the same year, Malcolm went further, warning that one of the dangers for the Bombay Army of recruiting upper-caste Hindus was the substitution of a former “pride of Corps” for a new “pride of Caste.” This, he argued, was among the more “injurious” of “prejudices and pretensions” in the military. As I have already shown in Chapter 2 with the Indianization debate of the 1820s, Malcolm generally believed it was good policy to “conciliate useful and respectable men” to British rule through encouraging their greater participation in the military and civil governance of India. However, he now warned that officials had to be careful when doing so that the “pride of Caste” of Indian subordinates was not augmented in the process. The overall “safety of the Empire” ultimately depended upon British officials getting this delicate balance right.<sup>46</sup>

Two decades later, Bombay Army Brigadier-General John Jacob was more forceful in his denunciations of caste. In his 1851 military reform tract, Jacob warned that the chief danger of the Bengal Army’s policy of only “enlisting men of a certain caste or creed, to the exclusion of others” was essentially “to subject that army to the control, not of the Government and the Articles of War, but to that of Brahmins and

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<sup>45</sup> Malcolm Minute, 27 January 1830, BL/APAC/IOR/F/4/1287/51585; *idem.*, *Political History*, 2: 128.

<sup>46</sup> Malcolm to Bentinck, 27 November 1830, BL/APAC/IOR/F/4/1287/51585.

Goseins, Moollahs and Fakeers.” This led to serious problems of governance within the army. Proclaiming in exasperation that “A NATIVE SOLDIER IS FAR MORE AFRAID OF AN OFFENSE AGAINST CASTE THAN OF AN OFFENCE AGAINST THE ARTICLES OF WAR,” Jacob concluded that the Bengal Army suffered from a total “want of discipline” which was “almost incredible to an officer of the Royal army, or of the other armies of India.” Only by Bengal Army officers “train[ing]” their sepoys to “pride themselves on their *soldiership* and discipline” rather than “their absurdities of caste”—as Jacob claimed was the case in the Bombay Army—would the Bengal Army be put on proper foundations. Even if this change in policy should provoke a massive exodus from the ranks, Jacob was still in favor, averring that there would be “millions of better men ready to occupy their places” who could be trusted always to be soldiers.<sup>47</sup>

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Although Jacob was perhaps the most forceful critic of caste and the role that it played in the Bengal Army, similar concerns about caste began to be put forth by various Bengal Army officers and officials by the early 1850s. For example, Bengal Army Major-General John Studholme Hodgson conceded in 1850 that “at present, the fidelity of the native army is, beyond dispute, firm and unimpeachable.” However, he also argued that a gradual introduction of a new system in the Bengal Army was necessary to improve the “moral tone of the Sepahees.” British officers, Hodgson insisted, were making a grave mistake in “fostering... [a] *false* pride of caste” among their sepoys by only recruiting high-caste Hindus and by not interfering in the religious observances of

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<sup>47</sup> John Jacob, *The Views and Opinions of Brigadier-General John Jacob* (1851; London: Smith, Elder & Co., 1858, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed.), 108, 109, 112, 115, 118-9. Emphasis in original.

Indian soldiers in cantonment. Rather, the Bengal Army major-general insisted that British officers must “elevate the mind and character of the native soldier to a British standard of manliness” before it was too late and Brahmin and Rajput soldiers proved to be utterly untrustworthy.<sup>48</sup>

Other Bengal officials and military officers during the 1850s also worried about the disastrous impact that caste prejudices had on British military discipline within the army. Thus, Sir George Campbell, then a Bengal judge but later a lieutenant-governor of Bengal and a Liberal MP, argued in 1853 that the Bengal Army’s “reverence for high-caste” in its recruitment was perhaps the army’s “greatest possible error.” By only recruiting Brahmins and Rajputs, the army had encouraged these high-caste Hindus to “parade their prejudices as a means of maintaining their monopoly” in the army, to the detriment of all military discipline. Likewise, British Army Lieutenant-General Sir Charles James Napier, the conqueror of Sind (1843) and briefly the Commander-in-Chief of India (1849-50), asserted that same year that high-caste Hindu sepoys were more a problem for the army than they were worth. Contending that the high-caste Hindu sepoy had “two commanders to obey, caste and captain,” Napier preferred the lower-caste sepoy. Napier considered this type of soldier to be far “superior” to a Brahmin or a Rajput in large part because he was not so beholden to caste rituals: “If caste chimes in with duty he is glad of it; if not, he snaps his fingers at caste.”<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>48</sup> John Studholme Hodgson, *Opinions on the Indian Army* (1850; London: William H. Allen & Co., 1857, 2nd ed.), 56, 59. Emphasis in original.

<sup>49</sup> Sir George Campbell, *India as it May Be; An Outline of a Proposed Government and Policy* (London: John Murray, 1853), 351, 352; Sir Charles James Napier, *Defects, Civil and Military, of the Indian Government*, ed. Lieutenant-General Sir W.F.P. Napier (London: Charles Westerton, 1853), 29.

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Following from these heightened concerns about caste, various military officers and colonial officials also feared during the latter decades of the Company period that there were too many Brahmin sepoys in the Bengal Army and they had too much influence within that army. These concerns were given further impetus by an official survey in 1842 which indicated that out of a total of 80,240 soldiers in the Bengal Native Infantry, 24,840 (or 31%) were Brahmins alone.<sup>50</sup> This statistic was corroborated by those in earlier decades of other individual regiments where Brahmins sometimes made up close to half of a regiment. For example, in the 29th Native Regiment of the Bengal Army, recruited in 1813 and 1814 from the area around Benares, 351 of its 804 (43.7%) sepoys were Brahmins as were 45 of its 94 (48%) Indian non-commissioned officers.<sup>51</sup> In other regiments for which there are available statistics, the number of Brahmin sepoys was slightly lower, but it appears never less than three-tenths of the total strength.<sup>52</sup>

Even before Bengal Army officials knew (or thought they knew) precisely how many Brahmins were in their army, various officials worried that there were too many Brahmin sepoys. Indeed, Bengal Army Captain George Fagan, the adjutant-general of the army, banned the further recruitment of Brahmins in the army in 1830 for precisely this reason. Fagan warned fellow military officers in an army circular that sepoys, when

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<sup>50</sup> Barat, *Bengal Native Infantry*, 123. According to this survey, there were 27,993 Rajput soldiers (34.89%), followed by Brahmins at 24,840 (30.96%), “Low-castes” at 13,920 (17.35%), Muslims at 12,411 (15.47%), and Christians at 1,076 (1.34%). The figure of “low-castes” appears suspiciously high, though, and may include other caste groups which claimed high-caste status such as Bhumiars and Kasayths.

<sup>51</sup> Badenach, *Inquiry into the State of the Indian Army*, 73.

<sup>52</sup> Peers, *Between Mars and Mammon*, 253. Peers provides the two examples of the 60th Bengal Native Infantry Regiment in 1828 and the 35th Bengal Native Infantry Regiment between 1820 and 1830. In the first case, out of 926 sepoys and native officers, there were 309 Rajputs (33.4%), 305 Brahmins (32.9%), 216 “Other Hindus” (23.3%), 86 Muslims (9.3%) and 10 Christians (1.1%). In the second case, out of 2,428 sepoys recruited over the ten-year period between 1820 and 1830, 830 (34.2%) were Brahmins, 772 (31.8%) were Rajputs, 309 (12.7%) were “Other Hindus,” 405 (16.7%) were Muslims, and 112 (4.6%) were listed as being “Other.”

on furlough, were bringing back too many Brahmins. Bengal Army sepoys were bringing back Brahmin recruits, Fagan claimed, not because they were “robust, stout, young men”—which he implied Brahmins generally were not—but rather to have the “convenience” of “having a Brahmin youth... cook for them.”<sup>53</sup>

Four years later, however, this policy was completely reversed. In spite of Fagan’s prohibition of further Brahmin recruitment, many Brahmins enlisted anyway, listing themselves as “Rajputs” on various military muster rolls. Commanders on the spot, such as Lieutenant-Colonel George Moore, argued that Fagan’s policy was counterproductive, banning for no good reason individuals whom they considered to be in all respects “very fine young lads and unexceptionable... as Soldiers.” Ultimately, Bentinck overturned Fagan’s prohibition on Brahmin recruitment in December of 1834. Employing the full range of descriptive language then in common usage, the governor-general asserted that it was “impolicy [to make] any distinction between the Military Classes of different Races or Castes in the Bengal Presidency.” Rather, Bentinck argued that policymakers ought to do whatever they could to encourage “a large portion of the most respectable of the native population” to enlist as soldiers, not discourage them. The Court of Directors ratified Bentinck’s decision a little over a year later.<sup>54</sup>

Bentinck attempted to settle the issue of Brahmin recruitment once and for all in his December 1834 minute. However, other Britons in India joined Fagan in later decades in not fully trusting Brahmin sepoys, warning of their dangerous and pervasive

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<sup>53</sup> Military Letter from Bengal to Court of Directors, 10 January 1835, citing Fagan Military Circular, 9 August 1830, BL/APAC/IOR/F/4/1523/60204.

<sup>54</sup> Moore to Bengal Army Adjutant-General Colonel J.R. Lumley, 6 November 1834; Bentinck Minute, 29 December 1834; both documents cited in Military Letter from Bengal to Court of Directors, 10 January 1835, BL/APAC/IOR/F/4/1523/60204; Military Letter from Court of Directors to Bengal, 10 February 1836, BL/APAC/IOR/F/4/1550/61960.



influence over other Indian soldiers in the army. For example, Bengal Army Captain Joseph Davey Cunningham worried in 1849 about the army's "practice of largely enlisting... pliant intriguing Brahmans." Likewise, Hodgson feared the influence which Brahmin sepoys supposedly held through "their secret and jesuitical institutions" in the army. Hodgson maintained that Brahmins were a corrupting influence within the army, encouraging other high-caste Hindu sepoys to "express repugnance and unwillingness to meet" various "*just* claims of the service" such as overseas expeditions.<sup>55</sup>

Other military officers and colonial officials during this period had similar apprehensions about Brahmin sepoys in the Bengal Army. Thus, Campbell echoed many of Jacob's arguments regarding the dangers of only recruiting high-caste Hindus. Such a recruiting policy "gives an immense facility for combination, the more so as there is a large proportion of Bramins—always a wily, intriguing race, exercising more or less influence over their fellows." Similarly, Napier was also largely distrustful of Brahmin sepoys, maintaining that whenever "the mutinous spirit arose with our Sepoys, the chief leaders were undoubtedly Brahmins." Likewise, in his testimony before Parliament in 1853, Bombay Army Lieutenant-General Sir Willoughby Cotton stated that more than Bengal Army officer had intimated to him that he would not "have a Brahmin" in his regiment if he were allowed to exercise meaningful control over recruitment.<sup>56</sup>

### **Proposed Alternatives to the Bengal Army Recruitment Model**

At the same time that various military officers and colonial officials began to

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<sup>55</sup> Joseph Davey Cunningham, *A History of the Sikhs, from the Origin of the Nation to the Battles of the Sutlej* (London: John Murray, 1849), 294; Hodgson, *Opinions*, 117-8. Emphasis in original.

<sup>56</sup> Campbell, *India as it May Be*, 349; Napier, *Defects, Civil and Military*, 28; Evidence of Lieutenant-General Sir W. Cotton, 24 February 1853, PP, 1852-3, *First Report from Select Committee on Indian Territories*, XXVII (426), 24, q. 327.

worry about the effect of caste on military discipline in the Bengal Army and feared the influence of Brahmins over other sepoys, several began to advocate alternatives to recruiting high-caste Hindus from north India. Various officers argued that the more diverse presidential armies of Madras and Bombay yielded better soldiers than Bengal, while others began to regard Gurkhas, Sikhs, and Muslims as other “martial races” who were just as good, if not better in some respects, as north Indian high-caste Hindu sepoys.

*Changing British Perceptions of Madras and Bombay Army Sepoys after ca. 1820*

As a direct result of increased anxieties about caste and Brahmin sepoys, many colonial officials and military officers in the 1820s began to regard the sepoys from the smaller but more caste-diverse presidential armies of Madras and Bombay as equal, if not superior, to those from Bengal. Like other attitudinal shifts explored already in this chapter, though, British perceptions regarding Indian soldiers in the Madras and Bombay armies changed gradually; earlier and more negative views did not entirely disappear. For example, Madras military officials complained in 1796 about their inability to recruit from south India a “sufficient Supply of Recruits, either in Number or Quality.” They unfavorably compared South Indians with the “[m]en of the Warlike Classes” from Awadh and Bihar when asking Company directors for permission to recruit much of their army from northern India. As Madras Army Commander-in-Chief Major-General Sir John Brathwaite argued two years later, the “[m]en obtained in the more Southern Countries are much inferior to the Northern recruits in Cast, Size, and appearance.” Likewise, Bombay Military Secretary William Newnham complained to his Bengal counterpart almost three decades later in 1824 that men from the Bombay Presidency

were for the most part “naturally averse from Military pursuits.”<sup>57</sup>

Similar criticisms of southern and western Indians for not being “military” enough were made by various authors and colonial officials in later decades. Thus, Fitzclarence argued that the Madras Army was more tradition-bound than even the Bengal Army and that “greater trouble has at all times been experienced in persuading the Madras Sepoys to receive innovations than those of Bengal.” Other authors such as British Army officer John Blakiston focused on the physical strength of northern high-caste Hindus as compared to other Indians. Thus, in describing north Indian Rajputs as being “a brave high minded race” in his 1829 memoir, Blakiston also argued that the Bengal Army was “composed of a much finer race of men than the native troops of either of the other Presidencies.” He even maintained that “one Bengal sepoy would make two of Madras” because they were “a much finer race of men.” Even as late as 1858, various Madras Army officers such as Brigadier Hill were complaining that various peoples of southern India were “losing their military habits” and thus did not often make good soldiers.<sup>58</sup>

Even so, other colonial officials and military officers after the 1820s, from the British, Bombay, and Madras armies *as well as* from Bengal, described Indian soldiers in the Madras and Bombay armies as being either equal to, if not, in some respects, more desirable than soldiers in the Bengal Army. For instance, Malcolm insisted in 1826 that Bombay Army sepoy were as loyal as any army in India. Others such as Madras Army

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<sup>57</sup> Military Letter from Madras to Court of Directors, 16 August 1796, BL/APAC/IOR/F/4/4/649; Minute of Major-General Sir John Brathwaite, Commander-in-Chief of the Madras Army, 1 May 1798, cited in Madras Military and Political Consultations, 1 May 1798, BL/APAC/IOR/F/4/53/1180; Newnham to Bengal Military Secretary William Casement, 14 June 1824, BL/APAC/IOR/F/4/928/26106.

<sup>58</sup> Fitzclarence, *Journal of a Route Across India*, 261; John Blakiston, *Twelve Years' Military Adventure in Three Quarters of the Globe* (London: Henry Colburn, 1829, 2 vols.), 2: 6-7, 113; Papers Received from Brigadier Hill, 23 August 1858, PP, 1859, *Papers Connected with the Re-Organization of the Army in India*, p. 252, q. 8.

Major-General James Welsh praised Madras Army soldiers in his 1830 memoir for being “the most orderly, tractable, and willing soldiers in the world.” Madras Army sepoy “had regularly advanced in discipline with their noble companions in his Majesty’s service, the King’s regiments in India.” Most important, though, was the fact that the British soldiers could always count on their Madras compatriots to join them “hand in hand to subdue every foe who has dared to oppose it.” This ability to trust Indian soldiers in the Madras Army made the difference in numerous battles.<sup>59</sup>

Most authors from this time period considered north Indian high-caste Hindus in the Bengal Army to be typically taller and physically stronger than Indian soldiers in the other two armies. At the same time, several also began to argue in the 1820s that other groups of Indians could be just as good soldiers as the high-caste sepoy of the Bengal Army. For instance, British Army Major Joseph Sherer described Bengal sepoy in his 1821 memoir as being “tall, stout, handsome looking men” who were “certainly finer and larger men than those of the coast army.” At the same time, he argued that Bengal Army sepoy did “not either remove or handle their arms with that life, and soldier-like steadiness, observable in the Madras native infantry.” Likewise, Malcolm argued in his November 1830 minute to Bentinck that while north Indian high-caste Hindus were “in size, appearance, and perhaps in a certain degree of Military pride” superior to those from other regions of India, they “excel them in nothing else.” He warned particularly of trusting too much to initial impressions of “the Superior Stature and the more Soldierlike appearance of the Rajpoots.” Instead, Malcolm insisted that the low-caste sepoy in the Bombay Army time and time again proved themselves “equally efficient... in all the

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<sup>59</sup> Malcolm, *Political History*, 1: 287; James Welsh, *Military Reminiscences; Extracted from a Journal of Nearly Forty Years' Active Service in the East Indies* (London: Smith, Elder, and Co., 1830, 2 vols.), 1: 15-6.

Substantial qualities of a Soldier” despite not appearing at first to be soldier-like.<sup>60</sup>

Lastly, but most important for many authors and colonial officials during this period was the greater diversity of the other two armies compared to the Bengal Army. This greater diversity, particularly in the case of the Bombay Army, meant that there were a variety of caste groups serving alongside one another and consequently that caste was not perceived to be so great an issue in terms of governance within the army as it was in Bengal. For instance, Bombay Army Lieutenant-General Sir Charles Colville argued in 1823 that maintaining mixed regiments where sepoys from a variety of caste and ethnic backgrounds served alongside one another was conducive of many “[m]ilitary advantages.” Not only did this different regimental structure open up the army to a variety of “Countries” but it also resulted in caste not being much of a problem for governance in the army.<sup>61</sup>

Others in later decades praised the Bombay Army precisely for being caste-blind in its organization, arguing that its distinctive pattern of mixing various castes and ethnic groups within the same regiment made for better soldiers compared to those from the overly caste-conscious Bengal Army. For example, British Army Major Henry Edward Fane conceded in his 1842 memoir that Bengal sepoys generally had “by far the advantage in personal beauty, and height” as well as were “generally better dressed.” However, he ultimately considered Bombay Army sepoys as being more desirable because they had “few prejudices and easier supplied wants.” As hardier men not as beholden to caste prejudices, Fane insisted that soldiers in the Bombay Army were “*to be*

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<sup>60</sup> Joseph Sherer, *Sketches of India: Written by an Officer for Fire-Side Travellers At Home* (London: Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orne, and Brown, 1821), 118-9; Malcolm to Bentinck, 27 November 1830, BL/APAC/IOR/F/4/1287/51585.

<sup>61</sup> Colville to Bombay Army Commander-in-Chief, 19 November 1823, cited in Bombay Military Consultations, 19 November 1823, BL/APAC/IOR/F/4/928/26106.

*preferred*, for hard service.” Likewise, Jacob bestowed great praise upon the Bombay Army sepoy almost a decade later, stating that while his counterpart in the Bengal Army “prides himself on being a Hindoo,” he prides himself “on being a soldier.” This was in large part because the Bombay (and to a lesser extent, Madras) sepoy was more willing to “adopt the feelings and ideas of Europeans, as far as they refer to his position as a soldier, till they become his own.”<sup>62</sup>

*From “Barbaric Savages” to One of India’s “Martial Races”: Changing British Perceptions of “Gurkhas”*

By the mid-Victorian period, “Gurkhas” were lauded as among the foremost martial races of India, known for their bravery, loyalty, and steadfastness to the call of duty.<sup>63</sup> However, these attitudes were a relatively recent development. Initially, before the late 1820s, if British observers referred to Gurkhas at all—and given the geographical isolation of Nepal, this was rare before the Anglo-Nepal War of 1814-6—they typically described them as being barbaric savages. For instance, geographer Thomas Pennant described a Nepali king in 1798 as being “a complete barbarian [whose] cruelties... are too shocking for me to relate.” Likewise, in his 1820 memoir of the recently-concluded Anglo-Nepal War, Bengal diplomatic official James Baillie Fraser alluded to the typically “savage disposition” of Gurkhas. For Fraser, they were “terrible marauders” who committed “great atrocities... robbing in every direction when they have a hope of

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<sup>62</sup> Henry Edward Fane, *Five Years in India* (London: Henry Colburn, 1842, 2 vols.), 2: 131-2; Jacob, *Views and Opinions*, 110-1, 118. Emphasis in original.

<sup>63</sup> Following Lionel Caplan and Seema Alavi, I have inserted quotation marks around Gurkhas, as there is no ethnic group as such, despite nineteenth- and twentieth-century British beliefs to the contrary. Rather, as Alavi argues, the Company cobbled together a collective “Gurkha” identity from “the Kumaonis, Garhwali, and Sirmouri hill men who flocked to its service” after 1816. Caplan, *Warrior Gentlemen*, 10-3, 52; Alavi, *Sepoys and the Company*, 264. However, out of a concern to avoid clumsiness in the text, other instances where I use the term do not have quotation marks.

success.”<sup>64</sup>

Various authors in later decades continued to refer to the barbarity of Gurkhas. For instance, Skinner informed readers of his 1833 memoir that the name of Gurkhas was “still heard with terror” by the various peoples who inhabited the hills of southern Nepal as well as northern India. Men and women from these regions, Skinner insisted, still “point with pleasure to the ruined holds of their tyranny.” Likewise, Royal Navy Captain Francis Egerton argued in 1852 that while Gurkhas may have been a “hardy, active race of men” they were also “very suspicious” and “treacherous.” These traits, among others, strongly suggested to him that they were not far removed from their former barbarism.<sup>65</sup>

However, at the same time, many began after the Anglo-Gurkha War of 1814-6 to extol more martial qualities of Gurkha soldiers, including several of the same individuals who castigated them for being barbarous savages. Thus, Fraser argued that Gurkhas possessed “in a high degree, almost to excess, the true sense of a soldier’s duty” in regarding “life at nought, in comparison with the performance of duty.” Indeed, Fraser maintained that the Gurkha soldier’s “high sense of honour” was “his most attractive ornament” and something which “raises his character to the highest.” Shipp, the only known British soldier-participant of the Anglo-Nepal War to write a memoir, also praised Gurkha soldiers in his description of the siege of Kalunga (1815),<sup>66</sup> employing particularly gendered language:

The enemy maintained their ground, and fought manfully. I hate a runaway foe; you have no credit for beating them. Those we were now dealing with were no

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<sup>64</sup> Thomas Pennant, *The View of Hindoostan* (London: Henry Hughes, 1798, 2 vols.), 2: 344; James Baillie Fraser, *Journey of a Tour Through Part of the Snowy Range of the Himala Mountains, and to the Sources of the River Jumna and Ganges* (London: Rodwell and Martin, 1820), 154.

<sup>65</sup> Skinner, *Excursions*, 1: 241; Francis Egerton, *Journal of a Winter’s Tour in India* (London: John Murray, 1852, 2 vols.), 1: 238, 239.

<sup>66</sup> Tony Gould, *Imperial Warriors: Britain and the Gurkhas* (London: Granta Books, 2000), 63.

flinchers; but, on the contrary I never saw more steadiness or more bravery exhibited by any set of men in my life. Run they would not; and of death they seemed to have no fear, though their comrades were falling thick around them.

In comparison to such unexampled bravery and “manful” character displayed by his Gurkha opponents, Shipp remarked that he “began to think” himself “in comparison with them, but yet a novice.”<sup>67</sup>

After the 1820s, as a result of somewhat greater distance from the events of 1814-6, the publication of more memoirs of the war by various participants, and the emergence of anxieties among colonial officials and military officers about caste and Brahmin soldiers in the Bengal Army, British attitudes toward Gurkhas became less equivocal and more positive. For example, Bengal Army Captain Godfrey Charles Mundy described Gurkhas in his 1833 memoir as “hardy little warriors” who proved during the Anglo-Nepal War to be “the enemies best worth of the British arms in India.” Similarly, Tucker explained in an 1842 minute to fellow Company directors that the British faced considerable difficulties during the first months of the Anglo-Nepal War for two reasons. First, “the valley of Nepaul” was considerably less accessible “to a regular army” than other regions of India. More important than this, though, for Tucker, was the fact that “the country was defended by a brave and sturdy race of mountaineers.”<sup>68</sup>

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<sup>67</sup> Fraser, *Journey of a Tour*, 10, 226; Shipp, *Memoirs*, 2: 102.

<sup>68</sup> Godfrey Charles Mundy, *Pen and Pencil Sketches, Being the Journal of a Tour in India* (London: John Murray, 1833, 2 vols.), 2: 213; Henry St. George Tucker, untitled paper (1842), *Memorials of Indian Government; Being a Selection from the Papers of Henry St. George Tucker, Late Director of the East India Company*, ed. John W. Kaye (London: Richard Bentley, 1853), 234. A more prosaic explanation for the Gurkha’s military successes in the Anglo-Gurkha War of 1814-6 has recently been proposed by Kaushik Roy: in the decades leading up to the conflict, the Gurkha Kingdom of Nepal copied the East India Company’s infantry system. By 1814, Nepal possessed 12,000 Westernized infantry who were drilled and organized in battalions and taught Western military discipline by Bengal Army deserters who formed the nucleus of their army. Kaushik Roy, “Military Synthesis in South Asia: Armies, Warfare, and Indian Society, c. 1740-1849,” *Journal of Military History* 69 (July 2005): 664. For more on British discourses about the supposed reasons for Western military superiority over Indian armies, see Chapter 5.



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Following from these generally favorable impressions of Gurkhas, various colonial officials and authors began to advocate during the 1820s and thereafter the increased recruitment of Gurkhas into the Bengal Army to act as a counterpoise to its high-caste Hindu sepoys. For example, as early as 1823, only seven years after the conclusion of the conflict against Nepal, Bengal Army Adjutant-General J.P. Nicol inquired whether it was politically feasible to establish a recruiting depot on the border of the Company's territories and Nepal "for the avowed purpose of drawing off its Subjects into our Military Service."<sup>69</sup> Nicol argued that if such an action would not terribly offend the Nepali government, "the advantages which would accrue from an accession of Goorkah Sepoys into our Hill Corps, would be of the utmost consequence to their efficiency." Above all, Nicol asserted, the addition of Gurkha soldiers in the Bengal Army would result in the army gaining "[t]roops of a Superior description" than Brahmins and Rajputs from northern India. Similarly, Bengal military officials described Gurkha sepoys in an 1835 dispatch to the Court of Directors as being "among the best Troops in the Company's Service." These soldiers were not only "invaluable [in]... Hill Service" but Bengal military officials asserted that Gurkha troops have also "occasionally been employed in the Plains" to great effect as well.<sup>70</sup>

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<sup>69</sup> Alavi has pointed out that even though the Nepali government reluctantly accepted the permanent presence of a British Resident in Kathmandu after 1816, it "continued with its uncooperative attitude toward the Company" by severely circumscribed his actions as well as forbidding Company recruitment parties from traversing Nepali territory. The government also placed "rigid restrictions on the movement" of its subjects outside Nepal, which made it difficult for would-be sepoys to "desert to the Company's army." Likewise, Caplan has argued that the attitude by Nepali authorities throughout the nineteenth century "to the enlistment of Gurkhas was one of consistent hostility, so much so that the British had to carry on the recruitment *sub rosa*." Alavi, *Sepoys and the Company*, 276; Caplan, *Warrior Gentlemen*, 20.

<sup>70</sup> Nicol to Bengal Political Secretary George Swinton, 8 January 1823, BL/APAC/IOR/H/665 (7); Separate Military Letter from Bengal to Court of Directors, 11 February 1835, BL/APAC/IOR/F/4/1556/63556.

Other military officers writing memoirs during this period were more explicit in asserting their belief that Gurkhas made better soldiers than north Indian Brahmins and Hindus. Thus, White argued that Gurkhas possessed a “superiority, in point of valour” compared with “the generality of Hindoos.” Similarly, Mundy asserted 11 years later that Gurkhas made better soldiers than high-caste Hindus. Mundy claimed this not just because Gurkhas were relatively “unencumbered with... besetting prejudices” but also because they were “individually, smarter and more active soldiers,” despite being “inferior in personal appearance to the Bengal sepoy.”<sup>71</sup>

Two decades later, as British anxieties about caste and loss of control in the Bengal Army became more acute, various military officers and colonial officials focused to an even greater degree on the comparative lack of caste consciousness of Gurkha sepoys compared to north Indian Brahmins and Rajputs. For example, Campbell advocated the recruitment of “as many Sikhs and Goorkhas as possible” into the Bengal Army in his 1853 Indian government reform tract. Both groups were desirable not just because of their “great natural pugnacity,” but, more importantly, also because they “eat whatever they can eat, and cook however they can, with a most laudable absence of [caste] prejudice.” Campbell asserted that this relative absence of caste prejudice was even more evident when one compared the “immense paraphernalia of a [high-caste Hindu] sepoy regiment, and its innumerable cooking-pots” with hardier Gurkha and Sikh soldiers who were more prepared to rough it.<sup>72</sup>

Similarly, Napier also argued that the relative lack of caste consciousness among Gurkha sepoys made them superior to high-caste Hindus. Not only did Gurkha soldiers

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<sup>71</sup> White, *Considerations on the State of British India*, 163; Mundy, *Pen and Pencil Sketches*, 2: 183, 310-1.

<sup>72</sup> Campbell, *India as it May Be*, 350, 351, 359-60.

“mess together” but Napier also insisted that “a cow would not long live alive with a hungry Goorka battalion.” For these reasons, as well as the fact that “these hardy soldiers profess an extraordinary attachment to our men,” Napier advocated the extensive recruitment of Gurkha sepoy into the Bengal Army. Doing so, he insisted, would provide the British a counterweight “with which to meet [the] Brahmins of Bengal, and their bristling prejudices of high caste.” Indeed, Napier argued that if the British could somehow recruit “30,000 or 40,000 Goorkhas” into the army—which was highly unrealistic given the continued hostility of the Nepali government to British recruitment of its subjects—British rule would rest on safer ground. Napier believed that with this large number of Gurkha soldiers, together with the roughly 30,000 British troops then in India, the British would possess “an Army able with ease to overthrow any combination among Hindoos or Mahomedans, or both together!”<sup>73</sup>

*The “Bravest of All the Indians”: British Perceptions of Sikhs in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries*

Another group of Indian men whom many Britons during much of the Company period commonly regarded as being one of the “martial races” of India were Sikhs from the Punjab. One common theme in many British descriptions of Sikhs during the first half of the nineteenth century, like British discourses regarding high-caste Hindu soldiers examined earlier, was that they belonged to one of India’s foremost military classes. For example, Bombay diplomatic official Alexander Burnes argued in his 1834 travel memoir of an expedition to Central Asia that the “genuine [Sikh] knows no occupation but war and agriculture, and he more affects the one than the other.” Later in his account, he

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<sup>73</sup> Napier, *Defects, Civil and Military*, 28, 29-30.

directly compared Sikhs with ancient Romans, stating that Sikhs were “either soldiers or husbandmen like the Romans of old.” Similarly, military adventurer, antiquarian and numismatologist James Lewis, writing under the nom de plume of “Charles Masson,” described Sikhs in his 1842 travel account as being “almost exclusively a military and agricultural people.”<sup>74</sup>

Others of a more historical bent argued that Sikhs were not always a “military people” but largely became one because of religious persecution by various Mughal emperors during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. For instance, Malcolm argued in his 1812 history of the Sikhs, the first such history published in English, that as a result of continuous Mughal oppression, the Sikhs were transformed from “an inoffensive, peaceable sect” into “a nation” of warriors. Since the sixteenth century, he insisted, Sikhs had maintained a “deep sense of the injuries they had sustained from a bigoted and overbearing government” as well as “the ardour of men commencing a military career of glory.” They thus “grafted the resolute courage of the soldier on the enthusiastic faith of the devotee” in a powerful combination which made them formidable adversaries.<sup>75</sup>

Similar arguments were made by other authors in later decades as well. Thus, Mundy argued in 1833 that the “the tyranny and cruelty exercised over” Sikhs by India’s Muslim rulers “transformed them from a peaceable race to a martial tribe.” They were “prompted” by religious bigotry to “take vengeance” against their Mughal oppressors. Likewise, William Waterloo Wellington Humbly, a captain in the Royal Lancers who fought in the First Anglo-Sikh War (1845-6), also focused on Muslim oppression in his

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<sup>74</sup> Alexander Burnes, *Travels Into Bokhara, Together with a Narrative of a Voyage on the Indus* (1834; Karachi: Oxford University Press, 1973 reprint ed. 3 vols.), 1: 45; 3: 143; Charles Masson, *Narrative of Various Journeys in Balochistan, Afghanistan and the Panjab* (1842; Karachi: Oxford University Press, 1974 reprint ed.; 3 vols.), 1: 434.

<sup>75</sup> Malcolm, *Sketch of the Sikhs* (London: John Murray, 1812), 33, 41, 42.

1854 memoir. Therein, he contended that it was the “cruel death” of Arjun (one of the Sikh gurus)—put to death by the Mughal emperor Jehangir (1605-27) in 1606—that “transformed the quiet and peaceable Sikhs into a warlike nation... determined to avenge themselves upon his assassins.”<sup>76</sup>

In addition to emphasizing their class- or religion-based enthusiasm for warfare, various military officers and government officials during this period also lauded the physical manliness of Sikhs, particularly compared to other Indian men. For instance, William Thorn, a major in the Royal Dragoons, depicted Sikhs in his 1818 memoir as being “generally tall, erect” and having “a manly open deportment.” Similar descriptions of Sikhs as being among the more physically manly of Indians were made in later decades as well. Thus, Masson argued in his 1842 memoir that Sikh men were “physically superior... to those of Hindustan Proper.” This was chiefly because they had more “muscular” and “well proportioned” limbs as well as “a stoutness of leg and calf, seldom seen in the Hindustani.” Similarly, a decade later Egerton observed that few groups of Indian men were “more military looking, or physically, a finer set of men” than Sikh soldiers. The latter appeared to him to be “less fleshy than, but [an] almost equally muscular set of men as, the generality of European troops” in India.<sup>77</sup>

A related theme in many British writings on Sikhs throughout this period was their hardiness and ability to withstand far greater fatigue in military marches than nearly all other Indian men, if not Europeans as well. For example, Madras diplomatic official George Forster asserted in a 1783 letter to a “Mr. Gregory” that the “[s]uccess and

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<sup>76</sup> Mundy, *Pen and Pencil Sketches*, 1: 129-30; W.W.W. Humbly, *Journal of a Cavalry Officer; Including the Memorable Sikh Campaign of 1845-1846* (London: Longman, Brown, Green, and Longmans, 1854), 54.

<sup>77</sup> William Thorn, *Memoir of the War in India* (London: T. Egerton, 1818), 500-1; Masson, *Narrative of Various Journeys*, 1: 433; Egerton, *Journal of a Winter's Tour*, 2: 76-7.

Conquests of the Seicks have principally arisen from their unparalleled activity and the endurance of an almost incredible fatigue.” This, together with the “[c]onstitutional Endowments they derive from an invariable Exercise of every species of Temperance,” gave “them powerful advantages over the debauched and debilitated Mussulman.” He further elaborated on these points in his memoir published fifteen years later. There, Forster insisted that the general military success of Sikhs stemmed in large part “from their endurance of excessive fatigue” as well as “a temperance of diet, and a forebearance from any of those sensual pleasures which have enervated the Indian Mohametans.” Similarly, Burnes maintained in his 1834 travel memoir that “Sikhs made good soldiers” largely because they were “inured to long marches and every fatigue.”<sup>78</sup>

In focusing on the physical strength and hardiness of Sikh soldiers, many also described their unshaven beards. During the Raj, the Sikh soldier’s hirsuteness would come to be generally regarded as among the more physically manly of his attributes. However, British impressions were more mixed during the Company period. Some such as Francklin admired their “singular custom” of “never suffer[ing] their hair or beards to be cut.” The Bengal Army officer asserted that this, along with the Sikh’s physical strength, helped “render [his] appearance imposing and formidable.” Likewise, in addition to describing Sikhs in his 1834 travel memoir as being “tall and bony men, with a very martial carriage,” Burnes added that their long hair and “small flat turbans... become them well.” Other military officers, however, were not so keen on the Sikh’s unshaven beard. Thorn, for instance, implied in his 1818 memoir that the Sikh soldier’s “custom” of not cutting their hair was something which detracted from his otherwise

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<sup>78</sup> George Forster to Mr. Gregory, n.d., but some time in 1783, cited in Forster to Henry Dundas, President of the Board of Control, 9 June 1785, BL/APAC/IOR/H/685 (3); George Forster, *Journey From Bengal to England* (London: R. Faulder, 1798, 2 vols.), 1: 289; Burnes, *Travels into Bokhara*, 2: 288.

“manly deportment.” Mundy went considerably further, sneering at the “most redundant beards” of Sikhs and insisting that they were “ornaments” which detracted from their otherwise very “handsome and martial countenances.”<sup>79</sup>

Another major theme in British descriptions of Sikhs throughout the Company period was their indomitable bravery and courage during battle with some even arguing that Sikhs were among the bravest, if not *the* bravest of Indian soldiers. For example, Forster argued in 1798 that throughout much of the preceding eighteenth century, “the Sicques displayed a courage of the most obstinate kind, and manifested a perseverance, under the pressure of native resource” which was most admirable. Similarly, Burnes remarked in 1834 that, unlike Afghan soldiers who “terminate a battle with the first discomfiture,” Sikh soldiers were “easily rallied” into battle. More impressive, during the battle itself, they possessed a “coolness and courage” which “surpass[ed] belief.” For Burnes, this admirable trait made Sikhs “the bravest of the Indians.”<sup>80</sup>

These initial impressions of the bravery and steadfast determination of Sikh soldiers would only become more pronounced in various memoirs of the two Anglo-Sikh Wars (1845-6 and 1848-9) published during the 1850s. For example, Humbly described several instances in his 1854 memoir of the First Anglo-Sikh War where his Sikh adversaries made “brave” or “gallant” charges at British lines. Describing a specific battle, Humbly asserted that the “indomitable Sikhs... entered upon the contest with the resolve to conquer or die.” Likewise, Bengal Army officer Hugo James asserted that same year that Sikhs were “no cowards, and fought like brave men.” Sikh soldiers frequently “display[ed] their contempt of danger” in battle against their British

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<sup>79</sup> Francklin, *Military Memoir*, 110; Burnes, *Travels into Bokhara*, 3: 101-2, 136; Thorn, *Memoir*, 500-1; Mundy, *Pen and Pencil Sketches*, 1: 130.

<sup>80</sup> Forster, *Journey*, 1: 294; Burnes, *Travels into Bokhara*, 2: 287, 288; 3: 139, 140.

adversaries, even when greatly outnumbered.<sup>81</sup>

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British arms were victorious over the Sikhs in both conflicts. Following the second war in 1849, the Company annexed the Punjab, a fate which the Nepali soldiers whom the British considered to be “Gurkhas” never had to face. Nevertheless, many military officers and colonial officials during the 1840s and 1850s advocated the greater recruitment of Sikhs within the Bengal Army, “consciously setting them against” the army’s high-caste sepoys.<sup>82</sup> Sikhs were considered to be better soldiers than high-caste Hindus. They were also deemed necessary to serve as counterpoises within the army to Brahmin and Rajput sepoys, if not actually to replace them. For example, Cunningham praised Rajputs for being “valiant and high-minded warriors.” At the same time, he also warned that “their pride and their courage are personal only, and concern them as men of ancient family and noble lineage.” As a result, while Rajput sepoys did “nothing unworthy of their birth,” they were otherwise “indifferent” to larger causes such as “the political advancement of their race.” By contrast, Cunningham argued that the Sikh owed “his excellence as a soldier to his own hardihood of character, to that spirit of adaptation which distinguishes every new people, and to that feeling of a common interest and destiny implanted in him by his great teachers.”<sup>83</sup>

Others focused on the absence of caste in Sikhism in advocating the greater recruitment of Sikhs as a counterweight to the *too* caste-conscious sepoys of the Bengal

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<sup>81</sup> Humbly, *Journal of a Cavalry Officer*, 45, 99-100, 144, 149-50, 155, 178; Hugo James, *Volunteer's Scramble Through Scinde, the Punjab, Hindostan, and the Himalayah Mountains* (London: W. Thacker and Company, 1854, 2 vols.), 1: 111.

<sup>82</sup> Peers, “Those Noble Exemplars of the True Military Tradition,” 138.

<sup>83</sup> Cunningham, *History*, 153.



Army. Thus, Hodgson argued in an 1852 minute to Governor-General Lord Dalhousie that extensive recruitment of Sikh soldiers as a “counterpoise” in the army was “more than ever required.” Action had to be taken lest the “daily increasing cliqueism of our Sepahee army” became even worse. Furthermore, Hodgson contended that British officials needed to “foster [the] present warlike spirit of the Sikh race” by recruiting more Sikhs “into the ranks of the Native army.” Similarly, Campbell argued that because Sikhs, like Gurkhas, “fraternize with our European troops” and “march light,” they presented an excellent contrast to high-caste Hindu sepoys with their “immense paraphernalia of... innumerable cooking-pots.”<sup>84</sup>

At the same time, there were others who warned against recruiting many Sikhs during this period, claiming that they could not be fully trusted. After all, the British had only just defeated them in back-to-back wars and felt the need to annex the Punjab in 1849 following the second conflict. Edwardes, for instance, warned in 1851 that “the Sikh soldiers have neither forgotten, nor forgiven, their humiliation on the banks of the Sutlej.” Believing them to be generally “incapable of gratitude to us,” he worried that they would prove a dangerous presence within the Bengal Army if recruited.<sup>85</sup>

Other military officials had similar apprehensions about recruiting Sikhs. For example, Bengal Army Major and Deputy Judge Advocate-General William Hough implied that since “Sikh soldiers were uncontrollable” leading up to the initial 1845-6 conflict, they were too dangerous to recruit now. Likewise, while Napier enthusiastically urged the extensive recruitment of Gurkha soldiers into the Bengal Army to act as a counterweight against high-caste Hindu sepoys, he was not sanguine about recruiting

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<sup>84</sup> Hodgson to F.F. Courtenay, Private Secretary to Governor-General Lord Dalhousie, 28 March 1852, reprinted as “Appendix B” in Hodgson, *Views and Opinions*, 207-8; Campbell, *India as it May Be*, 359.

<sup>85</sup> Edwardes, *Year on the Punjab Frontier*, 2: 105-6.

Sikhs. Fearing their “courage” in battle was “no ways abated by the last struggle” and they were generally “dissatisfied” as well as “discontented” by the British annexation of their homeland, Napier insisted it was madness to recruit them into the army.<sup>86</sup>

Ultimately, these apprehensions won out and Sikhs were not actively recruited into the Bengal Army until after they proved their loyalty to the British in 1857.<sup>87</sup>

*Their “Turbulent, Hardy, and Warlike Habits”: British Perceptions of Indian Muslims in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries*

A final group of Indian men whom several Britons considered to be a martial race suitable to act as a counterpoise in the Bengal Army to high-caste Hindus were Muslims. Like British discourses about north Indian high-caste Hindus and Sikhs, a major theme in the writings of various military officers and government officials regarding Muslims was that they belonged to a military class. For instance, Bengal surgeon and surveyor Francis Buchanan maintained in his 1807 survey report of the recently conquered province of Kanara in southern India that Muslims there were generally “accustomed to a military life” and thus did “not readily enter into civil occupations.” Likewise, Fitzclarence asserted 12 years later that the various eighteenth-century wars between Mughal successor states “formed a class of society” of Muslim “mercenaries” in central and northern India who knew little else except how to be a soldier.<sup>88</sup>

Similar arguments were made by various government officials during this period as well. Thus, Elphinstone (then-Resident at the Maratha capital of Pune) instructed

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<sup>86</sup> William Hough, *Political and Military Events in British India, From the Years 1756 to 1849* (London: William H. Allen & Co., 1853, 2 vols.), 2: 268; Napier, *Defects, Civil and Military*, 369, 373.

<sup>87</sup> Streets, *Martial Races*, 64-9.

<sup>88</sup> Francis Buchanan, *Journey from Madras Through the Countries of Mysore, Canara, and Malabar* (London: T. Cadell and W. Davies; Black, Parry, and Kingsbury; W. Bulmer and Co., 1807, 2 vols.), 1: 47; Fitzclarence, *Journal of a Route*, 71-2.

various Bengal Army officers in 1818 to recruit only north Indian Muslims from the “Military Classes” or the “Military Profession” for the newly-formed Poona Auxiliary Horse on the conclusion of the Third Anglo-Maratha War (1817-8). A few months later, it became clear that maintaining the full strength of the force would be too expensive and that several hundred men would have to be let go. Elphinstone instructed officers to discharge “all men who are not fit for soldiers” as well as those who “are not Military... even if their horses are good.”<sup>89</sup>

Referring to the same auxiliary corps, Governor-General Lord Auckland advocated its retention nearly two decades later in 1837 for similar reasons. Auckland insisted that it performed a vital service in that it allowed the British “an opportunity of employing a class of natives of higher rank than those usually enlisted for the regular army.” The governor-general insisted that there were many valuable political advantages to recruiting Muslims who were “generally connected with persons of influence in different parts of India,” but who were not otherwise likely to enlist “on any other terms than those offered by the peculiar combination of this Corps.” Consequently, Auckland maintained that it was absolutely imperative that the government retain the corps, in spite of the added costs of doing so.<sup>90</sup>

In addition to describing Indian Muslims as being a “military class,” several military officers and government officials also focused on other “gentlemanly” qualities

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<sup>89</sup> Elphinstone to Major Cunningham, 27 March 1818; Elphinstone to Cunningham, n.d, but after March 1818, both documents, BL/APAC/IOR/F/4/718/19542.

<sup>90</sup> Auckland Minute, 17 January 1837, cited in Bengal Political Consultations, 17 January 1837, BL/APAC/IOR/F/4/1651/65913. As a result of various economizing drives set in motion by his predecessor (Bentinck), and largely continued under Auckland’s tenure as governor-general until 1838 when focus turned to political instability in Afghanistan, numerous irregular cavalry units similar to the Poona Auxiliary Horse were dismantled. It is unclear, aside from the reasons given above, why Auckland chose to support its retention while going along with the elimination of other irregular cavalry regiments, particularly as many of these other units could have been said to have performed similar functions.

such as their bravery, courage, and steadfastness in battle. For example, British Army Major Innes Munro argued in his 1789 memoir of the First Anglo-Mysore War (1780-4) that Muslims “never fail to do their duty when treated like soldiers” by their British officers. Others, like Fitzclarence and Malcolm, focused on the bravery and valor of Muslim soldiers in battle. In his 1819 memoir, Fitzclarence wrote approvingly of the “natural bravery,” the “personal prowess” and the “contempt of death and dread of shame” of Muslim soldiers. Similarly, Malcolm claimed 13 years later that “valour [was] a common quality” among Muslim soldiers. Finally, Fraser asserted in his 1851 biography of Eurasian military adventurer James Skinner that there was “no more faithful servant or brave soldier than a respectable Muslim.”<sup>91</sup>

A third major theme found in various British descriptions of Muslim soldiers during the first half of the nineteenth century was their physical strength and hardiness. For instance, Munro described Muslim soldiers in the Madras Army as being “of a very gigantic size” as well as “withal extremely brawny and robust.” Likewise, a British military official argued in 1793 that the Muslim cavalrymen in the Maratha armies commanded by French military adventurer Count Benoit de Boigne (1751-1830) were the “hardiest of the whole.” Similarly, Bengal officials explained in an 1835 letter to the Court of Directors that there was “no limitation as to age or Height” in the recruitment of irregular cavalry units in the Bengal Army. Because these units were “generally composed of young well formed Mussulmen” from north India, Bengal officials argued

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<sup>91</sup> Innes Munro, *Narrative of the Military Operations, on the Coromandel Coast, Against the Combined Forces of the French, Dutch, and Hyder Ally Cawn, From the Year 1780 to the Peace in 1784* (London: T. Bensley, 1789), 192; Fitzclarence, *Journal of a Route*, 252; Malcolm, *Memoir*, 1: 355; Fraser, *Military Memoir of Lieut.-Col. James Skinner, C.B.* (London: Smith, Elder and Co., 1851, 2 vols.), 1: 95.

that such requirements would not be necessary.<sup>92</sup>

Largely because several military officers and authors generally considered Indian Muslims to be a “military class,” as well as physically stronger and braver than most other Indians, several Britons in India throughout the Company period also advocated their extensive recruitment. Unlike Gurkhas and Sikhs, however, whose recruitment was advocated during the 1850s primarily to diversify the Bengal Army, many urged the recruitment of Muslims in earlier decades to ensure peace and tranquility in north India. Thus, Malcolm warned Governor-General Wellesley in June 1805 that unless “some plan is adopted to attach [the] ... unemployed men of the Military Classes” in northern India, particularly with the defeat of the Marathas during the Second Anglo-Maratha War (1803-4), “they will again flock to the first standard that is reared against us.”<sup>93</sup> Only through recruiting Rohillas (Afghans who lived in India) into irregular cavalry battalions, Malcolm insisted, would Company efforts to “improve the Country” and to “transform a rude and turbulent race of men into peaceable and useful subjects” be successful.<sup>94</sup> Malcolm had a sympathetic ear in Wellesley who himself argued two months previously for a similar policy. The governor-general insisted that it was incumbent upon the British to “give [military] employment” to various Muslim soldiers in north India, particularly those “formerly... engaged in the military service of the Native powers.” These soldiers were “now in a general measure destitute of the means of maintaining themselves & their families.” Only by providing these soldiers with employment would they remain loyal to

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<sup>92</sup> Munro, *Narrative of the Military Operations*, 72; “Account of Colonel De Boigne’s Troops” (c. 1793), BL/APAC/IOR/H/388 (2); Military Letter from Bengal to Court of Directors, 11 February 1835, BL/APAC/IOR/F/4/1556/63556.

<sup>93</sup> A good proportion of Maratha armies during this period were made up of Rajputs and Muslims from various districts in northern India, the same regions which provided the bulk of sepoys in the Bengal Army.

<sup>94</sup> Malcolm to Wellesley, 28 June 1805, BL/APAC/IOR/H/88 (8).

British rule and not stir up trouble.<sup>95</sup>

However, others worried about recruiting large numbers of Muslim soldiers in the army precisely *because* they were too turbulent, if ultimately, not trustworthy enough. For example, in three letters written in 1796 to Company directors, Bengal officials informed the Court that they were keeping “a watchful eye upon [the] conduct” of various groups of Rohilla armed men in northern India on account of previous “Conduct” which they considered underhanded and duplicitous. Although “reduced in Numbers,” these Rohillas were still deemed “sufficiently numerous to be formidable” adversaries. Likewise, British Army General Sir Samuel Auchmuty, in discussing the Madras Army (in which, by this time, Muslims comprised about a third of its sepoys), argued in 1813 that it was “very desirable to discourage, in some measure, the recruiting of Mussulmans.” He also maintained that it would be wise policy to “take care that a due proportion of Hindoos are promoted to the Commissioned Ranks” to act as a “sufficient Counterpoise of Hindoo Strength to remove the apprehension of Mahomedan Intrigue.”<sup>96</sup>

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In later decades, as various government officials and military officers began to worry about the high-caste prejudices of Brahmin and Rajput sepoys in the Bengal Army, the reasons for increasing Muslim recruitment shifted. Some now desired the recruitment

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<sup>95</sup> Wellesley to Bengal Secret and Political Secretary N.B. Edmonstone, 11 April 1805, cited in Bengal Revenue Consultations in the Department of Ceded & Conquered Provinces, 11 April 1805, BL/APAC/IOR/F/4/183/3526.

<sup>96</sup> Political Letter from Court of Directors to Bengal, 22 April 1796; Political Letter from Bengal to Court of Directors, 25 January 1797; Political Letter from Bengal to Court of Directors, 11 September 1797, all three documents, BL/APAC/IOR/F/4/43/1033B; Auchmuty Minute, 1 March 1813, BL/APAC/IOR/H/88 (26).

of large numbers of Muslim soldiers, like Gurkhas and Sikhs, to serve as counterpoises in the army to high-caste Hindus, if not replace Brahmins and Rajputs outright. For example, Hodgson argued that instead of maintaining an average of about 150 Muslim sepoy per regiment, Bengal Army officers should strive to increase that number to around 250. This number, he conceived, “would approach nearer a just proportion, and, as a rule, tend to the preservation of a more politic equilibrium” within the army as a whole. Similarly, in addition to urging the recruitment of more Sikh and Gurkha soldiers, Campbell also advocated enlisting greater numbers of Muslims (such as Rohillas and Arabs) in the Bengal Army. Muslim soldiers, the Bengal judge believed, would provide a greater “counterpoise to the present sepoys” than which currently existed.<sup>97</sup>

Likewise, Jacob advocated the further recruitment of Muslims. The Bombay officer considered Indian Muslims, particularly from northern India and the Punjab, to be “the very best men for our army,” being “very bold, brave, strong, well-made active men.” More importantly, though, for someone who perhaps more thoroughly attacked the caste prejudices of Brahmin and Rajput sepoys than any other Briton during this period, Jacob praised Muslims for having “scarcely more prejudices of religion, &c., than Englishmen.” In this major respect, Jacob insisted, they were “superior beings” to the Bengal Army’s high-caste Hindu sepoys, “whatever the Bengal officers may fancy.”<sup>98</sup>

However, like earlier decades, others were less sanguine about recruiting Muslim soldiers, even as they worried about caste in the Bengal Army and advocated the increased recruitment of Gurkhas and Sikhs. For example, John Blakiston warned

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<sup>97</sup> Hodgson, *Views and Opinions*, 121; Campbell, *India as it May Be*, 360.

<sup>98</sup> Jacob, “Remarks on the State of the Native Army in India in General; Upon the Principles Whereon its Efficiency Depends; and on the Means Whereby its Existing Defects May be Remedied” (1854), reprinted in Jacob, *Views*, 133, 134.

readers of his 1829 memoir that Muslims were the “natural enemies” of Britons, largely because Britain had “supplanted them in the empire of India.” He further averred that “at any time, they would be willing and ready, one and all, to take their share in expelling us from the East.” Similarly, in his 1832 parliamentary testimony, colonial diplomatic official Sir Henry Russell warned that Muslim soldiers were “much more under the influence of religious fanaticism than the Hindoos” as well as were “constitutionally of a more eager and irritable temper,” all traits which made them too dangerous to actively recruit into the army. Likewise, Bengal judge Edward Parry Thornton reminded readers of his 1835 Indian reform tract that the 1806 Vellore mutiny of the Madras Army, one of the more serious outbreaks of violence within Company armies prior to the Sepoy Rebellion in 1857, had been fomented by Muslim soldiers at the cantonment:

The formidable alliance formed some years ago since to drive us from India, shews the feelings with which we are regarded by the old Mahometan authorities; and though their power is now broken and destroyed, we must not imagine that their hostile feeling towards us is abated.

Thornton, therefore, insisted, that Britons had to be “at all times... prepared to defend” themselves against Muslims or any combination of Muslims and disaffected Hindus. Several during this period, therefore, perceived Muslims to be enough of a threat to Britain’s Indian empire to make their increased recruitment a risky, if not outright dangerous, proposition, even if it would reduce the dominance of Brahmins and Rajputs within the Bengal Army.<sup>99</sup>

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<sup>99</sup> Blakiston, *Twelve Years’ Military Adventure*, 1: 303; Evidence of Sir Henry Russell, Select Committee of the House of Commons, 19 April 1832, cited in Papers Received from Sir Mark Cubbon, K.C.B., Resident at Mysore, 25 July 1858, PP, 1859, *Papers Connected with the Re-Organization of the Army in India*, 111; Edward Parry Thornton, *India, Its States and Prospects* (London: Parbury, Allen, & Co., 1835), 350-1.



### **Epilogue: The Sepoy Rebellion, the Peel Commission, and Reevaluating the Origins of the Martial Races Policy**

Ultimately, Russell and Thornton, among other colonial officials, mistrusted the wrong group of Indian soldiers. In the early morning hours of 10 May 1857, high-caste Hindu sepoys from the Third Native Cavalry of the Bengal Army, stationed at Mirath (Meerut), some forty miles northwest of Delhi, mutinied, protesting the introduction of the Enfield rifle in their regiment and the harsh treatment meted out the day before to eighty-five soldiers who refused to use the new rifle. Rumors had spread over preceding months among Bengal Army sepoys that the British were intending to rob them of their caste status by coating the cartridges for these weapons with beef fat.<sup>100</sup> The introduction of the Enfield rifle, many high-caste Hindu soldiers convinced themselves, was merely part of a larger plot of the British to Christianize them.<sup>101</sup>

The Sepoy Rebellion, which erupted in earnest a day later when mutinous soldiers at Mirath captured Delhi and convinced the aged Mughal emperor to proclaim Indian independence from British rule, swept across much of northern India throughout the rest of 1857 and into 1858. Shaking British rule to its very foundations, it was the greatest breakdown of trust between Britons and Indians in the 182-year period of British colonial rule. As such, it resulted in several significant changes in British imperial rule. A year later, the East India Company was abolished and its Indian territories were reorganized into a Crown colony ruled directly by the British State. A parliamentary commission was also established (the Peel Commission) to investigate what went wrong and to

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<sup>100</sup> An investigation by colonial officials after the Rebellion concluded that “tallow and lard had in fact been used to lubricate the cartridges.” They suspected that “animal fat from pigs or cows” may have been included in the mixture. Although unintentional, this aptly shows “just how out of touch were the rulers from the ruled” in 1857. Streets, *Martial Races*, 28.

<sup>101</sup> Stokes, *The Peasant Armed*, chaps. 1-2; Streets, *Martial Races*, 27-8; Madan Paul Singh, *The Indian Army Under the East India Company* (New Delhi: Sterling Publishers, 1976), 156-7.

recommend changes to the composition of British and Indian forces in India. In the process, the first standardized recruitment policy for all the Indian armies was crafted during the early 1860s: the martial races policy alluded to throughout this chapter.

As I have sought to demonstrate in this chapter, many of the ideological origins of the martial races policy were not simply Orientalist “imagination” of Indian peoples formulated by policymakers in the immediate aftermath of the Sepoy Rebellion or ideas derived from the writings of various late nineteenth-century authors of caste manuals. Instead, I have argued that these ideas emerged initially out of British concerns from the 1820s onward regarding control over the Bengal Army, by far the largest of the three sepoy armies. Directly as a consequence of greater mistrust toward their high-caste Hindu soldiers, several military reformers advocated the recruitment of other “martial races” such as Gurkhas, Sikhs, and Muslims, to act as more trustworthy counterpoises to Brahmins and Rajputs in the army. In the minds of many reformers, these groups had the added benefit of having a partial (in the case of Gurkhas) or a total (in the case of Sikhs and Muslims) absence of caste prejudice.

The chief implication of this argument concerns the Sepoy Rebellion itself, and specifically, the impact which this conflagration had on the development of the martial races policy. Rather than viewing the Rebellion as being the inspiration for many British racial attitudes regarding the Raj’s military forces as many historians have been wont to do, I would argue that it is more correct to say that the Rebellion confirmed many already-articulated fears of military officers and colonial officials. To be sure, there was little continuity between the pre-1857 and post-1857 Bengal armies in terms of which groups of soldiers were recruited. As Heather Streets has rightly pointed out, sixty-nine

of the seventy-four regiments of the Bengal Army either mutinied in 1857 or were disbanded by British officers before the sepoys in them could rebel. The army was thus largely recruited anew in the years after 1857 as its geographic recruitment base shifted from the Gangetic plains of north-central India to the Punjab in the north-west.<sup>102</sup>

However, as I have shown in this chapter, the army's post-1857 recruitment strategies were not simply "historical accidents" or ad-hoc responses to the exigencies of 1857 later codified into official policy.<sup>103</sup> Rather, Raj-era policymakers could and did draw upon the ideas of various reformers from earlier decades who advocated the wider recruitment of Gurkhas, Sikhs, and Punjabi Muslims to act as more trustworthy counterweights to Brahmin and Rajput sepoys from Awadh and Bihar. This is further borne out in various official papers presented as evidence to the Peel Commission, some written by the same individuals who most warned about the dangers of caste in the Bengal Army in the decade or so before the Rebellion. For instance, while John Jacob railed against caste in 1851 for allowing Indian soldiers to shirk their duty and being detrimental to military discipline, he was even more adamant in written evidence he submitted to the Commission seven years later that it be completely ignored by British military officials. Indian sepoys should be judged only according to "their power and willingness to perform their duties as soldiers," not according to their caste background. Indeed, Jacob compared an Indian sepoy's attention to caste to a soldier's having a "bodily defect or infirmity" in that both were prejudicial to any army's well-being.<sup>104</sup>

Various other military officers who presented written evidence to the Peel

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<sup>102</sup> Streets, *Martial Races*, 19.

<sup>103</sup> *Ibid.*, 31-2.

<sup>104</sup> Papers Received from General John Jacob, PP, 1859, *Papers Connected with the Re-Organization of the Army in India*, p. 90.

Commission in 1858 also echoed other major criticisms lobbed at the Bengal Army by various reformers during the latter decades of the Company period. Thus, Sir John Lawrence, Brigadier-General Chamberlain and Colonel Herbert Edwardes attacked the cliquishness of the pre-1857 Bengal Army, arguing that its “brotherhood or homogeny” was a critical “defect” which almost “operated most fatally against us.” Other military officers advocated the total exclusion of Brahmins from the army, also echoing various arguments made by reformers in preceding decades. For example, Bengal Army Major-General Sir Hugh Rose insisted that only by ridding the army of “clever” and “fanatical Brahmins” would the British be able finally to establish sufficient control over it. Similarly, although Bengal Army Colonel Burn conceded that Brahmins had “proved themselves on many occasions [to be] good soldiers” and even that “many, during the late struggle, have remained faithful,” he nevertheless advocated completely dismissing them from the service based on the logic that “none of the old leaven should be left to impregnate the new mass.” In replacing the large numbers of Brahmin sepoys in the army, Burn echoed pre-1857 reformers in recommending that the British turn to other “fighting classes” of northern and northwestern India such as Gurkhas, Sikhs, and Punjabi Muslims.<sup>105</sup>

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There are three major historiographical implications that follow from locating the origins of the martial races policy in the late-Company period. First, by recognizing

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<sup>105</sup> Papers Received from Sir John Lawrence, Brigadier-General Chamberlain, and Colonel Edwardes, 24 June 1858, p. 14; Papers Received from Major-General Sir Hugh Rose, 74, q. 16; Papers Received from Colonel Burn, p. 155, q. 3; p. 156, q. 8; all four documents, PP, 1859, *Papers Connected with the Re-Organization of the Army in India*.

several of the pre-1857 ideological origins of the martial races policy, the story of that policy's development and implementation no longer appears as an administrative oddity of colonial India—a policy both conceived of and implemented within the span of only a decade. Rather, it conforms to the general pattern of an almost glacial pace of administrative reform during the nineteenth century. Prime examples of this pattern include the prolonged debates over Indianization of the colonial bureaucracy, charted in Chapter 2, as well as Thomas Babington Macaulay's Penal Code, which was first proposed by him in the mid-1830s during his term as a Bengal Law Commissioner (1834-7) but only enacted in 1860.<sup>106</sup> Given the protracted debates surrounding these other major issues of colonial governance, why should British discussions regarding sepoy recruitment have been any different?

Secondly, the fact that much of British martial races thinking emerged out of governance anxieties in the latter decades of the Company period calls into question to what degree the martial races policy was, indeed, an “orientalist imagination” foisted on India by British scholar-officials. The British, after all, regarded men from Nepal and the Punjab as “martial races” long before they were in a position to actively recruit them or to transform them into a “martial species.” Furthermore, if the concept of “imagination” still has analytical force in understanding British martial races thinking, an open question given the concept's general lack of precision, it would be more correct to say that a particular kind of imagination—that of “bureaucratic panic”—was at work during the Company period. Stating it this way allows one to distinguish between British beliefs

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<sup>106</sup> John Rosselli, *Lord William Bentinck: The Making of a Liberal Imperialist, 1774-1839* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1974), 203; see also Stokes, *The English Utilitarians and India* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1959), pp. 234-43, who notes that the ambitious reform program of the Utilitarians floundered during the late 1830s for similar reasons.

about “innate” Indian martial races, on the one hand, and very real concerns about governance in the pre-1857 Bengal Army, on the other.

Finally, recognizing that the martial races policy of the 1860s has a crucial pre-history in the latter decades of the Company period goes a long way in explaining why there was considerable concern throughout the first half of the nineteenth century about the moral conduct of British military officers and soldiers in India. As I shall argue in the next chapter, it was precisely because of concerns about governance of the Bengal Army that many British military officers and colonial officials worried during the first half of the nineteenth century about the manliness and morality of officers and soldiers. Many believed that sepoys would stay loyal to the Company only if their commanding officers or their fellow British comrades-in-arms were morally upright. Like covenanted servants discussed in Chapter 3, a considerable amount was thought to be riding on whether or not British military officers and soldiers could be trusted to act virtuously while in India.

## **Chapter 5. Empires of Opinion: British Military Supremacy and Vulnerability in Company India**

In the previous chapter, I examined how a growing lack of trust in Bengal Army sepoys by British colonial officials and military officers after the 1820s had a direct impact upon the creation of the martial races ideology. Although very little was implemented in the way of changes to the recruitment practices of the Bengal Army before the Sepoy Rebellion, various colonial officials and military officers during the latter decades of the Company period began to articulate two ideas central to the martial races policy of the Raj. First, they proposed that martiality was a racial trait which not all Indians possessed. Secondly, they argued for the need to recruit from a variety of ethnic and socio-religious groups to act as counterpoises to one another. The ideas behind the martial races policy, therefore, were not simply “orientalist imaginations” of India by scholar-officials. Instead, it would be more correct to say that they resulted from various “bureaucratic panics” by colonial officials and military officers during the latter decades of the Company period regarding British control over the Bengal Army and, specifically, whether the British could safely trust the Brahmin and Rajput sepoys in that army to remain loyal.<sup>1</sup>

In this chapter, I will show how the greater inability by Britons in India to trust Bengal Army sepoys during the latter decades of the Company period also led to

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<sup>1</sup> For examples of scholars who have argued that the martial races policy was an “orientalist imagination,” see Nicholas B. Dirks, *Castes of Mind: Colonialism and the Making of Modern India* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001), 176-80; Thomas R. Metcalf, *Ideologies of the Raj* (Cambridge and New York, Cambridge University Press, 1994), 84-93, 104-5, 125-8; Fox, *Lions of the Punjab*, chap. 8; and Lionel Caplan, “‘Bravest of the Brave’: Representations of ‘The Gurkha’ in British Military Writings,” *Modern Asian Studies* 25, no. 3 (1991): 571-97; and *idem.*, *Warrior Gentlemen: “Gurkhas” in the Western Imagination* (Providence, RI and Oxford: Berghahn Books, 1995). The concept of “bureaucratic panic” is C.A. Bayly’s. See Bayly, *Empire and Information: Intelligence Gathering and Social Communication in India, 1780-1870* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 168.

concerns about the moral conduct of British officers and soldiers in India. In doing so, I wish to question the interpretation put forth by Amiya Barat and Dirk Kolff, among other military historians, that the British were largely complacent during the decades leading up to the Sepoy Rebellion in 1857. According to this view, necessary reforms in the Bengal Army were only implemented after 1857 when, to use Barat's words, the army's "Augean stables [were] given their much to be desired, much postponed cleansing."<sup>2</sup>

Admittedly, there is some truth in this interpretation. Despite changes to recruitment suggested by various colonial officials and military officers surveyed in the last chapter, almost no reform occurred in the Bengal Native Infantry before 1857. However, if one also considers British officers and soldiers alongside sepoys, a different story emerges. Far from being complacent about their sepoy armies, colonial officials and military officers worried endlessly throughout the first half of the nineteenth century about how improper moral conduct by British officers and soldiers might endanger the loyalty of their Indian soldiers.

Like the Company's various efforts to moralize covenanted servants, the Company enacted several reforms beginning in the 1810s and 1820s aimed at regulating the behavior of its British officers and soldiers in India. Military officials routinely court-martialed British officers who habitually drank or physically abused Indians. Company directors in London also regularly upbraided Company officials in India for being lenient toward offenders. The Company also enacted a series of reforms aimed at diminishing soldier drunkenness and, more broadly, improving the morality of British soldiers in

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<sup>2</sup> Amiya Barat, *The Bengal Native Infantry: Its Organization and Discipline, 1796-1852* (Calcutta: Firma K.L. Mukhopadhyay, 1962), 186, 306; Dirk H.A. Kolff, *Naukar, Rajput and Sepoy: The Ethno-History of the Military Labor Market in Hindustan, 1450-1850* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 187-90.



India. These changes ranged from the introduction of alternative recreational activities within cantonment such as sporting activities and libraries, where soldiers could be better watched and, in effect, trained to be moral, to trusting soldiers not to drink by paying them for their unused liquor rations and by establishing savings banks.

As the Sepoy Rebellion in 1857 would ultimately demonstrate, these reforms proved to be wholly inadequate—indeed, almost catastrophically so—given the real problems which the British faced in governing the Bengal Army during the latter decades of the Company period. Even so, they flowed out of a broader nineteenth-century British understanding that their empire in India was largely one “of opinion.” British military power, many believed, mainly rested upon the “opinion” which Indians were thought to generally hold of British superiority, if not invulnerability. For example, Edward Parry Thornton insisted in 1835 that the “knowledge” among Indians that the British were “so prepared” to put down military disturbances, wherever they might occur, served as “the best security for our safety and the general peace.” Likewise, John Studholme Hodgson maintained in 1850 that it was only the “involuntary *conviction* of our military strength to crush summarily all insurrection [which] maintains peace throughout the continent of India.”<sup>3</sup>

As I shall argue in this chapter, this understanding of British power in India, like the expectations placed upon covenanted servants always to act morally, put burdensome expectations upon British officers and soldiers in India always to present themselves to Indian soldiers as moral and manly British men. As Madras Army Commander-in-Chief J.T. Cradock asserted in 1806, no sepoy, even one “nurtured from his Infancy” as a

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<sup>3</sup> Edward Parry Thornton, *India, Its States and Prospects* (London: Parbury, Allen, & Co., 1835), 351; John Studholme Hodgson, *Opinions on the Indian Army* (1850; London: William H. Allen & Co., 1857, 2nd ed.), 45. Emphasis in original.

soldier, was supposed to be able to “vye [sic] with the British Soldier in the energies of mind or Body.” Likewise, officials such as Bengal Army Commander-in-Chief Lord Edward Combermere (1825-9) expected British military officers always to exert superior leadership over their men. Indeed, he considered it absolutely essential to British rule, asserting in an 1829 minute to Governor-General Bentinck that “much of the good feeling from our Military System [could] be traced [to] the zeal, the spirit, with which the European Officer on every occasion, recurs to his indulgence and energy.”<sup>4</sup>

At the same time, like fears about covenanted servants falling into debt or accepting gifts from Indians, military officials routinely worried over about the morality and manliness of British officers and soldiers in India. For example, Hodgson insisted that military officers needed to do more “to elevate the mind and character of the native soldier to a British standard of manliness.” Likewise, Jacob asserted in 1851 that it was absolutely necessary for officers always to exert the “highest moral tone, and... a simple and vigorous Anglo-Saxon honesty” in all their actions. Regarding soldiers, many officials worried—as Bombay officials did in an 1818 letter to their counterparts in Bengal—about the “the habits of intoxication to which the European Soldiery are so unfortunately addicted.” They feared that sepoys would be disgusted if they witnessed such immoral behavior by their British comrades-in-arms, perhaps even to the point of not remaining loyal to British officers and soldiers who acted so immorally.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Cradock Minute, 21 October 1806, cited in Military Letter from Madras to Court of Directors, 21 October 1806, BL/APAC/IOR/F/4/234/5388; Combermere to Bentinck, cited in Bengal Military Consultations, 1 May 1829, BL/APAC/IOR/F/4/1259/50578.

<sup>5</sup> Hodgson, *Opinions*, 59; John Jacob, *The Views and Opinions of Brigadier-General John Jacob* (1851; London: Smith, Elder & Co., 1858, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed.), 102; Military Letter from Bombay to Bengal, 22 April 1818, BL/APAC/IOR/F/4/539/12968.

### **British Discourses Regarding Differences in British and Indian Modes of Warfare**

From the very beginning of British colonial rule, various colonial officials and military authors sought to account for the seemingly sudden rise of the Company's military and political power on the Indian subcontinent. British-led armies were nearly always successful against Indian ones—even ones considerably larger numerically—many believed, because of their greater military discipline and “military science.” Others cited the more perfect use of the bayonet, artillery, and cavalry by the British in battle. These arguments were occasionally gendered as well, with British modes of fighting being portrayed as more sober, methodical, and manly than Indian fighting methods which were depicted as more reckless, disorganized, and effeminate.

#### *Discipline and “Military Science”*

Most military commentators thought that British armies had a relative superiority over Indian ones in military discipline. This “difference” was deemed to be a major bulwark of the Company's political and military power on the Indian subcontinent and a major reason for continued British military success against Indian armies. However, at the same time, these ideas were not created during the colonial period. Rather, as Channa Wickremesekera has recently observed, such conceits were already prevalent in the pre-colonial period. Various seventeenth and eighteenth century European travelers to India generally considered the “disorderly multitudes of soldiers and sprawling bazaars” of Mughal armies as resembling more “large moving fairs” than armies in any Western sense of the term.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Channa Wickremesekera, *“Best Black Troops in the World”: British Perceptions and the Making of the Sepoy, 1746-1805* (Delhi: Manohar, 2002), 76.

Even so, Wickremesekera maintains that the creation of “Indian difference in the military sphere” from European modes of warfare was not simply a case of racism or smug conceits of Western superiority. Rather, there were also fundamental differences between European and Indian warfare.<sup>7</sup> Between the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries, a “military revolution” had occurred in European warfare as various states shifted from relying upon locally-raised bands of “feudal” mercenaries to professional standing armies consisting mainly of disciplined infantrymen employed directly by the State.<sup>8</sup> By contrast, Indian armies were far more “segmentary,” predominantly comprised of locally-raised war-bands of mercenary soldiers whose primary loyalties were to their immediate employers and not to the distant state.<sup>9</sup>

To speak, therefore, of a single Mughal Army is misleading. Rather, the military forces of the Mughal Empire were actually “a number of separate armies controlled by independent commanders” rather than anything resembling the then-emerging professional standing armies of Europe. This had an impact upon how Indians generally fought battles as well. Indian armies generally fought more as “aggregates of individuals and not as cohesive bodies of soldiers.” Individual prowess and, particularly, skill in

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<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, 79. Stewart Gordon and Kaushik Roy have made similar arguments. Stewart Gordon, “The Limited Adoption of European Style Military Forces by Eighteenth-Century Rulers in India,” *Indian Economic and Social History Review* 35, no. 3 (1998): 229-45; Roy, “Military Synthesis in South Asia: Armies, Warfare, and Indian Society, c. 1740-1849,” *Journal of Military History* 69 (July 2005): 651-90.

<sup>8</sup> The idea of a “military revolution” occurring in Western Europe between 1560 and 1660 was first advanced by Michael Roberts in an inaugural lecture at Queen’s University, Belfast in 1956 and subsequently published in Roberts, *Essays in Swedish History* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1968), 195-225. Most military historians have generally accepted this argument, but some, like Geoffrey Parker and Jeremy Black, have sought to extend the time frame to include the early eighteenth century. Parker, *The Military Revolution: Military Innovation and the Rise of the West, 1500-1800* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1988); Black, *European Warfare, 1660-1815* (London: University College London Press, 1994).

<sup>9</sup> The concept is Burton Stein’s, who employs it to describe the common political structure of South Indian princely states during the pre-colonial period. Stein, *Peasant State and Society in Medieval South India* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1980). Drawing on this concept, Wickremesekera in *Best Black Troops* argues that “Segmented states resulted in segmented armies” (38). See also Jagadish Narayan Sarkar, *The Art of War in Medieval India* (New Delhi: Munshiram Nanoharlal, 1984), 62, 81-2.

hand-to-hand combat were privileged over military regimentation.<sup>10</sup>

In its various military engagements with “country powers” on the subcontinent during the century between the Carnatic campaigns of the 1740s and early 1750s and the two Anglo-Sikh Wars (1845-6 and 1848-9), then, the Company confronted a radically different style of warfare than had become the norm for Western Europe. Most British commentators during this period were aware that there were dramatic differences between how British-led and Indian armies fought. Even so, they generally described Indian methods of fighting as defective compared to European discipline. For example, in his February 1788 opening impeachment speech in the impeachment trial of Warren Hastings, Edmund Burke asserted that British military success in India thus far was largely attributable to the “fall of [Indian] warlike spirit, and the total disuse almost of all parts of military discipline.” Likewise, Bengal Army surveyor James Rennell insisted four years later that the Company’s prior military victories in India were largely because its armies fought “against undisciplined troops.” So long as various Indian rulers failed to make “any great improvement” in either the discipline of their armies or in their methods of fighting battles, he averred, the Company would easily retain its position of military preeminence on the Indian subcontinent.<sup>11</sup>

In partly attributing British military superiority against Indian armies to considerably greater military discipline, several cast this difference in scientific terms. For example, George Augustus Frederick Fitzclarence generally attributed British military success in his 1819 memoir to the “extensive combination of machinery” of

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<sup>10</sup> Wickremesekera, *Best Black Troops*, 34-50, quotes on pp. 42 and 43; Roy, “Military Synthesis in South Asia,” 657; Gordon, “Limited Adoption,” *passim*.

<sup>11</sup> Edmund Burke, “Speech on Opening of Impeachment” (15 February 1788), *WS*, 6: 283; James Rennell, *The Marches of the British Armies in the Peninsula of India, During the Campaigns of 1790 and 1791* (London: W. Bulmer and Co., 1792), 110, 112.

British armies guided by “the hand of science and system.” Likewise, Adam White argued three years later that “the superior science and intellectual energy” of European armies insured British military supremacy in India. Similarly, in an 1842 minute to fellow Company directors, Henry St. George Tucker largely attributed British military supremacy in India to the British being “much more advanced in the science of war” than Indians. This advancement, Tucker believed, along with a superior “wisdom, energy, discipline... skill, and military virtue,” was largely responsible for the “rapid, yet regular progress” of the Company’s military conquest of India.<sup>12</sup>

By partially attributing British military success over often more numerous Indian armies to a “superior science and intellectual energy,” nineteenth-century Britons like White were also indirectly casting differences between how British-led armies and Indian ones fought in gendered terms. Others were more explicit. For example, in 1805, William Francklin described disciplined British-led armies as practicing a more “open and manly warfare” than that typically employed by disorderly Maratha soldiers. Francklin claimed that Maratha soldiers not only lacked the military discipline of European soldiers but were also more “corrupt and treacherous” in fighting battles. Similarly, James Mill baldly asserted twelve years later in his *History of British India* (1817) that “in war, the Hindus have always been greatly inferior to the warlike nations of Europe.” Mill partially attributed this to “the slavish and dastardly spirit of the Hindus” which proved no match to the superior “manliness and courage of Britons.” He

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<sup>12</sup> George Augustus Frederick Fitzclarence, *Journal of a Route Across India, through Egypt, to England in the Latter End of the Year 1817 and the Beginning of 1818* (London: John Murray, 1819), 252; Adam White, *Considerations on the State of British India* (Edinburgh: Bell and Bradfute, W. and C. Tait, and Allardice; Glasgow: James Brash and Co.; London: J.M. Richardson, 1822), 141; Henry St. George Tucker, untitled paper (1842), *Memorials of Indian Government; Being a Selection from the Papers of Henry St. George Tucker, Late Director of the East India Company*, ed. John W. Kaye (London: Richard Bentley, 1853), 232, 238.

also argued, with a circular logic, that Indians were “greatly inferior” to British soldiers because “effeminate” Indians have “never been able, without European officers, to avail themselves of European discipline.” Thus, much like various nineteenth-century British and European scientists who considered the sciences to be the natural preserve of men, British military commentators throughout the first half of the nineteenth century attacked Indians for fighting an unmanly and unscientific warfare.<sup>13</sup>

### *Tactics and Weaponry*

In addition to asserting that British-led armies generally prevailed because of a superior “military science,” others focused on the military tactics which these armies used. Several military officers, for instance, wrote in almost gushing terms about the use of the bayonet by British soldiers. Thus, William Thorn, a major in the Royal Dragoons, maintained in his 1818 memoir that few Indian armies could withstand British soldiers who had “recourse to that sure weapon in British hands, the bayonet.” Similarly, Sir Charles James Napier insisted in 1853 that “Eastern” soldiers had little or no chance against Britons employing their bayonets. Rather romantically, he claimed this was largely because there had been “no falling off in British swordsmen since Richard Coeur de Lion, with seventeen knights and three hundred archers, at Jaffa defied the whole Saracen Army, and maintained his ground.”<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> William Francklin, ed., *Military Memoir of Mr. George Thomas* (London: John Stockdale, 1805), 317; James Mill, *HBI*, 2: 149-50. For more on the gendering of science during this period in Europe, see Londa Schiebinger, *The Mind Has No Sex? Women in the Origins of Modern Science* (Cambridge, MA and London: Harvard University Press, 1989); and Michael Adas, *Machines as the Measure of Man: Science, Technology, and Ideologies of Western Dominance* (Ithaca, NY and London: Cornell University Press, 1989).

<sup>14</sup> William Thorn, *Memoir of the War in India* (London: T. Egerton, 1818), 275-6; Sir Charles James Napier, *Defects, Civil and Military, of the Indian Government*, ed. Lieutenant-General Sir W.F.P. Napier (London: Charles Westerton, 1853), 297-8.

Others argued for British superiority in the use of artillery, maintaining that it was a major bulwark of their military power in India.<sup>15</sup> For instance, Board of Control President Lord Castlereagh insisted in an 1803 letter to the Duke of York, the long-serving Commander-in-Chief of the British Army, that the “security of our Dominions in the East” depended upon continuing to have superior artillery. Likewise, Bengal officials argued to the Court of Directors a year later that “the efficiency of the Corps of European Artillery is of the utmost importance to the permanent security of the British Interests in India.” Similarly, Bengal Army Colonel Morrison strenuously urged members of the Bengal Government three decades later to place its European artillery regiments on a continual “moderate War Establishment.” Although expensive, Morrison conceived that such further augmentations of European artillery units would ultimately prove most efficient in preserving Britain’s empire of opinion as the “great moral effect of Artillery on the minds of the people of India” would intimidate any would-be Indian opponents.<sup>16</sup>

Lastly, several British military officials attributed British military success over Indian armies to a superior use of cavalry. Thus, Bengal Army Captain Godfrey Charles Mundy argued in his 1833 memoir that nothing was more terrifying to meet with on the field than “the close combined charge of *our* cavalry.” Likewise, Jacob asserted 15 years later that “a body of European Dragoons is a most powerful and most efficient instrument in warfare.” Others provided specific instances when British cavalry charges proved decisive in battle. Thus, Bombay Army Captain James Grant-Duff described a British

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<sup>15</sup> Indian armies generally employed artillery in battle differently than European armies. A massive barrage of artillery shells from fixed positions typically commenced the battle after which the often larger artillery guns of Indian armies usually remained silent for the remainder of the battle. In contrast, European armies generally employed smaller, but more mobile artillery guns throughout the battle. Wickremesekera, *Best Black Troops*, 66, 78-9.

<sup>16</sup> Castlereagh to York, 11 January 1803; Military Letter from Bengal to Court of Directors, 1 March 1804, both documents, BL/APAC/IOR/H/502 (1); Morrison Minute, 7 August 1834, BL/APAC/IOR/L/MIL/5/401/196.



cavalry charge against Marathas in 1826 which resulted in their complete military rout. The British force “dash[ed] through both lines of the enemy’s infantry” as well as “wheel[ed] round upon their cavalry.” This maneuver ultimately “drove” the Marathas completely “from the field,” resulting in a high number of casualties.<sup>17</sup>

### **Various Roles of British Military Officers and Soldiers**

So far, I have shown how various colonial officials and military officers generally attributed British military success on the Indian subcontinent to superior British military discipline as well as the more effective use of the bayonet, artillery, and cavalry by British-trained soldiers in battle. At the same time, many also stressed the importance of various roles which British military officers and soldiers played in the Company’s Indian armies. British officers were thought to play an indispensable role in instilling military discipline among their sepoys as well as setting a superior example to be followed in battle and maintaining a personal bond with Indian soldiers in their regiments. Likewise, enlisted European soldiers in the Company’s armies were regarded as the primary bulwark of British military power in South Asia as well as for playing more concrete roles in helping to instill military discipline in sepoys and by setting a superior example to be followed for bravery and courage in battle.

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Several officials argued that an important role played by British military officers

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<sup>17</sup> Godfrey Charles Mundy, *Pen and Pencil Sketches, Being the Journal of a Tour in India* (London: John Murray, 1833, 2 vols.), 1: 344; Jacob, “Papers on Sillidar Cavalry As It Is, and As It Might Be” (Bombay: Times Press, 1848), 76; James Grant-Duff, *A History of the Mahrattas* (1826; London and New York: Oxford University Press, 1921 reprint ed., 2 vols.), 2: 354. Emphasis in original.

was instilling military discipline among sepoys. For instance, an anonymous Madras Army official asserted in 1796 that it was absolutely critical that officers patiently, but systematically “infuse a certain degree of European Discipline” in their Indian soldiers. Likewise, British Army Major Joseph Sherer argued a quarter-century later that Indian soldiers were not naturally “cowardly.” However, he also maintained that the chief reason for the “ease... with which they are beaten in the field, and driven from their strong-holds” was that they lacked “discipline” and were “very careless and indolent” in battle. Sherer insisted that sepoys would gain the “discipline, system, dependence on each other’s fidelity, and a humbler opinion of themselves” necessary in becoming prime soldiers only through training by British officers.<sup>18</sup>

Similarly, Malcolm also stressed the important role which British officers played in instilling military discipline among their men. In an 1830 minute to Bentinck, the Bombay governor asserted that there was “no principle connected with the efficiency of an Army so universally admitted as, that its discipline depends more upon the Officers Commanding Regiments, than any other class.” Thus, Malcolm insisted that the Bombay Army, as well as the other two armies of Madras and Bengal, required considerably more British officers to prevent the “high tone and spirit of the Army” from further “deteriorating” and “degenerating.” In doing so, he betrayed his own class bias as well as his Tory politics.<sup>19</sup> He argued that only officers “of the higher class” would “preserve

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<sup>18</sup> “A Short Sketch of the rise, progress and Dependence of the Hon’ble East India Company’s Military Establishment in the Carnatic from Local Observation and tradition” (7 April 1796), BL/APAC/IOR/H/451 (12); Joseph Sherer, *Sketches of India: Written by an Officer for Fire-Side Travellers At Home* (London: Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orne, and Brown, 1821), 70-1.

<sup>19</sup> Malcolm’s family, although poor, was part of the Scottish landed gentry. Perhaps more important here, though, were his Tory politics. In November 1830 he resigned his Bombay governorship to sit as a Conservative M.P. for a Cornish “rotten borough” which he represented until 1832. While in Parliament, Malcolm was firmly opposed to political reform.

that spirit and animation which are necessary in an Army and above all to that of India.”<sup>20</sup>

Other colonial officials and military officers stressed the role which British military officers played in setting a superior example to be emulated by their sepoys while in battle. For example, Innes Munro confidently asserted in 1789 that the “the steady and soldiery behavior of the sepoys” was largely due to their British officers. He argued that Indian soldiers “behave[d] in the field with astonishing conduct and intrepidity” whenever they were “led on by European officers” in battle. Similarly, Bombay Army Captain and Persian historian David Price recounted instances when British officers, through “the influence of [their] example, or by the employment of that persuasive language, [gave] animation to the most timid” among their men. Indian soldiers were thus “prevailed upon” to continue fighting, even against great odds.<sup>21</sup>

Likewise, in his 1820 memoir of the Third Anglo-Maratha War (1817-8), Henry Thoby Prinsep stressed the important role that British officers played in steadying their Indian soldiers in battle. Prinsep considered it very important that sepoys always observe their British officer “coolly giving his orders” and exhibiting “enterprising courage.” Only then, the Bengal official insisted, would Indian soldiers “see hope in implicit obedience, and never... despair while this ground of confidence remains.” Indeed, Prinsep argued that British officers who “inspired” their sepoys “with that confidence of success, which the ascendancy of the European character never fails to produce [by] lending the influence of their example” could only but expect success on the battlefield.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> Malcolm to Bentinck, 27 November 1830, BL/APAC/IOR/F/4/1287/51585.

<sup>21</sup> Munro, *Narrative*, 23, 330; David Price, *Memoirs of the Early Life and Service of a Field Officer, on the Retired List of the Indian Army* (London: William H. Allen & Co., 1839), 310.

<sup>22</sup> Henry Thoby Prinsep, *A Narrative of the Political and Military Transactions of British India, Under the Administration of the Marquess of Hastings, 1813 to 1818* (London: John Murray, 1820), 195, 258-9, 317.

For many military officials and authors, though, the most important role the British officer played was in maintaining a personal bond with his Indian soldiers. This personal bond was critical, one Madras Army officer insisted in 1796, because the attachment of sepoys was “rather directed to their Officers, than to the British Nation of which they have only a very confused Idea.” Similarly, Governor-General Lord Amherst urged the Court of Directors to send more British military officers to India in 1823 largely because of his belief that sepoys were only truly loyal “to the Officers who command them.” Likewise, a decade later, Malcolm stressed that sepoys would only “become attached” to the Company “when treated with notice and kindness” by their British officers. In such cases, he averred, they could only but “evinced... zeal and valour that can hardly be surpassed.”<sup>23</sup>

Indeed, based on this general belief that sepoys were truly loyal only to their immediate commanding officers, several colonial officials and military officers insisted that British military control over India ultimately rested on the ability of British military officers to maintain personal bonds with their Indian soldiers. For example, British Army General Sir Samuel Auchmuty insisted in 1813 that only through the proper “exercise of those Military virtues” by British military officers would the loyalties of Indian soldiers be retained and the “welfare, nay... existence” of British India secured. Likewise, Prinsep insisted in 1820 that only soldiers who acted “under the influence of the confidence inspired by an able commander, and impelled by the sense of duty” were truly

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<sup>23</sup> “A Short Sketch of the rise, progress and Dependence of the Hon’ble East India Company’s Military Establishment in the Carnatic from Local observation and tradition” (7 April 1796), BL/APAC/IOR/H/451 (12); Amherst to Court of Directors, 18 December 1823, BL/APAC/IOR/F/4/944/26514; Malcolm, *The Government of India* (London: John Murray, 1833), 198.

loyal to the Company.<sup>24</sup>

In later decades, as various colonial officials and military officers started to worry about whether they could trust Brahmin and other high-caste sepoys to remain loyal, various officials stressed the importance of British officers always acting virtuously around their men. Thus, while Frederick John Shore conceded that sepoys “will often display the most extraordinary devotion,” he also insisted that Indian soldiers would only be loyal to an “individual officer who has gained their affections.” The “attachment to the state, among the native soldiery,” Shore further contended, was “only to be secured through their officers.” The Bengal judge worried that the “existence of a kindly feeling between these two classes [was] ... much on the decrease” during the 1830s. It was, thus, starting to become “very doubtful how far” the Company’s sepoys “could be depended upon” to preserve British India.<sup>25</sup>

By the early 1850s, the concerns of Auchmuty, Prinsep, and Shore about whether British officers were moral enough to retain the loyalties of their Indian soldiers were more widespread. Thus, Hodgson insisted in 1850 that British officers in the Bengal Army needed to “endeavour to elevate the mind and character of the native soldier to a British standard of manliness” instead of kowtowing to the caste prejudices of their men. Only by doing so, he argued, would the “fidelity of the native army [remain] beyond dispute, firm and unimpeachable.” Likewise, Jacob argued a year later that only through the British military officer “remaining a *thoroughly* ENGLISH *gentleman*” was British military power over India truly secure. The Bombay Army officer smugly asserted that

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<sup>24</sup> General Sir S. Auchmuty, “Relations of European Officers to the Native Ranks” (October 1813), BL/APAC/IOR/H/88 (26); Prinsep, *Narrative of the Political and Military Transactions of British India*, 194.

<sup>25</sup> Frederick John Shore, “On the Native Army,” *Indian Gazette* (20 August 1835), reprinted in Shore, ed., *Notes on Indian Affairs* (London: John W. Parker, 1837, 2 vols.), 2: 420, 423.

Indian soldiers would only “bow before generous honesty and high moral power—before manliness in fact.” Thus, it was absolutely necessary that British officers always exert the “highest moral tone” and a “British standard of manliness” in all their actions. British officers training their sepoys “to pride themselves on their absurdities of caste” by adopting themselves the habits of a “Hindoo”—a rather “bad Hindoo” at that—simply would not do. Rather, Jacob insisted, only when British officers acted morally superior to their Indian soldiers would the latter consider them as “superior beings” and, thus, remain loyal to them as well as the Company.<sup>26</sup>

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In addition to focusing on the important roles which British military officers played in disciplining their armies and leading their sepoys by example, many colonial officials and military authors during the Company period also argued that the Company’s European soldiers played important roles in preserving Britain’s “empire of opinion” in India. Despite the fact that British soldiers were outnumbered at least five to one throughout the Company period, several colonial officials and authors during the late eighteenth and the first half of the nineteenth centuries deemed British soldiers as a primary, if not the main bulwark of British military power in India.<sup>27</sup> For example, as

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<sup>26</sup> Hodgson, *Opinions on the Indian Army*, 56, 59; Jacob, *Views and Opinions*, 102, 105-6, 118, 424. Emphasis in original.

<sup>27</sup> In 1857, there were 45,522 British soldiers in India, of which approximately 24,000 were in the British Army and 21,500 in the Company’s European regiments. This compared to 232,224 Indian soldiers in the Company’s three armies (135,767 sepoys in the Bengal Army, 51,244 in the Madras Army, and 45,213 in the Bombay Army). Generally, though, during the Company period, the total number of British soldiers (whether in the British Army or the Company’s) did not exceed 40,000. Omissi, *The Sepoy and the Raj*, 133; Peter Stanley, *White Mutiny: British Military Culture in India, 1825-1875* (London: Hurst & Company; New York: New York University Press, 1998), 10; Douglas M. Peers, *Between Mars and Mammon: Colonial Armies and the Garrison State in Early Nineteenth-Century India* (London and New York: I.B. Tauris, 1995), 257.

early as 1777, Company directors argued that only “a proper number of European Military on the spot [would] remove every Idea of danger to which Our Settlements may be liable.” Likewise, almost three decades later, directors warned Lord Castlereagh, then President of the Board of Control, that “the Safety of the British Possessions in India” depended greatly upon the Company being able to continually maintain sufficient numbers of British soldiers in India.<sup>28</sup>

Similar concerns were expressed by Henry St. George Tucker in the 1840s. The Company director conceded in an 1842 minute that the British could never “hold” India solely “with a European force.” Therefore, the British had to “depend mainly upon” sepoys for the defense of their empire in India. At the same time, though, Tucker also warned fellow directors that sepoys “must not be led to suppose that we depend wholly and exclusively upon them for the maintenance of our Rāj.” Indeed, Tucker foreshadowed post-1857 imperial policymakers in insisting that the Company needed to maintain a sizeable force of British soldiers in India. Like later Raj officials, who, maintained a permanent force of between 60,000 and 75,000 British troops in India throughout the second half of the nineteenth century to forestall repeats of the Sepoy Rebellion, Tucker insisted that a large force of British soldiers should always be ready if need be “to put down promptly any partial disaffection.” Only such a presence of British soldiers, Tucker believed, would truly encourage sepoys—the Company’s main source of military manpower—to “remain firm in their allegiance.”<sup>29</sup>

However much various Company officials such as Tucker considered British soldiers to be a primary and necessary “bulwark” of British military power in India,

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<sup>28</sup> Court of Directors to Lord Weymouth, 16 October 1777, BL/APAC/IOR/H/134 (17); Court of Directors to Castlereagh, 6 November 1804, BL/APAC/IOR/H/502 (2).

<sup>29</sup> Tucker, unpublished paper (1842), *Memorials of Indian Government*, 297-8.

though, very few ever considered as a realistic possibility the maintenance of a large British army (or armies) in India. For one thing, such an army would be prohibitively expensive. But, Tucker argued that even were the Company able to afford an army of 200,000 British soldiers—which he maintained it certainly could not—it still “would not suffice [to] hold” India on account of the “unhealthy climate” of many regions of India.<sup>30</sup> Other factors which made such an idea completely infeasible included the high rate of soldier mortality during the early decades of the nineteenth century—estimated by various early-nineteenth-century colonial officials to be at least ten percent per annum—and the chronic difficulties which Company military recruiters faced in procuring sufficient numbers of soldiers for the Company’s three European armies.<sup>31</sup> These problems were particularly acute during the American War of Independence and the French Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars when the Company was directly competing with the British Army for available recruits.<sup>32</sup>

Therefore, mainly out of necessity, the Company needed to rely upon its Indian armies to a large degree. Even so, many during the Company period argued that British soldiers played several other equally important roles in helping to maintain Britain’s “empire of opinion.” For example, several military officials such as Napier stressed the

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<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, 297.

<sup>31</sup> Minute by Bengal Army Commander-in-Chief Field-Marshal Sir George Nugent, 20 June 1813, cited in Bengal Military Consultations, 25 September 1813, BL/APAC/IOR/F/4/456/11119; “Remarks on the condition of European Soldiers serving in India,” n.d., but prob. 1820s, BL/APAC/IOR/L/MIL/5/392/143; Memorandum by India House Military Secretary James Salmond, c. 1826, BL/APAC/IOR/L/MIL/5/391/135; Military Letter from Court of Directors to Bengal, 31 May 1828, BL/APAC/IOR/L/MIL/5/402/200A.

<sup>32</sup> There are numerous memoranda from this period complaining of the shortfalls in available British soldiers for the Company’s European regiments. See Warren Hastings to Court of Directors, 2 April 1777, BL/APAC/IOR/H/134 (23); Court of Directors to Lord Weymouth, 16 October 1777, BL/APAC/IOR/H/134 (17); Court of Directors to Weymouth, 11 December 1777, BL/APAC/IOR/H/135 (3); Lord Cornwallis to Henry Dundas, 16 November 1787, BL/APAC/IOR/H/85 (33); Company Chairman Hugh Inglis to Dundas, 5 December 1800, BL/APAC/IOR/H/86 (22); and Company Chairman W.F. Elphinstone to Board of Control, 14 November 1806, BL/APAC/IOR/H/88 (14).



important role which British soldiers played in helping to instill European military discipline among sepoys. The conqueror of Sind argued that British soldiers “furnish[ed] examples of the highest discipline and skill” simply by serving alongside Indian soldiers. Others suggested more concrete ways by which British soldiers helped to inculcate military discipline among Indian soldiers. As the Court of Directors explained to the Board of Control in 1801, it was their general policy to promote the more “educated and disciplined” British soldiers in their European armies to non-commissioned officerships in their sepoy armies in order to train Indian soldiers in European military discipline. Largely for this reason, Company directors repeatedly insisted throughout the next two decades that recruiting sufficient numbers of European soldiers was absolutely “indispensable to the existence of the Native Corps.” Thus, in 1814, the Court of Directors contended that only by fully augmenting its European armies at all times would there be adequate “[n]urseries for European Non-Commissioned Officers to supply the Native Corps.” Having sufficient numbers of British soldiers as NCOs, Company directors maintained, was of “the paramount importance [in] upholding the character, discipline and attachment of the Native Troops, upon which our retention of India must ever depend.”<sup>33</sup>

Others stressed the supposedly innate bravery and courage of British soldiers as being a major prop of empire. For example, Company historian Robert Orme argued as early as 1763 that the “superior” courage of British soldiers proved decisive in battle “on every occasion” against far larger Indian foes. Three decades later, historian and

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<sup>33</sup> Napier, *Defects, Civil and Military*, 232; Military Letter from Court of Directors to Bengal, 11 February 1801, BL/APAC/IOR/H/88 (21); Court of Directors to Board of Control, 24 December 1806, BL/APAC/IOR/H/88 (14); Court of Directors to Board of Control, 15 September 1814, BL/APAC/IOR/L/MIL/5/411/298. Emphasis in original.

geographer Thomas Pennant asserted that the “superiority of *British* valor” usually resulted in British military victory against Indian armies. Later authors were equally as fulsome in their praise. Thus, Thomas Bacon, a lieutenant of the Bengal Horse Artillery, asserted in his 1837 memoir that British soldiers were superior to all others because of “their proud, invincible, dogged intrepidity, which quails before nothing human, whatever the odds may be.” Likewise, John McMullen, a non-commissioned staff sergeant in the British Army, argued nine years later that no matter how good sepoys were as soldiers, they were still “miserably deficient in that indomitable spirit, the characteristic of the British soldier.”<sup>34</sup>

Following from this general belief in the supposedly superior bravery and courage of British soldiers, it is perhaps not surprising that several colonial officials and military officers argued throughout the first half of the nineteenth century that British soldiers also played a critical role in encouraging sepoys to fight like proper soldiers in battle. For instance, in an 1814 minute to the Board of Control urging the necessity of always maintaining the full strength of its European regiments, the Court of Directors argued that it “has been the wise policy of the Indian Government at all times to reserve our European Force for scenes of danger, difficulty and enterprise.” British soldiers needed to be able to provide superior examples of bravery and courage to be “emulated” by sepoys serving alongside them. Similarly, Malcolm contended in both his *Political History of India* (1826) and his *Government of India* (1833) that only by mixing Indian

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<sup>34</sup> Robert Orme, *A History of the Military Transactions of the British Nation in Indostan, From the Year MDCCXLV* (1763; New Delhi: Today & Tomorrow’s Printers and Publishers, 1974 reprint ed. of 1783 2<sup>nd</sup> ed.), 1: 347; Thomas Pennant, *The View of Hindoostan* (London: Henry Hughs, 1798, 2 vols.), 2: 87; Thomas Bacon, *First Impressions and Studies From Nature in Hindoostan* (London: William H. Allen and Company, 1837, 2 vols.), 2: 282; John McMullen, *Camp and Barrack-Room, or, the British Army as it is* (London: Chapman and Hall, 1846), 77. Emphasis in original.

and European regiments would sepoys come into frequent contact with the “superior courage and energy of a British soldier.” Such a policy, he maintained, could only but “succeed... in exciting an emulation and pride in the minds of the native soldiers.”

Mixing British and Indian soldiers would also, in Malcolm’s opinion, “greatly add to [the] efficiency” of sepoys as well as “diffuse a spirit of cordiality and good feeling” among them. This, the Bombay governor believed, would be broadly beneficial to “the general interests of the empire.”<sup>35</sup>

### **Anxieties about the Personal Conduct of Officers and Soldiers**

It was one thing, though, to assert that British military officers and soldiers would always act virtuously, instilling military discipline in their sepoys and setting a superior moral example to be emulated by them on the battlefield. It was quite another thing entirely for this always to be so. As with covenanted servants, many colonial military officials worried about the moral conduct of British officers and soldiers. As I argued in Chapter 3, British concerns about colonial bureaucrats falling into debt and accepting gifts largely were the result of a general lack of trust of Indian clerks in the colonial bureaucracy. Similarly, the growing level of British mistrust toward Brahmin and Rajput sepoys in the Bengal Army during the latter decades of the Company period led many Britons in India to doubt whether British officers and soldiers always exerted superior moral leadership over their men. Regarding military officers, colonial officials worried about officers who did not pay their bills and thus failed to act like gentlemen, officers who were habitually drunk, and most scandalously, officers who physically abused

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<sup>35</sup> Court of Directors to Board of Control, 15 September 1814, BL/APAC/IOR/L/MIL/5/411/298; Malcolm, *Political History*, 2: 130; *idem.*, *Government of India*, 199-200.

Indians, while regarding British soldiers, drunkenness was the key issue.

*Concerns about the Private Indebtedness of Officers*

One type of personal conduct by British military officers held up to public scrutiny by various authors and government officials was private indebtedness. The discussion about the private debts of military officers, however, was different from that regarding covenanted servants which I explored in Chapter 3. For one thing, there were considerably fewer references in both printed sources as well as the colonial archives to British military officers falling into debt during the Company period.<sup>36</sup> However, this probably had little to do with the actual numbers of military officers in debt vis-à-vis their counterparts in the covenanted service. Indeed, if anything, it seems more likely that a greater number of the Company's military employees were in debt than its civil servants, for the simple reason that officers were generally paid less while having similar living expenses.<sup>37</sup> Rather, it seems a more likely reason for why the private debts of officers were not deemed as important as those of Company officials is that military officers did not have to worry about losing "mastery" over their districts to Indian creditors. The debts of military officers, while certainly important, simply were not perceived to be as *directly* threatening to Britain's control over India.

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<sup>36</sup> Based from my research, I have only located four archival files and one book (out of nearly 200 published primary sources thus far consulted) which directly refer to the private debts of military officers. As can be seen from the section on private debt and covenanted servants in Chapter 3, there are a considerably greater number of references regarding the debts of Company bureaucrats.

<sup>37</sup> Reliable statistics directly comparing the incidence of indebtedness of covenanted servants with military officers in a similar time period do not (to my knowledge) exist, but a comparison of an anonymous account by a Company officer named "Qui hi," writing in the 1850s with an 1825 study commissioned by the Bengal Government of the indebtedness of Bengal covenanted servants who attended Fort William College between 1808 and 1810 is suggestive. Qui hi estimated that three-quarters of all Company military officers were severely in debt, while the Bengal Government's 1825 survey suggested that a lower proportion of covenanted servants were in debt at all (16 out of 33, or nearly half), with only about a third (12 out of 33) being severely in debt. "Qui hi," *What is to be Done with the Bengal Army?* (London, 1857), 51-4, cited in Stanley, *White Mutiny*, 50; Minute by W.B. Bayley, 2 April 1825, cited in Bengal Public Consultations, 2 April 1825, BL/APAC/IOR/F/4/916/25818.

That being said, several colonial officials and military officers nevertheless worried about officers falling into debt. They feared that the indebtedness of officers would not only reflect negatively upon the personal character of officers themselves but also that of the colonial regime. For example, Malcolm believed that British control over India “has and ever will essentially depend upon the number, condition, and temper of our Army.” Thus, he warned Bentinck in 1830 about the dangers of unchecked profligate spending habits of junior military officers. Similarly, Hodgson argued two decades later that debt was one of the “great stumbling blocks of the younger European officers of the native army.” So long as British officers were “labouring under [their] pecuniary embarrassments” and were “unfortunate slaves” to their creditors, they could not hope to exert the proper moral leadership over sepoys in their regiments he considered to be so desperately needed. Likewise, in an 1850 General Order to officers in both the British Army as well as the Company’s armies, Napier insisted that private indebtedness “injure[d] the public Service [and] reflect[ed] disgrace upon our uniform.” Such conduct by military officers, he maintained, was “no less injurious to the fair fame of the Military profession than discreditable to their Regiments, and ruinous to themselves” as well as contrary to the “proper feelings of a Gentleman.”<sup>38</sup>

When discussing private debt by military officers, various authors and colonial officials ascribed it to multiple causes. Some, like British traveler James Cordiner, writing in 1820, argued that the need for Britons to “live sumptuously” was the chief cause of debt. He claimed that many officers “expended from two to ten thousand pounds each annually, in maintaining their households,” usually falling into debt in the

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<sup>38</sup> Malcolm to Bentinck, 27 November 1830, BL/APAC/IOR/F/4/1287/51585; Hodgson, *Opinions*, 180, 181; General Orders by Lieutenant-General Sir Charles Napier, Commander-in-Chief, British Army Forces in the East Indies, 9 December 1850, BL/APAC/IOR/L/MIL/5/419/363.

process. Likewise, in parliamentary testimony given in December 1852, Bengal Army Colonel Robert Alexander maintained that “strong temptations to extravagance... frequently involve[d] officers in debt.” To this failure in “moral strength,” Alexander added the slow rate of promotion as a major cause for why junior officers were often in debt. In raising the sums necessary to buy out their more senior officers in order to speed up promotion, many officers (like covenanted servants) who otherwise might have been “unwilling to involve [themselves] in debt” became “involved.”<sup>39</sup>

Other military officers and colonial officials focused on the expenses of regimental messes as being a leading cause of indebtedness among officers.<sup>40</sup> Some authors such as William Hough, a major in the Bengal Army and a deputy judge advocate-general, argued that regimental messes, where officers of a particular regiment dined together and shared the expenses of doing so, helped promote proper “conduct” among military officers as officers were always anxious to “be on good behaviour.” However, other authors such as Napier and Hodgson worried that they were more conducive of private indebtedness among officers. Napier criticized the extravagant expenditures of some messes as operating as a crushing burden on otherwise “poor and prudent Officers” who had to contract debts in order to pay for the indefensible profligacy of their peers. Hodgson went further, urging commanding officers to closely regulate the expenses of their regimental messes. By keeping the costs of their messes down, Hodgson argued they would “greatly inculcate habits of *just* economy, and foster a

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<sup>39</sup> James Cordiner, *A Voyage to India* (Aberdeen: A. Brown and Co.; London: Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme, and Brown, 1820), 110; Evidence of Colonel Robert Alexander, 2 December 1852, PP, 1852-3, *First Report of Select Committee of House of Lords on Operation of Act for better Government of H.M. Indian Territories*, XXXI (627), p. 98, qq. 992, 998.

<sup>40</sup> This appears to have been more of a problem for British Army officers, for whom regimental messes were an integral part of officer culture, than the Company’s armies, where membership in messes was voluntary and apparently many officers chose not to belong. Edward M. Spiers, *The Army and Society, 1815-1914* (London and New York: Longman, 1980), 22-3; Stanley, *White Mutiny*, 46.

manly desire of independence” among junior military officers. Without this aspiration, Hodgson thought “there can be no true ease of mind or respectability.”<sup>41</sup>

Finally, many also placed considerable blame on more general causes for officer indebtedness such as a lack of proper moral self-restraint among officers themselves. For instance, in his 1830 minute to Bentinck, Malcolm bemoaned the fact that “Providence for the future [was] a rare feature in the Military character, particularly among Junior Officers, whose expenses will usually exceed their means.” Many military officers, he complained, were not properly “habituate[d]... to privations.” Rather, they were only content to treat as “necessaries” those items which should be “deemed luxuries and enjoyed by few” such as owning stud racing horses. Similarly, although Napier was careful to note in 1850 that there were some whose “*misfortune* has thrown [them] into debt,” he argued that the number of such victims of happenstance were “*very few*.”<sup>42</sup> Most British officers in debt, he conceived, were in debt through their “own *misconduct*,” which Napier more broadly blamed on their immaturity:

[Y]oung men arrive in India and think that, having escaped from School, it is manly to be dishonourable. So they cheat the Government by not attending to their duties, and they cheat their tradesmen by not paying their debts. They meet Champagne drinking swindlers, who sponge on them, and lead them into expense. Thus comes debt—then Bankers are at hand to advance money. Thus they become involved past redemption.

Soon enough, Napier warned, “the habit of being constantly in debt makes them grow callous to the proper feelings of a Gentleman,” thus transforming otherwise honorable

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<sup>41</sup> William Hough, *India as it Ought to Be Under the New Charter Act* (London: Messrs. W. Thacker & Co., 1853), 47, 48; Napier General Orders, 9 December 1850, BL/APAC/IOR/L/MIL/5/419/363; Hodgson, *Opinions*, 180. Emphasis in original.

<sup>42</sup> In arguing this, Napier was going against the grain of contemporary opinion back home in Britain, where as Margot Finn argues, “the trope of the unfortunate debtor persisted into the Victorian era,” as private debt generally continued to be seen not as an individual’s moral failing but rather simply as an accidental “misfortune.” Margot Finn, *The Character of Credit: Personal Debt in English Culture, 1740-1914* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 125-6.

British military officers into “vulgar knaves.” By engaging in behavior “disgraceful” and ultimately “derogatory to the character of Gentlemen,” Napier feared, British military officers in debt endangered Britain’s empire of opinion.<sup>43</sup>

The stridency of Napier’s attack upon the character of indebted military officers, especially those serving in the Company’s armies, was particularly striking given his background as a member of a “stylish but shabbily genteel Anglo-Irish landed family.”<sup>44</sup> Even so, it says something about the subtle, but nevertheless real class differences between British Army officers and those employed by the Company.<sup>45</sup> As Peter Stanley suggests, many Company officers, “hard put to maintain their claims to gentility,” easily fell into debt trying to keep up with their socially superior counterparts in the British Army. Already generally feeling the social snobbishness of their comparatively wealthier and more genteel peers who held king’s (or, after 1837, queen’s) commissions, a great many Company officers were, thus, caught in a double-bind. On the one hand, many felt the need to maintain a precarious gentlemanly status. On the other hand, they were criticized for their “ungentlemanly” private debts by more genteel critics such as Napier.

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<sup>43</sup> Malcolm to Bentinck, 27 November 1830, BL/APAC/IOR/F/4/1287/51585; Napier General Orders, 9 December 1850, BL/APAC/IOR/L/MIL/5/419/363. Emphasis in original.

<sup>44</sup> Stanley, *White Mutiny*, 54.

<sup>45</sup> Various military historians in recent decades have overturned the once conventional impression of the largely “aristocratic” Victorian British Army officer corps, stressing instead the predominantly middle-class origins of many of its officers. See, for example: Gwyn Harries-Jenkins, *The Army in Victorian Society* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul; Toronto and Buffalo, NY: University of Toronto Press, 1977), chaps. 2-3; Spiers, *Army and Society*, chap. 1; and Huw Strachan, *Wellington’s Legacy: The Reform of the British Army, 1830-54* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1984), 110-1. Even so, because both commissions and promotions were purchasable until 1871 and would-be officers needed sizable personal incomes to supplement generally meager official salaries, officers were predominantly “gentlemen by education, manners and habits” (Harries-Jenkins, *Army in Victorian Society*, 16). By contrast, Company officers were typically drawn from the “more unassuming strata of the middle-class” (Stanley, *White Mutiny*, 29) which could more easily afford the prices for officer commissions in the Company’s armies than those of the British Army which were significantly more expensive. For example, an average infantry ensignship in the British Army cost £450, not including further expenses for uniforms, while commissions in British Army cavalry regiments and several of the more elite units such as the Life Guards often cost two to three times more. By contrast, commissions in the Company’s armies cost approximately £250, including uniform expenses.



To add insult to injury, these comparatively more genteel critics employed middle-class notions of the evils of indebtedness against their more bourgeois counterparts in the Company's armies.<sup>46</sup>

*Concerns about Physical Cruelty toward Indians by British Officers*

Perhaps an even more serious problem than officer indebtedness was the “incorrigible misbehaviour” of officers in physically abusing Indian servants, other Indians, or perhaps most endangering to Britain’s “empire of opinion,” sepoys.<sup>47</sup> Such conduct, the Court of Directors repeatedly argued in letters to military officials in India, was “among the most discreditable to an officer and the most injurious to the character of the British Nation.” It was a major blight on the reputations and character of such officers which “neither the Gallantry of former Services, nor... subsequent explanations can remove.” More important, though, Company directors maintained that officers physically abusing Indians expressly violated their duty to “protect, as far as in Us lies, all the Natives of India from injustice, cruelty and oppression.” Largely for this reason, the Court of Directors repeatedly instructed colonial officials in India from 1813 onward to summarily dismiss any military officer “guilty of the most shocking cruelties” toward Indians.<sup>48</sup>

Company officials in India, however, did not take action against military officers guilty of such “shocking cruelties” as uniformly or as swiftly as Company directors

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<sup>46</sup> Stanley, *White Mutiny*, 9, 21-3, 49-50, quote on p. 50.

<sup>47</sup> Wickremesekera has argued that “casual violence” against sepoys was “widespread” within the Bengal Army during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Such conduct almost certainly continued in the nineteenth century. Wickremesekera, *Best Black Troops*, 165.

<sup>48</sup> Military Letter from Bengal to Court of Directors, 29 February 1832; Military Letter from Court of Directors to Bengal, 30 March 1819; Military Letter from Court of Directors to Bengal, 14 April 1813; Military Letter from Court of Directors to Bengal, 20 October 1815, all four documents cited in BL/APAC/IOR/L/MIL/5/390/132.

desired. For example, Company directors complained in 1819 that Bengal military officials punished Bengal Army Captain Togo with “extreme leniency and indulgence” for physically abusing his Indian servants. Bengal officials had sent Togo on furlough to Europe, apparently with his pay still intact, instead of dismissing him. Similarly, directors found it hard to fathom eleven years later why Bengal Army Lieutenant Ebhart’s manslaughter of one of his Indian servants was investigated only by a Court of Enquiry instead of being brought to trial in a full court martial. Only by fully trying Ebhart for his crime, the Court of Directors warned, would “the Native Population” be granted “an assurance that their lives were to be protected against the violence of Europeans and especially of those to whom they may be officially subject.” Company directors complained that it was “plain that personal violence is commonly made use of by some of Our European Officers towards their Native fellow subjects in defiance alike of Laws and regulations.” Therefore, they stressed that only through colonial officials in India using their “best exertions to check... this Offensive, and in some case inhuman[e], behavior” would fewer British officers and soldiers engage in it.<sup>49</sup>

Two years later, Bengal Army Lieutenant-Colonel Robertson picked up on this argument, also insisting that it was the “obligation” of British officials to protect their Indian subjects from physical violence committed by British military officers. Such conduct, he insisted, was “one of the greatest enemies to our rule and good name that can exist,” particularly as Indians had “the most powerful claims on us for protection from violence and oppression.” Consequently, Robertson feared that such behavior, if unchecked, would ultimately “raise in this Country a spirit of hostility against us which

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<sup>49</sup> Military Letter from Court of Directors to Bengal, 30 March 1819; Military Letter from Court of Directors to Bengal, 2 June 1830, both documents cited in BL/APAC/IOR/L/MIL/5/390/132.

may take us by surprize like a volcano, and cause our destruction.” Such an outcome, he suggested, would be “just... retribution” for British authorities who failed to check behavior which was “contrary to the spirit of the rule of our immediate Government” as well as “contrary to all the feelings... which should find a place in the Heart of every British Officer.” Only through acting humanely themselves, Robertson and other officials warned, could British military officers ensure that Britain’s “empire of opinion” in India remained intact.<sup>50</sup>

### *Concerns about Drunkenness*

Finally, many colonial officials and military authors also worried about British officers and soldiers who habitually drank, fearing that it would lower their reputations among sepoys. For example, Frederick John Shore warned in 1834 that British military officers who habitually drank embarrassed not only themselves but Britons more generally by their “profane and indecent” conduct while drunk. Such conduct, he argued, could only but “tend to lessen, in a considerable degree, the imaginary distance between the two nations” of Britain and India and undermine British attempts to “contrast [their] enlightened and superior selves with the despised and degraded natives.” Likewise, John Jacob worried nearly two decades later that “the prestige of the superior race” was put at risk of being “destroyed” by the British officer “seen idling away his time in frivolous, or wasting his energies in vicious, pursuits” such as drunkenness. The Bombay officer insisted that “the native soldier should never see his European officer living an idle, useless life.” Like Shore, Jacob feared that habitually intoxicated British officers would

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<sup>50</sup> Statement by Bombay Army Lieutenant-Colonel A. Robertson, Read on 8<sup>th</sup> Day of Trial, enclosed in Resolution of Government, 25 February 1832, Bombay Military Consultations, 25 February 1832, BL/APAC/IOR/F/4/1311/52145.

soon lose the confidence and respect of their sepoys.<sup>51</sup>

Similar concerns about officer drunkenness were also expressed by colonial officials who took decided action against various military officers who proved to be habitual drunkards. For example, Bengal military officials initiated court-martial proceedings twice in a five and a half-year period in the late 1820s and early 1830s against Bengal Army Lieutenant James Melville MacGregor for his habitual drunkenness. In 1828, officials suspended him without pay and rank for three months. This failed to do the trick, though. Five years later, Bengal officials suspended MacGregor from the service due to another instance of habitual intoxication. MacGregor's constant drinking, Bengal officials argued, was "conduct highly unofficerlike [and] to the prejudice of good order and Military discipline." This was so because, while drunk, MacGregor usually "conduct[ed] himself in a highly disgraceful manner" entirely "scandalous and unbecoming the character of an Officer and a gentleman."<sup>52</sup>

Colonial officials and military authors expressed similar concerns about British soldier drunkenness. For example, Adam White argued in 1822 that Indian soldiers were "infinitely superior to the same class of men in the English army" in large part because they sent money home to their wives and children while British soldiers "squander their savings" on drink. Indian soldiers were also far less likely to be court-martialed than their British counterparts: whereas there were no "more than four or five courts-martial annually" in the Bengal Native Infantry, "it is not unusual to have the same number

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<sup>51</sup> Shore, "On the Character of the People: General Observations," *Indian Gazette* (25 October 1834), reprinted in *Notes on Indian Affairs*, 2: 138; Jacob, "Remarks on the State of the Native Army in India in General; Upon the Principles Whereupon its Efficiency Depends; and on the Means Whereby its Existing Defects May be Remedied" (1854), reprinted in *Views and Opinions*, 127, 128.

<sup>52</sup> Bengal Government General Order, July 1828; Bengal Government General Order, 30 December 1833, both documents, BL/APAC/IOR/L/MIL/5/417/347.

within a month” in the Bengal European Infantry. Similarly, Marianne Young, the wife of a Bombay Army captain, contended in her 1839 memoir that the sepoy “forms a strong contrast to the European soldier.” The British soldier, in Young’s view, “unhappily indulge[d] in every dissipation calculated to enervate and undermine his constitution, and utterly deprave his moral character.”<sup>53</sup>

For many colonial officials and military officers during the Company period, much of this comparatively immoral behavior by British soldiers stemmed from an overindulgence in alcohol. Some officers stressed the virtues of teetotalism and Christian morality. For example, in advocating teetotalism among soldiers in his 1831 tract on the British Army, John Shipp, formerly a non-commissioned lieutenant in the Bengal Army, sternly asserted that drunkenness was “a crime against [both] the laws of nature [and]... society” as well as a vice which “destroys our character” and “that which is beyond price—our immortal souls.” He exhorted British soldiers to practice temperance, insisting that only through avoiding alcohol would they remain healthy as well as retain their high moral character in India. Maintaining the latter especially, the Bengal officer insisted, would “command congratulation in the bright hours of prosperity, and call forth sympathy in the dark and gloomy hours of adversity.”<sup>54</sup>

Various colonial military officials during the first half of the nineteenth century

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<sup>53</sup> White, *Considerations on the State of British India*, 71, 72; Marianne Young, *Western India in 1838* (London: Saunders and Otley, 1839, 2 vols.), 1: 161.

<sup>54</sup> John Shipp, *The Military Bijou; or, The Contents of a Soldier's Knapsack: Being the Gleanings of Thirty-Three Years' Active Service* (London: Whittaker, Treacher, and Co., 1831, 2 vols.), 1: 117-9, 120. Douglas Peers has argued that a “noticeable decline in alcoholism and its related medical and disciplinary problems can be observed in those regiments where temperance societies found a footing.” One such regiment witnessed a decline from approximately 14,000 to 2,516 gallons of alcohol consumed between 1836 and 1838. Peers, “Imperial Vice: Sex, Drink, and the Health of British Troops in North Indian Cantonments, 1800-1858,” David Killingray and David Omissi, eds., *Guardians of Empire: The Armed Forces of the Colonial Powers, c. 1700-1964* (Manchester: Manchester University Press; New York: St. Martin's Press, 1999), 43.

expressed similar concerns about habitual drunkenness adversely affecting the morality of British soldiers. Thus, Bengal Army Commander-in-Chief Field-Marshal Sir George Nugent (1811-3) cited drunkenness in 1813 as the “one serious drawback” to an otherwise “gratifying state of our European Troops,” being responsible for some of the basest “atrocities that dishonour the British name.” Likewise, Sir Edward Paget, commander-in-chief of the army from 1823 to 1825, also argued that drunkenness “tend[ed] to destroy the constitution, morals and habits of the Troops.” Paget warned that habitual intoxication also produced “habits of idleness and dissipation” which were most “disgraceful.”<sup>55</sup>

Indeed, largely out of their concern about British soldier drunkenness, Bombay military officials warned their counterparts in Bengal of the dangers of mixing European and Indian regiments in 1818. Although several leading colonial officials such as Malcolm and Bentinck would later advocate such a policy in the 1820s and 1830s as one which would “excite an emulation and pride in the minds of the native soldiers” as well as “diffuse a spirit of cordiality and good feeling” among Indian soldiers toward their British counterparts, Bombay military officials feared just the opposite would occur. “Placing the Europeans and Natives in immediate contact with each other in the Field, in cantonment, and in Garrison,” they apprehended, would only lead to disastrous consequences such as “the habits of intoxication to which the European Soldiery are so unfortunately addicted [being] brought under the constant observation of the sober and decorous Natives.” Bombay officials worried that this could only but result in an “inevitable diminution of...respect” by sepoy for their British counterparts. Further

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<sup>55</sup> Nugent Minute, 20 June 1813, cited in Bengal Military Consultations, 25 September 1813, BL/APAC/IOR/F/4/456/11119; Paget Minute, 25 June 1825, cited in Bengal Military Consultations, 23 November 1827, BL/APAC/IOR/F/4/1078/29308.

worrying that British soldiers would “probably excite [the] antipathy and disgust” of Indian sepoys by their habitual intoxication and revealing their general class biases toward their predominantly working-class soldiers, Bombay military officials obliquely warned that the drunken conduct of British soldiers would naturally lead to “temptation and opportunity... for intriguing” with Indian women. This, they feared, would inevitably “lead to consequences of the most serious Nature” with more sober and decorous Indian soldiers.<sup>56</sup>

### **Company Efforts to Improve the Morality of Their British Soldiers**

Company officials in India as well as generally more parsimonious Company directors in London were goaded into action during the 1810s and 1820s by these concerns about soldier drunkenness, implementing a variety of reforms to improve the morality of their British soldiers in India. First, recognizing that soldiers would generally drink no matter what, Company military officials instituted official regimental canteens where soldiers could be supervised as well as advocated the substitution of beer and wine for hard liquor based on the idea that these drinks were less intoxicating and addicting than “ardent spirits.” Secondly, the Company offered financial incentives to soldiers not to drink such as paying them for their unused liquor rations as well as establishing regimental savings banks. Finally, Company officials in India established alternative recreational activities for soldiers within cantonment besides drinking such as fives’ courts and regimental libraries. In nearly all these instances, while soldier drunkenness appears to have been the initial impetus for reform, Company officials sought not simply to foster general sobriety among British soldiers in India but also to improve their

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<sup>56</sup> Military Letter from Bombay to Bengal, 22 April 1818, BL/APAC/IOR/F/4/539/12968.

morality more broadly.

In many instances, the Company enacted reforms a full two or three decades before comparable reforms were instituted in the British Army. This difference can largely be attributed to class differences between soldiers in the Company's European Armies as compared with those in the British Army. British soldiers in the Company's three armies generally came from more "respectable" working-class backgrounds than "the scum of the earth," to use the Duke of Wellington's words, who tended to comprise the British Army during the first half of the nineteenth century.<sup>57</sup> Largely because Company officials trusted their British soldiers far more than did their counterparts in the British Army, they implemented more serious reforms.

#### *Regulated Canteens and Substitutions of Drink*

One type of reform proposed by military officers in India during the 1820s aimed at improving the morality of British soldiers in India had to do with regulating the drinking environment of their men as well as what they drank. Assuming that British soldiers would drink no matter what, Bombay Army Major-General Lionel Smith argued in 1824 that regimental canteens would provide soldiers with a place "to sit down in peace and decency and enjoy [alcoholic beverages] in sociable comfort." Furthermore, such an arrangement would give their commanding officers the "means of governing [the] wors[t] consequences" of drunkenness such as "exposure of health and [the] commission of Crimes." Not only would regimental canteens "preserve the lives of many valuable Soldiers to their Country," but Smith also maintained they would "rapid[ly] operate [to]

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<sup>57</sup> Stanley, *White Mutiny*, 40, 42; Spiers, *Army and Society*, 77.



improve [the] morals and discipline” of British soldiers.<sup>58</sup>

Other colonial military officials advocated the substitution of other alcoholic beverages such as beer and wine in place of rum, arguing that these beverages were healthier. For example, Bombay Army Commander-in-Chief Lieutenant-General Charles Colville argued in 1824 that “the health of a European Soldier will be improved instead of suffering by an allowance of one ration of diluted Spirits or of good dry Wine daily” in place of rum. Similarly, Company directors considered beer and wine to be “less deleterious beverage[s]” than rum. They accordingly suggested four years later that allowing soldiers to drink beer and wine instead of rum would help diminish the “evils resulting from the inebriety of the European Soldiery.” Likewise, Dr. William Burke, the Inspector-General of Hospitals for the British Army, maintained in an 1835 minute to Bentinck that “[t]he first step into temperance is Beer, the next is Tea” and that the substitution of these drinks and others for “ardent Spirits” would “diminish the stock of drunkards.” Furthermore, “[r]ecruits who have not yet been depraved from Spirit drinking” would be saved from future moral and physical debilitation.<sup>59</sup>

#### *Financial Incentives to be Sober*

Various colonial officials also sought to inculcate greater morality among their British soldiers in India through paying them not to drink as well as opening soldiers’ savings banks. For example, Bengal military officials urged the Court of Directors in

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<sup>58</sup> Bombay Army Major-General Lionel Smith to Bombay Army Lieutenant-Colonel W. Blair, Military Secretary to Bombay Army Commander-in-Chief Lieutenant-General Charles Colville, 10 October 1824, cited in Bengal Military Consultations, 23 November 1827, BL/APAC/IOR/F/4/1078/29308.

<sup>59</sup> Colville to Elphinstone, 6 October 1824, cited in Bengal Military Consultations, 23 November 1827, BL/APAC/IOR/F/4/1078/29308; Draft Military Letter from Court of Directors to Bengal, 31 May 1828, BL/APAC/IOR/L/MIL/5/402/200A; Burke to Bentinck, 15 February 1835, BL/APAC/IOR/L/MIL/5/407/257.

1819 to allow them to pay soldiers extra salaries in lieu of unconsumed liquor rations. Such a policy, they conceived, “would give every encouragement to habits of sobriety amongst our European Soldiery” as well as was “very well calculated to improve the habits of the European Soldiery” more broadly. Three years later, Bengal military officials further elaborated on the virtues of such a policy, asserting that “the substitution of an equivalent in money to the daily issue of Rum would lessen the temptation to excesses by leaving it optional with the Soldier to save the money if he were so disposed or to spend it in any way he pleased.”<sup>60</sup>

Similarly, various government officials such as India House Military Secretary James Salmond advocated the creation of regimental savings banks in the Company’s three European armies during this period as well. In Salmond’s view, such a policy would encourage soldiers to save money instead of spending it on drink. Consequently, not only would the “means of buying Spirits” of British soldiers decline but a likely outcome of such a policy would be the dramatic decline of soldier drunkenness as well.<sup>61</sup>

### *Athletic Activities as Alternatives to Drink*

Finally, many colonial military officials argued that the problem of soldier immorality—and, specifically, soldier drunkenness—was best improved by tackling the broader problems of supposed idleness and dissipation among British soldiers in India. For instance, Bentinck complained in 1835 of the “relaxing and enervating effects of a climate hostile to the health, and opposed to the habits of the European” as being a major

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<sup>60</sup> Military Letter from Bengal to Court of Directors, 26 June 1819, BL/APAC/IOR/F/4/625/16027; General Order by Bengal Government, 14 May 1819, cited in Salmond Memorandum to Court of Directors, 22 July 1823, BL/APAC/IOR/L/MIL/5/391/135; Military Letter from Bengal to Court of Directors, 26 April 1828, BL/APAC/IOR/F/4/1078/29308.

<sup>61</sup> Salmond Minute, 10 August 1826, BL/APAC/IOR/L/MIL/5/407/261.

cause of immoral behavior by soldiers. He argued that if colonial officials seriously wanted to reduce alcohol consumption by British soldiers in India, they had to “provide every possible mental resource that may tend to diminish the pressure of confinement, and to fill up the vacuum of idleness.” Similarly, Young bemoaned soldier idleness in her 1839 memoir, insisting that the utter boredom of barrack life, along with the “sultry heat [which] induces perpetual thirst,” inevitably leads to “the poor fellows rapidly becom[ing] the victims of [the] habit” of drunkenness which was just “as pernicious as it is powerful.” Only by “introduc[ing] resources calculated to afford occupation and improvement to the soldier, during the hours he is constrained to pass in the confinement of the barrack room,” she conceived, would British soldiers consume less alcohol.<sup>62</sup>

In aiming to tackle what they assumed to be the immense problem of soldier listlessness, the extent of which Peter Stanley has called into question, various colonial officials and military officers during the 1820s and 1830s suggested the introduction of additional recreational activities for soldiers in addition to regimental canteens such as fives’ courts and regimental libraries.<sup>63</sup> For example, Bengal military officials convinced the Court of Directors in 1821 to authorize the spending of money to build several fives’ courts at its various regimental cantonments. By the end of the decade, as Douglas Peers has documented, tennis courts and football pitches were also being constructed at major

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<sup>62</sup> Bentinck Minute, 1 January 1835, cited in Military Letter from Bengal to Court of Directors, 20 January 1835, BL/APAC/IOR/F/4/1527/60320; Young, *Western India*, 1: 167, 168.

<sup>63</sup> Stanley has recently suggested that this view by “outsiders” to barrack-room culture of extensive idleness is misleading. “Seen from within...barrack-rooms could also be places of enterprise and enjoyment” where many “anna capitalists” employed their time operating within a “black economy” by selling their spirit rations to other soldiers, making “straw hats and khaki clothes,” or otherwise participating in other “crafts [which] could have been practiced more cheaply by natives” but appear to have “provided occupational therapy as well as pocket money” to many soldiers. Stanley, *White Mutiny*, 38-9.

cantonments throughout the Bengal Presidency.<sup>64</sup> Bengal officials argued that such facilities would provide “a means of occupying the time and diverting the minds of the men, from their usual indulgence in deleterious liquors.” They would also reduce the “exposure to the sun” by British soldiers which was “the universally admitted common cause of their frequent admission into Hospitals.” Providing such sporting facilities to their British soldiers, Bengal officials insisted, would thus “tend essentially to the sobriety, discipline and general efficiency of the European Soldiery on this establishment.”<sup>65</sup>

Paget made a similar argument in an 1825 minute. The Bengal Army commander-in-chief maintained that one of the only real “Checks... against the abominable and disgraceful practice of their Drinking to excess” was in “furnishing” British soldiers with appropriate “sportive [sic] amusements.” The Company needed to encourage its British soldiers to partake in various “Manly Games” such as big-game hunting. Only then, the Bengal military official insisted, would British officers truly ensure that “hours of leisure were passed in the enjoyment of innocent recreation and mirth” by British soldiers instead of being whiled away by drinking.<sup>66</sup>

In advocating the creation of alternative recreational activities for their soldiers, Company military officials and commanding officers were several decades ahead of their counterparts in the British Army. They were also more willing to spend the money

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<sup>64</sup> Peers, “Imperial Vice,” 42.

<sup>65</sup> Military Letter from Bengal to Court of Directors, 29 September 1821, BL/APAC/IOR/L/MIL/5/391/135.

<sup>66</sup> Paget Minute, 25 June 1825, Bengal Military Consultations, 23 November 1827, BL/APAC/IOR/F/4/1078/29308. As Chapter 6 will further discuss, various military officers and colonial officials also argued for tiger (and other big-game) hunting as effectively diminishing British officer and soldier drunkenness in India.

necessary to make such reforms work.<sup>67</sup> In both these respects, the subtle yet very real class distinctions between soldiers in the Company's three presidential armies and those in the British Army played an important role. In large part because the Company's European soldiers were generally drawn from the more "respectable" working class, Company officials appear to have been far more willing to spend money in providing their soldiers with more wholesome recreational activities in place of drink than military officials in the British Army were during this period. Company officials trusted their British soldiers far more than their counterparts in the British Army did theirs.<sup>68</sup>

#### *Regimental Libraries as an Alternative to Drink*

The Company's greater willingness to encourage the "aspirations" of its "respectable" working-class soldiery is most evident in the establishment of regimental libraries within the Company's three European armies. Not only were regimental libraries established a full two decades before the British Army, but they also included a far wider range of books beyond the "pallid selection of twenty-eight improving works allowed to royal soldiers."<sup>69</sup> As Bombay military officials argued in an 1823 letter to the Court of Directors, establishing regimental libraries for their British soldiers "would afford rational amusement to the Soldiers in their leisure hours." Regimental libraries

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<sup>67</sup> For example, both Edward Spiers and Huw Strachan discuss the parsimoniousness of the Treasury, which delayed the introduction of fives' courts and regimental libraries in the British Army until the 1840s. In addition, fearful that providing libraries would "create lawyers" out of their men, and thus endanger discipline, British Army officers were considerably less keen on the latter idea than were Company officials. It was really only after the marked decline of the use of corporal punishment in the army after the 1830s, and the growing public revulsion to it (as demonstrated by various high-profile efforts in Parliament during this decade to outlaw it) that encouraged military officials like Wellington to acquiesce in the introduction of alternative recreational activities for their soldiers in place of drink. Spiers, *Army and Society*, 63-4; Strachan, *Wellington's Legacy*, 67-8, 85-93.

<sup>68</sup> Stanley, *White Mutiny*, 40, 42; Spiers, *Army and Society*, 77.

<sup>69</sup> Stanley, *White Mutiny*, 43.

would also “tend to improve their minds and to lessen Licentious propensities often induced by mere idleness and want of something to occupy their attention.” Finally, Bombay military officials argued that regimental libraries would also tend to “lessen the inclination to vice and conduce to better principles and greater regularity of habits among the European Soldiery.”<sup>70</sup>

Company military officers still continued to laud the idea of regimental libraries for their British soldiers even after they had been implemented in the three European armies during the mid-1820s. Thus, Bengal Army Lieutenant-Colonel Jasper Auriol argued in 1832 that regimental libraries “have been of considerable Service in counteracting the principal evils of an Indian barrack.” As a result of having a regimental library in his cantonment, Auriol insisted that he was able to “divert many Soldiers from those evil Courses into which a total want of employment seldom fails to lead even the well behaved.” Likewise, Bengal Army Major-General Sir Samuel Ford Whittingham argued the same year that regimental libraries “have proved highly useful [in] affording the means of rational recreation thereby lessening the temptation to the pernicious vice of Drunkenness.”<sup>71</sup>

Particularly active in helping to set up these soldiers’ libraries in the Company’s regiments, perhaps not surprisingly, were missionaries and various clergymen in India. For example, Reverend E.N. Sute, the chaplain at the Bengal Army cantonment of Cawnpore, argued in 1832 that providing libraries for soldiers was productive of great “moral benefits.” Sute conceded that in some cases “the strength of immoral habits

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<sup>70</sup> Military Letter from Bombay to Court of Directors, 29 January 1823, BL/APAC/IOR/L/MIL/5/384/85A.

<sup>71</sup> Auriol to Bengal Army Adjutant-General Lieutenant-Colonel Beatson, 24 October 1832; Whittingham to Beatson, 10 November 1832, both documents, BL/APAC/IOR/F/4/1486/58611.

unhappily has prevailed against the influence of newly acquired knowledge.” However, the reverend contended that “a very large proportion of the Readers have made a moral advancement.” In addition to running most cantonment libraries, missionaries and chaplains played other roles as well. For example, various missionary organizations, such as the Society for the Propagation of Christian Knowledge (SPCK), donated and sold books to the Company during the 1820s to help establish several of the libraries.<sup>72</sup>

The active participation in regimental libraries by missionaries and chaplains, though, was not welcomed by all. In particular, various military officials and commanding officers grumbled over the overtly religious nature of many of the books donated or sold to their libraries. These complaints occurred even while many supported the creation of regimental libraries *precisely* with the intent of improving the morality of their British soldiers. Thus, Colville argued that books in regimental libraries in the Bombay Army should not just be on “Religious and moral” topics, which he contended soldiers generally were not interested in reading anyway. Rather, the Bombay Army commander-in-chief insisted that regimental libraries should purchase “a greater number of Historical books” to encourage British soldiers to seek glory on the battlefield.<sup>73</sup>

Going even further in his critique of the involvement by missionaries in the institution of regimental libraries was Bengal Army Lieutenant-Colonel H. Piper, who complained in 1832 that:

Of the books sent from England a much too considerable proportion were purely moral and religious. The object was of course dissemination of morality and religion but I do not think that desirable end is likely to be much forwarded by placing works of this class in the Libraries. There is no disinclination on the part

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<sup>72</sup> Sute to Bengal Army Assistant Adjutant-General Captain Mackinlay, 20 November 1832, BL/APAC/IOR/F/4/1486/58611.

<sup>73</sup> Minute by Colville, n.d., but prob. July 1822, cited in Bombay Military Consultations, 31 July 1822, BL/APAC/IOR/L/MIL/5/384/85A.

of the men to read a moral tale but the moral and religious Treatises to which I allude lie on the shelves unopened.

Rather than these types of books, Piper suggested that the Company purchase “[h]istories, Biographical Memoirs, and Works conveying knowledge generally in a popular form.” Books such as “Sir William Scott’s novels, books descriptive of military operations” as well as “Shakespeare’s plays,” he observed, were “very much called for by the men.” Instead of boring soldiers with religious treatises and moralizing tracts, Piper thus urged Bengal officials “to gratify” their “good taste” by buying more entertaining books for their enjoyment. Like concerns about covenanted servants being “eminent and highly-finished scholars” expressed by Tucker and other colonial officials, Piper and other military officers attacked the efforts of missionaries from an anti-intellectual stance common among Britons in India.<sup>74</sup> Moralizing soldiers through regimental libraries was fine; trying to do so with “moral and religious Treatises,” though, was not likely to be a successful means of educating soldiers to be more moral.<sup>75</sup>

## Conclusion

Ultimately, the deep concern among many military officers and colonial officials during the latter decades of the Company period regarding the moral improvement of their British soldiers, as well as the personal conduct of British officers, had much to do with doubts about whether sepoys could be trusted to remain loyal. Several colonial officials and military officers throughout the Company period, it is true, did heap healthy amounts of praise both upon British officers and soldiers. They argued that most officers

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<sup>74</sup> Tucker, “The Education of the Civil Service” (1843), *Memorials of Indian Government*, 430.

<sup>75</sup> Piper to Lieutenant-Colonel Beatson, Adjutant-General of the Bengal Army, 13 November 1832, BL/APAC/IOR/F/4/1486/58611.



ably instructed their sepoys in European military discipline and provided exemplary leadership in battle. Likewise, they praised British soldiers for generally being manlier than sepoys as well as showing Indian soldiers how to fight as proper soldiers in battle.

Even so, persistent worrying over the course of the first half of the nineteenth century by colonial officials and military officers about the personal conduct of British officers and soldiers in India suggests something entirely different. Ultimately, anxieties about the behavior of British officers and soldiers in India betrayed the fundamental weakness of Britain's "empire of opinion." In order for empire to work at all, the continued loyalty of sepoys was necessary. However, at the same time, various military officers and colonial officials, particularly in the decades leading up to the Sepoy Rebellion in 1857, worried that this loyalty was precarious at best.

To combat this problem of precarious loyalty by Indian soldiers to the Company's rule, Company officials focused mainly on the moral conduct of British officers and soldiers over which they believed they had far greater control. This turned out in retrospect to be a rather myopic response to the real problems of governance existing in the Bengal Army surveyed in the previous chapter. However, at the same time, Company efforts to reduce soldier drunkenness during the 1820s and 1830s as well as to regulate improper conduct among military officers such as physical cruelty to Indians and habitual intoxication show that the British were not complacent about issues of governance in the Bengal Army. Rather, deeply aware that their empire in India was sustainable only so long as their sepoys remained loyal, and believing that they would continue to be so only if British officers and soldiers acted virtuously, they focused most of their energies on various problems of British moral conduct which seemed easier to address. Company

officials thus worried far more about British soldier drunkenness than they did about the dangers of relying heavily upon Brahmin and Rajput sepoys from north-central India. Blinkered by racist assumptions that their power in India depended mainly upon maintaining the “belief” by Indians in British “moral superiority,” British officers and colonial officials in India were lulled into a false complacency that Indian soldiers would simply “bow before general honesty and high moral power—before manliness in fact” so long as it was displayed by British officers and soldiers. Consequently, colonial officials believed that all they had to do to secure the loyalties of Indian soldiers was to ensure that British officers and soldiers in India were virtuous enough.<sup>76</sup>

In the end, this strategy proved totally unsuccessful, almost catastrophically so. The mass revolt by high-caste sepoys in the Bengal Army in 1857 confirmed the very worst fears of many reformers who sought to drastically change that army’s composition and recruitment strategies in earlier decades. The Sepoy Rebellion also rather starkly demonstrated the brittle nature of British military power. Even while the British eventually prevailed, they only did so because most sepoys from the Madras and Bombay armies as well as Sikhs, Gurkhas, and Muslim cavalrymen in the Bengal Army stayed loyal. Had these other groups joined the rebellion sweeping through northern India in the spring and early summer of 1857—as the Sikhs almost did—it is difficult to conceive how the roughly 45,000 British troops then in India could have prevailed. Even so, the British lost effective control over much of northern India throughout the summer of 1857.

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Why did the greatest imperial crisis of British India take the form in 1857 of a

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<sup>76</sup> Jacob, *Views and Opinions*, 106, 424.

mass military revolt in the Bengal Army, the largest of the Company's three armies? Why did efforts by colonial officials and military officers in the decades before 1857 to moralize British officers and soldiers ultimately not matter at all in forestalling the Sepoy Rebellion? To put the question differently, why did parallel efforts by colonial officials to reform the conduct of covenanted and uncovenanted servants in the colonial bureaucracy work in creating, by 1857, a sturdy prop of British colonial rule while similar efforts failed in the military? How did differences in the level of trust which British officials in India had toward their respective Indian subordinates directly affect such disparate outcomes?

As I argued in Chapter 3, the lack of sufficient trust in Indian uncovenanted servants paradoxically led to constant reforms between the 1790s and the 1850s in colonial governance which led it by the end of this period to become the sturdiest prop of British colonial rule. A satisfactory enough system of indirect rule—from the British point of view—had been worked out by the 1830s whereby Indian clerks were entrusted with many of the quotidian responsibilities of colonial governance while remaining firmly subordinated within the uncovenanted service. To be sure, this racist method of governing India would ultimately spawn another major imperial crisis by the end of the century in the form of Indian nationalism as Mrinalini Sinha has demonstrated.<sup>77</sup> Even so, the fact that Bengali clerks in the colonial bureaucracy stayed uniformly loyal to the British in 1857 while north Indian Brahmin and Rajput sepoys in the Bengal Army did not points to the success of Bentinck's partial Indianization of the colonial administration in helping to stabilize British colonial rule.

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<sup>77</sup> Mrinalini Sinha, *Colonial Masculinity: The "Manly Englishman" and the "Effeminate Bengali" in the Late Nineteenth Century* (Manchester: Manchester University Press; New York: St. Martin's Press, 1995).

Indeed, I would argue that it was not accidental at all that the colonial bureaucracy managed by 1857 to become the strongest prop of British colonial rule while the military was one of the weakest. British colonial officials gave considerable thought about how they might be able to trust Indian clerks in the colonial administration—even if grudgingly—with most of the responsibilities of colonial governance as well as sought to create many of the conditions to make this trust possible. By contrast, Bengal military officials jerked between excessively praising their “gentlemen” sepoys in earlier decades to condemning their religious and caste practices by mid-century without changing at all the recruitment system whereby the Bengal Army came to be so dominated by Brahmins and Rajputs from Awadh and Bihar. Believing in their “empire of opinion,” British military officials focused nearly all their energies in reforming the morals of British officers and soldiers and hoped for the best. Precisely because there were such vast differences in the level of British trust toward Indian subordinates in the colonial bureaucracy and the army at the beginning of the nineteenth century, different policies were enacted during the first half of the nineteenth century which led to very different outcomes in 1857.

After 1857, British military officials completely reversed course, adopting a level of mistrust toward Indian soldiers which resembled that of Cornwallis and other colonial policymakers at the beginning of the nineteenth century toward Indian clerks in the colonial bureaucracy. As a result of the great “betrayal”—from the British point of view—of Bengal Army sepoys, imperial policymakers during the subsequent Raj chose to place their trust in more diverse sepoy armies recruited from various north and northwestern Indian “martial races” such as Gurkhas, Sikhs, and Punjabi Muslims,

avoiding recruiting soldiers from Bihar and the Upper Provinces in favor of the Punjab. The British also adopted an overly defensive posture throughout the Raj, endlessly worrying about future insurrections. For the next half-century after 1857, the number of British soldiers maintained permanently in India increased from 45,000 to approximately 70,000 to complement a shrunken Indian force of approximately double that number compared to the pre-1857 ratio of approximately five Indian soldiers to every British one.<sup>78</sup> The British also prohibited sepoys from serving in artillery units as well as in all major forts and military institutions.<sup>79</sup> Lacking the ability to trust completely their Indian soldiers after the shock of the Rebellion while at the same time finding it necessary to mainly rely upon sepoys because they were cheaper, late nineteenth-century imperial policymakers faced many of the same dilemmas of colonial rule which bedeviled Cornwallis, Bentinck, and other colonial officials during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries regarding the colonial bureaucracy.

To conclude, this raises two more questions to ponder. First, was British mistrust of their Indian subordinates an inevitable feature of colonial rule? And second, was such mistrust always central to the construction of colonial masculinity in India during the Company period as well as subsequently? Considering the examples of the colonial bureaucracy and the military, it appears that the answers to both of these questions are resoundingly affirmative. However, if one also considers the example of British tiger hunting during the nineteenth century, a less straightforward story emerges. As I shall argue in the next chapter, British sportsmen had various interactions with Indian subordinates while hunting tigers which complicate any necessary relationship between

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<sup>78</sup> Heather Streets, *Martial Races: The Military, Race and Masculinity in British Imperial Culture, 1857-1914* (Manchester: Manchester University Press; New York: Palgrave, 2004), 19.

<sup>79</sup> Spiers, *The Army and Society*, 135-8; Omissi, *The Sepoy and the Raj*, 133.

mistrust by Britons of Indian subordinates on the one hand and colonial governance and the construction of colonial masculinity on the other.

**Chapter 6. “Face Him Like a Briton”: Indian Tiger  
Hunting and British Masculinity, ca. 1800-1875**

*Never attack a tiger on foot—if you can help it. There are cases in which you must do so. Then face him like a Briton, and kill him if you can; for if you fail to kill him, he will certainly kill you.*<sup>1</sup>

When British Army Colonel Walter Campbell offered the above advice in 1864, Indian tigers and tiger hunting had firmly been in the British consciousness already for nearly a century. As early as the mid-eighteenth century, tigers represented for many Britons the massiveness and magnificence of India as well as its dangerous nature which seemed “beyond knowing and beyond control.” Thus, the curious late nineteenth- and early-twentieth century spectacle of Britons being photographed on top of dead tigers which they killed could be read as “India and its tiger... [being] safely vanquished by a leonine Britannia.” The tiger hunt, metaphorically the successful conquering of India by Britain, thus became a powerful plank on which to rest British imperial supremacy.<sup>2</sup>

There is another meaning, though, which can be found in Campbell’s statement: one of grave physical danger posed to Britons by tigers. This second theme, although contradicting the bravado of British sportsmen conquering India, nevertheless resonated with British anxieties regarding the Sepoy Rebellion which had just occurred as well as broader concerns about colonial governance which I have explored in previous chapters of this dissertation. Thus, Bengal colonial bureaucrat Robert Henry Wallace-Dunlop warned in 1860 that “no amount of coolness and daring can ensure the life of a sportsman, if he attempts killing a tiger when alone and on foot with the ordinary double rifle or

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<sup>1</sup> Walter Campbell, *My Indian Journal* (Edinburgh: Edmonston and Douglass, 1864), 162. Emphasis in original.

<sup>2</sup> Linda Colley, *Captives* (New York: Pantheon Books, 2002), 263-7, quotes on pp. 265 and 266.

gun.” Similarly, Bengal Army Captain Henry Shakespear argued for the importance of learning how to hunt tigers (and other big-game) by directly referring to the Sepoy Rebellion. He contended that many “young and gallant gentlemen, descended from the chivalry of England” had died because they were not yet “acquainted with the use of their weapons, and accustomed to handle them.” This knowledge could only come through the experience of a big-game hunt. A Briton who possessed this experience, he insisted, “is, at the hour of peril, worth a host of men, who have not had similar training.” However, even then it might still not be enough. There was no guarantee that a British sportsman who “faced [a tiger] like a Briton” would live to tell the tale.<sup>3</sup>

Historians of the nineteenth-century public school such as J.A. Mangan and John Chandos have argued for the “diffusion” of the “athletic ideal” taught there to the empire. In particular, Mangan and Chandos have contended that there was a wide propagation of the idea during the nineteenth century that sports and games were, as Chandos puts it, “the supreme test of moral excellence.”<sup>4</sup> Tiger hunting was one such “test of moral excellence” for Britons in India during the nineteenth century. Like covenanted servants who avoided falling into debt to Indian creditors as well as refused the gifts of Indians subject to their authority, British hunters who successfully vanquished the most ferocious animal of the Indian jungle sought to present themselves as being virtuous rulers of India. Like military officers and soldiers who lived according to a “British standard of manliness,” British tiger hunters sought to demonstrate their personal bravery and force

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<sup>3</sup> Robert Henry Wallace-Dunlop, *Hunting in the Himalayas* (London: Richard Bentley, 1860), 111-2; Henry Shakespear, *The Wild Sports of India* (London: Smith, Elder, and Co., 1860), v-vi.

<sup>4</sup> J.A. Mangan, *Athleticism in the Victorian and Edwardian Public School: The Emergence and Consolidation of an Educational Ideology* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1981); and *idem.*, *The Games Ethic and Imperialism: Aspects of the Diffusion of an Ideal* (1986; London and Portland, OR: Frank Cass, 1998 reprint ed.); and John Chandos, *Boys Together: English Public Schools, 1800-1864* (New Haven, CT and London: Yale University Press, 1984), 340.



of character in facing the most dangerous animal of India and killing it. By vanquishing tigers, British hunters not only sought to dominate India's natural environment but also to publicly display that dominion.<sup>5</sup> They also aimed to highlight their personal role in chivalrously protecting Indian men, women, and children from the "savage" tiger.

At the same time, as William Storey has noted, tiger hunting in India (as well as lion hunting in Africa) did not have an exact parallel back home in Britain.<sup>6</sup> For one thing, tiger hunting was not exported to the empire like other sports but rather the reverse. Like polo, Britons adopted it from Indian culture and transformed it over the course of the nineteenth century into a marker of elite British manliness.<sup>7</sup> Secondly, and more obviously, there were no animals comparable in size and danger in Britain to Indian tigers (or, for that matter, African lions). In both these respects, then, colonial big-game hunting was an "invented tradition" which both appropriated hunting methods "from the

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<sup>5</sup> Various Indian environmental historians have focused on British efforts to exert control over India's timber supply, among other natural resources, over the course of the nineteenth century. See, for example: Ramachandra Guha, *The Unquiet Woods: Ecological Change and Peasant Resistance in the Western Himalaya* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1989); Madhav Gadgil and Guha, *The Fissured Land: An Ecological History of India* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1993); Mahesh Rangarajan, *Fencing the Forest: Conservation and Ecological Change in India's Central Provinces, 1860-1914* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1996); and, with regard to India and "tropical island edens" such as St. Helena and Mauritius: Richard H. Grove, *Green Imperialism: Colonial Expansion, Tropical Island Edens and the Origins of Environmentalism, 1600-1860* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995). Much of this historiography, though, does not address colonialism's impact on India's animal environment in a major way. For example, in Richard H. Grove, Vinita Damodaran, and Satpal Sangwan, eds., *Nature and the Orient: The Environmental History of South and Southeast Asia* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1998), only one out of thirty chapters directly addresses colonial hunting, while an additional four chapters allude in passing to tigers and other animals. By contrast, influential books in North American, European, and African environmental historiography have thoroughly considered the animal dimension in their work. See, for example: Donald Worster, *Nature's Economy: A History of Ecological Ideas* (1977; Cambridge and New York: 1994 reprint ed.); Keith Thomas, *Man and the Natural World: A History of the Modern Sensibility* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1983); Harriet Ritvo, *The Animal Estate: The English and Other Creatures in the Victorian Age* (Cambridge, MA and London: Harvard University Press, 1987); and most recently, William Beinart, *The Rise of Conservation in South Africa: Settlers, Livestock, and the Environment, 1770-1950* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2003).

<sup>6</sup> W.K. Storey, "Big Cats and Imperialism: Lion and Tiger Hunting in Kenya and Northern India, 1898-1930," *Journal of World History* 2, no. 2 (1991): 136-7.

<sup>7</sup> For more on polo, see Patrick McDevitt, *May the Best Man Win: Sport, Masculinity, and Nationalism in Great Britain and the Empire, 1880-1935* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), chap. 3.

original inhabitants” as well as “reinterpreted” them.<sup>8</sup>

British tiger hunting in India during the first three quarters of the nineteenth century was different in a third major sense as well. In large part because of the “very light, inferior [and] inefficient” guns which British hunters used prior to the mid-1870s—which greatly increased the difficulty and danger of hunting tigers compared with afterwards—there was much need for collaboration with Indians.<sup>9</sup> To be sure, British sportsmen did not adopt every Indian method of hunting. However, they did adopt various Indian methods such as the use of *machans* (hunting platforms perched in trees) and riding on the back of elephants which accorded them a degree of safety from the spring of tigers which would be lacking otherwise.

M.S.S. Pandian has argued that tiger hunting during the second half of the nineteenth century was “one of the sites on which the colonial project tried to construct and affirm the difference between its ‘superior’ self and the inferiorized ‘native’ other.”<sup>10</sup> This is overstating the case. To be sure, Britons did in some cases, such as with princes and laymen, castigate Indians for not adequately “protecting” themselves or others from tigers. In these respects, British sportsmen acted no differently than covenanted servants or military officers and soldiers. In these instances, British masculinity in tiger hunting, as in the colonial bureaucracy or in the military, was defined largely in oppositional terms and emerged out of a situation of mistrust and loathing of Indian subordinates.

However, I shall argue below that this was not the tenor of the relationship

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<sup>8</sup> Storey, “Big Cats and Imperialism,” 137. The concept of “invented tradition” is from Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger, eds., *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1983).

<sup>9</sup> Thomas Rice, *Indian Game* (London: William H. Allen & Co., 1884), 147.

<sup>10</sup> M.S.S. Pandian, “Gendered Negotiations: Hunting and Colonialism in the Late Nineteenth-Century Nilgiris,” *Social Reform, Sexuality, and the State*, ed. Patricia Uberoi (New Delhi, Thousand Oaks, CA, and London: Sage Publications, 1996), 239.

between British sportsmen and Indians in all cases. Crucially, British interactions with Indian *shikaris* (or trackers and hunting guides) were qualitatively much different. Unlike Indian princes whom they were trying to supplant or Indian peasants whom they generally held in paternalistic disdain, British hunters generally respected their Indian *shikaris* as “professional huntsmen” from whom they could learn how to safely and successfully hunt tigers in the Indian jungles in which they dwelt. Paradoxically, while covenanted servants had difficulty trusting subordinate Indian clerks in the colonial bureaucracy and military officers feared the influence of Brahmins among Bengal Army sepoy during the last few decades before the Sepoy Rebellion, they *had* to trust their *shikari* hunting partners while hunting tigers—indeed, often with their own lives. Thus, tiger hunting provided a rare but important instance where British and Indian masculinities were not simply or always constructed in opposition to one another.

### **Common Ground between British and Indian Hunting**

Tiger hunting was able to become transformed over the course of the nineteenth century into a British sport in large part because some cultural affinity existed between Britain and India regarding hunting as a whole. From the Middle Ages through to the twentieth century, hunting served as an “important ritual” in British culture, continually reinforcing the social, political, economic, and cultural dominance of landed elites.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> John MacKenzie, *The Empire of Nature: Hunting, Conservation, and British Imperialism* (Manchester: Manchester University Press; New York: St. Martin's Press, 1988), *passim*; Storey, “Big Cats and Imperialism,” 137-9; E.P. Thompson, *Whigs and Hunters: The Origin of the Black Act* (London: Allen Lane, 1975); and Antony Taylor, *Lords of Misrule: Hostility to Aristocracy in Late Nineteenth- and Early Twentieth-Century Britain* (Houndsmills, UK and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), chap. 3. On the development of the English fox-hunt during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, see Raymond Carr, *English Fox Hunting: A History* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1976); and David C. Itzkowitz, *Peculiar Privilege: A Social History of English Foxhunting, 1753-1885* (Hassocks, UK: The Harvester Press, 1977).

Hunting served a similar purpose in most pre-colonial South and Southeast Asian polities. Robert Wessing has contended that the tiger has long been “considered the king of beasts or the king or master of the jungle.” Likewise, in his discussion of tiger hunting in South-East Asia, Peter Boomgaard has contended that various Javanese kingship rituals such as the *sima-maésa* fight between tigers and water buffaloes and tiger-sticking (*rampogan sima* or *rampog macan*) served the dual function of killing tigers as well as allowing rulers to “show [their] prowess” over the natural world.<sup>12</sup>

More relevant to a consideration of British tiger hunting in India during the nineteenth century, various Indian monarchs, including several of the Mughal emperors, hunted tigers as a major way of demonstrating their power over nature. Abu-al-Fazl, Akbar the Great’s (r. 1556-1605) official court historian, related a chance encounter between Akbar and a tiger where, before the monarch killed the tiger, he gazed at it with such penetration that it “cowered down from that divine glance.” The story is likely an apocryphal one. Even so, it demonstrates the important role that tiger hunting played in conferring kingly legitimacy in Indian society, a fact also attested by Akbar’s son and grandson being keen tiger hunters. Jehangir (r. 1605-27) had a minute account kept of his prolific hunting over a thirty-six-year period between 1580 and 1616 during which time he is said to have personally killed 17,167 animals, including eighty tigers. Likewise, mid-seventeenth century Italian visitor Niccolao Manucci wrote that Shah Jehan’s (r. 1628-58) “ordinary amusement was tiger hunting.”<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Robert Wessing, *The Soul of Ambiguity: The Tiger in Southeast Asia* (De Kalb, IL: Center for Southeast Asian Studies, 1986), 27; Peter Boomgaard, *Frontiers of Fear: Tigers and People in the Malay World, 1600-1950* (New Haven, CT and London: Yale University Press, 2001), pp. 109, 145-66 *passim*.

<sup>13</sup> Rangarajan, “The Raj and the Natural World: The War Against ‘Dangerous Beasts’ in Colonial India,” in John Knight, ed., *Wildlife in Asia: Cultural Perspectives* (London and New York: Routledge Curzon, 2004), 208; Salim A. Ali, “The Moghul Emperors of India as Naturalists and Sportsmen,” *Journal of the Bombay Natural History Society* 31 (1927): 841-3.

The British had great pretensions to becoming successors to the Mughals during the nineteenth century. However, before they could attain such power, they had to successfully vanquish other Indian rulers such as Mysore's Tipu Sultan (r. 1782-99) who also employed the tiger in their symbolic arsenals, in Tipu's case almost to the point of "obsession." Among other uses, the tiger or the tiger stripe (*babrī*) was used as decoration for his throne, on the uniforms of his soldiers, and on his coins, flags, and arms. Perhaps most famous, though, was "Tipu's Tiger," his mechanical man-eating-tiger-cum-organ. When wound, this mechanical organ—built by French craftsmen around 1794 and today at the Victoria and Albert Museum in London—simulates a macabre scene of a tiger—said to represent his regime—roaring and pouncing on a prostrate, shrieking European victim, symbolizing his hated British adversaries with whom he and his father Hyder Ali (r. 1761-82) had waged four wars between the late 1760s and the late 1790s.<sup>14</sup>

The tiger, then, had a different meaning than in the tiger hunts of the Mughals which the British sought to emulate. Nor were the British blind to this other meaning. Soon after the British stormed Tipu's fortress of Seringapatam in 1799, Benjamin Sydenham, an aide-de-camp to Governor-General Wellesley, described the musical instrument in an official report as being "so contrived that while the Organ is playing, the hand of the European is often lifted up to express his helpless and deplorable Condition." Demonstrating that he fully understood the other symbolic meaning which Tipu was

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<sup>14</sup> Kate Brittlebank, *Tipu Sultan's Search for Legitimacy: Islam and Kingship in a Hindu Domain* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1997), 140; *idem.*, "Sakti and Barakat: The Power of Tipu's Tiger. An Examination of the Tiger Emblem of Tipu Sultan of Mysore," *Modern Asian Studies* 29, no. 2 (May 1995): 257-69; Ann Buddle, *et al*, *Tigers Round the Throne: The Court of Tipu Sultan (1750-1799)* (London: Zamana, 1990); and Mildred Archer, *Tippoo's Tiger* (London: Victoria & Albert Museum, HMSO, 1959), 10.

using in this instance, Sydenham wrote that “Tipu’s Tiger” was designed to represent the “emblematical triumph” of the Mysore monarch over his hated British adversaries.<sup>15</sup>

In hunting tigers during the nineteenth century, then, the British drew upon two powerful meanings, both associated with Indian kingship. On the one hand, they consciously sought to emulate the Mughals and other Indian rulers by killing tigers. On the other hand, in the course of destroying these animals, they were also symbolically staging the vanquishing of Tipu Sultan and other Indian rulers who dared to get in the way of their imperial conquest of India.

In addition to its clear linkages with Indian kingship, which the British sought to appropriate during the nineteenth century, tiger hunting was successfully translated into a British sport during this period because British sportsmen more broadly considered Indian hunting to be superior to British. For example, Bengal Army Captain Thomas Williamson announced in his 1807 guide to Indian field sports, the first such guide published in English, that India possessed a “new and arduous species of the Chase” for British hunters up to the task. Similarly, Bombay Army officer John B. Seely described Indian sport as having a certain “nobleness” which he found lacking in British hunting. Other authors compared specific Indian field sports to British ones and found the latter generally lacking. Thus, Bengal Army Captain Godfrey Charles Mundy asserted that Indian wild boar hunting, or “pig-sticking,” was more dangerous and presented greater

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<sup>15</sup> “Memorandum relative to the Wooden Tyger found in Seringapatam by Benjamin Sydenham, aide-de-camp to Marquis Wellesley,” n.d. but prob. ca. 1800, BL/APAC/IOR/H/255 (12). Sydenham urged the Court of Directors to have the last laugh at Tipu’s expense by placing this “characteristic memoreal [sic] of the arrogance and barbarous cruelty of Tippoo Sultaun” in the Tower of London. Alas, calmer heads prevailed and “Tipu’s Tiger” resided for the next half-century in the London offices of the East India Company at Leadenhall Street. After the abolition of the Company in 1858, the musical instrument then passed into the India Office’s possession before being deeded over in 1879 first to the South Kensington Museum and then later to the Victoria & Albert Museum, where it is on permanent exhibit today. Archer, *Tippoo’s Tiger*, 21-7.

thrills than the English fox-hunt. Likewise, Bengal Army surgeon Henry Harpur Spry predicted that the “ecstatic excitement” and “immense variety” of Indian hunting would “completely tame the English Nimrod’s [hunter’s] latent passion for home preserves, and render” hunting back in Britain “for ever afterwards flat and distasteful.” “[A]fter having endured personal encounters with the grizzly bear, daring conflicts with the savage tiger, or the noble lion,” he wondered, why would a British sportsman possibly want to “submit to the daily routine of whistling on his dogs, and expending small shot upon birds?”<sup>16</sup>

### **Masculinity and Tiger Hunting: Why Britons Hunted Tigers**

Despite these generally positive attitudes about Indian hunting, not all Indian field sports were enthusiastically subscribed to by Britons in India. For example, several popular Indian princely hunting activities such as hawking or coursing with greyhounds or cheetahs were not terribly popular with the British. Consequently, few British authors of hunting memoirs wrote about these activities.<sup>17</sup> Even among those Indian field sports which appealed to Britons, there were several from which British sportsmen could choose. Aside from tiger hunting, wild boar hunting and bear hunting were other popular options discussed in various hunting memoirs. However exhilarating some Britons found wild boar hunting to be, though, wild boars themselves did not pose as much physical danger

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<sup>16</sup> Thomas Williamson, *Oriental Field Sports; Being a Complete, Detailed, and Accurate Description of the Wild Sports of the East* (London: Edward Orme, 1807, 2 vols.), 1: v; John B. Seely, *The Wonders of Elora; or, the Narrative of a Journey to the Temples and Dwellings Excavated out of a Mountain of Granite* (London: Geo. B. Whittaker, 1825, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed.), 16-7; Godfrey Charles Mundy, *Pen and Pencil Sketches, Being the Journal of a Tour in India* (London: John Murray, 1833, 2 vols.), 2: 78; Henry Harpur Spry, *Modern India: With Illustrations of the Resources and Capabilities of Hindustan* (London: Whittaker and Company, 1837, 2 vols.), 2: 217-8, 247.

<sup>17</sup> Books which were published on these sports also generally fared poorly. For example, Richard F. Burton’s *Falconry in the Valley of the Indus* (London: John Van Voorst, 1852) only sold half of its initial print-run of 500 copies during the following quarter-century after publication. Edward Rice, *Captain Sir Richard Burton* (New York: HarperPerennial, 1991), 216.

to the hunter as tigers did.<sup>18</sup> While at least two authors commented that boars trampled over and ate crops and were generally agricultural nuisances, they did not ordinarily kill Indian men, women, and children as tigers did sometimes.<sup>19</sup> Bears, while considered by some writers to be dangerous and exciting to kill, were not generally deemed to be as “noble companion[s] of the woods” as tigers were. Furthermore, they were neither as numerous nor did they typically enter inhabited areas as tigers occasionally did.<sup>20</sup>

In addition to emulating the Mughals and other Indian rulers who killed tigers to display their kingship, Britons hunted tigers because it seemed the masculine thing to do. As early as 1807, Williamson depicted tiger hunting as being a “manly diversion” which required “coolness” and a “good aim,” sentiments echoed by later writers. Landscape lithographer William Westall likewise described tiger hunting as being an “amusement worthy of men” in his two volume history of the “Hindoos,” published in 1847. Similarly, British Army Captain J.T. Newall, writing in the mid-1860s, stressed the bonhomie brought about by “the prosecution in common of a manly occupation, and the facing of a common risk.”<sup>21</sup>

Other authors emphasized the importance of tiger (and other big-game) hunting to the development of that all-important Victorian trait of “character.” Thus, Henry

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<sup>18</sup> As opposed to how they were typically hunted. Wild boars, which are much larger than ordinary pigs, were generally hunted on horseback, with a long spear riding at fast speed. This required superb dexterity to avoid injuring either the horse or falling off the horse and risk being injured by either the fall or by a wild boar charge. It was generally considered “unsportsmanlike” to shoot the animal.

<sup>19</sup> Marianne Young, *Western India in 1838* (London: Saunders and Otley, 1839, 2 vols.), 1: 198-9; Hugo James, *Volunteer's Scramble Through Scinde, the Punjab, Hindoostan, and the Himalayah Mountains* (London: W. Thacker and Company, 1854, 2 vols.), 2: 50.

<sup>20</sup> “Nimrod in the East,” “Tiger Hunting” (August 1831), *Oriental Sporting Magazine* (1828-33; Calcutta: Thacker, Spink & Co.; Bombay: Thacker & Co., 1882 compilation, 2 vols.), 2: 188. For a good example of a hunting memoir which described bear hunting as being among the more exhilarating and dangerous of sports in India, see Frederick Markham, *Shooting in the Himalayas, A Journal of Sporting Adventures and Travel in Chinese Tartary, Ladac, Thibet, Cashmere, &c.* (London: Richard Bentley, 1854).

<sup>21</sup> Williamson, *Oriental Field Sports*, 1: 276; William Westall, *The Hindoos: Including a General Description of India, Its Government, Religion, Manners, and Customs* (London: Nattali and Bond, 1847, 2 vols.), 2: 204, 220; J.T. Newall, *The Eastern Hunters* (London: Tinsley Brothers, 1866), 425.



Shakespear pleaded with parents in the preface of his 1860 hunting memoir that they encourage their sons in India to partake in big-game hunting so as to keep them “out of a thousand temptations and injurious pursuits.” He argued that hunting was an “innocent, manly, and useful” activity which would keep their sons “fit for their duty as soldiers.”<sup>22</sup> Big-game hunting, he strongly suggested, would also prevent them from “tak[ing] to the gaming-table, or to an excess of feasting, rioting, or debauchery,” activities which involved great expense and often led to debt. They would thus avoid “wast[ing] their activity, strength, and lightness, in frivolous pursuits or effeminate pleasures.” Similarly, Philip Meadows Taylor, the author of *Confessions of a Thug* (1837) and other novels about India as well as the police superintendent for the Nizam of Hyderabad between 1839 and 1860, recalled in his 1878 memoir that his various youthful hunting excursions during the late 1820s and early 1830s “gave a manlier, hardier tone” to his “mind” which was “of great service” throughout his later career.<sup>23</sup>

Finally, various British sportsmen stressed the courage necessary to hunt tigers, presenting the hunt as a test of British manliness under fire. British Army Lieutenant John Shipp recommended to the readers of his 1829 memoir that they “never run” from tigers but “if sufficient courage can possibly be mustered” recommended that they “run at them, or... stand and stare them full in the face.” Similarly, in his 1853 memoir, Walter Campbell described a hunter named “Charles” who did just that and “manfully stood his ground” against a tiger in spite of much danger.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> This appears to be a slippage in Shakespear’s choice of words, for the passage is not about soldiers at all but rather British officers.

<sup>23</sup> Shakespear, *Wild-Sports of India*, 2-3; Philip Meadows Taylor, *Story of My Life*, ed. with an intro. by Dennis Walder (1878; London: Pluto Press, 1989 reprint ed.), 27.

<sup>24</sup> John Shipp, *Memoirs of the Extraordinary Military Career of John Shipp* (London: Hurst, Chance, and Co., 1829, 3 vols.), 3: 132-3; Campbell, *The Old Forest Ranger; or, Wild Sports of India on the Neilgherry Hills, in the Jungles, and on the Plains* (London: A. Hall, Virtue, 1853, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed.), 146.

By the middle decades of the nineteenth century, it was commonplace for British hunters to brag about their supposedly superior sportsmanship. Thus, Wallace-Dunlop boasted in 1860 that “Anglo-Saxons [were] the only true sportsmen in the world” while Newall asserted six years later that “[c]ourage, nerve, presence of mind, activity, and decision” were the “inherent qualities [of] most Englishmen of healthy organization.” Even so, both authors recognized that these putative attributes of British sportsmen were continually tested in a sport such as tiger hunting which required much “pluck and resolution.” As an anonymous author going by the nom de plume of “Late Customs’ Officer” put it in 1874, tiger hunting required “all the courage of a bold man.”<sup>25</sup>

#### *Tigers as Dangerous Beasts of Prey*

One major reason why tiger hunting was widely considered to be a “manly diversion” requiring “all the courage of a bold man” was because tigers themselves were dangerous beasts of prey. There were three main reasons why British sportsmen generally considered tigers to be dangerous. The first was their stealth, which some authors of hunting memoirs saw as being overly cowardly. For example, James Bristow, an artilleryman in the Bengal Army and a prisoner-of-war for nearly a decade under the captivity of Hyder Ali and Tipu Sultan, wrote in 1793 that tigers were generally “pusillanimous” because they “will seldom attack a person unless by surprize.” Almost three decades later, British Army soldier Samuel Plummer likewise considered the tiger to be “more cowardly in the day-time than a dog.” Similarly, Bengal Army soldier Hugo James asserted that the tiger “surpasses in cowardice any other jungle animal of the same

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<sup>25</sup> Wallace-Dunlop, *Hunting in the Himalayas*, 2; Newall, *Eastern Hunters*, 387, 424; “Late Custom’s Officer,” *Past Days in India, or Sporting Reminiscences of the Valley of the Soane and the Basin of Singrowlee* (London: Chapman and Hall, 1874), 27.

size and strength” despite having “a most ferocious disposition.” Indeed, some authors such as Newall even employed explicitly gendered language, deriding the tiger in his 1866 memoir for being “as deceitful as a woman” in its hunting methods.<sup>26</sup>

Yet, despite various British sportsmen deeming tigers as “cowardly” animals, there was little doubt that tigers were dangerous to both Britons as well as Indians. Indeed, several authors considered tigers to be dangerous precisely because of their sneaky and unpredictable nature. For example, Bengal Army Lieutenant-Colonel and Rajput historian James Tod described the cunning of a tiger as its “most dangerous attribute” in 1829, one even more hazardous than its ferocity. Two years later, Lawrie Todd, a contributor for *Oriental Sporting Magazine*, warned that tigers often “skulked into a thick bush” while waiting to attack their prey. Similarly, British Army Major Edward Hungerford Delaval Elers Napier argued in 1840 that the typical “depth of foliage” in a jungle “serves often to screen [a tiger] from its victim until [it is] within reach of the fatal spring.”<sup>27</sup>

A second main reason various British sportsmen considered tigers as dangerous foes was their bite and claws. Hugo James, for instance, right after he condemned the tiger for its “cowardice,” noted that aside from the venomous snake, “perhaps no bite of either reptile or animal is so dangerous as that inflicted by a tiger.” In this statement he echoed earlier descriptions by Thomas Williamson and Bengal Army surgeon Daniel

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<sup>26</sup> James Bristow, *A Narrative of the Sufferings of James Bristow, Belonging to the Bengal Artillery, During Ten Years' Captivity With Hyder Ally and Tippoo Saheb* (London: J. Murray, 1793), 171; Samuel Plummer, *The Journal of Samuel Plummer, A Private in the 22d Regiment of Foot: Containing an Account of His Voyage by Sea, and His Journeys by Land* (London: T. Cordeux, 1821), 20, 30; James, *Volunteer's Scramble*, 2: 48; Newall, *Eastern Hunters*, 402.

<sup>27</sup> James Tod, *Annals and Antiquities of Rajasthan; or, the Central and Western Rajput States of India*, ed. William Crooke (1829-32; Delhi, Varanasi, and Patna, India: Motilal Banarsidass, 1971 reprint ed. of 1920 ed., 3 vols.), 2: 823; Lawrie Todd, “Tiger Hunting in Dharwar” (November 1831), *Oriental Sporting Magazine*, 2: 231; Edward Hungerford Delaval Elers Napier, *Scenes and Sports in Foreign Lands* (London: Henry Colburn, 1840, 2 vols.), 1: 97.

Johnson, authors of two earlier “notable” Indian hunting manuals which were often cited by later authors.<sup>28</sup> Williamson remarked that patients who had been bitten by tigers in the rainy season often suffered “serious consequences” while Johnson stated that “few people” generally survived after being wounded by a tiger. Williamson also warned that a tiger’s claws, while often appearing “trivial,” were far more dangerous and, in some cases even, the cause of death as the scratches tended to lead to lock-jaw.<sup>29</sup>

The third and perhaps greatest danger posed by a tiger was its often-lethal spring. Williamson remarked that the tiger’s “propensity of springing” often had deadly consequences because the tiger’s front paw was “the invariable engine of destruction.” It contained a force which Williamson believed “no man, however robust” could sustain “for one moment.” Similarly, north Indian missionary William Buyers warned in his 1848 memoir that the tiger’s “habit” of springing, “joined to [its] amazing strength, ferocity, and suddenness of motion, render[ed] him by far the most formidable of all the beasts of prey.” The most evocative description of a tiger’s charge and spring, though, appeared in Todd’s 1831 article for *Oriental Sporting Magazine*. Personally witnessing a tiger attacking an agricultural laborer, Todd reported that the tiger “was upon him with the speed of lightning.” The laborer was killed instantly, with the force and weight of the tiger’s spring causing a fractured lower jaw, as well as crushing the laborer’s cheek-bones “to powder” and “lacerating” his muscles from his “throat down [to his] breast.” Nothing “of a human face remained but the forehead and glaring eyeballs.” Tigers, thus, may have been “sneaky” and “cowardly” animals but they were often quite menacing and

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<sup>28</sup> MacKenzie, *Empire of Nature*, 172.

<sup>29</sup> James, *Volunteer’s Scramble*, 2: 48, 49; Williamson, *Oriental Field Sports*, 1: 196; Daniel Johnson, *Sketches of Indian Field Sports* (1822; London: Robert Jennings, 1827, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed.), 91.

powerful ones as well.<sup>30</sup>

### **“Protecting the Natives”/Denigrating Indian Elites and Laymen**

In the latter decades of the nineteenth century, as British officials started compiling detailed statistics on India, the full destructive force of tigers became much better known. At no time were tigers the single largest cause of death of Indians by wild animals—snakes, for instance, caused more deaths. Even so, colonial officials were greatly alarmed by the fact that tigers caused roughly 1,200 deaths and were capable of killing as many as sixty to seventy cattle per year.<sup>31</sup> But even before the full extent of the danger posed by tigers to Indians became better understood, the notion that tigers were quite dangerous was widely shared not only by authors of hunting memoirs but also by colonial officials formulating official policy. Coinciding with the reinvention of the chivalric gentlemanly ideal in Britain during the early decades of the nineteenth century by such people as Sir Walter Scott and Thomas Carlyle, a powerful rationale began to develop for tiger hunting during the early decades of the nineteenth century: the supposed need for British hunters to protect Indian men, women, and children from the “savage tiger.”<sup>32</sup>

Both the East India Company and the British Raj which replaced it in 1858 actively encouraged the killing of tigers and other carnivore predators by offering financial rewards to hunters—Indians as well as Europeans—who killed them. During

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<sup>30</sup> Williamson, *Oriental Field Sports*, 1: 196, 202; William Buyers, *Recollections of Northern India* (London: J. Snow; Glasgow: W. Collins, 1848), 148; Todd, “Tiger Hunting in Dharwar” (November 1831), *Oriental Sporting Magazine*, 2: 230-1.

<sup>31</sup> Boomgaard, *Frontiers of Fear*, 77.

<sup>32</sup> For more on the reinvention of the chivalric gentlemanly ideal during the Victorian period, see Mark Girouard, *The Return to Camelot: Chivalry and the English Gentleman in the Nineteenth Century* (New Haven, CT and London: Yale University Press, 1981).

the first half of the nineteenth century, the Company typically paid rewards of Rs. 5 to Rs. 10 (approximately 10s. 6d. - £1 5s.) for tiger skins as well as gave lesser amounts for talons and other parts of a tiger's body. Often considerably more was given in instances when a known "man-eater" was killed.<sup>33</sup> The British Raj was even "more systematic" in its efforts to encourage the "extermination" of tigers and other large carnivore predators. Beginning in the 1860s, rewards were revised upwards in the Central Provinces and other regions of India to range from Rs. 20 to Rs. 50 (£2 10s. - £6 5s.) for adult tigers and Rs. 10 to Rs. 20 (£1 5s. - £2 10s.) for their cubs.<sup>34</sup>

Some authors and colonial revenue officials worried about fraudulent Indian hunters taking tiger skins to multiple revenue collectors hoping to double or triple their rewards.<sup>35</sup> Even so, many justified the policy based on the perceived danger of tigers to Indian society. Tigers were "ferocious" menaces to society which often caused "the passage of the Ghauts [public baths] or Public Roads [to] become so infested... as to render it imminently dangerous to Travellers." Tigers also inflicted "[s]erious injury on industrious husbandmen" as well as often destroyed their cattle and crops.<sup>36</sup> Indeed, even in the face of scattered griping by British sportsmen that the payment of rewards to kill tigers destroyed the "noble" nature of hunting, various government officials still deemed

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<sup>33</sup> MacKenzie, *Empire of Nature*, 182.

<sup>34</sup> Rangarajan, *Fencing the Forest*, 149. A conversion rate of eight Indian rupees to the British pound generally obtained throughout the nineteenth century. Nicholas B. Dirks, *The Scandal of Empire: India and the Creation of Imperial Britain* (Cambridge, MA and London: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2006), 233.

<sup>35</sup> See, for example: Johnson, *Sketches of Indian Field Sports*, 70; Revenue Letter from Bengal to Court of Directors, 30 July 1823, with enclosure of Revenue Letter to Bengal, 21 March 1821, Bengal Revenue Consultations, 30 July 1823, BL/APAC/IOR/F/4/889/23171.

<sup>36</sup> Revenue Letter from Bengal to Court of Directors, 29 June 1826, with enclosure of letter from S.T. Cuthbert, Esq., Acting Collector of Rangur to Mr. Tilghman, Esq., Secretary to Bengal Board of Revenue, 18 February 1823, cited in Bengal Revenue Consultations, 29 June 1826, BL/APAC/IOR/F/4/970/27430; Narrative of Proceedings of Governor-General [Auckland] for the North-Western Provinces in the Political Department for the Months of April, May, and June 1839, 24 July 1839, with Extract from Memorandum by Captain Stewart, Fort Adjutant of Chiwar, 22 February 1839, Bengal Political Consultations, 24 July 1839, BL/APAC/IOR/F/4/1829/75509.

the expenditure of money on rewards as absolutely necessary to encourage Indian hunters in being “more active and enterprising” in killing tigers.<sup>37</sup> Most colonial officials agreed with Thomas Williamson that the “death of a tiger is a matter of too much importance to be treated with indifference” by Britons in India.<sup>38</sup>

Even with monetary rewards, however, many Britons believed that not enough tigers were being killed to protect Indians. Many Britons blamed rajas, zamindars, and other Indian landed elites, generally perceiving them as being lazy and indolent. Ironically enough, this was despite widespread British perceptions of tiger hunting during the nineteenth century as being a “princely pastime” and a “manly amusement.”<sup>39</sup> Nevertheless, various authors and government officials during the first half of the nineteenth century generally sought to co-opt, if not in some cases supplant the Indian prince’s traditional role as benevolent “protector” of Indian men, women, and children against tigers and other large beasts.<sup>40</sup> They sought to do so in large part by denigrating and de-legitimizing how Indian princes and other landed elites hunted tigers.

For some authors such as James Tod and Sir Henry Pottinger, a lieutenant-general in the Bombay Army and later governor of the Madras Presidency between 1847 and 1855, a major reason why tigers were such a “scourge” to Indians lay in the extensive and often-exclusive hunting preserves that many Indian rajas and zamindars enjoyed. These exclusive hunting privileges were not much of an issue for many Britons if rajas actively partook in the “martial exercise” of tiger hunting and “chivalrously” protected their

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<sup>37</sup> “Nimrod in the East,” “Tiger Hunting” (April 1829), *Oriental Sporting Magazine*, 1: 180; Revenue Letter from Bengal to Court of Directors, 29 June 1826, with enclosure of letter from S.T. Cuthbert, Esq., Acting Collector of Rangurt to Mr. Tilghman, Esq., Secretary to Bengal Board of Revenue, 18 February 1823, cited in Bengal Revenue Consultations, 29 June 1826, BL/APAC/IOF/4/970/27430.

<sup>38</sup> Williamson, *Oriental Field Sports*, 1: 211.

<sup>39</sup> James, *Volunteer’s Scramble*, 2: 44, 48.

<sup>40</sup> Barbara Ramusack, *The Indian Princes and Their States* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 158.

Indian subjects as Tod conceded some did. Likewise, Madras Army General James Welsh, claiming that South India “abound[ed] with royal tigers,” warmly praised a South Indian raja in his 1830 memoir for often killing more tigers on an annual basis “than there were days in the year.” The problem lay, however, when “lazy gentry” allowed their hunting preserves to become over-populated with tigers and other wild beasts, thus endangering the well-being of local villagers.<sup>41</sup>

This complaint was also found in several colonial government reports from the period. For example, it was reported in 1839 that the Raja of Benares had not hunted in his preserve for over four years, to the point where the “ravages committed by the Tigers, exceed belief.” Local villagers frequently lost their cattle and occasionally “casual travelers” on the public road were killed. Only after Governor-General Lord Auckland threatened the prince with the seizure of his preserve by the colonial government if he delayed any further the hunting of tigers did the raja relent and agree to do so more often.<sup>42</sup>

However, even when various Indian rajas hunted, many authors of hunting memoirs were critical of *how* they hunted. Some accused Indian princes of not being sportsmanlike enough, relying too much on the easy kill. Tod, for instance, described the hunting of several Rajput rajas he visited as being “indiscriminate... slaughter.”

Likewise, Bombay Army Captain and famous Victorian explorer Richard F. Burton attacked the hunting methods of various Sind emirs he visited in the late 1840s as being

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<sup>41</sup> Henry Pottinger, *Travels in Beloochistan and Sind* (1816; Karachi: Indus Publications, 1976 reprint ed.), 22; Tod, *Annals and Antiquities of Rajasthan*, 2: 751; James Welsh, *Military Reminiscences; Extracted from a Journal of Nearly Forty Years' Active Service in the East Indies* (London: Smith, Elder, and Co., 1830, 2 vols.), 1: 353.

<sup>42</sup> Narrative of Proceedings of Governor-General [Auckland] for the North-Western Provinces in the Political Department for the Months of April, May, and June 1839, 24 July 1839, with Extract from Memorandum by Captain Stewart, Fort Adjutant of Chiwar, 22 February 1839, Bengal Political Consultations, 24 July 1839, BL/APAC/IOR/F/4/1829/75509.



“mere slaughter” and certainly not “sportsmanship.”<sup>43</sup>

Various British sportsmen also accused Indian princes of having a scant regard for the welfare of their own subjects while hunting tigers. Thus, Burton argued in 1851 that one particular emir’s sportsmanship was not “admirable” in large part because this prince “enjoyed all the pleasures of the field [while] his followers had all the disagreeables and dangers.” Similarly, Rice derided the needless danger in which ordinary Indians were played because of the “pomp and splendour” of many princely tiger hunts. Rice contended that it was more often than not the “rule, instead of the exception” that at least one or more Indians would be killed during each “grand hunting-party.” He further criticized the “cavalier” attitudes of many of these princes who explained away the deaths of their Indian helpers by calling them “accidents.” Quite tellingly, though, neither Burton nor Rice criticized British hunters who were arguably just as “cavalier” if not more so.<sup>44</sup>

In addition to criticizing Indian princes for not adequately protecting their Indian subjects from tigers and other menacing wild beasts, various authors of hunting memoirs also castigated Indian laymen themselves for being cowardly toward tigers. For example, Williamson asserted in 1807 that while “spirited individuals may, here and there, be found,” by and large the “weak timid *Bengallee*... flies” from tigers without putting up any resistance. Williamson conceded that running away from tigers was generally a wise response on the part of Bengali peasants who were typically without adequate weapons to properly defend themselves. Even so, he still criticized their “predestinarianism” and

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<sup>43</sup> Tod, *Annals and Antiquities of Rajasthan*, 2: 751; Burton, *Scinde; or, the Unhappy Valley* (London: Richard Bentley, 1851, 2 vols.), 2: 85.

<sup>44</sup> Burton, *Scinde; or, the Unhappy Valley*, 2: 85, 86; Rice, *Tiger-Shooting in India; Being an Account of Hunting Experiences on Foot in Rajpootana, During the Hot Seasons, From 1850 to 1854* (London: Smith, Elder and Co., 1857), 29.

general “unwillingness” to stand up to tigers, even while “it is well known that tigers are easily made to quit haunts, if proper measures be resorted to.”<sup>45</sup>

This perception of total Indian helplessness was important to overall British notions that only they could truly be relied upon to kill tigers. However, at the same time, discourses about British indispensability in tiger hunting contrasted with numerous instances of Indians who actively defended themselves against tigers which can be found in both the official record as well as in various hunting memoirs. For example, a Madras judge reported a case in 1815 when over 700 villagers from his district “formed a Circle round [a] Tyger” and killed it by spearing it. Likewise, Williamson described instances of Indian villagers using traps involving nets as well as shooting tigers with poisoned arrows.<sup>46</sup>

Unable to criticize Indian villagers for being helpless in these cases, Britons instead derided their hunting methods as being needlessly dangerous either to themselves or others, inefficient, and cowardly. Thus, although the Madras judge reported that the villagers successfully killed the tiger by encircling it, this was only accomplished after three villagers “were severely torn” by the animal. Williamson considered the use of nets and other traps to catch and kill tigers to be inefficient, warning that tigers had been known to escape even “when... appear[ing] to be entangled beyond the possibility of self-extrication.” Perhaps most egregious from a British point of view, though, was the use of poisoned arrows to kill tigers. Earlier writers such as Williamson and Johnson did concede that this method was generally effective, usually managing to kill tigers within

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<sup>45</sup> Williamson, *Oriental Field Sports*, 1: 185, 190, 198. Emphasis in original.

<sup>46</sup> Report of Subedar Trincherry Kannen, Subedar of Police Doing Duty in South Mynaad to J.H. Baber, Esq., Judge and Magistrate of Zillah North Malabar, 14 November 1815, BL/APAC/IOR/F/4/522/12456; Williamson, *Oriental Field Sports*, 1: 228. Interestingly enough, Javanese and Sumatran hunters also made much use of nets to capture and kill tigers. See Boomgaard, *Frontiers of Fear*, 112-28.

200 yards of where they were shot and usually within a half-hour to an hour. However, later authors such as Rice were more critical, condemning the use of poisoned arrows as “a dirty trick” which was the “ruin of all sport.”<sup>47</sup>

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While British authors castigated Indian rulers and landed elites for not effectively protecting other Indians from tigers, or Indian laymen for not ably protecting themselves, many at the same time not surprisingly lauded their own efforts and those of other fellow British sportsmen in vanquishing tigers. For example, Napier claimed that many villagers displayed a “sentiment of more than gratitude” every time British hunters did them of “the scourge of a ferocious wild beast” such as a tiger. Rather romantically, he compared British tiger hunters to “the ancient heroes of old, such as Jason, Hercules, and Theseus” whom he bitterly remarked “must have earned their immortality and laurels at a very cheap rate” for none was ever recorded hunting “the royal tiger.” Other authors were more prosaic but just as laudatory of their own efforts and those of other British sportsmen. Thus, Sir Jermyn D’Ewes described a colonial official named “Sheriff” who helped cause “the expulsion and destruction” of many tigers and other “murderous and predatory bandits.” Likewise, Rice was congratulatory of his own efforts in ending “the reign of terror of so established [a] rapacious pest” as a man-eating tiger.<sup>48</sup>

The discourse of the calm, stoic British hunter ably protecting otherwise helpless

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<sup>47</sup> Report of Subedar Trincherry Kannen, Subedar of Police Doing Duty in South Mynaad to J.H. Baber, Esq., Judge and Magistrate of Zillah North Malabar, 14 November 1815, BL/APAC/IOR/F/4/522/12456; Williamson, *Oriental Field Sports*, 1: 228; 2: 14; Johnson, *Sketches of Indian Field Sports*, 70; Rice, *Tiger-Shooting in India*, 121.

<sup>48</sup> Napier, *Scenes and Sports in Foreign Lands*, 2: 194, 196; Sir J. D’Ewes, *Sporting in Both Hemispheres* (1858; London: Routledge, Warne & Routledge, 1861, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed.), 45; Rice, *Tiger-Shooting in India*, 48.



Figure 6-1. "Tiger Killed by a Chance Shot Near Meidah." (Rice, *Tiger-Shooting in India*, 7).



Figure 6-2. No Title. (Gordon-Cumming, *Wild Men and Wild Beasts*, 82).

and panic-stricken Indians was also portrayed in various lithographic prints which appeared in several of the hunting memoirs. For example, in a print entitled “Tiger Killed by a Chance Shot Near Meidah” [Figure 6-1], from Thomas Rice’s *Tiger-Shooting in India* (1857), an Indian on the far right is clearly frightened from the impending charge of a tiger while the British hunter is shown as dispassionately shooting it. The calm collectedness, almost nonchalance of the British hunter depicted in the print, though, is highly unrealistic, and for two reasons: first, the close proximity of the tiger; and secondly, the title of the print which tells us that this was a “chance shot.” Likewise, in a sepia print [Figure 6-2], found in British Army officer Sir William Gordon-Cumming’s *Wild Men and Wild Beasts* (1871), British hunters are depicted as taking all the proactive steps against charging tigers while Indians are shown as simply running away. Given that British hunters in both prints have guns and the Indians running away do not, the different reactions of the two to charging tigers are very understandable. This more logical explanation for the varied responses to tigers, though, interrupts the more racist interpretations of the supposed difference between proactive British hunters and helpless Indians which various British sportsmen such as Rice and Gordon-Cumming aimed to portray.

### **How Britons Hunted Tigers and How They Were Depicted Doing So**

Despite the bravado and nonchalance of British hunters depicted by Rice and Gordon-Cumming, tiger hunting was quite dangerous during the first three quarters of the nineteenth century as well as hard to do, largely because of the weaponry used. Until the mid-1850s, British hunters mainly used smooth-bore muskets which typically had

accurate ranges only under seventy-five yards. They had to cast their own lead balls (usually of .700 caliber or more), use individual charges of often smoky powder and go through “all the complex paraphernalia of muzzle-loading” which greatly affected both precision and “penetrating power.”<sup>49</sup> All of this made the single mortal shot practically impossible as several authors of hunting memoirs noted.<sup>50</sup> To kill a tiger during this earlier period, British hunters typically had to shoot at it several times and pump enough shot into the animal to slow it down and demobilize it. This was not made any easier by the fact that tigers—like most animals under similar duress—acted more erratically when initially wounded than otherwise.

Beginning in the mid-1850s, several improvements in gun technology began to be made which, collectively, helped usher in a “gun revolution” over the next two decades and greatly transformed tiger hunting as a sport. Improvements such as breech-loading, standardized rifling, smokeless powder, individual charges, and the replacement of lead spherical balls by smaller, conical-shaped bullets made guns more lethal and more precise than before. Even so, it was not until the mid-1870s that hunting rifles with all of these various changes started to be used by British sportsmen in India. Only after this point, when the “range and accuracy” of guns “moved forward by a quantum leap and the safety of the hunter was greatly improved,” was it possible for British hunters to kill

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<sup>49</sup> MacKenzie, *Empire of Nature*, 303-4; Major F. Myatt, *The Illustrated Encyclopedia of 19<sup>th</sup> Century Firearms* (New York and Avenel, NJ: Crescent Books, 1994), *passim*.

<sup>50</sup> See, for example: Williamson, *Oriental Field Sports*, 1: 248; Thomas Bacon, *First Impressions and Studies from Nature in Hindoostan; Embracing an Outline of the Voyage to Calcutta, and Five Years' Residence in Bengal and the Doab, From MDCCCXXXI to MDCCCXXXVI* (London: William H. Allen and Company, 1837, 2 vols.), 2: 18; Rice, *Tiger-Shooting in India*, v, 118, 171; Campbell, *Indian Journal*, 72-3. Williamson wrote that it was often quite difficult for balls to penetrate a tiger's “extremely rough” skin, while a writer going by the nom de plume of “Nimrod in the East” described one tiger as requiring 21 balls before it was killed. In this case, it is unclear whether the problem was with the guns or with the hunter. “Nimrod in the East,” “Tiger Hunting” (April 1829), *Oriental Sporting Magazine*, 1: 184.



tigers with a single shot from a safe distance away.<sup>51</sup>

The limitations posed by the weaponry placed a high premium on British sportsmen hunting tigers safely during this earlier period. As I will discuss in the next section, it also made necessary much interaction between British hunters and Indian *shikaris* if British sportsmen were to learn how to successful as well as safely hunt tigers. British hunters did not adopt every Indian method of hunting tigers, just as they did not partake in every Indian field sport. There is no evidence, for example, which suggests that Britons killed tigers using nets or poisoned arrows, methods they widely criticized for being cowardly and unsportsmanlike. Britons did, however, co-opt various Indian methods such as using *machans* (hunting platforms perched in tall trees) or beating for tigers while riding on top of elephants which provided a degree of safety and seemed “sporting” enough (or, in the case of the elephant-based hunt, prestigious enough). Lastly, in some instances British hunters stalked tigers on foot, although this type of hunting presented by far the greatest amount of physical danger to British sportsmen and thus appears to have been the least common method which they used during this period. As will be seen, though, it was the more common method by which British hunters were depicted hunting tigers, followed by the elephant hunt, largely because it best presented a British sportsman facing a tiger “like a Briton.” By the same token, British tiger hunts using *machans* were seen as the least glamorous of the three and, thus, rarely depicted in the memoirs of British sportsmen.

The type of tiger hunt which a British hunter participated in depended to a large degree upon its general purpose. If the aim was to kill a “man-eating” tiger or a tiger which had killed cattle, *machans* were often used. By contrast, if the aim was simply to

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<sup>51</sup> MacKenzie, *Empire of Nature*, 303-4.

hunt for sport, British sportsmen rode elephants or stalked tigers on foot. Other factors which determined which of the three general methods a British hunter used included his own personal temperament, his shooting skill and level of patience, and lastly, whether or not he was hunting alone or as part of a group.<sup>52</sup>

### *Hunting Tigers by Using Machans*

The hunting method which required the greatest amount of patience on the part of British hunters as well as some degree of shooting skill was hunting tigers in *machans*. As Williamson, Newall, and Gordon-Cumming explained in their hunting memoirs, these platforms would typically be constructed in tall trees fifteen to twenty feet above the ground near a pool of water several hours before dark. As Newall explained, the platforms would often be built from trees other than those immediately nearby largely because tigers possessed “a natural distrust of the signs of man’s presence” and were often “chary of approaching a place which show[ed] any recent alteration.” A bullock or some other live bait would be tied underneath the *machan*. British hunters would then wait overnight in the *machan* to see if a tiger appeared to either eat the bait or drink water.<sup>53</sup>

Despite appearing relatively easy, shooting a tiger this way was often difficult. For one thing, Williamson and Johnson both emphasized that it required much “resigned patience” and “a considerable amount of coolness” on the part of the hunter, as well as his being “completely silent.” Secondly, hunting in this manner required sportsmen to sit

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<sup>52</sup> Mary A. Procida, “‘Good Sports and Right Sorts’: Guns, Gender, and Imperialism in British India,” *Journal of British Studies* 40, no. 4 (Oct. 2001): 473.

<sup>53</sup> Williamson, *Oriental Field Sports*, 1: 213; Newall, *Eastern Hunters*, 247; William Gordon-Cumming, *Wild Men and Wild Beasts: Scenes in Camp and Jungle* (Edinburgh: Edmonston and Douglas, 1871), 11.



perfectly still for several hours in what several authors described as an “uncomfortable position” and one which caused “stiff necks.” Thirdly, the stationary nature of the hunting platform often made it difficult to shoot a tiger, particularly if it came from a different direction than the *machan* was oriented toward. Finally, there was the issue of accuracy. As Napier reminded his readers, there was often little way of knowing for certain what one was actually shooting at in such darkness. Even so, if a tiger appeared, and there was no guarantee that one would, the first shot had to be accurate. There was unlikely to be another.<sup>54</sup>

Nevertheless, despite conceding the considerable patience and skill needed to kill a tiger in this manner, some authors of hunting memoirs by mid-century began to consider this as unbecoming of true sportsmen. For example, Burton decried shooting at tigers from *machans* for being “mere slaughter” and certainly not “sportsmanship.” Likewise, Rice argued that “watching in ambush at night” for tigers was an “unsportsmanlike” method of killing them as it replicated the hunting style of tigers themselves. This method, he insisted, was more suitable for Indian princes and other “lazy gentry.” Similarly, Shakespear asserted that only hunters afflicted with a “natural Asiatic laziness” used a *machan*. This was so, despite his concession that a hunter using a hunting platform had to be a good marksman because if a tiger were only mildly wounded “you will but rarely bag or recover it.”<sup>55</sup>

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<sup>54</sup> Williamson, *Oriental Field Sports*, 1: 214; Johnson, *Sketches of Indian Field Sports*, 73; Newall, *Eastern Hunters*, 84, 413; “Nimrod in the East, “Tiger Hunting by Nimrod” (August 1830), *Oriental Sporting Magazine*, 1: 453; Napier, *Scenes and Sports in Foreign Lands*, 2: 66; Shakespear, *Wild Sports of India*, 87.

<sup>55</sup> Burton, *Scinde; or, the Unhappy Valley*, 2: 85; Rice, *Tiger-Shooting in India*, 3, 28; Shakespear, *Wild Sports of India*, 87, 200.

*Hunting Tigers on Top of Elephants*

A second, more glamorous method of killing tigers which British hunters used during the nineteenth century was beating for them while riding on top of elephants. While British sportsmen who used *machans* hunted tigers during the night, those who beated for tigers on elephants typically did so during the middle of the day when tigers were asleep. Again, bullocks or other draft animals would be typically tied to a tree near water as bait the night before the hunt. In the early hours of the next morning, *shikaris* would track the likely resting place of the tiger after it had eaten the bait. Once this information was known, several Indian beaters on foot would bang drums, crash cymbals, and play other noisy and “discordant” instruments as well as fire blanks in the air, all to try to force the tiger out of its lair or resting spot in the middle of the jungle. Once the tiger was roused, one or more British hunters would wait until the tiger charged at their elephants before shooting at it.<sup>56</sup>

Hunting tigers in this way had several perceived advantages. First, it allowed British sportsmen to partake in a princely Indian sport, as several authors of hunting memoirs stressed. Authors such as Williamson, Madras Army Colonel Thomas Duer Broughton, and Bombay Governor Mountstuart Elphinstone remarked how popular this type of tiger hunting was among various Indian princes who were “disposed to hunt tigers” largely because of the “pageantry” involved in it. As an elite activity, Wallace-Dunlop remarked several decades later, it was “hunting on a gigantic scale.” However, this also made it quite expensive. Authors of more modest means such as James and Buyers thus complained that hunters needed to possess “a few spare rupees” to properly

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<sup>56</sup> Shakespear, *Wild Sports of India*, 84; Newall, *Eastern Hunters*, 29, 289-90.

enjoy this “manly amusement.”<sup>57</sup>

Secondly, like British hunters who used *machans*, sportsmen who shot at tigers while riding on top of elephants were generally much safer than those who stalked tigers on foot. Even so, tiger hunting done on the back of an elephant was still potentially risky, largely because of the elephants themselves. For one thing, as a plate in Thomas Williamson’s *Oriental Field Sports* (1807) entitled “A Tiger Springing upon an Elephant” [Figure 6-3] shows, tigers were capable of springing quite high. This made it necessary, as Williamson warned, that a hunter be sure to ride on top of a tall enough elephant so that his feet would not be “in jeopardy” of being in a “dangling state, sufficiently low to be reached, without exertion, by a moderate sized tiger.” However, even if a British hunter were to ride on top of the tallest elephant possible, it would still not be any good if that elephant were of “a timid disposition” which might prove “more dangerous than hunting on the smallest elephant in the field.” The British sportsman’s safety thus depended largely upon the stolidity of the elephant, which Williamson and other authors warned could rapidly dissipate in the face of sustained tiger charges or other such “untoward events.”<sup>58</sup>

Indeed, several authors provided examples of even the most stolid of elephants running away from charging tigers. For example, Mundy wrote of an instance in 1833 when several elephants were attacked by a “bold” and “determined” tiger which bit and mauled the legs of the elephants in an attempt to attack Mundy and the other British hunters in his party. The tiger’s multiple “bold charges” caused several of the elephants

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<sup>57</sup> Williamson, *Oriental Field Sports*, 1: 234; Thomas Duer Broughton, *Letters from a Mahratta Camp During the Year 1809* (1813; Calcutta: K.P. Bagchi & Company, 1977 reprint ed.), 31; Mountstuart Elphinstone, *The History of India* (London: John Murray, 1843, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., 2 vols.), 1: 352-3; James, *Volunteer’s Scramble*, 2: 44, 48; Buyers, *Recollections*, 149.

<sup>58</sup> Williamson, *Oriental Field Sports*, 1: 226-7; Buyers, *Recollections*, 149.



Figure 6-3. "A Tiger Springing upon an Elephant." (Williamson, *Oriental Field Sports*, 1: 266).

to “turn tail in horror” and stampede in the other direction with the British hunters still riding on top. Likewise, Wallace-Dunlop described a tiger charge which caused three elephants to “wheel [a]round at once” and run at a very past pace, “screaming with fright.” This caused the howdahs that Wallace-Dunlop and other hunters in his hunting party used to sway back and forth rather violently “like boats at sea.” Not even the most vigorous goading by the *mahouts*, or elephant drivers, could induce the elephants to stop running.<sup>59</sup>

Two sepia prints of tiger hunts on top of elephants further illustrate the potential dangers involved in this type of hunt. In the first depiction, entitled “A Prompt and Public Execution” [Figure 6-4], from Robert Henry Wallace-Dunlop’s *Hunting in the Himalayas* (1860), a major theme is the palpable fear of both animals and humans. Of the three elephants, two are clearly running away, while the third one has the look of total petrification in its eyes. Other animals in the background, such as the horse in the center of the picture, are also clearly disturbed by the growling of the tiger. In “Elephant Charged by a Tiger” [Figure 6-5], from William Gordon-Cumming’s *Wild Men and Wild Beasts* (1871), the theme of animal fear is not so evident. However, two of the elephants in the distance do appear to have their trunks up, thus suggesting at least some alarm. The fear of the charging tiger expressed in both prints extends to humans as well. In both cases, the *mahouts* driving the elephants have their arms up with the look of alarm. In the first scene as well, the crowd in the distance behind the horse also appears to be restless. As in Figures 6-2 and 6-3 discussed in the previous section, the only sources of calm in either print are the British hunters themselves.

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<sup>59</sup> Mundy, *Pen and Pencil Sketches*, 1: 109-17; Wallace-Dunlop, *Hunting in the Himalayas*, 107, 108.



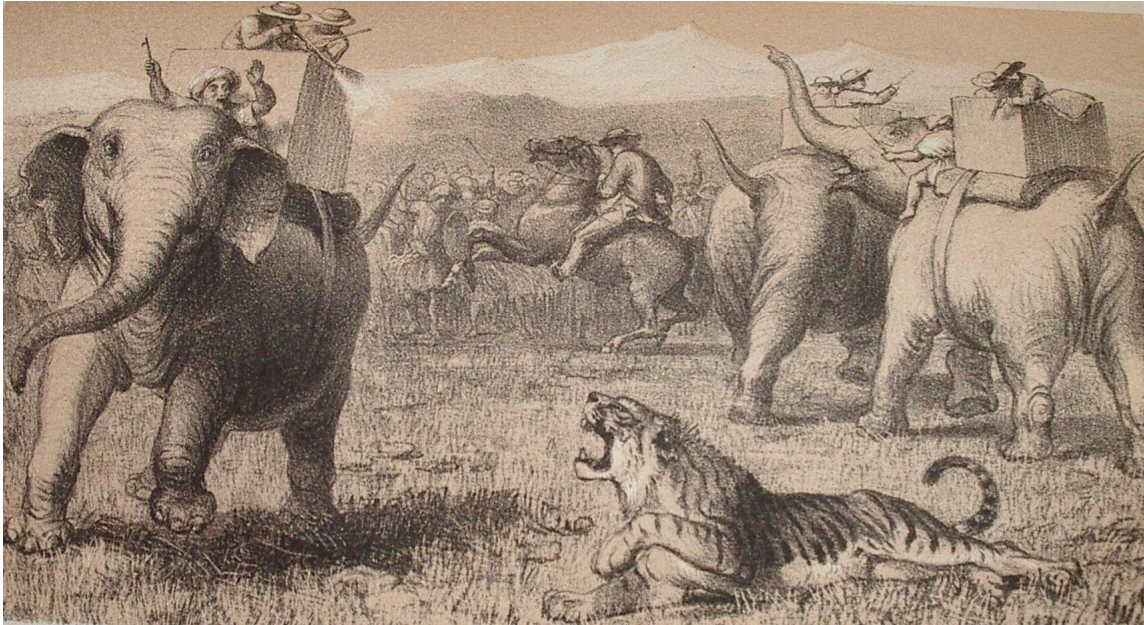


Figure 6-4. "A Prompt and Public Execution." (Wallace-Dunlop, *Hunting in the Himalayas*, 108).



Figure 6-5. "Elephant Charged by a Tiger." (Gordon-Cumming, *Wild Men and Wild Beasts*, 243).

However useful these depictions may have been in buttressing the discourse of manly Britons calmly and forthrightly facing tigers, though, their depictions of nonchalant British hunters are the least believable aspects of either print. For example, in the case of Figure 6-4, the picture jars with the textual description which Wallace-Dunlop provides of the howdahs (boxes in which the hunters sit on top of the elephants) in each of the three elephants “rolling and pitching like boats at sea.”<sup>60</sup> It seems rather dubious that any hunter, Briton or not, could have remained completely calm in such a situation. The same goes for Figure 6-5, which depicts a tiger gnawing an elephant’s trunk. While everything and everyone else in the print bespeaks alarm, if not chaos, the British hunters in the howdah on the front elephant simply appear calm, a dubious emotion to be felt at the very same moment that their own elephant was under attack. But as can be seen from other prints which I have examined thus far in this chapter, such depictions of calm, nonchalant British hunters were common in many of nineteenth-century sketches and lithographic prints which depicted British tiger hunts.

In neither instance described by Mundy or Wallace-Dunlop, nor in the two sepia prints accompanying these descriptions, were British hunters portrayed as being physically harmed. Moreover, in both cases the tigers were killed eventually. However, various authors suggested that less positive outcomes could result from an elephant becoming frightened during a tiger hunt. For example, “Nimrod in the East” warned in an 1828 article that under the duress of a tiger’s charge, a frightened elephant will likely “forget his friends in the howdah” as he runs into boughs, various tree branches and other barriers. Under such circumstances, Bengal Horse Artillery Lieutenant Thomas Bacon warned a decade later, a British hunter riding on top of an uncontrollable elephant “will,

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<sup>60</sup> Wallace-Dunlop, *Hunting in the Himalayas*, 108.

in all likelihood, be dashed to atoms.”<sup>61</sup>

For mainly this reason, both “Nimrod in the East” and Bacon considered it to be incumbent upon the *mahout* to prevent this behavior by encouraging the elephant to face tigers without fleeing. “Nimrod in the East” maintained that *mahouts* needed to be “patient and bold” for the elephants under their charge to be so as well. Bacon added that the elephant’s “behaviour in action against a tiger depends very much upon the courage and determination” of the *mahout*. Similarly, Gordon-Cumming argued more than three decades later that an “elephant will no more go steadily up to a tiger when driven by a funky *mahout*, than a horse will at his fences when ridden by a bad and nervous rider.” Scared elephants led to British hunters losing prime shots as well as much worse outcomes such as enabling “a vicious tiger to get in and make good his charge.”<sup>62</sup>

### *Hunting Tigers on Foot*

The third main method used by British sportsmen in hunting tigers during the nineteenth century was stalking them by foot. This presented the greatest potential for physical danger to Britons (as well as Indians) and, thus, appears to have been the least common method used by British hunters during the first three quarters of the nineteenth century. This was in spite of the fact that the thrill and danger of tiger hunting were among its more alluring qualities. Hunting tigers on foot remained too dangerous for many British sportsmen during this earlier period precisely because of the relative inadequacy of the guns which hunters used as well as the fact that hunters did not have

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<sup>61</sup> “Nimrod in the East,” “Letter to the Editor” (June 1828), *Oriental Sporting Magazine*, 1: 3; Thomas Bacon, *First Impressions and Studies from Nature in Hindoostan*, 2: 21.

<sup>62</sup> “Nimrod in the East,” “Letter to the Editor” (June 1828), *Oriental Sporting Magazine* 1: 7; Bacon, *First Impressions and Studies from Nature in Hindoostan*, 2: 21; Gordon-Cumming, *Wild Men and Wild Beasts*, 15. Emphasis in original.



much, if any, protection from a tiger's spring.

Mainly for these reasons, several authors of hunting memoirs argued that it was foolish and plain "madness" to stalk tigers on foot. For example, "Nimrod in the East" stated unequivocally that hunters on foot had little or no chance against a charging tiger, "however cool and good a shot" they were. Other authors such as Shakespear and Campbell explained that tigers possessed a "great tenacity to life" which made "the pursuit of them on foot so dangerous." Even after a tiger had been fatally wounded, Shakespear warned, it "will often go in [its] charge several yards, with all the power and capacity [to] strike down every one in [its] path" before finally collapsing and dying. Similarly, Campbell warned of the dangers of stalking tigers on foot. Regardless of where the hunter shot it, a wounded tiger often "has generally life enough remaining to make one spring before [it] falls, and that spring is rather apt to prove fatal." Indeed, Campbell pessimistically remarked earlier in his memoir that:

There is something inexpressibly terrible in the charge of a tiger. Man appears so defenceless, so utterly hopeless, opposed to the gigantic strength of the striped monster, who springs upon him with a force that crushes him like a worm in the dust.

Precisely because British hunters could not always trust their own guns to kill on first impact, several British sportsmen from this period argued it was totally mad for hunters to stalk tigers on foot. "Nimrod in the East," Shakespear, and Campbell all stressed the importance of having adequate protection against the charge and spring of a tiger for a successful and, most importantly, *safe* outcome to a tiger hunt.<sup>63</sup>

Ironically enough, though, despite appearing to be the least common method which British sportsmen used to hunt tigers during the first three quarters of the

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<sup>63</sup> "Nimrod in the East," "Tiger Hunting" (August 1831), *Oriental Sporting Magazine*, 2: 190; Shakespear, *Wild Sports of India*, 95; Campbell, *Indian Journal*, 160, 302.

nineteenth century, stalking tigers on foot was the most common type of tiger hunt depicted in lithographic prints and sketches appearing in British hunting memoirs and guides. Many of these prints, like others which I have examined so far in this chapter, showed British hunters being perfectly calm and nonchalant in the face of the dangers of tiger hunting. Two telling examples are “A Charging Shot” [Figure 6-6] from J.T. Newall’s *The Eastern Hunters* (1866) and “Tiger Killed by a Chance Shot Near Meidah” [Figure 6-7] from William Rice’s *Tiger-Shooting in India* (1857) which I already discussed earlier in this chapter as Figure 6-1. Both pictures skillfully show the danger involved in hunting tigers on foot. In both cases, British sportsmen are perilously close to charging tigers. Also, in neither instance do the hunters have much, if any protection from the charging tiger. Even in Figure 6-6, where the British sportsmen are shooting at the charging tiger from on top of a ledge, the height of the ledge appears easily surmountable by the tiger.

Like other lithographic prints from this period, though, there are two aspects of the hunts being portrayed which are not believable. First, in both prints, British hunters are depicted as being in imminent danger of being sprung upon by tigers but do not show any indication of being afraid. Rather, the only one showing any fear at all is the Indian in Figure 6-7 who is running away from the charging tiger. This portrayal of only Indians being afraid from charging tigers effectively underscores the British discourse of manly British hunters being needed to defend supposedly effeminate and helpless Indians from tigers. However, unless both charging tigers were instantaneously killed by such fatal shots as between the eyes or the heart, there is not enough distance between the tiger and the British hunters for the latter to be truly safe.



Figure 6-6. "A Charging Shot." (Newall, *The Eastern Hunters*, 292).



Figure 6-7 [also Figure 6-1]. "Tiger Killed by a Chance Shot Near Meidah." (Rice, *Tiger-Shooting in India*, 7).

Secondly, in both lithograph prints, British sportsmen are portrayed as trusting their guns to kill the tigers before these animals reach them. This flies in the face of the fact that both authors specifically warned about the dangers of hunting tigers on account of the inadequate weaponry then used. As I have already noted earlier in this chapter, Rice (among other hunters) complained in the 1880s of the “very light, inferior [and] inefficient” weapons which he and other British sportsmen used to hunt tigers before the mid-1870s. Similarly, Newall warned that hunting tigers properly required British sportsmen who were sober and responsible, not those who recklessly exposed themselves to danger and trusted their weaponry to save them. “Peril, to some extent, there must be, with such powerful and dangerous beasts to fight and slay.” However, for Newall, “to court” this danger “unnecessarily” by staking tigers on foot with little or no protection against a charging tiger except a smooth-bore musket was not the mark of a manly British sportsman but rather “implies a want of those qualities which distinguishes the accomplished” hunter. Such a “foolhardy contempt of precaution,” he argued, was not the “exhibition of superior pluck” but rather “of its want.”<sup>64</sup>

By all means, then, British sportsmen should face tigers “like a Briton,” just not *literally*. Like covenanted servants who were supposed to totally avoid all financial involvement with Indians or British military officers and soldiers who were supposed to always live up to “a British standard of manliness,” eschewing drink, sumptuous living, or physically abusing Indians, portrayals of British tiger hunters standing firm in the face of tigers charging at them was far from any realistic interaction which British sportsmen would have had with these animals during the nineteenth century. Precisely because of the weaponry they used, if British sportsmen wanted to live to tell the tale, they had to

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<sup>64</sup> Rice, *Indian Game*, 147; Newall, *The Eastern Hunters*, 199-200.



find safe ways of hunting tigers. Stalking them on foot was not one of them.

### **Indian *Shikaris* and British Tiger Hunting**

Whatever way British sportsmen ended up hunting tigers, they needed the expert knowledge provided by Indian *shikaris*. This was largely so because they did not know much about tigers or the jungles in which they dwelt whereas *shikaris* possessed much expertise in such matters. Thus, British sportsmen interacted with Indian trackers and hunting guides very differently than they did with most Indian princes or peasants. Unlike these other groups whom British hunters largely denigrated for their less than manly responses to the dangers posed by tigers, authors of hunting memoirs before the 1870s by and large did not criticize *shikaris*. Furthermore, although *shikaris* occupied a nominally subordinate position vis-à-vis British hunters, the power dynamics between them were often more complicated. Oftentimes, Indian *shikaris* were the “professional experts” who taught “amateur” British hunters how to hunt tigers.

#### *How Shikaris Were Described in British Hunting Memoirs*

When describing *shikaris* in their hunting memoirs, British sportsmen generally focused on three themes. First, many focused on the “low-caste” or “tribal” social status of their hunting partners. Thus, Daniel Johnson described *shikaris* as being “generally Hindoos of a low cast” while Marianne Young classed them as being “outcasts.”<sup>65</sup> This focus was not in itself so surprising given the classism of many Britons in India as well as the growing colonial interest in Indian caste during the first half of the nineteenth century

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<sup>65</sup> Johnson, *Sketches of Indian Field Sports*, 22; Young, *Western India in 1838*, 1: 199.

documented by several historians of India.<sup>66</sup> What *was* surprising, though, was the fact that British hunters mainly appeared to have employed the services of “tribal” groups such as Bhils and Gonds in the hunting of tigers whom the colonial state otherwise generally considered to be “disobedient human beings.” This was largely so because, unlike Indian peasants, many “tribal” groups whom British hunters relied upon for the bulk of their *shikari* hunting partners did not farm for a living but rather existed either by hunting and gathering or by pastoralism. It was, thus, harder to tax them as well as control them.<sup>67</sup>

Many British sportsmen, though, do not seem to have been terribly bothered by the fact that they employed these “disobedient human beings” to help them hunt tigers. In large part this was so because of the professional expertise of these trackers and hunting guides. For example, Thomas Williamson described *shikaris* as being “generally expert in their profession” while Daniel Johnson praised their “cool perseverance” in the “business” of killing tigers. Likewise, Bengal Army Lieutenant-Colonel Thomas Skinner remarked that *shikaris* held “dangerous offices” as they had to become “acquainted with the haunts and habits of wild beasts.” For this reason, he argued that they deserved all the respect and admiration typically accorded to the “professional huntsmen” who largely made fox hunting (and other field sports) back home in England possible.<sup>68</sup>

Finally, several authors argued that *shikaris* were indispensable to the hunt. “Nimrod in the East” declared in an 1831 article in *Oriental Sporting Magazine* that “if

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<sup>66</sup> E.g., Ronald Inden, *Imagining India* (1990; Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2002 reprint ed.); Nicholas B. Dirks, *Castes of Mind: Colonialism and the Making of Modern India* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2001); and Bernard S. Cohn, *Colonialism and its Forms of Knowledge: The British in India* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1996).

<sup>67</sup> Rangarajan, *Fencing the Forest*, 145.

<sup>68</sup> Williamson, *Oriental Field Sports*, 1: 209; Johnson, *Sketches of Indian Field Sports*, 24, 72; Thomas Skinner, *Excursions in India* (London: Richard Bentley, 1833, 2 vols.), 1: 151-2.

you want to kill tigers you must trust entirely” to Indian trackers and hunting guides. Similarly, Shakespear argued nearly three decades later that successfully tracking tigers “require[d] many years experience and practice in the jungle, besides the natural gift of a very keen sight.” Mainly for this reason, *shikaris* were “positively necessary for following this sport successfully and safely.” Likewise, British Army officer Arthur Brinckman declared that nothing was as useful to a British hunter as “a month’s work with a good shikaree.” British sportsmen who were patient enough could become good stalkers of tigers over time. But even then, British hunters did not typically possess the *shikari*’s intimate “knowledge of the ground” or his “great skill and perseverance in following up a trail.”<sup>69</sup>

#### *How Shikaris Helped Britons Hunt Tigers*

There were a variety of different ways in which British hunters used the expertise of Indian *shikaris* during the first three quarters of the nineteenth century. In some cases, they were mainly employed as gun carriers with the responsibility of making sure the multiple guns usually needed to kill a tiger in this era of more primitive weaponry were constantly being reloaded. In such cases, *shikaris* themselves were not usually expected to shoot tigers themselves, although Henry Shakespear advised his readers that only *shikaris* who were “able to shoot” in case of emergencies should be hired. Likewise, William Rice warned that prospective British hunters needed to have “perfect confidence” in the “steadiness of these men,” insisting that “nothing must for a moment

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<sup>69</sup> “Nimrod in the East,” “Tiger Hunting” (August 1831), *Oriental Sporting Magazine*, 2: 186; Shakespear, *Wild Sports of India*, 88, 91; Arthur Brinckman, *The Rifle in Cashmere: A Narrative of Shooting Expeditions in Ladak, Cashmere, Punjaub, Etc., With Advice on Travelling, Shooting, and Stalking* (London: Smith, Elder and Co., 1862), 171.

disconcert these gun-carriers” upon whom much of the safety of British hunters on foot depended. Rice calculated that as many as “three or more double guns, or rifles” were needed for each British hunter in the hunting party thus making it necessary for “at least two natives” to be employed as gun carriers for each British sportsman.<sup>70</sup>

Indeed, several authors of hunting memoirs related instances when the timely intervention of Indian *shikaris* saved the day. For example, Rice related an incident when a fellow British hunting partner named “Elliot” was manhandled by a tiger. Elliot was only severely mauled by the tiger and not killed largely because Rice’s Indian *shikaris*, “with admirable coolness and presence of mind, quickly handed me spare loaded guns.”<sup>71</sup>

The urgency of the situation can be seen by referring to the corresponding lithograph print entitled “Elliot Being Manhandled by a Tiger” [Figure 6-8]. In the print, the only sources of calm are Rice in the lower right-hand corner and his three *shikaris* at center who are quickly passing him loaded guns. The rest of the scene is chaotic, with several Indian bystanders gesticulating violently as well as futilely throwing tomahawks and other weapons at the tiger. Interestingly enough, unlike other depictions of tiger hunting which I have discussed in this chapter which minimize the danger in which British hunters faced or show them nonchalantly facing the threat of an impending tiger charge, the print over-exaggerates the danger which Elliot, a British hunter, faced. While Rice tells us that his friend survived the attack, its depiction suggests, on the contrary, a fatal outcome.<sup>72</sup>

In addition to employing *shikaris* as gun carriers, British hunters also used them for tracking tigers and reporting their likely whereabouts. British sportsmen often

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<sup>70</sup> Shakespear, *Wild Sports of India*, 6; Rice, *Tiger-Shooting in India*, vii-viii.

<sup>71</sup> Rice, *Tiger-Shooting in India*, 106.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*





Figure 6-8. "Elliot Being Manhandled by a Tiger." (Rice, *Tiger-Shooting in India*, 106).

expressed amazement at the skill which Indian trackers displayed in procuring this useful knowledge. Thus, Johnson remarked that they “trace [a tiger] by the blood, or, if they cannot follow it, they look around in all the thick covers near.” However, because they were so “well acquainted with [a tiger’s] haunts, they know the direction [it] will most likely take, and seldom fail of finding [it] in a few hours.” Likewise, Skinner wrote how “quite astonished” he was at the abilities of an Indian *shikari* who “showed so perfect an intimacy with the pursuits of the wild beast” which greatly expedited the hunting of a man-eating tiger. Similarly, Rice noted how often he was amazed that Indian trackers, just by “carefully observing each footprint or slightest drop of blood” were able to “point out the direction which the wounded game has gone.”<sup>73</sup>

A third role that *shikaris* played in several British tiger hunts was as knowledgeable experts whom British hunters consulted in the hunting of particular tigers. In such consultations, it appears that British hunters usually deferred to their advice. For example, Shakespear related a few instances where he disagreed with the hunting strategies proposed by his *shikaris*. Nevertheless, he often deferred to their judgment, stating that he did not often like to “go in direct opposition to the advice of so many men, hunters also” who knew “the country and animal so well.” Similarly, Gordon-Cumming emphasized the importance of having frequent meetings with *shikaris*, insisting that they were essential and “not time thrown away.” Later in his account, he remarked that he and his British hunting partners “trusted a good deal” to his *shikari* “Bheeka” who was frequently “brought up for consultation” in the hunting of particular tigers. Indeed, as Newall stated in his account, the “word” of a “professional shikaree... was so much

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<sup>73</sup> Johnson, *Sketches of Indian Field Sports*, 68; Skinner, *Excursions in India*, 1: 152; Rice, *Tiger-Shooting in India*, 57.

depended on” by British hunters precisely because they were experts in the habits of tigers and knew well the jungles in which they dwelt.<sup>74</sup>

Finally, in a few instances, *shikaris* actually appear to have directed British tiger hunts. The best evidence for this exists in Newall’s semi-fictionalized memoir where he recounts numerous instances between himself and two other British hunters and three Indian *shikaris* during the mid-1850s.<sup>75</sup> In several instances, Newall describes Rugonauth, one of the *shikaris*, “marshall[ing]” the tiger hunt by “inspect[ing] the position,” making sure the three British hunters were “properly posted,” entrusting the fireworks to “the charge of reliable men” as well as taking “personal command of the beaters.” Other *shikaris* are described as performing similar roles. Thus, in another instance, because Manajee (another *shikari*) knew the particular jungle better than Rugonauth, he was “entrusted [with] the duty” of overseeing the hunting of tigers in that area. After walking some distance, Manajee chose three trees where he posted the British hunters. The British hunters complied with Manajee’s orders without “wasting words.” Likewise, in a third instance, this time in “the absence of Rugonauth,” Manajee of course, undertook the whole of the arrangements.” After these were completed, Manajee stationed the hunters. Once that he “saw that all were ready, he went round and put the beaters in motion.”<sup>76</sup>

## Conclusion

Britons hunted tigers during the first three quarters of the nineteenth century for

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<sup>74</sup> Shakespear, *Wild Sports of India*, 67; Gordon-Cumming, *Wild Men and Wild Beasts*, 14, 152, 153; Newall, *Eastern Hunters*, 364.

<sup>75</sup> Newall’s memoir uses fictionalized names for the three British hunters and the three Indian *shikaris*. Newall is likely depicted as Norman, the oldest and wisest of the three British hunters.

<sup>76</sup> Newall, *Eastern Hunters*, 27-9, 85, 182, 278-81.

many reasons. First, they sought to emulate Mughal emperors of prior centuries in vanquishing the most menacing animal of the Indian jungle, thereby showing their “mastery” over nature and their right to rule India. Secondly, Britons hunted tigers to chivalrously protect Indian men, women, and children from the “savage tiger,” again mainly to legitimate their rule. Lastly, in bravely and forthrightly facing tigers “like a Briton”—despite the great dangers of doing so—British hunters sought to demonstrate their individual “moral excellence” as well as their superior manliness. By “manfully standing their ground” against tigers and living to tell the tale, Britons in India sought to present themselves as possessing the “pluck and resolution” necessary to quell any military revolt or to put an Indian subordinate in his place.<sup>77</sup> Tiger hunting, therefore, was not ancillary to British colonial rule or a recreational activity which Britons frivolously participated in when they should have been “governing.” Rather, it was a central site for the construction of colonial masculinity during the nineteenth century as well as an important aspect of colonial governance in its own right.

In hunting tigers, British sportsmen interacted with various groups of Indians. Many of these interactions—such as those with Indian princes and other landed elites and with most Indian villagers—were contentious and resulted in negative British discourses. In these instances, colonial masculinity was constructed largely in oppositional terms and largely in a situation of much mistrust and loathing of Indian subordinates by British sportsmen. Like covenanted servants who mistrusted their Indian subordinates or British military officers who feared the influence of Brahmin sepoys in the Bengal Army, British hunters in the nineteenth century maintained that Indian princely elites as well as Indian villagers could not be trusted to deal with the “tiger problem.” Only British sportsmen

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<sup>77</sup> Campbell, *Old Forest Ranger*, 146; Newall, *Eastern Hunters*, 387.

could protect Indians from the “savage” tiger. Only British hunters could be relied upon to “manfully stand [their] ground” against tigers and kill them.

However, British sportsmen interacted with *shikaris* much differently. Rather than dismissing them as being irrelevant or, even worse, nuisances who needed to be brought to account, British hunters relied extensively upon their local knowledge about Indian tigers and the jungles in which they dwelt. Indeed, so much so, that it would be correct to regard nineteenth-century British tiger hunting as a colonial hybrid, mixing Indian methods of hunting tigers with Western guns, albeit ones which were “very light, inferior [and] inefficient” compared to the semi-automatic hunting rifles which British hunters would start using after the 1870s.<sup>78</sup> Like colonial forestry officials who, as Richard Grove has contended, relied extensively upon indigenous Indian environmental knowledge in the formation of various colonial forestry policies, British sportsmen learned how to safely hunt tigers mainly through interacting with Indian *shikaris*.<sup>79</sup> This trust was necessary in large part because of the inadequate weaponry which the British had. Although the gun was surely a “tool of empire” by the end of the nineteenth century, for much of the century it was simply not reliable enough by itself.<sup>80</sup> If British sportsmen wished to vanquish the tiger and live to tell the tale, they *had* to rely upon the expertise of Indian *shikaris* as well as adopt Indian methods of hunting such as using *machans* or riding on the top of elephants which accorded them a degree of safety against a tiger’s spring.

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<sup>78</sup> Rice, *Indian Game*, 147.

<sup>79</sup> Grove, *Green Imperialism*, chap. 8 *passim*.

<sup>80</sup> For studies of the technological aspects of British imperial rule, see Michael Adas, *Machines as the Measure of Man: Science, Technology, and Ideologies of Western Dominance* (Ithaca, NY and London: Cornell University Press, 1989); and Daniel Headrick, *The Tools of Empire: Technology and European Imperialism in the Nineteenth Century* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1981).

It is understandable, then, why British hunters relied extensively upon Indian *shikaris* while hunting tigers and had a qualitatively very different relationship with them than they did with other Indians such as princes or laymen Indians. Why, though, were British relationships with *shikaris* so different than their interactions with other Indian subordinates in the colonial bureaucracy or in the military? Why did Britons trust so much—indeed, often their own lives—to their generally low-caste *shikari* hunting partners while similar levels of trust were generally lacking with regard to uncovenanted servants and sepoys who were disproportionately Brahmins or Rajputs?

One way of answering this question is to think about the groups of Indians with whom the British did not generally have positive interactions while hunting tigers. As competing elites whom the British were generally seeking to supplant during the first half of the nineteenth century—the cherishing of Indian maharajas would only come after the Sepoy Rebellion—it is understandable why British sportsmen would have been so critical of the hunting practices of Indian princes and other landed elites. Likewise, if Indian villagers truly had the “tiger problem” under control, there would be no need for British hunters to kill these ferocious menaces to Indian society. By contrast, *shikaris* were necessary accomplices. The British could not simply dispense with their expert knowledge as they could get rid of Indian princes. Precisely because tigers were dangerous animals and because they could not always trust their own weapons to kill upon immediate impact, British sportsmen needed to rely upon *shikaris* and their knowledge to a large degree, more so than in any other relationship they had with Indian subordinates. Paradoxically, if they wanted to face tigers “like a Briton,” British hunters had to bring along their *shikari* hunting partners.

Another way of thinking about why Britons might have placed greater confidence in their *shikari* hunting partners as opposed to Indian clerks in the colonial bureaucracy or sepoy in the Company's armies has to do with caste. Alone of the three sites I study in this dissertation for the construction of colonial masculinity in Company India, only in the hunting of tigers did the British mainly interact with Indians who did not belong to an elite group within Indian society. Unlike urban Bengali Brahmins and other scribal castes who dominated the colonial bureaucracy and unlike rural Brahmin and Rajput landowners in southern Awadh and northern Bihar who provided the bulk of the soldiers in the Bengal Army, *shikaris* were comprised of low-caste or "tribal" Indians who were at the margins of Indian society. Quite likely, Britons in India were not threatened by their *shikari* hunting partners as they often were by Indian clerks and sepoy because they "knew" their place. As a result, British hunters felt they could trust *shikaris*, whereas such trust was often lacking toward Indian uncovenanted servants or toward Brahmin sepoy in the Bengal Army.

By trusting their *shikari* hunting partners, British sportsmen learned how to hunt tigers during the nineteenth century. This led to two significant developments for the post-1875 period when considerably better weaponry started to become available. First, by the mid-1870s, tiger and other big-game hunting became an integral part of British upper- and upper-middle-class masculine culture and remained so until the end of the British Empire in the middle decades of the twentieth century. Despite the introduction of better weaponry later in the nineteenth century which made tiger hunting considerably easier and safer for British hunters but deadlier for the animals, many of the basic forms of British tiger hunting in India which developed as a result of this interaction between

British hunters and Indian *shikaris* during the first three quarters of the nineteenth century endured long afterwards. Only in the 1960s, “as the empire waned” and imperialist culture “fell victim to satire and skepticism and scorn,” did tiger and other big-game hunting begin to be widely seen as barbaric as well as symbolic of an upper class which was now more frequently regarded as out of touch, irrelevant, and no longer fit to govern.<sup>81</sup>

Secondly, as a result of learning how to hunt tigers largely from their interactions with *shikaris*, British sportsmen set in train the precipitous decline of the number of tigers on the South Asian subcontinent over the following century. Once modern weaponry became introduced in the mid-1870s, the “exterminationalist” policies of the British colonial state toward tigers could be given full force. Consequently, judging from the records of bounties paid out to hunters, at least 57,000 tigers were killed by British and Indian hunters between 1875 and 1925, quite possibly many more.<sup>82</sup> To a very large degree, nineteenth-century British tiger hunters prepared the way for the near-extinction of the species a century later.<sup>83</sup> In a perverse and macabre but still remarkable way, then, colonial rule in India worked best when Britons were able to trust Indian subordinates.

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<sup>81</sup> David Cannadine, *Ornamentalism: How the British Saw Their Empire* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 172. There are two telling examples of the cultural shift against tiger hunting in the 1960s. First, the worldwide outrage in 1961 regarding the Duke of Edinburgh’s shooting of a tiger while on a shooting trip with the Maharaja and Maharani of Jaipur documented by John MacKenzie in his *Empire of Nature*, 309-10. A second example was the Beatles’ 1968 song “Bungalow Bill” which had children asking the British tiger hunter “if to kill was not a sin?” and which had as a chorus line “Hey Bungalow Bill, what did you kill Bungalow Bill?”

<sup>82</sup> Rangarajan, “Raj and the Natural World,” 217. Rangarajan argues that the true figure was probably between 80,000 and 90,000 tigers killed over the fifty-year period, or about 1,600 to 1,800 per year, more than the roughly 1,200 Indians that tigers were thought to have killed every year.

<sup>83</sup> An animal census in 1972 concluded that there were only about 2,000 tigers left in the wild in South Asia. Despite very strict laws banning the hunting of tigers in India, the number of tigers in the wild today is probably not much more than this figure. MacKenzie, *Empire of Nature*, 291; Justin Huggler, “New Fears for Future of Tigers as Indian Census Project Collapses,” *The Independent*, 17 May 2006, <http://news.independent.co.uk/world/asia/article485896.ece>, accessed 17 May 2006; “Tiger Habitat Shrinking, Survival at Risk,” *CNN*, 21 July 2006, <http://www.cnn.com/2006/TECH/science/07/21/tigers.habitat.ap/index.html>, accessed 21 July 2006.



## Conclusion

*[O]ur hold upon India rests altogether upon the superior ability and the superior character of the European. If that be diminished, in the same degree, our hold over the country is diminished, and if that should altogether go, it will be perfectly impossible for us to retain our power over the country.<sup>1</sup>*

Throughout this dissertation, I have argued that concerns about the personal conduct of British covenanted servants, military officers, and soldiers during the Company period, far from being unrelated to broader anxieties about their colonial rule over India, were intimately connected to them. The East India Company's rule over India would only be "moral," colonial commentators and policymakers from insisted, if its covenanted servants, military officers, and soldiers acted morally themselves. Believing British rule over India to be fundamentally one of "opinion," colonial officials and authors insisted throughout the first half of the nineteenth century that only by eschewing private debt and gifts from Indians would British covenanted servants demonstrate their "mastery" over their districts and their moral fitness to rule Indians. Likewise, military officials such as Bombay Army General John Jacob maintained that military officers and soldiers would only retain the loyalty of their sepoys to British rule if they exerted the "highest moral tone" and acted according to a "British standard of manliness" in all their actions.<sup>2</sup> Only by Britons in India always demonstrating "the superior character of the European," Lord Ellenborough and others contended, could British rule over India rest on secure foundations, or, indeed, be possible at all.

Part and parcel of these colonial concerns about the morality of British

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<sup>1</sup> Evidence of Edward Law, Earl Ellenborough, 18 June 1852, PP, 1852, *Report from the Select Committee on Indian Territories*, X (533), p. 239, q. 2307.

<sup>2</sup> John Jacob, *The Views and Opinions of Brigadier-General John Jacob* (1851; London: Smith, Elder & Co., 1858, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed.), 102.

covenanted servants, military officers, and soldiers was a mistrust of Indian subordinates in the colonial bureaucracy and the army. However, this mistrust manifested itself in different ways. In the civil service, actuated by the goal of establishing a “moral empire” in India and believing that “every native of Hindustan is corrupt,” Governor-General Lord Cornwallis banned Indians from the covenanted service in 1793.<sup>3</sup> Almost four decades later, as Cornwallis’s racial ban led to significant delays in court trials and the devising of revenue settlements, Governor-General Lord Bentinck reversed course and partially Indianized the colonial bureaucracy. Even so, despite often being couched in humane terms as being a policy which would give Indian clerks “some share in the administration” of their country, ultimately Bentinck’s partial Indianization of the colonial bureaucracy was a paternalistic policy which belittled Indians for not being quite moral enough to govern themselves without British help.<sup>4</sup> Moreover, there were definite limits to Indianization beyond which British colonial officials were not prepared to go: for example, many insisted that Indians were not trustworthy enough to be allowed entry into the superior covenanted service when that issue was debated in 1853. Throughout the Company period, then, the question “Indianize the Indian Civil Service?” revolved around concerns about the morality of Indian subordinates. How British colonial officials chose to answer the question had significant implications for colonial rule as well as the construction of their own masculinity.

Although the lack of trust of Indian subordinates by Britons in India was most pronounced within the colonial bureaucracy, several military officials during the latter decades of the Company period also feared that the loyalty of Indian soldiers to British

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<sup>3</sup> Quoted from Percival Spear, *The Nabobs* (1932; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1963), 137.

<sup>4</sup> Evidence of William Wilberforce Bird, 18 May 1852, PP, 1852-3, *Report from the Select Committee of the House of Lords*, XXIX (41), p. 118, q. 1207.

rule was precarious at best. Despite initially lauding high-caste Hindu soldiers in the Bengal Army for being either “gentlemen” or, after 1820, members of one of India’s “martial races,” beginning in the 1820s various military officials began to worry about Bengal Army sepoys remaining loyal to British rule. Fearing that they had too little control over the army, several military officers and colonial officials began to advocate the recruiting of soldiers from other so-called martial races of India such as Gurkhas, Sikhs, and, more reluctantly, Indian Muslims. Ultimately, little came of these proposals until after the Sepoy Rebellion in 1857. Nevertheless, in many respects the martial races policy of the Raj grew out of governance anxieties during the Company period over whether high-caste Hindu sepoys could be sufficiently trusted to remain loyal.

In both the colonial bureaucracy and the Bengal Army during the Company period, then, colonial masculinity was largely defined in oppositional terms to an Indian “Other”—whether an uncovenanted servant or sepoy. Precisely because most Britons in India continually worried about whether these Indian subordinates could be trusted, many insisted throughout the Company period that British covenanted servants, military officers, and soldiers always had to act morally superior to the Indians they ruled. Only by acting themselves according to a “standard of a higher manhood” compared to their Indian underlings who “will embezzle, take bribes, and lie, almost without compunction or shame,” colonial officials like Henry Lushington insisted in 1853, would British covenanted servants ensure that British rule was placed on “moral” foundations and that Indians would remain loyal.<sup>5</sup> Likewise, worrying about the precarious loyalty of Indian sepoys to British rule, Jacob warned a year later that “the native soldier should never see

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<sup>5</sup> Henry Lushington, *The Double Government, the Civil Service, and the India Reform Agitation* (London: Wm. H. Allen & Co., 1853), 52.

his European officer living an idle, useless life.” The “prestige of the superior race” and, ultimately, the stability of colonial rule, depended upon British officers acting like virtuous men.<sup>6</sup>

Although the lack of trust among British covenanted servants and military officers toward their Indian subordinates often made for fraught relations between Britons and Indians in the governing of India during the Company period, it was not present in all instances. An important exception was British tiger hunting during the first three quarters of the nineteenth century when tiger hunting became an important symbol of British manliness in India. In hunting tigers, British sportsmen derided the efforts of Indian princes as well as villagers, deeming both groups incapable of successfully dealing with the “tiger problem.” In these encounters, British sportsmen acted no differently than covenanted servants and military officers in their interactions with uncovenanted servants and sepoys. However, British hunters’ interactions with a third group—*shikaris*, or trackers and guides—were qualitatively much different. Rather than denigrating *shikaris*, British sportsmen in their hunting memoirs lauded their local knowledge of the tiger and the jungles in which it dwelt, placing much trust in these subordinates. Largely because of limitations in their weaponry, British sportsmen, if they wanted to successfully kill a tiger and live to tell the tale, *had* to rely upon *shikaris* a great deal. Tiger hunting, at least during the Company period, thus, was one significant instance where British masculinity was not mainly defined in oppositional terms to an Indian “Other” whom Britons distrusted, loathed, or both.

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<sup>6</sup> Jacob, “Remarks on the State of the Native Army in India in General; Upon the Principles Whereupon its Efficiency Depends; and on the Means Whereby its Existing Defects May be Remedied” (1854), reprinted in *Views and Opinions*, 127, 128.

### Company India and the British Raj: A Missing Link?

What were the implications of this general pattern during the Company period of mistrust and/or loathing of Indian subordinates by Britons in India, tiger hunting notwithstanding, for the British Raj which followed after 1858? Despite the fact that the East India Company governed India for a slightly longer time period than did the British Raj which succeeded it, this question has not generally been asked by British imperial historians or even many colonial Indian historians, who have focused instead more on the constitutive role of the Sepoy Rebellion of 1857 in the making of the British Raj. For example, in her recent examination of British martial races thinking between 1850 and 1914, Heather Streets argues that the Rebellion “functioned as a crucible through which ideologies of both British and Indian masculinities were renegotiated.”<sup>7</sup> While doubtless true to some degree, one of the main findings of this dissertation is that many of the ideas behind the martial races policy of the Raj were articulated *before* 1857. Rather than being “historical accidents” or ad-hoc responses to the exigencies of 1857 which were later codified into official policy, or Orientalist “imaginings” by late-nineteenth century authors of caste manuals, the martial races ideology of the British Raj emerged initially out of British anxieties about governing the Bengal Army during the last few decades leading up to the Sepoy Rebellion.<sup>8</sup> Precisely because many military reformers did not trust the high-caste Hindu sepoys of the pre-1857 Bengal Army, they recommended the broadening of sepoy recruitment to include other so-called martial races such as Gurkhas, Sikhs, and Indian Muslims, groups which were heavily recruited after 1857.

The martial races policy of the Raj is perhaps the clearest example of how pre-

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<sup>7</sup> Heather Streets, *Martial Races: The Military, Race and Masculinity in British Imperial Culture, 1857-1914* (Manchester: Manchester University Press; New York: Palgrave, 2004), 11.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, 31-2.

1857 developments directly affected British colonial rule after the Sepoy Rebellion. However, there are other ways in which Company-era policies and debates had direct ramifications for the Raj. For example, arguments by colonial officials in 1853 that Indians were not yet ready—morally speaking—to join the covenanted service prefigured debates later in the century over the Ilbert Bill or the Public Service Commission described by Mrinalini Sinha.<sup>9</sup> Of course, Company-era discourses about Indian uncovenanted servants were different from those surrounding debates in the 1880s and 1890s over whether Indian judges ought to be allowed to try Britons in India or about the inferior status of the uncovenanted service within the colonial bureaucracy as a whole. British officials during the first half of the nineteenth century typically castigated Indian clerks for being “moral children” instead of attacking their “effeminacy” *per se*, although some, such as Thomas Babington Macaulay and Sir Charles Edward Trevelyan, noticeably did. By contrast, during the second half of the nineteenth century, as more Indians (and, more specifically, Bengalis) started qualifying for the covenanted service, the stereotype of the “effeminate Bengali *babu*” became more commonplace. Despite this difference, however, both stereotypes performed similar ideological work in denying full manhood to Indian subordinates. Moreover, the very system of Indian subordination within the colonial government which British officials defended in the late 1880s and early 1890s by deploying overtly gendered stereotypes such as the “manly Englishman” and the “effeminate Bengali” was crafted a half-century earlier by Bentinck. Thus, much of the racism of the British Raj’s governing structure carried over from the preceding Company period.

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<sup>9</sup> Mrinalini Sinha, *Colonial Masculinity: The “Manly Englishman” and the “Effeminate Bengali” in the Late Nineteenth Century* (Manchester: Manchester University Press; New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1995), chaps. 1 and 3.

Finally, in order to properly understand British tiger hunting during the British Raj requires a due regard for the development of the sport during the preceding Company period. To be sure, there were important changes in the sport after the 1870s. After the mid-1870s, as a result of the Forest Act of 1878, the arrival of modern guns, and the increasing pageantry and bombast of the British Raj, tiger hunting did become more “regularized and hedged about with codes and rules.” “[S]ocial distance between Britons and Indians” increased as well.<sup>10</sup> Even so, Britons learned how to hunt tigers mainly through interactions with Indian *shikaris* during the Company period. As a result of this social interaction, tiger hunting became an important marker of British upper- and upper-middle-class masculinity by the 1870s and remained so until decolonization in the middle decades of the twentieth century. Ultimately, then, British tiger hunting was a Company-era development.

Judging from the evidence which I have assembled regarding the nature of British-Indian interactions in the colonial bureaucracy, the army, and in tiger hunting during the Company period, then, I would conclude that the Sepoy Rebellion has been overstressed by historians in the “making” of the British Raj. Although I would not go so far as to deny the importance of the Rebellion altogether, ultimately I would contend that its significance lays more in confirming many already-articulated prejudices and fears by colonial policymakers regarding Indian clerks and sepoys than in creating them. Moreover, the British Raj’s notable racism did not emerge solely or even mainly out of the events of 1857. Rather, it was the end-product of a long series of debates and discussions among Britons in India during the previous century about how best to create a

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<sup>10</sup> John M. MacKenzie, *The Empire of Nature: Hunting, Conservation and British Imperialism* (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 1988), 170. These issues are also further explored in my forthcoming article in *Victorian Studies*.

“moral empire” in India, and, related to this larger question, how much, if at all, to trust subordinate Indians with the myriad and quotidian responsibilities of colonial governance. Ultimately, many of the racist policies and attitudes developed during the first century of British colonial rule in India carried over into the second, just as Lord Canning, the last governor-general of Company India, continued on to become the first viceroy of the British Raj.

### **Imperialism and British Masculinity: A Denied Link?**

Finally, what was the ultimate impact of British anxieties about the largely indirect nature of colonial rule upon the construction of British masculinity during the first half of the nineteenth century? To what degree was the general focus upon public and private conduct in the construction of British masculinity during the first half of the nineteenth century among colonial officials in India a product of colonial rule? More specifically, how did a general lack of trust of Indian subordinates by Britons in India during the first half of the nineteenth century influence the construction of British masculinity during this period?

These questions beg asking precisely because many historians of British gender during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries have still neglected to consider fully the implications for the construction of British masculinity (and femininity) of the fact that Britain possessed a large territorial empire throughout this period. Instead, leading historians of nineteenth-century British gender formation such as Boyd Hilton, Dror Wahrman, John Tosh, and Callum Brown have taken a more insular approach, crediting metropolitan developments and cultural trends such as Evangelicalism for why British



masculinity was heavily imbued with moral concerns throughout the first half of the nineteenth century.<sup>11</sup> By contrast, I would conclude that governance anxieties among colonial officials in India offer an equally compelling explanation for why British masculinity in India was deeply imbued with concerns about moral conduct throughout the first half of the nineteenth century than Evangelicalism *per se*. Believing that their rule in India was fundamentally one of “opinion,” and that Indians would only remain loyal if British covenanted servants, military officers, and soldiers demonstrated their superior morality and fitness to govern, Britons in India continually insisted on the need for Britons to act as virtuous men. From Edmund Burke to Sir Charles Edward Trevelyan, colonial officials and commentators alike contended that Britain would only succeed in constructing a “moral empire” in India if the agents of empire were beyond reproach themselves.

Indeed, only by taking more seriously an important insight first articulated by Oxford historian J.R. Seeley in 1883 that a good deal of “the history of England” during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries took place “not in England but in America and Asia” will historians of British gender more fully understand how ideologies of British masculinity and femininity were constructed during this period. Although more than a century has now passed since Seeley lectured on the importance of the “expansion of England” to British history and many would now shudder at his unabashed support of imperialism as being “necessary to the national life,” still his important insight about the

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<sup>11</sup> An important exception has been Catherine Hall, who, since the publication of *Family Fortunes*, has focused mainly on imperial topics, particularly nineteenth-century Jamaica.

importance of the empire to Britain needs to be taken more seriously than it has been.<sup>12</sup> The British Empire was not acquired in a “fit of absent-mindedness;” nor was it ultimately of little consequence to Britain as scholars continue to argue, either explicitly, or perhaps almost as perniciously, by omission.<sup>13</sup> Rather, as Seeley recognized while the globe was still being colored red, Britain and its empire were inseparable from one another. In these post-colonial times, this is no less so the case. Only by paying close attention to the deep and constitutive influences of British imperialism on British gender and vice-versa can both be more fully comprehended. In its own small way, this dissertation has aimed to add to scholarly understanding of these subjects.

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<sup>12</sup> Catherine Hall, “Introduction: Thinking the Postcolonial, Thinking the Empire,” in Hall, ed., *Cultures of Empire: Colonizers in Britain and the Empire in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries, A Reader* (New York: Routledge, 2000), 2.

<sup>13</sup> See, for example, Bernard Porter, *The Absent-Minded Imperialists: Empire, Society, and Culture in Britain* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2004).

## **Biographical Appendix**<sup>1</sup>

### Sources referred to below:

- DIB:* Charles Edward Buckland, ed. *Dictionary of Indian Biography*. Detroit: Gale Research Co., 1968 reprint ed. [London: Swan Sonnenschein & Co., 1906].
- DNB:* Sir Leslie Stephen and Sir Sidney Lee, eds. *Dictionary of National Biography*. Oxford and London: Oxford University Press, 1963 reprint ed. [1885-1901], 22 vols.
- MEB:* Frederic Boase, ed. *Modern English Biography*. London: Frank Cass & Co., 1965, 3 vols.
- ODNB:* H.C.G. Matthew and Brian Harrison, eds. *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography: From the Earliest Times to the Year 2000*. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2004, 60 vols. <http://www.oxforddnb.com>
- TL:* *Times of London*.

### Abbreviations used below:

- Bart.: Baronet  
 CB: Companion of the Order of Bath  
 CSI: Companion of the Star of India  
 DCL: Doctor of Civil Law  
 DD: Doctor of Divinity  
 GCB: Knight Grand Cross of the Order of Bath  
 GCH: Knight Grand Cross of the Royal Guelphic Order  
 GCMG: Knight Grand Cross of St. Michael and St. George  
 GCSI: Knight Grand Cross of the Star of India  
 KCB: Knight Commander of the Order of Bath  
 KCH: Knight Commander of the Royal Guelphic Order  
 KCMG: Knight Commander of St. Michael and St. George  
 KCSI: Knight Commander of the Star of India  
 LLD: Doctor of Laws

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<sup>1</sup> N.B. This does not include every individual cited in this dissertation; only those for whom I have been able to find biographical information. Of 172 individuals cited in this dissertation by name, either in printed works or in archival documents, some biographical information exists for 129 (75%) of them.

**Sir Frederick William Adam** (1784-1853): born, 17 June 1784, fourth son of the Rt. Hon. William Adam, privy councilor, lawyer, and lord lieutenant of Kinross, mother, the second daughter of the tenth Lord Elphinstone; educated at Charterhouse, 1794-5; officer, British Army, 1795-1853, rising to rank of general: ensign, British Army, 26<sup>th</sup> foot, 1795, lieutenant, 1796, lieutenant and captain, Coldstream Guards, 1799, participated in 1801 expedition to Egypt, major, 5<sup>th</sup> battalion of reserve, 1803, brevet lieutenant-colonel, 1804, lieutenant-colonel, 21<sup>st</sup> foot, 1805, landed in Sicily in command of the regiment's 1<sup>st</sup> battalion, 1806, aide-de-camp to the prince regent, 1811, appointed deputy adjutant-general, Sicily, 1812, participated in Peninsular campaign, 1812-4, promoted to major-general, 1814, led 3<sup>rd</sup> brigade in Lieutenant-General Sir Henry Clinton's division at Battle of Waterloo, appointed KCB, 1815, becoming also knight of the Austrian order of Maria Theresa and the Russian order of St. Anne, both first class, commander of all troops stationed in the Mediterranean, 1817, lord high commissioner of the Ionian Islands, 1824-32, appointed member of the privy-council, 1831, governor of Madras, 1832-7, received the GCMG, 1833, nominated GCB, 1840, promoted to rank of general, 1846, at time of his death he served on board of general officers with overall responsibility for the administration of army clothing. *ODNB*, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/101>, accessed 20 May 2006.

**William Pitt Amherst, 1<sup>st</sup> Earl Amherst** (1773-1857): born, 14 January 1773 in Bath, England, the first of three children of Lieutenant-General William Amherst, aide-de-camp to the king, governor of St. John's, Newfoundland, and adjutant-general of the army, uncle was Jeffrey Amherst, first Baron Amherst, commander-in-chief of the British Army; educated at Westminster School and Christ Church, Oxford, graduating MA in 1797; succeeded to uncle's title in 1797, lord of the bedchamber to George III, 1802-4, ambassador-extraordinary to the court of the Two Sicilies in 1809-11, led embassy to the court of the Chinese emperor, 1816; governor-general of Bengal, 1823-7; lord of the bedchamber to George IV and William IV, 1829-37. *ODNB*, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/445>, accessed 20 May 2006.

**Sir Samuel Auchmuty** (1758-1822): born on 22 June 1758 in New York City, the second son of Dr. Samuel Auchmuty, rector of Trinity Church, New York, family was most likely Loyalist during the Revolution; graduate BA at the college of New York [Columbia?]; officer, British Army, 1777-1822: ensign, 45<sup>th</sup> regiment of foot, 1777, lieutenant, 1778, transferred to the 52<sup>nd</sup> foot serving in India, 1783, adjutant, 1783-8, captain, 75<sup>th</sup> foot, 1788, served during Third Anglo-Mysore War, 1790-2 gaining promotion as major, deputy quartermaster-general to British forces in India, 1792-7, promoted to lieutenant-colonel, 1800, participated in Egypt campaign, 1801-3, knighted in 1803, commander of the Isle of Thanet, 1803-6, promoted to brigadier-general, 1806 and given command of reinforcements sent to the River Plate in South America, 1807, given thanks of Parliament for campaign in Montevideo, 1809, promoted to major-general, 1809, commander-in-chief of Madras Army, 1810-3, promoted to lieutenant-general, 1813, received thanks of Parliament for Java campaign and made GCB, 1813, commander-in-chief of Ireland, 1821-2. *ODNB*, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/889>, accessed 20 May 2006.

**George Eden, 1<sup>st</sup> Earl of Auckland** (1784-1849): born at Eden Farm, near Beckenham in Kent, 25 August 1784, second son of William Eden, first Baron Auckland, mother, the daughter of a bart.; educated at Eton College, 1796-1801, and at Christ Church, Oxford, 1802-8, earning a BA in 1806 and a MA in 1808, entered Lincoln's Inn, 1806, called to the bar, 1809; briefly practiced as a barrister; Whig MP for the borough of New Woodstock, 1810-4, succeeded to his father's barony in 1814; President of the Board of Trade, 1830-4, First Lord of the Admiralty, 1834-5; made GCB, 1835; elevated to earldom, 1836; governor-general of India, 1836-42; First Lord of the Admiralty, 1846-9. *ODNB*, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/8451>, accessed 20 May 2006.

**William Butterworth Bayley** (1781-1860): born, Hope Hall, Eccles, Lancashire, 30 November 1781, of gentry origins; educated at Eton College, 1798, briefly at Trinity College, Cambridge; Bengal covenant service, 1799-1834; educated at Fort William College, 1800-3, while at the college, he came under the influence of Rev. William Carey and acquired a lifelong interest in missionary work and Indian education, talented linguist, earning prizes in Hindi and Persian; assistant in the governor-general's office and in the office of the Persian translator, 1803-7; registrar to the *sadr diwani adalat* and the *sadr nizamat adalat*, 1807-10; judge and magistrate of Burdwan, 1810-4; secretary to the revenue and judicial departments of the Bengal government, 1814-9; chief secretary to government, 1819-25, became permanent member of the council, 1825, served as acting governor-general for five months in 1828 between the departure of Lord Amherst and the arrival of Lord Bentinck; Company director, 1833-54; deputy chairman, 1839, chairman, 1840; in his private capacity, Bayley was president of the Calcutta School Book Society, 1817-30, a member of the Calcutta diocesan committee of the SPCK, and a regular subscriber to the Baptist missionary schools at Serampore. *ODNB*, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/1758>, accessed 20 May 2006.

**Lord William Cavendish Bentinck** (1774-1839): born, 14 September 1774, at Burlington House in London, second son of the third duke of Portland, twice Whig Prime Minister (1783 and 1807-9) and Lady Dorothy Cavendish, daughter of fourth duke of Devonshire; educated at Rev. Goodenough's school in Ealing, Middlesex, 1781-8, Westminster School, 1788-91; officer, British Army, 1791-1811?, ensign in Coldstream guards, 1791, captain, 2<sup>nd</sup> light dragoons, 1793, aide-de-camp to the Duke of York, 1793, purchased lieutenant-colonelcy in the 24<sup>th</sup> light dragoons, 1794; MP for Nottinghamshire, 1796-1803, 1812-4, 1816-26; liaison officer with the Austro-Russian forces, 1799-1801; governor of Madras, 1803-7; promoted to major-general, 1805; joined staff of the British Army in the Peninsula campaign, 1808, envoy to Spanish supreme junta, saw combat in Battle of Corunna; envoy to the Court of the Two Sicilies, 1811-5, where he implemented constitutional reforms and actively supported Italian nationalism; governor-general of Bengal, 1828-35; MP for Glasgow, 1836-9. *ODNB*, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/2161>, accessed 20 May 2006.

**William Wilberforce Bird** (d. 1857): arrived in India, 1803; judge and magistrate of Benares, 1814; commissioner, 1826; appointed member of the Bengal Board of Revenue, 1289; appointed provisional Member of Bengal Council, 1837, appointed full member in 1838; extra member of the Board of Customs, Salt and Opium, 1837; appointed President

of the Board of Education, 1842, and Deputy-Governor of Bengal, 1840 and 1842; served as temporary governor-general during June and July 1844. *DIB*, 42.

**John Blakiston** (1785-1867) [*ODNB* entry is of his son, Thomas Wright Blakiston, a British Army officer and explorer]: second son of Sir Matthew Blakiston, second baronet, mother of Anglo-Irish gentry origins; served in the Madras engineers and the 27<sup>th</sup> Regiment of the British Army, participated in the Battle of Assaye (1803) and the capture of Bourbon, Mauritius, and Java; fought in Peninsular campaign from Vitoria to Toulouse, retired from active military service in 1814; author of two books; died on 4 June 1867 at Moberley Hall, Cheshire. *ODNB*, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/2598>, accessed 20 May 2006.

**Sir John Brathwaite**: unknown date of birth or date of death; officer, Madras Army: major, 1772, lieutenant-colonel, 1779, colonel, 1780, played an active role in Second Anglo-Mysore War of 1780-4, commanded troops in Tanjore, taken prisoner by Tipu Sultan in 1782 but released in 1784, held high command in the Madras Army by 1792, took Pondicherry in 1793, major-general, 1800, commander-in-chief of the Madras Army some point after that. *DIB*, 51-2.

**Arthur Brinckman** (d. 1913): officer, British Army, 94<sup>th</sup> regiment, 1855-60; studied divinity at Cuddesdon College, Oxford, 1860-3, curate at Hurst, Berkshire, 1863-7, mission priest at St. Andrew's Home, Edinburgh, 1868-70, curate of All Saint's, London, 1870-87, appointed chaplain of St. Saviour's Hospital, London, 1893, also appointed in 1901 the chaplain of St. Agnes Chapel, London; co-author of several tracts vindicating Anglicanism against Roman Catholicism as well as the author of books on Islam, the care of the sick, rescue work, and a diatribe against Roman Catholicism. *TL*, 29 Jan. 1913, p. 9, col. C.

**James Bristow**: born 1757, Norwich, England, of artisanal origins; Bengal Artillery, probably soldier, before 1781; captured by French and made prisoner of Hyder Ali and Tipu Sultan, 1781-91. [Information is from his autobiography].

**Thomas Duer Broughton** (1778-1835): born, Bristol, England, son of a reverend, great-grandson of the Revd. John Broughton, chaplain to the first duke of Marlborough; educated at Eton, 1791-5, king's scholar, 1793; ensign, Bengal Army, 1795-7, officer, Madras Army, 1797-1829, rising to rank of colonel, participated in siege on Seringapatam, 1799, military resident with the Marathas, 1802-9, captain, 1805, major, 1816, lieutenant-colonel, 1822, colonel, 1829; honorary secretary of the Royal Asiatic Society and an active manager of the Mendacity Society and of the Marylebone schools; author of two books. *ODNB*, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/3591>, accessed 20 May 2006.

**Francis Buchanan-Hamilton** (1762-1829): born, 15 February 1762 in Branziet, parish of Callander, Perthshire, Scotland, third son of Thomas Buchanan of Spittal of Glenshee and his wife, the heiress of Bardowie; received MA from University of Glasgow, 1779 and a MD from Edinburgh University, 1783; surgeon, Bengal Medical Service, 1784-

1815, assistant surgeon, 1794; accompanied Captain Michael Symes on Britain's first political mission to Ava, 1795; official surveyor of Mysore, 1800-2; joined British embassy at Kathmandu, 1802-4; surgeon to Lord Wellesley, governor-general of India, 1804-5; dispatched in 1807 to India to conduct a topographical survey of Bengal; superintendent of the Botanical Gardens at Calcutta, 1814-5; took name of "Hamilton" in 1818 after his brother's death and his inheritance of his mother's estate; deputy-lieutenant of Perthshire, 1826-9; fellow, Royal Societies of London and Edinburgh, fellow, Society of Antiquaries, fellow, Linnaean Society of London, fellow, Asiatic Society of Bengal. *ODNB*, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/3836>, accessed 20 May 2006.

**James Silk Buckingham** (1786-1855): born, Flushing, near Falmouth, England, 25 August 1786, youngest child of a seafarer; taken prisoner by the French for several months in 1797; between 1813 and 1818, traveled extensively in Egypt, Palestine, and Persia; journalist and fierce critic of Bengal Government, editor-in-chief, *Calcutta Journal*, 1818-23, newspaper was censored for its harsh criticisms of Bengal Government in 1823 and Buckingham was expelled from India in 1823 by Acting Governor-General John Adam, leading to attempts during the 1820s and 1830s for Buckingham to seek financial redress from Parliament, the East India Company finally conceded the injustice done to Buckingham in the mid-1830s by granting him a pension of £200 p.a.; publisher of four other publications during 1820s; MP for Sheffield, 1832-7; toured North America, 1837-41; cofounder of British and Foreign Institute, 1844; toured Western Europe between 1847-8, eyewitness to the various revolutions in that year; president of London Temperance League, 1851; granted pension of £200 p.a. from civil list in 1851 for his travel literature; prolific publisher and lecturer in Britain and North America; wrote 37 pamphlets on social and political subjects and 19 books. *DNB*, 3: 202-3; *ODNB*, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/article/3855>, accessed 20 May 2006.

**Edmund Burke** (1729/30-1797): born, Dublin, Ireland, of professional/gentry origins; father a Protestant attorney part of the Anglo-Irish ascendancy, mother from an impoverished but genteel Roman Catholic family; educated at Quaker school, Trinity College, Dublin, 1744-8, Middle Temple, London, 1750; practicing attorney, London, 1750s, participant in London salon culture, 1750s-60s; private secretary to William Gerard Hamilton, MP, 1759-64, private secretary to Lord Rockingham, prime minister, 1765-6, MP, 1766-95, agent for the province of New York, 1771-6, outspoken opponent of British policies during American War of Independence; paymaster-general of the army, 1782-3; leading critic of British policies in India, 1780s-90s, chief House of Commons manager of Warren Hastings' impeachment, 1788-95; author of *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful* (1757), *Reflections on the Revolution in France* (1790), and numerous pamphlets and other publications. *ODNB*, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/4019>, accessed 21 May 2006.

**Sir Alexander Burnes** (1805-1841): born, Montrose, Scotland, of professional (legal) origins, father was writer of the signet and provost of Montrose, kinsman of poet Robert Burns; officer, Bombay Army, 1821-41, quarter-master general's department, 1825-9, political department, assistant to the political resident in Cutch, 1829-33, 1835-6, resident in Kabul, 1836-41, received brevet rank of lieutenant-colonel, 1839, assassinated in 1841



by Afghan mob; received gold medal of Geographical Society of England, silver medal of the Geographical Society of Paris, admitted as member of Athenaeum Club without ballot (all three between 1833-5), knighted in 1839. *ODNB*, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/4056>, accessed 21 May 2006.

**Sir Richard Francis Burton** (1821-1890): born, Barham House, Hertfordshire, England, the eldest son of British Army Colonel Joseph Netterville Burton and Martha Beckwith, daughter and coheir of Richard Baker of Barham House, Hertfordshire, father placed on half-pay for refusing to testify against Queen Caroline in 1820; educated privately on the Continent, Trinity College, Oxford, 1840-2, expelled and left without a degree; officer, Bombay Army, 1842-61, rising to rank of captain, spent 1849-53 on furlough in England, 1854-61 on official leave exploring Arabia and the origins of the Nile River; consul, Foreign Office, 1861-71, 1872-90, Fernando Po, Africa, 1861-5, Santos, Brazil, 1865-9, Damascus, Ottoman Empire, 1869-71, Trieste, Austria-Hungary, 1872-90; made KCMG, 1886; fellow, Royal Geographical Society; gifted linguist, mastering more than forty languages and dialects; author of four books about India, several important travelogues including *A Personal Narrative of a Pilgrimage to Al-Madinah & Meccah* (1855-6) and *The Lake Regions of Central Africa* (1860), and important translations of *Kamasutra* (1883) and *Arabian Nights* (1885-8). *ODNB*, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/4136>, accessed 21 May 2006.

**Sir George Campbell** (1824-1892): born, Edenwood, near Capar, Fifeshire, Scotland, eldest son of Sir George Campbell, laird of Edenwood, Fife, younger brother of John, first Baron Campbell; father was an assistant surgeon in the EIC's service who was knighted in 1833 for his active services in preserving the peace in Fifeshire during the previous year's reform riots; educated, Edinburgh New Academy, ca. 1832-4; Madras College, St. Andrews, 1834-7, St. Andrews University, 1837-9, Haileybury College, 1839-41, Inner Temple, London, 1854; Bengal Civil Service, 1843-74, assistant magistrate and collector at Budaun, Rohilkhand, 1843-5, joint-magistrate of Moradabad, 1845-6, magistrate and collector, Kaithal and Ladwa, 1846-9, magistrate and collector of Azamgarh, 1854-5, commissioner of customs for northern India, 1855, commissioner of the Cis-Sutlej States, 1855-7, played important part in keeping Sikhs loyal to the British during Sepoy Rebellion, provisional civil commissioner, Delhi, 1857, employed by Canning to write an official account of the mutiny for the home authorities; second civil commissioner of Awadh, 1857-60, on leave to England, 1860-2, judge of high court of Bengal, 1862-7, chief commissioner of the central provinces, 1867-8, on leave, 1868-71, lieutenant-governor of Bengal, 1871-4; member of Council of India, 1873-4; DCL, Oxford, 1870; KCSI, May 1873; president of the economy and trade section of the Social Science Congress held in Glasgow, 1874; Liberal MP for Kirkcaldy, 1875-92; took an active interest in foreign, colonial and Indian affairs but was generally an ineffective politician, was a prominent Irish land reform advocate during 1870s. *ODNB*, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/4499>, accessed 21 May 2006.

**Walter Campbell**: born, Skipness, Scotland, of Highland Scottish gentry origins; educated, Edinburgh High School; major and colonel, 7th Royal Fusiliers (stationed in Madras); author of two books. Close friends/kinsman with William Gordon-Cumming.



[Information is from his two memoirs].

**Sir William Casement** (1780-1844): officer, Bengal Army, 1795-1844, rising to rank of major-general; served in the Second Anglo-Maratha War of 1803-4 and was present at the battles of Aligarh (1803) and Deeg (1804), deputy quartermaster-general during Anglo-Nepal War of 1814-6, Secretary to the Government of India in the Military Department, 1818-38, colonel, 23<sup>rd</sup> Bengal native infantry, 1824, KCB, 1837, Member of the Supreme Council, 1839-44, died of cholera in India. *DIB*, 75.

**Robert Stewart, Viscount Castlereagh and 2<sup>nd</sup> Marquess of Londonderry** (1769-1822): born in Dublin, 18 June 1769, second but only surviving son of the first marriage of Robert Stewart of Mt. Stewart, county Down, to Lady Sarah Frances Seymour Conway, daughter of the first marquess of Hertford; educated at Royal School, Armagh, 1777-81 and privately, 1781-6, St. John's College, Cambridge, 1786, did not graduate; sat for county Down in the Irish Parliament, 1790-4, MP for Tregony, a Cornish borough, 1794-7, awarded keepership of the Irish privy seal as well as lord of the Irish treasury and made Irish privy councilor, 1797, appointed British privy councilor, 1798, active in negotiations surrounding the union of Ireland and Britain in 1799-1800; President of the Board of Control, 1802-5, while there, an important advocate for Governor-General Lord Wellesley; Secretary of War and the Colonies, 1805-6, 1807-9, Foreign Secretary and Leader of the House, 1812-22; awarded the Garter, 1814, made a GCH (civil), 1821; committed suicide in 1822; fellow of the Royal Society and elder of Trinity House. *ODNB*, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/26507>, accessed 21 May 2006.

**John Chapman** (1801-1854): born, Loughborough, Leicestershire, 20 January 1801, eldest of three surviving sons of John Chapman, clockmaker of Loughborough; privately educated, but taught himself Greek and French, teacher of Sunday school, 1817, and secretary of a peace society and of the Hampden Club, 1817; manufacturer of bobbin-net machines, 1824-34, company went bankrupt in 1834; moved to London, invented improvements to Hansom's Cab, patent was granted to him and Mr. Gillett, 1837; deacon and superintendent of a London Baptist church, 1838-40; chief agent and promoter of Great Indian Peninsular Railway project, 1844-7; traveled to Bombay, 1845-6; Liberal reformer allied with Cobden, Bright, Macaulay and Napier in debates over EIC charter reform, 1853; died of cholera, 1854; author of several books and pamphlets on Indian economic affairs. *ODNB*, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/5122>, accessed 21 May 2006.

**Sir George Russell Clerk** (1800-1889): born at Worting House, Hampshire, of local gentry origins; Bengal covenanted service, 1815-47, Haileybury College, 1815-8, first assistant in the secret and political department, 1822, first assistant to the resident in Delhi, 1829-31, political agent at Ambala, 1831-40, agent to the governor-general for the affairs of the Punjab, 1840-42, envoy to the court of Lahore, 1842-3, lieutenant-governor of the North-Western Provinces, 1843-4, member of Bengal government, 1844-7, governor of Bombay, 1847-8, 1860-2, commissioner to negotiate boundaries of the Orange Free State, 1853, secretary of the India Board, 1857-8, permanent under-secretary of state for India, 1858-60, member of the secretary of state's council for India, 1863-76;

Clerk's politics were conservative and he disliked Evangelicalism and was scathing of missionary efforts in India; made KCB, 1848, KCSI, 1861, and GCSI, 1866. *ODNB*, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/5614>, accessed 21 May 2006.

**Sir Thomas Edward Colebrooke, Bart.** (1813-1890): born in Calcutta, the son of Henry Thomas Colebrooke, succeeded as Bart. in 1838, MP for nearly 40 years for Taunton and Lanarkshire, President of the Royal Asiatic Society, 1864-6, 1875-7, 1881, published *Life of Mountstuart Elphinstone, Essays by H.T. Colebrooke, The Creeds of India*, and edited a third edition of Elphinstone's *History of India*. *DIB*, 88.

**Sir Charles Colville** (1770-1843): unknown place of birth, second son of John Colville, 8<sup>th</sup> Lord Colville of Culross; officer, British Army, 1781-1837; ensign, 28<sup>th</sup> regiment, 1781, lieutenant, 1787, promoted captain into the 13<sup>th</sup> (Somersetshire) light infantry, 1791, a regiment in which he remained for the next 19 years, promoted to rank of major, 1795, lieutenant-colonel, 1796, colonel, 1805, brigadier-general, 1809, major-general, 1810, saw military action in the Peninsular campaign, 1810-1, 1812-4; received cross with one clasp and made KCB in January, and GCB in March 1815, promoted to rank of lieutenant-general in 1819, commander-in-chief at Bombay, 1819-25, governor of Mauritius, 1828-32, promoted to rank of general, 1837, his eldest son, Charles John Colville (1818-1903), succeeded as 11<sup>th</sup> Lord Colville of Culross as well as was made Baron (1885) and Viscount Colville (1902) in the peerage of the United Kingdom. *ODNB*, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/6008>, accessed 21 May 2006.

**Stapleton Cotton, 1<sup>st</sup> Viscount Combermere** (1773-1865): born on 14 November 1773 at the seat of the Stapletons, Lleweni Hall, Denbighshire, the second son and fifth child of Sir Robert Salusbury Cotton, 5<sup>th</sup> bart. of Combermere Abbey, Whitchurch, Shropshire, and MP of Cheshire for 40 years, mother was the daughter and co-heir of Colonel James Russell Stapleton of Bodrhyddan, Denbighshire; educated at grammar school at Audlem, 1781-5, Westminster School, 1785, and a private military academy at Norwood House, late 1780s?; officer, British Army, 1790-1865, second lieutenant, 23<sup>rd</sup> Royal Welch Fusiliers, 1790, first lieutenant, 1791-3, promoted to a troop in the 6<sup>th</sup> carabineers, formerly the 3<sup>rd</sup> Irish horse, 1793, participated along with the Duke of York in the siege of Dunkirk, 1793, promoted to majority in the 59<sup>th</sup> foot and lieutenant-colonel of the newly raised 25<sup>th</sup> light dragoons, both in 1794, served in Madras, 1797-1800, participating in the siege on Tipu Sultan's fortress of Seringapatam in 1799, joined the 16<sup>th</sup> light dragoons on the Kentish coast, obtaining the rank of colonel in 1800, promoted to major-general, 1805; Tory MP for Newark, 1806-14; participated in Peninsular campaign, 1808-14, promoted to rank of lieutenant-general, 1812, made KCB, 1812, second-in-command under Lord Wellington at the Battle of Salamanca; raised to peerage as Baron Combermere in 1814, awarded also Hanoverian, Portuguese, and Spanish orders; made GCB, 1815; governor of Barbados and commander-in-chief in the Leeward Islands, 1817-20; commander-in-chief in Ireland, 1822-5; promoted to rank of general, 1825; commander-in-chief in India, 1825-30, acting governor-general for nine months in 1826, elevated to viscount in 1827 and made a colonel of the first Life Guards in 1829; an old-fashioned Tory, Combermere opposed Catholic emancipation, the Reform Bill, repeal of the Corn Laws, army short service, and other innovations; provincial grand master of the

freemasons of Cheshire, 1840-65; constable of the Tower of London, 1852-65, promoted to rank of field marshal, 1855. *ODNB*, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/6428>, accessed 21 May 2006.

**James Cordiner** (1775-1836): probably born in Banff, one of eight children of the Scottish Episcopalian minister and antiquary Charles Cordiner; educated locally and then at King's College, Aberdeen, where he graduated MA in 1793; in 1797, while still a divinity student, he was appointed to superintend the Military Male Orphan Asylum at Madras, for Eurasian sons of British soldiers, en route to India, he was ordained as a deacon by the Bishop of Carlisle; chaplain at garrison of Colombo, Ceylon and principal of all the schools on the island, 1799-1804, second-minister of St. Paul's Episcopal Chapel, Aberdeen, 1807-8, first-minister, 1808-34; author of two books about his Indian and Ceylon experiences. *ODNB*, [www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/6311](http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/6311), accessed 21 May 2006.

**Charles Cornwallis, 1<sup>st</sup> Marquess Cornwallis** (1738-1805): born in Grosvenor Square, London, the sixth child and eldest son of Charles Cornwallis, fifth Baron and first Earl Cornwallis, mother the daughter of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Viscount Townsend, his maternal grandfather was the brother-in-law to Sir Robert Walpole; educated at Eton College, early 1750s; officer, British Army, 1756- , ensign in the 1<sup>st</sup> foot guards, promoted to captain of the 85<sup>th</sup> regiment, 1759, promoted to lieutenant-colonel of the 12<sup>th</sup> regiment, 1761, MP for family pocket borough of Eye, Suffolk, 1760-2, inherited his father's earldom in 1762, in the House of Lords, he allied himself with the Rockingham Whigs, made aide-de-camp to the king and a lord of the bedchamber, 1766, colonel of the 33<sup>rd</sup> foot, 1766, vice-treasurer of Ireland, 1769, member of the privy-council, 1770, constable of the Tower of London, 1771-84, promoted to rank of major-general, 1775, promoted to rank of lieutenant-general and second in command in North America to Sir Henry Clinton in 1778, commander of British forces at Yorktown, 1781; governor-general of Bengal, 1786-93, 1805; master-general of the ordnance, 1795-7, lord lieutenant of Ireland, 1797-1801, commander of the eastern district, 1801; British plenipotentiary to negotiate peace with France, 1801-2. *ODNB*, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/6338>, accessed 21 May 2006.

**Sir Willoughby Cotton** (1783-1860): only son of Admiral Rowland Cotton, a cousin of the first Viscount Combermere [see above], mother a daughter of a baronet; educated at Rugby School, where he led a rebellion in 1797, burning the headmaster's desk and books; officer, British Army, 1798-1854, ensign, 3<sup>rd</sup> foot guards, 1798, lieutenant and captain, 1799, participated in Copenhagen expedition, 1807, promoted to rank of captain and lieutenant-colonel, 1811, present at Battle of Vitoria (1813), received Peninsular medal, with clasps for Busaco, Vitoria, and the Nive, 1814, lieutenant-colonel, 47<sup>th</sup> foot, India, 1821, promoted to brevet colonel the same year, promoted to local rank of brigadier-general, 1824, saw military action in the Anglo-Burma War, 1824-6, exchanged to the 14<sup>th</sup> foot in Bengal, 1828, promoted to rank of major-general, 1830, made knight of the Hanoverian Order, 1830, commander of British troops in Jamaica, 1829-34, appointed commander of the Bengal division of the Army of the Indus, 1838, made KCB in 1838 and GCB in 1840, promoted to rank of lieutenant-general, 1841, commander-in-

chief and second member of council in the Bombay presidency, 1847-50, promoted to rank of general, 1854. *ODNB*, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/6434>, accessed 21 May 2006.

**John Francis Cradock [alt. spelling Caradoc], 1<sup>st</sup> Baron Howden** (1762-1839): born in Dublin, 11 August 1762, the only son of the Most. Revd. John Cradock, archbishop of Dublin; educated at Trinity College, Dublin, 1774-7; officer, British Army, 1777-1814, cornet in the 4<sup>th</sup> regiment of horse, ensign to the 2<sup>nd</sup> (Coldstream) guards, 1779, promoted to rank of lieutenant and captain, 1781, major in the 12<sup>th</sup> light dragoons, 1785, exchanged into the 13<sup>th</sup> regiment, 1786, lieutenant-colonel, 1789; appointed acting quartermaster-general in Ireland, 1791, quartermaster-general, 1792-3, aide-de-camp to Sir Charles Grey in the West Indies, 1793, promoted to rank of colonel of the 127 regiment, 1793 after helping to capture various islands in the French West Indies, appointed assistant quartermaster-general of the British Army, 1795, promoted to rank of major-general, 1798, played key role in suppressing Irish Rebellion in 1798, MP in Irish Parliament, 1785-97, 1799-1800, upon losing his seat with the Act of Union in 1800, Cradock was appointed to the staff of Sir Ralph Abercromby in the Mediterranean, fighting in the Egypt campaign of 1801, made KB in 1803, and colonel of the 71<sup>st</sup> Highland light infantry, 1803-9; commander-in-chief in Madras and lieutenant-general, 1803-7; promoted to rank of lieutenant-general, 1805, took command of British troops in Portugal until Wellesley arrived; appointed colonel of 43<sup>rd</sup> regiment, 1809, governor of Cape colony, 1811-4, promoted to rank of general, 1814, made GCB in 1815; created Baron Howden in the peerage of Ireland in 1819, in 1820, claiming descent from Caradoc, a prince in north Wales, he changed his name, in 1831, at the Duke of Wellington's behest, his peerage was elevated into the British peerage upon the coronation of William IV. *ODNB*, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/4602>, accessed 21 May 2006.

**Sir Mark Cubbon** (1784-1861): son of the Revd. Thomas Cubbon and descendant of an old Manx family; officer, Madras Army, 1800-61, rising to rank of lieutenant-general, lieutenant, 15<sup>th</sup> Madras native infantry, 1801-16, promoted to captain, 1816, soon thereafter he went on staff as an assistant commissary-general, served during Third Anglo-Maratha War of 1817-8, deputy commissary-general, Madras Army, 1822, promoted to rank of major in 1823 and lieutenant-colonel in 1825, member of investigatory commission into the government of Mysore, 1831, Cubbon was appointed by Governor-General Bentinck one of two commissioners to govern the province in 1831, sole commissioner, 1834-61, appointed to rank of colonel in the 15<sup>th</sup> Madras native infantry in 1839, promoted to major-general in 1846, and lieutenant-general in 1852, made CB in 1856 and KCB in 1857, equestrian statue of him in Bangalore. *ODNB*, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/6857>, accessed 21 May 2006.

**Joseph Davey Cunningham** (1812-1851): born in Lambeth, eldest son of Allan Cunningham, Scottish poet and author; educated at private schools in London and Addiscombe College, 1829-30, from which he passed out first, with the first prize for mathematics, the sword for good conduct, and the first nomination for the Bengal Engineers in 1831, attended Royal Military College at Chatham, 1831-4; appointed to staff of General Macleod, chief engineer in the Bengal Presidency, 1834-7, appointed

assistant to Colonel Claude Wade, political agent on the Sikh frontier, 1837, served in various political posts in the Punjab, 1837-45, promoted to rank of first lieutenant, 1839, placed in charge of Ludhiana, under George Russell Clerk, 1840, British agent to Bahawalpur, 1844-5; advisor to Generals Sir Charles Napier and Sir Hugh Gough during First Anglo-Sikh War, promoted captain by brevet, 1845, political agent at Bhopal, 1846-9; captain in the Bengal Engineers, 1849. *ODNB*, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/6928>, accessed 21 May 2006.

**Sir Jermyn D'Ewes:** of English gentry origins, possibly a Bart.?; educated at Rugby; officer, Madras Army, 1820s; traveler throughout Europe, Asia and Australia. [Information is from his sporting memoir].

**John Dickinson** (1815-1876): born, Nash Mills, Abbots Langley, Hertfordshire, 28 December 1815, son of John Dickinson, an eminent paper manufacturer; educated at Eton, probably late 1820s/early 1830s; being in delicate health and a wealthy gentleman of leisure, Dickinson lived on the Continent during much of the 1830s and 1840s, he was in Paris during the Revolution of 1848, and wrote a series of letters to *The Times* describing his experiences and analyzing the events; generally sympathized with liberal political parties; independent Indian reformer, 1850-76, free-trader advocating government irrigation projects and castigating the EIC for being too tight-fisted in its expenditure, cofounder, Indian Reform Society, 1853, served as its president, 1861-76, aimed during Sepoy Rebellion to moderate British passionate feelings and desires for vengeance; author of 8 pamphlets and books between 1850s and 1870s, all on Indian affairs. *ODNB*, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/7606>, accessed 21 May 2006.

**Alexander Dirom** (1757-1830): born 21 May 1757 at Banff, Banffshire, of local gentry origins; officer, British Army, 1779-1814, rising to rank of lieutenant-general, lieutenant, 88<sup>th</sup> foot, 1779, captain, 1780, served in West Indies, 1780-4, captain, 52<sup>nd</sup> Oxfordshire foot, in Madras, late 1780s, deputy adjutant-general, forces engaged in the Third Anglo-Mysore War, 1790-2, made brevet major, 1791, promoted to brevet lieutenant-colonel, 1795, full lieutenant-colonel, 1799, brevet colonel, 1802, major-general, 1809, and lieutenant-general, 1814; author of 4 books, elected fellow, Royal Society, 1794, fellow also of the Royal Society of Edinburgh and the Edinburgh Wernerian Society. *DNB*, 5: 1001; *ODNB*, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/7682>, accessed 21 May 2006.

**Alexander Duff** (1806-1878): born to James Duff and Jean Rattray at Auchnahyle Farm in the parish of Moulin, Perthshire, on 26 April 1806; educated at a parish boarding-school, after 1814, and a day school at Kirkmichael, studied arts and theology at St. Andrews University, 1821-4, while there, helped establish a student branch of the St. Andrews University Missionary Society, appointed missionary to India by Scottish Missionary Society in 1824 but did not leave for India until 1829, in India between 1830-4, while there, he established General Assembly Instruction, a school in Calcutta for instructing the Bengali elite in Western subjects and Christian theology as well as advocated English-language education; back in Scotland in 1835, he gave a three-hour devotional speech before the general assembly of the Church of Scotland which was published as "The Church of Scotland's India Mission" (1835), selling 15,000 copies, he



wrote two other tracts within the next five years advocating the missionary cause in India, including *India and Indian Missions* (1840), a 700-page treatise; missionary in India, again, 1840-9, initiator and frequent contributor to *Calcutta Christian Observer* as well as helped to found *The Calcutta Review*, editor of the latter journal, 1845-9; elected moderator of the general assembly of the Free Church of Scotland, 1851; Duff's testimony before Parliament in 1853 was influential in shaping the famous education dispatch of 1854 which established the framework for Indian education; back in India a third time, 1856-63, Duff was an eyewitness to the Sepoy Rebellion of 1857 and helped foster the belief that the rebellion was caused by religious reasons, namely a hatred of Christianity by Indians as well as tried to shield missionaries from blame in a book the following year; president, Bethune Society, 1859; appointed by governor-general to help draw up the constitution of the University of Calcutta, appointed vice-chancellor of university in 1863; convener of the foreign missions committee, 1865, first missionary professor at New College, Edinburgh, 1866, played active role during early 1870s in the formation of the Alliance of Reformed Churches holding the Presbyterian System. *ODNB*, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/8167>, accessed 21 May 2006.

**Jonathan Duncan** (bapt. 1756, d. 1811): son of James Duncan of Blairno, and his wife, Jean Meeky, uncle was a director of the East India Company; Bengal covenanted service, 1771-1811; resident of Benares, 1787-95, helped establish the Hindu College and was one of the founding members of the Asiatic Society of Bengal, while in Benares, Duncan introduced a permanent revenue settlement modeled after that of Bengal; resident at Malabar, 1792-4; governor of Bombay, 1799-1811. *ODNB*, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/8224>, accessed 21 May 2006.

**Sir Herbert Benjamin Edwardes** (1819-1868): born, Frodesley, Shropshire, on 12 November 1819, the second son of Revd. Benjamin Edwardes, rector of Frodesley, of a long-established Cambrian family dating back to the eleventh century; brought up in a deeply religious household by his aunt following his father's death in 1823, educated at private school at Richmond, Surrey, 1829-36, and King's College, London, 1836-41; officer, Bengal Army, 1841-65, rising to rank of major-general, second lieutenant in the 1<sup>st</sup> European or Bengal fusiliers at Dinapore and then at Karnal, 1842, interpreter, 1845, appointed by General Sir Hugh Gough, commander-in-chief of the Indian Army to his personal staff, 1845, aide-de-camp to Gough during the First Anglo-Sikh War, 1845, assistant resident at Lahore, 1846-8, fought in Second Anglo-Sikh War, 1848-9, promoted brevet major in 1848, made CB in 1849 (an honor rarely given to a subaltern) and presented with a gold medal, struck specifically for this purpose, by the EIC; DCL, Oxford University, 1850, deputy-commissioner of Jullunder, 1849-53, commissioner of Hazara, 1853-9, played important role during the Sepoy Rebellion in 1857 in pacifying the Sikhs, made KCB and LL.D., Cambridge University, 1860, appointed commissioner of Ambala and agent for the Cis-Sutlej states, 1862-5, made CSI, 1866, promoted to rank of major-general, 1868; Edwardes was an active supporter of missionaries in India and was vice-president of Church Missionary Society, 1865-8, he was also an active supporter of the City Mission; he is commemorated today by a mural tablet in Westminster Abbey, a stained glass window in the chapel of King's College, London, and a bust in front of the Oriental and Indian Office reading room at the British Library.

*DNB*, 6: 525-9; *ODNB*, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/8528>, accessed 21 May 2006.

**Edward Law, 1<sup>st</sup> Earl of Ellenborough** (1790-1871): born on 8 September 1790, the eldest son of Edward Law, head counsel for Warren Hastings during the impeachment trial, who was later ennobled in 1802 on becoming lord chief justice of the king's bench, Ellenborough's mother was the daughter of a Royal Navy captain; educated privately and at Eton College, 1802-5, where he was captain of the Oppidans, and St. John's College, Cambridge, 1807-9, where he won a university prize for a Latin ode, he graduated with a MA in 1809; MP for the Cornish pocket borough of St. Michael's in Lord Falmouth's interest, 1813-8, succeeded to his father's title in 1819, lord privy seal, Jan.-Sept. 1828, President of the Board of Control, Sept. 1828-Nov. 1830, 1834-5, 1841, 1858, one of 22 peers who voted against the third reading of the Great Reform Bill in 1832, governor-general of India, 1842-4, elevated to earldom and granted the GCB, 1844, First Lord of the Admiralty, 1846-51, played a major role in discussions of a new India Act in 1853 as well as helped craft the India Act in 1858; as a liberal Tory, he supported Italian unification in 1859 and the Polish rising in 1863. *ODNB*, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/16143>, accessed 21 May 2006.

**Sir Walter Elliot** (1803-1887): born on 16 January 1803, the second but eldest surviving of 8 sons and 3 daughters of James Elliot of Wolfelee, Roxburghshire, mother daughter of the last laird of Polmood, cousin of Lord Elphinstone [cited below]; educated at home and at private schools before 1818, Haileybury College, 1818-20, graduating with a certificate of high distinction and a name for sport, Fort St. George College, after 1820, won an award of 1000 pagodas for proficiency in Tamil and Urdu; Madras covenanted service, 1820-60: assistant to the collector and magistrate of Salem, 1821-3, posted in a non-regulation territory, 1823-33, on furlough in England, 1833-7, private secretary to his cousin Lord Elphinstone while he was governor of Madras, 1837-42, also during this period, Elliot was a third member of the Board of Revenue, a college board member, Kennada translator, and the acting Persian translator, as an amateur archaeologist, Elliot discovered the Amaravati ruins on the banks of the Kistna River (pieces of which he later excavated and were placed in the entrance hall of the British Museum) in 1839, Elliot was sent to investigate the condition of Guntur District, 1845-6, writing a famous report in 1847, commissioner of the Northern Circars, 1847-54, member of the Madras Council, 1854-60, created KCSI, 1866, elected as fellow of Royal Society, 1877, granted degree of LLD from University of Edinburgh, 1878, deputy-lieutenant of Roxburghshire, 1870s and 1880s. *ODNB*, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/8670>, accessed 20 May 2006.

**John Elphinstone, 13<sup>th</sup> Lord Elphinstone and 1<sup>st</sup> Baron Elphinstone** (1807-1860): born on 23 June 1807, the only son of John, 12<sup>th</sup> Lord Elphinstone in the Scottish peerage, a lieutenant-general in the British Army and a colonel of the 26<sup>th</sup> regiment, Elphinstone's ancestor, Alexander, the first Baron Elphinstone, was killed fighting beside King James IV of Scotland in the Battle of Flodden in 1513; Elphinstone succeeded to his father's title in 1813; officer, British Army, 1826-59, cornet, in Royal House Guards, 1826, lieutenant, 1828, captain, 1832, lord-in-waiting to William IV, 1835-7, made GCH and member of the privy council in 1836; governor of Madras, 1837-42, between 1842 and

1845 he traveled in the East and was one of the first Britons to explore Kashmir; lord-in-waiting to Queen Victoria, 1847-52, 1853, governor of Bombay, 1853-9, helped prevent a few localized mutinies in the Bombay Army from becoming widespread during the Sepoy Rebellion in 1857 and sent European soldiers from the Bombay Army to help pacify Bengal, for these efforts he was made a GCB and elevated into the British peerage as Baron Elphinstone in 1859. *ODNB*, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/8750>, accessed 21 May 2006.

**Mountstuart Elphinstone** [uncle of John] (1779-1859): born on 6 October 1779 at Cumbernauld House, Dunbartonshire, the fourth son of John, eleventh Baron Elphinstone who was governor of Edinburgh Castle for many years, Elphinstone's mother was a daughter of Lord Ruthven, an uncle was a Company director; educated at Edinburgh High School, 1791-2, as well as studying at Dr. Thompson's school in Kensington; officer, Bombay Army, 1796-1819, assistant to magistrate at Benares, 1796-1801, assistant to the governor-general's political agent at the court of the Maratha *peshwa* at Poona, 1801-3, fought in First Anglo-Maratha War, 1803, resident at the court of the Bhonsla at Nagpur, 1804-8, envoy to the Afghan court at Kabul, 1808-11, resident at Poona, 1811-9, played key role in Third Anglo-Maratha War, 1817-8; governor of Bombay, 1819-27; author of famed *History of India* (1843). *ODNB*, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/8752>, accessed 21 May 2006.

**Walter Ewer** (1784-1863): son of a governor of the settlement at Bencoolen; privately educated, joined Bengal covenanted service in 1803, distinguished student at Fort William College, employed at Rajshahi, at Amboyna, again at Rajshahi, 1816, superintendent of police in Bengal, Bihar, and Orissa, and the Conquered & Ceded Provinces for 10 years (after 1816?), judge of the *sadr* court, North-Western Provinces, until he resigned in 1839-40; well versed in music and astronomy, Ewer read the inscriptions on the Kutb at Delhi in 1822 through his telescope; fellow of the Royal Geographical Society and the Royal Society. *DIB*, 141.

**Henry Edward Fane** (1817-1868): born, Fulbeck Hall, Lincolnshire, 5 Sept. 1817, the eldest son of a reverend, uncle was General Henry Fane, Commander-in-Chief of British Forces in India, 1835-40, Fane was also related to the Earls of Westmoreland; educated at Charterhouse; officer, British Army, 1834-50, rising to rank of major, aide-de-camp to his uncle, 1835-40; Lieutenant-Colonel, South Lincoln militia, 1854-68, Conservative MP, 1865-8. *MEB*, 1: 1019.

**George Augustus Frederick FitzClarence, 1<sup>st</sup> Earl of Munster** (1794-1842): born, Somerset Street, London, the eldest illegitimate son by actress Dorothy Jordan of the Duke of Clarence, later William IV (1830-7); educated at Sunbury and Royal Military College at Marlow; officer, British Army, 1808-42, rising to major-general, fought in Peninsular campaign in Napoleonic Wars, 1808-15, aide-de-camp to Marquis of Hastings, governor-general and commander-in-chief of India, 1816-7, envoy entrusted with duplicates of peace treaty signed between Company and the Maharaja Scindia, 1817, traveled overland from India to England (travel account is narrative of this journey), stationed in Ireland and Britain, 1818-42, adjutant-general at the Horse Guards, 1831,



lieutenant of the Tower of London, 1831-3, colonel 1st Tower Hamlets militia, constable of the Round Tower; raised to peerage as Earl of Munster (one of his father's titles), and as Baron Twekesbury in the United Kingdom in 1831 by his father; privy-councilor, governor and captain of Windsor Castle; fellow of the Royal Society, Royal Geographical, Antiquarian, Astronomical, and Geological Societies of London, founding member of Royal Asiatic Society, 1824, elected member of its council, 1825, vice-president throughout late 1820s and 1830s, president, 1841-2, president, Society for the Publication of Oriental Texts, deputy chairman and vice-president of the Oriental Translation Fund; committed suicide in 1842. *ODNB*, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/9542>, accessed 21 May 2006.

**James Forbes** (1749-1819): born on 8 May 1749, the eldest of five children of Timothy Forbes, merchant, of Coleman Street in the City of London; Bombay official, 1765-84, member of council at Anjengo, 1772-5, officiated as chaplain, later secretary, attached to British forces sent to assist Raghunath Rao in the Maratha civil wars, 1775; resident and collector at Broach, 1777-84, as a fervent Anglican, he supported the conversion of Hindus to Christianity in the lead-up to the introduction of British missionaries to India in 1813, elected to membership of the Whimsical Literary Society in Rome in 1797, the Society of Antiquaries in 1801, and the Royal Society in 1803. *ODNB*, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/9830>, accessed 21 May 2006.

**George Forster** (c. 1752-1791): unknown date and place of birth, unknown social origins; Madras official, envoy to Maratha court at Nagpur, 1788-9, 1790-1; traveled from Calcutta overland to Russia, 1782-4 (subject of book). *ODNB*, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/9907>, accessed 21 May 2006.

**William Francklin** (1763-1839): unknown birthplace and date of birth, the eldest son of the classical scholar and dramatist Thomas Francklin, mother the daughter of a wine merchant; educated at Westminster School, 1777-81, and at Trinity College, Cambridge, 1781-2; officer, Bengal Army, 1782-1825, rising to rank of lieutenant-colonel, regulating officer at Bhaugulpore, 1815-25, retired in India; leading Persian scholar and author of 11 books and numerous articles, member and librarian and member of the council after 1824 of Royal Asiatic Society, also member of Asiatic Society of Bengal. *ODNB*, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/10081>, accessed 21 May 2006.

**James Baillie Fraser** (1783-1856): born on 11 June 1783 in Edinburgh, the eldest of six children of Edward Satchwell Fraser of Reelig, a member of the Scottish Highlander gentry; educated at home and in Edinburgh before 1799, oversaw family's sugar plantation at Berbice in Guiana, 1799-1811; diplomatic aide, Bengal presidency, 1815-21, became escort to his brother, then political agent to General Martindale's army in 1815, joined his brother on journey into Nepal and the Himalayas, 1815-6, crossed India via Delhi and Rajputana to Bombay, sketching and gathering geological information with a view to publication, 1820, accompanied Dr. Jukes on his diplomatic mission to Persia, 1820-1, was appointed by Foreign Office in 1833 to report on Russian influence in Persia, Fraser traveled in that country for the next two years on his secret mission; later in life, he was the deputy-lieutenant of Inverness-shire as well as a prolific author of 16 books including

a biography of James Skinner, the military adventurer. *ODNB*, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/10111>, accessed 21 May 2006.

**Sir Archibald Galloway** (*bapt.* 1780, d. 1850): baptized at Blairgowrie, Perthshire, on 12 February 1780 and was the son of James Galloway and Margaret, *née* Forester, of Perth; officer, Bengal Army, 1799-1841, rising to rank of major-general, ensign, 14<sup>th</sup> Bengal native infantry, 1800, lieutenant, 1802, saw service in the Second Anglo-Maratha War of 1804-5 where he participated in the siege of Bhurtpur, wrote an influential book on Indian sieges in the 1800s; promoted to ranks of brevet captain and regimental captain, 1812, promoted to rank of major, 1824, made lieutenant-colonel, 1826, member of the Bengal Army military board, 1830-5, promoted to brevet colonel, 1831, and colonel, 1836, made a CB, 1838, and KCB, 1848, Company director, 1840-50, chairman, 1849-50. *ODNB*, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/10309>, accessed 21 May 2006.

**Sir William Gordon-Cumming, 4<sup>th</sup> Bart.** (1848-1930): born on 20 July 1848 at Sanquhar House, near Forres, Morayshire, the eldest son and second of four children of Alexander Penrose Gordon-Cumming, later third bart., of Altyre and Gordonstoun, a landowner and army officer, Gordon-Cumming was the nephew of Roualeyn George Gordon-Cumming, a pioneer big-game hunter in Africa; educated at Eton College and Wellington College, and inherited baronetcy at age of 18; purchased commission in Scots Fusilier Guards, volunteered for the Carlist War in Spain, hunted in the Rocky Mountains, and stalked tigers on foot in India, fought against the Zulus in 1879, the British Army chose him to convey its condolences to the exiled Eugénie of France on the death of the prince imperial in that conflict; an *habitué* of the racecourse and gaming table, Gordon-Cumming was a member of the “Marlborough House Set” around the Prince of Wales; involved in a major gambling scandal surrounding the Prince of Wales in 1890. *ODNB*, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/39392>, accessed 21 May 2002.

**Charles Grant** (1746-1823): born, March 1846 at Aldouri farmhouse, Glen Urquhard on Loch Ness in Inverness-shire, Scotland, the third of seven children born to Alexander Grant of the Shewglie line, a soldier in the Jacobite army of Prince Charles Edward Stuart, father fought in the Battle of Culloden and had to go into hiding thereafter, Grant was orphaned at the age of 12; apprenticed to William Forsyth, a Cromarty ship-owner and merchant, 1758-63, worked for cousin in London mercantile firm, 1763-8; officer, Bengal Army, 1768-71, in England, 1771-2, Bengal covenanted service, 1773-90; secretary to the Board of Trade, 1773-87, member of Board of Trade, 1787-90, Company director, 1794-1818, deputy-chairman, 1804, held post of chairman three times, MP, Inverness-shire, 1802-18; prominent evangelical and member of the Clapham Sect, director of the Sierra Leone Company, 1791-1818; founder and vice-president of Church Missionary Society, 1799, and British and Foreign Bible Society, 1804. *ODNB*, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/11248>, accessed 22 May 2006.

**James Grant-Duff** (1789-1858): born on 8 July 1789 in Banff, Scotland, the eldest of John Grant of Kincardine O’Neil and Margaret Miln Duff of Eden; educated at Aberdeen and Marischal College, 1799-ca. 1805; officer, Bombay Army, 1805-25, became adjutant to his regiment and Persian interpreter, 1811, promoted to rank of lieutenant, 1811,

played key role during the Third Anglo-Maratha War of 1817-8, resident at Satara, 1818-23, returned to Scotland, 1823; succeeded to estate in Eden through his mother's family in 1825 and took his mother's name of Duff at that point, succeeded to an additional estate in 1850 through his wife's relations and took additional name of Cuninghame; son was a Liberal MP, undersecretary in the Indian (1868-74) and Colonial offices (1880-1) and governor of Madras (1881-6). *ODNB*, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/8171>, accessed 22 May 2006.

**Frederick James Halliday** (1806-1901): born, 25 December 1806 in Ewell, Surrey; educated at Rugby School and Haileybury College, both before 1824; Bengal covenanted service, 1824-59; assistant to the registrar of the supreme court, 1825-36, secretary to the Board of Revenue, 1836-49, Home Secretary to the Government of India, 1849-53, member of the Supreme Council, 1853-4, lieutenant-governor of Bengal, 1854-9, created KCB, 1860, member of the Council of India, 1868-86; in addition to his administrative acumen, Halliday was an accomplished contrabass player, earning him the nickname of "Big Fiddle"; Halliday's grandson was police commissioner of Calcutta. *ODNB*, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/33660>, accessed 22 May 2006.

**Warren Hastings** (1732-1818): born at the rectory at Churchill in Oxfordshire, 6 December 1732, father and grandfather were clergymen, the Hastings were continuously settled in Worcestershire since the 12<sup>th</sup> century although impoverished; educated at Newington Butts, 1740-3, Westminster School, 1743-9, becoming king's scholar and captain of the school in 1747; East India Company's service, 1750-85, resident at Murshidabad, 1758-60, member of the Bengal Council, 1760-5, in Britain, 1765-9, second in Madras Council, 1769-72, president of Bengal, 1772-3, governor-general of Bengal, 1773-85, impeached by House of Commons on some 22 counts of misgovernment and corruption, 1786, impeachment trial, 1788-95, acquitted in 1795 of all charges but his reputation was destroyed and he was heavily in debt, received honorary doctorate from Oxford University and made privy-councilor in 1813. *ODNB*, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/12587>, accessed 22 May 2006.

**Reginald Heber** (1783-1826): born 21 April 1783 at Malpas, Cheshire, the eldest of the three children of Reginald Heber, rector of Hodnet, Shropshire and co-rector of Malpas his second wife, May, daughter of a reverend, Heber had a half-brother through his father's first marriage who was MP for Oxford University and a bibliophile, the Hebers were an old Yorkshire gentry family and lords of the manor of Marton and Hodnet; educated at Whitchurch grammar school, 1791-6, a private boarding-school at Neasden in London, 1796-1800, and Brasenose College, Oxford, 1800-5, accomplished poet, elected fellow of All Souls, 1804; rector at Hodnet, 1807-17, delivered the Bampton lectures at Oxford, 1815, prebendary of St. Asaph, 1817-22, preacher at Lincoln's Inn, 1822-3; Bishop of Calcutta, 1823-6; pioneer of Anglican hymnography, compiling a collection of 93 hymns, including 57 written by himself; member of the Church Missionary Society. *ODNB*, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/12853>, accessed 22 May 2006.

**John Studholme Hodgson** (1805-1870): born in York, May 1805, second son of British Army General John Hodgson (1757-1846) who later served as governor of Bermuda and

Curacao when under British occupation during the Napoleonic Wars, Hodgson's grandfather was also a general in the British Army, mother was a sister of the Countess of Terrol of Russia; educated, Royal Military Academy at Woolwich, 1821-2; officer, Bengal Army, 1822-65, rising to rank of major-general, ensign, 23<sup>rd</sup> Bengal Native Infantry, 1822, promoted to lieutenant of 12<sup>th</sup> regiment, 1824, captain, 1834, fought in both Anglo-Sikh Wars, promoted to brevet major, 1846, commandant, 1<sup>st</sup> Sikh infantry, 1846-9, promoted to brevet rank of lieutenant-colonel, 1849, commandant, Punjab irregular force, 1850-4, major, 1853, brevet colonel, 1854, lieutenant-colonel, 1858, colonel, 1858, major-general, 1861. *ODNB*, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/13442>, accessed 22 May 2006.

**William Waterloo Wellington Humbly**: birthplace unknown, son of British Army officer who saw action at Battle of Waterloo and was heavily wounded; educated at Trinity College, Cambridge, receiving MA, captain, 9th Queen's Royal Lancers; fellow, Cambridge Philosophical Society. [Information is from his memoir].

**John Jacob** (1812-1858): born, Woolavington-cum-Purinton, Somerset, England, 11 January 1812, the seventh child and fifth son of Stephen Long Jacob, vicar of the town, mother the daughter of James Bond, vicar of Ashford, Kent, cousin was a bart.; educated at a dame-school at Milverton, Somerset, at home by his father until 1826, and then at Addiscombe College, 1826-8; officer, Bombay Army, 1828-58, rising to rank of general, gazetted lieutenant, 1836, served in First Anglo-Afghan War, 1839-42, and the Sind campaign of 1843, aide-de-camp to governors-general Ellenborough and Hardinge, 1843-7, political superintendent and commandant of the frontier of Upper Sind as well as commander of the Sind Horse, 1847, promoted to rank of regimental captain and brevet major, 1848, made CB, 1850, promoted to lieutenant-colonel, 1855, promoted to rank of colonel, 1856, honorary aide-de-camp to Queen Victoria, 1856-8, promoted to rank of brigadier-general also in 1856, commander of the cavalry division in war against Persia, 1856-8; author of 14 books, most of them military tracts. *ODNB*, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/14571>, accessed 22 May 2006.

**Hugo James** (d. 1859): third son of Hugo James, attorney-general of Jamaica; officer, Bengal fusiliers, Bengal Army, rising to rank of lieutenant at time of his death, fought in First Sikh War (1845-6) under Herbert B. Edwardes' [already cited] command. [Some information is from his memoir]; also *TL*, 11 Jan. 1860, p. 1, col. A.

**Daniel Johnson** (1766/7-1835): unknown birthplace and social origins; Bengal Medical Service, 1789-1809, asst. surgeon, 1789-1805, surgeon, 1805-9, conducted research on snakebites while in India; author of *Observations on Cold, Fevers, and other Disorders* (1823) along with his book on Indian field sports. *ODNB*, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/14872>, accessed 22 May 2006.

**John Laird Mair Lawrence, 1st Baron Lawrence** (1811-1879): born at Richmond, Yorkshire, 4 March 1811, the sixth son of British Army Major Alexander Lawrence, mother the daughter of a rector; educated at a day school at Bristol, before 1823, free grammar school at Londonderry, 1823-5, Wraxall Hall, Wiltshire, 1825-7, and

Haileybury College, 1827-9, passing out third among students destined for the Bengal Presidency; Bengal covenanted service, 1829-69; assistant judge, magistrate, and collector of Delhi, 1830-4, given charge of Paniput district, 1834-7, deputy-collector of Delhi, 1837-8, settlement officer of Etawah district of the North-Western Provinces, 1838-40, in Britain, 1840-2, collector of Delhi and Paniput, 1844-6, commissioner, Trans-Sutlej States, 1846-8, deputed for his brother Henry as resident at Lahore, 1846, 1847-8, member of Punjab board, 1850-3, commissioner of Punjab, 1853-, made KCB, 1856, played significant role during Sepoy Rebellion in 1857 by disarming most of the Bengal Army troops in the Punjab and raising more than 40,000 Punjab horse and foot to replace them and led the attack on Delhi in September 1857 which effectively ended the Rebellion, promoted to GCB, 1857, made a Bart., 1858, made a member of the privy council and awarded pension of £2000 p.a. by the defunct East India Company, 1859, appointed lieutenant-governor of Punjab, 1859-64 as well as a member of the viceroy's council, 1859, granted KSI, 1861, viceroy of India, 1864-9, made GCSI, 1866, made Baron Lawrence, 1869, chairman of the London School Board, 1869-72, supported Gladstone's Irish church and land bills in the House of Lords, chaired national committee that protested against the war with Afghanistan, 1878, buried in Westminster Abbey despite Disraeli's partisan objections. *ODNB*, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/16182>, accessed 22 May 2006.

**Sir John Low** (1788-1880): born at Clatto, near Cupar, Fife, on 13 December 1788, the eldest son of Captain Robert Low, mother the daughter of a doctor; educated at St. Andrew's University, 1802-3; officer, Madras Army, 1804-74, lieutenant, 1805, served in office of the Madras Army quarter master-general, 1810-1, brigade major in the Ceded Districts, 1810s, Persian interpreter and head of the intelligence staff to Colonel Dowse in the southern Maratha country, 1812-3, first political assistant to Sir John Malcolm [also cited], 1818, resident at Cawnpore, 1819-25, promoted to rank of captain, 1820, political agent at Jaipur, 1825-30, promoted to rank of major, 1828, political agent at Gwalior, 1830-1, resident to Lucknow, 1831-42, promoted to rank of lieutenant-colonel, 1834, made CB, 1838, promoted to rank of colonel, 1839, in Britain, 1842-7, governor-general's agent in Rajputana and commissioner at Ajmer and Mewar, 1848-52, resident at Hyderabad, 1852-3, member of the Supreme Council, 1853-8, promoted to rank of major-general, 1854, promoted to rank of lieutenant-general, 1859, made KCB, 1862, promoted to rank of general, 1867, made GCSI, 1873 and placed on retired list in 1874; eldest son, William Malcolm Low, was a Bengal official and Conservative MP for Grantham (1886-92). *ODNB*, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/17074>, accessed 22 May 2006.

**Henry Lushington** (1812-1855): born, Singleton, Lancashire, 13 April 1812, the second son of Edmund Henry Lushington of Park House, Maidstone, Kent, chief commissioner of the colonial audit board and Ceylon judge; educated at Charterhouse School, 1823-8, where he became a head boy in 1827, and Trinity College, Cambridge, 1829-37, receiving his BA in 1834 and MA in 1837, while at Trinity, he won the Porson university prize for Greek iambics twice as well as was elected a fellow in 1836, Inner Temple, 1840; chief secretary to the government of Malta, 1847-55; favorite advisor and critic of Tennyson's work to whom Tennyson dedicated his poem "The Princess" (1847); author of 11 Greek translations and books. *ODNB*,



<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/17211>, accessed 22 May 2006.

**Thomas Babington Macaulay, 1<sup>st</sup> Baron Macaulay** (1800-1859): born 25 October 1800 at Rothley Temple, Leicestershire, the seat of his mother's brother, the son of Zachary Macaulay, a leading member of the Clapham Sect and prominent anti-slavery advocate, mother from a long-established Leicestershire gentry family; child prodigy, privately educated until 12, educated by Rev. Matthew Preston, a known evangelical, 1812-18, Trinity College, Cambridge, 1818-22, won the Trinity scholarship in 1820, the Craven scholarship and the chancellor's medal for English verse in 1821, Lincoln's Inn, 1822-4, elected fellow of Trinity College, 1824, published articles in *Knight's Quarterly Review* and *Edinburgh Review*, 1820s, Whig MP, 1830-4, 1839-47, 1852-7; secretary to Board of Control, 1831, commissioner, Board of Control, 1832-4, played active role in the Charter debate of 1833, law commissioner and member of Bengal Council, 1834-7, wrote *Minute on Indian Education* (1835) which advocated English-only education and the ending of Company subsidies to Sanskrit and Arabic schools and mainly wrote the Penal and Civil Codes, although they were not implemented until 1860; Secretary of War, 1839-41, paymaster-general, 1846-7, elected lord rector of University of Glasgow, 1848, elected high steward of the borough of Cambridge and created Baron Macaulay, 1857, buried in Poet's Corner in Westminster Abbey; a prolific writer and historian, Macaulay is perhaps best known for his *The History of England* (1848). *ODNB*, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/17349>, accessed 22 May 2006.

**Holt Mackenzie** (1787-1876): son of Henry Mackenzie, the wit, essayist, and man of letters; educated at Haileybury College, 1806-7, Bengal covenanted service, 1808-31, Secretary to Government in the Territorial Department, 1817-20, member of the Council of the College of Fort William, 1820-5, president, 1825, best known, though, for his work on Bengal revenue settlements, and for his connection with the Settlement Regulation, VII of 1822 which settled the revenue in the Ceded and Conquered and North-Western Provinces, Secretary to Governor-General Amherst, 1826, also a member of the Bengal Council, 1826-31, made member of the privy-council, 1832 and commissioner of the Board of Control, 1832-4, vice-president of the Royal Asiatic Society, 1847. *DIB*, 263.

**John McMullen**: born in Ireland of unknown social origins; soldier either in British Army or one of the Company armies. [Roger Beaumont, *Sword of the Raj: The British Army in India, 1747-1947* (Indianapolis and New York: The Bobs-Merrill Company, Inc., 1977), 8.]

**Sir William Hay Macnaghten, Bart.** (1793-1841): born 24 August 1793 at Fort William, Calcutta, the second son of the sixteen children of Sir Francis Workman Macnaghten of Dundarave, Antrim, mother the daughter of the judge of the supreme court of Calcutta, father became a judge of the supreme court of Madras in 1809, at which time he was knighted, he transferred to the supreme court of Calcutta in 1815 and retired in 1825, he was created a Bart. in 1836; educated at Charterhouse School, before 1809; officer, Madras Army, 1809-14, posted with the governor's bodyguard in Madras, 1809-11, cornet to the 4<sup>th</sup> cavalry at Hyderabad, 1811-3, escort of the Mysore resident, 1813-4, transferred to Bengal covenanted service, 1814, College of Fort William, 1814-6,

assistant to the registrar of the *sadr diwani adalat*, 1816-8, joint magistrate of Malda, 1818-20, acting magistrate of Shahabad, 1820-2, registrar of the *sadr diwani adalat*, 1822-31, while court registrar, Macnaghten published the first three of six volumes of *Reports of the Cases Determined in the Court of the Nizamat Adawlut* (1827-52), and two genuinely monumental works, *Principles and Precedents of Mohummudan Law* (1825) and *Principles and Precedents of Hindu Law* (2 vols., 1828-9), secretary to Governor-General Bentinck, 1831-3, chief secretary of the secret and political department, 1833-7, secretary to Governor-General Auckland, 1837-9, edited the Arabic text of *A Thousand and One Nights* (4 vols., 1839-42) in late 1830s, envoy and minister to Kabul, 1839-41, created a Bart., 1840, murdered in Kabul in 1841. *ODNB*, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/17705>, accessed 22 May 2006.

**Sir Thomas Herbert Maddock** (1790-1870): son of Rev. Thomas Maddock, educated at Manchester Free Grammar School and at Haileybury College, 1812-3; Bengal covenanted service, 1814-49, served in the Sagar and Nerbudda territories, political agent at Bhopal, political resident at Lucknow, 1829-31, political officer in Nepal, 1831, secretary to the Government of India in the Legal, Judicial and Revenue Departments, 1838-43, member of the Supreme Council, 1843-9, deputy-governor of Bengal, 1845, 1848, knighted and made a CB, 1848, MP for Rochester, 1852-7. *DIB*, 269.

**Sir John Malcolm** (1769-1833): born, Burnfoot, Westerkirk, Dumfriesshire, Scotland, the fourth son of George Malcolm of Burnfoot, from a junior branch of the Malcolms of Lochore, Fife, mother the daughter of a local farmer; educated at parish school until 1781; officer, Madras Army, 1783-1821, rising to rank of major-general, adjutant of 29<sup>th</sup> battalion, late 1780s, Persian translator for Lord Cornwallis at Seringapatam, 1792, on medical leave in Britain, 1793-5, private secretary to Madras Army commander-in-chief, 1796-8, assistant to the resident at Hyderabad, 1798-9, first secretary of Mysore commission, 1799, envoy to Persia, 1799-1801, acting private secretary to Governor-General Wellesley, 1801-3, resident at Mysore, 1803-8, envoy to Persia, 1810-1, on furlough in Britain, 1812-7, knighted while in England, 1812, and made KCB, 1815, fought in Third Anglo-Maratha War, 1817-8, administrator of Central India, 1819-21, promoted to rank of major-general and GCB, 1821, on furlough in Britain, 1822-7, governor of Bombay, 1827-30; Tory MP for the Cornish pocket borough of Launceston, while in Parliament, he opposed the Great Reform Bill of 1832 as Wellington's spokesman in the House of Commons; marble bust of him erected in Westminster Abbey; author of numerous histories of Asia and India. *ODNB*, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/17864>, accessed 22 May 2006.

**Thomas Robert Malthus** (1766-1834): born, 13 February 1766, Rookery, near Wotton, Surrey, the second son of Daniel Malthus, a gentleman scholar who was an acquaintance of Rousseau's, great-grandfather was apothecary to Queen Anne and George I and his grandfather was a barrister of Lincoln's Inn; educated privately and at Jesus College, Cambridge, 1784-93, receiving his BA in 1788, a MA in 1791, and was elected fellow of Jesus College in 1793; ordained as deacon by the Bishop of Winchester, 1789 and curate of Oakwood (or Okewood) Chapel in the parish of Wotton, 1789-1805, rector of Walesby, 1803-5, professor of history and political economy, Haileybury, 1805-34; elected fellow,

Royal Society, 1818, elected one of 10 royal associates of Royal Society of Literature, 1825, member also of the French Institute, the Académie des Sciences Morales et Politiques and the Royal Academy of Berlin; utilitarian and member of Political Economy Club, 1821, but frequently sparred with James Mill and disagreed with many of Ricardo's economic theories, helped found the Statistical Society of London in 1834; author of *Essay on the Principle of Population* (1798), *Principles of Political Economy* (1820), and 11 other books mainly dealing with economic and moral issues along with numerous articles in *Edinburgh Review* and other publications. ODNB, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/17902>, accessed 22 May 2006.

**Frederick Markham** (1805-1855): born, 16 August 1805 at Ades, Chailey parish, Lewes, Sussex, the youngest son of Admiral John Markham and the grandson of William Markham, archbishop of York; educated at Westminster until 1824, where he was a cricketer and oarsman as well as acted Syrus in the Adelphi in the Westminster play of 1823, was expelled in 1824 for a boating scrape; officer, British Army, 1824-55, rising to rank of lieutenant-general, purchased an ensigncy in the 32<sup>nd</sup> regiment, lieutenant, 1825, captain, 1829, major, 1839, and lieutenant-colonel, 1842, buying all of his promotions, in Canada during the rebellion of that year, commanded the 2<sup>nd</sup> infantry brigade at the first and second sieges of Multan during the Second Anglo-Sikh War, 1848-9, made CB, 1849, aide-de-camp to queen, 1849-54; adjutant-general of the British Army in India, 1854, promoted to rank of major-general, 1854, appointed to command of 2nd division of the army before Sebastopol in Crimean War and promoted to local rank of lieutenant-general, commanded attack on the Redan, 8 Sept. 1855 during which he fell fatally ill, he died in London three months later. ODNB, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/18064>, accessed 22 May 2006.

**John Clark Marshman** (1794-1877): born, 18 August 1794 at Broadmead, Bristol, the eldest son of Joshua Marshman and his wife Hannah Marshman, née Shepherd, both Baptist missionaries; he accompanied his parents to Serampore, India, in 1799, and from 1811, made increasingly important contributions to the various undertakings of the Serampore missionaries, including their expansion in 1816 of Bengali elementary schools, which he superintended and for which he wrote the textbooks, he also helped to found and manage a savings bank there, he became the business manager of the Serampore mission by the late 1810s, in the 1810s and 1820s he managed the press as well as a paper-mill at Serampore and thus was a significant pioneer of Indian journalism, along with his father, he founded *The Sumachar Durpan* in 1818, the first newspaper in Bengali as well as established *The Friend of India*, editing it until 1852; Marshman also published an English-Bengali dictionary in 1828 and various Bengali textbooks; he was also the author of an acclaimed history of Bengal (1848), a general history of India, published between 1863 and 1867, biographies of Carey, his father, and Ward, embracing the history of the Serampore mission (1859), the memoirs of Major-General Havelock (1860), and several assorted pamphlets on Indian questions; granted star of India, 1868; chairman, Red Sea Telegraph Company and chair of a committee of audit of the East India Railway; made three unsuccessful attempts to obtain a seat in Parliament during late 1850s and early 1860s. ODNB, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/18162>, accessed 22 May 2006.



**James William Massie** (1799-1869): born in Ireland of unknown social origins; educated by Dr. David Bogue, presumably at the missionary college at Gosport, Hampshire; missionary in India, 1822-39; pastor, Perth, Dublin and Salford, after 1839, secretary to the Home Missionary Society, 1848-59, advocate of free-trade and active in the anti-slavery movement, ardent supporter and member of the union and emancipation societies that were formed during the American Civil War, granted DD and LLD, and elected member of the Royal Irish Academy in 1860s; author of 5 books and numerous pamphlets and sermons, mainly against American slavery. *ODNB*, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/18302>, accessed 22 May 2006.

**Charles Masson** (1800-1853): born James Lewis in Aldermanbury, London, on 16 February 1800, the eldest child of George Lewis, oil dealer; nothing is known of his education and early years; soldier, British Army, 24<sup>th</sup> regiment, before 1821, and Bengal Army, 1821-7, deserted in 1827; traveled throughout northwestern India and Afghanistan under assumed name of "Charles Masson," prominent antiquarian and numismatologist, news writer for East India Company in Afghanistan, 1835-8, returned to Britain in 1842, received small pension from the Company in 1845; Masson is best known today for being a pioneer of Afghan archaeology and numismatics. *ODNB*, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/37744>, accessed 22 May 2006.

**Philip Meadows Taylor** (1808-1876): born in Liverpool, 25 September 1808, the son of a Liverpool merchant, mother the daughter of Bertram Mitford of Mitford Castle, Northumberland; sent to India at age of 15 to enter the house of Mr. Baxter, a Bombay merchant, obtained officer commission in the service of the Nizam of Hyderabad, 1824, promoted to rank of adjutant in the nizam's service, 1830, independently of Bengal Colonel William Henry Sleeman, Meadows Taylor became interested in the detection and suppression of *thagi* and turned his inquiries to account in his first novel *The Confessions of a Thug* (1839), India correspondent for *The Times*, 1840-3, police superintendent for the nizam of Hyderabad, 1839-60, returned to Britain in 1860 after which point he wrote five other novels as well as his memoirs, made a companion in the Order of the Star of India in 1869. *ODNB*, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/27066>, accessed 22 May 2006.

**Sir James Cosmo Melville** (1792-1861): born at Guernsey, the third son of Captain Philip Melville, afterwards lieutenant-governor of Pendennis Castle, Cornwallis, mother from a Guernsey gentry family, younger brother was Henry Melville, a principal of Haileybury College and canon of St. Paul's during the 1840s and 1850s; entered the home service of the East India Company as a clerk, 1808, auditor of Indian accounts, 1824-34, financial secretary to the Company, 1834-6, secretary of the Company, 1836-58, made KCB, 1853, retired in February 1858 although he continued for some months thereafter as the *ex officio* government director of Indian Railways; elected fellow of the Royal Society, 1841 and became a commissioner of lieutenancy for the City of London in 1847; his second son of the same name followed him into the home administration of British India and was appointed assistant under-secretary of state for India in 1859. *ODNB*, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/18541>, accessed 22 May 2006.

**Charles Theophilus Metcalfe, 1<sup>st</sup> Baron Metcalfe** (1785-1846): born, 30 January 1785, at the Lecture House, Calcutta, the second son of Sir Thomas Theophilus Metcalfe, first bart., a major in the Bengal Army, Metcalfe's family originated in Yorkshire but his immediate ancestors were Anglo-Irish gentry, father was a Company director and a MP for Abington and was created a Bart. in 1802; educated at Mr. Tait's school at Bromley in Kent and Eton College, before 1801; Bengal covenanted service, 1801-38, Fort William College, 1801-3, aide to Governor-General Wellesley, 1803-4, and Bengal Army Commander-in-Chief Lord Lake, 1804-5, first assistant to resident at Delhi, 1806-8, envoy to the Punjab, 1808-9, resident at Delhi, 1811-9, 1825-7, resident at Hyderabad, 1820-5, member of the Supreme Council, 1827-35, acting governor-general of India, 1835, lieutenant-governor of Agra, 1836-8, governor of Jamaica, 1839-42, governor-in-chief of British North America, 1843-5, created Baron Metcalfe in 1845, he died leaving a fortune of £100,000, including a bequest in his will of £50,000 to his illegitimate Eurasian son. *ODNB*, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/18617>, accessed 22 May 2006.

**James Mill** (1773-1836): born, 6 April 1773, Northwater Bridge, parish of Logie Pert, Forfarshire, Scotland, son of a country shoemaker and small-holder, mother the daughter of a local farmer; educated at home, the local parish school, both before 1784, Montrose Academy, 1784-90, and the University of Edinburgh, 1790-8, where he trained to be a minister, ordained as a minister, 1798-1802, unable to find permanent work, he left the ministry and Scotland in 1802 for London, editor of various literary publications including the *Literary Journal* (1803-7), *St. James's Chronicle* (1805-8), as well as a frequent contributor to the *Edinburgh Review*, began work on his famous *History of British India* in 1806; East India Company, 1819-36, assistant examiner of correspondence, 1823-30, head examiner, 1830-36; co-founder of the Political Economy Club in 1820 and the Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge and *The Westminster Review* in 1824, as well as a close friend of Utilitarians Jeremy Bentham's and David Ricardo's; author of five books and numerous political pamphlets, including *History of British India* (1817) and *Essay on Government* (1820); father of John Stuart Mill. *ODNB*, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/18709>, accessed 22 May 2006.

**John Stuart Mill** (1806-1873): born 20 May 1806 in Pentonville, London, the eldest of nine children of James Mill [cited above]; child prodigy, educated privately by his father, learning Greek at the age of 3 and Latin by 8, also helped correct proofs of his father's *History of British India* from the age of 8, and read for the bar, 1821-2; clerk, East India Company, Leadenhall St. offices, 1823-58, being promoted to chief examinership in 1856; co-founder of Utilitarian Society, 1822, member of London Debating Society from 1825, suffered mental breakdown, 1826-7, member of Political Economy Club, 1831-71, proprietor, *London and Westminster Review*, 1837-40, co-founder of Sterling Club in 1838, a club for discussion of heterodox opinions, author of numerous influential works in logic and political theory, including: *The System of Logic* (1843), *Principles of Political Economy* (1848), *On Liberty* (1859), *Representative Government* (1861), *Utilitarianism* (1863), and *The Subjection of Women* (1869), Liberal MP for Westminster, 1865-8, co-founder of London National Society for Women's Suffrage, 1868. *ODNB*, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/18711>, accessed 23 May 2006.

**Frederic Millett** (d. 1856): Bengal covenanted service, 1816-48, member of the Indian Law Commission, 1834-45, member of the Supreme Council, 1845-8. *DIB*, 290.

**Gilbert Elliot Murray Kynynmound, 1<sup>st</sup> Earl of Minto** (1751-1814): born on 23 April 1751 at Grey Friars, Edinburgh, the eldest son of Sir Gilbert Elliot, 3<sup>rd</sup> baronet of Minto, Roxburghshire, mother of Scottish gentry origins; educated privately by the diplomat Robert Liston, 1762-4, Pension Militaire, Fontainebleau, France, 1764-6, Edinburgh University, 1766-8, Christ Church, Oxford, 1768-9, Lincoln's Inn, 1769, being called to the bar in 1774; MP for Morpeth, 1776-7, succeeded father as fourth bart. and as MP for Roxburghshire, 1777-84, MP for Berwick upon Tweed, 1786-90, MP for Helston, 1790-4, made member of the privy-council, 1793, British minister to the Italian states, March-May 1794, viceroy of Corsica, June 1794-March 1797, made Baron Minto later that year, envoy-extraordinary and minister-plenipotentiary to Austria, 1799-1801, President of the Board of Control, briefly in 1806, governor-general of Bengal, 1807-13, promoted in the peerage to Viscount Melgund and Earl of Minto, 1814; fellow of Royal Society and the Royal Society of Edinburgh. *ODNB*, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/8661>, accessed 22 May 2006.

**Godfrey Charles Mundy** (d. 1860): officer, British Army, 1820s?-1860, rising to rank of major-general, served as aide-de-camp to General Viscount Combermere when he was commander-in-chief of India, 1825-30 [also cited], present at the siege and storming of Bhurtpur in 1825-6, Under-Secretary of State for War, 1854-7, Lieutenant-Governor of Jersey, 1857-60. *TL*, 4 Feb. 1857, p. 3, col. A; 14 July 1860, p. 5, col. C.

**Innes Munro** (d. 1827): unknown birthplace or birth date; related to Sir Hector Munro, unknown social origins otherwise; unknown educational background; officer, British Army, 1777-1808, rising to rank of major and brevet lieutenant-colonel, as lieutenant and captain in the 1<sup>st</sup> battalion of the 73<sup>rd</sup>, afterwards 71<sup>st</sup> highlanders, Munro saw action during Second Anglo-Mysorean War (1780-4), captain in the Scottish brigade (disbanded as the 94<sup>th</sup> foot in 1818), 1793-8, Munro also served for many years as a paymaster of a recruiting district in India. *ODNB*, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/19548>, accessed 22 May 2006.

**Sir Thomas Munro** (1761-1827): born 27 May 1761 in Glasgow, Scotland, the second of seven children of Alexander Munro, a Glasgow merchant trading with Virginia; educated at Glasgow grammar school and University of Glasgow, 1773-7; officer, Madras Army, 1780-1819, rising to rank of brigadier-general, saw military action in all three Anglo-Mysore wars and the Third Anglo-Maratha War, joined intelligence department under Capt. Alexander Read, 1788, assistant to Read in Baramahal, 1792-99, member of the Mysore Commission, 1799-1800, collector of Kanara, 1800-7, in Britain on furlough, 1807-13, during which time he actively consulted the East India Company and the Select East India Committee of Parliament on reforming revenue collection and other administrative reforms, special commissioner for judicial and police reform, 1814-6, commanded reserve division of Madras Army during the Third Anglo-Maratha War of 1817-8 with rank of brigadier-general, promoted to CB in 1818 and major-general in 1819, governor of Madras, 1819-27, made bart. 1825, died of cholera while governor,

1827. ODNB, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/19549>, accessed 22 May 2006.

**Sir Charles James Napier** (1782-1853): born, Whitehall, London, 10 August 1782, the eldest of eight children of British Army Colonel Hon. George Napier, and grandson of the 6<sup>th</sup> Baron Napier of Merchistoun, mother was the daughter of the second duke of Richmond, Charles James Fox was her cousin; received sporadic education at grammar school in Celbridge, 1794?-8, military college at Farnham, 1814, 1815-7; officer, British Army, 1794-53, rising to rank of lieutenant-general, ensign, 33<sup>rd</sup> and 89<sup>th</sup> regiments, aide-de-camp to Sir James Duff, commander of the Limerick district, 1799; fought in Peninsular campaign, 1808-11, promoted to rank of lieutenant-colonel, 1811, fought in the War of 1812, 1812-4, made CB, 1815, inspecting field officer in the Ionian Islands, 1819-21, military resident in Cephalonia in the Ionian Islands, 1821-30, various posts in Britain, 1830-8, made KCB, 1838, commander of the northern district, 1839-41, during which time Chartism was in full-swing, he managed to avoid bloodshed, British military commander in Sind, 1842-3, played crucial role in the conquest of Sind in 1843, made GCB, 1843, administrator of Sind, 1843-7, commander-in-chief of British Army forces in the First Sikh War, 1845-6, in Britain, 1846-8, back in India as commander-in-chief of British forces in the Second Anglo-Sikh War, 1848-9, commander-in-chief, India, 1849-50, resigned post after a falling out with Governor-General Dalhousie, whom Napier's posthumously published *Defects, Civil and Military* (1853) primarily criticizes; Napier's politics were radical and he supported Chartism although he disagreed with O'Connell's tactics; statue of Napier in St. Paul's Cathedral and plinth in Trafalgar Square; author of 10 books on a variety of military and political topics, including a historical novel on William the Conqueror. Of no relation to Edward Hungerford Delaval Elers Napier [also cited]. ODNB, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/19748>, accessed 22 May 2006.

**Edward Hungerford Delaval Elers Napier** (1808-1870): born the eldest son of Edward Elers, a lieutenant in the Royal Navy, mother was the daughter of a Royal Navy lieutenant, father died when Napier was young, his step-father was an admiral of Royal Navy; educated at Royal Military College, Sandhurst, before 1825; officer, British Army, 46<sup>th</sup> foot, 1825-64, rising to rank of lieutenant-general, stationed in India, 1825-33, ensign, 46<sup>th</sup> regiment, 1825, lieutenant, 1826, captain, 1831, member of the senior department of the Royal Military College, 1836-7, commanded light company in Gibraltar, 1837, promoted to major, 1839, sent to Syria in 1840 where he was granted the local ranks of lieutenant-colonel and assistant adjutant-general, made brevet lieutenant-general in 1841, and received a gold medal from the sultan of the Ottoman Empire around that time, retired on half-pay in 1843, sent to Cape Colony in 1846 to organize bodies of irregulars during the Cape Frontier War of 1846-7, promoted to brevet colonel, 1854, promoted to major-general, 1858, appointed colonel of the 61<sup>st</sup> South Gloucestershire regiment, 1864, and promoted lieutenant-general in 1864; Napier was a man of literary and artistic ability who contributed to a number of magazines, chiefly *Bailey's* and the *United Service Magazine*, for over 20 years. Of no relation to Sir Charles James Napier [also cited]. ODNB, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/19750>, accessed 22 May 2006.

**Sir George Nugent [formerly Fennings], 1<sup>st</sup> Bart.** (1757-1849): born on 10 June 1757, the illegitimate son of Lieutenant-Colonel the Hon. Edmund Nugent, 1<sup>st</sup> foot guards, who

died unmarried in 1771, mother's surname was probably Fennings; educated at Charterhouse School, before proceeding to the Royal Military Academy, Woolrich, where he changed his name to George Nugent; officer, British Army, 1773-1849, ensign, 39<sup>th</sup> foot, 1773, lieutenant, 7<sup>th</sup> Royal Fusiliers, 1777, served in American War of Independence, 1777-83, captain, 57<sup>th</sup> foot, 1778, major, 1782, lieutenant-colonel, 97<sup>th</sup> foot, lieutenant-colonel of 13<sup>th</sup> foot, 1787, first aide-de-camp to the lord lieutenant of Ireland, his uncle, later first marquess of Buckingham, 1788-90, transferred to Coldstream Guards, 1790, MP for Buckingham, 1790-1802, left with his regiment in 1793 to Netherlands, raised at Buckingham and Aylesbury a regiment, the 85<sup>th</sup>, of which he was a colonel, 1794, appointed brigadier-general on the staff in Ireland, 1795, promoted to major-general, 1796, made captain and keeper of St. Mawe's Castle the same year, during 1798 Irish rising, he commanded northern district of Ireland and served as adjutant-general in Ireland, 1799-1801, he also represented Charlesville, co. Cork, in the last Irish Parliament, 1799-1801, lieutenant-governor and commander-in-chief, Jamaica, 1801-6, made Bart. 1806, transferred to the colonelcy of the 6<sup>th</sup> foot, 1806, commander of the western district, 1806, MP for Aylesbury, 1806-12; commander-in-chief, India, 1811-3, promoted to rank of general, 1813, made KB, 1813 and GCB, 1815, MP for Buckingham, 1818-32, received honorary doctor of civil law, Oxford, 1819, promoted to rank of field marshal, 1846. *ODNB*, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/20390>, accessed 22 May 2006.

**Robert Orme** (1728-1801): born on 25 December 1728 at Anjengo, Travancore, India, the second son of Alexander Orme, chief of the settlement at Anjengo, and a physician and surgeon in the EIC; educated at Harrow, 1734-41; merchant writer, Jackson & Wedderburn, 1742-3; East India Company, 1743-1801, writer in Bengal presidency, 1743-53, member of Madras Presidency Council, 1754-8, commissary and accountant-general, 1757-8, official historiographer, 1769-1793; elected fellow, Society of Antiquaries, 1770. *ODNB*, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/20833>, accessed 22 May 2006.

**Sir Edward Paget** (1775-1849): born on 3 November 1775, the fourth son of Henry Paget, the first earl of Uxbridge of the second creation, mother the daughter of Arthur Champagne, dean of Clanmacnoise, Ireland; officer, British Army, 1792-1849, cornet, 1<sup>st</sup> lifeguards, captain, 1792, major, 1793, lieutenant-colonel, 1794, served in Flanders and Holland, 1794-5, and Gibraltar, 1796-, colonel, 1798, aide-de-camp to George III, 1798, served in Egyptian campaign of 1801, appointed brigadier-general on the staff at Fermoy in Ireland, 1803, promoted to rank of major-general, 1805, in Sicily, 1806-8 and the Peninsular campaign, 1808-12, played a key role in the Battle of Corunna, 1809, for which he received a medal and was appointed to the staff of the Peninsular army under Wellesley, with the local rank of lieutenant-general and command of the left wing of the army, conducted advance from Coimbra to Oporto in 1809, promoted to lieutenant-general, 1811, Wellesley's second-in-command in Peninsula campaign, 1811-2, made GCB in 1812 and a member of the Portuguese Order of the Tower and Sword, captured by French troops, 1812 and held prisoner until 1814, captain of Cowes Castle, 1818-20, governor of Ceylon, 1821-3, commander-in-chief, India, 1823-5, promoted to full general, 1825, governor of Royal Military College, 1826-37, governor of Chelsea Hospital, 1837-



49. ODNB, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/21106>, accessed 22 May 2006.

**Robert Patton** (1742-1812): born, Anstruther, Kirkcaldy, Scotland, the third of five children of Philip Patton, a customs collector; officer, Bengal Army, before 1776, friend and admirer of Warren Hastings, governor of St. Helena, after 1797; wrote two books. *DNB*, 15: 511; *ODNB*, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/21589>, accessed 22 May 2006.

**Thomas Pennant** (1726-1798): born, 14 June 1726 in Downing, parish of Whitford (or Whiteford), near Holywell, Flintshire, Wales, the eldest son of David Pennant, landowner, the Pennants dated back to the Norman Conquest; educated at school of Rev. W. Lewis at Wrexham, 1733-40, Fulham, 1740-4, and Queen's College, Oxford, 1744-7, and Oriel College, 1748 (took no degree, however); noted geographer, elected fellow of Society of Antiquaries, 1754, resigned in 1760, elected member of the Royal Society of Uppsala, 1757, elected fellow of the Royal Society, 1767, and had extensive correspondence with Linnaeus, *DNB* entry refers to his being a "country gentleman" and "a moderate Tory" politically, high sheriff of Flintshire, 1761. *DNB*, 15: 765-8; *ODNB*, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/21860>, accessed 22 May 2006.

**Sir [Thomas] Erskine Perry** (1806-1882): born, Wandelbank house, Wimbledon, 20 July 1806, second son of James Perry, proprietor and editor of the *Morning Chronicle*; educated at Charterhouse School and Trinity College, Cambridge, receiving BA in 1829, Lincoln's Inn, 1827-9, University of Munich, 1829-31, and Inner Temple, 1832, called to the bar in 1834; honorary secretary to National Political Union of London, 1831, founded the Parliamentary Candidate Society, 1831, unsuccessfully contested seat of Chatham in December 1832 general election, private barrister, 1834-40, wrote 6 volumes on legal issues during 1830s, lost greater part of his fortune in the bank failure of 1840, necessitating his turning to his friends in the British government for assistance, knighted in 1841, Bombay Supreme Court judge, 1841-7, chief justice, 1847-52, president, Indian Board of Education, 1842-52, upon Perry's retirement in 1852, the Indian community of Bombay raised £5000 for a fund to establish a professorship of law at Elphinstone College in his honor; upon return to England, Perry wrote several anonymous letters to *The Times* under the pseudonym "Hadji" advocating the abolition of the East India Company as well as published two tracts on India, Liberal MP for Devonport, 1854-9, as an MP, Perry spoke often about the imperfections of the EIC and condemned the annexation of Awadh in 1856; member, Council for India, 1859-82, chairman of its judicial and legislative committee, 1860-82, made member of the privy-council, 1882. *ODNB*, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/22000>, accessed 22 May 2006.

**Samuel Plummer**: born, East Dereham, Norfolk, of mercantile/artisanal origins; British Army, private, 22nd regiment of foot. [Information is from his memoir].

**Sir Henry Pottinger, 1<sup>st</sup> Bart.** (1789-1856): born, Mt. Pottinger, co. Down, Ireland, on 3 October 1789, the fifth son of Eldred Curwen Pottinger, a descendant of the Pottingers of Berkshire, and his wife Anne, daughter of Robert Gordon of Florida Manor, co. Down; educated at Belfast Academy, before 1801; traveled to India, 1803, officer, both Bombay

and Madras armies, 1806-54, rising to rank of lieutenant-general, ensign, 1806, lieutenant, 1809, sent on exploration mission to Sind, 1808-11 which was the basis for his travel account, appointed to staff of Sir Evan Nepean, governor of Bombay, 1811-6, assistant to Mountstuart Elphinstone, 1816-8, collector of Ahmednagar, 1818-25, promoted to rank of captain, 1821, major, 1825, resident in Cutch, 1825-36, promoted to lieutenant-colonel, 1829, brevet colonel, 1834, while resident, he conducted missions to Sind in 1831, successfully negotiating a commercial treaty, and 1833-4 and 1836-7, resident to Sind, 1836-40, created Bart., 1840, envoy and plenipotentiary in China and superintendent of British trade during Opium War, 1841-2, made GCB, 1842, first British governor of Hong Kong, 1843-4, made member of privy-council, 1844, given freedom of many cities and granted life pension of £1,500 p.a. by Parliament in 1845, governor, Cape Colony, 1846, governor of Madras, 1848-54, promoted to rank of lieutenant-general, 1851, died in Malta in 1856. *ODNB*, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/22626>, accessed 22 May 2006.

**David Price** (1762-1835): born, Merthyr Cynog near Brecon, Wales, where father was curate; educated by his father before 1775, and then at Christ College, Brecon, 1775-9, when awarded "Rustat" scholarship by Jesus College, Cambridge, 1779-80, had to leave school in 1780 because he was penniless; officer, Bombay Army, 1781-1807, rising to rank of captain, appointed to 2<sup>nd</sup> battalion, 1782, fought in Second Anglo-Mysore War, promoted to lieutenant, 1788, fought in Third Anglo-Mysore War, 1790-2, where he was severely wounded in 1791 at siege of Dharwar, losing a leg, moved to guard of Sir Charles Malet, political minister at Poona, 1791-2, transferred to staff appointment at Surat in 1792, promoted to brevet captain, 1795, judge-advocate-general of Bombay Army, 1795-1805, promoted to full captain, 1797, served as military secretary and Persian interpreter to Colonel Dow in Malabar, 1797-8, Persian translator to Bombay Army commander-in-chief General James Stuart during Fourth Anglo-Mysore War, 1799, promoted to rank of major in 1804, returned to Britain in 1805 and retired from Company's service in 1807; Price was a noted Persian scholar and historian and from his retirement to his death wrote 4 serviceable histories of Arabian, Persian, and Indian history, received gold medal of Oriental Translation Committee, 1830; member of Royal Asiatic Society, to which he bequeathed over 70 valuable oriental—chiefly Persian—manuscripts, as well as a member of the Oriental Translation Fund; magistrate and deputy-lieutenant of Brecknockshire; author of 5 books. *ODNB*, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/22746>, accessed 22 May 2006.

**Henry Thoby Prinsep** (1793-1878): born, Thoby Priory, Essex, 15 July 1793, fourth son of John Prinsep and Sophia Elizabeth Auriol, the sister of James Peter Auriol, secretary to the government of Warren Hastings, father was a Company soldier who made an indigo trading fortune (indeed, he might be said to be founder of the industry) and who later became an MP for Queensborough, 1802-6, alderman of the City of London, and later in life, the bailiff of the borough of Southwark; educated privately until age of 13, Mr. Knox's school at Tonbridge, 1806-7, Haileybury College, 1807-8, Fort William College, 1809-11, Bengal covenanted service, 1808-43, assistant to magistrate and registrar, Murshidabad, 1811-4, assistant to the secretary to the governor-general, 1814-6, superintendent and remembrancer of legal affairs, 1816-20, member of Governor-General

Hastings's camp during the Third Anglo-Maratha War, 1817-8, investigated condition of land tenures in Burdwan and adjoining territory in Bengal, 1819-20, Persian Secretary to Bengal Government, 1820-24, in Britain, 1824-6, resumed secretariat, 1826-32, again on furlough, 1832-4, temporary member of Supreme Council, 1835-40, full member, 1840-3, as a Tory conservative, Prinsep was leading opponent to many of Governor-General Lord Bentinck's reforms in the 1830s, including most prominently, the 1835 decision pressed by Thomas Babington Macaulay to end Company subsidies for Arabic and Sanskrit education, retired in 1843; elected member of Carlton Club and Athenaeum Club, pre-1843, unsuccessfully contested four parliamentary constituencies as a Tory between 1843 and 1850, Company director, 1850-8, member, India Council, 1858-74, recording frequent dissents from the decisions taken by the secretary of state, particularly stern measures taken immediately after the Rebellion; prolific writer; poet, translator of Latin verse, particularly the poems of Horace, and keen mathematician; ran one of the main artistic and literary London salons of the mid-nineteenth century at their home at Little Holland House, Kensington, where Tennyson, Browning, and Thackeray mingled with Du Maurier, Ruskin, and Burne-Jones; Prinsep's second son, Valentine Cameron Prinsep, was an artist of the aesthetic movement. *ODNB*, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/22811>, accessed 22 May 2006.

**James Rennell** (1742-1830): born 3 December 1742 at Upcot, near Chudleigh, Devon, the younger child and only son of Captain John Rennell of the Royal Artillery, his father's death five years later in action in the Netherlands forced the sale of the family property, when mother remarried, Rennell's step-father could not provide for both James and his elder sister; at age of 10, Rennell was taken in by Gilbert Burrington, vicar of Chudleigh, where he was raised until his naval career began four years later in 1756, captain's servant, Royal Navy, 1756-62, surveyor for Alexander Dalrymple of the East India Company, 1762-4, surveyor, Bengal Army, 1764-7, surveyor-general of Bengal, 1767-77; elected fellow of Royal Society, 1781, received its Copley Medal, 1791, elected honorary member of the African Association, 1792 after he had compiled a map on the northern part of Africa in 1790, elected associate of the Institut de France, 1801, and subsequently also of the Imperial Academy of St. Petersburg and of the Royal Society of Göttingen, Rennell was awarded the gold medal of the Royal Society of Literature in 1825, Rennell also developed theory of Atlantic Ocean currents which, although published posthumously in 1832, forms the historical basis of modern-day ocean circulation studies, buried in nave of Westminster Abbey. *ODNB*, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/23369>, accessed 22 May 2006.

**William Rice**: lieutenant, Bombay Army; late captain, Turkish Contingent. [Information is from his hunting memoir].

**Hugh Rose, 1<sup>st</sup> Baron Strathnairn** (1801-1885): born, 6 April 1801, in Berlin, the third son of Sir George Henry Rose (1770-1855) and his wife, Frances, the daughter of Thomas Duncombe of Duncombe Park in Yorkshire, grandfather was George Rose (1744-1818), a political associate of William Pitt the younger, father was British minister to Prussia, 1815-8; educated at Prussian cadet school; officer, British Army, 1820-70, ensign, 1820, gazette major, 1826, major, 1829, equerry to the Duke of Cambridge, 1830,



lieutenant-colonel, 1839, member of British liaison mission to Syria, 1840, HM consul-general in Syria, 1841-8, made CB in 1842, secretary to the embassy at Constantinople, 1851, made brevet colonel, 1852, chargé d'affaires of Turkish embassy, 1852-4, British commissioner at the headquarters of the French commander-in-chief, Marshal Canrobert during Crimean War, 1854, major-general, 1854, made KCB, 1855, local lieutenant-general, 1856, appointed to command of the Poona division of the Bombay Army, 1857, took command of the Central India field force, Dec. 1857, led siege on Jhansi, Jan.-June 1858, made colonel of the 45<sup>th</sup> foot and thanked by both houses of parliament, April 1858, promoted to GCB, July 1858, commander-in-chief, Bombay Army, Feb.-May, 1860, commander-in-chief, India, May 1860-March 1865, made a KCSI, 1861, advanced to GCSI, 1866, commander-in-chief, Ireland, July 1865-June 1870, made DCL of Oxford, 1865, transferred to colonelcy of his old regiment, the 92<sup>nd</sup> (Gordon Highlanders) and created Baron Strathnairn of Strathnairn and Jhansi, 1866, promoted to full general, 1867, became regimental colonel of the Royal Horse Guards and gold stick, 1869, raised to field marshal, 1877; a conservative in politics, in later life, Rose spent much time examining the religious questions of the day and denouncing atheism. *ODNB*, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/24093>, accessed 14 June 2006.

**Sir Henry Russell, 2<sup>nd</sup> Bart.** (1783-1852) [*ODNB* entry is of his father, Sir Henry Russell, 1<sup>st</sup> Bart.]: father was justice on the supreme court of judicature in Bengal, 1797-1807 and chief justice, 1807-13; resident at Hyderabad, 1810-21. *ODNB*, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/24311>, accessed 22 May 2006.

**Horace Stebbing Roscoe St. John** (1830-1888): born 6 July 1830 in Corneille, near Caen, Normandy, the son of James Augustus St. John, an author, from Laugharne, Carmarthenshire, mother the daughter of a surgeon and apothecary; educated by his father; following the family tradition, St. John embarked on a literary career at a very early age, and over a period of thirty years was an assiduous contributor—chiefly on politics and foreign affairs—to the leading periodicals and newspapers of the day, including *The Times*, *The Standard*, and *The Athenaeum*; author of several histories including a biography of Christopher Columbus; political leader writer for *Daily Telegraph*, 1857-61, employed by the *Morning Chronicle*, 1861-2. *ODNB*, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/24497>, accessed 22 May 2006.

**John B. Seely**: captain, Bombay native infantry; military secretary to the vice-president of the Supreme Government; author of “A Voice from India, in Answer to the Reformers of England.” [Information is from his memoir].

**William Henry Sullivan Shakespear**: captain and commandant of Nagpur Irregular Force, and later an official in the Indian forestry service. [*ODNB* entry is of his son, William Henry Irvine Shakespear (1878-1915), a diplomat and explorer]. *ODNB*, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/40855>, accessed 22 May 2006.

**Moyle Joseph Sherer** (1789-1869): born, Southampton, England, the younger son of Joseph Sherer, descended from the Moyles of Bake in Cornwall; educated at Winchester College, 1801-7; officer, 34th regiment (Border regiment), British Army, 1809-36, fought

in Peninsular campaign, 1809-13, POW, 1813-5, stationed in Madras, 1818-23, rose to rank of captain, while in India, Sherer had imbibed Evangelical religious views and sought to promote them among his comrades in army with the publishing of a religious treatise *Religio Militis* (1827), promoted to brevet majority in 1830 and captain, 1831, he had a moderately famous literary career subsequently, publishing such fiction as *Life of Wellington* (1830-2); became mentally ill later in life. *ODNB*, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/25360>, accessed 22 May 2006.

**John Shipp** (1785-1834): born, Saxmundham, Suffolk, England on 16 March 1785, the younger son of Thomas Shipp, a marine, orphaned as a young boy, escaped from parish workhouse at age of 12 to enter British Army; soldier and non-commissioned officer, British Army, 1797-1823, rising to rank of lieutenant, enlisted in 22<sup>nd</sup> Cheshire regiment, Colchester, 1797, quickly rose to be sergeant in the grenadier company by 1803, fought in the Second Anglo-Maratha War of 1803-5, bravery in the siege on Bhurtpur earned him an ensigncy in the 65<sup>th</sup> foot in 1805, gazetted lieutenant in the 76<sup>th</sup> foot the same year, after two and a half years' further service, Shipp found himself forced to sell out on 19 March 1808 in order to obtain a sum (about £250) to pay his debts, reenlisted as a private in the 24<sup>th</sup> light dragoons, rising by 1812 to become regimental sergeant-major, reappointed by Governor-General Hastings to ensigncy in the 87<sup>th</sup> (the Prince of Wales's Own) Irish regiment of foot (later Royal Irish Fusiliers), fought in Anglo-Gurkha War and Third Anglo-Maratha War, distinguishing himself in both cases for exemplary bravery, promoted lieutenant, 1821, became implicated in a series of turf speculations, 1822, upon imprudently commenting in writing on the behavior of a superior officer, Shipp was court-martialed in 1823, nevertheless, he was granted a pension of £50 p.a. by the Company in 1825, active opponent of corporal punishment within the British Army, inspector, Stepney division of the London Metropolitan Police, 1830-1, superintendent of the night watch at Liverpool, 1831-3, master of Liverpool workhouse, 1833-4. *ODNB*, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/25415>, accessed 22 May 2006.

**Frederick John Shore** (1799-1837): born 31 May 1799, second son of Lord Teighmouth, governor-general, Bengal, 1793-8; educated at Harrow, before 1816, Haileybury College, 1816-8; Bengal covenanted service, 1818-37, register and officiating joint magistrate, Bulundshar, 1823-9, on leave, 1829-31, judge and magistrate, Furruckabad, 1832-5, commissioner of Sagar and Nerbudda and officiating agent to the lieutenant governor in the North West Provinces, 1835-7; despite writing pieces critical of the Company's administration in India, Shore was an old-fashioned Tory who opposed the Great Reform Bill of 1832 and was deeply critical of reformers such as James Silk Buckingham and James Mill. [Peter Penner and Richard Dale MacLean, eds., *The Rebel Bureaucrat: Frederick John Shore (1799-1837) as Critic of William Bentinck's India*, (Delhi: Chanakya Publications, 1982), 3-18].

**Thomas Skinner** (1800?-1843): birthplace unknown, son of British Army Lieutenant-General John Skinner; officer, British Army, 1816-43, rising to brevet rank of lieutenant-colonel, ensign, 16<sup>th</sup> foot, 1816, lieutenant, 1819, captain, 1823, exchanged into 31<sup>st</sup> foot, 1824, in India, 1826-43, promoted to rank of major, 1835, joined force assembled at Jalalabad under Sir George Pollock for the relief of Kabul, 1842, commanded 31<sup>st</sup> foot in

the campaign, awarded CB, 1842, gazetted brevet lieutenant-colonel, December 1842, died as a result of privations endured during the war. *ODNB*, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/25687>, accessed 22 May 2006.

**Adam Smith** (bapt. 1723, d. 1790): baptized on 5 June 1723, Kirkcaldy, Scotland, only child of Adam Smith, private secretary to the 3<sup>rd</sup> earl of Loudoun, writer to the signet and local customs official, mother the daughter of a prominent Fife landowner; educated at burgh school, 1730s, and Balliol College, Oxford, 1740-6, receiving Snell Exhibition, receiving BA in 1744; professor of logic and moral philosophy, University of Glasgow, 1751-64, traveling tutor to Charles Townsend's step-son while on his Grand Tour on the Continent, 1764-6, while on the Continent, Smith met Rousseau for the first time and struck up a close friendship which lasted until the latter's death in 1778, in Kirkcaldy, 1767-73, in London, 1773-6, elected fellow of the Royal Society as well as to The Club founded by Joshua Reynolds, 1773, commissioner of customs in Edinburgh, 1778-90, close friend of Edmund Burke's [cited above] during the 1780s; friends with Hume, Rousseau, Voltaire, Turgot, and other French physiocrats; author of *Theory of Moral Sentiments* (1759) and *The Wealth of Nations* (1776). *ODNB*, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/25767>, accessed 23 May 2006.

**George Thomas** (1756-1802): born, Roscrea, co. Tipperary, Ireland, of unknown social origins; sailor, Royal Navy, 1780-1, Indian adventurer, 1781-1802, commander of Begum Sumru of Sirdhana's army, 1787-92, army officer for Appa Rao, Scindia's cousin, the governor of Meerut, 1792-97, by 1799, Thomas was the most powerful ruler on the right bank of the Jumna with annual revenues estimated at Rs. 250,000 (approx. £31,000). *ODNB*, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/27219>, accessed 22 May 2006.

**William [formerly Wilhelm] Thorn** (1780-1843): born on 22 May 1780 in Neuwielf, near Koblenz, Hanover, the youngest of five sons born to master tailor Johann Philipp Thorn; after attending local schools he came about 1796 under the patronage of Major George Gordon, deputy inspector-general of foreign corps serving with HM forces on the continent, Gordon helped him obtain a cornetcy in the British Army in 1799 in the 29<sup>th</sup> light dragoons; officer, British Army, 1799-1825: cornet, 1799, lieutenant, 1801, saw much action in the Second Anglo-Maratha War, 1803-6 and distinguished himself in the Battle of Laswari, promoted to rank of captain, 1807, brigade major to the cantonment of Bangalore, Mysore, 1807-10, participated in expedition against French-held Mauritius, 1810, and Java, 1811, deputy quartermaster-general of the British forces in Java, 1811-4, promoted brevet major, 1812, resigned staff appointment in 1814 and returned to England, fought in Battle of Waterloo in 1815 and after peace was declared, returned to live in Germany, became a active member of the local Lutheran church in Neuwielf, helping its school and founding a society which erected a bridge over the Rhine at Neuwielf in 1817, placed on half pay in 1818, breveted lieutenant-colonel, 1819, resigned in 1825, received KCH, 1832. *ODNB*, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/27338>, accessed 22 May 2006.

**Edward Parry Thornton** (1811-1893): born, Clapham, England, 7 October 1811, second son of John Thornton, commissioner of Inland Revenue, grandfather was director

of the Bank of England; educated at Charterhouse School and Haileybury College, where he ranked second in his class, both before 1830; Bengal covenanted service, 1830-62, assistant to Robert Merttins Bird, commissioner of revenue in the Gorakhpur division, 1831, subsequently he became the chief settlement officer of Saharanpur and Muzaffarnagar, publishing the settlement reports for both districts in 1840 and 1841, on furlough in England, 1842-5, chief magistrate and collector at Meerut, 1845-8, transferred in same capacity to Saharanpur, 1848-9, civil commissioner in Punjab, 1849-58, judicial commissioner in Punjab, 1858-62, made CB in 1860, retired from Bengal covenanted service in 1862, in retirement, he joined the banking firm of H.S. Thornton. *ODNB*, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/27355>, accessed 22 May 2006.

**James Tod** (1782-1835): born, Islington, London, the son of James Tod of a Scottish gentry family; officer, Bengal Army, 1799-1818, appointed lieutenant in the 14<sup>th</sup> Bengal infantry, 1800, attached to the escort sent with Graeme Mercer, envoy and resident at Sindhia's court, 1805-15, promoted to rank of captain, 1813, second assistant to residency, 1815-8, resident and general political agent, Western Rajput states, 1818-22, left for Britain, 1823 (travel account is of his journey from Rajasthan to Britain in 1823), librarian, Royal Asiatic Society, after 1824, promoted major, 1824, lieutenant-colonel, 1826, author of *Annals and Antiquities of Rajasthan* (1829-32). *ODNB*, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/27486>, accessed 22 May 2006.

**Sir Charles Edward Trevelyan, 1<sup>st</sup> Bart.** (1807-1886): born at Taunton, 2 April 1807, the fourth son of George Trevelyan, archdeacon of Taunton, mother the daughter of a bart.; educated at Taunton grammar school, Charterhouse School, after 1820, and Haileybury College, before 1826; Bengal covenanted service, 1826-38, assistant to Sir Charles Theophilus Metcalfe, commissioner at Delhi, 1827-31, deputy secretary in the political department, 1831-6, secretary to the sadr board of revenue, 1836-8; secretary to the Treasury, 1840-59, made KCB, 1848, author of *Northcote-Trevelyan Report* (1854), governor of Madras, 1859-61, recalled 1861, finance minister of India, 1862-5, created Bart. 1874, father of George Otto Trevelyan [also cited]. *ODNB*, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/27716>, accessed 23 May 2006.

**Sir George Otto Trevelyan, 2<sup>nd</sup> Bart.** (1838-1928): born, 20 July 1838, Rothley Temple, Leicestershire, the second of three children, and only son of Sir Charles Edward Trevelyan [also cited], mother the sister of Thomas Babington Macaulay [also cited]; educated at Harrow School, 1851-7, became head of school and won a series of prizes for English verse, Trinity College, Cambridge, 1857-61, became second in merit order on the list of candidates for the classical tripos; private secretary to his father, then the governor of Madras and finance minister of India, 1861-2, Liberal MP for Tynemouth and North Shields, 1865-8, MP for Hawick district of the Border burghs, 1868-86, active supporter of widening the parliamentary suffrage to rural voters, and generally a Gladstonian radical during 1870s, civil lord of the Admiralty, 1880-2, chief secretary of Ireland, 1882-4, chancellor of the duchy of Lancaster, 1884-5, secretary for Scotland, 1886, resigned with Chamberlain over Irish home rule issue in 1886, lost seat in 1886 election to a Gladstonian Liberal, MP for Glasgow, Bridgeton, 1887-97, secretary of state for Scotland, 1892-4, retired from politics in 1897; received order of merit, 1911, was

also an honorary fellow of Trinity College, Cambridge and Oriel College, Oxford; author of several biographies including of his uncle, Thomas Babington Macaulay, and Charles James Fox as well as of a six-volume history of the American War of Independence, published between 1899 and 1914; of his children, one son became a Labour minister for education while another became the Regius Professor of History at Cambridge. *ODNB*, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/36555>, accessed 23 May 2006.

**Henry St. George Tucker** (1771/2-1851): born, St. Georges Island, Bermuda on 15 February 1772 (some sources give 1771), the eldest son of Henry Tucker, secretary, and afterwards president, of the council of Bermudas, by Frances, daughter of George Bruere, governor of Bermuda, educated at Dr. Alexander's school at Hampstead, 1781-6; Bengal Civil Service, 1786-92 as uncovenanted servant, 1792-1815 as covenanted servant, deputy registrar of the *sadr diwani* and *nizamat adalat*, 1794-99, during this time he drafted plans for a bank, partly under government control, which became the Bank of Bengal, judicial and revenue secretary of Bengal Government, 1799-1801, accountant-general, 1801-4, 1806, took leave of absence to manage firm of Cockerell, Traill, Palmer & Co., 1804-5, convicted of the attempted rape of Dorothea Simpson, wife of a junior partner in his former firm, and imprisoned for six months and fined Rs. 4000 (approx. £500), commissioner for superintending the settlement of the Ceded and Conquered Provinces, 1807-9, secretary to government in the public department, 1809-11, returned to Britain in 1811 and voted a gratuity of Rs 50,000 (approx. £6,000) by the directors in recompense for having undertaken the poorly paid job of accountant-general, secretary to government in the colonial and financial department, a post specifically created for him by Governor-General Lord Minto, 1812-4, chief secretary, 1814-5; Company director, 1826-51, chairman, 1834 and 1847; author of 3 books including the tragedies "Harold" and "Camoens," published in London in 1835. *ODNB*, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/27789>, accessed 22 May 2006.

**Alexander Fraser Tytler** [*ODNB* entry is of his father]: unknown date and place of birth, third son of Alexander, First Lord Woodhouselee, judge-advocate of Scotland and lord of Scottish judiciary; judge and magistrate, Bengal Presidency. *ODNB*, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/27965>, accessed 22 May 2006.

**Robert Henry Wallace-Dunlop** (b. 1823?, d. 1887): son of J.A. Wallace-Dunlop, Esq., member of Bombay Council; Bengal civil service; received CB. *TL*, 19 Nov. 1887, p. 1, col. A.

**Marquess Richard Wellesley** (1760-1842): born 20 June 1760, probably at Dangan Castle, co. Meath, the eldest of six sons and seven children of Garret Wesley, who was created earl of Mornington in 1760, mother the daughter of an Irish viscount, younger brother was the Duke of Wellington, the Wellesleys [Wesleys, formerly Colleys] were a long-established, though impoverished, Anglo-Irish family dating back to the 13<sup>th</sup> century; educated at Miss Towers' private school in Portarlinton, Harrow School, 1770-2?, Eton College, 1772?-8, Christ Church, Oxford, 1778-81, but left without a degree, won chancellor's prize for Latin verse on the subject of the death of Capt. Cook; succeeded to his father's title in 1781, MP for Bere Alston, Devon, 1784-7, Windsor, 1787-96, Old



Sarum, 1796-8, made one of the original knights of St. Patrick in 1783, junior lord of the Treasury, 1786-83, commissioner of the Board of Control, 1793-8, governor-general of Bengal, 1798-1805, ambassador-extraordinary to the Spanish junta, 1809-10, foreign secretary, 1810-2, lord lieutenant of Ireland, 1821-8, 1832-4, lord steward of the household, 1830-2, lord chamberlain, 1835. *ODNB*, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/29008>, accessed 23 May 2006.

**James Welsh** (1775-1861): born in Scotland, 12 March 1775, of unknown social origins; officer, Madras Army, 1790-1854, rising to rank of general, ensign, 3<sup>rd</sup> European regiment, 1790, lieutenant, 24<sup>th</sup> native infantry, 1792, transferred to 9<sup>th</sup> native infantry, 1795, fort-adjutant of Point-de-Galle, Ceylon, 1796-8, similar capacity at Masulipatam, 1798-9, promoted to captain, 1799, adjutant and quartermaster of 3<sup>rd</sup> native infantry, 1799-1803, fought in Second Anglo-Maratha War, 1803-4, judge-advocate and assistant surveyor to the Poona subsidiary force, 1804-5, commander of battalion of native infantry at Poona, 1805-6, promoted to rank of major, 1807, fought in Travancore conflict, 1809, promoted to rank of lieutenant-colonel, 1813, deputy judge-advocate-general, 1813-21, commander of troops in provinces of Malabar and Kanara, 1821-3, command at Vellore, 1823-4, command at Trevancore and Cochin, 1824-6, Doab field force, 1826-9, in Britain on furlough, 1829-37, promoted to colonel, 1829, promoted to major-general, 1837, commander of the northern division, Madras Army, 1837-47, promoted to lieutenant-general, 1846, and general, 1854. *ODNB*, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/29026>, accessed 22 May 2006.

**William Westall** (1781-1850): born on 12 October 1781 in Hertford, the son of Benjamin Westall, a brewer, older brother was Richard Westall, older brother was the historical painter Richard Westall; educated at schools in Sydenham and Hampstead, and taught by his elder brother until he became a probationer at the Royal Academy in 1799; landscape draughtsman, HMS Investigator on exploration expedition of Australia, 1801-5, shipwrecked off Australia coast, but managed to sail to China, India, Jamaica, and finally home to Britain (in India between 1804-5), elected fellow of the Linnaean Society, 1805, associate of Society of Painters in Water Colours, 1810, and became full member in 1811, became associate of Royal Academy, 1812, appears to have suffered a mental breakdown in 1815, was chiefly employed post-1815 as a lithographic illustrator of topographical works for Ackermann, Rodwell and Martin, and other publishers, exhibited at the Royal Academy Commencement of the Deluge, 1848; over course of his career, Westall exhibited 70 works at the Royal Academy, 30 paintings and drawings at the British Institution, and seven at the Suffolk Street Gallery; 700 prints of his work have been located; Westall was an intimate of Wordsworth, Southey and Sir George Beaumont. *DNB*, 20: 1259-61; *ODNB*, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/29107>, accessed 23 May 2006.

**Adam White** (1790-1839): son of Adam White of Fens, a merchant and the provost of Leith; political agent in Upper Assam; commander of Assam Light Infantry, at time of death, and lieutenant-colonel in 59<sup>th</sup> Bengal Native Infantry, killed at Sadiya, Upper Assam, in repelling an attack by Kampti tribes. *DIB*, 449.

**Sir Samuel Ford Whittingham** (1772-1841): born at Bristol on 29 January 1772, the elder son and second child of William Whittingham of Bristol; educated at Bristol and intended for the law, although Whittingham wanted to be a soldier; entered temporarily brother-in-law's merchant firm, before 1797, jointed mounted volunteers during invasion scare of 1797; officer, British Army, 1803-41, ensign, 1803, bought lieutenancy in 1<sup>st</sup> Life Guards, 1803, attended Royal Military College at High Wycombe, 1803-4, sent on secret mission by William Pitt to Spain, 1804-5, promoted to captain in the 20<sup>th</sup> foot, 1805, transferred to command of a troop in the 13<sup>th</sup> light dragoons, 1805, participated in disastrous campaign against Argentina, 1807, Peninsular campaign, 1808-14, serving as one of Wellesley's aides, appointed to brigadier-general in the Spanish Army, 1809, lieutenant-general, 1814, made CB, 1815, confidant of King Ferdinand of Spain, 1814-9, governor of Dominica, 1819-22 made KCH, 1821, quartermaster-general of British forces in India, 1822-7, promoted major-general, 1825, made KCB, 1826, and received thanks from House of Commons for his part in the siege of Bhurtpur, commander of Cawnpore division, 1827-30, commander of Meerut division, 1830-3, military secretary to Governor-General Bentinck, 1833-5, commander-in-chief of British forces in the Windward and Leeward islands, 1836-9, promoted to lieutenant-general, 1836, commander-in-chief of Madras Army, 1839-41. *ODNB*, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/29328>, accessed 23 May 2006.

**Mark Wilks** (c. 1760-1831): born on the Island of Man of unknown social origins, intended earlier for the ministry, Wilks had a classical education; officer, Madras Army, 1782-1818, deputy secretary to the military board, 1786-7, secretary to a diplomatic mission under Sir Barry Close to the sultan of Mysore, 1787-8, fort adjutant at Fort St. George, 1788-9, promoted to rank of lieutenant, 1789, aide-de-camp to the governor, 1789-90, brigade-major and aide-de-camp to Colonel James Stuart, 1790-92, assistant adjutant-general, 1793, Stuart's military secretary, 1794, on furlough to England, 1795-99, promoted to rank of captain, 1798, military secretary and private secretary to Madras governor, 1799-1801?, town mayor of Fort St. George, 1801-3, military secretary to Madras Army commander-in-chief, 1803, political resident at Mysore, 1803-8, governor of St. Helena, 1813-6, promoted to rank of brevet colonel, 1814, retired from Company's service in 1818; known primarily for his *Historical Sketches of the South of India* (vol. 1, 1810, vols. 2-3, 1814); Wilks was also elected a fellow of the Royal Society in 1826 and was for some years a vice-president of the Royal Asiatic Society. *ODNB*, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/29434>, accessed 22 May 2006.

**Sir John Pollard Willoughby, 3<sup>rd</sup> Bart.** (1798-1866): third son of Sir Christopher Willoughby, first bart., Bombay covenanted service, 1817-1854, became Chief Secretary to the Bombay Government, 1835, member of Bombay Council, 1846-51, Company director, 1854-8, member of the Council of India, 1858-66, succeeded brother Sir Henry, as bart., 1865. *DIB*, 453.

**Marianne Young [née Ridgway; other married name Postans]** (1811-1897): born in Pimlico, London, on 4 January 1811, the daughter of Richard Bowling Hunter Ridgway and his wife, Elizabeth; married Thomas Postans, an officer in the Bombay native infantry in 1833, Young traveled with her husband to India and accompanied him in 1834

to Cutch which gave her material three two books on the region; Young was also an accomplished fiction writer, writing about zenanas and other aspects of Indian women's lives which British men could not access; her husband died in 1846, in 1848, she married William Henry Young, an army surgeon, she accompanied him to the Crimea in 1854; both Marianne Young and her husband retired back to Britain in 1861. *ODNB*, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/48646>, accessed 21 May 2006.



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