REPRESENTATIONS OF INDIA: 1740 - 1840

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Abstract

This is a study of representations of India in English in the period 1740 - 1840. Representations in both fiction and non-fiction are analysed within their contemporary political and social contexts, revealing that they not only reflected the conflicts within society but were actively involved in them. Reportage, discussion, comment, fiction are seen to be all parts of the same interaction, related to the social, political, economic and ideological trends of the time. The various writings, brought together and analysed in context, demonstrate the interconnected nature of experience, ideas and representation.

The thesis begins with an overview of the research methodology and an analysis of the political and economic situation in the period. The study itself is divided into six chapters, the first two dealing with representations of Englishmen in India, the traders and the soldiers and administrators; the next three with the perceptions of Indian religion and the practices of Sati and Thuggee; and the sixth with Hyder Ali and Tipu Sultan, the kings of Mysore who came to represent all that was evil in India.

Finally, an extensive bibliography of material written about India in the eighteenth and nineteenth century is appended.

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INTRODUCTION

SECTION I

"For the first time, the history of imperialism and its culture can now be studied as neither monolithic nor reductively compartmentalized, separate, distinct."[1]

This study is part of the process wherein the critical focus on colonial writing shifts from individual aspects of texts to the broader field of examination of the material in the context of the multiplicity of political, social and ideological factors that influenced them. It is a study of the period after that which Perara defines as "Colonial", i.e. the early Imperial: "*Colonial* refers to the period before the consolidations of the eighteenth and early nineteenth century, when cultural and moral meanings were not yet systematically attached to the fact of conquest."[2]

The intial survey of written material of the period after Perera's "Colonial" period, the early Imperial, 1740 - 1840, revealed remarkable similarities in perceptions and representations in "literary" and "non-literary" writings. The border between the two, always blurred, became meaningless when the representations of English traders, thugs and Indian kings, amongst others, were examined. Meadows Taylor and other writers actively involved in the romantic re-creation of "factual subjects" did not significantly differ from "non-literary" representations of the same subjects in journals and periodicals. It made sense, therefore, to study the greater body of writings of the period simultaneously, examining their similarities and relationship of the the whole corpus to the social and political situation of their creators. This body of writing is similar in character to that which Said examined in *Orientalism* , where he described his subject matter thus:

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[1]Said, Edward: *Culture and Imperialism*, London, 1993; p. xxiii.
[2]Perera, S.: *Reaches of Empire*, New York, 1991, p. 10.

". . . Orientalism is not a mere political subject matter or field . . . nor is it a large and diffuse collection of texts . . . nor is it representative and expressive of some nefarious "Western" imperialist plot . . . It is rather a *distribution* of geopolitical awareness into aesthetic, scholarly, economic, sociological, historical, and philological texts, it is an *elaboration* not only of a basic geographical distinction . . . but also of a whole series of "interests" which, by such means as scholarly discovery, philological reconstruction, psychological analysis, landscape and sociological description, it not only creates but also maintains; it *is*, rather than expresses, a certain *will* or *intention* to understand, in some cases to control, manipulate, even to incorporate, what is a manifestly different (or alternative and novel) world; it is above all, a discourse that . . . is produced and exists in an uneven exchange with various kinds of power, shaped to a degree by the exchange with the power political . . . , power intellectual . . ., power cultural . . ., power moral."[1]

To a certain extent, the same can be said of the material dealt with in this thesis. It is a complex body of material, for which simple reductive analysis, as "racist/colonial/imperialist" etc., is not sufficient. This is because such tagging presupposes that the creators of the representations possessed the intellectual sophistication to actually comprehend the subjects they dealt with. Ideological and intellectual curiosity and interrogation are as much a product of a political and social climate as imperialism and nationalism: " . . . colonial facts are vertiginous: they lack a recognisable cultural plot; they frequently fail to cohere around the master-myth that proclaims static lines of demarcation between imperial power and disempowered culture, between colonizer and colonized. Instead, they move with a ghostly mobility to suggest how highly unsettling an economy of

[1]Said, Edward: *Orientalism*, London, 1978; p. 12.

complicity and guilt is in operation . . . "[1] The myth was complex. The writers of the period never "truly" encountered the sub-continent they described - they were limited by the intellectual and political debates that raged around trade, religion and, eventually, race. "The Orient was almost a European invention, and had been since antiquity a place of romance, exotic beings, haunting memories and landscapes, remarkable experiences."[2] To access this material with the intention of proving bias is, therefore, unproductive as it investigates only part of a complex equation.

Since bias is neither monomorphic nor static, analysis of the changing forms of the representations ("biases") and their roots is necessary to understand the mechanics of these cultural (mis)representations. The premise is: " . . . all cultures impose corrections upon raw reality, changing it from free-floating objects into units of knowledge. The problem is not that conversion takes place. It is perfectly natural for the human mind to resist the assault on it of untreated strangeness; therefore cultures have always been inclined to impose complete transformations on other cultures, receiving these other cultures not as they are but as, for the benefit of the receiver, they ought to be."[3] The resistance takes many forms, and resistance within the colonialists' culture is as relevant to the study of colonial representation as the colonialists' resistance to the culture of the colonised. It is the analysis of this resistance and conversion that is the purpose of this study.

Apropos of earlier analyses, Said remarks, in his study of Orientalism, that " . . . there is no getting away from the fact that literary studies in general . . . have avoided the effort of seriously bridging the gap between the superstructural and the base levels in textual, historical scholarship. . ."[4]. My thesis attempts to bridge this gap in the period that saw the rise of the English/British empire in India. The writings of the period expressed and

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[1] Suleri, Sara: *The Rhetoric of English India*, Chicago, 1992; p. 3.
[2] *Orientalism*, p. 1.
[3] *Orientalism*, p. 67.
[4] *Orientalism*, p. 13.

influenced the opinions of groups of Englishmen who had either had direct contact with India, or indirect contact through their countrymen who returned, greatly enriched, from it. Their perceptions of the region were influenced by, and part of, the "power political . . . , power intellectual . . ., power cultural . . ., power moral" and this is an examination of the close correspondence between the fictional and non-fictional.

Few would argue that representations in colonial writings are in any way "true" depictions. In the words of Homi Bhabha, "Colonial power produces the colonized as a fixed reality which is at once an 'other' and yet entirely knowable and visible."[1] As their power grew, the English increasingly needed to justify their domination of the sub-continent. If Tipu had not existed, he would have been created, had the thugs been "unreal", they too would have been invented. And so they were. "Facts" were chosen, and elaborated on, and layer after layer built up, like the skins of an onion. The resultant fiction sustained the English nation's dreams, ideology and actions in the sub-continent. Belief in these fictions was not essential, the mere fact of non-interrogation of them or of their existence was sufficient. Such tacit acceptance made the "facts" reality and India became what the colonialists wanted it to be, in much the same way as today cultures, peoples and sexes are defined by perceived "evidence", which is the result of public representation.

During the period 1740 - 1840, as at others, "Empire . . . was being constituted in a complex linkage of synchronous and sometimes indistinguishable literary, intellectual, political, and military activity."[2] To unravel this "complex" linkage, this study considered six separate "portraits": traders, soldiers and administrators, religion, sati, thuggee, and Hyder Ali and Tipu Sultan. The projections and metamorphoses of these portraits

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[1] Bhabha, Homi K.: "The other question: difference, discrimination and the discourse of colonialism", in *Literature, Politics and Theory*, ed. Francis Barker et. al.,London & New York, 1986; p. 156.

[2] *Reaches of Empire*, p. 11.

reflected the complex nature of their creation. The first two chapters investigate representations of the three most significant groups of Englishmen in India, and the remaining four, the major cultural and political aspects of India and Indians, as perceived by English writers of the period.

The men of the Raj, who have attracted considerable scholarship in the past, were, for the most part, incomers, temporary colonisers who spent their working lives in the sub-continent and returned "home" to live out their retirement. They built their empire on the foundations laid by the merchants, soldiers and civil servants of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. When the representations of these early colonialists was approached, the intial conclusions that were reached were not unexpected - they were essentially fictional. Further analysis, however, revealed that representations of individual social groups were closely linked to the variety of factors mentioned earlier. Therefore this thesis begins with the examination of the representations of the Englishmen themselves.

First in the public eye was the trader, who began his career as a romantic hero, then sank to the level of a pathetic, spineless worm of a man, the lowest form of life. On a superficial level, this could be attributed to the increasing importance of the imperial ideal. The chapter, "Traders", demonstrates that the rise of the imperial ideal was itself not simply a case of a sense of racial superiority in the ascendance, nor was the economic superiority of the sub-continent a universally accepted "fact". The representation of the trader did not just sink with the rise of the military, nor did the trader slip directly from the pedestal of romantic people's hero to the level of minor pedlar. He travelled down a path which made him first hero, then the unrefined, over-wealthy disrupter of English society, next, the greedy oppressor of "natives" and, finally, the despicable little Lapwing[1]. Concurrently, England reduced its exports of gold and silver to India and increased the reverse trade. This was a significant change - England saw

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[1] See Chapter 1 "Traders".

itself as a trading entity and the reversal of exchange had a dramatic effect on English society, to the extent that Parliament came under the control of those who owed their political existence to the East India trade. When moral objections were raised, for a variety of reasons, including social conflict between the traditional feudal aristocracy and the new financial aristocracy, the latter rejected their mercantile roots, paying lip-service to a newly acquired ideal of political power. These changes and conflicts were reflected in the representations, which were actively involved in the debates themselves.

Concurrent to the decline of the trader and the rise of the soldiers and administrators was a growing perception of India not just as an "otherness" but as a "differentness". The religions and customs of the sub-continent were perceived as affecting both the behaviour of the "natives" and that of those who came into contact with them, i.e. the Anglo-Indians. The disruptive effect of the returnees on their home society was at least partially "blamed" on the effect of India on them. Their failure to introduce the newly popular Christian/moral ideology in India came under attack and, as the attack gained momentum, increasingly negative images of Indian religions and customs came to the fore. The previously acceptable indifference that had set the "tolerant" Englishman apart from the "intolerant" Portuguese/Spanish Roman Catholic colonists became as unpopular as the trader-hero who had flourished under it. Human sacrifice, the mark of primitive society, was perceived in India and the occurence of sati in writings increased dramatically. Defence of the "toleration" policy was rendered impossible by religious toleration becoming synonymous with the condoning of human sacrifice/sati. And, as religous "tolerance" in the English lost its moral credit, Hindu tolerance became easier to brush aside. Tolerance became the mark of degeneracy - it had been part of the early "greed-motivated" period of the Anglo-Indian experience. The suppression of Thuggee combined moral outrage with the demonstration of English administrative effectiveness. It

appealed to resurgent English Christian morality - Christianity had not only neither produced nor encouraged such barbarity, it had motivated the men who succeeded in completely eradicating it even though it had existed for "thousands" of years.

The final chapter of the thesis examines the representations of two Indian rulers. The Moghuls had always been legend, their wealth, power and distance from the centres of English power had prevented direct contact with them. Regional governors had, however, often crossed the colonists' paths. They were intially perceived as impediments to "free trade" (cf. *Adventures of a Rupee*) and were, consequently, reviled. With the rise of British poltical power, the conflicts became both more frequent and more violent. The various monarchs now stood in the path of "necessary" English expansion, expansion that was variously justified as necessary for trade, or for religion, or the good of the Indians. Hyder and Tipu stood out because they successfully challenged the English armies on more than one occasion. After initial expressions of (military) respect, they degenerated to despots who denied their subjects the benefits of an English administration. The chapter examines the recurrent inconsistencies and contradictions in the (fictionalised) characters of the monarchs, who are used, in turn, as foils for each other, both being, on occasion, the "ideal" king and the evil Eastern tyrant. The lasting effect of the demonisation can be seen even in D. H. Lawrence's *Sons and Lovers*, where a fighting cock is named "Tippoo", after the by then legendary "vicious" fighter.

Prior to the presentation and analysis of the writings, the identification of the historical, political and economic background to the portraits is essential. The next section of this introduction will attempt to give an overview of the historical, political, economic, administrative and social situation leading up to and during the period under consideration.

SECTION II

II.1. POLITICAL HISTORY

II.1.1. Beginnings of the East India Trade

The first significant contact between the English and India came as the result of a letter written in 1579 by the English Jesuit, Thomas Stevens, describing a journey to India. It inspired four London merchants to travel to India in 1583 out of "a desire for direct communication with the East"[1]. They were the first of the stream who would travel to the sub-continent in search of trade, adventure and glory. Progress was rapid and, by the end of 1600, a group of "Merchant Adventurers"[2] with a capital of £70,000[3] had been granted a Royal Charter permitting them to trade with India. The immediate reason for the issuing of the licence was the raising of the price of pepper (then a scarce commodity) from 3s. a pound to 8s. a pound by Dutch merchants[4]. This commercial motive set the tone for the contacts that were to develop between the two nations.

In 1608, Captain Hawkins arrived in Surat, which was to become the first English factory, and made his way to the Agra court of Jehangir. The splendour of the Mughal court dazzled him, and, in turn, his stories and those of those who came after him, dazzled British audiences. Thomas Roe, the English ambassador to the Mughal court from 1615, wrote to his master, James I of England (James VI of Scotland), "Fame hath done much for the Glory of this place . . . it cannot be denied that this King is one of the

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[1] Roberts, P. E.: *History of British India* (3rd edition); 1958 (orig. publ. 1921); p. 21.
[2] Mukherjee, Ramakrishna: *The Rise and the Fall of the East India Company*; London & New York, 1974; p. 86.
[3] Dutt, R: *Economic History of India Under Early British Rule* (8th Impression); 1956 (orig. publ. 1901); p. 2.
[4] *The Rise and the Fall of the East India Company*, p. 86.

mightyest princes in Asia, as well in the extent of territory as in revenew"[1].

From such small beginnings the Company grew. Fort St George (Madras) was built in 1639, Bombay purchased from King Charles II and settled in 1687 and Calcutta was established as their Bengal headquarters in 1700. Even early on, all did not go smoothly for the Company though. Its monopoly was threatened in 1635 when King Charles granted a second licence to trade with India to Endymion Porter saying that the Company "had merely intended and pursued their own present profit and advantage without providing any safety or settledness for establishing of traffic in the said Indies for the good of posterity"[2]. In 1641 the Company appealed but was ignored. In 1649 a formal union of the two companies was effected and in 1657 Cromwell granted them a new charter, under which they became a joint stock company. In the following years the Company prospered under the relatively stable political situation in England and in India - the Restoration in England and the might of Aurangzeb's empire allowed it to concentrate on trade. There was little competition between the Company and its European rivals in India. An uprising at one of their garrisons in Bombay in 1683 began the shift away from pure commercialism. They began to express an interest in the methods of the Dutch which involved "government . . . warfare and the increase of their revenue"[3]. Calls for the establishment of an "English Dominion" in India were heard and a small force was dispatched from England to do this. The mission nearly ended in disaster when the English were forced to evacuate their Bengal factories and flee to Madras. However, a gamble by the English Governor of Bombay (the seizure of traffic off the west coast of India) paid off and Aurangzeb permitted the re-establishment of the Bengal factories on condition that a fine was paid and an undertaking to behave was given.

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[1] Quoted in M. E. Chamberlain: *Britain and India: The Interaction of Two Peoples*; David and Charles, Newton Abbott (Devon.), 1974; p. 26.
[2] Grant to Sir W. Courten, Dec 12, 1635, quoted in *History of British India*, p. 39.
[3] India Office Records, Letter book No. 9, dispatch to Bombay, September 11, 1689; quoted in *History of British India*, pp. 43 - 44.

In 1693 the Company's charter was renewed, still permitting a monopoly. However, many adventurous independent traders (known as interlopers) broke the monopoly regulations and amassed large private fortunes. In 1698 a new incorporated company was formed under the control of 24 Directors. For several years the two companies competed and were bitter rivals - until 1702 when an Instrument of Union was signed, combining the two ventures under the control of a single 24 member Court of Directors (the actual union was not completed until 1708 when all disagreements had finally been settled).

The gradual disintegration of the Mughal Empire after Aurangzeb's death in 1707 and the invasions of Nadir Shah "had its effect on the tiny European trading settlements scattered along the coasts of India. These trading centres, had, to some extent at least, been protected by guarantees from the central government . . . [now] officials intent on creating and preserving their own independence . . . disregarded the immunities and privileges . . . the Europeans began to fortify their settlements. But defence was to bring a measure of involvement . . . it is always necessary to occupy a little more territory than one actually needs in order to defend the area one actually holds. Expansion always brings conflict, and participation in the intricacies of local politics."[1] The Company's main problem was not the new emerging principalities but a rival Ostend Company, composed of freelance Dutch and English traders. There were several encounters with them but the English Company managed to end their brief challenge by capturing one of their vessels in 1730 and orchestrating the destruction of their last remaining garrison in Bengal in 1733.

Even though Bengal remained stable as the Mughal Empire collapsed, in the west things were less settled. The Marathas were in the course of building a new kingdom and the Portuguese and the British felt threatened. A Maratha chief, Kanhoji Angria, ruled the seas. The English

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[1] Edwardes, M.: *British India 1772 - 1942*; London, 1967; pp. 6 - 7.

attempted to shore up the Portuguese (alliances between the rival European powers were common) but to no avail. Attacks on the Maratha strongholds in the period 1717 - 1737 failed to dislodge him. Bombay, though unprotected, survived and built up a naval force and had, by 1746, become "the strongest of the Presidency towns from a military point of view."[1]

In the south Mughal control over the region had been, at best, tenuous, and by 1708 the Company was dealing with the Nawab of the Carnatic and other rulers who, though Mughal vassals in name, were quite independent of Delhi. Until 1740 the English were able to trade in a stable environment as the rulers of Hyderabad and the Coromandel coast were sufficiently powerful to maintain peace in their realms. However, in 1740 the Marathas attacked the Nizam of Hyderabad and were soon besieging Tiruchirapalli. The Maratha march threatened the British in their fortified garrison towns - affecting them all the way up to Calcutta, where a ditch was hastily constructed as a defence against the confederacy who had defeated the Nawab of Bengal at Murshidabad.

II.1.2. The Early Imperial Period, 1740 - 1840

While the Marathas threatened the English colonies on the one hand, the French were preparing to bring their European rivalry with the English into India. In 1742 Dupleix took office as Governor-General of the French territories in southern India. This began a protracted battle for superiority between the rival European powers - a struggle that was to play as great a part in de-stabilising the regions of Bengal and the Coromandel coast as the disintegration of the Mughal empire. Time and time again the two European trading powers took sides in local battles, even instigating rulers against each other in order to gain the upper hand. Their rivalry was the result of both political and commercial motives. On the political front the European

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[1] *History of British India*, p. 71.

rivalry was merely extended across the globe, much as it was in the Americas. The commercial motives were related - they *were* commercial rivals but this need not have led to conflict as there were sufficient opportunities for profit for both trading companies but it was their political mistrust of each other that brought them into direct confrontation.

In September of 1742 Madras fell to the French but soon after, on promise of a bribe from the English Governor, the commander of the French forces, La Bourdonnais, restored it to the English Company. However, in 1746 La Bourdonnais was forced to retreat and Dupleix himself seized Madras, attacked the English at Fort St David but was repelled. An English fleet appeared and laid siege to Puducheri. Dupleix mounted a spirited defence and the English retreated. In 1748 under the peace of Aix-la-Chapelle Madras was returned to the English. The French, understandably, felt cheated of victory. The conflict that was to reduce the French to a minor role in Indian affairs was just beginning. Dupleix was not a trader but a soldier and was "little fitted to be the chief of a trading-company's settlement in time of peace . . . his bent lay rather in the direction of diplomacy and intrigue . . . he had studied sedulously the complicated native politics of southern India, and soon found in them a promising field for the exercise of his peculiar talents."[1] The English took advantage of Dupleix's own earlier forays into regional politics and began to set up rival claimants to thrones that were to be occupied by princes supported by the French. On the death of the Nizam, Dupleix "favoured the claims of a native prince (Chanda Sahib) . . . against An-wa-ud-din, the ruling Nawab of the Carnatic"[2]. Nawar-ud-din was killed in a battle in 1749 and Chanda Sahib, in collaboration with the French, attacked a number of other rulers in the region, including Nasir Jang, the Subadar of the Deccan, who was supported by the English. The French-backed forces opposing Nasir Jang were defeated. However, the

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[1] *History of British India*, p. 106.
[2] *History of British India*, p. 107.

set-back was only temporary and Dupleix was soon intriguing with Nasir Jang himself and then with officers opposed to him in his own camp. In 1750 Nasir Jang was assassinated and the new Subadar of the Deccan gave the French two more towns (and, of course, considerable sums of money). Dupleix was also proclaimed suzerain of Southern India - a rather empty title, despite its resonance. This was the height of Dupleix's power. The English had by now realised that French domination of the region was a real possibility and if that happened their trade would be seriously affected.

In 1751 Clive seized Arcot, diverting Chanda Sahib's forces in that direction. This took the pressure off Tiruchirapalli, which was under siege and allowed it to be relieved. Chanda Sahib was himself soon defeated and put to death "somewhat to the discredit of the English, who might have exerted themselves to save him"[1]. By 1753 Dupleix, short of funds, his allies defeated, was forced to sue for peace. In 1755 he was replaced and a provisional treaty drawn up guaranteeing both the French and English lucrative territories. The French company was by this time in financial straits and Dupleix himself claimed to have sunk a large sum of money into propping it up. His claims were disregarded on the grounds that the money he had spent had come from revenues of land that had been given him - land that he had had no right to accept. Whatever the case Dupleix's dismissal was the beginning of the end of the French threat to the English Company. There was one last chapter, albeit a long one, to be played out.

The next important event in the history of the English East India Company was one of the most significant - the Battle of Plassey. The Nawab of Bengal, Siraj-ud-Daulah, angered by the build-up of foreign (European) fighting forces, by their continuing European feuds in his territories and, no doubt, by the paltry benefit he derived from their presence, sacked the largest European settlement in his territories. The English attempted to flee but were captured. This was followed by the "Black Hole Incident" (which,

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[1] *History of British India*, pp. 110 -111.

like other "facts", may or may not have actually taken place). Suffice to say, the English at the time found enough reason to retaliate and end the threatening development of French influence in Bengal (the Nawab's troops had been receiving training from the French at Chandanagar). Clive's alliance with Mir Jafar brought the dividends that he had hoped for - Bengal came under their control. In the brief reign of Mir Jafar the Dutch made an attempt to replace the English as the power behind the throne. The Nawab soon chafed under the English yoke and entered secret negotiations with the Dutch at Chuchura (Chinsura). In 1759 a Dutch fleet from Batavia appeared on the Hooghly but was quickly defeated. The Dutch gave up all hope of replacing the British and retired to their purely trading status.

In 1760 Clive returned to England and there began a period of great corruption and instant wealth for the English. The Company and its servants possessed power without responsibility and they made full use of the profit-making potential available to them. Vansittart succeeded Clive. The Company's coffers had been emptied by the continual warfare. The Nawab himself was nearing bankruptcy as a result of the rapacity of the English company servants. Mir Jafar was deposed and his nephew Mir Kasim placed on the throne. Mir Kasim immediately made over several districts to the Company, together with the large bribes and *jagirs* that were by now customary. Relations with the British soon soured however and he was deposed in 1763 and replaced yet again with Mir Jafar, who made further concessions to the British including the privilege of internal trade - which they had been carrying out anyway. Mir Kasim himself escaped to Oudh and allied himself with the Nawab there. This led to the battle of Buxar in 1764 where the English defeated the titular Mughal emperor, Shah Alam and his nominal First Minister, the Nawab of Oudh, Shuja-ud-Daulah.

There is another event during this period which is noteworthy - in 1761 the French general, Lally, was defeated by Eyre Coote at Wandewash. Territorially the set-back was temporary because in 1763 Pondicherry was

restored to the French by the peace of Paris. However, Lally's defeat was another nail in the coffin of French hopes of an Indian empire.

In 1765, Mir Jafar, the twice crowned Nawab, died and Clive returned. The Company began the pretence of Dual Government and assumed the Diwani (revenue and civil powers) and the Nizamat (military and criminal) of Bengal. Clive himself left Bengal two years later (in 1767) and later faced charges of corruption and receiving bribes in 1772, committing suicide in 1774. Back in England, in 1767, Parliament had begun to take an interest in Company affairs and it was required to pay the Exchequer the sum of £400,000 annually in return for the right to keep its Indian territories and revenue.

After Clive's departure Verelst (1767-9) and Cartier (1770-2) served as Governors. Their periods in office were largely undistinguished except for the continuance of the massive profiteering by the Company servants and a famine in 1769-70, which killed a third of the population (while the Company and its servants continued to make larger and larger profits).

In 1772, the policy of dual government was abandoned and Warren Hastings took over as Governor at Fort William. When the Regulating Act came into force in 1774 he became the "Governor-General of the Presidency of Fort William in Bengal", the highest English authority in India. Madras and Bombay remained separate but subordinate Presidencies. Under the Regulating Act, the Governor-General was to be assisted by a Council of four (who could overrule him) and the territories were to have a separate judiciary. Hastings found the new Council difficult to deal with - for two years he was constantly over-ruled, until one member died. Then the rest of the Council fell apart - a second member died in 1777 and Hastings himself defeated (and disabled) a third member in a duel. The new Council immediately called a halt to the Rohilla war and, on the death of the nawab of Oudh in 1775, seized some of his territory. The Maratha war, begun when the English at Bombay took sides in the war of succession to the

Peshwaship of the Maratha confederacy, was also apparently brought to an end in 1778 and Salsette and other islands acquired as a result. The conflict revived itself almost immediately and did not end until 1782, during which time the English made no significant gains.

In the south Hyder Ali was advancing on the Company - in 1780 he captured Arcot and was threatening Madras. The English were also locked in a marine war with the French which had begun in 1778. In 1780 Hyder Ali attacked Madras but was driven away by the timely (for the English) arrival of Eyre Coote. The next year Hyder Ali suffered several military defeats and the English re-captured a large amount of territory. The French were determined to join forces with Hyder Ali but Bussy, their new commander (who had served in India before), arrived in 1783 to discover Hyder Ali dead and his successor, Tipu in temporary retreat. Tipu was concentrating on consolidating his power in the west on the Malabar coast when the English attacked again, coming close to his capital. Tipu signed a peace treaty which brought an uneasy calm to his relations with the Company.

In 1781 a new Charter was granted to the Company, extending its privileges for another ten years. This did not meet the approval of all in the House of Commons and in 1782 an attempt was made to recall Hastings but the collapse of the government saved him. In 1785, on the passing of Pitt's India Act, Hastings found himself in charge of an Indian administration which had been placed under the control of the English Crown. He was, however, soon recalled and eventually faced impeachment proceedings. Lord Cornwallis was sent out to India, appointed as both Governor-general and Commander-in-Chief. Cornwallis took his responsibilities seriously and, beside attacking Tipu with vigour, set about reforming the administration of the Indian territories and attempted to end the private profits that were being made by individuals. He was also responsible for introducing the Permanent Settlement land revenue system in 1793.

Back in England in 1793, the Company's Charter was once again

renewed - with a significant change in their monopoly. The Company was required, under the renewed Charter, to provide 3000 tons of shipping to other traders, the first real break in its monopoly since the formation of the New East India Company in 1698[1]. Cornwallis left India in 1795. There was a brief period of calm after his departure, during Sir John Shore's term as Governor-General. This calm was disrupted by the arrival, in 1798, of Richard Wellesley, accompanied by his brother, Arthur, who was later to become the Duke of Wellington. In the words of Edwardes, "the empire-builders were on the march again."[2] One of Wellesley's first acts was to arrange an attack, with the help of his allies the Nizam of Hyderabad and the Maratha confederacy, on Tipu Sultan, who was at the time allied to the French. Tipu was killed in the battle of Seringapatam in 1799, and his territories came under English control. Wellesley then embarked on a series of annexations and "Subsidiary Alliances" - agreements under which rulers accepted what amounted to vassal status under the Company. Surat, the Malabar coast, the Carnatic, and Tanjore were annexed, and the Nawabs of Oudh and Hyderabad had entered into a Subsidiary Alliance (ceding Allahabad and some other districts) by 1801. In 1802 a subsidiary alliance treaty was signed with the Peshwa, the nominal head of the Maratha confederacy. The other Maratha chiefs were incensed and a short war broke out - which was all but ended by the time a victorious Lord Lake entered Delhi in 1803. This massive military and political offensive paid off - "within six years, from holding a few pockets of territory, the Company had expanded into a major power holding Bengal and southern India, its troops in occupation at Poona and Hyderabad, its political Residents, or agents, at every native court. Only Rajputana, Sind and the Punjab remained outside the net."[3]

The directors of the Company were worried by the burst of activity and

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[1] *The Economic History of India Under Early British Rule*, p. 9.
[2] *British India 1772 - 1942*, p. 26.
[3] *British India 1772 - 1942*, pp. 26 - 27.

the increase in political power so they hastily recalled Wellesley and sent out Cornwallis again. Cornwallis, however, died within two months of taking office and was replaced by Lord Minto in 1807. Minto tried his best to avoid entanglements with the Company's neighbours - with the notable exception of the Sikhs. Several confrontations with the Sikh ruler Ranjit Singh finally ended in the signing of a treaty in 1809, under which Ranjit Singh agreed to remain on the western banks of the Sutlej. Minto left in 1813, after a relatively uneventful term.

In 1814 the Company's Charter was renewed. Important changes were wrought - under the new Charter the Company was confirmed as the government of India for twenty years with the loss of its monopoly on trade with India (though it retained its China trade monopoly), proselytisation legalised (a bishop of Calcutta was appointed), and a small fund for the "encouragement of education, literature and science"[1] allocated. The immediate consequences of these provisions were as follows: little change in the operation of traders in India (traders still required licences issued by the Crown to trade with India), Bishop Heber, first Anglican bishop of Calcutta, arrived in India, and, in 1817, Lord Hastings established Hindu College in Calcutta, the first Anglo-Indian education institution.

Several military engagements with neighbouring states over the period 1813 - 1817 served to consolidate English domination of the sub-continent. In 1814 the Company invaded Nepal and was repulsed. After four years of sporadic fighting a treaty was signed under which Nepal lost some territory in return for a non-aggression pact. Between 1815 and 1817 the Maratha confederacy was in a state of turmoil - treaties and alliances with the British and other rulers were made, broken, remade and broken again with astonishing rapidity. By 1818 it was over and a small puppet state, nominally ruled by the descendant of Shivaji, was practically all that remained of the once powerful confederacy.

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[1] *History of British India*, p. 279.

In 1823 Lord Amherst took over as Governor-General, succeeding the Marquis of Hastings. During his term in office the Company's territory expanded further - in 1826 the first Burmese war ended with the Company gaining control of Assam, Arakan and other eastern hill areas, and Combermere laid siege to, and captured Bharatpur.

Amherst's successor, Bentinck, came as a reformer. He first cut back on military expenditure which had soared during the Burmese wars and tightened controls on the collection of revenue. Having thus increased Company income (and reduced its expenditure) he turned to reforming the judiciary, allowing the use of local languages in place of Persian in courts and appointing a number of Indian judges. However, the most significant of events of this period were Bentinck's abolition of Sati in 1829, Sleeman's destruction of Thug gangs, and the Education Act of 1835, which made education in English available to Indians. In terms of territorial expansion Bentinck's administration was quiet - a couple of states were annexed, including Coorg, and Mysore was brought under direct British administration.

1833 saw yet another Charter renewal. This time the conditions were more stringent - the Company was required to give up all its trade and concentrate on the administration of and collection of revenue in its Indian territories. The Governor General of the "Presidency of Fort William in Bengal" became the Governor-General of India, and the Council (in India) was given the authority to pass Acts. The Charter also instructed the Company to ensure that "no native of India, nor any natural-born subject of his Majesty, should be disabled from holding any place, office, or employment, by reason of his religion, place of birth, descent or colour"[1], and allowed all British subjects the right to own and dispose of property in India - in effect, throwing it open to all who cared to trade or settle.

After Bentinck's departure in 1835, a Company servant, Metcalfe, took over as interim Governor-General. The most significant act in his short

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[1] Charter Act, 1833 cited in *History of British India*, p. 307.

governor-generalship was the guaranteeing of the freedom of the press in 1836. Metcalfe was succeeded "in an evil hour for India and Great Britain"[1] by Lord Auckland. Auckland was sent out with the brief (a) to prevent a Russian attack on India and (b) to conquer Afghanistan. To say that these aims were bizarre would be an understatement - the nearest Russian outpost was more than 3,000 kilometres from Ludhiana, the outermost edge of British India. As for the Afghan campaign - the first attempt killed almost the entire sixteen thousand strong expeditionary force. The Afghan wars followed. In 1842, five years after Queen Victoria's accession to the British throne, Auckland set sail for England, leaving behind a Company involved in and on the brink of several bloody wars.

II.2. TRADE

II.2.1. The Growth of Trade

The trade with India was highly profitable for the Company. In the first years the Company made enormous profits: "In the period 1613 - 1616 . . . the total amount put forward was £429,000, which made a total profit of 87 1/2 per cent . . . In 1617 the Company made a profit of £1,000,000 on a capital of £200,000"[2]. The Indians, too, seemed to be profiting - "because of the difficulty of selling English goods in Asia . . . most of what they [the Indians] received was in fact silver bullion."[3] The figures for the year 1601 (the first year in which the Company traded) showed that Britain exported more money than goods to India - exporting £28,742 worth of silver coin but only £6,860 worth of goods[4]. England continued to export American silver to India, receiving in exchange textiles so that "by the end of the seventeenth

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[1] *History of British India*, p. 308.
[2] *The Rise and the Fall of the East India Company*, p. 69.
[3] Marshall, P. J.: "The Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries" in *The Raj: India and the British 1600 - 1947*, ed. C. A. Bayly, London, 1990; p. 18.
[4] *Britain and India: The Interaction of Two Peoples*, p. 31.

century Bengal, as the cheapest and most abundant source of cotton goods, had a crucial role in the East India Company's operations"[1] - which goes some way toward explaining the Company's keen interest in the political developments in that region later on. Roberts describes the period of 1660 - 80 as the "golden age of the Company while still a non-political, non-territorial trading body."[2] In 1700, the value of exports of goods (to the whole of Asia) was £114,000 while that of imports from Asia was £775,000. The imports rose to £2,203,000 in 1772 - 3 and £5,785,000 by 1798. There were murmurs against the Company on numerous occasions - "The East India Company, it was openly said, was draining England of millions of pounds of specie annually to buy useless luxuries"[3]. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries the trade with India was seen as "a one-way trade, since Europe had no commodity small enough in bulk to export and was compelled to pay for goods in gold and silver, diminishing her already inadequate store of bullion"[4]. Objections were raised by a number by a number of prominent people, including Defoe[5], but royal patronage and indebtedness - both Charles II and his father "borrowed money from the Court of Committees"[6], the controlling body of the East Indian traders - permitted the East India Company to continue its activities. Other prominent figures were also in the pay of the Company at various times - the inquiry into the Company's corruption in 1695 found that it had spent £107,000 in bribes in a period of 5 years!

Trade remained the formal reason for the British presence in India until 1857. P. E. Roberts, writing in 1921, saw no reason to doubt that the Battle of Plassey in 1757 (which made the Company the *de facto* ruler of

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[1] "The Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries", in *The Raj: India and the British 1600 - 1947*, pg 18.
[2] *History of British India*, p. 41.
[3] Wilbur, M. E.: *The East India Company*; Stanford, 1945; p. 120.
[4] Morton, A. L.: *A People's History of England*; London, 1961; pp. 161 - 2.
[5] Green, Martin: *Dreams of Adventure, Deeds of Empire*; London & Henley, 1979, p. 79.
[6] *History of British India*, p. 41.

Bengal) was an economic event - he claimed that it was "the overthrow of a foreign (Muhammadan) government by the trading and financial classes, native (Hindu) and British . . ." [1]. The focus on trade even after the acquisition of political power caused Adam Smith to remark, apropos of the priorities, that the English in India considered trade "their principal business . . . (and) regard the character of the sovereign as but an appendix to that of the merchant, as something which ought to be made subservient to it, or by means of which they may be enabled to buy cheaper in India, and thereby sell with a better profit in Europe"[2]. The all pervasive nature of this profit motive can be seen in the remark of the historian, Robert Orme who, writing to Robert Clive in 1752, called for the removal of the ruler of Bengal, citing commercial advantages as the reason for his suggestion: "'Twould be a good deed to swinge the old dog . . . I say the Company must think seriously of it, or 'twill not be worth their while to trade in Bengal"[3].

Parity was eventually reached when the Company established and consolidated its political power in the sub-continent through the extraction of tribute and indemnity from local rulers (an early significant example is the £2.75 million paid by Mir Jafar for the defeat of Siraj-ud-Daulah at Plassey[4]) and, most importantly from the land revenues and other taxes and levies. Based on Clive's revenue projections made in 1765, Dutt estimates that "after deduction of expenses and allowances . . . an annual remittance of over a million and a half sterling was to be made . . . to the shareholders in England."[5]

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[1] *History of British India*, p. 130.
[2] Smith, Adam: *The Wealth of Nations*; New York, 1937 (orig. publ. 1776); p. 602.
[3] Hill, S. C.: *The Indian Record Series: Bengal in 1756 - 7*; 1895, quoted in *History of British India*, p. 18.
[4] *History of British India*, p. 140.
[5] *The Economic History of India Under Early British Rule*, p. 39.

However, military expenditure and the lavish lifestyles of Company employees meant that by 1772 "the Directors were forced to inform Lord North . . . that, unless they could obtain a loan of one million pounds from the state, they could not carry on business"[1]. This did not mean that the Company was failing - on the contrary it had become one of the most influential forces in the English Court and its beneficiaries and employees continued to be some of the wealthiest men in the nation. The East India Company's territorial acquisitions drained vast sums from its coffers but individuals were still making immense profits. The table below illustrates the Company's rapid decline as a "profit-making" enterprise. Although there is a rapid increase in net profit over the first two years of the Company's Diwani there was a drastic reduction in it between 1769 and 71. In 1771 it had fallen to almost half of the original 1765 figure. However, after an initial 50% increase, the gross revenues remained almost constant - the fall in profits was due to increases in expenses on military, civil, building expenses (all for the benefit of the ruling Company, not of its Indian subjects, of course). The net profit, which did not include one-off payments by the Nawab and other grateful puppets, remained considerable.

Year	Gross Revenue	Net Profit
1765-66	£2,258,227	£ 471,067
1766-67	£3,805,817	£1,253,501
1767-68	£3,608.009	£ 871,622
1768-69	£3,787,207	£ 829,062
1769-70	£3,341,976	£ 336,812
1770-71	£3,332,343	£ 275,088

Fig: Revenue and profit derived from Diwani of Bengal[2]

India's profitability had increased, only the profits were increasingly diverted

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[1] *History of British India*, p. 181.

[2] Based on table and figures in *The Economic History of India Under Early British Rule*, p. 46.

away from the Company's treasury. Even the famine of 1770-71 made no impact on the revenue - a glance at the table above shows no appreciable decline in gross revenue during this period.

Acquisition of territory and revenue from these territories soon became the main means of increasing Company revenue. While collection of revenue cannot itself be considered "trade" - the fact that a sizeable chunk of this revenue was used to pay dividends to the Company's shareholders suggests that the administration of the region was a profitable enterprise. The cession of Benares by the puppet Raja, yielded £237,000 per annum in revenue - *after* the Raja had paid all the expenses of collection himself. And it was secure - the Raja was liable to pay the sum regardless of how much was actually produced in the ceded territory in any given year. The Zamindari Land revenue system, introduced by Hastings was another effective revenue-increaser which required no investment to increase profit. In 1781 alone the land revenue of the District of Purnia was increased by £260,000 - a very considerable sum in those days. Zamindars who were unable to pay the agreed sums lost their licences to those who could (usually through the introduction of more forceful methods of revenue collection).

II.2.2. Private Fortunes

From the very earliest days of trade, those Britons who went to India returned home immensely wealthy. According to M. E. Chamberlain, "the first effect of contact with India the British public noticed was the return of the "nabobs" . . . the *nouveaux riches* are always resented . . . they were a seriously disturbing element in English society"[1]. They lived ostentatiously on their new-found riches and the lives of the "Nabobs" (for so the returnees were called, after the fashion of Indian kings) was a source of wonder and

[1] *Britain and India: The Interaction of Two Peoples*, p. 57.

envy. One of the most famous of these was an "interloper" (unlicensed, non-Company trader) called Thomas Pitt, the grandfather of the famous William, who "made a large fortune . . . and purchased a large landed estate, together with the pocket borough of Old Sarum"[1].

The new wealth made its mark in British social and political circles at about the same time as British power in India began. Ten years after Robert Clive's victory over the Nawab of Bengal at Plassey in 1757, Lord Chesterfield found that his bid of £2,500 for a Parliamentary seat for his son was too low: all the seats had already been secured by men connected to the East and West Indian trade for sums between £3,000 and £4,000[2]. In 1770 Lord Chatham complained: "For some years past there has been an influx of wealth into this country, which has been attended with many fatal consequences . . . the importers of foreign gold have forced their way into Parliament by such a torrent of corruption as no private hereditary fortune could resist."[3]

In spite of the political and military careers of the men who went out to India, they were often effectively traders. In fact, since the term "merchant" was fairly loose in the eighteenth century, and encompassed anyone who had some dealing with capital[4], it can be said that almost all the English (and those in their employ) were merchants. Non-traders began to flood into India in the eighteenth century - civil servants and army officers on the Company payroll, but their salaries "made up a comparatively small part of what the ambitious . . . hoped to earn; the greater part came from perquisites and unofficial profits attached to offices and *above all from trading* . . . virtually all civil servants were also private merchants, while many army officers, surgeons and even chaplains traded"[5] (italics mine). This

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[1] *History of British India*, p. 49.
[2] *Dreams of Adventure, Deeds of Empire*, p. 371.
[3] R. A. Huttenback, *The British Imperial Achievement*; quoted in *Dreams of Adventure, Deeds of Empire*, p. 116.
[4] Marshall, P. J.: *East Indian Fortunes*; London, 1976; p. 12.
[5] *East Indian Fortunes*, p. 18.

mercenary character is confirmed by Chamberlain's statement that all Company servants were "not so much salaried employees in the modern sense as men paid a retaining fee to perform certain duties for the company and free to trade on their own account for the rest"[1]. The profits they made *were* spectacular and gave rise to some famous scandals like the trials of Robert Clive and Warren Hastings in 1773 and 1788 - 95. The payoff for the Battle of Plassey was £1,238,575 of which Clive received £31,500![2] Clive was indignant when he was charged with corruption. He told the House of Commons investigation that he had ". . . declared publicly in my letters to the Secret Committee of the India Directors that the Nabob's generosity had made my fortune easy . . . What pretence could the Company have to expect, that I, after having risked my life so often in their service, should deny myself the only opportunity ever offered of acquiring a fortune without prejudice to them . . .?"[3]

A pamphleteer, no doubt with tongue in cheek, remarked, apropos of the trader rulers, "Those men must have more than a moderate share of virtue, who, considering the universal veneration in this country paid to men of wealth, will return with a moderate fortune after being several years entrusted with the government of India."[4]

Dutt cites several examples of the abuse of trading privileges for private profit - an abuse which was to bring about the economic collapse of the Nawab Mir Jafar. Vansittart (Clive's successor as Governor) wrote that:

"With respect to trade, no new privileges were asked of Meer Jaffier, none indeed were wanted by the Company . . . However, our influence over the country was no sooner felt than many innovations were practised by some of the Company's servants . . . They began to trade in the articles that were

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[1] *Britain and India: The Interaction of Two Peoples*, p. 56.
[2] *The Economic History of India Under Early British Rule*, p. 32.
[3] House of Commons Committee's Third Report, 1773, p. 311.
[4] *Considerations on a pamphlet entitled "Thoughts on our Acquisitions in the East Indies"*; quoted in *History of British India*, p. 162.

before prohibited, and to interfere in the affairs of the country."[1]

Verelst, his successor also wrote about this: "A trade was carried on without payment of duties, in the prosecution of which infinite oppressions were committed."[2] Mir Kasim, Mir Jafar's successor, complained to the English Governor that those "setting up under the Company's colours allow no power to my officers . . . every man with a Company's Dustuck in his hand regards himself as not less than the Company . . ."[3] Warren Hastings himself wrote: "I have been surprised to meet with several English flags flying in places which I have passed, and on the river I do not believe I passed a boat without one . . . A party of Sepoys who were on the march before us afforded sufficient proof of the rapacious and insolent spirit of those people where they are left to their own discretion . . ."[4] Sepoys were not the only ones to jump on the bandwagon. Mohammed Ali, the collector of Dacca, wrote to the English Governor: "a number of merchants have made interest with the people of the factory, hoist English colours on their boats, and carry away their goods under the pretence of being English . . . the Gomastahs of the Luckypoor and Dacca factories oblige the merchants, &c., to take tobacco, iron and sundry other things, at a price exceeding that of the bazaar, and then extort the money from them by force . . . In many places Mr. Chevalier has, by force, established new markets and new factories, and has made false Sepoys on his own part, and they seize whom they want and fine them. By his forcible proceedings many hauts, gauts and perganas [*hat* - market, *ghat* - landing place, *pargana* - revenue district] have been ruined."[5]

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[1] *A Narrative of the Transactions in Bengal*, vol i, p. 24; quoted in *The Economic History of India Under Early British Rule*, p. 20.
[2] *View of Bengal*, p. 48, quoted in *The Economic History of India Under Early British Rule*, p. 20.
[3] Letter of Mir Kasim, of 26 March 1762, quoted in *The Economic History of India Under Early British Rule*, p. 20.
[4] Letter of Warren Hastings of 25 April 1762, quoted in *The Economic History of India Under Early British Rule*, pp. 21 - 22.
[5] Letter received in October 1762, quoted in *The Economic History of India Under Early British Rule*, pp. 24 - 25.

Publicly, the Company took the "presents" seriously enough to send Clive out again in 1765 to end the practice, though their choice of Clive seems to suggest that they were less than whole-hearted. In fact, the Directors were themselves involved in the expansion of private trading:

"How else but by the existence of collusion between the Directors and their servants in the East can we account for the fact that the Resident of Benares . . . was allowed to make an annual income of £40,000 a year besides his official salary of £1,350?"[1].

The table of gross revenue for the British territories in India over the period 1792 - 1838 (Appendix B) illustrates the profitability of administration. Note that the surplus listed is after all expenses, including salaries, military equipment, transport. This surplus was remitted to England as dividend for the shareholders. The Company's surpluses over ten year periods were considerable: a surplus of £5,350,556 between 1792 and 1800; a deficit of £7,299,978 between 1800 and 1810; a surplus of £11,043,046 between 1810 and 1820; a surplus of £10,449,364 between 1820 and 1830 and a huge surplus of £25,487,253 between 1830 and 1838 - a total profit of £45,030,241 over the 46 year period. In the years that this surplus was insufficient for dividend requirements, the shortfall was made up and charged to the Indian Public Debt. As a result, besides paying a substantial annual sum to the English Directors, India paid capital and interest payments on a debt that rose from seven million in 1792, to ten million in 1799, twenty-one million in 1805, twenty-seven million in 1807 and thirty million by 1830. These figures clearly demonstrate that the Company's decision to remain in India even as its trading role was diminishing was profit-motivated.

Shifts in the direction and volume of trade were sometimes dramatic. In 1813 "Calcutta exported to London two million pounds sterling of cotton

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[1] *History of British India*, p. 224.

goods; in 1830 Calcutta imported two millions sterling of British cotton manufactures."[1] The turnaround was even more rapid than appears from even those surprising figures - India only began to import British cotton in 1823, importing 121,000 lbs in 1824, which rose in just four years to 4,000,000 lbs[2]! This was partially achieved by heavily taxing Indian goods entering Britain (e.g. in 1812 the British import tax on Indian calicoes was 71.67%, on Ornamental cane work 71%, the import of Indian silk goods was prohibited) while, on the other hand, keeping Indian import duty low. This protectionist policy had the desired effect of killing off Indian manufacturing, and by 1832 the British import taxes had dropped to lower levels (between 10 and 30%). Of course, by this time the trade was firmly in Britain's favour. India had become a producer of raw material and a market for finished goods - which was just what British industry required: Cotton piece goods exported from Calcutta in 1802 amounted to 1,232 bales - by 1829 this had dropped to 433 while the amount of raw cotton exported had continued to increase (though somewhat erratically) and in 1829 Bengal exported *no* silk goods to Britain[3]!

Administrative and judicial controls (the reforms of Cornwallis, Hastings, Wellesley) had had the desired public effect - Hastings, amongst others faced charges of private profiteering. However, the main effect of the reforms was to limit the acquisition of wealth by the lower echelons of the Company's service. Senior officials, like Political Residents and military commanders continued to amass fortunes. Even the military made considerable profit - in 1840 Sir Charles Napier, a military employee, made £70,000 from a single engagement, the plunder of Hyderabad. The Directors made a token protest, but he was permitted to keep the spoils[4].

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[1] *The Economic History of India Under Early British Rule*, p. 293.
[2] *The Economic History of India Under Early British Rule*, p. 293.
[3] For details of the trade figures see attached tables (from *The Economic History of India Under Early British Rule*, Chapter XVI).
[4] *History of British India*. p. 329.

II.3 ADMINISTRATION

Though the rise of English power in India resulted from commercial competition in the face of a changing political situation, the Company was unprepared for power so it was "forced to improvise an administration"[1] when it did come, as it did in Bengal after 1757. Initially, the British maintained the system they inherited and were, in Edwardes' words, "no better than their predecessors, allowing chaos and oppression to continue"[2]. However, it was soon realised that that state of affairs could not continue if money was to be made efficiently. One of the first acts of the new trader-rulers was, therefore, to clamp down on others who were making quick profits, merchants and robbers. They were proud of the effectiveness of their law and order policies, which were praised by, amongst others, Rijaz-us-Salatin who in 1788 said the English "were unrivalled in their laws for the administration of justice etc."[3] This assessment was not always generally accepted - for example, in 1810 Lord Minto reported that robbery and murder were commonplace in Bengal[4]. However, in the late eighteenth century, other parts of the sub-continent were perceived as being in a greater state of disarray. In the area around Fort St George there was "uncontrolled oppression by robbers, mutinous troops, and local rulers"[5] and, in the territories of the Nizam which were ceded to the British in 1800, "everyone carried arms . . . travellers were frequently murdered . . . the inhabitants were harassed by some eighty chiefs with about thirty thousand men, as well as by the rapacity of the Nizam and his troops . . ."[6]

As British power increased, the Company found it necessary to introduce more effective administration. The directors of the Company saw fit

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[1] *British India 1772 - 1942*, p. 7.
[2] *British India 1772 - 1942*, p. 7.
[3] Quoted in *British India 1772 - 1942*, p. 8.
[4] *The Economic History of India Under Early British Rule*, p. 14.
[5] *British India 1772 - 1942*, p. 8.
[6] *British India 1772 - 1942*, p. 8.

to appoint as Governors men who changed the face of Indian administration (and laid the foundation for much of the system that exists to this day). The attitudes and ideas of these Governors worried their employers - some of them took it upon themselves to interfere with the lives of the Company's Indian subjects and others spent huge sums on military adventures.

The attitudes of the English in India changed over the years. As mentioned before the British initially did all they could to avoid getting involved in local differences - Rijazu-s-Salatin praised the English not only for maintaining law and order but also for not interfering in matters of religion[1]. In fact, the Company took great care to be seen publicly associating with local religion - in 1802 "as a thanksgiving for the conclusion of the Treaty of Amiens between Britain and France, an official government party went in procession"[2] to Kali's shrine in Calcutta. In 1817 "the pilgrim taxes levied by the Company were used for the repair and upkeep of temples. In fact, the government's involvement left its servants wide open to the criticism of supporting idolatry and acting, in the picturesque language of one observer, as 'dry-nurse to Vishnu'. As late as 1833, the Madras government was still responsible for the administration of some 7,500 temples."[3]

This acceptance was a public relations exercise, designed to keep the Company out of unnecessary and disruptive wrangles. Company officials did not necessarily feel that the Indians, or their religions, were civilised. Lord Cornwallis, who arrived in 1786, was sent to clean up the corruption that Clive and his successors had so singularly failed to. Part of his strategy was to replace all Indians in high positions with Englishmen because he felt that "'every native of Hindustan was corrupt . . . He replaced native judges with English judges."[4] Cornwallis began the trend that was to take firm root - that

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[1] *British India 1772 - 1942*, p. 7.
[2] *British India 1772 - 1942*, p. 54.
[3] *British India 1772 - 1942*, p. 55.
[4] *British India 1772 - 1942*, pp. 32 - 33.

of Anglicising India in the belief that that was the only means of ensuring stability and "progress". Cornwallis was more radical - he proposed and succeeded in implementing the separation of revenue collection and judicial powers in his Bengal Regulation of 1793. Cornwallis believed that by maintaining its distance from the lives of the people, the Company could best administer Bengal for its profit. He, and his successor Wellesley, made certain that the revenue collectors and judges were kept at such a distance from the people that neither extortion nor bribery were easy. This, of course, did not apply to Political Residents and other higher officials who had to conduct business regularly with their Indian counterparts.

The arms-length policies stemmed from the same basic reasons - Cornwallis believed in superiority and therefore distance, Wellesley believed that nothing was to be gained through intercourse (he had "nothing but contempt for Indians"[1]). The overall effect was simple - Indians and Englishmen were kept apart and social contact dropped to the minimum. The English residents saw little of their "subjects" and, by 1810, a traveller remarked that such was their sense of superiority that in Calcutta "every Briton appears to pride himself on being outrageously a John Bull."[2]

Not all Englishmen held the same opinions. In the 1820's administrators like Elphinstone and Metcalfe were acutely conscious of the effect of Cornwallis's distancing legislation which had led to the development of an anglicised intermediate class. They saw this as a dangerous move towards destroying Indian society and replacing it with a pale reflection of English. Edwardes calls them the "Preservationists"[3] because they believed that it was "time that we should learn that neither the face of the country, its property, nor its society, are things that can be suddenly improved by any contrivance of ours, though they may be greatly

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[1] *British India 1772 - 1942*, p. 33.
[2] Graham, Maria: *Journal of a Residence in India 1809 - 11*; London, 1813, p. 139; quoted in *British India 1772 - 1942*, p. 33.
[3] *British India 1772 - 1942*, p. 51.

injured by what we mean for their good."[1] They called on their fellow-administrators to "divest our minds of all arrogant pretensions arising from the presumed superiority of our knowledge, and seek the accomplishment of the great ends we have in view by the means which are best suited to the peculiar nature of the objects."[2] Views like that were not the norm - the deep root taken by the sense of racial superiority can be seen in Macaulay's 1833 remark that "to trade with civilised men is infinitely more profitable than to govern savages"[3].

Bowing to public pressure, the Company's officials accepted that interference was necessary in the field of social legislation - which was surprising, since that took such care not to interfere with other religious matters. The motives for the social legislation were, of course, often questionable, based as they were on the aforementioned sense of moral superiority. However, the effect of these reforms was unquestionably beneficial. Slavery was an issue that attracted the attention of early reformers. Warren Hastings suggested, in 1774, that it should be abolished - a sentiment that opposed a 1772 law that decreed "that the families of convicted bandits (dacoits) were to be sold into slavery."[4] William Jones and Lord Cornwallis also expressed similar abolitionist sentiments in 1785 and 1789 respectively - Cornwallis going so far as to attempt to prevent the export of slaves to non-British territory. In 1811 the abolitionists, in the face of strong opposition from the powerful slave lobby, managed to force a ban on the import of slaves. The ban had little effect - an attempt by Metcalfe to prevent the resale of people already in bondage earned him official censure as the law only covered the importation of *new* slaves. The progress of the abolitionists was slow - in 1832 inter-district slave trade was banned but the

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[1] Quoted in *British India 1772 - 1942*, p. 51
[2] John Malcolm: *The Political History of India from 1784 to 1823*, quoted in *British India 1772 - 1942*, p. 52.
[3] Speech on Charter Debate in the House of Commons on 10 July, 1833; quoted in *British India 1772 - 1942*, p. 57.
[4] *British India 1772 - 1942*, p. 96.

possession of slaves and intra-district sales remained legal. The 1833 Charter Act made the eradication of slavery official policy - but only if practicable. The formal abolition of slavery had to wait until India came under the direct rule of the Crown in 1858.

More immediately successful were attempts to introduce regulations prohibiting infanticide (particularly female infanticide), Sati and Thuggee. The Bengal Regulation (XXI) of 1795 forbade female infanticide but the practice persisted for many years after it came into general force in 1802. As late as 1850 William Sleeman (of the Thuggee campaign fame) met landowners who admitted it was still common practice. However, the regulation did manage to restrict the practice considerably. The abolition of Sati was a popular cause in England - accounts of the practice of wives burning themselves on their husbands' funeral pyres horrified Britons. The Company administration was reluctant to act against it - to have done so would have antagonised powerful Indian families, it claimed. Lord Wellesley's 1803 ban proposal was effectively blocked by the Supreme Court and the 1812 regulations only allowed the prevention of forced immolation - a weak, ineffective restriction. An 1818 report, quoted by Edwardes, explains:

"There are very many reasons for thinking that . . . a voluntary suttee rarely occurs; few widows would think of sacrificing themselves unless overpowered by the physical or mental powers of the majority . . . [The widow] will be at length gradually brought to pronounce a reluctant consent because . . . she is little prepared to oppose the surrounding crowd . . . in this state of confusion a few hours quickly pass, and the widow is burnt before she has had time to think of the subject . . ."[1]

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[1] Pegg, J.: *India's cries to British Humanity*, London, 1830, p. 14; quoted in *British India 1772 - 1942* , p. 101.

Those reports increased pressure on the administration and on the Directors in London. In 1823 the governor-general was instructed to reduce police presence at satis as their presence gave the impression of official sanction. The ban demanded by English public opinion and Raja Ram Mohun Roy was finally brought in by William Bentinck in 1829.

The other major piece of social reform, the suppression of Thuggee, was introduced with a minimum of delay or public opposition. The English administration claimed to have remained ignorant of its existence until Sleeman vociferously denounced it in 1829. The idea of a widespread religious cult specialising in murder and robbery suddenly became believable and it was formally recognised, Sleeman placed in charge of the eradication operation, and the custom declared completely crushed by 1860. It was the succesful conclusion of a chapter during which the Europeans had risen from the status of trading nation, subject to the whims and fancies of Indian kings and customs to the controllers and destroyers of those same kings and customs.

TRADERS

Traders were the first group of Britons to travel to India in significant numbers, and they continued to dominate the Indian traffic for a considerable period. However, as British influence over India increased the importance of the trader in the public mind diminished. The trend that the representation of this class of adventurers followed is the subject of this chapter.

Britain's initial experience of returnees, Nabobs, coloured perceptions of the East and lifestyles there. The Nabobs were ostentatiously wealthy - they had succeeded in extracting wealth from trade on a scale that put even their westerly-directed compatriots, the privateers who preyed upon the Spanish treasure galleons, in the shade. Enormous profits were made by the pirates but their careers were risky affairs and apt to end abruptly.

By the early eighteenth century, knowledge of India, though not widespread, was increasing - at least partly because first-hand English accounts of the sub-continent were readily available by this time. Prior to this, most knowledge of India had come from accounts written in a variety of languages and over a considerable period of time. The nabobs were a highly visible and important part of British society, having bought themselves into the ranks of the landed gentry and Parliament. Their great wealth and the mystery surrounding its acquisition attracted the attention. A single voyage to India was, up to the end of the eighteenth century, often enough to redress any lack of fortune. The Nabobs' similarity with buccaneers was borne out by swift ascendances to wealth. In spite of its relative tameness, the India trade was perceived as a swashbuckling affair, fraught with dangers similar to those faced by pirates. Like his pirate cousins, the fictional trader contended with unscrupulous competitors determined to gain the upper hand, and with untrustworthy and even hostile foreign people and rulers. Of course, this was an exaggeration - it would have been impossible to obtain regular consignments of luxury goods from hostile nations. In

reality, the trade was based on the use of resident factors who procured goods over months or years and then dispatched them on ships returning to Europe. However, the day-to-day activities of ordinary trade is not the stuff of adventure stories, which is what much of Anglo-Indian writing was. India as an exotic location would have been wasted if it was merely a background for the dreary activities of the resident factors, so the young men in narratives were endowed with strong arms and stronger wills. They had wild adventures which afforded them the opportunities to perform all manner of chivalric deeds, rescuing damsels in distress, outwitting wily adversaries, triumphing over evil geniuses, penetrating impregnable fortresses and escaping from the most secure of dungeons. These paper men wasted little time on any form of mercantile activity.

The Nabobs' impact on society was considerable. The Pitt family, which furnished two Prime Ministers, owed their Parliamentary seats to the East India trade. Thomas Pitt (1653 - 1726), grandfather of Pitt the Younger, the "Great Commoner" was, ". . . even before 21 . . . engaged in the East India trade as an interloper"[1], a trader who defied the monopoly of the East India Company and traded privately. By 1683 he "was in a very enviable position. At the early age of thirty he had not only made what in those days must have been regarded as a considerable fortune, but he had also become a man of mark. During the past year he had been the recognised leader of the interlopers in Bengal . . ."[2]

When only thirty-five, he set about establishing a Parliamentary tradition that was to provide England with two Prime Ministers:

"In 1688 he bought from James Cecil, Earl of Salisbury, the manor of Stratford under the Castle, and was returned as member for Old Sarum in the election of the Convention Parliament, and for New Sarum (Salisbury) in

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[1] Lee:*Dictionary of National Biography*, London, 1896; 45, p. 349.
[2] Dalton, Cornelius Neale: *The Life of Thomas Pitt*, Cambridge, 1915; p. 52.

the Parliament of 1690. In 1691 he became the owner of the site of Old Sarum, and the votes attached to it, thereby securing the representation of the borough for himself and his heirs. Had this seat not remained in the Pitt family, it is quite possible that his famous grandson, the Great Commoner, might never have entered the House of Commons . . . During these years Pitt also bought considerable landed property at Blandford St. Mary, and for the remainder of his life, he was constantly buying land whenever a favourable opportunity presented itself, and he found himself in possession of funds which he could conveniently spare for the purpose . . ."[1]

In 1698, Pitt returned to India as the East India Company's governor of Madras. His salary and allowances were not large, amounting to only £300 a year plus a one-off allowance of £100 for fresh provisions[2]. He was not, however, reducing his income. On the contrary, as his private trade was now under the protection of the Company, he stood to make even greater, and more secure profit. While serving as governor he acquired a diamond that was to bring him notoriety and the sobriquet "Diamond Pitt". He claimed that the stone was sold to him by Ramchund, an Indian jewel merchant at Fort St. George in 1701. As soon as it was in his possession he sent a model of the stone to his agent in England:

> "To Sir Stephen Evans, Knt.
>
> Fort St. George Nov. 6th 1701
>
> Sr. This accompanyes the modell of a Stone I have lately seene; itt weighs Mangs. 303, and cartts. 426. It is of an excellent christaline water without any fowles, only at one end in the flat part there is one or two little flaws which will come out in the cutting . . ."[3]

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[1] *The Life of Thomas Pitt*, pp. 71 - 72.
[2] *The Life of Thomas Pitt*, p. 112.
[3] *The Life of Thomas Pitt*, p. 238.

Stephen Evans was more cautious than the East-India trader and, doubting the saleability of such a large diamond, he wrote back:

> "London, August 1st. 1702.
>
> I have received yours with a modell of a great diamond weighing 426 Car. therein you give an account of itts water and goodness, certainly there never was such a Stone heard of before, and as for Price, they asked 200,000 pags., though you believe less than 100,000 would buy. Wee are now gott in a Warr, the French king has his hands and heart full, soe he cant buy such a Stone. There is no Prince in Europe can buy itt; soe would advise you not to meddle in itt . . ."[1]

Stephen Evans could not have been more wrong. The resourceful Pitt sold off-cuts of the stone to finance completion of its cutting and then sold the final result to the French king in 1717, when it was valued at £125,000. The king paid £40,000 down and delivered part of the French Crown jewels as security for the remainder of the price. The stone then passed into legend - it became part of the circlet of Louis XV's crown, was placed on display in 1791 by the National Assembly in the Garde Meuble, was stolen and then recovered from a hole in a garret in Faubourg St. Germain. Napoleon Bonaparte had it set in the pommel of his sword in 1804, it was carried away by Marie Louise, restored by Louis XVIII, removed by him on his deposition, brought back on his restoration and now is somewhere in the possession of the French government.[2]

In 1828 the *General Biographical Dictionary* gave this account of Thomas Pitt's colourful career:

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[1] *The Life of Thomas Pitt*, p. 238.
[2] Information gleaned from *The Life of Thomas Pitt.*

"PITT (Thomas) the founder of the noble family of that name, was born at St. Mary, Blandford, Dorsetshire, in 1653. Towards the close of the same century he became governor of Madras, where he resided many years, and realised a large fortune, a great part of which was produced by the purchase of a large diamond, for 20,400 *l.*, which he sold to the king of France for more than five times that sum."[1]

The *Dictionary of National Biography* describes him as "Pitt, Thomas: East India merchant and governor at Madras, often called "Diamond Pitt" . . ."[2].

The diamond became a symbol of the enormous wealth of Nabobs. Rumours abounded, rumours that were fuelled by Alexander Pope:

"A rumour prevailed in England that governor Pitt had acquired this jewel, called after him the Pitt diamond, unfairly; which report gained additional currency, by a sort of poetical adoption of it, by Pope, in a passage commencing with the following couplet:

Asleep and naked as an Indian lay,

An honest factor stole a gem away.

Such credit was ultimately given to the slander that Mr. Pitt was induced to compose a narrative of the manner in which he really became possessed of the diamond . . ."[3]

According to the *Dictionary of National Biography*, line 364 of Alexander Pope's "Epistle to Bathhurst" (Epistle III), originally ended with the words "and as rich as Pitt"[4]. The (edited) "Death-bed Edition" of 1744 (originally published in 1733) now reads:

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[1] Gorton, John: *General Biographical Dictionary*, London, 1828; II, pp. 655 - 656.
[2] *Dictionary of National Biography*, 45; p. 348.
[3] *General Biographical Dictionary*, II, p. 656.
[4] *Dictionary of National Biography*, 1896; 45, p. 348.

"Asleep and naked as an Indian Lay
An honest factor stole a gem away.
He pledged it to the knight; the knight had wit,
So kept the Diamond, but the rogue was bit."

Pope was not the only literary figure to seize upon and propagate the story of wealth gained by unfair means. Thomas Gray also referred to it in a letter written in October 1761:

"London. Oct: 1761

Dear Mason,

Perhaps You have not yet hang'd yourself! when you do (as doubtless you must be thinking of it) be so good as to give me a day or two's notice, that I may be a little prepared. Yet who knows? possibly your education at S^{T} John's (in conjunction with the B^{P} of GI^{R}:) may suggest to you, that the *naked Indian*, that found Pitt's diamond, made no bad bargain when he sold it for those oyster shells, & a Pompon of glass-beads to stick in his Wife's hair . . ."[1]

The Pitt diamond became, in the eighteenth century, a 'mythoid', a story that summed up the response of the public to the Anglo-Indian trader, the envy at their wealth, and suspicion of their methods. Some writers suggested that the greed of the traders was responsible for some of their more exotic adventures. In the 1710 novel, *The Adventures of Five Englishmen from Pulo Condoro*, the Englishmen fleeing for their lives are warned that Englishmen are attractive targets:

"The Captain told us that perhaps we might see Proes, desiring us if we did

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[1] Letter 346, *Correspondence of Thomas Gray*, ed. P. Toynbee & L. Whibley, II, p. 758.

to lye down close, and be very silent, for that if it were known there were any Englishmen in the Proe . . . they too should be killed for the Sake of Gold, without a great deal of which they suppose Englishmen never go."[1]

However, it was the romantic image that prevailed until the mid-eighteenth century. The cult of privateer-worship, when the likes of Walter Raleigh became national heroes for their freebooting activities against the Spanish and Portuguese, partially gave way to a fascination with these equally mercenary Anglo-Indian traders, who also made their profits from sea-faring and contact with exotic lands and peoples. The risks of the India trade, though low when compared with those of the western pirates, appeared considerable. This apparently risky trade fired the public imagination and writers reflected the contemporary mood by creating a breed of merchant-adventurers, strong in wind and limb (but none too involved in mercantile activity), who set sail across the pages of novels. In their romances the factor's stout heart and strong arm were rewarded with ample wealth and love.

The primary interests were there: action, exotica and money. The Englishmen braved the odds (never mind the reasons) and came out unscathed - full-blooded heroes in an expansionist era. The "knight-in-shining-white-armour" portrayal was popular and Scott, writing in 1828, described the mid-eighteenth century representation of the trader fairly accurately:

"His merits were thought the higher, when it was understood he served the honourable East India Company . . . Britain had now begun to lend a wondering ear to the account of battles fought, and cities won, in the East; and was surprised by the return of individuals who had left their native

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[1] Vaughan, Walter: *The Adventures of Five Englishmen from Pulo Condoro*, London, 1714, p. 59.

country as adventurers, but now reappeared there surrounded by Oriental wealth and Oriental luxury, which dimmed the splendour of the most wealthy of the British nobility."[1]

Typical of the fictional chivalrous merchants of this period was Rodomond, who appeared in "The History of Rodomond and the Beautiful Indian" in *The Lady's Drawing Room*[2]. He is a successful trader who, characteristically, enters the service of the East India Company through the help of an acquaintance (his foster father) who uses his "interests with some of the Directors of the East India Company, and got him sent over to one of their Factories"[3]. As a romantic hero he is, of course, a man of action. His mercantile career is summarily dealt with:

" . . . he became what they call a junior Merchant before he was One and Twenty; and from that time he began to trade for himself, was successful beyond expectation . . . In less than six years, he found himself Master of Twenty Thousand Pounds"[4].

Envy was already playing a part in the public interest in the traders. In particular, the older moneyed classes were suspicious of the new rich. It was necessary, therefore, for the hero to be proven socially acceptable - particularly as Rodomond's story is narrated by his foster-father in the genteel atmosphere of a society drawing room. The foster-father/narrator takes great pains to dispel any misconceptions his audience may have had about the gentility of his protégé's bearing and birth in the only other passage in the narrative that refers directly to Rodomond's merchant status - the company in the drawing room is informed that the hero of the tale,

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[1] Scott, Walter: *The Surgeon's Daughter* London & Edinburgh, 1834 (orig. publ. 1827); p. 265.
[2] Anonymous: *The Lady's Drawing Room*; London, 1744.
[3] *The Lady's Drawing Room*, p. 14.
[4] *The Lady's Drawing Room*, p. 18.

possesses "a Politeness which one might rather have expected from a young Man bred up in a Court, than in a factory of Merchants . . ."[1]. Having established Rodomond's manners he then places Rodomond (and, by extension, his fellow-factors) firmly within the circle of the upper class by explaining that the protagonist's "politeness" is by no means unusual - "we, who happen to be born to Estates, and have nothing to do but improve our Minds, are apt to be a little too tenacious on that Advantage, and imagine that Commerce and Good Manners are Things incompatible, whereas nothing can be more unjust. - Most Merchants are the younger Sons of good Families, - often have Relations in the highest Rank, with whom they converse and . . . we have many present Instances that a Merchant may be a fine Gentleman"[2]. The Merchant is thereby placed on the same social level as those of 'gentle birth' and proves himself, through feats of arms, a worthy scion of his native chivalrous class.

Rodomond's virtues are focussed on, particularly those that indicate a superior intellect and status than mere trading activites would have implied. Life in India is imaginatively created to embellish Rodomond's character and intelligence. The writer had, apparently, scant knowledge of the East and "facts" are presented with an eye to creating a wholesome hero - Rodomond announces to his credulous foster father (who then relays the words to his equally naive friends): "On my first Arrival at Bombay, I past most of those Hours I cou'd spare . . . in learning the Malayan Language"[3]. His intelligence allows him to acquire "so great a Proficiency in a short Time, that I cou'd converse with the Natives with as much Ease as if I had been born among them"[4] - a singular achievement which is rendered all the more wonderful by the fact that the inhabitants of the Bombay and its hinterland are not, and never have been, speakers of Malay. However, the purpose of the exercise

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[1] *The Lady's Drawing Room*, p. 16.
[2] *The Lady's Drawing Room*, p. 16.
[3] *The Lady's Drawing Room*, p. 17.
[4] *The Lady's Drawing Room*, p. 17.

is to demonstrate not a knowledge of local language, but the protagonist's quick intellect - he learns the language because it is there: "I cannot say I foresaw any great Advantages wou'd accrue to me by this study"[1]. In such a narrative accomplishments such as these are not to be wasted, they are put to good use and so it comes to pass that the Company's interpreter dies and the Company suffers "greatly by being obliged to trust Indians"[2]. Rodomond's knowledge of Malay comes to the rescue and he is able to save his employers "a Hundred Thousand Pounds in two Years time"[3]. This provides the audience with further proof of Rodomond's talents and his ability to deal with difficult situations.

Rodomond is now ready for adventure. He falls foul of the locals who have suffered as a result of his honesty. On one of his forays into the countryside " . . . as I was passing by the Side of a thick Wood . . . I heard the Sound of several Voices, and on a sudden found myself incompass'd by five Men, arm'd with Cutlaces, who without speaking a Word to me, seiz'd me . . ."[4] The odds are stacked against him - suspecting no danger, he has been travelling unarmed. The adventure which will demonstrate his valour begins. The villains carry him away. He recognises them - "I knew two of them to be servants to a *Banyan* * with whom I had a particular Acquaintance . . ."[5] Treachery is clearly afoot, for the "Banyan" "had always express'd a more than ordinary Friendship for me."[6] He is carried to the house of the "Banyan" and thrown into a hole where, suspecting a lingering death, he regrets that he had not "by opposing the Wretches who laid hold of me, provok'd them to end me at once . . ."[7] Despair is not allowed to last long and the next

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1 *The Lady's Drawing Room*, p. 18.
2 *The Lady's Drawing Room*, p. 18.
3 *The Lady's Drawing Room*, p. 18
4 *The Lady's Drawing Room*, pp. 18 - 19.
* "Banyan" is a misspelling of "banian", the English corruption of "Bania", the moneylending caste who often advanced money to recently arrived Englishmen. As spelled, "Banyan", it is the name of a species of tree.
5 *The Lady's Drawing Room*, p. 19.
6 *The Lady's Drawing Room*, p. 19.
7 *The Lady's Drawing Room*, p. 20.

necessary ingredient of a romance appears - a beautiful woman, daughter of his captor. She calls down to him "*Rodomond* . . . my Heart is pierced with Shame and Sorrow, at the Cruelty of my father. - He is determin'd to kill you . . ."[1] Needless to say, she is willing to save him, though he has to promise that if she "is so fortunate to deliver you [Rodomond] from my father's Power, you shall never be publickly seen again in *Bombay*, but quit that place with all possible Expedition . . ."[2]

The lady, the damsel in distress, has to be rescued so she asks him: ". . . make me the Partner of your Flight . . ."[3] Her virtue is important, as is her sense of filial duty so she charges the factor: " . . . during the Voyage [to England], and on our Arrival in your Country, or wherever you shall think fit to go, you will never make any Attempts on my Virtue . . . And Lastly, That you will make no Discovery of my Father's Treachery, in order to draw on him the Revenge of your Countrymen . . ."[4] Chivalrous as ever, Rodomond accepts the requests. Her request that her virtue be honoured is not as strange as it may appear - Victorian mores had not come into force and "persuasion" of young women by their paramours was by no means uncommon - however, purity of mind is valued in romantic heroines and her request demonstrates this. As soon as Rodomond has accepted her conditions, she provides him with the means of escape - a flint and straw to burn his cords. Freed of his bonds he climbs up a rope his resourceful saviour provides, and they escape together disguised as Negroes (another indication of the writer's unfamiliarity with India). In Bombay, still disguised, he calls on a friend with whose help they board a ship bound for England. It transpires that she has good European blood in her, they fall in love - as if that were ever in doubt! - and it all ends happily.

The story has all the hallmarks of a traditional romance - the knight

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[1] *The Lady's Drawing Room*, p. 21.
[2] *The Lady's Drawing Room*, p. 22.
[3] *The Lady's Drawing Room*, p. 22.
[4] *The Lady's Drawing Room*, p. 22.

has been replaced by a young merchant, the locale is India but otherwise it is all the same - Rodomond is kidnapped and meets a beautiful damsel, who releases him and they escape to civilisation and safety.

This fascination with the nabobs and their ostentation began to wane when the establishment began to feel threatened. Writers became less keen on the nabobs. Pitt and his fellows had returned in sufficient numbers to cause the writers of purportedly moral tales to voice anti-trader sentiment. In Samuel Foote's play *The Nabob*, Sir Matthew Mite, a returned Anglo-Indian, is described as "profusely scattering the spoils of ruined provinces"[1]. Some commentators varied the discussion by finding fault not only with the East-India trade but with the *act* of trade itself - in his vision of the future French writer Sebastian Mercier railed: "Foreign traffic was the real father of that destructive luxury, which produced, in its turn, that horrid inequality of fortunes, which caused all the wealth of the nation to pass into a few hands . . . " [2] (the "destructive luxury" being tobacco and other non-European produce).

All the writers were, however, conscious of the central role of trade in the British presence in India. Even the men of war who went out to India were identified as part of a trading system - in *The Adventures of a Rupee*, a father tells his son (who is setting out for India as a military cadet), "Your particular province is to protect the trade of your country . . . the prosperity of trade . . . is what you are to have in view".[3]

It is clear that by this time, the late eighteenth century, the perception that much of the wealth was ill-gotten was widely accepted. The father tells his cadet son that he will be not only protecting trade but also redeeming the image of his country and its trade which had been tarnished by some: " . . . you may enjoy the glorious honour of rectifying particular abuses, you may

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[1] Foote, Samuel: *The Nabob*; London, 1778; Act I, Sc. I, p. 7.
[2] Mercier, Sebastian: *Memoirs of the Year Two Thousand Five Hundred* (transl. W. Hooper); London, 1772; p. 185.
[3] Scott, Helenus: *Adventures of a Rupee*; London, 1782; pp. 59 - 60.

be blessed by those nations that have so often cursed our rapacity . . . "[1]

The soldiers had become the Englishmen who went to India to perform the heroic duties that were the province of Rodomond, and they had the additional task of civilising both the natives and their own merchants. The character of the trader-hero exemplified by Rodomond had begun to split into its component parts - the trader became increasingly weak, both physically and mentally, as a result of his moral decline, and the strength and honour went to the soldiers, who became the honourable, impartial protectors. The civilising role (which was non-existent in Rodomond who was himself civilised but did nothing to civilise) was transferred to the administrator who, as a matter of heroic necessity, was often in need of the manly protection of the soldier.

This change in the perception of the trader is clear in this description of a trader (from *Adventures of a Rupee*):

"His original education consisted in being able to read, write and cast accounts. With a little navigation, added to these accomplishments, he considered himself as having reached the summit of science; and so qualified, he began the seafaring life. He had already made two voyages to India, and as trade had succeeded under his management, he came to be of some consequence among his compeers. This was chiefly the effect of his extreme cunning, which never met with opposition to the success of its schemes, by any delicacy of conscience, or tenderness of heart."[2]

This trader, it is clear, possesses none of the honourable qualities of Rodomond. He does retain intelligence but it is a debased form of intelligence - an animal instinct, not worthy of a real man.

There was another side too - blame was not entirely placed on the

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[1] *Adventures of a Rupee*, pp. 59 - 60.
[2] *Adventures of a Rupee*, pp. 76 - 77.

(perceived) immoral activities of the English traders alone. In the eyes of the free-trade spokesmen Indian rulers were also responsible by virtue of their opposition to freedom of trade (through customs duties and other tax-raising activities) - the father in *Adventures of A Rupee* exhorts his son "to protect the trade of your country against the insults of . . . Indian nations, who ignorant of the blessings that commerce diffuses . . . are often disposed to interrupt its equitable course"[1]. This alleged anti-market interference was used to legitimise the use of force to "protect" trading interests. While it is true that there were unfriendly powers attempting to distract English traders, it should be noted that the main threat came from non-Indians - the Portuguese, the Dutch, the French and even the traditional traders, the Arabs. The British, like their competitors, were not above piracy, even considering it a legitimate means to boost profits. The guns were, therefore, more for protection against people in their own profession rather than "Indian nations". Still, in romantic fiction the more exotic the enemy, the more interesting - so it was that the father exhorted his son to protect trade from the Indian rulers.

The rapid acquisition of wealth by non-establishment individuals threatened the status quo and the corruption trials of the late eighteenth century (of Robert Clive and Warren Hastings, on charges of corruption) were seized upon by the supporters of the established gentry who took the opportunity to vocally attack the new wealth, sometimes in moral tales. Henry Mackenzie, author of *The Man of Feeling* chose as the subject of one of his moral tales in *The Lounger*, the effect of the Nabob on a country community. The plaintiff is the aptly named "John Homespun":

". . . my neighbour *Mushroom's* son, who had been sent out to India about a dozen years ago, returned home with a fortune, as we are told, of 100,000*l.* and has taken up his residence at his father's, till some finer place shall be

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[1] *Adventures of a Rupee*, pp. 59 - 60.

found out for him."[1] The arrogance of the young man knows no bounds - he re-invents his own family: "Before his arrival, he had made several large remittances to his father, for the purpose of dressing up the old house a little, so as to make it fit for his reception, and had sent a trunk full of fineries to dress up his mother and sisters for the same purpose."[2]

The older, wiser members of his family do not easily change. They are aware of tradition and the importance of their own values, and of "good taste": "The good old Lady, however, restrains her daughters from wearing them [their new clothes] (as indeed they did not well know how to make them up or put them on) till her son should arrive."[3] The young man is not, however, without support - another younger person is around, another person to whose head wealth has gone:

"His arrival furnished them with a very able assistant: the young man had made a love-match before he left this country, with a good-looking girl of our neighbourhood, who, not altogether with his inclination, had gone out to him soon after his establishment in India. This Lady returned hither with him, and has edified all the family amazingly."[4]

Mackenzie, supporting traditional values, angry at the affectations of these newcomers, scoffs at their displays of wealth:

"The Sunday after these newcomers' arrival, they appeared in church, where their pew was all carpeted and cushioned over for their reception, so bedizened — there were flowered muslins and gold muslins, white shawls and red shawls, white feathers and red feathers; and every now and then the

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[1] "John Homespun" (Mackenzie) in *The Lounger*, 17, (collected in 3 vols., London & Edinburgh, 1804), I, p. 147.
[2] "John Homespun" (Mackenzie) in *The Lounger*, 17, I, p. 147.
[3] "John Homespun" (Mackenzie) in *The Lounger*, 17, I, p. 147.
[4] "John Homespun" (Mackenzie) in *The Lounger*, 17, I, p. 147.

young Mushroom girls pulled out little bottles that sent such a perfume around them. — Nay, my old friend, their father, like a fool as he was, had such a mixture of black sattin about him, and was so stiff and awkward in his finery, that he looked for all the world like the *King of Clubs* . . ."[1]

Not only is the life of the Mushrooms changed, but that of the hapless John Homespun is disrupted as the heads of his (less intelligent) womenfolk are turned:

"But her instructions are not confined to her own family; mine is unluckily included. This is a favour which my wife is very proud of; as Mrs. Mushroom has forgot most of her old acquaintances in the parish, and associates only with us, and one or two more of her neighbours, who have what she calls *capability*; that is, Sir, as I understand it, who will listen to all the nonsense she talks, and ape all the follies she practises. These are strong words; but it would put any man in a passion to see how she goes on . . ."[2]

John Homespun, simple, honest countryman that he is, laments this change in attitudes, and yearns for a return to the old days, when money was inherited, valued and came with "gentle" breeding:

" . . . all this, Sir, is no joking matter to me. Some of the neighbours, indeed, laugh at it; but we who are favourites say that is nothing but envy. My wife and daughter *Mary* have rummaged out of their tetes and feathers; and the hoops, that had suffered a little from the moths, have been put in complete repair again. I was silly enough to let my wife get hold of a draught on town for the price of my last year's barley; and I verily believe she and Mary alone carry the produce of ten acres on their backs . . . I am glad to take this

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[1] "John Homespun" (Mackenzie) in *The Lounger*, 17, I, p. 148.
[2] "John Homespun" (Mackenzie) in *The Lounger*, 17, I, pp. 147 - 148.

estimate of things, because in the value of money we are now got into a style of expression which loses all idea of small sums."[1]

This is a condemnation of the unhealthy wealth of the upstart nabobs and their disrespect for *British* ways:

"Hundreds of thousands of pounds carried a sound of some importance, and could easily be divided into lesser parts; but Madam Mushroom's *Lack** , or half a Lack, sounds like nothing at all; and she has stories which she tells to my poor gaping girls, of a single supper in the east, given by some Nabob with half a dozen hard names, that cost one or two of those Lacks, besides half a Lack in *trifling* presents to the company."[2]

The wealth and barely credible stories, it is suggested, are traps for the unwary, temptations sent to try honest folk:

"In those stories, the East-Indian Lady, being subject to no contradiction, goes on without interruption or commentary, till my poor wife and daughters' heads are turned quite topsy-turvy. Even mine, though reckoned tolerably solid, is really dizzy with hearing her."[3]

So attractive are these temptations that even one as homespun as the honest squire is nearly seduced. However, he recognises the evil inherent in them:

"There are such accounts of Nabobs, Rajahs, and Rajah-Pouts, elephants, palanquins, and processions; so stuck full of gold, diamonds, pearls, and

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[1] "John Homespun" (Mackenzie) in *The Lounger*, 17, I, p. 149.
[*] Now "Lakh" - the Indian word for the figure 100,000.
[2] "John Homespun" (Mackenzie) in *The Lounger*, 17, I, pp. 149 - 150.
[3] "John Homespun" (Mackenzie) in *The Lounger*, 17, I, p. 150.

precious stones, with episodes of dancing girls and *otter* of roses! — I have heard nothing like it since I was a boy, and used to be delighted with reading the Arabian Nights Entertainments."[1]

Homespun's plea is Mackenzie's call for a return to traditional society and a rejection of temptation:

"In short, Sir, I am ten times worse off with this fresh disaster . . . this new plague is close at our doors, and Mrs. Mushroom is so obliging as to be a constant visitor. I am really afraid that I must sell my little estate, and leave this part of the country altogether; and that I must try to find out some new place of residence, where Nabobs, Rajahs, and Lacks of Rupees, were never heard of, and where people know no more of Bengal than of the Man in the Moon."[2]

A few months later Mackenzie returned to his theme, this time in an article purportedly written by a member of the Mushroom family, Marjory, sister of the returnee. She is depicted as a simple woman, the female counterpart of John Homespun, and, like him overwhelmed and distrustful of the "unnatural" splendour of her brother's new lifestyle. She is depicted as not alone in her suffering - family life is disrupted and other members of the family also suffer considerably:

"'Tis but very lately that I became acquainted with your paper, our family only having taken it in last week for the first time . . . I found some of my acquaintance in it . . . and so shall tell Mr. *John Homespun* when I meet him. Only think of a man come to his years to go put himself and his neighbours into print in the manner he has done. But I dare say it is all out of spite and

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[1]"John Homespun" (Mackenzie) in *The Lounger*, 17, I, p. 150.
[2]"John Homespun" (Mackenzie) in *The Lounger*, 17, I, p. 151.

envy at our having grown so suddenly rich, by my brother's good fortune in India: and to be sure, Sir, things are changed with us from what I remember; and yet perhaps we are not so much to be envied neither, if all were known. . . I will try to tell you things in their order. — My brother, who, as Mr. Homespun has informed you, is returned home with a great fortune, is determined to live as becomes it, and sent down a ship-load of blacks in laced liveries, the servants in this country not being handy about fine things; though, to tell you the truth, some of the Blackamoors don't give themselves much trouble about their work . . . Besides these, there came down in two chaises my brother's own valet de sham, my sister's own maid, a man cook, who has two of the negers under him, and Mons. de Sabot, whom my brother wrote to me he had hired for a butler; but when he came, he told us he was *maitre dotell* . . . But then, Sir, it is so troublesome an affair to be fashionable! and so my father and mother, and the rest of us, who have never been abroad, find. We used to be as cheerful a family as any in the country; and at our dinners and suppers, if we had not fine things, we had pure good appetites, and, after, the table was uncovered, used to be as merry as grigs at *Cross purposes*, *Questions and commands*, or *What's my thought like*? But now we must not talk loud, nor laugh, nor walk fast, nor play at romping games; and we must sit quiet during a long dinner of two courses and a dessert, and drink wine and water, and never touch our meat but with our fork, and pick our teeth after dinner, and dabble in cold water, and Lord knows how many other things . . ."[1]

Her voice, demanding control of such sudden and inappropriate advancement, is added to Homespun's:

"I could tell you a great deal more of embarrassments and vexations in the enjoyment of our good fortune; but I am sure I must have wearied you by my

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[1]"Marjory Mushroom" (Mackenzie) in *The Lounger*, 36, II, pp. 1 - 3.

scribble-scrabble account of what I have told. It will be sufficient to show you that Mr. Homespun has not so much cause for envy as from his letter I presume he feels against us . . ."[1]

Her brother is portrayed as much a victim of his own folly as his family and neighbours - only, unlike the others, he is too taken in by the show to realise it:

"In the same ship with the blacks, my brother brought down a great collection of pictures which were purchased for him at a sale in London, and are worth, I am told, Lord knows how much, though he got them, he assures us, for an old song; yet several of them I have heard cost some hundreds of pounds. But this, between ourselves, is the most plaguy of all his fineries. Would you believe it, Sir, he is obliged to be two or three hours every morning in the gallery, with a little book in his hand, like a poor school-boy, getting by heart the names and stories of all the men and women that are painted there, that he may have his lesson pat for the company that are to walk and admire the paintings till dinner is served up?"[2]

Mackenzie took the opportunity to voice the displeasure of those who had, until the rise of the mercantile class, held the reins of power. Like many other Nabobs, the young Mushroom aspires to a seat in Parliament and entertains lavishly, much to the discomfiture of his family, who knows their place in society and accept the right of the ruling elite to continue. This passage appeared at the time that Pitt the Younger, took office (in 1784). His family, as has been explained, entered parliament using profits from East India trade. The new Prime Minister was, at the time, opposed to the impeachment of Warren Hastings who had also made a fortune while in

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[1] "Marjory Mushroom" (Mackenzie) in *The Lounger*, 36, II, p. 8.
[2] "Marjory Mushroom" (Mackenzie) in *The Lounger*, 36, II, pp. 7 - 8.

India:

"My brother, you must know, has a mind to be a parliament-man, and so he invites all the country, high and low, to eat and drink with him; and sometimes I have been sadly out of countenance, and so have we all, when some of his old acquaintance have told long stories of things which happened to them formerly, though ten to one my brother does not remember a syllable of them. As t'other day, when our schoolmaster's son Samuel put him in mind of their going together to Edinburgh for the first time, and how they had but one pair of silk-stockings between them, and my brother had them on in the morning to see a gentleman who was first cousin to an East-India director, and Sam got them in the evening to visit the Principal of the college; and all this before Sir Harry Driver, Lord Squanderfield, and Lady Betty Lampoon."[1]

In Mackenzie's story, the Nabob, Marjory's brother, has more money than sense, suggesting that such profligacy is typical of the "upstart" Nabob-class. This reflects the public displeasure and envy of the powerful new Nabob class:

"Then my brother is turned an improver, which everybody says is an excellent way of laying out his money, and is so public-spirited! — and the planner who has come to give directions about it tells us, that in a few years hence he will get five pounds for every five shillings he lays out now in that way. In the mean time, however, it gives him a sad deal of trouble; when every thing is resolved upon to-day, 'tis a chance but it is all turned topsy-turvy tomorrow; for his voters, as they call the gentlemen on my brother's side of the question, who come to visit us, have every-one their own opinion .

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[1] "Marjory Mushroom" (Mackenzie) in *The Lounger*, 36, II, pp. 5 - 6.

. . ."[1]

To counteract this pernicious evil of disruptive new wealth, *The Lounger* featured a "rebuff" from a well-bred returnee who uses his relatively modest wealth to re-establish his family:

"My father, Sir, inherited an estate in one of the northern counties of this kingdom, a property once considerable, and which had been in his family for some generations; but which, during his life and that of my grandfather, had, from a certain easiness of temper bordering upon improvidence, and their humane endeavours to assist their needy relations, been so greatly reduced, that at my father's death it was necessary to bring the estate to sale for the payment of his debts."[2]

He had been appointed to a "respectable" position in the Company's service, through the usual patronage system:

"I had now attained my fifteenth year, and it became necessary to think of some profession by which I might make my way in the world. My inclination led me to the study of medicine, which I had persecuted [sic] for some time with great assiduity; when a near relation of my mother's, who warmly interested himself in our welfare, procured for me the commission of a surgeon's mate on board an Indiaman. The ship to which I belonged was to sail within a fortnight after I received intelligence of my appointment."[3]

On arrival in India he takes up a "respectable" post, eschewing commerce:

"After a voyage of six months, our ship arrived in the Ganges. During my stay

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[1]"Marjory Mushroom" (Mackenzie) in *The Lounger*, 36, II, p. 6.
[2]"John Truman" (Fraser Tytler) in *The Lounger*, 44, 1785, II, p. 70.
[3]"John Truman" (Fraser Tytler) in *The Lounger*, 36, II, p. 72.

in Calcutta, I was fortunate enough to recommend myself to a countryman of my own, then high in the council; by whose interest, with my Captain's leave, I obtained an appointment of surgeon to a small settlement of the Company's, which bordered on the territory of the Nabob of __."[1]

This "rebuff" is all part of the moral tale - this upstanding young man boldly criticises the immoral behaviour of the trader-class. His own behaviour is being held up as an example to the callous *nouveau riche*:

"Various, Sir, are the methods of acquiring wealth in India. Of these, the obvious and apparent are so well known, that they need not be mentioned: the more mysterious courses of affluence, as I never was solicitous myself to unravel, so I am not well qualified to explain. It is enough for me to say, that, with good conscience, and during a twelve years' exercise of a profession serviceable to my fellow-creatures, I acquired what to me appeared a competency. In short, Sir, being now possessed of a fortune of 25,000l., I began to think of returning to my native country . . . This intention I put into execution; and bringing with me the best part of my fortune, landed in safety on the coast of Britain, after an absence of thirteen years and a half."[2]

True, as his name indicates, to his honour and social rank, Truman spends his modest fortune buying back his family land and rebuilding the mansion. Mackenzie emphasizes the morality of this behaviour in his editor's note:

"I feel myself honoured by my friend Mr. Truman's correspondence, and sensibly interested in the simple story of his worthy family. His example may serve to inculcate one lesson of importance; that moderation, in point of

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[1]"John Truman" (Fraser Tytler) in *The Lounger*, 36, II, pp. 72 - 73.
[2]"John Truman" (Fraser Tytler) in *The Lounger*, 36, II, p. 73.

wealth, is productive of the greatest comfort and the purest felicity. Had Mr. Truman returned from India with the enormous fortune of some other Asiatic adventurers, he would probably have been much less happy than he is, even without considering the means by which it is possible such a fortune might have been acquired. In the possession of such overgrown wealth, however attained, there is generally more ostentation than pleasure; more pride than enjoyment: I can but guess at the feelings which accompany it, when reaped from desolated provinces, when covered with the blood of slaughtered myriads."[1]

This representation of the practices of the East-India traders as amoral, if not immoral, gained popularity rapidly. By 1791 traders were very far from the romantic heroes of the mid-eighteenth century. In Mariana Starke's play condemning sati, military cadets, not traders, are the heroes. They, like the soldier-son in *Adventures of a Rupee*, have a moral duty:

> "Would Europe's sons, who visit Asia's shore,
> Where plunder'd millions can afford no more,
> To nobler ends direct their future aim,
> And wipe from Europe's annals Europe's shame . . ."[2]

Trade itself was still regarded the justification for the British presence in India. While writers and the reading public were disappointed with the behaviour of its practitioners they accepted the central role of the mercantile system itself. Some early writers, like Mercier, had found economic fault, but such protests had been muted - the amorality of the traders and the contrasting morality of their protectors (soldiers) were the focus of interest. Writers propagating the "civilising mission" were on the rise. Up to the late

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[1] Mackenzie in *The Lounger*, 36, II, p. 80.
[2] Starke, Mariana: *The Widow of Malabar*, London, 1791; p. 12.

eighteenth century there had been occasional representations of trade as an obstacle because of its focus on profit (rather than on morality), but these had been the exceptions, rather then the norm. Mariana Starke's Chief Bramin, though basically an evil man, is allowed to condemn the activities of the British in a brief speech:

> " . . . Alas, my Country!
> Art thou condemn'd to bear a Victor's yoke?
> To groan beneath Oppressions' iron rod,
> And ravish all thy precious stores to feed
> The av'rice of thy Lords?"[1]

This central role of trade faded as the the nabobs and their actvities lost favour. By 1826 the idea of civilising, rather than trade, was being presented as the prime reason for the English presence in India. Some even began to suggest that India was benefiting from its trade with England, who, in their eyes, was "sacrificing" her best and boldest in the service of that subject nation. The author of *Six Sketches Illustrative of Life in India* asserted that "India is an immense gainer by the traffic she carries on with England"[2] because "the youthful functionary is made to contribute his health, and strength, and energies, and vigour, and all that is good in him; for the benefit of the country which gives hard commodities in exchange . . . "[3]. Trade had become an evil, albeit one that was an integral part of society, that India profited from morally. He ignored the rich pickings still available to the majority of the English traders and complained that in return for the goods India presented "an insatiable demand for our sons, brothers, cousins and nephews . . . to the infinite distress of hundreds of thousands (sic) of families,

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1 *The Widow of Malabar*, p. 46.
2 Anonymous: *Life in India 1: Six Sketches Illustrative of Life in India*; London,1826; p. 2.
3 *Six Sketches*, p. 2.

who have to part with their Johns, Thomases, and Williams."[1] He used this argument, rather inappropriately, to support what (he claimed) the economists of his time were saying: "Colonies are . . . excrescences . . . adding nothing to the strength or prosperity of the present state . . . "[2] He would have found it difficult to argue that India was gaining financially, as the figures quoted earlier were available for all to see - the hard commodities that India so grudgingly surrendered in exchange for the "flower of England's youth" were, in his words, "Sugars, Indigos, Silks, Saltpetre, Shawls, and Cottons, and five hundred other nutritious or comfortable articles"[3].

It is interesting to note that, despite these complaints, the salaries of even the "non-traders"

". . . made up a comparatively small part of what the ambitious . . . hoped to earn: the greater part came from perquisites and unofficial profits attached to offices and *above all from trading* . . . virtually all civil servants were also private merchants, while many army officers, surgeons and even chaplains traded"[4].

So, whether the English in India were willing to admit it or not, trade was still the mainstay of their existence in India.

Though the trader was himself losing his popular appeal and being replaced by others, the trading entity that was the East India Company had gained in stature. Walter Scott, describing Tom Hillary in *The Surgeon's Daughter*, expresses a high opinion of that powerful body and of its past influence and glory:

" . . . the honourable East India Company - that wonderful company of

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1 *Six Sketches*, p. 1.
2 *Six Sketches*, p. 1.
3 *Six Sketches*, p. 1.
4 Marshall, P. J.: *East India Fortunes*; London, 1976; p. 18.

merchants, who may indeed, with the strictest propriety, be termed princes. It was about the middle of the eighteenth century, and the directors in Leadenhall Street were silently laying the foundations of that immense empire, which afterwards rose like an exhalation . . ."[1]

The public was still attracted by the notion of a young man going away to make his fortune. The romantic vision of India as a place where fortunes lay by the roadside was continued in Scott's portrayal of the career of Richard Middlemas. On hearing that his erstwhile colleague and rival in love is setting out for India he exclaims:

"To India! . . . happy dog - to India! You may well bear with equanimity all the disappointments sustained on this side of the globe. Oh Delhi! oh Golconda! have your names no power to conjure down idle recollections? - India where gold is won by steel; where a brave man cannot pitch his desire of fame and wealth so high, but that he may realize it, if he have fortune to his friend?"[2]

To the raw cadet *Tom Raw, the Griffin*, also India was a land of great opportunity. Deflecting attention from the profits of non-traders in the sub-continent, his creator, Sir Charles D'Oyly, one of the East India Company's opium agents, represented the directors in Leadenhall Street as the real profiteers:

> "Of money making, in the Glorious East
> Such and a thousand other odd conceits,
> (By rich returning Nabobs sore increased),
> Fill the parental mind with feverish heats:
> Golconda's mine the golden dream completes,

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1 *The Surgeon's Daughter*, p. 265.
2 *The Surgeon's Daughter*, p. 259.

With all the sparkling gems of Samarcand,
Letters are written - double, treble sheets,
To various sharers of the eastern fund,
Alias - proprietors of India stock in Lond'"[1]

The character of the East India traders sank even lower. They were, at this time, men down on their luck - rarely well-bred, and if they were, they were younger sons who had been disinherited or were from families who had lost their fortunes. Hockley's character, Benson, who might have been another Rodomond had he been created a century earlier, has a very different career. To illustrate the despicable nature of the East India trader, Hockley describes how he came to be in the Indian trade:

"My name is Benson, and I am an Englishman, and not the first unfortunate one in the world . . . my father was a merchant in a house in London . . . when about thirteen years of age, I found him in grief bordering on despair. The firm had failed, and my father was a ruined man . . . My father had formerly been a captain of a merchant vessel . . . (and) through the interest of some of the Dutch firm with which my father had been connected, he obtained command of a merchant vessel . . . and, not knowing how to dispose of me, took me with him, and instructed me in the mysteries of navigation. . . " [2]

There is no hint of glamour or of a desire for adventure - it is all matter-of-fact, a case of a son trying to follow in his sailor-father's footsteps. Benson's behaviour shows how low the behaviour of the trader had fallen in public esteem. In China,

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[1] D'Oyly, Charles: *Tom Raw, the Griffin*, London, 1828; Canto I, Verse VI.
[2] Hockley, William Brown: *The English in India: A novel*, London, 1828; II, pp. 287 - 288.

"So amused were we at the long pigtails of the Chinese, that we could not resist giving them a pull as we passed them. At length they resented this liberty, and a quarrel ensued, a quantity of filth was thrown over us, which so enraged me, that I drew my dirk and stabbed the offender: upon which we all scampered off, and took refuge in the ship . . . fortunately for me, the Chinese whom I stabbed did not die, or I must inevitably have been sacrificed to the fury of the long tailed tribe . . ."[1]

An earlier trader, though no lover of non-Europeans either, would certainly not have even been involved in a conversation with them, leave alone been involved in a *brawl* with them.

So much for the young adventurer with no serious character defects who set sail for India and made a fortune without damaging his public image. The adventurous "trader" had sunk to the level of a common deck-hand, completely lacking in charm, social graces or honour. The other trading character in the novel, Lapwing, who is more mercantile in his motivation, is no better off intellectually and certainly far worse off physically. He stands in starker contrast to the mid-eighteenth century portrait of an intelligent, well-bred merchant:

" . . . the most extraordinary among the gentlemen passengers was a Mr. Lapwing, a sort of *nobody-knows-who* . . . an ordinary looking young man; neither in the army or the navy, and a person going out on some plea of succeeding to some property left him by a relation, with hopes of gaining some situation eventually. This poor fellow was the butt of the inhabitants of the gun deck, a sort of person whom they conceived themselves licenced to annoy and irritate . . . Lapwing was also the alarmist of the vessel; he was continually racking his mind with anticipations of some coming danger . . . "[2]

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[1] *The English in India: A novel*, I, p. 128.
[2] *The English in India: A novel*, II, p. 290.

D'Oyly's poem *Tom Raw* also describes the people aboard a ship going out to India and confirms that the trader is held in low esteem:

"Besides th' untutored boy [the cadet], there were on board
A vulgar couple destined for Bengal . . ."[1]

The "vulgar couple" turn out to be "a free mariner . . . The skipper of some country coasting vessel . . . "[2] and his wife. Aboard Hockley's ship, besides Lapwing there are no other traders His fellow travellers are, it is true, all India-hands, but they are India-hands of superior class - there is the good, honest soldier, Lieutenant-Colonel Hopeston, a dandy, Cornet Marriot and, of course, the perfect gentleman - brave, upright and destined to marry the beautiful Eleanor Riley, Lieutenant Onslow. Lapwing suffers unsympathetic laughter from his "better-bred" ship-mates, and constant physical humilation at the hands of the "lower classes".

The name itself is a joke. It certainly has nothing of the romantic ring of "Rodomond". Instead, it is a dig at his puniness, and his sole sponsor in India has an equally ridiculous pun of a name: Dr. Cashman. The pathetic Lapwing is obviously no hero, his prospects are bleak and he isn't socially or physically attractive. Rodomond, had he been Lapwing's contemporary, would have found it difficult to survive in Hockley's India - the trader has a much more difficult task in fictional mid-nineteenth century India. Immediately upon his arrival Lapwing is robbed - not by powerful bandits but by petty dock-thieves. The hapless man approaches Miss Riley to bleat, "'Oh miss, a black man has run away with my box and no one can tell me where to find my uncle, Dr. Cashman, and the blacks won't understand a word I say . . .'"[3] - he clearly has no facility for languages! And sympathy is not something the

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1 *Tom Raw*, Canto I, Verse XVII - XIX.
2 *Tom Raw*, Canto I, Verse XVII - XIX.
3 *The English in India: A novel*, I, p. 237.

other English waste on him:

"'Faith,' said Hawkes, "tis as awkward a predicament as need be, but go to the Custom House young man, your box is doubtless taken there to be searched; your name is on it I suppose?'"[1]

But Lapwing is not clever enough to have done that and is roundly berated for that omission -

"'No, sir, indeed it is not.'
'Ah, very wrong, sir, always put your name on your boxes, mind that . . .'"[2]

Worse is to come - he is to lose even more face with Hawkes as Hawkes discovers that not only is he stupid but he is also a mere trader of no consequence:

"'I am an old soldier, mind that too, but are you come out in our line?'
'No, sir.'
'In the civil, perhaps.'
'No, sir.'
'What then?'
'Nothing, sir.'
'Oh, poor *wratch*,' said Hawkes, and then the bearers were ordered to proceed."[3]

Hawkes, having discovered that Lapwing is of no consequence, expresses contempt for everything relating to the trader (and produces the atrocious pun on Lapwing's uncle's name that has been waiting to be expressed):

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1 *The English in India: A novel*, I, p. 238.
2 *The English in India: A novel*, I, p. 238.
3 *The English in India: A novel*, I, p. 238.

"'. . . for a fellow that is nothing; he says he belongs to nothing; and between ourselves it is all a flam, I'm thinking, about his uncle Dr. Cashman. I never heard of such a name; he would have no scruple in asking me to be his *cashman* I warrant . . .'"[1]

As narrator/commentator, Hockley presses the point home, lest it be overlooked:

"We have dwelt . . . long on poor Lapwing's miseries on first landing: but our object is to show what a young man may expect who goes to India in no decided service . . ."[2]

Some things had not changed though. Contacts remained as important as ever, though the impotent trader, Lapwing, being a nobody, does not even possess these essentials, which would have provided him with at least some chance in the manly world of mid-nineteenth century India. Walter Scott refers to the continuing importance of connections - Hartley enters the service of the East India Company through the good offices of ". . . a cousin of my mother's [who] commands a ship in the Company's service . . . "[3].

The well-bred, relatively well-off also continued to be the favoured. Lapwing possesses neither money nor breeding and is therefore not an attractive victim for sophisticated criminals or enemies. This prevents his encountering any opportunites to prove his physical or moral prowess, had he any. In the adventures he does chance upon, he is a minor character and when he does succeed in any way, it is only because his opponents are more stupid/cowardly than himself. He rescues the beautiful heroine,

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1 *The English in India: A novel*, I, p. 238.
2 *The English in India: A novel*, I, p. 259.
3 *The Surgeon's Daughter*, p. 259.

Eleanor from her captor, the sinister Portuguese De Castro, through petty subterfuge, not through any feat of arms. Even this minor feat is ruined by his explanation of its being the result of rather despicable, simple-minded mercantile prudence:

"I have always made it a rule to accompany any large quantity of goods; which under the care of servants are likely to be neglected and stolen, and the blame laid to the Pindarees."[1]

Lapwing's own account of his career after his arrival in India, creates not sympathy for, but embarrassment at his grubby mercantile nature:

"I have but little to tell you, Miss Riley, but will certainly acquaint you with it, short and uninteresting as it maybe. With some difficulty I found a Portuguese gentleman of the name of De Souza, to whom I had a letter of introduction. He informed me that my relative, Dr. Cashman, was in the service of the Nizam, at Aurangabad, and put me in the way to join him. I found the journey difficult, and expensive; but, thank God, arrived safe at Aurangabad. Dr. Cashman, my brother-in-law, received me kindly, though I could perceive he was not overanxious to be burdened with my company. He conversed of my affairs, mentioned the sum my poor father had bequeathed me, and recommended my employing my capital in a mercantile house at Bombay; whither I proceeded, but found there was no chance of being admitted as a partner. I was about to retrace my steps, when an offer was made me from the house of Boyd, and Company, who were, in fact, European shopkeeper, and wine merchants, to take a share in their concern, and set up an establishment at Seroor in the Deckan. I assented to these proposals, and became a regular shopkeeper; and at certain periods, convey wine and beer to Aurangabad, where Mr. De Castro has employed

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[1] *The English in India: A novel*, III, p. 147.

me."[1]

That offers a number of clues as to how Hockley and his contemporaries perceived the Lapwing/trader figure. Besides his foolish name he is credited with a number of other "low" characteristics. He associates with the lowest form of European, the dark Portuguese - even working for one. And his uncle is worse - he is actually in the employ of an ordinary Indian. Hockley suggests that, introduced to India by such mean individuals, it is not surprising that Lapwing lacks even the most rudimentary entrepreneurial spirit. He chooses to invest his money in the dull safety of trading houses or with "shopkeepers and wine merchants" instead of risking it on a daring venture, and then trails across the country with his own merchandise. Rodomond would never have had to stoop so low - connections with Portuguese, Indians and shop-keeping were as far removed from his life and character as duelling would have been from Lapwing's.

Everyone looks down on Lapwing - De Castro is angry that he has been "baffled by . . . a wretch like Lapwing"[2], the "princesses", Eleanor Riley's society friends describe him as "a baboon", "such a wretch", a "horrid creature" and they "hope he will never come here again."[3] Even Eleanor, whom he has rescued, is unhappy with his appearance at her residence:

"'. . . I gave him a hint to that effect [that he never visit her again]'
'Nay, I don't wish to deprive you, Miss Riley, of seeing your friends, but ---'
'Pray don't mention it,' said Eleanor; 'you know I am under lasting obligation to the young man, or he would never seek to intrude upon me . . . yet I hope, certainly, he will not call here again.'"[4]

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[1] *The English in India: A novel*, III, p. 147.
[2] *The English in India: A novel*, III, p. 161.
[3] *The English in India: A novel*, III, p. 236.
[4] *The English in India: A novel*, III, p. 237.

Lapwing's lack of social grace deprives him of any chance of social acceptance - he has appeared in Eleanor's presence in a white jacket in such a state that "the sight of such a creature could not be endured by the princesses, who, one by one, left the room . . ."[1] In another day and age the writer of such a passage might have implied the social indiscretion was on the part of the "princesses" but not in Hockley's world - he presents and reacts to Lapwing as his characters do and, like them, shows no sympathy for the man or remorse for his characters' treatment of him. The only character who does so much as give him the time of day is Eleanor - and she does so only because she is soft-hearted as all heroines must be. Hockley has introduced him into the story not only because he wants his novel to cover the widest possible range of "types" but also to caricature him, to laugh at him, to ridicule everything he stands for. Trading is for spineless, petty beings - men are soldiers and women, true Englishwomen,recognise this. Lapwing is merely one of the foils against which Onslow and his fellow-officers can shine. And shine they do - in spite of one's self, one cannot have any sympathy for the pitiful being that is Lapwing.

Even the best-off traders had a low social standing by this time. In *Life in India, or, The English at Calcutta* a trader is described as having "substantial bags of money . . . partner in one of the first houses here . . . passably good-looking, and well enough in other respects . . ."[2] but is considered an unworthy partner for a self-respecting woman because he is "not 'in the service', and that is an alarming drawback . . . every Register's and Ensign's wife . . . [has] the right to be handed before her."[3]

D'Oyly confirms that the mid-nineteenth century antagonism displayed towards the traders has its roots in the popular distaste for the greed and unscrupulousness of their predecessors, the Nabobs:

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1 *The English in India: A novel*, III, p. 233.
2 Anonymous: *Life in India, or, the English at Calcutta*; London, 1828; I, p. 175.
3 *Life in India, or, the English at Calcutta*; I, p. 175.

"We've heard it traced to envyings and jealousies,
Of our rupees, and character of Nabobs,
Obtained by acts that richly merit gallowses.
Our vulgar fondness for pillows and cabobs,
Snatching the shawls and jewels as the tray bobs
Under our noses at a grand Durbar.
In short, that *every* Indian *every* way robs.
We've heard that folks of ton have gone so far,
As to place 'gainst all Indian company a bar."[1]

The honesty of the contemporary trader was not an issue - though he was no longer a rapacious villain or an enemy of the interests of his country, his social standing had suffered with the rise of the imperial ideal of writers who relegated trade to a minor role, preferring the "honest manliness" of men of action. Besides, there were no more freebooters, adventurers or other individuals who had, in the past, competed with the monolithic Company that was a law, even a state, unto itself. Lapwing and his kind are of a lower order because trade itself was no longer perceived as the primary function of even the Company itself. Its image had changed. The very name by which it was increasingly known, "the Honourable (John) Company", personified it, exalting it to a more than ordinary standing in society. A government in all but name, it was now defended by those who believed in paternalistic government. The association with the greed that had been evident in the eighteenth century appears to have been laid to rest by its regularly published losses. In reality, of course, the profiteering was hidden behind the pomp and splendour of the new order.

Writers popularising the "paternal" image were careful to draw a distinction between the Company service of the eighteenth century, which

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1 *Tom Raw*, Canto III, Verse VII.

had not always been attractive, and the contemporary situation. Scott had to justify his choice of the East India Company of the eighteenth century by admitting that "If Hillary had answered truly he would have replied that it [entering Company service] was extremely easy; for at that time, the East India service presented no charms to that superior class of people who have since struggled for admittance under its banners."[1] The events of his narrative take place in an era that had once been "glorious": ". . . for old exploits, you have in the old history of India, before the Europeans were numerous there, the most wonderful deeds, done by the least possible means, that perhaps the annals of the world can afford."[2]

At the time he was writing the representation of traders, once the heroes of the romantic Company, had been reversed, just as the political power and the trade balance had. The more the British knew of India, the more Britons went out to India, the less attractive trade became. A nation that knew it was a trading power, that had accepted that the source of its wealth was trade, that trade was the driving force for its activities everywhere, was no longer charmed by it. Besides, the success, power and corruption of trading interests in the country had lost them public respect and sympathy. The underdog who had battled the seas and unfriendly competitors was now in total control - the roles had been reversed and new, moral heroes were needed. The reading public was only too aware of the existence and nature of trade, and so it could no longer be romanticised. The "excesses" of the early days had weighed heavily on the public conscience at the turn of the century so trade had been brushed aside, the merchants reduced to supporting roles in the new narratives which allowed the English to believe that the control of the distant colonies was serving the morally justifiable "cause" of enlightening and civilising the population there.

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1 *The Surgeon's Daughter*, p. 270.
2 *The Surgeon's Daughter*, p. 176.

SOLDIERS & ADMINISTRATORS

Trade provided the impetus and played a significant role in the history of the British in the Indian sub-continent. However, the period between 1740 and 1840 saw the East India Company metamorphose from a powerful trading organisation into the sovereign of an extensive empire. As trade grew, so did political involvement, bringing increasing numbers of soldiers and administrators to service the needs of trade and empire. The soldiers came first to protect trade, then to conquer, consolidate and police territory, while the administrators initially kept records and went onto ruling and creating their own system of control for the acquired territory. Philip Woodruff sums up the rise of British power in India thus:

"The first English in India were petitioners for leave to trade. But they found it necessary to have cities of refuge in which they could be secure from the absolute power of Indian monarchs . . . This necessity, together with an obstinate determination not to play second fiddle to the French, led to the astonishing twenty years between 1740 and 1760, by which date the English ceased to be petitioners and it was the Mogul who came to call on the English Governor."[1]

The period 1740 - 1840 will, for the purposes of this chapter, be divided into three parts, marking the changing power relationships between the English Company and the Indians/Indian states. The first, Woodruff's "astonishing twenty years", was the period during which the Company, pursuing profit, became embroiled in local politics, took on the Nawab of Bengal and won, the period during which the military discovered the extent of its muscle and began to flex it, establishing Company power in Bengal

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[1]Woodruff, Philip: *The Men Who Ruled India: The Founders*, London, 1953; pp. 379 - 380.

beyond doubt. This was followed by the period 1760 - 1800, a period of concerted military activity, of consolidation of empire, during which the Indian section of the Company was dominated by men who were first soldiers, then administrators. Between 1800 and 1840 the power were transferred to civil administrators who, while they continued the policies of military conflict with Indian states, gradually deprived the military establishment of its independence.

Over the century soldiers and administrators competed, in the public eye, for the position of most significant group in India. The change visible in these cases is not, as in the case of the traders, a fall from romantic hero to greedy despot (or vice versa) but a change in each group's perceived relative importance in the context of the development and consolidation of British power in India. These representations of individuals, and of the role they played during their lifetimes, remained constant both in their lifetimes and after: e.g. in his lifetime and in later accounts Clive's image remained largely the same. As a result, while there is a shift in public interest from the mid-eighteenth century activities of the soldier to those of the nineteenth century administrator, Scott's portrait of a 1740s soldier is much the same as it was in the literature of the 1740s.

Soldiers began, and remained, from 1740 through to 1840, upright, manly figures, the flower of English youth. The soldiers of the "astonishing twenty years" (1740 -1760) were represented as the selfless, gallant protectors of trade who showed amazing courage and initiative. They were heroes of their day, on romantic par with the buccaneer traders. Those of the 1760 - 1800 consolidation period were depicted as reigning supreme, but not all their activities were accepted by the public who saw them convert the English Company from accidental ruler into undisputed monarch. In the developing competition between the men of action and the administrators, opinion was divided, some suggesting that Company soldiers of the period strayed from the path of honest soldiering, seduced by ambition and the

wealth of India. The soldiers who came after 1800, in the era of the rise of the administrator, were relegated to the secondary role of policemen, at the right hand of the powerful civil servant.

The administrators, on the other hand, rose from minor, grey figures to somewhat tarnished (by corruption charges) competitors for the right to rule the newly acquired dominions, and, finally, were transformed into powerful and tireless servants of the English nation in India, constantly chafing against the bit of the profit-seeking, immoral Company and Directors who opposed their civilising activities on the grounds of cost-efficiency.

The "Astonishing Twenty Years" (1740 - 1760)

This was the heyday of the soldier. Writings about this period depicted a hardy, courageous specimen of "true" English manhood. By and large, the administrator, performer of routine tasks in the running of a trading post, did not feature. Those administrators who did feature in print were soldiers who, having waged successful military campaigns, took on the burden of ruling the provinces they had conquered. The distinction between the younger members of the two groups was, in any case, feeble, roles being interchangeable - Clive started out as a "Writer" and then became a soldier, Hickey was a soldier who became a Writer. The men who "proved" themselves, either by becoming immensely wealthy (trader-administrators), or by conquering some part of that distant region (soldier-administrators), caught the public eye. In the later periods non-military administrators, men who were appointed governors of vast tracts of land became of interest because they were kings in their own right: dispensers of justice, arbiters of law, instigators of reform and, controllers of the military.

So it was that soldiers were first in the spotlight in this period. They rose from the subordinate position of defence force to that of dominance when, between the 1740's and 1760's, they were called upon by their

masters to protect the Company's interests.

One factor that played a part in the popularity of the English soldier in India as a romantic figure was his youth. The "men" who went out as cadets were in their teens - on one occasion a "youth" of thirteen was commissioned. That youth, John Malcolm, went on to bring a large part of central India under Company rule.

The man who was portrayed as having done the most to redefine the Company's role in India was Robert Clive who originally came out as a Writer. He was the hero of all Englishmen, a talented soldier, a sort of proto-Duke of Wellington. In his own lifetime his military achievements became legend. His rise to prominence came during a period of a conflict between the French and the English in Europe, a conflict that was carried to India. Writers of the time, keen to dispel any notion that the Company was acting improperly by indulging in military activity in India, claimed that the French opened hostilities. Orme begins his description of the events of the period stating that, in 1751:

"The nations of Coromandel, accustomed to see Europeans assuming no other character than that of merchants, and paying as much homage to the Mogul government as was exacted from themselves, were astonished at the rapid progress of the French arms . . ."[1]

In the eyes of the adoring public Clive was an independent actor of near-superhuman power. Consider this description of Clive's march from Madras to Arcot in 1751:

". . . [The news that the English] had marched with unconcern through a violent storm of thunder, lightning and rain, gave the [Indian] garrison so high

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[1] Orme, Robert: *History of the Military Transactions of the British Nation in Indostan from the year 1745*, London, 1775 (2nd ed.); p. 167.

an opinion of the fortitude of the approaching enemy that they instantly abandoned the fort.'

'We marched,' wrote an English sergeant, 'without opposition through the town amidst a million Spectators, whose looks betrayed them traitors, notwithstanding their friendship and dirty presents. We then took possession of the fort . . .'"[1]

Such heroics were substantiated by Clive's own accounts of his exploits - in the following passage he boasts of the Englishness of his troops when facing defeat:

"Thus did providence disappoint our fears and relieve us from the dread necessity of starving or submitting to the terms of merciless barbarians . . . We fully and unmolested enjoyed the fruits of the earth so long denied us, tho' every day in our sight, and solaced ourselves with the pleasing reflection of having maintained the character of Britons in a Clime so remote from our own."[2]

Orme's history continued the romanticising:

" . . . [under siege] captain Clive, observing that the gunners fired with bad aim, took the management of one of the field pieces himself, and in three or four discharges flung them [the attacking party] into such confusion that they overset the raft, and tumbled into the ditch; where some of them were drowned, and the rest, intent only on their own preservation, swam back and left the raft behind."[3]

The reader can be in no doubt that with such a leader no opposition could

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[1] *The Men Who Ruled India: The Founders*, p. 84.
[2] Clive etc, quoted in *The Men Who Ruled India: The Founders*, p. 88.
[3] *History of the Military Transactions of the British Nation* , pp. 194 - 195.

avail:

"Thus ended the siege, maintained 50 days, under every disadvantage of situation and force, by a handful of men in their first campaign, with a spirit worthy of the most veteran troops; and conducted by their young commander with indefatigable activity, unshaken constancy, and undaunted courage: and notwithstanding he had at this time neither read books, or conversed with men capable of giving him much instruction in the military art; all the resources which he employed in the defence of Arcot, were such as are dictated by the best masters of war."[1]

In these passages there is more than hero-worship and pride in the strength of the English "arm". There is also the growing suggestion that the European is fundamentally superior to the Indian, a superiority-complex that will later be used to justify the rise of the administrator. Orme describes his perception of the nature of the difference between the peoples in this explanation of the significance of what he fears his English readers may consider minor events:

"Events of such a nature as the attacks on Elimiserum and the choultry, as well as several others, which appear in the course of this work, would have no influence in such sanguinary wars as most writers have only thought worthy of their attention: and these details may therefore by many deemed equally tiresome and superfluous; but the stress of this Indian war lying on the European allies, who rarely have exceeded a thousand men on a side, the actions of a single platoon in India may have the same influence on the general success, as the conduct of a whole regiment in Europe: and to give a just idea of the superiority of European arms, when opposed to those of

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[1] *History of the Military Transactions of the British Nation* , p. 196.

Indostan, is one of the principal intentions of this narrative."[1]

Orme's account served as the basis of numerous other accounts and of the general perception of soldiers of the period. It is almost ironic that the proto-Wellington, Clive, should have proved himself in the same arena as the Duke.

Though the focus in the writings of the 1820s and 30s was usually on the contemporary civilising mission, Scott's Anglo-Indian romance was rooted in the past and the romantic portrait of soldiers in the introduction followed in the tradition of Orme. Scott's narrator's informant referred him to accounts of the "early days" for inspiration:

"If you want rogues, as they are so much in fashion with you, you have the gallant caste of adventurers, who laid down their consciences at the Cape of Good Hope as they went out to India, and forgot to take them up again when they returned. There, for great exploits, you have in the old history of India before the Europeans were numerous there, the most wonderful deeds, done by the least possible means, that perhaps the annals of the world can afford."[2]

The elderly and impressionable narrator immediately acknowledges a debt to Orme and his representation of India and Englishmen/Britons in the Company's military arm:

"I know it . . . I remember in the delightful pages of Orme, the interest which mingles in his narratives, from the very small number of English which are engaged. Each officer of a regiment becomes known to you by name, nay, the non-commissioned officers and privates acquire an individual share of

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[1] *History of the Military Transactions of the British Nation* , p. 219.
[2] Scott, Walter: *The Surgeon's Daughter* London & Edinburgh, 1834 (orig. publ. 1827); p. 176.

interest. They are distinguished among the natives like the Spaniards among the Mexicans. What do I say? They are like Homer's demigods among the warring mortals. Men, like Clive and Caillaud, influenced great events, like Jove himself. Inferior officers are like Mars or Neptune; and the sergeants and corporals might well pass for demigods."[1]

None of the sheen had faded, the soldiers of the "astonishing twenty years" retained their clean, heroic image and their popularity. Scott's choice of the word "demigods" could have been Orme's own.

The Period of Consolidation (1760 - 1800)

The military successes of the 1740 - 1760 period wrought a tremendous change in the lifestyles and expectations of the Company employees:

"It was goodbye . . . to taffeties, ginghams, mull-mulls and muslins, indigo and saltpetre, vermilion, quicksilver and pepper."[2]

The momentous events of the late 1750's in Bengal, in particular the Battle of Plassey (which was termed the "Revolution" by English historians), left the Company in control of the region. Though they did not realise it:

"Not much longer would men aspire to be Warehouse-keeper or Purser Marine; councillor to a Government, plenipotentiary at a Prince's Court — those would soon be the appointments on which their eyes were set. They would no longer seek profit in gold but govern rich provinces and rule the affairs of men. But no one yet knew that . . . They had a long way to go and

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1 *The Surgeon's Daughter*, p. 176.
2 *The Men Who Ruled India: The Founders*, p. 89.

there was a great deal still to do."[1]

Of the many characters who were in India making their fortune, one of the most colourful was William Hickey, the dissolute eighth child of a well-to-do lawyer. Born in 1749, Hickey initially went to India as a cadet in 1768 (arriving in Madras in May 1769). His stay was a short one - he left seven months later, returning to England via Canton. He then spent some time in the West Indies, returned to England and made his second journey to India in 1777, where he became a solicitor. He stayed for three years, returned to England and then went back to India in 1782, finally settling in England in 1808 to write his *Memoirs* and die, respectably, in 1830. The *Memoirs,* though written between 1810 and 1830, provide fascinating insights into the systems and attitudes that underlay both the Company and its policies.

Hickey's narrative begins with his meeting with his (powerful) sponsor and the preparations he, as a cadet, made to travel to India. It also depicts the process of choosing between the military and commercial arms, and the factors cadets and their sponsors took into account when taking that decision. The preoccupation of the Company at that point in the consolidation period was the defeat of competing powers like the French and Hyder Ali, and Hickey's sponsors in England were of the opinion that the honours to be won on the battlefield in the service of the commercial organisation were the "most advantageous":

". . . [Hickey's father] took me to visit Sir George Colebrooke, the director who had nominated me a cadet. The baronet received us with great politeness, telling my father it afforded him pleasure to have had it in his power to comply with his request. He said he had appointed me to Madras in preference to Bengal, which was by many considered the most advantageous for a military man, because the Coast of Coromandel was

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[1] *The Men Who Ruled India: The Founders*, p. 89.

then the seat of an active war with Hyder Ally, and consequently more likely to give promotion to a young soldier; and that, instead of remaining a cadet two, three, or four years, as would probably happen to those who went the ensuing season to Bengal, I should obtain a commission in the Madras army upon landing."[1]

From the *Memoirs* it is clear that the soldiers were servants of the Company. Therefore, contacts within the Company were essential. The new military recruit is informed that passages to India were much in demand, and dispatched from one to the other of the Company's inner Circle, who shared/distributed the profits of the trade monopoly:

"From Sir George Colebrooke's, we went to Mr. Laurence Sullivan's, then a man of great influence and a leading director. He likewise was very kind, and promised to give letters that would be of essential service to me. He recommended my father to lose no time in securing a passage for me, as the ships would all be much crowded. From Mr. Laurence Sullivan's we went to the India House, where I was introduced to Mr. Coggan, one of the Company's principal officers, who, being then very busy, desired I would call the following morning and he would put me in the way of doing what was requisite."[2]

Hickey was a willing pupil, ready, like the other military cadets, to do his best to serve his masters, and his sponsors intended to do the best they could for him in return. He is taken under the Company's wing:

". . . he gave me a printed list of necessaries for a writer, observing that most of the articles therein specified would be equally useful to a military man;

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[1]Hickey, William: *Memoirs of William Hickey*, written sometime between 1810 and 1830, first published 1913; this edition P. Quennell, London, 1975, p. 75.
[2] *Memoirs of William Hickey*, p. 75.

only I must recollect, in addition, to take a few yards of scarlet, blue, green and yellow cloths, in order to make up the regimentals according to the corps to which I should be attached . . . He advised me to try for a passage to Madras in the *Plassey*, and gave me a letter of introduction to Captain Waddell . . . This letter I delivered the same day to Captain Waddell at his house . . . He received me with much civility, saying that, although he had determined not to take any more passengers than he had already got, he could not refuse his friend Mr. Coggan . . ."[1]

Company soldiers had some eccentricities that surprised the people in England - as when Hickey's father discovered that fashion, rather than the climate or reason, dictated their choice of clothing in India:

"My father made no complaint of my having such a variety of clothes, but much as to the cut of them. Making doublebreasted coats for such a climate as the East Indies he pronounced preposterous and absurd; yet in this he was mistaken. Officers in India dress precisely the same (in the point of coat at least) as in Europe, and, although certainly absurd in such extreme heat, actually button the lapel close up to the throat."[2]

All the preparation by sponsors, contacts and protectors did not, however, fully prepare the cadet for the welcome at Fort St. George. The ship from "home" was given a hearty welcome because, in those uncertain times, its arrival reassured the expatriates that "home" still existed. Men like the captain of the ship were, therefore, treated as heroes:

"Upon the captain's landing [in 1769] he was saluted with nine guns from the fort, according to the custom in those days."[3]

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[1] *Memoirs of William Hickey*, p. 75.
[2] *Memoirs of William Hickey*, p. 77.
[3] *Memoirs of William Hickey*, p. 108.

The small English community in India had its own hierarchy with its own social rules. Hickey attempted to take up residence in the captain's house but found that this arrangement could not be accepted by those who felt that cadets should know their place in society:

"We were . . . conducted . . . to a very handsome house in Fort St. George, which had been taken by Captain Richardson for himself and our commander . . . The morning after our arrival when seated at the breakfast table, Captain Richardson came in from his ride, and addressing me, said: 'What! are you still here, young gentleman? Pray, why don't you go to the Fort Major who will provide you with quarters in the barracks, the proper place for a cadet.'"[1]

The opinions of the English "on the ground" in India did not coincide with those of the men of power in England. In India, military cadetship was out of favour (though it had another spell of popularity yet to come when the English faced Tipu in later years). The civil service was beginning to be recognised and Hickey's second host felt that a career as a Writer would profit the young man better:

"Mr. Dawson and I had several conversation upon family matters, when he invariably expressed surprise that my father should have sent me out a cadet, especially to Madras, where the military line could never be an object for a gentleman; that the pay was too contemptible to afford the common necessaries of life, and particularly bad now a peace was made which barred all chance of promotion . . . 'I advise you by all means to go home and let your father procure for you a writership in the civil service . . ."[2]

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[1] *Memoirs of William Hickey*, p. 108.
[2] *Memoirs of William Hickey*, pp. 111 - 112.

India, Hickey informed his audience, bred eccentricity - some India-hands grew so accustomed to it they no longer felt comfortable when in England:

". . . Captain Henry Mordaunt, of the Bengal military establishment, . . . entered the room with his usual scowling countenance . . . He then began damning the climate, the brutality of the common people, the general stupidity of London, cursing his own folly for being such a blockhead, such an inveterate ass as to quit the paradise of Hindustan to visit the sink of everything despicable, by comparison, *England*! a country no man who had ever enjoyed the blessings and comforts of India could feel comfortable in."[1]

Hickey's narrative represents power in India as absolute and arbitrary once acquired. Eccentricities had to be lived with since there was no means of replacing the eccentrics, or even of reporting them to higher authority, since they themselves were the higher authority. Hickey's picture of despotic behaviour was illustrated by his own experience in 1782:

"The Chief Justice, Sir Elijah Impey . . . having heard that I was in Lisbon on my way back to India, he forthwith caused written notices to be stuck up at all the customary places in Calcutta requiring all and every attorney who had suffered twelve months to elapse without doing any business in the line of their profession, within *fourteen days* from the date of such notice to appear in court and there assign their reason for not practising; and, in case of any attorneys not complying with that order . . . their or his name or names would be directly struck off the Roll . . . the fourteen days having passed and I not appearing, my name was thereupon erased from the Roll by the Clerk of the

[1] *Memoirs of William Hickey*, p. 281.

Crown . . ."[1] [He was quickly reinstated despite this].

Such despotism was practised by all - Indians, already the subservient group, caught the full brunt of it. Hickey wielded his own "authority" as it suited him, so as to maximise his own profit:

". . . Durgachuru Muckerjee came in. Immediately producing the bond I had executed to him upon my departure for England, he observed the principal and interest then due upon it amounted to upwards of eight thousand rupees; which sum he should be glad if I would forthwith pay, and also provide myself with another banyan [bania or moneylender], as he did not choose any longer to be in the service of an attorney. At no period in my life was I disposed to submit to insolence from any description of person, but more especially from a native of Asia, I told Master Durgachuru he was an impertinent scoundrel, bidding him leave the house as quickly as possible; otherwise I should order my servants to kick him out. He followed my advice without a moment's pause, proceeding . . . to his attorney's, whom he instructed to issue a writ of *capias ad satisfaciendum* against me, in consequence of which I was obliged to borrow the amount and discharge his demand."[2]

Demands from administrators for a separate and efficient civil service were beginning to be voiced. Even some of the senior Company administrators expressed concern about the situation. They were in conflict with both the trading and military establishments and would, in time, give rise to those who felt the English had a civilising mission to fulfil in India. Warren Hastings was one of these. He protested to his English audience ". . . the boys of the service are sovereigns of the country under the unmeaning titles

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[1] *Memoirs of William Hickey*, pp. 423 - 424.
[2] *Memoirs of William Hickey*, p. 428.

of supervisors, collectors of the revenue, administrators of justice, and rulers, heavy rulers, of the people . . ."[1] Woodruff explains the sentiment being expressed: "His complaint was that the young man's agent, the banyan, was the lord of every supervisorship, and that the name and arms of England were being used as the instruments of oppression."[2]

Many administrators were developing the paternalistic ideal that would be the norm in the days to come. John Shore was one of these who, in spite of their close relationship with the subcontinent, were remote from their subjects. Writing in the 1770's he said of his "charges", the Indians:

"Upon the whole, if we should confer happiness upon them, it will be in spite of themselves . . ."[3]

Though he felt he had a civilising duty he did not even pretend to like Indians, despising them as inferiors: "Every hour I stay in this country, my situation becomes more irksome . . . The knowledge, such as it is, which I have acquired of the people, their customs and manners does not make me like them the better."[4] This attitude was not, at the time, widespread in the upper rungs of the Company service. Warren Hastings, an Orientalist, saw and feared the expansion of English rule. In 1779 he voiced his alarm:

"I am morally certain that the resources of this country in the hands of a military people and in the disposition of a consistent and undivided form of Government, are both capable of vast internal improvement and of raising that power which possesses them to the dominion of all India — an event which I may not mention without adding that it is what I never wish to see."[5]

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[1] Warren Hastings in *The Men Who Ruled India: The Founders*, p. 128.
[2] Warren Hastings in *The Men Who Ruled India: The Founders*, p. 128.
[3] John Shore in *The Men Who Ruled India: The Founders*, p. 133.
[4] John Shore in *The Men Who Ruled India: The Founders*, p. 133.
[5] Warren Hastings in *The Men Who Ruled India: The Founders*, p. 129.

Roderick Mackenzie, a soldier who had fought in the early campaigns against Tipu, shared both Shore's contempt for Indians and his sense of the civilising mission. He called on his audience to observe that English rule in India was necessary, even if certain vested interests were attempting to make it appear an evil system:

"From whatsoever delusion these unjust declamations prevail, it is a notorious fact, that one uniform attention to the dictates of humanity has invariably marked the footsteps of Britons, and the progress of their arms, from a CLIVE to a CORNWALLIS; and, those who have served in stations of responsibility are not to be told, that the fatigues of their appointment are considerably increased by the vigilence [vigilance] necessary to prevent the natives from cruelly abusing each other."[1]

Both Shore and Mackenzie were experienced India-hands who had lived and worked in the sub-continent for several years . The cadets were not. They were there for profit and status - their families had paid large sums of money to secure their opportunities. As a result, they subscribed to the dislike of the local population but certainly not to the civilising ideal. Matters were often made worse by their first experiences of India which did not incline them to be disposed well towards the Indians. In the words of Woodruff:

"The young Writer then had to look forward to three or four years of drudgery, if he lived so long . . . whatever the rules, in his first year or two the Writer probably lacked either the capital or the knowledge needed [to make profits through private trade]. On the other hand, he had no inevitable expenses. He ate and boarded free; he had no long list of servants to pay, for in addition to

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[1] Mackenzie, R.: *A Sketch of the War with Tippoo Sultaun*, Calcutta, 1793; I, p. 101.

his salary he had an allowance from the Company that was meant to cover the payments he must incur."[1]

Representation in drama and other media not controlled or created by Anglo-Indians was influenced by the corruption trials involving Company servants, resulting in portrayals of Company soldiers who resembled traders in their lack of moral fibre. In fact, in several cases, Company soldiers and traders were indistinguishable. In Samuel Foote's play, *The Nabob*, Mathew Mite, Nabob, trader and moneylender, sought refuge in the uniform of a soldier, hoping that it might give the impression of a plain-speaking man with no talent for, or interest in, intrigue: " . . . I am a military man, and quite a stranger to your legal manoeuvres."[2] His audience, however, were not to be taken in. Other East-Indian characters in the play placed the "military man" squarely in the ranks of the recognised Anglo-Indian, allowing him no escape from the common disgrace:

"Why, here are a body of merchants that beg to be admitted as friends, and take possession of a small spot in a country . . . we cunningly encroach, and fortify by little by little, till at length, we growing too strong for the natives, we turn them out of their lands, and take possession of their money and jewels."[3]

Foote responds to this boasting through the Mayor: "And don't you think, Master Touchit, that is a little uncivil of us?"[4] Foote, the dramatist, had neither love nor sympathy for these men, and he painted them as black as he could, voicing public concern over the behaviour of Company servants, adding to the growing demands for a civilised and civilising administration. His Nabob

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1 *The Men Who Ruled India: The Founders*, p. 77.
2 Foote, Samuel: *The Nabob*; London, 1778; Act III, p. 56.
3 *The Nabob*; Act II, p. 34.
4 *The Nabob*; Act II, p. 34.

displays a callous disregard for good, honest folk when he offers:

". . . at his own expence, [to] transport the two young ladies, Miss Oldham's two sisters, to Madras or Calcutta, and there procure them suitable husbands . . . and as for the three boys, they shall either be made supercargoes, ship's husbands, or go out cadets and writers in the Company's service."[1]

Since this is a play the suggestions are greeted with horror and fate intervenes to rescue the family from falling into the clutches of the amoral Anglo-Indian.

Walter Scott's depiction of India during this period was not universally accepted - however, those who did question it, like Charles Marsh, did not quarrel with his representation of Anglo -Indians but charged that he got some of his "facts" wrong. In his "Society in India" series (in *The New Monthly Magazine*) Marsh wrote:

"Our eminent northern novellist, potent master though he be of all aids and instruments pertaining to his art, has strangely committed himself, when he sent out, for want of knowing what better to do with them, his two personages of the Canongate Chronicles to that country . . . Fiction, to be sure, is a mighty privileged sort of person; but is she to be absolved from all probability of time, and place, and the verisimilitudes of local manners and practices? What Anglo-Indian could read without a stare of the wildest astonishment, of Hargrave's* journey to Seringapatam, to obtain an audience of that very accommodating person, Hyder Ali Sahib? It was indeed provident in Sir Walter Scott to send the poor fellow to a comfortable inn, when he got there . . . But unluckily there are no inns . . . in any part of Hyder's dominions . . ."[2]

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[1] *The Nabob*; Act I, p. 11.

[*] Marsh is himself wrong: the character he is referring to is Hartley.

[2] Marsh, Charles: "Society in India. — No. I", *The New Monthly Magazine*, 22, 1828, pp. 225 - 226.

If that is all the fault that Marsh could find, then he must have accepted Scott's soldiers, who were employees of the Company, soldiers of fortune who made no bones about their mercenary calling. To them India was a vast treasure trove, waiting to be plundered. Administration of territory never crosses the minds of his characters. To be fair, Scott did not consider the effects of a colonial system on either the colonised or the colonisers. He chose a narrator naive enough for such questions not to suggest themselves who puts the most extreme expressions of delight in the prospect of booty in the mouthof a character who goes to the bad there:

"To India! . . . happy dog — to India! . . . Oh, Delhi! oh, Golconda! have your names no power to conjure down idle recollections? — India, where gold is won by steel; where a brave man cannot pitch his desire of fame and wealth so high, but that he might realise it, if he have fortune to his friend?"[1]

These men were as fearless as any others but they were clearly mercenaries, with no qualms about profiting from soldiering:

". . . a few white faces never failed to strike terror into these black rascals; and then, not to mention the good things that were going at the storming of a Pettah, or the plundering of a Pagoda, most of those tawny dogs carried so much treasure about their persons, that a won battle was equal to a mine of gold to the victors.'[2]

Other writers went further than Scott, ususally presenting such profiteering as blameless. In *Life in India; or the English at Calcutta*, the upstanding young officer (soon to marry the heroine) joins his troops in booty-hunting, the spoils of which were, according to the writer/narrator,

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[1] *The Surgeon's Daughter*, p. 259.
[2] *The Surgeon's Daughter*, p. 266.

carefully shared out:

"In the huts they found an immense quantity of valuable booty, several of the cooking vessels were of silver, and many of the tulwars [swords] richly inlaid with precious stones. All was considered as the lawful property of the captors; and the sepoys and servants were equally anxious to secure their share."[1]

If such portraits of soldiers as profit-motivated mercenaries seems out to suggest that the public image of the soldier had changed, that the soldier had fallen as low as his trader contemporaries, it is because these were descriptions of *Company* soldiers. Walter Scott explains that these men were not true specimens of English soldiery, that the service they had entered was tainted by the untrustworthiness that infected their employers:

"Considerable difficulty was found in obtaining recruits for that [Company] service. Those who might have been otherwise disposed to be soldiers, were afraid of the climate, and of the species of banishment which the engagement implied; and doubted also how far the engagements of the Company might be faithfully observed towards them, when they were removed from the protection of the British laws. For these and other reasons, the military service of the King was preferred, and that of the Company could only procure the worst recruits, although their zealous agents scrupled not to employ the worst means."[2]

The soldiers of the Crown were the other class of soldiers, the honourable soldiers, the men who did not compromise, who carried on the traditions of the honest men of action. They were the soldiers of the King.

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[1] Anonymous: *Life in India, or, the English at Calcutta*; London, 1828; II, p. 144.
[2] *The Surgeon's Daughter*, p. 299.

Their links with the trading establishment were portrayed as being of a different nature. They were in India to protect trade and traders, not for personal gain or to profit from it - in *Adventures of a Rupee*: the father tells his son:

"The prosperity therefore of trade, is what you are to have in view, not the extension of settlement, and much less your private advantage. Your profits will be sufficient for your wants and if your good behaviour allows you to advance to a high rank, they may even enable you to return to your country with honourable wealth . . ."[1]

He calls on the young man to exercise his military prowess in "rectifying particular abuses"[2] so that he may rise to such a position of power that will bring him recognition and praise, in short to aspire to the acquisition of administrative power.

The effect of the mercantile nature of the Indian connection on the soldier was not always portrayed as negative. Helenus Scott saw the disregard for social barriers (as they existed in England) as a positive effect:

". . . many of our military youths - without science, without the capacity of acquiring any, with no knowledge of war, and with no predilection for the army that reason can justify, a young man in this country is made an officer. - He gets a cockade, an epaulet, a sword, and a commission and he never suspects that he is unfit for his business, nor does the world ever suspect it. While surgeons are appointed to examine the state of the common soldier's body, it might be equally proper to look a little into the temper of the officer's mind. This might be attended with the best effect in a nation like ours, where the mercantile spirit is so contrary to the military. - May we not account for the

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[1] Scott, Helenus: *Adventures of a Rupee*; London, 1782; pp. 59 - 60.
[2] *Adventures of a Rupee*, p. 60.

great success of the India Company, by the manner their officers attain a high command. - It is not because a man is of noble family, or has a weighty purse; it is known abilities and former services that entitle him to a distinguished rank . . ."[1]

Men like Mackenzie worked to clear the Anglo-Indians of the taint of misbehaviour. He took great pains to emphasise that his commentary was objective and the result of a search for the "truth":

"As steams that find vent from alembicks catch fire at the approach of a light, and endanger the adjacent vats, so do these mischevious allegations arrest dispositions prone to humanity and poison the minds of the people. Like mephitick fumes, that collect on water-butts in the holds of ships, they do not hurt whilst in confinement; but the moment that the bung is started, the mariner must look to his candle . . . When crimes of such deep hue come to light the perpetrators of them, must, at all times, be branded in civilised society with a stamp of infamy; consequently, allegations of that tendency, ought never to obtain belief until every prepossession has been minutely sifted; until every tendril of prejudice has been eradicated; until the truth has been traced through every possible fibre; and until proof and conviction have been substantiated beyond the possibility of error. Indirect insinuations of barbarity always wound more deeply than specifick attacks, because, their poignancy being artfully concealed, they evade all detection, and readily impose on the humane malicious presumptions for positive proofs."[2]

He informed the public that <u>any</u> suggestion that the English had misbehaved was either motivated by political considerations or "unchristian" Orientalism:

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[1] *Adventures of a Rupee*, p. 243.
[2] *A Sketch of the War with Tippoo Sultaun*, I, pp. 98 - 99.

"The torrents of abuse that have been poured forth by popular orators against their countrymen in the east, to answer certain political purposes, can never be stemmed whilst learned writers, through mere declamation, contribute to impress on the minds of the public vague ideas of oppressions, extortions, and other violations of good order unnecessarily committed on the 'harmless Hindoos.'"[1]

A "learned professor" was produced to justify the "crimes" by declaring them commonplace:

"'Happy would it be,' says a learned professor, 'if any of the four European nations who have, successively, acquired extensive territories and power in India, could altogether vindicate itself from having acted in this manner.'"[2]

Having thus widened the scope of the discussion, and effectively suggested that any discussion of culpability was an academic exercise, he completely dismissed it and reminded the reader that the ill effects, if any, were far outweighed by the benefits:

"How far other European nations can acquit themselves of these cruel insinuations, however necessary for them to declare, is wide from the subject of the present enquiry; all that is now intended, is to affirm with confidence, that although in the transfer of extensive dominions from one people to another by conquest, it is impossible that many individuals, particularly amongst the principal families, should not suffer hardships; yet, no great revolutions were ever so strongly marked by humanity and general benevolence as those effected by the British nation in India."[3]

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[1] *A Sketch of the War with Tippoo Sultaun*, I, pp. 97 - 98.
[2] *A Sketch of the War with Tippoo Sultaun*, I, p. 98.
[3] *A Sketch of the War with Tippoo Sultaun*, I, p. 99.

Senior soldiers, therefore, also subscribed to the idea that the English were in India not only to conquer, but also to bring Christian administration and justice to barbaric peoples. This was in line with what would be presented as the guiding ideal of the next period.

The Rise of the Administrator (1800 - 1840)

The period 1840 saw the administrator displace the soldier both in India and in the public perception of it. The soldier had served his purpose, that of establishing an empire. Now it was the task of the civil servants to justify the continued presence in India. So successful were they that in the 1828 novel, *Life in India, or, the English at Calcutta*; they were portrayed as the worthy natural successors of the adventurous traders and soldiers of the past:

". . . soldiers . . . have extended our territory, merchants, whose honour and liberality serves as cement between India and Britain; and civil servants whose wisdom and integrity have exalted European character in the eyes of the natives."[1]

The degree to which the idea of the civilising mission/influence of the English in India was accepted can be seen in the standard encyclopaedia entry on the government of British India, which remained unchanged for a quarter of a century (1797 - 1823). The reading public was informed that the continuing expansion of British influence brought unprecedented peace and security to India and its people:

"From a comparison of any government to which the Hindoos have hitherto

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[1] *Life in India, or, the English at Calcutta*; I, p. 205.

been subject, with that of Britain, indeed, it is evident that the preference must be given greatly in favour of the latter."[1]

To counter criticism of the administration of the new territory, the writer proposed that the English were actually improving on past Indian systems of government and taxation:

"At the time when the British first visited that country, they were not under the jurisdiction of their native sovereigns, nor had they been so for a long time before. The Moguls were not only foreigners, but a most cruel and detestable race of men; and it was by usurpations of their own rebellious subjects that the anarchy and confusion was introduced, in which the country was involved for so long a time. The British are foreigners as well as the Moguls; but the latter, who profess the intolerant superstition of Mohammed, suffer their conduct to be influenced by it in such a manner as to treat the natives with the utmost cruelty."[2]

This standard entry expressed some reservations about the domination, reservations similar to those expressed by Foote and Orientalists like Warren Hastings. However, the writer of the entry was an apologist, ready to defend the export of wealth as the normal consequence of rule by distant overlords:

"The greatest evil perhaps which results from the British government is, the exportation of great sums of money to a foreign country; but this evil, with respect to the provinces possessed by the British, existed also under the Mohammedan government. The Mogul emperors resided at Delhi; which is so far distant from the provinces of Bengal, Bahar, and Orissa, the territories

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[1] *The English Encyclopedia*, London, 1802; IV, p. 262.
[2] *The English Encyclopedia*, London, 1802; IV, p. 262.

now possessed by Britain; so that the greatest part of the treasure sent to that capital was totally lost to them."[1]

This was the moral justification the administrator had for the continuing ruthless commercial exploitation of the territory and people under his control.

The attitude of the now-settled Englishmen did not meet with the complete satisfaction of the French traveller, Roberdeau, who wrote an account of his travels in 1805. He described the Englishmen in the sub-continent thus:

"An Englishman in India . . . is proud and tenacious, he feels himself a Conqueror amongst a vanquished people and looks down with some degree of superiority on all below him. Indolence, the disease of the climate, affects him with its torpid influence . . . A cool apathy, a listless inattention and an improvident carelessness generally accompanies most of his actions; secure of today, he thinks not of tomorrow. Ambitious of splendour, he expends freely . . . Generosity is a feature in the Character too prominent to be overlooked, but as it sometimes borders on extravagance it loses some of its virtue. Bring distress before his eyes and he bestows with a liberality that is nowhere surpassed . . . In the public Character, whatever Calumny and Detraction may say to the Contrary, he is minutely just, inflexibly upright and I believe no public Service in the whole world can evince more integrity . . ."[2]

This new Englishman, rich and powerful, generous with his favours was not a soldier with a few extra pennies in his pocket, hoping for some prize money, but a law-giver, a ruler, a sort of local king. Charles D'Oyly, opium agent and writer of *Tom Raw*, tells of the attractions of the various

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[1] *The English Encyclopedia*; IV, p. 262.
[2] Henry Roberdeau in *The Men Who Ruled India: The Founders*, pp. 169 - 170.

branches of the Company's service in the 1820's:

> "If writerships are got, they're thought a prize
> Equal to twenty thousand pounds at Bish's,
> Cadetships, now, as times are sorry, rise
> In value, satisfying mod'rate wishes;
> Assistant surgeonships the Scotch man fishes . . ."[1]

In Hockley's civilised Anglo-Indian settlements, the young English recruits were received hospitably by their compatriots when they arrived and immediately settled into a life of leisure that was quite different from that which had been experienced by Hickey or even their mercantile fellow-passenger, Lapwing[2]. No sooner have they landed than they are whisked away to the homes of their resident patrons. Life in India clearly had many pleasures to offer servants of the English government:

"Harcourt and Wiffen, on landing, proceeded to the residences of the gentlemen to whom they were specially recommended; the former to a Mr. Riddlesworth, an agent, and the latter to Mr. Brasswaith, second member of council. Harcourt was at once plunged into luxury and extravagance. Mr. Riddlesworth's house was filled with company; gaming, and feasting, formed their chief amusement. Billiards, chess, backgammon, and whist were strong temptations to a young man, especially when all the party were engaged therein; in short, it appeared to Harcourt as if every one was striving to get rid of an already acquired fortune, instead of endeavouring to secure one. Mr. Riddlesworth kept race horses, devoting much attention to the delights of the turf: he was a bachelor, and intended to remain so, notwithstanding half the young ladies of the place had endeavoured to captivate him: his partner,

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[1] D'Oyly, Charles: *Tom Raw, the Griffin*, London, 1828; Canto I, Verse VIII.
[2] cf. "Traders"

Mr. Stonehurst, lived with him, and though he kept no horses for the turf himself, entered most cordially into the sports thereof. If Harcourt was astonished at the constant rattle of the billiard balls and backgammon board on Saturday, the day after his arrival, how was he surprised and shocked at the early commencement of the games on the Sunday! As early as ten in the morning, Mr. Riddlesworth's friends appeared . . . such a rattle, noise, and drawing of corks, Harcourt had never before witnessed; at first he imagined Mr. Riddlesworth kept rather low company, but was soon undeceived, by learning that the guests were composed of the principal people in the settlement, civil and military."[1]

The social rules of Anglo-Indian society had become firmly established:

"The ceremonial of rank, that idol of polite society, is a matter of no less importance in India than it once was in the court of Louis the Fourteenth, and its infringement or neglect would forever cast a shade upon the savoir vivre of the transgressor."[2]

However, it was all quite different from that which existed in England. While the Governor (or equivalent senior civil servant in a country station) was at the head of the local social scale, all Englishmen were received in society automatically, without reference to their social status at "home":

"*January* 1827. — It is usual in India for those newly arrived to call upon the resident families of the station; the gentleman makes his call, which is returned by the resident and his family; after which, the lady returns the visit with her husband. An invitation is then received to a dinner-party given in

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[1] Hockley, William Brown: *The English in India: A novel*, London,1828; I, pp. 260 - 261.
[2] *Life in India, or, the English at Calcutta*; I, p. 131.

honour of the strangers, the lady being always handed to dinner by the host, and made queen of the day, whether or not entitled to it by rank."[1]

Outside the drawing-room, social status was still being defined. The administrators, in their search for control of the dominions, clashed with both the soldiers and some "profit-motivated" governors. They aired their grievances publicly, so sure were they of their power. The *Journal* of Fanny Parkes gives a number of examples of the disputes:

"[*April* 11*th*] We understand that after twenty-five years' service, and *twenty-two* of actual residence in India, we of the Civil Service are to retire upon an annuity of 1000*l.* a year, for which we are to pay 50,000 rupees, or about 5000*l.* This, on first appearance, looks well for us and generous in the Company; but I should like first to know, how many will be able to serve their full time of bondage? secondly, what the life of a man, an annuitant, is then worth, who has lingered two and twenty years in a tropical climate?"[2]

On occasion the administrators threw even this moderate caution to the winds and were even more blunt in the expression of their distaste for the motives, methods and power of the trading establishment whose servants they ostensibly were. In their eyes, the good administrator was one who stood up, in the interests of "proper administration", against the profiteering and false economies of the Directors in Leadenhall Street:

"[*June* 25*th* 1825] Provided there is a good bulky dividend at the end of the year upon India Stock, the holders think the country is flourishing in the greatest security. Every governor who is sent out is told that the principal thing to be considered is economy. Lord Moira, who had a becoming horror

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[1] Parkes, Fanny: *Wanderings of a Pilgrim*, London, 1850;Vol. II, p. 70.
[2] *Wanderings of a Pilgrim*, II, p. 51.

of such *petitesses*, and who saw the political danger of carrying the cutting system into practice, in several instances refused to adopt the measures he was intrusted to execute. Yet India was never in a more flourishing state; dividends on India Stock never looked up more cheerfully. Lord Amherst has applied the paring-knife, and much good it has done; — the military ran riot, the civilians were inclined to grow rusty, and India Bonds were very dismal and *looking down.*"[1]

Charles Marsh, author of the *New Monthly Magazine*'s "Society in India" series, expressed the confident opinion that "extravagance" and pomp were essential if the administration were to continue to impress and control its Indian subjects:

"But it is highly politic, — it is more than politic, it is absolutely requisite, that he who represents the British name in India as the Governor-General, whatever may be his personal habits or inclination, should feast the native eyes with a full allowance of ceremonial greatness. His household cannot be too splendid, his establishments too munificent. It is money wisely laid out, for it comes back to you in redoubled respect for your national character, and adds new and radical holdings to your empire. Let this great official person descend from his pedestal; send him about Calcutta on indiscriminate visits, or without his troopers or his chubdars; let him give no costly entertainments, and hold no pompous levees — there is then, to their apprehensions, no British government in India. The authorities at home should look to this when they select a man for that important function. Generosity and munificence in that station have more political energy than is perhaps dreamt of in the philosophy of Leadenhall-street."[2]

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[1] *Wanderings of a Pilgrim*, II, p. 52.
[2] "Society in India. — No. I", pp. 233 - 234.

Determined to make maximum impact on India, the administrators frequently criticised the Directors and took their calls for reforms directly to the English public, strengthening the image of the brave "civiliser":

"[*October* 10*th* 1830] [re: delay in abolition of Suttee]: The Government interferes with native superstition where rupees are in question—witness the tax they levy on pilgrims at the junction of the Ganges and Jumna. Every man, even the veriest beggar, is obliged to give one rupee for the liberty to bathe at that holy spot; and if you consider that one rupee is sufficient to keep that man in comfort for one month, the tax is severe."[1]

Senior military officers were sometimes perceived as men who had an agenda and manners incompatible with the mission of the English in India. The Burmese war was one bone of contention - to the administrators the director of the campaign, Sir Archibald Campbell, was a war-monger, an overgrown schoolboy, and, once again, in keeping with their new sense of identity and power, they did not scruple to say what they felt:

"[*September* 18*th* 1825] Report says that Sir Archibald Campbell's spirit is too bellicose; and the deputation (civil) is to check his warlike excesses. The company profess that they do not wish for an extent of territory; so that the present war has been entered into solely for the purpose of avenging the insults that have been offered to their arms. I wish most sincerely that they had been contented with holding what they had, instead of proclaiming war; and probably they may be of the same opinion. The papers say that a truce has been entered into . . . Within these few days we have heard that it has been prolonged, in order that our terms might be submitted . . . It is hoped that they will not trample upon them, and that this most detestable war, which has cost so many lives and so much money, may be honourably

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[1] *Wanderings of a Pilgrim*, II, p. 162.

concluded."[1]

Fanny Parkes' description of the life of a "private soldier in the East" was part of the ongoing affirmation of the superiority of the civil service. She suggests the lowest ranks of the army were despised by the administrators, that with such poorly trained and unenthusiastic lower ranks the soldiery amounted to nothing, that they were an inferior service, because the civil service neither treated their "own" so shabbily, nor had they to put up with such poor material. In her civilian administrator-dominated India the soldiers and their institutions were inferior and they were represented as such:

"[*August* 21*st*, 1830] What can be more wretched than the life of a private soldier in the east? his profession employs but little of his time. During the heat of the day, he is forced to remain within the intensely hot barrack-rooms; heat produces thirst, and idleness discontent. he drinks arrak like a fish, and soon finds life a burden, almost insupportable. To the man weary of the burden of existence, to escape from it, transportation appears a blessing. The great source of all this misery is the cheapness of arrak mixed with datura, and the restlessness arising from the want of occupation; although a library is generally provided for the privates by the regiment."[2]

In everything the soldiers demonstrated their social, moral and intellectual inferiority. Here, in a description of the "influence of women over men in India" she contrives to introduce more "proof" of the administrators' superiority:

"[*June* 14*th*, 1830] Women have more influence over men in India than in any other country. All outdoor amusements are nearly denied to the latter by

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[1] *Wanderings of a Pilgrim*, II, p. 55.
[2] *Wanderings of a Pilgrim*, II, p. 149.

the climate, unless before sun-rise or after sun-set; therefore the whole time of military men, generally speaking, is spent in the house, devoted either to music or drawing, which of course they prefer in the society of ladies, or in the study of the languages, or in gaming. The young officers at this station play exceedingly high, ruinously so . . . Happily the gentlemen in the Civil Service have too much employment to admit of their devoting their time to gambling."[1]

The military did not, of course, take kindly to this control and attempted to demonstrate their dissatisfaction with the new masters through petty acts, which were used as yet more proof of their unfitness to rule:

"[*December 5th* 1830] "To-day's news is, that the Governor-general met the 3rd cavalry at Allahabad, on their march from Cawnpore to Benares. His lordship reviewed the regiment, and asked the officers to dinner; an invitation they all refused."[2] The administrator does not allow such a challenge to his authority to pass and is shown acting swiftly to put them in their place. On this occasion Mrs. Parkes does not approve of the Governor-General's solution, though she offers no alternative: "This annoyed his lordship very much, being the first display of *resentment* manifested towards him on his march by the army, and he *ordered* them to dine with him on pain of forfeiting their rank, pay and allowances, pending a reference to the Court of Directors. Of course the officers obeyed *the order*; they were obliged to do so: what an agreeable party the Governor-general must have had, with guests whom he had forced to partake of the feast!"[3]

Bishop Heber's journals opened up a number of areas of discussion. He was critical of a number of British practices in India. One area that he felt

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1 *Wanderings of a Pilgrim*, II, p. 140.
2 *Wanderings of a Pilgrim*, II, p. 170.
3 *Wanderings of a Pilgrim*, II, p. 170.

strongly about was the behaviour of the younger functionaries in the Company's service, and his assessment found favour with reviewers of his *Journal* in England:

"To us, the most painful subject the bishop touches on . . . is the levity, to give it no worse name, with which our young and thoughtless countrymen often trifle with the feelings of natives. The danger of such conduct is as obvious as its vice. Let one example serve: he met a military officer voyaging up the Ganges, who made it his boast that, whenever his cook-boat hung behind, he fired at it with ball. The gentleman, no doubt, took care to shoot high; but such tricks cannot be practised without exciting bitter anger at the time, and leaving a lasting impression of disgust. It is delightful to turn from such incidents, to the many specimens he gives of the gratefulness with which the poor natives receive the kindness of their European superiors."[1]

Here the main culprit, it is suggested, is the "military officer" - to the bishop most of the administrators appeared as men of honour. There were dissident voices - the reviewer in the *Quarterly Review* was not so admiring of British behaviour:

"The intercourse which takes place between distinguished English functionaries in the military and civil service of the Company and the upper classes of the natives, is and must be accompanied, on the side of the latter, with many feelings of jealousy. It seldom wears even the slightest appearance of familiarity, except in the chief seats of government; and there, as might be supposed, the natives are rarely to be seen now-a-days in their pure and unmixed condition, either as to real character or as to external manners. Exceptions of course there are to this rule, as to most others; but

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[1]Lockhart, J. G. (and J. J. Blunt) "Bishop Heber's *Indian Journals*, &c.", *Quarterly Review*, 37; p. 122.

we believe they are very rare. Of recent years, Sir John Malcolm furnishes by far the most remarkable instance . . ."[1]

The reviewer also bemoaned the lack of genuine interest in communication with Indians, or with India in general. ". . . It is strange, but true, that only two English gentlemen have as yet travelled in India completely as volunteers — Lord Valentia, and a young man of fortune . . ."[2]

In spite of these minor differences in opinion, J. G. Lockhart and other writers expressed general agreement with Heber's thesis that British rule was fundamentally beneficial, and cited numerous examples to prove their case. Here a reviewer illustrates the "progressive improvement of the country under the British government", using the reduction in the tiger population as proof of this (!):

"It is curious and interesting to find both the apparently progressive improvement of the country under the British government, as contrasted with its previous state, and also how soon, how easily, in a settled country, the most formidable wild animals become extinct before the power of man. The tyger will soon be almost as great a rarity in our eastern as in our western dominions: the snake, however, will hold his ground longer."[3]

All the examples are not as frivolous - he cites other more appropriate anecdotes of Heber's in support of his argument in favour of continued English civilian rule of its sub-continental dominions:

"One of these mutual felicitations, which the archdeacon overheard . . . was very interesting, as it was not intended for his ear, and was one of the strongest proofs I have met with of the satisfaction of the Hindoos with their

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[1] "Bishop Heber's *Indian Journals*, &c.", pp. 101 - 102.
[2] "Bishop Heber's *Indian Journals*, &c.", p.102.
[3] Bishop Heber quoted in "Bishop Heber's *Indian Journals*, &c.", p.122.

rulers. 'A good rain this for the bread,' said one of the villagers to the other. 'Yes,' was the answer, 'and a good government under which a man may eat bread in safety.' While such feeling prevails, we may have good hopes of the stability of our Indian government."[1]

Heber's account was laced with examples of the benevolence of the Anglo-Indian ruler. Lockhart took great pains to select these instances of "native" gratitude to the men of the Civil Service to underscore his desire to see continued English administration in India:

"How well they appreciate, and how lastingly they remember, the benefits conferred on them by kind and judicious functionaries, may be gathered from many examples scattered over this journal. Thus, at Allahabad, when the bishop asked, with a natural curiosity, which of the governors of India stood highest in the good opinion of the people, he found that, though Lord Wellesley and Warren Hastings were honoured as 'the two greatest men that have ever ruled this part of the world,' the people universally 'spoke with much affection of Mr. Jonathan Duncan.' . . . Again, at Baghipoor, he found the memory of Judge Cleveland, who died at the age of twenty-nine, in 1784, still fresh in honour: this able and eminent man did much for that district; he improved its husbandry, established bazaars, and, above all, instituted a police, which has been found lastingly effective in a region formerly noted for disorders. When he died, the chiefs of the hill country and the Mussulman gentry of the plain joined their contributions to erect a stately monument . . ."[2]

It is, of course, clear that Heber and other thinking men of his time were in favour of the administrators holding the reins of power. The questions that arose were not whether the administrators should continue to

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[1] Bishop Heber quoted in "Bishop Heber's *Indian Journals*, &c.", p. 122.
[2] "Bishop Heber's *Indian Journals*, &c.", pp. 123 - 124.

hold the reins of power but how to make their obviously necessary domination more palatable to the Indians. Writers recognised that there were still a number of obstacles to general popularity, such as the attitude of senior officials in both the civil and military establishments towards Indians. Francis Jeffrey, for one, argued that some social intercourse was necessary:

"I have not been led to believe that our government is generally popular, or advancing towards popularity. It is perhaps, impossible that we should be so in any great degree; yet I really think there are some causes of discontent which it is in our own power, and which it is our duty to remove or diminish. One of these is the distance and haughtiness with which a very large proportion of the Civil and Military Servants of the Company treat the upper and middling class of natives. Against their mixing much with us in society, there are certainly many hindrances . . . But there are some of our amusements . . . in which they would be delighted to share, and invitations to which would be regarded by them as extremely flattering, if they were not, perhaps with some reason, voted bores, and treated accordingly."[1]

The *Quarterly Review* , though also of the opinion that English rule in India should continue, asked whether the Company should continue to be permitted to impose its will on the administration, arguing that such control permitted amoral commercial considerations to impose themselves on what was essentially a (moral) civilising mission. It advocated the handing over of control of administration to the Crown:

"The affairs of our Eastern empire must inevitably engage a large share of attention in parliament and in the country generally, during the next four or five years, at the end of which period the great national question must be

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[1] Bishop Heber quoted in Francis Jeffrey, "Bishop Heber's *Journal*", *Edinburgh Review*, 48, p. 331.

resolved, — whether the government of that empire is to be continued in the hands of the Company, or transferred to the direct management of his Majesty's ministers . . ."[1]

Since this was a "moral question", the *Quarterly Review* also used Heber to support their argument:

"That such an empire should remain, for an indefinite course of time, in the relation of a colonial or quasi-colonial appendage to a kingdom so remote as this, his lordship was not likely to dream. But that, under a firm, paternal, and liberal system of government, the industry of India may be stimulated to an extent hitherto unimagined; the character of her people raised and strengthened; their prejudices, even their religious prejudices slowly, indeed, but surely overcome; and, in a word, the whole condition of these enormous regions so altered and improved, that their political separation from Great Britain might be another name for the admission of several great independent states into the social system of the civilised world, and even the Christian world — these are the prospects which, after duly weighing what has already been done, the rational and comprehensive intellect of Heber appears to have considered neither visionary nor absurd."[2]

The world of Marsh's "Society in India" was almost this. It was a secure one, peopled by confident, respectable civil servants and lawyers, who pursued their careers honourably and were rewarded with power and wealth, which they gracefully accepted:

" . . . Bobus Smith was Advocate-General at Calcutta . . . his reception was kindness itself . . . I was sitting with him one morning at breakfast, when a

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[1]"Bishop Heber's *Indian Journals*, &c.", p. 119.
[2]"Bishop Heber's *Indian Journals*, &c.", pp. 120 - 121.

brief, with a hundred gold mohurs (about two pounds sterling each), was put into his hands. That most brilliant and enchanting of coins, as it sparkled before my eyes, produced an instantaneous effect upon my nerves, and I was for a minute or two lost in those dreams of opulence which the sight of so large a sum naturally conjured up in the imagination of a poor devil of a barrister, who had never seen more than two guineas in the shape of a fee in the whole course of his profession. But the nonchalance, the imperturbable calmness with which Bobus received, and placed it in his drawer — this was quite miraculous. I should have capered about my room, and probably overthrown every chair and table in it, had such a shower of wealth descended upon me; but as for Smith, he coolly signed his initials on the brief, laid it down again, and resumed the conversation, as if it had been the most ordinary occurrence of his life. This circumstance gave me some foretaste of professional profits in India . . ."[1]

Marsh's articles portray a civilian establishment, with the military playing little or no part in his narrative. The questions he deals with were moral and administrative, as in his outburst against Christian missionaries' attempts to convert the Hindu:

"What will be our empire in India when its native subjects have become Christians? Christianity established in India, presupposes the abolition of caste; yet it is to that institution you owe your empire; for it completely disarms the whole population, with the exception of a comparative handful, who are permitted to follow warlike pursuits, and who are now serving in your army, and helping you to consolidate the conquest of their country. . ."[2]

Marsh pays no attention to the soldiers who policed the territories, and

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[1]"Society in India. — No. I", pp. 232 - 233.
[2]"Society in India. — No. II", *The New Monthly Magazine*, 22, p. 333.

continued to add new ones annually. His knowledge of, and interest in, the military is so sketchy that he does not realise that the "disarmed" non-lethal Brahmins supplied a large proportion of recruits to the English forces, nor does he know that both the Company's and the crown's forces comprised men of all castes but the "lowest". Marsh was a civilian, working on the implementation of a civilian administration's laws, who was far removed from the military. While he did not comprehend the composition and "contradictions" of the military, he had learned much about India, its people and civilisation:

"I have heard persons talking of civilizing the Hindoos! — Civilize the Hindoos! — a nation consummately civilized, when our own ancestors were naked savages, — and old in arts and literature, before the primeval forests of Britain had started from their ancient silence at the voice of man."[1]

In "Society in India" the civilians have taken their moral duty to heart and learned much about their "charges". It would have come as no surprise, then, that they had learned the lessons of the Orientalists and could speak Hindustani, which, until the end of the previous century had usually been erroneously called either "Moors" or "Gentoo". This gives them not just the moral authority but the physical means to engage in dialogue with their subjects:

"A set of bearers were once carrying an Englishman of portly dimensions, and thinking that he was quite ignorant of the native languages, they made him (pray forgive the pun) the burthen of their song. The cry they kept up for several miles, when translated into English, ran thus—

"Ōh whăt ă | hog hăve wĕ | got,"

a short strophe of two dactyls and a long syllable. But they had not reckoned

[1]"Society in India. — No. II", p. 334.

with their host. The young John Bull, who was a civil servant, and no mean proficient in the Hindostanee, perfectly comprehended their satire, and for some time bore it with composure. At last his patience deserted him, and out he jumped, laying about him on all sides with a bamboo, which he applied with considerable vigour. He had better have remained quietly in his palanquin; for finding themselves detected, and calculating from the brawny arm that wielded the cane upon severe castigation, they put down his palanquin, and set off at full speed . . ."[1]

The administrator had come of age. He spoke the language, travelled the roads, collected the taxes, meted out justice - all without any visible recourse to the men of war.

[1] "Society in India. — No. II", pp. 334 - 335.

RELIGION

For most writers one of the most foreign aspects of India was its religions. Islam was relatively familiar but Hinduism was a shock. Here was a religion that was "primitive" in that it was polytheistic and varied in form - yet sophisticated in certain aspects, as in its much commented-on tolerance. This apparent contradiction was viewed with scepticism by many. Until the late eighteenth century the English public had no access to any real study of the religion and representations of it reflected English Christian abhorrence for polytheism and for the rumours of strange gods and blood sacrifice that abounded. Accounts of Indian customs based on real knowledge did not exist - writers with experience who did write about them were either uninterested in the beliefs underlying the customs, or were inclined to pass "Christian" judgement.

In the first half of the eighteenth century, Indian religion featured in moral tales as an immoral creed. In *The Lady's Drawing Room*, the very Christian, very moral writer suggested that the reputed tolerance was a myth, as such a mature attitude towards religion was incompatible with paganism. The mother of the Zoa married an Indian who paid lip-service to toleration at the time of their marriage:

". . . he told me, That he would never urge me to a Change of Faith; that I might enjoy my Opinion undisturb'd; and pretended, That, provided People acted according to the Rules of Virtue and Reason, he did not think it any Matter of Moment to what Gods they pray'."[1]

Once the ceremony was over, he showed his true colours by continuing to worship false gods, thus denying the "indisputable truth" of Christianity:

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[1]Anonymous: *The Lady's Drawing Room*, London, 1744; pp. 142 - 143.

"I say, but *pretended*; for in reality there never was a greater Bigot to the Idol-worship, nor a more prophane Contemner of the divine Mysteries of *Christianity*. — Grant Heaven! my dearest *Zoa*, that you may one Day be happily convinc'd, That *they*, and *only they*, are truly *divine*!"[1]

When their child is born, the idolatrous father initially attempts to dissuade the mother from teaching her about Christianity but, since she refuses to obey his command, he threatens her with separation from the child. This threat is, of course, depicted as immoral - the writer implies that a Christian would never have made so base a threat. The captive European, fearful of losing her child (thus displaying Christian maternal love), accepts the conditions. However, she knows that her faith is True Faith, so she leaves her daughter an account of her life and tribulations, a story which, according to her, illustrates the moral superiority of Christianity (though, judging by the treatment she suffered at the hands of both "Pagan" lords and "Christian" serfs, she would have done well to advise her daughter to steer clear of all men, regardless of their religious beliefs):

" . . . if you carefully examine the Papers annex'd to this little History, in which I have set down the Forms prescrib'd by the *Christian* Nations . . . I flatter myself you will find so wide a Difference between those solemn and truly pious Rites and the wild Ceremonies of the *Pagan* Worship, that you will learn to love and venerate the one, and despise and hate the other."[2]

Once her story has been told she makes a heartfelt plea to her God that her daughter may someday see the light: " . . . All I ask of Heaven is, That they may have due Weight with you to make you become a *Christian* in your

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[1] *The Lady's Drawing Room*, p. 143.
[2] *The Lady's Drawing Room*, p. 163.

Heart . . ."[1] and begs her daughter:

". . . above all Things, if it be possible, my dear *Zoa*, avoid marrying a *Pagan*; for that would be binding yourself for ever to Idolatry, and perhaps make you the Mother of a Race of Misbelievers; a Crime which would render you no less cruel to them, than I should be to you, if I forbore giving you those Instructions at my Death, which I was bound by Oath never to reveal in Life."[2]

The Christian God hears her plea - her daughter is delivered into the care of the Englishman Rodomond, and is admitted to the Christian faith, turning her back on the evil faith of her father, the distant Malay-speaking Pagan. Her decision to save Rodomond was not the action of a pagan, it demonstrated the purity of her soul, and the triumph of innate Christianity over years of false teaching.

These representations of Hinduism highlighted its exotic, non-Christian features. It was polytheistic and clearly ancient, almost certainly pre-dating Christianity. Hinduism reminded the English of the religions of ancient Rome. To the English, this in itself implied it was primitive, and without divine sanction. One problem remained - its ability to withstand proselytising religions like Christianity (and Islam). This strength suggested it had some supernatural sponsor. Since this god-like sponsor could not be the Christian god, it had to be the devil. However, even this apparently logical thesis could not fully explain the Hinduism that was seen to exist. If it was the work of the devil, it should have been violently opposed to the "true" faith, yet Hinduism exhibited an extreme form of tolerance, showing little or no anxiety when faced by the "true" religion of Europe (at the time few English writers were aware of the existence of the orthodox Christians of southern India - had they been, their confusion would only have been

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[1] *The Lady's Drawing Room*, p. 174.
[2] *The Lady's Drawing Room*, p. 174.

greater). Writers of the era expressed the confusion in the English mind by disparaging Hinduism's "primitiveness", while wondering at the otherwise "reasonable" nature of the Hindus, as in this passage in Orme:

"The History of these gods is a heap of the greatest absurdities. It is Eswara twisting off the neck of Brama; it is the Sun, who gets his teeth knocked out, and the Moon, who has her face beat black and blue at a feast, at which the gods quarrel and fight with the spirit of a mob. They say that the Sun and Moon carry in their faces to this day the marks of this broil. Here and there a moral or metaphysical allegory, and sometimes a trace of the history of a first legislator, is discernible in these stories; but in general they are so very extravagant and incoherent, that we should be left to wonder how a people so reasonable in other respects should have adopted such a code of nonsense as a creed of religion, did we not find the same credulity in the histories of nations much more enlightened."[1]

The passive nature of Hinduism, the basis of its toleration of other faiths, was interpreted as a sign of fundamental non-masculinity. Orme suggested that the religion (and the climate) effectively castrated men:

"An abhorrence to the shedding of blood, derived from his religion, and seconded by the great temperance of a life which is passed by most of them in a very sparing use of animal food, and a total abstinence from intoxicating liquors; the influence of the most regular of climates, in which the great heat of the sun and the great fertility of the soil lessen most of the wants to which the human species is subject in austerer regions, and supply the rest without exertion of much labour; these causes, with various consequences from them, have all together contributed to render the Indian the most enervated

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[1] Orme, Robert: *History of the Military Transactions of the British Nation in Indostan from the year 1745*, London, 1775, p. 3.

inhabitant of the globe.

He shudders at the sight of blood, and is of a pusillanimity only to be excused and accounted for by the great delicacy of his configuration. This is so slight to give him no chance of opposing with success the onset of an inhabitant of the more northern regions."[1]

This is particularly interesting because it prefaces a five hundred page book which is devoted solely to the military conflict with these "enervated" people!

Orme, like others of his time, accepted that in the remote (unthreatening) past, the Hindus were educated, but asserted that, lacking the enlightened leadership of Christianity, they had sunk to depths of unChristian depravity. This opinion was consistent with the commonly held view that Christianity was a natural "civiliser". Of the fallen Hindus, the Brahmins came in for the greatest criticism - criticism which was not based on any feeling of sympathy for the oppressed, but on a fundamental jealousy of alternative centres of power:

"The Bramins . . . although much inferior either as philosophers or men of learning to the reputation of their ancestors . . . are still implicitly followed by the whole nation; and as preceptors they are the source of all knowledge which exists in Indostan . . . they shed no blood and eat no flesh, because they believe in the transmigration of souls; they encourage their wives to burn themselves with their deceased husbands . . ."[2]

At about this time, some senior figures in the Anglo-Indian hierarchy realised that, if the English were to continue to trade profitably, they had to administer the provinces under their control effectively. With this in mind,

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[1] *History of the Military Transactions of the British Nation in Indostan from the year 1745*, pp. 5 - 6.
[2] *History of the Military Transactions of the British Nation in Indostan from the year 1745*, p. 3.

Warren Hastings (amongst others) called for studies of the culture of the sub-continent. Scholars soon began to work on translating the ancient Indian epics and romances. When the first English translation of Hindu law was published in 1776, the editor, Halhed, gave this account of the background to its publication:

"The importance of the Commerce of India, and the Advantages of a Territorial Establishment in Bengal, have at length awakened the Attention of the British Legislature to every Circumstance that may conciliate the Affections of the Natives, or ensure Stability to the Acquisition. Nothing can so favourably conduce to these two Points as a well-timed Toleration in Matters of religion, and an adoption of such original Institutes of the Country, as do not immediately clash with the Laws or Interests of the Conquerors."[1]

John Shore, writing in 1807 about Warren Hastings' support of Indian studies, felt the Governor's contribution was as great as that of the scholars he encouraged, because it was as a result of his foresight and enthusiasm for such scholarship that the East India Company was able to administer, without opposition, the territory it was acquiring:

"If Mr. Hastings cannot claim the merit of having himself explored the mine of Sanscrit literature, he is eminently entitled to the praise of having invited and liberally encouraged the researches of others. But he has a claim to commendations of a higher nature; for a conduct no less favourable to the cause of literature, than to the advancement of the British influence in India, by removing that reserve and distrust in the professors of the Braminical Faith, which had taught them to view with suspicion all attempts to investigate their code, and to apprehend the infringement of its ordinances, in our political rule. The importance of his success will be readily

[1] Halhed, N. B.: *Code of Gentoo Laws*, London, 1776; Translator's Preface, p. ix.

acknowledged by those, whose observation qualifies them to form a due estimate of it; and to those who have not had the advantages of local experience, the communication of my own may not be unsatisfactory."[1]

In Halhed's day the effort put into the translation of "primitive", "pagan" law was justified by references to the Roman empire. The Romans, Halhed claimed, were tolerant of other religions and "even naturalized such Parts of the Mythology of the Conquered . . ."[2], Lest this be interpreted as a suggestion that Christianity, the "true" faith, should be diluted, the editor added that the Romans had incorporated only such parts "as were in any respect compatible with their own System"[3]. - implying that while Christians could not, of course, incorporate elements of Hinduism into their own religion, they could learn how to govern through toleration from the Roman example:

"With a View to the same political Advantages, and in Observance of so striking an Example, the following Compilation was set on foot; which must be considered as the only Work of the Kind, wherein the genuine Principles of the Gentoo Jurisprudence are made public, with the Sanction of their most respectable Pundits (or Lawyers) and which offers a complete Confutation of the Belief too common in Europe, that the Hindoos have no written Laws whatever, but such as relate to the ceremonious Peculiarities of their Superstition."[4]

The *Code* was prefaced by a letter from Warren Hastings (then Governor of Bengal) in which he professed disapproval of such parts of the *Code* that were incompatible with accepted English morality, indicating his acceptance

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[1] John Shore in *The Works of Sir William Jones*; ed. Lord Teignmouth (John Shore), London, 1807; II, pp. 20 - 21.
[2] Translator's Preface, *Code of Gentoo Laws*, p. x.
[3] Translator's Preface, *Code of Gentoo Laws*, p. x.
[4] Translator's Preface, *Code of Gentoo Laws*, p. x.

of the fiction that, compared with English Christianity, Hinduism was flawed:

" . . . I could have wished to have obtained an Omission or Amendment of some Passages, to have them rendered more fit for the Public Eye; but the Pundits, when desired to revise them, could not be prevailed upon to make any Alterations, as they declared, they had the Sanction of their Shaster, and were therefore incapable of Amendment; possibly these may be considered essential Parts of the Work, since they mark the Principles on which many of the Laws were formed, and bear the Stamp of a very remote Antiquity, in which the Refinements of Society were less known, and the Manners more influenced by the natural Impulse of the Passions."[1]

Emboldened by official support for the study of Hinduism, Halhed took the opportunity to voice opinions that bordered on heresy. He suggested that religious dogmatism could interfere with scholarship:

"Many conjectural Doctrines have been circulated by the Learned and Ingenious of Europe upon the Mythology of the Gentoos; and they have unanimously endeavoured to construe the extravagant Fables with which it abounds into sublime and mystical Symbols of the most refined Morality. This Mode of reasoning, however common, is not quite candid or equitable, because it sets out with supposing in those People a Deficiency of Faith with Respect to the Authenticity of their own Scriptures, which, although our better Information may convince us to be altogether false and erroneous, yet are by them literally esteemed as the immediate Revelations of the Almighty; and the same confidential Reliance, which we put in the Divine Text upon the Authority of its Divine Inspirer himself, is by their mistaken Prejudices implicitly transferred to the Beids of the Shaster. Hence we are not justified in grounding the Standard and Criterion of our Examinations of the Hindoo

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[1] Warren Hastings Preface to *Code of Gentoo Laws*, pp. iii - iv.

Religion upon the known and infallible Truth of our own, because the opposite Party would either deny the first Principles of our Argument, or insist upon an equal Right on their Side to suppose the Veracity of their own Scriptures uncontrovertible."[1]

Official sponsorship had opened up the door for English scholars like Halhed who, though nominally Christians, wanted to understand and explain the exotic East to their countrymen, scholars who would spend years in the study of India, its religion, customs and cultures - the Orientalists.

Orientalism: Sir William Jones

William Jones embarked for India in 1783, having secured an appointment, in time-honoured fashion, through the intercession of an influential patron. However, unlike other Englishmen who journeyed to India in search of wealth and glory, he had sought the appointment to satisfy his curiosity about the civilisations of Asia, having already been introduced to Arabic and Persian. In his letter to his sponsor, Lord Ashburton on April 27, 1783, he writes of his gratefulness for his appointment and of his scholarly interest in India:

"It is possible indeed, that by incessant labour and irksome attendance at the bar, I might in due time have attained all that my very limited ambition could aspire to; but in no station than that which I owe to your friendship, could I have gratified at once my boundless curiosity concerning the people of the East, continued the exercise of my profession, in which I sincerely delight, and enjoyed at the same time the comforts of domestic life."[2]

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[1] Translator's Preface, *Code of Gentoo Laws*, p. xiii.
[2] Quoted in *The Works of Sir William Jones*; II, p. 6.

Immediately upon his arrival in India Jones began to study Indian languages. Mere competence in language was not sufficient for Jones - in an address to the Asiatic Society in 1794, John Shore described the motives behind Jones' study of Indian languages:

". . . Sir William Jones was too discerning to consider language in any other light than as the key of science, and he would have despised the reputation of a mere linguist. Knowledge and truth, were the object of all his studies, and his ambition was to be useful to mankind; with these views, he extended his researches to all languages, nations, and times."[1]

He soon established himself as a supporter of Hastings' ideas of scholarship in the service of the administration and added his voice to those calling for the use of Indian laws when judging Indians, as a means of preventing disaffection amongst the Company's Indian subjects:

"Such were the motives that induced him to propose to the Government of this country, what he justly denominated a work of national utility and importance, the compilation of a copious digest of *Hindu* and *Mahommedan* Law, from *Sanscrit* and *Arabick* originals, with an offer of his services to superintend the compilation, and with a promise to translate it. He had foreseen, previous to his departure from *Europe*, that without the aid of such a work, the wise and benevolent intentions of the legislature of *Great Britain*, in leaving, to a certain extent, the natives of these provinces in possession of their own laws, could not be completely fulfilled; and his experience, after a short residence in India, confirmed what his sagacity had anticipated, that without principles to refer to, in a language familiar to the judges of the courts, adjudications amongst the natives must too often be subject to an uncertain and erroneous exposition, or wilful misinterpretation of their

[1] John Shore in *The Works of Sir William Jones*; III, p. vi.

laws."[1]

He had very definite ideas about the function of the English administration in India, and about how it should treat the English and the Indians:

"The object then of the court, thus continued with ample powers, though wisely circumscribed in its jurisdiction, is plainly this: that, in every age, the *British* subjects resident in *India* be protected, yet governed by *British* laws; and that the natives of these important provinces be indulged in their own prejudices, civil and religious, and suffered to enjoy their own customs unmolested; and why those great ends may not now be attained, consistently with the regular collection of the revenues and the supremacy of the executive government, I confess myself unable to discover."[2]

The idea of separate laws and tolerance surfaced regularly in Jones' work. In the introduction to the *Code of Manu*, in 1794, he re-affirmed his conviction that not challenging Indians' "prejudices" was the surest means of ensuring continued co-operation:

"Whatever opinion in short may be formed of MENU and his laws, in a country happily enlightened by sound philosophy and the only true revelation, it must be remembered, that those laws are actually revered, as the words of the Most High, by nations of great importance to the political and commercial interests of *Europe*, and particularly by many millions of *Hindu* subjects, whose well directed industry would add largely to the wealth of *Britain*, and who ask no more in return than the protection for their persons and places of abode, justice in their temporal concerns, indulgence to the prejudices of their own religion, and the benefit of those laws, which they have been

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[1] John Shore in *The Works of Sir William Jones*; III, pp. vi - vii.
[2] "Charge to the Grand Jury at Calcutta, December 4, 1783,", *The Works of Sir William Jones*; VII, p. 4.

taught to believe sacred, and which they alone can possibly comprehend."[1]

Within a year of arriving he had founded the Asiatic Society, a society whose stated intention was to increase knowledge and awareness of India amongst Britons (both in India and in Britain). The initial comparative studies by the society were, he stressed in one of his first speeches to the society, by no means comprehensive: "To form an exact parallel between the works and actions of the Western and Eastern worlds, would require a tract of no inconsiderable length . . ."[2]. He was aware of the differences in the development of the two cultures and attempted to classify their achievements: ". . . we may decide on the whole, that reason and taste are the grand prerogatives of *European* minds, while the *Asiaticks* have soared to loftier heights in the sphere of imagination."[3]

He was surprised to find Indians eager to share their literature, the volume of which astonished him. He tried to convey some idea of the magnitude, and importance, of the task of translation to his English-speaking audience:

"Wherever we direct our attention to *Hindu* Literature, the notion of *infinity* presents itself; and the longest life would not be sufficient for the perusal of near five hundred thousand stanzas in the *Puránas*, with a million more perhaps in other works . . . we may, however, select the best from each *Sástra*, and gather the fruits of science, without loading ourselves with the leaves and branches; while we have the pleasure to find, that the learned *Hindus*, encouraged by the mildness of our government and manners, are at least as eager to communicate their knowledge of all kinds, as we can be to

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[1] Preface to "The Laws of Menu", published in 1794, *The Works of Sir William Jones*; VII, pp. 89 - 90.
[2] "2nd Anniversary Discourse to the Asiatic Society, 24 February 1785", in *The Works of Sir William Jones*; p. 11.
[3] "2nd Anniversary Discourse to the Asiatic Society, 24 February 1785", in *The Works of Sir William Jones*; p. 11.

receive it."[1]

In spite of his general academic interest in India, the President was clear about the purpose of the Society's investigations, and reiterated it frequently: "The civil history of their vast empires, and of *India* in particular, must be highly interesting to our common country; but we have a still nearer interest in knowing all former modes of ruling *these inestimable provinces*, on the prosperity of which so much of our national welfare, and individual benefit, seems to depend . . ."[2]

Sharing Halhed's conviction that Indian society was a decadent one that had failed to realise its initial potential through some fundamental flaw, he both lauded and disparaged the material the society dealt with. The thesis that Hinduism must be inherently inferior, else the European would not have prevailed was as much apart of Jones' thought as it was Halhed's:

"Their sources of wealth are still abundant even after so many revolutions and conquests; in their manufactures of cotton they still surpass all the world; and their features have, most probably, remained unaltered since the time of DIONYSIUS; nor can we reasonably doubt, how degenerate and abased so ever the *Hindus* may now appear, that in some early age they were splendid in arts and arms, happy in government, wise in legislation, and eminent in various knowledge: but, since their civil history beyond the middle of the *nineteenth* century from the present time, is involved in a cloud of fables . . ."[3]

When commenting on Hindu philosophy, he opined that such "sublime theories", which he owned were the equal of the Greek, must have

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[1] "On the Literature of the Hindus", in *The Works of Sir William Jones*; IV, pp. 112 - 113.
[2] "2nd Anniversary Discourse to the Asiatic Society, 24 February 1785", in *The Works of Sir William Jones*; p. 11.
[3] "3rd Anniversary Discourse to the Asiatic Society, 24 February 1786", in *The Works of Sir William Jones*; p. 25.

come from the same source:

" . . . we now live among adorers of those deities, who were worshipped under different names in old *Greece* and *Italy*, and among the professors of those philosophical tenets, which the *Ionick* and *Attick* writers illustrated with all the beauties of their melodious language . . . The *six* philosophical schools, whose principles are explained in the *Dersana Sástra*, comprise all the metaphysicks of the old *Academy*, the *Stoa*, the *Lyceum*; nor is it possible to read the *Védanta*, or the many fine compositions in illustration of it, without believing, that PYTHAGORAS and PLATO derived their sublime theories from the same fountain with the sages of *India*."[1]

This is ambiguous - Jones avoided arguments over relative antiquity and questions of superiority, as firmly stating that either was older or more logical would have resulted in debates that may have cast doubt upon his Christian commitment. Instead, he settled for generalisations about the superiority of the European, while promoting the beauty and the humanity of the Asian:

"Whoever travels in *Asia*, especially if he be conversant with the literature of the countries through which he passes, must naturally remark the superiority of *European* talents: the observation, indeed, is at least as old as ALEXANDER . . . we cannot agree with the sage preceptor of that ambitious Prince [Alexander], that "the *Asiaticks* are born to be slaves," yet the *Athenian* poet seems perfectly in the right, when he represents *Europe* as a *sovereign Princess*, and *Asia* as *her Handmaid*: but, if the mistress be transcendently majestick, it cannot be denied that the attendant has many beauties, and some advantages peculiar to herself . . . although we must be conscious of our superior advancement in all kinds of usefull knowledge, yet

[1] "3rd Anniversary Discourse to the Asiatic Society, 24 February 1786", in *The Works of Sir William Jones*; p. 28.

we ought not therefore to contemn the people of *Asia*, from whose researches into nature, works of art, and inventions of fancy, many valuable hints may be derived for our own improvement and advantage."[1]

Jones was fascinated by, even attracted to, non-Christian religions. He professed to believe in the "truth" of Christian doctrine but voiced the opinion that both Hinduism and Islam were too firmly rooted in India to be easily replaced by Christianity:

"As to the general extension of our pure faith in *Hindustán*, there are at present many sad obstacles to it. The *Muselmáns* are already a fort of heterodox *Christians*: they are *Christians*, if LOCKE reasons justly, because they firmly believe the immaculate conception, divine character, and miracles of the MESSIAH; but they are heterodox, in denying vehemently his character of Son, and his equality, as God, with the Father, of whose unity and attributes they entertain and express the most awful ideas; while they consider our doctrines as perfect blasphemy, and insist, that our copies of the Scriptures have been corrupted by both *Jews* and *Christians.* It will be inexpressibly difficult to undeceive them, and scarce possible to diminish their veneration for MOHAMMED and ALI, who were both very extraordinary men, and the second, a man of unexceptionable morals: the *Korán* shines, indeed, with a borrowed light, since most of its beauties are taken from our Scriptures; but it has great beauties, and the *Muselmáns* will not be convinced that they were borrowed. The *Hindus* on the other hand would readily admit the truth of the Gospel; but they contend, that it is perfectly consistent with their *Sástras*: the deity, they say, has appeared innumerable times, in many parts of all worlds, for the salvation of his creatures; and though we adore him in one appearance, and they in others, yet we adore,

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[1] "2nd Anniversary Discourse to the Asiatic Society, 24 February 1785", in *The Works of Sir William Jones*; pp. 10 - 11.

they say, the same God, to whom our several worships, though different in form, are equally acceptable, if they be sincere in substance. We must assure ourselves, that neither the *Muselmáns* nor *Hindus* will ever be converted by any mission from the Church of *Rome*, or from any other church; and the only human mode, perhaps of causing so great a revolution will be to translate into *Sanscrit* and *Persian* such chapters of the Prophets, particularly of ISAIAH, as are indisputably Evangelical, together with one of the Gospels, and a plain prefatory discourse containing full evidence of the very distant ages, in which the predictions themselves, and the history of the divine person predicted, were severally made publick; and then quietly to disperse the work among well-educated natives; with whom if in due time it failed of producing very salutary fruit by its natural influence, we could only lament more than ever the strength of prejudice, and the weakness of unassisted reason."[1]

Even though he paid lip-service to the ideal of conversion, he, like many other Anglo-Indians, was clearly no friend of missionaries and felt that attempts to convert Indians would prompt a reaction that would jeopardise English interests in the sub-continent.

Jones' Contemporaries & the late 18th Century

Novelists of the period, unlike the Orientalists, were certain that English society was superior and depicted a morally-bankrupt, priest-ridden Hindu India. In Helenus Scott's novel, *Adventures of a Rupee*, the rupee desires to be transported to the Utopia of the priest-free England:

"I wish, said I, that fortune may some time or other carry me to England; for

[1] "On the Gods of Greece, Italy and India" (originally published 1784), *The Works of Sir William Jones*; III, pp. 395 - 397.

without doubt, that great East India Company, which can keep black men in such good order at so great a distance, will not be priest-ridden at home"[1]

Where the Orientalists took great care to get their "facts" right, Helenus Scott confused Hindu and Muslim - in his novel the Islamically named Jaffier is a devotee of the Hindu deity Brahma (who, in any case, has practically no devotees to this day, Hindus usually worshipping incarnations of either Vishnu or Shiva): "Jaffier prayed to Brama, and *preyed* upon his neighbour . . ."[2] The facts were unimportant, he had a point to make, the point that English society, religion and priests were morally superior to their Indian counterparts.

So convinced was the writer of the truth and morality of his faith that he depicts the Indian coin realising and acknowledging the divinity of Christ:

"I wonder, said I, if all the servants of heaven like to live well; do they consider the joys of this life as the best earnest of future happiness? It is surely not so in England, where men, I have been told, are acquainted with the true religion."[3]

Helenus Scott was not the only writer to represent Indians and their religion with little regard for fact. The non-Orientalist writers fall into two broad groups - those who demonised Hinduism, and those who used it in their fiction assuming that it was very similar to European religions. In a book published in 1786, contemporaneous to the establishment of William Jones' Asiatic Society, Hindu adventurers were depicted converting an island kingdom to Hinduism:

"Then the venerable Moteiranian Brahman, Naretti, opened his lips. He

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[1] Scott, Helenus: *Adventures of a Rupee*, London, 1782; p. 13.
[2] *Adventures of a Rupee*, p. 15.
[3] *Adventures of a Rupee*, p. 27

spake of the origin of the worlds, of the pre-existant state of souls, of their progressive transmigrations, and future restoration. Then he discoursed upon the works of the great Bramma, the birth and metamorphosis of Vistnow, the wondrous deeds of Ixora . . . Next he described the services of the pagoda, instructed the Mindoans in the doctrines of the Viedam, and established the truths of the Shastah. Conviction flowed from the hoary sage's tongue and entered into every heart. The queen declared her pagodas should be sanctified by the Brahmanic worship according to the directions of the holy books. She then asked for copies of the Viedam and the Shastah, and craved the wife Sedamma to instruct her people."[1]

The writer knew the names of the Hindu gods and books but their religion is obviously nothing more than a proselytising blend of Greco-Roman and Christian mythology. Conversions to Hinduism had taken place in the past but, by the eighteenth century, Hinduism was consistently unevangelical.

Representations of Hinduism usually ignored most of the information made available by Orientalism, choosing to use only accounts of Hindu horrors. Of particular interest was Sati, which writings of the time used to demonstrate that Hindus indulged in human sacrifice. For the more militant Christians the priests, the mainstays of the anti-Christian faith, were the most popular hate-figures. There was, of course, much in Hindu practice to be criticised, but writers like Mariana Starke were interested in the duty of Christians to overthrow false religion, not in justice. This was, no doubt, partly a result of anger at the Company's policy of not allowing the churches to interfere with its expansion. Believers do not take kindly to being asked to hold back, and her play is both a condemnation of Hinduism and of the perceived "unChristian" secular policy of the Company:

"Know'st thou not Albert, that the priests of BRAMA,

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[1] Anonymous: *Rajah Kisna*, London, 1786; pp. 37 - 38.

Lur'd by those gems which each deluded Victim
Presents at his curst shrine, from age to age
Enforce, thr'out this barb'rous land, a practice
Which Frenzy, not Religion, first began.
Shall Christians, then, who come to chase away
Those mists of error that o'ercloud the East,
Shall they allow self-murder?"[1]

In most writing about the sub-continent Hindus and Indians were synonymous - the common entry in 1797 and 1823 editions of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* and the 1802 edition of *English Encyclopaedia* made no distinction whatsoever. In spite of the blurring of identity, the remarks prefacing the description of the religion itself indicate Orientalist influence - it attempted to relate the Hindu faith to other religions:

"HINDOOS or GENTOOS: the inhabitants of that part of India known by the name of *Indostan*, or the *Mogul's empire*, who profess the religion of the Bramins, supposed to be the same with that of the ancient Gymnosophists of Ethiopia."[2]

It also recorded the continuing astonishment at the resilience of Hinduism:

"From the earliest period of history these people seem to have maintained the same religion, laws, and customs, which they do at this day: indeed they and the Chinese are examples of perseverance in these respects altogether unknown in the western world."[3]

The scholarly perspective had influenced the encyclopedia's assessment of

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1 Starke, Mariana: *The Widow of Malabar*, London, 1791; p. 19.
2 *The English Encyclopedia*, London, 1802; IV, p. 252.
3 *The English Encyclopedia*; IV, p. 252.

Hinduism as a moral system:

"The religion of the Hindoos, though involved in superstition and idolatry, seems to be originally pure; inculcating the belief of an eternal and omnipotent Being . . ."[1]

It described in considerable detail the various gods, castes, sects and customs. However, the information now available did not make some aspects of Hinduism any more comprehensible than they had been. The commentator's attempt to explain the philosophy underlying the toleration once again expressed the bewilderment that was still being felt by all English observers, including the commentator himself:

"The greatest singularity in the Hindoo religion, however, is, that so far from persecuting those of a contrary persuasion, which is too often the case with other professors, they absolutely refuse to even admit of a proselyte. They believe all religions to be equally acceptable to the Supreme Being: assigning as a reason, that if the Author of the universe preferred one to another, it would have been impossible for any other to have prevailed than that which he approved. Every religion, therefore, they conclude to be adapted to the country where it is established; and that all in their original point are equally acceptable."[2]

Towards the end of the century, Anglo-Indians, feeling that they were being unfairly represented in English writings in Britain, took to warning their countrymen in England about the "false" claims of various Indian-sympathisers. One such defender of British behaviour was Roderick Mackenzie, the soldier who had fought in the early campaigns against Tipu.

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[1] *The English Encyclopedia*; IV, p. 253.
[2] *The English Encyclopedia*; IV, p. 254.

His defence of the behaviour of the English in India consisted, in large part, of "exposés" of Hindu barbarity: "At the punishments that the Hindoos inflict on their delinquents, the most hardened Christian would shudder; and at the inhuman villanies that they commit under the cloak of religion, his very hair would stand on end."[1]

His depiction of Hindu torture is graphic, making his condemnation of the savage Hindus most impressive:

"A despot that sews up inferiors in raw-hides, on the supposition of offence, is not known among Christians. It is not to Britain that India is indebted for the invention of pinching with cloven bamboos the extremities of the human frame; neither was the practice of burying a delinquent to the chin in an erect posture, and of tantalising with his cravings, by exposing food and water at a short distance, imported into India by Britons; still more detestable to that people, must appear the abominable and cruel wretch, that deprives his father of existence, as soon as he outlives the power of self-maintenance, although the act from its frequency, attracts not the least symptom of compassion among the 'harmless Hindoos'".[2]

The 19th Century

The accounts of the late 18th century dealt with the aspects of Hinduism that were most horrific to the English reader, and Southey's 1810 *The Curse of Kehama* clearly owes as much to those accounts as it does to the publications of the Asiatic Society, which Southey acknowledged and recorded in his notes on the poem. Southey's Hindus are not the self-effacing, gentle men of Jones but monsters who sacrifice horses by the

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[1] Mackenzie, R.: *A Sketch of the War with Tippoo Sultaun*, Calcutta, 1793; I, p. 100.

[2] *A Sketch of the War with Tippoo Sultaun*, I, pp. 100 - 101.

hundreds:

"Dost thou tremble, O Indra, O God of the Sky,
Why slumber those thunders of thine?
Dost thou tremble on high . . .
Wilt thou tamely the Swerga resign, . . .
Art thou smitten, O Indra, with dread?
Or seest thou not, seest thou not, Monarch divine,
How many a day to Seeva's shrine
Kehama his victim hath led?
Nine and ninety days are fled,
Nine and ninety steeds have bled;
One more, the rite will be complete,
One victim more, and this the dreadful day.
Then will the impious Rajah seize thy seat,
And wrest the thunder-sceptre from thy sway.
Along the mead the hallow'd Steed
Yet bends at liberty his way;
At noon his consummating blood will flow.
O day of woe! above, below,
That blood confirms the Almighty Tyrant's reign!"[1]

The Almighty Tyrant is, of course, Satan. Southey used his knowledge of Hinduism, derived from Orientalist studies, not to redeem the image of Hinduism but to give his portrait of a barbaric race a ring of authenticity. The sacrifice of horses, who were highly regarded by the English, would itself have shocked British audiences - yet that was not enough for Southey, he drew in the natural world to darken the Hindu world further:

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[1] Southey, Robert: *The Curse of Kehama*, London, 1810; Part VIII, Verse 1, lines 1 - 19.

The steam of slaughter from that place of blood
Spread o'er the tainted sky.
Vultures, for whom the Rajah's tyranny
So oft had furnish'd food, from far and nigh
Sped to the lure: aloft with joyful cry,
Wheeling around, they hover'd over head;
Or, on the temple perch'd, with greedy eye,
Impatient watch'd the dead.
Far off the tigers, in the inmost wood,
Heard the death shriek, and snuff'd the scent of blood;
They rose, and through the covert went their way,
Couch'd at the forest edge, and waited for their prey."[1]

Orientalism's effect on popular representations of Indian religion was, with few exceptions like *The Curse of Kehama*, minimal. It influence was restricted to academia, and even the administrators of the East India Company's territories were unconvinced. The Marquis of Hastings, many years after the publication of the *Code of Gentoo Laws* and the scholarship of William Jones, was more scornful of Hindu deities than his predecessors:

"After breakfast we went to see a collection of Hindoo antiquities and curiosities of the country . . . The examination of it confirmed the opinion I had before entertained, that the present Hindoo mythology is not the depravation of a more rational system, but that from the beginning a wild incoherent and stupidly absurd pack of fancies were devised by the Brahmins to occupy the minds of people."[2]

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[1] *The Curse of Kehama*, Part IX, Verse 1.
[2] Hastings, Marquess of: *The Private Journal of the Marquess of Hastings, 1813 - 1818*, London, 1858, I; p. 77.

In his opinion, the Orientalists were dupes of the cunning Hindus:

"Since their [the Brahmins'] intercourse with us they have endeavoured to connect and reconcile their legends, in which they have had great assistance from the disposition of Europeans to find something abstrusely emblematical in the nonsense. There is not anything elegant in the remnants . . . either as to execution or as to taste."[1]

The claim that Hinduism was a sophisticated religion, accepted by Jones and other scholars, was repeatedly dismissed as pure fantasy:

"The more I have studied the Hindoo mythology, the more I am convinced of our error in ascribing to it anything of depth or ingenuity. It appears to me a mere tissue of those extravagances which suggest themselves to all rude and illiterate tribes in their notions of prenatural beings. The phenomena of the climate in which a people exists, viewed as the operation of some superintending spirit, are always likely to determine the features of the prevailing superstition . . . "[2]

The tolerance exhibited by Hinduism and its adherents, however, remained an integral part of the mystery. Hastings, like other Anglo-Indians, had experienced it and told of its effect on potential conflicts between Europeans and Indians:

"He [an English official] met in the bazaar a prodigious concourse of people, before whom was borne on a sort of platform carried by men, a large image of one of the Hindoo deities splendidly gilt . . . The postilion . . . made no attempt to leave a passage . . . but whipped his horses and drove into the

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[1] *The Private Journal of the Marquess of Hastings*, I, pp. 77 - 78.
[2] *The Private Journal of the Marquess of Hastings*, I, p. 137.

middle . . . The men who carried the platform, in endeavouring to get out of the way of the carriage, were thrown into a deep gutter, and the gaudy image was broken into pieces. Mr. Thomson expected all the religious indignation of the crowd to burst upon him; but to his great astonishment, instead of venting abuse upon him or even the postilion, the people only laughed heartily, and picked up the shattered fragments with apparent good-humour. The circumstances appears trifling, but it is strongly characteristic of the temper of the Hindoos, who could thus at once pardon the outrage from a conviction that an insult to them had not been intended."[1]

His contempt for the religious beliefs of the Company's subjects allowed him to interpret the relationship between the various religions without recourse to Orientalist information:

" . . . there is a rocky hill covered with temples, built by the Jeyns or Jynes . . . each of the temples contains an image of Budh . . . Discussions excited by these edifices have enabled me to obtain more precise information respecting the Jynes than I before possessed . . . They are a peculiarly mild people, holding the doctrine of the metempsychosis (erroneously ascribed in Europe to all the inhabitants of India), and thence refraining from destroying anything that has life. As far as I can learn they are pure Deists; the image of Budh being no object of worship with them, nor considered as a representation of the Deity . . . the image inculcates the tone of adoration, but is not the object of it. From sifting various accounts, and from many forcible indications, I am persuaded that this was the earliest faith prevalent in India, and that it was overset by the intrusion of the Brahmanical system . . ."[2]

Anything but the most cursory examination of Buddhists and Jains would

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[1] *The Private Journal of the Marquess of Hastings*, I, p. 50.
[2] *The Private Journal of the Marquess of Hastings*, II, pp. 260 - 261.

have revealed the falsity of most of these remarks. However, Hastings was simply not interested. Cultural arrogance prevented him from appreciating either the Orientalists or their subject, Hinduism and India.

The problem of the interpretation of Hinduism was complicated in the 1820s by Rammohun Roy, an English-speaking Hindu, who, surprisingly, appeared to side with the most arrogant of the English when he criticised the Brahmins. Though his representation of Hinduism was similar to that of the Orientalists, it negotiated the many barriers from the Indian side rather than the English, and was therefore even more incomprehensible to English audiences. His effect was as localised as that of the Orientalists - some Anglo-Indians welcomed his bolstering of the Sati prohibitionist lobby but the majority appear to have ignored his contribution as completely as they did the Orientalists'. To some he was proof of the deviousness of the Hindu, an opinion that would have been confirmed by his involvement in the Unitarian-Trinitarian arguments, where he represented Hinduism as monotheistic and praised English government of India:

"I now conclude my essay by offering up thanks to the Supreme Disposer of the events of this universe, for having unexpectedly delivered this country from the long-continued tyranny of its former rulers, and placed it under the government of the English,— a nation who are not only blessed with the enjoyment of civil and political liberty, but also interest themselves in promoting liberty and social happiness, as well as free inquiry into literary and religious subjects, among those nations to which their influence extends."[1]

Roy was an idealist who believed in the "oneness" of God, arguing for Unitarianism with the Europeans (Christians), and for a reformed, Vedantic

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[1] Roy, Rammohun (Raja): *The precepts of Jesus etc.*, Calcutta & London, 1824; p. 672.

Hinduism with the Indians:

"If Christianity inculcated a doctrine which represents God as consisting of three persons, and appearing sometimes in the human form, at other times in a bodily shape like a dove, no Hindoo, in my humble opinion, who searches after truth, can conscientiously profess it in preference to Hindooism; for that which renders the modern Hindoo system of religion absurd and detestable, is, that it represents the divine nature, though one, (একং ব্রহ্ম), as consisting of many persons, capable of assuming different forms for the discharge of different offices. I am, however, most firmly convinced, that Christianity is entirely free from every trace of Polytheism, whether gross or refined. I therefore enjoy the approbation of my conscience in publishing the Precepts of this religion as the source of Peace and Happiness."[1]

The greatest effect of the Orientalists on representations of Hinduism can be seen in the account of Bishop Reginald Heber, the first Anglican Bishop to be appointed to India. He was married to William Jones' niece by marriage and Jones encouraged him to travel to India. While in India he travelled extensively, keeping a journal which was published in 1828. He was a careful diarist and his journal attests to his genuine desire to study India. He had a keen eye for detail, and noticed that Hinduism had some very surprising features:

"I thought it remarkable that though most of the male deities are represented of a deep brown colour, like the natives of the country, the females are usually no less red and white than our porcelain beauties as exhibited in England."[2]

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[1] *The precepts of Jesus etc.*, pp. 317 - 318.
[2] *Bishop Heber in Northern India*; Cambridge, 1971 (orig. publ. 1828); p. 53.

Like Jones, he was able to relate the observations to previously acquired knowledge and propose an explanatory theory:

". . . it is evident from the expressions of most of the Indians themselves, from the style of their amatory poetry, and other circumstances, that they consider fairness as a part of beauty, and a proof of noble blood . . . Much of this has probably arisen from their having been so long subjected to the Moguls, and other conquerors originally from more northern climates . . ."[1]

Hindu tolerance did not fail to attract his attention (and surprise):

"Many, both boys and girls, have asked for Baptism, but it has been always thought right to advise them to wait till they had their parents' leave, or were old enough to judge for themselves; and many have, of their own accord, begun daily to use the Lord's Prayer, and to desist from shewing any honour to the image. Their parents seem extremely indifferent to their conduct in this respect. Prayer, or outward adoration, is not essential to caste. A man may believe what he pleases, nay, I understand, he may almost say what he pleases, without danger of losing it, and so long as they are not baptized, neither eat nor drink in company with Christians or Pariars, all is well in the opinion of the great majority, even in Benares."[2]

Heber's descriptions of the alien customs he encountered in India are more sober than those of Mackenzie and others but could not have failed to at least raise eyebrows in England: "The austerities and idolatries exercised by them, strike me as much, or I think more, the more I see of them"[3] - .a nearly naked man who never spoke, another who hopped around on one

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[1] *Bishop Heber in Northern India*; pp. 53 - 54.
[2] *Bishop Heber in Northern India*; p. 138.
[3] *Bishop Heber in Northern India*; p. 69.

leg, the other having "contracted, and shrunk close up to his hams"[1], and a third who held his hands above his head and "thus lost the power of bringing them down to his sides."[2] He did note that, unusual though the sights appeared to him, "I must own that these spectacles are not so common, at least so far as I can yet judge, as, before I came to India, I expected to find them."[3]

Heber, though an Anglican bishop, studied Hinduism and, when meeting Indian religious teachers was able to discuss specifically Hindu topics - of his meeting with Swami Narain, he wrote:

". . . [Swami Narain] alarmed me by calling the God whom he worshipped Krishna . . . because notwithstanding the traits of resemblance it bore to the history of our Lord, traits which are in fact to be found in the midst of all the uncleanness and folly in the popular legends respecting Krishna, I did not like the introduction of a name so connected with many obscene and monstrous follies. I observed, therefore, that I always had supposed that Hindoos called the God and Father of all, not Krishna but Brihm, and I wished, therefore, to know whether his God was Brihm, or somebody distinct from him?"[4]

He was both a proselyte and a realist. Like other scholars he noticed that Christianity was not taking root in the English territories - and that instead Hinduism appeared to be consolidating:

" . . . an Indian generally lays out some of his superfluous wealth in building or adding to a pagoda, it is a strong mark of progressive and rapid improvement to say, as Mr. Corrie did to-day, that *all* the large pagodas

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[1] *Bishop Heber in Northern India*; p. 70.
[2] *Bishop Heber in Northern India*; p. 70.
[3] *Bishop Heber in Northern India*; p. 70.
[4] *Bishop Heber in Northern India*; p. 308.

between 'Calcutta and this place have been founded, or re-built, in his memory'. This, however, I must confess, does not tell much for the inclination of the Hindoos to receive a new religion. Indeed, except in our schools, I see no appearance of it."[1]

The popularity of Christian schools was also deceptive, he realised:

"One of the boys in the Mission school, whose quickness had attracted my notice . . . now came forward, shewed his Brahmanical string, and volunteered as cicerone [in a Hindu temple], telling us in tolerable English the history of the gods and goddesses on the walls. The fat pundit seemed pleased with his zeal, but it was well perhaps for the little urchin, that the corpulent padre did not understand the language in which some of the remarks were made."[2]

A firm believer in the superiority of Christian doctrine, he was concerned about the consequences of non-conversion:

"They opened my eyes more fully to a danger which had before struck me as possible, that some of the boys brought up in our schools might grow up accomplished hypocrites, playing the part of Christians with us, and with their own people of zealous followers of Brahma, or else that they would settle down into a sort of compromise between the two creeds, allowing that Christianity was the best for us, but that idolatry was necessary and commendable in persons of their own nation."[3]

Heber did not imagine that the boy's tolerance of both religions was an example of "Hindu duplicity". This sympathetic attitude was consistent

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[1] *Bishop Heber in Northern India*; p. 69.
[2] *Bishop Heber in Northern India*; p. 137.
[3] *Bishop Heber in Northern India*; p. 137.

with his Orientalist background. However, despite his respect for Indians and his keen interest in Hinduism, he responded to Hinduism as his predecessors had, depicting it as a morally dangerous system of beliefs:

"Of the natural disposition of the Hindoo, I still see abundant reason to think highly . . . that they are constitutionally kind-hearted, industrious, sober, and peaceable, at the same time that they shew themselves on proper occasions, a manly and courageous people. All that is bad about them appears to arise from the defective motives which their religion supplies, or the wicked actions which it records of their gods, or encourages in their own practice."[1]

Even though he acknowledged that Christianity stood little chance of supplanting Hinduism, he criticised the reluctance of the Company to admit missionaries: "Yet it is strange to see, though this is pretty generally allowed, how slow men are to admit the advantage or necessity of propagating Christianity among them."[2]

Fiction of the 1820s picked up from Southey, Mackenzie and Starke, taking from the scholars and apologists only that which fitted their perception of Hindusim: barbarous practices. On arrival in India, the heroine of Hockley's *The English in India: A novel* is shocked to realise that " . . . her destiny had placed her among such a wicked race, whose pursuits seemed to be plunder, murder and rapine . . ."[3]

The characters in another 1820s novel, *Life in India,* debate whether the interests of the soul or of commerce should govern policy, and conclude that religion had to come before commerce, because with religion came prosperity:

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[1] *Bishop Heber in Northern India*; p. 128.
[2] *Bishop Heber in Northern India*; pp. 128 - 129.
[3] Hockley, William Brown: *The English in India: A novel*, London,1828; I, p. 58.

" . . . shall we in grovelling calculation keep back such a glorious hope; shall we leave as a matter of indifference that which the Redeemer came into the world to make known? No, rather let Britain send glad tidings of great joy to the uttermost end of the earth; that as there is but one Shepherd, there may be but one flock."[1]

One of the characters brings up an Orientalist suggestion that education should be pursued with the intention of propagating morality that will eventually undermine the false faith without other prompting:

"'No one,' returned Sir Robert, 'can be a greater advocate for native education than I am. If inquiry in the native mind is once set afloat, where can it rest until it has demolished the whole mass of absurdity? Even the proprietor of these temples is engaged to demonstrate in writing that the Brahmins have loaded their religion with inventions for their own profit. I would educate them, without meddling with their religious faith.'"[2]

His suggestion is rejected immediately on the grounds that morality and knowledge of the "True" god are inseparable:

"If we seek for truth, where does the search lead us? If we seek a foundation for morals, what have we fixed or certain, but the law of God? Any attempt to stem human passion in its flood-tide, by reason and philosophy, is like trying to bind flame with flame. Do we not see genius of the first order, cultivated by all that education can bestow, stoop beneath the tyrannical sway of passion in the hour of trial? Therefore if we would educate them aright, we must never forget that "The fear of God is the beginning of wisdom:" let us fairly consider, what there is to strengthen, to support, to quie[t] and to cheer the

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[1] Anonymous: *Life in India: or the English at Calcutta*, London, 1828; I, I, p. 188.
[2] *Life in India: or the English at Calcutta*, pp. 186 - 187.

soul of man in these tremendous periods of his existence, and we shall find that the religion of Christ is no cunningly devised fable . . ."[1]

The status of Christianity had actually been enhanced by the Orientalists' study of religion, while Hinduism had sunk even lower - Meadows Taylor's English soldiers approaching India have absorbed the "theses" of the past (Hinduism is both ancient, and primitive). They hang over the railings, anxious to "see a native of that noble land — a Hindoo, one who worshipped idols, whose faith and manners had been undisturbed for ages; while in the West had spread new faiths, new systems, where everything was daily advancing in civilisation."[2]

In the late 1830s, Thornton, recording Thuggee and its suppression for posterity, expresses nothing less than total contempt for Hinduism. The apologists had lost the battle - Hinduism had become totally evil:

"The dark and cheerless night of superstition, which has long clouded the moral vision of India, has given rise to institutions and practices so horrible and fantastic, that, without the most convincing evidence, their existence could not be credited by minds trained under happier circumstances than those which prevail in the East. That giant power, which has held the human race in chains wherever the pure and unadulterated doctrines of Revelation have not penetrated, has in India revelled in the wantonness of prosperity; the foundations of delusion have been laid wide and deep; the poison of a false and brutalizing creed has been insinuated into every action of daily life; the most obvious distinctions of right and wrong have been obliterated; and men have been encouraged to believe, that, while stifling the best and strongest feelings of nature, and violating the plainest rules of social duty, they were fulfilling their destined part in the scheme of the world, and even

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[1] *Life in India: or the English at Calcutta*, p. 187.
[2] Meadows Taylor, P.:*Tippoo Sultaun*, London, 1840; I, p. 301.

paying homage to those invisible forms which they were bound, both by conscience and interest, to reverence."[1]

Thornton's arguments against Hinduism reflect not just the effect of the half-hearted, pro-Christian, yet apologetic studies of the Orientalists on English perceptions of Hinduism but also the effect of the much publicised campaigns against Sati and Thuggee, which had been represented as typical features of Hinduism. The tolerance that baffled many commentators was just an aberration which was of no particular significance. Hinduism's countenancing of human sacrifice (as Sati was often termed) was its real face:

"The natural tendency of man to superstition gives to that gloomy power, in any form, an extraordinary facility of access to his heart. The weak and the wicked alike flee to it for a refuge: the former, from a morbid apprehension of undefined evil; the latter, from the upbraidings of conscious guilt. To the one class, superstition presents the alluring prospect of perfect assurance, in place of the humble faith and hope which are the characteristics of genuine piety: to the other, she holds out the offer of peace of mind upon easier terms than true Religion proposes."[2]

Superstition had no place in the "new" India that was being built by the benevolent conquerors for their native subjects. Where Heber, the gentle missionary, had led, others would follow, with the full support of the English nation, to root out and replace with the Word of Christ the source of evil practices that the administrators were legislating and policing into oblivion. The English, having studied Hinduism and attacked its "manifestations", had come to believe that they had the duty to actually eradicate it from the sub-

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[1] Thornton, Edward: *Illustrations of the History and Practices of the Thugs*, London, 1837; p. 43.
[2] *Illustrations of the History and Practices of the Thugs*, p. 74.

continent. They believed their crusade against Sati and Thuggee proved they had the moral authority and temporal power to do so.

SATI

Sati, the practice of a widow immolating herself on her husband's funeral pyre, represented, in the eyes of the British writers of the eighteenth century, the essential barbarity of Hindus and their religion. So strong was public interest in it that it even featured in French fiction - Mercier looking to the future, looked forward to its abolition in a newspaper "clipping":

"From the COAST of MALABAR, . . .The widow . . . who is young, handsome and adorned with every accomplishment, has sincerely deplored the death of her husband, who was burned alone; and after mourning, more in her heart than in her dress, has been re-married to a young man by whom she is also tenderly beloved. The new connection has rendered her still more respectable to all her fellow-citizens."[1]

He was certainly not alone - Sati appeared on stage in England in Mariana Starke's play, *The Widow of Malabar*, which appears not to have been based on personal experience of India but on reports. As in most of the representations of the time, the victim was young and beautiful - a choice that was to remain popular until the mid-nineteenth century (and, in some cases, even later). The plot is simple - the widow is driven towards the pyre by an evil Brahmin and, just when it seems all is lost, she is rescued by a passing Englishman. There is a hint of romance which does not develop - inter-racial attraction is recognised but avoided as presumably too controversial. The villain, the Brahmin, is aware of British distaste for sati and is wary of arousing any of their number, for fear of retaliation:

". . . Were funeral fires

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[1] Mercier, Sebastian: *Memoirs of the Year Two Thousand Five Hundred* (translated by W. Hooper); London, 1772 ; p. 218.

From yonder consecrated square to rise,
The blazing wonder could not fail to strike
Each British eye: - and wou'd not England's sons
Essay to stop the rites? - too sure they would!
Nay, e'en our City, of its Guards bereav'd
Might fall an easy conquest."[1]

This is both an expression of the Brahmin's native cowardice and a call (by the writer) to the British authorities in India to take "civilising" action - i.e. to outlaw the practice completely instead of making apologetic sounds about their inability to effectively police such a legal provision without antagonising the local populace. Both Mariana Starke and her (English) audience were deeply convinced that the custom was of a deep-rooted nature. This is apparent when Starke's heroine, Indamora, refers to her "knowledge of her destiny" when speaking to her Muslim maid (an interesting, inappropriate combination as it is unlikely that a Hindu lady would have had a Muslim maid, and the chances of a high caste Hindu accepting a non-Hindu maid were small, as were the chances of a Persian accepting menial service in a Hindu household):

"Born, as thou wast, beneath mild Persian skies,
The rigours of our laws excite thy wonder
But I, accustom'd to behold these walls
Crusted with smoke of human sacrifice,
I, who, alas, too frequently have seen
The op'ning flower of life consum'd in flames,
I stand resign'd to meet that awful doom
Which awaits the Matron who services her Lord."[2]

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[1] Starke, Mariana: *The Widow of Malabar*; London, 1791; p. 5.
[2] *The Widow of Malabar*, p. 6.

The conversation that ensues between the maid and mistress takes in another English-perceived evil, child marriage, and the suppression of Indian women:

Indamora: "The sun of happiness ne'er beam'd on me -
From early youth; e'en to the present hour . . ."[1]

The writer, it appears, must have felt that the Englishwoman suffered no such restrictions. The victim of the tyranny of Hindu custom is of heroic mould and, true to this mould, she had never, in her whole life, allowed her true emotions to show and her maid expresses surprise:

Fatima: "What say'st thou? - Whence that agonising sigh?
Ne'er, till this wretched moment, has one sound
Of murm'ring discontent escap'd those lips."[2]

Her character is comprehensible - there is a simple reason for her stoicism, a sense of loyalty that can be respected by the English audience:

Indamora: "Know, duty to a husband tied my tongue . . ."[3]

This sense of duty was obviously misplaced. Indian men are the upholders of the unjust system - this may in itself have been a criticism of the way contemporary English society functioned but, if it was, the idea was not explored. The villains were *Indian* men. In the interests of a good, moral narrative a convert was necessary so it was that all Indian men were not portrayed as evil, the young retained the ability to see the light. There was a

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1 *The Widow of Malabar*, p. 7.
2 *The Widow of Malabar*, p. 7.
3 *The Widow of Malabar*, p. 7.

foil to the hard-hearted older "Bramin" - the younger, more open-minded "Young Bramin", who denounced his forefathers' actions and barbaric traditions. The fault, it appears, was in their religion and uncivilised customs:

> "Tyrannic custom:
> She bids the savage sons of Indostan
> Suspend, for three successive nights and days,
> Beneath some branch of the wide-stretching palm,
> Each Babe whose feeble mouth rejects the breast:
> These hapless lips refus'd that first support . . ."[1]

There is a twist - the young Bramin turns out to be Indamora's long-lost brother who had been cast away for exactly the reason stated. All this would have stretched the credulity of a person more familiar with India - not only had Indamora a Persian Muslim maid but her high caste father attempted to destroy his *male* offspring, yet permitted his female child to survive. Even if this had all been true, it is unlikely that the rescued orphan child would be brought up by a Brahmin. Brahmins remain, even to this day, amongst the most closed of the hierarchies of India - birth is all important and a foundling would not have been permitted to enter the priestly caste. If all this were not enough - how is it that the young Bramin knows his parentage if he was left to die when only a babe? - it is clear that the message is more important than the facts.

Indian princes also possessed the barbaric traits that were manifested in the Brahmin. The sati was taking place in a lull in a battle and the two Englishmen present realise that the truce called by the Indian king (during which this sati is taking place) was intended solely to provide an opportunity for human sacrifice. They roundly condemn him:

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[1] *The Widow of Malabar*, p. 11.

Albert: ". . . Confusion on the rajah! - tho' his tongue,
In honied accents, pleaded for a truce,
That India, and her fraudful Priests, might give
Funeral honors to their warriors slain,
His plea was mere pretence."

Raymond: "Pretence!"

Albert: "To offer
A human sacrifice at BRAMA's shrine,
He sought this pause from the war."

Raymond: "Dissembling Villain!"

Albert: "And, ere another be past, the Victim,
(A lovely Widow in life's freshest bloom,)
Will mount the Funeral-pile, and, self-devoted,
Die to rejoin her Lord."[1]

True to their own honourable, chivalric tradition they do not allow such treachery to pass without challenge, especially as there is more than just battle at stake. Human life - the life of a young *woman* - must be protected, particularly from the false religion. Therefore the two young Christians/Europeans hasten to the rescue and save the damsel. Having done their chivalric duty they magnanimously set the priest free:

"No - learn that Christians conquer
To save and humanize Mankind. Live Bramin!"[2]

This is a truly Christian act that contrasts strongly with his own cowardly Hindu behaviour. It is abundantly clear that this reprieve demonstrates the superiority of the creed of the victor-saviours.

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[1] *The Widow of Malabar*, p. 19.
[2] *The Widow of Malabar*, p. 45.

Robert Southey was intrigued by Indian religion and customs, particularly by what he perceived as their most alien aspects. His portrayal of a Sati, though it draws heavily on William Jones' work, is not significantly different in substance or opinion from earlier representations. The satis are young, beautiful and dressed in bridal finery. There are no handsome British officers to save them but it would be a hardened reader who did not react against the unsympathetic Hindus who send such maidens to their death:

"O sight of grief! the wives of Arvalan,
Young Azla, young Nealliny, are seen!
Their widow-robes of white,
With gold and jewels bright,
Each like an Eastern queen.
Woe! woe! around their palankeen,
As on a bridal day'
With symphony, and dance, and song,
Their kindred and friends come on,
The dance of sacrifice! the funeral song,
And next the victim slaves in long array,
Richly bedight to grace the fatal day,
Move onward to their death . . ."[1]

The ceremony is a parody of a wedding - the first victim re-enacts her wedding in the macabre drama with a dead groom:

"Woe! woe! for Azla takes her seat
Upon the funeral pile!
Calmly she took her seat,

[1] Southey, Robert: *The Curse of Kehama*, London, 1810; Part I, Verse 6, lines 1 - 13.

Calmly the whole terrific pomp survey'd;
As on her lap the while
The lifeless head of Arvalan was laid."[1]

The second victim is sent to her death wearing no ornament but the symbol of her marriage to the man who, in a Christian society, would have been bound to protect her but in the pagan is the cause of her death:

"Woe! woe! Nealliny,
The young Nealliny!
They strip her ornaments away,
Bracelet and anklet, ring, and chain, and zone;
Around her neck they leave
The marriage knot alone, . . .
That marriage band, which when
Yon waning moon was young,
Around her virgin neck
With bridal joy was hung.
Then with white flowers, the coronal of death,
Her jetty locks they crown."[2]

Nealliny, the fair, young bride is not as composed as her more mature sister-wife and her struggles emphasise the involuntary nature of the ceremony - all pretence of marital duty is stripped away and the scene becomes one of human sacrifice:

"O sight of misery!
You cannot hear her cries, . . . their sound

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[1] *The Curse of Kehama*, Part I, Verse 10.
[2] *The Curse of Kehama*, Part I, Verse 11.

In that wild dissonance is drown'd; . . .
But in her face you see
The supplication and the agony, . . .
See in her swelling throat the desperate strength
That with vain effort struggles yet for life;
Her arms contracted now in fruitless strife,
Now wildly at full length
Towards the crowd in vain for pity spread, . . .
They force her on, they bind her to the dead."[1]

All is ready for the final act, the destruction of the bride by the groom's father. The evil guardians of false religion, the Brahmins, stand by to ensure compliance with their terrible, inhuman law. They are the Inquisition returned to torment the innocent :

"Then all around retire;
Circling the pile, the ministering Bramins stand,
Each lifting in his hand a torch on fire.
Alone the Father of the dead advanced
And lit the funeral pyre . . .
. . . And clap of hand, and shouts, and cries,
From all the multitude arise;
While round and round, in giddy wheel,
Intoxicate they roll and roll,
Till one by one whirl'd in they fall,
And the devouring flames have swallow'd all."[2]

With the passage of time the interest in sati grew and, by the 1820s,

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[1] *The Curse of Kehama*, Part I, Verse 12.
[2] *The Curse of Kehama*, Part I, Verses 13 - 14.

most magazines made references to it even in articles dealing with other aspects of India and life there. In the *New Monthly Magazine*, Marsh devoted the final part of the series "Society in India" to it, in spite of the fact that for most of the rest of his series he had almost completely ignored Indians and their traditions, concentrating instead on the life of the expatriate community. He took the moderate stand, popular with many "India hands" but unpopular with the interventionists like Starke:

". . . the most heated enthusiasts for diffusing the Christian faith in India disavow the idea of appealing to force; not that there is any magnanimity in the disclaimer, seeing how ridiculously inadequate to that end must be all the force they could summon. But the very same persons, when they talk of specific rights and ceremonials, although 'part and parcel' of the ancient superstition of India, and entwined with it by a coeval root and a simultaneous growth in one moment forget the forbearance they profess, and feel no delicacy in calling for restrictive measures to suppress them as nuisances and abominations. Take that singular usage for instance, of which so much more has been said or written than is understood, the Suttee, or the self-immolation of the Hindoo widows upon the funeral pyre of their deceased husbands. You will perceive the marked inconsistency between the politic tolerance they think prudent to entertain towards the Hindoo religion generally, and the zeal with which they recommend the compulsory restriction of its vital and essential parts, or what is still considered to be so in India. Happily, however, it is a zeal which, for the present, must content itself with being merely a verbal one."[1]

If this passage is not enough to convince his English readership of his knowledge of India and its customs and of his desire to put its customs into perspective another passage would most certainly establish this. In this

[1]"Society in India. - No. V", *New Monthly Magazine*, 23, 1828; p. 336.

passage he attempts to explain how some of the sati statistics were arrived at. Of course, it is also quite possible that he intended to defend the softly-softly approach of the British administration in India. His defence is spirited:

"Assuredly, the sacrifice of the Hindoo widow is a dreadful rite. But shocking as it is to moral taste, its horror is in some degree diminished by its being purely voluntary. It is right also to observe, that it is not imperatively enjoined by the Hindoo law. On the contrary, one of the most authoritative of their sacred texts declares [Colebrook's *Digest of Hindoo Law*], that "a wife, whether she ascends the funeral pile of her deceased lord, or survives for his benefit," (that is to perform a perpetual course of expiatory ceremonies in his behalf,) "is still a faithful wife." It is, in fact, a voluntary martyrdom, considered highly meritorious, and conferring great distinction, but by no means a duty of strict obligation. Nor is it an evil of such very frequent occurrence, as it has been represented. It will be found indeed to occur rarely; if the immense population of Hindostan proper is taken into consideration. It was a most unfair computation adopted by missionaries, when they took the number of immolations in a particular province, and then multiplied them by equal counts through the whole area of India . . . they who aspire to it undergo an examination into the chastity and fidelity of their lives . . . Besides this, there are many provinces where it has never been practised . . . In all probability, it will sink into desuetude altogether . . . when M. Bernier visited India, during the Mogul government, more widows sacrificed themselves in one year, and in a single province, than have sacrificed themselves within the last twenty years throughout the whole country . . . It would be unfair to deliver the whole system up to indiscriminate condemnation on account of this usage, inhuman as it is. With equal justice, an enemy of the Christian faith, in the spirit of a Porphyry, might array against it the inhumanities that have been committed in its name."[1]

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[1] "Society in India. - No. V", pp. 337 - 338.

This is all a far cry from Starke's vehement denunciations. Marsh asks his readers to try to comprehend the situation, and the way it has been represented in the past by ill-informed writers:

"It is in this spirit, and with such exaggerations, that the Hindoo rite has been clothed in horrors not its own. For this purpose, the victim is usually presented to us in the flower of youth, (the inhumanity would be less in regard to an old hag of sixty,) led, like the Iphigenia of Euripides, with tottering steps to her death-bridal, with all the lingerings after life natural to the vernal season of it, bidding an eternal farewell to its pleasures, its duties, its connexions . . . These, however, are pangs to which the Hindoo widows, on such occasions, are impassive. There is scarcely an instance, amongst those recorded by European spectators, in which they seem to have betrayed the compunctious visitings of nature, or the slightest wish to abandon their resolve, although, to the latest moment, the *locus pœnitentiœ* is open to them, and the entreaties of their relatives and friends are often united with the remonstrances of the Brahmins to invite them back to life and its duties"[1]

Such an explanation would have been unthinkable in the days of Starke. It could almost be a criticism of Starke's own play, though it is as likely it is what it purports to be - a general criticism. It is illustrated with anecdotes like the one about the experience of the Portuguese-born wife of the Advocate-General at Calcutta, only identified as Mrs S__, who attended a sati and observed the widow:

"She moved with an assured step, nor did one muscle of her frame betray the slightest faltering, or any other symptom of that internal sinking that

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[1] "Society in India. - No. V", p. 339.

renders the limbs faint and tremulous. Even that peculiar hue, which exhibits violent agitation so much more legibly in the dark native mien, than in the fixed whiteness of the European countenance, was not in the least discernible. Her dark eyes were unbedimmed, and something akin to joy sparkled in them, as if she felt herself no longer belonging to a world where her portion was only subjection and sorrow, and saw the portals of another and a better opening before her."[1]

Mrs S___ took the step of speaking to her and;

". . . the Brahmins retired some paces, and left the conference quite uninterrupted. "Have you well reflected . . . upon the dreadful resolution you have made; or has the love of life, so natural to your age (she was about twenty-two), been overpowered by the persuasions and the entreaties of others?" - "Quite the contrary . . . many have sought to divert me from my vow, which I have well considered . . ."[2]

(This particular sati was carried through, even though illegal as it was so close to the centre of Company power, as the Magistrate's men arrived to late to prevent it). Marsh, too, like so many of his time was unwilling to simplify the problem, recognising that there was more to it than met the eye - social and cultural differences had as great a part to play in perceptions as any other factor.

The writer of the series "Society in India" was even less tolerant of Christian ideas of superiority. He questioned the assumption that this oppression of women was the preserve of what was being portrayed as a "primitive society" and went on to wax eloquent about what he considered the Christian equivalent of sati:

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[1] "Society in India. - No. V", p. 340.
[2] "Society in India. - No. V", p. 340.

" . . . the horrid sacrifice once prevalent over Christendom, and still lingering in some parts of it, that dooms youth and beauty to the gloom of the convent! With what nice touches might he not describe the living death, in comparison with which the flame that consumes the Hindoo widow is mild and merciful! How might he dilate on the sufferings of the victim, when every image of joy, and every vision of hope, recedes for ever from her view, and the feverish enthusiasm which lifted her for awhile above the world, begins to subside, and its beloved scenes of home, of friendship, of love, recur in vain to her remembrance."[1]

This comparison was unusual and there is no evidence to suggest that any other writers felt so strongly. Again, it could be argued that this particular tirade was more an attack on Catholicism rather than a simple defence of Hindu society and the British administration's treatment of it.

Many magazines were less inclined to be lenient to the Hindus. The *Quarterly Review*, commenting on Bishop Heber's description of a sati, commented that:

". . . such tragedies are, in some instances, consummated by fraud and violence, it does not require an actual sight of them to arouse our pity and indignation, and convince us of the obligation under which we lie to make every possible effort for their suppression . . . "[2]

In February of the same year, *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* had also condemned the practice, devoting a whole article to it, brushing aside the plea:

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[1] "Society in India. - No. V", pp. 338 - 339.
[2] "Bishop Heber's Indian Journals, &c.", *Quarterly Review*, 37, 1828; p. 130.

". . . on which these horrors (legal sati) have been sanctioned . . . the delicacy of interfering with the prejudices of the people . . . we have no delicacy on record . . . let a rupee be deficient, and the European collector feels no scruple of offending the Hindoo's morbidness by demanding summary payment, and shooting the refractory . . . we have no scruple of taking possession of pagodas . . . we guard the passes of the Ganges, and knock the pilgrims on the head if they are unruly; we plant our sentinels in the very house of Juggernaut, and raise a very handsome revenue out of their pious foolery, to their infinite indignation . . . "[1]

This fury is more in the tradition of Starke and other horrified British opinion-makers. However, in spite of his fury, the writer attempted to argue rationally - basing his opinion that sati needed to be interfered with on his own reading of the significance and root of the practice. The writer challenged the view that it was a religious practice:

"Now, the Burning of the Widows is not a religious ceremony, nor a part of Hindoo religion . . . it is merely an act of presumed voluntary effort . . . the act . . . is attended by fabricated ceremonies, by Brahmins who are paid by the relatives, who divide the property of the victim, and by the rabble . . . "[2]

Having thus explained away any claims to religious significance he calls for its prohibition in no uncertain terms:

". . . let the extent of the murders be recollected, - two thousand nine hundred human beings destroyed before our eyes! If our government saw two rival tribes within their borders attacking each other, they would undoubtedly prohibit the mutual slaughter, without any consideration of delicacy

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[1] "Burning of Indian Widows", *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, 23, 1828; p. 161.
[2] "Burning of Indian Widows", p. 161.

whatever. If the slaughter amounted to five hundred, as the Suttees do every year under the eye of this delicate government, every combatant would be thrown into chains, or the dispute would be finished on both sides by the British bayonet. No government would be justified in wantonly offending even the most absurd religion, but when humanity calls upon us - and what is humanity but the command of Heaven and of wisdom? - we are deeply culpable for every hour's delay of following its dictates, and putting an end to the abomination."[1]

Novels of the time also reflected the concern, and the options available to the English as rulers. Hockley, it would seem, was not too worried by it, probably feeling that so much had been written on the subject that it was of little shock value. The sole sati in his three volume novel is in the story of Gumbia, the Pindaree and Bewa, the village girl he desires, which Barrington has composed for the amusement of one of the ladies. Bewa commits sati when she discovers that her true love is dead:

"(Elizabeth) sighed at the untimely end of the youth, and shuddered at the self-destruction of the devoted Bewa. "Surely," she mentally exclaimed, "the time is not far distant, when these soul-appalling sacrifices, will cease to be countenanced by an enlightened government."[2]

The novel *Life in India* dwells on sati much more at length, as it does with all "moral" topics. Soon after Elizabeth, the female protagonist, arrives in Calcutta her host, Mr. Russell, takes her to visit the temple of Kali at Kalighat. As they approach it ". . . they perceived, by the immense concourse of natives collected, that some ceremony was to be enacted."[3] Mr. Russell is

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[1] "Burning of Indian Widows", p. 162.
[2] Hockley, William Brown: *The English in India*, London, 1828; III, p. 58.
[3] Anonymous: *Life in India, or, the English at Calcutta*; London, 1828; I, pp. 148 - 150.

immediately aware of what is about to take place and endeavours to lead the women away from the scene, knowing that they are likely to react strongly:

"He (Mr. Russell) was perfectly acquainted with native manners, and no sooner cast his eyes upon a large well built pile of dry fire wood, than he divined what was going forward, and instantly turning his horses' heads homeward, observed, 'There is too great a crowd today, Miss Elizabeth, to admit of our seeing the place.'"[1]

But it is too late:

"Elizabeth had also observed the pile, and a troop of high caste natives who were advancing towards it. Her curiosity was excited, and though Mr. Russell gave his horses the whip, he could not disengage them time enough for the crowd, to prevent her noticing an elegantly formed, but completely veiled native woman, who walked steadily on, amid the uproar of tom-toms and conches, which rent the air; the attendants carrying wreaths and offerings of flowers, as if for sacrifice. A suspicion of the horrid truth burst on Elizabeth's mind, and involuntarily seizing Mr. Russell's arm, she exclaimed in agony: "O stop them! stop them! let me out and stop them!"
"My dear Miss Elizabeth," said Mr. Russell, with strong feeling, "I shall never forgive myself for subjecting you to this. No power of mine can avail that benighted crowd, who look upon their present act, as the most sacred they can offer to the Deity, the most honourable for themselves . . . Judge if anything short of an armed force could prevent it."[2]

On their return to Mr. Russell's house, they discuss the matter, Elizabeth serving as the interrogator new to India and Russell playing the part of an old

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[1] *Life in India, or, the English at Calcutta*; I, pp. 148 - 150.
[2] *Life in India, or, the English at Calcutta*; I, pp. 148 - 150.

India hand aware of the customs and beliefs of the land:

"Charlotte inquired after the meaning of the term Suttee, and what could possibly lead to such usages? 'A combination of the strongest of all human feelings,' returned Mr. Russell, 'and the most degrading of human passions - religion - dread of shame - love of fame - and avarice . . . in these circumstances the Brahmins, always ready to turn the weakness of humanity to their own account, have declared, that the woman consumed upon her husband's funeral pile, procures not only absolution for her own sins, and her husband's, but also for those of her parents on both sides; and covers her children and relatives with glory. Thus artfully leaguing against her, in the bosoms of all those who would otherwise protect her . . . '"[1]

Then follows the usual arguments that suggest that the Englishwoman is better provided for by her society than her Indian counterpart:

"'In a country where the state of a woman is so low,' rejoined Mrs. Russell, 'this way of getting rid of them gratifies family pride, and saves expense. A young heir finds no difficulty in providing funeral piles for a dozen of his father's wives . . . Though I do believe, that money-loving as the Hindoos certainly are, they would not act with such cruelty, were they not goaded on by religious superstition; and made to believe, that while they are indulging in avarice, they are clothing themselves and their families with honour.'"[2]

This sort of exchange no doubt serves the dual purpose of denouncing the Indian and of confirming the English woman's place within her own society - as a weaker being under the paternal protection of her male peers.

Having thus explained the basis of sati, the characters debate the

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[1] *Life in India, or, the English at Calcutta*; I, pp. 151 - 154.
[2] *Life in India, or, the English at Calcutta*;, I, pp. 151 - 154.

moral and political issues, and the government's duties and power:

"'What an empire is opinion,' replied Miss Percy. 'How dreadful that such scenes should go forward . . . under a Christian government. Can nothing be done to put a stop to them?'
'Government have made a commencement which, I trust, they will be able to finish. Authority is used to prevent victims being led to the pile by force, or immolated under age. Nothing short of public power can avail to stop a practise which, though more peculiarly belonging to Bengal, is nevertheless, found in Hindostan . . . It is a dangerous thing to interfere with native religious prejudice . . . '"[1]

He is not surprised that his explanation is greeted with some scepticism - like those at "home" (which is where the guests come from) his listeners are not convinced. The reasons for the continued tolerance require more detailed explanation and Russell rises to the occasion:

" '. . . I trust with you, Miss Percy, that the Government will no longer be obliged to suffer these abominations. Our power is firm enough now, to warrant our putting a stop to it, without risk of commotion or bloodshed. You will observe, Miss Percy, that the reason why it has been tolerated so long, is simply that we dared not run the risk of positive prohibition . . .'" [2]

To underline that this is the opinion of a large number of Anglo-Indians, the novel has a brief heroic anecdote where Mr. Russell saves a widow from the pyre:

"'When I was a young man I had nearly paid with my life for my enthusiasm.

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[1] *Life in India, or, the English at Calcutta*; I, p. 154 - 155.
[2] *Life in India, or, the English at Calcutta*; I, pgs 157 - 158.

Riding out one morning on the banks of the Ganges, near Benares, I saw a crowd like we met this morning . . . and anxious to know the cause, gave my horse to the sice, and mixed amongst them. They led the way to an immense pile, so carefully built up that I knew it must be for a person of rank, or at least of fortune. At the foot of the pile I saw a beautiful young creature . . . My frame trembled with indignation, as I saw the effects they made to induce her to mount, and when she drew back with an involuntary shudder, closing her eyes that she might for an instant shut out the horrid object before her, my feelings overcame all sense of personal danger, and I started forward with the celerity of lightning, and laid my hand upon her arm. My touch was pollution. I knew I had saved her, and instantly recollecting to what I had enforced myself, sprang to my horse, and rode for life . . . Nothing else preserved me from the rage of an infuriated multitude, baulked of their prey . . . '"[1]

This last episode is more in line with the tale of Starke, though the author is, clearly, far more familiar with India than the angry creator of Indamora. He is aware that to the high-caste Hindu nothing could be more abhorrent than the touch of a person outside his/her own caste.

The arguments for and against the practice were to rage for a while but not for long. Sati had already been outlawed in certain areas - though with a notable lack of success. It would soon, under the combined attack of the Christians and the Hindu reformers, be completely banned. But it had had its effect - it would remain a shining example for all to see of the primitiveness of Indian society and of the necessity of reforming it, preferably through the offices of an enlightened religion like Christianity. In spite of the growing intellectual respect for Hinduism, it was, in the eyes of a large number of Britons, a fatally flawed and barbaric creed. Even the writings and testimony of writers like Jones and Heber had proved ineffective against the

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[1] *Life in India, or, the English at Calcutta*;, I, pp. 154 - 156.

weight of evidence such as sati.

THUGS

The thugs hold a unique position in Anglo-Indian lore, achieving fame only matched by Tipu Sultan and sati. The name of Tipu is now a distant memory in English, sati is a faintly known custom but "thug" has entered the language, albeit with a different meaning. According to the Oxford English Dictionary, they take their name from the Hindi word "*Tug* ", which it defines as meaning to deceive - hence the name of the cult of deceivers. However, things are not as they seem. *A Practical Hindi English Dictionary* defines the two closest words thus:

"*Dhoka* : deception, guile, subterfuge
Thug : a cheat, an impostor
v. cheating, dupery"[1]

It appears from these two definitions that the word applied to the sect means "cheats" rather than the accepted "deceivers". The English, demonising India and Indians in the 1830's, choose to define the group using the second word but deriving a meaning from the first. In fact, the word *Thugatha*, which is the adjectival form from Thug, is defined as meaning merely "nonplussed". This is the beginning of the series of inconsistencies and romancing that riddle the story of Sleeman and his policing of India.

Thuggee was "identified" at a time when the English perception of India was coloured by a conviction that India, its society, religion and customs were primitive. Sati had been represented as a form of human sacrifice and Sleeman's claim that India was infested by yet another variation of it conformed with the accepted view that a people under the control of a religion such as Hinduism were capable of the most inhuman behaviour. Sati combined human sacrifice with unchivalrous behaviour

[1]Chaturvedi & Tiwari: *A Practical Hindi English Dictionary*, Delhi, 1975.

towards women, and the new evil, Thuggee, now combined the sacrifice with violence against property, with terror against unsuspecting victims. Significantly, the thugs were portrayed preying upon (small) traders - in the context of the English presence in India, where success at trade was a matter of pride for the English (even if the traders themselves were not), the secondary implication is that the religion that sanctioned the activities of the "Deceivers" encouraged not only the taking of life and property but was also opposed to trade itself.

Thugs were virtually unknown until the 1820s. When they burst onto the scene, it was claimed that so powerful were the forces of superstition that they had managed to keep their existence from both British and Indian administrators for centuries. The thugs, the readers were informed, had first appeared to be commonplace bandits who preyed on travellers (not unlike their oft romanticised English counterparts, Robin Hood, Dick Turpin etc.) and therefore an ordinary law and order problem: "the existence of large bodies of men having no other means of subsistence than those afforded by plunder, is, in all countries, too common to excite surprise . . . "[1]. However, a zealous officer, Captain Sleeman, produced evidence that the practice was far more dangerous than had been presumed - thugs were a secret religious society who *always* killed their victims. His revelations were shocking:

". . . it is remarkable, that, after an intercourse with India of nearly two centuries, and the exercise of sovereignty over a large part of the country for no inconsiderable period, the English should have been ignorant of the existence and habits of a body so dangerous to the public peace. This, however, seems to have been the case . . . ."[2].

Sleeman suggested that the failure of previous administrations to recognise

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[1] Thornton, Sir Edward: *Illustrations of the History and Practices of the Thugs*, London, 1837; p. 1.
[2] *Illustrations of the History and Practices of the Thugs*, p. 2.

it was a result of Europeans being so far morally advanced that they had been (Christianly) unable to even conceive of the existence of a sect where murder was a hereditary occupation, sanctioned by a deity (the goddess Kali) and tolerated by all sections of "native" society:

"'It appears strange that . . . no measures for the suppression of Thuggee were adopted . . . One would suppose that they were then considered too monstrous for belief, and were discredited or unnoticed; but it is certain that from that time [1816, when a report by a Dr. Sherwood was published] up to 1830, in almost every part of India . . . large gangs of Thugs were apprehended by Major Borthwick and Captains Wardlow and Henley. Many were tried and executed for the murder of travellers, but without exciting more than a passing share of public attention. No blow was ever aimed at the *system*, if indeed its complete and extensive organisation was ever suspected, or, if suspected, believed."[1]

Sleeman claimed that travellers had lived in fear of the thugs for centuries but neither they nor their rulers had made any attempt to protect them from thug depredations because of the religious factor. Thugs, according to the chroniclers, lived a large portion of their lives as ordinary folk, under the protection of local landlords. Nothing remotely resembling Thuggee had ever been encountered before, they reported, but as soon as it came to light investigations were initiated:

"The associations of murderers known by the name of Thugs present . . . so many remarkable points of character and manners, that curiosity may reasonably be excited to inquire into the history, and ascertain the feelings, opinions, and motives of persons differing, in many respects, so widely even

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[1] Meadows Taylor, Philip: *Confessions of a Thug*, (orig. publ. 1839) Oxford, 1916; p. 4.

from all other followers of their own horrible occupation."[1]

The investigations revealed the need for a struggle against the evil worthy of the followers of Christ, the successors of the civilised Roman empire. The English reading public was informed that once investigations proved the existence of the sect, the benevolent administration appointed an energetic officer, Captain Sleeman, to tackle it. His response was enthusiastic and his success spectacular. Thuggee was so patently evil there could be no disagreeing with the need for such public suppression. Since it was represented as adversely affecting all Indians equally there could be no question of anyone, even Orientalist apologists, claiming that it was an integral part of Hindu tradition. The swift response to it was represented as the action of a strong-willed administration that was fully aware of the situation in its territories. Many questions that could have been asked were not answered, or even asked, because of the closed nature of the revelation and response. It was identified, documented and eradicated largely by one man, Sleeman, all in the space of twenty years. No-one, least of all a scholar, had any real opportunity to investigate the cult. The audience did not notice this - it was a fiction that served all the interests of English power in India: trade, the conflict between the true god and false ones, the strength of English arms and, above all, it was convincing proof of the complete moral superiority of the European over the Asian.

According to the accounts of its suppression, all based on Sleeman's own, Thuggee was a traditional Indian evil. Philip Meadows Taylor's description of the origins of Thuggee and its discovery by the English was typical of the popularly accepted version:

"The origin of Thuggee is entirely lost in fable and obscurity. Colonel Sleeman conjectures that it owed its existence to the vagrant tribes of

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[1] *Illustrations of the History and Practices of the Thugs*, p. 1.

Mahomedans which continued to plunder the country long after the invasion of India by the Moguls and Tartars. The Hindoos claim for it divine origin in their goddess Bhowanee*; and certainly the fact that both Mahomedans and Hindoos believe in her power, and observe Hindee [sic] ceremonies, would go far to prove that the practice of Thuggee was of Hindoo origin. Though very remote traditions of it exist, there are no records of its having been discovered in any of the histories of India until the reign of Akbar . . . In that year [1816] however, and for some years previously, Thuggee seemed to have reached a fearful height of audacity, and the government could no longer remain indifferent to an evil of such enormous and increasing magnitude. The attention of several distinguished civil officers . . . had become attracted with great interest to the subject. Some of the Thugs who had been seized were allowed life on the condition of denouncing their associates, and among others Feringhea, a leader of great notoriety."[1]

That capture was the work of, not surprisingly, Captain Sleeman, who was "the political agent in the provinces bordering upon the Nerbudda river"[2]. Sleeman was portrayed as a reasonable officer, as sceptical as any other rational human being, who was convinced by the production of concrete evidence:

"The appalling disclosures of this man, so utterly unexpected by Captain (now Colonel) Sleeman were almost discredited by that able officer; but by the exhumation in the very grove where he happened to be encamped of no less than thirteen bodies in various states of decay, - and the offer being made to him of opening other graves in and near the same spot, - the approver's tale was too surely confirmed; his information was acted upon,

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* Another name for Kali - after whom Calcutta (Kalikata) is named.

[1] *Confessions of a Thug*, pp. 3 - 5.

[2] *Confessions of a Thug*, p. 5.

and large gangs . . . were apprehended and brought to trial."[1]

He implied that scepticism was a natural reaction, but not a justifiable one - after all, had not this worthy officer, Captain Sleeman, who had since been promoted to the rank of Colonel (further proof of his reliability, should that be required), been a sceptic once himself, only to be converted by the production of irrefutable evidence? All arguments that the practice was ordinary highway-robbery were negated.

Meadows Taylor was one of the main mythologists in the campaign against Thuggee. Sleeman produced the fiction, Meadows Taylor made it legend. His account took the readers from its discovery through to Sleeman's campaign for its effective control and suppression:

"From this period, the system for the suppression of Thuggee may be said to have commenced in earnest; from almost every gang one or more informers were admitted; when they found that their only chance of life lay in giving correct information . . . In this manner Thuggee was found to be in active practice all over India. The knowledge of its existence was at first confined to the central provinces, but . . . the circle gradually widened till it spread over the whole continent - from the foot of the Himalayas to Cape Comorin, from Cutch to Assam, there was hardly a province in the whole of India where Thuggee had not been practised . . . Few who were in India at that period (1831 - 32) will ever forget the excitement which the discovery occasioned in every part of the country: it was utterly discredited by the magistrates of many districts, who could not believe that this silently destructive system could have worked without their knowledge."[2]

There are other accounts which cover the history of the suppression -

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[1] *Confessions of a Thug*, p. 5.
[2] *Confessions of a Thug*, pp. 5 - 6.

Sleeman's grandson, James Sleeman refers, amongst others, to James Hutton's 1857 *A Popular Account of the Thug and Dacoit.* The story Hutton told is no different from Meadows Taylor's - the task was formidable but the local officials, acting under the overall control of Sleeman, were spectacularly successful:

"It was not until 1829 - 30 that the task of suppression was fairly commenced. The honour of the initiative was reserved for Lord William Bentinck, who passed certain Acts rendering Thuggee the object of a special judicature, and giving a wider discretion to the officers employed in its suppression . . . by the year 1840 the committals amounted to 3,689 . . . In the course of the next seven years, 531 more Thugs were apprehended and committed for trial . . . In 1848 also there were 120 committed . . . Since that year Thuggee appears to have quite died out. In 1853, indeed, some cases occurred in the Punjab, but vigorous measures being at once adopted, under the superintendence of Captain Sleeman [nephew of W. H. Sleeman] . . . its final suppression was almost coincident with its revival."[1]

One of the main reasons for the thugs managing to maintain such a low profile, claimed the chroniclers, was their ability to blend into society:

"[An] Officer employed to superintend them [Thugs awaiting trial] was surprised to recognise a noted Thug in the person of one of the most respectable linen-drapers of Hingolee. This person was so correct in his dealings, and so amiable in his deportment, that he had won the esteem of all the Gentlemen at the station, who used to assist him in procuring passports for his goods, in their way to Bombay; yet he was carrying on his trade of murder up to the day of his arrest, being convicted with the gangs on

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[1] Hutton, James: *A Popular Account of the Thug and Dacoit*, 1857 quoted in Sleeman, James: *Thug or a million murders*, London (n. d.), pp. 238 - 239.

all the roads around, and close to the cantonments . . . This fact may serve to shew how erroneous are the impressions of native character frequently received by European residents in India."[1]

No blame fell on the English for failing to recognise the servants of Bhowanee - the thugs were men of extraordinary cunning. Thornton recorded a Thug's description of how he succeeded in masquerading as a cloth merchant while pursuing a lucrative career as a hereditary psychopathic killer:

"'A year and a half before I was arrested at the Hingolee, in June 1832, I set up shop in the bazaar of the Golundazes, in the Hingolee Cantonments. I used before to bring cloths from Berar to the Cantonments for sale; and became intimately acquainted with Maha Singh, Subahdar of the Golundazes. I told him that I should like to set up a shop in his bazaar; and he advised me to do so, and got the Cutwal to assign me a place. I set up a linen-draper's shop; and I went several times, with the other shopkeepers, to Bombay, to purchase a stock of broad-cloths and other articles. The people of the cantonments knew that I used to deal to the extent of several hundred rupees."[2]

The vigilance of the English administrators was his downfall. When they recognised the existence of Thuggee, their reaction was as rapid as it was effective and not even the most cunning of thugs could escape the net, though they tried their best:

"When I resided at Omrowtee about seven years ago, I used to come to Hingolee and lodge in the house of Ram Singh, Thug, who has since been

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[1] *Illustrations of the History and Practices of the Thugs*, pp. 468 - 469.
[2] *Illustrations of the History and Practices of the Thugs*, p. 469.

seized and sent to Jubulpore. Sometimes I came with the gangs on Thuggee; and sometimes as a merchant, with cloths for sale. When I came with cloths, I used to stay for fifteen or twenty days at a time in the Moghul Sowar Lines, and other places. After the release of Hurnagur and his gang from Hingolee, after the Girgow murders, I, with Makhun, the two Nasirs, Chotee approver, and others, killed three Manwaries [Marwaris]: and after this, Imaum and Chotee got seized at Saugor; and this was reported to me by Kureem Khan and others, who came to Omrowtee from the Nurbudda valley; and I thought I might be pointed out and arrested. This was my reason for leaving Omrowtee for Hingolee . . . [where] I was arrested."[1]

A truly wily thug, he refused to reveal his place of residence to fellow Thugs, but the efficient English found him out, in spite of all his attempts at concealment and reform:

"When I was arrested, I had determined to leave off Thuggee, and intended to go and reside at Bombay. I used to go out occasionally on Thuggee after I settled at Hingolee; and when the gangs of Thugs encamped on the tank or lodged in the Dhurumsalah, I used to converse with them; but I never let them know where I resided."[2]

The English were depicted as unstoppable, their moral superiority delivering even the most cunning offenders into their hands, ridding the sub-continent of an hitherto successful inhuman practice:

"Ismael, Thug, who is now an approver, used to reside in the bazaar of the 5th Regiment, and he served Captain Scott as a Gareewan. Mohna, alias Ruhman, used also to reside here sometimes. Bahleen also used to live and

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[1] *Illustrations of the History and Practices of the Thugs*, p. 470.
[2] *Illustrations of the History and Practices of the Thugs*, p. 470.

work in the bazaar but they used all three to go on the roads, as many travellers used to pass, and no one sought after Thugs. Any skilful party might have had three or four *affairs* every night, without anyone being the wiser for it. People knew not what Thuggee was, nor what kind of people Thugs were. Travellers were frequently reported to have been murdered by robbers; but people thought the robbers must be in the jungles, and never dreamed that they were murdered by the men they saw every day about them. I never invited a Thug to my house, nor did I ever expose any of the articles obtained in Thuggee for sale. I was much respected by the people of the town and cantonments, and never suspected till arrested."[1]

From the evidence available, it appears that the Thug referred to was Hari Singh, who had for a time deceived Meadows Taylor, who described him, in his own book, as "a respectable merchant of the place, one with whom I myself, in common with many others, have had dealings."[2] The officer who issued him with the pass was "the officer in civil charge of the district, Captain Reynolds"[3].

The writings emphasised that the inaction of administrators prior to Sleeman's report were either because they, morally upright men all, were unable to believe that other human beings could be so debased or because the veil of secrecy that shrouded it prevented their realising its true extent. After it had been formally "recognised", all manner of reports were produced to prove that its existence had been known for many years. Thornton used an 1809 report as proof of English vigilance:

"The Records of Trials before the Courts must have given to the Foujdarry Adawlut information respecting those extraordinary associations of persons called Phansigars [literally "stranglers"] (so called from the manner in which

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[1] *Illustrations of the History and Practices of the Thugs*, p. 471.
[2] *Confessions of a Thug*, pp. 6 - 7.
[3] *Confessions of a Thug*, p. 7.

they put their victims to death), who take extensive journeys, under the disguise of travellers, for the purpose of committing murders and robberies. These associations . . . were formerly extremely numerous . . . [and] received encouragement and protection from petty Polygars . . . The extension of the Company's Government, and the attention paid to the police of the country, has checked, in a considerable degree, this inhuman practice. There are now seldom so many persons in a gang as formerly. The plans of the Phansigars are now less systematic . . . but they are still numerous, and a great number of murders are committed by them, every year, in the Company's territory . . . I am particularly impressed with the necessity of some extraordinary means being adopted to suppress these associations, and to bring to justice the members of them: but on so important a subject it is with great diffidence I submit my sentiments to the Court . . ."[1]

Thornton suggests that that particular official's request for a hearing and action fell on deaf ears not because the English were blind to the problem but because all the inhabitants of the country were systematically deceiving them. Within three years the Magistrate of Chittor wrote to the secretary to the Government in the Judicial Department to assure him that the matter was well under control, obviously believing it himself:

"With respect to the crime of murder by Phansigars, it is not possible for any magistrate to say how much it prevails in his zillah, in consequence of the precautions taken by these people of burying the bodies of the murdered . . . [but] at present, I say with some degree of confidence, that there are now living in the zillah very few, if any, Phansigars, who have lately committed offences . . . it is not possible to conjecture, with any degree of accuracy, what number of persons have fallen victims, in the Company's territories . . . that, for the last four or five years (to 1811), they have amounted to several

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[1] *Illustrations of the History and Practices of the Thugs*, pp. 271 - 273.

hundred each year, I have no doubt; but it is certain that, formerly, a much greater number of persons were annually killed by Phansigars . . ."[1]

The accounts claim that the lack of knowledge was due to the fantastic plot by almost all sections of native society to deceive the English officials. No less a person than the hero of the story, Sleeman, was, for many years, kept unaware of the prevalence of the practice even though it existed practically under his own nose:

"While I was in civil charge of the district of Nursingpoor, in the valley of the Nerbudda, in the years 1822, 1823, and 1824, no ordinary robbery or theft could be committed without my becoming acquainted with it, nor was there a robber or thief of the ordinary kind in the district, with whose character I had not become acquainted in the discharge of my duty as a magistrate; and if any man had then told me that a gang of assassins by profession resided in the village of Kundélee, not four hundred yards from my court, and that the extensive groves . . . was one of the greatest bhils, or places of murder, in all India; that large gangs from Hindostan [North India] and the Dukhun [Deccan] used to rendezvous in those groves, remain in them for days together every year, and carry on their dreadful trade . . . with the knowledge and connivance of the two landholders . . . I should have thought him a fool or a madman; and yet nothing could have been more true: the bodies of *a hundred travellers* lie buried in and among the groves of Mundésur, and a gang of assassins lived in and about the village of Kundélee, while I was magistrate of the district . . ."[2]

Thugs, according to the writings, existed right across India, operating under the protection of local rulers - "polygars". In many parts of the sub-

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[1] *Illustrations of the History and Practices of the Thugs*, pp. 274 - 276.
[2] Col W. H. Sleeman, quoted in *Confessions of a Thug*, p. 6.

continent outside English control, the situation was worse than in Company territories. Under corrupt local rulers no concealment was necessary:

"While they lived under the protection of Polygars and other petty local authorities, and among people whose habits were in some respects analogous to their own, it was unnecessary to conceal that they subsisted by depredation . . ."[1]

The depiction of a callous acceptance of murderers was intended to shock, as was the claim that they were closely integrated into society. The Indian attitude toward the practice was, it was claimed, the result of connivance and moral degeneracy:

"They [the Thugs] and their families lived peaceably with their neighbours whom they never attempted to molest. Between them there subsisted a reciprocation of interest, in the purchase and disposal of the plunder which the Thugs brought with them, on returning from their expeditions."[2]

The explanation brought Thornton to the conclusion that "Conscience in the East is neither very delicate nor very enlightened; and if any scruples arose, the countervailing profit would more than balance them."[3] Of course, it could have been argued that acceptance of the amorality of one's neighbour's activities away from home was a time-honoured tradition in all parts of the globe that continues unabated. What Thornton intended to produce in his audience was a sense of culturally defined moral outrage, outrage that would seem perfectly comprehensible and laudable, and could be turned to the purpose of justifying English rule in the subcontinent.

Thuggee so convinced the propagators of the fiction that it began to

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[1] *Illustrations of the History and Practices of the Thugs*, p. 4.
[2] *Illustrations of the History and Practices of the Thugs*, p. 4.
[3] *Illustrations of the History and Practices of the Thugs*, pp. 4 - 5.

be recorded everywhere. River pirates became thugs, part of the huge Hindu conspiracy to encourage human sacrifice and robbery:

"The practice of Thuggee is not confined to adventurers upon land. The rivers of India are infested by bands of fresh-water pirates, having similar habits to those of the land Thugs, holding the same feeling, and differing only from them in a few trifling particulars. These ruffians go in considerable parties, and have generally several boats at the ghât at the same time. Their murders are always perpetrated in the day-time. Those who do the work of the boatmen are dressed like other boatmen; but those who are to take part in the operations are dressed like travellers of great respectability; and there are no boats on the river kept so clean and inviting for travellers. When going up the river, they always pretend to be men of some consideration, going on some pilgrimage to some sacred place, as Benares, Allahabad, &c. When going down, they pretend to be returning home from such places. They send out their Sothas, or inveiglers, well dressed, upon the high roads; who pretend to be going by water to the same places as the travellers they fall in with. On coming to the ghât, they see these nice-looking boats, with the respectably-dressed Thugs amusing themselves. They ask the Manjee (captain) of the boat to take them and the travellers on board, as he can afford to do so cheaper than others, having, apparently, his boat already engaged by others. He pretends to be pushed for room; and the Thugs pretend to be unwilling to have any more passengers on board. At last he yields to the earnest requests of the inveiglers, and the travellers are taken up. They go off into the middle of the river; those above singing and playing, and making a great noise; while the travellers are murdered inside, at the signal, given by three taps, that all is clear, and their bodies thrown into the river. The boat then goes on to some other ghât, having landed the inveiglers again upon the road."[1]

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[1] *Illustrations of the History and Practices of the Thugs*, pp. 31 - 32.

Descriptions of their activities and customs, being based solely on the accounts of Sleeman and his fellow-suppressors, projected a picture of a broad-based movement, involving the whole of Indian society. The activities of the thugs demonstrated that Indian society was morally inferior to that of the English. Consider the following passage from Thornton:

"They assume the appearance of ordinary inoffensive travellers . . . Thugs are accustomed to wait at choultries, on the high roads, or near towns where travellers rest. They arrive at such places, and enter towns and villages, in straggling parties of three or four persons, appearing to meet by accident, and to have no previous acquaintance . . . they are often accompanied by children of ten years of age and upwards; who, while they perform menial offices, are gradually initiated into the horrid practices of Thuggee, and contribute to prevent suspicion of their real character. Skilled in the arts of deception, they enter into conversation, and insinuate themselves by obsequious attentions into the confidence of travellers of all descriptions, to learn from whence they came, whither and for what purpose they are journeying, and of what property they are possessed. When, after obtaining such information as they deem requisite, the Thugs determine to attack a traveller, they usually propose to him, under the specious plea of mutual safety, or for the sake of society, to travel together; or else they follow him at a little distance, and, when a fit opportunity appears for effecting their purpose, one of the gang suddenly throws a rope or sash round the neck of the unfortunate victim, while the rest contribute, in various ways, to aid the murderous work."[1]

Writers expressed horror and outrage by depicting such "morally reprehensible" actions as the use of children in religious crime. The Thug

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[1] *Illustrations of the History and Practices of the Thugs*, pp. 5 - 7.

was thus prevented from being a Robin Hood, fighting for the oppressed. Being morally bankrupt, thugs were cowards, their cunning was the low cunning of animals, not the cleverness of a fighting man:

"Intrepidity does not appear to be the characteristic of the Thugs; and, in truth, it is a quality not to be looked for in assassins by profession. A superiority in physical force is generally regarded as an indispensable preliminary to success. Two Thugs, at the least, are thought necessary for the murder of one man; and more commonly three are engaged. Some Thugs pride themselves upon being able to strangle a man single handed; and this is esteemed a most honourable distinction. To ascribe to a Thug this power, is the highest compliment that can be paid him. A single Thug who has succeeded in pulling a man from his horse, and strangling him, conferred a distinction upon his family which ennobled it in the eyes of their fellows for many generations . . . but the majority of the Thugs are, and ever have been, firm adherents of the maxim, that "discretion is the better part of valour" . . . The best precautions are taken to guard against discovery or surprise. Before the perpetration of the murder, some of the gang are sent in advance, and some are left in rear of the place, to keep watch, to prevent intrusion, and give warning, if occasion requires, to those engaged in the act . . . such are the perseverance and caution of the Thugs, that, in the absence of a convenient opportunity, they have been known to travel in company with persons whom they have devoted to destruction, for several days before they executed their intention."[1]

All the depictions are not consistent with this "cowardly" projection. A grudging respect was admitted - after all, they were opponents whom the English were overcoming, and the English did not engage on such a scale with petty criminals. Thugs, the same accounts claimed, picked all manner of

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[1] *Illustrations of the History and Practices of the Thugs*, pp. 7 -9.

targets, showing considerable ingenuity when it came to disarming potentially dangerous victims, who were usually the servants of Indian potentates (the English did not themselves suffer such indignities). Sleeman recounts an occasion when a gang robbed an official of the Marathas:

"We had occasion to examine a very respectable gentleman at Damoh upon the case, Gobind Das, a revenue officer under the former Government [the Marathas] . . . he well remembered another which took place on the road to Jubbulpore [Jabalpur]. Seventeen treasure-bearers lodged in the grove near that town on their way from Jubbulpore to Sagar. At night they were set upon by a large gang of Thugs, and sixteen of them strangled; but the seventeenth laid hold of the noose before it could be brought to bear upon his throat, pulled down the villain who held it, and made his way good to the town. The Raja, Dharak Singh, went to the spot with all the followers he could collect; but found there nothing but the sixteen naked bodies lying in the grove, with their eyes apparently staring out of their sockets. The Thugs had all gone off with the treasure and their clothes, and the Raja searched for them in vain."[1]

The thugs, he implies, were confident that they could disappear because they were not attacking the English. Of course, if the robbers had really been afraid of the English, they would have been equally wary of risking an attack on a group of travellers whose protectors, the Marathas, were equally renowned for their power and ferocity, unless they were unaware of their victims' identities - which they could not have been, if the same writer's insistence that they always took great pains to win their victims' confidence before robbing them is true.

Another Sleeman case also pretends to attest to their cunning and perseverance when facing Indian power:

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[1] Sleeman, William Henry: *Rambles and Recollections of an Indian Official*, Oxford, 1915 (orig. publ. 1844); p. 79.

"A stout Mogul officer of noble bearing and singularly handsome countenance . . . fell in with a small party of well-dressed and modest-looking men going the same road. They accosted him in a respectful manner, and attempted to enter into conversation with him. He had heard of Thugs, and told them to be off. They smiled at his idle suspicions, and tried to remove them, but in vain. The Mogul was determined; they saw his nostrils swelling with indignation, took their leave, and followed slowly. The next morning he overtook the same number of men, but of a different appearance, all Musalmans. They accosted him in the same respectful manner; talked of the danger on the road, and the necessity of their keeping together, and taking advantage of the protection of any mounted gentleman that happened to be going the same way. The Mogul officer said not a word in reply, resolved to have no companions on the road. They persisted - his nostrils began again to swell, and putting his hand to his sword, he bid them all be off, or he would have their heads from their shoulders. he had a bow and quiver full of arrows over his shoulders, a brace of loaded pistols in his waist-belt, and a sword by his side, and was altogether a very formidable-looking cavalier. In the evening another party that lodged in the same "sarai" became very intimate with the butler and groom. They were going the same road; and, as the Mogul overtook them in the morning, they made their bows respectfully, and began to enter into conversation with their two friends, the groom and butler, who were coming up behind. The Mogul's nostrils began again to swell, and he bid the strangers be off. The groom and butler interceded, for their master was a grave, sedate man, and they wanted companions. All would not do, and the strangers fell in the rear. The next day, when they had got to the middle of an extensive and uninhabited plain, the Mogul in advance, and his two servants a few hundred yards behind, he came up to a party of six poor Musalmans, sitting weeping by the side of a dead companion. They were soldiers from Lahore, on their way to Lucknow, worn down by fatigue in their

anxiety to see their wives and children once more, after a long and painful service. Their companion, the hope and prop of his family, had sunk under the fatigue, and they had made a grave for him; but they were poor unlettered men, and unable to repeat the funeral service from the holy Koran - would his Highness but perform this last office for them, he would, no doubt, find his reward in this world and the next. The Mogul dismounted - the body had been placed in its proper position, with its head towards Mecca. A carpet was spread - the Mogul took off his bow and quiver, then his pistols and sword, and placed them on the ground near the body . . . He then knelt down and began to repeat the funeral service, in a clear, loud voice. Two of the poor soldiers knelt by him, one on each side in silence. The other four went off a few paces to beg that the butler and groom would not come so near as to interrupt the good Samaritan . . . All being ready, one of the four, in a low undertone, gave the "jhirni" (signal), the handkerchiefs were thrown over their necks, and in a few minutes all three - the Mogul and his servants were dead"[1]

Since they were opponents being fought, none of the English accounts condemn the *individuals* who were Thugs, displaying instead a sort of respect for them, while using strong language to condemn the religion that was seen to be sanctioning their activities, Hinduism:

"The fact of the existence of the cold-blooded miscreants who in India make a trade of assassination, is sufficiently horrible: but when it is added, that their occupation is sanctified by the national religion - that the Thugs regard themselves as engaged in the especial services of one of the dark divinities of the Hindoo creed - that the instruments of murder are in their eyes holy - and that their faith in the protection of their goddess, and the perpetuity of their craft, is not to be shaken - we must be struck by the reflection, that we

[1] *Rambles and Recollections of an Indian Official*, pp. 80 -82.

have opened a page in the history of man, fearful and humiliating beyond the ordinary records of iniquity."[1]

The reading public were left in no doubt that it is the religion that was at fault - it even provided them with their own deity:

"The genius of Paganism, which has deified every vice, and thus provided a justification of the indulgence of every evil propensity, has furnished the Thugs with a patron goddess, worthy of those whom she is believed to protect. Of Kalee, the deity of destruction, they are the most devout and assiduous worshippers: in her name they practise their execrable art; and their victims are held to be immolated in her honour."[2]

The themes of cowardice, immorality, and debased religion were returned to time and time again, constantly reminding the audience that the accounts were proof of India's inferiority, and of the necessity of introducing the English moral code (and, by extension, Christian faith):

"The dignity and sanctity with which murder is invested by the creed of Thugs - and a mode of murder, too marked by cowardice and meanness no less than the blackest atrocity - afford lamentable proof of the inseparable connexion subsisting between the corruption of religion and the corruption of morals . . . The wayward desires of man lead him to indulge in that which true religion forbids: he therefore seeks shelter in a false one. Again, superstition sanctions, and even commands, practices, against which pure morality revolts: hence the moral judgement is depraved, the restraints of conscience abolished, and that feeling, which should conduct men to all that is good and pure and excellent, becomes the pilot to every vice, and the

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[1] *Illustrations of the History and Practices of the Thugs*, p. 44.
[2] *Illustrations of the History and Practices of the Thugs*, p. 44.

prompter of the most horrible crimes."[1]

The English writers took the fiction of the cult of Thuggee to its limits. It was the final proof that India needed English rule. One way of proving this was to include all Indians in the practice of Thuggee - so Sleeman and his fellow-writers produced Muslim thugs. In India the two religions, Hinduism and Islam have had a long history of inter-mingling (witness the Sufi saints, the Pirs, the mystics Kabir and Chisti, and the reverence with which they are regarded by Hindus), and this is turned to be used against Indians in general. Under the influence of Hinduism, adherents of a monotheistic religion, Islam, were corrupted and accepted the spiritual guidance of an idol. This was further proof that Hindus were capable of the most sophisticated of deceit:

"The superstitions of the Thugs are all of Hindoo origin: yet the Mahometans adopt them with a belief that is equally implicit, and a devotion equally ardent. The greater number of Thugs in the South of India are said to be Mahometans: not only do they profess to embrace the creed of Mecca, but, to a considerable extent, they follow it consistently. They marry, inherit, eat, and drink, according to the Koran: their devotions are statedly performed as the rule of Mahometan orthodoxy prescribes; and the Paradise to which their hopes are directed, is that portrayed by the cold, unspiritual, and sensual* imagination of the false prophet to whom they profess allegiance: yet they pay divine honours to the impersonation of Destruction, which, in the eyes of all sound Mohametans, must be idolatry - a crime severely denounced in the Koran, and held by all good Mussulmans in abhorrence. These inconsistencies they find it hard to reconcile: sometimes they deny the worship of the goddess - the fact, however, is indisputable. At other times

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[1] *Illustrations of the History and Practices of the Thugs*, pp. 65 - 66.

* Even from an anti-Muslim, this definition of the prophet Mohammed as "sensual" is amazing

they seek to identify the patroness of the Thugs with the heroine of their own creed, to the great scandal of their own brethren not initiated in the mysteries of Thuggee."[1]

The degenerative effect of Hinduism was underlined by references to the common ancestry of Christianity and Islam and to the fate of those in the Old Testament who succumbed to idolatry:

"The conjoint adoration of the deities of different and discordant creeds is neither new nor uncommon in the East. In the Old Testament, various instances are recorded, in which nations, as well as individuals, paid a divided homage to the True God and to a multiplicity of idols: and in various parts of India, the Mahometans, from having long been surrounded by a Hindoo population, have been led to adopt many of their opinions and practices."[2]

Thornton warned against the phenomenon of cultural cross-pollination, proposing that such co-mingling could only result in the degeneracy that he could be seen in India:

"The principle, indeed, upon which this approximation is formed, is not peculiar to the East. Everywhere, time not only abates the fervour both of religious and sectarian zeal, but causes many of the distinctive marks of original difference to disappear, and tinges the entire mass with the colour of the party which, either from numbers or activity, acquires an ascendant."[3]

Meadows Taylor's book, which is a portrait of a Muslim Thug, Ameer Ali, presented the contradiction between Islam and Thuggee and the thug's

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[1] *Illustrations of the History and Practices of the Thugs*, pp. 70 -71.
[2] *Illustrations of the History and Practices of the Thugs*, p. 73.
[3] *Illustrations of the History and Practices of the Thugs*, p. 73.

explanation of his heresy. It was a veiled hint that surrounding immorality could affect even a "partially correct" religion like Islam. Safety could only be achieved in the refuge of the Christian faith. When being initiated into the cult, Ameer Ali was racked with doubt but his faith did not give him sufficient moral strength to resist the seductions of evil:

". . . being a Moosulman, I could not then see why such respect was paid to the festival of the Dussera [the chosen time for his formal initiation into the fraternity], or indeed why it was kept at all; and I applied to my father for a solution of my doubts on the subject.

'It is necessary to your fully understanding this,' said he, 'that I should give you an outline of our belief in the divine origin of our profession, which is intimately connected with the faith of the Hindoos, and by whom we Moosulmans have been instructed in the art of Thuggee.

'This is wonderful,' said I; 'how do you reconcile any connexion between the faith of unbelievers and that of the blessed Prophet?'

'I cannot pretend to solve the difficulty,' said my father; 'but as their religion is far more ancient than ours, and no doubt had a divine origin, there are many points in it which one of the true faith may follow without offence, so that he does not join them in all their forms and professions. Indeed this is impossible, as no one can become a Hindoo; but as I told you before, Thuggee is one of the means by which Alla works out his own ends; and as the profession of it has been handed down to us from ages, and as it becomes the fate of those who are called to it to follow it, there is no possibility of avoiding the profession, though one desired it; and, as a direct consequence, no sin in associating with Hindoos in the practice of it, from whom it has had its origin. Do you understand me?'

'Perfectly,' said I; 'it was not to question its propriety that I asked the question, but only to know how it was, that Hindoo festivals were acknowledged and kept by us Moosulmans.'

'The Dussera is the only one,' said my father, 'which is observed; and the reason of this is, that it is the fittest time of the year to commence our enterprises, and has been invariably kept sacred by all Hindoo Thugs. But I must tell you of the origin of Thuggee, that you may judge for yourself how ancient it is . . . [here follows a description of the legend of the origin of the Thugs] . . . her protection has never been withdrawn. It is true, the remains of those who fall by our hands are sometimes discovered, and instances have been known of that discovery having led to the apprehension of Thugs - at least so I have heard; but during my lifetime I have never known of one, and it is my firm belief that such instances have been permitted on purpose to punish those who have in some way offended our protectress, by neglecting her sacrifices and omens . . . We follow the blessed precepts of our Prophet; we say our Namaz five times a day; we observe all the rules of our faith; we worship no idols; and if what we have done for ages, ever since the invasion by our forefathers of India, was displeasing to the apostle, surely we should have had, long ere this, some manifestation of his displeasure. Our plans would have been frustrated, our exertions rendered of no avail; we should have dragged on a miserable existence, and long ere this should have abandoned Thuggee and our connexion with its Hindoo professors.'"[1]

The campaign for the suppression of Thuggee presented a unique problem: there was little evidence against the alleged thugs that would stand up in a regular court. This problem was glossed over, special courts were set up and thousands of men condemned on the basis of the oral evidence of "approvers". Morally confident, the chroniclers remained unconscious of any parallel with the Inquisition or a witch-hunt, and described the "novel" means used to overcome the difficulties facing "justice" with pride:

"Thug approvers, whose evidence we required, were employed in all parts of

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[1] *Confessions of a Thug*, pp. 43 - 45.

India, under officers appointed to put down these associations; and [but?] it was difficult to bring all whose evidence was necessary at the trials to the courts of the district in which the particular murder was perpetrated. The victims were, for the most part, money carriers, whose masters and families resided hundreds of miles from the place where they were murdered . . . There was no chance of recovering the property taken from the victims . . . To obviate all these difficulties separate courts were formed, with permission to receive whatever evidence they might think likely to prove valuable, attaching to each portion, whether documentary or oral, whatever weight it might seem to deserve. Such courts . . . were presided over by our highest diplomatic functionaries . . . By this means we had a most valuable species of unpaid agency; and I believe there is no part of their public life on which these high functionaries look back with more pride than that spent presiding over such courts, and assisting the supreme Government in relieving the people of India from this fearful evil."[1]

The suppression of Thuggee, such as it was, was represented as one of the greatest achievements of English administration in India. It was the triumph of moral courage, steel will and Christian faith over idolatrous, immoral Indian tradition, proof that English rule was *right*. In the words of Sleeman:

"When our operations commenced, in 1830, these assassins (*scil.* the Thugs) revelled over every road in India in gangs of hundreds, without the fear of punishment from divine or human laws; but there is not now, I believe, a road in India infested by them . . . I believe that . . . the life, property, and character of the innocent are now more secure, and all their advantages more freely enjoyed, than they ever were under any former government with whose history we are acquainted, or now are under any native government

[1] *Rambles and Recollections of an Indian Official*, pp. 88 -89.

in India."[1]

[1] *Rambles and Recollections of an Indian Official*, pp. 559 -560.

PRINCES & ARCH-VILLAINS: HYDER ALI & TIPU SULTAN

Two of the most enduring characters in the Anglo-Indian mythology of heroes and villains were Hyder Ali and his son, the even more infamous Tipu Sultan. Their reputations, in particular that of Tipu, were almost as important in the establishment of the India of nineteenth century English fiction as the actual fact of Tipu's defeat. No other sub-continental ruler enjoyed such a terrifying reputation. Tipu was the bogeyman, the proof that Indian rulers were barbarians. The entry for Tipu in the *Dictionary of Indian Biography* sums up his reputation:

"Born 1753: commanded a part of his father Hyder Ali's army in the second Mysore war with the English: the death of his father was kept concealed until Tippoo could, from Malabar, rejoin the Army: he defeated General Matthews at Bednore and put him and others to death: He besieged and took Mangalore, and made a treaty with the English in March, 1784, regaining Canara and Malabar; he attacked Coorg, 1785: in 1786 he called himself "Padshah", a king: he fought against the Nizam and the Mahrattas, and made peace with them in 1787: he sent envoys to Turkey and France, with little success: in Dec. 1789 he attacked Travancore; was repulsed at first, but afterwards inflicted great damage: Cornwallis allied with the Mahrattas and the Nizam against Tippoo, who held his own against General Meadows, but lost Malabar: Cornwallis in person, in 1791, besieged and took Bangalore on March 21: attacked Seringapatam, but failed and had to retire: he took the Nandidrug and Savandrug forts, and again besieged Seringapatam in Feb. 1792, where, finding resistance hopeless, Tippoo yielded, and made great cessions of money and territory, but kept his throne and capital: Tippoo sought the aid of Zaman Shah, the Afghan ruler, and of the French in the Mauritius, against the English, but obtained little help. Lord Mornington, arriving in India in May, 1798, regarded Tippoo's conduct as

openly hostile, and, failing to obtain any satisfaction from correspondence with him, declared war early in 1799. Tippoo's forces were defeated by the English under Generals Harris, Stuart, Baird and Colonel Arthur Wellesley; and at the capture of Seringapatam, on May 4, 1799, by the English, Tippoo was killed: his sons were made prisoners and sent to Vellore: the greater part of his territory divided between the E. I. Co. and the Nizam: a portion being made over to the Hindu titular Raja of Mysore. His energy and ability as a ruler were overshadowed by his ferocity, cruelty and vindictiveness, and by the bigotry, fanaticism and duplicity which many attach to his memory."[1]

The reputation for cruelty and anti-English sentiment was based on the accounts of those who fought him and whom he captured, and the apocrypha and romantic reconstructions of his life, tastes and effects. Among his effects was a mechanical toy depicting a European being savaged by a tiger. This singular object, found in the music room of his palace after his death in 1799, has often been used to illustrate his "evil" nature. The Penny Magazine: described it in graphic detail:

"It represents a tiger in the act of tearing to pieces a prostrate soldier, — intended for an Englishman. The tusks of the animal have just penetrated the collar-bone of the soldier, who is lying on his back, stiff as a Dutch doll, with the tiger standing upon him; the forepaws resting on his chest, and the hind-paws on his thighs. The representation is altogether of a most primitive description . . . The attitude of the tiger is perhaps not so bad, but that of the man is very ludicrous . . . the dress of this figure is equally droll with his attitude . . . But the great object for which this group was constructed, and the part which is said to have given the greatest delight to its royal owner, was the machinery which it contained . . . The handle seen on the animal's shoulder turns a spindle and a crank . . . by action of the crank . . . the arm

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[1] Buckland, C. E.: *Dictionary of Indian Biography*, London, 1906; pp. 424 - 425.

rises in a manner which the artist intended to show supplication; the hand is lifted from the mouth, and a cry is heard. The cry is repeated as often as the handle is turned . . . [After every dozen cries an ingeniously connected device] produces a harsh growl. The man in the meantime continues his screaming or whistling, and, after a dozen cries, the growl is repeated. Such is the delectable nature of the music which pleased Tippoo so much, that he is said to have passed hours in his music room with an attendant turning the handle of the machine. The situation of the parties was typical of the subjection of England to the Khodadad [translated as "Gift of God; the name by which Tippoo designated his dominions."], and the representation consoled him with a show of power whenever his arms were unsuccessful . . . we will charitably hope that this was not the sole amusement derived by Tippoo from his instrument. On opening a door in the side of the tiger, a row of keys may be seen just withinside; although awkwardly placed, and not very easily come at, they may be played upon in a clumsy way . . . This part of the machinery appears to be quite unconnected with the growling and screaming portion of the instrument, and would seem to be intended merely to fill up a vacant space in the tiger's body, without reference to the original destination of the machine, as a symbol of abhorrence to Europeans . . ."[1]

All was not what it seemed. In spite of the determination to see what he wanted to see, the writer does point out that Tipu's most famous toy may not have been of his own design - in fact, there were compelling reasons to suppose that he had merely acquired it:

" . . . so rude is the construction of the whole machine, that it has been thought to be much older than the age of Tippoo, and that in fact it was made in the seventeenth century for some sovereign in the southern part of the peninsula when the Dutch were making inroads upon them. The

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[1]Anon.: "Tippoo's Tiger", *The Penny Magazine*, IV, 1835; pp. 319 -320.

appearance of the soldier is certainly much more like that of a Dutchman of the seventeenth century than of an Englishman at the end of the eighteenth. In this case Tippoo would only have the credit of adopting the invention ready made, instead of that of originating the barbarous idea: at all events it appears certain that he was in the habit of enjoying the working of the machine."[1]

The facts apart, the demands of fiction and myth were being served:

"Whether made for Tippoo himself or for some other Indian potentate a century and a half earlier, it would be difficult to convey a more lively impression of the mingled ferocity and childish want of taste so characteristic of the majority of Asiatic princes than will be communicated at once by this truly barbarous piece of music."[2]

Thus the fiction grew and the enemy, once with some honour, became the demon. Demons are, however, difficult to define and what is at one moment the acceptable face of honour, becomes the next one of the defining characteristics of the demon. Inconsistency in action, which can be the mark of a thinking man or a commoner king, becomes in the portrayal of the evil enemy, significant elements in an unstable character. Tipu and Hyder are no exceptions to this - when Hyder is the demon, Tipu is the honourable soldier and when Tipu is the demon, the reverse is the case.

A study of the careers and their representations must begin with Hyder, whose portrayal went through a relatively minor demonisation - he began his career as a worthy foe, progressed to fill the role of an evil barbarian, and was (partially) rehabilitated when Tipu became the enemy. The historian, Robert Orme (upon whose account Walter Scott was later to

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1 "Tippoo's Tiger", p. 320.
2 "Tippoo's Tiger", p. 320.

claim he based his romance) was one of the first to portray him for an English audience - as the worthy foe:

[August 17, 1754]: "Hidernaig, the best officer of the Mysoreans, happened to be in this part of the plain [near Elimiserum], and seeing the baggage without protection, ordered some of his troops to amuse the Tanjorines in front, whilst he himself with another body galloped round the French rock, and fell upon the rear of the convoy, amongst which they created no small confusion, and seized thirty-five carts, some of them laden with arms and ammunition, and others with baggage belonging to the English officers. Major Lawrence, as soon as he discovered the mistakes which had given rise to this disorder, directed the rear guard to march back to their station; but before they arrived the enemy were gone off with their booty . . ."[1]

This was just the beginning of the portrayal of Hyder - he was soon to fall from grace, from his high status as a skilled military commander. A significant part of his reputation depended on the accounts of those English soldiers whom he took captive. There began the inconsistency that is the hallmark of demonisation. According to an officer who was taken captive, in battle Hyder showed some signs of compassion, though these were, in the eyes of his captives (understandably) rather dubious:

"Hyder-Ally, seated in a chair in his tent, enjoyed at Damul, six miles from the scene of action, the sight of his prisoners, and the heads of the slain. Colonel Baillie, with several other officers, who, like himself, were inhumanly wounded, were carried to his camp . . . While these unfortunate gentlemen lay on the ground, in the open air, at Hyder-Ally's feet, heads of their unfortunate friends were, from time to time, presented to the conqueror;

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[1] Orme, Robert: *History of the Military Transactions of the British Nation in Indostan from the year 1745*, London, 1775 (2nd ed.); p. 369.

some of them even by English officers who were forced to perform that inhuman service . . . But, soon after the arrival of the English officers, Hyder, touched with a latent spark of humanity, ordered the practice of bringing heads before him, while the English gentlemen were present, to be discontinued; and the heads of Captain Philips and Doctor Wilson he ordered to be removed."[1]

Hyder's compassion was, according to the reports, short-lived - he was, after all, the enemy and could not, for long, remain an honourable opponent. His lust for power demanded the satisfaction of revenge, and the captives reported early ill-treatment:

"The conqueror, enjoying barbarous triumph over our captive countrymen, suffered them to remain in his presence till sunset, without ordering them the smallest assistance in their distress. The shell of the tent was then fixed for Colonel Baillie and his officers, but without a bit of straw, or anything on which they might lie . . . "[2]

The evil monarch, symbol of Eastern despotism, graduated from ill-treatment to torture, subjecting "innocent" captives to the most undeserved hardship:

"At sunrise, we were ordered to eat some cold rice, and at about eight o'clock we moved onward to Scolore . . . The dooley boys . . . during the course of our journey thither, behaved to us in a most barbarous manner, often beating us with sticks, refusing to give us water, and wantonly and cruelly exposing us to the sun. At any time when we were permitted to halt for a little rest and refreshment, if they had the opportunity of setting us down

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[1] Anon. "The Journal of an Officer of Colonel Baillie's Detachment" (orig. publ. London 1788 in *Memoirs of the Late War in Asia*), in *Captives of Tipu,* ed. A. W. Lawrence, London, 1929; p. 102.
[2] "The Journal of an Officer of Colonel Baillie's Detachment", pg 102.

under the shade of a grove or tree, they would give themselves trouble to expose us to suffering, by carrying us about to that side of the grove or tree where we should not enjoy the cooling shade of their leafy branches, but suffer the rage of the noonday sun, in its utmost rigour. The men who carried these doolies, as well as some of the lower casts of people in Hyder's dominions, would frequently revile us in terms not to be repeated. They would tell us, that we should be forced to eat our own dung, and expressed their hopes and confidence, that when we should arrive at the place of our destination, Hyder would not fail to put us to death."[1]

Every act of Hyder's had the potential for being used in the process of his demonisation - as this description of his taking boys captive makes clear:

"December 11th. — Forty-seven seamen, who were given up to Hyder by Suffrein, appeared this morning on the parade opposite to our prison, and have been circumcised since their arrival here . . . sixteen of these unfortunate victims could not be above twelve or thirteen years of age."[2]

Here there is a clear inconsistency - these children must have been first press-ganged or otherwise coerced into joining (or, at least, staying with) their original employers at the time of their capture - the East India Company. Yet their incarceration becomes scandal only when it was at the command of Hyder. The enemy had become The Enemy, and all his actions, regardless of motive or provocation, the acts of a sadistic dictator.

Hyder had, in his time, the reputation that was to pass to his son, much as glory can be passed from parent to child. After Tipu became the focus of hatred, the symbol of Satanic misrule, Hyder became the foil, the honourable, just monarch, against whose record Tipu would be judged. The

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[1] "The Journal of an Officer of Colonel Baillie's Detachment", pp. 110 -111.
[2] "The Journal of an Officer of Colonel Baillie's Detachment", p. 136.

protagonist of Walter Scott's *The Surgeon's Daughter*, Hartley, determined to save Menie Gray (the surgeon's daughter of the title) from delivery into the hands of Tipu, approaches a former prisoner of Tipu's and is told he must approach Hyder if he is to stand even the remotest chance. He then voices the contemporary opinion of Hyder, calling him a "usurper" and a "tyrant". The reply he receives, confirms Hyder's infamy, but indicates that there is a greater evil, Tipu - in this post-Mysore wars analysis, Hyder becomes, at worst, a benevolent despot when compared with his son:

"Yes, to this usurper and tyrant . . . you must be contented to apply. His pride is, to be thought a strict administrator of justice; and perhaps he may on this, as on other occasions, choose to display himself in the light of an impartial magistrate."[1]

Hyder's sense of justice is undermined by the traits that dominate the character of his son, the despotic traits:

"Hyder is just by reflection, and perhaps from political considerations; but by temperament, his blood is as unruly as ever beat under a black skin, and if you do not find him in the vein of judging, he is likely enough to be in that of killing. Stakes and bowstrings are as frequently in his head as the adjustment of the scales of justice."[2]

Scott utilised Hyder's "low birth" to make him a commoner king who mixes with his subjects, in stark contrast with his son, who is both arrogant and power-mad. In *The Surgeon's Daughter* Hyder dons the clothes of a fakir to spy on his son, throwing off the disguise to set some "innocent" British captives free and ensure that justice is done in his lifetime:

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[1] Scott, Walter: *The Surgeon's Daughter*, London & Edinburgh, 1834 (orig. publ. 1827); p. 391.
[2] *The Surgeon's Daughter*, p. 391.

"The voice of the old Fakir was heard louder and sterner than before.—'Cursed is the prince who barters justice for lust! He shall die in the gate by the sword of a stranger.'

'This is too insolent!" said Tippoo. 'Drag forward that Fakir, and cut his robe into tatters on his back with your chabouks.' . . . All who attempted to obey the command of the incensed despot fell back from the Fakir, as they would from the Angel of Death. He flung his cap and fictitious beard on the ground, and the incensed countenance of Tippoo was subdued in an instant, when he encountered the stern and awful eye of his father . . . "[1]

A sovereign who is true to his word (unlike Tipu), Hyder orders the younger man to fulfil his promise to reward the treacherous Middlemas, using the opportunity to set the scene for a terrible form of justice, death by elephant:

"'Such things as thou hast promised to this Feringi, proceed to make them good. The sun calleth not back the splendour which he lends to the moon; and the father obscures not the dignity which he has conferred on the son. What thou hast promised, that do thou proceed to make good.'

The ceremony of investiture was therefore re-commenced, by which the Prince Tippoo conferred on Middlemas the important government of the city of Bangalore, probably with the internal resolution, that since he was himself deprived of the fair European, he would take an early opportunity to remove the new Killedar from his charge; while Middlemas accepted it with the throbbing hope that he might yet outwit both father and son."[2]

Immediately as it is done, Hyder passes judgement on the false Englishman (who is false in every sense of the word, being half-Spanish and half-Jewish

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[1] *The Surgeon's Daughter*, pp. 418 - 419.
[2] *The Surgeon's Daughter*, pp. 420 -421.

but not one bit English/Scottish), sentencing him to immediate, horrible death. It is an execution that Scott suggests is richly deserved, not a wanton killing. His Hyder is, above all, just - so that Tipu will, by contrast, appear a complete demon. Compared to Tipu's anti-English sentiments, Hyder's are the comprehensible, courageous sentiments of a warrior-king:

"'Hitherto I have been in the Carnatic as a mild prince — in future I will be a destroying tempest! Hitherto I have made inroads as a mild and merciful conqueror — hereafter I will be the messenger whom Allah sends to the kingdoms which he visits in judgement!'

It is well known how dreadfully the Nawaub kept this promise, and how he and his son afterwards sunk before the discipline and bravery of the Europeans."[1]

This man does not much resemble the Hyder of the captives' tales. Their Hyder was a vicious barbarian who, when compared to his son in his lifetime, was the devil incarnate. James Scurry, "seaman", recorded this description of Hyder's treatment of his Indian and European captives:

"We were shortly escorted and sent to Chillembroom . . . In this fort I have seen whole families, or their carcasses rather, lying in different spots, some eight, some ten, according to their number. The few miserable survivors would plunge at one of our carrion bones, though thrown into the middle of excrement. May my eyes never see the like again!"[2]

His apparently straightforward narrative is typical of the demonisation process - it is riddled with inconsistencies. In spite of his professed anger at the treatment of Hyder's Indian subjects, the seaman was outraged that

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[1] *The Surgeon's Daughter*, p. 423.

[2] Scurry, James: "The Life of James Scurry, Seaman" (orig. publ. 1824), in *Captives of Tipu*, p. 185.

Europeans should suffer from poor food that is no different from that which was available to the inhabitants of the region they were passing through:

"Here a dreadful famine raged; and our provisions consisted of bad rice and carrion beef; this, with the saltpetre ground on which we lay, was the cause of the loss of numbers of our men. I have seen may stout fellows taken in one hour, and dead the next."[1]

Hyder allied himself with the French, whose political rivalry with the English had been carried from Europe to India. Hyder's continuing clashes with their common enemy, made him an ally. In the context of political rivalry their actions were completely normal, as the French were determined to undermine the English in any way they could, However, the English captives represented the actions of the French as inexplicable because they were Europeans and Hyder was an "unprincipled barbarian":

"What cause induced the French Admiral to deliver us up to this unprincipled barbarian we could never discover. We were equally at a loss to conceive why we were abandoned by the English when they might have demanded us. I can only attribute it to the deplorable state of British affairs in India at this time."[2]

When Hyder died, Tipu succeeded to the throne - and to the mantle of hate-figure, but , in his father's lifetime, *he* was the saviour, the honourable prince with the human side:

"Several officers were also carried to Tippoo Saib, who treated them with great humanity . . . Nothing could be more striking, on this sad occasion, than

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[1]"The Life of James Scurry, Seaman", p. 185.
[2]"The Life of James Scurry, Seaman", p. 185.

the contrast between the father and that of the son . . . "[1]

This compared favourably with his father who, the captives claimed, never showed mercy, ferociously punishing those (courageous) prisoners who dared disobey him:

"Nineteen of our men, with Lieutenant Wilson . . . effected their escape . . . but they knew nothing of the country, or which way to steer. Nineteen of them were the next day brought in with their arms pinioned; and the other . . . was drowned . . . Lieutenant Wilson was stripped and flogged with tamarind twigs very severely, when they plastered his back over with sugar, and exposed him to the sun, by way of finishing the punishment due to his crime; the men were put in irons. In consequence of this affair, in a day or two after we were marched to a strong prison, and the whole of us put in heavy leg-irons, with a scanty miserable allowance; and the guards were doubled."[2]

On his death-bed Scurry's Hyder remained a vicious barbarian who wilfully murdered others in the vain hope that he might live:

"The more immediate cause of his death was an ulcerated back; and reports were then circulated in the capital, that towards the close of his life, when the ulcer was rapidly spreading, he, by advice, ordered several criminals at different times to be killed, in order to apply their livers to his sore. It is, however, but just to state, that for this I have no other authority than hearsay, though I have no reason to doubt that it might be truth."[3]

With Hyder's death, all crime passed into the hands of Tipu and Hyder began the re-incarnation process as worthy enemy, which would culminate

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[1] "The Journal of an Officer of Colonel Baillie's Detachment", pp. 102 -103.
[2] "The Life of James Scurry, Seaman", pp. 185 - 186.
[3] "The Life of James Scurry, Seaman", p. 192.

in Scott's commoner king who stood in the way of Tipu's excesses. James Bristow initially welcomed Hyder's demise, condemning him as a "barbarian" and a "turbulent and ambitious tyrant":

"Towards the end of the year the tidings of Hyder's demise reached Seringapatam. This happened but a few days after the death of the unfortunate Colonel [Colonel Baillie], so that if he died by his order, the barbarian did not himself survive the base murder. The end of this turbulent and ambitious tyrant gave birth to various speculations and expectations . . ."[1]

Tipu's accession to the throne was welcomed, though, as the narrative was published many years later, the admiration was qualified to indicate that Tipu would not live up to early promise:

"[Hyder's death] was attended with none of those commotions commonly produced by the demise of an Eastern monarch. His son Tippoo Saheb, since called Tippoo Sultan, took undisturbed possession of all his father's territories, and command of his vast armies, at a time when many disaffected individuals filled both the camp and city. This must be esteemed no contemptible proof of his abilities as a politician as well as a soldier; such authority, at least did his known character carry with it, that no open attempts were made to oppose his accession, or divide and circumscribe his power."[2]

After a short period of Tipu's reign Scurry too came to the conclusion that the ill-treatment he and his companions had suffered under Hyder, whom he has thus far denounced as the greatest evil possible, was minor, " . . . exclusively of our mental feelings, we had every good in abundance; and thus they

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[1] Bristow, James: "Narrative of James Bristow" (orig. publ. London 1794), in *Captives of Tipu*, p. 42.
[2] "Narrative of James Bristow", p. 42.

continued to treat us for three months; but alas! our troubles had only just begun. About this time, 1783 - 4, Hyder Ali Cawn died."[1]

By the time Meadows Taylor wrote his romance, the period of grace, when Tipu's rule was welcomed, had been drastically reduced to a brief moment of folly and, even Tipu's accession to the throne is tainted by insinuations that he had cunningly hidden his real nature, to prevent any possibility of opposition to his elevation:

" . . . Hyder Ali, the most formidable and untiring foe the English had ever known, constantly victorious over the ill-commanded armies of the southern Presidency . . . died at Chittoor . . . Tippoo, the enterprising son of the deceased chief . . . assumed the command, and inheritance of his father's dominions, without any opposition — nay, amidst the rejoicings of his future subjects."[2]

Meadows Taylor's Tipu wasted no time being respectable or humane - his reign begins with an act of unspeakable barbarity. On a visit to his father's mausoleum, a commendable act in itself, he reveals his animal cruelty by having a horrifying scene prepared:

" . . . on his first visit to his father's mausoleum: in his going to the Gangam gate, a bullock's head on one side, and a man's head on the other, were lopped off at one time. The real meaning of this ceremony we never could learn."[3]

This ominous start is reinforced by a derivative scene, in which a seer predicts the tyrant's defeat (at the hands of the "civilised" English):

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[1] "The Life of James Scurry, Seaman", pp. 191 - 192.
[2] Meadows Taylor, Philip: *Tippoo Sultaun*, London, 1840; II, p. 2.
[3] "The Life of James Scurry, Seaman", p. 193.

". . . he fears the prophecy about him by a holy man whom he consulted . . . as he sat one day in the innermost apartments of the palace in the garden of the Deria Doulut, — where no one could by any possibility have access to him, and where he was engaged in study, — there was heard a voice conversing with him, and his was gradually raised until it became furious, as, Inshalla! it often does . . . the Mushaek [translated as 'Holy man'] . . . cried to him with a loud voice, and bade him beware of the English Feringhees, for they were plotting against him; and though the day was far distant, yet danger threatened him from them which could not be avoided."[1]

In this scene, there is one of the many inconsistencies that characterise Meadows Taylor's Tipu. Though described as a true Muslim, a terrible propagator of the Islamic faith, and a scourge of the Hindus, he is portrayed indulging in idolatry and practising magic himself:

"Then some say that the being . . . upbraided the Sultaun with many errors of faith, and with being given to idolatry in private, and with doing magic, to the hurt of his own soul . . ."[2]

Meadows Taylor called on his English audience to question every aspect of Tipu's rule, beginning with his elevation to the throne. He claimed that since the "king" of Mysore had sprung from poor stock and had no noble blood whatsoever he had no right to sit upon the throne of any state: "What was Hyder's origin? . . . his can be traced back a few generations, beginning with a Punjabee Fakeer, and descending (not much improved i' faith) to his father Hyder, whose mother was the only daughter of a cloth-weaver of Allund, somewhere by Koolbugah."[3] According to Meadows Taylor Tipu was unacceptable as ruler to many Indians, particularly those of noble birth, who

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1 *Tippoo Sultaun*, I, pp. 218 -219.
2 *Tippoo Sultaun*, I, p. 219.
3 *Tippoo Sultaun*, I, p. 69.

recognised his unsuitability, and refused to countenance his upstart proposals, leaving him to face the consequences of his prideful actions on his own:

" . . . the Nizam's ambassadors were men of sound judgement; they knew that their prince had lowered himself already in sending the embassy to a self-constituted Sultaun — a low-born upstart; and, men of high family themselves, they could well appreciate the situation in which he would feel himself placed by the proposal [to a marital alliance]. They answered the demand in cold, haughty terms . . . the Sultaun's message was received with indignation by the Nizam, whose pride instantly rose against the degradation of the proposed matrimonial connexion. An embassy from Tippoo, which followed, was dismissed with a flat refusal . . ."[1]

His demonisation had its root in fear and rivalry - rivalry that was compounded by (or resulted in, depending on the point of view) his relationship with the traditional English foe, the French. His conspiracy with them was described in his lifetime thus:

"It has long been known by the bye-standers, that Tippoo Saib, the son of Hyder Ally, ever since the death of his father, has been preparing for war; that being a soldier from his infancy, he is fond of war; and, bred in Indian courts, is a deep politician, and of course an avowed enemy of the English, who are the only rivals he has to dread in the vast regions of Hindostan. To enable him to make head against this powerful competitor, he has directed his chief attention to cultivate a lasting friendship with the French nation . . . Add to this, that he has long been amassing money to carry on this premeditated war, and that he only wanted a pretence to begin it . . . he is well acquainted with the English mode of attack, their bravery in pursuit of

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[1] *Tippoo Sultaun*, II, p. 270.

glory, and their indifference and dissipation when once it is attained . . . This war, therefore, appears to be a very unequal one. Tippoo is well acquainted with every inch of ground that is in contention, on which depends almost a certainty of conquest; besides that, he fights on his own ground, with every other advantage of intelligence on his side."[1]

Three years after that article Tipu's reputation had developed to the extent that he was accused of bizarre "crimes" - such as republicanism. The creed of republicanism was abhorred by the English establishment, so their Indian enemy became not only a republican-sympathiser but an active participant in anti-imperial activities, despite the fact that republicanism would have been as dangerous to his own ambitions as it would have been to those of the East India Company. He was, in his lifetime, implicated in a plot to wrest Goa from Portuguese (imperial) control and declare it a republic:

"The ship which the Portuguese establishment at Goa sends annually to Europe, arrived at Lisbon on the 9th of November. — The news she brought . . . seems not a little romantic. A number of natives, excited by Romish priests, had formed a scheme for erecting an independent republic in that country, like that of the republicans in America; and, to effect their purpose, the Europeans were all to be destroyed . . . Tippoo, in the mean time, was to assemble an army, and secure the conspirators in possession. A priest, however, in the plot, on falling sick, discovered the whole to his confessor, who, with the sick man's consent, apprized the government of the danger . . ."[2]

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[1] "Remarks on the War in India", *The Gentleman's Magazine and Historical Chronicle*, LXI, 1791, pp. 480 - 481.
[2] "East India Intelligence", *The Gentleman's Magazine and Historical Chronicle*, LVIII, 1788, p. 1113.

At the time there were, however, those who respected Tipu - after all, it would have been too humiliating to be defeated by the embodiment of evil, particularly if there was a possibility, such as always exists where there is political rivalry, that at some point in time he might well become an ally and, therefore, worthy of praise. A report written on Sept 21, 1790, kept the options for future alliance open by paying homage to his skill as a military strategist:

"After the junction of Col Floyd's detachment, Tippoo disencumbered himself of his heavy baggage, and marched with a view of harassing our main army, which, by forced marches, endeavoured in vain to bring him to action. For eight successive days our army marched at the rate of sixteen miles a day, in a hot sun, but without effect, Tippoo being so correct in his information as totally to elude the most vigourous pursuit . . ."[1]

In the early 1790s, so great was the need not to commit the Company to either view (worthy foe/pure evil) that censorship was imposed, and disinformation (the result of contradictory reporting) prevailed. Secrecy was actually unnecessary, since India was too far from Europe for any intelligence which reached England to be of any use to the Company's enemies in India, yet the Company maintained the fiction that it was in complete control. Besides, the Directors in London could not have been sure that the information that they themselves received was any more accurate than that which slipped through the net. The effect was confusion, leaving the press unsure of what the situation in India really was:

"The political news from the East Indies, since the late order, restricting the servants of the Company, and other inferior officers, to their own private

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[1] "East Indies", *The Gentleman's Magazine and Historical Chronicle*, LXI, 1791, p. 371.

affairs, in corresponding with their friends, has been reduced to a very low ebb; and what is received is much suspected of being fabricated at home; of this kind are the following advices from Madras. 'That Tippoo Sul[t]an, after concluding a treaty with the Mahrattas, and sowing division amongst their chiefs, to prevent the renewal of the confederacy against him, returned to Seringapatam, and occupied himself wholly with preparations for war . . . he gave particular injunctions to . . . collect the balances due from the Ryotts to the Circar; and has ordered all the arrears due to his army to be discharged. He has laid in immense quantities of military stores . . . he is enlisting men in every part of his dominions, but receives those only of high cast, or of approved bravery . . . . From the opposite quarter comes the following intelligence . . . Tippoo Saib, who has never even in idea thought of hostilities since the late treaty, is now at Bangalore, and gives up his whole time to amusements. He sees the absurdity of endeavouring to push his conquests beyond their present limit and is determined to enjoy the pleasures to be derived from a life of ease and retirement."[1]

Tipu's pronouncements in his own territories were, however, already being paraded as proof of his perfidy, and were described as bribery, the mark of a deceitful monarch:

"We see with what art this designing Prince makes religion a cloak to cover his drift: this offer, he knew, would seduce thousands whom zeal for the faith could never move."[2]

The edict he was referring to was published too:

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[1] "East India Intelligence", *The Gentleman's Magazine and Historical Chronicle*, LVIII, 1788, p. 743.
[2] "Original Edict of Tippoo Sultaun", *The Gentleman's Magazine and Historical Chronicle*, LVIII, 1788, p. 686..

"My chief design is, to inform those who are ignorant of this sentence, 'Obey not infidels, nor hypocrites, for GOD knoweth all things,' and now are serving idolaters, that whoever is in the land of the heathen, 'who ridicule the true GOD, and those' who 'believe in him, but deceive themselves only, and are not sensible thereof: there is an infirmity in their hearts, which GOD has increased, and they shall suffer a most painful punishment, because they have denied the truth,' may have comfort and relief by coming to these parts, and leaving the country of the unbelievers, which is incumbent upon Mussulmans. By the blessing of the Almighty, whatever be your support where ye are shall be increased [the comment was introduced here as an asterisked footnote] to double upon your arrival here; and your life, your fortune, and whatever is dear to you, shall be in the hands of the Lord and his Prophet." [1]

The translation concluded with this comment on the effectiveness of this "subterfuge":

"This address had the desired effect; numbers flocked to Tippoo's standard, and he forced his enemies to make peace upon terms highly advantageous to himself . . ."[2]

The impression being conveyed was of a truly deceitful monarch who would renege on his promises the moment it suited him.

Other contradictory reports, which would become sources for later novelists, claimed that dissatisfaction was rife within the borders of Tipu's kingdom:

"Accounts from different quarters mention the great losses Tippoo Saib has

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[1] "Original Edict of Tippoo Sultaun", p. 686
[2] "Original Edict of Tippoo Sultaun", p. 687.

sustained by the death of numbers of his hordes, partly owing to a want of forage, and partly to an epidemical distemper that has raged . . . His intestine broils are frequent and destructive: his Poligar chiefs, who have been deprived of their hereditary rights without any other reason than that which power conveys, are discontented and rebellious, ever watching an opportunity to throw off the yoke of oppression . . ."[1]

Other reports confirmed Tipu's reputation as a vengeful figure. This report sent in 1790 from Coimbatore informed English readers that, when defeated, Tipu took out his anger on innocents:

"Tippoo, by their [some Brahmins] account . . . was not wounded at Travancore, but that he lost his turban, the bangles about his hands, and his palanquin; the disgrace of which chagrined him so much, that he shut himself up in his tent for eight days, and would not see any body . . . [he] selected all the young women, to the number of 2000, and sent them off with his army."[2]

As his conflict with the English intensified, acceptable features were deleted from his depiction. The act of handing over his two sons as hostages after his defeat in 1792, instead of exciting sympathy, made him a weakling, a figure to be despised. full of false pride. His cold reception of them, which would have been considered appropriately manly in one who was still a worthy foe, was represented as symptomatic of the empty arrogance of a fallen tyrant:

"On the 29th [of May] at noon, the Princes, with their numerous suite,

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[1] "East India Intelligence", *The Gentleman's Magazine and Historical Chronicle*, LVIII, Sept. 1788, p. 826.
[2] "East Indies", *The Gentleman's Magazine and Historical Chronicle*, LXI, 1791, p. 79.

accompanied by Captain Doveton proceeded on their visit to the Sultan, who received them in a very superb pavilion, inclosed in a wall of very extraordinary extent. — The Sultan was seated at one extremity, and on each side, at suitable distances, were placed, according to their several ranks, about forty or fifty of his principal attendants. On their entrance into the pavilion, the young princes sprang forward to the throne where their royal father sat, and prostrated themselves before it. And here the etiquette of Asiatic courts put nature completely to flight; — for, the father, instead of advancing to embrace his darling children, contented himself with coldly placing a hand on the neck of each, and on the instant the Princes arose, and respectfully retired. It is a remarkable fact, that not a syllable was exchanged at this extraordinary interview."[1]

The suggestion is that Tipu is not human - in this period of powerlessness he became sub-human, instead of inhuman. His reception of the boys was presented as being in stark contrast to Cornwallis, who was, in the eyes of the English observers, the epitome of correctness and gentlemanly behaviour:

"The sons of Tippoo arrived at Lord Cornwallis's camp the 27th of February. About twelve o'clock, the works of the fort were crowded with an innumerable multitude of people, and the Sultan was plainly to be discovered amongst them. In a few minutes afterwards, the young Princes made their appearance . . . On entering the camp, they were saluted with 19 guns, and the part of the line they passed was under arms, and the officers saluted. Lord Cornwallis received them in his tent; which was guarded by a battalion of sepoys, and they were formally delivered unto his Lordship by Gullam Ally Beg, the Sultan's Vackeel, as hostages for the due performance

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[1] "EAST INDIA NEWS: Particulars of the reception of the Hostage Princes, by their Father Tippoo Sultan", *The Gentleman's Magazine and Historical Chronicle*, LXV, 1795, pp. 72 -73.

of the treaty. An awful silence for a moment prevailed. At length Gullum Ally, approaching Lord Cornwallis, much agitated, thus emphatically addressed his Lordship: "These children," pointing to the young princes, whom he then presented, "were this morning the sons of the Sultan, my master: their situation is changed, and they must look up to your Lordship as their father." The tender and affectionate manner in which his Lordship received them, seemed to confirm the truth of the expression. The attendants of the young princes appeared astonished, and their countenances were highly expressive of the satisfaction they felt in the benevolence of his Lordship."[1]

However despicable, the vanquished foe soon returned to do battle again and continued to harass the Company until his death in 1799. During the prolonged conflict, his characterisation took several turns. Observe this, which was published soon after his death and purported to describe Tipu's overnight metamorphosis from moderate to fanatic:

"The hopes which had been indulged when the death of Hyder became public, founded on the expectation of a favourable change in our affairs, through the mildness of Tippoo's temper, who had hitherto borne a character for humanity . . . quickly vanished; and it was soon discovered that if Tippoo did not surpass, he at least equalled his father in aversion and hatred to the Europeans; that his character had not hitherto appeared in a true light; but that now, when he found it no longer necessary to dissemble or conciliate the affections of his father's subjects, he threw aside the mask, and showed himself in his genuine colours . . ."[2]

By then Tipu's treatment of his troops, rather than his submissiveness, had become the focus of attention. He was accused of conspiring with his

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[1] "East India Intelligence", *The Gentleman's Magazine and Historical Chronicle*, LXII, 1792, p. 760.
[2] "Narrative of James Bristow", pp. 43 - 44.

paymasters to deprive, by any means possible, his soldiers of their hard-earned pay. This was, it was claimed, a ruse to keep them in his service:

"I shall here mention a species of unkingly chicanery, by which Tippoo himself manages to cheat his troops out of a great part of their pay. He keeps them three or four months in arrears, or until they begin to be very distressed for money; and then allows his treasurer, or some other person with his money, to make them advances at a very exorbitant discount till the pay is issued . . . and the profit of this political robbery accrues to himself. When we now reflect that they are bound always to receive one-fourth of their pay in grain, which generally consists of what has been damaged as stores, and which sepoys are obliged to throw away, and that the treasurer, or pay-jobber, probably expects or exacts something for himself . . . we may naturally conclude that the army is neither well paid nor well satisfied, and that nothing but fear, want of unanimity and bold leaders, not to omit the unquestionable vigilance and abilities of the tyrant, prevents them from revolting. I am confident, from what I have seen, that he will some time or other feel the ill-effects of their discontent."[1]

Other instances of Tipu's greed and barbarity, necessary features of a tyrant's character which prove his despotism, abound in the survivors' narratives:

" . . . two merchants from the Nizam's dominions . . . suffered with astonishing fortitude; they were daily . . . from eight in the morning until six in the evening, pinioned with their arms and legs to the ground, and whilst in this posture, lying on their backs, with their faces to the sun, a fellow on each side kept continually pricking them with long and pointed needles. Three lacks of rupees was the stipulated price for their release, but nothing could be

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[1] "Narrative of James Bristow", p. 57.

exacted from them, except the promise of remitting the money if they were suffered to return to their homes, on the performance of which Tippoo, however, did not seem much inclined to rely. The whole property of such as die (which is nothing uncommon) under the rack, if discovered, is confiscated, but as the proprietor, in general, entrusts very few with the hiding-place of his money, it is not often found out."[1]

According to the captives, the evil eastern potentate was given to frequent displays of power and false benevolence:

". . . orders were received at the capital to prepare for the nuptials of his son . . . who was now to espouse the daughter of the Queen of Cannanore . . . [He] issued a proclamation, prohibiting all marriages in the kingdom of Mysore until such time as the wedding of his son should take place, being determined to celebrate that day by the consummation of 25,000 marriages at his own charge."[2]

At the time of the events, however, his opponents, the East India Company soldiers, were also being accused of tyrannical behaviour. Some reports stated, as matters of fact, that the English troops behaved in much the same way as Tipu's. The accusations were angrily refuted in a lengthy article in the 1788 *The Gentleman's Magazine and Historical Chronicle*:

"At a general court of the proprietors . . . it was observed on the part of officers who fought under Gen. Mathews in India, and who had survived their cruel imprisonment in the Mysore country, that they had been grossly calumniated in certain publications of great authority in England . . . We therefore think it our duty . . . to state the matter of complaint fairly, with the

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[1] "Narrative of James Bristow", pp. 97 - 98.
[2] "Narrative of James Bristow", pp. 61 - 62.

refutation . . . in order to efface every injurious impression which any misrepresentation of ours may have left . . . Charge I ' . . . The drama commenced upon this occasion [the campaign of 1783] in a manner worthy of the events that were to follow. no quarter was given by the victorious English . . .' Refutation . . . a practicable breach being made, General Mathews sent in a flag of truce, summoning the garrison to surrender . . . The offers were rejected, the breach was stormed the next day at noon, and, according to the rules of war, all who continued in arms, or made any resistance, received no quarter; but we solemnly declare, that, as soon as quarter was demanded, it was granted, and none but those who obstinately resisted, felt the effects of our superiority . . . The whole of the prisoners . . . being first disarmed, were released the next morning, permitted to go where they chose, and allowed to carry with them their private property. The wounded were received into our hospitals; were attended and cured by European surgeons and their assistants . . . Charge II ' . . . the carnage was great; we trampled thick on the dead bodies that were strewed in the way. It was rather shocking to humanity, but . . . to a soldier, whose bosom glows with heroic glory, they are thought accidents of course . . .' Refutation. These lines are extracted from a letter, said to be written by Ensign John Hubbard . . . it is well known he was stationed at a small fort, called Compton, several leagues distant from the scene of action, and did not join the army until the reduction of Hydernagur . . . Charge III ' . . . [in] Onore were found sums of money to an unknown amount, besides jewels and diamonds. A considerable part of this appears to have been secured as private plunder by General Mathews: the complaints of the military were loud . . .' Refutation. There were many vague reports of money being found in Onore, but, as they were never confirmed, the army could not, nor even did they, murmur of being deprived of what never existed . . . Charge IV. 'The English had, however, obtained a considerable reputation by their executions; and the use of the bayonet . . . created so extreme a terror in the enemy, as to enable

them to surmount this . . .' Refutation. This mode of relating the circumstance carries with it a strong impression of cruelty. The bayonet was certainly used, and it was absolutely necessary, being considered the most speedy and effectual means . . . but there was no wanton cruelty or unnecessary effusion of blood. Charge V. 'The wealth of this metropolis (Hydernagur), in gold alone, is variously represented . . . The bitterest recrimination between the General and his Officers succeeded this event. The latter charged the General with a spirit of peculation, equally superior to shame, and incapable of satiety — the General, in return, declared of his whole army . . . [they had] become as loose and unfeeling as the most licentious free-booters.' Refutation. It is not possible to ascertain the exact sum, but we believe about eighteen lacks of pagodas (801,000l.), together with a quantity of jewels, were found at Hydernagur. A moiety of this treasure was undoubtedly the property of the captors, and the army were, no doubt, much dissatisfied at being deprived of their right; yet this discontent never retarded the public service. Owing to the embarrassed situation of the Company's affairs, a great part of the army were eighteen months in arrears, and at that time even their monthly subsistence was not paid them, yet they readily underwent every fatigue, and yielded at all times implicit obedience to the Commander in Chief . . . Charge VI. 'From Hydernagur, General Mathews sent out various detachments, for the forts of the country, and upon the coasts. Of the former, the principal was Annanpour . . . when a practicable breach was effected, orders were issued for a storm, and no quarter: they were received with alacrity, and put into execution without delay. Every man in the place was put to the sword, except for one horseman . . .The women, unwilling to be separated from their relation, or exposed to the brutal licentiousness of the soldiery, threw themselves, in multitudes, into the moats . . . Four hundred beautiful women, pieced with the bayonet, and expiring in one another's arms, were in this situation treated by the British with every kind of outrage . . .' Refutation . . . [Major Campbell] gave particular and repeated directions to

take none prisoners but those who bore arms; and personally reprimanded some of those officers for not seeing these orders rigidly executed . . . The story of four hundred women is as false as it is infamous, and worthy only of the fabricator. There was but one woman unfortunately killed . . . The severity this garrison was treated with was entirely owing to their having been guilty of a breach of the law of nations, which every power throughout Hindostan have a thorough knowledge of . . ."[1]

The same article informed the reading public of the "real" nature of their charge and behaviour and of Tipu's character. The representations closely resemble those in both Meadows Taylor and Walter Scott:

"We were ordered into the Canara country to draw Tippoo Saib from the Carnatic, where he had been ravaging with unrelenting barbarity from the commencement of the war; reducing large and populous villages and cities to ashes, plundering the inhabitants, destroying the appearance of agriculture, and to fill up the measure of his cruelty, driving the unfortunate wretches to distant and uncultivated parts of his own empire, there to toil under the heavy hand of power and oppression. Let his advocates among our countrymen contemplate this picture, and compare it with what we have impartially drawn of our conduct against his dominions — then let them blush at declaring the sufferings which we endured were 'just and merited'"[2]

In *Tippoo Sultaun*, the English rampage through the countryside, but their activities are presented as both normal and appropriate in the context of a bloody war instigated by their opponents - the English *deserve* their

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[1] Toriano, J. S. &c: "A VINDICATION of the conduct of the English forces employed in the late war, under the command of Brig. Gen. Mathews, against the Nabob TIPPOO SULTAUN", *The Gentleman's Magazine and Historical Chronicle*, LVIII, 1788, pp. 66 - 68.

[2] "A VINDICATION of the conduct of the English forces employed in the late war, under the command of Brig. Gen. Mathews, against the Nabob TIPPOO SULTAUN", p. 68.

rewards:

"Bednore was next approached; and as the minarets and white-terraced houses appeared to the view of the army, and it was known that the governor had deserted his post, all were clamorous to be led at once against it, both because it was to be their resting-place, after their fatiguing service, and was described as full of treasure, which would become their lawful spoil . . . . the reduction of the forts of the country followed, and, in a mistaken idea perhaps, all were occupied with small detachments . . . the dreams all had entertained of riches appeared to be realized, the spirit of rapacity pervaded all ranks, and each man was anxious to secure what he could of the golden harvest . . ."[1]

Meadows Taylor depicted Tipu as a thoroughly evil character, allowing only a few Indians to express admiration for him, a few who were either disreputable themselves (Jaffier) or had fatal personality flaws - like Rhyman Khan, whose weakness for his young wife, makes her life a misery. Early in the novel, to demonstrate that Tipu has been completely corrupted by power, Meadows Taylor has Rhyman Khan tell a story of the young Tipu, which resembles the captives' accounts of Tipu before his father's death. It is a useful starting point - Tipu can then be seen to degenerate into sheer barbarity as the novel progresses:

". . . I was then in the Pagha, — the Royal Guard; and I was desired by Hyder (peace be on his name!) to protect Tippoo Sahib, who led the charges. He fought like a tiger as he is, and many of the infidels tasted death at his hand: but one of them, as we charged and overthrew their last square, made a thrust with his bayonet at the young prince, which . . . I parried; and in return caused him to taste of death. The young man never forgot that deed, and

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[1] *Tippoo Sultaun*, II, pp. 56 - 57.

some others . . ."[1]

Rhyman, flawed himself, is one of Tipu's dupes - he believes the fiction that the king ". . . is faithful to those he loves, but a bitter foe to those who provoke him."[2]

A more "accurate" picture is provided by Herbert Compton, captive of both Hyder and Tipu, who says Tipu is ". . . one who is a tiger in nature, one whose glory it is to be savage and merciless as his namesake . . ."[3]. Of course, flashes of military prowess and honour are useful to explain his successes against English troops and there are inconsistencies throughout the novel. They reflect English unwillingness to be outmanoeuvred by a mere demon - pride was assuaged by allowing Tipu to be an able soldier, if nothing else. And so, when marching into battle, he is a man among men, a soldier whose only visible flaw is pride, pride that will, inevitably, prove his downfall:

"The Sultaun was always at the head of the column of the march, sometimes on foot with a musket on his shoulder, showing an example to his regular infantry who followed in order, relating his dreams, and pretending to inspiration among his sycophants who marched with him. At other times he appeared surrounded by his irregular cavalry, whom of old he had led against the English at Perambaukum, — a gorgeous-looking force . . . Sometimes he would be seen to dash out from among them as they rode along . . . and turning his horse in the plain, would soon be followed by the most active and best-mounted of his officers . . . Then would ensue some mock combat or skirmish, in which the Sultaun bore an active and often victorious part, and in which hard blows were by no means of rare

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1 *Tippoo Sultaun*, I, p. 217.
2 *Tippoo Sultaun*, I, p. 218.
3 *Tippoo Sultaun*, I, p. 285.

occurrence."[1]

As the narrative develops, Tipu's flaws take centre-stage, as Meadows Taylor attempts to convince his readers that the man is nothing but a tyrant. In his pride he claims divine inspiration and protection:

". . . we are unrivalled in such stratagems; it was ourself who planned the ambuscade which ended in the discomfiture of Baillie and his kafirs; and we have ever exercised the talent which Alla hath confided to us, among many others, of military skill, in which we surpass the English and French . . ."[2]

Meadows Taylor's Tipu is driven by an unquenchable thirst for power, and will stoop to any depths to achieve it. He even uses invented dreams to maintain control over his subjects and give "divine authority" to his worst excesses. Meadows Taylor implies such claims contrasted with the English Company's own honesty:

" . . . it was revealed to us in a dream, which we have chronicled as it appeared, and with which we will now delight the ears of our people . . . On the night before last, soon after this child of clay lay down to rest, an angel of light appeared to him, even like unto the angel Gabriel, as he manifested himself unto the blessed Apostle, (may his memory be honoured!) and of whom this mortal is an unworthy imitator; and the angel said, —'The Nairs in thy dominions are becoming troublesome, therefore shalt thou destroy them utterly; their abominations and the loose conduct of their women are offences against the Most High, therefore they shall be punished, — they shall all be honoured with Islamism.' And so saying the angel vanished, and this servant awoke, and recorded the dream as he had heard it."[3]

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1 *Tippoo Sultaun*, II, pp. 273 - 274.
2 *Tippoo Sultaun*, II, p. 342.
3 *Tippoo Sultaun*, II, pp. 159 - 160.

In *Tippoo Sultaun*, Tipu's ferocious and evil character is constantly developed by references to various moral flaws in his character and to the atrocities ascribed to him:

"Kasim's post near the Sultaun's person led him into daily and close communication with the monarch, and he gradually gained an insight into his extraordinary character. Sometimes, when he uttered the noblest and loftiest sentiments of honour, he would love and respect him; again, some frivolous or ridiculous idea would get possession of his imagination, and drive him into the commission of a thousand absurdities and terrible cruelties. It was no uncommon thing to see beyond the precincts of the camp a row of miserable Hindoos hanging upon trees, who had defied the Sultaun's efforts at conversion, and had preferred death rather than change the religion of their fathers."[1]

Halted temporarily by the walls of Travancore, Meadows Taylor has Tipu wreak a vengeance that is reminiscent of the terrors English troops were alleged to have visited upon the inhabitants of Hydernagar in the late 18th century:

"Impelled by a smarting sense of the degradation they had suffered in the attack on the wall, and in the subsequent delay which had occurred before the storming of the breach, the army now gave itself up to frightful excesses. The inhabitants were hunted like wild beasts, shot and speared by the merciless soldiery – their women and children sent into a captivity, to which death would have been preferable. Thousands were forcibly made to profess the faith, and amidst the jeers of the rabble were publicly fed with

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[1] *Tippoo Sultaun*, II, p. 327.

beef and forced to destroy cows, which they had hitherto venerated."[1]

When faced with certain defeat, he completely loses his reason, and even curses his own "false" Prophet:

"The Sultaun saw the action; it was in vain that he tore his hair, threw his turban on the ground, raved, swore, implored the assistance of the Prophet and all the saints in one breath, and in the next wildly invoked the vengeance of Heaven upon his coward army. It was in vain that he threw himself . . . into the crowd, and upon the narrow path strove to withstand the torrent which poured backwards. It was in vain that he shouted — screamed till he was hoarse: his voice was lost in the mighty hubbub, in the cries of thousands, the oaths, the groans, and rattle of musketry from behind. It was in vain that, drawing his sword in desperation, he cut fiercely at, and desperately wounded, many of the fugitives . . . "[2]

In Walter Scott's novel the portrait of Tipu is more consistent because his Tipu has a foil, his father, the now honourable Hyder, who can take credit for the military success while Tipu remains an incarnation of the devil. Menie Gray, who is to be delivered into Tipu's hands is said to be in the process of being sold into "slavery to a heathen tyrant"[3], The most powerful images were based on the narratives of captives like Scurry, Bristow and the anonymous officer. Their tales of life in Hyder and Tipu's camps, authenticated by no less an authority than Earl Cornwallis, served Meadows Taylor and Scott well:

"A few of our unfortunate countrymen, whom Tippoo has treated in a shocking and barbarous manner, and had, in contempt of the treaty,

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1 *Tippoo Sultaun*, III, p. 42.
2 *Tippoo Sultaun*, II, pp. 354 - 355.
3 *The Surgeon's Daughter*, p. 409.

detained in his service by force since the conclusion of the last war, have lately made their escape . . . Little . . . has transmitted to me a copy of a narrative, collected from these men, of the occurences that had happened to themselves, accompanied with lists of names, and an account of the fate, as far as they knew and could recollect, of all the other prisoners, and even deserters, that had remained in Tippoo's hands after the conclusion of the war . . . "[1]

Real authentication was difficult, but, as in the case of the Thugs, allegations were sufficient. After all, the task was to produce evidence of evil-doing, not to give fair trial or ascertain the truth. No records of how the English treated their prisoners, or of the Indian losses from their ranks were published. Indians, whichever side they were on counted for less than Europeans and that moderated compassion for them. The focus was, as Cornwallis makes clear, on the treatment of "Europeans" (Englishmen):

"I have to add, to many other melancholy circumstances mentioned in those lists, that, by concurrent testimony of the inhabitants of Oussore, and of the garrison, which after evacuating that place, was taken by us in the fort of Rayacotta, two Europeans, who had been confined and obliged to exercise mechanical trades for Tippoo's service in that place for five or six years, were put to death by his orders in the month of March or April last; which information was corroborated by our officers finding in the place, which was pointed out by the inhabitants as the grave of two Europeans, two human skeletons, with the heads separated from the bodies, and a few tattered remnants of cloathing, which, from some particulars in its make, seemed to have belonged to Europeans . . . "[2]

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[1] Copy of a letter from Cornwallis dated Dec. 26, 1791 in "East India Intelligence", *The Gentleman's Magazine and Historical Chronicle*, LXII, 1792, pp. 466 - 67.
[2] Copy of a letter from Cornwallis dated 26, 1791, p. 467.

The captives' portrayed themselves as stoics, true heroes of whom their country could be proud when it heard how they had stood firm in the face of Eastern tyranny and torture:

". . . having bound my arms behind me, they hurried me almost naked before Hyder . . . Several French officers were present; I was interrogated through one of them, who spoke English, with respect to the strength and destination of our army; but having replied that our troops amounted to 35,000 men, 5000 of whom were Europeans, and that we had seventy pieces of ordnance in the field, the interpreter briskly told me, 'I lied," we had no such thing! and that all our Europeans in India collected together would not amount to that number. Hyder was so much exasperated at my attempt to deceive him that he kept me three days without any food, tied down on the ground in the rear of his tent, which was the station I constantly occupied during the seven days I remained in his camp."[1]

Keen to project the image of true-blue Britons, the captives claimed that Britain never strayed far from their thoughts. They were not, they assured their readers, seduced by the unnatural beauty of India :

"Often I have paraded in the most disconsolate manner, in the silence of those delicious nights peculiar to that country, and which are not to be described by the most masterly pencil . . . But alas! they were no beauties to me; the ever-prevailing impression still corroding my mind, with my heart ready to burst at the thought of being for ever cut off from all that were near and dear to me . . . The melancholy hours we passed here would take a more able pen than mine to describe . . . we were all young, yet none of us dared to sing 'Rule Britannia', or even hum it with impunity. We prohibited it between ourselves, under the impression of bitterness, and the idea of every

[1] "Narrative of James Bristow", pp. 28 - 29.

hope being marred of ever seeing our country or friends again."[1]

In the novels that followed the Englishmen who survived never broke under torture. Herbert Compton, though in chains, openly challenges Tipu's power and survives:

"I am in your hands, a helpless captive, O Sultaun . . .and therefore I cannot but hear whatever thou choosest to say to me: but if thou art a man and a soldier, insult me no more with such words [promises of reward]. Nay, be not impatient, but listen. When Mathews was poisoned by thy order, — nay, start not! thou knowest well it is the truth — I was given the choice of life and thy service, or death upon refusal, — I chose death . . ."[2]

If Tipu were as vengeful as he has been made out to be, he would not have permitted such insolence, but in the novel he is no match for the heroic Englishman, who derides his religion, reduces him to impotent rage, and walks away alive:

"[Compton] ' . . . I abhor thy base and unholy faith.'

'Hog! son of a defiled mother! vilest son of hell!' screamed the Sultaun, almost speechless with passion, 'dost thou dare to revile the faith? Do ye hear him, friends? do ye hear the kaffir's words? Have ye ears, and do not avenge me? have ye swords, and do not use them?'"[3]

Tipu, Meadows Taylor's audience were informed, feared the English and their power to overcome Indian princes. He realised that in every sphere they surpassed him and that his alliance with the French could, in the end, only delay his eventual defeat:

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[1] "The Life of James Scurry, Seaman", p. 217.
[2] *Tippoo Sultaun*, II, p. 149.
[3] *Tippoo Sultaun*, II, p. 152.

"Above all, the English are his detestation; he sees their restless love of intrigue and power; he knows how they have sown dissensions in Bengal, and wrested many fair provinces from the sway of true believers; he fears their abilities and knowledge of the arts of war; and though he has some French in his service, yet he can see plainly enough that they have not the powers of the others to contrive or to execute . . ."[1]

"Tippoo Sultaun" hides his fear behind empty boasts, insulting the "Feringhees" on every occasion that arises, but the readers of the novel are invited to see through his words and observe the real nature of the man:

" . . .Alla . . . .hath planted a natural knowledge of them [cannon] in our heart, which is not surpassed by any of the whoreson Feringhees . . . accursed and mother-defiled race . . . "[2]

However, few Indians in the novel accept his assessment of their rivals. On leaving home, the young Kasim tells his mother of his respect and admiration for the Europeans who had humbled so many Indian rulers. He is proud to be associated with them in any way, even as an enemy:

"So much as thou lovest me, mother, wilt thou not have pride when I write to thee that I command men, that I have fought with the infidel English, that I have been rewarded, that I am honoured? . . . doth it not behove every believer now to draw his sword in defence of the faith? Look around: — the English are masters of Bengal and Oude; they hold Mohamed Ali of the Carnatic and him of Oude in a base thraldom; — they thirst for conquest, and are as brave as they are cunning . . . "[3]

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[1] *Tippoo Sultaun*, I, p. 218.
[2] *Tippoo Sultaun*, II, p. 141.
[3] *Tippoo Sultaun*, I, p. 75.

When speaking to Herbert Compton, while the latter is still a captive, he expresses the same opinion," . . . thine enemies even say that the English never lie."[1] Such sentiments, according to Meadows Taylor, were shared by a large proportion of Tipu's court, though they dared not express them before their monarch, who seems bent on self-destruction, pretending instead to despise them:

" . . . 'the English' were the continued subject of conversation; their religion, their manners, and their persons were ridiculed and held up to scorn by all, but their bravery none could deny; and that man held himself far exalted above his fellows, who had entered personal combat with or slain one of them . . ."[2]

Tipu, according to all accounts, was not just guilty of anti-English sentiment, but also of persecuting his own subjects. He was a tyrant who could abide no challenge to his own false faith and perpetrated vile crimes against those who did not accept it. Even though Hinduism was generally regarded as a primitive religion, Tipu's attacks on it were represented as the actions of a fanatic. It was suggested that he took every opportunity, no matter how bizarre, to force his faith upon the Hindus. At the marriage of his son he undid any goodwill that might have resulted from his generous gifts to his subjects by forcibly converting large numbers of them:

"To be ignorant of every other feature in the character of this extraordinary man, and to be informed of this circumstance alone, would certainly inspire a high opinion of his munificence, liberality and philanthropy, but the moment we are told that he tarnished all the glory which accompanied such a

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[1] *Tippoo Sultaun*, I, p. 286.
[2] *Tippoo Sultaun*, I, pp. 274 - 275.

splendid act, by a piece of contemptible, fanatical, and tyrannical despotism, compelling 100,000 of his defenceless Hindoo subjects to embrace Mahometism on the same day, our admiration changes into merited detestation."[1]

Reinforcing the image of a fanatic monarch who terrorised his non-Muslim subjects, Bristow repeated every hearsay that reached him, and bluntly concluded that the Indian prince was the worst possible ruler:

"It is his constant and favourite practice to insult and persecute the Hindoos on the score of religion: he has demolished many of their temples and sanctified places of worship, particularly a much-revered pagoda near the bazaar of Seringapatam, where he found, it is asserted, 150,000 coined pagodas, buried under the stone out of which the oval was hewn. He frequently orders calves to be brought before the doors of their temples, and sheds the sacred blood under the very nose of the offended deity . . . Tippoo, as I have once observed, is detested by the majority of his subjects, and will only ascribe their patience and submission to the known indolence and abject tameness of the Indians, who are awed by the vast armies he has hitherto contrived to maintain, and the known severity with which he ever punished the bare appearance of defection."[2]

Scurry also recorded other incidents of ill-treatment of Hindus. On another occasion his own civil officials were his victims. The description projects an image of cold-blooded, calculated torture - Tipu ensures that all his victims suffer by choosing the appropriate forefinger and thumb in the case of the left-handed Brahmin:

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[1] "Narrative of James Bristow", p. 62.
[2] "Narrative of James Bristow", p. 62.

"Some error, of no great import, discovered in the accounts of fifteen fine young Bramins, who were in one of his offices as clerks; for which they lost the forefinger and thumb of their right hands, all except one, who was left-handed, and he had his left finger and thumb cut off; but the suffering of the Bramins in general were indescribably cruel."[1]

The passage calls on the readers to sympathise with the victims, and goes on to give further evidence of Tipu's torture of other inoffensive men:

"Poor inoffensive men! Were they accused of being rich, it was enough; and no small pains were taken to procure their accusation, Tippoo's emissaries and spies being in every corner of his kingdom. Once informed against, all pleas were useless, and they were instantly dragged to Seringapatam. On their arrival, they were sent for by the paymaster-general, who would address them mildly, stating, that he has received information they were worth a certain sum of money, which he named, and that he wanted so much for his master's services. If the proposal was acceded to, all was well, and perhaps the Bramin would be put into a more lucrative situation; but a denial, or a supposed prevarication, was sure to be accompanied by the most exquisite tortures."[2]

Although Scurry's Tipu was always harsh towards his non-Muslim subjects he was forced to admit moral defeat when faced with the strength of Christian character, even when it was demonstrated by (mere) female Indians:

"Now followed the fate of the poor Malabar Christians . . . Their country was invested by Tippoo's army, and they were driven, men, women, and children,

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[1]"The Life of James Scurry, Seaman", p. 201.
[2]"The Life of James Scurry, Seaman", pp. 201 - 202.

to the number of 30,000, to Seringapatam, where all who were fit to carry arms were circumcised, and formed into four battalions . . . Their daughters were many of them beautiful girls, and Tippoo was determined to have them for his seraglio; but this they refused; and Mysore was invested by his order, and the four battalions were disarmed and brought prisoners to Seringapatam. This being done, the officers tied their hands behind them. The *Chumbars*, or sandal-makers, were then sent for, and their noses, ears and upper lips were cut off; they were then mounted on asses, their faces towards the tail, and led through Pataw, with a wretch before them proclaiming their crime. One fell from his beast and expired on the spot through loss of blood. Such a mangled and bloody scene excited the compassion of numbers, and our hearts were ready to burst at the inhuman sight. It was reported that Tippoo relented in this case, and I rather think it true, as he never gave any further orders respecting their women."[1]

In fiction, Tipu reached even greater heights of barbarity. Meadows Taylor's Tipu is the very symbol of bigotry and fanaticism. On one occasion he viciously attacks and kills a sacred bull in full view of a Hindu populace, then compounds his sacrilege by forcing a Brahmin to drink its blood, thus depriving his victim of his caste forever, and, finally, hunts the man like an animal:

" . . . one of those bulls which the belief of the Hindoos teaches them are incarnations of divinity, and which roam at large in every bazaar, happened to cross the road lazily before the royal party. The attendant spearmen strove to drive it on; but . . . it resisted their shouts and blows . . . and menaced them with its horns. There ensued some little noise, and . . . the Sultaun . . . . [cried out] 'A spear, a spear! . . . Now, friends, for a hunt! Yonder fellow menaces us, by the Prophet! Who will strike a blow for Islam, and help me destroy this

[1]"The Life of James Scurry, Seaman", pp. 197 - 198.

pet of the idolaters? — may their mothers be defiled! Follow me!' . . . The bull seeing himself pursued, turned for an instant with the intention of flight, but it was too late; as it turned, the spear of the Sultaun was buried in its side, and it staggered on, the blood pouring in torrents from the gaping wound, while it bellowed with pain. One or two of the attendants followed his example; and the Sultaun continued to plunge his weapon into the unresisting animal as fast as he could draw it out, until at last it fell, groaning heavily . . . 'Shabash, shabash!' (Well done, well done!) who could have done that but the Sultaun? Inshalla! he is victorious — he is the slayer of man and beast _ he is the brave in war, and the skilful in hunting!' cried all the attendants and courtiers. But there were many others near, who vented their hate in silent yet bitter curses, — Brahmins, to whom the slaughter of the sacred animal was impiety not to be surpassed . . . . [Tipu looked at the crowd] one of whom had disgust plainly marked upon his countenance, "ha! thou dost not like this. By the soul of Mohammed we will make thee like it! Seize me that fellow, Furashes!' he cried fiercely, 'and smear his face with the bull's blood; that will teach him to look with an evil eye on his monarch's amusements.' . . . ere the man knew what was said, he was seized by a number of the powerful attendants; his face was smeared with the warm blood, and some of it forced into his mouth. . . . 'Enough! bring him before us . . . Away with thee! . . . I will give thee a fair start; but if I overtake thee before yonder turning, thou art a dead man, by Alla!' . . . [The man] fled with the utmost speed that terror could lend him; the Sultaun waited awhile, then shouted his favourite cry of 'Alla yar!' and, followed by his attendants, darted full speed after the fugitive. The Brahmin, however, escaped down the narrow turning, and the brilliant party rode on, laughing heartily at their amusement."[1]

The whole scene is a parody of one in a chivalric romance ("The brilliant party rode on" etc.)

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[1] *Tippoo Sultaun*, I, pp. 289 - 292.

Another incident is rendered more gross, more horrifying by Tipu's persecution of his own courtiers - on a hunt Tipu's party encounters two elephant, and dispatches the mother:

" . . . the Sultaun, wild with excitement; '. . . Spare the young one'. . . A crowd rushed forward to seize the calf . . . The Sultaun, who had looked on in silence, now dismounted to examine it; and all his officers and courtiers, Mahomedan and Hindoo, followed his example . . . the young elephant, bound and secure, was brought before the Sultaun. Instantly . . . his eyes lighted up with the same cruel expression he had once or twice noticed . . . 'Bind it fast!' he cried to his attendants, 'tie it so that it cannot move.' . . .The order was obeyed . . . 'Now,' cried the Sultaun, looking around him proudly, and drawing his light but keen blade, 'by the blessing of the Prophet we are counted to have some skill in our Qusrut — let us prove it!' So saying, and while a shudder at the cruelty of the act ran round the circle, and the Hindoos present trembled at the impiety, he bared his arm, and advancing, poised himself on one foot, while the glittering blade was uplifted above his head. At last it descended; but being weakly aimed, the back of the poor beast yielded to the blow, while it screamed with pain. Almost human was that scream! . . . [after several attempts] 'Curse the blade!' he cried, throwing it upon the ground; 'it is not sharp enough, or we should have cut the beast in two pieces at a blow.' Several stepped forward and offered their swords; he took one, and looked around — his eye full of wanton mischief. 'Now Ramah Seit!' he cried to a portly Hindoo banker who was near, 'thou shalt try.' . . . 'But your slave is a Hindoo,' urged the trembling banker, 'to whom shedding the blood of an elephant is damnable.' . . . Tippoo, whose most dangerous passion, bigotry, was instantly aroused by the speech; 'what say ye, my friends? This is a kafir, an enemy of the true faith; why should he not be made to help himself to perdition?' and he laughed a low, chuckling, brutal laugh . . . The poor man, in very dread of his life, which indeed had been

very little worth had he disobeyed, — advanced and made a feeble stroke . . . The man was forced to repeat the blow many times, nor was there a Hindoo present who was not compelled to take a part in the inhuman barbarity."[1]

Inconsistencies mark this portrait - Tipu's capital Seringapatam is filled with Hindu temples, peopled by fat priests and filled with devotees, and all of it is encouraged by the secretly idolatrous Muslim monarch:

"At the other side of the square the venerable forms of the ancient Hindoo temples reared their huge conical and richly ornamented roofs; and around their massy gates and in the courts lounged many a sleek and well-fed Brahmin, whose closely shaven and shining head, and body naked to the waist — having only a long white muslin cloth tied around his loins, with its end thrown over his shoulder — proved him to be in the service of the enshrined divinity, whose worship was not forbidden by the fanatical ruler of the fort — nay, it was even whispered, shared in by him."[2]

This is the capital of the same man who persecutes the Nairs and attempted to destroy every smallest part of their faith:

"The Sultaun took the field in person against the Nairs in January of the ensuing year, and prosecuted the war against them with the utmost energy. In one fort alone, two thousand of them capitulated, who were converted, under threat of death if they refused the rite of Islam: complying therefore, they publicly ate of beef, which, abhorrent as it was to them, they were obliged to partake of. The war prospered, and, ere the rains had set in, the territory was subdued by the ravages of the Mysore army; for the war had been proclaimed a holy one by the Sultaun, who, with mad fanaticism,

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[1] *Tippoo Sultaun*, II, pp. 296 - 302.
[2] *Tippoo Sultaun*, II, p. 119.

everywhere destroyed temples, broke their images and plundered their treasures. The Nairs who would not accept the conversion offered, were hunted like wild beasts and destroyed in thousands."[1]

Tipu's hold on his subjects, Meadows Taylor claimed, was weak, being based on terror. His subjects were depicted turning to the English for protection and even his governors show no loyalty:

" . . . the governor [of Bednore], an officer of Tippoo's, and a forcibly-converted Hindoo, sought earnestly an opportunity to revenge his own dishonour . . ."[2]

The possibility that the governor was an opportunist, always siding with the victors, is ignored - it must be Tipu's inhumanity that has driven him into the arms of the English.

In the novel , the central character, Kasim moves from Tipu's camp to that of the English, and enhances his nobility, while the traitor par excellence is one who moves in the opposite direction, Jemadar Jaffur Sahib, who is guilty of the most heinous of Tipu's "crimes". A man who turns from the English to Tipu is, it is suggested, the most evil of the evil, because he has had the chance to see the light. His evil character cannot be doubted, else he would not have taken service under the despotic monarch of Mysore. Virtuous men, it is clear, will be attracted away from the enemy, while the treacherous naturally move toward him. This is the traitor Jaffur Sahib:

"Sprung from the lowest rank of the people, he possessed ferocity of character, which had early attracted the notice of the Sultaun, and he had risen rapidly to the station he held. He had also been a ready instrument in

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[1] *Tippoo Sultaun*, II, pp. 266 - 7.
[2] *Tippoo Sultaun*, II, p. 7.

his hand to effect any cruelty he willed; and if a war was to be carried into any district where Mohamedanism had not advanced, and forcible conversions of the inhabitants were to be made, or if any of the unoffending people were to be hung because they would not become converts, Jaffur Sahib was generally selected, — as well as from his address as a soldier, as from his unscrupulous character, — from among the others of the same stamp who abounded about the person of the Sultaun . . . "[1]

Those Hindus who have been converted to Islam welcome their "natural protectors", the Christian English, and collaborate with them to undermine and defeat the Satanic Muslim king (who, as has been mentioned before, worships their gods in secret and encourages them in his capital):

"The one a Nair, a Hindoo of high birth, forcibly converted to the religion of Mohamedanism, burned for an opportunity of revenge . . . had been promised reward, which . . . the one indignantly scorned . . ."[2]

If the depictions of his followers and of his treatment of Hindus was calculated to create an impression of a fanatic king, the depiction of the captivity and privations endured by Europeans was intended to bring Tipu's barbarity home to the audience and override any suspicions that English involvement in wars in India was anything less than essential. Fictional representations of the "atrocities" endured by English captives owed much to accounts of Tipu's "barbaric" treatment written by real survivors, who illustrated their accusations of inhuman behaviour lavishly. Items that would shock English readers were recounted with particular relish. The officer who survived internment by Tipu waxed poetic about the terrible fate met by European soldiers who fell into his hands, both on the battlefield and off it:

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1 *Tippoo Sultaun*, I, pp. 228 - 229.
2 *Tippoo Sultaun*, II, p. 30.

"While the enemy's horse and elephants marched again and again in barbarian triumph over the field of battle, the wounded and bleeding English, who were not instantly trodden to death by the feet of those animals, lingered out a miserable existence, exposed in the day to the burning rays of a vertical sun, and in the night to the ravages of foxes, jackalls, and tygers, allured to that horrid scene by the scent of human blood. Many officers, as well as privates, stripped of all they had, after protracting hour after hour, and day after day, in pain, miserably perished; others rising, as it were, from the dead, after an incredible loss of blood, which induced for a time the most perfect insensibility and stupefaction, found means to rejoin their friends in chains, with whom they were destined to share, for years, the horrors of the gloomy jail, rendered still more dreadful by frequent apprehensions of that assassination which, they had the most undoubted proofs, had been practised on numbers of their fellow-prisoners, dispersed in different places of confinement, throughout the dominions of a barbarous enemy."[1]

Allegations such as these were remembered and repeated, while reports of similar atrocities by fellow-Europeans would be brushed aside as anti-French passions cooled. The real captives, however, writing at a time when the French were still enemies, depicted them as Tipu's more-than-willing allies. Scurry recorded his suffering at their hands as graphically as he did his suffering at the hands of the Indians:

"Every means of intimidation was made use of: and when they found it ineffectual, I was ordered to the galley, where both my legs were put in irons, my arms tied behind me, and an iron bolt was forced into my mouth in such a savage manner, that the blood ran from both corners. In this situation I remained about three hours, when they took the gag from my mouth and

[1] "The Journal of an Officer of Colonel Baillie's Detachment", p. 101.

untied my arms. Both legs, however, still remained in irons, and in this condition I was kept by these humane Frenchmen, with an allowance of rice and water once in twelve hours, and that after their blacks were served . . . "[1]

It is significant that one of the major insults cited is the serving of European captives after the "blacks". This suggests that much of the ire at other suffering when in Hyder and Tipu's prisons may well have been doubly humiliating because it was inflicted *by* "blacks".

In fiction written in the 1830s, the alleged mistreatment of captives by Tipu had become so important to the arousal of anti-Indian feeling that even journeys in doolies (sedan-chairs), on the shoulders of unfortunate locals, were cited as an example of hardship:

". . . they had to endure a long march of many days, with every hardship and indignity which the unconcealed wrath and spite of the Sultaun . . . could inflict upon them. Their food was of the coarsest description; bad water, where it could be found, was given to them to drink; miserable doolies, in which it was impossible to lie full length, or even sit, and open so that the sun beat in on them, were given to some: they were carried too by the inhabitants of the villages, who were pressed from stage to stage, in order that they might travel with the utmost expedition; and as these men were unaccustomed to carry loads in that way, the exhausted men they bore were jolted, until an excess of fatigue often caused faintness and even death. Blest are those who died thus! they were spared the misery the survivors had to endure."[2]

The English perception of Tipu depended on denunciations of him as a Satanic figure. Bristow, for example, informed the English readers that Tipu

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[1] "The Life of James Scurry, Seaman", p. 183.
[2] *Tippoo Sultaun*, II, pp. 166 - 167.

dared to give European women to *black* slaves as mates:

"A singular species of cruelty that had no object in view than wanton malice, and the barbarous delight our villains constantly took in tormenting and insulting the English prisoners, occurred about this time. Four European women, with their husbands . . . were brought to Seringapatam, where they were torn from the men, whom the villains sent to Chittledroog, and afterwards allotted the women to four of the black slaves. Two became the property of the natives of Mysore, and the other two became the property of a couple of abominable Abyssinians, with whom they were compelled to live. I saw these women myself; they were good-looking females . . . "[1]

If handing over white captives to black slaves was the act of a demon, giving non-white women to white men was not - Indian women given to English captives were received without the righteous outrage that accompanied the sight of European women being given to non-Europeans:

"We were one day strangely informed, that each of us, who was of proper age, was to have a wife; for this piece of news we were extremely sorry, but there was no possibility of our preventing their designs. There were, at this time, a number of young girls, who had been driven with their relations out of the Carnatic, when Hyder infested that country . . . one morning we were ordered to fall into rank and file, when those girls were placed one behind each one of us, while we stood gazing at one another, wondering what they were about to do. At last the durga gave the word, 'To the right about face'; with the addition (in the Moorish language) of 'take what is before you'. This, when understood, some did, and some did not; but the refractory were soon obliged to comply. Thus they fed their vanity, by making our first interview as ludicrous as possible, each being by this means supplied with a piece of

[1] "Narrative of James Bristow", p. 46.

furniture, for which, however valuable in general, we had neither want nor inclination . . . on our return with our black doxies, we had the bazaar, or public market, to pass, where the crowd was so difficult to penetrate, as to separate us. . . we were subject to pay eighty rupees to the cadi, in case we divorced our wives, very few of whom exceeded eleven years of age. The one who fell to my lot was a native of Arcot . . . She was an affectionate creature, by whom I had two children; one died, and the other I left in the arms of its distracted mother."[1]

The girls themselves, "very few of whom exceeded eleven years of age", aroused minimal pity - the sole objection is that the Englishmen had "neither want nor inclination" for them. Once the deed is done the Englishmen not only accept their "wives", they leave them with children. Scurry, his editor wrote later, did make several attempts to contact his "wife" after his return to Britain, but there is no reason to believe that such concern was shared by any of his fellow captives, none of whom make any mention of such "marriages".

Not surprisingly, in Scott's novel the interest is in the transfer of European women into the hands of the non-Europeans, not vice versa and Tipu's desire to possess a European woman, though not unusual at the time (both Indian and Englishmen of power took pride in their ability to acquire foreign women) is described as "the selfish passions of a voluptuous tyrant"[2].

Another shocking image that fiction repeated and elaborated was that of English slaves in the Indian courts. Parading of foreign captives became, in *Tippoo Sultaun,* completely inhuman, specifically because it involved English youth at the mercy of non-Europeans:

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[1] "The Life of James Scurry, Seaman", pp. 202 - 204.
[2] *The Surgeon's Daughter*, p. 410.

"On either side of him knelt two fair and rosy-faced youths, dressed in gorgeous apparel, the children of Europeans captured on various occasions, who, forcibly converted to Mohamedanism, always attended the Sultaun . . . "[1]

A more detailed description of their situation reinforced the image by suggesting that the emasculation of these slaves was physical, and therefore a terrible affront to English virility:

"Around Tippoo — some engaged in fanning him . . . were a number of fair and youthful creatures, whose ruddy or pale cheeks showed their origin to have been in the cold and distant climate of the west. They were all dressed sumptuously as women, they had been instructed in the arts of music and dancing, and were thus held up to the scorn of people generally, who were taught, by frequent allusions to them, that all English were effeminate cowards, fit only to be dressed as women and to be engaged in such frivolous occupations. Some of the boys were young, and had known no other existence than that of debased slavery. They took pride in their gorgeous dresses, and moved about to display them; others, apparently overpowered by shame at their disgraceful situation, hung down their heads and strove to conceal their faces from the prying glances of the spectators. A miserable lot was theirs: many of them, retaining a vivid remembrance of their countrymen, their faith and their freedom, were obliged to perform a routine of bitterly degrading duties, dancing and singing before the Sultaun for the amusement of the Court . . . "[2]

Another barbarous act that the captives routinely accused Tipu of was the killing of European captives. One prominent victim was General Mathews

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[1] *Tippoo Sultaun*, II, p. 133.
[2] *Tippoo Sultaun*, III, pp. 110 -111.

whom, the survivors claimed, was foully poisoned at Tipu's command:

"The month of September this year, 1783, was distinguished by the inhuman murder of General Matthews, who was certainly poisoned in a very barbarous manner, being starved until he had consented to eat of the food which he had discovered contained poison. He refused for several days to taste nourishment, but hunger surmounted at last the desire of protracting a miserable existence, and he swallowed a plentiful portion of the victuals prepared for him, and in a few hours after expired in violent convulsions . . . Much was said amongst the prisoners, and much, no doubt, has gone abroad into the world concerning the whole of Tippoo's behaviour to the unfortunate General, which commenced with a base breach of faith, and closed with a barbarous murder. His base and cruel conduct has . . . been exposed in all the colours."[1]

The 1830s novels, too, represented torture and execution as important elements of the Indian kings' treatment of their English captives. Meadows Taylor's Tipu had several methods. The recurring image in his novel is of a cliff from which Europeans were cast to their death. Contradictorily, it was also the one evil idea that is not Tipu's own - he inherited it from his father, the normally honourable Hyder. Rhyman Khan, loyal servant of Mysore, described it thus:

" . . . that is a place well worth seeing, and one which was a rare favourite of Hyder Ali's . . . there is a sort of a house there . . . but not one of pleasure . . . Many a poor wretch has been in it, who would have given the wealth of the world, had he possessed it, to have got out again . . . you had better not get into it; few of our people [Indians] have ever been sent there, for it is reserved for the kafir English . . . and a few of them are now and then thrown from the

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[1] "Narrative of James Bristow", p. 47.

top, to terrify the rest into submission to the Sultaun's will, and to become a feast for the kites and crows . . . "[1]

There are other contradictions - Rhyman Khan, a devoted follower of Hyder and Tipu, shows a truly noble soul by admitting indirectly that he admires the English and has no stomach for his methods of execution:

" . . . though as arrant a coward as be in the field, yet who can stand by and see brave men hurled over these rocks; for, to do them justice, the English are as brave as lions and their courage cannot be quelled: we learned that at Perambaukum, to our cost.'" [2]

Tippoo Sultaun returns to the cliffs on several occasions, once, for the benefit of readers, describing, in graphic detail, the victims as they are led to their death:

"One by one the prisoners came . . . some of them heavily chained, others free; but all men on whose faces the rigour of captivity had set its seal. Melancholy and pale, many of them wasted by sickness, and by mental and bodily sufferings, they were shadows of what they had been; their clothes hung in rags about them, . . . a few of them had worn-out uniform coats upon them, whose stained and discoloured appearance fitted well with the wretched condition of their wearers. Their step was slow and weak, and those who wore fetters with difficulty moved at all; none of them spoke, but many of them gazed around upon the walls, and looked up into the bright heavens, and smiled, as thought they were glad that motion and air were once more allowed to refresh their cramped and emaciated limbs and weary spirits . . . following those on foot were several in small doolies, whose

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[1] *Tippoo Sultaun*, I, pp. 215 - 217.
[2] *Tippoo Sultaun*, I, p. 217.

emaciated and ghastly looks told of their sickness and unfitness for removal . . ."[1]

These are the men who are to be hurled over the cliff. They are pitiful - the aim is to shock and anger the English readers, to convince them that the Indian monarch is without any human virtue or feeling. The first victim is a young man, a good Christian - as non-Indian as could be:

"There was one youth, a noble and vigorous fellow . . . high-spirited and full of fire, which even captivity had not tamed. But the long and rapid journey, the bad food, the exposure to scorching heat and chilling dew, had brought on dysentery, which had exhausted him nigh to death. He was almost carried by the guards, and set down apart from the rest. His languid and sunken eye and pallid cheek told of his sickness: but there was a look of hope in the glance which he cast upwards now and then, and a gentle movement of his lips, which showed that his spirit was occupied in prayer . . . A cry of horror burst from the group of Englishmen . . . They saw the young man lifted up by two of his executioners, and borne rapidly to the further edge of the rock, not twenty yards from them. He uttered no cry; but looking towards them sadly, he bade them farewell for ever, with a glance even more eloquent than words. Another instant, and he was hurled from the brink by those who carried him."[2]

The seaman, Scurry, presented his English audience with a wealth of gory detail about Tipu's methods of torture, punishment and execution. He claimed Tipu took great pleasure in devising innovative, horrible tortures involving machinery and animals:

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[1] *Tippoo Sultaun*, I, pp. 276 - 277.
[2] *Tippoo Sultaun*, II, pp. 182 - 184.

" . . . Tippoo, thinking his mode of punishment towards those poor creatures who happened to fall under his displeasure not severe or terrific enough, ordered nine large tiger cages to be made, and placed opposite his Kerconah, or treasury. They were arranged there according to his order, and soon tenanted, each with a large tiger . . . we were paraded before those ferocious animals, and had an opportunity of seeing them fed once or twice a day; one of them was as black as coal . . . Those tigers, above stated, were designed for the punishment of high crimes and misdemeanours: three of his principal officers . . . were severally thrown to the tigers, and devoured in an instant, all but their head: for which purpose the tigers were always kept hungry! . . . I will first mention the manner in which he punished criminals. Amongst numerous other instruments, he had a wooden horse, of a full size, resembling those adopted for his cavalry, curiously and infernally contrived, on the saddle of which were nine rows of sharp spikes, about three-quarters of an inch long. The machine was moved by springs; and as soon as the culprit mounted, the horse, by some mechanism, would rear on his hindlegs, and then, falling with a jerk on his forefeet, the spikes would enter the posteriors of the rider. The time of riding was proportioned to the crime; though it was said, that one of his horsemen rode this machine with such dexterity as to avoid the spikes, in consequence of which he was pardoned. I have ofttimes seen the horse, with its furniture etc., but never saw a culprit on his back, though I was at Seringapatam at the time that several were punished that way."[1]

But it was the death by elephant that captured the imagination of writers of the 19th century. Writers exercised great licence in inventing modes of execution by elephant - this first was Scurry's:

"But his most common method of punishment was, that of drawing to death

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[1] "The Life of James Scurry, Seaman", pp. 199 - 200.

by the elephant's feet . . . the poor wretches (for several were drawn at one time) first had their arms tied behind them, above the elbows, and then a rope put about the small of their legs, which was fastened to the elephant's foot. This being done, the criminals stood with their backs towards the elephant's posteriors, waiting sometimes an hour for an order for their execution. The distance they stood from the beast was about six yards, and the first step the elephant took would throw the poor unfortunates on their faces; thus they would be dragged over rough and smooth ground till dead, and with no faces left."[1]

Meadows Taylor's Tipu imitates Scurry's and enjoys the spectacle of a victim being dragged to death by an elephant as punishment for daring to ask for protection from the king's lieutenant:

"'You are my father and mother — you are my Sultaun — you are my god!' cried the man; 'I am a poor Brahmin . . . I have been plundered — I have been beaten by a devil they call Jaffar Sahib; he seeks my life, and I have fled to your throne for mercy.'

'Thou shalt have it,' said the Sultaun quietly, with his low chuckling laugh, which not even his officers could listen to without feeling their blood curdle; 'thou shalt have it. Away with him, Furashes!' he cried, raising his shrill voice, 'away with him! I see an elephant yonder; chain him to its foot, and let him be dragged to and fro before the place he has defiled.'"[2]

In *The Surgeon's Daughter* it is Hyder, not Tipu, who uses the elephant as means of execution. The method is different but as picturesque - the condemned man is stamped on instead of being dragged behind the pachyderm. The treacherous Middlemas suffers this fate:

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[1] "The Life of James Scurry, Seaman", p. 201.
[2] *Tippoo Sultaun*, III, p. 8.

"'Hold, Feringi,' said Hyder, 'Thou hast received all that was promised thee by the bounty of Tippoo. Accept now what is the fruit of the justice of Hyder.' . . . he signed with his finger, and the driver of the elephant instantly conveyed to the animal the pleasure of the Nawaub. Curling his long trunk around the neck of the ill-fated European, the monster suddenly threw the wretch prostrate before him, and stamping his huge shapeless foot upon his breast, put an end at once to his life and to his crimes."[1]

Scott's scene is rendered more gruesome by references to the reactions of the executioner (the elephant) and of one of the traitor's associates, the Begum, Mrs. Montreville:

". . . the cry which the victim uttered was mimicked by the roar of the monster, and a sound like a hysterical laugh mingling with a scream, which rung from under the veil of the Begum. The elephant once more raised his trunk aloft, and gaped fearfully."[2]

In *Tippoo Sultaun* the tyrant is represented as not only enjoying the tortures but also boasting publicly of his actions. His capital is adorned with paintings that depict the most horrible tortures he devised:

" . . .every house was gaudily ornamented with paintings, which were a proof, if any was needed, in what hatred the English were held . . . a row of white-faced Feringhees, their hands tied behind them, and with their faces half blackened; while others were seated on asses, with their faces to the tail. Again there were some being torn to pieces by tigers, while men of the true faith looked on and applauded; others were under the feet or chained to

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1 *The Surgeon's Daughter*, p. 422.
2 *The Surgeon's Daughter*, p. 422.

the legs of elephants, one to each leg, while the beast was depicted at his utmost speed, his trunk raised into the air, and the Mahout evading him with a huge ankoos. Again another row were undergoing the rite of Mohamedanism at the hands of the Kazee; others were suffering torture; several appeared drawn up in a line, whose heads were all falling to the ground under one vigourous blow of the executioner — a man of the true faith, with a huge beard and mustachios curling up to his eyes, while streams of gore, very red and much higher and thicker than the sufferers themselves, gushed from the bodies.

Here again were a group of ten or twelve seated round a table, each with a fierce regimental cocked hat upon his head, a very red and drunken face, and his right hand upraised grasping a huge glass filled with red wine; while others, overcome by inebriation, were sprawling under the table and wallowing among the swine and dogs which lay at the feet of those who were yet able to preserve their equilibrium."[1]

That was falsity in the very heart of the capital of the most famous of Indian monarchs. Scott and Meadows Taylor, like their fellow-Britons, believed implicitly that the family was the epitome of evil and that no good had come to any from his rule. Yet it is evident from the contradictions in the accounts that the chroniclers and writers were biased and that the portraits were designed to justify the ascendancy of the English. Moral claims were being created to lend credibility to an essentially political conflict. The argument being presented was that since they, the most powerful of the rulers of the sub-continent, were evil, barbaric despots none of the other monarchs could be any better. English rule, being clearly superior to such despotism, was therefore desirable, necessary and a Christian duty.

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[1] *Tippoo Sultaun*, II, pp. 116 - 117.

CONCLUSION

Edward Said says, of his book *Orientalism*, that it ". . . tries to show that European culture gained in strength and identity by setting itself off against the Orient as a sort of surrogate and even underground self."[1] This thesis has attempted to examine the complexities of that relationship, as evinced by the changing representations of English traders, soldiers and administrators and of Indian religion, customs and kings, without recourse to pre-definition of the relationship (in English writing) between the English and India. The aim was to analyse the representations in writings in the context of English perceptions of the political and social relationships between the two peoples/cultures and within English society itself. The representations were, in effect, treated as much as part of the changes as the result of them. It is significant that the writings of the time not only depicted the conflicts and re-alignments but were actively involved in them. Beside being records of the conflicts, they were actors in them. Reportage, discussion, comment, fiction - all were parts of the continuing interaction. The different kinds of writing were so related that taking any one of them in isolation would have required constant reference to the others. Consequently, they were treated as a diffuse but related whole: the effort was to bring them together, analysing them in relation to each other and demonstrating the interconnected nature of experience, ideas and representation.

In the study, it has been seen that initially trade was the only expression of individualism available to those without hereditary endowment. The ruling establishment, grateful for the increased wealth (and of the opportunity to compete with traditional foes like Spain and France without direct involvement) encouraged the traders. However, when they began to interfere in the political life of their native land, they came under scrutiny which discredited them because they threatened the status quo, and

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[1]Said, Edward: *Orientalism*, London, 1978; p. 3.

not because they had "misbehaved" in India. As has been seen, this was not a case of their actions conflicting with the independently developing imperial ideal but of their forcing change in the power relationships in England, and creating wealth and political power that did not owe allegiance to the established power-brokers. The attack, when it came, came from those whose ranks they were swelling, the landed gentry and their sympathisers.

The imperial ideal that developed was partly a reaction to the growing influence of the Nabobs, in that it supported the actions of a different group of men, the soldiers, who, as militarists, were perceived as the guardians of non-commercial power. Then, when this group became a force to reckon with in itself, it was tamed by an increase in the control exercised by civilians, the administrators, who represented the authority of the "independent" (non-trading, non-military) parliamentary forces in England, forces whose rise had been due, in part, to the ascendance of the original trading establishment, which begat many of them. The traders were cast aside when the rule of the "people" superseded the rule of the old state in England. The people who inhabited Parliament, now possessing powers other than the right to trade, invented a moral code, which espoused, nominally, the service of "the greater good", instead of individual wealth, the foundation of trade. So, at the time of Victoria's accession to the throne, an event which marked the inauguration of the imperial and industrial age of England, it was the administrators, the arbiters and enforcers of public morality who were at the fore.

These events did not occur in isolation. While they were taking place, ideas were being debated in the public forums of periodicals, fiction and Parliament, as well as in the relatively closed worlds of the Company's service and scholarship. The public forums debated the precise nature of power and the duties that colonial territory entailed, and the private ones supplied the public with the "facts" upon which they were to base their opinions. The success of English arms was seen to raise the possibility that

the English were "naturally" superior militarily, an opinion supported by "evidence" from the private forums that the English were superior to the Indians in other areas of religion, kingship and morals. The diminishing power of the Indian monarchs and states was taken to indicate that they were at best decadent, at worst, primitive. Comparisons with the Roman empire were produced, supported by representations of the Hindu religion's similarities with the Greco-Roman. This also gave rise to the suggestion that the fading Indian empire was sinking under the weight of its "false" religion. English missionary activity was on the rise, and the moral codes being developed in England demanded that non-Christian religion be eradicated. Hinduism became ripe for the plucking.

Attacks on Hinduism were given credence by scholarly representations like that of Jones which confirmed that Hindu polytheism was a contemporary equivalent of the Roman and therefore both indefensible and in need of being swamped by Christianity, however hard that might be. The word of the Bible should be spread. Hindu "customs" like Sati and Thuggee gained prominence as "proof" that there was a need for Christian missionary activity and rule. The missionary activity was itself fired by the spread of the new morality of the people's rule in England - religion was part of it and, since it was part of the establishment, in a symbiotic relationship, religion justified the state and benefited from its patronage, and the state supported religion because it justified it.

Unfortunately, the Hindu faith appeared to be able to withstand aggressive English Christian morality. Convinced of the truth of their own beliefs but confronted by the resilience of the Indian, English writers concluded that powerful superstition stood in their path. They could not imagine otherwise. Reports that even though Indians under English/Christian rule fared better than under their previous masters they did not convert suggested that Indians required double salvation - from their rulers and from their religion. This served to strengthen the argument that

continued English domination (through the administrators) was both necessary and desirable. Sati and Thuggee became focuses of attention, proof that Indian/Hindu religion was reprehensible and that Indians required English moral guidance, which could, of course, be best provided through continued rule.

The suppression of Thuggee itself is probably best described as a crusade against highwaymen, a crusade because, like the Crusades in Palestine, it was justified morally using rather dubious factual evidence. Unusually, it was created by one man who convinced his benevolent Christian/moral state to take up the cause. The crusade was readily assimilated into the representations of the time because it proved yet again that the Hindu state was morally bankrupt and therefore open to conversion, just as the invasion of the "Holy Land" was justified by reference to the "pagan" beliefs of its then rulers. Christianity, morality and the state were inseparable - the only jarring note being the East India Company itself, even though it had been transformed from a trading organisation into a quasi-government (it would, of course, cease to be that after the events of 1857). Reports that Hinduism did not conform to either decadent or barbaric representations, that Satis continued under English rule, that Thuggee was so difficult to prove that extra-judicial means had to be employed to achieve success were dismissed or used as further proof of the need to impose English rule.

Hyder and Tipu were valiant foes at the beginning of their careers but, after they had challenged British rule and suffered defeat, they were progressively demonised. The fluctuations in their representations are traceable and comprehensible when the context is understood. Their power, barbarity and demonisation justified, at various times, the rise of the English military presence and the establishment of civilian English rule. Simultaneous to their representations, conflict between the English soldiery and administrators was taking place so, while Hinduism was being generally

denigrated by the moral codes of the conquering nation, in the "Mysoreans" territories it became a religion to protect. Subjective interpretation of evidence ("factual" and "fictional") was employed to suit the needs of different discussions and all the branches of writing involved in the contradictory presentations. On the one hand, in *Tippoo Sultaun* Tipu was depicted as evil because he was a Muslim tyrant who oppressed Hindus, and, on the other, he was a heretic because he subscribed to, and encouraged, Hindu practices. The contradiction was papered over by references to English morality and the superiority of English rule. He was represented as a demon because he opposed English rule, so his "actions" were used in the evidence against him, while the actions of his enemies were represented as acceptable, necessary steps in the battle to introduce Indians to English/Christian rule.

This study has attempted to place the arguments and discussions in the context of the English perception, not to draw the obvious conclusions. Analysis of the representations starting from a solely "Indian" or anti-colonial perspective would have been , as has been seen, no more useful than analysis with the intention of redeeming the "good" name of the Company. What was required was an understanding of the representation and its acceptance. This study of English writings between 1740 and 1840 demonstrates that the objective reality of India did not exist at all in the English perception at the time. What did exist was a series of changes and conflicts within English society, which were influenced by events in India. Whether or not Tipu was an Indian patriot, or Hinduism was a valid moral code etc., were not issues to English writers, even to those Englishmen who opposed the English presence in India, because the opposition was itself only part of debates about the effect of the colonies on English society and consciousness.

To summarise, the actions of the English nation in India, as depicted in the writings of its own people, were analysed by referring to their own

various social, economic and political conditions. The representations, since they were parts, symptoms and justifications of the action, were studied in the context of the larger whole and not in isolation, demonstrating the complex *English* nature of the portraits. This thesis examined those representations, the only "facts" that were available to the English at the time.

APPENDIX A

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APPENDIX B

EAST INDIA COMPANY
GROSS REVENUE, EXPENDITURE & SURPLUS 1792 - 1838.

Year	Gross Revenue	Net Expenditure	Surplus
1792-93	£ 8,225,628	£ 6,940,833	£ 1,284,795
1793-94	£ 8,276,770	£ 6593,129	£ 1,683,641
1794-95	£ 8,026,193	£ 6,567,808	£ 1,458,385
1795-96	£ 7,866,094	£ 6,888,997	£ 977,097
1796-97	£ 8,016,171	£ 7,508,038	£ 508,133
1797-98	£ 8,059,880	£ 8,015,327	£ 44,533
1798-99	£ 8,652,033	£ 9,139,363	£ - *387,330*
1799-00	£ 9,736,672	£ 9.955,390	£ - *218,718*
1800-01	£ 10,485,059	£ 11,468,185	£ - *983,126*
1801-02	£ 12,163,589	£ 12,410,045	£ - *246,456*
1802-03	£ 13,464,537	£ 12,326,880	£ 1,137,657
1803-04	£ 13,271,385	£ 14,395,405	£ *-1,124,020*
1804-05	£ 14,949,395	£ 16,115,183	£ *-1,165,788*
1805-06	£ 15,403,409	£ 17,421,418	£ *-2,018,009*
1806-07	£ 14,535,739	£ 17,508,864	£ *-2,973,291*
1807-08	£ 15,669,905	£ 15,850,290	£ - *180,385*
1808-09	£ 15,525,055	£ 15,392,889	£ 132,166
1809-10	£ 15,655,985	£ 15,534,711	£ 121,274
1810-11	£ 16,679,197	£ 13,909,981	£ 2,769,216
1811-12	£ 16,605,615	£ 13,220,966	£ 3,384,649
1812-13	£ 16,336,290	£ 13,515,828	£ 2,820,462
1813-14	£ 17,228,711	£ 13,617,725	£ 3,610,986
1814-15	£ 17,297,280	£ 15,955,006	£ 1,342,274

Year	Gross Revenue	Net Expenditure	Surplus
1815-16	£ 17,237,819	£ 17,059,968	£ 177,851
1816-17	£ 18,077,578	£ 17,304,162	£ 773,416
1817-18	£ 18,375,820	£ 18,046,194	£ 329,626
1818-19	£ 19,459,017	£ 20,396,587	£ - *937,570*
1819-20	£ 19,230,462	£ 19,689,107	£ - *458,645*
1820-21	£ 21,352,241	£ 20,057,252	£ 1,294,989
1821-22	£ 21,803,108	£ 19,856,489	£ 1,946,619
1822-23	£ 23,171,701	£ 20,083,741	£ 3,087,960
1823-24	£ 21,280,384	£ 20,853,997	£ 423,387
1824-25	£ 20,750,183	£ 22,504,156	£ *-1,753,973*
1825-26	£ 21,128,388	£ 24,168,013	£ 3,039,625
1826-27	£ 22,383,497	£ 23,312,295	£ - *928,798*
1827-28	£ 22,863,263	£ 24,053,837	£ 1,190,574
1828-29	£ 22,740,691	£ 21,718,560	£ 1,022,131
1829-30	£ 21,695,208	£ 20,568,358	£ 1,126,850
1830-31	£ 22,019,310	£ 20,233,890	£ 1,785,420
1831-32	£ 18,317,237	£ 17,048,173	£ 1,269,064
1832-33	£ 18,477,924	£ 17,514,720	£ 963,204
1833-34	£ 18,267,368	£ 16,924,332	£ 1,343,036
1834-35	£ 26,856,647	£ 16,684,496	£ 10,172,151
1835-36	£ 20,148,125	£ 15,994,804	£ 4,153,321
1836-37	£ 20,999,130	£ 17,363,368	£ 3,635,762
1837-38	£ 20,858,820	£ 17,553,525	£ 3,305,295