Arenas of Display and Debate: Britishness, Exotica, and the Material Counterflows of Empire in India, 1750—1825

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INTRODUCTION

In October, 1786 the German novelist and travel writer Sophie von La Roche visited the London home of the former East India Company (EIC) Governor General Warren Hastings and his wife Marian Hastings.[1] Prior to acquiring an estate at Daylesford, Gloucestershire in 1788, the Hastings family resided at a landed house at St. James's on the edge of the British metropolis.[2] La Roche marveled at how this residence contained myriad types of exotic Indian and East Asian creatures and items collected during their many years in the subcontinent. In addition to viewing an "all-black tiger," a cow from Tibet, "and several other eastern animals" on the property, the novelist was delighted when Hastings "showed [her] the pictures he had had painted in India, of cities and districts, forts, temples and palaces."[3] Hastings's noteworthy collections of British and continental paintings, ornate furnishings, scientific devices, and other items bore association with claims to polite taste.[4] But La Roche was struck by the copious Indian artworks, ivory South Asian furniture, and exotic food.[5] At dinner they ate on "genuine Indian porcelain, and…partook of East Indian rice…steamed tender in Indian fashion." While this home was filled with all of the material trappings of a returned Company officer or "nabob,"[6] also remarkable was the presence of South Asian servants. According to La Roche, in

[1] Sophia von La Roche, *Sophie in London, Being a Diary of Sophia La Roche,* Claire Williams, translator (London, 1788) (London: Jonathan Cape, 1933 edition), 246, 254-9.
[2] G. B. Malleson, *Life of Warren Hastings, First Governor-General of India* (London, 1894), 445.
[3] La Roche, *Sophie in London* 246-7, 270.
[4] Philip Lawson and James Philips, "'Our Execrable Banditti': Perceptions of Nabobs in Mid-Eighteenth Century Britain, *Albion: A Quarterly Journal Concerned with British Studies*, Vol. 1, No. 3 (Autumn, 1984): 227-8; Maya Jasanoff, *Edge of Empire: Lives, Cultures, and Conquest in the East, 1750-1850* (New York: Vintage Books, 2005), 35-8.
[5] See Anonymous, "Inventories: Household goods of Warren Hastings at Daylesford," BL Add MS 41609; BL Add MS 41611; Michael Edwardes, *Warren Hastings: King of the Nabobs* (London: Hart-Davis, 1976), 181-2.
[6] The term nabob was a corruption of the Persian term "nawab," meaning deputy or governor. James M. Holzman, *The Nabobs in England: A Study of the Returned Anglo-Indian, 1760-1785* (New York, 1926), 7-23.

Britain the Hastings family replicated life in India by having transported with them "two Indian boys, thirteen to fourteen years old, [to serve] Mr. and Mrs. Hastings." The former Governor General confided in La Roche that his property was "the merest phantom of the province he governed in East India," but he desired more land existing as an India-like space in Britain.[7]

Following his purchase of the 650-acre Daylesford estate that had once belonged to his ancestors, Hastings contracted the EIC's architect, Samuel Pepys Cockerell, to redesign Daylesford House, incorporating both classicized and South Asian architectural features.[8] Although Daylesford was largely European in form, Cockerell installed an Islamicate dome and a few other architectural details based upon sketches of Indian structures. Moreover, Warren Hastings directed Cockerell to design the garden and grounds just as they had been at his former home in Alipore.[9] While Daylesford's aesthetics and contents may have appeared to some observers as an intermeshing of British and Indian features and tastes, for a returned Anglo-Indian, South Asian and British architectural elements may not have been entirely distinct.[10] Hastings viewed such designs as within the scope of British or Anglo-Indian architectural forms. But for some European observers, this heterogeneity of forms — as well as the copious South Asian artworks and other items occupying every room of the house — designated Daylesford as an orientalized estate in Britain. Hastings was not unique in transporting his collections of Indian artworks, antiquities, and other items back to Britain during the latter part of the century. Indeed,

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[7] La Roche, *Sophie in London* 270-2.
[8] Keith Feiling, *Warren Hastings* (London: Macmillan & Co., 1954), 372-4.
[9] Christopher Christie, *The British Country House in the Eighteenth Century* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000), 80-82.
[10] This dissertation employs the contemporary usage of the term "Anglo-Indian." Rather than referring to someone of both European and South Asian ancestry, the term "Anglo-Indian" typically specified a Briton who spent a considerable time living in South Asian geographies, climates, and cultural milieus. This dissertation also refers to material culture produced by Europeans in India as "Anglo-India" goods since such items typically incorporated South Asian features or components, or at least carried association with India when transmitted to Britain. Moreover, Europeans typically referred to persons of diverse ancestry as "Portuguese." See also chapter 5.

as the Company's power and Indian territories expanded beginning in the 1750s, officers, merchants, artists, tourists, missionaries, and a variety of other persons shipped Indian exotica to Britain.[11] As this study shows, throughout the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries the circulation, ownership, and display of South Asian items remained contentious processes intimately tied to contemporary debate on the nature of empire, India, and Britain itself.

This dissertation examines how the appearance of greater quantities and varieties of Indian artworks, antiquities, and other items in Britain encouraged the creation of new museums, the development of new ways of displaying and categorizing exotica, the formation new fashionable social circles, and the construction of new ways of defining and delimiting Britishness and "orientalness" during the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.[12] This study argues that the importation of South Asian artworks, antiquities, religious images, and other Indian and Anglo-Indian items was central to British understandings of India and British national character. Following the Company's acquisition of a territorial empire in India in the mid-eighteenth century— a time when larger quantities and varieties of Asian goods flowed to Britain — the circulation of Indian exotica encouraged British re-imaginings of the geographic divisions and definitions of British and "oriental" spaces in India and London. Throughout the Georgian period, Britons held diverse perceptions of Britain and the colonial territories as heterogeneous

[11] The designation of particular items as "exotica" entailed a transformation from the ordinary to the unusual, which could occur through de-contextualization, dislocation, and physical movement. For this study, "exotica" refers to material culture typically divorced from its original uses and meanings and whose aesthetics appeared distinctively "oriental" to most British eyes. For any form of exotica, meanings and interpretations were always multiple, contested, and contingent. Caroline Frank has shown that Americans similarly divested Chinese images of earlier meanings, allowing for the re-inscription of items with new interpretations. Frank, O*bjectifying China, Imagining America: Chinese Commodities in Early America* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011), 7-10, 19-24.
[12] This dissertation follows Gillian Russell and Peter Clark's use of the term "fashionable sociability." For both scholars, fashionable sociability carried association with clubs and other exclusive venues catering to both men and women of polite taste. Gillian Russell, "An 'Entertainment of Oddities': Fashionable Sociability and the Pacific in the 1770s," in *A New Imperial History: Culture, Identity, and Modernity in Britain and the Empire 1660-1840* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 48-50; Peter Clark, *British Clubs and Societies 1580-1800: The Origins of the Associational World* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2000), 39, 192, 451.

geographies capable of containing both British and "oriental" sectors. Most Britons living in the subcontinent perceived European sectors of cities as appendages of Britain defined by the presence of European peoples, architecture, and other material culture. But there was not a singular, uniform vision of Britishness or orientalness in Britain or India. This dissertation reveals that while there were distinct phases in British uses of and attitudes towards Indian artworks and antiquities resulting from imperial expansion in the subcontinent, the constant movement of goods always was essential in maintaining British fantasies of national identity and imagined geographies throughout this period.

I. Historiography – The Imperial Turn

While recent scholarship has illuminated Britain and the empire as mutually-constituted during the Georgian period, this dissertation reveals the interwoven nature of Britain and India by underscoring how contemporaries did not understand these geographies as necessarily separate cultural, political, ethnic, or national zones. Since the end of the twentieth century, "new imperial histories" of Britain have underscored how the tumult, tribulations, and processes of imperial expansion and governance shaped the development of Britain and defined it against the empire.[13] Although Bernard Porter has questioned whether an influx of information, gossip, and goods from the colonies truly affected most Britons' daily lives, others, such as Catherine Hall and Sonya O. Rose, have argued that this very everydayness of empire in metropolitan persons' experiences highlights just how central it was in transforming Britain.[14] As C. A. Bayly and

[13] Frederick Cooper and Ann Laura Stoler, "Between Metropole and Colony: Rethinking a Research Agenda," introduction to *Tensions of Empire: Colonial Cultures in A Bourgeois World,* edited by Frederick Cooper and Ann Laura Stoler (Berkeley: University Of California Press, 1997), 1-37; Kathleen Wilson, "Introduction: Histories, Empires, Modernities," in *A New Imperial History: Culture, Identity, and Modernity in Britain and the Empire, 1660- 1840,* edited by Kathleen Wilson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 14-15.
[14] Bernard Porter, *The Absent-Minded Imperialists: Empire, Society, and Culture in Britain* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004); Catharine Hall and Sonya O. Rose, "Introduction: Being at Home with the Empire," in *At*

Kathleen Wilson have observed, the constant flows of peoples, goods, information, conceptions of self and national identification, and other connections forces all histories of Britain and imperial spaces to be global in scope in order to truly engage with the effects of empire.[15] More recently, scholars have further decentered the metropolis by underscoring how "Britain was also a frontier" of the Atlantic world and beyond. According to Catherine Molineux, "imperialism rendered Britain a periphery to the interactions between Native Americans, Africans, and Europeans that characterized developing colonial societies." While few Asian, African, Native American, and other non-European peoples lived in the metropole, Britons were constantly exposed to diverse, competing textual, visual, and oral descriptions of colonized persons. Thus, conceptions of race remained fluid throughout much of this period.[16] Moreover, Saree Makdisi has demonstrated that the eighteenth and early nineteenth-centuries witnessed the negotiation of race, class, orientalness, and Britishness as intertwined processes connected throughout the empire. Britain was not a "western" nation whose geographies and peoples were distinct from those of the "orient." For Makdisi, "the borders between 'here' and 'there,' 'us' and 'them,' were for some time rather more amorphous, even porous, than we might have imagined."[17] Britishness and orientalness could be qualities of both British and colonial spaces and peoples. This dissertation underscores the multiple, competing, and contradictory definitions and delimitations of British and oriental peoples and geographies existing in imperial spaces and within Britain.

Home with the Empire: Metropolitan Culture and the Imperial World, edited by Catharine Hall and Sonya O. Rose (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 16, 22-30.

[15] Kathleen Wilson, *The Island Race: Englishness, Empire, and Gender in the Eighteenth Century* (London: Routledge, 2003), 16; C. A. Bayly, *The Birth of the Modern World 1780-1914: Global Connections and Comparisons* (Malden, Massachusetts: Blackwell Publishing, 2004), 2-3; See also, James Epstein, *Scandal of Colonial Rule: Power and Subversion in the British Atlantic During the Age of Revolution* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 5-6.

[16] Catherine Molineux, *Faces of Perfect Ebony: Encountering Atlantic Slavery in Imperial Britain* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2012), 5.

[17] Saree Makdisi, *Making England Western: Occidentalism, Race, and Imperial Culture* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2014), ix-xii, xvi-xvii, quote xi.

Throughout this period, London and other reaches of urban and rural Britain were neither necessarily "British" geographies nor entirely distinct from colonial or "oriental" spaces. Lauren Benton has shown that all states, territories, empires, and other imagined geographies and political units were never coherent. Rather, nations and empires were always patchworks of heterogeneous, fragmented spaces demarcated by uncertain and porous borders.[18] According to Miles Ogborn, even London was a "series of multiple and contradictory spaces and places at all scales taking many different forms: imagined geographies, territorializations, networks, or hybridizations that combine the local and the global."[19] Linda Colley famously argued that in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries the concept of a unified British national identity emerged.[20] However, Makdisi suggests that processes of defining Britishness equally required identifying persons and geographies of Britain and the empire as foreign, oriental, or otherwise not British.[21] Collin G. Calloway recently illuminated parallels between the experiences of colonized persons in the Americas and Britain's internal others. Particularly, Calloway suggests that Scottish Highlanders and Native Americans faced similar trials and tumult as non-white persons on the peripheries of the expanding empire.[22] During this period, social conceptions and legal categories of race, class, and Britishness formed throughout the empire. Dana Rabin has asserted that metropolitan conceptions and categories were not merely mapped onto colonial

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[18] Lauren Benton, *A Search for Sovereignty: Law and Geography in European Empires, 1400-1900* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 2.
[19] Miles Ogborn, *Spaces of Modernity: London's Geographies 1680-1780* (New York: Guilford Press, 1998), 20.
[20] Linda Colley claims that the emergence of the concept of Britishness was resultant of conflicts with France late in the century. Colley, *Britons: Forging the Nation 1707-1837* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992), 3-9.
[21] Makdisi, *Making England Western*, ix-xii, xvi-xvii.
[22] Colin G. Calloway suggests that during the eighteenth century, "Highland Scots often had more in common with the Indians than with the English. Both were known for their attachment to their homeland, and they expressed it in similar ways." Of course, in the nineteenth century, however, Scottish Highlanders would eventually take "their place on the white side of the racial divide." Calloway, *White People, Indians, and Highlanders: Tribal People and Colonial Encounters in Scotland and America* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 10-15, quotes 5, 19.

milieus. Rather, colonial legal categories and social constructions of whiteness, non-whiteness, and nationality played a major role in defining difference within Britain. These colonial formations encouraged the development of new domestic legal designations of whiteness and Britishness which excluded Africans, Welsh persons, the urban and rural poor, South Asians, Jews, Highland Scots, and other marginalized people of Britain.[23] For Makdisi, an English, British, white, western, polite identity emerged in tandem with the construction of an Asian, African, Arab, black, oriental, lower-class otherness. Thus, while Britons described Indian persons according to their oriental qualities, many elites in Britain detailed internal others in similar, racialized terms.[24]

Given the intertwined nature of class and race throughout this period, many polite Londoners regarded poorer sections of cities, urban spaces inhabited by Asian immigrants and other marginalized groups, and the Welsh, English, and Scottish countryside as akin to oriental.[25] The Lake District, the Scottish Highlands, and, particularly, rural Wales were oriental-like spaces accessible to traveler.[26] In August, 1786 the aesthetic theorist Richard Payne Knight toured "the wildest North of Wales," where he visited the Anglo-German painter Johann Zoffany. According to Knight, this elegant residence could "be justly compared to one of the islands in the deserts of Arabia."[27] Likewise, as the landscape artist William Daniell and the travel writer Richard Ayton approached Llanbedrog, Wales in 1814, heavy rain forced them to take "shelter in an unfinished house, which promised to become a more decent habitation than any [they] saw till [they] again

[23] Dana Rabin, *Britain and its Internal Others, 1750-1800: Under Rule of Law* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2017), 4-10.
[24] Makdisi, *Making England Western,* ix-xii, xvi-xvii.
[25] Ibid, ix-xii, xvi-xvii.
[26] Katie Gramich, "'Every Hill Has Its History, Every Region Its Romance': Travellers' Constructions of Wales, 1844-1913," in *Travel Writing and Tourism in Britain and Ireland,* edited by Benjamin Colbert (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 147.
[27] Richard Payne Knight to Charles Townley, 17 August, 1786. British Museum Central Archive (BMCA), Townley Collection. TY7/2091, Unpaginated.

got into the land of civilization. Near it were a few of the common wigwams of the country, and from them there presently issued a flock of women and children." According to Ayton, "in their manners and appearance, [they] really bore a nearer resemblance to savages."[28] Indeed, as Ayton and Daniell revealed, the peoples inhabiting these spaces seemingly designated rural Wales and other marginalized geographies as oriental-like.

Since many Britons' conceptualization of orientalness originated in observations of the persons and geographies of Britain, travel writers and imperial agents also resorted to employing such correspondences and comparisons when detailing South Asian persons, locations, and material culture. In other words, Europeans unfamiliar with Asian persons at times resorted to describing them according to their supposed resemblances to the rural persons of Wales or Scotland, the impoverished denizens of London, or comparable internal others of Britain.[29] Accordingly, when the Baptist missionary John Chamberlain first arrived in India in November, 1802, he described the first South Asians he encountered in terms of their similarities in appearance, behaviors, and material culture to those of the lower orders of Britain. Amidst the "bustle and confusion" of docking and unloading cargo, numerous Indian laborers, sailors, customs officers, soldiers, and unauthorized persons boarded the vessel. Chamberlain was particularly struck by the presence of a "Brahman on board…with his string of beads of various colors about his neck, and a variety of the little insignificant ornaments about his hands." According to the missionary, this distinctively Asian manner of adornment made this Indian man

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[28] Richard Ayton and William Daniell, *A Voyage Round Great Britain, Undertaken in the Summer of the Year 1813 and Commencing From Lands-end, Cornwall* (London, 1814), 167.

[29] For instance, while observing a group of sepoys, Maria Nugent, the wife of the Commander-in-Chief of the Company's army, claimed that "they were in general stout little men—something, in size and make, like little Welchmen" [sic]. Lady Maria Nugent, *Journal From The Year 1811 Till The Year 1815, Including a Voyage to and a Residence in India, with a Tour of the North-Western Parts of the British Possessions in that Country, Under the Bengal Government*, Volume 1 (London, 1839), 208.

appear “much like a common prostitute girl in England of a very low sort.”[30] Thus, for many Britons, the social status of others as well as one’s personal identity could be determined or crafted through material self-fashioning in concert with exhibited behaviors.[31] For instance, when Mirza Abu Taleb Khan — a Persian official at the courts of Awadh and Bengal —traveled to Britain during the early nineteenth century, he noted Britons’ perception that they could temporarily alter their social identities at a masquerade by wearing the garb of “Turks, Persians, [and] Indians.” According to Khan, many other attendees “disguise[d] themselves as mechanics or artists, and imitate all their customs and peculiarities with great exactness.”[32] This observation reveals the mutability of self-identification and social designation resultant of the adoption of manners, customs, and material culture of the lower orders and persons of Asia.

By the latter half of the eighteenth century, Britons’ embrace or eschewal of South Asian goods and practices could also result in a more permanent designation as oriental within Britain. Tillman Nechtman has illuminated how Company servants’ adoption of certain South Asian cultural norms and acquisition of Indian artworks, antiquities, and animals could render them non-British, Anglo-Indian nabobs in the eyes of many metropolitan elites. As controversial characters garnering commentary from politicians, artists, pamphleteers, and other writers beginning in the latter half of the century, enriched Company officers and other returned imperial agents received condemnation as oriental and orientalizing presences in the metropole. Nabobs appeared in metropolitan literature, theater performances, and visual productions as reprehensible figures whose ill-gotten wealth, noteworthy collections of Indian exotica, and

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[30] John Chamberlain, 11-12 November, 1802. “John Chamberlain 1802-1821 Journal.” Baptist Missionary Society Archives (BMSA), BMS Missionary Correspondence, Box IN/24. Southern Baptist Historical Library and Archive (SBHLA), Nashville, TN, Microfilm Collection #5350. Reel 37, 19.
[31] Dror Wahrman, *The Making of the Modern Self: Identity and Culture in Eighteenth-Century England* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004).
[32] Mirza Abu Taleb Khan, *Travels of Mirza Abu Taleb Khan in Asia, Africa, and Europe,* Volume 1 (London, 1814), 284.

debauched activities in India and Britain made them akin to oriental despots. In January, 1770 the politician William Pitt the Elder stated in the House of Lords that "for some years past, there has been an influx of wealth into this country" carrying "many fatal consequences." According to Pitt, "the riches of Asia have been poured upon us, and have brought with them not only Asiatic luxury, but, I fear, Asiatic principles of government." Most alarming was that "the importers of foreign gold have forced their way into Parliament, by such a torrent of private corruption."[33] However, Nechtman argues that these elite anxieties were actually rooted in how Britons, Anglo-Indians, and others held divergent visions of the definitions and parameters of Britishness during this period.[34] For many Europeans living in the subcontinent and other reaches of the colonial world, they were just as British as the denizens of the metropolis.[35] Thus, constructions, designations, and articulations of Britishness, orientalness, whiteness, non-whiteness, and a raft of other social constructs remained in flux and contested in Britain throughout this period.

Of course, nabobs, persons of the lower echelons, and other marginalized individuals in Britain did not necessarily conceive of themselves as being "oriental" or in any way non-British or foreign to the British Isles. The designation of "oriental" imposed by elites and moneyed middling persons was a mechanism for othering, denying the similarities between the middling

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[33] William Pitt the Elder, 22 January, 1770, in *The Correspondence of William Pitt, Earl of Chatham*, Volume 3, edited by William Taylor and John Pringle (London, 1838), 400, quote 405. Also cited in Philip Lawson, *The East India Company: A History* (London: Longman, 1987), 120.

[34] Tillman W. Nechtman, "Mr. Hickey's Pictures: Britons and Their Collectables in Late Eighteenth-Century India," in *The Cultural Construction of the British World*, edited by Barry Crosbie and Mark Hampton (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2016), 181.

[35] West Indian planters also received condemnation in Britain as "nabobs" due to being nouveau riche as well as cruel overlords of enslaved persons. However, their efforts to replicate British life in the Caribbean resulted in less public ridicule. Tillman W. Nechtman, *Nabobs: Empire and Identity in Eighteenth-Century Britain* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 156-7; Kathleen Wilson, *The Sense of the People: Politics, Culture, and Imperialism in England, 1715- 1785* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 274-5; Ian Beaucom, *Out of Place: Englishness, Empire, and Locations of Identity* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1999), 7-9.

sort and poorer persons, and, at times, homogenizing and making sense of the rich diversity of peoples inhabiting the British Isles. The lower orders held a number of intersecting forms of self-identification. Familial, local, regional, occupational, cultural, and, at times, national identifications all shaded conceptions of the self.[36] Accordingly, this dissertation highlights this class-based vision of impoverished and other marginalized persons held by many of the British elite, but it does not claim that this was the only perception of these sectors of Britain or that there was a singular conception of Britishness. Rather, the ability of the lower orders — much like South Asian persons in India — to shape Britain and affect imperial development in the subcontinent led British elites to resort to using comparisons and analogies between Britain's internal others and colonized "oriental" persons.

II. Historiography - The Material Turn

This dissertation underscores the importance of the creation, circulation, and, at times, destruction of South Asian and Anglo-Indian artworks and other material culture in the shaping of Britain and the empire during the Georgian period.[37] Interwoven with new imperial histories of Britain is the "material turn" characterized by historians' increased recognition of the power of material circulation, collection, and display both in maintaining British fantasies of national

[36] While Makdisi identifies Britishness as linked to elite identify formation, Linda Colley's account of the construction of Britishness claims its origins among the lower orders in opposition to France. Colley, *Britons.*
[37] Christopher Whitmore has questioned whether there can be a singular definition of "material culture" by asking "are all materials cultural?" This study follows Jules D. Prown's claim that material culture is "material, raw or processed, transformed by human action as expressions of culture." However, as John Styles and Amanda Vickery assert, items are "ambiguous and multivalent, their significance dependent on particular uses and particular contexts." Prown, "Material/Culture: Can the Farmer and the Cowman Still Be Friends?," in *Learning from Things: Method and Theory of Material Culture Studies*, edited by W. David Kinery (Washington, D. C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1996), 21; Leora Auslander, Amy Bentley, Leor Halevi, H. Otto Sibum, and Christopher Whitmore, "AHR Conversation: Historians and the Study of Material Culture," *American Historical Review,* Vol. 114 (December 2009): 1369; John Styles and Amanda Vickery, Introduction to *Gender, Taste, and Material Culture in Britain and North America, 1700-1830*, edited by Styles and Vickery (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006), 21-22.

identity and in fashioning metropolitan perceptions of South Asia's present and past. Certainly, for many decades art historians, literary scholars, and cultural anthropologists have examined how the circulation and display of Asian goods in Britain and continental Europe can reveal the conditions, conflicts, and incongruities of colonialism.[38] Preceded by economic histories examining Britain's commerce in bulk colonial groceries and manufactured goods, by the last quarter of the twentieth century historians began emphasizing the "world of goods" by analyzing the late eighteenth-century "consumer revolution" accompanying the development of the middling social sectors. The foundational works of Neil McKenrick, John Brewer, J. H. Plumb, and Grant McCracken, examined patterns of consumption of domestic and imperial commodities as a means of illuminating the emergence of a robust consumer culture underpinning and encouraging industrialization.[39] Moreover, pioneering studies by K. N. Chaudhuri, Sydney Mintz, and other economic and cultural historians have highlighted the importance of burgeoning seventeenth and eighteenth-century demand for Asian and New World commodities in both driving imperial growth and normalizing certain goods in Britain.[40] Indeed, instead of remaining exotic imports in the British mind, by the latter half of the eighteenth century, tea, coffee,

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[38] Erika Rappaport, "Imperial Possessions, Cultural Histories, and the Material Turn: a Response," in *Victorian Studies*, Vol. 50, No. 2 (Winter, 2008): 289-92; Tim Barington and Tom Flynn, Introduction to *Colonialism and the Object: Empire, Material Culture, and the Museum*, edited by Barington and Flynn (London: Routledge, 1998), 1-8.
[39] Burgeoning demand for imperial commodities played an important role in propelling British industry to produce cheaper, locally-made substitutions. Neil McKendrick, John Brewer, and J. H. Plumb, *The Birth of a Consumer Society: The Commercialization of Eighteenth-Century England* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1982), 9-33; Grant McCracken, *Culture and Consumption: New Approaches to the Symbolic Character of Consumer Goods and Activities* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1988); Maxine Berg, *Luxury and Pleasure in Eighteenth-Century Britain* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 9-12, 44-45.
[40] As Marcy Norton revealed about early-modern European consumption of American groceries, Europeans initially replicated colonized persons' practices of use. However, fears of acculturation in Europe led to the development of new rituals and ways of imbibing tobacco, chocolate, and coffee. Norton, *Sacred Gifts, Profane Pleasures: A History of Tobacco and Chocolate in the Atlantic World* (Ithica, NY: Cornell University Press, 2008); Sydney W. Mintz, *Sweetness and Power: The Place of Sugar in Modern History* (New York: Penguin Books, 1985), xxix, 130-43; K. N. Chaudhuri, *The English East India Company: the Study of an Early Joint Stock Company 1600–1640* (London: Frank Cass & Co., 1965), 172-202; Chaudhuri, *The Trading World of Asia and the English East India Company 1660-1760* (Cambridge: Cambridge University press, 1978).

porcelain, and muslins were material components of the "everydayness" of empire experienced by most social sectors of Britain.[41] Some scholars have attempted to deny the importance of colonial goods in shaping individuals' understandings of Asia, Britain, the self, and others.[42] Yet, recent studies have convincingly shown how the use or rejection of colonial produce and manufactured goods were important forms of cultural and political expression.[43] Accordingly, this study contributes to the scholarship on the material histories of imperial Britain by revealing how the circulation and display of Indian items could shape metropolitan understandings of the British or oriental nature of Britain and imperial geographies.

Although this dissertation primarily employs textual sources rather than material culture analysis, it follows Leora Auslander's claims that the production, use, circulation, transformation, and display of material culture were important means of expression for historical actors. Auslander calls upon scholars to pay attention to the material conditions of any historical context since "human beings need things to individuate, differentiate, and identify; human beings need things to express and communicate the unsaid and the unsayable." For Auslander, material goods can take on a raft of significances distinct from their initial function or context of production. Items can be invested with overlapping and competing uses and symbolic meanings

[41] While empire may have been a "mundane" or "taken-for-granted" facet of Britons' lives in certain circumstances, Tillman Nechtman underscores how empire was a major part of public debate. Hall and Rose, "Introduction: Being at Home with the Empire," in *At Home with the Empire,* 22-4; Nechtman, *Nabobs,* 5, 8.

[42] For instance, David Cannadine, *Ornamentalism: How the British Saw their Empire* (London: Allen Lane, 2001), 181-200; Porter, *The Absent-Minded Imperialists*; See also Rappaport, "Imperial Possessions, Cultural Histories, and the Material Turn," 291.

[43] Erica Rappaport has recently shown that while tea was an important source of revenue, by the nineteenth century the consumption of tea held strong association with British sociability and cultural identity, temperance, and the "civilizing mission" in the colonies. Moreover, Joanna De Groot and T. H Breen's respective studies demonstrated that the consumption of colonial imports could reveal a Briton's nationalistic support for imperial development. Conversely, the rejection of colonial goods signaled a challenge to the British state. Rappaport, *A Thirst For Empire: How Tea Shaped the Modern World* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2017), 4-5, 8, 15-17. De Groot, "Metropolitan Desires and Colonial Connections: Reflections on Consumption and Empire," in *At Home with the Empire,* 167-71; Breen, *The Marketplace of Revolution: How Consumer Politics Shaped American Independence* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004).

determined by both the possessor(s) and other observers.[44] Britons, South Asians, and other persons circulated, consumed, displayed, created, destroyed, or otherwise used an array of material culture to record, express, or shape their experiences. South Asian and European items could be used to communicate or not communicate information about India, Britain, the empire, the self, and others. Indeed, as Maya Jasanoff has suggested, British imperial expansion and rule were in actuality a multitude of overlapping, inconsistent, and contradictory processes of collecting and controlling places, peoples, and material goods.[45] Thus, as travel writers and other observers remarked, colonized persons, Asian ecologies, and forms of colonial rule were often displayed, studied, debated, experienced, remembered, and understood in Britain through material counterflows. After inspecting public museums, the homes of orientalists, and the cabinets of elites during the early nineteenth century, Mirza Abu Taleb Khan noted that "the English are fond of making large collections of everything that is rare and curious" from around the world.[46] Conversely, Britons' circulation of European items also proved essential to the development and maintenance of the fantasy of global Britishness. Much as EIC officers transmitted Indian materials to the metropole as sources of information on India, while living in the subcontinent Britons imported, displayed, and utilized European artworks and other goods in an attempt to maintain a sense of connectedness to Britain.

The flow of British and continental prints and other artworks to India also encouraged South Asian artists to integrate, adapt, and experiment with aesthetics, as well as to devise new modes of expression. As Mildred Archer's foundational study details, during the latter part of the

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[44] Auslander suggests that historians are hesitant to use material culture along with texts as primary sources since scholars have viewed texts as the only sources which can "speak" to the interpreter. But looking only at documents — which self-consciously meet the aims of the writer — overlooks the other ways individuals communicate. Auslander, "Beyond Words," *The American Historical Review,* Vol. 119, No. 4 (October, 2005): 115-21, quote 119.
[45] Jasanoff, *Edge of Empire*, 10.
[46] Khan, *Travels of Mirza Abu Taleb Khan in Asia, Africa, and Europe,* Vol. 1, 263.

eighteenth century Indian painters seeking patronage adapted their productions to meet British tastes. Although the identicalness of many Asian manufactures to European goods may have rendered imported items and local productions indistinguishable to most denizens of Calcutta, the emerging local forms and styles of painting, nevertheless, remained South Asian in the eyes of Anglo-Indian and British viewers.[47] European patrons and other observers recognized the dynamism of Indian artworks throughout this period. However, Natasha Eaton has detailed the complex similitude of South Asian and Anglo-Indian productions by illuminating the mimetic relationship underpinning the entangled eighteenth and nineteenth-century Indian and British visual economies. British aesthetics and material culture forms were not a monolithic, dominant force to which Indians responded. Rather, British and Indian visual economies became interwoven as artists in colonial spaces continuously influenced, mimicked, and mirrored one another. This intertwining of aesthetic and material forms could, at times, result in the fluidity of aesthetics and the breakdown of differentiation between British, Anglo-Indian, and South Asian art and material culture.[48] Accordingly, circulation networks and social and economic conditions in India allowed or forced British and Indian artists to use both South Asian and European materials.[49] Britons and Indians, however, never presumed that the use and intermixing of aesthetics and materials would render subcontinental productions not South Asian.

Unlike other reaches of the colonial world and the United States in subsequent centuries, during the Georgian period it was less common for Britons to question whether artworks,

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[47] Mildred Archer, *Company Paintings: Indian Paintings of the British Period* (London: Victoria and Albert Museum, 1992), 13-18.

[48] Natasha Eaton, *Mimesis Across Empires: Artworks and Networks in India 1765-1860* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2013), 1, 4-6, 7-10, 63; Eaton invokes the notion of colonial anxiety produced by mimicry. See Homi Bhabha, “The Other Question: Stereotype, Discrimination and the Discourse of Colonialism,” in *The Location of Culture* (London: Routledge, Second Edition 2004).

[49] The landscape artist Thomas Daniell, for instance, stated that his employment of Indian assistants and his use of Indian paper and other materials resulted in his streetscapes being “Bengalee work[s].” Thomas Daniell to Ozias Humphrey, Calcutta, 7 November 1788, Humphrey Mss, Royal Academy of Arts Library, HU/4/13; Unpaginated.

artifacts, or other items from South Asia were "authentic" productions.[50] Rather, the great diversity of artworks and goods produced in India, the preponderance of local imitations nearly or entirely indistinguishable from imported European goods, and the loss of provenance of British goods in the subcontinent led Indians, Anglo-Indians, and those in Britain to assume that all material culture in India was South Asian. Indeed, much as women and men left home as Britons and became Anglo-Indian nabobs from their time in South Asian social, cultural, and ecological milieus,[51] European goods shipped to the subcontinent also gained an air of Indianness.[52] While Anglo-Indians differentiated imported European material culture in India from South Asian goods,[53] metropolitan persons such as elite connoisseurs, middling collectors, and customs officers typically identified any item produced in the subcontinent as Indian. This fluidity of forms allowed European observers in Britain and India to invest South Asian artworks, antiquities, and other manufactures with multifarious interpretations.

Underpinning this study's discussion of production, circulation, and display is the notion that Indian and Anglo-Indian material culture could have multiple, competing interpretations, meanings, and values among European and Asian persons in Britain and in the subcontinent. Arjun Appadurai and Igor Kopytoff famously suggested that the significances applied to particular items transform as they change hands and circulate between differing "social arenas"

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[50] For works detailing conceptions and constructions of "authenticity" of American Indian items during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, see, among others, Daniel H. Usner, *Indian Work: Language and Livelihood in Native American History* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2009), 93-140; Ruth B. Philips, *Trading Identities: The Souvenir in Native North American Art from the Northeast, 1700-1900* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1999); Edwin L. Wade, "The Ethnic Art Market in the American Southwest, 1880-1980," in *Objects and Others: Essays on Museums and Material Culture*, edited by George W. Stocking (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1985), 167-91.
[51] For women receiving the designation of "nabobinas," see Nechtman, *Nabobs,* 185-220.
[52] In part, such a transformation was due to skilled Indian and East Asian artisans adapting and intermeshing Asian and British aesthetics and materials, as well as their role in circulating and decontextualizing Indian, Anglo-Indian, and European productions. For Asian imitations being identical to British imports in Calcutta, see chapter 2.
[53] Nechtman, "Mr. Hickey's Pictures: Britons and Their Collectables in Late Eighteenth-Century India," 180-2.

and "cultural units."[54] The meanings of an item can shift based upon those who possess or control it, but the cultural context also influences interpretations and values.[55] According to W. David Kingery and Marjorie Akin, whenever a collector acquires a piece of material culture, the item transforms by taking on new functions and meanings.[56] However, items do not shed all previous meaning and take on a singular new designation when transitioning from one "regime of value" to another. Rather, as Fred Myers has revealed, numerous divergent and oppositional artistic, aesthetic, political, spiritual, monetary, scientific, and taxonomic meanings and designations could coexist within one social context.[57] Thus, South Asian material culture did not remain static in meaning or function in Britain or India. Such transformations were the product of news of imperial expansion and rule influencing popular opinion — as well as personal experiences and observations — shaping individuals' perceptions of South Asian items in Britain and India throughout this period.

Indian exotica took on a multitude of new associations and uses in Britain as the eighteenth century progressed, but never was there a coherent, singular vision. By building upon Martin Heidegger's designations of "objects" and "things," Bill Brown and other scholars have recently examined the capacity of material culture to influence human behaviors and generate multiple interpretations.[58] Accordingly, Lorraine Daston has asserted that an item can influence

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[54] Arjun Appadurai, "Introduction: Commodities and the Politics of Value," in *The Social Life of Things: Commodities in Perspective*, edited by Arjun Appadurai (Cambridge: Cambridge University press, 1986), quote 14-15, 29; Igor Kopytoff, "The Cultural Biography of Things: Commoditization as Process," in *The Social Life of Things: Commodities in Perspective*, 64-8.

[55] According to Amy Bentley, for any item "at one level, the meaning and value is intensely personal and idiosyncratic; at another, broader level of culture, the meaning takes its cue from larger social mores." Auslander, Bentley, Halevi, Sibum, and Witmore, "AHR Conversation: Historians and the Study of Material Culture," 1367.

[56] W. David Kingery, Introduction to *Learning from Things,* 8-9; Marjorie Akin, "Passionate Possession: The Formation of Private Collections," in *Learning from Things,* 104.

[57] Fred R. Myers, "Introduction: The Empire of Things," in *The Empire of Things: Regimes of Value and Material Culture*, edited by Fred R. Myers (Santa Fe: School of American Research Press, 2001), 58-9.

[58] According to these scholars, "objects" are material culture which does not gain the notice of humans, but "things" can impel observers to ponder the nature of material culture, how one interacts with it, and, possibly, the self. For Bill Brown, humans confront the "thingness" of items when they stop working in some way. This dissertation,

human behavior when a person encounters it and realizes that it defies taxonomy due to its chimerical physical features, its uncertain function, or its otherwise culturally-illegible nature.[59] During the eighteenth century most Europeans did not understand South Asian religious images and other Indian exotica as sellable items or as "artworks." W. J. T. Mitchell suggests that the European construction of the categories of art and non-art was a division between intelligible material culture and the "bad objects" of empire. These "bad objects" continued to generate anxieties and ambivalences among Britons, inviting individuals to re-inscribe them with new meanings through invented taxonomy, new uses, or the erasure of provenance.[60] Indeed, the particular physical features of Indian items and the channels through which they entered Britain could render them seemingly indecipherable, thereby possibly emptying pieces of material culture of previous meanings and encouraging diverse readings by Europeans. Most South Asian observers during this period did not perceive spiritual images as saleable goods or necessarily even as material culture crafted by human hands. Yet, one way in which Britons attempted to control and deconsecrate Indian images was through de-contextualization by placement in collections, taxonomic shift to "art" or "artifact," and, at times, shipment to Britain.[61] Accordingly, the circulation, dislocation, and re-contextualization of South Asian material

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however, does not rely upon this analytical framework since, as Daniel E. White asserts, when items stop working in one way, they take on new functions and meanings to observers. Nevertheless, this dissertation avoids using the terms "thing" and "object" when discussing material culture. Brown, "Thing Theory," introduction to *Things,* edited by Bill Brown (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004), 3-7, 9, 12; Martin Heidegger, *Poetry, Language, Thought* (New York: Harper, 1977, 2001 edition), 164-80; White, *From Little London to Little Bengal: Religion, Print, Modernity in Early British India, 1793-1835* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2013), 202, n.71.

[59] Lorraine Daston, Introduction to *Things That Talk: Object Lessons from Art and Science*, edited by Lorraine Daston (New York: Zone Books (MIT Press), 2004), 20-4.

[60] W. J. T. Mitchell, *What do Pictures Want?: The Lives and Loves of Images* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2005), 93, 146-7, 156-60.

[61] Richard H. Davis, *Lives of Indian Images* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1999), 85-6, 231-4; White, *From Little London to Little Bengal,* 72-4.

culture often resulted in multiple layers of new, competing meanings interweaving, challenging, and, at times, obliterating preexisting forms.

As recent scholarship on nabobs and the flows of Indian exotica to Britain has revealed, South Asian items were contentious materials bound up in contemporary politics of empire, display, gender, and orientalist research. Natasha Eaton has suggested that most studies have focused upon Indian material culture in Britain as only carrying association with nabobish collections, which were denigrated by metropolitan elites. But earlier in the century Indian items had value to polite Britons as peculiar, aesthetically-incongruent novelties.[62] However, as Tillman Nechtman has shown, greater quantities and varieties of Indian material culture flowing to Britain in the decades following the Company's conquest of Bengal resulted in these materials taking on new meanings. By the latter half of the century, collections of South Asian items retained importance to returned Anglo-Indians in the maintenance and expression of their "global biographies." Company officers held much broader definitions of items which could be regarded as British or at least normalized within Britain. Since nabobs did not interpret Indian material culture as an orientalizing threat to the white town of Calcutta or other European spaces in India, surely imported exotica would not be an intrusive presence in Britain. For Nechtman, metropolitan disagreements concerning the nature of Indian material culture was "a very real contest over the definition of Britishness."[63] Critics of nabobs identified such collections as indicative of nabobs' homes as being oriental spaces in Britain. Throughout the eighteenth

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[62] Natasha Eaton, "Nostalgia for the Exotic: Creating an Imperial Art in London, 1750- 1793," *Eighteenth Century Studies.* Vol. 39, No. 2 (Winter, 2006): 227-30; See also Christopher M. S. Johns, *China and the Church: Chinoiserie in Global Context* (Oakland: University of California Press, 2016); David L. Porter, "Chinoiserie and the Aesthetics of Illegitimacy," *Studies in Eighteenth-Century Culture,* Vol. 28 (1999): 27-54; Porter, "Monstrous Beauty: Eighteenth-Century Fashion and the Aesthetics of the Chinese Taste," *Eighteenth-Century Studies*, Vol. 35, No. 3 (Spring, 2002): 395-411.

[63] Nechtman, "Mr. Hickey's Pictures: Britons and Their Collectables in Late Eighteenth-Century India," quote 181; Nechtman, *Nabobs*, 146, 227-32.

century Indian exotica, East Asian items, and chinoiserie also carried association with feminine taste, tawdry consumerism, and, often, frivolity. Stacey Sloboda has revealed that the display of collections of chinoiserie, Asian artworks, and other "eastern" items within a room of a house could render that space feminized, uncertain, or akin to oriental. In the case of the Duchess of Portland, her collections of East Asian and pseudo-East Asian items allowed these spaces to be analogous to "a masquerade," where self-identification could be fluid and rooted in the presence and use of material culture and in persons' behaviors.[64] This study highlights Britons' perceptions that the collection, display, and circulation of Indian exotica could render geographic spaces in Britain, such as the collection room or the auction floor, as oriental-like and capable of orientalizing persons in those locations.

Given the unstable and, at times, ambiguous nature of South Asian material culture, the meanings and uses of Indian exotica in Britain and the "white town" of Calcutta were neither static nor uniform. This dissertation identifies four distinct phases in metropolitan attitudes towards exotic South Asian items, reflecting how Britons used these materials to mediate and reconcile notions of Britishness and orientalness at home and abroad. During the first half of the eighteenth century, elite and middling Britons embraced Indian goods as peculiar novelties and symbols of wealth and power.[65] The second phase began in the 1760s, when circulating reports

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[64] Stacey Sloboda embraces Dror Wharman's claims that masquerades revealed the eighteenth-century notion of identity as fluid and contingent upon costuming and behaviors. Stacey Sloboda, "Fashioning Bluestocking Conversation: Elizabeth Montagu's Chinese Room," in *Architectural Space in Eighteenth-Century Europe: Constructing Identities and Interiors*, edited by D. A. Baxter and M. Martin (Burlington: Ashgate, 2010), 130-1; Stacey Sloboda, "Porcelain Bodies: Gender, Acquisitiveness, and Taste in Eighteenth-Century England," in *Material Cultures, 1740-1920: The Meanings and Pleasures of Collecting*, edited by John Potvin and Alla Myzelev (Burlington: Ashgate, 2009), 19-22; Wahrman, *The Making of the Modern Self.*

[65] Natasha Eaton asserts that elite Britons embraced Indian exotica as novelties earlier in the century, but they shunned these items immediately after the Company's conquest of Bengal in the mid-eighteenth century. My dissertation builds upon this idea, but it suggests that metropolitan attitudes, interpretations, and uses of Asian exotica were protracted, complex, and uneven processes extending into the early nineteenth century. Eaton, "Nostalgia for the Exotic: Creating an Imperial Art in London, 1750- 1793," 227-50.

of Company misrule in India as well as an inflow of enriched nabobs led some middling and elite critics of the EIC to gradually eschew Indian items. For these persons, South Asian exotica carried association with nabobish pretention and absurdity, the uprooting of traditional authority in India and Britain, and the orientalization of the British elite. Middling and elite persons' interpretations and uses of South Asian items remained uncertain and contingent during much of the third quarter of the century. However, during the last decades of the eighteenth century the Hastings trial led to the further ossification of attitudes among those fearing the orientalization of the elite ranks. Yet, during this third phase, others — such as orientalists, Company servants, and specialized collectors — continued to embrace Indian artworks and antiquities as fascinating sources of historical knowledge and aesthetically-distinct beauty. A fourth phase followed the defeat of the ruler of Mysore, Tipu Sultan, at the siege of Srirangapatna (Seringapatam) in 1799. Quantities of loot circulated throughout South Asia and to Britain as personal mementos, trophies of war, symbols of the overthrow of oriental despotism, and tokens of virtuous imperial rule. This victory resulted in larger numbers of Indian goods flowing to Britain. But since many items from Mysore were looted, smuggled, physically altered, decontextualized, or had acquired deceptive provenances, Indian exotica was never entirely normalized in Britain during the Georgian period.

III. The Plan of the Dissertation

At the heart of this dissertation are questions relating to how material culture from India encouraged Britons to discuss and rethink what it was to be British or "oriental." How could imported South Asian items serve to blur and redefine the boundaries of Britishness and orientalness during this period of imperial expansion? How could the circulation and display of

Indian, European, and Anglo-Indian items seemingly render peoples and geographies of India and Britain as British or oriental? How did the transmission of Indian and Anglo-Indian items throughout India and to Britain intertwine metropolitan and subcontinental circulation networks and transform British practices of collecting and display? Did private and institutional collections of artworks, antiquities, and other exotica serve to normalize or other Indian material culture in Britain? How did these collections also reflect and encourage multiple British attitudes towards India? This dissertation contains five chapters, each addressing one or more of these questions.

Chapter one reveals how circulating Anglo-Indian visual productions could illuminate contemporary perceptions of Britain and colonial Indian territories as a patchwork of British and oriental spaces occupied by both elites and the lower orders. This chapter presents a case study of how the British landscape artists Thomas and William Daniell composed and circulated aquatints depicting the European sector of Calcutta in 1786-8. These important streetscapes were some of the earliest images of the "white town" of Calcutta. Yet, they have been greatly overlooked by scholars fixated on the Daniells' later images of India's interior. Rather than examining these representations of the white town through the lens of contemporary aesthetic theories, this chapter reveals how the Daniells' *Views Of Calcutta* challenged metropolitan stereotypes and condemnation of Europeans in India as having adopted Asian cultural norms and become akin to despotic Indian rulers. These streetscapes presented visual equivalences between the Britishness and orientalness of the geographies and populations of Calcutta and London. For the Daniells, the white town of Calcutta was not an illusory imitation of Britain. Rather, it was as akin to the polite, British sectors of London that also existed alongside orientalized spaces of Britain. By mystifying dissimilarities between London and Calcutta, the Daniells' aquatints

suggested to viewers in India and in Britain that the two cities and their populations were intertwined branches of a global British social landscape.

Chapter two examines how art and estate auctions in London and the "white town" of Calcutta were contentious rituals of material cultural circulation. Multifarious critics in Britain — such as pamphleteers, politicians, playwrights, caricaturists, and attendees themselves — decried auctions as "oriental" spectacles characterized by the commodification and redistribution of the material symbols of elite status, the unseemly and aggressive bidding practices of otherwise polite individuals, and the mingling of persons of all social echelons. This chapter argues that for critics, art and estate auctions in Britain and in the white town of Calcutta could be "oriental" geographies and practices capable of blurring social rank and orientalizing of the upper echelons of society. Throughout the eighteenth century, auctions were paradoxical events existing as one of the major sources of fine artworks, antiquities, and other material trappings of high social status. Yet, they were also "oriental" methods of sale threatening to eliminate material distinctions of social standing by redistributing landed estates, art and antiquity collections, and other markers of gentility to moneyed middling persons, non-Britons, and nabobs. While white-town residents perceived ownership and acts of publicly purchasing European material culture as essential to maintaining a sense of Britishness in the subcontinent, metropolitan critics of Anglo-Indians identified Calcutta auctions as public spectacles breaking down divisions between the black and white town social spheres and encouraging Britons to transform into nabobs.

The third chapter engages with questions of how the de-contextualization of Indian and Anglo-Indian material culture through legal and illicit shipment to Britain could transform and complicate the nature of those items. During the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries,

exorbitant customs duties and prohibition of certain Asian goods resulted in many Indian items entering Britain through clandestine channels. The importation of South Asian artworks, antiquities, and other goods often required tapping into the smuggling networks of the lower orders living along the coasts of Dorset, Cornwall, Devon, Kent, Sussex, and southern Wales. Thus, during the late eighteenth century, collections of India exotica in Britain carried both association with nabobish pretention as well as the orientalized lower orders responsible for the unchecked importation of restricted South Asian goods. Although by the last quarter of the century Britons held diverse, competing understandings of Indian goods, the overthrow of the ruler of Mysore, Tipu Sultan, in 1799 encouraged the normalization of South Asian exotica in Britain. Some South Asian exotica existed in Britain as rightful spoils of war, as trophies of the vanquishment of oriental despotism, and as symbols of proper Company governance. But many Indian items in Britain continued to carry association with nabobs, the de-contextualization and counterfeiting of Asian goods, and smuggling carried out by the racialized lower orders. This chapter reveals how the circulation of material culture throughout the subcontinent and its shipment to Britain both shaped and destabilized British understandings and distinctions between Indian, British, and Anglo-Indian items. The transmission of South Asian goods to Britain carried association with the interlacing of Asian circulation networks with European smuggling. Yet, Britons at home and in the subcontinent also depended upon American and British surreptitious shipping channels for the multidirectional transportation of European-produced goods. The clandestine or duplicitous movement of Anglo-Indian and South Asian goods to Britain often underscored the non-British nature of these items. Moreover, the dislocation and illegal shipment of South Asian goods, even items taken as trophies of conquest, could render the

nature of such items uncertain and encourage the application of new meanings and interpretations once in Britain.

Chapter four presents a case study revealing how the material counterflows of imperial expansion in India transformed metropolitan practices of collecting antiquities and methods of displaying South Asian exotica. This study focuses upon the numismatic collections, intellectual collaborations, and collecting practices of Sarah Banks, the sister of the famed naturalist Sir Joseph Banks. She amassed her collection of about 10,000 antiquarian and contemporary coins through purchases, gifts, and exchanges with over 500 individuals. In addition to breaking with convention by accumulating coins from all over the world, Banks applied innovative continental numismatic theories to her coins of India and other colonial spaces. This chapter argues that Sarah Banks's acquisition and organization of her Indian coins revealed how the influx of South Asian exotica into Britain forced some collectors to challenge long-established metropolitan practices of organizing and displaying Asian exotica. Her collaborations with orientalists and other numismatists reveal how women and others on the margins of antiquarian circles made important interventions into a field supposedly dominated by elite men. Underpinning the main contentions of this chapter is the claim that numismatic practices were never just about coins. Rather, medals and coins existed as their own type of material culture, but contemporaries also regarded them as easily transported and arranged items bearing features of many forms of antiquities. Numismatic specimens were an intersection of text, sculpture, and a variety of other antiquities whose aesthetics and historical context of production preoccupied antiquarians and orientalists. Thus, debates among antiquarians concerning coin features and experiments in numismatic arrangement also concerned the aesthetics, inscriptions, display, and uses of a variety of antiquities. Plentiful and multifarious in form, coins were sources of inscriptions in

South Asian languages as well as spiritual and political iconography accessible even to Britons who had never visited the subcontinent. An examination of how numismatists applied and adapted theories of ordering to Indian specie reveals how the coin cabinet was a zone of display and an organizational tool for integrating all manner of Indian exotica into European modes of cataloguing, exhibiting, describing, and understanding.

The final chapter explores how the circulation, display, and, at times, marginalization of South Asian material culture in museum collections impelled transformations in the function and methods of display in these institutions during the latter half of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. The 1799 siege of Srirangapatna, the British seizure of Egyptian antiquities at Alexandria in 1801, and decades of collecting and artistic patronage accompanying British imperial expansion in the subcontinent resulted in copious "eastern" items entering prominent metropolitan museum collections by the early nineteenth century. This influx of Asian items complicated museums' functions as either polite social spaces exhibiting fine works of art or repositories of orientalist knowledge. Administrators of metropolitan museums held differing visions of the capacity of Indian artworks and antiquities to render spaces as oriental. This chapter details how the administrators and curators of three prominent London museum spaces — the British Museum, the East India House Museum, and missionary museums — negotiated the British or oriental nature of these spaces of display. While each possessed and displayed Indian exotica, their methods of acquisition and exhibition of these materials reflected the dynamic, competing perceptions of the meanings and uses of these items when relocated to the metropolis. While these institutions reflected and influenced the interests and assumptions of their administrators and visitors, each museum's accumulation and exhibition of Indian artworks,

antiquities, and spiritual icons reveals differing perceptions of Britishness and orientalness during the Georgian period.

Ultimately, the ordering of this dissertation's five chapters underscores changing British attitudes, uses, and methods of display as increasing quantities of South Asian exotica arrived in Britain as the Georgian period progressed. Accordingly, the chapters are arranged chronologically and thematically. The first two chapters examine the role of material culture in revealing certain geographic spaces as being seemingly either British or oriental during the latter half of the eighteenth century. Indeed, chapter one examines how material culture itself could reveal contemporary perceptions of the British or oriental nature of imperial and domestic geographies. And the second chapter examines how the locations of material redistribution and the circulation of South Asian exotica in Britain or India, such as auction houses, could appear to some observers as orientalized. While the third examines how the meanings and uses of Indian exotica could transform through circulation and importation to Britain at the turn of the century, chapters four and five each address how private collectors and museums' negotiated methods of collecting and display of Indian items into the first decades of the nineteenth century. Together, these chapters reveal the important role that South Asian material culture played in Britons' conceptualization of nationality, imperial expansion and rule, the self, and others during the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.

CHAPTER 1

Calcutta "In These Degenerate Days"[1]: The Daniells' Visions of Life, Death, and Nabobery in Late Eighteenth-Century British India

Introduction

In April of 1785, Thomas Daniell and his nephew, William Daniell, left England for South Asia in order to refine their artistic abilities by observing and visually recording a distinctly South Asian landscape aesthetic.[2] They desired to capture exotic ecological and social matrixes by producing myriad topographical oil paintings and aquatint etchings while living in India.[3] After spending over two years painting, etching, and working at odd jobs in recession-torn Calcutta, the Daniells saved enough money to travel "up country" through the Ganga river system.[4] This uncle and nephew composed many sketches with camera obscura, many charcoal and ink wash illustrations, and numerous other studies during their travels throughout the subcontinent.[5] In 1794, after nearly eight years in India, a worsening art market in Calcutta and

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[1] Thomas Daniell to Thomas Pennant, 26 September, 1798. Cleveland Public Library (CPL), Special Collections 091.92Au82.

[2] Thomas Sutton, *The Daniells: Artists and Travelers* (London: The Bodley Head, 1954), 13-15.
According to Joseph Farington, the architect James Wyatt "was the principle cause of Daniell going to India, having spoken to George Hardinge, at a time when persons *not appointed* were refused leave to go." Hardinge, an influential lawyer and politician, had ties to both the Royal Academy and the EIC. In December of 1783 he represented the Company in opposing Fox's India Bill in the House of Lords. Hardinge persuaded the EIC's Court of Directors to give the Daniells permission to go to India and work as "engravers" in Calcutta. Farington, "Wednesday July 20th, 1796," in *The Diary of Joseph Farington ,* Vol. 2, edited by Kenneth Garlick and Angus Macintyre (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1978), 611-12.; Henry Manners Chichester, "Hardinge, George," in *The Dictionary of National Biography, 1885-1900*, Vol. 24 (New York: MacMillan and Co., 1890), 340-1.

[3] Mildred Archer, and Ronald Lightbrown, *India observed: India as Viewed by British artists, 1760-1860* (London: Victoria and Albert Museum, 1982), 10-12.

[4] *Bengal Public Consultations,* 14 September, 1787, in Introduction to "W. Daniell's Journal," Martin Hardie and Muriel Clayton, editors, *Walker's Quarterly*, No. 35-6 (London: Walker's Galleries, 1932), 8-11.

[5] Mildred Archer, *Early Views of India: The Picturesque Journeys of Thomas and William Daniell, 1786-1794* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1980), 219.

recurrent ill health compelled the Daniells to return to Britain.[6] Once back in London, they exhibited at the Royal Academy of Arts and published many works featuring India's interior. These paintings and aquatints proved very popular among collectors "of all classes of people" and also garnered the attention of artists, art critics, orientalist scholars, and the directors of the English East India Company (EIC).[7] To Company administrators in London, the Daniells' *Oriental Scenery* aquatints were such valuable sources of information on India's interior that the directors purchased thirty copies of the first series in 1795.[8]

During their residence in Calcutta, the Daniells composed and sold important streetscapes of Calcutta's European sector that were greatly overshadowed by their popular, later images of India's interior. Consequently, their Calcutta images have also received less scholarly attention. This chapter turns to the Daniells' lesser-known *Views of Calcutta* (1786-8) in order to explore how these artists crafted representations of British life in India.[9] Mildred Archer's foundational literature on the Daniells' work focused upon the aesthetic category of the picturesque and how these traveling artists were able to utilize it in visually capturing India's interior.[10] Romita Ray and Swati Chattopadhyay's recent monographs have explored the unique dynamics of the picturesque in India, yet some studies have revealed how encounters in new

[6] Farington, "Friday July 29th, 1796," in *The Diary of Joseph Farington,* Vol. 2, 623.
[7] J. Stokoe to Ozias Humphry, London 6 July, 1797, Humphrey Mss, Royal Academy of Art Library (RA), London, HU/5/40-1; Partha Mitter, *Much Maligned Monsters, History of European Reactions to Indian Art* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1977, 1992), 126-30.
[8] Farington, "Friday June 5th, 1795," in *The Diary of Joseph Farington,* Vol. 2, 2:349; Joseph Farington, "Saturday November 30th, 1799," in *The Diary of Joseph Farington,* Vol. 4, edited by Kenneth Garlick and Angus Macintyre (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1979), 1310-11.
[9] These twelve prints measured fifty-two centimeters in width by forty centimeters in height.
[10] The continuous adaptation, circulation, and transformation of aesthetics rendered the Indian picturesque an amorphous, unstable concept. William Daniell claimed in his travel journal that Indian landscapes had "picturesque bits innumerable." All that was aesthetically unusual, defying taxonomy, or otherwise disorienting to Daniell's British eyes contributed to the picturesqueness of encountered landscapes. British landscape painters in India as well as in other reaches of the empire utilized the term "picturesque" as a distorting lens that translated the exotic through aesthetic concepts of the familiar and the controllable. William Daniell, 24 October, 1788, W. Daniell's. Journal, British Library Mss Eur E268/14. For foundational work on the Daniells, Archer, *Early Views of India;* Archer, and Lightbrown, *India observed*.

ecologies, social milieus, and visual economies the world over rendered the picturesque landscape aesthetic unstable in Britain and the empire.[11] Examining the Daniells' twelve earlier streetscapes, *Views of Calcutta*, provides scholars with opportunities to move away from the unstable category of the picturesque and shift focus upon the connectivity and correspondences of colonial and metropolitan spaces. This chapter uses this set of aquatints to explore the interpenetrations of Calcutta and London at a time of rapid imperial expansion, marked urban development, and mounting metropolitan scrutiny of British society in India. While Christina Smylitopoulos showed that metropolitan caricatures of Company servants served to dissociate Anglo-Indian corruption from Britain,[12] this chapter argues that the Daniells' visual representations did not seek to establish a sharp distinction between colonial space and the metropole. Rather, their Calcutta streetscapes destabilized the distinctive qualities of "British" cities by underscoring similarities between Calcutta and urban Britain.

The Daniells' *Views of Calcutta* predominantly featured an idealized European sector – the "white town" – whose streets contained imposing, glowing Palladian buildings. In addition to European mansions, the aquatints presented noteworthy recently-built "Anglo-Indian" structures with neo-classical facades, such as the Old Government House (1767), the Council House (1767), the Writers' Building (1780), the New Court House (1784), the Accountant General's Office (1787), and St. John's Church (1787). In each white-town streetscape, an elevated station point reveals exceptionally-wide roads which draw the eye upon lively crowds of a few polite

[11] For instance, Jeffrey Auerbach, "The Picturesque and the Homogenization of Empire," *The British Art Journal*, Vol. 5 (Spring/Summer, 2004): 47-54; Swati Chattopadhyay, *Representing Calcutta: Modernity, Nationalism, and the Colonial Uncanny* (London: Routledge, 2005); John E. Crowley, *Imperial Landscapes: Britain's Global Visual Culture, 1745-1820* (London: The Paul Mellon Centre, 2011); Romita Ray, *Under the Banyan Tree: Relocating the Picturesque in British India* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2013); Giles Tillotson, *The Artificial Empire: The Indian Landscapes of William Hodges* (Surry: Curzon Press, 2000).
[12] Christina Smylitopoulos, 'Portrait of a Nabob: Graphic Satire, Portraiture, and the Anglo-Indian in the Late Eighteenth Century,' *RACAR: revue d'art canadienne /Canadian Art Review*, Vol. 37 (2012): 11-12.

Europeans and larger numbers of South Asians. For instance, in the ninth image in the series, *Old Court House Street Looking South* (1788) **(Figure 1)**, either side of the titular street is lined with glistening classicized structures of recent construction, each radiating an aura of monumentality. White stone walls and gates divide gardens and vestibules from the street. These luminous, fenced structures defined the white town against the surrounding and interwoven Indian "black town." In accordance with the theories of Giovanni Piranesi, the Daniells enhanced shading and perspective depth while human figures are diminished in size in order to accentuate architectural detail.[13] Between these glowing symbols of British civility is an eclectic mixture of Asian and European peoples as well as palanquins, carts, and a trained elephant. Two East Asian merchants demarcated by their distinctive bamboo hats and queue hairstyles stand near the center left in the foreground. Situated front and center is a lone ascetic carrying his characteristic staff. This holy person gestures toward the focal point of this streetscape as well as a prevalent feature of the entire aquatint series – an example of a small cluster of South Asians carrying Europeans in palanquins. While Britons and Indians freely mingle throughout this scene, clothing, complexion, and physical activity differentiate these individuals as inhabiting physically close yet necessarily separate social spheres. These classicized visages of Calcutta normalized colonial rule over an Indian underclass, yet they did so in terms of illuminating similarities of Calcutta to the metropolis.

Throughout the Georgian period topographical painters and etchers crafted images of London's streets alongside elite dwellings and public structures containing a diversity of polite Britons, middling individuals, and ubiquitous lower-order persons. For example, the

[13] Chattopadhyay, *Representing Calcutta*, 48.

Figure 1. Thomas Daniell, *Old Court House Street Looking South, Views of Calcutta*, No. 9 (1788). © The Trustees of the British Museum (BM Number: 1870,0514.1487).

anonymously-published *A View of the Lord Mayors Mansion House, Shewing the Front of the House and the West Sid*e (1761) **(Figure 2)** features this noted Palladian structure designed by George Dance the Elder, as well as wide streets containing pedestrians, animal-drawn carriages and carts, and in the lower-left of the composition a palanquin-like sedan chair carried by servants of the elite occupant. Dwarfed by the classicized residence of London's mayor are elite women and men, servants, a costermonger, a porter carrying a large parcel, a woman

Figure 2. Anonymous, *A View of the Lord Mayors Mansion House, Shewing the Front of the House and the West Sid*e (1761). Etching and Engraving, 6.5 x 10.5 in. (16.5 x 25.4cm). © The Trustees of the British Museum (BM Number: 1880,1113.3623).

transporting two buckets suspected by a shoulder yoke, and myriad other non-elite people. This view of the Mansion House reveals that much like in the white town of Calcutta, the streets contiguous to elite spaces in the metropolis appeared in some visual representations as zones of constant interaction and interweaving of British and non-British sectors of the city.

Although all of the diverse ways in which the Daniells' streetscapes appealed to local buyers is not available to scholars, one productive approach is an analysis of how these images concealed the fears, ambivalences, and harsh economic and social realities most Europeans experienced living in India. These streetscapes also reached mainland British eyes as Company officers and other white-town denizens shipped these idealized images back home. Because the Daniells left behind few writings discussing their Calcutta views, this chapter examines the

images themselves, the uses and circulation of these streetscapes in Britain and India, and the cultural and imperial context of their production to explore possible readings of these streetscapes available to British contemporaries. Although it is uncertain whether the Daniells were successful in presenting an idealized vision of a unified Calcutta-London social milieu, I suggest that these circulating works challenged metropolitan criticism and condemnation of Europeans in South Asia at a time of rapid imperial expansion and mounting fears of the orientalization of the elite ranks of British society.

During the latter half of the eighteenth century, the registers of verbally describing or visually depicting the otherness of the lower orders of both London and urban Calcutta were remarkably fluid. While metropolitan persons described South Asians according to their oriental qualities, many Britons also resorted to describing the lower orders of British society in similar terms.[14] Because all nations and empires were heterogeneous spaces with porous boundaries, London was diverse and disjointed in its composition and lacking in clearly-defined borders.[15] Britons could construct representations of London or Calcutta in terms of similarity rather than difference, thereby illuminating the interwoven nature of colony and metropole. Processes of defining Britishness equally underscored the foreignness of certain peoples and geographic sections of both London and the empire. As social and legal conceptions of race and Britishness developed across the eighteenth-century empire, colonial legal categories of whiteness, non-whiteness, and Britishness flowed back to the metropolis, impelling the formation of new domestic legal designation of Scots, Africans, the working-class poor, Jews, South Asians, and

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[14] Saree Makdisi, *Making England Western: Occidentalism, Race, and Imperial Culture* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2014), ix-xii, xvi-xvii.
[15] Miles Ogborn, *Spaces of Modernity: London's Geographies 1680-1780* (New York: Guilford Press, 1998), 23-36; Lauren Benton, *A Search for Sovereignty: Law and Geography in European Empires, 1400-1900* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 2.

other marginalized persons as being neither white nor British.[16] Indeed, many polite metropolitan persons understood Britain's internal others as analogous to black or oriental persons. If we accept Saree Makdisi's claims that the intertwined nature of race and class in eighteenth-century Britain led many polite metropolitan persons to understand Britain's internal others as analogous to black or oriental persons,[17] then the Daniells' Calcutta streetscapes presented a vision of the white town which interlaced Britishness and orientalness of Calcutta and the metropolis. The *Views of Calcutta* suggested to the metropolitan and colonial viewer that both urban spaces and their respective populations were intertwined and equivalent branches of a global British socialscape. By mystifying social dissimilarities between the metropolis and the white town, the Daniells' prints presented a counter-narrative revealing that these spaces were both undergoing parallel, yet connected processes of urban development and the negotiation of race, class, and nationality during the late eighteenth century.

I. "The Most Frequent Colour of the Cloth"[18]: Nabobery, Calcutta Portraiture, and the Daniells' Reimagining of the Anglo-Indian.

Nearly a century before the Daniells arrived in the subcontinent, myriad social, economic, and governmental circumstances led to the gradual piecemeal geographic fragmentation of the Mughal Empire. The erosion of Mughal authority in northern India took the form of regional governors declaring independence from the increasingly anemic imperial center. This decentralization of power meant that newly-independent rulers as well as prominent South Asian bankers, military leaders, and merchant groups could attempt to assert their influence over

[16] Dana Rabin, *Britain and its Internal Others, 1750-1800: Under Rule of Law* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2017), 4-10.
[17] Makdisi, *Making England Western,* ix-xii, xvi-xvii.
[18] Daniell to Pennant, 26 September, 1798. CPL, 091.92Au82.

the regions by subjugating or overthrowing their respective rivals.[19] During the third quarter of the century, the Company metamorphosed from a marginal trading organization into a sovereign landed entity in Bengal.[20] While the Company reserved rights of direct trade between major Indian ports and Britain, servants engaged in private "country trade" in textiles, saltpeter, tea, and other goods in order to supplement their meager salaries. After Governor Robert Clive ousted the Nawab of Bengal in 1757, individual Company men and unofficial British persons in Bengal had frequent opportunities to engage in such dealings with Indians. Yet, many also took part in forms of fraud, embezzlement, and extortion. Britons remitted rupees to Europe by taking out bills on the Company or by pursuing the more clandestine approach of transporting large quantities of diamonds or other valuables.[21] Although conspicuously-enriched EIC servants returned to the metropole in smaller numbers earlier in the century, the numbers increased sharply in the 1780s, when the Daniells lived in Calcutta.[22]

By the 1770s, news of high rates of mortality as well as stories of corrupt Britons going native and acquiring ill-gotten riches in South Asia circulated widely in London.[23] Metropolitan popular literature, visual productions, and gossip condemned the white town of Calcutta as the epicenter of European depravity, vice, disease, and greed. For these critics, some EIC officers and others may have left home as Britons, but their residence in Indian climes and social

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[19] C. A. Bayly, *Indian Society and the Making of the British Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 46-53.
[20] Philip J. Stern, *The Company-State: Corporate Sovereignty and the Early Modern Foundations of the British Empire in India* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 3-7.
[21] P. J. Marshall, *East Indian Fortunes: The British In Bengal in the Eighteenth Century* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1976), 110-20, 191-200.
[22] James Raven, *Judging New Wealth: Popular Publishing and Responses to Commerce in England, 1750-1800* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), 221-3.
[23] Maya Jasanoff, *Edge of Empire: Lives, Cultures, and Conquest in the East, 1750-1850* (New York: Vintage Books, 2005), 48, 81-4.

environments rendered them corrupted Anglo-Indians, or "nabobs."[24] According to the noted art critic and politician Horace Walpole, Company officers' activities in the subcontinent were nothing more than "a scheme…at vast expense, not only to dethrone [Indian] nabobs, but precisely to bring away all of the Mogul's treasure and diamonds."[25] Metropolitan newspapers and journals published condemnatory accounts of how Anglo-Indians rose "from low estate…by means of his eastern pursuits not only to the highest pinnacle of wealth, but to some of the greatest honours and titles of this kingdom."[26] As Company servants returned to Britain, metropolitan observers identified these nabobs as ignominious figures whose affluence, extravagant tastes, and social aspiration transformed them into Indian despots intruding into elite British society.[27] These "destroyers of the nobility and gentry" would surely orientalize and destabilize the ruling class through intermarriage and the acquisition of all of the trappings of the traditional elite.[28] Although most of this criticism underscored the detrimental effects of "oriental despotism" infecting the imperial center, many elites also feared that Anglo-Indians' corruption and commercial greed had the potential to illuminate domestic avarice and immorality. Thus, by revealing parallels between the white town and London, the Daniells' streetscapes presented a complicated vision of elite Britishness that simultaneously denied Anglo-Indian corruption and suggested that nabobs were not entirely distinct from metropolitan elites.

Parliamentary inquiry into EIC governance of Bengal in the 1770s, the India Bills of the 1780s, and the impeachment trial of Warren Hastings from 1788 to 1795 all encouraged larger

[24] The word "nabob" originated in the Persian term "nawab," meaning deputy or governor. James M. Holzman, *The Nabobs in England: A Study of the Returned Anglo-Indian, 1760-1785* (New York, 1926), 7-23.
[25] Horace Walpole to Horace Mann, 8 August, 1767, in *Walpole Correspondence*, Vol 22, edited by W. S. Lewis (New Haven: Yale University Press, 48 Vols. 1937-83), 547.
[26] "Anti-Nabob," "Memoirs of a Nabob," in *Town and Country Magazine,* Vol. 3 (London, 1771), 255.
[27] Tillman W. Nechtman, *Nabobs: Empire and Identity in Eighteenth-Century Britain* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 13-16, 80-91.
[28] Edmund Burke, *Mr. Burke's Speech, On the 1st December 1783: Upon the Question of the Speaker's Leaving the Chair, in Order for the House to Resolve Itself Into a Committee on Mr. Fox's East India Bill* (London, 1784), 32.

numbers of circulating textual and visual representations of Company servants. Recurrent metropolitan debate and disapproval of the Company governance and the conduct of individual servants led to frequent appearances of the nabobs in eighteenth-century British visual culture. The image of the nabob never disappeared or remained static within popular discourse as artists in both London and India engaged in the production and re-production of competing visions of the Anglo-Indian. Throughout this period, the detractors and defenders of nabobs were equally conversant of metropolitan condemnation, leading both to craft and transform visual representations of Anglo-Indians and the British sectors of Indian cities. The circulation of published images and texts from London to British communities in the subcontinent ensured that most white-town residents were well aware of their designation as nefarious "Asiatics" in metropolitan print media. Writing in the mid-1780s, the Calcutta lawyer and diarist William Hickey reflected upon the London newspaper articles which condemned white-town denizens "in the severest terms." According to Hickey, the authors of these publications underscored "the general propensity to folly and extravagances betrayed by every East Indian or Nabob…whose sole object…was to squander the enormous wealth acquired by plunder and extortion in every species of absurd profusion."[29] Moreover, during the last fifteen years of the century, white-town residents knew of parliamentary debates and criticisms of the EIC and Anglo-Indians as Calcutta newspapers printed and reprinted editorials, testimonials by Company officers, letters, and metropolitan observers' accounts pertaining to the trial of former Governor General Warren Hastings.[30] Thus, while white-town print media informed British residents of metropolitan

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[29] William Hickey papers. [Typescript of All of Hickey's Memoirs]. BL Mss Eur Photo Eur 175, Vol. 3, 367-8.
[30] W. S. Seton-Karr, S*elections from the Calcutta Gazette of the Years 1789-1797,* Vol. 2 (Calcutta: O. T. Cutter, 1865), 136-8, 292, 471-3.

condemnation, Calcutta newspapers, circulating images, and commissioned artworks also were valuable tools for deliberating and defending the white-town socialscape.

Nabobs' liminal existence as both domestic and foreign while in either Britain or India allowed the Daniells and other visual artists to re-envision Anglo-Indians in various shades of exoticism or familiarity.[31] However, the methods of representation employed by the Daniells in their streetscapes broke with the conventions of Anglo-Indian portraiture. Prominent EIC officers and other wealthy Anglo-Indians commissioned British portraitists in Calcutta and in London to compose works presenting these middling sitters as though they were distinctively polite Britons rather than unscrupulous nabobs.[32] Earlier eighteenth-century Calcutta portraiture featured subjects in Indian landscapes, wearing Indian dress, and, at times, juxtaposed alongside Indian family members. Yet, by the 1780s larger numbers of circulating caricature prints featuring nabobs had such influence upon the metropolitan eye as to render Calcutta portraiture equally representative of nabobish oriental excess, absurdity, and pretention.[33] This criticism as well as stricter Parliamentary oversight of Company servants' activities in India occurred concomitantly with British Calcutta painters reformulating the relationship of the sitters to the featured Indian peoples, landscapes, and material culture in their compositions.[34] Thus, while some painters endeavored to eschew signs of colonial governance, private trade, and military action enabling nabobish riches, others wished to re-envision representations of Anglo-Indian life in India through the visual vocabularies of representing elite status and landholdings in Britain.

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[31] For satirical visual representations of nabobs, Christina Smylitopoulos, "Portrait of a Nabob: Graphic Satire, Portraiture, and the Anglo-Indian in the Late Eighteenth Century," *RACAR: revue d'art canadienne /Canadian Art Review*, Vol. 37 (2012): 10-25.

[32] The classic study is Mildred Archer, *India and British Portraiture: 1770-1825* (London: Oxford University Press, 1979).

[33] Smylitopoulos, "Portrait of a Nabob," 10-14, 16.

[34] Beth Fowkes Tobin, *Picturing Imperial Power: Colonial Subjects in Eighteenth-Century British Painting* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1999), 117-25.

Although some Calcutta artists dissociated their works from Anglo-Indian pretension by eliding all traces of India, some portraitists continued to feature Indian attendants and equated wealthy Europeans in India to the landed elite of Britain. For instance, Arthur William Devis's 1786 conversation piece, *The Hon. William Monson and His Wife, Ann Debonnaire* **(Figure 3)**, presents a vision of the titular couple flanked by a South Asian attendant and lush Indian vegetation. An overgrowth of trees subsumes the entirety of the upper left portions of the picture plane. To the right of William Monson is a sprawling view of his lands containing the glistening columns of his mansion, well-maintained garden spaces in front of the portico, and a wide river with a few small boats on the opposite shoreline. The South Asian servant holding Monson's hat and walking stick is the only representation of Indian labor in the image, and he is the most distinct indicator that the sprawling landscape is in fact subcontinental rather than located within the British countryside. Because few Britons in the metropole actually ever witnessed New World slavery or Indian subjugation, they could assign multifarious, competing meanings to the master-servant relationship featured in such works. Given the longstanding presence of black figures within English painting, metropolitan viewers made little distinction between an Indian and a British servant featured in portraiture.[35] Rather, the presence of Indian landholdings was what made the nabob. The sprawling vista in a British garden piece signified a long tradition of hereditary authority over the estate. Yet, a sitter's claims to her or his Indian lands existed at the expense of Indian subjugation and the uprooting of local tradition.[36] This recasting of the nabob

[35] Catherine Molineux, *Faces of Perfect Ebony: Encountering Atlantic Slavery in Imperial Britain* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2012), 7-12.
[36] Beth Fowkes Tobin, *Colonizing Nature: The Tropics in British Arts and Letters 1760-1820* (Philadelphia: The University of Pennsylvania Press, 2005), 95.

Figure 3. Arthur William Devis, *The Hon. William Monson and His Wife, Ann Debonnaire* (1786). Oil on Canvas, 40 1/2 x 51 1/2 in. (102.87 x 130.81cm). © The Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA Number: 47.29.16)

as British within a portrait by means of entirely omitting India or by revealing South Asian estates as akin to the English country manor signaled to metropolitan viewers the sitters' desire to mystify their ill-gotten fortune, disrupt traditional landholding at home and abroad, and intrude into polite society in Britain. Thus, while portraiture functioned as an assertion of nabobs' social aspirations, it also identified particular individuals as pretenders to elite status.

The Daniells circumvented the metropolitan stigmas of Anglo-Indian portraiture by presenting the entire white town of Calcutta through the panoramic lens of the urban streetscape

where persons lost their individuality and became urban typologies that were distinctively identifiable as either British or oriental. The fluid nature of the Anglo-Indian image enabled those at risk of being deemed a nabob —such as the Daniells themselves — to utilize exotic imagery of South Asia to assert the Britishness of the white town of Calcutta. These artists crafted distinctly Indian aquatint views which could circulate broadly and appeal to both colonial and metropolitan audiences as evidence of polite British culture in South Asia. Just as the bricks of the glistening white-town buildings received new layers of chunam plaster and whitewash at the end of each monsoon season, the Daniells' *Views* patched over any traces of disease, cultural appropriation, and interracial sociability cracking the façade of Anglo-Indian society in Calcutta.[37] Despite the notable diversity of persons featured in the white town's streets, these artists presented to the viewer a clear demarcation of division between Indian and European society in Calcutta. I suggest that each of the Daniells' aquatints distanced the eye of the viewer from the depicted figures, allowing for both Indians and Britons to lose their individual identities and be reduced to their taxonomies as either colonizer or colonized. The loss of individuality within a landscape image enabled a simplification of the ethnic diversity of Indian peoples.[38] In order to reconcile the challenge of the close proximity of South Asian and European bodies and spaces, in the Daniells' streetscapes all British and Indian figures became a stable, static taxonomy of racialized bodies based upon their complexions and distinctively European or South Asian clothing.

The juxtaposition of depersonalized Indians with generic Europeans in white town streets served equally to render and re-envision all European persons – Company officers, unofficial

[37] For chunum plaster, see Archer, *Early Views of India,* 14.
[38] Romita Ray suggests that through a landscape view, all Indian bodies could be simplified and defined by brown, Indian, otherness dominated by colonial vision. Ray, *Under the Banyan Tree*, 25-8.

British residents, and an array of other people from all over Europe – as a homogenous, separate genteel class. Rather than recording the individual passersby, the Daniells injected European and Indian figures they found typical of white-town streets. Much like in their later works for which the Daniells charted “the most frequent colour[s] of the cloth” worn by certain groups of South Asians, the Indians and Europeans filling Calcutta’s streets wore clothing and bore complexions designating them as either a part of the black town or white town communities.[39] The second of the Daniell’s streetscapes, *The Old Court House and the Writers’ Building* (1786) **(Figure 4)**, peers down Old Court House Street in the white town perpendicular to Clive Street. J. Z. Holwell’s monument to the Black Hole incident appears in the background on the vanishing point in front of Fort William. The titular buildings extend diagonally from the upper-right portion of the picture plane to the lower-left side of the composition. To the right is the Old Court House featuring wide, arcaded verandas, a rooftop balustrade crowned with classicized urns, and Ionic columns integrated into the exterior façade.[40] Old Court House Street appears vibrant as clusters of South Asians and Europeans travel through the streets. Much like cities in Britain, traffic flows are not regulated as carts, palanquins, coaches, pack animals, and pedestrians move past one another. In the left foreground an Indian man drives a carriage containing two European passengers. Multiple Indian servants wearing dhotis and turbans follow the coach on foot. A British woman wearing a large, feathered hat looks out from the carriage directly at a man on horseback. His complexion, red coat, imported European boots, and wide-

[39] Daniell to Pennant, 26 September, 1798. CPL, 091.92Au82.

[40] Dhriti Kanta Lahiri Choudhury, “Trends in Calcutta Architecture, 1690-1903,” in *Calcutta: The Living City: Volume 1: The Past,* edited by Sukanta Chaudhuri (Calcutta: Oxford University Press, 1990), 158-60.

Figure 4. Thomas Daniell, *The Old Court House and the Writers' Building*, *Views of Calcutta*, No. 2 (1786). © British Library Board (BL Number: P95).

brimmed hat demarcate him as a Briton guiding the carriage through traffic. His horse is startled by two of four leashed dogs led by a South Asian servant with a whip in hand. Behind him stand a small cluster of Indian women wearing traditional saris. He is walking the dogs of a European who appears as a metropolitan gentleman wearing a blue English coat, white trousers, and stockings as he reclines in a palanquin with a book in hand.[41] A South Asian man dressed in white Indian clothing pointing ahead leads the cluster of five servants clad in dhotis and turbans.

[41] Anglo-Indians regarded palanquin usage as a British practice. In 1784, Philip Dormer Stanhope claimed that "palanquins are like the sedan chairs in England, but carried on the shoulders of men." Stanhope, *Genuine Memoirs Of Asiaticus In A Series Of Letters To A Friend* (London, 1784), 46.

Myriad other South Asian persons assemble in groups throughout the street in the middle ground and background. Their largely homogenous clothing and complexions remove individuality and designate each Indian as among — but not of — the white town social sphere personified by the featured Europeans. While the placement of the carriage and the palanquin in the foreground of this aquatint underscores colonial dominance, they equally present homogenized British white town inhabitants whose appearances, actions, and comportments show not a single sign of orientalization. Rather, this vision of a constant bodily presence of South Asians within this classicized European space imbricated class, race, and Britishness in Calcutta as they existed in the metropole.

While the eighteenth century witnessed the emergence of the concept of Britishness, the orientalness of British locations and peoples challenged the idea of a unified national identity.[42] During the latter half of the century, England was certainly not a "western" country, and London was not a metropolitan space distinct from the "orient." Although there were numerous persons from India, Africa, and other reaches of the empire resident in London by the mid-eighteenth century, many other peoples in parts of Britain did not conform to established European notions of the "occident." An English, British, white, western, polite identity emerged in England in tandem with the construction of an Asian, African, Arab, black, oriental otherness. This racial logic equally designated Scottish highlanders, rural Welsh persons, and the extremely poor of London as being neither white nor British, but instead as analogous to black or eastern.[43] For instance, as William Daniell and the travel writer Richard Ayton journeyed along the coast of Llanbedrog, Wales, they reflected that "one of the women seized hold of my umbrella…but after

[42] For a standard account of the eighteenth-century emergence of a unified national identity, see Linda Colley, *Britons: Forging the Nation 1707-1837* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992).
[43] Makdisi, *Making England Western*, ix-xii, xvi-xvii, 10.

pulling and twisting it about with truly Hottentot awkwardness, she returned it to me without having made any discoveries as to the nature of the machine."[44] Because the unstable categories of class and race were inextricably bound during this period, many polite Londoners regarded the urban poor, certain geographical sections of the city, and rural folk of the countryside as akin to oriental. The Baptist missionary William Carey observed in 1792 that "there are multitudes in our own nation, and within our immediate spheres of action, who are as ignorant as the South-Sea savages" and, thus, had to be converted through the same tactics as Asian peoples.[45] When passing through rural England, Thomas Daniell noted the oriental nature of the inhabitants of a local hamlet. He questioned persons about "the names of things [and] found 40 words were the same as the language of the natives of Bengal." Daniell claimed that "in aspect, complexion, language they so much resemble[d]" Indians.[46] The Daniells' recognition of the oriental-like qualities of such internal others allowed them to craft visual equivalencies between India and Britain. By including South Asian peoples in their earlier images of the white town, the Daniells revealed to British viewers that Calcutta and the metropole were analogous, connected spheres of the British socialscape. The Daniells' Calcutta streetscapes, thus, revealed parallels between the Asiatic otherness of Indians within the white town and the long-standing "oriental" presence in urban Britain.

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[44] Richard Ayton and William Daniell, *A Voyage Round Great Britain, Undertaken in the Summer of the Year 1813 and Commencing From Lands-end, Cornwall* (London, 1814), 167.
[45] William Carey, *An Inquiry Into the Obligations of Christians to Use Means for the Conversion of the Heathens* (London, 1792), 13.
[46] Joseph Farington, "Wednesday August 29th, 1798," in *The Diary of Joseph Farington,* Vol. 3, edited by Kenneth Garlick and Angus Macintyre (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1979), 1051.

II. "The Bamboo Roof Suddenly Vanished"[47]: Representing Calcutta's White Town as Akin to Polite British Spaces of London.

Although the extensive homes, temples, and bazaars of the black town surrounding the British sector of the city were only visible in two of the Daniells' twelve views, their implied presence just outside the picture plane of any white town streetscape underscored the analogousness of Calcutta to the metropolis. Sections of eighteenth-century London experienced marked physical transformations through infrastructural, aesthetic, and public health projects as civic leaders attempted to improve, bring order, and engender politeness to urban sectors that once had "neither uniformity nor beauty."[48] City planners and architects demolished older, densely-packed buildings made of less-durable materials and replaced them with newer structures, wider streets, and sanitation systems.[49] As homes, public buildings, and communal spaces became grander and more ornate in design, a new metropolitan consciousness emerged of individual structures contributing to an overall aesthetic of a street or region of the city.[50] While in the nineteenth century many metropolitan persons envisioned Gothic architecture as reflective of their unique national history, classicized Palladian aesthetics gained popularity in eighteenth-century London and the colonies because they reminded Britons of their history as once part of an ancient European empire.[51] The Persian travel writer Mirza Abu Taleb Khan claimed that "the greatest ornament London can boast is its numerous squares; many of which are very extensive and only inhabited by people of large fortune. Each square contains a kind of garden in its

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[47] Thomas Daniell and William Daniell, *A Picturesque Voyage of India By Way of China* (London, 1810), 104.
[48] Walter Harrison, *A New and Universal History, Description and Survey of the Cities of London and Westminster, the Borough of Southwark, and their Adjacent Parts* (London, 1776), 25.
[49] John Entick, *A New and Accurate History and Survey of London, Westminster, Southwark, and Places Adjacent*, Vol. 3 (London, 1766), 288-90.
[50] Peter Borsay, *The English Urban Renaissance: Culture and Society in the Provincial Town, 1660-1770* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), vii-ix, 60-2.
[51] Thomas Metcalf, *An Imperial Vision: Indian Architecture and Britain's Raj* (London: Faber and Faber, 1989), 3.

center" off limits to the perpetually-present, orientalized persons of the metropolis.[52] This physical and social transformation of London's urban landscape allowed the wealthy to reinforce or make claims to an elite social status.[53]

The continuous circulation of peoples and material culture between Calcutta and the metropolis led to even certain refurbished sections of London gaining an air of oriental otherness by the latter half of the century. These intertwined phenomena – along with more frequent metropolitan public spectacles representing India – muted a distinction in the popular British imagination between Anglo-Indian society in Britain and the white town social milieu in Calcutta. The areas of London occupied by returned Company officers, East India merchants, and South Asian émigrés were in fact a middling or pseudo-elite, nabobish black town within London.[54] However, these geographic spaces and social networks were not the only "oriental" region of the metropole. By the last half of the eighteenth century, large numbers of Indian servants, sailors, and laborers resided in impoverished areas of London. In 1772, the travel-writer Henry Grose observed that numerous South Asian persons could be seen in "the streets of London, begging charity."[55] London was a variegated assemblage of British spaces defined by morphological features and polite populace as well as oriental spaces filled with immigrants, dilapidated architecture, and the wretched poor. Thus, both London and Calcutta had their black towns and white towns. To many British viewers of the Daniells' aquatints, London and "the

[52] Mirza Abu Taleb Khan, *Travels of Mirza Abu Taleb Khan in Asia, Africa, and Europe* (London, 1814), 278.
[53] Mark Girouard, *The English Town: A History of Urban Life* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990), 76-85.
[54] Daniel E. White suggests that by the late eighteenth century the central London districts of Marylebone and Mayfair were akin to a "Little Bengal" because of the concentration of nabobs and Asian peoples living there. White, *From Little London to Little Bengal: Religion, Print, Modernity in Early British India, 1793-1835* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2013), 3-6, 141-4.
[55] John Henry Grose, *A Voyage to the East Indies* (London, 1772), 110.

Metropolis of British India" likely appeared as twin capitals defined by their interconnected architectural aesthetics, populaces, and oriental and British sectors.[56]

Although the Daniells' Calcutta streetscapes utilized European visual vocabularies of depicting London and continental cities, they could adapt these registers of representation to the colonial matrix because there was not a singular way of visualizing the metropolis, its inhabitants, or its inherent Britishness during the eighteenth century. Manifold views of the City appeared in popular print forms, such as caricatures, broadsides, etchings, book illustrations, and topographical images produced by Britons and travelers.[57] Images of London's bustling streets ranging from cheap prints to high art often underscored the diversity and, at times, oriental origins of persons in the metropolis.[58] In 1800 James Malton exhibited at the Royal Academy his watercolor *The East India House, Leadenhall Street, London, as Rebuilt by Richard Jupp and Henry Holland in 1796 to 1799* **(Figure 5)**, featuring elite men and women, servants, a costermonger, a porter, and a few Indian men in the street demarcated by their beards, turbans, and Asian clothing. By populating Leadenhall Street and this building's portico of with an array of elites, orientalized urban poor, and Indian persons, Malton constructed a vision of the EIC's headquarters as an Anglo-Indian structure in London appearing as though both the progenitor and a distant mirror of the white town of Calcutta. London occasionally appeared in prints produced by prominent artists from the continent as well as members of the Royal Academy and other exclusive metropolitan circles. For instance, the Royal Academicians and proponents of the Daniells' work, Francesco Bartolozzi, Philip James de Loutherbourg, and Thomas Malton the

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[56] Daniell and Daniell, *A Picturesque Voyage of India By Way of China*, 104.
[57] Ann Bermingham, "Urbanity and the Spectacle of Art," in *Romantic Metropolis: The Urban Scene of British Culture, 1780-1840,* James Chandler and Kevin Gilmartin, eds. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 151.
[58] Joseph Monteyne details how streetscapes of English marketplaces occasionally depicted Turks and other persons from Asia. Monteyen, *The Printed Image in Early Modern London: Urban Space, Visual Representation, and Social Exchange* (Burlington, Vermont: Ashgate Publishing, 2007), 59.

Figure 5. James Malton, *The East India House, Leadenhall Street, London, as Rebuilt by Richard Jupp and Henry Holland in 1796 to 1799. A Carriage on the Left and an Indian Amongst the Passers-By in the Street.* (1800). Watercolour, 27 x 36.5in. (68.58 x 92.71cm). © British Library Board (BL Number: WD2460).

Younger produced etchings of classicized streetscapes of the Royal Exchange and other London locales during the 1780 and 1790s. Throughout the century, some European visual artists, such as Bartolozzi and Malton, represented London by applying and accentuating continental Palladian aesthetics, thereby linking the British metropolis to the culture and history of Rome.[59] Much as British and continental artists crafted classicized images of London underscoring its

[59] British Museum Department of Prints and Drawings, BM no. 1880,1113.3709, 1878,1228.169; Farington, "Saturday January 12th, 1799," in *The Diary of Joseph Farington,* Vol. 4, 1133; Malcolm Warner, "The City of the Present," in *The Image of London: Views by Travellers and Emigres, 1550-1920,* edited by Malcolm Warner (London: Trefoil Publications, 1987), 12-13.

history as a distant outpost of ancient Rome, Anglo-Indian visual artists could delineate the white town of Calcutta as an appendage of London through the application of classicized aesthetics. While images of glistening Palladian structures underscored British civility and civilizational progress, the absence of a unified, coherent schema of representing either London or colonial British spaces allowed artists such as the Daniells to produce a vision of the white town streets as one of the permutations of a London-Calcutta socialscape.

The ten *Views* featuring the white town revealed to both colonial and metropolitan viewers that Calcutta and London were undergoing parallel processes of urban development. While British structures in India drew upon local architectural features in order to cope with subcontinental climates, imported European classicized architectural features demarcated the Britishness of the white town.[60] Writing in 1794, the landscape artist William Hodges described the white town of Calcutta as appearing like an assemblage of "Grecian temples."[61] Indeed, some travel writers presented idealized accounts of British expatriates living in a city of palaces whose "regular and wide streets" and glistening white facades clearly differed from the oriental winding alleys and "miserable huts and old Moorish and Indian" structures of the black town bazaars.[62] The Daniells similarly extolled the white town of Calcutta as an epicenter of British civility. For the uncle and nephew, "the splendor of the British arms produced a sudden change in its aspect: the bamboo roof suddenly vanished; the marble column took place of brick walls; princely mansions were erected by private individuals; hospitals were endowed with royal munificence."[63] Just as middling and elite persons enriched by global commercial enterprise

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[60] Sten Nilsson, *European Architecture in India 1750-1850* (New York: Taplinger, 1968), 25-9.
[61] William Hodges, *Travels in India During the Years 1780, 1781, 1782, and 1783* (London, 1794), 15.
[62] John Stewart, "A Letter from John Stewart, Secretary and Judge Advocate of Bengal, 1773," edited by L. S. Sutherland, *The Indian Archives*, Vol. 10, No. 1-2 (Jan-Dec, 1956): 5-6.
[63] Daniell and Daniell, *A Picturesque Voyage of India By Way of China*, 104.

patronized the renovation and beautification of London, profits in the 1750s-1780s enabled the Company to concomitantly chisel out a British section of Bengal.[64] However, some Anglo-Indians reported that in actuality Calcutta was "so irregularly built, that it looks as if the houses had been placed wherever chance directed, here the lofty mansion of an English chief and there the thatched hovel of an Indian cooly."[65] Thus, the numbers of Europeans living and socializing within the black town as well as the copious Indian servants and prominent South Asian merchants residing in the white town suggests that the Daniells wished to mask the fact that where the British and oriental areas of Calcutta-London socialscape began or ended was always gnomic, fluid, and contingent.

The Daniells' aquatints frequently featured large, shaded crowds or smaller clusters of South Asians existing as embodiments of the oriental black town directly contrasting the British space signified by the luminous architectural features of the structures. For instance, in the Daniells' eleventh aquatint, *The Old Government House* (1788) **(Figure 6)**, the black town appears to move throughout the British section of the city. The station point within the grassy maidan surrounding Fort William positions the viewer's eye on Esplanade Row and the adjacent structures. Similar in features to the Old Court House, the Council House and the Old Government House each bore Ionic columns on the second floor and rooftop balustrades adorned with urns. Such Palladian features as marble orbs and arches extend to the surrounding elaborate fence and gate, rendering the larger structure itself a wall designating British space. A large, dark cluster of Indians and a single camel dominate the central foreground. A few individual men in

[64] Borsay, *The English Urban Renaissance,* 311-17.
[65] Stanhope, *Genuine Memoirs Of Asiaticus,* 42.

Figure 6. Thomas Daniell, *The Old Government House*, *Views of Calcutta*, No. 11 (1788). © The Trustees of the British Museum (BM Number: 1870,0514.1485).

the front of this cluster appear bright and detailed in Indian attire. Despite intense sunlight, the many people standing in the center of this crowd are reduced to an indeterminable mass of uniform darkened shade and complexion with a few hints of colorful turbans. Balancing the line of homogenized Europeans on the left, the right middle ground contains a procession of an Indian embassy from Awadh to meet with Company administrators at the Old Government House.[66] Partially obscured by two trained elephants and a camel in the right middle ground, this

[66] Hermione de Alemeida and George H. Gilpin, *Indian Renaissance: British Romantic Art and the Prospect of India* (Burlington: Ashgate, 2005), 186-7.

large cohort consists of an unknown number of persons as well as two prominent politicians riding in palanquins. With darkness impenetrable to the British viewer, these crowds appeared as an extension of the oriental sectors of the city. The movement of the crowds revealed the black town as an amorphous, shifting social space which could exist next to or even surrounded by the white town without actually corrupting or orientalizing adjacent British spaces and people. Thus, Indian servants and others within the white town could be oriental yet the Britishness of the space inside the palanquin or within the white plaster-coated walls was not violated. By underscoring contrast between the oriental and European social sectors in a city where there truly was no separation, the Daniells' prints elided interracial sociability and also mystified marked financial volatility, political instability, and bodily danger characterizing British life in Calcutta.

III. "I was obliged to stand Painter, Engraver, Copper-smith, Printer, and Printers Devil myself"[67]: Producing and Selling Idealized Streetscapes in Recession-Torn Calcutta.

Soon after Warren Hastings resigned as Governor General and retired to England in 1785, most European residents of Calcutta realized that the economic boom periods of the past few decades had come to an end.[68] The miniaturist Ozias Humphrey observed that "there never was known in Calcutta so much poverty or so much scarcity of money, as there is at this time. All the first families are withdrawn from it…there are scarcely twenty persons left in Indostan, whose fortunes would each amount to twenty thousand pounds."[69] By the time that the Daniells began publishing their Calcutta streetscapes in 1786, Governor General Cornwallis's regulation of private trade, the closure of many English agency houses, and stricter governmental oversight

[67] Daniell to Humphrey, Calcutta, 7 November 1788, RA Library, HU/4/13.
[68] Marshall, *East Indian Fortunes,* 106-28; Natasha Eaton, *Mimesis Across Empires: Artworks and Networks in India 1765-1860* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2013), 81-3.
[69] Ozias Humphrey to Mary Boydell, Calcutta, 29 December 1785, Humphrey Mss, RA Library, HU/3/49-50.

of the EIC in India yielded a veritable recession in Calcutta.[70] Some travel writers noted that despite uncertain fortunes nearly all white-town homes were "ornamented with prints…or whatever else could be procured from Europe."[71] Imported artworks and other "Europe goods" were essential for defining the British space of the white town. Although the agency house of Paxton and Cockerell oversaw the advertisement of the Daniells' artworks and managed their sales, the Daniells found painting and printmaking to be "a very discouraging pursuit."[72] Patterns of consumption and the function of short-lived European prints revealed the impermanence and insecurity of British existence in Calcutta.[73] Artistic production and circulation were challenging in a white town characterized by poverty, high demand for British-made images, and large numbers of artworks in Calcutta marketplaces.[74] Local bazaars brimmed with European goods, Asian imitations, and abandoned artworks of those returned to Europe and the deceased. Thomas Daniell observed in 1788 that markets were so oversaturated that one could not get "a fiftieth part of the value of [prints] at Calcutta."[75] Despite the overabundance of imported European artworks and South Asian imitations diminishing the monetary value of prints, the Daniells' Calcutta streetscapes brought high prices at white-town auctions and proved to be of importance to Britons in India and after their return home.

A sharp decline in patronage, a constant stream of imported cheap English pictures, and little desire among Calcutta's transient European populace to invest in artworks led Thomas

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[70] Natasha Eaton, "Excess in the city? The Consumption of Imported Prints in Colonial Calcutta, c.1780-c.1795," in *Empires of Vision*, edited by Martin Jay and Sumathi Ramaswamy (Durham: Duke University Press, 2014), 164-6.
[71] Ms. Kindersley, *Letters from the Island of Teneriffe, Brazil, the Cape of Good Hope, and the East Indies* (London, 1777), 179; Katherine Prior, editor. *An Illustrated Journey Round the World* (London: Folio Society, 2007), 26.
[72] William Baillie to Ozias Humphrey, Calcutta, 23 November 1793, Humphrey Mss, RA Library, HU/4/88-89.
[73] Eaton, "Excess in the city?," 160-6.
[74] The Bengal Inventories Series of the India Office Records for 1780-1800 contains myriad auction records, revealing that European, Indian, and East Asian prints were ubiquitous in white town households and their estate sales. These common images typically only realized a few rupees at auction. BL IOR/L/AG/34/27/1-22.
[75] Thomas Daniell to Ozias Humphrey, Calcutta, 7 November 1788, Humphrey Mss, RA Library, HU/4/13.

Daniell to observe that "the commonest Bazar is full" of unwanted prints.[76] Europeans also had competition with Indian artists who produced "copies from copies of copies" of portraits and landscapes, leading to an overabundance and a debasement of circulating images. Daniell found that "a painter *in these degenerate days* is considered no higher caste than a shoemaker – those who saw my drawings, I am convinced, thought but lightly of them." Equally discouraging to British artists was the lack of buyers among prosperous Indians. Daniell noted that a Mahratta ruler "had not the least feeling for works of art. A print by Hodges of the Fort of Gwalior…being one day shown to him, exclaimed, after turning it about two or three times – Oh! What a large ship." Because most Hindus did "not ornament their houses with pictures…excepting the favourite idol" and only a small number of wealthy Muslims "have pictures in their houses by European artists," the Daniells had to rely upon an impoverished and impermanent Anglo-Indian consumer base.[77]

The currency of the Daniells' aquatints can be estimated, in part, by their robust sales and their retention of value in this diminished market, suggesting that these images carried important messages for buyers and viewers. As locally-produced "*Bengalee* work[s]" competing with masses of imported and excessive prints that Europeans fetishized as embodiments of British culture, the Daniells' streetscapes presented expatriate eyes with a reassuring and nationalistic vision of Calcutta's social and urban environs.[78] By mystifying traces of chronic European suffering and uncertainty in the white town, the Daniells' aquatints challenged Britons' need for imported nostalgic English images which identified the culture and security of home as thousands of miles away. Rather, through visions of European life and death in a unified

[76] Daniell to Humphrey, Calcutta, 7 November 1788, RA Library, HU/4/13.
[77] Daniell to Pennant, 26 September, 1798. CPL, 091.92Au82. Daniell's emphasis.
[78] Daniell to Humphrey, Calcutta, 7 November 1788, RA Library, HU/4/13. Daniell's emphasis.

Calcutta-London socialscape, the Daniells' aquatints showed that the white town was itself a location of Britain and an origin of Britishness rather than an illusionary, peripheral imitation populated by exiles.

Although some white-town art connoisseurs deemed the Daniells' aquatints to be of questionable quality, these Calcutta images remained important idealized visualizations of white-town life for Anglo-Indians during their residence in the subcontinent as well as following their return to Britain. According to Thomas Daniell, bazaars contained so many images that William Hodges's popular India landscapes "are selling off at the outcry of cartloads."[79] Nevertheless, the Daniells managed to sell large numbers of their Calcutta streetscapes to white-town denizens at the considerable price of "twelve gold Mohurs the set."[80] These images proceeded to circulate among white-town collectors and realized high prices when they sold at white-town art and estate auctions.[81] Despite increasing white-town poverty and excessive numbers of cheap prints available to Anglo-Indians at auctions and bazaars, the Daniells' Calcutta images at times sold at auction for more than double their original subscription price.[82] While the Daniells presented sets of these streetscapes to Humphrey and notable Company officers, many Calcutta residents sent these images to persons in Europe.[83] The Calcutta lawyer William Hickey purchased multiple sets to send to family members in Britain. Hickey found these views "very inferior to many

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[79] Daniell to Humphrey, Calcutta, 7 November 1788, RA Library, HU/4/13.
[80] Anonymous, *The Calcutta Chronicle* (Calcutta, India), Monday, 17 July, 1786.
[81] Anonymous, "Account Sales of Mr. William Pye, Deceased, Sold by Messrs. Burrell, Doning, & Co., Auctioneers," 1792, BL IOR/L/AG/34/27/14; Anonymous, "Sales by Messrs. Tallah & Co.," 1 December, 1791, BL IOR/L/AG/34/27/18.
[82] Although the original subscription price was 12 Mohurs (180 Rupees), in 1789 Mrs. Hintock purchased "A Set of Calcutta Views Handsomely Framed" for 372 Rupees. These images continued to realize high prices at auction throughout the 1790s. Anonymous, "Inventory & Sales of all & Sundry the Goods, Chattels, Belongings of John Hinlock, esq." 1789, BL IOR/L/AG/34/27/11.
[83] Daniell to Humphrey, Calcutta, 7th November 1788, RA Library, HU/4/13; Claude Martin to Ozias Humphrey, Benares, 11 March 1789, RA Library, HU/4/24-5.

subsequent performances."[84] Yet, he closely emulated the Daniells' streetscapes in crafting his own diagram of the white town. Hickey's renditions contained added textual descriptions for each building, indicating their function as explanatory images for viewers who never visited India.[85] The Daniells' streetscapes and Hickey's versions retained value to their possessors since they were some of the earliest visual representations of the white town to circulate in Britain.

Even during the years prior to the Daniells' return to England in 1795, metropolitan collectors, antiquaries, and nabobs admired, circulated, and displayed the Daniells' Calcutta streetscapes. The movement of the Daniells' aquatints and sketches to Britain resulted in the uncle and nephew gaining a reputation among some collectors, such as the famed naturalist Sir Joseph Banks, for producing works which bore "strong marks of genius."[86] The emergence of specialized collectors of Indian exotica and Anglo-Indian artworks in late eighteenth-century Britain allowed the Daniells' Calcutta images to retain commercial value following their relocation to the metropolis. At the April, 1792 Christie's of London auction of the art collection of the former Governor of Madras, Sir Archibald Campbell, "Twelve Views of Calcutta, etched and Coloured by Daniell" was the highest-selling lot at that day's sale.[87] For some nabobs in Britain, the display of the Daniells' idealized streetscapes was intimately linked to remembering and representing white-town life. Following his retirement in 1785, Warren Hastings filled his mansion at Daylesford, Gloucestershire with Indian pictures, other imported Asian exotica, and Anglo-Indian artworks. Inventories of this estate revealed that in the 1780s and 1790s his

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[84] William Hickey, *Memoirs of William Hickey,* Volume 3, 1782-1790, edited by Alfred Spencer (New York: Knopf, 1923), 327, 342.
[85] Hickey's images came into the possession of the family of Sir Robert Chambers in Britain. W. T. Ottewill, "Calcutta Streets and Houses in 1789: Unpublished Sketches and Notes by William Hickey," *Bengal Past & Present*, Vol 49 (1935): 99.
[86] Joseph Banks to Robert Kyd, 10 May 1791, BL Add MS 56299, f.101b.
[87] Lot number sixty-six sold for six pounds to Mr. James. James Christie, *A Catalogue of A Small Collection of Pictures, By Ancient Masters; Capital Drawings, and Prints…the Property of the Late Sir Archibald Campbell* (London, 1792). Prices and buyers listed in the annotated master copy at Christie's Archive, London, England.

collections of British and Indian-produced images were present in nearly all forty rooms of the mansion. However, Hastings prominently displayed his Indian landscapes by Hodges and all twelve of the Daniells' Calcutta views in his parlors and other conspicuous spaces where he entertained guests.[88] This placement allowed many visitors to Daylesford to observe the Daniells' and Hastings's idealized vision of Anglo-Indian social space. Great indebtedness following his acquittal in 1795 encouraged Hastings to part with a portion of his art collection at a 1797 Christie's auction.[89] The importance of the Calcutta streetscapes to Hastings is evident through his willingness to sell some of his commissioned paintings by his associates William Hodges and Tilly Kettle rather than the mass-produced aquatints by the Daniells.[90] While these Calcutta pictures provided an idealized vision of Anglo-Indian society for Hastings and other nabobs following their return home, they concomitantly presented reassuring reflections of white town life eliding the dangers and harsh living conditions for most Britons in the subcontinent.

As rumors swirled around London of Indian riches and oriental hookah smoke filling white-town residences, the realities of economic recession and unhealthful conditions in Calcutta made life quite difficult for most Europeans living in the City of Palaces. Travel writers and memoirists, such as Philp Dormer Stanhope, noted that for many a nabob, "his constitution [was] enfeebled by the climate, and still more so by the anxiety which continually preyed upon his spirits" from life in India.[91] Metropolitan gossip detailed nabobish greed, excess, embrace of Indian cultural norms, ill health, and uncertain life in India as being equally symptomatic of

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[88] Anonymous, "Inventories: Household goods of Warren Hastings at Daylesford." BL Add MS 41609, ff. 7-8, 19, 31; BL Add MS 41611, f. 4.
[89] James Christie*, A Catalogue of a Valuable Collection of Pictures…of the Esteemed and Excellent Artist, Mr. Gainsborough Dupont,…Also a Grand Selection of Views of India By the Ingenious Artist Mr. Hodges – Portraits by Kettle, &c, the Property of Warren Hastings* (London, 1797). Prices and buyers in Christie's master copy.
[90] The Daniells' Calcutta views stayed on the walls at Daylesford until the middle of the nineteenth century. Inventories: Household Goods of Mrs. Warren Hastings, 1853. BL Add MS 41611, ff. 4.
[91] Stanhope, *Genuine Memoirs Of Asiaticus,* 135.

oriental corruption.[92] While condemnatory images of newly-enriched Company servants circulated in Britain, disease and demise were indeed more likely outcomes of service in the subcontinent. The representation of death, and its commemoration through public monuments, offers a final example of how the *Views of Calcutta* mediated the cultural and social distance between India and London, providing another clue explaining the marketability of the Daniells' streetscapes.

In order to dissociate high rates of mortality from accusations of irresponsible business conduct and orientalization in the subcontinent, the Daniells created a visage of Calcutta devoid of indicators of recession, pestilence, or overcrowded cemeteries. While the Daniells' streetscapes acknowledged the precariousness of life in the white town, these images omitted the vast numbers of graves indicating high rates of British death. The only signs of European demise visible within the Daniells' white town were ornate mausoleums and public memorials placed alongside monumental architecture celebrating Company power and prosperity. The erection of memorials in the British sector helped residents cope with the tenuous nature of life in India. Mausoleums and monolithic architecture aided Anglo-Indians in dismissing metropolitan accusations of nabobery. Monuments enabled them to re-envision themselves as heroic — if at times sacrificial — imperial officers maintaining order in Calcutta and reaping the economic benefits of furthering metropolitan interests in the subcontinent.[93] The Daniells' placement of memorials to the dead alongside the luminous walls of the classicized white town made the entire British sector appear as a monument to overcoming the specter of meaningless death. Moreover, the Daniells' inclusion of mausoleums and memorials mediated Anglo-Indian life and

[92] English doctors warned that the embrace of oriental behaviors could yield high rates of British disease and death in Calcutta. Chattopadhyay, *Representing Calcutta,* 62-8.
[93] Robert Travers, "Death and the Nabob: Imperialism and Commemoration in Eighteenth-Century India." *Past & Present*, No. 196 (Autumn, 2007): 83-7, 107.

death by tapping into an expatriate desire to reveal European death and sinusoidal fortunes in Bengal as occurring within an intertwined Calcutta-London milieu.

By illuminating monuments to the dead as existing within a unified Calcutta-London urbanscape, the Daniells' *Views of Calcutta* vindicated deceased Britons from the ignoble fate of exiles putrefied by orientalization. Rather, such memorials appearing alongside the classicized white-town structures claimed these deaths as occurring on British soil and as sacrifices in the name of national interests. The twelfth aquatint in the Daniells' series, *St. John's Church* (1788) **(Figure 7)**, may feature this religious structure on the morning of its christening in June of 1787. Designed by James Agg who utilized imported plans of St. Martin-in-the-Fields in Westminster, this classicized building symbolizing London-Calcutta connectivity features the portico on the eastern side in order to accommodate nearby structures and traffic. As numerous South Asian servants hold parasols above a couple of Europeans walking into the church, many Indians occupy the middle ground and foreground near the portico. Throughout the street, Indians carry palanquins containing Europeans or converse amongst themselves while waiting for their white-town employers to emerge from the structure following the religious service. The Daniells foreshortened the view's perspective in order to underscore the grandeur and luminescence of the church's facades. However, throughout the background lurk a number of smaller structures caught within the church's umbra and ensnarled in vegetal overgrowth. St. John's Church sits in front of a large burial ground containing the mausoleums of prominent Muslims as well as the

Figure 7. Thomas Daniell, *St. John's Church*, *Views of Calcutta*, No. 12 (1788). © The Trustees of the British Museum (BM Number: 1870,0514.1486).

Islamicate tombs and burial plots of noted Europeans.[94] Of Company servants in Bengal between 1707 and 1775, fifty-seven percent perished before returning to Europe. Moreover, approximately twenty-five percent of all European soldiers died annually.[95] The cemeteries continued to grow so quickly that each November EIC servants would gather to celebrate having survived another year.[96] The land on which St. John's Church stood was the primary "old burial

[94] Alemeida and Gilpin, *Indian Renaissance,* 187.
[95] Marshall, *East Indian Fortunes,* 218-19.
[96] Rhoads Murphey, "The City in the Swamp: Aspects of the Site and Early Growth of Calcutta," *The Geographic Journal*, Vol. 130, No.2. (June, 1964): 254.

ground" in Calcutta until it was filled to capacity and necessitated the opening of South Park Street Cemetery in 1767.[97] The burial of Job Charnock – the founder of Calcutta's white town – and other Europeans within this older Islamic interment place consecrated the entirety of St. John's Churchyard a British space.[98] The Daniells' aquatints re-envisioned this macabre burial space as a memorial ground by omitting the vast numbers of smaller graves and mausoleums surrounding the church. The juxtaposition of these Islamicate symbols of Company heroism and honorable British demise with a structure that was an adaptation of a noted classicized metropolitan landmark symbolically placed the masses of British dead within a British unified Calcutta-London urbanscape. According to the Daniells' streetscapes, how could dead white-town gentlemen and gentlewomen have perished from oriental excess, dishonorable business practices, and other risky nabobish behaviors if they had been a part of polite Calcutta-London society?

Conclusion

Ultimately, the Daniells' circulating *Views of Calcutta* suggested to British viewers the interpenetrations of Calcutta and London at a time of competing images of nabobs ranging from the condemnatory to the vindicating. In addition to the fiery rhetoric of accusatorial politicians, Philip Francis and other personal enemies of Warren Hastings, and anonymous authors of articles, multifarious disparaging images of nabobs circulated in Britain. During the last quarter of the eighteenth century and the early nineteenth century, metropolitan caricaturists, such as James Gillray and the Cruikshanks, lampooned the EIC and its servants in Britain in a series of

[97] J. P. Losty, *Calcutta: City of Palaces* (London: The British Library, 1990), 44.
[98] Chaudhuri, "Trends in Calcutta Architecture," 157.

published etchings.[99] Their visibility to the public through prominent display in the windows of print shops and other storefronts further propagated public derision of nabobish corruption and the oriental nature of the white town.[100] The Daniells' Calcutta streetscapes challenged such depictions of the white town as a uniformly oriental milieu defined by its proximity to other reaches of South Asia. Thus, in order to dispel the cloud of nabobery surrounding returned individual Britons, the Daniells' views re-inscribed the white town as an interwoven appendage of the Metropolis. Although Edmund Burke and other critics described Company activity in the subcontinent as robbery on a grand scale, the Daniells' aquatints elided signs of heavy drinking, violence, gambling, and theft perpetrated by soldiers, sailors, and unofficial residents of the white town.[101] Rather, in their *Views of Calcutta*, the Daniells recast Europeans as polite Britons whose contacts with Indians actually encouraged residents to moderate their behaviors, enabling bodily well-being and a greater sense of Britishness as a part of the Calcutta-London socialscape. Anglo-Indians of the white town could not one day infect the metropolitan elite with oriental auras because it would seem that they had never left home.

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[99] British Museum Department of Prints and Drawings, BM nos. 1935,0522.7.161; 1868,0808.6336; Richard Godfrey, *James Gillray: The Art of Caricature* (London: Tate Publishing, 2001), 66-7.
[100] For public display of prints in shop windows, Diana Donald, *The Age of Caricature: Satirical Prints in the Reign of George III* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1996), 3-7.
[101] Burke, *Mr. Burke's Speech, On the 1st December 1783,* 63.

CHAPTER 2

Like "a Hoard of Trafficking Arabs"[1]: Auctions, Circulating Material Culture, and Britishness in the Calcutta-London Socialscape, 1700-1820

Introduction

In 1786, the amateur Indologist, David Simpson, returned to Britain after six years serving as a surgeon for the East India Company at Trichinopoly in the Madras Presidency.[2] Simpson imported his enormous collection of commissioned Indian artworks and diverse South Asian antiquities acquired during his travels around the subcontinent.[3] Over the next six years, he contacted noted metropolitan orientalists and antiquarians, inquiring whether they would potentially purchase the collection. In December 1787, Simpson offered his exotica for sale to the famed botanist and president of the Royal Society, Sir Joseph Banks. The assemblage contained "upwards of 120 in number of the real Idols, in copper, Brass & Ivory, which were worshipped by the Hindoos"; a seven-foot tall model of a Hindu temple; over one thousand "paintings & drawings, executed by the Natives in India;" and thousands of books, pictures, and weapons from India, China, and central Asia.[4] However, given Banks's proclivity to keep only botanicals and other biological specimens in his personal cabinets, he declined the offer.

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[1] Anonymous [Lord Henry Bathurst], *The Ruinous Tendency of Auctioneering, And the Necessity of Restraining it for the Benefit of Trade, Demonstrated in a Letter to the Right Hon. Lord Bathurst, President of the Board of Trade*. (London, 1812, 1848 printing), 35.

[2] D. G. Crawford, *Roll of the Indian Medical Service,* 1615-1930 (London: W. Thacker & Co., 1930), 265.

[3] The surviving ledgers from the Simpson collection reveal that he meticulously recorded the origins and provenances of many of the items in his collection. For instance, David Simpson, "Explanation of the Sacred Paintings of the Brahmins of Choukie Lingum's Pagoda at Madura." British Library, Add MS 15504.b.

[4] David Simpson to Joseph Banks, December, 1787, in *The Indian and Pacific Correspondence of Sir Joseph Banks, 1783-1789*, Vol. 2, edited by Neil Chambers. (London: Pickering & Chatto, 2009), 271-2.

Simpson may have sold or gifted nearly thirty of his Hindu images to other scholars.[5] But difficulties disposing of most of his assemblage impelled him to part with it through a well-publicized auction held at Christie's saleroom in Pall-Mall, London.

Simpson used the social arena of the auction floor as a stage where he could present the metropolitan viewing public with rich detail of his experiences collecting "a very complete system of Hindoo Mythology." [6] Newspaper advertisements for this sale followed the conventions of European auctions by underscoring the scarcity and value of the "oriental" items on offer.[7] While most auction catalogues were undetailed lists composed by the auctioneers, this catalogue was anything but typical by presenting Simpson's intricate descriptions and provenances of each of the pieces to cross the auction block. Thus, for all in attendance, there was no doubt that these items were aged South-Asian "Idols or Swaamies of the Brahmins, which were actually worshipped as Deities in Pagodas and Private Families, by Brahmins and Hindoos." Thirty-five of the eight-five lots of South Asian paintings, sculptures, and spiritual images featured detailed catalogue descriptions, allowing auction-goers to trace the items from their original Indian contexts to British possession. Simpson identified lot twenty-three as a "Saavapaaddie Swaamie," which was "one of the deities which was actually worshipped at the Pagoda at Carrour, a fort belonging to Hyder Ally, which was taken by the British troops last war, and it now in possession of the English."[8] Simpson used the first person in his sale catalogue so he could argue for the veracity of his experiences in India. Thus, his sale was a

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[5] Only ninety-two Hindu images appear in Simpson's collection by May of 1792. Thus, he may have sold or gifted around thirty of them between 1787 and 1792. James Christie [David Simpson], *A Catalogue of Indian Idols, Indian Paintings, Drawings &c Which Were Collected by Mr. Simpson During a Long Residence in India in the Company's Service, Which Will be Sold By Auction by Mr. Christie.* (London: Christie's of London, 1792), 3-10.
[6] [Simpson], *A Catalogue of Indian Idols, Indian Paintings, Drawings &c*, 3-4.
[7] Anonymous, *Star* (London, England), Saturday, May 19, 1792; Issue 1267.
[8] [Simpson], *A Catalogue of Indian Idols, Indian Paintings, Drawings &c*, 3, 6.

performance intertwining biography with the histories of the items in his collection.[9] In the case of "a model of the Bimanum or top of one of the pagodas in Jumbah-Kishnah," Simpson claimed that "I was assured by the Brahmin from whom I purchased the model" that it was of great age.

Simpson's sale appealed to a distinct audience of specialized collectors. The antiquarians Richard Payne Knight and Charles Townley purchased considerable numbers of items.[10] But some buyers, such as the antiquary Charles Marsh, acquired pieces in order to deposit them in institutional collections.[11] **(Figure 8)**. Of the twenty-six individuals who placed winning bids on these lots, nearly all were EIC officers, denizens of the metropolis with close personal connections to India, and scholars interested in "the orient."[12] The degree of specialization of Simpson's sale reflected great shifts in metropolitan reactions to representations of India, fluctuating attitudes among British art collectors and connoisseurs, and auctions and audiences' reception and circulation of Asian exotica during the last quarter of the eighteenth century.

This 1792 sale was remarkable for its great qualities and quantities of Indian art and antiquities filling Christie's auction room with Asian auras. As the Company's acquisition of a subcontinental territorial empire led some observers to fear resultant corruption and orientalization of Britain, Indian art and antiquities did not remain static in meaning to Londoners. The processes of auctioning art and other items from Europe and India reflected and

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[9] Natasha Eaton suggested that the Simpson sale catalogue was an "auto-ethnography." Natasha Eaton, "Nostalgia for the Exotic: Creating an Imperial Art in London, 1750- 1793," *Eighteenth Century Studies.* Vol. 39, No. 2 (Winter, 2006): 235-6.

[10] The Christie's Archive's annotated master copy of Anonymous [Simpson], *A Catalogue of Indian Idols, Indian Paintings, Drawings &c*, 1-12.

[11] A. L. Dallapiccola, *South Indian Paintings: A Catalogue of the British Museum Collection* (London: The British Museum Press, 2010), 297-8.

[12] By presenting precise identifications of each item to cross the auction block, this May, 1792 sale contrasted with earlier auctions and their catalogues. Anonymous [Simpson], *A Catalogue of Indian Idols, Indian Paintings, Drawings &c*, 3, 5-12. Annotated master copy at Christie's Archive, London, England.

Figure 8. Anonymous, A Model Temple Chariot, or Ratha, adorned with Viaisnava Figures. Southern India: Probably Commissioned by David Simpson at Srirangam, Tiruchirapalli. Donated by Charles Marsh, 1793. Height: 220 centimeters; Width: 90 centimeters.[13] © The Trustees of the British Museum (British Museum Number: 1793,0511.1).

[13] A. L. Dallapiccola, *South Indian Paintings: A Catalogue of the British Museum Collection* (London: The British Museum Press, 2010), 297-8.

reinforced the multiple and competing understandings of Britishness, orientalness, India, imperial expansion, and empire's transformations of Britain. Auctions at Christie's and other prominent London auction houses were important arenas for debating the counterflows of empire. The bidding floor had long carried strong associations with the importation of goods from Asia, with social transformations, with divining meanings of material culture, and with "oriental" presences in Britain. Auctions in London and in the "white town" of Calcutta were popular social gatherings defined by their function as centers of material cultural circulation, but also by the attendance by a diverse audience.[14]

This chapter argues that metropolitan and white town auctions could be contentious, "oriental" spectacles where practices of ruthless bidding, the dispersal of the material signifiers of gentility to non-elites, and genteel attendees socializing with lowly persons threatened to orientalize polite individuals and blur the boundaries of Britishness in London and in Calcutta. There were many critics of auctions and the social space of the sales room. Anonymous pamphleteers decried auctions as detrimental to the metropolitan economy by undercutting retailers and injecting markets with inferior and fraudulent items. Visual artists and playwrights lampooned the mendacious rhetoric of auctioneers as well as the impolite behaviors associated with fierce bidding. Moreover, at times, auction goers themselves both bemoaned the auction room as a space of social mixing and scoffed at the large sums bid for such items. This chapter illuminates how auctions were paradoxical events because they were where elites went to purchase art, furnishings, and other status symbols. Yet, they were also oriental forms of sale

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[14] John Brewer has suggested that sales rooms, galleries, and artists' studios frequently were a site of interaction of persons of all social statuses. Brewer, *The Pleasures of the Imagination: English Culture in the Eighteenth Century* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1997), 223-4.

where middling persons, nabobs, and non-Britons could outbid their rivals and acquire such items.[15]

Section one reveals that during the Georgian period metropolitan auction houses were contentious social arenas existing paradoxically as an uncouth, oriental milieu where refined connoisseurs gathered to acquire the physical signifiers of politeness. While events and spaces such as masquerades or an Asian collection cabinet could cause any polite space in Britain to carry an air of exoticism, auctions were one of the penumbral spaces of the metropolis where British and oriental sectors intermeshed. Although the bidding floor was a very prominent stage of polite sociability, critics ranging from British politicians to Christian ministers condemned auctions as performances where ferocious bidding wars caused gentlemanly collectors to devolve into persons little different from individuals haggling in an Asian bazaar.

The second section details how, much like in London, art and estate auctions in the white town of Calcutta functioned as social spaces central to reaffirming elite, British identity. Auctions and the circulation of European artworks and other household items were central to maintaining British ideas of the existence of a conjoined global London-Calcutta socialscape. White-town auctions were also uncertain, contingent milieus where the presence of Asian exotica, Asian imitations of European goods, Asian peoples, and other non-Britons undermined the illusion of separation of the polite, European white town from the Indian sections of Calcutta. Auctions' functions as circulation hubs destabilized the material distinctions and social divisions between the white and black towns. Auctions' popular recognition as orientalizing spaces in London led metropolitan critics, such as the caricaturist James Gillray, to project this concept

[15] Due to the enormous volume of contemporary auction catalogues, great inconsistencies in the recording and preservation of sales documents, and the low survival rate of auction materials for certain years, it is impossible to craft definitive statistics or accounts of auctions in Calcutta and London.

onto the white town, identifying the Calcutta auction not as an event where Britons acquired European goods in order to replicate life in the metropolis. Rather, the white-town auction was an oriental ritual revealing the savage behaviors of reviled "nabobs."

Section three explores metropolitan and country estate sales as well as prestigious art auctions as popular spectacles where the material symbols of refined taste circulated, granting middling persons and disreputable nabobs opportunities to participate. Estate auctions performed at the residence threatened to orientalize elite dwelling spaces, and the redistribution of possessions demystified the material symbols of high social status through commodification. Although estate auctions were a common means of disposing of the contents of country houses, this process of dismantling also revealed the questionable tastes and practices of ostensibly refined connoisseurs. Estate sales granted non-elites access to land, furnishings, art, and other material trappings of elite status in Britain. Some of the wealthiest EIC officers, such as Robert Clive, attended high-profile art sales at Christie's and other venues to publically demonstrate refined taste and acquire the accoutrements of elite status. However, as Clive's pursuits revealed, publically buying art at auction also exposed a nabob's pretenses to refinement.

The fourth section examines patterns in the sale of South Asian art and antiquities at Georgian metropolitan auctions. There were three distinct phases in British exotica collecting and in the popular meanings British observers ascribed to exotica. How auctioneers and auction catalogues included and detailed Indian exotica correlated to these shifts. During the first half of the eighteenth century, Indian and East Asian items entered the curiosity cabinets of elites and moneyed middling persons whose interpretations of these items ranged from pleasing rarities to inexpensive, peculiar novelties. These imports were not likened to Greco-Roman antiquities or superb continental paintings. As EIC officers returned home with remarkable collections

following the Company's conquest of Bengal in 1757, elites gradually eschewed their old Indian curiosities while nabobs, orientalists, and specialized collectors increasingly embraced them. Auctioneers strategically crafted their sales pitches and catalogues to appeal to the multiple and competing understandings of such items. By omitting detail and juxtaposing Asian items with ancient European works of art, auctioneers allowed bidders to invest Asian items with their own interpretations. By the time of Governor General Warren Hastings's corruption trial in 1785, auctioneers recognized that the orientalizing effects of Indian artworks and antiquities rendered them primarily the domain of nabobs, Indologists and specialized collectors, and museums.

I. "The Noble Science of the Hammer"[16]: The Development of the Auction and the Auction Room in Georgian Britain

Throughout the Georgian period, auction houses and other auction spaces in London were contentious social and commercial arenas, receiving popular condemnation as disreputable exploiters of an easily-duped public. Persons of varied status attended estate and inventory sales, as well as elite luxury-item auctions because one could acquire a wide range of objects. British elites, immigrants from various corners of the empire, and persons of the lower orders rubbed shoulders, publicly debated items on the auction block, and bid on a multitude of domestic and exotic goods. By the second quarter of the century, some observers, such as the amateur historian James Ralph, noted that auctions were "one of the principal Amusements of all Ranks, from the Duke and Duchess to the Pick-pocket and Streetwalker."[17] Thus, much as art galleries and artists' studios were places where polite and disreputable people mingled,[18] auctions rooms were

[16] Anonymous [William Woty], *The Estate-Orators: A Town Eclogue* (London, 1774), ii.
[17] James Ralph, *The Taste of the Town; or, a Guide to all Publick Diversions* (London, 1731), 231-2.
[18]John Brewer, *The Pleasures of the Imagination*, 223-4.

where social status, Britishness, and orientalness could overlap and blur. Fine art, utilitarian household goods, ornate furnishings, and a raft of other implements of self-fashioning were neither static in their social meanings nor inaccessible to a multitude of persons able to outbid rivals. For metropolitan critics, the ritual of the art auction, its requisite interpersonal interactions, and the fierce competition among attendees were unworthy of polite Britons. Rather, in pursuit of the trappings of respectability and goods of questionable taste, many auction-goers engaged in a decidedly "oriental" practice in a milieu external to the British sectors of London. In this view, the auction as a practice and as a theatrical public arena threatened to orientalize polite attendees.

The British auction had its origins in the EIC and other mercantile bodies importing exotic Asian and New World agricultural products and other mass-produced consumer goods. By the early seventeenth century, the Company sold textiles, spices, and other Asian imports through the "inch of candle" auction format.[19] Throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, imported colonial products were fixtures in the metropolitan marketplace.[20]
In the eighteenth century, a more widespread and robust consumer culture developed interwoven with industrialization and the emergence of a larger middling sector whose predilections usually guided popular British tastes.[21] Increasingly large quantities of imported New World and Asian agricultural products and manufactures met high British consumer demand. As a wider public

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[19] This method of sale consisted of persons placing bids on a lot until one inch of a candle had burned. The Company continued selling imports in this way in the late eighteenth century. Anonymous, *The London Guide, Describing Public and Private Buildings of London, Westminster, & Southward* (London, 1782), 91.
[20] Sydney W. Mintz, Sweetness and Power: The Place of Sugar in Modern History (Penguin Books, 1985), xxix, 130-4, 140-3; K. N. Chaudhuri, The English East India Company: The Study of an Early Joint Stock Company 1600–1640 (London: Frank Cass & Co., 1965), 172, 202.
[21] Great demand for colonial imports was one of the driving forces for the development of cheaper, locally-made imitations. Neil McKendrick, John Brewer, and J. H. Plumb, *The Birth of a Consumer Society: The Commercialization of Eighteenth- Century England* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1982), 9-33; Maxine Berg, *Luxury and Pleasure in Eighteenth-Century Britain* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 9-12, 44-45.

came to rely upon their high quality or their stimulating and addictive properties, tea, coffee, porcelain, and muslins transformed from exotic luxuries into necessities.[22] While the EIC continued to import these staples in bulk, private trade conducted by Company servants, other merchants, and smugglers introduced British consumers to coveted Asian imports.[23] Thus, a variety of parallel networks of trade and transportation injected goods from Asian and the wider colonial world into metropolitan retail and auction spaces. Throughout the Georgian period, meanings and uses of Asian imports morphed concomitantly with the development of new methods of selling luxury items.

As particular commercial venues gained an air of elite sociability by the early eighteenth century, many auction rooms retained popular recognition as risky, or even potentially deceitful, commercial spaces. The development of the auction as a form of transaction dissimilar to retail sales occurred concurrently with the rise of the commercialization of leisure and the intertwining of shopping and fashionable sociability.[24] While urban attractions such as pleasure gardens and theaters were commercially-managed institutions,[25] elite shopping venues were social arenas where a polite clientele consumed both goods and leisure. For persons of fashion, notable shopping galleries, such as The Strand and The Royal Exchange, were spaces where one's presence reaffirmed status.[26] Although the authors of eighteenth-century guidebooks to London

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[22] In 1757 Jonas Hanway's *Essay on Tea* detailed the various forms of tea, its mass popularity in Britain and in China, and how tea became normalized in Europe. Jonas Hanway, "An Essay on Tea," in *A Journal of Eight Day's Journey,* Vol. 2 (London, 1757), 1-49.

[23] Timothy Davies, "British Private Trade Networks and Metropolitan Connections in the Eighteenth Century," in *Goods from the East, 1600–1800: Trading Eurasia*, edited by Maxine Berg, Felicia Gottmann, Hanna Hodacs, and Chris Nierstrasz (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), 157-8.

[24] For more on fashionable sociability, see Gillian Russell, "An 'Entertainment of Oddities': Fashionable Sociability and the Pacific in the 1770s," in *A New Imperial History: Culture, Identity, and Modernity in Britain and the Empire 1660-1840* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 48-50.

[25] Brewer, *The Pleasures of the Imagination*, 59-66.

[26] Claire Walsh, "Social Meaning and Social Space in The Shopping Galleries of Early Modern London," in *A nation of Shopkeepers: Five Centuries of British Retailing,* edited by John Benson and Laura Ugolini (London: I. B. Taurus, 2003), 62-5.

encouraged tourists to visit exquisite and exclusive shopping locations, they often presented the reader with a great number of caveats about auctions as untrustworthy venues of sale and disreputable social spaces. James Ralph claimed early in the century that most auctions were actually just "entertainments…for the use of the idle and indolent." While some attendants were in search of goods, most "bid for everything and buy nothing."[27] The prevalence of deceitful bidding at auctions led the clergyman John Bowle to note in 1774 that a buyer at auctions "pays dearer than he needs to."[28] The medical researcher Reverend John Trusler warned in his *The London Advertiser and Guide* (1786) that auctioneers near "the great thoroughfares" were numerous and categorically swindlers. If one were to purchase items at auction, the odds were "ten to one [that] you are cheated, and give twice the value of the article purchased." Trusler concluded that one should "never buy at an auction," except when "the auctioneer is known to be a reputable man." However, even when bidding at a prominent auction house, "it is advisable to take some intelligent person with you, as a witness of the transaction."[29] Despite the normalization of polite retail spaces in the metropolis, British critics perceived auctions as being questionable in character. Thus, an air of disrepute hung even over auction houses as they developed as distinctive social and artistic institutions.

During the first half of the eighteenth century, the fashionable art auction developed as a form of sale distinct from other methods of rapid merchandise liquidation, such as auctions of the contents of estates, warehouses, and merchants' inventories. Nevertheless, art auctioneers continued to receive popular scrutiny and criticism. Specialized art auctions developed only after

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[27] Ralph, *The Taste of the Town;* 233.
[28] Reverend John Bowle to Reverend James Granger, 12 January, 1774, in *Letters Between the Rev. James Granger, Rector of Shiplake and Many of the Most Eminent Literary Men of His Time*, ed. J. P. Malcolm (London, 1805), 45.
[29] Reverend Dr. Trusler, *The London Adviser and Guide* (London, 1786), 9, 149.

the further loosening of British customs restrictions on the importation of continental artworks during the last quarter of the seventeenth century.[30] By the 1720s, the auctioneer Christopher Cock and his rivals, such as Andrew Hay and Dr. Bragge, endeavored to transform the role of the auctioneer from a master of ceremonies into a public orator whose theatrical performance at the podium made him central to a company synonymous with the sale of artworks and other luxury goods.[31] Cock and his rivals advertised their auction spaces as polite venues selling only the finest artworks, books, and antiquities from the collections of renowned persons of taste.[32]

Despite Cock's efforts to be the preeminent dealer in fine artworks during this period, he and other art auctioneers gained infamy among metropolitan collectors and painters for their dishonest practices.[33] Cock had a reputation for falsely advertising auctions of dealers' unsold stock of artworks and books as the sales of property of famous collectors; for associating with known art copiers and smugglers; and for his frequent placement of misattributed, altered, and fraudulent works on the auction block. The noted art historian and politician Horace Walpole quipped that the famous collections sold by Cock contained "true copies of original pictures that never existed."[34] While Cock was personally mocked on stage in Henry Fielding's *The*

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[30] Some historians have questioned whether customs officials actually enforced these restrictions. Nevertheless, the further loosening of restrictions and a lowering of import taxes encouraged an influx of artworks. See also Brian Cowan, "Arenas of Connoisseurship: Auctioning Art in Later Stuart England," in *Art Markets in Europe, 1400-1800,* edited by Michael North and David Omrod (Brookfield, Vermont: Ashgate Publishing, 1998), 155-7.
[31] Iain Pears, *The Discovery of Painting: The Growth of Interest in the Arts in England, 1680- 1768* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988), 65-7.
[32] See, for instance, Anonymous, *Daily Post* (London, England), March 17, 1727; Issue 2334; Anonymous, *Daily Journal* (London, England), May 6, 1730; Issue 2911; Christopher Cock, *A Catalogue of the Collection of Pictures of Robert Knight, Esq; (deceas'd,), Which Will be Sold by Auction, at Mr. Cock's in the Great Piazza, Covent-Garden* (London, 1745).
[33] William Hogarth famously satirized Cock's sales of fake old master paintings in his etching, *The Battle of the Pictures* (1745). See British Museum, B. M. Number Cc,1.137.
[34] Horace Walpole to Horace Mann, 3 March, 1742, in *Walpole Correspondence*, Vol 17, edited by W. S. Lewis (New Haven: Yale University Press, 48 Vols. 1937-83), 357. For more on Christopher Cock, see Louise Lippencott, *Selling Art in Georgian London: The Rise of Arthur Pond* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1983), 114.

Historical Register for the Year 1736,[35] auction houses' questionable business practices more generally received ridicule in Samuel Foote's 1752 satire, *Taste.* This play satirized the "Goths in Science, who had prostituted the useful study of antiquity to trifling superficial purposes." Above all, Foote cast a critical light on auctioneers' exploitation of ignorant and easily-fooled elite and moneyed middling collectors. This play mocked the metropolitan market for imported continental paintings and Greco-Roman antiquities by revealing how auctioneers convinced gullible audiences of the value and beauty of damaged and repellant works.[36]

Auctioneers had reputations as charlatans even after the trade came under greater regulation with the passage of auctioneer licensing laws.[37] The Auction Duty Act of 1779 called for greater professionalization of auctions through accurate advertisements, catalogues, and results reported to the Excise Office.[38] However, when James Christie opened his sales room in Pall Mall in 1766, he and rival auctioneers, such as George Leigh and Abraham Langford, had already realized that catalogues and precise advertisements could be a potent weapon in challenging continuing popular condemnation of art dealers and auctions more generally as a sordid business.[39]

Auction catalogs were often formulaic in nature, yet they were important in assisting auctioneers in assuring the crowd of the desirability, genuineness, and prestige of the items up

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[35] Fielding caricatures Cock as the auctioneer Christopher Hen, who auctions off a cabinet of curiosities containing "political honesty," "Patriotism," a "bottle of courage," and other rare virtues. Henry Fielding, *The Historical Register for the Year 1736* (London, 1737), 14-20.
[36] By depicting auctioneers selling blank canvases and convincing bidders that broken items were of greater value than pristine pieces, Foote painted auctioneering as a farcical and piratical practice. Samuel Foote, *Taste: A Comedy, In Two Acts* (London, 1752, Fifth Edition, 1782), ix, 17-18, 23-5, 28-29.
[37] These laws were also a form of tax increase during the costly war with the American colonies. Anonymous [William Cobbett], *Hansard's The Parliamentary History of England, 1777-8,* Vol. 19 (London, 1814), 246-7, 262.
[38] Satomi Ohashi, "The Auction Duty Act of 1777: The Beginning of Institutionalization of Auctions in Britain," in *Auctions, Agents, and Dealers: The Mechanisms of the Art Market, 1660-1830,* edited by Jeremy Warren and Adriana Turpin (Oxford: The Beazley Archive, 2008), 23-6.
[39] James Christie was partial owner of the newspaper, *The Morning Chronicle*, from 1769 to 1789. The classic study on the origins of Christie's is H. C. Marillier, *Christie's 1766-1925* (London: Constable & Company, 1926).

for bid. Major metropolitan auction houses issued catalogs for the piecemeal sale of a great diversity of goods, such as furnishings, book collections, paintings, wine, livestock, agricultural produce, and antiquities.[40] In addition to creating an audience and presenting rules for the public sale, catalogues' introductions insisted upon the authenticity and value of the goods.[41] Their value was derived in part from their presence within the impressive collection for sale. But, most importantly, the status of the former owner by name or simply as a "gentleman of taste" or "a man of fashion" communicated the great quality and scarcity of each piece.[42] Many museums and exhibitions in London charged for guidebooks or for admission.[43] Yet, art auction catalogues were usually free at the sale room as well as at a variety of London coffeehouses and bookshops. While distribution of these pamphlets was widespread, the content was minimal.[44] In order to generate trust with potential bidders, continental auction houses' art catalogues were very detailed and precise in their descriptions of specific lots to cross the block.[45] By contrast, the brief explanatory text featured in most London auction catalogues allowed for these documents to act primarily as a schedule of lots. Conversely, the silver tongue of the auctioneer presented

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[40] Horace Walpole noted in 1757 that he rushed from an auction of orange trees in order to attend an auction of antique Asian porcelain occurring three doors away. Horace Walpole to Horace Mann, 4 August, 1757, in *Walpole Correspondence*, Vol 21, edited by W. S. Lewis (New Haven: Yale University Press, 48 Vols. 1937-83), 121-2.
[41] Frequently the title of art sale catalogues insisted that all pieces for sale were genuine and should be regarded as great works of art in a future collection. For instance, Abraham Langford, *A Catalogue of the Genuine, Entire and Valuable Collection of Paintings, of John Blackwood, Esq;* (London, 1760), 1.
[42] Auction houses used "A gentleman of taste," "a man of fashion," and other such identifiers as terms to mask that these were really the dealer's back stock or items gathered by agents in Europe. James Christie, *A Catalogue of a Most Capital and Valuable Collection of Italian, French, Flemish and Dutch Pictures, of a Man of Fashion* (London, 1779); James Christie, *A Catalogue of a Most Capital, Valuable Collection of Italian, French, Flemish, Dutch Pictures…Being the Genuine property of A Man of Fashion* (London, 1784).
[43] For instance, the British Museum, Royal Academy Exhibitions, or Boydell's Shakespeare Gallery. Robert Dodsley, *The General Contents of the British Museum: With Remarks: Serving as a Directory in Viewing That Noble Cabinet* (London, 1762).
[44] Horace Walpole noted that his own collection inventory would be "no more worth reading than one of Christie's auction books" due to the lack of description. Horace Walpole to Lady Ossory, 8 October, 1777, in *Walpole Correspondence*, Vol 32, edited by W. S. Lewis (New Haven: Yale University Press, 48 Vols. 1937-83), 386.
[45] Benedicte Miyamoto, "'Making Pictures Marketable': Expertise and the Georgian Art Market," in *Marketing Art in the British Isles, 1700 to the Present: A Cultural History,* edited by Charlotte Gould and Sophie Mesplède (Burlington, Vt.: Ashgate, 2012), 125-6.

the crowds with rousing sales pitches. Strategic omissions and the lack of descriptive text in catalogues, therefore, enabled auctioneers to instill items with new meanings or associations in order to meet the tastes and expectations of the bidders. These catalogues functioned to create a logic and order of a collection for sale. But they simultaneously dismantled it by making the audience desire the individual items and envision the possibilities for their inclusion in future collections.[46] Auction catalogues were similar to museum or gallery exhibition guidebooks in their sequential listing of works based on their arrangement. These documents were essential to the differentiation of auction sales from fixed-price dealers as well as the reaffirmation of the art and luxury-item auction as a fashionable social event.

Although James Christie and competing metropolitan auctioneers wished to craft their sales floors as zones of polite sociability, auction rooms remained places where persons of various ranks mingled and bid against one another. As locations where moneyed persons of a multitude of backgrounds interacted and competed for the same material signifiers of status, auction rooms were spaces where class and other social distinctions could become fluid and indistinct. In February, 1808, Thomas Rowlandson published his etching of "Christie's Auction Room" **(Figure 9)**, featuring a sizeable audience sitting on rows of benches, crowded around the podium, or viewing paintings at the back of the bidding floor.[47] In this image, Christie stands at the podium while presenting the audience with a stirring speech about the picture of Venus up for bid. He does not have the attention of many persons in the crowd, who are instead engaged in conversation or looking at the works on the walls. Many persons only attended auctions in order to converse or watch the performance rather than bid on artworks. Walpole observed in 1770 that

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[46] Cynthia Wall, "The English Auction: Narratives of Dismantlings," *Eighteenth-Century Studies*, Vol. 31, No. 1 (Fall, 1997): 3-6.
[47] Rudolph Ackermann, *Microcosm of London; or, London in Miniature* (London, 1808), Plate No. 6.

Figure 9. Thomas Rowlandson, *Christie's Auction Room* (1808). Plate 6 from Rudolph Ackermann's *Microcosm of London* (1808). Height: 215 millimeters; Width: 265 millimeters. © The Trustees of the British Museum (British Museum Number: 1899,0420.100).

gallery showings and auction viewings were so popular in London "that sometimes one cannot pass through the streets where they are."[48] In the same year, an anonymous poet published *The Auction; A Poem,* presenting an intricate and fanciful account of the diverse persons attending a

[48] Horace Walpole to Horace Mann, 4 August, 1757, in *Walpole Correspondence*, Vol 23, edited by W. S. Lewis (New Haven: Yale University Press, 48 Vols. 1937-83), 210-11.

sale held by the prominent London auctioneer, Abraham Langford.[49] For this sale of the collections of a bankrupt antiquarian, "A catalogue was quickly made, / Prefac'd with pomp and much parade; / of urns, from Herculaneum brought / (In fact not worth a single groat)." For sale was "a curious bust of Indian clay, / Which bore marks of regal sway, / Brought in the Plassy from Bengal." Although the auction room was crammed with "hundreds [who] came who could not pay," "for Clio, the historic muse, / Two authors bid with equal views; / The one in female vestments clad, the other wrap'd around with plad. / Long they contended for the field / Too headstrong both and proud to yield."[50] Thus, for many auction-goers, the real spectacle of the sale was the fierce bidding between of the eccentric and diverse persons in attendance.[51] The South Asian travel writer Mirza Abu Taleb Khan claimed that his presence was welcome in the motley and uncertain social milieu of the auction house. He noted that "Mr. Christie the auctioneer also paid me much attention, and gratified me highly, by shewing me the articles he had for sale."[52] Nevertheless, such scenes of diverse persons viewing and bidding against one another met with renewed condemnation from detractors who argued that auctions were detrimental to the British economy.

While prominent metropolitan auctioneers fashioned their sales and exhibition rooms to appear similar to the refined interior of an elite's home gallery space, for some critics, the auction was a decidedly non-British, oriental form of sale, whose practice "puts a total stop to civilization and improvement." After many years of observing metropolitan auctions, the Tory

[49] For a longer discussion of this poem, see also Troy O. Bickham, "'A Conviction of the Reality of Things': Material Culture, North American Indians and Empire in Eighteenth-Century Britain," *Eighteenth-Century Studies*, Vol. 39, No. 1, (Fall, 2005): 38-9.
[50] Anonymous, *The Auction; A Poem: A Familiar Epistle to A Friend* (London, 1770), 5-6, 23.
[51] John Thomas Smith, *A Book For a Rainy Day: Or, Recollections Of the Events Of the Years 1766-1833* (London, 1845, 1905 edition), 108-19.
[52] Mirza Abu Taleb Khan, *Travels of Mirza Abu Taleb Khan in Asia, Africa, and Europe, During the Years 1799, 1800, 1801, 1802, and 1803,* Vol. 1 (London, 1814), 253.

politician and former president of the Board of Trade Lord Henry Bathurst published anonymously *The Ruinous Tendency of Auctioneering* (1812), condemning these "temples of deception" as necessarily anti-commercial. According to Bathurst, "auctioneering is not a mode of trade; it is in fact a mode of destroying trade" by selling low-quality and smuggled items in order to undercut retailers. The mutual greed of both buyers and auctioneers engendered an environment where "we see a clergyman, a barrister, or a physician, truckling among a parcel of 'low fellows' at Squibbs's, Robins's, or Leigh and Sotheby's" in hopes of "sav[ing] a few shillings." The author suggested that many auctions conducted even by the most respected agencies were actually "rig sales." At such an auction, the "swindler in chief" at the podium assured the crowd that the items for sale were from a particular estate or collection. In actuality, the auctioneer or his agents owned most of the items and planted fake bidders in the audience in order to drive the prices up. For Bathurst, because the auctioneer and his associates were akin to "a hoard of trafficking Arabs" selling wares in an Asian bazaar, there was little "difference in point of refinement between Grand Cairo in the midst of Barbarians, and rich Liverpool, in the midst of polished society." Since the auction room and this form of sale could carry an oriental aura, frequent attendees of the bidding floor "change into a sort of Ishmaelites; they are not like other men, and the bad passions gain such ascendency over them, that they are unfit for the society of other men."[53] Ultimately, because so many elites ventured to auctions filled with persons of all gradations of respectability in search of the material signifiers of high status, the auction room was an intersectional, paradoxical social space existing precariously between the polite British and the oriental-like sectors of the metropolis. This trope of the auction as an orientalizing force infecting polite Britons extended to auctions of the colonial world, such as in

[53] Anonymous [Lord Bathurst], *The Ruinous Tendency of Auctioneering,* 4, 7, 9, 28, 34-5, 38-9.

Calcutta, where the social and material cultural distinctions between Britishness and Indianness were blurred and unstable.

II. "10 Mounds of Old Europe Junk"[54]: Calcutta Auctions, White Town Identity, and the Making of the Nabob

Nearly a year after Governor General Warren Hastings and his wife left India for retirement in Britain in 1784, auctioneers sold the contents of their estates located at Alipore and on the Esplanade in Calcutta. These heavily-advertised public sales held at the Old Court House in the white town of Calcutta disposed of livestock, palanquins, kitchenware, furniture, buildings, weapons, and a number of paintings and prints.[55] Conspicuously absent from the Hastings sales were the majority of his Anglo-Indian paintings, South Asian artworks and antiquities, and other exotica which he transported to his Daylesford estate in Britain.[56] During his decades of service as an EIC officer, Hastings was a noted patron of orientalist scholarship, a sponsor of European and Indian artists, an antiquities and art collector, and a prominent member of white town social circles.[57] Most of his friends and colleagues noted that "his deportment [was] totally void of that ostentatious pride" of EIC officers.[58] Hastings did acquire a constellation of "Europe goods" and other white-town status symbols through private contract sales, "Europe shops," and frequent Calcutta auctions.[59] In July of 1784, Mrs. Hastings and the

[54] Anonymous, "Inventory of Sundry Effects Belonging to the Estate & Disposed of at Public Auction at [Chittagong (?) or Calcutta (?)]." July, 1787. B. L. IOR/L/AG/34/27/10.
[55] Anonymous, "To Be Sold By Auction by Mr. Bondfield," *Calcutta Gazette* (Calcutta, India), 3 March, 1785, Issue 53; Anonymous, "To Be Sold by Messrs. Williams and Lee at the Old Court House," *Calcutta Gazette* (Calcutta, India), 21 April, 1785, Issue 60.
[56] Much exotica was on display at his estate at Daylesford. B. L. Add MS 41606, ff. 89; B. L. Add MS 41609.
[57] P. J. Marshall, "Warren Hastings as Scholar and Patron," in *Statesmen, Scholars, and Merchants: Essays in Eighteenth-Century History Presented to Dame Lucy Sutherland.* Edited by Anne Whiteman, J. S. Bromley, and P. G. M. Dickson (Oxford: Oxford at the Clarendon Press, 1973), 242-62.
[58] Philip Dormer Stanhope, *Genuine Memoirs Of Asiaticus In A Series Of Letters To A Friend* (London, 1784), 44.
[59] "Europe shops" were retailers of recently-imported goods from Europe.

Governor General attended Lt. Colonel John Green's estate sale. Mrs. Hastings placed the winning bid of 136 sikka rupees for a couple of black busts, and Warren Hastings paid double that amount for a European fusil and a "Europe cross bow."[60] Hastings continued to purchase items at white-town sales until just before he departed for Britain. Most of his imported European items remained in India and went up for sale in Calcutta. Hastings would have had little incentive to pay to transport such items back to Britain, where similar pieces could be had far more easily. After all, their status as European imports and the prestige they conferred upon their owner were particular to the white town.

The ownership and circulation of "Europe goods" and Asian imitations of British items were of great importance for the maintenance of British identity for EIC officers and other European residents of Calcutta. European material culture ranging from architecture to prints to cutlery was essential to residents of the white town wishing to maintain appearances of living in a unified global British socialscape.[61] Estate sales and import auctions were white town social events attended by long-term residents, soldiers and other transitory European inhabitants, and large numbers of South Asians and other persons ordinarily excluded from white-town social circles. Auctions occurred in a number of locations in Calcutta: in the Old Court House, at Fort William, at the Company's Custom House, at auction rooms and Europe shops in the white town, on the ports, at galleries in European and Indian sectors, and in a variety of private residences all over the city.[62] While estate sales in the white town of Calcutta were important sites for maintaining white-town identity, these auctions were never actually British spaces of "Little

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[60] Anonymous [George Williams], "Account Sale of Sundries Sold at Public Outcry from 20 to 25 July, 1784 on Account of the Estate of Lt. Colonel John Green," 20-25 July, 1784. B. L. IOR/L/AG/34/27/6.
[61] The diarist William Hickey frequently detailed the high demand in the white town for Europe goods. See, for instance, "William Hickey Papers," B. L. Mss Eur Photo Eur 175, Vol 3, 211, 255; Vol 4. 340-1.
[62] Europe shops contained goods recently shipped from Britain or the continent, but also older goods acquired through local auctions. W. S. Seton-Karr, S*elections from the Calcutta Gazette of the Years 1784, 1785, 1786, 1787, and 1788,* Vol 1 (Calcutta, 1864), 34, 48-9, 110-111, 168, 216, 240.

London" in Bengal.[63] These sales highlighted the intertwined nature of the South Asian and British social sectors in Calcutta. Auctions were public spectacles where Europeans bought and circulated the imported signifiers of British identity, where many Indians purchased goods from white-town households, and where the heterogeneous denizens of Calcutta acquired Asian items. By existing as an intersection of the European and Indian sectors of the city, critics in Britain, such as the caricaturist James Gillray, identified the Calcutta auction as a decidedly non-British public event whose motley attendees revealed the nabobish nature of the white town.

The material conditions of the white town and the great frequency of auctions in Calcutta reflected the ever-present danger and brief residence experienced by most Britons in India.[64] The population of the white town was approximately one-thousand persons during the last quarter of the eighteenth century.[65] For most Company servants and private merchants living in Calcutta, their plan had always been to be there temporarily, amass a fortune, and return home with their remitted riches.[66] Nevertheless, most white-town denizens desired to have many of the amenities of home rather than succumb to the material conditions of India. European furniture, clothing, lighting fixtures, books and pamphlets, paper and writing instruments, and other household necessities and luxury items flowed into Calcutta.[67] British demand for imports from Europe was so great that Company officers collaborated with auctioneers and Europe-shop owners in

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[63] I am borrowing this term "Little London" from Daniel E. White, *From Little London to Little Bengal: Religion, Print, Modernity in Early British India, 1793-1835* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2013).

[64] Natasha Eaton has suggested that British life in Calcutta was overwhelmingly defined by their sense of risk, chance, and temporary existence in India. Eaton, *Mimesis Across Empires: Artworks and Networks in India 1765-1860* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2013), 87-90.

[65] Suresh Chandra Ghosh*, The British In Bengal: A Study of the British Society and Life in the Late Eighteenth Century* (New Delhi: Manshiram Manoharlal Publishers, 1998 [1970]), 58-9.

[66] Tillman Nechtman, *Nabobs: Empire and Identity in Eighteenth-Century Britain* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 192-3, 132-5.

[67] B. L. IOR/L/AG/34/27/1-22; P. J. Marshall, "The White Town of Calcutta Under the Rule of the East India Company," *Modern Asian Studies*, Vol. 34, No. 2. (May, 2000): 309, 323-5.

schemes for importing shiploads of goods directly from Britain.[68] However, consistently-high rates of European mortality throughout the eighteenth century as well as an economic downturn starting in the 1780s caused the white town's population to be increasingly volatile and transitory. As the orientalist scholar Henry Thomas Colebrook bemoaned to his father in 1785, "India is no longer a mine of gold; and all those whose affairs permit abandon it as fast as possible."[69] Frequent death and departure resulted in the rapid circulation of abundant European and pseudo-European items as Britons' abandoned household goods crossed the auction block.[70] For instance, in November, 1791 the auctioneers Burrell, Daring, and Forster sold the furniture, textiles, kitchenware, and artworks of the deceased Calcutta lawyer, Joseph Bourdieu. While his many paintings and European prints entered the hands of British and South Asian bidders, Ramsabuck Mullic and Sam Dhur purchased portraits of Bourdieu himself.[71] By the last quarter of the century, auctions due to British deaths and departures became so common that they were a social pastime overseen by a variety of official auctioneers as well as independent merchants.[72]

Estate sales and auctions of a multitude of European, East Asian, and "country" (South Asian) wares occurred with varying degrees of formality throughout the city**,** including residences and commercial venues at the penumbral overlaps of the black and white towns of Calcutta.[73] The Company reserved the right of auctioneering at the Old Court House, the Custom

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[68] Seton-Karr, S*elections from the Calcutta Gazette,* Vol. 1, 50-4, 117-18.
[69] Henry Thomas Colebrook to his father, 1785, quoted in Douglas Dewar, *Bygone Days in India* (London: The Bodley Head, 1922), 181.
[70] The majority of late eighteenth-century auction sales in the Bengal Inventories Series of the India Office Records are of the estates of the deceased. Anonymous, "To Be Sold by Public Auction at Williams and Lee's Auction Room," *Calcutta Gazette* (Calcutta, India), 3 March, 1785, Issue 53; B. L. IOR/L/AG/34/27/1-22.
[71] Many Indian artists bought portraits as reference material when crafting their own compositions. Anonymous [Burrell, Daring, and Forster], "Account Sale of the Following Effects Sold by Us by Public Auction on Account of the Estate of Joseph Bourdieu, esq," 17 November, 1791, B. L. IOR/L/AG/34/27/13.
[72] The Bengal Inventories Series for the years 1780 to 1795 records approximately six-hundred and nine auction sales and inventories taken in Calcutta and surrounding areas. B. L. IOR/L/AG/34/27/1-15.
[73] The term "auction" applied to sales of varying degrees of formality. Douglas Dewar, *Bygone Days in India* (London: The Bodley Head, 1922), 159.

House, and other official locations for their appointed superintendent of sales, otherwise known as the "vendu master."[74] Many owners of Europe shops and other persons also had auction rooms throughout the city. Among the many white-town agents who ran their own auctions during the last quarter of the eighteenth century were Robert Duncan; Williams and Lee; Joseph Queiros; Burrell and Gould; Mr. Yeates; Mr. Davidson; and King, Johnson, and Pierce.[75] Merchants and unofficial auctioneers also held estate sales.[76] All auctioneers' activities extended beyond British estates to taverns, residences and businesses at the intersections of the black and white towns, and several other locations overlapping British and black town social circles. In March of 1786, Cachatoor Isaac oversaw the auction of the contents of his late brother's garden home north of Lal Bazaar on Armenian Street in the black town. In addition to notable quantities of chinaware, Indian-manufactured furniture, and "an old fashion palanqueen," this auction consisted of a number of lots of European prints and Asian-produced Christian icons. Although there were a number of European buyers at this sale, Armenians, Indians, and other black-town residents placed seventy per cent of all winning bids.[77] The substantial participation of South Asian persons at this sale and others throughout the city suggests that for auctioneers and attendees there was actually little differentiation between white town and black town auctions.

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[74] In April of 1793, the Sub-Secretary of the Public Department announced that "the Governor-General is pleased to notify that Mr. Williamson as the Company's Vendu Master is to have the superintendence and management of all sales at the Presidency." W. S. Seton-Karr, S*elections from the Calcutta Gazette of the Years 1789-1797,* Vol. 2 (Calcutta: O. T. Cutter, 1865), 99.

[75] Seton-Karr, S*elections from the Calcutta Gazette,* Vol. 1, 34, 44, 49,216, 284, 288; Seton-Karr, S*elections from the Calcutta Gazette,* Vol. 2, 570.

[76] Auctioneers, Europe shops, and agency firms in Calcutta often had very close ties. Most auctioneers made five per cent of the total sale and handled the payments of debts and credits of the deceased. B. L. IOR/L/AG/34/27/1-15. For more on agency houses in Calcutta, see Eaton, *Mimesis Across Empires,* 89-90.

[77] Anonymous [Cachatoor Isaac], "Account Sale of Household furniture belonging to the Estate of Petruse Isaac, deceased, sold by public auction at the deceased dwelling house," 14 March, 1786, B. L. IOR/L/AG/34/27/11; Anonymous [Cachatoor Isaac], "Inventory of the Goods, &c belonging to Petruse Isaac, late of Calcutta, deceased," 23 February, 1786, B. L. IOR/L/AG/34/27/11.

While goods acquired through white-town estate sales and import auctions were vital to the maintenance of Briton's self-identification, the considerable numbers of South Asian bidders revealed that these sales and the goods disbursed at them were not exclusive to the white town. Auctions in the black and white towns granted Europeans and Indians equal opportunity to acquire European, pseudo-European, and Asian household items and works of art. The 1788 auction of the contents of the warehouse held by "Messrs. Redpath & Simon," where Indians placed winning bids for fifty-five per cent of the three-hundred and seventy-eight lots is a case in point. In addition to numerous textiles, tools, palanquins and carriages, and East Asian and Indian-manufactured furniture, South Asian bidders won dozens of European prints and paintings.[78] The intertwined nature of the black and white towns ensured that a very large portion of the attendants of Calcutta auctions were Indians or other residents of the black town.[79] According to the extant official Bengal inventory records for the years 1779 to 1795, of the two-hundred and ninety recorded estate auctions in the white town, Indians purchased approximately twenty-six per cent of all items.[80] The Company officer Thomas Williamson, claimed that in every black-town bazaar there were "various scattered boutiques, appropriated entirely to the display of European articles, and of china-ware, of every description." These small shops were run by "a tribe of Hindu speculators, who, from attending at auctions, are enabled to make cheap purchases, and become perfectly acquainted with the qualities of every article…as have a

[78] In fact, only one of the forty-three paintings and prints sold to a European. Anonymous, "Account Sales of the Goods & Effects of Messrs. Redpath & Simon in Partnership," 1788. B. L. IOR/L/AG/34/27/11.

[79] However, estate auctions held at army encampments throughout Bengal were almost exclusively attended by European military personnel. For instance, Anonymous, "Account Sales of Sundry Articles Belonging to the Estate of Mr. Ronald, Surgeon, Sold at Public Outcry," 9 November, 1784, B. L. IOR/L/AG/34/27/6.

[80] This number is based upon detailed auction results from over 290 sales containing a total of over 36,000 lots. Of the first fifteen volumes of the Bengal Inventories series, two-hundred and ninety of six-hundred and nine inventory lists are for Calcutta sales with recorded buyers. Thus, of 36,354 total lots, Indians and other black-town denizens purchased 9,320. B. L. IOR/L/AG/34/27/1 - IOR/L/AG/34/27/15.

preference in the eye of an European."[81] The great frequency of auctions and the continuous circulation of goods yielded the erasure of material distinctions between the European and Asian sections of the city. Because auctioneers usually were unaware of many items' origins, auctions also served to decontextualize and obfuscate the origins of goods. Indeed, the sale and circulation of artworks and household items through auctions in Calcutta rendered many European imports and their East Asian and Indian counterparts indistinguishable to buyers.

White town residents generally craved all European material reminders of home, but often the most popular Europe goods at auction were those which mainland British manufacturers tailored to subcontinental living conditions and Anglo-Indian cultural practices.[82] Imported artworks and decorative goods retained importance among the European population, yet certain South Asian goods, particularly hookahs, frequently sold at auction because their uses had become normalized as a British practice. Hookahs appeared even in the estate sales of soldiers, impoverished Europeans, and others who had very few material goods.[83] In 1798, the Calcutta lawyer William Hickey noted how newly-arrived Britons were initially aghast by white town residents' frequent usage of "those stinking machines." Hickey responded to one critic "that custom sanctioned smoking the hookah which was in common use among gentlemen, and that even some of our ladies had adopted the practice."[84] This demand for hookahs impelled

[81] Thomas Williamson, *The East India Vade-Mecum; or, Complete Guide to Gentlemen* (London, 1810), 168-9.
[82] The increase of European imports of glassware to India coincided with an increase in the numbers of Hookahs listed in Bengal inventories. Jonathan Eacott, *Selling Empire: India in the Making of Britain and America, 1600-1830* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2016), 291-5.
[83] For instance, Anonymous, "Account Sales of Effects Belonging to the Estate of Thomas Difty Deceased Sold at Public Outcry the 22nd September 1780 by Order of Jerimiah Duharty, Executor," 22 September, 1780. B. L. IOR/L/AG/34/27/3; Anonymous, "Account Sales of the Goods & Effects belonging to Nicholas Abur, deceased, sold at public auction," 2 June, 1788. B. L. IOR/L/AG/34/27/9;
[84] This quote from Hickey would have appeared in Volume 4, p. 208 of the published volumes (1919-25), edited by Alfred Spencer; William Hickey, "Article on unpublished portions of Hickey's Memoirs Vol IV," transcribed by Sir Evan Cotton. B. L. Mss Eur F82/15, unpaginated.

mainland British manufacturers to imitate hookah bottoms and snakes for export to India.[85] However, the circulation of European imitations of Asian goods alongside Indian and East Asian imitations of European manufactures threatened to further diminish the distinctively British qualities of white-town material culture. The blurring of differences between white town and black town material conditions was not only due to imported Europe goods entering every section of Calcutta. Rather, Britons' embrace of distinctively Asian items as well as Asian imitations of European goods underscored how the material signifiers of British society in India could become indistinguishable from those of the black town.

While many auctioneers were careful to identify certain items as distinctly European or Asian, the frequent sale and circulation of British imitation of Asian items, European goods, imported imitations from East Asia, and "country" items resulted in the erasure of the identifiable origins of many items at white town estate sales.[86] Numerous Europeans in Calcutta had collections of South Asian artworks and antiquities, yet few examples of Indian texts, images, and other exotica appeared at auction in the white town during the 1780s and 1790s. And on the occasions when noteworthy pieces did cross the block, they brought very low prices or did not generate a single bid. At the May, 1792 sale of "the effects of the late John Knott of Calcutta," some Indian pictures as well as a Persian manuscript of the "Ayin Akbar" went unsold.[87] India provided most consumer goods to European residents throughout British settlements in India, rendering most South Asian items commonplace to white town residents. While Indian exotica were important mementos to Britons returning home, most residents of the

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[85] Eacott, *Selling Empire,* 296-7.
[86] Natasha Eaton has suggested a merger of Indian and British aesthetics emerged from constant mimicking and copying occurring between South Asian and European artists. Eaton, *Mimesis Across Empires*, 8-14.
[87] This manuscript was actually the *Ain-i-Akbari* composed by the famous sixteenth-century Mughal biographer Abul Fazl. Anonymous, "An Inventory of the Effects of the Late John Knott of Calcutta, Deceased, Sold by Public Auction," 25 May, 1792. B. L. IOR/L/AG/34/27/14.

white town primarily desired imported items which retained an air of desirability due to their Britishness or East Asian exoticism.[88] In white town estates, East Asian decorative and utilitarian goods were ubiquitous. Particularly, East Asian porcelain and "China pictures" were inexpensive yet valued for their aesthetics as ephemeral novelties distinct from South Asian artworks filling the local bazaars.[89] Of considerable importance to white-town buyers were goods which auctioneers termed "Europe" as a means of claiming the items as being of high-quality.[90] Extant Calcutta inventories reveal that most European and pseudo-European items did not receive a designation as being either Asian or imported from Britain. Rather, while some Indian and East Asian material culture remained distinct, the constant circulation of Europe goods cast doubt on many items' origins. These uncertainties as to the Britishness or orientalness of goods on the auction block mirrored Anglo-Indian anxieties that the very notion of the white town of Calcutta as a distinct geographic, social, and material space inextricably tied to mainland Britain was an illusion.

Because Calcutta auctions illuminated the imbrication of white town and black town social spheres and spaces, these hubs of material cultural circulation met with metropolitan disparagement and ridicule. For metropolitan detractors, Calcutta auctions were not rituals of recycling the material signifiers of white town identify. Rather, they were scenes of nabobish debauchery and orientalization. In May, 1786, lively parliamentary and popular debate surrounding Edmund Burke's calls for the impeachment of Warren Hastings encouraged the

[88] Kévin Le Doudic has also noted the prestige of East Asian artworks to residents of French settlements in India. Kévin Le Doudic, "'Exotic' Goods? Far-Eastern Commodities for the French Market in India in the Eighteenth Century," in *Goods from the East, 1600–1800,* 196, 217.
[89] Many auctions contained untitled or unidentified, cheap images from East Asia. B. L. IOR/L/AG/34/27/1-15.
[90] For instance, "A Gold Europe Box" or "16 Pictures views of Europe." But such terminology applied to even banal utilitarian items, such as "Europe Thread." Anonymous, "Account Sales of Effects belonging to the estate of J. L. Ross," 9 October, 1790. B. L. IOR/L/AG/34/27/13; Anonymous, "Account Sale of the House and Effects belonging to the Estate of John Baptiste Mandezer," 21 May, 1781. B. L. IOR/L/AG/34/27/2.

London engraver and satirist, James Gillray, to publish his latest aquatint cartoon lampooning Company servants in India. **(Figure 10)**. *A Sale of English Beauties, in the East Indies* tapped into metropolitan apprehensions and ambiguities of the auction at home and in Bengal to vilify nabobs. In Gillray's vision, nabobs were corrupt products of "the orient" and the white town of Calcutta was a decidedly Asian social space distinct from the British socialscape. Gillray's *A Sale of English Beauties* depicts a crowd of European, Asian, and African persons attending an auction of recently-imported Europe goods. Gathered at a port in the white town of Calcutta are Company officers, European sailors and soldiers, Indian men of various ranks, and a considerable number of fair-complexioned European women.[91] This heterogeneous assemblage suggests that there was no separation of British and Indian social spheres in Calcutta.

Front and center in Gillray's image is a partially-disrobed European woman in a flowing red and white gown and a feathered bonnet who appears to be the victim of the degenerate nabobs. The auctioneer's gestures indicate that she is the current lot up for sale. On either side of her are two men clad in a combination of European and Asian clothing. They inspect the woman's breasts and other parts of her body as though she were livestock or another imported commodity. Gillray leaves ambiguous whether the bespectacled and mustachioed man in the red turban is a wealthy Indian attendee or a European whose time in India had rendered his complexion and dress akin to those of South Asians. The physical features of the man to her right encapsulate the metropolitan stereotype of the slovenly and indolent nabob. The presence of a rolled up piece of paper, which reads "Instructions for the Governor General," in this man's

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[91] Tillman Nechtman discusses this image through the lens of metropolitan representations of nabobinas. Nechtman, *Nabobs*, 217-18.

Figure 10. James Gillray, *A Sale of English-Beauties, in the East Indies* (1786). Height: 432 millimeters; Width: 543 millimeters. © The Trustees of the British Museum (British Museum Number: 1851,0901.295).

pocket suggests that he is a diminutive, rotund caricature of Warren Hastings. Gillray underscores EIC officers' corruption and eschewal of British interests and values by juxtaposing the rolled-up, disregarded orders from the Court of Directors in London with the nabob's actions. The figure of Hastings flanked by a nearly-nude African child shading his master with a parasol

— a metropolitan symbol of oriental opulence and difference — indicates the unquestionably non-British character of nabobs.[92]

While the placement of the African child exoticized the white town as a distinctly oriental social space, his presence also underscores the scene's similarity to a New-World slave auction through its commodification of bodies. A large wooden scale stands in the rear, comparing the weights and value of one of the newly-arrived women to a barrel labeled "Lack of Rupees."[93] To the right of the crowd, a number of distraught, weeping European women retreat into a warehouse whose door is crowned with a sign reading "unsaleable goods from Europe" that are "to be returned by the next ship." This systematic rejection of British women symbolized nabobs' identification of European women in Asia as mere courtesans akin to property, their rejection of respectable life through marriage or living the settled life of a metropolitan Briton, and their acclimatization to Indian cultural norms. Thus, through Gillray's critical lens, white town auctions were not essential conduits for the acquisition of the goods of home and the crafting of the white town into an appendage of Britain. Rather, they were rituals where Anglo-Indian nabobs rejected Britishness.

In addition to condemning British women travelers to the East Indies as corrupted and transformed into courtesans, Gillray's print suggests that the goods imported by white town residents are only items abetting the depraved nabobish lifestyle. Overseeing this sale is a thin auctioneer whose improvised podium is composed of parcels. These goods as well as the other

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[92] Although images of black servants with parasols were not uncommon in early-modern European portraiture, for late eighteenth-century British viewers, the image of the parasol signified the exotic, oriental world. Gillray was depicting the White Town of Calcutta as a part of the homogenized, exoticized "orient" rather than of a unified London-Calcutta British socialscape. See Benjamin Schmidt, "Collecting Global Icons: The Case of the Exotic Parasol," in *Collecting Across Cultures: Material Exchanges in the Early Modern Atlantic World,* edited by Daniela Bleichmar and Peter C. Mancall (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011), 31-57. For earlier representations of black servants in British portraiture, see Catherine Molineux, *Faces of Perfect Ebony: Encountering Atlantic Slavery in Imperial Britain* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2012).

[93] The word "Lack" on the barrel is a play on words. In Indian numbering systems, the word "lakh" means 100,000.

boxes and barrels of items for sale carry inscriptions of the names of their scandalous contents. The podium is labeled "Mrs. Philips (the Original Inventory) of Leicester Fields, London," which was a prominent manufacturer and distributor of contraceptive devices, quack medicines, and other "disreputable" wares. Beneath the auctioneer sit crates labeled "For the Amusement of the Military gentlemen," containing salacious European literature. The labels on the boxes reveal that white town gentlemen only read the likes of *Crazy Tales, Pucelle, Birchini's Dance, Female Flagellants, Fanny Hill,* and *Moral Tales.*[94] Lining the lower boarder of the image alongside a box of "Surgeon's Instruments" are barrels containing "Leake's Pills," which had strong associations with prostitution and the treatment of venereal disease.[95] This constellation of erotic and offensive literature, contraceptive items, and other such items up for bid suggests that the nabobish denizens of Calcutta only imported the worst elements from Britain and embraced South Asian practices.

Although the famed London orator never set foot in India, Gillray crafted a gaunt, foppish vision of James Christie as the auctioneer addressing the motley crowd of nabobs and Indians in order to warn viewers of EIC servants' presence at sales in London. Gillray's condemnatory vision of nabobs at Calcutta auctions reinforced some Britons' disdain of the auction — both in London and in Bengal — as milieus where polite persons could degenerate into nefarious "asiatics." Most importantly, these nabobs would surely act in an obscene manner at London auctions as they had at the Asian bazaar-like white town sales. Even more alarming was that these reprehensible persons would reenter British society with intentions of acquiring

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[94] For more on the books referenced in this image, see Draper Hill, *Fashionable Contrasts: Caricatures by James Gillray* (London: Phaidon Press, 1966), 169-70.
[95] Richard Godfrey, *James Gillray: The Art of Caricature* (London: Tate Publishing, 2001), 66; Cindy McCreery, *The Satirical Gaze: Prints of Women in Late Eighteenth-Century England* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 70.

the status and all of the material accoutrements of elites. As the copious numbers of Calcutta estate sales reveal, most Britons who returned home departed with their Indian exotica and left their "Europe goods" in India since, after all, there were plenty of domestic and continental artworks, furnishings, and other manufactures available in Britain.

III. "The Property of a Gentleman"[96]: Auctions, Dismantling Estates, and Nabobish Self-Fashioning.

Decades before the Hastings trial (1786-1795) cast greater popular scrutiny on the corruption of Company officers and their misrule of Bengal, British elites were appalled and fearful of nabobs' acquisition of landed estates and all of the trappings of genteel status through private contract and auctions. By the last third of the eighteenth century, a raft of metropolitan detractors condemned EIC officers and others Britons in India as persons whom "by art, fraud, cruelty, and imposition, obtained the fortune of an Asiatic prince, and returned to England to display his folly, vanity, and ambition."[97] Rumors circulated around London of nabobs remitting large sums of money in the form of smuggled diamonds and other stores of wealth enabling the acquisition of the material signifiers of elite status.[98] For some observers, nabobs' wealth and ability to pay exorbitant amounts resulted in the inflation of the prices of land and artworks. In November of 1771, Walpole wrote to a confidant concerning the staggering three-thousand pound price tag of "Mr. Hamilton's Correggio." According to Walpole, "it is divine – and so is the price; for nothing but a demi-god or a demi-devil, that is a Nabob, can purchase it."[99] For

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[96] James Christie, *A Catalogue of All of the Elegant Household Furniture, China, Large Glasses, Musical and Mathematical Instruments…the Property of a Gentleman, Deceased* (London, 1792), 1.
[97] "Anti-Nabob," "Memoirs of a Nabob," in *Town and Country Magazine,* Vol. 3 (London, 1771), 28.
[98] For nabobs importing diamonds, see Nechtman, *Nabobs,* 155-6.
[99] Horace Walpole to Horace Mann, 17 November, 1771, in *Walpole Correspondence*, Vol. 23, edited by W. S. Lewis (New Haven: Yale University Press, 48 Vols. 1937-83), 350.

critics, the most worrisome of all was that coteries of enriched nabobs were "particularly attentive to the purchase of all landed estates, at almost any price that is asked, in order to obtain the disposal of the boroughs, and thereby parliamentary influence."[100] Although fewer than fifty EIC officers who returned to Britain had made great fortunes, a number of high-ranking officers, such as Thomas Rumbold, George Pigot, and Richard Barwell, acquired sizeable landed estates.[101] While London auctions were intersectional, non-British events redistributing elite items, the presence of Company officers, such as "the real nabob Lord Clive," made estate sales all the more contentious.[102] The redistribution of landed mansions, fine furnishings, and artworks revealed the mutability of what constituted a symbol of high social standing. EIC servants and myriad other middling persons' presence and acquisition of items at auctions rendered the polite home a commercial space, commodified all elite property, and threatened to orientalize these very symbols through ownership by nabobs. However, nabobs' conspicuous and rapid acquisition of fine artworks and items of questionable taste at auction also revealed their crass pretentions to elite status.

Estate auctions allowed households either to be dismantled and sold piecemeal at a metropolitan auction house or briefly to become the location of an "oriental" auction where social boundaries were destabilized and status as a landed elite became a lot up for bid. Auctions of estates and town houses were a common means of quick disposal of the household goods of those who had relocated to another part of Britain, those who were in need of money, and those

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[100] "Anti-Nabob," "Memoirs of a Nabob," 70.
[101] Rumbold bought a mansion in Essex, Pigot acquired land in Ireland, and Barwell purchased a Sussex estate. J. M. Holzman, *The Nabobs in England: A Study in the Returned Anglo- Indian, 1760- 1785* (New York, 1926), 28- 9; Philip Lawson and Jim Phillips, "'Our Execrable Banditti:' Perceptions of Nabobs in Mid-Eighteenth Century Britain," *Albion: A Quarterly Journal Concerned with British Studies,* Vol. 16, No. 3 (Autumn, 1984): 227-8.
[102] Horace Mann to Horace Walpole, 29 October, 1767, in *Walpole Correspondence*, Vol. 22, edited by W. S. Lewis (New Haven: Yale University Press, 48 Vols. 1937-83), 561.

who had passed away.[103] The traditional landed values of the upper classes dictated that elite homes were spaces where denizens' minds could be elevated through polite behaviors, fashionable sociability, and elegant material surroundings.[104] Thus, country mansions and townhomes, ideally, were neither spaces of crass commercial transactions nor locations of uncouth theater in the form of contentious bidding wars. Country estate sales dissipated the illusion of elite status and its associated lifestyle as an innate property of those of the uppermost echelons of British society.[105] Christie, his associates, and many of his rivals held auctions for mansion houses and their contents, land, rights of ownership of leases, and rights to collect rents from current tenants. For instance, the 1787 sale of the "valuable freehold estate, consisting of the manors of Worcester and Goldbeaters" contained houses and other structures, commons and forests, and sixty-five lots of parcels of enclosed cultivated land with tenants. Christie claimed that the "one thousand eight hundred acres" could generate a total of "two thousand eight hundred pounds" per annum.[106] Because the ownership of land and rights to collect rent were associated with high social standing, such a sale constituted a virtual auctioning of elite status. Estate sales granted nabobs and other upstarts a chance to gain land and other status symbols, and also threatened to eliminate social distinctions.[107]

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[103] Cynthia Wall suggests that auction catalogue were narratives of redistributing goods to new owners. Wall, "The English Auction." 3, 6-7.
[104] Anne Nellis Richter, "Spectacle, Exoticism, and Display in the Gentleman's House: The Fonthill Auction of 1822," *Eighteenth-Century Studies*, Vol. 41, No. 4, (Summer, 2008): 548-51.
[105] Rosie MacArthur and Jon Stobart suggest that most attendees of estate sales were middling persons wishing to emulate elites by acquiring their household goods. MacArthur and Stobart, "Going for a Song? Country House Sales in Georgian England," in *Modernity and the Second-Hand Trade: European Consumption Cultures and Practices, 1700-1900,* Jon Stobart, I. Van Damme, Ilja Van Damme**,** editors (London: Palgrave, 2010), 192-3.
[106] James Christie, *Particulars and Conditions of Sale of a Valuable Freehold Estate, Consisting of the Manors of Worcester and Goldbeaters, with Court Baron, Together with All Their Immunities, Royalties, Quit Rents, &c..* (London, 1787), 1, 3-15.
[107] Maxine Berg has suggested that middling persons spearheaded shifts in taste in Georgian Britain. Berg, *Luxury and Pleasure in Eighteenth-Century Britain,* 203-5, 219.

When estate sales occurred in Metropolitan auction rooms, attendees observed how all genteel households could be dismantled, reduced to a series of commercial transactions, and rendered indistinct from the dwellings of nabobs and other parvenus. Sales could yield material convergences between social sectors, thereby undermining elites' position as arbiters of taste.[108] Some Georgian house sales occurred on the premises, allowing attendees to view items in situ. At such sales, the order of the items up for bid occurred room by room.[109] At the 1768 auction of the effects of "a Gentleman of Distinction" at his townhome on Cavendish Square, attendees progressed through twenty rooms where they saw the uses and logics of display of art, furnishings, and other items.[110] However, given that many auction-goers were unwilling or unable to travel to country houses, considerable numbers of estate sales occurred in metropolitan auction rooms. The movement of household goods and valued artworks piecemeal to the auction room decontextualized the overall assemblage and mystified certain items' context of use and display. Moreover, auction-room estate sales obfuscated the degree of refinement of the owners' tastes by placing high-quality furnishings and superb continental artworks alongside novelties and Asian exotica, unvalued items kept in attics or other storage spaces, and low-quality goods that auctioneers added. The April 1792 sale of the "valuable effects of a Man of Fashion, removed from his house in Bruton Street, Berkley Square" presented auction-attendees with a multitude of fine continental furnishings and kitchenware interspersed with "six curious oriental

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[108] Walpole reflected that he and all collectors worried that one day their assemblages would be subject to division when they "fall under Mr. Christie's hammer." Walpole to Lady Ossory, 16 July 1793, in *Walpole Correspondence*, Vol. 34, edited by W. S. Lewis (New Haven: Yale University Press, 48 Vols. 1937-83), 183-4.
[109] According to MacArthur and Stobart, this progression room by room was an organizational formula but also an auctioneers' tactic of glossing over quality and superiority of certain goods over others. Rather, all goods could be enumerated and detailed in situ rather than their physical features emphasized while on the auction pedestal. MacArthur and Stobart, "Going for a Song? Country House Sales in Georgian England," 183-4.
[110] James Christie, *A Catalogue of the Household Furniture…and Other Valuable Effects of A Gentleman of Distinction, Leaving off Housekeeping, At His House, Opposite Middlesex Coffee-House, in Charles-Street, Cavendish-Square* (London, 1768), 1-16.

paintings," Indian prints, chinoiserie figures, and Turkish carpets.[111] Although this sale occurred in Christie's auction room over five days, the catalogue featured no other subheadings categorizing this assemblage or indicating whether other goods were added to those of the "Man of Fashion." Such decontextualizations divorced all lots from the refined tastes of the previous owner and rendered them mere inventory to be sold to the highest bidder.

Estate auctions further demystified elite households by revealing the idiosyncrasies, vain luxuries, and, at times, poor aesthetic tastes of the former owner. Auction catalogues that list items in situ reveal the quantities and locations of novelties, exotica, and other questionable possessions. For British critics, history paintings by old masters were ideal for gentlemanly collectors since they elevated the mind and the soul of the owner through their depictions of classical or biblical scenes revealing high-minded ideals.[112] However, even in the decades prior to the Company's conquest of Bengal, the possession of excessive quantities of aesthetically-incongruent South Asian exotica or garish East Asian decorative items was only crass indulgence in opulence detrimental to the owner.[113] Throughout much of the century, exotica and novelties were most acceptable when displayed in obscure areas of a house, such as staircases, kitchens, and back hallways.[114] Nevertheless, many estate auction catalogues detailing items sequentially by room of the house reveal that many elites left questionable possessions on display in prominent locations. At Christie's January, 1774 estate sale of "Lord Viscount Vane, at his

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[111] Interestingly, James Christie himself purchased a number of Asian artworks from this sale. James Christie, *A Catalogue of All the Elegant Household Furniture, Large French Plate Glasses…and Other Valuable Effects of a Man of Fashion, Removed From His House in Bruton Street, Berkley Square* (London, 1792), 5-7, 35.
[112] Brewer, *The Pleasures of the Imagination,* 206.
[113] Richter, "Spectacle, Exoticism, and Display in the Gentleman's House," 550-1.
[114] Indian exotica, chinoiserie, and other faux-Asian items always carried an air of frivolity, crass consumerism, and feminization throughout much of the century. Stacey Sloboda, 'Porcelain Bodies: Gender, Acquisitiveness, and Taste in Eighteenth-Century England," in *Material Cultures, 1740-1920: The Meanings and Pleasures of Collecting*, edited by John Potvin and Alla Myzelev (Burlington: Ashgate, 2009), 19-22; Eaton, "Nostalgia for the Exotic," 250, n78.

House, at Easton, near Winchester," attendees saw that this mansion had "eighteen India pictures" displayed in his dressing room and parlor alongside busts of the twelve Caesars.[115] Estate sales into the late eighteenth century reveal that while many gentlemanly collectors never entirely discarded their Asian novelties, the buyers increasingly became a specialized clientele.[116] In June 1792, the noted Anglo-German painter and nabob Johan Zoffany attended Christie's auction of the contents of "Gunnersbury House six miles from London, near Ealing, Middlesex," where he bought a South Asian painting measuring "5 foot 3 inches long by 2 feet 4 inches in 4 plates, painted in India landscapes, figures and birds."[117] As Zoffany's purchase reveals, superb European antiquities and old master paintings were not the only items from elites' mansions that Company officers and others coveted. As Indian exotica increasingly became the domain of orientalists and nabobs as the century progressed, estate sales featuring numerous South Asian items threatened to reveal a merging of Anglo-Indian and elite tastes. Such a convergence could erode elites' claims as arbiters of refined taste. After all, if nabobs were notorious for filling their homes with Asian exotica juxtaposed with the artworks and other accoutrements of British gentlemen, what separated polite persons' collections from those of disreputable Company officers?

One of the most conspicuous nabobs in his acquisition status markers was Robert Clive, who acquired five landed estates following his return to Britain in 1767. Clive's appointment as leader of the British re-conquest of Calcutta in 1757 and his spearheading of the acquisition of

[115] The eighteen Indian pictures sold to an anonymous bidder for £1, 16s, 0d. James Christie, *A Catalogue of the Genuine Household furniture, China, Pictures, Prints, Brewing Utensils, and other Effects, of the Right Hon. Lord Viscount Vane, at his House, at Easton, near Winchester* (London, 1774), 8. Price listed in Christie's master copy.
[116] By the 1780s, catalogues for estate sales containing notable quantities of Asian artworks and other Eastern goods usually stated it in the title or at least contained explicit categories for exotica.
[117] James Christie, *A Catalogue of the Elegant, Rich Household Furniture…at Gunnersbury House Six Miles from London, Near Ealing, Middlesex. Which will be Sold by Mr. Christie on the Premises on Friday June 15, 1792.* (London, 1792), 7. Price and buyers listed in Christie's master copy.

swathes of territory in India's interior provided ample opportunities to obtain vast amounts of money in the subcontinent. His *jagir* (land grant) in Bengal, extortions of Indian nobles, shares of the spoils of war, private trade conducted while Governor in Bengal, and ties to the subcontinental diamond trade ensured a substantial fortune, allowing him to purchase land in Britain. By 1770, Clive had acquired mansions at Monmouthshire, Radnorshire, and Devonshire. By the time he obtained Lord Powis's Oakley estate in Shropshire, the construction of his new mansion at Clermont was nearing an end.[118] Following its completion, the architectural engraver William Watts praised the construction of Clermont as "an instance where great expense has produced grandeur, convenience, firmness, and enjoyment."[119] Clive hoped for political influence and social prestige through his acquisitions. In order to underscore his transformation from "Clive of India" to a landed British elite, he had to acquire status symbols proving his refined gentlemanly aesthetic sensibilities. His conspicuous consumption of items of questionable authenticity and mediocre quality only highlighted his lack of refined taste. Most importantly, Clive's desire to publicly bid enormous amounts at art auctions for mediocre paintings of which he had little understanding revealed to onlookers his nabobish ignobleness.

Following his acquisition of country estates, Clive attempted to construct a collection of prestigious European art by hiring agents to accompany and advise him at auctions and other sales. While Clive had his own sense of what works appealed to him, he knew that his taste was not to be trusted. Beginning in 1770 the American history painter Benjamin West, the Scottish connoisseur William Patoun, and the English politician Henry Strachey all aided Clive in his negotiations with private sellers, placed bids for him at auctions, and advised him when he did

[118] Mark Bence-Jones, *Clive of India* (London: Constable, 1974), 75, 91-9, 146-8, 188-9, 265.
[119] William Watts, *The Seats of Nobility and Country from a Collection of the Most Interesting and Picturesque Views* (London, 1779), Caption to plate VI.

attend Christie's sales.[120] During the first three months of 1771, Clive and his agents spent over £1500 on continental paintings.[121] Clive admitted that he "was no judge of the value or excellence of pictures." Rather, he thought it best to leave "the choice and price of pictures to others who understood them."[122] In April 1771, Sir James Wright offered Clive eight paintings, that Wright deceptively claimed were some of his best artworks "purchased during [his] residence in Italy."[123] Strachey warned Clive that the asking price of over six-thousand pounds was absurd and that Wright was "an arrant (or errant) picture dealer, a haggler, and by no means to be treated as a gentleman."[124] Although Clive was willing to pay far more, his agents convinced him to pay the still-excessive price of two-thousand pounds for six of the pieces.[125] Given that ninety per cent of all paintings at Christie's and other auction firms during this period sold for less than £40,[126] Clive spent staggering amounts well beyond expected values of individual pieces. Such reckless spending led his own advisors to warn that his expenditures were "very enormous, and…I fear your bankers will run short of cash, especially as there will be large annual demands for the new buildings. And I reckon you have already laid out above £4000 in pictures." Strachey pleaded with Clive to curb his spending and only buy artworks "from time to time in London under West and Patoun's judgement."[127] Clive's eagerness to spare no expense was evident through his injudicious bidding at auctions.

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[120] Bence-Jones, *Clive of India,* 266.
[121] In April and May, he spent thousands more through private contract. Maya Jasanoff, *Edge of Empire: Lives, Culture, and Conquest in the East, 1750-1850* (New York: Vintage, 2005), 36-7.
[122] Robert Clive to Henry Strachey, 15 May, 1771. B. L. Mss Eur F128/93, ff.55-6. Also quoted in Jasanoff, *Edge of Empire,* 36.
[123] James Wright to Robert Clive, 25 April, 1771. B. L. Mss Eur G37/61/3, ff. 38-9.
[124] Henry Strachey to Robert Clive, 22 May, 1771. B. L. Mss Eur G37/61/4, ff.32-7.
[125] Henry Strachey to Robert Clive, 23 May, 1771. B. L. Mss Eur G37/61/4, ff.38-9.
[126] Jasanoff, *Edge of Empire, 36*-7.
[127] Henry Strachey to Robert Clive, 23 May, 1771. B. L. Mss Eur G37/61/4, ff.38-9.

Clive's tendency to overpay and his acquisition of questionable works made his inexperience no secret to the crowd at Christie's. Despite receiving advice from his agents, Clive was unable to resist spending large sums on dubious European paintings. Walpole observed in April 1771 that a painting depicting the Madonna and child by Carlo Dolci "sold at an auction to Lord Clive" along with "two views of Verona by Canalletti" for a total of over five-hundred guineas. Not long after this sale "it came out that the two views of Verona were only copies by Marlow, a disciple of Scott, now living in London."[128] This public embarrassment was not the only time that he made costly mistakes at Christie's. At the March, 1773 high-profile Christie's auction of "pictures selected from the Roman, Florentine, Lombard, and other schools" by the engraver Robert Strange, Clive spent over £283 on a painting of "Our Savior with the Virgin and St. Joseph" supposedly by Leonardo da Vinci.[129] Copies and misattributed paintings such as this one regularly crossed the auction block at London sales.[130] Nevertheless, Clive was willing to take risks with his money in order to place a winning bid. During the 1770s, the standard conditions of sale for each of Christie's auctions stipulated that each bid had to rise proportionately to the total amount put forth so far. Thus, nearing the end of the bidding process, the crowd watched as Clive incrementally advanced the total cost by enormous amounts.[131] For Clive, the performance of buying the most prestigious lots at certain times during the auction was

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[128] Horace Walpole, *Book of Materials*, 15, quoted in *Walpole Correspondence*, Vol. 23, 299.

[129] James Christie, *A Catalogue of a Capital and Elegant Collection of Pictures Selected from the Roman, Florentine, Lombard, and Other Schools… the Whole Collected Abroad by Robert Strange* (London, 1771), 1, 6. Prices in Christie's Archive master copy.

[130] This painting was probably not authentic or attributed correctly. The only known da Vinci featuring St. Joseph was *Adoration of the Christ Child*, which was in the possession of the Borghese family in the eighteenth century.

[131] Typically, the conditions of sale for each of Christie's art auctions were that "no person is to advance less than 6d under one pound; above one pound is 1s. Above five pounds is 2s 6d, and so in proportion." James Christie, *A Catalogue of a Curious Collection of Coins, Medals, Shells, Fossils, Intaglios, and Other curiosities, of Samuel Dyer, Esq.* (London, 1773), 2.

just as important as owning and displaying such works in his pursuit of jettisoning his notoriety as a nabob and fashioning himself a gentlemanly collector.

Clive was ignorant of what constituted an authentic and prestigious European painting, but his collaboration with West, Strachey, and other trusted connoisseurs provided him with some understanding of how and when to buy.[132] Christie and his associates collaborated with artists, retailers, and connoisseurs in evaluating the value, authenticity, and expected public response to each lot.[133] Many continental auction houses placed the most prestigious and valuable items at the very start of the sale, but Christie's catalogues reveal that the auctioneer strategically orchestrated his sales leading up to a crescendo of desirable centerpiece artworks or antiquities. For many picture auctions, the catalogues' descriptions of each lot became increasingly more detailed as the sale progressed in order to underscore the prestige of the centerpiece lots. At many auctions there may have been a highly-valued piece or two at the midpoint of the event, but generally the desirability and prices of lots increased as the sale progressed. Seasoned auction-goers understood this rhythm of the sale and knew that the quality and expected bidding amount increased with each lot.[134] In February, 1771 Clive purchased nine lots of continental paintings imported by one of Christie's agents, Robert Ansell. Although he overpaid for a number of Dutch seascapes and some questionable works earlier in the sale, he targeted higher-quality paintings near the end of it.[135] While some elite collectors arrived only at the very end of the auction to signal their intent to bid on the finest pieces during the crescendo

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[132] Bence-Jones, *Clive of India,* 265-7.
[133] My thanks to Lynda McLeod, Daniel Jarmai, and Jeff Pilkington at Christie's Archive for granting me access to these documents.
[134] Bénédicte Miyamoto, "'Making Pictures Marketable,'" 227-9.
[135] James Christie, *A Catalogue of the Superb…Pictures Collected Abroad this Year with Great Speculation and Vast Expense by Mr. Robert Ansell* (London, 1771), 3-8. Prices and buyers in Christie's master copy.

of the sale, Clive sought out the final lots during his other trips to the auction floor.[136] However, while Clive may have known when the best works would cross the auction block, his public foolhardy bidding revealed to onlookers that his mansions were filled with nabobish assemblages of exotica, mediocre paintings, and imitation artworks.

Sales of nabobs' collections could also transform the auction room into a public display of the poor taste and juxtaposition of Indian and European artworks characteristic of nabobish collections and homes. Following his acquittal in 1795, Warren Hastings's staggering legal fees and other debts encouraged him to sell his home at Park Lane in London, some of his European paintings, and a number of the works he collected while in India. In April 1797, Christie's held an auction combining the paintings of the late artist Gainsborough Dupont with a portion of Hastings's collection of paintings by William Hodges, Tilly Kettle, and other artists working in India during his tenure as Governor General. While Dupont's collections — particularly works by his uncle, Thomas Gainsborough — brought large sums, Hastings was mortified at how little the auction-goers thought of his pictures. The attendees bid a grand total of only £125 for his dozens of paintings to cross the block.[137] Following the sale, Hastings lamented to his banker that the amount realized was only "a twentieth part of the tithe" he needed to raise.[138] For Hastings, few things had "given me so much vexation as the disgraceful sale of pictures. I would

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[136] For instance, James Christie, *A Catalogue of a Capital and Elegant Collection of Pictures Selected from the Roman, Florentine, Lombard, and Other Schools… the Whole Collected Abroad by Robert Strange* (London, 1773), 7; James Christie, *A Catalogue of a Capital and Valuable Collection of Italian, Flemish, and Dutch Pictures, Fine Bronzes, &c. Collected by a Gentleman* (London, 1771). Prices and buyers in Christie's master copy.
[137] While it is unclear which European paintings were from Hastings's collection and which were from the estate of Dupont, at least sixteen paintings by William Hodges and Tilly Kettle sold. James Christie, *A Catalogue of a Valuable Collection of Pictures…of the Esteemed and Excellent Artist, Mr. Gainsborough Dupont,…Also a Grand Selection of Views of India By the Ingenious Artist Mr. Hodges – Portraits by Kettle, &c, the Property of Warren Hastings* (London, 1797), 6-10.
[138] Anonymous, *True Briton (1793)* (London, England), Friday, 14 April, 1797; Issue 1343.

rather have burnt them."[139] The former Governor General was particularly disturbed by how the attendees for a European picture sale — rather than a specialized exotica or Anglo-Indian painting auction — disdained his artworks depicting Indian landscapes and South Asian people. After Kettle's portrait of the nawab of Awadh, Shuja-ud-Daula, coupled with an Indian landscape sold for the "mean price" of just over four pounds,[140] Hastings hoped to reacquire the piece "for a sum not much exceeding that at which it was knocked down."[141] While advertisements for this sale mentioned Hastings's Indian paintings, they primarily underscored Gainsborough's works and the old master paintings.[142] The Hastings sale and its underwhelming results highlighted how London auctions became increasingly specialized near the end of the century. By 1797, few collectors in search of old master works or Gainsborough's landscapes would have paid much for exotic images of India. Throughout the Georgian period, Christie, Leigh and Sotheby, and other savvy London auctioneers knew that the instability of the meanings of Indian and other Asian exotica required them to tailor their auctions, sales pitches, and methods of cataloguing such pieces in accordance with popular perceptions.

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[139] Quoted in Charles Alan Lawson, *The Private Life of Warren Hastings: the First Governor General of India* (London: S. Sonnenschein & Co., 1895), 140.
[140] This painting of Shuja-ud-Daula is quite possibly the portrait today (2019) held in the Yale Center for British Art. (YCBA Number B1976.7.48). Christie*, A Catalogue of a Valuable Collection of Pictures…the Property of Warren Hastings,* 7. Prices and Buyers in Christie's master copy.
[141] Quoted in Lawson, *The Private Life of Warren Hasting,* 140.
[142] Anonymous, *True Briton (1793)* (London, England), Saturday, 1 April, 1797; Issue 1332; Anonymous, *True Briton (1793)* (London, England), Tuesday, 4 April, 1797; Issue 1334.

IV. "That Much Esteemed and Truly Valuable Museum"[143]: Auctioning South-Asian Exotica in Georgian London

The remarkable April, 1774 auction of the antiquarian and Asian exotica collections of Richard Bateman was one of the first sales that James Christie and his associates tailored to a metropolitan clientele of orientalists and other specialized collectors. Although most of the items were Greco-Roman antiquities or older East-Asian porcelain, Bateman's assemblage contained "Seven Indian Drawings," South Asian paintings, and other subcontinental items. Rather than downplaying the exotic nature of many of Bateman's pieces by placing them intermixed with general antiquities lists or under headings for chinaware, the catalogue had categories stating the definitively South Asian origins of many items. Some Indian artworks and antiquities appeared in the catalogue in sections for paintings alongside a few East Asian and Turkish pieces. The presence of an "Indian Curiosities" section, however, underscored the value of such items for being South Asian.[144] This unusual, specialized sale revealed how many auctioneers were increasingly aware of Britons' multiple, competing understandings of Indian exotica. Like most London auctioneers, Christie maintained a web of consultants, agents, and other advisors who lent their expertise on the qualities of artwork, the values of particular pieces, and shifts in the art markets.[145] While such notable connoisseurs and artists as Thomas Gainsborough, Sir Joshua Reynolds, Horace Walpole, and David Garrick provided invaluable guidance concerning buyers' tastes,[146] Christie's connections with British and continental agents and retailers ensured that he

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[143] James Christie, *A Catalogue of That Much Esteemed and Truly Valuable Museum, of the Hon. Richard Bateman…Which Will be Sold by Auction by Mr. Christie* (London, 1774), 1.
[144] Ibid, 3-4, 11-12.
[145] James Christie and James Christie II frequently reported expected values of lots prior to auctions. James Christie to S. Martin, 15 January, 1773, B. L. Add MS 41354, f. 202; James Christie to the First Earl of Chichester, 1787, B. L. Add MS 33134, f. 117; James Christie II to Lord Glenberrie, 5 October, 1810, B. L. Add MS 88900/1/10.
[146] Percy Colson, *A Story of Christies* (London: Sampson Low, 1950), 29; Wall, "The English Auction," 7.

and his associates would "not be humbugged in pictures."[147] Christie and other auctioneers' knowledge of auction-goers tastes, the value of artworks and antiquities, and trends in meanings ascribed to the material counterflows of empire in India determined what, when, and how they sold South Asian wares.

The inclusion and categorization of Asian artworks and antiquities in auctions and their catalogues reveal how auction houses calibrated their sales based on oscillations in British attitudes towards Indian exotica. As social arenas existing at the intersections of polite and non-British sectors of the metropolis, auction rooms were a prime location for debating, mediating, and reconciling popular understandings of the material counterflows of imperial expansion. Patterns in the sale, circulation, and description of Indian items suggest that there were three distinctive stages of attitudes towards these materials. During the early modern period and into the eighteenth century, Asian exotica ranging from Hindu images and Indian portraiture to mass-produced Chinese porcelain arrived in middling and elite Britons' collections.[148] Many collectors appreciated the aesthetically-distinct and incongruous features of scarce Asian artworks and antiquities. Such items did not hold the same pride of place as ancient European artifacts and sculptures or imported Old Masters. Only after the Company's acquisition of a territorial empire in Bengal in 1757 did critics identify Indian exotica as contaminants threatening polite society. As critics increasingly shunned Indian exotica and equated it with the collections of EIC officers, auctioneers engineered their catalogues and sales pitches to either lack specificities or to associate these items with European antiquities. While auctioneers were very likely ignorant of Indian material culture, this tactic allowed bidders of various opinions on India and empire to

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[147] P. J. Tassert to James Christie, 1 June, 1790, Uncatalogued Correspondence of James Christie at Christie's Archive, London.

[148] Richard H. Davis, *Lives of Indian Images* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1999), 143-6; David Porter, *The Chinese Taste in Eighteenth-Century England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010).

imbue exotica with their own interpretations. During the last two decades of the eighteenth century, renewed public and parliamentary scrutiny of the EIC — particularly the Hastings impeachment— occurred simultaneously with a recasting of South Asian items as nabobish fetishes.

When Indian exotica appeared at auction during the first half of the eighteenth century, auctioneers generally highlighted such items as rare, dazzling luxuries that collectors would be eager to acquire for their cabinets of curiosity or novelty alcoves.[149] Walpole noted his own attraction to Asian novelties when he wrote to his cousin that "you would laugh if you saw in the midst of what trumpery I am writing. Two porters have just brought home my purchases" consisting of "Brobdignag combs, old broken pots, pans, and pipkins, a lantern of scraped oyster-shells, scimitars, Turkish pipes, [and] Chinese baskets."[150] However, not all collectors regarded Asian imports as trivial knickknacks. Christopher Cock and other auctioneers' 1721-1724 sales of the estate of the retried EIC servant, Elihu Yale, revealed the trend to regard South Asian items as desirable curios defined by their distinctly Indian qualities. After serving for thirteen years as a Company servant in Madras as governor at Fort St. George, Yale returned to Britain in 1699 with five tons of cargo. In addition to countless diamonds and textiles, Yale brought home a raft of Indian items.[151] Eight months following his death in July, 1721, the contents of Yale's Queen Square home sold at a series of highly-publicized auctions.[152] Conspicuous among his

[149] For English cabinets of curiosity, see Arthur MacGregor, "The Cabinet of Curiosities in Seventeenth-Century Britain," *The Origin of Museums: The Cabinet of Curiosities in Sixteenth- and Seventeenth-Century Europe,* Oliver Impey and Arthur MacGregor, editors (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1985, 2001).
[150] Horace Walpole to Harry Conway, 12 February 1756, in *Walpole, Correspondence,* Vol. 37 (New Haven, CT: Yale University press, 1937-1983), 439-40. Walpole's bill of sale reveals that his agent, John Bastin, placed bids on many lots of Asian exotica, such as Indian weaponry and Chinese lanterns. B. L., Add MS 35335, f. 64.
[151] Hiram Bingham, *Elihu Yale: The American Nabob of Queen Square* (New York: Dodd-Mead, 1939), 310-15.
[152] For examples of advertisements for the 8 March, 1722 sale, see Anonymous, *Evening Post* (London, England), 27 February, 1722 – 1 March, 1722, Issue 1964; Anonymous, *Daily Post* (London, England), Friday, 2 March, 1722, Issue 756; Anonymous, *Daily Courant* (London, England), Friday, 2 March, 1722, Issue 6353.

collections were "many valuable curiosities in Gold, Silver, and Agate," a "great variety of extraordinary *India* Cabinets," "An *India* Figure and Bird in Silver, moving by Clockwork" and eight paintings featuring "six *Indian* Kings whole Lengths, an *Indian* Queen, and a View of *Fort St. George*."[153] Advertisements and catalogues also highlighted the great quantities of Indian jewels, antiquarian coins, diamonds, and jewelry.[154] During this period prior to popular condemnation of nabobish wealth, Indian works were so popular that some remarkable items became valued for their provenance. The February and March, 1744 estate auctions of Benjamin Hymners featured Asian porcelain, Indian furniture, "diamond rings, pearl necklaces, with sundry other jewels and curiosities of Governor Yale's."[155] Although Elihu Yale's retirement in London occurred decades before Company servants and their assemblages gained the dishonorable air of Asiatic corruption, his riches and Indian exotica foreshadowed the ornate collections assembled by many retuned nabobs.

During the latter half of the eighteenth century, EIC servants' collections of Indian exotica transformed in many metropolitan minds from dazzling assortments of rare novelties from far-off lands to the material signifiers of nabobish difference and orientalization of polite society. While numerous persons brought home exotica as mementos from their time in India,[156] artists, scholars, and art patrons returned with particularly large quantities of text, images, and other subcontinental materials. Hastings's mansion at Daylesford filled with his Indian pictures and other imported exotica did not belie his reputation as one of the most conspicuous nabobs in

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[153] Christopher Cock, *The Last Sale for This Season: Being the Most Valuable Part of the Collection of Elihu Yale, Esq; (Late Governor of Fort St. George) Deceas'd* (London, 1722), 20-1. Italics from original source.
[154] For instance, Anonymous, *Daily Courant* (London, England), 31 January, 1722; Anonymous, *Daily Courant* (London, England), 19 November, 1722; Anonymous, *Daily Courant* (London, England), 13 March, 1723.
[155] Anonymous, *Daily Advertiser (1744),* (London, England), Thursday, 10 May, 1744, Issue 1960; Anonymous, *Daily Advertiser (1744),* (London, England), Tuesday, 14 February, 1744, Issue 3105.
[156] Nechtman, Tillman, "Mr. Hickey's Pictures: Britons and Their Collectables in Late Eighteenth-Century India," in *The Cultural Construction of the British World*, edited by Barry Crosbie and Mark Hampton (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2016), 186-8.

England.[157] His estate inventory reveals that in the 1780s and 1790s his collections were neither hidden from visitors nor differentiated from the old master paintings hanging in his "picture room." In addition to continental works of art, this room contained three landscapes by William Hodges — including his view of the Taj Mahal — and twelve miniature works by Indian artists. While the parlor and library displayed Johan Zoffany's *Colonel Mordaunt's Cock Match* and several Indian landscapes, nearly all forty rooms contained Indian paintings.[158] Given that Hastings acquired so many of these paintings and prints by commission, theft, gifting, or purchase while expanding the Company's territories, his walls at Daylesford were covered with the trophies of war or European images of conquest.[159] Thus, much as nabobs' acquisition of land and other property in the subcontinent signaled their probable desire to similarly usurp land and status after returning to Britain, EIC officers' exotica collections were tainted as spoils of war, ill-gotten wealth, and the uprooting of traditional authority in India and back home.

During the third quarter of the eighteenth century, increasing association of South Asian exotica with nabobish conquest, excess, and orientalization coincided with London auction houses recalibrating their sales so that Asian items could be emptied of their original identifiers and reinscribed with new, multifarious meanings. Indian and East Asian items frequently received bids at estate sales and at antiquities auctions. Yet, they usually appeared in catalogues as part of assemblages of miscellaneous antiquities or utilitarian items rather than according to their previous status as dazzling wonders from far off lands. Abraham Langford's June, 1765 auction of the antiquities collections of Ebenezer Mussell contained two-hundred and nine lots of

[157] Michael Edwardes, *Warren Hastings: King of the Nabobs* (London: Hart-Davis, 1976), 181-2.
[158] Inventories: Household goods of Warren Hastings at Daylesford, B. L. Add MS 41609, ff. 7-8, 19, 31,
[159] Hastings's purchases would appear bought with ill-gotten wealth, his paintings acquired by gift would seem acquired through underhanded dealings with Indian political leaders, and Hodges primarily composed his views of India while on campaign with Hastings. For Hodges painting war-torn landscapes, William Hodges, *Travels in India for the Years 1780, 1781, 1782, and 1783* (London, 1794), 51-7.

miscellaneous Greco-Roman, British, Egyptian, and Asian antiquities. These materials appeared scattered throughout the catalogue under the generic heading of "curiosities." This catalogue presented the origins, uses, or ornamental features of many of the British and ancient continental pieces, such as paintings recovered from Herculaneum and a "sword of James IV of Scotland, taken at Floddenfield." Asian items ranging from East Asian weapons to South Asian artworks and texts "on palm leaves" did not have any accompanying text detailing their precise provenance or significance.[160] Auction houses often used the heading "China" or similar labels to categorize and mystify the origins, physical specificities, and possible function of Indian items.[161] Christie's November, 1774 estate sale of the Athemarle Street house of Thomas Blandon designated many "Indian paintings," various East Asian items, and much European porcelain as "China."[162] In addition to encompassing items that defied other subheadings in catalogues, "China" and similar sections also strategically omitted whether Asian items were artworks, rare trinkets, or mere utilitarian items. Christie's April, 1769 auction of a multitude of Asian imports belonging to "Captain Frederick Vincent, Commander of the Osterly" featured over 400 lots of textiles, furniture, kitchenware, and Asian artworks. This sale contained exquisite ivory sculptures and many "fine Indian paintings." All of these pieces appeared scattered throughout the sale under the headings of "lace &c." While some of the South Asian paintings had decorative frames, the catalogue described many of them as "for chimney pieces"

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[160] Abraham Langford, *A Catalogue of the Genuine and Curious Collection of Roman and Egyptian Antiquities, Mummies, Uurns, Lamps, Figures, Etruscan Vases, and Other Effects, of Ebenezer Mussell, Esq; Of Bethnal Green, Deceas'd* (London, 1765), 5-7.

[161] Natasha Eaton has suggested that "China" sections at auction reveals a heterogeneity of British taste in the 1770s-1780s. Eaton, "Nostalgia for the Exotic, 234-5.

[162] James Christie, *A Catalogue of the Elegant Household Furniture, Useful and Ornamental China…of Thomas Blandon, Esq. Removed from His house in Athemarle-Street.* (London, 1774), 5, 19.

or screens.[163] Some collectors and orientalists continued to regard Indian artworks as valuable images. This auction's categorization of South Asian pictures as utilitarian items fit for catching the sparks and smoke of fire places, however, suggests growing metropolitan disregard for such items as of little aesthetic or cultural value.

As greater numbers of orientalists and institutions began more systematic efforts to amass collections of Asian material culture in London in the last decades of the eighteenth century, public scrutiny of the EIC and condemnation of nabobs led critics to claim that they "have not the least enthusiasm of the east" and "little admiration of their productions."[164] For some observers, the Asian artworks and antiquities transformed from novelties with incongruous yet enjoyable aesthetics to grotesquerie signifying the corruption of "eastern" cultures and the backwardness of Asian production.[165] For instance, Walpole, who had once eagerly attended sales of imported Asian porcelain and other rarities, began to revile the aesthetics of South Asian art. He followed popular shifts in taste towards Indian exotica when he complained that "modern virtuosos are fond of tracing up Grecian arts to Indian…They find barbarous coins with something aiming at being a bull, and then imagine that a noble type of that quadruped on a Greek medal was copied from an Indian one." For Walpole and other critics, "the most perfect forms" could not have been "borrowed from the most ugly and misshapen!"[166] Conversely,

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[163] James Christie, *A Catalogue of a Valuable and Elegant Assortment of East-India Goods, the Property of Captain Frederick Vincent, Commander of the Osterly, in the Honourable East India Company's Service* (London, 1769), 15-18, 21-23.

[164] Horace Walpole to Robertson, 20 June 1791, in *Walpole, Correspondence,* Vol. 15 (New Haven, CT: Yale University press, 1937-1983), 211-12.

[165] Christopher Johns recently revealed that while Europeans continued to import East Asian porcelain and other items throughout the period, condemnation of Asian aesthetics and the European production of grotesque, aesthetically-distorted chinoiserie began following the emperor's ban on Christian missionaries in China in 1722. Christopher M. S. Johns, *China and the Church: Chinoiserie in Global Context* (Oakland: University of California Press, 2016), 8-10. See also, David L. Porter, "Chinoiserie and the Aesthetics of Illegitimacy," *Studies in Eighteenth-Century Culture,* Vol. 28 (1999): 28-30; Porter, "Monstrous Beauty: Eighteenth-Century Fashion and the Aesthetics of the Chinese Taste," *Eighteenth-Century Studies*, Vol. 35, No. 3 (Spring, 2002): 404-6.

[166] Horace Walpole to Robertson, 20 June 1791, in *Walpole, Correspondence,* Vol. 15 (New Haven, CT: Yale University press, 1937-1983), 211-12.

metropolitan orientalists and the EIC itself were doubling down on their efforts to amass and study Indian texts and antiquities in Britain. By the 1790s, the EIC became a major London buyer of Asian exotica by private contract and at auctions, and its librarians began a project of "collecting all of the scattered remains of oriental arts and literature in the total dissolution of the Moghol Empire."[167] The Indologist Richard Johnson acquired large numbers of South Asian texts and miniature paintings while serving as a high-ranking EIC officer at Lucknow, Hyderabad, and Calcutta from 1772 to 1790. Following his return to London, Johnson purchased a landed estate where he housed his collections, pursued a seat in Parliament, and garnered distinction for his collection and his orientalist research until 1807, when ill health compelled him to sell his 11,000 Indian items. When Charles Wilkins, the famed linguist and librarian to the East India House Museum, encouraged Johnson to sell his collection directly to the Company, Johnson could place an exact value upon it due to the increased frequency of specialized sales of Indian exotica in London.[168]

Despite growing elite disdain for Indian artworks and antiquities, by the 1780s prominent London auction houses held high-profile sales of Asian exotica targeting a specialized clientele of orientalists and institutional collections. Individual pieces from India continued to appear in miscellaneous sections of European antiquarian auctions. In July 1812, George Leigh and John Sotheby auctioned "the very valuable and curious collection of manuscripts collected in Hindostan… by the late Dr. Samuel Guise," underscoring the desirability, rarity, and monetary value of Indian and West Asian manuscripts. In accordance with other specialized exotica sales since the 1780s, the auctioneers and authors of this sale's catalogue presented the audience with

[167] Richard Johnson to Charles Wilkins, 31 January, 1807, B. L. IOR/E/1/115, ff. 76-77, Quoted in Toby Falk and Mildred Archer, *Indian Miniatures in the India Office Library* (London: Sotheby, 1981), 26-7.
[168] Falk and Archer, *Indian Miniatures in the India Office Library*, 16-20, 26-7.

detailed descriptions for each lot. The auction pamphlet presented the collection as a coherent unit defined by its linkage to the biography of the former owner, who assembled it "at Surat, from the year 1788 till the end of 1795, with great trouble and expense."[169] This collection contained over 300 illuminated Persian, Arabic, and "Hindavi" manuscripts produced in India and West Asia between the twelfth and eighteenth centuries. Leigh and Sotheby buttressed their claims of each lot's scarcity and value by issuing their auction catalogue containing over 1,300 lots as an expanded reprinting of Guise's inventories published in 1792 and 1800.[170] Dr. Guise's works had gained recognition among specialized collectors of manuscripts and exotica through the publication of descriptions of the collection as well as excerpts and advertisements for the catalogues in *The Edinburgh Magazine* in 1799 and *The Monthly Review* in 1801.[171] The latter publication noted that if such a rare collection were to go on sale, it would be of particular interest to "those who have the management of public libraries."[172] While Sir Thomas Philipps and other private collectors bid on many of the lots,[173] orientalists and antiquarians wishing to build up the holdings of institutional collections purchased a number of the texts. Charles Wilkins attended the July, 1812 sale and purchased twenty-six Pahlavi texts for the EIC's

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[169] George Leigh and John Sotheby, *Catalogue and Detailed Account of the Very Valuable and Curious Collection of Manuscripts Collected in Hindostan…By the Late Dr. Samuel Guise* (London, 1812), 1-4.

[170] Dr. Guise's own collection inventories claimed that in India "the art of printing has not been introduced, books will be multiplied slowly; and…at Surat, the opportunities to purchase manuscripts, of any kind, rarely occur." Dr. Samuel Guise, *A Catalogue of Oriental Manuscripts, Collected in Indoostan. By Mr. Samuel Guise, Surgeon to the General Hospital at Surat. From the Year 1777 Till 1792* (London, 1792), Quote 2-3; Dr. Samuel Guise, *A Catalogue and Detailed Account of the Very Valuable and Curious Collection of Manuscripts Collected in Hindostan* (London, 1800). Ursula Sims-Williams, "The Strange Story of Samuel Guise: An 18th-Century Collection of Zoroastrian Manuscripts," *Bulletin of the Asia Institute*, New Series, Vol. 19 (2005): 202.

[171] Anonymous, *The Edinburgh Magazine, or Literary Miscellany* (August, 1799), 92–97; Anonymous, *The Monthly Review; or Literary Journal* (September–December 1801), 219–20. Both cited in Sims-Williams, "The Strange Story of Samuel Guise," 200.

[172] Anonymous, *The Monthly Review; or Literary Journal* (September–December 1801), 220.

[173] Frank Herrman, *Sotheby's: Portrait of an Auction House* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1980), 28.

library.[174] Thus, the EIC and other museums became prominent bidders and a part of the target audience for specialized exotica auctions.

Conclusion

A week following the dispersal of David Simpson's exotica collections at Christie's, Simpson sent to the antiquarian Charles Townley an Indian painting entitled an "Oriental Lady (A Moore Girl)" in order to thank him for his role in the rigging of the sale.[175] The day prior to this June, 1792 auction, Simpson claimed that "Mr. Christie tells me two friends of himself [in the audience] are quite sufficient" for ensuring adequate prices for each lot. Simpson instructed Townley and the antiquarian Dr. Mountie to "just act as the spirit of the sale requires" in order to "bring [each lot] to the price I have fixed." Their disingenuous bids would ensure that "all small Idols…go at 10 or 12 shillings a piece, if they sell to gentlemen as curiosities. All the paintings should go at what they cost, if not more." Simpson informed Townley that his exotica would primarily only appeal to orientalists and other specialized collectors, yet "we must if possible sell all, as it does not seem probable that I shall be able to dispose of them in any other way."[176] This auction was the culmination of nearly five years of Simpson's efforts to sell off his exotica collection in London at a time when most British collectors disregarded such materials. This "oriental" form of sale held in a non-British location of material culture circulation was a fitting stage for channeling Simpson's exotica to Indologists, other specialized collectors, and

[174] B. L. S. C. Sotheby (1), Vol. 77, 15 June, 1812 – 6 August, 1812; Sims-Williams, "The Strange Story of Samuel Guise," 202-3.
[175] David Simpson to Charles Townley, 4 June 1792. British Museum Central Archive (BMCA), Townley Collection. TY7/1782.
[176] David Simpson to Charles Townley, May 1792. BMCA, Townley Collection. TY7/1781.

institutions. The specialized nature of the Simpson sale suggested intensifying efforts by the EIC, museums, and orientalists to fashion repositories of exotica late in the century.

This chapter investigated how the circulation and display of Indian exotica could render geographies of the metropolis as well as European sectors of South Asia as non-British zones capable of orientalizing polite Britons. It argued that metropolitan and white-town auctions were "oriental" spectacles where indecorous bidding wars, polite persons socializing with members of the lower orders, and non-elites acquiring material symbols of high status served to break down social distinctions and undermined the parameters of Britishness. Metropolitan auctions were contentious public arenas characterized by their air of disrepute and oriental-like methods of distribution. Yet, paradoxically, they had great popularity with refined, elite art connoisseurs and functioned as sources of fine artworks and other material symbols of high social standing. Auctions threatened to break down material markers of class and other social divisions by redistributing elite dwellings, collections, and other status symbols to the highest bidders. Thus, in Britain auctions both demystified the material symbols of gentility through commodification and allowed nabobs and other non-elites access to superb artworks and antiquities indicative of refined, elite sensibilities. Much as in the metropole, estate and art auctions in the white town of Calcutta were social rituals where public bidding and acquisition of material signifiers of social standing were intimately tied to the reaffirmation of Britishness. While Anglo-Indians envisioned white-town sales as essential to the maintenance of an interlinked global British socialscape, Calcutta auctions also served to destabilize divisions between the European and oriental sectors of the city. For this reason, metropolitan critics of Anglo-Indians detailed white-town auctions as rituals that transformed the British in Calcutta into reprehensible nabobs.

One of the aims of this chapter was to examine how metropolitan auctions both revealed and reinforced popular British attitudes towards Indian art and antiquities during the eighteenth century. Metropolitan auction catalogues and accounts of public sales indicate that there were three identifiable phases in British exotica collecting during the eighteenth century correlating with popular meanings ascribed to Asian items. Such shifts corresponded with the fortunes of the Company's conquest of India and criticisms of EIC activities in Britain and the subcontinent. Prior to the Company's acquisition of a territorial empire in Bengal in 1757, small numbers of Indian and East Asian artworks and antiquities arrived in Britain, entering cabinets of curiosity as uncommon, peculiar novelties. Auction catalogues confirm that these items were curios rather than fine artworks reflecting the tastes of the possessor. As enriched nabobs and reports of Company misrule increased during the third quarter of the century, auctioneers strategically crafted their catalogues to both omit precise details of Indian items and juxtapose them with European antiquities. This mystification of the origins and significances of South Asian art and antiquities allowed bidders to invest these items with their own interpretations. By the time of the Hastings trial in 1785, Indian exotica was increasingly eschewed by polite collectors who did not wish to have such nabobish items. Nonetheless, mounting demand from nabobs, institutions, and orientalists and other collectors resulted in specialized auctions appealing to these buyers.

However, there was a fourth phase in metropolitan collecting reflecting the meanings Britons assigned to Indian artworks and antiquities. This shift in British attitudes was intimately linked to the Company's overthrow of Tipu Sultan following the siege of Srirangapatna in 1799. Given Tipu's political, technological, and military ties to France, the conquest of Mysore had strong association with British global imperial virtue. The quantities of loot taken from Srirangapatna that flowed throughout South Asia and into Britain as spoils of war, gifts, and

collections lost their air of exoticism and became symbols of honorable imperial conquest. Indeed, how items circulated to Britain and transformed in meaning is one question that will be addressed in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 3

"To Send Such Quantities of Ramayanas"[1]: Circulation, Smuggling, and the Influx of Indian Exotica to Britain, 1750-1820

Introduction

During his thirty years as an attorney in Calcutta, William Hickey amassed a large collection of paintings and etchings — by both European and South Asian artists — which he intended to transport back to Britain.[2] His tendency to purchase from bazaars, artists, and auctions "every article [he] felt any inclination for" resulted in his white-town home gaining popular esteem as "Hickey's picture and print warehouse."[3] However, the shipment of his collection from India to Britain could involve customs inspections and paying exorbitant fees on distinctly South Asian art. Thus, prior to arriving in London in August, 1808, Hickey arranged for a group of smugglers off the coast of East Sussex to run ashore his Indian art, "shawls, and other articles of Indian manufacture" whose importation could be contentious or outright prohibited. After arriving in Britain, Hickey properly applied to the East India Company (EIC) clerks for the retrieval of his European-produced items. But he was aghast to learn that the

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[1] Andrew Fuller to William Ward, 6 Feb, 1809. Baptist Missionary Society Archives (BMSA), Home Office Correspondence. Southern Baptist Historical Library and Archive (SBHLA), Nashville, TN, Microfilm Collection #5350. Reel 20, Vol. 2, Unpaginated.

[2] By the late eighteenth century, large quantities of imported cheap European and East Asian prints, Anglo-Indian paintings and etchings, and omnipresent Indian works inundated Calcutta's art markets, making cheap images readily available to Hickey. Natasha Eaton, "Excess in the city? The Consumption of Imported Prints in Colonial Calcutta, c.1780-c.1795," in *Empires of Vision*, edited by Martin Jay and Sumathi Ramaswamy (Durham: Duke University Press, 2014), 160-6; Tillman Nechtman, "Mr. Hickey's Pictures: Britons and Their Collectables in Late Eighteenth-Century India," in *The Cultural Construction of the British World*, edited by Barry Crosbie and Mark Hampton (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2016), 180-2.

[3] William Hickey, *Memoirs of William Hickey,* Volume 3, 1782-1790, edited by Alfred Spencer (New York: Knopf, 1923), 202, 327, 358.

customs agents in London had impounded his crates of pictures. Even more alarming, Company officers had auctioned his artworks at the India House on Leadenhall Street. If he wished to retain his Anglo-Indian paintings and prints, Hickey would have to pay an amount greater than the highest bid. When Hickey inquired why the EIC seized and sold his collection, he learned that the customs officers regarded these works by European artists as "foreign" Indian goods.[4]

For Hickey, the designation of his European-produced paintings and prints as Indian was preposterous since "they had been executed in a British settlement, by different artists, but all of them Englishmen constantly living under English law. The persons represented were all subjects of Great Britain….These paintings were executed for and paid for by me who am likewise a Briton." Hickey understood his Anglo-Indian pictures to be British material culture since "every canvas upon which the paintings were made, the colours, oils, and even the very hair pencils used in the work were all of British manufacture, and after all they were conveyed to Europe in an English East India ship." For Hickey, there was "nothing *foreign* from beginning to end in the whole transaction."[5] This disagreement had its roots in Britons' competing visions of both definitions of Britishness and the domestic or oriental nature of material culture from the colonies and reaches of Britain. For the customs agents, the white town of Calcutta was an oriental space rather than a geography capable of producing British goods. However, the circulation, re-contextualization, and, at times, smuggling of material culture from South Asia to Britain could destabilize items' oriental or British nature.

This chapter explores how the circulation of South Asian and Anglo-Indian goods in the subcontinent and their transmission to Britain through legal and covert shipping networks served

[4] William Hickey, *Memoirs of William Hickey,* Volume 4, 1790-1809, edited by Alfred Spencer (New York: Knopf, 1925), 462, 469-71.
[5] Ibid, 471. Hickey's emphasis.

to increasingly normalize this material in Britain, as well as complicate and make uncertain the British or oriental nature of such items. As chapter 2 detailed, by the last decades of the eighteenth century polite Britons generally eschewed Indian artworks, antiquities, and other exotica as material signifiers of oriental corruption and nabobish pretension. By the end of the century, EIC officers, antiquarians, religious leaders, and other collectors in Britain held disparate, competing associations with Indian material culture. South Asian items became more common and accepted in Britain as spoils of war and symbols of virtuous imperial rule following the defeat of Tipu Sultan and the conquest of Srirangapatna (Seringapatam) in 1799. But importation remained restricted and heavily taxed in the first decades of the nineteenth century. Some South Asian exotica and Anglo-Indian material culture continued to carry airs of disrepute due to their probable transmission to Britain through illicit and clandestine means, such as the evasion of customs inspections through bribery or the smuggling networks of the orientalized lower orders.[6] Moreover, for Britons at home and in the subcontinent, the production, destruction, displacement, and circulation of both South Asian and European-produced items in India made uncertain the character of such items. This chapter argues that during the Georgian period the movement of material culture in India and its transmission to Britain rendered the domestic or foreign nature of such materials ambiguous, particularly following the fall of Srirangapatna in 1799. Therefore, each of the three sections of this chapter explores how the shipment and de-contextualization of Indian goods both shaped and destabilized British understandings of Asian exotica. While section one details patterns and the nature of eighteenth-century smuggling of South Asian goods, the following sections examine the power of legal and

[6] Saree Makdisi, *Making England Western: Occidentalism, Race, and Imperial Culture* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2014), ix-xii, xvi-xvii, 32-3, 81-2.

surreptitious shipping networks to transform British perceptions of South Asian and Anglo-Indian material culture.

Section one explores how the smuggling of Asian goods into Britain during the Georgian period carried close association with the racialized lower orders. The legal and illicit shipment of bulk Indian consumer goods to Britain increased markedly following the Company's acquisition and expansion of a territorial empire in South Asia beginning in 1757.[7] As EIC officers engaged in Company and private trade, copious Indian and East Asian groceries, textiles, and luxury goods also entered Britain through long-standing smuggling networks connecting domestic and colonial social sectors and geographies. As regions where the lower orders secretly imported unknown quantities and varieties of Asian goods, the English and Welsh coastlines were dangerous, ungovernable, penetrable spaces in the popular British imagination. The covert movement of Indian and Anglo-Indian artworks and other luxury goods throughout the subcontinent and back to Britain by the lower orders resulted in such items continuing to carry ambiguous, non-British airs. While exotica had association with nabobery during the last decades of the eighteenth century, the orientalizing properties of these items also had roots in their duplicitous means of importation. In other words, this chapter argues that South Asian exotica carried oriental airs in Britain due to both being from India as well as from often being smuggled into Britain by the racialized classes. Indeed, into the first decades of the nineteenth century smuggling networks complicated items' nature.

The second section examines how the creation, circulation, and smuggling of European and South Asian material culture between Bengal and Britain was integral to missionary

[7] Frank McLynn, *Crime and Punishment and Eighteenth-Century England* (London: Routledge, 1989), 182-3.

endeavors in India.[8] As unauthorized residents of Bengal who were banned from proselytizing and commerce in Calcutta, the Baptist missionaries stationed at the nearby Danish city of Serampore depended upon North American smugglers for transporting money, texts, exotica, and people. In India the missionaries adapted tactics for converting the orientalized lower echelons of society in Britain, namely the production and distribution of Christian scriptures in local languages. For the Serampore missionaries, printing was a holy process of generating venerable materials capable of stamping out "heathen" practices.[9] While the printing of Indian-language texts supposedly furthered their mission in Bengal, these volumes had a second purpose as tools for generating enthusiasm and financial support in Britain and North America. Produced by Hindu and Muslim printers and composed of heterogeneous materials, these volumes appeared to Baptist congregants, merchants, and British customs officers as Indian material culture. Thus, the missionaries relied upon clandestine American shipping networks to get their texts into Britain. But their utilization of these channels only underscored the volumes' oriental nature.

The final section expands upon the transformative nature of circulation by examining how the sale, looting, and shipment of treasures, collections, and ritual items of Tipu Sultan, the ruler of Mysore, normalized Indian exotica in Britain as trophies of empire. Yet, the de-contextualization, shipping, and counterfeiting of goods from the fortress of Srirangapatna equally rendered some material counterflows of conquest uncertain and contentious. Three wars against the Company and an alliance with France generated popular British interest in the ruler

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[8] William Carey was not the first European missionary active in Bengal. In fact, a small number of Moravian brethren and John Kiernander, a Swedish missionary, arrived decades before Carey. Nevertheless, this chapter focuses upon the Baptist Missionary Society rather than other evangelical organizations since the Baptists were far more involved in the production and circulation of texts than the London Missionary Society or other organizations. Eli Daniel Potts, *British Baptist Missionaries in India, 1793-1837* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1967), 6-7.

[9] Miles Ogborn, *Indian Ink: Script and Print in the Making of the English East India Company* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007), 207-8; Daniel E. White, *From Little London to Little Bengal: Religion, Print, Modernity in Early British India, 1793-1835* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2013), 57-62.

of Mysore, manifesting in copious visual productions, published accounts of the wars, and theatrical representations of Tipu Sultan.[10] The EIC's defeat of Tipu in May, 1799 and the subsequent seizure and sale of his treasures normalized some Indian exotica in Britain as spoils of overthrown French-allied oriental despotism and rightful Company rule. The Company's prize sales did more than just legitimize the looting and redistribution of money and treasures from Srirangapatna.[11] These auctions emptied Tipu's jewels, robes and turbans, antiquities, and other valuable items of their specific spiritual and political meanings and functions. Their sale and subsequent circulation transformed these items from tools for asserting Tipu's authority into items of financial value or antiquarian interest. By breaking apart jewels, mixing and decontextualizing items into auction lots, and disbursing spoils across India and Britain, the prize agents at times erased the origins of Tipu's treasures. Divesting Tipu's collections and ritual items of their courtly meanings also made uncertain which artworks and treasures circulating in India and to Britain were actually from Srirangapatna. Many items arriving in the metropole carried dubious airs as probably misidentified, smuggled, or fraudulent.

I. "A General Disposition to Commit Acts of Pillage"[12]: Smuggling, the Lower Orders, and the Perilous Coasts of Britain

Throughout the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, the docking and unloading of a Company ship at Deptford, Blackwall, or another London port was a protracted and chaotic scene of constant movement of persons and goods onto and off of the vessel, customs officers

[10] Daniel O'Quinn, *Staging Governance: Theatrical Imperialism in London, 1770-1800* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2005), 312-15; Linda Colley, *Captives* (New York: Pantheon Books, 2002), 277-307.
[11] Richard H. Davis, *Lives of Indian Images* (Princeton, New Jersey; Princeton University Press, 1997), 154.
[12] Patrick Colquhoun, *A Treatise on the Commerce and Police of the River Thames: Containing an Historical View of the Trade of the Port of London* (London, 1800), 188.

ineffectively examining cargo, unauthorized persons boarding the ship, thieves attempting to take valuables, and crewmen illegally running contraband ashore. As the magistrate Patrick Colquhoun lamented, despite a raft of laws to prevent smuggling and pilfering, "abuses, frauds, and peculations, prevail… in the ships of the East India Company."[13] As the only persons tasked with taking inventories of "each package…at the time taken on board," crewmen could secretly load their own goods onto the vessel before leaving India.[14] Upon arriving in Britain, the dockworkers offered "their services…to smuggle the private adventures [cargo] of the officers and crew."[15] In addition to falsifying papers and shipping unregistered Indian goods, captains and sailors occasionally arranged for groups of smugglers to board and overwhelm a docking ship, thereby preventing customs agents from stopping the raid. In October, 1786, for instance, the *Dublin* arrived at Deptford carrying textiles, tea, and other Indian goods loaded in Calcutta. As the vessel docked and customs officers boarded, forty boats surrounded the ship.[16] Witnesses reported that "the gangs of smugglers were so numerous and desperate that it was not in the power of the revenue officer to make any effort to prevent their proceedings." The crewmen aided the smugglers in unloading Indian goods, which "were carried off by means of a bridge of boats extending from the ship to the shore."[17] While furtive unloading and overt running of South Asian items was commonplace in ports, more often officers and sailors collaborated with coastal smugglers. In addition to paying fishermen and other villagers to row ashore private-trade and Company-owned cargo, captains and sailors exchanged contraband with smugglers while out

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[13] Ibid, 90-1.
[14] Anonymous, *Advice to the Unwary: or an Abstract of Certain Penal Laws Now in Force Against Smuggling in General and the Adulteration of Tea* (London, 1780), 22.
[15] Colquhoun, *A Treatise on the Commerce and Police of the River Thames,* 66.
[16] H. V. Bowen, "'So Alarming an Evil:' Smuggling, Pilfering and the English East India Company, 1750–1810," *International Journal of Maritime History,* Vol. 14, No. 1 (June, 2002): 1-3.
[17] Anonymous, "Proceedings of Joint Committee of Trade and Warehouses. The Outrage Committed by Smugglers in Running Goods from the Ship Dublin at Deptford," 3 November, 1796. BL IOR/H/497, f. 336.

at sea.[18] Since customs officers and marine police were generally “of the same class [as smugglers], and possess the same desire to obtain plunder,” confiscations and arrests were infrequent. Persons of most social ranks enjoyed the financial and material benefits of smuggling. Nevertheless, these activities carried association with “the lower ranks of mankind” who were of “impure morals and loose conduct.”[19]

Throughout the Georgian period, the rugged coastlines of Southern England and Wales were ambiguous, contentious spaces carrying strong association with the racialized lower orders and the unchecked importation of New World, continental, and Asian contraband. Just as poorer coastal villagers depended upon smuggling as a lucrative means of circumventing the restrictions and laws imposed by elites,[20] polite Britons — even some persons benefitting from smuggling — perceived smuggling as a practice detrimental to British interests. As Gavin Dayly has suggested, while elaborate networks of smugglers intertwined geographies and intersected social sectors, English and Welsh smugglers held reputations as subverters of domestic laws. These actions of sailors and poor coastal communities appeared to lawmakers as detrimental to British finances and a challenge to the integrity of national borders.[21] As an illegal yet ubiquitous activity connecting the rural and urban lower orders to colonial circulation networks, smuggling injected

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[18] H. V. Bowen, “Privilege and Profit: Commanders of East Indiamen as Private Traders, Entrepreneurs and Smugglers, 1760-1813,” *International Journal of Maritime History,* Vol. 19, No. 2 (December, 2007): 68-9; Gavin Dayly, “English Smugglers, the Channel, and the Napoleonic Wars, 1800–1814,” *Journal of British Studies*, Vol. 46, No. 1 (January, 2007): 40-41.

[19] Colquhoun, *A Treatise on the Commerce and Police of the River Thames*, 66, 93.

[20] According to Cal Winslow, smuggling had association with the working poor since it was a challenge to regulations designed to maintain the power and wealth of elites and the bourgeoisie. Conversely, Paul Monod contends that smuggling was not a form of class conflict since the impetus to smuggle was always personal profit. However, while not all smugglers were of the lowermost echelons, Monod’s claim discounts the elaborate, geographically-broad nature of smuggling networks. Winslow, "Sussex Smugglers," in *Albion's Fatal Tree: Crime and Society in Eighteenth-Century England*, edited by Douglas Hay et al. (New York: Pantheon Books, 1975), 120-121; Monod, “Dangerous Merchandise: Smuggling, Jacobitism, and Commercial Culture in Southeast England, 1690-1760,” *Journal of British Studies*, Vol. 30, No. 2 (April, 1991): 168.

[21] Dayly, “English Smugglers, the Channel, and the Napoleonic Wars, 1800–1814,” 31-2; Michiel Baud and Willem Van Schendel, “Toward a Comparative History of Borderlands,” *Journal of World History*, Vol. 8, No. 2 (Fall, 1997): 229-31.

into Britain unknown quantities and varieties of Asian groceries, textiles, exotica, and other restricted manufactures. Thus, while certain colonial produce had achieved a degree of normalcy in Britain by the Georgian period, Indian and East Asian exotica appeared to some metropolitan Britons as being oriental due to both its origins as well as its entry into Britain through the clandestine networks of the racialized lower echelons. Moreover, the lower orders' willingness to collude with English and foreign merchants and sailors in permeating Britain's borders with contraband rendered these persons a dangerous and, possibly, orientalizing presence along the English and Welsh coastline. The late eighteenth century may have witnessed "the invention of the beach" as small seaside areas of Southern England became resorts for the privileged.[22] But, the coasts remained the domain of fishermen and sailors, violent storms, and the orientalized lower orders reputed for smuggling, raiding vessels, and subverting Britain's boarders.

The unapproved importation and circulation of foreign luxury goods, global foodstuffs, and colonial raw materials predated the intertwined "consumer revolution" and "industrious revolution" of eighteenth-century Britain.[23] The emergence of a more robust, moneyed middling sector driving a pervasive consumer culture propelled intricate, geographically-widespread networks of smugglers.[24] Tea, tobacco, sugar, liquor and other New World and Asian produce were the most commonly-run items. Smugglers also supplemented their profits by rowing ashore

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[22] Alain Corbin, *The Lure of the Sea: The Discovery of the Seaside in the Western World 1750-1840,* translated by Jocelyn Phelps (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), 164, 239; Fred Gray, *Designing the Seaside: Architecture, Society, and Nature* (London: Reaktion Books, 2006), 117, 131, 147-50; Zoe Kinsley, "Beside the Seaside: Mary Morgan's Tour to Milford Haven, in the year 1791," *Travel Writing and Tourism in Britain and Ireland,* edited by Benjamin Colbert (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 33.

[23] Neil McKendrick, John Brewer, and J. H. Plumb, *The Birth of a Consumer Society: The Commercialization of Eighteenth-Century England* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1982), 9-33; Jan De Vries, "The Industrial Revolution and the Industrious Revolution," *The Journal of Economic History*, Vol. 54, No. 2 (June, 1994): 249-52.

[24] Hoh-Cheung Mui and Lorna H. Mui, "Smuggling and the British Tea Trade Before 1784," *The American Historical Review*, Vol. 74, No. 1 (Oct., 1968): 44-7; Dayly, "English Smugglers, the Channel, and the Napoleonic Wars, 1800–1814," 32; Maxine Berg, *Luxury and Pleasure in Eighteenth-Century Britain* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 9-12, 44-45.

crates of luxury goods, such as artworks, for those wishing to avoid customs fees or confiscation. The importation of pictures and other artworks and antiquities from abroad remained restricted during the first decades of the eighteenth century. Beginning in 1721, duties were 20 percent of customs agents' assessed value of artworks. Yet, these fees could also fluctuate based upon artworks' size, composition, other physical characteristics, as well as the whims of the customs officers.[25] Nevertheless, the greatest profits for smugglers lay in running bulk Asian textiles and groceries. Although intended to buttress the EIC's monopoly on Asian imports to Britain and the North American colonies, the Calico Acts of 1700 and 1721 were ineffective and provided merchants with greater financial incentive to smuggle. British desire for imported Indian textiles waned during the latter half of the century as bourgeoning domestic industry met consumer demand and changing tastes.[26] But the commonplace consumption of Indian, Chinese, and New World groceries provided smugglers with ample opportunities to profit. A series of acts ratified during the latter part of the century, such as the 1779 Smuggling Act, instituted harsher penalties for running goods, looting ships, aiding smugglers, and buying and selling known contraband.[27] Nevertheless, by 1783 EIC officials estimated that Company vessels "have often smuggled from 1000 to 3000 chests of tea each; also that the foreign captains bring a large quantity of tea, which they either smuggle at sea or throw into the sea."[28] In February, 1784 the former Lord of Trade,

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[25] Since the value of exotica from Asia was uncertain, fees levied were probably rooted in the inclinations of the customs assessor rather than the claims of the importer. Iain Pears, *The Discovery of Painting: The Growth of Interest in the Arts in England, 1680- 1768* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988), 52-5; Brian Cowan, "Arenas of Connoisseurship: Auctioning Art in Later Stuart England," in *Art Markets in Europe, 1400-1800,* edited by Michael North and David Omrod (Brookfield, Vermont: Ashgate Publishing, 1998), 155-7; Holger Hoock, *The King's Artists: The Royal Academy of Arts and the Politics of British Culture 1760-1840* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2003), 240.

[26] Jonathan Eacott, *Selling Empire: Indian in the Making of Britain and America, 1600-1830* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2016), 130-1, 311.

[27] Anonymous, *Advice to the Unwary,* 6-15; K. N. Chaudhuri, *The Trading World of Asia and the English East India Company, 1660-1760* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978), 392-5.

[28] Anonymous, "Account of Teas Exported from China and Europe in Foreign and English Ships," 1783-1784. BL IOR/H/61, f. 139.

William Eden, claimed that at least 120 British vessels were only employed in smuggling Asian textiles, tea, and luxury goods. These activities resulted in an annual loss of £2,000,000 in state revenue.[29] While the 1784 Commutation Act reduced import duties on Chinese and Indian tea from 119 to 12.5 percent in an effort to quash smuggling, lower prices on tea spurred greater demand, particularly among the poorer sectors of Britain. Profits from tea running may have waned during the last decades of the century.[30] But even by 1800, approximately 20,000 persons were full-time smugglers.[31] Demand outstripping supply — and importers' desire to avoid paying duties — resulted the continuity of covert importation to Britain of Indian products.[32] Indeed, smuggling remained endemic as sailors, runners, and the denizens of seaside towns depended upon profits from looting and running Asian goods.

The importance of smuggling to the subsistence of seaside communities led some Britons to identify the entirety of the British coastline as inhabited by smugglers, wreckers, and bandits.[33] In addition to the Welsh and English coasts along the Bristol Channel, the shorelines of Kent, Sussex, Dorset, Cornwall, and Devon were the major smuggling zones throughout the Georgian period.[34] Upon entering the "wretched village called Rotherbridge" in Sussex, the proximity of the town to the cost led the politician Horace Walpole to assume that every local inn was entirely "inhabited by smugglers."[35] Even popular guidebooks warned travelers that "all

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[29] Anonymous, *the Gentleman's Magazine*, Vol. 54 (London, 1784), 144, 211.

[30] Adam Smith famously argued in that high taxation only encouraged higher rates of smuggling and resulted in lost revenue. Smith, *The Wealth of Nations* (London, 1776) (New York: E. P. Dutton & Co., 1910 edition), 362-66.

[31] McLynn, *Crime and Punishment and Eighteenth-Century England,* 172.

[32] Eacott, *Selling Empire,* 311.

[33] The artist Joseph Farington observed that for the Cornish town of Polperro, when the villagers had opportunities to smuggle "money was plentiful." But when smuggling was infrequent "the condition of the people was much changed." Farington, "Sunday September 2nd, 1810," in *The Diary of Joseph Farington,* Vol. 10, edited by Kathryn Cave (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1982), 3735.

[34] Mary Waugh, *Smuggling in Kent and Sussex, 1700-1840* (Newbury, Berkshire: Countryside Books, 1988), 7-8, 18; Geoffrey Morley, *Smuggling in Hampshire and Dorset, 1700-1850* (Newbury, Berkshire: Countryside Books, 1983), 10-16; Dayly, "English Smugglers, the Channel, and the Napoleonic Wars, 1800–1814," 36.

[35] Horace Walpole to Richard Bentley, 5 August, 1752, in *Walpole Correspondence*, Vol. 35, 137.

classes of labourers" in these regions "were in a manner guilty."[36] Such observations led maritime police, magistrates, and some travelers to use the terms "smuggler" and "country people" interchangeably. Although running bore strong association with the ostensible criminality of the lower orders, smuggling networks overlapped and interlinked social sectors and geographies.[37] The inland transportation of contraband was neither limited to men nor circumscribed by profession since an array of local persons — such as farmers, merchants, "coachmen, footmen, and females" — transported contraband to warehouses and retailers "by means of baskets, bundles, [and] bags."[38] Such prevalence and diffusion of these practices disallowed customs officers from effectively monitoring the coastline. Smuggled goods usually traveled through the same channels as items pilfered from landed ships. In August, 1793, for example, dock workers and twenty-six crewmen "stole from the gun-room, a large case of pepper, many bags of rice," 600 bottles of liquor, and a number of parcels of Indian goods. The crewmen handed off the items to smugglers waiting on the dock.[39] Despite the commonness of collaborating sailors and dockworkers, smuggling endeavors were not always successful. In November, 1758 customs officers intercepted a group attempting to run ashore South Asian textiles near the Cherry Gardens docks in London.[40] The likelihood of foiled smuggling attempts turning violent, however, often discouraged customs officers and maritime police from intercepting runners. In addition to identifying their activities as detrimental to state revenue and law-abiding merchants, maritime police and other critics adamantly referred to these "dissolute

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[36] Edward Wedlake Brayley, *London and Middlesex, or, An Historical, Commercial, and Descriptive Survey of the Metropolis of Great-Britain* (London, 1814), 777.
[37] Edward Carson, *The Ancient and Rightful Customs: A History of the English Customs System* (Hamden, Connecticut: Archon Books, 1972), 56-8.
[38] Anonymous, *Advice to the Unwary,* 21.
[39] Colquhoun, *A Treatise on the Commerce and Police of the River Thames*, 92-3.
[40] Although the smugglers evaded capture, customs agents discovered that they had dumped into the Thames "a considerable amount" of Indian goods. Anonymous, *Whitehall Evening Post or London Intelligencer* (London, England), 16-18 November, 1758; Issue 1976.

and abandoned persons" as "savage creatures" who "follow the imaginations of their own evil hearts."[41] Since most captains, sailors, runners, and residents of coastal areas did not perceive smuggling to be immoral or rightfully illegal, the unauthorized movement of Asian groceries, manufactures, and exotica often occurred openly.[42]

Because all EIC vessels were privately-owned enterprises — yet employed by the Company and beholden to the shareholders — many captains and sailors conducting legal private trade had few qualms with also violating the EIC's monopoly on Indian imports. The EIC Directors stipulated that all private trade would take the form of the captain or crewmen storing their imports in the EIC's London warehouses. Company auctioneers would then sell these privately-owned goods at the East India House. The EIC would claim a percentage of the prices realized, but the owner of the goods received the majority of the profits.[43] Since the smuggling of Asian products with high profit margins was essential to the overall profitability of trade, importers, of course, preferred the more-lucrative approach of sidestepping the Company's auctions.[44] Collusion between EIC captains and smugglers was so commonplace that they conducted business openly in front of passengers. During his first return voyage to Britain in 1770, William Hickey observed a Cornish smuggler board the *Plassey* and purchase from the commanding officer, Captain Waddell, Asian tea originally bound for the Company's warehouses. The smuggler paid the captain £1,224 for many chests. As sailors loaded the goods

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[41] Anonymous, *The Genuine History of the Inhuman and Unparalleled Murders of Mr. William Galley, a Custom-House Officer, and Mr. Daniel Chater, a Shoemaker, by Fourteen Notorious Smugglers, with the Trials and Execution of Seven of the Criminals at Chichester, 1748-9* (London, 1749). (Brighton, 1858 edition), 249.

[42] In fact, smugglers viewed such activities as a continuity of older patterns and forms of trade. Joshua M. Smith, *Borderland Smuggling: Patriots, Loyalists, and Illicit Trade in the Northeast, 1783-1820* (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 2006), 10-13; Peter Andreas, *Smuggler Nation: How Illicit Trade Made America* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 2-6; Baud and Van Schendel, "Toward a Comparative History of Borderlands," 229-31.

[43] Jean Sutton, *Lords of the East: The East India Company and Its Ships, 1600-1874* (London: Conway Maritime Press, 2000), 26-33, 72-73.

[44] McLynn, *Crime and Punishment and Eighteenth-Century England,* 178-9.

into the smuggler's boat, Waddell asked the buyer "whether he had recently sustained any losses by the Government vessels." He stated that he lost five or six hundred pounds worth of tea a few days before, but such a small amount was of "no object." Astounded at the quantities of tea and amounts of money exchanged, Hickey inquired to Waddell whether one could trust a smuggler. He replied that "these people always deal with the strictest of honour. If they did not, their business would cease."[45] Similarly, sailors on Company vessels were trustworthy accomplices for those wishing to bypass customs inspections. According to the antiquarian William Cole, travelers approaching the coast would "find no difficulty in getting the mate of the ship to take as many things as you please into his custody, and he will bring them to you…on shore."[46]

As sites of inspection and seizure of unapproved goods, customs houses were arenas for divining and debating the foreign or normalized nature of colonial goods. According to the Boston merchant John Ballard, officers "are universally complained of by everyone who has any business to transact at the custom house." Although this "vile set" was involved in smuggling, they also could be ruthless in their inspections if no bribes were forthcoming.[47] William Cole reported that "at Dover they are strict at the custom house…and rummage the boxes quite to the bottom."[48] While prohibition of continental textiles and liquor may have been strictly enforced, returning Anglo-Indians reported officers' overzealous seizure of South Asian goods. In July, 1784, Marian Hastings, the wife of Governor General Warren Hastings, arrived at Portsmouth with a considerable number of Indian goods stowed aboard *The Atlas.* Customs officials detained nearly every Indian item in her possession. While she was able to pay £875 in duties for her

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[45] William Hickey, *Memoirs of William Hickey,* Volume 1, 1749-1775, edited by Alfred Spencer (New York: Knopf, 1919), 248-50.
[46] William Cole to Horace Walpole, 5 July, 1766, in *Walpole Correspondence*, Vol. 1, 101.
[47] John Ballard, *England in 1815, as Seen by a Young Boston Merchant* (Boston, 1913), 171.
[48] William Cole to Horace Walpole, 5 July, 1766, in *Walpole Correspondence*, Vol. 1, 101.

ornate South Asian furniture, the confiscation of her silks, gowns, and jewelry led the Hastings' political agent, John Scott Warring, to proclaim that "there is not such a set of vermin in England as our Custom House officers."[49] Similar seizures of South Asian items occurred in subsequent decades. After landing near Portsmouth in September, 1805, the EIC officer David Price observed multiple "ludicrous scenes with the custom-house officers, by whom some of our fellow passengers were stripped, without mercy, of several valuable shawls, and other [Indian] articles, intended as presents to their friends."[50] Such criticism of "those unheroic harpies" also had roots in officers' corruption and collaboration with smugglers.[51]

Although customs agents had the duty of inspecting all cargo from incoming ships and seizing any illicit shipments, travelers and merchants found many of them willingly defied protocol by accepting bribes, misappropriating goods, or aiding smugglers. Patrick Colquhoun remarked that customs officers' "salaries are small; their families often large; their wants are therefore pressing." Thus, it was imperative for them to generate additional income.[52] Upon arriving at the ports of Dartford in 1782, the German travel writer Carl Philip Moritz noted that customs agents habitually asked for money in exchange for omitting inspection of baggage and crates. Moritz, much like many other travelers, "gave [money] willingly because the cost would have been even more if the trunk had been" inspected and Asian and other restricted goods were taxed or seized.[53] Customs officials' inclination to overlook cargo allowed for numbers of

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[49] John Scott Warring quoted in Sydney C. Grier, editor, *The Letters of Warren Hastings to His Wife* (London: William Blackwood & Sons, 1905), 394-6; Charles Alan Lawson, *The Private Life of Warren Hastings: the First Governor General of India* (London: S. Sonnenschein & Co., 1895), 149.
[50] David Price, *Memoirs of the Early Life and Service of a Field Officer on the Retired List of the Indian Army* (London, 1839), 527.
[51] Horace Walpole to George Montagu, 7 Aug., 1767, in *Walpole Correspondence*, Volume. 10, edited by W. S. Lewis (New Haven: Yale University Press, 48 Vols. 1937-83), 247.
[52] Colquhoun, *A Treatise on the Commerce and Police of the River Thames,* 66.
[53] Carl Philip Moritz, *Journeys of a German in England: A Walking Tour of England in 1782* (London: Eland Books, 1983), 31.

substantial and valuable Indian items to enter Britain. Writing in July, 1767, the politician Horace Walpole reflected that the famed nabob Robert Clive was able to get past customs "a million [pounds] for himself, two diamond drops worth twelve thousand pounds for the Queen, a scimitar, dagger, and other matters covered with brilliants, for the King, and worth twenty-four thousand more."[54] Clive's cargo on the *Britannia* also contained his own collection of South Asian artworks and antiquities, "some very ancient manuscripts," quantities of Indian textiles, and exotic animals.[55] These items and creatures were clearly of South Asian origin. Yet, Clive's false declaration that they were only worth £2,000 — and his bribes of £50 to a number of officers — allowed his cargo to slip through inspections quickly and with minimal fees.[56] Customs agents' questionable practices could also be to the detriment of collectors and merchants. The antiquarian Charles Townely claimed in 1792 that "an importer of goods, to which he is attached either from pleasure or for [resale], may be deprived of them, or be obliged to pay a higher duty for them than they are worth, by an ignorant or a malicious officer." These dishonest practices even took the form of outright theft of imports. According to Townley, "an officer who wished to form a cabinet of curiosities might possess himself of any object that came under his inspection."[57] Moreover, customs officers at times aided smugglers' unauthorized influx of Indian and New World goods through the willful lack of enforcement.[58] Arriving in Dartford in 1766, William Cole expected customs agents to be "very exact after run goods." Yet,

[54] Horace Walpole to Horace Mann, 20 July, 1767, in *Walpole Correspondence*, Vol 22, edited by W. S. Lewis (New Haven: Yale University Press, 48 Vols. 1937-83), 540.
[55] Anonymous, *Gazetteer and New Daily Advertiser* (London, England), Tuesday, July 28, 1767, Issue 11980; Anonymous, *St. James's Chronicle or the British Evening Post* (London, England), July 28, 1767 - July 30, 1767, Issue 1000; Anonymous, *London Evening Post* (London, England), July 28, 1767 - July 30, 1767, Issue 4473.
[56] Mark Bence-Jones, *Clive of India* (London: Constable, 1974), 244-5.
[57] W. Agar to Charles Townley 26 Sept, 1792, Charles Townley's annotations to letter. British Museum Central Archive (BMCA), Townley Collection. TY7/1506, unpaginated.
[58] Occasionally customs agents faced trial for collaboration with smugglers. In January, 1798 Thomas Green was imprisoned "for two years in Clerkenwell Bridge" for smuggling Indian textiles. Anonymous, *Observer* (London, England), Sunday, January 28, 1798; Issue 320.

he “saw nothing of them.”[59] As “a miserable class of men” who colluded with smugglers, customs officials did little to make the shorelines impenetrable, secure regions.[60]

Throughout the Georgian period, the rugged coasts remained porous, uncontrollable, and dangerous spaces in the collective imaginations of Britons.[61] The natural impossibility of customs agents to monitor every region of the British coastline led some observers to remark that the beaches would always be susceptible to schemes of clever smugglers. After observing a hot air balloon crossing the channel in 1785, Horace Walpole remarked that “Airgonauts [sic] have passed the Rubicon…[and] were exactly [like] birds.” Walpole was certain that “the smugglers…will be the first that will improve on the plan.”[62] The Celtic Sea, the North Sea, and the English Channel did not provide a protective barrier marking the delimitations of Britain. Rather, the southern coastlines were dangerous, ungovernable, and permeable spaces.[63] Similar to severe oceanic tempests which could wreck ships, drown sailors, and destroy property, the actions of the inhabitants of southern England and Wales could be a violent coastal force. In addition to being the location of “a little honest smuggling,” beaches were spaces where villagers engaged in “savage-like” acts of looting, destruction of property, and murder. Travelers noted that locals “consider it in no degree a moral offence to plunder a wreck.” The travel writer Richard Ayton claimed that persons of the English and Welsh villages were “notorious for more than common rapaciousness and brutality in their attacks upon the miserable wretches who have

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[59] William Cole to Horace Walpole, 5 July, 1766, in *Walpole Correspondence*, Vol. 1, edited by W. S. Lewis (New Haven: Yale University Press, 48 Vols. 1937-83), 101.
[60] Colquhoun, *A Treatise on the Commerce and Police of the River Thames,* 177.
[61] Dayly, “English Smugglers, the Channel, and the Napoleonic Wars, 1800–1814,” 31-2; Lauren Benton, *A Search for Sovereignty: Law and Geography in European Empires, 1400-1900* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 37-8.
[62] For Walpole, balloonists were akin to “Indian emperor[s].” Walpole to Lady Ossory, 13 Jan, 1785, in *Walpole Correspondence*, Vol 33, edited by W. S. Lewis (New Haven: Yale University Press, 48 Vols. 1937-83), 540.
[63] Georgian-period Britons produced images of stormy seas, jagged coasts, and shipwrecks as evocative symbols of catastrophe, mortality, oceanic dangers, and the delimitations of Britain. Corbin, *The Lure of the Sea,* 231-43.

the misfortune to be cast away upon their shores." When opportunities to smuggle or scavenge wrecks were few, the locals would extinguish the flames of lighthouses or otherwise lure ships to rocky outcroppings near the beach. According to Ayton, "the particulars that are recorded of their savageness on these occasions, are such as one should expect to hear of only amidst the privileged pillage and massacre in a stormed town."[64]

Ultimately, by the latter part of the century considerable numbers of Asian products lost their air of novelty or exoticness and became daily necessities of Britons across the social spectrum. Yet, the superior quality of Indian goods over British imitations — as well as the increasing acceptance of Indian artworks and antiquities — ensured the continuity of smuggling channels in the early nineteenth century.[65] As the Company's power and territories in the subcontinent expanded, new shipping channels emerged, allowing the transmission to Britain of greater numbers and varieties of South Asian agricultural products, manufactured products, and artworks and antiquities. Continental European and American merchants became important to the circulation of such goods between India and Britain. However, the movement of items from India to the metropole through foreign shipping and smuggling networks could equally render items' British or oriental nature uncertain.

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[64] Richard Ayton and William Daniell, *A Voyage Round Great Britain, Undertaken in the Summer of the Year 1813 and Commencing From Lands-end, Cornwall* (London, 1814), 51, 63-5.
[65] Eacott, *Selling Empire,* 285-6.

II. "It Would Give Offense at Both Calcutta and Leadenhall Street"[66]: Missionaries, American Merchants, and the Movement of Texts Between India and Britain.

During the first decades of the nineteenth century, British Baptist missionaries in Bengal engaged in ambitious projects of translating Christian scriptures into South Asian languages, printing and circulating their publications in Calcutta, and shipping their texts to the Baptist Missionary Society (BMS) Committee in Britain and their associates in North America.[67] However, the missionaries — who were stationed sixteen miles north of Calcutta at the Danish settlement of Serampore — found these intertwined endeavors to be difficult. Their efforts to convert South-Asian denizens of Calcutta met with resistance. Text production in Serampore required access to European, American, and Indian technologies, production materials, and circulation networks. And the shipment of their "oriental" translations back to Britain was expensive and could result in confiscation. When the missionaries sent texts to Britain on EIC vessels, they found duties to be prohibitive, that customs agents wanted bribes, or that Company servants did not honor promises of minimal importation fees. In 1811 the proselytizer and printer William Ward sent a number of Serampore texts aboard the *City of London*. A Company officer assured Ward that the shipment was approved and would be free of charge. The BMS administrators "only had to apply for them at the India House." Yet, when Mr. Brooks, a BMS representative, attempted to retrieve the crates, an EIC clerk informed him that there was "no proof of these being sent by permission of the Government" in Bengal. If the Baptists refused to pay a substantial fee on their unauthorized Indian imports, the books "must be sold at auction" at

[66] W. Short to John Sutcliffe, 21 December, 1800. BMSA, Home Office Correspondence Box H/4. SBHLA MC #5350. Reel 21, Unpaginated.
[67] Brian Stanley, *The History of the Baptist Missionary Society, 1792-1992* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1992), 36-56.

the India House.[68] Given the Company's monopoly and restrictions on the shipment of goods between India and Britain — as well as its efforts to keep proselytizers out of Bengal until 1813 — missionaries had to circumvent colonial and metropolitan law in order to convert persons in the subcontinent.[69] The Baptists, therefore, depended upon the clandestine and duplicitous transportation of people, goods, money, and information between India and Britain.

The Baptists' production and distribution of Christian texts in a variety of languages was vital to the formation and prosperity of evangelical organizations in Britain, the conversion of "heathens" at home and abroad, and the financial support of their endeavors in the subcontinent.[70] According to Miles Ogborn, the Serampore Baptists' Indian-language scriptures were more than just tools for proselytizing in South Asia. For the missionaries, translating and producing Indian-language New Testament volumes were sacred acts of generating venerable items.[71] Missionaries' fixation on the material components of Hinduism — particularly "idols" — impelled their production of physical texts which could act in the place of such images. In other words, processes of converting South Asian peoples required material creation and destruction. Christian texts could become new "idols" displacing a variety of Indian spiritual items.[72] The Baptists measured progress in the subcontinent by the numbers of scriptures printed

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[68] Andrew Fuller to William Ward, 12 February, 1812. BMSA, Home Office Correspondence. SBHLA MC #5350. Reel 20, Vol. 2, Unpaginated.

[69] Relations between the Baptists and the Company remained strained for years after 1813. Robert Eric Frykenberg, "Christian Missions and the Raj," in *Missions and Empire*, edited by Norman Etherington (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 109; Bob Tennant, *Corporate Holiness: Pulpit Preaching and the Church of England Missionary Society, 1760-1870* (Oxford: Oxford University press, 2013), 155-60.

[70] This chapter follows David Bebbington's definition of the term "evangelical." The characteristics of evangelicalism are conversionism (the notion that all individuals could eventually become a believer), activism (the perception that one's own conversion and salvation could be derived from leading others to conversion), biblicalism (an emphasis on using of the bible in devotion and teaching), and crucicentrism (the centrality of the doctrine of atonement in preaching and worship). Bebbington, *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain: A History from the 1780s to the 1830s* (London: Routledge, 1988), 1-17.

[71] Ogborn, *Indian Ink,* 207-8.

[72] For British missionaries' destruction, dislocation, and display of South Asian images, see chapter 5. White, *From Little London to Little Bengal,* 57-62.

and distributed. But the function of the Serampore texts extended beyond practices and processes of conversion in India. The missionaries shipped quantities of these translations to Britain and North America as evidence of success. The physical presence of these texts in the offices of missionary organizations generated support and money for their cause. The missionaries depended upon Americans for the unauthorized transportation of persons from Britain to Bengal, the shipment of printing materials and new-world silver to Serampore, and the multidirectional movement of published texts.[73] Copies of Indian-language New Testaments and other Serampore publications purportedly evidenced missionary progress. But the displacement, circulation, and circumstances of production of items in South Asia could make ambiguous the European or oriental nature of such goods. These publications were heterogeneous and ambiguous items, appearing to Britons as possibly oriental, European, or both. The missionaries were the primary translators, but both Indian and European people, expertise, and material culture were involved in the texts' manufacture. While the indeterminate nature of the physical volumes necessitated missionaries' use of less-than-legal American shipping channels, this method of transmission further rendered them as oriental exotica.

Central to the "missionary awakening" of the late eighteenth century was evangelicals' embrace of innovative printing technologies and material circulation networks as tools for converting oriental and oriental-like peoples at home and abroad.[74] The emergence of British missionary organizations during this period occurred in tandem with both the proliferation of urban humanitarian societies and clubs and the enrichment of merchants willing to invest money

[73] Conflicts with France and the United States occasionally disrupted Britons' access to American mercantile channels. See Andrew Fuller to Mr. Chamberland, 18 May 1809. BMSA, Home Office Correspondence. SBHLA MC #5350. Reel 21, Vol. 3, Unpaginated.
[74] Joseph Stubenrauch, *The Evangelical Age of Ingenuity in Industrial Britain* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), 12-14.

in the "improvement" of Britain and the empire.[75] Paralleling the consumer revolution of the latter part of the century, higher rates of literacy and transformations in British copyright laws in the 1770s led to a veritable explosion in the numbers of texts published and quantities printed.[76] Decades before William Carey arrived in Bengal in 1793, evangelical organizations employed printing technologies and translation projects to further their "exertions among the heathen" in Britain. Missionaries were "attentive to a kind of characters at home, who, though they sustain the Christian name,…are heathens in reality, nearly as much as the inhabitants of India or Africa."[77] As early as the 1760s, organizations such as the Society for Propagating Christian Knowledge produced and distributed "in the Highlands and islands of Scotland" Gaelic translations of scripture.[78] Thus, by the time that evangelical organizations expanded to Bengal, they had established strategies for conversion. Accordingly, the Baptists' publications encouraged proselytization beyond the bounds of Britain. While Carey's *An Enquiry into the Obligations of Christians to Use Means for the Conversion of the Heathens* (1792) called for the expansion of British missionary activities to colonial territories, its circulation and influence over metropolitan and North American readers reaffirmed the necessity of evangelical textual production.[79] Once in Bengal, Carey and other proselytizers perceived textual production and distribution to be imperative "since the natives of India, unlike most other pagans, are…able to

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[75] Peter Clark, *British Clubs and Societies, 1580-1800: The Origins of an Associational World* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 96; David Hancock, *Citizens of the World: London Merchants and the Integration of the British Atlantic community, 1735-1785* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 283-5.
[76] William St. Clair, *The Reading Nation in the Romantic Period* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 120-39; McKendrick, Brewer, and Plumb, *The Birth of a Consumer Society,* 9-33.
[77] Anonymous, "Village Preaching," in *Periodical Accounts Relative to the Baptist Missionary* Society, Vol. 1 (London, 1800), 153, 262-3.
[78] Anonymous, "Edinburgh Missionary Society," in *The Missionary Magazine for 1802: A Periodical Monthly Publication intended as a Repository of Discussion and Intelligence Respecting The Progress of the Gospel Throughout the World,* Vol. 7 (London, 1802), 215.
[79] William Carey, *An Enquiry into the Obligations of Christians to Use Means for the Conversion of the Heathens* (London, 1792); Geoffrey A. Oddie, *Imagined Hinduism: British Protestant Missionary Constructions of Hinduism, 1793-1900* (New Delhi: Sage Publications, 2006), 135-7.

read."[80] Although the "pious clause" included in the Company's 1813 charter legalized preaching and the distribution of Christian publications to Indians, the missionaries continued to rely upon evangelical organizations in Philadelphia, Boston, and New York, as well as American merchants, for the transmission of printing materials and texts between India and Britain.

North American mercantile networks underpinned evangelical projects requiring both the multidirectional shipment of goods and the unapproved movement of missionaries to Bengal. By utilizing American ships, the missionaries were able to travel to India without permits, at times evade inspection at customs houses, and tap into pre-existing networks of legal and illegal shipping between India, Britain, and the United States.[81] The preponderance of North American vessels involved in smuggling activities led the Royal Navy officer Samuel Hood to remark that "almost the whole trade of America is more or less illicit."[82] Since American merchants did not form an East India Company, heavily arm their vessels, or maintain factories in the subcontinent, Company officials generally overlooked them as unthreatening to the EIC. Therefore, American practices of clandestine shipping between India, North America, and Britain generally continued unimpeded into the nineteenth century.[83] This frequent inattention to American activities even allowed some Company servants to aid the BMS in evading the EIC's regulations. In February, 1802 Charles Grant — a Company Director and an advocate of missions in India —

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[80] Benjamin Wickes, "Propagation of the Gospel" (1806), 1**.** Wickes pamphlet attached to William Rogers to Andrew Fuller, 31 March, 1806. BMSA, Home Office Correspondence. SBHLA MC #5350. Reel 21, Vol. 3; Brian K. Pennington, *Was Hinduism Invented?: Britons, Indians, and the Colonial Construction of Religion* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 24-7.

[81] As major shippers of Indian goods, Americans collaborated with the Dutch and French Companies in challenging the EIC's control of the India trade. American defiance dissociated their trade from British scandals of empire. Thus, Indian goods did not carry airs of oriental corruption in North America. Eacott, *Selling Empire,* 228, 387-8.

[82] Commodore Samuel Hood to Richard Grenville, 8 August, 1768, in Grenville, Richard et al, *The Grenville Papers: Being the Correspondence of Richard Grenville, Earl Temple, K. G., and the Right Hon: George Grenville*, Volume 4, edited by William James Smith (London, 1853), 335.

[83] Occasional conflicts between Britain and the United States yielded disruptions in American India trading. Captain Wickes to Andrew Fuller, 22 January, 1811. BMSA, Home Office Correspondence. SBHLA MC #5350. Reel 21, Vol. 5, Unpaginated; James R. Fichter, *So Great a Proffit: How the East Indies Trade Transformed Anglo-American Capitalism* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2010), 31.

recommended to the BMS Secretary Andrew Fuller that "you had better send your missionaries by a Danish or American ship. If you were to ask…the Court of Directors to send them by a British ship, it might bring on indirectly in that Court the whole question of Christianity in the East."[84] Therefore, before leaving Britain on an American vessel, missionaries did not try to apply for permission to live in Bengal.[85] The Baptists had ease of access to American mercantile networks because numerous Philadelphia and New York-based merchants were members of British missionary societies. According to the Serampore missionaries, the project of converting persons in India was "a work in which Christians of all denominations may join, and have joined. The churches in America stimulated by an advertisement inserted in the papers by Captain Wickes have contributed largely to this work."[86] For the Baptists, merchants' efforts to galvanize American support were essential for propagating the gospel in India.

The BMS relied upon the shipping and financial networks, generosity, and goodwill of American merchants with close ties to local evangelical groups. Interlinked with the "missionary awakening" in Britain was the "Second Great Awakening" in North America.[87] American and British societies intertwined as individuals had memberships in multiple organizations, administrators corresponded, and British pastors relocated to the United States.[88] The partnership

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[84] Charles Grant to Andrew Fuller, 9 February, 1802. BMSA, Home Office Correspondence. SBHLA MC #5350. Reel 21, Vol. 3, Unpaginated.

[85] In October, 1798 the missionaries William Grant and Daniel Brundson arrived in Calcutta without papers and were "forbid entry [to Calcutta] at the Custom House." Daniel Brundson to John Sutcliff, 26 July, 1799. BMSA, BMS Missionary Correspondence. Box IN/21. SBHLA MC #5350. Reel 35, Unpaginated; John Clark Marshman, *The Life and Times of Carey, Marshman, and Ward* (London, 1859), 110-11.

[86] William Carey, John Marshman, and William Ward to The Baptist Missionary Society. 29 September, 1806. BMSA, BMS Missionary Correspondence. Box IN/21. SBHLA MC #5350. Reel 35, Unpaginated

[87] Organizations, such as the New York Missionary Society, the Massachusetts Baptist Missionary Society, and the Philadelphia Baptist Association formed in the 1790s. Lily Santoro, "Promoting the Book of Nature: Philadelphia's Role in Popularizing Science for Christian Citizens in the Early Republic," *Pennsylvania History*, Vol. 81, No. 1 (Winter, 2017): 30-31.

[88] For instance, the Philadelphia and New York-based merchants Robert Ralston and Benjamin Wickes were members of both American and British missionary groups. Moreover, William Staughton — a founder of the BMS — immigrated to Philadelphia and became an influential member of multiple organizations. S. W. Lynd, *Memoir of*

between these groups compelled American merchants to aid in the surreptitious transportation of people and goods between Britain and India "free from charge of passage."[89] American captains collaborated with the missionaries in deceiving customs officers in Bengal. According to the BMS administrator John Sutcliffe, "we must not offend the Company's ships, yet if [the missionaries] go out under their laws, it is the same effect." However, if a missionary were "registered as a surgeon bound for Serampore," rather than admit to being a proselytizer, he "might go with surety."[90] Moreover, after arriving in Calcutta on an American ship in 1813, the missionary and engraver William Johns falsely claimed to customs officials he had received the Directors' approval prior to leaving London.[91] Upon investigation, Governor General Minto determined that "Johns purposely abstained from applying to the Honourable Court for leave to come to India because he was aware that it would not be granted to him." Indeed, "the permission of the Honourable Court of Directors" was of no concern to American captains.[92]

American merchants' readiness to circumvent EIC restrictions encouraged the Baptists to utilize these mercantile and financial channels to ship goods and transfer physical money between Britain and Serampore. In addition to paper, chemicals, and other materials necessary for text production, Americans transported European tools, devices, and books to the missionaries.[93] This transatlantic partnership allowed the safe transfer of their collected

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the Rev. William Staughton, D. D. (Boston, 1834), 27-30, 57-8; William Staughton, *The Baptist Mission in India: Containing a Narrative of Its Rise, Progress, and Present Condition* (Philadelphia, 1811).

[89] Rob Ralston to Andrew Fuller, 6 May, 1809. BMSA, Home Office Correspondence. SBHLA MC #5350. Reel 21, Vol. 3, Unpaginated; See also Anonymous "Proceedings of the Committee," August, 1805, in *Periodical Accounts Relative to the Baptist Missionary* Society, Volume 3 (London, 1806), 125.

[90] W. Short to John Sutcliffe, 21 December, 1800. BMSA, Home Correspondence Box H/4. SBHLA, MC #5350. Reel 21, Unpaginated.

[91] Joshua Marshman to Anonymous, 9 June 1813. BMSA, BMS Missionary Correspondence. Box IN/21. SBHLA MC #5350. Reel 35, Unpaginated.

[92] J. Adams to J. Forbes, 26 March, 1813. BMSA, BMS Missionary Correspondence. Box IN/21. SBHLA MC #5350. Reel 35, Unpaginated.

[93] See, for instance, Andrew Fuller to John Sutcliffe 29 November, 1802. BMSA, Home Office Correspondence. SBHLA MC #5350. Reel 20, Vol. 3, Unpaginated.

donations to Philadelphia or New York in the form of bills of exchange. Once received, the American organizations converted these bills into Spanish colonial silver — a transregional trade currency preferred by smugglers and Asian merchants.[94] In August, 1805 the BMS Committee reported that "Captain Wicks being in London, the committee sent by him the care of Robert Ralston [of] Philadelphia, a thousand guineas, to be remitted from thence in dollars to the brethren in India."[95] In 1806 the British funds transmitted through Captain Wickes were "increased by an additional sum of 1357 dollars, which [the missionaries] received by the *Bainbridge* from Philadelphia."[96] Regular shipments of money and other goods from North America during the first decades of the nineteenth century provided a considerable portion of the resources necessary for the Serampore press. Nevertheless, the Baptists in Bengal supplemented their imported income with covert commercial activities underpinned by American smuggling.

Since the missionaries' proselytizing and mere presence in Bengal were illegal, they had no qualms with violating Company restrictions on the flow of goods so long as these transgressions furthered their holy work. While EIC officials allowed the Baptist missionaries to reside in Serampore,[97] the Governor General directed them to "not interfere with the prejudices of the natives by preaching to them, instructing them, or distributing books or pamphlets among them."[98] In the view of the Baptists, "the Governor General's [orders] amounted to a total suppression of all missionary efforts at Calcutta, Serampore, or elsewhere." The missionaries

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[94] Spanish silver was widely available in North America and accepted all over Asia. Smugglers used Spanish silver as a trade currency since it did not require documentation. For an early study detailing the omnipresence of Spanish coins in North America, see John Riddell, *A Monograph of the Silver Dollar, Good and Bad* (New Orleans, 1845).
[95] Anonymous "Proceedings of the Committee," August, 1805, in *Periodical Accounts Relative to the Baptist Missionary* Society, Vol. 3, 123.
[96] William Carey, John Marshman, and William Ward to The Baptist Missionary Society. 29 September, 1806. BMSA, BMS Missionary Correspondence. Box IN/21. SBHLA MC #5350. Reel 35, Unpaginated.
[97] Ogborn, *Indian Ink,* 208.
[98] EIC officials worried that proselytization led to a sepoy revolt at Vellore Fort. William Carey, John Marshman, and William Ward to The Baptist Missionary Society. 2 September, 1806. BMSA, BMS Missionary Correspondence. Box IN/21. SBHLA MC #5350. Reel 35, Unpaginated.

“could not make a single movement without disobeying the magistrates.”[99] Nonetheless, by 1797 William Carey was dealing in indigo and importing American and British “broad cloth for trade” in India. Charles Grant warned the BMS Committee that Carey was not “a licensed person in India [and] has no right to trade in anything.” But if Carey appeared to be “acting merely as a missionary he may be overlooked [by the EIC authorities] and remain in quiet.” Carey had to avoid “any plausible appearance [of being] reputed a trader.”[100] The missionaries supplemented their income by auctioning American-imported goods.[101] The Baptists secretly sent European textiles and religious texts directly to prominent Calcutta auctioneers, such as Tulloh & Co. and Gerald Hampley.[102] These “respectable house[s]” would then “conduct the sales [and] hand the proceeds to Dr. Carey.”[103] In February, 1812, for example, William Ward arranged for Hampley to oversee a white-town auction of Christian texts, BMS publications, and other British-produced books.[104] Since the missionaries were not conducting these auctions themselves, they were not directly taking part in commerce. However, the missionaries continued to rely upon imported donations for the production and distribution of texts.

Although the Baptists believed that success in Christianizing South Asians could be measured by the Serampore press’s total output and the varieties of tracts circulating in Calcutta,

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[99] Charles Grant to Anonymous [Andrew Fuller?], 2 September, 1806. BMSA, BMS Missionary Correspondence. Box IN/21. SBHLA MC #5350. Reel 35, Unpaginated.
[100] Charles Grant to Andrew Fuller, 25 Oct, 1797. BMSA, Home Office Correspondence. SBHLA MC #5350. Reel 21, Vol. 3, Unpaginated.
[101] J. W. Morris to John Sutcliff, 26 March, 1802. BMSA, BMS Home Correspondence: Miscellaneous Correspondence Bound Volume 1. SBHLA MC #5350. Reel 34. Unpaginated.
[102] BMS Committee secretly sent items to Serampore by addressing parcels to “Tulloh & Co., Calcutta.” Fuller to William Carey, 6 Sept, 1797. Home Office Correspondence. SBHLA MC #5350. Reel 20, Vol. 2, Unpaginated; See also, Anonymous, *Periodical Accounts Relative to the Baptist Missionary* Society, Vol. 1, 487.
[103] J. C. Gotch to William Burls. 6 August, 1817. BMSA, BMS Correspondence. Box H/4. SBHLA MC #5350. Reel 21. Unpaginated.
[104] Anonymous, “Account Sales of Books Sold by us [Gerald Hampley of Calcutta] by Public Auction on Account of Mr. W[illiam] Ward. 1 February, 1812.” BMSA, BMS Missionary Correspondence. Box IN/22. SBHLA MC #5350. Reel 35. Unpaginated.

these texts had little success in India or Britain.[105] Once printing commenced at Serampore in 1800, the single press and small number of type setters and laborers produced "1,000 half sheets…every day."[106] The output increased in the following years as more missionaries, printing equipment, and money arrived from Britain.[107] By 1808 the missionaries reported that in Bengali alone, "2000 New Testaments have been distributed, [and] 1000 copies, of the Penteteuch, the Books of Psalms, Ecclesiastes, and Canticles" saw press.[108] Reports of a costly blaze at the press reveal the missionaries' output by 1812. In addition to many copies of "Mr. Ward's second edition of Hindoo Manners," lost in the flames were "55,000 sheets" of scriptures in a variety of South Asian languages.[109] This output aided the missionaries in reaching multiple and intersecting religious and linguistic sectors in Bengal.[110] Indeed, "a learned Hindoo rejects with disdain a tract offered to him, unless it is written in Sanskrit, and learned Musulmans" would only read Christian texts "if presented in a Persian dress."[111] Despite the missionaries' claims of "distribut[ing] several thousand tracts" to Calcutta's populace,[112] the Serampore translations did not circulate widely. According to one observer, "not only Bramhans and lower Hindoos, but many Europeans express great hatred against them."[113] Many persons found the texts to be badly

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[105] The Baptists did not begin printing until Ward arrived in 1800. Eli Daniel Potts, *British Baptist Missionaries in India, 1793-1837* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1967), 17; Oddie, *Imagined Hinduism,* 145.
[106] Daniel Brundson to John Sutcliff, 30 July, 1800. BMSA, BMS Missionary Correspondence. Box IN/2. SBHLA MC #5350. Reel 35, Unpaginated.
[107] Ward's Journal 12 Sept, 1803, in *Periodical Accounts Relative to the Baptist Missionary* Society, Vol. 2 (London, 1804), 483.
[108] Anonymous, "Translation of the Scriptures," in *The Baptist Magazine*, Volume 1 (London, 1809), 117.
[109] Andrew Fuller (?), "Account of the fire at the Serampore Printing Press," 1812. BMSA, BMS Home Correspondence. Box H/3. SBHLA MC #5350. Reel 21, Unpaginated; This quote refers to Ward, *Account of the Writings, Religion, and Manners of the Hindoos*, 4 Volumes (Serampore, 1811).
[110] Carey, Marshman, and Ward reported in September, 1806 that "in addition to Bengalee…we have commenced translations into Sanskrit, Mahratta, Orissa, Hindoosthanee, Persian, Gujaratee, Telugu, Chinese, and the language of the Seeks." Carey, Marshman, and Ward to The Baptist Missionary Society. 29 September, 1806. BMSA, BMS Missionary Correspondence. Box IN/21. SBHLA MC #5350. Reel 35, Unpaginated.
[111] Eustace Carey, Journal. November, 1820. BMS Missionary Correspondence. Box IN/30. SBHLA MC #5350. Reel 35, 2. Eustace Carey was William Carey's nephew. He began proselytizing in Bengal in 1814.
[112] Anonymous, "Extracts from the General Letter to the Society, 21 March, 1806," in *The Massachusetts Missionary Magazine*, Volume 5 (Salem, MA, 1808), 155.
[113] Anonymous, "Baptist Mission in India," in *The Missionary Magazine for 1802,* 170.

translated and poorly produced. The physician and linguist John Leydon claimed that the missionaries were a "complete set of charlatans" who were not "thoroughly acquainted with any language lest Bengali…Even their Bengali [New Testament] is ridiculed for its stiff style by the learned and…is quite ridiculed by the natives of all descriptions."[114] The Serampore missionaries likewise observed that South Asians would "tear the tracts which they have received to pieces and throw them about the road."[115] Although the scriptures failed to convert Indians and their English translation of the Ramayana met with little interest in Britain, the Baptists sent copies to colleagues at home and in North America in order to craft the illusion of success in India.

Although records of missionaries hiring British villagers to run ashore texts and other Indian items are not extant, the Serampore missionaries, the BMS Committee, and American ship captains collectively endeavored either to reduce importation charges or ensure that these goods outright evaded customs inspections in Britain. Once the missionaries began sending quantities of their translations to Britain on American vessels in 1800, the BMS administrators feared that customs officers might levy exorbitant importation fees, seize their crates as contraband Indian goods, or demand bribes. Andrew Fuller suggested to Carey that "as soon as you have printed any copies of the [Bengali] New Testament," at least a half dozen should be sent to Britain. He instructed Carey to disguise the recipient of the volumes by addressing all "parcels to… Mr. Burls" rather than the BMS.[116] Whenever vessels arrived in Britain containing Serampore volumes, Fuller encouraged the pastor John Sutcliffe to "speak to the proper officer…so that [their crates] might not be detained." He hoped that with proper convincing —

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[114] The South Asians who did read the missionaries' publications would "laugh at it entirely and ask with a sneer if this is all the Vedd [sacred texts] that you sagacious Feringes [Europeans] have to boast of." John Leyden to Colonel Colin Mackenzie, Ca. 1800. BL Mss Eur F303/442, unpaginated.

[115] William Carey, John Marshman, and William Ward to Anonymous [the Baptist Missionary Society?], 1806, in *Serampore Letters*, edited by Leighton Williams and Mornay Williams (New York, 1892), 117.

[116] Andrew Fuller to William Carey, 24 Sept, 1800. BMSA, Home Office Correspondence. SBHLA MC #5350. Reel 20, Vol. 2, Unpaginated.

financial or otherwise — the customs agents would not "charge anything for books."[117] The missionary organizations typically were not successful in avoiding inspection. In July, 1809 Fuller wrote to William Ward that the BMS received a parcel from Serampore "containing a few articles…but we understand it was opened at the custom house and all that was valuable [was] taken out." The customs agents deemed their texts and other Indian items to be "illegal, [and] everything sent in this way will be seized."[118] Fuller lamented that "we have often much difficulty to get…boxes through the custom house. A copy or two of the Ramayana is very well to be sent." But fees and bribes were so costly that "we might as well have thrown the money of printing it into the sea."[119] Since the Serampore texts were supposed to generate money in Britain , "it [was] a great mistake for them to send such quantities of Ramayanas… for sale." According to Fuller, any profits "will never pay the duties charged on them… [And] they will never make us £100."[120] The Baptists did occasionally evade import fees by shipping the Serampore texts unbound.[121] Nevertheless, the missionaries sent publications because of their complicated function as illusory physical evidence of Indian Christianization.

The Serampore texts did not yield many conversions in India, but the Baptist proselytizers, nonetheless, used these publications as both evidence of missionary efforts and as a form of nonthreatening exotica ideal for gifting to associates. Given constant EIC scrutiny, the missionaries gifted their translations to Company officials in an effort to maintain collegial

[117] Andrew Fuller to John Sutcliffe, 15 February, 1800. BMSA, Home Office Correspondence. SBHLA MC #5350. Reel 20, Vol. 3, Unpaginated.
[118] Andrew Fuller to William Ward, 16 July, 1809. BMSA, Home Office Correspondence. SBHLA MC #5350. Reel 20, Vol. 2, Unpaginated.
[119] Andrew Fuller to William Ward, 7 October, 1811. BMSA, Home Office Correspondence. SBHLA MC #5350. Reel 20, Vol. 2, Unpaginated.
[120] Andrew Fuller to William Ward, 6 February, 1809. BMSA, Home Office Correspondence. SBHLA MC #5350. Reel 20, Vol. 2, Unpaginated.
[121] See, for example, J. W. Morris to John Sutcliff, 30 March, 1808. BMSA, BMS Home Correspondence: Miscellaneous Correspondence Bound Volume 1. SBHLA MC #5350. Reel 34. Unpaginated.

relationships and to evidence the scholarly merit of their efforts. In September, 1807, for instance, Carey presented the Ramayana to Lord Minto prior to a tense discussion about missionary activity.[122] The Baptists also gave Serampore publications to American colleagues, organizations, and transporters as thanks for their services and financial support. In March, 1800, Captain Wickes in Philadelphia was delighted to receive “a specimen of their [Bengali] printing.”[123] Likewise, the missionaries shipped to William Rogers — a professor of English at the University of Pennsylvania — “a large number of parcels,” including Serampore Texts bound for Providence College.[124] The BMS Committee replicated these practices by sending Serampore publications to the London Missionary Society, and other British and American organizations.[125] The BMS Committee even gifted copies of their imported texts to prominent EIC officials in order to win their favor. Indeed, although a recently-arrived “box of Grammars and Ramayanas” was still held at the Custom House in London, “as soon as [they could] obtain it” the Baptists wished to send copies to the former Governor General Wellesley.[126]

The missionaries also shipped quantities of Indian-language bibles and the English Ramayana to Britain for profit, but the BMS administrators suspected that very few persons wished to purchase an exotic Indian text. In July, 1803 the publisher John Morris lamented that “Mr. Fuller is too sanguine about the Bengalee New Testaments. Though advertised at one guinea, [the bookseller] Burton had sold none, nor had any inquired after. I do not believe twenty

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[122] See William Carey to Andrew Fuller, 29 Sept., 1807. BMSA, BMS Home Correspondence. SBHLA MC #5350. Reel 21, Vol. 5. Unpaginated.
[123] Benjamin Wickes to Andrew Fuller, 27 March, 1800. BMSA, Home Office Correspondence. SBHLA MC #5350. Reel 21, Vol. 3. Unpaginated.
[124] William Rogers to Andrew Fuller 20 May, 1810. BMSA, Home Office Correspondence. SBHLA MC #5350. Reel 21, Vol. 3, Unpaginated.
[125] J. W. Morris to John Sutcliff, 19 January, 1801. BMSA, BMS Home Correspondence: Miscellaneous Correspondence Bound Volume 1. SBHLA MC #5350. Reel 34. Unpaginated; Andrew Fuller to John Sutcliffe 5 Oct, 1812. BMSA, Home Office Correspondence. SBHLA MC #5350. Reel 20, Vol. 3, Unpaginated.
[126] Andrew Fuller to William Ward, 10 December, 1807. BMSA, Home Office Correspondence. SBHLA MC #5350. Reel 20, Vol. 2, Unpaginated.

copies will be sold [at a price totaling] five guineas."[127] While the Bengali Christian texts may have been trophies of missionary progress in India, the English Ramayana met with little interest from evangelicals in Britain and North America who shunned it as meaningless oriental fiction. Fuller observed, "the British reader is disgusted with [the Ramayana's] perversity and its nonsense, to say nothing of the falsehoods, and will not read it. I never read thirty pages of it myself, nor never shall."[128] After copies of the Ramayana arrived in Britain in 1807, bookdealers "fear[ed] it will never be sold." Morris "sent 12 to Burton and 12 to Burdite, [and] they say they cannot sell them."[129] In 1811 the book dealer William Headsman wrote to an associate that although he had received a number of copies he had "only disposed of one" since it was difficult to find buyers "for an Eastern curiosity."[130] Therefore, for the BMS Committee, booksellers, and readers, the Serampore texts were not British, Christian publications arriving in Britain as Anglo-Indian material culture. Rather, their heterogeneous materials and production by non-Christian South Asians rendered them Indian.

While the Baptists fixated upon their texts as essential to the Christianization and civilizing of "heathens" in India, the Serampore publications were inherently ambiguous items whose physical composition, methods of manufacture, and means of circulation rendered them as a form of oriental exotica. Indian and British printing presses and type pieces; South Asian and European inks and chemicals; British, Indian, and Chinese paper; a variety of binding materials; Anglo-Indian and South Asian labor and printing expertise; and Indian, British, and New World

[127] J. W. Morris to John Sutcliff, 16 July, 1803. BMSA, BMS Home Correspondence: Miscellaneous Correspondence Bound Volume 1. SBHLA MC #5350. Reel 34. Unpaginated.
[128] Andrew Fuller to William Ward, 7 Oct., 1811. BMSA, Home Office Correspondence. SBHLA MC #5350. Reel 20, Vol. 2, Unpaginated.
[129] J. W. Morris to John Sutcliff, 12 October, 1808. BMSA, BMS Home Correspondence: Miscellaneous Correspondence Bound Volume 1. SBHLA MC #5350. Reel 34. Unpaginated.
[130] William Headsman to William Hope, 11 February 1811. BMSA, BMS Home Correspondence. Box H/10. SBHLA MC #5350. Reel 21, Unpaginated.

money all went into the production of these volumes and pamphlets.[131] Persons in South Asia, evangelicals in North America and Britain, and the missionaries themselves acknowledged the material heterogeneity of the Serampore publications. Even Hindus and Muslims identified the printing press as a "European idol" generating Indian texts in the guise of British, Christian material culture.[132] The BMS began sending paper, ink, and types as early as 1798,[133] but the missionaries always intermixed these supplies with local materials. While the missionaries occasionally used "Chinese paper…obtained in Calcutta,"[134] John Morris and others in Britain suspected that the Bengali New Testaments contained both English and "Patna paper."[135] These heterogeneous volumes materialized through the collaborative labor of Indians and Britons. Daniel Brundson reported in 1800 that he worked alongside William Carey's son, Felix, and William Ward in typesetting while "two Muselmans and two Hindoos work the press by turns."[136] According to Brundson, "one of the men came to work today [at the printing press]…who had danced with cords in his sides and swung last week. Last year he said he ran a sword through his tongue." Despite the fact that they "serve[d] the devil," the Baptists understood South Asian labor and expertise as absolutely necessary in the production of Bengali Christian texts.[137] Even for the missionaries, the Serampore translations were a form of Indian material culture designed to appeal to South Asian audiences through translation and material

[131] William Carey, John Marshman, and William Ward to The Baptist Missionary Society. September, 1809. BMSA, BMS Missionary Correspondence. Box IN/21. SBHLA MC #5350. Reel 35, Unpaginated; Marshman, *The Life and Times of Carey, Marshman, and Ward,* 80.
[132] Marshman, *The Life and Times of Carey, Marshman, and Ward,* 80; See also, Ogborn, *Indian Ink,* 236-7.
[133] Anonymous, Committee Meeting, 27 August, 1798. BMSA, Minutes 1792-1914, Vol. 1, 97. SBHLA MC #5350. Reel 1.
[134] William Carey, John Marshman, and William Ward to The Baptist Missionary Society. September, 1809. BMSA, BMS Missionary Correspondence. Box IN/21. SBHLA MC #5350. Reel 35, Unpaginated.
[135] J. W. Morris to John Sutcliff, 16 July, 1803. BMSA, BMS Home Correspondence: Miscellaneous Correspondence Bound Volume 1. SBHLA MC #5350. Reel 34. Unpaginated.
[136] Daniel Brundson to John Sutcliff, 30 July, 1800. BMSA, BMS Missionary Correspondence. Box IN/2. SBHLA MC #5350. Reel 35, Unpaginated.
[137] Daniel Brundson to John Sutcliff, 3 June, 1800. BMSA, BMS Missionary Correspondence. Box IN/2. SBHLA MC #5350. Reel 35, Unpaginated.

qualities. But these publications also could also be further exoticized through clandestine transmission to Britain. While metropolitan persons tended to understand goods produced in Bengal by Europeans or Indians as oriental, the sale, local circulation, and unapproved shipment of such goods to Britain could further complicate the nature of such items.

III. "The Green Tent at Seringapatam"[138]: Sale, Circulation, and the Transformation of Courtly Ritual Items Into Trophies of Empire

Following the British capture of Srirangapatna in May, 1799, "the entire night was employed in plunder."[139] According to the orientalist Edward Moor, "property to a great amount, no doubt, changed hands violently on that night" following the death of the ruler of Mysore, Tipu Sultan. This siege concluded the Fourth Anglo-Mysore War and began the Company's occupation of this region of southern India. According to one Company officer, "the wealth of the palace…in specie, and jewels, and bullion, and bales of costly stuff…surpass[ed] all estimate."[140] As valuables from Tipu's collections scattered in the days following, Britons and South Asians remarked that "the bazars were stored with all sorts of provisions and merchandise, for which there was a ready and advantageous sale" to newly-enriched soldiers.[141] Although it was "impossible…to restrain the soldier[s] from plunder,"[142] Field Commander Arthur Wellesley and his officers secured much of Tipu's specie, jewels, bullion, artworks, equipment, and

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[138] Lt. Col. R. Brice to Anonymous, 21 May, 1811, "List of Sums Stated by the Prize Agents to be Still Due by the Individuals on Account of Articles Purchased at the Seringapatam Prize Sales." BL IOR/F/4/476/11473, f.24.
[139] Francis Buchanan, *A Journey from Madras Through the Countries of Mysore, Canara, and Malabar,* Volume 1 (London, 1807), 66.
[140] Price, *Memoirs of the Early Life and Service of a Field Officer on the Retired List of the Indian Army*, 434.
[141] Alexander Beatson, *A View of the Origin and Conduct of the War with Tippoo Sultaun* (London, 1800), 168; Arthur Wellesley to the Earl of Mornington [Governor General Richard Wellesley], 8 May, 1799, in *Supplementary Despatches and Memoranda of Field Marshal Arthur, Duke of Wellington*, Volume 1, edited by Arthur Richard Wellesley (London, 1858), 212.
[142] The Earl of Mornington [Richard Wellesley] to Arthur Wellesley, 30 May, 1799, in *Supplementary Despatches and Memoranda of Field Marshal Arthur, Duke of Wellington*, Volume 1, 236.

antiquities.[143] These treasures came under the charge of the members of the Prize Committee who catalogued, valued, and sold everything. Between June and September, 1799 the EIC held a series of public auctions in Tipu Sultan's "green tent at Seringapatam."[144] Once a symbol of "state, order, and magnificence," Tipu's tent became the site of the disbursal, physical transformation, and re-inscription of the late ruler's collections and other physical symbols of power.[145] Each officer and solider received a share of the plunder in the form of credit "to purchase articles of captured property at the sales."[146] According to one officer at the auctions, Colin Mackenzie, Tipu's "curious arms and rich dresses…were sought after with [great] avidity." All items associated with Tipu "were purchased at the sales that followed; as everyone was desirous of exhibiting to his friends at home the well-earned trophies of Seringapatam."[147] However, the prize agents misidentified, misunderstood, and obliterated myriad items' origins, uses, and political functions. Inaccurate valuations, questionable provenances, physical dismantling, and the inclusion of counterfeit items in the sales led observers to claim "that none of the prize agents" were "qualified to judge with any degree of nicety" the items sold.[148]

As chapter two detailed, during the latter half of the eighteenth century, elite and some moneyed middling collectors increasingly eschewed Indian artworks, antiquities, and other exotica as the trappings of nabobish intrusion into the metropole. Yet, popular British attitudes

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[143] The prize officers estimated the value of property seized was around £1,600,000. W. M. Gordon, "Memorandum Respecting the Prize Property captured at Seringapatam, 9 June, 1799," in *The Despatches, Minutes and Correspondence Of the Marquess Wellesley During His Administration in India,* Volume 1, edited by Robert Montgomery Martin (London, 1836), 710.
[144] Lt. Col. R. Brice to Anonymous, 21 May, 1811, "List of Sums Stated by the Prize Agents to be Still Due by the Individuals on Account of Articles Purchased at the Seringapatam Prize Sales." BL IOR/F/4/476/11473, f.24.
[145] Major Alexander Dirom, *Narrative Of The Campaign In India, Which Terminated The War With Tippoo Sultan In 1792* (London, 1793), 232.
[146] Anonymous, "Proceedings Of the Committee for Prize Affairs," 1799. BL Add MS 13681, f. 24.
[147] Colin Mackenzie, "Journal of Remarks and Observations made on the march from Hyderabad to Seringapatam, and during the Mysore Campaign," BL Add MS 13663, ff. 134-5.
[148] Anonymous, "Proceedings Of the Committee for Prize Affairs," 1799**.** Add MS 13681, ff. 138-40.

began to shift following the Company's overthrow of Tipu Sultan in 1799. While superb artworks and armaments from Srirangapatna became acceptable trophies of empire in elites' collection cabinets,[149] the circulation of spoils also resulted in inaccurate, dubious, and deceptive provenances of items flowing to Britain. During the first decades of the nineteenth century, the repurposing, destruction, dislocation, and re-contextualization of the Srirangapatna treasures divested Tipu Sultan's possessions of their courtly ritual meanings associated with Indian kingship. The auctioning and disbursal of Tipu's jewelry, clothing, ornate weaponry, and other treasures stripped these items of their courtly functions. Certain notable items — such as the famed musical tiger, weaponry, and portions of Tipu's throne — became celebrated metropolitan trophies of virtuous British imperial rule and the overthrow of oriental despotism. Nevertheless, most Indian exotica had limited collector interest or financial value in Britain. The defeat of Tipu and the taking of trophies partially normalized the burgeoning influx of artworks, antiquities, and other Indian goods not from Mysore. But the looting, sale, and circulation of Tipu's collections equally made uncertain the origins of most Srirangapatna spoils, resulting in many items carrying ambiguous or false provenances. Some Indian items — such weapons and jewelry untruthfully said to have been found on Tipu's body — gained regard in Britain for their purported origins. But the scattering of many Srirangapatna treasures in concert with blatant counterfeiting resulted in renewed scrutiny of Indian items in the metropole. Indeed, much Indian exotica arriving in Britain carried dubious airs as fraudulent or smuggled goods.

Following three costly and indecisive Anglo-Mysore wars, by the 1790s Tipu Sultan became a prominent symbol of oriental despotism in metropolitan visual, stage, and textual productions. For most Britons, his alliance with Napoleon Bonaparte elevated Tipu to the status

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[149] Davis, *Lives of Indian Images*, 154.

of great adversary of the British and cast Mysore as an oriental appendage of the French empire capable of driving the Company out of the subcontinent.[150] In addition to a raft of published accounts of the first three wars,[151] paintings, prints, and gossip detailing Tipu's corruption and malice circulated in Britain.[152] Noteworthy stage depictions further cemented an image of a villainous ruler of Mysore in the popular British imagination.[153] Productions such as *Tippoo Saib, or British Valour in India* (1791); *Tippoo Saib, or East India Campaigning* (1792); *Tippoo Sultan, or the Siege of Bangalore* (1792); *Tippoo Saib's Two Sons* (1792); and James Cobb's *Rahmah Droog* (1798) further crystalized a common metropolitan vision of Tipu as an oriental, tyrannical threat.[154] Prior to the conquest of Mysore in 1799 only orientalists, nabobs, and specialized collectors would dare own Mysorean items carrying acute oriental airs. Nevertheless, items associated with Tipu arrived in Britain through EIC servants, meeting limited metropolitan demand. In January, 1794, for example, Captain Macaulay shipped to Charles Townley a number of "Tippoo Coins." If Townley had no objections to such items, Macaulay could also procure "Tippoo's great seal in wax inscription."[155] This prior interest in Tipu-related items led Company officers to seek trophies of conquest from the siege of Srirangapatna. Since his brother Arthur was a commander of the EIC's forces in Mysore, the Governor General Richard Wellesley asked

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[150] Maya Jasanoff, *Edge of Empire: Lives, Culture, and Conquest in the East, 1750-1850* (New York: Vintage, 2005), 148-54; Edward Ingram, *Commitment to Empire: Prophecies of the Great Game in Asia* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1981), 132-3, 140-41.

[151] For instance, Anonymous, *An Officer In the East India Service* (London, 1794); Dirom, *Narrative Of The Campaign In India*; J. Moodie, *Remarks on the Most Important Military Operations of English Forces, 1783-4* (London, 1788); Edward Moor, *Narrative Of The Operations Of Captain Little's Detachment* (London, 1794).

[152] For a caricature ridiculing the EIC and the Third Anglo-Mysore war (1790-2), see James Gillray's etching, *The Coming-on of the Monsoons; or the Retreat from Seringapatam* (London, 1791). BM No. 1868,0808.6135.

[153] Anne Buddle, "Myths, Melodrama, and the Twentieth Century," in *The Tiger and the Thistle: Tipu Sultan and the Scots in India, 1760-1800,* edited by Anne Buddle (Edinburgh: National Gallery of Scotland, 1999), 59-67; Colley, *Captives*, 277-307; Anne Buddle, "The Tipu Mania: Narrative Sketches of the Conquest of Mysore," *MARG: A Magazine of the Arts*, Vol. 40, No. 4 (1989): 53-4, 58-62.

[154] O'Quinn, *Staging Governance*, 314-15.

[155] Captain Macaulay to Charles Townley, 7 January, 1794. BMCA, Townley Collection. TY7/1158, unpaginated.

him to acquire "any sword known to have been used by Tippoo."[156] Spoils from Mysore became noteworthy items in EIC officers' homes in India and Britain, the Company's museum at the India House, and, eventually, the collections of polite Britons.

British elites' acquisition and display of items from Tipu Sultan's collections and armory could dispel previous associations of exotica with nabobish corruption and affirm certain Indian items as trophies of empire. In addition to shipping the musical tiger, ornate weapons, and a portion of Tipu Sultan's library to the East India House,[157] Company officers in the subcontinent and the Directors in London presented remarkable trophies from Srirangapatna as gifts to the royal family and notable politicians. Shortly after Tipu's death, Governor General Wellesley wrote to his brother requesting him to "get Tippoo's small seal or ring for me, and some swords and handsome guns for Prince of Wales and Duke of York."[158] In January, 1800 the Governor General sent to the India House "a variety of articles from Seringapatam" intended as gifts from the Company to the King. Wellesley hoped that a "golden tiger's head (which formed the footstool of Tippoo Sultaun's throne) … [would] be placed in St. George's Hall in Windsor Castle, as a noble trophy of the triumph of the British arms in the East."[159] Similarly, the following June he shipped to the Prince of Wales a "helmet and suit of armour belonging to the late Tippoo Sultaun, and found in the palace of Seringapatam."[160] These gifts equated exotica

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[156] Richard Wellesley to Arthur Wellesley, 19 June, 1799, in *Supplementary Despatches and Memoranda of Field Marshal Arthur, Duke of Wellington*, Volume 1, 246.
[157] See chapter 5 for Tipu's library. Arthur Wellesley to Earl Mornington [Richard Wellesley], 17 August, 1799, in Wellesley, *Supplementary Despatches and Memoranda of Field Marshal Arthur, Duke of Wellington*, Volume 1 (London, 1858), 289.
[158] Richard Wellesley to Arthur Wellesley, 19 June, 1799, in *Supplementary Despatches and Memoranda of Field Marshal Arthur, Duke of Wellington*, Volume 1, 246.
[159] The Marquess [Richard] Wellesley to the Chairman of the Honourable Court of Directors, 20 January 1800, in *The Despatches, Minutes and Correspondence Of the Marquess Wellesley During His Administration in India,* Volume 5, edited by Robert Montgomery Martin (London, 1837), 402-3.
[160] The Marquess [Richard] Wellesley to the Prince of Wales, 20 June, 1800, in *The Correspondence of George, Prince of Wales 1770-1812*, Volume 4, edited by A. Aspinall (New York: Oxford University Press, 1967), 111.

with spoils of war, but many of Tipu's treasures and armaments were of British or continental origins or had components from Europe. In fact, Tipu's most notable rifles, cannons, and swords "had been presents, and several of them were of English manufacture." Yet, Tipu had Indian craftsmen modify and repurpose them "with gold and jewel" adornments from India.[161] While such items' British or oriental nature remained uncertain and contentious among Company officers, in Britain these heterogeneous items could still be exotic spoils. Britons equally prized items illuminating the alliance between Mysore and France. During the first decade of the century, Company officers in India shipped to the India House a number of flags, standards, and other banners "taken down after the storm." In addition to Mysorean standards "with golden ornaments" and tiger motifs, Company servants captured, "the colours of the French party at Seringapatam."[162] Although spoils became celebrated parts of elite and royal collections, British repurposing and re-contextualizing of Srirangapatna treasures in India aided in the normalization of Indian trophies in Britain.

By dismantling and repurposing Tipu's throne, jewels, and other valuables, Company officers physically transformed them into either mere treasure or symbols of British power. In the decades following the fall of the ruler of Mysore, captured items remained important tools for asserting Company authority in India. Each year on the anniversary of the defeat of Tipu, the Governor General held a reception at the Government House in Calcutta where seized treasures adorned dining tables and "beautiful standards of colours taken in the Fortress of Seringapatam"

[161] Anonymous, *Narrative Sketches of the Conquest of the Mysore, Effected by the British Troops and Their Allies, in the Capture of Seringapatam and the Death of Tippoo Sultaun May 4, 1799,* Second Edition (London, 1802), 97. For discussion of these armaments and many images revealing modification, see Anonymous [Sotheby's of London], *The Tipu Sultan Collection*, *25 May, 2005* (London: Sotheby's, 2005), 46-67, 78-119.
[162] Anonymous, "Lists of Standards, &c., in the East India Company's Museum. 1836" IOR/H/787, ff.2-5; Anonymous, *St. James's Chronicle or the British Evening Post* (London, England), January 21-23, 1800, Issue 6568.

hung from the walls.[163] While Tipu Sultan's library, weaponry and armor, jewels, money, and other collections were secured by the Company's prize officers, one of his most notable, ornate symbols of wealth and power did not remain intact – the golden, bejeweled "tiger throne." **(Figure 11).** Observers reported that it was "exceedingly rich and splendid. It is of an octagonal form, covered with thick plates of solid gold, the fringe of the canopy is about 4 inches deep."[164] Sitting atop the canopy was an ornate, jeweled huma bird later "sent to Europe as a present to her Majesty from Lord Morning."[165] According to Richard Wellesley, "the precipitancy of the Prize Agents" resulted in the dismantling of "this throne into pieces and [selling] it in lots." While the prize auction scattered to multifarious individuals "the most magnificent and beautiful of the ornaments of the throne," Wellesley repurposed components from the throne and other spoils.[166] In addition to displaying captured "standards and colours" in street parades and receptions,[167] Wellesley adapted and incorporated pieces of the throne in new practices and material culture signifying Company authority in India. Whenever he held "a durbar…for the vakeels and natives," Wellesley sat in a chair upon "an octagonal carpet" which "had formed one of the ornaments of that Prince's throne."[168] Company officers also integrated gold and jewels from Tipu's throne into military badges and medals, thereby blurring the lines between Indian exotica, British trophies, and Anglo-Indian manufactures.[169] In November, 1799 the prize committee

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[163] Anonymous, "The 5th May, 1803," *Selections From the Calcutta Gazette, of the Years 1798, 1799, 1800, 1801, 1802, 1803, 1804, and 1805*, Volume 3, edited by W. S. Setton-Carr (Calcutta, 1868), 375-6

[164] Captain Benjamin Sydenham, "Contemporary Eye-Witness Account of the Siege of Seringapatam and the Death of Tipu Sultan," BL RP 10774, ff. 44-45.

[165] Anonymous, *Narrative Sketches of the Conquest of the Mysore,* 102-3.

[166] Marquis Richard Wellesley to the Chairman of the EIC, 11 Aug., 1799. BL IOR/H/255, ff. 469-71.

[167] Anonymous, *St. James's Chronicle or the British Evening Post* (London, England), December 10-12, 1799, Issue 6550; Anonymous, "Garrison Orders, Fort. St. George, 3 June, 1799," *Selections From the Calcutta Gazette,* Vol. 3, 30.

[168] Anonymous, "Fete in Honour of the Peace, 27 January, 1803," *Selections From the Calcutta Gazette,* Vol. 3, 358.

[169] In 1808 the EIC issued to officers involved in the siege commemorative medals featuring a British lion mauling a tiger representing Tipu. Minted by Matthew Boulton at the Soho Manufactory in Birmingham, the origins of the bronze, silver, and gold composing these medals is uncertain. This bullion may have been from Srirangapatna. See, for instance, British Museum No. M.4391; BM No. G3,EM.57; BM No. G3,EngM.57.

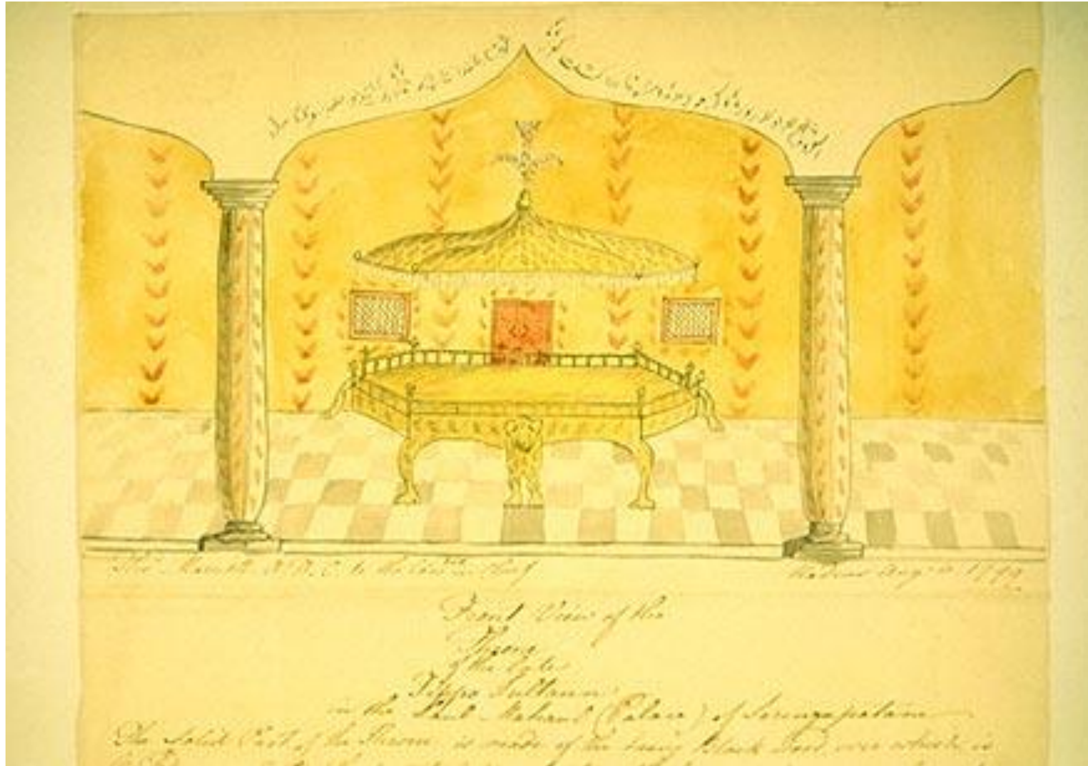

Figure 11. Thomas Marriott, *The Throne of Tipu Sultan in the Lal Mahal at Seringapatam, an Arcade Across the Front Supported by Two Pillars, and a Persian Inscription Above the Arch* (Ca. 1799). Height: 11.5 Centimeters; Width: 20 centimeters. © British Library Board (BL Number: WD4242).

commissioned the production of "star and badge of the order of St. Patrick" for the Governor General containing material from the throne and "ornaments worn by Tippoo."[170] Much like the repurposed carpet from the throne, this jeweled medal retained association with the overthrown ruler of Mysore. But physical alteration rendered these materials as symbols of Company power existing as both Indian and British material culture. For most captured items, transformation into trophies often required physical transformation and de-contextualization.

[170] J. Floyd to Lieutenant-Gen. George Harris, 9 Nov. 1799, in *The Despatches, Minutes and Correspondence Of the Marquess Wellesley During His Administration in India,* Volume 2, edited by Robert Montgomery Martin (London, 1836), 171; Anonymous, *Whitehall Evening Post* (London, England), December 10-12, 1799, Issue 8172.

Although the formation of the Prize Committee and the redistribution of captured property may have legitimized the taking of spoils and the flow of Tipu's treasures to Britain,[171] the prize sales also made ambiguous the origins and values of goods up for bid. According to the prize agents and purchasers, nothing was omitted from Tipu's "heterogeneous gigantic collection." In addition to countless Indian luxury goods, the ruler of Mysore possessed "watches, spy glasses, spectacles, looking glasses, and pictures."[172] As detailed in chapter two, the cataloguing of goods for an auction as well as the performance of the sale served to dissociate each lot from its previous context. Auctions were transformative in nature, resulting in the erasure and reinvention of items' meanings, as well as the divining of values of goods up for bid.[173] For Tipu Sultan, his collections of European and Asian items were equally important in making claim to the all-encompassing range of his kingly authority. Indeed, his possession of a great diversity of items from all over the world asserted his rule over all.[174] But the dismantling, dislocation, and misidentification of items on the auction block allowed meanings to become fluid and provenances uncertain. After endeavoring to assess such an enormous collection, the prize agents systematically dismantled and redistributed portions of items into individual auction lots strategically lacking description. Boxes up for bid contained miscellaneous bullion, artworks, pearls and precious stones removed from necklaces and other ornaments, and a variety of other valuable yet de-contextualized items. Moreover, the inclusion of numerous items unassociated with Tipu — as well as fake and low-grade articles — intermixed in the parcels of

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[171] Davis, *Lives of Indian Images,* 154.
[172] Britons justified their acquisitions by claiming that they "must have been the plunder of the unhappy Mysore family." Anonymous, "Copy of Letter, Dated 2 Jun 1799, from an Unknown Officer Serving at the Siege of Seringapatam and Subsequent Defeat of Tipu Sultan." BL Mss Eur B276, ff. 14-15.
[173] Cynthia Wall, "The English Auction: Narratives of Dismantlings," *Eighteenth-Century Studies*, Vol. 31, No. 1 (Fall, 1997): 3-6.
[174] Kate Brittlebank, *Tipu Sultan's Search for Legitimacy: Islam and Kingship in a Hindu Domain* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1997), 118-19.

Srirangapatna treasures led some buyers to doubt what really had once been the property of the Mysorean ruler.[175] Although the prize agents knew the estimated value of "each parcel of jewelry," the auctioneers received direction to "call out [each lot] as chance may direct" and "without mentioning the contents."[176] Since buyers were not certain of the provenances of their items, most wished to sell off their precious stones and bullion. Following the auctions, the prize agent John Floyd noted that there was "such a large quantity of jewelry being brought at once onto the market." Yet, "few persons wished to buy," resulting in Company servants transporting treasures to Britain and other reaches of India where better prices could be had.[177] While the disassembly, intermixing, and dispersion of Tipu's treasures at auction resulted in buyers being uncertain whether their items were really from the Mysorean ruler's collections, these sales also divested many ornaments, artworks, and antiquities of their courtly ritual function.

Accounts of the siege, looting, and prize sales reveal that countless items from Tipu's treasury and collections carrying specific courtly meanings lost these significances through dislocation and decontextualization, transformation into spoils subject to sale, and transportation to Britain. In the context of the court of Mysore, Tipu's possessions — such as clothing, jewels, and coins —were important tools in the establishment and reinforcement of his authority as ruler and the subordination of vassals.[178] Among the seized items originally destined to be "sold on account of the army as a part of the prize" was Tipu's "very large and ample quantity of Europe

[175] Multiple buyers, such as Major General Popham and Sir David Baird, complained that their parcels did not contain precious stones or bullion. Rather, they received "a bunch of chipped glass" or "a lump of coloured glass not worth even as many cowries." Price, *Memoirs of the Early Life and Service of a Field Officer on the Retired List of the Indian Army,* 438-43; Edward Moor, *Oriental Fragments* (London, 1834), 41-3.
[176] Anonymous, "Madras Proceedings," 6 August, 1799. BL IOR/P/254/40, ff. 5088-5090.
[177] Major General John Floyd of the Prize Committee, September, 1799. BL IOR/F/4/100/2034, f. 62.
[178] Brittlebank, *Tipu Sultan's Search for Legitimacy,* 91-2.

and Indian cloths of almost every kind."[179] The ruler of Mysore possessed clothing which had important symbolic functions as items of incorporative gifting. As the central ritual of the *darbār* (common assembly), gift exchange both reflected and created hierarchical relationships between ruler and subordinates. These meticulously-choreographed rituals of exchange underscored the superiority of the gifter to the receiver, as well as the "inalienability" of items. As items worn by Tipu — or at least from his personal wardrobe — *Khil'ats* (robes of honor) carried part of his essence and symbolically incorporated vassals into his field of power. In other words, gifted *Khil'ats* symbolically transferred certain elements of power and authority derived from that of Tipu Sultan.[180] Tipu's wardrobe did not cross the auction block, however, after Arthur Wellesley learned "that the Mohammadans remaining in Mysore intend to purchase it for the purpose of distributing the several articles worn by Tipu as sacred relics of his pretended prophetic and holy character." One way of ensuring Tipu's wardrobe became reduced to mere clothing was through relocation to Britain. Therefore, the Wellesleys shipped the entirely of Tipu's wardrobe to the East India House, where items were kept in the Company's museum, gifted, sold at auction, or discarded.[181]

Tipu's *khil'ats* remained associated with him — although divested of courtly power — once in British collections, but his antiquities could enter metropolitan cabinets divorced of their provenances. As the prize agent Edward Moor reported, the prize auctions reduced antiquities to their monetary values or their contexts of production. According to Moor, "among the valuable

[179] Anonymous, "Memorandum relative to Tipu Sultan's Wardrobe," IOR/H/255, ff. 480(o-p); Portions of Tipu's wardrobe entered the Clive collection at Powis Castle. Mildred Archer, Christopher Rowell, and Robert Skelton, *Treasures from India: The Clive Collection at Powis Castle* (London: the Meredith Press, 1987), 29, 94-109.
[180] Nicholas Dirks, *The Hollow Crown: Ethnohistory of an Indian Kingdom* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 102-3; Bernard S. Cohn, "Representing Authority in Victorian India," in *An Anthropologist Among Historians and Other Essays* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1987), 635-6; Brittlebank, *Tipu Sultan's Search for Legitimacy,* 92-3, 101-3.
[181] Anonymous, "Memorandum Relative to Tipu Sultan's Wardrobe," IOR/H/255, ff. 480(o-p)

property of the late Tippoo Sultan that fell into the hands of the captors at Sirangapatam, was a cabinet of coins and medals, Mahomedan and Hindu; many of them very old and curious. They were sold at the public prize sales; and a part was purchased by my…friend Major Price."[182] British orientalists and antiquarians understood Tipu's coins as numismatic specimens shedding light on India's history. But the ritual exchange of coins between the ruler and vassals was an important component of the *darbār.* The *nazr* ceremony — which occurred in conjunction with the presentation of *khil'ats* — featured subordinates presenting the ruler with locally-minted coins and unearthed aged specie, functioning as an acknowledgement of the governing authority of the ruler.[183] Price's transportation of Tipu's coins to Britain — and his subsequent gifting of specimens to Moor — served to erase their significance as items revealing vassals' acceptance of Tipu's authority. Moor's discussion of his specimens in *The Hindu Pantheon* (1810) detailed their context of production, calligraphic significances, and figurative imagery rather than their function in Tipu's court. The arrangement of Tipu's coins in Price and Moor's collection cabinets in Britain served to obliterate their symbolic function as items illuminating the web of hierarchical relationships had by Tipu to his subordinates and other Indian rulers.[184]

Although the prize sales legitimated Company officers' acquisition of riches and exotica from Srirangapatna, continued British customs restrictions resulted in many goods presumably entering Britain through bribery or clandestine means. Prior to 1799 conspicuous smugglers held ignominious reputations in the metropole for their display of Indian exotica. Following "a considerable residence in India" in the late eighteenth century, Captain John Donellan returned to

[182] Edward Moor, *The Hindu Pantheon* (London, 1810), 434, plate 104.
[183] The presentation of *nazr* to the ruler served as an oath of loyalty. Cohn, "Representing Authority in Victorian India," 635-6.
[184] Moor, *The Hindu Pantheon*, 434, plate 104; Walter Elliot, *Numismatic Gleanings: Being Descriptions and Figures of the Coins of Southern India* (London, 1858), 3.

Britain with many "very precious gems." Although he did not reveal the origins of his wealth and stones from India, he bragged of smuggling valuables, including jewels hidden from customs officers "under bandages, under pretense of a sore leg." By referring to him as "Ring Donellan" or "Diamond Donellan," critics underscored the interwoven nature of nabobish wealth and illicit means of transporting goods into Britain.[185] Exotica gradually became normalized following Tipu's defeat, but surreptitious importation of Indian items remained contentious. Since most Indian items not directly tied to Tipu were "not highly coveted in England," customs fees on exotica and dismantled jewelry from Mysore would often exceed these items' worth. Therefore, most British officers sought to sell off their acquisitions from Srirangapatna prior to leaving India.[186] Orientalists, nonetheless, transported their collections to Britain out of both "his affection" for the items and fear that "their dispersion" would be a "loss to his country." Although the secretive nature of smuggling and the reticence of most importers made uncertain whether certain Srirangapatna goods entered Britain through legal or illicit means, orientalists' willingness to gift, loan, and remark upon the low monetary value of such items in Britain suggests that they did not invest substantial amounts in customs fees.[187] While circulation continued to shade some imported Indian and Anglo-Indian items, covert shipping and de-contextualization, nevertheless, resulted in uncertain provenances.

In the years following the Tipu's death, multifarious items acquired uncertain or deceptive provenances as from the rule of Mysore's collections or as taken off of his body at the

[185] Joseph Cradock, *Literary and Miscellaneous Memoirs*, Volume 4 (London, 1828), 151; Anonymous, *Whitehall Evening Post (1770)* (London, England), 31 March, 1781 - 3 April, 1781; Issue 5456.

[186] Anonymous, "Proceedings Of the Committee for Prize Affairs," 1799**.** Add MS 13681, ff. 138-40.

[187] Company officers' accounts are conspicuously silent about the shipment to Britain of personal trophies and souvenirs from Srirangapatna. After all, had they admitted to bribing customs agents or hiring smugglers, their Tipu treasures might not signify the owner's virtue. While the prize officers David Price and Edward Moor transported considerable numbers of items from Srirangapatna to Britain and complained of hostile British customs officers, neither mentioned in their memoirs their methods of importation. Moor, *Oriental Fragments*, 32, 43, 489; Price, *Memoirs of the Early Life and Service of a Field Officer on the Retired List of the Indian Army,* 441-6, 527.

conclusion of the siege. If such provenances were true for items reportedly from Tipu's body, he would have gone into battle wearing multiple sets of clothing and carrying numerous guns, swords, telescopes, watches, coins, rings, and other European and Indian items.[188] Rumor circulated in India and Britain that Tipu "constantly wore a ruby ring" which was "the most valuable in his treasury." In addition to remarkable turban ornaments, the ruler always kept on his clothing "a pearl rosary…of uncommon size and beauty." But none "of these precious items [have] appeared since the sultaun's death."[189] Whenever outstanding jewels and other Indian valuables appeared for sale in the years following the siege, Company officers assumed that such objects "must have belonged to the best part of the sultaun's treasure."[190] In 1804 a Maratha soldier approached Edward Moor with an offer of a "remarkably fine" emerald ring similar to pieces from Srirangapatna. After reluctantly paying two mohurs for the ring of uncertain provenance, Moor transported it to Britain. When Moor had the London silversmiths Messrs. Green and Ward of Ludgate Hill examine the ring, it "was prodigiously admired." However, when the jewelers took "the stone from its setting, it had turned out [to be] a piece of glass with green wax and foil under it, and not worth one farthing."[191] Moreover, some fakes had British origins as London merchants fabricated and sold deceptive copies of Tipu's jewels. In the early nineteenth century, the picture dealer and jeweler John Francillon commissioned the counterfeiter Thomas Rodd to craft multiple copies of "a splendid emerald taken out of the hilt of Tippoo Saib's sword."[192] Myriad larger items flowed from India to Britain as supposed items from Tipu's collections or even components of his throne. Prior to dismantling and auctioning

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[188] Jasanoff, *Edge of Empire,* 182.
[189] Anonymous, *St. James's Chronicle or the British Evening Post* (London, England), April 19-22, 1800, Issue 6606.
[190] Price, *Memoirs of the Early Life and Service of a Field Officer on the Retired List of the Indian Army,* 435.
[191] Moor, *Oriental Fragments*, 73-5.
[192] Nichols Johns, *Illustrations of the Literary History of the Eighteenth Century*, Volume 8 (London, 1817, 1858 edition), 679.

sections, the prize agents marveled at the "ten small tiger heads, made of gold, and beautifully inlaid with precious stones" lining the outer railing of the throne structure.[193] **(Figure 12).** While Lady Clive, the wife of Madras Governor Ned Clive, acquired one of these tiger head finials as a gift from Lord Wellesley,[194] other tiger heads purportedly from the throne circulated into the cabinets of collectors in Britain. Charles Townley shipped European artworks and antiquities to Company servants in the subcontinent, and in return he received Indian exotica from a variety of sources.[195] Although the origin of this piece is uncertain, in the early the nineteenth century Townley acquired what he believe to be an agate tiger's head removed from Tipu's throne.[196] **(Figure 13).** Of course, while the dissimilitude of this agate feline head from the golden and jeweled ornamentation of the throne argues to the contrary,[197] the seller or gifter probably claimed it was from Srirangapatna. In the following decades Britons continued to apply deceptive provenances to Indian items in Britain in order to either deny items' origins or to claim them as heirlooms proving service to the empire.[198]

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[193] Beatson, *A View of the Origin and Conduct of the War with Tippoo Sultaun,* 154.

[194] A second throne finial was in the collection of Alexander Bowlby in London. No others were known until 2010, when a third finial, owned and transported to Britain by Lieutenant-General Sir Thomas Bowser, was put up at auction at Bomhams. The Bowser finial was Lot 370 of the 7 October, 2010 sale of Islamic and India art. https://www.bonhams.com/auctions/17854/lot/370/ (accessed 16 January, 2019); Denys Forrest, *Tiger of Mysore: The Life and Death of Tipu Sultan* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1970), 360-1; Robert Skelton, *The Indian Heritage: Court Life and Arts Under Mughal Rule* (London: Victoria & Albert Museum, 1982), 345.

[195] Warren Hastings, William Hodges, Johann Zoffany, and Claude Martin all sent items to Townley. Martin to Charles Townley, 13 September, 1785. BMCA, Townley Collection. TY1/22/1, unpaginated; Hodges to Townley, 3 Nov., 1786. BMCA, Townley Collection. TY7/1534, unpaginated; Zoffany to Townley, 26 January, 1798. BMCA, Townley Collection. TY11/6, unpaginated

[196] Forrest, *Tiger of Mysore,* 357.

[197] In fact, recent scholarship suggests that this seventeenth or eighteenth-century item is actually a "leopard's head" and may not be from South Asia. Skelton, *The Indian Heritage,* 124.

[198] A number of examples of Indian ivory furniture in the John Soane Museum and in the Warren Hastings collection gained false attributions as being taken from Srirangapatna. In actuality, most of these items were already in Britain by 1799. Amin Jaffar, "Tipu Sultan, Warren Hastings and Queen Charlotte: The Mythology and Typology of Anglo-Indian Ivory Furniture," *The Burlington Magazine*, Vol. 141, No. 1154 (May, 1999): 271-6; Sarah Longair and Cam Sharp Jones, "Prize Possession: The 'Silver Coffer' of Tipu Sultan and the Fraser Family," in *The East India Company at Home, 1757-1857,* edited by Margot Finn and Kate Smith (London: UCL Press, 2018), 31-2.

Figure 12. Anonymous, Tiger-Head Finial from the Throne of Tipu Sultan, 1787-1793. Gold and Precious Stones. Height: 8.3 Centimeters; Width base: 4.7 centimeters.[199] Powis Castle and Garden, Powys Collection. © National Trust / Kate Lynch (image). (National Trust Collection Number: NT 1180713).

[199] Skelton, *The Indian Heritage*, 345.

Figure 13. Anonymous, Leopard's Head Finial, 17th or 18th Century. Agate and Colored Glass. Formerly of Townley Collection. Height: 8.5 Centimeters; Width: 10.5 centimeters.[200] © The Trustees of the British Museum (BM Number: OA+.10617).

Conclusion

This chapter has explored how legal and surreptitious circulation could transform and make ambiguous the oriental or British nature of South Asian and Anglo-Indian material culture

[200] Forrest, *Tiger of Mysore,* 357; Skelton, *The Indian Heritage*, 384.

during the Georgian Period. The conquest of Mysore and the defeat of Tipu Sultan in 1799 may have normalized some Asian exotica as spoils of conquest and badges of imperial virtue. But much Indian material culture remained contentious as a variety of persons such as elite politicians, Company officers, religious authorities, antiquarians, and a variety of other observers across the social spectrum continued to negotiate the presence of such items in the metropole in the early part of the nineteenth century. By the latter part of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, material production, circulation, and re-contextualization could yield an intermeshing of British, Indian, and Anglo-Indian material culture at the time when exotica was becoming more common and acceptable in Britain. Each section of this chapter has explored how the shipment and de-contextualization of Indian items both shaped and destabilized British understandings of Asian exotica. The first section illuminated smuggling networks as subversive means of transmitting goods by Anglo-Indians and the racialized lower orders during the eighteenth century. Smuggling interlaced Asian circulation networks with those of the oriental-like persons of Britain. The following sections detailed how creation, destruction, repurposing, and de-contextualization in the subcontinent could further complicate the nature of items even prior to transmission to Britain through illicit or legal means. Ultimately, since the shipment of Indian items from South Asia to Britain frequently resulted in the obliteration of origins and the application of new meanings and associations, chapters four and five address how into the first decades of the nineteenth century antiquarian collectors and scholars continued to negotiate the meanings and display of such items in private cabinets, institutional collections, and museum spaces.

CHAPTER 4

"Money Alone Could Not Have Procured Those I Send You"[1]: The Intellectual Circles, Collecting Practices, and South Asian Coins of Sarah Sophia Banks

Introduction

On several occasions in 1798 the orientalists William Marsden and James Rennell visited the London residence of Sarah Sophia Banks (1744-1818) — the younger sister of famed naturalist of Sir Joseph Banks (1743-1820) — in order to examine her expansive collection of aged and modern coins and medals from India and other regions of Asia.[2] Sarah Banks's collection contained about 10,000 antiquarian and contemporary coins from all over the world.[3] What made Sarah Banks's collection particularly unusual was the inclusion of a number of cryptic and scarce specimens from South Asia, including a sixth-century Gupta coin which she likely received from Marsden.[4] **(Figure 14)**.[5] While scholars knew little about Indian coins of this age, this coin's arrival in Sarah Banks's coin cabinet in London, reveals the intricate channels of social obligation and sociability through which a rare exotica traveled during this period.

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[1] William Marsden, *Numismata Orientalia Illustrata: The Oriental Coins, Ancient and Modern, of the Collection, Described and Historically Illustrated by William Marsden,* Vol. 2 (London, 1825), 612-13.
[2] Johann Friedrich Blumenbach to Sir Joseph Banks, 19 September, 1798, in *The Scientific Correspondence of Sir Joseph Banks*, Vol. 4, edited by Neil Chambers (London: Pickering & Chatto, 2007), Letter 1484, p. 554-5.
[3] Her assemblage lacked the great numbers of ancient Roman and Hellenic coins typically filling the most prestigious numismatic cabinets of continental Europe and Britain.
[4] Sarah Sophia Banks Collection, British Museum number: SSB,165.11.1; S. S. Banks, British Museum Department of Coins and Medals (BMDCM), SSBI.21 "Manuscript List of Coins Acquired by SSB" reveals that she received unidentified Asian coins as gifts from Marsden.
[5] Sarah Banks's ledgers do not explicitly list a Gupta coin since orientalists did not properly understand Kalighat Hoard coins as such when she received her specimen. However, she does list a number of gold and silver "Unknown Coins with Sanskrit Inscriptions" and "Unknown East India Coins." S. S. Banks, Volume V, BMDCM, ARC R 18, Sect 158, Sect. 164-165; John Allan and Majumdar Basu identify the Sarah Banks example as a Kalighat piece. John Allan, *Catalogue of the Coins of the Gupta Dynasties and of Śaśāṅka, King of Gauda* (London: British Museum, 1914, 1967), xii; Majumdar Susmita Basu, *The Kalighat Hoard* (Kolkata: Mira Bose, 2014), 14.

Figure 14. Sarah Sophia Banks Collection. India: Gupta Empire. Ruler: Narasimhagupta, 467-474 C.E. Gold Dīnāra. 9.38 grams, 21 millimeters. © The Trustees of the British Museum (British Museum number: SSB,165.11.1).

In January, 1774, on a *talook* (parcel of land) owned by Raja Nabakrishna Deb in the outskirts of Calcutta, Indian laborers unearthed nearly two hundred "very ancient" gold and silver coins.[6] In an act mirroring the Mughal *nazr* ceremony,[7] the Raja presented this trove of coins as a symbol of political allegiance to the top officers of the East India Company in Calcutta.[8] Warren Hastings, the Governor General of the Company, gifted one hundred and seventy-two of these coins to the Company Directors in London. After the assemblage arrived at the East India House

[6] Anonymous, "Extract of a letter from the President and Council of Bengal; 15 Jan. 1774." British Library (BL), Add MS 39255.H, ff. 87.

[7] The *nazr* ceremony was a ritualized gift exchange between the Mughal Emperor and retainers occurring during the courtly darbar. Regional officials presented gifts to the emperor consisting of locally-minted coins and, at times, unearthed aged coins as a symbol of the governing authority of the central Mughal administration. In response, the ruler gave a variety of valuable objects, including coins minted specifically for this ritual purpose. Bernard S. Cohn, "Representing Authority in Victorian India," in *An Anthropologist Among Historians and Other Essays* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1987), 635-6; John S. Deyell and R. E. Frykenberg, "Sovereignty and the 'SIKKA' Under the Company Raj: Minting Prerogative and Imperial Legitimacy in India," *The Indian Economic and Social History Review.* Vol. 19, No 1 (1982): 2-4.

[8] Anonymous, "Extract of a letter from the President and Council of Bengal; 15 Jan. 1774." BL, Add MS 39255.H, ff. 87.

in 1775, the Directors presented "One gold and sixteen other ancient Indian coins" from this trove to the Trustees of the British Museum.[9] Soon thereafter they gave twenty of these coins to the Scottish anatomist William Hunter.[10] The Directors ordered the melting of the remainder of the hoard.[11] In 1783 a second hoard of upwards of two hundred gold coins — struck in the name of rulers of the Gupta empire in the sixth century C. E. — emerged on the banks of the Ganga River at Kalighat about ten miles north of Calcutta. Nabakrishna Deb repeated the ritualized gifting of ancient coins to Warren Hastings.[12] The Directors of the EIC again ordered that this trove of gold featuring images of Indian rulers and Hindu icons be melted and struck as contemporary Indian currency.[13] However, Hastings requested the Directors to spare a number of these gold dīnāra and store them at the India House.[14] The EIC Directors agreed and had the Kalighat Hoard shipped to London so it could be organized and added to the art and antiquity collections of the British Museum and the India House.[15]

Despite the Directors' decision to preserve the trove in London, Hastings and other officers of the Company kept a number of examples, some of which they later sold to collectors or gave to associates in India and Britain.[16] In 1819 the Scottish orientalists Robert Hutchins and

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[9] Anonymous, "General Meetings of the Trustees, Minutes," Vol 6, 11 August, 1775. British Museum Central Archive (BMCA) Shelf Mark C, 1482.
[10] My thanks to Donal Bateson — the Senior Curator and Reader in Numismatics at the Hunterian Museum in Glasgow, Scotland — for his help in confirming that these hoard coins are still in the Hunterian Museum Collection. (The numismatic archives are not presently (2019) open to scholars and the online catalog has not expanded to include many Asian coins).
George Macdonald, *Catalogue of Greek Coins in the Hunterian Collection, Glasgow,* Vol. 1 (Glasgow, 1899), xx.
[11] John Nicholls, *Recollections and Reflections, Personal and Political: As Connected with Public Affairs, During the Reign of George III* (London, 1822), 203-4.
[12] Marsden, *Numismata Orientalia Illustrata,* Vol. 2, 726.
[13] Anant Sadasiv Altikar, *Catalogue of the Gupta Gold Coins in the Bayana Hoard* (Bombay: Numismatic Society of India, 1954), iv.
[14] Marsden, *Numismata Orientalia Illustrata,* Vol. 2, 726.
[15] Basu, *The Kalighat Hoard*, ix; In 1837 the orientalist Horace Hayman Wilson reflected that the EIC's numismatic collections held at the East India House had its origins in "the precedent set in the case of the coins sent home by Warren Hastings." Wilson to the Committee of Finance 27 Nov., 1837. BL IOR Mss Eur F195/61, unpaginated.
[16] Nineteen examples from the Kalighat Hoard in the British Museum have the provenance of Warren Hastings: Museum Numbers OR.9466 — OR.9484. Some other Kalighat Hoard coins in the British Museum have a provenance of the India Office Collection. For instance, BM Number IOC.601.

Colin MacKenzie reflected upon how these coins changed hands among collectors in Calcutta. They noted that even a specimen recently acquired by the Baptist missionary William Carey "may be one of the Kalighat Coins."[17] During the first quarter of the nineteenth century, orientalists noted that the Gupta coins that occasionally sold in London probably were of the same origin. In a paper presented to the Society of Antiquaries of London in April of 1818, the collector and aesthetic theorist Richard Payne Knight detailed EIC servants' gifting of Indian coins in Britain and described his own Kalighat Hoard example.[18] (**Figure 15**).[19] William Marsden acquired eleven Kalighat Hoard coins for his own collection as gifts and through purchases from the former Chief Justice of Bengal, John Anstruther.[20] While Marsden was able to acquire coins from all over Asia from Company servants in London,[21] he also exchanged and gifted Asian coins to Indologists, antiquaries, and friends, such as Sarah Banks.[22]

This chapter presents a case study of how Sarah Banks's collecting activities, collaborations with orientalists, and methods of organizing and displaying her coins and exnomia defied the conventions of masculine antiquarian circles of Georgian Britain at a time when imperial expansion led larger quantities of Indian exotica to flow back to Britain. Accordingly, this study is not primarily concerned with examining coins. Rather, it focuses upon numismatic

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[17] Robert Hutchins to Colin Mackenzie, 1819. BL Mss Eur F303/442, unpaginated.

[18] Richard Payne Knight, "Observations On the Coins Found by Colonel Caldwell in the Tumuli Described in the Preceding Letter From Sir Anthony Carlisle, Knt." in *Archaeologia: or, Miscellaneous Tracts Relating to Antiquity*. Volume 21 (London, 1827), 8.

[19] The British Museum catalogue lists three Gupta-era Kalighat Hoard coins of the Richard Payne Knight collection: RPK,p205A.1.Ind; RPK,p205A.2.Ind; RPK,p205A.3.Ind.

[20] Marsden, *Numismata Orientalia Illustrata,* Vol. 2, 726, 730-1.

[21] William Marsden, *A Brief Memoir of the Life and Writings of the Late William Marsden*, edited by Elizabeth Marsden (London, 1838), 114-15.

[22] Sarah Banks lists Marsden giving and receiving many coins. S. S. Banks, BMDCM, SSBI.21 "Manuscript List of Coins Acquired by SSB," 54; SSBI.22 "Manuscript List of Coins Given Away by SSB," 25.

Figure 15. Richard Payne Knight Collection. India: Gupta Empire. Ruler: Kumaragupta II, 476-478 C. E. Gold Dīnāra. 9.53 grams, 20 millimeters. © The Trustees of the British Museum (British Museum number: RPK,p205A.2.Ind).

practice. Sarah Banks's innovations and collaborations occurred concomitantly with Indologists and specialized collectors' experimentation with numismatic display and organizational schema in order to mediate representation of India's past and present. Most of the scholarship on Sarah Banks has focused on her collections of sheet music, advertising cards, and theater ephemera.[23] Given that women have been largely written out of histories of numismatic practice during the Georgian period (and later) despite their important participation, notable collectors — such as Sarah Banks — have not received extensive scholarly attention.[24] However, Catherine Eagleton

[23] A. Pincott, "The Book Tickets of Miss Sarah Sophia Banks," *The Bookplate Journal*, No. 2 (2004): 3-30; Gillian Russell, "Sarah Sophia Banks's Private Theatricals," *Eighteenth-Century Fiction*, Vol. 27, No. 3-4 (Summer, 2015): 536-9; Arlene Carol Leis, *Sarah Sophia Banks: Femininity, Sociability and the Practice of Collecting in Late Georgian England.* Ph.D. Dissertation University of York. History of Art. September 2013; Arlene Carol Leis, "Displaying Art and Fashion: Ladies' Pocket-Book Imagery in the Paper Collections of Sarah Sophia Banks" in *Konsthistorisk Tidskrift/Journal of Art History*, Vol. 82, No. 3 (2013): 252-71.

[24] The absence of women from histories of numismatic practice and theorization is particularly striking given how frequently the correspondence of male antiquarians noted women's participation and expertise. Since coins were one of the primary objects of antiquarian study in Europe, this erasure of women from these histories has effectively served as a denial of the importance of women's contributions to "male" antiquarian study. Banks's inventories,

and R. J. Eaglen have recently produced pioneering works on Banks's collections and numismatic practices.[25] While Sarah Banks's collection began around 1780, only in 1791 did she begin compiling elaborate inventories. These ledgers reveal that she received coins from at least 523 individuals and gave away or exchanged specimens with at least 480 persons ranging from King George III's daughter, Princess Elizabeth, to local antiquities dealers and explorers of the colonies.[26] Her inventories reveal that she broke with typical British practices of numismatic display, generally characterized by antiquated early-modern methods of alphabetical rather than chronological and geographical ordering of European coins. Rather, she applied recent continental numismatic theories to her coins of Britain, India, and other reaches of the colonial world.[27] The creation and application of geographical and chronological methods of ordering numismatic specimens were integral to the negotiation and normalization of the display of Indian exotica of all sorts in Britain, particularly following the Company's conquest of Mysore in 1799.

This case study reveals how coins and the numismatic cabinet were contentious objects bound up in the politics of representing Britain's history and the connectedness of the metropolis to the colonies. Sarah Banks's acquisition of multifarious coins from Asia — as well as thousands of other coins from all around the world — depended upon her access to fashionable social circles, longstanding British conventions of coin gifting, and the intertwining of Indian

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themselves, present a counter-narrative that reveals the active engagement of women in these scholarly pursuits. S. S. Banks, BMDCM, SSBI.21 "Manuscript List of Coins Acquired by SSB"; SSBI.22 "Manuscript List of Coins Given Away by SSB."

[25] Catherine Eagleton, "Collecting African Money in Georgian London: Sarah Sophia Banks and Her Collection of Coins," *Museum History Journal*, Vol. 6 No. 1 (January, 2013): 23-38; R. J. Eaglen, "Sarah Sophia Banks and Her English Hammered Coins," *British Numismatics Society*, 78 (2008): 200-15.

[26] Sarah Banks also acquired a sizeable library of books, pamphlets, and other documentation on numismatics. Eagleton, "Collecting African Money in Georgian London," 26-7.

[27]The first volume contained coins of England, Scotland, and Ireland. The Second listed Holland, German States, and Austria. Denmark, Sweden, Russia, Poland, Prussia, Hungary, and Italy are in the third volume. The Fourth lists coins of Switzerland, France, Spain, and Portugal. The fifth is "Africa, Asia, America, Siege Pieces, Miscellaneous." The sixth volume contains tokens from Britain. The seventh focuses upon miscellaneous medals. Eagleton, "Collecting African Coins in Georgian London," 36; S. S. Banks, Volume VII, BMDCM, ARC R 14-21.

and British circulation networks. The influx of South Asian culture and coins into Britain at the end of the eighteenth century encouraged some metropolitan collectors to challenge elite practices of numismatic collecting, gifting, and display. By 1800 Sarah Banks and other collectors without ties to India increasingly utilized continental numismatic theories to mediate the integration of oriental specie into coin cabinets, which had previously only contained coins associated with elite tastes. Since the early modern period, ancient Roman and Hellenic coins were essential to gentlemanly collections.[28] These assemblages bore strong association with nativist visions which delimited the bounds of Britain yet revealed its early history as closely associated with great ancient continental empires. The incorporation of small numismatic texts and sculptures from South Asia into the British cabinet disrupted the function of the coin and medal collection as a space of producing and reaffirming this national narrative. I argue that since numismatic theory was closely linked to other antiquarian and natural history taxonomic systems, the incorporation of oriental exotica within the organizational schema elucidates how coin cabinets could serve to mediate the existence in Britain of various other types of Indian exotica. In other words, because numismatic theories of ordering influenced methods of display of all sorts of artworks and antiquities in museums and private collections, coin cabinets were important laboratories for experimenting with the display and normalization of Indian exotica in Britain more generally. This chapter suggests that once South Asian specie could be normalized within the British numismatic cabinet, Indian exotica of other sorts could exist as a spoil of conquest in other locations of display without orientalizing those spaces.

[28] Andrew Burnett, "'The King Loves Medals'": The Study of Coins in Europe and Britain", in *Enlightenment: Discovering the World in the Eighteenth Century,* Kim Sloan and Andrew Burnett, editors (Washington, D. C.: Smithsonian Books, 2003), 122-5.

While most of the literature on Georgian-period antiquarians focuses upon the study of aged sculpture and texts, the first section re-centers numismatics as a key field of antiquarian collection and study intimately tied to elite sociability. This section illuminates the importance of women, middling and lower-order individuals, and others on the margins of elite antiquarian circles to the circulation and study of Asian numismatic antiquities in the metropolis. These persons were essential to the transmission of numismatic material into and between elites' collections. Moreover, as the primary objects of antiquarian study in eighteenth-century Britain, numismatic methods of ordering were inextricably linked to the examination and display of multifarious other types of aged artworks and antiquities. Thus, the inclusion of Asian coins in British cabinets was an overt challenge to longstanding forms and objectives of numismatics as centering upon the study and display of items revealing Britain's classical past.

Section two examines the Banks residence at 32 Soho Square as an important arena of fashionable sociability, material circulation, antiquarian study, and numismatic display. Frequent visits by orientalists, imperial agents, and other travelers made this London home a location of intersecting British and Asian material cultural circulation networks. Sarah Banks's exchanges and collaboration with these persons allowed her to acquire coins rarely studied in Britain and to experiment with newly-devised methods of arranging and displaying coins. The Banks home was an intersectional social stage where Sarah Banks utilized her coin cabinets as a tool for negotiating the oriental or British nature of certain coins, for mediating the application of numismatic taxonomic structures to Asian specie, for contributing to scholarship on both Asian numismatics and domestic methods of counterfeiting,

The third section explores how the influx of antiquarian material from South Asia at a time of new numismatic theorization encouraged orientalists, Sarah Banks, and other specialized

collectors to re-conceptualize the function of the numismatic cabinet. In addition to serving as a tool for delineating geographic and cultural relationships between the colonies and Britain, the cabinet became space for negotiating the inclusion of Indian exotica within European taxonomic schema. The act of categorizing a coin as being of a certain region or state was to demarcate its domestic or foreign nature, reveal political ties of one state to another, and chart stages of civilizational development. However, the British or oriental nature of artworks and manufactured goods was not necessary dependent upon location or method of production. Banks's ordering of Birmingham-produced EIC coinage as South Asian, European-like Company coinage struck on British machinery in India as Asian, Birmingham-manufactured trade tokens featuring Asian motifs and text as British, and circulating counterfeits produced by Briton's lower orders as indeterminate revealed the slippery and shifting nature of such taxonomies.

Section four details how Sarah Banks's collaboration with orientalists, namely William Marsden, and British manufacturers, such as Matthew Boulton, granted her access to Indian numismatic networks extending to the metropolis. Sarah Banks's acquisition of Soho-produced Indian coins prior to shipment to Bombay and beyond suggests that for some Britons, oriental and British material culture could originate from both Britain and the colonies. Banks's acquisition of rare ancient Indian coins from imperial agents reveals that the expansion of British power in the subcontinent yielded an interlacing of South Asian circulation networks and rituals of exchange with long-standing British practices of gifting, self-fashioning, and display.

I. "As Considerable a Collection of Greek, Roman, or English Coins as Any Gentleman in England"[29]: Fashionable Sociability, Elite Collecting, and Numismatics

From the sixteenth to the nineteenth centuries, European gentlemanly collecting of ancient Roman and Hellenic coins was intimately linked to antiquarian study, the performance of masculinity by accumulating symbols of patriarchal power, and male homosociability.[30] When Sarah Banks began her collection around 1780, she also participated in long-standing antiquarian practices in which acts of gifting, receiving, and displaying numismatic specimens were tied to intellectual pursuits and social relationships. Sarah Banks's friend William Marsden noted that the "examination of…numerous specimens, the sorting them into their respective classes, and the attempts to decipher many of their obscure legends, afforded interesting and instructive evening amusement" with other antiquaries and collectors.[31] Coins' portability and their textual and figurative design features made them ideal objects for circulation and exhibition. With the advent of the Grand Tour, the gifting and trading of coins became closely associated with expressions of male friendship and intellectual collaboration.[32] The private numismatic cabinet was an arena where the quality of specimens and their proper ordering could prove to viewers one's personal refinement and devotion to learned study.[33] Coins were the lifeblood of male antiquarian societies, whose meetings often involved the display of ancient and medieval European

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[29] Andrew Ducarel to Philip Morant, 1 May, 1753. BL, Add MS 37219, ff.6-7.
[30] In early-modern Europe, collectors understood numismatic practice as a means of bettering the self. In fact, just gazing upon the numismatic image of a Hellenic king or a Roman emperor could allow the viewer to personally acquire some of the ruler's virtue. John Cunnally, *Images of the Illustrious: The Numismatic Presence in the Renaissance* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999), 34-6.
[31] Marsden, *A Brief Memoir of the Life and Writings of the Late William Marsden*, 114-15.
[32] For the practice of gifting coins in Italy, see John Cunnally, "Ancient Coins as Gifts and Tokens of Friendship During the Renaissance," *Journal of the History of Collections,* Vol. 6, No. 2 (1994): 129-43.
[33] Rosemary Sweet, *Antiquaries: The Discovery of the Past in Eighteenth-Century Britain* (London: Hambledon and London Limited, 2004), 31-34.

specimens.[34] However, gentlemen were not the only persons involved in this form of collecting and exchange. Elite and middling women, orientalists, and lower-echelon persons of all stripes played important roles in discovering, collecting, studying, and circulating numismatic items. With eighteenth-century imperial expansion came an influx of Asian money and aged oriental coins, leading to new patterns in collecting and numismatic practices in mainland Britain. For collectors, such as Sarah Banks, to include Asian coins in their cabinet was to challenge older numismatic objectives of using classical busts, symbols, and inscriptions to illuminate a nationalistic vision of British history and identity defined by Britain's historical ties to ancient continental empires. Thus, the numismatic cabinet could become a space where orientalists and other specialized collectors could study and represent Asian cultures and histories as well as illuminate the increasing interpenetrations of Britain and India during this period.

Although few notable collections or publications on numismatics emerged in Britain during the seventeenth century, growing numbers of tourists to the continent during the Georgian period encouraged the flourishing of numismatic practices.[35] During the decades of relative political and religious calm in continental Europe prior to the Napoleonic Wars, the Grand Tour was the capstone of a young British gentleman's education.[36] British men who traveled to the continent entered social milieus with long-standing masculine traditions of gifting ancient coins

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[34] For example, discussions of ancient and medieval European coins appear very frequently in the minute books and indexes of the Society of Antiquaries, the Spalding Gentlemen's Society, the Society of Dilettanti, and other antiquarian organizations. BL Egerton MS 1041-1042; BL Add MS 18823; Dorothy M. Owen, editor. *Minute Books of the Spalding Gentlemen's Society*. (Great Britain: Lincoln Record Society, 1981).
[35] Mark A. Meadow, "Merchants and Marvels: Hans Jacob Fugger and the Origins of the Wunderkammer," in *Merchants and Marvels: Commerce, Science, and Art in Early Modern Europe,* edited by Pamela H. Smith and Paula Findlen (London: Routledge, 2002), 184.
[36] This educational ritual allowed itinerant young men to experience the classical and contemporary wonders of Italy, to have greater first-hand experience with classical aesthetics, and to begin an antiquity or exotica collection. Cesare De Seta, *The Grand Tour: the Lure of Italy in the Eighteenth Century,* Andrew Wilton and Ilaria Bignamini, eds. (London: Tate Gallery Publishing, 1996), 13-35.

as mementos of friendship and as sources of antiquarian knowledge.[37] The transportation of coins back to Britain became an integral part of the Grand Tour. In 1798 the numismatist James Wright claimed that tourists should collect ancient coins while in the Europe because they "form the most numerous, the most various, the most valuable, the most durable… and, perhaps in some instances, the most exquisitely finished…of any class of the productions of human invention." For Wright, coins were ideal items to bring back to Britain since they were "the most faithful of all recorders; the cheapest, most minute, and portable of all pictures."[38] In addition to appearing as a combination of ancient calligraphy and sculpture, some ancient coins could also be transportable images of ancient architecture. The social commentator and numismatist Joseph Addison remarked that the surfaces of ancient Roman and Hellenic coins allowed one to see "ports and triumphal arches as there are not the least traces of in the places where they once stood"[39] For many British tourists, returning home with their trove of small metallic representations of the ancient wonders of southern Europe served as evidence of this masculine rite of passage.[40] Collections of ancient European coins retained an air of male homosociability because many specimens were mementoes from one's own or confidants' continental travels.

Numismatic cabinets were important symbols of wealth and personal refinement for gentlemanly collectors since they were a means for communicating one's knowledge and taste through the display of well-chosen coins and medals as well as through codified rituals of organization and study.[41] For John Evelyn, in addition to being "the most lasting…and vocal

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[37] Cunnally, "Ancient Coins as Gifts and Tokens of Friendship During the Renaissance," 129-32.
[38] James Wright, Preface to *An Arrangement of Provincial Coins and Tokens*, by James Conder (London, 1798), unpaginated preface.
[39] According to Addison, "you may learn from coins what was their architecture when they stood whole and entire." Joseph Addison, *Dialogue upon the Usefulness of Ancient Medals*. (London, 1726), 22-3.
[40] The antiquarians' collections usually had their origins in continental travels or the journeys of associates who gifted coins. Wright, Preface to *An Arrangement of Provincial Coins and Tokens*, unpaginated preface.
[41] Kenneth Arnold, *Cabinets for the Curious: Looking back at Early English Museums. Perspectives On Collecting* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006), 68-70; Burnett, "'The King Loves Medals,'" 122.

monuments of antiquity," coins and medals were "not only an ornament, but an useful and necessary appendage to a library."[42] Much as a voluminous library exuded an air of gentlemanly knowledge, a well-ordered numismatic cabinet was an essential sign of polite and scholarly refinement revealing the countless hours spent poring over inscriptions and spectacular images of busts and classical symbolism. Thus, the antiquarian Andrew Coltee Ducarel complemented his associate Robert Boothe by noting that he had "as considerable a collection of Greek, Roman, or English coins as any gentleman in England, well disposed and regulated."[43] Conversely, displaying a numismatic collection lacking in proper order by metal, denomination, size, chronology, and inscription revealed one's lack of diligence, a dearth of historical knowledge, and an inability to decipher classical languages.[44] Like most eighteenth-century British antiquarians, the numismatic author Beaupre Bell found ancient continental and Roman British specie to be of greater aesthetic and historical value than ancient Celtic coins. Bell and his colleagues had "not tast[e] to admire such rude performances as most of our English coins, especially the most ancient, are; which give light to no history, [and] are only standing proofs of the ignorance and inartifice of our ancestors."[45] Indeed, antiquarian interest in ancient Roman and Hellenic coinage had its roots in collectors' desire for status symbols and a drive to reveal a national history defined by Briton's connection to once-mighty ancient continental empires.[46]

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[42] John Evelyn, *Numismata: A Discourse of Medals, Ancient and Modern Together with Some Account of Heads and Effigies of Illustrious, and Famous Persons in Sculps, and Taille-douce, of Whom We Have No Medals Extant, And of the Use to Be Derived From Them* (London, 1697), 1.
[43] Andrew Ducarel to Philip Morant, 1 May, 1753. BL Add MS 37219, ff.6-7.
[44] The antiquarian Maurice Johnson reported in 1741 on the damaged and counterfeit Roman coins "belong[ing] to poor Charles Little of Boston, an illiterate coffee-house-keeper, who has begged and bought up as strange a farrago of a collection as ever was beheld." Maurice Johnson to Mr. Gale, Spalding, 3 April, 1741, in John Nichols, editor. *Bibliotheca Topographica Britannica,* Volume 3 (London, 1780), 344-5.
[45] Beaupre Bell to Maurice Johnson, 3 September, 1733, in *The Correspondence of the Spalding Gentleman's Society, 1710-61*, edited by D. Honeybone and M. Honeybone (Suffolk: Lincoln Record Society, 2010), 78.
[46] Adam Daubney, "Maurice Johnson: An Eighteenth-Century Numismatist," *British Numismatic Journal*, No. 82 (2012): 157-9.

Despite the blossoming of numismatic collections and gentlemanly rituals of examination and exchange during the eighteenth century, British scholars published very few numismatic studies prior to the 1790s. Most British antiquarians' collections of books on numismatics were primarily continental publications or dated British publications which do not engage with Celtic coins or Asian specie. John Evelyn's *Numismata* (1697) and Martin Folkes's *A Table of English Silver Coins* (1745), for example, remained standard texts for British numismatists into the late part of the century.[47] While Sarah Banks owned a few titles pertaining to South Asian history and the East India Company's monetary practices, by the early nineteenth century most of the two-hundred and thirty-one books contained in her numismatic library were European publications or were catalogues of continental cabinets.[48] Most eighteenth-century continental and British numismatic studies and treatises on collecting fixated upon ancient Roman and Hellenic specie,[49] thereby perpetuating most collectors' focus upon coins of ancient Europe.

As portable and common forms of aged images and texts, coins were vital items of display, discussion, and exchange at meetings of antiquarian organizations, such as the Society of Antiquaries or the Spalding Gentlemen's Society.[50] As the French travel writer Pierre-Jean Grosley observed in 1772, the "chief attention" of the Society of Antiquaries "is engage[ment] with coins."[51] Antiquarian groups often shared details of minutes from meetings and sent sketches, rubbings, and castes of coins to others.[52] Gifting and lending coins among individual

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[47] Martin Folkes, *A Table of English Silver Coins from the Norman Period to the Present Time* (London, 1745); Evelyn, *Numismata*.
[48] S. S. Banks, Volume VII, BMDCM, ARC R 20, 1-25.
[49] Burnett, "'The King Loves Medals,'" 123-6.
[50] The Spalding Gentlemen's Society's minute books contain sketches of coins discussed. Owen, *Minute Books of the Spalding Gentlemen's Society*, xvi, 1, 4, 17, 20, 33, 40, 44; BL Egerton MS 1041-1042; BL Add MS 18823.
[51] Pierre-Jean Grosley, *A Tour to London; Or New Observations on England and its Inhabitants,* Vol. 2, trans. Lockyer Davis (London, 1772), 8.
[52] Sessions of antiquarian meetings occasionally focused upon how to safely transport coins or how to "accurately tak[e] off impressions of our coins" so images could reach corresponding members or other groups. Maurice Johnson to Mr. Neve, 5 July, 1746, in *Bibliotheca Topographica Britannica*, 425-6.

members underpinned participation within these intellectual circles. Membership in antiquarian societies aided numismatic scholars in accessing uncommon coins held in private and institutional collections. Andrew Ducarel assured Philip Morant in 1757 that "the cabinets of every member of both the Royal and Antiquarian Society would be opened to you. My friend Dr. Gifford who has the care of the coins in the British Museum would be one of the first to give you all the assistance in his power."[53] Assemblages and the formation of numismatic knowledge were not just the work of one individual. Rather, numismatics was a collective project developing through complex systems of exchange underpinned by economic and social relationships. As larger quantities appeared at auction and in collection cabinets later in the century, common varieties of ancient Roman and Hellenic coins lost their impressive air.[54] For numismatic scholars, participation in antiquarian organizations and other clubs was essential for examining coins which entered Britain through global networks of transmission. As a prominent member of the Royal Society, William Marsden's network of contacts granted him access to Indian specie in private collections — such as examples in Sarah Banks's cabinets — as well as the holdings of the British Museum, the Hunterian Museum in Glasgow, and the Company's Museum.[55] Thus, networks of numismatists aided orientalists in locating increasingly copious Indian and East Asian numismatic materials in the cabinets of fellow scholars, museums, and Company servants.

While male antiquarians acknowledged the "very great importance" of Sarah Banks's coin and medal collection, throughout the Georgian period many British women formed numismatic collections, circulated numismatic specimens, and engaged with numismatic

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[53] Andrew Ducarel to Philip Morant, 14 April 1757. BL Add MS 37219, ff. 87-8.
[54] In 1749 the antiquarian Ebenezer Mussell reported that he purchase of a collection of 300 common Roman bronze coins for only 25 shillings. Ebenezer Mussell to Philip Morant, 6 June 1749. BL Add MS 37222, ff. 53-4.
[55] William Marsden, *Numismata Orientalia Illustrata: The Oriental Coins, Ancient and Modern, of the Collection, Described and Historically Illustrated by William Marsden,* Vol. 1 (London, 1823), x; "William Marsden," *Dictionary of National Biography,* Volume XXXVI (New York: Macmillan & Co., 1893), 202.

theory.[56] Because men's collections were actually familial projects, the ordering, display, and circulation of coins were not actually masculine practices. Rather, women viewed and studied assemblages, purchased coins, gifted specie, and constructed their own or joint collection rooted in female sociability.[57] In the case of the Society of Antiquaries fellow, Philip Morant, his wife and daughter were the most frequent contributors to his collection. The numismatist John White observed in October, 1754 that Morant's "Daughter chiefly had the care of [his] English series."[58] In May, 1756, Morant reported his wife's great addition to his collection when she "bought a most fair coin of Diocletian, of…the largest size."[59] Thus, while a coin cabinet was a marker of masculine gentlemanly refinement, many men's collections were in actuality made possible through women's labor and the social ties of female family members and friends. Sarah Banks's collecting practices reveal the substantial participation of women in numismatic exchanges occurring outside as well as within masculine antiquarian circles.[60] Of the five-hundred and twenty-three persons who sold or gifted coins to her, twenty-three percent of these individuals were women. And of the four-hundred and eighty recipients of coins from Banks, thirty-two percent were women.[61] Thus, numismatic gifting and collecting were increasingly

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[56] Wellesley Pole to Sir Joseph Banks, 22 January 1819, Royal Mint Museum. Quoted in Eaglen, "Sarah Sophia Banks and Her English Hammered Coins," 208.

[57] For instance, Henry Prescott mentions in his diary numerous men and women who were eager to view his collection. Henry Prescott, "July 1, 1712," *The Diary of Henry Prescott, LL.B., Deputy Registrar of Chester Diocese,* edited by John Addy and Peter McNiven, Vol. 2 (Oxford: The Alden Press, 1994), 364.

[58] John White to Philip Morant, 28 October 1754. BL Add MS 37222, ff. 97-8.

[59] Philip Morant to Andrew Ducarel, 9 May 1756. BL Add MS 37217, ff. 35.

[60] In May of 1795, Joseph Banks gave to his sister twenty-six silver coin found "by John Homes in the Ruins Witham Commach's Lock." The following September, Sarah Banks gave from this hoard a "Q. Elizabethan 6d…to Mrs. Bettes, one to Mrs. Brockenburg, one to Mrs. Fydell, one to Mrs. Linton, one to Miss Pacey, one to Mrs. Wells." Sarah Sophia Banks, "Manuscript List of Coins Acquired by SSB," BMDCM, SSBI.21, 7.

[61] Sarah Sophia Banks, BMDCM, SSBI.21 "Manuscript List of Coins Acquired by SSB," SSBI.22 "Manuscript List of Coins Given Away by SSB."

neither limited to gentlemanly circles nor circumscribed by older antiquarian objectives of revealing ancient British history through evidence provided by classical European coinage.[62]

As Sarah Banks participated in the intellectual projects of her antiquarian and orientalist colleagues, she concomitantly rejected the notion of ancient Roman and Hellenic coins as requisites for a venerable collection. Banks and her brother each acquired examples of classical coins from various associates. However, despite the importance of these coins to antiquarian social circles, Sarah Banks gave away her specimens or placed them in draws of miscellaneous, unidentified nomisma. While Banks did have numerous books on Roman coins and collected newspaper clippings detailing unearthed hoards, [63] she included in her records only five instances of acquiring ancient continental coins. Yet, for each of these occasions she did not present any descriptions of the denomination, the depicted emperor on the obverse, inscriptional information, or the reverse design elements.[64] Such an omission indicates that she either had no intention of retaining such pieces or that she was not interested in deciphering them. Banks did not have a designated drawer for ancient Roman or Hellenic coins in her cabinets, and she did not juxtapose her few classical pieces alongside her medieval coins of Britain or continental states. Rather, she kept these pieces in the miscellaneous "Drawer 220: Various Old Things."[65] In addition to a few medals and "13 coins not exactly known," this drawer contained "unknown East India Coins," an unidentified southern Indian gold fanam "found on the floor of the Linnean Society's meeting Room," six silver Roman coins, and "a Roman coin in Paper."[66] This shunting aside of classical

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[62] Even among elite collectors of classical specie, workers and middling persons were always an important source of coins. Particularly important were "country people, who labour with plow and spade, and as are employed in digging about old banks, mounds, highways, foundations and ruins." Evelyn, *Numismata,* 198.
[63] S. S. Banks, BMDCM, SSBII.39.
[64] For instance, In September of 1800, for example, Sarah Banks received from Mrs. Weir of Lincolnshire an "Old Token John Smyth Horncastle found in Mrs. Rokelysses's grave, a Roman coin found at the same time, which I gave to J." "J." may refer to Jonas Dryander, who collected Roman coins. S. S. Banks, BMDCM, MS SSBI.21, 85.
[65] S. S. Banks, BMDCM, ARC R 20, 21.
[66] S. S. Banks, BMDCM, SSBII.56.

coins and juxtaposing them with unknown Asian coins suggests that Banks and some other British collectors were involved in a repurposing of the numismatic cabinet during this period. For orientalists and other atypical metropolitan collectors, the coin cabinet could be a laboratory where oriental coins provided information on Asian languages, revealed India's past and present, and illuminated Britain's historical and contemporary connectivity with "the east."

Although a few notable early-modern cabinets in England, Scandinavia, and Germany contained West-Asian dirhams unearthed in northern Europe,[67] only in the eighteenth century did larger quantities of Asian specie enter Britain as greater numbers of merchants and imperial agents resettled in the metropolis. Some prominent British numismatists possessed a few miscellaneous Asian coins.[68] However, the majority of oriental coins in metropolitan cabinets entered Britain as parts of collections assembled or acquired in Asia by merchants or orientalists. For instance, in December of 1756, Philip Morant presented in a meeting of the Society of Antiquaries the Asian numismatic specimens of the late "Dr. Porter…who had traveled into the East" and acquired many coins.[69] The provenance of William Marsden's "oriental" coins reveals that some of the most expansive collections in the metropole were amalgamations of smaller collections assembled by a series of prior owners in Asia and Britain. In 1780, L'Abbé Beauchamp, a French orientalist resident in Baghdad, purchased a large collection of West Asian, South Asian, and ancient Roman coins belonging to a lately-deceased Muslim religious leader. Later in the decade, Sir Robert Ainsley — the British ambassador to the Ottoman Empire — purchased this entire collection as well as many other Asian pieces. Following his return to

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[67] Medieval merchants brought dirhams featuring Arabic inscriptions to Europe. Sir William Strickland recounted to William Marsden that laborers in Yorkshire unearthed dirhams of the Samanid Empire in 1807. Sir William Strickland to William Marsden, 22 January, 1809, in Marsden, *Numismata Orientalia Illustrata,* Vol. 1, x, 80-1.
[68] For instance, by 1799 the art collector Clayton Mordaunt Cracherode purchased some Gupta gold coins from the Kalighat Hoard. BMDCM, Clayton Mordaunt Cracherode Collection, BM numbers: OR.9455, OR.9456, OR.9457.
[69] Philip Morant to Andrew Ducarel, 1 December 1756. BL Add MS 37217, ff. 56-7.

Britain in 1794, Ainsley put his entire collection up for sale. While Lord Northwick and Richard Payne Knight purchased all of Ainsley's ancient Greek and Roman coins, his Asian pieces "were foreign to the scope of their classical pursuit, which embraced nothing barbarous, and they declined to take any concern with what they did not profess to understand." For a decade these West Asian and Indian coins remained in the possession of the London antiquity dealer G. Miles "veiled in the obscurity of a character little known even to the generality of oriental scholars." In 1805, Jonas Dryander — the Swedish botanist who served as head librarian of the Banks household from 1782 — discovered the existence of this collection. Because Dryander's inability to read Asian languages rendered him "imperfectly qualified at that time to appreciate their real importance," he and members of the Banks family did not purchase the coins. Rather, Dryander strongly recommended that Marsden acquire, study, and circulate pieces from this collection.[70]

By establishing close associations with orientalists, East India merchants, and EIC officers who remained connected to South Asian circulation networks, Sarah Banks and other specialized collectors had ample opportunity for acquiring and experimenting with Indian coins. When metropolitan persons incorporated Asian specie into their collections, their cabinets were no longer only mechanisms for illuminating British national history. In applying extant taxonomic systems designed for ancient European coinage, specialized British collectors did more than signal that oriental coins were akin to ancient European specie in terms of decipherability, historical value, and, possibly, aesthetic appeal. Rather, these persons were utilizing numismatic theory to negotiate and normalize in Britain the diverse spoils of imperial conquest flowing back to London. Thus, by the end of the eighteenth century the coin cabinet transformed from only a stage for examining Britain's classical past to a tool for mediating,

[70] Marsden, *Numismata Orientalia Illustrata,* Vol. 1, vi-vii.

incorporating, and controlling the display of oriental material culture at a time when the geographies and boarders of Britain and the colonies were increasingly blurred and interwoven.

II. "In the World of Literature and Science"[71]: Sociability, the Circulation of Exotica, and the Display of Coins at 32 Soho Square

As an epicenter of fashionable sociability, intellectual collaboration, and material circulation, the London home Sarah Banks shared with her brother and Lady Banks provided a forum for the formation and display of her collections. Living at 32 Soho Square allowed Sarah Banks to participate in her brother's scientific and antiquarian clubs and societies. However, the distinctiveness of Sarah Banks's intellectual pursuits, collecting practices, and webs of social relationships allows for an uncoupling of her biography from that of her brother. Born in 1744, Sarah Banks lived at Revesby in Lincolnshire until her father's death in 1764, when she relocated to Chelsea and inherited a substantial portion of the family's wealth and landholdings. Banks maintained a close relationship with her brother and corresponded frequently during his global travels during the 1770s.[72] From 1780 Sarah Banks lived with her brother and his wife in London, where her participation in her brother's metropolitan social and intellectual circles provided her opportunities to befriend fellow collectors and acquire coins from British antiquaries, merchants, orientalists, imperial agents, and various other persons.[73] These multifarious friends and associates were the most frequent gifters and receivers of coins. Sarah Banks stored her entire collection in her bedroom at 32 Soho Square. Her numismatic cabinets

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[71] Marsden, *A Brief Memoir of the Life and Writings of the Late William Marsden,* 46.
[72] H. B. Carter, *Sir Joseph Banks, 1743-1820* (London: British Museum, 1988), 23-5, 115-18.
[73] Amanda Vickery has shown that women not only participated in, but often organized and controlled metropolitan social clubs. Vickery, *The Gentleman's Daughter: Women's Lives in Georgian England* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998), 8-10.

consisted of around two-hundred and thirty-two specimen trays containing about 10,000 coins.[74] Because these trays could be easily transported throughout the public rooms of the house, the logic of arrangement within individual drawers reflected how they were displayed to viewers. As an intersectional space of the domestic and the foreign in Britain, the Banks residence was vital to the formation of her coin collection, the development of her numismatic practices, and her access to global South Asian circulation networks.

Joseph Banks's prestige in British intellectual circles granted him, Dorothea Banks, and Sarah Banks opportunities to be at the center of metropolitan circulation networks of naturalia, antiquarian materials, and knowledge.[75] In the decade following his voyage around the globe with Lieutenant James Cook aboard the *Endeavour* from August, 1768 to July, 1771,[76] Banks gained both renown among scholars and ties to King George III, who accorded him an influential role over the Botanical Gardens at Kew.[77] During the 1770s and 1780s, Joseph Banks was a member of countless scholarly organizations, and engaged in forms of self-promotion of his achievements among circles of male and female sociability.[78] Although he was a member of the Society of Antiquaries and the Royal Society prior to his voyages with Cook, his participation in clubs and societies eventually allowed him to become President of the Royal Society in 1778 and

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[74] Leis, *Sarah Sophia Banks,* 18; Eagleton, "Collecting African Money in Georgian London," 28-30.

[75] Joseph Banks was born in 1743 into a family with considerable land-holdings in Lincolnshire. In 1764, he inherited a portion of the family's wealth and pursued botanical research. He cultivated a network of personal and professional relationships through participation in myriad intellectual organizations. Neil Chambers, Introduction to *The Scientific Correspondence of Sir Joseph Banks, 1765-1820*, Vol 1. (London: Pickering & Chatto, 2007), ix-xvi.

[76] Joseph Banks's accumulation of natural history specimens, artifacts, and scientific and antiquarian knowledge flourished with his initial scientific travels within Britain and his 1766 excursion aboard the HMS *Niger* to Newfoundland and Labrador. See Edward Smith, *The Life Of Sir Joseph Banks* (London: Bodley Head, 1911), 17.

[77] Chambers, Introduction to *The Scientific Correspondence of Sir Joseph Banks,* Vol. 1, xix-xxi.

[78] Gillian Russell, "An 'Entertainment of Oddities': Fashionable Sociability and the Pacific in the 1770s," in *A New Imperial History: Culture, Identity and Modernity in Britain and the Empire 1660-1840*, edited by Kathleen Wilson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 48-50.

a trustee of the British Museum beginning in 1788.[79] Consequently, many friends, visitors, and other scholars observed and contributed to his collections held at the Banks's house.[80]

Paradoxically, the Banks residence was a fashionable meeting location of antiquarian and scientific groups, yet Soho Square overall held an air of otherness and disrepute due to the motley assemblage of imperial agents, prostitutes, and other marginalized persons residing in adjacent buildings. The Banks household at 32 Soho Square quickly gained a reputation as a venue for fashionable club gatherings where one could witness the exotic through meetings with imperial agents, the observation of persons from Asia and Africa, and the circulation of Asian material culture. When Joseph and Lady Banks purchased the property in 1777, the noted artist and nabob Johan Zoffany had recently moved out of number 31, number 22 contained Dr. Armstrong's Dispensary for Sick Children, a number of artists resided in Carlisle House, and number 21 was the White House Brothel.[81] While Joseph Banks had assistants and librarians tending to his collections within the home, Sarah Banks often planned social gatherings and acted as mistress of ceremonies.[82] Contemporaries noted her attendance and active participation in assemblies of various organizations – even those which were predominantly male in membership – and other meetings in the public rooms of the home.[83] According to the landscape

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[79] John Gascoigne, *Joseph Banks and the Enlightenment: Useful Knowledge and Polite Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 11-14.
[80] Following a gathering at the Banks residence in 1794, Joseph Farington was pleased when "Sir Joseph presented [him] with a card of invitation to his Conversations, which are held at his house on Sunday evenings during the meetings of the Royal Society." Joseph Farington, "Monday, May 12th, 1794," in *The Diary of Joseph Farington,* Vol. I, edited by Kenneth Garlick and Angus Macintyre (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1978), 188-9.
[81]Carter, *Sir Joseph Banks,* 154; Decades later, Henry Mayhew reflected upon the ill-repute of White House and other spaces in Soho Square during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Henry Mayhew, *London Labour and the London Poor* (London, 1851), 239; For the colorful history of Carlisle House, see Gillian Russell, *Women, Sociability, and Theater in Georgian London* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 17-37.
[82] Smith, *The Life Of Sir Joseph Banks,* 63-4.
[83] Despite her large numbers of contacts, associates, and friends, some contemporaries noted Sarah Banks's eccentric nature. According to her friend, the engraver John Thomas Smith, she "was looked after by the eye of astonishment wherever she went, and in whatever situation she appeared. Her dress was that of the Old School; her Barcelona quilted petticoat had a hole on either side for the convenience of rummaging two immense pockets,

painter Joseph Farington, "whether [Joseph Banks] is in or out of town there is every morning throughout the year a breakfast prepared in his library for his friends at 10 o'clock. Sir Joseph, Lady & Miss Banks are of the party when in town."[84] While serving as Vice President of the Royal Society, William Marsden found "the rooms in Soho Square were my habitual place of resort, where I met a variety of persons, and acquired information of what was going forward in the world of literature and science."[85] Indeed, this London residence gained popular recognition as a botanical museum, as a stage for social gatherings, and as a repository of knowledge due to its extensive libraries and collections of naturalia and antiquarian materials.[86]

Because orientalists, Company officers, and a variety of peoples from the colonial world attended these gatherings, 32 Soho Square was one of the major hubs in the metropolis into which exotica from the colonies flowed. This great concentration of material culture and knowledge caused the Banks residence to be a space where attendees could deliberate and negotiate the simultaneous domestic and the foreignness of the colonies and the metropole. In December of 1803, Farington recounted a recent visit to the Banks residence in which Sarah Banks and other attendees met "an Hottentot man and two women" who were "dressed in the English manner." After being intrigued when "one of the women spoke aloud in her own language," the company alluded to the fluidity, ambiguity, and overlapping nature of the oriental and the domestic within the metropole when noting that these three Africans' "manner was as decent and well regulated as well ordered country people of our own could be."[87] Thus, as an

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stuffed with books of all sizes." John Thomas Smith, *A Book For a Rainy Day: Or, Recollections Of the Events Of the Years 1766-1833* (London, 1845, 1905 edition), 229, 231.

[84] Joseph Farington, "Monday, 23 November 1807," in *The Diary of Joseph Farington,* Vol. VIII, edited by Kathryn Cave (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1982), 3147.

[85] Marsden, *A Brief Memoir of the Life and Writings of the Late William Marsden,* 46.

[86] Gascoigne, *Joseph Banks and the Enlightenment,* 70.

[87] Joseph Farington, "Thursday December 8th, 1803," in *The Diary of Joseph Farington,* Vol. VI, edited by Kenneth Garlick and Angus Macintyre (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1979), 2186-2187.

intersectional space frequently containing persons and material culture from far-flung regions of the earth, Banks residence functioning as a theater for the exotic in London.

The collections of Joseph Banks, Dorothea Banks, and Sarah Banks grew rapidly during the last decades of the century, as friends and associates gifted, donated, or lent new examples of naturalia and exotica to the holdings at 32 Soho Square. This urban residence occasionally became temporary storage for materials belonging to the British Museum or various antiquarian societies. But, Joseph Banks also received offers for the sale of Asian exotica and gifts of artworks from India.[88] Colleagues resident in South Asia sent items to Banks in hopes that the famed botanist would purchase these materials or discuss them during antiquarian or scientific meetings.[89] Often Joseph Banks obliged in presenting such items to his fellow scholars. His natural history specimens and his extensive library were the only collections which he kept permanently at Soho Square. As a trustee of the British Museum, he typically deposited all of his human-made exotica in this institution. For instance, in 1780 Joseph Banks presented to the Museum his "very large collection of artificial curiosities, utensils, dresses, etc. from the South Sea Island and the West Coast of America and Kamchatka."[90] Although Joseph Banks typically donated exotica to the British Museum,[91] Dorothea Banks and Sarah Banks kept their collections either at Soho Square or their country houses.[92] Because Lady Banks kept her chinoiserie at their

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[88] Neil Chambers, *Joseph Banks and the British Museum: The World Of Collecting, 1770-1830*. (London: Pickering & Chatto, 2007), 75-6, 96-7.
[89] For instance, In July of 1789, Banks presented to the Society of Antiquaries a considerable number of sketches of the Great Pagoda of Madura, meticulously composed by the EIC surgeon, Adam Blackader during his six years in residence along the Coromandel Coast. Blackader's images arrived unannounced at 32 Soho Square along with lengthy descriptions of the temple and a letter requesting that his artworks and texts be shown to members of the Society of Antiquaries. Blackader, "Description of the Great Pagoda of Madura, The Choultry of Trimul Naik, in a Letter to Mr. Adam Blackader, Surgeon, to Sir Joseph Banks," in in *Archaeologia: or, Miscellaneous Tracts Relating to Antiquity*. Volume 10 (London: Society of Antiquaries, 1792), 449-59.
[90] Anonymous, "General Meetings of the Trustees, Minutes," Vol 7, 10 Nov., 1780. BMCA Shelf Mark C, 1743.
[91] Chambers, *Joseph Banks and the British Museum,* 75-6.
[92] Carter, *Sir Joseph Banks,* 407.

Spring Grove estate, Sarah Banks had sufficient opportunity and space to store and display her coins at their London home.[93] As a center of exotica circulation and a laboratory of scientific and cultural analysis, 32 Soho Square was an arena for Sarah Banks and other scholars to experiment with new configurations and conceptions of display revealing the increasingly interwoven nature of the oriental and British geographies of the empire.

Because spaces within British homes containing Asian exotica carried associations of orientalness and femininity, Sarah Banks's accumulation and circulation Indian coins was not outside the scope of female collecting practices, intellectual pursuits, and social norms during this period. By the middle of the eighteenth century, imported Asian groceries and manufactures, such as tea, porcelain, and textiles lost their air of exoticism and were normalized, ubiquitous articles of daily consumption.[94] However, because imported Asian artworks, pseudo-Asian decorative items, and other oriental exotica did not easily fit into established European aesthetic categories, Asian and faux-exotic consumer items were adaptable in their uses and meanings in Britain, enabling them to be both domestic and foreign.[95] Some commentators, such as the art critics Horace Walpole and John Pinkerton, reviled and ridiculed the physical features of exotica

[93] Dorothea Banks attempted to acquire porcelain by making trades with the British Museum. In April of 1805 the trustees reported that "Lady Banks…proposed to exchange a curious feather from China, in a glass tube, for a China cup & saucer, of which there are two in the Museum exactly similar to each other." Anonymous, "General Meetings of the Trustees, Minutes," Vol 8, 5 April, 1805. BMCA Shelf Mark C, 2258; Chambers, *Joseph Banks and the British Museum,* 117.

[94] Britons used the term "India goods" to denote most Asian imported consumer items. The concept of "the Chinese taste" referred to imported and locally-produced ceramics more generally. But it also referred to items which many metropolitan viewers found aesthetically indeterminate, physically excessive, or just odd. Stacey Sloboda, "Material Displays: Porcelain and Natural History in the Duchess of Portland's Museum," *Eighteenth-Century Studies*, 43 (2010): 457-9; Stacey Sloboda, *Chinoiserie: Commerce and Critical Ornament in Eighteenth-Century Britain* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2014), 6-7; Natasha Eaton, "Nostalgia for the Exotic: Creating an Imperial Art in London, 1750- 1793," *Eighteenth Century Studies.* Vol. 39, No. 2 (Winter, 2006): 227-250.

[95] David L. Porter, "Chinoiserie and the Aesthetics of Illegitimacy." *Studies in Eighteenth-Century Culture,* Vol. 28 (1999): 28-30; David L. Porter, "Monstrous Beauty: Eighteenth-Century Fashion and the Aesthetics of the Chinese Taste," *Eighteenth-Century Studies*, Vol. 35, No. 3 (Spring, 2002): 404-6.

as ephemeral and aesthetically incongruous.[96] Many male observers identified rooms decorated with chinoiserie and Asian exotica as material expressions of supposed female taste and tawdry mass consumption.[97] Conversely, Asian exotica could also function to designate certain areas in the home as feminized social spaces where women intellectuals could convene and make interventions into the work pursued in learned circles of Europe.[98] Thus, given that collecting and studying South Asian coins occurred across social circles and carried both masculine and feminine qualities, Sarah Banks collaborated with a variety of persons in her efforts to bring this form of exotica into European schema of ordering and display.

Sarah Banks collaborated with the botanist and librarian Jonas Dryander in developing methods of recording and ordering her collection into an assemblage that was expandable, displayable, and readable as a repository of historical information on Britain and the empire.[99] From 1782 until his death in 1810, Dryander served as the head librarian and collaborated with members of the Banks household in curating their book and manuscript, naturalia, and exotica collections.[100] Dryander's expansive numismatic knowledge led antiquarians to avow that he was "no less conversant with some branches of numismatics than he was with bibliography and

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[96] Horace Walpole to Robertson, 20 June 1791, in *Walpole, Correspondence,* Vol. 15, edited by W. S. Lewis (New Haven, CT: Yale University press, 1937-1983), 211-12; John Pinkerton, *An Essay on Medals: An Introduction to the Knowledge of Ancient and Modern Coins and Medals; Especially Those of Greece, Rome, and Britain*, Vol II (London, 1789, 1808 edition), 12-13.

[97] Women's alleged habit of collecting indiscriminately as a compulsive act of consumption existed in many British men's minds as the antithesis of systems of organization of collections. The Duchess of Portland's Museum "was collected at an incredible expense by herself, and increased by some valuable presents from her friends…it comprised everything rich and rare." James Granger, "A Sketch of Bulstrode, by Mr. Granger" in *Letters Between the Rev. James Granger, Rector of Shiplake and Many of the Most Eminent Literary Men of His Time*, ed. J. P. Malcolm (London, 1805), 96-7; Stacey Sloboda, "Porcelain Bodies: Gender, Acquisitiveness, and Taste in Eighteenth-Century England," in *Material Cultures, 1740-1920: The Meanings and Pleasures of Collecting*, edited by John Potvin and Alla Myzelev (Burlington: Ashgate, 2009), 19-22.

[98] Stacey Sloboda, "Fashioning Bluestocking Conversation: Elizabeth Montagu's Chinese Room," in *Architectural Space in Eighteenth-Century Europe: Constructing Identities and Interiors*, edited by D. A. Baxter and M. Martin (Burlington: Ashgate, 2010), 130-1.

[99] My thanks to Catherine Eagleton for confirming the importance of this collaboration.

[100] Carter, *Sir Joseph Banks*, 141-2.

botany."[101] For instance, Dryander and Sarah Banks's reputation as experts of numismatic analysis and taxonomy led the British Museum's Trustees in 1807 to deposit at 32 Soho Square "upwards of 6,000" medieval coins recently unearthed in Lincolnshire. Dryander had the opportunity to both painstakingly classify the coins and adjudicate which pieces would enter private and institutional collections.[102] According to Taylor Combe's report to the Society of Antiquaries, as this hoard underwent "the most minute examination" Sarah Banks kept a few specimens as a token of thanks for her participation in the project.[103] Thus, Sarah Banks was not merely reliant upon Dryander's expertise. Rather, she also aided him in his own numismatic projects. Moreover, Dryander's ties to antiquity collectors and dealers led him to act as an intermediary for Sarah Banks in some of her purchases and exchanges of coins and numismatic literature.[104] Given his frequent participation in her numismatic pursuits, Dryander was one of the most common recipients of coins, receiving specimens – including Indian coins – on at least fifty-five occasions over the course of thirty years.[105] Although Banks's inventories only record fifteen instances when Dryander donated coins to her cabinets, the importance of this collaboration lay in his efforts to locate rare examples and derive innovative methods of ordering. Ultimately, the experimentation evident in the cabinets of both Banks and Dryander reveals their innovative numismatic methodology and collections to be mutually constituted.

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[101] Marsden, *Numismata Orientalia Illustrata,* Vol. 1, vii.
[102] Anonymous, *The Stamford Mercury,* 20 November, 1807; Joseph Banks to Charles Tennyson, 19 September 1808. Lincolnshire Archives Office, 4 T.d'E.H 7/8, quoted in Christopher Sturman, "Sir Joseph Banks and the Telby Hoard," *Lincolnshire History and Archaeology*, Vol. 24 (1989), 51.
[103] Taylor Combe, "A Description of a Large Collection of Pennies of Henry II. Discovered at Fealty, in Lincolnshire," in *Archaeologia: or, Miscellaneous Tracts Relating to Antiquity*. Volume 18 (London, 1817), 1.
[104] Dryander's efforts led to the growth of Sarah Banks's numismatic library as scientists in Europe sent continental publications and inventories of noted collections. Joseph Franz, Freiherr von Jacquin to Sir Joseph Banks, 6 October 1792, in *The Scientific Correspondence of Sir Joseph Banks*, ed. by Chambers, Vol. 4, Letter 1141, p 157; Joseph Banks and Jonas Dryander to Olof Swartz, 17 August, 1792, in *The Scientific Correspondence of Sir Joseph Banks*, edited by Chambers, Vol. 4, Letter 1130, p 145; Sarah Sophia Banks, BMDCM, MS SSBI.21, 54.
[105] S. S. Banks, BMDCM, MS SSBI.22, 9-11.

III. "Mere Arbitrary Signs"?[106]: Sarah Banks's Application of Numismatic Taxonomy to South Asian Coins

When Sarah Banks organized South Asian specie in her cabinet, she and her collaborators were making interventions into the centuries-long development of methods of numismatic taxonomy and modes of visualizing national histories and geographies through coin arrangement. Numismatic collections and their forms of storage and display had their origins in the early modern cabinets of curiosity, which juxtaposed multifarious natural and human-made treasures alongside wondrous items from around the known world and beyond.[107] The notion of the numismatic cabinet as a distinctive apparatus emerged in the eighteenth century in tandem with developments in scientific practices influenced by Carl Linnaeus's classifications of plants outlined in *Systema Naturae* (1735). Therefore, when Sarah Banks began her collection around 1780 a cabinet lacking a proper organizational logic was distasteful, unreadable to viewers, and devoid of informational value.[108] Much as Linnaeus developed a classificatory system of plants based upon sexual characteristics of individual species, eighteenth-century numismatists developed new, distinct ways of categorizing coins with many subsets. Seventeenth and early eighteenth-century coin cabinets featured coins arranged alphabetically based upon ruler or

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[106] Richard Payne Knight, "Account of some Coins found in certain Tumuli in the Southern District of the Peninsula of India. In a Letter from Sir Anthony Carlisle, Knt. F. R. S. and S. A. to Richard Payne Knight, Esq," *Archaeologia: or, Miscellaneous Tracts Relating to Antiquity*. Volume 21 (London: Society of Antiquaries, 1827), 2

[107] As more English travelers visited continental collections during the seventeenth century, these attempted microcosms of the universe became increasingly common in the libraries of learned metropolitan persons. Mary W. Helms, "Essay on Objects: Interpretations of Distance Made Tangible," in *Implicit Understandings: Observing, Reporting, and Reflecting on the Encounters Between Europeans and Other Peoples in the Early Modern Era*, edited by Stuart B. Schwartz (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 370-4; Patrick Mauries, *Cabinets of Curiosity* (London: Thames & Hudson, 2002), 23-5; Arthur MacGregor, "The Cabinet of Curiosities in Seventeenth-Century Britain," in *The Origin of Museums: The Cabinet of Curiosities in Sixteenth- and Seventeenth-Century Europe,* edited by Oliver Impey and Arthur MacGregor (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1985, 2001), 201-2.

[108] For instance, In June of 1764, the antiquarian Robert Lumtey Kingston described the disorderly coin and curio collection of "our Broker Dr. March," containing some mediocre and counterfeit contemporary European specie, ancient Roman coins, and many other natural and human-made curiosities which should not have been in a numismatic cabinet. Kingston grumbled that "the whole [was] in such confusion to attempt a description is vain." Robert Lumtey Kingston, FSA to Dr. Ducarel. 20 June, 1764, BL Add MS 23990, ff. 81-2.

inscription. But by the latter half of the eighteenth century numismatic experimenters fashioned comparative groupings based upon chronology, metal, denomination, size, place of production, imagery and inscriptional features, and other physical characteristics.[109] However, William Marsden conceded that "so multifarious…and often ambiguous, are the circumstances attending the examination of Asian coins" that classificatory errors were unavoidable and some specimens, such as punch-marked ingots and other protomoney, defied Europeans conceptual categories of coinage.[110] Thus, European classificatory frameworks previously accounted for neither the iconographic and textual particularities nor the cultural or political uses of coins struck in Asia.

Sarah Banks's methods of storing, cataloguing, and displaying her coins, medals, and other materials within her coin cabinets reveal that she and Jonas Dryander were implementing and reformulating continental theories of numismatic display. During the early nineteenth century they each composed expansive manuscript inventories of their respective collections. The correlating cataloguing structure throughout their volumes reveals that Sarah Banks and Dryander together engaged with modes of categorizing ancient European specie put forth in Joseph Eckhel's *Doctrina Numorum Veterum* ("Instruction on Ancient Coins," 1792-1798).[111] In addition to highlighting the importance of classifying according to "families" rooted in chronology, composition, and weights and measures, Eckhel's study argued that through

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[109] Katy Barrett, "Writing On, Around, and About Coins: From The Eighteenth-Century Cabinet to the Twenty-First-Century Database," *Journal of Museum Ethnography*, No. 25 (2012): 65-6; Burnett, "'The King Loves Medals,'" 123-5.
[110] Marsden, *Numismata Orientalia Illustrata,* Vol. 2, vi.
[111] Much as Eckhel argued that his ordering schema could was based upon observed coins, Dryander's volumes were records of a collection he had personally ranged. Jonas Dryander, Volume 1-4, BMDCM, ARC R 10-13. Eckhel's study examined the extant ordering systems of European institutional collections, identifying strengths and weaknesses of each in terms of legibility to antiquarian researchers. Joseph Eckhel, *Doctrina Numorum Veterum,* 8 Volumes (Vienna, 1792-1798); Barrett, "Writing On, Around, and About Coins," 69-70.

geographic ordering coinage could illuminate an abundance of historical information.[112] Banks and Dryander's volumes reveal their adaptation of Eckhel's schema of chronological configuration, arrangements of issuers based upon geography and political relationships, and hierarchies according to denomination and metal. Both collection inventories contain copious references to contemporary numismatic publications as well as commentaries on coins which were of uncertain taxonomy or origin, contained punch-marks or other alterations, or were of dubious authenticity.[113] While Dryander's volumes only charted European specie, Banks's great contribution to this joint project was her assertion — evident in her inventories — that this taxonomic logic could be applied to coins from India and other regions of Asia.

Rather than following early-modern numismatic frameworks, Sarah Banks constructed geographic arrangements of coins underscoring the interwoven nature of the material cultural productions of European states and their colonial holdings in Asia and other reaches of the world. Both her "Index of Currency" and the configurations of her cabinets followed a hierarchical logic underscoring geographic size and power of each issuing authority.[114] This sequence gave pride of place to Britain, followed by European states arranged according to geographical and political configurations. [115] And it concluded with the coins of colonial regions,

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[112] Eckhel, *Doctrina Numorum Veterum,* Vol. 1, 173-83; Joseph Pellerin was the first continental numismatic author to suggest geographic organization. Joseph Pellerin, *Recueil de Médailles de Peuples et de Villes* (Paris, 1763-7); Burnett, "'The King Loves Medals,'" 123-5.

[113] Moreover, they provided numerous assertions about whether certain pieces were in fact tokens, medals, jettons, counters, metallic tickets, or other nomisma or exnomia as opposed to coins. Dryander, Volume 1-4, BMDCM, ARC R 10-13; S. S. Banks, Volume VII, BMDCM, ARC R 20, 5.

[114] These groups are based upon which of the five volumes certain coins appeared. Catherine Eagleton provides a basic chart of Sarah Banks's cabinets. Eagleton, "Collecting African Coins in Georgian London," 28; S. S. Banks, Volume VII, BMDCM, ARC R 20, 2-8.

[115] Contemporary and medieval British coins occupied the first thirty drawers. The second group, German and Dutch coins, occupied drawers thirty-one to seventy-eight. Drawers seventy-nine to one-hundred and twenty-two contained Danish, Swedish, Russian, Polish and Prussian, Hungarian and Transylvanian, and Italian Specie. Coins of Switzerland, France, Spain, and Portugal comprising the fourth group were in drawers one-hundred and twenty-three to one-hundred and fifty-three. Coins of colonial holdings, the United States of America, and Asian states occupied the fifth group. The sixth section consisted of medals and miscellaneous trade tokens from the British Isles.

Asian states whose coins were calligraphically and aesthetically distinct from European coinage forms, and tokens and other pseudo-currency not issued by state authorities.[116] Drawers one-hundred and fifty-four to one-hundred and seventy-seven contained coins from regions of Asia, the British imperial periphery in South Asia and the Caribbean, and geographic areas outside of British control. These drawers were Africa (154-155), Turkey (156-157), Arabia (158), East Indies (159-165), China and Japan (166-167), North America (168), West Indies (169), South America (170), Siege Pieces, and "Miscellaneous" (177).[117] Sarah Banks organized the coins of each Asian region or governing body according to ruler, approximate date of issue, metallic composition, and denomination. Given the number of British imperial agents in Bengal who returned home with coins, Sarah Banks acquired a number of coins issued in the region by pre-colonial rulers as well as pieces later struck locally by the EIC. Drawer number 159 began with three rupees of "Sultan Gelaleddin Ben Mahmud Shah." Second were coins of "Sultan Seifeddin Firuz Shah." Third were six rupees of "Sultan Hussein Alavuddin Shan." And at the end of this sequence were rupees of "Sultan Mahmud Shah" and "Sultan Shir Shah." In a separate section of drawer 159 containing EIC coinage struck at "Calcutta but with the name of Moorhedavad [Murshidabad] with the title of the nominal Emperor Shah Alum," Banks arranged this coinage chronologically for each denomination. The list proceeded in a descending order from gold to silver to copper. For instance, her gold Company coinage struck at Calcutta consisted of a mohur dated AH1187 (1773-4 CE), a ½ mohur of AH1202 (1787-8 CE), a ¼ mohur dated AH1204 (1789-90 CE), an AH1183 (1769-70 CE) 1/8 mohur, a gold rupee of AH1183 (1769-70 CE), and

[116] Banks states in her ledgers that she stored medals and unidentified coins in an assortment of drawers and other containers, such as "box under the stool near the closet door," "varnished box by Miss Whelers," and "broom box." S. S. Banks, Volume VII, BMDCM, ARC R 20, 22-23; S. S. Banks, Volume VII, BMDCM, ARC R 20, 10-12.
[117] S. S. Banks, Volume VII, BMDCM, ARC R 20, 16-20.

a gold rupee dated AH1203 (1788-9 CE).[118] Banks separated EIC coinage produced by traditional Indian hammer-striking from later pieces struck in Britain and South Asia with European machinery.[119] In her sections of Bombay and Madras coinage, she lists gold, silver, and copper hammered coinage first before a distinct section of machine-struck specie.[120] While this sequencing underscored chronologies of production and the degree of Company influence in the subcontinent, it also suggested an uncertainty of the British or Indian nature of such coins.[121]

The manner in which Sarah Banks organized Asian coins in her cabinets reveals that forms of numismatic display were bound up with contemporary politics of empire, particularly as the Company conquered rival Indian states and became the preeminent power in South Asia by the early nineteenth century.[122] Her fifth ledger's "East Indies" section contained a table of contents listing "[Mughal] Hindostan, Bengall, Circars, Arcott, Madras, Ceylon, Bombay, Bencooen in Sumatra, Prince of Wales's Island, Mysore, Timera, Gentiah, Rungpour, Assam, Danish, Dutch, French, Portuguese Goa, Bootan & Nepaul, Siam, Bankce, Borneo, Phillipine Islands, Unknown East India Coins."[123] In addition to placing Mughal coinage first in order to indicate its precursory relationship to Company specie, this sequence suggests a hierarchy beginning with regions of Asia which were under British control and progressing to regions

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[118] S. S. Banks, Volume V, BMDCM, ARC R 18, Section 159, p. 5-8.

[119] European coining machines arrived in each of the Presidencies around 1790. Peter R. Thompson, *The East India Company and Its Coins* (Devon: Token Publishing, 2010), 50-1, 81-6.

[120] S. S. Banks, Volume V, BMDCM, ARC R 18, Section 160, p. 13, Section 150, p15-16.

[121] With the introduction of mechanically-produced, machine-struck coinage came the gradual British adoption and alteration of symbols of authority typically inscribed upon coinage in India. In northern India, the Company gradually replaced the regnal year of the Mughal emperor with meaningless "frozen dates" and removed other symbols and indicators of EIC authority being derived from Indian sources in the region.

[122] Beginning in last decades of the eighteenth century, as the British government gained greater control over the EIC administration in South Asia, the notion of the authority of the ancient Mughal constitution wore away as underpinning legitimacy of rule. EIC administrators progressively couched authority in terms of colonial rule being a break with the "despotism" of the Mughals and the corruption of the independent Indian states. Changes in appearances of Company coinage morphed concomitantly with these ideological transformations. Robert Travers, *Ideology and Empire in Eighteenth- Century India: The British in Bengal* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 31.

[123] S. S. Banks, Volume V, BMDCM, ARC R 18, page between Section 158, p. 6 and Section 159, p1.

where Company influence was very limited or nonexistent.[124] Because the coinages and histories of regions outside of Company control were mostly unknown to British orientalists, Banks's East India cabinet was also a project of ordering coins whose inscriptions were difficult to decipher or whose other design features were culturally illegible to all but the most specialized scholars.

Sarah Banks's efforts to taxonomize her Indian specimens were particularly remarkable given how little most British scholars knew of pre-Mughal Indian coinage during the Georgian period.[125] In 1789 the numismatic author John Pinkerton claimed that current coins circulating in British-controlled regions of India "are perfectly known." Yet, "it is doubtful if any Indian coins exist, preceding the time of the Moguls, or thirteenth century. Some old coins have been found near Calcutta, of gold, silver, copper, and tin… but it is impossible to say of what antiquity" this specie could be.[126] Since coins were often essential to the dating and analysis of an archaeological site or treasure hoard, the linguistic and cultural illegibility of some forms of ancient Indian coinages led orientalists to be uncertain as to the age and origins of excavated sites and coin deposits. In 1818 Richard Payne Knight reported to the Society of Antiquaries about myriad ancient Indian coins uncovered in burial mounds by Colonel Caldwell while conducting for the EIC a "survey of the southern districts of the peninsula of India in the year 1809." After receiving three of these ancient, rectangular punch-marked coins from Caldwell, Knight concluded that the incuse symbols on these ancient coins did not "imitate or represent any thing, but [were] mere arbitrary signs."[127] Banks also received unusual Asian coins from

[124] My thanks to Catherine Eagleton for pointing out to me the significance of this ordering.
[125] Marsden, *Numismata Orientalia Illustrata,* 2 volumes (London, 1823-5).
[126] John Pinkerton, *An Essay on Medals: An Introduction to the Knowledge of Ancient and Modern Coins and Medals; Especially Those of Greece, Rome, and Britain*, Vol II (London, 1789, 1808 edition), 12-13.
[127] These specimens were probably Maruyan period (sixth to second century BCE) punch-mark coins. Knight, "Account of some Coins found in certain Tumuli in the Southern District of the Peninsula of India. In a Letter from Sir Anthony Carlisle, Knt. F. R. S. and S. A. to Richard Payne Knight, Esq," 2; Knight, "Observations On the Coins Found by Colonel Caldwell," 5-6

persons who could not identify what she or he was gifting. In March of 1789 William Marsden gave to her some "tin coins brought from the Island of Banka [Indonesia]," about which he was completely "ignorant."[128] Throughout her lists of coins purchased or received as gifts, most Indian pieces lacked information as to date, ruler, or exact place of production, indicating that both Banks and the gifter were initially unable to identify them. For instance, in May, 1792 a Mr. Braithwaite presented Banks with "Oriental Coins, several – some very old." And seven years later, he gave her 43 "Napaul gold coin[s]" and 166 "Silver coins of Napaul."[129] Banks occasionally acquired South Asian coins whose origins were unknown due to their displacement from India to Britain. For example, in July, 1798 Dryander presented her with "a small Indian coin found amongst some plants" shipped from India to the Banks residence.[130] The movement of coins from South Asia to Britain — whether strategically stashed in an officer's cargo or inadvertently included in a container of plant specimens — at times resulted in the mystification of a coin's original context of production and use.[131] De-contextualization could yield a blurring of distinction of the Britishness or orientalness of coinage produced by Asian authorities, the coinage produced by the EIC in India, and Birmingham-produced specie for circulation in India.

Banks's schema of ordering her coinage functioned as an experiment in sequencing specie carrying oriental or orientalized-like connotations due to its Asian origins, production for

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[128] William Marsden to Sarah Banks (or Joseph Banks?), March 1789. BMDCM, ARC R 18, letter bound in volume between Section 164, p. 40 and Section 164, p. 41.
[129] S. S. Banks, "Manuscript List of Coins Acquired by SSB," BMDCM, SSBI.21, 15.
[130] S. S. Banks, "Manuscript List of Coins Acquired by SSB," BMDCM, SSBI.21, 25.
[131] For instance, in January, 1803 Richard Payne Knight reported to the antiquarian Charles Townley of the upcoming sale of twenty rare Jahangir-issued zodiac rupees and mohurs at "Lady Hughes's sale at Garraway's Coffeehouse" in London. According to Knight, "they are great curiosities in India" and were "probably presented to Sir. Edward Hughes during his command there as objects of importance. Among the knockers [auctioneers] in Change Alley they will scarcely produce much more than their weight." Although Knight wondered if these coins were actually "counterfeited by the Dutch at Batavea," their ritual importance in India was effaced by their transportation and sale in Britain. In fact, the auction catalogue only described the collection as being "Arabic coins in gold." Knight to Townley. January, 1803 BMCA, Townley Collection. TY7/2129.

circulation in India, or association with the racialized lower orders of Britain. Indeed, the turn of the century witnessed an influx of Indian exotica, omnipresent counterfeiting, and an explosion of circulating tokens bearing images of British industry, provincial landmarks, business advertisements, political figures and movements, global trade, exotic imports and symbols of the orient, and many other diverse pictorial and textual messages.[132] **(Figures 16 - 17)** From 1795 to 1797, Thomas Prattent and M. Denton published eight volumes presenting "an alphabetical list and facsimiles" of hundreds of examples of recently-produced Birmingham and London token coinages circulating in Britain. These volumes featured domestic trade tokens bearing images of exotic animals, tea imports, and symbols associated with the East India Company, such as the EIC bale mark, the India House, and the Company arms. **(Figures 18 - 19)** Prattent and Denton's compendiums also featured coins struck at the Birmingham minting facilities for circulation in India. Some of these coins featured calligraphy designed by the famed linguist and orientalist Charles Wilkins and bore similar design features to domestically-circulating trade tokens.[133] **(Figures 20 - 21)** During the late eighteenth century and first decades of the nineteenth century, producers of British trade tokens — such as the industrialists James Watt and Matthew Boulton's Soho (Birmingham) manufactory — also struck European-style coins for the East India Company's Asian territories.[134] Despite the common origins and similarity in design features of token coinage produced for the lower orders in Britain and EIC currency intended for circulation in India, many numismatists designated EIC coinage as Indian — even if it never left Britain.

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[132] Thomas Prattent and M. Denton, *The Virtuoso's Companion & Coin Collector's Guide*, Vol. 1 (London, 1795), 2-4; George Selgin, *Good Money: Birmingham Button Makers, The Royal Mint, and the Beginnings of Modern Coinage, 1775-1821* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 2008), 137-40.
[133] Prattent and Denton, *The Virtuoso's Companion & Coin Collector's Guide*, Vol. 3 (London, 1796), 63; Prattent and Denton, *The Virtuoso's Companion & Coin Collector's Guide*, Vol. 4 (London, 1796), 110-11; Prattent and Denton, *The Virtuoso's Companion & Coin Collector's Guide*, Vol. 8 (London 1797), 214-15, 221; Marsden, *Numismata Orientalia Illustrata,* Vol. 2, 750.
[134] Richard Doty, *The Soho Mint & The Industrialization of Money* (London: Spink and the British Numismatic Society, 1998), 185-91.

Figure 16. Great Britain: Edinburgh. Issued by Campbell. 1796. Copper Half Penny Token. (Private Collection). 9.8 grams.[135]

Figure 17. Sarah Sophia Banks Collection. Great Britain: London. Issued by Pidcock's Menagerie. Mid-1790s. Copper Half Penny Token. 10.35 grams © The Trustees of the British Museum (British Museum number: SSB,192.61.1).

[135] Sarah Sophia Banks possessed multiple varieties of this trade token. However, the British Museum has not digitized these coins yet. British Museum numbers: T.6685, T.6684, T.6683, T.6682, T.6681.

Figure 18. Sarah Sophia Banks Collection. Great Britain: Bath and London. Issued by M. Lamb & Son. 1794. Copper Penny Token. © The Trustees of the British Museum (British Museum number: SSB,185.95.1). 20.45 grams.

Figure 19. Great Britain: Bath and London. Issued by M. Lamb & Son. 1795. Copper Farthing Token. (Private Collection). 4.55 grams.[136]

[136] Sarah Sophia Banks possessed varieties of this trade token. However, the British Museum has not digitized these coins yet. British Museum numbers: SSB,185.99; SSB,185.98; SSB,185.97.

Figure 20. Sarah Sophia Banks Collection. Great Britain: Manchester and London. Issued by I. Fielding. 1793. Copper Half Penny Token. 10.66 grams. © The Trustees of the British Museum (British Museum number: SSB,193.106).

Figure 21. Great Britain and India: Minted at Birmingham, England. Issued by the East India Company in Bombay. 1791. Copper Pice (1/64 of a Rupee). (Private Collection). 6.5 grams.[137]

[137] Sarah Banks's inventories list many pice coins produced in Britain and in India. Her records identify multiple Birmingham pice and other denominations in her collection according to page 214-215 of Prattent and Denton's

While Prattent and Denton's catalogues juxtaposed domestic coins and those of the Company's Indian territories, Sarah Banks's taxonomy of a number of British-struck EIC specie as Indian indicates that the Britishness or Indianess of coins was dependent upon physical features and location of circulation rather than place of production. In the section labeled "Coins Struck by the East India Company at Calcutta" she lists "¼ Pun, or 4 Gunda's, or 16 Cowries 1792. Struck in London."[138] Banks's taxonomy of Watt and Boulton's Birmingham-produced East Indian Company coins as being Indian indicates that she organized her specimens geographically according to where they circulated and the social groups utilizing them in transactions, indicating their dissociation from their location of production.[139] The reinscription of EIC coinage as ambiguously British-produced yet foreign material culture was so absolute that Banks even taxonomized coinage designed by William Marsden as Asian. In 1786, the Directors of the Company commissioned Marsden to design copper and silver coinage bearing Arabic text and the Company's bale mark for Sumatra.[140] These Birmingham-produced two, three, and four keping coins were in the "Bencoolen (Sumatra)" section of her inventory and her cabinet along with a "Pattern [prototype] piece made by Mr. Boulton but not approved."[141] Thus, while most of her London or Birmingham-produced EIC coins never actually circulated in India, they received the taxonomy of being Asian.[142] Much like chinoiserie or other pseudo-Asian manufactures, coins produced in Britain bearing Asian text and EIC symbolism existed in Britain

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eighth volume. Prattent and Denton, *The Virtuoso's Companion & Coin Collector's Guide*, Vol. 8 (London 1797), 214-15; S. S. Banks, Volume VII, B. M. D. C. M., ARC R 18, Section 160, p. 15-16.

[138] S. S. Banks, Volume VII, BMDCM, ARC R 18, Section 159, p. 7-8

[139] S. S. Banks, Volume VII, BMDCM, ARC R 18.

[140] Marsden, *Numismata Orientalia Illustrata,* Vol. 2, 810.

[141] Marsden, *Numismata Orientalia Illustrata,* Vol. 2, 750; S. S. Banks, Volume VII, BMDCM, ARC R 18, Section 161, p. 17-18.

[142] Matthew Boulton or various collectors sent this Company coinage directly to Banks. Joseph Banks to Matthew Boulton, 28 March, 1804, in *The Banks Letters: A Calendar of the Manuscript Correspondence of Sir Joseph Banks Preserved in the British Museum,* edited by R. W. Dawson, (London: British Museum, 1958), 138.

as both domestic and foreign. Their presence within British persons' coin cabinets challenged a separation between domestic manufactures of Britain from those of the imperial periphery. Banks's designation of Birmingham and London-produced colonial coins as Indian suggests recognition of mainland Britain and the colonies as a patchwork of domestic and oriental spaces, each capable of producing materials which were British and oriental.

IV. "I Shall Bring For Her a Series of that Coin"[143]: Sarah Banks's Collecting Practices, Collaborations, and Global Circulation Networks

In November of 1804, the printmaker and social commentator James Gillray published a satirical image entitled "An Old Maid on a Journey," featuring five individuals walking to the entrance of a structure whose doors are labeled "the Ram" and "the Union." (**Figure 22)** The three corpulent figures to the left are flanked by two gaunt attendants carrying caged animals, artwork, and unseen items held within a box and a bag. Because Gillray did not explicitly name any of the characters lampooned in this image, some scholars remain uncertain whether this image features Sarah Banks along with her family and associates.[144] However, an anonymous 1830 pamphlet asserted that this image satirized "the eccentric sister to a worthy baronet, well known among the modern philosophers, as a friend and patron of men of genius and science" who could "be recognized by her collection of scraps now donated to the British Museum."[145] While the main function of this image may have been to present a number of signs and motifs suggesting to the viewer that the satirized "Old Maid" was not celibate, the motley assemblage of

[143] George Leonard Staunton to Joseph Banks, 12 November, 1793, in *The Indian and Pacific Correspondence of Sir Joseph Banks, 1792-1798*, Vol. 4, ed. by Neil Chambers. (London: Pickering & Chatto, 2011), Letter 95, p 171.
[144] Eaglen, "Sarah Sophia Banks and Her English Hammered Coins," 203-4.
[145] Anonymous, *Illustrative Description of the Genuine Works of Mr. James Gillray* (London: Thomas Maclean, 1830), 293, Quoted in Eagleton, "Collecting African Money in Georgian London," 25.

Figure 22. James Gillray, *An Old Maid on a Journey* (1804). © The National Portrait Gallery (NPG D12837).

items carried by servants nevertheless communicated the featured persons' unconventionality and proclivity for collecting unusual items. Gillray's image correctly suggests that members of the Banks household were closely involved in one another's global collecting ventures and other intellectual pursuits requiring elaborate webs of social relationships.

Sarah Banks took advantage of the status of 32 Soho Square being a center of antiquarian research, scientific development, and fashionable sociability to establish and cultivate her own elaborate intellectual and social networks extending to the continent and the colonies. Her cabinet and collecting practices flourished at a time of budding British numismatic scholarship, an increased influx of Indian money and aged specie, an explosion of illicit domestic coin

production, and innovation in authentic colonial and British currency. The unusual size and rare contents of Sarah Banks's collection reflected her access to Indian circulation networks, her collection's fame within numismatic circles, and her friendship with orientalists and coinage manufacturers. The scarcity of her Indian coins revealed her association with imperial agents who remained integrated into Indian mercantile and political networks. Their continued access to South Asian collecting circles and their assemblages formed while living in the subcontinent channeled Indian numismatic exotica into the metropole and into the cabinets of Sarah Banks and other likeminded collectors. Moreover, her association with members of the Committee on Coinage, such as the industrialist Matthew Boulton, afforded her opportunities to acquire British-produced Company coinage prior to shipment to the subcontinent in exchange for her own specimens and insights into fraudulent domestic coinage.

Although Banks most frequently exchanged Indian coins with orientalists, imperial agents, and coin manufacturers in possession of Asian specie, she occasionally received or attempted to give away numismatic exotica to persons who did not have direct ties to South Asia. Some of her Indian coins were previously in the possession of non-specialists. But very few metropolitan collectors who were not knowledgeable of India owned or actively sought out this form of exotica, resulting in orientalists prizing certain types of Asian specie which was dismissed or undervalued by metropolitan collectors. Given their original function as tools of incorporative gifting distributed during courtly rituals,[146] orientalist scholars in the subcontinent sought out the coinage of the Mughal Emperor Jahangir bearing signs of the zodiac. At Benares in May of 1803, the travel writer George Annesley "procured from a banker one of the Zodiac mohurs, which are now so extremely rare that it is almost impossible to procure a complete

[146] Andrew V. Liddle, *Coins of Jahangir: Creations of a Numismatist* (New Delhi: Manohar Publishers, 2013), 10, 77-97, 178-93.

set."[147] Despite their scarcity, they remained of little interest to most numismatists in Britain and Europe. For instance, "[Richard Payne] Knight …purchased, at an auction in Paris, a collection of the Zodiac rupees, for a trifle more than their weight in gold: so little are the value of these medals known."[148] While Banks was often willing to part with unwanted, duplicate, and unnecessary examples, often only orientalists or other specialized collectors wanted to receive Indian specie from her.[149] According to her inventories, she gave away coins of various sorts on at least six-hundred and twenty-five occasions to a minimum of two-hundred and nineteen people.[150] In February of 1797, Banks presented a list of coins she wished to trade to a numismatist by the name of Thompson. She offered Birmingham-produced coinage of Sierra Leone, Barbados, the Isle of Man, and the EIC as well as Bhutanese gold and silver coins "about the size of a Spangle."[151] However, Thompson was not interested. Rather, Thompson claimed that these specimens were "of very inconsiderable scarcity" or were not of interest to him.[152] Of twenty-one recorded occasions when Banks gave away Asian coins, all twelve recipients were British orientalist scholars, imperial agents, or others with atypical collecting proclivities, some of whom had also given her Asian specie.[153] Thus, the movement of aged and rare Indian specie

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[147] George Annesley, *Voyages and Travels to India, Ceylon, The Red Sea, Abyssinia, and Egypt, in the Years 1803, 1803, 1804, 1805, and 1806,* Vol. 1 (London, 1809, 1811 edition), 91.
[148] Edward Moor, *Narrative Of The Operations Of Captain Little's Detachment, and Of the Mahratta Army, Commanded By Purseram Bhow; During the Late Confederacy in India, Against The Nawab Tippoo Sultan Bahadur* (London, 1794), 488.
[149] John Thomas Smith claimed that in the 1790s he left for her at 32 Soho Square a large number of British trade tokens "with a note begging Miss Banks's acceptance of any she might want." However, a few hours later, she arrived unannounced at Smith's residence and "entered the parlour holding up the front of her riding habit with both hands, the contents of which she delivered upon the table." According to Smith, "out of so many hundred there was not one that she wanted." Smith, *A Book For a Rainy Day,* 230-1.
[150] S. S. Banks, BMDCM, MS SSBI.21.
[151] S. S. Banks to Mr. Harrison (on Behalf of Mr. Thompson) 23 February, 1797, BMDCM, MS SSBI.28.
[152] Mr. Harrison (on Behalf of Mr. Thompson) to S. S. Banks, 23 February, 1797, BMDCM, MS SSBI.29.
[153] Such infrequency of giving away Asian coins or receiving them from domestic collectors suggests that many British antiquarians' lack of interest in Asian numismatic exotica. The Indologist Edward Moor noted that many types of artworks and antiquities of considerable value in India were "not highly coveted in England." Moor, *Oriental Fragments* (London, 1834), 43; S. S. Banks, BMDCM, MS SSBI.22.

in mainland Britain primarily occurred within orientalist circles. The development of Sarah Banks's South Asian cabinet depended upon her access to social circles and circulation networks extending to the subcontinent associated with the EIC, returned imperial agents, and orientalists.

Metropolitan numismatists generally could only acquire Indian coins struck in South Asia through exchanges of information and specie with orientalists who transported collections to Britain or maintained channels of exchange with individuals in the subcontinent.[154] On at least seventy-seven occasions, Sarah Banks received coins from India or other reaches of Asia from at least fifty-one individuals in Britain.[155] During the late eighteenth century, Sarah Banks cultivated relationships with the two earliest European scholars of Asian numismatics — Marsden and the German orientalist Oluf Gerhard Tychsen — through exchanges of coins and information.[156] Both scholars took great interest in Banks's Indian coins and discussed her collection at meetings of antiquarian societies.[157] After receiving from Banks detailed lists and descriptions of her Asian coins, in December of 1798 Tychsen presented a paper on her Indian specie at a meeting of the *Königliche Gesellschaft der Wissenschaften* ("Royal Society of Sciences") in Göttingen.[158] Tychsen repaid his thanks by sending to her various numismatic publications as well as copies of his papers on Indian coins,[159] which Banks utilized in the organizating of her cabinets.[160] William Marsden also took interest in Banks's coins and the

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[154] S. S. Banks, BMDCM, MS SSBI.21, 55.
[155] Approximately one fifth of these gifters were women. S. S. Banks, BMDCM, MS SSBI.21.
[156] Tychsen's most noted publications are his works on West Asian coins, particularly his *Introductio In Rem Numariam Muhammedanorum* (Rostock, 1794).
[157] Blumenbach to Sir Joseph Banks, 19 September, 1798, in *The Scientific Correspondence of Sir Joseph Banks*, Vol. 4, Letter 1484, p. 554-5.
[158] John Friedrich Blumenbach to Joseph Banks, 20 December, 1798, in *The Scientific Correspondence of Sir Joseph Banks*, Vol. 4, Letter 1494, p. 567.
[159] John Friedrich Blumenbach to Joseph Banks, 28 September, 1800, *The Indian and Pacific Correspondence of Sir Joseph Banks, 1798-1801*, Vol. 5, ed. by Neil Chambers. (London: Pickering & Chatto, 2012), Letter 150, p 201.
[160] Sarah Banks cites Tychsen's *Introductio In Rem Numariam Muhammedanorum* (Rostock, 1794). S. S. Banks, Volume V, BMDCM, ARC R 18, Section 155, p 1.

ordering of her collection. As early as 1789 he transported some of Banks's coins to Dublin so they could be examined by prominent members of the Royal Irish Academy.[161] Marsden showed his thanks by presenting Indian, East Asian, European, and West Asian coins to Sarah Banks on at least fourteen occasions from 1789 to 1807.[162] In the following decades, he also contributed to her collection through the identification of Asian coins and the reproduction of Arabic inscriptions in her ledgers.[163] Moreover, this list contains fragments of letters from Marsden and his father-in-law, the orientalist Charles Wilkins, as well as small sketches explaining inscriptional and figurative elements of some South Asian coins.[164] Given how little information on Asian coins was available in European numismatic literature during this period, such annotations from orientalists was essential. However, Sarah Banks's intricately arranged and annotated cabinets and catalogues suggest that a lack of established methods for ordering Indian specie granted her much latitude in experimenting with organizational scheme.

The scarcity of Sarah Banks's Mughal rupees — particularly the zodiac issues of Emperor Jahangir— illuminates the importance of access to South Asian circulation networks in the formation of an Indian numismatic collection and in the integration of South Asian exotica into European organizational schema.[165] Following his return to Britain in 1779, William Marsden maintained relationships with Company officers, who transported their own impressive

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[161] William Marsden to Joseph Banks, 29 October, 1789, in *The Scientific Correspondence of Sir Joseph Banks*, Vol. 3, edited by Neil Chambers (London: Pickering & Chatto, 2007), Letter 953, p. 515.

[162] It is likely that Sarah Banks received coins from Marsden on numerous other occasions but recorded these pieces directly into her coin inventories rather than her lists of coins received as gifts.

[163] Her fifth volume contains Marsden's transcriptions of Nastaʿlīq calligraphic inscriptions of Turkish and North African coins. My thanks to Catherine Eagleton for confirming that this calligraphy was produced by William Marsden. In October of 1789, James Matra, the British Consul at Tangier, Morocco, also sent Sarah Banks lists of Arabic inscriptions on Turkish and North African coins. James Matra to Sir Joseph Banks 31 October, 1789, in Dawson, *The Banks Letters*, 594; S. S. Banks, Volume V, BMDCM, ARC R 18, Section 155 – Section 157.

[164] S. S. Banks, Volume V, BMDCM, ARC R 18, Section 155 – Section 162, Wilkins Letter Fragments, Section 162, p. 23-8.

[165] S. S. Banks, Volume V, BMDCM, ARC R 18, Section 159, p 1.

collections to Britain or who remained in India and sought out scarce coins for him. Orientalists in the subcontinent remarked how Indian art dealers, merchants in "the bazaars of the upper provinces," and agriculturists were a rich source of aged Indian specie.[166] For instance, the Scottish orientalists Henry Lowther and Colin Mackenzie noted that one means of forming a collection of ancient Indian specie was to "purchase them of the people who discovered them" when digging or tilling the land.[167] During the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, Marsden commissioned EIC officers in India to locate rare coins by tapping into these Indian numismatic circulation networks. Marsden requested Nathan Crow — the chief of the English factory at Surat — to search bazaars in order to accumulate and send to England any scarce, desirable specimens. In January of 1808, Crow "sent to England (with many other curious coins) a set of Zodiac-gold-muhrs." According to the factory chief, "money alone could not have procured those I send you; most of which I owe to the kind accommodation of a native of this place, named Dkunjee Shah Beltramund Khan."[168] As this arrangement suggests, British numismatists, much like orientalists in the subcontinent, relied upon South Asian circulation networks and Indian mediators in the movement of items into metropolitan cabinets.

At times, Company servants' acquisition of rare specie in India hinged upon their participation in longstanding South Asian political practices of ritualized coin exchanges between subordinates and superiors. The longstanding South Asian courtly ritual of the *darbar* (common assembly of ruler with subordinate local politicians) almost always featured an oath of allegiance taking the form of coin gifting — the *nazr* ceremony. Subordinates proved their loyalty by presenting locally-struck coins bearing inscriptions in the central ruler. Occasionally,

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[166] Anonymous, "Donation by Dr. Robert Tytler of a Collection of Coins to be Placed in the Company's Museum in England," October, 1821. BL IOR/F/4/699/18964.
[167] Henry Lowther to Colin Mackenzie, 27 October, 1814, BL Mss Eur F303/442.
[168] Marsden, *Numismata Orientalia Illustrata,* Vol. 2, 612-13.

the subordinates presented unearthed aged coins as well. During the eighteenth century, the EIC presented its own *nazr* to the Mughal emperor, [169] and the Governor General of the EIC gradually instituted the acceptance of *nazr* from prominent Indian subordinates.[170] South Asian practices of gifting specie were such a prominent component of courtly ceremony that it entered the political vocabularies and personal relations of Company servants in India and in Britain.[171] In March of 1787, Claud Martin — an EIC officer stationed at Lucknow — sent a number of zodiac rupees of Jahangir to the newly-appointed Governor General, Lord Cornwallis. Martin claimed that he was presenting his "humble Nazer to his Lordship with these improcurable coins. They are of a sort which his Lordship may remain twenty year in India and may not be perhaps able to collect such a number."[172] However, Cornwallis's Jahangir coins may not have been as old as Martin claimed. Martin's desire to engage with his superiors in a replication of the Mughal courtly ritual of coin exchange led him to commission Indian artisans to craft reproductions these rare zodiac pieces. Some of these fabricated coins changed hands in India before the owners transported them to Britain, where they entered circulation networks among exotica collectors and orientalist scholars. William Marsden strongly suspected that one of his own zodiac coins as well as one of the pieces in the cabinet of Richard Payne Knight were contemporary copies commissioned by Martin.[173] Despite the great scarcity of zodiac rupees and mohurs of Jahangir, Marsden did gift a few examples from his set to friends in Britain. While it is unclear whether Marsden first gave zodiac rupees to his father-in-law, Charles Wilkins, or if Wilkins acquired the coins from other

[169] Cohn, "Representing Authority in Victorian India," 637-42; Kate Brittlebank, *Tipu Sultan's Search for Legitimacy: Islam and Kingship in a Hindu Domain* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1997), 91-3, 98-100.
[170] Such as when Raja Nabakrishna Deb gifted Kalighat Hoard coins to Warren Hastings in 1783. Marsden, *Numismata Orientalia Illustrata,* Vol. 2, 726.
[171] The East India Company continued to present coins to the Emperor during *nazr* ceremonies until 1835. K. N. Pannikar, *British Diplomacy in North India: A Study of the Delhi Residency, 1803-1857* (New Delhi: Associated Publishing House, 1968), 141; Cohn, "Representing Authority in Victorian India," 641.
[172] Claude Martin to Colonel Alexander Ross, March 1793, BL IOR/H/741, ff. 133.
[173] Marsden, *Numismata Orientalia Illustrata,* Vol. 2, 615.

sources, Sarah Banks records receiving two examples (one most likely a contemporary copy) from Wilkins in March of 1798.[174] By the late eighteenth century, the circulation of Asian coins to Britain occurred as numismatic exchange rituals and circulation networks became inextricably interwoven. Indeed, by exchanging coins and numismatic information with orientalists and imperial agents, Sarah Banks tapped into a global circulation network which increasingly linked metropolitan numismatic practices to long-standing Indian courtly rituals.

As the "king" of social clubs with extensive ties to metropolitan and colonial material culture transmission networks,[175] Joseph Banks proved to be one of his sister's most important collaborators. On at least seventy-seven occasions her brother gave her coins that he acquired as forms of payment, as specimens for the Privy Council Committee on Coinage, and as tokens of good will from colleagues the world over. These coins ranged from a gold Anglo-Saxon piece unearthed in Kent to specie produced in Birmingham for circulation in India.[176] Joseph Banks's prestige in intellectual circles led to his frequent acquisition of items from colleagues in the colonies wishing to win his favor. Helenus Scott, a physician who corresponded with Joseph Banks concerning the Bombay Botanical gardens, sent many plant specimens and South Asian artifacts from the subcontinent to the Banks household in London.[177] In January, 1796, Scott sent a box containing varieties of seeds, "the God Gunnis [Ganesh] in clay," and "some…brass things which belonged to the Hindoo Temple of Chawghaut in the Malabar Country."[178] In June, 1801, Scott's latest parcel arrived at the Banks residence, containing a silver Mughal rupee of the

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[174] S. S. Banks, BMDCM, MS SSBI.21, 88.

[175] Peter Clark, *British Clubs and Societies, 1580-1800: The Origins of an Associational World* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 218.

[176] S. S. Banks, BMDCM, MS SSBI.21, 5-10, quote 8.

[177] Helenus Scott published an it-narrative, *Adventures of a Rupee* (London, 1782), describing how a rupee traveled to Britain and was for sale in a pawn shop. *Zaheer Baber, The Science of Empire: Scientific Knowledge, Civilization, and Colonial Rule in India (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1996), 168.*

[178] Dr. Helenus Scott to Sir Joseph Banks, *The Indian and Pacific Correspondence of Sir Joseph Banks,* Vol. 4, edited by Neil Chambers. (London: Pickering & Chatto, 2011), Letter 226, p. 347.

Emperor Shah Jahan struck at Surat and dated 1040 (1630-31 CE), which found a home in Sarah Banks's cabinet.[179] While Joseph Banks had few coins in his own collection, his participation in the Privy Council Committee on Coinage beginning in the mid-1780s encouraged colleagues to send to him specimens of authentic and spurious coins from Britain, the continent, the colonies, and other reaches of the globe.[180] Most of these pieces also ended up in Sarah Banks's cabinet. However, she acquired varieties of British-produced Indian specie — particularly, from the Birmingham coin manufacturer, Matthew Boulton — in return for assisting the Committee on Coinage in providing them with examples of circulating counterfeit British coins. The project of studying spurious specie and improving the coinage of Britain and the colonies was closely linked to processes of determining how to create oriental currency for the EIC and examining the coins used by — and, at times, produced by — the racialized lower orders of Britain.

The conjoined nature of the Committee's projects of improving British coinage, analyzing the physical features and modes of production of illicit coinages, and devising innovative Birmingham-produced Indian coinage illuminates the interwoven nature of British and oriental specie. Sarah Banks received British-produced Company coinage for circulation in India as a reward for her participation in Matthew Boulton's projects of accumulating and studying counterfeit coinage in Britain and India.[181] Joseph Banks's position on the Privy Council Committee on Coinage provided Sarah Banks with opportunities to cultivate personal relationships with Soho Mint officials, such as Boulton, at a time when they were devising new

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[179] S. S. Banks, Volume V, BMDCM, ARC R 18, Section 159, p 1.

[180] Eagleton, "Collecting African Money in Georgian London," 26.

[181] According to the magistrate Patrick Colquhoun in 1797, "The [counterfeit] coinage of base copper…goes on with impunity." Moreover, "no punishment whatever can be inflicted by any existing law on the owner or proprietor of such tools for making [counterfeit] copper money," particularly if the perpetrators were producing "evasive" half pence or farthings "varying in the stamp in any degree from the current coin of the realm." Colquhoun, *A Treatise on the Police of the Metropolis; Containing a Detail of the Various Crimes and Misdemeanors by Which Public and Private Property and Security are, at Present, Injured and Endangered: and Suggesting Remedies for their Prevention* (London, 1797), 125.

types of coinages to be used primarily by the populations of India or the oriental-like social sectors of Britain. As the Soho Mint "manufacture[d] copper coin for [the EIC's] settlements in India" in the 1780s-1790s, officers of the Royal Mint, Joseph Banks, and others on the Committee on Coinage also collaborated with Boulton on improving domestic British coinage.[182] Throughout the Georgian period, a very considerable percentage of farthings, half pennies, and other lower-denomination coins in circulation in Britain was fraudulent.[183] In 1791 Matthew Boulton bemoaned to Joseph Banks that some circulating counterfeit coinage had its origins from dies "stolen from me" and "made a dishonourable use of."[184] The prevalence of illicit coinage in concert with frequent money shortages led local businesses, organizations, and political groups to commission Boulton and other manufacturers to produce penny, half penny, and farthing token coinage bearing a wide variety of images — advertisements, political messages, and a raft of other textual and visual messages.[185] In effect, a number of organizations produced and circulated with impunity trade card-like tokens as small change from the 1780s to the 1810s.[186] However, such great diversity of circulating specie encouraged forgers to produce the "basest imitations" of trade tokens "diminished in purity and weight."[187] **(Figure 23)** While Royal Mint officials found it cost-efficient to allow counterfeiters and other private manufacturers to supply Britain's lower-classes with small-denomination coinage, Joseph Banks

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[182] Anonymous, [Privy Council Committee on Coinage], "Report on counterfeiting, June 1789," Sir Joseph Banks Papers, State Library of New South Wales (SLNSW), Series 85.05, 2.
[183] Boulton speculated that two-thirds to three-fourths of all small-denomination copper coinage in circulation was counterfeit. Birmingham was both the location of production of legitimate Soho mint coins as well as one the major centers of counterfeiting. A 1789 Privy Council report stated that it was very "common a custom among many of the lower class of manufacturers and traders to purchase these counterfeit halfpence" to pay their workers. In fact, counterfeiters routinely removed authentic farthings and half pennies from circulation and melted them down as raw copper for striking underweight fake coinage. Anonymous [Privy Council Committee on Coinage], "Report on counterfeiting, June 1789," SLNSW, Series 85.05, 1.
[184] Matthew Boulton to Joseph Banks, 22 December, 1791, in Dawson, *The Banks Letters*, 127.
[185] Doty, *The Soho Mint & The Industrialization of Money,* 15.
[186] Token coinage which was greatly dissimilar in appearance to official Royal specie did not impinge upon the Royal Mint's prerogative. Selgin, *Good Money,* 44.
[187] Wright, Preface to *An Arrangement of Provincial Coins and Tokens*, unpaginated preface.

Figure 23. Left: Authentic Thomas Warwick and Sons Trade Token. Lancaster, Great Britain. Minted in Birmingham. 1792. Bronze Half Penny. (Private Collection). 29 millimeters. Right: A Crude Contemporary Counterfeit Trade Token. Lancaster, Great Britain. Probably Minted in Birmingham. Dated 1792, but probably struck a few years later. (Private Collection.) 25 millimeters. United States quarter included in image for scale.

and the Committee on Coinage had to determine "how the legal coins of this kingdom could be improved, and the counterfeit coins" removed from circulation.[188] The manufacturer and the Committee members gathered circulating counterfeit coins so that the Soho Mint could develop

[188] Anonymous [Privy Council Committee on Coinage], "Report on counterfeiting, June 1789," SLNSW, Series 85.05, 2.

Indian and British coinage with increasingly secure design features. Sarah Banks aided her brother and Boulton in amassing specimens and information on counterfeiting practices in Britain, resulting in a symbiotic relationship providing the manufacturer with more data on counterfeiting and granting the collector more specimens of domestic and Indian coinage.

Sarah Banks's contributions to the Committee by providing examples and data relating to circulating counterfeit British coins revealed the revamping of domestic and Indian specie to be a unified project of examining the "oriental" qualities of coins of India and of spurious coinage of Britain.[189] Indeed, the study of counterfeit coin of Britain was integral to the improvement of the security features of Indian specie, particularly given that metropolitan counterfeiters were a major source of spurious South Asian coinage.[190] Soon after Sarah Banks began her numismatic collection, she had unusual predilection for seeking out fake British coinage. In May, 1781 she approached a man on Oxford Street "with a horseload" of fake King George II halfpennies in order to acquire an example.[191] Into the early nineteenth century, Banks presented Boulton with fraudulent Soho-produced coinage, from which he gathered data on how to make his British and colonial coinage designs further resistant to counterfeiting.[192] Banks knew that her gifts of counterfeit British specie encouraged Bouton to gift her Birmingham-produced Indian coins. Joseph Banks informed Boulton in 1789 that any coins he sent would not go to "an ungrateful

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[189] The British Museum only lists four contemporary counterfeit coins in the S. S. Banks collection at the time of its donation in 1818 – a 1797 Penny, two trade token "druid" pennies, and one trade token half penny. She gave all of her other counterfeit specie and tokens to Boulton. British Museum Numbers: SSB,23.1.1; SSB,184.48; SSB,184.42; SSB,186.112.3.

[190] According to Patrick Colquhoun in 1797, British counterfeiters had "extend[ed] their manufacture to those of India; and a coinage of the star pagoda of Arcot has been established in London for some years." These British-produced fake South Asian coins were "introduced by a variety of channels into India, where they are probably mixed with the real pagodas of the country, and pass at their full denominated value of eight shillings sterling." Colquhoun, *A Treatise on the Police of the Metropolis,* 19-20.

[191] Sarah Banks desired the example because it was fraudulent. S. S. Banks, B. M. D. C. M., SSBII.58, 3.

[192] Joseph Banks to Matthew Boulton, 4 August, 1804, in Dawson, *The Banks Letters*, 141. My thanks to Catherine Eagleton for confirming that Sarah Banks presented Boulton with counterfeit coins frequently.

person if you place them in the hands of my sister."[193] Similarly, in December of 1791, Joseph Banks wrote to Boulton that "my sister is a great pusher" in desiring for him to send further examples of scarcer Birmingham-produced coins.[194] The following month she received from him "1/50 Rupee 1791 (2), 1/66 of a Rupee (2), 1/100 of a Rupee (2), 1/200 of a Rupee (2)" struck at the Soho Mint for circulation in Bombay. Throughout the 1790s, Boulton gave to Sarah Banks circulation strikes and patterns [prototypes] of EIC coinage.[195] In May, 1804, a Soho-Mint coinage designer, John Philip, wrote to her that "Mr. Boulton has given me permission to send, and also to preserve for your valuable collection, an impression from every new coin that may hereafter be struck at Soho."[196] The manufacturers' continuous gifts to Sarah Banks went beyond tokens of good will or gratitude to the famed botanist for his role as a liaison between the Soho Mint and the Privy Council Committee on Coinage. Rather, these contributions to her cabinets were an acknowledgement of Sarah Banks's important participation in the Committee's activities by providing examples and data. Thus, much as Sarah Banks's associations with orientalists granted her access to circulation networks of Indian-struck specie in mainland Britain, her collaboration with Boulton and the Committee on Coinage allowed her to acquire examples of Birmingham-produced South Asian specie flowing from Britain to the subcontinent. Although her examples never left Britain and only small numbers of Birmingham EIC coins ever actually circulated in India, Sarah Banks taxonomized her specimens in her cabinets as Indian. Indeed,

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[193] Joseph Banks to Matthew Boulton, August, 1789, quoted in Eagleton, "Collecting African Money in Georgian London," 26.

[194] Joseph Banks to Matthew Boulton, 19 December, 1791, in Dawson, *The Banks Letters*, 127; Matthew Boulton to Joseph Banks, 22 December, 1791, in Dawson, *The Banks Letters*, 127.

[195] By March, 1804, Joseph Banks requested Boulton to send a complete list of EIC coinage struck at Birmingham so that his sister could be certain that she had in her South Asia cabinet an example of every piece of Indian coinage he had ever produced. Joseph Banks to Matthew Boulton, 28 March, 1804, in Dawson, *The Banks Letters*, 138; S. S. Banks, BMDCM, MS SSBI.21, 15.

[196] Boulton and Philip's generosity promoted good relations with Joseph Banks and other members of the Committee on Coinage, leading to continued governmental contracts in striking domestic and colonial coinage. John Philip to Sarah Banks, 18 May, 1804, BMDCM, MS SSBII.72.

tokens bearing Asian motifs, spurious coins, and EIC coinage struck in Britain could appear to Banks and other collectors as carrying an oriental air. Thus, while many South Asians rejected Birmingham-produced Indian coins for seeming too unlike local coinages,[197] Sarah Banks's categorization of her specimens as oriental material culture revealed the possibility of oriental and British material culture originating in either Britain or India.

Conclusion

In August, 1803 the British travel writer and politician George Annesley, the artist and antiquarian Henry Salt, and a number of Indian guides sought out ancient artworks and spiritual images among the ruins of Canouge near Lucknow. The British travelers expressed disappointment that "no buildings of any consequence remain[ed]" and the "great many" images of deities were "too much broken to be interesting." After some time one of the Indian attendants uncovered "a few of the coins which are found amongst the ruins." However, these unremarkable specimens were "small, and irregularly shaped, with Sanskrit characters" and featured an unidentified "Hindoo deity on one side."[198] The following October, Colonel Charles "Hindoo" Stuart sent to Annesley a far more noteworthy coin "recently recovered from the ruins of Canouge." According to Stuart, "the figures appear to be Indian – Maha Deva and his consort on one face, and on the reverse, the goddess seated on a lion." Despite their familiarity with South Asian numismatics, Stuart and his associate Captain Yule "failed of ascertaining the inscription." Although the specimen was "enveloped in a glorious obscurity," it would have "superior

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[197] Although Banks and other Britons designated Birmingham-struck EIC coinage as Indian, South Asian peoples generally disliked these coins since they seemed to them to be "European rather than Oriental." Marsden, *Numismata Orientalia Illustrata,* Vol. 2, 750.

[198] George Annesley, *Voyages and Travels in India, Ceylon, the Red Sea, Abyssinia, and Egypt, in the Years 1802, 1803, 1804, 1805, and 1806*, Volume 1 (London, 1809), 188-9.

estimation in the eye of the [British] antiquary" given the multifarious interpretations such a coin could receive. For Stuart, "even weak conjectures have their use." But metropolitan antiquarians would most likely view this remarkable South Asian specimen as akin to a Hellenic coin "struck in commemoration of Alexander's interview with the Amazonian Queen Thalestris [and] exhibiting Cybels in a war character."[199] Although this specimen could be understood through comparison and analogy to Greco-Roman specie, for orientalists coins of this sort could take on diverse meanings and readings, existing in cabinets as South Asian or as an intersection of forms.

This chapter has presented a case study revealing how imperial expansion in South Asia and the consequent material counterflows to Britain yielded transformations in long-established British practices of collecting, circulating, and display of numismatic specimens. Sarah Banks and her collaborators applied innovative European theories of taxonomy, arrangement, and display in order to reframe the numismatic cabinet as a tool for integrating the spoils of empire and delineating geographic and cultural relationships between the metropolis and imperial spaces. Since numismatic study and philosophies of ordering were intimately tied to parallel practices of arrangement and display of sculpture, texts, and myriad other types of objects, the numismatic cabinet was a laboratory of experimentation for integrating and normalizing Indian exotica in British locations of display. However, her categorization of certain types of British-produced coins as Asian, her designation of Indian-produced EIC coinage struck on European equipment as South Asian, and her uncertainty of how to configure various licit and spurious British and Indian pieces suggests that while the spoils of empire were increasingly common, the Britishness or orientalness of certain items and geographies remained ambiguous, contingent, and contested. Moreover, this chapter has suggested that numismatic practice was not necessarily

[199] Charles Stuart to Lord Valentia [George Annesley], 3 October, 1803. BL Add MS 19346, f. 56.

a masculine, gentlemanly, or even necessarily British practice. Contemporary literature and archival sources — as well as most recent scholarship on the social dynamics of numismatics — have focused upon numismatic practices as being masculine, gentlemanly pursuits. By presenting a case study of Sarah Banks illuminating her collaborations and numismatic experimentation, this chapter has underscored the important participation of women and individuals outside of domestic metropolitan gentlemanly clubs in the circulation of numismatic information, specimens, and methods. While Sarah Banks may have been unusual in terms of both the breadth of her collection and her ease of access to global circulation networks, this chapter has revealed contemporary reports of the participation of women in the construction of formidable collections, indicating that numismatic practice was not necessarily as gendered as scholars have presumed.

CHAPTER 5

"Cast Them to the Moles and Bats"[1]: The Circulation and Display of South Asian Images and Antiquities in London Museums, 1750-1820

Introduction

After eight years of exhibiting his collections at his homes in Manchester and Lancashire, in 1774 Ashton Lever opened his Leverian Museum, or Holophusicon, in London.[2] Lever advertised his collection of "many rare, beautiful, and undescribed beasts, birds, fishes, insects, shells, corals, shells, antiques, matters of art, and miscellaneous articles that can be seen in no other cabinet" to metropolitan audiences.[3] As increasing numbers of visitors from across the social spectrum marveled at Lever's collections, the Holophusicon gained recognition as one of the most expansive and impressive museums in Britain.[4] By 1783 Lever's museum contained South Asian weaponry, musical instruments, clothing, parasols, coins, incense burners, spiritual images, and other "artificial curiosities" from Asia.[5] Although Lever's Indian items attracted the attention of orientalists,[6] this material had association with unidentifiable, grotesque, and

[1] Mr. Powell to Mr. Rippon, May, 1800, in *The Missionary Magazine for 1801: A Periodical Monthly Publication Intended as a Repository of Discussion and Intelligence Respecting The Progress of the Gospel Throughout the World,* Vol. 6 (London, 1801), 252.
[2] Adrienne L. Kaeppler, *Holophusicon: The Leverian Museum: An Eighteenth-Century English Institution of Science, Curiosity, and Art* (Altenstadt, Germany: ZKF Publishers, 2011), 5-8.
[3] Anonymous [Ashton Lever], *Morning Post and Daily Advertiser* (London, England), Saturday, 14 November, 1778; Issue 1896.
[4] Sophie von La Roche, *Sophie in London, Being a Diary of Sophia La Roche,* Claire Williams, trans. (London, 1788, 1933 edition), 156.
[5] Adrienne L. Kaeppler, "Tracing the History of Hawaiian Cook Voyage Artifacts in the Museum of Mankind," in *Captain Cook and the South Pacific*, edited by T. C. Mitchell (London: British Museum Press, 1979), 168-9; Anonymous, *A Companion to the Museum, (Late Sir Ashton Lever's): Removed to Albion Street, the Surry End of Black Friars Bridge* (London, 1790), 26, 46; Kaeppler, *Holophusicon,* 235-7.
[6] In 1780 Alexander Dalrymple used images of Lever's Hindu "idols" in presenting a report to the Society of Antiquaries. Dalrymple, "Account of the Curious Pagodas Near Bombay, Drawn Up by Captain Pyke, Who was Afterwarded Governor of St. Helena," *Archaeologia*, Vol. VII (London, 1785): 323-32.

"curious" artworks displayed at fairs and other public entertainments of the lower orders.[7] Lever's advertisements boasted of the noteworthy persons who had admired his collection. Yet, the Holophusicon admitted visitors of lower statuses and featured items not in accordance with polite aesthetic sensibilities, casting an air of otherness over the assemblage.[8] The reputation of the Holophusicon as a popular spectacle rather than a gentlemanly collection survived Lever's death in 1788. After acquiring the entire assemblage in 1786, James Parkinson resolved to preserve it as a public amusement. But financial hardship forced him to sell it at auction in 1806.[9] The painter Joseph Farington reflected that prior to the sale Parkinson offered the Leverian collection to British government for £20,000. Since Members of Parliament had little interest in the offer, they "referred it to Sir Joseph Banks who *disapproved of purchasing it.*"[10] Indeed, for the British Museum Trustees, the Holophusicon's copious "artificial curiosities" and reputation as a popular attraction tainted the collection as impolite or orientalized.

In the eighteenth century, different forms of public museums emerged rooted in interlinked traditions of collecting and public display. London museums admitted certain sectors of the populace, emphasized specific types of material culture, and employed modes of display based upon the function of the collection as a popular commercial spectacle, a repository of

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[7] Kenneth Hudson, *A Social History of Museums: What Visitors Thought* (Atlantic Highlands, New Jersey: Humanities Press, 1975), 25-6.

[8] In September, 1773 Lever published a notice stating that he "was tired out with the insolence of the common people." Lever resolved to refuse "admittance to the lower class." But these persons continued to gain admission. Although the President of the Royal Society and the King and Queen toured in the 1770s, "more than 18,000 persons were admitted" in a single year. J.M. [Ashton Lever], *Gazetteer and New Daily Advertiser* (London, England), Wednesday, March 22, 1775; Issue 14375; Anonymous [Lever], *Morning Post and Daily Advertiser* (London, England), Saturday, June 6, 1778; Issue 1758; Anonymous [Ashton Lever], *Daily Advertiser* (London, England), Friday, February 9, 1776; Issue 14085; Richard D. Altick, *The Shows of London* (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1978), 28.

[9] Lever disposed of the collection by lottery in 1786. Kaeppler, *Holophusicon,* 10-11, 15-18.

[10] According to Farington, Banks "hated Sir Ashton Lever, [and] therefore hates the collection." Joseph Farington, "Wednesday, 9 July, 1806," in *The Diary of Joseph Farington,* Vol. 6, edited by Kathryn Cave (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1982), 2807. Farington's emphasis.

information, or an exclusive gallery.[11] One form of museum – originating as fairs, street festivals, coffee houses, and similar venues – used of exotica and other aesthetically-incongruent items as spectacles appealing to lower echelons.[12] For some observers, displays of exotica and other "curiosities" encouraged debauched behaviors in observers. Because there was not always a clear-cut distinction between orientalized popular attractions and polite British galleries, administrators of institutions such as the British Museum (BM) on Great Russell Street, missionary museums in London and Bristol, and the East India House museum on Leadenhall Street each had distinct ways of incorporating Asian exotica while also defining their collections, exhibitions, and social spaces in contrast to such "unruly" spectacles.

This chapter explores how the influx of South Asian material culture both reflected and encouraged transformations in the form and function of museums during the Georgian period. In order to identify why certain museums collected and displayed Indian and other "oriental" items, it is necessary to illuminate the particular types of materials acquired and displayed, from where the institutions acquired them, the methods of acquisition, the association of these materials with certain types of British collectors, and how popular and museological attitudes towards Indian exotica transformed in light of imperial developments and the advancement of orientalist scholarship. The siege of Srirangapatna (Seringapatam) in 1799 and the 1801 British confiscation of Egyptian antiquities from the French at Alexandria channeled many items into London museums and transformed some of the orientalizing material culture of "the east" into

[11] Susan M. Pearce suggests that there were two forms - exclusive elite museums and popular attractions. However, this dichotomy overlooks the function of each museum and the particular clientele who visited them. Pearce, *On Collecting: An Investigation into Collecting in the European Tradition* (London: Routledge, 1995), 124-9.

[12] Most notably "Don Saltero's" Coffee House and William Bullock's Egyptian Hall in Piccadilly. John Salter, *A Catalogue of the Rarities to Be Seen at Don Saltero's Coffee-House in Chelsea* (London, 1729, 1783); Michael P. Costeloe, *William Bullock: Connoisseur and Virtuoso: Piccadilly to Mexico* (Bristol: HiPLAM, 2008), 40-56.

the spoils of empire.[13] Thus, larger quantities of oriental materials appeared on display, complicating museums' functions either as collections of art or as repositories of information concerning India and other parts of the empire. This chapter details how museum administrators could use Asian and European items to negotiate the Britishness or orientalness of sections of these spaces of display. This study examines three prominent London museum spaces — the British Museum, the libraries and galleries of the East India House, and missionary museums. Each collected, displayed, and circulated South Asian and other "oriental" items. However, the presences, absences, and physical arrangements of South Asian art, antiquities, and spiritual images in different museums were not static, reflecting dynamic and competing British attitudes, as well as trustees, curators, and other administrators' perceptions of the function and expected viewership of such items. I argue that while the British Museum, the India House museum, and missionary museums were social institutions catering to the interests and assumptions of their overseers, their accumulation and display of Indian items both reflected and informed the competing definitions of Britishness held by their respective administrators and visitors.

The three sections in this chapter each address how and why one of these museums acquired and displayed South Asian material culture, reflecting administrators' understandings of Britishness, non-Britishness, and orientalness. The first explores the British Museum's procurement and exhibition of Indian items, as well as how these displays changed in form and function as the Georgian period progressed. The BM held Asian artworks and antiquities from its inception. Yet, during its first decades, donations of Indian items were infrequent and their display was never prominent. From its very formation in 1756, the Trustees believed that the Museum would be "a public institution subject to the visitors of the judicious and intelligent."

[13] Maya Jasanoff, *Edge of Empire: Lives, Culture, and Conquest in the East, 1750-1850* (New York: Vintage, 2005), 172-5, 222-5.

Thus, elaborate application and ticketing processes excluded most persons of the lower orders. Given the supposedly refined tastes of admitted visitors, curators put forth "no expense… towards preparing cabinets for…Indian, Chinese, and other modern curiosities."[14] By marginalizing Indian and other Asian items — and giving pride of place to naturalia and Greco-Roman antiquities in accordance with elite tastes — the British Museum was a distinctively polite, British space functioning as a zone of fashionable sociability. However, once it received spoils of Srirangapatna and Egypt beginning in the early nineteenth century, the BM could have orientalized spaces existing alongside galleries housing European masterworks.

Section two addresses how the East India Company's India House functioned as a corporate headquarters, a salesroom for Asian goods in Britain, an area of Anglo-Indian sociability, and an "oriental repository" of Indian texts and other material culture. Although EIC projects of accumulating texts and antiquities had been occurring for decades,[15] by 1800 the Company's London headquarters expanded to contain a research library and a museum housing spoils of imperial expansion. I claim that the social spaces and libraries of the India House were defined by a particular conception of Britishness undergirded by Anglo-Indian identity and experience. By 1800 the India House appeared as a classicized metropolitan structure. Yet, it also held one of the largest collections in Britain of Indian artworks, texts, antiquities, and naturalia. Rather than being an orientalized space in London, EIC officers understood this museum as containing spoils of war and valuable sources of information aiding orientalist studies, colonial governance, and the overall interests of the British empire in India.

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[14] Anonymous, "Proposal of a Plan" [For Setting up the British Museum], 27 August, 1756. Trustees Manuscripts Vol. 1. British Museum Central Archive (BMCA) Shelf Mark (SM) OP: Trustees Manuscripts (TM), 40, 45.
[15] C. A. Bayly, *Empire and Information: Intelligence Gathering and Social Communication in India, 1780-1870* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 49-53; Toby Falk and Mildred Archer, *Indian Miniatures in the India Office Library* (London: Sotheby, 1981), 16-20, 26-7.

The third section examines how by the early nineteenth century missionary museums' collections served as trophies of spiritual conquest and the preservation of Christianity rather than contaminants in Britain. Protestant missionaries in the subcontinent and administrators in Britain feared that "the immorality of the Calcutta congregation was as notorious as the sun at the noon day!"[16] White-town spiritual degradation through the embrace of Hinduism threatened Britons abroad but also flowed back home through orientalized Anglo-Indians. For these missionaries, Christianity and its preservation were imbricated with their delineations of Britishness. I argue that in addition to providing examples of "heathen" images, missionary museums' display of Asian spiritual items verified missionaries' published accounts of their efforts to maintain the Christian, British character of European communities in the subcontinent.

I. "It is Governed By an Aristocracy"[17]: Polite and Orientalized Spaces In the British Museum

Prior to his death in 1805, the renowned antiquarian, art collector, and British Museum Trustee Charles Townley arranged for his collections of Greco-Roman sculpture and other items to be offered for sale to the Museum.[18] Joseph Planta, the Principal Librarian of the Museum, reported to the Trustees in September, 1806 that "the ancient Marbles, Terra Cottas, [and] 2 bronze statues of Apollo and Hercules" were "purchased by Parliament…[and] deposited in the British Museum."[19] Although these sizeable sculptures eventually found a home in the

[16] John Bowen, *Missionary Incitement and Hindoo Demoralization: Including Some Observations on the Political Tendency of the Means Taken to Evangelize Hindoostan* (London, 1821), 35.
[17] Joseph Farington, "Thursday, 13 December, 1810," in *The Diary of Joseph Farington,* Vol. 10, edited by Kathryn Cave (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1982), 3821-22.
[18] Anonymous, "Extract Copied from Charles Townley's Will, 29 Nov. 1802." BMCA, Townley Collection. TY18/1, ff1-3.
[19] Anonymous, "General Meetings of the Trustees, Minutes," 16 September, 1806. Vol. 8. BMCA, SM C, 2296-7.

Museum's "Townley Gallery,"[20] the Trustees only accepted a portion of Townley's collections. Indeed, they were initially only interested in his ancient European sculptures rather than his miscellaneous antiquities and exotica, including items from South Asia. After John Townley offered the remaining pieces for £8,200 in May, 1814, a subcommittee of Trustees agreed to the proposal.[21] This collection included Indian items Townley purchased at auctions, received as gifts, or bought from imperial agents.[22] The Museum's acceptance of these materials a decade later suggests patterns over time relating to which types of items it acquired and displayed.

Having its mid-century origins in the merging of Sir Hans Sloane's collections, the Harlian and Cottonian manuscripts and books, and the Royal library,[23] the British Museum remained throughout the eighteenth century a heterogeneous collection of naturalia, works of art, and antiquities as it received donations from around the globe.[24] Following the purchase of the Sir William Hamilton collection of Etruscan and classical vases in 1772, the British Museum's administrators promoted the display of Greco-Roman antiquities and fine contemporary European artworks in crafting a polite British space.[25] With the exception of Joseph Banks, Charles Townley, and a few others, during the eighteenth-century most of the Trustees and

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[20] Townley collaborated in designing this 1808 addition. Charles Townley, "Sketch Plans by CT of the Proposed Extensions of the Museum," 1803. BMCA, Townley Collection. TY7/2229-2230, ff1-2; David M. Wilson, *The British Museum: A History* (London: British Museum Press, 2002), 64-6.

[21] John Townley was Charles Townley's uncle and heir to the collections. Sir Henry Ellis, "Diaries and Memoranda of Sir Henry Ellis, No. 2," 14 May, 1814, 17 May, 1814. British Library (BL) Add MS 36653/2, f. 30.

[22] Some of these items, such as the finial supposedly from Tipu Sultan's throne, were supposed spoils of Srirangapatna. "Leopard's (Tiger's?) Head Finial," British Museum Number: OA+.10617; Robert Skelton, *The Indian Heritage: Court Life and Arts Under Mughal Rule* (London: Victoria & Albert Museum, 1982), 124.

[23] Anonymous, "Proposals for the Establishment of the British Museum, viz. 'the Removal of the Sloanian Library and the Natural and Artificial Curiosities, The Cottonian Library, & Mr. [Maj. Arthur] Edwards's Books and The Harleian Manuscripts.'" BL Add MS 4449, ff. 82-114.

[24] The BM held naturalia and "artificial curiosities" from India, East Asia, Africa, and the Pacific. Yet, their placement in rooms containing heterogeneous, *wunderkammer*-like assemblages divested individual items of meanings derived from their original context. Anonymous, "Book of Presents," Vol. 1-2. BMCA SM: Book of Presents (BP), unpaginated; Edward Miller, *That Noble Cabinet: A History of the British Museum* (Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Press, 1974), 45-8, 52.

[25] Wilson, *The British Museum,* 45-8; Stephanie Moser, *Wondrous Curiosities: Ancient Egypt at the British Museum* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006), 220.

librarians had little interest in exhibiting human-made exotica from "the orient."[26] Although the Trustees held the ultimate authority to purchase or accept items for the Museum,[27] the arrival in the BM of trophies of war taken by the British nation, the EIC, and various individuals complicated its function. Following the influx of Indian and Egyptian artifacts in the early nineteenth century, the Museum remained a primarily elite, British space. However, the arrival of these notable imperial spoils forced the Museum's administrators to acquiesce to there being both polite spaces and orientalized sections of the institution.

Locating the British Museum at Montague House — a capacious mansion on the edge of London — rather than within a new structure tailored to the exhibition of artworks revealed the Trustees' vision of the BM as an elite space continuing to exhibit the collections of deceased individuals. Although the Trustees and other administrators transformed the structure from a peer's residence into a gallery capable of accommodating both the collections and visitors, the Museum remained an exclusive space containing a number of divided collections.[28] The tours were very brief, revealing the Trustees' desire to minimize both the number of visitors and the amount of information imparted to them.[29] Many found the tour to be disappointing because the guide moved quickly from room to room, giving only an overview of each.[30] According to one

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[26] Steven Hooper, *Pacific Encounters: Art & Divinity in Polynesia, 1760-1860* (London: The British Museum Press, 2006), 68-9.
[27] Moser, *Wondrous Curiosities*, 220.
[28] Constructed in the late seventeenth century, Montague House underwent substantial alterations after the Trustees purchased it. Through gifts from Joseph Banks and others, the BM's grounds became one of the finest pleasure gardens in London. Marjorie Caygill and Christopher Date, *Building the British Museum* (London: British Museum Press, 1999), 12-14; Wilson, *The British Museum,* 34; Anonymous, "General Meetings of the Trustees, Minutes," 15 March, 1771. Vol. 5. BMCA, SM C, 1294.
[29] During the latter half of the eighteenth century, tours of fifteen persons began on the second floor and ended with the library rooms on the first floor. Anonymous [A. Thompson], *Letters on the British Museum* (London, 1767), 3-6; Miller, *That Noble Cabinet,* 64-5; Moser, *Wondrous Curiosities*, 47-8.
[30] The historian William Hutton concluded that "when a man spends two minutes in a room, in which [there] are a thousand things to demand his attention, he cannot find time to bestow on them a glance a piece." William Hutton, *A Journey from Birmingham to London* (Birmingham, 1785), 190.

observer, anyone who ventures into the Museum "will return neither wiser nor better."[31] The physical design of the BM, the arrangement of the displays, the rapidity of tours, and the seemingly arbitrary restrictions reveal the Trustees' intentions of reserving information as the domain of the privileged and maintaining the Museum as an elite, British space.

Although the Museum was a "public institution subject to the visitors of the judicious and intelligent, as well as curious" persons of all echelons free of cost,[32] the Trustees established elaborate application and ticketing systems limiting the numbers admitted. Restrictive hours, long delays between the time of application and admittance, and scrutiny of applicants ensured that all but leisured men and women would not be able to visit.[33] Some individuals — including a number of women artists and connoisseurs — with close ties to the Trustees occasionally received permission to sketch the sculptures or tour the galleries on their own.[34] High demand for tickets, rules permitting only fifteen persons to tour each hour, routine denial of applicants, and an intentionally-mysterious approval process resulted in many individuals waiting months.[35] Despite these obstacles, the Trustees' occasional examinations of "the lists of those who had lately been admitted" revealed that a portion of those touring the Museum were "mechanics and person of the lower class."[36] In 1801 Joseph Banks and Joseph Planta noted that "every person, whatever his station may be has an equal right to demand and to receive tickets." However,

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[31] Anonymous, *The Ambulator; or, the Stranger's Companion in a Tour Round London* (London, 1774), xxi.
[32] Anonymous, "Proposal of a Plan," 27 August, 1756. Trustees Manuscripts Vol. 1. BMCA SM OP: TM, 40.
[33] Acquiring tickets required giving one's occupation, residence, and social standing. The librarians examined the list of applicants in order to determine "whether the persons so applying be proper to be admitted according to the regulations." Robert Dodsley, *London and Its Environs Described* (London, 1761), quote 19-20; Anonymous [Joseph Planta?], "Directions Respecting the Reading Room of the British Museum," ca. 1814. BL Add MS 36269, f. 193; Derek Cash, *Access to Museum Culture: the British Museum from 1753 to 1836*, British Museum Occasional Papers No. 133 (London: The British Museum Press, 2002), 1-3.
[34] Sarah Banks, Joseph Banks's sister, frequented the Museum. Sir Henry Ellis, "Diaries and Memoranda of Sir Henry Ellis, No. 2," 24 November, 1813. BL Add MS 36653/2, f. 9; For women sketching items in the BM, see, for instance, Anonymous, "General Meetings of the Trustees, Minutes," 14 January, 1809. Vol. 9. BMCA, SM C, 2405.
[35] Edward Edwards, *Lives of the Founders of the British Museum* (London, 1870), 338; Carl Philip Moritz, *Travels in England in 1782* (London, 1795, 1888 edition), 56.
[36] Anonymous, "General Meetings of the Trustees, Minutes," 16 January, 1784. Vol. 7. BMCA, SM C, 1857-8.

"persons of low education who visit the collection from mere motives of idle curiosity" were in the same tour groups as educated elites, resulting in "the senseless questions of the former continually interrupt[ing] all rational communication between the officers and the latter." Banks and Planta asserted that allowing the lower orders into the Museum subjected the collections to "the rude hands of the crowd" and, ultimately, "neither they nor the Public can ever hope to derive the least portion of permanent advantage" from their presence.[37] For the Trustees, circumscribing the "Public" as primarily educated middling persons and elites protected the collection and also preserved the BM as both polite and British.[38] These limitations reflected the Trustees' vision of the BM as a repository of notable individuals' private collections rather than a singular institutional assemblage truly open to the general populace.

The exclusivity of the British Museum throughout the Georgian Period was intimately linked to the collections' origins as the private cabinets of British elites who only granted access to carefully-selected persons. While the Museum held many books and manuscripts from its inception, most of its artworks, antiquities, naturalia, and other items were once the property of Sir Hans Sloane and other prominent donors.[39] Following the opening of the Museum to visitors

[37] Joseph Planta, "A Draft of Some Arguments Against Admitting All Persons Gratis Who Apply for Permission to See the British Museum," 18 May, 1801, Trustees Manuscripts Vol. 2. BMCA SM OP: TM, 745-6.
[38] By the early nineteenth century, continued frustrations by those seeking tickets encouraged the Trustees to admit larger numbers. But the officers on duty still had the responsibility to inspect all visitors based upon appearance and comportment, denying admittance to all "found exceptionable." Rudolph Ackermann, "Account of the New Gallery of the British Museum," in *The Repository of Arts, Literature, Commerce, Manufactures, Fashions, and Politics*, Volume 3 (London, 1810), 261; Cash, *Access to Museum Culture,* 65-70; Joseph Planta, "Report Concerning the Admission of Strangers," 18 February, 1808. Trustees Manuscripts Vol. 2. BMCA SM OP: TM, 865-8; Anonymous [Joseph Planta], "Regulations for General Admission," ca. 1814. BL Add MS 36269, f. 194.
[39] As president of the Royal Society from 1685 and as physician to the Royal Family during the eighteenth century, Sloane and his collection held great social prestige. Anonymous, "Proposals for the Establishment of the British Museum," 1754. BL Add MS 4449, ff. 82-114; Anonymous, "Proposal of a Plan," 27 August, 1756. Trustees Manuscripts Vol. 1. BMCA SM OP: TM, 40-5; James Delbourgo, "Collecting Hans Sloane," in *From Books to Bezoars: Sir Hans Sloane and his Collections,* edited by Alison Walker, et al (London: British Library Publishing, 2012), 16-21; James Delbourgo, *Collecting the World: Hans Sloane and the Origins of the British Museum* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2017), xxviii.

in 1759, the Trustees treated the BM as a gallery of donors' collections.[40] Thus, when tours of the Museum moved from room to room, they often also moved from collection to collection. One of the first spaces visitors encountered in the BM was the "Presents Room," which contained a heterogeneous assemblage of European and Asian artifacts and antiquities. In addition to a couple of mummies and other Egyptian items, this room contained "oriental" spiritual images.[41] A lack of labels on Asian items as well as the presence of "portraits of illustrious personages" who donated these goods, served to empty these materials of their original meanings and uses.[42] This logic of ordering by collector rather than chronology, type, or geographic or cultural origins met with bewilderment and criticism from some visitors. One observer noted in 1799 that the BM contained "many valuable collections in natural history, but… nothing is in order." The displays appeared as though "things have been thrown [in cases] at random."[43] However, as the Museum received larger numbers of Indian items during the last decades of the century, these were joined with other Asian materials due to their mutual miscellaneousness and marginality as the BM increasingly privileged Greco-Roman antiquities.

Beginning in the 1770s the Trustees and donors increasingly focused the collections on Europeans masterworks and Greco-Roman antiquities, further designating the BM as a gentlemanly, British space rather than a popular spectacle. During the 1760s, visitors reported that the BM's collections of ancient Roman and Hellenic antiquities were "far short of what [they] hoped to find."[44] Following Parliamentary approval of the payment of £8,410 for Sir

[40] The organization of the collections placed greater emphasis upon prior ownership rather than the original contexts of each item. Anonymous, *A View of the British Museum: or, a Regular Account Relating What is Most Remarkable and Curious to Be Seen There* (London, 1765), 3-4.
[41] Anonymous [A. Thompson], *Letters on the British Museum*, 22-3.
[42] Anonymous, *A Companion to All the Principal Places of Curiosity and Entertainment in London,* Sixth Edition (London, 1784), 95-6.
[43] Barthélemy Faujas de Saint-Fond, *Travels in England, Scotland, and the Hebrides,* Vol.1 (London, 1799), 89.
[44] Anonymous [A. Thompson], *Letters on the British Museum,* 29.

William Hamilton's "large collection of Etruscan, Grecian, and Roman" vases,[45] the Museum transformed from a diverse, "noble collection of curiosities" to an assemblage curated by Trustees wishing to appeal to British elites.[46] Hamilton, a Trustee during the last decades of the century, oversaw the proper arrangement and display of classical antiquities, underscoring the importance of the Museum and the Trustees as arbiters of polite taste.[47] While the BM gradually transformed from an assemblage of elites' collections to a gallery of Greco-Roman antiquities, oriental exotica was increasingly shunted to obscure areas of the institution.

Throughout the eighteenth century financial constraints as well as a lack of interest among most of the Trustees led to very few purchases of Indian art, texts, and antiquities, yet the British Museum received a considerable number of miscellaneous items as presents from Company servants, travelers, and collectors. The Trustees were reluctant to acquire Asian items, unremarkable European art, and other "artificial curiosities" that would be costly to maintain and take up valuable Museum storage space.[48] The painter Francis Bourgeois complained that any item donated to the Museum would be at risk of being discarded or sold. Bourgeois "applied for information respecting the British Museum, and on reading the laws and regulations respecting [donating artworks], he had found that it is governed by an *Aristocracy*, to which he had great objection." Indeed, the coterie of elite Trustees "might retain for the purpose of exhibition to the

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[45] Anonymous, *A Companion to All the Principal Places of Curiosity and Entertainment in London,* 92-3.
[46] According to the publisher Rudolph Ackermann, this collection gave "rise to so much discussion among the learned." Before long the collection generated a "revolution…in the national taste by the imitation of the beautiful forms and chaste decorations." Ackermann, "Account of the New Gallery of the British Museum," 255, 260; Robert Dodsley, *London and Its Environs Described* (London, 1761), 18.
[47] Hamilton was a diplomat at Court of Naples. Wilson, *The British Museum,* 46-8; Ian Jenkins, "'Contemporary Minds': Sir William Hamilton's Affair with Antiquity," in *Vases and Volcanoes: Sir William Hamilton and His Collection,* edited by Ian Jenkins and Kim Sloan (London: The British Museum Press, 1996), 45-51.
[48] For instance, in 1815 the Trustees rejected an offer of a "Mexican Idol of gold." Sir Henry Ellis, "Diaries and Memoranda of Sir Henry Ellis, No. 1," 9 December, 1815. BL Add MS 36653/1, f. 47.

public any part thereof" and discard or sell at auction other pieces.[49] Nevertheless, the Trustees accepted oriental items cost-free from collectors, such as the lawyer Charles Bathurst, who in 1786 donated "a set of idols which came from the Rohillas."[50] Prior to the establishment of the India House museum in the 1790s, some imperial agents shipped antiquities from the subcontinent to the BM. For instance, in September, 1773, Mrs. Hornby, wife of the Governor of Bombay, sent from India to the Museum "an ornament of feathers and beads used in the turbans of the principal servants of the nabobs in India."[51] In addition to maps, textual accounts, and drawings of India,[52] prior to the 1790s, the Museum accepted numerous South Asian images and manuscripts. On occasion Joseph Banks convinced the other Trustees to agree to the purchase of notable collections of Indian texts for sale in Britain. In April, 1793 Banks arranged for the acquisition of sixty-two volumes of manuscripts collected by Nathanial Brassey Halherd during his time in the subcontinent.[53] Moreover, although the Trustees accepted "a model of a moveable Temple called in the Carnatic Therup or Rhudum" as a present from the antiquarian Charles Marsh in 1793,[54] they did not wish to invest in such items' exhibition or upkeep. Rather the display case for this large model was to be made from "such old materials as may be found in the house."[55] Thus, despite the BM's impressive holdings of Indian items, during this period the Trustees did not wish for exotica to be prominently displayed or easily accessible to scholars.

[49] Joseph Farington, "Thursday, 13 December, 1810," in *The Diary of Joseph Farington,* Vol. 10, edited by Kathryn Cave (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1982), 3821-22; For the BM's auctioning of duplicates, Anonymous, "General Meetings of the Trustees, Minutes," 14 December, 1787. Vol. 7. BMCA, SM C, 1974.
[50] Anonymous, "Book of Presents," 17 February, 1786. Vol. 1-2. BMCA, SM: BP, unpaginated.
[51] Anonymous, "Book of Presents," 24 September, 1773. Vol. 1-2. BMCA, SM: BP, unpaginated.
[52] For example, the cartographer John Rennell presented the Trustees with "a map of Bengal and Bahar." Anonymous, "General Meetings of the Trustees, Minutes," 29 June, 1779. Vol. 7. BMCA, SM C, 1659.
[53] Anonymous, "General Meetings of the Trustees, Minutes," 17 April, 1793. Vol. 8. BMCA, SM C, 2101; This purchase is also detailed in Neil Chambers, *Joseph Banks and the British Museum: The World Of Collecting, 1770-1830* (London: Pickering & Chatto, 2007), 93-4.
[54] This is the same cart he acquired at the David Simpson sale in 1792. British Museum Number: 1793,0511.1; Anonymous, "General Meetings of the Trustees, Minutes," 11 May, 1793. Vol. 7. BMCA, SM C, 2073.
[55] Anonymous, "General Meetings of the Trustees, Minutes," 13 July, 1793. Vol. 7. BMCA, SM C, 2075.

During the last decades of the eighteenth century the arrival at the BM of items gathered during voyages of discovery necessitated the designation of certain spaces to exhibit these materials.[56] The Museum's restrictive policies began to change in 1775 after it received "a large collection of natural productions from the new islands in the South Sea and from the Cape of Good Hope" acquired by Johann Reinhold Foster and Captain James Cook during their first and second voyages.[57] The Principal Librarian Matthew Maty reported that the BM would display these items in a designated "South Seas Room" on the second floor of Montague House, serving as "a national monument of these national exertions of British munificence."[58] Additional donations of Pacific artifacts from Joseph Banks and the arrival of Asian items from other patrons resulted in the need for additional galleries.[59] Only in the early nineteenth century, however, did the Trustees restructure the layout of the BM's displays of "oriental" items.

Following the siege of Srirangapatna in 1799, the acquisition of Egyptian antiquities following the defeat of the French in 1801, and the purchase of the Townley marbles in 1805 the Trustees designated certain spaces as containing either European art or imperial exotica. While the numbers of Indian items presented to the Museum increased during the first years of the century,[60] they were primarily smaller, easily-transported items dwarfed in scale by the Egyptian artifacts turned over to the British as a term of the Capitulation of Alexandria. In 1802 the

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[56] While the Department of Manuscripts received Indian texts and the numismatic cabinets acquired "several parcels of curious East Indian, Persian, Chinese, and Japanese coins," larger oriental items remained either in basement storage or in cases of miscellaneous "artificial curiosities" until the end of the century. These juxtapositions suggested equivalencies between ancient oriental cultures and contemporary Asia. Anonymous, "General Meetings of the Trustees, Minutes," 31 July, 1772. Vol. 5. BMCA, SM C, 1345; Thomas Burdet presented "the Koran brought from India and supposed to have belonged to one of the nabobs." Anonymous, "Book of Presents," 30 January, 1767 Vol. 1-2. BMCA SM: BP, unpaginated; Weedon Butler, "A Walk Through the British Museum, an Interlude of Two Acts," 1767. BL, Add MS 27276, ff. 21-22.
[57] Anonymous, "Book of Presents," 6 October, 1775 Vol. 1-2. BMCA SM: BP, unpaginated.
[58] Matthew Maty to Lord Hardwicke, 26 September, 1775, BL Add MS 35612, f. 323.
[59] Daniel Solander to the Committee of Trustees, 10 August, 1781, Trustees Manuscripts Vol. 1. BMCA Shelf Mark OP: Trustees Manuscripts, 599; Anonymous, "Book of Presents," 23 October, 1778. Vol. 1-2. BMCA, SM: BP, unpaginated.
[60] Anonymous, "Book of Presents," 1799-1814. Vol. 1-2. BMCA, SM: BP, unpaginated.

commanders of the British forces in Egypt shipped the seized antiquities to Britain as a present to the King.[61] In addition to a number of Egyptian manuscripts, two obelisks, and fragments of statues, this trove contained sizeable stone images of Egyptian rulers and deities, a number of sarcophaguses, and the celebrated Rosetta Stone.[62] Although the Trustees could not refuse these items, there was no available space to exhibit them within the existing Museum structure. According to the mineralogist Edward Daniel Clarke, the Egyptian antiquities "were placed in the open court of the British Museum, and considered as curious but unimportant monuments of Egyptian art, glorious to the nation as trophies of its valour, but whose dark and mystic legends, impervious to modern inquiry, excited despair, rather than hope of explanation."[63] After nearly two years of storage outside of the galleries,[64] in 1804 Banks presented the Trustees with a proposal for the construction of a new large gallery that would "be a suitable place of deposit for the Egyptian antiquities." Banks envisioned a gallery that would be spacious enough to contain oriental items "now in the collection or may hereafter be added to it."[65] However, the Museum's primary focus dictated that Egyptian, East Asian, and Indian items — no matter how colossal or associated with imperial virtue — would not receive pride of place in the new gallery. The Egyptian antiquities appeared in only two of the Townley Gallery's thirteen rooms, and Indian items remained on the top floor of the BM.[66] Because "primitive" artifacts could be comparative

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[61] The King soon thereafter deposited the ancient Egyptian items in the Museum. Moser, *Wondrous Curiosities*, 220.
[62] Anonymous, "An Account of the Ancient Sculpture taken by the British Forces in Egypt from the French Army in Alexandria and Sent to England in the Charge of Col. Turner," September, 1801. Trustees Manuscripts Vol. 2. BMCA, SM OP: TM, 752.
[63] Edward Daniel Clarke, *The Tomb of Alexander, a Dissertation on the Sarcophagus Brought from Alexandria, and Now in the British Museum* (London, 1805), 24. Also quoted in Jasanoff, *Edge of Empire*, 224.
[64] Antony Griffiths, "The Department of Prints and Drawings During the First Century of the British Museum," *The Burlington Magazine*, Vol 136, No. 1097 (August, 1994): 535-6.
[65] Joseph Banks to the Trustees, "A Report Laid Before the Standing Committee of the British Museum by the Subcommittee," 14 May, 1804. Trustees Manuscripts Vol. 2. BMCA, SM OP: TM, 768-70.
[66] Ancient European antiquities, the Hamilton vase collection, and drawings and engravings occupied most of the new structure. Ackermann, "Account of the New Gallery of the British Museum," 255-6, 260; J. Mordaunt Crook, *The British Museum* (New York: Praeger Publishing, 1972), 68; Ian Jenkins, *Archaeologists and Aesthetes: In the Sculpture Galleries of the British Museum 1800-1939* (London: The British Museum Press, 1992), 56-60.

items highlighting the superlative qualities of the Museum's Greco-Roman antiquities, orientalized sections became a necessary — albeit marginalized — component of the Museum.

After the relocation of Egyptian antiquities to one section of the Museum, in June, 1808 Joseph Planta likewise proposed the consolidation of all Asian items in a single room entitled "Modern Artificial Curiosities." As early as May, 1805 the Trustees discussed a report asserting that "unfit articles have been and will from time to time be accidentally admitted, and which ought to be got rid of." According to the anonymous author, "many such are now to be seen in the second room of the collection of artificial curiosities, as well as in the basement story and other parts of the house." By this time the Department of Natural History, Antiquities, and Artificial Curiosities consisted of nine rooms, five of which contained naturalia and four displayed human-made items.[67] In 1808 Planta reported that this room on the upper floor of Montague House was merely wasted space containing mummies, Indian items, and East Asian goods, "many of which are of a very trifling nature, and by no means fit to be exhibited in such a repository as the Museum." Although he suggested that many of these materials should be discarded, "selected articles [would] be classed in a geographical order, retaining all those that lend any ways to illustrate particular customs of different nations." Planta claimed that "all trifling models, all trinkets, figures," and unknown spiritual images should be thrown away. All the remaining items from room two would move to what was the "South Seas Room," containing twenty-eight glass cases ordered according to the stages of civilizational development. While some "European curiosities" filled cases one to four, cases five to seven held Indian and East Asian items. Cases eight to ten contained specimens of African and Native American material culture. Artifacts from the Pacific occupied the next sixteen cases. Cases twenty-seven and

[67] Anonymous [Joseph Planta?], "Report of the Museum to the Committee," 3 May, 1805. Trustees Manuscripts Vol. 2. BMCA, SM OP: TM, 783-4, 786.

twenty-eight displayed unidentified and miscellaneous items. According to Planta, once the Asian items were moved, Room 2 "would then remain vacant for any future collection that might be brought in."[68] Indeed, for some Trustees, it was better to leave entire rooms of the gallery vacant than to have them contain Indian, East Asian, African, Native American, or Pacific material culture.[69] This proposed consolidation of Asian items in the BM concomitant to the opening of the Townley gallery reveals that for many the Museum could have certain designated orientalized spaces juxtaposed alongside British spaces displaying Greco-Roman artworks.

By the early nineteenth century artists produced fanciful depictions of the galleries as either oriental milieus displaying exotica visited by persons from "the East," or as idealized elite spaces of scholarly activity. While the Townley Gallery's classical artworks received attention from travel writers and visual artists, some painters underscored the aesthetic contrasts between the items held in the Egyptian rooms and the other sections of the building. The anonymous watercolor *View Through the Egyptian Room, in the Townley Gallery at the British Museum* (1820) **(Figure 24)** features the eponymous space occupied by the antiquities seized from the French at Alexandria. Perspective depth highlights the careful configuration of these items implemented by the notable sculptor Richard Westmacott, emphasizing placement in rows and possible chronology in accordance with numismatic theories of ordering.[70] Given his scant knowledge of Egyptian antiquities, Westmacott compensated by overemphasizing the rigidity of rows and symmetrical placement of items.[71] While hieroglyphic-covered seated figures, stone tablets, obelisks, and sarcophaguses of comparative size appear opposite one another, this

[68] Joseph Planta to the Trustees, 28 June, 1808. Trustees Manuscripts Vol. 2. BMCA SM OP: TM, 888-9.
[69] Anonymous, "General Meetings of the Trustees, Minutes," 29 June. 1808. Vol. 9. BMCA, SM C, 2391-2.
[70] Westmacott was versed in the proper display of classical sculptures, but he was uncertain whether such concepts could be applied to non-European items. Jenkins, *Archaeologists and Aesthetes*, 56-60.
[71] Moser, *Wondrous Curiosities*, 222-3.

Figure 24. Anonymous, *View Through the Egyptian Room, in the Townley Gallery at the British Museum* (1820). Height: 361 millimeters; Width: 443 millimeters. © The Trustees of the British Museum (British Museum Number: 1881,1112.137).

symmetry is broken by the colossal head of Rameses II placed near the right of the doorway. Somewhat obscured by this vast image are two visitors whose stereotypical clothing and dark complexions demarcate them as persons from the "east." The juxtaposition of generic, depersonalized individuals alongside aged artifacts from Egypt causes them to appear as though individuals from both the contemporary and ancient orient. This association of modern North African and Asian persons with ancient "eastern" artifacts designated the Egyptian rooms and those containing contemporary materials equally oriental spaces. Much as the two visitors gaze

into the next room, the rows of Egyptian antiquities lead the viewer's eye to the vanishing point — the *Townley Discobolus* — enclosed by two fluted Doric pillars and a plain lintel. The white columns physically and symbolically separate the orientalized space of the Egyptian rooms from galleries housing Townley's Greco-Roman items. Thus, the anonymous artist constructed her or his vision of the Townley Gallery as a microcosm of the Museum, where oriental and British spaces could equally exist and intersect as the spoils of empire increasingly flowed into London.

While visual artists could depict certain areas of the Museum as non-British milieus, they could equally craft fictitious visions of the BM where the presence of classical antiquities allowed even spaces adjacent to oriental exotica to exist as zones of polite study and sociability. James Stephanoff's *The Connoisseur* (Ca. 1817) **(Figure 25)** features a single room in the Museum where an assortment of Greco-Roman items line the walls and surround an antiquarian sitting at a desk. On the desk are a diminutive bronze European figure of a warrior, small fragments of ancient statues, the Portland Vase, and a numismatic cabinet. One drawer of the cabinet is open, suggesting that the book open in the connoisseur's hand is on the subject of ancient coinage.[72] The many Greco-Roman statues, vases, friezes, and other antiquities filling the room sit in configurations and in display cases dissimilar to how they would have actually appeared to visitors. While a number of these antiquities are identifiable works from the Townley and Hamilton collections, no Indian, Pacific, or East Asian items appear in this image. Along the back wall two lion-headed Egyptian figures serve as caryatids, thereby physically elevating and appearing as symbolic precursors to the Greco-Roman items placed atop the mantle. By marginalizing the few Egyptian items that represent all of the oriental holdings of the Museum, Stephanoff illuminated the BM as a space for elite collectors. Stephanoff's creation of

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[72] Ian Jenkins, "James Stephanoff and the British Museum," *Apollo*, Vol. CXXI, No. 277 (March, 1985): 174-5.

Figure 25. James Stephanoff, *The Connoisseur* (Ca. 1817). Height: 360 millimeters; Width: 540 millimeters. © The Trustees of the British Museum (British Museum Number: 2017,7016.1).

a fictitious, idealized vision of the galleries suggests that an individual granted access to the antiquities would be surrounded with marvels and knowledge in much the same way as noteworthy collectors such as Townely.[73] Thus, for Stephanoff, the Museum was both a physical place, an imagined geography, and a symbolic repository defining and reinforcing polite taste while also exhibiting the spoils of British power extending to continental Europe and Asia.

[73] Jenkins suggests that Stephanoff intentionally crafted this image to seem reminiscent of Johan Joffany's painting *Charles Townley in His Library* (1782). Jenkins, "James Stephanoff and the British Museum," 174-5.

II. “The Mob of Deities is Very Ill-Placed”[74]: The East India House As a Repository of Oriental Knowledge

In November, 1798 the *Calcutta Gazette* featured a notice from the East India Company’s Directors in London, announcing the formation of “a public repository in this country for oriental writings” located in the East India House.[75] The pioneering orientalist scholarship and collecting activities of Sir William Jones, Alexander Dow, Charles Wilkins, and other members of the Asiatic Society of Bengal spearheaded projects of colonial knowledge-gathering intimately linked to the governing power of the Company-State in the subcontinent.[76] These orientalists and other Company servants feared that “the decline of the Mogul Empire” intensified the looting, destruction, and selling off of Indian libraries and artifacts, leading to the rapid “exportation of many of the best manuscripts…without greatly enriching Europe.” The Directors had noted the “frequent practice among our servants, especially in Bengal, to make collections of oriental manuscripts, many of which have afterwards been brought into this country” yet remained in private collections. The Directors desired to make the Company’s headquarters “the centre of an ample accumulation” of Asian artworks, antiquities, and texts accessible to EIC officers.[77] The Directors also encouraged Britons to donate Indian texts and other items providing information on India’s past and present. This influx of South-Asian materials beginning in the last decade of the century occurred as the India House physically expanded to include larger libraries, galleries, auction spaces, and locations of Anglo-Indian sociability. For some British elites, the Company’s

[74] Edward Wedlake Brayley, James Norris Brewer, and Joseph Nightingale, *A Topographical and Historical Description of London and Middlesex,* Volume 2 (London, 1814), 261-2.
[75] Anonymous [East India Company Directors], “Extract from a Letter from the Hon'ble Court of Directors, Dated the 25th of May 1798,” in W. S. Seton-Karr, *Selections From Calcutta Gazette, of the Years 1798, 1799, 1800, 1801, 1802, 1803, 1804, and 1805*, Vol. 3 (Calcutta, 1868), 16-17.
[76] C. A. Bayly, *Empire and Information: Intelligence Gathering and Social Communication in India, 1780-1870* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 49-53; Michael S. Dodson, *Orientalism, Empire, and National Culture: India, 1770-1880* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 18-24.
[77] Anonymous [EIC Directors], “Extract from a Letter from the Hon'ble Court of Directors,” 16-17.

headquarters filled with Indian material culture was an orientalized, nabobish space.[78] For EIC servants, however, following the 1799 capture of Srirangapatna these collections were symbols of virtuous imperial conquest, essential tools of governance, and important materials for scholarly investigation into India's history.

Although some distance from the nabobish "black town" between Marylebone and Mayfair, the India House on Leadenhall Street existed between the British and oriental sectors of London, appearing as an appendage of the white town of Calcutta. As the EIC's South Asian territories grew rapidly in the late eighteenth century, the Company's headquarters likewise expanded to become a space of sale and diffusion of Asian imports, a center of orientalist study of antiquities and texts from India and East Asia, and an arena of Anglo-Indian sociability. While oriental exotica carried association with nabobery, gradual shifts in metropolitan perceptions of Indian material culture following the 1799 conquest of Mysore occurred concomitantly with EIC officers' claims such items were sources of knowledge. Rather than just serving as novelties or trophies of conquest, orientalists used Indian manuscripts, antiquities, and contemporary artworks as essential implements for understanding India. I suggest that for the librarians and other EIC officers, the collections of Indian texts, artworks, and antiquities did not render the India House an impolite, non-British space in London. Rather, despite popular criticism of the India House's improper classicized aesthetics, the library and museum could be a repository of information aiding the EIC's administration in India, thereby enriching and benefitting Britain.

The India House was initially modest in size, yet notable additions by 1800 allowed the galleries, archive and museum rooms, and auction floors to become Anglo-Indian social spaces.

[78] Daniel E. White suggests that sections of London containing notable populations of nabobs and South Asians constituted a "Little Bengal." White, *From Little London to Little Bengal: Religion, Print, Modernity in Early British India, 1793-1835* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2013), 3-6, 141-4.

According to the topographer John Noorthouck, following completion in 1726, the original India House was "suited to the opulence of the Company, whose servants exercise sovereign authority in their Indian territories, and live there in princely state."[79] Despite a 1753 expansion, the India House's limited size allowed for only administrative offices, the auction room and General Court Room, the Directors' Court Room, and a few other small compartments.[80] As the Company's Indian territories grew, so did the size of the EIC's administration in South Asia and Britain, necessitating more offices, archival space, and a library in the India House. Following the Company's acquisition of adjacent buildings between Leadenhall Street and Lime Street, in 1796 the Directors commissioned the architect Richard Jupp to add eastern and western wings to the structure.[81] Thus, in addition to providing space for spoils of conquest, the expansion of the India House mirrored the EIC's growing subcontinental territories, wealth, and influence. Although the white town of Calcutta received both praise and criticism as being a Paladian "city of palaces," Jupp and the Directors nevertheless desired to make the India House more grandiose by deploying classicized symbols of Company power, prosperity, and virtuous colonial rule.

Thomas Malton the Younger's *East India House* (Ca. 1800) **(Figure 26)** reveals this building as an ornate, recently-completed classicized structure, yet one that could be interpreted as a nabobish imitation of polite architecture or as a component of Calcutta's white town intruding into London. This streetscape peers down Leadenhall Street as persons of all social sectors pass by the India House, occupy its portico, or stop to observe it. In the bottom-left corner a man in a blue coat gestures in order to draw the viewer's eye to the edifice's ornamentation. Some contemporaries, such as the travel writer Samuel Leigh, perceived the

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[79] John Noorthouck, *A New History of London Including Westminster and Southwark* (London, 1773), 663.
[80] Walter Harrison, *A New and Universal History, Description and Survey of the Cities of London and Westminster, the Borough of Southwark, and their Adjacent Parts* (London, 1776), 487.
[81] William Foster, *The East India House: Its History and Associations* (London: The Bodley Head, 1926), 136-9.

Figure 26. Thomas Malton the Younger, *East India House* (Ca. 1799/1800?). Height: 367 millimeters; Width: 278 millimeters. © Yale Center for British Art, Paul Mellon Collection (YCBA Number: B2001.2.1001).

white-stone façade to have "a general air of grandeur and simplicity." Yet, the architrave, pediment, four ionic fluted columns, and statues on the apex of the pediment were elaborate in design. While Britannia appears prominently seated above the pediment, to the left and right were smaller figurative representations of Asia and Europe. The pediment contains a classicized image of the King who holds a shield in defense of a series of other personifications representing the Company and its commercial interests.[82] Thus, while "the edifice of congregated merchants is best suited to its object when it is grave, weighty, and simple," the Directors and architects

[82] Samuel Leigh, *Leigh's New Picture of London, or, A View of the Political, Religious, Medical, Literary, Municipal, Commercial, and Moral State of the British Metropolis* (London, 1820), 240-1.

wished to make the India House more than a mere commercial headquarters.[83] By installing these classicized features and crowning the roof with images of Britannia and the King, the EIC argued that their headquarters was an elite space whose function was to further British interests.

Unlike the British Museum, whose classicized aesthetics received praise form architects, connoisseurs, and visitors,[84] some observers noted that the India House's facades appeared awkward and as though it were an inferior imitation of classicized architecture. According to the antiquary Edward Brayley, "the front of the India House has been a subject of satirical observation with every architect who has taken occasion to speak of it." In addition to certain features being out of proportion with other architectural elements, "its ornaments and designs are…much too general. The figures are too thickly grouped, and the mob of deities is very ill-placed." Awkward and improper architectural forms and ornamentation was fitting, however, since ordinarily "a building devoted to commercial uses has little occasion for the refined polish of Palladio, or the majestic graces of [Michelangelo] Bonarotti." Such a tawdry overemphasis on elite aesthetics and "the want of general allusion to the Asiatic possessions of the Company" revealed EIC's plan to remake the India House as a polite space. For Brayley, given nabobs' reputations as orientalized Anglo-Indians, "when ornament was introduced [to the India House], the costume of Hinostan should invariably have prevailed."[85] Indeed, for critics such as Brayly, the inclusion on the facade of South Asian aesthetics and spiritual images would have been more fitting than the featured classicized columns and statues. Thus, such conspicuous, ineffective attempts to appear refined only underscored the oriental, nabobish nature of the institution.

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[83] Brayley, Brewer, and Nightingale, *A Topographical and Historical Description of London and Middlesex,* Vol. 2, 761-2.
[84] Caygill and Date, *Building the British Museum,* 13.
[85] Brayley, Brewer, and Nightingale, *A Topographical and Historical Description of London and Middlesex,* Vol. 2, 761-2.

As the Directors attempted to fashion the India House as a polite, British space, it was also the epicenter of the auctioning and disbursal of Asian imports throughout Britain. Prior to the acquisition of a territorial empire in the subcontinent, the Company held sales of Indian and East Asian textiles, porcelain, tea, a variety of other agricultural produce, as well as luxury items ranging from furniture to Asian works of art.[86] By the second quarter of the eighteenth century, the increased volume of imports necessitated the EIC having warehouses behind the India House, on "Fenchurch-street, Seething-lane, and the Stillyard, beside cellars for pepper under the Royal Exchange."[87] Although Jupp and Holland's expansion included the New Sale Room, the Old Sale Room remained noted for its prominent statuary and function as the primary auction space. The sale rooms were among the few spaces where persons unaffiliated with the EIC could interact with the Directors and observe artworks celebrating Company conquests in India.

Although portraits of Robert Clive, Warren Hastings, Lord Cornwallis, and other notable Company officers appeared throughout the headquarters,[88] the auction spaces equally functioned as locations for displaying propagandistic, Company-commissioned sculpture. Thomas Rowlandson and Augustus Pugin's *India House, the Sale Room* (1808) **(Figure 27)** features the Old Sale Room during an auction of Asian imports. Aside from diagonal rays of light beaming into the room through a sizeable oculus, the auction floor is dimly lit as attendees fill the central bidding floor in the middle ground or are seated on a grandstand extending into the foreground. At left bidders raise their hands to the auctioneer standing on an elevated platform. Along the back wall multiple EIC clerks seated at an ovoid table transcribe lots, bids, and prices realized.

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[86] For instance, Anonymous, "Sale at the East India House," 28th March 1704. BL IOR/H/10, ff. 1-129; Anonymous; "Goods for Sale at East India House and Goods Exported," 1705-7. BL IOR/H/13, ff. 1-67.
[87] Noorthouck, *A New History of London Including Westminster and Southwark*, 663.
[88] Portraits hung throughout the India House, but the New Sale Room was noted for its "pilasters, several paintings illustrative of Indian and other commerce," and heating system. Brayley, Brewer, and Nightingale, *A Topographical and Historical Description of London and Middlesex,* 764-5.

Figure 27. Thomas Rowlandson and Augustus Charles Pugin, *India House, the Sale Room,* 1808. Plate 45 from Rudolph Ackermann's *Microcosm of London,* Volume 2 (1808). Height: 228 millimeters; Width: 275 millimeters. © The Trustees of the British Museum (British Museum Number: 1948,0315.11.147).

Near the blind niches and pediments crowning the doorways in this section of the room three members of the Court of Directors appear at a semicircular desk surrounding the central clerks' table. Situated in their respective niches in the wall high above the clerks are portrait statues of Robert Clive, General Stringer Lawrence, and Sir George Pocock. These images sculpted by Peter Scheemakers in 1764 present these EIC notables in Roman costume. In addition to drawing comparison between Clive's conquest of Bengal and the territorial expansion of classical European empires, the juxtaposition of these sculptures with an auction asserted that the EIC's

importation and sale of Asian goods was intimately tied to national prosperity and imperial virtue. Moreover, the late eighteenth-century placement outside the chancel-like section of the room of two additional elevated statues — depicting Sir Eyre Coote and Marquis Cornwallis — in contemporary military uniforms suggests that current annexation of Indian territories was a continuity of earlier expansion that benefitted and glorified Britain.[89]

Rowlandson and Pugin's image features a number of attendees bidding or conversing with others, yet sales at the India House were not boisterous, rowdy events. Rather, the novelist Sophie La Roche noted while attending a 1786 tea auction held in the Old Sale Room that "a large number of merchants were present—all quite quiet. There was not a sound except for the auctioneer, and a reply, of which every one made a note; after a short interval another offer was made, and so on. This company only seems to work in millions, for it was a question of several million pounds of tea."[90] Although La Roche had access to the Old Sale Room, the print does not feature any women in the crowd, suggesting that attendance was generally restricted to prominent male merchants. The quantities sold, amounts bid, white male demographic, and comportment of bidders suggests that most attendees were British wholesalers and re-exporters of EIC goods rather than heterogeneous crowds of the general public frequenting art and estate sales.[91] Given the reputation of auctions as rowdy, oriental-like spectacles, the restrained and orderly behavior of the attendees — as well as the measured pace of bidding — suggest that the Company's auctioneers set terms of sales that engineered these events as polite commercial

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[89] Thomas Miller, *Picturesque Sketches of London Past and Present* (London, 1855), 96-7; Foster, *The East India House,* 137.

[90] La Roche, *Sophie in London,* 165.

[91] Hoh-Cheung Mui and Lorna H. Mui suggest that wholesalers were the main attendees. Mui and Mui, "Smuggling and the British Tea Trade before 1784," *The American Historical Review*, Vol. 74, No. 1 (Oct., 1968): 62.

rituals. Although the Directors attempted to maintain the sale rooms as civil, British spaces, throughout the century the India House accumulated potentially-orientalizing Indian exotica.

While the India House had long housed miscellaneous Asian items sent by officers in South Asia, on many occasions prior to the expansions of the 1790s the British Museum received European and Indian items from the Company. In addition to a number of texts and Kalighat Hoard coins,[92] the Directors donated larger Indian items to the BM, such as weaponry, maps, and textiles which could not be stored in the India House.[93] Company officers deposited materials in the Museum in order to establish a collegial relationship between the two institutions, allowing the EIC ready access to the BM's Indian and East Asian documents and artifacts. Thus, in December, 1787 the orientalist Charles Wilkins donated a copy of "the Hectopades of Veeshnoo-Sarma translated from an ancient manuscript in the Sanskrit language."[94] Similarly, in May, 1789 the Swiss-born, former military officer Antoine Louis Henri Polier sent from India "eleven volumes of the Baids [Vedas], or sacred books of the Hindus, and 1 volume of the Bhagavad Gita, all…in the Sanskrit language."[95] According to Polier, one of the terms of this donation was "that either Sir William Jones now in India or Mr. Wilkins now in London…shall at any time be allowed to have one of the volumes of the Baids [at a time] to take home with them, on their declaration it is for the purport of making extracts or translations out of them, and giving security for its being returned." For Polier, while the India House may not have been able to store these texts, it was important for a London institution to have them since British orientalists with expertise in Indian languages would "[open] by that mean[s] to the European world, a new

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[92] For the Kalighat Hoard of coins, see chapter 4. Anonymous, "General Meetings of the Trustees, Minutes," 11 August, 1775. Vol. 6. BMCA, SM C, 1482; Anonymous, "General Meetings of the Trustees, Minutes," 14 March 1777. Vol. 6. BMCA, SM C, 1558.
[93] Anonymous, "Book of Presents," 25 January, 1764. Vol. 1-2. BMCA SM: BP, unpaginated; Anonymous, "Book of Presents," 14 March, 1777. Vol. 1-2. BMCA SM: BP, unpaginated.
[94] Anonymous, "General Meetings of the Trustees, Minutes," 1 December, 1787. Vol. 7. BMCA, SM C, 1973.
[95] Anonymous, "General Meetings of the Trustees, Minutes," 22 May, 1789. Vol. 8. BMCA, SM C, 2005.

source of knowledge."[96] Subsequently, a trend emerged among EIC officers of strategically aiding Joseph Banks in locating, translating, and authenticating South Asian texts for the British Museum. In April, 1796 the Board of Trustees approved Wilkins and Banks's plan for the BM to purchase "about 30 Volumes, most of them oriental [manuscripts], which Mr. Halherd had selected and retained when he disposed of the part of his collection now in the museum, as being the most curious and important, none of them having ever appeared in Europe or in Print."[97] Even after the establishment of the India House museum and library in 1799 there remained a symbiotic relationship between the two entities as Wilkins and other orientalists continued to make copies of Indian documents and sketches of antiquities held in the BM.[98] This relationship proved mutually beneficial beyond the mere exchange of materials and information. Since the Trustees occasionally invested Museum funds in the EIC's exploits in Asia, the BM's coffers flourished as Company rule and trade in Asia thrived.[99]

Warren Hastings and the orinentalists Charles Wilkins and Robert Orme had long desired for the EIC to maintain a collection of Indian texts and artifacts in London,[100] but the Directors agreed to the formation of the India House museum and library only after the Company seized Tipu Sultan's library in 1799. Indeed, following the virtuous conquest of Srirangapatna the Directors and officers serving in India could regard the India House as simultaneously a British, classicized location of Company administration and a storehouse of Indian exotica. Shortly after

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[96] Antoine Louis Henri Polier to Sir Joseph Banks, 6 October 1792, in *The Indian and Pacific Correspondence of Sir Joseph Banks*, edited by Neil Chambers, Vol. 3, Letter 1, p.4.

[97] Anonymous, "General Meetings of the Trustees, Minutes," 8 April, 1796. Vol. 8. BMCA, SM C, 2117.

[98] EIC orientalists remained on such good terms with the Museum's administrators that in January, 1807 Wilkins received approval from the Trustees to "have casts made of [every] Hindoo coin in the Museum." Anonymous, "General Meetings of the Trustees, Minutes," 10 January, 1807. Vol. 8. BMCA, SM C, 2304.

[99] Anonymous, "General Meetings of the Trustees, Minutes," 14 December, 1787. Vol. 7. BMCA, SM C, 1974.

[100] Robert Orme, *Historical Fragments of the Mogul Empire, of the Morattoes, and of the English Concerns in Indostan* (London, 1782, 1805 edition), xxviii-xxix; A. J. Aberry, *The Library of the India House: A Historical Sketch* (London: The Secretary of State for India at the India Office, London. 1938), 15-19.

the seizure of the Tipu's texts, the Persian linguist W. Edmundson reported to the Directors that Lord Wellesley intended to "transmit to the Honorable Court for the purpose of being placed in their Oriental Literary Repository some of the most curious and interesting originals of the papers and records found at Seringapatam."[101] After much deliberation among EIC officers in India,[102] however, Wellesley ordered that the majority of the manuscripts be kept in the Fort William College Library in Calcutta, "and to send to England those of which there were duplicate copies."[103] In July, 1806 the India House finally "received from the Marquis Wellesley 197 volumes of the Arabic and Persian [manuscripts] presented by the army."[104] Although the India House did not initially receive the entirety of Tipu's library, the promise that it would house the complete collection sparked interest in expanding the EIC's collections. Thus, by the time in which the 197 volumes arrived, the Directors had ordered the consolidation of the collections of manuscripts and antiquities into two library and museum rooms of the upper floor of the east wing; had appointed Charles Wilkins as head librarian; and had acquired substantial numbers of texts, artworks, and natural history specimens through gift and purchase.[105]

The Directors and other officers' efforts to enrich the library and archive reveal their vision of the EIC's headquarters as existing simultaneously as a polite space as well as the foremost collection of oriental texts and antiquities in Britain. In addition to purchasing manuscripts and other items collected by Company servants,[106] the EIC received presents from

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[101] W. Edmonstone to William Ramsay, secretary 11 August, 1799. BL IOR Mss Eur E196, f. 43.
[102] Gen. Floyd, President of the Committee of Prize, to Colonel Close, Colonel Kirkpatrick, Captain Ogg, and Captain Price, 18 June, 1799. BL IOR Mss Eur E196, f.49.
[103] J. Howe to Thomas Brown, secretary, 12 Nov. 1806. BL IOR Mss Eur E196, ff. 66-7; Anonymous, Ca. 1800. BL IOR Mss Eur E196, f. 63.
[104] Anonymous, Library Daybook, 16 July, 1806. BL IOR Mss Eur F303/1, f. 16.
[105] Anonymous, "Finance and Home Committee Minutes," 2 December, 1801. BL IOR Mss Eur F303/35, unpaginated; Aberry, *The Library of the India House,* 19-23, 32.
[106] Ray Desmond, *The India Museum, 1801-1879* (London: HMSO, 1982), 20-21; Ursula Sims-Williams, "The Strange Story of Samuel Guise: An 18th-Century Collection of Zoroastrian Manuscripts," *Bulletin of the Asia Institute*, New Series, Vol. 19 (2005): 202.

returned officers and individuals in the subcontinent. Following the death of the orientalist and Company physician Robert Orme in 1801, the executor of his estate, John Roberts, presented Orme's sizeable collection of Indian texts, European maps of India, and spiritual images to the Directors.[107] During the first decade of the nineteenth century, the India House's library and museum gained such repute that Britons without ties to India donated exotica that otherwise might have entered the collections of other museums. In July, 1806, for example, the Scottish politician Sir John Sinclair gifted the EIC a number of drawings of the European sector of Madras and "a Hindu painting of the incarnations of Vishnu."[108] Even prominent Indians gave items to the Company. In July, 1817 the Raja of Travancore presented an ornate Indian sword with a golden scabbard to the Directors.[109] While the library and museum received a steady influx of smaller items and minor collections, the large numbers of spoils from Mysore entering Britain ensured that many items would end up at the India House. After depositing the manuscripts from Srirangapatna, in 1806 Lord Wellesley donated portions of his personal spoils, such as "two standards of the late Sultan's" taken after the siege.[110] Given the popular interest in Tipu Sultan, such materials garnered much attention. According to the antiquary Edward Brayley "the trophies obtained from Tippoo Sahib, form some of the first in value in this repository." Particularly remarkable objects on display were "the foot stool of his throne,…a tiger's head with its eyes and teeth of crystal,…several piece of his armour," and the famed musical wooden tiger.[111] Thus, while the India House contained materials that in other contexts may have

[107] Anonymous, Library Daybook, 2 December, 1801. BL IOR Mss Eur F303/1, f. 2-3; Aberry, *The Library of the India House,* 26-8; Anonymous, Library Daybook, November, 1801. BL IOR Mss Eur F303/1, f. 1-3.
[108] Anonymous, Library Daybook, 29 July, 1806. BL IOR Mss Eur F303/1, f. 18.
[109] Anonymous, Library Daybook, 9 July 1817. BL IOR Mss Eur F303/2, unpaginated.
[110] Anonymous, Library Daybook, 18 July, 1806. BL IOR Mss Eur F303/1, f. 17.
[111] Brayley, Brewer, and Nightingale, *A Topographical and Historical Description of London and Middlesex,* Vol. 2, 766-8; "Tipu's Tiger" and observers' reactions to it have been detailed at length in many studies. The foundational work is Mildred Archer, *Tippoo's Tiger* (London: H. M. Stationary Office, 1959, 1983).

rendered these rooms oriental, many items carried a contrary air of virtuous conquest and rule. The presence of Indian items within the India House reflected Anglo-Indians' complicated vision of Britishness in which refined, European aesthetics and Indian exotica were equally within the parameters of politeness. However, also essential in Anglo-Indian claims of high social status and Britishness within London was, of course, differentiation from the lower orders of Britain.

Although EIC officers held the ignominious designation as nabobs in the British popular imagination into the early nineteenth century, Company men wished to keep "mechanics" out of the India House museum as a means of defining themselves as polite and British against the lower sort. While the Directors and librarians initially envisioned access to the India House museum as limited to Company officers and a small number of other persons who received a pass,[112] "immense crowds" reportedly viewed the exhibits.[113] Wilkins's desire for greater regulation led to new restrictions in 1817. The Committee of Library found that admitting "persons of all classes" resulted in the function of the library being "impeded." In addition to the denial of tickets to persons found undesirable, the new regulations stated that when people of "high rank" visited, individuals of lower status could be refused admission.[114] These exclusionary policies and the willingness of Wilkins and the other librarians to loan materials to scholars reflected the function of the collections as being first and foremost for the use of orientalists. Although it is uncertain whether individuals were permitted to remove rare, aged South Asian texts, the India House daybooks reveal the constant circulation of materials between Company officers, Haileybury College, and Calcutta College.[115] These policies suggest that the

[112] Altick, *The Shows of London,* 299-300.
[113] Anonymous [Committee of Library], 16 July, 1817. BL IOR Mss Eur F303/35, unpaginated.
[114] Anonymous [Committee of Library], 16 July, 1817. BL IOR Mss Eur F303/35, unpaginated.
[115] Anonymous, Library Daybook, 1801-1814. BL IOR Mss Eur F303/1, ff. 20-120; Anonymous, Library Daybook, 1814-20. BL IOR Mss Eur F303/2, unpaginated.

India House functioned as a key location of research, yet one in which Company administrators and orientalists monopolized access to knowledge.

Also essential to EIC officers' claims of polite, British status were the Tea Room and other spaces whose purpose was to contain Anglo-Indian social gatherings that replicated meetings of elite social clubs and learned societies. Although earlier guest books and expense ledgers are no longer extant, the housekeepers' account books of the 1820s reveal "the total expense attending the breakfasts provided in the Tea Room, distinguishing several articles of consumption, the quantity and price, also the number of breakfasts provided each week." While the exact figures are not extant for earlier decades, many persons presumably socialized in the Tea Room following the refurbishment in 1800. By the 1820s the Company was spending substantial amounts of money on tea, sugar, and a variety of other foodstuffs because there were 500-750 breakfasts and other meals served each week and notable quantities of beverages consumed throughout the day.[116] In the early nineteenth century the EIC had around 30,000 employees in London, yet the vast majority were laborers and clerks employed in warehouses.[117] Since laborers were generally not permitted in the library, museum, auction rooms, and administrative offices, those being fed probably were either higher-ranking EIC servants, noteworthy auction attendees, and prominent visitors. When the duchess of Cumberland visited in July, 1817, after inspecting the "splendid manuscripts and subjects of natural history of the museum," she was joined by a couple of the Directors and a few prominent Company officers for

[116] The bindings of these volumes are in poor condition, disallowing one to read the volume number along the spine. Thus, it is uncertain how many volumes of these records once existed for the first decades of the nineteenth century. Anonymous, "Housekeeper's weekly accounts of breakfasts served in East India House," 1828-34. Uncertain volume number. BL IOR Mss Eur E270.

[117] Margaret Makepeace, *The East India Company's London Workers: Management of the Warehouse Labourers, 1850-1858* (Woodbridge, England: The Boydell Press, 2010), 4-5; H. V. Bowen, *The Business of Empire: The East India Company and Imperial Britain, 1756-1833* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 272.

an elaborate dinner at the India House.[118] By holding such social gatherings there, EIC officers both revealed the interwoven nature of Anglo-Indian and elite social spheres and asserted that this commercial headquarters could be a location of fashionable sociability. Ultimately, EIC efforts to construct the India House as a polite space in London suggest that the Britishness or orientalness of spaces was contested, contingent, and also mediated through both architectural ornamentation and the movement and display of Asian exotica.

III. "Hatred to the Idols"[119]: Proselytization, Collecting, Images, and the Display of Indian Exotica in British Missionary Museums

For decades prior to the 1814 opening of the London Missionary Society's Museum "in the Old Jewry, near Cheapside,"[120] the London Missionary Society (LMS), the Baptist Missionary Society, and other evangelical organizations displayed Asian artifacts, antiquities, natural history specimens, and spiritual images.[121] Before the passage of the 1813 East India Company Act — whose "pious clause" permitted missionary activity in the Company's territories — proselytizers in the subcontinent collected Hindu images and other "heathenish" items.[122] Missionaries shipped Indian items hidden in crates of letters and other goods destined for Britain. Most of these materials remained at the Bristol Baptist College's library or in the LMS offices. Preachers utilized these Indian artifacts in religious services, lectures, and other

[118] Anonymous, *The Asiatic Journal and Monthly Miscellany*, Vol. 4 (London, 1817), 206.
[119] John Biss to Andrew Fuller, 15 November, 1805. Baptist Missionary Society Archives (BMSA), BMS Missionary Correspondence, Box IN/2. Southern Baptist Historical Library and Archive (SBHLA), Nashville, TN, Microfilm Collection #5350. Reel 20, Vol. 2, Unpaginated.
[120] Anonymous, *The Missionary Magazine and Evangelical Chronicle, for October, 1814* (London, 1814), 405.
[121] This chapter follows David Bebbington's definition of the term "evangelical." See Bebbington, *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain: A History from the 1780s to the 1830s* (London: Routledge, 1988), 1-17.
[122] Bob Tennant, *Corporate Holiness: Pulpit Preaching and the Church of England Missionary Society, 1760-1870* (Oxford: Oxford University press, 2013), 155-60.

meetings.[123] For many members of British missionary groups, Hindu images and other "idolatrous" exotica functioned as evidence of successful conversions.[124] They also served as physical manifestations of the unchristian and deleterious practices of Indians which could orientalize the Europeans of Calcutta. According to Andrew Fuller, a prominent BMS administrator, Baptists feared that the "part of the British nation which has visited India or is conversant in it [has become] half heathenized by it."[125] Much of the foundational literature on William Carey and the Baptists, Nathanial Forsyth of the London Missionary Society, and other evangelicals active in Bengal has emphasized their efforts to convert Indians.[126] While these preachers extensively proselytized outside of Hindu temples,[127] they also endeavored to Christianize Europeans. For these missionaries, preaching to Europeans would ensure the white town of Calcutta to be a British, Christian space. When Baptist and LMS missionaries first arrived in Bengal in the 1790s, the colonial government under Governor General Cornwallis enacted a number of policies intended to shield EIC servants from "corrupting" Indian influences and maintain the British nature of white-town society. Although such processes of "Anglicanization" occurred concomitant to missionaries' efforts to Christianize Indians and

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[123] Chris Wingfield, "Reassembling the London Missionary Society Collection: Experimenting with Symmetrical Anthropology and Archaeological Sensibility," in *Reassembling the Collection: Ethnographic Museums and Indigenous Agency*, edited by Rodney Harrison, Sarah Byrne, and Anne Clarke (Santa Fe: SAR Press, 2013), 62, 80.
[124] Anonymous, *Catalogue of the Missionary Museum, Austin Friars; Including Specimens in Natural History, Various Idols of Heathen Nations, Dresses, Manufactures, Utensils, Instruments of War, &c.* (London, 1826), 1-2. .
[125] Andrew Fuller to William Ward, 16 July, 1809. BMSA, Home Office Correspondence. SBHLA Microfilm Collection #5350. Reel 20, Vol. 2, Unpaginated.
[126] The Baptists' efforts to convert Indians was the focus of many texts published by the missionaries themselves. Much of the nineteenth-century secondary literature followed this trend. See William Ward, *Account of the Writings, Religion, and Manners of the Hindoos*, 4 volumes (Serampore, 1811); William Ward, *Memoir of the Rev. William Ward, One of the Serampore Missionaries* (Philadelphia, 1828).
[127] For instance, J. Chamberlain, "Mr. Chamberlain's Journal," 27 October, 1807, in *Periodical Accounts Relative to the Baptist Missionary* Society, Vol. 3 (London, 1806), 292.

Europeans, [128] the Company did not enforce religious practice in South Asia.[129] Baptist missionaries extensively recorded the spiritual and cultural practices of Indians in Calcutta and nearby Serampore, yet they viewed their projects of conversion and consecration in India as part of a global process of quashing heathenism extending into Britain itself.[130] Although most BMS and LMS missionaries challenged the so-called non-Christian practices of the lower orders in Britain,[131] the moral threat of Asian spiritual practices heathenizing Europeans in India and seeping into Britain was one factor driving the formation of missionary museum collections.[132]

Missionaries' transportation of Asian images to the metropolis and their display of oriental exotica had close association with the designation of certain geographic sectors of Britain and India as British or "oriental" spaces. The missionary museums displayed South Asian exotica in part to evidence evangelists' efforts to uphold the Britishness of far-flung reaches of the empire, such as the white town in Calcutta. Since the zeal for the conversion of "heathens" at home and abroad — as well as missionaries themselves — spanned the social spectrum,[133] proselytizers in India did not equate Britishness with high social standing. Rather, LMS and Baptist missionaries identified Christianity and Britishness as interlinked. Indeed, for

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[128] Such reforms included the elimination of South Asians from higher-level administrative positions, the encouragement of British EIC officers to marry European women, higher wages for Company administrators, and a other measures excluding Indians from British society in Calcutta and other cities. Joseph Sramek, *Gender, Morality, and Race in Company India, 1765-1858* (London: Routledge, 2011), 40-4; Eric Stokes, *English Utilitarians and India* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1959), 3.

[129] The EIC's Directors suggested "that divine service be regularly performed, as in England, every Sunday, at all the military stations." Anonymous, "Extract from a Public Letter from the Court of Directors of the East India Company to Bengal, Dated 25 May, 1798," in Robert Montgomery Martin, editor, *The Despatches, Minutes and Correspondence Of the Marquess Wellesley During His Administration in India,* Volume 2 (London, 1836), 739.

[130] Brian K. Pennington, *Was Hinduism Invented?: Britons, Indians, and the Colonial Construction of Religion* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 23-5.

[131] William Carey, *An Enquiry Into the Obligations of Christians to Use Means for the Conversion of the Heathens* (London, 1792), 13.

[132] While British missionaries attempted to convert Muslims in Bengal, they focused their efforts on quashing Hindu "idolatry" because it seemed to be embraced by all persons in Calcutta. In January, 1798 Carey reported that "even the Mussulmans have so far Hindooized as to join in the idolatry." William Carey to John Sutcliff, 16 January, 1798, in *Periodical Accounts Relative to the Baptist Missionary* Society, Vol. 1 (London, 1800), 404.

[133] Pennington, *Was Hinduism Invented?,* 23.

missionaries, the Christianizing of the interwoven white and black towns was essential to fending off the “Asiatic corruption” of Europeans. Thus, one of the functions of displaying Indian “idols” in missionaries’ London and Bristol exhibition spaces was to evidence proselytizers’ efforts to maintain the Christianity and Britishness of the white town of Calcutta. Missionary organizations and their museums illuminated the material conditions of the interlaced black town and white town of Calcutta through extensive publications in Britain and the display of Indian spiritual images. These publications and exhibition spaces together revealed the threat of “idolatry” and suggested that the images on display were exemplary of images whose associated Hindu practices continued to spiritually, morally, and physically threaten Britons in Calcutta.

Missionary museums emerged in tandem with the “missionary awakening” of the late eighteenth century, which redoubled efforts to “civilize” and Christianize the oriental-like lower orders at home and expanded the geographic compass of proselytization to imperial territories. British missionary organizations emerged during the eighteenth-century proliferation of urban clubs concerned with social reform, abolitionism, and an array of other humanitarian projects.[134] While evangelical religiosity may have been at odds with Enlightenment ideas of reason, order, and individuality,[135] the expansion of missions was intimately linked to contemporary notions of the need for improving humanity.[136] Missionaries’ commitment to collecting, ordering, and displaying in museums the spiritual material culture of non-Christian peoples reveals their commitment to Enlightenment projects of knowledge gathering.[137] British and American

[134] Peter Clark, *British Clubs and Societies, 1580-1800: The Origins of an Associational World* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 96.
[135] Conversely, Joseph Stubenrauch recently revealed how British missionaries actually embraced the opportunities associated with “material modernity” — such as consumerism, mass production, increasingly widespread literacy, global mobility, and urbanization — to proselytize. Stubenrauch, *The Evangelical Age of Ingenuity in Industrial Britain* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), 12-13.
[136] Bebbington, *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain*, 50-69.
[137] Carey and other missionaries also collected botanicals in India. Leighton Williams and Mornay Williams, Introduction to *Serampore Letters*. Edited by Leighton Williams and Mornay Williams (New York, 1892), 14, 35.

religious revival, circulating accounts of global imperial expansion and cultural encounters, conflict with France, and evangelical millennial belief encouraged these societies to expand the geographic scope of their projects of improving the lives of the uneducated, the impoverished, and the unchurched.[138] Although the Methodist Bishop Thomas Coke penned *Plan for the Society for the Establishment of Missions among the Heathens* as early as 1783,[139] William Carey's writings in the 1790s had the greatest influence in encouraging the formation of missionary associations. Carey's *An Enquiry into the Obligations of Christians to Use Means for the Conversion of the Heathens* (1792) called for the expansion of the missionary project to imperial territories. For Carey, the monumental undertaking of global conversion required the collaborative efforts of all denominations functioning much like seaborne merchants united as a joint-stock company.[140] Following the formation of the Baptist Missionary Society, the Anglican clergyman Melville Horne's treatise, *Letters on Missions* (1794), echoed Carey's aims and inspired the formation of the LMS in 1795.[141] These organizations' commitment to cooperation in Britain and India during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries yielded joint projects of destroying, appropriating, transporting, and displaying Indian spiritual images.

Although the Baptists and the LMS held their respective assemblages of Indian exotica, the circulation of these materials between individuals and missionary museums in Britain

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[138] Brian Stanley, *The Bible and the Flag: Protestant Missions and British Imperialism in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries* (Leicester: Apollos, 1990), 55-6; Stubenrauch, *The Evangelical Age of Ingenuity in Industrial Britain*, 40-43; Penny Carson, "The British Raj and the Awakening of the Evangelical Conscience: The Ambiguities of Religious Establishment and Toleration, 1698-1822," in *Christian Missions and the Enlightenment,* edited by Brian Stanley (Grand Rapids: Eerdman's Publishing, 2001), 53-5.
[139] Thomas Coke, *Plan for the Society for the Establishment of Missions among the Heathens* (London, 1783); David Bundy, "Thomas Coke as Mission Historian: A Case Study of the Bahamas," *Methodist History*, Vol. 53, No. 4 (July, 2015): 214.
[140] Carey utilized Captain Cook and others' accounts of voyages to estimate the numbers of non-Christian persons. According to Carey, globally "four hundred and twenty millions…are still in pagan darkness, an hundred and thirty millions [are] the followers of Mahomet, an hundred millions [are] Catholics; and perhaps seven millions [are] Jews." Carey, *An Enquiry Into the Obligations of Christians,* 62-3, 81-2.
[141] Melville Horne, *Letters on Missions Addressed to the Protestant Ministers of the British Churches* (Bristol, 1794), 21-22.

mirrored the cooperation of persons of multiple organizations in Britain and India.[142] Collaborative proselytizing in and around Calcutta and the circulation of the spoils of missionary activity resulted in metropolitan missionary museums' collections being interwoven and mutually constituted.[143] The administrative, material, and financial ties of these organizations in Britain were many.[144] Much as sponsors attended meetings of multiple organizations, the abolitionist politician William Wilberforce, the Anglican parliamentarian Charles Grant, the economist Henry Thornton, the former Governor General of the EIC John Shore, and others held administrative positions in multiple societies.[145] The interlinked nature of these groups extended to missionary practice in India, where evangelicals frequently met, collaborated, and, according to the evangelical minister Thomas Haweis, "all move[d] in parallel lines, and pursue[d] the same magnanimous object."[146] Following his purchase of Aldeen House north of Calcutta, the EIC chaplain David Brown converted a Hindu temple on the property into an interdenominational Christian chapel and meeting place for missionaries. The replacement of the resident image of Jagannath with a church organ and congregational space symbolically rendered the temple a Christian, British location. These acts of spoliation, however, also revealed the conjoined efforts of evangelists in Bengal and Britain to neutralize and utilize South Asian images for their own objectives.[147] Practices of exchanging Indian spiritual images among

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[142] Despite close association, there were theological disagreements and quarrels between these groups. Eli Daniel Potts, *British Baptist Missionaries in India, 1793-1837* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1967), 49-50.
[143] Anonymous, *Catalogue of the Missionary Museum, Austin Friars,* 31-2.
[144] While these organizations were closely allied in the 1790s-1820s, their association weakened in the following decades. See, for example, William Ward's Journal, 14 Oct, 1799, *Periodical Accounts*, 13; C. Silvester Horne, *The Story of the L. M. S., 1795-1895* (London, 1895), 16-17.
[145] Pennington, *Was Hinduism Invented?,* 30.
[146] The BMS's *Periodical Accounts*, the Anglican publication *The Missionary Magazine and Evangelical Chronicle,* and *The Evangelical Magazine* published accounts of missionaries of various denominations and societies. Thomas Haweis, *A View of the Present State of Evangelical Religion Throughout the World* (London, 1814), 14.
[147] In October, 1806 the American East India merchant Benjamin Wickes reported that he "went with the Missionaries at Serampore, and one from the London mission, to a large pagoda; where we met four church ministers, who all united in prayer and praise for the spread of the precious gospel…O that the time may soon come when all their idol temples shall be turned into houses of delightful prayer." Wickes to J. Eastburn 16 October, 1806

missionary groups in Britain were common prior to the founding of the museums. The antiquarian John Bowen criticized metropolitan preachers' use of Indian images as props in sermonizing. According to Bowen, "images of brass, said to be Indian deities, are frequently displayed…to their congregations. The dancing of these puppets up and down, coupled with a few rhetorical flourishes and violent gesticulations" was integral to this performance.[148] The importance of Hindu images to these sermons suggests that those held in the LMS museum and the Baptist College had changed hands among preachers and continued to play a role in orations.

The missionary museums had limited hours in which approved persons could examine the displayed "objects of curiosity and interest,"[149] yet visitors "experienced no difficulty in obtaining access."[150] This openness underscored the missionaries' desire to show off trophies of proselytization, to Christianize those lured into the museum by the spectacle of exotica, and to encourage financial donations. Following the 1823 movement of the LMS collections to a larger gallery in Austin Friars, the doors were only open each Wednesday from 10:00AM to 4:00PM for anyone who acquired a ticket.[151] However, these restrictive hours did not result in few visitors. Many viewed the collections before and after sermons and other meetings in the LMS headquarters, and other congregants became familiar with them through their display during church services or through etchings and textual descriptions appearing in evangelical journals.[152]

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in *The Massachusetts Missionary Magazine*, Vol. 5 (Salem, MA, 1808), 356; Anonymous, *Calcutta Review for 1845,* Vol. IV (Calcutta, 1845), 502-3.

[148] Bowen, *Missionary Incitement and Hindoo Demoralization*, 6. Also quoted in White, *From Little London to Little Bengal,* 81-2.

[149] Anonymous, *Catalogue of the Missionary Museum, Austin Friars,* 1.

[150]John Evans, *The Picture of Bristol, or, a Guide to Objects of Curiosity and Interest in Bristol, Clifton, the Hotwells* (Bristol, 1818), 79.

[151] Since larger numbers usually generated more donations to the Society, ready access to the collections was pragmatic. Anonymous, *Catalogue of the Missionary Museum, Austin Friars,* 1-2.

[152] Thus, viewing the collection did not always require entering the rooms of the LMS museum. Chris Wingfield, "'Scarcely More than a Christian Trophy Case'?: The Global Collections of the London Missionary Society Museum (1814–1910)," *Journal of the History of Collections*, Vol. 29, No. 1 (2017):112.

The ease of access reflected the socially-heterogeneous composition of the congregants, financial donors, and the missionaries themselves. Some observers, such as the poet Robert Southey, derided the missionaries in Bengal as "low-born and low-bred mechanics."[153] Missionaries involved in Christianizing at home and abroad, thus, identified faith as providing distinctiveness from the orientalized, heathen-like lower orders of Britain.[154] This equation of Christianity with Britishness became so commonplace that even Indian converts, such as Krishno Dass, noted how Bengali Hindus accused them of having become Britons or "tiresome feringhees" [Europeans].[155] Since missionaries identified the Britishness of the white town according to the devoutness of the Europeans and their rejection of oriental spiritual practices, the collection, destruction, transportation, and display of Asian images remained an objective of the evangelical mission so long as there was a threat of orientalization of Britons at home and abroad.

The LMS's museum and the Bristol Baptist College's library exhibited Asian spiritual images and artifacts as "trophies of Christianity" providing information on Indian spiritual and cultural practice, evidencing the conversion of "heathens" in India, and providing examples of the idols threating Indians and Europeans.[156] Since the continuous transportation of goods between Britain and Calcutta was vital to the success of the missionary project, the Serampore evangelicals frequently sent to the administrators in Britain parcels "containing some of the implements, utensils, and idols, of the Hindoos; which may serve as useful illustrations when the

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[153] Anonymous [Robert Southey], "Periodical Accounts Relative to the Baptist Missionary Society, Etc," in *the Quarterly Review for 1809* (London, 1809), 196.
[154] While Carey was a shoe maker by trade, he identified as oriental those in Britain who were not Christian as well as those Europeans in India who adopted Indian cultural norms. Potts, *British Baptist Missionaries in India,* 7-8.
[155] Krishno Dass, "A Journey of Krishno Dass, Taken Principally from His Own Journal," 25 August, 1806, in *Periodical Accounts Relative to the Baptist Missionary* Society, Vol. 3 (London, 1806), 273.
[156] For the use of "idols" as evidence of conversion, Nicholas Thomas*, Entangled Objects: Exchange, Material Culture, and Colonialism in the Pacific* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1991), 151-8.

present customs, manners, and superstitions" of South Asians.[157] Although a complete catalogue of the Baptist Missionary Society's collections during this period is not extant, visitors noted the museum's importance. As the travel writer John Evans noted, in addition to housing "almost every production of importance upon the subject of theology," the Bristol Baptist College had on display several "Hindoo idols…which have been sent hither at different times by the Baptist missionaries in India."[158] Similarly, the LMS museum catalog boasted that "the most valuable and impressive objects in this collection are the numerous, and…horrible idols, which have been imported form the South Sea Islands,…India, China, and Africa."[159] Although "idols" were on display in their London offices as early as 1797,[160] the acquisition of images from Tahiti during the second decade of the nineteenth century encouraged LMS administrators to devote multiple rooms specifically to exotica.[161] These displays worked in conjunction with the missionaries' publications in elucidating the features and functions of images.[162] The presence of "idols" in these museums, however, underscored the veracity, danger, and importance of missionary work in the subcontinent.

While the physical arrangement in missionary museums associated each item on display with the beliefs and practices of certain regions of the world, museum catalogues and identification tags either underscored how devotees surrendered the "idol" at the time of conversion or how such images incited immoral and hazardous acts of worship. Missionary

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[157] Mr. Fountain to Mr. Morris, 12 May 1798, in *Periodical Accounts Relative to the Baptist Missionary* Society, Vol. 1, 422-3; Missionaries believed that the relocation of Hindu images to Britain divested them of spiritual power. White, *From Little London to Little Bengal,* 73-4.
[158] Evans, *The Picture of Bristol,* 79.
[159] Anonymous, *Catalogue of the Missionary Museum, Austin Friars,* 1.
[160] Anonymous, *Transactions of the Missionary Society* (London, 1816), 431-2.
[161] Anonymous, *Catalogue of the Missionary Museum, Austin Friars,* 1, 7; Rosemary Seton, "Reconstructing the Museum of the London Missionary Society," *Material Religion*, Vol. 8, No. 1 (2012): 98, 101.
[162] Pennington, *Was Hinduism Invented?,* 89, 95, 97.

society administrators received a wide variety of South Asian items.[163] However, only a small number of "idols" populated the glass cases of the Bristol Baptist College library. Conversely, the 1826 LMS catalogue reveals that artifacts filled cases and covered the walls of the two museum rooms. The displays consisted of twelve glass cases containing multiple shelves. In the smaller room, Cases A to C held natural history specimens from the Pacific. Twenty-three manufactured items from Rurutu, the Sandwich Islands, and the Society Islands populated Case D. Although Case E also contained shells, bones, and horns from Africa and the Indian Ocean area, many of these items appeared alongside African and Pacific weaponry.[164] The larger room featuring Asian items divided these materials into sections underscoring both region of manufacture and a distinction between natural and human-made exotica. Case H carried the label "East Indies" and contained at least twenty-seven South-Asian spiritual images on the first three shelves. The fourth shelf featured only Buddhist and Hindu images from India and Burma.[165] The LMS museum catalogue claimed that these images were "specimens…of the gods of the heathen in India, worshipped by more than a hundred millions of deluded people. These are creatures of the corrupt imagination." Thus, "the various cruelties accompanying their superstitions" threatened the spiritual and physical wellbeing all who resided in India, including Europeans.[166] Indeed, missionaries' published accounts of Calcutta, museum catalogue

[163] These materials ranging from Hindu images to "Hindosthanee writing paper." Anonymous, *Account of the Bristol Education Society: For the Year 1816* (Bristol, 1816), 36; Anonymous, *Account of the Bristol Education Society: For the Year 1817* (Bristol, 1817), 37. Also cited in White, *From Little London to Little Bengal,* 203, n. 94.
[164] The juxtaposition of natural history specimens with icons tapped into British assumptions that Africans and Pacific Islanders were living in a "state of nature." Sujit Sivasundaram, *Nature and the Godly Empire: Science and Evangelical Mission in the Pacific, 1795-1850* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 177; Anonymous, *Catalogue of the Missionary Museum, Austin Friars,* 6-16.
[165] Manufactured items such as ink, fans, boxes, slippers, and other specimens not necessarily associated with spiritual practices appeared on shelves separate from those containing images. Anonymous, *Catalogue of the Missionary Museum, Austin Friars,* 29-31, 33-7; Wingfield, "'Scarcely More than a Christian Trophy Case'?, 111.
[166] Anonymous, *Catalogue of the Missionary Museum, Austin Friars,* 31.

descriptions, and the physical placement of "idols" in museum cases highlighted the dangers of bodily harm and orientalization to anyone who encountered them in the subcontinent.

Missionaries' publications and personal letters provided ample detail of white-town eschewal of Christianity and participation in Indian spiritual practices. Narratives of Europeans worshiping Indian "idols" revealed the conjoined nature of projects of enlightening non-Christians and maintaining the character of the European sectors of Calcutta. Since rumors of EIC officers going native and transforming into nabobs highlighted their embrace of Indian spiritual practices,[167] British missionaries identified the intertwined white and back towns of Calcutta as a single milieu in need of spiritual salvation. In 1799 the Baptist missionary Samuel Powell claimed that "Calcutta and Batavia [were] the two worst cities in the world," whose wickedness was comparable to "Sodom and Gomorrah."[168] According to William Carey, to reside in Calcutta was to be "on every side surrounded with heathens and Mahommedans, who are deaf to the voice of reason, of Scripture, and of God."[169] This inseparability of Indian and British social spheres led Nathanial Forsyth in November, 1801 to inform the LMS directors of the urgency of proselytizing throughout Calcutta. Even in the black town "there is always a considerable number of Europeans, soldiers, seamen, civilians, and people of the settlement."[170] For missionaries in Bengal, Anglo-Indians' participation in South Asian practices was tantamount to orientalization. According to David Brown, "many of the English accept invitations from opulent Hindoos 'to festivals in honor of the idol'… issued to a Christian community by idolaters, who vie with one another to make these occasions attractive…to the

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[167] Tillman W. Nechtman, *Nabobs: Empire and Identity in Eighteenth-Century Britain* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 13-16, 80-91.
[168] Samuel Powell to Dr. Rippon, 30 Dec., 1801 in *The Missionary Magazine for 1801*, 218.
[169] Carey to Anonymous, 15 June 1802, in *Serampore Letters*, 69.
[170] Nathaniel Forsyth, "Extracts from a Letter by N. Forsyth," 7 Nov. 1801, *The Missionary Magazine for 1802: A Periodical Monthly Publication intended as a Repository of Discussion and Intelligence Respecting The Progress of the Gospel Throughout the World,* Vol. 7 (London, 1802), 394.

English." So strong was the influence of Hindu practice over the white-town "that the congregation of the church was thinned to increase the company attendant on this idol or that…some were heedlessly proceeding to these exhibitions from the very doors" of churches.[171] On days of Hindu festivals, the "streets in Calcutta were almost filled with the palanquins of Europeans, going to see the worship."[172] Missionaries noted the correlation between Europeans' embrace of Indian customs and the degradation of personal and communal virtue in the white town.[173] For Powell, any person arriving in the white town would find "none in Calcutta, whose conduct was consistent with the Christian character." Indeed, "none [were] so wicked as the English."[174] Thus, the ever presence of Indians, "Portuguese," and others existing throughout and between the intermeshed white and black towns posed a challenge to missionaries' objective of preserving – or creating – the Christian, British character of the European sector.

Long-standing Protestant objections to religious images impelled the administrators of British missionary museums to display South Asian Catholic images alongside Hindu "idols."[175] These juxtapositions also arose from missionaries' suspicions that British exposure to "Portuguese" Catholics in the subcontinent could normalize "idol" worship and the embrace of Hindu practices.[176] Placed among the Hindu and Buddhist "idols" in the LMS museum was an effigy of "the Virgin Mary and Child" that Britons seized in Mysore. According to the museum

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[171] David Brown, *Memorial Sketches of the Rev David Brown with a Selection of His Sermons, Preached at Calcutta,* edited by Charles Simeon (London, 1816), 72-3.
[172] Felix Carey to Mr. Yeates. Serampore, February, 1801, in *The Missionary Magazine for 1801*, 434.
[173] Carey to John Williams, Serampore, 9 Dec. 1800, in *Serampore Letters*, 61-2.
[174] Samuel Powell to Dr. Rippon, May 1800 in *The Missionary Magazine for 1801,* 253.
[175] John Poyner's pamphlet "Popery and the Religion of the Heathen" (1818) argued that Catholic popery was a natural ally of Hindu idolatry; Geoffrey A. Oddie, *Imagined Hinduism: British Protestant Missionary Constructions of Hinduism, 1793-1900* (New Delhi: Sage Publications, 2006), 26-7; Pennington, *Was Hinduism Invented?,* 67-72.
[176] Carey claimed that "whether children of English, French, Dutch, or Danes, by native women, are called Portuguese." The Portuguese in Calcutta were supposedly a threat to the British, Protestant nature of the white town because of their existence within and between the intertwined white town and black town social milieus. William Carey, "Of the Portuguese and Armenians in Hindostan," in *Periodical Accounts*, Vol. 2, 189; Carey to Dr. Ryland, 15 Aug, 1800, in *Periodical Accounts,* Vol. 2, 76.

catalogue, the removal of the image yielded the "great consternation" of local Catholics, some of whom "offered large sums of money for it; one offered twenty [gold] pagodas, another his daughter, and another even declared that he would sell his own child and procure enough money to purchase it, if it might be retained."[177] Just as this Madonna statue appeared on the fourth shelf of Case H among "a black stone image of Kali" and "a Buddha, in marble," this narrative of Catholic fixation on physical "idols" appeared in the LMS catalogue alongside claims of the "cruelties" and other practices supposedly associated with Hindu idol worship. The constant bodily presence of Indians and Portuguese throughout the city led Felix Carey to lament in 1801 that "here Hindoos, Musselmans, English and Portuguese, are all the same…They are running the road which leads to Hell as fast as they can."[178] Moreover, in 1807 the Indian convert, Krishno Presaud similarly noted that "the Hindoos worship their Rams and Kreeshnoos, the Mussulmans their Peers [saints], the ferengee [European] Catholics their crucifixes and Virgin Mary, and even Europeans, who profess to believe in Christianity…contribute to the support of idolatry."[179] Such parallels led missionaries to perceive any image crafted by Indians to be non-Christian in nature. In 1804 Carey observed "a Hindoo image-maker carrying home an image of Christ on the Cross between two thieves, to the house of a Portuguese."[180] Thus, Armenians, "Portuguese," and baptized Indians remained in the missionary mind as "Hindoo Christians" whose permutations of Christian practice provided them some degree of salvation but granted them neither a designation as European nor full belonging in the white-town socialscape. Rather,

[177] Anonymous, *Catalogue of the Missionary Museum, Austin Friars,* 31.
[178] Felix Carey to Mr. Yates, 4 Feb., 1801, in *The Missionary Magazine for 1801,* 437.
[179] Krishno Presaud, "Memoir of Krishno Presaud by Brother Ward," 1807, in *Periodical Accounts*, Vol. 3, 366
[180] William Carey, "Of the Portuguese and Armenians in Hindostan, in *Periodical Accounts*, Vol. 2, 188.

their Indian cultural norms and proclivity for relapsing into some degree of idolatry rendered South Asian converts distinct from Britons.[181]

Missionary museums functioned in tandem with the organizations' publications to illustrate missionaries' endeavors, yet physical arrangement, containment in glass cases, and visible physical damage equally suggested narratives of conversion, transformation, and circulation of "idols" on display.[182] The Baptist missionary Joshua Marshman boasted in 1805 that one converted Indian man "gave up his livelihood, threw his byraggee books [Hindu texts] into the river, and hung his image of [Jagannath] in a tree." A short time following his baptism, he "took down the poor image out the tree; and cleaving it in two, with one half of it he dressed his dinner." For Marshman, the image's dismemberment mirrored its disempowerment, making the "other half of Jaggernat'h" suitable to hang "up in the Museum at Bristol."[183] The BMS administrator Andrew Fuller delighted in the presence of damage on the surfaces of images. In 1802 Fuller informed Carey that "the broken [Hindu] Idols...are stationed in the Bristol Museum, and Lord Regland has sent me Brother Marshman's History of them…to which I have given this title – An Account of the Blind and the Lame."[184] Although the LMS catalogue did not explicitly mention the mutilation of pieces on display, contemporary illustrations and the physical condition of pieces still extant reveal that many bore marks signifying rejection by former worshipers, decontextualization, and damage inflicted by missionaries. In addition to visible abrasions or severed limbs, damage to images also took the form of writing on them or the

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[181] For typical accounts of "Hindoo Christians" relapsing into idolatrous practices, see William Ward's Diary, 2 Nov., 1800**,** in *Periodical Accounts*, Vol. 2, 115; Ward, "Extracts of journals of Ward, Marshman, and Mardon, 1 Jan to 18 Aug, 1805," in *Periodical Accounts*, Vol. 3, 177.
[182] The LMS catalogue contained quotes from the Baptist publications stating the Indian spiritual practices associated with the displayed images. Anonymous, *Catalogue of the Missionary Museum, Austin Friars,* 21-31.
[183] Dr. Marshman to Dr. Ryland, 29 Oct., 1805, in *Periodical Accounts*, Vol. 3, 117-18.
[184] Andrew Fuller to William Carey, 26 Nov., 1802, BMSA, Home Office Correspondence. SBHLA, Microfilm Collection #5350. Reel 20, Vol. 2, 2.

removal or the covering of genitalia or other features offending the prudish missionaries.[185] Such alterations reveal the missionaries' goal of rendering these "idols" as artifacts rather than as images imbued with divine properties.[186] The numbers of Indian images displayed in missionary museums were limited, but they served as examples of many shattered images "cast to the moles and bats."[187] Thus, these museums never functioned as repositories for every destroyed or stolen image. Rather, the visibly-altered Hindu images populating missionary museums' glass cases served as representations of processes of destruction in India.

Missionaries shipped Hindu images to London in order to neutralize their spiritual power,[188] yet published narratives of "idols" compelling persons in India to engage in immoral and dangerous practices underscored the continuing power of similar images in India. The numerous images constantly created, destroyed, and inciting irrational forms of worship colored accounts of Indian spiritual practice. The LMS catalogue reiterated falsehoods and exaggerations presented in the missionaries' other publications of Indian images encouraging Europeans to attend festivals where "great mortality frequently prevails." Affinity for Hindu images drove persons to "pierce their tongues, bore their sides, swing by hooks fastened in their backs, and perform many other ceremonies of self-torture."[189] Missionaries believed that orientalists, Anglo-Indians, and others exposed to Indian spiritual practices were in bodily danger by observing or participating in such practices. As William Ward sarcastically remarked, Europeans "who are not ashamed to confess your attachment to paganism, come and join the Hindoos in drawing the carriage of Jaggernaut, or in laying yourselves under its wheels to be crushed to death!"[190]

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[185] Pennington, *Was Hinduism Invented?,* 95; Hooper, *Pacific Encounters*, 66, 71, 193-4; Chris Wingfield, "'Scarcely More than a Christian Trophy Case'?," 117-20.
[186] White, *From Little London to Little Bengal*, 80-2.
[187] Mr. Powell to Mr. Rippon, May, 1800, in *The Missionary Magazine for 1801*, 252.
[188] White, *From Little London to Little Bengal,* 79-80.
[189] Anonymous, *Catalogue of the Missionary Museum, Austin Friars;* 25-7.
[190] William Ward, "Mr. Ward's Journal," 21 June, 1803, in *Periodical Accounts*, Vol. 2, 479.

Although the particular damaged and dislocated "idols" in missionary museum cases revealed how similar images continued to exude power over peoples in South Asia, the LMS offices and the Bristol Baptist College remained a Christian, British location. Rather, these museums' displays worked in tandem with missionaries' publications in crafting a narrative of evangelical efforts to maintain the spiritual and cultural character of the British community in Calcutta.

Conclusion

This chapter has explored how the material counterflows of empire in South Asia forced transformations in metropolitan museums' functions, practices of acquisition, and methods of display during the Georgian period. The defeat of Tipu Sultan in 1799, the British acquisition of remarkable Egyptian antiquities 1801, and, of course, many years of British collecting, looting, and artistic patronage in South Asia channeled many "oriental" artworks, antiquities, and images into London museums. The uses and physical arrangements of South Asian material culture were neither static nor uniform in differing metropolitan museums. The administrators and visitors of the British Museum, the India House library and museum, and missionary museums held dynamic, competing visions of Britishness and the capacity of Indian and other Asian items to render certain museum spaces as either British or "oriental." The first section revealed that during the eighteenth-century the British Museum was an exclusive elite social space primarily exhibiting European masterworks and Greco-Roman antiquities. But an influx of the material spoils of empire early in the nineteenth century forced this institution to have both British and "oriental" zones. Section two examined how the India House expanded at the turn of the century to become a prominent location of Anglo-Indian sociability and an "oriental repository" of South Asian texts, spiritual images, and other material culture. Company officers rejected the notion

that the presence of these items designated the India House an orientalized place in London. Rather, this library and museum was a valuable archive of materials revealing India's past, necessary for colonial governance, and promoting the interests of Britain. The third section detailed how the London Missionary Society and the Baptist Missionary Society acquired, circulated, and displayed Indian spiritual images and other material culture in metropolitan museums. Once these organizations began proselytizing in Bengal in the 1790s, they attempted to both convert South Asians and maintain the British, Christian character of European communities in India. The missionary museums displayed spiritual icons as examples of the material components of South Asian spiritual practices. But these "idols" also represented the larger numbers of images in the subcontinent which continued to present spiritual, moral, and physical danger to Europeans in India. Rather than rendering missionary museums as British or non-British locations, these exhibitions revealed to visitors the efforts of the missionaries in India to maintain the Britishness of the white town. Ultimately, while this chapter has detailed the capacity of imported Indian material culture to cause museum rooms and collection cabinets to carry "oriental" airs, the short conclusion of this dissertation explores how contemporaneously some Britons and nabobs attempted to use domestic materials in crafting their own "oriental" or pseudo-oriental spaces in Britain in the form of houses, pseudo-temples, and garden ornaments.

CONCLUSION

The preceding chapters of this dissertation have examined how the material counterflows of imperial expansion and rule in South Asia – such as artworks, antiquities, and spiritual images – forced Britons to confront and negotiate the multiple, competing definitions and delimitations of Britishness and "orientalness" as they existed in the subcontinent and in Britain during the Georgian period. The arrival in Britain of greater quantities of exotica as well as more detailed information on India's past and present also encouraged some persons to use domestic and Indian materials craft pseudo-oriental spaces on landed estates or in urban spaces. By the last decades of the eighteenth century, South-Asian architectural forms and aesthetics began to appear in Britain as architects and landscape designers began to copy features of Indian structures represented in textual accounts, paintings and published images of subcontinental architecture, and, occasionally, imported material culture. While some returned Anglo-Indians wished to craft a small pseudo-Indian space in or near their home, a few Britons who had never ventured to the subcontinent created their own Asian-like houses, garden follies, and other structures. Indian and East-Asian architectural forms and aesthetics remained uncommon in Britain until the end of the century. Nevertheless, as this brief discussion details, trends in British attitudes towards "oriental" architecture mirrored the dynamic uses and perceptions of South Asian exotica during the Georgian period.

When the South-Asian travel writer Mirza Abu Taleb Khan toured London in the early nineteenth century he visited "the house of Mr. [Thomas] Daniell," where he "saw portraits of many of my Indian acquaintance, and some beautiful paintings of the Taj Mahal…at Agra, and of several other places in Hindoostan." According to Khan, although "many of the English had

an opinion that there were not any buildings worth looking at in India, [he] was much rejoiced that Mr. Daniell had, by his skill, enabled [him] to convince them of the contrary."[1] Thomas Daniell's celebration and circulation of South Asian architectural forms in Britain was not limited to the publication of his landscape views of India's interior. Rather, both Thomas and William Daniell collaborated with British architects in the creation of Indian-like structures on British landed estates.[2] Famously, in 1805-1808 the East India Company's architect Samuel Pepys Cockerell relied upon Thomas Daniell's sketches, published images, and advice when constructing Sezincote House in Gloucestershire for his brother, Charles Cockerell.[3] This EIC officer's mansion featured an overall structural layout consistent with British architectural conventions during this period. Yet, it had a number of Indian-like details and components. In addition to its red sandstone façade reminiscent of Agra Fort and other noted subcontinental buildings, the mansion featured a Mughal-style dome and a number of *chattris* (small open pavilions) at the corners of the roofline. Thomas Daniell and the landscaper and aesthetic theorist Humphrey Repton incorporated many smaller pseudo-Indian structures and images into their design of the garden containing bamboo and other exotic plants. The entrance to the grounds incorporated a "Hindu" bridge featuring images of bulls representing the god Nandi. Beneath this overpass sat a pseudo-East-Asian "philosopher's chair" facing an adjacent stream running beneath the bridge. In addition to a fountain containing a stone cylindrical *lingam* (a phallic symbol representing Shiva) surrounded by snake sculptures, nearby Daniell constructed a small

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[1] Mirza Abu Taleb Khan, *Travels of Mirza Abu Taleb Khan in Asia, Africa, and Europe*, Volume 1 (London, 1814), 267.

[2] Partha Mitter, *Much Maligned Monsters: A History of European Reactions to Indian Art* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1977, 1992), 129. Of course, Indian architecture had critics in Britain during the late eighteenth century. In one of his Discourses delivered at the Royal Academy of Arts in 1786, Sir Joshua Reynolds claimed that "barbarick … Asiatick buildings" were "not models to copy." Reynolds, *Discourses on Art*, edited by Robert R. Wark (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1975), 242.

[3] Christopher Christie, *The British Country House in the Eighteenth Century* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000), 80-82.

garden folly reminiscent of a temple to the sun god Surya.[4] However, this edifice in the gardens of Sezincote was not the first Hindu temple-like structure Daniell designed in Britain based upon his own observations of buildings in India.

A few years prior, William Daniell published a print entitled *A Hindoo Temple in Melchet Park, in the County of Wilts* (ca.1802) **(Figure 28),** featuring the titular building situated upon a hill crowned with dark, impenetrable vegetation. This edifice designed by Thomas Daniell was a garden folly on Major John Osborne's estate near the Hampshire-Wiltshire border.[5] Yet, both Daniells wished to present the building as though it were an oriental spiritual space within rural Britain. While dense foliage surrounds the temple on three sides, the elevated station point allows the viewer of this print to see a sprawling vista of rolling hills and occasional clusters of trees and shrubs. Much as notable South-Asian forts, mosques, and temples appeared in the Daniells' *Oriental Scenery* (1795-1808) as existing within almost primordial, uncultivated landscapes, this view presents Osborne's temple as though it were the only structure in a similarly unadulterated, overgrown landscape in Britain.[6] However, William Daniell's inclusion of two European figures within this image suggests to the viewer that unlike the forts, ruins, and holy sites represented in their Indian views, this oriental-like space was easily accessible to British travelers. As this finely-dressed couple stands to the right side of the temple, the man gestures towards the rectangular entrance of the structure, inviting both his female companion and the viewer to enter the building and take note of its Indian-like architectural features. Although the main structure appears to be quadrilateral in shape, it stands upon a larger

[4] Thomas Metcalf, *An Imperial Vision: Indian Architecture and Britain's Raj* (London: Faber and Faber, 1989), 18-20; Michael Edwardes, *The Nabobs at Home* (London: Constable, 1991), 41-2; Carl J. Weinhardt, Jr., "The Indian Taste," *The Metropolitan Museum of Art Bulletin*, New Series, Vol. 16, No. 7 (March, 1958): 210-12.
[5] John McAleer, *Picturing India: People, Places, and the World of the East India* (Seattle, WA: University of Washington Press, 2017), 179.
[6] See Mildred Archer, *Early Views of India: The Picturesque Journeys of Thomas and William Daniell, 1786-1794* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1980).

Figure 28. William Daniell, *A Hindoo Temple in Melchet Park, in the County of Wilts* (ca.1802). Height: 361 millimeters; Width: 470 millimeters.7 © Royal Collection Trust (RCIN 702112)

rectangular *adhistantha* (base platform) and a *jagati* (upper platform). Embellished white pillars hold up a prominent *chhajja* (overhang) extending to the edge of the *jagati* at the front of the temple and featuring two reclined bulls representing Nandi. Crowning the structure is an *amalaka*-like bulb at the apex of the pyramidal *sikhara* (tower). The external facade of the building features symbols and images of Nandi and Vishnu. Yet, the nature of this pseudo-temple is complicated by the resident image.

[7] Unfortunately, the British Museum has not yet photographed their copy of this print in the collection. British Museum Number: 1873,1108.242

Rather than housing images of one or more Hindu deities, the "idol" inside was a classicized bust of Warren Hastings.[8] In 1803 the bookseller and printer John Sewell published an etching entitled *Pedestal to the Hindoo Temple at Melchet Park* **(Figure 29)**, revealing Osborne and Thomas Daniell's garden folly as a monument to "the immortal Hastings…the saviour of those regions of the British Empire." This temple was symbolic of nabobs themselves in that its exterior may have appeared to metropolitan viewers as having South-Asian characteristics. Yet, the interior of the edifice – much like the internal self-identification of Company officers – contained a seemingly virtuous imperial ruler analogous to those of ancient Europe. While the Daniells envisioned this temple as an oriental-like space within Britain, the absence of a Hindu deity underscored the fact that this was a structure composed of British materials and meeting Britons' aims, expectations, and uses. Thomas Daniell may not have designed the gardens of Sezincote or Osborne's folly to be actual, functioning Hindu temples in Gloucestershire or along the Hampshire-Wiltshire border. But other returned Anglo-Indians attempted to use their South-Asian images and other exotica to construct spaces akin to subcontinental holy sites.

As early as the third quarter of the eighteenth century, returned Company officers, artists, and other travelers constructed in Britain pseudo-Asian structures containing actual imported Indian images and antiquities. These monuments, follies, and temples revealed the increasing material counterflows of empire in India. Yet, they also revealed the multifarious potential uses of such materials, even by Company servants knowledgeable of South Asia. By the 1770s travelogues detailed the features of the spectacular gardens and Indian exotica displayed by the artist James Forbes at his home in Great Stanmore just north of London. Visitors remarked that

[8] John McAleer claims that Hastings was Osborne's mentor while in India. McAleer, *Picturing India*, 179.

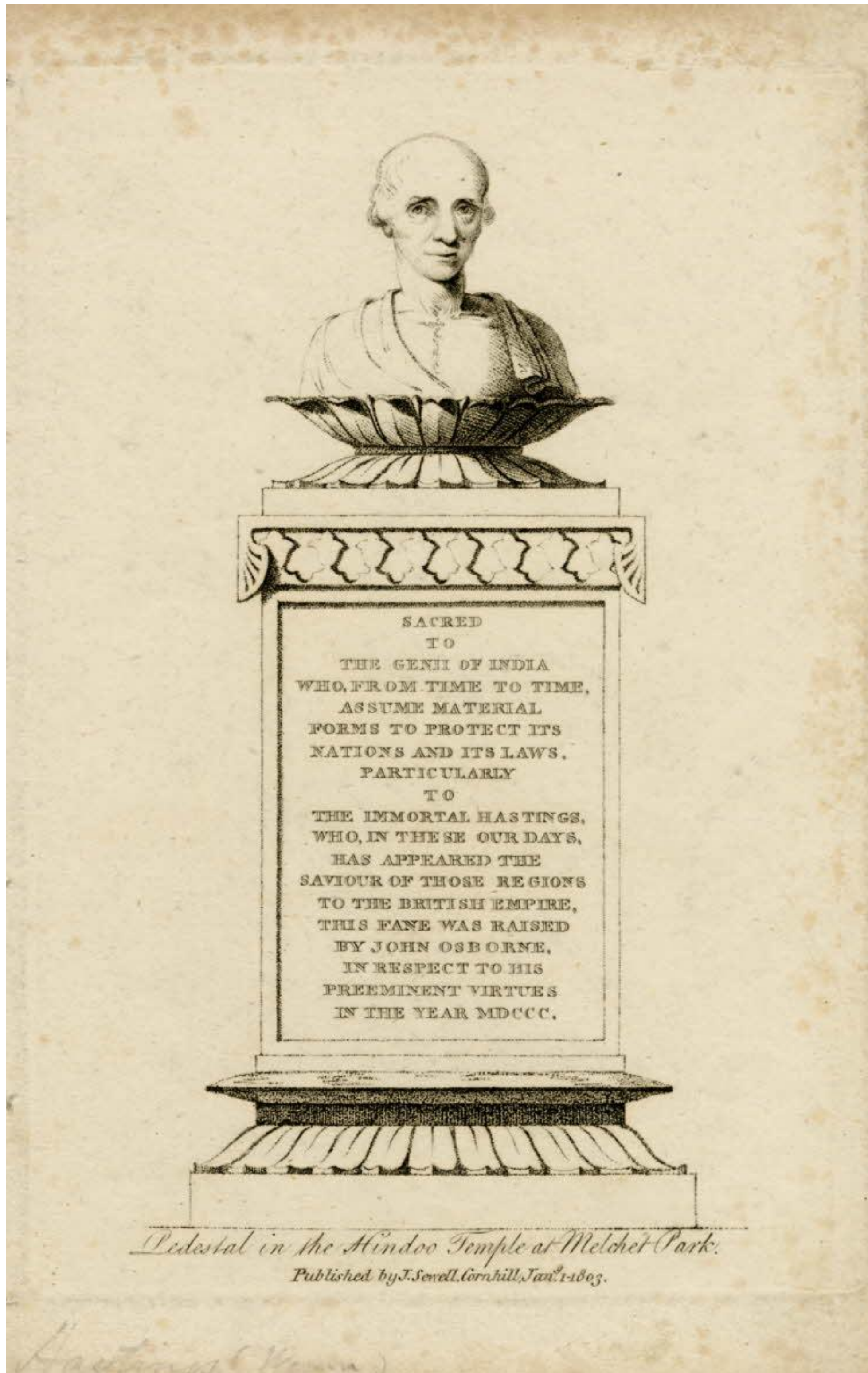

Figure 29. John Sewell, *Pedestal to the Hindoo Temple at Melchet Park* (1803). Height: 185 millimeters; Width: 130 millimeters. © The Trustees of the British Museum (BM Number: 1865,0520.74).

after buying the home of the Duke of Chandos, “Mr. Forbes enlarged it, and has greatly improved the gardens, in which he has erected a small octagon temple, containing various groups of figures, in Oriental sculpture, presented to him by the Brahmins of Hindoostan.” These striking images were “very ancient, and the only specimens of the Hindoo sculpture in this island.”[9] However, by the early nineteenth century, some returned Company servants and other metropolitan collectors of Indian exotica endeavored to craft “oriental” monuments on their property integrating architectural pieces or images imported from South Asia. During the 1820s Edward Moor – the noted orientalist and author of *The Hindu Pantheon* (1810) – constructed a pseudo-Egyptian and Indian ten-foot pyramid near his house in Great Bealings, Suffolk.[10] In addition to his substantial collection of Indian texts and smaller antiquities, Moor transported to Britain a colossal, stone “three-headed” image of a Hindu deity that he excavated at the caves of Elephanta near Bombay. He placed this deity at the top of the monument. According to Moor, his “rural pyramid supports also, imbedded in one of its sides, another stone [image of Kali], similarly raised to light, from beneath the ruins of the same temple.” While one of the four faces of the pyramid was the Indian side, Moor designated another as “the Egyptic side” featuring carved pseudo-hieroglyphics.[11] While this idiosyncratic juxtaposition of imported Indian spiritual images with ancient Egyptian-like aesthetics may have been unusual, British architects' emulation, misuse, and misinterpretation of South-Asian forms became increasingly common in Britain during the first quarter of the nineteenth century.

[9] Anonymous, *The Ambulator; or, the Stranger's Companion in a Tour Round London* (London, 1774), 241.
[10] This pyramid still remains (as of 2019) on the grounds of Bealings House in Great Bealings, Suffolk. https://britishlistedbuildings.co.uk/101030754-garden-ornament-circa-100-yards-east-south-east-of-bealings-house-great-bealings#.XAm3ZjF7nIU_(accessed 3 November, 2018).
[11] Edward Moor, *Oriental Fragments* (London, 1834), 444-5.

Architects and patrons with little knowledge of South Asian or East Asian aesthetics attempted to replicate, blend, and invent Indian architectural features and designs in crafting garden follies and far more substantial structures, leading to renewed anxieties and criticism in Britain. Writing in 1806, Humphrey Repton claimed that "the beautiful designs published by Daniell, Hodges, and other artists, have produced a new source of beauty" which could "justly vie with the best specimens of Grecian or Gothic architecture." According to Repton, "when a partiality for such forms is patronized and supported by the highest rank," British architects and landscapers would have to learn to employ Asian forms and aesthetics. However, "the misapplication of these novel forms will probably introduce much bad taste in the future architecture of this country."[12] Repton's assumption would prove correct during the following decade as the Prince of Wales endeavored to transform the Pavilion at Brighton into something akin to a fantastical oriental pleasure palace.[13] Beginning in 1803 various designers presented to the Prince their proposals for expanding and redesigning the Royal Pavilion. Although the Prince wished for this mansion to take on Indian and East Asian appearances, in 1808 he rejected Repton's plans that were based upon Thomas Daniell's designs.[14] Instead of relying upon actual Asian architectural idioms provided by Daniell, the Prince commissioned John Nash – a prominent architect with little knowledge of Asian aesthetics – in 1815 to devise and implement his own conception of an oriental palace. Although some British observers praised the Pavilion for its fanciful oriental-like design, even prior to completion the structure also received criticism

[12] Humphrey Repton, *An Enquiry into the Changes of Taste in Landscape Gardening* (London, 1806), 41-2.
[13] Metcalf, *An Imperial Vision,* 20.
[14] Humphrey Repton, *Designs for the Pavillon at Brighton* (London, 1808) iv, 29; Clifford Musgrave, *Royal Pavilion: An Episode in the Romantic* (London: Leonard Hill Books, 1959), 51-8.

for its bulging domes, tented roofs, and other features unlike actual architectural forms found in India or East Asia.[15]

When construction began in 1815, art critics and satirists still pondered and debated whether the Pavilion could be understood as an orientalized space in Britain. George Cruikshank's *The Court at Brighton à la Chinese!!* (1816) **(Figure 30)** expressed these uncertainties and ambivalences by presenting a rotund vision of the Prince as a racialized caricature holding court at the Pavilion. Seated upon a Turkish-style *divan* beneath a green Chinese-like dragon, the Prince is surrounded by members of the royal family and prominent British politicians, many of whom wear East-Asian bamboo hats or other Asian articles of clothing. Placed in an alcove behind the seated ruler are two life-like statues, one of Sara Baartman – an African woman whose exhibition in Britain stirred much controversy – and one of the Prince. Cruikshank's juxtaposition of these two fictitious statues mocked the possible mutual otherness of Baartman and the racialized caricature of the Prince Regent.[16] However, following completion in 1822, the Pavilion may not have necessarily appeared as indicative of nabobish influence in British politics or the orientalization of the metropolitan elite. Rather, as Tillman Nechtman has suggested, to some critics the great expense to alter the Pavilion as well as George IV's desire to masquerade as a debauched oriental ruler proved merely embarrassing and excessive.[17] As more British architects copied and fabricated Asian and pseudo-Asian forms by the 1820s, oriental aesthetics were increasingly accepted in Britain as fanciful, imperfect,

[15] Patrick Conner, *Oriental Architecture in the West* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1979), 132-6, 141; Metcalf, *An Imperial Vision,* 20.
[16] Of course, Prince George was not an "othered" person in "Georgian Britain." Rather, George Cruikshank was lampooning the Prince for supposedly mirroring the aesthetic tastes of persons who typically were marginalized in Britain. For a detailed discussion of the nuances of this print by Cruikshank, see Mary Dorothy George, *Catalogue of Political and Personal Satires in the British Museum*, Volume IX (London: The British Museum, 1949), 654-6.
[17] Tillman W. Nechtman, *Nabobs: Empire and Identity in Eighteenth-Century Britain* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 232-6.

Figure 30. George Cruikshank, *The Court at Brighton à la Chinese!!* (1816). Height: 273 millimeters; Width: 376 millimeters. © The Trustees of the British Museum (BM Number: 1935,0522.12.75).

heterogenous emulations of buildings from India, West Asia, and East Asia. Indeed, as fantastical hodgepodges of Asian and Asian-like forms and aesthetics, these structures and gardens served to control popular British conceptions and representations of "the east" while also being so divorced from the actualities of Asia as to offer no risk to British peoples and geographies. After all, if polite Britons themselves were constructing chimerical and outlandish – yet controllable and unthreatening – "oriental" spaces within Britain by the 1820s, why would elites continue to fear imported Indian exotica as capable of orientalizing regions and peoples of the metropole?

This discussion has revealed how British attitudes towards Asian architectural forms and aesthetics in Britain paralleled domestic uses, debates, and perceptions of the material counterflows of empire in India. This dissertation has argued that the arrival in Britain of greater quantities and varieties of Indian material culture was integral to British understandings of South Asia, imperial expansion and governance, and British national character. Moreover, this study has demonstrated that material circulation was intimately tied to British imaginings and re-imaginings of domestic and imperial geographies. Throughout this period, Britons and Anglo-Indians did not perceive Britain and colonial territories as being coherent, uniform British or oriental spaces. Rather, South Asia and Britain were heterogeneous geographies existing as a patchwork of British and oriental sectors whose definitions and delimitations were always contested. For most Britons, the locations of display and circulation of Indian exotica in Britain, such as the collection room or the auction floor, were contentious throughout this period. Much as European peoples, architecture, and goods could render the white town of Calcutta an appendage of Britain in the eyes of Anglo-Indians, South-Asian material culture had the capacity to designate middling and elite persons and spaces in the metropole as akin to oriental. Ultimately, this dissertation has revealed that while persons in Britain and India held multiple, divergent, and competing visions and articulations of Britishness or orientalness, the circulation and display of Asian exotica was crucial in crafting and upholding diverse and dynamic British conceptions of national identity throughout the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.

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BMDCM	The British Museum Department of Coins and Medals. London, England.
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CPL	The Cleveland Public Library Special Collections. Cleveland, Ohio, USA.
RA	The Royal Academy of Arts Library. London, England.
SBHLA	The Southern Baptist Historical Library and Archives. Nashville, Tennessee, USA.
SLNSW	The State Library of New South Wales. Sydney, New South Wales, Australia.
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