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Imaging Empire
The Trafficking of Art and Aesthetics in
British India c.1772 to c.1795

Two Volumes

Volume One

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in
History of Art

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Glossary

<i>adab</i>	politeness, good breeding; refinement
<i>adalat</i>	court of law
<i>babu</i>	Bengali term for gentleman, often used in derogatory sense
<i>Bakr Id</i>	Muslim festival, the commemoration of Abraham's sacrifice
<i>banian</i>	Indian intermediary working with European merchants; term for north Indian officials
<i>begum</i>	princess, Muslim lady of rank
<i>bibi</i>	wife, mistress: usually Indian mistress to a European.
<i>brahman</i>	High, priestly caste Hindu
<i>chobdar</i>	Mace or long silver pole bearer
<i>darshan</i>	feelings of awe inspired at the sight of one's ruler
<i>dastar ul-amal</i>	manual of Mughal government
<i>dhoti</i>	cotton wrap for the lower body
<i>divan</i>	small sized book of verse
<i>diwan</i>	chief financial officer of a Mughal province or state
<i>darbar</i>	Indian royal assembly, royal levee; Anglicised form of darbar
<i>fakir</i>	Muslim or Hindu ascetic
<i>farman; phirman</i>	a decree
<i>firangi</i>	a Frank; European
<i>gola</i>	granary

<i>hookah;</i> <i>hookah burdah</i>	hubble bubble piper and its bearer
<i>howdah</i>	elephant seat
<i>insha</i>	the science of letter writing
<i>jagir</i>	assignment of land revenue
<i>jama</i>	Indian coat or surcoat
<i>karkhana</i>	workshop where joint production of manufactures took place, often artists' studio.
<i>Kayastha</i>	Hindu writer caste
<i>khilat</i>	robe of honour bestowed by a superior on a dependant
<i>khillah; killah</i>	royal fort
<i>lakh</i>	one hundred thousand
<i>madrasah</i>	school, institution of Islamic learning
<i>mofussil</i>	interior, rural area away from town or headquarters
<i>mohur</i>	gold coin
<i>Muharram</i>	period of fasting and public mourning observed during the first month of the Muslim lunar year in commemoration of the deaths of Hasan and Hussein (A.D. 669 and 680)
<i>munshi</i>	writer; secretary
<i>muraqqa</i>	Mughal album, bound volume of miniature paintings, often including calligraphy
<i>musnud</i>	Large cushion used by Indian princes as the equivalent to a throne
<i>nabob</i>	term of abuse for European who had made much money in India; corrupted spelling of 'nawab'.
<i>naubat khana</i>	Persian form of gatehouse or watch tower with a music gallery attached
<i>nautch</i>	dance performed by Indian dancing girls

<i>nawab, nawabi</i>	Deputy to the Muslim Emperor; in the eighteenth century meant as a virtually independent prince
<i>nazr</i>	gift; often of coin to an Indian ruler
<i>nizam, nizamat</i>	government
<i>pagoda</i>	South Indian Hindu temple; also a gold coin minted at Madras with the device of a temple on one face
<i>pahr</i>	a watch; three hour division of the day
<i>pandit</i>	a Hindu teacher
<i>patua; pat</i>	Bengali rural painter; producer of pats, gouache scenes on cloth or paper
<i>peshkash</i>	a present
<i>Peshwa</i>	Chief Minister of the Maratha power; prince of an independent Maratha state
<i>punkah</i>	portable fan or swinging fan of cloth stretched in a frame and hung from the ceiling
<i>qasbah</i>	small town
<i>ragamala</i>	a collection of pictures symbolising standard tunes
<i>sati</i>	Hindu rite of widow burning
<i>sepoy</i>	Indian soldier trained in European style
<i>Shi'ite</i>	the largest minority within Islam
<i>suba; subador</i>	a province; its governor
<i>Sufi</i>	an adept of mystical knowledge within Islam
<i>tawkwah; tunka</i>	an assignment on the revenue of a locality for an individual
<i>tazkirah</i>	collective literary biography
<i>wakil</i>	agent, envoy

<i>wazir</i>	minister or officer in charge of administration
<i>zemindar</i>	land holder
<i>zenana</i>	female apartments

Abbreviations

Add Ms	Additional Manuscript
B	Minutes of the East India Company's Court of Directors
BAC	Yale Center for British Art, New Haven
BL	British Library
BM	British Museum
BPC	Bengal Public Consultations
CPC	Calendar of Persian Correspondence
E	Miscellaneous Letter Received by the East India Company
H	Home Miscellaneous Series
HU	The Correspondence of Ozias Humphry
L/AG/34/27	Bengal Inventories Series
LWL	Lewis Walpole Library, Connecticut
NLA	National Library, Alipore
NPG	National Portrait Gallery, London
OIOC	Oriental and India Office Collections, British Library
PM	Paul Mellon Centre, London
PRO	Public Records Office, London
RA	Royal Academy, London
RAS	Royal Asiatic Society, London
SA	Society of Artists, London
V&A	Victoria and Albert Museum, London
VM	Victoria Memorial, Calcutta

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Abstract

This dissertation explores the complex entanglements of an artistic traffic between two distinct ‘visual economies’ in eastern India, c.1772-c.1795. Both late Mughal and early colonial cultures were undergoing transformation, to the extent that during this era the nascent colonial artistic diaspora collapsed. Three inter-related areas will be interrogated: the pre-station and commercial circulation of imagery between London, Calcutta and Murshidabad, the dichotomies of political and aesthetic spheres, and colonial representations of late Mughal culture as embroiled by such frameworks.

Chapter one examines India-painted subjects in a metropolitan aesthetic sphere, thus acting as crucial juxtaposition for the refiguration of British art in Calcutta, which is the subject of the following section. Hastings’ regime wielded British art as part of an intensely spectacular colonial governmentality, but his successor Cornwallis, took a tougher line with devastating effect. A diversity of competing, derivative idioms ousted professional colonial painting forever; its artistic schema penetrated to ‘grass-roots’ level through the creation of a ‘Company School’ which transposed the practice of the *patua* caste.

Chapters five to seven investigate nawabi perceptions of British imagery. Hastings introduced the gifting of large-scale portraits; artefacts ill-suited to Indian interiors and aesthetic interiority - perhaps not even viewed as ‘art’. The final chapter, through representations of the nawabs of Murshidabad and Lucknow, traces the evolution of British pictures as accoutrements of Mughal sovereignty. By 1795 both courts possessed permanent if ‘hybrid’ expositions of colonial imagery which transgressed established Indian and British classifications, as well as indicating more profound redefinitions of Indian comportment, consumption and taste.

The intersection of ‘visual economies’ by way of an exploration of diverse zones of transculturation and processes of translation, provides a vital lens for recovering Indian and British agency - both elite and subaltern, in the oft-uneasy formation of a colonial aesthetic forum.

Introduction

Empire follows art and not vice versa as English men suppose.¹

When the British ‘stood forth as *diwan*’ of Bengal in 1772, they possessed little in the way of ‘imperial’ art. Yet by the time of Wellesley’s accession to Governor-General in 1798, the rise and demise of the professional colonial artist in India had already transpired.² In the efflorescent if evanescent interim, as many as sixty British portraitists, landscape, history, marine and animal painters, experimenting with ‘state of the art’ ethnographic subjects, as well as forming a dynamic diaspora of print-makers, had attempted to forge a colonial taste, market and aesthetic, to be appreciated not only in India but to be interposed across the globe. Coterminously, a more enduring (if still interstitial) international art traffic had been instigated, which penetrated not only colonial enclaves, but also *nawabi* sites throughout late Mughal India, places as diverse as Murshidabad, Lucknow, Pune, Arcot and Hyderabad.³ (Map 1)

¹ William Blake, ‘Annotations to Reynolds’s *Discourses*’, *The Complete Writings of William Blake* (ed.) G. Keyne, (Oxford, 1966) p.445.

² This dissertation will take its focus as the role of professional British artists as opposed to military painters drawn from Company service, female amateurs or other colonial picture-making communities, in order to explore their unique but ultimately ambivalent position in the early Company state. It is in this light, that their relationships with other artistic coteries both British and Indian, will be considered.

³ The field of enquiry is dominated by Mildred Archer’s seminal *India and British Portraiture, 1770-1825* (London, 1979). Valuable catalogues include Mildred Archer and Ronald Lightbown, *India Observed* (London, 1982), Pratapditya Pal and Vidya Dehejia, *From Merchants to Emperors: British Artists and India 1757-1930* (New York, 1986), C.A. Bayly (ed.) *The Raj: India and the British, 1600-1947* (London, 1990), S.C. Chaudhuri (ed.) *Calcutta: Living City* (Oxford, 1990) volume one, J.P. Losty *Calcutta: City of Palaces* (London, 1990), Pratapditya Pal (ed.) *Changing Visions, Lasting*

My dissertation seeks to explore the complex entanglements of this traffic in imagery across empire, scrutinising the social and aesthetic use, abuse and diffusion of British art in sites as far apart as London and Lucknow.⁴ Through an ethnography of the zones of transculturation and processes of translation, it will analyse the collision, osmosis, destruction, intransigence and creation involved in the meeting of two very different cultures' 'visual economies'.⁵

While the theme of 'clash of cultures' has become commonplace in post-Saidian writings, my dissertation pursues a different research agenda shaped by mutations within British historiography.⁶ J.G.A Pocock has called for 'a new subject' of 'British history' that pays equal attention to both the interactions of peoples, nations, and states within what he called 'the Atlantic archipelago' and the

Images (New York,1990), Pauline Rohatgi and Pheroza Godrej (eds.), *Scenic Splendours: India Through the Printed Image* (Bombay,1989), *idem.*, *Under the Indian Sun* (Bombay,1995), *idem.*, *A Pageant of Prints* (Bombay,1995); Anne Buddle (ed.) *The Tiger and the Thistle* (Edinburgh,1999). See also Catherine B.Asher and Thomas R.Metcalf (eds.) *Perceptions of South Asia's Visual Past* (Delhi,1994), Matthew H.Edney, *Mapping An Empire* (Chicago,1997), J.K.Bautze (ed.) *Interaction of Cultures: Indian and Western Painting in the Ehrenfeld Collection* (Virginia,1998), J.Codell and D.Macleod (eds.) *Orientalism Transposed: The Impact of the Colonies on British Culture* (Vermont,1998) and Beth Tobin, *Picturing Imperial Power: Colonial Subjects in Eighteenth-century British Painting* (Duke,1999).

⁴The concept of both trafficking art and of the East India Company's 'trade as traffic' have been explored by G.E.Marcus and F.R.Meyers (eds.) *The Traffic in Culture: Refiguring Art and Anthropology* (Berkeley,C.A. 1995) and Huw Bowen, 'Dipped in Traffic: East India Stockholders in the House of Commons, 1768-1774' *Parliamentary History* 5 (1986) pp.39-53. See also Parama Roy, *Indian Traffic: Identities in the Question of Colonial and Postcolonial India*, (Berkeley,C.A.1998).

⁵ I have borrowed this term from Deborah Poole, *Vision, Race and Modernity: A Visual Economy of the Andean Image World*, (Princeton,1997). The notion of 'economy' has been explored and used by many contemporary theorists, historians and literary critics. See Marc Shell, *Money, Language and Thought: Literary and Philosophical Economies from the Medieval to the Modern Era*, (Berkeley,C.A.1982), and, Jean-Joseph Goux, *Symbolic Economies: After Marx and Freud*, trans. Jennifer Curtiss Gage, (NewYork, Cornell, 1990).

⁶Edward W.Said, *Orientalism* (New York,1978). See also John MacKenzie, *Orientalism: History, Theory and the Arts* (Manchester,1995) for an imperial historian's difficult engagement with post-colonial theory. With regards to India, Michael H.Fisher's study of the entanglements between the Lucknow elite and Company personnel is entitled *A Clash of Cultures: Awadh the British and the Mughals* (Riverdale,1987).

extension of those interactions across the maritime expanses of the Atlantic, Pacific, and Indian Oceans. Pocock's 'New British History' would be a history of Greater Britain as a fluid, dynamic and interactive system; it would recover the white diasporic communities of the former British Empire from the distant verges of the globe, encompassing them within an imperial past so that they might become partners in a Commonwealth present.⁷ By way of exploring British art and artists in India, I wish to extend Pocock's argument beyond white settler colonialism, in an arena where British colonialism left its imprint on indigenous society.

Instead of adumbrating a specific artistic genre whose boundaries were increasingly blurred by colonial contexts, I have chosen to articulate the aesthetic tensions between the three crucial sites of empire: London, where the Court of Directors of the East India Company at Leadenhall Street and politicians in the Westminster increasingly attempted to fashion an adequate imperial administration and policy, the East India Company's capital of its Indian dominions, Calcutta, and the Indo-Muslim kingdoms where the British inscribed aggressive economic, military and political designs.⁸ These diverse locales evolved sophisticated artistic arenas in which Anglo-Indian imagery would be asserted.⁹

⁷ J.G.A Pocock, 'British History: Plea for a New Subject', *New Zealand Historical Journal*, 8, 1974, pp. 3-21, *idem.*, 'Deconstructing Europe', *London Review of Books*, December 19, 1991, pp. 6-10. See also Pocock (ed.) *The Varieties of British Political Thought* (Cambridge, 1996).

⁸ On the enmeshing of the colonial issues and British politics at home, see Lucy Sutherland's classic study, *The East India Company and Eighteenth-century Politics* (Oxford, 1952) and more recently, Huw Bowen, *Revenue and Reform: The Indian Problem in British Politics*, (Cambridge, 1991).

⁹ See George Marcus, 'Ethnography in/of the World System: The Emergence of Multi-Sited Ethnography' *Annual Review of Anthropology* 24 (1995); pp.95-117. See also George Van Den Abbeele, *Travel As Metaphor: From Montaigne to Rousseau* (Oxford, 1992). Commerce and travel occupy the same horizon of possibilities in European experiences, revealing an anxiety of economy - the material gain and loss of people and things.

‘The transnational dimension of cultural transformation - migration, diaspora, displacement, relocation - makes the process of cultural translation a complex form of signification’ as it ‘becomes crucial to distinguish between the semblance and similitude of symbols across diverse cultural experiences’.¹⁰ Tracing a transcultural traffic in imagery and aesthetics threatens to be irresolvably too dissolvable and nebulous. In order to define such interactions in more concrete terms, I will concentrate on three key related themes: firstly, the circulation of art across empire, which will consider the life stages of colonial imagery within the wider contexts of British and Indian art, emphasising transcultural constructions of value, taste and display; secondly, the dialectics between political and aesthetic spheres - scrutinising the differing forms of Company and *nawabi* patronage, and finally colonial representations of late Mughal culture and their entanglements with such objectives. Such analyses will create a dialectic between the commercial and aesthetic signification of diverse, often competing imagery where artistic production was caught within a web of publics, painters, patrons, markets, perceptual *habitus* and innovation, theoretical idioms and their practical realisation or transformation, thus denying any singular history.¹¹ I shall examine an array of art forms: from prints, oils, drawings, gouaches, to water-colours and mica painting, as well as consulting Indian and British written records of artistic production and reception of

¹⁰Homi K.Bhabha, ‘The postcolonial and postmodern: the question of agency’, *The Location of Culture* (London,1994) pp.171-197; p.172.

¹¹ ‘Habitus’ is directly associated with the work of Pierre Bourdieu as explicated in the introduction to *The Logic of Practice* (London,1990). See his classic study *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste* trans.R.Nice (London,1979, sixth edition,1999) pp.101-102, 170-173 and 437-440: p.437: ‘the mediation of the habitus ... defines the relation of the position synchronically occupied and consequently the practical or explicit positions taken vis-à-vis the social world’. See

such imagery, all of which were suspended in and activated by cross cultural conflict and solidarity in the search for both artistic moorings and the deployment of discrimination.¹²

In this sense, my dissertation whilst tracing the complex traffic between diverse sites (which to some extent confounds a one dimensional temporal narrative progression), will also explore the notion of the 'Voyage Out' for art and artists as departed from the confines of metropolitan markets and exhibiting *fora* to colonial and then to *nawabi* spaces. Out of such complexity emerges an oft-aggressive species of cultural imperialism as the Company, successive Governor-Generals, Political Residents, private traders and independent painters, attempted to impose their own notions of art circulation, representation and taste into India. The ambitions, ideologies and fantasies of these diverse groups were fraught with conflict; the ways in which British art was perceived and recoded by disparate sectors of Indian society were from diverse perspectives, defined by ambivalence

also Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life* trans. S.Rendall, (Berkeley, C.A. 1988).

¹²I have consulted visual material in such public collections as the India Office, Royal Asiatic Society, V&A, British Museum, Victoria Memorial, Fine Arts Academy and Asutosh Museum, Calcutta. Also examined are the collections of the Hazarduari Palace at Murshidabad, the Asiatic Society of Bengal, Yale Center for British Art and the Lewis Walpole Library, Connecticut. Private collections visited include those of the late R.P.Gupta, the Mullick, Deb, Bose and Nahar families, Calcutta. Important British manuscripts sources comprise the voluminous private papers of Warren Hastings, (BL) Charles Malet and George Paterson (OIOC), Richard Johnson (Rylands Library, Manchester), Ozias Humphry Papers (Royal Academy), Robert Home Sitters Book (Heinz Archive, National Portrait Gallery) the diaries and drawings of James Wales (Yale Center for British Art) and the bankruptcy case of William Wynne Ryland (Public Records Office, Kew). A useful summary bibliography of early Indo-Muslim responses to the British, including their art can be found in Gulfishan Khan, *Indo-Muslim Responses to the West in the Eighteenth Century* (Karachi, 1998) see also H.M.Elliot and J.Dowson (eds.) *The History of India as Told by its Own Historians* (London, 1877) volume eight, Jadunath Sarkar (ed.) *Bengal Nawabs* (Calcutta, 1952) and Ghulam Hussein Khan, *The Siyar Mutaqherin or History of Modern Times* trans. Haji Mustapha (Calcutta, 1789) volumes two and three. For contemporary newspaper reactions see the Colindale and India Office collections, Paul Mellon Centre, London and the National Library of India, Alipore.

and unpredictability, as such 'colonial' imagery transgressed the aesthetic and commercial realms which had previously fixed its status as art.

This leads us to the difficult issues of how colonial picture-making and art collecting could inform, legitimise and criticise colonial projects.¹³ I shall propose that colonial art became closely embroiled within both the administration and symbolism of the Company state.¹⁴ However, throughout the era under scrutiny, the East India Company's Court of Directors offered meagre patronage to British painters; a strategy which has earned it notoriety.¹⁵ Such a stance bestowed peculiar status on these painters who, aligned within a closely surveyed and ultimately limited community of 'private traders' based primarily in the Presidencies (Calcutta, Bombay and Madras) possessed the potential to be viewed as 'disinterested' spokesmen, providing a moral ethic and aesthetic overview of Company's rule.¹⁶ Yet their picture-making, their ignorance of Indian languages,

¹³As we shall see below, there are diverse ways of configuring such enquiries; from cruder equations of knowledge-power, art and politics, epitomised by Edward Said's more radical followers and art historians within the vein of Linda Nochlin's *Politics of Vision* (London, 1989) to more thoughtful recent enquiries evoked by Nicholas B. Dirks (ed.) *Colonialism and Culture* (Michigan, 1992) and Nicholas Thomas, *Colonialism's Culture: Anthropology, Travel and Government* (Oxford, 1994).

¹⁴Art is referred to both in the public and private correspondence of Governor-Generals, the Court of Directors, merchants, Residents, the Calendar of Persian Correspondence and in Indo-Persian chronicles. Alongside trading concerns and political manoeuvres, references to artistic practice and commissions were frequently placed adjacent or else were bitterly entangled within such issues; as in painters' demands to be paid for work at *nawabi* courts by way of *tawkwah* (an assignment on the revenue of a district) which embroiled them within the world of political intrigue and private trade.

¹⁵See W. Forster, *Catalogue of Pictures and Sculpture in the India Office* (London, 1924) Mildred Archer, 'The East India Company and the Patronage of British Art' *Apollo* November 1965, pp. 401-409, Brian Allen 'From Plassey to Seringapatam: India and British History Painting, c. 1760-1880' in Bayly, 1990 pp. 26-27. See also P/2/64 for William Hodges' pleas for the Court of Directors to pay the import duties on five of his oil paintings which had been gifted to East India House; met with stony silence.

¹⁶The vocabulary of 'disinterestedness' was highly charged and changing direction during this era, with the decline and redefinition of 'civic humanism' and the role of the 'public man'. See J.G.A. Pocock, *The Machiavellian Moment* (New York, 1974) and Richard Sennett, *The Fall of the Public Man* (London, 1977). For the evolution of a distinct ideological position for the arts within a

politics and the intricacies of cultural intercourse, as well as their difficult dialectic with the Company state, often denied or contradicted such an elevated perspective. Simultaneously artists sought to evolve other alignments between the colonial state and the aesthetic sphere, which were only partially successful. The ensuing bitter conflicts between the various sights, sites, rituals and rights in which art became embroiled are the subject of this dissertation.

The Forging of the Company State, c.1772-c.1795.

We must analyse the evolution of the Company's governance in Bengal and its relations both with Westminster and with Indian states, in order to understand the formation of distinct aesthetic spheres. In Britain, in India's 'successor-states' and in Calcutta, their respective aesthetic spheres were all undergoing transformation.¹⁷ Were these distinct 'commercial' communities, asserting

modern commercial society which precluded the existence of *oikos*, John Barrell, *The Political Theory of Painting From Reynolds to Hazlitt: The Body of the 'Public'* (New Haven, 1986). See also David H. Solkin, *Painting For Money* (New Haven, 1992) Iain Pears *The Discovery of Painting* (New Haven, 1988).

¹⁷We must be wary of drawing parallels between such very different processes, even though a common agent to both commercial development in Britain and Bengal, was the growth of the influence of the East India Company. For the Company's trading influence in India see K.N. Chaudhuri, *The Trading World of Asia and the English East India Company 1660-1760* (Cambridge, 1978) and his *Asia Before Europe: Economy and Civilisation of the Indian Ocean from the Rise of Islam to 1750* (Cambridge, 1990), C.A. Bayly, *Rulers, Townsmen and Bazaars* (Cambridge, 1983), his *Indian Society and the Making of the British Empire* (Cambridge, 1988), P.J. Marshall, *Bengal: The British Bridgehead* (Cambridge, 1987), his *Trade and Conquest* (Aldershot, 1993) and Sudipta Sen, *An Empire of Free Trade* (Pennsylvania, 1998). For the East India Company's influence in Britain see C.H. Philips, *The East India Company, 1784-1834* (Manchester, 1940), Sutherland, 1952 and Bowen, 1991. For the growth of an aesthetic sphere in Britain see the previous note. The various works of the Archers investigate the evolution of an aesthetic sphere in 18th-century India, most notably: M and W.G. Archer, *Indian Painting for the British* (London, 1955) and M. Archer, *Company Painting in the India Office Library* (London, 1972). See also Ratnabali Chatterjee, *From the Karkhana to the Studio* (Delhi, 1990) and Tapati Guha-Thakurta, *The Making of a New Indian Art* (Cambridge, 1992). These complex intertwined developments of art, trade and politics and a more detailed literature will be set out in the following discussion.

identities at the expense of older elites?¹⁸ By 1770, Britain was emerging as a 'commercial society' where a theoretical arena, public, professional status for painters and aesthetics remained disputable and ambivalent.¹⁹ Although the existing literature celebrates the eighteenth century as an era of unrivalled, unproblematic expansion, recent writing has presented this as an era of crisis; defined by hostile and controversial, vapid, cultural barriers of distinction.²⁰

Simultaneously in India, cultural identities were metamorphosing.²¹ I shall

¹⁸'Commercial' is used tentatively. Each culture possessed very different ideological and practical perceptions of economy and were not subsumed in to a world system of varying degrees of 'capitalism'. Immanuel Wallerstein, *The Modern World System* (New York, 1974) volume one. However each evolved in part shaped by the other and possessed enough similarities to be able to trade together; Bayly, 1983 and his *Empire and Information* (Cambridge, 1996). See also Sen, 1998, pp.5-6.

¹⁹The birth of a commercial society in late eighteenth-century Britain (especially England and London) has received much attention; for example N.McKendrick, John Brewer and J.H.Plumb, *The Birth of a Consumer Society* (London, 1982), Paul Langford, *A Polite and a Commercial People* (Oxford, 1989), Peter Borsay, *The English Urban Renaissance: Culture and Society in the Provincial Town, 1660-1770* (Oxford, 1989), P.H.Lindert, 'Remodelling British Economic History', *Journal of Economic History* 43 (1983) pp.986-992, J.Brewer and Roy Porter (eds.) *Consumption and the World of Goods* (London, 1993). See also Huw Bowen, *Elites, Enterprise and the Making of the Overseas British Empire* (London, 1996).

²⁰The recent work of John Brewer has alerted the need to search for other ways of responding to the growth of a commercial society other than through a celebratory 'Whig' ideology of sociability and politeness. 'The Most Polite Age and the Most Vicious: Attitudes Towards Culture as a Commodity, 1660-1800', Brewer and Anne Bermingham (eds.) *The Consumption of Culture* (London, 1995) pp.341-36, *idem.*, 'Cultural Production, Consumption and the Place of the Artist in Eighteenth-century England' in B.Allen (ed.) *Yale Studies in British Art Volume One: Towards A Modern Art World* (New Haven, 1995) pp.7-25, *idem.*, *Pleasures of the Imagination* (Oxford, 1997). Ronald Paulson's long term research on the work of William Hogarth has demonstrated the coexistence of popular and polite art forms and identities within a modern commercial society; *William Hogarth: His Life, Art and Times* three volumes (1986), *idem.*, *Popular and Polite Art in the Age of Hogarth and Fielding* (Notre Dame, 1979), *idem.*, *Breaking and Remaking: Aesthetic Practice in England, 1700-1820* (New Brunswick, 1989). See also P.Stallybrass and A.White, *The Politics and Poetics of Transgression* (Cornell, N.Y., 1986) and J.M.Golby and A.W.Purdue, *The Civilisation of the Crowd: Popular Culture in England 1750-1900* (London, 1984).

²¹See Muzzafar Alam *The Crisis of Empire in Mughal North India* (Delhi, 1986), Richard Barnett, *North India Between Empires: Awadh, the Mughals and the British, 1772-1801* (Berkeley, C.A. 1980) and Andre Wink, *Land and Sovereignty in India* (Cambridge, 1986). For art see the Archers 1955, R.Chatterjee 1990 and Guha-Thakurta 1992. See also Toby Falk and M.Archer, *Indian Miniatures in the India Office* (London, 1981) and M.Archer with G.Parlet *Company Painting in the V&A* (London, 1992).

explore the heartland of Company rule, the Mughal ‘successor state’ of Bengal, which became the centre of British interests in India, and its relations with the wealthy kingdom of Awadh. (Map 1) By the 1740s *subadors* in the Deccan, Carnatic and Awadh, and rulers of Mysore and the Marathas had achieved virtual independence from the centralised grip of the Mughal Empire, spawning a series of ‘successor-states’, which also affected the role of art in Mughal India.²² Regional centres such as Murshidabad (which owed its origin to the formation of a ‘successor state’ in the early eighteenth century under Murshid Quli Khan) with no erstwhile Mughalised tradition, now demanded an influx of manuscripts and painters from as far afield as Delhi.²³ Across Mughal India, networks of art dealers employing their own code (*raqam*) and itinerant limners employed by courts provided a diversity of commissions in an era of decentralisation, where there is evidence of a shift towards greater migrancy, commercialisation and short-term clientele from new patrons such as regional nawabs and local *zemindars*.²⁴

By the 1740s, the British and the French began to meddle seriously in sub-

²²David Washbrook, ‘Progress and Problems: South Asian Economic and Social History, c.1720-1860’ *Modern Asian Studies* 22.1 (1988) pp.57-96; B.Stein, ‘State formation and economy reconsidered’, *Modern Asian Studies* 19.3 (1985) pp.387-413 and C.A.Bayly, ‘The British Military-fiscal State and Indigenous Resistance in India 1750-1820’ in L.Stone (ed.) *The Imperial State at War* (London,1993) pp.322-349 and his *Indian Society and the Making of the British Empire* (Cambridge,1988). See also P.Calkins, ‘The formation of a regionally orientated ruling group in Bengal, 1700-1740’ *Journal of Asian Studies* xxix 3 1970 and B.Cohn, ‘Political Systems in eighteenth-century India: the Banaras region’ *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 82.3 1962.

²³For the spread of Islam in Bengal see Azim Roy, *The Islamic Syncretistic Tradition in Bengal* (Princeton,1983) and Richard M.Eaton, *The Rise of Islam and the Bengal Frontier, 1704-1760* (Berkeley, C.A. 1993). For provincial Mughal art in Bengal see R.Skelton, ‘Murshidabad Painting’ *Marg X* (1956), Archer and Falk,1981 and R.Chatterjee, *From the Karkhana to the Studio* (Delhi,1990) chapter two.

²⁴John R.McLane, *Land and Local Sovereignty in Eighteenth-century Bengal* (Cambridge,1993) Archer and Falk, 1981 p.121 and Chatterjee, 1990, especially chapter two. See also ‘Bengali Art Issue’, *Indian Museum Bulletin* (Calcutta,1988-89).

continental politics.²⁵ Long before the Anglo-French military campaigns of the late 1750s, the East India Company, in its search for profits, fought to supplant rulers' authority and settle north Indian centres of trade by establishing a powerful customs and police network.²⁶ During the Seven Years War (1756-1763) the British army under Robert Clive defeated the Nawab of Bengal, Siraj ud-daula, at the Battle of Plassey in the mango groves near the capital, Murshidabad in 1757; a victory manufactured as much through intrigue as force of arms.²⁷ In 1765, the Mughal Emperor Shah Alam, granted Lord Clive a *phirman* which permitted the East India Company the right to collect Bengal's land revenues, thus bringing this wealthy region under British control. However the transformation from a trading corporation to regional sovereign signalled a slow and messy process.²⁸ The emergence of the East India Company as a major territorial power in eastern India did not evolve from any coherent 'imperial policy' of expansion formulated in either London or Calcutta.²⁹

²⁵The East India Company had been granted its trading charter in 1600 and by 1690 one of its members Job Charnock was nominally *zemindar* of Calcutta on the River Hugly, where he built a factory. See P.J.Marshall, *Bengal: The British Bridgehead* (Cambridge,1987) and J.P.Losty, *Calcutta: City of Palaces* (London,1990) chapter one. The early trading machinations of the East India Company are dealt with by K.N.Chaudhuri, 1978 and the extensive research of P.J.Marshall, *Problems of Empire* (London,1968) and *East India Fortunes* (Oxford,1976). See also Sen, 1998 for a proposal of the East India Company's long term use and abuse of Mughal privileges, chapters one and two.

²⁶ Sen, 1998 especially chapter three and four.

²⁷The conflict between the British and the French had been focused in southern India and Plassey intended as a relatively minor battle in their global rivalry. However British victory in Bengal was to change the course of European expansion in India by redirecting interest to eastern India. See A.M.Khan, *Transition in Bengal* (Cambridge,1969). See also Sarkar, 1952 and Ghulam Hussein Khan, 1789 volume three section xiv.

²⁸See Marshall, 1968 Bowen, 1991 and Sen 1998.

²⁹The existence of a wider sense of British empire is still an area of contestation amongst historians. See for instance Huw Bowen, 'British Conceptions of Global Empire 1765-83', *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, 26.3 September 1998, pp.1-27.

During the 1770s the seeds of a distinct imperial ideology (emanating from both Westminster and Bengal) were scattered.³⁰ Warren Hastings' regime, 1772-1785, represented a crucial phase of British state-formation in eastern India, when the Company intensified its administrative and coercive grip on the province of Bengal.³¹ The early Company state formulated a distinctly hybrid constitution, drawn from notions of British political economy and a interpretative lens intent on reviving aspects of Mughal administration associated with Emperor Akbar's reign.³² Throughout Hastings' regime the anxieties over the Company's role as sovereign and trading corporation, remained central to its ruling ideology; the Governor-General concluding that 'a company of merchants are it seems incapable of conducting themselves as sovereigns even after they have become such'. Whilst the Company were 'sovereigns their interest is exactly the same with that of the country which they govern. As merchants the interest is directly the opposite to that interest'.³³

³⁰ Commons Journal, 10 May 1773, XXXIV, p.308, cited in Marshall, 'The Making of an Imperial Icon: The Case of Warren Hastings' *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 27.3 (September 1999) pp.1-16.

³¹ Neil Sen, 'Warren Hastings and British Sovereign Authority in Bengal', 1774-80, *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 25 (January 1997), pp. 59-81. For a retrospective assessment of Hastings' regime, see Marshall, 1999. For Hastings' notions of constitutionalism in Bengal see for instance Hastings papers BL: Add Ms 29,111 ff.1-14. See also Keith Feiling, *Warren Hastings* (London,1954) p.105.

³² This assertion is borne out by ongoing work on the regime of Warren Hastings by Robert Travers, to whom I am grateful for sharing his ideas.

³³Hastings Papers BL: Add Ms 39,892 ff.38-39; Hastings feared the 'incalculable mischief which would result from the intermixture of British subjects with the natives of India'. As we see in the above quotations Hastings was at least in this private memo, aware of Adam Smith's *Wealth of Nations* (London,1776) whose prose he is virtually transliterating. Smith, 1776 p.143: 'It is the interests of the East India Company considered as sovereigns that European goods which are carried to their Indian dominions as should be sold there as cheap as possible ... But the reverse if their interest is as merchants. As sovereigns their interest is exactly the same with that of the country which they govern. As merchants their interest is directly opposite to that interest'.

Although the Company did retain control of its Indian dominions, after the Regulating Act of 1773 the British state sought a more direct involvement, appointing parliamentarians and Crown judges to India in order to put metropolitan reforms into practice. Pitt's India Act of 1784 created a Board of Control which would oversee the decisions of the Court of Directors, as well as stipulating further schism of the political and mercantile aspect of Company rule.³⁴ This so-called 'double government' which also found expression in Cornwallis's India in the separation of the powers of district judge and collector, embodied many of the central elements of eighteenth-century Whig political philosophy.³⁵

In the last twenty years, a wide range of exciting new historiography of India has provided us with new approaches to socio-cultural history of early colonialism. Although articulating socio-economic developments rather than art and aesthetics, these recent reinterpretations must adumbrated as the wider terrain in which such cultural discussions should be located. The imperial view that the British empire in India had been acquired 'in a fit of absent mind', denies both active colonial agency and culpability, as the ominous metaphor for high Raj confidence in British global supremacy, which reinterpreted an era when such a power ethos did not yet exist.³⁶ However this perspective has been modified in recent years, as the Company is seen to have been 'sucked into' indigenous politics and trade as an inevitable repercussion of its increased mercantile interest in India.³⁷ 'Revisionist historians'

³⁴Sutherland, 1952 chapters nine to thirteen, Marshall, 1968 pp.107-130, 167, B.B.Misra, *The Central Administration of the East India Company, 1773-1834* (Manchester, 1959) chapter one.

³⁵T.R.Metcalf, *Ideologies of the Raj* (Cambridge, 1995) p.18.

³⁶This phrase derives from John Seely, *The Expansion of England* (London, 1883).

³⁷Bayly, 1988 p.46.

Frank Perlin, Burton Stein, David Washbrook and C.A.Bayly, have devised a compelling argument for the East India Company's need to ingratiate itself within Indian society, politics and culture, as well as to resituate agency to pre-colonial India which is no longer portrayed (as much imperialist rhetoric would have it) as a degenerate society, in desperate need for 'reform'.³⁸

Whilst there is room to disagree with the revisionist view about the indigenous origins of the colonial economy, it is largely through the labours of the revisionists that the eighteenth century can be reinterpreted as other than a period of unmitigated decline and 'civilisational crisis'.³⁹ The alternative strand in Indian historiography of recent years, is the work of the Subaltern Studies collective.⁴⁰ Partha Chatterjee, theoretically the most astute of the group, has argued that Revisionist history in the post-colonial age is another demonstration of a misplaced colonial guilt: 'the notion that colonial rule was not really about colonial rule but something else is a persistent theme in the rhetoric of colonial rule itself'.⁴¹

However, this critique has entirely failed to evolve a new historiography of the

³⁸The work of C.A.Bayly in particular has been instrumental in examining the complexity of Indian society in which the British became embroiled. See his *Empire and Information* (Cambridge,1996). See also Perlin, 1983, Washbrook, 1988 and Stein 1985.

³⁹ M. Athar Ali, 'The Eighteenth Century: An Interpretation', *Indian Historical Review*, V.1-2, 1978-79, pp.175-186.

⁴⁰ See Ranajit Guha, 'On Some Aspects of the Historiography of Colonial India' in Guha (ed.) *Subaltern Studies* 1 (Delhi,1982) pp.1-8; as editor, *Subaltern Studies: Writings on South Asian History and Society* I-VI (Delhi,1982-1990), as editor with G.Chakravarty Spivak *Selected Subaltern Studies* (New York,1988). Also Gyan Prakash, 'Writing Post-Orientalist Histories in the Third World: Perspectives from Indian Historiography', *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 32.2 (1990) pp.383-405. For criticism see Rosalind O'Hanlon, 'Recovering the Subject: Subaltern Studies and Histories of Resistance in Colonial South Asia' *Modern Asian Studies* 22.1 (1988) pp.189-224 and Henry Schwarz, *Writing Cultural History in Colonial and Postcolonial India* (Pennsylvania,1997) chapter five.

⁴¹Partha Chatterjee, *The Nation and its Fragments* (Princeton,1993) p.14.

eighteenth century: no 'subaltern studies' scholar has produced a significant piece of work on the eighteenth century save for some isolated studies on peasant rebellion and agrarian unrest.⁴² Nevertheless, in an important way, 'Subaltern Studies' scholarship, coupled with the more recent works of 'Post-colonial' scholars, have alerted us to the power of discourse, the phenomena of representation, formation of knowledge and order of information, the ways in which language and other non-verbal systems of signs and symbols inscribe and inspire agentive action.⁴³

To conclude this section, I will once more turn to early Company Bengal in order to examine its oblique position vis-à-vis Georgian state formation and notions of constitutionalism. 'There is little which discusses analytically the structure of the Company nor its ruling ideologies'.⁴⁴ Yet the formation of a distinct form of governmentality - aspects of which would be conveyed through art, became a fundamental concern for empire builders. Hastings wrote at length about:

the want of a principle of government adequate to its substance and a coercive power to enforce it. The extent of Bengal and its possible provinces is equal to those of most states in Europe. In difficulties it is far greater than those of any because it wants both a established form and powers of government, deriving its actual support from the unremitted labours and personal exertions of individuals in power instead of the vital influence

⁴²Ranajit Guha, *Elementary Aspects of Peasant Insurrection in India* (Oxford,1983).

⁴³ See for instance Sara Suleri, *The Rhetoric of English India* (Chicago,1992) Gauri Viswanathan, *Masks of Conquest: Literary Study and British Rule in India* (London,1990), Bhabha,1994 and Gyan Prakash, 'Writing Post-Orientalist Histories of the Third World: Perspectives from Indian Historiography', *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 32.2 (April,1990) pp.383-408. See also D.Chakrabarty, 'Postcoloniality and the Artifice of History Who Speaks for Indian Pasts?' *Representations* 37 (Winter,1992) pp.1-24.

⁴⁴Bayly, 1988 p.217.

which flows through the channels of a regular constitution and imperceptibly animates every part of it. Our constitution is nowhere to be traced but in ancient charters which were framed for the jurisdiction of your trading settlements, the sale of your exports and the provision of your annual investment. I need not observe how incompetent these must prove for the government of a great kingdom.⁴⁵

Hastings desired a 'foundation of constituency and permanency' which would remove private vices and the notion of a regime based on the 'enlightened despotism' of a few officials.⁴⁶ The Company state's *raison d'être*, its 'military-fiscal' character was to transfer the surplus revenue to Britain.⁴⁷ In this there were aspects of continuity with previous regimes as the East India Company took up pre-existing lines of surplus and appropriation and 'got round to realising them more vigorously and more completely'.⁴⁸ Yet there is no clue in this account as to what enabled the colonial state to carry out the objectives of earlier regimes more rigorously. The answer lies in an unprecedented application of governmental techniques and practices developed from the metropolis. 'Beneath the carapace of old terms and institutional shells, there ... occurred a fundamental alteration of both State and state. This is bound up with European origins and the international

⁴⁵Warren Hastings to the Court of Directors November 11, 1773. Hastings Papers BL:Add Ms 29,111 f.6.

⁴⁶*ibid.*, f.7. The phrase 'enlightened despotism' derives from J.S.Grewal, *Muslim Rule in India: The Assessment of British Historians* (Oxford,1970) chapter two where it is used to describe Company officials' praise for past Mughal regimes such as that of Akbar (r.1565-1605), but it can also be transposed to this instance where the personal exertions of men at the top of Company government who determine the state of the country.

⁴⁷ Huw Bowen, 'British India, 1765-1813: The Metropolitan Context' in P.J. Marshall (ed.), *The Oxford History of the British Empire Volume II: The Eighteenth Century*, (Oxford,1998) pp.530-551.

⁴⁸Washbrook, 1988 p.89.

character of the new colonial polity'.⁴⁹

The argument concerning an *etatist* of the economy in the eighteenth century has been recently rearticulated in terms of state-formation by Sudipta Sen who proposes that the Company derived its ruling premises from state formation in contemporary Britain.⁵⁰ However such a proposal simplifies the complexity of the actual situation to summary riposte.⁵¹ At no stage in British occupation of India, did *one* triumphant argument justifying India's subjugation exist.⁵²

In his essay 'Governmentality' Michel Foucault characterised the modern regime of power as based on bio-power as opposed to based on territory. This imbrication of men with things opened up the space for population to emerge as a target for state policy and the instruments of government come to be based on a range of multiform practices: statistics, economics, cartography, public health, education and a range of institutions around the delinquent, the lunatic, the patient, the poor, to render them governable. Finally Foucault asserted that the immense power of the state so visible in our time, is not so much the result of the 'etatist' of society as the governmentalisation of the state'.⁵³

Although a certain cohesion can be said to exist between governmental

⁴⁹Frank Perlin, 'State Formation Reconsidered II' *Modern Asian Studies* 19.3 (1985) p.478.

⁵⁰ Sudipta Sen, 'Colonial frontiers of the Georgian State: East India Company's Rule in India', *Journal of Historical Sociology*, 7.4 December 1994, pp. 368-392.

⁵¹ Anthony Pagden, 'The Struggle for Legitimacy and Image of Empire in the Atlantic to c.1700', Nicholas Canny (ed.) *The Oxford History of the British Empire, Volume One: The Origins of Empire*, (Oxford, 1998) pp. 34-98.

⁵² Metcalf, 1995, p.7: 'At no time was the British vision of India ever informed by a single, coherent set of ideas. To the contrary, the ideals sustaining the imperial enterprise in India were always shot through with contradiction and inconsistency'.

⁵³Michel Foucault, 'Governmentality' in G.Burchell, C.Gordon (eds.) *The Foucault Effect: Studies in Governmentality* (London, 1991) p.103.

techniques between the colony and the metropole, the colonial state became far more spectacular than its contemporary British counterpart.⁵⁴ Intimidating theatricality was articulated by exemplary punishments such as public hangings, shaving offending females' heads, by chained labour gangs and deploying public hangings, in part justified by the arguments that through both the Sharia and 'superstitious' Hindu rites, that 'sensational practices' defined Indian customs.⁵⁵

Not only in the forum of exemplary punishment but through acts of surveillance and self representation, the colonial state exercised an intense visuality from the edge of empire. The new capital city of Calcutta boasted wider streets and whiter seemingly 'more classical' public buildings than London, protected by an enormous fort - the most ambitious and most expensive British architectural construction of the age (figs.29-34, 37-41).⁵⁶

Such measures carried a strong visual aspect whilst still being strongly tied to colonial institutions; a peculiar type of spectacle also transferred to the display, ritualistic use and representational strategies of colonial art.⁵⁷ For instance,

⁵⁴We must be cautious here as the Georgian state was far from 'unspectacular'. As noted above this was a society obsessed with sensationalism, voyeurism and vulgarity; hangings were well attended and masquerades, exhibitions and funerals likewise generated immense public exposure. See Brewer, 1995a and 1995b; also Terry Castle, *Masquerade and Civilisation*. For the centrality of spectacle to modernity see Guy Debord, *Society of Spectacles* (Detroit,1983).

⁵⁵Foucault's analysis of power is predicated on a European modernity where physical punishment and torture lose their spectacular forms and the state's power over the human body operates far more obliquely through the prison or the asylum. Megan Vaughan in her analysis of biomedicine in Africa argues that whereas Foucault talked about the productive as opposed to the repressive power of modern states, colonial states were hardly 'modern' in this sense instead relying on large amounts of repressive power. *Curing their Ills: Colonial Power and African Illness* (Stanford,1991) Likewise Jenny Sharpe *Allegories of Empire* (London,1993) p.79 has argued for nineteenth-century India that the punishment of Indian rebels by the colonial authorities was excessive, ritualised and ceremonial whereby 'technologies of discipline are overdetermined by imperial structures of power'. *Allegories of Empire* (London,1993) p.79.

⁵⁶Losty, 1990 pp.35-6, 28-32, 35-40.

⁵⁷Singha,1998 introduction and chapters one and two. See also David Arnold, *Colonizing the Body*

Zoffany's *Chief Justice Sir Elijah Impey*, 1783 (fig. 49) is far more rhetorical than the 'sober as a judge' portrait equivalent in Britain.⁵⁸ Hanging above Impey's head in the Court House, his full-length canvas provided an idealised focus in the midst of rabble and seemingly bestowed authority on often confused proceedings. As the Company strove for a centralised government, Calcutta as Bengal's power-house became potent, in particular the Old Court House. This private building rented to the government was not only the head-quarters of the Supreme Court, but also where the Asiatic Society of Bengal met, where all public entertainments were held and it housed Calcutta's 'public gallery' - a portrait collection consisting of British and Indian protagonists instrumental to the creation of imperialism.⁵⁹

Impey's portrait thus epitomised all the ambiguity and ambivalence inherent in the governmental and aesthetic practices of the Company state. In Mughal India, government possessed its own version of spectacle; something of which can be gleaned from graphic representations of durbars and parades (fig. 78, fig.110 and fig.115).⁶⁰ Thus we must examine the complex intersection of Mughal and British ways of seeing and representing in the dialectic between art and state. The Company strove to impose not only more rigorous modes of surveillance and

(Berkeley, C.A. 1993) and Seema Alavi, *The Sepoys and the Company* (Delhi, 1995).

⁵⁸Impey was seated below his portrait so we have a transmutation of perceptions of 'the king's two bodies'. The portrait acted as a nexus of other rituals associated with the imposition of a Supreme Court on Calcutta; such as scarlet robes, uniformed peons, parades of judges through Calcutta's principal streets to the New Court House. As Stephen Greenblatt *Marvellous Possessions* (Chicago, 1991) p.45 has asserted, the differentiation between representative and representation was often reconfigured in a colonial context, as colonisers became self-conscious in new ways, which by necessity also affected their portraits as well as the ensuing ritualistic use for such 'icons'.

⁵⁹Losty, 1990 pp.28, 49-53.

⁶⁰See for instance E.Koch and M.C.Beach, *King of the World: the Padshahnama* (Windsor, 1997).

information gathering but also to redefine the 'public' and 'private', which created repercussions for the display of art and kingship.⁶¹

Indo-Muslim chroniclers criticised the Company's lack of interest in public works and eschewal of public ceremonial integral to Indian kingship.⁶² However, in terms of 'two dimensional' graphic symbols, colonialism seemed both more 'spectacular' than its Indian predecessors, as well as creating novel alignments between state and painting patronage which did not exist in contemporary Britain.⁶³

Hastings offered both public and private commissions to British artists. They performed a crucial role on diplomatic missions across the subcontinent and many of their works were shown in Calcutta's public buildings and at metropolitan exhibitions, as well as being translated into prints and gifted to or traded with Indian princes, thus reaching multiple publics. Such a policy sought to avoid the frequent accusations levied at both George III and Parliament, neither of whom were much concerned with the arts. Thus we can already gauge something of the peculiar nature of the role of art in the Company state.

The Literature So Far

In recent years the cultural dynamics of imperialism have begun to be relocated and relocated:

colonialism has always ... been a cultural process; its discoveries and

⁶¹S.Blake, 'The Patrimonial-Bureaucratic Empire of the Mughals' *Journal of Asian Studies* vol. 39 (1979) pp.77-94, Nicholas B.Dirks, *The Hollow Crown* (Cambridge,1987) and D.Haynes, *Rhetoric and Ritual in Colonial India: The Shaping of Public Culture in Surat City, 1852-1928* (Berkeley,C.A.1991).

⁶²See for instance Ghulam Hussein, 1789, volume three section xiv.

⁶³British imagery was far larger in scale to Mughal miniatures and its civic, moral, totemic uses and role as furniture, contrasted with the visual culture of successor-state Bengal.

trespasses are imagined and energised through signs, metaphors and narratives; even what would seem its purest moments of profit and violence have been mediated and enframed by structures of meaning. Colonial cultures are not simply ideologies that mask, mystify or rationalise form of oppression that are external to them, they are also expressive and constitutive of colonial relations in themselves.⁶⁴

However with regard to the specific artistic context of eighteenth-century India, there is scant equivalent to the sophisticated work of the Revisionists and the Subalternists. Although the impact of British art as trade and prestaton with its insinuations of taste and display in north Indian society are vital to an understanding of both nascent imperialism's wider impact and to the role of British art in the Indian subcontinent, these inquiries have been entirely neglected by scholars.⁶⁵

The dearth of such investigations contrast sharply with a burgeoning contemporary popular and commercial taste for early imperial imagery.⁶⁶ However,

⁶⁴Thomas, 1994 p.2.

⁶⁵Harriet Guest has explored the construction of the exotic, through the works of Sir Joshua Reynolds, Sydney Parkinson and William Hodges concerned primarily with Cook's Pacific Voyages (1768-1775). However such an ambit with regard to direct colonisation signifies ambivalently. 'The Great Distinction: Figures of the Exotic in the Works of William Hodges', *Oxford Art Journal*, (1989) and 'Curiously Marked' in J.Barrell (ed.) *Painting and the Politics of Culture* (Oxford,1992). See also Chloe Chard and Helen Langdon (eds.) *Studies in British Art 3 Transports: Pleasure and Imaginative Geography, 1600-1830* (New Haven,1996) and Geoff Quilley, 'The Imagery of Travel in British Painting with particular reference to Nautical and Maritime Imagery, c.1740-1800', (unpublished Ph.D., University of Warwick,1998) and his 'An Ocean is Her Own: The Image of the Sea and the Identity of the Maritime Nation in Eighteenth-century British Art' in G.Cubitt (ed.) *Imagining Nations* (Manchester,1998). For a rare historiographical overview of imperial imagery see Jeffery Auerbach, 'Art and Empire' in *The Oxford History of the British Empire Volume Five: Historiography* (Oxford,1998) pp.571-583.

⁶⁶In recent years a number of dealers have begun to specialise in early colonial art from India; most notably Spink & son, St. James's, Charles Grieg and Giles Eyre. Likewise since 1997 Christie's St. James's began to hold annual sales of important British, provincial Mughal and Company school art. These have been accompanied by full colour illustrated catalogues which wield the expertise of J.P.Losty and G.H.R.Tillotson; *Visions of India*. Important recent exhibitions of early colonial art include *Calcutta: City of Palaces* (British Museum,1990; accompanied by an excellent catalogue by the Curator of the India Office's Prints and Drawings - J.P.Losty), *The Raj: India and the British, 1600-1947*, National Portrait Gallery, London, 1990-1991. Most recently, the National Galleries of Scotland organised *The Tiger and the Thistle* focused on Scottish artistic and military involvement in

these commemorative and commercial catalogues have been documentary rather than analytical; thus images instead of being located within rigorous contexts at the nexus of artistic and social debates, are isolated as seemingly exotic and alien, albeit glamorous and glittering.

As if to reinforce, as well as to obfuscate aspects of this complicated imperial nostalgia, knowledge of colonial art still derives from Raj-generated texts; encouraged by Lord Curzon, penned by British officials and published by the high imperialistic journal, *Bengal Past and Present*.⁶⁷ These were instrumental to the most famous text on British art in the early Company state, Mildred Archer's *India and British Portraiture, 1770-1825*.⁶⁸ Packed with contemporary comments and informed by painstaking research, it has deservedly been elevated to authoritative status. However the author does not elaborate on the existence of a distinct 'colonial visual economy' - the product of interaction between diverse metropolitan and

the defeat of Tipu Sultan, ruler of Mysore. With regards to television, William Dalrymple's 'Stones of the Raj' (series of six programmes, Channel Four summer 1997 to commemorate Fifty Years of Indian Independence) focused on a colonial building and occasionally its internal art, such as the Writers' Building, Calcutta and La Martiniere, Lucknow. Likewise Dan Cruikshank in BBC 2's 'One Foot in the Past' (August, 1997) in his calls for the restoration of Calcutta's imperial heritage, made extensive use of artistic views of the city painted in the eighteenth century. The Victoria and Albert Museum, the Victoria Memorial Calcutta and the Yale Center for British Art have in the last decade opened new permanent installations dedicated to colonial art. In its reading room at St. Pancras, the India Office has also been able to display part of its collection of early colonial art and the Foreign and Commonwealth Office has now opened its art collection to the public. An exhibition of A.W. Devis's Indian works has been arranged for Autumn 2000 at the Preston Museum - I am grateful to Urmila De for this reference.

⁶⁷Such research was directed by successive editors Sir Evan Cotton, William Forster and C.W. Gurner from 1909 to the late 1930s; a list of their works can be found in Archer, 1979 and my bibliography. See in particular William Forster's classic article, 'British Artists in India, 1760-1820' - a culminating point of much of his long-term research, which in this instance was published in the journal *Walpole Society* 19 1931 pp.1-88 and his 'Additional Notes to British Artists in India, 1760-1820' *Walpole Society* 21 1933 pp.108-109.

⁶⁸Mildred Archer, *India and British Portraiture, 1770-1825* (London, 1979). For a draft of this work as well as plans for a second volume concerned with mid nineteenth-century India (restricted access) see the Archer Papers Eur Ms F/236 (OIOC).

Indian perceptions of art markets and aesthetic spheres.⁶⁹

Despite valuable expositions of colonial art in the 1980s, the most enduring recent contribution to this field of enquiry has been the *Raj, 1600-1947* exhibition.⁷⁰

Its scope was enormous: its aim didactic, to unravel the course of the Raj through a fascinating collection of Mughal, British and Company art and artefacts.

Interspersed with essays on the accession, ascendancy and twilight of British rule, the catalogue includes several 'visual essays'. The exhibits were directly juxtaposed with condensed history of the sitter or site although the exhibition space was inimical to the exploration of a 'colonial aesthetic sphere' in which to locate each exhibit, except as part of the carefully constructed progress of imperialism.

Other scholars have articulated their notion of an 'Oriental Picturesque'.⁷¹

This work has tended to seek reconfirmation of European stereotypes of tyranny, cruelty, laziness, lust and languor, which reiterate the deployment of an intense 'realism' of style.⁷² John MacKenzie acknowledges that 'the vast field of Orientalist

⁶⁹Archer, 1979 pp.80-86 evokes Indian art only to cite now lost works by artists such as Kettle; Indian portraits of some of Kettle's documented sitters being relegated to the status of copies of Kettle.

⁷⁰In the interim between Archer 1979 and the Bayly 1990 valuable expositions of early colonial art were R.Lightbown and Archer,1982 and Pratapidtya Pal and Vidiya Dehejia, 1986. To mark Calcutta's Tercentenary in 1990 two valuable series of essays concerned with the city's artistic past were published; P.Pal, 1990 and S.Chaudhuri,1990.

⁷¹A common influence for this group has been Edward Said's *Orientalism* (New York,1978). See Linda Nochlin 'The Imaginary Orient' in her *Politics of Vision: Essays on Nineteenth-century Art and Society* (New York,1989) and Nochlin with O.Richon, 'Representation, the Despot and the Harem' in F.Barker (ed.) *Europe and its Others* (Colchester,1985) volume one pp.1-13. See also Leonard Bell, 'Artists and Empire: Victorian Representations of Subject People' *Art History* (March,1982) pp.73-86.

⁷²Nochlin, 1989. See also Sara Suleri, 'The Feminine Picturesque' in her *The Rhetoric of English India* (Chicago,1992) chapter four. Although not art historians, eminent scholars such as Nicholas Dirks and Matthew Edney have recently deployed a version of the 'Indian Picturesque' with regards to colonial topographical inquiries. Dirks' essay in particular is illuminating; 'Guiltless Spoliations' in T.R.Metcalf and C.B.Asher (eds.) *Perceptions of South Asia's Visual Past* (Delhi,1990) and Edney, *Mapping an Empire* (Chicago,1997). As these works are concerned with military surveyors

painting has become the scene of skirmishes between traditionalist art historians, primarily concerned with aesthetics and positivist approaches to representation and radicalism influenced by Said'.⁷³ He has sought to readdress such issues by stating that western approaches to Orientalism have been much more ambiguous and interactive than previously avowed.⁷⁴

The creation of a coherent 'imperial aesthetic' through the agency of the 'Picturesque' is highly problematic in the light of recent scholarship.⁷⁵ In India, a solvent, coherent 'imperial aesthetic' was never devised (perhaps not even desired) and hence its supposedly 'post-colonial' imposition fabricates a sense of 'cultural hegemony' that never existed. As Nicholas Dirks has warned 'in calling for the study of the aesthetics of colonialism, we might end up aestheticising colonialism, producing a radical chic version of Raj nostalgia'.⁷⁶ So what appears to be 'cutting edge' scholarship, paradoxically reinforces many ideologies of imperialism (in the

rather than professional artists, they will not be discussed in detail here.

⁷³MacKenzie, 1995 p.45.

⁷⁴ibid., p.47. See also MacKenzie, 'Art and Empire' in P.J.Marshall (ed.) *The Cambridge Illustrated History of the British Empire* (Cambridge, 1996) pp.296-317. For a valuable critique of Orientalism, see Robert Young, *White Mythologies: Writing History and the West* (London, 1990).

⁷⁵The Picturesque existed as a specific aesthetic, at least within the period under consideration. To my mind, to define an artistic vision of India as 'Picturesque' is to reduce an enormous variety of ways of seeing to this very specific way of seeing associated with William Gilpin and domestic touring. See C.Hussey, *The Picturesque* (New York, 1927), S.Daniels and P.Garside (eds.) *The Politics of the Picturesque* (Cambridge, 1994). To find alternatives to the Picturesque, we need only cite Edmund Burke's notions of the Sublime and Beautiful; *A Philosophical Enquiry into our notions of the Sublime and Beautiful* (London, 1757). The sublime was determined by combinations of pleasure and pain at the sight/site of immensity and its physiological reaction on the eye; in this manner it is easy to assert that William Hodges' landscape representations of sites of India such as *the Maratha Fort of Gwalior* (fig. 35) can be both defined by as well as redefine the Sublime. For more on the sublime and its relationship to other artistic ways of seeing, see Charlotte Klonk, *Science and the Perception of Nature* (New Haven, 1996) chapter one, D.Punter 'The Picturesque and the Sublime' in Copley and Garside, 1994 pp.220-239 and Peter De Bolla, *Discourses on the Sublime* (London, 1989).

⁷⁶Dirks, 1992 p.5.

process even intensifying certain aspects).

Although MacKenzie has provided an attack on the binary oppositions constructed by 'graphic' followers of Said, at times his own conclusions on the nature of cultural interaction reinforce such schisms. Juxtaposed with the applied arts where he does acknowledge some traffic in ideas, from MacKenzie's perspective, European 'painters never adopted any of the characteristics of the Persian or Mughal traditions. The influences indeed were almost totally the other way'.⁷⁷ Alternatively, we need to consider the enormous variety of subtle and crude colonial adaptations and awareness of Mughal art as it influenced both the ideology and praxis of British artists. As we shall see, both Mughal miniatures and Bengali *pats* did influence colonial artists. Several painters involved themselves with the 'orientalist' Asiatic Society of Bengal, others learned Indian languages, collected or commented on aspects of Indian art.⁷⁸ The oeuvres of Kettle and Zoffany in particular, manifest engagement with Indian portraiture and compositional strategies, whilst James Wales began using Indian pigments which affected the ways in which he structured his pictures.

Permutation and transmogrification were not always glaringly obvious; often constituting or obfuscating a deliberately esoteric form of Orientalist

⁷⁷MacKenzie, 1995, p.105. This aspect of the relationship between British and Indian art has been much researched; see M and W.Archer, *Indian Painting for the British* (London,1955), Archer,1972 and with G.Parlett, 1992.

⁷⁸A.W.Devis was a member of the Asiatic Society of Bengal, Zoffany, Hodges and Humphry were all recorded collectors of Indian art; see for example Archer and Falk, 1981 p.160. William Daniell's *Diary*: September 9, 1789 notes that he had a *munshi*. Ozias Humphry, Humphry Papers BL: Add Ms 15, 561 made a sketch of an Indian painter at work, as well as notes on the application of gold leaf. Baltazard Solvyns as well as learning Hindi represented Calcutta *patuas* and commented on their practice, such as the creation of an excellent varnish.

connoisseurship which sought to refract modern colonial art not only within through the filter of European aesthetics, but also through the invention of traditions and innovations, to seek legitimisation through a demonstration of an intellectual and at times popular, awareness of Indian art. Such 'hybrid' imagery was designed for a whole array of publics, appealing variously to Indian and British elites as well as to wider British and Indian communities, issues either encoded or imposed often unpredictably on to such imagery. Artistic encounters operated not 'merely a matter of some proportion of success and failure, but also a question of exchange and the extent to which particular colonial projects were inflected or altered by the indigenous societies they encounter'.⁷⁹

As an aesthetic colonial hegemony never rooted in India, we must examine the sites and terms of negotiation, where recent colonial historiography has proved so valuable.⁸⁰ Both British and Indian painters competed within fiercely competitive markets, fighting to win the favour of an enormous range of clients who in turn demanded a plethora of art forms. This is one area which has begun to receive important scholarly attention through the exciting work of Tapati Guha-Thakurta, Partha Mitter, Ashit Paul and Ratnabali Chatterjee.⁸¹ Rather than being condemned

⁷⁹Thomas, 1994 p.16.

⁸⁰The notion of 'dialogue' between colonisers and colonised has received great attention in recent years from various viewpoints; see for instance Bayly, 1996, W.Halbfass, *India and Europe: An Essay in Understanding* (New York, 1988) Eugene Irschick, *Dialogue and History: Constructing South India, 1795-1895* (Berkeley, C.A. 1994) S.B.Schwartz (ed.) *Implicit Understandings: Observing, Reporting and Reflecting on the Encounters Between Europeans and Other Peoples in the Early Modern Era* (Cambridge, 1994) and J.J.Clarke, *Oriental Enlightenment: The Encounter Between Asian and Western Thought* (London, 1997).

⁸¹All of these scholars take the art of early nineteenth-century Bengal as their focus and with the exception of Mitter, are currently based in Calcutta.

out of the picture, Indian painters (both elite and subaltern) adapted British imagery in a whole variety of ways to produce a hugely varied, mobile and complex art, which moved away from direct and derivative responses to colonialism. Such novel art forms can be conceived as 'hybrid' - fissuring and fusing aspects of different cultural aesthetics into exciting and groundbreaking alignments.⁸²

However art historians who adopt colonial artists as their focal or starting point, have rarely investigated such nuanced and complex forms of transculturation. Four recent publications have sought to redraw the boundaries.⁸³ The most artistically and culturally varied has been *Perceptions of South Asia's Visual Past* which considered a wide range of different art and architecture, as well as the impact of European collecting habits on Indian artists. The unifying theme questioned 'what kind of past was created in colonial India to meet the requirements of the British Raj?'⁸⁴ Each of the contributions sought to anchor the means by which the British attempted to anchor their rule in India, as well as the ways in which their cultural practices affected and effected Indian art. Hence both British and Indian aesthetic traditions were recoded by colonial encounters. Influenced by British prints, late provincial Mughal painters began to adopt small dot-like strokes - thus modifying their media and techniques as well as their subject matter, in order to meet a growing colonial demand for copies of seventeenth-

⁸²Guha-Thakurta, 1992, Partha Mitter, *Art and Nationalism: Occidental Orientations* (Cambridge, 1994), R.Chatterjee 1990, Ashit Paul (ed.) *Indian Woodcuts in Nineteenth-century Calcutta* (Calcutta, 1983) and S.Banarjee, *The Parlour and the Streets* (Calcutta, 1989; second edition, 1998).

⁸³Asher and Metcalf, 1994, Bautze, 1998, Codell and Macleod, 1998 and Tobin, 1999.

⁸⁴Asher and Metcalf, 1994 p.1.

century Indian art.⁸⁵ Likewise British landscape aesthetics were flexed as ‘the exotic character of the land and the people were less subject to the nostalgia of loss than it was to the altogether different anxiety of conquest’.⁸⁶

An Interaction of Cultures: Indian and Western Painting, 1780-1910, alerted the urgent need to re-evaluate transculturation, stressing its vitality rather than its previous assignment as a form of ‘cultural decadence.’⁸⁷ This focus expressed the shift towards the reinterpretation of colonial aesthetics through a direct juxtaposition of British and Indian art, allowing the reader/viewer to form novel comparisons and associations.⁸⁸

Although *Orientalism Transposed: the Impact of the Colonies on British Culture*, is invaluable for its varied and thoughtful interpretations of an exciting range of colonial pictorial representations, active artistic agency on the part of the colonised remained absent.⁸⁹ However, Tobin’s seminal *Picturing Imperial Power* does explore instances of both British and Indian artistic representations. The author includes two chapters on the representation of Indians in conversation pieces painted by Britons and botanical drawings by Mughal-trained artists, in order to

⁸⁵V.N.Desai, ‘Reflections on the Past in the Present: Copying Processes in Indian Painting’, in Asher and Metcalf, 1994 pp.135-148.

⁸⁶Nicholas B.Dirks, ‘Guiltless Spoliations: Picturesque Beauty, Colonial Knowledge and Colonel MacKenzie’s Survey of India’ in Asher and Metcalf, 1994 pp. 211-234; pp.227-228.

⁸⁷Bautze, 1998 p.21.

⁸⁸Unlike *The Raj* which achieved narrative coherence through a careful selection of art drawn from major international collections in Britain, the United States and India, this selection of art derives from the private collection of the Ehrenfeld Family. Although there is no narrative coherence to the catalogue, the reproduction of these fascinating and little seen images is still important. It also marks an important companion to previous publications focussed on the Indian section of the collection, for example, Daniel J.Ehnbom (ed.) *Indian Miniatures: The Ehrenfeld Collection* (New York,1985).

⁸⁹Outstanding, is Romita Ray’s illuminating ‘The Memsahib’s Brush: Anglo-Indian Women and the Art of the Picturesque, 1830-1880’ pp.89-116.

demonstrate ‘the complexity, fluidity and multivalency of cultural encounters and political interactions between colonisers and colonised’; unfortunately a direct comparison between their different aesthetics is not on Tobin’s agenda.⁹⁰ Her wide geographical ambit and pictorial discrimination are determined by ‘hybrid identities’ which represent a crucial lens for focusing colonial enquiry, as Tobin provides the only recent book-length study concerning colonial painting.⁹¹ In attempting to inscribe diverse imperial representations and multiple instances of ‘in-betweenness’ and liminality within a single text, Tobin’s opus is suggestive and fills an obvious vacuum in eighteenth-century studies.⁹²

All of the above texts from the ‘Oriental Picturesque’ to discussions of ‘hybridity’ have valiantly and variously tackled the problem of representing colonial peoples through both established metropolitan and evolving colonial pictorial vocabularies. In so doing, they have paved the way towards more nuanced investigations of both the appreciative as well as the denigrative aspects of colonial representation. However, we need to adjust the frame, whilst remaining mindful of what lies beyond its boundaries.⁹³ We must forge a liminal approach, where British

⁹⁰Tobin, 1999, pp.3-4. Tobin’s research covers a similar same era as this dissertation;c.1770-1795. However Anglo-Indian images of botany and conversation pieces were not unrelated. For instance, the Mughal painter from the court of Azimabad - Zayn al-Din, worked for the Impeys in Calcutta (1781-83) producing both portraits and drawing specimen from their menagerie. His work demonstrated varying degrees of ‘westernisation’ with regards to the Impeys’ patronage of Kettle and Zoffany, European botanical treatises and the need to provide an artistic idiom which still retained ‘Mughal’ elements.

⁹¹This is borne out by her interest in cross-dressing of Britons with north Americans and Indians and West Indian slaves’ creation of a specifically ‘hybrid’ dress. The majority of the collection scrutinises apparel, cloth and the ensuing hybrid or exotic identities caused through self-other, gendered encounters.

⁹²ibid., p.26. See Bhabha 1994 and Robert Young, *Colonial Desire: Hybridity in Theory, Culture and Race* (London,1995).

⁹³In very different ways both MacKenzie, 1995 and Thomas 1994 have called for an examination of

and Indian artists' ideological, practical and aesthetic articulations can be iterated, and where the demands and responses of diverse markets and viewing publics can be sufficiently voiced. We must examine their complex mediations at every stage of artistic production, circulation and contemplation in order to construct as complete a depiction of a traffic in imagery as it is possible.⁹⁴ To begin redressing the balance there are various paths, pitfalls and impasses, which must be addressed. The first is the role of pictorial representation as the nucleus for investigation.

Art is necessarily 'embroiled in a complex set of mediations between artists, patrons, critics and a public ambiguous but always present'.⁹⁵ However much recent scholarship has concentrated on representation at the expense of other constructions of colonial imagery's signification, (such as size, format, ritualistic, private or personal use, relation to other art objects and critical or popular reception), which were often predeterminants for representational strategies and which were all complicated by colonial contexts through novel zones of transculturation and process of translation.⁹⁶

colonial imagery that sought to celebrate and elevate (albeit often in a marginal manner) other cultures. This marks a departure from Nochlin and beyond to Said, who condemn all European attempts to represent the Orient; see Robert Young, 1990 for a useful critique of Said's *Orientalism* and its problematic high cultural, ahistorical and humanist position.

⁹⁴As will become apparent in the course of this dissertation, I owe a debt to classic and recent research into the social lives of objects as explored variously by Marcel Mauss, *The Gift*, Homi Bhabha, 'Signs Taken For Wonders: Questions of Ambivalence and Authority Under a Tree Outside Delhi, May, 1817' in Bhabha 1994, pp. 102-122, Arjun Appadurai (ed.) *The Social Life of Things* (Cambridge, 1986) Annette Weiner, *Inalienable Possessions: The Paradox of Keeping Whilst Giving*, (Berkeley, C.A. 1992) Nicholas Thomas, *Entangled Objects: Exchange, Material Culture and Colonialism in the Pacific* (Cambridge, Mass., 1991) and John Frow, *Time and Commodity Culture: Essays in Cultural Theory and Postmodernity* (Oxford, 1997).

⁹⁵Guha-Thakurta, 1992 p.2.

⁹⁶I have borrowed the term 'zone of transculturation', where it is used to evoke the 'contact zone' where cultures negotiated and grappled with each other; from Mary Louise Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* (London, 1992).

Through the surviving literature, we can learn very little about the conditions of artistic production, the market status, the varying life stages of such pictures nor of aesthetic currency.⁹⁷ In fact, even the distinctions between different media and techniques and their modes of translation on their journey from fieldwork sketches to exhibited oils, so lucidly analysed by Bernard Smith with regard to Cook's Pacific Voyages thirty five years ago, have been marginalised.⁹⁸

'On some level, the exchange value of any particular image or image object was of course intricately related to its representational content'.⁹⁹ In Indian contexts, representation existed as only one facet in the comprehension of British art. On a pre-iconographical level, form and function operated in various ways; as Indians queried the use, status and display which were all issues of vital, if not more importance, to Indian viewing publics.¹⁰⁰ We need to examine at what point and in what manner, meanings entered, surrounded and were sustained, inflected and deflected through imagery.¹⁰¹ Such a mode of enquiry possesses a dual focus -

⁹⁷An important exception which examines the life stages of a few specific Indian artefacts is Richard H.Davis, *Lives of Indian Images* (Princeton,1997; Delhi,1999). See especially chapter five. This dissertation whilst following the lives of a number of specific paintings across empire – such as Willison's portrait of *Muhammed Ali, Nawab of Arcot, 1777*, is also concerned with mass-produced imagery, such as the circulation of prints and *pats*, as well as with the translation of *plein air* sketches in to exhibition oils or engravings.

⁹⁸Bernard Smith, *European Vision and the South Pacific* (London, second edition,1986); *Imagining the Pacific* (New Haven,1992).

⁹⁹ Poole, 1997 p.11.

¹⁰⁰So many different aspects of images' identities were so closely intertwined, that privileging representation at the expense of other forms of perception, is immediately to lose part of the picture. This is especially so within a colonial context whereby new artefacts were causes for wonder in a variety of ways. See Bhabha, 1994, Thomas,1989 and Alfred Gell, *Art and Agency* (Oxford,1998) for varying expositions of the ways in which art and western artefacts were comprehended and recoded by a diverse societies.

¹⁰¹'In what ways is meaning carried in works of art and how are the categories through which we experience the world communicated in works of art?' S.Bann, 'How Revolutionary is the New Art History?' in A.L.Rees and F.Borzello (eds.) *The New Art History* (London,1986) p.71.

an analysis of contemporary aesthetic perceptual processes and an explication of representation as located within the context of the picture as ‘transcultural artefact’.¹⁰²

Secondly, or rather coterminously, in attempting to situate colonial art within a wider imperial context, caution must be exercised. ‘Too much stress on the social aspects of art ignores the qualities which make it art rather than something else’.¹⁰³ Such investigations are heightened by the polemics surrounding the interaction of knowledge and power, ‘reality’ and ‘representation’ in a colonial context.¹⁰⁴ Recent colonial commentators have stressed the danger in blurring the relationship between the material and the ideological: ‘discussion of text and image mask this reality of empire: the numbers who died in colonial wars and in labour gangs, or as a result of disease, starvation’.¹⁰⁵ Thus we must investigate the ‘profoundly symbiotic relationship between the discursive and the material practices of imperialism’ as embroiled with the colonial field of cultural production.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰²Such a path of enquiry has received far more attention from visual anthropologists than from art historians. See for instance Marcus and Meyers 1995, Gell, 1998, Thomas, 1994 and Coote and Skelton, *Anthropology, Art and Aesthetics* (Oxford, 1992) all of which set up tensions or interaction between aesthetic and anthropological perceptions of non-western art as viewed through western eyes.

¹⁰³Borzello and Rees, 1986 p.8.

¹⁰⁴For a critique of postcolonialist theory’s frequent elision of reality and representation see Robert Young 1990 pp. See also Timothy Mitchell, *Colonising Egypt* (Cambridge, 1988) The debate is further problematised by competing definitions of reality and representation.

¹⁰⁵Elleke Boehmer, *Colonial and Postcolonial Literature* (Oxford, 1995) p.20.

¹⁰⁶Abdul JanMohamad, ‘The Economy of Manichean Allegory: The Function of Racial Difference in Colonialist Literature’, *Critical Inquiry* 12 (1985) pp.59-87; p.64. For an evocative account of the ways in which discourse effects practice see G.Obeyeskere, ‘British Cannibals: Contemplation of an Event in the Death and Resurrection of Captain Cook, Explorer’, *Critical Inquiry* 18 (1992) pp.630-654.

In eighteenth-century Britain, art existed within complex and multi-faceted forum of aesthetic activity intimately linked to the operation of power within a political, cultural and social context. This sociology of culture situates the meaning and status of art within complex and multiple politico-historical relations which authorise and sustain them, so that the quotidian logic of practice is fully integrated within a nuanced and complex arena which itself professes intimacy with the workings of political and economic authority.¹⁰⁷ Such an analytical method encompasses the set of social conditions of the production, circulation and consumption of symbolic goods which encompasses three levels of social reality; the position of the artistic field in relation to the field of power; the structure of the artistic field and the genesis of the producers' practice.¹⁰⁸

Can such a field be transmitted and translated to a colonial context? Whilst such a framework for investigating eighteenth-century British art has already proved invaluable, we must be wary of applying it unmediated either to British diasporas and to a Mughal 'art economy' which only superficially shared some points of comparison. As we shall see, art patronage, the dissemination of aesthetic ideas and practices and the structure of 'visual markets' in India appeared radically different from a British field of cultural production.¹⁰⁹ However Nicholas Thomas has

¹⁰⁷See also H.Caygill, *The Art of Judgement* (London,1989) and Randal Johnson (ed.) *The Field of Cultural Production* (London,1993).

¹⁰⁸For the field of eighteenth-century British art preoccupied with high culture and politeness, *Distinction* has made quite an impression; see his most dedicated followers- Pears,1988 and Brewer,1997.

¹⁰⁹See Chatterjee 1990 chapters one and two and Guha-Thakurta, 1992 introduction and chapter one. For instance, in Mughal India high ranked artists were subsumed in the royal workshop the *karkhana* whilst in Britain painters relied on short-term commissions gleaned from highly competitive circumstances.

demonstrated that the fundamental issues raised by Bourdieu possess relevance for an analysis of colonial relations, proposing ‘an ethnography of colonial projects’, which can be further transposed to a comparative tripartite agenda which explicates the interaction of metropolitan, colonial and late Mughal visual economies.¹¹⁰

Likewise, Deborah Poole has investigated the intersection of diverse fields of vision and suggested that the notion of ‘visual economy’ as the most apposite term for describing such interaction, as this evokes intense and extensive exchange but is removed from ambiguous perceptions of ‘shared culture’.¹¹¹

As I have tried to stress, both British and Mughal cultures were in processes of transition; they were not fossilised entities, which sought only to preserve their cultural heritage. However this should not deny that each guarded zealously certain aspects of its identity in the face of violent and accelerating imperialism. The Indo-Muslim scribal elite bemoaned the loss of better times; through poetical expression, historical writings and as we shall see through a taste for older or what may be termed ‘traditional’ art forms.¹¹² The East India Company became increasingly hostile to intermarriage between Britons and Indians; under Cornwallis Indians were removed from important government posts and patrimonial forms of indigenous information gathering (visual, verbal and aural) increasingly

¹¹⁰Thomas 1994 pp.58-61. With regards to India, Guha-Thakurta, 1992 has made thoughtful use of Bourdieu- examining the evolution of Bengali art through the nexus of individual painters, publics, patrons, institutions, the growth of taste and a distinctly Indian taste.

¹¹¹ Poole, 1997 p.8.

¹¹²This can be seen as an extraction of one aspect of ‘Inqalib’- bemoaning the passing of better days; see my chapter five. Archer and Falk, 1981 have demonstrated that Mughal images from the 16th century were copied and adapted well into the 19th century.

denigrated.¹¹³

By 1810, British print-makers were etching racially denigrative caricatures of Indian servants, whilst the *patuas* based around the great temple at Kalighat of south Calcutta, depicted scenes of corrupt Company officials and magistrates executing 'Rat Justice' (fig.50, fig.128). Instead of a wholesale imposition of British artistic values, market practices, aesthetic rituals and ideologies on India, what we see is intense cultural confrontation, conflict and compromise, where the difference served as a caesura towards evolving notions of art across empire, creating representations that were merely secondary to practices, but which became realities in themselves.

Chapter Plan

At the outset, I shall outline the dominant metropolitan ways of perceiving empire through its distinct brand of 'orientalist empiricism' as projected into the institutionalised exhibition spaces of the Society of Artists and the Royal Academy, as well as the motivations and social make-up of artists travelling to India, c.1772-1785. This will serve as an introduction for later comparisons between metropolitan and colonial aesthetic *fora* and their alignments with the East India Company and British government. An analysis of hitherto undiscovered exhibition reviews, will

¹¹³There is a growing literature concerned with the colonial information order; Bayly 1996, David Ludden, 'Orientalist Empiricism' and Arjun Appadurai 'Number in Colonial Imagination' in (eds.) C.Breckenridge and P.van der Veer, *Orientalism and the Postcolonial Predicament* (Philadelphia,1993) Edney 1997 and B.Cohn, *Colonialism and its Forms of Knowledge*, (Princeton,1997); to name but a few. The role of graphic information in such enquiries has been marginalised (except for Edney's concern with mapping). In fact we must look back to Partha Mitter's classic study *Much Maligned Monsters: European Reactions to Indian Art* (Oxford,1977) to examine the role of colonial art and archaeology within the search for knowledge concerning Indian culture.

reveal many of the tensions inherent within the evolution of a distinct appreciation of Anglo-Indian art. I shall also explore how far ways of perceiving empire through a species of ‘travel capitalism’ were affected, even effected by the first publicly exposed works of artists who had worked in India.

The following three chapters explicate the rise and fall of a professional colonial artistic community in Calcutta, c.1772-1795. As the new capital of Bengal, Calcutta was subjected to both extensive rebuilding and mythologising. The existence of competing alignments of self-other and Calcutta’s position at the centre of an aesthetic, market and graphic information order, will form the framework for investigation. I shall argue that in Calcutta, colonial modernity demanded public art as part of an evolving imperial ritual and ceremony in ways that did not exist in contemporary Britain. The role of an intensely visual display of authority became central to the symbolism of colonial institutions and in turn, this ‘apartheid community’ demanded a specific ‘aesthetic of whiteness’, poised through distinct denigration or elevation of the diverse Bengali communities. With recession and the tough line of Cornwallis’ regime, new alignments between art and government ideology signalled the decline of the professional artistic community. A diversity of derivative and appropriating artistic idioms replaced the high art of the professional painterly community.

The remainder of the dissertation shifts the ground away from British and colonial aesthetic arenas to Indian aesthetic perceptions of British imagery, focussing on imperial artistic enunciation in the mofussil but especially with regard

to foreign policy, where British art was gifted to Indian rulers. Such images operated at a nexus of colonial cultural symbols defined by actual or metaphorical surveillance (such as the building of watch-towers), as defined an evolving governmentality. Hence the intersection of 'kingship symbols' in an era of transition will be scrutinised. What appears a seemingly simple scenario was in fact a complex catalyst for a whole range of artistic and political anxieties.

Chapter five returns to colonial artistic agency with in the complicated meeting of two cultures' very different attacks on the other's fetish for luxury by means of a discourse of oriental or occidental 'despotism'. Painters travelled to India in search for wealth at Indian courts, most notably Arcot in south India and Lucknow in Awadh; yet the value and status of both the artists and their work appeared radically different from that of these court's own studio of Mughal-trained painters. I shall examine the tensions between economic status and the representational strategies through the memoirs and correspondence of the artists George Willison, Ozias Humphry and the extensive collection of James Wales and his assistants.

The final chapter juxtaposes the impact of British art at the courts of Lucknow and Murshidabad, c.1785-1795, in order to explore the close dichotomy between art and politics and the existence of resistance to British imagery. Although in a precolonial era these two courts had been culturally linked, exchanging painters and possessing a strong Shi'ite cultural identity, under the influence of direct or indirect British rule their attitudes towards the visual arts evolved in very different

directions. By 1795 both these courts possessed 'permanent, public' expositions of British art which became the *foci* of much colonial travel writing revealing both the success and the failure of the cultural strategies of colonialism, as such collections transgressed *a priori* aesthetic classification, entering and inflecting realms beyond colonial comprehension.

Chapter One

Mediating Orientalism

The Lure of India From London, c.1772-1785.

*The East Indies are going to be another spot of contention. Such a scene of tyranny and plunder has been opened as makes one shudder!*¹

This chapter will be concerned with the formation of discursive aesthetic ideology for empire from a metropolitan context. I shall propose that with the Company's accession to *diwan* and its search for knowledge in order to consolidate power, new perceptions of what constituted 'orientalist empiricism', became central to the direction taken by colonial aesthetics.² By analysing metropolitan responses to the first exhibited works of India-painted subjects, I shall gauge how far British notions of taste could be flexed in order to incorporate Indian subjects within the metropolitan aesthetic sphere. Contemporary writers on taste increasingly emphasised a direct relationship between subject and object; an interaction which required solitude rather than the sexual and gossipy vicissitudes of the Royal Academy's crowded show rooms, where these pictures were publicly viewed.³ In theoretical contemplative

¹Horace Walpole to ^{Horace}~~Henry~~ Mann, in Wilmarth Lewis (ed.) *The Correspondence of Horace Walpole* (New Haven, 1937-1982) volume 23 pp.380-381.

²The phrase 'oriental empiricism' is borrowed from David Ludden, 'Oriental Empiricism: Transformation of Colonial Knowledge' in C.Breckenridge and P.van der Veer (eds.) *Orientalism and the Postcolonial Predicament* (Philadelphia,1993) pp.250-278. See also C.A.Bayly, *Empire and Information: Intelligence Gathering and Social Communication in India, 1780-1870* (Cambridge,1996).

³Daniel Webb, *An Inquiry into the Beauties of Painting and into the Most Celebrated Painters, Ancient and Modern* (London,1760) and Sir Joshua Reynolds *Discourses on Art* (ed.) R.Wark, (London,1990 edition). For Royal Academy exhibitors see A.Graves *The Royal Academy of Arts: Complete Dictionary of Contributors and their arts from its foundation in 1769 to 1904*

attitudes, the picture acted as starting point, its principal elements extracted, then by a sophisticated translation rite, abstracted into chains of thought centering on notions of public virtue, the rise and fall of empires and their role within a comparative theory of civilisation.⁴

The process of transforming empire into a picture and later as a coherent exhibition for metropolitan consumption, has been the subject of several important studies in recent years.⁵ ‘Yet this real world outside the exhibition seems actually to have consisted only of further representations of the real,’ so that for metropolitan viewers India existed as little more than a motley ‘mimetic capital’, an array of texts and images and an increasingly wrangled but still arcane subject in Westminster, so multiple, complex, combative, partisan,

(London,1905). See also Louise Lippincott, *Selling Art in Georgian London* (New York,1983), Iain Pears, *The Discovery of Painting* (1988), John Barrell, *The Political Theory of Painting from Reynolds to Hazlitt: the Body of the Public* (Oxford,1986), Andrew Hemingway, ‘The Political Theory of Painting without the Politics’, *Art History* 10.3 (September,1987) and his ‘Art Exhibitions as Leisure-Class Rituals in Early Nineteenth-century London’, in B.Allen (ed.) *Towards A Modern Art World* (New Haven,1995) pp.95-108, David Solkin, *Painting For Money* (New Haven,1992) John Brewer, *Pleasures of the Imagination* (Oxford,1997) and Michael Rosenthal, *The Art of Thomas Gainsborough* (New Haven,1999).

⁴T.Eagleton; *The Ideology of the Aesthetic*,(Oxford,1990) introduction and chapter one; Andrew Hemingway, *Landscape Imagery and Urban Culture* (London,1992), H.Caygill, *The Art of Judgement* (London,1989), David Solkin, *Landscape of Reaction: Richard Wilson* (London,1982) and P.Mattick Junior *Eighteenth-century Aesthetics and the Reconstruction of Art* (Cambridge,1993) See also Charlotte Klonk, *Science and the Perception of Nature* (New Haven,1996) which examines the role of perception and mediation in aesthetic contemplation through the works of Burke and Alison amongst others; Edmund Burke, *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful* (London,1757) and A.Alison, *Essay on the Nature and Principles of Taste*, (Edinburgh,1790). See also John Brewer, ‘The Most Polite Age and the Most Vicious’ in Brewer and A.Bermingham (eds.) *The Consumption of Culture* (London,1995) pp.341-361 for the examination of the ideal man of taste as in isolation away from crowded exhibition spaces. For an application of Reverend Archibald Alison’s theory of associationism within a colonial context see Robert Dixon, *The Course of Empire* (London,1986).

⁵Foremost is Timothy Mitchell, *Colonising Egypt* (Cambridge,1988) , p.xiii. See also p.i ‘The world itself ordered up as though it were an endless exhibition’. See also Peter Greenhalgh, *Ephemeral Vistas: The Expositions Universelles, Great Exhibitions and World Fairs, 1851-1939* (Manchester,1988) and Jeffrey Auerbach, *The Great Exhibition of 1851: A Nation on Display* (New Haven,1999) and J.MacKenzie, ‘Empire and Metropolitan Cultures’, Andrew Porter (ed.) *The Oxford History of the British Empire Volume Four: The Nineteenth Century* (Oxford,1998). However all of these texts are concerned with the mid to late nineteenth century.

rhetorical or seemingly simulatory, that as a corpus for 'travel capitalism' or urban ethnography, it possessed little coherence.⁶

Simultaneously, we must analyse how far a growing awareness of India within political debate and the public sphere also held repercussions for the aesthetic forum and how notions of exchange between these two interrelated *fora* created a solvent or intensely divided vision of India.⁷ This extended from polite 'enclaves' such as the exhibition spaces of the Royal Academy, to Covent Garden's print shops, where a very different aesthetic of empire had evolved by the late 1780s. Through such diverse but not unconnected lenses, India was primarily viewed as an urban, metropolitan phenomenon.⁸

From the opening of the Seven Years' War in 1756 to the end of the War of American Independence in 1783, Britain's overseas empire expanded enormously. 'During this turbulent period Britons first in a mood of confidence and then in an atmosphere of gathering crisis, changed their perceptions of the world and began substantially to redefine their ideas about empire and

⁶Romita Ray, 'The Memsahib's Brush' in J.Codell and D.Macleod (eds.) *Orientalism Transposed: The Impact of the Colonies on British Culture* (Vermont,1998) pp.89-116; p.91 and Josef Borocz, 'Travel Capitalism', *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 34 (1992) pp.708-716.

⁷Huw Bowen notes that by 1768 as much as 23% of Parliament owned East India Company stock; Bowen, *Revenue and Reform* (Cambridge,1991). Elsewhere he explores the wider shareholding public of India Stock, noting that women and foreign investors played an important role, whilst very few shareholders came from the aristocracy; 'Investment and Empire in the later eighteenth century: East India Stockholding, 1756-1791', *Economic History Review* XLII 2 (1989) pp.186-206. Close alignments between public and aesthetic spheres have defined much recent art historiography for the later eighteenth century; especially Barrell 1986 and Solkin 1992. Reynolds' own public lectures at the Academy (later published and widely circulated as *Discourses*) were strongly influenced by his membership of an intellectual circle which included Adam Smith and Edmund Burke, both of whom were concerned with British rule in India.

⁸See Hemingway, 1992 for the notion of rural English subjects which were compared less to their subject than caught up within the intricate web of exhibiting, commerce and criticism as defined the London art world in an increasingly industrialised society. Colonial subjects were other to the metropolis in distinct ways, at a further remove from direct experience except for a few returned Company officials and their wives. See also Diana Donald *The Age of Caricature* (New Haven,1996).

imperialism'.⁹ By 1781, pamphleteers claimed that India had now 'become so much the subject of public attention that almost every one has gained a sufficient knowledge of the history, manners and politics of that country'.¹⁰ However public interest in India remained minimal or coloured by opinion so that for the wider public, beyond a small circle of Orientalist scholars, it became difficult to form associations so that throughout this era attitudes to empire were bitterly divided and this affected the perceptual strategies of comprehending such images.¹¹

Most eighteenth-century India-related publications were concerned with contemporary history or with political controversy, transmitted through translated Persian histories and pamphlets.¹² 'These were addressed to a public

⁹Huw Bowen, 'British Conceptions of Global Empire, 1756-1783' in *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 26.3 (September,1998) pp.1-27; p.1.

¹⁰ P.J.Marshall, 'Taming the Exotic' p.32 in R.Porter and G.Rousseau (eds.) *Exoticism in the Enlightenment* (Manchester, 1990) pp.46-65. See also Huw Bowen, 'British India 1765-1813: The Metropolitan Context' pp.530-551 and James Horn 'British Diaspora: Emigration from Britain 1680-1815' pp. 28-52; both in P.J.Marshall (ed.) *Oxford History of the British Empire Volume Two: The Eighteenth Century* (Oxford,1998).

¹¹Lucy Sutherland, *The East India Company in Eighteenth-century Politics* (Oxford,1952) P.J.Marshall, *Problems of Empire* (London,1968) and Kate Teltscher, *India Inscribed* (Delhi,1995) chapter 5 for a combative iconography of early Company rule employed by returned traders and Company servants such as William Bolts, William Macintosh, Henry Verelst and Joseph Price. See also James Raven, *Judging New Wealth: Popular Publishing and Responses to Commerce in England, 1750-1800* (Oxford,1992) chapter eleven: 'Assumptive Gentry and the Threat to Stability' pp.221-248. I am very grateful to Urmila De for this reference.

¹²R.Lightbown and M.Archer, *India Observed* (London,1982) pp.15-30. Kate Teltscher, 1995, pp.3-8 notes that compared with pamphlets and other publications with a political agenda, there were relatively few poems or novels with an India subject matter; important examples being the anonymous sentimental novel, *Hartly House* (London,1789). However as Raven 1992 p.232 notes Indian vignettes were extremely fashionable in a range of metropolitan literature through this era, as in the anonymous sentimental novel *Juliana* (London,1786). Henry MacKenzie's *The Man of Feeling* (London,1771) also included an Indian vignette. See R.Junejia, 'The Native and the Nabob: Representations of Indian Empire in Eighteenth-century English Literature' *Journal of Commonwealth Literature* 27 (1992) pp.183-199. For Indian histories as translated and comprehended by Company officials, J.S.Grewal, *Muslim Rule in India: The Assessment of British Historians* (Calcutta,1970). See also P.J.Marshall, 'Warren Hastings as a Scholar Patron' in A.Whiteman (ed.) *Essays Presented to Lucy Sutherland* (Oxford,1973) pp.242-262, D.Kopf, *British Orientalism and the Bengal Renaissance: The Dynamics of Indian Modernisation, 1773-1835* (Berkeley,1969) and R.Rocher, 'British Orientalism in the Eighteenth Century: Dialectics of Knowledge and Government' in Breckenridge and van der Veer, 1993, pp.215-249.

less interested in the exotic landscape and peoples of India than in the details of campaigns and battles or in absorbing subjects of how the revenues of Bengal should be collected and spent'.¹³ This was the first era when detailed linguistic, economic, legal, political and archaeological information was filtering into and being reformulated in Britain, largely through an Orientalist circle centered on Warren Hastings where 'the utility of ideas about India for governance and their institutionalisation by the state bolstered their epistemological authority'.¹⁴ Dr. Johnson hoped that Hastings:

who once intended to increase the learning of his country by the introduction of the Persian language will examine nicely the traditions and histories of the East; that he will survey the remains of its ancient edifices and trace the vestiges of its ruined cities and that on his return we shall know the arts and opinions of a race of men, from whom very little has been hitherto derived.¹⁵

R.Drayton, 'Knowledge and Empire in Marshall, 1998 pp.231-252.

¹³Lightbown, 1982, p.14 and Ludden, 1993 pp.264-265: 'Empirical data and factualised statements about India entered European intellectual life through parliamentary debate, books, newspapers, art and universities ... In this setting orientalism was shaped by forces having little to do with India'.

¹⁴Ludden, 1993, p.261. However 'colonial knowledge was seriously contested intellectual terrain. The Company collected data that could have been used to construct very different images of India'. See also Marshall, 1973, Marshall, 1990, and his *The British Discovery of Hinduism* (1970) 'The Making of an Imperial Icon: The Case of Warren Hastings' *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 27.3 (September,1999) and *idem.* with G.Williams, *The Great Map of Mankind: British Perceptions of the World in the Age of Enlightenment* (London,1982). See also Breckenridge and van der Veer, 1993, Bayly, 1996, B.S.Cohn, *An Anthropologist Amongst Historians* (1987) and his *Colonialism and its Forms of Knowledge* (Princeton,1997). For the visual arts see Partha Mitter, *Much Maligned Monsters: A History of European Reactions to Indian Art* (Oxford,1977); T.Falk and M.Archer, *Indian Miniatures in the India Office* (London,1981) introduction, M.Archer, 'The British Collectors and Patrons in India,1760-1830' in Archer,C.Rowell and R.Skelton, *Treasures from India: the Clive Collection at Powis Castle* (London,1987) pp.9-16, R.Head, *The Indian Style* (London,1986), R.Desmond, *The Indian Museum*, (London,1982), Richard H.Davis, *Lives of Indian Images* (Princeton,1997;Delhi,1999) chapter five. See also Isabel Stuebe, 'William Hodges and Warren Hastings: A study in eighteenth-century patronage' *Burlington Magazine* (October,1973) pp.659-66, M.Archer, *India and British Portraiture* (London,1979) for individual monographs on artists and their Company patrons and C.A.Bayly (ed.) *The Raj: India and the British, 1600-1947* (London,1990).

¹⁵Dr. Johnson to Warren Hastings: March,1774, cited in Lightbown, 1982, p.16.

Certain information was far more readily available visually than verbally.¹⁶ *Company Officers Viewing the rock at Trichinopoly*, attributed to Edward Penny (fig. 1) provides a rare instance of Company officials contemplating Indian architectural and sculptural heritage, out strolling with their dog, about to enter a *choultry* to take tea. Albeit within the grounds of a fort, here the early imperial enterprise is couched within an idiom guised with a 'disinterested' aura more consonant with representations of the Grand Tour, thus directly orientalisng classical heritage into which India through its Aryan roots, was to be increasingly incorporated.¹⁷

By 1768, (the year the Royal Academy was established) a very different relationship to British trade in the East was emerging.¹⁸ Three years previously Shah Alam had granted Lord Clive a *phirmaud* which permitted the East India Company the right to collect Bengal's land revenues, thus bringing this wealthy region under British control.¹⁹ Although contemporaries reiterated that 'the affairs of the Company are now become as much the object of annual consideration as the raising of supplies', British India remained an unknown

¹⁶See Matthew Edney, *Mapping an Empire: The Geographical Construction of British India, 1766-1843* (Chicago,1997) and Nicholas Dirks, 'Guiltless Spoliations: Picturesque Beauty, Colonial Knowledge and Colonel MacKenzie's Survey of India' in C.Asher and T.Metcalf (eds.) *Perceptions of South Asia's Visual Past* (Delhi,1994) pp.211-232 and Mitter, 1977.

¹⁷See Thomas Trautmann, *British Aryans in India* (Berkeley,C.A.1997), Mitter, 1977, and William Hodges' *Dissertation on Architecture* (London,1787).

¹⁸Marshall, 1968, Sutherland, 1952 and Bowen 1991.

¹⁹M.Bence-Jones, *Clive: Master of Bengal* (London,1975). For the transition from traders to sovereigns in India see A.M.Khan, *Transition in Bengal* (Cambridge,1969) chapter five and six, C.A.Bayly, *Rulers, Townsmen and Bazaars* (Cambridge,1983), his *Indian Society and the Making of the British Empire* Cambridge,1988). Explanations of early British expansion have focused heavily on peripheral factors such as private profit generated; see P.J.Marshall, *East India Fortunes* (Oxford,1976). Sudipta Sen has attempted to demonstrate the uneasy combination of trading interests with the imposition of British notions of rule, *An Empire of Free Trade* (Pennsylvania,1998). For Westminster's anxieties over how to administer an alien empire, Marshall, 1968 Sutherland, 1952, Bowen 1991 and C.A.Bayly, *Imperial Meridian: The British Empire and the World, 1780-1830* (London,1989).

quantity.²⁰ General ignorance was parodied in the parable of a Company Director who bored at a board meeting, asked whether Sir Roger Dowlat (the Bengal Nawab, Siraj ud-Daula) was an English baronet.²¹ Thus began the first era of agonistic uncertainty contained within the new incompatibility of nation and empire, further heightened by a succession of scandals in the 1770s which thrust India in to the public forum.²² Although initially the right to *diwani* was prophesied by Clive and other India enthusiasts as ‘manna from Heaven’, by 1768 the East India Company was close enough to collapse and ruin to necessitate bailing out by government funds, inverting the great expectations of Bengal as fabulous oriental asset.²³ Pamphlet warfare between embittered ex-Company servants most infamously William Bolts and Henry Verelst, earned the Company further unwanted publicity, as its service was represented as corrupt, driven by private vices, rather than public benefits, in its gluttonous quest for wealth.²⁴ Colossal personal fortunes jarred with the lack of national funds, which incited public opinion against prosperous returned Company servants, translated in to ‘Nabob’ stereotypes.

Accompanying the active accession to *diwan* and the subsequent

²⁰*The Annual Register*, (London, 1768) p.76

²¹J.Price, *Five Letters from a Free Merchant in Bengal to Warren Hastings Esq.*, (1778) p.136; cited in Marshall, 1968 p.26.

²²Parliamentary Enquiries of 1767 and 1772, as well as troubles in South India, notably the murder of the Governor of Madras by his council, only exacerbated the situation. For textual debate of 1770s and 1780s Teltscher, 1995 chapters four and five and F.Whelan, *Edmund Burke and the Political Morality of Empire* (Pittsburgh, 1995).

²³Anonymous, *The Present State of British Rule in India*, (London, 1775). See P.Cain and J.Hopkins, ‘The Political Economy of the British Empire, 1750-1914’, *Economic History Review*, 2nd series, xxxiii, 1980, p.464.

²⁴Calls for reform came from the Company’s own ranks; ex-servants William Bolts and Alexander Dow’s pamphlets and historical works completely altered public perceptions of India. They were serialized in the London press and therefore reached an enormous readership. In 1772 *Lloyd’s Evening Post* began a series of articles concerned with Company corruption inspiring the entrepreneur Samuel Foote for his Haymarket hit *The Nabob*, which opened in June.

formation of a British capital in Bengal in 1772, it was now imperative that the fine arts legitimised empire. More than any other colony, British India became the subject for London's leading painters, from Francis Hayman to the military artist Captain Swain Ward who painted the first large-scale oils from 'on the spot' sketches of India, 1757-1764.²⁵

We need to examine the make up of the artistic community that travelled to India in order to account for the motivations, stereotypes and ambitions of such men and women, as well as the effects this would have on the type of work they later exhibited. Life in later eighteenth-century London was tough. Contemporary artists' remarks reveal the ardours of a fiercely competitive art world of as many as eight hundred painters, and where membership of leading institutions such as the Royal Academy, soon became restricted to only forty artists.²⁶ How therefore could a painter survive in an aesthetic sphere which stressed exclusion, or an 'elevated distinction', as opposed to the ideological framework of an all-embracing public concern for the polite arts?²⁷ The Royal Academy sought to define what art the nation should encourage, as well as who should pass judgement on matters of aesthetic merit.²⁸ Its members were

²⁵Brian Allen, *Francis Hayman* (New Haven, 1987), Solkin, 1992. The importance of Swain Ward has until recently been underestimated. See Pauline Rohatgi, 'Preface to a Lost Collection: the Pioneering Art of Captain Swain Ward' in Rohatgi and P. Godrej (eds.) *Under the Indian Sun* (Bombay, 1995).

²⁶ 'The population of London is no more than just sufficient to afford reputable maintenance of 8 painters only and this number is to include all branches of art'. James Northcote as quoted in M. Pointon, 'Portrait Painting as a Business in 1780s London' *Art History* 7 (1984) pp. 187-205. The Society of Artists had 200 members and it was here that many of the first artists to travel to India exhibited. As already noted, Kettle and Swain Ward both showed at the Society in 1760s and 1770s. See also Brewer, 1997 p. 235 who notes that the Society of Artists expelled those members who showed at the Academy, demonstrating the bitter rivalry between these two bodies; the society declining by 1780.

²⁷J. Brewer, 'Cultural Production, Consumption and the Place of the Artist in 18th Century England', in B. Allen (ed.) *Towards A Modern Art World*, (New Haven, 1995) pp. 7-25; p. 14.

²⁸Solkin, 1992, p. 246.

prohibited from exhibiting elsewhere, which in turn affected the Society of Artists which lost many of its most noted painters (including India returned artists Tilly Kettle and William Hodges).²⁹ With most of those painters who travelled to India, 1770-1784 excluded from Academy membership, an alternative way of seeing, incorporating new subject matter and stylistic concessions away from this exclusive institutionalisation of the arts evolved both in India and in London. In turn, as much of the more exciting art of the 1770s, including the Indian oils of Swain Ward, Kettle or Willison and the Pacific landscapes of William Hodges and John Webber, was being exhibited at the Society of Artists, this alerted the Academy's President to question the decorum of subjects for high art. Whilst the Royal Academy promised security for metropolitan artists by providing them with a forum to exhibit and the cultural cachet of being a member, which would supposedly attract a worthy clientele, these prerequisites were far from stable. A sizeable fortune rather than a brief annual show of one's works crowded and miserably hung, outshone by Sir Joshua Reynolds and Benjamin West, provided security, as well as affording an independence which the Academy did not offer.

We must analyse historians' conclusion that, '(a)n artist travelled to Italy to help make his fortune; he travelled to India to save himself from penury'.³⁰ India may have appeared as gamble of grave rather than great expectations, yet tales of death and career failure were outweighed by the myth of the extraordinary wealth won by Willison and Zoffany. The average age for painters

²⁹ibid., p.273.

³⁰Brewer,1997 p.316. See also Archer, 1979 p.36: 'Reynolds and Gainsborough already dominated the scene ... most artists however, were obliged to seek patronage from the rising middle class in the provinces and from country gentlemen and squires'.

travelling to India was thirty six, a direct result of the example set in London of 'making good by your mid thirties', which pressurised these ambitious artists to examine the fatal flaws in their practices when they saw their peers breaking into the big time. In order to travel to India, an artist required permission from the East India Company's Court of Directors whose strict policy allowed only a few artists into its settlements at any one time, thus rejecting the primary applications of such notable painters as John Smart and Francis Wheatley, squeezed painters into their mercantile eschewal of a colony of poor whites.³¹ Painters needed notable sponsors and securities of up to £1,000, an enormous sum given that Ozias Humphry, an Associate of the Royal Academy, formerly enjoying the favour of George III, in 1780 was earning only £500 a year which thus excluded many lesser artists.³²

A large portion of those painters who applied to the Court of Directors were socially well-connected.³³ Others came from successful artistic families which gained them entry to networks of sitters earned by their relatives.³⁴ They

³¹Early maps of Calcutta denote the large numbers of asylums (into which many poor whites, vagrants and debtors were incarcerated) in Calcutta; Collection of Maps; National Library, Rare Books Annexe, Alipore, Calcutta. See David Arnold, 'European Orphans and Vagrants in India in the Nineteenth Century' *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 7.2 (1979) pp.104-127 and P.J.Marshall, 'The Whites of Colonial India: A Failed Colonial Society?' in his *Trade and Conquest* (Aldershot,1993) pp. and D.Fieldhouse, 'For Richer For Poorer', P.J.Marshall (ed.) *The Cambridge Illustrated History of the British Empire* (Cambridge,1996) pp.108-146.

³²Archer,1979 p.188; see also G.C.Williamson, *Life and Works of Ozias Humphry R.A.* (London,1918).

³³As Pears, 1988 chapter three notes, very few British artists were drawn from gentry ranks. Reynolds and Wilson were rare exceptions. Geoff Quilley, *The Imagery of Travel in British Painting with particular reference to Nautical and Maritime Imagery, c.1740-1800* (unpublished Ph.D., University of Warwick,1998) pp.176-177 concludes that many maritime painters came from disreputable parts of London. However the type of artist who travelled to India was often from the upper social ranks associated with other members of their professions. For instance, the miniaturist Catherine Read who worked in Madras was from an aristocratic Scottish family with Jacobite leanings, George Willison's uncle was a Company Director, Charles Smith's uncle was Caleb Whitefoord, a famous Scottish patron of the arts based in London and Francis Swain Ward the son of a gentleman. See Archer, 1979 pp.98,118,178.

³⁴Metropolitan patronage circles were important to securing a clientele abroad; for example Hastings by the late 1760s was already a patron of Anthony Devis and later patronised his

had trained at Shipley's, the Duke of Richmond's Gallery, St. Martin's Lane, the Edinburgh and Dublin Academies and later at the Royal Academy Schools, as well as receiving the tuition of leading artists such as Angelica Kauffman or Benjamin West and many had been on a Grand Tour of southern Europe.³⁵ As a group they spent the main body of their pre-Indian careers in the leading fashionable or intellectual cities of Edinburgh and Bath, but especially London, where they were keenly aware of the latest metropolitan innovations.³⁶ The professional artists who voyaged to India signified a particular type; including leading talents associated with high society or innovators; status to be further enhanced by an Indian sojourn, as travel broadened their horizons.³⁷

Direct patronage links to Company service also attracted painters to India.³⁸ Varying forms of Orientalism, focussed on fantasies and actualities of enormous wealth to be had in an exotic, luxurious East lured artists, even if primarily lampooned for their emulation of negative stereotypes of returned Company servants who were criticised their dissipated lifestyles and ill-gotten

nephew A.W.Devis in 1784 Add Ms 29,132 ff.363,397,407,432.

³⁵A wave of painters arriving from 1783 onwards had been trained at the Royal Academy Schools, such as George Farington and Charles Smith, arriving in 1783, Arthur W.Devis in India 1784-95, Thomas Daniell 1784-93, John Alefounder(1785-94) Francesco Renaldi, 1786-96, and Charles Sheriff 1797-1809.

³⁶Before travelling to India many had already been elected to the post of Fellow at the Society of Artists; for example George Farington in 1771, twelve years before he left for Calcutta, Hodges in 1771 (in India 1780-3) and John Seaton elected in 1769 (to India 1774-80).

³⁷The earliest female miniaturist to visit India, Catherine Read who arrived in 1777, had been celebrated in London, worked for George III and received great reviews. 'The crayons of this lady, the present English Rosalba, do honour to her country. Her picture of the two young princes has uncommon merit both in the execution and composition.' *St. James's Chronicle* 11-14 May, 1765, p.4. Likewise Johann Zoffany, Ozias Humphry and John Smart all received royal patronage. Zoffany was a founding member of the Royal Academy and Smart the Vice President of the Society of Artists. For the importance of travel to eighteenth-century British culture see C.Chard and H.Langdon (eds.) *Yale Studies in British Art Volume Three Transports: Pleasure and Imaginative Geography, 1600-1830* (New Haven, 1996).

³⁸For example, Kettle portrayed Lord Pigot and Admiral Cornish in the 1760s, both of whom may have encouraged him to travel to India, Archer 1979 p.67. J.D.Milner, 'Tilly Kettle 1735-1786' *Walpole Society* 15 (1927) pp.47-103.

riches.³⁹ In popular parlance, a 'Nabob' described someone 'in the East India Company's service who has by art, fraud, cruelty and imposition obtained the fortune of an Asiatic prince and returned to England to display his folly, vanity and ambition'.⁴⁰ From the British public's view, large Indian fortunes were invariably ominously made and nabobs reinscribed wider public hysteria and envy at their conspicuous consumption:

Every upstart of fortune, harnessed in the trappings of the mode, presents himself at Bath, as in the very focus of observation. Clerks and factors from the East Indies, loaded with the spoil of plundered provinces ... men of low birth and low breeding, have found themselves suddenly translated to a state of affluence unknown to former ages and no wonder their brains have been intoxicated with pride, vanity and presumption.⁴¹

Nabobs were entangled in wider social anxieties of the impact of fluid class boundaries, emulation and social aping, as well as disclosing anxieties of corrupt colonial governance, which contemporaries feared would soon infect and infect the British constitution.⁴²

³⁹Teltscher, 1995, pp.163-177 Marshall, 1968, p.61, Raven, 1992, pp.221-248 and the classic study J.Holzman, *The Nabob in England: A Study of the Returned Anglo-Indian, 1760-1785* (New York,1926). See also P.Lawson and J.Philips, 1984 pp.225-241 and Archer 1979 pp. 39-40. For contemporary publications focussed on the figure of the nabob see Samuel Foote, *The Nabob: A Farce* (London,1772):- 'with the money of the east we have too imported the worst of its vices.' II.i. p.67. See Richard Clarke's verse *The Nabobs or Asiatic Plunderers* (London,1773). See also B.S.Allen, *Tides of English Taste* (New York,1968) volume two pp.3-17.

⁴⁰*Town and Country Magazine*, January 1771; many thanks to Michael Rosenthal for this reference. Holzman 1928 p.7 traces the history of the term 'nabob' from its earliest known citation by Horace Walpole in 1764.

⁴¹Tobias Smollett, *Humphry Clinker*, (London; 1967 edition), pp.65-66. Newspapers reported social animosity towards nabobs throughout the latter part of the eighteenth century; ladies often refused to dance with them at balls, even at masquerades; *Morning Advertiser* May 7,1792; Holzman ,1928 p.19.

⁴²Teltscher, 1995, pp.163-177; nabobs were referred to in terms borrowed from crude assessments of 'oriental despots' such as 'European bashaws'. The East was long believed to have corrupted the Roman Empire as its ambitious generals from far flung provinces snatched power from the citizens and eastern riches gradually enervated and corrupted the people. 'Today the commons are prosecuting the Asiatic delinquents, tomorrow those delinquents may be the commons'. *ibid.*, p.169.

Nabobcracy's supposed depravity was believed to infringe not only on social hierarchy and parliamentary life but also on the realm of art and aesthetics. Although a few early portraits represent Company officials in oriental dress, (often the *khilat* presented to them by Indian *subadors*), as in the case of Reynolds' *Colonel Foote* (fig. 2), these were the 'exotic' exceptions; most preferred conventional self-presentation as they were reintegrated into British society.⁴³ Such attempts at social acceptance were ridiculed by writers; Samuel Foote having his fictional Sir Matthew Mite parade hybrid, deplorable mores before high society. Try as he might, Mite was frustrated in his attempts at self-presentation as 'aesthetic object', thwarted in his search for his wife, so that even flowers as courting folly now court disaster, 'Damn the smell! It is their colour I talk of. You know my complexion has been tinged by the east and you bring me here a blaze of yellow which gives me the jaundice'.⁴⁴

When it came to the patronage of British artists, *nabobi* taste was scorned by zealous cognoscenti and jealous contemporaries; 'these learned patrons ... Lord Clive or some nabob' who would pay £50,000 for daubings worth £11, at times came close to the mark. Clive, often ill-advised by his network of art dealers, bought spates of bad Old Masters, spending £4,000 in

⁴³The wearing of oriental dress was directly associated with masquerades where it was one of the most popular costumes; see Aileen Ribeiro, *The Dress Worn at Masquerades, 1730-190 and its Relation to Fancy Dress in Portraiture* (New York, 1984) and Terry Castle, *Masquerade and Civilization*. For the presentation of the self as exotic see Harriet Guest, 'Curiously Marked: Tattooing, Masculinity and Nationality in Eighteenth-century British Perceptions of the South Pacific', in J. Barrell, (ed.) *Painting and the Politics of Culture* (Oxford, 1992) pp. 101-134; Beth Tobin, 'Cultural Cross Dressing in British America' in her *Picturing Imperial Power: Colonial Subjects in Eighteenth-century British Painting* (Duke, 1999) pp. 81-109 and Pointon, 'Killing Pictures' in Barrell, 1992 pp. 39-72. Foote, 1772 I.i. p. 86 poked fun at Mite's eastern mores, 'His style is a little oriental'. For nabobs' conventional self-representation see Archer, 1979 pp. and sitters' boxes for Clive, Hastings and Barwell, (Heinz Archive: National Portrait Gallery).

⁴⁴Sir Matthew Mite, Foote, 1772, II.ii p. 95.

less than four months, quipping to his dealer, 'you will think me picture mad'.⁴⁵ 'It has been observed that the good and virtuous man alone can acquire this true or just relish even of works of art' as 'the morally virtuous individual lives with the grace and symmetry of an artefact so that virtue may be known by its irresistible aesthetic appeal'.⁴⁶ Art became embroiled within social aggression and search for legitimation.⁴⁷ Company officials and military officers were occasionally lavish patrons; General Barker ordered two large historical scenes of his career in Awadh, featuring both the nawab Shuja ud-Daula and the Mughal Emperor, for his country seat Bushbridge from old Indian acquaintance Tilly Kettle, in a manner which echoed Clive's employment of West at Claremont.⁴⁸ (figs 4, 13a, 13b, 14)

The social stereotype of the nabob reached its apogee in the late 1780s, before gradually fizzling or changing direction, so that the popularised 'nabob' now became less splendid and more concerned with the moral aftermath of his wealth, epitomised by MacKenzie's Mr. Truman.⁴⁹ By this date Company service was gaining social respectability in part due to Westminster regulations prohibiting private trade, the elevation of the entry age for Company clerks and attracting well respected members of British legal and political professions, such

⁴⁵M. Bence-Jones, 'A Nabob's Choice of Art: Clive of India as Builder and Collector', *Apollo* (November, 1971) pp. 1446-1448.

⁴⁶Eagleton, 1990, pp. 10-11.

⁴⁷Foote, 1772 II.i: Sir Matthew Mite throws money and useless gifts at the Society of Antiquities paraded by his four Indian servants in an attempt to gain sociocultural cachet.

⁴⁸Holzman, 1928 pp. 14-27. A few of these 'Nabob' houses contained references to India: Hastings' home was designed by Cockerell and incorporated a dome taken from one of Hodges' prints as a central feature; I. Stuebe, 'William Hodges and Warren Hastings: a study in eighteenth-century patronage' *Burlington Magazine* (October, 1973) pp. 659-66.

⁴⁹Henry Mackenzie's *Lounger* included a tale of nabobs; a Mr. Truman who used his fortune of £20,000 gained in India for moral purposes. In the anonymous novel, *Man As He Is* (London, 1792) the nabob Mr. Birimport is a recluse haunted by his past doings in India, far from the ostentation associated with Foote's Mite of twenty years earlier.

as Sir William Jones, who at least ideologically, replaced the motley band of fortune seekers.⁵⁰

Although the creation of a diaspora of colonial painters collaborated ethnic respectability, artists' search for wealth stereotyped them as transitional figures, suspended ambivalently between nabobs and the learned men of empire. The return of the first visiting portraitists, Tilly Kettle and George Willison ignited a discourse of easy money. Willison's ability to double his already exorbitant prices at the Arcot nawab's durbar (charging 700 pagodas, £500 more than Reynolds' top price of 230 guineas for a whole-length), astounded and confounded society in London and his native Edinburgh.⁵¹ With Willison in mind, Paul Sandby observed sardonically that, 'you may erect palaces and temples of *fame*, but *fortune* is seldom raised in the North, South or West. The East it appears, is the golden point and compass to wealth'.⁵² Sandby's distinction between 'fame' and 'fortune' swiped at Willison's dearth of high-minded art; he exhibited a group of portraits of the court of Arcot at the Society of Artists, but neither proposed nor produced grand painted or printed schemes of Indian history, manners and customs with which to 'educate the public'.⁵³

⁵⁰ 'The East Indies was not till late years considered as a quick road to wealth, formerly appointments in the Company's service were not objects of general solicitation.' In 1774 a Company clerk (known as a writer) was only earning £5, which was one reason why the Company pre-1772, had encouraged private trade amongst its servants, a policy reversed at least in theory by Lord North's Regulating Act, 1773. Cohn 1987 'The Recruitment and Training of British Civil Servants in India, 1600-1800' pp.500-553, Marshall, 1976 pp.1801-2 notes that the number of Company servants rose from 70 in the late 1750s to 286 by 1783 as the Company was increasingly divided between commercial and administrative branches. Company men were now trained for government and information gathering; Bayly 1996 chapters two and three.

⁵¹ Willison was rumoured to have brought back a fortune as much as £30,000. Archer, 1979 p.107.

⁵² Paul Sandby quoted in Archer, 1979 p.107.

⁵³ These portraits whilst derived from a single likeness of the Nawab of the Carnatic are valuable ethnographic evidence for transcultural art prestatation. Willison exhibited only portraits of the Arcot royal family at the Society of Artists, as he enjoyed retirement in Edinburgh.

Older nabobi stereotypes were now distended by the inclusion of returned artists, notably Zoffany.⁵⁴ Zoffany accumulated an extensive collection of Indian souvenirs which he displayed in his London studio alongside his drawings and oils painted at Calcutta and Lucknow or else in the metropolis from his ‘on the spot’ sketches, which included ‘curious Asiatic armour, weapons and other valuable’, Oriental dresses and superb *hookahs*, gongs, peacock feather fans, a Koran and Shiva in ivory, as well as hundreds of Indian sketches of elephants, ruins, India mythology and sati.⁵⁵ Such an ‘oriental’ studio lured clientele, in the years before the formation of a metropolitan public repository for Indian culture.⁵⁶ The scientist George Forster who had travelled with Cook, negotiated for Zoffany’s participation in comparative ethnography which would be illustrated with the artist’s oriental drawings: ‘He has in particular portraits of Indians, men and women from different castes and tribes which I am very interested in and which we shall need for our next project’.⁵⁷

Through a compilation part fantasy, part inspired by Indian subjects (into

⁵⁴The mid 1780s also saw a rising tide of hostility towards Hastings’ administration in Bengal as reported back in London, often from his opposed members on the Supreme Council. Burke through his alliance with Hastings’ arch rival Philip Francis became increasingly preoccupied with what he saw as a corrupt British empire; Marshall, *The Trial of Warren Hastings* (Oxford, 1965) and Whelan, 1995. See also Sara Suleri, *The Rhetoric of English India* (Chicago, 1992) chapter three. Thus orientalist playful stereotypes of artists are thrown into a new light by such grave events acted as light relief. For Zoffany see Mary Webster, *Johann Zoffany* (London, 1976) and Archer, 1979 pp.130-177.

⁵⁵Manners and Williamson, pp.287-294 and Archer, 1979 p.177. ‘If Zoffany the painter is not returned to England with an increased stock of health he may be said however to be completely armed against the power of death having by the last ship from Madras received two Indian coats of mail, formed of wrought iron, three chieftains spears a target, scimitar, dagger, hatchet and two Indian matchlock guns’ *Woodfall’s Register*, February 13, 1790, p.3. For other early Indian collections in eighteenth-century London see Davis, 1999 chapter five.

⁵⁶The Indian Museum attached to India House (now the basis of the India Office collection) was established in 1800 in order to house some of the donated manuscripts and ‘eastern curios’ donated by Company servants. See R.Desmond *The Indian Museum* (London, 1982) also Falk and Archer, 1981, E/4/647; ff.430-439 and Davis, 1999 pp.157-174.

⁵⁷George Forster to Voss; cited in Archer, 1979 p.450 note 86.

which Zoffany had inserted his own portrait) such as *Embassy of Hyder Beg Khan*, (fig. 94) *Tiger Hunt*, *Cock Match* (fig.118) and *Self Portrait with Hookah*, in the words of a vicious critic, Zoffany was orientalisised into the ultimate nabob:

When he sojourned in India, the sun darted a beam of matchless lustre upon his dwelling ... he kept his *zanana* ... the ladies washed his linen while eunuchs read an homily ... He had twelve *hircarrahs* marching before him, proclaiming his academic honours; he fumigated gracefully on his snake while the *hooker burdah* kept pace with his bearers. He had a band of Abyssinian nymphs to dance before his vision ... bestriding the vertebrae of a state elephant, he sought the tiger in the navel of the forest.⁵⁸

Such chimera appended rumours of Zoffany's great fortune earned in India:

'The emigration of artists has received an additional spur from Zoffany's having already remitted home £36,000 accompanied with a letter which states that he intends coming home as soon as he has finished the portraits that he is bespoke which will produce ... £30,000 more'.⁵⁹ Wild tales of his death, rebirth and enormous wealth so that now 'other painters are turning their attention in that direction'.⁶⁰ The miniaturist Ozias Humphry, in planning his Indian trip yearned for the earnings of Zoffany and his forebears.⁶¹ He initially sketched designs on

⁵⁸ A. Pasquin, *Authentic History of the Progress of Painting, Sculpture and Architecture... to which has been Appended original letters which prove Sir Joshua Reynolds to have been illiterate*, (London, 1796), pp.34-35.

⁵⁹ Whitley Papers January 13, 1785.

⁶⁰ *Evening Post*, January 12, 1785.

⁶¹ Of the Scottish artist Charles Smith heard of his return from India; 'Smith you say is at his Edinburgh his native home. What inducement has he to paint for money? He carried home I heard £20,000.' Ozias Humphry Papers Royal Academy (hereafter HU): HU/4/13. The history painter George Carter Humphry noted also made a quick fortune substantiated by newspaper reports: 'Carter the painter is already returned from India with a fortune of £5000! This is doing business very quickly for the time of it does not exceed three years.' *The World*, October 17, 1787 (Whitley Papers).

the sum of £10,000, which he considered relatively modest in comparison with Willison's £30,000 and rumours of Zoffany's £50,000.⁶² Even so, such capital could not compare with the former trappings of Company men such as Richard Barwell's £400,000 and Mrs. Hastings' lavish oriental taste - which transposed nabobi stereotypes to extremes.⁶³

Yet the metropolitan press also condemned artists who left for India, painting them as desperately ambitious or as struggling members of their profession, just desperate: 'If poor Zophani had not in general painted in a manner altogether different from the present daubing before us he might not have taken his leave of us for India and not be taking anything that we would have more readily parted with'.⁶⁴ When Zoffany arrived in India, sardonic tales of his success filled the London press:

The celebrated Zoffany is so well received in India that it is expected that he will acquire a fortune in a few years. For every pair of eyes capable of receiving a lustre from his pencil, he receives a brace of diamonds, for every cheek that he displays a carnation blush, he is to be paid with a ruby!⁶⁵

The playful tone implies that such patrons were incapable of aesthetic contemplation beyond a psyche conditioned by their material wealth, in a community which had pushed the anxieties of an immoral commercial society to

⁶²Archer, 1979 p.188.

⁶³London generated verse ridiculed Mrs. Hastings who was notorious for her extravagance: *The Rolliad* and *The Hastiniad*; both published 1786.

⁶⁴*Morning Chronicle*, May 14, 1783, p.3. Such newspaper reports were also highly critical of easily won fortunes by Zoffany's predecessors: 'It was by lucky accident that Tilly Kettle got a very sudden wealth. And so we hope that our friend Zoffany will be able to do likewise.' *Morning Post* January 12, 1785.

⁶⁵*Morning Herald*, 6 August, 1784, Whitley Papers. For other notices on his wealth, *Morning Post*, May 19, 1788.

new extremes.⁶⁶ The critic's description conjures an art that almost mirrors its 'luxurious' specifically eastern form of payment. Zoffany had been feted in Britain for an elegant, 'close facture', his jewel-like colours and precise detail. Thus we see a distinct, if never fully articulated Orientalism emerging which was determined by a consumption of imported luxury goods specifically designed for a British market, which injected hybrid fantasy in the creation of India as a hyperrealm at the heart of politeness.⁶⁷ Zoffany's British conversation pieces such as *Queen Charlotte and her Two Eldest Sons, 1764* (fig. 3) are resplendent with remnants of eastern trade, here denoted by Chinese figurines, the queen's jewellery even the play costumes of her sons as an infantilised Alexander and Darius, where the blood-stained plains of Persia are deflated into a floriate scarlet carpet.⁶⁸

Eastern consumption defined specific 'orientalised spaces'.⁶⁹ In mid eighteenth-century Britain, India was visually known to polite society primarily through the applied arts and imported goods, which had already extruded crucial polite rituals and spaces (such as seated apparelled in outlawed chintz, tea-

⁶⁶Eagleton, 1990 chapter one, Brewer, 1995a and William Hogarth's vicious attacks on polite society through such schemes as *Marriage a la Mode*, Ronald Paulson, *Hogarth: His Life and Times* (London, 1995), *idem.*, *Popular and Polite Art in the Age of Hogarth* (Notre Dame, 1979).

⁶⁷These processes of formation and translation are extremely complex; see J. Irwin, *The Origins of Chintz* where chintz was designed with fanciful patterns such as Indians in European dress taking tea, alongside tiger sleighing and erotic figures. Through china, fabrics, wall papers and even engravings as illustrations to travelogues we see a playful and heavily mediated form of orientalism. See also John Barrell, *The Infection of Thomas De Quincey: A Psychopathology of Imperialism* (New Haven, 1991).

⁶⁸J. MacKenzie, 1995 p. 117 notes that eastern wares often appear in Zoffany's conversation pieces. See also Pointon, 1993 p. 164 for a discussion of this work whereby it reveals an exotic opulence the consequence of 'military dominance and cultural conquest'.

⁶⁹J. MacKenzie, 1995, pp. 76-78 p. 77; 'If great buildings remained classical or later gothic, they did so with their Moorish, Egyptian or Indian rooms, their Chinese wall paper their proudly displayed ceramics and ivories, their Chinese Chippendale furniture, japanned work, screens and chests, musical instruments and case clocks'. A Bagnio was established off Newgate Street, London in 1679 decorated with Oriental tiles; Sweetman, 1986 p. 49. See Rana Kabbani, *Myths of the Orient: Desire and Rule* (London, 1986).

drinking in highly ornate drawing rooms) which caused moral commentators to caution the use and abuse of luxury.⁷⁰ Orientalised, or exotic luxury exacted intense moral debates throughout the century, if changing direction from the 1720s to 1780s, once the East India Company became administrators of Bengal.⁷¹ Bernard Mandeville's affirmation of passion and private vice as the crux of British society, defined the East India Company's traffic as a crucial nexus: The haughty Chloe, to live great,/ Had made her husband rob the state,/ But now she sells her furniture which the 'Indies had been ransack'd for'.⁷² The theme of feminine fetish and the effeminising effect of oriental consumption is taken up in Pope's *Rape of the Lock* where exotic goods exude aesthetic and moral ambivalence, where all the world is immured as the ornament of Belinda's toilette: 'This casket India's glaring gems unlocks,/ And all Arabia breath from yonder box', as the life stages and by implication economic exploitation of such goods, their producers and the countries from whence they came, are elided.⁷³ The arrival of Mrs. Hastings in Britain further exacerbated

⁷⁰The 'use and apparel' of chintz was prohibited by law in 1720, although some great houses such as Wanstead continued to lavish funds on chintz. In 1768 two women were fined £5 for wearing chintz gowns in public; *Gentleman's Magazine* xxxviii p.395. Raven, 1992, chapter eight, John Sekora, *The Concept of Luxury in Western Thought from Eden to Smollett*, (Baltimore, 1977) and Christopher Berry, *The Idea of Luxury* (London, 1994). See Solkin, chapter two and Beth Kowalski-Wallace, 'Tea, Gender and Domesticity in Eighteenth-century England' *Studies in Eighteenth-century Culture* 23, 1993 pp.131-145, *idem.*, 'Women, China and consumer Culture in 18th-century England' *Eighteenth Century Studies* 29, 1995-6, pp.153-167. Arjun Appadurai (ed.) *The Social Life of Things* (Cambridge, 1986) and N. Thomas, *Entangled Objects* (Cambridge, Mass., 1991).

⁷¹J. MacKenzie, 1995, pp.105-137. The author examines a distinct cross fertilization and mimicry in the applied arts as western designs were shipped out to be adapted by Indian craftsmen into unique products. See P. Conner *The China Trade, 1600-1800* (Brighton, 1986) O. Impey, *Chinoiserie* (London, 1987) J. Irwin and K. Brett *The Origins of Chintz* (London, 1970) J. Guy and D. Swallow, *Arts of India 1550-1900* (London, 1990) and M. Archer, 'Indian Themes in British Pottery' pp. 114-123 *Apollo* (August, 1973). For India as known through textiles and a smattering of curios in Europe, see B. Cohn, 1997 pp. 77-78.

⁷² Bernard Mandeville, *The Fable of the Bees* (London, 1714) p.47.

⁷³ Alexander Pope, *The Rape of the Lock*, (London, 1712-1717) ll.133-136. See also Nigel Leask, *British Romantic Writers and the East: Anxieties of Empire* (Cambridge, 1992) p.19 for an analysis of Belinda as defined almost entirely by a language of the oriental commodity.

farce and anxiety through female consumption, but now more directed allied with the charges of corruption aroused for her spouse: 'Oppress'd with gifts in triumph spread,/ The chair of state, the iv'ry bed'.⁷⁴ Thus even into the 1770s and 1780s, the morality of colonial luxuries was still hotly debated.

Away from the anxieties of luxury and vulgarity and the overt search for money, India was being puffed as subject for high art. Hastings' state signified a shift towards an aesthetic ideology of 'accuracy' 'on the spot', in order to celebrate a regime (and by extension a country, the two sliding close together), to be recorded in its particularity rather than abstractly applauded.⁷⁵ However this form of 'orientalist empiricism' was hardly free from either intense cultural bias nor from stereotypes.⁷⁶ Not only the translation of sketches into high art, but also the data were not so 'on the spot' as artists may have claimed.⁷⁷

⁷⁴Anonymous, *The Hastiniad: An Heroic Poem in Three Cantos* (London, 1786, to the tune of Derry Down) The Hastings notoriously gifted an ivory bed to Queen Charlotte, which also appeared in an anti-Hastings' political print, J.Lockington, *A Lecture on Heads*, March 9, 1786, which through its coarse hatching and sinister grimace on Hastings' face, transmutes a likeness derived from a Zoffany portrait of Hastings used as frontispiece to his *Memoirs* (1786). Public opinion turned against Hastings at this time (summer 1786) when he forwarded a diamond from the Nizam of Hyderabad as gift for George III, which was reported as bribe by his enemies. Again this royal prestation generated numerous popular responses in caricature and verse, such as the anonymous tune *A Full and True Account of the Wonderful Diamond Presented to the King by Warren Hastings June 14, 1786* and a print of George III as *The Stone Eater* March 28, 1788 swallowing diamonds. Even throughout his subsequent trial, Hastings as a diminutive oriental figure choking on gems was a constant theme; see M.D.George, *English Political Caricature* (Oxford, 1959), H.T.Dickinson, *Caricatures and the Constitution, 1760-1832* (Cambridge, 1986) and E.K.Robinson, *Edmund Burke: A Life in Political Caricature* (New Haven, 1996) chapters three and four.

⁷⁵See Bayly, 1996 chapter two for an investigation of the information order as it began in Hastings' era. For colonial investigations into Hindu art during this epoch, Mitter, 1977 chapters two and three.

⁷⁶As Mitter has argued with regard to European perceptions of Hindu art, by the mid seventeenth century mediaeval images of much maligned monsters gave way to new forms of stereotyping which although coloured by greater accuracy were encoded with their own bias under the guise of a 'more scientific rhetoric'. Science and art were very close; Pears, 1988 pp.110-111 and 250, both were seeking professionalism and aesthetic perception was closely tied to physiological theories see Barbara Stafford, *Voyages into Substance: Art, Science and Nature and the Illustrated Travel Account 1760-1840* (Cambridge, 1984) and Klonk, 1996.

⁷⁷The translation of raw data into high art in another context has been explored by Bernard Smith in his seminal *European Vision and the South Pacific* (Oxford, 1986 second edition) and *Imagining the Pacific* (New Haven, 1992).

Hayman and Penny's imagery of Clive's era painted in 1760s London, engaged variously with notions of nationalistic pride in British victories, as well as to the developing trends for a public art which appealed primarily through its call to viewers' sentimentality rather than to stoic virtues.⁷⁸ In its swift passage to abstractions of higher virtues, such a stance became preoccupied with the inclusion of 'local details': the Vauxhall guidebook even justifying at length why Clive had been represented in his military uniform rather than some classical garb; 'the painter could with no propriety avoid representing the British figures in their uniform'.⁷⁹ I shall argue that dramatic shifts towards the representation of empire occurred in the 1770s and 1780s. By the time of Benjamin West's exhibiting *Lord Clive Receiving from the Mogul the grant of Diwany* (fig. 4) in 1795, (begun in 1774 but delayed due to Clive's death) in an historical high minded idiom inimical to accurate detailing, critics had altered their agenda. They now expected far greater 'accuracy', thus shifting the boundaries of pictorial decorum:

There is well managed recession, if we may so term the whole, and though the event is rather stately than interesting, it strongly engages the attention. As the scene is Asiatic, we think *the buildings in the background are not sufficiently in costume*, for the main structure bears too strong a resemblance to our venerable dome of Saint Paul's.⁸⁰

⁷⁸Solkin, 1992, pp.190-199.

⁷⁹Anonymous, *Description of Vauxhall Gardens* (London,1762) appendix n.p. and Solkin, 1992 pp.193-194. Whilst almost 'apologising' for the inclusion of modern dress at the same time the guide book stresses that the appearance of the nawab and his officers is represented with the 'utmost precision', which demonstrates that dress as civil index functioned variously in high and ethnographic imagery which sat uneasily together.

⁸⁰V&A Press Cuttings volume three p.720.(my emphases) Two versions of this image were produced, for details of each commission, Archer,1979 pp.417-8 and note 19, p.469. As we shall see the role of dress and costume to denote local customs as opposed to universal ideals, was highly charged in practical theoretical and playful ways.

In the same time and space, the Daniells were exhibiting their first oils and William Hodges' aquatints and oils from the 1780s were well known in the public and aesthetic spheres.⁸¹ The critic's condemnation of West's seeming insularity from such artistic developments suggests that the tenets of academic discourse were shifting. The images of India sent to metropolitan exhibitions were at least marginally appreciative of Indian arts and customs, as well as demonstrating at least a superficial awareness of Indian art, recoded into these oils through complex meditative and indexical configurations. I shall suggest that at a time when Company officials were preoccupied with gaining sufficient knowledge of Urdu, Bengali and Persian, they also sought to comprehend, appropriate, translate and refashion visual idioms encoded into a range of Indian imagery.⁸²

⁸¹ At the Royal Academy in 1795 Thomas and William Daniell exhibited one oil each, their first since their return from India after an eleven year gap since they had last exhibited at the Academy. Thomas Daniell showed *The Gate leading to a Hindoo Temple at Trichencore* and William Daniell *A View of Fyzabad*. William Hodges had exhibited Indian subjects at the Academy 1785-8 and in 1794, which focused on Mughal heritage in the mid Ganges Valley and on Bihar where he had resided with the District Collector Augustus Cleveland in 1782. In addition, his *Choix des Vues* was widely available and he had produced several essays on architecture as well as a travel account of his Indian sojourn, *Travels in India During the Years 1780, 1781, 1782 and 1783* (London, 1793) which included his dissertation on architecture and engravings after his exhibited oils in Hastings' collection. Such works included large numbers of plates of domed mosques or mausolea, such as the Taj Mahal, which would have been freely available for citation or adaptation by Benjamin West. See Bayly, 1990 catalogue entry 112 for West's 'poetic license' in the setting and some of the British figures included in this scene.

⁸² Many Company officials were noted collectors of Indian art; the same men who possessed an interest in the rituals and languages of diverse Indian societies. As Archer and Falk, 1981 introduction have stressed, collectors often searched for social and historical as well as for artistic information from such images. Colonial appropriation of Indian languages has been much more widely researched; B.Cohn, 'The Command of Language and the Language of Command' R.Guha (ed.) *Subaltern Studies* volume four (Delhi, 1985) pp.276-329, Bayly, 1996 chapter eight, Marshall, 1973 and Rocher, 1993. Numerous dictionaries and grammars to aid Company officials in their language skills were published in both London and Calcutta during this era; for example William Jones, *Grammar of Persian Language*, (London, 1771) G.Hadley, *Practical and Vulgar Dialect in Moors* (London, 1772), Nathaniel Halhed, *Grammar of Bengali Language* (Calcutta, 1778) and W.Gilchrist, *Dictionary of English and Hindustani* (1787). Important Indo-Persian texts were also translated either through Company or Hastings' patronage; such as Francis Gladwin, *Ain-i Akbari* (1783-6) and F.Balfour, *Forms of Herkern* (1781).

Despite the East India Company's apparent reluctance to patronise the arts, India was subjected to the pencil of the three leading history painters of the 1760s.⁸³ In 1762, Jonathan Tyers the proprietor of Vauxhall Gardens, commissioned from Francis Hayman, a scheme of modern history pictures of British victories overseas. These included *Lord Clive Meeting Mir Jafir after the Battle of Plassey* (fig. 5) which ornamented the Rotunda, the most morally elevated and sober space within the riotous gardens.⁸⁴ This triumphalist scheme both marked a departure from the playful Orientalism of the 1740s, epitomised by an ornamental mosque and Imambara at Kew and Chinese structures, fireworks and other forms of playful orientalism at Vauxhall itself; as well as providing the cultural setting into which Hayman's paintings were catapulted.⁸⁵ Although David Solkin has stressed that this scheme created distinction from the trivialised scenes of rustic sports in the open air Chinoiserie supper boxes, the Rotunda itself was described as a 'Persian Pavilion' where Hayman's scenes were viewed through its windows as 'Indian pictures', against a sky of Chinese

⁸³B.Allen, 'From Plassey to Seringaptam' in Bayly,1990. For a trading corporation, the East India Company had already proved a lavish patron of the arts, which may have influenced its subsequent choice to private popular subjects. The Court of Directors commissioned a marble relief of *Britannia receiving riches from the East* by Michael Rysbrack, a series of views of its settlements, portraits and full length marble statues (by far the most expensive visual art) of its leading figures such as Stringer Lawrence and Clive, with which to decorate its principal rooms which were occasionally opened to the public. Its notoriety as a parsimonious art patron comes rather from isolated incidents whereby it refused to permit painters into its settlements and did not offer direct artistic sponsorship for artistic schemes.

⁸⁴Allen,1990 pp.26-37. At this date Clive was also created a baronet, so this was truly a high point in his career. Hayman's scheme was hung in the Saloon, the annex to the Rotunda built c1750. The other pictures included *the Surrender of Quebec* and *Triumph of Britannia*. Hayman also planned a second Indian subject, painting a modello of *the Surrender of Pondicherry to Sir Eyre Coote*: Bayly,1990 catalogue entry 93. Portraits and busts of both men decorated India House.

⁸⁵Orientalism in this context was playful as well as possessing undertones of the illicit, Vauxhall both tapping into and redefining metropolitan orientalism. See for instance the anonymous poem of 1741, *The Turkish Parade or Vauxhall Gardens*. J.MacKenzie, 1995, pp.75-76. At the public pleasure gardens in London, orientalism was a key component as demonstrated through pseudo Chinese arcades and Turkish tents which also extended to the royal grounds of Kew as exteriors became cabinets of curios. See also B.Allen and T.J.Edelstein, *Vauxhall Gardens* (New

fireworks displays, where Garden goes (often public men including Clive himself) partook in Masquerades swathed in Oriental costumes.⁸⁶

Clive's victories in Bengal heralded a new form of orientalism loaded with administrative and moral responsibility which had reverberations for the ways in which this exoticised orientalism was viewed.⁸⁷ 'A marvellous piece of imperialist propaganda; a brutal seizure of power ... is described in terms that transmute a violent conquest into a demonstration of the victors' sensibilities'.⁸⁸ Accompanied by a lengthy explanation in a valedictory catalogue (deemed necessary due to the motley viewing crowds), Hayman's *Lord Clive greeting Mir Jafir*, professed to represent British magnanimity in an era preceding the deep-felt anxiety created by the financial and moral burden of empire. Viewers were supposed to ruminate on British mercy and intense sensibility in the wake of conquest, as Company concerns in India entered the difficult transition from merchants to sovereigns:

The subject of this picture is one of the most interesting nature to every Briton who regards the honour and prosperity of his country. For the better *understanding* of it, it is necessary to observe, that General Clive, after gaining the Battle of Plassey in the East Indies which restored British interests that had been ruined in those parts of the world, found himself under a necessity of deposing the reigning nabob; for that

York, 1983).

⁸⁶J. MacKenzie, 1995 p.77 and Ribeiro p.223. There were other types of oriental space in London, such as the Bengal Club, the Norris Street Coffeehouse where curries were served and the Bath House, parodied by Samuel Foote where by Sir Matthew Mite plans to set up a Bagnio and a seraglio in central London. As Mildred Archer notes, the East India Company in its cultural patronage deliberately distanced itself from such oriental frivolity; 'The East India Company and British Art' *Apollo* November, 1965 p.401.

⁸⁷For Clive see Huw Bowen, 'A Question of Sovereignty? The Bengal Land Revenue Issue, 1765-7' *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 16 (1988) pp.155-176, A.M.Khan, 1969, S.C.Hill, *Bengal, 1756-7* (London, 1905) and Henry Vansittart, *A Narrative of Transactions in Bengal* three volumes (London, 1766).

⁸⁸Solkin, 1992, p.195 and Allen, 1987 pp.14, 16, 48, 63-70, 73 and 107-109.

purpose sent from the field of battle for Meer Jaffir, a principal general under the Subah or Nabob and an enemy of the French. Meer Jaffir when sent for, seeing the general surrounded by his victorious troops, approaches him with *every symptom of doubt and diffidence in his countenance*. The General is represented in the *attitude of friendship, by extending his hands to receive him ...* The British colours are displayed in the hands of another English officer with a *most pleasing expression of modest triumph in his looks ...* Meer Jaffir wears on his face strong remains of the emotions already mentioned, but his dejection seems to be faintly alleviated by the general's manner of receiving him. The extension of his arms and the inclination of his body is most movingly expressive of doubt, submission and resignation.⁸⁹

Hayman's artistic precedent; Charles Le Brun's *Alexander and Darius*, associated his picture with a 'universal' or at least much cited idiom of magnanimity with direct imperial precedents in the Greek conquest of Persia as recorded by Plutarch.⁹⁰

Whilst Solkin observes that the picture indicates compassion towards their conquered subjects, his sentimentalised reading denies the more overt and bombastic definition of empire, encoded through Hayman's representation of victory at Quebec and allegorical presentation of the Thames resplendent with 'grangerised' British worthies.⁹¹ However both the artistic precedent and the guide's transcultural sociability, (well known enough to be viewed as a hermeneutic synecdoche for magnanimity) obscures and reinscribes the actual

⁸⁹ *A Guide to Vauxhall Gardens*, 1762 n.p. (my emphases).

⁹⁰ Solkin, pp.196-197. Plutarch's *Parallel Lives* of Greek and Roman public men sets up Alexander and Caesar which thus charges the analogy of British imperialism and Hayman's artistic precedents still further.

⁹¹ However the notion of 'empire' was still ill-defined: Bowen, 1998 pp.5-6 'Before the 1760s the word 'empire' was not synonymous with the possession of territory, being instead regularly applied to other forms of dominion, power and control, especially in commercial or maritime contexts'.

events surrounding Plassey. It is not so much the meeting of two great warriors caught at logger heads in the aftermath of battle as a covert conspiracy between Clive and one of Siraj ud-Daula's generals who plot for the nawab's demise. Hayman has rather conflated historical events into a single instant, as Mir Jafir appears garbed in the golden robes of the new Bengal nawab, rather than as general straight from the battle field.⁹²

By the mid 1760s, Clive imagery was everywhere.⁹³ Benjamin Wilson produced a canvas which continues the theme of Clive's benevolence to Mir Jafir: *Clive leading Mir Jafir to the Throne to be crowned Nawab of Bengal* (fig. 6) whereby Mir Jafir (looking remarkably similar to Hayman's likeness) is led to the *musnud*, supposedly in the durbar hall of the Murshidabad *killah*. On his return to Britain, Lord Clive commissioned the King's History Painter Benjamin West to adorn the dining hall of his country seat Claremont with two large panels, including *Clive's Acceptance of the Phirman Granting Diwan from Shah Alam* (fig. 4) which would be integral to a *tout ensemble* of Indian inspired plasterwork and ivory furniture.⁹⁴

In 1772 with parliamentary storms brewing, indicting both Clive and the low public opinion of the East India Company, the Court of Directors was desperate to recreate some of the early enthusiasm for empire epitomised by the

⁹²Bayly, 1990 fig. 10 for a modello for this work which further asserts Mir Jafir's subordination rather than his partnership, in the events surrounding Plassey.

⁹³See Bayly 1990 catalogue entry 106 for a silver medal of Clive to celebrate victory at Plassey, 1766 and entries 111 and 112.

⁹⁴Archer, 1979 p.414. Benjamin Wilson's *Memoirs* (Heinz Archive) describe the pictures of Watt and Mir Jafir 'taking the oath by having the Alcoran (sic.) on his head in the presence of his son and Governor Watts on account of a treaty he made with Jaffier, in favour of the East India Company before the Battle of Plassey'; quoted in Archer, 1979 p.468, note 15. In the mid 1760s Clive euphoria reached its apex. At Bishop's Castle, Shropshire national celebrations feted Clive's victories by great fireworks displays; *Lloyds Evening Post* May 25, 1766.

Vauxhall scheme.⁹⁵ Therefore Leadenhall exhorted the Professor of Painting at the Royal Academy, Edward Penny to represent *Lord Clive Receiving from Najim ud-daula the Nawab of Bengal, the grant of a sum of money which was later to be used to establish the charity known as Lord Clive's Fund for helping disabled soldiers as well as the widows of those dying in the Company's service.*⁹⁶ (fig. 7) The picture was exhibited at the Royal Academy the same year, to the tune of mixed reviews.⁹⁷ The choice of the artist was carefully calculated; Penny was famed for his depictions of military benevolence, most notably *the Marquis of Granby relieving a sick soldier* (fig. 8) ; hence his representation of Clive would be 'naturally' intratextualised with the rest of his oeuvre, as well as appealing to the innate integrity of both viewer and subject.⁹⁸

Such a high minded aesthetic received harsh reviews. Those newspapers employed by factions opposed to Clive's actions produced attacks garbed within artistic idioms, either creating imaginary paintings of Clive's misdeeds or else using a politically charged vocabulary to lampoon actual representations. Hence cynical hacks were unconvinced by attempts to present Clive as a man of virtue,

⁹⁵Huw Bowen, 'Lord Clive and Speculation in East India Company Stock, 1766', *The Historical Journal* 30.4 (1987) pp.905-920; p.905. Clive's actions instigated a Parliamentary Enquiry. The Company's share prices were based on market speculation so that it was vital to give its public image a morale boost in time of crisis. For notions of a society based on appearances, see Adam Smith, *Theory of Moral Sentiments* (1759) and his *Wealth of Nations* (1776) See also Teltscher, 1995, pp.158-174.

⁹⁶Bayly, 1990 catalogue entry 111 and Archer, 1979 pp.415-416. In February 1773 Court of Directors ordered Penny to be paid £150 but he demanded another £60; this money coming out of the Military Fund in whose offices the picture was hung. In 1770 Clive had established Clive's Fund from money gifted to him from Mir Jafir. Its aim was to relieve old and disabled soldiers, orphans and widows of soldiers who had died or been disabled in Company service. The following year the Company accepted Swain Ward's gifted oils, so it was demonstrating allegiance to both the Royal Academy and the Society of Artists in different ways.

⁹⁷*Middlesex Journal*, April 28-30, 1772; p.4. praises Penny's merit, especially the portrayal of distress on the soldiers' faces, which although excellent is taken to extremes: 'the furthest seems to be possessed by the violence of disease and the heat of the climate that he is actually fallen into a state of idiotism'.

⁹⁸Allen, 1990 p.33.

suggesting it transgressed even Penny's talent as the general's figure was 'neither expressive of humanity or dignity; at the same time it is reckoned an excellent likeness'.⁹⁹ The political connotations of 'likeness' were farther heightened as the soldiers' presentation seemed so 'powerfully marked', suggesting that the fault of benevolent representation lay less with Penny's worth than with Clive, whose 'immoral' actions could not be so easily (an)aesthetised as the Company desired. Another sardonic exhibition visitor suggested a companion piece; by implication referring to the other publicly-exposed oil, Hayman's *Mir Jafir and Clive after Plassey*, which in the light of Clive's subsequent career, should be reinterpreted:

The air of this great general's head, the elegance of his deportment, together with *the humanity so expressive in his countenance*, not only communicated to my mind that fine sympathy which one would always wish to feel on such occasions, but prompted me to hope some more of the celebrated actions of this great man may be given to the world.

Animated with this hint, Mr. Printer, I have sketched from my imagination, the following historical subject, which I would propose to Mr. Penny's consideration as a counterpart to this for next year.

On one side of the foreground I would have *Seraj ud-Daula* Nabob of Bengal, draped in all the pride of Asiatic Sovereignty, supported by a long train of his principal officers, domestics and palanquin bearers, all vying with each other in magnificence and grandeur: On the other side should stand Lord Clive dressed in the uniform of the East India Company and supported by the President and council of Bengal: he should be represented with a Bible in one hand and the other on his heart calling God and Our Saviour to witness faithfully to observe a treaty of peace and amity, whilst the nabob was pledging him on the Koran at the

⁹⁹*Morning Post Review*, May 1-2, 1772, p.2.

same time and to the same effect ...

In the background of this I would have Lord Clive in *chiaro oscuro* concluding an article of *private* agreement (*subversive* of those entered in the foreground) ... and in perspective in the hills, I would have the unfortunate *Serajah al dowlah* (Lord Clive's *late sworn friend*) murdered as he is flying, by order of the then nabob (Mir Jafir), Lord Clive's *new friend*.

The grouping of so many respectable characters together, the magnificence of the eastern deities, the expression of the passions and above all *the massacre of Serajah al Dowla*, cannot I think fail to a person of Mr. Penny's well known execution, to gain him as much credit and his piece as much fidelity as the one he is now so much admired for.¹⁰⁰

The passage draws attention not only to the subject for modern history painting (notoriously ill-defined) but also to notions of correct composition as the main action - the conspiracy, transpires in the interstitial, middle ground as the eye is led through differing strata of temporal spatial analogies.

Such imaginary imaging as well as making mimetic appeal to Hayman and Penny's pictures, also conjured up political satire already in public memory. The most caricatured aspects of Clive's career were his 'high handed' actions, his cruelty towards former nawab Siraj ud-Daula and the murdered merchant Omichond, both of whom figuratively came back to haunt him (fig. 9). In *Peace Makers of India*, 1770 (fig. 10) instead of pacific settlement Clive and his parliamentary supporters are grabbed by the noses by an angry Bengal nawab, effectively inverting the ideology infused in high art images of Anglo-Indian

¹⁰⁰Signed Sketch: *To the Printer of the London Evening Post*, May, 14-16, 1772, p.4.(my emphases)

amistosity.¹⁰¹

Whilst such diverse metropolitan imagery was penetrating the aesthetic sphere, the first pictures by British artists who had actually visited India filtered in to London. With the exception of Ward's *Sher Shah's Mausoleum at Sasseram* and Kettle's *General Barker and Shuja ud-Daula at Faizabad*, and its companion *Shah Alam Reviewing the Company Troops under Barker's guidance, Faizabad* (figs. 13a, 13b and 14) these painters exhibited subjects derived from their experiences in south India. Francis Swain Ward, Tilly Kettle and George Willison exhibited Indian subjects at the Society of Artists from 1765 to 1783.¹⁰² Swain Ward in particular was a prolific exhibitor; in 1768 he sent fourteen India-related subjects to the Society of Artists, which three years later bestowed him the accolade of Society Fellow.¹⁰³ He showed representations of important temples and forts in south India such as *the rock at Trichinopoly, Madras, c.1770* (fig. 11) combining topographical information, frontal presentation with customs, linking building and staffage in ways which

¹⁰¹Their themes, such as hallucinatory confrontations with Indians are thus couched within a deflation of historical modes of composition. This was the key theme in political satire as Clive is haunted by his Indian past. Unlike satires surrounding the Hastings trial, the number of images generated by Clive's appearance before parliament were less than ten. British Museum: 4968, 5017, 5101 and 5102 for Clive satires in the early 1770s.

¹⁰²Both Kettle and Willison sent works over from India, which created a sense of immediacy; a practice which William Hodges was also putting into play when on Cook's Voyages. In 1777 and 1778 Willison sent four portraits of the Arcot royal family to the Society of Artists exhibition. In 1780 Hodges sent 'view of a nobleman's seat' from the East Indies. Other artists when based in India sent their works to the Royal Academy; Zoffany sent two pictures 1783-4, Devis one in 1791, Renaldi *portrait of a mogul lady* in 1791, Smart a *portrait of Cornwallis* in 1793 and Alefounder pictures in 1785, 1787, 1789, 1791 and 1793. However very few of these pictures seem to have had an Indian subject matter. For Swain Ward see Rohatgi, 1995. He returned to Britain 1764-1773 before requesting a renewal of his position was stationed in India where he continued to paint until his death in India in 1794. This suggests that he had attempted to return to his career as a professional artist (which he had assumed before joining Company service) but had met with little financial reward.

¹⁰³Rohatgi 1995. He gifted ten of these oils to India House, all of these had been exhibited at the Society of Artists from 1770-3, they were framed, glazed and displayed 'in the most convenient part of this house' in the Committee of Correspondence Room. See Court Minutes B/88 f.544; B/89 ff.22, 174-175, 433.

are not seen so overtly again in this era. The rock rises in the grounds of nawab of the Carnatic's fort, providing a vantage point over the surrounding plains, which now under Company protection (but not flying the Union Jack), is peppered with a Hindu procession and red-coated officers, both on duty and at leisure, which thus creates a panoply of strategies for surveillance.¹⁰⁴

Swain Ward also showed representations of more mundane buildings, albeit dramatically presented through one-point perspective and central positioning and effective lighting, such as *A South Indian Choultry*, c.1770 (fig.12) Instead of being depicted from an artificially elevated position (as in the *Rock at Trichinopoly*) the viewer is by implication simulatory traveller, about to seek rest in the choultry's shadowed centre.¹⁰⁵ Thus the earliest exhibited depictions of India came from the pencil of an artist in the Company's military service who trained in both surveying as well as fine art, provides detailed topographical information (by means of a *camera obscura*) which would not be matched until the Daniells' oils and aquatints of the late 1790s.¹⁰⁶

From the arrival of the first artists in India throughout the later

¹⁰⁴The rock was considered a symbol of national prowess, demonstrating the alliance between the nawab of the Carnatic and the British against the French. it had been secured by Clive in 1752. Figure one represents the rock from the other side and lacks the clarity of focus of Swain Ward's vision which combined his training as a professional painter with military surveying. For the relationship between mapping and landscape painting see S.Daniels (ed.) *Mapping the Landscape* (Nottingham,1990) and Edney,1997 chapter two. The Daniells made several views of the rock for their *Oriental Scenery* 144 aquatints 1795-1808. They took very different viewing points from Swain Ward at a greater distance from the north west , including a tank in the foreground and from the south east, thus taking an oblique angle of the rock and its structures as represented by Swain Ward. See my chapter four for a discussion of the Daniells.

¹⁰⁵Bayly, 1990 catalogue entries 96 and 245.

¹⁰⁶The work of William Hodges who was also a prolific exhibitor, takes a very different stance to the presentation of monuments, ignoring detail in favour of a 'general whole' which captured his notions of 'beatus ille.' G.H.R.Tillotson has noted, 'Paths of Glory: Representations of Sher Shah's Tomb' *Oriental Art* 37 (1991) pp.4-16. Swain Ward's dramatic landscapes also marked a departure from Lambert's views of the Company's trading factories and forts of the 1730s; Quilley,1998 chapter four.

eighteenth century, representations and critical reactions to such exhibition imagery metamorphosed at various levels, from the Grub Street hack to the high theory of the Academy. Whilst in 1775 Kettle was chastised for showing only portraits rather than depicting the customs of India, by 1796 Zoffany in his *Embassy of Hyder Beg Khan* (fig. 94) was condemned for taking this too far, immersing himself within the ‘despotic’ environment of the Lucknow court, producing a debased and picaresque subject from a once noble painter:

in speaking of the grouping and colouring we know not which to condemn first, as both so irresistibly demand our scorn. In the management of the picture ... he has laboured hard to sacrifice the dignity of humanity to the pride and parade of aristocracy; indeed he seems so familiar with slavery and so enamoured with its effects, that we doubt if the black catalogue of governing infamy can furnish a subject equal to his hunger for degradation.¹⁰⁷

Overall exhibition critics’ assessment of the impact of India on the practice of artists remained either divided or undecided. *The Morning Chronicle and London Advertiser* in their review of Kettle’s *Portrait of a British Society Beauty*, (R.A. 1783), sighed that although Indian service, travel and ‘climatic determinism’ brought an elevation of moral and imperial responsibility, the body and mind out of sedentary habit, it did not extend to the aesthetic sphere:

This whole length of a lady is far from being one of the best pictures in the room. Who is the original, we have never yet been able to discover. Whatever effect India may be found to have on the morals of our people, by the rigour of its climate, the rise which it often makes in station, by some cause or other, physical or economical, their mental abilities are sometimes seen to be much strengthened. But it is not so with the

¹⁰⁷A.Pasquin, review of Johann Zoffany’s *Embassy of Hyder Beg Khan to Meet Cornwallis*, Royal Academy, 1796.

powers of the pencil: they, if not retrograde, seem at least to remain stationary- if an artist goes to India a dauber, a dauber he returns.¹⁰⁸ Kettle had been a regular exhibitor since the 1760s, but his India-related pieces brought him greatest acclaim, as not all his critics were so harsh. Indian subjects' 'novelty' allowed for distinct aesthetic approaches, both on the part of the painter and the public, engaging the viewer at least with a moment of wonder and a suspension of severe aesthetic denunciations associated with familiar subject matter. Kettle's *Shah Alam and General Barker*, (figs 13a, 13b) 1781 was well received:

Mr. Kettle is so improved an artist since his return from India that there is no doubt that he will soon be able to make the pot boil handsomely. His oriental review is thrown finely into perspective and the Mogul and other characters in the foreground, form a group of very capital portraits.¹⁰⁹

Without the sitter's likeness known in the public forum, the criticism usually targetted at Kettle's inability to achieve a satisfactory simulation could not be levied, or at least the criteria for subject-treatment had to be shifted to new ground, associated with both historical composition and a developing ethnography.¹¹⁰ More hostile critics had to bestow Kettle some praise: 'without any of the great excellencies of the art, has made his picture of Shah Allam an *interesting* performance; it gives *some intimation* of Indian men and

¹⁰⁸*The Morning Chronicle*, May 21, 1783. For climatic determinism see Mark Harrison, *Climates and Constitutions* (Delhi, 1999) pp.11-12 and Chard and Langdon, 1996 pp.25-26.

¹⁰⁹*The Painter's Mirror* V&A press cuttings volume three.

¹¹⁰By being a 'historical' scene, Kettle would have been exonerated from the need to achieve Shah Alam's 'exact likeness' as laid out by Reynolds: 'When a portrait is painted in the historical style as it is neither an exact minute representation of an individual or so completely ideal, every circumstance out to correspond to this mixture.' *Discourse Five*, 1772. In this sense therefore Indian art would be used in a very precise manner.

manners'.¹¹¹

Though all the figures in this piece are portraits I must consider it as an historical one, as it represents a point in history, contains many figures and is altogether composed in the historical stile. It is a very good picture. The aerial perspective as well as the lineal, are admirable, each figure is very characteristic, particularly the Mogul and the English officer. *The first shows Magnificence, Indolence and Fierceness without strength. The other conscious of his power, is bold yet respectful;* the colouring is true and the draperies excellent, the legs of the Mogul however are too short and make the lower part of his figure appear nothing to the upper which is extremely well drawn.¹¹²

The representation demonstrates the meeting of two types of governance and their inherent ceremony; the military and bureaucratic nature of Company rule, here depicted in Awadh, (still independent from British rule but now forced to support Company troops as part of the Treaty of Buxar), and Mughal rule, which in colonial rhetoric was increasingly characterised by a rhetoric of 'hollow splendour'.

Like Swain Ward's landscapes, Kettle's Awadhi portraits wield a tight, bright facture, creating the illusion of physical proximity (if still maintaining cultural distance) between representation and viewer. As Kettle had not been at Allahabad at the same time as Shah Alam, it seems likely that the imperial portrait was based on a Mughal miniature either in his or Barker's possession, which thus had further implication for notions of 'likeness' as mediated through foreign art. As J.P. Losty has suggested, Kettle's many portraits of *the nawab of Awadh, Shuja ud-Daula* (one exh. Society of Artists, 1775) were probably based

¹¹¹*The Public Advertiser*, May 2, 1781, p.2. (my emphases)

¹¹²*St. James Chronicle or British Evening Post* May 3-5, 1781, p.2. (my emphases)

on miniatures painted by the Awadhi artist Mir Chand (fig. 15) which thus further mediates notions of ‘orientalist empiricism’ and limited likeness.¹¹³ This appears to have been a common strategy in many early colonial representations of Indian rulers. From Hayman’s Mir Jafir to Kettle’s Shah Alam, (with the exception of Mir Chand’s Shuja ud-Daula), all Anglo-Indian diplomatic scenes were structured around the use of profile portraits of the Indian protagonists. Such a device, even if not directly derived from specific Mughal miniatures, bestowed an aura of expected ‘character’; Indian rulers’ likenesses being primarily known in Europe through the medium of engravings after Mughal profile portraits (fig. 17).

Contemporaries believed that Indian art, if judiciously employed, could act as an important lens for colonial ways of painting. *The Morning Post* in its criticism of Kettle’s *Nabob Shuja ud-Daula Vizier of the Mogul Empire Receiving an English Officer at Faizabad in the East Indies*, at the Society’s 1775 exhibition, whilst far from panegyric, expressed excitement at this new treasure trove of artistic subjects:

No painter living has a better field for object than Mr. Kettle and would he favour us with small whole lengths as conversation pieces and show us the customs and manners of the people of the East and suppose effects like Rembrandt, we might hope to see him produce many interesting and valuable pictures.¹¹⁴

By implication the public had surfeited on scenes of English generals liasing

¹¹³Losty, in Bautze (ed.) *Interaction of Cultures: Indian and Western Painting in the Ehrenfeld Collection* (Virginia, 1998) p.27 note 7. Clive’s Mughal albums: V&A: IS:48 1956 and IS 133-1964. Although none of the individual leaves contained within these two *muraqqas* are recorded as begin of the Bengal nawabs (the albums being compiled in Awadh and largely of much earlier art) it is probable that Penny adapted such images to Clive’s verbal descriptions to produce a ‘hybrid’ image.

¹¹⁴*Morning Post*, May 1, 1775, p.1

with nawabs, even the Mughal Emperor; instead the Company in its new found role as sovereigns, should survey its Hindu subject people through the lens of high art. The choice of a decorous idiom within which to represent foreign peoples which would combine ethnographic specificity and neoclassical idealism remained contentious throughout this era. With specific regards to India, William Hodges would later warn 'should a painter be possessed of the talents of a Raphael and were he to represent a Chinese with the beauty of a Grecian character and form, however excellent his work ought to be, it would still have no pretensions to represent as characteristic of that nation'.¹¹⁵ Rembrandt's style with its concentration on 'local nature' provided an important lens for introducing foreign subjects and new information to the aesthetic sphere. The critic's choice of Rembrandt also indicates the ideological division between the Society of Artists and the Royal Academy - the latter cautioned the use of Dutch art as stylistic guide for the elevated abstraction required by high art.¹¹⁶

Deformity is not nature, but an accidental deviation from her accustomed practice ... we are so far from speaking in common conversation with any such accuracy that when we criticise Rembrandt and other Dutch painters who introduced ... exact representations of individual objects with all her imperfections, we say that it is not in good taste yet it is nature.¹¹⁷

However Rembrandt furnished the most impressive precedent of a European

¹¹⁵William Hodges, *Travels in India during the years 1780,1781,1782 and 1783* (London,1793) p.155.

¹¹⁶Solkin, 1992 chapter six and D.G.C.Allen, 'The Society for the Encouragement of Arts, Manufactures and Commerce: Organisation, Membership and Objectives in the First Three Decades, 1775-1784' (unpublished Ph.D., University of London,1979).

¹¹⁷Reynolds 1990 p.124.

painter who had engaged with Indian subject matter, adapting miniatures from the court of Jahangir in the form of small brush sketches (fig. 16).¹¹⁸ He had specifically adapted Mughal art for his own ends and Kettle is exhorted to follow such practice, thus mediating Indian subjects from ‘on the spot’ observations tempered not only with reference to neoclassical idioms, but also mediated through the perceptions of Indian art, stimulating innovative stylistic, as well as subject properties, in order to offer powerful new insights into the nature of Indian society. Perhaps the call for a small-scale art, bespoke of an engagement with Mughal chronicles, as artistic precedents and mediation formed a vital part of picture making and aesthetic perceptions.¹¹⁹

Simultaneously, the reference to Rembrandt indicates that despite the prolificity of Indian art through the medium of European collectors and its transposition into engraved book illustrations, western aesthetic responses to Indian subjects ‘on the spot’ or even through an engagement with Mughal painting, remained minimal. India was primarily known through line engravings inserted into travelogues which were fanciful, transliterated from the author’s sketches, or based on Indian miniatures.¹²⁰ The reproduction of Mughal images

¹¹⁸See for instance, Rembrandt’s *Jahangir receiving an address*, (c.1606-28; miniature and his adaptation c.1655 British Museum; pen and ink.) Although the basic Mughal composition remains, this is where any direct comparison ends. Rembrandt’s style is sketchy and angular revealing little of the painstaking detail of the original, suggesting rather an interest in ‘the general whole’. Bautze, 1998 catalogue number ten: Rembrandt *portrait of Muhammed Adil Shah of Bidgejur* pen drawing. In 1642 Rembrandt painted a Director of the Dutch East India Company as well as producing 21 drawings after Indian paintings.

¹¹⁹In both press reviews and in academic discourse, a detailed form of connoisseurship which could cite the artistic models within an image was highly valued and which could add layers of signification to imagery; such as Reynolds’ citation of the poses of classical statues as applied to his sitters. There is no reason to assume that Indian art judiciously applied could not have functioned in a similar manner.

¹²⁰Mitter, 1977 pp.1-72. See also O.Kuz, ‘A Volume of Mughal Drawings and Miniatures’ *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institute* XXX (1967) pp.251-271 and R.Lightbown, ‘Oriental Art and the Orient in Late Renaissance and Baroque Italy’ *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institute* XXXII (1969) pp.228-279. Teltcher 1995 p.211 notes that Sir William

as illustrations for scholarly British journals (fig.19), as well as source of fascination for a select number of painters including John Flaxman (fig. 18), continued throughout this era, even when British artists began travelling to India. In some respects, such images seemed ‘more authentic’ than colonial representations (albeit translated through the medium of European engraving), as well signifying the transferral of original Indian art to Britain by way of ‘Orientalist collectors’.¹²¹

The landscape painter William Hodges in his *Travels* presented himself within this learned aura declaring ‘I can not look back at the various scenes through which I have passed these excursions without almost involuntarily identifying a train of reflections to the state of the arts under this as well as under the Hindoo government’.¹²² He included two engravings and two descriptions whereby his and his readers’ visions were mediated by Mughal art.¹²³ Hence the royal *bagh* at Lucknow was described as ‘laid out in the same

Jones included Indian miniatures engraved to accompany the first volumes of *Asiatic Researches*, which set off the image within a neoclassical frame, akin to his own translations and adaptations of Hindu literature. There were many different uses for Indian art some of which denoted its difference or to reinforce learned Orientalism or else as portrait illustrations largely akin to British likenesses; as in the inclusion of a portrait of Hyder Ally c.1793 *The European Magazine*. See also Mitter 1977 figs 36, 38 and 39.

¹²¹See Mitter, Raj and Buddle, Davis, 1999 chapter five. Robert Skelton, ‘Collecting Indian Miniatures’ in D.Ehnbom (ed.) *Indian Miniatures: The Ehrenfeld Collection* (New York,1985) pp.9-14 and Robert Skelton, ‘Indian Art and Artefacts in Early European Collecting’ in O.Impey and A.MacGregor (eds.) *The Origin of Museums: The Cabinet of Curiosities in Sixteenth- and Seventeenth-century Europe* (Oxford,1985) pp.274-280.

¹²²William Hodges, *Travels in India During the Years 1780,1781,1782 and 1783* (London,1793) p.152.

¹²³The two Indian images included were a scene of two Indian sages conversing under a tree, which has been highly coloured by the engraver and gold paint applied as a background in order to denote gold leaf present on the richest Mughal miniatures. In this respect therefore Indian art provided a lens onto the Mughal past. Hodges was the only British artist to produce a travelogue in this era (1772-1795) and thus the only British artist to make such an overt reference to Mughal art through the medium of line engraving and his text. However the sculptor John Flaxman (who never went to India) kept an ‘Indian notebook’ where he adapted Mughal miniatures into sketches with painstaking detail. Like Jones, Hodges was utilising Mughal art to reinforce his visions rather than to mark out its difference as strange and exotic, which thus marked a break with previous inclusions of Mughal art in European travelogues.

manner as we see in Indian paintings, which are all in platts, in which are planted flowers with the strongest scent.’¹²⁴ As in his inclusion of *View of a Zenana*, (fig. 20) this conjures up scenes beyond his own aesthetic (and by implication also beyond any physical perception (the *zenana*, like the *harem* being off-limits to European men), as well as eliding his (by implication, Orientalist) vision with Indian tradition; a cultural strategy seen more stridently through Hastings’ policies and attempts to forge a ‘colonial constitution’ out of both British and Mughal political virtue. When at Bhagulpur, Hodges described the scene as that of a ‘perfect paradise’ where under the administration of Augustus Cleveland, direct parallels between a golden age of past Mughal government and present British rule are created through his citation of Indian art. ‘It was not uncommon to see the manufacturer at his loom, in the cool shade, attended by his friend softening his labour by tender strains of music. There are to be met with in India many old pictures representing similar subjects in the happy times of the Mughal government’.¹²⁵

Hodges’ own artistic practice owed little to the mediation of Indian art.¹²⁶ However the appropriation and citation of Indian art in academic oils occupied an ambivalent place in the complex customary aesthetic agenda being formulated at the Royal Academy during the 1770s. Although in his early *Discourses* Reynolds condemned Rembrandt, he was to concede that even

¹²⁴ibid., p.83.

¹²⁵Hodges, 1793 p.27.

¹²⁶Rather Hodges’ aesthetic is influenced in varying degrees by his combination of aspects of the classical landscapes of Claude Lorraine and his own master Richard Wilson and through the sublime idioms of Salvator Rosa. Harriet Guest, ‘The Great Distinction Figures of the Exotic in the work of William Hodges’ *Oxford Art Journal* 12 (1989) pp.36-58. See Isabel Stuebe, *Life and Works of William Hodges* (New York,1978).

Dutch painters could be admitted to the aesthetic polis at the primary stage for the representation of new subjects, such as the customs of India.¹²⁷ A desire to first know 'the particular' (associated with 'second or customary nature') became necessary in order to be abstract associations, which paradoxically signified depicting novel subjects in comprehensive ways so that their information was available in all its minuteness, whilst held within the bonds of public subject.

Both the Royal Academy and its President were linked by patronage to the East India Company's Court of Directors.¹²⁸ Additionally many of Reynolds' sitters possessed Company connections, some of whom had built up collections of Indian art which Reynolds admired (he later owned an album of Indian miniatures), his friendship with James Paine and with Caleb Whitefoord famed Scottish patron of the arts, also linked him to the artists Tilly Kettle, George Willison and later to Charles Smith, all of whom had made fortunes in India, as well as paying tribute to Hodges in his *Discourse on Architecture*.¹²⁹ He was also more directly incorporated within the patching up of Indian scenes and

¹²⁷See Barrell in Bhabha, Guest, 'Curiously Marked' and Beth Tobin, 1999 'The Imperial Politics of the Local and the Universal' 1999, pp.202-226.

¹²⁸Reynolds was commissioned by the Court of Directors to portray Stringer Lawrence in 1761; (now in the Bengal Club, Calcutta). Lawrence is represented in a breast plate with a view of the temple of Sringam in the background denoting British victory over the French at Pondicherry. An engravings after this image was also made, now in the OIOC Prints and Drawings Department; Archer, 1979 p.409.

¹²⁹Kettle and Hodges on return from India abandoned the Society of Artists to exhibit at the Royal Academy where the latter became an Honorary Associate. Reynolds also won commissions from numerous Company personnel such as Colonel Foote, Lord Clive, Warren Hastings, Richard Barwell as well as being close friends with Hastings' ally, Sir John D'Oyly, Resident at the durbar of the Nawab of Murshidabad, 1780-1785. For Reynolds' connections to India, see Archer, 1979 pp.36, 60, 117, 187-188, 206, 409 and 411. He also provided letters of recommendation for the painters Thomas Hickey (Hastings Papers Add Ms 39,871, f.6) and for Ozias Humphry; Archer, 1979 p.189. Reynolds' nephew travelled to India in 1774 as an attorney. Being so closely associated with Burke and Adam Smith, Reynolds must have fully aware with their growing preoccupation with empire in India. Caleb Whitefoord also owned four drawings of India by Hodges; sold Christie's 1801; Isabel Stuebe, *Life and Works of William Hodges*, (New York, 1978) catalogue entries 466-469.

portraits.¹³⁰

By 1776, Reynolds was developing his notion of the ‘ideal painter’ by dint of his entanglement with customary subjects, transgressing his recent imperative that a painter ‘must divest himself of all prejudices and favour of his age or country; he must disregard all local and temporal ornaments’, for ‘he addresses his work to the people of every country and every age’.¹³¹ However, as Barrell and Guest have asserted, the *Seventh Discourse* reiterated the importance of a ‘customary aesthetic’, whereby ‘ancient ornaments having the right of possession ought not to be removed’.¹³²

Reynolds was acknowledging a hierarchy of modern excellence; several of Britain’s leading painters such as West and Copley, had forsaken the American colonies in favour of Britain, (a powerful remembrance of colonial loyalty at the time of American Rebellion), and British painters circumnavigated the globe accompanying Cook to the Pacific, travelled throughout Europe, especially to France and Italy but now as far as Greece, as well as encompassing Russia, the West Indies, Canton and in particular India, all of which were also to become consumers of British art.¹³³ In fact, the later *Discourses* emphasise the importance of viewing great works of art *in situ* as well as the benefits of

¹³⁰Hastings’ close ally Richard Barwell who sat to Reynolds and whose portrait included a roundel of Hastings, which was sent to the Governor-General in India wrote; ‘I was at court this morning. His Majesty received the pictures I brought to England with me and which upon my arrival I gave unto Sir Joshua Reynolds’ hands to be improved ... it gives me great pleasure to communicate that he regards it as a very curious piece and that the whole credit is yours.’ R.Barwell to W.Hastings, Hastings Papers BL: Add Ms 29,192 f.93.

¹³¹Reynolds, 1981 p.64. In *Discourse Three* Reynolds laid out his central form which must be ‘above singular forms, local customs, particularities and details of every kind’.

¹³²Reynolds, 1981 p.139. John Barrell, ‘Sir Joshua Reynolds and the Englishness of English Art’ in Homi Bhabha (ed.) *Nation and Narration* (London,1990).

¹³³Thus we see the foundations of traffic as will be explored in detail in chapter three; where London is the epicentre of modern civilisation, manifested also through the dissemination of prints and painters across the globe; see T.Clayton, *The English Print* (New Haven,1997) as British art became a new form of ‘universal art idiom’.

travel.¹³⁴ In short, the President was professing an art which would actually have direct relevance to a nationalistic, modern commercial society possessed and increasingly possessive of, an accelerating empire:

Like a sovereign judge and arbiter of art, he (the ideal artist, but also the Royal Academy student) is possessed of that presiding power which separates and attracts every excellence from every school; selects both what is great and what is little; brings home knowledge from the East and from the West; making the universe tributary towards furnishing his mind and enriching his works with *originality and variety of innovations*.¹³⁵

Thus we see a confident form of cultural ‘eclecticism’, which resulted from burgeoning imperialism through distinct macro- and micro-cosmic configurations.¹³⁶ Through a direct association of taste and pictorial facture, all minute and grand aspects of all art (perhaps indicative of Burke’s sublime and beautiful) are subsumed to a taste which must be rigorous yet also influenced and articulated through such encounters. Reynolds’ vocabulary is strident; replete with images of sovereignty and rule, so that the universe becomes but a tributary (albeit life line) for watering a fertile artistic mind. Through the traffic in art and artefacts, often extruded as war spoils, everything is available not only to the itinerant and international artist, but also to those painters, like Reynolds and later Henry Tresham, who never left Europe.¹³⁷ This idiom of a selective

¹³⁴Reynolds, 1981 especially Discourse XII.

¹³⁵ibid., Discourse VI p.110 (my emphasis).

¹³⁶Reynolds’ choice of vocabulary is potent; furnishing and enriching the mind has an obvious materialistic parallels in the form of the polite interior whereby a patron’s taste is externalised. Oriental luxuries had long been naturalised and subsumed within the greater whole of a decorative scheme which included old masters, French clocks, mirrors and a range of other goods from across the globe.

¹³⁷Henry Tresham (1750-1814) seems to have learnt of India through his contact with Admiral Suffrom who had fought in the Mysore Wars and brought back 51 Indian men and women to Malta to teach them cotton weaving; Tresham travelled extensively in Europe so may have met them there. Two watercolours of men and women were exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1789;

discrimination of foreign art in order to produce innovation, also reappeared in Reynolds' tribute to Hodges' Indian oeuvre in his *Discourse On Architecture*: 'the barbaric splendour of those Asiatic buildings which are now publishing by a member of this academy... furnish an architect not with models to copy but with notes of comparison and general effect which would not otherwise have occurred'.¹³⁸

The Royal Academy, modelled largely on French lines, was thus acknowledging an area of oriental study largely neglected in Britain.¹³⁹ Its artists were encouraged to accommodate an enormously ambitious array of knowledge, drawn from as diverse sources as Pliny to English abridgements of Ferishta and Abul Fazl, as foreign art and readily translated texts were further transliterated through the ideological framework of the Academy. Reynolds' 'customary aesthetic' called for universal conclusions from local customs, all of which possessed both merits and defects:

What is approved of in the Eastern nations as grand and majestic would be considered by the Greeks and Romans as turgid and inflated and they

see M. Archer, *British Drawings in the India Office Library* (London, 1994) volume III, p.304, plate 52. *Indian Textile workers and weavers from the Malabar Coast* (OIOC P&D WD4038) was exhibited in Bayly, 1990 catalogue number 66. Another rare watercolour *Tradesmen offering their wares to an anchored East Indian Man off Diamond Harbour, Calcutta* was sold at Christie's St. James's June 1998; lot 97. As no other professional British artists were exhibiting depictions of Indian labour in the 1780s and early 1790s, Tresham's work must have been met with great interest.

¹³⁸ Reynolds, 1981 p.242. N. Thomas, *Colonialism's Culture: Anthropology, Travel, Government* (London, 1994) pp.72-3; 'Barbarian' was Greek for outsider to denote someone beyond the polis, increasingly associated with cannibalism and the lack of civilized life; see A. Pagden, *The Fall of Natural Man* (New York, 1989) p.15. However in Reynolds' context such barbarism is splendid and highly civilized in its own manner to the extent that it can be incorporated within the modern commercial aesthetic 'polis'.

¹³⁹ At the French Academy, Rubeens had taken an active interest in Indian art and sculpture; see Mitter 1977 chapter one. See also Lightbown, 1969 p.279 for Louis XIV's interest in the Orient, thus shifting the centre of Oriental enquiries in early eighteenth-century Europe away from Italy. See also Baron de Montesquieu, *Espirit des Lois* (Paris, 1748) for a critical analogy between French and Eastern culture, politics and 'despotism'. For parallels between the Royal Academy and the French Academy see Barrell, 1986 chapter one and Reynolds, 1981; introduction by Robert Wark.

in return would be thought by the Orientals to express themselves in a cold and insipid manner.¹⁴⁰

Consequently there were various artistic calls for the representation of customs within the metropolitan aesthetic arena. Whilst he was still in India, Kettle sent over four oils to the Society of Artists which included *nawabi* portraits, and female subjects such as *Dancing Girls in Southern India*:

An assembly of Gentoo and Mulatto girls well grouped and pleasingly contrasted; the costume is likewise very judiciously attended to but the ornaments pendant from the ears and noses of the principal figures, *seem rather real ornaments attached to the picture* than the effects of light and shade.¹⁴¹

This concern with surface detail was also carried in to Kettle's work at Faizabad, *Dancing Girl 1772* (fig. 21) loosely bestowed the pose of Apollo Belvedere, weighed down with jewellery. Likewise, George Willison's *Nawab of Arcot*, c.1774 (fig. 22) was praised for the great attention bestowed on the dress which successfully gives of 'the idea of eastern magnificence' but once again the general effect had been compromised as 'the back figures which are too slight for the labour bestowed on the principal figure'.¹⁴² On one level the artists desired to convey new visual data to the metropolitan public, such as the architectural detail of a building, or the intricacy of *nawabi* ceremonial dress, but which needed to be satisfactorily incorporated within a wider composition.

Reynolds' early *Discourses* condemned the use of modern dress in

¹⁴⁰Reynolds, 1981 *Discourse VII* p.136.

¹⁴¹*Morning Chronicle*, May 23, 1772, p.2. review of Kettle's *Dancing Girls*. (my emphasis)

¹⁴²*Morning Chronicle*, May 21, 1778, p.1. At a round the date that Willison was exhibiting his portraits of the Nawab of the Carnatic at the Society of Artists, parliamentary debate was focussed on the nawab's annexation of Tanjore, an event that aroused Edmund Burke's preoccupation with Company administration in India. The nawab had been an ally of the British since the 1740s. Whelan, 1995, pp.108-114.

portraiture and history painting, as it detracted from the concerns of art to a universal notion of citizenry, which appealed to all spatial and temporal societal configurations.¹⁴³ However it is costume which is taken as a key ethnographic index of 'local nature', its showy presentation in these exhibition oils also going against Reynolds' warning that artists should not seduce their public by producing show pieces, the most gaudy rather than the most elevated attracting the eye. From a different perspective, Kettle and Willison's focus on ornament could be argued as essential to the communication of the 'oriental' vagaries of his subject matter, which demanded bright colours and heavy impasto to convey 'authenticity' which operated at both a sensual and intellectual levels in the rumination of Company relations with indigenous kingdoms such as the Carnatic, which was now deeply embroiled with British ambitions.

In 1776 Kettle sent his first and only narrative picture of Indian 'customs'; *A Gentoo Woman Distributing Her Jewellery Before Taking Leave of Her Family To Mount the Funeral Pyre of Her Husband*, c.1770 (fig. 23) which follows at least some of the advice of his metropolitan critics.¹⁴⁴ Sati was viewed by the Company state as an increasingly controversial ceremony; popularised by lurid accounts in early travelogues (fig. 24). Although represented in early colonial art primarily as a demonstration of female stoicism and fortitude, by the 1790s the tide was turning, becoming the paradigm of India's 'barbarism' demanding abolition.¹⁴⁵ It was already a well established

¹⁴³ Reynolds, 1981 pp.20-46. The *Seventh Discourse* did shift towards at least a partial consideration of the local 'the general principles of urbanity, politeness or civility have been the same in all nations but the mode in which they are dressed is continually varying.'

¹⁴⁴ A version was painted for Colonel Hugh Grant who retired to Britain from India in 1774 and which is now housed in the Oriental Club, London. Archer, 1979 p.72

¹⁴⁵ Sati has been much written about; see Lata Mani article (check) and R.Singha, *A Despotism of*

h 'Conventions and Customs: The debate on Sati in Colonial India' in K. Gargi & S. Vaid
Reconstructing Women Delhi 1989 pp. 88-126 83

image of conjugal fidelity which had given rise to complex and contradictory representations by European travel writers, often signifying ambivalently as an act of heroism or deflated as the imposition of an often corrupt brahmin will who coerced grieving widows to mount the pyre. Suicide was aesthetically sanctioned, appealing to a modern commercial society desirous of sensationalism, voyeurism and death.¹⁴⁶ Through the lens of the sublime, it was possible to admire her heroism, through uneasy configurations of pleasure and pain. Later painters such as Baltazard Solvyns, criticised sati as a 'cruel practice', where the widow was promised future happiness in another life, appealing to her 'weak and superstitious mind' although such an act still portrayed 'courageous resolution'.¹⁴⁷ Kettle's choice of artistic precedents indicates a heroic image which combines concern with the customary and the hermeneutic in the creation of an orientalist sentimental idiom, as India is transformed as other to a British society obsessed with the immorality, selfishness and infidelity of its leading society beauties.

The gifting of possessions (which by implication are inalienable by being passed through the family), also focussed the composition in material and sensible terms which appealed to a modern commercial society both as adjunct and as other, refracted through Kettle's focus on the transitional life stages of jewellery which thus consolidated the public's experiences of orientalism

Law (Cambridge, 1998). Both Zoffany and Hodges produced images of sati; Hodges depicts the successive moment after Kettle; once the widow has left her family and is preparing to mount the funeral pyre which is being lit. A surviving oil sketch by Zoffany represents the widow already lying on the pyre.

¹⁴⁶Teltscher, 1995, p.56.

¹⁴⁷F.B.Solvyns, *Les Hindus* (Paris, 1808) volume two pp.12-13.

through their luxury consumption.¹⁴⁸ In the suspension of his subject within a neoclassical idiom, Kettle makes no overt physiognomic reference to caste as rather sensibility and sociability as unfamiliar subjects were mediated through familiar idioms.¹⁴⁹ The representation of women also acted as a powerful index for the state of a society.¹⁵⁰ Crude and summary readings of Kettle's orientalist images as denotative of India would perceive it as a society based on custom determined through religion, (denoted by Brahmins and temples) and as feminine, an idiom which drew on contemporary allegory epitomised by Roma's ceiling panel of India as a subordinate female offering up jewels and luxuriant spolia to Britannia (fig. 25).¹⁵¹

Unlike his work for General Barker, Kettle's ethnographic scenes were designed for speculation in the London art market, which partially determined the way in which the subject was treated.¹⁵² Hence the widow is represented within a commercially successful, polite and fashionable painterly manner, as possessing neoclassical features, operating in an idiom which transposed small and sentimental histories into an orientalist subject, signifying at both local

¹⁴⁸Marcia Pointon, *Strategies for Showing*, (Oxford, 1997)

¹⁴⁹Solvyns' ethnographic scheme *A Description of the Manners and Customs of the Hindus* (Calcutta, 1796) was the first systematic attempt to represent caste by way of occupation and appearance. See my chapter two.

¹⁵⁰Thomas, 1994 pp. 101-102. Other British painters also exhibited subjects focussed on Hindu or Muslim mourning such as Hodges' *Mohammedan Woman tending the tomb of her husband*, RA 1787. A version of this featuring several women was engraved for the *European Magazine* in 1792 as well as for Hodges, 1793 p.28. See Stuebe, 1978 catalogue entries 423-427 for similar subjects as oils, prints and drawings.

¹⁵¹See Spiridone Roma's 1778 allegorical panel of *India presenting jewels and other spolia to Britannia*, as ceiling roundel for India House. Other exhibited pictures with Indian women as their subject in this era include Renaldi, *Portrait of a Mogul Lady* R.A. 1791 and in 1797 he exhibited two more *portraits of two Hindustani Ladies*. In 1777 Kettle on his return to London exhibited a *portrait of a Moor's Lady*, R.A.

¹⁵²Both Angelica Kauffmann and Joseph Wright of Derby produced small scale feminine historical subjects which were more marketable than large, gloomy and gruesome historical scenes. So it seems that Kettle was attempting to tap into this aspect of the open market.

and universal levels.

However this was only one solution amongst many. In the first years of empire we see the critical difficulties in formulating responses to Indian subjects in a still fluid aesthetic metropolitan arena, where the East India Company and the private patronage of its personnel, market speculation and the involvement of the Society of Artists and Royal Academy, operated ambivalently with regards to British administration of India, such entanglements between public and aesthetic spheres and the colonial state which were thrown into further crisis in Calcutta.

Chapter Two

White Sepulchral City *The Self-Imaging of a Colonial Public, c.1772-1795.*

*The grave of thousands! ... the Eastern world is the grave of thousands; but is it not also a mine of exhaustless wealth, the centre of unimaginable magnificence?*¹

The aim of this chapter is to extrapolate the growth of an aesthetic sphere for British art in the white town of Calcutta, analysing the ways in which this art created and was generated by, the colonial community's collective identity. Such exploration will examine the importance of 'print-capitalism': now a much utilised term expressive of the coming together of the dual forces of capitalism and print technology instrumental to the creation of a bourgeois public sphere within a colonial context. Yet despite the observations of an eminent scholar, such media did not travel easily, much to the frustration of the colonial community: its press was censored and its modes of political expression grafted in very different directions to its experience in Britain.²

In Calcutta, commissioning public portraits and purchasing civic views expressed political standing (albeit in different manners) in a community whose

¹Opening letter; anonymous, *Hartly House* (London,1789) three volumes; volume one.

²Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, (London,1990). An opposing position with regard to the impact of print capitalism in India is taken in Partha Chatterjee's *Nationalist Thought and the Colonial World* (London,1986). Jurgen Habermas, *Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere* (Oxford,1988) O.Kruege and P.Negt, *Public Sphere and Experience* (London,1990). Taste in the public sphere is examined by P.Bourdieu, *Distinction A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste* trans.R.Nice (1979,sixth edition, London,1999) See also John Barrell, *The Political Theory of Painting from Reynolds to Hazlitt: The Body of the Public* (Oxford,1986).

free speech and notions of a British public sphere were severely curtailed. In London, artists, critics and connoisseurs bemoaned the state's reluctance to patronise painting, however in Calcutta colonial modernity demanded public art as an integral component to an evolving imperial ritual and ceremony, in ways that did not exist in eighteenth-century Britain.³ Rather than a realisation of civic humanist calls for history painting, the Company state's art display devised both solutions and contention, further problematising the role of imagery within a modern commercial society.⁴ The assertion of an intensely visual display of authority became central to the symbolism of colonial institutions, in an inversion of the loss of spectacular forms in an increasingly institutionalised modernity in Europe.⁵ In place of the distributive character of indigenous kingship, the Company constructed a core of institutionalised authority- defined by a large standing army and the judicial structures of civil authority.⁶

³For instance, James Barry, *An Inquiry into the Real and Imaginary Obstructions to the Acquisition of the Arts in England* (London,1775), *idem.*, *An Account of a Series of Pictures in the Great Room of the Society of Arts, Manufactures and Commerce at the Adelphi* (London,1783); Valentine Green, *A Perusal of the Polite Arts in France at the time of their Establishment under Louis XIV, compared with their present state in England in which their national importance and several pursuits are briefly stated and considered in a letter to Sir Joshua Reynolds, President of the Royal Academy and F.R.S.* (London,1782). See also Barrell, *The Birth of Pandora* (London,1992) and David Solkin, *Painting for Money* (New Haven,1992).

⁴For examples of Calcutta's public art see Bengal Past and Present volumes I to XXXIII, M.Archer, *India and British Portraiture, 1770-1825* (London,1979) and C.A.Bayly (ed.) *The Raj: India and the British, 1600-1947* (London,1990). For the difficult entanglements between state and the public sphere see Jurgen Habermas, *Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere* (Cambridge,1989), R.C.Holleb, *Habermas: Critic in the Public Sphere* (London,1991) and C.Calhoun (ed.) *Habermas and the Public Sphere* (Cambridge,Mass.,1992). See also O.Kruger and P.Negt, *Public Sphere and Experience* (London,1990), J.Keane (ed.) *Civil Society and the State* (1988) and N.Rose and P.Miller, 'Political Power beyond the State: Problematics of Government' *B.J.S.* 43.2 (June,1992) pp.173-205.

⁵G.Burchell (ed.) *The Foucault Effect: Studies in Governmentality* (London,1991). See N.Dirks preface to B.Cohn, *Colonialism and its Forms of Knowledge* (Princeton,1997) T.Metcalf *Ideologies of the Raj* (Cambridge,1995) chapter one, R.Singha, *A Despotism of Law* (Oxford,1998) and S.Sen, 'Colonial Frontiers of the Georgian State' *Journal of Historical Sociology*, 7.4 (December,1994) pp.368-392. For exemplary punishment in Calcutta, M.Fisher (ed.) *The Travels of Dean Mohemad* (Delhi,1996) pp.106-107. Also see Ghulam Hussein Khan, *The Siyar Mutaqherin*, trans. Haji Mustapha (Calcutta,1789) three volumes, volume three section xiv.

⁶Singha, 1998 preface and Seema Alavi, *The Sepoys and the Company* (Delhi,1995).

The constraints of a severely dented public sphere, and by extension aesthetic sphere, must have affected the colonial community's construction of cultural tropes through which to celebrate their imperial city.⁷ However, the influence of art on social and moral perceptions of the city was phenomenal: Calcutta appeared whiter, broader and more classical because of pictorial ways of seeing.⁸ Topographical views of India could act as 'guide books' in Britain for prospective sojourners, as well as for a 'travel-capitalist' view of empire.⁹ Thus representations were not merely secondary to practices; they constituted political, hermetic, even hermeneutic realities in themselves.¹⁰

The ways in which artists sought both to supply and distend demand amongst the colonial and Indian populations are extremely complex; British painters were only short-term residents in Calcutta, seeking to make fortunes at Indian courts before returning Godspeed to London, which embroiled them within an intricate, interstitial nexus of innovative and familiar praxis, traditions, transition and translation.¹¹ From the mid 1770s, at least one British

⁷For an overview of Calcutta's artistic activity S.C.Chaudhuri (ed.) *Calcutta: Living City* volume one (Oxford,1990) P.Pal (ed.) *Changing Visions Lasting Images* (1990) and J.P.Losty, *Calcutta City of Palaces* (London,1990).

⁸We can see the ways in which travellers' accounts of Calcutta alter over time as art also changed. In 1773, Mrs. Fay's first view of Calcutta is compared to the Thames and then the scene as a whole is viewed as 'a mezzotint, a beautiful moving picture'. At this date Calcutta was primarily known in topography through Scott's 1730s prints rather than through painting, so it is interesting that Mrs. Fay chose this analogy from her own aesthetic experience. Eliza Fay, *Letters From India*, (London,1779) p.131.

⁹See William Hodges, *Choix des Vues de l'Inde* (London,1785-8) his *Travels in India during the Years 1780, 1781,1782 and 1783* (London,1793), Thomas and William Daniell, *Twelve Views of Calcutta* (Calcutta,1786-8) William Baillie, *Twelve Views of Calcutta*, (Calcutta,1794) and Baltazard Solvyns *A Description of the Manners and Customs of the Hindoos* (Calcutta,1796). Timothy Mitchell, *Colonising Egypt* (Cambridge,1988) p.22. Europeans, 'brought up within what they thought of as a representational world, they took representation to be a universal condition'. Through maps and views it was possible to some degree to envision Calcutta before arrival, residues of such experiences which perhaps remained, even if the 'reality' was quite different.

¹⁰N.Thomas, *Colonialism's Culture: Anthropology, Travel and Government* (Oxford,1994) pp.111-112.

¹¹This number does not include military engravers, amateurs, nor the Indian artistic sector; which

artist resided in Calcutta, this number swelling to thirty in the late 1780s. The potential patronage circle surmounted to less than three hundred Company servants, a few *banians* and Europeans so that artists could not survive by remaining in the city throughout their stay, which after all was not their intention.¹² At least in the 1770s, the painterly diaspora deflated any pretensions which Calcutta may have had as an Enlightenment centre for the visual arts, as face painting signified the chief source of income and public interest, rather than an ethnographic or elevated subject-matter. It was not until the mid 1780s that painters and engravers began to advertise civic views, as the first landscape painters used Calcutta as their base and the late Hastings administration increasingly feted the creation of a great centre for the arts.

I shall explore the evolution of Calcutta's self imaging through representations of both the White Town and the Black Town in the creation of a self-other dichotomy and its subversion through the oeuvres of three artists, William Hodges, Thomas Daniell and Balthasar Solvyns.¹³ The architectural expansion of the city was obsessively recorded by visiting painters as views of Calcutta formed a backbone artistic genre in an otherwise unstable and by the 1790s, disintegrating market for British art. From George Lambert's *Views of Old Fort William*, 1730 (figs.26, 27), the Daniells' aquatints published 1786-8 (figs 36, 37, 38, 39), to Baillie's military topography, 1794 (figs 70, 71) and Balthasar Solvyns' *Les Hindoos*, 1794-9 (figs. 30, 44) civic views acted as the

taken as a whole, was an intense visual culture consisting of hundreds of painters. See chapter four for a discussion of these complex interactions.

¹²Although Calcutta's mythology celebrated the city as great centre for the arts, most painters stayed relatively briefly before going up country in search of fortunes at Lucknow.

¹³ See T.R.Metcalf, 'Imperial and Towns and Cities' in P.J.Marshall (ed.) *The Cambridge Illustrated History of the British Empire* (Cambridge, 1996) pp.224-253; p.225.

most enduring public art which could weather art recession, appealing to Calcutta's short-term population.¹⁴

To articulate the operative artistic practice in Calcutta, we should first explicate the mythologies of the city as metamorphosed from associations of small trading settlement to 'city of palaces' replete with cultural tropes of imperial prowess and promise. The Battle of Plassey in 1757 and the subsequent removal of the administrative capital of Bengal from Murshidabad in 1772, catapulted Calcutta to the power house of British India.¹⁵ This role was further heightened with the loss of the American colonies in 1783 so that by the mid 1780s Calcutta had become the 'second city of empire'; a role which required an inflated architecture and an elevated, enduring but expandable imperial ethos.¹⁶ The will to forge a capital city from the perspective of both Indian and British cultures positioned Calcutta at the matrix of three imperial discourses, (Roman, modern British and Mughal) and from which it drew an eclectic discordant, multi-layered colonial *trope tropique*, which soon became highly sophisticated, if oft-contradictory in its primary manifestations.

Much has been written about early Calcutta.¹⁷ The psyche of this early

¹⁴William Hickey and the amateur artist Nicholas Pocock both made sketches after the Daniells' views, c.1788-1796 and Indian painters in the mid nineteenth century also produced copies in oils (Victoria Memorial); a testament to the long-term appeal of such art. Out of named art work in the estates of deceased Europeans in the Bengal Inventory Series, it is these views which appeared most often: L/AG/34/27/1-20.

¹⁵Calcutta became the colonial administrative centre for the three British held provinces of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa. It also assumed a primacy over the other Presidencies Madras and Bombay although these cities attempted to subvert Calcutta's centralising drive on many occasions. P.J.Marshall, *Bengal: The British Bridgehead* (Cambridge,1987).

¹⁶Sten Nilsson, *European Architecture in India, 1750-1850* (London,1968), Losty 1990, Chaudhuri 1990 and Pal 1990.

¹⁷The literature on early Calcutta is enormous; for bibliographical sources see Losty 1990, pp.131-133. Contemporary accounts include *Memoirs of Asiaticus* (London,1780), E.Fay, *Original Letters From India* (Calcutta,1817), P.Francis, *Memoirs* (London,1867), anon *Hartly House, a novel*,(London 1789) *Memoirs of W.Hickey* (ed.)A.Spencer,(London,1913-25) and T.Twining, *Travels in India One Hundred Years Ago* (1893). Key Raj-generated texts include;

settlement demanded an obsessive drive for narrative, mythologising on many levels, which invented then fossilized tradition, in a repetitive ritual. Although such histories almost exclusively examined the small White Town, Calcutta was foremost an Indian city, with a population estimated by contemporaries at two hundred thousand.¹⁸ In the last ten years, (coinciding with the city's tercentenary) several publications have reset the balance.¹⁹ The agenda strove to recover and represent Indian agency through an examination of the Black Town and to demystify civilizing metonyms; colonial violence instigated the demolition of Bengali villages in order for the white town to expand; its policies of apartheid, prohibiting Indians from colonial spaces at certain hours, its policing of the bazaars, its attempts to abolish Hindu and Muslim festivities within its confines, and its pilfering of marble from Mughal mosques, in order to construct its churches.²⁰

From the perspective of Mughal civic ideology, it is possible that Calcutta as the new capital of Bengal, signified a break with decorum. In Mughal political science Indian rulers sought to define their ruling time and it coherent space with the seal of their charisma.²¹ Successive nawabs across northern India regularly moved their capitals, either for prestige or to avoid

K.Blechynden, *Calcutta Past and Present* (Calcutta, 1905) H.E.Busteed, *Echoes from Old Calcutta* (Calcutta, 1908), H.E.A.Cotton, *Calcutta Old and New* (Calcutta, 1907), W.K.Firminger, *Thacker's Guide to Calcutta* (Calcutta, 1906), Rev.W.H.Hart, *Old Calcutta* (Calcutta, 1895), J.Long, *Peeps into the Social Life in Calcutta a Century Ago* (Calcutta, 1868). More recently, P.Sinha *Calcutta in Urban History* (Calcutta, 1979), S.C.Ghosh, *Social Condition of the British Community in Bengal* (Leiden, 1970) and S. Banarjee, *The Parlour and the Streets* (Calcutta, 1989; 1998).

¹⁸C.A.Bayly (ed.) *The Raj: India and the British, 1600-1947* (London, 1990) p.106.

¹⁹Most notably Banarjee 1998, Pal, 1990 and Chaudhuri, 1990.

²⁰Banarjee, 1998 chapter one.

²¹See K.Ballhatchet and J.Harrison (eds.) *The City in South Asia* (1980), C.A.Bayly, *Rulers, Townsmen and Bazaars* (Cambridge, 1983) and C.Asher, *The Architecture of Mughal India*, (Cambridge, 1992).

warfare; the most famous eighteenth-century example being the nawab of Awadh Asaf ud-daula, who on his accession in 1775 transferred the capital from Faizabad to Lucknow where he undertook a massive building programme.²²

‘Whilst so considerable a production was taking place at Lucknow, another as considerable was taking place at Calcutta’, as these two very distinct, rival cities became the power-houses of northern and eastern India.²³ A key aspect in the symbolism of Hastings’ governorship therefore was to create a new capital city for Bengal at Calcutta. After the Company ‘stood forth as *diwan*’ in 1772, Hastings shifted the major organs of state away from the patrimonial arena of the nawab’s household at Murshidabad and closer to the Company’s council chambers; both a critical practical as well as a symbolic manifestation of Company supremacy, demonstrative of the changing nature of governance under colonial rule.²⁴

In the 1760s, Calcutta was depicted in Indo-Persian literature as a dirty, smelly, unholy place, the chronicler Karim Ali unimpressed by this depressing, dingy malarial outpost of feverish *firangis*.²⁵ Even its British residents complained that Calcutta seemed, ‘so imperfectly built that it looks as if the houses had been placed *whether chance directed*; here the lofty mansion of an

²²For Lucknow see Rosie Llewellyn-Jones’ trilogy *A Fatal Friendship: Lucknow* (Delhi,1985), *A Very Ingenious Man* (Delhi,1992) and *Engaging Scoundrels* (Delhi,2000). See also the classic study: A.H.Sharar, *Lucknow the Last Phase of an Oriental Culture* (London,1875).

²³Ghulam Hussein, 1789 volume three, p.279.

²⁴ ‘A vast influx of people will be drawn to Calcutta and with it a great increase of wealth. The consequence of the Presidency will be much improved with its population and it will lessen that of Murshidabad which will no longer remain capital of the province, having nothing to support it but the presence of the nawab’. *Proceedings of the Committee of Circuit*; quoted in C. Gleig, *Memoirs of Warren Hastings* (London,1843) volume one p.263.

²⁵Karim Ali, *Muzafarnama*, in J.N.Sarkar, *Bengal Nawabs* (Calcutta,1952). See also G.Khan, *Indian Muslim Perceptions of the West in the Eighteenth Century* (Karachi,1998).

English chief, and there the hovel of an Indian cooly'.²⁶ However within a decade, its decrepit bazaars and dusty graveyards were modernised or at least disguised (if more by imperial ideology than architecture): drains were dug, straw and mud huts razed to the ground and *chunam* coated private houses raised to the sky.²⁷ Anglophile writers eulogised a semblance of pre-ordained Cartesian civic planning

There was a time when Calcutta was unhealthy; but since that time so many drains have been cut in its territory, so many ponds filled in its precincts and so many thousands of trees have been felled down to the southwards of it from whence blows the cool wind in river, that Calcutta is become a healthy place; add to this those broad streets bounded by lofty, airy houses looking like so many palaces and it shall be acknowledged that no city in India can be handsomer or healthier.²⁸

In many ways the construction of the new capital city repositioned the polity away from a late Mughal symbolic order and towards a new British style.²⁹ On the other hand, if there were no very strong Muslim links with Calcutta (except as a departure point for the *Hajj* pilgrimage) then Calcutta had long been a focal point for Bengali Hinduism through the Kali temple to the south of the city.

²⁶W.K.Firminger (ed.) *Memoirs of Asiaticus*, (Calcutta,1909), p.30, 1774 (my emphasis). Mrs. Fay, 1779, p.131 notes also Calcutta 'does not appear much worthy describing ... it looks as if all the houses had been thrown up in the air and fallen down again by accident as they now stand ... besides the appearance of the best houses is spoiled by the little straw huts ... so that all the English part of town ... is a confusion of very superb and shabby houses, dead walls, straw huts, warehouses and I know not what'.

²⁷ 'The bamboo roof suddenly vanished; the marble columns took the place of brick walls.' Thomas and William Daniell *Picturesque Voyage to India* (London,1810) plate fifty. However Calcutta's geographical position continued to caused concern as the British believed that cholera was spread by contaminated air, M.Harrison, *Climates and Constitutions* (Delhi,1999) I am grateful to Urmila De for alerting me to this work.

²⁸Ghulam Hussein, 1789, volume two p.608, note 32 (translator). See also Harrison, 1999 pp.183-203. P.J.Marshall, 1987 pp.4-5, 20 notes that the River Hugli was becoming increasingly stagnant during this era, its declining waters giving rise to increased disease.

²⁹The expansion of South Park Street Cemetery shows a shift away from Company traders towards British political officials; Hastings' Supreme Council enemies buried in a cluster with its own spatial politics. Britons were commemorated with urns, cupolas and great mausolea. Field trip to South Park Street Cemetery, Calcutta: March,1998.

Hastings did make a few attempts to 'Indianise' his capital by collecting his 'synod of pandits' in 1773 to devise a code of Gentoo laws and by founding the Calcutta *madrasah* for Muslim education in 1781, pushed away from the heart of administration on the eastern boundary of the city.³⁰ Ozias Humphry's sketchbook provides the only surviving view of the *madrasah* (fig.28). Apart from its four domes, the building reveals little of its function. We see no scholars, only a bullock and his driver by a stagnant tank as the artist subordinates the scene to a Picturesque idiom.

Yet Calcutta with its neoclassical 'architecture', its garden villas and churches was a very different space to Muslim Murshidabad with its *killah*, *musjed* and mosques; as revealed through a comparison of compositional parallels between views of these two cities, which juxtapose their cultural and political functions as the dual *fora* for the Bengal polity. The Daniells' *Indian Notables Arriving to Meet Cornwallis at Old Government House, Calcutta*, 1786-8 (fig. 29) and Murshidabad artist after Farington, *The Nawab of Bengal, Mubarek ud-Daula Proceeding to the Chowk Mosque During the Festival of Bakr Id*, c.1790-5 (fig. 111) set off the political-ceremonial nucleus of each city: Old Government House is contrasted with Murshidabad's continued Shi'ite role as spiritual capital of Bengal.³¹

Colonial architecture was supposed to embody law and order, as well as

³⁰Calcutta is already become the seat of a British empire and the resort of persons from all parts of Hindustan and the Deccan' and so now must promote such institutions for the increase in governmental and liberal knowledge: Home Miscellaneous Series (OIOC) H/162 pp.371-381; April 17, 1781 The *madrasah* was to be 'constructed on the plan of similar edifications in other parts of India.' p.370.

³¹Murshidabadi merchants and the court instigated a spate of mosque building in response to the loss of political power, reinforcing its role as Shi'ite capital of Bengal, still a powerful form of sovereignty. See C.B.Asher, *The Architecture of Mughal India* (Cambridge,1992) pp.330-335.

win admiration from Indians.³² Its grand scale, classical references and white *chunam* also functioned as a critique of jumbled, foggy, smoky London bereft of classicism.³³ Yet built by Company Engineers, lacking polite details and correct proportions, adapted to the vagaries of the heat, Calcutta's palaces were curiously hybrid. Although possessing grand peristyles as pretensions to classical architecture, this ultimately signified nothing, transgressing the boundaries of the language of classical architecture.³⁴ None of the city's public buildings was intended for civic function and ritual.³⁵ Yet written accounts, topography and surveys attempted to project the city *as if* it were built on a grid system, rather than growing *ad hoc* out of a trading settlement.

The first scheme of artistic views of Calcutta produced by Thomas and William Daniell in 1786-8, present the city along clear vistas, its great glittering buildings overseers of trade, conversation, even Hindu festivals. Hence the image of the city combined actual and metaphysical constructions of power through a focus on regular spacious streets, an ontological design representative of the nature of colonial governmentality, determined by order, surveillance, and grandeur. Even the early surveys of the city exaggerate the straight lines of main thoroughfares, minimalising allies and bazaars which confounded any colonial

³²T.R.Metcalf, 'Architecture and the Representation of Empire in India, 1860-1910', *Representations*, 6 Spring, 1984 p.37.

³³P.Brimblecombe, *The Big Smoke: A History of Pollution in London* (London,1988) and Roy Porter, 'Visitors' Visions: Travellers' Tales of Georgian London' in C.Chard and H.Langdon (eds.) *Transports: Pleasures and Imaginative Geography 1600-1830* (New Haven,1996) pp.31-48.

³⁴It was not until the mid 19th century that the British began to evolve a specific architectural style in India which drew on Hindu, Mughal and British forms in order to demonstrate their role as emperors. See T.R.Metcalf, *The Indo-Saracenic Style* (Berkeley,C.A.1989)

³⁵See P.J.Marshall 'Private British Investment in 18th-century Bengal', pp.52-67 in his *Trade and Conquest* (Aldershot,1993) and H/104 for extensive details of Calcutta's building campaigns from the 1760s into the 1790s, especially focussed on the construction of Fort William.

logic of order.³⁶ (fig. 32) The white town was but a tiny fraction of the city as a whole; the rest of which remained impenetrable to surveyors and artists, leaving its roads unnamed and its outline blank and unformed.³⁷ 'It shows all the streets ... and the principal public buildings are particularly pointed out. The European part of the town is also distinguished from the native by being engraved in a *different manner*', so that even within the supposedly uniform, homogeneous and 'scientific' idiom of surveying, difference was asserted.³⁸

At the time when Calcutta was being surveyed, the first artistic views began to be planned, sketched painted and printed. In Britain, topography may have been considered as an inferior branch of art requiring little more than a *camera obscura*, but within a colonial context, this genre was increasingly charged with conveying the public elements of the rise and fall of civilisation and the epic nature of British imperialism.³⁹ By this means colonial topography acquired a narrative dimension analogous to the forms of historical and philosophical epic achieved by poets and explorers.⁴⁰ William Hodges' *View of Esplanade Row, 1787* (fig. 33) takes its vantage point from the battlement of Fort William, looking down across the bustling River Hugly across the Maiden to the

³⁶See for instance Mark Wood's 1784 Survey. Nillson, 1968 p.62.

³⁷With Rennell's surveying operation surging ever outwards across India whilst increasingly centralised in London, it is paradoxical that the vast extent of Calcutta was beyond the colonial gaze. J.Rennell, *A Description of Roads in Bengal and Bihar* (London,1778) and his *Memoir of a Map of Hindustan* (London,1788). This also signifies the priorities of the information order, which sought optical control over areas of economic profit; M.H.Edney, *Mapping an Empire* (Chicago,1997) and C.A.Bayly, *Empire and Information* (Cambridge,1996). North Calcutta's reference points were shrines, temples and mosques. See Susan Gole, *Indian Maps and Plans from Earliest Times to the Advent of European Surveys* (Delhi,1989) and Keya Dasgupta, 'A City Away from Home: The Mapping of Calcutta' in Partha Chatterjee (ed.) *Texts of Power: Emerging Disciplines in Colonial Bengal* (Minneapolis,1995) pp.145-166.

³⁸William Baillie's advertisement for his print after Wood's 1784 Survey of Calcutta; *Calcutta Chronicle*, July 31, 1793. (my emphasis)

³⁹Robert Nixon, *The Course of Empire*, (London,1986)

⁴⁰*ibid.*, chapter three.

first street of empire, as military power oversees the welfare of the overseas settlement, its commerce and administration.⁴¹ Hodges' view is a demonstration of military paternalism which protects commerce and government highlighted against a sublime sky; the sunlit Esplanade with its government buildings' row of facades, seemingly provides an anglicised version of the nawab's palace complex at Murshidabad, as well as a front of wealth and power, a clear aestheticisation of colonial clout.⁴²

His writings conflate his two most views of Calcutta, *View From Fort William* and the *Esplanade from Garden Reach* (fig. 34).⁴³ In the latter, the Esplanade appears on the horizon painted in a distant glittering impasto, it is set off by monsoon clouds, in a Salvator Rosaesque idiom, sublimating the 'sublime achievement' of new Calcutta, emerging out of swampy, unhealthy terrain.⁴⁴ 'The air of Calcutta is much affected by the closeness of the jungle around it. The natives have formed a complete belt which commences near the town and extends in every direction full four miles deep. This is planted with fruit trees and is perfectly impervious to the air', infusing Hodges' interest with meteorology with specific medico-topographical aspect.⁴⁵ In contrast with his

⁴¹This oil is in the Inchscape plc. Collection; reproduced as a line engraving in Hodges' *Travels in India in the years 1780, 1781, 1782 and 1783* (London 1793).

⁴²Nillson, 1968 p.65.

⁴³Hodges' *View of Fort William* includes the steeple of St. John's Church, erected in 1784, a year after Hodges had left for Britain, so that at least in this respect, he was updating his field-work under the instruction of his patron, Warren Hastings.

⁴⁴Shown at the Royal Academy in 1787 where *the Morning Herald* noted May, 15 that 'we learn from those who know the situation, that it is a faithful delineation. Mr. Hodges possessed much of Caneletti's style and though he may fail in his exactness, he has infinitely more variety'. From 1785-1794, Hodges sent 25 oils with an Indian subject matter to the Royal Academy, most of which were from Hastings' private collection and were translated into line engravings to illustrate Hodges' *Travels in India* (1793). Isabel Stuebe, *William Hodges* (New York, 1978).

⁴⁵Valentia, George Viscount, *Voyages and Travels to India, Ceylon, the Red Sea, Abyssinia and Egypt* (London, 1811; Delhi, 1994) four volumes, p.193. For Hodges' interest in climatic effects, Bernard Smith, *Imagining the Pacific* (New Haven, 1992); the painter's concern also forming an important area for metropolitan art criticism; see the press cuttings collection; Paul Mellon

much closer view from within the confines of the white town, to heighten the effect, Hodges has portrayed the scene during the summer monsoon; swirling dark clouds and a lonely, brooding figure create a mood of contemplation, solitude, climatic violence as well as appealing to a temporal-spatial progress of civilisation as the eye moves through the picture away from the 'primeval' huts of the foreground to the colonial city.⁴⁶

Hodges' artistic agenda is elided in to a naturalised perception, which asserted both that Calcutta as decorous subject for high art, and that Britons across empire possessed a 'civilized nature', comprised the high ethics and aesthetic standards necessary for the governance of empire

As the ship approaches Calcutta ... *the whole city bursts upon the eye.* This capital of British dominions in the East is marked by a considerable fortress on the south side of the river, which is allowed to be in strength and correctness of design, *superior to any in India.* On the foreground of the picture is the watergate of the fort which reflects great honour on the talents of the engineer, the ingenious Colonel Polier. The Glacis and Esplanade are seen in *perspective*, bounded by a range of beautiful and regular buildings; and a considerable reach of the river, with vessels of various classes and sizes, *close the scene.* A plate representing this view, from a picture taken *on the spot* and admirably engraved ... is annexed.⁴⁷

The 'epic' quality of British imperialism and the role of maritime commerce as

Centre; 1785-1794. Employing a medical topographical view of Calcutta provides a specific associative way of viewing the city' topography; for instance tanks so prevalent in the Daniells' views were condemned by contemporaries as cess pits for disease. Likewise the festivals represented by Solvyns were also viewed as instigating and spreading epidemics. Harrison, 1999 pp.161-162.

⁴⁶Dixon,1986 p.56. See my chapter five for more on Hodges' development of progress through the stages of civilisation in India. See also Baron de Montesquieu, *Espirit des lois* (Paris,1748) and Adam Fergusson, *An Essay on the History of Civil Society* (London,1767).

⁴⁷Hodges, 1793 p.14 (my emphases)

harbinger of religion and civilisation, were commonplace themes in Whig poetry, Calcutta fitting and fissuring such tropes:

With native song shall gay Calcutta ring,
And Ganges listen while our muses sing
Poets unknown but on the Persian plains,
Shall bloom again adorned by British strains ...

The sister arts shall yield congenial aid
And live eternal tho' the brave must fade.
Thy patronage shall future wonder cause,
For these sights Hodges draws.

With wondering eye will gazing Britain view,
The scenes O Hodges, which thy pencil drew,
From various distance will the wandering stranger view,

The animated tents and semblance true,
The grazing sire will ken the impending rock
That vainly dared to brave a British shock.
Will view the fort that seemed to menace fate
And drops a tear although with joy elate!

And many a scene so beautifully wild,
Thy tints will give to fame, tho' bold yet mild ...
Through seas immense, the architect will fly,

And Attic kings view an eastern sky
Professors here will bring their useful store
And teach uncultur'd heathens their learned lore
Over Indian seas shall fleets triumphant ride;
Their nation's glory and their monarch's pride

Academies shall rise with Genius strong,
The bard will rise inspired by future song ...
Thus Ancient Rome, the wonder of the world ...
Saw Arts and Sculpture hold unrivall'd place ...

So will Calcutta sing in future time

And give to epic song the verse sublime ...
There shall the British name forever reign
Unconquered Lord of all the Eastern Plain.⁴⁸

Calcutta's 'futurespast' emerges from primarily a revival of Orientalist learning lost in the *mofussil* to the wholesale imposition of a cultural colonialism which are envisioned as a natural progression for a city constructed on victories and commerce, where bards and muses enact a modern day epic in a heady allegorical splendour of Indian choirs, British academies, fleets, muses, verse, art and sculpture.

Hodges' fieldwork and by implication his active involvement within the Marathas and Benares campaigns, are incorporated to an overall pacific idiom focussing on Calcutta's supremacy as the far away Gwalior fort pins down the furthest reach of the Bengal empire.⁴⁹ His works act as the great crescendo, the only act of cultural relevance within a present tense, thus linking past revival and future greatness (by implication the only artistic activity of any relevance now occurring in colonial cultural policy). The verse moves away from an 'Orientalist' revival of Hindustan's Persian and Sanskrit poetry (by the 1780s beginning to be translated and published by Company servants in Calcutta, forming one of the city's most popular printed genres), to full-scale cultural

⁴⁸anonymous, *Peace, An Ode to Warren Hastings*, c.1785 Hastings Papers BL:Add Ms 29,235, ff.142-4. Whilst such a poetic genre was well established in Britain through such works as Pope's *Windsor Forest* or James Thomson's *Seasons*, there are few other surviving examples for colonial India during this era.

⁴⁹The Maratha fort of Gwalior was captured by the British in 1780. The verse must refer to this fort as it is the only one amongst Hodges' *Choix des Vues* which is represented at a distance across a plain. See Dixon, 1986, pp.76-77 for an analysis of the employment of the sublime at the heroic frontiers of empire whereby landscape possessed powerful aesthetic and philosophical associations. In many ways imperial landscape was the ultimate in the sublime, in that being until recently enemy territory, its subjugation to British rule was portrayed (at least by Hodges) as a sublime act, often defying the forces of nature; as in the case of Gwalior which he draws from all sides.

imperialism, as the city become a reincarnation of modern day Rome destined to rule eternally.

Elsewhere in his travelogue Hodges exhorts other artists' works as they are assumed in to a panoply of magnificence:

The mixture of European and Asiatic manners which may be observed in Calcutta are curious- coaches, phaetons, single horse chaises with the palankeens and hackeries of the natives - the passing ceremonies of the Hindoos - the different appearance of the fakirs - form a sight perhaps more novel and extraordinary than any city in the world can present to a stranger. Some views published by Mr. Daniell are highly to be commended for their accuracy.⁵⁰

These *Views* focussed on the commercial quarter around Tank Square and the public buildings on Esplanade Row.⁵¹(Map Two) All the Daniells' aquatints represent lively, prosperous spaces, often along oblique lines of perspective, denotative of wide thoroughfares, teeming with the city's work force as the city is wide and spacious with room for the eye to rove and the staffage to breath.⁵² (figs 31, 36) The lively eclectic staffage, whilst conveying the general idea of the colonial city, also proffers 'ethnographic variety' as a distinct marketing ploy:

Mr. Daniell respectfully informs the public that he proposes to publish by subscription twelve views in which he hopes to introduce most of the principal buildings, the natives in their various *dresses*, with every other circumstance that may tend to convey *a good general idea* of the city of

⁵⁰Hodges, 1793, p.16.

⁵¹See Losty 1990, chapter two for a useful employment of all of the Daniells' views to the city's architectural expansion.

⁵²From Gillray's caricature of *Cornwallis' Levee*, we see the Daniells' *Views of Calcutta* hanging in Old Government House, which at least within this print signifies ideal colonial elision of space. In this sense they function as powerful totemic symbols of colonial order and the success of its governmentality as artists' views are digested by the authorities.

Calcutta.⁵³

A combination of colonial institutions and an ethnographic focus on Indians, eliding and juxtaposing the familiar and the exotic, (the latter being regulated by the former), revealed the peculiar nature of colonial governmentality. The state was projected all seeing yet discursive, through the agency of its public buildings as both the architecture and the artists look down on and regulate the scene from their interested and disinterested perspectives. Except for Indians bathing at the *ghats*, always regulated by the presence of Company sepoy, (figs 37, 38) there are no crowds but rather collections of individuals going about their business, each of their specialised activities by implication, contributes to the well being of the colonial political economy, regulated by a picaresque division of labour. Simultaneously, the Daniells represent ethnographic costumes, (which in later artistic investigations would function as a primary index for denotation of caste) with *fakirs* often seemingly out of place on Calcutta's main streets (fig.36).

Whilst such marketing, poetry, prints and canvases celebrated Calcutta's glittering white town, its benevolence and cultural promise, colonial artists represented the Black Town in very different ways. Contemporary travelogues criticised the Indian quarters as 'that scattered and confused chaos of houses, huts, sheds and caves, alleys, windings, gutters, sinks and tanks which jumbled into an undistinguished mass of corruption, equally offensive to human sense and health', as images of confusion once applied to the white town were now

⁵³ *Calcutta Chronicle*, July, 17, 1786, (22x17.5 inches), price 12 gold mohurs, coloured in watercolour (my emphases).

transposed to form a distinct orientalism.⁵⁴ Although Indian agency was generally curtailed by the Calcutta press, every so often reports of rioting, fires and thieving surface, indicative of a subaltern underclass.⁵⁵ In Old Fort William the Indian market was demolished to be replaced by registered shops under the disciplinary colonial gaze, 'the old bazaar composed of an irregular and confused heap of straw huts, not only collected filth and threatened contagion but proved in fact an asylum for every thief that escaped the hands of justice in Calcutta; robberies were of course daily committed without the possibility of detection'.⁵⁶ Thus personal and social disease needed curtailing by colonial town planning, as character and environment coinformed, within colonial opinions of morality.⁵⁷ It was widely believed that national constitutions resembled the dominions in which they resided, here is taken to a microcosmic level, which signified the need for reform rather than the fatalism which would define later racial classifications.⁵⁸

However, north and south Calcutta were defined by a 'spiritual

⁵⁴Bayly,1990 p.106.

⁵⁵See for instance the *Calcutta Gazette* April 9, 1789 and February 10,1785 for details of both robberies and fires. Such accounts on another 'picaresque' level accompanied tales and reportage of rioting, tigers, monsoons, warfare and rebellion in Bengal and other parts of India which further served to insulate Calcutta's white town through the constructions of others.

⁵⁶*Calcutta Gazette* August 30, 1787. Kate Teltscher, *India Inscribed* (Delhi,1995) p.145. For the spread of a contagion of small pox throughout Calcutta see the *Calcutta Gazette* January 8,1789.

⁵⁷Harrison, 1999 chapters three and four, David Arnold, 'Introduction: Tropical Medicine before Manson' in Arnold (ed.) *Warm Climates and Western Medicine* (Amsterdam,1996) pp.6-7. See also Diana Wylie, 'Disease, Dirt and Gender in Late Twentieth-century Perceptions on Empire' and T.R.Metcalf, 'Architecture and the British Empire' both in R.Winks (ed.) *The Oxford History of the British Empire: Volume Five Historiography* (Oxford,1998) pp.277-289 and pp.584-595.

⁵⁸Harrison,1999 p.13 and chapter four, Clarence Glacken, *Traces on the Rhodian Shore: Nature and Culture in Western Thought from Ancient Times to the end of the Eighteenth Century* (Berkeley,C.A.1967), M.Banton, *The Idea of Race* (London,1977), N.Hudson, 'From Nation to Race: the Origin of Racial Classification in Eighteenth-century Thought', *Eighteenth-century Studies* 29 (1996) pp.247-264 and Ivan Hannford, *Race: The History of an Idea in the West* (Baltimore,1996).

geography' of magnificent temples and mosques, as well as bustling commercial quarters which would have augmented the colonial rhetoric of Calcutta as great Anglo-Indian entrepot.⁵⁹ In what ways was 'Indian Calcutta' represented by British artists; how far were choices determined by aesthetic boundaries erected either locally or imposed by the metropolis, which either erased or adumbrated social anxieties? In turn we must explore how far artistic decorum was strained by such subjects.

In the few instances where the Black Town did appear in colonial topography of the 1780s, it signified as Other to the White Town's glittering affluence, which further acerbated apartheid and hardening prejudices between the British and Indian communities, as well as creating distinctly aesthetic modes of elision and denigration.⁶⁰ The Daniells' *view of Govinda Mitter's Black Pagoda on Chitpore Road* (fig. 41) inverts the key virtues demonstrated in their depictions of the white town in such views as *St. John's Church* (figs 39, 40 and Map Two).⁶¹ In the last issued of the twelve views, the artists represent the grand ecclesiastical portico as the British flock for morning service, their *palanquins* lining up to enter the newly-built glistening church, the overgrown mausoleum of Job Charnock demonstrating the enduring spiritual and historical significance of this ground, once burial site for the Old Fort William.

⁵⁹Sudipta Sen, *An Empire of Free Trade* (Pennsylvania, 1998) chapter two, Susan Gole, *Indian Maps and Plans from the earliest times to the advent of European Surveys* (Delhi, 1989) and Bayly, 1996 chapter eight.

⁶⁰For apartheid at the heart of the colonial city see Anthony D.King, *Colonial Urban Development* (London, 1976).

⁶¹In early surveys, some of north Calcutta's trading *ghats* are marked, some of which were used by the colonial commission houses, occasionally the Black Pagoda and the Deb Mansion; Naba Krishna Deb held great Durga Puja celebrations here and he also gifted land for the building of St John's Church (deeds and transactions in the private collection of the Deb Family, Shobha Bazaar; I am extremely grateful to the Deb family for this information).

View of Govinda Mitter's Pagoda is very different in its agenda. The Black Pagoda was the fourth issued print after the first three aquatints which followed a clockwise route around Tank Square which make the contrast all the more startling; there are few signs of bustling commerce as the imposing pagoda is obscured by huts and there are no crowds waiting to enter. As in the rest of their Calcutta views, the Daniells have taken the time of day to be uniform; nearly midday, signified by the use of shadows, which would not have been the busiest hour for ritual at the temple as it is subordinated to an empty homogenous time. The temple was in fact never finished, so does not offer the surveillance over the view that the public buildings of the white town present. The staffage are seated smoking in ruined houses, the only activities are an English man and his *hircarrah* racing along Chitpore Road to the south and an Indian beating his bullock, a pose reminiscent of Hogarth's *Second Stage of Cruelty* indicative of indolence and a slow enervating pace of life, where the temple is not bestowing spirituality on to the community.

Chitpore Road appears not as a location where action occurs, but as an aesthetic object, as a picturesque artefact to be appreciated for its decayed textures, whose indolence is qualified by being othered to views of the White Town, which by implication needs to discipline the indigenous population to elevate them from enervating climatic indolence.⁶²

By the time of the Daniells' *Oriental Scenery*, published in London, they depicted the Black Pagoda, (1797-8) in a very different manner.⁶³ (fig. 42) Their

⁶²Harrison, 1999 p.159.

⁶³ *Oriental Scenery* was the most ambitious print scheme of India; 144 aquatints issued 1795-1808 at a cost of £210.

Twelve Views had been intended primarily for local colonial consumption, to provide funding for their tour of the Ganges Valley whilst *Oriental Scenery* represents an enormous geographical range of Indian monuments to an international viewing public, where the imperative is to re-present native Calcutta on a par with the best of India's heritage. Hence the pagoda is seen from the far side of its tank as an imposing structure; in scale it has been increased dramatically as conversing figures and holy cows bathing in its tank create a very different mood of distinct religiosity and sociality.

When the Company surrounded itself with persuasive representations of its rule, there were gaps between performance and projection, revealing anxieties about how to govern, sanitise and reform; an preoccupation which extended to an ethnographic gaze even in its own capital city. Baltazard Solvyns' 'two hundred and fifty coloured etchings descriptive of the manners, customs, character and dress and religious customs of the Hindoos' revealed a very distinct agenda by way of a critique of former topography, taking Calcutta to be representative of all of India's ethnographic variety.⁶⁴

In Solvyns' opus, the categorisation of caste was closely associated with

⁶⁴His agenda was 'to delineate the character, customs and manners, the persons and dresses of the inhabitants of Hindustan, their implements of husbandry, manufacture and war, their modes of conveyance by land and water the various sectaries of religion with their peculiar ceremonies and the appearance of the face of the country'. The late R.P.Gupta suggested that as Solvyns was not British, this allowed him to take greater 'disinterested' interest in Indians rather than previous British artists who were all too dismissive. I am grateful for this suggestion: interview, Calcutta, April, 1998. Urmila De of St Catharine's College, Oxford is currently undertaking doctoral research on Solvyns; I am extremely grateful to Urmila for sharing her fascinating ideas about this painter: 'Balthasar Solvyns and his Hindoos: The Reading of an Orientalist Picture Book'. Also see M.Archer, 'Baltazard Solvyns and the Indian Picturesque' *Connoisseur* clxx (January to April, 1969) pp.12-16, C.Pinney, 'Colonial Anthropology in the Laboratory of Mankind', in Bayly, 1990 p.252 and Teltscher, 1995 pp.129-131. See also Louis Dumont, *Homo Hierarchicus* (Chicago, 1966), Arjun Appadurai, 'Is homo hierarchus?' *American Ethnologist* 13 (1986) pp.45-61, Ronald Inden, 'Orientalist constructions of India', *Modern Asian Studies* 20 (1986) pp.401-446 and Gloria Godwin Rahejia, 'India: caste, kingship and dominance reconsidered', *Annual Review of Anthropology* 17 (1988) pp.497-522.

occupational ranking, which, along with dress, religion and physiognomical reading provided a five-point identifying system analogous to Company projects of surveying and classifying Indians (fig 43).⁶⁵ Solvyns drew on established scholarship which examined the *Laws of Manu*, as providing four main caste divisions and he further divided caste by his own organisational scheme, which he at no time claimed to be hegemonic.⁶⁶ 'Early colonial ethnography was thus both unsystematic and still in the service of regime that remembered the struggle of conquest, that could not yet afford to dehistoricise and recast Indian society'.⁶⁷

He stressed the scientific, Linnaean and Buffonesque rigour of his work, based on a 'minute' observation and abstraction from particularities, so that each figure denotative of caste and occupation is presented as a single specimen.⁶⁸ The singularisation of the sub-racial divisions may have provided a fresh, direct visualisation appealing by image also to the imagination, yet it also 'permits a more complex conceptual operation' away from observable facts to disquisition

⁶⁵Chris Pinney, 'Classification and fantasy in the construction of caste and tribe', *Visual Anthropology* 3 (1990) pp.259-288 and Bernard Cohn, 'The census, social structure and objectification in south Asia' in Cohn, *An Anthropologist Among Historians* (Delhi, 1987).

⁶⁶Solvyns was initially encouraged in his scheme by William Jones, who was in the process of translating the *Manu dharma shastras*; the Brahmin normative text on social mores and customs. Solvyns was closely associated with two British painters in Calcutta: John Alefounder and A. W. Devis, the three are recorded living and exhibiting together through the early 1790s and all three proposed ethnographic schemes. Although Solvyns refers to caste through his work, especially noted in his first section entitled '66 prints of the Hindoo casts with their respective professions' his use is ambivalent and not included in the full title of his opus which sets out his agenda: *A Collection of 250 coloured etchings, descriptive of the manners, customs and dresses of the Hindous* (1796; OIOC 1799 edition).

⁶⁷Dirks, 1992, p.65. See N. Dirks, 'Guiltless Spoliations' in C. Asher and T. Metcalf (eds.) *Perceptions of South Asia's Visual Past* (Delhi, 1994) and Susan Bayly, 'Caste and Race in the Colonial Ethnography of India' in Peter Robb (ed.) *The Concept of Race in South Asia* (Oxford, 1995) pp.165-218.

⁶⁸Thomas, 1994 chapter three, L. Schiebinger, 'The anatomy of difference: race and sex in eighteenth-century science', *Eighteenth-century Studies* 23 (1990) pp.387-405. See also George Louis le Clerc, Count of Buffon, *A Natural History, General and Particular* trans. W. Smellie (London, 1866).

upon character, which was often far from plausible, as caste divisions were objectified, yet apprehended in a rigorously subjective fashion.⁶⁹ Each caste possessed an ‘appropriate physiognomy and its characteristic features’: ‘the Brahman has a mild and pious air; the Kuttery is haughty and bold in appearance’.⁷⁰ The system possessed its own self-evident logic which is reliant on the artist’s ability to express a ‘universal’ taxonomy of emotion as mediated by each caste; Brahmins look pious and the warrior caste look bold, as appearance discloses identity in an entirely unproblematic fashion which appealed to a hermeneutic sociability.⁷¹

Although proposing that certain emotions are evident from their physiognomy and apparel, in terms of bodily representation, there is little to indicate the effects of ‘division of labour’ (as were being proposed in London by artists and theorists such as James Barry). Each figure possesses the same build - taugth, muscular bodies, albeit differentiated by varied skin tones denoted by coloured washes, where emaciation, poverty and the different degress of physical exertion are entirely absent.⁷² Such uniformity in appearance could be explained in part by Solvyns’ adherence to certain artistic as well as scientific processes of abstraction and classification, as well as indicating the still difficult

⁶⁹Thomas, 1994 pp.82-83.

⁷⁰ Solvyns,1799 pp.9-10 and Teltscher, 1995 pp.130-131.

⁷¹Solvyns,1799 catalogue p.1 He concludes that the ‘appearance of features, habits and character strongly mark the inhabitants of different provinces and some of the original castes can not be denied but it is impossible to reduce into a system in a work of this kind.’ The works of Linneaus and Buffon were well known in their type of classifications of specimen and emotion. On a domestic level, Adam Smith’s *Theory of Moral Sentiments* (London,1759) provided a very detailed account of different emotions and many of the circumstances in which they arise; so that on certain levels a discourse of sentiment could be coalesced as well as othered by early anthropological accounts.

⁷²For Barry’s ‘division of labour’ and its effects on notions of a central form see Barrell, 1986 chapter two. See also Barrell, ‘Visualising the Division of Labour: William Pyne’s *Microcosm*’ in his *The Birth of Pandora*, (London,1992) pp.89-118.

dialectic between the representation of 'local' nature and the 'universal'.⁷³

'Instead of trusting to the works of others, or remaining satisfied with the knowledge contained in preceding authors, I have spared neither time nor pains, nor expense, to see and examine with my own eyes, and to delineate every object with the most *minute accuracy*'.⁷⁴ Thus the unclassifiable, overwhelming, excessive and sublime variety of Indian life is here reduced to the containable, with the type of rigour associated with botany.

Although Solvyns avoided the Daniells' overview, his topography was regulated in other ways.⁷⁵ By extension of his 'orientalised division of labour' as classification; some of Solvyns' 'specimen' are quoted in his crowded topographical views.⁷⁶ (fig. 30) These served as simulatory street experiences, as sites and sights to order and translate seeming social chaos; as a visual equivalent to the numerous linguistic manuals being published, both of which provided epistemological as well as picaresque power as India's variety was subsumed to single publications.⁷⁷

⁷³Barrell, 1990. Solvyns did later propose a series of three hundred heads of Hindous, to be annexed to his other scheme; which would focus on the differentiations of physiognomy as the area where greatest difference between the castes was indicated, even without dress and occupational iconography. Glacken, 1967, chapter fourteen, Hannaford, 1996 pp.205-213 and J.Pickstone, 'Ways of Knowing: Towards a Historical Sociology of Science, Technology and Medicine', *British Journal for the History of Science* 26 (1993). Solvyns' decision to present classicised, idealised bodies could also be projected on to the character of such figures who can very loosely and superficially be termed 'noble savages'. However such associationism was at times complicated by the letter press which warned that certain castes, particularly lower household stewards were dishonest.

⁷⁴Solvyns, 1799 p.1 (my emphasis).

⁷⁵John Barrell, 'The Public Prospect and the Private View: The Politics of Taste in Eighteenth-century Britain' in J.C.Eade (ed.) *Projecting the Landscape* (Canberra, 1987) pp.15-35.

⁷⁶I owe this observation to Urmila De; conversation winter 1999.

⁷⁷In this there are parallels with colonial linguistic enquiries. In the crudest sense, George Hadley's *Compendious Grammar of the Current Corrupt Dialect of the Jargon of Hindustan* (London, 1796) provided a series of conversations which could be learnt in order to cope with inevitable social situations. Like Hadley, Solvyns 'rehearses' social scenarios; including a section of 35 prints of servants in the domestic concern of European families.

In collapsing geographical distance between colonial self and other, Solvyns created temporal distance between Bengali and colonial positions within modernity:

As is the present race of the Hindoos *we see perhaps with little change*, the customs, features and character - the religious mysteries and public amusements of their ancestors at an age when the inhabitants of few other parts of the globe were in a state of civilisation, their attachment to their ancient religion having preserved to them their primitive manners, amidst the influence of commerce with foreigners and the fanatic tyranny of their Mohammedan conquerors.⁷⁸

He creates an image of a people who although enjoying extensive commerce and by implication at least a limited 'sociability' with other nations, have 'progressed or regressed' little, but rather their culture is fossilised (here on display as if in a museum).⁷⁹ They have remained insulated; contact suspended at the level of the 'economic', retaining their 'original' culture, which in an oblique manner also justified the Company's preoccupation to fix certain ancient brahmanical legal texts as 'canonical' and characteristic of Indian society and traditions.⁸⁰

Solvyns created a distinct spatial and spiritual geography unlike that previously represented by artists, in works such as *Hook Swinging*. (fig 46) He shifts topography away from the limited sphere around the colonial public buildings to encompass north, eastern and south Calcutta and its diverse

⁷⁸Solvyns, 1799 p.2 (my emphasis)

⁷⁹Edward Said, *Orientalism* (New York,1978) p.94, J.Fabian, *Time and the Other: How Anthropology Makes its Object* (New York,1983) and B.McGrane, *Beyond Anthropology: Society and the Other* (New York,1989) and James Clifford, *The Predicament of Culture* .

⁸⁰Deborah Poole, 1997 introduction and B.Cohn, *An Anthropologist and the Historians and other essays* (Delhi,1987) and *idem.*, 'The Command of Language and the Language of Command', in R.Guha (ed.) *Subaltern Studies IV* (1985). See also Thomas,1994 pp.22-24.

populations to the spectacle of a Shiva devotees, wires attached to their shoulders, swung from a representation of the god's great wheel (*charka*) which represented the cycles of the cosmos.⁸¹ However from a sacred ceremony, Solvyns translates it in to a commercial activity: 'the rich hire the poor to perform penance ... which is believed to answer fully the purposes for obtaining absolution'.⁸² Such views appealed not only as a distinct ethnography to accompany early colonial enquiries in to Bengali folk culture, but also on a less esoteric level as an orientalised alternative to the representation of European popular culture; the sacred, profane and sarturnalian are combined.

Yet the concern to represent Hindu ritual did not always sit comfortably with his topography. For instance, his representation of the Kali temple in south Calcutta is melancholic as opposed to both his *Hook Swinging* and to the crowded scene produced by a Murshidabad artist of *Worship at a Kali Temple at Titaghar, Bengal, 1798-1804* (fig. 45) representing ablution, resonating with the sound of music-makers, brahmins hold garlands and goats are carried to sacrifice - their meat distributed amongst the poor - one of the chief rites of such temples.⁸³

Although very different from contemporary Company school art, Solvyns drew artistic inspiration from a colonial taste for Indian art readily available from *patuas* in Calcutta's bazaars.⁸⁴ (fig. 47) These took the form of

⁸¹ Bayly, 1990 pp.223-224. Like sati, hook swinging was to be increasingly condemned by the Company state.

⁸² Solvyns, 1799 p.10.

⁸³ Add Or. 1128 (OIOC). For similar instances see M.Archer, *Company Painting in the India Office* (London,1972) and Archer with G.Parlett, *Company Painting in the V&A* (London,1992).

⁸⁴ I am grateful to P.J.Marshall for suggesting a comparison between British prints and *pats*. The ongoing research of Urmila De focuses much more lucidly on such issues.

series of Indian occupations, which like Solvyns' work, usually focussed on a single figure but unlike Solvyns' construction of narrative by way of a standing figure surrounded by his working implements-as-attributes, facing the colonial viewer who is by implication a potential commercial client, such Indian schemes represented each figure at work, unaware of his viewing public. Whilst Solvyns' labour force was almost entirely male, *pats* represented far more women, engaged in selling sweetmeats, cleaning cotton, or pounding rice.⁸⁵

Solvyns was thus situating his project between the burgeoning market for both British prints and Indian 'souvenir art'.⁸⁶ Whilst the *pats* belonging to Company officials seem to have been commissioned or purchased at random, Solvyns sought to fix a colonial system as a 'scientific' framework.⁸⁷ In one sense, he was colonising a very popular Indian art; occidentalising and 'elevating' its subject matter, whilst also asserting his own imagery as part of this 'ethnographic grid', hoping to appeal to the same public as were purchasing *pats*.⁸⁸

Public Art and Free Speech

The nature of colonial power produced a particular form of reality in Calcutta which was radically different from Britain. In civic topographical views

⁸⁵For example Add Or. 1215-1219 (OIOC). In this sense, they were far closer in terms of the representation of labour to Arthur William Devis' scheme for *Bengali Manufactures* 1786-1793. For more on Devis' scheme see my chapter three.

⁸⁶For their hospitality and extensive knowledge of early Calcutta *pats* derived from their own art collections I am extremely grateful to R.P.Gupta and Nikhil Sarkar; Spring, 1998. In the India Office see Add Or. 1127-1130; 1235, Add Or. 1147-1174; 1230; Add Or. 1098-1126; 1234; Add Or. 1175-1182, 1184, 1186-1192, 1203, 1206-7, 1211-13, 1215-1220, 1222, 1226-7, 1229. They are all in watercolour and dated c.1798-1804.

⁸⁷These collections of *pats* contained on average 19 drawings per set and illustrate more the collectors' whims than a desire to re-construct an exact social system of Calcutta's Hindu population.

⁸⁸See Ratnabali Chatterjee, *From the Karkhana to the Studio* (Delhi, 1990) pp.45-73; p.45 and Banarjee, 1998 pp.118, 130-137.

we rarely see Britons.⁸⁹ Calcutta's imposing civic facades revealed nothing to the wider public; political information concerning their internal machinations was tightly constrained. Edmund Burke criticised the make up of Company service; 'the Company in India does not exist as a national colony ... the English in India are nothing but a seminary for the succession of officers. They are a nation of placemen:- they are a commonwealth without a people'.⁹⁰ P.J.Marshall suggests that although no coherent will to 'creolisation' existed, a growing sense of 'white consciousness' evolved in Calcutta: 'whites in India in or out of the Company's service were coming to see themselves as a political community with rights to assert'.⁹¹ 'The community as a whole may have lacked political power, but its constitutional elements ... had been extremely adept at extracting privileges for themselves by means that approached the political'.⁹²

In Europe, the public sphere has been identified as existing within the intermediary realm between the government and the people; providing a locus of legitimacy and authority independent of and exercising surveillance over, the

⁸⁹A few Britons occasionally appear as in the Daniells' *View of Writers' Building*, 1786-8 where an English man reading is lifted by Indian bearers in his palanquin and an English couple can be seen in their carriage. English women in particular are never shown out strolling in the streets of Calcutta. It is only Solvyns' topography which includes mixed crowds going about their individual business or else watching festivals such as Charak Puja. The general dearth of female staffage makes an important contrast with Lambert and Scott's much earlier image of St.Anne's Church and with other parts of empire- London and the West Indies. See *Canaletto in England* (Birmingham, 1995) and D.Morris, *Thomas Hearne and his Landscape* (London, 1989), especially plate eight.

⁹⁰E.Burke, Trial of Hastings Speech February 15, 1788, quoted in P.J.Marshall, 'The Whites of Colonial India, 1780-1830: A Failed Colonial Society?' *Trade and Conquest* (Aldershot, 1993) pp.26-44. See his 'British Immigration into India in the nineteenth century' in P.C.Emmer and M.Morner (eds.) *European Expansion and Migration: Essays on Intercontinental Migration from Africa, Asia and Europe* (Oxford, 1992).

⁹¹Marshall, 1993 p.42. See also Homi K.Bhabha, 'DissemiNation: Time, Narrative and the Margins of the Modern Nation', in Bhabha (ed.) *Nation and Narration*. (London, 1990) pp.291-322.

⁹²Marshall, 1993 pp.43-44.

state.⁹³ An expanding print media with public meetings and voluntary associations gave expression to this 'autonomous' public discourse. Yet Habermas' definition of the public sphere through rational discussion ignores that conflict was a driving force and cornerstone of the public sphere, that did not merely surface with its later disintegration.⁹⁴ From its inception the bourgeois public sphere's claim to represent general will utilised a powerful rhetoric of exclusion as it was always an unstable mixture of different types of publicity; a site of discursive contestation and a potentially unpredictable process which rather than singular was accumulative.⁹⁵

'The institutions of civil society in the forms which they had arisen in Europe always made their appearance in the colonies precisely to create a public domain for the legitimation of colonial rule'.⁹⁶ The alignments between administration, economy, governmentality and their refiguration within a public sphere were very different within colonial modernity as the colonial state although aggressive and exclusive, needed to forge discursive or conciliatory zones with its British and Indian subjects.⁹⁷ Ideologies of participation and the primacy of representation within this schema, were to play an increasingly central role during imperialism where 'public' rituals were not empty reverberations of a hollow crown, a poor theatrical substitute for actual power,

⁹³Habermas, 1989 creates the public sphere as a fourth term, distinct from family, state and marketplace. R.Sennett *The Fall of the Public Man*, (London,1977) pp.16-17. John Brewer, 'This, That and the Other' in D.Castiglione (ed.) *Shifting the Boundaries* (London,1995) pp.1-21.

⁹⁴Kruege and Negt,1990 introduction.

⁹⁵See Rose and Miller, 1992 p.179.

⁹⁶P.Chatterjee 1993, p.237.

⁹⁷D.Haynes, *Rhetoric and Ritual in Colonial India* (Berkeley,C.A.1991) with regard to late nineteenth-century elite of Surat Haynes argues that symbolic behaviour determined by rhetoric and ritual were not devoid of political power, but potent sources of collectivity for the assertion of rites and rights.

but highly charged and politically powerful albeit it in a very distinct manner from the operations of quotidian bureaucratic governance.⁹⁸ For the most part the state at once created and defined 'the public'. By effecting channels through which the colonial 'public' could be heard, the state entrenched itself as the sole arbiter of which discourse was legitimate and so delimited the 'public' from the 'private'.⁹⁹

In Calcutta, the funding for public art like that of public buildings and entertainment, was raised through subscription which encouraged and relied on the contribution of prominent members of society for their support as every public building from the Court House to the Arsenal, was decorated with art.¹⁰⁰ The first public canvases were canvassed by the Supreme Court which was the focus of all public ritual and ceremony into the 1790s as well as being a controversial space, infamously exemplified in the case of Nandkumar, who was hanged for forgery in June 1775, to the horror of the Hindu population.¹⁰¹ Not only did it receive strong criticism from Indian subalterns and elites, but also from the colonials themselves, who petitioned Parliament for its removal.¹⁰²

⁹⁸T.R.Metcalf, *Ideologies of the Raj* (Cambridge,1995) p.185.

⁹⁹S.Freitag, 'The changing nature of the public in British India', *South Asia*, 14 (June 1991) pp.65-90.

¹⁰⁰Collective groups elected artists who were well rewarded; Kettle was paid £580 for his portrait of the Master of the Grand Lodge in 1775 and Devis paid £2,530 for a portrait of Cornwallis in 1793; Archer, 1979 p.269. The public art of portraiture was tempered by a few allegories such as Home's *Mars and Britannia* for the Arsenal. (Home's sitter's Book, Heinz Archive). Contemporary newspapers reveal that public buildings were decorated inside and out with transparencies of landscapes, battle scenes and allegorical figures; W.Seton-Karr (ed.) *Selections from the Calcutta Gazette* (Calcutta,1864) volumes one to eight.

¹⁰¹S.J.Stephen, *The Story of Nuncomar and the Impeachment of Elijah Impey*, two volumes, (London, 1885) p.193 tells the tale of immense Hindu grief in Calcutta as 'grief and sorrow were on every face, yet to the last, the multitude could hardly believe that the English really purposed to take the life of the Great Brahmin'.

¹⁰²Marshall, 1993 p.30. See also Ghulam Hussein volume three section xiv where the Supreme Court is listed amongst one of the vices of the English in their ruler as Bengal governors. See also B.S.Cohn, 'Law and the Colonial State' in his *Colonialism and its Forms of Knowledge* (Princeton,1997) chapter three and Radhika Singha, *A Despotism of Law* (Delhi,1998). Even

‘The respect and veneration which the natives have hitherto manifested for the government daily decreasing ... a spirit of contempt for its authority and for Europeans in general heretofore unknown diffusing itself among the natives.’¹⁰³

Consequently its supporters gave the court a morale boost, commissioning a congratulatory portrait of Impey from the artist Tilly Kettle who sat on the jury of Nandakumar’s case, and who with other supporters, petitioned the Supreme Judge Elijah Impey.

We have all of us had occasion, many of us as jury men, to observe through the course of the full exercise of the various jurisdictions vested in your court, the candour, wisdom and moderation with which you have conducted all their proceedings ... We request your Lordship that you would be pleased to sit at full-length to the painter to whom we shall appoint to draw it. We propose to put it up in the Town Hall or some other public room, merely as gratification to our sentiments of esteem and respect for you, well knowing that your virtues and the services you render to the public will event a much more durable monument to your name and character.¹⁰⁴

Thus Impey was to become object subjected to their choice of artist, representational strategies and site, as a totemic if transient cultural and political token. The Chief Justice replied:

The protection of the laws is the only protection that can constitute with a free government ... The eyes of all the inhabitants of the settlement are upon us then by that means become judges of our conduct and will bestow on us censor or confidence in proportion as we deserve the one or the other.¹⁰⁵

contemporary travelogues condemned the Supreme Court; for example Asiaticus pp.38-39.

¹⁰³ *Journal of House of Commons* xxxviii 97. in P.J.Marshall, 1993 p.30. William Hickey records violent rioting at the court house; Hickey, 1913-25 volume two pp.178-180.

¹⁰⁴ *Bengal Past and Present*, January to June, 1925 p.123 (my emphases)

¹⁰⁵ *ibid.*, p.124.

Through his deferential definition of the settlement's visual superintendence of the court's procedures, Impey attempted to bestow on his supporters (and by implication, also his critics) the sense of a collective sphere, where the public's surveillance and criticism acted as a form of censor and framework for the workings of Justice.¹⁰⁶ The resulting portrait (fig. 48) provided a distinct ideological focus, hung above Impey's head in the Old Court House, as part of the regalia of British law heightened and magnified in the colonial context.¹⁰⁷ Impey was represented fully garbed in his robes of office, with the collar of the Supreme Court, taken from a low view point, peering down on the rabble of the court below, hand on his legal text and a great classical pillar of enduring Justice, providing the main support of the composition, within a grandiloquent and somber mode where representative and representation are elided in order to reinforce an ontological affirmity of Justice, affirmed also by a second portrait petitioned for the New Court.(fig 49) Impey is full-frontal, full-length and imposing, his hand lifted as part of the swearing-in ceremony, prophesied as the Saviour of Justice, as the collision between individual, the institution and higher virtues are conflated within his figure in a powerful image.

Away from the Court House, we need to examine the ways in which public perceptions about art were circulated and engrained on public

¹⁰⁶This mutual surveillance creates immense flattery and carries the ideological notion of an autonomous public sphere to new extremes, whereby it can have influence on the ways in which government conducts itself within a colonial context. At the same time perhaps such a rhetoric removes autonomy from this public sphere and resituates it far more intimately with the working of the state. At least in Impey's speech, the rhetoric of the 'governmentalisation of the state' whereby techniques of control through surveillance were deployed, is temporarily inverted; or at least the discursive complexities of such assertion of a rule by law are emphasised.

¹⁰⁷I am extremely grateful to his Honour the Lord Chief Justice of the High Court, Calcutta for permission to view the valuable collection of legal portraits in the judges' private chambers, the library, the committee room and in Court Number One. See also Hickey, 1913-25 volume two, p134.

consciousness through the agency of the press.¹⁰⁸

The civilised world affords no similar instance in the rise and culture of the arts and to such perfections Calcutta this day affords the arts which depend on the luxuries of society and the tangibility of fashion are arrived at the summit of perfection ... in splendour London now eclipses Rome and in similar respects Calcutta rivals the head of empire. But in no respect can she appear so eminently so as in her publications. If in Europe the number of publications gives the grounds to rationate the learning and refinement of particular cities we may place Calcutta in rank above Vienna, Copenhagen, St. Petersburg, Madrid, Venice, Turin, Naples or even Rome.¹⁰⁹

Despite Calcutta's great number of newspapers, free speech was severely curtailed, epitomised by the fate of James Hickey's *Bengal Gazette* which bitterly criticised Calcutta government's 'despotic' corruption that clashed with his definition of 'English liberty'.¹¹⁰ Calcutta's authorities were accused of pilfering marble from the ancient kingdom of Gaur in order to construct 'St. John's-in-the-swamps', Hastings for trying to bribe each of his fellow counsellors with £100,000 and Impey for his venality and nepotism as a protagonist in the destruction of English Liberty which must be checked by the creation of an informed public sphere:

Mr. Hickey considers the liberty of the press to be essential to the very existence of an Englishman and a free g*****t. The subject showed his full liberty to declare his principles and opinions and every act which tends to coerce that liberty is tyrannical and injurious to the community

¹⁰⁸Graham Shaw, *The Press in Eighteenth-century Calcutta* (London, 1981) notes that from 1780-90 3-5 presses, 1791-7 7-10 presses, as many as 40 printers and 24 weekly periodicals and newspapers. The printing quarter was situated within the commercial quarter close to Tank Sqaure. There was no Indian owned press until that established by Babu Ram in 1807 at Kidderpore. Ashit Paul (ed.) *Woodcuts in Nineteenth-century Calcutta* (Calcutta, 1983) and Nikhil Sarkar, 'Printing and the Spirit of Calcutta' in Chaudhuri, 1990 pp.128-136.

¹⁰⁹William Duane, the editor *The World*, 1792; see Chaudhuri, 1990 p.128.

¹¹⁰*Hickey's Gazette* October, 2 1780 and also William Hickey, volume two p.176.

the press is the medium through which opinions are discriminated among the people ... (it is) the most efficacious machine to protect and shield the subject from tyranny and despotism.¹¹¹

Likewise few colonial limners in Calcutta escaped Hickey's attack. Artists were depicted as government hirelings, albeit hopelessly incompetent, clumsy mouthpieces for the trumpeting of Company dignity through its leading personalities.¹¹² Such a strategy thus affected their status as 'liberal arts' infused with common sense and freedom from *etatisation*, which he linked strongly to the earlier generation of painters and poets, especially Gay, Swift and Hogarth.¹¹³ Calcutta society's obsessive concern with face painting at the expense of more abstract and elevated art forms, is deflated by Hickey's accusations that artists are unable to hit on likeness, the most fundamental aspect of a portrait, which was also the only, aesthetic demand of this community thus destroying any aspiration to higher virtue.¹¹⁴

C*****1 P*****e waits only for the finishing of his portrait by Mr. Seaton to march the detachment. The picture is a very masterly performance and one of Mr. Seaton's *chefs d'oeuvre*. The c*****1 is painted at full length ... surrounded by a seraglio of Oriental Virgins, fulfilling what Gay says - 'thus stand like a Turk' 'with my doxies all round'. The ladies are in weeping attitudes, bemoaning the melancholy

¹¹¹ *Hickey's Gazette*, July 22, 1781 also Banarjee 1998 chapter one, especially pp.25-26.

¹¹² He first assaulted Willison who resident at Arcot carried out costly commissions for Warren Hastings. Hickey casts the painter in the role of illicit private trader, advertising jewels and sweetmeats won as bribes from Arcot, which implied his ill-gotten gains: 'for sale by private contract by Mr. George Willison, diamonds, rubies and other precious stones set and uncut ... sweet meats' *Hickey's Gazette*, July 29, 1780. Willison was at this time selling his goods before leaving for Britain, which Hickey playfully attacked.

¹¹³ In this Hickey was looking back to an earlier era and iconography as associated with Hogarth and his ideology for art. See Ronald Paulson, *Hogarth: His Art, Life and Times* (London, 1971), *idem.*, *Breaking and Remaking: Aesthetic Practice in England, 1700-1820* (New Brunswick, 1989).

¹¹⁴ See for instance his sardinism as directed at Mr. Smith, a now little-known miniaturist 'thy pains can never reach thy will' *Hickey's Gazette* December 12, 1780.

event of the c*****'s departure to the wars. The painting of *Hector and Andromache* (described by Homer) is a fool to it, in point of expression.

Mr. Seaton has made a very patriotic scene of it indeed,- nothing is wanting but to introduce, if possible, the couplet from the *Beggar's Opera*: 'How can I leave these pretty hussies without a single tear or tender sigh'.¹¹⁵

The mixed visual idioms which albeit confused and motley, still manage to convey a central message of corruption. Sentimentalised Homeric subjects as were being popularised in London by Angelica Kaufmann, are here unexpectedly transmuted in a modern colonial context, garbed then garbled into an incongruous mock heroic scene; Hector is replaced with a corrupt Company officer off to make war with the Marathas, and Andromache is ousted by a bevy of weeping *bibis* within the framework of the bawdy stage-play, Hogarthian and iconoclastic in ambiance.¹¹⁶ Such an imaginary representation also parodied the types of India-related pictures being exhibited in Britain - military portraiture and oriental customs featuring Indian women, which are now coalesced.

Hickey's paper was fast forced out of circulation, its proprietor imprisoned, although by then another weekly paper- the *India Gazette*, had come into existence which mildly ridiculed the lack of a public sphere as both place and process.¹¹⁷

Not many months before Bengal was somewhat abated, the discussing

¹¹⁵*Hickey's Gazette*, January 13, 1781. (my emphasis)

¹¹⁶In actuality Seaton (*India fl.1774-1780*) employed a very plain style of portraiture. Archer,1979 pp.108-117.

¹¹⁷However no governmental press regulations were drawn up until 1797. In this sense therefore the major deterrent against sensationalism in the press was not through the law but through the threat of imprisonment applied arbitrarily by the colonial authorities. We have already seen from early surveys of the city that a large number of gaols and asylums were erected. See also David Arnold, *Colonizing the Body* (Berkeley,C.A.1993), Singha, 1998 and Alavi, 1995, for the Company state's use of the prison and the asylum to experiment with forms of control.

humanists of the colony were not infrequently entertained with manuscript accounts, hand-bills, and other manuals of advice with diverse ... productions; either hacked about like state-minutes in circulation, or else nailed up against military barriers, ecclesiastical porticoes, judicial piazzas or other places of *diuretic* resort.¹¹⁸

In Calcutta, 'diuretic' refers not to the over consumption of caffeine in coffee-houses which had long become the vanguards of polite society in London, where papers and political prints were perused, but with urination in its civic spaces, where public notices were ignored, even despoiled. Although several newspapers were later founded, they reserved their attacks less for a covert government, than for each other in the desperate search for a marketable sensationalism.¹¹⁹

In this part of the world the channels of intelligence are few - the novelty of character trifling - the follies and vices of the people, from a confined sphere of action, not strikingly conspicuous. The subjects of merriment and laughter but thinly scattered. The vicissitudes of fortune, though often times extraordinary, seldom worth relation.¹²⁰

Rather than a 'public' sphere this was a social forum of private gossip, which fast moving, transient, libellous and ultimately petty, excluded extensive publication.¹²¹

¹¹⁸*India Gazette*, April 7, 1781. (my emphasis)

¹¹⁹See *The Calcutta Friday Morning Post* June 28, 1793, for a long article assessing the content of other papers: the *Calcutta Chronicle* 'is entirely filled with extracts from the prints of last week ... we recommend this would-be-witty and satirical editor to take up the trowel instead of the pen as better suited to his talents', the *Calcutta Gazette* finding 'the late supply of European intelligence being just exhausted, this paper has today returned to its usual state, undistinguished but by the superior number of advertisements'.

¹²⁰*India Gazette*, February 14, 1785.

¹²¹'The bounds of society are here very much circumscribed, authentic information on great subjects is necessarily held in profound secrecy and prudentially limited to a few, except by those few, public opinions are not to be formed with ease or certainty' *The World*, October 10, 1791. *Calcutta Chronicle* January 4, 1794 'a few remarks on the delicate situation of an editor of a public paper in this country where interest is potent and self importance very general and as usual everywhere ever jealous, ever watchful.' See also *Hartly House* (London, 1789) volume one pp.59-60.

Print capitalism took a variety of forms, not always as written material but equally as graphic information which was often more crucial to the articulation of political sentiments.¹²² A tight colonial press mechanism which kept political debate out of general circulation, by extension affected the existence of political visual satire, so feted in 1780s London as the paradigm of English Liberty in its mixture of humour, opinion and licentiousness, as an outlet to deflect and rechannel underlying political anxieties.¹²³ Whilst it can be argued that Calcutta resembled British provincial towns in that it relied in political satire from the metropolis, Calcutta, catapulted to the administrative capital of a substantial Indian empire, now possessed enormous political intrigue and significance in ways foreign to small British towns.

Social satire digging at idle clerks and the social mores of the white town began to appear in the 1790s, paradoxically becoming the most public art form in Calcutta's white town.¹²⁴ Whilst public portraits were paid for by distinct factions, so that there was always a minority or majority who disapproved of such canvassing for canvases, James Moffat's subject matter drew attention to the everyday arduous of staying well or just alive in Calcutta, had appeal across

¹²²Linda Colley, *Britons* (New Haven, 1992) chapter three and Nicholas Thomas, *In Oceania* (1997) asserts the importance of a visualised print capitalism; for the wide political dissemination of prints, both satires and straight art. For the rise of social caricature from the 1770s see Diana Donald, *The Age of Caricature* (New Haven, 1996) chapter three, Timothy Clayton, *The English Print* (New Haven, 1997) and John Brewer, *Pleasures of the Imagination* (Oxford, 1997).

¹²³For metropolitan-generated political satire throughout this era see the pioneering work of M.D. George, *English Political Caricature to 1792* (Oxford, 1959), *British Museum Catalogue of Political and Social Satires* volumes v-xi (1874-1954), H.M. Atherton, *Political Prints in the Age of Hogarth* (Oxford, 1974), Donald, 1996 and N.K. Robinson, *Edmund Burke: A Life in Political Caricature* (New Haven, 1996).

¹²⁴Moffat produced the only social satire in eighteenth-century Calcutta; a subject which as received scant attention. He arrived in Calcutta aged 14 in 1789 where he learnt the art of print making. Even through the recession he seems to have continued full-time and his social satires were later sold to William Holland, one of London's leading printsellers and republished in glossier versions, c.1805. He died in Calcutta in 1815.

the settlement so that by bypassing partisan sentiments as public virtues and grand pretensions are replaced with metaphysical rumination of the proximity of death; a displaced ontology centering around domestic living.¹²⁵ By taking the 'public sphere' back to its familial roots, Moffat's works raises complex sentiments which highlight the compromise to metropolitan notions of 'civilised society' when thrown into a colonial context. Death from food poisoning and debt, increased racial prejudice and a hardening imperialism, formed the framework of the 1790s White Town as Moffat shifted his trajectory from the vicious or moronic mores of a supposedly polite colonial society, to Indians who are fixed and stereotyped in new and harsh ways.¹²⁶

The power of stereotypes operated through repetition and immediate cognition. The negative verbal representations of the Black Town as dirty, diseased and immoral are here transposed to the heart of the White Town in an ironic process of reversed colonisation. In *The Bengal Kitchen* (fig. 50) servants crouch low in a dingy, sooty kitchen, smoking *hookahs*, mixing bodily fluids with food, constituting an unhealthy image which is subversive to the high civilised white interiors of Zoffany's conversation pieces, to A.W.Devis' representations of rural Bengali luxury manufactures and sharply juxtaposed with Baltazard Solvyns' visually ennobled specimen. (figs. 51, 57, 58)

¹²⁵Moffat used etching with touches of aquatint, his most famous work being his *View of Gaur* published in 1808. He lived at Cossitolla Street and then at Bow Bazaar and made great use of the Calcutta press to advertise his skills. See Pauline Rohatgi, 'Topographical prints of Calcutta' *Indian Museum Bulletin*, 1988-9 pp.63-71. For drawings made by Moffat for his caricatures see M.Archer, *British Drawings in the India Office* (London,1969) numbers 494 and 495,496 and 497 which date from the period 1796-8 and feature ugly Britons dancing, ordering around their Indian clerks, as well as the *Bengal Kitchen* to be now discussed. Such drawings are executed in pen and watercolour in earth tones on crudely made paper. Important examples of Moffat's work are housed in the Lewis Walpole Library, Farmington, Connecticut.

¹²⁶Homi Bhabha 'The Other Question: Stereotype, Discrimination and the Discourse of Colonialism', Bhabha, 1994, pp.66-84.

Essentially intended to be funny in the same manner as his other satires by drawing attention to ‘uncouth types’, Moffat’s colonial imagery also reveals anxiety at the heart of the colonial home, with its armies of servants and its sickly Britons as the domestic sphere becomes the site for undercover tensions, where the civilising mission and *de facto* colonialism are undone.¹²⁷ Just as the Black Town was not closely mapped (in spite of Rennell’s rigorous mapping project across India) even closer to home, the colonial gaze (except for that of the artist who alerts attention to household mismanagement) seems not to extend to its own intimate spaces.

The servants are crudely outlined, the pigment applied so dark that it is difficult to denote their features; again indicative of evolving notions of dark skin as characteristic of dishonesty, as opposed to the pale skin, ‘honesty’ and ‘transparency’ of the *sahebs*, thus further adding fuel to developing prejudices of Asiatic indolence and immorality, in part explained by climatic determinism and evolving racial discourses.¹²⁸ In this sense art and pseudo-science conspired in the creation of a distinct self-other dichotomy and distinct colonial stereotypes. In stereotyping colonial power produced the colonised as a fixed reality at once an other yet knowable and visible; ‘the stereotypes gives access to an identity

¹²⁷Bhabha has argued that it is in the home that the ‘unhomeliness’ of colonial life is unearthed; 1994 p.9. See also Teltscher, 1995, pp.146-151 for an examination of servants’ subversion of colonial masters and Singha chapter four. Servant insurrection is dealt with in the anonymous novel, *The Memoirs of a gentleman who served several years in the East Indies* (London,1774) and Edward Ives’ *Voyage from England to India* (London,1773) in the latter servants use their cunning. Colonial preoccupation with hygiene is examined by Mark Harrison, 1999 pp.21-22: ‘Prior to the late eighteenth century, Europeans rarely made derogatory remarks about Indian hygiene ... environmental deterioration and the assumption that the Indian population was a reservoir of dirt and disease led to a transformation of attitudes towards ill health. Whereas most diseases had hitherto been regarded as products of climate, they were now seen as man-made and therefore preventable’.

¹²⁸Harrison, 1999 p.95 and John Mitchell, ‘An Essay Upon the Causes of the Different Colours of Peoples in Different Climates’ in J.Martyn (ed.) *The Philosophical Transactions 1743-1750* volume ten (London,1756) pp.926, 934, 947-949.

which is predicated as much as on mastery and pleasure as it is as anxiety and defence, for it is a form of multiple and contradictory belief in its recognition of difference and disavowal of it'.¹²⁹ At least on an aesthetic level, as soon as the other could be represented it could be appropriated and controlled, although beneath and within such confidence harboured profound anxieties.¹³⁰

Thus within the first thirty years of Calcutta's accession to Bengal's capital we see the evolution of distinct aestheticising processes whereby an ideology of commerce and its other, functioned as the framework within which representations of Indians were constructed. There is no evidence until the early years of the next century of Indian painters sketching pejorative and stereotypical images of Britons, which would either have operated as a combative discourse or on its own terms.¹³¹(fig. 128)

Whilst recent studies concerning the imperial information-order have focussed largely on the drive for empire in newly acquired or foreign territories, Calcutta operated as a crucial crucible for melting and forging new colonial representations or shaky experimentations which could be applied further afield.¹³² Public identity in Calcutta manifested itself through many different art forms; from civic views, to public portraits and social satire, all of which gave rise to competing notions of collectivity and exclusion, targetted at an upper

¹²⁹Homi Bhabha, in F.Barker (ed.) *The Politics of Theory* (Colchester,1985) p.199.

¹³⁰Jean Baudrillard, *In the Shadow of the Silent Majorities ... Or the End of Society and Other Essays* trans. P.Foss (New York,1983) pp.20-22, Robert Young, *White Mythologies: Writing History and the West* (London,1990) pp.43-44.

¹³¹R.Chatterjee,1990 chapter three.

¹³²Valuable studies of colonial information gathering are David Ludden, 'Orientalist Empiricism', C.Breckenridge and P.van der Veer (eds.) *Orientalism and the Postcolonial Predicament* (Philadelphia,1993), C.A.Bayly, *Empire and Information* (Cambridge,1996) B.S.Cohn, *Colonialism and its Forms of Knowledge* (Princeton,1996) and Matthew H.Edney, *Mapping an Empire* (Chicago,1997).

stratum of colonists rather at Indians or poor whites. The beneficent vision of the city existed as a grand illusion; the state allowed for civic identities through social rituals and the deployment of a few material symbols, but ultimately this was a community frustrated by the bounds imposed on its public sphere.

Chapter Three

Spectacular Speculation

Art in the Game of Chance, Calcutta, c.1772-1795.

*No picture is made to endure nor to live with
But it is made to sell and sell quickly.¹*

This chapter will explore the diachronic development of a highly sophisticated market for British art in Calcutta. I shall propose that metropolitan imagery, especially prints, formulated a fundamental role in determining both the buying patterns and the taste of the colonial and Indian mercantile communities. During the boom of the early 1780s, the Calcutta press celebrated the dissemination of vast quantities of imported art; its purchase dilating and inflecting the city's crucible of crucial hermeneutic rituals. A fetish for European-style houses, totemic nationalistic ceremonies, often transfused through the medium of metropolitan luxuries, articulated colonial difference rather than emulation; when the very act of imitation by this British diaspora both extruded and precluded subversion.²

In spite of stimulating recent research into prints representing India, the

¹Ezra Pound, *Cantos, Canto XLV*.

²Mimicry and imitation are now well established themes in postcolonial studies; Homi Bhabha, 'Of Mimicry and Man' and 'Sly Civility' in *The Location of Culture*, (London,1990); pp. 85-101. For distinct patterns of taste, supply and demand see Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste*, (London,1979; sixth edition,1999) p.579 note 28 'the fallacy of the trickle-down model is that it reduces to an intentional pursuit of difference what is in fact an objective, automatic effect of the differentiation of the consumers' conditions, disposition and differentiation of the field of production'.

impact of the print import trade has been entirely neglected.³ Hence I shall analyse the nascence of the print trade in India from premature metropolitan manoeuvres to exploit Calcutta, to the establishment and exegesis of a more solvent trading network. Such a trajectory will target the imbrications of the dynamic alterity of producers and consumers in the battle to consolidate and create colonial taste. The familiar boundaries of both British and Bengali art economies collapsed, as diverse art forms were formulated in to a fluid and incommensurable dialectic; such pictures as locally-produced *pats*, etched ethnographic plates and elegantly aquatinted views of London, were often forced into direct competition, despite differences in aesthetic intentions, subject matter, visual locution, media and techniques. Yet as Calcutta never forged a coherent 'creole' nationalism, its values remained closely tied to the metropolis which questions the precise role of print trafficking.

Post-colonial studies have been preoccupied with issues of hybridity, creolisation, in-betweenness, diasporas and liminality in order to comprehend the mobility of ideas and identities generated by colonialism.⁴ 'Neither colonial social relations nor their representational codes can be seen as structures that are simply reproduced; rather, their persistence depends upon performance, upon practical mastery'.⁵ Strategic action in colonialism was transformative:

Just as the world of modern consumerism cannot be effectively

³See P.Rohatgi, 'Early Topographical Views of Calcutta', in *Indian Museum Bulletin, 1988-1989*, P.Rohatgi and P.Godrej (eds.) *Scenic Splendours: India Through the Printed Image* (Bombay,1989), *idem.*, *Under the Indian Sun* (Bombay,1995), *idem.*, *A Pageant of Prints* (Bombay,1996) and Ashit Paul (ed.) *Woodcuts in Nineteenth-century Calcutta* (Calcutta,1983).

⁴See Bhabha, 1994 and Robert Young, *Colonial Desire: Hybridity in Theory, Culture and Race* (London,1995); Young, *White Mythologies: Writing History and the West* (London,1990) see pp.141-156.

⁵N.Thomas, *Colonialism's Culture: Anthropology, Travel and Government* (Oxford,1994) pp.59-60.

understood if it is assumed that the mass of objects for sale cannot be manipulated and reconstructed according to taste fashioned within particular classifications and subcultures, the dynamics of colonialism cannot be understood if it is assumed that some unitary representation is extended from the metropole and cast across passive spaces, unmediated by perceptions and encounters.⁶

As Cohn states, 'the metropole and colony have to be seen in a unitary field of analysis'.⁷ The projects of state building in both countries were bound by legitimation, documentation, classification, many processes devised in India and then applied to Britain, as well as vice versa.⁸

Yet this should not underscore *colonial difference* and its operations; the instrumentation of such surveillance techniques were never identical in different locales; both state formation and its relationship to the role of art were very different in colonial modernity to its metropolitan formations.⁹ Calcutta was separated from London by substantial spatial and temporal distance. Key Company decisions such as plans to depose Siraj ud-daula, to accept the *diwani*; and the declaration of war under Hastings nor Cornwallis, were taken in Bengal without advice or knowledge of the Court of Directors and Parliament. The political distance was described as much as two years.¹⁰ The passing of acts and

⁶ibid., p.60.

⁷B.S.Cohn, *Colonialism and its Forms of Knowledge*, (Princeton,1997) pp.3-4. See also M.L.Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* (London,1992) and J.Codell and D.Macleod (eds.) *Orientalism Transposed: The Impact of the Colonies on British Culture* (Vermont,1998) introduction.

⁸Cohn, 1997 p.4.

⁹See P.J.Marshall, *Problems of Empire* (Oxford,1968) and *East India Fortunes* (Oxford,1976) K.N.Chaudhuri, *The Trading World of Asia and the English East India Company, 1660-1760*, (Cambridge,1978), J.Brewer, *The Sinews of War: War, Money and the English State, 1688-1783* (Oxford,1989) and C.A.Bayly, *Imperial Meridian: The British Empire and the World, 1780-1830* (London,1989), Huw Bowen, *Revenue and Reform* (Cambridge,1991) and his 'British Conceptions of a Global Empire, 1756-1783' in *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, and P.J.Marshall (ed.) *The Oxford History of the British Empire Volume Two: the Eighteenth Century* (Oxford,1998).

¹⁰Marshall, 1968 p.29. See also F.G.Whelan, *Edmund Burke: The Political Morality of Empire*,

the assignment of patronage prescribed the only areas where London had tentative control.

On the publication of his *Twelve Views of Calcutta*, (figs 70, 71) William Baillie wrote to Humphry, 'it will appear a very poor performance in your land I fear. You must look upon it as a *Bengalee* work.'¹¹ Such a play on taste dissemination-prejudice of 'core-periphery' signified on many levels. Earlier print makers such as the Daniells, were assisted in their civic views by Bengali painters who stained, coloured and probably even printed these aquatints. Contiguously, Baillie was acknowledging the difference in taste between London and Calcutta; despite the fact that the latter was to be increasingly influenced by the metropolis, which can also be seen by way of London's aesthetic traffic control. Whilst the exportation of art to India was encouraged, heavy customs duties were levied on British art sent from India to London; a policy whose intransigence excluded the development of an equitable periphery-centre art circulation.¹²

Art in Calcutta: Luxated Luxury?

(Pittsburgh, 1995).

¹¹William Baillie to Ozias Humphry HU/4/118 (my emphasis).

¹²M. Archer, *India and British Portraiture, 1770-1825* (London, 1979) p.440 note 46 observes that although some painters did send their works to London exhibitions, they were not encouraged to send over finished pictures when in India. Until 1793, heavy customs duties were levied on finished pictures entering Britain. We can gauge what rates may have been for an earlier era by examining those for 1809: two guineas for pictures under two feet square, four guineas for pictures two to four feet square, and six guineas on those of four feet square and upwards. See also William Hickey *Memoirs* (London, 1913-25) volume four pp.470-471. Overall, this policy has interesting definitions about what constituted the 'foreign' as well as the direction taken in art trafficking. William Hodges *Travels in India During the Years 1780, 1781, 1782 and 1783* (London, 1793) p.13 noted that in Calcutta, 'An European lands here in the midst of a great city ... where art no centinels with the keen eye of suspicion, no stoppage of baggage'. Opposed to this ideology of hospitality, revenue from internal customs duties was a vital source of Company income; P.J.Marshall, *East India Fortunes* (Oxford, 1976) and from a very different perspective Sudipta Sen, *An Empire of Free Trade* (Pennsylvania, 1998) chapter three.

‘Nations under a high state of the commercial arts are exposed to corruption, by their admitting wealth, unsupported by personal elevation and virtue as the great foundation of distinction’.¹³ Such fears were inflated by colonial territory which transgressed any claims to being a ‘nation’.¹⁴ Early Calcutta appeared even in the Company’s metropolitan records, as a den of iniquity, indolence and decadence, Clive declaring it to be ‘one of the most wicked places in the Universe ... Rapacious and Luxurious beyond conception’.¹⁵ ‘Expenses ... are so excessive and no person choosing to retrench ... a very few years will reduce a man from opulence to beggary’.¹⁶ P.J.Marshall has indicated that by the 1750s, a taste for luxuries already defined Calcutta’s consumptive patterns.¹⁷ The Court of Directors horrified at the lavish lifestyles of its lowliest clerks, stipulated they should have only two instead of twenty servants, and prohibited the extensive use of elaborate palanquins; regulations hardly heeded:

The want of subordination and the inattention to our interest are not the only evils that require redress - we apprehend there must be total change of manners in the settlement before we can expect a rising set of valuable servants. The *luxury and extravagance* that prevails must give

¹³ Adam Fergusson, *Essay on the History of Civil Society* (London, 1767) pp.254-255.

¹⁴ See Huw Bowen, *Elites, Enterprise and the Making of the Overseas British Empire* (London, 1996), N.Kaehn, *The Power of Commerce: Economy and Governance in the First British Empire* (London, 1994) and B.Bailyn and P.D.Morgan (eds.) *Strangers in the Realm: Cultural Margins of the First British Empire* (London, 1991).

¹⁵ Lord Clive quoted in the introduction piece to the Calcutta lots 84-98; Christie’s catalogue, *Visions of India*, (June, 1998), p.73.

¹⁶ Richard Barwell to A.Beaumont cited in Marshall, 1976 p.14.

¹⁷ Marshall, 1976 p.23 indicates that there is some evidence of imported luxury consumption in Calcutta at a very early date, which effectively demystifies notions of Calcutta as being cleaned up from a nabobi to a more virtuous identity in part by way of luxury goods as rather identities were shifting, ‘nabobs’ seem always to have been consuming reasonable amounts of luxuries which complicates the supposedly virtuous significations of British art. A list of European residents in Calcutta 1766 indicates that this was a community with sophisticated tastes; including a wig maker, pastry cook, jewellers, a draftsman and painter.

way to simplicity and economy.¹⁸

If anything, ostentation and luxury consumption increased, reaching an apogee in the early 1780s. The rake William Hickey observed that ‘at the time I arrived in Bengal everybody dressed splendidly. Being covered with lace, spangles and foil’, so that Calcutta appeared to be a ‘brilliant if slightly tawdry imitation’ of Europe.¹⁹

However I shall assert that whilst metropolitan stereotypes depicted colonial Calcutta as surfeiting with wealthy, near grotesque and exotic ‘nabobs’, art consumption was minimal. Although its inhabitants spent lavishly on bejewelled silk gowns, expensive victuals and entertainment, numerous servants, grand carriages and palanquins, they recognised painting as an ‘unstable luxury’, deserving exiguous rather than exigent patronage.²⁰ The memoirs of Calcutta’s residents revealed a dialectic between necessity and luxury transforming the practical and ethical benefits and draw-backs of ‘luxuries’ in a colonial context:

Living is very expensive on account of the great rent of houses, the number of servants, the excessive price of all European commodities, such as wine and clothes &c. The perspiration requires perpetual changes

¹⁸ Court of Directors to Fort William in N.K.Sinha (ed.) *Fort William India House Correspondence* (1949) entry for March 4, 1767 (my emphasis). In some respects, Calcutta was an ‘abstract’ site on to which to focus British orientalist and nabob stereotypes. In fiction it was described as a ‘mine of exhaustless wealth’; anonymous, *Hartly House*, (London, 1789), three volumes, volume one, p.1 and as ‘that region of gaiety and pleasure’; anonymous, *Disinterested Nabob: A Novel*, three volumes, (London, 1787) volume one p.1.

¹⁹Hickey, 1913-27 volume two p.138 and Spear, *Nabobs* cited in P.Pal and V.Dehejia, *From Merchants to Emperors* (New York, 1986) p.23. See also J.Sekora, *The Concept of Luxury in Western thought From Eden to Smollett* (Baltimore, 1977) and C.Berry *The Idea of Luxury* (Cambridge, 1994).

²⁰Such attacks on nabobi luxuries reached their height with descriptions of Mrs. Hastings’ riding habit: ‘people who saw the dress were universally of the opinion that it would not be worth less than from five and twenty to thirty thousand pounds sterling’. For conspicuous consumption in Calcutta see S.C.Ghosh, *The Social Condition of the British Community in Bengal, 1757-1800* (Leiden, 1970) pp.119-125 and G.D.Bearce, *British Attitudes Towards India 1784-1858* (Oxford, 1960) and Percival Spear, *Nabobs* (Oxford, 1963).

of clothes and linen; not to mention the expenses of palanquins, carriages and horses. Many of these things which perhaps luxuries, are, in this climate, real necessities of life.²¹

Inevitably this questions the transmuted status of art when thrust into far climes, severed from the severe ethical checks, conspicuous consumption and social dilemmas of Britain.²²

Although in a metropolitan context some were following Mandeville in maintaining that luxury had at least as many beneficial as destructive aspects, in India, orientalism remained a powerful caution (if not oft-heeded) against over consumption.²³ The classical definition of luxury, blamed a generic East for disorientating and thence corrupting the martial values of Rome; a precedent already a source of moral anxiety in eighteenth-century Britain, and exacerbated by the acquisition of an Indian empire.²⁴ Closer in time and directly relevant in space, the British believed that a fetish for 'Private Luxury' which arose from India's 'enervating', 'effeminising' climate, brought the fall of the Mughal Empire; double proof that the lure of luxury could be luxated into an irresistible, destructive force which could consume civilisation from its core.²⁵

²¹Jemima Kindersley, *Letters From India* (London,1777) p.292.

²²T.Veblen, *Theory of the Leisure Class* (London,1912) and G.Vichert, 'The Theory of Conspicuous Consumption in the Eighteenth Century' in P.Hughes and D.Williams (eds.) *The Varied Patterns in Studies of the Eighteenth Century* (Toronto,1974) pp.253-267.

²³Details here : See also D.Solkin *Painting for Money*,(New Haven,1992), John MacKenzie, *Orientalism: History, Theory and the Arts* (Manchester,1995), Sekora,1977 and Beth Tobin, *Picturing Imperial Power: Colonial Subjects in Eighteenth-century British Painting* (Duke,1999) chapters one and four.

²⁴G.J.Barker-Benfield, *The Culture of Sensibility* (Chicago,1992) p.133 notes that Hume distinguished between innocent and vicious luxury - the latter directly associated with Asiatic tyranny which had the capacity to destroy liberty through despotism and effeminacy. See also Edward Said, *Orientalism* (New York,1978), Lisa Lowe, *Critical Terrains* (London,1991) and John MacKenzie, *Orientalism: History, Theory and the Arts* (Manchester,1995).

²⁵For the classic study of negative representations of the Orient see Edward Said, *Orientalism* (New York,1978). See also the Baron de Montesquieu, *Espirit des lois* (Paris,1748), Robert Orme, *Historical Fragments of the Mughal Empire* (London,1768) and T.R.Metcalf, *Ideologies of the Raj* (Cambridge,1995) p.9.

Calcutta's commerce, conducted through money-lending at high levels of interest, appeared to the metropolis as lacking the moral probity and propriety of property; a mercantile society *in extremis*. Former Company servants and private traders William Macintosh and Joseph Price, bickered over indicted indolence of the English in India; washed, dressed and fed by armies of servants, transformed textually into passive statues, sapped of all manly vigour; feminised figurines who recalled Belinda in Pope's *Rape of the Lock*.²⁶

The reformation or careful control of luxury and laxity were deemed vital by medical theorists who warned that greed and immorality swiftly led to mortality.²⁷ Tight clothing, a diet of meat and too much liquor led to 'torpor' in the liver which could contribute to a painful death.²⁸ Doctors prescribed not only frugality but that Britons 'accustom themselves to what are called the native dishes, which consist of the most part of boiled rice and fruits, highly seasoned with hot aromatics' and that 'early rising, the cold bath, a morning walk, temperate meals and evening ride are the best rules for preserving health in India'.²⁹ The memoirs of Calcutta's colonial inhabitants both affectionately and disdainfully recall a society of riotous luxuriance, dissipation and superfluity of

²⁶Teltscher, 1995, pp.162-163. See James Raven, *Judging New Wealth: Popular Publishing and Responses to Commerce in England, 1750-1800*, (Oxford,1992); chapter eleven, 'Assumptive Gentry and the Threat to Stability', pp.221-248 and chapter eight, 'Reactions to Luxury and Fashion' pp.157-182.

²⁷See Poonam Bala, *Imperialism and Medicine in Bengal* (Delhi,1991), David Arnold (ed.) *Warm Climates and Western Medicine* (Amsterdam,1996) and Mark Harrison, *Climates and Constitutions* (Delhi,1999). James Bontius, *An Account of the Diseases, Natural History and Medicines of the East Indies* (London,1769), James Forbes, *Oriental Memoirs* (London,1813) four volumes, James Lind, *An Essay on Diseases Incidental to Europeans in the Hot Climate with the Method of Preventing Their Fatal Consequences* (London,1768) and Raynal, Abbe, *A Philosophical and Political History of the Settlement and Trade of the Europeans in the East and West Indies* eight volumes (London,1783).

²⁸Clark, 1773 p.131 and John Wade, *A Paper on the Prevention and Treatment of the Disorders of Seamen and Soldiers in Bengal* (London,1793) pp.12-13.

²⁹ Charles Curtis, *An Account of the Diseases in India as they appeared in the English Fleet ... in 1782 and 1783* (Edinburgh,1807) p.280 and Forbes,1813 volume one p.83

supping and slurping, where men drank as many as five bottles of Madeira a day, where food fights were customary and where inhabitants died not from consumption but its excess, surfeiting on arrack or pineapples.³⁰

Such a reputation coloured a variety of seemingly 'polite' portraits by leading artists - luxury signified as both object and subject for representation and display.³¹ The oeuvre of Calcutta's most feted painter, Johann Zoffany, reveals a miasma of ostentation and opulence; from *Mr. and Mrs. Hastings* (fig. 52) bedecked in their finery (Marion Hastings in a gold thread gown), a well dressed female servant in tow, with pearls about her neck, indicative of her good treatment, the *Auriol and Dashwood families* (fig. 51) taking tea under a jack fruit tree, to *Thomas Graham* (fig. 53) hookah in hand, red faced and overweight, the antithesis of the man in retirement enjoying country pursuits or moral, sensible improvement through learning.³² Whilst drawing their artistic precedents from well-known British compositions or sub-genres such as representations of companionate marriage, conversation pieces and Hogarth's

³⁰H. Brown (ed.) *The Sahibs*, (London, 1948), p. 51. Rose Aylmer buried at South Park Street Cemetery, died from a surfeit of pineapples; William Hickey possessed 60 servants; men supposedly drank as many as five bottles of wine a day, plus copious whisky and arrack and vast amounts of food were consumed: Fay, 1777, pp. 190-191 observed 'we are frequently told in Europe that the heat in Bengal destroyed the appetite ... on the contrary, I cannot help thinking that I never saw an equal quantity of victuals consumed ... a soup, a vast fowl, curry and rice, a mutton pie, a forequarter of lamb, a rice pudding, tarts, a very good cheese, fresh churned butter, fine bread, excellent Madeira'.

³¹Commissioning portraits from leading artists was subsumed within attempts to ape aspects of a British aristocratic lifestyle; S. C. Ghosh, *The Social Condition of the British Community in Bengal, 1757-1800* (Leiden, 1970) pp. 119-125.

³²Some charges in verse can be overlaid on to readings of such portraits; for example *The Rolliad*, lampooned a luxury-clad Marion Hastings; see also *Tickell's Ode in the Morning Herald*, 'Gods! how her diamonds flock/ On each unpowder'd lock!', as well as *Hartly House*. Rare sporting images include Zoffany's *Tiger Hunt* and similar subjects which decorated the *punkah* boards in Hastings' town house (Victoria Memorial). See also Karen Stanworth, *Historical Relations: Small Group Portraiture in 18th-century Britain, British India and America* (unpublished Ph.D., Manchester, 1994). I am grateful to Kate Retford for this reference. As such portraits were so expensive in India they were elevated to a status above that of their British counterparts in terms of price and exclusivity.

Captain Coram, each demonstrates a 'hybrid' life style; clad in clothes which make few concessions to the climate and drinking tea - a ritual once associated with effeminacy, social and internal deterioration, in an alien environment could be transformed to 'healthy' even a 'moral' activity, away from the consumption of more seductive and destructive eastern luxury.

Such orientalist portraiture acts as a nexus for issues of politeness and luxury consumption which if checked, would create a Company service capable of forming a long-term acclimatised colony in India; such optimism transposed from theories of geographical determinism derived from Herodotus and Hippocrates.³³ In this sense luxury became a physical threat as 'a warm climate relaxes the solids, dissolves the blood and predisposes to putrefaction'.³⁴

Doctors warned of the strain of a tropical climate on the body, in particular the nervous system, (whose proper functioning was believed to be crucial to correct aesthetic and physiological perceptions) in a foreign clime distended in alien ways, which held consequences for the means of producing and viewing art.³⁵

In Calcutta, the cost of living was exorbitant, so that art expenditure operated as an exclamation of symbolic capital; the ability to bestow resources

³³Harrison, 1999, p.3. Early optimism about gradual physical adaptation in India, such as tolerance of heat and food gave way to a pessimism by 1800 when Europeans began to accept their alienation in an Indian environment and rather to devise racial difference between themselves and their subject populations.

³⁴J.Clark, *Observations on the Diseases in Long Voyages to Hot Countries* (London,1773) p.269 and Harrison,1999 p.62. As we have seen in chapter two, Indians were often condemned for their indolence by Europeans; which was in part climatically determined and which threatened British 'national character' in India.

³⁵For art as determined through the elasticity of the nervous system see Edmund Burke, *Enquiry into... the Sublime and Beautiful*, (London,1757) and see Charlotte Klonk, *Science and the Perception of Nature*, (New Haven,1996). In his analysis of the effect of India on the British see Dr.James Lind, *Essay on Discourse Incidental to Hot Climates*, (London,1748) 'The parts chiefly affected ... are the brain and stomach or in other words the nervous system'. Thus we can surmise that very distinct notions of sensibility existed in colonial India.

on persons and objects even within the contractual nature of a market.³⁶

Astronomical prices for painting performed as recompense for British artists prohibited from trespassing in to other professions, thus pressurising a maximisation of commissions:

Mr. Tilly Kettle has obtained our license to proceed to Bengal to exercise his profession as a portrait painter on condition that he does not act in any other capacity or engage in any kind of commerce whatever, which you are to see is punctually complied with and in failure there of, he is to be sent to Europe.³⁷

Evolving from this position, Ozias Humphry's letter of permission from the Court of Directors stated that he was not in any case or form to accept 'any present, gift, donation, gratuitous or reward'.³⁸ His advisor George Willison warned 'never meddle with any merchandise or matters and to my profession to make no drawings unless to particular considerations- to take out materials for two years'.³⁹ Former Company official Edward Wheeler, instructed Humphry take his likeness to Calcutta, 'as introduction for himself', along with a selection

³⁶Economic and symbolic capital are so inextricably intertwined that the display of material and symbolic strength represented by prestigious affines is in itself likely to bring in material profits; 'symbolic capital is valid even in the market. A man may enhance his prestige by making a purchase at an exorbitant prices, for the sake of his point of honour, just to show he can do it'. P.Bourdieu, *The Logic of Practice* (London,1990) p.119.

³⁷Letter from the Court of Directors to Fort William; N.K.Sinha (ed.) *Correspondence of East India House and Fort William* (Delhi,1949) volume five November 11, 1768, p.151.

³⁸Humphry Correspondence, R.A. December 26,1784; HU/3/24. Similar compliance and regulations were established for Company officials, although these were frequently ignored as men indulged in several money making schemes which the Company seldom discovered unless particular complaints were made against such traders. The artists Caleb Whitefoord and Thomas Longcroft gave up professional painting as there was so little money to be had in the later 1780s; becoming cotton and indigo traders in Luckipore and in Awadh. The Company's attitude to professional artists attempted to confine them within a particular 'disinterested' moral ideology.

³⁹Willison also suggested that Humphry go first to Bombay but Humphry was anxious to work as fast as possible at Calcutta and Lucknow and return to London: Humphry Papers BL: Add Ms 22,951 Sitters Book ff.1-4. This volumes also contains a long list of materials for India including linseed oils, crystals and Wedgewood tablets, as well as portable soup. A double spread carefully analyses Willison's prices when in India in the 1770s; a half-length @ 150 pagodas and a full-length @ 300 pagodas. 'Whatever Willison did at the darbar was paid for double'.

of other works and prints.⁴⁰

Such commercial practice as ‘art dealers’ proved vital to painters’ survival in Calcutta, as very few could in actuality afford portraits by Kettle, Zoffany or Humphry.⁴¹ The medium of the press became a crucible for colonial artists who wished to transgress tight patronage circles in order to address wider publics, as newspapers became the sites where painters and engravers squabbled over subscribed print schemes. Painters’ battles were sharply juxtaposed with the numerous advertisements for sales of imported art.⁴² Here, the polite idioms, efficiency and regularity of such sales provided an economic even moral framework for an aesthetic sphere, distinctly lacking from strickening artistic practice.

The latest print schemes located Calcutta within the wider British empire. In the 1780s, (the decade when Britain had to come to terms with the rebellious American Colonies), loyalty to the mother country became paramount and the international art trade metamorphosed into a metonymy of patriotism through the medium of ‘print-capitalism’.⁴³ Despite such mythologising in Calcutta, prints were stolen or remained long unsold.⁴⁴ Consumers were never more than tepid in their support for any art forms, which by necessity

⁴⁰HU/3/11 December 1, 1784.

⁴¹Willison charged his colonial sitters £120 for a full-length canvas, Zoffany charged £300 for a double portrait and Devis and home charged £230 for a full-length portrait.

⁴²The first marketed mention of European sales of goods appeared in *Hickey's Gazette*, March 11, 1780 at Williamson and Duncan's Auction Rooms.

⁴³See B.Anderson, *Imagined Communities* (London, 1991) and W.Ivens, *Prints and Visual Communication* (London, 1996 edition). See also T.Clayton, *The English Print*, (New Haven, 1997), Raphael Samuel (ed.) *Patriotism: the Making and Unmaking of British National Identity* 3 vols. (London, 1989); L.Colley, *Britons, Forging the Nations, 1707-1837*, (New Haven, 1992) and E.Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism since 1780* (Cambridge, 1990).

⁴⁴For examples of stolen prints: *Calcutta Gazette*, September 7, 1786; prints stolen from William Hickey; *2 views of America and the West Indies* in green and gold frames, two oval prints belonging to a set of the *Sorrows of Werther*; Reward 5 gold mohurs.

reverberated back to the metropolis where print exporters experienced spectacular failures as much as success in a colonial market which remained ultimately unstable.

However from 1780s London, the British print export trade had grown beyond all bounds: 'In less than a quarter of a century our artists have exceeded those of the continent and the demand for British ornament and elegance has become a powerful branch of trade and a new source of national opulence'.⁴⁵ 'The calculation in all understandings is on the foreign sale being thrice above our own'.⁴⁶ In 1787 the total value of the print trade was now measured at £250,000 per year.⁴⁷ 'In the commercial state, the arts were central in producing tradeable commodities of direct consequence to the national economy and in exemplifying and promoting the levels of public and private virtue to which civil society should aspire and which it had thus far attained through the supply of artefacts supposedly of the highest level of aesthetic taste'.⁴⁸ Although an expanding international trade, print commerce revolved around intimate networks and personal trust, as high quality prints circulated through a network of ambassadors and artists, whilst middling stock was trafficked via established routes for luxury goods. Print-sellers, such as Carrington Bowles, established links to provincial and colonial book-sellers, as well as using the Post Office as a means of distributing their wares.⁴⁹

⁴⁵*The World*, January 4, 1787.

⁴⁶Clayton, 1997, cites *The World* February 3, 1787.

⁴⁷*ibid.*, p.262.

⁴⁸Geoff Quilley, 'The Imagery of Travel in British Painting with particular reference to nautical and maritime imagery' (unpublished Ph.D., University of Warwick, 1998) p.123.

⁴⁹Clayton correspondence, summer 1997. See also Ian Maxted, *London Book Trades, 1775-1800* (London, 1977); M.Harris, *London Newspapers in the Age of Walpole*, (London, 1987), G.A.Cranfield, *The Development of the Provincial Book Trade in Eighteenth-century England* (Cambridge, 1986), J.Feather, *The Provincial Book Trade in England* (Cambridge, 1985).

Whilst in London the first exhibited Anglo-Indian pictures were being transcribed into polite print idioms, private commissions for English engravings were transmitted to the south Indian court of Arcot: the nawab's European advisors organised a shipment of furniture consisting of card tables, lamps, mirrors, chairs, settees and 'six pieces of paintings to place in panels of a large room- twelve handsome engravings'.⁵⁰ Such oriental emporia won metropolitan applause:

The print sellers have at present an amazing run for exportation; the engravers and colourers are fully employed, so great is the demand for presents as well as trade in our East India settlements. The Indians in our interest are enraptured with views of our public buildings in the concave mirror.⁵¹

Retired Governors of Bengal Henry Verelst and Robert Clive disseminated their hybrid collections of Indian art, (which included English prints coloured in Calcutta by Indian artists), amongst the metropolitan cognoscenti, winning approval from Reynolds and Horace Walpole.⁵² Yet these early accounts rarely stressed British consumption of imported art; rather it is Indian agency which is reiterated; both in terms of Indians colouring European prints (a practice strongest in seventeenth-century imperial cities of Agra, Lahore and Delhi) to

However in Calcutta no separate specialist book-selling profession existed. Printers acted as book distributors as well as publishers: see Graham Shaw, *Printing in Calcutta to 1800* (London, 1981) p.22.

⁵⁰Mr. Morn to Robert Palk, January 24, 1767, BL:Palk Papers, Add Ms 34,686, f.14. Valentine Green produced a mezzotint after Swain Ward's portrait of *the Nawab of Arcot* c.1772, one of the earliest prints after a professional British artist working in India. Already best sellers were Kirskhall's prints after Lambert and Scott's views of the Company's trading settlements including old Fort William, Calcutta, c.1730.

⁵¹*London Evening Post*, January 22-4, 1767, Clayton, 1997 p.262.

⁵²'I can only say with respect to the Indian pictures that I found in a book of Mr. Verelst's among many others really Indian. He found me much struck with the red band (collar) of the clergyman ... He told me that he had in town several other English prints coloured by Indians in the same fantastic manner'. H.Walpole, *The Correspondence of Horace Walpole* (ed.) Wilmarth Lewis (New Havem, 1937-1982) 28 pp.62-63.

Indians impressed by recently imported art; the ultimate rhetorical legitimization for imposing a species of cultural imperialism, in India. Here it is prospects of London as viewed through a special optical device, which won attention: Indians were admirers of British art but also (by association) of the nationalistic messages which it conveyed.⁵³

With this enmeshment of artistic agency and its success in India, London-based print entrepreneurs Ryland and Bryer, sought to plunge into the gold rush, surging towards colonial, Indian mercantile and *nawabi* communities.⁵⁴ By 1769 they devised designs to convey a convoy of engravings and oils to Madras, anticipating profits of five hundred per cent; an unexceptional expectation.⁵⁵ In 1770 they loaned five thousand pounds in bonds to be repaid at 23% interest to Captain Mears of *The Egmont* and to James Haddock, Purser of *The Morse*, on the security of certain picture sales, which would be carried as part of their cargo space. Ryland and Bryer were so confident of success that they did not invest in counter securities, relying instead on the collateral of the furniture-maker John Linnell and a Monsieur Triquet, who were promised security of the copper plates from which most of the

⁵³India became a substantial market for imported art: see F.A.Wendeborn, *A View of England at the close of the Eighteenth Century*, (London,1791) volume one, p.191; quoted in C.Saumarez-Smith, *Eighteenth-century Design and the Domestic Interior in England*, (London,1993) p.304. Provincial and colonial booksellers usually carried out direct orders for clients; Clayton correspondence, summer,1997. There is also some evidence of private commissions executed for individual art patrons in India in the first years of empire: Hastings Papers BL: Add Ms 29,277 ff.72, 363 and 407.

⁵⁴I am very grateful to Timothy Clayton for the following information; correspondence summer 1997. See H.Hayward and P.Kirkham, *William and John Linnell: Eighteenth-century Furniture Makers* (London,1974) volume one pp.5-6, John Ryland, *Authentic Memoirs* (London,1784), A.M.Hind, *History of Engraving and Etching* (London,1914). Ryland had been apprenticed to the French engraver Ravenet and was nephew to the influential art patron Sir Watkin Williams Wynne.

⁵⁵In order to fund this project, Ryland raised £5000 by applying to James Walker of Spittlefields, promising high profits. For private trade and cargo space see Marshall,1976 pp.18, 220.

exported images and much of Ryland and Bryer's metropolitan livelihoods depended.⁵⁶

The art they were exporting was of the highest calibre. It included mezzotints by the celebrated Valentine Green and Thomas Watson, as well as several rare proofs and copies of valuable works commissioned from artists whose reproduction rights or marketing lay with Ryland, such as the oils of Joseph Wright of Derby, *Calm and Storm in Moonlight*, George Stubbs' *Lion and Stag* and the *Marquis of Rockingham's Stallion*, as well as attributed old masters obtained through London auctions and international dealers, such as Guido's *Mary Magdalene* effected a majestic merchandise.⁵⁷

However the ships returned in 1771 and 1772, the pictures soiled and unsold.⁵⁸ Madras had proved hostile to the extortionate prices as fixed by the print-dealers and the captains; a lack of communication left no room for manoeuvre, so that after months of deliberation, Ryland and Bryer's heavy investment erupted in to much publicised bankruptcy. Several years later Ryland was hanged for forging two East India bills of exchange; his engraving skills, life and death were inextricably linked to India.⁵⁹

⁵⁶Marshall, 1976 chapter two notes that captains were allotted 30% of cargo space for private trade in luxury goods an accepted way of boosting small marine salary. It was initially agreed that Ryland and Bryer were to be repaid at 25-50% although Ryland in order to persuade Mears made an additional private agreement that he would receive as much as 50% bonds taken out at 23% interest.

⁵⁷List of art, Public Record Office Bankruptcy Cases (hereafter PRO): PRO/B1/77 November 10, 1786, pp320-3. also PRO/C107/69; Christie's catalogue for sale of stock after Ryland's death March 1, 1784, which is the list of these pictures as they returned from Russia. Judy Egerton suggests that Stubbs as he took back his work back in part payment from Ryland, that Ryland and Bryer were acting as agents. I am very grateful to her for this suggestion. This art was of high quality but it included images which had been rejected by patrons, such as the *Marquis of Rockingham's Stallion*.

⁵⁸Much damage was caused to the stock on the voyage: PRO/C/107/69. The diaries of George Paterson, Eur Ms 379/2 (OIOC) note that the *Egmont* sailed for Britain August 21, 1770. f.27.

⁵⁹*Memoirs of William Wynne Ryland*, (London, 1784), featuring a sensationalist frontispiece of Ryland cutting his throat on the sight of the offices of Justice', also includes an account of his

Ryland's fate exhorted other private traders who sought personal extortion, to bleed India dry in defiance of the Regulating Act. Ryland and Bryer had attempted to encompass multiple markets, but finally their pictures were not even landed, due to high customs which discouraged speculation on shore, augmented by their lack of secure agents in Madras and Calcutta. It would seem that at this early date, that the art cargo was too specialised for a still very limited number of Anglo-Indian art lovers as the disposal of high grade luxuries depended on an intimate network of merchants, artists and diplomats; ignoring this network spelled disaster.⁶⁰

In spite of Ryland's premature failure, colonial consumers now wished to possess first-rate engravings at the expense of over-priced local oil paintings. Prints' physical fragility provided initial charisma:

What I formerly suggested of furnishing my apartments with prints, pasted to the wall cannot possibly prevail ... in any degree in Calcutta as people are forever unfix'd here. It being customary to let houses from month to month only, no person finds himself sufficiently interested in a house to decorate it in so costly a market. Framed prints which are moveable and transferable are in great fashion in India.⁶¹

Thus art acted as 'disposable splendour' which increasingly transgressed the necessities of tasteful decoration, thus questioning the 'chronopolitics of a public culture', as refracted through the modes and consumption of its art. The

trial and execution. He was charged on eight accounts, including forgery and fraud of both the East India Company and persons from whom the bill was tendered; at Fort St. George, Madras, by John Smith and Hector Munro for 510 pagodas with 5% interest. 'The chairman acquainted the Company that William Wynne Ryland who had been prosecuted for forging and altering bills of exchange was on Saturday last capitally convicted of altering a forged acceptance to a bill of £200.' Minutes of the Court of Directors, B/99, 1784, p.295 (OIOC). See also the *Whitehall Evening Post*, 19-22 April, 1783.

⁶⁰Clayton correspondence, summer, 1997.

⁶¹Ozias Humphry to Mary Boydell: Humphry Papers, HU/3/49 September 1785.

expected life time of a British resident was gauged at just two monsoons, so that personal property changed hands with lightning speed, thus affecting notions of collecting.⁶² A short-term clique demanded a constant supply of short-term art.⁶³

‘History ... is public time. That is, it is time experienced by the individual as public being, conscious of a framework of public institutions in and through which events, processes and changes happened to the society of which he perceives himself to be part’.⁶⁴ In Britain, modernity created a temporality ‘in keeping with the scale and diversity of the modern nation (which) works like the plot of a realist novel. The steady, onward clocking of calendrical time ... gives the imagined world a sociological solidity’.⁶⁵

Calcutta, lacking long-term personnel who could in any way fulfill the role of sovereigns, an evolving bureaucratic system provided a framework for solvency, as the life of institutions became divided off from the personal charisma of former *nawabi* rulers.⁶⁶ Early colonial rule brought to catachrisis a whole host of distinct notions of time; Bengali and British calendars and almanacs were the most frequently published books; watches were frequently presented as diplomatic gifts to Indian princes and Shi’ite chroniclers wrote wryly how the English were governed by their clocks.⁶⁷

Thus we see distinct tensions between colonial time and space in the

⁶²Archer, 1979 p.438 note 15 observes that 44% of the Bengal army died in India; only 4% in action.

⁶³Calcutta’s residents most marking cultural expressions were their tombs. See Barbara Groseclose, *British Sculpture and the Company Raj* (London, 1995).

⁶⁴J.G.A.Pocock, *Modes of Political and Historical Time in Early Eighteenth-century England*, in his *Virtue, Commerce and History* (Cambridge, 1985) p.91.

⁶⁵Bhabha, 1994, p.158.

⁶⁶See Radhika Singha, *A Despotism of Law* (Delhi, 1998) preface.

⁶⁷Shawe, 1981 p.41 almanacs far outnumbered other publications. See my chapter seven for the gifting of watches and clocks.

creation of a 'diasporic aesthetic and its uncanny disjunctive temporality'.⁶⁸ The tropical climate became associated with ruthless physical corrosion of 'markers of civilisation' such as architecture, in ways unknown in Britain. Calcutta was hardly the incarnation of Rome as celebrated by Edward Gibbon who stated that whatever the faults of such an enormous empire, its virtues would be remembered by the physical fragments left in its wake, primarily the arts. Cheaply-bricked and *chunam*-preened Calcutta was no match for the marble marvels of Ancient Rome or Mughal India: its public art collection consisted of an array of motley fragments- 'scraps patches and rags', including captured portraits of the King and Queen of France snatched from Pondicherry and portraits of the Awadhi nawabs which had to be 'repeatedly turned into the signs of a coherent national (or colonial) culture'.⁶⁹ Yet this 'decadence' could create a sense of 'fast time' and bestow on the city an illusion of being part of the landscape far longer than it had been; a trope especially exigent as it lacked a stable community, its youthful, short-term population advancing rapidly to their deaths.⁷⁰

Within a colonial context, if art was to survive, it should be a marker of ostentation, a short-term display of one's wealth which could be allowed to decay, in a similar vein to the purchase of an expensive gown and pair of bejewelled dancing shoes, soon to be worn out and stained with curry, gravy, Madeira and sweat. Hence society portraits in Calcutta, whilst valued primarily for their 'likenesses', expired before the resemblance to their tired, aging, (oft-

⁶⁸Bhabha, 1994 p.225.

⁶⁹ibid., p.45.

⁷⁰Edmund Burke in Whelan,1995 p.89: 'these men are sent over to India without maturity, without experience without knowledge or habits in cultivated life'.

ailing) sitters had faded.⁷¹ Thus we see a climatic assault not only on the colonial corporeal constitution, but also on familiarising symbols of the English constitution in the form of cultural artefacts.⁷² Zoffany's altarpiece in St. John's had to be restored just three years after its installation.⁷³ From sitters book, diaries and administrative records, restoration emerges an important part of artists' work in eighteenth-century Calcutta, despite the modernity of this art.⁷⁴

Whilst public buildings provided solvency with an at least semi-permanent art display, the rented homes of the short term residents appeared very different: 'space without places, time without duration'.⁷⁵ Although grand in size, being let unfurnished and lacking the moral cachet of property, they could not aspire to epitomise an exemplary society as in Britain.⁷⁶ Few residents possessed anything akin to an art 'collection', but rather an accumulation of pictures, which drawn from a limited stock produced a degree of homogeneity

⁷¹Rupert Featherstone, 'New light though Restoration of Oil Paintings in India by European Masters c1760-1830' in P.Vaughan (ed.) *Victoria Memorial* (Bombay,1998).

⁷²See David Arnold, *Colonizing the Body: State Medicine and Epidemic Disease in Nineteenth-century India*, (Berkeley,1993) pp.333-334. Early colonial medical texts stress the unhealthy region of Bengal as particularly hazardous.

⁷³The struggling artist John Alefounder was commissioned for this work by the Vestry of St. John's. His report of October 15, 1787, 'I have this afternoon aired and cleaned the mildew off the picture with the utmost care ... I fear the picture is injured by the mold, as it remains spotty after cleaning it off.' Church Wardens Records quoted by W.K.Firminger, 'Leaves from the Editor's notebook: Alefounder and the restoration of Zoffany's Last Supper', *Bengal Past and Present*, 3 (January to March 1909) p.163.

⁷⁴See Robert Home's Sitters Book,(Heinz Archive: also a photostat in OIOC) for his restoration. The Daniells were instructed by Macpherson to clean and restore pictures in the Old Court House before the arrival of the new Governor-General in 1786. For more recent problems of restoration, Mildred Archer and Robert Skelton's report: Archer Papers Eur Ms F236/467(OIOC) *The Conservation of Painting in India 1981-2 and 1984*. This notes a range of imported and locally produced oils in public collections throughout India: such as *Danae* attributed to Correggio in Pondicherry, works by Gainsborough, George Lambert and George Morland in the Prince of Wales Museum, Bombay to the value of as much as £60 million, but fast falling to decay so that she estimated that despite inflation and market surgence, by the year 2000 their value would have fallen by half due to their decay.

⁷⁵Louis Althusser, *Montesquieu, Rousseau and Marx* (London,1972) p.78.

⁷⁶See H.T.Dickinson, *Liberty and Property: Political Ideology in Eighteenth-century Britain* (London,1977) and Paul Langford, *Public Life and the Propertied English Man, 1689-1798* (Oxford,1991).

and by implication also symbolised a form of heuristic collectivity beyond public sites. ‘What would you say of an apartment forty feet high and one hundred and twenty feet square, lighted by five or six crystal lustres?’⁷⁷ Given the size of these apartments, an enormous amount of prints would have been required in order to create the desired effect of a ‘wall paper’ of engravings; an operative praxis which would have elevated Macklin and Boydell into billionaires.⁷⁸ However furniture was mismatched bric-a-brac:

Paper and wainscot are improper both on account of the heat, the vermin, the difficulty of getting it done, the rooms are all white walls but plastered in panels which has a pretty effect and are generally ornamented with prints, looking-glasses or whatever else may be procured from Europe.⁷⁹

In Britain plain white walls were associated with lower class interiors, bereft of sufficient funds to lavish on plaster work, expensive wall papers and other decorative schemes. Calcutta’s apartments were limed for medicinal purposes, sloshed down with crude disinfectant after the death of one tenant in preparation for re-letting, as well as being white-washed every year post-monsoon. ‘The inner apartments were not highly decorated, presenting to the eye only white walls, which however from the marble-like appearance of the stucco, gives freshness grateful in so hot a country’.⁸⁰ Gleaming and blanched on both the outside and the inside, such decoration functioned as a form of opulence *per se* -

⁷⁷John le Couteur, *Letters chiefly From India* (London,1790), pp.299-300. See also P.Spear, *Nabobs* (Oxford,1963) p.46.

⁷⁸In Britain from the 1740s, there was a fashion for pasting prints on the walls and on fire screens and print sellers even supplied selections of paper borders. This was deemed a virtuous activity for women. See Saumarez-Smith, 1993, pp. and Clayton, 1997 pp.75, 140, 254.

⁷⁹Kindersley, 1777 pp.278-279. For a brief discussion of Anglo-Indian interiors see Stanworth, 1994 pp.152-159. ‘The very eclecticism of the furnishings indicates a greater concern for authentic European articles than for any homogeneity of style’ and Tobin, 1999, chapter four.

⁸⁰Hodges, 1793 p.9.

in the creation of an 'aesthetic of whiteness'.⁸¹ Aside from the heat and the dust, noise, dirt, disease and clutter of street life (hardly indicated in civic views), interiors seemed cool, clean, sparse, almost sepulchral sanctuaries, attempting to impose a willed 'climatic determinism'.⁸²

Whilst in the 1760s Jemima Kindersley described a scramble for imported furniture, by the 1790s the fragility of such goods prescribed and transposed a 'minimalist aesthetic'.⁸³ Defined by functionality, economy and health, colonial houses were magnificent, far larger than any of its inhabitants could have afforded in Britain, which justified the inverse of their decoration in the creation of 'inside-out spaces'; less validated more, and more qualified less, their Spartan architectural splendour defended as a necessity:

All have grand peristyles of different orders, the doors and windows are large and the rooms lofty, on account of the excessive heat ... the walls are painted white, paper or tapestry are never used; they are sometimes hung with prints or pictures, but these are destroyed in a short time.⁸⁴

⁸¹I am grateful to Urmila De for this evocative phrase. Houses were chunam coated, limed in and out, servants wore white robes, colonial ladies preserved their pale skin from the sun and prints framed and glazed reflected white walls, at the heart of whiteness.

⁸²Thus we see a variety of othering strategies; also away from the commercial entrepôts and bazaars which were surfeited with pictures and luxury goods. Arnold, 1993 chapters one and two especially pp.32-33 'The medical commentators and topographers of the period began to build up a medical representation of India's pathogenic climate and landscape that was very different from the romantic vistas shown in the Daniells' picturesque aquatints of the period'.

⁸³M.Douglas and B.Isherwood, *The World of Goods: Towards an Anthropology of Consumption*, (New York, 1979) and C.Campbell, 'Character and consumption: an historical action theory approach to the understanding of consumer behaviour', *Culture and History*, 7 pp.37-48.

⁸⁴F.B.Solvyns, *Description de les Hindoos*, (Paris, 1808) p.123 and Robert Hardgrave, in P.Pal (ed.) *Changing Visions, Lasting Images* (Calcutta, 1990). The reference to all having 'different orders' once again alerts us to Calcutta's hybridisation of European architectural idioms where the significations of orders became merely decorative divorced from a rigorous classical idiom as set out by Vitruvius. Whilst in cities such as Bath and London, inhabitants lived in uniform, terraced houses, and decorated their interiors in great and personal style, the reverse was true of Calcutta, which effectively turns inside-out the dialectic of interior-exterior space-site/sight. *Calcutta Gazette*, October, 2, 1794: Mr. Brown raffle of prints in 10 prizes 'each containing a sufficient number of prints for a room @ 32 Rs per chance.' See also Bhabha, 1994 p.220 and R.Leppert, 'Music, Domestic Life and Cultural Chauvanism: Images of British Subjects at Home in India', in Leppert and S.McClary (eds.) *The Politics of Composition, Performance and*

The conversation pieces and ethnographic imagery of British and Mughal portraitists working for the colonial community, convey some idea of these plain interiors.⁸⁵ F.B.Solvyns, A.W.Devis, Thomas Hickey and Zayn al-Din, all included details of Calcutta homes, which appear white walled, often pannelled with sparse furnishings and rich Persian rugs. Leppert suggests that such colonial domestic scenes, with pianos and harpsichords signifying harmony (often matched by carefully chosen palette, colours and sound colluded), negotiated ways of representing a refined and confined dimension to colonialism away from brute force, as racial estrangement became a measure of moral conduct.⁸⁶

However such conclusions are complicated by conversation pieces commissioned from Mughal artists, where a distinct polite realism refocuses colonialism through a transcultural exchange; the sitters held within an Indian frame of representation, yet also dictating the terms, creating 'exotic' and 'hybrid' perceptual strategies appropriated by the British for their domestic spaces.⁸⁷ Zayn al-Din, a royal painter from the naibs' court at Azimabad, portrayed the Impey household; *her children and their ayahs* and *Lady Impey in her dressing room*, c.1783.⁸⁸ (figs 54 and 55) In the latter, Lady Impey

Reception, (Cambridge,1988) pp. 63-104.

⁸⁵Of course we must be cautious here; although interiors feature in such pictures, these could be a matter of artistic license rather than being 'portraits' of actual settings. It was after all common in Britain to have set fabrics and props in one's studio. Karen Stanworth, 1994 p.152. See also L.Pressly, 'Genius Unveiled: the Self Portraits of Johann Zoffany', *Art Bulletin*, 69.1 (1987) pp.88-101. See also Beth Tobin, 1999 pp.110-138.

⁸⁶Tobin, 1999, p.120.

⁸⁷Except for the following two exempla, very few other miniatures operate within this imposed colonial domestic if hybrid idiom.

⁸⁸Zayn al-Din came to Calcutta after the naibs' court at Patna was run down by the British. The Impeys possessed a great menagerie and numerous gouache on paper works of the birds exist: Wellcome Institute, India Office, Ashmolean, Christie's, V&A, Royal Asiatic Society.

dominates the scene, defined by a perspective of importance: she sits within a whitewashed interior decorated with a great oriental carpet, black lacquered furniture and small red stipple prints, all exhorting as extremely fashionable in the early 1780s.⁸⁹ Zayn al-Din was working in an entirely alien genre which retains mnemonic elements of Mughal art transmuted by their new subject and context. Hence two stewards frame the composition, as do the *chobdars* of ceremonial scenes, and Impey's servants present an inventory of activity, seated on the floriated rug, appearing like the border figures which often decorated the pages of Mughal albums, thus conflating two types of Mughal composition in order to translate colonial subjects into the court painter's comprehension.

By the 1790s few residents spent lavishly on art, leading William Hickey to boast:

In March 1790, my new mansion being finished and very handsome, I removed into it. I furnished it in such a style as gained universal approbation and acquired me the reputation of possessing great taste. The principal apartments were ornamented with immense looking-glasses, also a number of beautiful pictures and prints, forming altogether a *choice and valuable collection*. The expense altogether was enormous, but as I looked only to pleasant times, having no idea I should ever be able to lay up a fortune, I was indifferent about the price of things, purchasing every article I felt any inclination for. When completed my house was pronounced to be the most elegantly fitted up

⁸⁹S.B.Singh, *European Agency Houses in Bengal* (Calcutta, 1966) p.16 notes that many agency houses had links to China. Hastings possessed a taste for such goods: Hastings Papers BL: Add Ms 29,229 March 7, 1785: four red prints, four glass drawings, two oval paintings and four round paintings sold to British and Indian buyers such as Moddrun Dut, Boydeneath Pundit and Mr. Smith. Many auction houses had trading links with Canton such as Cox & Reid; Singh, 1968 p.12. See also G.H.R.Tillotson, *Fan Kwae: Hong Kong Bank Art Collection* (1986) 'China Trade Painting' pp.55-69.

of any in Calcutta, and in fact, there was none like it. Some of my facetious acquaintances christened it, '*Hickey's picture and print warehouse*'.⁹⁰

William Hickey's sardonic neighbours' diatribe focused on analogies with a 'picture and print warehouse', expressing the obvious insult to lob at what they regarded as vulgarity, pretension and show, antithetical to a 'minimalist aesthetic'.

Calcutta supported a trade in framed and glazed prints (less easily destroyed when presented this way), which were imported in hundreds of thousands to India during this epoch.⁹¹ Despite recession, the number of auction houses dealing in art grew apace in late 1780s, numbering as many as ten, by the early 1790s.⁹² With as many as fifteen East Indian men arriving each season (October to March) each laden with several hundreds of British prints, the choice for a small community was phenomenal.⁹³

From being the private investments of naval captains, they exploded into prime enterprise for major print entrepreneurs. Most famously, Boydell and Macklin began targeting the market in the late 1780s in the search for new

⁹⁰Hickey, 1913-1925, volume three p.159 (my emphasis).

⁹¹Each year agency houses attempted to out do each other with the number and quality of prints: *Calcutta Gazette* September 9, 1784 'prints: the greatest variety ever exposed for sale in this settlement among which are many very scarce and valuable'. *Calcutta Gazette* March 9, 1786 Mr. Ord's warehouse will 'exhibit at his new warehouse a collection of upwards of 1000 capital prints designed by the first masters in Europe and engraved by the most celebrated artists' 60 subjects, @ 64 Rs. for a raffle ticket.

⁹²Singh, 1966 pp.1-10 notes that there were as many as fifteen agency houses in 1790s Calcutta; however only two thirds of these appear to have traded in art; evidence from the Calcutta press as will be discussed in detail below.

⁹³An enormous range of prints and dealers from the very best works by Reynolds et al and Boydell down to Sayers and Bowles, sold 'at the Cheap Shop next to Marvin and Forrest's- a great variety of European articles at a lower price than at any other shop in town for ready money only ... prints in burnished frames . . . Captain Stewards' investment of the Atlas.' *Calcutta Chronicle*, July 19, 1787.

outlets for their ambitious historical schemes.⁹⁴ *The Shakespeare Gallery*, an expensive and risky project, would ultimately fail in full public glare. However at its inception, Boydell sought to maximise subscribers through a network strained as far as Calcutta, Madras and Bombay. Boom time and the success of other entrepreneurs such as Josiah Wedgwood in expanding their business to India, induced and seduced other ambitious mercantile designs, as the much maligned Ryland fiasco was conveniently forgotten.⁹⁵ Unlike Ryland, Boydell employed a tight-knit network of relatives, artists, naval captains and merchants to disseminate his prints. His nephew, Thomas Boydell, in Company service, stationed primarily in Bihar, travelled as far as Lucknow and provided vital information on an array of locales across northern India. Captain James Brabazon Urmston became agent for George Stubbs and Boydell.⁹⁶ Well connected in both Calcutta and London society, he sounded out oriental outlets, as well as moulding fluid colonial taste through a supply of high quality (of soon mouldering) pictures.⁹⁷ Ozias Humphry aspired likewise.⁹⁸ Engaged to Boydell's niece Mary, and a passenger of Urmston's ship, he too bore over a cabinet of Boydell's best prints, whilst in exchange Boydell acted one of Humphry's securities and Humphry insured himself as a 'print-dealer', believing this could

⁹⁴*The Times*, May 7, 1789. For Boydell see S.Bruntjen, *John Boydell, 1719-1804: A Study of Art Patronage and Publishing in Georgian London*, (New York,1985). For Macklin's *Poets* in Calcutta see the *Calcutta Gazette* July 30, 1789 at Edward Gardner's auction house and at Davidson's auction house *Calcutta Gazette* January 11, 1795 and *Calcutta Gazette* March 26, 1795.

⁹⁵Abu Talib, *Travels of Abu Talib* trans. C.Stewart (Calcutta,1814; Delhi,1972) p.96: Wedgwood 'paid me much attention and at one period was very curious to accompany me by the route of Persia to India' in search of new markets and designs. See also J.Holzman, *Nabobs* (New York, 1926) p.91; Wedgwood experimented with samples of Bengal earth. For Wedgwood's wares advertised in Calcutta see the *Calcutta Gazette* January 12, 1786.

⁹⁶ 'Captain Urmston has desired me to acquaint your uncle that with this same ship he has sent your uncle a draft for the assortment of all his prints' Ozias Humphry to Mary Boydell, HU/3/40 August 18, 1785.

⁹⁷*Reminiscences of three generations of the Urmston Family*, Eur Ms Photo 370 (OIOC) p.27.

be mutually beneficial.⁹⁹ Such fruitful dreams ripened into a nightmare:

There never was known in Calcutta so much poverty or so great scarcity of money as there is at this time, all the first families are withdrawn from it and I have been confidently assured that there are scarcely 20 persons left in Indostan whose fortune amounts to £20,000 ... *your invaluable cabinet of prints* has no chance now that Mr. Hastings has left it, of meeting an adequate purchaser in India.¹⁰⁰

However, Boydell through Urmston, did establish links with leading merchants in Calcutta. The house of agency Colvin and Bazett, both a banking business and dealers in European luxury goods, who acted as his agents from 1788-92, a contract that was renewed every season, which with fluctuating profits and the unpredictable partnerships and profits of agency houses could not be otherwise.¹⁰¹ Humphry sought to assist Boydell in the establishment of an up country trade expansion that would take in Awadh and Bihar.¹⁰²

Boydell's Shakespeare scheme was advertised by subscription through Colvin and Bazett direct to London, although his other produce was regularly disposed in Calcutta through the form of auctions or raffles.¹⁰³ Prints sold on the

⁹⁸See G.C. Williamson *Life of Humphry* (London, 1918) p.142 for details of this voyage.

⁹⁹Guildhall: printsellers' insurance: 111,936; policy number 45,5348; Clayton, 1997, p.215 and Archer, 1979 p.188.

¹⁰⁰HU/3/123 Urmston did manage to dispose of his prints, through auctioneers Pope and Fairlie, *Calcutta Gazette* August 11, 1785.

¹⁰¹ *History of the Colvin Family*, volume one Eur Ms Photo 145, OIOC. Colvin and Bazett advertised the arrival of *Shakespeare Gallery*, *Calcutta Gazette* September 18, 1788, October 2, 1788 and August 11, 1788. As well as Urmston, Boydell was using other captains: a Mr. Butler's cargo 'now exposed for sale the newest prints from Boydell', *Calcutta Gazette* July 10, 1795. Earlier Mr. Burrows chief purser of the Francis, the ship under Urmston's command, carried over a shipment of prints to Calcutta; *Calcutta Gazette* November 3, 1788. King and Johnson another leading auction firm also advertised Boydell's prints as part of their stock: *Calcutta Gazette* November 6, 1792. Boydell also advertised his scheme *History of the Thames* direct to India: *Calcutta Gazette* March, 19, 1795, 81 coloured views. By September 17, 1795 Boydell also began to use another leading Calcutta auctioneers; William Dring to advertise his prints. See Eur Ms 331 and Eur Ms Photo 345 and Eur Ms Photo 311 for the Colvin Family (OIOC).

¹⁰²Colonel Martin to Ozias Humphry: HU/ 3/184 'I will receive the catalogue with pleasure. I received a letter from my friend Hodges who purchased a parcel of prints at your Bodyell and I am in expectation to see them ... I see the catalogue is in Calcutta, I then will see it there'.

¹⁰³ 'The proposals at large, transmitted from England are to be had on application to Bayne and

open market in this manner were embroiled within an aggressive social ritual, as part of Calcutta's cosseted, claustrophobic and wanton voyeurism. Cultural sites sired inflated concentration on self-presentation in which publics flaunted their vaunted status, fortunes, social and sexual charms, within a severely constricted social theatre: 'public amusements are perhaps fewer in Calcutta than in any other city in the world of equal elegance in buildings, extent and in the taste of its European inhabitants'.¹⁰⁴ One resident defined colonial urban, urbane leisure:

The principal diversion of Calcutta are balls, card parties and what are called Europe shops which are literally magazines of every European article whether luxury or convenience. These early in the morning are the public site of the idle and gay who there propagate the scandal of the day and purchase at an immoderate price the toys of Mr. Pinchback and the frippery of Tavistock Street.¹⁰⁵

It was '(t)he European shops...the warehouses where all the British finery imported is displayed and purchased' where British ladies would spend thirty to forty thousand Rupees (£3,000-4,000) in a morning 'for the decoration of their persons ... on which account many husbands as observed to turn as pale as ashes on the bare mention of their wives being seen to enter them'.¹⁰⁶

Europe shops were perceived as refined spaces, where the art market existed as both place and process possessed of a distinct spatial typology.¹⁰⁷

Colvins who are authorised to receive subscription'. See also *Calcutta Gazette*, April 10, 1788.

¹⁰⁴ *Calcutta Chronicle*, January 18, 1787.

¹⁰⁵ W.K. Firminger (ed.) *Memoirs of Asiaticus*, (Calcutta, 1909), p.33.

¹⁰⁶ Anonymous, *Hartly House* (Calcutta, 1789) volume one pp.88-89. See also Beth Kowaleski-Wallace, *Consuming Subjects: Women, Shopping and Business in the Eighteenth Century*, (New York, 1997), Hoh-cheung Mui and Lorna Holbrook Mui, *Shops and Shop-keeping in eighteenth-century England* (London, 1987) and Roy Porter, 'Visitors' Visions: Travellers' Tales of Georgian London', in C.Chard and H.Langdon (eds.) *Transports: Travel and Imaginative Geography, 1600-1830* (New Haven, 1996) pp.31-48.

¹⁰⁷ J.C. Agnew, *The Market and the Theatre in Anglo-American Thought, 1550-1750* (Cambridge, 1986) and Sen, 1998 pp.26-32.

They became polite sites as self to the other of Indian bazaars which were increasingly represented as squalid and disorderly.¹⁰⁸ However numerous colonial ditties poked fun at the insulated feminine and effeminate diurnal rituals which underlay the Anglophile luxury trade:

Letter from an English lady in Calcutta to her friend in England:

I rise fatigued, almost expended,
Yet suddenly when breakfast's ended,
Away we hurry with our fops,
To rummage o'er the Europe shops:
And when of caps and gauze we hear,
Oh! how we scramble for a share!...
This sets the blood in circulation
And gives the town some conversation.¹⁰⁹

Close to death, wasted by indolence and illness, it is only thoughts of conspicuous consumption and its innate and extrinsic social ceremonial, that furnish energy for this tired yet *pied a terre* community marooned in a monsoonal and enervating environment.¹¹⁰

A rare metropolitan-generated social satire with an Indian subject, James Gillray's *Sale of English Beauties in the East Indies, 1783* (fig. 56) through its parody of earlier prints which celebrated the rise of Britain's prosperity, ridicules the influx of women seeking husbands in Company India. They parade bare bosomed on the ghats, stared at, swinging on the weighing machine in a parody of rococo fantasy, asking to be prodded and outshining their

¹⁰⁸Sen, 1998, pp.8-9.

¹⁰⁹*Calcutta Gazette*, August 12, 1784.

¹¹⁰Jean Baudrillard, 'The Art Auction: Sign Exchange and sumptuary Value', *For a Critique of the Political Economy of the Sign*, (1981) pp.112-122. Auctions were deigned as sites for the affirmation of personal status and cultural aspiration. See Pears, 1988, chapter three pp.57-67 and Arnold, 1993, pp.36-37.

‘alternative’; imported pornography and erotic novels. Thus in addition to local poetry, we have metropolitan Britons poking fun at Calcutta’s penchant for imported goods and their totemic rituals; a theme which ran throughout this era when commenting on Calcutta’s auction houses. The type of luxuries are anthropomorphised into ‘living works of art’, of a sensual rather than stoic or intellectual cultural colonialism.¹¹¹ The print also offers a critique of *Peace An Ode to Hastings* which prophesied great British fleets arriving in Calcutta laden with architects and professors, who would ‘teach cultur’d heathens their learned lore’ and elevate fabulous academies where painting and sculpture would hold ‘unrivall’d place’. The only epic song is the pitch of the auctioneer, celebrating these women on the quayside to Indians and Britons who compete for their charms; the former, stereotyped into lascivious lechers winning out. Ironically the scene is still held within the frame of Hastings’ art patronage; indicated by the portly merchant who measures up a statuesque female; ‘instructions for the Governor-General’ flopping from his pocket.

Such an artistic and commercial ritual effectively reverses the colonial gaze; from Britons viewing Indians in art as ethnographic specimen, to women as objects to be minutely scrutinized and appropriated.¹¹² Although essentially comic, more seriously Gillray’s print appealed to contemporary belief that the treatment of the fair sex was a powerful index of a society’s degree of civilisation. Women are recognized primarily as trading goods in the East India

¹¹¹As there were very few British women in India they must have hoped for ‘luxury’ status. The press regularly included verses to women and a rare local literary publication was the *Bevy of Bengal Beauties*.

¹¹²This as it reverses familiar metaphors of rape and plunder of colonies. See Sara Suleri, ‘The Feminine Picturesque’ in her *Rhetoric of English India* (Chicago, 1992), chapter four.

Company' ruthless commercial ideology.¹¹³ As well as mocking British imports and the 'promiscuity of objects' within such a context, the print also indicates that a fetish for overseas profits and the imposition of British commerce in India could be taken too far, undermining 'Britishness' at its core. Although a contemporary novel indicated the English heroine's sensible admiration for a Brahmin (a flirtation unconsummated), intermarriage was actively discouraged.¹¹⁴ Gillray's etching again demystified the familiar Georgian laureate convention, 'there shall the British name forever reign', as the long-term outcome of the cultural intercourse he portrays would create hybridity not recognisably British.

Decentering some of Gillray's anxieties, several British women came specifically to Calcutta as employees of the Europe shops, bestowing a 'civilising and discriminating' aura of refinement, sensibility and fashionability, on to what were often rudimentary *godowns*.¹¹⁵ Yet even the social and cultural imperatives associated with such imperial emporia fractured, as few firms could

¹¹³John Brewer, 'The Most Polite Age and the Most Vicious', in Brewer and Bermingham (eds.) *The Consumption of Culture* (London, 1995) p.356 examines the relationship of the male gaze on both exhibition spaces and women in late eighteenth-century London whereby 'both women and paintings were properly deemed the object and property of men' which 'reveals a larger apprehension about the exhibition rooms and its contents, pictorial and human, as an erotically charged site of male voyeurism'. Brewer takes the Prostitute as the central paradigm for the age, which again is now highly charged in Calcutta. See also M.Pointon, *Strategies for Showing* (Oxford, 1997) and Laura Brown, *Ends of Empire: Women, Ideology and Early Eighteenth-century Literature* (New York, 1993).

¹¹⁴C.J.Hawes, *Poor Relations* (1996) and K.Ballhatchet, *Race, Sex and Class under the Raj: Imperial Attitudes and Policies and their Critics 1793-1905* (London, 1980). See also A.L.Basham, 'Sophia and the Brahmin' in Ballhatchet and J.Harrison (eds.) *East India Company Studies: Papers Presented to Sir Cyrill Philips* (Hong Kong, 1986) pp.13-30, J.Sharpe, *Allegories of Empire: The Figure of Woman in the Colonial Text* (Minneapolis, 1993) and Sara Mills, *Discourses of Difference An Analysis of Women's Travel Writings and Colonialism* (London, 1991).

¹¹⁵For example Mrs. Fay who imported two female assistants for her Europe shop. The miniaturist Sarah Baxter married a partner of a commission house before travelling to India where she provided some work for the firm Baxter and Ord. Archer, 1979 pp.400-402, 472.

survive on credit:

About ten years ago there were no more than three or four Europe shops in Calcutta at which time they continued to increase till within the last twelve months; in this period most of the debts now due to individuals were contracted and in consequence those of or from the acquisitions of fortunes by those who kept them, they began to decrease until the present day when strange it is that there should not be a single European shop in all Calcutta they are converted to commission warehouses ... ready money only is the universal condition.¹¹⁶

The majority of auction houses in Calcutta were attached to houses of agency, fundamentally rudimentary banking businesses which invested in real estate and up-country commerce and manufacture of indigo, opium, salt, sugar and saltpetre thus forming a powerful 'monopoly' out across Bengal into Bihar and Awadh.¹¹⁷ Such large-scale trade capitalised bargaining power to deal in locally-produced as well as imported luxury goods, all of which were advertised in long inventories in the Calcutta press.¹¹⁸ Their consortium of imported goods consisted in the trappings of polite society; pianos, Wedgwood's Queensware, French champagne, Cheshire cheese, speaking trumpets, marketed as highly desirable; (many of which appear in such compositions as Zoffany's *Auriol and Dashwood Families* fig. 51) although little disguising their existence as a motley bric-a-brac paradoxically transposed to the core of the quotidian rituals and patriotic ideology of this diaspora.¹¹⁹

¹¹⁶*Calcutta Chronicle*, October 30, 1788.

¹¹⁷Holden Furber, *John Company at Work*, (New York,1970) Marshall,1976, C.A.Bayly, *Rulers, Townsmen and Bazaars*, (Cambridge,1983) For a later epoch see Maria Mishra, *Business, Race and Politics in British India, c.1850-1960* (Oxford,1999). See also the Bengal, Bombay and Madras Inventory Series give some indication of which firms were managing the estates of the estates of deceased Europeans; about half of which mention European art.

¹¹⁸'To be sold by public auction by Dring, Cleland & co., a very capital camel lately come down the country. He may be seen at the auction room on Wednesday' *Asiatic Mirror* May 22, 1793.

¹¹⁹See D.Burtin, *The Raj at Table* (London,1993) and H.Bhabha, 'DissemiNation' in *Location of*

‘The proximity of Calcutta and its houses of agency along with European monopolies of many valuable trades brought about a very rapid decline in the old (Indian) merchant class’.¹²⁰ Although after 1773 Company servants were forbidden from taking gifts, many men involved within Indian diplomacy continued both in underhand and legitimate ways to boost their personal fortunes, often through the medium of the agency contract.¹²¹ Thus we see private trade embroiled within governmental concerns. Unlike the metropolis where the invention of a modern economy whose benign opacity and the preclusion of an external view of its processes, in the colonial sphere, it was the state’s intervention which defined the tight-knit dialect between governmentality and economy.

Money made in the *mofussil*, (often through violent means, such as the imposition of harsh working conditions, redefining notions of customary rights, labour and productivity) would be invested in Calcutta’s real estate and in the purchase of imported art. In the purchase of such imagery, commission houses formulated their own monopoly; only they could withstand credit and only they took risks in art sales. They used a small portion of their profits to invest in pictures, so that art was a ‘luxury’ which relied on prosperity in other goods in order to speculate in aesthetic issues; prints hanging limply in ladies’ chambers, owed their presence as much to an intricate import network stretched from the London engraver delicately working on copperplates in his workshop, as to the

Culture, (1994) pp.139-170.

¹²⁰Bayly, *Rulers, Townsmen and Bazaars* (Cambridge,1983) p.240.

¹²¹See for instance the business activities of the political Resident and art collector Richard Johnson; in M.Archer and T.Falk, *Indian Miniatures in the India Office* (London,1981) introduction.

hard labour of out of sight, out of mind, Indian workers.

Whilst such artistic reinvestment attempted to paint a thin civilising veneer over a cruder, more ruthless economy, back in Britain, the lampooning of colonial traders became a powerful rhetorical weapon within a wider condemnation of the excessive importation of foreign luxuries offering in the process an alternative discourse to valediction of the traffic in goods between both countries:

Thus, Britons, are procur'd the Eastern wares,
Your iv'ry cabinets, and your iv'ry chairs;
Your silks, your costly gems, and baneful tea...
Which for gain, thousands of Indians bleed,
And base corruption's ready-growing seed
Is largely sewn o'er Britain's famous land,
By an unprincipled, a savage band.¹²²

Hence the high level of 'civilisation' associated with a modern, British commercial society can be grafted in the wrong direction; as private traders' effectively fulfilling the 'nabob' stereotype are reduced to 'savages' in the service of such commerce; an 'empire undone by its own navigational greatness'.¹²³

Additionally, the metaphor of seeds of corruption as sewn in Britain, operated as foil to the propagation of rural industry in Bengal as promoted by such commission houses and represented in A.W.Devis' *Weaving and the Pottery*.¹²⁴ (figs 57, 58) Devis must have hoped to find a market for his images

¹²²Timothy Touchstone, *Tea and Sugar or the Nabob and the Creole: A Poem in Two Cantos* (London,1792) pp.9-10; Teltscher, 1995, pp.173-174.

¹²³Quilley, 1998 p.195.

¹²⁴ Urmila De, *The Economy of Human Life: A.W.Devis' Images of Indian Arts, Agriculture and Manufacture*, Autumn,1998. I am extremely grateful to Urmila for a copy. Archer,1979 pp.255-59 and S.Paviere, *The Devis Family of Painters* (Leighton-on-sea,1950).

in Calcutta, especially as the number of wealthy men involved in commission houses who demonstrated an interest in the art, proved the only colonial patronal arena to expand during this era. He represented Bengali industry as other to urban colonial Calcutta in very different ways from his contemporaries such as Solvyns. Devis was less interested in dress, physiognomical differentiations or the classification of Bengalis by Hinduism, caste and costume; his system of organisation was not proto-anthropological, but the scope of Bengal as defined through its luxury goods production designed for overseas trade.¹²⁵

The landscape is Pastoral as opposed to Georgic, the women and children, idealised in countenance, happily involved in what appears a flourishing rural economy (despite the fact that famine had wiped out as much as a third of Bengal's population in 1770), seemingly unharrassed by Company regulations and its monopoly which pervaded and altered the manufacture of opium, cloth and salt. As well as being goods designed for overseas trade, the manufacture of salt, sugar and cloth also indicated local consumption, as two very different economies were temporarily united by way of Devis's images.

From an 'Orientalist' level, Devis's pictures contributed to a burgeoning

¹²⁵This can be gauged as much by the subsequent title for his scheme - 'The Economy of Human Life' which makes various appeal to literary traditions, the role of *homo oeconomicus* when extended in to the colonies and the unique nature of the political economy of the Company state. Unlike Solvyns whom we have seen centred his concerns on the elision of caste and occupation, Devis' individual images were named after the processes or sites of manufacture, such as *the Pottery, the Sugar Mill* or *Spinning and Treading the Corn*. Although Devis claimed to be representing *all* Bengal's manufactures, he was in fact interested primarily in goods for international consumption such as muslin, indigo, sugar and salt; even manufactures not primarily intended for polite society, such as earthenware pots and brassware. It is work which provides ethnographic classification which signified another aspect of the Company's mercantile ethic. Devis travelled to various parts of Bengal and Bihar in order to portray different trades which defined such regions; for example paper making in Patna, which although rapidly declining under Company rule, was once a great intellectual centre for poets and painters, and to the wild Sunderbans on the Ganges delta, where he portrayed the various stages in the production of salt and saltpetre.

informational ¹²⁶ concerned with the translation and construction of maps., human geography, as well as making modern parallels to the most feted treatise of Mughal kingship - the *Ain-i-Akbari*, which included long sections on the production of gold, coin, cloth and other 'civilised' services in the imperial *karkhana*.¹²⁶ Devis provided verbal descriptions of the processes of manufacture which elided several of his images in order to provide a coherent narrative of production which spanned Bengal, as well as uniting the disparate members of Bengali society (indicated by the family unit), all of whom assumed distinct roles within commerce.¹²⁷ To accompany *the Pottery* he wrote, 'The Potter is represented sitting at his wheel in the act of finishing a vessel; on his right are the rude implements he uses in the fabrication of earthenware ... on the left ... behind the potter in a recess is a large jar for rain water and smaller ones for boiling sugar'.¹²⁸

Finding little success, Devis on his return to Britain aspired to the translation of his small, on the spot oils into a stipple scheme which would then be exported back to Bengal, appealing to the community's taste for metropolitan

¹²⁶*The Ain-i Akbari* was being translated by Francis Gladwin (1783-8) at the time that Devis was producing his scheme (1786-93) and thus provided 'high cultural' legitimation to the violence and quotidian hardships imposed by Company trading regulations on to Bengal. See Sen, 1998 chapter three. The *karkhanas* of Patna and Murshidabad had already been run down by the British, many of its personnel left impoverished, forced either to villages or Calcutta's bazaars. However Devis' images and the Company's mercantile ideology represents a landscape of highly specialised skills infused with new notions of 'economy' which effectively replaced such workshops. At the same time, Devis' images of rural industry also appear to represent a 'traditional village economy'- a sociological unit which would assume increasing importance in colonial administration and ethnographic enquiries; Eric Stokes, *The Peasant and the Raj* (Cambridge, 1978) and C. Dewey, 'Images of the Village Community', *Modern Asian Studies* 6 (1972) pp.291-328.

¹²⁷For instance in *Weaving* we see different generations engagements in different processes; in *Grinding the Corn* two women are seated in the foreground grinding whilst a girl looks on, playing with her parrot and inadvertently learning such skills from her elders.

¹²⁸Devis quoted in Pavriere, catalogue number 86. *The Pottery* was exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1796.

prints, as well as drawing in all the diversity of Bengal's village economy into the confines of Calcutta's colonial apartments.

Even during recession, Calcutta's auction houses exuded an ocular if desperate extravagance:

Dring & co. have within these three years built a new warehouse called their Long Room. London produces nonesuch, I daresay. It is 210 feet long, 41 feet wide, proportionally high, with about 21 windows in front, filled from end to end with tables piled up with fine goods of every denomination and the walls filled with prints. All then with the sparkling of lustres from the ceiling, give it really an air of grandeur that *no shop in the universe* I daresay, besides can boast of.¹²⁹

Dring's was one of three most splendid auction houses; few of Calcutta's public buildings with the exception of the Writers' Range, exhibited such an extended (albeit distended) facade.¹³⁰ Its grandiloquent Long Room was designed by Baillie's friend and business associate, Richard Blechynden, civil architect and later surveyor to the East India Company.¹³¹ Not to be outdone by other auction houses who also expanded their premises, Dring fledged other wings which precariously sought to mimic Blechynden's design; grandeur outweighing design and safety:

I observe that they have made the west wing only of nineteen intercolumnations with twenty one windows in front to imitate the one built by me- the consequence of which is that some of the windows are so near that if they build upper rooms, the cornices of the windows will

¹²⁹HU/ 4/113 (my emphasis) and Losty, 1990, pp.86-8 and pp. 120-122 for early nineteenth-century accounts of these warehouses.

¹³⁰'The new rooms at Dring and co.'s reflect the great honour on the architect, the ingenious Mr. Blechynden; whilst the spirit of the proprietors who choose to build such an elegant, spacious and expensive apartment for the accumulation of their numerous constituents, is no less deserving of admiration'. *Calcutta Friday Morning Post and General Advertiser* June 28, 1793.

¹³¹The Papers of Richard Blechynden, BL: Add Mss 45,578-45,663; in India 1780-1822 until his death. His papers also include a selection of drawings and notes on antiquities.

run into each other!¹³²

These glittering showrooms collapsed overnight; repairs were required at Dring's after fifty feet of cornice crumbled quickly in the rains.¹³³ The hollow splendour of such 'aesthetic theatre-sets' received sardonic comment from the press:

The competition among the three rival houses has excited an emulation in tasty decoration, as well as in the active part of the business. The novelty of the new house, attracted a great body on its opening and the crowd has been there ever since, the purchasers not proportionally plenteous.

Dring and Rothman have been the statuary as usual. Both in numbers present and quantities sold the Europe goods of today's sale are of *the best quality*.

King and Johnson's rooms *present pillars and pictures of piety in the background* the nearer the church the farther from music a speaking trumpet would be a useful appendage to the crier there, for the lungs of Stentor could not convey 'going a going' through half the lofty roof. Some of those who love to turn a penny bought some cheap bargains yesterday at these rooms and sojourning to the opposites, seeing what the effect of an unlocked jaw has over the imagination are led to exclaim after crossing the street - a 'plague of both your houses'.¹³⁴

Yet *The World's* comments were far from disinterested. Newspapers depended on the financial backing of these houses. The aspirations of the auction rooms

¹³²Blechynden Papers, BL: Add Ms 45,593 p.45, May 9, 1795. Blechynden heard rumours that Dring was worth £50,000. Never satisfied with the size of their premises, Dring and his then partner Cleland planned to build a new auction house in 1795. They wished to buy a tank for 12,000 Rs. near Charles Weston's house to the south of their present auction room, 'enquiring what they could possibly want with this tank as independent of the expense of filling it up they cannot build on it for many years, he (Dring) said they want it to secure so much of the southerly wind to a large elegant auction room the proposed building which you are to exhaust your skill and taste in. Would to God I were rich enough to refuse them!' pp.20-21.

¹³³Add Ms 45,594, p.20.

¹³⁴*The World*, June 9, 1792 (my emphases).

blew sense and taste out of all proportions, so that not even the herald from the Trojan Wars could make himself heard, deflated greatness in the modern commercial context.¹³⁵ The allusion to the Capulets and Montagues reveals that competition had gone too far and had become bitterly intense, in a claustrophobic, ultimately destructive environment.¹³⁶

Such reportage clashed with the ideological self imaging of these businesses as private traders were increasingly transformed into the overseers of the ideological self-fashioning of the white town. The house of Paxton, Cockerell & co. occupied a prominent position along Clive Street in one of the grandest mansions in Calcutta, paid tribute by the Daniells in the first print of their Calcutta series, *view along Clive Street, eastern side of Tank Square*, 1786-8 (fig. 59). This firm acted as securities for the Daniells, advertising subscription for their schemes, as well as managing their affairs whilst they were up country.¹³⁷ The mansion dominates the centre of the print on the east side of the Old Fort, the centripetal point for a commercial narrative reading from left to right: imported goods arrive from the River Hugli beyond the edge of the picture, off-loaded at the Old Fort, which as converted Customs House received imported prints which were then delivered to Paxton's. The Daniells in the creation of an aestheticised commercial space, 'ironed out' the tight conjunction of two streets which was transposed into the semblance of a great classical plaza, where Indians in polite poses signify within visual connoisseurship of *Castor and Pollux*, engaged in civilized conversation defined by a refined

¹³⁵Stentor, herald of Trojan Wars, Homer, *The Iliad*, v.785.

¹³⁶W. Shakespeare, *Romeo and Juliet*, III.i.

¹³⁷For Paxton see Eur Ms D1140 (OIOC).

ambiance of colonial commerce.¹³⁸ The view is restless on the eye, with fast linear recession accelerating towards a series of vanishing points, one of which is the portico of Paxton and Cockerell's auction house; its path of sight dissecting the main facets of commerce, the ditch of the old fort, the oblique angle on the base of the Holwell monument (by association another keystone in Calcutta's enduring mythology and well being), and defines the movement of a group of figures carrying a weighty load, so that it is Commerce, sight, site, product and producer of a polite colonial society which defines the scene, as the physical place is made to correspond with the metaphysical, ideological space within a specific reinscription of *beatus ille*. The gleaming white mansion of Paxton and Cockerell, the only building not in partial shadow nor confined to oblique perspective, is literally radiating prosperity out across a civic space, as figures move towards and away its lines of sight and the warmth of its beneficent prosperity, as the aesthetic realisation of a heterotopia.¹³⁹

As the marketing of art in Calcutta soon became a highly sophisticated trade separate from its production increasingly artists were tied to houses of agency as decorators and clients.¹⁴⁰ As competition increased, auctioneers exported their own agents to London to establish links with leading artists and to

¹³⁸This classical pose had long been associated with civic humanism, used to portray Lord Shaftesbury and his brother, see D.Solkin, *Painting for Money* (New Have,1993) and John Barrell, *The Political Theory of Painting from Reynolds to Hazlitt: The Body of the Public* (Cambridge,1986) and Terry Eagleton, *The Ideology of the Aesthetic* (Oxford,1990) chapter one.

¹³⁹ M.Foucault, 'Of Other Spaces', *Diacritics*, Spring, 1986 p.24. For other views of 'Europe shops' in Calcutta, see William Hickey's annotated versions of the Daniells' view of Old Court House Street, the third and fourth buildings on the left he notes as 'Europe shops, that is where all Europe articles are sold.' See Losty, 1990 pp.56-7 as well as an illustration of this plate.

¹⁴⁰R.Blechynden, visited Dring and Rothman's 'where I proposed writing out the advertisement fair for them'. October 18, 1792 Add Ms 45,585 f.23. Robert Home was greatly assisted in Calcutta by the merchant James Colvin who found him a studio and appointed one of his relatives as advisor as well as finding ample commissions from his family and friends. E.B.Day's *Biography of Robert Home*, Eur Ms 311 (OIOC).

seek out the latest luxuries. Baillie begged Ozias Humphry to assist Dring's business associate:

Mr. Cleland, one of the principal partners in Drings (formerly Burrell and Dring) auction business and commission warehouse, is gone home within the next few days to bring out cargo for this country of English articles. You will say what which is not already to be had here? Almost everything ... whole ship loads, the advance paid to captains and on their investments.¹⁴¹

Baillie asked that Humphry offer Cleland your 'best advice where to procure the best sort, some drawing and painting materials for which I will send a commission by him. By him also you can make an opportunity of favouring me with the prints from your paintings'. As Cleland 'is no judge of these articles I suppose, and may be taken in unless recommended to a tradesman of eminence and character'.¹⁴² This indicates another facet to the relationship of metropolitan art dissemination; the exploitation of the colonies; off-loading less than first-rate art, in an inversion of the principles lionized by the press.

Although auctioneers counted for a substantial proportion of private traders in Calcutta, most were merchants who had little experience of aesthetic matters. Likewise, naval captains were not famed for their commissioning; the discriminating taste of London connoisseurs employed to calculate the most decorous art for Calcutta, increasingly became a vital marketing deployment: 'A small but capital collection of paintings selected by a gentleman of taste in London'.¹⁴³ Colonial taste was thus mediated, few direct commissions were

¹⁴¹William Baillie to Ozias Humphry HU/ 4/113

¹⁴²Baillie wrote to Humphry 'I'll thank you to choose the chalks for me' HU/4/114.

¹⁴³At the auction house of Lee, Saunders and Kennedy, *Calcutta Chronicle* July 26, 1787. This selection included *Views of London, A Dandy Lion, The Isle of Thanet, Sketches from Nature and sea pieces* 'executed in a masterly style'. Captain Pierce was another such dealer whose

carried out directly to London, so that the community relied on stock from these few men, whose choice was influenced by contacts to metropolitan connoisseurs, artists and print-sellers, none of whom were disinterested in their assistance. Newly arrived painters sought to fill this niche; claiming that they possessed correct taste and so bought only prints of 'the most eminent masters, carefully selected by Mr. John Brown artist who is lately arrived to this country'.¹⁴⁴

As competition grew ever more intense, the quantity, diversity and quality of art ascended to the defining coordinates in aesthetic and commercial judgement as the endless search for novelty dominated advertisements in 1790s. 'A Very extensive and elegant collection of prints with gold burnished frames upon an entire new principle, the patent for which was granted February last and are the only ones that yet been brought to this country'.¹⁴⁵ Caricatures and portraits prints after London's latest political scandals such as Hastings' trial for impeachment flooded in to Calcutta.¹⁴⁶ Polygraphic paintings (situated half way between prints and oils) newly patented in London, appeared for the first time in 1789.¹⁴⁷ The apogee of this trade was the arrival of an enormous panorama of

death by shipwreck was much lamented in both India and London. His lost cargo included 'a large assortment of curious boxes of colours, crayons, black lead pencils with a great variety of articles for drawing ... by Mr. Reeve & co. of Holborn'. Pearce possessed 'a great taste for the polite arts. He was the means of the making the fortune of Zoffany by taking him to India and recommending him there.' Newspaper cutting for January 13, 1786; Whitley Papers, BM: Zoffany box. The loss of Pearce's ship *the Halsewell* was engraved by the military artist William Elliot who in the 1760s had exhibited *View of the Maiden Calcutta* at the Society of Artists. (For very brief details of Elliott, see my entry for the *New Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford).

¹⁴⁴ *Calcutta Gazette*, October 4, 1794.

¹⁴⁵ Mouart and Faria, *Calcutta Gazette*, September 26, 1793; *Asiatic Mirror*, October 9, 1793.

¹⁴⁶ 'An assortment in handsome burnished gold frames amongst which are those of the king and queen ... C.J.Fox, General Coote, Lord Thurlow, Erskine and Hastings' *Calcutta Gazette* June 28, 1787; as well as copies of Hastings' *Defence* for 10 Rs.

¹⁴⁷ *Calcutta Gazette*, October 18, 1789, Edward Gardner was advertising polygraphic pictures to be sold by auction. *Calcutta Gazette* November 31, 1791, Burrell, Dring & co., advertising sale

London in 1798 and publicly displayed in Tank Square.¹⁴⁸ Designed to appeal to latent desires to be in the British capital, momentarily satisfied through this simulatory experience, the exhibitional gaze turned its lens back to the metropolis, acting as the ultimate in imported art, transposed from individual consumption to public spectacle, from the minute to the sublime in a swift reversal of the gaze of ‘travel capitalism’.¹⁴⁹ Thus we see Britain exoticised in a variety of ways through processes of recontextualisation as well as through artistic innovations and the presentation of part of Britain and the world unknown to many of Calcutta’s inhabitants.¹⁵⁰

These auction houses thus emulated pseudo-public galleries, puffing their sales as ‘exhibitions’:

EXHIBITION

Ord and Knox: Having covered the whole of the walls of their large and commodious shops with a choice collection of PRINTS *on the most approved subjects by the first masters*, they beg leave to acquaint the ladies and gentlemen of the settlement that they are now properly

of the effects by auction of Francis Rundell, who had run the old theatre: ‘Also some very beautiful polygraphic copies of the following celebrated paintings: *A landscape of the Morning* by Barrett, *view of Glaciers, of the icy cavern* by Webber, *Conjugal Peace* by Angelica Kauffmann, *a Madonna* by Salfo Tarratto ... *Santa Teresa* from Correggio. Mechanical painting being less expensive or scarce than oils were more showy than prints so seem to have enjoyed some success in India.

¹⁴⁸*Calcutta Gazette* December 28, 1797 *Great View of London* in Tank Square, January 1, 1798, tickets from Colvin and Bazett; open daily from 7am to 5pm.

¹⁴⁹R. Hyde (ed.) *Panoromania* (London, 1988). The first panorama was designed by Mr. Barker which opened in Edinburgh in 1789, featuring a view of the city. By 1793 he had established a permanent exhibition space for his panoramas in London. By 1800 panoramas of Barker’s *View of London from Albion Mills* (1795) had been exported to New York, Vienna, Paris and Hamburg, as well as Calcutta.

¹⁵⁰B.Cohn, many Company clerks were in their mid teens, uprooted from provincial schools and thrust into Calcutta’s Writers Building. Consequently they had never travelled extensively, so London through Boydell’s prints or Barker’s panorama was ‘exotic’ in one way that perhaps qualified its reverse, Daniells’ views of Calcutta in Britain see R.Porter and G.Rousseau (eds.) *Exoticism in the Enlightenment*, (Manchester, 1990), Thomas, 1994, pp.53, 94, 173, 182 and H.Guest, 1989, and her ‘Curiously Marked: Tattooing, Masculinity and Nationality in Eighteenth-century Perceptions of the South Pacific’ in J.Barrell (ed.) *Painting and the Politics of Culture, 1700-1850* (Oxford, 1992) and finally Bernard Smith’s *Imaging the Pacific* (1992).

arranged and to those who have taste in that way, that they will have an opportunity of fully gratifying it.¹⁵¹

As connoisseurial ways of viewing art filtered into the auction room, so commercial value became paramount in the appreciation of exhibition art.¹⁵²

Whilst exhibitions and auctions disposed of a few large art collections of deceased Company men, by and large oils could not be easily sold, even within the efficient mechanism of the agency house and even when the pictures derived from the collection of Sir Joshua Reynolds' nephew. William Johnson, peeved at being snubbed in his uncle's will, made a public gesture of putting all the oils sent to him over the years on sale, as a symbolic *denouement* of Reynolds' memory.¹⁵³ 'So weak and foolish was this Mr. Johnson that by way of making his anger at so contemptuous a remembrance of his being made by his uncle's will, he directly advertised for public sale by auction, every picture Sir Joshua Reynolds had sent him, amongst which was a very fine portrait of Sir Joshua'.¹⁵⁴ For such rare events, the local press attempted tepid art appreciation:

Portrait of Sir Joshua Reynolds on entering the rooms where they are exhibited, strikes the lover of the arts with very lively feeling- such fame as his sure as to continue would render such a picture invaluable - it is a most excellent likeness ... The paintings of *Omai* and *Dr. Johnson's servant* to the amateur of painting and modern secondary history, would prove rich garniture to the study or conversation room - the pictures indeed seem to speak.¹⁵⁵

¹⁵¹ *Calcutta Gazette*, March 15, 1787.

¹⁵² In Britain, auctions and exhibitions were part of the same social circuit. At bottom, both were driven by commerce, artists displaying their skills, except the best auctions featured primarily Old Masters and the exhibition spaces displayed Britain's best painters. Bourdieu, 1999, p.365, note 23.

¹⁵³ William Johnson 'came out with the (Crown appointed) judges in 1774 under the protection of Sir Robert Chambers', Hickey, 1913-25 volume three p.127.

¹⁵⁴ *ibid.*, volume three p.75.

¹⁵⁵ *The World*, December 8, 1792.

From 1774 until his death in 1792 Reynolds sent over a number of works to his nephew, including these two 'exotic' subjects which may indicate his search for India-related commissions (fig. 60).¹⁵⁶ As the President of the Royal Academy and living out the high life of the 'ideal artist', Reynolds made some mark on the colonial desire to transform Calcutta into a great centre for the arts.¹⁵⁷

Whilst the estates of deceased Europeans were disposed of by auction, imported oils were sold by raffles, lotteries, tombolas and dice games.¹⁵⁸ Typical was auctioneer Joseph Queiros's suggested raffle of old Masters, 1784-5: first prize being nineteen pictures worth a total of 5,000 Rs (£500):

Van Goyen *Storm* (6.2x4.8) 1,200Rs

Poussin *Nymphs and Shepherds* 2 pictures (5.5x5.2) 1,000Rs

Wilson *Landscape* (2.1x1.8) 100Rs¹⁵⁹

Yet even raffles were far from secure if the subscription could not be filled. 'Mr. Queiros having had offers for many of those beautiful pictures, the whole of

¹⁵⁶When William Johnson died in Calcutta his effects were sold off and included a vast array of art; prints of stained glass windows for New College Oxford, West's *Hannibal's enmity to the Romans*, *Regalus taking his leave from Carthage*, Stubbs' *Woman, Eggs and Raven*, Reynolds' *Student, Beggar, Woman in Van Dyck Costume, Mrs. Abington, Bacchus and Ariadne* and 'a variety of other capital prints too numerous to be mentioned.' Occasionally other works by Reynolds also cropped up, such as 'Venus, a painting by Sir Joshua Reynolds', 1000Rs (£100) sold at the European, Chinese and Indian Warehouse, 46, Radha Bazaar, *The World*, January 4, 1794.

¹⁵⁷ 'I would advise you to learn at your leisure the Persian language which would certainly aid your progress and contribute to make you a useful man. to make it people's interest to advance you that private business is better done by you than any other person, is the only solid foundation of success' Reynolds to Johnson January 17, 1781 *Letters of Reynolds* (ed.) F. Hilles (London, 1873) pp. 76-7. 'I am now drawing a whole length of Mr. Barwell and his son for Mr. Hastings when the picture goes to India I shall write at the same time in your favour' Reynolds to Johnson, *ibid.* After Reynolds' death in 1792, a group of his oils were sent to his nephew: the subjects of the sale were *Moses in the Bull Rushes, Peeping Boy, Dog and Girl, Girl and Bird, Child Reading* and *View of his Home at Richmond*.

¹⁵⁸Earliest editions of *Calcutta Gazette* reveal this obsession with gambling, May 13, 1784 a great demand throughout the settlement had arisen for lottery tickets 'upon the same construction as those used for the state lotteries in England'. A raffle of prints was held at Mr. Ord's warehouse whereby 60 prizes were drawn, tickets prized at 64 Rs each; *Calcutta Gazette* March 9, 1786. For art as distributed by dice games, see Stubbs' oils in Calcutta, discussed below.

¹⁵⁹*Calcutta Gazette*, December 9, 1784.

which he intended to dispose of by a raffle and not thinking it likely that the subscription will be filled, begs leave to give public notice that he has resolved to sell them separately on very reasonable terms for ready cash only.’¹⁶⁰

However this praxis endured as the only realistic prospect of disposing of oil paintings, providing a safety net for auction houses. Captain Urmston as well as acting as agent for Humphry and Boydell, carried over the unsold oils of George Stubbs which were sold by a dice game held in September 1785:

Three valuable large paintings and others of smaller size (by Stubbs) brought out in Captain Urmston’s investment that if a subscription is opened to dispose of them by a raffle, it would be met with encouragement; the following scheme is in consequence proposed: namely forty subscribers at 150 Rupees each, the pictures to be divide into six prizes to be gained by the six highest numbers made by three throws with three dice in the order in which the pictures are arranged below:¹⁶¹

First Prize large picture of *Reapers* (5.5x4 feet)

Second Prize large picture of *Haymakers* (same size)

Third Prize *The Pointer* (a very beautiful and natural likeness curiously done in enamel.)¹⁶²

Fourth Prize four pictures in pairs; *Horse, Lion and Leopards*

Fifth Prize ditto *Horse, Lion and Tygers*

Sixth Prize ditto *Lions and Tygers* (figs 61,62)

By 1785 Stubbs’ prints were readily available in India and Urmston sought to

¹⁶⁰ *Calcutta Gazette*, May,12,1785.

¹⁶¹ *Calcutta Gazette* September 1, 1785 raffle at Pope and Fairlie.

¹⁶² Ozias Humphry’s *Memoirs* (Liverpool Library) mentioned the Pointer ‘a pointer dog which was sold to Captain Urmston and carried to India on an octagon within a circle of a foot or twelve inches ... upon copper in enamel’. Ryland had previously taken over *Scrub*, a portrait rejected by its patron the Marquis Of Rockingham ‘and sold to Mr. Ryland and he sent it to the East Indies with other pictures and the (sic) were never landed but Mr. Stubbs took it back in part payment, new lined it and repaired it’. I am very grateful to Mrs. Egerton for this reference.

take this a step farther.¹⁶³ Although Stubbs' animal painting had fallen out of fashion by the mid 1780s, the works he sent to India were versions of valuable pictures which he planned to exhibit in making his 'come back', as well as translate into prints. By sending oils to India he hoped not only to make needed money in hard times, but also to attract subscribers for his future projects.¹⁶⁴ The inclusion of *Tigers* (one of Stubbs' most popular subjects) had relevance for wealthy Britons who hunted tigers in the mangroves of the Sunderbans, so such art acted as a surrogate picture for prize kills, thus forming a 'hybrid' art, executed in a superior style, if only generic rather than a 'likeness' of the trophy (fig. 63).¹⁶⁵

Overall we see imported prints and oils which appealed to wider notions of an Exotic or else turned back the gaze onto Britain's leading cities or a generic Pastoral. The exotic possessed ambivalent significations as an aesthetic category: 'the exotic was what the European was not and so helped Europe to define itself. In the visual arts, exotic representations acquired a tenuous and shifting quasi-aesthetic character, opposed the beautiful in a spatial sense, as the

¹⁶³This sale went ahead as several years later buyers of these pictures turn up in the Bengal Inventory Series : King and Johnson sale of goods June 3, 1794, the goods of Reynolds' nephew 'an old woman going to market with eggs, an original painting by Stubbs'. Bengal Inventory Series: L/AG/34/27/18:1795 notes its reappearance in the effects of Mr. Sallah at Berampore sold for 51 Rupees. Sallah also owned two horse pictures by Samuel Gold who had been in Calcutta and who claimed Stubbs had been one of his masters; *Calcutta Gazette* March 26, 1789. For two Stubbs' pictures gifted to the nawab of Arcot as seen by William Daniell see E.Cotton, 'The Daniells in India', *Bengal Past and Present*, xxxv, 1923, pp.1-70. Stubbs also had an interest in Indian subjects; see his 1765 exhibition oil of *Cheetah, Stag and two Indians* commissioned by Pigot, Governor of Madras.

¹⁶⁴Stubbs' work had largely gone out of fashion by the 1780s, being eclipsed by other animal painters such as Sawry Gilpin (who provided animals in some of Hodges' views of India). Sending his oils so far away in search of profit was a desperate measure; I am grateful to Mrs. Egerton for this information; conversation summer 1998.

¹⁶⁵ The jungles on the fringes of Calcutta's outskirts acted as other to its glittering modernity, as a site filled with rebels, disease, outlaws and tigers beyond the colonial civilizing mission. See Harrison, 1999, p.60. See also F.Zimmermann, *The Jungle and the Aroma of Meats* (Berkeley,1987).

ugly and the grotesque were opposed to the beautiful in more direct qualitative sense.¹⁶⁶ Reynolds' exotic subjects are in some aspects familiarised by their new context, whilst the Pastoral is exoticised in terms of context and distance. However overall, exoticism 'inscribes its object with an accultural illegibility, isolated from any coherence of origin' whereby through 'colonising displacement or dislocation of its object from any signs of the ... cultural context that might produce legible personal significance' so that Reynolds' *Omai* already radically decontextualised as 'living specimen' lionized in London and is now orientalised into generic 'Noble Savage' by way of his turban and robes of bark cloth.¹⁶⁷

Q: What is commerce?

A: Gambling

Q: What is the most cardinal virtue?

A: Riches ...¹⁶⁸

The metaphysical morality of gambling signified various entanglements; gaming denoted a particular attitude towards life, the desire for unnecessary risks as well as a mark of self confidence and as a marker of symbolic capital, the ability to lose more so than the desire to win.¹⁶⁹ Not confined to the card tables and dice of Calcutta's mansions; borrowing and empty promises underlay the structure of society as a whole; a house of cards ready to collapse. 'Trade in Bengal seems to Europeans to be a lottery in which the prizes were high but in which there were

¹⁶⁶Smith, 1992, p.9.

¹⁶⁷Guest, 1992 pp.102-104.

¹⁶⁸*Hickey's Gazette*, March, 1781.

¹⁶⁹One of Hogarth's recurring themes had been the destructive effects of gambling: from the *State Lottery*, *the Rake in gaming house with doxies*, *drunken as it burns*, to the *first of the Four Stages of Cruelty* where boys game on a gravestone to later works such as *the Cock Pitt*, and the *Lady's Last Stake*, who losing at cards also loses her honour. Gambling was an excepted part of high life; we only have to think of the Duchess of Devonshire, up to her neck in debts; Amanda Foreman, *Georgiana: Duchess of Devonshire*, (London,1998).

many blanks'.¹⁷⁰ With recession in the 1790s, Calcutta's commentators exclaimed, 'lotteries crowd on lotteries ... but the proprietors do not seem to consider where the money to support them is to come'.¹⁷¹

From art as luxury, oils became directly associated with disport, augmenting accusations of a society already deemed immoral in a variety of ways, freed from moral and polite signifiers. In Calcutta, Cornwallis' regime 'fostered a climate of opinion in which drinking, gambling, liaisons with Indian women and gross speculation were no longer admired or tolerated'.¹⁷² Luxury possessed complex and at bottom ambivalent social significations.¹⁷³

Like imported foods, British imagery was qualified in colonial rhetoric as both a luxury and a necessity its consumption was belied and believed vital to one's original cultural identity upheld at all costs, even if forsaking local painters whose art was not 'patriotic enough'. Prints could this be incorporated into the fevered patriotism of Calcutta, best commemorated by such events as the King's birthday, attended by the whole settlement, '*malgre* in the extreme heat, appeared in full dress with bags (wigs) and swords', when infinite toasts were drunk, glasses smashed and canons fired at the ghats.¹⁷⁴

During this era we see the emergence of more solvent notions of a wider British empire. Whilst forging ahead with novel forms information gathering, conquering new territories, literally on the cutting (or culling) edge of empire, cultural taste (at least in terms of painting as furniture) was 'conservative'. Due

¹⁷⁰ Marshall, 1976 p.49.

¹⁷¹ *Calcutta Chronicle*, January 1, 1793.

¹⁷² Bayly, 1983 p.78.

¹⁷³ A. Deaton, *Economics and Consumer Behaviour* (1980), M. Douglas and B. Isherwood, (1979); R. Mason, *Conspicuous Consumption* (1981); S. Schama, *The Embarrassment of Riches*.

¹⁷⁴ Hickey, volume two p.173 and *Calcutta Gazette* December 9, 1784.

to the temporal distance in the flow of intelligence between Britain and India, Calcutta's adherence to the latest metropolitan fashion was always slightly lagging behind London; by the time the 'latest' prints arrived in India, they were no longer in fashion, at least from a London stance.

Contemporaries believed that the decline of Mughal and Roman empires was exacerbated by aggressive provinces seeking to snatch power, as well as from their succumbing to the seduction of eastern luxury, already a much expressed anti-Company sentiment in Britain.¹⁷⁵ With the loss of the American colonies, close cultural control over British India became paramount.¹⁷⁶ Therefore the purchase and appreciation of British art was viewed as a vital safety valve against the orientalisising excesses of 'reversed acculturation', ensuring the temporal supremacy of Britain over its colonies, who following its lead in print consumption betrayed a conservative outlook. With regard to the social lives of prints, although utilised in variety of distinct ways in Calcutta, part of their value and cultural aura lay in the perception of their other lives across empire; either pre-natal as prints were taken from exhibition oils, society portraits, great historical schemes, drawings of old masters, or else inferred from other Britons' uses for such art.¹⁷⁷ New emphases on certain aspects of prints'

¹⁷⁵ 'An overextended empire was not only difficult and expensive to administer and defend, but many believed that it would promote vice and luxury in the metropolis in a way that threatened to corrupt society and the body politic'. Huw Bowen, 'British Conceptions of a Global Empire', *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* (1998) p.8. The fact that Britons overseas were focusing the colonial lens back on to Britain not only signified the increasing centralisation of 'print capitalism' but gave some comfort that despite the size of empire, its cultural consumption at least in some areas possessed uniform aspects, that it was manageable.

¹⁷⁶ See P.J.Marshall, 'Britain without America – A Second Empire?' in Marshall (ed.) *The Oxford History of the British Empire Volume Two: The Eighteenth Century* (Oxford,1998) pp.576-595 and K.Wilson, 'Empire of Virtue: The Imperial Project and Hanoverian Culture c.1720-1785' in L.Stone (ed.) *An Imperial State at War* (London,1994) pp.128-164.

¹⁷⁷ Arjun Appadurai (ed.) *The Social Life of Things* (Cambridge,1986).

identities gained peculiar currency in Calcutta; such as greater scarcity; displayed against white walls, they generated a very different impact to their British counterparts. As 'inalienable possessions', their status proved highly problematic: as they could not by dint of short term residents in Calcutta, gain value from their context.¹⁷⁸ Rather they were recycled through the sales of estates of deceased and departing owners, quickly becoming frayed and devalued by a stock of newly-imported more fashionable (but also more expensive art).

In terms of subject matter, Britain when cognated through 'print-capitalism' was constructed as a peculiar 'Occidentalism'; its culture denoted by views of its English and Scottish cities, pastoral subjects, mezzotints of public men and society beauties, indicating not only leading personalities but also the latest artistic innovations. Away from aesthetic appreciation or art as furniture, imported prints proved profound in shaping self conceptions in India, not merely through othering strategies of absence. For instance, St. John's was modelled on views and elevations of James Gibbs' St. Martin's-in-the-fields; it is also probable that colonial women adapted dress and hairstyles from the *ensembles* of society beauties' portraits - considered *le dernier mot* in European *haute couture*.¹⁷⁹ As a body of knowledge, this 'manifest Occidentalism' was fluid; as artistic diasporas expanded, so too did print stocks come to include an increasing amount of representations of empire, thus moulding an array of

¹⁷⁸ Annette Weiner, *Inalienable Possessions: The Paradox of Keeping While Giving* (Berkeley, C.A. 1992).

¹⁷⁹ Sten Nilsson, *European Architecture in India, 1750-1850* (London, 1968) and Clayton, 1997 for the ways in which prints encouraged the consumption and emulation of other British goods.

international publics in multivalent manners.¹⁸⁰ Thus across empire we see varying strategies of an exoticising the familiar and familiarising of the exotic, shaping an ontology for national consciousness.

The dual condemnations of luxury and fashion, as useless, wasteful extravagance, burgeoned during this era when there was a rise in British literature which took an anti-luxury stance.¹⁸¹ Above all, gambling was condemned as ‘unprecedentedly sinister’ in the dislocation of former attack on luxury which now focused on elite consumption.¹⁸² In Calcutta, it was not so much misuse as non-use which defined the instrumentation of imported art. Prints jostled alongside other forms of furniture, selling well only when framed and glazed. Art had to possess many other significations which transgressed the aesthetic. As more lucid art historians have noted with regard to eighteenth-century British picture-making, there was always a profound uneasiness surrounding the appreciation of art - anxieties only exacerbated by an exotic context.¹⁸³

¹⁸⁰See for instance the print catalogues of John Boydell, Paul Mellon Centre and those of Carrington Bowles, British Museum.

¹⁸¹Raven, 1992, pp.158-162.

¹⁸²ibid., pp.168-169.

¹⁸³R.Paulson, *Breaking and Remaking: Aesthetic Practice in England, 1700-1820* (New Brunswick,1989).

Chapter Four

From Boom to Ruin:
Death of the Artist in Calcutta, c.1785-1795.

*Yet to India, artist sail,
And if judgement there abide,
India will thy talents hail,
Cheering thee with bounteous pride...
Doubt not fortune will attend
Him whom taste and virtue love.¹*

*Alefounder is so disappointed at the great expense which attended his journey
and the uncertain profits that he has gone melancholy mad ... he should be put
on board the first ship and sent home.²*

Whilst valedictory verses penned in Britain assured painters to ‘Doubt not fortune will attend/ Him whom taste and virtue love’, as early as 1785 patronage had atrophied. The poetic elision of ethics and aesthetics, as Calcutta’s residents ‘naturally’ recognised the innate virtues as well as talent of newly arrived artists, became an acrimonious dialectic, even an anathema as Calcutta’s painterly diaspora collapsed.³ Recession served to heighten the intransigent dialectic between ‘needs’ and ‘luxuries’.⁴ Only the previous year

¹To Mr. Sheriff on his intended departure from England cited by Mildred Archer, *India and British Portraiture, 1770-1825* (London, 1979) p.394.

²G.C.Williamson, *The Life and Works of Ozias Humphry, R.A.* (London, 1918) p.130.

³See Terry Eagleton, for an evocative analysis of the conflation of ethics and aesthetics in the later eighteenth century *Ideology of the Aesthetic* (London, 1990) chapter one. Of Lord Cornwallis, Ozias Humphry observed. ‘I can perceive no symptom of any desire in his Lordship to patronise art or artists - He is a downright soldier and a very good man’. Ozias Humphry Papers, RA: HU/3/68. ‘Lord Cornwallis takes no ... notice of any artists whatever which perhaps may be owing to the multiplicity of his business.’ *ibid.*

⁴C. Berry, *The Idea of Luxury*, (Cambridge, 1994). Cornwallis wrote to Henry Dundas (Head of the Board of Control for regulating government in India via Westminster) that by 1789, Bengal was ‘advancing hastily to a general state of poverty and wretchedness’; cited in P.J.Marshall, *Bengal: The British Bridgehead*, (Cambridge, 1987), p.89.

inhabitants had celebrated, 'it is with infinite delight I have observed the rapid progress we are daily making in all those polite and refined entertainments which have so strong a tendency to humanise the mind and render life pleasing and agreeable.'⁵ Such alterity reinscribed the familiar metonym that 'the more these refined arts advance, the more sociable men become', flocking to the cities and that 'besides the improvements which they receive from knowledge and the liberal arts it is impossible but they must feel an increase of humanity'.⁶ In the ideological chain of association binding commerce, humanity and the polite arts in the acceleration of civilisation, the strain on one link rattled the others, locating painting at the nexus of factors beyond its control. Did a decline in aesthetic encouragement signify a loss of humanity? If this was not the case, we need to articulate how plummeting artistic patronage could be hermeneutically justified.

By the 1790s, one strand of British picture-making and perception focussed on the importance of elevating the artist above a commercial realm defined by a 'division of labour'.⁷ Thus there was the danger of a total rejection of a public role for art: the painter's experience in front of the object being unique to him and communicable only to other artists: 'the pleasure for instance which the generality of mankind receive from any celebrated painting, is trifling compare to which a painter feels ... What is to them, only an accurate

⁵ Anonymous 'Letter to the Editor', *Calcutta Gazette* October 21, 1784. The shift from boom to slump was swift; on his arrival in Calcutta in 1785 Humphry sighed 'Zoffany has been as remarkably fortunate as I have been unlucky in the period of my arrival'. HU/3/43 November 20, 1785. Zoffany arrived in 1783 in the midst of prosperity.

⁶ Hume cited in David H. Solkin, *Painting For Money* (New Haven, 1993) p.44. See also T. Clayton, *The English Print* (New Haven, 1997) and J. Brewer, *Pleasures of the Imagination* (Oxford, 1997).

⁷ Archibald Alison, *Essay on Taste* (Edinburgh, 1790) p.64.

representation of nature, is to him a beautiful exertion of genius and a perfect display of art'.⁸

In India, the situation was exacerbated in practice. The skills and demands of professional painters became too specialised and extravagant for the requirements of a colonial community under economic pressure. Therefore their own role as 'artists' was seriously undermined, and this would have grave repercussions for their imagery.

Whilst the two previous chapters have concentrated on the white town's 'aesthetic insularity' we now need to widen the focus to explore the evolution of the discursive plethora of 'Company aesthetics', which both revealed and masked the transgressive, liminal and invasive battles and negotiation between Calcutta's diverse artistic colonies. Despite increased social apartheid, a complex orientalism-occidentalism emerged.⁹ Britons and Indians could choose from (and discriminate against) an enormous range of art: such as the works of former royal artists Zoffany or Zayn al-Din, or the prints and drawings of military engravers or from the hundreds of displaced *patuas* in Calcutta's bazaars. From Bengal inventories, we can gauge the eclectic taste of Europeans.¹⁰ For instance the estate of Maria Saldannah included thirty five pictures, such as a 'large picture of the *Death of Hector*, one of Saint Joseph' and three 'country' (a common term for Indian) pictures.¹¹ Likewise the estate of

⁸Charlotte Klonk, *Science and the Perception of Nature* (New Haven,1996), pp.23-24. See also Kay Dian Kriz, *The Idea of the English Landscape Painter: Genius as Alibi in the Early Nineteenth Century* (New Haven,1997).

⁹S.Chaudhuri (ed.) *Calcutta: Living City* (Oxford,1990) volume one pp. 137-155.

¹⁰Bengal Inventory Series L/AG/34/27/volumes 1-20. I am extremely grateful to Lizzie Collingham for alerting me to the importance of this public records series.

¹¹L/AG/34/27/18 May 26, 1795.

Henry Maschmann included a print of Gainsborough's *Watering Place* sold to Mr. Needham for 24 Rs, two prints of Queen Mary and King Charles sold to Govind Pyker for 31 Rs and four square Hindustani pictures sold to Pharsee Johame for 38 Rs.¹²

Rather than a catholicity of taste, both cultures zealously guarded their identities, which suspended or emphasised strained relations. Such perceptions and practices involved varying zones of transculturation and processes of translation as colonial art became entangled within an intricate web. Its idioms were appropriated and recoded both by amateur British painters (who were usually military officers working as local print-makers, or else collecting drawings from far off parts of India to be sent to Britain for reproduction), and by Indian painters who were employed by a range of British and Bengali clientele. This was an era of flux: as Calcutta expanded it swallowed up villages whose *patuas* were subsumed within a new urbanity and forced to adjust their practices.¹³ The Mughal *karkhanas* of Murshidabad and Azimabad were depleted by the Company, forcing artists to migrate to the new British capital. Simultaneously, intense economic recession ousted colonial painters from Calcutta in search of new subjects and a new clientele creating an ebb and flow, floods and whirlpools of dynamic but destabilised artistic currents, networks and aesthetic traffic.¹⁴

¹²L/AG/34/27/18. However there were many other estates which featured only British art, such as that of Justice Hyde L/AG/34/27/19; January 12, 1797 which included portraits of his family, three volumes of Boydell's collection of prints, Thomas Hickey's *History of Painting* and a print of Dr. Johnson; or that of Captain William Golding L/AG/34/27/20 1798: *six views of Calcutta* framed and glazed, maps of Calcutta, Bengal and London.

¹³See Sumanta Banarjee, *The Parlour and the Streets* (Calcutta, 1998) chapter and Ratnabali Chatterjee, *From the Karkhana to the Studio* (Delhi, 1990) chapter two.

¹⁴For an account of the dynamic and evolving economic networks under early colonial rule see C.A. Bayly, *Rulers, Townsmen and Bazaars* (Cambridge, 1983).

By the 1790s, the number of professional artists travelling to India declined drastically. Whilst from 1783 to 1786, eleven painters working chiefly in oils had made the voyage, the next first-time artist-visitor to venture from Britain did not do so until 1802.¹⁵ Enthusiasm for India on the part of a community of professional artists had waned never to recover.¹⁶ Those British painters who now chose India stayed for longer periods, often the rest of their lives, which altered the signification of an imperial aesthetic.¹⁷ By 1820 Calcutta's population totalled nearly three times that of 1750, yet its enthusiasm for locally produced professional colonial art had not expanded in tandem, despite the increasingly 'anglicised' taste of the *babus* and the city's recovery from the slump.¹⁸

Hard Times:

Recession and Calcutta's Artistic Community

First of all, we need to explore the direct effects of economic slump and changing state patronage of the arts in late 1780s and early 1790s Calcutta. By the late 1780s, recession had hit Calcutta hard. Warfare in Mysore and in Europe

¹⁵The painters who arrived post 1786 were George Place (1798-1805) who spent his career at the court of Lucknow, James Wales and Robert Mabon, (1791-5) based largely in Bombay and Pune. A number of miniaturists also arrived in India during this time. Archer, 1979 pp.387-406 and William Forster, 'British Artists in India' *Walpole Society* xix, (1930-31).

¹⁶Archer, 1979 pp.357-358 follows the first portraitist to the last in the era 1770-1825, thus noting that after George Chinnery's arrival in 1802 no other professional portraitists travelled to India during this epoch. From 1772-1786, 20 artists working in oils came to India, but from 1787-1802 this number dropped to 7; pp.357-358.

¹⁷Charles Smith who had been in India 1783-7 returned in 1800 until 1811; likewise Thomas Hickey on his first visit 1784-91, came back 1798-1811. Long term artists' dates in India are: Robert Home, 1791-1834 and George Chinnery 1802-1825. In this way artists 'outlasted' many of the colonial residents; they appeared to exist within a temporality which had parallels with the 'genealogy of the institution' that is as permanent fixture in the cityscape. Archer, 1979 pp.178-185, 204-233, 356-387.

¹⁸C.A.Bayly, *Indian Society and the Making of the British Empire* (Cambridge, 1988) p.68 notes that Calcutta's population was 120,000 in 1750, 200,000 by 1780 and 350,000 by 1820. *ibid.*, p.71 notes that by 1790 there were as many as 4000 Europeans in Calcutta.

as well as bad harvests, had drained Bengal of its bullion.¹⁹ This throws fresh light on Devis's imagery of rural industry and prosperity which inverted actual social conditions: during recession there was literally no bullion in Bengal, which forced an *ad hoc* bartering and credit-note system.²⁰ Thus images such as the *Mint* and *Assaying*, (fig. 65) despite their intense realism, are strangely dislocated by the city's dearth of silver and coin.

Rife economic strife signified disaster for many private traders reliant on high luxury consumption, as represented in James Moffat's *Hard Times, 1796* (fig. 64).²¹ The division of labour, signifier of a highly sophisticated modern commercial society, had in Calcutta collapsed under itself as interdependence and social interaction here did not so much produce fellow feeling as illumine (or rather malign) the parasitical nature of this breed of commercial society. In the print, the hairdresser bemoans the new fashion for docking which has undone his livelihood, 'Curse them, I don't know what to be about', whilst his portly companion offers useless advice that some forms of consumption never die: 'Eating my boy! Eating's always in fashion hah!' . Thus the effect of the division of labour on bodily representation as employed variously in Britain by

¹⁹See A.Tripathi, *Trade and Finance: the Bengal Presidency, 1793-1833* (Oxford,1979).

²⁰This becomes apparent from the diaries of the architect Richard Blechynden. For this specific point I am extremely grateful to Professor Peter Robb. See also B.B.Chaudhuri, 'Money and Social Change in Eastern India in the first century of British Rule' *Indian History Congress* 1985 and N.K.Sinha, *Economic History of Bengal from Plassey to the Permanent Settlement* two volumes (Calcutta,1956-62).

²¹Again this is another extremely rare print by Moffat; the only known example is housed in the Lewis Walpole Library, Farmington, Connecticut. The coarse local paper and pigments signify a very different from to the shimmering full-length canvases of the 1770s and early 1780s.

James Barry is here parodied by Moffat's thin, pinched in tradesmen and a portly (by implication prosperous) resident.²²

The strickening of the market is developed by the other pair of figures for whom, neither highly consumptive lifestyles nor diseases like cholera and malaria have been taking their usual toll, the undertaker moaning, 'I have only had thirty nine jobs yet the rains are almost over', indicative of a community chastened even 'saved' by poverty.²³ Moffat produced other images of recession including *The Times*, 1796, which parodies the pidgin linguistic scenarios mapped out in Hadley's *Grammar*. A Company clerk lounges at his desk, a *hircarrah* announces 'got bill with master's name on it' to which the man replies 'no money, come back next month'.

Away from merely employing recession-as-subject, artists were subjected to its effects. Servants' bills and Company wages went unpaid not only for weeks, but for years so that painters had little hope in realising their fees, as art's luxury status was further heightened, now cast out of the zone of desirable consumption.²⁴ As we have seen, it was imported imagery which found favour in Calcutta, which extended from a taste for prints also to the market for portrait miniatures, so that the realm of minimal art consumption was taken into the realm of the minute:

The people here are ignorant of everything but likeness and smooth finishing. They require as much as they would in London and more. In proportion as they grow poor they grow nice and want good

²²For Barry see Barrell 1986. Being well fed in recession Calcutta was a luxury; some days the architect Richard Blechynden had to go without food. I am grateful to Professor Peter Robb for this information.

²³As Mark Harrison has analysed, contemporaries stressed a frugal life style bereft of luxuries so ironically lives were saved during recession; *Climate and Constitution* (Delhi, 1999) chapter two.

²⁴I am grateful to Professor Peter Robb for this insight.

pennysworth- besides they see here daily the best and most finished pictures of Smart, Meyers, Cosway and all the best miniature painters whereas they never see one oil picture and Mr. Hickey a very weak painter is their best in oil except Mr. Zoffany who is soon to return.²⁵

Calcutta's portrait clientele collapsed under the weight of too many painters.

Such a migration demonstrates what at first glance appear conflicting issues: the temporal and informational divisions between London and Calcutta, as well as the metropole's increased influence on colonial governance.²⁶

If one may judge from the conversations I have heard since my arrival, the times are not at present very fortunate for making large fortunes rapidly - the return of Mr. Hastings who was a munificent patron, the death of Mr. Wheeler and the resolution that every person of property has taken to return immediately to avoid the obligations of Mr. Pitt's Bill has laid them under ... added to the actual distress which prevails in Bengal ... leaves one not a very flattering prospect.²⁷

Initially Cornwallis' appointment as the new Governor-General signified optimism that painting would once more be instrumental in the evolution of imperial governmentality.²⁸ Contemporaries hoped that:

the blank left by the loss of Mr. Hastings will be soon be filled up in that Parliament restrictions which has so disturbed India are to be done away

²⁵HU/3/49 December 29, 1785.

²⁶Pitt's India Act, 1784 further divided off trade and administration in India as well as asserting greater parliamentary involvement and sought to end private trade.

²⁷HU/3/36, Ozias Humphry to Mary Boydell, Calcutta, August 7, 1785. Joseph Farington: 'The last season artists were flowing from all quarters to India. The rage now seems to be over but Mr. Carter whose spirit of enterprise is not of a common kind, ventures this season and will be with you as soon as this letter, as he goes by the Manship. I do not hear of any other intending to make the voyage.' HU/3/95, and also Archer 1979, p.273.

²⁸Cornwallis's era is still under-researched. See A. Aspinall, *Cornwallis in Bengal* (Manchester, 1931) and Eric Stokes, *English Utilitarians and India* (Cambridge reprint, 1982) chapter one. In contrast, Hastings had offered much personal and state patronage to painters. See my chapter five. He was being tried for impeachment and Cornwallis' regime in several respects tried to distance itself from him.

and then the great men will soon become more great and will have the same ambition of encouraging works of art.²⁹

However a 'whiff of parsimony clung about Company rule despite the splendour of its military victories ... in the matter of well-paid posts for Indians, patronage for Indian artisans and expenditure on public works', which extended also to support for British painting.³⁰ The new administration sought to cleanse the vices and accusations of luxury surrounding colonial affairs.³¹ For the duration of governorship Cornwallis offered no direct patronage to British artists, thus implying that British art forge its own independent space poised ambivalently between state and public, instead identifying the exigency to convey martial spirit, notions of nationalism, epitomised in art by multifarious representations of British Victory in the Third Mysore War, produced under private patronage.³²

The sole professional portraitist to suffer Calcutta for his entire Indian career was John Alefounder (*fl.* 1785-1794) who downcast at economic depression, tried suicide several times, before succeeding on Christmas Eve, 1794.³³ However Robert Home newly arrived from Madras, managed to eke out a living by producing bust-length portraits, charging between 500 and 600 rupees per canvas, still a sizable amount but much less than the enormous fees

²⁹Mary Boydell to Ozias Humphry, HU/3/56. She instructed her still-then fiancé that 'as soon as Cornwallis arrives you must not fail of going among the first who make their bow of congratulations especially as he brings you a packet and has promised my uncle to show your every civility' HU/3/56, HU/3/65, and HU/3/68. See also P.J.Marshall 'Cornwallis Triumphant' in *Trade and Conquest* (Aldershot,1993), pp.57-64.

³⁰Radhika Singha, *A Despotism of Law* (Delhi,1998) p.x note 11.

³¹Beth Tobin, *Picturing Imperial Power* (Duke,1999) pp.118-120.

³²*The Oriental Star*, March 30,1793 gives a long account of decorations to celebrate the first anniversary of Mysore Victory. See 'The Seringapatam Collection at the Victoria Memorial Hall', *Bengal Past and Present*, 1924 28 pp.2-13, M.Archer, *Tipoo's Tiger* (London,1959) D.Forrest, *The Tiger of Mysore* (London,1970) Anne Buddle, *The Tiger and the Thistle* (Edinburgh,1999), B.Allen, 'From Plassey to Seringapatam', in C.A.Bayly (ed.) *The Raj, 1600-1947* (London,1990) and Kate Brittlebank, *Tipu Sultan's Search For Legitimacy* (Dehli,1997).

³³Archer 1979 pp.270-272.

once won by Willison and Zoffany for full-length glittering likenesses, whose shimmering opulence was now out of fashion.³⁴ The amateur painter and engraver William Baillie like other lesser painters added further artillery in the battle for patronage:

It is only the higher ranks who can afford high prices or employ artists of note. There are a great number of the middling class who neither can afford or will give 500 or 600Rs for a head and yet who would venture 200 or 300 Rs. There are but very few judges of a good picture a likeness is what most people want and I think I can provide that.³⁵

As in Humphry's previous analysis of Calcutta's demand, we see consistent accusations: the public has no taste and consequently no aesthetic expertise in judging oil painting beyond its most 'functional' aspects which questioned how artistic 'value' should be encoded.

Aside from Cornwallis' eschewal of graphic patronage, the market value for colonial painting was plummeting. Struggling painters utilised some of the commission houses' strategies in the desperate attempt to attract clientele. Lotteries were unsuccessfully proposed both by George Carter and by John Alefounder, as they attempted to tap into Calcutta's established social rituals, transferring business from the 'public' site of the commission houses to their own homes.³⁶ Alefounder aimed for a raffle of twenty eight oils and miniatures

³⁴Robert Home's collection is now in store in the Asiatic Society of Bengal. Home's sitters' book is in the Heinz Archive, (National Portrait Gallery, London). His sketches taken from sittings are in the V&A currently undergoing restoration. E.B.Day, *Biography of Robert Home* (OIOC Eur Ms Photo).

³⁵William Baillie to Ozias Humphry HU/4/113. Baillie was fiercely competitive, analysing the works of fellow artists; attacking Sarah Baxter HU/4/113. Other artists who sought to undercut prices include; Aaron Upjohn in 1787 offering 16 Rs. for a likeness in profile *Calcutta Chronicle*, January 1, 1787.

³⁶ Carter's lottery for December 1786 flopped and his pictures sold by auction in January 1787. See Archer, 1979 p.275 and for a list of such works, Crawford Monuments 30/5/5 European Letterbook 1784-1787; John Rylands Library, Manchester. Throughout this era artists used their own or each others' homes as sites to exhibit. The miniaturist Charles Sheriff was displaying his

divided into fifteen prizes with one hundred and fifty tickets at fifty Rupees each, making a total of about eight hundred pounds from a mélange of genres from ethnographic subjects such as *Hook Swinging*, to representations of a *Hindustani Lady*, *Hookah Burdah*, *Mughal Man* and *a Fakir* to portraits after Reynolds and Angelica Kauffmann (no doubt gleaned from imported mezzotints).³⁷ In terms of the number of prizes and the price of their tickets, such lotteries provided a cheaper alternative to imported art; for instance the tickets for Stubbs' sixteen oils divided into six prizes were priced at 150 Rs each, three times Alefounder's raffle, although the latter sought four times more subscribers; an ambitious scheme given plummeting public interest in locally produced art.³⁸

The only other painters to utilise the lottery were the Daniells who in order to fund a Mysore tour proposed a 'hybrid' auction, caught half-way between a lottery and subscription, as every ticket purchaser won an oil painting; (thus appealing to the austere patronal climate), prizes being of diverse sizes, all of which were at much lower cost than Thomas Daniell's normal rate and which the Daniells hoped would raise £5,500 - the amount required in order to undertake an extensive tour of southern India.³⁹ Never had so many views of

pictures in the house of Joseph Taylor, November 8, 1799; which Richard Blechynden notes as 'the very best I ever saw'. Add Ms 45,611, pp.201-2 and p.212. I am extremely grateful to Professor Peter Robb for this reference.

³⁷*Calcutta Chronicle*, August 14, 1788.

³⁸In consequence Alefounder hoped to make over £150 more than Captain Urmston's sale of Stubbs' works. The surviving plans for print schemes raised by subscription in India suggest that between 30 and 40 subscribers was considered satisfactory; so that the search for four times this number was extremely ambitious for any project. See the list of subscribers for Robert Mabon's *Sketches Illustrative of Oriental Manners and Customs* (Calcutta, 1797) and James Wales' plans for subscribers to be discussed below.

³⁹'Which at Mr. Daniell's customary prices amount to 55,550 Rs. but in order to dispose of the whole, he proposes a lottery of 150 tickets at 250 Rs. each which will amount to 37,500 Rs.', 'his having so considerably lowered the prices of his labour together with the circumstances that every subscriber will be entitled to a picture for each ticket of at least the value of the

India been exhibited by British artists.⁴⁰ ‘It is very suggestive for understanding the imperative of the landscape art of Hodges or the Daniells in India and their relationship with contemporary military cartography’.⁴¹ The Daniells brought unknown sites as sights to the urban colonial view, crammed into a Calcutta tavern. Large, painted in vivid colour, wielding a *camera obscura*, dramatic overviews and oblique vantage and vanishing points, and displayed as part of a crowded montage, depicting often strange, esoteric structures such as *the Observatory, Delhi*, much of northern India could be perused in less than a couple of hours.⁴² (fig. 73) Over Rennell’s *Memoir of a Map of Hindustan* (which professed to be overlaying Mughal territorial divisions) could be superimposed an aesthetic grid of ‘sublime’ natural and cultural wonders.

Additionally, as we shall see, the Daniells’ search for as many rare spectacles and far away places as possible, defined the artistic project for colonialism which paid scant regard to analysis of the territory, flora, fauna,

subscription, flatters himself that his undertaking will not want encouragement.’ The value of the first prize of pictures: 1,200-2,400 Rs. each down to 79 prizes of a picture total amount as 25-19,750 Rs.. The lottery was to be held on March 1, 1792 at Cockerell, Trail and co, The pictures were put on display in the Old Harmonic Tavern where they could be viewed daily from 10am to 2pm for two months in advance. Blechynden attended their exhibition on January 12, 1792 Add Ms 45,582, ‘very fine indeed- four rooms full.’ Baillie HU/4/113 notes that many of which were sold to a Mr. Speke, ‘has got a great number of the Daniells’ pictures some of which he got from the lottery’.

⁴⁰By 1792 William Hodges had long since completed *Choix des Vues de l’Inde* (1785-8) which consisted of 48 aquatints of monuments in India. In total, the Daniells exhibited around 150 oils at the Royal Academy. The only other pictorial project of comparable size to the Daniells’ was Solvyns’ *250 etchings descriptive of the manners and customs of the Hindous* (1796) and plans for 300 heads.

⁴¹Geoff Quilley, 1998 pp.59-60. See Derek Gregory, *Geographical Imaginations* (Cambridge,1994), James Whale, ‘Romantics, Explorers and Picturesque Travellers’ in S.Copley and P.Garside (eds.) *The Politics of the Picturesque* (Cambridge,1994) and Matthew H.Edney, *Mapping An Empire* (Chicago,1997).

⁴²Within this specific instance, the observatory had been valued in Mughal culture for its high position providing a vantage point at which to observe the stars at night. In the Daniells’ view it is seen in broad daylight, the astronomers are gone and rather staffage survey the land or turn back to the painters, as form now overrides function in the transformation in to colonial symbol.

culture and production under direct colonial rule, awaiting future appropriation entangled by a disinterested and administrative ethos.⁴³

After Humphry's departure from India in 1788, the engraver William Baillie acted as his dealer: 'Mr. Bigly has charge of your picture of *the Ladies Waldegrave* and the prints you left with me which are now not worth a *fifteenth* of their value ... as in Calcutta pictures are in abundance of one sort or another'.⁴⁴ Baillie then cited the plight of other colonial pictures scraping a pittance: Hodges' twenty one landscape oils from the famed Augustus Cleveland estate (for which Hodges had been rewarded with £4000 in 1781) which after his patron's death had in 1784 fetched 1,500 to 2,000 Rs each (£150-200) were ten years later selling for only 100 Rs. (£10) a canvas, despite being advertised as 'valuable paintings'.⁴⁵ Hodges' aquatints for *Choix des Vues* encountered worse.⁴⁶ 'As to prints, the commonest bazaar is full of them. Hodges' Indian views are selling off at the out-cry by cartloads and although framed and glazed, are bought for less money than the glaze alone could be purchased in the bazaar - *times are changed*'.⁴⁷ Art could now be purchased not even as furniture, but for its glass or frame, thus further severing its esoteric (even exotic) prowess from its exoteric materiality.

⁴³As the Survey of India stretched further afield, so artists travelled as far as possible. See M. Clayton and M. Hardie, 'Thomas and William Daniell', *Walkers Quarterly* 35-36 (1932), M. Archer, 'India Revealed: Sketches by the Daniells' *Apollo* 76.9 (November, 1962) and M. Shellim, *India and the Daniells* (London, 1979). Also the *Diary of William Daniell* (OIOC).

⁴⁴HU/4/130 William Baillie to Ozias Humphry.

⁴⁵HU/4/130. *The World*, January 1, 1794, to be sold on 4 February by King, Johnson and Pierce. In the same letter, William Baillie also notes that Zoffany's drawings were selling for only one rupee eight annas each.

⁴⁶This is despite his saturation advertising in India. For every weekly issue of the *Calcutta Gazette* in 1787, Hodges' *Choix des Vues* appeared. No other British artist in India attempted such dense advertising.

⁴⁷HU/4/130 Baillie to Humphry (my emphasis). We can gauge the resale of Hodges' *Choix des Vues*, in the estate of John Roach L/AG/34/27/9 volume 1, 1788: Bengal Inventory Series: lot 253 sold to Mr. Hawkins, @5 Rs. each.

The Patronage of a Hybrid Indian Art

Away from the dilemma of the market, in Calcutta there was a potential 'institutionalised' art patron - the Asiatic Society of Bengal, whose initial agenda promoted enquiry into the history and antiquities, the arts, sciences and literature of Asia, which ironically left little room for the professional painter.⁴⁸ 'What was occurring was a titanic shift in authority. The Asiatic Society gave institution form and definition to a group of scholar-administrators who were fashioning a new domain for authority over that of the older orientalism, a claim which largely succeeded'.⁴⁹ Despite possessing over one hundred members by 1790 including Devis and Zoffany, professional artists seem to have played little direct role in the Society's publications.⁵⁰ To be directly involved, artists were assigned a manual rather than a liberal status. This is summed up by the case of John Alefounder whose direct pictorial involvement was only to etch an amateur drawing by J.Eliot for the *Asiatick Researches*.⁵¹

Although initially encouraging Solvyns in his ethnographic scheme, the President of the Asiatic Society Sir William Jones, primarily commissioned

⁴⁸'A mere man of letters, retired from the world and allotting his whole time to philosophy or literary purists, is a character unknown among European residents in India where every individual is a man of business in the civil or military state, constantly occupied in the affairs of government, the administration of justice, in some department of revenue or commerce or in one of the liberal professions.' *Asiatic Researches* volume one. See also O.P.Kejariwal, *The Asiatic Society of Bengal and the Discovery of India's Past* (Delhi,1988).

⁴⁹Thomas Trautmann, *Aryans and British India* (Berkeley,C.A.1997), p.30.

⁵⁰Initially there had been encouragement. The Judge at Dacca John Paterson (later a patron of Robert Home) had suggested to Alefounder: 'the idea of pictures of customs and manners of this country' *Calcutta Chronicle*, September 11, 1788. The painter planned drawings for publication although these came to nothing.

⁵¹This was a representation of a *Ganaw man in war dress* after a drawing by J.Eliot, Judge at Tipperam, 1795-1808 (R.A.S). William Jones condemned Alefounder's work as that of a 'tyro'. This is sharply juxtaposed with the ways in which artists conveyed visual information in Britain. As Urmila De has lucidly observed, both Devis and Charles Smith provided 'scientific' drawings to illustrate articles on physiology and physiognomy of an Indian child with a double head; papers delivered to the Royal Society in 1790 and 1799. *The Economy of Human Life*, p.3.

Indian pictures to provide illustrations for his research, indicative of the only form of 'state' patronage offered to painting during Cornwallis's era.⁵² Several Indian painters (usually derived from Mughal courts) were employed directly by the Company to translate plants and peoples in to botanical or human specimen (fig. 66) and assistant in map making and surveying which gave rise to their loose, collective name 'Company artists', a title denied British professional artists and which became a powerful signifier of an information order which incorporated Indian agency, albeit marginalised and dislocated by being forced into complicity with European visual traditions.⁵³

They were employed within the acts of recording both the gigantic and minute; the prospect with the assistance of the telescope, the camera obscura and topography and the specimen, aided by the microscope, Linnaean classification and European botanical treatises, which instigated reconfigurations of their artistic but also their social perceptions of the face of the land, sense of place and information gathering.⁵⁴

⁵² In the metropolitan press, Jones placed notices of his forthcoming work, 'when he returns to Europe he will bring with him drawings of all the remarkable ruins in India to which he means to fix the necessary histories; *St. James's Chronicle*, February 11-13, 1790, p.4. Jones was also planning a orientalist version of Linnaeus' *Philosophica Botanica*. In the *Asiatic Researches* for 1790s he announced 'designs for a treatise on the plants of India,' but he died four years later before it was completed. His collection of drawings is now housed in the Royal Asiatic Society, including botanical drawings by Indian painters such as Zayn al-Din drawn at Krishnagar, Harishnagar and Calcutta 1789-93, (pen, ink and watercolour 32x20cm). See also Raymond Desmond, *The European Discovery of Indian Flora* (Oxford, 1992).

⁵³ Tobin pp.174-201.

⁵⁴ Archer, *Company Drawings in the India Office* (London, 1972) introduction. See also James Wales, *Dairy at Pune, 1791-1795* volume one (BAC) ff.67-68: 'Two days I invented a camera obscura for showing the object vertical', which he then gave to his brahmin assistant Gangaram, dispatching him to make drawings of the surrounding countryside; 'this day I sent Gangaram with the camera to take a sketch of the view from the hill'. See also Gangaram's Drawings - Register Three: Wales Collection (BAC). We can trace the evolution of his Mughal 'map-like' views such as *View of Parbati* (22364) to the same site (22368) seen from the bottom of the hill within a Europeanised idiom.

‘The Hindoos of this day have a slender knowledge of the rules of proportion and none of perspective. They are just imitators’.⁵⁵ However ‘fine art’ was increasingly redundant in British India; colonial painters were starved of commissions and Mughal-trained artists forced to work in alien idioms which highlights the processes of translation of art and perception. Their foreign style was overlaid on to ‘curious specimen’, creating hybrid images far removed from colonial art. So whilst condemned as lacking European ‘genius’ Indian artistic idioms proved crucial in some aspects of information gathering:

The representations of the costumes of the country, I am persuaded are as faithful as the pencil can delineate; the native painters of India do not possess a genius for fiction or works of fancy, they cannot invent or even embellish ... but they draw figures and trace every line of a picture with a laborious exactness peculiar to themselves.⁵⁶

Thus we see interesting patterns of patronage emerging. As Archer and Edney have argued from very different perspectives, Indian painters were often treated merely as ‘copyists’ or assigned to the most menial tasks in topography, surveying and other picture-making as required by the colonial state. However the impact of colonialism on their artistic idioms was profound. The *patua* caste passed its skills down through the generations, so that an Anglicisation of pictorial vocabulary possessed far reaching effects.

Concurrently, the arrival of high quality British art such as Hodges’ *Choix des Vues* in Calcutta’s bazaars created new viewing publics. Indian painters working both for the British and also free-lance transposed Hodges’ landscape aesthetic to produce their own ‘hybrid’ watercolour versions,

⁵⁵G.Forster *A Journey from Bengal to England*, (London,1798) volume one p.80.

⁵⁶Archer, 1972 p.xi.

(converting prints based on detailed wash drawings, back into sketches) which would further undermine the role for British painters in Calcutta.⁵⁷ (figs. 67, 68) ‘British paintings and engravings of Indian scenes began to be supplanted more cheaply and abundantly by the pictures produced by this pool of displaced artists’, which despite its very different appearance, in some sense aped, even replaced the market for colonial imagery.⁵⁸

As both Bayly and Guha-Thakurta have observed, colonial demand for such art affected not only these *patuas*’ self image, but also their perceptions of history and landscape, when commissioned to adapt Hodges’ aquatints.⁵⁹ In an adaptation of *the mosque at Futtipoor Sicri* (fig. 68) we see the artist reversing Hodges’ composition - perhaps drawn through a mirror, pounced or traced, which thus profoundly altered the site’s topographical signification.⁶⁰ Hodges’ attempts to intertwine foliage and decaying architecture are here reinterpreted; the tree-as-repoussoire assumes greater prominence on the frontal plane, whilst the oblique angle of the mosque is taken to such extremes that the structure appears not to be foreshortened through the effects of linear perspective but to

⁵⁷ Series of sixteen drawings of picturesque scenes with Indian monuments by a Calcutta artist c.1798-1804; OIOC Add Or. 1131-1146, ff.34-49 (M.Archer, *Company Drawings in the India Office*, London,1972 pp.78-79). The artist makes use of dead trees from Hodges. Archer notes that the architecture is inaccurate and that these drawings do not seem to have been made on the spot. It does however include buildings other than Hodges’ series such as Add Or. 1146, *the Great Imambara, Lucknow*. The watercolours which demonstrate the strongest affinity with Hodges’ *Choix des Vues* are: Add Or. 1133 (figure 000) *Exterior of the Jami Masjid with the Buland Darwaza, Fatehpur Sikri* (reversed adaptation of plate 12); Add Or. 1134, *Distant view of the same* (plate 11 adapted) and Add Or. 1140, *Bridge across a tank; Ahmad Khan’s mausoleum, Ahmadpur* (distorted version of plate 36).

⁵⁸ Guha-Thakurta, 1992, p.13.

⁵⁹ Guha-Thakurta, p.15 and C.A.Bayly (ed.) *The Raj India and the British, 1600-1947* (London,1990) p.134.

⁶⁰ In a very different context, Solvyns’ *250 Etchings* (1796) when etched, reversed Calcutta’s topography.

vanish into a sharp ramp, thus appearing more akin to the *Observatory at Delhi* (fig. 73).

Britons constructed substantial collections of Indian art as they wished to comprehend something of its aesthetic and its 'social' character.⁶¹ It can be proposed that Company officials commissioned Indian painters to adapt such images as Hodges' aquatints in part to comprehend the ways in which their very different perceptions operated when trying to cognate such alien subject matter. In this therefore colonial officials were surveying the 'deconstruction' and 'reformation' of a pictorial vocabulary; a process which also 'reversed' the translation of Indian miniatures into prints in Britain.

Colonial pictures were thus reinvented; aspects of their media and techniques or compositions combined with Indian artistic schema in the production of a new 'hybrid' art. Mildred Archer suggested that whilst Solvyns was attempting to produce a 'scientific' view of caste, Indian painters began digesting aspects of his vocabulary into their oeuvres.⁶² This needs to be seen within the much wider context of artistic production; 'ethnographic' types continued largely unaffected beyond a small group of painters, although the rising demand for such imagery amongst the colonial community also caused social shifts within this 'displaced pool' of diverse artists.⁶³ Likewise, early Bengali print-making based at Bat-tala and Chitpore and the *pats* at the Kalighat

⁶¹Kejariwal, 1988 p.40.

⁶²She identifies an unfinished album by Solvyns belonging to Wellesley's A.D.C., C.C.Fraser which seem to have been finished by Indian painters; adding their own backgrounds to the etched figures as well as caste marks, other details and Bengali inscriptions which are not otherwise included in Solvyns' works.(The version to which Archer refers is in the Harry Elkins collection, Harvard); 'Solvyns and the Indian Picturesque', *Connoisseur* (1969) pp.17-18.

⁶³Guha-Thakurta 1992 introduction.

temple, which albeit widely circulated and closely tied to the rituals of their sites of production, bore little overt resemblance to the ideology of imperial art.⁶⁴

A distinct Indian patronage network grew up amongst north Calcutta's mercantile community, which created its own taste agenda.⁶⁵ Partners in colonial commission houses, these men were shrewd observers of British social mores, absorbing those aspects they saw fit to the accretion of their own cultural identities.⁶⁶ 'With the accumulation of wealth, the consumption patterns of the Bengali propertied class also underwent a change, paving the way for an increasing import of luxury items from Europe'.⁶⁷ As new 'urban zemindars' they built up great estates which included bazaars and painterly communities in the north of the city, for example that of Naba Krishna Deb at Shobha Bazaar: 'modelled on small villages, these localities became replicas of the old landed estates owned by feudal chieftains, their customs changing in response to urban needs'.⁶⁸

The records of sales of the goods of departed Europeans, reveal that both Britons and Bengalis were bidding for identical imagery, for example the estate of Thomas Harding in 1796 when pictures including oval prints and *The Death*

⁶⁴ibid., pp.12-13: 'outside the bounds of British commissions and patronage, a wider enclave of bazaar artists in the city and its outskirts were also drawn into the changing art market. Among them were the migrant community of rural *patuas*, settled in the vicinity of the Kalighat temple, the large group of wood and metal engravers based around the small Bengali presses at Battala ... and the anonymous oil painters of mythological pictures operating around the same zone—these were the main groups that stood at the cross roads of change, as traditional conventions and iconography made its concessions to new techniques, mediums and demands' pp.12-13.

⁶⁵Evidence of Indian patronage derives from Robert Home's sitters book and sketch book, from the Bengal Inventory Series (OIOC) and Mayor's Court Records. See also Banarjee 1998 chapters two and four and Guha-Thakurta, 1992 chapters one and two.

⁶⁶Marshall, 1993 pp.208-9 and his 'Masters and Banians' in B.Kling and M.Pearson (eds.) *The Age of Partnership* (Honolulu,1978).

⁶⁷Banarjee, 1998 p.38.

⁶⁸ibid., p.29.

of *Captain Cook* were sold to Gopi Mohen Baboo.⁶⁹ The same patron, founder of the Tagore dynasty, was to employ the portraitist George Chinnery-as-agent to augment his art collection which included a *Shipwreck* by de Louthembourg, a *study of a Hindu boy* by Zoffany, *Holy Family* after Raphael, *a Girl* after Reynolds and a *Venus* after Titian.⁷⁰ Occasionally Indians also subscribed directly to colonial artists' print schemes; Mabon's *Sketches Illustrative of Oriental Manner and Customs* records alongside the Governor-General, the painters Home and Solvyns the names of Nawab Hyatt Saheb and Byranjee Jeejeebhoy.⁷¹

In sharp contrast, there are few surviving portraits of Indian communities by British artists.⁷² Whilst providing scant commissions for colonial artists such as Home and Chinnery, the *babu* community devised its own 'hybrid' imagery from Mughal-trained or descended painters.⁷³ Western art materials were readily available in Calcutta from an early date so that Indian painters could adapt not only stylistic aspects but also the media of British artists to produce portraits and

⁶⁹Harding estate L/AG/34/27/19: 1796 Other exempla include sale of estate of William Spink: L/AG/34/27/1: 1788 5 prints in gold frames to Eduljee Darabjee and *views of Europe* from James Lindsay's estate L/AG/34/27/3: 1790 to Sudersan Jain and Sadah Scin. Therefore British art was reaching a range of Hindu and Jain communities.

⁷⁰See the anonymous *Catalogue of Pictures of Maharajah Tagore* (Calcutta,1905) p.1.

⁷¹Robert Mabon, *Sketches Illustrative of Oriental Manner and Customs* (Calcutta,1797) p.i.

⁷²This may in part be explained by the fact that prints bound in volumes, signified on a level of book collecting, which in India had long been wide ranging; see B.K.Datta, *Libraries and Librarianship in Mughal India* These Indian buyers after all had shares in auction houses so may have had their pick of stock free or discounted. It was quite different to organise a British artist to visit north Calcutta. Home's *Sitters' Book* includes a note of payment from N.K.Deb in 1797 for a portrait of his son for 2,500Rs. Other sitters' names include Nazim Ali in 1801, Coorga Raraj, in 1803, Oberchand,1804, Ray Ram Singh 1805, Moulne Derwashi Ali and two native gentlemen in 1806, the Raja of Benares in 1808. See Archer 1979, p.328 and Home's sketch book V&A.

⁷³This issue is extremely complex as banians' responses to British art were various. See S.C.Welch *Room For Wonder: Indian Painting During the British Era*, (London,1978) For an important early oil portrait of and by Indians; anonymous Bengali painter, *Haji Mohsin*, c.1800 (OIOC).

a species of Hindu art.⁷⁴ Their own painters adopted aspects of colonial art, as in the anonymous Bengali portrait of *Raja Naba Krishna Deb* c.1795 which alludes to the patron's role as *banian* in one walk of life but refers more overtly to his presentation as devout Hindu, *dhoti* clad on the banks of the Ganga.⁷⁵ (fig 69) From the view of the painter, the visual schemata owe more to the provincial Mughal school at Murshidabad than to British artistic traditions, apparent from the bright sky at sunset, the umbrella *burdah* and the use of the profile portrait, all of which locate the picture within established depictions of the Bengal *zemindars*.⁷⁶

As a member of a fast-rising *Kayastha* elite, Naba Krishna Deb wished to be aligned within the older Mughal traditions that continued to carry considerable sway in defining the culture of the political order.⁷⁷ However the use of oil pigments bespoke of the raja's desire to enter into the new politics of display, the portrait taking pride of place in the hybrid architectural surround of the *thakur dalan* of his palace in Shobha Bazaar, which he used for public celebration of *durga puja*; hung between pillars looking towards the inner sanctum and the idol of Durga, thus asserting his central role as devout patron; a device commonly seen in Murshidabad miniatures.⁷⁸ Once more we see Indian

⁷⁴For example, *Calcutta Gazette* May 12, 1785 'linseed oil, fine verdigris, vermilion, Prussian blue' and *Calcutta Gazette* July 20, 1786 at Mr. Bondfield's: 'Hog's hair brushes, paints and every necessary article for drawing'. J.Appasamy, 'Early Oil Painting in Bengal', *Lalit Kala Contemporary* 32 April, 1985 pp.5-9.

⁷⁵N.K.Deb was Persian tutor to Hastings as early as 1750 and is said to have learned English from Hastings. He was employed by Clive as intermediary with the nawab at Murshidabad.

⁷⁶Banarjee, 1998 p.28 'their cultural tastes and social habits ... often continued to display traces of influence of the former Muslim powers'.

⁷⁷N.N.Ghose, *Memoirs of N.K.Deb* (Calcutta, 1901) chapter 2 and Marshall, 1993 chapters one and nine.

⁷⁸Johnson collection (OIOC) Archer and Falk pp.192-193; catalogue 381.ii a patron in the act of worship before Rama and Siva; see also R.Head *Catalogue for the Royal Asiatic Society* (1982) p.148 (057.001-2) *patron in the midst of a narrative of Krishna*; bearing Impey's seal 1775. For the architecture of Deb's palace, Chaudhuri, 1990 pp.56-63 and p.163.

painters becoming increasingly adept at adapting select aspects of British art, producing a 'fusionist' imagery which ultimately had little to do with the works of colonial painters, which after being jettisoned its exhausted signifiers.⁷⁹

A Disapora Scattered

India in the Printed Image

With so many diverse Indian painters adjusting their imagery to the taste of multiple patronage groups, we need to examine how colonial painters also sought to accommodate and influence the evolving artistic and economic demands of a complex market, which in recession had little patience with these most financially 'exclusive' artists. Colonial contemporaries complained 'painting is fast gone to decay for want of encouragement', 'painting is quite neglected here' and that 'there is really little encouragement in any branch'.⁸⁰

However artists were branching off in all directions:

You would hardly know Calcutta again, it is so much increased... in point of extent and number of houses and likewise in bulk of inhabitants manners are much the same. The arts are quite at a stand - no encouragement for ... painters ... Mr. Home who has done a good deal in Madras, means now to try this field, but ... as it is said he will find it very sterile. Devis is up country an extensive work he has undertaken, namely paintings of all the various manufactures in India, such as weaving and pottery, sugar and indigo making there will be above forty pictures done by subscription and to be sent home to be engraved. Alefounder is here

⁷⁹In this first era, Indian painters seem to have learnt about colonial art through their direct perusal of British picture, through their own form of 'empiricism' rather than from direct tuition. This form of teaching seems also to have occurred in 1570s Goa where Akbar sent his own artists to train with the Jesuits, who although they possessed oils and prints, were not artists themselves. Gauvin Bailey, *Counter Reformation Imagery and Allegory in Mughal Painting* (unpublished Ph.D., Harvard, 1996) p.57 and Guha-Thakurta, 1992 p.15.

⁸⁰Gavin Hamilton to Ozias Humphry, HU/4/18 which continues, 'Devis the only painter here and very clever, has little to do.' HU/2/89 makes similar notice with reference to the ailing practice of Alefounder.

doing little to nothing. Mr. Solvyns a sea painter has something to do and has done some tolerable good views of Calcutta on the riverside extremely exact but rather deficient in point of airiness and natural colouring. The Daniells are in the Mysore country, taking Tipoo's hill forts over again.⁸¹

By not offering portrait patronage, Cornwallis' regime inadvertently redirected picture-making towards information-gathering (often at the margins of empire) away from the cosy confines of Calcutta's white town.⁸²

Travel for travail became a defining feature of artistic activity in India as never before.⁸³ Whilst Hastings had provided government protection for Kettle and Hodges to journey as far as Agra, Gwalior and Tibet, they were the exception; no artist during his regime undertook extensive independent touring.⁸⁴ However with the cost of living so high and commissions so few in Calcutta, portraitists travelled far afield seeking both clientele as well as gathering 'raw data' to be recoded into metropolitan art schemes.⁸⁵ This was an

⁸¹Gavin Hamilton to Ozias Humphry, HU/2/130, December 12, 1792.

⁸²With Calcutta less than enthusiastic for the arts by the late 1780s, several painters turned to touring the out-stations, most notably Francesco Renaldi and A.W.Devis. There was increased pressure for artists to travel further afield to remote spots, beyond even Company surveyors whose drawings were also competing within the same art market. *Calcutta Gazette* July 9, 1789 'The drawings they (the Daniells) have taken of the hills and scenery above Hurdwar are well worth publishing where Europeans have never before been. The people stared at them as if they were supernatural beings and insisted on looking particularly at their clothes and touching them ... their passage through the hills was not only tremendous but dangerous'.

⁸³See T.Todorov, 'the Journey and its Narratives' and C.Chard, 'Crossing Boundaries and Exceeding Limits: Destabilisation, Tourism and the Sublime' in C.Chard and H.Langdon (eds.) *Transports: Pleasure and Imaginative Geography, 1600-1850* (New Haven,1996) pp.287-296 and pp.117-150.

⁸⁴This was after all an age of rough an ready colonialism; constant warfare acted as a defining feature of Hodges' touring. He left south India after only a few months as war with the Marathas had broken out. He became embroiled in the Benares insurrection in 1781. Many of his 48 aquatints in *Choix des Vues* featured forts or deserted mosques where colonial battles had recently transpired, which he contrasted with snippets from Mughal history in his letter press. See William Hodges *Travels in India in the years 1780,1781,1782 and 1783* (London,1793) For Kettle and Tibet, Archer 1979 pp.91-92.

⁸⁵As we have seen, the Daniells raised money from lotteries of oils and their views of Calcutta in order to tour. They stayed with various Company officials up country, whom they repaid with sketches (for example for Thomas Lyon, they took his portrait which they presented to his bibi)

era when the vast majority of European civilians remained in the Presidencies, so that touring signified not only the changing nature of the art market but also of imperial ideology, with which it was inextricably bound. Artists transgressed the formal territorial boundaries of empire; so that on many occasions art did precede empire. Thus we see the mobilisation of both latent and manifest orientalisms; whereby fantasy acted as both a product and precondition of colonialism.⁸⁶ Hence the foothills of the Himalayas and Awadh amongst other parts of the Indian subcontinent, could be known at home and imprinted in visual memory through oils and aquatints, even before direct plans for British annexation had been hatched, even desired, which thus bestowed upon artists such as the Daniells a distinct 'disinterested' stance. The visualisation of exotic lands created a peculiar epistemological power for a variety of viewing publics at both profound and superficial levels, as unknown land was perceived through alternative readings of the familiar and the exotic.

The Daniells' *Oriental Scenery*, which with its use of the *camera obscura* privileged architectural and topographical information as opposed to Hodges' concern with a 'Mughal constitution', the rise or fall of Civilisation. Devis' *Bengali Manufactures 1786-1793*, brought village life in Bengal to the colonial gaze (whose rituals and domestic activities are all ignored except to indicate their complicity within a colonial economy), so that the rural imagery produced contrasted sharply with Gainsborough's or Moreland's images of English rural life. However such representations refocussed painters'

and gave drawings lessons to amateur artist Samuel Davis. Maurice Shellim, *The Daniells*, (London, 1978).

⁸⁶Edward W. Said, *Orientalism* (New York, 1978).

preoccupation with ruined monuments and absent or indolent staffage, to at least an abstract concern with bio-power and the present. In an era defined by the researches of the Asiatic Society and the evolution of distinct forms of economic and political classification, artists sought to colonise new subjects in the creation of new ways of seeing, which as we shall see, possessed profound social effects.

From the late 1780s as a result of such field trips, colonial artistic activity in Calcutta was defined by subscription for series of prints featuring Indian landscape and customs. This I shall argue signified two things: firstly a permutation in money-generating designs relying on a wider definition of 'public involvement', and secondly, the invocation of graphic material with the evolving information agenda of the colonial state. With a depleted local market, subscription emphasised the market not as place but as process; whereby a wide-cast net of communication enabled such art schemes to capture a range of international publics.

Although the professional painters Francis Swain Ward and Thomas Hickey approached the East India Company with ambitious ethnographic and landscape print schemes, their plans were swiftly rejected.⁸⁷ The Directors recommended that such projects remain confined to the voluntary enterprise and private patronage that defined the nature of artistic activity in late eighteenth-century Calcutta.⁸⁸

⁸⁷Archer 1979 pp.228-230. Madras Public Consultations, July 27, 1804 P/242/65; Madras Dispatches E/4/332; E/4/896. Also S.Sen 1998 pp.94-5. For another proposed scheme see P.Rohatgi, 'Preface to a lost collection: the pioneering art of Francis Swain Ward' in Rohatgi and Godrej 1995 pp.31-52. Committee of Correspondence and Court Minutes: B/111; Z/D/2; Z/D/4 E/1/84 ff.102-106.

⁸⁸For Hastings' elision of private and public artistic patronage see my chapter five.

The best written record of an artist's intentions for a print scheme which conflates many of the issues which I shall examine, are the diaries of the Scottish artist James Wales.⁸⁹ Following the lead of William Hodges and the Daniells, his project consisting of views, plans and elevation of the caves and temples of Salsette and Ellora, which Wales aimed should be distributed to 'every print and book seller in Britain and Ireland be furnished with copies of the proposals and also all noblemen, universities, libraries', thus revealing an ambitious agenda. The publication's size, (he planned seventy copper plates measuring twenty-six by sixteen inches, as well as a folio volume of accompanying text) made this the most grandiose Indian print scheme to date.⁹⁰

In order to 'accommodate a greater number of subscribers it will also be disposed of in parts containing one particular work with its appendages', in addition to a scheme of 'forty views elegantly framed and glazed might take a run in England independently of the other parts of the publication'.⁹¹ Once sufficient India-based subscribers had been found, Wales planned to return to England where to 'examine well the different modes of engraving etching,

⁸⁹Although never based in Calcutta, Wales's proposed scheme had many points of convergence with that of other artists based in Madras and Calcutta, all of whom attempted to appeal to international markets once sufficient funds had initially been raised at a local level. The Wales collection of drawings and diaries is now housed in the Yale Center for British Art, New Haven, Prints and Drawings Department B1977.14. Register Three drawings of Ellora excavations 22311-2, Wales Dairies Ms (Fo) 21.7.1976; six volumes, (BAC): volume two 1794-May1795, Salsette and Ellora.

⁹⁰Such a large scale work fitted into the top end of the print market. This was dominated by large scale luxury productions, (usually aquatinted) such as William Hodges, *Choix des Vues* (1785-8), the Daniells' *Oriental Scenery* (1795-1808).

⁹¹Wales diary volume four, f.12. 'The whole publication in parts must be introduced amongst the learned, the same kind of people as the forty prints.. all the great libraries throughout Europe and the United States.' See also ff.15 and f.6. f.13- 'After the drawings are intensely finished and their Indian subscriptions taken if they amount to 200 for whole sets of the work, I shall then prepare to return to Europe which may be about the beginning of 1796 and set immediately about publishing .. in order to accommodate a greater number of subscribers it will be disposed of in parts containing one particular work and its appendages'.

aquatint, mezzotint', to be executed by 'a capital hand'.⁹² He hoped for a sale of as many as four hundred copies and a total net of twelve thousand pounds.⁹³

As the majority of painters wished to have their works reproduced in London, drawings provided the more feasible option.⁹⁴ Occasionally in India, as in the case of Swain Ward's landscape views, Devis' *Bengali Manufactures* or Solvyns' *Etchings of Les Hindous*, oil paintings were first put at the artists' homes in order to attract reluctant subscribers; a strategy which marked their difference from the drawings of numerous military men with whom they were competing to capture the same market.⁹⁵ Drawings gave the impression that they provided a 'more direct' relationship between field work and finished print.⁹⁶ Of course they were far less 'on the spot' than they appeared.⁹⁷

⁹²'The manner used by Mr. Birnie may probably answer in some parts of the views.' Wales Diary volume 4 f.14.

⁹³However Wales estimated that two thirds would go on costs out of a total of £8,396 . Out of this £140 for seventy copies, £150 on engraving £10 for each run of 480 sheets. Volume 4, f.13 Such earnings were far less than rumours of Zoffany's £30,000 to £50,000 for a few portraits from the nawab of Awadh.

⁹⁴Frequently artists' advertisements in the Calcutta press refer to having their work engraved by the 'first masters', anxious to fit their work into a high aesthetic to which Calcutta was well accustomed. through its imported art. See Pauline Rohatgi, 1995 for a good analysis of one such artist and his plans; Swain Ward, He planned at one stage to use Paul Sandby; E/1/84 part 1, f.102.

⁹⁵Such views were usually held at artists' houses. See exempla *Calcutta Gazette* December 17, 1785 Swain Ward asked the public to visit his home to see his oil paintings from which his scheme would derive 'from which they can form a better judgement of his intended publication than any words can express. A book for subscription is there open for those who wish to emerge the work.' His scheme appears again *Calcutta Gazette* September 14, 1788 at the same site twelve oils which are 'to be engraved by the best artists in England on a large scale. The subscription in 100 Rs a set which will be delivered as soon as the work is brought forth'. Solvyns likewise in search for subscribers for his *Les Hindous* declared the etchings would be 'equal to the original drawings taken from nature' which along with several of his paintings after similar subjects (perhaps the eleven double-spread etchings of Calcutta's views , one of which derives from an oil on panel, *View of Calcutta from the river*, sold at Christie's, St.James's October, 1999) were all exhibited at the Old Theatre, *Calcutta Gazette*, February 6, 1794.

⁹⁶With the exception of Devis' *Bengali Manufactures*, no other artist in India claimed that he was producing on the spot oils. Devis' oils are small scale, not much bigger than the drawings of William Hodges or Solvyns. I am grateful to Urmila De for this observation.

⁹⁷There are numerous surviving drawings both by professional and military artists throughout this era, see M.Archer, *British Drawings in the India Office* (London, 1968). Although few were produced before the mid 1780s, extensive collections survive for the Daniells, a few for Devis and a handful of Zoffany's works. Very few preliminary drawings by Hodges survive other than

A group of metropolitan print-makers began to specialise in engraving Indian subject matter.⁹⁸ They overlaid their own idioms onto the raw data, so that less 'than perfect' drawings could be 'translated' into the realms of high art as the metropolis imposed its stylistic constraints on to ethnographic data. Thus a whole range of art was being transformed by the distinct ideology of 'travel capitalism' - as the unknown was naturalised and authorised by a universal idiom.

In an age of accelerated visual capitalism, Indian subjects began to proliferate.⁹⁹ Travel literature had long become popular especially amongst the mercantile classes who directly associated travel with commerce.¹⁰⁰ As we have seen, art was cognated on several levels in Britain, extending from exhibition oils to prints. Like maps, views of India formed potent symbols in 'large part derived from their repeated viewing. Each time they saw a map ... the officials mentally encompassed the territory it represented'; thus views took this a step farther in the movement from scientific configurations to an immediate vision encoded within the idioms of high art; as India underwent a 'civilising

the 90 large folio drawings for the publication of his *Choix des Vues* (in the B.A.C). Likewise, Balthasar Solvyns' collection of watercolours in the V&A Prints and Drawings Department is highly finished.

⁹⁸Thomas Medland engraved several of William Hodges's plates in *Travels in India* (London, 1793), as well as plates for Thomas Pennant's *Travels in Hindustan* (London 1798?) which also included works by Zayn al-din, A.W. Devis and the Daniells. Publishers such as John Stockdale began to specialise in Indian books and pamphlets; Shaw, 1981 p.14.

⁹⁹The first metropolitan produced scheme was William Hodges' *Choix des Vues* 1785-8; followed by Elisha Trapaud's *Twenty Views of Hindustan*, 1788. See also Josef Borocz, 'Travel Capitalism' *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 34 (1992) p.708.

¹⁰⁰Kate Teltscher, *India Inscribed* (Delhi, 1995) p.4 and G.R. Crone and R.A. Skelton, 'English Collections of Voyages and Travels, 1625-1846' in G. Lynam (ed.) *Richard Hakluyt and his Successors* (London, 1941). See also P.J. Marshall and G. Williams, *The Great Map of Mankind: British Perceptions of the World in the Age of Enlightenment* (London, 1982), Percy Adams, *Travellers and Travel Liars 1600-1800* (Berkeley, C.A., 1962), K.K. Dyson, *A Various Universe: A Study of Journals and Memoirs of British Men and Women in the Indian subcontinent, 1765-1856* (Oxford, 1978), M. Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Travel and Transculturation* (London, 1992) and B. Moore-Gilbert (ed.) *Writing India, 1757-1900* (Manchester, 1996).

process'.¹⁰¹ Additionally, the political polemacy surrounding Hastings' trial and war with Mysore, catapulted India to centre stage; prints were thus subsumed within as well as seeming as exotic, virtuous other to a wide ranging, combative information order of caricatures, pamphlets, speeches and libel cases. Thus imagery was suspended between travel- and imagination- as a distinct form of print capitalism, its universal idioms allowing its data to be understood as well as reigning in the far corners of the empire into a collectivity.¹⁰² In this sense diasporic public spheres became a fundamental cultural dynamic to urban life.¹⁰³

Yet as we shall see, most of these views were hardly peopled, so that it is terrain which signified such metropolitan engagement with the other. We can only speculate on how such views were comprehended; through their representation of sweeping plains and distant forts (denotative of actual or potential surveillance and intense cultivation), they signified less as an overt exotic than propagating waves of sameness, determined through conventional compositions.¹⁰⁴

Colonial artists considered compiling luxury publications in London, a necessity as Calcutta's print-making was soon lampooned as expensive, long-winded and poorly executed; one author complaining, 'I hope ... that the high price it is sold at will be excused on account of the plates which in this country

¹⁰¹Edney, 1997 p.325. See also J.Pickles, 'Texts, Hermeneutics and Propaganda Maps', in T.J.Barnes and J.Duncan (eds.) *Writing Worlds: Discourse, Text and Metaphor: the Representation of Landscape* (London,1992) pp.193-230.

¹⁰²Arjun Appadurai, *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalisation* (London,1996) pp.3-10.

¹⁰³ibid., p.10.

¹⁰⁴Bernard McGrane, *Beyond Anthropology: Society and the Other* (Columbia,New York,1989).

cost many times more engraving than in Europe'.¹⁰⁵ Most of the ten recorded print-makers, such as Moffat and Baillie, learned their trade in Calcutta, which indicates some form of indenture system was in operation in the print shops.¹⁰⁶ They executed (or seriously injured) a range of imagery, producing portrait prints from oils in public buildings, to translating ethnographic sketches for the *Asiatic Researches*, although few engravers could survive from visual work alone.¹⁰⁷ They bickered fiercely with painters through the medium of local newspapers, for example Swain Ward accused the engraver Richard Brittridge of delaying his intended six views of Calcutta, beginning the first plate but then making 'frivolous excuses' as well as demanding a large cut of the profits.¹⁰⁸

To avoid such wrangles, several artists reproduced their own work - a trend began by the Daniells in 1786, whose financially successful, high quality etching and aquatinted *Views of Calcutta* lured painters and print-makers with less expertise to aspire likewise.¹⁰⁹ By cutting out all middle men, (whose services during recession were expensive) painters as print-makers hoped for higher profits, although the multiplication of labour became intimidating:

The Lord be praised, at length I have completed my *twelve views of Calcutta*. The fatigue I have experienced in this undertaking has almost

¹⁰⁵R.Barrow, 1784 in Shawe, 1981 p.21. William Jones criticised the work of goldsmith/engraver Richard Brittridge as 'extremely dilatory', in 1791. See Blechynden Add Ms 45,586 f.4 and P.Rohatgi and P.Godrej (eds.) *A Pageant of Prints* (Bombay,1989).

¹⁰⁶Shaw, 1981 p.27 and Archer, 1979 p.473.

¹⁰⁷An exception was James Moffat who advertised from various addresses across the city; 'picturesque views, delights and designs of every description ... copperplate, etching and aquatint ... accurately delineated to receive and transferred to plates of any size' *Asiatic Mirror*, December 20,1797. See also Shaw, 1981, pp.64-66 and Blechynden noted Add Ms 45,594 f.40 'saw Hudson the engraver's death mentioned in this day's paper a happy release I think for him'.

¹⁰⁸*Calcutta Gazette* September 15, 1785. These he now intended instead to be sent to England 'to be engraved on a large scale, the subscription at four gold mohurs which will be received by Mr. Joseph Sandys behind the Old Court House where the pictures are now to be seen.'

¹⁰⁹See for instance, William Baillie, *Twelve Views of Calcutta* (Calcutta,1974), Baltazard Solvyns' *250 Coloured Etchings of the Manners and Customs of the Hindous* (Calcutta,1796) Robert Mabon's *Sketches Illustrative of Oriental Manners and Customs* (Calcutta,1797)

worn me out ... By Mr. Bigly ... I send you the Calcutta views which you promised to do me the honour of accepting ... You know I was obliged to stand Painter, Engraver, Coppersmith Printer and Printer's Devil myself. It was a devilish undertaking but I was determined to get through it at all events.¹¹⁰

Baillie enjoyed some financial success 'the set of views of Calcutta ... which I published last year by subscription gave much satisfaction to my subscribers ... they procured me about 80,000Rs (£8,000) odd clear'.¹¹¹ However profit was not without its price:

I have meticulously injured my sight by using a large magnifier in etching (aquatinta) and mean to if I can, in my present resolution, never to touch copper again, until now and then perhaps etching ... which will not cost me much trouble on exertion of my sight and even then only pour s'amuser - An engraver must have better talents than mine and novelty besides to recommend him to succeed here- I do not believe that even Woollett himself if alive would make both ends meet. As people do not consider me a professional artist, they do not, I suppose, conceive it possible that I am capable of executing anything well, especially if I have acquired the knowledge of it in this country.¹¹²

Thus Calcutta, so accustomed to first grade imported prints set high aesthetic standards for local artists. For Calcutta's artists and print-makers, the perusal of metropolitan art became vital for survival.¹¹³

¹¹⁰HU/4/131. Although clearly by Baillie, this letter has long been misattributed to Thomas Daniell.

¹¹¹HU/4/116 October 4, 1795.

¹¹²William Baillie to Ozias Humphry HU/4/114.

¹¹³Devis planned a print after his *Cornwallis' Receiving Tipu's Sons as Hostages* was advertised as: 'the size of the engraving to be no less than the *Death of Lord Chatham* (by J.S.Copley, one the best known, best-selling engravings of the 18th century) but so much larger, as the artist (in London) who shall be of the first abilities will undertake it.' *Madras Courier*, January 13, 1794; priced at 80Rs. (half at subscription, half on delivery). *Calcutta Gazette* October 23, 1794: Anburey's views to be etched and coloured by Solvyns 'after the manner of the *views in Switzerland and Cumberland*.' These European views had been a great success few weeks earlier: *Calcutta Gazette* October 16, 1794 (the previous issue) announced Captain Pierce's (at Dring's) *Views of Switzerland*. *Calcutta Gazette* September 25, 1794, Lee and Kennedy

I lay my hands on all books of views that come within my reach- I have got lately the first volume of Boydell's *History of the Thames* with aquatinted plates ... The second part is expected by Colvin and Bazett, attorneys for Boydell by the ships of this season ... (These views) I do not think so well executed in general; I mean the aquatint parts of the views Many of them (possess) a great freedom of outline, on the whole they give a good idea of Farington's style of drawing. He is not a little of a mannerist. I have his *Views of the Lakes* and a good many others and observe a great success in his foregrounds, particularly his naked or decayed trees.¹¹⁴

Despite his interest in such 'mannerist' effects, Baillie's practice was defined by military surveying and its agenda for 'accuracy'. His Calcutta views betrayed few pretensions to high art (figs 70, 71); he did not employ naked and decaying trees, a freedom of outline nor aquatint. Rather the plates he used were small, deriving from pencil drawings drawn with the aid of a *camera obscura*, which were then tentatively etched and hand coloured with very pale washes 'I attempted only the outline on the plates and finished them with Indian inks and colours'.¹¹⁵ The staffage seemed little more than shadows, unidentifiable as to physiognomy, dress, caste or rarely occupation, often entirely absent from his views of Calcutta's public buildings, thus marking an aesthetic departure from the Daniells' work of the previous decade and Solvyns, as well as signifying the city's expansion and the construction of a military orphanage (featured in two of his twelve views) by his friend Richard Blechynden.

advertised *Views of Westmoreland and Switzerland*. One final example of the impact of European prints on the marketing and artistic psyche of colonial Calcutta, Aaron Upjohn's likeness of William Jones, *Calcutta Gazette*, January 15, 1795 to be 'in the manner of chalk engravings' which he stressed were very popular in England; (10x7.75 inches @1 gold mohur.)

¹¹⁴HU/4/115; William Baillie to Ozias Humphry.

¹¹⁵HU/4/118 October 4, 1795.

Like other Calcutta print-makers, Baillie primarily practised etching. Of Balthasar Solvyns' *Les Hindous*, he reported, 'I have been told that the etching is extremely rough and at the same time slight' which thus inverted what was to be praised in print facture, as well as the work of Mughal artists, particularly for the specific representation of 'specimen', which thus revealed a colonial modernity obsessed with precision and accuracy.¹¹⁶ James Wales in his print-making plans aimed to employ his assistant Robert Mabon would do for the etching of the figures, as 'outlines which little more will be perfectly sufficient for the figures and indeed every subject but the views'.¹¹⁷ Thus we see different aesthetic and 'scientific' considerations revealed in a single publication. An etched line simulated the effects of drawing, leaving blank areas which could be hand coloured, thus allowing for the price of such prints to be raised.¹¹⁸

In Calcutta a specific visual culture came into existence. which displaced the sublime idealism of Hodges' and Zoffany's large scale oils in a move towards minuteness, epitomised by miniature or bust length portraits and a taste for landscape views, mimicking the effects of watercolours. Although leaving little patronage for painting this did signify the existence of a bourgeois

¹¹⁶Baillie to Humphry HU/4/116. Baillie praised imported prints such as *Views of Ireland* 'the etching has arrived at wonderful perfection'. An obituary of Solvyns also condemned his etching; 'His sketches though not very picturesque were very faithful delineations and he must have been a man of very laborious and observant research. The engravings executed by himself and published in Calcutta are very rude.' *Calcutta Gazette* May 18, 1826; quoted in Archer, 1969 p.15.

¹¹⁷HU/4/118. Diary of James Wales at Pune, volume four f.14.

¹¹⁸As Clayton, 1997 p.14 notes at the most basic level of print-making, etching was quick and cheap. In Britain prints if coloured, automatically doubled their price. See also William Baillie to Ozias Humphry 'Cockerell and Trail have published an advertisement of Mr. Daniell's forthcoming publication of 24 select views of Hindustan to be engraved by himself and also coloured by him like the original drawings which will give them additional value.' HU/4/114. *Calcutta Gazette* October 2, 1795: Daniells' drawings to be seen at Bowyer's, Pall Mall.

modernity where moral and aesthetic values were encoded into small scale and private art.¹¹⁹

In British India, art-as-print-making became rather a by-product of military, political and economical researches in the construction of a colonial governmentality. By 1795, it was glaringly obvious that military men (often members of the Asiatic Society) were enjoying far more success in realising their print schemes than professional colonial artists as the predicament of forging a space for artists in colonial India was succinctly expressed by the Daniells' famous dictum.¹²⁰

the shores of Asia have been invaded by a race of students with no rapacity but for lettered relics; by naturalists, whose cruelty extends not to one human inhabitant; by philosophers, ambitious only for the extirpation of error, and the diffusion of truth. It remains for the artist to claim his part in these guiltless spoliations and to transport to Europe the picturesque beauties of these favoured regions.¹²¹

On the one hand we have an image which seemingly fulfills the 'prophesy' laid out by *Peace An Ode to Hastings*, where *cultural imperialism* by being just that, is somehow exonerated from violence, yet we have the Daniells, long returned from India, at the tail-end of a diaspora of highly-skilled professional painters, situating 'the artist' last in the list.¹²² The Daniells won accolades for their *Oriental Scenery* which transgressed the boundaries of the smaller schemes of their predecessors. Their own role in India as professional painters as opposed to

¹¹⁹Susan Stewart, *On Longing* (1989).

¹²⁰P.Pal and V.Dehejia, *From Merchants to Emperors* (New York,1986) and P.Katternhorn, 'Sketching From Nature: Soldier-Artists in India in Rohatgi and Godrej, 1995.

¹²¹Thomas and William Daniell, *A Picturesque Voyage to India by the way of China*, (London,1810) p.ii.

¹²²Of course this is partially stylistic; coming as it does at the beginning of the opus.

military officials gave them the freedom to tour far wider, taking in the foot hills of the Himalayas, Mysore, the Carnatic, the Ganges Valley and western India.

However they were the exception. Few British artists realised their print schemes; Devis' *Bengali Manufactures* was never completed, Alefounder's ethnographic plans came to nothing; neither Thomas Hickey nor Swain Ward realised their ambitions to produce expensive publications. Lacking patronage, public interest and sufficient finance, such schemes floundered. Rather it was the works of amateurs which were translated into lavish London publications.¹²³

Many derived from drawings by Company officers and which were termed 'Picturesque Views', thus overlaying a highly charged but also extremely problematic ideology on to their imagery, much of which 'was done to devise assaults on forts, to supplement route maps and geographical descriptions', complicit and (later puffed as implicit) within the colonial gaze.¹²⁴

Whilst assisting their incorporation within a 'travel capitalist' taste for views of foreign and domestic scenery, such imagery has also been termed by recent commentators as an 'Indian Picturesque'.¹²⁵ 'The British found the Picturesque to be the perfect intellectual tool for imaging the landscapes of south Asia during the Company period.'¹²⁶ However this term is highly problematic. The Picturesque defined a specific aesthetic associated primarily with the essays of amateur draughtsman and tourist Reverend William Gilpin in

¹²³Robert Home's *Twenty Nine Select Views of Mysore* (uncoloured line engravings London, 1794) taken 'on the spot' during the Third Mysore War, were soon eclipsed by the large coloured aquatints after drawings by officers directly involved in the action. See Archer, 1979 p.301. These were the works of Robert Colebrooke, *Twelve Views of Mysore* (London, 1794) and A. Allan, *Twelve Views in Mysore Country* (London, 1794).

¹²⁴Dirks, 1994 p.216. See also p.219.

¹²⁵For literature on this subject see introduction note 75.

¹²⁶Edney, 1997 pp.57-76; p.59.

the 1780s, and with the heated debate between Richard Payne Knight and Price in the 1790s.¹²⁷ In a Gilpinesque sense, the Picturesque was directly linked with the promotion of domestic touring as a leisure activity in Britain, focused on such sites as the Wye Valley. His guides books encouraged viewers to find specific vantage points and to concentrate on the appreciation of a 'surface aesthetics' - unconnected from either social, political and historical perceptions of the terrain they surveyed which has earned them a reputation of being 'strikingly iconoclastic'.¹²⁸ Gilpin prescribed rugged, overgrown landscape, ruins, rough edges and decay, consonant with the appearance of brush strokes, which thus created a very specific way of seeing, which denounced topographical 'accuracy' as well any narrative dimension, associated not only with landscape as high art, but also with the practice of travelling. Whilst claiming autonomy for the aesthetic, such Picturesque vocabulary, as numerous art historians have proposed, soon became politically charged.¹²⁹ With increased industrialisation and enclosure, the Picturesque became imbued with a nostalgia for dwindling common rights, as well as celebrating through its emphasis on hoary oaks, decaying abbeys and castle, the endurance of an ancient constitution.

¹²⁷See C.Hussey, *The Picturesque* (New York,1927), Alan Liu, *Wordsworth: The Sense of History* (Stanford,1989), B.Stafford, *Voyage in to Substance: Art, Science, Nature and the Illustrated Travel Account 1760-1840* (Cambridge, Mass.,1984), Dana Arnold (ed.) *The Picturesque in late Georgian England* (London,1995), S.K.Robinson, *Inquiry into the Picturesque* (Chicago,1992), S.Copley and P.Garside (eds.) *The Politics of the Picturesque* (Cambridge,1994), Kim Michasiw, 'Nine Revisionist Theses of the Picturesque', *Representations* 38 (1992), Nigel Everett, *The Tory View of Landscape* (New Haven,1994) and I.Crosby, *The Englishman's England: Taste, Tradition and the Rise of Tourism* (Cambridge,1990).

¹²⁸Andrew Hemingway, *Landscape Imagery and Urban Culture* (London,1992) pp.19-25.

¹²⁹Anne Bermingham, *Landscape and Ideology* (London,1986), *idem.*, 'The Picturesque and Ready to Wear Femininity' in Copley and Garside, 1994 pp.81-119. See also Klonek, 1996 chapter one.

Thus the transfer of both these strands of the Picturesque to India became highly problematic. The drawings of military men hardly signified the outcome of polite tourism, nor were they devoid of strident political and historical narratives, which instead acted as a fundamental part of their success; conveying to Britain the cultural productions of men directly involved within the expansion of the British empire into Mysore. Although Edney has argued that ‘there was little that was genteel about the gaze in the imperial setting’, such publications indicated to British publics not only rigorous colonial surveillance and bloody battles (which at the time of the French Wars was the psyche informing British publics), but also the changing nature of Company service.¹³⁰ That many of the most successful publications came from the pencils of officers indicated that Company service was being reformed from an image of corrupt private traders and ‘nabobs’ and that such views indicated leisure away from their duties, as well as implicit colonial surveillance. ‘Most Company officials who engaged in landscape painting were concerned with examining, disciplining and improving India. They were up country magistrates, revenue collectors, army officers on station, engineers building roads and especially officers undertaking cartographic surveys’.¹³¹

The transposition of the Picturesque’s increased concern with ancient constitutionalism and customary rights to India was also highly problematic. As we shall see in chapter five, Hastings employed Hodges to provide representations of key monuments associated with a ‘Mughal constitution’ with

¹³⁰Edney, 1997 chapter two. Drawing was on the curriculum of the Military Academy at Woolwich as well as at Sandhurst and at Haileybury- the training centre for the East India Company.

¹³¹Edney, 1997 p.63.

which the Governor-General was much preoccupied, yet the forts of Mysore were beyond the scope of the Mughal legacy associated with Emperor Akbar (r.1556-1605) and the artistic concerns of these military painters very different to Hodges' 'high aesthetic'. 'Europeans not only tried to grasp the Orient as a picture, they did so the basis of representations and exhibitions that had already constructed the picture for them', which could assist in the active construction of 'the picture-like quality of an East that was still for them - engaged as they were in conquest and early rule - a moving image'.¹³²

Despite the ambiguities in the creation of a solvent extension of the Picturesque in India, asserting a 'colonial aesthetic' became increasingly crucial to graphic information-gathering.¹³³ In colonial rhetoric, it is India *per se* which emerges as naturally Picturesque, so that sketchers became copyists rather than artists, merely transcribing the reality which appears already organised into the ideal artistic composition.¹³⁴ Through such a rhetoric, viewers and subjects were intimately linked to the extent that the mediating, didactic role of the professional artist was no longer needed.

Yet bestowing an aesthetic dimension to techniques of observation and control, as well as adding an aura of classification to artistic representations, became increasingly important. However this did not produce an orientalised

¹³² Dirks, 1994 pp.227-228.

¹³³The aesthetic dimension of the imperial information gathering project has become a popular topic in recent years. See Paul Carter, *The Road to Botany Bay*, D.Cosgrove and S.Daniels (eds.) *The Iconography of Landscape* (Cambridge,1988); N.Alfrey and S.Daniels (eds.) *Mapping the Landscape* (Nottingham,1990), S.Daniels, *Fields of Vision* (Princeton,1993) and M.Vicziany, 'Imperialism, Botany and Statistics in Early 19th-century India', *Modern Asian Studies* 20, 1986 pp.625-660.

¹³⁴Dirks, 1994 p.17 'The India imagined by the British in the late 18th and early 19th centuries seemed *always already picturesque*, redolent with exotic examples of robed figures adding colour to dramatic actual locales, of ruins providing a haunting focus for scenes overrun with natural abundance' and Edney,1997, p.60.

equivalent to the intense phenomenalism which was evolving in 1790s Britain, with its 'scientific' concern to capture immediate effects whereby all aspects of the composition would receive a sharp focus. However this was an imperial aesthetic which often superficial in its source, gleaned from imported prints, adapted to perceptual processes informed by an equally superficial (but influential) interpretation of India's supposed 'decadence' implicit in its very monuments and landscape, as demonstrated in the watercolours of Charles George Nicholls.¹³⁵ (figs 74, 75) The sublime twilight of Hodges' representations of decaying palaces such as *Ruins of Rajmahal*, 1782 (fig. 93) are now fissured into small scale images of decay. In Nicholls' sketches even Calcutta's glittering Chowringhee Road becomes subject to sketches of overgrown gardens and chipped paintwork - indicative of colonial confidence that the terrain could be recoded into British artistic idioms and moving beyond the desire demonstrated by the Daniells and Devis to represent Calcutta as new and glittering or a prosperous Bengal.

Picture-making formed a vital part in the accumulation of information which would eventually shift the ground from British gathering of Indian histories and the consultation of brahmins, Indo-Persian elites and *zemindars*, to an emphasis on statistics and colonial knowledge-power frameworks.¹³⁶ Such 'scientific' inquiries may have increasingly possessed at least marginal

¹³⁵The collection of Charles George Nicholls' watercolours from his time in India (1792-1818) were sold at Christie's (October, 1999) lots 52-76. In 1799 he became a draughtsman for the Survey of India in Orissa.

¹³⁶Dirks, 1994. See also Arjun Appadurai, 'Number in Colonial Imagination' in P. van der Veer and C. Breckenridge (eds.) *Orientalism and the Postcolonial Predicament* (Philadelphia, 1993).

concessions to the aesthetic, but reversing this dialectic was to become increasingly difficult for the professional painter.¹³⁷

As Bayly and Edney have argued, the colonial information order rested on shaky foundations.¹³⁸ From the late 1780s forms of patrimonial knowledge gleaned from contract with such important ‘grass roots’ groups as Armenians, *banians*, Anglo-Indians, and Indian women were marginalised; even Indian painters who did forge a role within this project, but only under the stringent gaze of the Company state. However from the other end of the spectrum, the ‘foreign, disinterested’ gaze of the British professional artists was also ousted from the picture, so that both deep and ‘superficial’ forms of surveillance were restricted or at least their active agency curtailed by colonial information-gathering.

‘If the effect of colonial power is seen to be the production of hybridisation rather than the noisy command of colonialist authority or the silent repression of native traditions, then an important change of perspective occurs’.¹³⁹ Both Indian and British communities were proficient in appropriating aspects of the works of colonial painters, which whilst testament to the interest aroused by such imagery (both subject and style), also demonstrated its incompatibility with the aesthetic concerns of publics in Calcutta. Cornwallis’s regime demanded greater specialisation in the legal professions and extended to other occupations such as architecture, but not to painting. The failure of disinterested painters warned that exclusive or ill-advised professionalisation

¹³⁷Edney, 1997 pp. 57-63.

¹³⁸Bayly, 1996 p.365. Edney, 1997 conclusion.

¹³⁹Homi K. Bhabha, *Signs Taken For Wonders* in his *The Location of Culture* (1994) p.112.

could founder. By rejecting the talents of some of its best painters, Calcutta was radically altering the signification attached to a British aesthetic sphere which estranged painting as the familiar symbol of English national cultural authority, emerging from its imperial appropriation (or rejection) as the sign of its difference.

Whilst evocative accounts of colonialism have cautioned against constructing the cultural imperialism in terms of 'progress', through the accumulative effects of a linear temporality through a 'regime of historicity' this narrative is hard to escape, even if post-colonial investigations have managed to remove something of the Providential.¹⁴⁰ I have tried to demonstrate in the course of this chapter that sometimes such tropes disintegrated, atrophied, contested expectations. Under Warren Hastings, a degree of high art had been produced in India.¹⁴¹ His imperial vision, captured in his public and private papers as well as through the paradigmatic *Peace An Ode*, prophesied a future where India would generate a strident high culture (replete with art academies) on its own turf as well as exporting its information to London. However the fragility of the professional art community when rejected by the colonial state soon revealed otherwise. From 'high art' supposedly the epitome of a modern commercial society, it collapsed into new hybrid forms as its vocabularies were appropriated, diluted, dilated and inflected by a diversity of liminal groups. In

¹⁴⁰Reinhardt Koselleck, *Futures Past: The Semantics of Historical Time* trans. Keith Tribe (London,1985), J.Fabian, *Time and the Other: How Anthropology Makes its Object* (New York,1983).

¹⁴¹We only have to think of William Hodges working for Cleveland at Bihar. Hastings also made sure Zoffany would be carrying out important works for him which would be shipped to him in Britain. Other painters were of course working in oils in India, particularly those with a more serious attitude to India as a subject for high art, see Swain Ward, Devis and Solvyns.

terms of a community of professional British painters, India was transmogrified into little more than the site where data were collected; sometimes to be recoded under public scrutiny in Britain, as the metropolis increasingly asserted its cultural supremacy:

Artist, why from Albion's shore
Wilt thou eager bend thy way? ...
Wheresoe'er thy bark may coast,
Think not o'er the globe to find
Worth transcending Britain's boast,
Grace of form or force of mind.¹⁴²

All of these factors finally left diasporic professional painters redundant. In Calcutta, 'British painting as commodity' was fraught with commercial but also hermeneutic difficulties: its high market value, the plummeting status of artists after the likes of Zoffany, Devis and the Daniells, its 'inferiority' to the works of Indian, metropolitan and amateur painters, as well as its physical instability, initiated its demise.

¹⁴²May 16, 1796 *To Mr. Sheriff the Artist on his Intended Departure From England*; V&A press cuttings cited in Archer, 1979 p.394.

Chapter Five

Warren Hastings' Portraits in A Landscape of Prestation c.1772-c.1785.

Who ever gives, takes libertie.¹

Gazing at Aurangzeb's portrait he (The Shah of Persia) began to utter against it much abuse, going through the life and chief doings of such a king, then spitting on the picture, threw it to the ground. He ordered his slaves to shoe beat the face, which deserved no less.²

The remainder of this dissertation aims to illumine the role of British art within rituals and symbolism as targetted at *nawabi* elites. Such cultural imperialism differed radically from the art market and aesthetic spheres of colonial Calcutta. Adjoining political wrangles and intensive as well as extensive colonial expansion, British art became embroiled in struggles for power and legitimacy, which could have everything or nothing to do with the subjects it portrayed as the East India Company attempted to build up a trade in and a taste for British art which would ultimately oust Mughal idioms in favour of European aesthetics; a manoeuvre involving political, economic and psychological displacements within certain sectors of the indigenous population, who, for whatever reasons would ignore, accept, criticise or resist British artistic values. Indian demand for British art was coloured by an ambivalence. Likewise British motivations for introducing their art and aesthetics to *nawabi*

¹John Donne, 'A Hymne to Christ at the Author's Last Going into Germany'.

²M.Edwardes (ed.) *Niccolo Manucci: Memoirs of the Mughal Court*, (London,1975) p.69.

elites now appear less than clear; determined by the lack of a coherent symbolism inherent to early colonial governmentality.

‘The public and artistic representation of Company power stood uneasily poised between the Mughal, the Royal and the flat ritual of the chartered Company’.³ We need to discover whether there was a more coherent, more confident cultural policy, where these diverse strands (albeit often violent and contradictory) could be woven into a single fabric.⁴ I shall explicate the means by which British art became consonant with notions of elite cultural identities and issues of a colonised modernity, as the political landscape shifted ground from late Mughal territory, to the scene and schema of early British imperialism during an era of critical transition. British art through its status and representational strategies functioned as a double-edged sword; sufficiently sharpened and polished to act as a pleasing foil to the recipient nawab’s sense of power, whilst simultaneously cutting to the heart of established notions of sovereignty.

Despite the important impact of British art in Indian society, these enquiries have been neglected by art historians. ‘Although paintings in oils held few aesthetic attractions for Indians - they infinitely preferred their own indigenous paintings - they too were realising that large canvases could carry social overtones and that it was prudent to decorate their mansions and palaces

³C.A.Bayly, ‘Company Supremacy’, Bayly (ed.) *The Raj: India and the British, 1600-1947*, (London,1990), pp.132-133.

⁴ The difficulty in fashioning colonial self-representation is a widely debated arena: According to Jan Morris, the British Empire ‘never really possessed an ideology and was temporally opposed, indeed to political rules, theories and generalisations. It was the most important political organisation of its time, yet it was seldom altogether sure of itself or its cause’ in J.Morris, *Stones of Empire: The Building of British India*, (London, 1994) p.2. See also Thomas R.Metcalf, *Ideologies of the Raj* (Cambridge,1995).

with such works'.⁵ Archer's representation of Indian courts depicts them as wealthy, despotic resorts, ideal for British portraitists seeking vast fortunes. Despite her lack of concern with issues of agency and notions of Orientalism as a European discourse, Archer does indicate a 'politics of value', as British artists attempted to exploit their Indian patrons by charging them too much.⁶

The Raj coordinates the Governor-General's foreign policy in relation to the royal capitals of Awadh and the Carnatic, focusing on portraits of Hastings, the nawabs, and the Lucknow oeuvre of Johann Zoffany.⁷ It is noted that the erosion of these princes' political clout was simultaneously masked, recorded and fossilised by itinerant artists, so that 'the authority of the Nawabs of Awadh and Arcot dwindled even as Tilly Kettle and Zoffany painted them in their glory'.⁸ Bayly develops this paradox of power-puffing and its deflation, permanence and accelerated change, in an essay which addresses the consequences of British involvement at Indian courts by the early nineteenth century.

(f)or Indians the power of the Company was now unassailable, but its legitimacy as ruler still masked ... (Indian court) artists still portrayed Hindu and Muslim rulers as the centres of illustrious courts and the pivot of splendid religious ceremonies and of royal pilgrimages to places of sanctity. Ironically these actually increased in numbers and opulence under the Christian rulers.⁹

⁵M.Archer, *India and British Portraiture, 1770-1825*, (London,1979), p.58.

⁶This is most clearly related with reference to the payment of artists' bills, a good example being the case of Ozias Humphry; Archer 1979 pp.186-203.

⁷Bayly,1990 catalogue entries 132 to 144.

⁸ibid., pp.113-114.

⁹ibid., p.133.

Whilst the attention given to art of Indian courts is by necessity slight, the difficult encounters between the old Mughal order and the new imperatives of imperial rule are indicated; these kingdoms in losing their political clout to the British in an era of aggressive colonial expansion, were shunted into specific rhetorical strategies, (resistant or defensive) ousted from actual power.¹⁰

‘(I)t is almost as if there was an inverse relationship between the glory of the ceremonial and the real authority of these protected rulers’.¹¹ At the close of the eighteenth century, Company officials took note of this dichotomy, which they were helping to evolve. Hastings’ loyal ally David Anderson connoted: ‘it is observable that in proportion as the Mughal Emperors have fallen from real power which they formerly possessed, an increase has taken place in the ceremony and show of respect with which they are treated’.¹² *The Raj* pushes the dynamic still farther; the East India Company preserving Mughal cultural forms in order to conceal, or at least stabilise the charged political change under colonial rule.

This interwoven mesh of preservation and transformation, is further complicated when the period in view is pushed back into the first years of empire. Entering an era of ambivalent colonial discourse, responses and

¹⁰This term is borrowed very loosely from the anthropological work of Clifford Geertz; where ritual is set apart on a stage, possessive of dramatic but ultimately fictive power; hence ritualized politics and political ritual do not so much imitate social reality as imitate themselves by repetition. C.Geertz, *Negara: The Theatre State in 19th-century Bali*, (Princeton,1980). ‘Theatre State’ is taken up and adapted by Nicholas Dirks in *The Hollow Crown: Ethnohistory of an Indian Kingdom*, (Cambridge,1987) pp. 384-7. In relation to the south Indian kingdom of Pudukkottai, he notes that ‘Colonialism purposefully preserved many of the forms of the old regime, nowhere more conspicuously than in the indirectly ruled Princely State ... but these forms were *frozen*, and only the *appearances* of the old regime without its vitally connected political and social processes were saved.’ p.6 (my emphases).

¹¹Bayly, 1990, p.133

¹²David Anderson, *On Distinction of Rank in India*, Anderson Papers, British Library (hereafter BL) Add Ms 45,441, ff.3-14; f.9.

stereotypes were still unstable and in the process of being scripted or pictured. After the 1780s *the Raj* has little to say about the impact of *British* painting on the life of Indian courts, concluding that '(t)he decline of European painting of Indian rulers and court scenes after the glories of Willison, Zoffany and Kettle was witness to the dwindling prestige and incomes of these sovereigns.'¹³ In this sense British art as a foreign luxury is directly identified with prosperity and independence. Such an ideological position although sliding into established Mughal ideologies of rulers as great consumers of foreign goods, also implies the unease, the ambiguity of the political situation which informed the very presence of British artists, ambassadors, private traders and mercenaries at Indian courts.¹⁴

Simultaneously, such an observation is juxtaposed with ideas that Indian court art increased in opulence and output. In the case of a court such as Murshidabad, (the former capital of Bengal and an early blue-print for subordination at other courts) such a conclusion is only partially valid. Although there was a notorious remission in *nawabi* commissions given to visiting British painters, the trade and taste for European art expanded dramatically as a flow of European imagery (especially prints and Old Masters), further dislocated *nawabi*

¹³Bayly, 1990 p.132.

¹⁴An invaluable account of British private traders preying on an India ruler, including painters and an architect is the work of J.D.Gurney, which explores the demise of the nawab of the Carnatic's political power in southern India. *The Nawab of Arcot's Debts* (unpublished Ph.D.Oxford, 1968). See also Rosie Llewellyn-Jones' Lucknow trilogy *A Fatal Friendship* (Delhi,1985), *A Very Ingenious Man* (Delhi,1992) and *Engaging Scoundrels* (Delhi,2000). P.J.Marshall, *East India Fortunes* (Oxford,1976), C.A.Bayly, *Rulers, Townsmen and Bazaars* (Cambridge,1983) and Sudipta Sen for an exposition of the Company's long term violent agenda in the realm of trade, *An Empire of Free Trade* (Pennsylvania,1998).

income, ensuring that by the early years of the nineteenth century a 'taste' for western art far exceeded the agenda of patrimonial patronage.¹⁵

At the other end of the discursive spectrum lies the work of Ratnabali Chatterjee which explores the brutal impact of British art at Murshidabad.¹⁶ She raises two vital, intertwined issues; the alienation of Mughal-trained artists from court patronage and the imposition of European taste on the nawabs:

The (British) authority which forced the scions of the Nawab Nazims of Murshidabad to learn English instead of Persian, to push aside their cultural norms, amuse themselves with new toys, also modelled them to be good recipients of consumer goods. Hence while the artisans from Murshidabad fled to Calcutta, the Nawab came to be surrounded by Buhl cabinets, Venetian glass and British paintings.¹⁷

Whilst recent scholarship has charted the impact of British art on Indian painting in the nineteenth century, there has been little exploration of first years of colonial contact, an epoch governed by misunderstandings, insecurities and ignorance. Wider networks of images and their life stages have been ignored; this is particularly the case with engravings, which acted as the backbone in regular art trading between Company officials and Indian courts.¹⁸

¹⁵See Tapati Guha-Thakurta, *The Making of a New 'Indian Art'* (Cambridge,1992), chapter one pp.11-7. For prints at Indian courts see my chapter seven part two.

¹⁶R. Chatterjee, pp. 10-44, in her book *From the Karkhana to the Studio: Changing Social Roles of Patron and Artist in Bengal*, (New Delhi,1990) I am extremely grateful to Dr. Chatterjee for a copy of this work.

¹⁷ibid., p.33.

¹⁸For the trafficking of prints see Hastings Durbar Accounts, 1780-1785 Hastings Papers BL: Add Ms 29,092. For life stages of art objects see Richard H.Davis, *The Lives of Indian Images* (Princeton,1997; Delhi,1999). See also I.Kopytoff, 'The Cultural Biography of Things: Commoditisation as Process' pp.64-91 and A. Appadurai 'Commodities and the Politics of Value', introduction both in Appadurai (ed.) *The Social Life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspective*, (Cambridge,1986). See also Appadurai, 'Consumption, Duration and History', in A.Appadurai, *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization*, (Minnesota, 1996).

The targetting of an Indian elite as a new market for British pictures involved a complicated ‘mobilisation of aesthetic principles (or something like them) in the course of social interactions’.¹⁹ It is crucial to explore whether nawabs could lay aside their bitter entanglements with Company Residents, in order to ‘enjoy’ evaluating and discussing British art through carefully measured notions of the ‘beautiful’ and ‘skill in likeness’ (*taswir*) or alternately as curios, as indices of the marvellous; (*refaya, zalalat*).

Art as Prestation in Europe and India

With notions of power-ritual in mind and the wider impact of British art at Indian courts, I shall investigate the gestation of a novel form of prestation as forged in India. Hastings through his network of envoys despatched his portrait as a gift to important Indian princes in kingdoms as far part as the Deccan and Awadh. (map) What seems a simple scenario in fact acted as catalyst for an entanglement of artistic and political anxieties. I have chosen to examine only Hastings’ portraits in order to explore in a focussed and manageable way the intricate artistic, political and anthropological issues revolving around the introduction of British art at Indian courts.

In Mughal culture there was no tradition of disseminating one’s image as a mark of authority or solidarity; neither Mughal Emperors nor the rulers of the successor states regularly gifted their portraits either to loyal subordinates or to foreign dignitaries.²⁰ Although past emperors from Akbar to ShahJahan had utilised the visual arts in a variety of ways, including figurative decoration of their durbar halls and *zananas*, the employment of such imagery in Indo-Islamic

¹⁹ Alfred Gell, *Art and Agency: An Anthropological Theory*, (Oxford, 1998) p.4.

²⁰I am grateful to J.P.Losty for enlightening me on this point.

culture remained polemical. I shall explore why such an experienced colonial administrator and Orientalist scholar as Warren Hastings, introduced both the gifted portrait and its ideological baggage as a fundamental to the diplomatic repertoire. Full-length canvases, ill-suited to Mughal notions of architectural integration and interior decoration, also defied principles of Indian portraiture concerned with *adab*, (notions of delicacy, refinement and minutiae) part of an intensely private viewing time and space questioned whether such British pictures were even perceived as ‘art’.²¹

‘How does one make signs to the other; how does one reconcile the desire for transparent signs with the desire for opacity?’²² I shall scrutinise the ways in which both the status and representational strategies accorded Hastings’ portraits within colonial and metropolitan society, were radically compromised by their pre-emption on the Indian diplomatic stage. Whilst there is a poverty of surviving *nawabi* responses to these specific images, I shall argue that ambivalence calculated a form of ‘return’ for such images.

As Hastings’ own imperial vision is notoriously difficult to reconstruct, this casts the dye for his intentions for gifted art.²³ Recent investigations of his regime have focussed either on the imposition of notions of British sovereignty and constitutionalism in Bengal, or else Hastings’ use of Indian traditions and personnel, asserting him within the tradition of the Bengal nawabs.²⁴ Such

²¹Barbara Metcalf (ed.) *Moral Conduct and Authority: The Place of Adab in South Asian Islam*, (Berkeley, C.A. 1984). *Adab* has been termed variously as moral exemplification, codes of behaviour, as refinement as opposed to vulgarity, and although essentially spiritual it has come also to refer to notions of taste.

²²Stephen Greenblatt, *Marvellous Possessions* (Chicago, 1991) p.91.

²³See P.J. Marshall, *The Trial of Warren Hastings* (Oxford, 1965); K. Feiling, *Warren Hastings*, (London, 1954).

²⁴Neil Sen, ‘Warren Hastings and British Sovereign Authority in Bengal, 1774-1780’ *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, January, 1997 pp.59-81 and also Robert Travers, *The*

dialectics between often seemingly opposed forces became strained; Hastings forged his own form of governance, with mixed loyalties and fluctuating manipulation of the Company's constitution, Mughal traditions of political comportment and ideologies of Georgian state-formation. We need to examine this form of state power not merely through its repressive character but through its discursive strategies which negotiated with a variety of groups and experimented with several cultural symbols.²⁵ Hence the end of this chapter will explore Hastings' use of art as pre-emption as situated within both his much wider artistic patronage and the Company's construction (or not) of public works, in order to compare his instrumentation of art and cultural symbols within domestic and foreign policies.

'Envisaging India after the fall of the Mughal empire as a set of independent states, Hastings believed that the British rulers of Bengal must conduct a foreign policy within a diplomatic system comparable to that of Europe', whilst simultaneously upholding at least some outward appearance of Indian diplomacy based on 'face to face relations'.²⁶ Marshall stresses that Hastings had to devise a practical alternative to the governance of the former

Construction of the East India Company State and Indian Officials, c.1770-1793 I am extremely grateful to the author for a paper of his paper. See also P.J.Marshall's illuminating, 'The Making of an Imperial Icon: The Case of Warren Hastings', *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 27.3 (September,1999) pp.1-16.

²⁵Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish* (New York,1979) p.194: 'we must cease once and for all to describe the effects of power in negative terms: it 'excludes', it 'represses', it 'censors', it 'abstracts', it 'masks', it 'conceals'. In fact power produces; it produces reality; it produces domains of objects and rituals of truth'. See also G.Burchell, C.Gordon and P.Miller (eds.) *The Foucault Effect: Studies in Governmentality* (Chicago,1991) and N.Thomas, *Colonialism's Culture: Anthropology, Travel and Government* (Oxford,1994) pp.33-65.

²⁶Marshall, 1999 p.6. Hastings desired that alliances be made with other states as 'the friends and allies of the King of Great Britain' thus able to 'extend the influence of the British nation to every part of India not too remote from their possession'; S.Weitzman, *Warren Hastings and Philip Francis*, (Manchester,1929) pp.87-88 and John R.McLane, *Land and Local Kingship in Eighteenth-century Bengal*, (Cambridge,1993) p.13.

Bengal nawabs. I propose that the assertion or insertion of certain symbols of government either Mughal or British, attempted to express this seemingly 'hybrid' Company state, whose cultural projections were largely determined by the vagaries of enunciation. This is not to suggest that symbols were deployed merely in a pragmatic manner, but that various ideologies and degrees of masking and communicating were carefully inscribed within a variety of insignia. As the Company albeit cautious (if oft-misguided) in the form and function of so-called cultural emblems deployed within various Indian contexts across its territories of Bengal and Benares, as well as in foreign states, did devise a colonial iconography.

In the crudest sense, the British perceived a central role for symbols within Mughal diplomatic culture, to which they would partially adhere yet distort. However diplomatic relations between British Bengal and other Indian states, 'bore little relation to the formal European model of negotiations and alliance which Hastings depicted in his writings' which affected the gifting of diplomatic images.²⁷ The Company's *ad hoc* agreements, land and trade feuds were often inconsistent and openly aggressive so that the diplomatic portrait added a veneer of order and decorum distinctly lacking in actual relations.

During Hastings' regime, Indian rights and institutions were relentlessly eroded, not only in Bengal but also in those Indian states feeling pressure of colonial ambition. Many kingdoms, most notably Awadh and the Carnatic, due to previous warfare and defeat by the British, faced the burden of paying for Company troops under the terms of subsidiary alliances which drew these

²⁷Marshall, 1999 p.9.

indigenous powers more closely into the imperial orbit.²⁸ (Map 1) Michael Fisher has provided illuminating insight into the development of a system of 'Residents' which became a defining feature of Hastings' foreign policy, so that by 1782 there were Company envoys at as many as eleven Indian states, exerting British policy at the durbar.²⁹ 'Often isolated from their fellow Europeans, the Residents played a particularly crucial role in the establishment and expansion of British rule over India'.³⁰ Conversely, Indian princes sought to pursue their own interests through the Residency system in a tug-of-war, generating ominous and unstable relationships as they sought to harness the Residency to support their administration, or at least block it from unwanted interference in the internal affairs of the state.³¹ At the same time, the Company gradually removed its channelling of political information through those visiting *wakils* posted in Calcutta, to its own Residents.³²

In retrospect, contemporaries viewed Hastings' foreign policies as polemical.³³ He was accused of inept diplomacy as well as an aggressive desire for expansion which had publicly humiliated India's royalty and disgraced the British name epitomised by satires which represented Hastings as a corrupt administrator attempting to bribe his way into Westminster as well as into George III's affection.³⁴ *Bulse: the Knave of Diamonds 1786* (fig. 76) adapted

²⁸ Marshall and B. Allen, entry on Warren Hastings; Bayly, 1990 pp.113-114.

²⁹ There was much debate whether these Residents held the same rights as European ambassadors. That they represented the East India Company denied them this full status, M.H.Fisher, *Indirect Rule*, (Delhi,1993) introduction.

³⁰ *ibid.*, p.1.

³¹ *ibid.*, p.270.

³² C.A.Bayly, *Empire and Information*, (Cambridge,1996) chapter two.

³³ F.G.Whelan, *Edmund Burke and the Political Morality of Empire* (Pittsburgh,1995) p.135.

³⁴ Hastings was one of the most caricatured men of the later 18th century; see N.K.Robinson, *Edmund Burke A life in Political Caricature* (New Haven,1996) Appendix Two. See BM 6966 for *Bulse the Knave of Diamonds* July 11, 1786.

the physiognomy from a recent portrait of Hastings by Zoffany, and its composition from Reynolds' much earlier likeness, thus to deflate images that the former Governor-General had introduced in to British and Indian public spheres. Diamonds forced from the Nizam of Hyderabad by a ruthless British foreign policy are prepared not only for Hastings' own pleasure but for George III.³⁵

During his trial for impeachment (1788-95), Hastings expressed the imperial necessity of projecting the ambiance of a seemingly seamless, vigorously rigorous regime, to foes and neighbouring states; a strategy which initially won at least guarded artistic praise (fig. 77).³⁶ At least within the maladroit speeches of his impeachment defence, Hastings emerged as:

not only a determined and calculating practitioner of power politics but also as a Machiavellian politician at a higher level of sophistication, sensitive to the role of images in political contests and concerned to deploy power at his disposal so as to maximise the appearance of his power in the perception of his adversaries, which in turn would be a means to increasing his actual strength.³⁷

Fascinating although this line of argument is, Whelan all too often conflates Hastings' defence ploys with his earlier political ideology and practice as the governor's own motives behind his actions are hidden within a panoply of rhetorical strategies.

³⁵In this print, Hastings' governing manual is a huge tome entitled 'corruption' which as we shall see, subverted the Persian texts included in Reynolds' portrait of the 1760s.

³⁶Whelan, 1995, pp.227-230. Whilst an absorbing study of Burke's attitudes to Hastings' regime, Hastings' own views are too neatly fitted into those of a pragmatist, practising *raison d'etat*. Whelan is often in danger of contradicting himself by positing Hastings as also being Machiavellian, thus confirming and denying that the former governor possessed a powerful 'imperial vision' which went far beyond mere responses to the *status quo*.

³⁷*ibid.*, p.229.

Hastings' use of Indian interlopers in government affairs attempted to establish a creative dialogue, a process within which pictures could function as an 'honorific currency'.³⁸ Within ten years, a new gifting dichotomy had been adumbrated. Accompanying imported broad cloth and pistols, engravings, mezzotints and oil portraits began to clutter the *darbar* accounts and ledgers of Company Residents, thus signifying the importance of British art to the diplomatic encounter.³⁹ The presentation of pictures at the royal *darbar* assumed a prominence hitherto reserved for the giving of *khilats*.⁴⁰ The acceptance of *khilat* signalled a literal incorporation in to the body politic, through a garment from the ruler's wardrobe; a set of loyalties very different to the receipt of a portrait of Hastings or George III, which swapped patrimonial forms of political incorporation for acts of looking and kinship through empirical knowledge, a European ideology and practice that assumed an increasing importance during Company rule.⁴¹

³⁸ This term is borrowed from C.A. Bayly, *Rulers, Townsmen and Bazaars*, (Cambridge 1983) p.52 with reference to a political exchange of shawls.

³⁹ Warren Hastings' *Darbar Accounts*, December 1784, Hastings Papers BL: Add Ms, 29,092 and the *Memoirs and Ledgers of the British Resident at Poona*, Charles Malet, Eur Ms F149, (Oriental and India Office Collections; hereafter OIOC) F149/54, Letterbook, 1790-1, f.95: Malet's first meeting with the Peshwa, 'I advanced some hundreds of yards in my palanquin to meet him and presented him with ... an elephant, a horse, jewels and cloths, and some of the images that were sent me by the Court of Directors'. The diaries of the Scottish artist James Wales at Poona reveal that he was commissioned by Malet to paint hundreds of pictures for the royal court as well as organise for the importation of engravings from printsellers in Holborn. *Diaries of James Wales*, (Yale Center For British Art, New Haven).

⁴⁰ For *khilat* giving and its inherent symbolic potency, see Ghulam Hussein, *Siyar Mutaqherin, History of Modern Times*, trans. Haji Mustapha (Calcutta, 1789) three volumes, volume one p.15 and McLane, 1993, chapter four. The complex economic and psychological processes involved within the acts of gifting are discussed in M. Mauss' classic study, *The Gift: The Form and Reason For Exchange in Archaic Societies*, (London edition, 1996) and Appadurai, 1986.

⁴¹ We have no visual representations of gifting between Indians and the Company during this era, as we shall see in chapter six there were several representations of Anglo-Indian diplomacy to mark the signing of treaties, but not of actual exchange of material goods but rather signified through the joining of hands. This is thus contrasted with other representations of empire such as Benjamin West's *William Penn's Treaty with the Indians*, 1771-2 where cloth is offered to north American Indians in exchange for land. See Beth Tobin, *Picturing Imperial Power: Colonial*

In a precolonial era the Jesuit mission introduced European imagery to the Mughal Emperor. Its religious agenda was very different to the ideology of British art, in form and function.⁴² However a common denominator to both Counter Reformation and colonial imagery at centralised and regional courts, was its introduction as prestation. The notion of ‘the gift’ has become an intriguing, enduring and contested area for anthropological investigation. One of the most powerful and illuminating ways of thinking about the patterns between persons has been through the opposition of the gift to the commodity as the apparent clarity of the polarity of two very different social lives of things, has made it integral to a more general logic that opposes pre-colonial society to colonial modernity. Yet these oppositions were never absolute. As Marcel Mauss in his classic study has long since argued, prestation is structured according to forms of calculation and interest that in some sense resemble those of a market economy; in turn commodities are also endorsed with non-commodity meanings as they move within the moral economy of everyday life.⁴³ ‘The concept of the gift is most interesting when it is understood not as a figure of pure gratuitousness but through the very ambivalence that provokes the question of how its logic really differs from that of the commodity’.⁴⁴

Subjects in Eighteenth-century British Painting (Duke,1999) pp.56-80; p.63. S Blake, ‘The patrimonial-bureaucratic empire of the Mughals’, *Journal of Asian Studies* 39, 1979 pp.77-94.

⁴²The best study of the impact of Jesuit imagery on Mughal culture is Gauvin Alexander Bailey’s *Counter Reformation Imagery and Allegory in Mughal Painting*, (unpublished Ph.D. Harvard,1996). The bulk of this thesis concentrates on the reign of Akbar and the first half of Jahangir’s reign when the impact of European imagery was at its most intense.

⁴³Mauss, 1996 p.3.

⁴⁴John Frow, ‘Gift and Commodity’ in his *Time and Commodity Culture: Essays in Cultural Theory and Postmodernity* (Oxford,1997) p.102. See also James Carrier, (ed.) ‘Maussian Occidentalism: Gift and commodity System’, in *Occidentalism: Images of the West* (Oxford,1995) Lewis Hyde, *The Gift: Imagination and the Erotic Life of Property* (New York,1983) and David Cheal, *The Gift Economy* (London,1988).

A central theme for Mauss which has been subjected to numerous analyses, is the phenomenon of prestations which in theory are voluntary, disinterested and spontaneous, are in fact obligatory and interested.⁴⁵ No gift is ever free. As Derrida in his model of the theoretically 'pure' and hence unrealisable gift, prestation is imprisoning, removing liberty in relations and instigating circuits of reciprocity.⁴⁶ He makes out an irresolvable paradox at what seems the most fundamental level of the gift's meaning: for the gift to be received as a gift, it must not appear as such, since its mere appearance as gift places it in the cycle of repayment and debt.⁴⁷

Reciprocity central to Mauss's *prestation totale* can be qualified in the light of Mughal investiture and the reception of supplicants' offerings. Prestation in terms of a cycle of set rituals and obligations, was central to Mughal negotiations; a political system into which the British had been embroiled since the 1600s; offering *nazr* in return for *farmans* for duty-free trade and its cultural significance had long since been mythologised through the picaresque travel writings of European writers. *Darbari* politics were extremely complex. A meeting with a ruler involved the mediation of an influential noble or merchant at the *darbar*, ritualised forms of address, particular costumes and the offering of *nazr* and *peshkash*, presents from an inferior to a superior which demonstrated humility. Such rituals were crucial to the dialectic between

⁴⁵Mauss, 1996 p.1.

⁴⁶Jacques Derrida, *Given Time: I Counterfeit Money*, trans. P.Kamuf, (Chicago,1992), argues for the impossibility of no return; even recognition is a form of return ; it gives back a symbolic equivalent.

⁴⁷*ibid.*, p.14.

political privilege and mercantile activity in India as the command of the realm over subjects was literally enacted in the *nazr*. (fig. 78)

Manoeuvring Company interests within the political arena of the *darbar* continued to demand careful attention to the idioms of gifting. 'The British experience of Mughal communication and honorifics as much as their knowledge of the intercourse of states in Europe, warned that failures of diplomatic etiquette even more than the clash of irreconcilable interest brought war and the disruption of commerce'.⁴⁸ Shoddy gifts reflected on to the giver; thus the Maratha chief Shinde was condemned for presenting the Mughal Emperor with 'false jewellery, a broken-down pony and an elephant with a great ulcerated wound on its back'.⁴⁹ Therefore British art's introduction on to the south Asian public stage had to be carefully manoeuvred in order to avoid shame and shunning.⁵⁰

However Parliament asserted its opposition to the Mughal political economy founded on cycles of obligation through prestation; such customs were dismissed as extortion and bribery, in which British officials were all too willing to partake. Hence the 1773 Regulating Act sought to ban both private trade and

⁴⁸Bayly, 1996 pp.284-285 and chapters two and three for discussion of British involvement within the politics of the *darbar*. This is also noted by Fisher, 1993 p.292 'since the Resident normally worked through influence or suggestion and repeated the formalities of court intercourse, he could not force the ruler's hand without raising dangerous confrontation and breach of etiquette'. Other works that deal with the role of Company involvement in Indian diplomatic encounters are, Bernard Cohn's classic essay, 'Representing Authority in Victorian India' in his *An Anthropologist Amongst Historians* (Chicago,1987) pp.632-682 and McLane, 1993 pp.96-121.

⁴⁹A.MacDonald, *Memoirs of the Life of Nana Fadnavis* (London,1924) p.20. From another angle, Shinde was extremely powerful and disrespectful prestation asserted such potency; even in Delhi.

⁵⁰Here as elsewhere there was tension between the motives of the East India Company and Parliament, as well as between the British and Mughal political economies; S.Sen,1998, chapters one and two.

present taking amongst Company servants.⁵¹ Ghulam Hussein, the Indo-Persian author of the most extensive history of Hastings' regime, noted that the Supreme Council returned all gifts offered in public from *wakils* and subjects alike thus breaching Mughal etiquette; 'it was observed that in receiving visits, they constantly refused the *nazrs* presented them in compliance with a custom peculiar to India and that they returned untouched even presents of fruits'.⁵² Although fruits-refusal (little more than quickly consumed tokens) manifested the ultimate rebuttal, such a gesture marked out the ideological differences between Mughal and British notions of 'economy'.

It has been suggested by John McLane, that with increased commercialisation in eighteenth-century Bengal, pristine forms of reciprocity and loyalty conveyed through prestation were evolving into harsher economic calculations.⁵³ For instance, the Company's abolition of the annual *puniyah* at Murshidabad 'signalled a retreat from symbolic to more purely contractual relations'.⁵⁴ Yet it is difficult to accept that there had emerged a pervasive computation of tribute to money as there are no indigenous criteria as such to draw a distinction between the politics of the gift and the politics of profit; patronage of the *darbar* was always regarded as above money.⁵⁵ The British abolition of the annual *puniyah* ceremony, where *khilats* were bestowed on local notables by the Bengal nawab at Murshidabad, indicates that deviance or

⁵¹ Bayly, 1996 pp.46-47: 'Britons were only too quick to write off Indian social expenditures and the political exchange of gifts as bribery and extortion. They often failed to understand that magnates' shares, or even the location of traders in markets was a reflection of social status. Some of them even saw the honorific gifts passed in the Mughal court as bribery'.

⁵² Ghulam Hussein, 1789, volume two, p.461.

⁵³ McLane, 1993 chapter two.

⁵⁴ *ibid.*, p.46.

⁵⁵ Sen, 1998 p.70.

refusal to partake in gift-giving was politically loaded, even leading to charges of treason and threats of execution.⁵⁶

As the Company had supplanted the nawabs it also received gifts which if more than tokens, it was in theory unable to accept, so that these were stored waiting to be recycled as prestations to other Indian rulers, thereby changing the significance of the gift and privileging the elements of reciprocity based on monetary values and the contract.⁵⁷ In spite of Parliament's desires and Ghulam Hussein's portrayal of the Supreme Council, gifting could not be done away with entirely. Whilst McLane rightly argues that the British attempted to impose contractual relations at the durbar, (signifier of their different notions of economy and its sites for activation) the residues of gifting in fact became far more highly charged in a 'symbolic' sense. It is on this level that the British introduced painted canvases; a practice which signified both a willingness to play the game, as the same time as undermining it at its core.

So we have to consider the prestation status accorded to such images in relation to other goods offered and received at the durbar.⁵⁸ Annette Weiner has argued that some gifts carry the charisma of the giver, so whatever their past status, this essence fulfills a mnemonic life stage which recalls the original transaction.⁵⁹ In theory it is at this level that Hastings' gifted portraits operated; his images as 'inalienable possessions', venerated as prized tokens of friendship

⁵⁶McLane, 1993, p.103.

⁵⁷Cohn, 1987 pp.640-657.

⁵⁸The durbar remained the prime site for political discourse; Hastings held durbars in Government House, Calcutta; the arriving notables represented in the Daniells' *View of Government House*, 1786-8. For details of his gifts and correspondence to foreign powers see the *Calendar of Persian Correspondence*, 1772-1784.

⁵⁹Annette Weiner, *Inalienable Possessions: The Paradox of Keeping While Giving* (Berkeley, C.A. 1992) chapter one.

to be kept out of further gifting or commercial transactions. Yet even if Hastings' portraits as gifts are hence not alienable in the sense of commodities sold within a market, (that is as alienated) to deem them 'inalienable' in both the sense of their charisma and their status is only partially more helpful. In Governor-Generals' likenesses, the giver is always present within the gift, but only so long as mimesis is accorded to the image and so long as it enjoyed an enduring status within a Mughal context.

Within the disruptive or semi-opaque relationship between coloniser and colonised, such life stages for prestations were unpredictable. Both Appadurai and Thomas have analysed the shifting and uncontrollable, transient and conflictual status of goods and their exchange, where the cycle of prestation is far more precarious, even ominous and unstable than realised.⁶⁰ The exchange of artefacts between cultures and the ensuing promiscuity of objects, inevitably questioned the existence or not of inherent significations and the perception of phenomenological qualities.

Why did the British emphasise the prestation of art at the expense of other commodities and in what ways did pre-existing discourses determine practice? In eighteenth-century Britain, any summary reading of such travelogues and government records produced a 'travel capitalist' view of Mughal India, would notice the emphasis on oil pictures as favourite 'curios' of this 'despotic' society.⁶¹ According to the memoirs of seventeenth-century European visitors, European pictures had once been highly prized at Imperial

⁶⁰See Appadurai, 1986 and N. Thomas, *Entangled Objects* (Harvard, 1991).

⁶¹For instance, F. Bernier, *Travels in the Mughal Empire, 1656-1668* trans. I. Brook (London, 1891), Peter Mundy, *Travels in Europe and Asia 1608-1667* six volumes (London, 1907-24) and Thomas Roe, *Travels of Sir Thomas Roe* (London, 1990 edition).

Delhi. In particular, accounts of the court of Akbar's successor, Emperor Jahangir, are cluttered with references to a taste for full-length oil portraits; some being European gifts and others representing his family, as adapted by his own court artists.⁶² Sir Thomas Roe, English envoy at the court of Jahangir (fl.1615-9), complained that the presents sent by the East India Company 'are extremely despised by those (who) have seen them ... Here are nothing esteemed but of the best sorts; good cloth and fine, rich pictures ... soe that they laugh at us for such as we bring'.⁶³ British pictures were one of few commodities not to be scorned, so that the gifting of portraits was literally a way of saving face.

Within traditions of European diplomacy portraits had long been a key pawn to be shunted on the international stage; no ambassador quitted Britain without a selection of royal likenesses. Although such art exchange between Britain and India had atrophied by the 1710s, its revival and reinterpretation functioned as a powerful symbol of 'Anglicisation' - a manifestation of the Company's attempt to assume some of the key symbolic and practical attributes of Georgian state-formation.⁶⁴

In eighteenth-century Britain, the public art which in practice was instilled with notions of altruism, honour and heroism became arguably ^{not} history painting but portraiture.⁶⁵ 'It is possible to argue that a taste for portraiture

⁶² See for instance *Tuzuk-i Jahangiri* (Tehran, 1940-41), Gauvin Bailey, 1996 pp.141-159, E.Koch and M.Beach, *King of the World, The Padshahnama*, (Windsor, 1997) p.232, L.Leach, *Indian Miniatures and Drawings: the Cleveland Museum of Art* (1986).

⁶³ Sir Thomas Roe, *The Embassy of Sir Thomas Roe to India, 1615-9* W.Forster (ed.) (Oxford, 1926) pp.76-77.

⁶⁴ Sudipta Sen, 'Colonial Frontiers of the Georgian State' *Journal of Historical Sociology* 7.4 (December, 1994) pp.368-392.

⁶⁵ Louise Lippincott, 'Expanding on Portraiture: The Market, the Public and the Hierarchy of Genres in Eighteenth-century Britain', in A.Birmingham and J.Brewer (eds.) *The Consumption of Culture* (London, 1995) pp.75-88.

expressed an individual's sense of social and civic responsibility, while buying history paintings comprised one of the great depravities of commercial capitalism as understood by the eighteenth-century'.⁶⁶ This extended also to a colonial context. During Cook's voyages, the painters William Hodges and John Webber had painted the likenesses of a variety of Pacific peoples who were seemingly delighted to see their faces appear on paper and exchange British-painted images⁶⁷. Hence:

giving, owning, displaying, caricaturing, defacing and disposing of portraits were acts of public import ... (i)n eighteenth-century Britain portraits fulfilled the moral and civic roles that academic theory envisioned for history painting they recorded history, heroes, virtue and friendship, they taught morality, enforced loyalty and represented tradition. They spoke forcefully to a public which by dint of more than two centuries of conditioning, understood it would seem instinctively, their meanings and purpose.⁶⁸

With no flourishing public art other than portraiture, it was perhaps inevitable that Hastings would primarily gift his own likeness, its significance in part determined beyond art.

However in its first years the Fort-William administration was continually censored by the Court of Directors for its lavish enthusiasm for incorporation within Mughal ceremonial, leading Leadenhall Street to preach:

In your public system you seem to entertain the idea that the Company is to adapt the Eastern parade and dignity, but we are of the opinion (as we have repeatedly observed to you) that European simplicity is much more

⁶⁶ibid., p.75.

⁶⁷ Bernard Smith, *Imagining the Pacific* (New Haven,1992) pp.103-109.

⁶⁸ibid., p.82.

likely to engage the respect of the natives than any imitation of their manners.⁶⁹

Early factory records reveal that British art was seldom gifted in imperial Delhi or at local mercantile or administrative levels. Although Swain Ward worked in both south India and Bengal in the era 1757-64, his services were rarely used by the British within a diplomatic context.⁷⁰ 'Every ensign and cadet aboard ships destined for the coast of India brought with them toys that might win the fancy of Indian courts: looking glasses, inlaid pistols and clocks of elaborate craftsmanship'.⁷¹ However these often looked more like an inventory for a warehouse than as gifts fit for kings.⁷²

In 1760s Murshidabad, instead of gifting pictures the Company offered the nawab wax figurines of *Venus de Milo*.⁷³ At this date Hastings was also in Murshidabad as Resident to the Durbar, where he executed gifting commissions for the nawab; issuing chits for luxury goods to be delivered from Calcutta.⁷⁴ These early days of empire were a far cry from Hastings' vision of British

⁶⁹ N.K.Sinha (ed.) *Fort William-India House Correspondence*, (Delhi,1949) volume five, entries for March 4,1767 and March 17, 1769. As we have already seen, the Court of Directors occasionally received pictures from British artists as gifts; Francis Swain Ward in London and from the Nawab of Arcot who sent his portrait by Willison.

⁷⁰ Although Swain Ward travelled through the Ganges Valley portraying Calcutta and Sher Shah's tomb at Sasseram, he was not used by Clive at Murshidabad.

⁷¹ Sen, 1998 p.23. Forster, 1902, p.70. John Surman's list of good for prestation at the imperial camp included 1 European fountain, 1 box of English flowers, 6 china toys, a sword with a silver handle, silver hinges, 12 looking glasses, 5 clocks, 460 pieces of broadcloth, 49 scissors, 12 razors, 10 pocket books and 69 pencils, see C.R.Wilson, *Early Annals of Bengal* (1900), pp.59-61 for further inventories of early gifted goods.

⁷² Sen, 1998 p.72.

⁷³ Records of early Company gifts can be found in C.R.Wilson, 1900 volume two, Appendix 22, pp.311-6. The Company offered wax figures of a variety of female mythological and Christian subjects to the nawabs Mir Jafir and Mir Qasim, in 1759 and 1762.

⁷⁴ Warren Hastings *Papers During His Residency at the Durbar at Murshidabad, 1757-60* carried out commissions for European goods from Calcutta for the nawabs. No art is recorded but he ordered china, broad cloth, coffee cups, 'several glasses and other things of small value which I shall endeavour to procure for him.' Hastings Papers BL: Add Ms 29,096, June 20,1758, f.14.

pictures-as-gifts within the arts of diplomacy, as a means of searching for cultural moorings between the colonials and their Indian subjects or rivals.

Hastings, effectively 'sacked' in the early 1760s, had returned to London to cool his heels in the interim before his promotion as Governor-General. Already a collector of Mughal art and a patron of Swain Ward, he was desperately aware of the need to boost his standing; he sat to Joshua Reynolds.⁷⁵ (fig. 79) Both painter and sitter were highly ambitious men at cross roads in their careers; Reynolds embroiled within the undercover machinations for the inauguration of the Royal Academy and Hastings manoeuvring for a prominent Company position.

Hastings' portrait depicts him within the vein of an orientalist scholar-patron in a lavish ensemble of brilliant textures signifying his standing as a man of intense refinement, (the only Indian references are the Persian text and seal and his Chintz waistcoat, a button playfully undone at the viewer's eye-level), in a delicately painted repertoire, which in its physiological frisson on the eye is unusual for the broad and stoic representational strategies for which Reynolds became famous.⁷⁶

⁷⁵Hastings was already a patron of Mughal art, receiving miniatures from William Fullarton, at Patna, Hastings Papers BL: Add Ms 29,132, ff. 142-3, August 10, 1762 'got some pictures and some Persian histories which I will send down to you first good correspondence'; Hastings may also have already patronised Swain Ward; as the sale of his effects in 1785 included 9 pictures of sepoy by Swain Ward.

⁷⁶See N. Penny, *Reynolds*, (London, 1988), John Barrell, *The Political Theory of Painting from Reynolds to Hazlitt*, (Oxford, 1986) and Desmond Shawe-Taylor, *The Georgians* (London, 1985). Chintz had been outlawed in the 1720s however its apparel in this instance was a powerful marker of Company involvement; J. Irwin and K. Brett, *The Origins of Chintz*, (London, 1970). Hastings was presenting himself in a very different way to former Company officials such as John Foote, Stringer Lawrence or Lord Clive, all painted by Reynolds in the early 1760s. His Indian career is pushed to the edge of a 'disinterestedness' as opposed to demonstrating an exotic or military identity more common to popular stereotyping of Company officials. See also David Solkin, 'Great Pictures or Great Men?' *Oxford Art Journal*, 9 (1986) pp. 42-49. Hastings penned *An Ode to Sir Joshua Reynolds*, Hastings Papers Add Ms 29,235 f. 65: 'What

At this date Hastings was also seeking to establish a chair of Persian learning at Oxford to provide the vital but scarce linguistic skills which would inform the nature of Company service and assist diplomacy and imperial expansion; for only a handful of officials had a smattering of Indian languages.⁷⁷ He is thus presented as both the man of learning and diplomat, eliding different facets of his public and private identities; an ambivalence which would define his self-presentation in India.⁷⁸

In one region during the 1760s, British art was already making an impact in an era and area of embroiled politics. In practice, the south Indian court of Arcot during the Madras governorship of George Pigot, acted as the model for the introduction of British art within the Ganges Valley during the regime of Warren Hastings.⁷⁹ (Map 1) By 1763 the East India Company had assisted the nawab Muhammed Ali to consolidate his position in Arcot against the French, a manoeuvre which created bonds of dependency to the Company which would ultimately strangle Arcot in the drive for direct colonial administration.⁸⁰ In return for tribute and land, the Company supported the nawab against his enemies, thus maintaining their troops as 'mercenary' garrisons in his kingdom; a scheme adopted time again by the British as a way of both making money and forging inroads in to the economies of independent kingdoms.

Michelangelo boasted and Titian knew, / Reynolds is excell'd by you'. Reynolds sent at least one of his *Discourses* to Hastings; Bayly, 1990 catalogue number 132.

⁷⁷ See B.Cohn, 'The Command of Language and the Language of Command', R.Guha (ed.) *Subaltern Studies IV* (Delhi, 1985) and Bayly 1996 chapter eight.

⁷⁸ A.M.Khan, *Transition in Bengal, 1756-1775* (Cambridge, 1969).

⁷⁹ C.A.Bayly, *Indian Society and the Making of the British Empire* (Cambridge, 1988) p.93.

'Compared to Awadh or even to Bengal before 1757, Arcot was a dependent regime. It was a fragile conquest state on the fringes of Muslim India'. The nawab of Arcot was manipulated in very different ways to the nawabs in Bengal.

⁸⁰ *ibid.*, p.58. See M.H.Nainar, *Tuzak-i Wallajahri Sources of the History of the Nawabs of the Carnatic*, (Madras, 1956) and J.D.Gurney, 1968.

At Arcot this entanglement was further complicated by the presence of private traders, the court's internal factions and by irresolvable discord within the Madras administration. The nawab, Muhammed Ali, had already sat to Swain Ward and was fast developing an enthusiasm for British goods, employing a resourceful bankrupt, Nicholas Morse, as 'interior decorator' and the Company Engineer John Call as architect.⁸¹ As early as 1764, he requested the building of a European style residence which should be a 'large handsome house within the Fort of Madras, that whenever I come there, whether on my own or Company business, it may serve as a place of residence for me'.⁸²

In the late 1760s, the Court of Directors wished gifts to be presented to the nawab not as a glittering pageant but as a constant trickle, giving the impression of a 'regular (but economical) system'.⁸³ 'We think presents though of no great value, frequently presented may have a better effect than to send them all at once'.⁸⁴ However, the presentation of George III's letters at Arcot were grand occasions; royal salutes were fired by British garrisons, and the

⁸¹See H.D.Love, *Catalogue of Pictures in Government House and the Banqueting House, Madras* (Madras, 1903) p.23. For Arcot see Archer, 1979, pp.54-5, 69-71, 100-4, 121, 391. J.D.Gurney, 1973 pp.220-41, Pamela Nightingale, *Fortune and Integrity* (Oxford, 1985) and the Durbar diaries of George Paterson Eur Mss E 379/1-9, 1769-74. For Swain Ward, Pauline Rohatgi, 'Preface to a Lost Collection: The Pioneering Art of Francis Swain Ward' in Rohatgi and P.Godrej (eds.) *Under the Indian Sun* (Bombay, 1995).

⁸²The nawab, Muhammed Ali to Robert Palk, in H.D.Love, *Vestiges of old Madras*, (Madras, 1913) volume two pp.609-610. 'I could wish therefore that it is made both large and lofty (such in short as is fit for me to reside in) and arched below so that no shells whatever may be able to penetrate it'. The Court of Directors was much pleased by the nawab's enthusiasm for colonial architecture, as this they believed implied on the part of the nawab 'confidence in our future import. We wish to have such ideas strengthened and encouraged': *ibid*, pp.619-611. However this classical, multi-pillared palace, built by John Call, remained unfinished.

⁸³This again demonstrates the difference between British and Mughal notions of a gift economy, which extended not only to the type of gifts presented, but also to the temporal structure of prestation. Instead of great ceremonies of numerous goods as feted in Mughal chronicles, this pageant is drawn out by the British over a long period of time; in part influenced by the Company's own parsimony.

⁸⁴Love, 1903 pp.618-619. Gifts sent included a carriage, orrery, globes, a lion, card tables engravings as well as pictures of the king and queen and two Stubbs' oils of the *Lion and Tiger*.

letters carried in procession, 'in rich gold brocade bags' and '(t)he nabob as a mark if the highest respect placed the letter on his head and mounting his elephant again with it, the whole procession returned to the durbar'.⁸⁵ The letters were subsequently 'publicly read at the durbar in several languages'.⁸⁶

However a large scale portrait would have required less or at least different forms of translation; its size allowing its idioms to be viewed by the assembly at an instance. The Company's Directors organised the shipping of the British sovereign's picture to the nawab of Arcot accompanied by a letter from George III:

We accept with satisfaction the white stone which you have sent us, as a mark of your attachment. We shall wear it ourself and deliver it down to Our successors in remembrance of you and in order that you may have before your eyes a memorial of Our regard and affection We send you Our picture and that of Our Queen.⁸⁷

The nawab's instructions for the way in which these pictures were to be received, reveal he was not certain of what to expect, although of whatever size, they should be accorded the same great state he was to bestow all of George III's letters.

that the pictures if they were small and easy to be conveyed, should be sent with the letters to Vellore and there be lodged till he should desire and we should find a proper opportunity to send for and deliver them in such a manner and with such ceremony and distinction of that kind

⁸⁵Paterson Papers Eur Ms E379/1 pp.295-6. This was a custom assigned to *firman*s and charters from the Mughal Emperor. Placing the letter on the head was an extreme mark of deference; see below for the analogy of portrait prestation to turban exchange and body rituals.

⁸⁶'For he (the nawab) knew well that accounts of these letters would be written everywhere and talked of all over the country and the more show and parade made about this business it would make the greater noise and would be the more for his honour.' *ibid.*, p.297.

⁸⁷Letter of George III to Nawab of the Carnatic, 1768 in Love, 1903, p.77. Paterson also makes mention of this: 'pictures of his Majesties of Britain as a proof of friendship and regard.' Eur Ms 379/3 p.247; August 15, 1772.

maintained and as would do him most honour in the eyes of the country people.⁸⁸

Bemoaning his loss of power to the British, at the same time the nawab attempted to adapt those aspects of British culture which he considered power enhancing; the use of large scale images being one such strategy. Rituals which could raise the prestige of the nawab, parading George III as a loyal ally, instigated the tradition of receiving British portraits in full durbar, as substitute, simulation for the King's presence. The nawab accredited the images and the king's letter via Governor Pigot: 'I have received the eight pictures of the king, princes etc., which you are pleased to send me out of a friendship and am very glad to receive them. I never saw such pictures, which are indeed of an exceeding good shape'.⁸⁹ Hence the arrival of Tilly Kettle at Madras in 1768, (where the nawab owned a palace and spent an increasing amount of time) signalled a portrait in return.⁹⁰

My inability to obtain the satisfaction of seeing Your Majesty's Royal Person which I so much desire, is the reason that I have your Majesty's picture night and day before me, endeavouring to console myself therewith by imagining that I have thereby the honour of being ever in Your Majesty's presence. I was desirous to attending in person Your Majesty to return my grateful thanks for the favour of Your Majesty's picture ... I have sent Your Majesty the picture of myself and my children, together with a few cloths and some attar ... humbly hoping that the picture may have that of being affix'd in Your Majesty's Royal Sight.⁹¹

⁸⁸H/30, August 30, 1768.

⁸⁹Love, 1903, p.79.

⁹⁰His portrait was sent to George III and referred to in the King's letter of March 19, 1771.

⁹¹Court Correspondence, xviii January 1770.

Yet the nawab's enthusiasm for British art was the exception rather than the rule. South Indian princely culture possessed a long tradition of wall painting, so that large canvases could be adjusted more easily within the visual psyche of kingship than in the Shi'ite court culture of the Ganges Valley where no such tradition of 'painting as decoration' existed.⁹² Although various other oil paintings such as Stubbs' *Lion and Tyger* were sent to Muhammed Ali, has does not appear to have possessed a portrait of either Pigot or any other local Company official.⁹³ Asserting royal presence at the durbar operated to the Company's advantage in manifold ways, principally which was the bestowal of political and cultural legitimacy to the Company's activities.⁹⁴ Symbolising concerns umbilically tied with the British state, defined a discourse of sovereignty to be asserted forcefully by Hastings.⁹⁵

⁹²There was a long tradition of wall painting in south India stretching from Arcot to Mysore across huge distances, as a range of political regimes utilized the visual arts as a source of strength and often featured royal themes. The Sufism of Arcot also predicated the use of the visual arts in a very different way to the Shi'ite culture of north India where no such tradition existed. In audience halls such wall paintings featured durbar scene or battle scene; see George Michell, *Architecture and Art of South India* (Cambridge, 1993). For descriptions of Tanjore's painted palaces see Paterson, Eur Ms 379/9 pp.39-40.

⁹³The royal collection has long been dispersed. William Daniell's *Diary for 1792* (OIOC) notes that he saw several works by Stubbs as well as portraits of the Kings and Queens of France and Britain, signifying the attempts of both nations to win cultural favour in the Carnatic, which was after all the area where many of their bitter battles had been fought in the 1750s.

⁹⁴Gulfishan Khan, *Indo-Muslim Responses to the West in the Eighteenth Century* (Karachi, 1998) chapter eight notes that Indo-Muslim discussions of the 'constitution' of the East India Company always drew clear distinctions between British government and this trading corporation. All the nawabs under examination in this chapter: Muhammed Ali of the Carnatic, Mubarek ud-Daula of Bengal, Shuja ud-Duala and Asaf ud-Daula of Awadh and Ali Khan of the Deccan, sent gifts and corresponded with George III; see *CPC*.

⁹⁵N.Sen, 1997 and Marshall, 1999. Throughout his governorship Hastings wished to reign in India as part of an evolving British empire, not only to be incorporated within this evolving psyche, but to play a major role. 'Hastings himself had not the slightest doubt that Bengal had become an integral and extremely important part of the British empire, that Britain exercised sovereignty there, a concept he frequently invoked and that an appropriate apparatus of rule must be created which would be in the last resort accountable to the national government.' p.4. See also E.Monckton-Jones, *Warren Hastings in Bengal, 1772-1774*, (Oxford, 1918) p.191 as well as G.Gleig, *Memoirs of the Life of Warren Hastings*, (London, 1884) three volumes, volume one, p.472.

Hastings utilised his position as Governor-General to promote British artists in a vein reminiscent of Emperor Akbar's beneficent patronage; a rhetoric of kingship which he was projecting as powerful legitimation for the creation of the Company state.⁹⁶ Hastings' public and private papers reveal both his respect for Akbar's regime as well as his appropriation of its centralising aspects, which he saw as vital to filling the vacuum of the lack of a colonial 'constitution' for the Company state.⁹⁷ He wished to legitimate British rule through his own brand of 'learned orientalism', designed to confer respectability on colonial government, by positioning Britons as the proper inheritors of the 'original constitution' of the Mughal Empire, as epitomised by the reign of Akbar.⁹⁸ Thus he utilised Mughal ideas of political virtue to legitimate British rule, as well as interpolating ideas of British constitutionalism in colonial Bengal.⁹⁹ His notions of government were partially impelled by the elite of Mughal personnel within Company employment or sphere of influence, as well as compounded and permeated by his interpretation of a melange of Mughal histories and *dastur ul-amals*.

⁹⁶ Although there is no evidence surviving that Hastings himself patronised living Indian artists, his circle of associates included Richard Johnson and Impey who were great patrons of modern Indian art, so it is more than likely that he too was offering patronage as well as collecting past Mughal art.

⁹⁷ Warren Hastings to the Court of Directors, Hastings Papers BL:Add Ms 29,111 November 11, 1773, f.6.

⁹⁸ Bayly, 1996 p.284: 'In the 1770s and 1780s Warren Hastings had patronised the study of Persian and the written record of the Mughal Empire as a means of understanding the Indian 'constitution'. The manners of political communication - verbal, ritual and written- were to the men of the eighteenth century the very essence of politics'. Ab'l Fazl's *Ain-i-Akbari*, was well known to Hastings and other East India Company officials, and was translated and published 1783-8, Calcutta. *The Institutes* contain a wealth of information on land boundaries, modes of revenue collection, its subject being the proper modes of kingship in many different areas of rule and political compartment. The translator - Francis Gladwin, included an engraved frontispiece of Akbar- perhaps deriving from a Mughal miniature in the possession of Warren Hastings.

⁹⁹ T.R.Travers, *The Construction of the East India Company State and Indian Officials*, c.1770-95.

Preoccupation with Akbar's legacy also extended to Hastings' patronage of a variety of British painters. He dispatched William Hodges to portray many of the key forts and mosques from Akbar's reign, ultimately leading to the multiple depictions and detailed descriptions of Akbar's tomb at Secundrii (Sikrandra), which in their emphasis on decay and past magnificence, epitomised by oblique angles, crumbling architecture, ancient trees and other signifiers of a British landscape aesthetic, had little in common with contemporary Indian artists' representations of the tomb's continued splendour as a key pilgrimage site.¹⁰⁰(figs 80, 81) Such a rupture with Indian ways of perceiving Mughal heritage functioned as a paradigm for the ways in which the British sought to interpret Indian political ideology for their own ends, coloured by both their cultural bias and brand of colonial governance.¹⁰¹

With the establishment of an Anglo-Indian political theory that utilised key texts of a Mughal imperial past, the importance of a visual genealogy centering on eminent statesmen, also took on new emphasis and a new format. As part of a rhetoric of sovereignty which drew on both Georgian state formation and a 'return through reform' to an Akbarian ideology of kingship, the colonial use of images had colliding uses. The dispatch of court artists to

¹⁰⁰ At the time that William Hodges was dispatched to tour the Ganges valley, (1781-83), Hastings was also patronising Gladwin's English translation of the *Ain-i Akbari*. See Isabel Stuebe, *The Life and Works of William Hodges R.A.* (New York, 1978) catalogue entries 400-406 for details of Hodges' three tours up country 1781-83. Hodges was at Secundrii (Sikrandra) in late February to early March 1783. He was much impressed by Akbar's tomb which 'produced such a glare of splendour almost beyond the imagination'; Hodges, *Travels in India* (London, 1793) pp. 119-124. One print was engraved by J. Brown to be included in Hodges' *Essay on Architecture*, 1786 and two aquatints by Hodges as numbers 39 and 40 of his *Choix des Vues*, 1788. See also William Hodges' *Travels in India* (London, 1793) chapter vii pp. 120-145.

¹⁰¹ As we have seen Hodges included a number of Mughal miniatures in engraved form, in his *Travels in India* (London, 1793), which were designed to demonstrate an affinity of these two forms of rule; a sentiment no doubt influenced by his patron Warren Hastings.

take the likenesses of foreign rulers and loyal subjects was a practice (if not a tradition) which Akbar had instigated and now became entangled with Hastings' introduction of portrait exchange in India. Akbar's chief minister Ab'l Fazl recorded the optical surveillance of empire symbolized by such art: 'His Majesty himself sat for his likeness and also ordered to have the likenesses taken of all the grandees in the realm. An immense album was thus formed; those that have passed away have received new life and those who are still alive have immortality promised them'.¹⁰²

Yet Hastings' use of images differed radically from that of the Mughal Emperors whose accumulation of portraits fulfilled very specific purposes. The ensuing albums of likenesses were kept in the royal archives or the *zenana*, as forms of preparatory studies for an intensely private viewing.¹⁰³ The resulting *muraqqa* akin to a 'sketch-book' could be used as preliminary data for the political construction of great imperial chronicles such as the *Akbarnama*, featuring durbars filled with loyal allies as well as battle scenes where dangerous adversaries' likenesses came to grief. Indo-Persian chronicles recorded that nobles and emperors collected portraits of their enemies as well of their allies, so that the guise of kinship through portrait commissions was indicted with further suspicion within Indo-Islam.

Although such colonial portraiture was radically different to the Jesuits' introduction of retables to Akbar's court, the atrophy of this practice gave rise to

¹⁰² Ab'l Fazl, *Ain-i-Akbari, the Institutes of Akbar*, trans. H.Blochmann (London, 1873-1896), volume one, p.115.

¹⁰³ J.P.Losty, *The Art of the Book in India* (London, 1982) pp.77-78.

Hastings' acts of 'reviving' Akbarian culture.¹⁰⁴ By reintroducing European art as pre-eminence into late Mughal India, Hastings was thus drawing a direct comparison with this era of Mughal governmentality and what he perceived as a former 'Golden Age'. As part of a Company manoeuvre which both situated itself within a colonial interpretation of Akbar's cultural regime, as well as searching to establish gifts within an extension of European diplomacy, Hastings sat to every British artist to visit India.¹⁰⁵

The earliest India-painted images of the Governor-General were painted by Tilly Kettle who was working in Calcutta by 1772. Kettle's three surviving portraits represent Hastings in quiet contemplation, his hand resting against his head as the public man in retirement, implicitly a person of high moral character in a setting devoid of references to India; denoting the extension of British values and political ideology. (figs 82, 83) Compared to Reynolds' portrait, Hastings is now plainly dressed; yet Kettle's use of impasto to suggest the delicacy of the lace cuffs and the sheen of the jacket, are some of his finest work. However it is Hastings' physiognomy, which has been carefully painted in a succession of glazes which focuses of the composition; locating him within a genre for representing British parliamentarians, which was gaining currency in the 1770s, as well as situating him within an idiom of intense sensibility whereby the viewer and sitter seemingly share the same space. Hastings' lips are

¹⁰⁴As Gauvin Bailey, 1996 pp.33-61 has effectively demonstrated even from the first Jesuit mission, evidence of Akbar's court artists adapting European motifs into their oeuvres was strong. Numerous records of the imperial court's digestion of European art into its identity were recorded by Mughal chroniclers and European visitors. Bailey argues therefore that European art was viewed as more than exotic, imparting superficial notions of realism but rather that it became central to the court's artistic identity.

¹⁰⁵In total there are at least 19 documented or surviving portraits and prints of Hastings from his Indian career 1772-85, as well as 6 Indian portraits adapted from these and later images, such as Lemuel Abbott's portrait of 1795.

parted as if to sigh, the lace of his cuff and wispy hair fluid and near fluttering, his hand on the head in contemplation creasing his skin and his waistcoat ruffled and unbuttoned, its lining and his lace necktie delicately revealed, as playful parody of feminine *décolletage*, making certain parallels with Joseph Wright's *Brooke Boothby*. (fig. 84) For a Governor, to be epitomised as the ultimate man of sensibility was both highly charged as well as highly problematic, especially given the accusations of a rough and ready imperialism defined by brutality and corruption.

This begs issue of how a Governor-General should be represented.

Devoid of garter robes or military uniform as defined the ceremonial depictions of his successors Marquises Cornwallis and Wellesley, Hastings was presented as scholar and political strategist.¹⁰⁶ (figs 86, 88) The dialectic between public and private identities is far more apparent in Hastings' images than those of his successors. Such a mode of representation, as thinker and by extension scholar, signified as a virtuous identity in both British and Mughal culture.¹⁰⁷ It is only A.W.Devis' full-length canvas painted at the end of Hastings' career in 1784, which takes a more formal mode; Hastings meeting the viewer's gaze from an elevated perspective position, seated in front of a baroque curtain and a roundel containing the marble bust of Lord Clive, thus indicating a genealogy of British government in India based upon the combined and consolidating talents of these two men. (fig. 87)

¹⁰⁶Later Governors had already been awarded order of the garter so possessed a very different social standing to Hastings. See also A.Wilton, *The Swagger Portrait*, (London,1990) and E.Wind, *Hume and the Heroic Portrait* (Oxford,1986).

¹⁰⁷This point will be elaborated below in a discussion of which portrait served as the European model for a likeness of Hastings now in the Johnson collection and exhibited at the Raj exhibition (London, National Gallery,1990).

Although portraiture functioned as the public art form in Calcutta, throughout Hastings' governorship, no likeness of the governor hung in a public building; for all of his images were commissioned by a network of close allies who circulated them in discrete yet calculated ways. Such a dissemination of images extended back to London, to be exhibited or translated into prints as wielded by Hastings' allies and distorted by his enemies in times of crisis, as a powerful propaganda weapon, (portrait prints were after all the most dangerous art form.¹⁰⁸

I got into the familiar chat with you, because at this present writing you are staring me in the face. Kettle means to touch you up a little before I exhibit you to the public. I am afraid indeed that the people want to take my word for it that this same Mr. Hastings whom they have heard so much about is but a plain looking man in a brown coat. At worst I can only clap whiskers and a turban on you and make you the Great Mogul.¹⁰⁹ (fig. 83)

Hence in Britain, Hastings' visual image was largely absent from the discussions and propaganda generated during the early and highly polemical years of his governorship, which oriented metonyms of eastern despotism, luxury and

¹⁰⁸See Marcia Pointon, 'The Fantastic Gallery: Portraiture and Political Strategy' in Pointon, *Hanging the Head* (New Haven, 1993) pp.94-104. This use of imagery received Hastings' full consent, as the case of unauthorized version of his bronze bust speculated in India by the sculptor Thomas Banks demonstrates. For this Banks was severely chastised by Hastings who wished to retain control of his images, and he had to explain himself: 'with respect to the bust in bronze I began it by order of Mr. Cockerell (a leading merchant in Calcutta) who thought I might get satisfaction by sending some to India, I inferred it might be your wish to have one also and therefore made a trial bust ... I have given up the idea of sending any to India and if I have been mistaken with respect to that ... I am writing to withdraw it'. Banks to Hastings January 1, 1795, Hastings Papers BL: Add Ms 29, 173, f.306. Nathaniel Wraxhall, *Memoirs* (London, 1864) volume four pp.342-345 'Newspapers and print shops formed the channels through which the enemies of Warren Hastings generally transmitted their accusations or insinuations over the kingdom'.

¹⁰⁹ Charles Stewart to Hastings, 1776; Hastings Papers BL: Add Ms 29, 138, f.83. There is no evidence that this portrait was exhibited; certainly not at the Society of Artists nor at the Royal Academy. However it must have been on show in Stewart's London home to his influential allies.

magnificence to fill the vacuum.¹¹⁰ In 1776, the threat of recall was very real. His London secretary, in order to boost morale as Hastings plummeted to this nadir in his career, commissioned the first print of the Governor; a costly and much cosseted mezzotint, scraped from the 1760s portrait by Reynolds.

This important want of your resignation having occasioned an express to be sent to India over land ... in my last which I sent by the man of war which sailed last week, I forgot to tell you that I have an engraving in hand of your picture as painted by Sir Joshua Reynolds and shall by the ships of this season, send you a number of prints hoping that they will be well done.¹¹¹

Woodman organised that sixty mezzotints should be sent via the Purser of the *Duke of Portland* to Calcutta and another two dozen to Madras via Hastings' ally Charles Stewart, totalling around eighty five prints.¹¹²

I wrote some months ago ... (of) an engraving from your picture painted by Sir Joshua Reynolds, some of the prints are already done, but too late to send you by this ship. They are *exceedingly well done* and I hope they will satisfactory to many of your friends in India as well as here. I shall send Lord Mansfield one of them and those to you by the ships of the season.¹¹³

Although the crisis had passed by the time this image of political currency floated into Bengal, it was gifted at the royal durbar at Murshidabad (which was

¹¹⁰There are also no caricatures which denote Hastings, 1772-1785, until the diamond controversy of summer 1786 N.K.Robinson, *Edmund Burke in Political Caricature* (New Haven, 1996) chapter four.

¹¹¹John Woodman to Warren Hastings February 21, 1776; Hastings Papers BL: Add Ms 29,138, f.48.(my emphasis)

¹¹²Captain Maxwell of the *Eagle Packet* 'now carries a small box containing some of your prints directed to be left at Madras for Mr. Stewart your late secretary who has promised to distribute them to such of your friends as they will be agreeable to' *ibid.*, f.458. June 7, 1777. As a mezzotint plate wore out after around 250 images, we can surmise that a third of the print run was sent to India; may be a higher ratio if the plate was not entirely worn out; the rest distributed in Britain. As Penny, 1986 pp.190, 230 and Lippincott, 1995 p.83 propose, sitters often had control of their portrait plate, which were intended for a very select circulation, not bringing the parties involved much profit, which is sharply juxtaposed with the colonial print trade as explored in chapter three.

¹¹³Add Ms 29,138, ff.245 and 458, March and June 1777. (my emphasis)

already under British subjugation, so that Hastings did not lavish funds on an oil portrait for the nawab).¹¹⁴ Woodman's letters hope that Watson's mezzotint be 'well done'; the quality as much as the quantity and means of distribution affecting the reception of such images as Hastings' close associates expressed anxiety that on his return to Britain that he spurn his India-painted likenesses, which in the metropole they believed would only dent his public standing. From this trajectory, taste and the choice of painter were of vital importance. Hastings had already sat to Reynolds and his allies urged he patronise London's other leading portraitist, Thomas Gainsborough who known for his sensible treatment of his sitters, would provide a moral and aesthetic counterpart to Reynolds' showy presentation.¹¹⁵

You ... should sit to Gainsborough. For God's sake do so and if the picture is a good one have some mezzotints scraped from it. They will be a thousand times more valuable to your friends and creditable to you than the many bad pictures which now exist of you.¹¹⁶

¹¹⁴Although the vast bulk of the Hazarduari Palace print collection has now disappeared, a sepia brush drawing by a Murshidabad artist c.1810, clearly derives from Reynolds' print of Hastings. (Reserve Collection). I am extremely grateful to the Curator of the Hazarduari palace and to the National Survey of India for enlightening me on this national collection.

¹¹⁵In fact Hastings never sat to Gainsborough. By 1785 when the Governor-General returned to London, Gainsborough had fallen out with the Royal Academy over the hanging of his pictures. Hastings like other Company men desired cultural respectability and as part of this strategy he aligned himself once more with Reynolds and the Academy. He began sitting to Reynolds in 1786 for a portrait which was never finished.

¹¹⁶G.N.Thompson to Warren Hastings, 'The Nesbit Thompson Papers II' *Bengal Past and Present* 17 (July to December,1918) pp.79-120 (my emphases). On return to Britain Hastings and David Anderson arranged to exchange portraits. Once close allies in India, Anderson was far from London based in Edinburgh, (although he did appear as a key defense witness during Hastings' trial,1788-95). Hastings Papers BL: Add Ms 29,169 October 15,1785 f.83: 'I am much obliged to you for your promise of sitting to Reynolds and I am glad that you have asked me about the dimension of the picture as I might otherwise be met with ... that of a family I have heard about of in some novel I believe the Vicar of Wakefield whose vanity have led them to get their portraits drawn so large that their house is found too small to admit them. I have measured the highest room in my mansion and find it rather less than 11.5 feet height so that a half-length will be as much as it will hold; my sister would have me ask a whole length and build a new room for its reception'.

Throughout his later governorship and trial for impeachment, (c.1782-1795) Hastings deployed his likeness as a key weapon in propaganda wars, sitting to more than fifteen artists and sculptors.¹¹⁷ No British parliamentarian used so intensively and extensively his own likeness through the medium of straight prints and portraits, celebrated in verse by his allies.

Touches sublime of science and sense,
And all the virtues of benevolence,
As if those virtues had never raised a foe,
Should on the consecrated canvas glow.¹¹⁸

Yet within the specific context of a colonial administration in both domestic and diplomatic senses, Hastings' images conveyed his charisma in a particular manner. Haji Mustapha's preface to his translation of Ghulam Hussein's *the Siyar Mutaqherin*, sighs that his life was a waste after Hastings had resigned, which had 'shaken my whole frame, as if by some sudden unexpected stroke' and 'to no purpose do I search for solace in roaming from seat to seat and from garden to garden ... Nothing is green for me now; these once pleasing spots, they have become so many dreary deserts.'¹¹⁹ Consequently:

this circumstance completed the unhinging of my mind ... that gentleman had been one of my oldest acquaintances amongst the English ... some people observed that I was talking to his picture, a picture of striking likeness, by the inimitable Zophani (at Lucknow, Awadh). I was sensible that some strange alteration had taken place within me.¹²⁰

¹¹⁷These artists included many leading talents such as Lemenuel Abbott, Stubbs, Lawrence, Masquerier, Romney, Ozias Humphry and Richard Cosway. For details of these portraits now in private as well as public collections, see the Sitters Boxes, Heinz Archive, N.P.G. and the Biographical Collection Lewis Walpole Library, Farmington. Although now closed, the Hastings Gallery, Victoria Memorial formed an important collection of such images.

¹¹⁸J.J.Pratt, 'On Seeing a Portrait of Warren Hastings', Hastings Papers BL: Add Ms 29,235 f.174.

¹¹⁹Haji Mustapha preface to Ghulam Hussein, 1789; volume one pp.13-14.

¹²⁰*ibid.*, p.15.

Hastings was surrounded and replaced by a barrage of representations, ranging from portraits, poetry, pamphlets, speeches to tracts, penned and paid for by his allies, whilst he remained strangely a 'blank figure', although increasingly iconic.¹²¹ Too many diverse and ultimately competing representations obscure clear-cut notions of the Governor's 'character' and ruling ideology as Persian histories of his regime are also undecided in an overall assessment of Hastings' aims and administration. Peppered with accounts of atrocities, high-handedness, personal genius and benevolence, Hastings emerges as an 'autonomous prince', over whom London has no control: 'But what could these helpless people do, Hastings was in Calcutta and they in England; the sea stretched out between ... Hastings was not under their control. They also wrote imperative letters to Hastings but what did he care about them? He tore their letters up'. Hastings kept his own machinations under cover so that even his voluminous correspondence reveals only marginally his dealings; 'I cannot acknowledge the dates of your letters, for I destroy them as soon as read.'¹²² Yet through the re-interpretation of Mughal texts as well as his generous patronage of artists, Hastings set about writing and painting his own history.¹²³

¹²¹ This was as a result of Hastings' extensive patronage, which won him much praise from artists: 'Mr. Hastings, the soul and animating principle of this country is removed to England and the sun ... is set never to rise again'. Ozias Humphry, Humphry Mss, HU/3/43, Royal Academy. Hodges to Hastings B.P.C. P/2/64 1783: 'my humble but most sincere acknowledgements and thanks for the honour which you have done me and the flattering as well as very useful encouragement which you have afforded me in my profession as a painter.' See also Zoffany's perception of Hastings' 'many acts of kindness' Hastings Papers BL: Add Ms 29,229 f.153.

¹²² *Mutakhul-t-Tawarikh* Elliot Papers BL: Add Ms, 30,786 f.136 and Hastings to Thompson, G.N.Thompson Papers, Ms Eur D 1083,(OIOC) April 9,1784 (series of letter not paginated).

¹²³ 'Perhaps then, by re-constructing the ancient constitution of Bengal as a centralised and bureaucratic system of government, Hastings was beginning to set the trap for modern historians to walk into, and inaugurating a long tradition of misreading the original constitution of the Mughal empire' T.R.Travers, *The Construction of the East India Company State and Indian Officials, c.1770-1793*, pp.39-40.

So we have an entanglement of interests. Hastings was using his painted self within a wider political discourse which directed its enunciation both to Westminster and as we shall see, also to Indian courts. Hastings' portraits were only gifted in kingdoms where the British had military and commercial ambitions, so that they functioned as 'cultural artillery' with a precise political agenda yet simultaneously they acted a unique form of prestation infused with promises of kinship

With such ambivalence in mind, I shall now examine the impact of one of Hastings' portraits at the city of Hyderabad, capital of the Deccan, in order to determine the ways in which such an image signified in foreign policy.(map) Richard Johnson had been deputed to Hyderabad in mid 1784 to settle arrears tribute owed to the Company by the Nizam, where he soon became embroiled in the difficult cross-regional politics involving the Carnatic and Maharashtra.¹²⁴(map) The Nizam of Hyderabad effectively played off the British and the French for diplomatic promises until 1798, a policy which isolated Company Residents and starved them of information.¹²⁵ 'The nizam seems to be one of those princes whose existence or power of existence depends on being the keystone of an arch, upon equal purpose from all sides,' which demanded delicate yet forceful ways of keeping in favour.¹²⁶

¹²⁴ 'Although I spare neither pains nor expense, authentic information is very difficult to be had here ... it is occasioned by the extreme fear that every man of note suffers that he should be prospected of any intercourse with a foreign resident.' Richard Johnson to Warren Hastings, July 4, 1784 Johnson Papers, Eng. Ms 195 John Rylands Library, Manchester.

¹²⁵ C.A. Bayly, *Indian Society and the Making of the British Empire* (Cambridge, 1988) p.400. By 1800 Hyderabad and most of its outlying districts had been eroded by Company influence, largely through darbari machinations.

¹²⁶ Johnson to Hastings, March 5, 1784, Eng. Ms 195. (Rylands)

By the mid 1780s Deccani officials were all too familiar with colonial gifting strategies. The *wakil* for Hyderabad stationed in Calcutta, ‘Abd al-Latif, noted that whenever the British contrived to annex a state, they began by exploring the inlets of information through native agents, before appointing their own *wakil* to that court then slowly and slyly, they would then send messages of friendship, which were accompanied by European novelties as gifts for the ruler, through this colonial agent. It was thus at this ‘level of interference’ that British portraits paved the way to carefully-begged requests for land for a British trading factory, which would then be armed ready for an aggressive offensive against the state at an opportune moment: in this sense, British art possessed a dramatic and temporally specific narrative function within the politics of the *darbar*.¹²⁷

Sharp-eyed political analysts such as ‘Abd al-Latif identified art’s ominous role as rarity in the pause, the lull before the storm, but Company Residents sought to create alternative roles for British pictures within Mughal society, by drawing comparisons with other modes of exchange. On another level portraiture reciprocation would come to signify as a visual form of *insha*, (the discourse of how kings should communicate), where there was room to manoeuvre a more anglicist approach, drawing on the close relationship between verse and miniature painting as entrenched in Indo-Persian culture.¹²⁸ The means of achieving this were complex and relied on a detailed knowledge of Mughal etiquette as it had devolved in each of the successor states. Francis Balfour’s

¹²⁷ ‘Abd al-Latif Musawi Shushtari, *Tuhfat al-‘Alam*, Pers. Ms. Elliot 382, Bodleian Library, Oxford, ff.167-176 and f.137; cited in Gulfishan Khan, 1998 pp.58-59.

¹²⁸ Bayly, 1996 p.77.

translation of the *Forms of Herkern* which discusses the manners in which Indian princes should correspond by way of 'sample letters', expressed the correct etiquette for the giving and receiving of 'varieties of rarities of your country' which could thus be integrated within the politics of prestation in a precise manner.¹²⁹

However as well as following a given etiquette for the prestation of their own goods, colonial officials had to create a specific 'transcultural' status for the alterity of British art. The ambivalence of such a task surfaces in the correspondence of British Residents stationed at Indian courts. In December 1784 Johnson reported to Hastings the prestation of his portrait by Zoffany:

I omitted to inform you that I presented your picture handsomely framed to the soubah (Ali Khan, *Nizam* of the Deccan) as a *peculiar mark of friendship*, requiring his in exchange, *a mode which I said amongst us was familiar to your interchange of turbands*. He accepted it as such and is making up a picture in return. You will see how much this pleased him by his particular mention of it in his letter as what he prized much above all the other valuable presents to be laid before him by me from you.¹³⁰

(fig.88)

This dialectic framework, duplicating and distorting usages of portraiture in Britain, thus slid uneasily into a new context. Johnson through the reportage of his dialogue with the Nizam, sought to secure the doctrine of British portraiture within a precise discursive space; his earlier letters revealed his perception of the social rank of turbans during his lonely journey towards Hyderabad: 'There is neither cultivation and manufactures, *no civilization and less government* ... I have not met with many possessed of *a turband or a jammah* I have forgot ye

¹²⁹Francis Balfour, *Forms of Herkern* (Calcutta, 1781).

¹³⁰ Letter dated December 20, 1784; Hastings Papers, BL: Add Ms 29,167 f.253 (my emphases)

figure of. I have met with no man who could read'.¹³¹ Hence 'turbands' in Johnson's eyes, are a 'marker of civility', and this charges his portrait comparison still farther.

The turban analogy also drew attention to the Mughal Emperors' pre-emption of small portrait coins to be worn in the turban, thus inferring that the dissemination of colonial likenesses did have a figurative counterpart within Mughal culture.¹³² However large-scale British portraits painted on canvas and framed in gilded wood, appealed to very different notions of involvement within the use and status of pre-emption of the Indian body politic. Coins, turbans and ceremonial dress were calculated to be worn on ceremonial occasions, as a mark of loyalty to superiors or foreign dignitaries.¹³³ Within this ritual context, oil portraits (a very different species of ornamented cloth to shawls or *khilat*), could be hung within the spaces for ritual, when *khilat* and shawls or turbans would be worn and presented although such pictures were physically far more cumbersome, and to Indian culture perhaps just as 'useless' as the British receipt of Indian *khilat*, turbans and shawls, which officials such as Hastings never wore.

Thus each side had to devise ways of deploying or employing such gifts. Yet both cultures could comprehend that turbans and portraits acted as signifiers of learning, refinement and friendship, with specific if often oblique relations to

¹³¹Johnson on his way to Hyderabad, spring 1784; letter to Hastings, Hastings Papers, BL: Add Ms 29,164, f.184.(my emphases)

¹³²This was the only accepted practice for wide image dissemination. I am very grateful to J.P.Losty for illuminating this point.

¹³³Turbans signified a very distinct form of incorporation into the Indian body politic. For notions of the political system as a corpus; Bayly, 1996 p.25. See also B.Cohn, 'Cloth, Clothes and Colonialism in India' in Cohn, *Colonialism and its Forms of Knowledge* (Princeton,1997) p.106-162.

the body of the giver and his recipient. Both were gifts to be exchanged between equals rather than implying the subject-ruler dialect as contained within *khilat*, which was vital on the pan-Indian diplomatic stage. As turbans were exchanged, so Johnson begged a picture of the Nizam in return; an insistence which refocused the transposition of colonial portraiture as part of a cycle of mutual obligation, which transmitted and transfixed a visual dialogue.¹³⁴ ‘Exchange’ acted as both a practical and ideological prism for seeing what discourse was being transcribed, beyond the object which was ultimately unfixed, entering only but another unstable life stage.¹³⁵ Whilst such reciprocation was tied by obligation, it also acted as an ideological counter; allowing the Nizam to have a portrait of himself received and installed in Calcutta, a reciprocal marker of power: although as a miniature it signified ‘power’ in a very different way to an oil portrait, kept within Hastings’ album rather than displayed in a public building.

‘Exchange does not produce a homogenous totality but rather an arena where heterogeneity is determined’.¹³⁶ In British moral and political economy, reciprocity was deemed vital not only to market stability but also as a form of code which would improve sociability.¹³⁷ In turn, the ‘exchange’ of a British

¹³⁴As we have already seen, this was something novel in Indian society. The Mughal court in Delhi had in its heyday (c.1560-1680) believed its own artists to be far superior to any to be found out in the farthest reaches of its empire, (if there were talented painters there then they would be summoned to Delhi) so instead of asking for images in exchange by regional artists, the imperial court would dispatch its own painters to take the likenesses it required. I am grateful to J.P.Losty for this point.

¹³⁵Thomas, 1991 p.7.

¹³⁶Weiner, 1992, p.10.

¹³⁷ibid., p.26. However Weiner then notes that inalienable possessions are above exchange, as possession acts as a more pressing agenda; p.33. Yet these could also function rather as two successive life stages within the prestation of portraits. Exchange was infused with notions of obligation; the British relying on Mughal notions of a gift economy as a cycle for reciprocation; although initially a portrait exchange acted as a unique exchange; ‘mirroring’ each other; obligations are by-products; in the battle for loyalty and allies.

portrait for a likeness by a Mughal-trained artist, signified the colonial rhetoric for a 'transcultural' art appreciation, infused with 'universal' indices of 'likeness' and 'beauty', thus making the gifting of art an important site for an exchange of values, perhaps transcending much wider cultural and socio-religious divisions, whilst simultaneously creating new tensions and schisms.

Since the 1760s Hastings had been collecting Persian and Indian art, building up a personal library consisting of hundreds of images, into which the Nizam's portrait would have been incorporated. Although Warren Hastings' Mughal art collection has long been dispersed, it seems likely that the Nizam did make a gift of his portrait, from evidence drawn from the Hyderabad Resident's own *muraqqas*.¹³⁸

Johnson commissioned a portrait of the Nizam from one of the court's artists which presents Ali Khan seated cross-legged beneath a canopy in a vein common to Deccani royal portraiture; a very different image to Zoffany's *Warren Hastings*. (fig. 91) Johnson added the Nizam's portrait to a series of modern Indian rulers that he was compiling, including a likeness of Warren Hastings, (taken from a portrait by Johann Zoffany by a Lucknow artist).¹³⁹ (fig. 89) The turn of the head, the cut and colour of the dress coat bespeak of an engagement and adaptation of Zoffany's portrait which is effectively inflected by the provincial Mughal medium and techniques of Awadh whilst Hastings'

¹³⁸Hastings owned over 250 Mughal and Persian drawings and miniatures as well as 190 volumes of Indian languages. Sale of one Hastings' rare albums, now dispersed: Sotheby's November 25-26, 1968, 40 lots. From the Akbar and Jahangiri eras; lot 367 *Death of Akbar* a very unusual subject; lot 388 *two sages meeting Alexander*, as well as subjects adapted from European prints. c. 1620. *Muraqqas* were intensely personal not merely scrap books they reflected their patrons' taste; Losty, 1982, p.83.

¹³⁹These formed illustrations in a *divan* of the poet Mir Qamar Din Minnat, OIOC Ms Or.6633.

presentation as a scholar-patron in his British portraits is re-presented, so that in several idioms, he is formulated as a man of learning, *divan* in hand receiving a chit, seated on a European chair below a blood red streaked sky. His representation bears similarities with a Lucknow miniature of Asaf ud-Daula, nawab of Awadh also included in the *muraqqa*; a rare instance of British and Indian rulers held within the same provincial Mughal idiom. (fig. 90) Although portrayed in profile, the nawab is seated on a European chair against an almost identical sky to the portrait of Hastings.¹⁴⁰

One way of achieving likeness was by engaging in creative perception to the illusion of shared temporal spatial dimensions through sympathy of the gaze so that notions of exchange were built into the act of looking. The frisson between Persian and British notions of portraiture and physiognomy opens up complicated matters of empiricism and character analysis. According to Ab'l Fazl, Akbar was concerned with likeness, and sat for his portraits, inaugurating a long standing concern within Mughal culture, even if the exact criteria of what constituted 'likeness' shifted over time.¹⁴¹ Likeness achieved through a profile and delicately delineated features allowed for Indian viewers to abstract the moral character, without being distracted by over attention to the outward appearance, a charge long levied against the realism of European art: foreign painters 'consider only the outside of things to the place of inner meaning'.¹⁴²

¹⁴⁰The format of rulers seated against a dramatic blood red sky was peculiar to the Provincial school at Lucknow.

¹⁴¹Ab'l Fazl, 1873, volume one, p.115. For instances of the importance of likeness as court artists and friends of far away sitters collaborated; see S.P.Verma, 'Elements of Historicity in Portraits of the Mughal School', *Indian Historical Review* 1983; also P.Brown, *Indian Painting Under the Mughals, 1550-1750* (Oxford,1924) pp.142-143.

¹⁴² Ab'l Fazl, 1873 volume one pp.102-103. Koch and Beach,1997 pp.122, 135-136. 'The Mughal practice retained the gesture of the gestalt of an incomplete image. It projected the image and its diverse body languages, constructed portraits almost invariably in profile,

The provincial Mughal artists did attempt to extract a pure profile but rather adapt from a large oil to folio-size gouache; in the course of Hastings' face plumped out but remained strongly denotative of the painted original.

Whilst those Indian portraits which survive of Hastings are copies from Zoffany's 1784 oil as well as from Brittridge's engraving after the same, his countenance became embroiled within discussions of his political aims.¹⁴³ Prose, physiognomy and portraiture were very close, revolving around *adab*, delicacy, refinement and pious sentiment.¹⁴⁴ Physiognomy-as-science, was a measure of moral worthiness and weapon for political propaganda within Mughal culture, cited to praise the merits of man and spilling into poetry and biography, so that Hastings is analysed as 'amoral'; beyond the frame for evaluation. Ghulam Hussein Khan, no doubt mindful of Hastings' diplomatic use of portrait images, sharpened his pen:

The English are a race of men who are keen sighted, full of policy and secrecy. But none more so as the governor whose breast is a casket full of inaccessible secrets and a repository of impenetrable views and projects. Who is the man who can make him speak his mind? Who can tell from his features, his air or his actions at any of the secrets locked up in

permitted facial expressions to subtly simmer on the surface thus leaving ample room for the viewer to complete the image by investing his emotions into them', Ghulam Muhammed Seikh, 'The Making of a Visual Language: Thoughts on Mughal painting' in T.Guha-Thakurta (ed.) *Journal of Arts and Ideas*, 30-31, December, 1997, pp.7-32; p.16. There is no Mughal literature on why the profile portrait was preferred; see J.Losty, 'From Three Quarter to Full Profile in Indian Painting: Revolutions of Art and Taste' in M.Kraatz, J.Meyer zur Capellen and D.Seckel (eds.) *Das Bildnis in der Kunst des Orients* (Stuttgart, 1990) pp.152-166.

¹⁴³The Indian images which exist of Hastings are dispersed between the private collections, the V&A, India Office and the Victoria Memorial. At least three are based on Richard Brittridge's line engraving after Zoffany (Calcutta, 1784); the original sketch finding its way to Ozias Humphry.

¹⁴⁴Ghulam Hussein, 1789 volume two p.414. 'the valiant Mr. Hushtin, the prop of the state and the impetuous in war', possessing *adab* 'this man who in strength of genius, extent of knowledge, beauty of style and propriety of manners has no equal in these times.'

that impenetrable breast? It is out of any man's power, it is utterly impossible.¹⁴⁵

Hastings' body and the information-accumulation agenda of his regime are thus conflated through the metaphor of his breast as a locked casket or exclusive archive, away from public scrutiny, both British and Indian.

The Governor-General's portrait formed one of several illustrations including not only regional rulers but Islamic prophets, to fill a *divan* by the revered poet Minnat, to whom Johnson and Hastings offered much patronage.¹⁴⁶ In one sense, this *muraqqa* of modern statesmen operated as a visual equivalent of the *tazkirah* (collective biography), as well providing an important record of major political players in late Mughal India. Contemplating a collection of portraits, both literally and figuratively, was cognated as a moral-enhancing exercise in both Indian and British political thought.¹⁴⁷

As part of his concern to 're-construct' a Mughal constitution, which would help to legitimise Company rule (at least in theory), Hastings collected miniatures of past emperors.¹⁴⁸ These were obtained by trading, looting, as war spolia, as 'prize' or by tapping the indigenous network of art dealers or bought up cheap from impoverished noble families and delivered by Company officers

¹⁴⁵Ghulam Hussein, 1789 volume three, pp.329-30 (my emphases). For further explication of the ambiguities of Hastings' political views, another Indo-Persian history which deals with his governorship, *Mutakhul-t-Tawarikh*, Elliot Papers, BL: Add Ms 30,786.

¹⁴⁶He was awarded the title 'King of Poets' by Hastings; Archer and Falk, 1981, p.6.

¹⁴⁷ See V.Desai and D. Leidy, *Faces of Asia*, (1989) and Poniton, 1993 chapter one.

¹⁴⁸ Hastings Papers, BL: Add Ms 39,892 f.82 lists a hand-written genealogy of Mughal Emperors, with notes to a set of portraits. The accompanying album of miniatures is not traceable. This genealogy of *Hindustani Kings from Timur to the present ruler, Shah Allam II*, is set up against a genealogy of English kings. Hastings' notes on some of the missing miniatures reveal some of the ways in which he approached Mughal art. In relation to Muhammed Shah he notes, 'a weak prince but possessed of all the good qualities which a good heart can inspire ... in this portrait he is habited like a fakir or mendicant as he affected that character or ever wore a turban from the day of his disgraceful submission to Nadir Shah to that of his death'. Akbar was described as 'a wise, a great and good prince'.

and officials on the fringes of empire who sounded out possible sources, thus tallying the search for histories of past government and manuals concerning the management of revenue, which formed important information-gathering projects in Hastings' regime.¹⁴⁹ These two forms, the *muraqqa* and the manuscript (whether illuminated or not) were often found in the same sites, so that a Company raid on the estate of a *zemandar* included the hasty sacking of a library, gathering whatever books on which they could lay their hands.¹⁵⁰

Muraqqas were then carved up between avid Company collectors who created their own collections, possessive or not of an internal logic. Residents epitomised by Johnson, were avid collectors of Mughal manuscripts, so that the presentation of European art at the *darbar* could assist the flow of Indian art towards Company sources. Coterminously to this dissemination of portraits from Calcutta, a tide of Mughal art from impoverished noble families across India was being drawn in to the British capital along the currents of political change. This centralised channelling of resources, which focussed both on the frontiers and on cities such as Delhi and Lucknow, experimented with distinct intelligence gathering, trade and dealing strategies, which could be drawn from or fed into more pressing modes of government, as Company men searched out art for Hastings.¹⁵¹ Thus the role of British pictures at Indian courts has to be

¹⁴⁹Davis, 1999 chapter five for a fascinating discussion of the different agendas for indigenous and colonial collecting and their agendas. The format of many of these albums reveal the ways in which they were collected. Despite the enormity of his collection, not one of Johnson's albums was purchased complete. Instead individual pictures were bought up separately from dismantled manuscripts: Archer and Falk, 1981, introduction.

¹⁵⁰B.K Datta, *Libraries and Librarianship in Ancient and Medieval India*, (Delhi,1970) p.3.

¹⁵¹Hastings' correspondence with his Residents is filled with references to their collecting manuscripts for him. Johnson again : Hastings Papers Add Ms 29,175 f.208, April 25, 1784 'you commissioned me to get some histories of the Deccan - Mr. Grant has some which you will be glad to see as I understand them to be new, rare and authentic'. Johnson believed there to be only a couple of great art centres; 'these can only be effected at Lucknow, Delhi or Benares',

fitted into the wider colonial ambiance of collecting, disseminating and destroying visual information.¹⁵² Whilst Hastings was constructing a collection of miniatures drawn from a wide variety of sources, his patronage of British painters and encouragement of print-trading at Indian courts laid the foundations for the future destruction of regional Mughal art.¹⁵³

The most flourishing Mughal school of art in the 1780s centered on Lucknow.¹⁵⁴ As well as dispatching his likeness, Hastings also requested artists travel with him as on his diplomatic missions, most notably William Hodges who accompanied him to Benares in 1781, and Johann Zoffany whom he summoned to Lucknow in 1784. In the latter instance, Hastings prepared for his final trip to Lucknow by sitting to Zoffany in Calcutta beforehand; in anticipation of gifting his likeness as parting gift to the nawab Asaf ud-daula.¹⁵⁵ However such an image, as well as Zoffany's presence, were also intended as appeasing tokens as Hastings intended to negotiate the nawab's debt to the

Hastings Papers, Add Ms 29,155 ff.101-3, July 1782. Johnson greatly augmented his collection through the use of art dealers at Lucknow and Farrukahabad.

¹⁵²Haji Mustapha built up an art collection which he intended to be engraved as illustrations. 'the much greatest part of the persons spoken of in this history are to have a plate in their proper places and plates also to be occasionally inserted of fortresses, palaces, building, arms', these were lost on the voyages; 'a few miniatures have been procured since and others may be found among the curious of Calcutta'. Francis Gladwin in the preface to first volume of the *Ain-i Akbari*, announced that 'I am making a collector of drawings of the most remarkable men, animals, cities, fruits and flowers, as well as representations of the principal ceremonies described in the *Ain-i Akbari* ... in order to illustrate it as much as possible'.

¹⁵³This practice is seen in its most damaging form at the pre-colonial capital of Bengal, Murshidabad where the court on the Company pay roll, had not the funds to patronise its own Karkhana and where Residents introduced second rate oils and prints. See R.Chatterjee, 1990 chapter two.

¹⁵⁴See Archer, 1972 pp.155-165.

¹⁵⁵Hastings Papers Add Ms 39,879, diary for January 1784 to September 1785. In Calcutta he sat to Zoffany 28, 29, 30 January, February 1,2, and 4. He arrive in Lucknow 27 March and Zoffany June 3.

Company and to restore relations which had been severely damaged by aggressive colonial policies.¹⁵⁶

When at Lucknow, Zoffany took the images of the nawab as well as that of Mughal heir apparent Mirza Jawan Bakht, who had fled from war-torn Delhi to Lucknow at the same time as Hastings was making his way to the Awadhi capital.¹⁵⁷ Hastings, caught in the ‘clash’ between these two powerful men assigned himself and the Company the role of go-between.¹⁵⁸ Seeking to extract debts owed to the Company from the nawab, he feared this unexpected regal guest ‘will put the nabob to an expense he can ill afford and it will interfere with my views of obtaining an early discharge of his debt’.¹⁵⁹

Zoffany’s oil sketch of *Jawan Bakht receiving Hastings and the Nawab at Lucknow* (fig. 92) in part dispels the tension by presenting a united front of powerful north Indian ministers, as an anglicised version of great past chronicles or present *muraqqas* of public men. The composition is determined by individual likenesses of the nawab and the prince, taken from sittings during the summer of 1784, combined with *plein air* sketching of a sultry monsoon sky, the broad brush strokes conveying a hot moonlit night, its loose facture emphasising Hastings’ sunburnt skin, his profile outlined in scarlet. The fluidity of the image masks its carefully planned composition giving an aura of ‘on the spot’ which was becoming a powerful rhetorical device for British artists’ creation of an

¹⁵⁶ M. Fisher, *A Clash of Cultures* (Riverdale, 1988) chapter two.

¹⁵⁷ Add Ms 39, 879: June 4, ‘Mr. Z by appointment to ye prince ... for ye first sitting of his picture.’ June 12, ‘went to prince and sat with him till late. Mr. Z with him.’ also 16 and 17 June. The nabob likewise with Mr. Z ;21 and 23 June as well as July 3,5,7 and 9. June 15 Mr. Z with Jawan Bakht and following day the picture was finished. Hastings sat to Zoffany at Lucknow August 10, 1784.

¹⁵⁸ Hastings to Thompson, G.N. Thompson Papers, Ms Eur D 1083, OIOC.

¹⁵⁹ Hastings Papers BL: Add Ms 29,121, May 3, 1784; Also H/557 f.121, OIOC.

‘orientalist empiricism’. Hastings speaks directly to the prince, probably in Urdu, a signifier of their intimacy, as it was usual on all such occasions for an interpreter to act as cultural broker between foreign dignitaries, thus functioning in a very distinct manner to the exchange of portraits at Hyderabad.

Johann Zoffany soon after his arrival at Lucknow, became ensconced within a powerful European faction, which was to have enormous influence on his patronage and compositional devices.¹⁶⁰ Exposed to high Mughal art within the collections of Orientalists Wombwell, Martin and Polier, this aesthetic acted as the framework and ironic reinterpretations for his Lucknow commissions. Hence the composition of *Jawan Bakht Receiving Hastings and the Nawab of Awadh* reiterates and reinterprets the visual presentation of Mughal rulers enthroned at the top of compositional triangles in Mughal art. On one level this acts as a demonstration of Hastings’ subordination to the persona and aura of Mughal kingship, shoes removed, clad in his stockings before the *musnud*.¹⁶¹ Although Hastings is seated at the feet of the prince, it is he who is the hinge of the composition; being the nearest figure to the viewer, leading him into the diplomatic negotiations of north Indian politics, his densely painted, saturated pale coat further transforming him into the focus.

The choice of a profile portrait acts as a way of marrying the two likenesses of the Indian nobles into a tight yet dynamic group (akin to Hastings’ view of his political role during this visit) as well as being one of Zoffany’s

¹⁶⁰Zoffany seems to have attempted to found a studio at Lucknow in order to paint landscapes and customs and ceremonies, thus escaping the strictures of pot-boiling portraiture back in Calcutta. I am grateful to Tapati Guha-Thakurta for this lucid suggestion; spring, 1998.

¹⁶¹I am very grateful to Professor Peter Marshall for this suggestion; correspondence Spring 1997.

heavy-handed visual jokes; it has been suggested that in Mughal art the choice of the profile signified superiority assigned to the Emperor, whilst full or three-quarter face poses were often delegated to *farangis* and other subordinates.¹⁶² Throughout his subsequent Lucknow oeuvre, Zoffany was to demonstrate a keen awareness of Mughal artistic compositions, befitting to his self-promotion as a 'scholarly painter'.¹⁶³ The oil sketch is defined by a colour range (red, green and gold) derived from Mughal chromatic iconography of sovereignty.¹⁶⁴ In turn, the presence of musicians and dancers was supposed to bring to mind specific aural perceptions; as an occidentalised version of at least some of the physiological strategies associated with viewing *ragamalas*.¹⁶⁵

Inasmuch as contemporary Muslim chroniclers complained that Company rule promoted a more bureaucratic, face-less attitude to government than its Mughal predecessor, the emphasis on the persona of Hastings in diplomatic encounters, reinforced (if only in pictures) the importance of the 'governing personality' as the essence of correct statecraft. This visual reinforcement of the 'charisma' of the statesman opened a two-way power possession process. To own an image of Hastings was in one sense to have control over it, yet its large format and life-like presence held more ominous overtones of increased Company interference in cross-regional politics as well as engaging in intricate

¹⁶²See Koch and Beach, 1997 p.45.

¹⁶³As a founding member of the Royal Academy, Zoffany was aware of the need for high art to engage with an matrix of learned rhetoric, poetry and epics, as outlined by Reynolds. Like Hodges, he demonstrated an interest in Mughal art which would not be matched by subsequent European painters; Zoffany through an awareness of Mughal imagery as composition.

¹⁶⁴Whilst it can be surmised that this was determined by the scarlet Company dress and the muslin robes of the Indian prince and wazir, such tones also infuse the spectators, the ground and the distant moonlight, firmly suffusing the scene in a 'regal' light.

¹⁶⁵For the intricate relationship between Mughal painting and music, see Bonnie C. Wade, *Imaging Sound: An Ethnomusicological Study of Music, Art and Culture in Mughal India*, (Chicago, 1998).

issues of likeness and decorum. In Mughal society, 'images however were not precisely regalia and seizing images makes a more complex statement than taking items of regalia', colonial canvases' large scale and public display seemed more akin to flags, banners and overt insignia of suzerainty than matching with the role of face painting within Mughal culture.¹⁶⁶

In a pre-colonial era there is strong evidence for the various ways in which Mughal emperors extracted and created multiple meanings for European images.¹⁶⁷ The Jesuits often intentionally chose images for their ambivalent, potentially reinterpretable significations, into which the recipient culture could covertly encode its own messages, even at the detriment of Catholicism.¹⁶⁸ Unlike contemporary Britain, where there was a burgeoning literature concerned with the fashioning of taste in the visual arts, Mughal culture had no equivalent tradition.¹⁶⁹ However court chroniclers and the memoirs of Emperors from Akbar to ShahJahan, reveal the development of a delicate connoisseurship for Mughal imagery; Jahangir claiming to be able to make out the hand of different masters in their collaboration on a single portrait image.¹⁷⁰ Yet how far had such responses been carried through to the Mughal successor states?¹⁷¹

¹⁶⁶G. Tartakar and V. Dehejia, 'Image Appropriation', in C.B. Asher and T.R. Metcalf (eds.) *Perceptions of South Asia's Visual Past*, (Oxford, Delhi, 1994) p.167.

¹⁶⁷Bailey 1996, pp.304-5.

¹⁶⁸ibid., pp.304-305.

¹⁶⁹D. Ehnbohm, *Indian Miniatures in the Ehrenfeld Collection* pp.9-14; Manuals on taste were known as 'rasika' which were literally guides in the appreciation of arts, but with reference to poetry rather than directly to painting.

¹⁷⁰T.W. Arnold, 'Portraiture' pp.123-132 *Painting in Islam: A Study of the Place of Pictorial Art in Muslim Culture* (Oxford, 1933).

¹⁷¹The ways in which Mughal art was carried from the centre Delhi to the peripheries is extremely difficult to trace. The Punjab is the only area which has been documented in detail; M.C. Beach, *Mughal and Rajput Painting* (Cambridge, 1992).

The Ain-i Akbari included a section on the role of art within Mughal culture, which prescribed art for study and amusement, with the patronage of art becoming a rite of kingship which Hastings' revival rhetoric also incorporated.¹⁷² Ab'l Fazl perceived the improvements made in visual arts due to the imperial court's promotion of artists which elevated masters whose achievements 'may be placed at the side of the wonderful works of the European painters who have attained worldwide fame'.¹⁷³

By default this version of a history of colonial imagery in India, becomes (perhaps inevitably and inextricably) tied to the centralising force of imperial administration in Calcutta. In sum, a poverty of responses not only subsists in subaltern terms, but now how can the nawabi-elite speak?¹⁷⁴ From Residents' correspondence with the Governor General, a specific ideological stance to the nawabi response to portraits was expressed.¹⁷⁵ As the gifting of portraits became systematised, so too the responses became pre-coded and near prescriptive rather than descriptive, as a portrait was potentially the most intimate gift and as such demanded added eulogy, creating a repertoire for

¹⁷²Ab'l Fazl, 1873 *On Painting*, pp.113-115. See also Losty, 1982 p.78 Akbar greatly extended the royal studio and a shift towards a more 'realistic' style of painting took place which was in part influenced by the impact of European art. He had over one hundred artists at court and weekly inspected their works and artists were rewarded according to this reception.

¹⁷³ibid., pp.113-114.

¹⁷⁴Gayatri Spivak, 'Can the Subaltern Speak?' in C.Nelson and L.Grossberg(eds.) *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture* (Macmillan,1988) pp.271-313. Indian criticism and opinions on British art in this first colonial era have been entirely neglected, so it is worth trying to 'recover' these voices even if softened in translation.

¹⁷⁵Examples of these reactions pepper the pages of official and personal correspondence between residents and agents and Governor-Generals: 'I had the honour of delivering to his Highness (the nawab of Bengal) His Excellency's letter which you transmitted and at the same time representing to the nawab his Lordship's portrait which he received in full durbar and with every mark of grateful respect and marked admiration as well as for the very striking resemblance exertion of the portrait'. T.Pattle to Edmonstone, August 2,1804, in S.K.Bhose and J.Datta Gupta (eds.) *West Bengal District Records: Murshidabad in Nizamat Letters Received Part I, 1802-1831*, (Calcutta,1965)

diplomacy, to be repeated on subsequent occasions as a new and institutionalised ritual, both comforting and frustrating in its repetition; a fossilised reference point within the flux and *Inqalib* of north Indian politics.

A Landscape of Shi'ite Reaction: Colonial Surveillance and the Aesthetics of Decay, c.1780-1785

The colonial manipulation of portraits was soon digested by Muslim writers of the old order, forging critical metaphors to describe political comportment, or the lack of it. Ghulam Hussein's *The Siyar Mutaqherin*, complains that the British do not care to associate with their Indian subjects, a theme which runs throughout its comparison of the past and present state of the country.¹⁷⁶ In the government offices of Calcutta, 'it follows of course that when a company of Hindustanis having business with their English rulers, look very much like a number of pictures set up against the wall'.¹⁷⁷

Ghulam Hussein as member of this Muslim literati, was well versed in imperial chronicles such as the *Ain-i-Akbari*, and the travel writing of the Munshi Ishmail so was fully aware that European portraits had been highly praised for their life-like qualities; the picture often being mistaken for the sitter, at least within the panegyric of court writers. It is tempting to build in subsequent analogies, where aesthetic responses to canvases are now confused with political reactions to people, so that perhaps both are ignored and pushed into the background, thus subverting on its different levels, Hastings' attempts at 'creative dialogue'. Whilst the treatment of Indians at the hands of Company personnel is criticised, so too by implication, is the role of British pictures

¹⁷⁶Ghulam Hussein, 1789 volume three, section xiv

¹⁷⁷ ibid, volume three pp.587-8.

within the Company Bengal. Art within the successor states demanded a concentrated viewing activity, and did not constitute a constant crude display that was reluctantly acknowledged, yet on permanent show (like the Bengalis constantly waiting for the attention of their colonial superiors).¹⁷⁸

This metaphor informed a much larger criticism of the British administration of Bengal, thus deconstructing gestural efforts to establish 'a genre of kinship' and inverting notions of a 'constructive dialogue'. Ghulam Hussein constantly bemoaned 'the aversion which the English openly show for the company of the natives and such is the disdain that they betray for them that no love and no coalition can take root between conquerors and conquered'.¹⁷⁹

The Company's attempt to encapsulate its regime in the forms of visual arts other than Hastings' diplomatic portraits affected the ways in which such portraits were viewed. To promote the use of painted portraits was to make a concise political statement half way between the familiarity of architecture and the alien, offensive nature of commemorative portrait sculpture. Company officials readily believed that they were impressing the Bengali nawabs and *zemindars* with the scale of their architecture - a mode of thinking that can be transferred to paintings, as expressed by the nawab of Arcot on receiving George

¹⁷⁸By the late 1790s and early 1800s, the presentation of Indians in British portraiture all too often comes close to their presentation within the criticism as laid out by Ghulam Hussein. See for example Thomas Hickey's portrait of *Lieutenant Colonel William Kirkpatrick*, c.1799 (National Gallery, Dublin), Resident at Hyderabad. He stands in an interior with Persian letters on a table and a scarlet clad column reminiscent of Reynolds' *portrait of Hastings*. Behind the table shunted into a corner of the composition are five of his Indian allies. For an illustration in colour of this picture see A.Buddle, *The Tiger and the Thistle*, (Edinburgh, 1999) plate 16.

¹⁷⁹Ghulam Hussein, 1789, volume three, p.161.

III's portrait, 'I never saw such pictures, which indeed are of an exceeding good shape'.¹⁸⁰

However such a discourse of grandiloquent Anglicised cultural symbols was often neither recognised nor praised by the established Indian elite. Ghulam Hussein sighed that now Bengal seems to 'have no master at all', as the English avoid at all costs, expressing their regime through outward symbols of authority nor even presenting their actual (as opposed to painted selves) to their Indian subjects:

(T)hey hate *appearing* in public audiences; and whenever they come to *appear* at all it is to betray extreme uneasiness, impatience and anger, on *seeing themselves* surrounded by crowds ... hence multitudes of people remain *deprived of the sight* of their rulers and *never see* anything of that benignity and that munificence which might be expected from people that now sit on the throne of kings and *figure as representations* of Emperors.¹⁸¹

As in his criticism of Hastings' public persona as defined by inscrutability and a casket-esque breast of projects, Ghulam Hussein condemns the British aversion to self-manifestation within a ritualistic context.

Such analysis of a lack of paternalism and the peculiar direction taken by the optics of imperialism, was countered by the British themselves.¹⁸² The

¹⁸⁰A.W.Devis reported that on a visit to Hastings' ally Bissummer Pandit, Hastings Papers, Add Ms 29,170, May 3, 1786 'when I saw Bissummer Pandit and acquainted him I had deputation to paint him a small portrait (of Hastings) he said he would have a large one- I accordingly painted him a large one- this portrait went up the country and by being exposed to the sun was utterly spoiled'.

¹⁸¹Ghulam Hussein, 1789, volume three, p.597. (my emphases)

¹⁸²However Hastings did to some extent have to partake within 'Mughalised' ceremony. Hastings entertained foreign wakils separately: such as Govind Ram, wakil to the Nawab of Awadh in his home as well as taking him to the homes of one of the other Councillors. P.J.Marshall (ed.) *Writings and Speeches of Edmund Burke vii* (Oxford,2000). Francis Fowke's evidence to the Committee of Managers for the Hastings trial for impeachment records that 'Mr. Hastings had a large levee every day where persons attended with petitions - some he heard himself and some

landscape painter William Hodges in his appraisal of Hastings' governance of Bengal and Bihar, attempted to provide a picture of compassion, which replaced Mughal pomp and ceremony.¹⁸³

When he passed them, *all appeared struck with the simplicity of his appearance* and his ready and *constant attention* to prevent any injury to the meanest individual ... they could not but contrast this *appearance* and conduct with that of their own nabobs, whom they *never saw* except mounted on lofty elephants and glittering in splendour with their trains followed by soldiers to keep off the multitudes from offending their arrogance and pride.¹⁸⁴

At Patna, Hastings' administration had abolished the naibs' ceremonial parades through the streets of the city, believed to be totemic rallying points to political action; a loss much bemoaned by Indo-Persian poets.¹⁸⁵ Throughout British territory, ritualistic *nawabi* displays of power were ruthlessly eroded, which despite Hodges' highly problematic humanist call to the transparency of British benevolence, left little in their place. However both Ghulam Hussein and Hodges observed that Hastings did on occasion tour up country with a great flotilla: 'The Governor travelled with all his household and retinue and with *so much pomp* and so many commodities that he had almost four hundred boats in his retinue'; 'from the number of gentlemen who attended the Governor-

he referred to me.' BL:Add Ms 24,266, f.249. I am extremely grateful to Professor Marshall for these references from his forthcoming book.

¹⁸³ Hodges' account appears with the specific context of Hastings' defense (1791-95). *The Travels* were published in 1793.

¹⁸⁴ Hodges, 1793 pp.43-44 (my emphases).

¹⁸⁵ Kumkum Chatterjee, *Merchants, Politics and Society in Early Modern India: Bihar 1730-1820* (New York, 1996) p.218. See also pp.222-230 'Perceptions of Inquilab'. The Patna intelligentsia in particular bemoaned the harsh treatment of the naibs. Artists were forced to quit Patna for Calcutta, such as Zayn-al Din who found service with the Impeys. Rajat Kanta Ray, 'Indian Society and the Establishment of British Supremacy, 1765-1818' in P.J.Marshall (ed.) *Oxford History of the British Empire: Volume Two: the Eighteenth Century* (Oxford, 1998) pp.508-529. I am grateful to Professor Ray for explanation of Inqualib.

General the fleet was very large and consisted of every variety of the boats of the country', which farther problematises the ideology of Company rule and benevolence through mixed, even contradictory significations.¹⁸⁶

In Mughal writing it is British neglect of the welfare of their people which defines the modern age: 'the distresses of the people and the depopulation and desertion of the land will go hand in hand until they are come to their height and the desolation is become complete and general'.¹⁸⁷ The British are thus 'multiplying oppressions and of tormenting in private and public the inhabitants of those large towns', as each colonial official 'little cares about what ruin shall remain after him'.¹⁸⁸ Even the rhetoric of reviving Akbar's political virtue, so yearned for by Indo-Persian scribal elite and deployed as a powerful rhetoric by Hastings' regime, was seen as a gauze to obscure imperial designs; 'the late successors intended by certain institutions and rules of their own set up of late under pretense of putting the ancient ones in force and how these have disguised their own intentions in the eyes of the public, by masking their intentions'.¹⁸⁹ The decay and its effects were far reaching; 'not only all the markets and thoroughfares are thronged with disorderly people and disorderly houses but every street and every corner are infected with drinking shops and tippling houses with here and there groups of drunken servants ... especially servants

¹⁸⁶Ghulam Hussein, 1789 volume two p.330 and Hodges, 1793 p.38. The sale of Hastings' effects as listed in the *Calcutta Gazette* for March 3, 1785 on his departure for Britain included many ceremonial objects such as 'rich saddlery, an embroidered howdah for an elephant, several rich palanquins, carpets ... tents'.

¹⁸⁷Ghulam Hussein, 1789, volume two p.553.

¹⁸⁸ibid., volume two p.581.

¹⁸⁹ibid., volume two p.546.

belonging to the English'.¹⁹⁰ The evolution of society under British rule is affected and effected by their cultural edifices; where the influence of alcohol spread like a disease and the houses are dilapidated as decay is exacerbated rather than checked.

Indo-Persian analysis of the face of the country, lends us a radical critique on representation of decay as feted by a colonial aesthetic idioms, as produced for Hastings by William Hodges.¹⁹¹ In order to examine such different representations of decay, we must first outline the Hodges' practice. Hodges undertook four tours of Bengal, Bihar and Awadh from 1781-1783, under the patronage of the Governor-General and the District Collector of Bihar, Augustus Cleveland.¹⁹²

For Cleveland Hodges produced mainly 'pure landscapes' (as opposed to archaeologically orientated views), such as *View of the Hills at Rajmahal*,

¹⁹⁰ibid., volume two pp.565-566. We also see how the distillation of liquor and liquor shops increasingly became the subject of Company artists, working at Murshidabad or Calcutta; Add Or.1129-1130 *Drawings of Festivals and Occupations* c.1798 (OIOC).

¹⁹¹There is no evidence that Hodges worked for Indian patrons. Throughout this era landscape painting was not a much patronised genre by Indian nor much by Calcutta's colonial elites, thus justifying its scant appearance in this dissertation.

¹⁹²His first tour was in spring 1781 as far as Monghyr. For his second tour Hodges accompanied Hastings to Benares in autumn 1781 and travelled to Bhagulpur where he resided with Cleveland January to May, 1782. His final tour spring and summer 1783, took him as far as Agra and Sikrandra. For Hodges see William Forster, 'William Hodges R.A., in India' *Bengal Past and Present* XXX (1925) pp.1-8, Isabel Stuebe, 'William Hodges and Warren Hastings: A Study in Eighteenth-century Patronage' *Burlington Magazine* (October, 1973) pp.659-66 and her *The Life and Works of William Hodges* (New York, 1979). See also Harriet Guest 'The Great Distinction: Figures of the Exotic in the Work of William Hodges' *Oxford Art Journal* XII (1989) pp.36-58 and G.H.R. Tillotson, 'The Indian Picturesque: Images of India in British Landscape Painting, 1780-1880' in Bayly, 1990 pp.141-151, his 'The Paths of Glory: Representations of Sher Shah's tomb' *Oriental Art* XXXVII (1991) pp.4-16. See also his 'The Indian Travels of William Hodges' *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* 2.3 (November, 1992) and 'Farangi and Babu: Two Early Theories of Indian Architecture' in *India International Centre Quarterly* 24.4 (1997) pp.209-224; I am extremely grateful to Dr. Tillotson for copies of these papers. G.H.R. Tillotson, 'Painting and Understanding Mughal Architecture' in Tillotson (ed.) *Paradigms of Indian Architecture* (London, 1998) pp.59-79. G.H.R. Tillotson, *The Artificial Empire: The Indian Landscapes of William Hodges* (Curzon: April, 2000). For his patronage from Cleveland see Kate Teltscher, *India Inscribed* (Delhi, 1995) pp.121-124, 128, 181, 201 and 222.

c.1782 (Tate, London).¹⁹³ Such an image depicts a shepherd tending his flock overseeing the plains of Bihar, indicative not only of idioms borrowed and orientalist from Claudean (or more directly from Hodges' master Richard Wilson's) views of the Roman Campagna, but also of Cleveland's 'civilising mission', whereby a hill corps had been created.¹⁹⁴ Through such an ideology, under British rule the territory of Bihar had progressed from primeval marauding, whereby the 'aboriginal' hill tribes had once attacked the lower passes, to a higher level of civilisation, now capable of a pacific, even disinterested prospect over the now cultivated terrain, and by implication (through shepherds and troops) of a peculiar form of 'military-fiscal' allegiance to the Company.¹⁹⁵

According to Hodges, as part of this 'paternalist' campaign, Cleveland utilised persuasion to infiltrate every level of society from trinkets to the ordering of sepoys' uniforms:

by little presents and acts of personal kindness he so subdued their ferocious spirits that they promised to desist entirely from their usual depredations ... He sent presents to their wives and ... caressed their children, decorating them with beads and to their chiefs he presented medals as a mark of his friendship and as a reward for their improving civilisation. At length when he found them prepared for the accomplishment of his plan, he ordered clothes to be made, like those of

¹⁹³A half-length portrait of Cleveland by Hodges is in a private collection.

¹⁹⁴For Hodges' allegiance to Richard Wilson see his 'An Account of Richard Wilson Esq. Landscape Painter FRA' *The European Magazine and London Review* XVII (1790) pp.403-405. See also David Solkin *Richard Wilson: A Landscape of Reaction* (London, 1982). For Hodges' verbal and visual representation of the hill troops under Cleveland see Seema Alavi, *The Sepoys and the Company* (Delhi, 1995) chapter four and Kate Teltscher, *India Inscribed* (Delhi, 1995) pp. 121-124, 128, 181, 201, 222. See also Hodges' article *Annual Register*, 1793 pp.43-47 and *Asiatick Researches* iv (1775) p.47. Hodges produced 22 oils for Cleveland and 36 for Hastings, who also owned his 90 preparatory drawings from which Hodges selected his 45 aquatints for *Choix des Vues*.

¹⁹⁵Hodges, 1793 pp.88-90.

the sepoy in the Company's service for a few, and he furnished them with firelocks and they became regularly drilled.¹⁹⁶

Thus we see Hodges poised at the nexus of art, sociability through pre-emption, reform and expansion which extended beyond British involvement in Mughal etiquette.

Under Hastings' protection, Hodges sought to portray the key monuments of the Mughal Empire, which existed beyond the formal boundaries of Company territory.¹⁹⁷(map) In his *View of the Palace at Rajmahal, Bihar, c.1782* (fig. 93) Hodges employed a different aesthetic to his views of Calcutta; the topographical coherence of this palace is not easy to work out, with an emphasis on textures rather than on its position within a wider landscape. Such visual rhetoric intended colonial demonstration that the Mughal order had transpired as culture gives way to nature (thus directly reversing the construction of Calcutta in the marshlands of the River Hugli). 'There yet remains part of the palace which is supported by vast octagonal piers raised from the edge of the river' yet these too are collapsing into a monsoon-swollen river, providing the composition's principle dynamic.¹⁹⁸

From another angle, Hodges is employing a high aesthetic which derives from a combination of a sublime idiom (pleasure and pain at the speed at which the heritage of one of the greatest empires in history is collapsing before our

¹⁹⁶ibid., pp.89-90 However no reference to pictorial pre-emption is made, although doubtless some of the chiefs would have seen Hodges' sketches or oils either in Cleveland's Italianate mansion or on Hodges' sketching tours through the local hills and villages. Having Bihar represented by Hodges thus also fitted into Cleveland's civilising campaign.

¹⁹⁷We can see this from a perusal of the subjects Hodges chose for his aquatints *Choix des Vues* (1785-88) and the form the letterpress took- concentrating on details of these buildings in Mughal history and through modern colonial expansion, which are often placed side by side. The order of this publication does not follow Hodges' touring (as his later *Travels*, 1793 were to do).

¹⁹⁸Hodges, 1793 pp.20-21.

eyes) and the not unrelated employment of the landscape ideology of Richard Wilson.¹⁹⁹ Wilson had transposed Claudian idioms in order to portray England and Wales, as the lens of the rise and fall of Roman Civilisation was now deployed to chart a British past (including ruins dating back to its Roman era), in order to express the creation of a solvent constitutionalism through a complex multi-layered history.

Although already an extremely complex aesthetic, it was further transmuted when representing India. Thus Hodges transposed certain aspects of the aesthetic depictions of the Roman Empire and Britain, in order to project notions of a Mughal constitution as were being proposed by Hastings.²⁰⁰ India as newly acquired territory oscillated between the Grand Tourist experience of Rome and notions of direct territorial control, in distinct spatio-temporal dialectics of knowledge-power.²⁰¹

Additionally, Hodges directly aligned his work with the histories penned by Dow and Orme, declaring the need to appreciate art beyond mere empty 'Gilpinesque-Picturesque' configurations, but as part of an informational grid for apprehending empire: 'Pictures are collected from their value as species of human excellence and genius exercised in a fine art ... they would rise still higher in estimation were they connected with the history of various

¹⁹⁹Solkin, 1982. See also Michael Rosenthal, 'Landscape as High Art' in K.Baejter (ed.) *Glorious Nature* (London,1993).

²⁰⁰Bayly, 1996 p.53. See also Feiling, 1954 p.105.

²⁰¹Hodges' views possess scant staffage whose presence would detract from the elegiac mood he was attempting to create. When they do appear they are not engaged in contemplative attitudes associated with 'ego fui in Arcadia' of Claudian representations of the Roman Campagna; it is rather the viewer, without such mediation, who is supposed to ruminate on the rise and fall of the Mughal empire. See also C.Chard and H.Langdon (eds.) *Transports: Travel, Pleasure and Imaginative Geography 1600-1830* (New Haven,1996).

countries'.²⁰² It is not merely the twilight of a regime (also signified by Hodges' choice of evening light) destroyed by nature, but the onset of Mughal decline is profoundly political - being conventionally associated with the reign of Aurangzeb - the era from which the Rajmahal palace dates.²⁰³

Thus any nostalgia for the passing of the Mughal empire - 'the greatest and richest empire ... which the human annals can produce' appears at least superficially problematic, unless removed to an entirely 'disinterested' plane, which given Hodges' cultural bias and intense loyalty to Hastings, was extremely ambivalent.²⁰⁴ What we have is a picture designed for British consumption which sought to justify British rule by exaggerating the physical decay of India's key buildings.²⁰⁵ Hodges' view reveals other trepidations about colonial rule. Although this is newly conquered territory, there are no signs other than the artist's presence of British governmentality; it is rather a neglected landscape which is left alone to collapse before our eyes, as the British allow this rich cultural heritage to disappear.²⁰⁶

Hodges' graphic representations of decaying monuments, could be cognated by Hastings as a visualised, occidentalised version of *Shahr-i-Ashob*; the Urdu literary genre - 'poem of a ruined city'.²⁰⁷ Although politically charged and not disassociated from the Indo-Persian chroniclers highly critical of modern times, such stylised verse, like Hodges' imagery, rarely focussed on

²⁰²Hodges, 1793 p.156.

²⁰³See the Archaeological Survey of India, New Imperial Series LI *List of Ancient monuments ... in the province of Bihar and Orissa*, (Calcutta,1930) pp.216-217. See also *Landscape Paintings in Victoria Memorial* (Calcutta, 1991) p.6.

²⁰⁴Hodges,1793, p. 151.

²⁰⁵For Hodges' exaggeration of decay see Tillotson, 1991.

²⁰⁶Dirks,1994 p.223: the British would 'draw the ruined temple, to preserve stone on paper, to collect and protect what is being lost to nature and its seemingly inexorable process of decay'.

²⁰⁷Chatterjee, 1996 pp.222-230. See also Bayly, 1996 pp.197-198.

flourishing cities and markets, but upon decay.²⁰⁸ Likewise, no British artist during this era sought to represent past Mughal history (in contrast with Ancient Rome and Britain, where scenes from Homer or Ossian painted by Gavin Hamilton, formed an important adjunct to the high art of Wilson *et al.*).²⁰⁹ Rather Hodges' landscapes intended the viewer to conjure up scene from Mughal epics illuminated in court annals, which again consolidates his attempts to draw comparisons between European and Indian ways of seeing and narrating. Thus from a transcultural aesthetic, there were points of comparison to be drawn by Orientalist scholars.²¹⁰

However such a graphic representation can also be read in the light of Indo-Persian accusations of colonial negligence; as a depiction of the dilapidation of Mughal rule, due to British apathy and contempt:

If a house that has no owner is not likely to be tenanted, such a house is likely to totter for want of repair ... and will become ruinous in a little time, so likewise a country of this immense extent, having no apparent master, must in time cease to flourish and at last must fall into decay.²¹¹

Expressing colonial rule through British cultural codes, such as pictures or public monuments, was loaded with gestural and actual difficulties leading an

²⁰⁸See R.Russell and K.Islam, *Three Mughal Poets: Mir, Sauda and Mir Hasan* (London,1969) and F.Lehmann, 'Urdu Literature and Mughal Decline' *Mahfil* 6.2 (1970) pp.125-131. However Hodges' verbal representations of Bengal were anxious to dispel any image that his stylised visual representations created a *beatus ille* lacking industry and prosperity. Hodges, 1793 p.17 'From the apparent state of a country a just estimate may be formed of the happiness or misery of a people. Throughout the kingdom of Bengal it appear highly flourishing, tillage of every kind and abounding in cattle. The villages are neat and clean and filled with swarms of people'.

²⁰⁹ See for instances of this contextualisation, Jeremy Black, *The Grand Tour* (London,1995) and Sam Smiles, *The Image of Antiquity* (New Haven,1994)

²¹⁰Although Hodges never makes this connection, he did draw attention to Dow, Scrafton, the Asiatic Society of Bengal and to Mughal art and Persian chronicles translated and abridged by Company officials. In Britain, direct parallels between landscape painting and poetry were commonplace; John Barrell, *The Idea of Landscape and the Sense of Place* (Cambridge,1972).

²¹¹Ghulam Hussein, 1789 volume two pp.580-581.

Indian chronicler to complain that the only public works patronised by the English were erected with profit or punishment in mind:

Not one of them has any thought of showing his gratitude to this country by sinking a well, digging a pool, planting a public grove, raising a caravanserai or building a bridge; that there are bridges already, they never fail to clog them with a toll ... These accusations are true; the English being to a man ... sojourners have no time to conceive an affection for this country.²¹²

From such a perspective, instead of tanks and temples, the Company campaigned for the construction of gaols, asylums and court houses, designed to correct and transform Bengali society rather than to bolster tradition so that British governmentality is most directly expressed through exemplary punishment.²¹³

After Hastings left India, his remaining political allies wished to construct a cultural symbol to commemorate his governorship. Beyond Calcutta and its hinterland, it was the Benares district where elaborate designs for projecting Company sovereignty were most concentrated, but also given the later charge for impeachment against Hastings, this recently annexed territory was very polemical.²¹⁴ For the duration of the trial, Hodges exhibited and published

²¹²ibid., volume two p.577. See S.Sen, 1998 chapter three; p.90 'rivers, roads, tolls and ferries were all points of concern in the newly acquired landscape of greater Bengal ... a new vision of colonial political economy demanded the survey, scrutiny and regulation of the terrain in which the marketplace was lodged'.

²¹³Countering the negative view of British public works, Haji Mustapha the translator of the *Siyar Mutaqherin* praises Hastings, volume two p.577: 'He has built and endorsed at Calcutta a seminary of Mahometan law; a settlement pointed out by policy itself and useful to government as to the natives. He has established in the uncultivated parts of Bengal colonies of invalid Talingas ... to whom he has allotted waste lands, rent free' which are of greater value to Bengal than 'a thousand citadels'.

²¹⁴Benares was annexed by the Company from the Raja Cheit Singh in autumn 1781. It was a controversial acquisition- being the result of bloody fighting. Hodges and Hastings were both present and the former produced a long account of the insurrection for his *Travels*. Likewise many of Hodges' acquaintances feature captured forts from the Benares district. Such brutal action later formed one of the charges against Hastings which brought his trial for impeachment,

extensively about the importance of Benares as the prime site of aboriginal Hinduism, in order to demonstrate that it was both a prize for the Company, and that it enjoyed benevolent British rule.²¹⁵ Additionally, Hastings' allies gathered petitions from leading the city's merchants and brahmins which were later published in London and used by Hastings' defence.²¹⁶

At Benares, George Nesbitt Thompson expressed the problems in erecting a public memorial as a rallying point of solidarity, to be translated and accepted into the cultural codes of diverse social and religious groups:

I intimated to Bissumber Pundit, his brother (Benarim) and your moonshy, my anxious wish that you might receive some public testimony of the esteem and affection with which I know the natives regard you and desired the two pundits to take the opinion of ... Ali Ibrahim Khan upon the practicability of such a measure at Benares. The answers of Benarim and Ali Ibrahim Khan soon arrived highly approving the attempt and declaring that the people of Benares would eagerly second it, but referring back to me for the mode of executing it. In this there is some difficulty. Enmity is not only a more active principle than friendship but its operations are easier, of wider extent and certainly more effectual, a small effort of malice will often defeat the most zealous effects of Benevolence ... I thought of a public edifice or a statue but I knew not how to familiarise

voted in 1787. See Marshall, 1965, Whelan, 1995, pp. 170-175 and Teltscher, 1995 pp.179-180. See also W.Hastings, 'The Benares Diary of Warren Hastings' *Camden Miscellany xviii* (London,1948), C.C.Davies, *Warren Hastings and Oudh* (London,1939), P.Basu, *Oudh and the East India Company, 1785-1801* (Lucknow,1973) and K.P.Mishra, *Banaras in Transition, 1738-1795* (Delhi,1974).

²¹⁵See Hodges, *A Dissertation on the Prototypes of Architecture* (London,1787). In this year he became an Associate of the Royal Academy after exhibiting a diploma piece of *Aurangzeb's Mosque at Benares*. In 1791 Hodges provided an affidavit (witnessed by John Boydell) detailing his involvement in the campaign, to be used by Hastings' defence: Hastings Papers BL:Add Ms 29,092 f.188. This is very similar to the account given in Hodges' *Travels* (1973) pp.64-75. See also Bayly, 1990 catalogue number, Tillotson 1992 and W.G.Archer, 'Benares through the eyes of British Artists' *Apollo XII* (1970) pp.96-103. 246

²¹⁶ *Copies of Several Testimonials transmitted from Bengal by the Governor-General and Council relating to Warren Hastings Esquire* (London,1789); see also Teltscher, 1995 pp.179-181.

the idea with the Hindoos and the religious prejudices of the Musselmen I knew opposed it.²¹⁷

Again, this passage implies that ‘enmity’ is the most effective other as well as drive for governmentality, as well as the difficulties in projecting British cultural symbols at a diversity of often hostile groups.

Several of Hastings’ key Indian allies were deputed to Benares and they saw fit to erect a monument which operated within existing Mughal cultural idioms, which could thus be comprehensible to wider publics in the confused change-over era between old and new oriental-occidental powers. Letters between Hastings and the Company-employed judge of the Benares *adalat*, Ali Ibrahim Khan, reveal the form this commemoration was to take.²¹⁸ The Khan supervised the construction of a *Naubat kanah* (a Persian gateway or watch tower with a music gallery), once the sole prerogative of the Mughal Emperor, but now commemorating Hastings and Company sovereignty. It was to be inscribed in Persian, Hindustani and English characters: ‘By order of Mr. Warren Hastings, Ali Ibrahim Khan erected this building’, where ‘drums and other instruments of music are in the building and the Nobut sounds five times a day.’²¹⁹ This use of high-Mughal insignia of sovereignty, appealed to Hastings’

²¹⁷ G.N.Thompson to W. Hastings, September, 1787, Hastings Papers BL: Add Ms 29,171, f.6 (my emphasis).

²¹⁸ A series of letters between the Khan and former governor exist in which the former expresses great affection for Hastings, desirous of his return to India, ‘If you had remained, a new town would have risen up in Benares district) a granary as a resource in time of charity would have been built and a flourishing gunge (market) erected in the name of the Company.’ Hastings Papers BL: Add Ms 29,202, 1785-6. I am grateful to Robert Travers for these references.

²¹⁹ *ibid.*, ff.85-86. A naubat khana was a common feature in great houses, religious buildings and palace complexes. It usually took the form of an outer gateway and was the thickness of several rooms, often three or four storeys high. This company example was ‘began at Bishwashar’; f.85. For a drawing of ‘the instrument composing the nobut khana/ the band of music which play at different *perhaps* or watches of the day and night which are divided into 8 perhaps of 3 hours each’. By James Wales’ Brahmin artist-assistant at Pune, Gangaram 22312(Yale Center For British Art; Wales Collection).

own self-conscious form of Orientalism, which feted a 'return through reform' to the forms of the Delhi administration.²²⁰ Different texts intended to appeal to three distinct groups as well as areas for which Company made its appeal, the Persian speaking old Mughal elite, its own servants and Hindu culture, which predominated in the Benares region, although the Company in its Benares policy was at its most neo-Mughal. However, a *Naubat Khana* was usually attached to a royal residence and its musicians entertained visitors as well as touring with the regal retinue; neither features fulfilled at Benares.

Whilst a powerful symbol (complete with trumpet and cymbals) of Company presence through an established cultural sign, the ways in which the *Naubat Khana* were put to use were unique to the disciplinary gaze of the colonial state. Music was thus an important component in signalling each *pahr* (watch) so that noise and spectacle were integral to this 'watchtower's' surveillance over the territory, both in ceremonial and actual terms.²²¹

Thus the state had to negotiate with existing normative codes in order to establish 'circuits of communication' with the ruled. Such strategies had unpredictable consequences, as the field of meaning invoked by the citation of a particular symbol of traditional authority, could not always be controlled and restricted to the specific objectives of the Company. Despite plans for public works, colonial morale in 1780s Benares had plummeted to rock bottom.²²² The

²²⁰For Hastings' use of Akbar see Robert Travers' ongoing research and R.Guha, *A Rule of Property for Bengal* (Paris,1963) ch.1. Markers of Mughal sovereignty are observed in an empirical fashion by Hastings' key ally David Anderson, *On Distinction of Rank in India* Anderson Papers BL: Add Ms 45,441, ff.3-14.

²²¹This overview and mapping of the territory were primary considerations of British rule. See M.Edney, *Mapping an Empire* (Chicago,1997) and S.Sen, 1998, chapter three. Surveillance was a vital dimension of the science of Indian kingship; Bayly, 1996 pp.10-55.

²²²The aggressive annexation of Benares and the overthrow of its raja Cheit Singh in 1781 was to prove one of the key charges against Hastings which led to his trial for impeachment. Hence

Court of Directors frightened by Hastings' description of the surrounding country deduced:

We were particularly struck with the part of the letter which represents the people abandoning their villages at the sight of Mr. Hastings' approach, notwithstanding every means used to prevent it. The circumstances of this nature, whether really owing to the conduct of Europeans or not, does certainly carry with it a reflection on the national character.²²³

Hastings expressed to his successor Macpherson, what he believed his symbolic and cultural legacy; proud of the Calcutta *madrasah* and the Patna *gola*, which were both ironically polemical and short-lived.²²⁴

In other areas of Company rule, district collectors began to experiment with a variety of symbols of authority.²²⁵ Many of these were not so much signs taken for wonders, as blots on the landscape: the Patna *gola* marking the entrance to Company territory on the borders of Awadh and Bihar, is an empty symbol at its most potent.²²⁶ A mixture of visionary architecture owing much to

Benares receives great attention in Hodges' works: months after the charge was voted against Hastings Hodges exhibited a *view of Benares* as his diploma piece at the Royal Academy in 1786. His *Travels*, 1793 also included a long section on Benares and Hodges himself present at the coup provided a sworn affidavit of his involvement (in front of John Boydell) 1791 Hastings Papers Add Ms 29,202 ff.165-170.

²²³Court of Directors, Hastings Papers BL: Add Ms 29,202, ff.12-13, March 14, 1786.

²²⁴Hastings Papers BL: Add Ms 29, 116, ff.146ff. Hastings to Macpherson, 1786. Ghulam Hussein praised Hastings for his *madrasah* 'He has built and endowed at Calcutta seminary of Mahometan law'.

²²⁵Seema Alavi has noted that in relation to the administration of JungleTerry, Bihar, inviting subscription for memorials to deceased Company officials, was a way of incorporating local hill chieftains into developing notions of power sharing, *Sepoys and the Company*, (Oxford, 1995) For an interesting discussion of Company memorials to its servants Kate Teltscher, *India Inscribed* (Delhi, 1995) pp.121-4. Shore's *Monody on the Death of Cleveland 1786* (Hastings' close ally and collector at Bihar and great patron of William Hodges) sorrow, local chieftains 'erected a monument to the memory of Mr. Cleveland nearly in the form of a pagoda.' *Asiatic Researches iv*, 1795, p.105. Teltscher note 43, p.153 notes another deification of another collector, Thomas Hinckel of the Sunderbans in 1788. The *Calcutta Gazette* records how the manufacturers 'to express their gratitude they have made a representation of his figure or image, which they worship amongst themselves.' This is noted as 'strong proof that the natives of this country are sensible of kind treatment, and easily governed without coercive measures.'

²²⁶Built at Bankipur by John Garstin of the Bengal Engineers; 90 feet high with walls 12 feet thick.

Ledoux, as well as to Bengali granary construction, it is a hybrid form, but serious design faults meant that it was never filled with grain so that it could not fulfill its function to relieve future famine, which had caused such devastation in the early 1770s, providing literal and figurative cracks in colonial discourse.

(figs 000)

However as seen in Zoffany's even more inflated version, in his *Embassy of Hyder Beg Khan*, (fig. 94) held multiple optical significations: it looked to a 'state of the art future' for an imposing imperialism, marking the entrance to the colonial controlled city of Azimabad (Patna), away from the rabble and chaos in the foreground; the procession moving from right to left, framed by a ruined Mughal fort, and off into the distance (signified by the temporal movement of the viewer's eye across the pictorial surface) towards the *gola*. This motley crowd is held within an ideology of colonial benevolence as Zoffany crams an inventory of Indian 'types' into the scene; ranging from the royal household to fakirs, Jesuit priests, Anglo-Indians, water bearers and even the artist on his mule, denotative of the variety of peoples now under British rule.²²⁷

All of the Company's cultural and public works were concerned primarily with surveillance, which as a cornerstone of sovereignty became highly charged through the Company's ruthless empiricism. However, such ocular symbols betray an inherent ambivalence. Company gifting and notions of

²²⁷When translated into a print, Zoffany included a key. The picture which was painted from his sketches on return to London. The reference to the *gola* was a tribute to Hastings' regime; the print being scraped when the trial was in full swing. Zoffany's chaotic scene focussed on a single event, organises the diversity of figures in a very different manner to Solvyns' ethnographic project *Les Hindous* with its 'specimen' classification by caste determined by the four *varnas* and then subdivided by occupation. Hodges, 1793, p.50 also described the Great Trunk Road, 'it is extremely pleasant to observe the variety of travellers that are to be met with on the road'. See also Teltcher, 1995 p.131.

kinship and benevolence were not straight-forward cultural symbols, but fraught with tensions, as sites and sights of contention and misunderstanding.²²⁸ We have seen how paranoid the Company was lest its cultural symbols be destroyed, thus signifying that such actions were powerful social rallying points and that monuments could even be an incitement to rebellion.²²⁹

Hence in relation to the visual symbols of Hastings' regime, we see a whole host of issues and interactions between British and provincial Mughal art. Hastings sent his portraits to places as far apart as Hyderabad and Lucknow, hoping that they would win him a variety of favours. In reacting to such images the Muslim literati were forced to forge new metaphors and idioms within political discourse in order to analyse British behaviour, which flooded other forums.

'At best it (gift) is an ambivalent category, oscillating between the poles of generosity and calculation'.²³⁰ British portraits may have played only a minor role in political negotiations, but these social and political shifts were over time, to have profound effects on indigenous aesthetic and artistic perceptions. A particular type of interaction was thus contrived. Portraiture in Britain functioned as a specific type of gift economy, removed from the commercial uncertainties associated with history painting and a cut-throat market. In Mughal India there existed very distinct notions of prestation in which art had little part. Although pictures were offered to Indian rulers as a portion of dowries, war

²²⁸Edney, 1997 chapter two. See also: 'The artefacts and images of colonial civil authority, the permanent gallows ... and the jail road left their mark on the municipal map. The baleful figure of the police darogha in popular skits ... indicate that the imagination of power was being re-shaped at various social levels.' Singha, 1998 pp.xi-xii.

²²⁹See R.Guha, *Elementary Aspects of Peasant Insurrection in India* (Oxford,1983).

²³⁰Frow, 1997 p.124.

spolia or as diplomatic gifts, there was no tradition of personal portrait dissemination nor exchange. To bridge the gaps between these two different traditions involved calculated deliberation, which did not always succeed.

The construction of cultural symbols and their dissemination in this first age of empire, expressed tentatively the innate vulnerability of colonial rule. Britons were caught in dilemmas of what form such sovereign projections should take; whether to impose their own cultural codes or else to adopt Mughal codes. I have tried to demonstrate that by adapting a whole range of suzerain ciphers, all such cultural forms were in some way divorced from any innate symbology which they may have possessed, the outcome being seemingly irresolvable hybridity often lacking clear enunciation. When analysed together in order to search for a 'cultural system', common features reveal anxiety about Mughal kingship and the creation of novel forms of colonial governmentality focussed on visual superintendence; through the watch-tower, graphic media of mapping and topographical surveillance, or else through the gifted portrait, an emblem of Hastings' personal presence (as well as of increased Company influence) across late Mughal India. Whilst the exchange and dissemination of portraits instigated a new form of image circulation within the successor states, the ways in which they were received were always dogged with suspicion and ambivalence, as a flawed form of art at odds with *adab*.

Chapter Six

A Sword With Two Edges

British Painters' Exaltation and Exploitation of Indian Rulers c.1772-1795.

I shall omit nothing that is in my favour to do to get money.¹

‘Unlike the obvious impact of technology from the west, the reception of European painting and sculpture has been uneven and problematic, oscillating between enthusiastic acceptance and vehement resistance’.² Polarities extruded varying hybridities which converged in the form of the nawabi portraits, as colonial art was synthesised rather than unquestioningly absorbed, into the power politics of Mughal kingship. I shall explore the ways in which an entanglement between representational strategies and payment disputes inhered within the hierarchy of an image’s signification, as British artists targeted Indian courts in search of portrait commissions. Such images could be perceived and produced in varying ways; as curio, rarity, likeness, icon for kingship to be gifted or kept on permanent display, valued for media and techniques, time and labour ratios, size, detail, general effect, by way of comparison to the service and luxuries provided by a variety of courts and European traders. Whilst such issues between economic and aesthetic states were intricately bound, heuristically we must also attempt to extract the different significations of each

¹Ozias Humphry to Mary Boydell, HU/3/23, Royal Academy Library.

²Partha Mitter, ‘Artistic Responses to Colonialism in India: An Overview’ in C.A. Bayly (ed.) *The Raj: India and the British, 1600-1947*, (London, 1990) p.361.

as well as the means by which they conformed.³

Such an approach will permit an examination of the ways in which the exchange of British portraits created a peculiarly colonial ritual. I shall analyse the shift away from Hastings' use of British painters to gather such visual information to the chaos and then the hostility as defined the artistic 'policies' of his successors Macpherson and Cornwallis. As subsumed within such a framework, I shall in due course, provide case studies of two British portraitists working at Indian courts - Ozias Humphry at Lucknow and James Wales at Pune.⁴

Both colonial artists' working methods but more crucially their fees, bespoke of ominous repercussions as British painters demanded exorbitant prices at *nawabi* courts.⁵ During this era at least sixteen British painters attempted to win *nawabi* patronage; any landscape or ethnographic sketches taken along the way acted as a by-product of such travelling.⁶ In the early 1770s when only two British professional portraitists travelled to India, to summon a painter away from his or her colonial clientele in Calcutta or Madras, thus

³Deborah Poole, *Vision, Race and Modernity: A Visual Economy of the Andean Image World* (Princeton, 1997) p.11.

⁴The best written and verbal records of British artists at Indian courts are the collections of Ozias Humphry, BL: Add Mss 15,958-15,963 and Add Ms 22,951 Humphry *Lucknow Diary*, 1786 Eur Ms 043 (OIOC); Royal Academy volumes three, four and eight - HU-/3-/4-/8 and the most complete of all, the diaries and drawings of James Wales and his assistants Robert Mabon and Pandit Gangaram at Pune, 1791-95, which have now passed into the Yale Centre for British Art, New Haven; Rare Books and Prints and Drawings Departments; 1977.

⁵Ratnabali Chatterjee records the price of a royal miniature in 1760s Bengal as 22 Rs (c.£2), *From the Karkhana to the Studio*, (Delhi, 1990) p.19. See also A.Mukhopadhyay, 'A Murshidabad Mughal Miniature in Victoria Memorial', *Bulletin of Victoria Memorial*, XIII, (1979) pp.20-21.

⁶Thus we already see a very different form of touring to military artist in south India, whose work was 'interested and disinterested' in very distinct ways. Occasionally there was overlap; the Daniells sought patronage for their view of Lucknow from Asaf ud-duala, but out of landscape artists they seem to have been the exception, see my chapter seven and William Daniell, *Diary for 1789* (OIOC on loan).

drawing a valuable and rare resource to his court, (as both Muhammed Ali and Shuja ud-Daula were to do) indicated clout and *éclat*.⁷ Such praxis appeared akin to nawabi patronage and protection for leading Urdu poets who had suffered in the aftermath of the sacks of Delhi, as well as enhancing the culture of royal court.⁸ Through their *wakils* and commercial agents based in Calcutta, the nawabs would have had little difficulty in discovering the price of British pictures.⁹ Thus the duality between this ‘symbolic capital’ and colonial exploitation was often ambivalent.

Hence I shall propose that both ambiguity surfaced at Indian courts due to the less than clear status of the British painter and his fees, which instigated a ‘conflict’ of luxury significations. Colonial constructions of ‘oriental despotism’ increasingly coloured the vision of British painters travelling to *nawabi* courts, fragmenting with the pecuniary demands of Ozias Humphry. ‘The European dream, endlessly reiterated in the literature of exploration is of grossly unequal gift exchange: I give you a glass bead and you give me a pearl worth half your tribe’. However in Mughal territory this illusion turned into an endless nightmare in which European jewels were treated as shoddy baubles by the Emperors. Edward Terry described Jahangir’s heart as ‘covetous; and ‘so

⁷‘Having learned that the addressee very much wishes to see Mr. Kettle the painter, the writer has ordered him to proceed to Faizabad and then to Allahabad after he has taken leave of the Nawab Vizier; says he is a master of his art and hopes the addressee will be much pleased with him’. John Cartier, Governor of Fort William ; November 1771, *C.P.C* volume three, 1770-2; in J.D.Milner ‘Tilly Kettle’, *Walpole Society* 15, (1927) pp.47-103.

⁸Muammed Sadiq, *A History of Urdu Literature* (London,1964) and R.Russell and K.Islam, *Three Mughal Poets: Mir, Sauda, Mir Hasan*, (London,1969).

⁹Before the late 1790s in Madras and the sketches and oils of Thomas Hickey of the Indian *wakils* from Hyderabad and Mysore, there is no evidence of *wakils* sitting for their portraits when stationed in Calcutta. Likewise foreign rulers do not seem to have deputed artists to British presidencies. Some of *wakils*’ cultural activities can be gleaned from Hastings’ Durbar Accounts, BL:Add Ms 29,092 and from the Memoirs of Ab’d al-Latif; details in G.Khan, *Indo-Muslim Perceptions of the West in the Eighteenth Century* (Karachi,1998).

insatiable as that it never knows when it hath enough; being like a bottomless purse that can never be fill'd'.¹⁰ 'Medieval notions of wealth, despotism and power attaching to the East ... were thus reworked to create an alternative version of savagery understood not as lack of civilisation but as an excess of it, as decadence rather than primitivism'.¹¹

In part to justify British rule in India, such stereotypes appealed variously; as a picaresque orientalism (which is what the British reading public wished to read), as well as revealing an atrophy of concise information of the Mughal political economy which had declined with the demise of the Company factory at Agra: '(i)t as in this context that the philosophical and dramatic tropes of Oriental Despotism, sati and decadence flourished. Orientalist fantasy flooded into the gaps left by the decline of pragmatic information; it did not always predetermine that information'.¹² Such issues are complex: from the view of the visiting British painter, 'Orientalist fantasy' and practical exploitation of the nawabs by Company traders combined in heady combinations, so it is often difficult to detect a caesura; where chimera ceased and commenced.¹³ 'Ideas of Orientalist despotism purveyed by Manucci, Bernier, by Jesuit commentators and by English travellers such as Fitch and Hawkins do not seem greatly to have informed their thinking. These works were not at the time regarded as manuals

¹⁰Edward Terry, *A Voyage to the East Indies* (London,1655) pp.378-379.

¹¹Ania Loomba, *Colonialism-Postcolonialism* (London,1998) pp.108-109. For oriental despotism see Baron de Montesquieu, *Espirit des lois* (Paris,1748), Alexander Dow, *The History of Indostan* (London,1768 and 1772) three volumes, Luke Scrafton, *Reflections on the government of Hindostan* (London,1763) . Franco Venturi, 'Oriental Despotism', *Journal of the History of Ideas* vol. xxiv (1963) pp.133-142 and T.R.Metcalf, *Ideologies of the Raj* (Cambridge,1995) introduction and chapter one.

¹²C.A.Bayly, *Empire and Information*, (Cambridge,1996) p.47.

¹³See David Ludden, 'Orientalist Empiricism' in C.Breckenridge and P.van der Veer (eds.) *Orientalism and the Postcolonial Predicament*, (Philedelphia,1993) pp.

of political theory for Europeans in India. Rather they were attempts to make room in European mentalities for the great kingdoms of the east'.¹⁴

Mughal chroniclers from the reigns of Akbar to Aurangzeb recorded of isolated incidents whereby court artists were dispatched to foreign courts to accompany visiting envoys.¹⁵ Whilst away, these painters remained incorporated within the service and hence the pay-roll, of the home court; it was colonial abuse of this position which exacerbated ensuing tensions.¹⁶ As Tapati Guha-Thakurta and Ratnabali Chatterjee have asserted, the artistic and economic stances of Indian painters were very different to that of British artists, leading to terrible dislocations under colonial rule.¹⁷ Court artists were incorporated within the royal *karkhana* and received rewards of land, *khilat*, elephants and protection in line with court servants.¹⁸ This 'patrimonial' patronage is sharply

¹⁴Bayly, 1996, p.48. see also pp.47-54, 142-143 and 149-150.

¹⁵The most famous tale is reported by Manucci as well as by Emperor Jahangir himself in the *Tuzuk-i Jahangiri* volume two pp.116-7. Jahangir deputed his painter Bishan Das to the Shah of Persia who took his picture, with which the Shah was ill pleased. Yet apparently he did acquiesce to sit and Jahangir praised the result. An example of a portrait of Shah Abbas was published by Coomaraswamy, *Catalogue of Indian Collections in Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, Pt. VI* (Boston,1930) pp.46-48 plate 35. However as early as 1575 Akbar sent his court artists to Portuguese Goa to copy European paintings and prints; the impact of which can be seen in their works of the 1580s. As we shall see this information agenda had no equivalent with British artists dispatched from Calcutta in the 1770s and 1780s. See B.W.Robinson, 'Shah Abbas and the Mughal Ambassador Khan Alam: The Pictorial Record', *Burlington Magazine*, 114, 1972 pp.58-63; Percy Brown, *Indian Painting Under the Great Mogul, 1550-1750* (Oxford,1924); E.Koch, 'The Influence of the Jesuit Mission on Symbolic Representations of Mughal Emperors' in C.W.Troll (ed.) *Islamic India: Studies and Communities*, (Delhi,1982) pp.14-29; V.N.Desai, *Life at Court: Art For India's Rulers, 16th century to 19th century* (Boston,1985) and Riazul Islam, *Indo-Persian Relations: A Study of Political and Diplomatic Relations Between the Mughal Empire and Iran*, (Tehran,1970) and S.P.Verma, *Elements of Historicity in the Portraits of the Mughal School*, *Indian Historical Review*, XI 1-2 1982 pp.63-73. B.Stoler (ed.) *The Powers of Art: Patronage in Indian Culture*, (New York,1992).

¹⁶ 'It is possible to argue that a taste for portraiture expressed an individual's sense of social and civic responsibility, while buying history paintings comprised one of the depravities of commercial capitalism as understood in the eighteenth century.' Louise Lippincott, 'Expanding on Portraiture: The Market, the Public and the Hierarchy of Genres in Eighteenth-century Britain' in A.Birmingham and J.Brewer (eds.) *Consumption of Culture* (London,1995) pp.75-88 ; p.75.

¹⁷T.Guha-Thakurta, *The Making of a New Indian Art*, (Cambridge,1992) introduction and chapter one; R.Chatterjee, 1990 pp.10-44.

¹⁸E.Koch and M.C.Beach provide the most detailed account of the role of the Mughal court

juxtaposed with the status of the artist in mid eighteenth-century Britain where artists were forced out into the market place to search short-term client relationships.¹⁹

In Britain 'the market life of portraits appeared enviably safe, simple and virtuous', partly by being long articulated through familiarising processes and predictable representational strategies, axiomatic to their becoming customary.²⁰

As we shall see, it was the full-length or three-quarter length British canvas which became most feted in *nawabi* contexts. The reasons were manifold: colonial painters desired to charge as much as they could for their art, which through their own culture's value coordinates, denoted the larger the canvas, the more inflated their prices.²¹ In the eighteenth-century successor states, *nawabi* court limners were fully adept at miniature painting and an 'occidentalised' alternative was never bestowed the same high alterity as the alien medium of oil painting, so that *difference* determined the *raison d'être* of the colonial artist.²²

The two kingdoms where British artists targetted their economic

artist; *King of the World, The Padshahnama*, (Windsor,1997). See also S.P.Verma *Karkhanas under the Mughal* (Delhi,1994).

¹⁹Louise Lippincott, *Selling Art in Georgian London* (New Haven,1983), I.Pears, *The Discovery of Painting*, (New Haven,1988) and John Brewer, *Pleasures of the Imagination*, (Oxford,1997) and his essay, 'Cultural Production, Consumption and the Place of the Artist in eighteenth-century England', B.Allen (ed.) *Towards a Modern Art World*, (New Haven,1995) pp.7-26.

²⁰Lippincott, 1995, p.80.

²¹Hastings Papers BL:Add Ms 29,229 ff.154,194 : Hastings when faced with an enormous bill of £1,500 from Zoffany, was told that the picture in question (*the Cock Match*) contained over one hundred portraits; labour and research qualifying its price. However many other ambivalent signifiers of monetary value were put into play by artists, which as we shall see, were often contentious. In a pre-colonial era, scholars have noted that the most favorably received 'Company' imagery at Jahangir's court, had been Jacobean miniatures; thus marking a departure from Akbar's regime when great retables, oil on canvas or panel had been gifted by the Jesuits; Gauvin Bailey, *Counter Reformation Imagery and Allegory in Mughal Painting* (unpublished Ph.D., Harvard,1996).

²²In a pre-colonial era, British oil painting had not been well received: *Embassy of Sir Thomas roe* (London,1970 edition) p.97: Roe at Jahangir's court noted the prestation of one European picture 'being in oil he liked it not.' Rather prints and miniature paintings were preferred, being 'closer' to Mughal ways of seeing.

trajectories were the Carnatic and Awadh.²³ (Map 1) The Carnatic, had been subjected to 'indirect colonial rule' since the 1750s, and by the 1780s, Awadh was also feeling the burden of colonial revenue demands. Artistic commissions at Indian courts fell into two distinct phases during early colonial rule defined primarily by an enthusiasm on the part of both Hastings and Indian princes for British art as a bartering counter effloresced in the 1770s yet by the mid 1780s recession in Bengal forced artists to focus their ambitious designs on still nominally independent kingdoms, being run down by British monetary demands, colonial espionage and aggressive private trading.²⁴

The nawab of Arcot devised his own resistance to British political and economic demands, promising great rewards in order to lure or appease British traders, although delaying payment for as long as possible, as he attempted to isolate Europeans from his durbar; leading an experienced official to complain 'the politics of this country are so dark, difficult and intricate that I find it no easy matter to form an opinion'.²⁵ George Willison, artist to the Arcot court for six years, complained to Warren Hastings in 1780 concerning equivocal payment for *nawabi* pictures.²⁶

²³In each kingdom five British portraitists worked through this era. At Arcot Swin Ward, Kettle, Willison, Read and Smart; in Awadh Kettle, Smith, Zoffany, Humphry and Longcroft.

²⁴However we should be careful not to make this distinction absolute as there are too few details about the ways in which Kettle and Willison made their fortunes in India. Rather, from an early date we see some of the later trends towards British art emerging such as nawabi promises to meet high demands, but then not doing so, as well as several early instances of nawabs preferring their own art to anything the British can do. See Colonel J.B.Gentil, *Memoirs sur l'Hindustan*, which contains several anecdotes on Indian reception of British art in 1770s Awadh. Several of the Gentil albums are now housed in the V&A: see M.Archer and G.Parlett, *Company Painting in the V&A*, (London,1992).

²⁵Lindsay to Weymouth p.118 Gurney, *The Nawab of Arcot's Debts* (unpublished Ph.D., Oxford,1968) December 1770 to January 1771. See also Gurney, 'Fresh Light on the character of the nawab of Arcot' in A.Whiteman (ed.) *Essays presented in honour of Dame Lucy Sutherland* (Oxford,1973) pp.220-241.

²⁶George Willison was resident at the court of Arcot, 1774-1780. He arrived with a letter of recommendation from Warren Hastings asking for sittings to be given for a portrait; Archer,

I fear the political situation of the two brothers with their father would render it a difficult task to place them in such a manner in the composition of the picture so as to give satisfaction to the parties and I therefore contented myself with a portrait of the nabob by himself which was sent to you ... deferring the picture of the two brothers for another opportunity if you should wish to have them. I have ever since been soliciting the payment of this picture that was sent you and having now the space of four years been assured with repeated promises of the nabob ... but I find myself as distant from my reward as I was the first day and I am afraid it will be my hard fate to submit to the necessity of putting up with the loss ... even after repeated intentions that I have given him of the necessity that he had put me under of applying to you and repeated requests on his part that I would not do so, as he would pay me himself, you will easily see how unwilling I was to trouble you with this demand.²⁷

As Willison was soon leaving for London, he presented Hastings with a bill for 700 pagodas which was eventually settled.²⁸ Archer suggests that Muhammed Ali in 'having the honour' of a British artist at his court, the nawab should pay for the portrait and send it as a gift to Calcutta.²⁹ Willison had already been

1979 p.102. This portrait was dispatched to Calcutta in April 1777. See Archer, 1979, pp.99-104 for Willison's Arcot oeuvre and figures 56-60. See also C.W.Gurner, 'The Editor's Notebook: George Willison' *Bengal Past and Present* 47 (January to June 1934) p.77. H.D.Love, *Vestiges of Old Madras*, (Madras, 1913) three volumes; volume two p.620 for details. For very brief details of Willison's career in India, see my entry for the painter in the *New Dictionary of National Biography*, (Oxford, forthcoming).

²⁷George Willison to Warren Hastings, Hastings Papers BL:Add Ms 29,145, June 18,1780, f.203.

²⁸'The price of the picture with its frame to Mr. John Fergusson of Calcutta who has my orders to receive the same.' *ibid.*, f.203.

²⁹'In requesting a portrait from Muhammed Ali, Hastings seems to have *assumed* that the nabob would pay Willison for it and then the completed portrait when sent to Calcutta would be a *present* from the nawab to the Governor-General.' M.Archer, 1979, pp.441-442, note 8: (my emphases). Once again we see the British constructing distinct life stages into a portrait image as well as the ambivalence of prestation, obligation and art as commodity. This was a very different cycle of obligation to the exchange of portraits between Hastings and the Nizam of Hyderabad which once more reiterates the lack of a clear system for a portrait gift economy. Whilst at Hyderabad the Governor-General desperately needed to win favour and so trod carefully; he deliberately did not dispatch a British painter in search of a private fortune, at Arcot, the nawab had lost much of his political power to the Company and was thus treated more ruthlessly.

amply rewarded for his efforts by Muhammed Ali, rumoured to have returned to Edinburgh with a fortune of £30,000, two thirds of which was from Arcot.³⁰

Willison was closely associated with George Dempster, a very influential and repeatedly elected Director in Leadenhall, it was politic to partake in Willison's double-speak, which became consonant for artists deliberately mystifying this 'dual relationship' between Company and court, playing one off against another for their own ends.

Such manoeuvres reached crisis point in the mid 1780s. After Hastings' departure for Britain, his temporary replacement John Macpherson (1785-6) felt the pressure of three painters working in 1780s Awadh: Johann Zoffany, Charles Smith and Ozias Humphry. Whilst metropolitan press reports divulged and distended artists' success, in actuality painters suffered grave dilemmas in realising *nawabi* fees, but such perturbation did not deter Ozias Humphry.³¹

I am assured by Mr. Macpherson (acting Governor-General 1785-6) that a residence of *three or four months* at Lucknow with the Nabob Vizier will not fail to give me the fortune I came to seek in India, namely £10,000- of this I am assured by those who are well acquainted with the state of affairs in these parts.³²

Humphry like his predecessors, realistically hoped to inflate his income. As he had once earned £125 for three months' work in 1780s Britain, we can see the

³⁰Willison doubled his prices at Arcot; his normal prices were 75 pagodas (£30) for a bust-length portrait, 150 pagodas, (£60) for a half-length portrait and 300 pagodas (£120) for a full-length. He was charging not only the court double but also Hastings. His bill was taken out of debts owed to the Company. Archer 1979, p.104 notes that 3,500 pagodas (£1,140) was owing to Willison when he left for Britain.

³¹ 'Mr. Zoffani is not yet paid, though he was called by the Vizier and abandoned his own business at Calcutta in the hopes of doing better and to this day he has not realised a farthing from the Vizier, Minister or any of the blacks.' Colonel Martin to Ozias Humphry, HU/4/24.

³²Ozias Humphry to Mary Boydell HU/3/49

near *hundred fold* increase in earnings he expected to receive at Lucknow.³³

Being removed from the framework of the London art market, portrait practices and expectations were destabilised by a colonial context. This begs reinterpretation of Lippincott's observations that

portraits were ... immune to the flamboyant extremes of the speculative market. The number of practitioners ensured that competition would keep prices down, quality up and service reliable ... Since the initial purchase transaction was trivial, routine and socially useful, it was not considered commercially motivated. Since the image subsequently changed hands by gift or inheritance rather than public sale, it remained uncorrupted by speculations on its market value.³⁴

As we have seen in depressed Calcutta, the *Ladies Waldgrave* - one of Humphry's best canvases, was not worth a fifteenth of its previous value, at a time when he was still attempting to extract extravagantly calculated prices for his *nawabi* miniatures.³⁵

In his preparations for his Awadhi sojourn, Humphry himself remained unsure how his services would be introduced to the Lucknow court, sensing his presence would require more than face-painting, 'whether I am to carry some account of an embassy to the Nabob or in what form I am to appear for the benefit, I am at this time ignorant but I rather expect I shall be entrusted with some embassy'.³⁶

At Lucknow where Anglo-Indian relations were already strained, the presence of British artists soon became highly problematic; neither side

³³ Archer, 1979 p.188.

³⁴Lippincott, 1995, pp.82-83.

³⁵Of course these were not unconnected. The recession forced Humphry to stake his claims at Lucknow and to force the price so high. But this was also due to Macpherson's bad advice.

³⁶Ozias Humphry to Mary Boydell, HU/3/49.

knowing quite how to deal with them:

I know not what to do about Mr. Humphry and Mr. Smith the painters. If the nawab should sit to be painted, the Lord knows when they will reap the advantage of their labours. If I were to wish my greatest enemy the most perplexing situation, I should for the present make him Governor-General's agent at the courts of the Shahzada and Vizier.³⁷

Too many painters created problems, to the extent of threatening diplomacy, especially during a period when the nawab was attempting to limit the number of Europeans in his kingdom. The Resident warned Ozias Humphry that patronage was not likely to be fruitful.³⁸

it is particularly unlucky that Mr. Zophani is here too and in his estimation with the nawab ... Mr. Z had very little reward for his labours as yet, if any, and I fear the present nawab is not of a disposition to be very liberal. Though *he is taught to believe* Mr. Z a first rate artist, and is as much pleased with his pictures as he can be with any, yet I am persuaded that the nawab and his court prefer their own *common* country pictures to any Mr. Z can do.³⁹

The letter of recommendation which Governor Macpherson penned for Humphry, addressed to the Awadhi Nawab Vizier, acted as culminating point for notions of puffing and portrait exchange and its inherent ambiguities:

Mr. Hastings carried Mr. Zoffany to your Excellency's court and the pictures he drew were shown here and *gave me real satisfaction*. Mr. Zoffany is *deserving favour* and is a *celebrated* artist. Some time since I wrote to your Excellency by Mr. Smith, who is a *painter of eminence*

³⁷Colonel Harper, Resident at Lucknow to Governor Macpherson, quoted in Archer, 1979 p.192.

³⁸Although not as nawab in 1771, Asaf ud-Daula was painted several times by Tilly Kettle so probably did not require many more full-length canvases of himself. These images divided between the Louvre, Musee Guimet, Faizabad and Lucknow show him at full length facing the viewer. Zoffany's three quarter length portrait shown slightly from the right thus attempts a different representation of sovereignty. Ozias Humphry was working in miniature, an art form which was not yet known at Lucknow, so he pinned some hope on success.

³⁹Colonel Harper to Ozias Humphry, 1785, quoted in M Archer, 1979, p.192 (my emphases).

and friend of mine

Mr. Zoffany and Mr. Smith are artists in *different styles*. I hope your Excellency will show them *attention and favour*. There is another style of painting, that of drawing perfect likenesses in small pictures, which is most agreeable, because the hand of friendship can always carry them as a remembrance. The *most eminent* gentleman in England in this line of painting is Mr. Humphry, whom I have deputed to the Presence *to bring me pictures* of Your Excellency, of the Shahzada, and of your son and of your ministers. He will show your Excellency a picture of me, and it is a *true resemblance*.

Till I have the pleasure of a personal interview with your Excellency, make me happy by sending me your picture, and by your attention and favour to Mr. Humphry, who has drawn pictures of some kings of Europe and who has met with favour from the king of England. *It is worthy of princes to favour men who are eminent in the fine arts*. What can I say more?⁴⁰

Macpherson claimed all three were ‘celebrated’ or ‘eminent’ and that each paints within a distinct ‘style’, thus engaging with a sense of novelty within the court’s aesthetic perceptions as Humphry’s own skill in and genre of painting, are eulogised in terms of ‘perfect likeness’ and true resemblance’, values which Macpherson gauged as imperative in Mughal portraiture, as they were in colonial Calcutta. Charles Smith, being the least well known painter, but a Scot, is described as ‘a friend of mine’, hence most closely tied to the Calcutta administration.⁴¹ As the letter unravels, the Governor’s tone grows more

⁴⁰Macpherson to Asaf ud-Daula, January 22, 1786; quoted in Archer, 1979, pp.190-1 (my emphases); letter contained in two versions in the Humphry Papers: HU/3/98, January 17, 1786. For a brief discussion of Macpherson presenting his portrait as an assertion of his own identity as Hastings’ successor, and taking a different line to Hastings in terms of foreign policy, see Karen Stanworth, *Historical Relations: Representing Collective Identities: Small Group Portraiture in 18th-century England British India and the United States*. (unpublished Ph.D., Manchester 1994); pp.132-187; pp.141-143.

⁴¹Charles Smith was well connected; for instance his uncle was the influential art patron Caleb Whiteford whose was a friend of Reynolds; Archer, 1979, p.179.

forceful; from his tentative 'I *hope* your Excellency will show them favour and attention', he slips into a personal imperial imperative, 'make me happy by sending me your picture and by your favour and attention to Mr. Humphry' and he concludes with a call to the science of kingship; 'it is worthy of princes to favour men who are eminent in the fine arts'.

Macpherson's ambit in citing the nawab's 'favour' for these three ambulant colonial painters, was deliberately ambivalent. However British artists throughout this era, orienting monetary designs towards Lucknow and Arcot, seldom made the money for which they hoped. Willison's bill to Hastings was eventually settled when lumped onto the nawab's larger debts to the Company. Nine years after his return to London, the miniaturist John Smart who likewise worked for several years at Arcot, still complained that his bill of £1,600 (for work executed 1785-1795) remained unpaid and so he submitted forceful affidavits to the Company, for principal and interest of £2,504 6s and 7d, 'for which a *tunka* (assignment on revenue of a locality) was granted on the Tinnevelly Provinces, but of which no part has been paid'.⁴² Likewise the Resident at Lucknow, initially promised Humphry a *tawkwah* to the value of £4,830 for the following year at 12% interest, although Humphry did not want to wait. Charles Smith nearly as displeased with Macpherson as Humphry, appealed to the Resident at Benares to negotiate on his behalf.⁴³ Hence James

⁴²ibid., p.391, also Home Miscellaneous Series, OIOC, H/298 p.1496, H/322, p.469: 'Mr. Smart was employed by the late nabob as miniature painter to his family from 1785 to 1795 when Mr. Smart was obliged to return to England on account of his health, at which time there was due to him by the nabob the above mentioned sum.' An original affidavit (dated April,14) was deposited with Mr. Fordyce.

⁴³Archer, 1979, p.184. 'I do not wish to make the same claim on him (Macpherson) though I have the same title, especially as I have hopes of being able to attain at least some considerable part from Hyder Beg Khan on his return from Lucknow, otherwise I should not hesitate to *expose his illiberal behaviour* towards me. The hopes of receiving my demand on the Nabob and

Grant secured Smith's fees through the promise of yet another *tawkwah* in exchange for the pay-off of debts owed to Europeans like Smith.⁴⁴

We see a paradox; the British condemning yet also appealing to their perception of *nawabi* luxury consumption, a state of affairs described by William Hodges:

The private luxury and vices of the Musslemen princes too frequently reduce them to a state of real poverty even with large revenues and too often they delegate to artful, designing and avaricious characters, the management and concerns of the state and become mutually the plunderers instead of the parents of their subjects.⁴⁵

Although garbed in an imperial ideology of sociability, the practice of offering portraits to nawabs acted as a destructive ritual through the supply of private luxury. By the 1770s *tawkwahs* had been utilised by both the Company and private traders in their attempts to recover loans from the Nawab of the Carnatic and became a standard mark in their demands for treaty payments and salaries for their mercenary troops stationed in foreign kingdoms.⁴⁶ Such burdens were wielded as the fastest form of payment in the ongoing debt situation; a tactic that the British made great use of in both the Carnatic and Awadh; represented in art by Tilly Kettle (fig. 13a and fig.13b).⁴⁷

At Arcot, the internal order of revenue collection and the unity of the

of employment sufficient at least to assure me for some months, have induced me to remain till the next season.' Charles Smith to Ozias Humphry (my emphasis).

⁴⁴Llewellyn-Jones, 1992 p.125.

⁴⁵William Hodges, *Travels in India during the years 1780,1782,1782 and 1783*, (London,1793) pp.103-104.

⁴⁶As the nawab relied on the Company's troops' as well as supplies of luxury goods as well as the purchase of Company support bonds for these three kinds of debts, these soon became the basis of all his private debts. See Gurney 1968; also H/103 pp.419-423 for his debts as accumulated by 1770 to European private creditors.

⁴⁷For more on the intricacies of debt-loan and promise situations, see Gurney, 1968. See also M.Fisher (ed.) *The Politics of British Annexation of India*, (Oxford,1993) and C.A.Bayly, *Indian Society and the Making of the British Empire* (Cambridge,1988) pp.79-80, 89-95, 103-105.

nawab's durbar had been destroyed by the annexation of fertile lands to Company revenue control, thus undermining the centralising and multi-layered political and economic system of the kingdom, and creating a patchwork of Company influence across of the Carnatic.⁴⁸ Art assisted in deeper colonial penetration of India in a way akin to the activities of private traders and Company Residents.⁴⁹

'It was perhaps naive of Humphry to imagine that he would succeed in getting prompt payment from the nawab when men like Hastings had failed'.⁵⁰ In the ensuing controversy, Humphry disgusted at not being offered enough by the court or by Macpherson, blamed the latter for commissioning the pictures and then refusing to pay their value, going so far as to file an ill-advised suit against Macpherson, which was swiftly dismissed, in the High Court of Calcutta.⁵¹ Whilst Macpherson's prose to the nawab had been couched in

⁴⁸There were two types of *tawkwahs* utilised by the British in attempts to recover their debts, firstly the demand of a specified sum to be drawn from the revenue of a district and secondly the complete assignment of a district, utilised either in a low revenue area or in the case of a large number of European debts, as was the case with Duncan's arrangement of Charles Smith's payment from Awadhi land returns. However this latter case relied on British knowledge of local revenue collection as without this information the case fell into the hands of local amildars, who could delay or reduce the value of the tunka. In turn poor harvests and heavy rains also reduced land revenues. See Gurney, 1968, pp.210-283.

⁴⁹Humphry and Smith's introduction to the nawab through Harper who himself conducted trade worth £20,000 per annum in Awadh's saltpetre; Llewellyn-Jones, 1992 pp.96-97. See M.H.Fisher, *A Clash of Cultures* (Riverdale,1987) and an instance of deliberate British clash in their economic demands; H/103 pp.419ff.

⁵⁰R.Llewellyn-Jones, 1992, p.125. Whilst this is the kernel of truth, Humphry never lost his early hopes of a fortune from or through Lucknow as here 'is where all the large fortunes have been made, for example Hastings, Johnson and Bristow'.

⁵¹In his case Humphry was represented by Reynolds' nephew. One version of a Lucknow miniature was accepted by the Academy's Hanging Committee for 1788 which also acted as a demonstration of Reynolds' approval of Humphry. Hastings also provided two valuable portrait commissions at the same date which were translated into prints. Thus we see the British art establishment very much in favour of Humphry's action, even if the reverse was true in terms of Bengal's government. On return to Britain, Humphry's career no doubt aided by such support, enjoyed a revival. Humphry generated a lot of 'evidence' concerning his case; HU/5 and HU/8 which devotes a whole volume of letters; Add Ms 13,532, *Brief Account of the Case of Ozias Humphry representing his transaction at the court of Oude* ff.1-3; Humphry Papers BL:Add Mss 22,9511 and 15,958-15,963 for other details. His case also in the records of the Calcutta Bar Club Library (now housed in Victoria Memorial): 'Ozias Humphry versus John

uncertain terms, Humphry, desirous in emulating Willison's premise to 'charge double at the durbar', pushed his prices too high.⁵²

By implication, the majority of nawabi portraits went to the Governor-General in Calcutta, so the nawabs were bemused that they had to sit to these painters, as well as paying for their portraits as gifts. In Britain, remarkably 'few sitters paid for their own portraits'.⁵³ Of course this did not sufficiently warrant a 'breach of etiquette' worthy of making war or introducing trade sanctions, and this is partly where its 'strength' lay. If the Company could demand as much as half of Awadh's annual revenue in tribute, they could well 'afford' to offer the nawab a British picture as a gift and the absolute refusal to do so signifies the ruthlessness of colonial ideology even in the cultural arena of face painting.

The Mughal durbar ceremonial demanded that on arrival, the British artist be temporally and symbolically incorporated within the court through the offering of *nazr* in return for shawls or *khilat*. Although under the protection of the Resident, the artist also pledged loyalty to the nawab, to turn this into a tug-of-war of fealty.⁵⁴ Bernard Cohn has suggested that colonial 'misunderstanding'

Macpherson' 24, pp.364-446. See also E.Cotton, 'An Artist and his Fees' *Bengal Past and Present* 34, (July to September,1927) pp.1-19, and William Hickey, *Memoirs* (1913-25) volume three p.366 and *Calcutta Gazette* March 12, 1789. See also G.C.Williamson, *Life and Works of Ozias Humphry, R.A.* (London,1918).

⁵²Zoffany may have charged Hastings an enormous sum for *The Cock Match*. Archer, 1979 pp.151-2. Hastings' secretary felt he had to explain this, as being due to the picture containing more than 90 portraits. However Humphry was charging about £1,000 per miniature. Hastings Papers, BL:Add Ms 29,229, ff.151,153-154 and 486. Wales diary volume four f.25 he expected to be paid 10,000 Rs (£1000) for a group portrait of the court. Humphry away from Calcutta for twenty three and a half weeks calculated that he should be compensated for his loss of earnings which worked out at 1000Rs. per week and 'the plaintiff insisted he was instilled to double that sum, viz. 47,000Rs. because Mr. Willison a gentleman who had been employed as a painter at the durbar of Arcot was allowed double his ordinary price'. See also Archer,1979 pp.193-201.

⁵³Lippincott, 1995 p.82.

⁵⁴For durbar encounters: *the Lucknow diary of Ozias Humphry*, Osborn Collection, Yale

of the ceremony of the durbar altered inextricably its inherent power relations which indicated that 'misunderstanding' signified as a colonial mask for the careful manipulation of indigenous ritual and meanings.⁵⁵

When Indian visitors assessed British art in London, we see colonial art embroiled within a wider Shi'ite condemnation of British luxury, thus contributing critically to a specific 'politics of value'. Whilst British painters were inundating Lucknow, members of the Awadhi Shi'ite scribal elite travelled to Britain, where they recorded their experiences in manuscripts which were later circulated in north India.⁵⁶ Although there is little evidence of an Indian artist visiting Britain, the cultural experiences of Shi'ite travellers are a valuable counterpoint to the experiences of British artists in India. It was customary for Indo-Persian travellers to analyse another people by way of vices and virtues.⁵⁷

University and photostat OIOC Eur Ms 43, spring 1786 and James Wales, *Diary at Pune, 1792-1795*, British Art Center, Yale University. Wales was fascinated by his encounter with the durbar on his first visit, providing a plan of the scene in his diary of 1792 and notes on the gifts offered and received on this occasion. On arrival at the Peshwa's court, the Resident presented shawls on Wales' behalf. Ozias Humphry and Charles Smith whilst negotiating for sittings with Jawan Bakht at Lucknow, presented *nazr* of 7 gold mohurs in exchange for *khilat*. However the mohurs were too light so two more had to be offered through the prince's servants before portrait transactions could go any further. Archer, 1979, p.193.

⁵⁵Bernard S.Cohn, *Representing Authority in Victorian India*, in Cohn 1987 pp.632-682.

⁵⁶See Simon Digby, 'An Eighteenth-century narrative of a journey from Bengal to England: Munshi Ishmail's New History' in *Urdu and Muslim South Asia: Studies in Honour of Ralph Russell*, (ed.) C.Shackle (London,1989) pp.49-65; Abu Talib *Travels of Abu Talib*, trans. C.Stewart (Calcutta,1814; reprint,1972) Gulfishan Khan, *IndoMuslim Perceptions of the West in the Eighteenth Century* (Karachi,1998); Bhaskar Mukhopadhyay, *The Home and the World, Travel, Translation and Dwelling in Bengali Modernity* (forthcoming); I am extremely grateful to the author for a copy of his paper. See also *Shigurf-Namah-i-Velaet or Excellent Intelligence Concerning Europe being the Travels of Mirza Itas al-muddin in Great Britain and France* trans. J.E.Alexander, (London,1927) also P.J.Marshall (ed.) *Oxford History of the British Empire: volume two: The Eighteenth Century* (Oxford,1998). Tapan Raychaudhuri, 'Europe in India's Xenology: The Nineteenth-century Record', *Past and Present* 137 (1992) pp.156-182 and Juan Cole, 'Invisible Occidentalism: Eighteenth-century Indo-Persian Constructions of the West' *Iranian Studies* 3-4 (1992) pp.3-16.

⁵⁷This conduct book of vices and virtues was a common device in great Mughal chronicles. Abu Talib 1972 p.167 included a verse to qualify his section on the multiple vices of the English: 'He is your friend, who, like a mirror, exhibits all your defects,/ Not he, who like a comb, covers them over with the hairs of flattery'.

With regard to the English, vice heavily outweighed the virtues.⁵⁸ They are condemned for their pride, irreligiosity, worldliness, excessive love of luxury and attachment to finery, their egotism constructed through a contempt for others.⁵⁹ Their society was viewed as based on artificial needs, whose expenses waste time and should be curtailed.⁶⁰ ‘Their third defect is a passion for accruing money and their attachment to worldly affairs’, which Abu Talib cautions as always bringing disaster.⁶¹ They surround themselves with the trappings of ‘a luxurious manner of living, by which their wants are increased a hundred fold’.⁶² Luxuries ‘pamper their appetites, which from long indulgence, have gained such absolute sway over them, that a diminution of these luxuries would be considered, by many as a serious misfortune’.⁶³ ‘It is certain that luxurious living generates many disorders and is productive of various other bad consequences’.⁶⁴ Adoration of luxury will eventually lead to British demise, in

⁵⁸We can see this from just a brief perusal of an edited and translated version of Abu Talib, 1972 p.167; chapter xix: of the English character it reveals ‘He accuses the common people of want of religion and honesty and the nation at large of a blind confidence in their good fortune also of cupidity. A desire of ease, one of their prevailing defects ... the English irritable, bad economists of their time, and luxurious. The advantages of simplicity, exemplified in the histories of the Arabs and Tartars. The English vain in their acquisition of foreign languages- Governed by self interest, licentious, extravagant. An instance of meanness and extravagance united. Bad consequences of these vices. The English too strongly prejudiced in favour of their own customs. The author’s mode of defending the Mahometan customs. The English blind to their own imperfections’.

⁵⁹ibid., pp.168-179; pp.168-169 ‘the second defect, most conspicuous in the English character is pride, or insolence ... This self confidence is to be found more or less in every Englishman it however differs much from the pride of the Indians and Persians’.

⁶⁰ibid., pp.136-137 criticised his English colleagues’ vanity and elaborate dress: ‘Curtail the number of your garments; render your dress simple ... give less time to your eating, drinking and sleeping’.

⁶¹ibid., p.169 widens the grip of vice away from the English to universal proportions as ‘sordid and illiberal habits are generally found to accompany avaricious ... consequently to render the possessor of them contemptible. ‘The fourth of their frailties is a desire of ease and a dislike to exertion’.

⁶² ibid., p.170.

⁶³ibid., p.171.

⁶⁴ibid., p.171.

the familiar cycle of the decline and fall of great empires.⁶⁵

Itas al-muddin sighed that British love of the arts transgressed morality, citing the tale of an English painter who in his depiction of *the Crucifixion*, murdered a friend in order to achieve a correct delineation of pain at the point of death; his picture received royal praise, the author concluding that 'it can not be concealed, that as long as there are patrons of science and encouragers of artists for one picture a lakh of rupees (£10,000) will be given and a murderer may escape unpunished. In England it would be extraordinary if the arts and sciences did not flourish'.⁶⁶

Itas al-muddin also perceived that old masters were purchased for as much as 20,000Rs. (£2000) and Abu Taleb expressed outrage at the high prices for ruined statues.⁶⁷

In Europe statues of stone ... are held in high estimation, *approaching to idolatry*. Once ... in London, a figure (in) which nothing but the trunk remaining ... sold for £5,000. It is really astonishing that people possessing so much knowledge and good sense, and who reproach the nobility of Hindustan with wearing gold and silver ornaments ... should be *tempted by Satan* to throw away their money.⁶⁸

Such a referral to an idolatrous worship of art objects was thrown into a harsh,

⁶⁵ibid., pp.176-179: 'this spirit of extravagance appears daily to increase' and that they should take caution, 'if the English will take the trouble of reading ancient history, they will find the luxury and prodigality have caused the ruin of more governments than was ever effected by an invading enemy: they generate envy, discord, and animosity and render the people either effeminate or desirous of change'. 'Many of these vices or effects are not natural to the English but have been ingrafted on them by prosperity and luxury; the bad consequences of which have not yet appeared'. Although 'vice will sooner or later cause destruction to its possessor.'

⁶⁶Itas al-muddin, 1927 pp.69-70.

⁶⁷Abu Talib 1972 p.95 noted when in London 'Mr. Christie the auctioneer also paid me much attention and gratified me highly by showing me the articles he had for sale. He once exhibited to me a number of pictures which he valued at £60,000; and when I called there a few days afterwards, they were all disposed of.'

⁶⁸Abu Talib, 1972 pp.143-4.(my emphases).

raking light when the same author condemned the British lack of piety and religious faith; a vacuum both created and filled by a fetish for luxury. Whilst the wearing of gold and silver was analysed as an integral part of the display of wealth and power in India, Britons buying up bits of broken old stone for extortionate prices appeared a ridiculous, useless obsession, effectively reversing the charges of luxury levied against Mughal culture.

Their comments grew more ominous as imperial ambition in India increasingly affected indigenous society and artistic and cultural practices. In the early 1770s, removed from the onslaught of ruthless imperial reform in Bengal, Munshi Ismail and Itas al-muddin, admired Francis Hayman's *Mir Jafir Surrendering to Lord Clive After the Battle of Plassey*, (fig. 5) at Vauxhall Gardens as one of its 'wonderful tableaux' and 'a very correct representation after the defeat of the nabob ... in eighteenth-century Plassey, when ... Mir Jafir, Lord Clive and the English officers are all embracing one another and shaking hands'.⁶⁹ They also praised fine collections of 'Persian and Hindustany picture many of which I thought superior to the paintings of Europe'.⁷⁰ Abu Taleb sighed that the greatest works in Mughal art were now to be had not in India but in England as mere show-pieces, whilst British art had become an inevitable part of court life at Lucknow, as the grave repercussion of an imperial image traffic.

Whilst illuminating the aesthetic practices of India and Britain, such accounts were distanced from the suffocating colonial aesthetic struggles at

⁶⁹Digby, 1989 p.56 and Itas al-muddin, 1927, pp.60-61.

⁷⁰Abu Talib, 1972, p.95.

Indian courts.⁷¹ Indian suspicion of the motives of a Company artist extended also to the uses of these portrait images once they had been sent back to Calcutta. Again it is Muhammed Ali who boxes clever with the British, sending his portrait to Madras, Leadenhall Street, the Society of Artists and George III (figs 22, 95). Writing to thank Muhammed Ali in 1775 Hastings revealed a distinct agenda: 'For want of a better place to put it (your picture will hang) in the Court House along with the portraits of the King and Queen of England. As this is the *room* where all public ceremonies are held, as well as the court of justice, the portrait will become the object of attention'.⁷² This indicates not only what Hastings gauged as the best way of pleasing the nawab but also a concern with display and power politics with real implications for the ways in which he wished his own portrait to be received at Indian courts.⁷³ In his description of the site for hanging, the portrait, Hastings 'orientalises' the Court House in Calcutta, to provide an 'occidentalised' version of the Mughal hall of audience which acted as seat of government, site of ceremony and court of justice, hence as the proper site to hang the portrait.⁷⁴ In fact the Calcutta high court and assembly room were on separate floors, which Hastings ignores to impress that the portrait will have the maximum effect thus overriding British compartmentalisation of government administration where there could be no direct equivalent politically, ideologically nor architecturally, to the durbar hall.

⁷¹See also G.Khan, 1998, for other travellers to Britain with a variety of diplomatic, scholarly and commercial motives.

⁷²Warren Hastings to the Nawab of Arcot, Archer, 1979, p.102.(my emphasis)

⁷³The nawab soon became concerned with an international status as expressed through the dissemination of his images. He was the only Indian ruler to use colonial art in this way.

⁷⁴The nawab had in fact expressed a desire for this portrait to be hung in the Council House, at the heart of government, in a similar way to his portrait to the Court of Directors in London.

Hastings commissioned other nawabi portraits in the Old Court House which augmented a bombastic display of imperial power, hanging along side war spoils as a 'proto-public gallery' overseeing 'violent entertainments', riotous food fights, duel machinations and nationalistic celebrations.⁷⁵ More soberly, under the raking morning light this motley art collection acted as a form of 'imperial archive' from whence to draw and sustain strength through a monopoly of imagery which could be reused in a number of political and totemic fashions.⁷⁶

When he (Bahar Ali Khan, the *wakil* for Faizabad) came into Governor Hastings' presence, he saw a curtain rolled up on the door of the room. The governor told them to open it. They unrolled it. Shuja-ud-Daula's picture was embroidered on it. Bahar Ali Khan rose, bowed to it and gave way to tears ... 'Since the day that man died my peace of mind is gone'.⁷⁷

For such an occasion Hastings developed a 'hybrid' ritual from a likeness generated through interaction between Kettle and Mir Chand at Faizabad, which had fixed Shuja in iconic fashion.⁷⁸ By taking carpets and rich brocade which decorated the bays of durbar halls and embroidering figurative representation, he

⁷⁵For the assembly rooms above the Old Court House, Calcutta, *Bengal Past and Present* (July-December 1930) p.60; *C.P.C.* number.516 for Hastings and the nawab of Arcot's portrait, which were restored by the Daniells in 1787, for which they were paid 1,500Rs to 'clean repair and hang up'; *Bengal Public Consultations* September 14, 1787.

⁷⁶Thomas Richards, *The Imperial Archive*, (London, 1993), introduction.

⁷⁷Faiz Baksh, *Memoirs of Faizabad and Delhi*, trans. W.Hoey two volumes (Allahabad, 1889) volume two pp.86-87.

⁷⁸Thus we see ways of fixing style and iconography through different media and techniques through identity formation other than coloniser and colonised but rather elite and subaltern in this instance through courtly idioms which made various concessions to Awadhi and European art. At least three versions of Shuja's portrait in Maratha dress by Mihr Chand still exist; V&A, B.M. and in the Museum fur Indische Kunst, Berlin. Kettle's very similar versions as large scale oil portraits are now in the Victoria Memorial (featuring General Barker and his staff) and a single portrait in the Yale Center for British Art; the latter probably from Hastings' sale in 1797 from his town house in Park Lane. See also Colonel Gentil Albums V&A IS 257-1951; fifty eight pictures by Faizabad painters of manners, customs and historical events in Awadh. See Archer for other likenesses of Shuja in courtly robes, pp.73, 141, 74-80.

reinvented a cultural form to elicit maximum surprise from the negotiating *wakil*, as well as act as symbolic chastisement for his presentation of ‘a few curios as presents which were not adequate to the Governor’s rank’, so that art was used not only as marker as kinship but was designed to be aggressive and intimidating in sensational and emotional ways.⁷⁹

Likewise ‘receiving back’ a British portrait of an Indian ruler invented a tradition whereby Indian rulers began to gift their own portraits on a range of diplomatic stages.⁸⁰

This day I had a private audience with the Nabob, from which we separated both pleased. I have however, refused a fortune ... he was repeatedly told that I would accept nothing, he had prepared five lacs of rupees and eight thousand gold mohurs for me ... my answer to his Excellency was this: that a barley corn from him was equal in my sight to a million; but I could not but express my concern that he and his people were ignorant of our customs and my character, to make such an offer, which I peremptorily declined. I added that I had seen in his *Shusha Khana* some pictures of His Excellency, of which I begged to have one, as a memorial of our friendship. And I took one, about fifteen inches square, done by Zoffani, *not set in diamonds*, which is a strong resemblance to the Nabob; and for which to say the truth, *I would not give two-pence*. It pleased him.⁸¹

Whilst not partaking in illegal present acceptance, that Shore mentions Asaf ud-Daula’s likeness had not been set in gems implies it had become customary to

⁷⁹Faiz Baksh, 1889, volume two p.85. Jesuit accounts reveal that Jahangir also had plans to have great curtains painted and embroidered with Christian images; Bailey, 1996, pp.127-128.

⁸⁰Archer 1979 pp.327-328 notes that the artist working in early 19th-century Lucknow George Place, prepared a miniature of the then nawab Saadat Ali, as a prestation for Lord Wellesley in 1802. She also observes that this became standard practice at Lucknow. Saadat Ali’s successor Ghazi-ud-Din presented his portrait to important British visitors, such as Lord Hastings in 1814, Sir Edward Paget in 1823 and Bishop Heber in 1824.

⁸¹Lady Manners and G.Wilamson, *The Life and Works of Johann Zoffany, R.A.* (London,1920) p.93 (my emphases).

receive pictures in this form, which could then be removed and sold for high prices in Calcutta or London, charging art inadvertently with illicit, material associations.

Additionally, the Governor-General's low valuation of the 'strong resemblance' has the potential to imply a comparable degree of contempt for the sitter. (fig 99) The low viewing angle whilst a metaphor for 'looking up' to the sovereign, also emphasises his double chin and seeming all-over rotundity and his rosy complexion (its tones matching his dress and its reflection on the gilt arms of the chair) is strangely out of place for an Indian prince, especially when compared with Zoffany and Kettle's earlier representations (figs 14, 97, 98). Asaf's painted anatomy wanting, he is seated on an ostentatious velvet-clad European chair, with a European pistol slung through his sash.⁸² None of Asaf ud-Daula's surviving colonial likenesses from the 1780s (with perhaps the exception of Zoffany's half-length gifted to Baladon Thomas) attempt to 'flatter' him in the way as British representations of the Nawab of the Carnatic, whose portraits are imposing, focused on his 'truly majestic countenance' and 'features expressive of sensibility and a noble disposition of mind'(figs 95, 96).⁸³

Shore's observations also demonstrate how the traffic of portrait images had evolved since Hastings' regime. Hastings' successors had little interest in the resulting pictures, as the request for portraits of the nawabs became a diplomatic activity which was increasingly divorced from personal art

⁸²Pistols were some of the most popular Company gifts. The nawab requested Hastings send him some fowling pieces; November 11, 1784, *C.P.C.*

⁸³ George Paterson, E379/2 f.25 'well proportioned and of an engaging aspect...the impression of personal opulence matched his physical dignity and grandeur.' See Gurney, 1968 and 1973 for important descriptions of Muhammed Ali.

appreciation. The most ominous outcome for a traffic in portrait images occurred with the case of the Mysore princes who were captured and made hostage by the British in Madras.⁸⁴ ‘Mr. Smart, a miniature painter ... was taking their likenesses. They are to be sent when finished to Tipoo Sahib for Lord Cornwallis, having asked him if he would like to have his sons’ pictures, “Yes” said he, “provided they can be accompanied by Lord Cornwallis’s” ’.⁸⁵ Thus we see grave repercussions for Hastings’ initial exchange of portraits as a marker of kinship. His sons held captive, Tipu could only possess their painted images, which had ominous repercussions for art and agency as Indians were by pictorial representation ‘seized as a token and then displayed, sketched, painted ... quite literally captured by and for European representation’.⁸⁶

If we could identify the demands of sitters then we might gain a clearer understanding of the ways in which British art could appeal to their notions of sovereignty.

The patronage of European artists like Willison was an important feature of Muhammed Ali’s battle to secure his realm. Like the building of mosques and places in the key cities of the domain, the commissioning of portraits helped to identify Muhammed Ali as a true ruler, as a visible embodiment of princely dignity and pious excellence and as a consumer of suitably aristocratic goods and services.⁸⁷

⁸⁴As result of the condition of the treaty of the Third Mysore War 1792. Whilst in Madras the princes were also painted by Devis, Home and Smart, some of which found their way to the Royal Academy’s exhibitions.

⁸⁵Thomas Twining, *Travels in India One Hundred Years Ago* (London,1983) p.66; quoted in Archer, 1979, pp.392-3. Smart’s miniatures are lost but there are two of his preliminary drawings signed and dated 1794 in the British Museum.

⁸⁶S.Greenblatt, *Marvellous Possessions* (Chicago,1991) p.119.

⁸⁷Bayly, 1990 catalogue entry on Willison’s full-length Muhammed Ali, Nawab of Arcot portrait. The notion of an incorporative sovereignty is particularly apt for Muhammed Ali, as he was steeped in Sufism; which in terms of its ideology of the visual arts had a powerful precedent in the era of Akbar and Jahangir. Gauvin Bailey, ‘The Indian Conquest of Catholic Art’ *Art Journal* (Spring,1998) 57.1, pp.24-30 See also C.A.Bayly, ‘The Origins of Swadeshi: Cloth and

From the perspective of both the artist and the ruler, commissions at court seemed strange experiences as few British painters had previously worked for Indian clients.⁸⁸ To discover the strategies of representation utilised by British artists to 'dignify' the nawabs we need to be aware of the various iconographical, formalistic, connoisseurial or contextual options which were available. Willison presents Muhammed Ali in ceremonial dress, consonant with the very public display of his picture which demanded *darshan*.⁸⁹ Such official portraits 'relieve that prince of the burden of imaging his divine right ... Even before meeting his model, the painter already knows the appearance he must fix upon the canvas; quiet strength, serenity, severity, justice'.⁹⁰ This was especially so with the nawab of the Carnatic. His likenesses by British artists seem to have been based on these preexisting images dating back from Swain Ward's work in the 1760s which were on full view in his Madras Palace. Artists searching for commissions adapted this likeness and presented the image to the nawab, so that art was subsumed to ready-made luxury product, rather than through sittings as at Pune or Lucknow. Through such 'mimetic idealism' Muhammed Ali's portrait was transformed from an index of a dynamic dialectic to an icon, a sign denoted by resemblance.

These images' full-length pretensions and static poses owe something to

Indian Society, 1700-1930', in Appadurai, 1986 pp.285-321.

⁸⁸Thus sitters were often far more used to sitting to British artists than British limners were used to representing Indians; at least in the cases of Muhammed Ali and Asaf ud-Daula.

⁸⁹See Diana Eck, *Darshan: Seeing the Divine Images in India* (Chambersburg, 1981). Of course such command of sovereignty became far more problematic when the same likeness was gifted to George III. In this instance, it is encoded into decorous notions of the portrayal of sovereignty. George Paterson Eur Ms 379/ 2 f.25 'jewels on his head, bound to the turban from which a fine feather sprung upon one side, jewels on his arms and several strings of very fine pearls with diamonds pendant.' p.12 'without this ostentation he could not have adequately fulfilled the image of ruler that was expected from him'

⁹⁰J.P.Sartre, 'Official Portraits' in (ed.) M.Natonson, *Essays in Phenomenology*, (1966).

George III's official portraits replete with gold, ermine, classical columns and Baroque scarlet curtains, so that the nawab was incorporated in to 'universal' visual idioms for portraying royalty. (figs 95, 100) However Muhammed Ali was also being constrained by a colonial frame of representation; pictured in a neoclassical palace where he is salaamed by his staff, and even a palm tree sways in deference although through the arched entrance, a battalion of Company sepoy signify as the most overt marker of Company presence in the Carnatic. Thus the nawab's image reveals a matrix of power clashes. Portrayed in a novel, grandiloquent medium and representational mode, the painting confirms that his sovereignty was being eroded; a *status quo* apparent from a colonial interpretation of the composition and the very existence of such a canvas.

The best record of the difficulties of re-presentation are the diaries of the Scottish artist James Wales at Pune, the cultural capital of the Marathas.⁹¹ By 1780 what the British called the Maratha empire, had infiltrated to the heart of the Mughal Empire, controlling Delhi, expanding its territories and stretching itself to the limits. It had already fought bitter wars with the British who feared its alliance with arch enemy Mysore and thus sought desperate negotiations stationing a Resident at Pune in 1786.⁹² The tensions created for an artist were evident even before Wales began working, as he recorded his perceptions of

⁹¹*Diary of James Wales in Bombay and Pune, 1792-5.*

⁹²For a summary of the rise of the Marathas, C.A.Bayly, 1988 pp.98-101, J.Grant-Duff, *History of the Marathas* (1826), two volumes K.B.Marathe, *Selections from the Satara Rajahs and Peshwas' Diaries*, twelve volumes (Madras,1908-11); J.N.Sarkar (ed.) *Persian Records of the Marathas*; see also 'The Letters of Shinde', *Asiatic Annual Register* (1802) pp.55-67. Even before the arrival of British painters at Pune in 1791, the court's wakil was requesting that four pictures be sent from Calcutta to the Peshwa in 1786; W.C.Macpherson, *Soldiering in India*, (London,1930) p.342.

members of the Marathas ruling powers. Shinde, the most powerful minister in India, the head of the Marathas and Protector of Delhi (figs 101, 102), is ironically deflated in Wales' writings

Although a chief of great powers, (he is) nonetheless a person of mean appearance and rather low stature; fat and lame of one leg ... He has the same attention paid him as if he were a king and indeed as great in every respect, his possessions are larger than those of any kings in Europe as also the number of his supporters.⁹³

According to the British Resident at Pune, Sir Charles Malet, (fl.1786-97)

Shinde held very specific notions of how he should be depicted:

Visited Mahajee Scindia and introduced him to Mr. Wales a portrait painter to whom he was good enough to sit near two hours - He expressed a desire that his picture may be drawn on horseback observing that every man's character and way of life should be painted in his picture and that his whole life had been present in the field.⁹⁴

Shinde's conceptions of portraiture were closely tied to the values of the Mughal scribal elite, whilst his projected pictorial depiction, as tough triumphant warrior, would in part reveal his separation from this way of life as well as manifest that his life had been inextricably tied up with the concerns of the East India Company, as the distillation of biographical elements can be deconstructed on many levels.⁹⁵

⁹³Wales volume one June to December 1792, B.A.C ff.11-2. notes jewels worth £15,000 July 2.

⁹⁴Malet, Pune October 2 1792. Shinde was noted by Malet, for his affability and good manners 'our meeting being in open durbar and entirely of general topics.' This portrait is now lost; a surviving oil, OIOC three quarter length in white durbar robes, a white caste mark on his forehead; (30x25 inches) see also *Bengal Past and Present* volume 50 July to September, 1935, pp.26ff.

⁹⁵The desire to infuse one's portrait with an aspect of biography, referring in general sense to one's life or to a specific event, also informs the earlier work of Tilly Kettle at Faizabad. A lost painting recorded by Colonel Gentil, depicted Shuja ud-Daula in Maratha dress, mounted on horse back, spear in hand. Mildred Archer suggests that this refers to one of his victories, as recorded by Haran Charan in his *Chahar-i-gulzar-i Shujai*, 1789: The nawab in disguise as a Maratha machinated this identity: 'On being questioned as to the weapon in the use of which he

Fierce debates engaging notions of likeness and the depth of character (which an artist and artistic decorum should bestow upon both sitter and picture), raged around portraiture back in Britain.⁹⁶ If 'likeness' was an axial concern, then these contentions had to have been shifted unwittingly to Pune, where court ministers were asked to perceive it through the alien agency of this newly-arrived Scottish painter. The puffing of British art as governed by the laws of perspective, proportion and anatomy was one way of inscribing it within the court's growing interest in European science, thus allowing it an 'easy' legitimation.⁹⁷

British art became increasingly embroiled within a perceptual strategy which also formed the basis for ethnographic inquiry. *Wales plays off his own* preconceptions of how courtly Indians should appear and behave; a process of attempted 'seeing in' beyond the ceremonial and political regalia. Hence Shinde is of a stature which does not match his political standing, the Prime Minister at Pune, Nana Fadnavis, possesses too open a countenance for one expected to be Machiavellian in outlook, whilst the Peshwa's youth is at odds with his 'gravity of character (which) must only provide an affectation'.⁹⁸ The character analyses

might be most proficient he named the spear and in the contest that followed as a trial between him on the one side and four skilled Maratha spearmen on the other, he beat them all and returned to his camp covered with glory.' Quoted Archer, 1979, p.80.

⁹⁶See Marcia Pointon, *Hanging the Head*, (New Haven,1993) chapter one.

⁹⁷ 'Globes, orrery and mathematical curiosities lately received here as presents from the court of Directors and mention that such things have only been sent from the idea of the Peshwa's love of science conveyed to the court by my letters' Malet Letterbook F149/55, September 1791 to September 1792, entry for September 22, 1792.(OIOC) This art was therefore the 'proper' accompaniment to British ideology of government in India through the 'rule of laws', rather than the 'whims of despotism'. Ozias Humphry whilst sketching the nawab of Awadh at Lucknow in 1786, noted 'I saw a portfolio of Hindustany pictures, some of which were wonderful as to their finishing of the heads and reconciatura but without any proper proportion or knowledge of the figure, perspective or effect.' *The Lucknow Diary of Ozias Humphry* (Yale, Osborn Mss Collection; photocopied for the OIOC Eur Ms 043).

⁹⁸James Wales, *Diary of 1792*, volume one ff.3-6.

of the Resident, Sir Charles Malet reveal the ways in which he assessed the Pune court, both on first impression and on regular contact with its key personnel in a political capacity. Hence the Peshwa was 'of slender habit and small for his age; his countenance though neither handsome nor strongly marked, is sensible and acute which correspond with his character'.⁹⁹ Of Nana Fadnavis, he was 'a Brahmin; tall and thin, brownish in complexion with a long oval face, marked with large, piercing eyes and a long nose,'¹⁰⁰ who 'seemed about fifty years old of a middling size and stature and of a good intelligent though not striking countenance with an address though not remarkably courtly was perhaps more engaging as carrying with it candour, benevolence and sincerity'.¹⁰¹

These slippages between expectation and observation were incorporated within portrait schemata whose compositional vagaries were also points of contention. Wales laboured long and hard over a group portrait of *Madhu Rao Narayan, the Maratha Peshwa, with Nana Fadnavis and Attendants*, 1792 which is the culminating point for many of these concerns.¹⁰² (fig. 109) From his arrival at Pune, Wales was instructed by both the Resident and the Peshwa to work within an idiom which he believed compromised the grand style of

⁹⁹Malet in Choksey, *History of British diplomacy at the court of the Peshwas, 1786-1818* (1951) p.17; letter number two March 8, 1786.

¹⁰⁰Choksey, 1951, p.14.

¹⁰¹Sardesi, *Pune Affairs*, 1786-97 p.14.

¹⁰²I am very grateful to the staff of the Royal Asiatic Society, London, for showing me this portrait and for invaluable information. This picture was painted for the Peshwa and hung in his palace at Pune until the mid 19th century when it was gifted to the British Resident of Satara, whose wife later presented it to the R.A.S. Many of Wales' other pictures for the court were destroyed during the Anglo-Maratha wars. However, a similar group of the Maratha court is noted by Archer to hang in University Building (former Government House) in Ganeshkhind, a suburb of Pune.

portraiture as taught in the Royal Academy.¹⁰³ Writing of his commissioned first picture he watches his own style evolve in a semi-ethnographic manner, thus bouncing back observation of an Indian ‘Other’ on to its impact on the self: ‘working all day on Con Saib’s portrait ...This picture I am finishing in a very *uncommon state* in compliance with Sir Charles’ desire, as the natives are very fond of *high finished* pictures and this is to be shown as a *specimen*’.¹⁰⁴ Thus we see the evolving aesthetic entrapped by an interstitial realm: between Wales’ own practice and the court’s artistic preconditioning; in the production of an art form curious in terms of subject and style to the painter and the viewers.

Wales took repeated likenesses at the durbar. ‘I waited on the Peshwa and made a very good likeness of him and a design for the whole picture’.¹⁰⁵ In addition, he deputed his assistants Robert Mabon and Gangaram Pundit to take a many sketches of the ceremonial as possible.¹⁰⁶ Gangaram’s portrait of the Peshwa was very different to Wales and Mabon’s three-quarter face sketches (figs 104, 105,106).¹⁰⁷ Seated in profile, Madhu Rao’s features are sharply

¹⁰³Wales and Mabon had both already exhibited at the Royal Academy during the 1780s; A.Graves, *Royal Academy Exhibitors, 1769-1904* (London,1922) volumes three and four: Wales exhibited three portraits in 1788-9 and Mabon crayons, portraits and an historical scheme, 1788-89.

¹⁰⁴Wales Diary, volume one f.31 (my emphases). Commissions first relied on a specimen so rulers could chose or refuse to patronise an artist. Of course as art was closely tied to diplomatic activities, there was pressure to accept. However Asaf ud-Daula very famously rejected a specimen he had commissioned. See chapter seven. Humphry presented his miniature of Macpherson and Zoffany his Calcutta-painted portrait of Warren Hastings.

¹⁰⁵Wales, volume one, f.56; September 10,1792.

¹⁰⁶The drawings of Robert Mabon are housed in the Yale Center for British Art; part of the Wales’ Collection: (B1977.14.22244, Registers 1 and 2). Many are very delicate, little bigger than thumb-size, so that Wales was working in a scale similar to that of provincial Mughal painters. They included watercolour sketches of the Peshwa’s jewellery, his rosewater vessel, sword hilt and other ornaments and ritual artefacts of the durbar. These drawings provided valuable information for the finished group portrait, complete with colour notes; no.22270, being used for the painting of the Peshwa’s sword in the finished picture. ‘All the spots and diamonds set in gold upon a green ground ... it is a Persian sword made at Isaphan given in a present to the Peshwa by Shinde in 1792 in the Peshwa’s group’.

¹⁰⁷Gangaram’s sketches make up Register Three of the Wales’ Collection: 22248 to 22430 and includes a portrait of ‘a fool named Gangaram’ 22249; as well as the Peshwa 22257.

delineated, a strategy for representation which Gangaram used in a variety of portraits of courtiers and brahmins.(fig. 107) Wales' portrait of the Peshwa reveals little of such a physiognomy; rather the sitter's chin is lengthened and his head placed slightly as though looking down, in order to minimalise the line of his jaw.¹⁰⁸ By this date European notions of anthropometry were coming in to existence; a system which measured race and intelligence by way of a facial angle between the forehead and the jaw. The further the jaw protruded the more backward such peoples were presumed (fig. 103).¹⁰⁹ Unlike Solvyns who sought ethnographic specificity, Wales wished to dignify the Peshwa, thereby indicating the increased schism between portraiture, idealisation and anthropology.¹¹⁰ Hence the Peshwa's painted visage like that of Nana Fadnavis, his left hand man, is long and oval which owes much to Mabon's sketches at the durbar; the artist and his British assistant being remarkably close.¹¹¹

However Wales did engage with Gangaram's Mughal idioms. Soon after his arrival at Pune he recorded that 'in the morning the minister sent me a picture requesting it to be copied'. Likewise he collected Indian miniatures

¹⁰⁸Unlike Gangaram who worked in gouache or Mabon who worked in pencil, Wales seems to have taken likenesses straight on to small canvases, using oils, or at least to have taken his sketches and fixed the sitter's image in his mind soon after appointments in order to create as good a likeness as he could: volume one; f.67 'painted a head upon a small canvas of Nana in order to finish it from the life as an original to finish all his other pictures from'. Adapting a likeness in several ways was a common strategy for British artists working at Indian courts; Zoffany's Asaf ud-Daula reappears in the group scene with Hastings and Jawan Bakht. It was a procedure which saved the painter and sitter trouble once a likeness had been carefully crafted and approved.

¹⁰⁹ This notion was primarily identified with the research of the surgeon Petrus Camper; who is discussed in detailed by Barbara Stafford, *Body Criticism: Imagining the unseen in Enlightenment Art and Medicine* (Cambridge, Mass.,1991) pp.84-118. See also Bernard Smith, *Imagining the Pacific* (New Haven,1992) pp.186-191.

¹¹⁰ C.Pinney, *Camera Indica* (London,1997) pp.76-77.

¹¹¹Comparisons with other likenesses painted at the court reveal that these were not the most satisfactory of Wales's work. His use of pure profile, as a way of enhancing the sitter, was drawn from Mughal portraits. Mabon's sketches 22286, 22270 22273, 22259 22240 of the durbar, and Shinde.

which Gangaram then adapted in to his hybrid idiom using watercolour and western modelling (fig 108).¹¹² The Resident mindful of the future international audiences for Wales' art, noted that, 'much of the world is likely to be indebted to his pencil for knowledge of men, manners and the face of nature in this part of the world'.¹¹³

The 'essence' of western India he believed was imbued through the arts:

India's character which is the very soul of representation in sculpture, in prose or in painting, but I never yet saw the character of the person, physiognomy or the dress of the natives of India preserved in our European pictures. There is much correctness and as much nicety to be observed in the Indian drapery or perhaps more as its character is *minuteness*, than in any of the modes of Europe but once known it is less complex.¹¹⁴

Although British images of India had been exhibiting since the 1760s, as late as the 1790s Malet still felt that British artists had failed in the process of translating India into high art. 'Minuteness' possessed various celebrated and pejorative associations within the realm of British aesthetics, whereby a fine line between sensibility and sensuality was debated by several cultural commentators. It was noted as a primary characteristic of Indian art:

in painting ... they have only exercised themselves in miniature, many of which are highly beautiful in composition and in delicacy of colour; their attempts in this art have also been confined to watercolour as they have laboured under a further disadvantage; of Mohemmadans prohibiting all resemblance of animated nature.¹¹⁵

¹¹²Wales Diary, volume one, f.32.

¹¹³Malet to C.Roberts, December 31,1792 f.59. F/149/1.

¹¹⁴Malet May 12, 1792 anticipating the work of Wales at Pune.(my emphasis) It is significant that he does not know of any British depictions of India, a view that was also being expressed by exhibition critics back in Britain, who lamented the dearth of depictions of Indian customs by returning British artists.

¹¹⁵Hodges, 1793 p.154.

Yet Malet's belief in 'minuteness' as a way of capturing the character of Indian dress, was at odds with Wales' desired academic practice.¹¹⁶ Although associated with sensibility, an intense refinement of feeling and perception through physiological sensations through the nervous system and the eye, from the starker polis of the Academy, (in which Wales situated his work) an art concerned too much with 'minuteness' destroyed both physical and sensual processes of abstraction, deconstructing attempts at elevation and which instead collapsed in to associations with material ostentation, sensual appetite that bound it into the realm of the ignorant and uncultivated, by which it was further devalued.¹¹⁷

Perhaps as an attempt to assert his ideology to the court, Wales ordered a copy of 'the Life of Sir Joshua Reynolds and his Lectures'.¹¹⁸ Wales' own painterly practice (as we shall see from his repeated emphasis on the primacy of the general effect) was heavily influenced by Reynolds, so he attempted to introduce Reynolds' teachings as the 'epitome of European notions of aesthetics', a hierarchy of genres and education, as well as an authority on the status of 'the artist', to this western Indian court.

With such preoccupations in mind, Wales laboured long and hard over his group portrait (fig. 109)

This day I began the large picture containing the Peshwa and his three

¹¹⁶ 'This morning jewels to the amount of near £50,000 were sent to me by Nana Fadnavis to be included into his picture' In consequence, Wales worked hard in order to return them, in case stolen. Numerous sketches of jewels are in the Mabon collection (B.A.C). volume one f.62 October 10, 1792 'painted all day at the pearls upon the Peshwa's picture.'

¹¹⁷For minuteness and its relationship with high art: John Barrell, *The Political Theory of Painting* (London,1986) and for the concept of sensibility and effeminacy: John Mullan, *Sentiment and Sociability* (Oxford,1988) and G.J.Barker-Benfield, *The Culture of Sensibility* (Chicago,1992).

¹¹⁸Wales, volume one, f.34

attendants. This should have at least one more figure more in it to make a good composition. It is expected that one month's constant application to this picture will finish it. Principle: a noble simplicity and grand powerful harmonised effect of the whole before any part of the detail is introduced. The detail is to be introduced with such judgment as to help not to detract the general effect.¹¹⁹

'The manner in which the portraits of the Maratha chiefs are to be painted is first a general effect of broad light and shadow understood and produced ... (yet) neatly finished without imposing the general effect'.¹²⁰ Entangled with stylistic constraints, Wales was troubled by the subject-matter: 'as people of distinction in India are fond of fine or rather rich dresses with watches and snuff boxes, rings etcetera introduced it is no easy matter for an artist to please them without sacrificing the best principles of his art'.¹²¹

Inevitably, his work was closely scrutinised by the court, who permitted him numerous sittings and audiences.¹²² It was they who dictated the terms, carefully planning their dress, poses and desired projection of 'character and biography' and presenting themselves as they wished to be portrayed, 'I was with him (Nana Fadnavis, for) about an hour he put on garments as he wished to be drawn with and was very cheerful'.¹²³ Such tensions also surface in his finished pictures. In the group portrait the dark durbar hall acts as ground to the catchlight and sparkling effects of the jewels and foil to the fall of light on the

¹¹⁹ibid., f.64.

¹²⁰ibid., f.34.

¹²¹Wales Dairy, Volume Four *List of Pictures Begun at Pune*, f.3.

¹²²Wales, volume one, f.41 'worked all day finishing Con Saib's portrait- it is to be taken to the durbar on Wednesday.' f.49 August 10,1792, 'went to Poona and saw the ministers and the Peshwa and showed my painting of Con Saib, the doctor's picture and Sir C[harle]s' miniature- the Peshwa, minister and Hurry Pandit expressed very great satisfaction with my paintings and presented me with shawls.'f.49.

¹²³Volume one, August 15, 1792 f.50. The diary notes sittings throughout August and September.

Peshwa; a common device for the portrayal of Indian princes within the oeuvres of British artists.¹²⁴ Not only did Wales labour over the application of delicate areas of paint, the pigments, binding and drying oils were themselves local and alien, thus altering his methods of laying in.¹²⁵ He carefully restricted his palette to dark green, red, white and gold, which is one way of providing unity, as well as employing thick pigment with a large amount of oil which creates a buttery, softer focus than the intensity of 'minuteness' or Solvyns' scientific rigour. The court is presented full face before the viewer; denotative of a westernisation in self presentation akin to the introduction of large-scale mirrors across India, which also tapped into a nexus of Persian and Urdu associations of divinity through light.¹²⁶

To conclude we look once more to the tensions innate within a surface aesthetic which fetishised eastern luxury. A European fascination with Indian dress and durbar ritual artifacts could only be thinly disguised by a stereotypical condemnation of their role as sensual and luxurious paradigms of such *nawabi* societies.¹²⁷ The Peshwa was:

¹²⁴One way of expressing the general effect through display of pearls, characteristic of the region. and a source of outlawed private trade on the part of Company officials. Malet to Samuel Manesly esq: 'By my situation at this place which is purely political I am precluded from benefiting by your proposal of a joint concern in pearl which I am persuaded might be presented to quiet advantage as I believe this is the best mart in India for that article ... Pearls of all colours, all sizes and all shapes sell here.' Malet Papers F149/55 (OIOC) f.59.

¹²⁵ 'Discovered ultramarine and another curious colour, viz. a green tone burnt and also a white oker.' f.31 'Colours which I found for sale natural ultramarine, greenstone, yellow ochre, black made from cocoanut shell, gold red, rupan, wood oil, poppy oil.' Wales Diary, volume one, f.32

¹²⁶In a precolonial era there existed metal mirrors in India which formed an important symbol of regal and divine sovereignty, see Bayly, 1986 p.291. The ways in which mirrors and full-length mirrors altered notions of the self are extremely complex. In early eighteenth-century Britain both these ways of viewing the self became increasingly important to the polite interior, often possessing the same frames. See my chapter seven for more on mirrors at Indian courts

¹²⁷For a later era and British women artists' perceptions of Indian royalty, see Romita Ray, 'The Mem Sahib's Brush'; Anglo-Indian Women and the Art of the Picturesque, 1830-1880', in J.F.Codell and D.S.Macleod (eds.) *Orientalism Transposed*, (Vermont,1998); pp.89-116. Ray notes that by the Victorian era there was a common fascination in Britain and India for

of a fair complexion and appeared to be about twenty three years of age- his dress consisted of a long *jama* or gown of very fine muslin; a string of very large pearls hung from his neck a long way down his waist; a very fine red shawl with a rich, embroidered border thrown carelessly over his shoulders; his turban was folded in the manner peculiar to the Brahmins, with only this distinction that in front were a cluster of beautiful diamonds the centre one of which was about one inch square of a very fine water. On top of his turban he wore a small curvature of gold about three inches high richly set with emeralds and various precious stones; over the right temple, from the top of the turban hung several strings of pearls, which terminated at bottom by small red tassels.¹²⁸

Mabon's account is dominated by his concentration on the jewelled splendour of the Peshwa's dress, a focus which was echoed by both verbal and other visual depictions of India's royalty.¹²⁹ Whilst this could be fitted in to a discourse of despotism through an excessive love of luxury, the preoccupation with a description of surface details such as dress, did detract from an evaluation of higher virtues and an assessment of the Maratha history and present regime, so that it was British 'viewers' who were seduced, a sensual focus which they evaluated with the nature of Indian society within crude stereotypical perceptual processes.¹³⁰ This opens up an ambivalence of how far such works were under

ornamentation and the aesthetics of ritual. Through detailed drawings transliterated into prints, the British public had the chance to own princely India; *ibid.*, p.99. See also Joanna Punzo Waghorne, *the Raja's Magic Clothes: Revisioning Kingship and Divinity in British India* (1994). In James Wales' case, preparatory drawings were never intended to be published in the way in which Parkinson's drawings of Pacific artefacts had been. Only Colonel Gentil through his use of Awadhi painters built up a similar ethnographic collection of finished pictures. The Daniells and Zoffany also produced private sketches of tools and jewellery but these were never worked into a more finished art form.

¹²⁸Robert Mabon, *Oriental Manners* (Calcutta, 1797) pp.2-3 to accompany plate two.

¹²⁹This is reflected by the many sketches of these three painters; 22266 hilt of Peshwa's sword; 22268 sheaf of sword 222317 big sheet of drawings of jewellery. Mabon also produced several sketches of the durbar.

¹³⁰That a respectable ethnographic interest in Indian jewellery existed can be seen in the many instances in which it was gifted to the Asiatic Society of Bengal; Pauline Lunsingh Scheurleer,

the close scrutiny of the nawabs who demanded that their dress be treated with such splendour; pigment to connote if not denote their material wealth (although the price charged for such pictures, the cost of such novel skills outweighed the price of gold leaf) thus signifying a very different material wealth and worth for the painting; the signifier and the signified elided.

During the first era of empire British artists both created payment disputes as well as forcing their art into a niche within the aesthetic psyche of Indian courts. Thus in terms of representation, techniques and value, there were compromises on both sides. The nawabs wished to be portrayed in all their splendour on canvases to be publicly displayed in their palaces, which whilst demonstrations of power to the 'country people' were from another enunciative angle, ominous signifiers of their entanglements with the East India Company, which would ultimately to lead to their downfall.

'Rich Remains from Social Anthropological Fieldwork in 18th-century India' *Journal of the History of Collections* 8.1, 1996 pp.71-91. Lists of donations to the Asiatic Society appeared in each issue of the *Asiatic Researches*. See also Ray Desmond, *The Indian Museum*, (London,1982).

Chapter Seven: Part I

Diplomacy and Display

Ceremony and Surveillance at Lucknow and Murshidabad, c.1785-1795.

Permit me to call your attention to the peculiar circumstances of disgrace in which the whole country must see me involved. I, whose predecessors possessed the government ... have no authority in the very city of my residence.¹

The final stage in early imperial art trafficking consisted in the digestion of a diversity of British art by *nawabi* courts. Such processes were refracted through Indian court art, aesthetic perceptions and through colonial art in multivalent ways interpreted and misinterpreted as accommodation, resistance, imposition and rejection. This area has yet to attract much scholarly interest. Neither the relationship between sovereignty as represented in colonial and Mughal art, nor such imagery as an accoutrement of suzerainty through its display and diffraction, have been much investigated.² I shall focus primarily on the court at Murshidabad, which fell under Company control in the 1760s, whose artistic attitudes will be compared to a court fighting to retain independence from the Company - Lucknow, in order to evaluate the dialectic between art and political expansion as situated within a wider Mughal artistic

¹The Bengal Nawab Mubarek ud-Daula to the Court of Directors, H/584.

²It is the work of Ratnabali Chatterjee which is the exception. See her *From the Karkhana to the Studio* (Delhi, 1990) pp.10-44.

arena.³ (Map 1)

Although in a pre-colonial era these two courts had been culturally linked, exchanging artists and possessing of a strong Shi'ite cultural identity, under the influence of British rule in Bengal their attitudes towards the visual arts evolved in very different directions.⁴ The two most noted painters to work in each court were George Farington and Johann Zoffany who unlike their predecessors, created 'semi-ethnographic' depictions of courtly ritual attempting either to hit to the heart of each court's notions of identity, or to signify within the stereotypes of the colonial state.⁵ The ensuing colonial representations of

³Research for this chapter has been based primarily on two field trips to Murshidabad; spring and summer 1998. I am extremely grateful to the National Archaeological Survey of India and the curator of the Hazarduari Palace, (the royal collection at Murshidabad) for allowing me access to the royal library and the reserve art collection, as well as to photograph images from the collections. Under the present curator, the Hazarduari collection has been recatalogued and reorganised. For information concerning Murshidabad's past and present art collections I am indebted to Aran Ghosh, Victoria Memorial, Professor Qamaruddin and Ratnabali Chatterjee, Islamic History Department, Calcutta University. With the establishment of the imperial art gallery Victoria Memorial in the first years of the twentieth century, valuable illuminated Mughal manuscripts were transferred from the Hazarduari Palace. However Murshidabad remained an important repository for provincial Mughal art well into the 1960s; when private collections were being sold off by Armenian art dealers: I am grateful to R.P.Gupta for this information; interview Spring, 1998. The other principal collection of Murshidabad art in Calcutta is the reserve collection of the Indian Museum. The Asutosh Museum, Calcutta University, the Fine Arts Academy Calcutta, The India Office and the V&A also house important collections of Murshidabad art. See also S.C.Welsh, *Room For Wonder: Indian Painting during the British Period* (London, 1978).

⁴These were the only two sites where representations of court rituals were produced by British artists during this era. For Murshidabad see J.H.T. Walsh, *A History of the Murshidabad District* (London, 1902), A.Claude Campbell, *Glimpses of Bengal* volume one (Calcutta, 1907), A.M.Khan, *Transition in Bengal* (Cambridge, 1969), K.Mohsin, *A Bengal District in Transition Murshidabad, 1765-1793* (Dacca, 1973) N.Majumdar, *Justice and Police in Bengal, 1765-1793: A Study of the Nizamat in Decline* (Calcutta, 1960). For Lucknow see A.Sharar, *Lucknow: the Last Phase in an Oriental Culture* (Lucknow, 1875), Richard Barnett, *North India Between Empires: Awadh and the British 1720-1801* (Berkeley, 1980), Michael Fisher, *A Clash of Cultures* (Riverdale, 1987) and Rosie Llewellyn-Jones, *A Fatal Friendship* (Delhi, 1985), *A Very Ingenious Man* (Delhi, 1992) and *Engaging Scoundrels* (Delhi, 2000). For the Shi'ite identity of both cities see Juan Cole, *The Roots of North Indian Shi'itism Iraq, Iran: Religion and State in Awadh 1772-1859* (Berkeley, 1988) and Richard M. Eaton, *The Rise of Islam and the Bengal Frontier, 1704-1760* (1993).

⁵On his way to Lucknow Zoffany stopped in Murshidabad and Archer suggests that Farington through his patron Robert Pott, British Resident at the Murshidabad Durbar (1785-7) may have travelled to Lucknow, so they must have met. M.Archer, *India and British Portraiture 1770-1825* (London, 1979) pp.125-126 Their imagery at each site is directly contemporary, focused on the era 1785-8. It seems that both possessed an interest in ethnographic subject matter and were

Lucknow and Murshidabad could not have been more different in the manner in which they inverted and qualified the courts' notions of symbology. Whilst at Lucknow, the nawab's Shi'ite identity was further asserted through his own painters' depictions of the commemoration of Muharram, at Murshidabad the Company's control of the household expenses of the court stripped its ability to maintain a *karkhana* of artists who left for the uncertainties of colonial Calcutta.

After Clive's accession to the *diwani* in 1765, Murshidabad fell under the jurisdiction and onto the pay-roll of the East India Company. Although Calcutta became the administrative capital of Bengal, the British retained the Nawab's court as a focal point in the Company polity, the Nawab at least nominally retaining control of the *Nizamat* (law and order branch of government) as a legitimising token for Company government.⁶ From the perspective of Indian and French commentators, the young nawab Mubarek ud-Daula, was harshly treated: placed under the protection of a hostile 'stepmother', imprisoned within the harem and forced to learn English.⁷

Once described by Clive as larger and more prosperous than London, Murshidabad was run down by Hastings' administration within fifteen years.⁸

glad to be away from Calcutta's portrait commissions.

⁶We have already seen that Hastings desired British sovereignty in Bengal and went so far as to draw up plan which would bypass direct Company rule; Neil Sen, 'Hastings and British Sovereignty in Bengal, 1774-1780' *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 25.1 27.3 (January 1997) pp.59-81 and P.J.Marshall, 'The Making of an Imperial Icon' *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* (September,1999). However we now have to examine the space forged for the Bengal nawabs; whilst retaining certain forms of their power, these were reconfigured through the loss of administrative rights. As we shall see, the assignment of new meanings to older forms as well as 'updating' such rituals and attributes of kingship were extremely complex.

⁷Details of the Company's policies in relation to Murshidabad are noted in *Murshidabad Affairs, 1821-50, Records from the Berampore Collectorate*, (Calcutta,1995) pp.1-9. See also Jean Deloche (ed.) *Voyage en Indie du Comte de Modave, 1773-1776* (Paris,1976) p.117.

⁸Lord Clive in the 1750s noted that 'The city of Murshidabad is as extensive, populous and rich as the city of London', M and W.G.Archer, *Indian Painting for the British* (London,1955) p.22 James Rennell, in his survey of India, *Memoirs of a Map of Hindustan*, (London,1788) p.12

Not only through drastic cuts in the nawab's household allowance, but also through colonial jurisdiction of Murshidabad the British restricted the nawab's ability to display any real sense of suzerainty.⁹ The Governor-General aimed to 'bring the whole expenditure of the Nizamat within the pale of sixteen lakhs, it was necessary to begin with reforming the useless servants of the court and retrenching the idle parade of elephants, menageries which loaded the civil list. This cost little regret in performing'.¹⁰ Hastings expressed real contempt for the court through a deployment of orientalist stereotypes: 'every addition then would be so much wasted on a band of parasites and sycophants or be hoarded up; a consequence still more pernicious to the Company'.¹¹

Hastings created an internal division within the Nizamat by appointing personnel with opposed interests.¹² In 1778 when the nawab came of age, he desired direct control of the *Nizamat* affairs but his pleas were ignored by the British who three years later were satisfied his position was so weak that they removed his European and sepoy bodyguard and by 1792 the last residue of Mubarek's civic administrative power was destroyed as the *Faujdari* courts were overtly transferred to Calcutta.¹³ Cornwallis complained of 'the nabob's

described Murshidabad in 1781 as 'a modern city and does not contain any magnificent buildings either private or public ... the city is now decaying, especially since the removal of the Board of Revenue to Calcutta in 1771'.

⁹ Hastings' ruthless cost-cutting and power-curbing at Murshidabad in the early part of his governorship are best described in A.M.Khan 1969 chapter ten. For contemporary histories, Ghulam Hussein, *The Siyar Mutaqherin: History of Modern Times* (Calcutta, 1789) three volumes and selections contained within J.Sarkar, *Bengal Nawabs*, (Calcutta, 1952).

¹⁰Hastings Papers BL: Add Ms 29,105, pp.191-3 November 11, 1771.

¹¹H/584, April 4, 1771.

¹²Nandkumar's son was assigned as diwan to the nawab's guardian, his step mother Munni Begum, an enemy of the deputy suba Nawab Reza Khan, ensuring that there would be no insurrection against the British as the nawab's household was divided.

¹³The nawab's finances were reduced to such a level that even the Court of Directors wished to raise his stipend. By 1786 the nawab's debt was as much as 3 lakhs, owed not only to the Company but also to local merchant dynasties such as the Setts.

inattention to business, considered him to be a dupe to designing men and feared it will be necessary to leave him to his fate'.¹⁴ Hence Mubarek ud-Daula was maintained, altered, managed and then discarded, as part of a systematic, if awkwardly developing set of colonial priorities, which begs issue of Murshidabad as an experimentation ground or blue-print for methods of subverting other indigenous elites.

In terms of the court's art patronage, from the early 1740s until the mid 1760s, the provincial Mughal school at Murshidabad enjoyed a relatively brief but brilliant efflorescence.¹⁵ Robert Skelton investigated the growth of a lively regional school of painting instigated under the regime of Murshid Quli Khan in the 1720s, which reached fruition under the direction of the nawabs Alivardi Khan and Mir Qasim.¹⁶ However he ignored any impact of colonialism on these painters and the pioneering work of the Archers transforms this encounter into a wholly positive dialectic. 'As patronage by Indian society diminished, it was natural that Murshidabad artists should look for their livelihood to these new residents and visitors'.¹⁷ In contrast, Ratnabali Chatterjee's long-term work on Murshidabad, investigates a transmogrification of nawabi consumption patterns which was entirely destructive in intention and effects.¹⁸

¹⁴H/584, f.39

¹⁵The seminal work of Robert Skelton set the tone for many of these studies. See his 'Murshidabad Painting', *Marg* 1956 X (Bombay,1956) pp.10-21. See also *Arts of Bengal*, (Whitechapel,1979) and R.Chatterjee, 'The non-indigenous sources of paintings in Bengal, 13th-18th Centuries' pp.22-30 and J.Chakrabarti, 'Indigenous Sources of Paintings in Bengal, 13th-18th centuries', pp.14-21, in *Indian Museum Bulletin XXIII & XXIV*, (1988-9)

¹⁶Murshidabad received its name from Murshid Quli Khan who moved the capital of the Mughal suba of Bengal away from Dacca in 1703. Although he was renowned for his extensive building programmes and 'Mughalisation' of the region, no miniatures can now be securely dated from his era. It was Alivardi Khan (1740-56) who provided great patronage for the evolution of a Mughal school of art, with its cold moonlit scenes who attracted artists from Delhi; *The Arts of Bengal*, p.21.

¹⁷M.Archer, *Company Paintings in the India Office*, (London,1972) p.59.

¹⁸R.Chatterjee,1990 pp.20-36.

At the time as Murshidabad painters were forced to quit the city, British prints and portrait commissions trickled to the nawab's court, ultimately transmuting its artistic idioms and notions of taste. On one level, the gifting of these British pictures was intended as a form of 'cultural compensation' for the economic hardship suffered by the Bengal royal family, who could only retain a fraction of their former retinue of artists, yet their presence created a battleground for competing notions of regal representation.¹⁹ The British artist who spent several years at Murshidabad, George Farington whose portrayals of festivals reinforced *de jure* patrimonial rites, whilst imposing European perspective and compositional hierarchies which hit to the heart of Mughal modes of seeing.²⁰

Although now all of Farington's oils are lost, from a series of Murshidabad artists' copies and colonial eyewitness accounts of his pictures, it is possible to trace distinct compositional continuities.²¹ The very fact that colonial oil painting was so prone to decay and so unenthusiastically received in white Calcutta, highlights its very different role in nawabi spaces. Farington's paintings proffered profound effects on local Indian limners; residues of his work held within their visual memory long after direct influence had faded.

The sales of the art of the former Murshidabad Resident Robert Pott and of Mr. Sallah (Berampore merchant) left between them well over one hundred

¹⁹Ghulam Hussain, 1789 volume three pp.203-4: 'Thousands of artificers can not earn enough to support their families ... because their arts and calling are of no use to the British'.

²⁰Farington's works are now only known through an oil in the Hazarduari Palace and two series of Murshidabad artists' copies in V&A and India Office : IS 11:3-14 1887. Kettle was the first professional artist at Murshidabad in 1774, but most British artists seem to have passed Murshidabad by, on their river trips to more lucrative commissions at Lucknow.

²¹Archer, 1979 pp.124-125.

and fifty works by Farington including several oils: *Nautch, Gentlemen and Elephants, View of the Chowk Gate at Murshidabad with a part of the Nawab's Guard, a Matchlock and a Spearman, the Family of Mozzuffer Jung, and two Views of the Durbar at Murshidabad, one large*, as well as nearly one of his hundred sketches.²² Thus it is possible to gauge the variety of 'ethnographic' work Farington was tackling; the durbar and *chowk* which included portraits of the nawab and royal ceremonies, the prevalent subjects.²³

Whilst Farington, at the request of the successive staunch Hastingsnites, Residents John d'Oyly and Robert Pott, was suspending Mubarek-ud-Daulah at the centre of ostentatious ceremonies, the ruler's sense of frustration was being expressed to the Company; that his income was now insufficient to support religious festivals and that his palace was falling into disrepair.²⁴ 'Although my rank and dignity are well known throughout Hindustan yet as it is equally known that I am so intimately connected with the Company that our credit is inseparably blended, should matters of ... importance be neglected it will reflect disgrace not on me alone, but on the Company'.²⁵

Thus Farington's typographical topography concentrated on the political sources of contention of Mubarek ud-Daulah's 'reign'. *The Nawab Mubarek ud-Daula proceeding to the Chowk Mosque for the Festival of Bakr Id*, Murshidabad artist after George Farington, c.1790 (figs 111-114, 125, 126)

²² *Calcutta Gazette* November 26, 1795; The estate of Mr. Sallah L/AG/34/27/18 - 1795.

²³ An early twentieth-Century copy of *the Nawab Celebrating Bakr Id at the Chowk Mosque*, hangs in the Hazarduari Palace. Much of the palace's original collection is destroyed or damaged, remaining images are held in the Reserve Collection. Its existence confirms that Farington was painting his depictions of festivals for both the British Resident and the Nawab.

²⁴ Letters to Court of Directors, H/584, p.31, 1786, Bengal Public Consultations, 1790

²⁵ *ibid.*, p.31.

depicts the nawab as the axis of a procession of *zemindars*, body-guards and mounted sepoy moving through a prosperous square towards the entrance of the royal mosque, to the drumming and trumpeting of the Naubat Khana (figs 111, 112). The focus on Indian ceremony set within a topographically specific space marked a departure from both Mughal art and colonial views of Calcutta, as well as instigating representational strategies which would appear variously in both the works of other British artists most notably Zoffany's *Embassy of Hyder Beg Khan* (fig.94) Home and the Daniells' staffage, as well as influencing the direction taken by Company imagery.²⁶ In terms of European artistic precedents, Farington's work is perhaps most closely linked to Gentile Bellini's *View of Piazza San Marco- procession*, which with its 'Orientalised' architecture, the Bellinis' link to the Ottoman empire and the importance of the Venetian school to British artistic debate, created a barrage of associations. The choice of a regal procession in order to display both the nature of indigenous sovereignty and its relationship with British rule, also signified a peculiar form of 'colonial benevolence' - especially when such pageants had been abolished by the Company at Patna.²⁷

The *chowk* itself had once been a flourishing emporium, 'where people assembled to sell horses, wild and tame, fowl, singing birds and almost every product and manufacture of India' so that its control by the Company and their redirection of trading routes catapulted the *chowk* to an arena of conflict, where

²⁶For illustrations of Home and Zoffany's parades see Archer, 1979 pp. and for the Daniells see Maurice Shellim. The representation of great pageants against topographical backdrops became an important component of an evolving Raj iconography by the end of the nineteenth century. Jan Morris, *Stones of the Raj* (London,1994) and T.R.Metcalf, *Ideologies of the Raj* (Cambridge,1995) chapter three.

²⁷See my chapter five for a discussion of this aspect of Company sovereignty.

Munni Begum and later the nawab disputed with the British over the rights of control.²⁸ Simultaneously, the presence of sepoy and the translation of such political expression into British art, instigated a precise and intense framework of colonial surveillance, which inextricably altered such rites' inherent meanings.²⁹ Juxtaposing such wrangles, the *chowk* was also cause for wonder:

I was dazzled by the glittering appearance of the Nawab, and all his train, amounting to about three thousand attendants, proceeding in solemn state from his palace to the temple. They formed in splendour and richness of attire one of the most brilliant processions I ever beheld. The Nawab was carried on a beautiful pavilion by sixteen men in red uniforms ... Before and behind him moved in great pomp of ceremony, a great number of pages and near his person slowly advanced his lifeguard, mounted on horses; all in a style of unrivalled elegance; the very earth with expanding blossom, poured out her treasures to deck them; and the artisan essayed his utmost skill to furnish their trappings.³⁰

Behind such panegyric lay complex struggles for power. In the fifteen year interim between Dean Mohamed's account and Farington's painting, the drastic cuts placed on the nawab's expenses, reveal an indigenous elite clinging to a

²⁸M.Fisher (ed.) *Dean Mohamed, the First Indian Author in English* (Delhi,1996) p.39. The square was rent free but not its shops. Munni Begum sent a petition to Cornwallis, that shops contributed to mosque ceremonies and its upkeep and thus enjoyed royal household patronage which opposed colonial notions of public property: BOR p-s 1795-9 range R/89/21 -22; cited in Sudipta Sen, *An Empire of Free Trade*, (Pennsylvania,1998) p.149.

²⁹Sepoys often signify ambivalently as staffage in British art during this era; as a way of naturalising Company rule; as in Hodges' *View of the Fort of Bidejegur, 1782* (Yale Centre for British Art) where a red coated sepoy stands by a British cannon along the ridge where the British attacked Cheit Singh's hideout in 1781. Increasingly, they appeared in topographical views of Calcutta thus displacing the presence of red coated Company officers; again in Hodges' *View of the Esplanade from Fort William*, c.1782-5. From the perspective of Company and late Provincial Mughal art, C.A.Bayly (ed.) *The Raj: India and the British, 1600-1947* (London,1990) p.133 suggests that Britons or sepoy appear as the rulers' personal retainers, adding loyalty and power to the courts depicted. For the complexity of the formation and administration of sepoy see Seema Alavi, *The Sepoys and the Company*, (Delhi,1995). See also R.Barthes, *Mythologies* trans. Annette Lavers (London,1972) p.116-118.

³⁰Fisher, 1996, pp.40-41.

rhetoric of power.³¹

It is possible that this signified a ‘strangely reversed relationship between the substance and the trappings of rule’ where fabulous rituals were ‘ends in themselves’.³² Yet drawing binary oppositions between power and symbolism are too crude; if Murshidabad had lost its administrative clout, it still retained the role of Shi’ite capital of Bengal and as Nicholas Dirks has suggested, kings were not so much hollowed as hallowed; they still held sway over brahmins and other social groups in complex, malleable ways.³³

‘The road ... which is about three miles was illuminated with lamps representing verse from the Koran, mosques and trees. Nearly three thousand persons were employed on these occasions’.³⁴ However under colonial patronage, such festivities were increasingly removed from the political forum to the aesthetic sphere thus affecting the status and perception of indigenous painters. Murshidabad’s royal artists were ousted from the picture. They no longer produced the plethora of grand mica festivals lamps, but rather a sparse number of small mica images for the British, which instead of being integral to such ceremonies now depict such events from a ‘disinterested’ stance, employing a mode of vision designed to be complicit with imperialism.³⁵ At the

³¹Most of the earliest European travel accounts of visits to Murshidabad either also focus on religious festivals; see William Hodges, *Travels in India during the Years 1780, 1781, 1782 and 1783* (London, 1793) p.34 and the manuscript diary of William Daniell, 1789 (OIOC loan). However this contrasted sharply with the Shi’ite elite who bemoaned the loss of splendour.

³² Clifford Geertz, *Negara: The Theatre State in 19th-century Bali* (Princeton, 1980) p.13. N.Thomas, *Colonialism’s Culture* (Oxford, 1994) pp.90-94.

³³N.Dirks, ‘Castes of Mind’ *Representations* 37 (Winter, 1992) and Arjun Appaduari, *Worship and Conflict: A South Indian Temple* (Oxford, 1983) which argues that the Company became more interventionist in its surveillance of Hinduism and Radhika Singha, *A Despotism of Law* (Delhi, 1998) for the Company’s intervention into religious matters.

³⁴*Riyaz al-Salatin* pp.282-283.

³⁵M.Archer, *Company School Painting* (London, 1972) p.61. gives examples of Company paintings on mica in the India Office Prints and Drawings Collections which often focussed on depictions of *sati* and hook swinging. In at least one example, the spectators are all represented

same time, such imagery acted as an *aide-memoire*; so that Britons could now own a piece of princely India, if through the appropriating extension of visual representation rather than through associations attached to a ritualistic object such as a mica lamp. Thus from the ornamentation of lamps with generic mosques and trees which hung on banners and branches lining the routes to the mosque, imagery become topographically specific, although now divorced from any involvement within the geographical locale, in the relocation of boundaries between subject and object.

Farington's royal pictures were preoccupied with a limited imperial empiricism, which went little beyond a concern with 'surface aesthetics', portraying the glitter of the pageant, rather than the interiors of mosques and temples where sacred rites took place, which were the subject of late Mughal and early Company art. Such presentation trivialises kingship to a pageant, rather than providing an ethnographic interpretation of the profundity of its involvement as part of religious ceremony.³⁶

The East India Company sought to overlay an aesthetic sphere (although far from rounded) as an arena in which to project its 'universal' notions of aesthetic appreciation, to be shared by Britons and Bengalis alike:

from the back, which has parallels with the works of Solvyns such as *Chepauk Puja* (fig 000). Thus we see the production of a very distinct form of imagery, as painters became isolated from a ritualistic involvement in the production of imagery and are made at least superficially complicit with a colonial view point (which in turn was influenced by such art and its information).

³⁶ Again we see a form of colonial ethnography focussed on royalty which is based on surface aesthetics rather than on deep sociological knowledge. Mark Harrison, *Climate and Constitution* (Delhi, 1999) p.12 'Both race and sex were products of deep forms of knowledge, such as pathological anatomy which began to emerge at the end of the eighteenth century in contrast to a Linnaean form of natural history which was concerned with classification on the basis of surface appearance'. See also J.Pickstone, 'Ways of Knowing: Towards a Historical Sociology of Science, Technology and Medicine' *British Journal for the History of Science*, 26, (1993) pp.433-459 and Sara Suleri, 'The Feminine Picturesque' *The Rhetoric of English India* (Chicago, 1992).

whenever we ascribe to him (our companion) the qualities of taste and good judgment ... the expression of a picture ... all the general subjects of science and taste are what we and our companion regard as having no particular relation to either of us. We both look at them *from the same point of view*, and we have no occasion for sympathy, or for that imaginary change of situations from which it arises, in order to produce with regards to these the most perfect harmony of sentiments and affections.³⁷

Sympathy through artistic perception could be transposed to India. As we have seen, as early as 1762, the relationship between the Bengal nawab and the Company occupied a crucial space in British artistic perceptions of India.

Maintaining such 'good relations' through artistic representation extended also to patronage. For the nawab and the Resident Farington painted several versions of at least one of his oils, which constructed a powerful ideology of solidarity. *The Meeting of the Resident Sir John d'Oyly and Nawab Mubarek ud-Daulah*, Murshidabad artist after Farington's picture of 1785 (figs 113, 114) attempts to create a hybrid imagery of kinship, which embraced distinct court and colonial viewing publics; where artistic models were cognisable but not identical to the customs of each culture. The duplication of pictures neutralised some of the 'inequalities' of the gifting cycle, thereby altering the power structures innate in such exchanges. Here the Resident takes centre stage - the 'hand of friendship' prevails, against a capriccio architectural backdrop where the chowk mosque is framed by a gateway.³⁸

³⁷ Adam Smith, *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*, (London, 1759) p.19. (my emphasis)

³⁸ The two versions of this scene illustrated here utilise the same architectural structure, three bays to signify in different ways; as gateway to the chowk or as entrance to the palace. The latter is painted in a much brighter and broader way with many other subtle differences to the former such as the Resident is plumped out and his legs are no longer crossed; may be this is Robert Pott who is represented rather than John D'Oyly.

The British paid the nawab the highest ‘compliment’, by extending and suggesting shared modes of good taste (and by association similar ethical standards).³⁹ Additional to viewing the same pictures, occupying the same canvas space created a potent epistemology of ‘orientalist empiricism’ which captured both shared representational strategies as well as exchange and circulation. However this often meant the deployment of fanciful compositions and portrait types to achieve the desired effect, as well as appealing to the Anglicisation of taste.⁴⁰ Mubarek ud-daula was being incorporated within colonial cultural ideologies through the medium of British artistic idioms and an English language education, which whilst intended to filter British ideological aims into his political and cultural views also deemed them sufficiently hybrid to win neither respect from a conservative elite nor from the British.⁴¹ However the overall picture was one of dereliction, ‘we can say little of the nabob himself, he seems to betray a mind more neglected than really deficient at bottom’.⁴²

After his death, the impact of Farington’s imagery reverberated in many other unexpected directions. At the court of Murshidabad, the nawab was

³⁹This became a common strategy for the role of Residential commissions at Indian courts, the most famous example being Hastings’ commission of the *Cock Match* from Zoffany at the court of Lucknow in 1784. A second version was painted for the nawab which is now lost. In Britain, ordering a copy of a portrait was a standard way of expressing one’s loyalty to the sitter, thus creating networks of imagery and political allegiances.

⁴⁰George Carter accompanied Cornwallis on an official tour to Murshidabad in 1787: ‘Mr. Carter was never more happy than in the composition of his present picture of the meeting of Lord Cornwallis and the nabob of Bengal ... It is a wonderful scene altogether and does him great credit. Public report gave this picture to the king or to the Company but we hear from very good information that Mr. Carter was commissioned for it by the nabob himself, previous to his leaving Calcutta and went up to his court to paint him, his son and Raja Sunderfinck his Prime Minister’. Archer, 1979 pp.275-276 and p.279.

⁴¹Gauri Viswanathan, *Masks of Conquest: Literary Study and British Rule in India* (New York, 1989).

⁴²H/584, 1775.

redelineated through as aesthetic idiom which had long been associated with the imperial court at Delhi. The manuscript illumination to emerge as a result of this, had never flourished in Murshidabad prior to Company rule. It can be said to function as a visualisation of the nostalgia, if not of the essential depression associated with *Inqalib*. An illustrated version of the well known tale *Nal wa Daman*, c.1790 (fig. 115) situates the narrative within the modern setting of the Murshidabad court, which, crowded with local notables, contradicts both imperial reforms on the part of the Company and modes of looking instigated by Farington.⁴³ It is an attempt to redress the balance, or at least to complement the heathen art of the British, by projecting established artistic and religious readings through the depiction of a cultural life devoid of colonial ways of seeing.⁴⁴ Its durbar scenes recall the *puniyah*, when the *zemindars* of Bengal travelled to Murshidabad to pay their annual land rents to the nawab, the splendour of such an occasion is signified by the lavish use of gold leaf; a luxury which the court could now ill afford; reminiscent of the grandeur of Alivardi Khan's regime as celebrated by contemporary chroniclers as a Golden Age when gold defined ritualistic dress, gold thread robes and surcoats, nazr, jewellery as prestation - the material in and of ritual and its pictorial representation.⁴⁵ 'When the *Puniya* assembly was being held in the palace the nawab was seated under a

⁴³*Nal wa Daman*, was gifted by the then current Nawab to the Victoria Memorial in 1904 (VM ref C.325) I am grateful to Ratnabali Chatterjee and Tapati Guha-Thakurta for invaluable information concerning this manuscript; conversation spring 1998. The manuscript is inscribed with the seal of Akbar's court, thus it was of the highest quality, which may have been one reason for giving it 'epic' illustrations; as large-scale pictures were peculiarly associated with Akbar's regime and his chronicles such as the *Akbarnama*.

⁴⁴It included battle and durbar scenes in the form of a visual modern history, equivalent to the *Siyar Mutaqherin* or the *Muzzafarnama*. Thus we see the same subjects appearing across a wide range of Company and Mughal art during this era; in the OIOC there are numerous examples of series of rulers involved in recent history commissioned or at least bought by the British.

⁴⁵McLane, 1993 pp.48, 96-8, 107-112.

canopy of gold embroidered cloth supported by gold plated poles on a richly embroidered cushion with a gold embroidered bolster'.⁴⁶

Intended for private circulation amongst the nawab's closest allies, *Nalwa Daman* reinscribed Akbarian ways of seeing to provide an exclusive art as opposed to Farington's oils; two competing styles which played on shifting notions of what constituted 'public' identity, kingship, the form and function of 'art'. Forced to accept British habits of interior decoration, the court adopted a form of distinction that excluded colonial interference as defined by its insistence on surveillance.

In this era of transition we must consider whether the nawab could really incorporate such different modes of Mughal and British art into a choate kingship in the process of transformation. Whilst a source of strength for Calcutta's *babus*, who sought an eclecticism, the lack of clearly focussed art and ruling ideology proved critical for Bengal's royal family. However a 'hybrid' royal art which sought to resolve some of the differences between European and Bengali art did come into being, best epitomised by a group of portraits of the Bengal nawabs where local artists attempted to comprehend the alien portrait schemata of the British.⁴⁷ *Mubarek ud-Daula*, c.1785, Murshidabad artist (fig 116) owes its influence to British portraiture indicated by the addition of large amounts of oil to the gouache pigments simulates the effects of oil paint, affecting the method of laying in; broad brush strokes indicating folds on the Nawab's robes, yellow being used instead of gold leaf to simulate the sparkle of

⁴⁶Yusuf Ali, *'Ahwa'l-i-Mahabat Jang*, quoted in Sarkar, 1952 p.154.

⁴⁷This collection is now divided between a first floor gallery space and the Reserve Collection of the Hazarduari Palace. I am grateful to the Curator and the National State Archaeological Survey, New Delhi, for allowing me to view and photograph these images.

his jewelled crown and necklaces.⁴⁸ However, the application of colour is carried out in a traditional manner which jars with the heavy new pigment, which destroys the luminosity of earlier portraits. The scale of the likeness is dramatically increased to simulate the effects of bust-length oil portraits (albeit painted on paper rather than canvas) intended for public display; a thickly coloured paper support decorated with a European floriate motif, mimicking the gilded wooden frames used by the British.

The artist is interested in the effects of size and pose, but also adjusts his medium and technique to accommodate a genre caught between the values of an old regime and the ensuing influence of British rule. Yet this portrait exhibits not so much improvisation as a transliteration of British artistic values up to a carefully demarcated point, under the close scrutiny of the nawab. The acknowledgment of colonial frames of representation also affects the self-conception on the part of the sitter. Whilst Mughal likenesses of his predecessors had depicted them in profile, in simple dress, on cold moonlit terraces in front of the River Bhagirithi, Mubarek ud-Daula is coroneted and highly ornamented. In actuality the crown jewels were being pawned off and had to be borrowed for ceremonious occasions, as suzerainty became more directly associated with occasional as opposed to quotidian public ritual and the need to assert a form of authority in the face of diminishing power.⁴⁹ Thus the nawab was playing his trump card: still *de jure* sovereign and magnet for religious

⁴⁸ *Calendar of Persian Correspondence*, November, 1774, quoted in Archer, 1979, p.124.

⁴⁹ In 1802 Lord Valentia noted that the nawab Nazim ul-Mulk, was decked in emeralds and diamonds but none of these belonged to the nawab, as they had been pawned and those who held them in pledge, were waiting to claim them in the nawab's palace, which takes notions of a 'hollow crown' to another level; cited by Chatterjee, 1990, p.28.

festivals in Bengal, he possessed at least some of the traditional trappings of sovereignty, which the Company in its military expansion and centralising bureaucratic drive did not, could not adopt.

In fine, Murshidabad accommodated and experimented with multiple kingship representations. Yet it should also be noted that such creative strategies which attempt to articulate the nawab's shifting power and exposure to colonial aesthetics, only amounted to a fraction of artistic perception (if no longer production).⁵⁰ Murshidabad's taste had never been stagnant and British art in terms of form and function, was assigned specific spaces.⁵¹ There is evidence of artistic exchange of painters between Bengal and Awadh from the 1750s into the nineteenth century.⁵² Such interaction generated a variety of cross fertilisations including an intense realism associated with the group of painters which included Dip Chand, Mir Chand and Nevasai Lal, which has too often be assigned as being the product of Kettle's work at Faizabad rather than as a dynamic regional Mughal school with its own meticulous idioms which had evolved from a much more dilute, long term and complex engagement with a variety of Europeanised and high Mughal idioms. *An Imperial Procession through Awadh*, Faizabad artist, c. 1770 (fig. 117) with its high viewing stance, one-point perspective, cool tones and delicate clouds, shadows, tonal painting,

⁵⁰There are fundamental difficulties in situating Murshidabad art influenced in some way by British art within a Mughal orbit during this era as now the Bengal royal family's collection has been dispersed. From a number of valuable articles contained within the Indian Museum; special Murshidabad edition, an enormous amount of Bengali art such as palm leaf manuscripts remained uninfluenced by colonial imagery in any way. This is borne out by collections of folk and provincial Mughal art such as that of the Asutosh Museum, Calcutta University.

⁵¹See Gauvin Bailey for a precolonial era: *Counter Reformation Imagery and Allegory in Mughal Painting*, (unpublished Ph.D. Harvard, 1996).

⁵²Archer and Falk, 1981 pp.192-193, R.C.Sharma, 'Awadh Style of Painting and Bengal' in the Indian Museum Bulletin, 1988 pp.72-76; Sharma, 'Awadh School of Painting' Indian Museum Bulletin xix 1984 p.14.

and reflections, predates Kettle's appearance at Faizabad. Its overview and situation of the procession within a wide landscape contrasted sharply with later Company views of Murshidabad's chowk; literally the only territory where the nawab could exercise his sovereignty. Across Awadh and Bengal a distinct cross regional art digested and internalised British pictorial values to formulate a new style of court art.⁵³

In 1780s Lucknow, British painters represented the nawab in very different ways from Mubarek ud-Daula. My discussion of Zoffany's Lucknow *oeuvre* will focus on what is perhaps now perceived as the most 'iconic' representation of early colonialism; *The Cock Match* (fig 118).⁵⁴ Why did Zoffany not depict the nawab within a civic role, such as the celebration of *Muharram* or *Holi* which confirmed his rule as leader within a similar vein to Farington's work at Murshidabad? After all painters such as Humphry and the Daniells attended such festivals and Zoffany's sketches depicted a range of specifically Indian customs.⁵⁵ At Lucknow the politics of ceremony, the evolution of Company school painting and the aesthetic agenda of British art were even directly opposed to their role in Bengal. Asaf ud-Daula refused to pay for over-priced portraits and he played the British at their own game, through an oft-intimidating as well as subtle use of images which nagged at diplomatic

⁵³I am grateful to Tapati Guha-Thakurta for this suggestion; May, 1999.

⁵⁴Bayly, 1990 catalogue entry 136: Earlom's print after *the Cock Match*. See also E.Cotton, 'Zoffany's Cock Match' *Bengal Past and Present* 27 (April to June 1924) pp.223-224 and his 'Zoffany's Cock Match: Two Versions' *Bengal Past and Present* 37 (October to December 1928) pp.127-135. See also Archer, 1979 pp.143-154 and Mary Webster, 'The Mystery of the Lucknow Cock Fight' *Country Life* (1973) pp.588-589 and her *Johann Zoffany, 1733-1810* (London,1976).

⁵⁵For example, the diary of William Daniell at Lucknow August 28, 1789 reveals that he attended festivities for Muharram at Lucknow. See also the Lucknow Diary of Ozias Humphry Eur Ms Photo 43 OIOC ff.12-13.

propriety.⁵⁶ He commissioned views of Lucknow from the Daniells after seeing their Calcutta prints, but judging the result, which the painters (hoping for great rewards) had laboured over during the monsoon rains, refused direct patronage, maintaining his rights as great ruler to reserve his munificence.⁵⁷

Ozias Humphry's remarks concerning royal sittings, reveal that he expected Asaf ud-Daula to be bored and bad tempered at such a prospect.⁵⁸ In addition his diaries disclose that he and Smith were always received at one of the nawab's garden houses, away from the heart of Lucknow government, no doubt a precautionary measure in case these painters were in fact spies, feigning ignorance of Persian and Urdu whilst actually after aural or graphic espionage material.⁵⁹ No British artist was satisfied with his treatment at the hands of the court of Lucknow.

In colonial discourse, Lucknow became other to the colonial state in Bengal, as 'extensive but meanly built ... the streets are crooked, narrow and the worst I have seen in India', inhabiting a dry, barren and infertile landscape.⁶⁰

⁵⁶For instance, the nawab gave away a version of his portrait by Zoffany, summer, 1784 to Baladon Thomas who was court martialled and dismissed from Company service in August 1784; the nawab finished sitting to Zoffany at the end of July so about the time the picture was finished, he was making a political and artistic statement, as Hastings was still in Lucknow.

⁵⁷'Showed him the Calcutta views, which he seemed pleased with and expressed a wish of having a set of views of Lucknow done in the same manner (i.e. aquatinted)'. William Daniell, *Dairy* volume three, July 9, 1789 (OIOC). One of their original pencil drawings of Lucknow was exhibited in the Spink show, *Visions of India*, November 1996. It was later translated into an aquatint for *Oriental Scenery*, 1081, plate xvii.

⁵⁸April 10, 1786 the nawab sat 'without any apparent impatience'. Humphry managed to eke as many as three sittings from him; *Lucknow Diary of Ozias Humphry*, (Ms Photo Eur 43).

⁵⁹See the Diary of Ozias Humphry at Lucknow, 1786 Eur Ms Photo 43. James Wales was arrested near Pune as local authorities saw him drawing the land and assumed he was a spy: Archer, 1979 p. Humphry notes that Haidar Beg Khan sent a chit to cancel a sitting saying he was ill, only to appear at a levee a few hours later, much to their chagrin. In total he sat only half an hour on 12th June.

⁶⁰Hodges, *Travels in India in the years 1780, 1781, 1782 and 1783* (London, 1793) p.64. See also Ozias Humphry's description of Lucknow as characterised by 'narrow, hollow, dirty, miserable streets.' Ms Photo Eur 43 f.11.

Yet from 1775 it was a capital to surpass Delhi. Asaf ud-Daula ordered the construction of country houses, a new bridge over the River Gumti, the Rumi Darwaza modelled on the Constantinople Gate in the Ottoman Empire and a great Imambara, constructed to provide relief in the time of famine, for which he was much praised. The nawab sought to express his political preeminence through a new constellation of symbols and courtly forms which asserted his unique place not only on the north Indian diplomatic stage, but in the world.⁶¹ 'In these ways Asaf ud-Daula established Lucknow as the centre of a distributive culture which he himself largely defined'.⁶²

As ruler of the Shi'ite capital of India, Asaf ud-Daula gifted money to Kaubala the site of Islamic martyrs' Hasan and Hussein's burial, as well as patronising Shi'ite scholars and building *madrasahs* and mosques throughout his realm. His court painters produced images of *the nawab leading a procession of Muharram to his mosque* and *Asaf ud-Daula commemorating Muharram*; where the nawab, hookah in hand, is dressed in grey during this solemn time of dirges and self-flagellation - a ceremonial far from the frivolity represented by Zoffany.⁶³ (figs 119, 120)

In *The Cock Match* Zoffany sets the scene in a royal tent, creating a 'theatre-set space' where the nawab banter with his bodyguard Colonel Mordaunt in mirror poses, as low and lewd as each other - as the two ruffled cocks preparing to tear each other apart - perhaps a more appropriate signifier of

⁶¹Fisher, 1988 p.3.

⁶²ibid, p.77.

⁶³Llewellyn-Jones, 1985 pp.22-23. The Lucknow court possessed five court painters, as well as three additional painters not at court. Other court images represent the nawab riding out across a lush and fertile landscape; Asutosh Museum, Calcutta, which again are very far from European constructions of Awadh as barren and the nawab as idle and dissipated.

Anglo-Indian affairs at Lucknow, once the civilizing layers of diplomatic etiquette had been removed. However, apart from the cock keepers and a group of intently watching Indians on the frontal plane, the actual fight is ignored; as the central event acts merely as a crucible for an ethnographic study of the crowd, which as in Zoffany's *Embassy of Hyder Beg Khan* (fig. 94) is a picaresque rabble, bursting beyond an ordered composition and threatening to transgress the boundaries of subject and object.⁶⁴

Although it included portraits of thirteen Europeans, drawn from the East India Company, as well as private traders and men in the service of the nawab, the picture depicts neither Hastings nor the Resident Colonel Harper, the two most important figures to British concerns at Lucknow. Out of the Indian contingency the prime minister and the nawab's uncle are represented, yet again Jawan Bakht who was at Lucknow during this era, 1784-6, and who was painted by Zoffany, Smith and Humphry, is not included. Lacking the presence of the Mughal heir-apparent, the court's most important visitor, Hastings, the Resident and his staff (as seen in the oil sketch of *Hastings, Asaf ud-Daula and Jawan Bakht*), the picture made a precise political statement.⁶⁵ (fig. 92)

On the nawab's ivory silk *musnud*, sits Zoffany's chief benefactor Colonel Martin in his scarlet Company coat, legs crossed, hand-in-waistcoat in a polite pose (his position next to position occupied by Asaf indicating he was

⁶⁴We have already seen this also with Zoffany's later oil the *Embassy of Hyder Beg Khan*, that an incident involving Indian animals act as the 'central event' thus deflating Reynolds' high-minded historical composition focussed on a central often stoical heroicism which created a circle of reaction. Zoffany's 'bacchanalian' world is also a very different to the ordered ethnography of the crowd in Murshidabad processions.

⁶⁵Hastings had attended a royal cock fight when at Lucknow; a few weeks before Jawan Bakht arrived. Dairy of Warren Hastings BL: Add Ms 39,879 April 5, 1784 entry.

literally his ‘right-hand man’), with his close friends John Wombwell and Colonel Polier in similar stances of refinement, looking down on the scene from the hallowed arena by the throne, denoting that it is they who are at least cultural pretenders to *de facto* sovereigns within the value system of colonial viewers accustomed to European portraiture.⁶⁶ They are removed both from the heart of the pit as well as from the rabble away from the overt physicality of cock fighting, signified by their disparate, elegant but static poses and far away gazes, as opposed to the seething, sensuous Indian crowds.⁶⁷ Higher still in terms of physical elevation are the artists Ozias Humphry and Zoffany, who pencil in hand, is the only figure to meet the viewer’s gaze. Behind him a green umbrella as the marker of sovereignty is wry indicator that he is the master of the scene.⁶⁸

Three of Zoffany’s best known Indian pictures took the maltreatment of birds and animals as their central event, which deconstructed Reynolds’ call for heroic human action as the ‘central event’ for history painting.⁶⁹ From another

⁶⁶Hastings and Zoffany stayed with Colonel Martin in Lucknow. As Rosie Llewellyn-Jones 1992 has demonstrated, although later commentators portrayed Martin as a close friend of the nawab (in part indicated by their penchant for great displays of European art), this was not the case. Few Europeans, including Martin, were in fact received by the Lucknow court on a regular basis. Rather the nawab kept his distance from them as far as possible. This European community also occupied an ambivalent role with regards to the Company, pursuing their own interests between both parties. So in many ways, the *Cock Match* represents the tensions and interactions between all three.

⁶⁷Their poses appear to derive from independent portraits painted by Zoffany, such as *Colonel Polier and his friends* and a lost oil of *Wombwell and his friends* (photo: Heinz Archive). Zoffany’s chaotic image is far from the map-like space of the durbar where everyone was to know his place. Stanworth, 1994 pp.173-4. She notes the presence of numerous nautch girls as part of the rabble, as opposed to Hogarth’s entirely masculine Cock Pitt. See also anonymous *The Cocker: Humbly Inscribed to those Gentlemen who are amateurs of the Gone Cock, that Prodigy of British Valor*, (Newark,1793).

⁶⁸Ghulam Hussein, 1789 volume three (translator’s note p.52); umbrella ‘an instrument to keep off the sun and rain has always held as one of the principal insignia of sovereignty in Hindustan’ David Anderson, ‘On Distinction’, Anderson Papers BL:Add Ms 45,441 ff.1-4.

⁶⁹Apart from the *Cock Match* Zoffany’s *Embassy of Hyder Beg Khan* focuses on the bolting of an elephant heavily laden and beaten by its driver and his *Tiger Hunting* represents a British tiger shoot. In all scenes, both Britons and Indians are indicted in varying degrees in the creatures’ ill treatment.

angle, Zoffany demonstrated his allegiance to the type of ‘modern moral subject’ developed by William Hogarth, which demonstrated that cruelty towards animals signified an early stage in personal and social destruction.⁷⁰ Zoffany described this as ‘an *historical* picture of a Cock Pitt composed of a great number of small figures’, cock fighting conjured controversy in Britain which deemed it ‘historical’ in a specific way.⁷¹ *The Cock Match* takes its precedent from Hogarth’s infamous *Cock Pit*, 1759, where a blind Lord Albermarle, (personifying Blind Folly), gambles away his estate by listening to the ranting of an east end cock fight, making a wager he can not win in a ritualistic and primeaval underworld in the ‘orientalised’ part of London.⁷² (fig 121) In Britain cock fighting remained a royal pursuit enveloped within a mythology ‘saturated with notions of masculinity, royalty, nationhood and war’.⁷³

Despite such legitimisation, by the 1750s cocking was being condemned as a barbaric practice, thus suitable for a representation of Awadhi despotism.⁷⁴

Britons stereotyped Indian cock fighting as extreme and vicious, almost beyond

⁷⁰See for instance Hogarth’s *Four Stages of Cruelty*, 1751. In the first two stages the protagonist tortures puppies, tying stick to their tails and then progresses to become a coach driver who shamelessly beats his horse to the ground, before finally committing robbery and murder.

⁷¹Although criticised throughout the eighteenth-century, cock fighting was not legally abolished until 1835. However in the 1770s and 1780s, the rise of a cult of sensibility amongst the upper middle class would have abhorred such an activity; G.J.Barker-Benfield, *The Culture of Sensibility* (Chicago, 1992).

⁷²In many ways Zoffany saw himself as Hogarth’s successor as the modern moral as well as modern comic painter- Shearer West, *The Image of the Actor* (London, 1991) and R.Paulson, *Breaking and Remaking : Aesthetic Practice in England, 1700-1820* (New Brunswick, 1989).

⁷³Stanworth, 1994 p.176.

⁷⁴If Hogarth’s Lord Albermarle was gambling away his estate, this is far graver with reference to Awadh where Asaf is gambling away his kingdom. The anonymous ‘Game cock’ in *Cockfighting and Game Fowl*, p.82 noted that cock fights in India were longer and more severe than their British counterparts, adding a layer of ‘oriental barbarity’ to the image. See Edward Said *Orientalism* (New York, 1978).

the comprehension of a nation supposedly steeped in liberty and sensibility.⁷⁵

Zoffany's picture contained nearly one hundred portraits, crammed on to the canvas which in size was far smaller than full-length nawabi portraits.

'Despotic' Lucknow is thus encoded through an aesthetic sublimity whose defining feature is excess.⁷⁶

Such comic history demonstrated colonial confidence; a departure from the need to signify Anglo-Indian relations in terms of solemn historical portraiture.⁷⁷ (figs 4, 13, 14) However by the time Zoffany commenced the *Cock Match* (1784-7) Hastings was being threatened with a trial for impeachment and such an aesthetic could not guarantee the same ethical valence as Hodges' landscapes.⁷⁸ From another angle Hodges' Indian oeuvre provided a precedent for the outcome of even the most 'enlightened despotism' - thus adding a sinister narrative dimension to Zoffany's depiction of luxury at Lucknow which re-presents a further orientalised charges of speculation and speculation levied at Anglo-Indian society, as each of the many cocks demonstrates the extent of self-interest and factionalism at Lucknow.⁷⁹

Zoffany's representation has been assigned partnership with a distinct

⁷⁵Stanworth, 1994 p.179.

⁷⁶Peter de Bolla, *Discourses of the Sublime* (Oxford, 1989) the sublime was defined by excess, going beyond clear classification.

⁷⁷This picture was never exhibited at the Royal Academy but hung rather in the study at Hastings' home of Daylesford. However it was translated into a mezzotint and formed a key part of Laurie and Whittle's stock, see 1795 catalogue: British Museum Print Room). It was located in the *Histories: sentimental and humorous section* no. 1, @£2 2s or £4 4s if coloured. fine mezzotints (after all portraits) 'Colonel Mordaunt's Cock Match with the Nabob of Oude, fought at Lucknow in the East Indies in the year 1786, at which were present many high and distinguished personages.' (21x27 inches).

⁷⁸Suleri, 1992 chapter two for an exploration of Hastings' trial through the sublime.

⁷⁹We have already seen that oils in Calcutta could only be distributed by lotteries; here gambling surrounding art becomes its subject, but not its status (its two versions being commissions, even if its subject in terms of reception was a gamble). Thus we see a distinct take of art as a luxury and luxury in art.

character assassination of Asaf ud-Daula. He is represented as a personification of luxury- overweight, enjoying 'vicious' luxury as an effete Muslim robed in a gossamer muslin, which in colonial art was more usually associated with semi-erotic depictions of nautch girls.⁸⁰ Likewise two of the Europeans depicted are unusual for their state of undress, indicating not merely the heat of the encounter but that the effeminising power of luxury acted as contagion which threatened not only the body but the body politic, which should be constrained for social and political welfare. Even in his lifetime, Asaf was condemned by British and Indian writers as 'insufferably vulgar and debauched'.⁸¹

For although he was not destitute of sense, yet his company was composed of the sum of mankind where one might discover here and there a man of birth as well as a vile contemptible wretch. He seemed intent only on pastimes, amusements, drama, music and pleasures ... without the least regard for decency or any sense of shame ... he managed so that there appeared no trace of them either in his discourses or in his public behaviour.⁸²

Thus we must locate *the Cock Match*'s intrinsic frivolity within a carefully coded aspect of the nawab's identity; discourses of private luxury acted as deliberate distractions from covert politics and did not affect his role as Shi'ite ruler. Paradoxically Zoffany's image later defined the reign of Asaf ud-Daula; to be variously celebrated and condemned by Indian and British viewers.⁸³

⁸⁰See for instance Francesco Renaldi's Indian oeuvre Archer, 1979 figures 198-199.

⁸¹Archer, 1979. p.143.

⁸²Archer, 1979 p.307. 'From the best information I have been able to get concerning Oude (sic Awadh) I hear that the Vizier extorts every rupee he can from his ministers to squander in debaucheries, cock fighting, elephants and horses.' C.Ross (ed.) *The Correspondence of Lord Cornwallis*, (London,1859), p.247; cited by Stanworth, 1994, p.179.

⁸³There are numerous Indian versions of the Cock Match; in the Edward Binney collection (illustrated in S.C.Welch, *Room For Wonder: Indian Painting During the British Era* (1978)) others are in the Ehrenfeld Collection, the Academy of Fine Arts, Calcutta and the India Office Prints and Drawings Department. Robert Home also produced a version, c.1817 known as the Ashwick version. All of these adapt the composition and the setting, often replacing the grounds

Although greatly decayed by the 1810s, as subject and object of transient luxury now coalesced, *The Cock Match* with its idle banter between the court, Europeans and Company officials, became synonymous with Lucknow's magnificence in its last era of independence. As a subject it was adapted by Indian artists well into the 1850s, becoming a rallying point and source of strength as an élitist version of the popular protests and sense of loyalty that rallied around nawabi mausolea.⁸⁴

By 1790, very distinct indigenous and colonial ways of imaging the two predominant Shi'ite capitals of northern India had come into existence. In Farington's, Zoffany's and Company school, the nawabs of Bengal and Awadh were represented in profile, thus drawing on compositional precedents in both Mughal and British depictions of India rulers. As opposed to Zoffany's imagery of excess at Lucknow, Farington and Company school art in Murshidabad indicated that in the present age a moral Shi'ite identity can be recovered and developed under colonial rule. In the early nineteenth century, Lucknow and other Indian courts which had fallen under direct British rule began to be depicted by their court artists, Company School and colonial painters within a vein reminiscent of Farington's work at Murshidabad. Out of political and economic adversity, an evolving rhetoric of splendour was deployed by both sides. Once more a colonial rhetoric of sovereignty came into play as bureaucratic and institutional powers were severed from Mughal symbology and

and tent with a neoclassical facade and the figures with 'updated' British officials denoted by their 19th-century fashions. Only the nawab appears in all these scenes; so we have an interesting form of historical portraiture developing as it become something of an aesthetic rite to be represented in a picture of this kind.

⁸⁴By this date *the Cock Match* was in an advanced state of decay Archer, 1979 pp.149-150. Bayly, 1996 p.202.

ceremony, now assigned to an 'aestheticisation of power' associated with an increasingly sepulchral crown.

Chapter Seven: Part II

Mutable Splendour

The Display of British Art at Indian Courts, c.1785-1795.

*the nawab's durbar hall is so crowded with English prints and paintings
that not an inch of the walls can be seen.*⁸⁵

Throughout this dissertation I have adumbrated issues of enunciation: concentrating largely on the ways in which British art (in terms of both status and representation) was interpolated towards colonial, metropolitan and Mughal viewing publics, through entanglements of differences innate, ineluctable to and imposed on each forum. We must now consider the ways in which British art signified back to the colonialists within an alien environment, creating complex mediated pronunciations for perception. Previous discussions of the 'zones of transculturation' where distinct cultures met, grappled and translated with each other, have focussed exclusively on the processes rather than the sites for intercourse which is inadequate for explication of the interaction between two intensely visually and ritualistically aware elites.⁸⁶

The translation and appropriation of western goods by non western

⁸⁵Charles D'Oyly, Collector at Dacca on the nawab of Dacca's durbar hall in 1808; quoted in Archer, 1979, p.288.

⁸⁶See M.Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Travel and Transculturation* (London,1992) and Homi Bhabha, 'How Newness enters the World' in his *The Location of Culture* (London,1994). See Sudipta Sen, *An Empire of Free Trade* (Pennsylvania,1998) chapters one and five for the importance of market as site and subject of colonial discourse.

societies has begun to receive analysis in recent years.⁸⁷ ‘The actors in this sphere were the owners of small lithographic presses, the sellers of herbal pills in western containers; the *joshis* and *puraniks* taking printed texts out in to the hills, the sepoys returning to their villages with western scalpels, muskets and clocks’.⁸⁸

However in a ‘high cultural’ realm, historians have predicated the transformation of Indian objects into artefacts, antiquities and art, rather than scrutinising the predicament raised by reversed trespasses of de- or at least re-aestheticisation.⁸⁹ As the Eurocentric museum created a specific sight/site for the translation of objects, so Indian royal palaces and their innate or imposed viewing rituals, transposed both British images as well as *nawabi* and colonial artistic perceptions. The ‘cultural biographies’ of colonial pictures pulled in different directions.⁹⁰ Although we have seen that Europeans and Indians ordered Willison, Zoffany and Farington to produce several versions of the same

⁸⁷Such enquiries have usually been concerned with nineteenth- or twentieth-century encounters; see M.Taussig, *Mimesis and Alterity* (Chicago,1993), N.Thomas, *Entangled Objects* (1989). For India see Homi Bhabha, ‘Signs Taken For Wonders’ in his *Location of Culture* (London,1994). See also Beth Tobin, *Picturing Imperial Power: Colonial Subjects in Eighteenth-century British Painting* (Duke,1999) pp.102-122.

⁸⁸C.A.Bayly, *Empire and Information* (London,1996) p.314. For the notion of colonial hegemony denied through indigenous appropriation of western practices and ideology see Gyan Prakash, ‘Science Gone Native in Colonial India’, *Representations* 40 (Fall,1992) pp.153-178.

⁸⁹See for example James Clifford, *The Predicament of Culture: Twentieth-century Ethnography, Literature and Art* (Cambridge Mass.,1988) pp.196-9; B.S.Cohn, ‘The Transformation of Objects Into Artifacts, Antiquities and Art in Nineteenth-century India’ in his *Colonialism and its Forms of Knowledge* (Princeton,1997) pp.76-105 and Richard H.Davis, *Lives of Indian Images* (Delhi,1999) pp.176-179. See also B.Durrans, ‘The Future of the Other: Changing Cultures on Display in Ethnographic Museums’ in R.Lumley (ed.) *The Museum Time: Putting Cultures on Display* (London,1988) and C.Breckenridge, ‘The Aesthetics and Politics of Colonial Collecting’, *Comparative Studies in Society and History* xxxi 1989 pp.195-216. Such enquiries are both directly and indirectly informed by Bourdieu’s analysis of the ‘mystical psyche’ of the ethos of the museum; *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste* (London; sixth edition,1999) p.30. N.Thomas, foreword to Alfred Gell, *Art and Agency* (Oxford,1998) p.3. .

⁹⁰See Igor Kopytoff ‘The Cultural Biography of Things: Commoditization as process’ in A.Appadurai (ed.) *The Social life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspective* (Cambridge,1986) pp.64-91 and Davis,1999 pp.6-10.

pictures, the spaces in which they were displayed across empire could not have been more different.⁹¹

The display of certain objects could expand or detract from certain perceptions of nawabi status.⁹² Throughout the successor states established aesthetic ways of comprehending the British had long since evolved.⁹³ The temples of Bengal *zemindars* often included terracotta figures of Europeans in devotional friezes; a practice dating from the mid 1600s and south Indian palaces often included wall paintings featuring battles or durbars with Europeans.⁹⁴ Thus we see very different representational coda for denoting Britons within traditional settings, which continued throughout this era, such as *Battle of Pollilur, Tipu Sultan's Palace, Seringapatam*. (fig. 122) Britons could be incorporated within Indian painterly, sculptural and architectural notions with relative ease, either upheld as the kings who should be included in prayer, or else as the arch rivals, whose defeat was a totemic source of strength. However from the 1760s Indian elites commenced experimentation with colonial modes of interior decoration, which did not necessarily signify as either performative

⁹¹For instance Zoffany's Cock Match hung in a palace on the outskirts of Lucknow and in Hastings' country home of Daylesford, Oxfordshire. Muhammed Ali's portraits had been hung at the Society of Artists, in St. James's Palace, East India House, the Old Court House Calcutta, Government House, Madras, Pigot's British home and in the nawab's palaces in Madras and on the Chepauk plain.

⁹²Annette Weiner, *Inalienable Possessions: The Paradox of Keeping Whilst Giving* (Berkeley, C.A. 1992) pp.40, 102. For a precolonial era, Gauvin Bailey 'The Indian Conquest of Catholic Art' *Art Journal*, 1998, p.57 investigates the use of murals in Mughal palaces, harems, tombs and hunting lodges. With the exception of fragments at Lahore, and Fatepur Sicri, these murals were later whitewashed by Aurangzeb who deplored the use of visual arts in imperial ideology.

⁹³Peter Mundy Papers BL: Add Ms 19,281 ff.1-213 described at Agra 'are many rooms painted, which we might perceive to be drawn from Europe prints'. George Paterson when on a diplomatic mission to Tanjore in the early 1770s noted of the rajah's durbar hall it was 'ornamented with a great many figures in relief and coloured, one of which has white hands and the face of a European but this is the only one in the whole palace'. Diaries of George Paterson; Eur Ms 379/9 (OIOC) pp.39-41.

⁹⁴David McCutcheon, *Late Medieval Temples of Bengal* (Calcutta, 1970).

acceptance or operative mimicry of colonial cultural values but which occluded close ocular colonial classification and its ontology.⁹⁵

‘Aesthetic intolerance can be terribly violent’.⁹⁶ We need to construe how colonialism whilst offering its visual economy to Indians, was also imagining the indigenous appreciation of British imagery at a lower level than the same art’s role within metropolitan society, thus to question the existence and endurance of ‘inherent aesthetic meanings’. Britain’s leading role in international art traffic was celebrated in the metropolis not only through economic prosperity but in the dissemination of artistic values and national virtues, (although taste was increasingly dominated by notions of distinction, as exclusivity and moral elevation were designed to create a small elite who possessed judgment).⁹⁷

In 1780s Britain ‘an intensely visual culture in which the meaning of objects could be read at a glance from their appearance’ had evolved.⁹⁸ Yet within a colonial context new perceptions and methods of discrimination were created in order to exclude a foreign people from appreciating British art within the same way, particularly as ‘local customs’ were being hierarchised by a Eurocentric agenda.⁹⁹ The mode of display even more than the art itself,

⁹⁵Guha-Thakurta, 1992, p.53: ‘the concept of decorating walls with framed paintings and rooms with busts and statues itself was a novel one in India’.

⁹⁶Bourdieu, 1999 p.56.

⁹⁷Iain Pears, *The Discovery of Painting* (New Haven,1988) and J.Brewer, *Pleasures of the Imagination* (Oxford,1997). With regards to the traffic in imagery Timothy Clayton has explored the ways in which British art was celebrated in the metropolitan press; *The English Print* (New Haven,1997).

⁹⁸C.Saumarez-Smith, *Eighteenth-century Design and the Domestic Interior in England* (London,1993) p.305. See also Marcia Pointon, *Hanging the Head* (New Haven,1993) and Michael Rosenthal *The Art of Thomas Gainsborough* (New Haven,1999) and Jean Baudrillard, *The System of Objects* (Paris,1968) pp.1-10.

⁹⁹M.Baxandall, ‘Exhibiting Intention’ in Ivan Karp and Steven D.Lavine (eds.) *Exhibiting Cultures* (1991) pp.33-41; p.34. See N.Hudson, ‘From Nation to Race’ *Eighteenth-century Studies* 29 (1996) pp.247-264, H.Augstein (ed.) *Race: The Origins of an Idea 1760-1850*

expressed the ruling conception of the value of the art, as well as reflecting changes within connotations of interior space, consumption and the visual.¹⁰⁰

It is dangerous to see these collections merely as ‘montages’ or accumulated objects rather than as dramatic fields for action structured around specific ritual scenarios. ‘There is a more general sense in which the subsumption of displaced objects and initiated activities can produce political consequential interpretations’.¹⁰¹ Renaming and recontextualising are motivated multivalently, not merely through irony as ‘such subversion is certainly a feature of colonial representations produced by both dominant and subordinate groups, but the appearance of parody and the copying of institutions, practice and objects from one’s own tradition may distort the intentions of those doing the copying’.¹⁰² The political seriousness of the intellectual transaction is diminished if acquisition and reproduction are understood as burlesque imitation.¹⁰³

In a precolonial era ambassadors had stressed, ‘Choice pictures, especially histories or others that have many figures ... but good for they understand them as well as we’ and ‘pictures ... but only to give away as presents’.¹⁰⁴ ‘If the work is not excellent ‘it is here despised’.¹⁰⁵ Such ambits for prestation were transmuted by the British from the 1770s as they forced high

(Bristol,1996) and P.Robb (ed.) *The Concept of Race in South Asia* (Delhi,1995).

¹⁰⁰Duncan, 1995 chapter one and J.Elsen and R.Cardinal (eds.) *Cultures of Collecting* (London,1994).

¹⁰¹Thomas, 1989 p.186.

¹⁰²ibid., p.12.

¹⁰³ibid., pp.11-14.

¹⁰⁴ *Journal of Sir Thomas Roe* (ed.) W.Foster (1929) volume four pp.11-12. See also Roe’s Letter Book BL: Add Ms 6115 f.70.

¹⁰⁵Letter to the Company factor at Surat October 15, 1616. G. Forster, *Early Factory Records of the East India Company*, volumes four to five, pp.232, 297.

profits through a range of prints; quantity as a more pressing concern than quality.¹⁰⁶ As the durbar accounts of Warren Hastings disclose, prints were purchased from Calcutta's leading agency houses and sent as gifts to princes, as well as being imported from Calcutta to rudimentary commission houses set up in Lucknow by such auctioneers as Joseph Queiros. This became a centralised cultural policy as prints were disseminated to as far afield as Arcot, Benares, Pune, Dacca, Arcot and Lucknow, which would soon spill over into the domain of Indian trade as flying stationers blowing horns and *battala* hawkers with bells on their feet announced their arrival in remote villages laden with prints.¹⁰⁷

As opposed to short-term decoration in Calcutta, these prints at Indian courts formed part of 'permanent' collections that were to last well into the present century. In northern India, prints' physical size aligned them within the viewing habits of the Mughal elite. Being 'more versatile' than an oil portrait, they could be bound up in *muraqqa* form and stored with illuminated manuscripts, enabling them to pass along *daks*, with letters and reports across India, as a novel form of paper currency. Yet despite the popularity of engravings, the printing press-as-propaganda weapon was rejected by north Indian rulers, many of whom opposed the mechanical reproduction of texts and images for ritualistic and political reasons.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁶ For the filtration of second-rate British art through empire see Guha-Thakurta, 1992 p.53.

¹⁰⁷ Hastings' Durbar Accounts, 1780-1784 BL:Add Ms 29,092 and Ashit Paul (ed.) *Woodcuts of Nineteenth-century Calcutta* (Calcutta,1983) p.22. Travellers accounts that describe north Indian interiors bedecked with prints include, *The Private Journal of the Marquiss of Hastings*, (ed.) Marchioness of Bute, (1858) and Emily Eden, *Up the Country*, (reprint London,1983).

¹⁰⁸ Bayly,1996, pp.204, 238-243 notes that newspapers and newsletters were read in the bazaars and passed around. In a pre-colonial era, Jahangir requested the Jesuits send him a press from Rome so that he could print pictures himself, which however never appeared. Instead his own painters copied aspects of, or whole compositions from European prints, as well as colouring them and adjusting certain subjects from their own oeuvres to this westernization: Bailey, 1996 pp.127-128. Tafazzul Hussein Khan complained to the Governor-General about defamatory

An efficient indigenous information ecumene enabled indigenous art to be swiftly disseminated, so there was no place for print making until Indian society itself was more radically transformed under colonial rule.¹⁰⁹ In spite of the prolificity of prints on display at the Lucknow court, as well as the intermittent visits of several artist-engravers such as the Daniells who actively experimented with copper plates there, Abu Taleb Khan found it necessary to scrutinise the *process* of print-making, which was not yet known in Awadh.¹¹⁰

The art of printing being well understood in Calcutta, I have said little on that subject. There is, however, another science, nearly the same called *engraving*, much in use in Europe; of which I shall endeavour to give some description. This art is subservient to painting; and by its aid, the copies of a picture may be multiplied at pleasure, though generally on a smaller scale. For this purpose, a sheet of copper must be procured first of the size required, on which is spread a coat of thin wax or similar substance; on this the outlines of the picture are drawn with black lead; and the engraver, with various sharp instruments, then cut through the wax into the copper, or it might be done aqua-fortis, (as the lines drawn by a pen dipped in that liquid soon eat their way into the copper), and afterwards finished by the engraver, who must possess a considerable knowledge of painting. The plate being ready, the prints are struck off nearly in the same manners as books are. If it be wished to have them coloured, so as to resemble pictures more nearly, this can be done by boys or women, at a very reasonable rate. By these means, the copy of a picture

remarks concerning Awadh which appear in a Calcutta newspaper: 'I am apprehensive lest the inhabitants of distant countries who are unacquainted with the real state of the case may believe its contents to be true ... I trust that you will at least order special regulations to be given to the printers to abstain in future from printing such extravagant and unfounded stories'; April 18, 1794 *C.P.C.*

¹⁰⁹ Bayly, 1996 p.200. *The India Gazette* also noted that newspapers were later arriving in Calcutta due to the efficiency of Indian scribes; April 7, 1781; G. Shaw, *Printing in Calcutta to 1800* (London, 1981) A few earlier instances of Mughal print making are known; see A.J. Qaisar, *Indian Responses to European Technology and Culture* (Oxford, Delhi, 1982) pp.58-64.

¹¹⁰ William Daniell Diary volume three, 1789 at Lucknow: entries for August 17, 18 and 27, 1789.

may be procured for a guinea, the original of which would have cost a hundred.¹¹¹

For the first time, attempts were made to introduce a market for British art in northern India, which radiated out from Calcutta as far as Lucknow.¹¹²

Hastings following his sojourn at Lucknow with the Mughal heir apparent Prince Jawan Bakht, sent him a selection of prints from Calcutta, bought from the commission house of Roach and Johnson.¹¹³ As both the prince and then the Governor-General had recently been painted by Zoffany, Hastings included a number of Zoffany's London-made mezzotints such as *Garrick as King Lear* and *Garrick as Abel Drugger*.¹¹⁴ The rest of the stock was comprised of six sets of perspective views, two large books of mezzotints, three books of painted views with glasses, prints of a Picturesque tour, two sets of aquatinted sea views, prints of Dover Castle, *a cupid*, mezzotint of *Miss Lumsdaine*, *Miss Powell*, *the Connoisseur*, *Moses in the Bull Rushes*, a London hospital, (these latter two from oils decorating the Foundling Hospital) *a sailing match*, two *hunting scenes*, Stubbs' *Phaeton*, *Lion and Horse*, ten prints of *the Life of King Charles*, prints of the British and French royal families and a miscellaneous

¹¹¹ Abu Talib, *Travels of Mirza Abu Talib* trans. C.Stewart (Calcutta, 1814, reprinted Delhi, 1972) chapter thirteen, pp.120-121. See also Gulfishan Khan, *Indo-Muslim responses to the West in the eighteenth century* (Karachi, 1998) pp.241-243, 279, 310-311 and chapter five.

¹¹²With reference to the impact of European art on north Indian society from the 16th century onwards, Partha Mitter sums up the inherent shift with British rule: 'If European art had already made an impact, the colonial period may be seen as the logical culmination of that process. And yet there was a world of difference between the two periods in the reception of European art. Unlike the Mughals for whom European art was primarily exotic and marginal to their concerns, its introduction by the Raj was part of a comprehensive package that sought to reproduce the cultural values of the West'. *Art and Nationalism in Colonial India, 1850-1922: Occidental Orientations*, (Cambridge, 1994) p.12.

¹¹³ Hastings Papers BL: Add Ms 29,092, ff.165-6, a note in Hastings' handwriting, 'Paid Roach and Johnson for the following articles intended for a present for the prince'.

¹¹⁴When both were sitting to Zoffany at Lucknow in 1784, no doubt they would have discussed British art and this commission came as a result of their acquaintance: 'He (Jawan Bakht) had given a list of rarities he hoped the Governor-General would forwards them.' H/557 f.319; December 16, 1784.

selection of prints, totalling several hundreds of images.¹¹⁵

The subject selection was usually constrained by the print stocks of Calcutta. However Hastings through his knowledge of Mughal art, was 'orientalising' British artistic practice sufficiently to allow for points of entry into the Mughal aesthetic sphere. Individual prints were often gifted loose, thus anticipating that rulers would then mount them in elaborate albums; such art provided a 'travel capitalist gaze' and view of England so that temporally colonialism's ruthless voyeurism was checked, even inverted on a superficial level.

The royal library at Murshidabad, contained books of prints from the earliest colonial collection of the Bengal nawabs, such as Thomas Jeffries' *Dresses of Different Nations, 1772* which included a plate of former nawab Alivardi Khan, flattering the court's international status, whilst also demonstrating that India had been subsumed in to colonial 'print capitalism'.¹¹⁶ Thus we see differing levels of appropriation; the nawab (or rather his dress) became representative for Bengal and for 'India as an imagined community - a nation' as well as a curious object for scrutiny to be contemplated alongside the costumes and regularised bodies of 'specimen' from other nations. When such

¹¹⁵Add Ms 29,092 ff.165-166; the stock is very similar to that of metropolitan print sellers such as Carrington Bowles, with whom Roach and Johnson may have had a contract. The total value of this print sale to the government was 926 Rs. (c.£94).

¹¹⁶ Thomas Jeffries, *Dresses of Different Nations* (London, 1772) Alivardi Khan is plate 36, volume four. The Bengal nawabi collection also included 82 prints by Bartolozzi, *the Complete works of William Hogarth, Antiquities of London*, Boydell's *Shakespeare*, 1790, *Picturesque Representations of Naval, Military and Miscellaneous Castles of Britain and the Original Designs of the Most Celebrated Masters of the Bolognese, Roman, Florentine and Venetian Schools, dedicated to the King of England* (1705); source: P.Majumdar, *The Musnud of Murshidabad* (Calcutta, 1905). These books of engravings are no longer housed in the Hazarduari Library. I am grateful to the State Archaeological Survey, New Delhi for permission to consult materials in the library.

imagery was exported to Murshidabad, it sat in the royal library alongside palm leaf manuscripts, almanacs and *muraqqas*. However receiving back such an image challenged British print culture. Not only was print making not well known in India, but also the Indian economy could not simply be reduced to an orientalist version of European 'capitalism'. Rather Alivardi's portrait reproduced for popular British consumption signified within the beginnings of a colonial economy which involved only the introduction of mechanically reproduced art, but also increased production and circulation of popularised nawabi portraits (including Alivari Khan) commissioned by Company personnel.¹¹⁷

Visiting professional artists in this sense were vital 'cultural brokers', introducing a wide range of art, pigments and techniques, as well as advising Residents on suitable pictures as gifts. James Wales commissioned prints to be dispatched from London; the subjects society beauties and topographical views of London such as *Blackfriar's Bridge* by Paul Sandby, to be procured from a Mr. Taylor, a printseller in Holborn.¹¹⁸ He also ordered the mezzotint after Reynolds's Mrs. Robinson and prints of 'Some other fine and beautiful women if possible' including 'prints of handsome women and paintings in crayons after Sir Peter Lely' as well as negotiating for 'a proper *bungella* for exhibiting paintings'.¹¹⁹

¹¹⁷See Archer, 1972 p.60.

¹¹⁸James Wales, *Diary of 1792*, 1, f.34 (Ms Fo. 21.7.1976. 6 vols., Yale Center for British Art)

¹¹⁹Wales volume one, f.34 and Archer 1979, p.346. This was suggested in January 1795 nearly three years after the court had become acquainted with European art. Wales' correspondence mentions works to be commissioned from the renowned enamel painter William Birch (1760-94) (exhib RA 1781-9; 1792-4) perhaps intended to appeal to the court's sense of high finished art which had also been admired by Jahangir in the early seventeenth century.

The introduction of British prints would have enhanced and detracted from the architectural surrounding of these durbar halls, fracturing and inflecting the plasticity and focus of Mughal conceptions of space. Royal palaces were observed by Britons as so crowded with prints that many were hung sideways or upside-down to fit it in to the available space; at Pune a lounging Venus lands balancing on her head (from erotica to circus artiste), its *trompe l'oeil* trumping figurative arrangement.¹²⁰ This is the birth of a now familiar discourse, as imperial authority could not fully replicate itself; chaos continually threatened colonial order and classification as Indian montages of imperial art continuously confounded European logic. In the mixed nature of the assemblages, we confront the paradox of an imperial ideology which projected order and system, but remained caught in the hybridity of its representations. Just as the transplantation of museums to India would never be reproduced 'in their presumed maturity of form', so in this earliest colonial era the definitions of 'public' and 'private' collections were transformed.¹²¹

However, framed and glazed prints became less individual works than reflecting surfaces, creating their own patterns of intention. In this sense they replaced Mughal wall decoration of inlaid stones set in patterns, lying half-way between this reading strategy and European displays, as an 'in-between space', before the full onslaught of imperial interior design, caught between flat and

¹²⁰ M and W.G.Archer, 1955 p.88.

¹²¹I am very grateful to Tapati Guha-Thakurta for a copy of her paper 'Traversing Past and Present in Victoria Memorial', p.152. Of course what constituted 'private' and 'public' the terms were now changing which also depended on issues of enunciation. These were long term displays (as opposed to those of Calcutta's private homes) but the British condemned their ideological agenda to be that of 'private luxury' rather than *civitas* and other notions of public virtue which were seen as crucial to late 18th-century British art collecting.

figurative display, they garbed the walls of Indian palaces as a glittering but gradually oxidizing armour, which signified both splendour of the nawabs, yet also became a mirror to refract the surveillance of Company officials from these courts' inner cultural life.

Colonial travelogues are peppered with accounts of *nawabi* art displays where British prints jostled as part of a paraphernalia of miniatures, oils and other imported goods - French mirrors and chandeliers, hand-organs and other mechanical curios.¹²² Through colonial discourse, familiar art through its unfamiliar display became unsettling, far removed from imperial notions of the polite interior, where excess and base appetite must be carefully checked.¹²³ We can gauge as much from British accounts of Asaf ud-Daula's assignment of British prints to *the Daulat Khana*, his Europeanised palace complex on the edge of Lucknow, away from the real seat of government where Company officials were ushered.¹²⁴ It needs to be seen in the perspective of his capital as a liminal construction on the far side of the River Jumna - an appendix to the massive Shi'ite building programme.¹²⁵ Its 'European features suggest the

¹²² Such goods were the product of illicit trading. F.Maitland Arnott, sent to James Powell 'some expressly got for the nabob', 'guns, six Japan cabinets, two large ivory imambaras, 192 china toys and 62 tumbling boys.' BL:Add Ms 13,532; p.60. p.54 In the 1770s Martin erected Captain's Bazaar in Lucknow where European luxuries were off-loaded. For greater details see Llewellyn-Jones, 1992 and 2000.

¹²³ Tapatī Guha-Thakurta, 'The Museumised Relic: Archaeology and the first Museum of colonial India', *Indian Economic and Social History Review*, 34.1, (1997).

¹²⁴ This palace complex was little used by the nawab, as its structure and design were ill-suited to the lifestyle of the court. Its hybrid architecture 'represents the tension felt by the nawabs- on the one hand gravitating toward the values established by the Mughals and on the other by the need to appear modern and worthy of self-governance in the eyes of the Company'. C.London (ed.) *Architecture of Victorian and Edwardian India*, (London,1994) p.90. It was sketched by the Daniells; July 31 and October 12, 1789 Daniell, 1789. See Llewellyn-Jones 1992 pp.121,134,137-138.

¹²⁵ See other colonial mentions of the *Daulat Khana* in 1789: Bengal Public Consultations, December 11,1806 and William Tennant's *Travels* entry for March 2,1804. Like Calcutta's *madrassah* (dedicated to eastern learning and hence injecting another culture into this city space) the *Daulat Khana* was placed on the outskirts of the city; the *madrassah* on the east, the *Daulat*

nawab's *superficial* display of regard for the British, yet at the same time an *uneasiness* with both British dominance and British artistic styles'.¹²⁶ The deployment of such imagery within the context of Anglo-Indian diplomacy influenced the political forum of the anticipated negotiations thus manipulating psychological pleasures associated with cultural 'affiliation', supposedly allowing Company officials to attain the 'right state of mind' before entering into political negotiation.

Such luxury goods expenditure also signified as an important rhetoric of otherness. John Boydell's nephew, described the exposition of European art at the nawab's palace at Lucknow, which retained in his eyes, an element of the Calcutta saleroom from whence it came:

The cabinet at the palace contains a great many costly articles- but did you ever see such a heterogeneous arrangement? The first impression was so unfavourable that I could not even look at the few pieces with any pleasure ... in short my fancy plan was to a merchant's warehouse or (to) enter an auction-room and there it stayed several hours after I quitted the place.¹²⁷

Governor-General John Shore likewise described the *Daulat khana* as 'literally a glass house but a complete Europe shop'.¹²⁸ His analogy distinguishes between a 'consumer appetite' associated with commercial spaces and *cognoscenti* contemplation of art associated with 'true' art appreciation (even if as the silent other, most conspicuous by its absence).¹²⁹ As such objects were

Khana on the west.

¹²⁶ Asher, 1992 p.332.(my emphases).

¹²⁷ T.Boydell to Ozias Humphry Papers RA: HU/3/45

¹²⁸ C.J.Teignmouth, *Memoirs of Lord Teignmouth* (London,1843) entry for February 28, 1797 pp.410-411. It was not literally made of glass but so filled with reflecting surfaces, such as chandeliers, mirrors and prints that glass seemed to be everywhere.

¹²⁹ Bourdieu, 1999 pp. 273-274 discriminates between the museum and the commercial gallery; 'which like other luxury emporia ... offers objects which may be contemplated but also bought.'

removed from cycles of exchange, they were transmuted into ambivalent artefacts; which was the more usual colonial reading of Asaf ud-Daula's collection.¹³⁰ However, like Europe shops, the *Daulat Khana* was designed with the idea that it would permanently display British art; possessing a very different unifying logic to the close interaction of architects and artists employed by elites in England. From such a perspective, Zoffany's *Cock Match* is well suited to the *Daulat Khana* (and may have been designed with its display here in mind) as its representation of excess jostled within a colourful, crowded and varied environment.

On seeing the *Daulat Khana* Lord Annesley took his cultural assassination to another plane 'where were deposited a part of the *whimsical curiosities* purchased by the late Asaf ud-Daula ... consisting of several thousand English prints framed and glazed'.¹³¹ Likewise the Daniells accompanied Claud Martin to the *Daulat Khana* to see 'the nawab's curiosities'.¹³² Burke long before perceived that 'the first and simplest emotion which we discover in the human mind is curiosity' which defined by novelty, 'cannot attach us for any length of time' as 'it has an appetite which is very sharp but very easily satisfied' so that it cannot properly be termed a method of

As we have seen with regards to both London and Calcutta, there were few exhibition spaces freed from the taint of commerce; pictures were displayed for sale even at the Royal Academy.

¹³⁰See N.Thomas, 'Licensed Curiosity: Cook's Pacific Voyages', in Elsner and Cardinal, 1994, pp.116-136 (hereafter Thomas 1994b). Thomas draws our attention to the need not only to consider the tension between the private and public collection but also to consider categories which do not fit so easily, such as the private museum, which could have been one way of comprehending the *Daulat Khana*. See also Bourdieu, 1999, p.280.

¹³¹ G.Annesley, *Voyages and Travels to India ... and Egypt in 1802-1806* (London,1809) p.135 In one sense prints were curios when compared to their existence in Britain. In India there were far less of them and they were divorced for their status of mechanical reproduction, at least partially so.

¹³²Daniell, 1789 entry for July 8, 1789.

aesthetic judgement, which when applied to British art in whatever context, created uneasy agency.¹³³

Curiosity acted as both a means and an end for inquiry and threatened grand narratives as it constituted 'a slippage from the noble practice of science in the public interest into a private licentious curiosity peculiarly difficult to avoid'.¹³⁴ The ways in which foreign goods were represented in British collections revealed the 'severity of the image's decontextualisation' as curiosity was very much in the shadow of contemporary debates surrounding luxury, novelty, effeminacy and commercial society.¹³⁵

Colonial application of 'curiosity' to the display of its own art in foreign contexts refigured old terms, although such deductions are profoundly hermeneutic going far beyond the superficial perception of a few objects. However prints were subsumed to other cultures beyond British classification; their uses not fitting neatly into clear categories, so that British viewers could do little but fall back on to notions of the 'curious' in order to translate what was seemingly incomprehensible yet also bore some familiarity to their own value systems.¹³⁶ 'It is not that the voice of authority is at a loss for words. It is rather, that the colonial discourse has reached that point when faced with the hybridity of its objects, the presence of power is revealed as something other than what its rules of recognition assert'.¹³⁷

¹³³Thomas 1989, pp.130-134.

¹³⁴Thomas *In Oceania* (1997) p.18.

¹³⁵Thomas, 1994b p.122.

¹³⁶ 'Curiosity was almost constantly extruded as another, all too similar to more legitimate interests and inquiry or in objects yet necessarily disavowed by them. Thomas, 1994 p.136. See also E.Hooper-Greenhill, *Museums and the Shaping of Knowledge* (London,1982) chapters four and five and Susan Pearce, *On Collecting* (London,1995).

¹³⁷Bhabha, 1994 p.112.

Hence Asaf ud-Daula's European-style palace the *Daulat Khana* in one reading fits well into European ideological constructions of his oriental despotism; possessing nothing of reasoned nor logical purchase, it is rather seen as the result of base appetite; a cabinet of curios, signifying on the level of novelty and articulating an aesthetic so primitive as almost to deny its own validity.

Asaf ud-Daula is absurdly extravagant and ridiculously curious he has no taste and less judgment ... but he is extremely solicitous to possess all that is elegant and rare; he has every instrument and every machine, of every art and science; but he knows none ... Such is old Asaf ud-daula, as he is generally called, though he is now only 47; a curious compound of extravagance, avarice, candour, cunning, levity, cruelty, childishness, affability, brutish sensuality, good humour, vanity and imbecility.¹³⁸

Like his collection the nawab himself almost appears as a 'rarity'; he is 'ridiculously curious' and a 'curios compound' searching all that is 'elegant and rare' whilst he 'knows none', so that his collection reflects at least superficially, a colonial construction of his character, which ironically through a repetition of terms, defies close categorisation.¹³⁹

Smith's character assignation of the nawab of Awadh, manipulated terms similar to Shore's earlier description of Mubarek ud-Daula, as a prince neglected or corrupted by his oriental education and formed an important but seemingly trivialised article in the *Asiatic Researches* which seemed almost an

¹³⁸ Lewis Ferdinand Smith 'Letter to a Friend, March 1, 1795' *Asiatic Researches* 1806 pp.10-12 quoted in Archer, 1979 pp.144-145.(my emphases). Here eclecticism as an integral part of Indian kingship is through the matrix of colonial discourse, transfused to a new level. However we have already seen in chapter five that Asaf was not desirous to own every art, as seen in his treatment of Ozias Humphry; being unimpressed with European miniature painting.

¹³⁹ 'What is at stake is indeed personality i.e. the quality of the person which is affirmed in the capacity to appropriate an object of quality.' Bourdieu, 1999, p.281.

orientalised parody of this serious journal and of the concerns of the Asiatic Society.¹⁴⁰

Such analysis is expressed through the nawab's consumption of European goods so that vices as well as virtue, were most thoroughly fixed through the alterity of inanimate *objets d'art*, clinging to the material, in a fluid, consumptive and metaphysical world:

Asaf ud-Daula ... has not great mental power and although his heart is good, considering the education he has received, which instilled the most despotic ideas ... he is fond of lavishing his treasures on ... lustres, mirrors and all sorts of European manufactures ... from two pence deal board paintings of ducks to the elegant paintings of a Lorraine or a Zophani and from a little dirty paper lantern to mirrors and lustres which cost £2,000 or £3,000 each. Every year he expends about £200,000 on English goods of all sorts.¹⁴¹

Such a variety of art which indicating a wide ranging patronage (especially as art purchase was virtually non-existent in contemporary Calcutta), also fitted into well known discourses of 'vulgarity' as opposed to connoisseurship. The moral commentator Vicesseminus Knox had long since perceived 'the vulgar eye gazes with equal satisfaction on the canvas of a Titian and the daubings of a sign', a taste also transposed to Lucknow. However such diverse art is further complicated when we recall that Shore had condemned Zoffany's portrait of Asaf as 'not worth twopence', which thus deflated even the best art of Lucknow to the level of 'two pence deal board paintings'.

Colonial accounts of the nawab's collection attempt to expose the

¹⁴⁰Teltscher, 1995 pp.142-144 for analysis of another 'anglicised' collection; W.Hunter, 'Narrative of a Journey from Agar to Oujen' *Asiatic Researches* 6 (1799).

¹⁴¹Smith 1806 p.122.

hollowness of ‘the naive exhibitionism of conspicuous consumption which seeks distinction in the crude display of ill-mastered luxury’ and inadvertently the emptiness of many cherished standards of their own culture.¹⁴² ‘Almost the same but not quite’, Bhabha’s famous dictum implies Indians were not ‘quite up to the mark’ of British standards.¹⁴³ However such a colonial rhetoric is better applied to the nineteenth century when British education was imposed on Indians; in the eighteenth century rather than ‘almost’, the nawabs were surpassing the British, at least within colonial rhetoric which represented them through a ‘vocabulary of excess’, whose words consist of European goods parading as a social index.¹⁴⁴

At the same time a ‘cabinet of curios’ articulated a potential archive for an ‘ethnographic’ examination of a people. Members of the Shi’ite elite criticised the colonial information order as based on pecuniary demands, debased informants, ignorance and prejudice.¹⁴⁵ Calcutta possessed no permanent collection where the culture of Awadh could be perused, so in this sense the *Daulat Khana* acted as powerful critique for an obvious vacuum.¹⁴⁶ Simultaneously, all European culture could be confined to a display within a single palace.

It thus signified in numerous ways which extended also to its

¹⁴²Bourdieu 1999 p.31. See also T.Veblen, *Theory of the Leisure Class*, 1899.

¹⁴³Bhabha, 1994 pp.85-92; p.86.

¹⁴⁴Thomas, 1994 p.54.

¹⁴⁵Abu Talib, 1972 p.173 attacked the English for their search for curiosities and their superficial knowledge: ‘as soon as one of them acquires the smallest insight into the principles of any science or the rudiments of any foreign language, he immediately sits down and composes a work on the subject and by means of the press circulates books which have no more intrinsic worth than the toys bestowed on children, which serve to amuse the ignorant’.

¹⁴⁶Not until late 1790s did the Asiatic Society draw up plans for a building of its own to house its growing collections. It did not as yet have its own premises but met in the Old Court House.

comprehension by Awadhi artists. Posthumous miniatures of the nawab of Awadh, adapted from Zoffany's half-length portrait, represent Asaf ud-Daula in the *Daulat Khana*.¹⁴⁷ (fig. 123) In this image the architectural setting in which Zoffany's portrait was displayed is now conflated with the picture to create a new image of sovereignty - display itself becomes the object for representation, fissuring the boundaries between object and space in the re-creation of frameworks.¹⁴⁸ This also indicates an important shift in late provincial Mughal art and early Company painting in a realignment of space and personality. Previously nawabs were depicted outdoors, either hunting or on terraces with a view of a garden, river or sunset sky beyond. Now we see an internalisation and creation of new interiority as such rulers are situated indoors, surrounded not by retainers but with objects, thus turning inside-out colonial governmentality's concern with bio-power. In this respect we have only to juxtapose this portrait of Asaf and its presentation of self with *Nal wa daman* to see how the glitter of gold leaf and the ceremonial dress and intent gaze of Bengal's zemindars are replaced with inanimate chandeliers and gilt-framed mirrors.¹⁴⁹ If the self is primarily created for others, then this is lent new pathos by such a context. (figs 115, 123)

By the mid nineteenth century, such expenditure became associated with

¹⁴⁷The likeness derives from Zoffany's Asaf (OIOC) where the backdrop is a dark, swirling sky, set dramatically against the royal throne. From a large number of Indian copies and adaptations of this portrait (OIOC, Ehrenfeld collection, Hazaduari Palace), it would seem that a version of it was displayed in the *Daulat Khana*.

¹⁴⁸See P.Mitchell and L.Roberts *Frameworks* (London,1990) Asaf's portrait by Zoffany in the OIOC possesses a very elaborate carved and gilded frame replete with the emblem of Lucknow-fish.

¹⁴⁹Perhaps this was a trend which owed something to nawabi representations devised by European artists. Although in this era we do not see 'portraits' of interiors through such art, durbar halls are indicated, but these remain 'vague spaces'.

the last independent era of *nawabi* rule, to be remembered with nostalgia by the remnants of the Shi'ite elite. Hence a 'visual genealogy' of *the nawabs of Awadh* c.1858, (reading from right to left, as in courtly Persian and adapting an array of likenesses from *muraqqas* to canvases by Kettle, Zoffany and Home, from the royal collections, Lucknow) represents the dynasty within a *loggia*, replete with elaborate arches and a highly ornate, Italianate ceiling. (fig. 124)

The display of British art became a source of *nawabi* strength: as a mode of resistance, a display of wealth though conspicuous consumption, an ironic reinterpretation of the Archers' central premise that, 'of all the courts, Lucknow was the one which most rapidly adopted British social conventions'.¹⁵⁰ Consumption redirected British surveillance of Awadhi revenue back on itself.¹⁵¹ 'By limiting the type and amount of knowledge to which the Resident had access, rulers could try to protect their resources for expropriation by the Company'.¹⁵² Such expenditure can be aligned with Richard Barnett's well-known thesis that Asaf ud-daula was adept in manoeuvring his resources out of view of the East India Company.¹⁵³ As we have already seen, 'the attraction of the wealthy Lucknow court had to be balanced against the reality of actually getting money out of it'.¹⁵⁴ Therefore conspicuous consumption mobilised through the agency of European, but non-Company traders, was to trump the British government, as money which could have paid off part of his debts

¹⁵⁰Archer, 1972 pp.8-9.

¹⁵¹From 1787 to 1797, the nawabs of Awadh spent £1 million on European goods, Llewellyn-Jones, 1985 p.59.

¹⁵²M.Fisher, *Indirect Rule: Residents and the Residency System* (Delhi,1993) p.295.

¹⁵³A summary of Barnett's thesis in Bayly Raj, p.118, R.B.Barnett, *North India Between Empires* (Berkeley,C.A.1980).

¹⁵⁴In this reading we see a serious political agenda beyond the trivialising accounts of colonial officials such as Lewis. Llewellyn-Jones, 1995 p.126.

(filling the Treasury coffers of Calcutta) was lavished on prints and other European goods, supplied by Europeans whose relationship with the East India Company was also equivocal.¹⁵⁵ This was to partake at a sub-level, within game of administrative bluff and counter-bluff by which Asaf ud-Daula tried to exclude the British from access to and control of Awadhi resources.¹⁵⁶

At Murshidabad very different display tactics came into play.¹⁵⁷ Whilst Farington had been at pains to represent the court as a site of splendour, visiting Britons continually noted its decay but never as a marker of colonial negligence.¹⁵⁸ 'Decadence' was manipulated within a swerve in agency which indicts the nawab as cause of his present predicament, (as the palace was the one space where he retained jurisdiction) rather than harsh British reform: his 'penchant' for colonial art becomes as a symbol for his general subordination to the Company as he manifested only a 'debased' taste for the worst pictures.

An anonymous colonial anecdote of the nawab of Bengal's palace exposed an ideology of 'second-rate' taste as expressed through 'second-rate art'. Thus Murshidabad could not even compare to a provincial back-water in

¹⁵⁵Colonel Martin supplied the nawab with European goods at a profit to himself. He established the Captains Bazaar along the river front at Lucknow in the 1770s, where European goods from Calcutta were off-loaded. The ex-auction house owner Joseph Queiros was in the employment of Martin in the 1780s and procured prints and paintings through his links back to Calcutta. Martin occasionally ordered goods for the nawab through his London agents William and Thomas Raikes. Llewellyn-Jones, 1992 pp.60, 84,96, 134-9, 150,167.

¹⁵⁶The nawab's 'vacillation and deceit (acted) as an elaborate ploy to maintain the independence of his realm and hide its real revenues from British eyes.' Bayly, 1990 pp.81-2.

¹⁵⁷For an early account of the *killah*'s interiors bereft of European art and furniture see Fisher, 1996, p.39.

¹⁵⁸Describing (even prescribing) Mughal decay, became a standard feature of early colonial travelogues. William Hodges, *Travels in India* (London,1793) p.105 for his description of the royal palace at Faizabad resident of former Awadhi nawab Shuja ud-Daula; 'In the inner courts were the remains of the durbar or hall of public audience ... the painting and gilding greatly gone to decay'. This was the same palace which is loosely indicated by Kettle's *Shuja and General Barker* 1775. Hodges, 1793 p.104 explains such rapid decay as Awadh was 'in a state of constant fluctuation'.

Britain, the nawab's taste not worthy of a boorish country squire: 'figure to yourself a bad representation of the entrance of a Devonshire village and you will have some idea of the great city of Murshidabad'.¹⁵⁹ Juxtaposed with accounts of grand new auction houses, and lists of sales of fashionable prints, lotteries and praise for the decoration of public buildings in Calcutta, Murshidabad was Other; its choice of British art despicably shabby. Paradoxically Calcutta's art defined *nawabi* taste at Murshidabad, which once again demonstrated how the decisions and revisions of space coloured the supposedly 'inherent virtues' of British art. According to the *Calcutta Chronicle* the royal residence manifested:

nothing but a square plait of blue and red poppies, peeping through the uncut grass- on one side of the square was an apartment into which we were received: the floor was covered with Persian carpets and the room decorated with English furniture:- two ill painted pictures were hung, one at each end of the hall, the subjects were the portraits of two English ladies and a portrait of Jupiter and Leda.

The Nabob was seated on a sofa at the upper end of the room- he rose to receive us and after the compliment of salutation we were placed in chairs on each side of the sofa:- the Resident sat on the same seat with the nawab and smoked the hookah with him ... on a table near the nabob was placed a musical clock made by Cox and another elegant clock adorned with jewels by Ellicot, with both which he seemed much pleased - the conversation was carried on by an interpreter: an etiquette always observed, even if you understand the language.¹⁶⁰

Further colonial descriptions consolidate the conflation of political and cultural decadence:

¹⁵⁹*Calcutta Chronicle* May 15, 1788 p.1.

¹⁶⁰*ibid.*, p.1.

The gateway was ruinous and never could have been anything other than *mean*. The first and second courts within were neglected beyond conception; the buildings in a state of dilapidation, while weeds and rubbish filled the corners ... the walls whitewashed, arches ornamented with painted wood, coloured and carved with equal coarseness. A few English fox hunting prints, of the secondary quality, decorated one side.¹⁶¹

Both such verbal descriptions juxtapose sharply with Company images of the Murshidabad durbar, where the nawab and the Resident are seated outdoors, a neatly shaved lawn in the foreground, numerous court attendants and holy men filling the spaces of glittering architectural structures as well as with the Resident's neoclassical palace (figs 113, 114, 125, 126).

Unlike Lucknow, Murshidabad possessed no European-style palace: its open, multi-pillared, precolonial structure was ill-designed for the display of vast quantities of British art, with only the end walls allowing for one canvas each. The court had few funds to lavish on art in sharp contrast with Asaf ud-Daula's *Daulat Khana* so that instead of portraits of the nawab and his family, the subjects are boorish or its inverse feminine, but overall shabby, of low moral content and aesthetic standard, hardly fitting decoration for a royal palace as 'incongruity' and 'deflation' became powerful rhetorical weapons for subordination.¹⁶²

¹⁶¹Marchioness of Bute (ed.) *The Private Journal of the Marquess of Hastings*, two volumes (London, 1858), volume one pp.81-82.

¹⁶²We have already seen from Wales' order for female portrait prints for the Pune court, Willison's copy of a Venus after Sir Joshua Reynolds and Gillray's *Sale of English Beauties to the East, 1783*, that nawabi aesthetic taste was being stereotyped and grafted onto more sensual desires for British women. The display of a single canvas at each end of the nawab's apartment thus compared with Mughal Emperors' use of European art as recorded by such European visitors as Sir Thomas Roe and in Mughal chronicles such as the *Padshahnama* where Europeanised images of saints and gods was utilised in the space near the throne, thus creating an intense visualization, almost a 'halo' of divinity around the Emperor. In this sense, European imagery operated within the careful construction of space, where each official lined up in his

European travel writing had long wielded the Indian use of western imagery as a powerful allegory of its own society and its dialectic with foreigners.¹⁶³ However at Murshidabad, the allegorical associations of Mughal kingship through Solomonic, mythological and Christian symbology, were deflected. Now European mythology is reduced to a lascivious tale, which if read within a travelogue tradition, makes a travesty of the nawab's kingship.

Intersecting notions of time and taste were deployed as the palace is transformed as other to refinement, decayed but coarse, white washed and crudely coloured which ultimately must disintegrate in the creation of a new imperial order. Colonial accounts focus on the incongruity of British pictures and prints of English women and hunting scenes which sit uneasily, seemingly undigested in durbar halls, disfiguring both the art and the *situ* into something ambivalently hybrid creating a *frisson* between pictures and setting.¹⁶⁴

However on another level, there is colonial anxiety at the ease with which British art could be so arbitrarily appropriated, even tainted by its 'despotic' environment: - it is not the colonialists asserting 'exhibitionist' authority, but the old ruling elites through the medium of colonial imagery, which thus has implications for art as an accoutrement of sovereignty or its compromise.¹⁶⁵

Such fears were dispelled by the apparent ability of colonial art to be metamorphosed into 'litmus paper' for gauging the state of the society in which

proper place, as the durbar hall functioned as map of Mughal administration. See for instance, E.Koch and M.C.Beach, *King of the World: the Padshahnama* (Windsor,1997).

¹⁶³ Teltscher,1995 pp.109-113.

¹⁶⁴Bhabha, 1994 pp.113-114.

¹⁶⁵For the colonialist as exhibitionist *ibid.*, p.116.

it was placed.¹⁶⁶ ‘A work of art has meaning and interest only for someone who possesses the cultural competence, that is the code, into which it is encoded’ and that a ‘beholder who lacks the specific code feels lost in a chaos of ... colours and lines’ were arrested at the primary stratum of meaning at a sensual level.¹⁶⁷ Rather than extracting higher moral value out of such images, which were minimal in this case anyway, nawabi taste is relegated by colonial perception to a sensual (by implication not elevated) level of existence.

‘Taste is the basis of all that one has- people and things and all that one is for others, whereby one classifies oneself and is classified by others’, or by the Other.¹⁶⁸ From the British ideological view, everyone possessed the seeds of taste which needed cultivation, here entirely lacking (as in Hodges’ description of the want of agriculture in the Lucknow region; culture had to be cultured properly). ‘A fine taste is neither wholly the gift of nature nor wholly the effect of art. It derives its origins from certain powers natural to the mind; but these powers cannot attain full perfection unless they be assisted by proper culture’.¹⁶⁹ The senses must be aided by judgment and allowed to dominate as was too often the case within the European construction and destruction of the nawab of Awadh’s fetish for European goods.¹⁷⁰ It is judgement which discovers the meaning of a picture both immediate and remotely.¹⁷¹ ‘This excellence of taste

¹⁶⁶In chapter one we saw how Reynolds stressed the importance of ornament in painting to reveal the characteristics of a nation. Art and nations receive their ‘peculiar character and complexion’ from ornament. Here we see that this is taken a step further as not merely the ‘painting of ornament’ but ‘painting as ornament’ indicates social characteristics, despite its subject having nothing to do with the context in which it has been displayed.

¹⁶⁷Bourdieu, 1999, p.2.

¹⁶⁸ibid., p.56.

¹⁶⁹A. Gerard, *An Essay on Taste*, (London, 1789) p.1.

¹⁷⁰ibid, p.90.

¹⁷¹ibid, p.104.

suppose not only culture but culture judiciously applied. Want of taste unavoidably springs from negligence; false taste from injudicious cultivation'.¹⁷²

At Lucknow and Murshidabad distinction operated in additional ways. Asaf's connoisseurship, defined by his enormous expenditure on British art is indiscriminating, possessing both the best and worst images on offer, a signifier within colonial discourse as a marker of his insatiable appetite for luxuries. At Murshidabad with only limited funds to spend on art, such excess is stripped away to reveal that beneath eclecticism lay a debased taste for the worst British pictures; a direct inversion of the vagaries of aesthetic judgment as associated with the ideal 'Man of Taste' in Britain. Asaf ud-Daula's collection did possess some fine pictures (selected by whatever means) unlike Mubarek ud-Daula's collection in Bengal; ironically it was the latter who had received an English education.¹⁷³ But like colonial schooling, this imposition of a certain form of taste was carefully calculated to imbue subordination rather than an easy incorporation into the value system of the British, laying the foundations for conflicting discourses of hybridity.

'The founding objects of the western world become erratic, eccentric accidental *objets trouvés* of the colonial discourse - the part-objects of presence'.¹⁷⁴ Despite the accelerating colonisation of the 1790s this was still an

¹⁷²ibid, p.105.

¹⁷³As the original palace at Murshidabad has long since gone, it is now impossible to recover the original picture collection, except from a few surviving works in the Hazarduari Palace and from Majumdar's 1905 work, which noted such paintings as *Peasants Carousing* by Rembrandt, *Music Party* by Teniers and *Venice* after Tiepolo. None of these appear to be correct attributions but rather as copies on a par with the sort of art which stocks English country houses. Llewellyn-Jones, 1985 pp.22-23 Asaf did have an English language teacher.

¹⁷⁴Bhabha, 1994 p.92.

era of transition when cultural symbols were fiercely contested and deployed on various levels in games of flattery and intimidation. There were now colonial rituals which demanded colonial accoutrements. The Company through its drive for parsimony may have projected an ideology that its form of governmentality did not require ostentatious ritual and symbols, but in areas where Indian symbols could be ‘anglicised’, it imposed its own cultural code. Against the backdrop of the old Mughal state, signified by its pre-colonial architecture and carpets, was overlaid the diplomatic forum of the British; replete with an array of Anglicising elements far more ominous than on first appearance, cultural forms which were making both subtle and crude perceptual realignments within the cultural identity of the *nawabi* elite. English pictures, the calendar and ideological tenets of their imposition of a ‘homogeneous empty time’, defined the curious trappings of the Resident and his departure, leaving a wake of cultural fragments.¹⁷⁵

Ozias Humphry when invited to the home of Hasan Reza Khan, whose portrait he took, observed:

if I looked no further than the tea table, I could persuade myself I was in London. He replied that for some years past their interest had been so connected and interwoven with the English that they endeavoured in all matters that they could with propriety to *accommodate* themselves to their manners.¹⁷⁶

To ‘accommodate with propriety’ suggests a willingness to ‘make room for’,

¹⁷⁵We can see from Hastings’ other gifts to Jawan Bakht: Hastings Papers BL: Add Ms 29,092 ff.165-166, items which were concerned with European taste, ways of seeing and constructions of time and place: - a chest of tea, four elegant tea caddies, six smelling bottles with gold tops, six snuff boxes, a silver toilet, four London-made scissors with silver handles, two watches and a gold telescope in a gold box. These few items were valued at 1390 Rs (c.£141) much more than the huge stock of gifted prints.

¹⁷⁶Ozias Humphry quoted in Archer, 1979 p.194.(my emphasis)

oblige or favour indicating diplomatic probity to a careful demarcation.¹⁷⁷

Although we have seen a degree of compromise and cultural adoption on the part of both sides, colonial penetration was increasingly apparent as Indian elites were educated into accepting British art at least at the 'public' level of their existence within colonial mind sets. However accommodation imbricates crucial Indian agency within the formation of colonialism, as well as in the highly ambivalent re-formation of customs.¹⁷⁸

Thus we see 'hybrid' activities taking place within 'hybrid' spaces.¹⁷⁹ 'A taste for western art had become a major signifier of wealth and status' amongst India's elites. It was an integral part of their new self-image and life styles and of the flamboyant fashions in architecture and interior decoration'.¹⁸⁰ Yet the very nature of artistic display and the 'anglicised' rituals were themselves still superficial, and could be removed when receiving important Indian visitors as colonial cultural signifiers whilst conveying one level rarity, novelty, distinction and cosmopolitanism, held little relevance to the inner and often also the outer cultural life of the conservative elite.¹⁸¹ British pictures could be shunted into the store room, the chairs, tables and tea trays cleared away, whilst nobles and the nawab sat on rugs, regarded *muraqqas* and took *pan*, as notions of

¹⁷⁷Accommodation and space are of course imbricated and implicated by such a term. the specifics of this spatial analogy are crucial. Britons were received into specific spaces, be it a garden house, royal tent or carefully selected apartment which ultimately had little to do with the inner life of the court.

¹⁷⁸Thomas, 1994, p.15: calls attention to overemphasising the impact of colonialism through notions of 'fatal impact': '(t)hough generally sympathetic to the plight of the colonized, such perceptions frequently exaggerate colonial power, diminishing the extent to which colonial histories were shaped by indigenous resistance and accommodation'.

¹⁷⁹As we saw in chapters two and three Calcutta's buildings were rarely what can be termed architecture. Thus nawabi adaptation further deconstructed European architectural idioms.

¹⁸⁰Guha-Thakurta 1992 pp.49-50.

¹⁸¹ibid., 1992 p.52: 'in sharp contrast to the westernisation of their visual tastes the interest in literature or music remained closely oriented to local and classical Indian traditions'.

enunciation transformed the scene and schema for *nawabi* interiors and their ensuing etiquette.¹⁸²

New spaces and accompanying objects should not be seen merely as superficial concessions to Europeanisation, as mere ‘fetishes’. These demanded a new structure of belonging.¹⁸³ The Europeanisation of Indian interiors also affected bodily awareness and self constructions. The use of mirrors altered *nawabi* notions of space; sheets of glass acting as lenses which cut down the sides of rooms and threw space back to the centre.¹⁸⁴

Notions of *adab* and politeness began to be redefined. Whilst the British began to adjust their life-styles to the Indian climate, smoking *hookahs*, and taking cold baths, Indians were also undergoing bodily, aesthetic and taste redefinitions. Nawabs now took tea from Wedgwood Queensware, as the consumption of ‘oriental luxury’ once so bemoaned in early eighteenth-century Britain, was re-exported to eastern spaces.¹⁸⁵

By 1810, provincial Mughal school at Lucknow portrayed the nawabs seated in interiors crammed full of European style art, western furniture where western rituals such as English banquets re-evolved. (fig. 127) On many levels *nawabi* appropriations of colonial ‘taste’ from tipples to pictures, transposed the

¹⁸²Smith, 1806 pp.101-102; Asaf took opium and a green leaf called *subzee* but when in English company relished a ‘good dish of tea and hot rolls’.

¹⁸³New spatial practices implied formation of new sensibilities, no longer confined to courts but gradually spilling over to the new city of Calcutta where the nouveaux riches babus would view with their equals in maintaining houses decorated with assortments of European objects of conspicuous consumption, including art. See Dipesh Chakrabarty, ‘The Difference-Deferral of a Colonial Modernity: Public Debates on Domesticity in British India’, in D.Arnold and D.Hardiman (eds.) *Subaltern Studies* viii pp.50-88 and Bhaskar Mukhopadhyay, *Home and the World: Dwelling in Bengali Modernity* (forthcoming).

¹⁸⁴Baudrillard, 1968 pp.1-6.

¹⁸⁵Mark Harrison *Climate and Constitution* (Delhi,1999) chapter two and Bourdieu,1999 chapter three.

anxiety of shifting power relations in eastern India, at least on the stage of Anglo-Indian diplomacy, especially after the Company's direct annexation of Awadh. These European accoutrements were incorporated into evolving notions of elite identities which deconstructed and ignored colonial classification. From a British viewpoint this was a limited 'triumph' in acculturation, yet such luxuries were translated into demonstrations of prestige within Indian society which ultimately had very little to do with colonialism, despite Britons' congratulatory panegyric:

An English apartment, a band of English regimentals playing English tunes, a room lighted by magnificent English girandoles, English tables, chairs and looking glasses, an English service of plates, English knives and forks, spoons, wine glasses, decanters and cut-glass vases - how could this convey *any idea* that we were seated in the court of an Asiatic prince?¹⁸⁶

Such an observation reveals seemingly conflicting sentiments. Whilst a celebration of English cultural presence, it denies the 'essential' ethnographic focus of other cultures in contact with imperial powers that would be increasingly sought.

'(A)rt and cultural consumption are predisposed, consciously and deliberately or not, to fulfill a social function of legitimating social differences'.¹⁸⁷ The presence of British art at Indian courts involved and evolved difficult power relations. Despite the growing jingoism created by expanding imperialism, these reactions to British art reveal darker and shifting agendas.

¹⁸⁶Lord Valentia at the court of the nawab of Awadh, Saadat Ali in 1803; Archer 1979 p.324 (my emphasis). We see how he focuses in from the apartment, to the sounds, from the general to the particular, moving from the furniture to the most delicate glass ware.

¹⁸⁷Bourdieu, 1999, p.7.

The creation of new modes of self-representation, the changing nature of client-artisan dialectic, novel notions of interior decoration, imperatives of correct taste, alien patterns of consumption and a devolving art economy replete with further dislocations of value determination, reverberated along the corridors of power. European pictures as symbolic ciphers of supremacy were closely interwoven with so called mechanisms of ritual and state control which they also moved beyond in the evolution of distinct modes of resistance, accommodation and digestion within patronal and artisan spheres that sowed the seeds for the future production of a national 'Indian' art.¹⁸⁸

¹⁸⁸ Guha-Thakurta, 1992, Mitter, 1994 and R.Chatterjee, 1990. 'Paradoxically, the power and charisma of European knowledge now determined the main thrust of anti-colonial developments in art in Bengal': Tapati Guha-Thakurta, 'Orientalism, Nationalism and the Recollection of Indian Art in Calcutta, in C.B.Asher and T.R.Metcalf (eds.) *Perceptions of South Asia's Visual Past*, (Delhi,1994) pp.47-66; p.48.

Conclusion

The Promiscuity of Objects: *The Poetics and Politics of Colonial Images*

In the first twenty five years of Company rule a liminal market and demand for British imagery was forged in India. More fundamentally the means by in which such 'oft-exotic' imagery was introduced, explained, translated, extruded, denuded and perceived by both Britons and Indians, signified as trope for the wider ambivalence of a troubled, often contradictory imperialism based on flimsy foundations. The heterogeneity of the communities to which such imagery was projected, precluded any coherent homogeneous signification, locuted and located by local and partial articulation. The introduction British art involved 'a process of displacement that, paradoxically makes ... (its) presence wondrous to the extent which it is repeated, translated, misread, displaced'.¹ At times, such cultural fragments were burdened with so much more as part of colonialism's 'civilising mission'; modes of civil authority and order, albeit through the difficulties of enunciation.²

'For it is in-between the edict of Englishness and the assault of the dark unruly spaces of the earth, through an act of repetition, that the colonial ... (image) emerges uncertainly'.³ Yet also in the white, ordered spaces of colonial Calcutta, the transferral of a diaspora of British artists was imbricated with difficulties. Tropical humidity, rented houses, fear of death and other

¹Homi Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (London, 1994) p.102.

²ibid., p.107.

³ibid., p.107.

insecurities of the minority settlers community foreclosed the possibility of long-term investment in art. Even during the boom, oil paintings were doomed to a hard lot of lotteries and raffles, to be won in the public arena as trophies rather than as discrete purchases of a discriminating taste. With the first sign of economic recession, colonial consumption of art plummeted, manifesting not only the tentative nature of colonial taste, but also the very precariousness of artistic existence within a mercantile society *in extremis*.

However, whilst the commercial value of ‘high art’ collapsed, a pictorial way of seeing became crucial to colonial information-gathering; as the necessary adjunct to an ‘orientalist empiricism’.⁴ Surveyors, officers and judges utilised visual material to assist in the planning of military manoeuvres, or else as private sketches which were often transferred to Britain to be translated in to high quality ‘Picturesque’ aquatints. Despite this confusing aesthetic terminology, no coherent aesthetic developed in India, surely due to the complexity of the varying social and artistic encounters between two very different visual economies.

However, from the view of London pictorial representation became entangled with perceptions of India. In this era, tens of thousands of sketches, aquatints, mezzotints, miniatures and exhibition oils were produced and indigenous art and artefacts collected, launching India in to the metropolitan aesthetic sphere in an unprecedented manner, having repercussions for architecture and aesthetic theory. That art became complicit within a both latent

⁴ D.Ludden, ‘Oriental Empiricism’, in C.Breckenridge and P.van der Veer (eds.) *Orientalism and the Postcolonial Predicament* (Philadelphia,1993). See also Arjun Appadurai, ‘Number in the Colonial Imagination’, *Modernity at Large* (New York,1997).

and active colonial vision can be gauged by the writings of early colonial visitors, for instance Thomas Pennant.⁵ Every site he visited had already been portrayed by Hodges, the Daniells or Zoffany, all of whom he praised for their accuracy. The effects of the creation of such a vision were profound; a colonising sight was truly overlaid on to site as the seemingly ephemeral sketches and prints. As Mitchell suggests, modernity defined the fundamental view of the world as a picture; whereby reality existed as a series of representations reinforced by picture-making.⁶ In this sense, there was often less of a contradiction between creating India as a representation for metropolitan consumption and its instrumentation within quotidian administration than cultural commentators have suggested.⁷ Although they were literally worlds apart, an efficient trafficking mechanism allowed for wide dissemination of ideas and artefacts to be recoded in various ways.

Yet we have seen that relatively few painters chose to represent Bengal or Indians - the heartland and new subjects of British rule, but rather took on the mantle of traveller scrambling for 'exotic' 'never before seen' sights which could be visually colonised. Such scenes were rarely populated. At least in the 1770s and 1780s Indians rarely appear in art that was in any way made public - either through exhibitions or through prints, contrasting sharply with the art of Cook's Voyages. Until Solvyns' project, the only serious artistic engagement with the representation of Indians were either as servants in the portraits of

⁵ Thomas Pennant, *View of Hindoostan* (London, 1798).

⁶ Timothy Mitchell, *Colonising Egypt* (Cambridge, 1988).

⁷ The predicament between latent and manifest 'Orientalisms' underpins the work of Edward Said; a tension which remains unresolved; Edward Said, *Orientalism* (New York, 1978). See also Robert Young, *White Mythologies: Writing History and the West* (London, 1999) for a useful critique of this ambiguity.

white officials, as labourers in Devis' *Bengali Manufactures* and Kettle and Hodges' depictions of Hindu and Muslim wives about to perform acts of conjugal fidelity. These performed as stereotypes in various ways: Devis was less interested in the manufacturers than their produce - perhaps the best representation of a 'Company aesthetic', whilst the depiction, almost allegorisation of India as a beautiful, loyal female provided attractive prospects for imperial legitimisation, particularly in an era of uncertainty and anxiety of empire.

As the value system of Britons abroad uncertainly and ultimately unenthusiastically defined by their local circumstances, what hope could British art have within the alien aesthetic sphere of Indian cultures? As Guha-Thakurta, Mitter and Chatterjee have asserted, British art was synthesised by Bengali painters in to their own practices. 'The non-use of introduced articles was taken as a negative condition which had to be explained'.⁸ However this denies the creative recontextualisation of objects in a dynamic poetics of appropriation. There was room to construct new meanings based on local factors and extension of Indian aesthetic values to be bestowed partially on British art: 'the artefact was never simply a valuable object of exchange or even a gift that creates relations of one sort or another but also a crucial index of the extent to which those relations are sustained or disfigured'.⁹ In making room for 'native' as 'inappropriate' forms of agency (such as pictures hung upside down, or a wall so cluttered with pictures that it is possible to appreciate them 'properly') in terms of British art and ideologies, displaced founding norms.

⁸N.Thomas, *Entangled Objects* (1989) p.1.

⁹ibid., p.19.

The unsettling experience of staging metropolitan art in the colony contains a hidden account of how such an agenda was revised in the process of its historical articulation, urging a revision of our customary notion that colonialism produced nothing but domination. To view colonialism in India as mere domination and imposition runs the risk of turning British India into a graveyard, leaving nothing of its history except the remains of those which were either appropriated or stood resistant to it. It cannot track 'inappropriate' realignments and relocation produced in the process of institutionalisation of British and Indian art. In terms of 'messianic' time of contemporary Indo-Persian chronicles, the ascendancy of the British was interpreted as 'Inqalib', as a time of reversal when the world was turned upside down.¹⁰ But it is only during such 'state(s) of siege' which blasts open the homogenous continuum of history, when throughout is suddenly arrested, immobilised and then released, that newness can enter the world.¹¹

By the 1790s in Bengal, both the *nawabi* and *banian* elites began patronising Indian painters to work within an Europeanised idiom, which began to collapse old boundaries and create new barriers between British and Indian art.¹² This was not simply an absorption of European elements into Mughal art but a reorientation of aesthetic agenda as artists such as Mir Chand were devising a vernacular realism, which was not simply imitation or reiteration of

¹⁰Kumkum Chatterjee, 'History as Self-Representation: The Recasting of a Political Tradition in Late Eighteenth-century Eastern India', *Modern Asian Studies* 32.4 (1998) p.924.

¹¹Walter Benjamin, 'Theses on the Philosophy of History' trans. Harry Zohn *Illuminations* (London,1992) pp.245-255.

¹²See Ratnabali Chatterjee, *From the Karkhana to the Studio* (Delhi,1990), Tapati Guha-Thakurta, *The Making of a New Indian Art* (Cambridge,1992) and Partha Mitter, *Art and Nationalism: Occidental Orientations* (London,1994).

British artistic conventions.¹³ Whilst difference remained irreducible, the very process of vernacular reinscription of European art produced a contingent and contentious negotiation; a form of translation that set boundaries into a relationship of mixture and movement. Indians and Britons commissioned a whole range of imagery. For instance Hastings, Impey, Naba Krishna Deb, Asaf ud-daula and Mubarek ud-daula all possessed collections of British and Indian art. Certain types of imagery were in high demand by both cultures; for instance *muraqqas* from imperial courts and the imported prints. However at a superficial level, this shared eclecticism disguises many cultural tensions, aesthetic and ideological divisions and distinctions which bled in to other aspects of every day practice.

Ethnographically, the impact of British art on the indigenous sphere cannot be properly gauged without considering their influence on the ‘practices of the self’ of the Indian nobility. The formative importance of *adab* in the self fashioning of the south Asian Islamic elite has recently been underscored.¹⁴

Anthropologists have alerted their readers to the importance accorded to ‘seemingly insignificant detail of dress, bearing, physical and verbal manners’ in all societies.¹⁵ The necessity for this attention to the ‘unnecessary’ is traced to the society’s propensity to use the body as a *practical mnemonic* for the ‘fundamental principles of the arbitrary content of the culture’. Such effectivity

¹³It can even be questioned whether such art was ‘derivative’; Europeanised idioms as digested in 16th and 17th-century Mughal imagery had long been a part of Awadhi cultural life, so that perhaps Kettle’s presence fits into this tradition rather than signifying a clean break with past modes of Europeanisation.

¹⁴See for example, Barbara Metcalf (ed.) *Moral Conduct and Authority: The Place of Adab in South Asian Islam* (Berkeley, 1984).

¹⁵Pierre Bourdieu, *Outline of Theory of Practice* (Cambridge, 1977) pp.94-95.

lies in the fact that by 'embodying' these principles in the form of seemingly insignificant social requirements of demeanour, then fall below the threshold of consciousness and are quarantined off from the possibility of voluntary deliberate transformation.¹⁶

There are reasons to believe that the very notion of interiority was undergoing crisis. This was revealed dramatically in the early nineteenth century when the Nawab of Murshidabad was forced to reside in the new British-built Hazarduari Palace with its neoclassical architecture and European division of space, wrote to the colonial authorities, 'I appeal to your sense of justice ... that palace ... being built wholly in the European style is totally unsuited for the residence of a native prince. Privacy for native ladies cannot be obtained, nor there are any means by which they may without exposure enjoy the fresh air and take exercise'.¹⁷ The practices of self associated with *adab* had to undergo changes in order to accommodate not just a new kind of interior space but also European furniture and pictures which required new spatial practices, so that British art became conspicuous by its presence.

¹⁶Norbert Elias, *The Civilizing Process Volume One: The History of Manners* (Oxford, 1939) See also Maulavi M. Hidayat Hussein, 'The Mirza Namah (The Book of the Perfect Gentleman) of Mirza Kamran with an English Translation' *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal* volume 9, 1913. Also Qeyamuddin Ahmad, 'Some Norms of Social and Economic Behavior - A Late Seventeenth-Century Indian Point of View' *Indian Historical Review* 8 nos. 1-2 (July 1981-January 1982) pp. 19-34. This is an annotated translation of the *adab* portion of Shah Hidayatullah Bihari's *Hidayatu'l Qawa'id*, 1712. See also Jeffrey Minson, 'Men and Manners: Kantian humanism, rhetoric and the history of ethics' *Economy and Society* 18.2 1989 pp. 191-220. See also Arjun Appadurai, *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization* (London, 1996) p. 67; consumption must and does fall into the mode of repetition, of habituation.

¹⁷*Selection of Papers Connected with Nizamat Affairs* (Calcutta, 1863) printed for private circulation only; Appendix B p. 41, para. 31 cited by Ratnabali Chatterjee, 1990 p. 32. The Hazarduari Palace was constructed with a central court yard, which akin to the lay out of the homes of Calcutta's wealthy Hindu *babu* community, was believed by the British to be an important concession to Indian architectural and hence spatio-rituals. Additionally, an inner courtyard, the colonialists believed, gave 'privacy' for women, which illuminates the division between colonial and Indo-Islamic notions of space, public and private.

That British imagery became digested into Indian notions of kingship are indicated by its destruction by British troops in colonial accounts of the Lucknow Mutiny of 1857 when imperial battalions ‘drunk on plunder’, ‘smashed fowling pieces and pistols to get at the gold mountings and the stones set in the stocks. China, glass and jade they dashed to pieces in pure wantonness; pictures they ripped up, or tossed on the flames’.¹⁸ From one view point such accounts appear almost cannibalistic; as the British commit violence against their own cultural goods; smashed up in war and criticised through their display in peace, which surely undermined the agenda for disseminating such objects. Within British culture, art was held within an aura of education, exhibiting, art writing, decorous use and learned perception. When transferred into a colonial context such a ‘civilising mantle’ was stripped away, which not only from an Indian, but also from a British perspective, questions whether such artefacts remained art at all.

¹⁸M.Archer, *India and British Portraiture, 1770-1825* (London,1979) p.464, note 49.

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