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Redeeming the Nabob: Frances Burney, Warren Hastings and the Cultural Construction of India[1] in *A Busy Day*

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It wasn't always as E.M. Forster depicted it. Before 1857, before The Raj, before India became the jewel in Britain's crown, the experiences of a young English woman freshly arrived in the subcontinent could be positive, worthwhile, even lucrative. At the end of the eighteenth century, the English "discovered" India as more than just a place where bright young men could make fantastic amounts of money. Its unique culture, its storybook opulence, its overwhelming otherness not only provided inspiration for wild Orientalist imaginings but also offered opportunities to question seriously the assumed superiority of European culture. India was, in short, a place where the European could be entirely remade.

That being said, India was still a place where bright young men could make fantastic amounts of money. In fact, the perception of the young East India Company employees adopted in the literature of the period focuses solely on their rapid accumulation of wealth and power.[2] Dubbed "nabobs," after the Mughal title, "nawab," but in British jargon a synonym for "Eastern despot," the Company employees were seen, as Jyotsna Singh notes, "as merchants/adventurers and opportunists who were in India solely to acquire wealth" (54). Singh's point is that the nabob-figure is in part a European construction that embodies several

Orientalist tropes, especially that of India as "a site of Eastern decadence and despotism, breeding corruption and dissipation among Company functionaries" (53). The alternative figure in the European construction of India, according to Singh, is the Oriental scholar, who seeks to retrieve a Hindu "golden age" from the lead of present-day Indian life. This second figure is no less an Orientalist construction than the first, no less a colonial misperception of the reality of Indian culture. Moreover, both tropes ultimately reassert the centrality of British activity on the subcontinent.

The nabob's aggressive rise to power thus made India itself a threat to the traditional structure of English mercantilism. James Raven asserts that anti-nabob literature portrayed him primarily as a figure who threatened the economic establishment of late eighteenth-century Britain. In Raven's view, however, the nabob's aggressive attainment of wealth was distrusted in Britain in part because it defied "the traditional features of status" (221). In short, the nabob had no place within the English social structure; moreover, the nabob appeared at a time when that structure was itself changing. For Raven, anti-nabob literature reaches its height during late 1780s and 90s; then, after 1800, "the nabob makes no more villainous appearances, and very few complimentary or derisive ones" (233). This view of the nabob literature is underlined by Renu Juneja in her study, "The Native and the Nabob: Representations of the Indian Experience in Eighteenth-Century Literature." Juneja, however, stresses that nabob literature of the period is, on the whole, free of the racism that plagues later British accounts of India.

The emphasis on status displayed by anti-nabob literature is itself noteworthy. It suggests that the distrust of colonial mercantile endeavours is a distrust of the transforming nature of colonisation itself. For those who embraced the colonising activity of the East India Company, Britain's established order was no longer the only social paradigm available. Anti-nabob literature tends to focus on merchants who have *returned* to England—who have, in effect, brought the colony home with them. Seventeenth-century English travellers, who reported back tales of their discovery of the "exotic" East, could be classed in the tradition of travellers—the contemporary counterparts of Sir John Mandeville—in search of a fantastic and mysterious land on the periphery of civilisation. However, the discourse of eighteenth-century Britain had no room for the returned nabob, who was both an Englishman and an Indian—who had not only embraced that periphery, but made it a

site of challenge to the perceived centre. With its vigorous trade and its rise as a cultural entity in its own right, especially in the last years of the century, India—particularly Calcutta—stood ready to become a new centre.

Whether they were admired or scorned, the nabobs were certainly at the core of British India. However, by 1784, the monopoly of control held by the East India Company had come under attack from "merchants and politicians out to put an end to its trade privileges" as Philip Lawson informs us (127). Pitt's India Bill in 1784 transferred military control and other powers back to the state, and as the state began to chip away at the Company's hegemony in India, British interest in India as a cultural entity began to flourish. As Lawson, in *The East India Company: A History*, notes,

> Any student looking at this period in the Company's past will be struck, overwhelmed even, by the profusion of narratives, accounts, and analyses of every description and hue. (126)

Not all of these accounts, of course, announce themselves as factual; it is also during this period that the figure of the nabob as a literary trope comes into existence. Plays such as Samuel Foote's *The Nabob* (1772)—which Singh analyses extensively—defined the features of the colonial merchant; in so doing, they also defined the relationship between coloniser and colonised as primarily mercantile: all political, social, and especially cultural interests were therefore subordinate to economic ones. By the last years of the century, however, the mercantile power of colonialism was forced to accommodate other interests.

Raven's estimation that the height of nabob literature coincides with the Hastings Trial is worth some detailed study. The years from 1784 to the end of the century marked the end of the controversial governorship of Warren Hastings—which Percival Spear regards as a "transition" period—and the beginning of his trial for impeachment, one of the most protracted non-murder trials of the century. It began in 1788—opening with Edmund Burke's dazzling four-day speech indicting Hastings—and dragged on for eight years, until the jury finally declared Hastings not guilty of all charges. Far beyond the particulars of the charges themselves, the Hastings Trial opened up the world of British India for London readers in a way that had hitherto gone unnoticed. Part of the reason lay in the fact that Hastings appeared in popular British

consciousness as a singular figure, much more than a mere colourless diplomat. He made sincere efforts to understand Indian culture, encouraging not only translations of the great Hindu classics, but also himself learning Persian so that he might deal more effectively with the crumbling but still significant Moghul empire. Raven argues that the perceived threat posed by the nabob to established class-boundaries in England helped to further the unflattering profile given the East India Company and its employees by the prosecutors at the Hastings trial, and, ultimately, to assist in establishing Hastings' own guilt. It can also be argued, however, that as the Hastings trial unfolded, the prosecution's own rhetoric helped to unsettle many of the literary stereotypes of the nabob, and, as the trial dragged to its conclusion, interest shifted away from the figure of the nabob himself to other aspects of Anglo-Indian life. This shift helped to put the nabobs in a much broader social and cultural context, and opened up the possibility of seeing India on more than just economic terms.

The trial itself is a good place to start reappraising both Singh's account of English constructions of India, and some of the literary responses to Hastings' impeachment. In particular, Frances Burney's "nabob-play," *A Busy Day* (1800-01) can be read as both a literary response to India, and as a working out of ideas and attitudes generated by the Hastings trial.[3] Moreover, a close reading of the play forces us to reexamine both Juneja's and Raven's easy dismissal of "nabob" literature at the end of the century, and Singh's own dichotomous appraisal of the British construction of India. *A Busy Day* uses Burney's fanciful invention of British India—constructed along the lines of Hastings' ideals—to underpin her satire on British society itself.

The issues of class mobility, colonial mercantilism, and Hastings' ideal of India are all represented in *A Busy Day*. The play's heroine, Eliza Watts, is the daughter of a *nouveau-riche* English merchant. Mr. Watts's fortune is so new, in fact, that in order to secure the infant Eliza's future, he sent her to Calcutta under the guardianship of a rich nabob, Mr. Alderson. Eliza, now a young woman and an heiress worth £80,000, returns at the opening of the play to an England she has never known. She is accompanied by her secret lover, Cleveland, who is on the verge of making his own fortune in India, but who has been recalled to England by his uncle, Sir Marmaduke Tylney, to earn his inheritance on the completion of an arranged marriage with the fashionable Miss Percival. Cleveland must find a way to divulge his

engagement to Eliza, who as a merchant's daughter is regarded as unworthy of Cleveland's family. At the same time, Cleveland's younger brother, Frank, has fallen in love with Eliza, and delights in his pursuit of a *déclassé* "cit."

The plot closely follows the lines of older merchant comedies, particularly one of Burney's favourites, Garrick and Colman's *The Clandestine Marriage* (1766). The play owes much to the conventions of merchant comedy, whose narrative and thematic parameters are clearly defined: a young couple is brought together despite parental machinations which would see the rich daughter of a "cit" married to the impoverished, but titled, son of a Lord. The thinly veiled contempt the nobility holds for the wealthy, boorish merchants, and the merchant family's pretensions to opulence and high life, all serve to satirise the rapid rise of the bourgeoisie. Behind this comic jousting lies a serious bid for power, a struggle by the rich to retain not only a monopoly on culture and fine commodities, as Lawrence Klein has argued, but also their mythology of the well-born as genetically superior beings: Lady Wilhelmina's obsession with "birth" and "genealogy," for example.

A Busy Day also uses the unusual figure of a "female nabob" to satirise parochialism and class warfare in England. As Margaret Anne Doody reminds us, these themes are not new: "[t]he cause of merchants against aristocrats had long been taken up...though the concept of 'the British Empire' is relatively new" (295).[4] However, Burney rewrites the colonial merchant comedy in two ways. First, as Doody notes, she eschews the "one patently virtuous male middle-class character" (295) who both sets all of the problems of the plot to rights and reasserts the rightness of middle class values. Secondly, she makes her heroine an idealised Anglo-Indian and constructs India as a place of culture, learning, and beauty that can enrich English culture provided the English overcome native xenophobia and parochialism. She is also innovative in her depiction of the nabob as a new mercantile class, outside the established boundaries of English society, yet morally superior to it. At the same time, she allows that English principles of order and good government—untainted by mercantile cupidity—can counter the perceived decadence said to corrupt the nabobs. In short, Burney's India closely resembles the ideals endorsed by Warren Hastings.

II

We can understand more clearly how Burney constructs her India to resemble Hastings' if we look more closely at what the trial itself meant to her. At the opening of the Hastings trial in 1788, Burney was employed at court. The Queen herself allowed a few court members—including Burney—considerable time away from their duties to attend the commencement of the proceedings. Burney records a mixture of emotions on stepping into Westminster Hall in February, 1788. Burke had been something of a childhood hero, as Burney records in her journal, but she is almost overwhelmed by the pity she feels at seeing Hastings—a slight, unassuming man—quietly facing his accusers in what appeared to be an elaborate frame-up. Burney's account of the trial openly reveals her sympathy for the accused: she believes him wholly innocent of all charges, and she expresses herself quite freely in her conversation with William Windham, MP for Norwich and one of Hastings' prosecutors. Although she had little personal contact with Hastings, she rightly perceived his love for the country and the culture, which, for her, superseded any party infighting: she claims to know nothing of "Committee business," but asserts that

> The only conversation in which I could mix was upon India considered simply as a Country in which he had travelled: & his communications upon the people, the customs, habits, Cities,—& whatever I could Name, were so instructive as well as a entertaining, that I think I never recollect gaining more intelligence or more pleasantly conveyed, from any Conversation in which I ever have been engaged. (15)

This, for Burney, is the essence of Hastings' India—a vision of the country that far exceeds its economic importance. Burney is aware, however, that this side of Hastings' character has been wholly written out of Burke's portrait of him: "I am satisfied this Committee have concluded him a *mere man of Blood*, with Slaughter & Avarice for his sole ideas!" (15); this gap in perception leads her to question not only the legitimacy of the charges, but also the legitimacy of the men whom she formerly—perhaps echoing her father's opinions—held in high esteem. Of Burke she notes his "Brow knit with corroding Care & deep labouring Thought:—a Brow how different to that which had proved so alluring to my warmest admiration when I first met him!...how did I grieve to

behold him now, the cruel Prosecutor—such to me he appeared—of an injured & innocent man!" (3)

As constructed in her journals, the Hastings trial represents for Burney an awakening of political consciousness, a decisive move away from a simple fascination with great men to a sharply critical evaluation of prominent political figures. Burney is fair to represent Windham, her chief sounding board for her ideas, as "one of the most agreeable, spirited, well bred, &...brilliant Conversers I have ever spoken with" (7-8); however, not content with merely being impressed with his conversation, Burney is distressed that such an intelligent man would believe Hastings guilty. Windham is initially happy to play the part of the experienced parliamentarian guiding a young lady through the mysteries of parliamentary form; yet Burney's insistence in Hasting's innocence—and the proceedings of the trial which would eventually acquit him—proves seriously disturbing to him in successive encounters. By April, 1790, he confesses that his speeches during the trial have been foreshortened by doubts planted by Burney herself: "*You* gave me my chief alarm!" he tells her, "*you* contributed to all my difficulties" (48). Burney, of course, claims to be unaware of the effect she has had on Windham—but she is careful to note his responses all the same.

In the end, it seems, she is vindicated. Her view of Hastings as an innocent man hounded by the political establishment neatly fits with her interest in marginalised, silenced figures oppressed by powerful authorities.[5] Moreover, the journals present the Hastings trial as a triumph against powerful political machinations. But the vindication of Hastings also serves as a vindication of his views. Ultimately, Burney sees in him a spirit of tolerance and enlightenment far beyond his peers—the same spirit of tolerance and support for the marginalised that informed her own sympathies with groups such as the exiled French clergy. Beyond the particulars of one man's guilt or innocence, Burney's experience with the trial awakened in her a deep distrust with the whole social and political machinery that brought it about. In Hastings' India, she found a new way to confront some of the social evils she had been wrestling with since *Evelina*. Her "arrival from India" adds a whole new dimension to what is in her writing a very familiar class warfare.

III

The play opens in disorder and disorientation. Eliza, having travelled "so many thousands and thousands and millions of miles" (1.10) is introduced as the victim of an overturned carriage in St James's St. This opening action immediately suggests London as a place of danger—far greater danger, in fact, than the Calcutta that Eliza has left. Moreover, London, to her, is a foreign, exotic landscape. Her inability to read the code of the street-names—the waiter is surprised that she would not know she was in St James's St., and therefore that the "hotel" she has been brought to is actually a gaming-house—all signal a reversal of expectations of "civilised" and "savage" that will underpin the entire play.

For example, Burney reveals the savagery of fashionable London not only in its abusive waiters, but in attitudes regarding Eliza's Indian servant. The waiter can only refer to him as "the Black," and he "exits, sneering" when Eliza assumes that, as a personal servant, he is to be treated with respect. Even Deborah, who has travelled with Eliza from Calcutta, endorses the abuse that "poor Mungo" suffers by noting that "a Black's but a Black; and let him hurt himself never so much, it won't shew. It in't like hurting us whites, with our fine skins, all over alabaster" (I.40-42). However, for all the supposed inferiority of "those Negro places" (I.131), Deborah must acknowledge that the treatment she receives at this fashionable gaming-house is far worse than anything she could expect in Calcutta. Here, in the opening, Burney signals that her India, far from being a place of savagery and decadence, allows the possibility of benevolent cultural contact.

Eliza also appears in defence of Indian culture against her biological family, who represent the worst excesses of the mercantile class. The Watts family, boorish middle-class English as they are, are ignorant of India, yet contemptuous of it all the same:

MISS WATTS.

Pray, Sister Eliziana, where did you get that pretty travelling dress?

ELIZA.

It was made in Calcutta.

MISS WATTS.

La! can they make things there? I thought they'd been all savages.

ELIZA.

Yes, yes they can make pretty good things there, I promise you! I suppose there's more hundred thousand things made in Calcutta than in all the known world besides.

MISS WATTS.

Pray, sister, do the Indins do much mischief?...What kind of look have they? Do they let 'em run about wild? Wa'n't you monstrous frightened at first?

ELIZA.

Frightened? The native Gentoos are the mildest and gentlest of human
beings.

MISS WATTS.

La, nasty black things! I can't abide the Indins. I'm sure I should do nothing but squeal if I was among 'em.

(I.449-62)

This exchange reflects more than simple English xenophobia, although in effect the Watts's demonstrate the same bull-headed ignorance as the Evelina's Branghtons or Captain Mirvan. What makes Miss Watts's ignorance even less excusable is the fact that mercantile families such as hers have benefited from, even actively participated in, colonial trade. At the same time, they still believe that money made on English soil is preferable to that made in India: Mr. Watts's response to the last line quoted above is a reassuring, "There's no need for you to go among 'em now, my dear, for I can give you as handsome, I warn't me, as the Nabob gave your Sister" (I.463-64). Mr. Alderson's generosity in adopting Eliza and making her his heiress is thus reinterpreted as a necessary evil—now superseded by Mr. Watts's own fortune.

Miss Watt's assumptions of the "savagery" of the Indians is, ironically, reflected in Lady Wilhelmina Tylney's treatment of the Wattses themselves at the end of the play. Lady Wilhelmina's obsession with what might be termed the genetics of class—the concern with bloodline as a marker of moral superiority—results in her refusal to acknowledge the Wattses even as barely human: they are, by her estimation, nobodies—perhaps worse than Miss Watts's "nasty black

things." Mrs. Watts's attempt at even the most general conversation offends Lady Wilhelmina, who refuses to acknowledge that she has even been spoken to:

> MRS. WATTS.
>
> Dears, my dear, I wish she'd receive us, like; for I'll be whipt if I can think of an word to say for a beginning.
>
> MISS WATTS.
>
> Why ask if she's going to Rinelur [i.e. Ranelagh]. That's the genteel thing to talk about in genteel company.
>
> MRS. WATTS.
>
> I will, my dear. Pray, good lady, may you be going to Rinelur to night?
>
> LADY WILHELMINA.
>
> Sir Marmaduke!
>
> SIR MARMADUKE.
>
> Lady Wil.?
>
> LADY WILHELMINA.
>
> Did any body—speak to Me?
>
> MRS. WATTS.
>
> Yes, it was me, my good lady, as spoke; it wasn't that Gentleman.
>
> LADY WILHELMINA. (*turning away*)
>
> How singular! (V.265-74)

The moral outlines of Burney's satire suddenly come into focus here: if the mercantile class wishes to rise to the level of the gentry, it must first prove its own moral superiority. At the same time, the play reveals that there is nothing in British society itself to permit the middle class to do this. The Watts women have had their heads filled with enjoying their new-found purchasing power, while Mr. Watts can only lament to his cousin, Joel Tibbs, that no one prepared him for the conspicuous consumption that attends newly-acquired wealth.

The romantic plot also highlights the moral deficiencies of the British gentry and the inadequacy of the British gentry to rise above it. Frank Cleveland regards his pursuit of Eliza—or, rather, of Eliza's fortune—almost as a prerogative of his class. Sir Marmaduke makes it clear that he has little interest in Eliza's status, and considers her fortune

respectable. Cleveland, on the other hand, is expected to have his uncle to arrange a lucrative match with an heiress such as Miss Percival. Cleveland has, therefore, subverted the natural order by endeavouring to make his own fortune and by arranging his own match—with a woman outside his class. On the other hand, Frank, who should be expected to make his own way, regards the possibility of venturing to Calcutta as "fagging" (II.214),[6] a prospect he finds offensive to his position as a gentleman. The relative positions of the two Cleveland brothers suggest that it is more than just carriages that are overturned in this play.

Burney's point is that neither the mercantile class itself nor the landed class can, of their own accord, attain the kind of moral level promised by the match of Eliza and Cleveland. In this way, then, India functions as a kind of Green World, a space removed from England, but still sufficiently English to allow Eliza and Cleveland to flourish, and to be sufficiently prepared to return to England and, in effect, remake the worlds of their elders. Within the parameters of the social order, Burney creates Eliza and Cleveland's India as an idealised alternative to Britain. Ironically, though, that ideal must exclude the majority of India's British inhabitants. In Burney's India, there is no East India Company, no corruption, no "nabobery."[7] In order for her India to function as the idealised paradigm she has constructed, the nabob must be absent altogether. Barbara Darby has noted that Burney "neatly avoid[s]...any possible negative association of Eliza and Cleveland with the new wealth of the nabob" (14) by making Eliza's guardian, Mr. Alderson, invisible, and by having Cleveland recalled before he has a chance to make his fortune in the Company. However, it is precisely Eliza and Cleveland's freedom from actual the means of acquiring wealth which allows them to use that wealth—Eliza's inherited fortune—to redeem both the vulgarity of the Wattses and the petty avarice and snobbery of the Tylneys.

At the same time, one cannot discount the benevolence of Mr. Alderson in leaving his entire fortune to Eliza. Consider, for instance, that Eliza's inheritance is not bound up with oppressive conditions, as is Cecilia Beverly's; nor is it bestowed on her as the result of tragic negligence, as is Eugenia Tyrold's. Even though, as a nabob, he is neither gentry nor merchant; nevertheless, his benevolence shows him to be morally superior to both the Tylneys and the Wattses. In this Burney attempts something different from her contemporaries, who were content to see the nabob as an upstart form of merchant, pretending to gentility yet grotesquely rapacious and avaricious.[8] Here, Mr. Alderson is

benevolent, generous, and—ultimately—the indirect agent of Eliza and Cleveland's marriage. The Wattses cannot rise above their own vulgarity. Sir Marmaduke Tylney, meanwhile, shows greater distress at the loss of a hayrick than at the misfortunes of a poor man, while Lady Wilhelmina believes that sympathy should only be reserved for the rich, since "a low person has so little leisure to reflect or refine, that a few disagreeable accidents can make but little impression upon him" (II.113-14). Finally, Frank Cleveland avariciously and rapaciously pursues Eliza for her inheritance. Clearly, one does not need to be a member of the East India Company to suffer what seems to be Eastern decadence or savagery.

Seen in this context, then, Eliza and Cleveland's marriage at the end of the play is a symbolic union of ideals: the nabob-heiress and the would-be writer, both extricated from the messiness of everyday Indian life, but able to assert the moral goodness of the new Anglo-Indian over the native Britons. In this context, Cleveland's closing speech about London's being the glory of the British Empire does not ring with the same irony it would for contemporary readers. I believe that, in the figure of the Anglo-Indian, Burney attempts a figure who can offer a serious corrective to the always-correctable English middle class.

If, in their concern with social mobility and aggressive consumption of luxury goods, the middle class failed to live up to its own moral potential, then it is possible, Burney suggests, that the Anglo-Indian could assume their place. In her view, the impeachment and ultimate ruin of Warren Hastings was a serious mistake for Britain, since it ended forever the hope for a benevolent colonialism that would feed and renew both British commerce and British culture. Whether Burney could have foreseen the ultimate decline of the East India Company, and the assumption of Indian rule by the British government, is immaterial. Her India, forever on the margins of her play, nevertheless always exists as an unspoken—and unrealised—ideal. That ideal offered the much-maligned nabob the opportunity to be redeemed from the stereotype of the ruthless, greedy, parasitical merchant—not exactly foreign, but never quite English—and, remembering that "Merit is limited to no Spot, and confined to no Class" (V.907-08), must nevertheless forge for itself a rightful place in England. That the ideal was impossible to achieve, in 1800 or after, only underlines the bitterness of the bourgeois satire in Burney's last comedy.

Notes

[1] I would like here to record my thanks to Lars Troide, for providing me with a transcript of the Hastings portions of Burney's journals, and to Barbara Darby, for letting me use her conference paper on Burney's plays. I was also fortunate to share the panel with her where these papers were presented, and greatly appreciate her comments and insight.

[2] Percival Spear, in his 1932 history *The Nabobs*, defines the nabobs as the result of "a rapid transformation from the purely commercial factor of the 'fifties to the merchant turned soldier or politician in the 'sixties, and finally [the nabob's] proclaiming himself 'a gentleman'" (37). He sees the nabob as a figure who disrupted the social order by pretending to gentility, instead of forming "the liberal element of the middle class" (37), his supposedly rightful place.

[3] Interest in Warren Hastings and India continued in the Burney family long after the trial was over. Burney's brother-in-law, Ralph Broome, was a staunch supporter of Hastings, and Burney records a conversation with him about Indian affairs some time in 1800, about the time that *A Busy Day* was composed.

[4] Burney's representation of India has a literary precedent. Phoebe Gibbes's *Hartly House, Calcutta* (1789), described as "A Novel of the Days of Warren Hastings," appeared at the height of the Hastings trial, and depicts a young woman, Sophia Goldsborne, who arrives in Bengal during the last days of the Hastings administration. She falls in love with a Brahmin—a move greeted with astonishing tolerance by her family—but, erroneously believing Brahmins to be celibate, is satisfied with cultivating his friendship. Although she eventually marries a young Englishman destined for greatness within the Company, her experiences of India have sufficiently orientalised her to suggest that a new order of Nabobs—one closely modelled on the Hastings ideal—will emerge from this union. Whether or not Burney read Gibbes—the novel was something of a sensation when it was first published, and likely did not escape her notice—she certainly would have found in Sophia an adequate model for Eliza Watts. Like Sophia, Eliza has been orientalised enough to regard Indian culture sympathetically: without condescension.

[5] It is significant, I think, that Burney ascribes feminine qualities to Hastings, and comments particularly on his silence in the face of Burke's long harangue. Hastings thus becomes, like the heroines of Burney's novels, a silent figure misconstructed by a more powerful authority.

[6] The term not only signifies, as Peter Sabor notes, degrading work, but also has overtones of schoolboy drudgery, perhaps alluding to the fact that so many writers started so young.

[7] Note that in *Hartly House, Calcutta*, the nabob is also conspicuous by his absence. The young man Sophia Goldsborne eventually marries is, like Cleveland, in India to make his fortune, but he is spared the actual taint of having to work for the Company. Moreover, Sophia's presentation of British India reveals primarily its burgeoning cultural life without showing the Anglo-Indians actually acquiring wealth.

[8] Or, as Lady Oldham expresses it in Samuel Foote's comedy *The Nabob* (1772), "With the wealth of the East, we too have imported the worst of its vices" (13).

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