

Afterword

In his new role as East India Company Chairman, Henry St. George Tucker wrote to John Cam Hobhouse on August 2, 1847. He stated that, “There is a most unpleasant letter just received from Sir Charles Napier.”¹ In reference to the Outram-Napier controversy, Tucker concluded: “If the two fire-balls [i.e., Napier and Outram] should chance to meet, there will be a fearful explosion.”² Hobhouse replied that the Company’s promotion of Outram to Resident in Baroda was “very indiscreet and inopportune.”³ On account of this promotion, Hobhouse believed that the Outram-Napier conflict would continue.⁴ Nonetheless, Napier lessened any potential explosion with Outram (or anyone else) when he resigned as Sindh’s governor and left South Asia on October 1, 1847. He also sent a clear message about his negative view of the Company when his steamer went to Great Britain via Aden instead of Bombay.⁵

Napier’s expansion of the Company’s territorial and political power into Sindh opened impasses between what colonial officials said and their actual behavior.⁶ Rather than simply generate tensions within the Company, these impasses smudged its internal distinctions. Through the interconnection of dis-contiguous locales, such impasses put socio-cultural distinctions at “risk” when they brought people’s actions and worldviews into contrast. Consider the case of Hobhouse. He devoted his life to a liberal worldview that included issues like increased suffrage, the reform of Parliament and the reduction of the British military.⁷ He and other liberals of his time (e.g., Thomas Babington Macaulay and John Stuart Mill) extended these ideals to public affairs.⁸ Nonetheless, Hobhouse’s exchanges with the Company about Sindh appeared more conservative than liberal. In *John Cam Hobhouse: A Political Life*, Robert Zegger wrote that Hobhouse’s liberalism evolved “into an empire of force by

1 BL/OIOC/MssEur/F213/18/225.

2 BL/OIOC/MssEur/F213/18/234.

3 BL/OIOC/MssEur/F213/18/235.

4 Ibid.

5 MSA/BR/P/1984/Vol. 141A-2149 (August 31, 1847).

6 Such an impasse is similar to Jacques Derrida’s idea of an “aporia.” For more details about this idea, see: Jacques Derrida, *Aporias*, trans. Thomas Dutoit (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1993), 78; Gregory Jay, *America the Scrivener: Deconstruction and the Subject of Literary History* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1990), 84 and 86.

7 Robert E. Zegger, *John Cam Hobhouse: A Political Life, 1819–1852* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1973), 195 and 273–274.

8 Ibid., 273.

mid-century.”⁹ Such a violent colonialism corresponded closely to opinions held by Hobhouse’s antagonists in the conservative Tory Party (e.g., Lord Ellenborough).¹⁰

To better contextualize how colonial expansion impacted the actions and worldviews of the colonizer and colonized, this book analyzed Sindh’s transition to Company rule. Rather than conclude that this transition was a limited affair, it argued that Sindh’s annexation brought transformations. Instead of the creation of collective unity, it described how different groups connected to Sindh’s annexation experienced socio-cultural conflict. It also illustrated how agents’ actions informed the conversion of socio-cultural distinctions into historical conflicts within groups. This analysis showed how such conflicts splintered groups and had resolution among South Asians and the British. To illustrate this resolution, I depicted how expansion of direct rule by the Company created opportunities for agents to internally wedge their socio-cultural worlds apart.

While its own historical story, Sindh’s annexation was also part of a larger colonial endeavor. This endeavor involved the expansion of direct rule by the Company in South Asia. This expansion accelerated after Sindh’s 1843 annexation and reached a crescendo with the 1856 annexation of Awadh. In addition to the right of conquest, political economy also explained direct rule’s expansion. The South Asian economy was stagnant from the early 1830s to the late 1850s. With a precarious budget and a decreased monopoly over trade, the Company increasingly turned to “territorial expansion as a basis for gathering additional taxes.”¹¹ Nonetheless, this expansion of direct rule failed to remedy the Company’s financial difficulties:

Cottage industries were destroyed, land reform displaced peasants and urban development went ahead regardless of old ties and structures. No matter how hard the British tried, even to the point of changing land assessments after a revenue conference in 1847, it proved impossible for them to turn India into the booming economy desired by the reformers after 1833. The majority of peasants remained poor and the economy stagnated until the 1850s...¹²

9 Ibid.

10 Algernon Law, ed., *India under Lord Ellenborough, March 1842–June 1844: A Selection from the Hitherto Unpublished Papers and Secret Despatches of Edward Law Earl of Ellenborough* (London: John Murray, 1926), 57.

11 Robin Moore, “Imperial India, 1858–1914,” in Andrew Porter, ed., *Oxford History of the British Empire: The Nineteenth Century* (London: Oxford University Press, 1999), 430.

12 Philip Lawson, *The East India Company: A History* (London: Longman, 1993), 160.