Reconsidering the 'Transition Narrative': The Domiciled Britons of Company Rule, c.1760-1857

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Abstract

This article engages with narratives of the domiciled British community during Company Rule in India. It traces the development of the 'transition narrative' which locates the differences in society, culture and beliefs of domiciled Britons in the early eighteenth century with those of their nineteenth-century counterparts and challenges the duality of this narrative highlighting its over-reliance upon the 'colonial archive' and limiting the scope for research. Through an exploration of developing approaches and methods which challenge both the 'colonial archive' and 'transitional narrative', it seeks to demonstrate potential new areas for research into this community.

Keywords: British Empire, History of India, East India Company, historiography, transition narrative

Introduction

The British domiciled community in India has long fascinated their fellow countrymen in the metropole.[1] From the early eighteenth century to the decline of the Raj, innumerable publications describing the life and work of Britons in India informed and entertained the British public.[2] Colonial India remains a popular setting for novels, documentaries, films, and television dramas, and has been linked to a rise of imperial sentiment in post-colonial British society.[3] In academia too, the historiography of the British in India is a broad, dynamic, and evolving field.[4]

The century of Company rule, beginning with the acquisition of the Bengal *diwani* in 1757 and ending with the abolition of the Company following the events of the 1857 Indian Uprising, witnessed the extension and consolidation of British authority over much of the Indian subcontinent and crucial developments in the formation of the colonial state. As outlined by Ian Barrow and Douglas Haynes, these include the conquest of Mysore and the defeat of the Maratha Confederacy, the design and implementation of the Permanent Settlement and indirect rule of 'princely states', the introduction of Utilitarianism and missionary activity, the emergence of 'racial' hierarchies, and the reshaping of the domiciled British community.[5] In Britain, too, there was growing public awareness of

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[1] Here I used 'domiciled British community' to refer to those Britons living and working in India, under the authority of the East India Company. It does not include those of mixed European-Indian heritage, who shall be referred to as Eurasian. This is at odds with Satoshi Mizutani's (2011) definition in *The Meaning of White: Race, Class and the 'Domiciled Community' in British India 1858-1930,* Oxford: OUP, who uses the term to refer to persons of mixed descent as well as unmixed European heritage. This difference reflects the differing focus of research, given Mizutani's interest in racial categorisation and 'whiteness'.

[2] Elizabeth Buettner (2006), 'Cemeteries, Public Memory and Raj Nostalgia in Postcolonial Britain and India', *History and Memory*, 18(1), pp.5–42.

[3] See Amit Chaudhuri, '"Did the Empire Do Any Good?" British TV Is Revising India's History. Again.', *The Guardian*, 13 October 2015, https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2015/oct/13/empire-british-tv-india-dan-snow-jeremy-paxman, accessed 17 September 2018; Paul Scott, *Jewel in the Crown* (London: Heinemann, 1966); *Joanna Lumley's India,* ITV, 5 July 2017, 9pm; *BBC India Season,* BBC, Summer 2015; *Big Asian Summer Season,* BBC, Summer 2018; *Viceroy's House,* dir. by Gurinder Chadha (20th Century Fox, 2017).

[4] *The Oxford History of the British Empire: Historiography (2001)*, ed. by Robin W Winks and Alaine M Low, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

[5] Ian J. Barrow and Douglas E. Haynes (2004), 'The Colonial Transition: South Asia, 1780-1840', *Modern Asian Studies,* 38 (3), pp.469-478; Philip Stern (2009), 'History and Historiography of the English East India Company: Past, Present, and Future!', *History Compass*, 7(4), pp.1146-1180.

Indian affairs, contributing to Britain's sense of global power, and increasing the willingness of the Government to intervene in Company affairs. Company rule has therefore featured centrally in the historiography of colonial India.[6]

For several decades after Independence, the early colonial transition, from pre-existing political and cultural structures to western-dominated forms of authority during Company Rule, captured the interests of writers seeking to evaluate colonial rule in the newly emerging post-colonial environment.[7] A focus on the economic and political policies of the East India Company in their establishment of colonial power developed a clear sense that the onset of colonial rule had marked a radical break from the supposed chaotic militarised society which preceded it.[8] More recent research, influenced by post-modern approaches to colonial discourses, has begun to explore the ways in which the colonial state created, projected, and protected its power and ways in which the colonised were able to subvert and manipulate at least some of that power. A key result of this research was to highlight the existence of the 'colonial archive' and the restrictions it placed on on-going research.[9] A specific aspect research which has been influenced by the limitations of 'colonial archive' is the period of Company rule. Crucial to the development and implementation of British colonial power and prestige, this century was carefully curated by administrators, academics and indigenous elites to present a period of smooth transition from pre-colonial to colonial rule.

These broad shifts in the historiography and analysis of colonial histories has significantly affected research into the domiciled British communities in India during Company Rule. The daily experiences and representations of low and mid-level administrators are clouded by assumptions linked to traditional transition narratives. The need of the colonial state to represent their administrators as bastions of British power has led to a distorted perception of their lives.[10] Previous

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[6] Phillip J. Stern, 'History and Historiography of the English East India Company'.

[7] Barrow and Douglas E. Haynes, 'The Colonial Transition: South Asia, 1780-1840', p. 469.

[8] This characterisation was effectively challenged by, among others, Richard B. Barnett (1980), *North India between Empires: Awadh, the Mughals and the British 1720-1801,* Berkeley: University of California Press,.

[9] Tony Ballentyne (2000), 'Archive, Discipline, State: Power and Knowledge in South Asian Historiography', *New Zealand Journal of Asian Studies*, 3 pp.87–105.

[10] This need is represented in the production and replication of behavioural guides produced for new recruits to the Company and their armies. For examples see J. H. Stocqueler (1844), *The Handbook*

approaches and reliance upon the colonial archive has limited our ability to locate a truer sense of experience unchained from the rhetoric of nineteenth-century Empire. This paper will first consider the legacy of the colonial archive in the formation of this transitional narrative and examine new approaches and methods being, before suggesting where opportunities for new research and source materials can be found. It is hoped this paper can inform, educate and inspire others to push the boundaries of knowledge about the domiciled community during Company rule further, and locate a truer narrative of experience.

The 'Colonial Archive' and 'Transitional Narrative'

Current understanding of the British domiciled community in India, especially those in the direct employment of the East India Company, has been derived from the 'colonial archive'. These repositories of cartographic, linguistic, ethnological, ethnographic, religious, economic and historical knowledge in various forms have come to provide the main window into the lives and experience of those Britons who created it, and the subjects over which they 'ruled'. It is no longer possible to view this archive as a store of transparent sources from which to build a clear image of the colonial past. Rather, it is imagined as an important site of power and (post)colonial oppression, a body of knowledge shaped by the struggles and violence of the colonial past.[11]

Exposure to this 'colonial archive' has shaped historical interpretation and understanding of the colonial experience for colonised and coloniser alike. In many fields, the narrative which has been perpetuated by this archive has begun to be challenged. Subaltern studies, postcolonial approaches, and more recently gender and area studies have begun to unpick and complicate historical understanding of British Rule in India. However, these new approaches have had limited success in complicating the binary approach historians have taken when discussing the image and experience of the domiciled British communities which developed in India throughout Company Rule. Focus has remained on the transition witnessed within the community from integration towards isolation. Often,

of India: A Guide to the Stranger and the Traveller, and a Companion to the Resident, London: W.H Allen & Co., Thomas Williamson (1810), _The East-India Vade-Mecum, or Complete Guide to Gentlemen Intended for the Civil, Military or Naval Service of the Hon. East India Company,_ London: Black, Parry, and Kingsbury.

[11] Ballentyne, 'Archive, Discipline, State', p. 88.

examples of Warren Hasting's adoration of eastern cultures, languages, and religions are contrasted with the evangelical reforming drive of Dalhousie and Bentinck. Yet, the implicit use of the orient and occident as comparative categories and binary nature of a community's identity and experience renders many of these works significantly limited.[12] Their approach lacks sufficient complexity to understand a community of individuals with differing experiences, pressures, and influences, instead treating all Britons resident in India as a homogenous group regardless of the distinct identities, histories and values each settlement created. The unique nature of their lives in India is lost in an attempt to reconcile their 'Britishness' with their isolation.

These 'transition narratives' as they will be described in this paper, attempt to reconcile and justify the differences between the portrayal and experiences of early domiciled Britons and their nineteenth-century colonial counterparts. These narratives began to appear while the British still controlled large territories on the sub-continent. Writings of the nineteenth-century utilitarian reformers, including James Mill, emphasised the changing focus of the British community towards a reforming and benevolent force within Indian politics, society, and culture.[13] The lifestyles of Britons in India during the eighteenth century came under scrutiny and were condemned for their excesses, immorality, and cultural integration. Mixed race children, the products of unofficial inter-racial marriages, in particular, became to be viewed as problematic, and a danger to British dominance and moral authority. [14] These early writings established the idea that British domiciled community underwent a significant transition, and became increasingly loyal to British culture, character, and principles.

Continuing into the twentieth century with Percival Spear's formative 1932 work, *The Nabobs* these 'transition narratives' began to take the eighteenth century as its focus. Spear's work specifically charts the differences of 'early' and 'late settlements' in Bengal, arguing that there were

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[12] 'Orient' and 'Occident' here refer to the categories outlined by Edward Said in *Orientalism* (London: Penguin Books, 2003).

[13] James Mill, (1817) *The History of British India,* London: London: Baldwin, Cradock and Joy, 1817.

[14] Uther E. Charlton-Stevens (2012), 'Decolonising Anglo-Indians: Strategies for a Mixed-Race Community in Late Colonial India during the First Half of the 20th Century.' (unpublished PhD Thesis, University of Oxford) https://ora.ox.ac.uk/objects/uuid:254b43ad-a0d6-4416-b451-c1ebff58ecce, accessed 21 May 2018; Satoshi Mizutani (2011), *The Meaning of White: Race, Class, and the 'Domiciled Community' in British India 1858-1930,* OUP: Oxford; Kirsty Walker (2012), 'Intimate Interactions: Eurasian Family Histories in Colonial Penang', *Modern Asian Studies*, 46(2), pp.303–29.

actually several transitions of the British communities in India, often framed around the priorities and personalities of the Governor Generals. [15] In a breakaway from earlier, more contemporary narratives of the community, Spear does not attempt to justify the community's transition but explain it in relation to wider political and global shifts. This desire to highlight and seek an explanation for the perceived differences between the lives of eighteenth and nineteenth century Britons has continued in the historiography of British India. H.V Bowen, for example, charts the 'change and expansion which underpinned the Company's transformation from trader to sovereign' highlighting the 'entirely new set of responsibilities' placed on domiciled Britons who now had to control new territories, administer justice, collect revenue, and importantly for the development of the 'official archive', generate and collate colonial knowledge.[16]

The changing nature of the East India Company's overseas activities and their relentless search for profit, has been a central concept for those interested in the changing nature of domiciled life.[17] The declining political and cultural authority of the Mughal empire created a vacuum which the British were able to fill with western notions of political domination and cultural superiority. In this way, the British government was able to export the political framework within which Company employees lived and worked and manipulated the cultural expectations and boundaries. The domiciled Britons in India began to mirror the reforming changes occurring in Britain, adopting elements of Utilitarian and Evangelical beliefs, and modifying pre-colonial systems of government and society towards western notions. Eric Stokes argued Utilitarianism was a major orienting notion of those tasked with deciding that what legacies of the past to modify and how. He, and subsequent writers including Penderel Moon and Francis Hutchins argue that the influence of utilitarian beliefs, and the use of these

[15] Percival Spear (1998), *The Nabobs: A Study of the Social Life of the English in Eighteenth Century India,* Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 25-30.

[16] "'No Longer Mere Traders": Continuities and Change in the Metropolitan Development of the East India Company, 1600-1834', in *The Worlds of the East India Company (2002),* edited by H. V. Bowen, Margarette Lincoln, and Nigel Rigby Rochester, NY: Boydell Press, 2002, pp. 19-32

[17] Peter Marshall (1975), 'British Expansion in India in the Eighteenth Century: A Historical Revision', *History*, 60 (198), pp.28–43; Nick Robins (2012), *The Corporation That Changed the World - Second Edition: How the East India Company Shaped the Modern Multinational,* London: Pluto Press, Robert Travers Travers (2005), 'Ideology and British Expansion in Bengal, 1757–72', *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, 33(1), pp. 7–27 .

ideologies in the education of Company employees at East India College, point to a semi-authorised indoctrination of Britons before their deployment to India.[18]

Taken collectively, this current research has argued that the domiciled community's priorities, roles, and responsibilities began to change in line with their territorial expansion, while western liberalising ideologies provided a new political and cultural framework within which to structure their personal and professional lives. These shifts in global politics and ideology ingrained an adherence to British values, ideals, and beliefs within the expanding community and established, by the mid-nineteenth century, a more connected, ideologically coherent community—a precursor to the later community of the 'high noon'.[19]

Reconsidering 'Transition Narratives': Approaches, Methods, and Current Trends

The reliance of 'transition narratives' upon the 'colonial archive' has received criticism from a broadening range of writers.[20] Central to much of the critique is traditional reliance upon the 'colonial archive'. Critics argue that given its purposeful creation as a power and knowledge structure of imperial rule, the pre-existing assumptions of life during Company rule will be inherent in research conclusions. The portrayal of British cohesion, authority, civility, and power is ingrained in the 'colonial archive' offering little possibility to complicate its narrative. Writers have therefore begun to focus instead on what might be called the more everyday aspects of the making of empire, with studies ranging from the effects of colonialism on gender, social and political relations, and structures of power within domestic spaces. These writers turn away from the question of macro imperial and

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[18] Ian J. Barrow and Douglas E. Haynes (2004); 'The Colonial Transition: South Asia, 1780–1840', *Modern Asian Studies,* 38 (3), pp. 469-478; Francis G Hutchins (2015), *The Illusion of Permanence: British Imperialism in India* Princeton: Princeton University Press; Eddy Kent (2014), *Corporate Character: Representing Imperial Power in British India, 1786-1901,* Toronto: University of Toronto Press; Eric Stokes (1959), *The English Utilitarians and India,* Oxford: Clarendon Press); Eric Stokes (1973), 'The First Century of British Colonial Rule in India: Social Revolution or Social Stagnation?', *Past & Present*, pp.136–60. Thomas R. Trautmann (1997), *Aryans and British India,* Berkeley: University of California Press.

[19] 'High-Noon' often refers to the end of the nineteenth century when Britain's global imperial control was at its zenith.

[20] An example of this is Ian J. Barrow and Douglas E. Haynes special edited edition of *Modern Asian Studies* in 2004, which gathered respected and established scholars of the subcontinent to discuss the period of Company Rule and challenge existing narratives. Writers including Susan Bayly, Durba Ghoash, and David Washbrook contributed to this important edition.

global shifts and instead examine the particular, everyday experiences of changing colonial power by both Indians and domiciled Britons alike. In doing so, these writers hope to add complexity to the period of Company rule, dispel ideas of British homogeneity, challenge the orient/occident dichotomy, and highlight the colonial domestic sphere as an important site of enquiry.

One of the most successful challenges to both the 'colonial archive' and 'transition narratives', has been works utilising localised and area studies. In their narrower geographical focus, they are able to highlight distinct traits and cultures present in different British enclaves, challenging the idea of a homogenous British community. This notion was originally created by the Company's use of cartographic knowledge to frame a new and increasingly coherent image of India; in framing India's national boundaries, these maps developed during the eighteenth century, both reflected and reinforced the Company's, and later the British state's, ambition to extend power throughout India.[21] In reality, prior to British intervention, India was a collection of semi-autonomous, culturally diverse states. While they may have pledged loyalty to one empire or ruler, they retained clear aspects of identity making their cultural and political heritage unique. These nuances are lost in the records of the 'colonial archive' which perpetuates the one state narrative these cartographers were keen to represent.

In order to challenge this perception, writers have increasingly begun to focus their attention on specific regions, states, or cities.[22] In doing so they have disrupted the portrayal of British India as

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[21] Matthew H. Edney (2009), *Mapping an Empire: The Geographical Construction of British India, 1765-1843*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

[22] Examples of successful studies focussed on specific regions or cities include; Swapna M. Banerjee (2004), *Men, Women, and Domestics: Articulating Middle-Class Identity in Colonial Bengal,* Oxford : Oxford University Press,); Bernard S. Cohn (1962), 'The British in Benares: A Nineteenth Century Colonial Society', *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 4(2) pp.169–99; Robert Eric Frykenberg (1962), 'British Society in Guntur during the Early Nineteenth-Century', *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 4(2), pp.200–208; Suresh Chandra Ghosh (1998), *The British in Bengal: A Study of the British Society and Life in the Later Eighteenth Century,* New Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal Publ.; Durba Ghosh (2004), 'Household Crimes and Domestic Order: Keeping the Peace in Colonial Calcutta, c. 1770-c. 1840', *Modern Asian Studies*, 38(3), pp.599–623; P. J. Marshall (1976), *East Indian Fortunes: The British in Bengal in the Eighteenth Century,* Oxford [Eng.]: Clarendon Press, P. J. Marshall (2000), 'The White Town of Calcutta under the Rule of the East India Company', *Modern Asian Studies*, 34 (2), pp.307–31; Jon E. Wilson (2010), *The Domination of Strangers: Modern Governance in Eastern India, 1780 - 1835*, Cambridge Imperial and Post-Colonial Studies Series, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan; Zoë. Yalland (1987), *Traders and Nabobs: The British in Cawnpore, 1765-1857,* Wilton, Salisbury, Wiltshire: M. Russell. For specific works on Hill Stations see Nandini Bhattacharya (2013), 'Leisure, Economy and Colonial Urbanism: Darjeeling,

a one state nation, where experience was able to be standardised. Despite being written over 40 years ago, one of the most influential of these works is Suresh Ghosh's *The Social Condition of the British Community in Bengal, 1757-1800.* First published in 1970, it attempted to answer B.S Cohn's call for a 'systematic and analytic study of the British themselves and the societies and cultures they built'.[23] In choosing to focus on Bengal, Ghosh was able to focus attention on the unique history of Calcutta as a British base, including the growth of the 'white town' and close relationships between Anglo-Indian and British families.[24] In contrast, Bernard Cohn's 'The British in Benares', focuses on a rural population of Britons, isolated from the increasingly cosmopolitan centre of Calcutta where the British community was 'not tied to local Indian society' in the same way as in Calcutta. Cohn presents a community which isolated themselves long before the 'transitional narratives', highlighting the differences in experience depending upon location. Localised works have continued to be produced and taken collectively they build an increasingly complicated picture of British experiences in early colonial India. It is of course not possible for all studies to be localised, and it would not be sensible to suggest so. However, in the pursuit of knowledge about British communities and their lives it has proved a useful approach to move beyond the 'colonial archive' and nuance our understanding.

The inclusion of diverse source materials in these studies is another increasingly used method to attempt to complicate homogeneity and focus on the unique aspects of different communities. The use of locally published English newspapers has been a feature of the historiography for a number of years. The publication of subscription newspapers from the 1780s throughout British India quickly developed a strong and localised press core which reflected and influenced the communities they served. Reporting on the community's social calendar, national and local news, legal troubles of residents, and advertising items available for auction, these newspapers offer insights into the daily workings of life for the domiciled communities. Their relative independence

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1835–1930', *Urban History*, 40 , pp.442–61; Hyde Clarke (1881), 'The English Stations in the Hill Regions of India: Their Value and Importance, with Some Statistics of Their Products and Trade', *Journal of the Statistical Society of London*, 44, pp.528–73; Dane Kennedy (1996), *The Magic Mountains: Hill Stations and the British Raj,* Berkeley: University of California Press; Judith Kennedy (1997), 'Claiming the High Ground: Theories of Imperial Authority and the British Hill Stations in India', *Political Geography*, 16, pp.655–73.

[23] Bernard S. Cohn, 'The British in Benares', p.198.

[24] Anglo-Indian here refers to those of mixed-race heritage, rather than the British themselves. This is in line with Ghosh's use of the term.

from Company control and purely local nature allow for analysis of the differences between British territories and nuance our understanding of experience. Andrew Otis' recent work concerning *Hickey's Bengal Gazette*, the first English language newspaper to be printed in India, highlights not only the possibilities of newspapers as a source of daily experience, but also the limitations of these sources. [25]   In the case of *Hickey's Gazette,* William Hickey's personal opinions, quarrels, and troubles significantly affected the content of his publications. A strong anti-Company sentiment developed and is reflected in the newspaper, which is not representative of the domiciled community in Bengal. Equally, as Otis notes, these newspapers often constructed the community's values and experiences as much as they reflected them. Consideration of the limitations presented by these newspapers is of course required, however, there is considerable scope for their inclusion as a primary focus of research, rather than supporting evidence as they have often been used.

While these local news publications can offer a deeper insight into local British communities, and their unique experiences other sources and approaches take that focus to the individual and family level. A spate of works which focus on the lives and experiences of individuals have offered a refreshing exploration of the lives of the domiciled community. Works by Peter Robb, Onni Gust, and Willem Kuiters have explored broader issues of community identity, belonging, and exile through specific case studies of individuals.[26] Part of a broader 'biographical turn' within the humanities, these works have utilised personal sources held in large archives and private collections and have drawn attention to the private lives of public figures and those who played far smaller roles in the development of the colonial state. [27] Continuing the use of these sources, whether in biographical

[25] Andrew Otis (2018), *Hickey's Bengal Gazette: The Untold Story of India's First Newspaper,* London: Tranquebar Press.

[26] Onni Gust (2018), '"The Perilous Territory of Not Belonging": Exile and Empire in Sir James Mackintosh's Letters from early nineteenth-century Bombay', *History Workshop Journal,* 86, pp,22-43; Willem G.J. Kuiters (2002), *The British in Bengal 1756–1773; A Society in Transition Seen through the Biography of a Rebel: William Bolts (1739–1808),* Paris: Les Indes Savantes); Peter Robb (2011), *Sex and Sensibility: Richard Blechynden's Calcutta Diaries, 1791-1822* (New Delhi: OUP; Peter Robb (2011), *Sentiment and Self: Richard Blechynden's Calcutta Diaries, 1791-1822* New Delhi: OUP India.

[27] Barbara Caine (2010), *Biography and History,* Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan, pp. 1-7; Kuiters, Willem G. J., P. J. Marshall (2002), *The British in Bengal: 1756 - 1773; a Society in Transition Seen through the Biography of a Rebel: William Bolts, 1739 – 1808,* Paris: Indes Savantes; *Telling Lives in India: Biography, Autobiography, and Life History* (2004), ed. by David Arnold and Stuart Blackburn, Bloomington: Indiana University Press; William Dalrymple (2001), *White Mughals: Love and Betrayal in Eighteenth-Century India,* London: Harper Press.

approaches or not allows scholars to move beyond the idea of what seems most significant because it is most visible. The domestic and private aspects of the lives of Company officials, their choices of servants, homes, possessions, relationships, and daily actions enable us to understand how Britons and Indians altered through mutual contact, respect, and intimacy. They can reveal the extent to which broader global and colonial shifts effective the daily experiences of Britons and locate the individuals within the narrative. Placing these personal recollections and accounts at the centre of research is a departure from the traditional 'transition narratives' which focus on external forces. They highlight the unique space of the domiciled Britons home as a site of transculturation where the negotiation of British colonial identity was challenged daily by the presence of native servants and concubines.

Increasing attention to the importance of understanding the domestic sphere, especially during Company rule when identities were potentially in flux has occurred in line with an increase in gender studies. Writers including Alison Blunt and Swati Chattopadhyay have drawn focus to the domestic sphere challenging its invisibility within the historiography of empire, and re-centred women's experiences within the field.[28] In line with this broadening of the traditional male scope towards and understanding of women's lives, both British and Indian, during Company Rule, has come research focussed on the sexual and intimate lives of domiciled Britons. Sexual power and intimate relations have received increasing attention and have revealed a far more complicated relationship between Indian women and British men than previously understood drawing into question the conclusions of the 'transition narrative'. Works by Ann Laura Stoler and Indrani Sen and Durba Ghosh lead the field and have encouraged the study of family, sex and intimacy as a strong field of investigation.[29]

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[28] Alison Blunt (1999), 'Imperial Geographies of Home: British Domesticity in India, 1886-1925', *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, 24(4), pp.421–40; Swati Chattopadhyay (2002), '"Goods, Chattels and Sundry Items": Constructing 19th-Century Anglo-Indian Domestic Life', *Journal of Material Culture*, 7(3), pp.243–71.

[29] Durba Ghosh (2006), *Sex and the Family in Colonial India: The Making of Empire*, Cambridge Studies in Indian History and Society, 13, Cambridge, UK ; New York: Cambridge University Press; Sudipta Sen (2001), 'Colonial Aversions and Domestic Desires: Blood, Race, Sex and the Decline of Intimacy in Early British India', *South Asia: Journal of South Asian Studies*, 24 (.sup001), pp.25–45; Ann Laura Stoler (2002), *Carnal Knowledge and Imperial Power: Race and the Intimate in Colonial Rule,* University of California Press; Ann Laura Stoler (1992), 'Sexual Affronts and Racial Frontiers:

Conclusion

Whether viewing the East India Company as an institution or examining the lives of individuals, work centred on this quasi-imperial trading entity continues in earnest. The period of Company Rule attracts scholars of economic, colonial, political, and social and cultural histories, and more recently scholars of gender, race and post-colonial perspectives. The differences between the lives and experiences of domiciled Britons in 1750 and 1860 have been proven to be significant. Their relationships, their living and working circumstances, their outlooks and loyalties, and their community 'sense of self' all witnessed significant changes. This has led scholars to deem Company Rule a period of transition, in which these changes took effect. The influence of the 'colonial archive' has supported this notion of a steady and continuous movement towards western ideals of politics, culture, and society. The 'transition narrative' as this paper has termed it, therefore presents a neat narrative of Company rule which can be utilised by a variety of approaches. However, in recent years this narrative has been increasingly complicated.

New approaches, methods, and trends have questioned not only the smoothness of transition but the extent to which it existed at all. These approaches and methods have not set out a new, singular and perfectly consistent interpretation of Company Rule, as the traditional 'transition narrative' had. In part, this is because they have created a picture of a state and community that was characterised by internal contradictions, reliant on a range of complicating factors. Instead they have suggested a view of Company rule that is profoundly more complex than it is currently characterised; a state not simply related to colonial progression, but deeply grounded in local culture and society; and a community whose identity was in constant motion pressured by a multitude of factors.

European Identities and the Cultural Politics of Exclusion in Colonial Southeast Asia', *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 34 (3), pp.514–51.