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Acting with Intent: How Queen Victoria brought India Home to Britain through an Indian Prince and an Indian Servant

Chapter II: The Impact and Acceptability of the Queen's Actions

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Introduction

Historians suggest Queen Victoria was a monarch in name alone. Queen Victoria's historical significance has typically been limited to her role in accommodating the monarchy to the strict middle-class morality of the age that now bears her name. Queen Victoria is rarely mentioned other than with reference to her love for her husband Albert, her intense mourning for him, and her friendship with John Brown, a Scottish servant. Many historians imply that she had little to no part to play in politics, economics, or even social aspects of the realm. However, this assessment is inaccurate. There is one piece of her empire where the Queen was involved in all three of these details, and that was in regards to her Indian Empire. Queen Victoria actively hired Indian servants and made Indian culture a focal point of her daily routine. It is the purpose of this graduate thesis to examine the numerous ways in which Queen Victoria demonstrated her interest in India to her subjects and the impact of these actions. While much historiography claims that the Queen was solely a figurehead, this graduate thesis will prove she was acting with intent to bring her distant Indian subjects into the center of attention for her British subjects.

The Queen's interest in India grew as she aged. It began in the early 1850s with the arrival of the Maharajah Duleep Singh, the boy-king of the conquered Sikh empire. The Sepoy Mutiny occurred in 1857-1858, and eventually Duleep Singh, himself, attempted to challenge British rule in India. The Queen must have felt a lack of control over her empire at this point. Her Proclamation of 1858 promised to protect and help her Indian subjects and demonstrated a growing awareness of the far-off colony's significance. Next, possibly in an effort to better link her empire's center and its periphery, the Queen took the title Empress of India in 1876. Her interest peaked during the 1880s and 1890s. This period is where the bulk of attention will be paid to the Queen's actions and their impact. She strongly supported the first great exhibition that displayed Indian works and culture to the British public in 1886. The following year the Queen sent for Indian servants to come to the palace. One of them was Abdul Karim who, over the remainder of her life, would grow closer to her and increasingly well-known amongst the British public. In 1891 she added the Durbar Room to her favorite palace, Osborne House. In 1895 there would be another exhibition influenced by the Queen. The course of her life demonstrated a growing interest in the colony that would be known as her favorite. In the last fifty years of her reign, Queen Victoria's interest became more public. Her interest was then dispersed into the general population through newspapers and magazines. Ordinary Britons became fascinated with India and, eventually Karim, and began to incorporate Indian goods into their daily lives.

Victoria's relationships with Duleep Singh and Abdul Karim have recently attracted popular attention, but there has been little serious analysis of the Queen's actions relating to India and her self-conscious role as an imperial sovereign. Shrabani Basu's *Victoria and Abdul: The True Story of the Queen's Closest Confidant* focused mostly on the resentment of the household staff towards her Indian servant. Basu ignored public opinion on the matter and thus fails to appreciate the broader imperial dimensions of this relationship. Sushila Anand has written about the Queen's connection with both men but her work's utility is undermined by baseless insinuations of a possible romantic relationship between the Queen and Abdul Karim and a perpetual focus on royal scandals.¹

Other writers have taken a more serious approach without trying to sensationalize the relationship. For example, G.R. Searle explained that

In a moment of rare common sense, she warned that colour prejudice threatened to break up her Empire: having curry prepared each day in her palace of residence, on the off-chance that a hungry Indian prince might pay a courtesy call, was her own particular contribution to good race relations. The Queen also defied convention by establishing a close relationship with her devoted Indian servant "Munshi". Few of her subjects were so open-minded.²

Marina Warner has also referred to Abdul Karim's importance: "Despatch boxes about Indian affairs were shown to him, his advice was solicited, and he was taking part in the holy privacy of family theatricals, as a figure in the 'tableau vivant' of an Indian bazaar."³ Roderick Cavaliero agrees, explaining that "By 1892 he was Her Majesty's Indian Secretary, looked after her dispatch boxes, assisted her in her Indian correspondence and constantly briefed her on Indian matters. Munshi informed her, and she informed Lord Salisbury, her prime minister, that she had more Muslim subjects than the Sultan."⁴ Walter Arnstein maintains that "In her later years, Queen Victoria looked on her title Empress of

1 Shrabani Basu, *Victoria and Karim: The True Story of the Queen's Closest Confidant* (Gloucestershire: The History Press, 2010), 104; Sushila Anand, *Indian Sahib: Queen Victoria's Dear Abdul* (London, United Kingdom: Duckworth, 1996, 45.

2 G.R. Searle, *A New England? Peace and War 1886-1918* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2004), 33.

3 Marina Warner, *Queen Victoria's Sketchbook*. (New York: Crown Publishers Inc.; 1979), 200.

4 Roderick Cavaliero, *Strangers in the Land*, (London: I.B. Tauris Publishers; 2002), 197.

India not solely as an honor but also as a responsibility, and in her eyes Abdul Karim, the Munshi, became the respected personal embodiment, ever at her side, of that exotic Jewel in her Crown with all its varied languages and peoples.”⁵ Nonetheless, while these historians provide a tantalizing glimpse of Queen Victoria’s interest in India, they have not fully recognized the significant impact she had on her subjects.

This Masters level thesis will examine the Queen through the stories of her relationship with two men: Duleep Singh, a conquered Indian prince, and Abdul Karim, an obedient Indian servant. Through these stories, the activity of the Queen will be seen in a new way. She participated in many aspects of her empire dealing specifically with India. Most of these concepts have been overlooked in modern historiography.

This graduate thesis seeks to use the basis of existing historical research on imperialism and apply it to the reign of Victoria as she strengthened the bonds of her empire and stimulated understanding of India. The cultural understanding the people of Britain gained proved to be limited in scope, but the Queen’s active role in shaping what they did understand is rather significant and up to this point has been often overlooked by historical analysis. This paper will be divided into two chapters. The first chapter will examine how Queen Victoria participated in the development of the connection between her British subjects and India. A focus will be placed upon her relationships with Karim and Duleep Singh. Chapter two (which follows) will examine the impact of these relationships and the Queen’s actions on the British masses. This chapter will thoroughly examine the effect of the Queen’s actions as reported on in contemporary newspapers. This chapter will analyze the reaction of the majority of literate Britons and their incorporation of Indian culture and items into their personal lives.

Chapter II: The Impact and Acceptability of the Queen’s Actions

Introduction

Chapter two will shift focus from the Queen, to the consequences her intentional actions had on her subjects. This chapter will be divided into two parts. Part one will examine what the public knew about her interactions with Singh, Karim, and her general interest in India. This portion will also examine why these two relationships were acceptable in the scheme of racial, gender, and class norms of the era. In shaping her subjects’ understanding of India, Queen Victoria was indeed molding what it meant to be a British subject in the late nineteenth century. Part two will demonstrate the extent of the Queen’s impact on public life and social norms of her subjects. The events they attended, the goods they bought, and the ways they conceived of India all changed as a consequence of the Queen’s influence.

Duleep Singh, Abdul Karim, and Queen Victoria represented a microcosm of something larger that was happening within the British Empire. The metropolitan center of Britain and the periph-

eral segments of the empire, like India, were exchanging not only goods but also awareness of one another.⁶ Much of the focus in historical research on this cultural exchange has centered on how London exported ideas and people to the periphery, but there was return flow of ideas and people too. This exchange was certainly a two-way path from India to Great Britain and back. As the people of England and Europe read about the Queen learning Hindustani, building an Indian-inspired room in the palace, and befriending Karim, an Indian of non-aristocratic birth, a metropolis-periphery exchange was certainly occurring. The people of Britain seemed very accepting and interested in her attention to India, which probably did build a stronger bond between home and abroad. While the household, according to previous historiography, was greatly concerned about this relationship, the middle-class literate population favorably viewed Victoria as a mother-like ruler showing attention to her colonial children. The use of Singh and Karim, and the other demonstrations of the Queen’s interest, were tools of imperialism, which had a great impact on reminding the subjects of Britain that they were a part of a great empire, and educating them about the other members of the empire.

The historical research dealing specifically with Karim and Queen Victoria has often pointed to the resentment felt by the Queen’s family and the household staff toward a friendship they deemed inappropriate because of race and class norms. Historians recently proposed that two empires actually existed within the British Empire. One was an empire of race, the other an empire of class.⁷ Many Britons, despite the feelings of the royal family and staff, viewed Victoria’s relationship with Singh, Karim, and her interest in India as appropriate because she created a visual representation of suitable hierarchies within these two empires. She demonstrated the establishment of her monarchical authority over a dominated prince and her servant and reinforced race and class hierarchies, represented by the British Queen ruling an Indian prince and keeping an Indian servant. Britain’s supremacy over India and the monarch’s supremacy over her servants and empire was maintained and supported by the public. In other works on race and gender, historians have examined the “rule of colonial difference.”⁸ There was an, “essential difference between the rulers and the ruled.”⁹ Queen Victoria, Duleep Singh, and Abdul Karim personify this difference.

In regards to gender, which was traditionally minimized by imperial historians, Victoria fulfilled a legitimate womanly role of imperial mother and caregiver. Additionally, the public’s expectations would have shaped the Queen’s actions. She knew and understood acceptable boundaries of that time and she acted within those norms when dealing with Singh and Karim. The Queen’s interest in India and relationship with Singh and Karim followed

5 Walter L. Arnstein. *Queen Victoria*, (New York: Palgrave Macmillan; 2003), 197.

6 John Mackenzie, Bernard Cohn, David Cannadine, and Pramod Nayar are just some of the historians who have studied the impact of colonial exchange. This paper seeks to take the concepts they have examined and thoroughly apply them to Queen Victoria and her actions dealing with India.

7 David Cannadine, *Ornamentalism: How the British Saw Their Empire*, (Oxford, England: Oxford University Press; 2001), 9.

8 Mrinalini Sinha, *Gender and Empire* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), pg. 183. Accessed March, 2013 from ebrary.com/id/10254436.

9 *Ibid.*, 183

the norms of the time period, which in turn led to the public's widespread approval. She was a British-monarch-mother and this role complied with all norms of the time which made her actions, as reported in contemporary newspapers and magazines, acceptable to her subjects.

The concept of women-mothers related to the concept of colonialism on a deeper level. Historians have concluded that British women were seen as, "mothers, guardians of value, culture, religion."¹⁰ It has been argued that a, "society's well-being, its wealth, its ability to feed and clothe itself, its very future, were frequently perceived as directly related to women's ability to bear healthy children."¹¹ Queen Victoria personified this idea as she was a mother, not only to a family made up of her own nine children, but also a nation, and, indeed, an empire. Victoria took in Duleep Singh, an Indian prince, treating him as a mother would have treated an unruly child. The she took in Karim, to whom she signed letters, "Your loving mother,"¹² or, "Your affectionate Mother."¹³ She was fulfilling the traditional colonial role of women. She was spreading positive feelings between England and India in a gender-acceptable way, with a maternal regard for her colonial children.

The Queen's actions were always acceptable because they maintained the status quo. The way Singh and Karim dressed, the roles they played in relation to the Queen, the manner in which newspapers covered their activity, and the way they were viewed by the public demonstrate this idea of clear boundaries of who is in charge and who is following orders. The public did not question the friendships because from outside the palace walls, it seemed like a clear cut ordering of typical race, class, and gender norms. Britain was in control of India, the monarch had control of her servants, and a mother was tending to her children.

This chapter will highlight the role of newspapers in both shaping public opinion and illustrating the public acceptability of the Queen's actions. For the most part, newspapers have been used minimally when examining the concept of the British Empire. Much like Queen Victoria's role as a monarch had been minimized to the grieving widow status which was previously examined, so too, have the valuable resources of contemporary periodicals been minimized in use throughout historical research when examining the Queen and her actions. The newspapers offer a glimpse of public opinion regarding India in everything from advertisements, to political cartoons, to public interest stories about Singh and Karim. Some newspapers were printed specifically for women, hunters, humorists, home-enthusiasts, and other interest groups. Others were printed for the general interest of the masses. They also cover the sentiments of the world as the papers used were published in Britain, India, and the United States. They demonstrated the British public's strong interest in India, their understanding of the Queen as an active ruler, and the consequences of her actions on her subjects.

Part I: How Much did the Public Know and Why did they Accept it?

The Queen's intentional shaping of her subjects has been covered thoroughly in chapter one, but the reason she could so easily shape them was because she knew what acceptable behavior was and what unacceptable behavior was. She used that understanding to form their perceptions of empire, specifically in regards to India. It was no secret that the Queen had this ability. Lord Salisbury commented that "She had an extraordinary knowledge of what her people would think – extraordinary, because it could not come from any personal intercourse. I have said for years that I have always felt that when I knew what the Queen thought, I knew pretty certainly what views her subjects would take, and especially the middle class of her subjects."¹⁴ This innate skill, which could not have been taught to Victoria by her many servants or tutors, would benefit her agenda to bring India to the forefront of the British imperial awareness. It is possible she read the papers as a means of keeping in touch with her subjects' opinions and then used her understanding as Salisbury described. Queen Victoria used this knowledge and understanding to her advantage as monarch. She would shape the way her subjects thought of Indian people, art, architecture, literature, and goods. She would take her own interest and make it her peoples' interest.

The first time the Queen began to shape the public consciousness was when she began a relationship with the newly conquered Duleep Singh. The prince-consort and Queen took great interest in this Indian prince. They selected the schools he attended, allowed their children to play with him, and frequently invited him to the palace. During one of these visits, "The young Princes are seen dressed in the Maharajah's Indian costumes."¹⁵ The maharajah, "wore his complete national (Sikh) costume, with all its splendid jewels, when he went to court or at any great entertainment."¹⁶ Queen Victoria used Singh as an introduction of India to the British public. She made him a part of royal events that would be covered in the newspapers. Throughout his life he was discussed in the newspapers, and the British public would learn a lot about the conquest of India through this man. They would also be fully aware that his royal standing enabled him to mingle amongst British aristocracy.

Singh became a bit of a celebrity in England. The Queen's fondness for him was chronicled, much in the same way it was for Abdul Karim. "The Queen never forgot the Maharajah's birthday; as regularly as it came round arrived the royal birthday gift. A valuable thorough-bred hunter was the first of these; he also received, at different times, a dog, a beautiful time-piece, and other gracious tokens of her kindly interest in him."¹⁷ Papers, such as *The Lady's Newspaper*, recorded the meetings of the Maharajah with the Queen and other members of the court. *The Times* told of Duleep Singh dining with the Duchess of Kent. He used the

10 Philippa Levine, *Gender and Empire* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), pg. 10. Accessed March, 2013 from ebrary.com/id/10254436.

11 Ibid., 145.

12 Shrabani Basu, *Victoria and Karim*, 107.

13 Sushila Anand, *Indian Sahib*, 58.

14 "Queen Victoria and The Victorian Age" *The New Encyclopedia Britannica: Volume 29*. (London, England), 2002, pg. 492.

15 Ibid., 343, 348.

16 Ibid., 336.

17 Login, *John Login and Duleep Singh*, 349.

Queen's royal box when attending plays.¹⁸ *The Times* stated on another day, "The Queen and Prince, accompanied by the Maharajah Duleep Singh, walked in the Home Park this morning."¹⁹ A few months later, *The Times* again told of how, "His Royal Highness, Prince Albert, accompanied by the Maharajah Duleep Singh, went out shooting."²⁰ The article continued to state that the Maharajah also attended church with the royal family. Queen Victoria even sketched the Maharajah with Prince Arthur.²¹ Even after Singh's disastrous attempts at rebellion, the familial connection continued. *The Milwaukee Journal* covered the marriage of Singh's son. "At the present moment a Hindoo bridegroom and his English bride are enjoying their honeymoon on the Riviera, and the queen rejoices to know that her godson – child of her favorite Dhuleep Singh – has formed an alliance with one of the highest families in the land by his marriage with the beautiful Lady Anne Coventry."²² Here we also see the progress of the Queen's anti-racial discrimination policies as her Indian godson married an Englishwoman.²³

Karim, like Singh, was treated liked a well-loved child, and he too, would be discussed in great detail throughout the papers of Great Britain. The people of Great Britain were aware of his every action from when he returned to India to what game he killed on hunting excursions. *The Times* told of his departure for India. "The Sutlej, which has just left England for Bombay, conveys her Excellency Lady Lansdowne, and among the other passengers is the Munshi Abdul Karim, the Queen's Indian clerk, who is going on three or four months' leave to India."²⁴ *The Sporting Times* recounted his successful hunts. "Let us hope that the Queen's Munshi Abdul Karim will not continue his battues when the Court moves to Windsor. This noble Eastern sportsman went out at Balmoral and shot a very fine fox, a roe deer, and a hind."²⁵ Even his religious activities were recorded indicating metropolitan consciousness of the Empire's religious diversity. "The Queen's Munshi, Hafiz Abdul Karim, and the other Indian attendants of her Majesty, went on Sunday to their devotions (Namar of Id), at the Mohammedan Mosque at Woking. This custom they observe every year, and are met on the occasion by Mohemmedans from all parts of England, who come to see the Munshi and join him in his prayers."²⁶ The interactions of Karim with the Queen were also covered. "The

Queen usually converses in Hindustani with the Munshi Abdul Karim."²⁷ Not only was the public aware of Karim, they were practically inundated with details of his life.

The Queen showered him with gifts just as a mother might spoil her children. His wife shared the special cottage the Queen had built for him, once again showing the high regard she held him in.²⁸ He received land grants in his home town of Agra and titles in Britain.²⁹ He received a private carriage for his personal use. One biography reports his use of this carriage. "The Indian secretary, Munshi Abdul Karim, arrived in state, alone in his carriage, wearing a light bluish-gray turban, and apparently concentrating in himself the dignity of the whole Indian empire."³⁰ "This personage, who is a man of vast dimensions and most imposing presence," *The Huddersfield Daily Chronicle* noted, "is daily to be seen in one of the Queen's best carriages, which is apparently appropriated solely to his use."³¹ While Karim did not have Singh's royal status, he was accepted as a part of the royal family in the public's eyes.

Victoria also acted as a mother to his wife, offering gynecological advice when the two apparently struggled to have children. She was often gentle, like a mother would be, in the way she communicated with Karim. A letter from the Queen to Karim demonstrated the close personal intimacy the Queen felt to Karim and his wife when she stated the following,

I spoke to Dr. Reid about your dear wife and I think he will understand easily what you have to tell him. It may be that in hurting her foot and leg she may have twisted something in her inside, which would account for things not being regular as they ought.

If this is so, it can only be found out by her being examined by the hand of this Lady Doctor.

It may be something is out of place which can be put right and then the object of your great wishes may be obtained.

There is nothing I would not do to help you both, as you are my dear Indian children and you can say anything to me. I have had 9 children myself, and have had daughters, daughters-in-law, nieces, grandchildren etc to look after and I can help you, Your loving mother, VRI.³²

Victoria's motherly actions towards Karim were not always the typical maternal roles. She did not teach her colonial children things like how to walk and speak, as a mother to an infant

18 "Musical and Theatrical On-Dits", *The Lady's Newspaper*, July 22, 1854, Issue 395. Gale Database (DX1900465210)

19 "Court Circular", *The Times*, November 16, 1854, Issue 21900. Gale Database (CS101354352).

20 "Court Circular", *The Times*, January 29th, 1855, Issue 21963. Gale Database (CS135040061).

21 Mary Thatcher, "Queen Victoria's Own Maharajah", *The Times*, March 17, 1980, Issue 60577. Gale Database (CS117802609).

22 "Queen Victoria's Kindoos" *The Milwaukee Journal* (Milwaukee, Wisconsin) Wednesday, June 15, 1898; pg. 5. Gale Document (GT301084873).

23 Mary Thatcher, "Queen Victoria's Own Maharajah".

24 "Court Circular" *The Times* (London, England), Saturday, Nov 01, 1890; pg. 9; Issue 33158. Gale Database (CS151835489).

25 *The Sporting Times* (London, England), Saturday, October 03, 1896; pg. 5; Issue 1724. Gale Database (DX190182546).

26 "Gleanings" *Birmingham Daily Post* (Birmingham, England), Tuesday, May 12, 1891; Issue 10260. Gale Database (BB3201337619)

27 "More Manners for Women" *Punch* (London, England), Saturday, Dec 04, 1897; pg. 256. Gale Database (DX1901939649).

28 "The Queen's Munshi", *Reynolds's Newspaper*, November 18, 1894, Issue 2310. Gale Database (Y3200623909).

29 Basu, 79.

30 Arthur Lawrence Merrill, *Life and Times of Queen Victoria*. (Philadelphia: National Publishing Co., 1901) 337-378.

31 "The Queen's 'Munshi'", *The Huddersfield Daily Chronicle*, (West Yorkshire, England), April 15, 1892, pg. 4. Gale Database (R3208717692).

32 Basu, *Victoria and Abdul*, 108.

would do. Instead the teacher role fell on Karim. He taught the Queen how to speak and write Hindustani. In return, the Queen bestowed numerous honors on him as were previously examined in chapter one. By awarding these titles to Karim she was connecting the periphery of her empire more closely to the metropolis. Karim represented India to the people of Britain, and when he returned home, he would have represented Britain to the people of India. He was being rewarded for his obedience to Victoria who was his British-monarch-mother. Treating Indian servants as children was common amongst Britons. Steel and Gardiner, as quoted in Nayar, stated in 1909, "The Indian servant is a child in everything save age, and should be treated as a child; that is to say kindly, but with great firmness."³³ This would have been after the Queen's death, but the image she had helped to create lived on in her British subjects.

It was not only in her dealings with Singh and Karim that the Queen was seen as a mother. The public was very accepting, and had been exposed on many occasions, to this kind of imperial motherhood. Britain was the mother country to her colonies. The Queen, as an individual, was referred to as mother to India, but also to other parts of her empire as well. The best demonstration of the acceptance of this motherhood view is the cartoon (previously discussed in chapter one demonstrating the Queen's return to public life and included below) which showed Queen Victoria as a mother, holding her infant India, and surrounded by her other colonial children.³⁴ The fact that India was the child in her arms strongly supported the fact that the people of England were well aware of her special affection for this colony. As early as 1861, *The Bengal Catholic Herald*, an Indian newspaper, claimed that the Indian population had entered, "into closer relations with the great British family."³⁵ Additionally, her actions fulfilled the role of caregiver. It was reported in another Indian publication, *The Friend of India and Statesman*, that the Queen, "had directed her Government to take the most stringent possible measures for the eradication of plague in India."³⁶ Like a mother would care for a sick child, Victoria was shown nursing to her imperial family back to health. As *The Friend of India & Statesman* stated, "It is a true instinct that has conferred upon Her Majesty the name of 'mother of her people.'³⁷ The motherly sentiment extended beyond India to other colonies. Chiefs of New Zealand addressed the Queen as, "Oh, Victoria, our Mother!" calling themselves "your Maori children."³⁸ Even former colonies felt this filial bond. In the United States one newspaper stated, "Early a wife, often a mother, she has set before the nation and the world an example and a pattern of true domestic virtue."³⁹

33 Nayar, *Colonial Voices*, 11.

34 "The Opening Scene", *Fun*, (London, England), Wednesday, May, 05, 1886, pg. 202, Issue 1095. Gale Database (DX1901440638).

35 "The Famine" *The Bengal Catholic Herald*, (Calcutta, India), Saturday, May 04, 1861, pg. 139, Issue 18. Gale Database (CC1903354679).

36 "Editorial Notes", *The Friend of India & Statesman*, (Calcutta, India), Wednesday, January 27, 1897, pg. 2, Issue 4. Gale Database (CC1903326187).

37 "Queen Victoria". *The Friend of India & Statesman*, (Calcutta, India), Tuesday, May 26, 1896, pg.4, Issue 22. Gale Database (CC1903438797).

38 "Address of New Zealand Chiefs to Queen Victoria", *The Daily Picayune*, (New Orleans, Louisiana), Monday, December 22, 1862. Gale Database (GT3014189072).

39 "Queen Victoria's Jubilee", *The Daily Inter Ocean*, (Chicago, Illinois), Tuesday, June 21, 1887, pg. 2, Issue 89. Gale Database (GT3001242276).

Not only did newspapers and magazines report on the interest of the Queen's, but so did contemporary books. Countless articles of the time period referred to the Queen's attitude towards India. "Should her majesty ever reveal to us what public events in her life have afforded her most gratification it is probable, thinks *Woman* [the magazine publishing this quote], she would place her proclamation as Empress of India first of all."⁴⁰ Another paper maintained that "The queen's devotion to India and everything connected with that delightful, but troublesome colony seems to have communicated itself to her subjects."⁴¹ When discussing the Queen's Hindustani education, Richard Holmes, her biographer and the librarian at Windsor Castle, observed the following: "In the last ten years a signal proof of the warm interest which Her Majesty has always taken in her Indian Empire has been given by the Queen's study of Hindustani, under the instruction of the Munshi Abdul Karim."⁴² This was written the year of her death. There was no explanation of who the munshi was, which attested to his fame at the time.

This study of Hindustani impacted her subjects in Britain, but also those in India. *Strand Magazine* commented, "The fact of the Queen's studies has reacted in the most sympathetic manner in India. The princes and people of that country recognize in the Imperial act a further mark of tender care and parental attention towards her subjects in the East."⁴³ Here the people of India allegedly showed loyalty and affection towards their monarchical mother as she carefully showed respect for them by learning their language. The people of Great Britain viewed these actions as a sign of imperial conquest as there was no mention of bad feelings or resentment, just appreciation. The British people revered the Queen as a mother to the Empire.

Part Two: The Impact of the Queen's Interest on her Subjects.

Following the Queen's example, her subjects began incorporating India goods into their own cultural identity. Nayar, a historian who has studied the tactics of leaders of imperial Britain, refers to this phenomenon as cultural mobility. He defined it as, "the conspicuous movements of peoples, objects, images, and ideas. There have to be contact zones in which cultural goods are exchanged."⁴⁴ Such cultural mobility was represented by Singh and Karim whose contact zones would have been public functions, interactions with the Queen, as well as the reports in the newspapers read by the British public. Objects would also be exchanged in large numbers at the exhibitions and in the stores of Great Britain. The Queen's actions which were examined in chapter one would have a significant impact on her subjects' awareness of far-off places as well as the cultural understanding of India through commerce.

The two exhibitions examined in chapter one served as great evi-

40 "For Wives and Daughters", *The Londoner*, January 15, 1897, Issue 123. Gale Database (VUABP1906589157)

41 "Queen Victoria's Kindoos" *New York Herald*, June 15, 1898. Gale Database (GT3010848473).

42 Richard R. Holmes, *Queen Victoria 1819-1901*. (London, England: Longman's Green and Company 1901), 297.

43 Rafuddin, Ahmad. "The Queen's Hindustani Diary" *Strand Magazine: An Illustrated Monthly*. July 1892. Pgs 550-557. Proquest Database (3982406).

44 Nayar, *Colonial Voices*, 239.

dence of how the Queen's interest in colonial India was impacting her subjects in Britain and demonstrated the concept of cultural mobility. By their attendance, the people of Britain revealed an interest in learning about Indian culture. The exhibition crowds also purchased a variety of Indian goods. Some of these were clothing, some were to decorate homes with, and others were to be preserved in museums. One of the items was the exhibition's Durbar Room, similar to the one found at Osbourne. It was set up for use as, "a great central ball-room,"⁴⁵ at a new museum that was being built. These exhibitions' significance has been explained by as follows: "Exhibitions in England during the nineteenth century underscored the intimate connection of English culture with its imperial possessions – and this was made possible because of the physical mobility of goods and wares. Indisputably, the exhibitions did retain the colonial binary: civilized England/primitive India."⁴⁶ Therefore, the established hierarchical guidelines set up initially by the Queen in her relationships with Singh and Karim were being reinforced as her subjects attended the various colonial exhibitions. In this way, the Queen shaped her empire, educated her subjects, and encouraged her subjects' acceptance of her fascination with India.

In 1874, it was reported by a state official, "These collections are very much visited and afford it is believed equal instruction and amusement to large classes of the people."⁴⁷ Newspaper reporters echoed this sentiment. "It ought to have an educational as well as a recreative result," *the Illustrated London News* exclaimed, "by impressing everyone with the great size and increasing importance of that little-known but major part of her Majesty's empire."⁴⁸ Not only were these exhibitions culturally didactic but they were also economically important as members of British society acquired Indian products. At the Empire of India Exhibition, "The directors are in a position to state that, from the actual percentages paid to them by exhibitors, the total sales of Indian goods were between £50,000 and £60,000; and they believe the incidental outside business, done on orders secured in the Exhibition equaled at least another £25,000; or, in brief, that the Empire of India Exhibition of 1895 benefited Indian trade by a sum of £75,000."⁴⁹

The exhibition also strengthened the familial bonds and understanding of the imperial family of which Queen Victoria was the matriarch. "There are relics of the Honourable East India Company to remind us of days which are fled, and an Indian city to show us the present life of the natives whom we hail as fellow-subjects of the Queen."⁵⁰ Another report advertised, "a full

representation of life in Hindustan will be offered to the public."⁵¹ At these exhibitions, patrons could watch shows such as *India*. In this show, "The clever creator of the vast show has condensed the whole story of India; its ancient glories, its ancient barbarism, its ancient rites and customs, its conquest and sequent development under the influence of Western civilization, into a three hours' epitome of one of the strangest, most romantic, most thrilling narratives of the conquest of a great people by a greater, which can be found in the history of the world."⁵² As many other historians have noted, the British public's understanding of the imperial concept was shaped by the government.⁵³ These exhibitions are a perfect example. They would also lead to widespread purchasing of Indian goods as, "'Consumption, ingestion, and decoration' of colonial products was a mode of acquiring, both literally and metaphorically, a taste for and of the Empire."⁵⁴

Even the exhibition advertising highlighted the shopping. The advertisement below shows the shops being operated and perused by people of Indian heritage. The advertisement also promoted the other parts of the Queen's empire. Not only did this exhibition shape the British public's understanding about India, but also the Queen's other territorial acquisitions as well. The article that accompanied this image highlighted the Queen's role in using these occasions to spread understanding and increase imperial awareness. It was stated in *The Penny Illustrated Paper* published in London, that, "Her Majesty, as Queen of Great Britain and Ireland and Empress of India, has given great pleasure not only to countless London citizens, but to numbers of cordially loyal subjects from India and from the furthestmost corners of the Realm, by graciously consenting to open in person the Great Colonial and Indian Exhibition at South Kensington on Tuesday next, the Fourth of May."⁵⁵ The significance of the Queen appearing herself was noted ten years earlier at the Indian and Colonial exhibition when it was reported by *Lloyd's Weekly London Newspaper*, "Victoria, Queen of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland and Empress of India will on Tuesday next, open the Indian and Colonial Exhibition at South Kensington. Her Majesty's public appearances have during the past few years been so infrequent that her personal attendance at this ceremony will in itself constitute a notable feature in the year's occurrences."⁵⁶

These ideas were not only circulated by the very large exhibitions. The transfer of colonial knowledge can be seen in smaller scale gatherings of Britons as well. At smaller events like the Ice Bazaar held at Windsor to help the National Society for the

45 "The Sunbeam Museum", *The Milwaukee Sentinel*, (Milwaukee, Wisconsin), Thursday, March, 22, 1888, pg.2). Gale Database (GT3003011724).

46 Nayar, *Colonial Voices*, 241.

47 *Ibid.*, 239.

48 "Empire of India Exhibition", *Illustrated London News*, (London, England), Saturday, June 1, 1895, pg 678, Issue 2928. Gale Database (HN3100147396).

49 "The Empire of India Exhibition" *The Friend of India and Statesmen*. (Calcutta, India) Wednesday, February 12, 1896; pg. 20; Issue 7. Gale Database (CC1903391181).

50 "Empire of India Exhibition", *Illustrated London News*, (London, England), Saturday, June 1, 1895, pg 678, Issue 2928. Gale Database (HN3100147396).

51 "The Empire of India Exhibition" *The Era*. (London, England), Saturday, December 15, 1894; Issue 2934. Gale Database (BB3202512579).

52 "The Empress Theater at the India Exhibition" *Illustrated London News* (London, England), Saturday, September 28, 1895; pg 387; Issue 2945. Gale Database (HN3100148987).

53 Promod K. Nayar's *Colonial Voices*, Bernard S. Cohn in *Colonialism and Its Forms of Knowledge*, David Cannadine in *Ornamentalism*, and John Mackenzie's *Propaganda and Empire* all explore the concepts of the governments role in perpetuating colonial understanding.

54 Nayar, *Colonial Voices*, 229.

55 "Our London Letter", *The Penny Illustrated Paper and Illustrated Times* (London, England), Saturday May 01, 1886; pg. 273; Issue 1299. Gale Database (BA3207721960).

56 *Lloyd's Weekly London Newspaper*, (London, England), Sunday, May 2, 1886; Issue 2267) Gale Database (Bc3206261687).

Prevention of Cruelty to Children, many of the themes previously addressed in this paper can be seen. The Queen's motherly role is represented by associating herself with an event for the protection of children. She portrayed her role as mother to her own nine children and all of her subjects, rich or poor. She was interacting with the wealthy to protect the poor, once again staying within the boundaries of expected class norms for her era. In order to help raise money, "The Queen sent many articles for sale, including four huge dolls gorgeously dressed in Hindu costume by the wife of Munshi Abdul Karim."⁵⁷

Small-scale events such as weddings also enabled this sort of exposure for India. "Queen Victoria never gives but one wedding present, an Indian shawl, and they say this is a direct result of the fact that her Indian subjects make her presents of so many hundreds of them."⁵⁸ Another report stated, "Everyone knows that she cannot refrain from presenting a bride – and the weddings that fall in her way are legion – with one of her beloved Indian shawls in addition to any other gift."⁵⁹ These quotations show many facets of previously discussed topics within this paper. First, it shows the Queen's dominance as her loyal Indian subjects are so willing to present her with gifts which could be construed as demonstrating loyalty. Second, many of the weddings to which the Queen would be sending these shawls would have been upper-class British subjects. She is spreading both the message of conquest and her own interest in the colony in an acceptable way according to standards of the time. Not only did these gifts then encourage her citizens to buy Indian clothing, as is seen below, it also encouraged other foreign leaders to do the same. Gifts became a way of demonstrating the assets of one's country. "In fact, where Queen Victoria gives India shawls, the German Empress, when making presents, gives clocks."⁶⁰ With every action, both political and personal, the Queen was enacting imperial change.

The exhibitions held within Great Britain were not the only time the British public demanded Indian goods. The economic tie between these two countries was quite strong. Contemporary advertisements verified a desire for a variety of goods. These ranged from cloth to tea. *Myra's Journal of Dress and Fashion* advertised for Indian silks to be used for summer costumes.⁶¹ An advertisement for Benjamin and Sons announced, "Just Received – a case of elaborately embroidered Indian goods, for Gentleman's Dressing Gowns, Ladies' Ulster Coats, and Morning and 'Five o'clock Tea'

Gowns, suitable for presents."⁶² While the British had been trading with India for centuries, the Queen's attentiveness to India would have strengthened interest in Indian goods. This would have been doubly good for the Queen. Her personal interest spread throughout her country, and the economic benefits increased. The government would have made a significant amount of money with the taxation of these items that were in high demand.

The imperial undertone was visible in the advertisement for Lipton Tea shown below. The caption in the banner showed the attitude of conquest as it stated, "Lipton's Teas Proclaimed Victorious Over All Others."⁶³ In the background, dutiful Indian workers were shown in the fields. This advertisement was a clear demonstration that the Queen's attempts at bringing India into the imperial family have been successful. This ad also showed the concept of cultural mobility, as well, since English factories are seen too. The management of these factories would have been reinforcing all of the same norms and expectations in India that were being spread by the Queen at home in Britain.

Another instance of the demand for Indian goods leads back to the Maharajah Duleep Singh. He wanted to return to India, but needed to raise funds. In order to pay for the voyage, he auctioned some of his possessions. *The Times*, dedicated a sizable article to the description of these goods. "There are a few handsome embroidered Cashmere carpets and coverlets, but these, again, are not at all of exceptional beauty, though, like everything Oriental in textile fabrics, their colours are well assorted and the design is excellent." Another description of dining service pieces read, "large dinner services and dessert services, some in Indian patterns, others of the ordinary English make."⁶⁴ For such thorough descriptions to be included in the paper, there must have been a significant public demand for these items.

There was more than just the exchange of goods which demonstrated the transfer of colonial knowledge. The Queen also tried to instill into her subjects an appreciation for art, architecture, and literature. *The Quiver* reported in 1898 that "The Queen-Empress takes the warmest interest in her Eastern Empire, and is an industrious student of Hindustani, and each day at the appointed hour, takes a lesson from the Munshi, her Indian secretary. She also keeps a diary in Hindustani. Of late years she has taken a great interest in Indian literature."⁶⁵ Another paper reported, "She shows her devotion to Indian art in various ways – by patronizing the embroidery, carpets, and gold and silver industries of every kind."⁶⁶ This article continued and described the Queen's interest in architecture, "Indian architecture is another of her hobbies.

57 "Ice Carnival' Bazaar at Windsor". *Hearth and Home an Illustrated Weekly Journal for Gentelwomen*. (London, England), Thursday, December 15, 1898; pg. 227; Issue 396. Gale Database (DX1901327389).

58 "Men and Women" *Daily Evening Bulletin* (San Francisco, California), Saturday, October 27, 1888; Issue 18. Gale Database (GT3001991766).

59 "Queen Victoria's Kindoos" *The Milwaukee Journal* (Milwaukee, Wisconsin) Wednesday, June 15, 1898; pg. 5. Gale Document (GT3010848473).

60 Warren, Arthur. "The German Empress" *The Woman at Home* (London, England); pg. 43. Gale Database (DX1901728077).

61 "Multiple Display Advertisements", *Myra's Journal of Dress and Fashion*, (London, England), Sunday, June 01, 1879, pg.8, Issue 6. Gale Database (DX1900864756).

62 "Just Received", *The Sporting Gazette and Agricultural Journal*, (London, England), Saturday, January 11, 1879, pg. 33, Issue 870. Gale Database (DX1901014462).

63 *Illustrated London News*, (London, England), Saturday, May 13, 1893; Issue 2821. Gale Database.

64 "The Maharajah Duleep Singh", *The Times*, (London, England), Friday, July 20, 1883, pg. 4, Issue 30877. Gale Database (CS68207860).

65 "The Favourite Queen's Authors" *The Quiver*. (London, England), January 1898. Proquest Document 3960293.

66 "Queen Victoria's Kindoos" *The Milwaukee Journal* (Milwaukee, Wisconsin) Wednesday, June 15, 1898; pg. 5. Gale Document (GT3010848473).

In evidence of this is a beautiful building adjoining her house at Osbourne, in the Isle of Wight, of exclusively Indian design which she had erected a few years ago by an Indian engineer, and in which her Oriental visitors are received and entertained when the court is at Osbourne. Li Hung Chang and the king of Siam were the last distinguished guests there.⁶⁷ She hired Indian artists and architects to keep her portrayal of India authentic in the eyes of her British subjects. Her subjects would follow this influence in many aspects of their lives. “English taste suddenly demanded different, exotic, global flavors and styles,” wrote one historian.⁶⁸ The addition to the Osbourne House is of course the Durbar Room discussed in chapter one. The Queen’s addition of such a room did inspire others to emulate her. Through this emulation an appreciation of Indian architecture was spread. An article describing other significant homes of England reported on this spread of Indian art.

Turning to the right from the hall, the most unique and exquisite feature of Bagshot House is reached. We are in a corridor leading to the billiard-room; but any one would imagine that a real bit of far-off India had been bodily transported into Surrey. Walls and ceiling are composed of the most finished work in light cedar; the characteristic curves of this gallery, lending themselves with facility to the designs executed at Lahore by Ram Singh, of the Mayo School of Art, the Indian artist who was responsible for the superb Durbar Room at Osbourne. Here he has surpassed his other efforts, and the effect of flowers, fruit, and quaint ornamentation carved in this fragrant wood is most charming.⁶⁹

Around the same time of the exhibitions, *The Penny Illustrated Paper* and *Illustrated Times* reported on Pramatha Nath, an Indian who wrote a book about India. The author of the article was very impressed with Nath’s account on the matters of, “the Hindu civilization; religion, social conditions, domestic customs, and the industrial life of the Hindu population.”⁷⁰ It continued, “He is so far from stirring up any antagonistic feeling in the minds of his countrymen, that it is understood he is likely to receive special honours from the Empress of India.”⁷¹ While this event seems minor, as there were thousands of people who wrote thousands of book during Victoria’s reign, the reason this one, and this article, stand out was because it showed the direct influence of the Queen. Even more, it showed the understanding her subjects had of her influence. In this case, the Queen was rewarding good behavior from her Indian subjects in order to inspire good behavior from more of them. The newspapers helped show this positive behavior to her British subjects which would have, in turn, gained her their respect as they saw their monarch intentionally making decisions for the betterment of the entire empire.

67 “Queen Victoria’s Kindoos” *The Milwaukee Journal* (Milwaukee, Wisconsin) Wednesday, June 15, 1898; pg. 5. Gale Document (GT3010848473).

68 Nayar, *Colonial Voices*, 234.

69 Beavan, A. H. “The Historic Homes of England” *The English Illustrated Magazine*. (London, England), 1893, pgs 727-734. Proquest Database 3249454.

70 “British India”, *The Penny Illustrated Paper and Illustrated Times*. (London, England), Saturday, May 25, 1895, Issue 1774. Gale Database (BA3207800698).

71 Ibid.

Due to the Queen’s encouragement of Indian art and architecture many schools were established in Great Britain for British artists to learn Indian styles of design. One such school was the India House in London. Newspapers, such as *The Times*, advertised, “Only Indian artists of real ability will be chosen, and during their stay in England they will come into contact with British artists of established reputation, and will be accorded every facility for visiting public galleries and public collections.”⁷² These schools were created, “In an effort to reinvigorate English design, art schools in England were encouraged to take Eastern designs and emulate them.”⁷³

The Queen’s actions, for the most part, were not criticized by her subjects because her actions subscribed to norms of the era. Occasionally, negative sentiment was seen in the newspaper reports. However, it rarely dealt with Karim specifically, Singh, or the Queen. Usually these reports reflected racism of the time or a lack of understanding of various aspects of Indian culture. However, there is still no mention of the question of gender. One newspaper stated, “The Munshi is eminently a grave man, for he is never seen to smile, and he regards everybody and everything with an apathetic indifference which is thoroughly Oriental.”⁷⁴ This was not an accusation against the munshi, but against all people from Asia. However, a biography of the Queen contradicted this description of Karim’s demeanor. “The Munshi, with whom her Majesty studied Hindustanee, was liked at Balmoral for his amiability of character.”⁷⁵ When reports with a negative bias did emerge, other contemporary information demonstrated support.

Another paper referred to propriety based on religious norms. On a visit with the Queen to Nice, the paper reported, Karim and other Indian’s “presence as Cimiez necessitated the erection of a special bungalow in the grounds of the Grand Hotel, as of course, their religious and caste prejudices make it necessary for them to live apart from Christians.”⁷⁶ This referred, not to the English having a problem with the Indian servants, but the Indian servants having a problem with the English. Other than these two statements which posed a minor challenge to the claim that the British population was strongly supportive of the Queen’s actions and the Indians living in Britain, there was no sign of the public being upset with the events of the latter part of the nineteenth century in regards to India in the metropolis.

Conclusion for Chapter Two

The Queen’s fascination with India was well documented and was highly publicized in this last era of her reign. Newspapers, which have been previously neglected as resources, prove the dramatic

72 “Decoration of India House” *The Times* (London, England), Monday, November 12, 1928; pg 16; Issue 45048. Gale Document (CS270081900).

73 Nayar, *Colonial Voices*, 231.

74 “The Queen’s Munshi”.Pg 4.

75 Charles Morris, *The Life of Queen Victoria and the Story of Her Reign* (Philadelphia, United States; John C. Winston Co, 1901) 195.

76 *Bow Bells: A Magazine of General Literature and Art for Family Reading*, (London, United Kingdom), April 19, 1895, pg. 396. Proquest. (3206218).

extent of the Queen's intense interest in India. The variety of publications demonstrated the significance and magnitude of the global knowledge and acceptance of the Queen's activity. Her actions maintained the cultural and political power structures of Britain over India, monarch over her subjects, and a mothering ruler over her child-like subjects. Her interest in India spread throughout the population of Britain because they supported her actions.

The relationships with Singh and Karim were among the more well-known manifestation of this interest, but there were other examples as well. The addition of the Durbar Room to the Osborne Palace, the exhibitions that were held, and her study of Hindustani were all well-known events. Their happening was strongly supported by the British population who were able to read the newspapers and magazines. The commonality and recurrence of so many accounts of the Queen in connection to India, Karim, and Singh show the public wanted to read these stories. The newspapers complied with demand by printing what would sell as many copies as possible. The Queen's actions amplified their own interest, and the people of Britain began to purchase a variety of goods from India strongly linking the metropolis and periphery. By purchasing these goods the people of Great Britain were gaining understanding of the connections of peoples throughout the British Empire. Buying a shawl may have been the fashionable way to show that a person understood the connection between him or herself and the greater British Empire. Though the reason for the Queen's fascination is undeterminable, the impact of her fascination was culturally substantial and her British subjects' support for her was unwavering throughout the later portion of her lengthy reign.

Victoria's actions created knowledge for her subjects, shaping how they understood the British Empire and their places in it. The shopping habits, advertising methods, and popular entertainments of the time revolved around her interest. The public accepted and embraced her actions because she stayed within the social boundaries of the era. While Salisbury commented that the Queen had some intangible skill for understanding her subjects, she could have been using the papers as a measure of the acceptability of her actions. The Queen would have been aware of what was being printed in periodicals and would have adjusted her actions accordingly. It is unlikely that had the reports about Singh and Karim been overtly negative that Victoria would have continued behaving as she did. The papers were a gauge. Without the support from the news media her quest to link India and Great Britain would have been unattainable.

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The Essex Standard (Colchester, England)

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