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UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHAMPTON

A Passage from India: British Women Travelling Home, 1915-1947

by

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AUTHOR'S DECLARATION

I declare that this thesis is the result of work done wholly while I was in registered postgraduate candidature, and that it represents my own work.

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHAMPTON

ABSTRACT

FACULTY OF SCIENCE
GEOGRAPHY

Doctor of Philosophy

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This study explores the repatriation processes of the white, British, middle-class wives of army officers and civil servants who made return journeys to the home-land between 1915 and 1947, and examines their notions of home and senses of belonging in both Britain and India. In order to do this I travel between three inter-related themes. The first of these is the fluidity and instability of home, constructed on a number of scales, and its co-existence over both time and space. Second, I explore repatriation as a process that can destabilize notions of home and belonging. Third, I consider that return home is capable of disrupting, rather than stabilizing or confirming, subjectivities. I explore these themes by investigating narratives of repatriation as recorded in personal texts such as life writings and recorded interviews, as well as a range of other published and unpublished material. I begin by tracing the influences of class and gender on geographies of repatriation in the home-land, and discuss representations of Britain as home. Considering women's personal accounts of return, I then examine discourses mobilized on departure, the physical journey from India, and on arrival in Britain, as women travelled to the home-land for periods of long leave, to visit friends and relatives, for reasons of ill-health and pregnancy, or, as children to attend school. I also consider women's final departure, usually made due to the ill-health, death or retirement of their husbands, or due to Indian Independence. I am concerned with repatriation as an extended process, and consider return home as more than a physical journey between two clearly definable points.

For memsahibs, imperial movement was not one way, and they moved repeatedly between Britain and India whilst based in the sub-continent. However, such return travels have not yet received detailed critical attention from historical and cultural geographers. Homecomings are inextricably linked to the shaping of subjectivity, and can be problematic as both imaginative constructions and the material existence of homes are disrupted on return. Linked to this, I stress throughout that repatriates occupy an ambiguous position between forced and voluntary movement. Many women felt a deep sense of attachment to the sub-continent, and considered their departure to be an uprooting. I also highlight the difficulties in attempting to define either a beginning or an ending to journeys. Just as the boundaries between travel and dwelling are blurred, so too are the borders between departure and arrival. The accounts of British women returning from India challenge dominant imperial discourses of Britain as home, and highlight the significance of returning home at both national and household scales.

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CHAPTER ONE

A PASSAGE FROM INDIA: BRITISH WOMEN TRAVELLING HOME, 1915-1947

Land of Regrets

What far-reaching Nemesis steered him
From his home by the cool of the sea?
When he left the fair country that reared him,
When he left her, his mother, for thee,
That restless disconsolate worker
Who strains now in vain at thy nets,
O sultry and sombre Noverca![1]
O Land of Regrets.

Thou has racked him with duns and diseases,
And he lies, as thy scorching winds blow,
Recollecting Old England's sea breezes,
On his bed in a lone bungalow;
At the slow coming darkness repining
How he girds at the sun til it sets,
As he marks the long shadows declining
O'er the Land of Regrets.[2]

Introduction

In this poem, first published in 1885, Alfred Lyall reflects a range of popular representations of the British in India. In common with many traditional images, it ignores the presence of women in the sub-continent, and is concerned exclusively with tales of imperial male duty. Employing a monolithic category of 'man', it focuses on the bravely-borne hardship of his separation from the 'Mother Country'.

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[1] Noverca means step-mother.

[2] 'Land of Regrets', written by Alfred Lyall, was first published in an anthology of his work in 1885, Verses Written in India, London: George Routledge and Sons. In the sixth edition of this text, the poem appears as 'revised and slightly enlarged' from that published in the original, featuring nine verses. It is also quoted in a range of other texts. For example see Allen, C. (1979) Raj: A Scrapbook of British India, 1877-1947, Harmondsworth: Penguin; Edwardes, M. (1969) Bound to Exile: The Victorians in India, London: Sidgwick and Jackson; Fendall-Currie, (1903) Land of Regrets, Westminster: Archibald Constable & Co. Ltd.. It remains unclear to me, however, whether Alfred Lyall was responsible for first associating this phrase with British India.

Embracing imperial rhetoric at the national scale, it similarly excludes the Indian populace, apparently revoking the need to discuss their presence or experiences. Gendered metaphors are extended to the representation of India as 'stepmother' (noverca).[3] In common with other gendered representations of nations, Lyall alludes to the male domination of national space, pointing to notions of vulnerability and the need to protect imperial space and imperial subjects, as well as the possibility for exploration and exploitation. By employing familial imagery, Lyall indicates the strength and importance of links between Britain and India. However, by evoking the figure of the stepmother, the depth and sincerity of such connections is also questioned as it is suggested that the relationship is not one characterized by the affinity associated with direct lineage. In such ways, Lyall points to a strained and difficult relationship characterized by work, loyalty and imperial allegiance and patriotism, rather than affection or genuine familial attachment. In contrast to India, Lyall represents the British climate and personality as temperate, and points to a number of ways in which prolonged contact with India could debilitate the British official. He typifies imperial anxieties which associated the heat of the sub-continent with physical and mental disease and degeneration, as well as death. Loneliness, boredom and melancholy are considered inevitable. Further, Lyall's poem is concerned with Britain's sustained association with home. Imagined geographies are based around fond (but distant) memories of a green, cool and pleasant land, and invoke the intimate sense of belonging which all imperial subjects should relate to notions of the home-country. As in numerous texts, India is represented as a land of exile, while Britain remains a yearned for home.[4]

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[3] Rudyard Kipling has also referred to India in this way: 'Hard her service, poor her payment - she in ancient tattered raiment - India, she the grim Stepmother of our kind...'. Cited in Hill, C. H. (1926) India - Stepmother, Edinburgh: W. Blackwood.

[4] For examples of India represented as a 'land of regrets' or exile, see novels such as Fendall-Currie, (1903), op. cit.. The female protagonist, Ethel Bellhouse, is a mother and widow who, at the start of the novel is in London to see her youngest child off to India. Her previous connections with India are catalogued as follows: 'Her mind wandered away to the dark days of the Indian Mutiny, with their heroisms, escapes and sorrows; to her husband, who had been killed at the assault on the Cashmere Gate; to the solitary spot on those bleak hills where her first-born lay in a soldier's grave, having fallen at the head of his company in one of the petty raids on the Punjab Frontier; to her second boy, who had died of cholera while on famine duty in Behar;...and then she roused herself and retired to bed - not to sleep but to weep over the thought of parting with her youngest child, who had been her cherished idol for the past twenty years, and was now about to leave her and sail for the East'. (p8).
Also refer to novels by Forster, E. M. (1989) A Passage to India, Harmondsworth: Penguin, first published 1924; Kipling, R. (1994) Plain Tales from the Hills, Harmondsworth: Penguin, first

This thesis explores the repatriation of white, British, middle-class wives of army officers and civil servants who spent prolonged periods living in India, and who made return journeys to the home-land between 1915 and 1947. The title for this study was inspired by E. M. Forster's novel, *A Passage to India*, concerning the lives of middle-class British women and men whilst in the sub-continent.[5] Focusing on racial, gender and class contrasts in India, Forster's novel is framed around the inability of the central characters to empathize with the sub-continent and its people, or to associate life there with a sense of belonging, familiarity or comfort. Emphasizing the imperial significance of Britain as home, Forster positions it as a site of return and refuge. In this thesis I explore the accounts of British women returning from India, many of which challenge dominant imperial discourses of Britain as home. Engaging with broad notions of repatriation, I consider return home as more than a physical journey between two clearly definable points. As such, I explore repatriation as a process, or passage, which not only involves reconciliation in the home-land, but also incorporates anticipation of return, as well as physical and mental preparation for departure from the host country. Critically, this also involves the influence of repeated travel on women's notions of home as they moved *between* Britain and India, in response to dominant discourses of imperial domesticity, femininity and motherhood, prior to their final departure. The ability of such women to move between these two countries was vital to their imperial position and status in India, and all had spent time in Britain prior to their final departure from the sub-continent.

The poem *Land of Regrets* was written by Alfred Lyall (1835-1911), a member of the Indian Civil Service (I.C.S.). He enjoyed what has been referred to as a 'dazzling' career in India. As one of 'the most brilliant Civilians of his generation', he retired in 1887 as both a 'hero', and the governor of the United

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published 1888; Scott, P. (1997) Staying On, London: Arrow, first published 1977. Reflecting similar attitudes, refer to texts such as Dewey, C. (1993) Anglo-Indian Attitudes: The Mind of the Indian Civil Service, London: The Hambledon Press; Moorhouse, G. (1983) India Britannica, London: Harvill Press; O'Malley, L.S.S. (1965) The Indian Civil Service, 1601-1930, London: Frank Cass & Co. Ltd, (2nd Edition). A large number of poems were also written about India as a land of exile, death and regrets. For an introduction to this poetry, see Edwardes, M., (1969), op. cit..

[5] Forster, E. M., op. cit..

Provinces.[6] Turning down offers of colonial governorships, he maintained formal links with India as a member of the Council of India from 1887-1903, and as a member of the Privy Council from 1902. His *Verses Written in India* have been acclaimed as the finest poems written by a member of the I.C.S..[7] Further, his essays, commentaries and analyses of Indian society and British imperial rule in India have been considered to be 'among the most impressive intellectual achievements of a century of discovery'.[8] On his return home, highly respected by the Victorian intelligentsia and high society, he was awarded honorary degrees, invited to give lectures, and attended exclusive clubs and dinners. Represented as making 'a major contribution to the European understanding of India', and unequivocally revered as a British imperial subject, Alfred Lyall has long been considered as a legitimate and valid figure for studies of imperial history.[9]

Other accounts, however, destabilize stereotypical images of the British in India such as those portrayed by Alfred Lyall. Margaret Dench, for example, lived in India from 1918 to 1943.[10] She married William Dench (who at the time was the sub-divisional officer of Malakland), and established a number of homes with him throughout the North West Frontier Province over a period of twenty-five years. During this time she had four children, three of whom were born in India, and all of whom were educated in Britain. By 1943, two were married, and her first two grandchildren had also been born in the sub-continent. For Margaret Dench, her children and grandchildren, India was home: 'It was more than a temporary domicile, it was the land of their birth and so far of their allegiance'.[11] Her memoir begins with a brief account of her voyage out to India in 1918, and recalls the advice given to her by another passenger, Mrs Blake, who was returning to India after spending six months in Britain. Mrs Blake remarked how glad she was to be going back to the sub-continent, commenting that this period away had seemed more like six *years*. Summarizing these observations, Margaret Dench wrote:

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[6] Dewey, C., op. cit.; p6-7.
[7] Ibid..
[8] Ibid., p6.
[9] Ibid., p117. See also Durand, M. (1913) Life of the Right Honourable Sir Alfred Comyn Lyall. London: William Blackwood and Sons.
[10] Refer to the Appendix for brief biographical details of each of the women involved in this study.
[11] Dench, M., (undated) untitled life writing. Centre of South Asian Studies (Cambridge) (CSAS), Dench papers; p141-142.

> We found out that India is known as the 'Land of Regrets', and that once having lived there one is never happy anywhere else...This we proved for ourselves in after years.[12]

In this way, although appropriating the phrase 'Land of Regrets', Margaret Dench reverses the meaning attached to it by commentators such as Alfred Lyall.[13] Rather than confirming socially- and culturally-constructed imaginative geographies of Britain as home, she suggests a complete disruption by asserting that, for some British people, ideas of belonging were indeed associated with India. Her account also raises questions concerning the happiness of repatriates on return to the homeland. However, despite their different perspectives, Margaret Dench's memoirs and Alfred Lyall's poem both suggest that ideas of home are complex and dynamic. Similarly, it is implied that distance from home is crucial in influencing the definitions given to it, and the meanings associated with it. They also stress the importance of imaginative geographies of home to the construction and maintenance of imperial power, pointing to the significance of the production of spaces, as well as knowledges, of empire. However, unlike Sir Alfred's poetic convictions, Margaret Dench's account does not position the sub-continent as a place of exile - as being *away* from home - but as home itself. Distancing herself from notions of India as 'stepmother', she describes an atmosphere of intimacy and familiarity, rather than fear, alienation or ill-health. Moreover, accounts such as that by Margaret Dench are concerned with spaces, places and people often excluded from academic consideration. They offer the opportunity to consider the complications, tensions and contradictions that exist within any discourse.

In this thesis, I explore a number of women's autobiographical accounts of return to Britain from the sub-continent. Characterized by narratives of exile, displacement and dislocation, women's personal life stories often highlight how

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[12] Ibid.; p3.

[13] And see texts such as The Land of Regrets: A Miss-sahib Reminiscences by Isobel Fraser Hunter (1909, London: John Ouseley). She asserts that she 'would gladly, oh! so gladly exchange' her 'well-appointed English home, its polish and veneer, its trim little maids doing the work of half-a-dozen natives, and its homely ways' for her home in India. Similarly, discussing her return to Britain, she questions the notion of Britain as home, describing 'the primitive rooms which were my early choice of necessity on arrival in the homeland, oh! so unhomely that cold winter's day' (p18). Further, she unequivocally states: 'I Love the 'Land of Regrets' (p38).

imaginative geographies of home were disrupted upon return. Thus, I address some of the questions raised by conflicting accounts such as those by Alfred Lyall and Margaret Dench. My research period is bounded by two significant dates. In 1915, a Royal Commission on the Public Services in India reported, among other things, that the conditions of leave for officers in the I.C.S. and the army were unsatisfactory, preventing men and their families from spending sufficient time in Britain.[14] Although the changes implemented as a result were in themselves relatively minor, they laid the foundations for far more significant revisions in 1925 which enabled both women and men to travel between Britain and India on a more regular basis than they had done previously. Marking a critical juncture, India gained its Independence at midnight on 14th/15th August 1947, resulting in the mass movement of British women and men away from India. The period between these two dates covers a time of distinct dynamic social, cultural, economic and political change in both Britain and India. Such change had profound implications for the imaginative geographies of home which had been constructed whilst living in India. White middle-class women often returned to Britain to find that they were shocked and disappointed, and many felt that they could no longer consider it home.

In returning to his or her own country, the repatriate is linked to notions of homecoming at a number of scales, from the household to the nation. Similarly, transnational concepts of association (for example concerned with imperialism), can be linked to notions of home and belonging. Such homecomings are inextricably linked to the shaping of subjectivity, and can be problematic as both imaginative constructions and the material existence of homes are disrupted on return. In order to investigate these connections, I travel between three inter-related themes throughout this study. The first of these is the complex fluidity of home on a number of scales, and its re-negotiation, contestation and co-existence over both time and space. Second, I explore repatriation as a process that can destabilize socially- and culturally-constructed notions of home. Third, I suggest that return is capable of disrupting, rather than stabilizing, subjectivities. I explore these themes by considering narratives of repatriation as recorded in personal texts such as

[14] Royal Commission on the Public Services in India. Report of the Commissioners (1917) Volume 1, Cmd. 8382, London: HMSO. See Chapter Four for a consideration of these issues.

memoirs, letters and taped interviews, as well as a range of other published and unpublished material.

Critical studies concerned with middle-class British women travelling to, and within, the empire have focused on the construction and negotiation of mobile subjectivities, stressing their position as participants within imperial contexts.[15] Some of this research has considered middle-class women who moved away from Britain to establish homes in settler colonies such as Australia, Canada and South Africa, as well as on a more transient basis in countries such as India.[16] This growing body of work stresses not only the movement and translation of British imperial domesticity, but also the negotiation and fluidity of individual and collective subjectivities. However, there have been few critical studies concerned with return home in these, or other, contexts. Similarly, studies concerned with metaphorical and theoretical concepts of travel often neglect return journeys and the implications of being situated within repatriated spaces. In other words, research considering the connections between home, travel (metaphorical *or* material) and subjectivity has largely been concerned with movement *away*. Further, where representations and narratives of return are considered, they tend to focus on the experiences of men, suggesting that women rarely left home in the first place. In contrast, this thesis stresses that imperial movement was not always one way, and focuses on female repatriation. Informed by both theoretical and material travels, I explore the influences of return journeys, homecomings and processes of repatriation on mobile subjectivities and senses of belonging.

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[15] See for example Blake, S. L. (1990) A Woman's Trek: What Difference does Gender Make? Women's Studies International Forum, Vol. 13, no.4; p347-355; Blunt, A. (1994) Travel, Gender and Imperialism: Mary Kingsley and West Africa, New York: Guilford; Blunt. A. (1997) Travelling Home and Empire: British Women in India, 1856-1939, Unpublished PhD Thesis, University of British Columbia; George, R. M. (1994) Homes in the Empire, Empires in the Home, Cultural Critique, 15; p95-127. George R. M. (1996) The Politics of Home: Postcolonial Relocations and Twentieth Century Fiction, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. McClintock, A. (1995) Imperial Leather: Race, Gender and Sexuality in the Colonial Contest, London: Routledge; Mills, S. (1991) Discourses of Difference: An Analysis of Women's Travel Writing and Colonialism, London: Routledge; Paxton, N. (1992) Disembodied Subjects: English Women's Autobiography Under the Raj, in J. Watson, & S. Sidonie, (eds.) De/Colonizing the Subject, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

[16] For example see: Blunt, A. (1997), op. cit.; Harris, C. (1997) The Resettlement of British Columbia: Essays on Colonialism and Geographical Change, Vancouver: UBC Press; Lester, A. (1996) From Colonization to Democracy: A New Historical Geography of South Africa, London: I. B. Tauris; Schaffer, K. (1988) Women and the Bush: Forces of Desire in the Australian Cultural Tradition, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

1. (Auto)Biography, Mobility and Subjectivity

Over the past decade, feminist historians and geographers have recognised that it is inadequate merely to 'add' women to masculine narratives by focusing uncritically on 'heroic' individual women, or by remaining undiscriminating in respect of traditional accounts of imperial power and influence.[17] Diverse accounts have begun to examine the heterogeneity of people involved in imperialism, and of the variable impact of colonization according to place. Studies of imperialism are no longer confined to the 'celebrated' moments or 'public' episodes of white, middle-class colonials. Recent research has pointed to the importance of everyday spaces, places, events and experiences, exploring the importance of home and domesticity to imperialism.[18] Reconceptualizing the politics of imperialism, such work has drawn attention to men and women who were not known as individuals, and has highlighted the importance of personal histories in reflecting aspects and nuances of everyday life. Recent studies have also begun to move away from a focus on texts which conventional literary definitions have positioned within a strict classificatory genre as 'autobiographical'. As feminist writers such as Liz Stanley have discussed, recent research has problematized notions of 'autobiography', employing a wide variety of writing strategies - life writings, life stories, reminiscences, memoirs, diaries and so on, as well as oral accounts - in order to consider the discursive construction, destabilization and re-negotiation of subjectivities over both time and space.[19]

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[17] See, for example, Blunt, A. & Rose, G. (1994) (eds.) Writing Women and Space: Colonial and Postcolonial Geographies, New York: Guilford; Domosh, M. (1991) Toward a Feminist Historiography of Geography, Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers NS 16; p95-104; Hall, C. (1988) White, Male and Middle-Class: Explorations in Feminism and History; Rose, G. (1993) Feminism and Geography: The Limits of Geographical Knowledge. Cambridge: Polity Press.
[18] For an introduction to some of the material in this field refer to George, R. M. (1994) op. cit.; Haggis, J. (1990) Gendering Colonialism or Colonizing Gender? Recent Women's Studies Approaches to White Women and the History of British Colonialism, Women's Studies International Forum 13 1/2; McClintock, A. (1995) op. cit..
[19] Stanley, L. (1992) The Auto/biographical I: The Theory and Practice of Feminist Auto/biography, Manchester: Manchester University Press. See also Bunkers, S. L. (1987) 'Faithful Friend': Nineteenth-Century Midwestern American Women's Unpublished Diaries, Women's Studies International Forum, Vol.10 No. 1; p7-17; Stanton, D. C. (1987) (ed.) The Female Autograph, Chicago: Chicago University Press; Watson, J. & Sidonie, S. (eds.) (1992), op. cit..

Critical analyses of life writings have emphasized that no 'autobiography' is a discourse of individual authorship.[20] Personal life histories and life geographies are, to some extent, shared. Collective knowledge and memories of certain events, as well as connections within economic, political, social, historical and geographical contexts, links the lives of individuals. Similarly, life writings are the products of negotiated, dynamic and shared memories.[21] Recollection is vital not only to the creation of autobiographical accounts, but also to the construction of subjectivity, and connections with past histories and geographies have to be considered along with present circumstances. Such reflections raise questions concerned with the motives for writing autobiography, and necessitate discussion of why, when, how and *where* life stories are re-told, as well as consideration of *who* is doing the telling, and to whom. Linked to such discussion, it is important to acknowledge whether it was intended that personal accounts should have an audience. If so, consideration needs to be made of who this may have been. Further, it may be necessary to move beyond a recognition of the *intended* audience in order to reflect on the position of the academic researcher.

Just as I am not making claims about individual figures, nor do I aim to make an essentialist notion of Women the subject of inquiry.[22] Although particular knowledges, events and memories might be common to a group of women, this does not indicate identical life histories or life stories. Instead, I am exploring personal texts in order to consider how subjectivities might be constructed and contested. Subjectivity is not fixed or static, and the complexity and heterogeneity of subject locations and mobilities need to be acknowledged, indeed foregrounded, in order to explore this. Considering the fluidity and diversity of life histories and life geographies, as well as their inseparability, when discussing biographies and subjectivities, it is possible to move beyond fixed and static constructions. Blurring the boundaries between issues of placement and displacement, and stressing that

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[20] Denzin, N. (1989) Interpretative Biography, Sage University Paper Series on Qualitative Methods (17), California: Sage; Katz, C. & Monk, J. (1993) (Eds.) Full Circles: Geographies of Women Over the Life Course, London: Routledge; Marcus, L. (1994) Autobiographical Discourses: Theory, Criticism, Practice, Manchester: Manchester University Press.
[21] Connerton, P. (1989) How Societies Remember, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press; Fentress, J. & Wickham, C. (1992) Social Memory, Oxford: Blackwell; Samuel, R. (1994) Theatres of Memory. Volume 1: Past and Present in Contemporary Culture, London: Verso.
[22] Refer to Riley, D. (1988) Am I that name? Feminism and the Category 'Women' in History, London: Macmillan.

the destinations of travel themselves are not static, such studies have furthered the investigation of relationships between everyday patterns of mobility and location in constructions of subjectivity.[23] Within this body of work, consideration has also included those who have undertaken (or have been subjected to), movements which have positioned them as migrants or exiles. I suggest that in order to develop a more nuanced understanding of the connections between (auto)biography, mobility and subjectivity, debates considering travel to and from a range of locations and destinations should also include the unstable and ambiguous spaces of those who are repatriated.

2. Exploring Life Stories

Although marginalized groups such as women have traditionally been excluded from scholarly texts and official documentation concerned with the dominant discourses of empire, personal diaries, letters and other unpublished material contain important and revealing accounts of their relationships with imperialism. An increasing number of such texts are to be found in the public spaces of archives and libraries. However, it is probable that significant numbers of accounts such as these either remain in private hands (usually the relatives of those concerned), or, particularly in the case of older manuscripts, have been destroyed. Nevertheless, archives held in the Oriental and India Office Collection (OIOC) of the British Library, and at the Centre of South Asian Studies (CSAS) in Cambridge, contain an extensive range of personal accounts. The majority of texts that I have examined in these two collections include written memoirs, autobiographies and reminiscences, although few actually label themselves under any of these discrete and formalizing headings.[24] I have also explored letters, diaries, written responses to questionnaires, and taped interviews. Although I initially made a number of attempts to establish direct contact with women who were repatriated from India in order to conduct

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[23] For example see Clifford, J. (1997) Routes: Travel and Translation in the Late Twentieth Century, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press; Kaplan, C. (1996) Questions of Travel: Postmodern Discourses of Displacement, Durham: Duke University Press; and Morris, M. (1988) At Henry Parkes Motel. Cultural Studies, 2 (1), p1-16 and 29-47. Refer to Chapter Two for a detailed consideration of these issues.

[24] See Sanders, V. (1989) The Problems of Women's Autobiography, in The Private Lives of Victorian Women: Autobiography in Nineteenth Century England, for a discussion of women's tendency to 'shy away' from terms such as autobiography. (London: Harvester Wheatsheaf).

personal interviews, this was not pursued.[25] I received a very limited response, and none of the respondents had themselves lived in India as married women. Reflecting the length of time that has passed since Indian Independence, the women (and men) with whom I have been corresponding were all discussing the life experiences of deceased relations, or the time that they themselves had spent in the sub-continent as young children.

The majority of personal accounts discussed in this thesis share certain commonalities. Each was authored by a white female who occupied an elite middle-class position as the British wife of an army officer or civil servant living in India. Critically to my purposes, each includes some discussion of return to Britain during the period 1915 to 1947. This *may* involve a consideration of processes of repatriation and long-term settlement. Alternatively, it could involve one or more voyage to Britain for a defined period of time, for example accompanying a husband on home-leave. It is interesting to note that a great number of memoirs exist which, while concerned with the lives of women in India, contain no reference to the periods of time they spent in Britain on furlough,[26] and also end abruptly as their authors are about to leave India for the final voyage home.[27] It is as if these episodes just did not exist, or at least that the women concerned did not consider Britain as either an interesting or important part of their lives. However, in order to fully consider process of repatriation such accounts often remain important sources, and can reveal much not only about women's association of India with home, but also about their anticipation of return, and their preparations for departure. Further, it is significant that so many women chose not to reflect on their lives in Britain, and it is important to consider why this might have been. In addition, all the texts considered were written by women who did eventually settle in Britain, and were physically scripted whilst they were living here. They are recollections of past histories and geographies as much as forty years after their narrators had left India. Other sources indicate that significant numbers of both men and women did not

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[25] A request for information was placed in the newsletter of the British Association for Cemeteries in South Asia [BACSA] in Spring 1998. Attempts to contact the Indian Civil Service (retired) Association were unsuccessful, and I now believe that the organization ceased to exist in the 1980s. Enquiries made at both Gloucestershire and Bedfordshire Record Offices were also unsuccessful.
[26] Furlough is a period of long-leave, granted to both military and civilian officials working in India.
[27] Refer to Chapter Four for a discussion of this.

settle in Britain after leaving India, and moved to countries such as Australia, Canada and South Africa. These expatriates' reflections (written or otherwise) are likely to reveal a very different, though none the less nuanced, narrative from the one constructed in this thesis.

Significantly more sources exist that are concerned with repatriation processes during the 1940s than at any other time. For most women discussed in this study, their final departure from India was realised as a result of Independence in 1947. However, the earlier years of this study remain equally critical since women travelled to Britain on a number of occasions throughout this time, often as children and later as wives and mothers. This distribution of material reflects a number of influences. First, the numbers of those returning in the 1940s were greater than at any other time. Although significant numbers of women travelled back to Britain each year due to the death, ill-health or retirement of their husband, a much larger number returned in 1947 as part of the mass withdrawal of the British from India upon Independence. Second, the 1970s saw renewed interest in the lives of the British who had lived in India during the imperial era.[28] A significant number of interviews were conducted and taped[29] and people were encouraged through a number of initiatives to record their experiences in memoirs, many of which are now held in various libraries. The majority of those who were alive to participate were those who had returned during the 1940s, and accounts held in archives reflect this. Finally, and linked to the previous point, from the late 1970s, feminist writers began to attempt to deconstruct the stereotypically negative image of the memsahib.[30] Traditionally, women had not been encouraged to write about their experiences of empire, certainly not to make them publicly accessible,

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[28] Chaudhuri, N. & Strobel, M. (eds.) (1992) Western Women and Imperialism: Complicity and Resistance, Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
It is difficult to know what caused this resurgence of interest in the British Raj. However, it is possible that it was linked to feelings of nostalgia which intensified not only as temporal distance from Independence enabled sentimental and romanticized images to emerge, but also as it was realized that the last generation of those who had played a major role in British imperialism were beginning to die.
[29] See Plain Tales from the Raj: A Catalogue of the BBC Recordings (1981) India Office Library and Records and Imperial War Museum, London; Allen, C. (ed.) (1996) Plain Tales from the Raj, London: Abacus, first published 1975.
[30] See Strobel, M. (1991) Sexuality and Society: The Myth of the Destructive Female, in Strobel M, European Women and the Second British Empire, Bloomington: Indiana University Press. And refer to the discussion in Chapter Two.

but, from the 1970s an increasing interest in women's history, has meant that it is the life histories and geographies of those women who were repatriated most recently which feature predominantly in archive and library collections.

It is vital that personal material like this is not considered in isolation, and throughout my thesis I draw on a range of other material in order to contextualize and support my research. A range of legislative and other official documentation has been particularly valuable,[31] including the findings of two Royal Commissions.[32] These provide detailed information about problems associated with existing regulations and conditions, as well as outlining prospective changes considered to benefit those concerned. In this respect, they provide useful contextual material and offer, at least in part, a framework for some of my discussions and arguments. However, perhaps more revealing than these published documents is the wealth of unpublished material submitted as evidence to the Royal Commission on the Superior Civil Services in India in the early 1920s. Although information such as this was routinely made available to the public, it was strongly argued by those who undertook this work that this should not occur in respect of this particular investigation. After much debate, their case was upheld and the collected evidence remained unpublished.[33] Such material, now held in the Oriental and India Office Collection, can offer a particularly important insight to contemporary feeling, discussion and debate.

The archives of the Indian Civil Service (Retired) Association, again held within OIOC, have also been vital to my research. This society was established in 1921, and offered both formal and informal support to many men and women who left India to live in Britain and elsewhere. Their comprehensive archive includes

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[31] By using the term 'official', my main aim is to distinguish these sources from the personal life stories told by women returning from India. In this way I am not limiting the notion of 'official' to Governmental sources, but am also referring to material attributed to any person holding a 'public' position which might be considered to give them some degree of authority and/or legitimacy.
[32] These are the Royal Commission on the Public Service in India. Report of the Commissioners (1917), Cmd. 8382, London: HMSO. Although the research had been completed by 1915, publication was delayed until 1917; and the Royal Commission on the Superior Civil Services in India, Cmd. 2128, London: HMSO.
[33] Royal Commission Report (Cmd. 8382), p61, paragraphs 106 and 107; and see telegram, 10th June 1924, Smile. From the Viceroy (Home Department) to the Secretary of State for India. India Office Service and General Department Records; L/SAG/7/529.

copies of the Association's Annual Reports (from 1921 to 1988), which document their largely financially focused campaigns and disputes. Significantly, in constructing their arguments these records often draw upon and reflect a range of opinions, including those of prominent individuals and other organizations, as well as the Government. Their records also contain a vast amount of personal correspondence in relation to a number of issues. Of particular importance to this study has been that concerning the financial plight of a number of widows whose husbands had served in the I.C.S., and which includes discussion of the decision whether or not to grant them monetary assistance.

I have also consulted a range of published material in the form of magazines, newspapers, journals, advice books and novels. I have drawn on both visual and written imagery from these sources in a variety of ways to substantiate and enhance my research. The influences of such media on both women and men have been investigated and acknowledged in a range of contexts.[34] The inclusion of such material in this study emphasizes the vast range of texts concerned with the multifarious relationships between Britain and India, including various connections with, and influences on, those who returned to the home-land. By employing a range of documents vivid and fluid life histories and geographies can be constructed and explored.[35] It is only by adopting a contextual approach such as this, including all of these sources that it is possible to begin to acknowledge the contradictions and complexities of the practical and theoretical knowledges of white middle-class British women leaving India throughout the period 1915-1947.

3. Thesis Themes

This chapter has offered a brief contextual introduction to the main themes of this thesis, highlighting the centrality of home, travel and subjectivity to what follows. I have discussed the primary material employed throughout, drawing particular attention to the personal sources explored, and pointing to the significance of

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[34] For example see Mackenzie, J. (1986) Imperialism and Popular Culture. Manchester: Manchester University Press.

[35] For a brief discussion concerning the investigation and exploration of life histories refer to the entry by Rebecca Klahr in McDowell, L. & Sharp, J. P. (eds.) (1999) A Feminist Glossary of Human Geography, London: Arnold; p153.

considering texts such as life writings and reminiscences. In the following chapter I discuss a number of themes concerned with imperial geographies of home, travel and gender. In so doing, I clarify my initial point of departure which is that processes of repatriation are connected to both metaphorical and material constructions of home and also to the negotiation of subjectivities. Further, return journeys were often an important component of imperial travels.

In Chapter Three I introduce the importance attributed to public displays of wealth by men returning from India in the eighteenth-century, and emphasize the changes associated with repatriation over time. By examining the representation of Britain as home to those in India, I reflect on the geographies of repatriation established by middle-class women and men returning home in the nineteenth and early twentieth-centuries. Highlighting the disruption of their 'aristocratic' status over space, I focus on the critical significance of class and gender to their destination. Exploring the continued significance of return to the home-land, I also trace the reduced visibility of repatriates in the early part of the twentieth-century. Transient and equivocal notions of home are themes which run throughout the thesis. In Chapter Four, I consider these issues by examining the temporary visits made by women and children to Britain whilst living in India. I focus on the connections made between the ability to return home and the successful maintenance of British imperial boundaries in the sub-continent. Turning to women's life writings, I consider their recollections of time spent in Britain as adults and as children, examining the lived geographical knowledges of the home-country which contributed to expectations of return. Pursuing this theme, I consider the significance of anticipated departure for women leaving India in Chapter Five. Discussing the fluidity of home, and women's sense of belonging in India, I stress that expectations of repatriation were often equivocal. Women's accounts point to the difficulties in defining points of departure and arrival, an issue which is developed further in Chapter Six as women landed in Britain. Engaging with notions of home-comings at a number of scales, most repatriates felt out of place. Here, I consider the records of the Indian Civil Service (Retired) Association, as well as women's personal writings, which reveal the disrupted subjectivities of those returning home to Britain.

When India has been referred to as the *Land of Regrets*, its meaning has been ambiguous. Dominant representations have often characterized life in India as a time of exile, dominated by an overwhelming sense of homesickness and a yearning desire to return to the home-country. But the personal accounts of middle-class women frequently suggest that expectations of return are much more equivocal than this suggests, and that repatriation to Britain was often marked by feelings of loss and deprivation. In what follows, I consider the ways in which dominant imperial discourses of Britain as home were contested by women travelling away from sites of homemaking in India, in order to return to the home-land. The importance of maintaining notions of Britain as home was reflected and perpetuated through imperial and domestic discourses which stressed that the security of British rule in India was dependent on the ability of men, but particularly women and children, to travel home on a regular basis. However, such visits often problematized women's imaginatively constructed notions of home, and contributed to expectations of return which were characterized by anxiety and worry. In this study, I consider women's passage from India, considering those who returned home over the period 1915 to 1947, in order to consider ambiguous notions of repatriation, and to stress that dominant discourses of imperial domesticity were often subverted and contested. By investigating a broad sense of repatriation at a time of imperial decline, I am seeking to reveal the life histories and geographies of women who reflected a less visible and opulent sense of return than many men and women who returned in the eighteenth- and nineteenth-centuries. Moreover, this study considers previously largely unconsidered narratives of return by focusing on the place of female repatriates. By examining the personal accounts of such women, it is possible to reveal much about the implications of returning home following their involvement as key participants within imperialism. In so doing, I stress not only the disruption of discourses of imperial domesticity over space, but also the destabilization of subjectivities constructed whilst in India. By focusing on British women travelling between Britain and India from 1915 to 1947, this thesis examines contested notions of home and belonging across increasingly disputed imperial space, and explores the significance of returning home at both national and household scales.

CHAPTER TWO

GEOGRAPHIES OF IMPERIALISM: GENDER, HOME AND TRAVEL

Introduction

In the late nineteenth- and early-twentieth centuries, the extent of modern European imperialism was reflected in the Continent's domination and management of almost 85% of the earth's surface.[1] But modern European imperialism represents only one example of imperial expansion, regulation and exploitation, and earlier empires also brought groups of people and parts of the world under imperial power and control in diverse ways. As Loomba writes:

> At its height in the second century AD, the Roman Empire stretched from Armenia to the Atlantic. Under Ghengis Khan in the thirteenth century, the Mongols conquered the Middle East as well as China. The Aztec Empire was established when, from the fourteenth to the sixteenth centuries, one of the various ethnic groups who settled in the valley of Mexico subjugated the others. Aztecs extracted tributes in services and goods from conquered regions, as did the Inca Empire which was the largest pre-industrial state in the Americas. In the fifteenth century too, various kingdoms in southern India came under the control of the Vijaynagara Empire, and the Ottoman Empire, which began as a minor Islamic principality in what is now western Turkey, extended itself over most of Asia Minor and the Balkans. At the beginning of the eighteenth century, it still extended from the Mediterranean to the Indian Ocean, and the Chinese Empire was larger than anything Europe had seen.[2]

However, the scale of modern European imperialism far exceeded these past empires.[3] Within this, it was the British Empire which covered the greatest area. It is because of the far-reaching effects of British imperial expansion, which continue in the contemporary world, that so many recent studies of imperialism have been focused on its multifarious dimensions. Further, referred to as Britain's 'jewel in

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[1] Loomba, A. (1998) Colonialism/Postcolonialism, London: Routledge; p2-3
[2] Loomba, A., ibid.. And see Blunt, A. & Wills, J., (in press) Decolonizing Geography: Postcolonial Perspectives, in Blunt, A. & Wills, J., Dissident Geographies: An Introduction to Radical Ideas and Practices, London: Prentice Hall.
[3] Blunt, A. & Wills, J., ibid..

the crown', India has been the subject of much of this work, with scholars studying social, cultural, political and economic dimensions of the sub-continent during British imperial rule there from the seventeenth century. Reflecting and developing such academic interest in modern British imperialism, this thesis, concerned with specific aspects of British India in the first half of the twentieth-century, is situated in a particular imperial context (Figure 1 shows the boundaries of British India in 1909).[4]

This chapter examines the significance of gender, home and travel to geographies of imperialism in British India. Studies critical of the assumed masculinity of imperialism have begun to consider the position and participation of British women within imperial contexts, stressing that imperialism cannot be understood without examining the construction, nuances and complexities of gender.[5] As well as stressing women's involvement, a range of studies have explored the heterogeneity of their experiences, highlighting the significance of both subjectivity and spatiality. The middle-class wives of civilian and army officers travelled to India in increasing numbers from the mid-nineteenth century[6] until the Indianization of the administrative and military regimes there in the 1920s. After this time, although fewer British officials were recruited to positions in the sub-continent, such men and their wives continued to maintain a significant and authoritative presence there until 1947. Moving beyond a restrictive and narrow concern with 'public' episodes and spaces, a number of recent studies concerned with British imperialism in India have focused on memsahibs as they voyaged to and within the sub-continent in order to establish homes both with, and for, their families. Such explorations of gender and imperialism have increasingly focused on domesticity and domestic spaces, and have examined the movement of imperial power between the so-called 'public' and 'private' spheres, as well as the

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[4] Although not formally part of British India, Burma was a British Crown Colony. In many respects (including civil service and the military), it was treated similarly to British India.
[5] Driver, F. (1992) Geography's Empire: Histories of Geographical Knowledge, Environment and Planning D: Society and Space, Vol. 10; p23-34.
[6] Linked to discourses of imperial domesticity, the reasons for women's increased presence in the sub-continent are complex. For a detailed consideration of the dramatic rise in their numbers refer to Blunt, A. (1997), op. cit..

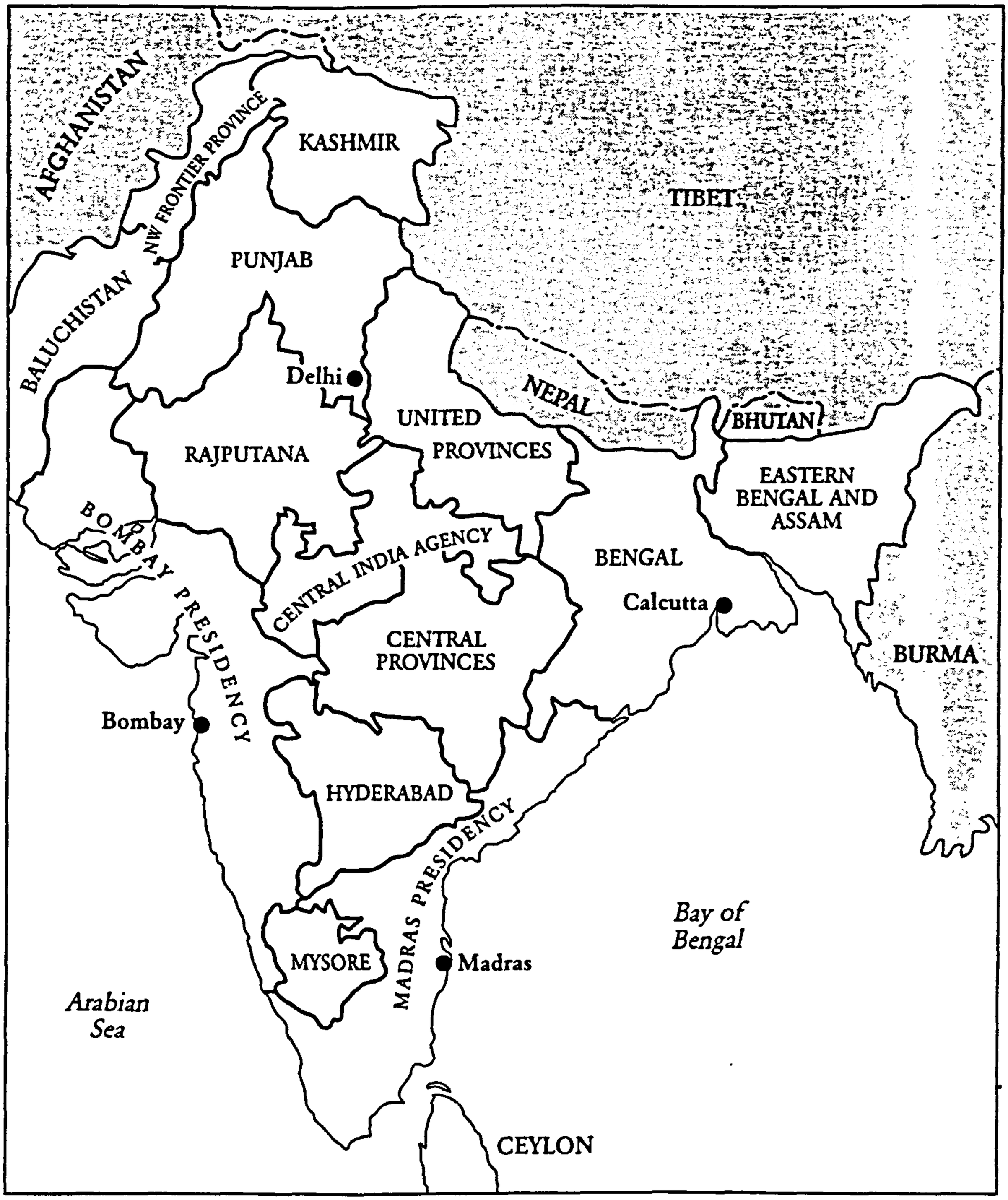

FIGURE 1: The Provincial Boundaries of British India in 1909.
[Source: Kennedy, D. (1996) The Magic Mountains: Hill Stations and the British Raj, Berkeley: University of California Press]

significance of home at a number of scales.[7] Imperial domesticity and gender are also linked to patterns of imperial travel that involved movement not only to and within the sub-continent,[8] but also included periodic return journeys from India to Britain.

This chapter begins by exploring the recent resurgence of academic interest in imperial discourses, stressing the critical connections between gender, geography and imperialism. Highlighting discourses of domesticity, I reflect on imperial femininities both within, and beyond, the household. Further, I discuss mobile subjectivities and explain my focus on the white, middle-class wives of civilian and military officers. This chapter also considers the mobility of imperial domesticity, tracing its movement and translation across imperial space and its re-construction in India. Acknowledging the transience of homes in the sub-continent, I reflect on the importance attributed to maintaining ideas of Britain as home. I begin to consider more equivocal notions of home by suggesting that such constructions were often challenged and manipulated. Further, I stress that the movement of people and lifestyles to India was not one way, and often involved a return journey home. Considering the distinctive position of women travelling away from India, this chapter also explores critical analyses of travel, home and subjectivity. Stressing their connectivity, contemporary studies have begun to blur the boundaries between travel and dwelling, and to problematize notions of both subjectivities or homes as either static or fixed. Within these contexts, I highlight the importance of considering repatriation and stress that notions of return have yet to receive detailed study.

1. Gender, Geography and Imperialism

The past twenty-five years has seen a proliferation of popular and academic interest in a broad range of issues concerning British imperialism in the nineteenth- and twentieth-centuries.[9] For example, a number of feature films, television series, and documentaries as well as novels and biographies have been produced, which were

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[7] Blunt, A. (1997), op. cit.; McClintock, A., op. cit..
[8] Blunt, A., (1997), op. cit..
[9] Chaudhuri, N. & Strobel, M. (eds.), op. cit..

often written by those involved in the colonial process.[10] Considered by writers such as Nupur Chaudhuri and Margaret Strobel as 'colonial nostalgia', such material has been said to romanticize and fictionalize the history of imperialism, lack any contextual understanding, and 'in no way challenges white European and North American viewers' and readers' hegemonic position in today's world'.[11] Academic interest in imperialism has experienced a similar revival from the 1970s. Research has been focused not only on retrospective studies of imperial encounters, discourses and power relations, but also on postcolonialism, decolonization, recolonization and neo-colonialism.[12] Traditionally, accounts concerned with imperialism and colonial history have reflected commentators concerns with narrowly defined economic and political achievements, usually performed by white, middle-class men. However, as Nicholas Thomas has noted, colonialism has always, equally importantly and deeply been a cultural process.[13] The British empire is no longer considered to have been physically constructed via developments in the military, government, warfare and territorial acquisition alone. Also important were *ideas* of imperialism, which are now increasingly highlighted as having been represented to both the colonized and colonizing populations in order to inculcate particular world views of imperial status, as well as hierarchies which specified cultural and racial superiority and inferiority.[14]

The interest shown by contemporary geographers in modern British imperialism is related to the recognition of the discipline's role in its construction and maintenance. It can be argued that geography was the science of imperialism, and David Livingstone, for example, has suggested that:

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[10] Ware, V. (1992) Beyond the Pale: White Women, Racism and History, London: Verso. Examples of films include *A Passage to India*, *Out of Africa* and *White Mischief*. *Jewel in the Crown* and *The Flame Trees of Thika* were television productions. Each of Britain's terrestrial television channels marked the 50th anniversary of Indian Independence. The weekend following the 15th August 1997 (16th & 17th) saw the broadcast of 15 hours and 25 minutes of programmes concerned with Indian Independence and the subsequent fifty years, as well the period of British rule preceding it. However, this weekend also saw the 20th anniversary of the death of Elvis Presley. It is interesting to note that coverage concerned with this American singer totalled 18 hours and 10 minutes over the same period. (*Radio Times*, 16-22 August 1997).
[11] Chaudhuri, N. & Strobel, M. (eds.), op. cit.; p2.
[12] For example see Ashcroft, B., Griffiths, G. & Tiffin, H. (1995) The Post-colonial Studies Reader, London: Routledge; Ashcroft, B., Griffiths, G. & Tiffin, H. (1998) Key Concepts in Post-colonial Studies, London: Routledge; Betts, R. (1998) Decolonization, London: Routledge;
[13] Thomas, N. (1994) Colonialism's Culture: Anthropology, Travel and Government, Cambridge: Polity Press; p2
[14] Mackenzie, J. (1986), op. cit..

> Exploration, topographic and social survey, cartographic representation and regional inventory...were entirely suited to the colonial project.[15]

Recent geographical studies of imperialism have moved away from a celebration of exploration, so-called 'discovery' and heroic explorers and geographers. As well as re-writing critical histories of the emergence of disciplinary geography, acknowledging the complexities of its connections with imperialism, some studies have highlighted the role of geography in the representation, production and dissemination of imperial knowledges and discourses.[16] Geographical imaginations, it has been stressed, reflected imperial imaginations of the world, the people living in it, and their hierarchical relationships with others.[17] By broadening definitions of geographical knowledge, it has been recognized that geographical representations and imaginations have been disseminated through a wide range of media, such as travel writing, adventure stories, exhibitions, museums, photographs and zoos.[18] Also contributing to attempts to dismantle the white, middle-class and heterosexual masculinity of much of traditionally produced geographical knowledge, the exploration of sources such as personal diaries, memoirs, and letters, can reveal previously unacknowledged challenges to, and subversions of, dominant discourses.

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[15] Livingstone, D., (1993) The Geographical Tradition: Episodes in the History of a Contested Enterprise, Oxford: Blackwell; p170.

[16] For examples of work concerning the historiography of imperialism see Stoddart, D. R. (1986) On Geography and its History, Oxford: Blackwell; Livingstone, D., op. cit..
For an introduction to studies concerned with geographical discourse and imperialism refer to Bell, M., Butlin, R. & Heffernan, M. (eds.) (1995) Geography and Imperialism, 1820-1940, Manchester: Manchester University Press; Godlewska, A. & Smith, N. (eds.) (1994) Geography and Empire, Oxford: Blackwell.

[17] Said, E. (1979) Orientalism, New York: Vintage. And see Gregory, D. (1994) Geographical Imaginations, Oxford: Blackwell.

[18] Such studies have emphasized the spatiality of cultural imperialism, and highlight geographers increasing concern with issues of subjectivity. For example see: Anderson, K. (1995) Culture and nature at the Adelaide Zoo: at the frontiers of 'human' geography, Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers, NS 20, p275-294; Blunt, A. (1994), op. cit.; Driver, F. (1994) Geography, Empire and Visualization, Royal Holloway Department of Geography Working Paper 1, Royal Holloway, University of London; Haraway, D. (1989) Teddy Bear Patriarchy: Taxidermy in the Garden of Eden, New York City, 1908-1936, in D. Haraway Primate Visions, London: Verso; Phillips, R. (1997) Mapping Men and Empire: A Geography of Adventure, London: Routledge; Ryan, J. (1994) Visualizing Imperial Geography: Halford Mackinder and the Colonial Office Visual Instruction Committee, 1902-11, Ecumene 1, p157-176.

From the early 1980s, influenced by the development of 'women's history', a number of geographers, such as Susan Monk and Jane Hanson, began to call for feminist perspectives, theories and frameworks to be adopted by members of the discipline.[19] Geographical studies of imperialism began to reflect a recognition of the importance of complex and multi-faceted identities to imperialism, increasingly acknowledging the connections between race, class and sexuality, as well as gender. The majority of geographical scholarship,[20] as well as studies by academics from a range of other disciplines,[21] concerned with modern British imperialism, has focused on imperial power relations between colonizers and colonized peoples away from Britain. Other work, such as that by Anne McClintock,[22] as well as a number of studies contained in two volumes edited by John Mackenzie,[23] has been concerned with the cultural construction of imperial identities at home in Britain, exploring the ways in which imperial ideals were conveyed to the British population at home.[24] Increasingly, studies of modern British imperialism have emphasized not only that masculinities and femininities were historically and culturally constructed, and that men and women experienced imperialism in different ways, but also that there was a distinct spatiality to such cultural imperialism as discourses were played out in different ways over space.

A number of studies concerned with the construction of imperial masculinities and femininities in Britain have considered the variety of cultural media through which such imperial ideals were conveyed, including youth

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[19] Monk, J. & Hanson, S. (1982) On Not Excluding Half of the Human in Human Geography, Professional Geographers, 34 1; p11-23. And see Women and Geography Study Group of the IBG (1984) Geography and Gender: An Introduction to Feminist Geography, London: Hutchinson.
[20] Blunt, A. (1994), op. cit.; McEwan, C. (1994) Encounters with West African Women: Textual Representations of Difference by White Women Abroad, in Blunt, A. & Rose, G. (eds.), op. cit..
[21] For an introduction to such work see Spivak, G. C. (1987) In Other Worlds: Essays in Cultural Politics, London: Methuen. And refer to the work of the Subaltern Studies Collective, for example, Guha, R. & Spivak, G. C. (eds.) (1988) Selected Subaltern Studies, Oxford: Oxford University Press. Refer also to Clifford, J. (1997) Routes: Travel and Translation in the Late Twentieth Century, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press; Grewal, I., (1996) Home and Harem: Nation, Gender, Empire and the Cultures of Travel, London: Leicester University Press; Mani, L. (1987) Contentious Traditions: The debate on SATI in Colonial India, Cultural Critique, 7, p119-156; Mills, S. (1991), op. cit.; Pratt, M. L. (1992) Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation, London: Routledge.
[22] Refer to the chapters of Empire of the Home, Part I of McClintock, A., op. cit..
[23] Mackenzie, J. (ed.) (1984) Propaganda and Empire: The Manipulation of British Public Opinion, Manchester: Manchester University Press; and Mackenzie, J. (ed.) (1986) Imperialism and Popular Culture, Manchester: Manchester University Press.
[24] And refer to the chapters in The Empire at Home, Part III of Midgley, C. (1998) Gender and

movements, popular entertainment, novels, exhibitions and landscape painting.[25] In 1987, for example, Mangan and Walvin published an edited volume entitled *Manliness and Morality: Middle-class masculinity in Britain and America, 1800-1940.*[26] In it, the editors considered the middle-class conditioning which produced adherence to a narrow, restricted and inhibited concept of masculinity, characterized by physical courage, chivalric ideals, and military and patriotic values. Further, they identified the inherent cultural geography of imperialism, emphasizing that manliness was not 'a simple, single, coherent concept linked to a single locality. It was a...variety of overlapping ideologies regionally interpreted'.[27] Dominated by issues of health, imperial ideals of masculinity were often pre-occupied with the production of racially superior men who would, and could, defend the British empire away from home.[28]

The imperial fixation with producing healthy imperial citizens (white and male) also influenced ideals of femininity. Anna Davin, for example, has suggested that notions of femininity were closely linked with imperial domesticity, prioritizing women's domestic and familial role through discourses of motherhood and their ability to raise future colonizers and soldiers, as well as future imperial wives and mothers.[29] For white, British, middle-class women, status as 'the angel in the home' was advocated as their moral responsibility, and the domestic virtues of

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Imperialism, Manchester: Manchester University Press.

[25] For a general introduction refer to Mackenzie, J. (1984) Propaganda and Empire: The Manipulation of British Public Opinion, 1880-1960, Manchester: Manchester University Press.

[26] Mangan, J. & Walvin, J. (eds.) (1987) Manliness and Morality: Middle-class Masculinity in Britain and America, 1800-1940, Manchester: Manchester University Press. Also refer to Warren, A. (1986) Citizens of the Empire: Baden-Powell, Scouts and Guides, and an Imperial Ideal, in J. Mackenzie (ed.), op. cit..

[27] Mangan, J. & Walvin, J., op. cit.; p3.

[28] Park, R. J. (1987) Biological Thought, Athletics and the Formation of a 'Man of Character', 1830-1900, in Mangan, J. & Walvin, J. (eds.), op. cit..
Issues of physical and mental health were of fundamental importance to British women and men living in India, and are discussed in Chapter Four.

[29] See Davin, A. (1978) Imperialism and Motherhood, History Workshop Journal V p.9-65.
Concern regarding the 'quality' of recruits for the Boer war had led to an increasing concern for the future of the empire. Various middle- and upper-class Victorian societies for the promotion of public health and domestic hygiene stressed the responsibility of the Mother in both child bearing and rearing, and subsequently laid the blame for the 'degeneration' of the population with the ignorance of working-class mothers. Importantly, it was *maternal* ignorance and not *paternal* ignorance that was blamed for the degeneration of the population. Similarly, the maintenance and security of British imperialism in India was connected to particular notions of middle-class motherhood, as women were held responsible for preventing the 'degeneration' of their children born in India. I discuss these issues in Chapter Four.
Also refer to Rowbotham, J. (1989) Good Girls Make Good Wives: Guidance for girls in Victorian

wife and mother were constructed as their incontestable right.[30] Women's domestic subject position was formalized through the 'cult of domesticity'. According to Anne McClintock, during the second half of the nineteenth- and the early twentieth-centuries, 'commodity spectacles' (such as photographs, advertisements and products), extended the cult of domesticity throughout Britain's working- and middle-class homes on a previously unimaginable scale.[31] Domestic products such as the bar of soap conveyed imperial discourses of race, gender, class and sexuality. Adherence to imperial roles defined by race and gender was seen as necessary to secure and uphold the empire, suggesting complex relationships between home, domesticity and discourses of imperialism. However, notions of home and domesticity were vital not only to the construction of imperial femininities but also to imperial masculinities. A number of studies have pointed to the connections between imperial masculinity and concepts of home at the scale of the nation or empire, stressing the role of men as defenders, protectors, supporters or administrators of the British empire, usually away from home.[32] Further, imperial masculinities were similarly linked to homes at the level of the household, as British imperial domesticity also 'permeated the lives of men...as husbands, as fathers, and as upholders of fireside virtues'.[33] Moreover, according to John Tosh, the construction of imperial masculinities was often 'inherently contradictory', with tensions existing between 'authority and affection, between homely and homosocial pursuits, and between security and adventure'.[34] Connections and tensions between imperial masculinity and imperial domesticity are of fundamental importance to understanding the gendered geographies of imperialism.

Post-structural and postcolonial debates during the 1980s and 1990s have stressed that power relations incorporate gender, race, class and sexuality, existing

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Fiction, Blackwell: Oxford.

[30] Rowbotham, J., op. cit.; Trollope, J. (1983) Britannia's Daughters, London: Hutchinson.

[31] McClintock, A., op. cit.; Richards, T. (1990) The Commodity Culture of England: Advertising and Spectacle, London: Verso.

[32] Dawson, G. (1994) Soldier Heroes: British Adventure, Empire and the Imagining of Masculinities, London: Routledge; Driver, F. (1992), op. cit.; Phillips, R., op. cit..

[33] Tosh, J. (1996) New Men? The Bourgeois Cult of Home, History Today, Vol. 46 (12), p10. And refer to Anne McClintock, who suggests that imperial domesticity was 'a crucial, if concealed, dimension of male as well as female identities', p5. McClintock, A., op. cit..

[34] Tosh, J., op. cit.; p14. And see Tosh, J. (1995) Imperial Masculinity and the Flight from Domesticity in Britain, 1880-1914, in T. P. Foley, L. Pilkington, S. Ryder, E. Tilley (eds.) Gender and Colonialism, Galway: Galway University Press; Tosh, J. (1999) A Man's Place: Masculinity

and operating together as processes, rather than individually. Highlighting the nuances of, and connections within, multi-faceted identities stresses the importance of considering subjectivities. Within this framework, feminist writers such as Vron Ware[35] have begun to recognize the complexities associated with the participation of white British women within imperial contexts. Further, Nupur Chaudhuri and Margaret Strobel, for example, have considered the ambiguities of white women's position as commentators upon imperial situations and encounters.[36] Emphasizing the domestic spaces and experiences of imperialism, studies concerned with women who journeyed to the empire to set up home both with and for their families, are among those which consider the complexities of the negotiation and contestation of gendered subjectivities within imperial contexts. For example, studies by Alison Blunt,[37] Rosemary Marangoly George[38] and Anne McClintock[39] point to complex power relations, and highlight the ways in which gender, race, class and sexuality were continually transformed and translated over both time and space.[40] Such work, concerned with everyday spaces and experiences of home and domesticity reveals much about the ambiguity of women's subject position defined in relation to discourses of imperial domesticity.[41] Further, attention is drawn to the heterogeneities, tensions and inconsistencies existing within categories such as male/female, colonizer/colonized, and public/private, previously assumed to be fixed, and usually in binary opposition. Such oppositions underestimate the contradictions within any discourse, represented by spatial and temporal differences and the existence of heterogeneity and tension within both dominant and subordinate cultures.[42] Geographical studies of imperialism informed by post-structural and postcolonial debates are therefore increasingly concerned not only

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and the Middle-class Home in Victorian England, New Haven: Yale University Press.

[35] Ware, V. (1992) Beyond the Pale: White Women, Racism and History, London: Verso. Although she does not focus on imperialism, also refer to Frankenberg, R. (1993) White Women, Race Matters: The Social Construction of Whiteness, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

[36] Chaudhuri, N. & Strobel, M., op. cit.. There is a burgeoning literature concerned with white women's participation in colonized spaces. For an introduction to the range of literature associated with such issues see Blunt, A. & Rose, G., op. cit..

[37] Blunt, A. (1994) Travel, Gender and Imperialism: Mary Kingsley and West Africa, New York: Guilford.

[38] George, R. M. (1994), op. cit..

[39] McClintock, A., op. cit..

[40] Blunt, A. (1994), op. cit.; Blunt, A., (in press/b) Imperial Geographies of Home: British Domesticity in India 1866-1925, Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers.

[41] Blunt, A. (in press/b), op. cit..

[42] See Lowe, L. (1991) Critical Terrains: French and British Orientalisms, Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.

with the diversity of gendered experiences of imperialism, or with its spatial variability, but also with the heterogeneity of the imperial discourse itself.[43]

2. Memsahibs

Traditionally, narratives of British imperial involvement in India have tended to focus on the 'public' episodes of imperialism. Further, dominated by 'heroic' masculine endeavours, the dynamics of gender, race and class have often been neglected. However, where they have been included, women have often been constructed as responsible for alienating the previously friendly native, ultimately causing British imperial destruction.[44] In this way, *memsahibs*[45] have been portrayed as idle and jealous, and obsessed with maintaining their racial 'superiority' and segregation. In a critical discussion of traditional accounts, Gatrell comments that such women were represented as:

> Narrowly indolent, more prejudiced and vindictive towards the colonized than their men, abusive to servants, usually bored, viciously gossipy, prone to extra-marital affairs, destructive to peaceful social relations, and cruelly insensitive to women of the colonized races.[46]

From the late 1970s, feminist writers from a variety of disciplines attempted to deconstruct stereotypically negative images of Western women as participants in empire. Studies such as those by Pat Barr and Margaret MacMillan, have served to acknowledge the participation of white middle-class wives in British India.[47] Their accounts tend to offer one of two potential scenarios for such women. The first continues to position memsahibs as existing exclusively within the household. Often detailed accounts of their day-to-day domestic lives are described, and a

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[43] Stoler, A. (1989) Rethinking Colonial Categories: European Communities and the Boundaries of Rule, Comparative Studies in Society and History 31 (1) p134-161.
[44] See comments in Strobel, M., op. cit.. See also Haggis, J., op. cit..
[45] The term came from 'madam-sahib', which literally means madam-sir, and was used in British colonies in Africa as well as Asia. Chaudhuri, N. (1988) Memsahibs and Motherhood in Nineteenth-Century Colonial India, Victorian Studies, p517-535.
[46] Gatrell, B. (1984) Colonial Wives: Villains or Victims?, in H. Callan and S. Ardener (eds.) The Incorporated Wife, London, Croom Helm.
[47] Barr, P. (1976) The Memsahibs: The Women of Victorian India, London: Secker and Warburg; Barr, P. (1989) The Dust in the Balance: British Women in India, 1905-1947, London: Hamish Hamilton; MacMillan, M. (1996) Women of the Raj, London: Thames and Hudson.

focus on the apparent tendency of such women to be lethargic or lazy remains.[48] In the second popular representation of memsahibs, women are represented and celebrated as 'honorary men' or 'heroines' who, under conditions of hardship, bravely risked their lives (and often those of their unborn or very young children), dutifully to accompany their husbands on tours of duty around India. Such studies continue to position such women within existing masculinist frameworks of imperial encounters.[49] Further, they fail to consider the intricacies of the negotiation and contestation of gendered subjectivity within imperial contexts, ignoring other facets of identity such as race, class and sexuality. Acknowledging the complexities and contradictions within such representations, a number of studies have begun to consider the image of memsahibs in ways which are critical of masculinist frameworks, and which resist the construction of such women as 'honorary men'. Further, such critical studies recognize women's whiteness and class position, as well as their gender, in order to trace the meanings and constructions of subjectivities, rather than to 'add' individuals to existing masculinist frameworks.[50]

The white, British, middle-class wives of army officers and civil servants, form the focus for this study. Travelling to, as well as within India, as an imperial elite in order to establish homes both with, and for, their families, memsahibs embodied mobile concepts of imperial domesticity. The domestic role of memsahibs was seen to be vital, and, bound up with racial hierarchies, was represented as 'a sign of national virtue and moral superiority'.[51] Crucially for my study, memsahibs also travelled *between* India and Britain on a number of occasions, and were expected to construct and maintain notions of Britain as home, over both time and space. Further, memsahibs were encouraged to return to Britain, and many of them considered that their repatriation was inevitable.[52] Such movements reflected class superiority, as well as gendered notions of imperial

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[48] The difference, however, is that this is often represented as being beyond the control of the individual memsahib as the heat and boredom (as well as homesickness) associated with womens' lives in India is portrayed as overwhelming. Refer, for example, to Barr, P. (1976), Ibid..
[49] See Mills, S. (1994) Knowledge, Gender and Empire in A. Blunt & G. Rose, op. cit.; p29-50.
[50] See, for example, Blunt, A. (1997), op. cit.; Haggis, J., op. cit.; Sharpe, J., (1993) Allegories of Empire: The Figure of Woman in the Colonial Text, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press; Ware, V., op. cit..
[51] Sharpe, J., op. cit.; p92.
[52] The inevitability of women's departure from India is discussed in Chapter Five.

domesticity, and distinguished the women involved in this study from other British wives in India. Military and civilian officers and their wives were clearly segregated, both residentially and socially, not only from the Indian population, but also from white men and women who were involved in trade or commerce, as well as those people referred to as 'domiciled Europeans'.[53] Although domiciled Europeans were of British or European descent, and steadfastly sustained notions of Britain as home, most had never visited the home-country.[54] Considered to be inferior, domiciled Europeans were often ridiculed by middle-class officials, who categorized them with the Anglo-Indian community due to their lack of physical association with Britain, and what was perceived, at least, as their financial inability to return to the home-land. Critically, the ability to return home was vital to imperial hierarchies, and the women who form the focus for this study had all lived in Britain prior to their repatriation there.

3. British Domesticity in India

The establishment of British homes beyond Britain repositioned what had been constructed as the 'private' sphere of domesticity into the 'public' realm of the British empire. Highlighting the mobility of imperial power and domesticity, this created a 'public domesticity' that contradicted oppositionally constructed ideals of 'public' and 'private'.[55] Attempting to approximate a British lifestyle in India, British homes and gardens were reconstructed by middle-class officials in the sub-continent, reflecting, it has been suggested, ideas of an 'imagined England'.[56] The bungalows usually occupied by military and civilian officers and their wives were generally considered to be 'spacious', 'lofty' and 'large'(Plate 1).[57] Their

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[53] I discuss these issues in connection with notions of imperial aristocracy in Chapter Three.
[54] Anthony, F. (1969) Britain's Betrayal in India: The Story of the Anglo-Indian Community, Bombay: Allied Publishers.
[55] Blunt, A. (1994), op. cit.; Blunt (1997), op. cit.; George, R. M. (1994), op. cit.; (1996) Prologue: All Fiction is Homesickness, in George, R. M. The Politics of Home: Postcolonial Relocations and Twentieth-Century Fiction, p1-9; Grewal, I., op. cit..
[56] Schwarz, B., op. cit.. And see Anderson, B., op. cit..
[57] Platt, K. (1923) The Home and Health in India and the Tropical Colonies, London: Bailliere, Tindall and Co.; p18-19.

PLATE 1: Mildred and William Archer's bungalow in Dumka.
[Source: Archer, W. & A. (1994) India Served and Observed, London: BACSA]

architectural design was often very similar. Each bedroom had its own bathroom. Double bedrooms had two, and the principal bedrooms also had dressing rooms attached. There was also a living-room, dining-room and pantry. All rooms were characterized by their high ceilings and white-washed walls. The kitchen was housed in a separate building, near to the servants' quarters, and typically a verandah ran round the outside of the house.[58] Officials' bungalows were particularly extensive, and often had multiple bedrooms and bathrooms, as well as a range of other rooms.[59] A retinue of servants was employed in each household.[60] The number considered acceptable to successfully maintain a middle-class home did decrease from the 27 required in the 1880s, although at least 7-10 were still employed in the 1930s.[61] This usually included a cook, cook's 'boy', head bearer, bearer, waiter, sweeper, clothes washer and ayah (lady's maid). Other staff may have included grooms, messengers, water-carriers and drivers (Plate 2).[62]

It has been suggested that the white middle-class wives of army officers and civil servants constructed these homes in ways which attempted to represent and reinforce British upper-middle class ideals more explicitly and visibly than at home in Britain.[63] Studies such as that by Anne Stoler recognize that such cultures were not direct translations of European ideology, but were unique cultural transformations involving interpretation of imperial discourses from place to

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[58] Allen, C. (1979), op. cit.; MacMillan, M., op. cit.; Platt, K., ibid..

[59] Colonial Office, 1909 (appendix), in King, A. (1995) The Bungalow: The Production of a Global Culture, Oxford: Oxford University Press, (first published 1984); p48.

[60] There are considered to be a number of reasons for the large number of Indian servants employed in British households. The restrictions of caste meant that individual servants were each only able to perform a limited range of tasks. Other reasons include the heat, which prevented people from undertaking too many hours of active employment in the day, and also the relatively low cost of employing Indian servants. See MacMillan, M., op. cit.; Trollope, J., op. cit..

[61] Allen, C., ibid.; p57.

[62] Allen, C., ibid.; MacMillan, M. (1996), op. cit.; Platt, K., ibid..

[63] Greenberger, A. J. (1978) Englishwomen in India, British History Illustrated, 4, p42-50; Hutchins, F. G. (1967) The Illusion of Permanence: British Imperialism in India, Princeton: Princeton University Press. For more critical accounts refer to Blunt, A. (forthcoming/b), op. cit.; Chaudhuri, N. (1992) op. cit.; George, R. M. (1996) op. cit.; Haggis, J., op. cit.; Schwarz, B., op. cit.; Stoler, A. (1991), op. cit..
The existing literature tends to be inconsistent in its use of 'England' & 'Britain', with some texts using them interchangeably. Throughout the period of this study, 1915 to 1947, Britain included England, Northern Ireland Scotland and Wales, as it still does today. As such, I use 'Britain' throughout this text in order to maintain consistency, only using 'England' when directly quoting other work. It is interesting to note that some of the material quoted from primary sources also reflects an interchangeability between 'Britain' and 'England'. In these circumstances it may be possible to suggest that they are referring to *British* imperialism, but to *England* as nation (and home).

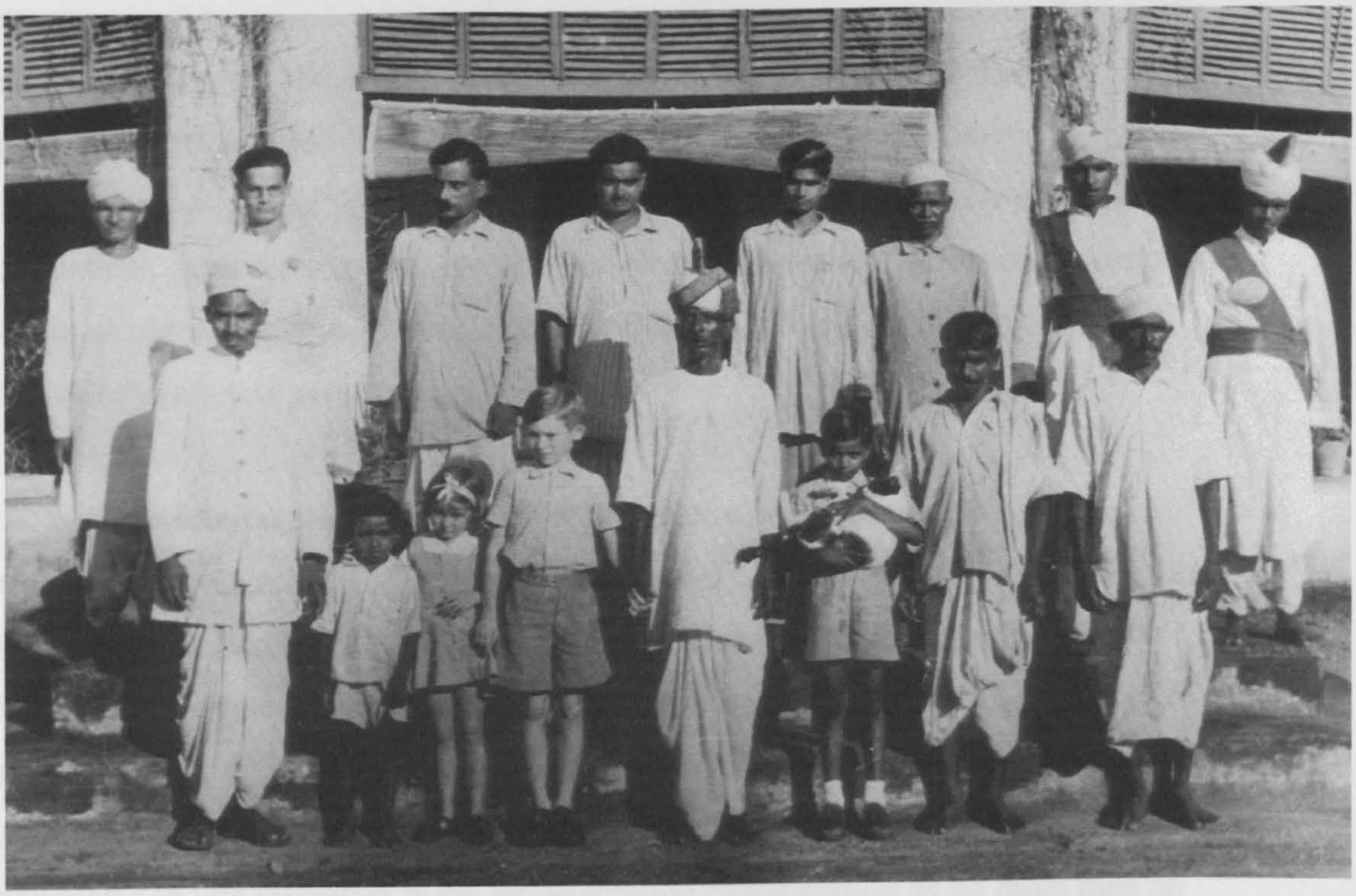

PLATE 2: Mildred and William Archer's staff in Bihar.
[Source: MacMillan, M. (1996) Women of the Raj, London: Thames and Hudson]

place.[64] However, it has also been suggested that British middle-class wives steadfastly rejected Indian goods, maintaining the suggestion that 'no collector's wife will wear an article of Indian manufacture...and all her furniture, even to her carpets, are of English make'.[65] Although women frequently had to move house whilst living in India, homes were repeatedly constructed in attempts to make them familiar, closely reproducing notions of British domesticity. Within their homes, housekeeping similarly followed a British model, despite the difficulties that this might involve. Housekeeping manuals offered advice in respect of the unfamiliar experiences of housekeeping in India, and, as well as teaching the value of domestic skills more generally, instructed readers in the best ways to use and maintain British goods, products and traditions in the sub-continent.[66] Some British women were also very proud of their Indian made furniture, carpets and clothes, for example. And indicating challenges to dominant discourses of imperialism which constructed Britain as home, many women associated India with a sense of belonging and consistently referred to it as home.[67]

Housekeeping in India was often portrayed as an imperial military campaign, and the re-located British home there as an empire in miniature.[68] Just as imperial power relations underlay the domestic duties of British women, female efficiency and domestic discipline at the household scale were seen as comparable to the efficiency and discipline required for successful imperial rule. Further, Rosemary Marangoly George points out that 'what is even more interesting and unexpected in this discourse is the representation of the empire as no more than an expanded version of the domestic arena'.[69] Highlighting the equivocal position of women as domestic and imperial subjects within the empire, she writes that 'managing a home and managing the empire were ultimately part of the same project'.[70] By examining such complex connections between domesticity and imperialism, it is also possible 'to challenge notions of the household as a static site

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[64] Stoler, A. (1989), op. cit..
[65] Wilfred Blunt, 1909; quoted in Chaudhuri, N. (1992), op. cit.; p231.
[66] For example refer to Gardiner, G. & Steel, F. A. & Gardiner, G. (1911) The Complete Indian Housekeeper and Cook, London: William Heinemann, ninth edition; Platt, K., op. cit.. See also The Bungalow: A Paper for Anglo-Indian Homes.
[67] Refer to Chapter Four for a discussion of these issues.
[68] George, R. M. (1994), op. cit..
[69] Ibid.; p108.
[70] Ibid.; p112.

that confined the imperial roles of women in India to a reproductive, domestic sphere'.[71] Although it has been suggested that in Britain women's primary imperial role was constructed as that of motherhood,[72] the establishment of British homes in India meant that women could not only directly contribute to imperialism, but that they could also earn recognition for their labour.[73] Furthermore, the contributions made by middle-class women were rarely through feminine conventions of 'motherhood', as most British women living in India sent their children back home for their schooling. Indeed, such women were praised for enduring separation from their children, a 'maternal stance that was in other circumstances greeted with the highest censure'.[74] Such a situation demonstrates not only the ambiguous position of women living in India, but also the ways in which gender constructions can be transformed over space. However, it is perhaps whilst women were living in India that their subjectivities were at their most stable and confident. While in the sub-continent, the positions and subjectivities of memsahibs were clearly defined as discourses of domesticity and imperialism, which were closely bound up with ideas of racial superiority and hierarchies of class, helped them to construct specific roles and to identify particular notions of self: a position which for many was critical for the successful re-negotiation and re-construction of homes across both time and space.

The domestication of imperial space was not constructed in relation to the household alone, but extended to the gardens of British residences and beyond to the imperial landscape. The compounds in which houses stood could 'be of considerable extent, containing the flower garden, often a tennis court, stables, sometimes a vegetable garden, and the servants quarters'.[75] They were often domesticated in order to make the environment more home-like (Plate 3). Evoking images of a British cottage garden, Kate Platt's advice book pointed out that:

> Most of our favourite old-fashioned flowers grow well in the cold weather, though they may not have quite an English fragrance. Roses,

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[71] Blunt, A. (1997), op. cit..
[72] Davin, A., op. cit..
[73] George, R. M. (1996), op. cit..
[74] Ibid.; p98.
[75] Platt, K., op. cit.; p25.

PLATE 3: Desiree Battye in the garden of the Kashmir Residency.
[Source: Barr, P. (1989) The Dust in the Balance: British Women in India, 1905-1945, London: Hamish Hamilton]

> lilies, carnations, pansies, verbenas, phloxes, delphiniums, snapdragons, violets, mignonette, all flourish.[76]

The cultivation of imperial space reached out beyond the garden, extending to the domestication of entire landscapes. Linked with the representation of Britain as home and the portrayal of its landscapes as beautiful, India's landscapes were often symbolically domesticated through their representation as British or European. Hill stations, built by the British as retreats from the heat of the Indian plains, were spaces constructed as distinctively home-like, and were represented as the epitome of Indian domestication (Plates 4 and 5). In combination with the physical landscape, the European-style architecture characteristic of hill stations 'had far more affinities with the quaint villages of a romanticized England than with the stark cantonments of a regimented India'.[77] For example, Lord Lytton wrote in 1877:

> For the first time I have seen Ootacamund. Having seen it, I affirm it to be a paradise, and declare that in every particular it far surpasses all that its most enthusiastic admirers and devoted lovers have said to us about it. The afternoon was rainy and the road muddy, but such beautiful *English* rain, such delicious *English* mud. Imagine Hertfordshire lanes, Devonshire Downs, Westmoreland lakes, Scotch trout streams, and Lusitanian views![78]

Rosemary Marangoly George has suggested that the notion of home is based around an organizing principle of inclusions and exclusions and is a way of establishing difference that is fundamental to imperialism.[79] Home has such a central place within British imperialism because it is the space of consolidation with the 'self', which has been qualified by encounters with the 'other'. As she continues:

> Homes and nations are defined in the instances of confrontation with what is considered 'not home', with the foreign, with distance. Ultimately, then, distance in itself becomes difference. Thus, for instance, it is in the heyday of British imperialism that England gets

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[76] Platt, K., ibid.; p26.
[77] Kennedy, D (1996) The Magic Mountains: Hill Stations and the British Raj, Berkeley: University of California Press; p3.
[78] Lord Lytton (1877), quoted in Hutchins, F. G., op. cit., original emphasis.
[79] George, R. M. (1996), op. cit..

PLATE 4: Simla, 1822.

[Source: Barr, D. & Desmond, R. (1978) Simla: A Hill Station in British India, London: Scolar Press]

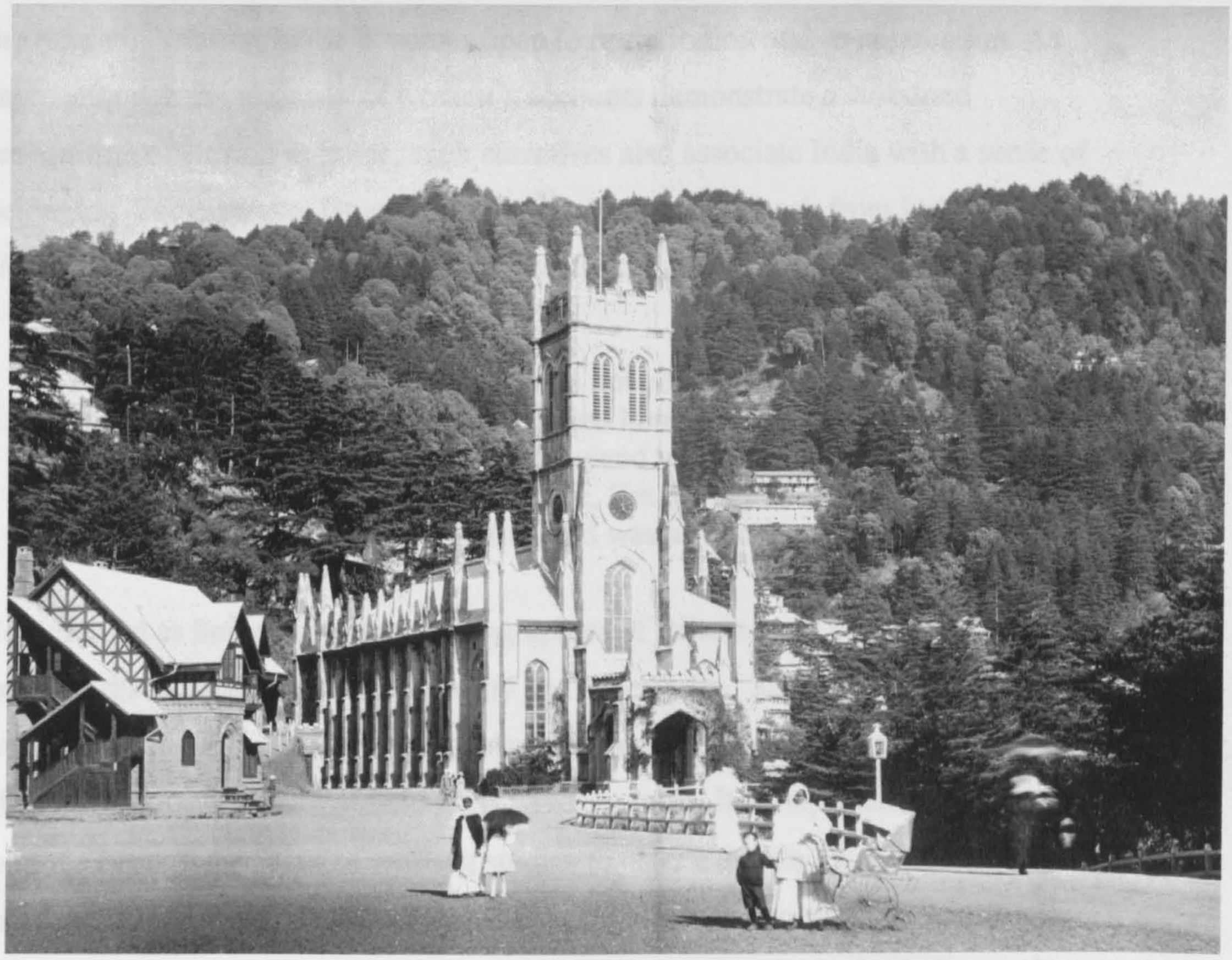

PLATE 5: Christchurch, Simla.

[Source: Barr, D. & Desmond, R. (1978) Simla: A Hill Station in British India, London: Scolar Press]

> defined as 'home' in opposition to 'the empire', which belongs to the English, but is not England.[80]

Home is the place where domestic and imperial subjectivities are constructed. In this way, she explains, the idea of 'home-country' is necessary for the existence of subjects and the notion of belonging. However, 'in the very reference to a 'home-country' lies the indication that the speaker is away from 'home''.[81] This distance, inherent in the construction of home and away, is opposed by return: by countering the original distance, home becomes open to re-definition and re-negotiation. As such, although the majority of women's accounts demonstrate a sustained recognition of Britain as home, such narratives also associate India with a sense of belonging. For example, Drusilla Hawes,[82] who travelled back from India in 1947, clearly stresses the ambiguity of such a position:

> You were always taught that India was not your home, yet it was to a certain extent. Britain was always called home. India was never called home. India was always India, but England was home, so you always referred to it as home - I'm going home, I'm having home leave, and so-and-so he's on home leave. So England was always home.[83]

Represented as home, imaginative geographies of Britain were constructed around imperial discourses of stability, security and superiority. Such notions of home, as well as evoking a particular sense of place, served as references in the construction of subjectivities for white middle-class wives in India. It is important at this stage to move beyond the focus of existing studies to offer a detailed investigation of these women returning to Britain in order to consider how socially- and culturally-constructed notions of home co-existed and were negotiated over both time and space. The re-location of British domesticity to India did not indicate an end to its movement, and the placement and stability often associated with it was one which was actually characterized by impermanence and continued mobility.

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[80] Ibid.; p4
[81] Ibid.; p2
[82] Drusilla Hawes was born in India. She married Derrick Hawes (an army officer), in 1932 and lived in India until 1947.
[83] Hawes, D., taped interview. OIOC, Mss.Eur.R.203; Cassette 2, side 2.

4. Discourses of Home

Recent debates concerned with notions of home have revealed the contradictions, ambiguities and complexities surrounding its construction as a physical place of living and belonging, as well as its metaphorical or imagined locations. Few, if any, homes exist as *either* imagined *or* real spaces, but are linked to notions of both: discourses of home are not only shaped by imaginative geographies, but they also have a material existence.[84] With regard to definitions and meanings, the word 'home' is often used to evoke images of comfort, security and boundedness.[85] As Rosemary Marangoly George suggests, ''home' has been abandoned to its clichés'.[86] Studies informed by post-structuralism, postcolonialism and feminist theory have begun to question the clichéd representation of home, instead pointing to its fluidity and instability.[87] Home does not always refer to a utopian place of safety and shelter, but can also be a place of secrets, fear and danger.[88] However, whether a place of dread and abuse or love and security, home is infused with a range of meanings, values and definitions which imply intimacy. Linked to notions of identity and self-definition, a home is often 'intimately bound to the individual's self-concepts, reflecting...personality, social status or accomplishments'.[89] In this way, the home is connected to the self-image of its inhabitants, with furnishings, for example, becoming significant indicators of selfhood.[90]

Emphasizing heterogeneity and fluidity, contemporary studies of home stress variability over both time and space. As Angelika Bammer has stated:

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[84] Said, E (1994), Culture and Imperialism, London: Vintage.
[85] George, R. M. (1996), op. cit.; Martin, B. & Mohanty, C. T. (1986) Feminist Politics: What's Home Got to do With it?, in T. de Lauretis (ed.) Feminist Studies/Critical Studies, London: Macmillan.
[86] George, R. M. (1996), op. cit.; p3.
[87] It is in these critical ways which I am engaging with notions of home. By using the term, I am not reproducing clichéd concepts of home associated with stability, safety and fixity. Instead I am exploring the problems and complexities connected with meanings and knowledges of home. However, I have decided not to use quotation marks around the word in order to label it as a problematic term - as well as being tiring to read, I find that it adds emphasis which is not always appropriate.
[88] Bammer, A. (1992) The 'Question of Home', New Formations: A Journal of Culture / Theory / Politics, 17; pvii-xi.
[89] Duncan, J. (1981) Introduction, in J. Duncan (ed.) Housing and Identity: Cross-Cultural Perspectives, London: Croom Helm; p1.
[90] See Loyd, B. (1981) Women, Home and Status, in J. Duncan (ed.), op. cit.; Pratt, G. (1981) The House as an Expression of Social Worlds, in J. Duncan (ed.), op. cit..

> ...home has always occupied a particularly indeterminate space...'home' may refer to a deeply familiar or a foreign place, or it may be no more than a passing point of reference.[91]

In stressing the 'plurilocality' of home (its existence 'both here and there'), Bammer suggests that home does not occupy a static or fixed location.[92] Furthermore, notions of home can co-exist in time and over space, as well as on a number of scales. As bell hooks suggests, home is 'locations'.[93]

Doreen Massey has also problematized accounts that suggest that the material instabilities of home (whether referring to 'family', 'community' or 'nation'), are currently taking place on an unprecedented scale, both globally and locally.[94] She stresses that home was *never* an unmediated experience, and is defined (at least in part) as *always* having been potentially unstable. In this way, issues of homelessness, placelessness and deterritorialization form vital components in both historical and contemporary contemplations of home. It has been argued that movement away from home is inextricably linked to the definitions and meanings which are attached to it.[95] In other words, distance *from* home, involving either voluntary or forced movement, is vital to the definition it is given. In this respect, movement from home opens up opportunities for challenging originary ideas of home as authentic. Both individuals and particular groups of people experience movement away from home in different ways, and for many 'the fragmentation and disruption of 'home' is neither new nor, in terms of scale, unprecedented'.[96]

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[91] Bammer, A., op. cit.; pviii.
[92] Ibid.; pviii. Original emphasis.
[93] hooks, b. (1992) Representing Whiteness in the Black Imagination, in L. Grossberg, C. Nelson, and P. Triechler, (eds.) Cultural Studies; p338-346.
[94] Massey, D. (1992) A Place Called Home, New Formations: A Journal of Culture / Theory / Politics, 17; p3-15.
[95] Van den Abbeele, G. (1992) Travel as Metaphor: From Montaigne to Rousseau, Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press. See also Blunt, A. (1994), op. cit..
[96] Bammer, A., op. cit.; p.viii.

5. Travels

In relation to debates about home and the critical importance of distance from it, feminist and postcolonial writers have begun to address the gendered and racialized aspects of travel. Attention has been drawn to its association with privilege, stressing the relative historical (at least) ease by which it has been practised by white, heterosexual men, as well as its connections with notions of pleasure and play, especially with ideas of tourism and often 'exotic' viewing enjoyment.[97] In his study concerned with the interactions between travel and culture, James Clifford has referred to this as the 'historical taintedness' of travel.[98] Further, work by bell hooks and Caren Kaplan has moved beyond considerations of voluntary movement to investigate the forced movement associated with exile and displacement.[99] Moreover, reflecting the discrimination associated with material travel, research by Alison Blunt, bell hooks and Janet Wolff shows that the gendered and racial language of travel as metaphor can marginalize white women and men and women of colour who want to participate in cultural criticism and the construction of theory.[100] Postcolonial and feminist theorists have also suggested ways in which metaphors of travel can be used to deconstruct hierarchies of race and gender within theory. Janet Wolff, for example, has argued that postcolonial criticism employs metaphors of mobility in order to destabilize categories of traditional anthropology.[101] Similarly, Minnie Bruce Pratt has stressed that travel metaphors can be used not only to construct, but also to deconstruct, a hierarchical Western feminist theory.[102] Significantly, the connections between theoretical, abstract notions of travelling, and empirical, practical movements are closely linked, and I consider them as such throughout this thesis.

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[97] For example see hooks, b. (1992), op. cit.; Wolff, J. (1993) On the Road Again: Metaphors of Travel in Cultural Criticism, Cultural Studies, 7; p224-239.
[98] Clifford, J., op. cit..
[99] hooks, b., op. cit.; Kaplan, C. (1987) Deterritorializations: The rewriting of home and exile in Western Feminist Discourse, Cultural Critique, 6; p187-198; Kaplan, C. (1996), op. cit..
[100] Blunt, A. (1994), op. cit.; hooks, B., op. cit.; Wolff, J., op. cit..
[101] Wolff, J., ibid..
[102] Pratt, M. B. (1984) Identity: Skin blood heart, in E. Burkin, M. B. Pratt & B. Smith (eds.) Yours in Struggle, Ithaca, NY: Firebrand books; See also Martin, B. & Mohanty, C. T. (1986), op. cit..

Both travel and travel writing have been of fundamental importance to British imperialism. Travel was vital to the construction and maintenance of empire through exploration, discovery, naming and mapping, as well as in the transportation of British goods. Further, men and women travelled to all areas of the empire in order for them to participate in its administration, martial regulation, domestication, settlement and control. In addition, travel writing was significant as it mobilized imperial representations and geographical imaginations to those at home.[103] For many women, imperial travel enabled them to transgress the confines of home and domesticity and to assume positions and responsibilities that they would not have occupied in Britain. In her study of the prominent nineteenth-century missionary, Mary Slessor, who travelled to, and within, West Africa, Cheryl McEwan has summarized that, '[m]any British women found it easier to enter the public sphere and exercise *direct* influence within the British empire than they did at home'.[104] In her study of Mary Kingsley, Alison Blunt comments on the ability of privileged, bourgeois women to transgress notions of imperial femininity operating at home in Britain, by travelling away.[105] Focusing on a woman travel writer, Blunt considers the ambiguities of gender, class and race over space. Significantly, whilst 'away', Kingsley was able to 'share in racial superiority in the context of imperial power and authority' and to participate in ventures which otherwise would have been considered unacceptable for a woman.[106] However, on return home, Kingsley was again perceived in terms of her gendered identity. In complex and contradictory ways, her 'masculine' behaviour whilst away was seen as spatially and temporally distanced, and her femininity was reasserted on her return home. Further, studies such as that by Rosemary Marangoly George have suggested that the spatiality of gendered imperialism can also be seen to operate at the household scale.[107] It has been acknowledged that discourses of imperial domesticity were played out in a myriad of ways, according to place as well as

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[103] Blake, S. L., op. cit.; Blunt, A. (1994), op. cit..
[104] McEwan, C. (1995) 'The Mother of all the Peoples': Geographical Knowledge and the empowering of Mary Slessor, in M. Bell, R. Butlin and M. Heffernan, op. cit.; p125. And refer to Birkett, D. (1989) Spinsters Abroad: Victorian Lady Explorers, Oxford: Oxford University Press; Blake S. L., op. cit.; Domosh, M., op. cit..
[105] Blunt, A. (1994), op. cit..
[106] ibid.; p161.
[107] George, R. M. (1994), op. cit..

subjectivity.[108] For example, it has been suggested that the meanings and values attributed to female domesticity varied according to geographical location. In contrast to attitudes in Britain, women who travelled away from home to various localities within the empire could be held in high esteem in respect of the contribution their domestic duties made to the security and maintenance of imperial boundaries.[109] Moreover, such women interpreted and negotiated feminine discourses of British imperial domesticity as they travelled through imperial space.[110]

I have chosen to foreground the term 'travel' for a number of reasons. The importance of travel to imperialism has long been acknowledged, particularly the significance of movement between colonized and colonizing countries, such as India and Britain. The purpose of travel for the middle-class British wives considered in this study was connected to such imperial aims and ambitions. Travel is also closely associated with concepts of home, in respect of both leaving, and possibilities for return. Differentiating it from other forms of movement, travel is defined, at least in part, by the anticipation that a return journey will be made. In this way, Iain Chambers has pointed to the distinction between travel and migration, suggesting that:

> [T]o travel implies movement between fixed positions, a site of departure, a point of arrival, the knowledge of an itinerary. It also intimates an eventual return, a potential homecoming. Migrancy, on the contrary, involves a movement in which neither the points of a departure nor those of arrival are immutable or certain. It calls for a dwelling in language, in histories, in identities that are constantly subject to mutation. Always in transit, the promise of a homecoming - completing the story, domesticating the detour - becomes an impossibility.[111]

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[108] Refer to Haggis, J., op. cit.; Stoler, A. (1991) Carnal Knowledge and Imperial Power: Gender, race and morality in colonial Asia in M. di Leonardo (ed.) Gender and the Cross-roads of Knowledge: Feminist Anthropology in the Post-modern Era, Berkeley: University of California Press.
[109] George, R. M. (1994), op. cit.; (1996), op. cit..
[110] See Blunt, A. (in press/b), op. cit.. I discuss these issues further in section 3 of this Chapter, British Imperial Domesticity.
[111] Chambers, I. (1994) Migrancy, Culture, Identity, London: Routledge, p5; See also Van den Abbeele, G., op. cit..

In contrast to migration, then, the movements I am concerned with are defined by their homecomings at a number of scales. These women's journeys both to and from India were fundamentally associated with notions of home. Travel *to* India was deemed acceptable for middle-class women as it was constructed by imperial discourses as a movement towards home.[112] The imperial agenda of establishing British households and re-constructing British domesticity in the sub-continent enabled the masculine approval and legitimization of women travelling away from home. Similarly, travel *from* India was represented as returning home at household, national and imperial scales. Significantly, however, I would dispute Chambers' assertion that *points* of departure or arrival (although perhaps inevitable) are ever certain or fixed. The continual motion of mobility itself, as well as the instability of location, suggests that such junctures are fluid and transient rather than fixed, and that the beginnings and ends of journeys are difficult, if not impossible, to define. Departures and arrivals associated with journeys home are not easy to demarcate - and arrival at a place referred to as home does not mark the end of that journey. Just as the boundaries between travelling and dwelling are blurred, the borders associated with leaving and arriving cannot be defined as discrete, especially when it is possible that a home is also being left.

The concept of travel has also been linked with modern ideas of commercial movement, and the large-scale transportation of people, services and supplies. Women travelling to and from India were conveyed by the ships of large organizations such as the Peninsular and Orient Steam Company (now better known as P&O), and were linked with the practicalities of travel. The practices of travel are diverse, yet its associations with leisure, recreation and enjoyment problematize its use as an all-encompassing term.[113] In other words, it cannot be used to cover all experiences of movement. As bell hooks has suggested, for example, travel is not only distinct from migration, but also from 'relocation, enslavement, homelessness'.[114] However, distinguishing the women involved in this study from the movements of migrancy, exile and dispossession can also be problematic, and is a theme which is addressed throughout the thesis as I consider

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[112] For a detailed consideration of this refer to Blunt, A. (1997), op. cit..
[113] Ibid..
[114] hooks, b., op. cit.; p343.

the reluctance of many middle-class wives to leave their homes in India. Further, the women who form the focus for this study are not alone in being away from, or returning to, home, and others may have similar experiences of homecomings. Crucially, there is an increasing tendency for both women and men to be between homes, or away from home, due to either forced or voluntary movement, in the contemporary world. However, I am tracing the life histories and geographies of women who moved between homes for particular reasons, within a specific imperial context. It is important to stress that I am focusing here on a specific form of travel, and point to the discourses of imperialism, whiteness, gender and class within which these journeys were undertaken and experienced. By using the term travel to refer to these journeys, I seek to acknowledge its 'taintedness',[115] and explore the links between travel and power, rather than reproduce or ignore the limitations of the word.

Many studies concerned with imperial travel have overlooked that imperial movement was often not one way. Acknowledging this, there is a range of contemporary literature which considers the immigration of formerly colonized subjects (usually from the Indian sub-continent or the Caribbean), to Britain, which had been depicted at particular times, and through a range of representations, as their 'mother country' and, by extension, as their adoptive home.[116] However, there are far fewer sustained analyses concerned with Britons returning home, although *return* travel was also often seen as vital to both the construction and maintenance of British imperialism.[117] Work such as that by Alison Blunt[118] and Gerry Kearns[119] does address issues of 'return', but focuses on the fluid subjectivity of short-term residents or travellers rather than those domiciled in imperial countries for prolonged periods. Scholarship concerned with imperial travel also tends to neglect both the material and emotional significance of returning *home*, and is generally not concerned with theorizing or contemplating either the imaginative constructions or

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[115] Clifford, J., op. cit..

[116] For a critical and insightful introduction into such literature see Webster, W. (1998) Imagining Home: Gender, 'Race' and National Identity, 1945-64, London: UCL Press.

[117] Chapter Three includes a discussion of representations and images which depicted return home to Britain as vital for the maintenance of imperialism. Similar themes are also developed in throughout the thesis.

[118] Blunt, A. (1994), op. cit., especially chapter 4 and Conclusion.

[119] Kearns, G. (1997) The Imperial Subject: Geography and Travel in the Work of Mary Kingsley and Halford Mackinder, Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers, NS 22 (4); p450-472.

the material existence of the destinations themselves. In this way, texts concerned with imperial travel have tended not to engage with a sustained consideration of discourses mobilized on departure, the return journey to, and arrival at, home. By ignoring the return travels of imperialism, knowledges of imperial constructions of home, as well as the mobile subjectivities of British women, remain incomplete. There are exceptions, such as Bill Schwarz's paper concerning the author Paul Scott.[120] Discussing the transportation of a British elite lifestyle to India he suggests, 'But this was not a one way journey'.[121] However, although he briefly refers to the problematic repatriation of George Orwell to a home which 'was largely unknown to him',[122] he does not engage with the questions this raises about the movement of imperial notions of home, travel or subjectivity over space, or with the contradictions and complexities associated with return movement home. Similarly, accounts such as those by Margaret MacMillan[123] and Charles Allen[124] do sometimes include reference to the departure of British women and men from India. Typically, however, this represents a short final chapter, or even a concluding paragraph or epilogue. Such texts tend to celebrate return, engaging with traditional accounts which position repatriates as leaving a land of exile and looking forward to returning home.[125] Issues of return are perhaps most explicitly discussed in popular biographies and autobiographies, as well as novels such as Jonathan Raban's *Foreign Land.*[126] In contrast, my work is concerned with women who returned to live in Britain after prolonged residence in India. It considers the mobility of women's gendered subjectivities over time and space, focusing on imperial domesticity and the significance of returning home at both national and household scales.

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[120] Schwarz, B. (1992) An Englishman Abroad...And at Home: The Case of Paul Scott, New Formations: A Journal of Culture/History/Politics, p95-105.
[121] Ibid.; p95
[122] Ibid.; p95.
[123] MacMillan, M., op. cit..
[124] Allen, C. (1996), op. cit..
[125] Refer to Chapter One for an introduction to the representation of India as a land of exile or 'regrets'. See Chapter Five for a discussion of personal accounts concerned with departure from India.
[126] Raban, J. (1986) Foreign Land, London: Picador. In a rather sentimental text, the male protagonist leaves post-colonial Bom Porto (as well as his young native lover) when he reaches the age of 60 in order to return to Britain and reconcile himself with his daughter.

6. Travel, Home and Subjectivity

Post-structural and postcolonial debates concerned with gender, home and travel are also linked to the discursive construction of subjectivity. Until recently, work concerning the construction and negotiation of subjectivities often focused *either* on concepts of mobility *or* on notions of location. Crucially, discussions are now increasingly concerned with troubling the assumed fixed boundaries between location and mobility. Significantly, it has been acknowledged that subjectivities are always, or at least can be, 'out of place'. In other words, it has been recognized that subjectivity is unstable and ambiguous not only *over* time and space, but also *within* particular contexts. Kathleen Kirby, for example, explores what she calls 'mobile subjectivities'.[127] She places emphasis on the travel of subjects across trajectories of power such as gender, class and race. Avoiding the implication of movement from one stable resting place to another, her work problematizes the 'resting' one does, indicating the instability and ambiguity of 'positionality'. Research considering the connections between fluid notions of home and the construction of subjectivity, for example by George Van den Abbeele, has stressed that the former is necessarily and permanently altered upon travelling away: a home returned to is never the same as the home left behind.[128] Similarly, movement away from home, involving either forced or voluntary movement, has profound implications for subjectivity in the construction and negotiation of the exile, refugee, expatriate or tourist, for example. In this way, debates have pointed to the importance of physical distance *from* home (as the point of departure). Thus, studies concerned with forced and/or voluntary movements have begun to emphasize the importance of theorizing flexible and fluid *destinations* of travel, considering the politics of location and the complexity of locating the 'self' at the borders, margins, peripheries, centres and boundaries.[129] Other work, such as that by Meagan Morris[130] and Minnie Bruce Pratt,[131] has included discussion of the homes, hotels, motels, tents, refuges and other sites of location. My research

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[127] Kirby, K. M. (1996) Indifferent Boundaries: Spatial Concepts of Human Subjectivity, New York: Guilford. See also Ferguson, K. E. (1993) The Man Question: Visions of Subjectivity in Feminist Theory, California: University of California Press.
[128] Van den Abbeele, G., op. cit.. And see Morris, M., op. cit.; Pratt, M. B., op. cit..
[129] hooks, b., op. cit.; Kaplan, C. (1987), op. cit..
[130] Morris, M., op. cit..
[131] Pratt, M. B., op. cit..

suggests that the consideration of these locations and destinations should also include the implications of returning home. Acknowledging the importance of geographical location and mobility to the construction of subjectivity highlights the fundamental significance for women leaving India and returning to Britain. Despite returning to the home-land, repatriation could be capable of disrupting, rather than confirming or stabilizing women's subjectivities. Further, the destabilization of their subject position was often long-term. Travelling home does not necessarily entail movement towards a desired or longed-for place, and many repatriates occupy positions of displacement. Attention should be paid to processes of repatriation, the fluid and mobile subjectivity of the repatriate, and the unstable and ambiguous spaces of those who are repatriated, in order to consider how they might contest and negotiate meanings of both self and home across time and space. Further, personal narratives characterized by exile, dispossession, and homelessness suggest the inter-linking of notions of *re*patriation with *ex*patriation, highlighting the contradictions and tensions involved in returning to a place labelled as home. In this respect, it is necessary to re-consider the apparently fixed boundaries between forced and voluntary movement. Blurring such boundaries provides the opportunity to locate an intermediate space which refuses to be categorized as voluntary, while at the same time it resists positioning the repatriate as passive.

Conclusions

This chapter has explored a number of themes, and has positioned my thesis in relation to a range of existing work on imperialism, domesticity, gender, home and travel. Following other studies concerned with the critical connections between gender and imperialism, I emphasize the construction and negotiation of gendered subjectivities over time and across space, stressing variability according to place. Further, I trace the fluidity of imperial discourses, highlighting the connections between what have traditionally been considered as separate 'public' and 'private' spheres. I am also concerned with exploring the ways in which apparently dominant imperial discourses of home were contested and challenged, and aim to develop debates which question the concept of home as either a stable or fixed location.

In this chapter I have argued that it is not enough to acknowledge a traveller's intention to return, or to recognize the critical significance of distance from home. Instead, I have suggested that the implications of returning home be subject to detailed examination. By engaging with notions of travel, I have stressed that the boundaries between mobility and location should be blurred. Further, I have highlighted that points of departure and arrival are not discrete or easy to define, especially when both starting positions and destinations are associated with home and belonging. Through a consideration of locations and destinations I have also pointed to the need to recognize the repatriate's ambiguous position between forced and voluntary movement, and to identify a location from which to consider the negotiation and re-construction of subjectivities.

Throughout what follows, my aim is to present a detailed and contextual study of return travel and processes of female repatriation to homes which exist at a number of scales, in order to provide new perspectives on the themes raised in this chapter. Rather than consider imperial movements to be one-way, I explore the mobile subjectivities of women who returned to Britain, considering the disruption of dominant imperial discourses of home at a number of scales. I begin by focusing, in Chapter Three, on representations of Britain as home, and trace the influences of class and gender on geographies of repatriation within the home-land.

CHAPTER THREE

GEOGRAPHIES OF REPATRIATION: BRITAIN AS HOME

Introduction

Returning home to Britain was both represented and perceived as critical to the white middle-class who spent the majority of their adult-lives in India. In the eighteenth century, such returns were often associated with visibility, characterized by public displays of wealth and prominence. Throughout the nineteenth century, as salaried employment began to supersede individually sought riches, such visible signs of opulence became less apparent, although notions of gentility and upper-middle-class standards of living remained important symbols and goals for many British women and men living in, and returning from, India. Dominant representations of Britain constructed the nation as home, employing images of domestication, civilization and historicity in order to evoke senses of belonging. Moreover, such portrayals highlighted the rural, pointing to the beauty and serenity of the home-land, and linking them to the justification and maintenance of imperialism. Drawing on these themes, as well as a number of others, particular places were portrayed in ways which attempted to attract those people returning from the sub-continent. Highlighting not only the materiality, but also the spatiality, of imaginative constructions of home, a distinct geography of return became apparent in the nineteenth century. Sustained until around the time of the First World War, such geographies of repatriation were often clearly divided in respect of class and gender. However, although repatriates became less visible from the 1920s to the mid-twentieth century, and as geographies of repatriation often became less perceptible, women and men continued to return to Britain throughout this time, and their experiences, histories and geographies of repatriation have yet to receive detailed examination.

In this chapter, I begin by discussing 'imperial aristocracy'. Focusing on repatriation, I consider the public displays of extensive wealth demonstrated by

many of the 'nabobs'[1] who returned from India in the eighteenth century. I then explore how such aristocratic aspirations were transformed over the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, and introduce the relative (what was often referred to as 'genteel') poverty experienced by many of those returning to Britain.[2] In the following section I begin to consider the emphasis that is often placed on male expectations and experiences of return, reflecting on the gendered narratives and geographies associated with homecomings. To do this, I draw on a range of material to explore representations of Britain as home, and also consider how the home-country was portrayed in particular ways to those returning from India. I then focus on a series of representations published by *The Oriental Traveller's Gazette* from 1919 to 1921 in order to reflect on how specific towns and cities were portrayed in attempts to attract repatriates to settle there. I highlight how such images drew on existing discourses, thereby appealing to, as well as shaping, established imaginative geographies of Britain. In the subsequent section I consider how these issues related to the representation of Cheltenham, which was established as a popular and conspicuous enclave for upper-middle-class repatriates from India from the mid-eighteenth century onwards. In the final section, I consider the lives of less wealthy repatriates who returned from India to settle in Bedford in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and reflect on the influence of class and gender on geographies of repatriation. Highlighting the disruption of repatriates' class status on return to Britain, I stress the poverty associated with some (particularly widows), as well as the relative visibility displayed by others. As such, I consider the establishment and perpetuation of the town's reputation, and highlight the heterogeneity of people's life histories and geographies.

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[1] 'Nabob' is derived from *nawab*, the Indian word for an Indian Muslim Prince. Edwardes, M. (1991) The Nabobs at Home, London: Constable.

[2] The term 'genteel poverty' has been used to refer to (upper-)middle-class people whose financial circumstances and social standing have considerably reduced over their life-time. Although they retain bourgeois attitudes, beliefs and manners, they do not have the means to maintain the lifestyle associated with their previous status. However, revised incomes could still be fairly substantial, suggesting that their 'poverty' was relative rather than acute. I have found that the term is frequently used to describe the position of some of those repatriated from India, and in particular is applied to the circumstances of elderly women, usually widows. For some examples of the term being used to describe I.C.S. and army widows refer to the I.C.S. (Retired) Association archive (especially items 167, 168 and 169). Novels such as Staying On (Paul Scott, op. cit.) also refer to such women in this way. I focus on the material implications of return more fully in Chapter Five.

This chapter is concerned with shifting geographies of return, and the representation of Britain as home to white middle-class women and men living in India. Expectations of return were tied to multiple and elaborate imaginings of home. Significantly, visual and written representations of Britain could contribute to such imaginative constructions. Emphasizing that imagined geographies have a material existence, they were often manifested on return home as distinct areas of repatriation. Discourses of home, represented *to* the British middle-class living in India, were often reflected *by* them, as they returned to Britain. The towns and cities which emerged as enclaves for those repatriated from India often reflected class and gender divisions at a number of scales. I explore such divisions, considering the ways in which class and gender influenced geographies of return not only *between* towns and cities, but also *within* them. Finally, I stress throughout this chapter that individuals' experiences of repatriation have altered over time, as wealth and opulence were replaced by increasing levels of 'genteel' poverty. Crucially, then, I trace the disruption of repatriates' class status as they returned home to Britain in the twentieth century.

1. An Imperial Aristocracy Returning Home

There is an extensive range of material concerned with British involvement in India from the seventeenth century to the present.[3] However, few records or accounts are concerned with the return home of those who spent their working lives there. Michael Edwardes' book, *The Nabobs at Home*, is perhaps the most substantial exception to this.[4] By focusing on nabobs, Edwardes explores the repatriation of British merchants and traders who travelled back to Britain during the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries having made their fortunes in India. Due to restrictions imposed by the East India Company, few British women travelled to the sub-continent at this time,[5] and, as such, his book is concerned exclusively with

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[3] For an introduction to this literature see refer to James, L. (1997) Raj: The Making and Unmaking of British India, London: Little, Brown and Company.
[4] Edwardes, M. (1991), op. cit.. For a detailed study of their life in India see Spear, P. (1980) The Nabobs: A Study of the Social Life of the English in Eighteenth Century India. London: Curzon Press Ltd. (First published by Oxford University Press, 1932).
[5] See Blunt, A. (1997), op. cit.; and refer to Skelley, A. R. (1977) The Victorian Army at Home: The Recruitment and Terms and Conditions of the British Regular, 1859-1899, London: Croom Helm; Spiers, E. M. (1980) The Army and Society, 1815-1914, London: Longman.

masculine experiences of return. He considers how men were motivated to return home to Britain as a result of their dislike of the sub-continent, based on their hatred of 'the climate, the disease and 'the blacks''[6] - passions which were similar to those attributed to British officials in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Further, Edwardes discusses how British men associated wealth creation and accumulation with working in India, and explores their homecomings in terms of economic success and prosperity. However, fear and anxiety were also linked to such returns, expressed by the British establishment at home. Their concern focused on the potential political power that such rich, opulent and ambitious men would be able to exercise within the country once repatriated. Highlighting the importance of class, as well as whiteness and gender, to British notions of power and control, Edwardes suggests that:

> In the second half of the eighteenth century, the British upper classes felt, and displayed, both publicly and privately, the sort of panic that might have been caused by the arrival in England of the hordes of Genghiz Khan - carrying the plague. The actual invasion was that of a comparatively small number of men who had acquired, by various means, usually dubious, large fortunes in India which they intended to spend in ensuring their entry into 'society'. That is to say, into the political, social, and economic preserves of the English landed gentry.[7]

Return home for such men, therefore, was not only characterized by prosperity and an aristocratic standard of living, but also by hostility, expressed through satirical literature and drawings, in journals, papers, books and plays. Some people in Britain saw nabobs as figures of fun, while others were outraged by what they considered to be presumptuous behaviour, as repatriated men frequently attempted to gain access to the upper echelons of society or to influence parliament. At the very least, those at home considered them to be inferior as their money had been made in trade. However, Edwardes considers that 'the ambitions of the majority were on the whole modest: a house in the country with some land and a comfortable income from the estate or from savings in Government stock'.[8] Such country estates were considered a status symbol, and it was not uncommon for repatriates to exhibit their associations with India in highly visible ways, for

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[6] Edwardes, M. (1991), op. cit.; p28.
[7] Ibid.; p13.
[8] Ibid.; p28.

example through the external architectural modification and internal refurbishment of their newly acquired property. Warren Hastings,[9] for example, lived at Daylesford, situated in the Gloucestershire Cotswolds (Plate 6). Much of his furniture was ivory, and he displayed his collection of Moghul miniatures in the drawing-room and library. Further, two fireplaces were based on Indian motifs (Plate 7):

> One shows the popular Indian deity of good fortune, the goddess Lakshmi with elephants, and the other a scene of Indian court life including dancers and musicians, and a prince smoking a hookah.[10]

In addition, a dome of Moghul design was placed over the main entrance to the house (Plate 6). Similarly, Colonel John Cockerell[11] purchased the estate of Sezincote, also in the Gloucestershire Cotswolds, in 1794 (Plate 8). In a display of opulence as well as public exhibitionism, architects and landscape gardeners were consulted to design both an 'Indian' front for the building, and an 'Indian' garden. The result was:

> ...eclectic, a mixture of styles, with 'Hindoo' forms on the ground floor and 'Mogul' above. For the garden, Daniell[12] designed a variety of monuments, including a fountain in the form of a lingum, the phallus which is the symbol of the Hindu god Siva, entwined with serpents. There is even a 'Hindoo' bridge, and beneath it a philosopher's chair for meditation on the meaning of the fountain! Originally the domes of the house were painted white to give the impression of marble, and the finials gilded. Together with other features, they helped to make Sezincote a romantic version of India set in the English Countryside.[13]

Pointing to lavish public displays of grandeur such as these, Edwardes indicates the wealth and success which surrounded many of those who returned from India in the

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[9] Warren Hastings first went to India in 1750. He was Governor-General in Calcutta between 1774 and 1785, at which time he returned to Britain. Moorhouse, G. (1983), op. cit..
[10] Edwardes, M. (1991), op. cit.; p38. For a further discussion of the influences of Indian architecture on British designers and buildings see Head, R. (1986) The Indian Style, London: George Allen and Unwin.
[11] Colonel John Cockerell was a friend of Warren Hastings.
[12] Thomas Daniell spent nine years in India publishing aquatints of Calcutta and making drawings of the Muslim and Hindu architecture he saw as he travelled around India. Edwardes, M. (1991), op. cit.; p42.
[13] Ibid.; p43.

PLATE 6: Daylesford House
[Source: Edwardes, M. (1991) The Nabobs at Home. London: Constable]

PLATE 7: Daylesford House, Chimney Piece.
[Source: Edwardes, M. (1991) The Nabobs at Home. London: Constable]

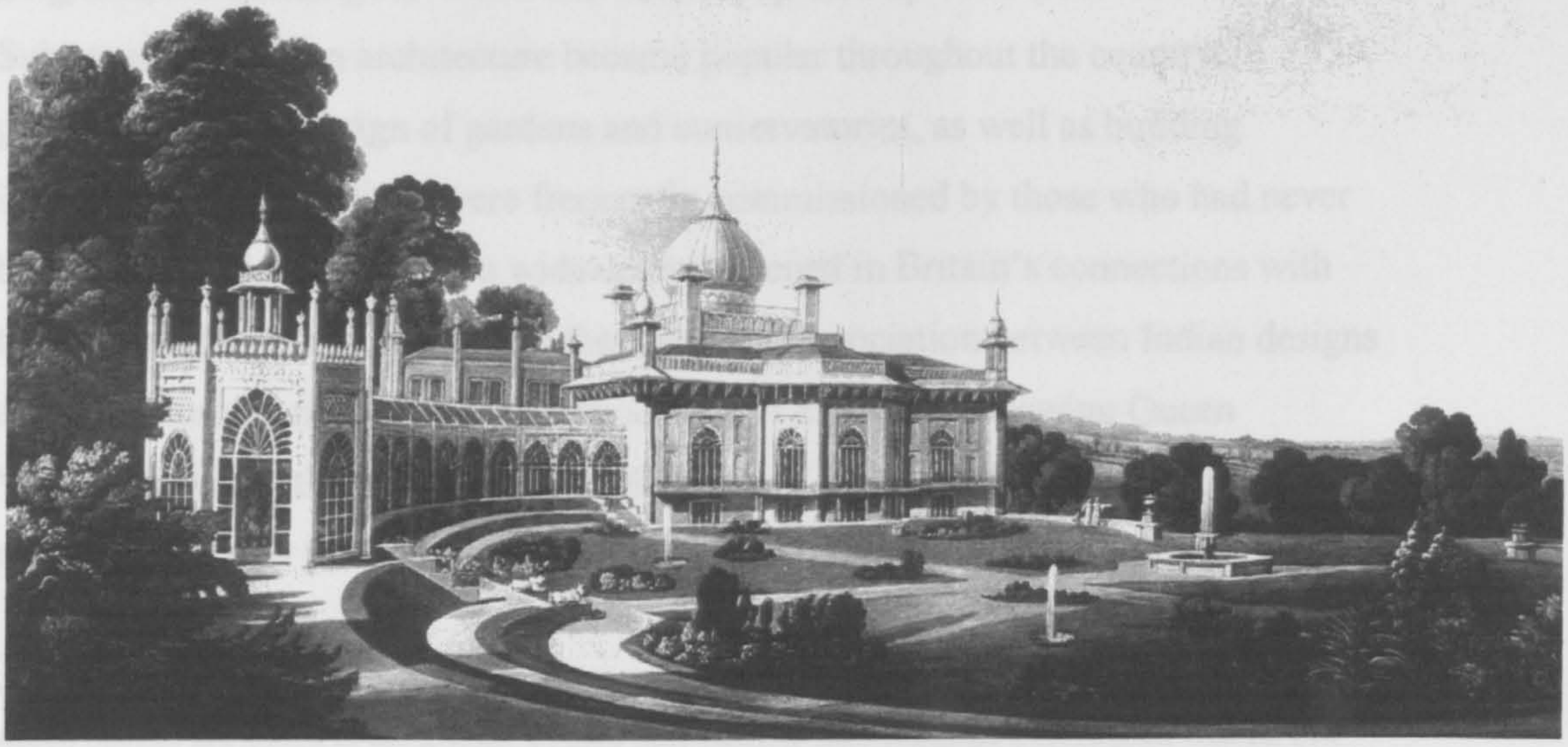

PLATE 8: Sezincote, the South Front.
[Source: Edwardes, M. (1991) The Nabobs at Home, London: Constable]

eighteenth and early-nineteenth centuries.[14] Although he indicates the condescending attitudes of British 'society', as well as the often more damaging reactions to those who tried to push too hard and far into the 'establishment', it is clear that many of these merchants and traders still retained both the desire and the ability to firmly position themselves within aristocratic society, as well as to flaunt both their riches, and their associations with India.

The popularity of Indian-style architecture increased throughout the nineteenth- and early twentieth-centuries, reflecting Britain's connections with the sub-continent, as well as imperial wealth.[15] This popularization had largely been fuelled by the construction of Brighton's pavillion.[16] In 1815, under the instruction of the Prince of Wales (later to be George IV), John Nash designed the pavillion in Brighton, the building for which had been completed by 1821 (refer to Plate 14). Subsequently, Indian architecture became popular throughout the country, particularly in the design of gardens and conservatories, as well as building interiors.[17] Such buildings were frequently commissioned by those who had never been to India, demonstrating a wide-spread interest in Britain's connections with the sub-continent, and pointing to the continued association between Indian designs and the assumption of wealth and grandeur. For example, following Queen Victoria's visit to the Indian-style smoking-room at Bagshot Park in 1890, she made the decision to include Indian decorations in the dining room at Osborne

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[14] There are a number of other examples which could be given here, reflecting the significance which nabobs attributed to the display of their associations with India, as well as their wealth. For example, in 1765 William Frankland returned from India and bought Muntham in Sussex, which he enlarged to include a portico and verandah. A Pavillion and a minaret were built in the garden. A number of nabobs, however, chose to display their connections with India only through the internal decoration of their houses. For example, In 1790, Reverend Jolland's house at Louth was decorated to include Indian bamboo furniture, matting and trinkets, as well as bound Asiatic manuscripts. Similarly, Robert Clive established 'an oriental treasure chamber' in Powis Castle in the eighteenth century. Although no external modifications were made, this room reflected the wealth he had accumulated in India, and contained sabres, 'ivory-filled exhibition cases, ancient armour...a nabobs palaquin and a marvellous hookah embedded with gems...glorious textiles and fly whisks...gold and bone and silver, lotus forms and lions' heads, shields of lacquered hide, painted ivory playing cards and betel-nut cutters shaped like mythical beasts'. Morris, J. (1997) Clive's Castle, Granta, Vol.57, p249-255. And refer to Head, R. (1986) The Indian Style, London: George Allen and Unwin.

[15] Public demonstrations of imperial wealth were made in the built environment of cities throughout Britain and the world. See Driver, F. & Gilbert, D. (1999) Imperial Cities: Landscape, Display and Identity, Manchester: Manchester University Press; Jacobs, J. (1996) Edge of Empire: Postcolonialism and the City, London: Routledge.

[16] Head, R., op. cit..

[17] There are numerous examples of building facades, out-buildings and interiors which reflect an 'Indian-style' of architecture. Refer to Head, R., op. cit..

House. However, highlighting the complexities and contradictions involved in the adoption of Indian architecture in this country, the 'Indian room' at Osborne 'is so contained that it does not even ruffle the exterior of the Italianate House'. Further, 'national self-consciousness precluded its use from official architecture in Britain' until the 1920s.[18] At this time, 'a few Indian elements were provided in a scheme for a new Indian Office in the Aldwych, London', which was designed between 1928 and 1930. However, even then the motif was barely influenced by Indian style, including only 'whimsical elephant heads and an entrance flanked by faceted columns'.[19] Significantly, however, the widespread use of Indian design in British architecture in the nineteenth- and twentieth-centuries was largely attributable to members of Britain's aristocracy who had never visited India. Although in the eighteenth- and early nineteenth-centuries men returning from India could establish themselves as aristocrats in Britain, and were often keen to display their fortune as well as their associations with the sub-continent, this became increasingly difficult over time.

Established by the East India Company in the nineteenth century, in order to replace their existing military and administrative regimes, the Indian Army and the I.C.S. were strictly hierarchical organizations from their inauguration.[20] In 1858, the East India Company's association with the sub-continent was formally dissolved, as British imperial rule in India became the responsibility of the Crown, and the British government subsequently adopted their systems of civilian and military control.[21] Although both were considered to be elite institutions, Indian Civil Servants in particular occupied positions of notable authority and power. In 1913, for example, the highest administrative and political offices in India (a

[18] Ibid.; p55.
[19] Ibid.; p87.
[20] Although both organizations were considered as elite, members of the I.C.S. were considered to have been 'a class apart' from the military officers in India. Dewey, C., op. cit.. The I.C.S. were commonly referred to as 'the heaven born', a term which associated their position with those members of the superior Brahmin caste (MacMillan, M.; op. cit.). Further, it distinguished them from the 'country born' - women and men of British descent who had been born in India and were referred to as domiciled Europeans or Anglo-Indians. Pointing to similar notions, Geoffrey Moorhouse suggests that 'A fairly bright young Englishman seeking a future in India...would think soldiering rather beneath him and hope to be recruited by the I.C.S.'. (op. cit.; p140).
[21] Moorhouse, G.; op. cit..

country of 244 million people) were held by the 1000 or so British officials of the I.C.S..[22]

I.C.S. and Indian army officials were established in communities which were usually residentially and socially separated from others in India. Anthony King, for example, has highlighted the location of officers' bungalows away from places of Indian settlement, stressing the connections between spatial and social distance.[23] Further, Byron Farwell points out that the friends of military officers were other officers, and that 'even among the British there were few civilians with whom officers cared to fraternize'.[24] As such, they did not mix with the thousands of British men in India who were working in commerce, industry or on plantations. Social status was crucial to those living in the sub-continent, and was dictated in relation to a man's official rank and position. A woman's place within such hierarchies was automatically determined by that of her husband.[25] In this way, they too formed part of the British imperial elite in India, and 'British wives played important roles in both establishing and maintaining this hierarchy in domestic and social terms'.[26]

Members of both the I.C.S. and the Indian Army were paid according to salary scales. Although they were far from comparable with the riches acquired by some British men in India up to the mid-nineteenth century, such incomes were considered to be relatively substantial, and were adequate for those living there to maintain high standards of living into the twentieth-century.[27] Whilst in the sub-continent, therefore, officers and their wives enjoyed a lifestyle that was well above

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[22] King, A. D. (1995), op. cit.. By Independence, following a series of recruitment problems as well as the 'Indianization' of the Service, the I.C.S. incorporated 504 British men.
[23] King, A. (1976a) Colonial Urban Development: Culture, Social Power and Environment, London: Routledge and Kegan Paul; King, A. (1976b) Culture, Social Power and Environment: The Hill Station in Colonial Urban Development, Social Action 26, 3; p195-213.
[24] See Farwell, B. (1989) Armies of the Raj: From the Mutiny to Independence, 1858-1947. London: Viking, p93; And refer to Mason, P. (1974) A Matter of Honour. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston.
[25] Barr, P. (1989), op. cit..
[26] Blunt, A. (1997), op. cit.; p27.
[27] The maximum I.C.S. salary was approximately £2000 per annum. However, there were also a range of positions (such as commissionerships and provincial chief secretary), which were on rates of pay higher than the salary scale, which generally ranged from £2700 to £3600. Blunt, E. (1937) The Indian Civil Service, London: Faber and Faber Ltd.. Military salaries seem to have been rather more complex than this, although they were generally lower than those received by Indian civil servants.

that to which they had been born into in Britain. Their high status in India turned them into 'instant aristocrats'. In a vivid depiction of middle-class women's and men's lives in India, Benedict Anderson has suggested that the imperial elite acted out a 'tropical gothic' lifestyle there. Illustrating his point in graphic and colourful ways, rather than attempting to reflect day-to-day reality, he suggests that they performed their roles 'against a background of spacious mansions and gardens filled with mimosa and bougainvillaea, and a large supporting cast of houseboys, grooms, cooks, amahs, maids, washerwomen, and, above all, horses'.[28]

Considering the material standards of living enjoyed by the British in India, as well as their elitist attitudes and the extent of their power and authority, it has been suggested that both civilian and military officers were responsible for creating and sustaining what has been termed an 'imperial' or 'middle-class' aristocracy in the sub-continent.[29] As Benedict Anderson suggests, organizations such as the Indian Army and the I.C.S. 'permitted sizeable numbers of bourgeois and petty bourgeois to play aristocrat off centre court: i.e. anywhere in the empire but at home'.[30] Their aristocratic lifestyle could not be transported to or maintained in Britain. In a fleeting reference to the repatriation of such women and men, Francis Hutchins suggests that:

> Their aristocratic posture was not transferable; they could only live like aristocrats in India, they could neither live like nor pretend to be aristocrats in England itself.[31]

As such, unlike the nabobs, who were often able to return to Britain with a fortune large enough to buy their way into high society (despite the hostility of some members of the British establishment), the salaries paid to the middle-classes who worked in India from the late-nineteenth century until Independence did not enable them to settle in Britain as aristocrats. Although hopes and desires for an opulent and aristocratic standard of living continued to be associated with the sub-

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[28] Anderson, B. (1991) Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism, London: Verso; p150-151. And see the discussions in Blunt, A. (1997), op. cit., p24-27; and Hutchins F. G., op. cit., p105-108.
[29] In respect of an' imperial aristocracy' refer to Anderson, B., op. cit.; For discussion of a 'middle-class' aristocracy see Hutchins, F. G., op. cit..
[30] Anderson, B., op. cit.; p150.
[31] Hutchins, F. G., op. cit.; p108.

continent, it was no longer possible to accumulate vast amounts of wealth. In this way, 'the ambition of using India as an avenue of advancement was not lost sight of; it was simply transplanted to Indian soil'.[32]

Crucially, however, return home continued to be a significant goal for military and civilian officers. Officers and their wives were not only encouraged to retire to Britain, but also to maintain their links with the home-country throughout the time that they spent living in India. An officer's wife would accompany him on his return visits, and, unrestricted by leave rules, would commonly make a number of additional journeys without him.[33] The inability of repatriates to transfer the material facets associated with their aristocratic standard of living could only worsen over the course of the twentieth-century as I.C.S. salaries and pensions were fixed for nearly one hundred years at their 1862 level, and the pay of army officers always remained below that of their civilian counterparts.[34] In this respect, it became increasingly difficult for those returning from India to maintain even an appearance of middle-class gentility, with many experiencing 'genteel' poverty, whilst some suffered from severe financial difficulties. In this way, as individuals were increasingly unable to accrue vast fortunes whilst in India, visual displays and public signs erected to mark their repatriation to Britain became less significant over the first half of the twentieth-century.

2. Britain: Representing the Return Home

Within a context of British imperialism, gendered representations of return were closely connected to the depiction of Britain in particular ways: as beautiful, domesticated, traditional and peaceful. Further, to those who were away, Britain was represented as home. Evoking images of beauty, fertility and family, Britain's domestic scene became 'semiotically important as the inspiration and justification of empire'.[35] In a study of novels, poetry and landscape painting, Inderpal Grewal[36]

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[32] Hutchins, F. G., ibid.; p107.
[33] These issues are dealt with more fully in the following chapter.
[34] For details of I.C.S. pay refer to Blunt, E., op. cit.; especially Chapter Four. For an insight into the pay of army officers, see Farwell, B., op. cit.; p90. The implications of these low incomes for women returning to Britain are discussed in Chapter Five.
[35] Bratton, J., op. cit.; p87.
[36] Grewal, I., op. cit..

has shown the importance of cultural representations of Britain's landscape as both beautiful and ordered, encouraging notions of conscious domestication or 'improvement'.[37] The work of Humphrey Repton, for example, evokes rural harmony and discipline, depicting 'a stable vision of England' whether based on farming or manufacturing (Plates 9 and 10).[38] During the nineteenth-century, the British landscape became a symbol of home and peace, and the notion of domestic space became central to political discourses of British imperialism and nationalism. Significantly, return home (to the household as well as the nation), was offered as a reward for imperial *masculine* loyalty.[39] It was almost exclusively men who were portrayed as being away from the home-country, positioned in various outposts of the empire in order to explore, administer and fight for its security and maintenance. In this way, popular images of the empire tended to eliminate women.[40] Families, as well as women travellers and 'adventurers', were largely ignored in favour of male role models and heroes.[41] Moreover, it was not uncommon for narratives to position men's transportation to the empire as a conscious movement away from feminine spheres of domesticity.[42]

Relating the enjoyment and beauty of the domesticated British countryside to its rootedness in history and tradition provided the 'essential link in turning the merely idyllic into the inspirational',[43] and highlights the importance of understanding gendered representations of return within the context of broader portrayals of Britain. Common images included in the depiction of domesticated British landscapes include woods and fields in summer time, rose gardens, terraced lawns, children, dogs and meadows, often with streams running through them.[44] Constructing masculine notions and expectations of return, imperial fiction for boys employed the inspirational power of the nation as home to develop an imperial pride

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[37] See Daniels, S. (1993) Fields of Vision: Landscape Imagery and National Identity in England and the United States, Cambridge: Polity Press.
[38] Ibid.; p92.
[39] Bratton, J., op. cit..
[40] But see Phillips, R. (1997) Ambivalence in the geography of adventure: Home and Away in *Daughters of the Dominion*, in R. Phillips, op. cit.; p89-112. Here, Richard Phillips discusses how, 'while many adventure writers were busy policing the lines between home and away, women and men, others found the geography of adventure more malleable', p90.
[41] Tosh, J. (1995), op. cit..
[42] Tosh, J. (1996), op. cit..
[43] Bratton, J., op. cit.; p89.
[44] Ibid..

PLATE 9: Humphrey Repton, Armley Mill from Kirkstall Road.
[Source: Daniels, S. (1993) Fields of Vision: Landscape Imagery and National Identity in England and the United States, Cambridge: Polity Press]

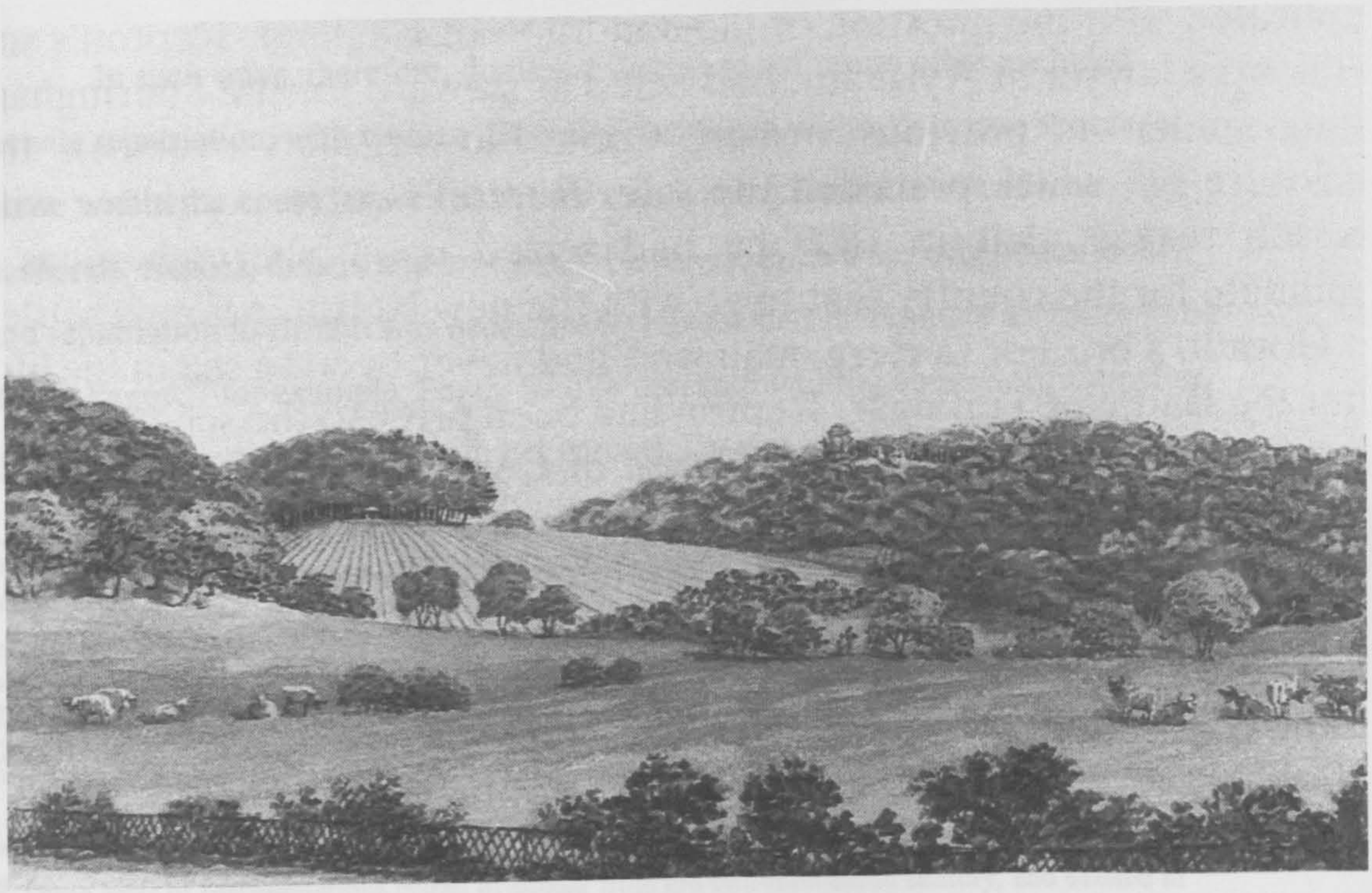

PLATE 10: Humphrey Repton, Main view from proposed new house at Sheringham.
[Source: Daniels, S. (1993) Fields of Vision: Landscape Imagery and National Identity in England and the United States, Cambridge: Polity Press]

that would inspire young men to fulfil their patriotic duty. Coupled with the concept of imperial adventure, excitement and the rewards of imperial allegiance, participation in the physical and economic maintenance of the empire was encouraged.[45] Rewards might be financial, gained whilst in the empire. However, as important to representations of imperial masculinity as men's adventures *within* the empire, were those concerned with their homecomings, portrayed at a number of scales. Repatriation, constructed through a masculinist framework, was represented as unproblematic, and even as heroic. In this way, men were not only rewarded with return to the home-country, they were also portrayed as returning to material homes, and to women who were waiting there for them.[46] Return home for an imperialist, for example, often resulted in the love of a long admired woman. John Bratton suggests that the novel *It is Never to Late to Mend*,[47] is the archetype of such imperial texts. It opens with the hero about to lose both his ancestral home and his girl. After much anguish, he tears himself away from home and goes to Australia. Eventually, 'he returns with a huge nugget of gold, as well as useful and profitable experience of sheep farming and land dealing...rescues his girl and his farm, and lives happily ever after' in the home-land.[48]

In such ways, therefore, dominant discourses of return often excluded female repatriation, with women generally positioned within domestic spaces (at home within the house, as well as the nation), waiting for the return of their husbands, fiancés, fathers and brothers.[49] However, there were exceptions to this, and repatriation to Britain was occasionally represented in feminine terms. In *More About Peggy*,[50] for example, Peggy Saville is seen travelling home to Britain after spending three years in India with her parents. Peggy was glad to be going home,

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[45] Ibid.. And see Dawson, G., op. cit.; Phillips, R., op. cit..

[46] John Tosh points to one American observer who commented: 'That Englishmen are such hardy explorers, such persistent settlers of the waste places of the earth, attests their love of home. They go because they want to go, but because they hope to return with enough to establish a home in England'. Collier, P. (1909) England and the English from an American Point of View, London: Duckworth; p173. Cited in Tosh, J. (1995), op. cit.; p82.

[47] Reade, C. (1940) It is Never to Late to Mend, Toulouse: Impr. Toulousaine, (first published 1856).

[48] Bratton, J., op. cit.; p87.

[49] These sorts of representations began to appear from the mid-nineteenth century, and existed in sharp contrast to earlier literature which tended to ignore Britain altogether, beginning with the hero arriving in a colony, where he subsequently makes a very good life for himself; Bratton. J., op. cit.. Also see Dawson, G., op. cit..

[50] Horne Vaizey, Mrs G. de (1900), More About Peggy, London: The Religious Tract Society.

and recognized that 'there is no place like the old country'.[51] Although no physical reward was awaiting Peggy on return to Britain, she expected to be fulfilled simply by seeing the home-land again. Evoking images of British domestic rurality, Peggy described her expectations of return:

> Oh! Think of seeing English grass again - the green, green grass, and walking along between hedges of wild roses and honeysuckle; and the smell of the earth after it has rained, and all the little leaves are glistening with water - do you remember - Oh! do you remember?[52]

Further, Peggy spent much of the journey home to Britain dreaming about the house that she would be living in with her parents. She stressed to her fellow male traveller, Hector Darcy, that they were 'going to look around for a house as soon as possible'.[53] Moreover, she was emphatic in her claims that they knew exactly what they were looking for, and described her desire for 'a house covered with roses and creepers, and surrounded by a garden...with soft turf paths, bordered with roses, and every flower that blooms growing in the borders'.[54] In addition, she imagined an orchard, spring bulbs and a moat. She also emphasized that she wanted her return to the domestic sphere of the household to take place as soon as possible, and that finding what she referred to as a real and permanent home - 'a refuge' - would mark the fulfilment of her dreams.[55] Significantly, such rigid and fixed images of return were obviously unrealistic, as gendered geographies of home and away were linked in complex and multifarious ways. However, with few role models, or other guidance, assistance or advice, women could find it difficult to form expectations of repatriation, a situation which could problematize their ability to adjust to life in Britain.

Problems in constructing expectations of return were often exacerbated for women travelling home after the Second World War. Although discourses of return were widespread at this time, they consistently ignored those being repatriated from Britain's declining empire, in order to focus on those returning from war. However,

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[51] Ibid.; p11.
[52] Ibid.; p11.
[53] Ibid.; p11.
[54] Ibid., p12.
[55] Ibid.; p13.

dominant discourses actively constructed notions of return which associated homecomings with masculine heroism, emphasizing male return to households where women had spent the war waiting for them.[56] The diversity of women's experiences and knowledges, as well as their return from war work both in Britain and abroad, was largely ignored as publications such as *Picture Post* told wives, mothers, daughters and sisters 'How to welcome a soldier home'.[57] Such narratives overlooked the vast numbers of women who had themselves left home in the war, and who were returning from participation in 'the services, from billets where they had been housed during mobilization for war-work, from the Women's Land Army, from evacuation'.[58] Such gendered discourses positioned 'woman' as the *object* of return: not only at home, but as never having left. Further, the refusal to depict women as being away denies female repatriates opportunities to reflect on feminine notions of repatriation, and suggests that those who *have* left home would lack a motive, or an example, for return. Moreover, women were not only excluded from dominant discourses of repatriation, but it was repeatedly suggested that they should never have left home at all.[59] In contrast, the focus for this study *begins* at the point of women's departure, prior to their return home.

Over the second half of the nineteenth- and the first half of the twentieth-centuries, return home from India was increasingly divorced from ideas of financial reward and public prominence. Despite this, the concept of Britain as home remained significant, and representations often continued to glorify the home-country to those who were away. Such images maintained a focus based on notions of the 'rural-idyllic' and tended to place importance on Britain's pre-industrial past, continuing to stress peace, order and beauty. [60] An emphasis on rural images had implications for the portrayal of city areas, and in the 1920s and 1930s, Britain's urban regions tended to be characterized in particular ways. The historicity of cities, as well as rural areas, was stressed, and both were repeatedly displayed as positive, industrious, productive and resourceful.[61] In 1932, Stephen Tallents, on behalf of

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[56] Webster, W., op. cit..
[57] Ibid.; p5.
[58] Webster, W., op. cit.; p5.
[59] Ibid..
[60] Bratton, J., op. cit.; p85.
[61] Ibid.. And see Gowans, G. (1996) Representations of London in Popular Geographical Magazines, 1935-1995; unpublished Masters dissertation, Royal Holloway, University of London.

the Department of Overseas Trade, drew up a list of subjects deemed suitable for 'national projection', with the aim of manipulating imperial patriotism. The images used to represent Britain's urban areas repeatedly stressed tradition and heritage, evoking upper-middle-class attitudes and understandings of the home-land. However, most images continued to emphasize Britain as essentially rural and unchanging.[62] Ideas of British fairplay and democracy were illustrated through

> ...the Parliamentary institutions, the Underground system and the Manchester Guardian. The majority though stressed the pre-industrial past, particularly with an accent on the aristocratic life-style and the public school ethos: the monarchy, the English Bible, the works of Shakespeare, Henley and the Boat Race, test matches, the trooping of the colour, the Lord Mayor of London, Oxford and Edinburgh, the Times, the English countryside and villages, fox hunting, English servants, English bloodstock and pedigree stock, gardening and tailoring. The British masses were easily forgotten on a move to make the English the aristocracy of the world.[63]

Such images were closely bound up with representations of Britain as home (and as a site of return) to middle-class women and men living in India. Similar themes, concerned with rurality, tradition, order and beauty, depicted an upper-middle-class British country lifestyle. Although such images reflected a British 'imperial aristocracy' that could be created and sustained whilst in the sub-continent, it would have been increasingly difficult for the majority of repatriates to imitate a similar way of life following their return to Britain. Plate 11, for example, was used to advertize Lipton's Tea to the British in India in the 1920s. Depicting British women and men drinking tea and playing tennis in the sub-continent, it not only stresses that Britain was considered to be home, but also emphasizes a yearning to be there. The image draws on ideas of historicity, positioning Britain as the 'old country', and depicting it as both 'changeless' and 'traditional'. Further, notions of a rural village are evoked in descriptions of vicarage gardens and herbaceous borders, while images of 'copper beech and bee-humming lime and ancient mulberry tree casting dappled shade', combine such notions, portraying both the pastoral and the historic. Crucially, however, it is unlikely that the upper-middle-

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[62] See Weiner, M. J. (1981) English Culture and the Decline of the Industrial Spirit, 1850-1980, Harmondsworth: Penguin.
[63] Greenhalgh, P. (1988) Ephemeral Vistas: The expositions Universelles, Great Exhibitions and World's Fairs, 1851-1939, Manchester: Manchester University Press; p126.

PLATE 11: Advertisement for Liptons Tea.

[Source: Allen, C. (1979) A Scrapbook of British India, 1877-1947, London: Penguin]

class lifestyle this image suggests could be created by these people once they had returned home to Britain.

A number of additional criteria, reflecting a range of particular concerns, were also employed in the representation of Britain as a site of return to those leaving India. Reflecting, as well as perpetuating, imaginative geographies of Britain as home, particular towns and cities were depicted as having specific qualities which made them notable destinations for those returning from India. The aesthetics of landscape remained important, reflected in an emphasis on rurality wherever possible, but also on ideas of authenticity, tradition and historicity, as well as notions concerning the picturesque and beautiful. However, issues of climate were also paramount, especially temperature, rainfall and hours of sunlight, evoking and sustaining a range of discourses relating to particular issues of physical and mental health and well-being, associated by many with prolonged residence in the sub-continent.[64] Britain's climate in summer was described as superior to any other in respect of suitability to the 'Anglo-Saxon race'.[65] In *Health Resorts for Tropical Invalids: In India, at home, and abroad*, for example, it was suggested that the first choice of residence for those in need of recuperation should be Britain. By way of concession, the book suggested that 'If a better climate is sought in the winter, the one that approaches the nearest to the English summer is in the majority of instances the best', again stressing Britain's perceived superiority.[66] Imaginative geographies of home were, at least in part, constructed through such representations, although they were also connected to peoples' lived experiences, histories and geographies in complex ways as they travelled *between* Britain and India on a number of occasions.[67] Moreover, as a number of towns and cities gained reputations as enclaves for those returning from India, their popularity with repatriates was also employed in their representation, highlighting notions of continuity and familiarity with life in the sub-continent. Perhaps the largest concentrations of repatriates were found in Cheltenham and Bedford, both of which were actively represented as popular sites of repatriation, and were widely known

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[64] These issues are addressed more fully in Chapter Four.
[65] Moore, W. J. (1881) Health Resorts for Tropical Invalids: In India, at home, and abroad, London: J & A Churchill; p144.
[66] Ibid.; p161.
[67] Refer to Chapter Four for a discussion of the movements women made *between* Britain and India.

as enclaves for those returning home. As such, although women repatriated from India (either with or without their families), lived predominantly as a disparate group of individuals, there also appears to have been a distinct geography of return, reflecting the materiality of imaginatively constructed geographies of home.

The Oriental Traveller's Gazette (published by Thomas Cook & Son), was largely concerned with advertizing the availability, frequency and cost of passages to Britain from India and a number of other countries. Published three times a year, it featured regular articles concerning British towns and cities which it recommended to those returning from long periods spent living in India. These short articles not only shaped imaginative geographies of Britain, but were also based around a number of already established notions and desires connected with repatriation from India, thereby directly appealing to a range of expectations. Particular landscapes were of fundamental importance, and both visual and written representations were concerned with idyllic visions of the British countryside. Reflecting and perpetuating dominant discourses, images within *The Oriental Traveller's Gazette* conformed with others that represented Britain as home to those living in India. Drawing on a range of literary sources in order to evoke particular notions of Britishness, Leamington, for example, was described as being 'within reach of the Shakespeare Country'. Similarly, Woodhall Spa was portrayed 'in the midst of the sylvan country in the hilly part of Lincolnshire'. Further, it was represented as being 'surrounded by old-time villages described so vividly by Tennyson in so many of his poems'.[68] In this way, Britain's historicity was also stressed, along with an emphasis on the 'picturesque'. Tunbridge Wells, for example, was described not only as 'very beautiful', but also of 'great historic interest'.[69] Both Harrogate and Bath were portrayed as picturesque and historic. The countryside surrounding the former was considered 'antiquarian', while the villages close to the latter were 'old-world'.[70] Similarly, High Tor near Matlock, was presented as being within 'romantic Derbyshire', 'overtopped by a range of hills or tors' (Plate 12).[71] Representing Britain in particular ways, such images

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[68] Brief Notes on the Spas of Great Britain, The Oriental Travellers Gazette, February 1919; p6.
[69] The Spas of Great Britain, The Oriental Travellers Gazette, April 1921; p7.
[70] Ibid.; p6.
[71] English Health Resorts, The Oriental Travellers Gazette, February 1920; p7.

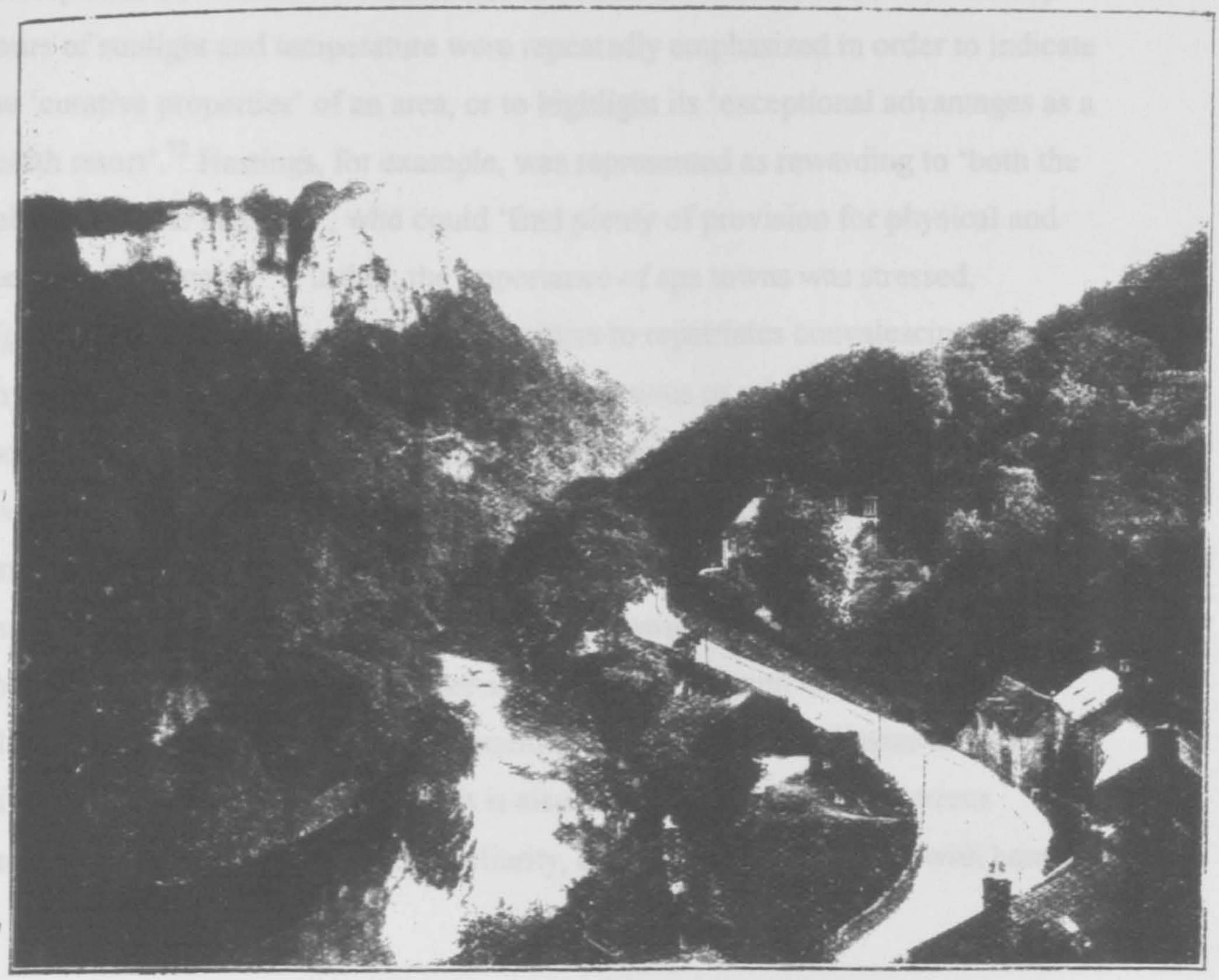

PLATE 12: High Tor, Matlock.

[Source: The English Health Resorts, The Oriental Traveller's Gazette, February 1920. Thomas Cook and Son Ltd.]

were used to appeal to, as well as create, imaginative geographies of the home-land, characterized by its idyllic and historic rural spaces and places.

Reflecting imperial discourses concerned with the physical and mental health and efficiency of those who spent prolonged periods living in the sub-continent, such representations were also closely linked to notions of climate and atmosphere. Concerned with narratives of health and fitness, details of rainfall, hours of sunlight and temperature were repeatedly emphasized in order to indicate the 'curative properties' of an area, or to highlight its 'exceptional advantages as a health resort'.[72] Hastings, for example, was represented as rewarding to 'both the delicate and the vigorous', who could 'find plenty of provision for physical and mental refreshment'.[73] Further, the importance of spa towns was stressed, highlighting not only their beneficial qualities to repatriates convalescing from physical disorders and those 'suffering from nervous or other diseases', but also to those who were already 'healthy and vigorous', and who wished to maintain their levels of fitness. Indicating the quality of their 'medicinal waters', it was also emphasized that their 'beautiful surroundings' were similarly advantageous.[74] The 'sub-tropical vegetation' found in a number of towns was also considered noteworthy, with Torquay, Penzance and Sidmouth offering the best examples. Although the foliage may have been mentioned in order to emphasize the warm climate associated with such areas, it is also possible that such descriptions encouraged repatriation through familiarity, and a sense of continuity with homes in India.

Some articles in *The Oriental Traveller's Gazette* also pointed to established geographies of return, stressing the existing reputation of a particular area as an enclave for repatriation as a reason for return. In this way, the representation of a number of towns and cities emphasized the influence that India had had on their urban landscapes. Images representing Brighton and Buxton, for example, focused on architecture distinctively influenced by Indian design. Both Buxton's pump room (Plate 13) and Brighton's Pavilion (Plate 14) were

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[72] Ibid.; p7.
[73] Ibid.; p5.
[74] Brief Notes on the Spas of Great Britain, op. cit.; p6.

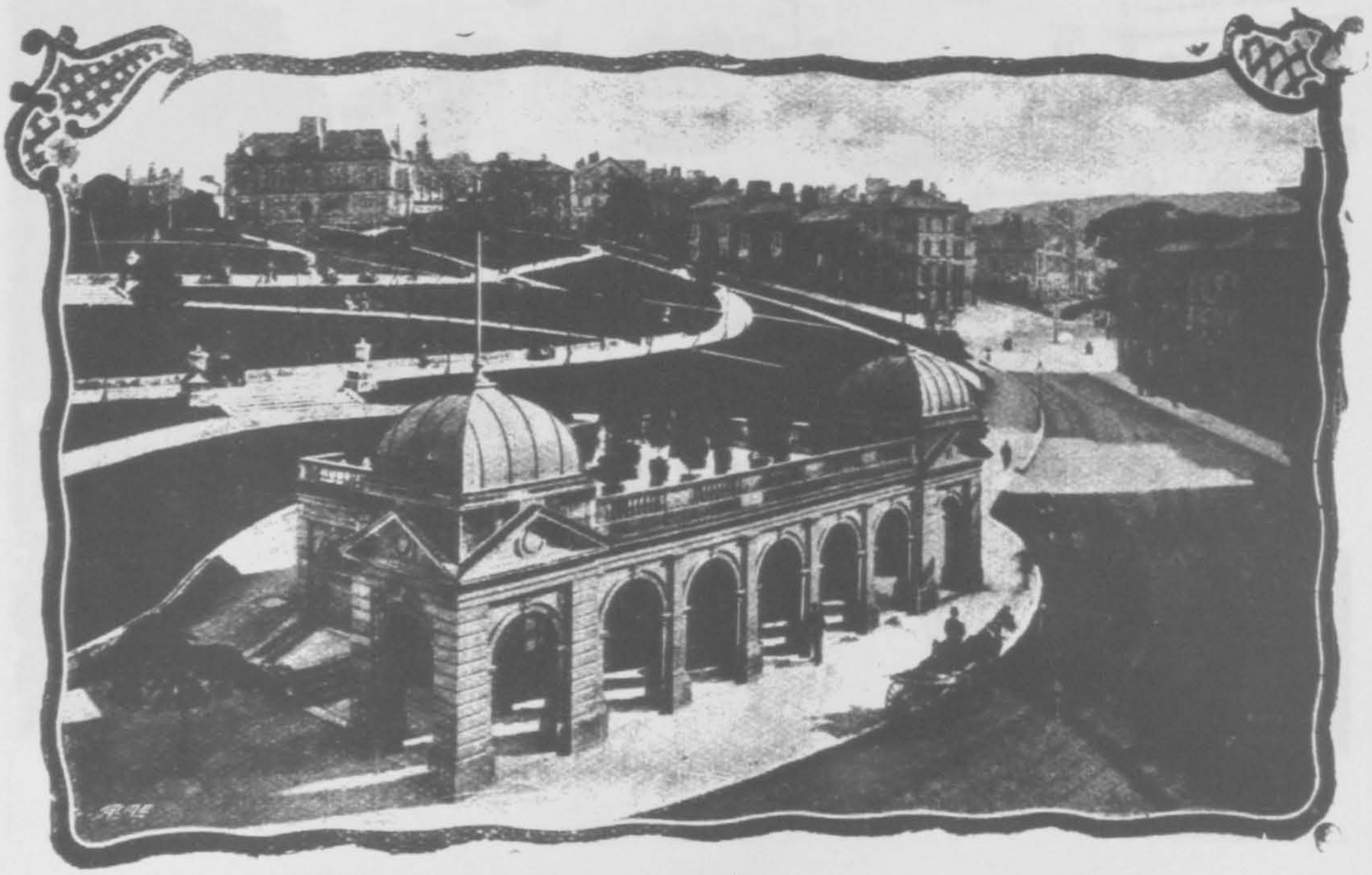

PLATE 13: Buxton Pump Room.

[Source: The English Health Resorts, The Oriental Traveller's Gazette, February 1920. Thomas Cook and Son Ltd.]

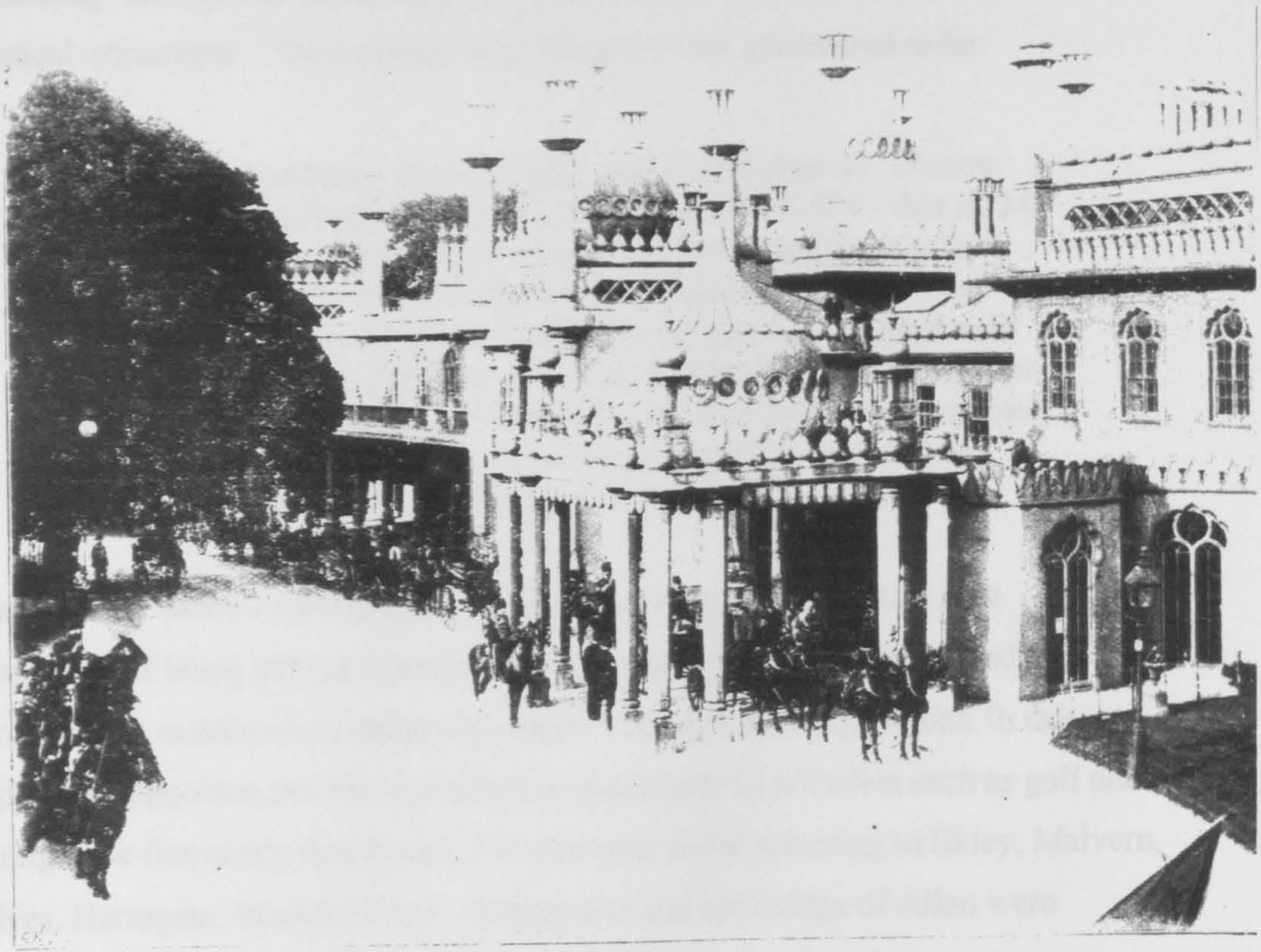

PLATE 14: Brighton Pavillion.
[Source: The English Health Resorts, The Oriental Traveller's Gazette, February 1920. Thomas Cook and Son Ltd.]

reminiscent of the Indian built environment, and by appealing to notions of familiarity could help repatriates to evoke a sense of belonging. In a similar way, the ambience of an area was also portrayed, frequently pointing to issues of lifestyle and standards of living which were characteristic of life in India, particularly in hill stations. For example, Buxton was represented not only as being 'encircled by a belt of hills shielding it from the cold winds of winter', and as possessing 'exceptional advantages as a health resort', but it was also noted for its 'musical attractions'.[75] In a similar way, Brighton was considered to be:

> famous for its sunshine, glowing light, and bright clear air. During 1913 the hours of bright sunshine in Brighton were 1,584 - that is, 341 more than London, and of this sunshine 490 hours occurred in the winter months, as compared with 345 in London, while the winter temperature is 7 per cent above that of the Metropolis, coupled with fine air, freedom from fogs, and clear and bright skies. There is a fine promenade, and the Madeira walks under the east cliffs are completely sheltered from the north winds. It is almost superfluous to add that Brighton is never dull at any season of the year.[76]

Connected to issues concerning the character of a particular location, the importance of being able to associate with people of a similar background and with a comparable middle-class status also appears to have been significant. In this respect, the opportunities for repatriates to participate in activities such as golf and fishing were frequently mentioned. For example, those returning to Ilkley, Malvern, St Ives, Harrogate, Woodhall Spa, Strathpeffer and the Bridge of Allan were assured of being able to find excellent golf courses.

Geographies of repatriation, clearly divided along lines of class and gender, changed over time as the 'imperial aristocratic' lifestyle associated with the British living in India became increasingly difficult to establish on return to the home-land. Such changes can be traced through a consideration of towns such as Bedford and Cheltenham, both of which gained reputations as enclaves for those leaving India up to the early twentieth-century. Representations of return are usually focused on narratives and images concerned with men, while women are often considered

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[75] English Health Resorts, op. cit.; p7.
[76] Ibid.; p6.

never to have left home. As such, the life histories and geographies of women's experiences of homecomings remain relatively unexplored, both in respect of repatriation generally, and with regard to return from India more specifically. In contrast, this study focuses on women returning from India, and critically considers their experiences of homecomings at a number of scales. In the rest of this chapter, however, I am concerned with exploring Bedford and Cheltenham as sites for return. Pointing to the disruption of repatriates 'aristocratic' status on arrival in Britain, I consider not only how experiences of repatriation changed over time, but also examine class and gender distinctions over space.

3. Geographies of Return

(i) Cheltenham

> Ask a dozen people from the north, south, or east of England what the name of Cheltenham means to them and nine will reply - retired colonels, bath chairs, genteel ladies taking tea in the Promenade.[77]

Issues relating to the construction of Britain as home to those in India (concerned with notions of landscape, climate and health, as well as the presence and influence of other middle-class repatriates), were perhaps most successfully conveyed in representations of Cheltenham. As the quotation above suggests, the town was renowned as a favourable location for those returning from the sub-continent. By the second half of the nineteenth-century, according to one inhabitant, Cheltenham had become 'the favourite residence of so many retired veterans from India that it acquired the sobriquet of 'Asia Minor'...you couldn't fire a shot gun in any direction without hitting a colonel'.[78] The development and maintenance of Cheltenham's reputation as an enclave for upper-middle-class repatriates, was based not only on the natural environment and notions of physical well-being associated with it, but also on the high quality of its schools.

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[77] Packenham, S. (1971) Cheltenham: A Biography, London: Macmillan; p15.
[78] Adams, W. E., written in his Memoirs, and cited in Indian Summer, a pamphlet produced by Cheltenham Art Gallery and Museum for an exhibition of the same name. Held 28th June - 15th September 1985.

Plate 15, for example, shows how Cheltenham was portrayed by its own town council. The visual image highlights the Cotswold Hills, and is reminiscent of the British landscapes which the areas surrounding hill stations in northern India were said to resemble. In this way, the physical environment surrounding Cheltenham (portrayed as picturesque and described as 'incomparable'), was seen to be quintessentially British, evoking notions of home and familiarity. Critically, Cheltenham's environs were not only associated with beauty, but also with a climate that was considered appropriate for those people returning from India. Reflecting, as well as perpetuating, discourses concerned with the physical health of those who had lived in the sub-continent, the town was described as bright and sunny, free from fog, and sheltered from winds which might bring cold and rain. Concerns for the fitness and well-being of repatriates were again addressed as the town's spa waters were identified as being particularly beneficial to those 'from tropical climates'. Further, appealing to discourses concerned with children's mental development and efficiency, attention was drawn to the high reputation attributed to Cheltenham's schools.

Discourses of health and vigour were paramount to representations of Cheltenham. *The Oriental Traveller's Gazette*, for example, similarly linked discourses of physical fitness and well-being with notions concerning the British landscape as rural, domesticated and picturesque, thereby directly appealing to those returning from the sub-continent. India formed the focus for such representations due to its distinction from other countries of the empire which encouraged the British population to settle there permanently. India was not a settler colony, and repatriation to Britain was encouraged. Further, journals such as *The Oriental Traveller's Gazette*, as well as guide books and advice manuals concerned with the tropical countries of the British empire, recognized the relative significance of India, frequently dedicating more space within their publications to issues relating to India.[79] Emphasizing the area's temperate environment and atmosphere, Cheltenham was portrayed not only as being 'sheltered by the Cotswold Hills', but also as benefiting from a climate 'being particularly suitable

[79] For example, in The Home and Health in India and the Tropical Colonies, the vast majority of each chapter is concerned with India. All of the remaining countries are considered in a short section or paragraph, headed 'Tropical Colonies', found at the end of each chapter. (Platt, K., 1923, op. cit.).

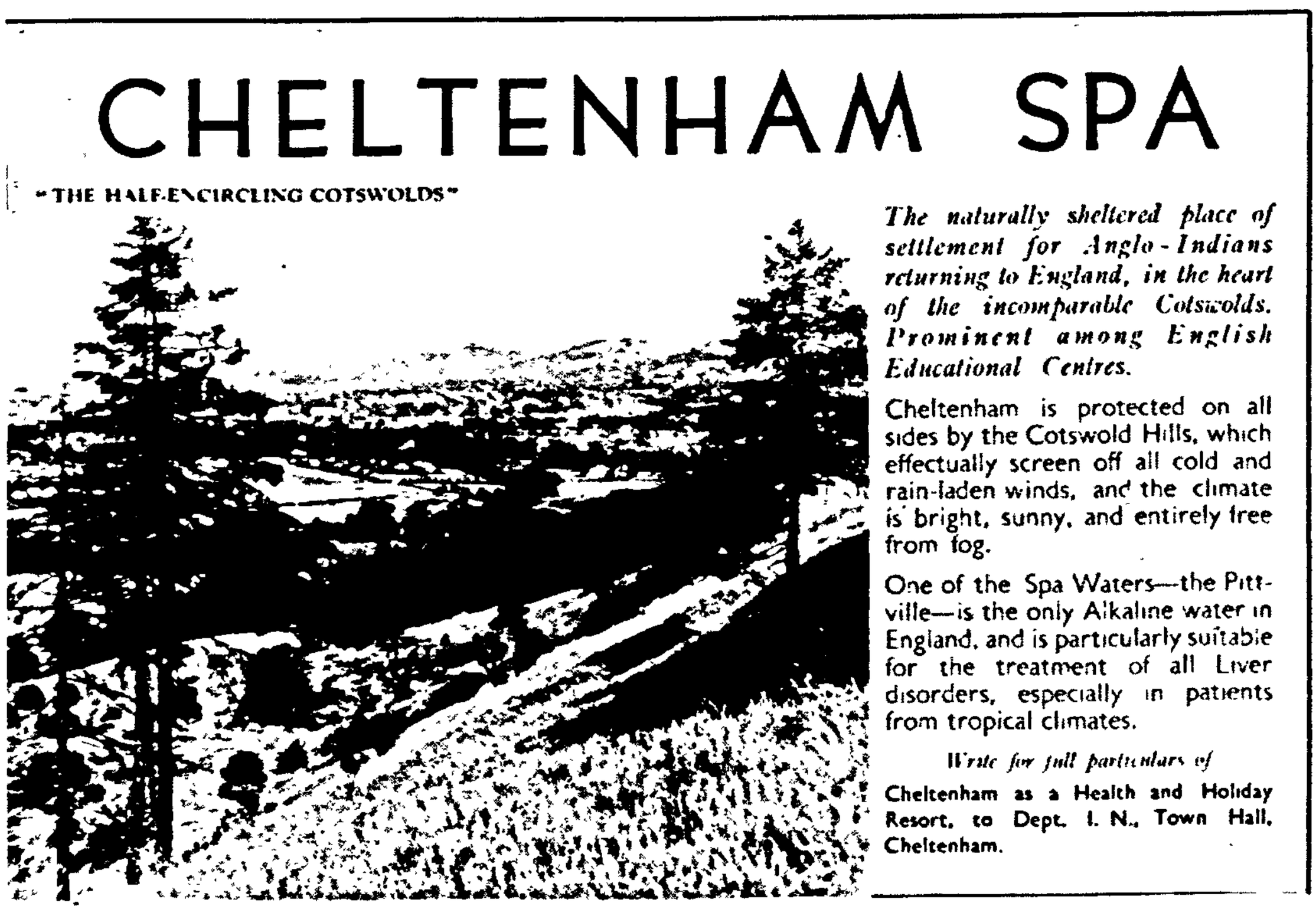

PLATE 15: Cheltenham Spa.

[Source: Allen, C. (1979) A Scrapbook of British India, 1877-1947, London: Penguin.]

for those who have lived in the tropics', and which could assist in offering relief from the disease and discomfort, which, it was believed, was caused directly by living for long periods of time in the intense heat of the sub-continent.[80] In addition, having pointed to the 'considerable reputation for relieving the diseases engendered by residence in tropical climates' of the 'waters' at Cheltenham, W. J. Moore suggested that the town offered 'perhaps as agreeable and suitable a permanent residence for those long in the tropics as any place'.[81]

Reflecting the long-term connections between Cheltenham and India, the appearance of the town's built environment - 'its gleaming white neo-classical terraces, its open verhandas [*sic*] and porches'[82] - was thought by many people to be reminiscent of India's colonial architecture. Moreover, indicating the influence of India on Cheltenham's council, a public building, based on a Moghul design was built in the town's centre in 1823 (Plate 16). The new gateway to Market Street had been inspired by the architectural style of the two Indian influenced houses set in the Cotswolds surrounding Cheltenham, namely Daylesford and Sezincote (see Plates 6, 7 and 8). Evoking a sense of familiarity, such architectural features reminded repatriates of the lives they had left behind in India. Further, the built environment conveyed notions of successful repatriation, emphasizing discourses which associated return home with wealth accumulation, ambition and public display. In addition, the presence of buildings which were reminiscent of those found in India suggested to repatriates that people with similar life histories and geographies had been settling in the area over long periods of time, and that as such, it would be possible for them to continue to associate with like-minded people if they too decided to live there.

Significantly, the 'society' to be found within Cheltenham was also considered to be appropriate for those returning from the sub-continent, possessing 'many attractions for those who are fond of sport', as well as being 'quite a musical

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[80] The Spas of Great Britain, op. cit.; p7. As mentioned earlier, the use of the term 'Anglo-Indian' can be ambiguous. Here it refers to white British people who lived in India, and not to people of mixed British and Indian descent. Refer to Chapter Four for a discussion of the worry and anxiety which was often associated with India's climate.
[81] Moore, W. J., op. cit.; p161.
[82] 'Indian Summer' pamphlet, op. cit..

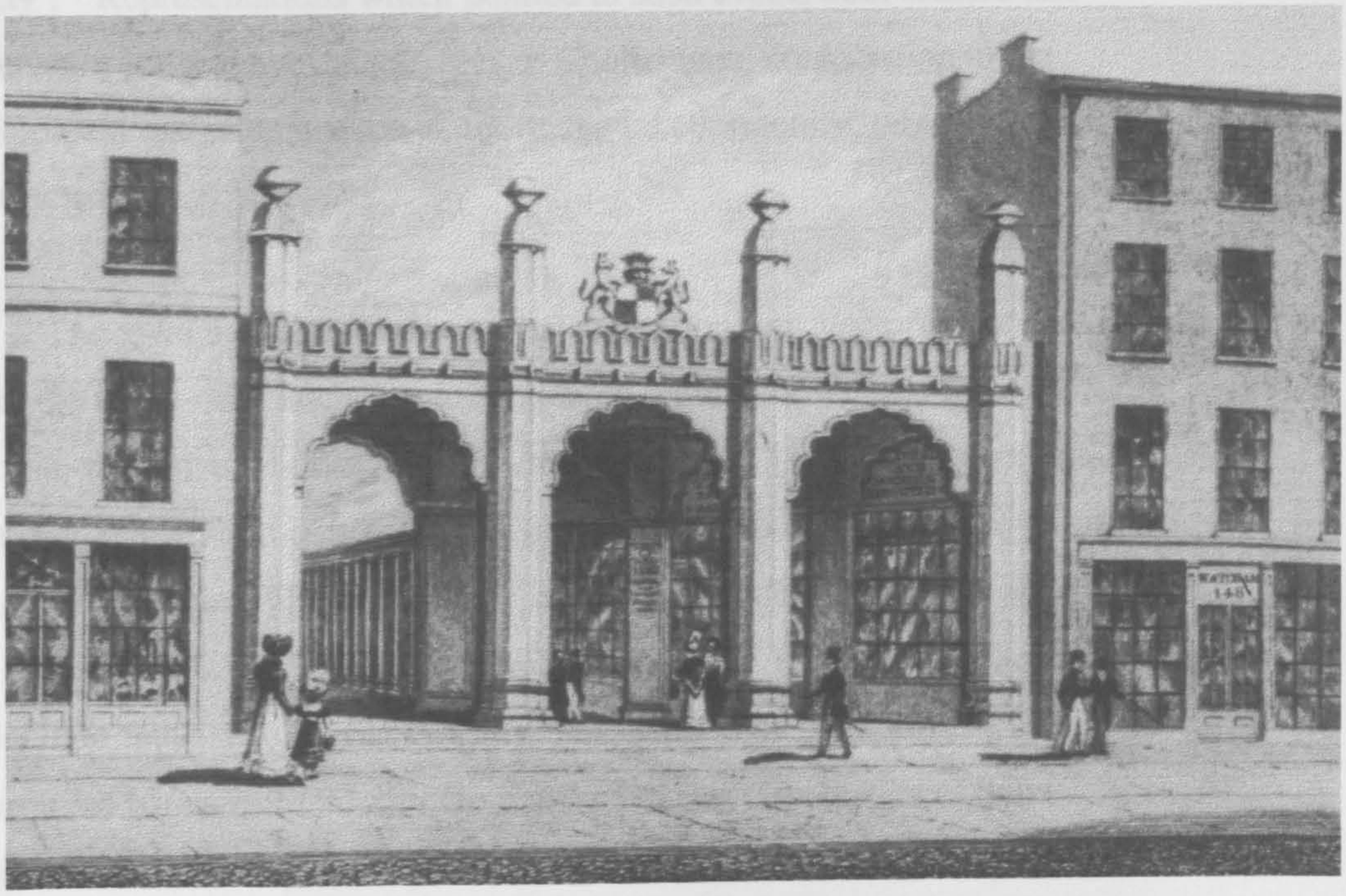

PLATE 16: Moghul Indian Style entrance to the New Market Arcade in Cheltenham High Street, opened 1823.

[Source: Exhibition pamphlet, 'Indian Summer', 28 June - 15 September 1985. Cheltenham Art Gallery and Museums.]

centre, numerous concerts being organized all through the season'.[83] During the nineteenth century, balls and plays were each held two or three times a week, and promenades were taken through the town every day, pointing to the importance attributed to public display, as well as upper-middle-class standards of living and levels of wealth.[84] The influence of repatriates within Cheltenham's society was frequently stressed, highlighting its parties and 'exclusive clubs, at one of which...it was said that the best curries in England were served'.[85] Clearly pointing to notions of visibility, portrayals repeatedly emphasized Cheltenham's associations with the sub-continent, highlighting that in the town 'there is a very large Anglo-Indian society'.[86] Representations which pointed to such events both created and perpetuated imaginative geographies of Cheltenham, contributing to the development and maintenance of an 'imagined community' which was clearly constructed along class lines.

The town's excellent educational reputation was also promoted in order to attract the upper-middle-class returning from India. Cheltenham College, for example, was established by retired army officers, and had strong connections with India. The preparation of boys for the army and the Indian Civil Service was a prime consideration.[87] Pointing to the importance of class to the construction of such communities, the College Commission stated in 1849 that admission was only available to those who moved in a circle of 'gentlemen', and those who had any connections with retail traders were not, 'under any circumstances to be considered'.[88] Similarly, the reputation of Cheltenham Ladies College attracted repatriates to settle in the town in order that their daughters should receive an appropriate education.[89] Again, class and wealth were stressed. The establishment of a girls' school in Cheltenham was first discussed in 1853. At meetings, it was made clear that those involved:

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[83] The Spas of Great Britain, op. cit.; p7.
[84] 'Indian Summer' pamphlet, op. cit..
[85] Ibid..
[86] The Spas of Great Britain, op. cit.; p7. As mentioned earlier, the use of the term 'Anglo-Indian' can be ambiguous. Here it refers to white British people who lived in India, and not to people of mixed British and Indian descent.
[87] Packenham, S., op. cit.; p108.
[88] Ibid.
[89] Clarke, A. K. (1953) A History of the Cheltenham Ladies College, 1853-1953, London: Faber and Faber; p23.

> were concerned primarily for the larger class of girls who were not likely to teach or to follow into any particular calling, but whose influence into womanhood, was wide and pervasive...What lay before them when their schoolroom days were over was a leisured social and domestic life, with time on their hands'.[90]

It seems that the number of people living in Cheltenham who had been repatriated from India was highest from the mid- to late-nineteenth century. However, in 1904 Cheltenham was still referred to by some as the 'Anglo-Indian's paradise', and it has been suggested that the town continued to be influenced by repatriates until well into the 1930s.[91] Certainly, the town's representation in *The Oriental Traveller's Gazette* in 1921 continued to focus on its reputation as an enclave for those returning from the sub-continent. However, for most, life in Cheltenham was perhaps not as opulent - or as visible - as it had been in the nineteenth-century, and the town's reputation as an enclave diminished further over the course of the twentieth-century. Increasingly, repatriates found that the 'imperial aristocratic' lives they had played out in India could not be sustained in Britain, and their class status was disrupted on return. Although it has been suggested that Cheltenham continued to be a destination for repatriates in the 1920s and 1930s, the area increasingly accommodated those suffering from 'genteel' poverty as a range of social, cultural, economic and political conditions transformed middle-class standards of living in Britain.[92] As such, notions of outward respectability, linked to the hope of sustaining little more than the *appearance* of middle-class status, began to replace ambitions concerning the accumulation and public display of vast wealth and prosperity.[93] Although 'the guide books continued to advertise Cheltenham's attractions',[94] the number of repatriates who decided to settle there fell, a situation which would have been linked not only to the Indianization of the I.C.S. and the Indian army (which meant that fewer British men were being recruited), but also to the declining value of pensions which severely restricted the lifestyles of those who returned to live in

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[90] Ibid.; p23.
[91] 'Indian Summer' pamphlet, op. cit.. And see Packenham, S., op. cit..
[92] These issues are discussed more fully in Chapter Six.
[93] Packenham, S., op. cit.; p138.
[94] Ibid.; p138.

Britain. According to a number of commentators, 'by the time the [Second World] War came the place was in a state of incipient decay, described as a 'Town to let'.[95]

(ii) Bedford

> Bedford was...a distinctively middle class town, but its middle classes were themselves unusual, for a large proportion of those who had moved into the town had not come from local villages, or other, less salubrious, towns nearby, or even from London. Many of them were retired army or navy officers, or men who had been in the service of the Crown, who had spent most of their lives abroad, especially in India. In Bedford, they still maintained a way of life with which they had been familiar in the East...They certainly gave Bedford a distinctive air... - unusually cosmopolitan and sophisticated for a small market town'.[96]

As this quotation suggests, Bedford was also an enclave for those returning from India. As with the representation of Cheltenham, the portrayal of Bedford was linked to discourses concerned with physical and mental health and well-being, and was concerned with climate, as well as educational opportunities. Further, Bedford's representation as a site for those returning from India was also linked to particular notions of class. Aiming to attract less wealthy repatriates than those who could settle in Cheltenham, marketing campaigns often focused on the affordability of life in Bedford, and 'it was said with some truth that the wealthier service people retired to Cheltenham, the poorer to Bedford'.[97] Pointing to the materiality of imaginative geographies of return, the town developed a reputation as an enclave for those with little or no private income, and repatriates in Bedford were characterized by their lower social standing. Although 'society' in Bedford was often just as inflexible as that in Cheltenham, it was neither as exclusive, nor as 'aristocratic'. Although its 'closed circle' was in part reminiscent of that associated with 'imperial aristocratic' lifestyles, and included retired military and naval officers, with their wives and elder children',[98] it was also joined not only by planters, engineers, 'a few of the leading doctors, clergymen and lawyers', but also

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[95] Quoted in Packenham, S., op. cit.; p138. And see 'Indian Summer' pamphlet, op. cit..
[96] Smart, R. (1982) A History of a Froebal College and its Schools, Bedford: Bedford Training College Publication Committee; p1.
[97] Linnell C D (1959-60) Late Victorian Bedford, The Bedfordshire Magazine, Vol. 7, no.51; p80.
[98] Ibid..

by some members of the business community.[99] Despite the selectivity, as well as superiority and snobbery, associated with Bedford's 'society', large sections of its membership would have been formally excluded from Cheltenham's schools, as well as by its upper-middle-class society.[100] In this way, although many of Bedford's repatriates 'had connections with noble families, they had little intercourse with the 'county' families, who looked down on them as proud and poor'.[101] Moreover, a distinct geography of return was reflected within Bedford itself, as specific streets, for example in the 'Saints' district, were associated with those who had come home from India. Personal recollections frequently highlight details of repatriation at the scale of the household, in many cases stressing a material focus as they emphasize the domestic details of return. In this way, geographies of return were clearly identifiable at a number of scales, and were often divided in respect of wealth and class status. Connected to such issues, geographies of repatriation were also distinctively gendered. Due to the relatively low cost of living, there was a high proportion of army widows in Bedford, many of whom were associated with varying degrees of poverty, and who were often represented in derogatory ways which constructed them as figures of fun.[102] In this way, critical understandings of repatriation concerned with Bedford shift away from a focus on wealth accumulation and opulence, suggesting that for many life there was often accompanied by notions of financial shortages and want.[103] Despite this, however (as the quotation above suggests), notions of public display and prestige at some level often remained important to those returning home, who often saw themselves as superior to other people living in Bedford.

Representations of Bedford as a site for those returning from India focused on a range of issues. It has been suggested that Bedford was first consciously

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[99] Houffe, S. (1969) The Villa Architecture of Bedford: Part II, Family Residences, 1860-1900, The Bedfordshire Magazine, Vol. 12, no, 91; p103.
[100] Linnell, C. D., op. cit.; p80.
[101] Ibid..
[102] The reputation of the so-called 'Bedford Mater' is discussed later in this section. Anonymous, The Bedford Mater, The Bedfordshire Times and Independent; Friday March 12th, 1909.
[103] Patricia Bell (Bedfordshire's County Archivist until the late-1970s) has spent considerable time locating a range of personal material concerned with repatriation to Bedford. Focusing very much at the scale of the household, she has also searched through census records in order to identify houses (and by extension, areas), which were occupied by people who had connections with India. Refer to Bedfordshire Record Office, listing CRT 130/Bedford, particularly items 188, 189 and 191. And see Bell, P. (1978) Aspects of Anglo-Indian Bedford, Bedfordshire Historical Record Society, Vol. 57,

portrayed to those living in India in 1888, when its Mayor, Joshua Hawkins, spoke publicly about the area's schools, suggesting that they could be of national benefit to 'that numerous body of public servants who have passed their lives...abroad in the public service, and alas in the case of many whom, their silver is apt to deteriorate to copper before it gets home'.[104] Building on this, 'most other publications after Joshua Hawkins' advertizing campaigns in 1888 and 1889 do show clearly a military and colonial bias'.[105] Bedford's educational facilities were fundamental to its development as a centre for those returning from India. The town was the beneficiary of a charity, The Harpur Trust, which was used to heavily subsidize local education for boys and girls as both boarders and as 'day' pupils.[106] In the 1880s, for example, tuition fees for day boys ranged from £12.0 - 4.0 per year. As such, Bedford 'was just the place to live in if one had children to educate cheaply but well, and to send them to as boarders if one worked abroad'.[107] C. D. Linnell, for example, remembers that in a class of about 30 boys at Bedford Modern School in the 1880s, 'there were seventeen who had been born in our 'Great Dependency', sons of the large colony of soldiers, sailors, planters and officials who had spent their working lives in India and settled in Bedford'.[108] As well as being 'affordable', it was also significant that the boys' schools encouraged many of their students to follow careers as either civilian or military officers in India, and trained boys directly for entrance into Sandhurst or Woolwich.[109] As such, by the end of the nineteenth-century, the schools were renowned for 'sending a steady stream of officers' to India, as well as elsewhere in the empire.[110] Stressing the perceived importance of the contribution Bedford's schools made to the maintenance, security and administration of Britain's imperial boundaries, King Edward VII stated in his response to an address from Bedford's Mayor in 1909 that:

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p181-203.

[104] Joshua Hawkins, reported in the Bedfordshire Mercury, 13th July 1988, and cited in Bell, P. (1978), op. cit..

[105] Ibid.; p197.

[106] There were two boys schools - the Grammar School (now Bedford School) and the Modern School. There were no girls schools of a similar standard until the early 1880s, at which time two were established, the High School and the Girls' Modern School (now known as the Dame Alice Harpur School). Smart, R., op. cit..

[107] Conisbee, L. R., (1964) Bedford: Bedford Modern School, Bedford: L. R. Conisbee; p34.

[108] Linnell, C. D., op. cit.; p80.

[109] Ibid..

[110] Ibid..

> I congratulate you upon the signal instance of munificence to which you owe your famous schools, and upon their present prosperity. I recognise how much those of you who have been trained in them have contributed both to the administration and defence of my empire'.[111]

In 1917-18, all four schools began to offer a limited amount of free places, so a number of pupils with different social backgrounds from the majority began to attend them. These students were added to the distinct hierarchies, based on notions of class and wealth, which were constructed in both the girls' and boy's schools in Bedford. Social standing and superiority ranked children so that:

> Boarders were the elite; this was so even at the girls' Modern School, where they were fewest; some of these girls were conscious of their connection with the British Raj in an Empire on which the sun never set, and behaved accordingly. Next came the town fee-paying students, of whom many came from Anglo-Indian families who had come to Bedford for education...Then there were those who held free places...Last of all were the country boys and girls.[112]

However, it was not only the low-cost of education in Bedford which was stressed. In common with the representation of a number of towns and cities, the area was also discussed in terms of its 'dry and healthy climate (both rainfall and death rate being among the lowest in the country)', suggesting that it was these reasons, 'which draw its residents, a high proportion of whom have been in civil and military employment overseas'.[113] A range of representations also pointed to 'the advantages of Bedford as a residential centre'.[114] It was emphasized that whilst the accommodation to be found there was of a high standard, it was also considered to be affordable. In this respect, the town's policy concerning house building was to 'provide suitable accommodation, especially as to bedrooms, for families of moderate means'.[115] Moreover, reflecting various discourses concerned with the imaginative construction of home in Britain, it was stated that 'the houses are mostly of villa type, either detached or semi-detached, and are of picturesque and

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[111] Bell, P., op. cit.; p199.
[112] Godber, J. (1973) Bedford: The Harpur Trust, 1552-1973, The Harpur Trust; p115.
[113] Bedford School Prospectus, 1939.
[114] Bedford Trade Protection Society, Bedford Town and Bedford Schools, 1926 edition. Bedford: Sidney Press; p31.
[115] Ibid.; p34.

varied design. There are gardens, often of considerable size...The streets are wide, and many of them are planted with trees'.[116]

The importance of living in an area close to others repatriated from India was also stressed, so that Bedford's reputation as an enclave was frequently highlighted. A brochure from 1913, for example, constructed Bedford's 'society' as 'just what Anglo-Indians have been accustomed to, and therefore what they want'.[117] As the account continued:

> In many places in the neighbourhood of London the unfortunate retired officer finds himself with no companionship to his taste during the greater part of the day; the men go off to their business in town, and only return in the evening. This is not the case in Bedford, where birds of this kind have flocked together. Paterfamilias has no difficulty about finding kindred spirits to play golf, bridge, or row, or do whatever he has a mind to.[118]

Accounts such as these often excluded women returning from India, and were concerned with the ability of men to be able to fraternize, focusing particularly on the opportunities to form social networks with those with similar life histories and geographies. For example, Bedford's Town and Country Club (established in 1885), was also portrayed as a site where those returning from India could meet to socialize. However, this club was established as an exclusively male space, and it still only permits women through invitation from its male membership for attendance at specific events.[119] However, it was also suggested that while 'for the gentlemen there was bridge at the clubs', 'ladies' could enjoy 'a decorous tea among the palms of the newly-opened Cadena Rooms.'[120] Further, social networks for women were often centred on the home. For example, a number of recollections suggest that 'at homes' seem to have been popular among female repatriates living in Bedford.[121] Forming an important part of their lives there, such events would

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[116] Ibid.; p34-35.
[117] C J Maltby, Bedford as Seen by the Anglo-Indian, in Bedford Town and Bedford Schools, 1913 edition. Bedford Trade Protection Society.
[118] Ibid..
[119] Personal communication with James Collett-White (Bedfordshire County Archivist); 3rd August 1998.
[120] Houffe, S., op. cit.; p141.
[121] Letter from Miss Spankie to Patricia Bell, 20th June 1980; CRT 130 Bedford/191; Irving, B. (1959) Our Road, The Bedfordshire Magazine, Vol. 6, no. 46.

have enabled women to form friendships, and share experiences, with others who had returned from India.

Within Bedford a number of streets and roads developed reputations as particular enclaves for those returning from India, including a location known as the 'Saints' district, as well as Glebe Road and The Crescent.[122] They were not only renowned as areas of high quality housing at relatively affordable prices, but were also situated near to Bedford's four main schools. Further, they soon became well known as popular sites for repatriation, encouraging others to move to them. Glebe Road, for example, consisted of seventeen semi-detached houses built in the 1870s (Plate 17):

> They were inhabited, with hardly an exception, by people of limited means who had come to Bedford to educate their children. Some of the mothers were widows, some of the fathers ex-army officers. Most of them had several children...I doubt whether the rent of any house exceeded £35.[123]

The 'Saints' district was also well known as an enclave for those repatriated from India (Plate 18).[124] There, Beryl Irving has indicated the significance of Indian internal decorations to those repatriated from India. Stressing the importance of displaying reminders of the sub-continent, she has alluded to connections with nabobs, although such exhibitions were on a significantly reduced scale.[125] She has written:

> Our houses were large enough to accommodate an Edwardian number of young, and under their gables, the Anglo-Indians were trying to make ends meet with dignity...We, the lordly ones, were of those English families who had served their country in India in one way or another, but chiefly in the army. Our houses were crammed with Benares tables, strings of little carved elephants, placid Buddhas, and malevolent gods.[126]

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[122] The 'Saints' district included St. Andrew's Road, St. Michael's Road, St. Augustine's Road, St. George's Road, St. Alban Road and St. Edmund Road.
[123] Mann, H. E. (1955) The Newcomers, The Bedfordshire Magazine, Vol. 4, no. 27; p93. By way of comparison, annual boarding fees at Cheltenham College in 1849 were £35.
[124] Bell, P., op. cit.; p188.
[125] Also refer to Morris, J. (1997), op. cit..
[126] Irving, B., op. cit.; p225.

PLATE 17: Glebe Road, Bedford.
[Source: Author's Collection]

PLATE 18: St. Michael's Road, Bedford.
[Source: Author's Collection]

As this suggests, feelings of superiority were common among those who had returned from India, and they often seemed 'proud and distant' to the rest of the population of Bedford, who referred to them, disparagingly, as 'squatters'.[127] Repatriates were generally not welcomed by Bedfordians, who considered their 'society' to be 'very exclusive, not to say snobbish',[128] and were often 'enraged that the children of...such intruders should enjoy benefits intended for Bedfordians alone'.[129] Such hostility exacerbated the need for repatriates to be located close to others from India.[130] Further, although situated in a different context, the resentment and animosity shown by Bedfordians is reminiscent of the unwelcoming reaction which was evoked in respect of nabobs returning home in the eighteenth century. Contributing to the alienation of those who had not spent long periods of time in the sub-continent, it has been suggested that as late as the 1920s such areas were characterized by repatriates' use of specific practices and vocabulary. For example:

> you invited friends to 'tiffin' rather than to lunch; you said you were going down to 'the bazaar' when you were going shopping in the High Street; you had friends to mid-morning tea (a.m. tea); washing was 'dhobi'; a tailor 'derzi'.[131]

However, financial hardship was associated with repatriates in some areas of Bedford, particularly in respect of the 'Saints' district, where families often lived in various degrees of poverty. Miss Spankie, for example, was conscious of the small size of the house where she lived with her mother in St. Michael's Road at the beginning of the twentieth century. Also pointing to the importance of 'at home' days which were held once a fortnight, she remembers that there was only enough space in the hall for a hallstand (made of bamboo, which was both affordable and easy to move),[132] and a 'very small table to take the silver tray for calling cards'. She stresses that although 'army wives and widows brought no furniture to the town', they generally acquired sufficient amounts, although it was

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[127] Smart, R., op. cit.; p1.
[128] Linnell, C. D., op. cit.; p80.
[129] Conisbee, L. R., op. cit.; p26.
[130] Ibid.; p1.
[131] Bell, P., op. cit.; p191. In contrast to the British tradition of having 'tea' in the afternoon, in India it was more often undertaken in the morning due to the intense heat later in the day.
[132] It is also possible that bamboo furniture was favoured because of its widespread use in India,

'probably cheap and nasty'.[133] However, also pointing to the poverty frequently associated with the occupants of these areas, it was rumoured that some 'houses might have respectable furniture in the hall and reception room, but orange boxes in the bedrooms'.[134] Further, in sharp contrast to those who were associated with aristocratic ideas of wealth and success upon their repatriation from India, it was not uncommon for families to receive incomes which did not allow them to go on holiday. However, in attempts to create and sustain a particular image associated with bourgeois standards of living, some made arrangements for it to appear as though they could. For example:

> Local tradition said that in summer, when the better off did go to the sea or the country, those who could not afford to leave Bedford closed up the house at the front, as if away, and lived secluded at the back.[135]

In such ways, repatriates could at least maintain the *appearance* of middle-class gentility, associated with particular notions of behaviour, status and authority, and which many considered to be vital to their subjectivity, as well as their formal position in society. Linked to ideas concerned with the construction of a particular image, 'every morning between 11 and 12.30 there was a regular parade of admirals, generals, colonels and other officers with their ladies up and down High Street'.[136] Although such practices pointed to feelings of superiority associated with return from the sub-continent, and the parading repatriates were 'all well turned out', they were also 'wretchedly poor, for families were large and pensions small'. However, as with more opulent displays of return, such public exhibitions do suggest that people continued to be proud of their connections with India.

Not all repatriates in Bedford suffered from financial hardship, and it is perhaps more appropriate to consider issues of 'genteel' poverty in respect of most. For example, towards the end of the nineteenth century, most of the residents of Glebe Road expected to have the help of servants. Indeed:

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making it familiar to these women.

[133] Letter from Miss R. Spankie to Patricia Bell, 20th June 1980; CRT 130 Bedford/191. Original emphasis.

[134] Personal correspondence from Patricia Bell, 10th August 1998.

[135] Ibid..

[136] Linnell, C. D., op. cit.; p80.

> there were often two, even in small houses, the familiar combination of cook and housemaid. A caller would have been surprised had the door not been opened by a woman in a print dress in the morning or a woman in a dark dress and white cap and apron in the afternoon.[137]

Similarly, Miss Spankie remembers that 'in those old days in Bedford we all had some domestic help, generally 'sleeping in'.[138] Further, pointing to the ways in which middle-class lifestyles changed over the first half of the twentieth-century, Beryl Irving recollected that "At Home' days were rife. Everyone could afford that sort of thing then, for they kept two servants however hard-up they were, and did not dream that a time would come when callers would find them doing their own chores'.[139]

However, the relatively low cost of living associated with Bedford - its affordable schools as well as adequate housing - coupled with its renown as an enclave for those returning from India, meant that those repatriates who were among the worst off often chose to settle there. This resulted in distinctively gendered geographies of repatriation, as a significant number of widows moved to Bedford, and the town became recognized as a favourable location for them. Further, such women acquired a reputation which associated them not only with severe financial hardship, but, based on strict hierarchies of class, they were also stigmatized in respect of their social status, and were frequently portrayed as failing to achieve the middle-class position to which they had inappropriately categorized themselves as belonging. The Rev. James Campbell,[140] for example, was 'reputed to have said that the town was full of 'widows living on a herring in order to be able to say they had a son in the army".[141] Characterized as the 'Bedford Mater', it was suggested that there:

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[137] Mann, H. E., op. cit.; p93-94.
[138] Letter from Miss R. Spankie to Patricia Bell, 20th June 1980; op. cit.. Original emphasis.
[139] Irving, B., op. cit.; p227. And see Houffe, S. (1970) The Villa Architecture of Bedford, III, M H Baillie Scott 1895-1914, The Bedfordshire Magazine, Vol.12 no. 92; p141-146. As he points out, in 1910, 'Bedford had reached its high point as the home of the conservative, the leisured and the retired. The Directory of its quiet shady streets reads like an Army List, Major-Generals, Colonels and a sprinkling of navel officers occupied its big solid houses, which, staffed by a host of bustling servants, were enjoying their hey-day'; p141.
[140] Rev. Campbell was associated with St. Peters and St Andrews parish from 1910 to 1913.
[141] Letter from Miss R. Spankie to Patricia Bell, 20th June 1980; op. cit..

> Never lived a more maligned person than that unique product of the Harpur Trust, the Bedford Mater. Driven by adverse circumstances to Bedford...She is mother and father to combined to her little flock, and has unaided to learn by painful experience the intricacies of Rents, Taxes, Rates and School Fees.[142]

Further, it was not unusual for two women whose husbands were dead 'to take a house between them where their children, for the time being, formed one family'.[143] Such women were often caricatured, and although accounts agreed that widows were attempting to simulate a standard of living that was beyond their means, criticisms were not consistent in their identification or representation of specific faults. For example, it was said by some that 'boys went short of food to enable their mothers to buy the dress suits they were expected to wear at dances and Christmas parties'.[144] Others, however, suggested that in order:

> to buy [her son] blazers, colours, and all that pertains to his dignity as a Public School Boy, she will forgo the pretty clothes and daintinesses her soul craves for, and all amusements save Afternoon Teas, where she can talk of him, and perhaps a little - a very little - Bridge and whist.[145]

The numbers of those who had civilian and military connections with the sub-continent increased from the 1880s to 1914. However, according to Patricia Bell, although 'from 1918 to the outbreak of the Second world War in 1939, something remained of the service ethos and tone in the life of and traditions of both town and schools...there was no more conscious expansion'.[146] Further, according to C D Linnell, 'old Bedford' began to die in the 1890s, although 'amidst this veritable revolution the Squatters somehow held their own, nor did they surrender their identity until they were overwhelmed in the wake of development and change which followed the Great War'.[147] As such, accounts question whether geographies of return, previously clearly identifiable in Bedford at a number of scales, were present in the town from the 1920s onwards.

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[142] Anonymous, The Bedford Mater, op. cit..
[143] Linnell, C. D., op. cit.; p80.
[144] Ibid.; p80.
[145] Anonymous, The Bedford Mater, op. cit...
[146] Bell, P., op. cit.; p181.
[147] Linnell, C. D., op. cit.; p83.

Conclusions

From the eighteenth century, life for the white, British, middle-class in India was influenced by the importance of returning home. Prior to the employment of salaried officers, such returns were often based around the public display of accumulated wealth, success and ambition. Although incomes reduced the ability for repatriates to flaunt their connections with the sub-continent in such obvious and material ways, Britain's position as home remained vital to those in India. Representations of the home-land constructed imaginative geographies which were based on specific themes, emphasizing the landscape as picturesque and rural, and attempting to encourage its association with historicity and authenticity. Further, imaginative constructions of home were reflected in material geographies of return, as significant numbers of repatriates settled in towns such as Bedford and Cheltenham. Moreover, despite fundamental changes which meant that repatriates were increasingly unable to maintain their 'aristocratic' lifestyles once they were in Britain, it remained important to many to exhibit their connections with India, often in the belief that they were superior to other people at home. As such, closely connected to notions of social standing, prestige and wealth, sites of repatriation also demonstrated clear spatial divisions based on class and gender. Gender divisions were also reflected in representations of return, which often prioritized discussion of the requirements of male repatriates, stressing their need to be able to socialize with others in the same position. If female repatriates were considered, their needs were often considered to be very different from those of men, and tended to depict women in domesticated settings such as homes.

Geographies of repatriation seem to have become less distinct throughout the first half of the twentieth-century, and have been depicted as being in marked decline by the end of the 1920s. Numbers of repatriates fell steadily from this time, as the Indianization of both civilian and military organizations in the sub-continent meant that fewer British men were recruited. Further, women and men were repatriated on pensions that were rapidly devaluing, not only as the cost of living in Britain increased, but also as payments remained fixed at nineteenth century levels. In addition, changing middle-class structures meant that many were increasingly

positioned outside of British 'society'. Significantly, the 'imperial aristocratic' lifestyles of the British middle-class in India could not be transported over space, and the class status of repatriates was disrupted on return. As British imperial power became increasingly equivocal, the reduction in repatriates' wealth and class status contributed to a reduction in the prestige attributed to those who were returning. However, despite the increasing invisibility of repatriates, both women and men continued to come to settle in Britain every year. Further, at Independence in 1947, around 504 men were repatriated to Britain from the I.C.S.,[148] as well as hundreds of officers from the Indian army, plus the wives and children of those who were married. Despite, or perhaps because of, their apparent invisibility, the implications of returning home to Britain for those who were repatriated throughout this time require detailed consideration. In this respect, issues concerned with the repatriation of women from India over the period 1915 to 1947 are considered throughout the rest of this thesis. In the following chapter I begin to explore the co-existence of notions of home and belonging which existed for many women living in India. In order to do so, I focus on the complex patterns of mobility and dwelling demonstrated by women and girls as they travelled between Britain and India for a variety of reasons.

[148] Treasury meeting, 19.02. 1947.

CHAPTER FOUR

IMPERIALISM, TRAVEL AND DOMESTICITY: VISITING THE HOME-LAND

Introduction

The reflections of British women who spent prolonged periods living in India often reveal complex patterns of travel and dwelling. Whilst resident in the sub-continent, the wives of army officers and civil servants frequently moved house due to the work commitments of their husbands. Many also travelled around India with their spouses on official 'tours'. Typically, they spent periods of short leave voyaging through India, as well as Asia more widely. Regular journeys were also made to hill stations, where middle-class wives could live away from the hot weather of the plains. Significantly, women would also typically return home to Britain on a number of occasions. They would accompany their husband on his home-leave for example, or (if they had any), visit their children. Imperial discourses concerning the physical, moral and intellectual welfare of children dictated that from the age of five or six they be educated in Britain. Women also usually travelled home for the final stages of pregnancy, and during periods of ill-health. Such extensive movement not only *within* India, but also *between* India and Britain, points to the possibilities for the co-existence of home as well as for multiple senses of belonging. Equally possible, however, was the existence of multiple sites of homelessness and alienation. Marking a significant juncture, women were able to travel home to Britain more frequently after 1925, when the government granted each officer, and his wife, four free passages over the length of his service.[1] Critically, the increased frequency with which women were able to travel between Britain and India could encourage the construction and maintenance of co-existing notions of home. Whilst on such visits, accommodation was usually found with relatives as salaries restricted the ownership of property in Britain while living in the sub-continent, and this lack of a physical home existed in sharp

[1] Royal Commission on the Superior Civil Services in India, Cmd., 2128; op. cit..

contrast to Britain's construction and representation as such. As visitors and guests, the intention of long-leave as a time of revitalization and rest was emphasized. Day-to-day concerns of domesticity, house-keeping and home-making were generally not the responsibility of women visiting Britain.

Details of long-leave are often excluded from the personal texts and reminiscences of women who lived in India themselves.[2] It is important to consider the influences of repeated travel to and from Britain upon women's notions of home. Further, I suggest that the consideration of return visits home had broader significance as they provided the basis on which girls' and women's lived experiences of Britain were constructed, as well as the foundation for expectations of repatriation. In the first section I begin by considering imperial debates surrounding proposals to alter regulations stipulating the frequency and duration of long-leave. Such discussions were framed in terms of financial hardship, health and efficiency, and foreground the fundamental necessity of returning home. The second section then explores narratives of home-leave, discussing women's activities and experiences whilst visiting Britain. Despite financial difficulties, it remained for many a time of relaxation and leisure. It was also a time of high mobility. Movement between friends, relatives and various rented accommodation was frequent, and travel around Europe was also common. The third section of the chapter is concerned with the transportation of children from India to Britain. I discuss childhood memories of home, belonging and rootedness, and offer a critical and contextual analysis of accounts which offer children's impressions of the home-land. I end the chapter with a discussion of their sense of place upon return to India as young women, reflecting on narratives which stress notions of familiarity and a sense of connectivity with the sub-continent.

Throughout this chapter I am concerned with a number of recurring themes. The first of these is the fluidity of notions of home and its negotiation over both time and space, considering the construction of senses of belonging and rootedness. Significantly, I consider dominant imperial discourses which reflected

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[2] I reflect on the tendency for women to exclude details of home-leave from their personal accounts in section two of this chapter.

the perceived necessity of maintaining unequivocal notions of Britain as home to the British living in India. Linked to this, I also explore the influences of travel both on notions of home and the re-construction of subjectivity. Third, I examine the co-existence of particular imagined and lived geographies of Britain in order to reflect, in the following chapter, on women's expectations concerning repatriation. I also reflect on the implications of paid passages home, granted from 1925, for each of these themes.

1. Maintaining Imperial Vigour: Long-leave and passage entitlement

Indian Civil Servants and army officers were granted periods of both short- and long-leave.[3] The most common type of short-leave was referred to as 'privilege leave', and was intended to provide officers with a break from their work. In addition, such men were entitled to further limited periods of short-leave for other reasons, such as studying or taking examinations. Each officer was entitled to one month of privilege leave in each active year of service and, importantly, was entitled to receive full pay. After 33 months service, short-leave could be accumulated to a maximum of four months (although prior to 1915 this had been restricted to three), and could be taken either in or beyond India.[4] Taken within India, short-leave often consisted of a few weeks at a hill station such as Simla or Darjeeling (Figure 2 represents the location of British hill stations in India). Here, women and men were able to relax in a socially- and culturally-constructed environment which closely mimicked upper middle-class British ideals. Further, the cooler climate was considered more appropriate to apparently temperate British attitudes and mentalities, as well as to their physical constitution, than those experienced in other parts of India.[5] Desiree Battye was based in north-west India with her husband, Stuart, who was an army officer. As she summarized in her memoir, such visits to hill stations were seen as:

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[3] Royal Commission on the Public Services in India, Cmd. 8382, op. cit.; p184.
[4] Royal Commission on the Public Services in India, Cmd. 8382, op. cit.; p49.
[5] See Ernst, W. (1991) Mad Tales from the Raj: The European Insane in British India, 1800-1858, London: Routledge. And see the brief introduction to hill stations in Chapter 2, as well as the discussion that follows here.

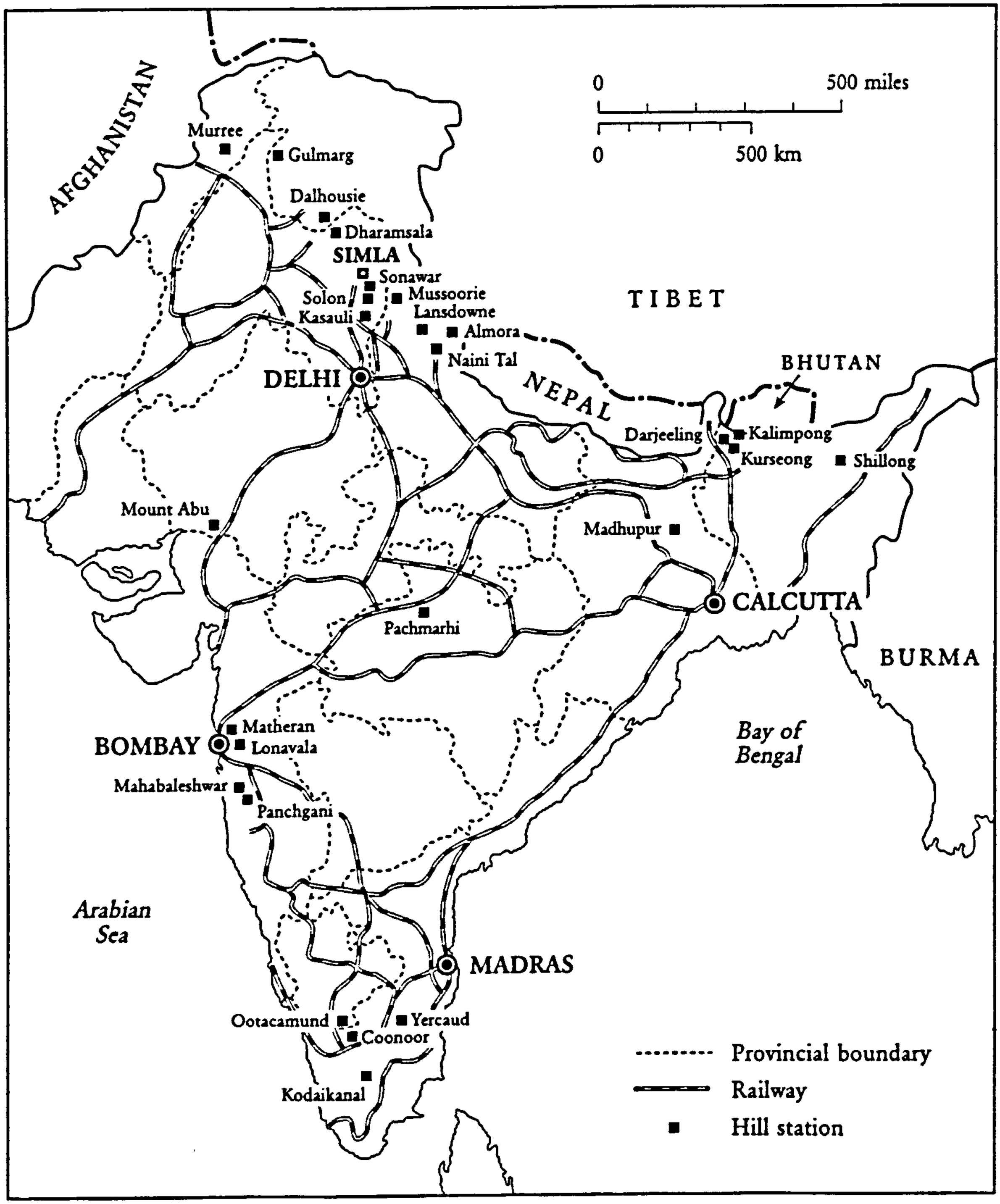

FIGURE 2: Hill Stations in British India.

[Source: Kennedy, D. (1996) The Magic Mountains: Hill Stations and the British Raj, Berkeley: University of California Press]

> a break from working in the hot weather when the plains became an inferno till the monsoon broke when things were not all that much better, the dampness enervating, everything leather becoming coated with green mildew overnight causing endless cleaning of boots and equipment.[6]

However, such women did not only travel within India when their husbands were on leave. Many travelled to the hills unaccompanied, sometimes taking their children with them, and often living there for several months at a time. Mildred Archer, for example, lived in a number of towns and villages in Bihar with her husband, William, who was a member of the I.C.S., from October 1934 until early in 1948 (Plate 19). In the 'hot weathers' of the early 1940s, concerned for her children's health, she travelled to Mussoorrie for up to four months each year. Reflecting a certain reluctance to do this, and justifying her movements by drawing on discourses of motherhood and domesticity, she says:

> Until then I had always sworn that I would not leave my husband and go to the Hills, nor would I if I had been alone. But when in the hot weather the children became ill with tummy troubles, and developed mango boils and prickly heat which easily became septic, I succumbed like many other mothers before me and retreated to the Hills.[7]

Alternatively, short-leave could be taken out of India. Advice concerning travel to and from, as well as within, India were the focus of books such as those by Thomas Cook & Son.[8] Imperial anxiety concerning the health of British women and men living in India often focused on the perceived threat of the high temperatures and humidity found within the sub-continent.[9] However, in an interesting reversal of such anxiety, guide books offered advice not only to those who were planning journeys away on short-leave, but also to 'those to whom a visit to England during the winter months is inadvisable'.[10] Tours organized by Thomas Cook lasted from

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[6] Battye, D., (undated) Miss-Sahib. CSAS, Mrs S Battye: p94-95.
[7] Archer, W. & A. (1994) India Served and Observed, British Association for Cemeteries in South Asia: London; p96.
[8] Cook, T. & Son (1891): India: Information for Travellers and Residents, London: Thomas Cook and Son. Subsequent editions were published frequently, so that the version printed in 1924 was at least the 9th edition. Throughout this time, the texts' content changed little.
[9] These issues are discussed more fully later in this chapter.
[10] Cook, T. & Son (1891), ibid.; p66.

PLATE 19: Mildred Archer being transported to the Naga hills in 1947.
[Source: Archer, W. & A. (1994) India Served and Observed, London: BACSA]

six weeks to three months. Shorter voyages could consist of a round-trip from Bombay to Egypt and might include a trip to the pyramids, whilst longer journeys could include visits to Palestine, Cyprus, Turkey and Greece.

Short-leave could also be used in conjunction with long-leave and imperial discourses stressed the necessity of visiting the home-land. It had long been considered that 'some 'mysterious transformation'...affected Westerners once they proceeded East of Suez'.[11] Further,

> The Indian climate was believed to be inhospitable and dangerous. It got in the skins and nerves of those who were reared under a less fiercely burning sun, under the gentle tepid drizzle of maritime conditions. The enduring 'solar myth' emerged, of the power of 'heat and dust' to set off a whole range of nagging and unsalubrious ailments and impediments, from prickly heat to insubordination, from heat-stroke to adultery and manslaughter, depression and paralysis, nervous exhaustion, irritability and neurasthenia.[12]

Social and cultural conditions were also considered to be dangerous and damaging, and it was advocated that there was no better antidote than going home. Initiated by the East India Company early in the nineteenth-century, the custom of encouraging higher-class civilian and military officers to visit Britain was not only motivated by a concern for individuals' health. Moreover, such 'transformations' were considered to be a potential risk to imperial welfare, as 'Europeans in India were meant to be visible in public only as a 'formidable' ruling elite, and therefore not in a state of sickness, destitution, madness or infirmity'.[13] Regular visits to Britain, it was hoped, would ensure that such a situation did not arise.[14]

British officials and wives generally spent their furlough at home, as well as travelling there and back. Until 1915, rules concerning long-leave stated that it had to be taken on reduced pay, equivalent to half the officer's current salary. It was

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[11] Ernst, W. (1991), op. cit.; p1.
[12] Ibid.; p162.
[13] Ibid.; p37.
[14] If a European civilian or military officer was diagnosed as 'insane' in India, it was standard practice in the nineteenth-century for them to initially be made 'invisible' through their institutionalization in an asylum. If they had not recovered within 12 months, they would be shipped home where (a) they could cause no further embarrassment in India, and (b) it was hoped they might make a recovery. Refer to Ernst, W. (1991), op. cit..

also subject to conditions which regulated both the total leave available to an officer, and the amount which could be taken at any one time.[15] When long-leave was taken in conjunction with short-leave it was known as combined leave, and was subject to a minimum duration of six months and to a maximum of two years.[16] There were a number of issues, however, which were considered unsatisfactory about this system. This resulted in the establishment of the Royal Commission on the Public Services in India in 1912, presided over by Lord Islington, and otherwise known as the Islington Commission.

Anxiety concerning long-leave focused on the regulation that all furlough be taken on reduced pay. Many officers found it financially impossible to take leave in 'England'[17] on these conditions, and it was felt that an inability to return home caused considerable tension and unease between British officials. Linked to this, it was hoped that an adjustment to the leave-taking rules would change the custom of taking furlough of two years' duration, reported by the Islington Commission as 'a practice which has come down from an age when there were fewer railways and the sea journey to India took longer than it now does'.[18] A tradition of infrequent but prolonged leave was being maintained by the necessity to limit expenditure on passages to and from Britain. This was considered to be damaging to British rule in India as the capability of officers returning after such a protracted absence was questioned. However, whilst considering options for reform it was imperative not to lose sight both of the necessity of visiting the home-land (for women and children, as well as serving officials), and that 'a married man with a family requires to be able to take at least six months' leave to make it worth his while to go to Europe'.[19] Following recommendations made by the Islington Commission, from 1915 it became possible to take up to eight months leave on full

[15] Royal Commission on the Public Services in India, Cmd. 8382, op. cit.; p49. The Islington Commission was established in 1912, and their Report was signed in August 1915. However, as a result of the First World War, publication was delayed until 1917, when it was already considered by many to be out of date.
[16] Royal Commission on the Public Services in India, Cmd. 8382, op. cit.; p49.
[17] The Commissioners Report consistently refers to England, and not Britain.
[18] Royal Commission on the Public Services in India, Cmd. 8382, op. cit.; p52.
[19] Ibid.; p52. Interestingly, tax regulations operated in such ways that it was also a maximum of six months leave that officers were encouraged to take in Britain. I discuss this in the following section.

pay.[20] Interest free loans, repayable by instalments after the officer's return to duty, were also granted by the Government to cover the cost of passages between India and Britain.

Such changes would have made significant differences to British middle-class families living in India. Although financial assistance for passages operated through a system of loans, for the first time officers were able to take leave on full-pay, reducing the anxiety of many families concerning their expenditure whilst visiting Britain.[21] However, despite these changes, by the beginning of the 1920s anxiety was again being expressed concerning the ability of officers, as well as their wives and children, to travel home to Britain as frequently as was considered desirable for their physical and mental well-being. Further, in August 1917, just four months after the Islington Commission had been published, the Secretary of State announced that the policy of His Majesty's Government was that of:

> the increasing association of Indians in every branch of the administration and the gradual development of self-governing institutions with a view to the progressive realization of responsible government in India as an integral part of the British Empire.[22]

A detailed enquiry was made into how this might be carried out, resulting in the publication of the Report on Indian Constitution Reforms (the Montague-Chelmsford Report). Out of this report, embodying the constitution of India, a new Government of India Act (1919) emerged. With the explicit aim of increasing the direct involvement of Indians in higher levels of authority, control and administration, it was hoped that the early signs of unrest in the country would be eliminated. 1919 was a crucial year for British imperial rule in India, with Gandhi becoming formally involved in the Indian National Congress, and organizing a

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[20] Royal Commission on the Superior Civil Services in India, Cmd. 2128, op. cit.; p54. The Lee Commission recommended that 'privilege leave' (i.e. short leave on full pay) should be cumulative up to four months. It was also suggested that a total amount of two years' long leave should be commutable into one year's leave on full pay – but not more than six months leave should be commutable at any one time. This, it was argued 'will make it possible, by combining furlough with privilege leave, to take seven months' leave on full pay'. Royal Commission on the Public Services in India, Cmd. 8382, op. cit.; p52-53. The Report of the Lee Commission clarifies that a maximum of eight months leave on full pay was settled on.

[21] I discuss these issues further in the following section.

[22] Royal Commission on the Superior Civil Services in India, Cmd. 2128, op. cit.; p5.

series of protests against British rule which were held at the end of March. Reacting to one such meeting, Brigadier-General Rex Dyer ordered was has become known as the 'Amritsar Massacre' on April 13th. Five days later, Gandhi appealed for calm, and called for the suspension of his campaign. Serious unrest continued throughout much of India, however, and the Raj began to be concerned for its survival.[23] Discontent was reflected by Indian politicians and other officials who felt that the process of Indianization was slow, narrow-minded and intolerant. In 1920, Gandhi called for sustained action from Indian people in the form of non-co-operation, where 'participants were instructed to hand back their titles and decorations, stay away from official levees and ceremonies, remove their children from government schools, boycott the courts, withhold taxes, shun imported goods and have nothing to do with the elections to the new legislative assemblies'.[24] Further, in October 1921, all government servants were asked by Congress to leave their posts. More violent unrest motivated Gandhi to call off the campaign in 1922, but by this time it was clear that the political opponents of British rule were capable of organizing substantial public support. The Government recognized that the political demands being made in the sub-continent by the Indian National Congress meant that further constitutional changes had to be considered, including 'Indianization' of the Civil Service. Hence, the Royal Commission on the Superior Civil Services in India (the Lee Commission), was established in 1922 to consider issues of recruitment and organizational change as well as the general conditions of the service.[25] In respect of the latter, investigations surrounding two related issues are of particular significance to this study: objections concerning the granting of loans to officers to cover the cost of passages, and grievances relating to the regulation of leave rules. Evidence, in respect of all the Commission's interests, was in part collected by two questionnaires which were issued to officials through the I.C.S. Association in each Province.[26] Although the Raj remained intact, it had

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[23] James, L., op. cit.. In particular refer to Part 6, chapter 2, Strong Passion: Amritsar and After 1919-22; p464-490.
[24] Ibid.; p484.
[25] Royal Commission on the Superior Civil Services in India, Cmd. 2128, op. cit.. The Lee Commission was established in 1922, and their report was subsequently published in 1924. The changes concerning leave rules and passage entitlement became effective from 1925.
[26] Question Four of the *Questionnaire on Service Conditions in the All-India Service* was concerned with passage allowances: What are your views with regard to the question of passage allowances for officers in the Services and their families? If such allowances were granted, would you prefer that

been realized that India could not be ruled without the co-operation of its people.[27] British officers in India were not only uncertain of the political future of the sub-continent, they began to resent the attacks made on them by the press, as well as from a range of political circles. This, combined with their 'deteriorating financial condition, produced feelings of anxiety and discontent'.[28] For many, the threat to continuing British rule was a real concern, reflected in anxiety and worry for imperial security. Unequivocal demands for the alteration of regulations to enable officers, as well as their wives and children, to return to home to Britain on a more frequent basis indicated this concern. Further, their insistence both reflected and perpetuated imperial discourses which stressed the links between the ability to return home, and the maintenance of successful imperial rule.

The responses to the Lee Commission questionnaires were gathered by each Association's Honorary Secretary, who subsequently issued a summary to the Commission's investigators. The resulting documents presented an almost unanimous request for the granting of free passages to an officer and his wife, as well as the removal of restrictions which limited the total amount of leave on full pay. Each memorandum reflected similar issues and themes, reflecting and drawing on imperial discourses in order to justify its demands. Arguments were concerned with financial hardship and played on a number of imperial anxieties: responses focused on men and women's reduced 'vigour and efficiency' which, under such straitened circumstances, would result from their inability to return home as often, and for long enough, as was considered necessary or appropriate.[29] As the summary from the United Provinces I.C.S. Association pointed out:

> The Government of India have frequently recognized the need of visits to England if officials are to maintain the necessary standard of health and vigour, and a no less vital consideration is the health of wives and the health and education of children.[30]

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they should take the form of an increase in overseas pay to all officers or the grant of a certain number of passages during an officer's service to himself, his wife and family.
Question Eight sought opinion on conditions of leave: Have you any criticism to make regarding the leave rules?

[27] Ibid..

[28] Royal Commission on the Superior Civil Services in India, Cmd. 2128, op. cit.; p6.

[29] Unpublished evidence presented by the Honorary Secretary of the United Provinces Indian Civil Service Association (November 1923). OIOC; Q/13/17/316.

[30] Ibid..

The I.C.S. memorandums stressed the rise in the cost of living and the depreciation of the rupee, as well as the financial implications of repeated long-distance travel. Appropriating arguments posed previously by the Islington Commission, a number of responses also cited as 'evidence' for their case the example set by European businesses established in India. According to such accounts, merchants provided an excellent precedent by providing officers and their family with a passage home every four years. Further, it was quoted that officials working in a number of other British colonies were offered a passage allowance by the British Government.[31]

Officers themselves raised questions concerning their ability, as well as that of their families, to relax and recuperate in Britain while limited finances restricted their lifestyle, including the type of housing and quality of servants available to them, and with the constant anxiety of incurring large debts.[32] Accounts stressed that 'leave should be a period of recreation', pointing to the provision of half-pay as 'a totally inadequate provision with which to face the present cost of living at Home'.[33] The 'evidence' presented by the I.C.S. Association in Madras explicitly addressed the paradoxical nature of the situation many officers were in: if they responded to dominant imperial discourses that insist they visit the home-land, they risked putting themselves in serious financial difficulty. Pointing to the system of passage advances, its memorandum suggested that:

> This concession has saved the health of many who would otherwise have been unable to go home; but at the same time it has helped in the general impoverishment of the services by encouraging men to take leave which under present conditions they may need but cannot really afford.[34]

Responses repeatedly reflected discourses which stressed the absolute necessity of visiting home, a place constructed as vital to officers, wives and children. In this

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[31] Ibid.; Unpublished evidence presented by the Honorary Secretary of the Assam Indian Civil Service Association (November 1923). OIOC; Q/13/17/616.
[32] Unpublished evidence presented by the Honorary Secretary of the Madras Indian Civil Service Association (November 1923). OIOC; Q/13/15/482.
[33] The United Provinces Indian Civil Service Association, op. cit..
[34] The Madras Indian Civil Service Association, op. cit.

way, submitted 'evidence' was centred around imperial notions of physical and mental health, questioning the efficiency and vigour of those who lived and worked in India for too long. Further, the need for officers to visit the home-land was explicitly linked to notions of successful imperial rule: British men, women and children needed to be fit, competent and capable. Equally, such 'evidence' was informed by, and in turn perpetuated, imperial discourses which represented the necessity of men's ability and duty to 'protect' women and children from dangers associated with India.[35] Both women and children were considered to be at risk in India, and there was a perceived danger of taintedness, corruption and contamination which, if allowed to take hold, would seriously undermine British rule in India.

Perceived as being more susceptible to the heat, humidity and general atmosphere of India than the male officers, debates suggested that women had to travel either to the hills or home more frequently than their husbands. In a book concerned with defending the image of British women living in India to their 'sisters' at home, Maud Diver wrote:

> It is a known fact that the Indian climate, the artificial life its hot season entails, the long railway journeys, and the continuous shifting from place to place, from which few Anglo-Indians are exempt, tends to promote an astonishingly rapid waste of nerve tissue; and it is this fact which renders long residence in India more injurious, as a rule, to women than men.[36]

Accounts stressed an officer's responsibility to look after both his wife and children in India, and that neglecting to do so suggested a failure in his imperial duty. The I.C.S. Association in Madras pointed to the emotional distress caused to officers who were not in a position to be able to maintain their family's well-being:

> In India expenditure on visits to hill stations forms a heavy item in the budget of a married man. Yet in most cases, substantial reduction can

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[35] There is a complex history concerned with women's perceived vulnerability in India being used to defend, justify and sustain imperial endeavours. Refer to Sharpe, J., op. cit.. Also see Blunt, A. (in press/a) Embodying War: British Women and Domestic Defilement in the Indian 'Mutiny', 1857-8, Journal of Historical Geography.

[36] Diver, M. (1909) The Englishwoman in India, London: William Blackwood and Sons; p8-9. Maud Diver is referring to the British living in India, and not those of mixed descent.

> only be effected at the risk of grave injury to the health of wife and children. Similar considerations preclude the reduction of the amount of leave taken in England, though as a matter of fact it is beyond dispute that many unfortunate Englishmen are subjected to the cruel necessity of seeing their wives and children failing in health and vigour because they can no longer afford to send them to the hills or to England.[37]

Official discourses positioned memsahibs as passive, and as needing to be sheltered and looked after in similar ways to children. Conflating discussions concerned with women and children, the summarizing memorandum from Bihar and Orissa I.C.S. pointed both to the necessity of protection, and to the burden of responsibility that this entailed for the financial, and consequently the physical well-being of men:

> The married officer has always had to make provision against the time when his wife must go the hills in the summer, when his children have to go for their education to England, and when he has to bear the heavy expense of passages home to recuperate his health...the cost of travelling between India and England is twice what it used to be; so that even with the improved rate of leave pay, a holiday in England can only be taken at longer intervals; the health and work of officers suffer on this account and by reason of the anxiety due to straitened means and to the inability to make provision against the future.[38]

Documents such as these pointed explicitly to the disadvantages of women being in India with their husbands, as it was especially married men who were considered to be 'at risk' from financial difficulties. However, emphasis was often placed not only on financial expenditure, but also on the physical, emotional and mental costs of life in India. Summarizing the responses received from all the I.C.S. Associations, the Report of the Royal Commission suggested that:

> [T]he married officer, especially, is confronted with the alternative of having either to incur a large debt, or to postpone taking leave. [*sic*] to the detriment of the health of himself and his family. In such cases the officer's efficiency must suffer.[39]

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[37] The Madras Indian Civil Service Association, op. cit..
[38] Unpublished evidence presented to the Royal Commission on the Superior Civil Services in India (London: HMSO, 1925; Cmd. 2128) by the Honorary Secretary of the Bihar and Orissa Indian Civil Service Association (November 1923). OIOC; Q/13/17/618.
[39] Royal Commission on the Superior Civil Services in India. Report, Cmd. 2128, op. cit.; p35.

It is surely significant, however, that despite the repeated insistence of the importance of protecting women and children from India's perceived dangers, most reports ultimately stressed that it was imperial masculinity that would be compromised if officers could not ensure the well-being of their family. Both military and civilian officers were among those positioned as 'heroes of the colonial landscape'.[40] Gendered in particular ways, such men reflected notions of imperial masculinity that were characterized by a range of 'attributes' linked to heroism, courage, chivalry and patriotism, as well as the ability and desire to travel away from home. Further, such notions were complemented by 'a vision of domestic femininity, at home with the children and requiring protection'.[41] However, women living in India were in a complex and contradictory position in relation to such ideas. As wives and mothers in India (and therefore already *away* from home), women's domestic and imperial roles were inextricably linked.[42] As well as setting up homes both with, and for, their families, it was perceived as vital that women travelled between India and Britain (often unaccompanied by their husbands), typically in order to visit children at school, or to reduce risks associated with childbirth in India. As particular notions of motherhood and domesticity were constructed as crucial to women's imperial duty in India,[43] it was surely imperative that they could afford to travel home on such significant occasions. However, perhaps because notions of imperial masculinity positioned women already at home, such concepts of imperial femininity were not reflected in the 'evidence' of those concerned with stressing the necessity of returning home. As such women were represented as passive, and as needing to go home because of their vulnerability and weakness, and not because by doing so they would directly benefit the empire. Further, these accounts do not suggest that the inability of women to return home would be damaging to notions of imperial femininity. Instead they stress the potentially damaging implications for imperial masculinity as women remained 'unprotected' if they were unable to visit the home-land.

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[40] Driver, F. (1992), op. cit.; p27.
[41] Dawson, G., op. cit.; p2. And see Hall, C. (1998) Going a-Trolloping: Imperial Man Travels the Empire, in C. Midgley (ed.), Gender and Imperialism, Manchester: Manchester University Press.
[42] Blunt, A. (in press/b), op. cit..
[43] As, indeed, they were elsewhere throughout the empire, although this was often in very different ways. For a discussion on imperial motherhood in Britain, see Davin, A., op. cit.. For a broader discussion concerning notions of imperial domesticity refer to McClintock, A., op. cit..

As a consequence of the Commission's recommendations, passages were:

> granted to all officers of non-Asiatic domicile in the superior Civil Services. The officer himself should receive 4 return passages during his service (of the standard P&O first class 'B'), and when married, his wife should be entitled to as many return passages as may be to his credit. In addition one single passage should be granted for each child.[44]

It is significant that children were granted a single passage which, presumably, was to encourage their return to Britain, and to discourage further travel between the two countries during a child's formative years. Moreover, for these purposes, a 'child' referred to 'a legitimate child who, if a female, is unmarried and under the age of 21 or, if a male, is under the age of 12'.[45] So, despite the insistence on women's and children's particular frailty in the Indian physical and moral climate, it was still perceived as more imperative to remove boys pre-puberty than girls. It was argued that such an allowance for passages should not be given in the form of an increase in an officer's pay as there 'would be the risk...that it might be imprudently diverted to purposes other than that for which we had intended it, with serious consequences, possibly, both to the officer and his family'.[46] As such, each officer was awarded a passage fund, which was applied to when required. Appeals concerning the amount of leave that could be taken on full pay did not receive a similar favourable response and no further changes were made.

2. Women at Home in Britain: On holiday

Discussions concerned with the necessity of visiting home not only stressed the importance of leaving the environment, climate and people of India, but also the importance of returning to Britain for its own sake. It was important to see the home-land, to be comforted and recuperated by its beauty, serenity and climate.[47] The cultural representation of Britain's landscape constructed it as domesticated,

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[44] Royal Commission on the Superior Civil Services in India. Report, Cmd. 2128, op. cit.; p35.
[45] India Office list for 1926: Fundamental Rules of the Civil Service. Compiled from official records by direction of the Secretary of State for India in Council. 40th Publication. London: Harrison and Sons Ltd.
[46] Ibid.; p36.
[47] Grewal, I., op. cit..

beautiful and ordered. Further, its temperate climate and atmosphere were considered to be beneficial to the physical and mental well-being of all who had spent prolonged periods in the 'heat and dust' of India.[48] For the British living in India, the maintenance of links with Britain was imperative, and imperial discourses stressed the importance not only of visiting friends and relatives, but also being able to breath in its air and to participate in a 'civilized' society: in short, to recognize it, and to refer to it, as home. For women especially, return to Britain was thought to be vital in order that they visit their children who were being educated there. At the beginning of the twentieth century, Maud Diver recommended that women 'should register a vow, and keep it - Fate permitting - never to desert either husband or child for more than three or four years at a stretch'.[49] Significantly, despite worry concerning the expense, it was also important to be able to relax whilst in Britain, and visits were almost always referred to as holidays.

Enid Dawkins, for example, lived in India with her husband, Clinton, over a period of approximately 25 years.[50] Throughout this time she travelled between India and Britain on a number of occasions, with her length of stay at home increasing as her sons got older. In 1919 she returned to Britain with Clinton and their two young sons (aged 5 and 2), who were making their first voyage home. Reflecting dominant imperial discourses of India as a place of banishment, Enid recorded in her journal that 'some of us on board had been in exile for 15 years, many for nearly 10'.[51] Such long periods of absence were not uncommon. Prior to 1915 all journeys home had to be paid for by individuals, and that many did not have the ability to do so on a frequent basis.[52] Exacerbating the situation, the First

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[48] Ernst, W. (1991), op. cit..
[49] Diver, M. (1909), op. cit.; p41.
[50] Enid Dawkins' archive consists of excerpts from journals, as well as edited letters written to her husband. Autobiographical details such as the exact length of time they were resident in India are not stated.
[51] Dawkins, E., excerpts from a journal, written while on leave in Britain from April 1919 to February 1920. OIOC, Mss.Eur.D.0931, item 17; no pagination.
[52] Esmee Maude Mascall was born in Britain in 1896, and was taken to live in India when she was eight months old. Her family returned home in 1904 in order that she could start school. Reflecting on the financial difficulties people experienced in visiting the home-land as often as they would have liked, she has written: 'You lucky parents and children who are together for all the school holidays, and even see each other through the term! - how can you even dimly imagine what it felt like to be parted, perhaps for years? The sea passage cost so much that on an Army Officer's pay one would have to scrape and save for just one parent, not both, to come Home to the children every

World War had restricted the movement of people between Britain and India for a number of years, so that at the time the Dawkins' were travelling, many had not returned for extended periods. By 1919, the granting of passage advances meant that families like the Dawkins' could at least make the voyage home, their inability to fund themselves being postponed in the form of a loan. Following the granting of free passages from 1925, the difficulties in travelling between Britain and India decreased further, effectively reducing the distance between them. Iris Portal, for example, who was born in India in 1905, has pointed to the significance of the Lee Commission, suggesting that as people went home more often, so 'the thread of connection between India and Britain was broken more often'.[53] In 1923, Ruth Donnison moved to Burma with her husband, Vernon. Six years later, in 1929, they made their first journey back to Britain on leave. Her memoir records her feelings about making that initial voyage home:

> The first leave back to England was particularly exciting. It is quite hard to recollect how remote England felt, how difficult leave seemed, before one had actually made the journey home. Having made the journey, it no longer seemed so difficult – though finding the money might be – and Burma no longer seemed so impossibly far away from home. And even finding the money was no longer the problem it had been, as it was about this time that the government decided to pay the leave passages of officers and their wives, four times in the course of their service. Children received one passage each. For us leave was particularly exciting because of the long period [six years] we had served without.[54]

Ruth Donnison suggests that once the journey had been made, it seemed much easier, and Britain seemed closer than it had done previously. Further, she indicates that women travelling to and from Britain after 1925 could feel even less alienated from Britain as financial worries, although far from being removed altogether, had been reduced. In such ways, these changes must have had implications for the construction and maintenance of notions of the home-country itself. Further, with an increased ability to travel between Britain and India, it is conceivable that the possibilities for the co-existence of home became greater. Although most women

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other year. And this is what Mummy did. But we had to wait until 1907 for a joyful family reunion'. Mascall, E., (undated), untitled life writing. OIOC, Mss.Eur.C.0427: p.11. Original emphasis.

[53] Portal, I., taped and transcribed interview. OIOC, Mss.Eur.T.53; p2/4.

[54] Donnison, R & V. (undated), untitled life writing. OIOC, Mss.Eur.B.357: chapter 15, p213.

still had no physical home in Britain, many did begin to travel there every two to three years. Alternatively, it is possible that repeated patterns of travel and dwelling could lead to increased feelings of homelessness and displacement as their lives were more frequently punctuated by long journeys, and as they were based in one place for shorter periods of time. Further, the frequency of such visits meant that women's imagined geographies of the home-land became interlinked with their lived experiences in increasingly complex and elaborate ways.

Although passage entitlements eased the financial situation of many who had to return home, money often remained a concern. Each officer and his wife were granted the equivalent of four free passages at the level of P&O First Class. In order to make their passage allowance go further, many women travelled at Second, or Tourist Class, on less expensive lines. In this way, it was possible to obtain a maximum of eight passages from the government allowance. Vere Birdwood, for example, remembered that:

> When going to and from England on leave we invariably had to travel second class on the ships, [and] we lived in a very modest sort of way when we were in England.[55]

Despite financial hardships for many people, it was imperative that visits to the home-land were treated as holidays. The first view Enid and Clinton Dawkins, and their two boys, had of Britain in 1919 was the coast at Kent, where the 'white cliffs smiled a welcome'.[56] After docking at Tilbury and spending two days in London, the Dawkins' travelled to Enid's parents' house at Dolton in Devonshire, where they spent most of their leave. They returned to India in November, and, despite John's age, took both children back with them.[57] Remembering this period of leave, Enid Dawkins' account unequivocally positions their visit to Britain as a holiday. As she was based in her parents house, she had few, if any, domestic responsibilities to undertake whilst there, and her mother had employed a nurse to look after the children. The only demand on her time was that 'taken up with

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[55] Birdwood, V., taped and transcribed interview. OIOC, Mss.Eur.T.7; p2/4.
[56] Ibid..
[57] Refer to the following section for a discussion of children's 'removal' from India.

correspondence about a governess for the kids to bring back to Burma'.[58] Although she comments on the "food production' war inroads on to the herbaceous border' in her parents garden, she made no further comment about the impact of the war on Britain. Reflecting on this period, Enid Dawkins evokes fond memories of her leisure time in Britain:

> And of our leave what am I to write? A memory of sun and summer, general peace and contentment, as happy a memory as one could have... We had picnics by the river, motoring expeditions...as well as quite a lot of tennis...A perfect summer drew towards autumn. We went blackberrying, mushrooming...and the boys were introduced to the sea-shore.[59]

Enid Dawkins visited Britain again in 1922. This time she travelled home in advance of her husband, and was accompanied by an Indian nurse, Naida, employed to look after her two children, now aged 7 and 5, as well as her baby son, Colyear. Sailing into Plymouth harbour, Enid Dawkins' account again reflects idyllic notions of her surroundings, and suggests that she is relaxed, untroubled and calm. Describing her first impressions from the ship she wrote:

> It <u>was</u> so pretty coming in to Plymouth harbour – a glorious sunny afternoon and everyone walking about in couples on the hills and rocks. The cliffs were a <u>sheet</u> of blue – bluebells I suppose, and the gorse and primroses are in full flower, - and the roses are just bursting their buds. It <u>is</u> a lovely harbour – everything is so green and fresh and clean.[60]

Reflecting her exposure to rural Britain, she described her journey to Devon in picturesque terms:

> Apple and pear and cherry blossom fully out – young beech woods and hedges as green and beautiful as possible: other tree buds just fat and tinged with young green - blackthorn laden with its snow-lilac in flower: the hedges a <u>mass</u> of bluebells, primroses, dog violets, stareort [sic] and the fields covered with dandelions and daises.[61]

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[58] Dawkins, E., op. cit..
[59] Ibid..
[60] Ibid.. Original emphasis.
[61] Dawkins, E. (1922), Edited letters to her husband, Clinton. OIOC, Mss.Eur.D.0931; item 17. Original emphasis.

However, although many other women depict their visits to Britain as being on holiday, Enid Dawkins' account exists in sharp contrast to most. The majority of narratives which include accounts of time spent on leave are concerned with recounting their activities, and not with descriptions of the countryside. Although on leave, the majority of women seem to have been extremely busy whilst visiting Britain. Mary Maxwell, for example, whilst on leave with her husband Reginald in 1919, initially found that 'shopping was very necessary', and that after that her time was absorbed by going to the 'theatre...concerts, pictures galleries'.[62] Moreover, narratives of the time spent in Britain are frequently dominated by women's continued mobility both within, and beyond, the home-land.

Most, if not all, of the women who form the focus for this study, did not have homes to return to whilst visiting Britain. Hence, although notions of home may have co-existed at the national scale, this became much more problematic at the scale of the household as women had to keep moving between friends, relatives and various rented accommodation throughout their stay. Whilst on leave from November 1919 to December 1920, for example, Mary Maxwell stayed with her husband and children in rooms in London, before moving to a furnished house just outside Bath. Having been granted twelve months leave, Reginald was called back to India after just three. Mary Maxwell moved with the children to a farmhouse in Devon, before going to the New Forest. She spent the summer in Wales before returning to India, without her children, for Christmas.[63] Similarly, Mary Maxwell was in Britain with her husband from March 1935 until early in 1936, when Reginald returned to India. Throughout this period they moved seven times, her account suggesting that they kept on moving in an attempt to find a place where they could feel comfortable, and at home. The Easter holidays were spent in a house at Whitchurch near Ross-on-Wye, 'let to us by the aunts with whom the family used to spend holidays, so it would feel more like home than anywhere else'.[64] June was spent in London, and in July they went to Arisaig on Loch Nanuamh. From August until November, they travelled to and from Grasmere, Liverpool and Dublin. They spent winter in London before Reginald returned to

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[62] Ibid..
[63] Maxwell, M., (undated) untitled life writing. OIOC, Mss.Photo.128; Chapter Nine, p15.
[64] Ibid..

India. Mary Maxwell's high levels of mobility continued as she moved to Brighton, Bracknell and then Hove. In addition, she visited a friend in Norfolk whose husband was also in India. Again pointing to her desire to feel settled and at home, Mary Maxwell comments on her friend's decision to buy 'a lovely house so that their family would have a home'.[65] In June 1936 she stayed near Edinburgh, and also in London, visiting Whitchurch again before returning to India.[66]

Certain levels of mobility outside of the home-country were actually encouraged by the government for men on leave, as they were only able to stay in Britain for six months before becoming liable to pay full levels of income tax on their salary. Such increased levels of taxation would have made a significant difference to people who were already concerned about the cost of their holiday in Britain. For many men, who were often on leave for longer than six months, this meant that fairly substantial periods of their furlough had to be spent outside of the home-country. Continental Europe was a favourite destination for many. Frances Stewart-Robertson came to Britain on leave in the mid-1930s with her husband, Robin. For six months they moved around Britain, staying with various relatives. However, they then 'found we were going to be too long in England to escape Income Tax so we went over to France to a delightful little village near Deauville'.[67] Similarly, whilst Mary Maxwell was on leave with her husband from March 1923, they did not only travel around Britain:

> We moved to Carbis Bay where we stayed in furnished rooms by the sea, and later moved to Zweisimmen, in Switzerland, for two months. My husband could not be in England for more than six months without paying full income tax on pay drawn in England and his leave was for nine months. We returned to rooms in London and Bath and finally to St.Leonards, where he left us in rooms to return to India in December. Another child was due in January.[68]

Vere Birdwood suggests that it was not only in respect of physical location that women could feel out of place in the home-country. Many found that their attitudes and outlook on life, as well as their clothing, were considered to be out of

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[65] Ibid.; p18.
[66] Ibid..
[67] Stewart-Robertson, T., op. cit.; p93.
[68] Maxwell, M., op. cit.; Chapter Six, p1.

date when they returned. Indicating, however, that they did feel comfortable in India, she has said:

> She [the memsahib] didn't feel she was wearing unfashionable clothes while she was [in India] but she was terribly conscious of this the moment she arrived at Victoria station or Southampton docks, when she got home on leave and her first expedition to Harrods or wherever to completely re-stock her wardrobe, she was generally a lot out of date.[69]

Further, a number of accounts stress how alienated women felt in Britain. Frances Stewart-Robertson, for example, pointed out that 'friends and relations were not really interested in what one did or where one lived when abroad'.[70] Similarly, Vere Birdwood was disappointed by the indifference which people showed towards her life in India when she visited Britain, and discusses her displacement and dislocation as she felt she could not speak about India. Emphasizing a distinct sense of segregation between her life in India and that in Britain, she stresses that it was the former that represented her *real* life. Her subsequent description of her activities in the home-country points to Britain as a place for holiday and relaxation. It was not where her husband worked, where they drew their pay, or where their home was. Although they had to curb their expenditure, their time in Britain was treated as a vacation, after which they were glad to return to India and feel 'human' again:

> [T]he thing which remains as a constant memory is the total disinterest of the people in England to Indian affairs. In fact, so strongly did we feel this that I don't think any of us ever spoke about India for the six months or so we spent in England. I think we felt India was the real life because it was there was drew our pay, it was where our own home was as against the homes of relations, and it was where most of us, let's face it, spent most of our working lives. We lived life, our lives, entirely in two spheres. Indian life which was our real life, and the strange almost dehumanised periods of leave in England where we enjoyed ourselves and breathed the good English air and brought [*sic*] clothes and went about and stayed with our friends and enjoyed the countryside and did all the simple things. Nothing expensive, because we never had much money. That I must emphasize. We never had very much money. But we had a quiet enjoyment and we saw our retired

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[69] Birdwood, V., op. cit.; p4/9.
[70] Stewart-Robertson, T., (undated) The Blackberry Basket. OIOC, Mss.Eur.C.0701; p93-94.

> parents. Maybe, or whatever. Picked up the threads. But most of us were very glad to get back to India.[71]

Despite the significance attributed to such visits in imperial and domestic discourses of home and away, details of home-leave are excluded from many women's written and oral accounts. In her published autobiography, Mildred Archer provides scant detail of long-leave taken in Britain at the end of the 1930s:

> In February 1939 Bill and I, with Michael left Purnea and went on leave to England via Ranchi. Home leave to England occurred only every four or five years unless there were special reasons such as serious ill health.[72]

Although Mildred Archer continues by briefly reflecting on the voyage home, she omits arrival in Britain, as well as both family and personal activities and experiences whilst there. Such silences are typical of many women's autobiographical accounts, especially those who moved frequently between India and Britain. Similarly, Flora Annie Steel had lived in India for the majority of her life until her husband retired. As well as writing a number of novels, she co-authored a popular advice book concerned with housekeeping in India.[73] She was considered to be an exemplary memsahib, and her autobiography, *The Garden of Fidelity*, was published posthumously in 1929.[74] In it, she simply recalls, 'What I did during the year of our leave...matters little'.[75] Because such visits were seen as vital to the well-being of successful imperial rule, it is perhaps surprising that women have not written or talked about these visits in more detail. However, most of the accounts that have been available for study are retrospective considerations of women's lives. Few of the archives include diaries, journals or letters written at the time, although some material did draw upon such sources to a greater or lesser extent. The intended audiences for such writings also varied, although they were frequently dedicated to the author's family. It is possible that on reflection women felt that the periods they spent in Britain were of less interest to the reader than the

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[71] Birdwood, V., op. cit., p6/11.
[72] Archer, W. & A., op. cit.; p85.
[73] Gardiner, G. & Steel, F. A., op. cit..
[74] Steel, F. A. (1929) The Garden of Fidelity: Being the Autobiography of Flora Annie Steel, 1847-1929, London, Macmillan & Co..
[75] Ibid.; p57.

time they spent in India, which would probably be less familiar, and might be considered to be more unusual. In other words, such women may have positioned Britain as the norm against which their lives in India could be seen as more interesting, and therefore more worthy of record. Alternatively, it is possible to assume that some of the life histories and geographies considered here were written for the authors themselves, perhaps in order to help the construction and negotiation of present subjectivities, which are, after all, inextricably linked to both collective and individual memories, as well as contemporary understandings of prior values, beliefs and contexts. Under such circumstances, it is possible to suggest that the exclusion of home-leave indicates that the time spent at home was either unproblematic, or was considered to be insignificant to their lives, and therefore does not need to be reflected upon. However, it is also possible to argue that such exclusion might have been related to women's feelings of displacement and alienation whilst in Britain, making them reluctant to remember the time spent here. Further, it must be remembered that the oral accounts considered for this study were conducted as unstructured interviews, and perhaps did not encourage women to talk about the periods of time they spent on leave in Britain.[76]

For whatever reason, despite the significance attached to visiting Britain by a range of discourses concerning imperial health, efficiency and motherhood, women's autobiographical accounts tend to exclude these periods. For most, the time spent in Britain was perceived as a holiday, as they were absolved of formal domestic responsibilities through their position in hotels and boarding houses, as well as in the homes of friends and relatives. Although they often maintained complex patterns of travelling and dwelling, women's time was dominantly spent in rural Britain, or by the sea.[77] However, many women felt alienated and displaced while in the home-country, not only because they had no physical home, but

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[76] Although the interviews considered here were largely unstructured, women were encouraged to discuss their lives in India, rather than the periods of time they spent in Britain either on leave, or following their repatriation. However, if women mentioned Britain during the interview, further discussion was often supported and developed.

[77] It is difficult to know why this might have been. However, it is possible that women were often based in such locations while on leave due to the importance of rural places and coastal resorts as holiday destinations for the British middle-classes more generally. See, for example, Walton, J. (1983) The English Seaside Resorts: A Social History, 1750-1914, Leicester: Leicester University Press. Further, such areas were often represented as having landscapes and climates which were suitable to the health needs of those who had spent prolonged periods in the sub-continent (refer to

because they often felt divorced from what some felt to be the 'real' life of India. Women's lived experiences of the home-country must have been inextricably connected to their imagined geographies, producing complex understandings, as well as uncertainties, of Britain as home. In this respect, it is significant that accounts frequently point to the relief felt by women as they left Britain and returned to their homes in India. Reflecting similar sentiments to those expressed by Mrs Blake to Margaret Dench as they journeyed to India in 1918,[78] the novelist Sara J. Duncan summarized these feelings in 1903 through her character Helena Farnham. Having spent three months in Britain on leave with her husband, she was pleased to be leaving again for India. As the ship left dock, Helena reflected on her departure:

> It was a Bombay ship, full of returning Anglo-Indians. I looked up and down the long saloon tables with a sense of relief and solace; I was again among my own people. They belonged to Bengal and to Burma, to Madras and to the Punjab, but they were all my people...Dear old England, sitting in our wake, seemed to hold by comparison a great many soft unsophisticated people, immensely occupied about very particular trifles. How difficult it had been, all the summer, to be interested![79]

3. Children at Home in Britain

(i) Going home

Many of the women whose life histories and geographies form the subject of this research were born in India, living there for various lengths of time until they were sent to Britain for their education. These moves home entailed staying in boarding schools, or with friends or relatives, and meant prolonged separation from parents. Many accounts stress the anxiety this caused, not only to the children, but also the physical and mental demands it made on the women whose time and loyalties were divided between their children and their husband. However, I am not concerned here with exploring narratives of parting and separation *per se*, or with the imperial

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Chapter 3).
[78] Refer to page 4.
[79] Duncan, S. J., (1903) A Mother in India. Published in Cowasjee, S. (ed.) (1982) Stories from the Raj: From Kipling to Independence, The Bodley Head: London.

discourses which constructed systems of 'duty and reward' based around notions of 'bravely-born' hardships. Instead, I am examining imperial discourses surrounding the reasons for children's transportation from India to Britain. I do this in order to provide a framework for the consideration of the childhood memories of home, belonging and rootedness of these women. I examine the significance of leaving home and discuss not only children's first impressions of Britain, but also their longer-term attitudes. Further, I reflect on the geographies of Britain that children were exposed to, and which contributed to their imagined geographies and lived experiences of the home-land.

Imperial discourses dictated that both girls' and boys' mental, moral and physical health would only flourish if they were sent home to Britain for the majority of their childhood, and that continuing to live in India would be damaging to them. Such notions, however, were not only reflected in official discourses such as those apparent in the evidence collected on behalf of the Lee Commission. Maud Diver's book, *The Englishwoman in India*, for example, warned of the danger of keeping children too long in India, and stressed that to do so was a reflection of maternal selfishness. In this respect, she suggested that the memsahib:

> [K]nows that there is a limit of age beyond which she dare not keep them without risk of handicapping them, physically and morally, in the race of life. Physically because the staple foods of childhood have far less nutritive value in India than in England, and the constant moving comes harder every year upon their sensitive nervous systems, to say nothing of the difficulty of obtaining pure and suitable food at Indian rest-houses and railway stations: morally, because routine and discipline are not easily enforced in a land where constant allowance must be made for the climate and the life; and because... it is still less easy to keep the eager, all-observant little minds fearlessly upright and untainted in an atmosphere of petty thefts and lies, such as natives look upon as mere common-sense and good policy.[80]

In similar ways, popular fiction also represented the importance for children not only to be educated in Britain, but to spend their formative years there in an environment suitable for appropriate 'character-development'.[81] Set in the

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[80] Diver, M., op. cit.; p42-43.
[81] Ibid.; p3.

nineteenth century, *The Rose and the Lotus* (*or Home in England and Home in India*), opens as the fictional protagonist, Agnes Malcolm, is finishing fourteen years of schooling in Britain. Her mother had died many years ago, and as the novel begins she is about to leave for India to be reunited with her father. In the following quotation she is seen reasoning with her school friend (May Sherwood), who has suggested that perhaps she 'should have grown up a much more loveable and better girl, if [she] had been with [her] own father and mother'.[82] Reflecting and perpetuating dominant imperial narratives, Agnes replies:

> I shall never forget the impression made on my mind by a girl of fifteen, who had just arrived from India. I think her parents had been too poor to send her home to be educated. In the first place she talked such curious English, with a nasal twang that was dreadful to hear, and her manners were so unformed and odd. Somehow she didn't seem English in anything, and if not positively untruthful, she had such a misty inaccurate way of stating facts, that I could not believe what she said. What was worst of all, was a want of refinement and delicacy in her ideas. My uncle said it was all owing to being brought up in India, and often left to the charge of native servants. It is better to suffer any amount of separation than to grow up in such an atmosphere of untruthfulness.[83]

Texts such as these helped to stigmatize those who did not have the means or ability to send their children home. According to Maud Diver, a woman who did not transport her child to Britain was selfish, and in ignoring discourses of imperial motherhood should be considered maternally deficient. Similarly, in *The Rose and the Lotus*, Mrs Johnston explicitly associated the lack of a childhood in Britain with notions of poverty and deprivation. Issues such as the so-called 'chi-chi' accent said to be characteristic of Anglo-Indians, as well as British people who had been in India for 'too long', were constructed as something to be dreaded, and as completely unacceptable, by competent imperial mothers. In 1922, Enid Dawkins took her three children home to Britain in order to establish the elder two in school, and so that they could all meet their grandparents. Unaccompanied by her husband, she wrote to him everyday from the ship, her correspondence full of anxiety concerning the moral well-being of her sons (aged approximately seven, five and

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[82] Johnston, E. (1859) The Rose and the Lotus; or Home in England and Home in India, London: Bell and Daldy; p94.
[83] Ibid.; p94-95.

two), who she feared were being influenced by two children who she suspected of being Anglo-Indian:

> There are two brothers about the same age here, darkish and with terrible chi-chi accents, called 'William' and 'Jackie' - and unfortunately they have been playing together all day: John has already developed the most appalling chi-chi voice already. We don't encourage those boys, so perhaps the friendship won't develop.[84]

However, an incident which took place a week later served to calm Enid Dawkins' fears. She was obviously comforted by the episode, and re-told the event to her husband in the form of an 'amusing' story, immediately relieved of the anxiety and embarrassment that had been caused to her by her sons' apparent ignorance of appropriate imperial behaviour. Perhaps having spoken to her children about their choice of friends, her eldest sons confronted one of the other children concerned. It then became the place of another mother to worry about her child's imperial welfare. As Enid Dawkin's children were playing in the ship's nursery,

> ...a Mrs Kidson was there and her son Arthur, a dark-eyed, dark-skinned boy of 7 - rather a bully with the most appalling chi-chi accent. The following conversation ensued during a pause in the usual noise. John to Arthur '<u>You're</u> only a chi-chi boy'. Bill, ditto 'You are a chi-chi'. Mrs K, after a second's pause to gain her composure, <u>very</u> frigidly to John 'Excuse me, he is <u>not</u> a chi-chi boy'. John, defensively 'Well, he talks like one anyway'. Exit Arthur's Mother hastily to have hysterics in the cabin!'...John's final sally was so dreadfully painfully accurate![85]

In such ways physical health, moral welfare and appropriate standards of education were advocated as reasons for children to leave India and go home. Unless a child had been subject to ill-health, seven was considered the latest 'safe' age for transportation to Britain, although 'few will deny that the sooner after the fifth year a child can leave India, the better for its future welfare'.[86] Staying in India beyond this time was considered simply to be delaying the inevitable, and increasing the likelihood of the child to be damaged physically and/or mentally. However, discourses are never all-encompassing or unequivocal, and there will

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[84] Dawkins, E. (1922), op. cit..
[85] Ibid.; Original emphasis.
[86] Diver, M., op. cit.; p44.

always be individual contestations of dominant knowledges. Due to the First World War, Vere Birdwood was detained in India until she was eleven. Reflecting upon her childhood there, she has spoken about her prolonged stay in the sub-continent in terms of privilege and well-being. As she points out:

> It was altogether a very, very splendid way of bringing up children, we were extremely healthy because we had masses of fresh air, sunshine, wonderful food, when our contemporaries in England were rationed and pushed around and subjected to all the hazards and troubles of a civilian population in war time.[87]

Vere Birdwood's account challenges imperial discourses concerned with the transient lifestyle associated with India, as well as its climate and diet. Indicating that life in the sub-continent was *not* damaging or debilitating either physically or mentally, she suggests that it was actually superior to that available to her peers at home. Brought up in Simla, it could be argued that it was only because she was in the domesticated built environment of an Indian hill station, which had been developed to closely mimic a British way of life, that she was able to endure her formative years there without permanent damage.[88] However, even under these circumstances, attitudes such as those advocated by Vere Birdwood appear to have been rare. As such, although Drusilla Hawes was also born in Simla, and spent a happy childhood in India with her mother and father until she was five years old, it was then time to go home. As she has recollected:

> ...and then it was Home. I had boils on my legs and everyone said, 'It is high time you were in England now my gal'. So it was goodbye to my Ayah, goodbye to my pony, goodbye to my beautiful dolls house...and worst of all goodbye to my father.[89]

Narratives such as this suggest that children sent to Britain from India were in an uncertain position between going home and leaving home. Similarly, Elinor Tollington was born in the Punjab in 1909. As a child she was settled with her

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[87] Birdwood, V., op. cit.; p7.

[88] See Barr, P. & Desmond, R. (1978) Simla: A Hill Station in British India, London: The Scolar Press; Kennedy, D., op. cit.; Kenny, J. (1995) Climate, Race and Imperial Authority: The Symbolic Landscape of the British Hill Station in India, Annals of the Association of American Geographers 85, 4; p694-714.

[89] Hawes, D. (undated) Drusilla's Memories, op. cit., p2. Sadly, she did not see her father again. He died travelling home from India on leave.

parents in Simla before moving to Lahore, where they lived in 'a beautiful house in the Mogul style of architecture', and where she grew up 'with a sense of privilege that hardly fitted one for the world beyond'.[90] However, unlike Vere Birdwood, she was sent to Britain to begin her education shortly before the outbreak of World War One. Reflecting upon her departure from India in terms of loss and disappointment, Elinor Tollington has unequivocally stated:

> Alas, that wonderful period of carefree childhood came to an end.[91]

Iris Portal also spent her early childhood in India. She was the fourth generation on her maternal side, and the third on her paternal, to have been born there. Living in Simla, she was surrounded by family and friends. In addition to her father's elder brother:

> my brother and I...and later a younger sister, had aunts, uncles and cousins around us. In addition to Uncle Dunlop and Aunt Minnie there were my father's sister and her husband, the Erle-Richards and their four daughters aged from ten to four.[92]

Iris Portal stresses the sense of belonging that she associated with India, suggesting that although she was 'far away from what was termed 'home'',[93] this meant little to her within the context of familial and personal history that she associated with India as a child. Everything that Iris Portal associated with home and belonging was in India, and ideas concerning Britain were connected with notions of fantasy. As concepts of Britain existed through representations alone, Iris Portal highlights the implications for understandings of the home-land which were constructed as imaginative geographies, suggesting that:

> Pictures and talk about England were fairy stories. India was real.[94]

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[90] Tollington, E. (undated), untitled life writing. OIOC, Mss.Eur.D.1197; no pagination.
[91] Tollington, E., ibid..
[92] Portal, I. (undated), Song at Seventy. CSAS, Portal Papers; p9.
[93] Ibid., p7.
[94] Ibid., p7.

Accounts such as these indicate that for those born in India, a childhood sense of place, belonging and rootedness was associated with the sub-continent. Pointing to the significance of their birthplace, personal recollections of childhood memories and familial ties suggest a sense of connectivity with India. Further, the spaces and places of the sub-continent represented their lived experiences, and Britain existed only as constructed in their geographical imaginations. In other words, India was familiar to them, and many texts discuss the distress associated with departure as they were taken away from the people and places which, to them, represented home.

(ii) Life in Britain

On arrival in Britain, many children were disappointed as their lived experiences of the home-land often conflicted with their geographical imaginations. Further, accounts frequently reveal the distress felt by many as life in Britain was so disconnected from that which they had known with their parents in India. Feelings of disruption and homesickness are commonly expressed. Although referred to as home, nothing about the home-country, or the households and schools into which they were positioned, were familiar. Consequently, children felt 'out of place' in the strange and unfamiliar environments. Summing up such feelings, Elinor Tollington remembered that Britain 'was an alien setting'.[95] Similarly, Vere Birdwood stated unequivocally that she 'was physically unhappy living in [her] grandmothers house',[96] while Margaret Ramsay-Brown recalled explicitly that 'when we came back to England, we didn't like England at all'.[97]

Children were often desperately unhappy, and frequently had difficulties adjusting to life in Britain. In common with many, Elinor Tollington did not enjoy her boarding school, a situation which was exacerbated by the different lifestyles those who had been in India had led from the other pupils there. As well as having to adjust to her changed circumstances, she had problems making friends with children who could not understand her background. As she states:

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[95] Tollington, E., op. cit..
[96] Birdwood, V., Ibid.; p2/2.
[97] Ramsay-Brown, M., taped interview. OIOC, Mss.Eur.R.216: Tape 1, side 2.

> The complete change in everything I had ever known came as a complete shock. 'Born in India' [children at school] said, 'why aren't you black? What was your mother's name? Anyhow we don't believe you, you'r [*sic*] makeing [*sic*] it up[98].

Iris Portal was similarly unhappy throughout the time she spent at school. However, by forming friendships and networks with children in a similar position to herself, she found that she was able to cope. Being able to discuss experiences of India with fellow-students, whose life histories and geographies were similarly connected with the sub-continent, was some measure of comfort, and reduced feelings of alienation and dislocation. Stressing the continuing importance of India as home, Iris Portal has said:

> I was at boarding school for seven years, which I very much disliked...and one was sustained throughout those years, by the thought that one would go back, and there were other children at the school whose parents were in India...We all used to, used to talk about it and compare notes and we all wanted to go back.[99]

Despite such desires, imperial discourses of home and away made no allowances for children to make return visits to India. Although after 1925 children were included in the passage concessions awarded to officers, they were entitled to one free passage only, encouraging their removal from the sub-continent, and discouraging return until their supposed vulnerability had lessened. In this way, imperial discourses suggested that the benefits of time spent in Britain would be impeded if children returned to India even for a short time. As such, many endured long periods not only away from what they considered to be home, but also from their parents. Due to passage advances (from 1917), and allowances (from 1925), parental visits did occur more often than they had done in the past. However, they were still infrequent. Most children could probably expect to see their mother every two to three years, while their father, restricted by leave rules, was probably able to visit his children in Britain only every four to five years. Although these visits presented some degree of familiarity to children, and in most cases probably

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[98] Tollington, E., op. cit..
[99] Portal, I., taped and transcribed interview. OIOC, Mss.Eur.T.53; p8.

provided some level of comfort, it was seldom possible for them to return to India at least until their schooling was complete.

Despite imperial discourses which stressed the transience of life in India as one reason for the removal of children, many experienced similar levels of mobility in Britain as they moved between schools, as well as friends and relatives. Margaret Ramsay-Brown and her sister, for example, frequently moved between houses whilst resident in Britain. Although her account recognizes the mobility characteristic of life in India, she has suggested that while living in Britain, having to stay with relatives for relatively short periods of time meant that:

> There was a lack of space to put one's things, being moved around like that... You didn't have a home [in Britain]. When we were in India, although you were moving around, our home moved with us. One moved to a different location, but your home was there. And when you came to England you had settled houses that people had lived in from whenever, but you had nowhere to park your own things.[100]

In this way, Margaret Ramsay-Brown problematizes fixed and permanent ideas of home. She emphasizes that notions of home are not necessarily equated with physical stability, whilst more mobile concepts such as family and personal possessions can often become associated with belonging. Ironically, many children who had been sent to Britain led a more mobile and rootless childhood and adolescence than they would have experienced in India. Extending beyond physical mobility such movement was also represented through notions of displacement and dislocation as children did not feel at home.

Women's personal texts often employ images of darkness to evoke the feelings which were experienced throughout their childhood in Britain. For many adolescents, Britain continued to be characterized as dull, colourless, cold and unfriendly. Margaret Ramsay-Brown, for example, commented that:

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[100] Ramsay-Brown, M., op. cit.; Tape 2, side 1.

> I think Rumer Godden has written that coming back from India to England is like moving from a techni-colour film to a black and white one. And everything is less colourful.[101]

As a child, when Iris Portal was not away at boarding school, she was based in Cambridge with relatives of her mother. Here, she remembers how she 'stood in the window of the dining room of that tall, dark house and looked out at rain falling and wondered why there was no colour anywhere'.[102] However, it was not until her brother moved close to Hove to continue his education that Iris Portal began to associate Britain with lasting notions of the home-land as depressing and dreary. Although Iris Portal had finished school herself, and was keen to return to India, she was expected to move with her mother to a rented house close to her brother's school. Significantly,

> The enormous change in our way of life came to me vividly in that house at Hove. It was in a steep street going down to the sea-front, wind-swept, cold and seemingly always grey.[103]

Reflecting on these feelings, Iris Portal explained that she 'found, as I think many children who grew up in India in my generation certainly did, that England was dull, drab and cold'.[104] However, moving beyond accounts which compare the remembered blue skies of India with the grey ones considered representative of Britain, she explained that 'I don't mean so much climatically as in atmosphere'.[105] In this way, a number of accounts represent the darkness that they associated with Britain in terms of restrictions, confinement and a frustrating loss of freedom. The accounts of many women suggest that as children, small places and spaces came to characterize Britain's landscapes. In similar ways, conservative and narrow-minded attitudes seemed to typify the mindset of the resident population. After the vast

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[101] Ibid.. Rumer Godden was born in India, living there as a child prior to her education in Britain. She returned to the sub-continent once her schooling was complete, and remained there following her marriage to an army officer. She has written a number of novels, including Two Under the Indian Sun, based on the childhood she shared with her sister in India and in Britain (1966, London: Macmillan). She described her arrival in Britain in the following way: 'It was a cold grey morning when the ship berthed at Plymouth. Everything was grey, wet, colourless as we stood by the rail watching the luggage being unloaded into the custom sheds'; p199.
[102] Portal, I., Song at Seventy. op. cit.; p13.
[103] Ibid..
[104] Portal, I., taped and transcribed interview, op. cit.; p8.
[105] Ibid..

spaces of India, accounts of childhood memories are particularly vivid in this respect as they encountered the home-country for the first time. Margaret Ramsay-Brown found Britain to be particularly suffocating and repressive. Distressed by her removal to Britain, she was distraught at having had to leave 'everything she loved' in India.[106] On arrival in Britain, she was immediately struck by 'the smallness of England'.[107] Remembering Britain in these terms, she commented:

> It was very much more restricted. I couldn't roam, and I remember you went into the park and there were 'Keep off the Grass' notices, and I do remember deliberately jumping over and walking on the grass.[108]

Children also missed the standard of living to which they had been accustomed in India. In Britain they did not have ayahs to care for them, and few had governessess or nannies, instead being sent to boarding school. During school holidays most lived with relatives who were usually distant and previously unknown, although some stayed with people who were paid to accommodate children whose parents were abroad. Many found their hosts much stricter than the Indian servants who had been responsible for them in the sub-continent. Further, as well as the open spaces previously accessible to them, children frequently missed their horses and other pets. Mrs Ramsay-Brown summarized feelings of loss in her childhood recollections:

> You were much more restricted in behaviour. It wasn't about being better behaved in India than in England. It was just the small scale of things, and, if you like, the lack of freedom that one had before...I couldn't just get my pony and ride across country. And the people, of course, were not as friendly.[109]

Children were also disappointed with the smallness of things at the household scale. Drusilla Hawes, for example, was 'not impressed by [her] grandmother's flat, no garden, no veranda'.[110] Similarly, Elinor Tollington was taken to live in a flat in London, where she was to stay with her mother's cousin. Although as an adult she

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[106] Ramsay-Brown, M., op. cit.; Tape 1, side 2.
[107] Ibid..
[108] Ibid.; Tape 2, side 1.
[109] Ibid..
[110] Hawes, D., op. cit.; p2.

could recognise that 'for anyone accustomed to London [it was] no doubt very desirable', as a child she was shocked by her accommodation, finding it 'small and dark', as well as 'drab and dirty'.[111] Travelling with her grandparents to their home just after she had arrived in Britain, Margaret Ramsay-Brown kept pointing to large houses and asking if theirs was of a similar size. They replied negatively until:

> suddenly these doll's houses. It was a perfectly ordinary small detached house, in fact rather a nice house...But it, you know, living in those big houses with huge rooms and huge grounds, and coming, even a fairly good sized English house looked small.[112]

Throughout their childhood in Britain most sustained memories of India as home, and for many, their return to the sub-continent had been long awaited and anticipated. Sylvia Corfield, for example, lived in India prior to being educated in Britain. At the end of her schooling she was unequivocal in her desire to return to India. As she stated:

> I felt my home was there. We had a home in Shillong which my father had built. We had another home in Dipuldar. It was the sort of life that I longed to live, also to be with my people.[113]

Similarly, Iris Portal returned to India when she was 17, having 'longed to go, the whole time [she] was at school'.[114] Throughout the period spent living in the home-country, she 'never forgot it', and continued to associate the sub-continent with a sense of belonging and connectivity that she was unable to feel in respect of Britain. She describes her return to India in terms of freedom, expressing her relief to be away from 'cold, grey school and cold, grey England'.[115] Further, Iris Portal has stressed the sense of familiarity she felt on return there. Pointing to the significance of having spent her early childhood there, she recalled how well she fitted in, and 'having been born out there', how she felt 'back in a familiar landscape'.[116] Margaret Ramsay-Brown expressed similar feelings concerning her

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[111] Tollington, E., op. cit..
[112] Ramsay-Brown, M., op. cit.; Tape 1, side 2.
[113] Corfield, S., taped and transcribed interview. OIOC, Mss.Eur.T.17; p2/2.
[114] Portal, I., taped and transcribed interview, op. cit.; p1.
[115] Portal, I., (undated) Song at Seventy, op. cit.; p31.
[116] Portal, I., taped and transcribed interview, op. cit.; p1.

return to India. Again suggesting the significance of ones birthplace, she remembered definitively that, 'I felt totally connected to India. I was born there'.[117]

It is striking how many accounts discuss the immediate sense of familiarity felt on return to India. Barbara Donaldson, for example, stated that her 'main feeling in returning to India at eighteen was that I was home again.[118] Similarly, Marjory Fyson was overjoyed to be back home, and 'began to remember Urdu, and all the sights and sounds so familiar came flooding back.[119] Drusilla Hawes returned to India in 1932 with her husband, Derek. In a vivid and evocative description of her sense of place, she remembered that:

> One day out of Bombay I sniffed and smelt the old familiar unforgettable smell of India. When I smelt it I knew that I was back and that nothing I saw, or heard, or ate, or did would be unfamiliar. Even the language came back to me.[120]

Personal reminiscences such as these suggest that many children who were sent home to Britain for their education continued to associate India with a sense of belonging that they were unable to evoke in respect of the home-country. Accounts are often characterized by feelings of homesickness, deprivation and loss as everything that had been familiar to them was distanced. Separated from their family, many were unable to feel a sense of belonging, and sustained notions of India as home. On return to the sub-continent, many were greeted by their parents or family servants. Alternatively they travelled back to India to establish a home both with, and for, their husband.

Conclusions

Women living in India often reflected complex patterns between travel and dwelling not only within the sub-continent, but also between Britain and India. Their journeys from India to Britain became more frequent from 1917, and again from 1925. In this chapter I have focused on a range of imperial discourses which

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[117] Ramsay-Brown, M., op. cit.; Tape 1, side 1.
[118] Donaldson, B. (1982) India Remembered. CSAS; p1.
[119] Fyson M. (undated) Lucky Child. CSAS, Fyson papers; p22.
[120] Hawes, D. op. cit.; p50.

pointed to the necessity not only for men, but also women and children, to visit the home-land in order to ensure successful imperial rule. Emphasizing the ambiguous position of women in India, it is clear that such discourses centred on the implications for imperial masculinity, and not imperial femininity, if officer's wives were unable to visit Britain on a regular basis. As adults, lived experiences of Britain became interlinked with imagined geographies of home in increasingly complex ways. At the household scale, notions of Britain as home were problematized as there was usually no physical home to return to. High levels of mobility while on leave added to feelings of displacement, and women often felt out of place as their clothes, attitudes and outlooks differed from those they were visiting. Many were relieved to return to the familiarity they associated with India. As children, imagined geographies of Britain were often fragmented on arrival. They were often distressed at leaving their homes and families in India, and felt alienated and restricted by the spaces, places, and attitudes in Britain. Moreover, many sustained notions of India as home, and welcomed their return to the sub-continent as young adults. Chapter Five focuses on the sense of belonging many women associated with India as they lived there as the wives of army officers and civil servants. In order to examine their notions of home, I consider the personal accounts written by women in respect of the preparations they made for their final departure from India, and as they reflected on their last voyage home.

CHAPTER FIVE

DWELLINGS AND MOBILITY: SENSES OF BELONGING AND THE FINAL VOYAGE HOME

Introduction

Between 1915 and 1947, significant numbers of women travelled from India to re-settle in the home-country, typically returning as a result of their husband's final departure. India was not a settler colony, and repatriation to Britain was encouraged. Imperial discourses emphasized the necessity for men to return home, pointing to the sub-continent as a space for work, duty and career: a place of temporary 'exile' and not of permanent domicile. Strict retirement laws, stipulated in the Civil Service Fundamental Rules, operated for both army officers and for members of the I.C.S..[1] The ill-health or death of their husband could also precipitate the final passage home for middle-class wives. For most of the women in this study, however, departure was realized as a result of Indian Independence,. These events were crucial to expectations of return, as well as to processes of repatriation.

In this chapter I begin by exploring India as a site of home-making for British women. I examine their senses of belonging and consider notions of home, thus providing a context from which to discuss their permanent movement away, and to consider narratives of displacement and dispossession. I then reflect on both physical and mental preparations made for departure from India. I interrogate their anticipation of returning home, an often uncertain condition which is coupled with

[1] For members of the I.C.S., retirement was compulsory at the age of 55, except in exceptional circumstances. An officer could not, however, be retained under any circumstances after the age of 60. For those serving in the army, retirement was compulsory between the ages of 55 and 67 depending on rank. (India Office List for 1926, compiled from official records by direction of the Secretary of State for India in Council. 40th Publication. London: Harrison and Sons, Ltd). Taxation regulations were among the formal incentives which operated to encourage men to return home to Britain after retirement. Tax regulations on pension payments appear to have been extremely complicated for those who lived and worked in India, and include a remarkable number of clauses and revisions. However, it is my understanding that pensioners benefited from substantial tax relief if they did *not* stay in India. Somewhat ironically, it also appears that tax exemptions were even greater for those who were not domiciled in India, but who were resident *outside* of Britain. (see

the disruption of leaving home. Although most women used this time to reflect on notions of the home-land, their expectations of Britain were usually much more equivocal than those reflected in dominant imperial discourses. I also discuss the practicalities of departure: the significance of parting with people and pets, and often difficult decisions whether to pack or part with personal material possessions. Such dilemmas, I argue, had implications for negotiating notions of return. In the final section, I consider the physical journey from India: a voyage which was frequently characterized by discomfort, danger and sickness. Contrary to popular discourses which celebrated the final departure from India, many women have represented their voyage in terms of endurance, or death. Baggage often assumed a focus for survival, and I suggest that the creation of rumours and myths among the women on board was also important in this respect. Significantly, notions of fear became more intense once ships had reached the Mediterranean, passed Gibraltar, and began to advance towards Britain.

In this Chapter I am examining the importance of departure, voyages of return, and the significance of home as an apparently stable destination in respect of the final passage from India of white middle-class women. Indicating both the transience and co-existence of home, the journey made by such women does not only represent a voyage towards home. Pointing to the fundamental significance of their departure from India, many were also leaving home. I suggest that it is difficult to define a beginning or an ending to such journeys. Just as the borders associated with travelling and dwelling are blurred, the boundaries between leaving and arriving cannot be defined as discrete. I also argue that such voyages were further complicated by the often ambiguous position these women occupied between forced and voluntary movement, and that this was linked to the destabilization of subjectivities over time and space. It is of fundamental importance to consider not only the implications of, but also the reasons for, leaving India. Finally, I emphasize that notions of home are transitory and fluid, and that accounts of the journey from India problematize dominant imperial discourses which positioned Britain as home.

Indian Civil Service (retired) Association Annual Reports; OIOC, Mss.Eur.F.0173; item 4). I

1. At Home in India

The accounts of white middle-class wives of army officers and civil servants who returned to Britain from India suggest that notions of home were of fundamental importance to them: the amount and extent of discussion concerned with concepts of home and senses of belonging is striking. Accounts are not only concerned with spatially and temporally distant notions of Britain as home, or with periodic movement *between* Britain and India. Patterns of travel and dwelling were also repeated to and from homes *within* India. Narratives are continually re-centred around questions of being at home, feeling at home and going home, as well as locating, searching or finding a place or space to call home. Accounts stress fluidity and mobility, and suggest that home cannot be considered as a static location, position or destination, but, rather, as transforming over both time and space.

Many of the texts studied here include discussions which highlight metaphorical notions of home *and* its physical existence as vital, highlighting their connectivity. Accounts repeatedly return to the mobility of women's lives in India, stressing that each move necessitated the re-construction of homes in a different location. Some texts point to the initial displacement and upheaval felt by wives the first time they had to move, often just months after establishing a home in India. In 1922, Ruby Gray travelled to India to set-up home with her husband Charles, an army officer. She was initially shocked by what she has described as the 'primitiveness' of her bungalow. It had been badly neglected, and was simple, she thought, with stone floors, rush matting, bare white-washed walls and no electricity or running water. Over the next few weeks she put her practical domestic knowledge to work, and began to establish her first imperial home. However, such notions of imperial domesticity were soon disrupted:

> I had just finished making the curtains for the house when I learnt my first lesson as a soldiers wife. Charles walked in one day and said he had orders to go to Bareilley...That was the end of my first home exactly two months after landing in India.[2]

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discuss these issues in greater depth in Chapter Six.

[2] Gray, R. (undated),untitled life writing. OIOC, Mss.Eur.D.1037/11; p61.

Ruby Gray's expectations of both home and domesticity in India were dislodged. Shocked by such transient notions of domicile, her account points to a concern that she would never feel at home again:

> I was now beginning to realise what being married to an Indian Army [Officer] would mean to me in the future; this was not just a visit...with the knowledge that I would be returning to my permanent home in due course, this was to mean that for the rest of my days spent out in India we were to have no permanent home of any kind, always in temporary accommodation, bungalows, boarding houses, lisson huts, tents, on the move all one's serving days.[3]

As Ruby Gray suggests, extensive movement in India could disrupt notions of both home and belonging. Privileging conceptions of physical stability and position, such texts suggest that repeated movement, and the resultant impermanence associated with locating home in India, could problematize and destabilize notions of belonging. Moreover, Drusilla Hawes, for example, questions the possibility of having a home at all under such circumstances. Born in Simla in 1908, Mrs Hawes lived in India until she was five, returning in 1932 to set-up home with her husband, Derek. Referring to 'temporary dwelling places', she sounds unsettled and appears to associate notions of physical situatedness and permanence with ideas of home:

> Although you had nice bungalows you didn't bother too much about them because they were temporary dwelling places, I mean you could easily be uprooted in six months and go off somewhere else. You just packed up your boxes, but you'd leave everything like furniture and stuff like that you left behind. So it wasn't like a home here [in Britain] for instance, where I've got all my own furniture and so on.[4]

However, moving beyond an emphasis on physical stability, the importance of family, as well as familiarity with a range of conditions and circumstances, to the notion of home is highlighted in many accounts. Pointing to the negotiation of meanings of home over space, these women frequently emphasize the significance of personal material possessions, as well as family, as markers of home. In this respect, although familiarity with place is, without doubt, relevant to senses of

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[3] Gray, R., ibid.; p61.
[4] Hawes, D., taped interview, op. cit.; Cassette two, side two.

belonging, home is associated with notions of attachment beyond a desire for a stable location. Acknowledging the transience of homes in India, Barbara Donaldson, for example, suggests that it was still possible to feel at home wherever she was in the sub-continent:

> [There was] constant moving from place to place. [Officers] would be transferred and at once one was in a new place, strange house and other friends... We took it in our stride because each place we landed in was 'home' and made familiar, even if it were a tent.[5]

In contrast, Mary Maxwell's account repeatedly associates the lack of a permanent home with alienation, suggesting that such transient notions of home were, for her, linked to a sense of homelessness and displacement. However, her deep sense of homelessness was also connected to ideas of the familial and the familiar, suggesting flexible concepts of belonging and metaphorical notions of home rather than a fixed category concerned with geographical inertia. Conflating notions of family and home, such feelings were exacerbated during the Second World War due to her forced separation from her husband (who remained in India), and her son, who was in the Navy. Initially unable to obtain a return passage to India, she rented a series of houses in Britain in an attempt to make herself feel at home and, even more important to her, so that her son would have a home to visit whilst on leave. Vocabularies of displacement and rootlessness are employed throughout the text and are reflected in her overwhelming longing for her 'own home'. Constructing her memoir from detailed diaries kept throughout her life, she recollected that, 'In all my wandering life I don't think I have ever felt so homeless'.[6] Similarly conflating notions of home and family, Iris Portal vividly evokes notions of belonging which associate India very strongly with ideas of home. Having lived in India for all but eleven years between 1905 and 1942, her memoir suggests that she felt such a sense of belonging in India because of personal familiarity as well as a familial history which she felt connected her with, and rooted her in, that country. Describing important links between travel, family and home, she suggests complex relationships between mobility and dwelling, saying that:

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[5] Donaldson, B., op. cit.; p1.
[6] Maxwell, M, op. cit.; Chapter 12, p21.

> The family was a serious organisation in those days and has always been important to me, as indeed it usually is to nomad people. Even though we were far from what was termed 'home', we had relations all around us.[7]

Paradoxically, therefore, accounts which point to the difficulties in reconciling notions of home with repeated movement are complimented by texts which point to the fundamental necessity of ideas of home to be able to travel. Home does not have to be characterized by a stable location. Indeed, for women such as these, it was essential that imaginative geographies associated with belonging were attached to mobile and fluid notions which enabled the negotiation and re-construction of home over both time and space. In this way, people and objects such as pictures, photographs, curtains and even packing cases or crates became markers for home across distances over which the more permanent constructions of home often could not be moved. Without denying the significance of familiarity with physical localities, therefore, the importance of personal possessions should not be under-estimated. People's inability to move with their belongings due to loss, destruction or other forced separation can potentially lead to increased feelings of displacement and homelessness. Blurring boundaries of travelling and dwelling in this way, some women discuss the stability they associated with their constant mobility. Helen Mary Hughes, for example suggests that although she may have been physically moving for significant periods whilst living in Burma with her husband, she always felt settled:

> I found a certain quality of stability about those days [in Burma] which I have since missed. True the stability was not applicable to our bodies for we were always on the move.[8]

Individual domestic influences were also considered by many women to be important to notions of home. Ruth Donnison, for example, travelled to Yenangyaung in Burma with her husband, Vernon, in 1923. Stressing the importance of creating a home, she describes the influences associated with personal domesticity:

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[7] Portal, I., (undated) Song at Seventy, op. cit.; p7.
[8] Hughes, H. M. (undated) No Business in Camp. OIOC, Mss.Eur.C.0640; p53.

> By the time we had unpacked and arranged our few possessions and I had some curtains made for our windows, the house, though always hot in hot weather, and lacking all mod. con[s], did look pleasant and we felt we could call it a home.[9]

Such accounts highlight the importance of home-making in India, suggesting the ease with which houses could be turned into homes with the appropriate care and attention. In her memoir, Viola Bayley stressed how domestic skill could rapidly turn each residence she moved to with her husband into a home:

> It's amazing how quickly houses lose their atmosphere, and thank heavens, how quickly one can turn the next house into a home. I feel, having lived in seventeen different houses and countless boarding houses and flats, that I can speak with good authority.[10]

In this and many other texts, women such as Viola Bayley have stressed that India was a physical site of home-making, which often meant the frequent and repeated construction of home, regularly across vast distances. It is perhaps not surprising, therefore, that despite initial feelings of upheaval and displacement, many women associated India with notions of both home and belonging. Stressing connections between familiarity and home, ideas of home-making were closely bound up with India for all the women in this study, as the sub-continent was usually the only place where they had established physical households. Such spaces, as well as their surrounding environs, represented sites of reality and their everyday lives. The vast, open landscapes of India were fundamental to many women's concept of India as home, suggesting that physical locality was more important to concepts of home at the national scale than to household notions of home. For example, in 1918, Margaret Dench moved to Malakland in the North West Frontier Province with her husband, Will. Stressing the importance of familiarity with place and locality to the construction of a sense of belonging, Margaret Dench firmly associated the landscapes of India with home, writing:

> [T]he long train passed over the bridge at Attock and I saw the wide Indus river through the girders. Did I but know it I was at the same time

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[9] Donnison, R., op. cit.; p135.
[10] Bayley, V. (1976) One Woman's Raj. CSAS, Bayley papers; p131.

> being translated into a Frontiers-woman. Thereafter I always felt that I was coming home when I crossed Attock Bridge going north.[11]

Despite the representation and construction of Britain as home, life histories and geographies were based around India, and it was there that many women felt at home. Their personal narratives frequently reflect the possibility for the co-existence of home and for multiple senses of belonging. Repeated travelling and dwelling allows for the re-definition and re-negotiation of ideas of home over both spatial and temporal distance. However, the ability to repeatedly re-construct notions of home across both time and space was also linked to the construction of stable and confident subjectivities (although I am not suggesting that they were permanent or immobile), and women's specific imperial and domestic roles in India. Further, this in turn is connected to ideas of settlement, rootedness and connectivity: to being in place. Although the majority of women's accounts demonstrate a sustained (although often strained) recognition of Britain as home, their narratives overwhelmingly associated India with a sense of belonging. At the time of their final departure from India, concepts of home co-existed for many women, involving intricate notions of both Britain and the sub-continent at a number of scales. This points not only to the fundamental significance of leaving India, but also indicates the possibility of conflict between ideas of departure and arrival.

2. Preparing for Departure

Narratives dominated by notions of home and homelessness can be seen in the context of wider discourses surrounding issues of both forced and voluntary movement associated with expatriation, emigration, exile and displacement as discussed by cultural and literary theorists such as bell hooks and Caren Kaplan.[12] Moving beyond a consideration of voluntary movement, it is evident from a number of personal accounts that, for some, repatriation from India elicited feelings of dispossession, rootlessness, homelessness and exile. I am not attempting to associate return home for the women in this study with the terror and violence

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[11] Dench, M., op. cit.; p12.
[12] hooks, B., op. cit.; Kaplan, C. (1996), op. cit..

evoked by bell hooks, for example, in respect of forced movement, usually *away* from home: although this is not to say that return home could not involve encounters with fear at a number of scales. However, repatriation itself does occupy an ambiguous position between forced and voluntary movement: according to the Oxford dictionary, to repatriate is 'to send or bring back (a person) to his or her own country'.[13]

In their personal texts, women who returned to Britain from India often discussed their final departure from the sub-continent, emphasizing the inevitability of their return home. Margaret Dench, for example, lived in India with her husband, William, from 1918. From the outset, she knew that retirement was compulsory for her husband at age 55, and that unless there were serious problems such as ill-health or death they would be leaving in 1943.[14] In a number of accounts this inevitability of return to the home-land is constructed in negative terms. Some women discuss their departure from India as destructive, reflecting powerful notions of loss and deprivation. At the time of her final return to Britain, Vere Birdwood was aged 36 and had lived in the sub-continent for all but six years of her life, having been educated in Britain between the ages of 11 and 17. However, throughout her adult life in India, as the wife of an army officer, she knew that eventually she would leave the sub-continent. Implying that her life might be considered to be over once she had left India, she has pointed out that:

> We all knew - and this is like knowing that death is inevitable - we all knew that one day we would leave India. Most of us, I think, did not look forward to this day.[15]

Similarly, Iris Portal lived in India as an adult for 20 years, and at the time of leaving was acutely conscious of a sense of dislocation from a place which she considered to be her home. Positioning herself as a nomad, she described herself on her final departure from India, in 1943, as being 'in a state of shock similar to bereavement'. She stressed how destructive this inevitability could feel, stating that at the end of your husband's career:

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[13] The Oxford Paperback Dictionary (1988), Oxford: Oxford University Press (3rd Edition);p685
[14] Dench, M., op. cit.; p120.
[15] Birdwood, V., op. cit.; p.6/11.

> You must then go away and die in Cheltenham. You must not...stay there.[16]

Drawing repeatedly on the inevitability of leaving India, Viola Bayley's memoir focuses on the theme of 'the last time' for a series of experiences and activities. Emphasizing her attachment to India, she has written about the winter of 1941-1942 as 'our last in Delhi - sadly as we had made so many good friends and the house in Clive Road had become a real home'.[17] Similarly, 1945 has been identified by her as 'our last summer in Kashmir, our last year in India'.[18] Reflecting on the months prior to her return to Britain, Viola Bayley recollected that: 'it was a strange winter, our last in India'.

Fewer accounts reflect the inevitability of return from India in positive terms. Dorothy Younie, for example, alluded not only to the fundamental importance of notions of return, but also highlighted the optimistic sense of anticipation associated with imperial discourses which constructed Britain as home when she said:

> You were always dreaming about coming back...We were always thinking about coming back...and the idea was that we'll get home as soon as possible.[19]

Similarly, Anne Symington suggested that the 'real reason' that more British people did not settle in the sub-continent was because 'the idea of settling permanently in India didn't appeal to very many of us I don't think. Merely because like most human beings I think we liked living at home'.[20]

For women who had to leave as a result of Independence, feelings of disruption and dispossession were often exacerbated by the unexpectedness of their forced departure. Many who had been unable, or unwilling, to travel to Britain

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[16] Portal, I., taped and transcribed interview, op. cit.; p3/1.
[17] Bayley. V., p69.
[18] Ibid.; p124.
[19] Younie, D., Coming Home. Radio Scotland programme script. OIOC, Mss.Eur.T.182; no pagination.
[20] Symington, A., taped and transcribed interview. OIOC, Mss.Eur.T.64; p7/1.

during the Second World War took the opportunity to visit friends and relatives in the home-country soon after peace had been declared. When their husband's home-leave was over, most returned to India fully expecting to spend several more years there, and were shocked to find their stay so short-lived. Sylvia Corfield, for example, had lived in India as a child. Following her education in Britain, she returned after the First World War, and remained in India with her husband until 1947. Evoking an abrupt sense of departure, she stated:

> After Independence day we had to leave - my husband and I had to leave...because we were told that his job was at an end.[21]

Pointing to her position between forced and voluntary movement, Sylvia Corfield's narrative suggests that she had little, if any, choice in returning to Britain. Although she may have recognized that her departure from India was inevitable, she was bewildered and surprized that it was to be so soon. However, as the campaign for Indian Independence intensified, even many of those who positioned themselves as rooted in India were glad to be leaving. On 8th August 1942, the All-India Congress Committee had invited the British to 'Quit India'. After a negative response, it called on its supporters to make the country ungovernable, and a number of Congress's leadership, including Gandhi, were arrested and imprisoned.[22] The subsequent unrest and rioting, coupled with the violent British response, was deeply distressing to many middle-class British women who considered India to be their home. Although the actual campaign continued for just a few months, it had repercussions which were sustained for much longer. Viola Bayley, for example, suggests that throughout the winter of 1945-6 there was:

> ...an unhappy situation all around us. We were not wanted in India. It was made clear, politely by some, less politely in slogans and demonstrations by others, at worst in rioting...I had to listen to the shouts and yells of a mob that were storming through the streets, shouting for the British to go. I had never heard anything like it before. It was frightening, very frightening, and made one picture only too vividly the days of the Mutiny.[23]

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[21] Corfield, S., op. cit.; p2/22.
[22] James, L., op. cit.
[23] Bayley, V., op. cit.; p126.

In turn, however, this subdued need for repatriation was coupled with regret. Confronting these issues, personal narratives often contain detailed discussion concerning the uncertainty many women associated with having to leave India. Illustrating both a desire to return home, and her regret at leaving, Margaret Dench wrote:

> I was ready to go; anxious that our sojourn in this land was ended to strike roots in England, but still it was with a heavy heart that I went aboard Strathaird for I knew I was unlikely ever to see India again, and I loved India with the devotion of one who has spent there all the adult years of her life.[24]

Accounts such as these describe the distress often felt by women who were leaving. India represented familiarity, and many British women felt at home in the sub-continent. In this respect, it is perhaps not surprising that a number of personal texts are characterized by narratives of exile and expatriation, reflecting the doubt, insecurity and dejection felt by some women as they returned to the home-land. Drusilla Hawes, for example, stressed that leaving India was 'like leaving a life-time behind...It was the life I'd known, the happiness'.[25] Similarly, although Viola Bayley had 'longed all these years of home', at the time of her actual departure from India she felt a deep sense of belonging there. Reflecting equivocal notions of home, she found herself 'scared of leaving a way of life that had grown so familiar'. Further, pointing to powerful notions of disruption and dislocation, she felt that her departure from India represented an 'uprooting'.[26]

Margaret Dench was similarly anxious and uncertain about her return to Britain. However, she was perhaps more deeply concerned with the ability of her grown-up children to cope with departure. Three of her four children and two of her grand-children had been born in India. Stressing the importance of birthplace to concepts of rootedness, she was conscious of the implications that this could have for them. She had brought her family up to always think of India as more than a temporary domicile, so to them 'it was home'. Pointing towards notions of forced

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[24] Dench, M., op. cit.; p142.
[25] Hawes, D., op. cit.; cassette two, side two.
[26] Bayley, V., op. cit.; p129.

movement, and stressing the significance of their departure from India, she reflects on the displacement of her entire family:

> I hoped they wouldn't feel dispossessed when their links with India were finally severed. They had been brought up to think they had a stake in the country, it was more than a temporary domicile, it was the land of their birth and so far of their allegiance.[27]

Adding to the distress of leaving India, many accounts reveal concerns associated with returning home. For many women, the departure from India mobilized notions of uncertainty and anxiety concerned with constructions of Britain as home, as well as their position within it. Demonstrating equivocal notions of return, the majority of texts reflect curiosity about the home-land rather than confident or unshakeable opinions. At the scale of the nation, women's expectations are often cautious, contesting imperial discourses which represented Britain as home, and as unquestionably beautiful and ordered.

Despite associating the sub-continent with notions of home, Iris Portal felt that at the time of her departure in 1943, 'India was finished for me'. Reflecting on the violence within the sub-continent, she felt it was imperative that she went 'home as soon as possible'. Such certainty, however, was disrupted by her acknowledgement that Britain was home in name only. Questioning this construction she asked, 'would it be home to me?'.[28] Also reflecting ambiguous notions of return, Margery Hall's account similarly reflects doubt and unease as well as enthusiasm. In it, she wrote that:

> At last we were going home. Seven years, a world war between, and for me three children added to my family. It was all very exciting; I was slightly apprehensive. We must look very funny, I thought, with our out of date Indian bazaar-made clothes. I wondered what England would think of us, and what we would think of battle-scarred England.[29]

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[27] Dench M., op. cit.; p141. And see Chapter One.
[28] Portal, I. (undated) Song at Seventy. CSAS; p177.
[29] Hall, M. (undated) And the Nights Were More Terrible Than the Days: Adventures of a young wife in India. CSAS, Hall papers; chapter 14, p1.

Adding to such anxieties were practical concerns about life in Britain. Many women were worried about the financial implications of returning home, as well as about finding somewhere to live, and their personal domestic abilities, duties and responsibilities. Although most women had returned to Britain for relatively short periods of leave, the vast majority were setting-up home there for the first time. Desiree Battye, for example, was particularly concerned about her ability to care for her children. With both a nanny and an ayah she had never before had charge of them for 'more than half a day at a time', and was desperately worried that she would not be able to cope with their day-to-day needs and demands.[30] Viola Bayley was also anxious about her 'domestic abilities', particularly her complete lack of culinary experience. Stressing that it would not have been acceptable for her to learn to cook in India, she has pointed out that she 'had the prospect of returning home with nothing but a cookery book between [her] family and starvation'.[31] Further problematizing notions of return, the majority of those going home had no material home to return to. As Vere Birdwood has stated:

> We had no homes in England...This was absolutely the case in the 20s and 30s because (a) we didn't have enough money to buy a house and secondly, I believe the tax laws were such that we'd have to pay income tax on our house in England as well as Indian income tax on our pay.[32]

At the time of Independence, women's concerns over financial and domestic security were often exacerbated by the uncertainty of their husband's future career, as well as by the economic significance of not having a job in Britain. Viola Bayley has described the pervasivness of such tension, suggesting that 'beyond the unrest and the constant talk of the handing over of power lay the worry of one's own uncertain future'.[33] Mildred Archer was worried about leaving India for both material and emotional reasons. She was deeply concerned about the loss of her husband's job, and their continued ability to pay the school fees for their two young children. Emotionally, her account points to the sense of belonging and familiarity associated with India. After fourteen years in the sub-continent, she had not lived as a married women, or mother, anywhere else. Anxious about setting up a new home

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[30] Battye, D., op. cit.; p199.
[31] Bayley, V., op. cit.; p128.
[32] Birdwood, V., op. cit.; p.6/11.
[33] Bayley, V., op. cit.; p126

in Britain, she emphasized that leaving her life in India meant 'leaving a life that we had so absolutely loved'.[34]

Packing for the final departure from India was traumatic for many women. It was felt not only by those who strongly associated India with a sense of belonging, but also by those who had been looking forward to returning to Britain. In their accounts, a number of women have emphasized the significance of packing, highlighting the distress it often caused as many possessions, as well as family pets, had to be sold and left behind. Vere Birdwood indicated the emotional upheaval that this could cause, stressing that having to return to Britain whilst her belongings remained in India made her feel vulnerable and exposed.[35] Such anxiety was often exacerbated for those who had to leave at short notice. During the Second World War, for example, the availability of passages was reduced, and the space for personal freight severely limited. Desiree Battye, for example, remembered that 'our orders to leave had come through so hurriedly there had been no time to bring our heavy stuff with us'.[36] For Margaret Dench, this meant that 'All that we brought home were a few rugs and our archaeological trophies'.[37] Mrs Dench found that packing for her departure from India was a particularly emotional and demanding exercise, and her account suggests the symbolic importance of luggage as representative of herself, and the casting-off of her life in India:

> Packing for the last time was a nostalgic affair. It was like packing up a good part of one's life. There would be no room on a wartime voyage for sentimental relics, so papers and old letters and the accumulation of years had to be discarded. One emerged stripped, it might be said, of everything but personality and clothing.[38]

Furniture, often hand-crafted in India, usually had to be left behind. Pointing to notions of coercion, Viola Bayley alludes to the indeterminate position she occupied between forced and voluntary movement, emphasizing the distress that

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[34] Archer, M., taped interview, op. cit.; Cassette two, side one (reel 7).
[35] Birdwood, V., op. cit.; p6/11.
[36] Battye, D., op. cit.; p199.
[37] Dench, M., op. cit.; p132.
[38] Ibid.; p132.

could be caused by having to leave without her belongings. She has written in her memoir that:

> We were forced with having to sell most of our beloved Kashmir furniture as the boat had announced strict regulations over number and size of packages.[39]

Emphasizing both physical and emotional defilement, Viola Bayley points out that such journeys meant that they had to effectively prioritize their lives, constructing hierarchies of their possessions in respect of sentimental or financial value.[40] Decisions had to be made with regard to what could be taken home and what would be left behind. Desiree Battye emphasizes that during and immediately after the War private documents and personal letters were subject to official scrutiny.[41] Furthering notions of disruption, such possessions were often held by the authorities for protracted periods, and many women had to travel away without them. Moreover, their return was often accompanied by heavy censorship. Cats, dogs, horses and polo ponies had to be sold, given away or shot, causing much anguish to those who were leaving. Mrs Showers-Stirling remembered feeling over-whelmed by all the '101 things' that she had to do in preparation for departure. As well as all the packing, it was imperative that she sold their horses and found homes for the family dogs.[42] Similarly, Frances Stewart-Robertson 'made arrangements' for her two horses and, much to her distress, organized for her two dogs (Cripps and Uppy), to be destroyed. Fortunately, however, this was not necessary as at the last minute two acquaintances agreed to take them on.[43]

Further, many women have discussed the 'agonising process' of saying goodbye to relatives, friends and servants, and talk of the tears shed at homes, hill stations, train stations and docks. Frances Stewart-Robertson left India with her husband in 1946. Summarizing feelings of loss, not only of possessions but of emotional ties to people, animals and places being left behind, she stated in her memoir:

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[39] Bayley, V., op. cit.; p128.
[40] Ibid.; p129.
[41] Battye, D., op. cit.; p199.
[42] Showers-Stirling, C. (begun 1960) Notes on her Life. CSAS; p114.
[43] Stewart-Robertson, F., op. cit.; p196-199.

> It was time for us to leave Bundi. Goodbye visits paid to all of our favourite spots...We packed up all our own possessions...And then the day to leave Bundi came. Our animals had all been found homes, but our servants were gathered on the verandah or on the lawn beyond, some frankly weeping.[44]

Similarly, Desiree Battye left India with her husband, Stuart, in 1945. Although it is not clear from her memoir exactly how long she had lived in the sub-continent, her married life had been based there, and, further, she considered that 'England' had 'never been my home'.[45] She too remembered not only the physical disruption, but also the emotional distress caused by having to leave relatives, friends, servants and pets:

> Stu had long since sold his polo ponies, now he sold the car while I bit back the tears as we sent Medlar with the sweeper up to Ronnie on her house-boat in Kashmir, the rule that no dogs or pets could be taken abroad more strictly enforced than ever. More tears saying goodbye to Ayah...sadly too to Nasrullah.[46]

Personal narratives also include descriptions of the last visits made to favourite places, revealing women's regret and sadness that they would not be able to return. Many texts reveal the significance of these last memories of India, as those about to leave constructed romantic and picturesque final images of areas which were more familiar than the docks of large cities, where impressions of ports could spoil their memories. Viola Bayley's last memories of India are of two days she spent with her husband in Dehra Dun, 'a semi-hill-station' set in pine forests. 'I remember', she has recounted, 'the last walk that we took in the fresh chill of the morning along a woodman's path that seemed to wind on forever'.[47] Similarly, Mary Maxwell's last remembrance of India was of her:

> last three days at Matheran, the lovely hill station where we had often been on short leave and where we could rest and enjoy a holiday...We

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[44] Ibid.; p196-199.
[45] Battye, D., op. cit.; p107.
[46] Ibid.; p198.
[47] Bayley, V., op. cit.; p128.

> left dear Matheran by the afternoon rail motor and drank in the scene as we travelled down.[48]

After 24 years of living in the sub-continent as the wife of an army officer, Ruby Gray left in 1947. Her final memories of India are of travelling from where they lived, in Saugar, to Mowh, where they stayed for a few weeks before embarking on the final stage of their voyage across India, to Bombay. She remembered those last weeks as an 'anti-climax', preferring to dwell upon the familiar countryside around Saugar:

> We were travelling by night to avoid the heat and dust of the day, the moonlight made all look so peaceful and beautiful...We watched a panther run across the road caught in the beams of the headlights. We started life in brilliant sunshine, we ended it in moonlight, for this was the end for both of us.[49]

For some women, partings such as these actually came to represent their departure from India, and highlight the difficulties associated with defining the start of their voyage home. It had been virtually impossible to book the journey to Britain either during or immediately after the Second World War. Further, at the time of Independence such large numbers of people had to be transported that passage availability remained severely limited. Application for the voyage home was made to the Government, who contacted applicants when a passage became available. The date of planned departure was often unspecified, and considerable time (often several weeks), had to be spent waiting in the big port towns until final confirmation was issued. Most women did not enjoy this period. The big cities were usually unfamiliar and impersonal, and although they were the sites of actual departure, for most women there was nothing, or no-one, to say goodbye to. This often represented a discordant end to their lives in India, and many considered that their passage was already underway. Linked to notions concerning the construction of 'last memories' of the sub-continent, Iris Portal, for example, 'said goodbye to India in the jungles of those western rocks and screes', stressing that 'the suburbs of Bombay were impersonal'.[50] Reflections such as these reveal the uncertainty and

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[48] Maxwell, M., op. cit.; Chapter 14, p8.
[49] Gray, R., op. cit.; p198.
[50] Portal, I., Song at Seventy, op. cit.; p180.

anxiety felt by many women who were leaving India, and point to the challenges and difficulties which many associated with returning home.

3. Travelling from India

Travelling by ship remained the most common form of transport to and from India until the time of Independence. Air routes had been in use from the late 1920s,[51] but travelling by plane was not an option for the majority of women returning to Britain until the end of the Second World War (Figure 3 represents the first commercial passenger air route to India). Even then it remained prohibitively expensive to most people.[52] By the late 1930s, travelling by air took approximately three days, whereas voyaging home by ship took three to six weeks, depending on the route taken (Plate 20). The most common itinerary operated by the principal steamer lines took passengers from Bombay or Calcutta to Aden, through the Red Sea and the Suez Canal, to Port Said, Malta, Gibraltar, Marseilles and Britain (Plates 21 and 22 show advertisements for two of the main steamer lines).[53] The Peninsular and Orient Steam Company advertised this route from Bombay as taking 19¾ days.[54] Such a journey could be shortened by two days by disembarking at Marseilles and taking the 'express' to Victoria Station, London. Alternatively, passengers could leave the ship in France or Italy and make their own travel arrangements, perhaps taking a more relaxing journey across Europe. In exceptional circumstances, for example at time of war, ships might be forced to take the longer route around South Africa, thereby avoiding the Mediterranean, and extending the voyage by as much as three weeks. Passengers would not be told of such changes to their journey until it was underway. Details of fares, times and

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[51] On 30th March 1929, a weekly air-mail service, operating from Croydon to Karachi, commenced. The journey took seven days because of a lack of experience and a shortage of equipment for night flying. For the part of the journey from Basra to India, the 'ground organization' (arrangements for accommodation and food), was considered to be incomplete. As such flights were only available to male passengers. Further uncertainties at this experimental stage also limited the passenger number to six. Murray, John (1929) (13th Edition) A Handbook for Travellers in India, Burma and Ceylon, London: John Murray; pxxix.

[52] Only one of the women's accounts I have looked at discusses her last voyage home by aeroplane. See Lambert, F., taped interview. OIOC, Mss.Eur.R.171.

[53] Murray, John, op. cit.; pxxxi. A number of variations on this route were available. For example, the Lloyd Triestino could be taken from Bombay to Trieste, Venice or Brindisi, and the Marittima Italiana to Genoa and Naples.

[54] Ibid.; pxxxi.

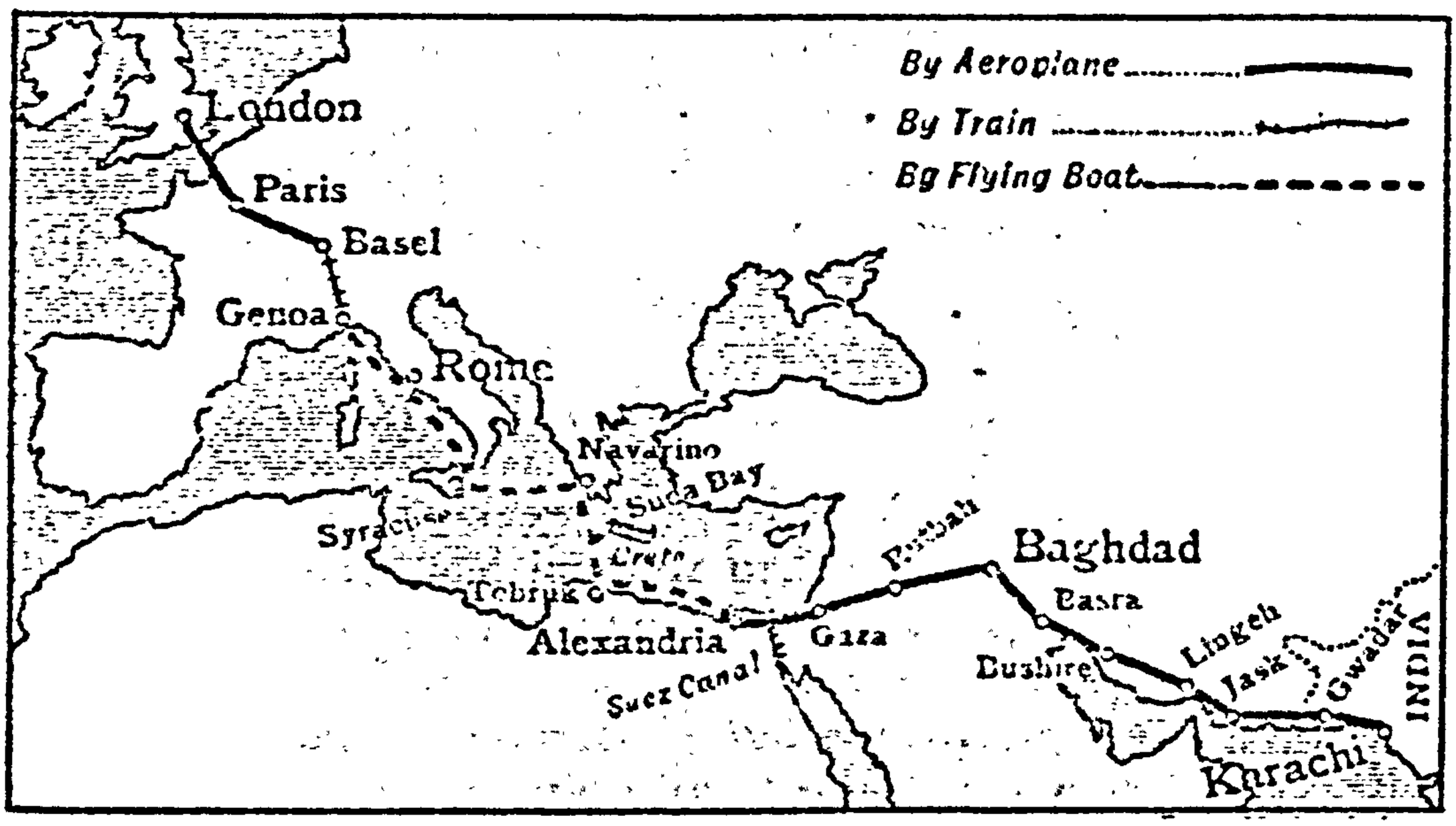

FIGURE 3: Air route to India, 1929.

[Source: A Handbook for Travellers in India, Burma and Celon, (1929), London: John Murray]

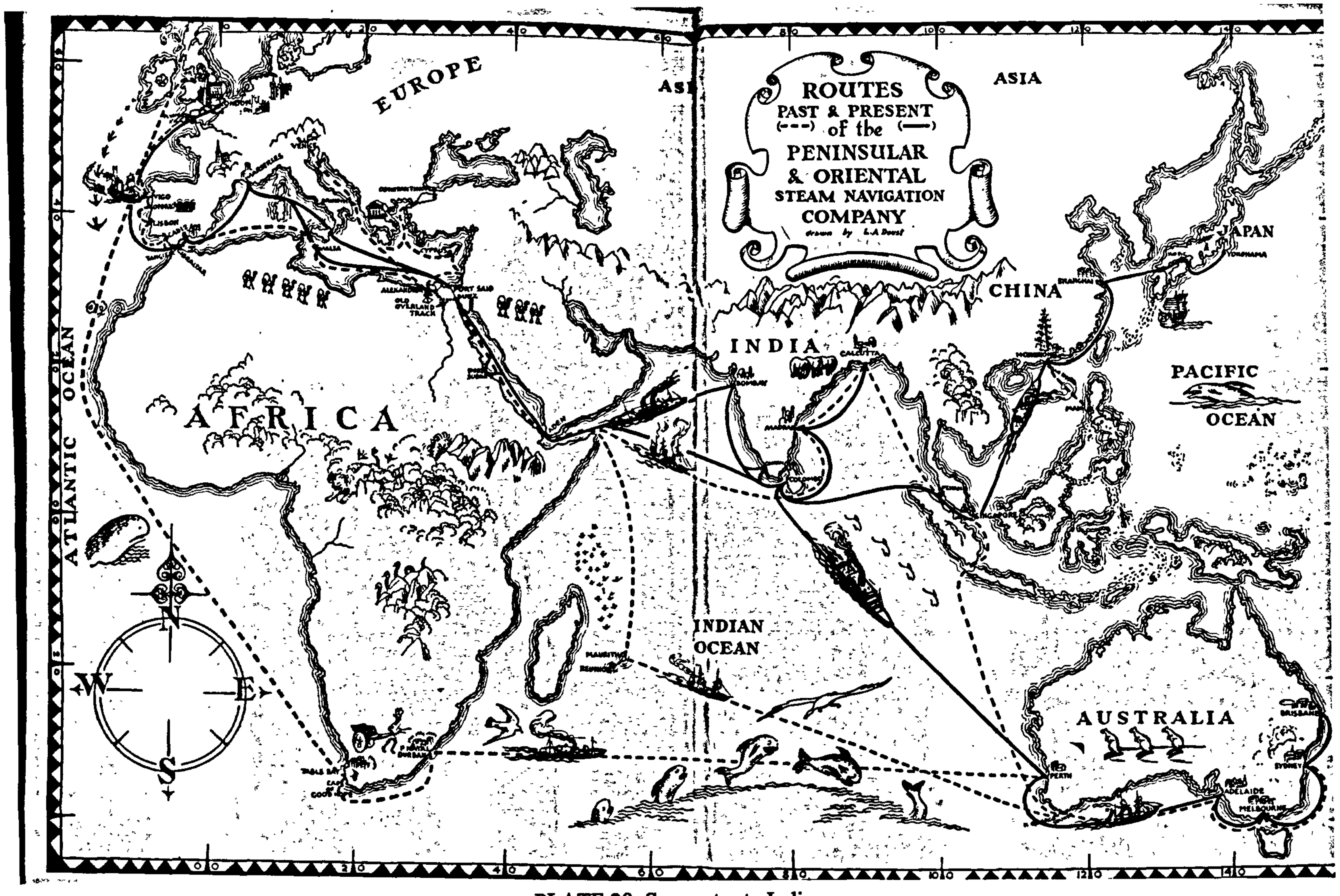

PLATE 20: Sea routes to India.

[Source: Cable, B. (1937) A Hundred Year History of the P&O, Peninsular and Orient Steam Company, 1837-1937, London: Ivor Nichelson & Watson]

PLATE 21: Advertisement for the Peninsular and Orient Steam Company.
[Source: Allen, C. (1979) A Scrapbook of British India, 1877-1947, London: Penguin]

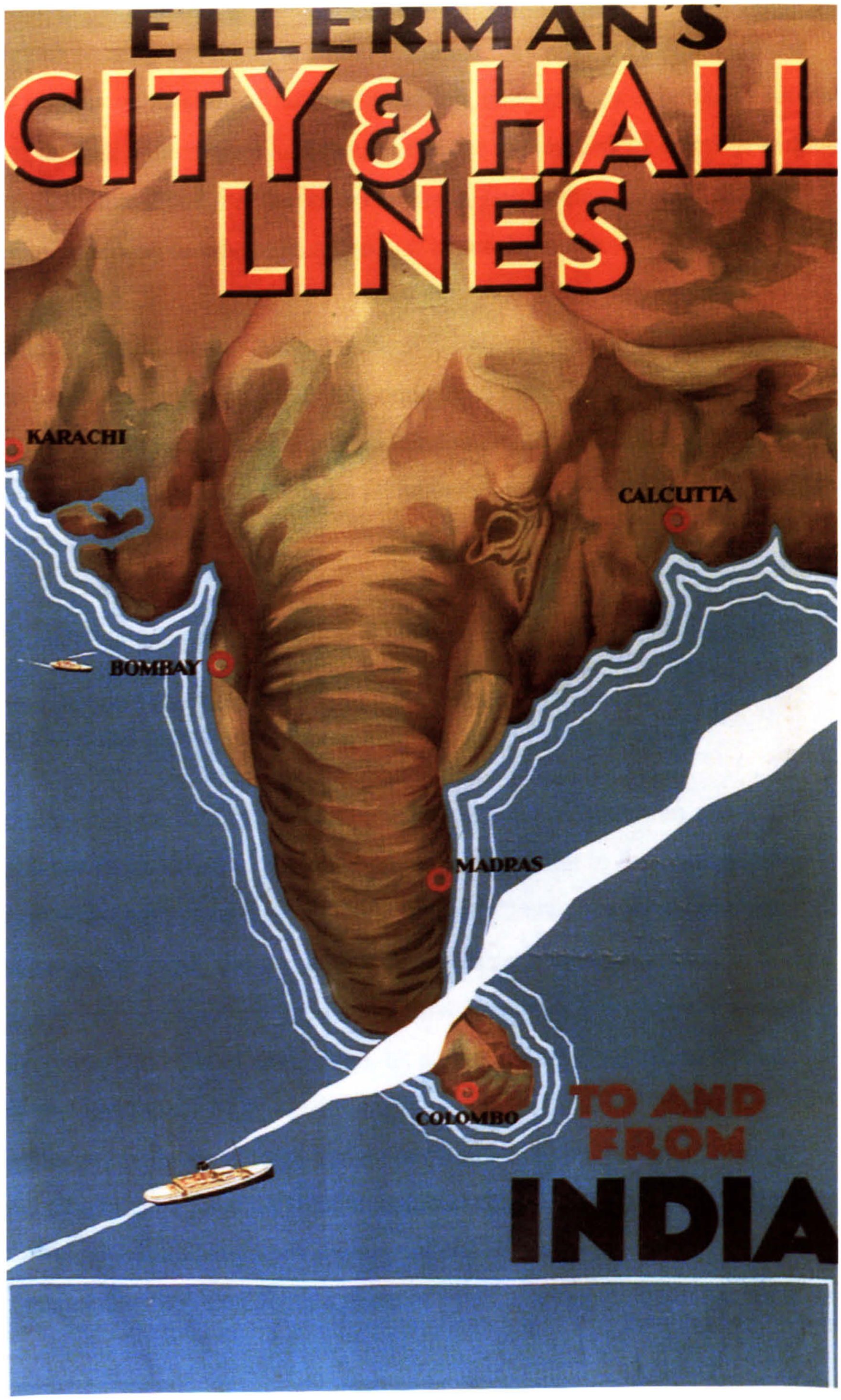

PLATE 22: Advertisement for Ellerman's City and Hall Lines.
[Source: Mayfair Cards of London, George Harvey Collection]

routes could be found in a number of sources, such as the bi-monthly *Oriental Traveller's Gazette*, as well as more substantial texts published by Thomas Cook and John Murray. In contrast to a range of material which offered practical and moral advice to women travelling *to* India, these sources were concerned almost exclusively with more 'matter-of-fact' information, such as how to book the return passage, freight limits, insurance and regulations for the landing of dogs.[55] Further, John Murray's *A Handbook for Travellers in India, Burma and Ceylon*, did not contain any information or advice in respect of return journeys.[56]

The journey home from India has been frequently portrayed by images of enthusiastic colonials flinging their topees overboard once Port Said had been passed (Plate 23).[57] Suggesting a simple and uncomplicated notion of departure which refuses to acknowledge a sense of attachment to the sub-continent, Charles Allen has commented that:

> The final, ritual farewell was made - as always - where the East ended and the West began: 'As we left Port Said and sailed into the open waters everyone was paraded with their topees on deck and at a signal we all flung our topees into the sea and that was the last of India'.[58]

These narratives suggest that such rituals marked the end of both men's and women's exile or banishment in the sub-continent, and point to their subsequent disconnection with India once they had left. Not only were they all apparently delighted to be going home, the journey itself has often been represented as a leisure cruise rather than a forced departure. However, very few personal narratives represent the voyage to Britain as positive, let alone as a celebration, and none mention the so-called ritual of topee throwing. In contrast, women's personal accounts concerned with the voyage home are often characterized by images of darkness and danger. Mrs Crofton lived in India as the wife of an I.C.S. officer from 1922-1947. Contradicting such joyous notions of return, as well as positive accounts concerned with retreat from a place of exile, she has stated in her memoir:

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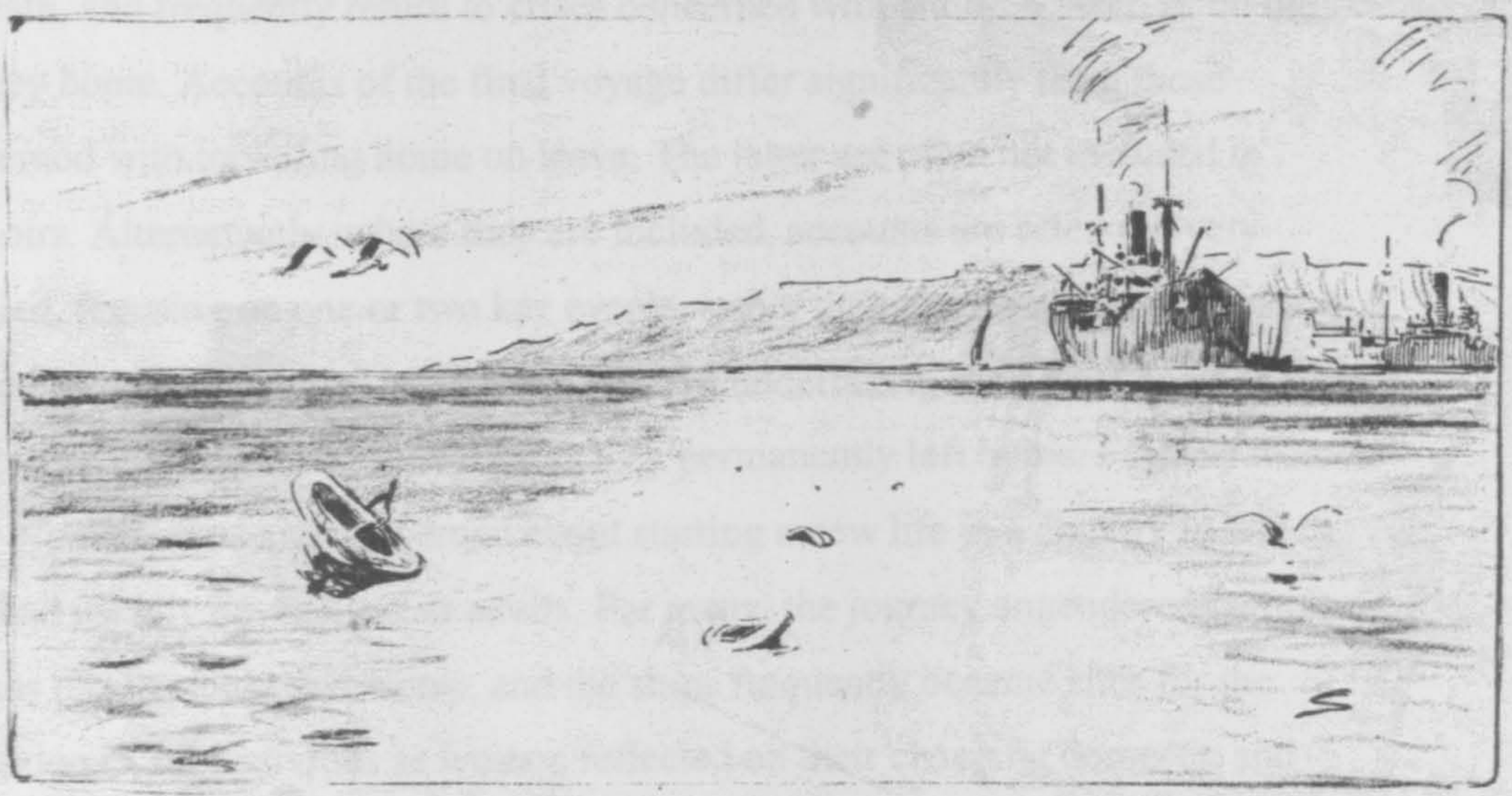
[55] Cook, T. & Son, op. cit..
[56] Murray, J. (1929) op. cit..
[57] Allen, C. (1979), op. cit..
[58] Allen, C. (1996), op. cit.; p264. In keeping with much of the rest of the book, this quotation is not attributed to a named individual.

Topees overboard: the last Anglo-Indian ritual,
that of throwing overboard one's topee as the ship sailed homeward out of Port Said.



'Bound in the wheel of Empire, one by one,
The Chain gangs of the East from Sire to Son,
The Exiles' line brings out the exiles' line
And ships them homeward when their work is done.'

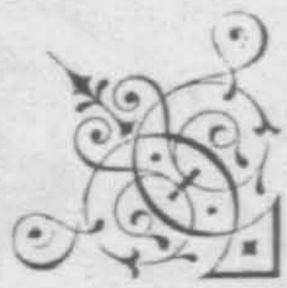


PLATE 23: 'Topees Overboard'.
[Source: Allen, C. (1979) A Scrapbook of British India, 1877-1947, London: Penguin]

> We left India for good at the beginning of May. It has been said that the finest view of Asia is over the stern of a ship. We did not think so; we had left too much behind.[59]

Throughout the journey, women continued to reflect upon worries about both going home, and leaving home. This is reflected in accounts which are apprehensive and uncertain, and none suggest expectations of Britain which are unequivocally positive. Viola Bayley, for example, expresses ambiguous notions of return throughout the sea voyage, continually questioning whether she would feel like a stranger in Britain.[60] The majority of narratives are focused on notions of survival, or death, and frequently return to crises concerned with children taken ill on the journey home. Accounts of the final voyage differ significantly from those concerned with travelling home on leave. The latter are often not included in memoirs. Alternatively, where they are included, accounts are often not very detailed, focusing on one or two key events, rather than the voyage as a whole. Instead of travelling away on holiday, women undertaking their final passage from India were distressed and saddened as they permanently left home. Further, women were often anxious and concerned about starting a new life in a country in which they had usually never lived as adults. For many, the journey engendered complex notions of self-doubt and worry, and the ships frequently became sites for the disruption of subjectivities as women reflected on their changing domestic and imperial status.

The majority of women in this study made their final voyage home during the 1940s.[61] Both during and after the Second World War, passage availability was limited, and women travelling home were transported from India in converted liners that were being used to convey extensive numbers of army and navy personnel. Following Independence in 1947, these vessels continued to be employed as large quantities of people continued to require transportation (Plate 24). Known as 'troop ships' or 'troopers', personal accounts stress their strict

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[59] Crofton, Mrs. O. (undated) They Also Serve. CSAS, Crofton Papers; p197.
[60] Bayley, V., op. cit.; p132.
[61] See Chapter Two for a discussion of why the majority of locatable personal accounts date from this time.

PLATE 24: Mass departure from India, August 1947.
[Source: Allen, C. (1979) A Scrapbook of British India, 1877-1947, London: Penguin]

gender segregation, over-crowding and regimentation. Most women who made the last journey from India with their husbands were shocked to discover the strict rules concerning gender segregation which operated on troop ships. Desiree Battye, for example, travelled home on the *S.S.Strathmore* in 1945 (Plate 25). Having been shown to her cabin on 'G' deck, she was surprised to find a 'voluptuous looking blonde lying languidly on the top bunk by the port hole and blower, a plump boy of about six years old sitting quietly on the bunk below'.[62] Desiree Battye told her that there had been a mistake, and that her husband, Stu, would shortly be joining them. She was disconcerted to learn from her cabin-mate that all men had been accommodated on one side of the ship, with the women and children together on the other. Men were not allowed to enter their wife's cabin, and women were not permitted to even go to their husband's side of the ship. Margery Hall was similarly unsettled when she boarded *The Duchess* in 1946.[63] Surprized to be put in a separate cabin from her husband, she asked who would help with their three children. Not particularly sympathetically, an official replied that her husband could call at her cabin, but not go in. Desiree Battye too had been relying on her husband's help. Never having been responsible for her two young children (one aged two, the other four months), for prolonged periods, she was dismayed to learn of this forced separation. As well as being segregated from their husbands, many were travelling without their nanny or ayah, and were concerned with coping with their children for the first time. Drusilla Hawes 'wept buckets' on the way home not only because she 'couldn't believe that it would be the last time', but also because she 'had to do it on [her] own, with the three children'.[64] Since all men were given duties around the ship, women only saw their husbands at meal times. Accounts stress the strict regimentation and lack of freedom on 'troop ships', and many are centred on the danger women felt they were being reminded of constantly. Emergency drills occurred at least once a day. Women, still separated from their husbands, had to carry children, life-belts and emergency bags filled with items such as baby milk, photographs, and jumpers as well as other articles

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[62] Battye, D., op. cit.; p200.
[63] Hall, M., op. cit.; chapter 14, p2.
[64] Hawes, D., op. cit.; cassette two, side two.

PLATE 25: S. S. Strathmore.

[Source: Ingall, C. (1997) The P&O Line and Princess Cruises: A Celebration in Pictures of the Peninsular and Orient Steam Navigation Company, Colishall: Ship Pictorial Publications]

vital to individual survival strategies, to their assigned life-boats.[65] Equally upsetting was the sound of gunfire and, the closer ships got to the Mediterranean, sweeping for mines. Margaret Dench also pointed to routine, punctuality, restrictions and obedience, suggesting that:

> Before we were twenty-four hours out from Bombay we realised that we were not only in a state of war but also under military supervision. The majority of the passengers were troops, and civilians were only incidental and therefore also came under orders.[66]

However, in order to compensate women for the lack of their spouse's help, each 'family' (designated as a woman with two or more children), was allocated what Desiree Battye refers to as a 'substitute husband'. He was to be responsible for getting his 'family' from their cabin, escorting them to a life-boat and accompanying them in it. Desiree Battye found the procedure confusing, exhausting, and frightening, and worried that if a real emergency occurred she was 'destined to be separated from [her] husband who would be busily getting other wives and children into HIS boat'.[67]

Ruby Gray was similarly separated from her husband as she travelled to Britain on a converted Trans-Atlantic liner in July 1947, after 25 years in India. Pointing to the severe over-crowding on such ships she has written that:

> On this last journey we were very congested...I was down below deck in a three berth cabin that had been converted to hold six women, we were in an inside cabin, no porthole, just a blower that blew air from the top deck...It was originally built for the Atlantic crossing, a crossing of four days in a northern climate, it was now August in the Red Sea, with a voyage of about three weeks.[68]

Margery Hall recalled her accommodation on *The Duchess* in a similar way:

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[65] Battye, D., op. cit..
[66] Dench, M., op. cit.; p144-145.
[67] Battye, D., op. cit.; p205. Original emphasis.
[68] Gray, R., op. cit.; p201.

> It was an original 2-berth converted to 16. It now held 16 bodies, 9 children and 7 women. Our bunks were in tiers, and there was just space to walk between.[69]

Worsened by the over-crowded conditions, Ruby Gray has remarked that 'August in the Red Sea was stifling'.[70] Desiree Battye reported that, with sealed portholes and the lack of 'blowers' for the extra bunks put into cabins, there was a complete lack of fresh air. Added to this, for the first part of the journey, temperatures were 'well up in the nineties'.[71] Combinations of overcrowding, lack of privacy, uncomfortable weather conditions, sickness and death led to tension, and 'endless. ructions' between unwitting cabin-mates.[72]

The majority of texts reflect concern with ill-health, sickness and death, associating the voyage home with fear and anxiety. Mary Maxwell had a sore throat and headache for most of the voyage, while her husband suffered from diarrhoea, and her daughter and grandchild were both repeatedly sick.[73] Desiree Battye's journey was dominated by the serious illness of her four month old daughter, who was increasingly unable to keep down any fluids until she was not receiving any nourishment at all.[74] In Margery Hall's cabin of nine women and seven children, dysentery broke out after just four days at sea. This put terrible strain on women who were already frustrated and exhausted, as well as on resources such as the clean linen which was constantly required for fresh bedding and nappies. Shortly after the dysentery had cleared up, the children contracted croup. Dismayed, Margery Hall wondered to another women what else they might catch. She replied, 'Don't you know what else we have on board so far - croup, measles, chicken pox, dysentery, and a young soldier with polio...the military doctor has been building an iron lung for him'.[75] As Margery Hall recollects her son's worsening tonsillitis, her account becomes increasingly anxious, and her cabin is described as a 'little black hole', stifling and depressing. Her memoir becomes dominated by ill-health, and continues by charting the young soldier's illness until she remembered how one

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[69] Hall, M., op. cit.; chapter 14 p1.
[70] Gray, R., op. cit.; p201.
[71] Ibid.; p202.
[72] Ibid..
[73] Maxwell, M., op. cit..
[74] Battye, D., op. cit.; p217-225.
[75] Hall, M., op. cit.; Chapter 14, p3.

evening the ship stopped. It was dark and she crept up on board to see what was happening. Her account is tense and fearful:

> Everything was terribly quiet. A frightening, deadly, apprehensive silence lay over the ship and everybody. I joined a completely silent group at the rail and saw, with a lurch of my loudly beating heart, a cloth-bound bundle slide slowly into the sea from somewhere down below. There was also a voice. I couldn't hear what it said, but it could only be speaking for the dead...My son got worse and I began to get frightened.[76]

Tension increased throughout the journey. Margery Hall records how strained everyone was, and her account reflects despair and helplessness. She hoped desperately that the voyage would soon be over. Evoking powerful imagery of fear, she describes 'the next horror' as a young baby died and was buried at sea. Gravely concerned for her own son, she remembered that, 'Nerves by now were at breaking point. We had odd bursts of tears, and none of us expected to get our families home safely'.[77]

From being too hot, the climate through the Mediterranean became too cold for women used to living in India. The change in temperature associated with Port Said has been reflected in complaints concerning the cold, and an increasing concern with flu, bronchitis and pneumonia. This suggests an interesting reversal of imperial anxieties concerned with travel *to* India, where fears concerning intense *heat* were associated with disease and death.[78] The emotional as well as the practical importance of baggage is again highlighted as women searched almost daily in the 'Wanted on Voyage' hold for the warm clothes that would form an important part of their survival strategy for the stage of the journey from the Mediterranean to Britain. However, a number of accounts suggest that the collection of such garments was not always straight forward. In her memoir, Mary Maxwell has commented on how cold it became in the Mediterranean, describing her visit to the baggage room on 14th May in order to get extra clothing. However, having looked for hours, she was unable to locate her luggage. Returning daily to

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[76] Ibid.; Chapter 14, p4.
[77] Ibid..
[78] Refer to Ernst, W., op. cit.. Also see my discussion in Chapter Four.

search, it was not until eight days later (by which time she must have been close to Britain) that some of her bags were located and she was able at last to find her coat.[79] Moreover, suggesting how ill-prepared women were for their return to Britain, Desiree Battye recollected that most 'wives had few jumpers and no coats after years in India'.[80] Conditions continued to get worse, and 'from being cold it turned icy, us wives freezing in our cotton dresses'.[81] Emphasizing the desperation felt by women throughout the ship, she has stressed that this:

> was the most exhausting part of the journey. We seemed to have no strength left with our thin blood to fight the cold and the real emergencies became more frequent.[82]

Perhaps as a way of coping with the unpredictability and stress of the journey, and to temporarily defer thoughts of sickness, ill-health and death, women began to create and perpetuate a range of myths and rumours, their 'imaginations soaring' in an attempt to think of something other than the situations they were having to confront and struggle with daily.[83] Preoccupied in this way, women were perhaps also able to postpone thoughts about their inevitable repatriation and expectations of return which were typified by uncertainty and apprehension. Their stories also often play on a number of fears and anxieties, and conceivably exaggerate danger and risk in order to make their actual situations and perceived positions appear less threatening. For example, on the ship on which Desiree Battye was sailing, as the weather became intensely bitter, 'the rumour ran riot that the British ports were blocked and we were headed for Iceland'.[84] Similarly, not having seen the coast for two weeks, Margaret Dench remembers that the rumour went round that 'we were heading for South America and would call at Pernambuco'.[85] It was also rumoured that security was so tight on their ship because they were carrying industrial diamonds.[86]

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[79] Maxwell, M., op. cit.; chapter 14, p.11.
[80] Battye, D., op. cit.; p222.
[81] Ibid..
[82] Ibid..
[83] Ibid.; p221.
[84] Battye, D. op. cit.; p224.
[85] Dench, M. op. cit.; p149.
[86] Ibid.; p149.

As the journey home continued, personal accounts evoke images of intensified fear and anxiety as ships neared Gibraltar. Instead of representing Gibraltar as a symbolic landscape of British imperialism, it was associated with increased danger and insecurity, disrupting socially- and culturally constructed notions of imperial power. For those travelling during either of the World Wars, submarines and warships posed a very real threat. Mrs Christian Showers-Stirling, for example, travelled home with her husband in 1915 due to his ill-health. Pointing to the high levels of danger associated with travelling near to Gibraltar, she has commented on her concern regarding the likelihood of being torpedoed[87]. Similarly, voyaging home following the Second World War, Desiree Battye has written that:

> the convoy steamed majestically on its immaculate zig-zagging through the Mediterranean til one evening we approached Gibraltar slowing right down...This apparently was the most dangerous part of the voyage so far though there was plenty more to come the nearer we got to England.[88]

Also travelling at this time, Margaret Dench has remembered that her first sighting of Gibraltar was during the sea-burial of a young baby.[89] Linking the development of myth and rumour with the fear associated by many of passing close to Gibraltar, Desiree Battye wrote:

> Packs of German submarines, the rumour amongst the wives ran (certainly this did not come over the tannoy), were lurking in the Atlantic waiting to pounce on just such a plumb convoy as ours coming through the Straits.[90]

For those returning home at other times, frequent and dense fogs meant that accounts often associated Gibraltar with a fear of being ship-wrecked, as well as with minor ailments such as sore-throats and headaches. Ruby Gray, for example, described her journey past Gibraltar in 1926 as a 'rather unpleasant experience'.

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[87] Showers-Stirling, C., op. cit.; p115.
[88] Battye, D., op. cit.; p200.
[89] Dench, M., op. cit.; p149.
[90] Battye, D., op. cit.; p220.

Although she had gone to her cabin on a beautiful evening, she was getting ready for bed when:

> the ship's foghorn suddenly boomed forth, we looked out of the porthole, thick fog outside, from then on till the morning our hooter kept up an incessant blast at regular intervals answered by other foghorns from all sides as we converged on the Straits.[91]

In such ways, fears for personal safety and survival became paramount as Gibraltar was approached, and many women continued to associate an intensification of danger with their increasing proximity to the home-country. Further, most of their journeys continued to be dominated by fear, anxiety and worry as they arrived in Britain. After docking, there were often long waits aboard ship as custom regulations had to be complied with, and other administrative matters dealt with. Those with sick children often attempted to obtain special passes to enable them to disembark immediately, but this was not always granted. Raising questions about whether they had returned home, women's expectations of repatriation continued to be characterized by uncertainty and apprehension as they waited on board for instructions to disembark. Viola Bayley's account, for example, continues to reflect anxiety concerning her domestic abilities:

> I remember saying to the children as we drew into Southampton Docks: 'Do please eat as much as you can for breakfast. I don't know when you'll get another meal'.[92]

Accounts frequently expressed the relief felt by many women returning to the home-land that the long sea-voyage was, at last, over. However, few women portray their landing as a home-coming, instead discussing their arrival in Britain in terms of personal survival. Attention often returns to their luggage, large quantities of which were often lost, stolen or damaged. Belongings which had survived the journey home were discharged at what Desiree Battye called 'maximum unloading speed' onto docksides so that much was smashed.[93] Many recorded their first impressions of Britain in terms of shock and disappointment, unable to reconcile the

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[91] Gray, R., op. cit..
[92] Bayley, V., op. cit.; p132.
[93] Battye, D., op. cit.; p220.

ports of Britain with the idyllic vision of the home-land which had become vital as the justification and inspiration for empire.[94] Most, having no homes of their own, made their way to relatives' houses, maintaining practices of mobility and dwelling, and problematizing the suggestion of an end to their voyage, or an arrival at home. They took small amounts of baggage with them, leaving packing crates, often holding their entire possessions, to be delivered to some as yet unknown destination at a later date. Some awaited luggage that had been transported on cargo ships. The majority of unpacking was not done until women were living, finally, in homes of their own. Even then, packing crates remained of symbolic importance to many. In India, Ruby Gray had fitted her crates with removable shelves in order to put them to multiple use - as blanket boxes and storage cabinets for china and glass as well as packing cases. As she states, 'These packing crates were part of my life...I suddenly realized that I had not visualized life without packing cases'.[95] The wealthy often had their crates made out of hardwood, anticipating that they would convert them into furniture on return to Britain, gracing, as Pauline Hunt's memoir suggests, 'dining rooms in Cheam rather than West Godavari'. As she continues:

> Our own crates were made of the humbler mango wood which was only good for the rougher type of garden shed where the planks weathered into an interesting shade of grey to match the English skies and gently decaying reminder of a far-receding experience.[96]

Conclusions

For many women, India represented notions of home at both the household and the national scales. Their ability to repeatedly re-construct homes as they travelled within India was linked to familiarity and familial connections, as well as to the construction of stable and confident subjectivities, consolidated through specific notions of imperial domesticity. Despite their transient lifestyles, therefore, many have indicated the extent to which they felt rooted in the sub-continent. As such, at the time of their final departure from India, women were frequently equivocal about their repatriation to Britain for two connected reasons. First, although some

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[94] These issues are discussed further in the following chapter.
[95] Gray, R., op. cit..
[96] Hunt, P. & R., (undated), Innocents in India. CSAS; p90.

women felt they wanted to return, they were also often uncertain and confused about their expectations and abilities; and second, although women were returning to a country referred to as home, they were also leaving home(s) in India. Physical and mental preparation for departure was often traumatic as women had to part with friends, relatives, servants and pets, as well as a range of personal possessions.

Women occupied an indeterminate position between forced and voluntary movement as government regulations and imperial discourses actively encouraged repatriation. Although women were usually not physically forced or terrorized into leaving, they often found the 'Quit India' campaign to be worrying and frightening, and notions of displacement and homelessness were often intensified at the time of Indian Independence. Positioning themselves as exiles or in mourning at the point of departure from India, for many women the journey home was connected to the questioning and destabilization of their subjectivity. In this way, the physical journey home was frequently characterized by danger, ill-health and anxiety, and by an intensification of fear as they travelled closer to Britain.

In Chapters Four and Five I have considered the discourses mobilized on departure from India in a number of situations: to live in Britain as children; to visit the home-land for short periods as married women; and in order to return to Britain permanently. Emphasizing the complexity of the co-existence of home at a number of scales, many women associated India with a sense of belonging, and were returning to Britain faced with a range of uncertainties and anxieties. Lived experiences and imagined geographies were linked in intricate ways, and expectations of return were not based on unequivocal notions of Britain as home. In the following chapter I consider notions of home at both the household and the national scale as women disembarked and started their onward journeys in the home-land. I focus on their problems of repatriation, and am concerned not only with disrupted subjectivities and senses of belonging, but also with the practical difficulties which had to be confronted in day-to-day life.

CHAPTER SIX

CONTESTED SUBJECTIVITIES: HOMECOMINGS

Introduction

As repatriates, women returning to Britain from India engaged with notions of home-coming at a number of scales. Concepts of belonging were not limited to imaginative geographies of home within the empire or nation, but were also fundamentally concerned with material notions of personal domesticity at the household level. Although most female repatriates had spent periods of time visiting their home-country, many faced the prospect of long-term residence in Britain for the first time since childhood. Often anxious about their return, many were startled at how unfamiliar Britain actually appeared. Almost all were confronted with establishing a first home of their own in Britain. In this respect, most had no physical home to return to, and often stayed with friends, relatives or in hotels, boarding houses or other temporary accommodation until a more permanent residence could be found. Typically, it was not until then, perhaps months later, that the women and their families were able to retrieve personal possessions from storage, unpack their belongings, and begin to establish their own home in Britain.

I begin this chapter by considering accounts concerned with homecomings at the national scale. I reflect on women's disembarkation in Britain, and examine their first impressions upon return to the home-country. Focusing on the narratives of those who did so soon after the end of the Second World War, or at the time of Indian Independence, I discuss accounts concerned with Britain's physical appearance. These often appear to challenge hitherto unquestioned assumptions regarding the country's position as a national and imperial power, as well as home. Revisiting themes of dislocation, dispossession and exile, I also explore how such dissonances were linked to the disruption of subjectivities, and the inability of repatriates to re-create their 'imperial aristocratic' life-style at home in Britain. For some, as Britain's imperial status was challenged, their subjectivity, constructed through discourses of imperial domesticity and bound up with notions of class and

race superiority, was also questioned. Further, although they had returned home, many women felt out of place, and associated Britain with physical and psychological restrictions, which could exacerbate already mobilized senses of displacement and alienation. Not infrequently, women continued to associate the sub-continent with a sense of belonging over long periods of time, and their memoirs describe prolonged searches for home in Britain. In the subsequent section I assume a material focus, and examine homecomings at the household scale. I reflect on the materiality of discourses, examining the ways in which women's accounts of setting-up home in Britain address the practicalities of accommodation, housekeeping and servant management. Financial organization was a recurrent concern, since most families were unable to sustain the standard of living to which they had become accustomed in India. Many women had to establish their first home in Britain without the domestic help they were used to, and some had to find paid employment. It is important to remember that perhaps for the first time as adults, they were not on holiday in Britain, and were often facing entirely novel responsibilities and obligations. Finally, moving beyond what has been termed 'genteel' poverty, I consider the severe financial hardship experienced by some repatriated women, particularly widows reliant on pension payments and charitable support. In order to explore these issues I continue to draw on a range of sources, but concentrate particularly on the archives of the Indian Civil Service (retired) Association, established in 1921 to protect the interests of retired officers. Focusing on the poverty experienced by elderly widows, I draw on the life histories and geographies of a number of women whose experiences extend into the 1960s.[1] All, however, were repatriated between 1915 and 1947.

This chapter is concerned with discourses mobilized on arrival in Britain, and the significance of setting-up home for white middle-class wives returning from India. It engages with a number of themes. The first of these suggests that return home can be problematic. Repatriation can profoundly destabilize socially- and culturally-constructed notions of home at a number of scales. Home is not the same as when it was last (or ever) lived in, or visited; nor does it necessarily accord

[1] The archive of the Indian Civil Service (retired) Association, which is held by the India Office Library, does not include any correspondence beyond this time. The only more recent material to be

with imaginative constructions. Further, repatriation does not necessarily elicit in the repatriate a sense of belonging, familiarity or rootedness. In this way, repatriation can disrupt, rather than stabilize or confirm, subjectivities. Connected to this, I consider the material construction of homes within Britain in order to reflect on the implications of women's shifting position as domestic and imperial subjects, and to examine the dislocation of their class status across space. Social, economic, political and cultural changes in Britain throughout the period from 1915 to 1947 are recurring contextual themes throughout.

1. Challenging Britain as Home

In Chapter Four, I discussed how women who visited Britain for short periods often felt out of place and unsettled: that life in Britain was unreal and dehumanizing, and that most were glad to return to India once their holiday was over. Similarly, at the time of repatriation, women often felt outdated, and unfamiliar with British attitudes and behaviour, as well as their environments. Further, prolonged absences from Britain meant social, cultural, economic and political conditions had altered significantly whilst they were away.[2] Sharp rises in the cost of living, the decline of British imperialism, distinct changes in the class structure, and the physical and psychological implications of both the First and Second World Wars, for example, could cause repatriated women to question their sense of place, as well as their positions within Britain. What they had expected to be familiar, through their imaginative constructions as well as their lived experiences, may have altered beyond recognition.

Although women visiting the home-land were aware of such changes, they were perhaps more able to disregard them as they knew they would be returning to India. Ruby Gray, for example, returned to Britain on leave in 1926 to find the General Strike in 'full swing'.[3] Acknowledging the inconvenience caused to herself, she had to be taken ashore in a small boat, her train to Shropshire was

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deposited with the collection is the Society's Annual Reports, dating to 1988. See Mss.Eur.01703, item 259.

[2] These issues form recurring themes, and are discussed where relevant throughout this chapter.

[3] Gray, R., op. cit.; no pagination.

driven by a volunteer, and all her heavy luggage was lost. However, her account also points to the connections between her subsequent return to India and her ability to dismiss such events. Saying nothing else about the period spent visiting Britain, she states, 'however, by the time I was ready to leave for India it had all turned up'.[4] Linking the return of her luggage and her departure for India in this way suggests that she was able to dismiss both the underlying causes of the Strike, and the longer-term implications for Britons: it appears as though it is not her concern. In contrast, repatriates had to acknowledge, confront and adjust to such transformations in order to establish homes both with, and for, their families. However, at the time of repatriation, socially- and culturally-constructed notions of Britain as home, as well as its assumed national and imperial status, were often disrupted. Further, such disruptions were linked to the destabilization of subjectivities which had been constructed whilst living in India, where women had occupied particular positions and performed specific roles constructed through dominant discourses of British imperial domesticity.

Women's accounts suggest that such disruptions were often exacerbated for those who returned after the Second World War. Not only did Britain appear physically altered, but events and circumstances throughout the War had also precipitated a new sense of solidarity and comradeship among the population at home.[5] Such feelings could not be shared by the majority of those returning from India, and could be a point of resentment, as well as a focus for a lack of understanding, even before Britain was reached. On the final voyage home from India, for example, Frances Stewart-Robertson remembered the following incident occurring:

> One breakfast time, Robin and another man at our table were having races between the weevils out of their biscuits, when a steward came up and said 'you English don't seem to know there's been a war on.[6]

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[4] Ibid..

[5] Addison, P. (1985) Now the War is Over: A Social History of Britain 1945-1951, London: The British Broadcasting Corporation and Jonathan Cape. Paul Addison points to the importance of the crises of Dunkirk, the Battle of Britain and the Blitz on London, as well as rationing, as key events in the construction of such feelings.

[6] Stewart-Robertson, T., op. cit.; p200-201.

Similarly, Helen Hughes had to leave Burma in October 1941 due to the threat of a Japanese invasion during the Second World War.[7] Although war had been declared more than two years previously, the reality of conflict came as a complete shock to her. Her account reflects her feelings of astonishment rather than distress at her imminent danger. She wrote:

> So far removed did we feel from wars and rumours of war; so hard was it to realise life could be other than cushioned and easy as it had always been.[8]

Accounts anticipating return to Britain often suggest women's loss and regret, as well as feelings of uncertainty and anxiety. Perhaps not surprisingly, therefore, many women experienced little sense of celebration on their arrival, and have since described their homecomings in terms of personal survival and relief rather than happiness at being back in Britain. After arriving in dock, women often had to wait for prolonged periods prior to disembarkation. For example, after the ship on which Margery Hall was travelling had reached Liverpool, the passengers were informed that no-one was to disembark for 24 hours. Fearful for her son, who was suffering from tonsillitis and was in need of an emergency operation, she remembers that on hearing this news 'my heart sank even lower'.[9] However, as there were extenuating circumstances, she was granted a permit which enabled her to leave the ship almost immediately. Describing her homecoming, she has emphasized the sense of tragedy, boredom, lack of privacy and exasperation felt throughout the ship, as well as her own anxiety and concern. Margery Hall wrote that:

> We crept down the gangway an hour later, with the invalid wrapped in rugs. Our journey was accompanied by whistles and catcalls from hundreds of troops who crowded the rail, but they could see our bundle, and knew about the two which had been dropped into the sea. I am sure they were envious and not angry.[10]

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[7] On 15th March 1942, Singapore had surrendered to the Japanese. In March the Japanese army moved into Burma, capturing Rangoon in March and Mandalay six weeks later. Large numbers of the Burmese welcomed the Japanese as potential liberators from British imperialism, and supported their campaign there. James, L., op. cit..
[8] Hughes, H. M., op. cit.; p58.
[9] Hall, M., op. cit.; Chapter 14, p5.
[10] Ibid..

Desiree Battye's family waited for four days before they were allowed to leave the ship. Anxious about the survival of her four month old daughter, her immediate concern upon disembarkation was to provide her with food. Having found a cafeteria which would give her the much needed boiled water, she made up her child's bottle and began to feed her. Much to her relief, Fiona kept the liquid 'down for the first time since leaving the Suez Canal'.[11] Dismissing an explicit sense of homecoming or celebration, Desiree Battye's emotions upon reaching Britain were more modest than this. Clearly relieved that her family had reached Britain at all, she simply stated in her memoir, 'It was quite something...to have survived the journey'.[12]

Although this suggests a possible ending to her voyage, other accounts stress women's continued mobility after returning to Britain, emphasizing both material and metaphorical travel. Indicating the difficulties in defining a specific point of arrival, or an end to voyaging, women frequently had to journey for long distances away from the ports where they had docked in large cities such as Glasgow, Liverpool, Portsmouth and Southampton, . Further, many had no home to return to and had to search not only for somewhere to live, but also for a sense of belonging which would help them to evoke notions of connectivity, rootedness and settlement in the home-country. For example, Mary Maxwell and her family arrived in the Mersey at 11.00am on 30th May, but were unable to disembark until two days later. Having left the ship at 3.30pm, they caught the 5.27 train to Euston, arriving there at about 10.00pm. They then drove to a friends house, where Mary Maxwell's daughter, son-in-law and grandchild were to be staying for a few days. Mary Maxwell, her husband, and also her father, subsequently drove on to a hotel in Hampstead. There, Mary Maxwell almost immediately developed laryngitis, and was unable to help her husband to sort out their ration cards. Finding Reginald a job was their next priority, and only after that had been arranged did they start to look for somewhere to live. After finding a house they spent over two months touring through Scotland on holiday whilst the purchase was being finalized. Finally accomplishing Mary Maxwell's search for a 'home of her own', they moved into

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[11] Battye, D., op. cit.; p224.
[12] Battye, D., op. cit.; p224-225.

their 'own home' on September 18th, over three-and-a-half months after arriving in Britain.[13]

Other accounts stress how women found that there was often no-one to greet them or celebrate their return, either at docksides or in homes, as parents, close relatives and friends had often died during their long absence from Britain. Viola Bayley, for example, was distressed and confused as she arrived home in Britain. Both her mother and father had died since her last visit eight years before, and she anticipated that her return would be difficult without 'her parents waiting with a loving welcome'. She foresaw that Britain would be 'such a different world' from where she had last visited. Significantly, she felt that her arrival was a time for grieving. On reflection she wrote, 'That home-coming was our worst moment'.[14] Exacerbated by the Second World War, others were returning home for the first time since receiving the news that a child or sibling had been killed in action.[15]

In almost all the texts concerned with return the women discuss their first impressions of Britain, usually derived from the harbour and surrounding area as seen from the deck of the ship as they came into dock. Repatriates found themselves largely unprepared for the condition of home, which they often saw as having altered irrevocably in a number of ways. From the beginning of the war, Britain could no longer be represented as resembling peace and harmony, and urban areas had been severely damaged by bombing. Moreover, the Country's imperial position was rapidly declining. Many recorded their shock and disappointment, suggesting the destabilization of socially- and culturally-constructed notions of the home-country, which had been linked to the representation of Britain as both a national and an imperial power. The accounts of those who returned from India soon after the end of the Second World War contrast sharply with those evoked whilst coming into Britain on leave.[16] Women's descriptions suggest that the idyllic vision of Britain (represented as a symboi of

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[13] Maxwell, M., op. cit.; Chapter 14, p15.
[14] Bayley, V., op. cit.; p127.
[15] For example, both Ruby Gray and Mary Maxwell lost sons in the Second World War.
[16] Accounts concerned with periods of leave are considered in Chapter Four.

home and peace), which had provided vital inspiration and justification for empire, was not reconcilable with the ports of immediate post-war Britain.[17]

Having lived in India since 1932 as the wife of a civil servant, Elinor Tollington returned to Britain in 1945 with her two small children. Her memoir records not only her first impressions of the home-country, but also those of her children. Stressing that the scene was very different from that in India, she has stated:

> We were to be shocked. Hugh and Elizabeth had never seen poor elderly whites before. Our contemporaries in India were all people of substance in their prime.[18]

Accounts such as this indicate that notions of Britain as a national and imperial power were not only questioned as a direct consequence of the war, and were not just concerned with the physical appearance of the built environment. It seemed incongruous to Elinor Tollington, for example, that return to the imperial home-land should be connected with visible evidence of people's poverty, sickness and infirmity. As Vere Birdwood similarly stressed, due to the strict retirement rules for both army officers and civil servants, 'there were no old people in India you see'. She continued by emphasizing that:

> A man of 60 was probably the oldest person one was likely to meet in India...so we were all in the healthiest periods of our lives.[19]

Although the situation in Britain was undoubtedly exacerbated by rationing, shortages and wartime hardships, Elinor Tollington's writing continues by emphasizing that the poverty at home was entrenched, rather than merely reflecting the relatively short-term austerity characterized in war-time:

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[17] Refer to the discussion about representations of Britain in Chapter Three.
[18] Tollington, E., op. cit.; no pagination.
[19] Birdwood, V., op. cit..
This raises interesting issues concerning the reversal of anxieties concerned with ill-health, sickness and death in India. Refer to Chapter Three for a discussion of such themes.

> These were people against a background of solid, long-established slum poverty. I was dismayed to see how thin and grey people looked as rather glumly they went about their immediate tasks.[20]

In such ways, remembered and imaginatively constructed geographies of home as beautiful, ordered and peaceful were disrupted, challenged and subverted. Desiree Battye, who also returned to Britain in 1945, described her homecoming to Liverpool as distressing. Highlighting the appearance of the physical environment, she wrote:

> We glimpsed for the first time what the British people had been through during the last four years, much of the dock and a great part of the town having been devastated by bombs leaving open spaces where houses were no more with piles of rubble from half-demolished buildings.[21]

However, moving beyond a concern with the built environment, Desiree Battye has excluded herself from a category of 'British people', pointing to problematic notions of belonging and settlement in the home-country. She indicates that it was not only Britain's physical surroundings that might cause distress and confusion, and highlights the problems many women faced in understanding the attitudes of the population at home in Britain. Not only were many unable to comprehend their war-time experiences, but repatriates sometimes found it hard to accept that changing class structures meant that they could no longer expect the deference and respect displayed by the lower classes in the past.[22] Further, those returning to Britain after the Second World War were shocked by the level of austerity, especially compared to the life they had continued to lead in India throughout the

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[20] Tollington, E., op. cit.; no pagination.
[21] Battye, D., op. cit.; p225.
[22] Pauline Hunt lived in India with her husband (who worked in the I.C.S.), from 1939-1946. Their memoir is co-authored. Although the following passage is attributed to Roy Hunt, I think they offer a pertinent perspective to the discussion. As they arrived home in Britain in 1946: 'For the first time we encountered the new assertive and sometimes peevish egalitarianism which was a feature of that period. It came to the fore particularly when Britains [*sic*] who had suffered the deprivations and austerities of war-time Britain were confronted with demands for goods and services from those who they thought had lived a soft life abroad. 'Don't you know there's a war on!' was the common refrain, sometimes justified, but at times an over-reaction and the result of stress and frustration. To [those older] the attitude was puzzling and saddening. It had not yet dawned on them that the English world of the twenties and early thirties had departed forever. House-maids and forelock touching yokels together with the numbers of little cosiness and certainness which had seemed the peculiarly English promise of retirement had vanished evidently, and their return was unlikely'. Hunt, P & R., op. cit..

war. Ruby Gray's account illustrates the difference in the standard of living between Britain and the sub-continent during this time (as well as in the years immediately following), as rationing continued, and even intensified, at home. Having spent a number of years in Britain whilst her husband was a prisoner of war, she returned to India with him following his escape and subsequent journey to Britain in 1945. She recalled in her memoir that:

> At first the whole life seemed unreal after the war years in England and the accompanying austerity, I had left England heavily rationed in all food supplies (2oz of butter, 2oz of sugar per head per week), clothing and furniture non-existent. In India everything seemed so lavish, however one soon slipped back into prewar days. The first thing I did after a fortnight was to have a bilious attack, the doctor laughed when he saw me and asked whether I had just come out from England, he said this was the usual attack after war years in England.[23]

As such, the realities of food shortages and rationing came as a shock to many, and repatriates often found they could not comprehend the length of time people would queue outside shops in order to secure what seemed to them to be tiny 'luxuries'.[24] As a result of such shortages, there was a reversal of the movement of goods being sent from Britain to India as throughout the Second World War, as well as in the immediate post-war period, a range of food parcels were prepared and sent from the sub-continent towards home. Some repatriates were sent provisions by Indian friends or their old servants. For example, at the beginning of the Second World War, Ruby Gray returned to Britain for what she thought would be the last time. Some months later, her bearer, Furzon, contacted her saying that he had heard that food shortages were acute in Britain and asked if there was anything he could send her in the way of food.[25] Yet others arranged the transportation of goods themselves. For example, Pauline Hunt, aware of the situation in Britain, brought a range of food parcels back to Britain with her, moving boxes of 'sugar, soap and other things that we knew were in short supply'.[26]

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[23] Gray, R., op. cit.; no pagination.
[24] For example see Pauline and Roy Hunt's memoir, op. cit..
[25] Gray, R., op. cit.; no pagination.
[26] Hunt, P. & R., op. cit.; p58.

Personal accounts record that whilst living in Britain as children, the home-land was often associated with restrictions, confinement and a frustrating loss of freedom.[27] Returning to these feelings, the life writings of many women suggest that they felt similarly constrained after their repatriation as adults. Margaret Ramsay-Brown has expressed this very clearly. After spending the majority of her married life in India, she returned to live in Britain. However, although ultimately resident here, she re-visited India every two years, where she felt 'like a bird that's been let out of a cage'.[28] Similarly, Frances Smyth felt restricted when she returned to live in Britain. In a vividly embodied representation of confinement, she has written that:

> I think when one leaves India and comes back to England, England presses on one rather hard. It's very close, confined, and that operates against...the sense of immensity, everything so far away that your skin is able to vibrate, to feel all those emotions in the skin. But when you come back to the confined smallness of England your skin is being pressed on, and all this goes.[29]

This account reflects feelings of claustrophobia, and a frustrating loss of freedom for many women returning from India. However, these emotions were not only associated with small places and spaces within Britain's rural and urban landscapes. Indeed, again reminiscent of accounts concerned with childhood memories of the home-country, they were exacerbated by the small attitudes which many considered characteristic of the mindset of the resident population. Feelings of homesickness were intensified by the lack of interest shown in the 'Indian' lives of those who returned, just as they had been whilst women were visiting the home-land on leave. However, unlike their experiences whilst on holiday in Britain, such women were not able to reconcile themselves with the knowledge that they would be returning to India. In a programme recorded for BBC Radio Scotland in 1987, Dorothy Younie clearly pointed to this:

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[27] See Chapter Four.
[28] Ramsay-Brown, M., op. cit.; tape 2, side 1.
[29] Smyth F., transcribed interview. OIOC, Mss.Eur.T.62; p3/4.

> When one came home...they were not really interested in our lives. Not really in tremendous detail. We heard a lot about what they were up to, but...nobody [was] very interested [in us].[30]

Moreover, she emphasizes how those returning from India were expected to listen closely to all their relatives, friends and neighbours had to say. It is possible that this situation was aggravated as the accounts of women returning from India suggest that they considered the conversations of such people to be dull and mundane compared to their own. Frances Stewart-Robertson, for example, was indignant that her friends and relations were not interested in her stories about India. Indicating that she considers these events to be more important and engaging than those experienced by her contemporaries in Britain, she was exasperated and irritated that to them 'the fact that the next door neighbour's wife was about to have a third baby was far more important!'.[31] However, despite their sometimes patronizing attitudes, denying repatriated women a position from where they could speak about their own experiences and lives, while simultaneously expecting them to listen to those of others, reinforced feelings of alienation and placelessness.

Britain's declining imperial position, particularly the loss of India, its imperial 'jewel in the crown', often exacerbated this situation. Those returning after Independence were faced with the upheaval of dispossession, and for many the move was disruptive, leading to feelings of exile and bereavement. Further, such feelings were manifested not merely by a forced movement from India, but also by a distressing shift in their imperial subject position once in Britain. Britons' apparent total disdain for Indian affairs could shock and upset repatriated memsahibs who already felt displaced.[32] Further, memsahibs were often blamed for a deterioration in race relations in India, and representations which stereotyped them as condescending, indolent and petty, as well as racist, were widespread from

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[30] BBC Radio Scotland (3rd June 1987). Going Home, Programme Script. OIOC, Mss.Eur.T.182.
[31] Stewart-Robertson, F. T., op. cit.; p94.
[32] Britons' lack of interest in India has been discussed by a range of commentators, most of whom are disgruntled and exasperated by such dominant attitudes. For example, A.A.Irvine ends his analysis of British rule in India with the following: 'A friend of mine, for whose brains except when he is speaking of India I have profound admiration, told me the other day that we Anglo-Indians are accustomed to 'look upon India as being so important', whereas ordinary people in England 'simply scream with laughter' whenever the subject is mentioned. I do not accept this view; and I shall continue to believe that India is of importance to England'. Irvine, A.A. (1938) Land of No Regrets, London: Collins.

the mid-nineteenth century.[33] Moreover, memsahibs have been characterized as culpable for the downfall of empire.[34] As such, it is possible that fear of condemnation and vilification discouraged such women from talking about their position as repatriates from the sub-continent. Unable to discuss such a large and significant part of their lives, feelings of ostracism and dislocation were compounded. Margaret Ramsay-Brown, for example, was surprized by the total lack of interest in India, and found it difficult, and destabilizing, to accept that once in Britain she was a 'stranger, quite unknown'.[35]

The accounts of such women suggest that their experiences of repatriation were capable of disrupting notions of home at the national scale. Shocked by the changes which had apparently taken place in their absence, many found that they were unable to associate return to Britain with a sense of homecoming, belonging or familiarity. Further, repatriates were no longer able to dismiss such changes, and had to attempt to accept and confront them. Indicating the inextricable links between notions of home and the construction of subjectivity, return to Britain was apt to disrupt, rather than support, subject positions which had been consolidated while living in India. These women had been significant members of the imperial 'ruling race' in India, giving orders to servants on a daily basis in rituals of domesticity which were constructed as vital to the maintenance of imperial boundaries. On return, by contrast, they became anonymous, with no particular authority, influence or privilege. As their domestic and imperial positions shifted, subjectivities were problematized and fractured. Disappointments and difficulties often came as a shock to female repatriates, many of whom had always identified Britain as home.

Moving beyond women's short-term impressions of life in Britain, the personal accounts of many female repatriates maintain an emphasis on never feeling at home here, pointing to a sustained sense of belonging associated with

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[33] Refer to Jan Morris for an introduction to discussions concerned with the apparent reputation of memsahibs in the first half of the twentieth century. Morris, J. (1998) Farewell the Trumpets: An Imperial Retreat, London: Faber and Faber Ltd (2nd Edition). For critical considerations of such stereotypes see: Sharpe, J., op. cit.; and Strobel, M. (1991), op. cit..
[34] Morris, J. (1998), op. cit..
[35] Ramsay-Brown, M., op. cit.; tape 2, side 1.

India, and emphasizing an extended concept of repatriation. Even when domiciled in Britain, for example, Margaret Ramsay-Brown did not think of this country as home.[36] However, talking in the 1970s, she was also unable to feel that India remained her home, and described herself as living 'in exile' in this country. In a memoir written in 1981-1982 about the time she spent in the sub-continent, Mrs Mills remembered 'that the happiest days of my life were spent there'.[37] She lived in Assam as the wife of a civil servant from 1931. At the time of Independence, she was reluctant to return to Britain. After spending a further 12 months in the sub-continent she travelled to Kenya with her husband, where they stayed with her brother until 1950 before leaving for home. Similarly, Ruth Donnison lived in Burma with her husband from 1923 until 1947. In a co-authored memoir, they wrote:

> Since [we left] life has been made up of the experiences that are common to all who have lived in post-war England. It has been happy. It has been far from dull. But it no longer has the quality of our Burma life.[38]

Many women's life stories discuss the enduring importance of memories of India, and point to the continued significance of their life there even after long periods in Britain. For Dorothy Rowe, this meant that when she wrote about her life, approximately 30 years after returning to Britain with her husband in 1947 (following 20 years of residence in India), she commented that she still woke at night to find herself thinking about the people she lived with there.[39] Mrs Lermit lived in India for eleven years. Her response to a questionnaire similarly reflects the long-term impact of living in the sub-continent, stressing the significance of associating it with home and a sense of belonging. She wrote:

> I have never been able to get the place out of my thoughts just like my mother and her family, or like my grandfather.[40]

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[36] Ibid.; Cassette 2, side 1.
[37] Mrs J P Mills (1981/2) Memoirs of a Memsahib in Assam. Mills Papers, CSAS; 5th instalment.
[38] Donnison, R. & V., op. cit.; p422.
[39] Rowe, D., taped and transcribed interview. OIOC, Mss.Eur.T.57; p4/13.
[40] Mrs Lermit. Questionnaire response. CSAS.

Similarly, in a memoir written in the 1980s, Iris Portal vividly described the continuing strength of her memories of India, again pointing to feelings of long-term dislocation in Britain:

> It is thirty-eight years since I left India, forty since I last saw Lachman [groom] and his family, yet sometimes I have a strange experience when I am alone in my English house. I feel quite certain that if I open the door I shall find Lachman and Tosca [horse], Pat and the dogs, all garlanded up and dressed up for Dassehra [a Hindu festival]. Mrs Lachman would be too shy to come, but there will be Mittoo [parrot] screaming in his cage. Once I did open the door, to make sure.[41]

Significantly, Iris Portal refers to her 'English house' here, which implies that she is sustaining notions of India as home in two connected ways. First, it intimates that her 'house' in 'England' is not her only domicile, suggesting that India was being imaginatively constructed and sustained as home. Second, by commenting on her 'house', she implies that she does not feel at home. Describing feelings of displacement and dispossession, Iris Portal has also suggested that:

> I feel to this day, now I'm approaching old age, it's still with me, I feel as if India was my home and I have left half of myself behind, I've never felt it possible to put down roots anywhere else[42].

In such ways, Iris Portal has expressed long-term feelings of being unsettled and unrooted in Britain, highlighting that repatriation should be considered as a broad process of adjustment, characterized by continued mobility and fluidity, as well as shifting notions of belonging.

Concerned with notions of transience, and inextricably linked to concepts of the familial and the familiar, Mary Maxwell's deep sense of homelessness has already been introduced.[43] In what she described as a 'wandering life', she positioned herself as 'homeless' during repeated separations from her husband and son. Mary Maxwell's almost overwhelming longing for her 'own home' continues to be reflected in her memoir after the conclusion of the Second World War, and

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[41] Portal, I., (undated) Song at Seventy, op. cit.; p64.
[42] Portal, I., taped and transcribed interview, op. cit.; p8.
[43] See Chapter Five, p.141.

her final return to Britain with her husband. In 1944, the Maxwells were repatriated to Britain, and on 18th September they moved into 'Beecholme', near Kenley, where they lived for four years. Her text is concerned primarily with the events surrounding the establishment of their 'first home in England'. Significantly, the powerful and emotive narrative is dominated by events that took place in their 'own home': 'we were happy to be in *our own home* at last'; November 1st was my first birthday in *our own home*'; This was our first Christmas in *a home of our own*'.[44] Again pointing to the significance of personal possessions, Mary Maxwell wrote in detail about the unpacking of books and prizes which had been in storage since Reginald went to India in 1906. Also reunited with the luggage that they had transported from India, the theme of unpacking dominates the narrative of their first few days in their 'first home in England'.

Employing language reminiscent of that used by Mary Maxwell, long-term feelings of homelessness and her extensive search for a home are also recurrent themes in Christian Showers-Stirling's memoir.[45] Having lived in India for 12 years, she returned to Britain in 1915 with her husband due to his ill-health. He died shortly after their arrival. Emphasizing the connections between notions of family and home, such feelings became paramount. Her text is concerned with her search for a sense of belonging, and for what she called 'a home of my own'. Vocabularies of displacement and rootlessness are employed throughout her account as she described renting a series of houses in an attempt to make herself feel 'at home' in Britain. Indicating a protracted sense of repatriation, her memoir ends with the fulfilment of her quest: 'At last!', she wrote, 'a home of my own'.[46] Her search took 33 years to complete, during which time she had lived in at least six other rented houses.

After a substantial period of residence many women described themselves as living happily in Britain, although this was often qualified by the suggestion that they were not as happy living here as they had been in the sub-continent. Feelings such as these appear to be related to a growing sense of belonging, as relations

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[44] Maxwell, M., op. cit.; Chapter 14, p20-24.
[45] Showers-Stirling, C., op. cit..
[46] Ibid., p144.

came back to live in this country, and as individuals established friendships and networks. In addition, over time, knowledges and spaces concerned with life in Britain became more familiar. However, at the time of their repatriation, many women felt alienated and frustrated as they considered that Britain no longer felt like home. Coupled with a sense of disruption at the scale of the nation, the personal accounts of such women also reveal how notions of home were contested at the scale of the household.

2. Setting-up Home in Britain

(i) Accommodation, housekeeping and 'genteel poverty'

Throughout, as well as immediately after, the First World War, there was a sharp increase in inflation. After an initial rise, caused by anticipation of shortages, prices rose steadily. By June 1915, prices were almost a third above their pre-war level, while by 1916, some food prices (for example for sugar, meat, fish and eggs) had risen by up to almost 200%. However, such increases were not only for food, with house rents and taxes also rising dramatically.[47] The cost of living continued to rise throughout the inter-war period, which had a series of implications connected to the construction and maintenance of middle-class status, lifestyle and domesticity in Britain. For many, repatriation from the sub-continent entailed a dramatic fall in material standards of living. As such, women's class status was fractured as their 'imperial aristocratic' lifestyles could not be transported to Britain. For those returning from India in the first half of the twentieth century, this was exacerbated not only by rapidly rising prices, but also by fixed salaries and pensions which made life in Britain increasingly expensive and, for many, had important ramifications for those trying to maintain the appearance of gentility.[48] For many women, therefore, difficulties and disappointments were not only experienced at the level of the nation. Pointing to the materiality of discourses, homes do not only exist as imaginative constructions, but also as physical spaces and places. In this respect, problems were also confronted at the household scale as notions of home,

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[47] Stevenson, J. (1984) British Society, 1914-45, Harmondsworth: Penguin.
[48] These issues are discussed more fully later in this chapter.

connected to both imaginative constructions and material structures, were repeatedly disrupted.

At a maximum of £1000 per annum, I.C.S. pension payments in the nineteenth century were considered to be high.[49] Although an income such as this was not enough to continue the 'aristocratic' lifestyles men and women had been accustomed to in India, and certainly did not secure the way of life sought by nabobs in the eighteenth century,[50] it was adequate to secure a relatively high middle-class standard of living on return to Britain until the early part of the twentieth century. In 1909, for example, it has been suggested that a middle-class way of life was characterized by an income of £700 per annum, a suburban villa, servants and a carriage.[51] Further, although in 1914, 'it was difficult to maintain the illusion of ease and comfort on an income of £400-500 per year', an income of £1000 was considered to be 'comfortable'.[52] However, in 1919, these pension payments were fixed at mid-nineteenth century levels, paying maximum pensions of £1000 per annum until the mid-1950s, at which time, almost one-hundred years later, they were said to be worth a mere 25% of their original value.[53] Many retired I.C.S. officers, as well as military officials (who generally received lower pensions), seem to have experienced financial difficulties, even if they had an additional small private income. For example, in 1937, Iris Portal was concerned that due to her husband's questionable health, he would be offered early retirement from the army. Adding to the distress she felt as she contemplated departure from a country where she felt very much at home, Iris Portal was deeply anxious as she considered their financial position upon repatriation:

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[49] Men in the I.C.S. were able to retire on pensions of £1000 per annum after 25 years' service, of which three could be spent on furlough. See O'Malley, L.S.S., op. cit..

[50] Refer to Chapters 2 and 3 for further discussion of imperial (or middle-class) aristocracy, as well as nabobs.

[51] Raynor, J. (1969) The Middle Class, London: Longmans, Green and Co. Ltd.; p22.

[52] Stevenson, J., op. cit.; p32.

[53] This payment, fixed in 1919 at 1862 levels, was not altered until 1956. Under the Pension (increase) Act (1955), Indian civil pensioners over 60 years of age received, with effect from 1st April 1956 a maximum increase of £156 p.a. (ICS (retired) Association Annual Report for the year ending 31st March, 1956; Mss.Eur.F.0173, item 4). Further increments followed at regular intervals.

Army Officers' pensions were similarly effected by a number of tax codes and orders which meant that Officers in the early 1950s were campaigning against pension payments which were less than

> We calculated our means - which were alarming, a major's pension of about £500 a year and about £3 or £400 private income. Jane and Susan would have to be educated, and in those days State education was unthinkable.[54]

A total of £800 per annum would have required more than a slightly reduced standard of living, demanding a serious re-consideration of all expenditure, and leading to a fundamental change in status.

In June 1921, the I.C.S. (Retired) Association was formed for the purpose of 'watching over the interests of retired men'.[55] By the 1940s, issues of financial concern were widespread, and the Association began to campaign for the increase of pension payments. Summarizing their case, it was stated that:

> It is clear...that the I.C.S. pension, fixed as it was nearly a century ago, is quite inappropriate to existing conditions and does not provide a just reward for a lifetime of service in arduous conditions...With that pension so reduced in purchasing power, the I.C.S. pensioners can no longer count on anything like the reasonable standard of living which was held out to them as a major inducement to join the service....[M]any of them are now faced with hardship and anxiety at a time when they are too old to find other employment.[56]

In this way, the I.C.S. (Retired) Association campaign was based on the financial difficulties caused by a rise in the cost of living,[57] and again reflected discourses which associated hardship and stress with a life-time spent living and working in India.[58] Further, it was suggested that the time spent in India required financial compensation. Moreover, pointing to considerations linked to both the physical and mental welfare of those who had spent prolonged periods in the sub-continent, it was suggested that:

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they had been in the 1920s, despite the rise in the cost of living (Army Officers Pensions - The Officers Pensions Society; Mss.Eur.F.0173, item 142).

[54] Portal I (Undated) Song at Seventy, op. cit.; Chapter 9.

[55] The I.C.S. (retired) Association, Annual Report for the year ending March 31st 1922. OIOC, Mss.Eur.F.0173, item 4.

[56] I.C.S. (retired) Association, Annual Report for the year ending March 31st 1954; Appendix: The Case for an Increase of Pensions. OIOC, Mss.Eur.F.0173; item 4.

[57] The rise in the cost of living has been estimated as rising by 90% between 1938 and 1948 alone. Lewis, R. & Maude, A. (1949) The English Middle Class, Phoenix House: London; p204.

[58] Refer to Chapter Three for a discussion of how such issues were raised as 'evidence' by a number of I.C.S. Associations in respect of requests to award officers passage grants in the early 1920s.

> it is not possible to compare the cases of the Home Civil Service with those of I.C.S. Pensioners. Many United Kingdom pensioners, by reason of having an established domicile, have been able to form connections which made it possible for them to supplement their incomes after leaving Government Service. In addition, they have not had to face the same risks to health and vitality as those who have served in India.[59]

Arguments such as these attempted to position those who had been in India in a different category from those who lived at home in Britain. Further, questions were raised about the ability of repatriates to feel at home, or in place, in either India or Britain. Whilst living in the sub-continent, their position as British subjects was continually reinforced, not least by the importance attached to representations of Britain as home, as well as the significance linked to men and women's ability to visit the home-land on a regular basis. Whilst in India they were also constantly reminded of their position as U.K. citizens, and their repatriation to Britain had been actively encouraged. This text, however, excludes them from a classification of 'U.K. pensioners', thereby questioning subjectivities constructed around particular notions of British imperialism.

Private ownership of property became more common among the middle-classes in the late-1930s and into the 1940s, fuelled by the suburban growth of the inter-war years.[60] Despite increasing levels of austerity, a few families were able to buy houses in advance of their return from India, and so had a home to return to. Property was sometimes purchased whilst on leave in this country, and subsequently rented out until the owners' return. For some, therefore, homecomings were not only concerned with repatriation at the national scale, but were also concerned with return to homes which physically existed at the scale of the household. Margaret Dench, for example, came to Britain in 1939, accompanying her husband who had taken early-retirement due to ill-health. However, once given a clean bill of health by a British doctor, coupled with the

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[59] I.C.S. (retired) Association, Annual Report for the year ending March 31st 1955. OIOC, Mss.Eur.F.0173; item 4.
[60] Stevenson, J., op. cit..

threat of the Second World War, he was sent back to India. Within this time, however:

> We had made up our minds to buy a house and saw no reasons to change our plans. Will's retirement, even if postponed, would come in three years time, and we would need a home to come to.[61]

Eventually, they bought a house in Plymouth, situated within sight of Dartmoor but only two miles from the city centre. Mr Dench went back to India, and it was decided that Margaret Dench and the children should follow him there. The house was put in letting agents' hands, and it was promptly requisitioned by the army. The family returned to Britain again in 1942, but it was some months before their house in Plymouth was de-requisitioned, problematizing the idea of an end to their journey home:

> As it happened it was eighteen months before we were housed in our own home, and so we had many dreary months in a hotel in London, only enlivened by the frequent fire-raids and later by the attentions of the V.I and the V.II.[62]

Those who returned after the Second World War could come home to find that military occupation had left their home damaged and violated. Viola Bayley had lived in India with her husband from 1933 to 1946. Adding to the distress of an already traumatic home-coming, she returned to the house that had been left to her as a result of her parents' death. She recognised that this home was much 'more than many others possessed' on their return to Britain.[63] However, in a powerful and evocative account of return, she recalled in her memoir how it had been defiled. Pointing to a clear distinction, she referred to her house, and not her home, indicating her lack of a sense of belonging or intimacy. Distanced from notions of home then, she wrote:

> Our house in Rye had been occupied by troops and then lain empty for a year. It looked like that garden of sleeping beauty, waist high in brambles and thistles, with rambler roses tumbling over the windows. Holes for gun emplacements yawned across what had been the front

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[61] Dench, M., op. cit.; p108.
[62] Ibid.; p131-2. The VI and VII were flying bombs employed in German air attacks.
[63] Bayley, V., op. cit.; p127.

> lawn. The house was unspeakable. There were banisters broken off for firewood, doors kicked to pieces by army boots, and graffiti that made us hastily send the children to explore the garden while we took scrubbing brushes to the walls.[64]

Her account highlights the disruption which can be associated with homecomings. She stresses the fragmentation of imaginative constructions, as well as the physical transformation of households, and suggests the lack of a sense of belonging, familiarity or rootedness on return. Pointing to the inextricable links between material and metaphorical senses of belonging, home is not the same (either imaginatively or materially), as when it was left. However, most women had no home in Britain, and finding accommodation was therefore a priority. In reality, however, problems of securing adequate accommodation were often acute. As Margaret Dench stressed in her memoir, properties that repatriates could afford were small, dark and claustrophobic compared with those they had been used to.

> Leaving Pat [one of their children] in Oxford Will and I paid a rapid visit to Bristol where a house had been advertized in Portishead which sounded just right. This was [a] disappointment, it turned out to be a village house with a small high-walled garden. We were used then to large compounds and plenty of living room and the house seemed claustrophobic, even on a brief visit.[65]

Added to this, their material possessions were often few, and Vere Birdwood clearly illustrates the difficulties involved in having to start a new life in Britain. In so doing, she also reflects on home as an indeterminate space, indicating its fluidity and evasiveness, as well as its co-existence at a number of levels:

> *We had no homes in England. Everyone came home* almost as naked as they went, with a few trunks of the silver or what have you that we brought to India, otherwise we had to start again at the age of 50, 55, 60 or whatever it might be.[66]

Here, Vere Birdwood alludes to the problems not only in evoking a sense of belonging in a country where she had not lived as an adult, but also the practical issues associated with setting-up home. Acquiring the material possessions

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[64] Ibid.; p127.
[65] Dench, M., op. cit.; p108.
[66] Birdwood, V., op. cit.; p6/11. Emphasis added.

necessary to establish a household in Britain was often problematic. Most had not been able to build-up savings whilst living in the sub-continent, as large amounts of money had been spent maintaining their lifestyles, as well as visiting the homeland and journeying to the hills. The majority had also been forced to leave their furniture in India, and despite increasing rates of home-ownership, most did not have this luxury to return to. Further, this situation would have been exacerbated for those who returned following the Second World War as basics such as clothing and furniture were strictly rationed.[67] Not being able to clothe themselves appropriately, or furnish their houses with their own possessions, would have prolonged feelings of displacement and alienation as both were often connected the construction of senses of belonging.

Adding to feelings of apprehension, those women who returned at the time of Indian Independence did not know whether their husbands would continue to have jobs, or if they would find employment on return to Britain. They were also ignorant of what eligibility criteria and levels of compensation would be for loss of career, and remained so until immediately prior to their departure, adding to stress and anxiety. It was not until August 1947, just days before Indian Independence was achieved, that a Command Paper was published confirming details of compensation.[68] I.C.S. compensation levels ranged from nothing for those with 32 years (or more) service, to a maximum of £8000, for those who had served 16 years. Compensation for army officers was similar, though slightly less, the maximum payable being £6000, for those aged 39 at their last birthday. For all but a few men near retirement age, new jobs had to be found in Britain, although obtaining a salary equivalent to that earned in India was not a likely prospect for most. Members of the I.C.S. received relatively high salaries, with those under 30 earning around £1000 p.a., rising to £2000 p.a. by the time men were in their early forties, depending on their length of service.[69] This higher figure was said to be the equivalent of about £1500 in Britain. As such, officials who were trying to arrange

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[67] Addison, P., op. cit..

[68] INDIA: Recapitulation of terms and assurances given to officers of the Civil Services of India and to members of the Indian Armed Forces in connection with the constitutional changes in India, London: HMSO, August 1947, Cmd.7192.

[69] For example, average professional earnings in 1935/7 for G.P.s was £1,094, and for barristers was £1,090, while male teachers earned £348. Raynor, J., op. cit.; p60.

for the re-employment of ex-I.C.S. officers into the Home Civil Service felt that it was 'difficult to contend that a post at the minimum of the Principal Scale [c.£900] is, in fact, 'comparable employment' for the older men'.[70] The final salaries agreed for men who took up such work depended on a range of issues, including the score gained on a test, and the rating (for example 'good' or 'very good') given on a report made about the individual. Those who went into further civil service employment received a payment of £500 in lieu of compensation, payable on arrival in Britain. This was considered to be a settlement grant.[71] However, those who returned to Britain prior to Independence in order to take up a position of employment *not* with His Majesty's Government were entitled to neither compensation nor a re-settlement grant.

Uncertain of these details until Independence was imminent, Elizabeth Stewart's letters written from Shillong to her parents demonstrate the worry and confusion that many women experienced in the weeks leading up to and immediately after 15th August.[72] Desperate to be able to clarify the position with the tenants living in their house in Britain, she was anxious to know the date when she should be planning her family's departure. She was similarly keen to establish when her husband would be able to leave his job, fearful that an early departure would jeopardize their eligibility for compensation.[73]

Elinor Tollington's husband was also eligible for compensation, and was apparently awarded £14000 for 'loss of career' due to Indian Independence in 1947.[74] With some of this money, they bought a 'beautiful Georgian house on the Thames at Wallingford', with her husband's sister and her family. However, they

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[70] Starting pay for successful candidates (Principals Competition (I.C.S.) Starting Pay). Treasury meeting, file no. 902/07. Minutes taken 29.3.1947; Public Record Office, Document T 216 82.
[71] Starting pay for successful candidates (Principals Competition (ICS) Starting Pay). Treasury meeting, file no. 902/07. Telegram (no. 5130), 21.4.1947; Public Record Office, Document T 216 82.
[72] Letters written by Elizabeth Stewart to her parents, 11th June and 18th July 1947. CSAS, Stewart Papers; letters from India, 1947.
[73] After a brief visit to Britain, the Stewarts moved to New Zealand in December 1947, 'with all our luggage intact, where we have lived happily ever after'. Ibid..
[74] This is much higher than the levels of compensation actually awarded. As indicated, the maximum award was £8000. At age 45, Mr Tollington was likely to have received between £5000 and £6000 depending on his length of active service. (Cmd. 7192). Examples such as this raise interesting issues about memory and autobiography, which I begin to address in the following chapter. Tollington, E., op. cit..

only 'lived in this lovely place for two years before reality forced us to give it up and we sold it'.[75] At the age of 47, Phil (along with many other men), had been unsure of his ability to adapt to a different career. However, around this time he was accepted by Balliol College, Oxford, to study medicine. Even with the compensation money, Phil's education grant was not enough for the family to exist comfortably. Increasingly concerned about their financial position, Elinor Tollington decided that she had no choice but, for the first time, to seek paid employment for herself:

> I worked out one night that we only had £3000 left and some years to go before Phil qualified. It seemed someone must earn something...I joined Phil, during the term time in lodgings in Oxford, taking up a relatively pleasant if precarious employment delivering export cars to the ports.[76]

In consequence, and much to her father's disapproval, Elinor Tollington started her first job, driving cars from the factory in Cowley, to docks around Britain for export. The journey back to Oxford was undertaken by hitch-hiking. Pointing to the difficulties and controversy associated with such a decision, her father was explicit in his expression of disapproval and displeasure:

> Poor Papa was not at all happy at this turn of events and offered me untold (at least he never told me) sums to do something else. I could not ask him to pay what I managed to earn and in any cases I enjoyed the adventure.[77]

Elinor Tollington's account emphasizes the importance of status to the middle-class, highlighting that maintaining the *appearance* of gentility, rather than income itself, was often the key to successful association with the higher ranks of society. In this way, lifestyle, habits, tastes and attitudes were as much a question of being middle-class as was salary.[78] Women such as Elinor Tollington point to the problems associated with their need to accept paid employment, as they were unable to comply with visible notions of middle-class domesticity, and were

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[75] Ibid..
[76] Ibid..
[77] Ibid..
[78] Stevenson, J, op. cit..

therefore unable to sustain their bourgeois status. Although it would have been potentially alienating, Elinor Tollington found that it was less stressful consciously to ostracize herself, avoiding people she knew, than it was to have to confront them:

> Mostly I avoided the family or anyone I knew, so much time on explanation.[79]

Domestic facilities were seldom what repatriated women were expecting, and almost all had to set-up home in Britain without the domestic help they had come to rely upon in India. For many, this lack of servants indicated to them a fall in their status as a wife's domestic authority was reduced both by the absence of paid help (there was no-one to give orders to), and by her performance of their menial tasks such as cooking and cleaning.[80] Further, the absence of servants was considered to be a practical hardship by many. The minimum number of servants considered acceptable for a middle-class family running a home in India was between seven and ten.[81] Drusilla Hawes returned to Britain in 1947, having lived as the wife of an army officer in India for fifteen years. Coming home with her two small children, she was deeply concerned about her lack of experience with them. In India, they had largely been cared for by an ayah as well as a nanny. On return to Britain she found that:

> I didn't have anybody...There was no help at all...Ayahs were a great blessing...In England, in the old days when you had nannies you did precisely the same thing. Anyone who could afford a nannie did just that - when she didn't want her children she just passed them back to the nannie. And that's a marvellous arrangement.[82]

Recalling the deprivations associated with returning to Britain, her reminiscences point explicitly to notions of genteel poverty, and a substantially reduced standard of living. Further, it is significant that as recently as the end of the nineteenth-century, many of these women's families would have employed servants in Britain. For example, the 1888 edition of *Mrs Beeton's Household Management* suggests

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[79] Tollington, E., op. cit..
[80] Samuel, R. (1983) The Middle-class Between the Wars: Part 1, New Socialist, Jan/Feb; p34.
[81] Refer to Chapter Two for a consideration of domesticity at the household scale in India.
[82] Hawes, D., op. cit.; tape two, side two.

that a family with £1000 a year (a sum equivalent to the full I.C.S. pension) should have a cook, two housemaids and a manservant.[83] However, the declining status of the middle-class throughout the inter-war period was reflected, in part, by a reduction in the number of servants employed by each household.[84] As such, none of the women in this study had any live-in servants once repatriated, although a few employed a 'daily'. The subsequent disruption of both their domestic position and their middle-class status was felt by many.

A number of accounts describe the distress felt by women on a day-to-day basis as they found themselves unable to cope with their domestic duties and responsibilities. Their personal narratives are constructed in rhetoric which evokes images of domestic loss, deprivation and hardship. For example, Drusilla Hawes stressed that:

> We came home at a very unfortunate time...in 1947...There was rationing and there were no servants...There were no lovely parties or picnics, I mean life was pretty good drudgery when we came home. I had a daily but I had to learn to cook...And it was a very painful, painful, awful, I think I wept buckets over learning to cook.[85]

Many other accounts relate similar culinary traumas.[86] Mary Maxwell has reflected on the length of time it took her to produce each meal, paying tribute to her family for the patience they demonstrated while she 'learned to cook on them'.[87] Rationing exacerbated experiences such as these for those who returned in the immediate post-war period. The women have often remarked with distaste upon the food they had to both prepare and consume. Some, such as Elinor Tollington, comment on the blandness of food such as shepherd's pies. Others, for example

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[83] Quoted in Lewis, R. & Maude, A. (1949) The English Middle Classes, London: Phoenix House; p252.
[84] This was not simply connected to a reduction in middle-class incomes. The number of people willing to be employed in domestic service in the 1920s and 1930s declined sharply. This was especially the case in the south-east, where even those who could afford servants often had to learn to manage with less, or no, help. By the mid-1940s, following the Second World War, this shortage became acute. Jackson, A. A. (1991) The Middle Classes, 1900-1950, Nairn: David St John Thomas; Lewis, R. & Maude, A., op. cit..
[85] Hawes, D., op. cit.; tape two, side two.
[86] It is interesting to note that problems in learning to cook were widespread among the middle-class at this time. Indeed, it has been suggested that 'some, it seems, especially where the wife (in her own estimation at least) had been born to better things, made it a point of honour to cook badly'. Samuel, R. (1983) The Middle-class Between the Wars: Part 3, New Socialist, May/June; p28.
[87] Maxwell, M., op. cit.; Chapter 12, p22.

Frances Stewart-Robertson, dwell upon the alternatives made available during desperate shortages. She recalled an incident in her memoir where a friend bought and cooked some whale meat for her husband. He was not impressed. 'With a look of disgust on his face', he left the room, refusing to eat it.[88]

However, tasks such as learning to cook are also often represented in more positive terms. Portrayed as significant challenges, such events can be linked with the negotiation of subjectivities through personal survival and gain. In her account, Drusilla Hawes said:

> My sister-in-law taught me how to cook. She took me in hand and she taught me, and I always bless her for having done this.[89]

Viola Bayley has described the mastering of domestic chores in a similar way, and suggests the significance to such women in overcoming their domestic anxieties:

> Veronica [sister] had managed to acquire for us a two-burner gas stove. We had no oven but a hay box that I found invaluable. With this equipment I set about my first cooking. Luckily the children's favourite food was corned beef...There were times when I eyed such things as mackerel still to be cleaned with deep distaste. Surely there was someone to clean them - surely it couldn't be me. But it was, and I soon got used to that and other unglamorous tasks.[90]

The accounts of repatriated women suggest that disrupted notions of home were sustained at the scale of the household, as experiences of home and domesticity were found to be challenging and unfamiliar. For most, repatriation from India resulted in a decline in their standard of living as their 'middle-class', or 'imperial', aristocratic status could not be maintained. Further, increases in the cost of living and changes in British middle-class constitution, coupled with their constant incomes, meant that for the first time, most had to seriously consider their financial situation, and were no longer able to occupy a materially privileged or elite position. The majority were unable to employ domestic help, and for some it necessitated paid employment. Material difficulties such as these exacerbated

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[88] Stewart-Robertson, F. T., op. cit.; p201.
[89] Hawes, D., op. cit.; tape two, side two.
[90] Bayley, V., op. cit.; p127.

feelings of dislocation and alienation and contributed to the disruption of subjectivities.

(ii) Financial hardship

For some women, repatriation to Britain was associated with severe and unprecedented financial concerns. Although I am not suggesting that it was any more or less 'real' than the so-called 'genteel' poverty discussed in the previous section, it is important to distinguish the absolute poverty experienced by some women from the relative hardship faced by others. Women often returned to Britain at the time of their husband's death or retirement. Either event could bring a financial blow as a husband's income was either substantially reduced, or halted altogether. Linked to the preceding discussion, the standard of living was dramatically reduced for many. However, for some, usually widows, the situation was such that they could not afford to support a home of their own without financial assistance from external sources, a situation which worsened throughout the twentieth century. Moreover, others were reliant on the provision of charitable accommodation, living in rooms or small flats which were usually run by Christian organizations and funded by donations. In each of these circumstances, notions of home were disrupted at the household scale as women's domestic status was diminished. Linked to the fracturing of subjectivities, I suggest that such women experienced exacerbated feelings of displacement and alienation.

Just as pension payments made to officers were considered generous at the end of the nineteenth century, so too were those paid to widows and orphans. All members of the service, married or unmarried, had to contribute to the family pension fund, from which widows received £300 a year. Further, sons of deceased civilians received £100 a year until they were 21, and daughters were awarded this sum until marriage.[91] Payments made to the widows of army officers were not as straight-forward as this, and were based on a complex hierarchical system connected to a means test (the qualifying figure for which was confidential),[92] as

[91] O'Malley, L.S.S., op. cit..
[92] Army Officers information letter no. 26, July 1952. OIOC, Mss.Eur.0173, item 42.

well as to their deceased husband's rank and length of service. However, widows of army officers generally received less than their civilian counterparts. As discussed in the previous section, although amounts such as these might have been adequate to sustain the appearance of middle-class living in the nineteenth century, they became increasingly insufficient throughout the first half of the twentieth century. In 1915, for example, Mrs Christian Showers-Stirling returned to Britain with her husband as a result of his ill-health. He died in January 1916, leaving his wife to bring up their two young children. Following the funeral she moved to 'quite pleasant lodgings' in Museum Road, Oxford (Plate 26). Although she was fortunate in having a small private income to add to her pension, she remained anxious about her financial position:

> I now realise what little, if any, help I had from 'the family', and how very helpless and unused I was to making decisions as I depended on Herbert for everything - not even having my own allowance or a cheque book...I had no idea how far money would go but knew that with a very small income - about £500 or less a year - I should have to be very careful - so I worried (and prayed) a lot.[93]

However, many widows found themselves in serious financial difficulty as they received no pension at all. Women often failed to meet certain qualifying criteria, one of which stipulated that the wives of I.C.S. officers became eligible for a pension only after their husbands' had served ten years. Moreover, the widow of an army officer could only obtain a pension if her husband had served twenty years. In addition, if an army officer or an Indian Civil Servant married after his retirement, his wife was not eligible for any benefit, even though it was compulsory to pay into the family pension fund throughout the time of his service,[94] and it was 'difficult if not impossible for a retired officer to make an adequate provision for her from saving'.[95] In this way, women who were the second wives of officers were often disqualified from any form of widow's pension.[96] However, women also automatically relinquished any rights they may have had to a widows pension when

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[93] Showers-Stirling, C., op. cit.; p119-120.
[94] O'Malley, L.S.S.; op. cit..
[95] The Officers' Case: The case for the equitable treatment of Officers of the Armed Forces with regard to retired pay and their widows pensions; OIOC, Mss.Eur.F.0173; item 43.
[96] See ICS (retired) Association correspondence, OIOC, Mss.Eur.F.0173, item 173, item 169; The Officers' Case, op. cit..

PLATE 26: Museum Road, Oxford.
[Source: Author's collection]

they re-married, a situation which could cause severe financial problems. For example, as an elderly woman, Mrs Bateman found herself in this unfortunate position. Her first husband, who had worked as an Indian Civil Servant, died in 1927. Although she received a widow's pension, she re-married in 1932, thereby surrendering her rights to it. However, it was not until her second husband died that she was informed that, as he had been a retired member of the I.C.S. when they married, she was not entitled to any form of pension payment at all.[97]

Indicating the severity of their position, campaigns for the increase of pensions often focused on the financial hardships of widows of both civilian and military officers. Summarizing the desperate situation many women found themselves in, those protesting for an increase in widows' pensions suggested that:

> Any increase is most welcome, no matter how meagre it may be, particularly for the hard pressed widows who are trying to exist on a pittance.[98]

Following a number of years of campaigning, annual widows' pensions were increased, and, significantly for the wives of deceased army officers, the system of means testing was abolished.[99] Although small, the advantages connected to such changes were acknowledged. However, indicating the importance of women's roles as wives, it was also clearly expressed that, 'they are, however, quite inadequate for widows, who have lived a service life with their husband.'[100]

In this way, widows often experienced not only the 'genteel poverty' associated with a drop in their standard of living but also, as elderly women (if not before), severe financial distress. For such women, poverty was commonly

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[97] As late as 1970, the Secretary of the Staines Trust (Mr Walden) wrote to the Secretary of the Association (Mr Fell), saying: 'I find it very difficult to convince these widows that when they are married after the husband's retirement they are not normally eligible for a Widow's pension under any Pension Scheme regulations. Often I think the husband did not or was afraid to ascertain what the position would be and many a widow I find has been left with an erroneous impression of her entitlement. 24th July 1970. I.C.S. (retired) Association; OIOC, Mss.Eur.F.0173, item 69.
[98] Army Officers information letter, no. 26, July 1952. OIOC, Mss.Eur.0173, item 42.
[99] On 1st December 1952, an annual pension of £215 paid to the wife of a Major-General was increased to £300, whilst the widow of a Captain who received payment of £90 benefited from a rise to £110. The Officers' Case, op. cit.. Small increases were also applied to I.C.S. widows pensions around this time.
[100] The Officers' Case, op. cit..

reflected through their inability to secure their own home, problematizing notions of settlement and contesting subjectivities based on particular concepts of domesticity, as well as imperial hierarchies. For example, the novel *Staying On*, by Paul Scott, is concerned with a couple who remained in India after Independence. Throughout, Lucy protests that this represented her husband's desires, repeatedly stressing her longing to return to Britain. In anticipation of his death, Tusker writes a letter to his wife addressing her options if she goes home. Summarizing life in Britain for repatriated widows, emphasis is placed on hardship and poverty, pointing to life at home in terms of mere survival:

> What it all comes to Luce is you've got enough to take you home if that's what you want though in y[ou]r pos[itio]n I'd prefer to stay here, considering the sort of income you'll have. At home you can't starve really, what with supplementary benefits, and things like Distressed Gentlefolk (Ha!). Also they've got the Nat Health and Old People's Homes. Perhaps for a white person being poor in England's better than being poor in India, though by average Indian standards we're rich.[101]

For women whose narratives commonly reveal that they were fundamentally concerned with senses of home and belonging, many of whom were repatriated to Britain searching desperately for their 'own home', living in such accommodation must have seemed devastating. Further, stressing the connections between the significance of home and the construction of subjectivities, their move into poverty, as well as charitable housing, may have been accompanied by a decline in status, and could lead to women challenging their understandings of self.[102]

In 1954, the I.C.S. (retired) Association was asked by one of its members if it would establish a hostel for I.C.S. pensioners. Citing the example of 'several retired I.C.S. officials and their widows who live in hotels', and emphasizing the particularly harsh position many women found themselves in, it is suggested that accommodation could be provided which 'even an I.C.S. widow should be able to pay for'.[103] The Association was unable to help, but did point to the literature which

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[101] Scott, P., op. cit..
[102] See Steinfeld, E. (1981) The Place of Old Age: The Meaning of Housing for Old People, in J. Duncan (ed.), op. cit.; p198-246.
[103] Letter from Mr Wild to Mr Trotman (secretary of the I.C.S. (retired) Association), 17th October 1954. OIOC, Mss.Eur.F.0173, item 94.

had been sent to them by a number of charitable organizations concerning a range of hostel accommodation which I.C.S. members could apply to, as could any other 'deserving case'.[104] The Working Ladies' Guild, for example, ran a 'home' at Highgate in North London where 'elderly ladies no longer able to fend for themselves can end their days in peace and comfort'.[105] In order that this should be possible, it was stressed that women had their own private space in the form of a 'bed-sitting room'. Further, it was emphasized that 'each lady has her own possessions', pointing to the significance of their ability to retain, and have a place for, personal belongings.[106] Similarly, Miss Shepperd's Annuitant Homes (for elderly Gentlewomen of limited means), based in Holland Park, was established with the aim of 'providing rent free accommodation for elderly women living on small fixed incomes' (Plate 27).[107] Again pointing to the importance of belongings to a sense of home, the Society's brochure continues, 'Miss Shepperd knew in what distressing surroundings these ladies often had to live, and how much it would mean to them to have a comfortable room with their own furniture' (Plate 28).[108]

However, although the widows of I.C.S. members could apply to such organizations (and indeed were encouraged to do so by the organizations themselves), charitable provision was made much more accessible from 1963 following the creation of a Trust under the will of the late Mrs Staines.[109] The Staines Trust was established for the 'relief of poverty' by the 'provision of material assistance for retired public servants (particularly those employed by the Government of any British or former British possession overseas...) who are living on pensions insufficient for their needs'.[110] A 'considerable sum' was held by the Trust, which aimed to provide 'material assistance to service pensioners and their

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[104] Letter from Mr Trotman to Mr Wild, 22nd February 1955. OIOC, Mss.Eur.F.0173, item 94.
[105] The Working Ladies Guild, brochure. OIOC, Mss.Eur.F.0173, item 146.
[106] Ibid..
[107] Miss Shepperd's Annuitants' Homes (for elderly gentlewomen of limited means). Annual Report and statement of accounts for the year 1960. OIOC, Mss.Eur.F.0173, item 146.
[108] Ibid..
The I.C.S. (retired) Association also holds details of the Friends of the Poor and Gentlefolk's Help and St Andrew's Society for helping poor ladies. Each of these organizations stress how little help was available for the kind of women they have been established to assist, discussed in their literature as 'distressed gentlefolk'.
[109] The I.C.S. (retired) Association, Annual Report for the year ending March 31st 1964. OIOC, Mss.Eur.F.0173, item 167.
[110] The Staines Trust Deed, 20th August 1963. Registered Charity No. 230742. Ibid..

PLATE 27: One of Miss Shepperd's Annuitant Homes, 18 Lansdowne Walk.
[Source: Miss Shepperd's Annuitants' Homes (for elderly gentlewomen of limited means). Annual Report & statement of accounts for the year 1960.]

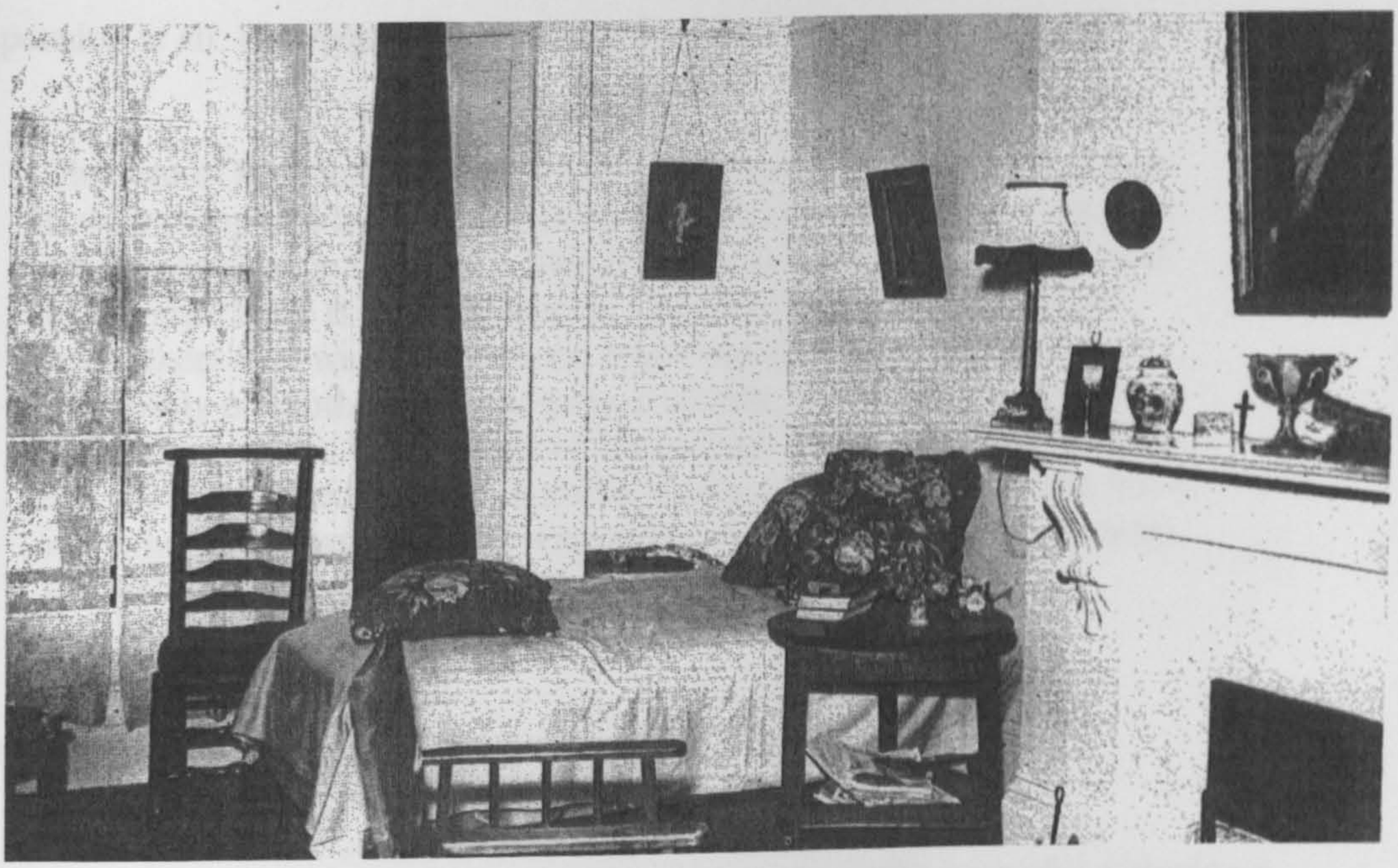

PLATE 28: A Resident's Room.

[Source: Miss Shepperd's Annuitants' Homes (for elderly gentlewomen of limited means). Annual Report and statement of accounts for the year 1960]

dependants' in the form of 'rents, rates and taxes and mortgage repayments'.[111] Although the Association encouraged any member who 'knows of a pensioner or widow who is in financial difficulty' to put their case to the Trustees, it was overwhelmingly women who applied for, and were recipients of, such funds. Suggesting that they were among the worst off of those eligible to apply, by 1966 eight I.C.S. widows were receiving grants of varying amounts. Dorothy Arndt, for example, lived in a flat in Epsom, and applied for financial assistance in 1963. Having married her husband following his retirement from the I.C.S., she received no pension at all. Her request made to the Staines Trust was not unusual:

> The rent of my room is £6.6., it is built outside the main building and is very damp and there is no facility for making even a cup of tea. The other rooms range from £8.8. which for me is out of the question, and in any case there is never a vacancy. The flats I mentioned are now both taken. One was £7.7. and the other was £6.0.. There is the possibility of another flat becoming available, the tenant has just died and at present it is in the hands of the probate people, also her daughter has not yet decided what to do about it. I have no idea of the rent, but it is a tiny flat so that it may be reasonable, unless the landlord increases the rent. Thankyou again for trying to help me, it is most kind of you.[112]

Dorothy Arndt was awarded £104.0.0. in 1964.

Notions of poverty associated with pension payments were also linked to a series of tax regulations, which effectively operated as an incentive *not* to live in India, as pension payments there were taxable.[113] Paradoxically, however, the only other country where pensioners were liable to pay tax was Britain. In other words, with the exception of India, Pakistan, Burma and Aden, permanent residence in

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[111] Ibid..
[112] Letter from Dorothy Arndt to the I.C.S. (retired) Association, 25th September 1963. OIOC, Mss.Eur. F.0173, item 168.
[113] The I.C.S. (retired) Association, Annual Report for the year ending March 31st 1948. OIOC, Mss.Eur.F.0173, item 167.
Further, Pension (Increase) Acts were not applicable to pensioners who were domiciled in India, Pakistan, Burma or Aden operating as another incentive not to live there. Moreover, if pensioners resident in those countries left, they did become eligible for the increases. Equally, if anyone took up residence in those areas, they would lose the amount of increase. It was pointed out to army officers that: 'This is important to those contemplating such a step. An officer living outside India, Pakistan, Burma or Aden, who proposes to go to those countries for anything other than a very short visit in strongly advised to enquire in advance as to the position'. The Pennant, October 1956. OIOC, Mss.Eur.F.0173, item 142.

Britain (at home), was more expensive than any other country.[114] When women were living on such small incomes this could act as an incentive to leave Britain, and to reside in another country where they were exempt from paying tax. For example, Lady Irving applied to the Staines Trust for financial help in 1963, from her residence in Spain, and received £100 in 1964. She too was among those who received nothing from the Family Pension Fund as she married Sir Miles Irving after his retirement, and found life in Spain much more affordable.[115] Similarly, Dorothea Jean Ibbotson applied to the Staines Trust for assistance due to her 'impoverished position'. On her application form she stated that she was thinking of moving to South Africa in order that she could live more cheaply than she could in Britain as there would be 'no Income Tax if living out of England'.[116]

Repatriated widows were often in a position of severe financial hardship. Although some received small pensions (which were rapidly de-valued due to increased costs of living), many received no pension at all. Unable to sustain their own home, some of these women were supported by charitable donations, whilst others moved into accommodation provided by a range of organizations. Stressing that notions of home and subjectivity are inextricably linked, moves to such housing may have problematized and destabilized notions of self. Further, the financial situation of some women, coupled with complex tax regulations, meant that they were effectively encouraged to leave homes in Britain and move

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[114] However, towards the end of 1950, the Government of India announced that it was going to levy Income Tax on pensions paid outside of India, a situation which caused much anxiety. For those resident in Britain, this meant that they would be subject to double taxation: they would be liable to pay tax to both the British and the Indian Governments. For those resident in countries other than Britain they would become subject to taxation when they had previously been exempt. The I.C.S. (retired) Association pointed to the 'hardship that would be caused to pensioners, especially to married men drawing small pensions who had families to maintain and to pensioners abroad'. (I.C.S. (retired) Association, Annual Report for the year ending March 31st 1951. OIOC, Mss.Eur.F.0173; item 4). Despite the 'double income tax relief' that would eventually be obtained, it was thought that pensioners should be spared the anxiety and worry of receiving additional demands and then claiming refunds'. (I.C.S.(retired) Association, Annual Report for the year ending March 31st 1952. OIOC, Mss.Eur.F.0173; item 4). The seriousness of this threat of 'double taxation' was also reflected in the reactions of the Officers' Pensions Society Ltd., who wrote to the Secretary of State for Commonwealth Relations on 2nd February 1953 in view 'of the danger that officers living abroad might become liable for the first time to British Income Tax', saying that: 'If the incomes of those, who have set up their homes abroad, suddenly become liable to heavy additional taxation, the effect would be disastrous (The Pennant, June 1955. OIOC, Mss.Eur.F.0173, item 142). Also see Public Record Office document 142 588.

[115] Correspondence between Lady Irving and the I.C.S. (retired) Association. OIOC, Mss.Eur.F.0173, item 168.

[116] Correspondence between Dorothea Jean Ibbotson and the I.C.S. (retired) Association. Ibid..

elsewhere. Following the often traumatic process of repatriation, such moves must have added to feelings of dispossession and alienation, and contributed to the disruption of subjectivities based on discourses of imperial domesticity which were closely bound to notions of superiority and 'aristocracy'.

Conclusions

Narratives concerned with repatriation suggest that return home can be problematic. Socially- and culturally-constructed understandings of home as familiar, intimate and safe were often disrupted at imperial, national and household scales. First impressions of docks and large cities physically damaged by conflict throughout the Second World War, often shattered imaginative geographies of Britain, and called into question popular representations of it as home and as a national and imperial power. Many women also emphasized their unfamiliarity with everyday life in Britain: they did not feel at home. For some, this was more than a temporary dislocation, as women continued to associated India with home over long periods of time. Notions of home were also disrupted at the household scale as the material conditions of return often meant that women were unable to sustain the standard of living to which they had become accustomed in India. Discourses of alienation, displacement, and homelessness highlight the interlinking of *re*patriation with *ex*patriation. Further, personal narratives of repatriated women suggest that return home can point to marginalization and ostracism. Linked to subjectivities in this way, women's domestic and imperial positions shifted on return home, and were often fundamentally destabilized as repatriates attempted to construct lives for themselves in Britain. Repatriated from India having spent a significant number of years contributing to British imperialism there, challenges women made to the status of the home-country also raised questions concerning their position within it. Subjectivities were also disrupted at the household scale as many experienced a reduction in their standard of living which was linked not only to the impossibility of transporting the 'imperial aristocratic' lifestyle that they had played out while in India, but also to a decrease in the status of the British middle-classes at home.

CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSIONS:

A PASSAGE FROM INDIA: BRITISH WOMEN TRAVELLING HOME, 1915-1947

This thesis has been concerned with the British wives of military and civilian officers living in India from 1915 to 1947 in order to explore their return journeys, and has examined their notions of home and belonging in both Britain and India. Imperial and domestic discourses of home and away represented Britain as home to women living in India whilst simultaneously encouraging them to re-construct homes at the household scale in the sub-continent. Return was portrayed as vital to the maintenance of Britain's imperial boundaries in India, and influenced discourses of white middle-class femininity and motherhood there. For such women, imperial travel was not one way, and memsahibs not only travelled extensively within India, but also between India and Britain, as they visited the home-land for a variety of reasons. For those born in India, the journey to Britain was made as a child for reasons of health and education. As adults, women might visit the home-land due to long leave, sickness or pregnancy, or to visit children there. Repatriation from India was encouraged, and most women returned to Britain due to their husband's ill-health, death or retirement, or as a result of Indian Independence.

Notions of home were critical to the British middle-class living in India at a number of scales. At the scale of the household, the movement of British imperial domesticity to the sub-continent linked the establishment of homes there to the maintenance of successful imperial rule. In respect of the nation, representations which portrayed Britain as home emphasized beauty, order and domestication, constructing it as a site of return, and as a reward for imperial allegiance and loyalty. Although dominant imperial discourses associated Britain unequivocally with notions of home and belonging, middle-class wives often thought of India in terms of familiarity and connectivity, considering it to be their home. At the time of their final departure from India, therefore, many women felt that they were not only

embarking on a journey towards home, they were also leaving home behind. Women's accounts of repatriation are often characterized by images of exile from India, as well as disappointment on return to Britain as its position as home, as well as a national and imperial power, was questioned. Most women had no physical home to return to in Britain, and their initial destinations were often sites of temporary location, problematizing their sense of a homecoming. For many, the end of their journey home was not easy to define.

In Chapter Three I focused on a range of sources in order to examine gendered representations of return, and also to consider how geographies of repatriation had transformed over time. The opulent displays associated with male return in the eighteenth-century were increasingly replaced by the inability of repatriates to recreate their 'imperial aristocratic' status on return to the home-land. Despite this, imperial and domestic discourses continued to stress the importance of sustaining notions of Britain as home to the British middle-class living in India. Geographies of repatriation, clearly divided in respect of class and gender, became increasingly less visible throughout the first half of the twentieth-century.

In Chapters Four, Five and Six, I focused on female processes of repatriation over the period 1915 to 1947 in order to consider the discourses mobilized on departure, the journey from India, and on arrival in Britain. In so doing, I have drawn attention to female homecomings within an imperial context, and have moved beyond accounts which consider repatriation from India only up to the First World War. Despite the increased invisibility of repatriates returning from India and the reduced perceptibility of geographies of return, women continued to be repatriated throughout the first half of the twentieth-century. Chapter Four examined the journeys women made to Britain as both adults and as children. The material submitted as evidence to the Lee Commission revealed the importance placed on the ability of men, but particularly women and children, to be able to travel to Britain and to sustain notions of it as home. Male responses to questionnaires stressed that this was vital not only to the maintenance of imperial boundaries in the sub-continent, but also to imperial masculinities. However, women's personal life writings suggest that their attitudes to Britain were much more equivocal than this, and many suggested that it did not represent their home,

but that of their relatives. This was particularly problematic at the scale of the household. Many women described themselves as feeling out of place, and most were glad to return to India. For those born in India, a sense of belonging and rootedness was associated with the sub-continent from childhood. This was often sustained through their infancy and into adolescence which was spent with family friends, distant relatives, or at boarding schools in Britain as a result of imperial anxieties concerning their physical, mental and moral welfare if they remained in India.

In Chapter Five I examined India as a site of home-making, stressing women's ability to repeatedly recreate imperial homes over space. Their personal accounts reveal the sense of belonging that many attached to the sub-continent, and highlight the importance of familial connections, familiarity and personal possessions, rather than a stable location, to the construction of homes. I then turned to women's final departure from the sub-continent. Narratives concerned with the preparations for their departure point to women's ambiguous notions of return: the anticipation of going home was often coupled with the disruption of leaving home. Feelings such as these continued to be expressed on the journey home from India. Accounts concerned with their journey to Britain frequently contradict traditional imperial narratives which express unequivocal delight at leaving a site of exile. Challenging dominant imperial representations, women have described the sickness, ill-health and tension associated with travelling home to Britain.

Chapter Six explored the physical and emotional upheaval experienced by many women as they arrived in Britain, and considered their homecomings at both national and household scales. Highlighting the material construction of home, women frequently found that their imagined geographies of the home-land were disrupted on return. This was often exacerbated for those who returned after the Second World War. Most felt alienated and confused as they found it difficult to adjust to life at home. The majority had no physical homes to return to, and those who did often found them to be damaged. Almost all were establishing their first household in Britain, and found they had neither the physical help, or the advice, that they were used to. Women's subjectivities were often destabilized as they were

no longer significant members of the ruling race with specific imperial and domestic roles to perform. Further, their class status was disrupted on return as many lived in 'genteel' poverty. For some women, usually widows, their repatriation was characterized by severe financial hardship

A return home is not an easy journey to make. Reaching a physical destination arbitrarily demarcated, called and referred to as home does not mark the end of that journey. Linked to the continual negotiation, consolidation and interpretation of subjectivity over both time and space, the accounts of repatriated women suggest that return journeys are fundamentally connected to notions of home and belonging. Autobiographical accounts by the middle-class wives of army officers and civil servants who returned to Britain often describe feelings of exile, displacement and dislocation in the home-land. For many, subjectivities were destabilized on their departure from India and subsequent arrival in Britain as notions of home were disrupted at a number of scales. Considering material conditions as well as emotions and attitudes, many women emphasized their unfamiliarity with life in Britain. Some women described their feelings of being unrooted as long-term, and discuss extended journeys through their extensive and prolonged searches for home in Britain. Such texts reflect retrospective notions of India as home, and indicate that a number of women, even after years of residence in Britain, found it problematic to associate the home-country with a sense of belonging. Such long-term senses of loss and disruption suggest that the re-negotiation of subject positions on return to Britain could be, for many, a protracted process. The accounts written by women returning from India can reveal much about resisting a sense of conclusion to such routes, and point to the impossibility in attempts to define either the beginning or the end of a journey.

Other women found that their sense of dislocation on return to Britain negated permanent settlement in the home-country, and could lead to their migration to other areas of the British empire, particularly Australia, Canada and South Africa. Sylvia Molloy, for example, lived in a number of regions in both Burma and India with her husband from 1940 to 1947. They returned to Britain on leave in 1946, at which time they considered that 'life was not very good in England. There was still rationing which lasted long after we had returned to

Burma. Meat was strictly rationed...Although we were living in the country, eggs and butter were scarce'.[1] Following Independence they decided not to return to Britain, but sailed instead to South Africa. Further, from 1938, the Commonwealth Government had made a system of grants available to 'retired army officers and civil servants wishing to settle permanently in Australia' in order to cover half the cost of the tourist passage from India.[2] In this way, in January 1948 approximately 100 ex-service personnel and civilians, and their dependants, left India having 'elected to settle in Australia rather than be repatriated to Britain'.[3] However, it was not only as a result of post-war austerity, or due to the decline in British imperialism, that people found the idea of settling in Britain to be unappealing. After living in India for 21 years, Magda Hammersley-Smith moved back to Britain when her husband retired in 1929, travelling as far as Marseilles with her two married daughters. Leaving her children to continue their journey by ship, Magda Hammersley-Smith disembarked in France. Reluctant to settle in Britain, she travelled back through Switzerland (where she had spent a number of years prior to her marriage), in order to investigate the possibilities of living 'in retirement in more sunshine than England would give us'. However, in the end she 'decided against it', suggesting that as her husband 'did not speak those languages he would be happier in England'.[4] Journeys such as these, made by women moving away from Britain following their departure from the sub-continent, have yet to be traced. The life histories and geographies of women who found themselves unable to settle in the home-country subsequent to their departure from India could reveal much about the movement and translation of discourses of imperialism across space. Further, they could recount details not only concerning women's imaginatively constructed geographies of such countries, but also their material spatiality. Such women were often assisted by the Migration Board of the Empire Settlement Scheme, whose records are held by the Public Record Office, Kew. Additionally, I would anticipate that a range of personal narratives and memoirs, such as those

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[1] Molloy, S., (undated) untitled life writing. OIOC, Mss.Eur.F.0272.
[2] Overseas Settlement Board. Minutes of the 42nd meeting held at the Dominions Office at 11.00am, Tuesday 8th March 1938. Item 2, migration to Australia. PRO, DO 35 666/1.
[3] Evening News, 7th January 1948. PRO, DO 35 3420. There was some controversy surrounding the departure of this particular liner, as 350 people were refused passage because it was suspected that they were Anglo-Indian or of Anglo-Indian descent.
[4] Hammersley-Smith, M., (undated) A Great-Grandmother Remembers. Heany Papers, CSAS; p132.

considered in this study, could be located and explored within the countries concerned.

For many women, their 'passage from India' was also linked to the maintenance of ties with the sub-continent, actively constructing them over many years, and again resisting a sense of arrival or the completion of their journey. To many women this seems to have been as important as it was for them to maintain links with Britain whilst living in India. Most kept in touch with Indian friends and servants, sending them letters and gifts, and also welcoming them as visitors to their homes in Britain. In order to be able to maintain her connections with India, Mildred Archer obtained a job in the India Office Library, emphasizing that her time living in the sub-continent had changed her 'whole life and became her main and enduring interest'.[5] Other women suggested the enduring importance of India in a range of ways. Elinor Tollington, for example, lived in a number of places in Britain before settling in Dunsmore following the death of her husband. There, she called her home 'Moonrising, named after the house we had had in Nathir Gali'.[6] Dorothy Rowe described how she would gather together cloves and other spices in an attempt to recreate the atmosphere of the sub-continent. A few women undertook return journeys to India, focusing in their accounts on visits made to places where they once lived. As with narratives concerned with return home to Britain, their descriptions are frequently characterized by disappointment. Mildred Archer, for example, was dismayed when she returned to India in the 1970s. She stressed that it was:

> ...rather sad going back. The new city at Patna is run down terribly, all the bungalows look so mucky and the gardens that used to be so beautiful have all gone. From that point of view things have deteriorated.[7]

In contrast, other women were sure that they did not want to go back, emphasizing the difficulties associated with making return journeys. For example, although Drusilla Hawes kept in touch with Indian friends and relatives, and some came to

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[5] Archer, M., Taped interview. OIOC, Mss.Eur.R.146; Cassette 1, side 2.
[6] Tollington, E.; Op. cit.; no pagination.
[7] Archer, A.; Op. cit.; Cassette 1, side 2.

visit her in Britain, she never went back to India, feeling that somehow, 'it wouldn't be the same you see'.[8] The connections, friendships and support networks established between India and Britain, as well as return journeys made to the homeland offers other opportunities for future research directions. Further attention to these issues could reveal much about the connections between repeated patterns of travel, concepts of home and the negotiation of subjectivity. However, my investigations suggest that there are few personal texts concerned with such return journeys. Women rarely wrote or talked about their long-term position following repatriation to Britain in much detail. However, my explorations cannot have been exhaustive, and it is possible that other sources do exist, especially in private, rather than public, collections.

Moving beyond the experiences of middle-class women returning from India, it is also important to acknowledge and contemplate some of the other routes and sources this thesis might have explored, pointing to avenues for future research. Although discussions of repatriation are usually focused on the experiences of men, they have largely been framed within uncritical accounts of imperial encounters. Moreover, studies of imperial masculinities are often centred on the movement of men away from home - at both the national and the household scales - neglecting to consider their return journeys. The repatriation processes of middle-class army officers and civil servants returning from India could reveal much about men's experiences of repatriation, and could contribute to debates which seek to highlight the contradictions and tensions within imperial discourses. Additionally, studies of masculine repatriation should not be disconnected from discussions of home at the household scale, and a detailed examination of their personal life writings could provide a vital insight into connections between masculinity and imperial domesticity.

Studies concerning the repatriation of women and men from India could also consider those who, although white and British, were not considered to be part of the ruling elite in India. Representing a lower-rank and position within imperial hierarchies based on attitudes towards class and race, thousands of British soldiers,

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[8] Hawes, D.; Cassette 2, side 2.

teachers and railway workers, as well as those in trade and commerce, for example, were also repatriated due to Indian Independence. The War Office, India Office and Ministry of Health worked together in order to establish 'emergency plans' to temporarily house up to 50, 000 such families returning from India in August 1947.[9] Transit camps were set-up in Tonbridge, Folkstone, on the Isle of Wight and in the Thames Estuary, where families could spend two days 'before transference to hutted camps spread out all over the country, as near to their original homes as possible'.[10] It is probable that details of their arrival in Britain would have been recorded in the national and local press, and it might be possible to investigate individual and group location programmes through the Public Record Office. However, the life histories and geographies of such men and women are often less well documented and recorded than those of the middle-classes, and it may not be possible to locate and examine personal texts.

Further, some of the questions raised by this research can also be used to engage constructively with contemporary power relations and postcolonial discourses, and to work strategically with regard to contemporary feminist and political discourses. In this respect, it is vital to recognize the significance and extent of contemporary migration and transnational mobility, including both forced and voluntary movements. The opportunity and frequency of everyday *voluntary* travel around the globe, for a diverse range of reasons connected to travel, tourism and explorations, as well as for purposes of employment, ambition, education and housing, has, for vast numbers of people, never been greater. In sharp contrast to voluntary travel, recent movements such as those seen in Albania and Rwanda, and across the Kosovan border, provide contemporary examples of those subjected to mass *forced* movement away from, but also towards, homes. As this thesis has suggested, the material and emotional implications of (in)voluntary return to homes from which people were often forcibly removed, and which may no longer exist at either national or household scales, can be serious, causing long-term feelings of disruption and uncertainty. In such ways, repatriation can be problematic and controversial, and its multifarious consequences require detailed consideration.

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[9] The Times of India, August 5th 1947; p3.
[10] Ibid..

Three inter-related themes have recurred throughout this study. First, I have explored the fluidity of home on a number of scales, and reflected on its re-negotiation, contestation and co-existence over both time and space. Second, I have considered repatriation as a process that can destabilize socially- and culturally-constructed notions of home. Third, I have suggested that return is capable of disrupting, rather than confirming, subjectivities. I have stressed that British women travelled extensively within India, repeatedly establishing homes there throughout their adult lives. Life in India was represented in terms of financial, mental, physical and emotional cost, from which, it was perceived, women and children needed to be protected. Images of Britain as home were constructed in attempts to justify British imperial control, and women's ability to travel between Britain and India on a regular basis was linked to the maintenance of empire. Following a period of imperial crisis in India, the Lee Commission was established to investigate, among other things, the continued ability of women and men to visit the home-land. Subsequently, each officer and his wife were granted four free passages throughout the length of his service. The implications for women's perceptions of Britain are ambiguous. Although women could travel home more frequently, they were also reminded on a more regular basis that they did not have physical homes there, and that they felt alienated and out of place. As such, imperial discourses of home were contested. Many women associated home-making with the sub-continent, and were uncertain about making the final voyage from India to Britain.

On arrival in Britain, most women found that their class status was severely disrupted. Significantly, the 'imperial aristocratic' lifestyles they had played out whilst in India could not be transported to their lives in the home-land. Moving beyond their material standard of living, the subjectivities of repatriates were destabilized as women no longer occupied the distinct positions associated with imperial hierarchies in India. Although they had lived their lives as superior members of the ruling race, this was no longer applicable once at home. Moreover, whilst living in India, women's subjectivities had been constructed in relation to specific discourses of imperialism and domesticity, and were bound up with notions of race and class superiority in ways which clearly defined their position and role in

the sub-continent. However, for most women returning to Britain, such ideas and concepts, fundamental to their subjectivity, could not be transported to the homeland, problematizing the re-negotiation and subsequent consolidation of their selfhood and role here. Further, many women found themselves unable to even talk about their lives in India. In contrast to women's experiences of homemaking and housekeeping in the sub-continent, repatriates were not given advice about how to re-construct their lives or homes in Britain, presumably on the assumption that return home to Britain would be familiar and unproblematic. In contrast, women's personal accounts stress how *un*familiar day-to-day life in Britain felt to them, and how many longed for the familiar environments, routines and habits of their homes in India. In this way, many female repatriates experienced difficulties in thinking of themselves at home in Britain, and often felt out of place and unsettled.

Texts such as memoirs can be vital spaces not only for the recollection and preservation of memories and life stories, but also for the re-negotiation of subjectivities. The memoirs considered for this thesis are significant in their discussion of repatriation. Many memoirs exist which are concerned only with the lives of women whilst they were living in India; they do not contain any reference to the periods of time spent in Britain, and end before departure from India is made. It is as if these periods are considered to be not worth recording or discussing, or, further, as if they did not exist. The apparent reluctance of many women to discuss their lives following repatriation from India could be linked to the long-term disruption of subjectivities, and to the uncertainty of their position in Britain. As such, it is possible that they wrote about the time they spent in India not only because they considered their lives there to be more interesting, unusual or noteworthy to a British audience, but also because it reflected the periods of time when they felt most confident and self-assured. Further, it could be suggested that once repatriated, women whose roles and subjectivities had previously been defined through their participation in British imperialism considered their lives to be so fractured and disrupted as to consider them over, and as such, not worth writing about. The recollection and negotiation of *memories* of our lives are as important to the construction and negotiation of subjectivities as are current contexts and experiences, highlighting the significance of examining life histories and geographies. Although the actual motives for such writings are clearly

ambiguous, I have suggested that both autobiographical writings and oral histories are ways in which the repatriated women involved in this study were able to begin to negotiate their sense of history of themselves, and played vital roles in the shaping and consolidation of their subjectivities.

My title, *A Passage from India*, reflects a long-term process of repatriation, and alludes to return home as both problematic and ambiguous. Throughout this study, I have drawn attention to the complexities associated with imperial travel towards home by highlighting the co-existence of homes at national and household scales, and by pointing to the contradictions associated with both going home and leaving home. I have attempted to challenge imperial discourses which represented unequivocal notions of Britain as home, and as a desired location of repatriation for British women who had often spent the majority of their lives establishing homes both with, and for, their families in India. I have suggested that return home is not an easy journey to make, and that expectations of home and return are often equivocal and anxious. Further, return to homes at either the household or the national scale does not necessarily elicit feelings of belonging, familiarity or rootedness, and return home is not always welcome or welcoming. I have also stressed that departure and arrival are difficult, if not impossible, to define. Rather than consider repatriation as movement between two clearly definable points I have traced broader notions of return, considering connections with the negotiation of subjectivities and fluid concepts of home.

Stressing the fluidity of home, I have pointed to the importance of personal possessions and familial attachments, rather than physical stability, to a sense of belonging. I have considered the repatriation processes of women returning to Britain at a time of imperial decline. Many British women had to leave their homes in India following Independence in 1947. Those who were repatriated at this time often experienced exacerbated feelings of disruption and upheaval as their departure had been so unexpected. In this way, I have drawn attention to the indeterminate position that many repatriates occupied between forced and voluntary movement. Although many women recognized that their departure from India was inevitable, many felt that they had been made to leave their homes before they were ready to go. Describing their departure as an 'uprooting', or as being

'severed', from their home, points to notions and feelings of violent removal, and suggests powerful notions of loss which many found difficult to overcome. Rather than consider repatriates as unproblematically moving from one place to another, therefore, I have highlighted the importance of considering the problems and disappointments associated with homecomings.

Referred to as a 'Land of Regrets', British India has traditionally been represented as a site of exile, melancholy and death. The sub-continent was never a settler colony, and it was imperative that the imperial rulers maintained notions of Britain as home. In the seventeenth and eighteenth-centuries return from India was closely associated with the accumulation and display of wealth by male nabobs. By the latter part of the nineteenth- and the early twentieth-centuries, repatriation, although still clearly divided by class and gender, was far less prominent than earlier returns. However, images of Britain as a yearned for home remained, and representations of India continued to associate the sub-continent with ill-health, boredom and frustration, as well as a desperation to leave. Depicted as both physically and mentally damaging to British personnel there, India was commonly represented as the 'Land of Regrets'. As this study has shown, personal accounts written by the middle-class wives of army officers and civil servants often dispute and contest traditional representations of imperial India, and challenge dominant imperial discourses which portrayed Britain as home. Many women have stressed that they associated India with a sense of belonging. To many it was their place of birth, and to many others it was considered as a site of homemaking, representing an atmosphere of intimacy and familiarity despite the physical mobility associated with life in India. For women who considered India to be their home, the sub-continent became the 'Land of Regrets' at the time of their departure and during their subsequent repatriation to Britain. Despite their differences, both interpretations of India as the 'Land of Regrets' imply that meanings attached to homes and senses of belonging are complex and dynamic, and that they are continually negotiated and contested over both time and space. Critically, stressing the ambiguity of home, both spatial and temporal distance from it is vital to the definitions it is given. Although the construction of both home and away were represented as vital to the maintenance of imperial rule in India, the accounts of repatriation written by women who had left the sub-continent question dominant

discourses of imperialism and domesticity through their sense of attachment to it as home.

Processes of repatriation are not necessarily complete once the home-land has been reached. Highlighting the importance of stressing 'a passage from India', homecomings refer to more than a physical journey from a clearly defined point of departure to another place, identified as arrival. Further, home is not necessarily the same as it was when last visited, or as it had been imaginatively constructed whilst away. Emphasizing the difficulty in suggesting an end to repatriation, notions of home are transient, fluid and often evasive, problematizing the decision to conclude that home has been reached. Moreover, blurring the boundaries between mobility and location, travelling does not stop when a destination has been arrived at, and is fundamental to the interpretation of subjectivities and the construction of a sense of belonging. I have resisted a sense of conclusion to the journeys of women repatriated from India. Although repatriated women were returning to the home-land, their life stories have revealed problems and tensions, associated not only with processes of return, but also within dominant imperial discourses of home.

APPENDIX

BIOGRAPHIES[1]

Archer, Mildred.

Dr Mildred Archer first went to India in 1934 in order to be with her husband, William, who was a member of the I.C.S.. They were stationed in various locations in Bihar. They returned to Britain in 1947 due to Indian Independence.

Battye, Desiree.

Went to India with her husband, Stuart, who was an army officer. It is not clear when they first arrived in India, but it was probably in the mid-1930s. Whilst in India, they were based in the north-west of the country. They returned to Britain c.1943-4 following Stuart's posting there.

Bayley, Viola.

First went to India in 1933 to stay with a cousin in Lahore, in the Punjab. She met Vernon, a member of the I.C.S., whilst there, and married him later that year. They lived in both the Punjab and the North-West Frontier Province. They returned to Britain in 1947 due to Indian Independence.

Birdwood, Vere.

Lady Vere Birdwood was born in India in 1909, staying there until 1920, when she returned to Britain for her education. She married Christopher, an army officer, in 1931. They left India in 1945.

Corfield, Sylvia.

Was born in Assam in 1900. Having been in Britain for her education, she returned to India in 1919, where she married Colonel Daunt. They left India in 1947 due to Independence. Colonel Daunt died in 1953, and Sylvia re-married in 1961.

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[1] For details of sources refer to Bibliography: Primary Sources.

Crofton, Mrs O.

Travelled to India in 1922 as the wife of an I.C.S. officer. They were stationed in a number of locations in the north of India. They left India in 1947, two months prior to Independence.

Dawkins, Enid.

Enid Dawkins lived in India with her husband, Clinton, who was a member of the I.C.S.. Although details of her arrival and departure in the sub-continent are not given, it appears that their time there probably spanned approximately 25 years, dating from c.1910 to 1935.

Dench, Margaret.

First went to India in 1918. She met up with her husband, Will, who was a sub-divisional officer in the I.C.S., and they travelled together to Malakland in the North-West Frontier Province where he had already been stationed for four years. They returned to Britain in 1943 due to Will's retirement.

Donaldson, Barbara.

Barbara was born in India, and lived there as a child until she was sent to school in Britain. She returned to India when she was eighteen to stay with her parents, and was shortly married to J C Donaldson, who was a member of the I.C.S.. No dates are given, but they were there throughout the Second World War, possibly leaving due to Independence.

Donnison, Ruth.

Ruth first travelled to Burma in 1923 in order to marry Vernon, who was a member of the I.C.S.. Having lived in various areas in Burma, they returned to Britain in 1947 due to Independence.

Fyson, Marjory.

Was born in India in 1910, and following her education in Britain returned to the Punjab. Her husband was in the I.C.S.. No further details are given.

Gray, Ruby.

First went to India in 1921, having married Charles, an army officer, earlier that year. They spent most of their time in India in various parts of the Punjab, returning to Britain in 1947 as a result of Indian Independence.

Hall, Margery.

First went to India in 1938 to stay with friends. She soon met Henry, an army officer, and after a brief visit to Britain, she returned to the sub-continent in 1939 to be married. They were repatriated in 1947 due to Independence.

Hammersley-Smith, Magda.

Her first visit to India was in 1906, when she travelled to the sub-continent to visit her family. She met and got engaged to Ralph, an army officer, whilst there. She returned to India in 1908 in order to get married. They were repatriated to Britain in 1929.

Hawes, Drusilla.

Drusilla was born in India in 1908, returning to Britain in 1913. She married Derek, an army officer, in 1932, returning to the sub-continent with him at that time. They were based in the Punjab, returning to Britain in 1947 due to Independence.

Hughes, Helen M.

Details of dates are not given. However, Helen was in Burma with her husband (who was an army officer), from c.1937 to 1941, after which they spent a number of years in India.

Hunt, Pauline.

Went out to India for the first time in 1939 in order to be with her husband, Roy, who was in the I.C.S.. They returned to Britain in 1947 due to Independence.

Mascall, Esme.

Esme was first taken to India when she was eight months old, returning to Britain for her education. In 1915, she married Maurice, an army officer. She went out to India in 1919 with her two year old daughter, but returned to Britain permanently two or three years later due to the child's ill-health.

Maxwell, Mary.

Lady Mary Maxwell first went to India in 1913 as the wife of Reginald Maxwell, who had been in the I.C.S. since 1907. They were based in the Madras Presidency, and lived in a number of places prior to their repatriation in 1944 due to Reginald's retirement.

Mills, J. P.

Was married to a member of the I.C.S. in c.1930. They left India in 1948, following Indepence, and returned via Kenya where they lived for nearly two years.

Molloy, Sylvia.

Went to India in 1940 with her husband, Pat, who was in the I.C.S.. They were stationed in Burma, but also spent considerable time in Lahore and Simla. Following Independence, they decided not to return to Britain, sailing instead for South Africa.

Portal, Iris.

Iris was born in Simla in 1905, staying there until she was six. She returned to India for a visit in 1922, going back in 1927 following her marriage to Gervas ('Squire') Portal, an army officer. Whilst there they were stationed in a number of places in the north and east of the country. They left India in 1942, Iris to return to Britain, and Squire to take up a post on the Persian Gulf prior to his retirement.

Ramsay-Brown, Margaret.

'Tigger' Ramsay-Brown was born in Darjeeling in 1921, returning to Britain for her education. She went back to India in 1939, married to an army officer. At

Independence she separated from her husband, and spent a number of years based in both Britain and India. Following her repatriation to Britain she continued to visit India every two years.

Rowe, Dorothy.

Mrs Rowe first went to India in 1927, marrying John (a member of the I.C.S.), in Bombay. They were stationed in a number of places in the north of India. They returned to Britain in 1947 due to Indian Independence.

Showers-Stirling, C.

First travelled to India in 1902, when she was 23, in order to stay with her Aunt and Uncle in Quetta. She met Herbert, an army officer, while there, and they were married in 1903. They returned to Britain in 1915 due to Herbert's ill-health, where he died early in 1916.

Smyth, Frances.

Lady Frances Smyth was born in Quetta in 1908. She returned to India in 1925, marrying an army officer in 1927. She re-married in 1940, again to an army officer (it is not clear whether this was due to death or divorce). They left India in 1942.

Stewart, Elizabeth.

Elizabeth was married to Gerald Stewart, a member of the I.C.S.. They returned to Britain in 1947 due to Independence, but soon moved on to New Zealand. No other autobiograhical details are given.

Stewart-Robertson, Frances T.

Although dates are not clear in Theo's memoir, she was born in India, and spent her childhood in India before returning to Agra, in central India, to stay with her father. She married Robert (known as Robin),who was in the I.C.S., and they were first stationed in Meerut. They returned to Britain in the immediate post-war period.

Symington, Anne.

Was born in India in 1904. Following her childhood in Britain, she married David Symington in 1929 and returned to live in various places within the Bombay Presidency. They returned to Britain in 1947.

Tollington, Elinor.

Elinor was born in the Punjab in 1909, returning to India in the early 1930s. She married Phil Tollington, who was a member of the I.C.S., in 1932, and they were posted to Lahore, also in the Punjab. They returned to Britain in 1947 following Independence.

Younie, Dorothy.

Dorothy Younie was interviewed by BBC Radio Scotland. She was married to a member of the I.C.S., but no other biographical details are given.

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