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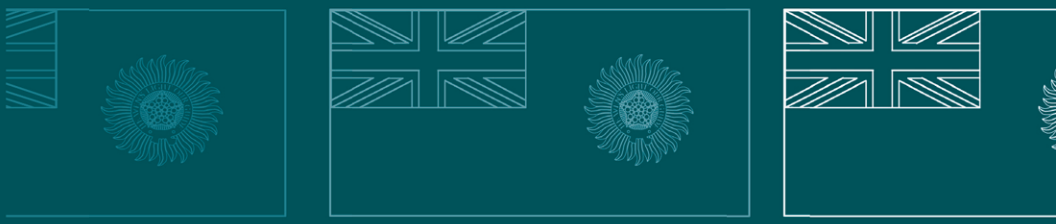
SIR JOHN MALCOLM AND THE CREATION OF BRITISH INDIA

Jack Harrington



Sir John Malcolm and the Creation of British India

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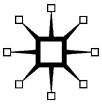

SIR JOHN MALCOLM AND THE CREATION OF BRITISH INDIA

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Contents

Abstract

Sir John Malcolm and the Creation of British India

This book analyzes the works of Sir John Malcolm (1769–1833) as key texts in the intellectual history of the formation of British India. It is concerned less with Malcolm's widely acknowledged role as a leading East India Company administrator and more with the unparalleled range of influential books that he wrote on imperial and Asian topics between 1810 and his death in 1833. Through the publication of nine major works, numerous pamphlets and articles, and a few volumes of poetry, Malcolm established his reputation as an authority in three major areas. First, the *Sketch of the Political History of India* (1811) and the posthumously published *Life of Robert Lord Clive* (1836) remained major sources on the history of the founding of the British Empire in India for much of the nineteenth century. Through these histories, he wove the anxieties of the company's solider-diplomats of the early 1800s into the narrative of the company's rise as an imperial power. With the *History of the Sikhs* (1810) and, to a far greater extent, the *History of Persia* (1815), Malcolm sealed his reputation as a path-setting orientalist making an early contribution to European knowledge of India's northwest frontier. Last, Malcolm's *Memoir of Central India* (1823), which analyzed the history of the region from the rise of the Marathas to the British conquest in 1818, is one of the most sophisticated and politically significant examples of British efforts to construct an Indian past that accounted for British imperial control in the present.

This study's detailed examination of his works provides an insight into how British imperial mentalities in the period before 1857 were shaped by the interplay between trends and events in India and Britain, on the one hand, and the competing historiographical and political traditions current among British imperial administrators on the other. It demonstrates that British thinking on India was far from unified and was often characterized

less by a desire to formulate an ideology for rule—even if this was its eventual effect—and more by bitter divisions between imperial administrators. Malcolm's need to counter the arguments of his opponents among the Court of Directors in the decade after Governor General Wellesley's departure in 1806 and his resistance to more radical commentators on India such as James Mill in the 1820s, shaped his writing. Malcolm's influence and the range of topics he wrote about make him an ideologue of empire, a pioneer of British orientalism, and a founder of the historiographical traditions of British India. Malcolm's body of works is one of the most comprehensive and prominent examples of how the British responded intellectually to their empire in India in the generation after the trial of Warren Hastings and before the first Anglo-Afghan war.

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Abbreviations

Add MSS	Additional Manuscripts
BL	British Library
Eur MSS	European Manuscripts
H/	Home Miscellaneous Series
IOR	India Office Records
NLS	National Library of Scotland

Introduction

This book is about the idea of British India and the works of Sir John Malcolm. Famous as a hawkish soldier-diplomat from the time of the Napoleonic Wars until his death in 1833, Malcolm was also an influential orientalist, a pioneering historian of the East India Company, and one of its most important ideologues. The unequaled range of his interests and the sophistication of his historical analysis of Britain's place in South Asia make him the most comprehensive contemporary commentator on the drive toward imperial expansion after the trial of Warren Hastings in the era of the French Revolution and beyond.[1] By examining Sir John Malcolm as a key thinker about the formation of British India before the uprising of 1857, this study sheds light on the connection between intellectual activity and the day-to-day development of imperial rule in this period of haphazard and rapid empire building.

Having come to prominence after 1798, while serving under Governor General Richard Wellesley, Malcolm eventually rose to become the governor of Bombay from 1827 until 1830. During these years, he played a central role in bringing western India under British political control. This book is concerned less with his career with the East India Company and more with the unparalleled range of influential books that he wrote on imperial and Asian topics between 1810 and his death in 1833. Through the publication of nine major works, numerous pamphlets and articles, and a few volumes of poetry, Malcolm established his reputation as an authority in three major areas. His *Sketch of the Political History of India* (1811) and the posthumously published *Life of Lord Clive* (1836)[2] remained major sources on the history of the founding of the British Empire in India until well into the twentieth century. Through the *History of the Sikhs* (1810) and, to a far greater extent, the *History of Persia* (1815), Malcolm sealed his reputation as a pathbreaking orientalist, making an early contribution to European knowledge of India's northwest frontier. Last, Malcolm's *Memoir of Central India* (1823), which analyzed the history of the region from the rise of the Marathas to the British conquest in 1818, is one of the most sophisticated and politically significant examples of British efforts

to construct an Indian past that accounted for British imperial control in the present. By the time of his death in 1833, Malcolm was known chiefly as the leading authority on indirect rule, the complex and controversial system of government through native princes under which most of India was controlled until the end of the British Raj. Individually, these works made Malcolm a leading authority on the topics they considered throughout the nineteenth century. Taken together, they show how one individual reflected and shaped the ideological foundations of British India in the three decades of imperial growth after 1798.

Malcolm's prominent role as a hawkish soldier-diplomat has always been acknowledged.[3] Yet his written works have often been seen as mere tools of self-promotion.[4] No effort has been made to study them as a comprehensive expression of British imperial thought during a significant period of empire building. This neglect is somewhat surprising. Few European authors before Malcolm were able to benefit in the ways that he did from a rapidly developing network of gifted orientalists, who were engaged in collecting and systematizing European knowledge of Asia.[5] As will be seen, the relative sophistication of Malcolm's historicism and his use of numismatics, oriental philology, and non-European historiography mark a sharp contrast to writers of the earlier generation, such as Robert Orme. Moreover, with the possible exception of Sir William Jones, none of the major British authors who wrote about India in this period matched Malcolm for knowledge and experience of South Asia combined with high imperial office. The depth of his historical analysis of the East India Company, India, and strategically important neighboring regions such as Persia helped make him not simply the leading ideologue of empire but also the preeminent shaper of British historical consciousness of Asia in these years of imperial consolidation.[6] Writing chiefly as a historian, Malcolm used the modern past to explain and guide British policy. By looking at the role of history and locating Malcolm's contribution amid those of contemporary orientalists and imperial historians, this book analyzes the connection between the British historiography of empire and of Asia, on the one hand, and the ways in which the British Empire in India used India's past to legitimate Britain's place in its future, on the other. As a statesman and writer, Malcolm provides a bridge between how the British Empire in India developed and how contemporary Britons tried to understand and control this process.

Written by a man whose diplomatic career had taken off during the French Revolutionary wars, Malcolm's books can be read as the imperial legacy of the kind of romantic conservatism expressed in Edmund Burke's *Reflections on the Revolution in France* (1791). Malcolm valued Indian society as ancient and organic and he feared the revolutionary consequences of

sweeping reform. Like his hero Burke, he believed that good government must conform more to the feelings and prejudices of the people, to the "heart," and less to the diktats of reason, or the "head."[7] While *Reflections* inspired Malcolm's view of society, Burke's extensive Indian writings did not provide him with a readymade framework for understanding the implications of Britain's strategic role as a political power in India. Malcolm was also the heir to Governor General Warren Hastings's pragmatic oriental empire building of the 1770s and early 1780s. As he acknowledged in one of the few references he made to Hastings, "[N]o one . . . can dispassionately read the history of the period . . . without being satisfied that, to his intimate knowledge of the interests of the government which he administered, to his perfect acquaintance with the characters of every class of the natives, and to his singular power of kindling zeal and securing affections, we owe the preservation of the British power in India."[8] As Malcolm's works show, the Indian and British contexts for debates about the East India Company and its growing territorial power in Asia changed rapidly in the years after the trial of Warren Hastings (which Burke had initiated). Inheriting elements of Hastings's and Burke's political legacies, Malcolm devoted his career to placing the British at the apex of a venerable, native-run empire in Asia; he believed they could become the latest and greatest successors to a South Asian imperial tradition last carried on by the Mughals.

Much of Malcolm's singularity and significance as an ideologue lies in how his writings express aims and anxieties produced by his own experiences as a soldier and diplomat on the borders of British India. From the late eighteenth century onward, the need to maintain a steady supply of money and other resources for the vast armies of the three presidencies dominated all discussions of policy.[9] The unbridled power of the East India Company's army had been displayed sporadically in mutinies of both native and European troops. At the same time, embarrassing military defeats at the hands of the Marathas and Tipu Sultan demonstrated that although the Company's possessions in Bengal were, by the 1780s, wealthy and well protected, the territories of Bombay in the west and Madras in the south were undermanned, surrounded by enterprising enemies, and unable to raise enough money from revenue and trade receipts to finance themselves. It is no coincidence that Malcolm and his colleague Sir Thomas Munro, often identified as the two leading militarists of the 1820s, both began their careers in the Madras army in the early 1780s.

As an author, Malcolm challenged the idea that the Company was essentially a commercial enterprise with discrete territories in Bengal, Madras, and Bombay surrounded by warlike but weak and disorderly neighbors. This vision of the Company's affairs, which reflected its origins

as a state-sponsored trading enterprise, had generally been expressed by the Company's directors. Much of Malcolm's significance as a state builder lay in the uses he made of recent history to present the Company's possessions in India not as a commercial concern but as a rising imperial state, encircled by jealous native princes and petty chiefs. In this schema, war and conquest constituted the best path to lasting peace in British India. As Malcolm wrote, "[T]he English have always been in a situation in India that forbade any compromise of a power . . . the principle, or rather necessity of action, for such it would appear, had propelled us forward, till our empire has attained its present magnitude."[10] The power of the military-minded men Malcolm represented was such that even by the 1820s, when the Company's commercial privileges in India had been removed and its major Indian rivals had been subdued, the demands of the Company army helped keep British India in constant readiness for war, drawing resources away from domestic social and economic reform.[11]

From 1818 onward, with peace more or less secured across most of the Indian subcontinent, Malcolm and his fellow administrators became seriously concerned with the problem of how to construct civil society in British India. This marked a distinct shift in Malcolm's writings, away from closely argued narratives of war and diplomacy toward more conceptual histories of how Asian societies developed and what role the British could and should play. Broadly, this reflected a shift in Malcolm's policy calls, away from an emphasis on territorial consolidation, toward limiting direct territorial power. In turning his attention to governance as a historical problem, Malcolm engaged with prevailing European traditions in historiography. Together with his close colleagues, Mountstuart Elphinstone and Sir Thomas Munro, Malcolm applied late Scottish Enlightenment ideas about government and society to the problems of governing India.[12] A whole generation of Scots, and indeed of Britons generally, spent the first decades of the nineteenth century attempting to build a science of government on the foundations of the political teachings of the Scottish Enlightenment.[13] Malcolm's use of the conventions of philosophical history, such as periodic digressions to explain the context of changes in the nature of government and politics and his exacting approach to documentary evidence, places him squarely in a tradition that owes a great deal to Scottish Enlightenment historians such as David Hume and William Robertson. Chapters 3 and 6 in this volume show precisely how his *History of Persia* (1815) and his *Life of Lord Clive* (1836) were indebted to these specific authors. It is tempting to see Malcolm, Munro, and Elphinstone as a distinct coterie of Scottish administrators who self-consciously acted like the kind of ideal legislators outlined in works such as Adam Smith's *The Theory of Moral Sentiments.*[14] However, Malcolm's Scottish intellectual pedigree and its manifestation must be put in their exact historical context.

Although Malcolm's works owe a great deal to the intellectual inheritance of the mid-eighteenth century (notably, the ideas of Hume, Smith, and Robertson), they are also evidence of the profound effects of the French Revolution on the heirs of the Scottish Enlightenment. After all, Malcolm was a peer of Francis Jeffrey, Sir Walter Scott, and Sir James Mackintosh.[15] The French Revolution engendered an immense sense of caution about reform—less obvious in the thinking of someone like Henry Brougham, entirely absent in the case of James Mill (who fought against the forces of reaction the revolution had stirred up), but of immense significance in understanding Francis Jeffrey's stewardship of the *Edinburgh Review* or, in this case,[16] the works of Sir John Malcolm. While Malcolm's Scottish intellectual heritage is apparent to some extent in all his works, this study aims to be exact in identifying the connection and explaining how it was modified by the genres in which he wrote and by political developments in India and in Britain. Notably, it will argue that Malcolm's ongoing critique of the East India Company's government and his legislative vision for British India owed a great deal to Adam Smith's *Wealth of Nations.* Like his Scots contemporaries mentioned earlier, Malcolm benefited from the techniques for analyzing the mechanisms of political society laid out in Smith's work.[17] Yet Malcolm's Scottish intellectual inheritance must be viewed alongside the other traditions of thought that fed into the world of early nineteenth-century orientalism and imperial policy making of which he was a part. More specifically, it must be viewed in the context of the ideological divisions over policy that characterized the administration of British India in the early nineteenth century.

It has often been argued that the task of writing about empire eroded political divisions between British authors, uniting them in a joint enterprise of promoting and defending imperial dominion over non-European peoples.[18] This interpretation does not explain the fundamentally opposite historical visions of British India that were formed along ideological lines in the first half of the nineteenth century. Malcolm's body of work demonstrates that British writers on India in this period were often bitterly divided over imperial policy and very willing to enlist recent history to support their arguments. The only other contemporary published author on Indian affairs who rivaled Malcolm in influence or achievement was the radical philosopher James Mill, whose three-volume *History of British India* appeared in 1817, halfway through Malcolm's career as an author. Mill's work was an expression of the great radical reaction to the revitalized conservatism of the era of the French Revolution. In this sense, Mill fundamentally rejected the British intellectual traditions on which Malcolm's thought was based. Mill's *History* applied the language of utilitarianism to the history of the growth of British commerce and empire in India.[19] Deploring at once the hoary superstitious hierarchies of Hindu society and

the vainglorious power politics of British Empire builders such as Robert Clive and Richard Wellesley, Mill hoped to free the history of British India from partisanship, myth-making, and irrational reverence for the past.[20] As Mill himself put it, he had endeavored to write a "judging history" that sifted out "what was true and what was useful, from what was insignificant and what was false."[21] All too often, Mill's radical agenda as an historian has been ignored. and the *History* has been treated as the archetypal statement of British imperial ambition and anxiety with regard to India in this period.[22]

By focusing on the ethnographic elements of Mill's work—his assessments of Muslim and Hindu civilizations—many authors overlook the ways in which his narrative of British imperial conquest—which makes up the major part of the history—added to a bitter and often very partisan debate about the meaning of the recent past that was a key feature of the politics of the administration of British India in this period. Mill recognized these sections simply as the necessary preliminaries for a close analysis of the growth of British India as the inevitable and often tragic consequence of the interaction of two civilizations at very different stages in their development. As will be seen, Mill and Malcolm fundamentally rejected each other's interpretation of the growth of British India, and both used history to support their own agendas in the present. By accurately defining Malcolm's contribution to the historiography of British India, this study also provides insights into the narrative elements of Mill's *History of British India* and his overall critique of the East India Company. In doing so, it will show how the historiography of empire was shaped by events and political pressures in this period. Perhaps more important, it will also demonstrate how the historical awareness of men such as Malcolm fashioned the ideologies of empire that formed in this period. This study does more than demonstrate the importance of contemporary history in the development of British imperial thinking; it uses a detailed analysis of how the past was interpreted to show that the historiography of British India in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries was shaped by the context in which men like Malcolm and Mill, the pioneers of that historiography, wrote.

In the past few years, a number of studies have cast doubt on the degree of continuity between European attitudes toward empire in the 1780s and the 1830s. The decades between Adam Smith's *The Wealth of Nations* and Edmund Burke's Indian speeches, in the one instance, and James and John Stuart Mill at India House, in the other, have been presented as a "turn to empire."[23] In this view, the skepticism found in Burke and Smith about the abuse and corruption inherent in the Company's government of India gave way to a seemingly paradoxical celebration of authoritarian government in India by two champions of democracy in Britain.[24] The effect

of such analyses is to distinguish between, and ultimately to contrast, the humane critique of British imperial exploits in Asia that was such a prominent feature of the second half of the eighteenth century and the apparent hypocrisy of the "liberal imperialism" of the next century. The civil administrations of Malcolm and others such as Sir Thomas Munro in the 1820s provide a link between the vision of Indian society and the critique of the early history of the British in Bengal found in *The Wealth of Nations*, and the pro-orientalist, pro-indirect-rule traditions of policy making in the 1830s.[25] The diverse paths that British orientalism and political writing about India took in this period are clear from the ways Scots such as Malcolm shared their intellectual inheritance with a broader range of writers on imperial themes, notably missionaries such as Alexander Duff and novelists such as Sir Walter Scott.[26] As the present work argues, a writer such as Malcolm, working across a range of genres and topics, from non-European to imperial history, for example, had to use literary modes and intellectual traditions in different ways at different times. For instance, in the *Memoir of Central India* (1823), discussed in chapter 4, Malcolm very self-consciously used romantic, emotive language and anecdotes to give the great leaders of the final years of Maratha power in the late eighteenth century an air of tragic grandeur. This celebration of Maratha history suited his call to keep native rule in central India intact after 1818. At other times, Malcolm showed himself to be very willing to use more schematic historical models, strongly rooted in Scottish Enlightenment thinking, such as the many digressions in *Clive*, particularly the "General View of India in 1746" with which it begins.

The intellectual history of empire between the 1780s and 1830s was more textured and more closely tied to specific policy debates—such as the highly detailed discussion over the Permanent Settlement of Bengal—than descriptions such as "liberal imperialism" might imply.[27] The intellectual landscape of British Indian policy making was distinguished by unpublished minutes and memoranda of Company officials and very dense (and often poorly edited) collections such as G. R. Gleig's *Life of Sir Thomas Munro*.[28] To take the subject of British imperial historiography, books such as Malcolm's *Political History of India* and *Clive,* seldom mentioned in contemporary studies of James Mill's *History of British India,* continued to be extensively cited throughout the nineteenth century. Moreover, they are far more plausible sources for the triumphalism of later British imperial historians such as J. W. Kaye and W. W. Hunter than Mill's work, with its immense cynicism about the necessity and virtue of British activities in eighteenth-century India. The range of works that must be considered when evaluating the intellectual history of empire building in the early nineteenth century is broader than the common focus on highly regarded

thinkers such as Smith, Burke, Bentham, and the two Mills or, more specifically, on a single category of discourse such as "liberal imperialism" suggests.[29] Major areas of interest in the intellectual history of British India—from the history of the Company to the development of indirect rule in central India—coalesced from a mixture of closely argued policy debates and attempts to govern in conformity with contemporary theories about the nature of society.

By arguing that Malcolm's career as an agent of the Company shaped his output as an author, this work draws together a number of key trends in the modern historiography of British India in the half-century after 1783. First, Malcolm's great enthusiasm for empire-building projects in areas on the peripheries of British imperial and diplomatic thinking, such as the Punjab or the Persian Gulf, bears witness to the immensely experimental and inchoate way the Company's territorial power grew in different parts of Asia. Clive's conquest of Bengal was simply an unusually successful example of the kind of adventurous schemes that were being attempted under the auspices of the Company all over Asia.[30] Recent studies of the Company's indirect influence in the Middle East and western Africa have encouraged us to look beyond India to explain the growth of the East India Company's political power. Malcolm's perspective on imperial problems was governed by his basic assumption that the pattern of British imperial growth in India and in Asia more generally was in no way obvious. Second, Malcolm's belief that British possessions in India constituted an imperial state in competition with its native neighbors reflected both political reality and British understanding of it. This means that, on the one hand, the British, like their Maratha competitors, derived their authority from their ability to control local rulers.[31] On the other hand, they combined this with a ruthless assertion of sovereignty.[32] Malcolm's historical analysis of the eighteenth century in terms of the creation of a British imperial state and his later development of a theory of indirect rule sanctioned by the history of Maratha expansion are important examples of how Britons understood these aspects of imperial growth. In this sense, as will be seen, Malcolm's historical vision of India was more than a narrative of wars and diplomacy set against a backdrop of chaos brought about by Mughal decline.

Analyzing Sir John Malcolm as an Ideologue of the British Empire

The years between the 1750s and 1830s witnessed the transformation of the British presence in India. In the mid-eighteenth century, the British in India

were trader-adventurers operating out of a number of well-established South Asian trading centers and working within political structures dominated by native rulers and service gentries. Through war, diplomacy, and economic consolidation, they became the rulers of a major land empire characterized by authoritarianism and bureaucratization.[33] Sir John Malcolm's books, which can be read as a series of commentaries on this process, are an important and representative part of the intellectual life of the British Empire in the first half of the nineteenth century. These books will be examined for the insights they provide into the creation of a British historiography of imperial experience in Asia in these years. Malcolm's distinct interests as a writer in oriental history, in the history of the East India Company, and in the administration of British India generally developed at different times in his career. This means that the following chapters, although arranged thematically, appear in chronological order. This approach allows attention to be drawn to shifts in Malcolm's thinking in response to particular events. For instance, though *Clive* can really be seen as an extension of his earlier project of writing a *Political History of India,* because it was written at the end of the 1820s, it needed to address questions about the foundations of the British Empire in India that had been raised by the appearance of James Mill's *History of British India* in 1817.

The most comprehensive biography of Malcolm continues to be J. W. Kaye's two-volume life of Malcolm, published in 1855, which contains numerous extended extracts from letters and journals, many of which are no longer extant. [34] Extensive comparison of Kaye's extracts with the originals, where they have survived, reveals that he was a remarkably reliable copyist. Therefore, when quotations appear in manuscripts and in Kaye and the latter is accurate, it has been referenced for simplicity. Kaye's *Malcolm* has been used repeatedly for materials not available in manuscript form, but it has been relied on far less for the structure of Malcolm's life. Indeed, an underlying principle of this work is that close study of Malcolm as author reveals patterns and connections that are less obvious when his life is viewed largely from the point of view of his career as an administrator. For instance, Malcolm spent much of his career imagining that British imperial influence would soon spread into northwestern India and the Middle East, and his interest in Persian and Sikh history reflected this. For this reason, Malcolm's works will be discussed in terms of their immediate context rather than their lasting legacy.

By looking at the themes highlighted in individual works and collections of closely related works, this book aims to show how Malcolm's ideas, as they were transmitted in published texts, shed light on different aspects of British imperial experience. Though I argue that Sir John Malcolm merits close examination as an imperial thinker in his own right, my intention

is that this book can also be used selectively to give depth to certain issues. For example, chapter 2 aims to show how recent history was used to justify rapid imperial consolidation between 1798 and 1818. Together with chapter 6, it also looks in detail at how, in the early nineteenth century, the beginnings of empire in India were formed into narrative of British imperial history that would remained unchallenged (even by many nationalist historians) until the mid-twentieth century. To take another example, chapters 4 and 5 use Malcolm's works to explain the policy-making implications of indirect rule and to look at the ideological and historical justification for leaving much of India (at lease in nominal terms) in the hands of native rulers and administrative groups. Taken together, all of these chapters are designed to show that the formation of imperial texts such as the works of Sir John Malcolm was highly contingent on immediate historical circumstances. Malcolm's works had enduring influence throughout the life of British India, but their meaning and relevance changed over time and this book's ultimate aim is to explain why they appeared when they did and why they said what they did in the way that they did.

In order to show Malcolm's significance as an imperial administrator and commentator, the first chapter sketches his life and times, paying particular attention to the crises and problems that characterized the period of rapid imperial consolidation in which he wrote. Malcolm's early life, before he became an author in his forties, profoundly shaped his outlook and generated the preoccupations with power politics and indigenous self-perception that distinguish him from contemporary writers on India and empire. The historiography of British imperial policy making in nineteenth-century India is then be examined to identify the archival issues involved in studying Malcolm and to account for the use made of various sources throughout the book.

The second chapter begins the analysis of Malcolm's published works by considering him as an historian of British war and diplomacy in India. It discusses Malcolm's first work, the *Sketch of the Political History of India* (1812), a survey of British diplomacy in South Asia between 1784 and 1806 designed to argue that neutrality was a dangerous policy. The chapter reads the *Political History* as a product of Malcolm's experience as a soldier-diplomat pushing for a stronger stance in Indian diplomacy, frustrated by the home authorities' demands for retrenchment and strict noninterference in the affairs of native princes. It explains Malcolm's arguments in favor of imperial expansion and consolidation in India as a reaction against the East India Company's traditional emphasis on commerce. In this sense, the *Political History* turned the recent past into the history of a fledgling imperial state rather than that of a state-sponsored trading company burdened with the task of administering a few discrete territories on the

Indian coast. To make these arguments, Malcolm presented a new vision of South Asia as a volatile and dangerous place characterized by fierce rivalry between regional successors to the Mughal Empire. Because of the immense importance of the *Political History* as a reference work for later writers such as Mill, who relied on Malcolm for the narrative structure of his account of the period from 1784 onward, it is particularly instructive to see how Malcolm constructed recent imperial history.

The third chapter assesses Malcolm's development as an oriental historian by analyzing the two histories of Asian peoples he published in 1812 and 1815. These works were the products of a number of diplomatic missions to British India's northwest frontier. Through them Malcolm developed a distinctive approach to understanding the history of Asian peoples. Crucially, he saw himself as a "traveler historian." On the one hand, the traveler historian provided a rigorous analysis of a wide range of documentary evidence. On the other, his travel experiences gave the historical narrative authenticity, humanity, and romanticism. Malcolm's emotional engagement with the ordinary people and the spaces where history took place served to entertain his audience and confirm the truth of what he wrote. Malcolm wrote about peoples on the peripheries of British knowledge of Asia and he did so to promote the spread of British influence. The chapter uses the *History of Persia* (1815) and the *History of the Sikhs* (1812) as key examples of how Malcolm's promotion of oriental history reflected his determination to stimulate British commercial and imperial interest in Asia. At the same time, it demonstrates that Malcolm responded to the problems of writing non-European history for European audiences in immensely innovative ways.

The fourth chapter discusses the *Memoir of Central India* (1823), Malcolm's book on the Maratha territories conquered by the British in 1817, in order to show how he applied his understanding of Asian history to people under British control. His books on central India were derived from the time he spent overseeing the postwar reconstruction of the region. These works were important in his evolution as an imperial theorist. The process of creating a historiography of Malwa and the Marathas was intimately connected with his vision for the region under British rule. Malcolm argued forcefully in these works that the best kind of British regime would preserve and protect native governments and native customs as much as possible. This would mitigate the risk of violent native rebellion. Moreover, it made the most of modes of exchange and government that had evolved in India over millennia. Malcolm argued that, in contrast to the proven efficacy of older practices, earlier British efforts to reform the administration of revenue and justice (such as the Permanent Settlement of Bengal) had failed. This chapter treats Malcolm's *Memoir of*

Central India (1823) as a blueprint for indirect rule and as a major contribution to Maratha historiography, on a par with Grant Duff's *History of the Mahrattas* (1818).

Chapter five examines Malcolm's interest in developing rules and guidelines for the administration of British India as a whole. The biographical context for this is his burning desire to cap his Indian career with a major governorship. This he achieved in 1827 when he became governor of Bombay. The wider historical context is the growth of British interest in restructuring British India during the 1820s. Malcolm stood out as an opponent of large-scale reform, immensely skeptical about the influence political radicals like James Mill wielded at India House. The chapter sees the writings of the last ten years of his life as those most closely related to the government of India. Although many of Malcolm's ideas did not pass into policy, they demonstrate the growing complexity of British discussions about the nature of civil society in India and the function of British imperial government.

The last chapter discusses Malcolm's final work, *Clive* (1836); this biography of his great hero, "the founder of British India," will be read as the culmination of his development as an historian and as a theorist on empire. His observations on the origins of empire were interwoven with his mature reflections on how that empire should be governed. *Clive* is significant as a response to the widely influential *History of British India* by James Mill and as the subject of Macaulay's famous review article on Clive. This chapter uses Malcolm's work to shed light on the political uses of history made by British imperial administrators in the first half of the nineteenth century. By comparing Malcolm's *Life of Lord Clive* with the writings of Mill and Macaulay, it examines the different ways in which the pioneers of British imperial history interpreted the controversial and ambiguous career of Robert Clive, threading him into a larger narrative about imperial growth and the nature of the British Empire in India.

By examining the different phases of Malcolm's development as an historian and ideologue of empire, this book emphasizes the growth of his ideas and interests over time in response to the steady transformation of the East India Company and the British territorial possessions in India into vital elements of a British Empire in India. As an empire builder, Malcolm evolved with the imperial enterprise he described. The hawkish diplomatic historian of the 1810s, described in earlier chapters, was the product of a patchwork territorial empire, unsupported by a government at home, lacking the resources and the political support necessary to make a unified empire. As British power in India increased, domestic policy began to dominate. Security concerns were now directed not at the native princes, as enemies on the outside, but at the forces of internal

unrest and the ways in which a civil society could be created that would guard against rebellion. Looked at over the span of his career as a writer, Malcolm's works reveal how closely related the rhetoric of empire was to its changing politics.

Malcolm was a new kind of imperial historian, not simply in his celebration of territorial expansion and his belief that conquest, not commerce, was the purpose of the East India Company in Asia, but also in his erudition. His works were products of an unprecedented and unmistakable advance in the range and depth of European study of South Asia, which was apparent from the 1770s, and had accelerated greatly by the time he came to write in the first decades of the nineteenth century. One of the more complex aspects of the relationship between empire and knowledge in this period was the fact that this growth in imperial knowledge went hand in hand with the creation of a language of imperial consolidation. Malcolm should be read as a complete ideologue of British India between the conquest of Bengal in 1757 and the Indian uprising in 1857. As a spotlight on the intellectual history of British India, Malcolm's works demonstrate how the period from 1783 and 1830 can be seen as a distinct phase of revolution and authoritarian reaction in global history.

Chapter 1

Sir John Malcolm and the British Empire in India

From 1798 until his death in 1833, Sir John Malcolm was a leading figure in the British administration of India. He became a published author in his early forties; but his career in the East India Company had begun thirty years earlier as a cadet in Madras. While Malcolm's writings on South Asia appeared between 1812 and 1833, during a time of imperial consolidation, his vision of Britain's place in Asia was formed in the 1780s, a time when Britons were far more anxious, despondent, and morally ambivalent about their empire and its future.[1] As the following brief biographical sketch shows, Malcolm's books made such strident demands for deliberate and determined empire building precisely because the British India of his youth had been so divided and directionless. Although the structures of imperial government in India multiplied and thickened over the course of Malcolm's life, his own sense of the empire's vulnerability remained fairly constant.

Born on May 2, 1769, John Malcolm grew up in a fairly typical late eighteenth-century Scottish borders agricultural family on the banks of the river Esk in Dumfrieshire. His father, George Malcolm, a sheep farmer, was a hereditary tenant of the Duke of Buccleuch. His mother came from a more prosperous, better connected mercantile family, the Pasleys of nearby Craig. Her grandmother was the niece of Sir Gilbert Elliot, the first Baron Minto, and her uncle was Sir Thomas Pasley who, during John Malcolm's childhood, earned an impressive reputation as a naval commander in the West Indies in the American War of Independence, serving under the famous George Johnstone, known as "The Governor."

The Johnstone connection proved crucial to the prosperity of the family. The power and influence of the Johnstones at this time can scarcely be exaggerated. From the late 1750s, members of Johnstone family appear in every major event in the British Empire. The governor's strong network of allies in the navy, the colonial office, and India house was matched by the tremendous political connections of his brothers, Sir William "Pulteney" Johnstone, the fifth baronet, and John Johnstone, the prominent East India Company servant. George and William were both selected for early peace negotiations with the Americans in 1778. Their brother Patrick had died in the Black Hole of Calcutta. As a member of the Bengal Council, John Johnstone became one of Robert Clive's fiercest opponents. William Pulteney's enthusiasm for estate management, coupled with his vast wealth, made him one of the great improvers of the age, providing patronage to major projects such as the canal network of Sir Thomas Telford. Like Telford, many Dumfrieshire boys would owe their careers in Britain and its empire to the deft use the Johnstones made of their patronage. So closely did the Malcolms identify themselves with their prosperous and influential neighbors, the Johnstone family, that they named their third son, John's elder brother, Pulteney. As the Malcolm family grew in size, Malcolm's father leased extra land from the Johnstones. The Johnstone connection proved to be a steppingstone for Malcolm and his brothers, leading to a range of careers throughout the growing British Empire.

John Malcolm was one of seventeen children, the fourth of ten sons. He and his brothers and sisters were educated at the local parish school. Their meager income from the sheep farm was seldom enough, and Malcolm's father speculated unsuccessfully in a number of ventures, including the wine trade.[2] Declared bankrupt in 1780, George Malcolm spent the rest of his life in debt.[3]

The Malcolm family was helped immensely by the Johnstones. In 1779, they secured an East India Company writership for Malcolm's eldest brother, Robert. This was a highly coveted civilian post in the Madras presidency. The next two brothers, James and Pulteney, were found cadetships in the navy. In 1780, the Johnstones secured a cadetship in the East India Company for John. At eleven, he was a little too young, but as a letter from George Johnstone to Malcolm's father makes plain, such opportunities were rare:

> The enclosed, from my worthy brother, the Governor, is a fresh proof of his never-ceasing attention and sympathy to his friends. He thinks that John, the eldest of your boys now at home, if I have not mistaken his name . . . should . . . accept of this appointment. Could he be certain of such a gift

> hereafter, no question it would be more to be wished, but so many accidents may occur to disappoint that young as John is, it may be doing the best thing to embrace the offer.[4]

As the tone of the letter suggests, this was not an offer George Malcolm could afford to refuse. The legendary wealth acquired earlier in the century by Robert Clive and Scots such as Sir Hector Munro still made a powerful impression. A steady stream of prosperous retired merchants and officials returning to Scotland showed that modest fortunes were still attainable. The Johnstone family themselves were a striking example of how wealth acquired in the empire could translate into local and national power back in Britain.[5]

John Malcolm was twelve before he was able to attend an interview with the Court of Directors. Even then, he was still too young. "Why, my little man," asked one of the directors, "what would you do if you met Hyder Ali?"[6] To which young Malcolm replied, "I would out with my sword, and cut off his head." Malcolm's nineteenth-century biographers all used this anecdote as a great example of his bluff, manly character, and it is worth remembering that Malcolm had a reputation as a straight-talking military man all his life. This story also captures the East India Company's preoccupation with their formidable neighbor to the south, Hyder Ali of Mysore. As will be seen, strategic fears about Mysore shaped the public life of Madras for the first two decades of Malcolm's career.

Security and national honor dominate Malcolm's writings on empire, and it is worth remembering that his life in India began at a time of great uncertainty for the Company. At the time Malcolm joined, in the early 1780s, a series of high-level scandals created a political crisis that would persist throughout his entire career. The governor general of Bengal, Warren Hastings, had been sent home to face impeachment proceedings in Parliament in 1783, the year of Malcolm's arrival. Two years earlier, in a less well-known case, the governor of Madras had also been recalled to face charges of corruption.[7] The home government was now reluctant to promote Company officials to the most senior roles. Those sent out as governors, commanders in chief, and board members were often men on the periphery of British politics with little experience of Asia, and even less inclination to spend years away from British political life.[8] This talent vacuum was felt acutely in Madras at the time of Malcolm's arrival, particularly in the army. The leading military men in India, Sir Eyre Coote and Sir Hector Munro, were long past their prime. The continuing war with Mysore provided the setting for a bitter power struggle between the new governor, Lord Macartney, and the commander in chief, Sir Eyre Coote.[9] In short, by the time of Malcolm's arrival in 1782, the Madras government

was bitterly divided and extremely aware of its own financial dependence and military vulnerability.

The army Malcolm joined in 1783 was war weary and dejected by recent defeat. The series of wars the Company fought in India between 1779 and 1784 had demonstrated the folly of relying on the supposed superiority of its arms and its troops over native armies. In the north, British attempts to gain influence among the Maratha princes had resulted in a series of close-run battles. The peace that followed left Bombay isolated from other British settlements and the old heartlands of the crumbling Mughal Empire in the hands of the Maratha ruler Shinde. As will be seen, Malcolm went on to publish ground-breaking books on the history of the Marathas in the 1820s, by which time they had lost their military and political independence. However, in the India of Malcolm's early career, Maratha influence reached across the subcontinent and Maratha rulers and their advisers—the founders of the Holkar and Shinde dynasties, for instance—were widely feared and revered as wily politicians and powerful warriors.

In the south, the British, based at Madras, had suffered a number of embarrassing defeats at the hands of Hyder Ali, the ruler of the neighboring kingdom of Mysore. Hyder's rapid marches into Madras territory had led to rapid victories against an unwieldy, underresourced British army, more at home fighting large set-piece battles. In the summer of 1780, Hyder's army even chased the retreating force of Sir Hector Munro to the gates of Madras itself. The traveling painter, Thomas Hodges, who was in Madras at the time, described the shock and dismay Hyder's approach caused:

> [W]ar . . . descended like a torrent over the whole of the county. . . . I was a melancholy witness to its effects, the multitude coming in from all quarters to Madras as a place of refuge, bearing on their shoulders the small remains of their little property, mothers with infants at their breasts, fathers leading their horses burdened with their young families . . . every object was marked by confusion and dismay.[10]

The sense of the army's shame and embarrassment was captured in pamphlets published at the time such as William Fullarton's *A View of the English Interests in India.* Complaining about the poor management of the war against Hyder Ali, and the lack of adequate resources for the army, Fullarton observed, "when we look back to the days of Clive and Lawrence, to the smallness of their force, and the magnitude of their achievements, we must confess that more recent occurrences have exhibited a mortifying contrast."[11] The sense of the precariousness of British influence was unavoidable in Madras during the first twenty years of Malcolm's career.

Even in peace time, diplomacy and military life in the Madras presidency required tact and delicacy, and compared strikingly with the situation in Bengal. Through war, diplomatic intrigues, and aggressive trading tactics, the British took direct control of a prosperous Mughal successor state in Bengal. In the south, the British in Madras had a very different relationship with the local ruler, the Nawab of the Carnatic. The British had been heavily involved in the development of the Carnatic in the aftermath of the Seven Years War. As a result, the interests of the Nawab and his British backers were intertwined from the start. Though the Nawab remained in control of his state's revenues, much of this income was committed to the British, either to pay for the military protection of the East India Company or to settle loans made by private British merchants.[12] Regular budget deficits and a reliance on Bengal for financial help left the British in Madras in need of Nawab's funds.[13] As a diplomat and a soldier, Malcolm learned his craft in the precarious political world of Madras, not in wealthy, self-confident Bengal. Malcolm would go on to become a leading polemicist for imperial consolidation and one of the great advocates of sharing the trappings of power with local Indian rulers. This study argues that Madras, not Bengal, provided the context for these key elements of Malcolm's vision of British India.

The frustration felt by the Company's soldiers in the Madras presidency is conveyed in a letter written at the time by Malcolm's friend, Thomas Munro: "Since the conclusion of the late war [the Anglo-Maratha War of 1780–1784] we have acted as if we had been to enjoy a perpetual peace. The distresses and difficulties which we then encountered, from the want of [stores and armaments], has not cured us of our narrow policy of preferring a present small saving, to a certain though future great and essential advantage."[14] As the earlier quotation from Fullarton shows, this sense of frustration and uncertainty pervaded the Madras Company army. Resources were so scarce that Malcolm and his fellow soldiers spent must of their time in remote garrison communities scattered all along the coastline and the vast border with neighboring Mysore. As the next chapter will show, the basic arguments about British policy expressed in Malcolm's *The Political History of India* (1826) are essentially the same as those of Madras soldiers such as Munro and Fullarton writing in the aftermath of the Second Anglo-Mysore war.

The white population of Madras was vastly outnumbered in an unusually cosmopolitan and heterodox city. Lacking Bengal's infrastructure, Madras did not present the same opportunities for British merchants to dominate inland trade. Instead, they relied heavily on local merchants. Thus, growing British influence in southern India, at the expense of the French, had encouraged rather than suppressed the local merchant community. Political

security and steady streams of investment supplied by the British made Madras the regional center for long-distance trade, attracting merchants and sailors from all over the trading world of the Indian Ocean.[15] The sense of wonderment the young Malcolm must have felt on his arrival in 1783 is captured in Thomas Hodges's description of his own first days there:

> The appearance of the natives is exceedingly varied, some are wholly naked, and others so clothed, that nothing but the face and neck is to be discovered, besides this, the European is struck at first with many other objects such as women carried on men's shoulders on pallankeens, and men riding on horseback clothed in linen dresses like women: which, united with the very different face of the country from all I had ever seen or conceived of, excite the strongest emotions of surprise![16]

If British financial control and military power gave the Nawab's state security, he gave his legitimacy and religious authority as a monarch in return. During the 1780s, Malcolm's first years in India, the Company publicly acknowledged the Nawab's sacred status through its patronage of temples and mosques and by celebrating key religious holidays.[17] As will be seen, during the 1820s, Malcolm argued in his published works that British supremacy in India would last only with the cooperation of local elites. Had Malcolm's formative years been spent in Bengal, where British authority over law and taxation had been officially granted by the Mughal emperor, where British merchants dominated local trade, where truculent local rulers and serious military defeats had been unknown for almost a generation, it is possible he might not have been such a strong advocate of government through native elites.

Before considering Malcolm's progress toward high imperial office, it is useful to say something about his character. Comfortable talking with all people, boisterous and playful, he kept the nickname "Boy Malcolm" for most of his life.[18] These were character traits that made him popular as a soldier, but still served him well as a diplomat. It is worth bearing in mind that Malcolm met and knew scores of minor chiefs all across western India and had spent time at every major court in the subcontinent. As his friend the orientalist William Erskine reflected, "Munro is perhaps the most sound of our Indian politicians; if any exception it is Elphinstone—as Malcolm is the most enterprising and dashing."[19] Erskine's judgment provides a useful framework for understanding Malcolm's career, his approach to imperial administration, and his motivations for writing so copiously. One of the reasons why Malcolm is such an important figure in the history of British empire building is that whenever he promoted new initiatives in government, he generally presented himself as the ideal candidate to carry them through.

In the many isolated garrisons scattered across the vast territories of the Madras presidency, life was dull and heavy drinking and gambling were the chief diversions. Like many young cadets, Malcolm soon found himself in debt.[20] His sense of shame comes across in a letter to his father written in February 1788. "My not receiving a single line from you last season," he wrote, "made me almost suppose you thought me no longer worthy of your advice, as I had made such a bad use of what you had formerly bestowed on me." Malcolm remained in debt until the end of 1788, but by the next year he was a reformed character; as his brother, Robert, informed their mother, "he has now cleared himself from debt, and is as promising a character in his profession as lives." As this rather back-handed compliment suggests, the life of a Company soldier was not an enviable one.

As a "writer" Malcolm's brother Robert could expect a reasonably prosperous future—either managing the Company's commercial interests, administering revenue-collection or justice, or, as in his case, combining all three. By 1790, Robert Malcolm was a junior merchant in the chintz-trading port of Masulipatam, and by the end of his career he had become second judge of the Court of Circuit and Appeal for the Northern Circars. As a "cadet" in the Company's army, John Malcolm's prospects were far gloomier. An able marksman and a good horseman, he could hope to progress through the ranks. However, promotion was strictly by seniority and no Company officer could rise above the rank of colonel. As a Company officers' pamphlet of 1794 complained, "we are not . . . men of interest, else we should not have preferred a service in which seniority gives command."[21] For East India Company officers, fairly lucrative positions could be found in revenue administration, but the best opportunities lay in the diplomatic service or the political line, as it was known.[22] An ambassador, or resident as these officials were known, at a native court, would earn his diplomat's salary on top of his military pay and privileges, and could even expect a Baronetcy.[23]

Malcolm's chance to break into diplomacy came during his first campaign, the Anglo-Mysore war of 1789–1792. His regiment accompanied the Nizam of Hyderabad's forces marching toward Mysore. After "six tedious months"[24] besieging forts, they joined the main body of the Nizam's forces advancing southward to meet Lord Cornwallis, the governor general, and attack Mysore's capital, Seringapatam. It was at this point that Malcolm met Sir John Kennaway, the Company's resident at the Nizam's court. Kennaway had risen through the ranks to become one of the Company's leading diplomats,[25] and he and his fellow diplomat Graeme Mercer soon took Malcolm under their wings. As Mercer wrote in a letter to a friend, "our acquaintance commenced in 1791, when I was attached to the Residency at Hyderabad [the Nizam's capital], and John

joined us an ensign in the detachment of Madras troops. . . . He soon became a favorite with us all, and particularly with Sir John Kennaway, the Resident. He was then a careless, good-humoured fellow, illiterate, but with pregnant ability."[26] To have any hope of succeeding as a diplomat, Malcolm needed to master Persian and Mercer lent him the use of his own munshi, or scribe, "under whom he made rapid progress."[27] With a working knowledge of Persian, a few minor translating roles during the war, and an ally like Kennaway, by the end of the war Malcolm had made a promising start in the political line. Though Malcolm would continue to draw military pay for the rest of his life, it is as a soldier-diplomat that he should be understood. He would spend the first ten years of his career in garrisons on the borders of the Madras presidency, command a regiment briefly in the Third Anglo-Maratha War of 1817–1818, and rise to the rank of lieutenant-general; however, Malcolm held senior positions mainly as a diplomat, not as a military commander. Thus, Malcolm's meeting with Kennaway was a crucial turning point in his career.

After the war, in 1794, Malcolm returned to Britain on medical leave. During 1795 and 1796, he spent much of his time lodging in Edinburgh. Having attended his local parish school and been tutored during the months he spent in London before leaving for India in 1783, Malcolm had received no further formal education. Keen to improve himself, he attended public lectures at the university and made regular visits to the professor of rhetoric, Rev. Hugh Blair.[28] After leaving Edinburgh, we know from a letter to his sister, he began a close study of Adam Smith's *Wealth of Nations*.[29] Documentary evidence for Malcolm's time in Edinburgh is limited. There is no record of him matriculating at the university. His later correspondence with and about other contemporary Edinburgh students such as Francis Jeffrey, Sir Walter Scott, William Erskine, and James Mill, suggests he knew none of them at the time. That said, Martha McLaren has argued quite forcefully that he, Munro, a Glasgow student, and Elphinstone, an Edinburgh alumnus, all shared a view of Indian society and the British government of India shaped by the late Scottish Enlightenment study of man and civil society.[30]

His arrival in Britain coincided with another of the East Indian Army's periodic bouts of unrest, stemming from the inequalities in status and prospects between it and the king's army in India. Malcolm became one of the many officers on furlough who bombarded India House and the government with pamphlets and letters demanding army reform. Malcolm's own plan, his first published work, asked for greater integration between the Company's and the king's army.[31] The former, he pointed out, in spite of their great knowledge of Indian warfare and their affinity with the native troops they commanded, would spend their careers under

the ultimate command of the king's army officers. He complained that "men educated on the fields of America or Germany" led the Company's armies "to victory in Hindustan";[32] in other words, king's army officers enjoyed higher status even though they relied on the Company army's expertise and its native troops. This brief pamphlet on the army contained the seeds of Malcolm's later historical argument about the birth of British India: that the British had failed to realize that India was not simply a commercial concern, it was a site of imperial glory where national virtue was tried and tested. Malcolm's article caught the attention of Henry Dundas, president of the Board of Control (the government body responsible for the East India Company), who persuaded the new commander in chief at Madras, Sir Alured Clarke, to appoint Malcolm to his staff. He continued in that position when Clarke became commander in chief at Bengal at the end of 1796. General Harris, Clarke's replacement, appointed Malcolm to the lucrative post of Town Major to Fort St. George at Madras.

Malcolm's ambition was far from sated. His official work gave him access to most of the major minutes and reports circulating among government officials on military and diplomatic affairs. He worked hard to develop his expertise in this area and began writing his own minutes on the state of India and sending them to fellow officers.[33] At the same time, he also started to take an interest in Company history, corresponding with friends on the topic.[34] History appealed to him intellectually. As he wrote in a letter to his sister, "Of all reading I prefer History. It pleases most upon reflection and its impressions are more lasting."[35] Historical precedent was also becoming a key ingredient for the arguments Company administrators put down in their memoranda and minutes. Given that many governors, governing councilors, and home officials were not well informed about India and Indian affairs, superior knowledge of the history of Anglo-Indian relations or of the courts of individual princes could be put to good effect. Malcolm began publishing historical works to enhance his political reputation, but his interest in history's connection with contemporary events can be traced back to his desire to build a successful career as a Company diplomat.

As Malcolm wrote to his sister, his papers on Indian affairs received "flattering notice," not least from the governor of Madras, Lord Hobart (later the Earl of Buckinghamshire).[36] Hobart planned to solve the presidency's long-term strategic problems by annexing territory from the local Nawab. This ambitious scheme to boost revenues and consolidate political control made Hobart popular with East India Company officers like Malcolm. But it brought him into direct conflict with Sir John Shore, the governor general of Bengal, who was keen to uphold a policy of strict

neutrality and noninterference in southern India.[37] Many of the diplomats and soldiers who helped Governor General Richard Wellesley push forward British interests had cut their teeth five years earlier in Madras, in the 1790s, under Hobart. This included men like Josiah Webbe, Barry Close, Thomas Munro, and Malcolm himself, many of whom had been in the rank and file of the army during the humiliating campaigns against Mysore of 1780–1784. As secretary to the commander in chief, Malcolm got to know all of the leading figures in the Madras administration and was privy to the major policy discussions of Hobart's administration.[38] When Richard Wellesley became governor general of Bengal and arrived in Madras with plans to settle the Mysore problem once and for all, Malcolm was well placed to benefit.

Malcolm sent Wellesley two memoranda on Indian diplomacy in September 1798. The first was a report on Mysore. The second, a memorandum in favor of increasing Hyderabad's reliance on British military support, was a bold rejection of the noninterference clause of the 1784 Government of India Act, which prohibited any alliance that might lead to war. Malcolm argued that the British should not expect lasting peace "from any show of moderation or symptom of timidity" but "from the terror of our name, and the success of our arms."[39] Fundamentally, Malcolm was less concerned with limiting territorial expansion (which had been a key objective of the Government of India Act) and more concerned with consolidating British power in the east at any price. As he declared: "[I]t is our best policy to look boldly towards war, and not allow any apprehension of accelerating that event to deter us from taking . . . measures that have an obvious tendency to give us commanding influence, to strengthen our power, and to make success more probable in the event of a rupture."[40] Interference in Indian affairs was therefore essential to British interests: "By alliances and intimate connexions with Country Princes we have gained that power we are now arrived at, and by the same means we must preserve it."[41] Significantly, Malcolm argued that his approach to the geopolitics of contemporary India merely reflected reality after the British conquest of Bengal. Indeed, Malcolm felt that Robert Clive, the conqueror of Bengal and a name to conjure with, had perfectly grasped the situation at the time. "The great Lord Clive," he observed, "in one of his letters to the Court of Directors, answers their numerous paragraphs against extending their existing Territory, by calling to their mind that they were no longer Merchants, but Sovereigns of a vast Empire which must take the course of other Empires." "To stop," he added, "is dangerous, to recede ruin."[42] As will be seen, Malcolm's vision of the East India Company's historical development changed little over the course of his career.

Malcolm went on to argue that a closer connection with Hyderabad was the most effective means of offering the British long-term security. As recent history had shown, any war on the south would always cause the British serious logistical problems. This led Malcolm to conclude that, "if the English ever go to war on this coast without an ally, that war will be ruinous, and the Nizam is the only power with whom we can form an alliance with a well grounded hope of durability." Moreover, the Nizam himself needed the assistance of a powerful ally. "The Nizam," Malcolm observed, "however equal he may have been to preserve his independence without foreign aid is no longer so. The contest he tried in 1795 with the Marhattas proved his inferiority even to that power." Thus, if the British would not help him, the Nizam had no choice but to rely on their great enemy, the French. The memorandum is important in two ways. First, it expresses the attitude many Company officers felt toward Sir John Shore's policy of neutrality in the conflict between the Marathas and the Nizam. Second, it relied on a broader picture of Britain's place in India, which fundamentally rejected the assumption held by many of the Company directors in London that diplomatic and military initiatives were an unnecessary distraction from the Company's trading activities.

Wellesley found the similarity between Malcolm's ideas and his own "curious, as Captain Malcolm had not seen my letters or minutes on the same subject, and only knew that a detachment was ordered to Hyderabad."[43] Edward Ingram has caustically remarked that Malcolm's memoranda exhibit his skill as a sycophant rather than as a strategist and geopolitician. Malcolm, he argues, told Wellesley what he wanted to hear.[44] Yet, as has been seen, Malcolm's ideas had already been formed in the camps and barracks of Madras.[45]

Wellesley was only too happy to surround himself with young enthusiasts, and he soon showed his appreciation for Malcolm by appointing him second resident at the Nizam's court. This was a bigger prize than being first resident in a minor court. The second resident usually replaced the resident when he moved on.[46] In line with Wellesley's desire to remove French mercenaries from the senior ranks of native armies, the Nizam was told to dismiss these officers from his service if he desired British military aid. The Nizam accepted. His remaining troops mutinied and Malcolm was sent to quell the unrest. All accounts agree that his life was in danger among the mutineers until some ex-Company soldiers who had served under him interceded and vouched for his high character.[47] With this incident, his reputation as a conciliator began. The Hyderabad residency was not only a major diplomatic post, it was also an important military position. Malcolm led the Nizam's subsidiary force in the war against Mysore in 1799. After the war, he was appointed secretary to the commission responsible for the

reconstruction of Mysore. Here, he worked directly under the governor general's brother, Arthur Wellesley, the future Duke of Wellington, who became a life-long friend.[48]

Malcolm was sent as an envoy to the Persian Court in 1799, and he would remain a strong advocate of a more active British role in Persia for the rest of his life. With Napoleon in Egypt, many British officials feared a French invasion of India from the north. Uncertainty persists as to whether Wellesley believed the threat of such an invasion was real or simply saw it as a good opportunity to spread British political influence. Edward Ingram has gone so far as to suggest that Wellesley hoped to bring Persia under a subsidiary alliance, much as the British had done in Hyderabad and Oudh.[49] If this was the case, Malcolm, the author of the enterprising memorandum on Hyderabad and the end of noninterference, was the perfect diplomat to send. In any case, he was instructed to sign defensive and commercial treaties with the Shah. Malcolm returned with a vague assurance on defense and a rather hollow commercial treaty, neither of which was ever ratified. If these agreements were ambiguous, they were also friendly, and Malcolm's mission was the beginning of a new era of European contact with Persia.[50] His diplomatic experiences, combined with the *History of Persia* he published in 1815, made him a leading authority on the region.

As acting private secretary to the governor general between 1801 and 1803, Malcolm spent the next two years closely involved with Wellesley's grand imperial schemes for India. Malcolm was now Wellesley's chief political fixer, and it was often said of this time that the governor general's reply to any sudden crisis was invariably the same: "Send Malcolm!"[51] As part of a wider scheme to unify the empire in India, Wellesley hoped to extend the use of the Bengal revenue and judicial systems to other British territories. Malcolm accompanied Wellesley up the river Ganges to Awadh, where the Bengal regulations had just been introduced. At this time, Malcolm genuinely shared Wellesley's view that social and legal reform along the lines of the Bengal regulations would build the British Empire in India. The Bengal regulations, originally introduced in 1789, under Governor General Cornwallis, provided laws for the proper administration of revenues, policing, and justice in British territories. In justice, they provided for the application of Hindu, Muslim, and English law by British judges. In the administration of revenue, they aimed to foster an improving landed aristocracy by charging permanently low rates of assessments to large landowners.[52] In time, the regulations would attract immense criticism, particularly as the British became more aware of the complexity and variety of revenue-raising and judicial practices in South Asia. Ten years later, in 1812, Malcolm would tell the Select Committee of the House of

Lords on the Affairs of the East India Company that extending the Bengal regulations to all of British India would be "unwise."[53] Yet in 1802, as he accompanied Lord Wellesley into Awadh, he wrote to a colleague about the apparent effects of the Bengal regulations on the province, noting: "I think it one of the most wise and benevolent plans ever conceived by a government to render its subjects rich and comfortable. We can only hope . . . that those who benefit . . . will repay the State for the care it takes of their interests with a firm and lasting attachment."[54] Anxious that the introduction of the regulations to Madras should not be scuppered by a new governor, Wellesley sent Malcolm to convince the incumbent, Lord Clive, to remain in his post. When the Persian ambassador, Haji Jhalil Khan, was killed during hostilities between Company sepoys and Persian attendants in Bombay, Malcolm was dispatched to deal with the diplomatic fallout. He sent his cousin, Lieutenant Charles William Pasley, acting resident at Bushehr, with messages and gifts to the Shah. Malcolm now combined a credible track record as a diplomatist with the confidence of the governor general.

When the Second Anglo-Maratha War began in 1802, Malcolm was appointed chief political agent to the army in the south, led by Arthur Wellesley. Stricken by illness early in the campaign, he spent much of the war convalescing. He missed the great battles at Assaye and Argoan and his diplomatic duties were given to Mountstuart Elphinstone, at that time a relatively young and inexperienced civilian. Malcolm resumed his diplomatic role in 1803 to negotiate terms of peace. As chief negotiator, overseeing talks with hundreds of petty princes and bands of irregular cavalrymen, he was intimately involved in the postwar settlement of these new British territories. The war had given the British unprecedented preeminence in northern India; they were now custodians of the Mughal Emperor of Delhi, and their political influence stretched far westward into Rajastan and the Punjab. Malcolm hoped to create lasting alliances between local chiefs and the British through a series of magnanimous treaties, guaranteeing land grants, retaining soldiers and cavalrymen wherever possible. He felt that peace could be secured only by large and generous gestures, which would bond the warriors and chiefs of the region to the British government. As he cautioned in a memorandum to Lord Wellesley, "the most economical mode of effecting this should no doubt be adopted but no expense could be deemed great when its importance was considered."[55] Victory had earned the British new allies, many "of the first rank and reputation." But he warned that, "unless some arrangements calculated to attach these men to our government are made . . . they will again flock to the first standard that is reared against us."[56] Malcolm looked to Indian precedent, hoping to give grants and military subsidies based on Mughal and Maratha

practices. As Malcolm saw it, the war had now pushed British influence to the boundaries of the old Mughal Empire. Like their predecessors, they needed to cement their authority by offering military protection to the chiefs of northwestern India.

The continuing war with the Marathas prompted a major political and financial crisis in the government of India, which put Malcolm's steady rise to the top of the Indian government on hold for over ten years. With the army's supply train stretched across northern India deep into unfamiliar and difficult terrain and army pay months in arrears, the home authorities now enforced a policy of strict neutrality to save money.[57] At the end of 1806, the new governor general, Sir George Barlow, renounced all of the treaties Malcolm had signed with the chiefs and princes of lands west of the river Jumna.

Malcolm now faced the first significant setback of his career since becoming a major player in the Company's administration. The reassertion of neutrality in the affairs of the Indian princes highlighted the glaring differences between the home government's plans for India, on the one hand, and the ambitious empire-building schemes of Malcolm and his fellow soldier-diplomats on the other. Malcolm's fellow political agent, Charles Metcalfe, complained at the time:

> The advantages of increased resources, the military strength of our frontier, and even our reputation, is sacrificed to [Barlow's policy]. . . . But he may as well set his chair on the sands of the sea and order the waves to stop for the influence of the British will roll in spite of him beyond the Jumna.[58]

Barlow's policy, Metcalfe argued, achieved little apart from showing the princes and people of India that the Company was so anxious to avoid war it would renege on treaty obligations to allies and would even overlook minor attacks on its own territory. In a letter to Edmonstone, who had been placed at the head of the political line by Wellesley, Malcolm remarked, "this is the first measure of the kind that the English have ever taken in India and I pray to God that it will be the last."[59]

With the Maratha war over and noninterference reaffirmed, the next few years of Malcolm's career were quiet and he rather reluctantly took up the official post he had held since 1806, that of resident of Mysore. Malcolm found court life dull and spent much of his time in Madras. On July 4, 1807, he married Charlotte, the younger daughter of Colonel Alexander Campbell, the commander in chief at Madras. They had one son and four daughters. After their return to England in 1812, Charlotte never went back to India; nor did their family ever move to Scotland. Instead they leased a number of properties in London and the home counties.

Amid fresh fears of a French invasion of India, Malcolm was dispatched to Persia in 1808 by the new governor general, Lord Minto. Minto failed to obtain credentials from the crown for Malcolm's diplomatic mission; instead, the British government dispatched its own envoy, Sir Harford Jones. Nevertheless, Minto urged Malcolm to take the mission. "You must accept" Minto wrote. "[A] French Embassy, which must be properly considered the advance guard of the French Army, is already arrived. Every week during which these proceedings continue to operate undisturbed and unopposed must obviously increase extremely the difficulty of counteracting them."[60] Together, Minto and Malcolm devised a scheme for setting up a British military outpost on the island of Karrack, which would be both a forward position for defending India against French expansion and a nucleus for a renewed British presence in the Middle East.[61] Malcolm soon saw the success of this settlement as the key to his own future. As he wrote in his journal while sailing past Karrack:

> I could not contemplate this island without thinking it far from improbable that the English government might be obliged . . . to take possession of it, and my mind passed rapidly from that idea to the contemplation of myself as the chief instrument in the execution of this plan. I saw this almost desolate island filled with inhabitants, whose prosperity and happiness were in my charge, and who repaid my labors by their gratitude and attachment; but what delighted me most in picture was the figure of Charlotte [his wife] smiling graciously upon me from the window of one of the most stately castles that my fancy had erected on the shores of Karrack.[62]

Malcolm's ambitions for Britain, himself, and the barren island of Karrack were soon frustrated. The Persian authorities detained him at Shiraz for almost a year until Minto, rather embarrassed by his earlier plan, recalled him to Calcutta.[63] Yet Minto dispatched Malcolm to Persia again at the end of 1809.

In many ways, Malcolm had been far too eager to counter French influence at the court. Rather than biding his time, as Jones had done, Malcolm attempted to overawe the Shah, at first with expensive gifts, next by publicly breaking off negotiations when an impasse was reached, and last by returning to the gulf with a small army and two frigates.[64] Malcolm succeeded in only creating further friction with Jones and presenting a divided front to the Shah. Minto confided to Dundas that Malcolm had "disappointed me exceedingly."[65] The failure and great expense of the two missions damaged Malcolm's reputation with the cabinet and the Company's directors for many years to come.[66]

When not on official duties, Malcolm spent much of the next four years in Bombay, where he became part of the group of young officials gathered

around the Scottish Whig lawyer and philosopher Sir James Mackintosh, the recorder of Bombay. At this time, Bombay was on the periphery of British India. Not quite the thriving Asian entrepôt it would later become, Bombay was a frontier port connecting India with the Persian Gulf and the Arabian Sea. The Bombay Literary Society, which Mackintosh set up to recreate the kind of learned atmosphere he was accustomed to in Britain, provided a forum for Malcolm to share and cultivate his oriental learning. Mackintosh reconnected Malcolm with the intellectual world of late Enlightenment Britain. As will be seen, he gave Malcolm and the other members of the Bombay Literary Society a real sense that they were part of a great project of learning, adding new, detailed observations about Asia to European knowledge of how man functioned in society.[67] Mackintosh convinced Malcolm not only to write about Asian people but also to write about controversial issues connected with the government of British India.

In 1809, the white officers of the Company's army at Madras mutinied, after the governor announced the abolition of "tent contracts," wage supplements for being in the field. For the Company officers, this reform only worsened their situation in relation to the king's army. Malcolm, who had been dispatched to Madras by the governor general, met publicly with the leading mutineers and took a conciliatory line with them. Sir George Barlow, now governor of Madras, felt that a tougher stance was needed. Minto agreed and withdrew Malcolm from the mission. Malcolm saw this as a personal affront, and when the matter was reviewed by a parliamentary inquiry three years later, he published a pamphlet defending his motives.[68]

Malcolm left India in 1811, thinking that whatever course it took, his career would best be served in England. It was at about this time that he first established himself as an author. In two years he published three works: *A Sketch of the History of the Sikhs* (1810), *Observations on the Troubles in the Madras Army* (1811), and *A Sketch of the Political History of India* (1812). At the same time, he completed the work that established his reputation as an orientalist, *The History of Persia* (1815).

Like Thomas Munro, Malcolm advised the Select Committee of the House of Lords on the Affairs of the East India Company in the run up to the renewal of the Company's charter in 1813. Asked generally about the feasibility of social reform and the introduction of Christian missionaries to India, Malcolm replied:

> As foreign danger has been removed, our danger from revolt and insurrections, and other domestic concerns, has no doubt been proportionately increased; and that revolt and insurrection, I do conceive, is more likely to be caused by our giving any offence to the usages and religion of the natives.[69]

The charter renewal debates signaled a shift in British thinking about India toward domestic problems. Malcolm's answer to the committee was very much a distilled version of the social policies he would develop in the 1820s. Over the next twenty years, in minutes and in published works, Malcolm would argue that internal rebellion must be avoided by resting British authority on the firm foundations of India's ruling elites, and that threats from external enemies must be countered by a "forward policy" of building up political connections and military reputation beyond the borders of British India.

Based in London, with all his books receiving favorable reviews in the major periodicals, he became a minor celebrity in late Regency society. Over six foot four in height, often seen on formal occasions wearing the Order of the Sun and the Lion, awarded by the Shah on Malcolm's last mission to Persia, he was a striking figure. A sense of his reputation and easy manner can be gathered from Sir Walter Scott's comments on their first meeting:

> General John Malcolm—the Persian Envoy, the Delhi Resident, the poet, the warrior, the politician and the borderer . . . has just left me after drinking his coffee. A fine time we had of it talking of Troy town and Babel and Persepolis and Delhi and Langholm and Burnfoot. . . . I know him little but I like his frankness and his sound ideas of morality and policy.[70]

In 1815, he accompanied Scott on his trip to France to soak up the postwar atmosphere. Here, he joined in the great social events of Allied-occupied Paris, rubbing shoulders with the tsar and Madame De Stael; introducing Sir Walter Scott to his old friend the Duke of Wellington; and making contact with such luminaries of European orientalism as Sylvester De Sacy. A sense of Malcolm's desire to make the most of his new connections is revealed in a letter to his publisher, John Murray, in which he confessed, "I did not send a copy of my History to S De Sacy . . . if you could get me out of this scrape . . . by saying I gave you directions and you forgot—In short a good lie—it would be a favour."[71] His prestige as an orientalist was confirmed in 1816 when the University of Oxford conferred on him an honorary doctorate of laws. By the middle of the year, however, the likelihood of renewed war against the Marathas offered Malcolm career opportunities that his influence in London had failed to deliver, and he returned to India.

The Marquis of Hastings,[72] governor general since 1813, had begun to argue that the British in India must return to the bold military and diplomatic initiatives of the Wellesley era, and transform themselves into the new paramount power in India, as the Mogols had been before.[73] He justified Britain's new stance in India as a response to the incursions into

Company territory of large gangs of freebooters from the Maratha armies, known as Pindaries. As long as British India tolerated the continued existence of the Pindaries, he argued, it compromised its long-term security and weakened its position with its allies. "Common caution," he later wrote, "required that the no longer postponable enterprize of extirpating the Pindarries, who had again mercilessly laid waste our territories, should embrace a provision for encountering the widest combination among the Native States."[74] In other words, Hastings was fully aware that a campaign against the Pindaries was likely to turn into a war against their Maratha sponsors, particularly Shinde and Holkar.

Malcolm recognized that if he took part in the coming war, he could expect promotion to colonel. In addition to the welcome financial boost, this would put him in line to be one of the first wave of East India Company army officers to become a Knight of Bath. More enticing still was the prospect of a governorship.[75] Influential friends, such as Wellington and Canning, warned him that in England he could not expect to compete with better connected men. Returning to India, they advised, might be his best strategy. Certainly his friend Sir James Mackintosh agreed, and as he assured Malcolm, "Canning is so deeply pledged to you, that I should consider him as likely to be as useful an agent, if a vacancy happens in your absence, as if you were in Europe."[76]

On his arrival, he resumed his familiar role of roving diplomat. Acting as the agent of the governor general, the Marquis of Hastings, he went to sound the native courts in preparation for the oncoming war. Ostensibly, this was a war against the Pindaries. These large bodies of irregular cavalry, loosely affiliated with Holkar and Shinde, had raided the territories of the Company's allies, the Nizam of Hyderabad and the Peshwa and, from 1813, had started to attack British territory. Initially, serving as chief political agent to the commander of the British forces, Sir Thomas Hislop, when war with Holkar commenced at the end of 1817, Malcolm was sent to command the Third Division of the Army of the Deccan. This was Malcolm's first (and only) major military command. After the war, Malcolm was put in charge of the postwar reconstruction of the strategically important province of Malwa. In the running to become governor of either Bombay or Madras, Malcolm was passed over by the directors for both posts. Hastings offered to create for Malcolm the post of lieutenant governorship of central India, but he was outvoted by his council.[77] Having learned that this post would not be created any time soon, Malcolm returned to Britain in 1823.

As with his previous five years in England, Malcolm devoted his leave to Company politics and to writing. Gregarious and ambitious as ever, Malcolm cultivated a network of old India hands and orientalists. He

became a regular correspondent with oriental philologists and historians throughout Europe; contributed papers to the Royal Asiatic Society; and founded the Oriental Club in Mayfair. He kept up with his publishing as well. In 1823, Malcolm produced a slightly revised version of his official report on Malwa under the title *Memoirs of Central India*. A significantly enlarged version of the *Political History of India* was published in 1826. This was followed in 1827 by *Sketches of Persia,* a collection of Persian tales arranged as a travel account designed to illustrate Persian manners. Malcolm hoped to challenge the derogatory depiction of Eastern manners in works such as Sir James Morier's *Haji Baba of Isfahan.* He used the *Sketches* to vent his indignation at Western ignorance and intolerance with comments such as, "we admonish Asiatics for slavery and yet almost every European power engages in it secretly or otherwise."[78] Malcolm made the most of his contacts to forward his literary aims; negotiating with Francis Jeffrey about writing Indian articles for the *Edinburgh Review.* But he had never fully given up hope of becoming a governor.

In 1827, following Elphinstone's retirement, Malcolm was invited to become governor of Bombay. He accepted with one proviso, that the old Maratha territories in central India would be incorporated into the presidency.[79] Malcolm felt that such an inclusion would add to the prestige of the post of governor and compensate for his earlier frustrations in being made lieutenant governor of central India. The home authorities prevaricated until Malcolm was in India and then announced that he would not be given control of central India.

A series of economic and political crises occupied all of Malcolm's time during his three years as governor of Bombay. The financial strains of the Anglo-Burmese war of 1824–1827 placed military retrenchment at the top of the government of India's agenda. Although the governor general, Lord Bentinck, had imagined his administration would be characterized by agricultural improvement and educational reform, the need to reduce expenditures dominated all policy discussions.[80] An embarrassing squabble with the Supreme Court at Bombay took up much of his time. A series of untimely deaths had left the Supreme Court of Bombay in the hands of one judge, Sir John Grant. Grant issued a writ of habeas corpus against Pandurang Ramachandra, a *sirdar* or large landholder protected by a Company *sanad* (treaty). The governor-in-council promptly ordered a stay of proceedings in this case and that of all other similar writs of habeas corpus on the grounds that the Supreme Court's jurisdiction did not extend beyond the Island of Bombay (the Court being simply an English Court for the English colonial city of Bombay, not for the territories of the Bombay presidency). In reply, Grant asserted that the Company's government had no power to coerce the Supreme Court. While the two parties

were awaiting a decision from the Supreme Government of India, based in Bengal and from the Crown, Sir Thomas Bradford, the commander in chief (a member of the king's not the Company's army), expressed his support for Grant. For a while, it seemed possible that Bradford would use the troops to carry out the wishes of the Court. If this had happened Malcolm was prepared to have the commander in chief deported, which was a power the governor had over all residents in India who were not servants of the Company.[81] Grant then issued a writ of attachment against Pandurang Ramachandra. The governor did not act on it. Grant responded by closing the Court. Malcolm proclaimed that it was the duty of the government of Bombay to provide justice and protection of property for its people when the Court would not. The establishment of martial law under the governor was narrowly avoided by the arrival of new judges. They did not share Grant's view and the legal issue ended there. Although this battle failed to end with any of the tragedies each side had prophesied, it did nothing to strengthen the image of the British government in India and it raised the usual constitutional fears about the powers of colonial governors. Moreover, it created a scandal in Britain, when a letter from the chairman of the Board of Control, Lord Ellenborough, to Malcolm criticizing Grant appeared in the *Bengal Harakaru*. The letter caused considerable embarrassment to the sender, and it was suspected that Malcolm had been responsible for leaking it. Malcolm left India for the last time in 1830.

As governor of Bombay, Malcolm reached the pinnacle of his career with the Company. However, it had come a decade too late to satisfy his pride. Moreover, as in Madras and Bengal, the pressing need to retrench and economize meant there was little opportunity to make a significant impact. Malcolm's deep knowledge of western India and his desire to nurture local elites made him an ideal candidate to extend the work of his predecessor, Elphinstone, in establishing Hindu colleges. Equally, as Malcolm's writings reveal, he would like to have devoted more of his own time and that of his staff to the delicate management of the native states of western India. So constrained was Malcolm, in time and resources, that his term in office has been described as the decline of the period of social reform initiated by Elphinstone.[82] As with his Persian missions, Malcolm's time as governor of Bombay was remembered more for controversy than significant achievements. Five years was the conventional term of a colonial governorship. With no guarantee of succession to a more senior post, ill health, the political standstill created by his feud with Grant and Bradford, and the general mood of retrenchment led Malcolm to return to England after only three years.

Malcolm returned to Britain in 1830 and spent the last three years of his life engaged in politics and writing. He devoted much of his time

to the *Life of Lord Clive* and *The Government of India*. The latter work contained his mature reflections on the future of government policy and was intended as a counterweight to the growing body of pro-reform literature. Like many other Tories, he quickly caught the mood of dismay that surrounded the Reform crisis of 1830–1832, and he was keen to do his duty, becoming an MP for the pocket borough of Launceston, which was controlled by the Duke of Northumberland. The Duke of Wellington, Malcolm's friend and political leader, asked him to deliver the opening speech against the second bill. His speech and his other writings on the bill painted an image of pending political ruin. As Malcolm wrote in his diary, "this Goddess Reform, in the form her present votaries have given her, is the twin sister to the Goddess Reason, who troubled Europe forty years ago, and has reappeared to vex the world with changes."[83] If passed, Malcolm argued, the bill would pave the way to revolution. In Parliament, Malcolm pictured himself as a gallant and undaunted defender of the old order. As he wrote to his brother, "a stout stand will be made for the rich inheritance of the constitution which our fathers have transmitted to us, and which, with all its defects, is the best in the known world."[84] Malcolm's antireform stance on British affairs stemmed from the same root as his approach to the government of India. In both cases, Malcolm felt that any effort to replace entrenched elites as the leaders of government and society could end in violent revolution. In both instances, Malcolm believed he had inherited a duty of care to the future that entailed preserving the best traditions of the past.

Malcolm was not returned to the newly reformed parliament, but his sense of doom was transmitted into a new constitutional crisis, though one of far less importance for the British public: the negotiations for the renewal of the East Indian Company's Charter. The growing influence of reformers like James Mill and Thomas Babington Macaulay in the Company meant that many of the proposals for the new government of India entailed sweeping changes to the structure of government. For instance, Mill called for the creation of a "Law Member" of the Supreme Council in Bengal who would oversee the creation of a new penal code for all of British India.[85] To Malcolm's mind, reformers had condemned Britain to political oblivion by cutting its aristocratic guiding strings, and they now threatened to do the same in India. Malcolm expressed his fears in speeches, in pamphlets and in the books he wrote in this period. In the spring of 1833, an influenza epidemic swept through London. Malcolm became ill and collapsed while giving a speech to the Court of Proprietors.[86] After partial recovery, he died in May 1833 at the age of sixty-four.[87]

At first glance, Malcolm's writing career sits rather oddly alongside the life of a busy and sociable soldier keen on hunting, horses, and carousing.

Most of Malcolm's books were written in camps, on marches or diplomatic missions, in the brief moments of leisure his official duties gave him. Certainly his uneven, scrawling handwriting gives the impression of haste and fatigue. Malcolm was not alone in stealing precious time from his work to devote to learning. The correspondence between Elphinstone, the Company's representative at the Peshwa's court, and William Erskine, the secretary of the Bombay Literary Society, for instance, reveals a similar desire to understand Asian history and a comparable interest in the latest oriental learning. For instance, when Erskine was researching for his edition of the commentaries of the Mughal Emperor Babur, Elphinstone wrote:

> [I]t is a pity you were not in the Deccan . . . or you would have been enabled to illustrate the Tartar incursions by a close inspection of a Chopawul [band] of Pindarries. Seriously it renders many Uzbek stories credible to observe that these last Pindarries . . . advanced at the rate of 40 and 50 miles a day and yet found time to plunder and to commit the utmost cruelties.[88]

Erskine and Elphinstone were members of the same informal group of amateur orientalists as Malcolm. Together, they brought to the government of India a deep fascination with its history and an assumption that good government and a passion for uncovering and understanding India's past necessarily went hand-in-hand. However, few of Malcolm's contemporaries wrote so copiously or so widely.

Writing was an extension of Malcolm's main career. He always wrote about topics connected with his work. Even his collection of Persian travel tales, written in 1827, was intended to disprove utilitarian theories of character. As he explained to his confidant Erskine, "the observations I have made [in this book] are the result of experience reflection and conviction. I hate the swell of superficial travellers. I hate more the cold blooded Bastards the Utilitarians of the day who would while they rob us of all the romance of life . . . look with contempt on every man on earth that does not cut his coat after their fashion."[89] Malcolm's misgivings about utilitarianism, particularly the growing influence of James Mill on Indian affairs, eventually found expression in *Clive,* which specifically refuted the interpretation of the founding of the British Empire in India laid down in Mill's *History.*

As the preceding text has shown, Malcolm's career spans the period from the early 1780s, characterized by defeats in India and Parliamentary censure in Britain, to the early 1830s, when the British were confident enough about their position in India to contemplate far-reaching social and legal reform and tentative advances into central Asia. As a diplomat and an administrator, Malcolm strived to spread British authority and to

nurture Indian society under its auspices. As an author, he aimed to make Britons more aware of Asia and their duties as empire builders in India. This study examines Malcolm's works in order to show how they encapsulated particular issues and trends that were part of this process of imperial consolidation. For instance, Malcolm's *Sketch of the Sikhs* (1811) and his *History of Persia* (1815) were in part efforts to encourage British political and strategic interest in India's northwest frontier and overturn the policy of noninterference. Although events from the 1830s, particularly the first Afghan war, can seem like the obvious consequences of British imperial expansion in India, Malcolm's efforts to draw attention to this region in the face of government apathy reminds us that it was far from clear that British India would develop strong connections in that region. Malcolm's published works, though they are foundational works on the growth of British India, are also proof that the British were not in agreement about why their empire had developed, what its purpose was, and where it fitted into the history of South Asia.

The growth of British India raised new questions about how it should be administered internally and how it should defend its border, particularly after 1818; however, Malcolm's worldview changed little from his early days as a cadet in Madras. Malcolm's life as a diplomat, roving across India, serving in all three presidency capitals, gave him an unusually broad knowledge of the Company and of South Asia. Later chapters will show how this influenced both his subject matter and his general message. Malcolm is chiefly remembered as a kind of founding father of British India, yet his experience was of life on the precarious peripheries of a young and growing empire. The observations he imparted to his readers were about areas that had resisted or never known British dominance. The following studies of Malcolm's works will all argue that the insecurity and frontier mentality of 1780s Madras shaped his works just as it had determined his policy decisions as a Company servant.

Chapter 2

The *Political History of India* and the Creation of an Historiography of Imperial Conquest

Sir John Malcolm's first major work, the *Sketch of the Political History of India* (1811), is a path-setting book in the historiography of the British conquest of South Asia. It was the first British narrative history of the period from 1784 to 1805. As such, it charted the final transformation of the East India Company from a body of merchants into the custodians of the British Empire in India. Put another way, it presented the history of British India in the late eighteenth century in terms of the futile resistance of Company's directors to the growth of a British imperial state in South Asia. The *Sketch* is the first major historical work of this period to apply British theories about the unsuitability of the law of nations or the concept of a balance of power to British relations with the Indian princes. Written by a major actor in the diplomatic events it described, the *Sketch* expressed the historical consciousness of the Company officials who had pushed for imperial expansion in the generation after Warren Hastings.

Throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the *Political History of India* would remain a major source for this topic.[1] Malcolm's politicized narrative of the events described in the book long remained largely unchallenged even by critics of Malcolm's overall interpretation. Its more famous near contemporary, James Mill's *History of British India* (1817), often described as the paragon of British imperial self-perception in this era,[2] relied heavily on Malcolm's work for facts, its narrative structure, and its critique of the East India Company. Malcolm appears so frequently as a source in *The History of British India* that much of Mill's vision of

British war and diplomacy in this period can be read as a commentary on Malcolm's *Sketch*.

Acting in History: "Send Malcolm!"

Malcolm's *Sketch of the Political History of India* was an apologia for recent British policy in India.[3] It aimed to justify the aggressive diplomacy and ambitious wars of his mentor, Richard Wellesley, governor general of Bengal from 1798 to 1805, and to condemn the attempts by the directors of the Company to impose a policy of noninterference in the affairs of the native princes. In doing so, the *Sketch* also attempted to defend Malcolm's own actions as a leading diplomatic agent. To understand why the *Sketch* was published when it was, it is necessary to examine the period immediately after Wellesley's governor generalship, when a reversal of British policy in India left Malcolm feeling politically isolated. But to understand the historical vision of British India that the book articulates, one needs to go back further still to Malcolm's early military career in Madras in the 1780s.

The *Sketch of the Political History of India's* anxious vision of British India was a product of Malcolm's very first experiences as a cadet in the Company army in Madras. As the previous chapter argued, Madras may have been the capital of a vast presidency, but when Malcolm arrived in 1783 it was not a bastion of a secure and self-confident British imperial administration.[4] With thousands of miles of coastline and a very jagged internal border to protect, Madras was strategically weak and always undermanned. One of the earliest surviving anecdotes of Malcolm's first years in the army perfectly illustrates the military vulnerability of Madras in these years. Returning to the Madras presidency from a diplomatic mission in Mysore, a certain Major Dallas was met at the border by a young boy in a cadet's uniform (the fourteen-year-old Malcolm). He asked the boy to take him to the commander of the sepoys on this stretch of the border. "I am their commander," was the boy's reply.[5] It is significant and unsurprising that Malcolm's first published work was an anonymous article on army reform. The proposed reform of the East India Company in the 1790s prompted groups of soldiers on furlough, including Malcolm, to hold meetings and publish pamphlets defending their privileges. At that time as now, attention was focused on the Bengal army, which, by strength of numbers, had the largest voice in this debate.[6] Malcolm's article stressed that the Company army varied from presidency to presidency and that the privileges of the Bengal army were often as resented by the Company

soldiers of Bombay and Madras as they were by the soldiers of the regular British army. To impress on his readers the fact that his were the views of a Madras army soldier, he signed himself "Mullagataunay."[7] Malcolm wrote the *Sketch of the Political History of India* as someone who had spent the first fifteen years of his career as an active part of the overstretched Madras army, whose demands took second place to those of Bengal. In this sense, Malcolm's early career reminds us of the nuances within British militarism in India brought about by the different economic, strategic, and political circumstances of the various presidencies.

His personal ambitions to become a leading soldier-diplomat were largely fulfilled through the efforts of the British to overcome their long-term strategic weakness in Madras. He first became an interpreter during Governor General Cornwallis's swashbuckling campaign against Tipu Sultan in 1791. Then, throughout the 1790s, he was one of the military cronies of Lord Hobart, governor of Madras from 1793 onward. As the previous chapter discussed, Hobart had been keen to reduce the Company's reliance on the local Nawab's authority. Flying in the face of the policy of nonintervention imposed by the India Act of 1784, Hobart engineered a diplomatic situation where the Company could annex the district of Tinnevelly from the Nawab to pay off debts accrued by his father, the previous Nawab.[8] For old Madras soldiers like Thomas Munro and Barry Close and their protégés like Malcolm, Hobart promised a way out of the embarrassing weakness that had dogged Madras in the 1780s. Significantly, Hobart and his advisers saw ultimate protection for Madras resting in an all-India strategy for the defense of British India.[9]

Their chance came toward the end of 1793, when the Nizam of Hyderabad asked for British protection against the Marathas.[10] He based his claim on the provisions of the Treaty of Seringapatam of 1791, a defensive alliance against Tipu Sultan, which bound the Marathas, the Nizam, and the British to mutual protection. Hobart argued that military intervention on the Nizam's side would be a way to bring his vast state under British influence.[11] At a stroke, this would connect the Madras and Bengal presidencies and overcome the strategic problems of defending Madras and Bombay from Mysore and the Marathas. The case was discussed at great length, in far more detail than it is necessary to go into here. Crucially, Sir John Shore, the governor general of Bengal, argued that as the British were not bound by the treaty to intervene, the policy of noninterference as laid down by Pitt's India Act of 1784 gave them no grounds for supporting the Nizam.[12] In the following months, the Nizam suffered a spectacular defeat against the Marathas at the battle of Khurdlah. Hobart and his men were quick to argue that Shore's policy had been wrong. They felt that Shore's neutrality had pushed the Nizam into the arms of the French mercenaries

at his court—this while Britain was at war with the French Revolutionary Republic. Moreover, they argued that the Marathas had gained in power and confidence, and the British had shown that they were willing to lose face and forsake their strategic advantage in order to avoid war. Malcolm and his circle of soldier-diplomats felt deep frustration with Shore as governor general. Writing to Malcolm in 1796, his friend George Johnstone, a junior diplomat, drew a sharp contrast between Shore's cold indifference to the Nizam and Hobart's tough stance against the Nawab of the Karnatak. "Great praise," he told Malcolm, "is due for the vigour and promptitude of Lord Hobart in assembling an Army. One such instance of decision is of more value, than all the homilies on good faith and justice, which have been written by Sir John Shore during his administration."[13] Shore's insistence on strict neutrality provided the context in which Malcolm and his fellow soldiers and diplomats at Madras came to argue that the British needed to view themselves as a rising state in Indian power politics.

Malcolm expressed his own views in a memorandum of 1798, arguing for a closer alliance with the Nizam of Hyderabad. "Every Government," he declared, "but particularly one possessing territories so extended as that of the British in the East must ever be liable to frequent wars. Exemption from that evil is to be expected more from the terror of our name, and the success of our arms, than from any show of moderation or symptom of timidity. By alliances and intimate connexions with Country Princes we have gained that power we are now arrived at, and by the same means we must preserve it."[14] Malcolm first caught Richard Wellesley's attention by sending him this very paper.[15] In the *Sketch,* written fifteen years later, Malcolm depicted Shore's policy over Hyderabad as the nadir of British imperial activity in India before the Marquis of Wellesley's arrival. As will be seen, Shore's insistence on British neutrality in the Nizam's war against the Marathas provoked the longest and most embittered attack on noninterference in the whole book.

Wellesley was already aware of the view from Madras before he received Malcolm's memorandum. Staying at the Cape colony on his way to India, he had met William Kirkpatrick, another Madras army officer. Wellesley's early initiatives as governor general, a military alliance with Hyderabad and a war against Tipu Sultan, had both been strongly argued for by Kirkpatrick.[16] In order to understand fully Malcolm's account of Wellesley's government, it is important to remember that Wellesley's first major diplomatic move—a renewed alliance with the Nizam—simply carried on Hobart's agenda. Moreover, most of the men he used to achieve these aims, often nicknamed "the Wellesley kindergarten,"[17] were in fact seasoned soldiers from Hobart's Madras. Later, it suited the conceited Wellesley, and his critics, that he should be remembered as an innovator in British India.[18]

However, Wellesley was simply the right man in the right place at the right time; he did not bring with him a new understanding of British India.

That said, between 1798 and 1805 Wellesley's audacious and active administration transformed the territories of the East India Company, and Malcolm and his fellow Madras men were the leading agents of this change. When he arrived, the Company's direct territorial control and its political and military influence in native courts were confined to the local areas around Bengal, Madras, and Bombay. Through a series of diplomatic maneuvers and two large-scale military campaigns, Wellesley increased the size of Company's territory by 60 percent and stretched its influence over the entire Indian subcontinent. Wellesley increased the Company's indirect influence across the former Mughal Empire by offering military protection to literally hundreds of minor princes and chiefs and signing or adding to subsidiary alliance treaties with larger states such as Hyderabad and Awadh. These controversial treaties provided Company troops for the defense of the state at a price. In the absence of a cash payment, the troops could be paid for by revenues from districts ceded permanently or temporarily. As Malcolm put it in a letter of 1799, "to have so large a force maintained without charge to their revenues, and at the same time ready to act on every call of Emergency, is an object of peculiar consequence to a Government conducted on the Economical principles of that of the British in India."[19] As he went on to observe, "how much is the value of this object increased, when we consider the support which this force gives to the friends of the alliance , and the check in which it keeps both its secret and declared enemies."[20] From the 1760s, taking its cue from Indian state-builders like the Maratha princes, the Company had began to enter into subsidiary alliances with its immediate neighbors.[21] The practice had never been uniformly popular among British statesmen. Its most famous critic, Edmund Burke, had argued that the financial demands these treaties made on Indian rulers led them to extort money from their people, either directly or indirectly, by granting revenue rights to pay off loans. This promoted tyranny and misrule, and ultimately led to the decay of native government.[22] Throughout the 1780s and 1790s, successive governors general worked hard to avoid increasing the Company's subsidiary alliance commitments. Taking the opposite view, Wellesley hoped to bring the whole of India under a British-sponsored military alliance, theoretically at no extra cost to the Company.[23] As will be seen, Wellesley's critics, and even many of his supporters, objected not so much to expansion as to expansion by this means. Hobart gave men like Malcolm the confidence to argue for a campaign of expansion and consolidation, but Wellesley translated their dreams and wishes into treaties, alliances, and annexed territories.

From 1798 on, Malcolm's reputation was entirely bound up with the policies of Richard Wellesley. Malcolm's first appointment under Wellesley was as assistant resident (deputy ambassador) at the court of the Nizam of Hyderabad. In truth, he spent the next six years as Wellesley's personal agent, soon acquiring a reputation as a diplomatic fixer. The series of diplomatic and military initiatives Wellesley undertook in this period set the stage for Malcolm's own brilliant diplomatic career. The loss of political support for Wellesley at home became inevitable with the start of the Maratha War in 1803, and it is worth tracing events from this moment to understand what led Malcolm to write the *Sketch*.

Toward the end of 1802, the British found an opportunity to use the power struggles of the Maratha princes to build up their influence in the court of the Peshwa of the Maratha rulers. Though his political power waned, he remained important in Indian diplomacy thanks to his symbolic authority. From the 1790s, the leading Maratha princes had been in a state of almost constant war and the Peshwa had long been under the influence of Shinde. In 1802, Shinde's rival, Holkar, invaded the Peshwa's territories. The Peshwa fled to nearby Bassein and began negotiations with the British. They agreed to accompany the Peshwa back to his capital, in exchange for a closer military alliance, a subsidiary alliance.[24] The Treaty of Bassein was signed in December and the Peshwa was restored. Shinde argued that the treaty was invalid, and the Company was soon at war with him and his fellow Maratha prince, the Bhonsle of Nagpur. Victory over Shinde left the Company in possession of Delhi and its most important resident, the Mughal Emperor. The following year, the Company pursued the Maratha chief Holkar into Rajasthan.

The Maratha War gave the Company's directors the excuse they needed to recall Wellesley. In spite of their early triumphs, the British now found themselves overstretched, in unfamiliar territory, and susceptible to irregular cavalry raids.[25] This situation provided the setting for the disintegration of Wellesley's government. By this time, Richard Wellesley was on the verge of a nervous breakdown. Increasingly isolated from his staff, he had begun to doubt the merits of stretching British influence further west than Delhi, a fact which was hidden from the authorities at home.[26]

To make matters worse, news of the war did not come from Wellesley, who had sent a letter home saying that hostilities seemed unlikely the day before he gave orders for the troops to be mobilized.[27] Instead, the directors discovered that the Company was embroiled in an India-wide war with the Maratha princes only when the governor of Bombay happened to mention that military supplies were running low.[28] Wellesley's days in office were numbered. The costs of the war soon wiped out any of the financial benefits Wellesley's earlier policies had brought. The crisis was such that most

of the pay for the Company's troops was several months in arrears.[29] The elderly and infirm Cornwallis had been sent out as a safe pair of hands to avert a major financial crisis in India. He died three months later and was replaced by George Barlow. The decision of Cornwallis, carried through by Barlow, to give up British diplomatic obligations on their northwest frontier and return to a policy of nonintervention, broke numerous treaties Malcolm had personally negotiated. This u-turn in policy was an immense embarrassment for him.

Malcolm had been kept up to date with Marquis Wellesley's activities in England by his friends and colleagues. He knew about the attempts to initiate an impeachment trial, which had begun in 1806.[30] By the summer of 1807, he received news from Arthur Wellesley that Richard had largely ridden out the storm and was beginning to receive recognition. As he explained to Malcolm, "a revolution is . . . in progress, slowly but very certainly in the public mind respecting the former system of government [in India] and according to which, affairs are to be administered in the future."[31] The need to justify Wellesley's general approach was therefore no longer a matter of saving his mentor from censure at home.

Malcolm may have had no great need to defend Wellesley from the court of directors and their parliamentary allies, but he still had plenty of reason for defending himself as a follower of Wellesley. As he complained in the summer of 1807 to John Elliot, son and private secretary of Lord Minto, the governor general:

> [M]y friends in England inform me that the late strong recommendations of me to the authorities in England are likely to share the same fate as that which has attended every testimony of my public services for the last nine years [i.e., since Marquis Wellesley's arrival in Indian in 1798]—that is, to be totally neglected; and that I never need expect different treatment, as I have committed the crime of doing my duty under Lord Wellesley. . . . If such are the grounds upon which I am to be judged, long may I be honoured with their reprobation.[32]

This letter was written toward the end of Malcolm's disastrous second mission from India to Persia in 1808. His clashes with Harford Jones, the separate envoy sent by the British crown, created considerable embarrassment for the Company and the government.[33] Malcolm's bitterness and resentment came out clearly in his letters, which complain that the directors "have not noticed one of the numerous recommendations of my political services."[34] His sense of being at odds with the home authorities continued to grow following a clash with Sir George Barlow, now governor of Madras, over the Madras officers' mutiny in 1809. In the subsequent Parliamentary Enquiry the directors had defended Barlow, leading Malcolm to write a

pamphlet in defense of his own actions.[35] Malcolm's annoyance was such that his friend the Whig man of letters, Sir James Mackintosh wrote in his defense to Charles Grant, the leading Company director. Grant replied that Malcolm's sense of persecution was uncalled for. Surely, he reasoned, if Malcolm had lost favor, he would not have been selected for so many important missions in the years after Wellesley's departure.[36] Unwarranted though it may have been, Malcolm's sense of personal persecution gives an animated, politically urgent tone to his *Sketch* that would otherwise have been absent.

The *Sketch* expressed a vision of British India as vulnerable and underresourced that Malcolm had held since his days as an ambitious soldier-diplomat in Madras. Wellesley's policies had played out the wildest hopes of Madras men like Malcolm and Close, and the *Sketch* also defended the actions of Richard Wellesley and his followers. In this sense, Malcolm was not writing with a wider audience in mind; the *Sketch* is essentially a pamphlet, written with all the passion of the immediate era in which it was produced. It follows in the pamphleteering tradition of the works on Company history that appeared in the 1760s and 1770s.[37] Its arguments are shaped by the mass of documents and memoranda written by Indian policy makers during Wellesley's administration, and it is worth exploring these documents to understand why and how Malcolm's Madras mentality would lead him to write a history of the East India Company that attempted to throw aside its mercantilist origins and treat its territorial possessions in India as an imperial state under threat.

The Political Context for the *Sketch of the Political History of India*

By the early years of the nineteenth century, debates about the wars and diplomacy of the East India Company in India no longer attracted the attention of leading politicians and statesmen. The days when Robert Clive defended his governorship from the floor of the House of Commons or when Edmund Burke had been able to mount support for the impeachment trial of a governor general of Bengal had passed. When discussion turned to India, free-trade and the missionaries generally commanded more interest in the press and in Parliament.[38]

The main figures who influenced and shaped the Company's relations with the Indian states were Company servants in London and India and, to a much lesser degree, the president and staff of the Board of Control.[39] Opinion on the native states divided roughly between two groups, one for

and one against clause 34 of Pitt's India Act of 1784. The clause declared that "to pursue schemes of conquest, and extension of dominion in India, are measures repugnant to the wishes, the honour, and policy of the nation" and it prohibited the Company from engaging in any offensive war or any alliance likely to lead to war.[40]

In the years after Pitt's India Act of 1784, the most vocal and influential defenders of noninterference were the leading directors of the East India Company, notably the financier Jacob Bosanquet, whose banking family had been involved with the Company for two generations, and the former commercial agent of the Company and prominent evangelical, Charles Grant. Bosanquet expressed the older mercantilist view of the Company. As he told Prime Minister Pitt, the Company existed to "draw . . . from a distant country the largest revenue it is capable of yielding."[41] Talking of the East India Company, "no other trade," Bosanquet argued, "can be compared with it in its present produce to the State."[42] Its ultimate worth lay in "assisting the operation of the state" by a constant influx of specie.[43] This being the case, the Company could have no interest in costly wars of imperial expansion or in any diplomatic initiatives likely to increase defense costs and disrupt trade.[44] The Company already controlled Bengal, Bihar, and Orissa, the most fertile and prosperous provinces of India, and had no need to add to them. With this in mind, Bosanquet's ally, Charles Grant, had argued in an influential work,[45] that British imperial expansion in India had been a great sin. It was not to be emulated with further conquests, but to be atoned for by limiting relations with the other princes of India, and improving the social and economic conditions of British India.[46] This vision of India assumed not only that a proactive diplomatic policy was unwise but also that it was unnecessary; the other states were so distracted by constant war and weak government that the British could afford to ignore them. For Grant, the administration of his fellow evangelical, Sir John Shore, between 1793 and 1798, had been ideal. Shore, a long-serving Company servant, had championed Grant's and Bosanquet's cause and resisted calls from his diplomatic and military staff for the British to interfere in the power struggles of the Nizam of Hyderabad and the Marathas.[47] On the other side, few of Wellesley's personal allies in government had the expertise or the interest to offer a sustained defense of his policy.[48] His warmest advocates were the civil and military personnel who had personally benefited from his administration, men like Malcolm.

As an historian of the Company, writing in 1811, two years before it lost its monopoly on trade with India, Sir John Malcolm can be seen as a late contributor to the tradition of anti-Company writing. Certainly, many of the eighteenth-century books and pamphlets that cautioned against the

growth of British territories in India can more readily be described as anti-Company than anti-imperial. To take the example of the *Wealth of Nations*, Adam Smith, like many antimercantilist authors, dismissed the idea of the Company as a conduit for increasing Britain's wealth.[49] Moreover, while Smith had spoken about the great tragedies that had resulted from the interaction between European settlers and native inhabitants, in the specific context of India his main concern had been to show that the great problem with the Company's state was that it was a government of merchants. Smith concluded that the Company structure contained no internal check capable of ensuring the good government of India. For as long as they had powers of patronage, the holders of Company stock would do nothing to prevent the venality of its servants, because their benefit was derived not from "the plunder of India, but the appointment of the plunderers of India."[50] This was a crucial distinction. Smith was not simply saying that the directors of the Company would always prefer profit to the expense of good government. Rather he was saying that the Company had ceased to be of economic benefit and had become a tool for the self-interest of its directors. The Company's servants themselves could have no interest in allowing any surpluses collected in India to be disbursed or accumulated in that country. "No other sovereigns were, or, from the nature of things, could be so perfectly indifferent about the happiness or misery of their subjects . . . or the glory or disgrace of their administration."[51] Even after Pitt's India Act of 1784 had created a Board of Control headed by a Secretary of State to supervise the Company, it was still recognized that the directors were largely resistant to the development of the government of India. In defending Wellesley's decision to set up a college for young company servants in Calcutta (much to the public annoyance of the directors), Henry Dundas, by then Lord Melville, observed that "they never allowed themselves to look further than the means of supplying a good investment. Every six pence of expense that encroached upon that object was considered as a robbery."[52] Melville had of course been one of the chief architects of Pitt's India Act and he recognized that the role of the board, in part, was to protect the governors of British India from the censure of the Company's parsimonious directors.

The debate over noninterference in the three decades after 1784 cuts across discussions about the Company's monopoly rather than running in parallel with them. For example, contemporary Scottish political economists such as Lord Lauderdale and James Mill followed Smith in seeing the Company's monopoly as a very leaky conduit for pouring wealth into Britain. Like Smith, they saw that the Company deprived British manufactures of Asian marketplaces and ensured that the supply of raw materials from India was restricted and expensive.[53] As Lauderdale (who had

been a candidate for governor general in 1806) put it in his pamphlet of 1809, "our intercourse with the East [has] evidently ceased to partake of the nature of commerce. . . . The extent of demand which regulates all commercial transactions, no longer formed a rule for the conduct of those concerned."[54] Under the Company's monopoly, the level of imports into Britain was determined not by a "consideration of European markets" but by the amounts of tribute raised in India and the needs of Company servants attempting to bring their personal fortunes back from India. In this system, "there could exist . . . no such thing as imports" for India, because "a country from which all was taken, and to which nothing was returned, could not partake of those desires originating from the possession of surplus wealth, which give birth to the demand for foreign commodities."[55] The trade issue was only half of the critique of monopoly.

The other half was the horrific implications of the Company's privileges for its government of India. In the late 1770s and early 1780s, the era of Burke's every more fiery attacks on the Company, the force of anti-Company sentiment had been directed at both the Company's monopoly and its perceived misrule. The 1780 edition of Abbé Raynal's *Histoire des deux Indes* had despaired of the free reign given to the Company. Diderot, the author of this section of the work, complained that, "Parliament has lost its senses, and the wiser portion of the people are silent or speak in vain."[56] Addressing himself to the Company on the subject of its government of India he went on to ask, "Licensed bandits, you who for so long have held a large part of the globe in the thrall of a monopoly, condemning it to eternal poverty, did this tyranny not suffice?"[57] After 1784, with the management of empire brought under the scrutiny of a newly created Board of Control, headed by a secretary of state, writers like Lauderdale had noticed that the Company directors were actually opposed to territorial expansion.[58] Lauderdale then went on to to ask why, if this were the case and if Clause 34 clearly affirmed noninterference, had British India expanded through conquest in these years? The answer, he suggested was that government had been complicit in this breach of statute and of the Company directors' wishes.[59] The board, he reflected, "has been uniformly employed in sounding the praises of those whose disobedience it was instituted to check; and. . . in so doing, it has connived as a system of violation of orders, productive of debt to an extent which, in former times, with less efficient machinery for doing mischief, it would have been impossible to have contracted."[60] Although Malcolm willingly repeated the charges of misgovernment and corruption that Smith and others had leveled at the Company's directors, he did not follow the free-trade argument that the Company's India connection had become little more than a tool for the imperial adventurism of individual statesmen.

Malcolm's focus in the *Sketch of the Political History* was not domestic but foreign policy, however, he made strong use of the older antimercantilist argument that the concerns of foreign merchants were at odds with those of a state, like British India, surrounded by rivals. As will be seen, he argued that the same was true of the manner in which the Company's directors exerted their influence at home. Their considerable and well-coordinated presence in Parliament, Malcolm suggested, led the directors to exploit the weakness of the Pitt's Act in Parliament, to force through the nonintervention clause in 1784, a clause that was wholly inappropriate for the protection of an empire.[61] Yet Malcolm's critique of the Company's government, though it shared the premise of the economic arguments of Smith and others, was ultimately shaped by military priorities. For example, when giving evidence before Parliament in 1813 he had been asked whether it "would be good policy to increase the means of information [available] to the natives of India" regarding manufacturing and agriculture. Malcolm's reply was that "the first consideration of the government must always be its own safety; . . . every subordinate measure (and such I conceive that referred to in the question), must be regulated entirely by the superior consideration of political security."[62] It is this preoccupation with reason of state that distinguishes Malcolm and his fellow hawks not only from their mercantilist opponents but also from the antimercantilist political economists.

Malcolm's defense of Wellesley's administration and his attack on the Company's directors follows on directly from two key sets of documents; each of which will be discussed later in some detail. The first set consisted of the two documents the court of directors drafted in 1804, the Memorandum of March 22 and the more famous Draft 128. These were the most comprehensive and blunt statements of the court's censure of Wellesley's government. The second set was the series of memoranda written by various officials following the Treaty of Bassein. These documents debated the wisdom and the necessity of British involvement in the feuds of the Maratha princes, thus rehearsing the discussion about the inevitability of British expansion in India that shaped Malcolm's *Sketch*. They aired many of the ideas featured in Arthur Wellesley's defense of his brother's governor generalship, written in 1806. This document above all others provided Malcolm with a framework for understanding British policy in India over the previous thirty years as an inevitable path to Richard Wellesley's policies.

One further set of documents relating to Richard Wellesley's government was ignored in Malcolm's *Sketch*. This was the series of parliamentary papers published as part of James Paull's attempt to initiate an impeachment trial against Wellesley in 1806. Paull made a case against

him as a rather high-handed, avaricious tyrant, but he said nothing about Wellesley's policy regarding Mysore, the Marathas, and Hyderabad.[63] The *Sketch of the Political History of India* remained silent on Paull's corruption charges relating to Wellesley's dealing with the kingdom of Awadh, because Malcolm was not writing an apologia for Wellesley. Rather, he was justifying the process of imperial expansion of which Richard Wellesley had been an instrument.

The condemnation of Wellesley's administration by the court of directors was most vehemently and fully expressed in two drafts of memoranda to be sent out to India. The most vicious of these, the famous Draft 128, was toned down considerably before it was sent.[64] However, a less adulterated version of Draft 128 and the earlier memorandum of March 22, 1804, were both widely circulated in pamphlets intended as part of the campaign to have Wellesley impeached in 1806. These two memoranda listed ways in which Wellesley had overstepped his authority as governor general, saying little directly about his use of subsidiary alliances. Draft 128 described much of Wellesley's conduct as "a series of deviations from the Constitution established by law for the Government of India." Moreover, the draft complained that after Wellesley's "many instances of disregard . . . to all other authorities" India "has in fact been turned into a pure and simple despotism."[65] "In his Houses, his attendants, his Establishments," the draft stated that Wellesley had, "give[n] into the style of Asiatic pomp and display." "Nothing of this kind," it continued, "is requisite for the support of the British Authority in the East."[66] The criticisms of his diplomatic and military policy stemmed from their disdain for his self-important and authoritarian style of government. The draft reprimanded Wellesley for the annexation of territory in Awadh and for the Treaty of Bassein. It framed the latter as an unwelcome meddling in the affairs of foreign powers. The directors argued that Wellesley's interference in Maratha affairs inevitably led to war because it provoked the other chiefs, who recognized that "it had a natural tendency to subvert the independence of the Mahratta empire."[67] As it was done without the consent of the home authorities, the signing of the treaty exceeded Wellesley's legal powers. The draft's main concern was to demonstrate that his diplomatic policies, like his lavish spending, had overstepped his legal powers only to saddle British India with heavy debts and strategically questionable military obligations. Thus, the draft laid down a challenge for the defenders of Wellesley's diplomatic record. They would need to show that Wellesley had not chosen to transform the political landscape of India in order to appease his own vanity and thirst for power.

For Malcolm, expansion in India had been a matter of absolute and unavoidable necessity. Versions of the *Sketch's* principal arguments in favor

of greater interference in Indian power politics can be found in Malcolm's earliest official minutes. His memorandum on Hyderabad of 1798 had proclaimed, "let anyone acquainted with the History of the rise of the British in the East reflect on the wars the Company have sustained, and they will discover those that have been ruinous, that have threatened their extirpation, have principally arose from a total want of intelligence and connexion."[68] Closer ties and greater influence with the Indian princes, Malcolm argued, would build lasting peace and security for British India. Over the next five years Wellesley's whirlwind of wars and annexations dramatically altered the landscape for polemicists like Malcolm. After the Second Anglo-Maratha War in 1803, purely defensive arguments became inadequate for justifying breaking the last major independent power block in India and placing the British at the head of a vast system of military alliances stretching across all of India.

Instead, from this time Malcolm and other supporters of Wellesley's expansionist agenda began to focus less on alliances and treaty obligations and more on the need to check the growth of rival powers with a show of force. Following the condemnation of British inference in Maratha affairs in 1804 by the home authorities,[69] Malcolm and Arthur Wellesley both wrote extended defenses of the treaty with the Peshwa. Although Arthur Wellesley was not an advocate of subsidiary alliances, he defended the Treaty of Bassein in part on the grounds that it had the potential to drawn in and neutralize the other Maratha princes. Given the Company's strained finances, in his view, such a prospect was worth working toward. The rivalries and ambitions of the Maratha princes (notably Shinde) were such, he argued, that the treaty was the only way "to avoid a war which sooner or later with all the Mahratta powers."[70] Malcolm's defense focused on refuting the claim that the British had needlessly roused the jealousy of the Maratha princes. "I know of no measures," he announced, "which could prevent other nations from entertaining a great degree of jealousy of a neighbour who they considered as superior in Arms in wealth and in Power except [that] state . . . becoming from weakness of Policy or a decline of Strength less an object of envy of terror."[71] In other words, neutrality in Indian geopolitics was not an option for the British. Malcolm still had to explain why the British had actively interfered in Maratha politics and his answer was as unambiguous as it was uncompromising. For Malcolm, the British could only remain in India by preempting hostility:

> The English Government can only maintain peace with powers governed on principles like those of the Marhattoes, by maintaining a superiority which will intimidate them from attack and therefore every measure which tends to increase that superiority must be considered as a step towards permanent

> tranquillity and it will invariably be found safer and wiser to direct our policy to the reduction of their means of offence, than to place any trust in our happy management of the feelings of a People whose trade is and the sole object of whose power is plunder.[72]

In essence, Malcolm was saying that the nature of Maratha governments rendered useless any treaty unsupported by the real threat of force. Crucially, in defending the intervention in Maratha politics, Malcolm emphasized continuity in British policy, observing, "the Empire has originated in commerce, and many of the principles and Institutions of its government must therefore have been framed more with the view of promoting its commercial, than its political Interests."[73] He went on to say, "apprehension entertained of danger from extended Territorial possessions, or political connections in that quarter, has almost invariably led the Superior Authority in England to mark by censure, and disapprobation, every measure of the local Governments in India which appeared calculated to add to our Territories or to extend our political relations."[74] But as Malcolm made clear to his readers, "reference to the History of British India will prove that there is not a shadow of ground to conclude that the English Nation could have continued to enjoy the great commercial benefits it derives from its intercourse with India, on any other terms but the full establishment of its political Power in that quarter of the Globe."[75] Malcolm's conclusion is worth quoting at length because, without reservation, it defends consolidation of military power in India as just and prudent imperial policy, casting aside the quibbles of the Company's directors and the noninterference provisos of Pitt's India Act:

> By . . . substituting in the place of narrow maxims of policy those just and liberal principles which are suited to the form and magnitude of our present Power, we shall succeed in rendering our empire in India an inexhaustible source of Riches, and of strength, to the mother country:- We shall at the same time through the means of our political connections and by the Interference of our authority, and example, make nations whom we found a prey to all the evils attendant on a rude and barbarous State of continental warfare, peaceable, and industrious.[76]

The most authoritative and detailed defense of Richard Wellesley's administration before the *Sketch* was written by his brother Arthur in 1806, at a time when the parliamentary inquiries into his administration were still ongoing.[77] Arthur Wellesley began by arguing that his brother had inherited a series of long-term political crises that demanded urgent action and had few solutions apart from decisive diplomatic and military intervention. The imminent threat of a French invasion, backed by the Company's

"ancient native enemy," Mysore, combined with Madras' chronic strategic weakness left few alternatives to war. He went on to point out that the alliance for mutual protection between the Marathas, Hyderabad, and the Company, enshrined in the Treaty of Seringapatam, was by this time no longer binding in the sense that European observers would understand. The government in India, he explained to his readers, was "entirely different from the systems and modes adopted in Europe." The provisions of treaties were of little significance in themselves because "the foundation and instrument of all power there is the sword." He went on to explain that in every case where the Company had a subsidiary alliance with a weak state, the consequences were always the same. As he put it, "the sword, or in other words, the army of the East India Company, became the only support and the only efficient instrument of authority of the protected states." As a result, "the door was necessarily opened to the interference of the British government in every concern; and the result was increased weakness in the native states; jealousy of this interference, and disunion bordering upon treachery."[78] In other words, Arthur Wellesley was not defending his brother from the charge of eroding the independence of the native states. Rather, he was saying that the process had already begun long before his brother had become governor general. Arthur Wellesley described the 1790s in India as a time of general political instability during which the Company reduced its own influence and allowed the Marathas, particularly Shinde, to take its place. He went on to argue that the British decision not to intervene between the Marathas and the Nizam in 1793 led to the latter's dramatic defeat at battle of Khurdlah. Wellesley's analysis of the consequences is dramatic. The Maratha prince Shinde had not only established control of the Peshwa at Poona and the Emperor at Delhi, he was also the effective ruler of much of the Nizam's territory. This was disastrous for the Company. At a stroke, Shinde had now become the Company's neighbor and potential rival on the frontiers of all its presidencies and in a future war he could have sided with Tipu against the English.[79] This analysis made the Marathas appear as a long-term problem in Indian politics. To make matters worse, British neglect and defeat at the hands of the Marathas had transformed the Nizam of Hyderabad from "a great and leading power in Hindustan to that of a tributary" of his conquerors.[80] This vulnerability, Wellesley argued, pushed the Nizam into the arms of his French mercenaries. None of this was unfamiliar to anyone who had read earlier justifications for the Treaty with the Nizam of 1798 or the Fourth Anglo-Mysore War, such as Malcolm's two memoranda of 1798. What was significant and controversial was the continued importance Arthur Wellesley attached to the Maratha threat, rather than the French invasion scare of 1798. This enabled him to argue that the decision

to intervene in Maratha affairs by restoring the Peshwa and signing the Treaty of Bassein was not the start of a new enterprise. Rather, it was the completion of an earlier process sparked off by British neutrality in the war between the Marathas and the Nizam.[81] Wellesley went to some length to make this absolutely clear, arguing that the Peshwa had made several attempts to form an alliance with the British and that the war with Shinde would have happened anyway.[82] The only difference, Wellesley observed, was that thanks to the Treaty of Bassein it was a limited offensive war rather than a defensive war against all the Marathas along 1,000 miles of border.

Arthur Wellesley's *Memorandum* was an important precursor to the *Sketch,* because it argued that necessity and the realities of war and diplomacy in India negated the directors' call for peace and for a controlling hand in the affairs of the government of British India.[83] Wellesley had rejected the assumption, shared by Shore and the directors, that British treaty obligations in India could be a guide to future British policy. He categorically denied that the law of nations applied to India.[84] The principles that treaties were mutually binding on the parties and that the sovereignty of these parties was equal and absolute were not features of the Indian system of states as Wellesley saw it. His interpretation assumed that political and military control rather than international legal protection must govern British diplomatic thinking. Building on the idea that the British had been strategically weak throughout the 1790s, Arthur Wellesley showed that the argument about whether or not subsidiary alliances were desirable was irrelevant. He agreed with the directors that subsidiary alliances tended to erode the independence of native princes and draw the British deeper into Indian affairs. However, he argued that this process had already begun and in the circumstances, Richard Wellesley, the governor general, had been right to neutralize jealous rivals like Shinde and Mysore, whose states had become incubators for French mercenary armies. As will be seen, Malcolm did not become critical of subsidiary alliances until long after the publication of the *Sketch.* Malcolm shared Arthur Wellesley's overall interpretation that the only prudent path available to a governor general of India in 1798 was to build up influence in major courts like Hyderabad and neutralize implacable enemies such as Tipu Sultan of Mysore. Both also agreed that British security rested largely on the ability to protect Hyderabad from its enemies and the need to reduce its reliance on French mercenaries. Yet, while Arthur Wellesley and Malcolm agreed about what Richard Wellesley faced on his arrival in India, they disagreed about its long-term causes. Where Arthur Wellesley identified problems inherent in subsidiary alliances, in the *Sketch* Malcolm set his sights on the directors of the East India Company. Moreover, while Arthur Wellesley saw subsidiary

alliances as an unavoidable step toward annexation, Malcolm viewed them as an efficient method for protecting British India from pressing danger.

The *Sketch of the Political History of India* as a Book

The *Sketch of the Political History of India* was first published in 1812 as a single octavo volume. The book comprised a narrative diplomatic history of the British in India from 1784 to 1805 with the professed purpose of showing that the policy of noninterference was "unwise and impracticable."[85] In 1826, a larger two-volume version appeared under the title the *Political History of India*. The second edition completed the historical sketch with an account of events from 1806 to 1823 and included a more comprehensive section on government policy. Most commentators assume, wrongly, that the second edition merely reproduces the historical chapters of the first.[86] In fact, it omitted many of Malcolm's more vehement criticisms of the court of directors, improved the style of a few sentences, and made the *History* read less like a pamphlet and more like a historical work. Three additional chapters covering the period 1805 to 1823 rounded off the earlier narrative. The extended narrative, covering the years after Cornwallis's second administration, turned a three-act tragedy into a five-act comedy, with events from 1806 proving Wellesley (and Malcolm) right, and culminating in British supremacy in India.

We know surprisingly little about the process of writing the *Sketch*. Malcolm's surviving letters only document his progress; they say nothing about his aims and objectives. We do know that the *Sketch* was one of three works Malcolm published at this time. In 1812, Malcolm published a *Sketch of the Sikhs*. Seemingly a work of ethnography, its call to pay attention to a rising power on the borders of British territory clearly challenged the mood of noninterference that had set in after 1806. Malcolm also published a pamphlet defending his course of action in the Madras army officer's mutiny of 1809. This pamphlet was a vehicle for a sustained attack on Sir George Barlow, who, as acting governor general, had overseen the return to noninterference. With reference to Barlow, Malcolm noted, "experience seems to me to have most fully proved that the very qualities which eminently fit a man for subordinate situations may unfit him for the supreme."[87] Certainly, Malcolm's friends were aware that Malcolm was not only an opponent of noninterference, he was also an enemy of its main proponents, and they urged him not to publish his pamphlet on the Madras army.[88] Publishing so prolifically at this time, Malcolm clearly intended

to make a noticeable contribution to the debate about the renewal of the Company's charter in 1813.

The *Sketch* is not concise. It uses a minute, diplomat's eye view of recent British relations with the Indian powers to show that by the late eighteenth century the East India Company had become, in practice, a South Asian state. The narrative follows the structure of official minutes on diplomatic events rather than that of a more polished political history designed for a general audience. As he saw it, this was the only possible way of approaching the historical development of the British Empire in India. Analogies and generalizations were inappropriate because none was possible:

> The situation of a dependent state, with a population of fifty millions, at the distance of ten thousand miles from the principal State, and surrounded by Governments without faith, or even long-sighted prudence, is unprecedented in the History of the World, and the application of the common maxims of political morality to the management of a dependence is, from the singularity of the case, likely to require much caution, and to be subject to considerable mistake.[89]

That said, the narrative overall presents a clear and consistent historical case for an active imperial policy in India. For that reason, the following exegesis of the *Sketch* will not follow Malcolm's arguments through the rabbit warren of diplomatic arguments and counterarguments that make up the bulk of the text. Rather, it will closely examine the main thread of the book's central argument: that parliamentary legislation intended to ensure neutrality was imperfect and that empire building in India was an historic fact—not to be denied but to be acknowledged boldly and decisively.

The first chapter, discussing the history of the Company up to the passing of Pitt's India Act in 1784, charted two jarring themes in the history of the Company: the steady growth of Britain's imperial commitments in South Asia and the Company's resistance to this change. Malcolm's brief survey of the history of the East India Company before 1784 forcefully argued that the nature of the British presence in India changed rapidly and radically in the 1740s. In the previous century and a half, the venal East India Company had used wealth attained in the East to protect itself from scrutiny at home; "their deceptions at home were supported by iniquities abroad."[90] The Company and its directors, Malcolm noted, "were . . . dead . . . to those feelings which urge the mind to great and good actions." Instead, they "recognized no motive but a desire to enrich themselves, their relations and their dependants."[91] For Malcolm, the history of the Company from the seventeenth century onward "proves the urgent necessity, which existed, from the earliest period of their association, for the strict and constant interference of the Legislature . . . , to check excesses,

by which the national character of England was so exposed to injury."[92] In other words, greater government control of Indian affairs had not suddenly become a necessity in the 1780s. It had always been pressing.

With war against the French now being fought in India, Malcolm argued that 1744 "heralded a new era of British India,"[93] fed by rivalry with other European states, characterized by interference in the wars of the major Indian princes and resulting in noticeable territorial gains. Malcolm saw this as an epoch in two senses. First, European assistance in the wars of the native princes changed forever the nature of the territorial presence of the East India Company in India. "From that moment on," he wrote, "the substance, though not the form, of the [Company's] Government was altered; and they were involved beyond all power of retreating in all the complicated relations of a Political State."[94] Second, with European politics now played out on Indian battlefields and in Indian courts, the Company's adventurers were joined by British naval and army officers. Together, they became objects of public curiosity, admiration, and scrutiny. "The veil of secrecy" that had shrouded the Company's activities in India was now pulled aside and profit gave way to patriotism:

> India became a scene in which character and reputation, as well as wealth, were to be acquired; . . . The names of Lawrence and Clive (both of whom commenced their career about this period in the history of the Company) will live as long as the annals of England, and be regarded as glorious examples, until the qualities of valour, military skill, and elevated genius, shall cease to receive the applause and admiration of mankind.[95]

With India now a theater for national enterprise, Malcolm portrayed growing parliamentary interest in Indian affairs in terms of the dogged resistance of the directors to any erosion of their independence and privileges. To Malcolm's mind, while the directors remained true to their original calling as merchants they increasingly proved themselves to be unfit for their new imperial responsibilities. The resemblance between Malcolm's arguments and the general position of the anti-Company literature of the 1760s is noticeable. Indeed, he saw the partisan mudslinging that had led to the first parliamentary inquiries into the affairs of the East India Company as an important aspect of the growth of British imperial government. "There can be no doubt," he argued, "that the promoters of these inquiries (however mixed their motives might have been) became entitled to the gratitude of their Country."[96] Without their information, "every attempt to ameliorate and improve the Government, where the temptation to continue a corrupt system was so strong, must have proved vain and abortive."[97] Malcolm understood that parliamentary debate was essential to the process of reforming the Company and transforming India into a national interest.

However, Malcolm insisted that the influence of the Company remained powerful enough to effectively undermine any attempts at thoroughgoing reform. This was most evident in the course of Pitt's India Act, the legislation at the heart of the *Political History of India's* discussion of diplomacy. Malcolm recognized Fox's aborted India bill as a bold effort to give British India adequate representation in Parliament. He reminded readers that the bill had been rejected for fear that it would have funneled the mighty patronage of the Company into the hands of a small board of ministers. For Malcolm, the antiparliamentary implications of this act (the usual focus of most commentators) were of limited significance.[98] Far more important was the fact that the Company's directors had flexed their political and financial muscles to fend off necessary government reform. This becomes crystal clear in his explanation of the stockholders' decision to support Pitt's India:

> [T]hough originally adverse to any interference in their concerns, when they found they could not avert that event, naturally [they] chose that bill which was least unfavourable to what they considered their established rights and privileges.[99]

In a lengthy section, which he removed from the second edition, Malcolm argued this was because the Company could never reconcile its duties to their stockholders with its duties to the British Empire.[100]

This gave Malcolm his starting point for examining the legislation of 1784 and for diagnosing Wellesley's alleged transgressions of that act twenty years later. Malcolm was now free to argue that the act, particularly Clause 34 on noninterference, was a temporary and unavoidable compromise that had failed to create an adequate imperial administration for British India. In Malcolm's view, Pitt's fledgling government, reliant on the support of the Company's directors, had been, "directed to a correction of abuses, and to a control of power, [rather] than to the complete removal of admitted evils." In consequence, "a great part of the efficiency of the new system was sacrificed to the forms of the old."[101] Malcolm regarded the 1784 legislation as a political compromise. This enabled him to argue that Clause 34 did not set strict intractable guidelines for British India. The legislators, Malcolm concluded, surely never intended "to prescribe, as a positive maxim of policy, to a great state, a disregard to the concerns of its neighbours: or, in other words, to deny to a government the exercise of that influence and power [is] one of the principal and most legitimate means of maintaining peace and tranquillity."[102] Malcolm had shown that British India was an imperial interest and, if not for the untimely interference of the East India Company's directors, parliament would have had a more direct influence in its affairs.

The *Sketch* used the administration of Lord Cornwallis from 1785 to 1792 as a test case for the workability of the act. Malcolm began by suggesting that Cornwallis's personal character made him an ideal governor general at a time of transition: "firm in his purposes, possessing unwearied zeal, and unsullied honor, he proceeded toward the objects which he had in view, with a vigor and decision which commanded success."[103] Moreover, his public reputation put him in a strong position with the home authorities:

> His rank and character, while it placed him above the influence of the ministers of the crown, or the fear of the Court of Directors, commanded a respect from the civil and military servants of the Company, which, added to the increased powers with which he was vested, freed him from every shadow of opposition.[104]

By presenting Cornwallis in this way, Malcolm could argue that his were the prudent policies of a virtuous statesman with a coherent agenda for the imperial government of British India and that he had left a legacy of government for British India. As Malcolm observed, talking about his domestic policy in these terms was already common.[105] The legacy Malcolm had in mind was one of assertive and strategic defensive policy, entirely at odds with Clause 34's fanciful call for neutrality.

In Malcolm's hands, Cornwallis's war against Tipu between 1789 and 1792 showed him to be the kind of decisive military ruler British India needed if it was to survive. Though the remaining years of Cornwallis's administration were a time of peace, Malcolm argued that this had been guaranteed by his willingness to go to war and "grounded on that proud but just sense of national honour which will not suffer itself to be approached by the breath of insult."[106] Indeed, for Malcolm, Cornwallis's government perfectly illustrated the fact that British India could remain powerful only by maintaining a strong reputation, not by careful compliance with unrealistic laws laid down by Parliament to protect the commercial interests of the Company's directors:

> The enemy he had subdued paid a reluctant homage to his virtue, and the confidence reposed in him by his allies was, if possible increased, but these feelings were personal, and could be calculated as the strength of the state only while the individual so honoured and so revered continued at its head.[107]

Having implied that Cornwallis's first administration, between 1785 and 1793, set the precedent for Wellesley's round of wars and annexation, Malcolm had to explain why Cornwallis's second administration of 1806 abandoned British treaty obligations and territorial gains made in the war

with Holkar of 1805. It must be remembered that Malcolm's interpretation of Cornwallis was far from obvious. After all, Cornwallis had been such a conspicuous opponent of the kind of assertive native state policy pursued by Wellesley that the directors felt he was the perfect person to restore British noninterference in 1806. His first administration, Malcolm said, exhibited "a strength of judgement which admirably fitted him for the exercise of both civil and military power."[108] And his conduct during those years "must ever be a theme of just and unqualified applause." However, his second administration of 1806 "seemed to act upon different principles." Malcolm added that Cornwallis's death three months into his second government "make[s] it difficult to pronounce what would have been the results, had his life been prolonged."[109] He went on to suggest that his readers could only "speculate upon the causes which produced such an apparent deviation from the high and unyielding spirit of his former Administration."[110] With these passages, Malcolm attempted to remove Cornwallis as a witness for the case against Wellesley's Maratha campaign.

Malcolm pictured Sir John Shore's administration between 1793 and 1798 as a steady decline from the heights achieved under Cornwallis. As he had done with Cornwallis, Malcolm made Shore the archetype of a particular style of government. Cornwallis, as Malcolm penned him, was guided by his sense of his own rank and character to prefer his instincts to the rigid and abstract rules and laws laid down in London. Shore, on the other hand, was portrayed as a very different kind of public figure: "a most respectable civil servant of the Company"[111] who intelligently and diligently followed the orders of the home authorities and narrowly interpreted the noninterference clause. Shore, Malcolm stressed, "appears to have been uniformly actuated by a sincere and conscientious desire to govern India agreeably to the strict and literal sense of the Act of the Legislature, and the wishes of his superiors in England; to the implicit execution of whose orders, his great ability and experience were on all occasions zealously applied."[112] Malcolm used Shore's administration to show "by its results" what happened when "this neutral system of policy"[113] (noninterference) was rigidly applied. By presenting Shore in the best possible light, Malcolm was able to argue that even under the most favorable circumstances noninterference was an ineffectual policy.

Malcolm's prime example of the pitfalls of noninterference was Shore's policy over Hyderabad and his main arguments here followed directly from his thinking in the late 1790s, when he first caught Wellesley's attention. When the Nizam of Hyderabad asked for British assistance against the Marathas, Shore had argued that it was impossible under the terms of the Treaty of Seringapatam signed between the three powers in 1791. For Malcolm, this was wholly irrelevant. Maratha posturing against

Hyderabad had made the treaty "redundant" (he chose to leave out the fact that the Nizam technically started the war against the Marathas).[114] Malcolm argued that the crucial issue was not treaty obligations but power politics. Speaking of the end of the Anglo-Mysore war when the treaty was signed, he observed that what mattered to the Marathas and the Nizam was not the letter of the treaty of defensive alliance they had signed, but their perception of British power. The Nizam, Malcolm argued, "entertained the most friendly disposition toward the British government" and he acknowledged its "ascendancy in the political scale of India."[115] The Marathas, on the other hand, maintained "a degree of jealousy which verged on hostility." In this case, the treaty's main effect had been to give Britain an impression of strength.

In this light, Shore's decision not to aid the Nizam had disastrous consequences. It "threw him onto the arms of his French mercenaries" and gave the Marathas false confidence.[116] For Malcolm, this created an intolerable situation. Hyderabad could either be swallowed up by the Marathas under Scindia, or defend itself by relying more on its French troops. Far from preparing for future peace, Shore sowed the seeds of long-term British weakness. The most striking result of Shore's administration for Malcolm was "the danger to which our possessions in India had been exposed,"[117] for the native princes did not understand Shore's true motives. They assumed he was motivated by "weakness or a selfish policy, and not . . . moderation."[118] Malcolm concluded his study of Shore's administration with an extended critique of noninterference. It is here that Malcolm's militarism is most explicit:

> This system . . . while it might have in some degree the effect of promoting wars among other states, did not seem likely to secure the exemption of the Nation, by which it was followed, from that fate. It was, in fact, one state withdrawing . . . from any concern in the interests of that commonwealth of Nations, among whom it was placed; and that exposed it to all the dangers of the aggrandisement of a rival state, or confederacy among numbers against its power; events which became more probable from that diminution of fame and estimation, which was the obvious and inevitable result of the policy pursued.[119]

As this passage shows, Malcolm rejected any view of British India that did not treat it as a "rising nation" in a discrete un-European "commonwealth of nations."[120] He entirely contradicted the arguments of Bosanquet and Grant, who assumed that noninterference was possible because the Company's princely neighbors were weak and divided barbarian nations.[121] This censorious conclusion to Shore's administration was an ideal introduction to Wellesley's aggrandizing administration.

Almost repeating verbatim his description of Cornwallis, Malcolm introduced Wellesley as "a nobleman, whose rank and talents enabled him

to enter on the great duties committed to his charge"—wholly unlike his predecessor.[122] In Malcolm's hands, Wellesley was not the revolutionary would-be dictator, the Indian Napoleon, his critics had portrayed him to be. He had simply revived a tradition laid down by that most prudent and most trusted of modern British statesmen, Lord Cornwallis. The chapter on Wellesley goes into immense detail. Malcolm's abiding message was that Wellesley's succession of costly wars and annexations had brought great rewards. They had eliminated British India's independent rivals in the south, broken the power bases of the leading Maratha princes and brought the old centers of Mughal authority, Delhi, and the princely state of Hyderabad firmly under British influence.

Malcolm avoided suggesting that the administration of Wellesley followed a set plan. As we have seen, the authors of Draft 128 had accused Wellesley of turning the Indian government into a despotism to serve his "grand schemes of ambition" and Malcolm's whole argument so far aimed to show that political conditions in India made noninterference indefensible as a policy. Malcolm used a detailed exegesis of events between 1798 and 1805 to prove Wellesley was always forced into war. These sections bear a strong resemblance to the dense reviews of diplomatic events that can be found in Malcolm's minutes and memoranda. The similarity is strongest when Malcolm is attempting to prove that the last Mysore War was a response to a likely French invasion and that the Treaty of Bassein did not lead to the Second Anglo-Maratha War. Malcolm argued that Shore's weakness in the 1790s had made war with Mysore inevitable by the time of Wellesley's arrival. The fear of a French alliance with Tipu (the spark for the war) was, in Malcolm's view, a direct result of the general lack of confidence in British power in India, which had spread through India following Shore's decision not to aid the Nizam against the Marathas. As in his minute of 1804, Malcolm was equally adamant that the Treaty of Bassein did not cause the Second Anglo-Maratha War. This argument, found in Malcolm's earliest minutes, was important because if Wellesley had expected war to follow, his actions would clearly have breached even the laxest interpretation of the noninterference clause. It is significant that while Malcolm was so anxious to show that the clause was redundant and dangerous, he was also reluctant to suggest that Wellesley flagrantly ignored it.

Malcolm went on to argue that Wellesley created a durable system of peace by binding the leading native princes in a grand military alliance with Britain. This was an increasingly difficult case to make. Even vehement defenders of Wellesley such as his brother Arthur and the respected Madras official, Thomas Munro, were starting to voice public doubts about the wisdom of subsidiary alliances.[123] They argued that subsidiary alliances inevitably led to the collapse of internal government in debt and

corruption and the eventual takeover of the state by the British. Malcolm's defense of the subsidiary alliance system ran along the same lines as his general apologia for Wellesley's administration, avoiding generalization, pleading the merits of specific circumstances:

> Superficial observers have been too ready to compare our connexion with Mysore to that with the Nabob of Arcot, the vizier of Oudh, and the Raja of Tanjore; and to conclude on general but erroneous principles, that it would soon run its course; as it carried, like them, the seeds of its own destruction, and was not of a nature constituted for duration. But a very little reflection will show that radical difference which subsists in those connexions.[124]

Yet, it must be said that Malcolm's portrait of Wellesley's administration is significant as much for what it does not say about Wellesley as for what it does say. The success of the various campaigns for the publication of materials on the Wellesley administration gives a false impression of public accountability. Even A. S. Bennell, the leading authority on the Wellesley administration, declares that "once information was available, the extent to which the Governor General had imposed his own views of events, not simply in terms of decision taking but also in analysis, became very clear."[125] What is incredible, from reading the Parliamentary Papers published between 1804 and about 1811, and Mill's *History,* which made use of them, is how well covered up many of these disputes remained. As various studies have shown, even the immense five-volume *Despatches of Marquis Wellesley*, and the truly colossal *Despatches and Supplementary Despatches of the Duke of Wellington* manage to play down these inner tensions.[126] The *Sketch* played its part as well. The most significant omissions in light of later developments occur in the *Sketch's* narrative of the last years of Wellesley's administration. Malcolm painted a picture of the Second Maratha War heading steadily toward the eradication of Holkar and the establishment of British paramount power, a trajectory broken by the decision of the court to settle immediately with Holkar and abandon all gains made west of the Jumna.

There are several major problems with this version of events. By this time Richard Wellesley had become increasingly isolated from his inner circles of advisers, who were now hundreds of miles away from Calcutta. Arthur Wellesley complained that with Malcolm and himself in the field, the Marquis of Wellesley no longer had anyone to question his policies. By late 1804, Richard Wellesley had come to mistrust his former confidants, Arthur Wellesley, Malcolm, and Lord Lake the commander in chief. As his brother Arthur's letters reveal, the governor general was actually going through immense mental strain.[127] Those on the field knew that the army was at the edge of its capabilities, pay was in arrears, and supplies were

limited and expensive. This was the context in which the British under Colonel Monson were forced by Holkar to retreat in late 1804. Wellesley also disagreed with his men in the field about the postwar settlement. He was in favor of making the east bank of the Jumna the Company's territory. This would have involved laying no claim to those territories on the west bank that Malcolm and others argued Cornwallis and Barlow should not give up in 1806.[128] No mention is made of any of this in the *Sketch.*

Instead, the *Sketch* suggested that the British were prevented from consolidating their new position within the old Maratha Empire by the ignorant and irresponsible demands of the court of directors, and Sir George Barlow's willingness to blindly put them into action. To the charge that the Company could not afford to continue the war against Holkar, Malcolm answered that "Scindiah [Shinde] and Holkar would not have given trouble for much longer." "The embarrassment in our finances" was in Malcolm's view, only "temporary."[129] But for a few months more in the field, Malcolm argued, the Company threw away its chance to permanently strengthen its strategic position on the northwest frontier. Rather than refuting the claims made at the time by the accountant general, Henry St. George Tucker, and others that the Company was on the verge of financial collapse in 1806, Malcolm chose to entirely omit them from his work, thus making the return to noninterference seem particularly imprudent.

The first, and only, major review of the *Sketch* appeared in the *Edinburgh Review,* and it reveals a lot about the ways in which the rather barren field of the historiography of British India was to bear fruit. The anonymous reviewer, James Mill in fact, was at this time earning a living as a journalist while he wrote his own history of British India. Mill was quick to warn his readers that "General Malcolm may be regarded as the advocate of the practises adopted by the most enterprising of the Governors-General, in opposition to the express will of the Legislature, and the avowed sentiments of the Directors of the Company."[130] Mill dismissed Malcolm's reason of state arguments for the extension of the subsidiary alliance system as a smokescreen for Wellesley's arrogant and dangerous ambition. He was convinced that interference in princely India tended to create the precise problems it pretended to solve. "The truth is" Mill wrote in typically sarcastic style, "that independent states, are generally extremely ungrateful to the great men in their neighbourhood who take the trouble of forming plans for their welfare."[131] While Malcolm celebrated the mid-eighteenth century as the dawn of an era of great imperial heroes, Mill bemoaned the fact that a company run by cool-headed administrators was often driven headlong into reckless diplomatic and military adventures by robber barons and egoists like Clive and now Wellesley who masqueraded as great men. Looking in detail at Wellesley's administration, Mill accepted only one of

Malcolm's justifications: the possibility of a French invasion. Still living in the era of French wars, well aware that the general Bonaparte who may have threatened British India in 1798 had become the Europe-conquering Napoleon of his own time, Mill upheld that security concerns merited a decisive blow against possible French allies among the native princes. "We are not of the number of those who have considered this danger as visionary, at any period, from the establishment of the executive directory in 1795, until the commencement of the war in the peninsula of Spain."[132] In making this argument Mill did not accept Malcolm's view of British India as a rising state surrounded by jealous native rivals. Instead, he saw the Company and its possessions as extensions of the British state and thus was willing to approve of Wellesley's wars and annexations as being in the interest of the nation he served. When he came to write his *History* five years later, three years after the end of the Napoleonic Wars, Mill dismissed the French threat as another of Wellesley's tricks to justify imperial expansion. As authors, Mill and Malcolm would not cross each other's paths again until the 1830s. But Mill's review helped to define Malcolm as an imperial apologist and set out the battle lines that, as will be seen, would divide the two men as administrators and historians of British India.

The second edition, the *Political History of India* (1826) appeared after the Third Anglo-Maratha War, when "British Paramountcy" in India was officially declared.[133] This provided Malcolm with a triumphant conclusion to his story. It was easy enough to present the Third Anglo-Maratha War as the long overdue completion of Wellesley's campaign to subdue the Maratha threat to British India. It was equally easy to portray the governor general at the time, the Marquis of Hastings, as the heir to a tradition of military-minded statesmanship begun by Cornwallis and temporarily revived by Wellesley. Malcolm felt that Prinsep's *Transactions of the Indian Government of the Marquis Hastings* (1824) was the definitive work on this subject.[134] For this reason, his account of Hastings's "brilliant administration" was uncharacteristically brief.

Far more surprising was Malcolm's account of the administration of Lord Minto from 1809 and 1813, between the administrations of Barlow and Hastings. Minto was generally seen as the preserver of the policy of noninterference; keeping the British out of Maratha affairs until his departure in 1812.[135] While Malcolm acknowledged this, he made it clear the Minto was the unwilling custodian of this unenviable charge. Malcolm argued that Minto saw that war with the Marathas was likely in the future and that British interests could not be served by a rigid policy of noninterference. Malcolm made this point in his summary of Minto's views on British interference. He relished the irony that Minto, who had been one of

the prosecutors in the Warren Hastings Trial, now recognized "the necessity under which the most eminent of his predecessors had acted." To make his argument Malcolm used several extracts from a letter of Minto, which argued that the British had been wrong to assume that the among the states of India there was a balance of power similar to that which existed in Europe before the French Revolution.[136] Malcolm quoted him at length:

> At no period of the history of India, do we recognise the existence of any such system. With them, war, rapine, and conquest, continue . . . as just and legitimate pursuits and the chief source of public glory, sanctioned . . . by the ordinances of the religion . . . . How vain would be the expectation of augmenting our security by diminishing our power and political ascendancy on the continent of India.[137]

For Malcolm, the chief importance of Minto's administration was the impression it "conveyed to the authorities at home, of the utter impracticality of perseverance in that neutral policy they had desired to pursue."[138] Minto therefore played a pivotal role in the *Political History of India*. His administration transformed the mindset of the home authorities (a change echoed in his own person) to "a course of action more suited to the extent, the character, and the condition of the British power."[139]

Conclusion

Together, the *Sketch* and the extended *History* gave British India a past that explained and sanctioned imperial growth as opposed to the cautious mercantilism of the Company's directors. Malcolm's first concern was to show that the commercial operation begun by the East India Company had, in the course of the eighteenth century, given way to what had become a national enterprise. In this sense, government had a duty to supervise and scrutinize the Company's management of India. This being the case, the noninterference clause was not a cornerstone of the British administration of India. Rather, it was one of the last examples of the resistance of the Company's directors to the decline of their power. The book argued that Britain's Indian territories needed statesmanlike governors who recognized that the Company's possessions constituted a British empire in India.[140] Malcolm's narrative began in 1784, but it did not describe Pitt's Act of that year as the foundation for subsequent British policy. Instead, Malcolm argued that Cornwallis's first administration, beginning in the same year, created an imperial tradition that Shore had deviated from and Wellesley

had restored. Cornwallis had shown that bold leadership was essential if Britain's remote Indian Empire was not to be set upon by local rulers keen to take any chance to strengthen their own position. For Malcolm, Shore's administration failed to learn the lessons of his predecessor. Shore, the dutiful Company servant, was very much a creature of the past, unfit for the geopolitics of the present. By relying on the imperfect legislation governing British India, Shore had left it vulnerable to the opportunism of its native neighbors. Wellesley's empire building was, in this view of things, wholly appropriate to the condition of British India. Naturally, this interpretation glossed over a few important facts. Cornwallis had been a vehement opponent of imperial expansion in India and of subsidiary alliances. Equally, Wellesley himself had come to question the wisdom of expansion into the northwest of India. Both these points forcefully show that while Malcolm appeared to be writing an apologia for Wellesley, he was actually writing one for himself; the return of noninterference in 1806 had been an indictment of all of his diplomatic activities since 1798. It had put an end to the sustained process of imperial consolidation that Malcolm and his Madras cohorts had longed for since the 1780s.

The *Sketch* expressed the historical vision of an ambitious soldier-diplomat in mid-career who felt that India had the potential to be an imperial concern to rival the West Indies or Canada. In this sense, it is worth noting that the second edition ended with an extended account of the history of British relations with Burma. Malcolm's explanation was that the first Anglo-Burmese war had just begun started and his general public might value such information.[141] Malcolm neglected to tell his readers that the war had been going disastrously and he was being considered as a possible governor of Madras or even governor general of Bengal.[142] This should remind us that the *Political History of India* was very much a product of an era of imperial consolidation, inasmuch as it fashioned history into the foundations for empire building.

At its core, the *Sketch*'s interpretation of recent diplomatic history expressed the strategic fears of 1780s Madras. Men like Malcolm had recognized Hobart and, to a far greater extent, Wellesley, as statesmen who had aimed to overcome the strategic weaknesses of British India's three unequal, disparate presidencies through assertive diplomacy and empire building. Malcolm's overall analysis also contained severe censure of the Company's directors, which bears a strong resemblance to the critique found in works like Adam Smith's *Wealth of Nations*.[143] Like James Mill, Malcolm shared Smith's belief that the Company's monopoly on trade combined with its directors' political interests had been the principal cause of the corruption and abuse that had characterized the Company in eighteenth-century India. However, Malcolm's focus was different from

that of Smith and Mill. Malcolm's main interest was to show that the Company's territorial possessions in India created a new set of duties and responsibilities, mismatched to its older mercantile existence as a conduit for wealth into Britain. Providing a critique of the Company as an unwelcome relic of mercantilism was of secondary interest to Malcolm. As has been seen, from his early memorandum on Hyderabad through to the publication of the *Political History of India* over twenty years later, Malcolm was at pains to show that the Company's territorial possessions were part of the British Empire. As such, they required the serious attention of British statesmen and concerns about cost must always give way to strategic necessity. Though Malcolm shared Mill's admiration for the Company as the agents of the British Empire in India, he felt that its leaders, whose interests were essentially commercial, should not shape imperial policy.

In this sense, Peer's concept of British India in the 1820s as a garrison state and of Malcolm and his associates as its spokesmen can be applied to the preceding forty years, when these men were cadets and junior diplomats. But it was the specific demands of life in Madras that really characterized Malcolm's vision of British India. If the Company's officials worried about a lack of resources, and if its soldier-diplomats felt more aggrieved than its civilian staff, then this was far more the case in Madras than in Bengal. In fact, Malcolm's narrative, beginning as it does in 1784 and ending in the 1820s, created a historical narrative built on the foundations of earlier critiques of Company power, but designed to encourage a more self-consciously imperial understanding of Britain's connection with India.

Chapter 3

Sir John Malcolm and the History of Modern Asia

Sir John Malcolm's first book, the *Sketch of the Sikhs* (1812), and his best known, the *History of Persia* (1815), established his reputation as one of Europe's leading oriental historians—a status he would continue to enjoy throughout most of the nineteenth century. Through these works, Malcolm proved himself to be more than a soldier-administrator turned amateur orientalist. At a time of growing literary and scholarly interest in Asia, Malcolm satisfied demand for histories that critically analyzed their sources and identified the deep structures within societies that shaped political events.[1] His information came from his diplomatic missions to Persia and the Punjab. Both regions lay on British India's northwest frontier, and Malcolm saw greater military and commercial activity in this area as integral to the development of an India-wide strategy.[2] This makes the *History of Persia* and the *Sketch of the Sikhs* useful case studies for examining the relationship between imperial enterprise and oriental knowledge in an era when the steady growth of British India was not accompanied by widespread political support at home.[3] This chapter will also analyze Malcolm's reasons for presenting the knowledge he gained from his missions as formal histories rather than travel memoirs. As Malcolm wrote in the preface to his *History of Persia,* "if I had not been a traveller, I would not have been an historian."[4] By thoroughly examining the implications of Malcolm's decision to discuss Persia and the Punjab in the way he did, this chapter shows the importance he attached to historical writing as a medium for understanding Britain's relationship with Asia in his own time.

Unlike all of the major works he wrote after 1818, the *Sketch of the Sikhs* and the *History of Persia* are histories of Asia rather than histories of

the British Empire in Asia; studying them allows us to understand how he approached the considerable problems involved in writing the history of non-European people. Later chapters will explore the relationship between his vision of history and his agenda for British imperial policy in India; this chapter examines the two works in which Malcolm developed his outlook as an historian of Asia, rather than as a Company official.

The Literary Society of Bombay, Orientalism, and Information Gathering

The *History of Persia* and the *Sketch of the Sikhs* sit together as part of a distinct phase in Malcolm's career and in his development as an author. Malcolm wrote the bulk of both works in India and the Persian Gulf between 1806 and 1812. In between his diplomatic missions, Malcolm spent much of his time in Bombay, where he became part of the small explosion of Scottish orientalism centered on Sir James Mackintosh, a Scottish Whig philosopher and lawyer who had become recorder at the Supreme Court of Bombay in 1802. Jane Rendall has shown how he effectively transmitted the Scottish Whig worldview of the late Enlightenment to the many members of the Bombay Literary Society, which he founded soon after his arrival.[5] As Mackintosh wrote of his time in Bombay, "I have endeavored to spread the maxims of historical criticism which seem to have been hitherto . . . forgotten in Indian enquiries."[6] Mackintosh's inaugural speech to the Society acknowledged that although Sir William Jones and his Royal Asiatic Society of Bengal had cultivated a wide variety of projects, they were preoccupied with philology and the study of ancient history and literature.[7] The Bombay Literary Society was to be more wholeheartedly practical. Just as the Royal Asiatic Society had a special interest in the richness of India's past, the Bombay Literary Society would strive to secure its future and give Indian examples for the universal study of man and nature. It aimed to provide "raw material" for modern sciences, notably the science of political economy. "Of all kinds of knowledge," Mackintosh declared, "Political Economy has the greatest tendency to promote quiet and general improvement in the general condition of mankind."[8] In other words, the purpose of the collection of knowledge was to improve society. He stressed that this enterprise required no special knowledge, merely the skills of a keen observer with detailed firsthand knowledge. Indeed, Mackintosh warned his audience that "to be valuable" their observations "must be spontaneous." He reminded the soldiers, civil servants, doctors, and lawyers that made up the society that they were "representatives of the curiosity of Europe."[9]

The Bombay Literary Society's manifesto shaped Malcolm's own agenda as an historian of Asia. He regularly submitted papers and donated artifacts to the society. Mackintosh proofread not only the *Sketch of the Sikhs* and the *History of Persia,* but also the *Sketch of the Political History of India* and the pamphlet on the Madras army mutiny of 1809.[10] As Malcolm acknowledged in a speech to the society, Bombay was the perfect residence for an historian of Asia, like himself. "The City of Bombay presents from its numerous population and the various persons who visit it, a great store of information on almost all subjects connected with the history, geography and actual condition of the different kingdoms of Asia."[11] As an historian of Asia, Malcolm can be seen as the greatest product of Mackintosh's effort to transmit the knowledge of Company servants to a wider European audience. Mackintosh's guidance gave Malcolm the confidence to write and use writing as a means of improving his profile and furthering his career as an imperial statesman.

One must be precise about how Mackintosh and the Scottish intellectual world he represented shaped Malcolm as a thinker and writer. Building on the work of Jane Rendall, Martha McLaren has argued that Scots like Malcolm approached the study of Asian people using stadial theory and an essentially sociological understanding of religion. The theory that societies develop in sequential stages first appeared in classical Greek and Roman literature. The great Scottish social theorists and historians of the mid-eighteenth century are among the most famous and sophisticated developers of stadial theory and are generally associated with a four-stage model. In this model, the first stage was the "savage stage" characterized by small, disunited hunter-gather communities without private property and therefore without significant levels of social hierarchy. Knowledge of this state was drawn largely from modern literature on Native Americans and Pacific Islanders. In the second stage, society would be organized into large groups of warrior-shepherds. This pastoral stage would have private property (chiefly measured by the size of herds of domesticated animals) and social hierarchy, but no division of labor or permanent settlements. The hordes of central Asia were seen as the most historically important example of this stage. In addition to ancient works like Tacitus' *De Origine et situ Germanorum* and medieval accounts of the Mongols, understanding of this phase was also drawn from contemporary ethnographic works such as the French orientalist De Guignes's *Histoire Générale des Huns, des Mongols et des Turcs* (1756). The third stage was the agricultural stage, distinguished by settlement and food surpluses. These surpluses would allow for the division of labor and the further development of inequalities in wealth and status. Generally, discussions of this phase focused on Europe from the fall of the Roman Empire to the late fifteenth century. The last stage,

the commercial stage, saw the massive growth of cities. As inequalities in wealth increased, so too did the legal apparatus to protect property and the political apparatus for power to be given to those with the most property. If commercial societies were more unequal, they were also more generally wealthy, more governed by civility, and more likely to furnish the means for widespread happiness.[12] Greater general wealth and the further division of labor also gave opportunities for the development of arts and science, with the effect that life could be made more comfortable for more people.

It must be stressed that this was a conjectural model.[13] It did not always explain what had or should happen in history, but was rather a tool for understanding differences between societies and how societies can change or why they do not change.[14] Without necessarily engaging fully with sophisticated elaborations of stadial theory found in works such as William Robertson's *History of America* or Adam Smith's *Wealth of Nations*, late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century writers such as Malcolm did refer to "stages of civilization" and made regular use of the four stages outlined here.[15]

Keen to underscore the unity between Malcolm's roles as an historian of Persia and the Punjab and as an administrator governing India, McLaren sees his analysis of Asian society as being analogous to the accounts provided by William Robertson and David Hume of the late fifteenth-century transition of Europe from the agricultural or feudal stage to the commercial stage. By focusing on questions of how societies can improve, how they can be understood in terms of stages of development, and how constitutions can strike a balance between liberty and authority, McLaren provides no adequate explanation for Malcolm's analysis of the Sikhs and of Persia.[16] McLaren is right to say that Malcolm was very much an historian in the tradition of the Scottish Enlightenment, but not for the reasons she identifies. Mackintosh's tutelage and Malcolm's own experience as a diplomat encouraged him to see Sikhism as a political movement within Hinduism, shaped by the pressures and demands of Mughal centralizing. Equally, he viewed Persian history in terms of the monarch's need to secure his own power on the shifting sands of tribal unrest. The *History of Persia* and the *Sketch of the Sikhs* are not primarily concerned with identifying their subjects within a particular stage in the development of society. Instead, they provide historical projections of political problems.

Although McLaren's emphasis on the central problem of how societies develop and prosper links the *History of Persia* and the *Sketch of the Sikhs* to Malcolm's career as governor of Bombay in the 1820s, it implies a certain discontinuity between these works and their contemporary, the hawkish *Sketch of the Political History of India.* Emphasizing the link between Malcolm's ambitions for British diplomacy west of the river Jumna

and the publication of two works on the region, this chapter builds on M. E. Yapp's belief that enterprising soldier-diplomats like Malcolm set the agenda for British strategic thinking in this period.[17] The fact that they promoted themselves and their causes by building and disseminating specialist knowledge meant that these men also set the agenda for the growth of British knowledge of Asia. It is in this context that the *Sketch of the Sikhs* and then the *History of Persia* will now be analyzed.

The History of the Sikhs

Malcolm's first printed work on the manners, customs, and history of an Asian people, his *Sketch of the Sikhs*, originally appeared in 1809 as an article in *Asiatick Researches,* the journal of the Bengal Royal Asiatic Society.[18] It was printed as a book in London in 1811, as a single duodecimo volume. Although a small work by an East India Company officer, it was reviewed by James Mill in the *Edinburgh Review* and soon became the standard British reference book on the Sikhs, not superseded until the appearance of the works of Ibertson, Cunningham, and others later in the century. For Malcolm and his British audiences, the *Sketch of the Sikhs* was significant for two main reasons. First, it shed light on a rising power on the frontiers of British India that had benefited from the British policy of noninterference. Second, it used the Sikh religion as an example of how, as Malcolm *understood* it, the conquest of India by foreign Muslim invaders had led to a transformation within Hinduism.

The Sketch of the Sikhs is typical of the kind of oriental histories written by British imperial administrators at the turn of the nineteenth century. Most of Malcolm's research had been done in the field, in his spare time. Its initial readership was the subscribers of the Royal Asiatic Society of Bengal, and like all British orientalist works, it made little use of the poorly kept official archives in London and the presidency capitals.[19] Instead, it had grown out of the author's own collection of documents and been nurtured by an extensive network of orientalists. It was an amateur work intended for a small audience of fellow amateurs.

Its content is less typical. Unlike the great bulk of British works on South Asia at this time, which discussed southern and northeastern India, the *Sketch of the Sikhs* examined a place and a people well beyond the frontiers of British India, in the war-torn northwest. At a time when so much western writing on India suggested passivity and servility were the leading traits of the Hindus,[20] Malcolm wrote about effective Hindu rebellion against foreign invaders. He argued that the Sikhs had to divest themselves

of much of their Hindu heritage in order to achieve this. At the same time, he used the Sikhs and western India to argue that Hinduism was capable of adaptation and effective resistance.[21]

Malcolm's information on the Sikhs was collected during the closing months of Wellesley's administration in late 1805. War with Holkar and negotiations with Shinde had brought British armies into the northwestern hinterland of the Maratha Empire, the region between the Jumna and the Sutlej Rivers. The British disagreed over the shape their frontier should take in that part of India. Malcolm, chief political agent to the army, felt that the British should capitalize on their new power in northwestern India by offering protection to all those Rajput and Sikh chiefs whose territories lay between the Jumna and Sutlej Rivers.[22] Accordingly, he signed many treaties of alliance with local chiefs. As the previous chapter showed, within a year the governor general, Sir George Barlow, had renounced almost all of the treaties Malcolm and his fellow political agents had made west of the Jumna, fixing the east bank as British India's border. With Delhi in British hands and the Maratha armies scattered, Barlow was sure that little was to be gained by entangling the British in the local politics of Rajasthan and the Punjab.[23] Even Richard Wellesley himself had come to hold this view by 1805.[24] Like his immediate predecessor Lord Cornwallis, Barlow was also acutely aware that the Company's dire finances gave him no other option: The army, spread out across a remote and hostile region, had been unpaid for several months. As the chief accountant in Bengal, Henry St. George Tucker, complained, "let military men lead our armies; but do not make statesmen and financiers out of them."[25] The military men Tucker had in mind were the commander in chief, Lord Lake, who was in personal command of the army, and Malcolm, his chief political agent.

For Malcolm and many other Company soldiers and diplomats, Barlow's decision did not simply slight their authority, it was also a "disgraceful and ruinous" strategic error, leaving the entire region to the west of Delhi open to the ambition of larger powers.[26] For the British in 1805, this meant the Maratha princes Holkar and Shinde first and foremost. However, there was another, half-known threat: the growing power of Sikh chiefs spreading their influence eastward and southward from their power base in the Punjab. Malcolm felt that the aggrandizing Sikh chiefs would be the main beneficiaries of the British decision to retract their frontier eastward to the river Jumna.

Britain's first major diplomatic contact with the Sikhs was the fruit of Malcolm and Lake's controversial and unsuccessful pursuit of Holkar into Rajasthan and the Punjab. Sikh communities could be found all across India, but British knowledge of the Sikhs as a political power came mainly from a handful of Indian sources known to a few prominent orientalists,[27]

and from the accounts of individual European merchants and mercenaries. Unlike many contemporary works of orientalism of similar size, the *Sketch of the Sikhs* is not an overt piece of propaganda urging Britain to take up arms in honor of its imperial obligations;[28] it describes the contemporary Sikh states as being "weak and distracted."[29] However, Malcolm's belief that the Sikhs were capitalizing on a misguided British policy of neutrality clearly influenced his decision to write about them and publish his findings. The introduction to the *Sketch of the Sikhs* certainly has an urgent tone, stating "although the information I convey . . . may be very defective, it will be useful in a moment when every information regarding the Sikhs is of importance."[30] The Sikhs were not simply a curious people in the hinterlands of the old Mughal Empire. The *Sketch of the Sikhs* portrayed them as a "nation" with a track record of effective military resistance to imperial authority, on the borders of British India in a historically and strategically important region.

Malcolm relied on anecdotes and documents acquired during his diplomatic mission. He felt the great advantage the *Sketch of the Sikhs* had over its predecessors was its detailed references to the Adi Grant'h, "the sacred volume of the Sikhs" and other manuscripts, equally unfamiliar to European audiences.[31] Back in Calcutta, a Jain scribe and the Scottish orientalist John Leyden both helped Malcolm translate and transliterate the more difficult texts. In addition, he made use of more readily available works in Persian such as the *Sier Mutakhiran,* which had much to say about the Sikhs as regional rebels against Mughal government. Malcolm certainly read the few earlier European works that had appeared on the Sikhs. We can be sure of this from the mistakes he transmitted from them.[32] However, they could not have been of much use to him in composing his *Sketch of the Sikhs,* which, thanks to its use of Sikh texts, greatly surpassed its predecessors. It was convenient and obvious for Malcolm to understand the Sikhs as a scriptural people who derived their manners and customs from their sacred books, however, he made equal use of political histories, family records, and anecdotes to make inferences about Sikh character and society.

Even in this small book, Malcolm's reliance on oral sources is striking. As Lake's political agent, he spent a considerable amount of time conversing with local rulers and their agents. The British diplomatic initiative to isolate Holkar in that part of India led Malcolm to meet with and befriend as many Sikh chiefs as he could.[10] In the text, he thanked the family of the Raja of Nandon and the envoy Sansar Chand, who had attended on Lord Lake in 1805, for their help. We know from Malcolm's own writings that exchanging information about manners and customs was a standard part of diplomatic conversation at court. On his return to

Calcutta, Malcolm also claimed to have consulted "a Sikh priest of the Nirmala Order."[33] It has been suggested that this last informant's influence can clearly be seen in Malcolm's frequent use of Sanskritized versions of names and his essentially Hindu view of Sikh theology.[12] Malcolm was gregarious to the point of being a gossip and put high value on befriending people of all classes and stations.[34] The frequent use of phrases such as "they often boast . . . ," "I was once told . . ." confirms this. These marks of authenticity are almost obligatory in any travel account, but what we know of Malcolm's character supports the idea that oral evidence shaped his understanding of the Sikhs and their society. It is perhaps to these meetings as much as to the manuscripts he had before him, that we can trace many of the anecdotes and observations about behavior and Sikh self-perception that recur throughout the text. A good example of Malcolm's reliance on personal observation can be found in his account of Sikh religious practice, where he regrets that he had no opportunity to see how Sikhs worship in private.[35] This reliance on oral informants to confirm historical facts and, more interestingly, to determine the significance the Sikhs themselves attached to these facts, is a clear indication of the role firsthand travel played in Malcolm's history writing.

The *Sketch of the Sikhs* is equally striking for the way it evaluates its historical sources. Malcolm pointed out that his sources could be divided into Sikh and non-Sikh. He argued that the latter chiefly consisted of "Mohammedan" writers, who belittled the achievements of a people they viewed as rebels.[36] Malcolm gave more attention to what Sikh writers themselves said, arguing that, "in every research into the general history of mankind, it is of the most central importance to hear what a nation has to say about itself."[37] Throughout the text, Malcolm clearly had two duties: one, to tell the Sikh story as from Sikh mouths and the other, to critically assess the veracity of his sources. So for instance, he dismissed all accounts of Nanak, the first guru, performing miracles as entirely fabulous. This is an example of how the quest to present Sikh history in Sikh terms conflicted with, and lost out to, the desire to write a critically evaluate evidence according to the standards of late eighteenth-century European historical writing.

Malcolm divided the *Sketch of the Sikhs* into three sections: history, religion, and manners and customs. The first section followed the lives of the gurus and of the first Sikh leader after the gurus, Banda Bahadur. It devoted most of its attention to the first guru, Nanak, and to the last, Govind Singh. Malcolm's account of Nanak's life emphasized his piety and his rejection of the worldliness of his father. He saw Nanak's efforts to present himself as the "enemy of discord" between Muslims and Hindus as the main purpose of his travels. In his dealings with Muslims and Hindus, Malcolm noted, Nanak tried to "combat the furious bigotry of the one,

and the deep rooted superstition of the other, but he attempted to overcome all obstacles by force of reason and humanity."[38] He insisted Nanak's life and teachings were so apolitical and pacific that they "did not rouse the bigotry of the intolerant and tyrannical Muhammedan government under which he lived."[39] Malcolm had little to say about the gurus who followed Nanak. Mostly, he attached importance to events which added to the unity of the Sikhs. For instance, of the second guru, he merely said, "his life does not appear to have been distinguished by any remarkable actions."[40] Theological developments within Sikhism mattered to Malcolm only for their political value: He praised Guru Arjun Das for being "the first who gave consistent form and order to the religion of the Sikhs . . . uniting that nation more closely." Malcolm identified Har Govind as the guru responsible for "a remarkable revolution in [the Sikh's] habits, by converting a race of peaceable enthusiasts into an intrepid band of soldiers." However, he pointed out that Har Govind justified bearing arms only as a means of self-defense. This did not break with "Hindu institutes and usages."[41]

In contrast, Guru Govind, who received the lion's share of Malcolm's attention, was unquestionably "the founder" of "the nation." Govind "cherished a spirit of implacable resentment against . . . his father's murderers," the Mughals.[42] This, Malcolm suggested, had led Govind to wish to found a state in opposition to Mughal authority. Accordingly, the need to build a state of warriors, determined the nature of Govind's reforms. Nanak, the first guru, had "carefully abstained from all interference with the civil institutes of the Hindus" but "his more daring successor Guru Govind saw that such observances were at variance with the plans of his lofty ambition."[43] To create an army of proud warriors, Govind "subverted the hoary institutions of Brahma." Abolishing caste, he made all Sikhs equal and decreed that "advance should solely depend on their exertions."[44] In summarizing Govind's aims and achievements Malcolm stated "the object he attempted was great and laudable."[45] Malcolm argued that Govind's importance lay as much in his legacy as in the achievements of his lifetime:

> [I]t was not possible he could . . . , in a few years, . . . oppose, with success, the force of one of the greatest empires in the universe. The spirit, however, which he infused into his followers, was handed down as a rich inheritance to his children.[46]

Describing the Sikh uprising in the Punjab in the years after Govind's death, Malcolm remarked that if the emperor had not returned from the Deccan, "there is reason to think the whole of Hindustan would have been subdued by those merciless invaders."[47] He went on to describe the repression and persecution of the Sikhs that followed their resurgence, and their current weakness and factionalism. When Lord Lake's army had arrived

in the Punjab in late 1805, Malcolm wrote, they witnessed that the Sikhs had become "weak and distracted, in a degree that could hardly have been imagined."[48]

The remaining two sections of the book discussed the Sikh people and their religion. The second section began with a geographic and ethnographic survey, moved to a description of revenues and trade and concluded with Malcolm's observations of Sikh customs and of their military strengths. His discussion of religion focused on Nanak's theology and the changes to religious practice brought about by Govind. He made no observations on the additions of the other gurus. Malcolm's discussion of the Sikh people and their religion constantly referred back to the historical section. For this reason, their contents will be discussed together as parts of Malcolm's overall interpretation of the Sikhs.

As this brief summary shows, two interconnected themes dominate the *Sketch of the Sikhs.* The first theme is the contrast between Nanak, the founder of the Sikh religion, and Govind, the founder of the nation. Malcolm observed with approval, "though they consider Baba Nanak as the author of their religion, [the Sikhs] revere with just gratitude Guru Govind as the founder of their worldly greatness and political independence."[49] The second recurring theme is Sikhism's shifting relationship to Hinduism and Islam. Throughout the *Sketch of the Sikhs,* Malcolm always referred to the Mughals as Mohammedans, deliberately merging their character as foreign invaders and as Muslims. Thus, in Malcolm's text the relationship between the Sikh religion and Hinduism and Islam is closely related to the relationship between the politics of Mughal imperialism and Sikh and Hindu resistance in the Punjab. For Malcolm, much of the difference between Nanak and Govind was intelligible as a contrast in approaches to the Mughals. This comes across clearly in his introduction to the life of Nanak:

> Born in India, at the very point where the religion of Muhammed and the idolatrous worship of the Hindus appeared to touch, and at a moment when both these tribes cherished the most violent rancour and animosity towards each other, his great aim was to blend those jarring elements in peaceful union, and he only endeavoured to effect this purpose through the means of mild persuasion.

This gives a geopolitical context for Nanak's Sikhism as a mission to reconcile Islam and Hinduism. Malcolm saw Nanak's religious syncretism as an essentially Hindu response to Islam. In the section on religion, Malcolm called Nanak a "reformer" within Hinduism, who "made no material invasion of either the civil or the religious usages of the Hindus."[50] Malcolm

respected Nanak's peaceful theology. In his discussion of the Sikh religion, he used extended quotations from Nanak's writing to argue that the guru distilled "pure deism" from a blend of Islam and Hinduism. Malcolm continually reminded his reader that Nanak did not offer a doctrine of political resistance to Mughal authority. For Malcolm, this was confirmed by the freedom Nanak had in addressing rulers and religious leaders throughout the Muslim world. Malcolm clearly admired Nanak's effort to create peace through religious renewal. Moreover, Malcolm's sympathetic register was wholly consistent with his agenda of presenting Sikhism as Sikhs understood it. Nonetheless, Malcolm insisted that Nanak was not the founder of a "nation." As we have seen, Malcolm credited later gurus with beginning this process.

Guru Govind's status as a nation builder made him the most important and successful figure in Malcolm's *Sketch of the Sikhs.* In reviewing Govind's life and character, Malcolm wrote, "it is impossible not to recognise many of those features which have distinguished the most celebrated founders of political communities."[51] For Malcolm, Govind's implacable desire for vengeance against the Mughals was the key to his life and teachings. To strike a blow against the Mughals, he needed to turn the Sikhs into an independently minded nation of warriors. Malcolm saw this as his reason for "breaking" with Hinduism, by accepting converts, disregarding caste distinctions, and arming his followers. Malcolm suggested that "to inspire men of low rank, and of grovelling minds with pride in themselves, he changed the name of his followers from Sikh to Singh, or lion." Malcolm credits Govind with understanding the historical context in which he lived. He recognized that Sikhs would need to break with Hinduism in order to resist the Mughals. Malcolm's use of words like "necessary," "wise," and "fine" to describe Govind's policies underscores this sense of Govind's importance in the historical evolution of the Sikhs as a nation. Govind's success came from his ability to create laws that suited the religious heritage and political necessities of the Sikhs.

Malcolm's conviction that Govind had turned the Sikhs into a fierce egalitarian warrior community prompts the question, What importance does Malcolm attach to others factors in shaping Sikh character? For Malcolm, the Sikh's political system largely shaped their character. In this sense, Govind's desire to create an independent warrior people had a hugh effect on his people. Malcolm said this accounted for the great difference between the warlike Singhs and other Sikhs. He did say that the mountainous environment had made them hardy and capable of enduring immense fatigue. But this was not because the hostile environment made them a warrior people.[52] Rather, Malcolm felt that years of fighting in barren and rugged terrain had made the Singhs tougher than their more

domestic brothers. Equally, Malcolm described the Singhs as capable of bloodthirsty and cruel behavior, but remarked that this was a result of their frequent exposure to war. He did not argue that their environment affected their social structures and therefore shaped the nature of their political history. In this sense, the *Sketch of the Sikhs* is notably distinct from contemporary works such as Marsden's *History of Java* (1819) or Elphinstone's *Account of the Kingdom of Cabaul* (1815), both of which saw stages of development as the fundamental causes of social and political structures in the societies they observed.

Ultimately, in Malcolm's estimation, the Sikh society was prone to division and weakness, and their "republican" political structure was the cause. He noted that this was an unusual departure from his usual agreement with Sikh accounts of themselves.[53] It has been said that Malcolm's image of a rootless and unstable Sikh republic, rocked by factions and intrigues and likely to topple into anarchy or to be steadied by the firm hand of a tyrant, anticipated the eventual rise of Ranjit Singh (although Malcolm appears not to have expected much from him).[54] Malcolm's critique of republicanism, notably his belief that its egalitarianism was a source of instability and a likely entrance point for tyranny, resembles Burke's assessment in *Reflections on the Revolution in France*. His formula did not simply look forward in Sikh history, it was looking back at French history. For Malcolm, the disparity between the Sikhs' view of themselves and the reality of a fragile political unity ultimately devalued them as dynamic state builders. He saw the guru-mata as a "national assembly" that could work well only when the members were united. Malcolm's misgivings about the Sikh form of government came across clearly in his description of the Sikh response to the arrival of the British and Maratha armies in 1805:

> [A] Guru-mata, or national council, was called, with a view to decide on those means by which they could best avert the danger by which their country was threatened, from the presence of the English and Maratha armies, it was attended by few chiefs: and most of the absentees, who had any power, were bold and forward in their offers to resist any resolution to which this council might come. The intrigues and negotiations of all, appeared, indeed, at this moment, to be entirely directed to objects of personal resentment, or personal aggrandisement; and every shadow of that concord, which once formed the strength of the Sikh nation, seemed to be extinguished.[55]

Although Malcolm did not describe the Sikhs as an imminent threat to British interests, his picture of Sikh history demonstrated the volatility and strategic significance of the Punjab and the entire northwest of India. The notion, which lay behind the return to noninterference in 1806, that India west of the Jumna was an obscure backwater that the British could

afford to keep out of now that they had secured Delhi, was challenged by Malcolm's account of the creation of a militant Sikh identity and of the Sikhs' success in resisting and even threatening Mughal authority.

The History of Persia

Malcolm's *History of Persia,* published in 1815, applied the analytical techniques of the *Sketch of the Sikhs* to a much more familiar theme in oriental history. Rather than examining the history of revolt and religious revivalism on the fringes of an empire, Malcolm now turned his attention to the question of imperial centralization. The classical idea of Persia as a semimythical despotism, mired in oriental luxury, propped up by tyrannical cruelty had not been challenged by the works of seventeenth-century French travelers like Chardin and Tavernier. With his *History,* Malcolm used firsthand experience and unfamiliar Persian and Indian sources to critically assess Persian despotism as a form of government. In writing a history of an ancient Eastern country using standards typically applied to the study of modern Western societies, Malcolm developed a framework for understanding oriental history that reflected contemporary developments in historical writing.

The two vast quarto volumes of the first edition testify that *The History of Persia* was intended to be the last word on Persian history and society. On reading the *History of Persia,* Mountstuart Elphinstone observed, "Malcolm's 'History' is grave, sober, judicious, philosophical—Not a trace of Jack Malcolm in it."[56] In other words, on the face of it the *History* was a surprisingly dense book for an earthy soldier-diplomat like Malcolm to write. This was certainly the effect Malcolm had hoped to achieve. His reputation had been damaged after the controversial, costly, and unfruitful mission to the Persian court in 1810. By publishing the *History of Persia,* Malcolm planned to establish himself as the leading British expert on Persian affairs. Moreover, by unearthing modern Persia from oriental romance and giving it a critical narrative history as a regional superpower, Malcolm hoped to forward his own political agenda: proving that Britain must pay closer attention to its Asian neighbor. This section will examine the content and arguments of the book. It will then explain how these were shaped by Malcolm's career aims as a hawkish diplomat writing about an important power on the periphery of British India.

As a bid to establish Malcolm's reputation as an expert on Persia, the *History of Persia* was more a rescue mission than a by-product of a successful diplomatic career. Malcolm's three missions to the court of Fath

Ali Shah between 1799 and 1810 created friction between the Company and the British government without achieving lasting results of much substance. His first mission to Persia, in 1799, was one of his earliest assignments from Governor General Richard Wellesley. The French occupation of Egypt and Syria provided the immediate context for Malcolm's mission to build commercial and political influence with a key regional power. On paper, Malcolm had a vague remit to help reestablish a British commercial presence in the Persian Gulf, to curb French influence in the Levant, and to establish a defensive military alliance. It seems likely that Wellesley planned to make Persia much more than a buffer state, turning it into a dependent ally like Awadh.[57] After over a year of delays, the Persians eventually signed two rather nonspecific commercial and defensive treaties aimed at reviving British trade in the Gulf, giving general assurance of mutual protection. However, the treaties were never ratified and Anglo-Iranian relations remained substantially the same.[58]

Malcolm's next mission was prompted by a second French invasion scare. The Treaty of Tilsit between France and Russia, signed in July 1807, brought peace to Europe and a French mission to Tehran.[59] The Francophobic governor general, Lord Minto, dispatched leading diplomats from British India to all the major courts along the land route from the Persian Gulf to India. Malcolm, heading up the Persian mission, was given three frigates, five hundred sepoys, and orders to prepare to seize the island of Karrack in the Persian Gulf. The Persians detained Malcolm at Shiraz, and the scheme was soon abandoned as war in Europe broke out once again.

Malcolm's third visit, in 1810, clashed with a separate mission from London, which had been dispatched by the Crown rather than the Company. The friction between the two missions, almost ending in a duel, was exploited by the Persians, who attempted to play each side off against the other.[60] Malcolm's missions were criticized by the directors of the East India Company and the British government not only for their lack of results, but also for their immense cost. Confident that lavish gifts and a near regal entourage would earn him political respect in Persia, Malcolm ran up a huge bill, the payment of which was still a sticking point between him, the Company, and the government three years later.[61] Thus, Malcolm's knowledge of Persia, had not been accompanied by real diplomatic gains, nor had it enhanced his career.

It is hard to be precise about Malcolm's aims for Anglo-Iranian relations, and the part the *History of Persia* was to play in his scheme. As has been seen with the *Sketch of the Political History of India,* Malcolm often presented long-term initiatives to consolidate British imperial power as a series of pragmatic responses to short-term local crises. This is a plausible

explanation for his reading of the Persian situation. French invasion scares could have justified Malcolm in making ambitious demands for trading rights, seizing strategically important territory in the Persian Gulf, and pushing for close military alliances. His three missions all assumed that an increased British role in the Gulf was possible and could be necessary if a European power became a serious rival in the region. Malcolm's early diplomatic researches into the tumult of modern Persian history led him to believe that the newly established Qajar dynasty might welcome a closer alliance with British India.[62] That said, British imperial designs in the Middle East in the early nineteenth century were vague and they fluctuated as local politics, grand European power politics, and the situation in British India changed.[63] Malcolm's *History of Persia* should be seen less as the instrument of a particular policy and more as a means of restating the potential importance of Persia to Britain and British India. This affects how the book should be read. Certainly, Malcolm's professed desire to make Persia and its modern history familiar to a European audience is consistent with his belief that Persia should loom larger on the horizons of British India.

Unlike the *Sketch of the Sikhs,* which was written initially for a narrow audience of amateur orientalists, the *History of Persia* was aimed at the wider reading public. Malcolm hoped to fill "a blank in our literature," by acquainting "the English reader" with the "history and condition of a people, who have in most ages acted a conspicuous part on the theatre of the world."[64] The *History of Persia* was designed to increase public interest in Persia and transform it from a semimythical kingdom in the obscure lands between the Ottoman Empire and India, into an Asian superpower that could not be ignored by Europe or British India.

Although Malcolm did not state his motives directly in the *History of Persia*, the book's dedication to the Marquis Wellesley hints at his deeper purpose. It declared Wellesley's "administration of the British Possessions in India has connected his name with the history of almost every kingdom of Asia."[65] This seemingly hollow rhetoric was in fact a challenge to the view that British possessions in India could be governed in isolation from other nations. It was a reminder of the role Wellesley had played in building British India up as a rising Asian empire. As the dedication made plain, Wellesley's vision of British India was the first cause of Malcolm writing the *History of Persia.* "To the flattering partiality with which you regarded and encouraged my efforts in the Public Service," Malcolm wrote, "I owe those opportunities which have enabled me to write the History of Persia."[66]

The *History of Persia* demonstrates why Malcolm has been described as "one of the great traveller-historians of the romantic era."[67] Malcolm set out his credentials as a traveler-historian in the preface. He contrasted the

formative years of most historians, spent at college and in libraries, with his own, spent in the camp as a cadet in India.[68] Malcolm saw his experience, gained by extensive travels in India and Persia, as his key qualification as an historian. As he wrote, "the nature of my public employment, which led to my travelling over almost all the provinces of Persia, gradually improved the knowledge I possessed of its inhabitants."[69] He was also a traveler-historian in that his own experience could verify the claims of his narrative. "My opinions," he wrote, "which are invariably expressed with freedom, may perhaps, have some value, from being those of a man whose only lessons have been learned in the school of experience."[70] Malcolm frequently returned to this theme in the text. For instance, when quoting Gibbon's description of the fortified city of Dara on the borders of the Roman and Persian empires, Malcolm drew from his own travels noting, "the fortifications appear to be like those of the present day."[71] Malcolm's personal experience thus aided his task of writing an authentic history of Persia.

Malcolm understood that his great contribution was to write a history of Persia rather than a travel account. As in many contemporary works on oriental history, Malcolm addressed the problem of writing the history of a nation like Persia: "The tale of despotism which is the only one they have to tell, is always the same: and the quick succession of absolute monarchs, and servile ministers, often render the volumes which record their lives a mere catalogue of names and of crimes."[72] He went on to explain that the need for a Western history of Persia, lay not so much in the lack of Persian historians but in the inevitable limitations placed on their works by the system of government under which they lived:

> Asiatic historians seldom speculate upon changes in the manners of men, in the frame of society, or on forms of government. They are entire strangers to the science of political economy, and never reason upon any subject connected with the rise and fall of nations, except with reference to the personal character of rulers. It must be obvious, that such writers . . . can never attain any portion of that excellence which belongs to those who, living under happier auspices, have mixed the wisdom of philosophy with the facts of history in a manner which has enabled them to instruct future ages, by their narration of the events of the past.[73]

As the preceding quotations illustrate, Malcolm assumed that the Western historian would be able to see intricacies and draw maxims out of the comparatively desolate earth that had produced the Persian historians he found so inadequate. European historians had distinct advantages. They were able to offer some comparison with other societies. This need not be by using the rather formal stadial theories found in works like James Mill's *History of British India.* Instead, it might be simply the ability to differentiate certain social and political phenomena as being products of

one type or stage of society rather than another. Second, Western historians could bring to bear their more extensive understanding of the science of man. A third advantage was also implied in this extract. Malcolm seemed to be suggesting that historians raised under a despotic government could not have psychological insight into political power relations. The dazzling image of the despot obscured the view of the other members of the court. Thus, someone like Malcolm was not only better equipped by education to write about Persia than, say, a Persian historian, he was more able to understand the interplay of characters that formed political history even in a despotism. Together, these advantages allowed him to give interest and significance to what would otherwise be a catalogue of hideous crimes and usurpations. Thus, for Malcolm, the historian of oriental societies converted the data they found in Asian annals into something that is intelligible to Western audiences as "history."

The *History of Persia* was a chronological narrative beginning with Persian origin myths and ending with the arrival of Malcolm's second mission in 1808. It commenced with a geographical description of the country and quickly proceeded to an account of ancient Persia under the Paishdadian dynasty. From the middle of chapter 5, Malcolm introduced the Arabs and the origin and growth of Islam. The first volume's narrative finished in 1729, and at this point Malcolm inserted an appendix on the use of Persian and Greek sources in compiling ancient Persian history. The second volume began with the rise of Nadir Shah in the early eighteenth century. The historical narrative ended halfway through the second volume. The remainder of the second volume was taken up with chapters on religion, government, geography and culture, manners and customs, and the character of the people. M. E. Yapp has described these sections of the *History* as a practical guide to modern Persia that sits poorly with the rest of the work.[74] In fact, for a historian like Malcolm, consciously modeling himself on authors like David Hume and William Robertson,[75] an analysis of society, religion, and culture was essential to the historical narrative because it showed both the context in which politics operated and the effects of major political change. Such digressions explained fully how and why even quite similar societies could have significantly different histories.

Malcolm frequently interrupted the historical narrative with digressions either in the text (e.g., on the origins of the ruler Nadir Shah), or in their own chapters (e.g., on the rise of the Mughals). These digressions tended to anticipate the described events, instead of being retrospective. For example, his account of the life of Muhammad and the early history of Islam comes before the invasion of Persia. They were almost exclusively on two topics—religion and the tribes—which Malcolm viewed as the main instruments of change in his political narrative. In the case of religion,

Zoroastrianism, Islam, and the predominance of Shiism were all analyzed as causes for major political and constitutional transformation. The same was true of Malcolm's interpretation of the tribes. As will be seen, Malcolm believed that Persia, as a despotism, had often become culturally stagnant. The impetus for political renewal and revolution had only ever come from the sporadic expansion of volatile tribal groups. Aware of the political threat from the tribes, Persian monarchs often followed a "jealous policy" of "transplanting" them to "distant quarters and foment internal division."[76] Frequently, religious and tribal upheavals were connected. For instance, Malcolm interpreted the spread of Islam in the sixth century as the result of an Arabic tribal outburst, fueled by religious zeal. Equally, Malcolm explained Nadir Shah's rise to power in terms of changes within his own tribe that propelled them out of their homelands. The subsequent narrative of Nadir Shah's rule was given meaning by his aversion to Shia Islam and his attempt to spread the Sunni faith in Persia.[77] Malcolm's analysis of Nadir Shah's reign, like his extended accounts of the spread of Islam through Arab invasions, demonstrated that tribal power and religious fervor were constant themes in Persian political history.[78]

In contrast to the uneven influence of the tribes and religion on the Persian state, Malcolm saw the despotism of the central government as a fairly constant constraint on Persia's culture and economy. Regardless of how many times power changed hands, Malcolm observed that Persia's political system "continued in an unchanged state for more that twenty centuries."[79] Malcolm's narrative is a study of the nature of political power in Persia, and it is worth examining and analyzing its central arguments in some detail. Like every other contemporary European writer on Persia, Malcolm had to consider to what extent Persia was a despotism and what role religion played in its government. This agenda had in part been set by the great swell of French seventeenth-century travelers to Persia such as Chardin and Tavernier, who focused on the cruel, arbitrary rule of the kings.[80] Relying on these works, Montesqueiu's *Espirit Des Lois (*1748) had represented Persia as the archetypal oriental despotism, where the monarch was above the law and his tenacious grip on patronage meant that even his provincial governors lacked real independence. While he made no direct references, Malcolm's insistence that the reach of the Persian despot's power was limited was clearly a response to the kind of arguments Montesquieu had expressed. In both his historical narrative and the account of modern Persia, Malcolm described how the actions of the king were often checked by the independent power of the tribes and the autonomous legal authority of the ulema—the shia religious leaders. A striking example of this is his coverage of the rise of the Qajar dynasty in the later eighteenth century, which he introduced with a "view of Persia and the adjoining countries, before the elevation of the reigning family to the throne." In this chapter,

he described how the state building of individual chiefs and the resistance of the nobles were inauspicious for the Qajars' attempt to seize power and spread their authority from their new capital, Tehran. Malcolm's analysis of Persian despotism, focusing on the autonomy of the tribes, the provincial governors, and the clerics, resembles the French orientalist Anquetil-Dupperon's *Theory of Oriental Legislation* (1806), which attempted to disprove Montesqueiu's view of governance in Asia.[81] However, Malcolm makes no direct reference to either the *Theory of Oriental Legislation* or to Montesqueiu.[82] Malcolm certainly shared Anquetil-Dupperon's conviction that the existence of independent forces in Persian society, such as the power of the clerics, made total despotism an impossibility. However, Malcolm assumed that the Persian monarch's main objective was to build up and preserve his despotic power. How else could he maintain power long enough to bring stability to the country? Malcolm presented Persian history as the playing out of an historical problem: The varying effects of a combination of a tradition of despotic power and tribal unrest set the parameters for how its political history should be interpreted. Malcolm was criticized by early reviewers for suspending moral judgment when it came to infamously bloody tyrants such as Abbas the Great and Nadir Shah.[83] Elphinstone, for example, declared that Malcolm was "in love with tyranny."[84] Yet Malcolm saw that any Persian monarch could be effective only if he built up his power at the expense of other factions in society. He judged Persia's rulers in terms of their ability to counter its inherent problems through successful centralization and the effective consolidation of political power.

The nature of Persian despotism was the central preoccupation of the *History of Persia.* In its narrative, the ability of individual rulers to overcome conspiracy, invasion, and revolt and to outmaneuver the moral power of the clerics is a constant theme. This theme received separate notice in two further chapters, one on the form of government and another on the population. The despot, as the foremost person in the state, was particularly important in Malcolm's survey of the people and their manners because it is the higher ranks, "whose example . . . always [has] so powerful an effect upon the branches of the community."[85]

In evaluating despotism as a form of government and its merits, he considered the rulers and reigns it tended to produce and its ability to bring improvements. During a reflection on the inevitable decay of all political power, Malcolm offers a sharp insight into the character of the Asian monarch:

> [A]mid the ruins with which that country is covered, we find few [edifices] that were dedicated to purposes of real public utility. The polished fragments of vast palaces, and the remains of flattering sculpture, prove only

> that there were rich and powerful monarchs, not that they had happy or civilized subjects. The object of ambition among all eastern kings, is to enjoy grandeur, and to leave a great name. Their grandeur is comprised in their personal state and magnificent palaces; their fame in conquest. These are the passions which animated the breast of a Kai Koosroo, an Ardishher. . . . and it is evident that to effect such objects, (whatever may be his personal character), a monarch must be absolute, and his subjects strangers to freedom.[86]

Leaving aside the tone of censure, it is noteworthy that Malcolm saw conspicuous consumption, meaning in this case the construction of vast monuments, as an essential aspect of the king's identity. This correlates with what we know about Malcolm's actual dealings with Eastern monarchs and his writings about how the Company should deal with them. During his Persian missions, he insisted that his lavish entourage as a diplomat enhanced the native estimation of the British. Equally, as with the Maratha Peshwa in 1818, he was always an advocate of large pensions to sidelined rulers, which would allow them to maintain the form of regal authority, arguing that this was often as satisfying as, if not more so than, its substance.[87] A noticeable feature of much of the writing on British India in this period is the criticism of this kind of regal spending as irresponsible extravagance from the governor of an impoverished people. Amid a large body of European writing that identified such rulers as "extravagant parasites," Malcolm is one of the few writers who attempted to describe this kind of courtly consumption as a function of oriental kingship and not merely the infantile caprice of an oriental prince (as Mill saw it).[88]

In discussing the character of the despot, Malcolm noted that court life gave him few opportunities to develop humanity and compassion. Here, Malcolm painted a portrait, which resembled similar passages in Bernier and Chardin (the two great French observers of Mughal and Persian courtly life), of the Persian king closeted in his seraglio, counseled by eunuchs and women, too detached from reality to be the prudent and manly monarch he should be:

> There is perhaps, nothing more difficult than for a Monarch of Persia to continue humane, even if that should be his natural disposition . . . we have hardly one instance, in the history of Persia, of a king of that country evincing any uncommon degree of humanity: while there are many to prove, that the habit of shedding blood often becomes a passion; by a brutal indulgence in which, human beings appear to lose that rank and character which belong to their species.[89]

However, Malcolm argued that despotic systems contained within themselves the opportunity to balance the moral turpitude of courtly life. He

cited the Persian king's daily hearing of the petitions of the people as the principal antidote to the secluded and corrupting life he would otherwise lead. Malcolm pointed out that the right of all subjects, however lowly, to an audience with the king was a key part of despotism. In some ways it placed him above monarchs with more limited powers who gave their ears only to the powerful.[90]

Moreover, Malcolm saw that the despot was seldom the sole source of power and authority in the Persian state. In European thought the Persian monarch was the archetypal oriental despot. Montesquieu had cited the subservience of the regional governors to the court of the despot as the crucial symptom of the despotic state. Thanks to this, no rival or complimentary power bases could be said to exist independent of the monarch's. Second, the Persian monarch, Montesquieu showed, was not constrained by any law.[91] Malcolm agreed that the characters of the governors of provinces and of cities were, "in a considerable degree formed on that of the reigning sovereign."[92] However he went on to note, "they are, . . . in general more manly and open, both in their manner and conduct, than the ministers and courtiers; and are therefore, as a body, entitled to more respect: for habits of violence and injustice do not debase the nature of man so much as those of deceit and falsehood."[93] Malcolm argued that in practice the monarch is often no more than the ruler of his capital.

More important, the authority of the clerics, while it seldom clashed directly with the legal powers of the monarch, certainly constrained him in practice. According to Malcolm, Nadir Shah's confiscation of the revenues of the religious orders was the most impolitic decision of his career.[94] Even a powerful Persian ruler could not hope to outmaneuver the clerics in a land where their influence was so strong without making enemies of them and alienating himself from the people.[95]

Having suggested that the independence of the senior clerics limited the authority of the Persian king, Malcolm at the same time argued that Islamic political theory ultimately ingrained despotism into both political and domestic arrangements. As he put it, "The mind is formed by its domestic habits: and in a Mahomedan community, every man is a despot in his own house. From childhood to old age he hears of, and sees nothing but arbitrary power."[96] Naturally, this meant that the experience of despotic government was not as onerous as Malcolm's Western audience imagined it might be. "Accustomed only to obey or to command," Malcolm felt that the archetypal Persian, "cannot understand what is meant by individual, or political freedom: and he recognises in the monarch of his country the same absolute power which he claims to exercise over all whom nature or fortune have placed under his own authority."[97]

In Malcolm's tour of Persian society, despotism was ever present as the cause of decay in the arts and commerce (Persia's former place at the

forefront of civilization is a constant theme of the book). Malcolm felt the need to explain how such a violent and unstable society had been able to produce the refined luxuries its tyrannical rulers enjoyed:

> That this luxury could not have existed without a knowledge of many of the arts of peace, and a certain progress in civilization, is obvious: but this progress was continually retarded by the internal wars consequent to the system of government, and by the recurring irruptions of savage tribes of warriors.[98]

As has been seen, Malcolm thought that Eastern despotism could never produce sophisticated historians because free intellectual inquiry was a virtual impossibility in such a hostile political environment. Malcolm argued that poetry was the only substitute under a despotic government like Persia's. Poetry was often seen by contemporary European writers as the foremost art of barbarous societies. This idea had a strong provenance in Enlightenment discourse about the supremacy of reason over sentiment. In barbarous societies, the argument ran, the imagination, the chief faculty used in writing poetry, had greater sway over the mind than reason.[99] Malcolm himself suggested that the Persians valued poetry so highly because they were "at that stage of civilization when the minds of men dwell with the most enthusiastic rapture on that enchanting branch of literature."[100] As Malcolm's tone implies, he was not dismissive of poetry. In fact, he argued that in a despotism, poetry was one of the few outlets for intellectual enquiry and even political dissent:

> for where liberty is unknown, and where power, in all its shapes, is despotic, knowledge must be veiled to be useful. The ear of the despot would be wounded by the expression of direct truths; and genius itself must condescend to appear in that form in which alone its superiority would be tolerated.[101]

Malcolm argued that despotism not only constrained the arts, it corrupted the character. Malcolm reminded his readers that Europeans generally viewed Persian people as being corrupt and deceitful by nature. Malcolm did not refute this; instead, he provided a sympathetic explanation for it, and, crucially, one which had an underlying moral relativism:

> The falsehood of the Persians is proverbial: nor are the inhabitants of that country forward to deny this national reproach: but they argue, that this vice appertains to the government, and is the natural consequence of the condition of the society in which they live: and there can be no doubt, that when rulers practice violence and oppression, those who are oppressed will

> shield themselves by every means within their power: and when they are destitute of combination and strength, they can only have recourse to art and duplicity.

Malcolm saw the system of government under which Persians lived as the great force that shaped their character. Moreover, he argued that despotism distorted the moral order, as his reader would understand it, often making vice the means of being virtuous:

> Nor is their moral character always debased by the use of this species of defence; instances continually occur in Persia, as in other countries subject to an arbitrary government, where the head of a village, or the magistrate of a city, entitles himself to the gratitude and admiration of those under him, by a virtuous and undaunted perseverance in falsehood, by which he endangers his own life and property, to save others who consider him as their guardian.[102]

For Malcolm, Persia's political history could only be properly judged if the effects of despotism on the king and his people were fully appreciated. If one understood the effects of despotism, one could discern virtue and freedom of thought where none seemed to exist. Such was the pervasive effect of despotism on society and the individual that tyranny and oppression could often be the only suitable means for prudent statecraft:

> The government of this country may be termed a military despotism, the action of which is regulated by a consideration of the condition of its subjects, and the condition of the empire. The power of the Monarch of Persia rests chiefly upon the fear he inspires. It has been well observed, that the arm of a despotic prince should be always uplifted.[103]

This maxim led Malcolm to defend the eighteenth-century king Shah Abbas's vicious repression of his opponents as prudent. Elsewhere in the *History of Persia,* Malcolm accounted for the frequent tyranny and oppression of the Persian kings by describing the effects of their "enervating and luxurious habits" on their character.[104] In contrast, Shah Abbas "acted more from policy than passion."[105] His "desire was to establish general tranquillity, which he knew in a despotic government must be founded on terror, and a complete submission to the monarch."[106] With "every province . . . ripe for rebellion . . . it must have required dreadful examples, before such a country could be reduced to the tranquillity which the general good required; and the energetic individual who effected this beneficial change must often have acted the part of a cruel tyrant."[107] Malcolm felt that the reign of Abbas had brought peace and with it a revival of commerce

and culture. Persia, he concluded, "was never more prosperous and more powerful than under Shah Abbas"[108] For Malcolm, he showed that a king could reign for the benefit of people under a despotism, however, he had no choice but to use the tools of the despot to accomplish his ends.

With its narrative history and its extensive chapters on modern Persia, the *History of Persia* demonstrated how despotism affected a society. In doing so, Malcolm emphasized despotism's intrinsic limitations. In Persia's case, the great patchwork of tribes, whose manners and habits were not enervated by life under the despotism, restricted the geographic reach of the monarch's authority. The independent power of the religious leaders and their active maintenance of sharia law meant that the Persian monarch was not above all law. Malcolm's *History of Persia* was his most detailed study of an Asian society. Not only did it put Persia on the map as it were, it examined how institutions and practices found all over Asia and all over the Islamic world had developed, how they worked, and how they had affected political events. The most striking example of this was Malcolm's comprehensive study of despotism, but he also examined a range of other topics such as Islam's effect on government. Malcolm's book also told the history of Persia as part of a wider geopolitical jigsaw: The modern history of Persia was the history of volatile imperial rivalry played out in Persia, Afghanistan, and India. By telling this story, Malcolm was ratcheting up the importance of India's northwestern frontier.

The History of Persia is significant in Malcolm's career as an author in part because its value as a work of orientalism was acknowledged so quickly after its publication. It played a major part in literature's great lunge to the East in the decade after the end of the Napoleonic Wars. Robert Southey, Thomas Moore, and Sir Walter Scott all made use of the *History of Persia's* largely non-Greek rendering of ancient Persian history and its accounts of Zoroastrianism.[109] Thanks to the *History of Persia,* Malcolm became a minor man of letters, writing an article in the *Quarterly Review* in 1818. He became an honorary Doctor of Laws at Oxford University in 1815 and corresponded with the leading French Academician, Sylvestre De Sacy.[110]

Sir John Malcolm and Orientalism during the Napoleonic Wars

The connection this chapter has suggested between Malcolm as an historian and Malcolm as a diplomat needs to be placed into the context of contemporary British orientalism with a certain amount of care. Even though growing enthusiasm for "the East" is a striking element of the last

years of the Napoleonic Wars, it is not at all clear what role the empire itself played in this outpouring. At first sight, the link appears obvious enough. The years between 1798 and 1818 witnessed the consolidation of British power in the Indian subcontinent, culminating in the rapid and decisive victories of the Pindari and Anglo-Maratha wars of 1818. Equally, a range of prominent men of letters, including Scott, Shelley, and Thomas Love Peacock, had well-documented connections with British India.[111] The problem is that the great consolidation of British power in India over these years occurred with very limited support from politicians in Britain. The Anglo-Nepalese War of 1814–1815 and the Third Anglo-Maratha War attracted little attention in Parliament. The domestic and continental impact of the end of the Napoleonic Wars drew British attention away from India.[112] The indifference of political decision makers was matched by a limited supply of resources. Focusing chiefly on botany, Richard Drayton has described the Company as a great patron of scientific inquiry and learning in general.[113] The picture he paints of knowledge and imperial dominion advancing hand in hand cannot be applied to the study of Asian languages and cultures. Moreover, Edward Said's argument that great knowledge-gathering projects built the foundations of empire in this period relies heavily on French examples such as the colossal twenty-three–volume *Description de l'Égypte,* the fruit of Napoleon's Middle Eastern campaign.[114] Indeed, Charles Grant, the prominent Company director, complained bitterly that England had no great institute of oriental learning to rival that of the French.[115] As Robert Irwin has stressed, earlier schemes to establish chairs in Persian or Turkish at Oxford had come to nothing, and the teaching of oriental languages at the universities in this period was poorly regarded and poorly resourced.[116] The Company's own manuscript collection and its active policy of subscribing to books on oriental topics made the India House library the largest of its kind. However, this potentially valuable resource was not well managed in this period.[117] It was not until later in the century that the library became useful or popular.[118] Certainly, as Bernard Cohn and others have argued, knowledge-collecting and codifying projects like the compilation of legal digests in Bengal from the 1770s on had a direct relationship to the will of the British to govern and control.[119] That said, such initiatives were driven by the demands of officials in India rather than diktats from London. Moreover, this argument applies accurately only to Bengal. Famously, the same level of research into local revenue-collecting practices did not occur in Madras until the early nineteenth century.[120] As Michael Dodson has recently argued, local circumstances determined the extent to which oriental scholarship served imperial projects, and the level of control central government had over knowledge of Asian peoples varied greatly over time.[121] The heightened

literary interest in Asia in the era of the Napoleonic Wars happened in spite of limited patronage and resources, at a time when British imperial consolidation in India was a minor part of British politics.

The *History of Persia* and the *Sketch of Sikhs* are excellent examples of how British orientalism thrived in such infertile soil. These two works were not obvious cultural products of an age of empire. Instead, they were examples of how empire building and the orientalism that accompanied it often happened without the support of the British state or the East India Company. Knowledge passed semiofficially through networks such as the Bombay Literary Society.

The *History of Persia* and the *Sketch of the Sikhs* were neither fully state sponsored nor mere vanity publications; they hovered somewhere in between. Malcolm's interest in writing history was shared with his fellow political officers. Writing histories of specific regions was a typical duty. For instance, Malcolm had written a report on the recent seizure of power by the Qajars while preparing for his first mission to Persia in 1799.[122] Networks of civilian and military diplomats were the main conduits for the exchange of information as well.[123] Between 1802 and 1803, for example, Malcolm and the resident of Mysore, Mark Wilkes, exchanged a series of letters on the early history of European settlement in Madras. As this example shows, though the channels of knowledge were official, the historical information relayed through them frequently served no pressing official purpose.[124] Malcolm's correspondence is littered with requests for specific reports and books from fellow officers.[125] Many of the larger residencies had their own libraries, however, quality varied depending on the resident, and it was quite typical for them to move with their owners.[126] Far and away the most accessible libraries were those of the Asiatic societies in Bengal, Madras, and Bombay. William Erskine, as secretary to the Bombay Literary Society, regularly lent books to officers in the field and frequently asked them to forward the books to people who had requested them.[127] Although amateur orientalists working for the Company could make use of official networks of knowledge exchange, they actually functioned informally, relying on the abilities of individuals to collect and distribute the right books and manuscript information.

This general pattern is noticeable in Malcolm's writing of the *History of Persia* and the *Sketch of the Sikhs.* Collecting information on the history of the country and on its people was an integral part of the mission. In the case of Persia, Malcolm could rely on the support of a team of diplomats and military surveyors to help him gather information. However, when Malcolm needed advice on translating documents or copies of particular works, he did not turn to the supreme government in Calcutta. Instead, he relied on his vast network of fellow amateur orientalists. Equally, Malcolm

published his works to promote areas and ideas that were not widely supported by the British government or the directors of the East India Company. Malcolm had to appeal to a wider British audience because his attempts to build support within official channels had failed.

Conclusion

The Sketch of the Sikhs and the *History of Persia* appeared at a time when British political interest in Asia was limited and schemes for imperial expansion in India found few backers. Both works placed a spotlight on India's northwest frontier. By shedding light on the history of the Punjab and Persia, Malcolm invited his audience to view British India as part of a larger geopolitical region. *The Sketch of the Sikhs* emphasized the galvanizing effects of Afghan and Mughal empire building on the Sikhs of the Punjab. Similarly, in the *History of Persia,* Malcolm used episodes like Nadir Shah's invasion of India to contrast the conditions of Persia and the Mughal Empire. Both histories showed that historically India could not ignore its border.

Both histories also gave a foretaste of Malcolm's understanding of the religiopolitical issues that would face any British government of India. That is to say, the theories of indirect rule that Malcolm developed in the 1820s had their foundations in his observations about Islam and Asian empire building in these two works. In common with contemporary orientalists, Malcolm conceived the religions of the peoples he studied in terms of theological tenets rather than observable practices.[128] So, for example, he understood the rise of Sikh power as stemming from a revolution in manners brought about by Govind's new creed. Equally, as we have seen, he argued that the teachings of Islam had engendered a culture of despotism that prevailed in every political unit from the court of the Shah to an individual family where the father's will is the only law.[129] Malcolm saw within Govind's teaching a creed that promoted individual liberty and within Islam a creed that demanded subservience to arbitrary rule. Yet, Malcolm felt that the liberty of the Sikhs had been excessive and led to political weakness, and the religious despotism of Persia had allowed it to grow into a powerful and enduring state. Thus, Malcolm's negative rendering of Islam should be seen as part of a wider analysis of state building. As Martha McLaren has observed, the need to balance authority and liberty in different measures at different stages in the development of a nation had been laid out by David Hume in the Tudor and Stuart volumes of his *History of England*.[130] For Malcolm, arbitrary and cruel despotic

power had often served to centralize the Persian state, a necessary process for such a geopolitically valuable and vulnerable region. At the same time, what Malcolm saw as Govind's creation of a freedom-loving warrior people allowed the Sikhs to effectively resist and check Mughal expansion. In both of the works discussed in this chapter, Malcolm's portraits of manners and society, and his observations about religion in particular, served to explain the peoples he studied in terms of the effectiveness of their state building.

Of all Malcolm's histories, these are the only works that consider lands outside of British control. In them, he developed techniques for analyzing the history of Asian peoples in terms of a central story about the growth of a nation, through either resistance, as with the Sikhs, or centralization, as with the Qajar dynasty in Persia. In terms of Malcolm's development as a writer, these two works proved his ability as an historian and allowed him to develop a methodology for understanding Asian societies. Both works showed that he could use a range of sources and evaluate them critically. As he had argued in *The History of Persia*, Malcolm identified the trends and structures within non-European societies that made their histories more than a chronicle of battles and courtly intrigues. The next chapter will show how Malcolm applied these methods of framing national histories to newly conquered British territories in western India. It argues that his understanding of the historical context of Asian societies shaped his belief that Britain should limit its direct control of its empire, preserving native rule and indigenous patterns of government wherever possible. In other words, as Malcolm developed as a writer in the years after 1812, his outlook as an historian of Asia dominated his thinking as an imperial policy maker.

Chapter 4

Sir John Malcolm's *Memoir of Central India*: The Historic Case for Indirect Rule

The close of the Third Anglo-Maratha War (1817–1818) heralded a new era of self-confidence for the British in India.[1] It completed a process of British expansion through alliance building and annexation in Maratha-dominated central and western India that had been abandoned in 1806 at the end of Richard Wellesley's governor generalship. The British were now the direct rulers of around one-third of the subcontinent.[2] "The supremacy of British authority"[3] over the remaining princes was confirmed by numerous treaties and the effective break-up or absorption of large independent military forces.

The final conquest of the Marathas realized the kind of grand strategic initiative Sir John Malcolm had advocated since the beginning of his diplomatic career in the 1790s, but paramount power brought problems of its own. As early as 1812, Malcolm had warned the Commons' Select Committee on Indian Affairs that "the task of maintaining an empire will be more arduous than that of gaining one."[4] In 1821, in the aftermath of the Third Anglo-Maratha War, he confided to a friend "I have for many years been conscious that our progress towards supreme power is a progress towards the dissolution of our authority in India."[5] For Malcolm, British dominance in India depended on the continued existence of princely states. As he told the governor general, the Marquis of Hastings, in the same year, "there is, among other evils concomitant with our present state, a tendency to direct rule, alike arising out of the character and condition of the

remaining Native governments and our successes and established supremacy, which it will be difficult . . . to counteract."[6] Difficult though it would be to prevent the expected collapse of India's native governments, Malcolm was certain that the British had no choice: "We must try to march slow time if we cannot halt, and to support at least for a period, what is still left of rank and power."[7] In giving this advice to the governor general, Malcolm had something specific in mind: his recent experiences with the princes and chieftains of Malwa, overseeing the postwar reconstruction of the province. The book Malcolm eventually wrote about Malwa and its conquest by the British—the *Memoir of Central India* (1823)—used eighteenth-century history to argue for the continuation of native government. The *Memoir* is both a ground-breaking work of British orientalism and a landmark in the development of indirect rule in the years of imperial consolidation after 1818.

The depth of Malcolm's insight into the history of the Marathas in Malwa was unprecedented. The *Memoir* set out an original and general analysis of the Maratha constitution that explained both their rising power in the sixteenth century and their decline into courtly plotting and internal rivalry from 1760s on. By looking at Malwa, the arena of Maratha expansion, rather than Poona, the scene of Maratha centralization, Malcolm attached less importance to Brahmin courtly intrigues than did the better-known British source, *The History of the Mahrattas* (1826), written by fellow political agent James Grant Duff. Grant Duff's massive influence on Maratha historiography in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries has invited the conclusion that his work was the authoritative expression of British imperial attitudes toward the vast and powerful Maratha states of eighteenth-century India.[8] Although modern historians have relied heavily on the *Memoir* as a source of statistical and anecdotal information about eighteenth-century Malwa and the Marathas, it has not been fully acknowledged as a distinct and significant rival to Grant Duff's work.[9] Moreover, unlike Grant Duff, Malcolm incorporated his historical analysis of preconquest India into a larger treatise on British succession to Indiawide dominance.

This chapter begins by examining the ways in which the great wave of British treatises on Maratha government that appeared after 1818 attempted to understand how central India had developed historically and how it could be governed in the present. This is followed by an analysis of the account of Malwa history found in the first half of the *Memoir,* and an examination of the description of government and society with which the book concludes. The next chapter will place the *Memoir* into the wider policy discussions about the government of India that developed in the course of the 1820s.

Sir John Malcolm and the Postwar Reconstruction of Central India

The Third Anglo-Maratha War had begun as a campaign against the Pindaris, the bands of irregular horsemen loosely attached to the Maratha armies that had been responsible for a series of raids on towns and villages across the Nizam's and Peshwa's territories and, after 1813, in Company lands. Consistent with predictions by intelligence officers such as Malcolm,[10] this situation soon escalated as the Peshwa and subsequently Holkar, Bhonsle Raja, and Appa Sahib led a series of insurrections against the Company. As with the war against the Gurkhas in 1815, the governor general, the Marquis of Hastings, asserted British military supremacy with a rapid and concerted show of force. The close of the war left the Company with the immediate task of reconstruction and the need to make more long-term decisions about the administration of the newly conquered Maratha territories.

Following the defeat of the Maratha armies and the forced abdication of the Peshwa, Hastings appointed commissioners to oversee postwar reconstruction in the old provinces of the Maratha Empire. Due to his outstanding knowledge of revenue and justice administration in southern India, Sir Thomas Munro was made commissioner for the southern Maratha lands. The former resident at the Peshwa's court, Mountstuart Elphinstone, became commissioner for that prince's territories in the Deccan. Owing to his extensive diplomatic experience and his military credentials, Malcolm was appointed commissioner for the rugged and war-torn central Indian province of Malwa, the home of the Maratha rulers Holkar and Shinde. The commissioners were ordered to rule according to local practices initially, but they were given considerable powers to control and reform the native states under their jurisdiction. At the outset, Hastings had assumed that, consistent with his war aims of bringing peace and stability to the areas of India under British control, most of the native rulers in the newly conquered territories would eventually be pensioned off and the three presidencies of Madras, Bombay, and Bengal would be greatly enlarged.[11]

To Malcolm's mind, the relations he had built with local rulers in Malwa revealed that central India could continue to be governed by native princes, according to local practices under the discrete but firm supervision of a few well-qualified Company officers. As commissioner of Malwa between 1818 and 1821, he played a large role in the postwar settlement of India. In addition to being the power base of Holkar and Shinde, Malwa was the home of influential minor princes such as the Rajput rulers of Kotah and the Pathan rulers of Bhopal (the only major Muslim state in central

India). The peace settlements Malcolm made with Holkar and Shinde and the numerous other princes of the region reflected his own desire to use the existing political order, as opposed to a British administration, as the medium for the region's agricultural recovery. Large parts of Malwa's agricultural lands and many of its villages had been abandoned due to twenty years of almost constant warfare, but Malcolm was confident that lasting prosperity was possible. "Malwa Proper," he wrote, "may . . . be concisely described as a table-land, . . . highly cultivated, varied with small conical table-crowned hills and low ridges, watered by numerous rivers and small streams . . . alike conducive to the health of man, and the liberal supply of his wants and luxuries."[12] Beyond treaty making, Malcolm was responsible for suppressing banditry, particularly from the tribes of Bhils living in the forests and hills, and disbanding the hordes of Pindari horsemen that remained from the war.[13]

After the frustration of being passed over for the governorship of Bombay in 1819, Malcolm began to advocate a possible extension of his current role in central India as an alternative. As he wrote to a colleague, "juggled and ousted from the succession to Bombay as I have been by intrigue and prejudice, I shall not stay in India, unless . . . as Lieutenant-Governor of the Conquered Countries. The time will soon come when there will be a *Lieutenant Governor of Central India*! And I should then prefer fixing my *mountain throne* amid the ruins of Mandoo . . . even to Poona."[14] The Peshwa's capital at Poona had been incorporated into the Bombay presidency. Mandhu had been the capital of the sultans of Malwa. It is no coincidence that Malcolm had established the main British military cantonment for the region close to the ruins of the city. Malcolm's choice reflected his desire to transform Malwa from the backyard of the Maratha princes into a powerful province in its own right. As his time in Malwa drew to a close in 1821, Malcolm was confident that his tried and tested methods of bringing peace and prosperity to the war-torn wilderness of Malwa could be applied to all of princely India.

All the commissioners had been asked to prepare reports about government and society in the areas they controlled, with recommendations for possible reform.[15] Malcolm's report had far grander designs. As he proudly informed the Marquis of Hastings toward the end of 1821, "it will bring a mass of matter before government that will enable it, beyond any documents possessed, to judge the mode in which that great proportion of India, which though not under our direct rule, owns our superiority, is to be managed and controlled."[16] It set out a case for the increased importance of central India as a vast, underdeveloped agricultural region ripe for cash crop cultivation and a key link in the network of inland trade.[17] It proved the historical impossibility of introducing direct rule without

provoking unrest and hindering economic reconstruction. It "strongly recommended" the appointment of a lieutenant governor of central India to supervise the network of highly trained Company diplomats that would oversee native government in the region.[18] Malcolm saw his report as nothing less than a blueprint for British policy toward all of the native princes of India. In Malwa, it seemed that Malcolm had found the solution to the emerging problem of how to sustain British rule through the continued reign of India's native princes.

The report's case for leaving local rulers in place in the newly conquered territories (as opposed to introducing direct British rule), relied on its ability to paint a portrait of a thriving social hierarchy that had grown over time. Malcolm used the histories of the region's main dynasties to show that the intricate network of Maratha, Rajput, and Muslim princely states that made up central India was regarded as the legitimate government by its populace and was the best medium for good government and for the improvement of society. This was an easy enough task in the case of the long established Rajput princes, or even its few Muslim rulers (though the Pathan kingdom of Bhopal was a relatively young state), but Maratha state builders had settled in Malwa only in the eighteenth century. And, as will now be seen, most British accounts assumed that Maratha governments were held together by little more than the promise of plunder.

British works on the Marathas before 1818 can be divided into two groups, official reports and published accounts. Both were written by soldier-diplomats and their discussions of Maratha society were dominated by military and political events. The contemporary British discovery of Maratha history was characterized by two major preoccupations. The first was that plundering and intrigue rather than centralization and expansion through warfare had been the core of Maratha statecraft. The second was that the Brahmin politicians of the later Maratha courts had overstepped their original and proper roles as scribes and advisers by becoming power-brokers and princes.[19] The effect of both assumptions was to question the legitimacy of the Maratha polities. As will be seen, Malcolm's own ideas reflected contemporary British understanding of caste roles, however, his analysis of Malwa history relied less on the idea of Brahmin conspiracy and more on establishing the legitimacy of the current Maratha princes. In this respect, Malcolm's analysis of the Marathas reflects the kind of broad engagement with social and political institutions that Nicholas Dirks argues was a declining feature of British writing about India in this period. In this sense, Malcolm's ethnographic survey and his desire to engage with the political history of Malwa undermine Dirk's assertion that the colonial archive of Indian knowledge was largely built on the demands of revenue and justice administration.[20]

The implications of growing Maratha influence in the former Mughal heartlands shaped British diplomatic accounts. Many of the early British agents at the court of the Peshwas, the Brahmin princes who had dominated Maratha politics since the 1720s, returned favorable reports and were even prepared to consider a lasting alliance.[21] From the 1790s, a growing body of Company servants began to look on the Marathas as the biggest threat to British security interests in northern India. As a servant of the Marquis of Wellesley during the Second Anglo-Maratha War, Malcolm himself had been a prolific contributor to this body of anti-Maratha material. In a paper justifying closer military interference in Maratha politics, Malcolm observed, "the Marhattoes have no doubt in different periods of their history (even since they have extended their Empire over a great part of India) recognised a common cause, but on examination it will be found that their efforts have never been united for any length of time, and that their temporary union has either been effected by the only principle they have in common 'love of plunder' or the paramount influence and Power of one particular Chief."[22] Malcolm's minutes on the Marathas, like those of Arthur Wellesley,[23] attempted to show that predatory expansion was the essence of the Maratha Empire and no amount of British forbearance could avoid further Anglo-Maratha wars. Though this body of writing argued for British interference in Maratha affairs, these writers made little use of existing knowledge of Maratha government and society and had no real interest in enlarging it.

The handful of printed works on the Marathas, which began to appear from 1800 on, only added to this picture of a volatile polity built on venality and willful disorder.[24] Short books such as De Broughton's *Letters from a Mahratta Camp* (1809) and the anonymous *Origins of the Pindaries* (1818) used tales of the inability of chiefs to prevent the atrocities of their troops to advocate a revival of Wellesley's aggressive stance toward the Maratha princes.[25] De Broughton's work even opened with a dedication "To the most noble the Marques [*sic*] of Wellesley, KG/ THE firm repeller of their insolent pretensions,/ And formidable barrier to their ambitious projects."[26] In essence, British knowledge about the Marathas was bound up with the kind of pro-Richard Wellesley literature reviewed in the earlier discussion in this book of Malcolm's *Sketch of the Political History of India*.

The first works to discuss Maratha history in any detail, Henry William Tone's *Letter on the Marhattas* and Edward Scott-Waring's *History of the Marhattoes,*[27] greatly increased British knowledge of the origins of Maratha power without challenging the orthodoxy of earlier pamphlets and memoranda. Both had sympathy for early Maratha expansion as a response to the zealotry of a tyrannical foreign invader (the Mughal emperor Aurangzeb advancing southward into the Deccan). Tone, a mercenary in Shinde's

army, found much to admire in the character and exploits of Shivaji Raj Bhosle, the "founder of the Maratha empire." For both, Maratha history after the death of Shivaji was the story of a great empire built on insecure foundations, shaken apart by the intrigues of Brahmins. As Tone stated at the end of his sketch of Maratha history: "The Maratta states are merely a confederacy without union, founded not upon confidence, but jealousy, incapable of that wise and defensive policy that embraces the common good, unswayed but by private consideration; destitute of mutual dependence upon each other; and untinctured by a single atom of patriotism or public spirit; a selfish and contracted system without vigour or energy; in one word, a government whose councils are directed by the influence of interested Brahmins the most faithless and the most venal of mankind."[28] By withholding the badges of nationhood or civil society, these writers reinforced the general idea that the Marathas were not only militarily opposed to British India, they were also essentially the opposite of it in terms of providing ordered and equitable government for India.

The great growth in British study of the Marathas in the 1820s was a direct product of the Third Anglo-Maratha War of 1818 and of the detailed archival research of those officers placed in charge of Britain's new possessions. The initial wave of research on the history, manners, and government of the people of western India was driven by the need to understand how best to govern those territories that had come, either directly or indirectly, under British control. The most famous and influential expression of British attitudes toward the Marathas was James Grant Duff's *History of the Mahrattas,* written by Malcolm's fellow soldier-diplomat, the Resident at the newly created Maratha court of Satarah from 1818. For Grant Duff and other British officials, the task of learning about Maratha society had been a necessary part of the process of drawing a line under the rule of the Peshwas, and confirming the legitimacy of Rajah of Satarah as the heir to Shivaji.

As administrators and subsequently as historians, Elphinstone, Malcolm, and Grant Duff had far greater access to archival material, but this raised as many questions as it answered. British officials desperate to discern what previous Maratha government practices had been or to settle property disputes were bewildered by the vast collections of revenue records they found in the Peshwa's archives. Political agents and revenue collectors were often unable to discern any system in the paper record.[29] As his discussion of this problem in the preface to the *History of the Mahrattas* reveals, Grant Duff used earlier notions of the plundering and destructive Marathas to give his narrative meaning. "It was," he stated, "generally an object of their policy to render everything as intricate as possible, and to destroy records of rightful possession. As their armies overran the country, their history becomes

blended with that of every other state of India, and may seem to partake of the disorder which they spread."[30] In other words, the apparent chaos of the archival records confirmed earlier ideas of a mystifying Maratha state system designed to abet extortion and corruption. For Grant Duff, the Marathas and their recorded history resisted sophisticated historical analysis. "As the only method of preserving regularity," he explained, "I have sometimes been obliged, when the confusion becomes extreme, rather to observe the chronological series of events than to follow out the connection of the subjects; a mode which will appear . . . to partake more of the form of annals."[31] Like Grant Duff, James Tod, author of *Annals and Antiquities of Rajast'han,* stated that he had little choice but to present history as annals because the source materials available were unsuitable for anything more sophisticated.[32] Both men argued that reliance on confusing or suspicious Maratha and Rajput sources made it impossible to analyze patterns and themes in the history of the Marathas or central India generally. This contrasts sharply with Malcolm's own historical narrative, with its digressions on the development of the Maratha constitution, and its celebration of the growth of Maratha power under the founders of the dynasties of Holkar and Shinde.

The *Report on the Province of Malwa* and *The Memoir of Central India*

Malcolm's *Report on the Province of Malwa* is better known under the title of the second edition published a year later in 1823, *The Memoir of Central India.* Originally submitted early in 1821 to the governor general, the Marquis of Hastings, and published in one quarto volume in 1822, it was one of a number of reports on the settlement of the former Maratha territories, the best known being Mountstuart Elphinstone's *Report on the Former Territories of the Peshwa* (1821). These *Reports* added to British knowledge of the geography, history, society, and commerce of the regions they described, often with an emphasis on the administration of revenue and justice and the precise nature of British involvement. Malcolm's is exceptionally long, twice the length of Elphinstone. Proportionately, Malcolm's *Report* devoted more space to history and statistical data. In addition to estimates on revenues, customs rates, and agricultural yields, the *Report* included the findings of a geological survey. As his friend Sir Thomas Munro observed, Malcolm had created a "Malwa Encyclopaedia."[33] Malcolm knew his *Report* was comprehensive. As a plan for carefully managed indirect rule, it would need to be.

At the same time, Malcolm was confident that it could appeal to a general market. As he told a friend, "I trust it will contain the anatomy of Central India in a way that will be appreciated; and there are some parts of it which are not mere dry matter. Fanny Stewart, who has read them, says they are like the 'Tales of my Landlord.'"[34] Malcolm's comparison of his dense government report with the latest novels of Sir Walter Scott, though rather fanciful, shows that he thought his history of Malwa contained sufficient romance and drama to keep the general reader interested. As he told his correspondent, "as far as name goes (it is no season book to bring money) it will be to me worth ten Political Histories."[35] This allusion to his last published work on India suggests that Malcolm's main aim was to impart a political message rather than to achieve a high volume of sales.

The second edition of the *Report—The Memoir of Central India*—appeared a year later in two octavo volumes.[36] It preserved the same chapter titles as the *Report,* and though there are no significant omissions or additions to the text, obvious uses of jargon are toned down. For instance, "sirkar" in the *Report* appears as "district" throughout the *Memoir*. The *Memoir* contains an additional chapter, "Reflections on the Condition of British Power in Central India," and the appendix includes "Notes of Instructions to Assistants serving under Sir John Malcolm."[37] With these additions, the *Memoir* is more explicit about the central importance of a lieutenant-governorship than the *Report.*

The History of Malwa as a Hindu Province

The *Memoir* consciously used an analysis of the modern history of Malwa to dictate future British policy. As Malcolm wrote in the letter to the governor general that prefaced the *Report, "*these people . . . (amid all the political changes that have occurred in their condition) . . . are as . . . susceptible of impression, as they were in the days of AURUNGZEBE. It is essential to study the history of such a race: from its lessons we may learn how to rule and control these tribes so as to promote their happiness and prosperity, through the same means that we use to strengthen and confirm their attachment to our government."[38] In the historical section of the *Memoir* Malcolm identified the structures of Malwa society in order to explain why Mughal authority in central India had declined through the eighteenth century, and why the Marathas, in spite of their apparent internal weaknesses, had been able to build a power base there.

Malcolm's account of the history of Malwa prior to the Maratha invasions of the eighteenth century is brief. He began, as almost every

contemporary British writer on India did, by emphasizing that early Hindu history was "involved in darkness and fable."[39] What can be certain, Malcolm suggested, is that Malwa had been a culturally and politically thriving province of the Hindu kingdom of Delhi. This was borne out by both archaeological and documentary evidence.[40] The Muslim conquerors who appeared in the twelfth century "only ever partially subdued" the local Hindu elite.[41] Malcolm guessed from the size of its ruins that the capital of the Muslim kingdom of Mandhu must once have been great. In the context of the *Memoir*'s later account of the rise of the Marathas as a form of Hindu resistance to foreign rule, the apparent paradox of the power of the capital and the ultimate limitations of its imperial expansion emphasized the enduring strength of the Hindu Rajput princes of Malwa.

Malcolm discerned a new pattern emerging with the arrival of the Mughals. As Muslim conquerors, they could not hope to subdue the Rajputs; but as the tolerant protectors and patrons of Hinduism, they soon gained the Rajputs as loyal warriors. "In regard to these brave Hindus," Malcolm remarked, the Mughal emperors were "content with nominal submission, a moderate tribute, and occasional military service."[42] Yet, religious divisions had only been submerged; they had not vanished, and Malcolm suggested that the Mughal Empire could not be both Islamic and tolerant toward all the religions of its subjects: "A religion established by the sword, one of whose first tenets enjoined conversion, death, or heavy tribute to infidels, and above all worshippers of idols, ill accorded with a policy that was grounded on maxims which made no distinction between the latter and the faithful."[43] In this schema, religious toleration persisted under the successors of the Emperor Akbar, largely out of indifference rather than careful policy or heartfelt conviction. As with the *History of Persia,* discussed in the previous chapter, Malcolm took religious intolerance to be one of the most likely expressions of the politics of Islam.

Malcolm asserted that the long-ruling seventeenth Mughal emperor, Aurangzeb, had introduced additional taxes on non-Muslim citizens not out of real zeal for Islam but as a means of gaining political capital among Mughal religious leaders. The idea that Aurangzeb feigned his fanaticism, most famously elaborated in the *Travels* of the seventeenth-century French traveler François de Bernier, was not shared by all European commentators.[44] Malcolm emphasized that his decision to cease protecting Hinduism came in a period of Mughal weakness: "At the very moment when [their power] began to decline, and new enemies arose in every corner, a senseless bigotry had resort to persecution [*sic*]."[45] The obverse implication is that full religious tolerance was the prudent policy of Indian imperial governments in times of prosperity and security, not an unavoidable concession in a time of crisis.

In Malcolm's view, the imprudent policy of Aurangzeb, and indeed the whole sequence of Malwa history up to this period, explained why the proud Rajput princes, "the sword of the Hindu faith,"[46] would "consent to become the authors of their own ruin" by inviting the Marathas into Malwa.[47] So vehement was the Hindu population's sense of outrage that it led to uncharacteristic acts of violent resistance. In their rage, the people overthrew "the mosques of tyrants," built on sacred sites, a further reminder that India's Hindu identity had been buried but not obliterated by the Muslim conquests.[48] Malcolm's treatment of history before the arrival of the Marathas is designed to show that the region's Hindu identity had survived centuries of Muslim encroachment. Whether in the form of direct military conflict, religious persecution, or tolerance, Muslim influence had never entirely eradicated Hinduism.

Once the Marathas appeared as an independent force in the early seventeenth century, Malcolm gave overall sense to their rise and later decline through two connected digressions, on the nature of their constitution and on their expansion into Malwa. Malcolm prized these passages sufficiently to want to reuse them in his *Life of Clive.*[49] When Richard Jenkins, the resident at the court of Nagpur, came to describe Maratha government in his official report, he cited Malcolm's explanation as the most accurate.[50] Certainly the final result was an explanation of the appearance and dynamics of Maratha expansion of the kind that Grant Duff and his predecessors had thought impossible and unnecessary. In the *Memoir,* the digression gave coherence to the five separate accounts of the main Maratha families that follow, and for all these reasons it merits close examination. The following discussion will begin by examining Malcolm's analysis of the role of Brahmins and go on to consider his discussion of Maratha expansion.

Malcolm's immediate concern was to show that Brahmins had participated in the very first military expeditions. This gave the Maratha conflicts with the Mughals the character of a "holy war" against the religious bigotry of foreign invaders.[51] But Malcolm was adamant that the Brahmins were more than simply "priests"; many distinguished themselves as warriors.[52] This challenged the commonplace that the Brahmin politicians of later Maratha history were opportunistic interlopers who had stolen power and influence from the Maratha warriors.[53] Malcolm went on to consider the role of Brahmins in the course of Maratha politics. This theme fascinated contemporary British commentators, many of whom chose to interpret the involvement of Brahmins in Maratha politics as an unseemly corruption of their caste and the polity generally. "The Brahmin conspiracy" or "Brahmin tyranny" had been and would remain a mainstay of Maratha historiography throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.[54] The Brahmins, the argument went, had abandoned their proper calling as custodians of

learning and religion to engage in politics. In doing so, however, they put the venal satisfaction of their own interests and their fellow Brahmins above those of the Maratha chiefs they served and the wider Maratha polity. As well as polluting themselves, they corrupted the pristine Maratha polity founded by Shivaji. As Susan Bayly has shown, this interpretation of Maratha history, and India's past generally, supported the postwar creation of British-sponsored Hindu kingdoms such as that of the Rajah of Satara.[55]

Malcolm acknowledged that the Brahmins remained indissoluble as a caste, but he refuted the main assertion of the "Brahmin conspiracy" theory—that they were opportunistic interlopers in the rising Maratha state. He insisted that Brahmins played an integral part in Maratha political growth from the start, not just as courtiers, but in the army amid the warrior-cultivators.[56] Malcolm's untypical emphasis on Brahmin warriors may be explained by the fact that Elphinstone and Grant Duff were using the Peshwa's archives whereas he relied more on manuscript materials from other Maratha powers and on oral testimonies from informants.[57] Moreover, Elphinstone and Grant Duff were mainly writing from Poona, the urban center of the (Brahmin) Peshwa's power. Malcolm's perspective was from war-torn, politically fluid Malwa, the arena for Maratha imperial ambition in the eighteenth century and the place where he physically wrote his history, surrounded by the ruins of Muslim palaces.[58]

For Malcolm, the Brahmin politicians (especially the Peshwas) were merely skilful players in this changing political order, not agents of its corruption:

> The Brahmins who presided over it had, to use the expression of a Mahomedhan writer, 'converted the peaceful chord of their order into a bow-strong.' But notwithstanding the Military reputation which some of the PAISWHAS added to their other pretensions to Supreme Authority, all the superior intelligence, which their habits and education gave them, was unequal to keep in check the ambitions of enterprising Chiefs, which intoxicated with success, soon forgot their obligations to the Brahmin Princes by whom they were elevated to command.[59]

As this extract shows, Malcolm hinted at the impropriety of Brahmin interference in politics but did not assign it a leading role in the story of the unstable Maratha constitution. Malcolm saw the nature of the princes' political competition itself as the principal cause of Maratha weakness. "One part of the policy of the PAISHWAH tended greatly to accelerate the period of the independence of these leaders;—a fear of their disturbing the peace of their Native Country, or consuming its resources." The Peshwas' policy protected themselves and their capital from the jealousy of other Maratha chiefs, but at the cost of building up their rivals' power and influence beyond the Maratha heartlands. As Malcolm put it,

"to attain the object of keeping a successful General and his adherents at a distance, the superior was satisfied with nominal allegiance."[60] In this sense, any pernicious effects stemming from Brahmin political intriguing were simply the inevitable consequences of the inherent instability of the Maratha polity.

Although the Brahmins had played a legitimate role in Maratha growth, Malcolm saw the character of the Sudras, the Maratha warrior-peasants, as the central explanation for the uniqueness of Maratha expansion and state formation. "The plain uninstructed Mahratta Soodra, or Kutree," he observed, "entered upon his career as a Soldier in the same dress, and with the same habits he had tilled his field, or attended his flocks."[61] "The Sudra," Malcolm argued, retained a "simplicity of character" through "revolutions which have . . . raised him to the highest consideration and power, and . . . cast him back to his former occupations."[62] His character aided the conquest of western India "by placing him in contrast with the proud formal Mahomedhan, by associating him with the Hindu population of the countries he invaded; and by preventing his progress, ever being impeded by that pomp, luxury or pride, which form so often an encumbrance, if not an obstacle to the most successful conquerors." But Malcolm stopped short of using stadial theory to explain the rusticity of their character and their success as conquerors.

As he informed his readers, "unlike in their origin and habits to the Goths and Vandals that barbarised Europe, or those Tartar tribes who have so often conquered and destroyed the Kingdoms of Asia, the first Mahrattas were driven to arms by oppression, and tempted to continue in . . . their new profession, by the proved weakness of their oppressor."[63] Readers would have understood the list of central Asian tribes Malcolm mentioned as peoples whose material condition, whose "stage of civilization," led them to conduct war through plunder. Malcolm consciously cast aside a whole discourse on plundering horsemen and with it a set of powerful and frightening images with which his readers would have been familiar. He substantially modified the notion, found in his early memoranda, that the Marathas were a "predatory" people who could sustain themselves and expand only by plundering. Instead, he used a more narrowly political interpretation of the Marathas as freedom fighters, an interpretation that fit in with Maratha self-perception.[64] This politics-driven view of Maratha "imperial history" led Malcolm to see their later history as a product of the problem of adjusting to life as the heads of a settled government. It can be contrasted with the assumption that we have observed in earlier British accounts—including Malcolm's own—that the Marathas remained plunderers throughout their history.

Malcolm then went on to examine the two ways in which this problem of consolidating conquest manifested itself in later Maratha history. First,

he considered the tax and government structures the Marathas had established to meet their immediate needs as conquerors. He observed that, "the character and constitution of their early power made it impossible for them to maintain themselves in many of the Countries they were able to plunder."[65] This was the first cause of the revenue demands they made on neighboring villages and rulers and "whenever these were admitted, the country had a respite from their ravages." Yet, Malcolm argued, "we cannot believe that the able Mahratta Chiefs, who first inflicted these heavy taxes upon the revenues of the Mughal empire, ever viewed it as more than a temporary expedient, which . . . afforded them the means of progressive encroachment."[66] In other words, the Maratha chiefs used threats of violence to raise revenues as an indirect way of spreading their influence and increasing their power. "They had also through this means," Malcolm remarked, "an opportunity, which they thoroughly understood how to use, of fomenting divisions in families and states. From the house of Timur, to the lowest of the Rajpoot Rulers with their sphere, we find every party had a secret or open supporter in a Mahratta Chief or Agent."[67] The methods for which the Marathas became infamous, which earned them a reputation as wily plunderers, were the expedients of a people unaccustomed to conquest.[68]

The second aspect of the conquest Malcolm analyzed was the popularity of the Marathas among the ordinary people of Malwa. His comments here contrast with his original paradox that the Marathas seemed to be unsuitable empire builders: "To insinuate themselves by wiles into a share of the management of a District or a Country, and to make a party amongst its inhabitants, were deemed better, than using force even when the latter was in their power; and in effecting these their patience and humility were great aids."[69] Pomp and pride gave way to policy. Malcolm noted that "they were content at first to divide the Government as well as the Revenues with the Hindu Chiefs of the Military Class they found established, trusting to time and intrigue for their gradual reduction."[70] More than intriguers who wiled their way into the upper echelons of political society, the Marathas built up support at every level of the community on the foundations of older forms of government. This was both popular and efficient. Echoes of the kind of tradition-focused policies Malcolm would later advocate for British India are evident and become even more so later in the *Memoir*. Certainly at this point in the *Memoir,* the Marathas seemed to be model conquerors. The efficacy of their indirect methods made the unsuitability of the usual language of imperial conquest ironic, because this was the secret of their success.

Ultimately, "the fabric however had no foundation" and the problem of adjusting to settled government could not be overcome by later Maratha

leaders.[71] The nature of the Maratha armies encouraged rivalry between the chiefs. As the Maratha armies had been supplied and paid through conquest, "[T]he leaders were necessarily invested with powers for the collection of Tribute or Revenues for the Provinces into which they were sent, but though a share was claimed by Government the application of the greater part, in the payment of his Troops, and other expenses, raised the successful general into a Ruler of the Countries he had conquered."[72] For Malcolm, the system of Maratha conquest worked against long-term consolidation because it encouraged chiefs to look to their own aggrandisement and "the public interest was lost sight of in the desire of individuals to promote their own ambition."[73] In this context, the attempts of the Peshwas to create a centralizing power base would always be counterproductive. "The early example of usurpation in the PAISHWAH," Malcolm observed, "was followed almost by all to whom opportunity offered, and this was aided by the Village Governments, (which is probably the oldest of Hindu institutions) having been carried into the State."[74] Rather than becoming a point of attraction for loyalty and power, the Peshwa became the archetype of self-interested warlordism.

At this point, Malcolm observed a sharp contrast between how his readers might expect the Maratha political system to operate, and how it actually developed in his view. "Every office," he noted, "from that of PAISHWAH, or prime minister, to the lowest employ, became hereditary. This practice, by giving rights, limited patronage, and weakened the heads of the Empire, among whom division early arose; but, instead of declining, that State appeared for a long period to prosper the more from that spirit of action which was excited by the clashing interests of the Chiefs, who shared in its anomalous administration."[75] In other words, rivalry for power and authority was the life blood of the Maratha polity. In this sense, as Burton Stein has observed about Sir Thomas Munro, early British observers of Maratha government like Malcolm had noticed that absolute sovereignty was not the key to political power in the Maratha polity. As Stein has suggested, this analysis seems to prefigure Wink's interpretation of Maratha power relations as being determined by competition for power and the need for rulers to share the trappings of power with their superiors and subordinates.[76] Malcolm's model of eighteenth-century Malwa society recognized that effective sovereignty was shared, negotiated and mutable and that successful rulers, like Zalim Singh, used this to their advantage, rather than fighting for honors that could not be held exclusively for long and were not necessary in order to govern.

After his general analysis of the Maratha constitution Malcolm returned to his narrative of the Marathas in Malwa. As a link between the Deccan and Hindustan, the Mughal heartland, Malwa was the stage for Maratha

dynastic growth. From the rise of the Peshwas in the first quarter of the eighteenth century on, Malcolm's narrative devoted individual chapters to each of the major dynasties that emerged in the course of the century. This enabled him to turn the power struggles of the Maratha, Muslim, and Rajput chiefs of Malwa into a complex competition for political and material resources in an historically important transit region of the Indian peninsula. Waning Mughal power, hurried on by Maratha expansion, was replaced in the eighteenth century, where Malcolm puts the weight of his historical surveys, by the power contests of fledgling Maratha states and their benefactor, the Peshwa. The final act involved rising British influence, culminating in the war of 1817–1818.

This was context for evaluating the principal actors in the modern history of Malwa. For instance, the Rajput leader Zalim Singh, whose prudent rule Malcolm examined in some detail, was praised for his skill in surviving and profiting from the disputes that had surrounded him and plunged the rest of Malwa into disorder and economic instability.[77] Conversely, the Pathan adventurers clustered around the ruler of Bhopal generated a series of bloody power feuds that had been the cause of many of the problems that Zalim Singh avoided. Bhils and the other "wild tribes" of central India had swelled in number and gained in power because of Malwa's historic instability.[78] The backdrop to all these histories is the sequence of larger Indiawide power struggles for which Malwa provided an arena. The additional histories were not an afterthought or an embellishment to this grand narrative; they were an integral part of the story of the region.[79] Malcolm appreciated that even Malwa's political history could be only partially and inaccurately understood in terms of the rivalry of big powers.

Malcolm treated the modern, eighteenth-century Maratha chiefs, such as the Peshwas, and later Shinde and Holkar, as partially successful state builders rather than mere adventurers. His narratives gave each dynasty historical legitimacy. The detailed and sympathetic account of the rise of the Holkar family, for example, embellished with local myths and with an explanation of the specific political problems that faced the founder and his successors contrasts sharply with earlier British accounts describing the eighteenth century in Maratha history as merely a time of disorder, instability, and petty jealousy among leaders of bands of predatory horsemen.[80] The overall function and effect of Malcolm's examination of kingship among the Rajputs and the Marathas of Malwa can be analyzed in terms of its three dominant themes: the use of the heroic and mythic, his criteria for prudent statecraft, and the preconditions for benevolent rule.

Malcolm made use of local folklore about the origins and lives of major historical figures wherever possible. As we have seen, he felt that these mythic, romantic elements of the *Memoir* would attract readers

whose historical tastes had been fashioned by the novels of Sir Walter Scott. His use of these devices also has a deeper significance. These are the most obvious examples of Malcolm's reliance on local informants,[81] and of his attempt to relay Maratha folk memory to his Western audience. For instance, his account of the origins of the Holkar family discussed the function of myths surrounding the first of that line, not as a cynical Western observer, but in terms of how the Marathas themselves viewed these stories of origin.[82] The effect was a history articulated in conventional Western terms, charting political and military events, but based on Maratha ideas. Malcolm made relatively little use of the accounts of outsiders, whether Western authors or Mughal writers such as Seyed Gholurn Hussein Khan. Contemporary readers such as Malcolm's first biographer, J. W. Kaye recognized Malcolm's ability to convey Indian folk knowledge.[83] Through close analysis of Malcolm's description of the government of the late eighteenth-century ruler of Holkar, Alhia Bhye, Lynn Zastoupil has demonstrated that the outlook of his Brahmin informants affected his own assessment.[84] Zastoupil goes further, suggesting that the *Memoir* transmits "Indian public opinion" in a way that disproves Edward Said's idea of the orientalist's inability to engage with the self-image of the people he describes.[85] In other words, these passages illustrate how oriental discourse, through skilled linguistic knowledge and a reliance on native expertise, could best be described as a dialogue.[86] Malcolm's use of the folkloric shows how the romantic idiom was often the product of considerable research and was a way of imparting deep knowledge as well as sympathy.[87] Malcolm's romantic admiration for the heroic and charismatic qualities of the great princes of Malwa formed part of his analysis of their political reputation.

Malcolm also provided a focused picture of their political achievements. In Malwa, where the rivalry of new Maratha dynasties overlaid the competition of local Rajput princes, successful rulers needed to maneuver through the ambiguous and mutable political scene. In Malcolm's narrative the Maratha chief Madaji Shinde was the striking archetype of the kind of statesman capable of triumphing in this environment. Shinde, Malcolm wrote, "stands alone amid all the mummery to which the mock humility of artful and ambitious leaders has resorted to deceive the world."[88] At length, Malcolm presented Shinde at the height of his powers as the quintessential Maratha conqueror:

> The actual sovereign of Hindustan . . . , the conqueror of the princes of Rajpootana, the commander of an army composed of sixteen battalions of regular infantry, five hundred pieces of cannon , and one hundred thousand horse, the possessor of two thirds of Malwa and some of the finest provinces

> on the Deckan, when he went to pay his respects to a youth who then held the office of Paishwah, dismounted from his elephant at the gates of Poona; placed himself in the great hall of audience below all the Manhkarries or hereditary nobles of states; and when the Paishwah came into the room, and desired him to be seated with others [*sic*], he objected on the grounds of being unworthy of the honour.[89]

The anecdote continued with Shinde carefully unwrapping a pair of slippers and saying that his ancestors had been the slipper bearers of the Peshwas and that no other role could be more honorable to him. Malcolm then recounted an anecdote about Shinde's ability to insinuate himself with the ryots [peasants] of the Deccan. As the digression demonstrated and as the narrative now illustrated, the successful "Maratha statesman" always was careful to appear the inferior of princes and the equal of villagers. Malcolm concluded the episode by observing: "[T]hough we may smile at a conduct which appeared an endeavour to reconcile stations and duties that were incompatible, it must be confessed that this able chief was through his life consistent in the part he acted; which appeared more natural, from the manly simplicity of character which led him to despise the trappings of state and the allurements of luxury."[90] Shinde's conduct was consistent with Maratha morality. Moreover, "his actions were suited to the constitution of the society he was born in, which had a just pride in his talent and energy, and esteemed him one of the ablest, as he was the most successful, of Mahratta leaders."[91] In his narrative, Malcolm treated the paradox which Westerners had seen in the character of the leaders that he had discussed in the digression, as the Maratha norm and evaluated Shinde accordingly.

Malcolm's favorite leaders in the history of Malwa, those to whom he gave the most attention and praise, all ruled indirectly, usually as regents and deputies. For Malcolm, the most impressive and the most effective rulers were "content with the substance of power, and left others to wear its robes."[92] Alhia Bhye Holkar had been a regent for her infant son. Zalim Singh, Rajput ruler of Kotah, was also regent. The history of Malwa, as Malcolm understood it, with its complex mesh of political networks, showed that prudent rule was often indirect: In India it was often desirable that sovereignty and its authority were not combined in a single person.

Malcolm saved most of his praise for Maratha kingship, and indeed for Asian kingship at its best, for Alhia Bhye, the female ruler of Holkar. This section's romantic and unalloyed praise attracted the attention of contemporary reviewers and subsequent historians.[93] As the widow of the previous Rajah, Alhia Bhye's title to the government of Holkar (as regent for her son) had not been the strongest. Lynn Zastoupil has drawn attention to

Malcolm's extended examination of how Alhia Bhye built the legitimacy of her rule on her charity and the sensitive management of the religious and social elites.[94] Her close relationship with every section of society, her shrewd use of patronage, and her prudent willingness to share her power in the interest of the state, made her a model of the wise and benevolent ruler. In addition to its significance for future British policy (which was only ever implicit), this passage, and similar sections on Madaji Shinde and others, made Malcolm's an exceptional Asian history. As Francis Jeffrey wrote in the *Edinburgh Review,* "[I]f Sir John Malcolm is to be believed, Alhia Bhye's government is an enlightened model to be followed in Asia." Malcolm's *Memoir* was a genuine effort to promote Asia as a region suitable for contemporary philosophical history; which entailed the ability to furnish models for political behavior.[95]

Malcolm had opened his history of the Marathas with a comprehensive analysis of their constitution that would account for both their greatness and their decline. Although the story of decline was masked somewhat by the brilliant careers of later Maratha rulers such as Madhaji Shinde and Alhia Bhye, Malcolm's coverage of the last few years of the Maratha Empire (from the late 1790s) had a tragic tone. It was the first time in the narrative that the seeds of disunity, which Malcolm argued had been sown in the first years of Maratha history, affected the narrative. Malcolm's detailed description of the disintegration of Jeswunt Holkar's state, his growing obsession with military power, and his eventual madness vividly exemplifies the mood of decline:

> Jeswunt Rao had no value for the principles of good and regular government, and never evinced the least desire to establish it. His object, often declared, was to restore the Mahratta Supremacy over India by a revival of the ancient predatory system; but the times were different—instead of the fallen Emperor of the Moghuls, he had to contend against the rising fortunes of the English,—and in place of the national force used by Sevajee, he had a motley band of desperate freebooters, who recognised no common principle but love of rapine.[96]

His portraits of the last Maratha princes and their involvement in the Second and Third Anglo-Maratha wars all emphasize the solipsism of individual rulers and the impossibility of national unity.

Malcolm gave little attention to the growth of British power in these years. The *Memoir* made no use of the vehement apologia for British intervention in the Maratha Empire, which had been such a conspicuous part of the *Sketch of the Political History of India.* This omission was appropriate to the book's overall aim of explaining the history of Malwa and its peoples in terms of internal pressures on the dynasties involved.

The Pindaris, the ostensible cause of the Third Maratha War, were given their own chapter. In contrast to the many portraits of the rise of distinct polities that had so far filled Malcolm's account of Malwa, the description of the Pindaris does not give its subjects historical legitimacy as state builders. Malcolm made it plain from the start that the Pindaris were mercenaries and adventurers from many backgrounds and their growing size and independence had been a symptom of the decaying political power of the princes who hired them. The Pindaris, he wrote, "had risen like masses of putrefaction in animal matter out of the weak and expiring States."[97] Malcolm's report on them, written in 1817, had likened them to "mildew on rotting fruit."[98] The metaphors of decomposition implied that the Pindaris were not like their Maratha employers, who "had the more legitimate, and therefore more permanent, motives of attachment to their native soil and to the religion of their fathers, with the consequent resentment against the intolerant and oppressive rulers, by whom they were placed in danger."[99] This gave the Maratha dynasties of central India a "union of interest and action unknown to the Pindarries."[100]

The Pindaris may never have formed into a state, nor did they possess the necessary materials to form a nation, but they grew in power as the authority of the Maratha state disintegrated: "[T]hey became, from the very looseness of their composition, a nucleus, for all that was floating and unattached in the community, to form upon; and this presented, at all moments a mass of materials which an able and popular leader might use, either for the destruction of others, or his own aggrandizement."[101] The *Political History of India* had shown how military adventurers could become new regional rulers if no overlord existed to check their ambitions. Malcolm's analysis here is consistent with his predictions in the *Political History* that the half measures of 1806 would lead to future security problems for the British. Without naming the governors general who enacted this policy, Malcolm pointed out that treaty obligations under which the Maratha princes were placed by the British at that time forced them to disband their armies; and yet the British, committed to noninterference, did nothing to manage the resulting body of unemployed soldiers.[102] The Pindaris were simply another aspect of this problem.

This entire chapter on the Pindaris supported the argument for the British rejection of noninterference and for the declaration of paramountcy in India. The disorder brought about by the Pindaris was self-perpetuating: "Like swarms of bees and locusts, . . . the Pindarries were fed and nourished by the very miseries which they occasioned; for, as their predatory invasions extended, property became insecure, and those who were ruined by their depredations were afterwards compelled to have resort to a life of violence, as the only means left them of subsistence."[103] They had created

a general condition of lawlessness; banditry became so widespread that "all calculation regarding the numerical strength of the Pindarries" was irrelevant; they "were indeed so amalgamated with the predatory powers, and the whole of the loose part of the military population of India, that it had become a system, not a particular force to be subdued."[104] The exact size of the Pindari hordes had been hotly disputed among British officials in India. Thomas Munro, for instance, was sure that their numbers had been grossly exaggerated. Malcolm, who had accepted the highest estimates (about 40,000), was presenting his readers with an answer to this problem. The numbers themselves were immaterial.

For British policy making, two sets of implications stem from this analysis of the Pindaris: those relating to British-administered territory and those relating to the lands of native princes. Pindari raids on British territory proved the inefficacy of noninterference as a policy and the need to return to a Wellesley-style mission to consolidate the military labor supply of India under British control.[105] Pindari incursions on native princes were a different matter. They could lead to a decrease in revenues and thus an increase in political instability. Where the East India Company was closely connected with a state, as in the case of the Nizam of Hyderabad, Britain had obligations to defend their ally (should they choose to honor them). These arguments appeared in the period leading up to the Third Anglo-Martha War, but in the aftermath they took on new significance.[106] The elimination of the Pindaris and the postwar British declaration of paramountcy alleviated this supposed lawlessness.

The kind of arguments Malcolm had made about the Marathas during the Second Anglo-Maratha War were now applied to the Pindaris only. At that time, as we have seen, Malcolm had been content to conflate the Maratha princes and their military system. The Pindari irregular cavalry had been represented as the heart of the Maratha polity; now they were an infected limb to be amputated. Where the histories of the Marathas princes had been designed to establish their historical legitimacy as rulers; Malcolm consciously withheld this kind of legitimacy from the Pindaris. Malcolm stressed, in high-flown but not disingenuous language, that this was "not an attack on a State, or a body of men, but upon a system. It was order contending against anarchy."[107] The sensitivity to state building and the imaginative effort to recreate an historical heritage that Malcolm used to portray the Maratha chiefs as part of the princely elite of India are noticeably absent here.

Thus, the historical section of the report concluded with the elimination of that "system of plunder" that had impoverished central India and threatened to engulf the more settled territories to the east and south (those of the Company). The historical section of the *Memoir* showed that

the Marathas were legitimate rulers and that the Pindaris were an illegitimate force that had been eliminated. For Malcolm, the set of arguments about a "system of plunder" undermining British security, which had shaped his *Political History of India,* was now defunct and could be replaced with a new set of arguments about the consolidation of this new epoch starting in 1818.

"The Anatomy of Central India"

The final third of the *Memoir* examined manners and customs, government and the economy in contemporary Malwa. Malcolm only drew his readers' attention to the effects of British rule in the final chapter entitled "A View of the Contrast between 1817 and 1821." His overriding concern was to show that princely central India could provide good government itself. The role of the British was not to reform central India but to provide security and to rejuvenate a society that had fragmented through twenty years of economic decline and political instability; the last chapter made that clear. As Malcolm said of Malwa under British rule, "there never was a country where the industrious classes of the population were better pleased."[108] Yet, Malcolm was not simply describing "traditional" Indian society. The *Memoir* constructed a model of life in central India capable of withstanding the movement for direct rule that was gathering momentum under Charles Grant, the Company director, and his evangelical and utilitarian allies.[109]

Each of the chapters on Malwa government and society began by considering the lives and practices of the elites, princes and Brahmins, and then moved down the social scale, usually finishing with a discussion of the Bhils and other "wild tribes." This technique, which Malcolm had used in the *History of Persia,* reflected the author's belief that manners and customs filtered down through society and that this phenomenon was more noticeable in Asia. However, the models of government and society that Malcolm constructed, like the histories that preceded them, ultimately proved that the political authority of the princes and politicians of central India was limited in practice by that of the village and district officials. This was shown most explicitly and most elaborately in the chapter "On Revenues." It began by asking who the land belonged to in India. From this starting point, Malcolm established a number of important premises that set the agenda for the entire discussion of government practice. First, he insisted that the king was not the owner of the land but of a right to tax it, which he could exercise more thoroughly and more greedily depending on the extent

of his power.[110] According to Indian practice, Malcolm insisted, proprietorship lay with the cultivator, occupancy over a number of generations gave title to the land, and Indian history had shown that the village community would protect the cultivator when the king's demands were too great.[111] So great was the weight of tradition that even the most avaricious or tyrannical of rulers could not cast it aside:

> [N]either the bigotry, nor the despotism of these invaders, effected a change in the habits, institutions, or rights of the Hindu population of India. These were disturbed but not destroyed. The Mahomedan Princes, no doubt increased . . . the land tax, or sovereign's share of the produce . . . but the right of the cultivator to property in the soil was never disputed.[112]

Malcolm was making two points here, both of which limited the role of governments in shaping Indian life. First, Indian practices predated the Muslim conquest and withstood it. Second, the model of a despotism in which all property belonged to the monarch and all rights descended from him was invalid.[113] Instead, the payment of revenues confirmed the proprietary rights of the cultivator, not the king who received it: "[T]he mere fact of occupation for two or three generations regenerated, to a certain extent, the rights of the cultivator, who claimed, as long as he could pay the Government share, the field that his father had tilled as his own and as the inheritance of his children."[114] Property rights were determined by usage at a local level and Malcolm went on to show that Malwa's history proved this. Its political history had been exceptionally unstable; but disorder, civil war, and even tyranny had been unable to encroach on the harmony and vitality of village life:

> This country has, for upwards of a century, been subject to numerous petty usurpers, and has consequently been exposed to changes and oppressions far beyond what it could have experienced under one despot, who, however he might abuse his power, would have controlled that of others. But, fortunately, the bigotry of the Mahomedans, and the rapacity of the Mahrattas, alike understood and valued those ancient institutions, which render every village in Indian an independent and distinct community, ruled by its officers within its own limits.

The village rather than the prince or his court was the key political unit in the state. The village as a "little republic" was a familiar image in the writing of Malcolm's like-minded colleagues Charles Metcalfe, who had settled the Delhi territory, and Sir Thomas Munro, whose experience had been gained throughout the Madras presidency.[115] It is instructive to see the uses Malcolm made of this model of the village, not least because it played

a central role in his discussion of government and society in the *Memoir.* He noted that under the Mughals detailed divisions of the land were made. Where the village officers themselves did not have a copy of the record, Malcolm argued that the dimensions of particular plots were often simply remembered. After an absence of thirty years, many cultivators, or their descendants, were able to return and reclaim their land thanks to these land measurement practices and the competency of the relevant village officials. Often, individuals with no clear title to the land had been accepted as proprietors because of long-held occupation. In this sense, rights were normative.

For Malcolm, though the British brought peace in 1818, the restoration of peaceful life had little to do with any specific British policy. The village community as an indissoluble unit, disturbed but not destroyed by political unrest, becomes the core of civil life:

> [T]here is no people in whose heart the love of the spot where they were born is more deeply planted than the Hindus; and those of central India, under all their miseries and distresses, appear never for a moment to have given up hope of being restored to their homes. . . . Infant Potails [village headmen] (the second and third in descent from the emigrator) were in many cases restored at the head of these parties.[116]

This distinction between the government as a guardian of peace and the village as the administrator of revenues and justice explained why village life had endured through the political upheaval of the previous two centuries. "Under all this mismanagement," Malcolm observed, there had been "not nearly so much ruin and general distress as might be supposed."[117] Malcolm went on to explain how villages were able to protect themselves from the venality of corrupt regional officers by petitioning local princes for help (this worked because the prince could then fine the officer in question, giving the officer a disincentive to oppress the village):

> This can only come from the government, with all its arbitrary acts, being defrauded, by a combination, which extends from the prime minister to the poorest cultivator of the smallest district. The uncertainty of station makes all tremble at the prospect of proved guilt; and hence that union between heads of villages, renters, collectors, and Government officers, which enables the lowest to keep the highest in check. The abuses of such a system become, in time, understood; and are, even when detected, treated with indulgence: they belong to a loose despotic government like that of the Princes of India. And when they are within limits, and the administration is conducted with vigilance, and upon tolerably just principles, a considerable degree of happiness and comfort is diffused.[118]

Villages, more durable than governments themselves, were capable of regulation without central government and, most important, they could develop practical ways of defending themselves against excesses of tyranny and corruption.

Malcolm had proved that native rulers, such as Alhia Bhye, were capable of good government. Here, he was demonstrating that even under wicked or incompetent rulers, oppression had been limited and the happiness of the people could still be secured. For instance, Malcolm mentioned that the "superior opulence" of cities was "more inviting to oppressive Princes." However, he stated that the ability to plunder the cities was "checked by the collective influence and strength of the wealthy citizens, particularly the bankers who are very powerful."[119] In Malcolm's view, it was a paradox that the weakness of the political system at its highest levels and the strength of local governments and local elites provided for the protection of the people from tyranny. This supported the lesson of the histories: that the political success of local princes and foreign invaders had depended on their ability to develop good relations with the villages.

Aside from village officials, the most important figure in local government was the Zamindar or larger landholder. Malcolm stressed that in central India, Zamindars had always been servants of their state. They possessed rights to a share of the government's revenue but only as payment for service to the government. The Zamindar had historically been a local magistrate operating on behalf of the state.[120] For Malcolm, the Zamindars were not the independent landlord class that the British had tried to create in Bengal, they were a service nobility. Thus, the British, by bolstering the authority of the Zamindars in Malwa, were ultimately asserting their own claims to stately power.

The full implications of Malcolm's approach to the Zamindars for his vision of Malwa become clear if his views are compared to those of his neighbor Commissioner, Mountstuart Elphinstone. Elphinstone had actually been keen to diminish the service obligations of the Zamindars and to remove their rights to revenues wherever possible; often by pensioning them off.[121] Unlike Malcolm, he continued Maratha efforts to replace the Zamindars with the state's officials—Brahmin or British collectors, usually—in the collection of revenue and the administration of justice. As the commissioner for the Peshwa's former territories, Elphinstone had taken over a discrete political entity. In doing so, he inherited its centralizing mission in the face of local aristocratic opposition. In contrast, Malcolm commanded a region where Maratha dynasties of recent origin competed with each other and developed working relationships with the entrenched local Rajput and Muslim petty chiefs and "little kings."[122] In this scenario, British authority was best increased by building up aristocratic service

obligations to the British. Malcolm was not so much "Balkanizing" Malwa, as unearthing a "Balkan" patchwork of governments from beneath the ruins of Mughal and Maratha state building.

As with revenue, so it was with the administration of justice. Here, Malcolm drew his readers' attention not so much to the inadequacies of centralized government as to the vitality of local government, both village and district. He emphasized the durability of older Indian practices and their ability to reemerge in time of peace:

> These local authorities have been cherished or neglected, according to the disposition of the sovereign, but, as far as we can trace the history of Central India, their rights and privileges have never been contested, even by the tyrants and oppressors who slighted them; while on the other hand, all just princes have founded their reputation and claim to popularity on attention to them.[123]

Malcolm pointed out that the Marathas themselves did little to augment the administration of justice. "The character of the police in the principal towns . . . , under Mahratta government, may be judged, when it is stated, that the office of Cutwal is publicly rented, and that the police is considered as a source of profit."[124] His observation has two implications. First, it adds to his main argument that Indian society itself maintains law and justice at a village level. Second, by extension, it indicates that the role of government would always be limited. Its ability to maintain peace rather than its interference in local life guaranteed order.

Malcolm's major preoccupation was to promote the use of Panchayats. These were groups of elders who judged and sentenced in civil and criminal cases involving their own caste or members of their village. They had been introduced into Company territory as a judicial practice in 1813–1814. Their radical difference to a system of courts and a large number of complaints about corruption made them unpopular with the court of directors.[125] As the next chapter will show, Malcolm needed to overcome considerable opposition in order to show that the proposed introduction of the Bengal Regulations (legal code) and of Bengal judicial practices into Malwa was unnecessary and therefore unwise.[126] Panchayats, Malcolm stated, were natural to Indian society; they were an extension of village government and they did not disturb preserved caste prejudices. The British, by supporting an existing structure, created three main advantages for themselves. First, they increased the authority of the villages, which would ultimately promote them as channels for economic regeneration. Second, by upholding the authority of the Panchayats, a native institution, the British ultimately overcame the people's alienation from a foreign government. Third, the continued existence of Panchayats showed that

British government at its best did not interfere with existing community structures. Malcolm's hope that the Panchayats could eventually try criminal as well as civil cases[127] is a classic example of his conviction that the role of the British was to foster developments from within Indian society rather than to effect changes through legislation.

Conclusion

Like Elphinstone and Grant Duff, Malcolm attempted to prove that pristine Hindu revenue and justice practices, such as the Panachayats, had endured through centuries of political unrest and that they were more appropriate for the government of western India than the complicated hybrid of English, Muslim, and Hindu legal ideas developed in Bengal. In weighing the merits of Maratha government, Malcolm reminded his readers that Hindu revenue settlements were usually moderate (the vast body of literature about oppressive settlements in southern and northern India and Hyderabad dealt mainly with Muslim states).[128] This is consistent with the assessment of Muslim local government as corrupt, onerous, and inefficient found in the *History of Persia.* It must be remembered that Malcolm's Malwa settlement followed in the tradition of the reconstruction of Mysore after 1799. The family of Tipu Sultan had been replaced by the Hindu Woyedar dynasty. While Malcolm presided over Malwa, Elphinstone ended the reign of the Brahmin Peshwas in the Deccan and reinstated the Hindu Bhonsle dynasty of Sattara. Malcolm was implementing British overlordship of the last great Hindu threats to British preeminence in South Asia, the Maratha dynasties of Nagpur, Holkar, and Shinde. Equally, as the *Memoir* showed, the British, like the Marathas and the Mughals before them, now rested their authority on the loyalty of dependent Rajput princes, the local Hindu rulers of western and central India. The *Malwa Report,* as its author claimed, portrayed indirect rule as the only possible way of governing the vast Hindu populations of central India, organized as they were under hundreds of petty rulers (Malcolm boasted that he had personally made agreements with 269 princes in Malwa).[129]

Yet the *Memoir's* style and many of its arguments about current policy distinguish it both from other works on new British territory and from larger trends in the government of those territories. Broadly, the period after 1818 was characterized by British initiatives to wipe out the service elites and other intermediary classes that lay between India's rulers and the wider population. The *Memoir* articulates unique arguments in favor of retaining and building up service nobilities. For example, Malcolm defended the

Zamindars as the traditional conduit between local governments and the larger courts. However, British moves to eliminate the power of Zamindars (as seen in Elphinstone's Deccan and, two decades earlier, in the Poligar wars in southern India) were often not so much radical breaks from Indian practice, as they were continuations of the centralizing initiatives of earlier Indian rulers (in these cases the Peshwas and Tipu Sultan).[130] The *Memoir* demonstrates how the character of British imperial enterprise in India at this time was far from uniform and was often largely shaped by individual interpretations of specific regions.

This also applied to the interpretations of India's past that British administrators used to sanction their policy recommendations. Grant Duff's *History of the Mahrattas* was a political narrative. Its focus on intrigues within the Maratha courts, and particularly on Poona and the Peshwas, explained the rise of the British in terms of the impossibility of lasting Maratha dominance in India. In contrast, Malcolm's history of Malwa, with its many digressions, explained Maratha imperial expansion and decline in terms of how groups and individuals operated within the constraints of the social and political structures of the time. As we have seen, this was the criterion on the basis of which he praised Alhia Bye and criticized her successor, Jeswunt Rao Holkar. Malcolm balanced Malwa's present prosperity under British overlords with its glorious past under virtuous and awe-inspiring leaders. However, unlike Grant Duff's work, Malcolm's *Memoir of Central India,* as the title suggests, was not a formal history. Rather, it used history to narrowly prescribe British policy in the future. As the next chapter will show, the *Memoir*'s discussion of Panchayats and other "traditional" modes of administration was significant because it claimed to give historical sanction to the policies it advocated and it used a sophisticated and engaging historical idiom to reinforce this sense of legitimacy through precedent.[131]

To advocate indirect rule was, in the first instance, to paint a portrait of a complex network of polities on one layer and an enduring village-based system of justice, police, and cultivation on another, all of which, Malcolm argued, need not and should not be swept away by the British government. Peace among the princes would be the ultimate security for increased revenues. Peace would allow for the redevelopment of land and reduce transit costs, further spurring on the increase in cultivation. It is for this reason that both Malcolm and Elphinstone had often been happy to accept military service in lieu of revenue shares from certain local leaders.[132] Malcolm's comments on revenue bear this out. Although improvement demanded a moderate revenue settlement, he gave little attention to the details of revenue collection. For Malcolm, the job of the British was instead to encourage the princes themselves to be the conduits of improvement and regional prosperity.

The *Memoir* is a transitional document in the history of British India. Its author had, at the beginning of his career, devised a series of arguments about the pernicious effects of predatory warfare on India. This had been part of a great effort among Company diplomats to justify war, annexation, and unequal alliance building as a way of eliminating the military and political independence of the Maratha princes. In the *Memoir,* however, the Maratha princes were no longer the agents of a predatory system of warfare. This language was transferred to the Pindaris who, Malcolm attempted to show, had been "totally eliminated" by British victory in the war of 1817–1818 and the settlement of the Maratha Empire that followed. The Marathas, no longer a disruptive force in India, were now part of the fabric of its native government. They were the natural rulers of their domains. They had a bond with the people that foreigners, such as the British, could never attain, and the *Memoir* argued that history had proven this. In the *Memoir,* the history of Malwa is that of a Hindu province—happy under tolerant and stable overlords, but willing and able to resist any attack on their ancient customs. To Malcolm's mind, Malwa under his rule was prosperous precisely because it adhered to this historical maxim.

The *Memoir* continued the themes of disorder and chaos that Malcolm had outlined in his early memoranda on the Marathas. But now the rulers of Malwa appeared as a barrier against war and anarchy where they had once been an obstacle to lasting peace. To sustain this argument, Malcolm produced an account of the Maratha invasion of Malwa that reflected its importance in the history of Indian empire building. This scheme incorporated the British as the latest wave of conquerors rather than the harbingers of a totally new era in South Asian history. The *Memoir* demonstrated that Malcolm possessed the expertise to help the British government build on Indian foundations. It expressed Malcolm's conviction that Malwa needed to remain a vast network of largely autonomous village communities under the rule of native princes. The next chapter will show how Malcolm's arguments about the need for indirect rule in central India were received and developed into a coherent vision of how India should be governed.

Chapter 5

Sir John Malcolm and the Government of India after 1818

The Memoir of Malwa heralded a new phase in Malcolm's Indian writings. It responded to the emphasis on the administration of British India brought about by the Third Anglo-Maratha War. In the *Sketch of the Political History of India* of 1812, Malcolm had described the princes of India as potential enemies and allies in a complex system of state rivalry. With the British from 1818 on as unequivocally the paramount power in India, the *Memoir* had informed its readers that the native princes of central and western India were now to be viewed either as loyal dependents or possible rebel leaders.[1] As Malcolm informed the governor general, Lord Hastings, that summer, "the very minds of the inhabitants are for the moment conquered; but neither its former history nor our experience warrants our expectation that these feelings will be permanent."[2] As he saw it, creating a lasting peace through good government was now the main challenge for the British administration of India and this became the central preoccupation of his writings until his death in 1833.

Malcolm's Indian works after 1818 all assumed that though British military power had been sufficient for conquest, it was inadequate for guaranteeing peace. "History informs us," Malcolm wrote, "that though armies are the sole means of conquering a country, they never were the sole, or even chief means of preserving it."[3] With British military strength reliant on a vast native army and peace in the provinces dependent on popular consent, the British Empire could hope to survive only by providing India with an enduring civil government adapted to the needs and prejudices of the people. As Malcolm put it, "our power in India rests upon the general opinion of the natives of our comparative superiority in

good faith, wisdom, and strength, to their own rulers."[4] In his view, these advantages were not inherent or self-evident. The British would not only have to provide good government, they would have to be seen to be doing so: "The people of India must, by a recurring sense of the benefits have amends made to them for the degradation of continuing subject to foreign masters."[5] "To be safe or beneficial," Malcolm insisted that reform "must be . . . the work of the society itself."[6] The task of British government was to carefully manage native institutions, to ensure peace in the short term and the "gradual and almost unseen" improvement of Indian society in the long term.[7] "If," he remarked with deft use of a military metaphor, "instead of overmarching, we are content to go along with this great population, and be in good temper with their prejudices, their religion, and usages we must gradually win them to better ways of thinking and of acting."[8] As will be seen, Malcolm's arguments about topics ranging from army recruitment to the freedom of the press, assumed that government policy must reflect and encourage patterns within society. This was Malcolm's justification for promoting the continuation of native rule under British guidance as an alternative to spreading direct British rule. The *Memoir* and his subsequent works were written to refute the arguments of Charles Grant, James Mill, and others at India House who favored steadily replacing native governments and administrative practices with a centralized, reforming British imperial administration.[9]

Malcolm's new interest in the government of India as a whole went hand in hand with a shift in his writing away from the close commentaries on legislation, war, and diplomacy of the *Sketch of the Political History of India,* toward a noticeably more systematic analysis of the operation of Indian society and the duties and obligations of the British imperial government. Malcolm's claim that the slow progress of native institutions under British tutelage was the ideal form of imperial government relied heavily on the model of native society elaborated in the *Memoir.* This new approach reflected changes in his career. Until 1818, when he was appointed commissioner for Malwa, Malcolm had been a soldier-diplomat. Even the analyses of Sikh and Persian society in his previous books were arguably those of an interested observer rather than a would-be legislator keen to understand the components and mechanisms of the society he intended to govern. This altered with the *Memoir.* As Malcolm said, he was attempting in this book to describe the "anatomy of central India."[10] In his subsequent books, he went on to use that anatomy, that framework, to validate his own policy recommendations. Its central role in Malcom's later works is attested to by the fact he made such frequent reference to it in the footnotes. This chapter shows that whatever lens Malcolm viewed the nature of British power in India through, whether the role of the army or

the structure of the Company's government, he relied on his observations about India's people and society presented in the *Memoir.*

The policy implications of the *Memoir* for British India as a whole were outlined in the two most detailed and comprehensive sources for Malcolm's theories on the British imperial government of India, *The Political History of India* (1826), written as part of his campaign to secure a senior post in India, and *The Government of India* (1833), published in the run-up to the expiry of the East India Company's charter. After a more detailed look at the intellectual terrain of British Indian policy making in the 1820s, the present chapter places each of these books in its immediate context. I then go on to examine the themes to which Malcolm devoted most attention: relations with the native states, internal administration, and the army. Together these topics formed the cornerstones of his British imperial policy recommendations for an India that he understood to be an ancient and effective agrarian civilization in which military supremacy was the most potent authority.

The Significance of the 1820s for Sir John Malcolm's Writings

Where Malcolm's earlier projects had been histories designed, either explicitly or obliquely, to promote his ambitions as a diplomat, the *Memoir* was published to demonstrate his mastery of civil administration. With the exception of *Clive,* published in 1836, the books Malcolm wrote about India after 1818 focused on present and future policy, turning more on questions of internal government than external relations. This change reflected the new priorities of the government of British India—reform and retrenchment—and the increasingly radicalized intellectual landscape of Britain in the 1820s.[11] Before looking in more detail at how these pressures shaped Malcolm's interests and arguments as a theorist of empire, it is worth explaining how the *Memoir of Malwa,* the blueprint for indirect rule, set the agenda for his later works.

Although the last chapter stressed the significance of the *Memoir's* approach to history, contemporary readers would not have separated Malcolm's historical analysis from his recommendations about policy. Francis Jeffrey, a leading Scottish Whig, reviewing Malcolm's work in the *Edinburgh Review* in 1824, did not make this distinction. Introducing contemporary India to his audience, Jeffrey observed that this "mighty region, which has suffered so deeply from the dissensions and wars of rival chiefs, on the dissolution of the Moghul empire, is now subjected to one undivided

sovereignty, under whose firm and impartial sway all its various powers seem to be settling into a species of federal community."[12] Yet Jeffrey recognized that British supremacy was by no means secure. He warned that "the more difficult task remains of cementing, by policy, what we have subdued by arms."[13] He went on to say that, "in the capacity of legislators, the greatest danger arises from our ignorance and inexperience in the usages of the country."[14] Unaware of the complexity of their task, the British might set an agenda for the postwar development of India that was too hasty or too simple. Jeffrey felt that Malcolm evinced "on all occasions, a most enlightened spirit of impartiality and moderation."[15] He went so far to as to say that Malcolm "reasons with the calmness of a statesman."[16] Malcolm was an admirable author precisely because "he does not by any means disguise either the dangers or the difficulties of our situation both as conquerors and as legislators."[17] The historical section, "replete with well-condensed matter," enabled the legislator to fully understand the problems he faced. This was significant. The task of the legislator, as Jeffrey understood it, was not to fashion intrinsically perfect laws, but to meet the demands of the society he governed while respecting its prejudices (this had been established by David Hume and, more explicitly, by Adam Smith).[18] For Jeffrey, the most striking example of this in the *Memoir* was the reign of Alhia Bhye, the regent of Holkar. This was precisely because she approached the government of her country just as the British should now: "It was not by her armies, but by the force of her character, that she ruled and preserved her dominions in peace, in a time of general confusion and trouble."[19] When he came to discuss the methods of government for India, Jeffrey was even more scathing in his evaluation of previous British efforts at judicial reform and revenue settlement than Malcolm had been. Endorsing Malcolm's detailed descriptions of current practice, Jeffrey cautioned, "[W]e can only improve by adhering to the model we see before us; by studying it, by understanding it."[20] Jeffrey recognized that Malcolm's *Memoir* had taken a detailed knowledge of the "model" of existing society as the starting poinht for sound imperial government. For Jeffrey, the effect of Malcolm's work was to prove "the superior capacity" of native rulers "to manage their own affairs."[21] Jeffrey entirely endorsed Malcolm's premise, that the native rulers had often shown themselves capable of providing benevolent government. The mixed and often unforeseen consequences of British schemes for agricultural improvement such as the Bengal permanent settlement added weight to this argument.[22] "If," he concluded, "corruption has already taken root in a portion of our territories, care should be taken not to extend it to the conquered territories."[23] John Barrow, reviewing the same work in the *Quarterly Review,* also endorsed Malcolm's vision of the decline of Maratha power and his plan for the future administration of the region.[24]

It is necessary to bear in mind that Jeffrey assumed the skills Malcolm displayed as an historian were essentially the same as those he demonstrated in his discussions of contemporary policy. It was axiomatic that good government fostered improvement by adapting itself to the prejudices of the people; the past gave the legislator his bearing for the future. More particularly, Jeffrey, like Malcolm, warned that the British government of India must be carried out by experts with a deep knowledge of the languages, manners, and history of the people. In this sense, Malcolm's earlier works, his histories, built the foundations of his more focused discussions of imperial government in the 1820s. Moreover, Jeffrey's review reminds us that the importance Malcolm attached to the need to consider the history and manners of a society when designing its government was in no way idiosyncratic. Martha McLaren has indicated ways in which the ideas of Malcolm and those of his fellow imperial administrators, Munro and Elphinstone, about the advancement of civil society in India drew on earlier Scottish Enlightenment debates about the development of commerce and the state in early modern Europe.[25] For Malcolm's generation of Scots, which included Francis Jeffrey, the intellectual demands made by the challenge of governing vast politically complex regions such as India made discussions in terms of "stages of development" less relevant than the detailed study of the mechanisms of political society. As Jeffrey's review, with its praise for Malcolm's "model" of Indian society, reminds us, it was this aspect of Scottish Enlightenment political thought that characterized the generation after Dugald Stewart.[26] An overriding concern with the effects of political structures had been evident in Malcolm's earlier works such as the *History of Persia,* which was a case study of the effects of despotism on society at large. Malcolm's later works were distinct because they used general analyses and detailed descriptions of the structures of Indian society to actually guide policy. McLaren argued that, in this sense, Munro, Malcolm, and Elphinstone were legislators in a Scottish Enlightenment mold. However, Malcolm's Scottish intellectual roots need to be more precisely identified. As this book has argued, the *Memoir*'s use of a "model" to infer policy was a new aspect of Malcolm's later writings. This chapter and the next chapter on Malcolm's *Life of Lord Clive* will show that Malcolm's use of theory, his reliance on the philosophical historical devices of writers such as William Robertson or, more particularly, the kind of political analysis found in Smith's *The Wealth of Nations,* became far more apparent in his later works. Moreover, by linking Malcolm only to the great authors of the middle period of the Scottish Enlightenment, McLaren's otherwise instructive analysis fails to account for the profound effect the French Revolution had on the late Enlightenment generation's view of government. For Jeffrey, as for Malcolm, the Revolution had given a new and

tragic emphasis to the need to provide government adapted to the prejudices of the people, to work with existing social hierarchies, to avoid overly abstract or ambitious agendas for reform, and to make the close study of a society a necessary prerequisite for its government.[27]

The effect of James Mill's emergence as a respected commentator on Indian affairs after 1817 perfectly illustrates this point. As an historian and administrator of British India, Malcolm's fellow Scot, Mill, can be seen as a kind of rival heir to the political traditions that had informed the Scottish Enlightenment. As Malcolm himself was to remark, "I cannot accept that the mantle of Francis Bacon has descended upon Jeremy Bentham."[28] Throughout the 1820s and 1830s, noticeably during the reform crisis of 1830–1832, Malcolm was a vocal opponent of the reform agenda of Mill and his mentor Bentham. As the next chapter will show in more detail, Mill's *History of British India* (1817) used the history of the British in India to prove the necessity of far-reaching reform in the imperial administration. In contrast, Malcolm, like Jeffrey, saw great danger in grand theories aimed at rationalizing government that did not build on existing foundations.

Malcolm's arguments owed a great deal to the rhetoric of Burke's *Reflections on the Revolution in France*. For example, in arguing for the support of India 's native rulers and against the spread of direct British government, Malcolm cited the feelings of the people and the force of convention, rather than the quality of native governments. As early as 1818, he had written, "[O]ne of the most natural and legitimate sentiments of the human mind leads it to regard that power which has been long established in ancient and noble families with respect, if not veneration. It is the great link of order in every society, particularly those which are simple and despotic. We are compelled by the impulse of this feeling to regard every species of usurpation with disgust."[29] Burke, too, had been explicit about the immense emotional and aesthetic appeal of hereditary power. As he put it, "[O]ur passions instruct our reason; because when kings are hurl'd from their thrones . . . we are alarmed into reflexion; our minds . . . are purified by terror."[30] Burke concluded by observing that "Poets, who have to deal with an audience not yet graduated in the school of the rights of men, and who must apply themselves to the moral constitution of the heart, would not dare to produce such a triumph as a matter of exultation."[31] Malcolm's vision of Indian government as expressed in the *Memoir* was, to a great degree, an example of the legislator addressing himself to the "moral constitution of the heart."[32] His solution, as outlined in the *Memoir,* was to avoid replacing existing government and administrative structures at all, and his justification had been the great affection of the native people for rank and authority. The novelty of British government would not lie in

the quality of its laws, but in the security it gave to law and property as it already existed. This is partly why Douglas Peers's vision of British India in the 1820s as a "garrison state" provides such a compelling explanation for the continued importance of security and the military after the declaration of paramountcy in 1818.

As the review by Jeffrey shows,[33] the contrast, between the interpretation of Peers, rooted in militarism, and McLaren's notion of the creation of a government that nurtured improvement according to Scottish Enlightenment ideals is inadequate for analyzing Malcolm's writings in this period.[34] Malcolm's later writings addressed the task of building a lasting civil administration, capable of securing order and ensuring improvement. This, he argued, was vital because, as the territorial power of the British grew, their military resources became evermore strained.[35] In his view, the British had no choice but to endeavor to earn the respect and avoid the resentment of the populace. At the same time, Malcolm was not suggesting that the British military regime, which had gained the empire, should or could wither away; rather, it should be supported by the ever-thickening bonds of civil society. This chapter demonstrates the continuity between the militarism running through all of Malcolm's works and the compassion and admiration for Indian culture that is more pronounced in his books after 1818. It does this, in part, by arguing that Malcolm's great fear of revolution and his disdain for the revolutionary politics of social theorists such as Mill were unifying themes in many of his later writings.

Writing about the Government of India

Malcolm discussed the administration of British India in the final chapters of the *Sketch of the Political History of India* (1812), the *Memoir of Central India (*1823), and the *Political History of India* (1826). The *Government of India,* written months before his death in 1833, is his only work devoted entirely to analyzing current policy. This section reviews the circumstances in which he wrote these books and outlines their arguments about the government of British India. As the following brief summary shows, while the consolidation of British authority in India after 1818 drew Malcolm's interest toward problems of internal administration and reform, concern with security and the stabilizing role of the military remained at the core of all of his policy recommendations and theories of imperial government.

As we have seen, the *Sketch of the Political History of India* (1812) argued that, as a leading regional power in South Asia, British India must put its security above the short-sighted policies of the merchants who continued

to run the East India Company as a commercial concern. Malcolm saw Pitt's India Act of 1784 as an unsuccessful attempt to reform the Indian government. Too willing to conciliate the Company's directors, Pitt "left the power in England which was to control the Administration of India, shackled and embarrassed."[36] "This inactive system," Malcolm wrote, "so far from attaining its object, which was to preserve affairs upon the footing in which we found them, had only the effect of making the British Government stationary while all around them advanced."[37] Recent history, Malcolm argued, demonstrated that the act's noninterference clause, though it satisfied the money-minded directors, left British India vulnerable as a state.

The *Sketch* aired two important arguments about British India that inform all of Malcolm's subsequent writings on this subject. It demonstrated that the British had evolved into a "dependent state . . . surrounded by Governments without faith."[38] For example, when criticizing the British decision to renounce its treaty obligations to the petty princes and chiefs of Rajastan in 1806, he argued that as the foremost power in South Asia, the Company had a duty to protect smaller states from their larger neighbors.[39] Second, the *Sketch* argued that the authorities at home did not adequately understand the full implications of Britain's place in India. As a result, there was a mismatch between Britain's needs and responsibilities as an Asian state and the resources and legal powers it gave the people who ran that state. The earlier discussion of the *Political History of India* (1826) has shown that Malcolm celebrated the administration of the Marquis of Hastings from 1813 to 1823 as the completion of the process of imperial consolidation begun by Richard Wellesley and thwarted by the Company's directors. Quick and decisive wars against the Gurkhas in 1814–1815 and against the Marathas in 1817–1818 marked a definite break with the policy of noninterference.

"The British Government," as Malcolm wrote in the *Memoir of Central India,* "had resolved to assume that paramount rank among the States of India which belonged to the condition and magnitude of its power."[40] As Malcolm himself would observe over ten years later, the British widely believed that Indiawide military ascendancy after 1818 would dramatically increase the revenues of British India and allow the Company to "liquidate those debts, which a succession of wars, for more than half century, had tended to accumulate."[41] With the Company's major Indian rivals subdued, new revenue surpluses would be ploughed into improvement. *The Memoir of Central India* used the history of the province of Malwa to discourage direct British rule by arguing that careful management of indigenous governments would lead to long-term peace, the improvement of agriculture, and an increase in wealth. In the last chapter of the *Memoir,*

Malcolm hinted that indirect rule (that is leaving domestic government in the hands of Indian princes) was not only possible, it was the only way to preserve the British Empire. "Our present condition," he warned, "is one of apparent repose, but full of danger."[42] Malcolm feared that overconfidence might encourage the British to dismantle native institutions in order to build a better society. As he put it, "It is the hour in which men awake from a dream. Disgust and discontent succeed to terror and admiration; and the princes, the chiefs, and all who had enjoyed rank or influence, see nothing but a system dooming them to immediate decline and ultimate annihilation."[43] Malcolm was adamant that mismanagement would lead to overconfidence and that revolt would be the most likely consequence.

Malcolm's Indian writings were now part of an increasingly complex debate about what Britain should do with the areas under its direct control and the even larger area nominally ruled by native princes. Widespread peace in India after 1818 and the massive growth of British imperial responsibility led to a growing interest in how British India should be administered. As president of the Board of Control between 1816 and 1821, George Canning encouraged increased professionalism in the administration of the board and at India House.[44] A greater number of more specialist committees and secretaries processed the increased volume of correspondence on the domestic government of India. Not only were the new staff given more specific remits, Canning took care to appoint men of proven intellectual ability, such as James Mill and Thomas Love Peacock.[45] The growing ranks of the administrative staff in Britain increasingly used Benthamite ideas on legal and social reform as the basis for a dramatic expansion in the size and scope of the government of British India,[46] flying in the face of the recommendations of works such as the *Report on the Province of Malwa*.[47] As a result, debates about the administration of India became more detailed, more systematic, and more preoccupied with internal administration from 1818 on. Policy makers in this period seriously discussed many experimental issues, most of which never came to anything. A good example of this is the enthusiasm for white colonization, which will be discussed in more detail later. The changing composition of the Company's staff reflected a shift in thinking. During the 1820s, debates within the Company about the merits of Westernization became increasingly polarized. The well-publicized orientalist-Anglicist rift of the 1830s over Indian education was essentially part of a larger, less clear split in British thinking about how to improve Indian society between those who aimed to promote "traditional" institutions and values on the one hand and those who sought to promote Western learning on the other.[48] Malcolm, who felt that the purpose of British government was to make the best of existing Indian structures and practices without provoking a revolutionary backlash, was an extreme

exponent of the "orientalist" side of the debate. Macaulay perfectly exemplified the opposite view. As law member of the Bengal Council, Macaulay had been happy to produce a penal code that entirely disregarded the precedents of Muslim and Hindu legal practices.[49] But the ideological divisions were generally not so clearly defined. For instance, while James Mill, in many ways Macaulay's guide on Indian policy, was eager to see the native states of India entirely replaced by British central government, he did not agree with Macaulay that English should be the language of education in India.[50] In practice, sharp divisions tended to crystallize over individual debates.

Before moving on to look at Malcolm's writings between 1823 and his death ten years later, it is worth examining the ways in which his career prospects during this period influenced his decision to write more generally about the government of India. Malcolm spent much of this time actively canvassing for a senior post in India. Put forward as a possible candidate for governor of either Bombay or Madras in 1819, 1825, and 1827, Malcolm was also eager to promote the creation of a lieutenant governorship of central India, with himself as the first incumbent.[51] He had written detailed letters about it to major figures including George Canning, the Duke of Wellington, Lord Amherst, the court of directors, and the Board of Control. As he observed to Lord Amherst, the governor general, "for the administration of the remote provinces of our Empire, it becomes every day more and more obvious that high local authority should be established."[52] As he explained to Governor General Bentinck in 1828, "In offering myself as the instrument to carry this plan through in central India, I sought not only to preserve in their condition natives of rank, and to perpetuate a school of liberal and enlightened European agents, but I desired to introduce a system that would excite the ambition of the Indian service."[53] Malcolm saw the lieutenant governorship as a just reward for his years of hard work, but he also imagined it as an innovative and apt response to the challenges of ruling newly conquered India. The court stalled on a decision about giving Malcolm central India until after he had been installed as governor of Bombay, at which point he was informed that his request had been denied.[54]

Constant uncertainty about Malcolm's career in India during the 1820s, combined with disappointment over central India and Madras, had a noticeable effect on Malcolm himself. He became something of a bore, keen to boast about his own importance at every opportunity. During late 1827, when Malcolm was negotiating over central India, John Ravenshaw, a Company secretary, remarked, "[I]f he would only leave others to see his merits without thrusting them before our eyes upon all occasions he would

with me be second only to Munro."[55] It would be wrong to see Malcolm's new interest in internal administration and his greater output simply as a response to changes in British India after 1818. Malcolm's writings throughout the 1820s should be read in part as works of self-promotion written by someone keen to take a more active role in the government of India.

For the second edition of the *Political History of India,* published in 1826, Malcolm added three chapters on the administration of the government. These chapters analyzed the local governments of India, discussing the administration of revenue and justice, the army, the press, missionaries, and the Eurasian population, and they assessed the relationship between the various arms of the home administration. Malcolm provided both a detailed analysis of current practices and a plea that any future reform should be cautious and limited. He warned that "all those fair hopes of gradual improvement which we now entertain may be lost in the vain and rash attempt to accelerate their improvement."[56] The book contained a sustained critique of Bengal judicial and revenue practice that will be discussed in more detail later.

Malcolm's *Government of India*, written in the run-up to the expiry of the Company's charter in 1833, fleshes out earlier policy discussions found in the *Memoir* and the *Political History*. Approximately half of the *Government of India* is devoted to Malcolm's extended reflections on the Bombay presidency and its role in the former Maratha Empire, the Indian Ocean, and the northwest frontier. These sections of the book are best read as detailed case studies of how indirect rule should work, using examples from the Maratha heartlands in western India.[57] However, Malcolm was also adamant that his observations were relevant to discussions on older British concerns in Awadh and Hyderabad.[58] The bulk of the rest of the *Government of India* looked at the political organization of the three presidency governments and their armies.

Perhaps rather surprisingly given Malcolm's earlier writings on the directors of the Company, the *Government of India* also contained a vehement defense of the Company as the best vehicle for British rule. Like many other contemporary books and pamphlets on this subject, it assumed that the Company would lose the last of its commercial privileges and be refashioned, or possibly even replaced, as the instrument of British government in India.[59] Malcolm argued for the preservation of the Company and a separate Board of Control. He also put forward detailed plans for how the home administration should be governed. Keen to wed Britain more closely to its empire in India, Malcolm hoped to create an India interest in Parliament by allocating a set number of seats in the House of Commons to Company servants.[60]

At first sight, Malcolm's defense of the Company's directors and his desire to build up their influence in Parliament seem inconsistent with his despair in the *Political History* over the Company's sabotage of Pitt's India Act of 1784. However, Malcolm's recommendations are entirely consistent with two central tenets of his earlier works. The first is that Parliament should be knowledgeable about Indian issues and, unlike in 1784, more representative of all the branches of the Company's administration.[61] This would prevent a small faction, such as the directors, from using the strength of their party to carry Indian legislation that was unpopular with the generality of Indian administrators. The second is that the East India Company, though it may have needed reform, had also proven to be a highly effective provider of imperial government through skilled and honest public servants. As Malcolm put it, only an "insane" person would design such a government; but in its favor the Company's administration had "grown with our empire" and "the managing partners of a body of merchants have risen from the details of a factory to the charge of kingdoms."[62] Moreover, now that the Company had been divested of its monopoly on European trade, Malcolm could view the directors as responsible agents of empire in a way he had not done in the *Sketch.* "Rendered jealous and vigilant by their reduced condition," Malcolm argued, the directors, through their powers of scrutiny, had become "a highly efficacious check on" the powers of both the Board of Control and the governments in India.[63] It is interesting to note that Mill, ever ready to release government from the dead grip of history, and Macaulay, who believed that history often taught the necessity of making bold leaps forward in the present, both agreed with Malcolm on this point.[64] In charge of its own patronage, free from the scandals of the days of Clive and Hastings, and without its monopolies on trade to and from Britain, the Company had proven itself to be the best means for a parliamentary monarchy like Britain to rule despotically over a vast Asian empire like India.

Malcolm's writings on government in the 1820s share an assumption that the British could not expect the gratitude and must be careful to avoid the wrath of their Indian subjects. Having described the content and context of Malcolm's main writings on policy, this chapter now examines how this was reflected in his discussion of the three policy areas he wrote about most in his published works: the government of British India, the army, and British relations with the native princes. Malcolm distinguished between these three themes in his written works, and they also represent the three strands of his life. Having begun his life in the army, Malcolm became a soldier-diplomat, and in the final fifteen years of his life he actively campaigned for high office in the civil administration.

The Government of British India

Malcolm's recommendations on the administration of revenue and justice and other aspects of government are best understood as part of a general strategy for securing lasting British rule in India. At the root of all of his thinking lay a central assumption: that the British were foreign conquerors of an ancient and largely static hierarchical society with revered and highly sophisticated social and political institutions. As Malcolm saw it, to rule effectively and to improve the condition of the people in the three presidencies of Bengal, Madras, and Bombay, the British needed to address themselves to the local elites. In his view, the leaders of Indian society had the most to lose by the spread of British authority. He observed: "We are supported by the good opinion of the lower and middling classes . . . ; but [our government] has received the rudest shocks from an impression that our rule is at variance with the permanent continuance of rank, authority and distinction in any native of India."[65] For Malcolm, disregarding the claims of the elites for authority was imprudent in the extreme.

Malcolm saw India's elites as the pillars on which lasting British power rested. The improvement of Indian society under British rule did not depend on the quality of new reforms or the ability of British administrators; rather, it relied on the effectiveness of local elites:

> The period is yet distant when we can expect to add to our reputation or strength, and with these to our means of civilizing such countries, by addressing ourselves . . . to the mass of the people . . . we can only hope to reclaim ignorant superstitious, or predatory classes of men from their rude and lawless habits, by using, as our instruments those by whom they are influenced or governed.[66]

Using language reminiscent of Edmund Burke's *Reflections on the Revolution in France*, Malcolm argued that any but the most gradual reforms, however desirable they might be, could easily tear apart the foundations of Indian society, unsettling British imperial control:

> By vexing and disturbing such communities with laws which they do not understand, and introducing principles of rule foreign to all their usages, we dissolve ties which, when preserved, further our object; and excite the hostility not only of their chiefs and priests, but of all the restless and bold spirits of the country to whose violence we expose the peaceable and industrious inhabitants.[67]

Malcolm's analysis is comparable to his accounts of the rise of the Marathas and Sikhs. In each case, Malcolm argued that normally peace-loving,

well-ordered Hindu communities had erupted into militant uprisings when they felt that their traditional ways were under threat from Mughal imperial authority. His writings on imperial government in the 1820s made the same argument. In Malcolm's vision of government in the presidencies, the role of the British was to preserve, support, and, where necessary, revive established practices in justice and revenue.

As we have seen, this led Malcolm to champion the use of Panchayats (arbitrators drawn from the local community) for the routine administration of civil and even criminal justice. In their favor, Panchayats were cheap and comprehensible to ordinary people. Best of all, they required only limited supervision from British officials.[68] Malcolm felt this was beneficial because it reinforced preexisting social structures, promoting peace and stability. In contrast, he believed that British and even Mughal efforts to impose a system of regular written law in Bengal had only ever been partially successful. As he remarked, "[N]otwithstanding that spirit of domination, and that contempt for infidels, which marked the Mahomedan rulers, their law was never more than formally introduced."[69] Overly reliant on Muslim legal practices, the British courts in Bengal "never became popular among that people in conformity to whose real or supposed prejudices it was constituted."[70] Even Muslims, he noted, had felt alienated from the early British courts in Bengal. "The numerous changes," he observed, "necessarily made both in civil and criminal code, and the circumstance of a Christian judge presiding in the court, must have effected much of that respect [a Muslim] may be conceived to have for a system of law based on the Koran."[71] Malcolm's critique of Bengal, like his praise for Panchayats, assumed that the best justice systems grew out of the communities they served rather than the efforts of outsiders to codify and simplify the law.

Malcolm went on to argue that Bengal was perhaps the one province in India where the Company could risk making such mistakes with its reform of government. "Bengal Proper," he observed, "from the character of its submissive inhabitants, was the safest part of our dominion upon which we could make such an experiment."[72] Malcolm went on to warn that "the Hindu inhabitants of Malwa and Rajputana, whose habits and customs have never undergone any great change, even under the Mahomedan government, would ill receive such an intended gift."[73] Malcolm's protracted appeal against the extension of the Bengal regulations shows how closely he connected heightened awareness of security and strategy with a romantic appreciation of how natives actually experienced and related to government.

Related to justice was the immense and complex question of revenue administration. As Malcolm himself made clear, he was not pressing for reform in Bengal. Instead, he argued that the regulations were

too imperfect and too specific to Bengal to be applied elsewhere.[74] The example of Bengal illustrated the folly of sweeping innovation and the need to tailor policy to the local situation. "There is no cause," he wrote, "[which] produces such bad effects in our government in India as the continued efforts to apply the same general rules, principles, and institutions, to every part of our diversified and extended empire."[75] He noted that attempts to introduce the Bengal regulations in rugged and lawless Rohilkhand had failed and ended in political unrest. Quoting at length from his *Memoir of Central India,* Malcolm went on to suggest that the regulations would be wholly unsuitable for Malwa and Rajputana:

> The great majority of the inhabitants of that country are Hindus:–to introduce therefore, a jurisdiction grounded, even in its forms, on the imperfect laws of the Mahomedans, who do not bear a proportion to the whole population of five to the hundred, would be an innovation almost as great as the introduction of the English law, and one, from causes which have already been stated, much more repugnant to the feelings of the inhabitants.[76]

It is important to note that many in Calcutta and in London advocated introducing the Bengal regulations (the code of laws for Bengal) into recently acquired parts of the empire—a step that Malcolm and Sir Thomas Munro, by then governor of Madras, bitterly opposed. Burton Stein has argued that Munro and Malcolm were part of a sustained campaign to increase the power of the Board of Control. In Stein's view, Munro and Malcolm shared the Board of Control's opposition to the court of directors' plans to introduce the Bengal regulations into newly conquered territories. Stein saw Munro's advocacy of the ryotwari system of revenue collection as a rallying point for opposition to the court. In this way, publications such as G. R. Gleig's *Life of Sir Thomas Munro* (1830) and Malcolm's *Political History of India* (1826) were salvoes fired against the court of directors.[77] Stein's interpretation provides a useful link between Malcolm's hostility to the court, a feature of all his Indian works, and his opposition to the spread of the Bengal regulations after 1818.

Malcolm did not make an original or a detailed contribution to the debate about the revenue system. But he did set down a sustained critique of the permanent settlement of Bengal. By arguing in favor of a range of revenue systems to suit local practice, Malcolm clearly expressed his hostility to the spread of the Bengal system to newly acquired territories such as Malwa. Malcolm recognized that in a largely agrarian country, revenue collection was the most visible part of government: "The happiness and comfort of nine-tenths of the population depends more upon our fiscal than our judicial or political arrangements."[78] "As we succeed or fail in our

revenue settlements," Malcolm argued, "we shall increase or decrease our crime or litigation."[79] Malcolm was convinced that across all of India "a striking similarity of general features may be found in all that regards the culture of the soil and the rights attached." As with his discussion of justice, this enabled Malcolm to criticize the Bengal system and make general recommendations based overwhelmingly on his own experience of revenue administration in central India.[80]

Malcolm argued that the permanent revenue settlement of Bengal had been poorly executed due to a general lack of detailed knowledge, "both as to the extent and resources of the countries settled, and to the various claims, rights and relations of its inhabitants."[81] The Bengal regulations, fully implemented under Governor General Cornwallis in 1793, had aimed to set tax assessments permanently low in order to create an improving native aristocracy. Malcolm saw a paradox in the early history of the permanent settlement. Designed to limit the role of government, its flaws had led to increased government interference. The Zamindars of Bengal, Malcolm argued, were "ill suited, from their habits and character, to fulfil [their] duties" as the improving landlords the permanent settlement was intended to create.[82] The complaints of their oppressed cultivators flooded the courts:

> The Zamindars, whom it was the desire of this system to elevate became its earliest victims . . . they abused the power it conferred upon them, to oppress the minor proprietors and cultivators. The latter were loud in their complaints, and pleaded prescriptive usages . . . they fortified themselves with volumes of law, and, in their turn, resisted the Zamindar, who could only recover by suits which incurred great delay and expense, that rent, which according to his tenure, he must pay, or, in default of payment, expose his land to be sold. The government vested itself with a power it had denied him, to proceed by a summary process and with out expense. It is hardly necessary to add, that, in consequence of this regulation, and their general character and habits, almost the whole of the Zamindars of Bengal who had been confirmed in their real or supposed rights were swept away, and their estates purchased by another class; who possessed wealth, but had seldom any previous connection with the cultivators of the soil.[83]

The government, Malcolm argued, had been mistaken in attempting to limit its role in society by building up an artificial landlord class. Not only had it failed in limiting its role in improving agriculture, it had also failed to nurture a local landed elite capable of improving the land.

In Malcolm's view the permanent settlement had been inappropriate to Bengali society at the time. By fixing assessment rates in perpetuity in a country where agriculture and commerce were underdeveloped, Malcolm argued, government deprived itself of funds to govern:

> Riches must flow into countries through other sources than agriculture, before government can be secured against losses from bad seasons, famine, and war; and until it has such security, it seems reasonable that it should have a share of the advantage resulting from increased produce.[84]

Moreover, by setting a low fixed assessment (and Malcolm did assume that it was low),[85] the government made itself inadequate for a society at Bengal's stage of development:

> It is pleasing to see a rich landlord expending his wealth in improvements; but the sacrifices made by government to promote the general prosperity will not be rewarded, unless the frugal and industrious of the cultivating class have the path open to obtain property, as well as to preserve what they already possess. A government which precludes itself from any increase of territorial assessment must look to the general diffusion of wealth for the future improvement of its resources.

Malcolm went on to argue that British schemes for improvement, like the permanent settlement, were bound to fail because they were incomprehensible to the native populace: "The cultivators . . . generally . . . do not understand our more enlarged views on fiscal administration, and consequently, cannot appreciate them."[86] Malcolm felt that the British had overcomplicated matters. Rather than attempting to introduce a new system, the British should have used existing practices with prudence and moderation:

> The governments in India which preceded ours never made a permanent settlement of revenue; yet experience proves that where rulers were just, their system of collecting the revenues was quite compatible with the improvement of the country, the diffusion of wealth, and the creation of landed property.[87]

Malcolm was convinced by his own research into Malwa that native revenue systems operating at their optimum ensured a reasonable share for government at the same time as allowing industrious peasants to accumulate wealth. Equally significant, Malcolm believed his own administration of newly conquered Malwa showed that the direct interference of central government was rarely necessary:

> Where the sword of the conqueror has not violated the rights of the proprietor or the cultivator, he claims the land of his fathers, (subject to the land tax, or government share) as well as all that belongs to his condition in his native district, as his indefeasible inheritance; and where violence and

> usurpation have destroyed these rights, they have generally been re-created by the tendency of the inhabitants to return to the ways of their progenitors, or by the policy of their rulers, who saw in those institutions aids to their own government.[88]

Malcolm was equally skeptical about white colonization as a means of improving agriculture and increasing wealth. He was adamant that the Company's government must continue to carefully restrict the "privileges and pretensions" of "the British community in India living under [their] protection, but not in their service."[89] He rejected the idea of improving the land by encouraging white settlement:

> The grounds upon which the impolicy [*sic*] and danger of admitting Englishmen to follow agricultural pursuits in India rest, are, in a great degree, referrable to the peculiar nature of our eastern possessions, which (it cannot be too often repeated) must never be viewed as a colony, but as a subject empire, to the inhabitants of which we have guaranteed, by every pledge that rulers can give to their subjects, the enjoyment of their property, of their laws, of their usages, of their religion.[90]

Malcolm felt that "the danger of offence, from the settlement of British agricultural colonists would be too great."[91] He feared it would create social unrest within Indian society itself, which in turn would destabilize British rule. The native elites would see settlers as "invaders of their rights, and no benefit they could derive from the introduction of capital, or the example of industry and enterprise, would reconcile any to the change, except the very lowest of the labouring classes." This, of course, was undesirable because a dispossessed and resentful native elite could "be irritated to a spirit of personal hostility, which . . . would be most injurious to the public interests."[92] Once again, fear of rebellion and revolt underpinned Malcolm's critique of Westernization.

Much of the problem was with the would-be colonists themselves. As all of Malcolm's Indian writings had stressed, timely management of the status quo by well-informed personnel was the key to the lasting success of British India.[93] Settlers could not be as carefully selected or as closely monitored as Company servants.[94] This had dangerous implications because of the nature of British power in India, relying as it did on a greatly outnumbered European population:

> [W]e can never expect to count numbers with the natives, and it is upon their continued impression of the superiority of our character that our existence must depend. We ought, therefore, to be most cautious as to the adoption of any measure having a tendency to lower the opinion they entertain

> of their rulers; and the colonization of some scattered English families over our provinces would have this effect, no one can doubt who knows the country and its inhabitants.[95]

Moreover, there was quite literally no room for colonization, "even [in] jungles and wilds, in which the right of pasture, and of cutting wood and grass usually belongs to the villagers in their vicinity." Intended as a spur for agriculture and the spread of wealth, white colonization might actually hinder India's improvement, for "when peace and property augment the agricultural population, those that want employment, compelled as they are by their usages to follow the occupation of their fathers, must spread over waste lands."[96] It followed logically from Malcolm's insistence on the endurance of native society that the improvement of India was to be accomplished by the improvement of Indians.

Malcolm approved of the ultimate aim of both the permanent settlement and the plans to encourage white settlement: the fostering of an improving class, capable of fostering wealth and orderly local government. He was willing to consider deliberately creating a native elite, loyal to the British, but only by building on existing patterns of social hierarchy:

> [I]f it is deemed politic (as no doubt it is) to make a sacrifice of any part of the revenue to which we are entitled, for the object of raising a superior class of natives . . . we should elevate in his native district the military officer who has served with distinction in our army; the meritorious and honest native law officer, or judge; the respected Mukh, or president of a court of Panchayat; the most industrious and deserving of the heads of the districts or villages: we may imitate with advantage the native governments, which grant certain portions of waste lands to him who constructs a well, or any other work beneficial to the community; like them, we may shape our system to admit the rise of the frugal and industrious cultivator: all these are legitimate modes by which we may reward service, stimulate to exertion, and strengthen our internal government.[97]

Malcolm went further still. Such an elite would be "our only means of effecting this object; and we should not improvidently waste them by admitting, on the mere ability to advance a small sum, a set of men without personal respectability or local ties to occupy this vacant but important niche in the community."[98] Malcolm's reasons for preferring a service elite as the means of improving agriculture and society are entirely consistent with his opposition to extending the Bengal regulations.

Malcolm also saw that "great and beneficial improvements" in agriculture must be "produced within the society itself."[99] His study of central India convinced him that indigenous institutions were sophisticated

enough and durable enough to bring about agricultural improvement under the right conditions. Even his scheme to build a native elite outlined here, was in part sanctioned by being the current practice of native governments.[100] The *Memoir* had argued that the main role of the British was to act as overlords, creating a secure environment in which local communities could flourish. It is important to recognize that Malcolm saw his own recommendations, such as extending the use of Panchayats or creating a native service elite as ways of strengthening native society and reinforcing its existing hierarchies. What mattered, in this sense, was the allegiance of the elites to the British as the apex of that society.

Of course, Malcolm's ideas about the British imperial government's role in Indian society were always underpinned by strong military-strategic arguments. For instance, in justifying giving Indians a greater role in the administration of revenue, justice and the police Malcolm observed that

> [T]he character of our government debars us from trusting them with political or military power; but this is the strongest of all reasons for bringing them forward in every manner that is unattended with danger. The acquisition of knowledge, under a system which almost excludes the higher classes from the government of their own country, must either rouse them to efforts against our authority, or sink them into a state of abject submission, and leave them with few objects in life beyond indolence and sensual indulgence.[101]

Malcolm's analysis of local administration and lasting imperial rule always returned to the role of military power and the military life in Indian society now that the British had defeated all their major opponents. Like Governor General Bentinck, Malcolm recognized the need to strengthen the authority of the empire by building up an indigenous elite that owed allegiance to and derived their interests from it.[102] In this sense, he differed from Mill, who had argued that Indians had all too often shown themselves too untrustworthy, too incapable of integrity as Westerners understood it, for such offices.[103]

In conclusion, Malcolm had only limited interest in reforming government structures within Bengal and the other presidencies. The main purpose of his critique of the Bengal system was to prevent its introduction to the newly conquered territories. Malcolm's objective in his writings was to show that limited government intervention was always preferable, that local demands would produce different practices and accordingly place different demands on the British administration, and that British attempts to rationalize or standardize justice or revenue would fail. His ideal was a series of locally specific regimes for revenue and justice that brought seemingly subpolitical units like the village community to the fore. As

will be seen, this ultimately served his wider aim of leaving much of India under the rule of native princes. Although strategic concerns underpin all of Malcolm's policy recommendations, he also had a deep-rooted belief that the unhappy history of the permanent settlement and the extension of the regulations beyond Bengal should encourage restraint and caution in the future.

British Armies in India

Malcolm saw himself as a military man throughout his career. Even after retiring as governor of Bombay he continued to draw half-pay as a major-general in the Madras Forty-Ninth Native Infantry.[104] For Malcolm the British Empire in India was "essentially military, and our means of preserving and improving our possession through the operation of our civil institutions depend on our wise and politic exercise of that military power on which the fabric rests."[105] His Indian writings continually stressed the "dependence of our power on the fidelity of our native troops, and the absolute necessity of adopting every measure by which their attachment can be affirmed and approved."[106] In discussing Malcolm's attitude to the army, it is not enough to say that as a military man he had a vested interest in promoting the financial and political interests of the Company army.[107] Years spent observing native forces from India to the Persian Gulf as a diplomat and a soldier gave Malcolm an exceptionally broad understanding of the military world of South Asia. He recognized that the native troops were a detail in a much bigger picture. The British forces in India were made up of the king's army and the Company army, each with different pay and privileges. The latter included not only European regiments but also irregular native troops and native regiments officered by Europeans. Moreover, this volatile mix of British forces was part of a vast military economy comprising hundreds of thousands of military men in India.[108] Malcolm saw that India's history of continual warfare and revolt made the soldier and soldiering key aspects of political and social life.

In this context, Malcolm feared that British supremacy in India needed to be carefully managed. "The object of our laws and institutions," he observed, "is to repress if not destroy those habits which distinguish the military tribes subject to our rule: but such changes, to be safe, must be gradual; we can not otherwise expect to escape the dangers and convulsions with which they are likely to be attended."[109] The British had to ensure peace without destroying military virtue. Moreover, Malcolm recognized that the great privileges that the Company's armies had accrued

over the years, which put an immense strain on finances, could not easily be removed without provoking dangerous political unrest. These questions, which link military power with the nature and future direction of the British Empire in India, continually reappear in Malcolm's work. The main issues surrounding the army continued to be remarkably the same during the first quarter of the nineteenth century, and Malcolm's own views remained consistent. In particular, Malcolm was acutely aware of the tensions between the two separate British armies in India, the king's and the Company's. He was also concerned that the British might underestimate their reliance on native soldiers. As with his discussion of other aspects of government, Malcolm saw revolt and revolution as likely consequences of careless policy.

Malcolm saw no alternative to the continued existence of these two British armies in India. He observed that most Indians saw British rule mediated through the East India Company. If, he argued, the Company were "no longer masters of a single regiment . . . the people must consider their power as fallen, and drawing rapidly to a close."[110] As with so much else in government, Malcolm was preoccupied with how British rule appeared to Indians. After all, "among the natives of India, it [had] been usual to consider the military power and those possessing it as pre-eminent."[111] Moreover, Malcolm raised fears of an overly powerful king's army in a remote region like India spawning a military despotism (a common preoccupation in the years immediately after Napoleon's defeat). Too much patronage and too many resources, he wrote, "throw the means and temptations of a dangerous ascendancy into the scale of the military department . . . constituted by His Majesty."[112] Malcolm hoped to alleviate most of the jealousies between the two by making their advantages less exclusive. Promotion to the highest ranks should be possible for Company servants, and the king's officers should be able to lead sepoy units.

The sepoy army required equal care. In a pamphlet of 1812, he had warned that "the firm allegiance" of the native soldiers was "the most important principle in our government of this great empire."[113] Malcolm took every opportunity to remind his readers of "the dependence of our power on the fidelity of our native troops."[114] In the *Political History of India*, the *Government of India,* and a review of Charles Stewart's largely forgotten *History of the Bengal Army* for the *Quarterly Review*, Malcolm urged military officers to treat the sepoys with more respect. "The Commander in Chief is unfit for his station," Malcolm declared, "who grants his applause to the mere martinet, and forgets in his intemperate zeal, that no perfection in appearance and discipline, can make amends for their loss of the temper and attachment of the native soldiers under his command."[115] Malcolm was certainly prepared to argue that insensitive treatment of the

native troops could lead to full rebellion. In the *Quarterly Review* article, after discussing the great differences between the many troops of the sepoy regiments, he remarked, "Minds of the caste we have described are alive to every impulse, and from similarity of feeling will all vibrate at the same touch."[116] In the *Memoir of Central India*, Malcolm used the history of Maratha resistance to the Mughals to show that fear of persecution could unite Indians across the boundaries of caste and religion. Malcolm felt this was particularly likely in the army because of its emphasis on honor.

The army was an obvious example of how ordinary Indians could gain status and pride as part of the British Empire.[117] This meant the British had to be aware of the sentiments of their native troops. Malcolm was convinced that the danger of sepoy unrest was directly linked to their own sense of belonging. At the time Malcolm wrote in the 1820s, the highest possible rank a sepoy could achieve was "subedar." "After attaining that rank," Malcolm complained, " he enjoys no consideration which can save him from the harshness of a European officer, a boy, perhaps, who has just joined the corps which he the native, has perhaps belonged to for thirty or forty years."[118] It is worth noting the tone of disgust in this extract. Malcolm clearly felt this was not only impolitic, but also unjust.

As has been seen, Malcolm's solution was to reward military service with civic responsibility: "The Sepoy should be taught to look to meritorious services in the army as the road to employment under the civil administration of his native province."[119] Moreover, Malcolm felt local government would benefit greatly from such a scheme, suggesting that, "a certain period of service in the regular army should be an indispensable qualification in all candidates for situations suited to persons of military habits." In Malcolm's vision of British India, the East India Company army became the nursery for the model native citizen. In this sense, his ideas confirm Seema Alavi's observation that the civilian governmental institutions run by soldiers from the Invalid Thana section of the Bengal army were in large part responsible for the consolidation of imperial power in northern India between the 1780s and 1830s.[120] This reminds us of the central role the sepoy army played in development of the East India Company state after 1818.

Up to 1818, the Company's army had been a collection of mercenary forces divided into the three presidencies and seconded by the king's army.[121] He wanted to unify the three armies and create stronger links between the king's and the Company's armies. Most significantly, he wanted to turn the Company army's native veterans into the Company administration's service gentry. Malcolm's anxiety about the army had been his first impetus to write. With his later works, written after paramountcy had been declared, his warnings about the likelihood and the cataclysmic repercussions

of army revolts were part of a more systematic meditation on the empire. It was, he argued, "permanently in danger" and never more so than when "apparently at peace."[122] Moreover, if Britain was to limit the spread of its direct authority at the same time as maintaining its military supremacy, the entire army would need to feel that their interests were being served by the government of India. This included the sepoys, who could never be promoted to senior command, and the old Company officers, who relied on prize money in lieu of the prestige of the king's army. In this sense, Malcolm's observations on the army, written in the 1820s, merely expressed concerns that he had expressed all through his career in minutes or memoranda. As Douglas Peers and Edward Ingram have demonstrated, the resistance of the Company officers to reform and the constant danger of mutiny remained consistent features of the Company's history throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.[123]

The Native States: Direct British Rule as "the Master Evil"

Throughout the first half of the nineteenth century, British imperial administrators remained ambiguous and divided over India's six hundred or so remaining princes.[124] Wars, annexations, and subsidiary alliances had left the British with hundreds of different connections with the various princes. Often prompted by specific crises in the native governments, they asked how, as the overlords of India, they could ensure the peace and the happiness of the subcontinent while ineffectual and hostile native princes continued to rule over much of the land. Policy did not develop systematically and uniformly. The relatively few published attempts to develop an approach to indirect rule, such as Malcolm's, endeavored to give coherence to a phenomenon that had emerged haphazardly and would remain in flux throughout the period before 1857.[125]

In this period, Sir John Malcolm's unparalleled knowledge of the Indian diplomatic scene made him a leading authority on this complex and recurrent problem. In his 1832 report on princely India, B. S. Jones, the secretary of the Board of Control, acknowledged that, "Among the individuals who have advocated the policy of preserving in existence our subsidiary allies and the tributary states Sir John Malcolm stands prominently forward, and his opinions are entitled to the utmost deference from his long experience and acknowledged talents."[126] Altogether, Malcolm's published works and official letters argued forcefully that the British Empire in India would survive only as long as it left much of India under the control of native rulers. As early as 1818, Malcolm had been explicit that the ever-expanding

frontiers of British India created as many security problems as they solved. The natives of India, he argued, would always be inclined to resent the growing power "of strangers, who appear to the general observer to have subdued the natives of one of the finest portions of the earth, with no view but the sordid and inglorious one of rendering their land a source of profit, or at least using that power which its possession gave them, to protect a profitable commerce."[127] In this sense, the Company could not invoke its own authority to govern. "The power exercised by British rulers," Malcolm noted, "has none of that prejudice in its favour which often supports hereditary monarchies and national governments, even at a period of decline."[128] It was reliant on the people's affections for their local leaders.

The logical extension of Malcolm's desire to reinforce the legitimacy of India's elites was a firm belief that Britain should leave as much of India as possible in the hands of native rulers. This required a careful British policy. "If," Malcolm reasoned, "policy requires that we should govern a considerable part of India through its native princes and chiefs, it is our duty to employ all our influence and all our power to strengthen, instead of weakening, these royal instruments of power."[129] Malcolm argued from the history of British India, that if princely misrule leading to British annexation was to be avoided, British diplomatic policy must change, too; and as the following summary will show, Malcolm's native state policy was as prescriptive about the conduct of Company officers as it was about good government under native rulers.

Fundamentally, Malcolm's native state policies, whether he was talking about the southern kingdom of Mysore or the northwestern Maratha state of Baroda, were shaped by his knowledge of central India. As commissioner for Malwa, Malcolm had studied the history and society of central India in close detail, and had thought deeply about the relationship between the people and their rulers. Malcolm's findings in the *Memoir* set the agenda for his native state policy in a number of ways. First, unlike much of old Mughal India, central India was largely governed by Hindu rulers. Malcolm argued that central India preserved ancient, non-Muslim forms of government and society, which compared well with the highly unsatisfactory judicial and revenue practices the British and their Mughal predecessors had developed in Bengal and other provinces.[130] Second, Malcolm saw the history of resistance to Mughal authority in central India as a warning that the British must be tolerant and careful overlords. This led Malcolm to advocate British rule through a devolved regional government run by highly skilled soldier-diplomats like himself. Both these themes merit close examination.

Malcolm's experience in central India gave him a heightened sense of the importance of Hindu government for what was, after all, a largely Hindu population. Before 1818, most firsthand British experience of Indian states

was derived from the vast Muslim Mughal successor states, many of which were scarcely much older than the Company's government. The Rajput princes of Rajastan and Malwa seemed to Malcolm to represent an older and more solid form of Indian government. Throughout the *Memoir,* Malcolm had stressed that the Hindu population accepted the Maratha invaders of the eighteenth century because they were coreligionists. It was on these grounds that Malcolm could justify leaving intact the government of Shinde and Holkar, though they were barely more than fifty years old. Also, through observing Maratha and Rajput kingdoms in western India, Malcolm developed a number of key assumptions about Hindu governments. He became convinced that Hindu governments "were never as rapacious as those of the Mahomedhans."[131] Moreover, he felt that local political and judicial structures in central India were more purely Hindu than those in provinces with a strong Muslim presence, such as Bengal. As with justice and revenue administration, Malcolm argued that older practices, wherever they could be found and nurtured, were preferable to reform because they had grown over time, within Indian society.

This led Malcolm to advocate a very specific style of British involvement in central India. Such a complex network of petty princes, interlaced with caste rivalry and fringed with tribal unrest, required delicate handling on the part of the British. Only an individual with the right expertise and the appropriate authority could successfully oversee British interests in the region. As the previous chapter showed, Malcolm felt that his Malwa experience had affirmed the necessity of preserving the princely order as much as possible, in the belief that the removal of their political authority would be violently resented. However, the mutual animosity of the princes and the tendency of native governments to misrule required the British to take a supervisory role.

Malcolm argued that this difficult balance in British relations with the native princes required careful selection and guidance of the best Company personnel. His ideal diplomatic agents came from the Company army, like himself, and possessed a solid knowledge of local manners and customs.[132] Malcolm argued that their military credentials would earn them the respect of the native princes and allow them to act quickly and effectively in any strategic crisis without needing to wait for orders from central government. However, Malcolm's overriding concern was that the officers involved must have a genuine regard for India, its people, and its princes. Their actions, he wrote, must be from "the heart" and not "the head"; decisions that "proceed from reason—and not from feeling . . . cannot please."[133] As he warned, "Men may dread but they can never love or regard, those who are continually humiliating them by parading their superiority."[134] Sincere respect for Indian society and its political structures was essential to an officer's

success. For Malcolm, the role of diplomatic agents was no longer to pave the way toward greater British control. Instead, the agents had a duty to prevent the crisis "of having the whole of India subject to our direct rule" by endeavoring to maintain the princes "in the active exercise of their sovereign function."[135] The sympathy and admiration of Company servants for Indian society and its rulers was vital because heavy-handed reform needed to be avoided at all costs. After all, as the *Memoir* had shown, India itself provided the best models for the administration of revenue and justice.

Security concerns made the continued reign of the princes a necessity; the nature of Indian society made it efficient. In most societies, Malcolm argued, the manners of the people were shaped by the actions of their superiors. As he had argued about direct rule in India, guiding the elites and building up their loyalty were key to improving society at large. Thus, the continued existence of the princes was a necessity if India was to increase in wealth and happiness. It must be remembered that Malcolm was convinced that the government of native princes had often been, not only more popular, but also better. Talking about the decision to keep Mysore as a native state rather than bring it under direct rule after the defeat of Tipu Sultan in 1799, Malcolm declared himself "fully satisfied that upon the whole, the inhabitants of the country, and particularly those of the higher classes, have enjoyed a happiness and consideration superior to what our system of rule could have enabled us to bestow upon them."[136]

A problem still remained. Malcolm conceded that to bring happiness to the people through the rule of princes was to "effect good with bad instruments." The education of an Indian prince encouraged him to be a vain sensualist, his character made him prey to wily and intriguing courtiers. As the *Memoir* had argued, "The Mahomedhan priests, the Brahmins, and other civil classes, have for ages been the nominal servants, but real masters of the turbulent and bold, but ignorant and superstitious, military races of their countrymen."[137] The situation was in many ways worsened under British paramountcy after 1818. These courtiers either saw the British as their competitors or used them to their own advantage.[138] Equally, the princes themselves could feel degraded by their new situation of dependence. This is where the British political agents came in. "If," Malcolm told readers of the *Memoir,* "policy requires that we should govern a considerable part of India through its native princes and chiefs, it is our duty to employ all our influence and all our power to strengthen, instead of weakening, these royal instruments of power."[139] The role of British diplomatic agents was to carefully build up the authority of the princes.

The level of importance Malcolm attached to symbolic authority in India may be judged by the amount of time he devoted to describing it

metaphorically. His history of Malwa had shown that the most successful rulers "were content with the substance of power while others wore its robes."[140] In the "Notes," Malcolm informed aspiring diplomatic agents that, although many of the princes now had "little more than the name of that power they before enjoyed . . . they seem, as they lose the substance, to cling to the forms of station." Malcolm went on to caution that "the pride of reason may smile at such a feeling; but it exists, and it would be alike opposite to the principles of humanity and policy to deny it gratification."[141] In the *Government of India,* Malcolm applied this maxim to British relations with the Maratha states after 1818. In particular, Malcolm used the example of the deference and respect paid by British residents to the flag and person of the Rajah of Sattarah, the prince they had restored as titular head of the Marathas after deposing the Peshwa.[142] Malcolm believed that if the princes were publicly respected and privately mentored by their British residents, they could become instruments of improvement.

Malcolm saw that the princes, at their best, could wield more than the image of power. They could become beacons of a rejuvenated Indian morality, and the patrons of local art and learning. As the previous chapter showed, Malcolm was convinced that, in Indian society, the elites led and molded manners and opinions. As an example, in the *Government of India,* Malcolm discussed the British campaign against female infanticide among the Rajputs. Malcolm observed that, as commissioner for Malwa, he had not addressed himself to the people at large or even to the numerous petty princes. Instead, he used all his influence on the princes of Cutch, the head of the Jahihah Rajputs. This example, Malcolm argued, went "farther, than all the treaties which have been made on the subject of infanticide."[143] For Malcolm, just as the force of any rule or law came from the predisposition of the people to live by it, so the will of the people was shaped by the example of the monarch. In this sense, Malcolm stood in opposition to contemporary British efforts to curb infanticide, sati, and other practices for regulation and enforcement.[144] This reminds us that Malcolm did not attach great significance to the legal independence of the rulers. What mattered for the improvement of society was the sense of stability and order they gave and the moral guidance they had the potential to offer.

Malcolm's approach to the Indian princes must also be understood as a reaction against previous practices. Malcolm saw his own ideas as lying between two extremes. On the one hand, he spoke against fretting, constant interference that would rob the princes of their independence and be costly and unpopular with the local people.[145] On the other hand, he cautioned against "that abstinence from interference which inevitably leaves such states to destroy themselves."[146] Reformers had often used both tactics. As we have seen, Malcolm rejected both approaches because his aim

was to limit the extent of direct British rule by making the native princes conduits of good government.

Conclusion

In some respects, Malcolm's warning about the great dangers of British paramountcy resembles the hawkishness of his earlier works. In both cases, he argued that the uniqueness of the task meant that only suitably qualified experts like himself could manage it and that interference by the home authorities was likely to be heavy-handed and based on poor intelligence. In this sense, Malcolm's later Indian works were a further example of what Michael Fisher and Malcolm Yapp have described as the man on the spot using his knowledge for political leverage, an important process in the spread of the British imperial presence into northwestern India.[147] These works, like his histories of Persia and the Sikhs were essentially different deployments of the same tactic of self-promotion. In a minute arguing against the need for a separate central Indian government, written in 1830, Governor General Bentinck complained, "Sir John Malcolm and others, upon the express ground of the unavoidable inefficiency of an administration conducted by so distant an authority have suggested the formation of a local government for India. . . . The importance of those chiefs and states has been in my opinion, dressed up with a certain degree of poetical imagery, which the daily despatches of all the political agents residing at those durbars, seems completely to contradict."[148] As Bentinck recognized, Malcolm relied on the imaginative force of the examples and arguments he had derived from his "anatomy of central India." In this sense, Malcolm's motives and strategies as a writer on policy seem remarkably consistent. Yet, his writings from the *Memoir* on were novel in the way they used the techniques he had developed as a philosophical historian writing about Persia and the Sikhs to explore the nature of civil society in India and guide the Company's government's connection with it.

Malcolm's later writings saw British power as essentially military but recognized that it could not be lasting without a civil administration capable of providing order and improvement. He rejected the spread of direct rule and white colonization as means to achieve these ends. The model of a thriving indigenous society elaborated in the *Memoir* proved that neither could work. In the case of direct rule, Malcolm's critique of the permanent settlement of Bengal forcefully, demonstrated that British-run India had shown itself incapable of providing systems of government that were any better than native practices in times of peace and security. Instead, he used

numerous close examples to show that the British must rest their authority on India's administrative institutions, such as the panchayats and its titular rulers. He was fiercely opposed to any suggestion that India was a *tabula rasa* on which new or standardized judicial and fiscal regimes could be imposed. As a result, he rejected any plans for sweeping reform aimed at rationalizing or Westernizing Indian practices. His belief in the efficacy and legitimacy of India's social hierarchy and its ability to deliver good government was sharpened by a belief that heavy-handed, or overconfident British reforms could lead to rebellion and revolt. Within Malcolm's schema, the British were to broker general peace by maintaining their dominance of the military labor market, arbitrating in princely disputes, and swiftly stamping out rebellion. He saw that the delicate and damaged fabric of Indian civil society could easily collapse, forcing the British to extend their direct authority. To avoid this, knowledgeable soldier-diplomats like himself had to provide careful guidance and help India's natural leaders (its princes) to provide good government. This chapter and the previous one have shown how Malcolm's deep understanding of Indian history informed his views on government.

Taken together, Malcolm's late Indian writings display an interest in the structures of imperial government that was largely absent from the *Sketch.* Malcolm's conception of British India uses tools of analysis and observation that owe a great deal to Book IV of Smith's *Wealth of Nations.* In examining the historical analysis in the *Sketch of the Political History of India,* we saw that Smith had argued that "the government of an exclusive company of merchants is, perhaps, the worst of all government whatever, in any country," on grounds of both justice and economic benefit to India.[149] By the 1820s the loss of the Company's monopoly on trade between India and the empire had made Smith's (and Malcolm's) critique of merchants as sovereigns less relevant to a discussion of policy. Instead, Malcolm used Smith's discussion of colonies (though it had been addressed principally to the problem of America) to discuss the evolution of Company government in India. Malcolm's rejection of white colonization on the grounds that there was insufficient unclaimed, uncultivated land, closely followed Smith's argument in the second part of Book IV, that Roman colonies, as they were formed in inhabited provinces, could never flourish as rapidly or as profitably as modern colonies in North America.[150] Malcolm's picture of central India's complex agricultural system proved that India did not present the kind of limitless supply of available land that Smithian political economy stated was necessary for such a community to thrive.[151] Furthermore, it also showed that India's indigenous economic structures, under the peace and order of British rule, could foster agricultural improvement. Equally, Malcolm's call for Indian seats in Parliament follows the

general reasoning of Smith's suggestion of having North American seats. "The assembly," Smith wrote, "which deliberates and decides concerning every part of the empire, in order to be properly informed, ought to have representatives of every part of it."[152] For Malcolm, this would be another way of removing mercantile self-interest as a motive of Company policy.

This book has constantly referred to Malcolm the writer as an ideologue of empire. In discussing his works on policy, it must be said that Malcolm stands in opposition to the great tide of liberal imperialism that is often said to characterize the 1830s. Far from being the liberal at home and authoritarian in India that individuals such as James and John Stuart Mill were said to be, Malcolm had a broadly consistent view of the role of ancient aristocratic government in the preservation of order and peace.[153] His belief that social experimentation or overly hasty introduction of Western practices or theories might lead to rebellion was at odds with the policy making of Macaulay and John Stuart Mill in the 1830s. As Lynn Zastoupil has shown, while support for annexation and direct rule grew in the two decades after his death, during this time Malcolm, particularly through the *Memoir,* remained a major advocate of indirect rule and the continued support of native elites.[154]

Like Thomas Munro, a fellow major-general of the Madras native infantry, Malcolm was able to represent the voice of the military man on India matters. The *Sketch*'s pro-Wellesley polemic in favor of an aggressive diplomatic and military agenda is an obvious example of this. Yet, Malcolm's writings on the government of India show how this mentality also expressed itself in discussions about civil society and the internal administration of British India. Malcolm can be seen as an unusually prolific and widely cited example of what Linda Colley has described as the "fighter as writer." As she argues in *Captives,* the intellectual contribution of military men to European culture has often been ignored by military and political historians and dismissed by intellectual historians. Malcolm's works are fascinating examples of the connection between the emergence of historical and ethnographic literature as aspects of imperial knowledge and the problems and trends that characterized the development of the East India Company state in India after 1818.[155] Recent articles by Douglas Peers have shown how the literary outlook of military men manifested itself in historical works such as the writings of Robert Orme and J. W. Kaye.[156] Colley's "fighters as writers" thesis adds an important dimension to our understanding of the intellectual history of British India in that it validates the idea that militarism was capable of underpinning a range of sophisticated ideas about empire that drew on diverse intellectual traditions.[157]

In Malcolm's case, his use of analytical tools derived from Smith's *The Wealth of Nations* was a way of managing the increasing complexity of

the task of conceptualizing how British India should be governed. But to say that the Scottish Enlightenment provided the intellectual roots of his approach to government, as McLaren has argued, is to ignore the question of how, why, and when Malcolm drew on Scottish Enlightenment thinking. This chapter has shown that Malcolm's writings on the government of India from the 1820s and 1830s represent a distinct shift toward more schematic explanations in order to justify his vision for the civil society of India under British paramountcy after 1818. This shift also manifested itself in his last historical project: *The Life of Robert Lord Clive.* As the next chapter will show, Malcolm's broader understanding of the British Empire as a phase in the historical development of India had profound implications for his rendering of the history of the founding of the empire.

Chapter 6

The History of the East India Company II: *The Life of Robert, Lord Clive*

Sir John Malcolm's final historical project, the *Life of Lord Clive*, took his survey of the history of the East India Company back, before 1784, to the start of British territorial conquest and expansion in India. Clive, the founder of the British empire in Bengal, remained a hugely controversial figure, reviled by many as the archetype of the corrupt and ostentatious "nabob" of the 1760s and 1770s. "Nabob," a corruption of "Nawab," was a term used in Britain to describe Company servants and others who used the vast fortunes they had made in the East to gain political influence and buy into the British landed elite.[1] In the historiography of British India, Malcolm's hagiographic *Clive* and Macaulay's brilliant and more famous review of it, set the stage for Clive's Victorian reputation as the illustrious founder of the empire in India.

Yet, *Clive* has never been adequately acknowledged as a landmark in the intellectual history of British India. Martha McLaren and Lynn Zastoupil do not even mention it in their otherwise comprehensive analyses of his writings.[2] The deficiencies of the book itself are perhaps partly to blame. As it eventually appeared, three years after his death in 1836, *Clive* was prolix, even by Malcolm's standards. Dense sections of narrative and large, undigested extracts from letters obscured the book's main themes. Throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, it would remain useful chiefly as a reference work for other scholars.[3] Its main literary achievement was its being superseded by the review written by Macaulay.[4] Yet any study of Malcolm that passes over *Clive* misses out on many of his most detailed and

conjectural digressions on the causes of British imperial power. Reflecting the new depth of Malcolm's policy interests and the impact of James Mill's *History of British India* (1817) on the emerging historiography of British India, *Clive* used the history of the founding of British India to give legitimacy to the vision of post-1818 British India he had been promulgating in the *Memoir,* the second edition of the *Political History,* and the *Government of India. Clive* demonstrates the ways in which Malcolm's growing interest in civil administration and his increasing reliance on interpretative models of Indian society, derived from Smith's analyses of government and politics, were manifested in his historical writing about British India. In contrast to the hawkish revision of diplomatic history presented in the *Political History of India,* Malcolm's *Clive* offered speculative and elaborate general explanations of the rise and nature of modern Indian courts and the ascent of British power in India.

Clive is important in this book's analysis of Malcolm's historically sanctioned vision of the evolution of British India and of the East India Company as its custodian. Just as the *Political History* offered a view of the past to justify the pro-Wellesley militarism of the 1810s, *Clive* articulated the ideological tension of the 1820s and 1830s in British India. This tension was typified by Malcolm's *Memoir of Central India*'s impassioned call for the rejuvenation of indigenous institutions, on the one hand, and Macaulay's great polemic in favor of Westernization, "the Minute on Indian Education," on the other. Together, Mill's *History*, Malcolm's *Clive,* and Macaulay's review show the political use the builders of British India in the 1820s made of the history of its foundation in the mid-eighteenth century when they came to write about it. Moreover, the historiographic shifts between the treatment of the founding of British India in the three works—from Mill's unalloyed scorn, through Malcolm's hyperbolic praise, to Macaulay's measured praise for manly decisiveness—prepared the ground for the nineteenth-century hero worship of Clive. Through frequent comparison of these three works, this chapter will demonstrate the ways in which the imperial questions of the 1820s and 1830s played a crucial role in forming British attitudes toward the mid-eighteenth century. In the *Sketch of the Political History,* Malcolm had presented the mid-eighteenth century as the start of the epoch in which he had lived out his career and now wrote. It is a striking feature of *Clive* that Malcolm found precedents for his attitudes to issues ranging from indirect rule, to the sepoy army, to the role of the court of directors in the 1750s and 1760s. By focusing on direct parallels between his own time and Clive's and praising Clive as the originator of his own blend of tradition-based, militaristic government, Malcolm made Clive into a resolute imperial hero suitable for the Victorian age. More important, it is not enough to say that Malcolm's Clive was the prototype of the imperial adventurer typified by

the late-Victorian romanticism of of G. A. Henty and others. Malcolm used numerous examples to prove that Clive had laid down a tradition of civil administration that sanctioned indirect rule.

The Life of Robert Lord Clive as a Book

Clive seems to have become a serious project for Malcolm in the 1820s, and it is instructive to view his progress in writing the biography in tandem with his increasing frustration over his own career and the growing influence in Britain and the Company of political radicals such as James Mill. Soon after his return from India in 1822, Malcolm paid a visit his old acquaintance the Earl of Powis. The son of Robert Clive, Powis had been governor of Madras from 1800 to 1802. Malcolm had been too much Wellesley's man to view Powis as more than a nominal master, but he certainly always regarded him as a confidant and ally.[5] Moreover, such an advocate of aristocratic government as Malcolm no doubt cherished the friendship of an earl whose father had founded the empire he served so loyally. It was probably during this visit that Malcolm began to prepare a biography of Clive, but it was not until 1826, on another visit to the Earl of Powis, that he was given the family papers.[6]

Malcolm did not begin *Clive* in earnest until around 1827, when he was appointed governor of Bombay, and the bulk of it did not appear until 1833. In the months before returning to India, Malcolm had many of the most important documents in the Clive papers transcribed, and much of his voyage was taken up with annotating them.[7] He did attempt to continue the Clive project as a pastime throughout his governorship, but it appears that he made little progress until his resignation in 1830. Even on his return, as he complained to his old friend William Erskine,[8] his parliamentary career distracted him from completing the work, and at his death in 1833 only fifteen chapters had been completed.

Following Malcolm's death, his wife, Charlotte, searched for a suitable person to finish the project. Initially she approached Mountstuart Elphinstone, who recommended William Erskine.[9] As we have seen, Erskine's connection with Malcolm stretched back nearly thirty years to the founding of the Literary Society of Bombay. As their letters reveal, their companionship had been based on their shared passion for oriental history, and Malcolm would probably have approved of the choice. By this time, Erskine was certainly qualified to write the history. He had completed John Leyden's text of the *Commentaries of the Emperor Babur* and was preparing his own history of the early Mughal emperors. He also wrote frequently for the *Edinburgh Review* on Indian policy matters.[10] The

ways in which Erskine's contribution shaped the text will be considered later in this chapter.

One wonders why Malcolm allowed events and other literary projects to distract him from finishing *Clive.* Two possible explanations emerge. The first is that the task was too large and complex to be finished early. As late as 1833, he admitted to Erskine that his earlier drafts would have to be amended.[11] A second reason for delay is that the *Clive* project may have provided him with a certain amount of solace during these years of contention and career frustration and he was reluctant to give it up. As he confided to his brother, Gilbert, when he began researching the book, he expected it would give him "much of both information and delight."[12] It is noticeable that *Clive* contains extended attacks on trends in Company policy that seem more relevant to Malcolm's own times than to Clive's. For instance, Malcolm's extended and passionate praise for Clive's show of outward respect to the Mughal emperor had a clear resonance in the 1820s when more and more policy makers called for an end to the pretense of using native rulers as figureheads—or perhaps fig leaves—for British rule. The biography was an opportunity for Malcolm to show how history justified his policies in the present; a task that became more urgent in the 1820s, when poor leadership led to disasters such as the first Burma war or the Barrakpur mutiny.[13]

The Context for a Life of Clive: "Confounding the Calumniators of His Memory"

James Mill and the Company's official historiographer, James Bruce had both attempted to write definitive histories of the Company in the eighteenth century.[14] However, Mill had little access to manuscript material and Bruce's published research never reached beyond 1707.[15] By the time Malcolm wrote, no new material had appeared on Clive for more than forty years. The core of Malcolm's work was to be the large collection of manuscripts kept by Clive's son, the Earl of Powis. The scope of the task Malcolm set himself is revealed in a letter he wrote at the time: "I have just returned from a visit to the Earl of Powis—who has given me the whole of his father's (the great Clive) papers and a more valuable collection of Documents to illustrate his character and that of the British in India from 1750 to 1765 cannot be conceived. I shall hereafter make use of them."[16] Combined with the large amount of pamphlets and official papers produced for the Parliamentary Enquiry of 1773,[17] Clive's private papers gave Malcolm the source materials he needed for a comprehensive history of

the Company in the period. Malcolm intended to do more than simply celebrate his hero, "the great Clive." He planned to interpret what had become the most important moment in the Company's past: the conquest of Bengal, which laid the foundations for all its later territorial expansion in South Asia. Malcolm's earlier *Political History of India* had provided a historical justification for the growth of British India, but its treatment of the beginning of this imperial enterprise had been cursory. It had avoided the more controversial issues such as Clive's motives in organizing the British conquest of Bengal or the preconditions for conquest (both key aspects of the Parliamentary Enquiry). Moreover, since the publication of Malcolm's *Sketch of the Political History of India,* James Mill's *History of British India* (1817) had rapidly became the more popular work. Its largely cynical view of the conquest of Bengal and its portrayal of Clive as an opportunistic and reckless robber baron,[18] had undermined the *Political History*'s twin assumptions: that the birth of empire had been unavoidable and that the exploits of Clive and others in mid-eighteenth-century India were great examples of British military virtue played out in a new imperial theater—India.

The source Malcolm relied on most of all for narrative detail and to transmit the mood of heroism and triumph he felt characterized the Anglo-French wars of the mid-eighteenth century was Robert Orme's *History of the Military Transactions of the English Nation in Indostan from the Year 1745* (1763). A Company servant, Orme had always intended that his work would create a new object for British military pride.[19] He had self-consciously imitated the best classical histories. That is to say, in plain and simple language he offered somber and detailed battle descriptions and dense accounts of political developments at the top levels of the East India Company and in the courts of the native princes. As an elegant history of military achievement, his *History* echoed the events it described in giving new importance to India as an arena for Anglo-French rivalry, for commercial growth, and for heroic action. Malcolm himself never attempted to write extended battle narrative, preferring to quote Orme instead. For example, in his account of the Siege of Arcot, Clive's first battle, feeling the need for a minute account of these events, Malcolm passed the mantle to Orme, of whom he said the following: "No apology is necessary for adopting his narrative; which, in its very minuteness, is as interesting as it is instructive; and while it conveys a lesson to the mere European soldier, paints in true and vivid colours all that belongs to the character of the yet unimproved system of Asiatic warfare."[20] As a source, Orme gave Malcolm the heroic and epic elements his story of imperial foundation needed. Malcolm never tried to supersede Orme as a military historian. Yet Orme's analysis of Indian society, relying as it did on climatic theories of

racial difference found in Montesqueiu's *Espirit Des Lois,* was rather dated and simplistic for a writer of Malcolm's time and erudition.[21] Moreover, Orme, who had become deeply disillusioned with British empire building in Bengal, refused to write about the period after 1761. In this sense, Malcolm was building a larger story of the rise of the British Empire in India, as it appeared to him in the 1830s, around the extracts of Orme's detailed battle accounts, which make up so much of the first two books of the *Life of Clive.* Most of Malcolm's other citations, like Mill's, were from the Parliamentary Enquiry of 1773 the narratives of key figures in Bengali politics like Scrafton, Vansittart, and the 1789 translation of the Mughal diplomat, Syed Gholurn Hussein Khan's *Sier Mutaqhuerin*.[22]

Though the Parliamentary Enquiry of 1773 into the conquest of Bengal had vindicated Clive, his numerous enemies in Parliament, in the Company's home administration and among the Company's military officers, had continued to produce a torrent of vicious and salacious literature against him.[23] Like Alexander Dow's *History of Hindustan,* which includes a brief and scathing reference to Clive, the first biography was written by enemies he had made in India during his second governorship of Bengal. The pseudonymous authors of this first *Life of Clive* (1775), who had used the name "Charles Caraccioli," are widely believed to have been East India Company army officers who lost out financially as a result of Clive's military and civil reforms of 1765.[24] Malcolm makes no direct mention of this biography in his text or in his surviving letters. However, the biography is important for developing two major themes in the study of Clive and his times that Malcolm reacted strongly against. The first is his alleged financial impropriety, of which the "Caraccioli" biography provided considerable detail. The second is the image it creates of Clive's personal life and his character. Its pages are filled with stories of Clive's cruelty, his immorality, and his great vanity, all sharpened by insult. The book opened by declaring it would show that "the motives of his alliances and hostilities were subservient to his private ambition, and inconsistent with public faith and credit."[25] The authors described how he used his "immense riches, his unbounded authority and the praetorian dignity" of his office, to satisfy his wants.[26] As a biography, perhaps its most interesting contribution was its detailed and sarcastic account of Clive's suicide. The authors themselves, or their publishers, saw this as one of the more appealing aspects of their work, mentioning their discussion of the "circumstances of his death" in the book's long title. The author of the Caraccioli biography repeated it with considerable irreverence, observing "as none but the supreme searcher of the hearts can judge of human actions committed in privacy, we do not presume to ascertain whether it was a fit of insanity or through hurry and inexperience in the art of shaving that he cut his jugular vein."[27] The

four-volume Caraccioli biography was a venomous collection of anecdotes representing Clive as a cruel, thuggish, uncouth, avaricious adventurer. Though Malcolm's work makes no mention of it, the book's authors were undoubtedly the boldest of the "calumniators of [Clive's] memory" whom Malcolm sought to "confound" with his new biography.[28]

It is helpful to view *Clive* as a product of Malcolm's increasing sense of alienation in the late 1820s and 1830s. As an Indian policy maker and in Parliament as a member of Wellington's antireform Opposition, Malcolm showed himself to be increasingly uneasy about the future. As the previous chapter showed, everywhere Malcolm looked, he saw pragmatic statesmanship and aristocratic government giving way to the system making of social theorists. He feared a rising tide of Utilitarian thinking, not only as a politician but also as an author. As he said in a letter to Erskine in 1826:

> I hate . . . the cold blooded Bastards the Utilitarians of the day who would while they rob us of all the romance of life, [illeg.] our ancestors and condemn in wholesale all that differ from their own ideas regarding the failings of things, and look with contempt on every man on earth that does not cut his coat after their fashion.[29]

If he had not been before, Malcolm was now very much a romantic under siege. In policy making and in history writing, Malcolm saw James Mill as the leader of the Utilitarians. Just as Mill, the India House employee, is usually seen as being more radical than he was;[30] Mill's history of the East India Company is often too readily identified as a manifesto for the administration of British India. In the study of policy making in this period, it is essential to recognize both these fallacies. Nonetheless, it is equally germane to remember that they were widely believed at the time. Macaulay, Mill's great supporter on Indian matters, thought him far more of an advocate of Westernization than he was; so too did Malcolm, his great detractor.[31] In the early pages of *Clive,* Malcolm effectively translated his differences with Mill as a theorist about the government of India into differences with Mill as an historian of British India:

> I have the sincerest personal respect for Mr. Mill: I admire his accuracy, his industry, and indefatigable research; but our conclusions from the same premises often differ most widely. . . . I . . . acknowledge that my early impressions, and the occupations of my life, may give a bias to my judgement; but no human mind is free from prejudices, and those of the closest author are not the fewest in number, or the easiest to be subdued. With a full sense of my own disadvantages, I confess that I am not convinced, by the laboured and metaphysical preface to Mr. Mill's History, that local knowledge, and an acquaintance with the languages, habits and

> characters of nations of whom I, and others similarly circumstanced, have treated on this and other occasions, are disqualifications for the tasks we have attempted. At all events, our efforts may be useful in collecting facts for more critical and philosophical historians. Though we do not withhold those opinions . . . our chief purpose is to inform—theirs to speculate. We are satisfied if we can lay before our readers a true picture of the scenes we describe. They have what they deem a higher object; and the facts of their volumes are often rendered subservient to the propagation of their general principles and abstract theories.[32]

Several elements are worth emphasizing here. For Malcolm, Mill was failing to achieve greater objectivity. His lack of local knowledge was unquestionably a drawback compared with Malcolm's own experience of war and diplomacy in India. Malcolm disapproved of Mill's irreverence for national heroes and the founding of a great empire. For instance, in discussing Mill's incredulity about the horror of the "Black Hole of Calcutta," Malcolm criticized his "tone" describing "this memorable catastrophe" as much as his cynicism.[33] Mill's history robbed the past of its romance and its great men. Romantic affinity and the ability to celebrate virtue had become more prominent aspects of Malcolm's writing. *The Sketch of Persia* (1827), with its eulogies on Eastern character and the universality of human decency, is a good example of this. *Clive* should be seen as Malcolm's attempt to render the history of British India in the same way: something he had not been able to do in his earlier diplomatic histories.

For Mill, Clive's active interference in Bengali courtly politics was indicative of the money mania that had pushed British imperial enterprise beyond prudent bounds in the mid-eighteenth century. In a discussion of the British overthrow of Siraj ud-Daulah, Mill noted that the British had allowed themselves to be deceived about the wealth of the Bengali government: "The cupidity natural to mankind, and the credulity with which they believe what flatters desires, made the English embrace, without deduction, the exaggerations of Oriental rhetoric . . . ; and believe that a country which they saw was one of the poorest, was nevertheless the most opulent. No rational foresight was applied . . . to the increased expenditure which the new connexion with the government [of Bengal] naturally produced."[34] Greed had led to the folly of meddling in native politics in the hope of making financial gains.

Mill went on to argue that the British, by adopting or benefiting from Eastern political practices, were myopically and detrimentally abandoning the moral superiority of their civilization in order to exploit their military and political advantages. For him, the abuse of civilization was a striking product of its interaction with more "barbarous" cultures. This had been the chief purpose of the more famous extended discussion of Muslim and

Hindu civilizations that begin the *History.* Having established the relative primitiveness of Indian society, Mill gave himself a framework for understanding the corruption, war, and waste that had accompanied imperial expansion in India. The *History* endeavored to clinically examine eighteenth-century India for evidence of this process at work. Mill did state that the Company's government had been one of the best and "if [they] have been so little successful in ameliorating the practical operation of their government, it has been owing chiefly to the disadvantages of their situation."[35] Yet Mill's praise of the Company was always measured—too measured to be mistaken for a celebration. Moreover, he rejected out of hand the picture of a state constantly under threat that Malcolm had painted in the *Political History,* preferring instead to assign more importance to the avarice of Company servants and the haughty ambition of governors general such as Wellesley. For Mill, the secret to the Company's successes had been the considerable powers its knowledgeable and talented servants had wielded at a local level. In this sense, the Company was at its best when it was allowed to get on with its business, uninterrupted and unguided by "pragmatic statesmen and lawyers."[36] The best aspect of the Company's government, for Mill, was the potential for government by anonymous experts, and the recurring tragedy in the story of British Empire was the egocentric interference of men such as Clive and Wellesley. Malcolm's portrait of "the great Clive" rejected out of hand Mill's rendering of Clive as the arch-corruptor of the Company's original mandate to trade.

Malcolm's History of Clive and the Founding of the British Empire in India

The final product, including Erskine's conclusion, is a rather unsystematic work. Events and their significance, rather than themes, shape the text. In this sense, controversies such as the feud within the Company between Clive and Lawrence Sullivan, the chairman, take up considerable space and become vehicles for Malcolm's defense of Clive's character and conduct. At the same time, *Clive* also uses a number of detailed digressions to introduce key topics. For instance, as will be seen, Malcolm's support for the overthrow of Siraj ud-Daulah, Nawab of Bengal in 1757, is prefaced by a general historical assessment of the inherent susceptibility to revolution of the post-Mughal courts. Owing to Malcolm's habit of clustering his observations about particular themes around key events, the following analysis will be an exegesis of the *Clive.* It will make frequent reference to

Mill's, Macaulay's, and Malcolm's sources in order to convey the historiographical implications of his observations.

The first chapter is entitled "A General View of the State of India in 1746." This section originally appeared after the account of Clive's boyhood. However, early readers of the manuscript thought that this context should appear at the start. One reader even drew an analogy with the introductory chapter of William Robertson's *Charles V,* at the time still one of the most respected political biographies.[37] The chapter in question, "A View of the Progress of Civilization in Europe Since the Fall of Rome," had set a remarkably high standard for philosophical history. It traced the changes within medieval society that would lead to the new epoch in civilization that was the context for the book's subject—the reign of Charles V.[38] In this sense, it showed how the events of Charles V's reign were possible and provided a basis for evaluating his abilities to understand and follow the demands history placed on his own time. As with Book III of Adam Smith's *The Wealth of Nations, Of the Different Progress of Opulence in Different Nations*, Robertson demonstrated how small changes had brought about insensibly gradual, entirely unforeseen transformations in the political and economic nature of society.

This was the function of a prefatory general view and as the reference to Robertson implied, Clive's career was to be made intelligible in terms of the changes in Indian since Europeans had passed the Cape of Good Hope. This meant that by the mid-eighteenth century, the wars in the Carnatic and the conquest of Bengal would, in the space of a few years, turn the Company into a fledgling Indian state. For Malcolm, Clive's great achievement had been to understand his own times and seize the opportunities they offered in the interests of the East India Company and his country. Malcolm had already provided the foundations for this argument in the *Sketch of the Political History of India.* In it, he had shown that the growth of British power in the East had been the unavoidable consequence of the fact that the Mughal successor states had enlisted the European trading companies in their power struggles.[39] In turn, the rivalry between England and France meant that they had no choice but to check the growth of each other's native sponsors. As time went on, the jealousy and hostility of other European states was replaced by that of the native powers, and if the British wished to keep their territorial possessions they had no choice but to defend themselves and actively overcome long-term strategic weakness, as in Madras, through war and aggressive diplomacy.[40] The *Sketch* had built on this premise by using the recent diplomatic history of India to demonstrate that in this geopolitical climate expansion had been unavoidable; the force of circumstances rather than the will to conquer had led to the growth of British imperial power in India.

Clive's "General View" began by stating that the wars and courtly intrigues of eighteenth-century India, which had culminated in British dominance, were initiated by the decline of Mughal authority. Following the death of the Emperor Aurangzeb in 1707, Malcolm observed that the central authority of the Mughal Empire began to decline as "the government of distant countries was entrusted to soubahdars (or viceroys), who invariably took advantage of the dissensions on the imperial family . . . to . . . render themselves independent."[41] This was a common assessment in both the Indian and European sources Malcolm used.[42] For Malcolm, the erosion of Mughal regal authority loosened the political ties and allegiances that had maintained order. "Hindoo rajahs, and Mahomedan nabobs," he observed, "owned or rejected the sway of their superiors according to the means of their resistance."[43] In their "rancorous hostility to each other," Malcolm argued that the Mughals lost "all sense of union and of common danger."[44] This was vitally important for Malcolm's explanation of how a new era of Indian powers politics had begun in the 1740s. The rivalry of the Mughal princes was such that they "blindly courted the aid of allies who (a little foresight would have shown) were rising fast to greatness on their ruin."[45] The allies Malcolm had in mind were the Marathas and also the Europeans.[46]

In Malcolm's analysis of European involvement in Asia, the key issue was how long intervention in the affairs of the native princes could be avoided. The short-lived Portuguese empire in India proved the wisdom of not interfering in the affairs of the Indian princes in those early days.[47] The English Company had hoped to remain an essentially commercial enterprise as well. Like Mill, Malcolm cited Sir Thomas Roe, the seventeenth-century English ambassador to the Mughal court, as the exponent of a forever mercantile connection with India. Malcolm went on to quote from Mill himself, who had observed that, "if Sir Thomas Roe had lived to the present day he might have urged the trade with China as proof, by experiment of the proposition he advanced."[48] Mill felt that, but for the Company's establishment of forts and its keeping of an army, India could have offered the same unrivaled economic benefit. Instead, thanks to the ambition and greed of the Company's servants, it became a costly and confusing imperial commitment. Malcolm quickly pointed out the problems with this analogy. The Chinese government used "a rigid system of exclusion" to keep "European settlers dependent on its own power."[49] In stark contrast, the Indian princes, by "engaging in alliances" with "the subjects of one European state," gave the representatives of that state's rival "no option between . . . ruin and . . . retaliation."[50] This was a familiar argument from the *Political History.* The two powers Malcolm had in mind were France and Britain.

In Malcolm's view, Indian politicians had guaranteed the growth of European military forces in South Asia by giving France a new advantage in its rivalry with Britain. "The improvements which within the last two centuries had taken place in Europe, gave its soldiers an incalculable advantage over those of Asia, before the latter were taught by repeated defeats to make war on more equal terms."[51] So great was the advantage that "the well-commanded, well-trained [European] battalion move[d] amidst then thousand of its rabble opponents, like a giant with a thousand hands."[52] For Malcolm, the superiority of European military discipline and artillery explained the rapid increase in European involvement in South Asia. "It was undoubtedly," Malcolm remarked, "good policy in the English to abstain from all interference with native states." "From the moment they left their factories," he noted, "they would be involved beyond the possibility of retreat."[53] More important, it was inevitable once the English had become involved in Indian power struggles that the "principles of commercial pursuit," on which their ventures in India had been founded, would have to be disregarded. The significance of this was that Malcolm stressed the wars of the Carnatic in India were the start of a process of British imperial growth that was unavoidable and accidental.

Unlike Macaulay, Malcolm did not present English and French involvement in the wars of the Carnatic as deliberate opportunism.[54] Rather, he argued that they were forced into the battles of an aggrandizing regional ruler in order to protect their positions in India from each other. As soon as Chanda Sahib enlisted the help of the French in his bid for the subahship, the British had no choice but to limit the advantage of the French.[55] Once again, an instructive contrast can be drawn with Macaulay and Mill, who viewed the disorder of the 1740s as a scene ripe for the opportunistic scheming of Dupleix, the French governor of Pondicherry. The remaining pages of the "General View" used a close narrative of the events of the war in the Carnatic to show that the British had no choice but to enter the war and check their aggrandizing French rivals.[56] For Malcolm, Indian power politics forced the European trading companies to take sides. Competition with each other thus made South Asia a new arena for the military and political rivalry that had previously been carried on mainly in Europe and North America.

As Robertson's introductory chapter had done for the early modern Europe of Charles V, Malcolm's "General View" attempted to show that by 1746 a slow revolution had taken place in Indian politics that made the main achievements of Clive's career possible. Unlike Mill and Macaulay, Malcolm had not relied on the moral superiority of English civilization as an explanation for the growth of the British Empire in India. Erskine, the future coauthor of *Clive,* did not agree with Malcolm's interpretation. In

1826, Erskine wrote, but never published, a review of Malcolm's *Political History of India* in which he rejected Malcolm's explanation of the rise of the British in India, based on the combination of European and native rivalries, for one based on qualitative differences in character:

> General Malcolm's view of our policy would lead us to believe that our progressive and rapid aggrandizement has risen from circumstances that we could not control and that forced us into wars that were generally in self-defence [in] which the superiority of our national character compelled us to become conquerors. . . . That we have subdued India . . . contrary to the wishes even of those who directed our councils on the East, that the English never set out this a regular plan and resolution to conquer India as they have done, that they made their conquest in direct opposition to the laws and wishes—that they had justice on their side in all their wars and operations can as little be affirmed. The truth is that they were the wiser and superior people. They were always placed in circumstances of difficulty and danger which whetted and improved their faculties; they were placed in a situation to form a hot bed of statesmen and warriors. . . . That the native princes sometimes adopted a provoking and perverse policy towards our country men we will not deny, they may sometimes have offered the spectacle of folly and injustice [illeg.] on to ruin. But that will not explain our rise, it was not the triumph of right over wrong, but of knowledge over ignorance.[57]

Erskine recognized that the conclusion of Malcolm's reasoning in the *Political History* was that Indian power politics gave the British no choice but to fight and protect their territorial interest where necessary and that imperial conquest had been an unavoidable consequence of this. Erskine's criticism, which was also applicable to the "General View," was that Malcolm had not fully considered the essential inequality between Europeans and Indians as representative of two civilizations at different stages of advancement. For Mill in particular, this had been the great cause of British imperial progress as it was also the cause of the misrule and corruption that had been a prominent part of its history. Mill's *History* also assumed that the advanced moral character of the Europeans made their use of Eastern practices inappropriate, imprudent, and unnecessary.[58] Erskine's review reminds us that Malcolm, by underplaying the importance of the mismatch or clash of civilizations, preferred explanations for the negative aspects of early imperial rule that attached more importance to factors in India at the time—chiefly, as will be seen, to do with the nature of north Indian courtly politics. Equally, the emphasis on the essential powerlessness of the British in the "General View" provided a firm foundation for the arguments in favor of indirect rule and maintaining the authority of the army, to which Malcolm would return throughout *Clive*.

For Malcolm, the enduring importance of the war in the Carnatic lay in the fact that it had ultimately witnessed the end of French imperial aspirations in India and the start of a new era for the British: "The French force in this part of the Carnatic was destroyed, and the reputation of the British arms was restored, or rather founded in India:—for before his brilliant successes no event had occurred which could lead the natives to believe that the English as soldiers, were equal to the French."[59] The "General View" had argued that the Anglo-French wars on the Carnatic were a conjuncture, created by the intensification of the power struggles of the Mughal successor states and the direct involvement of the English and French East India companies in their countries' rivalries.

The conquest and subsequent recapture of Calcutta and Clive's role in the creation of British Bengal was the next major topic Malcolm considered in detail. In the historiography of the conquest of Bengal, the reign of Siraj ud-Daulah, the last independent Nawab of Bengal, bears directly on the discussion of the propriety of Clive's decision to invade Calcutta and to overthrow him (an event epitomized by the Battle of Plassey). Mill had argued that while Siraj ud-Daulah, the Nawab, was far too ignorant and far too enamored of courtly luxury to be a good ruler, he lacked those vices that make a tyrant.[60] This was a poor context for Malcolm's version of the founding of the empire in Bengal because it presented the English conquest as ruthless opportunism rather than just vengeance. Malcolm preferred to emphasize that the British had liberated Bengal from a cruel despot.

The key exemplar of Siraj ud-Daulah's cruelty was the incarceration of British prisoners in "the Black Hole of Calcutta," as described in the published narrative of J. Z. Holwell, one of the survivors.[61] Mill had challenged Holwell's account on a number of points. In the first place, Mill argued that the Nawab had not intended to put all the British prisoners in such a small cell as punishment. In fact, the "Black Hole" appeared to be the most obvious place to keep the prisoners because it had been used for the same purpose by the British themselves. Furthermore, Mill also suggested that the Nawab himself was unaware of the suffering of the prisoners until the morning.[62] Mill then went on to argue that the number of prisoners in the cell was not unusual by British standards at the time, quoting from the *First Report of the Select Committee* (1782), to show that British prisons in Calcutta of similar dimensions were regularly filled with similar numbers of prisoners.[63]

Malcolm's narrative restored those elements of horror that had been essential to the "Black Hole" story. In doing so, he challenged Mill directly. Where Mill had argued that the Nawab had been unaware of the fate of his prisoners, Malcolm described his "proud indifference to their fate."[64] To

Mill's long discussion of standard eighteenth-century British prison sizes he replied that the Black Hole had never been intended for 143 prisoners (preferring the higher figure found in Holwell's narrative to the one used by Mill).[65] Malcolm did not address Mill's evidence of overcrowding in East India Company jails. Having reestablished Siraj ud-Daulah's cruelty and provided a just cause for British reprisals, Malcolm returned to Clive's military initiatives in Bengal.

Malcolm's chapter on the actual overthrow of Siraj ud-Daulah began with a general reflection on the development of Muslim courts in northern India. Although Muslim rulers had replaced Hindu ones in all the major courts, Malcolm noted that, "all those minuter arrangements of internal policy, on which the good order of the machine of government must ever depend, remained very nearly in the same hands in which the Mohammedans found them."[66] Malcolm argued that the new rulers preferred Hindu middlemen to their Muslim counterparts, because they were better at raising funds. Moreover, "they formed a counterbalance to the ambition and turbulence of [the rulers'] relatives, and the chiefs and followers of their own race."[67] While this gave a certain amount of security to the Muslim courts of India, Malcolm went on to note, "that neither individuals nor the community can recognise, much less feel an attachment to what we call a state . . . there is no regular government supported by fixed succession to the throne, men derive no benefit from the state, and owe it therefore no duty."[68] With this digression, Malcolm attempted to diminish the legitimacy of the incumbent Nawab by showing that in India the ability to control financial networks and exercise political authority determined who would govern, not dynastic inheritance.[69] This was a largely uncontroversial general explanation of how the growth in the power and independence of a hereditary monarch could give order and domestic peace. "It is evident," he continued, "nothing can be so erroneous as to judge the conduct of the natives of India, amid the changes and revolutions to which that country has been exposed, by those rules which apply to nations which enjoy a civil liberty and equal laws."[70] Like Mill, Malcolm drew on explanations about the development of civil society that had strong roots in the Scottish Enlightenment. Yet, where Mill emphasized the relative primitiveness of Indian society and the abusive opportunism of the English, Malcolm's theme was that the overthrow of Siraj ud-Daulah was a typical event given the times, and that the English were not innovators and could be blamed only for the limited part they played in the plot not for the plot itself.[71]

Malcolm then went on to discuss the events that preceded the overthrow of Siraj ud-Daulah and the contentious issue of Clive's motives in aiding the conspirators. Though Malcolm did not directly discuss Mill in this

section, it is worth comparing their two approaches to illustrate their contrasting visions of this crucial moment in the history of British India. Mill opened his account by quoting Clive on the strategic necessity of deposing the Nawab after the attack on the French at Chandannagar, making passing reference to Orme's pronouncement that money induced the English to get involved.[72] Orme was one of the more solid sources for this, not least because he was a celebrant not a critic of British actions in India as this time. Malcolm, in contrast to Mill, argued that the Nawab had to be overthrown before the arrival of French reinforcements sparked a large-scale Anglo-French war. This is the classic argument that we have seen applied by Malcolm to the Fourth Anlglo-Mysore War of 1799 and even to the Second Anglo-Maratha War of 1803–1805.[73] According to this line of reasoning, British policy toward the Indian states at this time was determined by the struggle with France to be the foremost European power in India.

While evaluating the outcome of the Battle of Plassey and the subsequent overthrow of Siraj ud-Daulah, Malcolm gave a rare glimpse of his specific target as a biographer: that great mass of pamphlets portraying Clive's involvement in the revolution of 1757 as a story of rashness, avarice, corruption, and greed:

> I have dwelt thus minutely upon the transactions of this remarkable epoch of Clive's life, and of Indian history, for the purpose of affording materials to determine how far those writers are correct, or justified by his accusers, who have censured and condemned many parts of his conduct, both military and political, during this short but memorable expedition.[74]

Malcolm then went on to consider one of the first great scandals that had surrounded Clive's career. This was his role in the overthrow Siraj ud-Daulah as Nawab of Bengal. For Mill, Clive was a man seldom troubled by scruples, who had moved against a fellow conspirator so that he and his associates could have a larger share of the financial rewards. Mill also stated that Omichund, the Company's coconspirator, had been of great use to the Company and would have been unlikely to jeopardize his good relations with them, not least because they were obviously likely to succeed in the *coup d'état*. They had no reason to fear him, and every reason to honor their agreements with him, he concluded. Malcolm refuted all this. He pointed out that the financial benefits to Clive were negligible and that Omichund was likely to betray them, and this likelihood released them from any contract they had made.[75] They had no obligation to pay him or even protect him, and they were justified in protecting themselves. The false treaty was the best solution to a pressing problem and one not by any means out of place in Eastern diplomacy:

> No verbal promise could satisfy a person who was conscious of having broken every tie with those by whom he had been trusted. He demanded, therefore, what he thought the most sacred of all pledges that could be given; and it was obvious, that they must either comply with his request, deceive him with a false treaty, or vitiate the real one by the insertion of an article not meant to be performed.[76]

Curiously, when Macaulay came to assess this incident, he avoided the legal angle altogether. He did not pick up on the preemptive breach of contract. Instead, he launched a sustained attack on this brand of Company apology. The English, he argued, should always act with veracity.[77] Their vulnerability was no excuse. For Macaulay, their deception of Omichund was morally unjustifiable; worse still, it was not necessary, it was a "blunder."[78] Macaulay was often far more sympathetic than Mill when it came to Reason of State, but in this case he insisted that the English did not need to intrigue and conspire like this because, even in these "early days of empire," they were far stronger than Malcolm and others said they were.[79] Even if they were weak, their moral superiority to the natives of India still made it not only unnecessary but also unwise to loosen moral standards, to stoop to the level of Eastern practices. And by forging the signature of his fellow commander, Admiral Watson, in order to carry out the conspiracy, Clive had not only compromised the reputation of the British with the natives, he also undermined their internal authority.[80] For Macaulay, corruption by the adoption of Eastern manners was a practical danger as much as a moral one. His critique illustrates Malcolm's reliance on the argument that the British were seldom powerful enough to assert their own usages.

Malcolm then moved on to the larger question of the impact of growing British influence in Bengal in the years before the *Diwani* (the control of the revenues) was granted in 1765. This was really an examination of the decline of Muslim elite control and naturally elicited some reflections on the growth of British influence in eastern India. Malcolm followed previous commentators, notably Mill, in transmitting the sense of discord and rivalry between Mughal politicians that was recorded in the *Sier Mutaqhuerin,* the melancholy memoirs of the Mughal diplomat Syed Gholam Hussein Khan. When he came to consider the reign of Mir Jafar, who had been installed as Nawab by the British only to be deposed by them a few years later, Malcolm introduced a long digression on the loss of Muslim authority in India. "It was impossible," Malcolm observed, "to reconcile that prince to his condition; which was more humiliating from the circumstance of his presenting to his countrymen the first instance, in Bengal, of the power of a proud Mohammedan sovereign being

overshadowed by that of a body of merchants, who, before this change, had never appeared at the court of his predecessors but as humble supplicants."[81] Malcolm then went on to consider how this affected the ruler's status in Indian political society: "To add to the strong and rankling feeling which such a change must have excited, the Mohammedan prince and his chiefs found themselves deserted by the wary and pliant Hindus, who, possessing greater foresight . . . were ready on the first alarm of danger to their life or property, to seek the protection of the English."[82] Malcolm's analysis combined immense sympathy for the elite with a keen desire to understand the shifting of power in Bengal in terms of the nature of local politics. "It is not meant," he stated, "to question the necessity which compelled our advance to power in Bengal . . . but while we do justice to ourselves, we should not be unjust to those who opposed us by intrigue or in battle."[83] Here, Malcolm returned to the explanation of European involvement in Indian politics found in *Clive's* introductory "General View":

> Alarm for their lives, hatred and distrust of each other, or the lust of power, might make them confederate with us for the purpose of the moment. . . . They might hope to direct or command those with whom they had combined to destroy their enemies. But when this dream of self-delusion was dispelled, when they found that they themselves had been made the instruments of subverting the dominion of the race to which they belonged, and that their power was now controlled by the very persons by whom it had been so recently established,- it became natural for them . . . to seek through every means emancipation from this humiliating thraldom.[84]

Once again Malcolm imagined himself arguing against "those, who, alike regardless of usage and of feeling, are guided in their judgement of every public and private act by partial principles, and by a local and limited scale of moral rectitude."[85] Who exactly Malcolm was criticizing is unclear. If it was Mill, it was not just him, and not just the "utilitarians" of India House he had in mind. Malcolm's target here is all those who applied non-Indian solutions to Indian problems (the Bengal Permanent Settlement being an example of this). Malcolm also had in mind those who underestimated the consequences of British power for India's former rulers and who saw their machinations as indicative of their character rather than of their loss of power and status to foreign invaders. Here, too, he attempted to engage the reader's sympathy to prove his point. "I ask of these," he continued, "what would have been their conduct, if placed in the depressed and degraded condition of Meer Jaffir?"[86]

In contrast, Malcolm presented Clive as the archetype for the knowledgeable, powerful, and charismatic regional leaders he had argued elsewhere would be the key agents of the government of British India in the

post-1818 era. For example, the digression ended with the observation that, being "fully aware of the character and motives" of Mir Jafar, the new Nawab of Bengal, Clive remained wary. At the same time, he was always careful to show great respect to the trapping and forms of the Nawab's power:

> With respect to the safety of Bengal, he evidently trusted in a very great degree to the influence of his own name and character. He was perfectly acquainted with the natives of India; and he knew that, with them, personal confidence, and a belief in the good fortune of an individual, had an almost superstitious influence, and gave him a strength which more than made amends for the inefficiency of his force.[87]

Returning to the problem of how the British should interact with the native princes of India, this chapter also contained Malcolm's views on the importance of buttressing the symbolic power of the Mughal emperor. It was evidently a matter he felt strongly about—he devoted three pages to it, used the first person, and cited his own *Political History of India* for a lengthier discussion of the issue.[88] Malcolm's reflections on the Mughal emperor have a vehemence that is hard to ignore:

> At the period here treated of, when the Emperor was known to be quite powerless, and to act under personal restraint, such was the impression throughout India of the nominal allegiance to which he was entitled, that no usurper, however daring, could outrage the general feeling so far as to treat his name with disrespect, or neglect forms to which consequence was attached long after the substance of authority was fled.

He went on to suggest that Clive was "deeply impressed" by the status of the Mughal emperor. Yet Clive was not simply coldly weighing up political advantages:

> I have elsewhere given my opinion very fully upon this subject, and have expressed my sentiments as the motives by which Clive was governed in all his intercourse with the Court of Delhi. I have stated "that, though general reasoners may deem such conduct a sacrifice to prejudice, a reverence to a shadow; yet the fact cannot be denied, that, by making that sacrifice, and reverencing that shadow, Clive went in unison with the feelings and opinions of millions of men, Such inconsistencies as those which exist in our connection with the fallen descendents of the house of Timour are frequent in political communities, and particularly as they have existed from time immemorial in India. They grow out of habits, the sentiments, and sometimes the superstition, of human beings; and wise statesmen, referring to their source, will ever treat them with consideration and respect.[89]

Malcolm's use of the word "superstition," with all its negative connotations in the discourse of the history of civil society, very deliberately reminded his readers that government could not simply prohibit or remove, institutions and practices that seemed at odds with the progress of order and prosperity. The role of government was to provide regular governance for the governed that conformed to their prejudices. Once again, Malcolm's arguments here reiterated the kind of Scottish Enlightenment view of the proper function of the legislator, as epitomized in Adam Smith's *The Wealth of Nations*.[90] This entire digression on the decline of Muslim power in India mirrored similar statements in the writings of Munro, Malcolm, and others from the 1820s. A small number of British officials were able to govern a vast Indian population using indigenous military forces precisely because they knew how to exploit and acknowledge the most potent symbols of power.[91]

In considering Clive's return to Britain in 1760, Malcolm devoted considerable space to marking up tensions between the court of directors, chaired by Lawrence Sullivan, and Clive. Malcolm adapted the same arguments he had sketched out in the *Political History of India.* While the Anglo-French wars had transformed India into an arena for patriotic endeavor, the directors of the East India Company were unwilling to surrender their old mercantile privileges for the sake of this new imperial enterprise. As he remarked, "Sullivan's were the principles of the head of a commercial Company; Clive's those of the founder and sustainer of an empire."[92] "The legislature," Malcolm went on to observe, "had not as yet directly interfered in the administration of our Eastern possessions; but ministers and men of high rank and influence had, nevertheless, great power and weight, both in the Court of Directors and in the Court of Proprietors."[93] The problem had been that this connection was " maintained [more] to promote parliamentary influence, and as a means of rewarding and attacking friends, than with any view to the benefit of the public interests of either the Indian or the British empire."[94] Here too, Malcolm was following his own arguments about the necessity for greater government control during the parliamentary debates surrounding Pitt's India Act of 1784.

Malcolm then went on to consider Clive's second term as governor of Bengal. The first issue he grappled with was the propriety of the Mughal emperor's grant of the *Diwani,* the collection and use of the revenues, for Bengal to the East India Company in 1765. The conceit of a government apparently administered by a Nawab, actually run by the East India Company, all in the name of a powerless Mughal emperor, had been criticized by Mill as pointlessly disingenuous and conducive of bad government. At best, Mill suggested, it was a temporary expedient that soon outlived its utility in disguising the power of the East India Company and

in providing stable government for Bengal.[95] In this view, indirect government was not only unaccountable, it gave the weak tyrannies of barbarous governments the support and protection of more stable, better resourced Western governments, ensuring that misgovernment could not be checked by the revolt of the people.[96] In contrast, Malcolm treated Clive as a farsighted forerunner of the Company men of his own time who kept alive the symbols of the regal power structures they had commandeered and who resisted the centralization of British India. Once again, he attacked those "philosophers,"[97] commenting:

> [I]t is not easy to convince such persons of the degree in which he was enabled, by this grant, to reconcile to the rule of strangers the various communities which formed the vast population of India; nor can we compute the amount of strength which it took away from princes, who had long been enemies to those Europeans who they deemed invaders and usurpers, but who were, from the moment the grant was made, in the eyes of a great proportion of their subjects, if not in their own, sanctioned in the exercise of the power they had attained by the authority of one who, however fallen, was still considered the legitimate source of all rank and authority over that empire of which he was hardly more than the nominal head.[98]

While British commentators after 1765 had argued over the need for the double government, Malcolm's language was very obviously from the 1820s and 1830s, by which time the experiment had been tried many times and the movement in favor of direct rule had become more organized and more vocal within policy-making circles. As we have seen, Malcolm, Munro, and others cautioned against direct control of British India on the grounds that this would be perceived as an attempt to displace India's established rulers. Not only would direct rule become the surest way of turning elites into enemies and rebels, it was also the best way to give them authority as rebel leaders and as champions against the foreign British rulers. Once again, Clive, as an advocate of indirect rule on strategic grounds, was portrayed by Malcolm as the initiator of a tradition in British government, albeit one that did not gain its full significance until after 1818, when the British declared themselves the paramount power in India.

The major issue concerning Clive's second government of Bengal from 1765 was his effort to wipe out corruption among the Company's servants. One aspect of his government that had been hotly disputed since Clive's own time was the responsibility he himself had for the abuses he set out to correct. Malcolm addressed this issue early on, when discussing Clive's departure from Bengal in 1759. For Meer Jafar, the new Nawab, and other natives of rank, the chief cause of alarm at the intended departure of Clive was the fear that his successor would not exercise the same authority in

checking and controlling the subordinate officers of their government. The people of Bengal, Malcolm observed "feared . . . that spirit of contemptuous superiority, which the extraordinary and sudden rise of the English in Bengal had engendered among many of the Europeans in the service of the Company, and still more the assumed influence and power of the natives in their employment."[99] This, Malcolm argued, had been the particular cause of high-level corruption. As he noted, "the Nabob and his chief managers had, notwithstanding Clive's efforts, too great reason to complain of the insolent pretensions and fraudulent practices of Gomastahs (or agents employed by the gentlemen at Calcutta), and in different parts of the country." Malcolm insisted that "Clive's public and private letters convey his sentiments very strongly upon this subject" and that he "had punished most severely a native in his service, for using his name as a sanction to some abuses."[100] Malcolm's message here was that Clive was a reformer, correcting rather than inspiring the abuses that had characterized the 1760s. The significance of this can scarcely be overestimated. In Clive's time a general accusation had soon appeared, with which Mill concurred, that Clive had by his example been responsible for many of the abuses practiced by East India Company staff, which he corrected in the second government.

It was at this point that Erskine took over as the author.[101] He was left with the Parliamentary Enquiry of 1773 into Clive's conduct—the first extended parliamentary examination of the conquest of Bengal. Here, Erskine relied on extended quotations from Clive's papers with little in the way of analysis. Erskine also had the task of reporting Clive's death. He avoided mentioning the suicide, implying rather vaguely that Clive had died of fatigue. It is hard to know how Malcolm would have treated this. He was certainly in the habit of omitting rather than refuting controversial issues. However, his mention of Clive's early suicide attempts suggests that it was a theme he was willing to explore and grapple with.[102]

Erskine's hand is perhaps most obvious in the summary of Clive's vision of India. He appears to have shared Malcolm's admiration for Clive's character and also acknowledged his ability to work within the political realities of the time. As Erskine observed, "He was strongly urged by the Emperor of Hindustan to march to Delhi and restore him to his capital. . . . [H]e saw and acknowledged that it was perfectly within his power. But it was anticipating the events of forty years. His well regulated mind perceived that great and flattering as was the glory of such a transaction, and high as it would raise his name, it would be contrary to sound policy and hurtful to his country."[103] It is unlikely Malcolm would have presented Clive's reflections on the future of Indian policy as Erskine did. Erskine stressed, quite rightly, that Clive thought British India would

remain Bengal-centered, and the task of future government would be to limit expansion beyond this discrete and prosperous region and to intensify agriculture and commerce along the Ganges.[104] It was this ideal of British India thyat Charles Grant had promoted in his career as a director. In opposing expansion, he saw himself forwarding Clive's vision of British India. For him, Wellesley's expansion went against the sound maxims on which the empire had been founded. Though Malcolm did quote Clive's aversion to expansion at one point in the book, generally he associated Clive with the maxim: "We must go forward; to retract is impossible."[105] Malcolm was not denying that Clive was reluctant to expand territory. Rather, he imagined Clive, like himself, as the advocate of military retaliation and possible expansion whenever policy demanded and not the promoter of the Bengal-centered, mercantile empire Grant et al. advocated. It seems unlikely Malcolm would have fully endorsed Erskine's summary of Clive's plans of the future of British India.

Macaulay's Review of the *Life of Robert Lord Clive*

To show just how politicized Malcolm's vision of the Clive era was, it is worth looking briefly at the piece of writing that made it famous, Macaulay's *Edinburgh Review* article of 1840. This was the first of the two works he wrote specifically on British imperial history. At the time, Macaulay had been involved in Indian policy making for almost a decade. Having piloted the Government of India Act through Parliament in 1833, he sat as the first Law Member of the Bengal Council and drafted the new Indian Penal Code.[106] Throughout the course of his Indian career, Macaulay's aim had been to simplify and improve the structures of imperial government.[107] Macaulay's politics and his partisan view of key events in the history of British India clearly affected his vision of Clive's career, just as Malcolm's had.

For Macaulay, the history of British India was, without question, that of two grossly mismatched civilizations. Episodes like the administration of Vansittart showed just how destructive such a meeting of peoples could be for the less advanced power.[108] The gap between British and Indian civilizations gave unprecedented scope for abuse as well as for a benevolent role. The danger, Macaulay passionately believed, was augmented by the nature of English political power, half acknowledged, unaccountable, and held by a commercial Company. "Cruelty," he noted, "was not among the vices of the Company. But cruelty itself could hardly have produced greater evils than sprang from their unprincipled eagerness to be rich."[109] In barbarous

societies (which included India, medieval Europe, and the highlands of Scotland), Macaulay argued here and elsewhere, the great check against despotism was the resistance of the people.[110] The Bengalis of Clive's time had, Macaulay said, been accustomed to tyranny, but in extreme situations people had been able to resist. Such checks on weak governments worked against weak rulers, "but," he observed, "the English government was not to be shaken off. That government, oppressive as the most oppressive government, was strong with all the strength of civilisation. . . . It resembled the government of Genii, rather than the government of human tyrants."[111] This was the opposite of Malcolm's argument that the history of the British in India was one of overcoming vulnerability by flexing and strengthening the sinews of an imperial state and carefully managing relationships with indigenous chiefs and power brokers.

Certain elements of Malcolm's book were useful to Macaulay in celebrating Clive as a great statesman. In adapting the romantic, celebratory elements of Malcolm's work, Macaulay departed from Mill's forensic audit of British India, which attempted to undermine the function of the mythic in describing historic actions and historic figures: Mill had a disdain for the "great man" history that Macaulay, his disciple in Indian policy making, did not share. A good example of this is his willingness to follow Malcolm in restoring all those gothic elements to the Black Hole of Calcutta, which Mill had removed. Macaulay took the story at its most horrific. "Nothing," Macaulay wrote (with reference to the Walpole's gothic classic *The Castle of Otranto*), "in history or fiction, not even the story which Ugolino told in the sea of everlasting ice, after he had wiped his bloody lips on the scalp of his murderer," could equal the tale for gruesomeness. "These things," he continued, "which, after the lapse of more than eighty years, cannot be told or read without horror—awakened neither remorse nor pity in the bosom of the savage Nabob."[112] The legend of the Black Hole made sense as an event that led to the recapture of Calcutta by Clive. Macaulay, a popular writer, treating an obscure and typically rather dull area of history, was primarily concerned to make the conquest of Bengal an entertaining and intelligible national myth. The kind of rational debunking Mill resorted to, which to be fair Macaulay often engaged in, too, was appropriate to advanced historical discussion, but not to exposition, which is what Macaulay was doing at the same time as challenging Malcolm. He was telling his readers a new story. In this sense, Malcolm's biography provided the materials for hero worship and for constructing a national legend.

For Macaulay, Clive's virtuous acts offset his shortcomings and the general corruption of the times. In this view of things, Macaulay chose Clive's second government as the high point of his career. By doing so, unlike Malcolm, Macaulay celebrated Clive as a reformer in the history of British

India. Macaulay concluded his essay on Clive by describing him as the first of many great figures in the history of the British Empire in India and William Cavendish Bentinck, the governor general when Macaulay arrived in India, as the heir to this tradition. In India, Bentinck was a keen reformer "who abolished cruel rites, who eliminated humiliating distinctions."[113] He had been happy to get rid of many of the Indian social practices Malcolm, Munro, and others had kept alive for so long. In defending his praise of Bentinck to the editor of the *Edinburgh Review*, he called the former governor general "my old friend of whom Victor Jacquemont said as truly as wittily that he was William Penn on the throne of the mogul and at the head of two hundred thousand soldiers."[114] In Macaulay's view, this was precisely what the empire needed, a despot willing to challenge the prejudices of the people in the interests of the people, not the cautious Tory that Malcolm had made Clive out to be. The decision to place Bentinck as the heir of Clive provides the clearest indication of Macaulay's rewriting of imperial history. If Clive was the founder of the British Empire, then he was also the founder of the liberal tradition in that empire. It is often said that Macaulay wrote the *History of England* to reclaim the English past for the Whigs.[115] The essay on Clive was certainly written to reclaim the hero of the British Empire for the reformers.

Conclusion

Placed alongside Macaulay's more popular effort, Malcolm's *Clive* was obviously an attempt to fix Clive as the founder of his own approach to empire. Malcolm's Clive built up Britain's power base within the existing social and political structures of Indian life. Bentinck was not his heir in this sense; Malcolm was. Descriptions of Clive's charismatic leadership added to this impression. Malcolm stated that the weakness of Vansittart's administration and the ensuing mutiny of the soldiers, "which threatened destruction to the English empire," showed that Clive was the only person capable of steering the Company in Bengal through its metamorphosis into the manager of a vast Asian territory.[116] Certainly this was an appropriate observation for the biography of a hero. But it was also a reflection on Malcolm's own preoccupations regarding Britain's Indian government. After 1818, "the man on the spot" was a much more important figure than he had been, as large territories nominally ruled by scores of petty princes came under the control of individual British officials with extensive powers. As we have seen, Malcolm championed this system against calls for the government of India to be centralized and placed in the hands of committees rather than

individuals. For Malcolm, such powerful representatives in India were indispensable to a government conducted overseas. Malcolm's Clive is the architect of a potent India-based British administration in opposition to the unrealistic efforts of the court of directors to keep the reins of government firmly in the hands of London-based merchants and bankers. In this sense, *Clive* is a prequel to the *Political History of India*.

Both of these works, Malcolm's two attempts to write the history of the East India Company, construct the same historic view of British India. If, the argument ran, Britain was to remain in India at all, it could not stay outside of the power struggles of Indian princes, nor could it ignore the ambitions of its French and Dutch competitors who were unwilling to share with them European influence in the subcontinent. Decisive action needed to be taken on the spot in order to survive in this fierce and fast-moving contest. According to Malcolm, once territory was acquired, British India became a state. Not only did reason of state become a legitimate motive; individuals acting on it were exercising their virtue patriotically. The problem for Malcolm was that many later commentators mistook these actions for what they replaced: the venality of a commercial company motivated by avarice. The Company's mercantile directors used their power at home in Britain to counter the transformation of British India into an imperial concern. Thus, they were able to use its parliamentary and ministerial connections to confound the British government's efforts to take control of its own empire; this created a series of awkward and unworkable half-measures. Malcolm felt that it had been for the benefit of the old commercial interests to argue that British India was a stable and discrete entity rather than a newly born state fighting for its own survival. In his rendering of events, the court of Clive's era commenced this opposition to the transformation of their Indian concerns, and Clive, through his reforms, opposed them, helping the Company and its administration change into a professional government capable of prudent and beneficent rule. In this sense, Clive was not simply the cautious advocate of oriental government Malcolm had become by the late 1820s. He was also to be the bold, pragmatic empire builder Malcolm praised as the ideal governor general, when in the aftermath of the Wellesley era he wrote the *Sketch of the Political History of India*. *Clive* shows that Malcolm's vision of Britain's place in India and its role remained remarkably the same. What changed as that empire grew and government became more complex and problematic was his confidence that this vision would be unchallenged. In this sense, Malcolm's vision of British Indian history mirrored his thinking on British Indian policy. Together, Macaulay's and Malcolm's *Clive* show how the origins of the British Empire in India were exploited by policy makers in an era of uncertainty and experimentation.

Within the corpus of Malcolm's own works, *Clive* also sheds a significant light on the ways in which his understanding of the Company's history had kept pace with his wider interest in civil administration in the 1820s. As this chapter has argued, *Clive* is Malcolm's only philosophical history of British India. Even serious commentators on his work such as Martha McLaren seem to have disregarded it as a minor hobby project, somehow sitting apart from his other works. This is regrettable precisely because the intellectual roots of Malcolm's historical imagination are so clearly exposed in this work. The larger number of digressions in *Clive* show quite clearly that, as McLaren has argued, Malcolm's writings were indebted to Scottish Enlightenment discourse on the nature of government. The interesting question that *Clive* raises is why this was less of a feature of his other Indian works. This chapter and the preceding one have suggested that Malcolm became more reliant on conjectural models for understanding British India as he became more interested in the problems of civil government. Although *Clive* shares the *Political History*'s assumptions about why the British Empire in Indian suddenly began to grow in the 1740s, the former work has a sophistication and a breadth of vision that make it an unmistakable product of the late 1820s and early 1830s.

This is important because *Clive* remains a key reference work even to this day.[117] In this sense, the lack of scholarly regard for it is ironic. It ignores the fact that Malcolm's assumption of an essential continuity between his own values and times and those of Clive was transmitted to later audiences. It was thanks to works such as Macaulay's and Malcolm's, rather than Mill's caustic account of mid-eighteenth-century Bengal, that Clive became emblematic of an entire century of British rule, from 1757 to 1857. This status was confirmed by works such as J. W. Kaye's *Lives of the Indian Officers* and the early twentieth-century *Men Who Ruled India* series, which placed Clive at the start of a tradition of muscular Christian imperial statesmanship typified by the likes of Malcolm, Wellesley, and the Marquis of Hastings.[118] As Nirad Chaudhuri has argued, the career of Robert Clive became part of a polemic history of British conquest that was a cornerstone of later British imperial thought.[119] Yet, as this chapter and indeed this book have argued, Malcolm's vision of the history of British India grafted the issues of his own time onto the past and implied a continuity that was belied by the great changes that took place in British India's government and society during the first three decades of the nineteenth century.

Conclusion

British India before 1857 and the Writings of Sir John Malcolm

Sir John Malcolm's significance as an ideologue lay in the fact that his works gave a historical consciousness and a rhetoric to the empire-building militarism of the first three decades of the nineteenth century. Out of the imperial crises of the 1780s, the Company had become the paramount power in India, and as a consequence the related questions of how India as a whole should be governed and how the improvement of society could be achieved increased in significance. At home, the long friction between the Company's commercial roots and its role as the manager of a territorial empire, which animated the *Sketch of the Political History of India,* had ended with the loss of its monopoly on Indian trade in 1813. Many major authors in the history of British India, from Sir William Jones to James and John Stuart Mill, who advocated democracy at home and authoritarianism for British India, have added weight to the idea that the imperial project sat paradoxically with the development of liberal democracy in Britain. As a thinker and a policy maker, Sir John Malcolm articulated an ideology of empire that was anything but paradoxical. No other writer in this period elaborated a historical vision of empire that so completely expressed the impact of the British conservative reaction to the French Revolution on late Enlightenment thought. Viewed in order, Malcolm's works prove the intellectual continuity between the imperial crises of the 1780s and the British India of indirect rule and militarism that emerged through the nineteenth century.

As an historian of India, of Persia, and of the East India Company, Malcolm's special interest was in the eighteenth century. In all of Malcolm's historical works, the great center of gravity lay, not in the preconditions

and origins of modernity, but in the sudden shifts that created the contemporary world; from the vigorous resistance of the Sikhs and Marathas to Mughal authority, to the brutal centralizing of Shah Abbas and Nadir Shah in Persia, to the wars in the Carnatic of the 1740s. In this sense, Malcolm's published histories and his historical consciousness underpinned his view of the contemporary world and of how British India should be governed. Moreover, though both Malcolm and Mill wrote within a tradition of philosophical history that sought to account for events in terms of larger structural changes, Malcolm saw individual leaders as the great cause of change, whereas Mill saw individuals more as products of conditions within society. Malcolm's contemporaries would have drawn little distinction between his worldview as an historian and his ideas as a policy maker because history explained the nature of the present. His histories all share a deep respect for rulers who understood their own age. In some instances, Malcolm argued, this led to open aggrandizing, such as Wellesley found necessary in the 1790s after the French invasion scare, Tipu's Mysore, and Shore's ill-judged neutrality left British India vulnerable. At other times, Malcolm's concept of good leadership involved preferring the "shadow of power" to the "substance" and carefully managing events indirectly, as Clive had done in building up the double government of Bengal. Malcolm's idea of India and the contribution he made to the creation of the Company Raj of 1818 to 1858 must be understood in terms of his specific understanding of history.

His books, as products of British imperial experience, confirm the fact that a range of intellectual traditions combined to shape the discourse of empire in British India in the 1820s and 1830s. His later works certainly reveal a way of analyzing civil society that owed a great deal to the Scottish Enlightenment. Yet this aspect of his work must be viewed in the context of the early nineteenth century. Malcolm should be seen as a disciple of the Bombay Literary Society. He was just as concerned with collecting the raw materials for the analysis of society as he was with systematizing that information and drawing conclusions from it. Moreover, other influences had a profound effect on his history writing and his policy making. In particular, the echoes of Burke in much of Malcolm's rhetoric, and the importance he attached to heroic leadership in his histories, clearly associate him with the flourishing literary romanticism of the time in which he wrote. His belief in the importance of opinion, and of governing in conformity with feelings and prejudices, became more marked throughout the 1820s and 1830s. Crucially, this was a question of aesthetics, but it also had profound political implications. Malcolm was an obvious product of the conservative reaction to the French Revolutionary and Napoleonic era. It must be remembered that the obverse of his advocacy of princely India

was an aversion to direct rule by Company officials. Where Mill celebrated the government of highly educated, well-informed anonymous experts, Malcolm thought that the imperial administrator must allow the bonds of hierarchy that link societies to be the means of India's preservation and its improvement. The intensity with which he expressed his Burkean idea of society being united by social connections of subordination and the importance he attached to the politics of sentiment both distinguish him from his contemporary imperial authors. In terms of the formation of imperial ideologies at this time, Malcolm's later histories and his works on the government of India added depth and weight to the militarism that had been a feature of his earliest writings and the dominant mode of imperial India at this time. Chapters 5 and 6 show how the need to create policy for the administration of civil society made him noticeably more reliant on late Enlightenment conjectural tools. Any discussion of the intellectual trends and undercurrents that define Malcolm's work must acknowledge that his writings after 1818 became much more sophisticated, and more obviously indebted to Enlightenment thinking about civil society, in response to the need to formulate more complete arguments about empire and look beyond war and diplomacy.

Viewed together, Malcolm's works show that events within India and the politics of government had profound effects on the historiography of both imperial and oriental history in this period. Malcolm's overall vision of British India and its place in Asia was massively influenced by his early career. The vulnerability of Madras during his first decades in India animated his empire-building rhetoric with an anxiety and a fear of complacency that affected everything he wrote. His works on Persia and the Sikhs were products of his great frustration as a diplomatic hawk, keen to extend British influence into northwest India. By informing his audience about the war-torn frontiers of their empire, Malcolm hoped to end the policy of noninterference that had been dominant since 1806. Additionally, Malcolm's familiarity with the native courts and with Asia beyond the borders of British India explained his late advocacy of indirect rule. His experiences encouraged him to view the three presidencies not as epicenters of British government, spreading out across South Asia, but as just some of the many states that made up the "Commonwealth of Nations" in India.[1] Malcolm's critique of early British reform programs such as the permanent settlement, and his vehement desire to curb the application of the Bengal regulations to the conquered territories of western and central India are striking features of his later writings, but their foundations lay in his immensely cosmopolitan knowledge of India and the enthusiasm he was able to muster for local government in all its varieties.

Malcolm's body of work, viewed chronologically, as it has been in this book, perfectly illustrates how the anti-Company literature of the 1780s ultimately spawned the militarism and the faith in indirect rule that were such important components of nineteenth-century British India. *The Sketch of the Political History of India* and *The Life of Robert Lord Clive* shared an assumption that, for much of the Company's history, the directors had protected their commercial privileges at the expense of the needs of an emerging empire in India. In the latter work, for example, Clive was cast as "the founder of an empire" in contrast to "merchants" such as his great rival Lawrence Sullivan.[2] In practice, the empire that had grown up during the latter half of the eighteenth century had been the Company's empire. The direct proprietary rights of the Crown over the possessions of the Company were not confirmed until 1813.[3] The history of the British Empire and evolution of the necessary structures of administration in India in the eighteenth century is more properly the history of the Company's empire in India. One of the great trends in the history of British India in this period was the gradual increase in government authority over the Company coupled with the steady erosion of its commercial significance. In this sense, by fashioning an historical narrative for India's transformation into a British imperial possession, and by arguing that the directors had frustrated this process, works such as the *Political History* and (more obliquely) the *Government of India* and the *Memoir of Central India* neatly incorporated the decline of the Company's independence into a narrative of British imperial expansion in India.

Malcolm's critique of the Company had two distinctive features that mark his books as tools for empire building. First, although Malcolm built on arguments against the Company's administration of India and its relations with the British government in the works of Adam Smith, Sir James Steuart, and many others,[4] his motives were first and foremost strategic. As the first two chapters of this book have argued, Malcolm's attack on the Company's directors was an articulation of his militarism. Malcolm wrote as a Madras soldier, someone who felt that the priorities of the Company lay elsewhere, whether in a wealthier, better-resourced Bengal or in London, where the budget for an undermanned East India Company army was set by directors who represented stockholders earning a dividend of 10 percent a year. Malcolm's determination to put military-strategic demands at the top of the agenda led him to write about the Sikhs and Persia. After 1818, his driving desire to rejuvenate Indian society stemmed from a belief that this was the only way to ensure peace given the limits of British military resources. Second, Malcolm never publicly called for an end to Company rule, and in the run up to the 1833 charter renewal, he became a vocal advocate of its continued role in governing India. In this sense, though

Malcolm was an empire builder, he can be more precisely identified as a reformer of the Company. Thus, as commentary on Indian affairs, his writings about the need to transform the Company indicate a consistent theme in the history of the British empire in the fifty years after 1783.

Malcolm's emergence as a proponent of indirect rule after 1818 and the historical sophistication of his arguments owe a great deal to the *Sketch of the Sikhs* and the *History of Persia*. With these works, Malcolm had attuned himself to the technical problems of writing oriental history. They reveal a critical approach to evidence that was typical of the increasing professionalism of history writing in this period. Malcolm wrote within a tradition of philosophical history that encouraged him to problematize the historical phenomena he observed and present schematic and speculative explanations. This is noticeable, for example, in the *History of Persia's* discussion of the inability of the arts to develop under despotism and the effects this had on the progress of Persian civilization.[5] All of this meant that when Malcolm came to write the history of newly conquered Malwa, the great force of his historical imagination turned the Maratha rulers of the province, whom he had once described as stateless plunderers, into the natural rulers of a delicate mesh of political structures. The *Memoir* is four parts history and ethnography to one part explicit polemic in favor of British rule. The strength of its argument for indirect rule lay in the story it told of a society capable of violently resisting heavy-handed imperial authority, as had happened in the reign of Aurangzeb, but also capable of providing for the regular administration of justice and revenue collection through village governments. In this sense, Malcolm's progress as an historian was vital to his transition from soldier-diplomat writing hawkish polemics to ideologue of early nineteenth-century militarism and architect of post-1818 indirect rule.

Although Malcolm can be viewed retrospectively as a founding ideologue of British India, a detailed analysis of the formation of his texts reveals that empire building, particularly in terms of knowledge gathering and codifying, was highly experimental, unsystematic, and contingent on local circumstances. Malcolm's vision of South Asia and its broader geopolitics was shaped by the fact that his career had begun in the strategically weak Madras presidency and much of the rest of his professional life would be spent on the frontiers of British authority. His books, which aimed to promote and channel British awareness of these peripheries of the British Empire, serve as a reminder that much of the published literature of empire was the product of uncertainty about British prospects in Asia. Works such as the *Memoir of Malwa* or the *Life of Clive* were designed to create rather than affirm orthodoxy in British imperial thinking. This is significant because much of the recent scholarship on the imperial ideologies and

systems of knowledge that emerge in British India does not give adequate attention to this lack of a clear direction in the development of British India.[6] The history of ideas about empire and the literature of empire have had too narrow a focus. When this period has been addressed, writers like Adam Smith, Edmund Burke, and the Mills have been seen as the key representatives of British imperial thought on India. In the same way, Robert Southey and Thomas Moore have been viewed as the leaders of "oriental" taste in romantic English literature. This ignores a mass of noncanonical yet highly influential books written by authors with a far greater knowledge of India and a far more acute interest in shaping public attitudes toward British policy there. This study of Malcolm and the works that he responded to reminds us that the half century following the 1780s must be studied in its own right and that the complex and fluid British imperial literature comprised a vast array of works. Malcolm's works, particularly when viewed in the context of the ideas and writings he responded to, remind us that there were many competing rhetorics of British imperial India.[7] Using Malcolm's writings as a prominent example of the complex intellectual genealogies of specific key texts, this study has argued that there were necessarily multiple ideologies of the British Empire in India to suit the diffuse and changing aims and anxieties of its ideologues.

By treating Sir John Malcolm as a key thinker in British India, this book has inevitably invited readers to be aware of his impact and significance for later generations. Throughout the 1820s, Malcolm's string of career setbacks was matched by waning support for his cautious, conservative approach to Indian government. In part, the times had not been auspicious for Malcolm's thinking. The real need for reform and retrenchment and the relative peace that prevailed on the Indian subcontinent provided a poor context for Malcolm's cautious and elaborate system of indirect rule. But by the time of his death in 1833, growing concern over the northwest frontier and several major policy decisions involving Indian princes brought Malcolm back to the fore as an authority. His own efforts to redeem the reputation of Richard Wellesley also revived interest in Malcolm's own earlier career.[8] The tough stances of 1798 to 1818 suited the needs of a Raj keen to assert its own authority and historical legitimacy. This movement was most notably expressed with the publication of five volumes of Wellesley's Indian dispatches in 1837 and the erection of his statute at India House. Within British Indian policymaking circles, this generation retained its authority through the great mass of old minutes along with better-aimed apologias such as the memoir of Wellesley's administration written by his Persian secretary, Neil Edmonstone. Works such as G. R. Glieg's often reprinted *Life of Sir Thomas* Munro (1830), with its extended extracts from Munro's work, served to popularize the Wellesley generation, but so too did Malcolm's own productions. Malcolm's *Political History of*

India was a major source for Wellesley's biographer in the 1840s. H. H. Wilson, the great opponent of the Anglicists in the 1830s, in his annotated version of James Mill's *History of British India,* relied heavily on Malcolm's works to refute Mill's more skeptical and sarcastic observations about the recent history of the East India Company.[9]

Malcolm's changing fortunes as a guide to native state policy are perfectly illustrated through the changing policy stances of one of his more surprising advocates, John Stuart Mill. Unlike his father, who specialized in revenue administration, the younger Mill spent almost all of his career at India House, drafting responses to incoming correspondence on the native princes. Having begun his Indian career very much in his father's mold, believing that indirect rule was misrule, by the time of his father's death in 1836, John Stuart Mill came to support the continuation of native government, notably in the case of Jaipur.[10] Following Malcolm's precepts, through the late 1830s he began to resist annexation on the grounds that princely rule provided a government that had grown organically within the society in question and reflected the prejudices of the people it governed. As Lynn Zastoupil and others have shown, there is a strong corollary between John Stuart Mill's embrace of the romantic poets in the late 1820s and his move toward indirect rule, as outlined in Malcolm's later works.[11] Equally, just as John Stuart Mill came to distance himself from his earlier enthusiasm for Coleridge, by the late 1840s and 1850s, he came to support Dalhousie's program of annexations.

It should be stressed that John Stuart Mill's changing attitude toward Malcolm's set of maxims reflected larger trends within British Indian policy making. If the late 1820s had seen the rise in influence of advocates of direct rule such as Macaulay and James Mill, those years also witnessed the continuing influence of Malcolm's doctrines. By the 1850s, though indirect rule was still supported in cases where the native government reflected a distinct "national identity," as was argued to be the case with the Rajput dynasties, it was also generally accepted that the recent origins of most of the dynasties meant that there was no obligation to retain the current ruler.[12] This, of course, flew completely in the face of the historical arguments about the Maratha states of central India that Malcolm had developed in the *Memoir.*

From the late 1840s, the historian of British India, J. W. Kaye (who had become Mill's immediate junior at India House in 1856) used his biographies of men such as Malcolm as a warning to the Company of his own day that it had lost the valor and the talent with which the empire had been founded. Kaye saw imperial tragedies such as the First Afghan War and the Uprising of 1857 as indicative of a loss of that statesmanship and competence that, for him, had characterized Malcolm's generation. Kaye's publications were matched by his efforts to bring together a Malcolm archive in the India Office Library.

Like Kaye, Sir Henry Lawrence, the prominent solider-administrator of the 1840s and 1850s, used Malcolm as an authority in developing his own brand of Christian militarism.[13] In the posthumously published *Essays, Military and Political* (1859), Lawrence presented the strategic problem of governing British India in language that could easily have been drawn from Malcolm's *Political History* or his *Government of India*. "The land . . . has," Lawrence observed, "for nearly a thousand years been held by the sword." "The time may yet come," he suggested, "when we shall find our best safeguard in the hearts of a grateful people—but that time has not yet come, nor is there a near prospect of its advent. The sword, whether in the hand or in the scabbard, has yet some work to do."[14] In other words violent unrest, not unchanging social order was the theme of Indian history. "How could any Government," Lawrence asked, "however beneficent, subsist for a day simply by its civil policy on the ruins of such a tempest-tost land?"[15] Lawrence's conviction that the British must address themselves to the elites led to his falling out with his brother, John, a fellow Company servant who favored a revenue settlement in the newly conquered Punjab that cut out local rulers. Equally, Lawrence's violent vision of India's past led him to call on the Company to nurture a sense of patriotic virtue in the army's sepoys by granting more promotions to noncommissioned ranks. "There is always a danger," he commented, "in handling edged tools, but justice and liberality forge a stronger chain than a suspicious and niggardly policy."[16] Like Malcolm, Lawrence saw the support of local elites and the preservation of military power as the cornerstones of lasting British Indian authority.

If they were keen to use Malcolm's language and invoke his name, muscular Christians such as Lawrence and Kaye departed from Malcolm in their idea of the character of the Company's presence in India. Lawrence shared Malcolm's concern that the native army should feel secure in the practice of their own religions; however, he saw a greater role for outward shows of Christian piety on the part of European officers. Lawrence believed the officer should be "a living homily." Pious Muslims and Hindus, Lawrence assured his readers, would respect a Christian officer as a man "who, first in the fight—first in the offices of peace—is staunch to the duty he owes his God."[17] In Kaye's biography of Malcolm, though he did not conceal Malcolm's opposition to overt shows of Christianity by the Company (and its promotion of missionaries),[18] the image he presented of Malcolm as an outwardly pious Christian warrior rather contradicts the relative lack of such references in Malcolm's published works as a whole.[19]

Militarism did not necessarily go hand in hand with a policy of preserving native structures of government. General Sir Charles Napier, sixty-one-year-old conqueror and first governor of Sindh, and perhaps the

most ardent of the Christian warriors of the period, followed Malcolm and Lawrence in their concept of "sword-government," but rejected out of hand any notion that support for traditional practices and local elites would be the root of Indian social and economic development. In an often quoted diary entry reproduced in his first biography, Napier had declared, "Were I emperor of India, . . . no Indian prince would exist. . . . The Emperor of Russia, and he of China would never get their pulses below 100!"[20] In Sind, Napier had brought in sweeping reforms, removed trade tariffs, and actively suppressed *sati* and slavery. Certainly, if Malcolm had some role to play as a prominent soldier-administrator from British India's formative years, by the mid-nineteenth century his belief that local administrative practices, indirect rule, and a focus on the military must necessarily be united as a single approach to imperial government had become marginalized.

In the century after the Uprising of 1857, Malcolm's reputation rose, even if his teachings began to seem dated. Works such as the early twentieth-century *Rulers of India* series continued to celebrate Malcolm and the others as founding fathers of the British Empire. Yet, even as heroes of the late Victorian empire, Malcolm, Metcalfe, Munro, and Elphinstone sat uncomfortably with their immediate successors. Their intimacy with Indian culture and Indian people, their trepidation about direct expansion, and their incompatibility with the philistinism of the Christian warriors of the mid-nineteenth century made them useful champions of later imperial indirect rule. *Sketches of the Rulers of India,* a book written to teach Britons, through historical example, how to retain their empire amid the growing clamor for independence, made this very point. The sympathy of Malcolm and his peers for the Indian people, it argued, made them far more agreeable as foreign rulers. It is significant that in this work almost all of the examples to prove this point involve "magnanimous and high-souled Malcolm."[21] Yet, the "empire of opinion" school was not an entirely appropriate exponent of the current policy of indirect rule. The author of the *Sketches* cautioned that close friendships with Indians of all classes, such as Malcolm had cultivated, were politically dangerous.[22] In the 1860s and 1870s, Henry Maine, the legal theorist, and Alfred Lyall, the historian, made the distinction clear in their works. Munro, Malcolm, and Elphinstone, they argued, stressed the essential similarity between European and Indian civilizations, whereas, in fact, European experience had been entirely different. Europe's legal and cultural traditions marked it out as a qualifiedly superior civilization.[23] Writing in the 1930s and 1940s, Edward Thompson again emphasized the contrast between Malcolm's generation and their mid-Victorian successors, emphasizing the romantic qualities of their Indian experience. British administrators who

ruled personally, among the people, rather than from behind a desk; who respected the people they governed; and whose minds were enlarged by the study of literature and history were suitable imperial ancestors for liberal Britons.[24]

As this brief survey of Malcolm's status in British imperial historiography has suggested, in the nineteenth century British historians were keen to treat Malcolm as a founder of empire. The specific values and ideals with which he was associated were his militarism and his championing of indirect rule. This book has endeavored to show that Malcolm was the most striking proponent of a literature of empire that celebrated martial glory and used a romantic idiom to engage with the history of Asia and of the origins of the British Empire. Malcolm's corpus of works helped to meet the broader intellectual demands of a British Empire that looked increasingly to its northwestern frontier. His oriental histories were steppingstones in the development of a modern European historiography of Asia and a pronounced interest in the hinterlands of empire. His works on the history of British India brought together a basic narrative that remained unchallenged in British historiography until the mid-twentieth century. His key themes of the triumph of British patriotic virtue over the venal mercantilism of the East India Company, and the importance of superior fire power and military discipline in the great military victories of the eighteenth and nineteenth century would soon become the orthodoxy. The growing influence of liberal imperialism and the marked expansion of direct rule under Governor General Dalhousie's "doctrine of lapse" in the 1840s and 1850s were ultimately temporary deviations from the concerted support for princely India that characterized British rule after 1818. The great sense of the Company's weakness Malcolm had felt in Madras in the 1780s was compounded during his long diplomatic career spent far beyond the frontiers of British India, in historic sites of resistance to Mughal authority, such as the Maratha and Sikh lands, or in centers of ancient imperial power such as Persia. And it was this feeling of British India's essential novelty and vulnerability that made him an empire builder, both as a Company official and as an historian. The range of Malcolm's works and his ability to articulate a vision of the British in India as a force for rejuvenation and order made him both an imperial heir to the renewed conservatism of the Napoleonic era and a leading literary exponent of the authoritarianism of the British Empire in the 1830s. This book has shown that Malcolm's corpus of work demonstrates the continuities within empire-building mentalities between the trial of Warren Hastings in 1785 and the Indian Uprising of 1857.

Notes

Introduction

1. See, for example, Lynn Zastoupil, *John Stuart Mill and India* (Palo Alto, CA: Stanford University Press, 1994), pp. 63–98.
2. Sir John Malcolm, *The Life of Robert Lord Clive,* 3 vols. (London: Murray, 1836); hereafter *Clive.*
3. M. E. Yapp, *Strategies of British India: Britain, Iran and Afghanistan, 1798–1850* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1980), pp. 16–17.
4. Edward Ingram, *In Defence of British India: Great Britain in the Middle East 1775–1842* (London: Frank Cass, 1984), p. 80.
5. C. A. Bayly, *Empire and Information: Intelligence Gathering and Social Communication in India, 1780–1870* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), pp. 144–45.
6. As M. E. Yapp has stressed in his study of British relations with Iran and Afghanistan, Malcolm's influence on British Indian military thinking "was greater than that of any other man and the shadow of his strategic intellect extended to the last days of the Raj." Yapp, *Strategies*, p. 17.
7. Sir John Malcolm, *The Political History of India* (London, 1826), II, p. cclx-vii; in a letter to Lord William Cavendish Bentinck of January 24, 1828, he quoted Burke, referring to him as "that wonderful man." C. H. Philips (ed.), *The Correspondence of Lord William Bentinck, Governor General of India, 1828–1835* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977), p. 7; he often stated in conversation that Burke and Robert Burns were his favorite authors, J. W. Kaye, *The Life and Correspondence of Major-General Sir John Malcolm, G. C. B., Late Envoy to Persia, and Governor of Bombay: Late Envoy to Persia, and Governor of Bombay; from Unpublished Letters and Journals* (London: Smith, Elder and Co., 1856), II, pp. 229, 603.
8. John Malcolm, "An Historical Account of the Rise and Progress of the Bengal Infantry, from its first formation in 1757 to 1796, when the present Regulations took place: together with a Detail of the Services on which several Battalions have been employed in that period. By the Late Captain Williams, of the Invalid Establishment of the Bengal Army" *Quarterly Review, XVIII* (1818), p. 409.
9. Peers, *Mars and Mammon: Colonial Armies and the Garrison State in India 1819–1835* (London: Tauris, 1995), pp. 36, 64.

10. John Malcolm, "An Historical Account of the Rise," p. 400.
11. Peers, *Mars and Mammon,* pp. 7–8, 59.
12. Zastoupil, *John Stuart Mill and India*; Martha McLaren, *British India and British Scotland, 1780–1830. Career Building, Empire Building, and a Scottish School of Thought on Indian Governance* (Akron, OH: University of Akron Press, 2001).
13. Bayly, *Imperial Meridian: The British Empire and the World, 1780 to 1830* (London: Longman, 1989), pp. 85–86, 115.
14. McLaren, *British India and British Scotland*, p. 5.
15. By ignoring Jeffrey, Brougham, Scott, and the other Scots of Malcolm's generation, McLaren was able to uphold the central tenet of her thesis: that the "romantic conservative" epithet that Eric Stokes placed on Malcolm, Munro, and Elphinstone is wholly inappropriate because they came from the reforming tradition of the Scottish Enlightenment. Though a more accurate description than Stokes's is necessary, it is useful to understand why he felt it was applicable in the first place.
16. S. Collini, D. Winch, and J. Burrow, *That Noble Science of Politics: A Study in Nineteenth Century Intellectual History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), p. 96.
17. Ibid., p. 30.
18. The most compelling recent exposition of this argument is Nicholas B. Dirks, *The Scandal of Empire: India and the Creation of Imperial Britain* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2006), p. 125; see also Balachandra Rajan, *Under Western Eyes: India from Milton to Macaulay* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1999), p. 196; and Anindyo Roy, *Civility and Empire: Literature and Culture in British India, 1822–1922* (Oxford: Routledge, 2005), p.78.
19. Javed Majeed, *Ungoverned Imaginings: James Mill's The History of British India and Orientalism* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992), p. 123.
20. James Mill, *The History of British India*, William Thomas (ed.) (London, 1975), p. xxiv.
21. Ibid., pp. 6–7.
22. Eric Stokes, *The English Utilitarians and India* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1959), p. 32; Rajan, *Under Western Eyes*, p. 243.
23. Jennifer Pitts, *A Turn to Empire: The Rise of Liberal Imperialism in Britain and France* (Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press, 2005) pp. 3, 11, 103.
24. Ibid.
25. Earlier studies like Zastoupil's in particular have done far more to trace and account for the continuities within British imperial thinking about India in the early nineteenth century. The great achievement of Zastoupil's work was to align J. S. Mill the European thinker with J. S. Mill the East India Company official and show how his response to writers on India – above all Malcolm – was a striking corollary to his engagement with the conservatism of Coleridge during the 1830s. Zastoupil, *John Stuart Mill and India,* pp. 114, 181.
26. Phillip Constable, "Scottish Missionaries, 'Protestant Hinduism' and the Scottish Sense of Empire in Nineteenth and Early Twentieth-century India," *The Scottish Historical Review*, 86, (2007), 278–313, p. 279.

27. These dimensions have been well considered in recent studies of the mid-eighteenth century by Robert Travers and Jon E. Wilson. Robert Travers, *Ideology and Empire in Eighteenth Century India: The British in Bengal* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007); Jon E. Wilson, *The Domination of Strangers: Modern Governance in Eastern India* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008).
28. Burton Stein, *Sir Thomas Munro: The Origins of the Colonial State and His Vision of Empire* (New Delhi and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), p. 198.
29. Pitts, *A Turn to Empire,* p. 160.
30. John Kaye, *The Honourable Company: A History of the English East India Company* (London: Harper Collins, 1993), p. 331.
31. Stein, *Sir Thomas Munro*, p. 234.
32. C. A. Bayly, "The British Military-Fiscal State and Indigenous Resistance in India 1750–1820," in L. Stone (ed.), *An Imperial State at War: Britain from 1689 to 1815* (London: Routledge, 1994), p. 324.
33. This interpretation is derived from Bayly, *Imperial Meridian*, pp. 248–56.
34. R. Pasley, *Send Malcolm! The Life of Major-General Sir John Malcolm, 1769–1833* (London: Basca, 1982), p. 4; Kaye, *Malcolm*.

1 Sir John Malcolm and the British Empire in India

1. By rejecting the idea of a steady "swing to the East" expressed in earlier works such as Vincent Harlow's *History of the British Empire: The Founding of the Second British Empire, 1763–1793* (London: Longmans, Green, 1952), my interpretation of the British Empire in the 1780s closely follows that of P. J. Marshall, *The Making and Unmaking of Empires: Britain, India and America, c.1750–1783* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005).
2. I am grateful to Ian "John" Malcolm for this information.
3. J. W. Kaye, *The Life and Correspondence of Major-General Sir John Malcolm, G. C. B., Late Envoy to Persia, and Governor of Bombay: Late Envoy to Persia, and Governor of Bombay ; from Unpublished Letters and Journals, I* (London: Smith, Elder, 1856), p. 6.
4. Ibid.
5. Andrew Mackillop, "Scots and the East India Company in the Long Eighteenth Century," lecture delivered to the Scottish History Seminar, University of Edinburgh, April 2004.
6. Kaye, *Malcolm,* I, p. 8.
7. Jim Phillips, "Parliament and Southern India, 1781–3: The Secret committee Inquiry and the Prosecution of Sir Thomas Rumbold," *Parliamentary History* 7 (1988): 81–97, 81–82.
8. George Canning, quoted in C. H. Philips, *East India Company* (Manchester: Publications of the University of Manchester, 1940), p. 222; Douglas M. Peers, *Between Mars and Mammon: Colonial Armies and the Garrison State in Early Nineteenth Century India* (London: Taurus Press, 1995), p. 29.

9. H. H. Dodwell, "The Carnatic, 1761 to 1784," in H. H. Dodwell (ed.), *Cambridge History of India Volume V: British India, 1497–1858* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1929), pp. 289, 293.
10. William Hodges, *Travels in India during 1781, 1782 and 1784* (London: James Edwards, 1783), p. 23.
11. William Fullarton, *A View of the English Interests in India; And the Military Operations in the Southern Parts of the Peninsula during the Campaigns of 1782, 1783, and 1784* (London: Creech, 1787), p. 216.
12. Marshall, *The Making and Unmaking of Empires*, p. 144.
13. Edward Ingram, "The Role of the Indian Army at the End of the Eighteenth Century," in P. Tuck (ed.), *The East India Company: 1600–1858, Volume Five* (London: Routledge, 1998), p. 105.
14. G. R. Gleig, *The Life of Major-General Sir T. Munro, Bart. and K.C.B. Late Governor of Madras with Extracts from His Correspondence and Private Papers,* Vol. 1 (London: R. Bently, 1830), p. 81.
15. Marshall, *The Making and Unmaking of Empires*, p. 146.
16. Hodges, *Travels,* pp. 4–5.
17. This interpretation of the politics of late eighteenth-century Madras follows S. Bayly, *Kings, Saints and Goddesses: Muslims and Christians in South Indian Society, 1700–1900* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press) pp. 157, 176, 221–23.
18. Kaye, *Malcolm,* I, p. 20.
19. William Erskine, "Diary," January 25, 1836, Erskine Papers, BL, Add. MS 39,945 f.31.
20. Andrew Mackillop, "Scottish Networks and the East in the Long Eighteenth Century," lecture delivered to the Scottish History Seminar, University of St. Andrews, November 2003; D. M. Peers, "The Raj's Other Great Game: Policing the Sexual Frontiers of the Indian Army in the First Half of the Nineteenth Century," in Anupama Rao and Stephen Pierce (ed.), *Discipline and the Other Body: Correction, Corporeality, Colonialism (*Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2006).
21. R. Callahan, *The East India Company and Army Reform, 1783–1798* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1972), p. vi.
22. M. H. Fisher, *Indirect Rule: Residents and the Residency System, 1764–1857* (Dehli and New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), p. 67.
23. Ingram, "The Role of the Indian Army," p. 106.
24. Kaye, *Malcolm,* I, p. 17.
25. Kennaway and his generation of diplomatists are well represented in William Dalrymple, *White Mughals: Love and Betrayal in Eighteenth Century India* (London: Harper Collins, 2003), p. 67.
26. Kaye, *Malcolm,* I, p. 19.
27. Ibid.
28. The only record of his time in Edinburgh is his account in a letter to his sister, which survives in Kaye, *Malcolm,* I, pp. 40–41.
29. Ibid., p. 58.

30. Martha McLaren, *British India and British Scotland, 1780–1830. Career Building, Empire Building, and a Scottish School of Thought on Indian Governance* (Akron, OH: University of Akron Press, 2001), p. 37.
31. Kaye, *Malcolm,* I, pp. 34–36.
32. Ibid.
33. Virtually none of these survive. The earliest extant minutes by Malcolm date from 1798.
34. See, for example, his correspondence with Mark Wilks, the historian of Mysore, on the history of the Madras Presidency; M. Wilks to J. Malcolm, April 23, 1802 to April 25, 1808, BL, IOR H/736, pp. 545–64.
35. Kaye, *Malcolm,* I, p. 41.
36. Ibid., p. 61.
37. Philips, *East India Company,* pp. 91–92.
38. This is confirmed by the sudden increase in Malcolm's correspondence in the India Office archives after 1798.
39. John Malcolm, "Reflections on the Policy of Forming a More Intimate Alliance with the Nizam." May 1798, BL, IOR, Mss Eur F 228/85.
40. Ibid., p. 2.
41. Ibid.
42. Ibid., p. 3.
43. Edward Ingram (ed.), *Two Views of British India: The Private Correspondence of Mr Dundas and Lord Wellesley; 1798–1801* (Bath: Adams & Dart, 1970), p. 54.
44. Ingram, *In Defence of British India,* p. 27.
45. This breaks with the more conventional idea of a Wellesley "kindergarten" with Malcolm and his colleagues as imperial apprentices of the governor general. See the next chapter for a more detailed discussion.
46. Sir T. E. Colebrooke, *Life of the Honourable Mountstuart Elphinstone*, *I* (London: John Murray, 1884), p. 207.
47. Dalrymple, *White Mughals*, p. 127.
48. Certainly until 1814, Malcolm remained a close confidant. Thereafter, he became a less frequent correspondent, although Wellington backed Malcolm for an Indian governorship all through the 1820s. Iain "John" Malcolm, "John Malcolm, Arthur Wellesley's Best and Lifelong Friend?," unpublished lecture delivered at the 2006 Wellington Conference, University of Southampton, June 22, 2006.
49. Ingram, *In Defence of British India*, p. 98.
50. Malcolm's minutes on recent political events in Persia show how little was known about that country and its relations with the Company's north Indian neighbors and with Russia. See John Malcolm, "Account of the Rise of Baba Khan." 1798, BL, Add MS 13,745.
51. Rodney Pasley, Send Malcolm! *The Life of Major-General Sir John Malcolm, 1769–1833* (London: BASCA, 1982), p. 4.
52. P. J. Marshall, *Bengal: The British Bridgehead: Eastern India 1740–1828* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), pp. 122–27.

53. "Examination of Lieutenant Colonel John Malcolm on Monday, 5 April 1813," in *Minutes of Evidence taken before the Right Honorable the House of Lords in the Committees appointed to take into consideration so much of the speech of His highness the Prince Regent as relates to the Charter of the East India Company* (London, 1813), p. 21.
54. Kaye, *Malcolm*, I, p. 161.
55. John Malcolm, "Memorandum on Irregular Horse," June 1805, IOR H/506a, f. 7.
56. Ibid., p. 13.
57. Philips, *East India Company,* p. 144.
58. J. W. Kaye, *Life and Correspondence of Charles, Lord Metcalfe* (London: Smith, Elder, 1858), p. 93.
59. Kaye, *Malcolm*, I, p. 358.
60. Minto to Malcolm, n.d, 1808, quoted in Kaye, *Malcolm,* I, p. 404.
61. This scheme was a rather hyperbolic response to the invasion threat, but, as M. E. Yapp has shown, it illustrates how distant external threats could revive older imperial ambitions. Yapp, *Strategies of British India: Britain, Iran and Afghanistan*, 1798–1850 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1980), pp. 9, 53–55.
62. Kaye, *Malcolm,* I, p. 424.
63. Yapp, *Strategies,* p. 47.
64. Ibid., pp. 55–59.
65. Minto to Dundas, n.d, 1808, quoted in McLaren, *British India and British Scotland*, p. 60.
66. Philips, *East India Company,* p. 177.
67. Jane Rendall, "Scottish Orientalism between Robertson and Mill," *The Historical Journal* 25 (1982): 43–69.
68. Kaye, *Malcolm,* I, pp. 500–509; John Malcolm, *Observations on the Recent Disturbances in the Madras Army* (London: John Murray, 1812).
69. John Malcolm addressing the Select Committee on the Affairs of the East Indian Company, May 4, 1812, *Minutes of Evidence Taken Before the Right Honourable House of Lords Committees Appointed to Take into Consideration So Much of The Speech of His Highness the Prince Regent as Relates to the Affairs of the East India Company* (London: E .Cox & Son, 1813), pp. 22–23.
70. Sir Walter Scott to John B. S. Morrit, 1812, in J. C. Grierson (ed.), *The Letters of Sir Walter Scott, Vol. 3* (London: Constable and Co, 1932–37), p. 170.
71. John Malcolm to John Murray, March 8, 1818, NLS, Murray Archive, Acc. 126041763.
72. After the Nepalese War of 1814–1816, Lord Moira, the governor general, was made Marquis of Hastings. For clarity, he will be referred to by the latter name.
73. Francis Rawdon, *Summary of the Administration of the Indian Government by the Marquess of Hastings during the Period that he Filled the Office of Governor General* (London, 1824), p. 100.
74. Ibid., p. 30.
75. As Lord Hobart, Buckinghamshire had been governor of Madras in the 1790s.

76. Kaye, *Malcolm,* II, p. 140.
77. Kaye, *Malcolm,* II, pp. 307, 312.
78. Malcolm, *Sketches of Persia* (London, 1827), p. 11.
79. Charlotte Malcolm to the Duke of Wellington, 21 February 1828, quoted in Philips (ed.), *The Correspondence of Lord William Cavendish Bentinck, Governor-General of India 1828–1835* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977) p. 10.
80. Peers, *Between Mars and Mammon,* p. 235.
81. Kaye, *Malcolm,* II, p. 524. The *Dictionary of National Biography* wrongly states that Bradford was arrested and deported.
82. K. Ballhatchet, *Social Policy and Social Change in Western India, 1817–1830* (London: Oxford University Press, 1959), pp. 313–19.
83. Kaye, *Malcolm,* II, p. 562.
84. Ibid., p. 563.
85. Philips, *East India Company,* p. 293.
86. Ibid., p. 294; R. Campbell to Sir C. Pasley, May 3, 1833, BL, Add Ms 41,964, p. 147.
87. Mr. G. Malcolm to Sir C. Pasley, June 1, 1833, BL, Add Ms 41,964, p. 149.
88. Elphinstone to Erskine, January 23, 1815, NLS, Add Ms 28,516.
89. John Malcolm to William Erskine, 2 December 1826, NLS, Add Ms. 32.7.18, p. 28.

2 The *Political History of India* and the Creation of an Historiography of Imperial Conquest

1. This is the title Malcolm gave to the more widely used second edition, published in 1826.
2. Eric Stokes, *The English Utilitarians and India* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1952), p. xii; Majeed, *Ungoverned Imaginings*, pp. 2, 5.
3. This is the title of Pasley's biography, *Send Malcolm!*
4. Susan Bayly, *Saints, Goddesses and Kings: Muslims and Christians in South Indian Society 1700–1900* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), pp. 166–67; Peter J. Marshall, *The Making and Unmaking of Empires: Britain, India and America, c.1750–1783* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2005), p. 143.
5. J. W. Kaye, The Life and Correspondence of Major-General Sir John Malcolm, G. C. B., Late Envoy to Persia, and Governor of Bombay: Late Envoy to Persia, and Governor of Bombay ; from Unpublished Letters and Journals (London: Smith, Elder, 1856). pp. 10–11.
6. Raymond Callahan, *The East India Company and Army Reform, 1783–1798* (Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press, 1972) p. 134.
7. Kaye, *Malcolm,* I, pp. 32–35.
8. Edward Ingram (ed.), *Two Views of British India: The Private Correspondence of Mr Dundas and Lord Wellesley; 1798–1801* (Bath: Adams & Dart, 1970),

p. 7; Sir John Shore, *The Private Record of an Indian Governor-Generalship: The Correspondence of Sir John Shore, Governor General of India, with Henry Dundas, President of the Board of Control, 1793–1798* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard Historical Monographs, 1933), p.103.

9. The role Madras' security problems played in the development of an all-India defensive strategy is outlined in M. E. Yapp, *Strategies of British India: Britain, Iran and Afghanistan, 1798–1850* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1980), p. 8. There is no modern study of Hobart's Madras.
10. William Dalrymple, *White Mughals: A Tale of Love and Betrayal in Eighteenth Century India* (London: Flamingo, 2003), p. 91.
11. Shore, *Private Record,* p. 118.
12. C. H. Philips, *East India Company, 1784–1833* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1941), pp. 90, 92.
13. George Johnstone to John Malcolm, October 26, 1797, BL H/736, p. 10.
14. John Malcolm, "Reflections on the Policy of Forming a More Intimate Alliance with the Nizam," April 19, 1798, BL/ MSS Eur F 228/8, pp. 3–4.
15. Earl of Mornington to the Rt. Hon. Henry Dundas, October 11, 1798, quoted in Ingram (ed.), *Two Views of British India,* p. 100.
16. Dalrymple, *White Mughals*, p. 78.
17. Penelope Carson, "Golden Casket or Pebbles and Trash? J.S. Mill and the Orientalist/Anglicist Controversy," in Lynn Zastoupil, M. Moir, and D. M. Peers, *J. S. Mill's Encounter with India* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999), p. 161; Douglas M. Peers, *Between Mars and Mammon: Colonial Armies and the Garrison State in Early Nineteenth Century India* (London: Taurus Press,1995), p. 38.
18. The more conventional view, that Wellesley's servants were his creatures, can be found in Iris Butler, *The Eldest Brother: The Marquess Wellesley, The Duke of Wellington's Eldest Brother* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1973) and in Dalrymple, *White Mughals.*
19. J. Malcolm to R. Wellesley, October 11, 1799, BL, Add. Ms 13,706, ff. 55–56.
20. Ibid.
21. Stewart Gordon is explicit that the British and French were merely carrying on existing practice by entering into subsidiary alliances. The argument that this was a European innovation for slowly transferring power and authority out of the hands of native governors, which Arthur Wellesley makes, ignores the extent to which the East India Company incorporated itself into existing military and political networks. Stewart Gordon, *The Marathas: 1600–1818* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), p. 75.
22. F. Whelan, *Edmund Burke and India: Political Morality and Empire*, (Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1996), p. 101.
23. Butler, *The Eldest Brother,* p. 149.
24. Raghubir Sinh (ed.), *The Treaty of Bassein and the Anglo-Maratha War in the Deccan 1802–1804, English Records of Maratha History. Poona Residence Correspondence, Vol. 10* (Bombay: Sri Gouranga Press, 1951), p. xix.
25. C. A. Bayly, "Richard Wellesley," in *Dictionary of National Biography, Vol. 58* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), pp. 37–45.

26. Butler, *The Eldest Brother*, p. 326.
27. C. Halliwell, "The Marquis Wellesley's encounter with the Maratha Empire," unpublished PhD thesis, University of Southampton, 1999, p. 176.
28. Ibid., p. 181.
29. J. W. Kaye, *The Life and Correspondence of Henry St. George Tucker, late Accountant General of Bengal and Chairman of the East India Company* (London: Smith & Elder, 1854), p. 175.
30. Kaye, *Malcolm,* I, p. 373.
31. A. Wellesley to J. Malcolm, August 1807, quoted in Kaye, *Malcolm*, I, p. 374.
32. John Malcolm quoted in Kaye, *Malcolm,* I, p. 385.
33. Yapp, *Strategies of Empire,* pp. 47–49.
34. John Malcolm to Sir James Mackintosh, July 1809, IOR H/737, f. 14.
35. John Malcolm, *Observations on the Disturbances in the Madras Army in 1809* (London: John Murray, 1812).
36. Sir Charles Grant to Sir James Mackintosh quoted in Kaye, *Malcolm,* I, p. 384.
37. For a detailed analysis of this literature and its critique of the East India Company, see H. V. Bowen, *Revenue and Reform: The Indian Problem in British Politics 1757–1773,* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991).
38. A. Webster, "The Political Economy of Trade Liberalization: The East India Company Charter Act of 1813," in *Economic History Review*, *2nd Series, 43* (1990), p. 405; Stokes, *English Utilitarians and India,* pp. 38–40.
39. Philips, *East India Company,* p. 12.
40. Reproduced in P. J. Marshall (ed.), *The Problems of Empire, Britain and India, 1757–1813* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1968), p. 166.
41. J. Bosanquet, "A Concise Statement of Reasons Why the East India Company Should Not be Charged with the Intended Additional Duty of 2½ Per Cent on Imports, Exports and Re-Exports" in H/61, p. 188.
42. Ibid.
43. Ibid.
44. In making this argument on paper, Bosanquet often drew comparative profit and loss accounts for wartime and peacetime commerce, showing that the latter was markedly cheaper in terms of freight, insurance, and the cost of troops; ibid., p. 187; J. Bosanquet, "Report on Indian Debt and Finances of India, November 1802," Add Ms 13, 814.
45. Charles Grant, "Observations on the State of Society among the Asiatic Subjects of Great Britain, Particularly with Respect to Morals; and on the Means of Improving it: Written Chiefly in the Year 1792," *Parliamentary Papers*, 10 (1812–1813), No. 282.
46. G. Carnall, "William Robertson and Contemporary Images of India," in S. J Brown (ed.), *William Robertson and the Expansion of Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), p. 219.
47. Ingram, *Two Views of British India,* p. 7.
48. Philips, *East India Company*, p. 141.
49. For example, Adam Smith, *Wealth of Nations, Books IV–V* (London: Penguin, 2006), p. 22.

50. Ibid., p. 341. This passage was introduced in the third edition of 1784.
51. Ibid.
52. Lord Melville to Lord Castlereagh, August 11, 1803, quoted in Marshall, *The Problems of Empire*, p. 140.
53. Webster, "The Political Economy of Trade Liberalization," p. 410.
54. Earl of Lauderdale, *An Inquiry into the Practical Merits of the System for the Government of India under the Superintendence of the Board of Control* (Edinburgh, 1809), p. 137.
55. Ibid., p. 138.
56. Abbé Raynal, *A History of the Two Indies: A Translated Selection of Writings from Raynal* Peter Jimack (ed.) (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006), p. 45. This text appears in the third French edition, published in 1780.
57. Ibid.
58. Lauderdale, *An Inquiry,* pp. 120–1.
59. Ibid., p. 122.
60. Ibid.
61. John Malcolm, *Sketch of the Political History of India from the Time of Mr Pitt's India Bill, A.D. 1784, to the Present* (London: William Miller, 1812), p. 33.
62. John Malcolm quoted in *Interesting Extracts from the Minutes of Evidence Taken Before the Committee of the Whole House to Whom it Was Referred to Consider of the Affairs of the East India Company* (London: T. Davison, 1814), p. 3.
63. Ibid., p. 145; James Paull, *A Letter from Mr. Paull [on the subject of the charges preferred by him against Marquis Wellesley] to S. Whitbread* (London, 1808).
64. Ibid., p. 146.
65. Anon., "Draft 128," IOR H/486, f. 7.
66. Ibid., f. 8.
67. Ibid.
68. John Malcolm, "Reflections on the Policy of a Closer Connection with the Nizam," April 18, 1798, IOR MS Eur F288/85, f. 2.
69. Philips, *East India Company,* p. 139.
70. Arthur Wellesley, "Notes on the Administration of Marquis Wellesley," in *Selections from Wellesley's Despatches,* Sidney Owen (ed.) (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1880), p. 283.
71. John Malcolm, "Commentary on the anonymous 'Observations on the Treaty of Bassein,'" November 1804, British Library, Add. MSS. 13,472, f. 89.
72. Ibid., p. 87.
73. Ibid.
74. Ibid.
75. Ibid., p. 88.
76. John Malcolm, "Commentary on the Anonymous 'Observations on the Treaty of Bassein,'" f. 148.
77. For a more detailed analysis of the pro-Wellesley memoranda written by his senior staff, see Halliwell, "Lord Wellesley's Encounter with the Maratha Empire."
78. Arthur Wellesley, "Notes on the Administration of Marquis Wellesley," p. lxxi.

79. Ibid., p. lxxvi.
80. Ibid., p. lxxix.
81. Ibid.
82. Ibid.
83. Ibid., p. xl.
84. C. H. Alexandrowicz, *An Introduction to the History of the Law of Nations in the East Indies (16th, 17th & 18th Centuries)* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1967), pp. 156, 176.
85. Malcolm, *Sketch of the Political History of India,* p. 463.
86. G. D. Bearce, *British Attitudes Towards India, 1784–1858* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1961), p. 264; Martha McLaren, *British India and British Scotland, 1780–1830. Career Building, Empire Building, and a Scottish School of Thought on Indian Governance* (Akron, OH: University of Akron Press, 2001), p. 143.
87. Malcolm, *Observations on the Disturbances in the Madras Army,* p. 58.
88. Kaye, *Malcolm,* I, p. 500.
89. Malcolm, *Sketch of the Political History of India,* p. v.
90. Ibid., p. 27.
91. Ibid.
92. Ibid., p. 33. For the edition of 1826, Malcolm added to this section by observing that amid "abundant proofs of misconduct" in this period, the history of the East India Company also exhibited "a spirit of bold enterprise and determined perseverance which no losses could impede and no delays subdue." There could be no doubt, Malcolm noted, that this spirit had been "nourished by their exclusive privileges" as a state-chartered monopoly. Malcolm was equally certain that this government protection had led to "efforts both in commerce and in war, that were honourable to the character of the British nation." This addition challenged the traditional idea that the East India Company's principle purpose in the British state had been to supply wealth to fuel growth. Malcolm, *Sketch of the Political History of India*, I, p. 28.
93. Ibid., p. 34.
94. Ibid., p. 37.
95. Ibid., pp. 34–35.
96. Ibid., p. 41.
97. Ibid.
98. This is the focus of Macaulay's and Mill's works on British India, see chapter 6.
99. Malcolm, *Sketch of the Political History of India,* p. 48.
100. Ibid., p. 55.
101. Ibid., p. 56.
102. Ibid., p. 224.
103. Ibid., p. 60.
104. Ibid.
105. Ibid., p. 61.
106. Ibid., p. 103.
107. Ibid.
108. Ibid., p. 413.
109. Ibid., p. 414.

110. Ibid.
111. Ibid., p. 136.
112. Ibid.
113. Ibid., p. 226.
114. Ibid., p. 168.
115. Ibid.
116. Ibid.
117. Ibid., p. 226.
118. Ibid.
119. Ibid., p. 225.
120. Ibid.
121. Charles Grant, "Observations on the State of Society among the Asiatic Subjects of Great Britain, Particularly with Respect to Morals; and on the Means of Improving it: Written Chiefly in the Year 1792," *Parliamentary Papers,* 10 (1812–1813), No. 282, 23.
122. Malcolm, *Sketch of the Political History of India*, p. 229.
123. C. A. Bayly, *Indian Society and the Making of British India* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), p. 103.
124. Malcolm, *Sketch of the Political History of India,* p. 178.
125. A. S. Bennell, *The Making of Arthur Wellesley* (Hyderabad: Orient Longman, 1997), p. 224. Bennell has written six further articles on the Second Maratha War.
126. To the best of my knowledge, there is no systematic account of the omissions and abridgements for the Wellesley Despatches. Individual examples have been spotted by C. A. Bayly, C. H. Philips, and others.
127. Butler, *The Eldest Brother,* p. 330. All mention of this is also missing from the printed collections of papers of the Wellesley brothers.
128. The situation was slightly different, in that Barlow and Cornwallis were giving up treaty obligations, and Wellesley was not. However, the fact that Wellesley did not value these gains is not mentioned in the *Sketch of the Political History of India*, neither does it appear in any of the Parliamentary Papers released at the time on this topic. See Bennell, *The Making of Arthur Wellesley,* p. 120.
129. Malcolm, *Sketch of the Political History of India*, p. 385.
130. James Mill, "Sketch of the Political History of India, from the Introduction of Mr. Pitt's Bill in 1784. By John Malcolm, Lieutenant-Colonel in the Honourable East India Company's Madras Army, Resident at Mysore, and Late Envoy to the Court of Persia. 8vo. pp. 480. London 1811," *Edinburgh Review*, 20 (July–Nov 1812): 38–54, 39.
131. Ibid., p. 52.
132. Ibid., p.49.
133. This was the phrase used at the time. Malcolm's response to British India after 1818 is discussed in chapter 4.
134. Kaye, *Malcolm,* II, p. 222.
135. Philips, *East India Company*, p. 179.
136. Malcolm, *Sketch of the Political History of India,* p. 431.

137. Ibid., p. 437.
138. Ibid., p. 440.
139. Ibid.
140. Malcolm was not a particularly legalistic thinker and he made relatively little of the issue of whether the Company's territories in India officially belonged to the crown. The charter of 1813 resolved the issue by confirming that the Company held its Indian possessions in trust for the British crown. Philips, *East India Company,* p. 174.
141. Malcolm, *Sketch of the Political History of India, I*, p. 590.
142. Philips, *East India Company,* p. 260.
143. For works that develop Smith's antimercantilist critique of the Company, see B. Lenman, Scottish Enlightenment, Stagnation and Empire in India, 1772–1813, *Indo-British Review* 1 (1995).

3 Sir John Malcolm and the History of Modern Asia

1. Using Robert Southey and Thomas Moore as examples, Javed Majeed demonstrates how poetic interest in the East was a product of growing sophistication in oriental scholarship. Majeed, *Ungoverned Imaginings: James Mill's The History of British India and Orientalism* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992), pp. 43, 87.
2. M. E. Yapp, *Strategies of British India: Britain, Iran and Afghanistan*, 1798–1850 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1980), pp. 16–17.
3. C. H. Philips, *East India Company, 1784–1833* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1941), pp. 142, 216; Yapp, *Strategies of British India,* p. 4.
4. John Malcolm, *The History of Persia, from the Earliest Period to the Present Time* (London: Murray, 1815), p. 4.
5. Jane Rendall, "Scottish Orientalism from Robertson to Mill," *The Historical Journal* 25 (1982): 43–69.
6. R. J. Mackintosh (ed.), *Memoirs of the Life of Sir James Mackintosh, Vol. I* (London: Edward Moxon, 1836), p. 444.
7. Sir James Mackintosh, "A Discourse at the Opening of the Literary Society of Bombay, by Sir James Mackintosh, President of the Society, Read at Parel, 26 November 1804," *Transactions of the Literary Society of Bombay, I* (London, 1819), p. xvi.
8. Ibid., p. xxv.
9. Ibid.
10. Martha McLaren, *British India and British Scotland, 1780–1830. Career Building, Empire Building, and a Scottish School of Thought on Indian Governance* (Akron, OH: University of Akron Press, 2001), pp. 120, 126.
11. John Malcolm, "Speech Requesting that Sir James Mackintosh be Made to Sit for a Bust," *Transactions of the Literary Society of Bombay, Vol. 1* (London, 1819), p. 346.

12. Istvan Hont, *Jealousy of Trade: International Competition and the Nation-State in Historical Perspective* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2005), p. 264.
13. This phrase was first coined by the late Scottish Enlightenment political economist Dulgald Stewart. See D. Stewart "Life of Adam Smith," in A. Smith, *Works of Adam Smith Volume Five* (London: Strahan & Preston, 1811), p. 450.
14. Ibid., p. 389.
15. Peter J. Marshall and Glyndwr Williams, *The Great Map of Mankind: Perceptions of New Worlds in the Age of Enlightenment* (London, Dent, 1982), p. 275.
16. McLaren, *British India and British Scotland,* pp. 7–10, 123–34.
17. Yapp, *Strategies of British India,* pp. 9–10.
18. Malcolm, "A Sketch of the Sikhs, a Curious Nation Who Inhabit the Provinces of the Penjab," *Asiatick Researches,* XI (Calcutta, 1810).
19. W. Foster, *East India House: Its History and Associations* (London, 1924), p. 87.
20. V. G. Kiernan, *Lords of Human Kind: European Attitudes towards the Outside World in the Imperial Age* (London: Weidenfield & Nicholson, 1969), p. 33.
21. Malcolm's study of the Marathas can also be interpreted in this way. See chapter 4.
22. Sir George Barlow to Lord Castlereagh, March 15, 1806, IOR, H/506, pp. 27–28.
23. Sir George Barlow to Lord Minto, March 15, 1806, IOR, H/506, p. 7.
24. V. G. Kiernan, *Metcalfe's Mission to Lahore 1808–1809* (Lahore: University of Punjab, 1971) p. 6; Iris Butler, *The Eldest Brother: The Marquess Wellesley, The Duke of Wellington's Eldest Brother* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1973), p. 334.
25. J. W. Kaye, *The Life and Correspondence of Henry St George Tucker, late Accountant General of Bengal and Chairman of the East India Company* (London: Smith, Elder, 1854), p. 180.
26. Malcolm formally protested and asked to be relieved of his diplomatic duties. Kaye, *The Life and Correspondence of Major-General Sir John Malcolm, G. C. B., Late Envoy to Persia, and Governor of Bombay: Late Envoy to Persia, and Governor of Bombay ; from Unpublished Letters and Journals, I* (London: Smith, Elder, 1856). pp. 343, 357.
27. For instance, Malcolm mentions a copy of the Adi Grant'h belonging to the Bengal-based orientalist, H. T. Colebrooke. Malcolm, *Sketch of the Sikhs,* p. 2.
28. See, for example, Anon., *The Origin of the Pindarries* (London, 1818), a pro-Wellesley pamphlet that used a study of the Pindaris and the Marathas to justify an end to the policy of noninterference.
29. Malcolm, *Sketch of the Sikhs,* p. 5.
30. Ibid.
31. Ibid.
32. Gianeshwar Khurana, *British Historiography on the Sikh Power in the Punjab* (London: Mansell, 1985), p. 24.

33. Malcolm, *Sketch of the Sikhs,* p. 8.
34. Kaye, *Malcolm,* I, p. 20.
35. Malcolm, *Sketch of the Sikhs,* p. 168.
36. Ibid., p. 7.
37. Ibid., p. 5.
38. Ibid., p. 23.
39. Ibid., p. 24.
40. Ibid., p. 25.
41. Ibid., p. 147.
42. Ibid., p. 149.
43. Ibid., p. 42.
44. Ibid., p. 45.
45. Ibid., p.69.
46. Ibid.
47. Ibid., p. 79.
48. Ibid., p. 81.
49. Ibid., p. 84.
50. Ibid., p. 147.
51. Ibid., p. 69.
52. Ibid., p. 129.
53. Ibid., p. 90
54. Khurana, *British Historiography on the Sikh Power in the Punjab*, p. 29.
55. Malcolm, *Sketch of the Sikhs,* p. 106.
56. T. E. Colebrooke, *Life of the Honourable Mountstuart Elphinstone,* Vol. I (London: John Muuray, 1884), p. 320.
57. Edward Ingram, *In Defence of British India: Great Britain and the Middle East, 1775–1842* (London: Cass, 1984), pp. 78, 119. In contrast, Yapp, *Strategies of British India,* p. 26, argues that the idea of a Persian alliance was Malcolm's not Wellesley's. The lack of archival evidence about Wellesley's broader long-term political aims in India means that there will always be some disagreement about the extent of his ambition and his dissimulation.
58. Yapp, *Strategies of British India,* p. 28.
59. Philips, *East India Company,* p. 176.
60. Ingram, *In Defence of British India,* p. 180.
61. Yapp, *Strategies of British India,* p. 71.
62. Malcolm, "The Rise of Baba Khan," 1799, BL Ad MS 13,402.
63. Ibid., pp. 17–19.
64. John Malcolm, *The History of Persia, From the Earliest Period to the Present Time, I* (London: John Murray, 1815) p. i.
65. Ibid., I, p. ii.
66. Ibid.
67. Tilar J. Mazzeo (ed.), *Travels, Explorations and Empires: Writings from the Era of Imperial Expansion 1770–1835, Vol. 4: The Middle East* (London: Pickering and Chatto, 2003), p. xvi.
68. Malcolm, *History of Persia,* I, p. iv.
69. Ibid.
70. Ibid., p. iii.

71. Ibid., p. 107.
72. Malcolm, *History of Persia* , II, pp. 275–76.
73. Ibid.
74. M. E. Yapp, "Two Historians of Persia," in B. Lewis and P. M. Holt (ed.), *Historians of the Middle East* (London: Oxford University Press, 1962), p. 346.
75. Mackintosh, quoted in McLaren, *British India and British Scotland,* p. 147.
76. Malcolm, *History of Persia,* II, p. 62.
77. Ibid., p. 238.
78. Ibid., I, p. 55.
79. Ibid., p. 333.
80. John Chardin, *A Journey to Persia: Jean Chardin's Portrait of a Seventeenth-century Empire,* R. W. Ferrier (ed.) (London: I. B. Tauris, 1996), p. 73; Jean Baptiste Tavernier, *Account of the Commodities, Manufactures, and Produce of the Several Countries of the Indies* (London: Harris, 1744).
81. For a detailed analysis of Anquetil-Dupperon's contribution to eighteenth-century discussions of oriental despotism, see F. Whelan, "Oriental Despotism from Montesquieu to Anquetil-Dupperon," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 22 (2001): 619–47.
82. However, when discussing Chardin's account of the tyranny and cruelty of the Persian monarchs, he notes that "the philosophers of his country have grounded many just, and some erroneous opinions" on his work, Malcolm, *History of Persia,* II p. 478.
83. Ibid., p.322.
84. Colebrooke, *Mountstuart Elphinstone,* I, p. 322.
85. Malcolm, *History of Persia*, II, p. 544.
86. Malcolm, *History of Persia,* II, p. 264.
87. Rodney Pasley, *Send Malcolm! The Life of Major-General Sir John Malcolm, 1769–1833* (London: BASCA, 1982), p. 103.
88. Unlike the subsequent generation, Malcolm, Munro, and many others saw and appreciated the function of this kind of courtly conspicuous consumption in Asian societies; even if they wished to discourage it. Susan Bayly, *Saints, Goddesses and Kings: Muslims and Christians in South Indian Society 1700–1900* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989) pp. 107, 111–14.
89. Malcolm, *History of Persia,* II, p. 455.
90. Ibid., p. 470.
91. These references to Montesquieu's vision of Persia are taken from F. Whelan, "Oriental Despotism: Anquetil-Dupperon's Response to Montesquieu," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 22 (2001): 640.
92. Malcolm, *History of Persia,* II, p. 628.
93. Ibid.
94. Ibid., p. 106.
95. Ibid., p. 474.
96. Ibid., p. 480.
97. Ibid.
98. Ibid., p. 265.
99. Majeed, *Ungoverned Imaginings,* pp. 162–65.
100. Malcolm, *History of Persia,* II, p. 543.

101. Ibid.
102. Ibid., p. 109.
103. Ibid.
104. Ibid., p. 356.
105. Ibid.
106. Ibid., p. 360.
107. Ibid., II, p. 372.
108. Ibid., II, p. 378.
109. Sir Walter Scott, *Anne of Gierstein* (Edinburgh, 1827); for Moore, see Majeed, *Ungoverned Imaginings,* p. 97.
110. Sylvestre De Sacy to John Malcolm, IOR H/736, p. 334.
111. James Watt, "Scott, the Scottish Enlightenment, and Romantic Orientalism," in Leith Davis, Ian Duncan, and Janet Sorenson (ed.), *Scotland and the Borders of Romanticism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), connects interest in India with the expansion of British India in this period.
112. Ingram, *In Defence of British India,* pp. 2–3.
113. R. Drayton, *Nature's Government: Science, the British Empire and the 'Improvement' of the World* (New York and London: Yale University Press, 2000), p. 84.
114. E. Said, *Orientalism, Rev. Ed.* (London: Penguin, 1995), pp. 79–92, 122–97.
115. Cited in H. V. Bowen, *Business of Empire: The East India Company and Imperial Britain, 1756–1833* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), p. 167.
116. R. Irwin, *Dangerous Knowledge: Orientalism and its Discontents* (Woodstock, NY: Overlook Press, 2006), p. 118.
117. William Foster, "James Bruce: historiographer of the East India Company" *Scottish Historical Review* (1913): 336.
118. Many of the thematic and biographical collections of manuscripts in the India Office Records, including the "Papers of Sir John Malcolm," were compiled in the mid-nineteenth century by dedicated archivist-historians of the Company such as J. W. Kaye; Martin Moir, *A General Guide to the India Office Records* (London: British Library, 1988), pp. 106, 149.
119. Bernard S. Cohn, *Colonialism and its Forms of Knowledge*: *The British in India* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1996), p. 109; Nicholas B. Dirks, *Castes of Mind: Colonialism and the Making of Modern India* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1996), pp. 63, 83, 167.
120. B. Stein, *Sir Thomas Munro: The Origins of the Colonial State and his Vision of Empire* (New Delhi, 1989), p. 150.
121. M. Dodson, *Orientalism, Empire and National Culture* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), pp. 4–5.
122. Malcolm, "The Rise of Baba Khan, 1 August 1799," BL Add. 13,706.
123. Michael Fisher, *Indirect Rule: Residents and the Residency System, 1764–1857* (Delhi and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), p. 92.
124. John Malcolm to Mark Wilkes, December 31, 1803, BL IOR H/736, p. 113.
125. See, for example, Malcolm's correspondence to Erskine when the latter was secretary of the Bombay Literary Society, NLS Adv. Ms. 36.1.7. F

126. Ibid.
127. Mountstuart Elphinstone to William Erskine, January 28, 1816,NLS Ad. Ms 28.5.16.
128. Richard King, *Orientalism and Religion: Postcolonial Theory, Indian and the 'Mystic East'* (London: Routledge, 1999), p. 55.
129. Malcolm, *History of Persia,* II, p. 182.
130. McLaren, *British India and British Scotland,* p. 66.

4 Sir John Malcolm's *Memoir of Central India:* The Historic Case for Indirect Rule

1. For the idea of "paramountcy" in India see the governor general's own account; Francis Rawdon, *Summary of the Administration of the Indian Government by the Marquess of Hastings during the Period that he Filled the Office of Governor General* (London: India House, 1824), p. 100.
2. Michael Fisher (ed.), *The Politics of the British Annexation of India, 1757–1857* (Delhi and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993) p. xvi. Fisher's figure of 33 percent reconciles the conflicting estimates that appear in nineteenth-century sources. All of Malcolm's contemporary sources put the figure at between 30 and 35 percent.
3. BL, IOR, H/521, "Review of the Activities of the Secret and Political Department, 1825," f. 600.
4. "Examination of Lieutenant Colonel John Malcolm on Monday, 5th April 1813," taken from Interesting Extracts from the Minutes of Evidence Taken Before the Committee of the Whole House to Whom It Was Referred to Consider of the Affairs of the East India Company (London: T. Davison, 1814), pp. 22–23.
5. Sir John Malcolm quoted in J. W. Kaye, *The Life and Correspondence of Major-General Sir John Malcolm, G. C. B., Late Envoy to Persia, and Governor of Bombay: Late Envoy to Persia, and Governor of Bombay ; from Unpublished Letters and Journals, II* (London: Smith, Elder, 1856), p. 308.
6. Ibid., p. 324.
7. Ibid.
8. For this assumption see, for example, the Introduction to Stewart Gordon, *The Marathas, 1600–1818* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993). This misinterpretation stems from the fact most of the modern Western historians of the Marathas are keen to show the limitations of the older nineteenth-century historiographer. Orientalist study of the Marathas itself is a neglected topic although both Stewart and Wink have made insightful observations about this in their works.
9. C. A. Bayly's pathbreaking analysis of the economy and society in this period, *Townsmen, Ruler and Bazaars: North India in the Age of British Expansion, 1770–1870* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), p. 47, even uses the *Memoir's* statistical information on Malwa as a proxy for northern India. Barbara Ramusack's recent volume on the princely states for the *New*

Cambridge History of India describes the *Memoir of Central India* as a "foundational source" for the study of the Maratha states of Malwa; Ramusack, *The New Cambridge History of India; III.6: The Indian Princes and their States* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), p. 36.

10. For a representative sample of these documents, see IOR/H 89, "Papers Relating to the Pindarri Campaign."
11. C. H. Philips, *The East India Company, 1784–1833* (Manchester, Manchester University Press, 1941), p. 190.
12. Malcolm, *The Memoir of Central India Including Malwa and Adjoining Provinces, with the History and Copious Illustrations of the Past and Present Condition of that Country, I* (London: Kingsbury, Parbury & Allen, 1823), p. 4.
13. Amar Farooqui, "Narcotrafficking, Princley India and the Raj: The Subjugation of the Sindia State, c. 1843–44," p. 50; B. K. Sinha, *The Pindaris: 1798–1818* (Calcutta: Bookland, 1971), p. 181; U. N. Charkavorty, *Anlgo-Maratha Relations and Malcolm, 1798–1830* (Calcutta: Calcutta University Press, 1976), p. 152.
14. Kaye, *Malcolm,* II, p. 309.
15. Philips, *East India Company,* p. 218.
16. Kaye, *Malcolm,* II, p. 329.
17. Malcolm, *A Memoir of Central India, Including Malwa and Adjoining Provinces. With the History and Copious Illustrations of the Past and Present Condition of that Country, Vol. II* (London: Kingsbury, Parbury and Allen, 1824), p. 300.
18. This view of the *Memoir* was expressed in Malcolm, *Political History of India*, II, p. 139.
19. Susan Bayly, *Caste, Society and Politics in India from the Eighteenth Century to the Modern Age,* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), p. 109.
20. N. B. Dirks, *Castes of Mind* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2001), pp. 97, 105, 122.
21. C. W. Malet, "Itineraries of Journeys from Surat to Cawnpore, 12 March–28 July, 1785, and from Bombay to Poona, Including a Journey to the Mahratta Army When Besieging Buddammee, 12 February–6 June, 1786," BL Add MS 29,216.
22. John Malcolm, "Remarks on the 'Observations' on Mahratta Affairs, 20 Oct. 1804," BL Add MS 13,592, p. 125.
23. D. A. Kolff, "The End of an *Ancien Regime:* Colonial War in India, 1798–1818,"in H. L. Wesseling and J. A. de Moor (eds.), *Imperialism and War: Essays on Colonial Wars in Asia and Africa* (Leiden: University of Leiden, 1989), p. 30.
24. These writers seem to have made no use of earlier accounts. Beyond, the odd reference in travel works by other European authors, no sizeable book on the Maratha appears before 1800. V. G. Dighe, "Modern Historical Writings in Marathi," in C. H. Philips (ed.), *Historians of India, Pakistan and Ceylon* (London: Oxford University Press, 1960), p. 473.
25. Anon., *The Origins of the Pindarries, Written by an Officer of the East India Company Army* (London: John Murray, 1818), p. 18.

26. Capitalization in original. T. De Broughton, *Letters from a Mahratta Camp* (London: John Murray, 1812).
27. Dighe, "Modern Historical Writings in Marathi," p. 475.
28. W. H. Tone, *A Letter to an Officer on the Madras Establishment Being an Attempt to Illustrate Some Peculiar Institutions of the Maratta People.* (Bombay, 1799), p. 47.
29. Macleod to W. Erskine, January 1818, NLS Adv Ms 36.1.75; *Revenue and Judicial Practises in the Territories of the East India Company*, II (Calcutta, 1826). Recent historians are at a loss to understand their difficulties with the Peshwa's archives; see André Wink, *Land and Sovereignty: Agrarian Society and Politics under the Eighteenth-Century Maratha Swarajya* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), p. 387.
30. James Grant Duff, *History of the Mahrattas* (London: Longman, Rees, Orme, Brown & Green, 1826), p. xiv.
31. Ibid.
32. J. Tod, *Annals and Antiquities of Rajast'han* (London, 1829), p. xxvii.
33. G. R. Gleig, *The Life of Major-General Sir T. Munro, Bart. and K.C.B. Late Governor of Madras with Extracts from His Correspondence and Private Paper*s, Vol. II (London: Richard Bentley, 1830), p. 84.
34. Letter quoted in Kaye, *Malcolm,* II, p. 329.
35. Ibid.
36. Quotes will mainly be taken from *Memoir of Central India.* The texts of all quotations included have been compared with the *Report* for differences.
37. This had been published as a pamphlet in 1821 and also appeared in the index of the second edition of the *Political History of India*, 2 vols. (London, 1826).
38. Malcolm, *Report,* p. iv.
39. Malcolm, *Memoir,* I, p. 2
40. Ibid., I, p. 26.
41. Ibid., p. 20.
42. Ibid., p. 29.
43. Ibid., p. 33.
44. Martha McLaren suggests that Malcolm's interpretation of Aurangzeb's motives might be an example of his reliance on Indian opinion. This may be true. However, it was by no means an unusual view in European writing; see for instance E. Scott-Waring, *A History of the Marhattas, to Which is Prefaced a Historical Sketch of the Decan* (London: John Richardson, 1810), p. 102.
45. Malcolm, *Memoir,* I, p. 36.
46. Ibid., p. 33.
47. Ibid., p. 38.
48. Ibid.
49. John Malcolm, "Life of Robert Clive" lithograph of manuscript, BL, IOR, Mss Eur D564, p. 66.
50. Richard Jenkins, *Report on the Territories of the Rajah of Nagpore* (Calcutta, 1827), p. 142.
51. Malcolm, *Memoir,* I, p. 44.
52. Ibid.

53. The question of caste propriety in Maratha history is immensely complicated, but Malcolm does not look further into the question of Brahmin involvement. He does not, for instance, question Shivaji's claims to Ksatriya (rather than Sudra) caste status; see James Laine, *Shivaji: Hindu King in Islamic India* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2003).
54. This is true of British and Marathi sources.
55. Bayly, *Caste, Society and Politics in India*, p. 89.
56. Malcolm, *Memoir,* I, p. 53.
57. On the importance of oral sources for Malcolm see Lynn Zastoupil, *John Stuart Mill and India* (Palo Alto, CA: Stanford University Press, 1994), p. 231.
58. Kaye, *Malcolm,* II, p. 309.
59. Ibid., p. 49.
60. Malcolm, *Memoir,* p. 50.
61. Ibid., p. 46.
62. Ibid.
63. Ibid., p. 47.
64. Dighe, "Modern Historical Writings in Marathi."
65. Malcolm, *Memoir,* I, p. 47.
66. Ibid.
67. Ibid.
68. For this interpretation see Scott-Waring, *A History of the Mahrattas,* p. 176.
69. Malcolm, *Malwa,* I, p. 47.
70. Ibid.
71. Ibid., p. 48.
72. Ibid., p. 49.
73. Ibid.
74. Ibid.
75. Ibid.
76. Burton Stein, Sir Thomas Munro: The Origins of the Colonial State and his Vision of Empire (New Delhi, 1989), p. 234; André Wink, *Land and Sovereignty in India: Agrarian Society and Politics under the Eighteenth-Century Maratha Swarajya* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), p. 379.
77. Ibid., pp. 324–26.
78. Ibid., p. 340.
79. Ibid., p. 349.
80. Scott-Waring, *A History of the Mahrattas*. This interpretation of the eighteenth century dominated until the mid-twentieth century. It is worth remembering that works like Malcolm's *Memoir of Central India,* show that not all British administrators dismissed the eighteenth-century Mughal successor states as unstable and transitory.
81. Zastoupil, *John Stuart Mill and India*, pp. 140–41.
82. For instance, Malcolm notes that, "according to a fable which belongs to the youth of almost all Hindus that have attained eminence," as a boy Mulhar Row Holkar had been sheltered from the sun by the hood of a cobra; *Memoir,* I, p. 144.

83. Kaye, *Malcolm,* II, pp. 334–5.
84. Zastoupil, *John Stuart Mill and India*, p. 139.
85. Edward Said, *Orientalism* (London: Penguin, 1995), pp. 7, 100, 117.
86. My thinking on the role of native experts in shaping colonial knowledge has been greatly shaped by discussion of Bengal in Michael Dodson, *Orientalism, Empire and National Culture* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007).
87. The ways in which this reading of Romanticism challenges the Saidian idea of the inevitable falsity and superficiality of efforts to understand "the other" are demonstrated in Majeed's chapter on Robert Southey in Javed Majeed, *Ungoverned Imaginings: James Mill's The History of British India and Orientalism* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992), pp. 58–64.
88. Malcolm, *Memoir,* I, p. 123.
89. Ibid., p. 125.
90. Ibid.
91. Ibid.
92. Ibid., p. 125.
93. Henry St. George Tucker, *Memorials of Indian Government* (London, 1855), described her as "the heroine of Sir John Malcolm's tale," p. 240.
94. Zastoupil, *John Stuart Mill and India,* p. 143.
95. Contrast Malcolm's description of Zalim Singh as an intelligent and wily prince who was able to fend off his external enemies and his opponents within the court with Tod's account of Zalim Singh as an avaricious opportunist or the "Machiavelli of Rajast'han"; Tod, *Annals and Antiquitues of Rajast'han, or the Central and Western Rajpoot States of India*, Vol. II (London: Smith, Elder, 1829–1832), p. 585.
96. Malcolm, *Memoir,* I, p. 257.
97. Ibid., p. 283.
98. John Malcolm, "Abstract of a Letter from Sir John Malcolm to the Marquis of Hastings dated 1st July 1817" in BL, IOR, H/521, p. 310.
99. Malcolm, *Memoir,* I, p. 284.
100. Ibid., p. 283.
101. Ibid.
102. Malcolm had studied this problem from the start. See his 1805 "Memorandum on Irregular Horse," in BL, IOR, H/506.
103. Malcolm, *Malwa,* I, p. 283.
104. Ibid.
105. See BL, IOR, H/520, H/521, H/506a. In particular, Malcolm's report to Hastings of 1817 and the famous "Memorandum on the Pindarries" by Richard Jenkins; M. P. Roy, *The Origin, Growth and Suppression of the Pindaris* (New Delhi: Sterling Publishers, 1973).
106. See for instance, Anon., *Origins of the Pindarries*, written by an East India Company army officer.
107. Malcolm, *Memoir*, I, p. 226.
108. Ibid., II, p. 246.
109. Ainslie Embree, *Charles Grant and British Rule in India* (London: George, Allen and Unwin, 1962) p. 150; see next chapter.

110. Malcolm, *Memoir,* II, p. 2.
111. Ibid., p. 3.
112. Ibid.
113. It is frequently mentioned that Mill rejected the idea of an oriental despotism where the ruler owned all the land. In fact, this view had already been challenged a generation earlier. Both Edmund Burke and Warren Hastings denied its applicability to India. As Akhileshwar Pathak has argued convincingly, the European debate about the sovereign's ownership of the land was often shaped more by expediency than by reference to a clear and consistent set of texts; *Law, Strategies and Ideologies: Legislating Forests in Colonial India* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2002), p. 156.
114. Malcolm, *Memoir,* II, p. 4.
115. Clive Dewey, "Images of the Village Community: A Study in Anglo-Indian Ideology," *Modern Asian Studies* 6 (1972): 291–328.
116. Malcolm, *Memoir,* II, p. 21.
117. Ibid.
118. Ibid., p. 52.
119. Ibid., p. 59.
120. Ibid., p. 139.
121. Mountstuart Elphinstone, Report on the Territories Conquered from the Peshwa, Submitted to the Supreme Government of British India (Calcutta: Gazette Press, 1821), p. 74; Kenneth Ballhatchet, *Social Policy and Social Change in Western India, 1817–1830* (London: Oxford University Press, 1959), p. 64.
122. For a detailed explanation of this vocabulary for smaller Indian political units, see N. B. Dirks, *Hollow Crown*: *Ethnohistory of an Indian Kingdom* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1993).
123. Malcolm, *Memoir,* I, p. 553.
124. Ibid., I, p. 554.
125. B. B. Misra, *The Central Administration of the East India Company, 1773–1834* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1959), p. 206.
126. This is only implicit in the *Memoir.* Malcolm is explicit about the dangers of introducing the Bengal judicial system into Malwa and "Rajputana" in the *Political History of India*, II, p. 77, written three years later.
127. Rodney Pasley, Send Malcolm! The Life of Major-General Sir John Malcolm, 1769–1833 (London: BASCA, 1982), p. 110.
128. For the history of these discussions see Stein, *Sir Thomas Munro*, pp. 99–117; Misra, *The Central Administration of the East India Company*, pp. 133–41.
129. C. E. Luard, "Malcolm's work in Central India," in H. H. Dodwell (ed.), *The Cambridge History of India, Vol. V* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), p. 573.
130. Bayly, *Indian Society,* p. 112.
131. C. Bates, "The Development of Panchayati Raj in India," in Bates and Basu (eds.), *Rethinking Indian Political Institutions* (London: Anthem Press, 2005), p. 169.
132. BL, APAS, H/506a Malcolm's "Memorandum on Irregular cavalry"; Ballhatchet, *Social Policy in Western India,* ch. 3.

5 Sir John Malcolm and the Government of India after 1818

1. Barbara N. Ramusack, *The New Cambridge History of India; III.6: The Indian Princes and Their States* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), p. 6.
2. J. W. Kaye, *The Life and Correspondence of Major-General Sir John Malcolm, G. C. B., Late Envoy to Persia, and Governor of Bombay: Late Envoy to Persia, and Governor of Bombay ; from Unpublished Letters and Journals, II* (London: Smith, Elder & Co,1856), p. 372.
3. Malcolm, *Government of India* (London: John Murray, 1833), p. 36.
4. Malcolm, *A Memoir of Central India, Including Malwa and Adjoining Provinces. With the History and Copious Illustrations of the Past and Present Condition of that Country,* II (London: Kingsbury, Parbury and Allen, 1824), p. 433.
5. Ibid., p. 436.
6. Malcolm, *Government of India,* p. 81.
7. Malcolm, *The Political History of India, II* (London: John Murray, 1826), p. 65.
8. Ibid., p. ccxc.
9. Zastoupil, *John Stuart Mill and India* (Palo Alto, CA: Stanford University Press, 1994, p. 67; Michael Dodson, *Orientalism, Empire and National Culture* (Basingstoke,: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), p. 81.
10. Letter quoted in Kaye, *Malcolm,* II, p. 329.
11. Douglas M. Peers, *Between Mars and Mammon: Colonial Armies and the Garrison State in Early Nineteenth Century India* (London: Taurus Press,1995), p. 211; W. Thomas, *The Quarrel Between Macaulay and Croker: Politics and History in the Age of Reform* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), pp. 70, 149; Lynn Zastoupil and Martin Moir (eds.), *The Great Indian Education Debate* (Basingstoke: Routledge, 1999), pp. 9–11.
12. F. Jeffrey, "A Memoir of Central India, Including Malwa and Adjoining Provinces, with the History and Copious Illustrations of the Past and Present Condition of that Country. By Major-General Sir John Malcolm, G.C.B, K.L.S., 2 vols. 8vo. Kingsbury, Parbury & Allen. London 1823," *The Edinburgh Review* No. XL (March 1824): 280.
13. Ibid., p.281.
14. Ibid.
15. Ibid.
16. Ibid., p. 285.
17. Ibid., p. 281.
18. John W. Burrow, Stephen, Collini, and Donald Winch, *That Noble Science of Politics: A Study in Nineteenth Century Intellectual History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), p. 21.
19. Francis Jeffrey, "A Memoir of Central India, Including Malwa and Adjoining Provinces, with the History and Copious Illustrations of the Past and Present Condition of that Country. By Major-General Sir John Malcolm,

G.C.B, K.L.S., 2 vols. 8vo. Kingsbury, Parbury & Allen. London 1823," *The Edinburgh Review* XL (March 1824), p. 284.
20. Ibid., p. 291.
21. Ibid., p. 296.
22. Ibid., p. 292.
23. Ibid., p. 296.
24. J. Barrow, "Malcolm, A Memoir of Central India, Including Malwa and Adjoining Provinces; with the History, and Copious Illustrations, of the Past and Present Condition of that Country," *Quarterly Review* 29; 58 (July 1823): 382–414.
25. Martha McLaren, *British India and British Scotland, 1780–1830. Career Building, Empire Building, and a Scottish School of Thought on Indian Governance* (Akron, OH: University of Akron Press, 2001), pp. 138, 161.
26. Burrow, Collini, and Winch, *That Noble Science,* pp. 35–7.
27. Ibid.
28. Kaye, *Malcolm,* II, p. 563.
29. Malcolm, "An Historical Account of the Rise and Progress of the Bengal Native Infantry," p. 386.
30. Edmund Burke, *Reflections on the Revolution in France*, Conor Cruise O' Brien (ed.) (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1983) p. 175.
31. Ibid., p. 176.
32. Ibid.
33. Jeffrey, "Central India."
34. Martha McLaren, "From Analysis to Prescription: Scottish Concepts of Asian Despotism in Early Nineteenth-Century British India," *International History Review* 15 (1993): 441–660; Douglas M. Peers, "Soldiers, Scholars, and the Scottish Enlightenment: Militarism in Early Nineteenth-Century India," *International History Review* 16; 3 (1994): 441–65.
35. Malcolm, *Political History,* II, p. 254.
36. Malcolm, *Sketch,* p. 454.
37. Ibid., p. 226.
38. Malcolm, *Sketch,* p. v.
39. Ibid.
40. Malcolm, *Memoir,* I, p. 335.
41. Malcolm, *Government,* p. 2.
42. Malcolm, *Memoir,* p. 264.
43. Ibid., p. 265.
44. Sir Cyril H. Philips, *The East India Company, 1784–1833* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1941), p. 199.
45. Ibid.
46. Zastoupil, *John Stuart Mill and India.*
47. The shift toward government through boards of administrators in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries coincided with the expansion of empire at this time and had a profound impact on how imperial government was formed and maintained. Christopher Bayly, *Imperial Meridian: Britain and the World, 1780–1830* (London, 1989), pp. 116–18.

48. Jennifer Pitts, *A Turn to Empire: The Rise of Imperial Liberalism in Britain and France* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2006), p. 103. Lynn Zastoupil and Martin Moir (eds.), *The Great Indian Education Debate: Documents Relating to the Orientalist-Anglicist Controversy, 1781–1843* (Richmond: Curzon, 1999), p. 20.
49. John Clive, *Thomas Babington Macaulay: The Shaping of the Historian* (New York: Knopf, 1973), pp. 375, 441.
50. Zastoupil and Moir (eds.), *The Great Indian Education Debate,* p. 20; Eric Stokes, *The English Utilitarians and India* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1952); *The English Utilitarians,* p. 324.
51. Philips, *East India Company,* pp. 222, 251.
52. Malcolm to Lord Amherst, 25 April 1827, Eur F140/ 78 (b), f. 10.
53. "Malcolm to Lord William Cavendish Bentinck," *The Correspondence of Lord William Cavendish Bentinck,* I, p. 56.
54. Philips, *East India Company,* p. 260.
55. Ravenshaw to Bentinck, *The Correspondence of Lord William Cavendish Bentinck, Governor General of India, 1828–1835, Vol. I* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1976), p. 156.
56. Malcolm, *Political History of India,* II, p. 281.
57. These aspects of Malcolm's policy recommendations and their impact are discussed in Ballhatchet, *Social Policy and Social Change in Western India, 1817–1830* (London: Oxford University Press, 1959).
58. Malcolm, *Government of India,* p. 80.
59. D. Eyles, "The Abolition of the East India Company's Monopoly, 1833," unpublished PhD dissertation, University of Edinburgh, 1955, p. 209.
60. Malcolm, *Government of India,* p. 269.
61. Ibid.
62. Malcolm, *Political History of India,* p. 69; for similar phrasing, see also ibid., p. 218.
63. Malcolm, *Political History of India,* p. 70.
64. Macaulay, "Speech on the Government of India, Delivered on 10 July, 1833," in Lord Macaulay, *The Works of Lord Macaulay, VIII* (London, 1897), p. 122; Philips, *East India Company,* p. 266.
65. Malcolm, *Political History of India,* II, p. cclxiv.
66. Malcolm, *Government of India,* p. 28.
67. Ibid., p. 29.
68. See the previous chapter for a more detailed analysis of Panchayats. It is noteworthy that when Malcolm discusses them again—in *The Political History of India* and the *Government of India*—he quotes from the *Memoir of Central India.* Clearly, he felt this was the authoritative statements on the subject.
69. Malcolm, *Political History of India,* II, p. 145.
70. Ibid.
71. Ibid., p. 147.
72. Ibid., p. 151.
73. Ibid., p. 82.
74. Ibid., p. 138.

75. Ibid., p. 137.
76. Ibid., p. 154.
77. Burton Stein, *Sir Thomas Munro: The Origins of the Colonial State and his Vision of Empire* (New Delhi, 1989), p. 198.
78. Malcolm, *Political History of India,* II, p. 166.
79. Ibid., p. 165.
80. Ibid., p. 182.
81. Ibid., p. 169.
82. Ibid., p. 73.
83. Ibid., p. 172.
84. Ibid., p. 173.
85. Mill felt that the assessment was too high for an impoverished economy like Bengal's. James Mill, *History of British India, 4th ed.* III, (London: Peer, Stephenson and Spence, 1844), p. 256. For a thorough analysis of this aspect of the permanent settlement, see Peter J. Marshall, *Bengal: The British Bridgehead: Eastern India 1740–1828* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), pp. 141–9, which concludes that the fixed rate was too high to be sustainable let alone to encourage agriculture.
86. Malcolm, *Government of India,* p. 162; see also Malcolm, *Political History of India,* II, p. 12.
87. Malcolm, *Political History of India,* II, p. 137.
88. Ibid., p. 167.
89. Ibid., p. 134.
90. Ibid., p. 250.
91. Ibid., p. 151.
92. Ibid., p. 138.
93. Malcolm, "Notes on Instructions to Officers," in *Political History of India,* II, p. cclxv.
94. In his private correspondence he remarked, "I think the introduction throughout our Dominions of a lower Class of Europeans more hazardous than you seem to do—I do not doubt that it would lend to improvement but I think it might prove a most difficult society to manage. I cannot stand Mill's plan of Indigo Merchants being magistrates. They have too many interests and connections," Malcolm to Erskine, 31.12.1826, NLS Adv. Ms. 36.1.7.
95. Malcolm, *Political History of India,* II, p. 254.
96. Ibid., p. 252. In the long term, the British policy and legislation (most notably the Forest Act of 1878), went against Malcolm, making it easier to alienate wasteland and ultimately vesting ownership of abandoned land with the state; R. Guha and M. Gadgil, *The Fissured Land: An Ecological History of India* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), pp. 113, 126.
97. Ibid., p. 176.
98. Ibid.
99. Malcolm, *Political History of India,* II, p. 153.
100. Ibid., p. 176.
101. Ibid., p. 142.
102. Philips (ed.), *The Correspondence of Lord William Bentinck,* p. xxix.

103. H. V. Bowen, *Business of Empire: The East India Company and Imperial Britain, 1756–1833* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), p. 146.
104. Anon., "Memoir of the Later Major-General Sir John Malcolm, KCB and KLS," *United Service Journal* IX (1832): 376.
105. Malcolm, *Political History of India,* II, p. 245.
106. Malcolm, "An Historical Account of the Rise and Progress of the Bengal Native Infantry," p. 420.
107. Peers invites this interpretation by describing Malcolm as a proponent of a militarism designed to draw resources toward the defense of British India; Peers, *Mars and Mammon,* p. 24.
108. Kolff, "The End of an *Ancien Regime* in India." This is not an explicit theme of Malcolm's major works. See Malcolm, "An Historical Account of the Rise and Progress of the Bengal Native Infantry, from its First Formation in 1757 to 1796, When the Present Regulations Took Place: Together with a Detail of the Services on which the Several Battalion Have Been Employed during the Period. By the Late Captain Williams of the Invalid Establishment of the Bengal Army. 8vo. London, 1817," *Quarterly Review* (1818): 385–423, and Malcolm's unpublished 1805 "Memorandum on Irregular Cavalry," IOR, H/506, pp. 114–217.
109. Malcolm, *Political History of India,* II, p. 225.
110. Ibid., p. 207.
111. Ibid., p. 208.
112. Malcolm, *Government of India,* p. 62.
113. Malcolm, *Observations on the Late Disturbances,* p. 102.
114. Malcolm, "An Historical Account of the Rise and Progress of the Bengal Native Infantry," p. 415.
115. Ibid., p. 400.
116. Ibid.
117. Ibid., p. 400.F
118. Ibid., p. 415.
119. Malcolm, *Political History of India,* II, p. 244.
120. Seema Alavi, "The Company Army and Rural Society: The Invalid Thana, 1770 to 1830," *Modern Asian Studies* 27; 1 (1993): 147–78.
121. Ingram, "The East India Company's Army at the End of the Eighteen Century," p. 137.
122. Malcolm, *Political History of India,* II, p. 196.
123. Ingram, "The East India Company at the End of the Eighteenth Century," p. 130; Peers, *Mars and Mammon,* pp. 64–5.
124. While he was Commissioner for Malwa, Malcolm used the term "Master Evil" in a letter to the governor general, Malcolm to Hastings, no date, quoted in Kaye, Malcolm, II, p. 158.
125. Ramusack, *The Indian Princes and Their States,* p. 88; for a good selection of these works, see M. Fisher, *The Politics of British Annexation of India, 1757–1857* (Delhi and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993).
126. B. S. Jones, *Papers Rrelating to the Rise of British Power* (London, 1832), p. 2.
127. Malcolm, "An Historical Account of the Rise and Progress of the Bengal Native Infantry," p. 386.F

128. Malcolm, *Political History of India,* p. 76.
129. Malcolm, *Government of India,* p. 157.
130. Malcolm, *Memoir,* II, p. 443.
131. Ibid., p. 329.
132. Ibid., p. 261.
133. Malcolm, *Political History of India,* II, p. cclxvii.
134. Malcolm "An Historical Account of the Rise and Progress of the Bengal Native Infantry," p. 415.F
135. "Notes to Officers," quoted in R. Pasley, "*Send Malcolm!,*" p. 119.
136. Malcolm, *Government of India,* p. 157.
137. Ibid., p. 159.
138. Ibid., p. 161.
139. Malcolm, *Memoir,* II, p. 266.
140. Ibid., I, p. 125.
141. Ibid., II, p. 450.
142. Malcolm, *Government of India,* p. 103.
143. Ibid., p. 32.
144. For the most recent thinking on sati in particular, see Andrea Major, *Pious Flames: European encounters with sati, 1500–1830* (Oxford: Oxford Universtiy Press, 2006), p. 122, and her forthcoming monograph on sati and the princely states.
145. Ibid., p. 159.
146. Ibid.
147. Michael Fisher, *Indirect Rule: Residents and the Residency System, 1764–1857* (Delhi and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991) p. 76; M. E. Yapp, *Strategies of British India: Britain, Iran and Afghanistan*, 1798–1850 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1980), p. 49.
148. Bentinck, "Minute on Central India," in *The Correspondence of Lord William Bentinck,* I, p. 28.
149. See chapter 2's discussion of Malcolm's critique of the Company's directors; for a more detailed review of Smith on the company's government; Adam Smith, *Wealth of Nations: Books IV and V* , (ed) A. Skinner (London, 1999), p. 151.
150. Smith, *Wealth of Nations: Books IV and V,* pp. 145–6.
151. Ibid.
152. Ibid., p. 208.
153. For this view of the Mills as imperial administrators, see T. Metcalfe, *The New Cambridge History of Modern India Volume III.4: The Ideologies of the Raj* (Cambridge Cambridge University Press, 1995), p. 17.
154. Zastoupil, *John Stuart Mill and India*, p. 152.
155. Linda Colley, *Captives: Britain, Empire and the World, 1600–1850* (London: Jonathan Cape, 2002), p. 278.
156. D. M. Peers, "Conquest Narratives: Romanticism, Orientalism and Intertextuality in the Indian Writings of Sir Walter Scott and Robert Orme," in Michael J. Franklin (ed.), *Romantic Representations of British India* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), p. 247.
157. Colley, *Captives,* p. 280.

6 The History of the East India Company II: *The Life of Robert, Lord Clive*

1. T. G. Percival Spear, *The Nabobs. A Study of the Social Life of the English in Eighteenth Century India* (London: Oxford University Press, 1932), p. 12; P. J. Marshall, *East Indian Fortunes: The British in Bengal in the Eighteenth Century* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1976), p. 43.
2. Martha McLaren, *British India and British Scotland, 1780–1830. Career Building, Empire Building, and a Scottish School of Thought on Indian Governance* (Akron, OH: University of Akron Press, 2001)*;* Lynn Zastoupil, *John Stuart Mill and India* (Palo Alto, CA: Stanford University Press, 994).
3. P. Lawson and B. Lenman, "Robert Clive, the Black Jagir and English Politics," *Historical Journal*, XXVI (1983): 801.
4. T. B. Macaulay, "The Life of Robert Lord Clive; Collected from the Family Papers Communicated by the Earl of Powis. By Major-General Sir John Malcolm, K.C.B., 3 vols. 8vo. London: 1836," *Edinburgh Review* 70 (January 1840).
5. The letters to and from Malcolm and the Earl of Powis kept in the India Office Records and the manuscript collection of the British Library, show that they remained regular correspondents from their first meeting in 1801 onward.
6. J. W. Kaye, *The Life and Correspondence of Major-General Sir John Malcolm, G. C. B., Late Envoy to Persia, and Governor of Bombay: Late Envoy to Persia, and Governor of Bombay; from Unpublished Letters and Journals, vol. II* (London: Smith, Elder, 1856), p. 427.
7. Ibid., p. 502.
8. Sir John Malcolm to William Erskine, May 19, 1829, NLS Adv. Ms. 36.1.7, p. 202.
9. Malcolm's wife took a considerable interest in managing the completion and production of the book; nine letters from her to John Murray, the publisher, survive in the Murray archive. NLS, Murray Archive, Item No. Acc.126041763.
10. For example, Erskine wrote both reviews for the first and second volume of Tod's *Annals and Anitquities of Rajast'an* in 1829 and 1832.
11. Sir John Malcolm to William Erskine, May 19, 1829, NLS Adv. Ms. 36.1.7, p. 202.
12. Kaye, *Malcolm,* II, p. 502.
13. Douglas M. Peers, *Between Mars and Mammon: Colonial Armies and the Garrison State in Early Nineteenth Century India* (London: Taurus Press, 1995)*,* pp. 170–73.
14. John Malcolm to Gilbert Malcolm, August 14, 1826, quoted in Kaye, *Malcolm,* II, p. 476.
15. Given that Bruce had been a professor of moral philosophy at the University of Edinburgh, the history he produced is remarkably bland. It is possible that further research into his numerous notes, in the British Library, would show

more of a willingness to grapple with the larger issues connected with the rise of European empires in India. In turn, such a study would help us understand the dimensions of this underresearched topic.

16. Sir John Malcolm to William Erskine, December 31, 1827, in NLS Add Ms. 36.1.7, p. 151.
17. Bowen, *Revenue and Reform: The Indian Problem in British Politics 1757–1773* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), pp. 23–24.
18. James Mill, *History of British India, vol. II* (London: Peer, Stephenson and Spence, 1844), pp. 106, 209.
19. D. M. Peers, "Conquest Narratives: Romanticism, Orientalism and Intertextuality in the Indian Writings of Sir Walter Scott and Robert Orme," in Michael Franklin (ed.), *Romantic Representations of British India* (London: Routledge, 2006), p. 247.
20. Ibid., p. 72.
21. Sinharaja Tammita Delgoda, "'Nabob, Historian, and Orientalist.' Robert Orme: The Life and Career of an East India Company Servant (1728–1801)," *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society,* 3rd Series, 2 (1992): 373.
22. A number of important contemporary histories by Muslim authors carry the same sense of gloom and were available in manuscript form to British officials in India. The *Sier* is simply the most famous in this genre and the most relevant to Bengal. C. A. Bayly, "Modern Indian Historiography," in M. Bentley (ed.), *A Companion to Historiography* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), p. 670.
23. Bowen, *Revenue and Reform,* pp. 23–4.
24. T. G. Percival Spear, *Master of Bengal: Clive and his India* (London: BCA, 1975), p. 215.
25. Charles Caraccioli, *Life of Robert Clive, Baron Plassey, vol. I (*London, 1775), p. 1.
26. Ibid., p. 2.
27. Ibid., IV, p. 556.
28. Kaye, *Malcolm,* II, p. 476.
29. Sir John Malcolm to William Erskine, December 2, 1826, NLS Adv. Ms. 36.1.7, p. 190.
30. Stokes took Mill, the imperial administrator, to be a promoter of "utilitarian reform"; Eric Stokes, *The English Utilitarians and India* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1952), p. xvi. His cautiousness about the implementation of sudden, sweeping reform in India is noted in the introduction to Mill's *History of British India,* William Thomas (ed.) (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1976).
31. Sir John Malcolm to William Erskine, 31.12.1826, NLS, Adv. Ms. 36.1.7, p. 159.
32. Sir John Malcolm, *The Life of Robert Lord Clive; Collected from the Family Papers, Communicated by the Earl of Powis, vol. I* (London: John Murray, 1836), p. 164–65.
33. Ibid., I, p. 150.
34. Mill, *History of British India,* II, p. 304.

35. Ibid., p. 200.
36. Ibid., III, p.119.
37. John Malcolm, "Life of Robert Clive" lithograph of manuscript, BL, IOR, Mss Eur D564, p. 66.
38. William Robertson, *History of the Reign of the Emperor Charles V* (London: Routledge, 1996).
39. Ibid., pp. 3, 7.
40. Ibid., p. 21.
41. Ibid., p. 1
42. This largely political interpretation was not really challenged until the 1970s. The work of individuals such as Frank Perlin, Richard Barnett, and C. A. Bayly has been significant here. See, for example, Christopher Bayly, *Townsmen, Ruler and Bazaars: North India in the Age of British Expansion, 1770–1870* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983).
43. Malcolm, *Clive,* I, p. 2
44. Ibid.
45. Ibid.
46. Ibid., p. 3.
47. Ibid.
48. Ibid., p. 7.
49. Ibid.
50. Ibid.
51. Ibid., p. 8.
52. Ibid.
53. Ibid., p. 9.
54. Macaulay, "The Life of Robert Lord Clive," pp. 302–3.
55. Malcolm, *Clive,* I, p. 28.
56. Ibid., pp. 9–14.
57. William Erskine, "Review of Sir John Malcolm's Polticial History of India," 1826, NLS Adv. Ms. 36.1.75, f. 39.
58. Mill, *History of British India*, III, p. 257.
59. Malcolm, *Clive,* p.102.
60. This is still a popular interpretation. See, for instance, A. Calder, *Revolutionary Empires: The Rise of the English Speaking Empires from the Fifteenth Century to the 1780s* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1981), p. 594. For the importance of the Black Hole in the historical imagery of British India, see Kate Teltscher, "The Fearful Name of the Black Hole: Fashioning an Imperial Myth," inBart Moore-Gilbert (ed.), *Writing India, 1757–1990: The Literature of British* India,(Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1997), pp. 30–51.
61. J. Z. Holwell, *A Genuine Narrative of the Deplorable Deaths of the English Gentlemen and Others, Who Were Suffocated in the Black Hole in Fort William, at Calcutta* (London: A. Millar, 1758).
62. Mill, *History of British India*, II, p. 227. F
63. Ibid., p. 241. F
64. Ibid., p. 244.
65. Sir John Malcolm, *Clive,* p. 140

66. Ibid., I, p. 219.
67. Ibid.
68. Ibid., I, p. 223.
69. The importance of monetization in the political history of Muslim countries as an explanation of frequent dynastic changes in government can be found, among others places, in André Wink, *Land and Sovereignty in India: Agrarian Society and Politics under the Eighteenth-Century Maratha Swarajya* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), pp. 23–35.
70. Ibid., I, p. 223.
71. As has been seen, the Indian precedence for British practice was a particular preoccupation of Malcolm.
72. Mill, *History of British India,* II, p. 205.
73. Malcolm, Sketch of the Political History of India from the Time of Mr Pitt's India Bill, A.D. 1784, to the Present (London: William Miller, 1812), p. 226.
74. Malcolm, *Clive,* I, p. 284.
75. Ibid., p. 298.
76. Ibid.
77. Macaulay, "Life of Lord Clive," p. 330.
78. Ibid.
79. Ibid., p. 331.
80. Ibid.
81. Malcolm, *Clive,* I, p. 343.
82. Ibid., p. 344.
83. Ibid., p. 345.
84. Ibid.
85. Ibid., p. 346.
86. Ibid.
87. Ibid., p. 388.
88. Ibid., pp. 403–5.
89. Ibid., II, p. 405.
90. John W. Burrow, Stephen Collini, and Donald Winch, *That Noble Science of Politics: A Study in Nineteenth Century Intellectual History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), p. 28.
91. Peers, *Mars and Mammon,* pp. 53–54.
92. Malcolm, *Clive*, II, p. 201.
93. Ibid., p. 193.
94. Ibid., p. 194.
95. Mill, *History of British India,* II, p. 260; this view was reiterated in Macaulay, "Life of Lord Lord Clive," p. 342.F
96. Mill, *History of British India,* II, p. 230.
97. Malcolm, *Clive,* II, p. 339.
98. Ibid.
99. Ibid., p. 105.
100. Ibid., pp. 105–6.
101. Ibid., III, p. 129.

102. For a more detailed discussion of this topic, see D. L. Prior, "The Career of Robert, First Baron Clive, with Special Reference to His Political and Administrative Career," unpublished M Phil diss, University of Wales (1993).
103. Malcolm, *Clive,* III, p. 374.
104. Ibid., p. 377.
105. Malcolm, *Political History of India,* II, p. 16.
106. Sir Cyril H. Philips, *East India Company, 1784–1833* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1941), pp. 290, 294–5.
107. K. J. M. Smith, "Macaulay's 'Utilitarian' Indian Penal Code: An Illustration of the Accidental Framework of Time, Place and Personalities in Law Making," in W. M. Gordon and T. O. Fergus (eds.), *Legal History in the Making: Proceedings of the 9th British Legal History Conference* (London: Hambledon Press, 1991), p. 154.
108. Macaulay, "The Life of Lord Clive," p. 342.
109. Ibid., p. 341.
110. Ibid.
111. Ibid., p. 342.
112. Ibid., p. 332.
113. Thomas Babington Macaulay, "Inscription on the Statute of Lord Bentinck," in *The Work of Lord Macaulay, vol. VIII* (London: Longmans, Green, 1897), p. 379.
114. T. B. Macaulay to M. Napier, 28 November 1839 in T. Pinney (ed.), *The Letters of Thomas Babington Macaulay, vol. III* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977), p. 309.
115. John W. Burrow, *A Liberal Descent: Victorian Historians and the English Past* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), p. 35.
116. Malcolm, *Clive,* III, pp. 74, 93.
117. Lawson and Lenman, "Clive, the Black Jagir and English Politics," p. 803; I wish to thank Professor H. W. Bowen of Leicester University for drawing my attention to the fact that significant transposition errors in Malcolm's quotations from the Clive Papers have often been repeated in a wide range of published works.
118. See, for example, J. W. Kaye, *The Lives of Indian Officers, Illustrative of the History of the Civil and Military Service of India* (London: A. Strahan, 1867); W. W. Hunter and G. D. Oswell, *Sketches of the Rulers of India Volume Two: The Company's Governors* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1908), p. 126.
119. N. C. Chaudhuri, *Clive of India: A Political and Psychological Study* (London: Barrie & Jenkins, 1975), p. 10.

Conclusion

1. Malcolm, *Sketch of the Political History of India from the Time of Mr Pitt's India Bill, A.D. 1784, to the Present, I* (London: William Miller, 1812), p. 225.

2. Malcolm, *The Life of Robert Lord Clive; Collected from the Family Papers, Communicated by the Earl of Powis, II* (London: John Murray, 1836), p. 201.
3. P. J. Marshall, "Parliament and Property Rights in the Late Eighteenth-Century British Empire," in John Brewer and Susan Staves (eds.), *Early Modern Conceptions of Property* (New York: Routledge, 1996), p. 536.
4. Bruce Lenman, "The Scottish Enlightenment, Stagnation and Empire in India, 1772–1813," *The Indo-British Review* 21 (1996): 53–61, 59.
5. Malcolm, *Sketches of Persia, II* (London: John Murray, 1827), pp. 105–7.
6. Uday Singh Mehta, *Liberalism and Empire: A Study in Nineteenth Century British Liberal Thought* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1999); Jennifer Pitts, *A Turn to Empire: The Rise of Imperial Liberalism in Britain and France* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2006).
7. As my introduction stated, I argue that the idea of the justification of imperial dominion as a unifying "common enterprise," put forward by such writers as Nicholas Dirks and Sara Suleri, does not adequately account for the varieties and tensions within imperial discourses over time and across contextual boundaries.
8. C. A. Bayly's fascinating entry on Wellesley for the *Dictionary of National Biography* provides the basis of this discussion of his reputation in the 1830s and 1840s.
9. We know surprisingly little about the reading public's response to works like Malcolm's and Mill's in Victorian era. Mill's work is often described as a standard textbook for aspiring young civil servants. The source for this observation is Eric Stokes. It is unclear why Stokes himself makes this claim. Avril Powell, in her research on Haileybury, has found no proof for this assertion. Building on the assumption that Mill's was the major Victorian work on the subject, many scholars have tended to assume roughly contemporary works such as Malcolm's various Indian histories or Mountstuart Elphinstone's *History of India* were commercial failures. This is taken for granted by C. H. Philips. However, the number of reprints of these works suggests that their influence has been undervalued.
10. Lynn Zastoupil, *John Stuart Mill and India* (Palo Alto, CA: Stanford University Press, 1994), p. 55.
11. Ibid., p. 51; , D. M. Peers, "Imperial Epitaph: John Stuart Mill's Defence of the East India Company," in Lynn Zastoupil, Martin Moir, and Douglas M. Peers (eds.), *J. S. Mill's Encounter with India* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999), p. 89.
12. B. Ramusack, *The New Cambridge History of India; III.6: The Indian Princes and Their States* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), p. 83.
13. Sir H. M. Lawrence, *Essays Military and Political Written in India* (London: W.H. Allen, 1859), p. 396.
14. Ibid., p. 5.
15. Ibid., p. 6.
16. Ibid., p. 28.
17. Ibid, p. 45.

18. Kaye, *Malcolm,* p. 362.
19. Ibid., p. 621.
20. Sir W. Napier, *The Life and Opinions of Sir Charles James Napier, K.C.B., II* (London: John Murray, 1857), p. 188.
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22. Ibid., p. 130.
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Index