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## PUBLIC PERCEPTIONS OF 1857 An Overview of British Press Responses to the Indian Uprising

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EVER since military and civil insurrection swept northern India in 1857, the nature of this bloody conflict has been the source of heated debate, as historians and commentators from various intellectual and political backgrounds have interpreted its meanings in line with their wider ideological agendas. This trend was epitomised in the century after 1857 by British imperialist representations of the uprising as a limited military mutiny<sup>1</sup> and Indian Nationalists' reclamations of it as the 'First War of Indian Independence'.<sup>2</sup> As Gautam Chakravarty observes, early British histories of the uprising, which used information collected by the authorities in its immediate aftermath, began to construct a consensus, exemplifying 'the ways in which historiography worked in tandem with the administrative needs of the colonial state during periods of crisis, producing narratives, explaining events and enlisting opinion'.<sup>3</sup> This, however, tells only one part of the complex story of Britain's responses to the uprising. As news of the revolt and its progress filtered back to Britain in 1857–1858, these events—and a broad range of attitudes, opinions and ideas arising from them—were disseminated to the British public via a range of publications. Some, such as missionary periodicals or official publications from the government or East India House, had specific or vested interests in India that determined the idiom through which events were interpreted. Other sections of the popular press, though certainly subject to political bias, catered to the keen interest of a less partisan general public, which they fed with letters from their correspondents and from 'ordinary' Britons caught up in events at various sites in north India, as well as with numerous editorial opinions and 'educational' pieces providing background information on Indian cities and religions. These articles provide

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fascinating insights into British ideas about India, the ideologies that upheld them and the effect that the explosive events of 1857 had on attitudes to empire. This chapter provides an overview of a sample of British press responses to the uprising in 1857–1858, as reported at the time,<sup>4</sup> exploring how they both reflected fractures and disagreements within the imperial polity and attempted to fashion coherent narratives out of events in India, in line with their own social or political agendas.

The main publications used in this chapter are: *The Times*, a politically independent newspaper that tended to follow the Whig line with regard to the uprising; *The Tory*, supporting *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*; the progressive *Illustrated London News*;<sup>5</sup> the weekly women's periodicals *The Lady's Newspaper and Pictorial Times*<sup>6</sup> and *The Ladies' Own Journal and Miscellany*; the evangelical publications *The Christian Lady's Magazine*, *The Baptist Magazine* and *The Missionary Herald*. These publications all had their own specific ideological and/or political agendas, and their discussions of events in India must be understood as both reflections of—and attempts to shape—popular perceptions of the uprising. Although technological improvements in the first half of the nineteenth century and legislative developments like the abolition of the stamp tax in 1855 allowed newspapers and periodicals to command a greater circulation than ever before, the consumption of the publications used in this article was primarily confined to the middle and upper classes. As Gautam Chakravarty points out, there were other media through which the experiences of empire could be disseminated to the working classes, such as the 'penny dreadfuls' and other non-elite publications, stage, music hall and popular print culture.<sup>7</sup> These productions often distilled sensational accounts and ideas from the elite press for popular consumption, and their treatments of 1857 would make a fascinating alternative focus of study. They lie, however, outside the scope of the present article, the focus of which is to deal with the narratives and counter-narratives on 1857 as they appeared in the mainstream press.

### **The British Press and the Construction of a Popular History of 1857**

The 1857 Uprising represented a significant threat to British control of India, the extent of which only gradually became clear in 1857–1858. Early press reports of the uprising displayed a determined optimism that events were not serious and would soon be over. Letters from India took six weeks to arrive in Britain, and, in the absence of up-to-date information, attempts were made to limit public alarm. 'By the next mail', *The Lady's Newspaper and Pictorial Times* observed, 'we shall probably hear that Delhi is again in our custody and the "King" shot'.<sup>8</sup> The expediencies of continued British rule required the formation of an official

narrative that both disguised the true extent of popular discontent in India and limited the need for 'excessive' retributions against the supposed majority of Britain's 'loyal Indian subjects'. As a result, official accounts tended to emphasise the military aspects of the insurrection, categorising it primarily as a 'Sepoy Mutiny' that had drawn support from some limited sections of the general public. Culpability for the insurgency could thus be confined to a minority group of disgruntled sepoys,<sup>9</sup> local badmashes (bad characters),<sup>10</sup> unruly tribals<sup>11</sup> and fanatical Muslims,<sup>12</sup> while the majority of ordinary, respectable Indians could be exculpated from involvement or blame. As news of atrocities against British women and children—at Cawnpore and elsewhere—arrived, however, events took on a more serious and sensational aspect. When the Queen's Speech on the opening of Parliament in December 1857 declared, 'It is satisfactory to know that the general mass of the population of India have taken no part in the rebellion, while the most considerable of the native Princes have acted in the most friendly manner, and have rendered important services,'<sup>13</sup> its assertions were immediately challenged in the press. 'The Ministerial Speech ... takes a very favourable view of the campaign', complained *The Lady's Newspaper*, 'and affects to believe that the mutiny has only been a military one, which we fear, facts will scarcely bear out'.<sup>14</sup> Indeed, the press tended to dispute official interpretations of events throughout the campaign and reported a variety of opinions and ideas that revealed its determination to challenge the hegemonic narrative.

During the early phases of the insurrection many newspapers, short of up-to-date information on Indian events, took the opportunity to print background information about India's cities, religions and peoples, so as to enable readers to visualise the scene of the action they were reading about. These accounts constructed India as a mysterious, barbaric land inhabited by fanatical religious devotees, thus providing a suitable setting and cast of characters for the events that were about to unfold. The most dramatic descriptions were employed, unsurprisingly, by missionary publications, a genre with an established tradition of describing 'abhorrent' Indian practices and denigrating Indian religion in order to encourage support for the spread of Christianity. Rev. Charles Stovel, for example, reported that 'error and disease walk the earth in that region, developed in gigantic forms as if to elucidate each other. Her pestilences and her idolatry alike disclose, in monstrous shapes, the terror of departing from the truth and law of God.'<sup>15</sup> Other publications described the Indian cities that formed the uprising's backdrop, often reproducing orientalist stereotypes about the Indian environment. *The Illustrated London News* described Delhi as a place of extreme sensuality and religious feeling, 'of Oriental pomp, infinite luxury, and indescribable religious fanaticism', adding, 'There is no difficulty, therefore, in supposing what the influences of such a place on native character would be, or the effect of it on the safety of the European society, unless defended by an overpowering force.'<sup>16</sup> Such essentialist portrayals of Indian society represented it as existing in an ahistorical and timeless context. Ranajit Guha has argued that

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the uprising itself was portrayed as 'de-chronologised',<sup>17</sup> positioned within an amorphous context of Indian events that occurred with neither cause, purpose, nor semblance of legitimacy.<sup>18</sup> Certainly, the newspapers studied presented India as a land stuck in the distant past,<sup>19</sup> removed from the civilised world's chronological time frame, while the British were the only active agents in what was unfolding: 'History opens suddenly on India. We look upon it when it first appears as geologists suppose one might have looked on the world during one of its stages of creation.'<sup>20</sup> 'History' in India existed only as it was made by the British presence and they claimed absolute control over what could happen there. Indian-led events existed outside the civilised, logical march of progress that characterised European history and were seen as chaotic, ahistorical and illegitimate.

As India was argued to have no 'history', the press incorporated the uprising into the narrative of British history, making its Indian setting almost irrelevant. The storming of Delhi was 'one of those bold, dashing adventures which show of what mettle the soldiers of England are made', which surpassed 'in dramatic interest' that of Sebastopol.<sup>21</sup> India was the arena in which acts of British valour could unfold,<sup>22</sup> bestrode by 'great men' such as Napier. As *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* put it:

Charles Napier now appears on the stage. Henceforth in all the scenes and acts his figure is most prominent. Amid the lights and shadows of Eastern policy, the picturesque groupings of Eastern life, the stern action and the gloomy catastrophe, first and foremost moves the fierce grey-bearded warrior.<sup>23</sup>

Men possessing the finest British qualities populated the story. Heroes like Havelock were endowed with almost mystical powers;<sup>24</sup> the *Ladies' Own* even speculated that one of his ancestors, 'Havelock' or 'Havluck', was 'the lost child of a Norse sea-king',<sup>25</sup> while *The Baptist Magazine* portrayed him as a Christian hero or martyr:

Mourn, England! Of thy soldier sons,  
Is fallen the good, the true, the brave;

The warrior witness of the Christ,  
Who made him all he was, for whom  
He fought so well, until the tomb  
Closed over him, self-sacrificed.<sup>26</sup>

By writing about events in India as an adventurous narrative over which the British exercised complete agency, the press could exorcise the stigma of loss

of British control and reconstruct the uprising as part of a wider narrative of Britain's rightful place in world affairs. As *Blackwood's* put it:

Only by constant *cursus* and *recursus* is life itself preserved; and hence the necessity of nations advancing against nations, of England establishing itself in India, and France in Africa. Hence also the value of that instinct which urges individuals over the earth. Thus the East is taught by Europe.<sup>27</sup>

From this perspective, the uprising, though traumatic, was merely another episode in the inevitable advance of European civilisation.

The idea that the historicity of the uprising could only be understood by reference to European agency helps explain the emergence of 'conspiracy theories' that interpreted it in the context of the 'Great Game' of European geopolitics. 'It is whispered that Russia has had a share in the instigation of this insurrection;' *The Lady's Newspaper* reported, and 'that for some time past her agents have been inflaming the minds of the superstitious Sepoys.... While we have no direct evidence against Russia, we confess to having a suspicion that she is guilty, for the simple reason that we believe her capable of anything of this sort.'<sup>28</sup> These theories removed Indian agency by explaining the uprising in terms of wider British foreign policy assumptions, without reference to the desires or reasoned motivations of the Indian population, removing the need to probe too deeply into the causes of Indian discontent or to recognise the Indians as autonomous agents in their own affairs.

## The Debate Over Causes

One of the most controversial and difficult tasks faced by the press during 1857–1858 was to provide convincing explanations for events in India, without under-mining the ideological base of British imperial rule. As Gautam Chakravarty points out:

The interpretation of insurgency, like the conduct of counter-insurgency, was marked from the outset by disagreements among policy-makers, publicists and historians. The clearest evidence of the difficulty of interpreting the rebellion lay in the search for, and the quarrel over, a rubric that would adequately signify the event in its totality, while mirroring the constitutional relation between the state and its subjects.<sup>29</sup>

The debate over causes was often conducted in a partisan fashion, with disagreements between various groups within the imperial polity being reproduced in the press. What these debates shared, however, was a failure to

seriously analyse potential reasons for Indian discontent—such as East India Company (EIC) economic policies—and instead to emphasise causes that were really ‘non-causes’; that is, explanations that proved the uprising to be groundless and rooted in Indian irrationality.

Differences of opinion over the causes of and culpability for the uprising revealed the interpretational fissures between different interest groups. ‘Official’ accounts blamed the introduction of new cartridges greased with cow and pig fat, to the exclusion of almost all other issues stressing that the uprising’s ‘proximate cause was the cartridge affair, and nothing else ... as a body, the native army did really believe that the universal introduction of cartridges destructive of their caste was a matter only of time.... Such truly was the origin of the mutiny.’<sup>30</sup> They also maintained that popular unrest only followed and never preceded mutiny.<sup>31</sup> This explanation constructed the uprising as limited in scope, with its causes fixed in irrational, unfounded and illegitimate religious fears rather than ‘real’ grievances. As one official report put it, ‘the only of the causes that is quite certain is, what appears to us almost as insane ... but is ... a rooted and universal persuasion ... that it is the fixed design of the British Government to interfere by force with the religious liberty of the people.’<sup>32</sup>

The greased cartridges explanation alone was rarely considered sufficient by the press, which, while often agreeing that this was the catalyst, also offered various antecedent causes. Indian fears of government-sponsored, forcible conversion to Christianity provided a context for wider popular discontent than the official line allowed, affecting the Indian community at large. As *Blackwood’s* put it, ‘It is certain that the cartridge was the spark which fired the train, but the train itself was the general suspicion of an intention on the part of Government to bring the natives over to Christianity.’<sup>33</sup> Since many argued that the EIC had done little—perhaps too little—to introduce Christianity to India, this idea was considered a ridiculous delusion, but Indian credulity made their belief in it plausible, while their religious fanaticism explained their violent reaction. As one Baptist missionary put it, ‘A religious panic may have given occasion to this violence; but it had its foundation in the prevalent superstitions of India—in Hindooism, which proscribes Christians as loathsome pariahs; and in Mahommedanism, which commands Mahommedans to kill them as infidels.’<sup>34</sup> As Gyanendra Pandey<sup>35</sup> points out, figuring the uprising as a religious revolt allowed the British to deny structural flaws in the colonial state, discount economic motivations for discontent, and represent it as a senseless panic that the British must quell: an issue of colonial law against Indian disorder that actually upheld the ideological basis of legitimate British power.

The role of religious grievances in provoking the uprising was a difficult subject for the religious press, as issues of proselytisation and conversion came under critical popular scrutiny. Keen to disassociate themselves from the outbreak, and to secure their position in India in the aftermath of the uprising, missionaries claimed that they had not been the targets of particular hostility.

‘There is not the slightest symptom of any special animosity against missionaries or their doings;’ The *Christian Intelligencer* asserted, ‘nor of the present disturbances having in any degree whatever been caused by any missionary proceedings. On the contrary, if any European is respected and trusted by natives at present, it is the missionary.’<sup>36</sup> Both the *Missionary Herald* and the *Baptist Magazine* stressed that missionaries were not to blame for the outbreak, despite its religious character, and were confident that ‘missionaries in India will ... meet with no obstruction in the future from the authorities’.<sup>37</sup> Paradoxically, however, they also sought to represent the uprising within the framework of a Providentialist narrative that saw it as a traumatic but necessary battle in the war between ‘darkness and light’. Indian religious fears indicated the decline of Hinduism and Islam in the face of an ascendant Christianity. The *Missionary Herald* declared:

During the extraordinary troubles from which we are now emerging, nothing has so much cheered our own minds as the fact that the disaffection of the native troops has originated in their dread of the growing power of Christianity. Most strangely have they erred in believing that the Government was endeavouring to entrap them into the sacrifice of their caste, yet we believe they are right in apprehending that their idols and superstitions are decaying and will be speedily overthrown, though ‘not by might nor by power.’<sup>38</sup>

Rather than criticise the government’s excessive interference with Indian religion, missionary publications blamed its failure to actively encourage the spread of Christianity, presenting the uprising as God’s punishment for the EIC’s ‘secular’ ways: ‘God had given India to England for great and eternal purposes, and she ignored her high mission.... And, at last, God rose up in judgment against men.’<sup>39</sup> Conversion to Christianity, it was argued, would have civilised India and secured British rule more effectively than any EIC policy, while the present troubles represented both divine retribution for past failures and a traumatic, but necessary, clearing of the way for renewed and reinvigorated Christian endeavours.

If some publications emphasised Indian fears of religious change, others depicted a more general hostility to colonial modernity. For the British, India was mired in timeless tradition, and, as Gautam Chakravarty asserts, the Sepoys’ refusal of the greased cartridges functioned as ‘a metonymy for the culture of a pre-modern society locked in an “invincible immobility”’.<sup>40</sup> Thus, Indian religious grievances were supplemented by fears of impending social and technological revolution in their apparently ‘stationary’ world.<sup>41</sup> *The Economist*, quoted in *The Ladies’ Own*, stressed perceived challenges to caste and other aspects of ‘traditional’ society, attributing the unrest to

the terror with which the Hindu and the Mahometan acknowledge the swift and inevitable progress of English influence in the region of science and

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religion they see with the greater panic a movement which they feel to be fraught with social revolution.... Hereditary faith and caste, which is even more than faith, seem sinking away beneath their feet, while the School, the Railway, and the Telegraph overshadow them with a sense of arbitrary fate ...<sup>42</sup>

Indians were believed to want security based on the repetition of timeless practices to

tread the little round that his parents trod before him; to scratch the fields with the same crooked stick that served his father for a plough; to shave with the same razor the children of those whom his father shaved of old to tell the same stories, eat the same food, share the same ceremonies, lead the same solid life, and die the same apathetical death, which millions have done, are doing, and will continue to do, before, around, and after himself, in most supreme indifference whether Prospero or Stephano be king of the island.<sup>43</sup>

As a desperate, retroactive attempt to preserve Indian society from the march of 'progress', the uprising was presented as the irrational rejection of Western modernity and the evident benefits of British rule.

As the uprising spread and reports of atrocities at Cawnpore, and elsewhere, filtered back to Britain, the official 'military mutiny' interpretation was increasingly challenged. Violence against British civilians suggested a widespread hatred of Britain's presence in India, which was being expressed in 'a revolt of race, religion, and colour, against a dominant Power, alien in all these respects'.<sup>44</sup> As Peter Robb points out, the insurgency was not clearly demarcated along racial or religious lines; rebels came from all social, political and religious groups, and equally diverse people helped Britons to escape or hide.<sup>45</sup> Despite this, portrayals of the uprising as a 'clash of civilisations' appeared across all sections of the press, as the conquering British race faced down its 'dark enemies'. The conflict was figured both as a religious battle between 'the crescent and the cross',<sup>46</sup> and a racial one that sought to 'exterminate the hated Europeans'.<sup>47</sup> Unable to reconcile attacks on the British civilian population with the idea of a limited military mutiny, the uprising was reconfigured as a larger battle between two monolithic entities: the inhabitants of India, and the alien Europeans, or, more particularly, the new British rulers of India and its former overlords, the Muslims.

Although Hindus were certainly not excused culpability, especially after Nana Sahib's actions at Cawnpore, many Britons believed that the revolt was a Muslim plot. The *Missionary Herald* claimed that

[t]he mutiny of the Bengal native army has developed itself into a formidable Mohammedan conspiracy, having for its object nothing short of the utter extermination of the European population, and the overthrow of the British Government. . . . The Kings of Delhi and Oude were to be reinstated, and all the influential Mohammedans of the country, most of them being the descendants

of those who held high offices under the former dynasty, have been discovered to have employed their wealth in fostering the rebellion.<sup>48</sup>

Aristocratic Muslims were singled out as the ringleaders of the conspiracy, and the King of Delhi went from being a 'puppet'<sup>49</sup> in the hands of the insurgents to an evil mastermind as the insurrection progressed.<sup>50</sup> As a result, attempts were made to undermine the legitimacy of 'disloyal' Indian rulers<sup>51</sup> and emphasise their motivations of personal aggrandisement and greed. By denying that they could represent the interests and beliefs of the larger Indian population, the British could deny claims to power by Indian sovereigns and present themselves as reasserting 'rightful' authority in India. Moreover, by emphasising the cruelty and injustice of India's former rulers, they could legitimise 'benevolent' British rule. Given the lack of evidence supporting the Muslim conspiracy argument—Alex Padamsee asserts that it 'was significantly at variance with Anglo-Indian intelligence reports at the time'<sup>52</sup> and was disproved as early as 1859—its almost universal acceptance indicates the multifaceted nature of its discursive utility. It allowed the missionary press to disassociate themselves from the causes of revolt by blaming the section of the population with whom they were least involved. For the rest, the spectre of a Muslim conspiracy to reinstate 'tyrannical' Islamic rule allowed them to justify its suppression in terms of 'saving' the Hindu population from 'oriental despotism'<sup>53</sup> and to reassert a British identity as just, benevolent 'secular Christian' rulers.

Explanations for the uprising focusing on Indian attributes, fears and fancies deflected public attention from the EIC's more tangible failings, but these were not purged from the debate completely. Initial press reports met the calamity with patriotic assertions of confidence in the Indian authorities. 'Fortunately the Indian Government has vigour enough for the emergency', declared the *Illustrated London News*, 'and if it have not means will be supported by all the wealth, power, energy, and resources of Great Britain.... Fortunately the people of England may speculate and argue on the subject if they please, for while they are cogitating the Indian Government is working.'<sup>54</sup> As news of the revolt's successful suppression failed to arrive, however, the Indian government received substantial criticism: accusations of understaffing the civil and military establishments,<sup>55</sup> serving primarily mercenary interests,<sup>56</sup> adopting an 'inconsistent course with respect to the religious habits and prejudices of the people',<sup>57</sup> and general mismanagement<sup>58</sup> abounded. It had allowed the Bengal army to slide into decay by failing to provide adequately skilled European officers<sup>59</sup> and by unwisely recruiting a high proportion of high-caste Sepoys: 'the most aristocratic, exclusive, and high-spirited of the natives.' Accusations of EIC ineptitude provided both an explanation and a focus for blame, without threatening the fundamental principle of British rule. No attempts were made to explore the economic and

political impact of British imperialism on India or uncover wider structural reasons for discontent with British rule, and emphasis on EIC failures thus actually worked to limit the ideological threat posed by the uprising and resulted ultimately in the end of the system of 'double government' and the institution of Crown rule.

## Justice? Atrocity, Retribution and the Reversal of Honour

As the uprising unfolded, another major concern debated in the press was the form that British retribution should take. The India Office, with one eye on the future, advocated 'a policy distinguished by a wise and discriminating generosity', exhorting its representatives 'to temper justice with mercy, and, except in cases of extreme criminality, to grant an amnesty to the vanquished'.<sup>60</sup> Excessive retributive violence would make the re-establishment of British rule more difficult, and accordingly the authorities urged remembrance 'that they are our people; our erring, guilty subjects, but our subjects still. By force of arms have we recently asserted our right to rule over them, and we must now show towards them the magnanimity of rulers.'<sup>61</sup> Officially, there was to be no mass, uncontrolled retribution and punishments were reported as measured and legitimate: 'The prisoners were all executed by martial law.'<sup>62</sup> If Indians were to continue to be subjects, the state had to punish precisely and lawfully. These sentiments are at odds, however, with the contents of published letters from soldiers at the scene, who took pride in dispensing rough and degrading 'justice', and adopted a policy of guilty until proven innocent. General Neill, who has become infamous for his brutal reprisals against the Indian population, reported that 'whenever a rebel is caught, he is immediately tried, and unless he can prove a defence, he is sentenced to be hanged at once.'<sup>63</sup> In some instances, soldiers apparently acted purposefully against the orders of authority,<sup>64</sup> indicating a discrepancy between official policy and popular practice. Clearly, the definition of 'justice and retribution' varied between the government and its agents, the former failing to limit the scale of revenge exacted by the latter.

Some newspaper reports adopted the official tone of firm, but measured justice. 'Sir Colin Campbell, and the true soldiers of Britain who are with him,' the *Illustrated London News* declared, 'have but one duty, and they will do it. That duty is to quell, and to punish, the mutiny as to render future mutinies improbable, if not impossible. They will do JUSTICE—no more and no less. They will be soldiers and not executioners. . . . It is for Asiatics to be revengeful. It is for Englishmen to be just.'<sup>65</sup> They were in the minority, however, and although some evangelical and other publications spoke out against excessive

retribution,<sup>66</sup> humanitarian sentiments were largely met with ridicule. 'I think I hear a faint wail from Exeter-hall', declared one correspondent to *The Times*, 'and the usual talk of European brutality and torture on the mild Hindoo Sepoy. If you hear any such sentiments by all means ship off their propounder to this country at once. Let him see one-half of what we have seen, and compare our brutality with theirs, then send him home again, and I think you will find him pretty quiet on the subject for the rest of his life.'<sup>67</sup> At its most extreme, public sentiment desired the extermination of all who had offended them. 'The name of Sepoy will be erased from the dictionary of the world', declared the *Delhi Gazette Extra*, 'and the homes of these devils will be but discernible by the burning embers and smouldering ashes of villages, which, like the Cities of the Plain in Scripture, will at once serve for the scene of their crimes and their sepulchres'.<sup>68</sup> A 'scorched earth' policy was adopted that no doubt caused the death of many who were not the proven rebels against whom alone the authorities sanctioned punishment.<sup>69</sup> Large-scale vengeance, it was argued, was necessary and desirable. *The Lady's Newspaper* commented of those killed when Delhi fell that 'these were not mutineers, but residents of the city, who trusted to our well-known mild rule for pardon. I am glad to say they were disappointed'.<sup>70</sup> Similarly, *The Times* considered that 'it is a fatal mistake to suppose that the natives appreciate such leniency. They all expect a fearful retribution, and attribute all hesitation on our part to fear.'<sup>71</sup> Paradoxically, punishment was even figured as an act of humanity:

That his [the King of Delhi's] two sons and his grandson should have been shot does not appear at all unjust. The few must suffer for the good of the many. This is true humanity — we have but to recall the horrors of the immediate past, and then decide whether or not such lessons are not absolutely necessary for the admonition of the Hindoo and the protection of the European ... as a cure and a preventative the guilty must suffer.<sup>72</sup>

If the authorities defined the uprising as a military mutiny and sought to punish it as such, the public believed it was something more and deserved more spectacular revenge.

Press calls for dramatic acts of retributive justice reflected just how severely the uprising and accompanying violence against British men, women and children had shaken the previously self-confident imperial nation. As Cohn and Mukherjee<sup>73</sup> both argue, 1857 represented the ultimate rejection of British rule and an Indian attempt to reclaim lost power via the enactment of public violence and the reassertion of political authority. The initial loss and subsequent restoration of honour and power was an important aspect of 1857 in the British public imagination. As Chakravarty argues, the uprising interrupted a British language of 'agency and command that required the submission and expropriation of a subject population, and exposed them to "humiliation by an

inferior race”<sup>74</sup>. It was ‘a serious interruption of the habitual hierarchy of status and authority that structured British relations with India’.<sup>75</sup> In the wake of this, it was necessary to develop what Daniel Rycroft terms a ‘counter-insurgency complex’—‘a critical framework within which to negotiate the ideological tensions and slippages implicit in imperial visual narratives’.<sup>76</sup> In order to reassure the British public that control had been restored, ‘governmental coercion against subaltern resistance’<sup>77</sup> must be displayed. This theme of loss and restoration of power informs many reports of the uprising. Indian appropriations of the emblems of British authority caused palpable confusion and distress. As Chakravarty argues:

Rebel violence is at once the sign and the effect of an event that had ‘indescribably’ upset habitual hierarchies, replacing the symbols and institutions of the British with indigenous alternatives, and physically attacking the person of the rulers. More than the causes of the rebellion, or the judicious means of containment that preoccupied the echelons of high policy, it was this reversal that dominated the popular media, bringing forth calls for vengeance.<sup>78</sup>

The appropriation of symbols of British power by Indian subjects challenged Britain’s self-perception as India’s undisputed master and scenes in which Indians mixed British signifiers of power with displays of native agency were particularly troubling. ‘Ram Singh, of the Light cavalry’, it was reported, ‘showed himself yesterday, in all his treacherous glory, ready for the fight, attired not in the grotesque and monkey-like display of English cut pantaloons, shell jacket, and military forage cap, but like his delinquent compeer, in the more easy dishabille of the Brahminical thread and *dhotes*—with our medal hung round his neck, and our greased cartridge ever and anon between his lips.’<sup>79</sup> Ram Singh is thus both incorporated into the system of British rule (adorning himself with a British medal), yet has rejected its authority. Disturbingly, his apparent assimilation has been proved false, but he has appropriated some aspect of British power. He is at once ridiculous and threatening. Another letter reported:

At Baroda ... they had the impudence to cut down the Residency flagstaff for their own use. But the most impertinent thing of all was done at Bareilly, where the Sudder Ameen (a native judge) took our judge, Mr Robertson, prisoner, made a regular trial, English fashion, and hanged him. And at Allyghur they put a wretched Sepoy on horseback and called him the ‘General Sahib,’ and forced the English officers and civilians to salute him!<sup>80</sup>

Such anecdotes reflect both British consternation at their exposure to Indian violence and a deeper concern that their ‘grateful subjects’ could appropriate and corrupt symbols of their power. If Indians could mimic British authority figures, could they actually fill these roles?

Indian acts of aggression shattered the British idea that their 'natural' supremacy gave them a monopoly on violence in India.<sup>81</sup> They believed themselves racially superior, protected by an almost-sacred 'whiteness'. As *The Times* put it:

There is something quite new to English minds in hearing of the dreadful outrages committed upon the persons of English men and women. We thought we were lifted above such a dreadful risk, that our higher than Roman citizenship would shield us, that some Palladium would protect one of English blood from the last indignities, even in such terrible extremities as these. It seems we are mistaken. . . . The Sepoys have not only mutinied, but have done what they have done to the bodies of English people. . . . They have broken the spell of inviolability that seemed to attach to an English man as such, and have plunged headlong into this horrible abyss of cruelty.<sup>82</sup>

The enactment of violence by Indians on British bodies thus had deep psychological meanings. Had it damaged, perhaps permanently, British honour and prestige as an 'inviolable' race? By refusing them physical and figurative respect, Indians had purposefully tried to undermine British superiority: the complete suppression of the revolt demanded its restoration.<sup>83</sup>

As Jenny Sharpe discusses, the symbolic implications of Indian aggression were most dangerous when violence was directed towards British women and children. Although the more extreme atrocity stories were largely groundless, the interpretation of the mutiny as a crime against British womanhood loomed large in the public imagination.<sup>84</sup> It was considered viciously inappropriate that tender British women should even *know* of the violence perpetrated in India, let alone fall victim to it:

If I did write with tears and blood, meseems that I should shame  
To set this savage villany in sight of English dame.  
Ah! Lady, lady! Turn aside the knowledge from your heart,  
Or knowing not its hideous tale, keep all its pain apart.<sup>85</sup>

Within the national discourse, women were 'that sacred nucleus of our race, wherein as in a shrine our honour makes abode'<sup>86</sup> and were 'the embodiment of all that the Englishman must protect'.<sup>87</sup> Public attacks on British women were invested with deep symbolic meaning, as humiliating violations of the essence of the British nation. 'I die happy', one of the King of Delhi's sons was said to have declared as he was led to execution, 'since I have defiled English women, and seen them walking naked about the streets.'<sup>88</sup> So serious were such supposed violations deemed that some publications even preferred British women's death to their 'dishonour' by Indian men:

But if in God's dark maze of providence  
Such hour of darkness should appear again,

Oh men, if ye be men!  
 Kiss them, and kill them in their innocence!...  
 Oh fathers, husbands, brothers, think no sin!  
 But out of horror, out of agony,  
 With your swift tender bullets tenderly  
 Dismiss them to the keeping of their God!<sup>89</sup>

More than the simple act of rebellion, it was the supposed atrocities against British women that necessitated such brutal reprisals against the Indian population. Interestingly, *The Lady's Newspaper* initially objected to the invocation of sacred womanhood to incite violence, declaring:

There is at this hour a war-cry resounding in India which fills us with horror; it is this, "For the Ladies and the Babies!" and as the words pass from lip to lip, and from rank to rank, men rush to the slaughter, mad with the thirst for blood... If there is a political necessity for wholesale butchery, let it not be done in the name of woman; if the women and the children of our country have been the victims of the heathen, it is not so we would have them avenged... That fearful war-cry chills the very heart, sickens the very soul. Oh, not in the name of woman let the tumult of battle rage....<sup>90</sup>

This rejection, by a women's publication, of the symbolic role awarded to them in the narrative of British valour and honour is fascinating, although the same newspaper later shifted its position and declared that, 'the rebellion of the Sepoys is the lesser of their offences; it is their savagery to the innocents that stands out the most hideously, and it is their savagery which has to be punished so severely ....'<sup>91</sup>

The inversion of the power hierarchy inherent in Indian violence against Europeans helps to explain the forms British vengeance took; as Gautam Bhadra argues, British retribution incorporated the symbolic reassertion of their power.<sup>92</sup> The 'martyrdom' of British womanhood and the desecration of the symbols of Christianity represented a powerful symbolic violation—'after we stormed and entered Delhi', one letter to *The Times* reported, 'we saw a poor woman crucified naked, and nailed up in the same manner as our Lord and Saviour is represented'<sup>93</sup>—and had to be countered by a similar defilement of the articles of Indian faith. Thus Hindu and Muslim 'insurgents' were not only executed in vast numbers, but were killed in ways that violated their religious sensibilities. *Blackwood's* explained the practice of blowing Sepoys from the mouths of guns thus:

You must know that this is nearly the only form in which death has any terrors for a native. If he is hung, or shot by musketry, he knows that his friends or relatives will be allowed to claim his body, and will give him the funeral rites required by his religion.... But if sentenced to death in this form, he knows that his body will be blown into a thousand pieces, and

that it will be altogether impossible for his relatives, however devoted to him, to be sure of picking up all the fragments of his own particular body; and the thought that perhaps a limb of someone of a different religion to himself might possibly be burned or buried with the remainder of his own particular body, is agony to him.<sup>94</sup>

Similarly the punishment devised by General Neill at Cawnpore, in which high-caste sepoys had to wash blood from the *bibighar* floor before being hanged, was considered especially effective because it violated their caste.<sup>95</sup>

Although there was unprecedented brutality on both sides, the scale of the atrocities practised on Britons during the uprising was vastly inflated in popular accounts caught up in a 'pornographic fantasy of rape'.<sup>96</sup> Interestingly, attempts were made in the wake of the uprising to dispel some of these stories. At the EIC quarterly meeting in March 1858, the Chairman was asked whether he 'had any positive knowledge of the mutilations which were said to have been committed by the Sepoys on women and children', to which he replied that 'his own impressions of India led him to believe that no such mutilations and atrocities had occurred'.<sup>97</sup> Similarly, when an officer present at the siege of Delhi was asked whether it was true that Europeans had been found chained to guns and crucified, he replied that 'to the best of his belief nothing of the kind had occurred'.<sup>98</sup> Such public denials of the more sensational atrocity stories peddled in the press suggest a need both to downplay the 'damage' done to British prestige and to quell public demands for bloody vengeance. Reactions in the press, however, suggest that such attempts to limit public perceptions about the scale of the atrocities met with little success, and popular ideas about what was required to restore proper order remained markedly more severe than those of the authorities.

## Changing Attitudes to India, Indians and Empire

The violent expression of discontent with British rule that the uprising represented shattered comfortable British notions of their imperial destiny, calling into question both their policies in India and their purpose for being there. During and after the revolt, various interest groups reinterpreted its meaning as they put forward 'competing narratives of justification'<sup>99</sup> in the debate over the future of India. Many hoped that the uprising, though traumatic, would usher in a new era in imperial policy, although the form that this would take was subject to debate. Some still believed that the British should eventually re-introduce Indian self-government. *Blackwood's* argued that they should raise

the governed to the state of the governors ... respect their customs and religions ... rule them intermediately by laws made sacred through time-honoured

usage inculcate civilisation by contact; and by giving them community and individual interest in the welfare of the State, involve them in its prosperity and progress.<sup>100</sup>

Such suggestions assumed that Indians, though currently irrational and uncivilised, were capable of improvement through Britain's 'civilising mission'. As Catherine Hall points out, however, popular belief in the redeemability of subject races and the potential equality of man was significantly damaged by events in 1857, which 'proved' the base nature of Indians.<sup>101</sup> Such a race could be controlled only through a sterner form of rule; 'having neither the intelligence nor the moral principle to govern themselves we must place them under a despotism.'<sup>102</sup> The *Illustrated London News* believed that British rule had been too lenient, arguing that:

The spectacle of power is that which we should exhibit... Asiatics differ not simply in religion, but in blood, from Europeans. They worship Power... They despise weakness; and any attempt to introduce the farce of constitutional forms among them is not only a failure and an error, but the source of discontent and rebellion... What is required for India is a despotism—unquestionable, but kindly; a fatherly despotism controlled only by fatherly justice and wisdom; strong to punish as the native Sovereigns have generally been, but prompter than they have ever shown themselves to do justice and mercy.<sup>103</sup>

By presenting despotism as the only system Indians could understand, the British granted themselves *carte blanche* to impose a more stringent, controlled regime in India—a comforting prospect in the wake of recent events. By advocating a benevolent, paternal despotism, they bestowed legitimacy upon a form of rule that would deny its subjects all agency. 'Native custom' should no longer play a part in government policy: 'There can hereafter be no communion betwixt light and darkness,' *The Times* declared, 'and he who claims the privilege of being guided by "native custom" must renounce the hope of European countenance or sympathy. The Bengal mutineers have done nothing more than indulge in the customs of their caste and country, and nothing beyond what was sanctioned by custom and by creed.'<sup>104</sup> Only a firmer form of rule, based on European principles, would secure British power in India.

Although some argued that India was held for British benefit, to allow the 'natural expansion of an adventurous race' and aid 'the progress of the nation and the happiness of the country',<sup>105</sup> others invoked a higher mission. 'We do not hold India to make fortunes for civilians,' one Baptist missionary declared, 'nor to afford distinction to soldiers, nor to establish there a flourishing British community, nor to secure to Great Britain a profitable trade, nor to increase our influence in Europe; but to make the Hindoos intelligent, prosperous, moral, religious, free, and happy.'<sup>106</sup> In this vein, the evangelicals argued, it was the

Indian government's duty 'to confess Christ, and to serve Him both as individual Christians and as a government ... every law that they pass, and every measure which they adopt, should be in harmony with His law'.<sup>107</sup> 1857 had proved the inefficacy of EIC policies of religious 'neutrality' and opened the door for a more overtly Christian form of government. 'There is now an avowed desire even in high quarters,' the *Baptist Magazine* declared, 'that Christianity may be diffused throughout India, and that, since the result of a humiliating patronage of heathenism has been so unfruitful, the experiment of Christian influence may be tried. Long as the door was shut against missionaries lest they should do harm, it is now thrown wide open to them, in the hope, more or less strong, that they may do good.'<sup>108</sup> No amount of superficial civilisation could secure India, only Christianity would efficiently assure British rule. As *The Ladies' Own* put it:

We might cover India with a network of railways, irrigate her deserts, reclaim her jungles, reform her courts of justice, and make it a model of successful government, but if we did not Christianise the people we should still be liable to the outrages and rebellions of miscreants like Nana Sahib.<sup>109</sup>

Such views were not universally held, however; in direct contrast to missionary position, the *Illustrated London News* argued:

Let us not make the mistake of thinking that we owe them Christianity, and of endeavouring to force it upon them before they are ripe to receive it. Christianity was never yet successfully inculcated by the sword, and never will be. . . . Soldiers and railroads are what are needed in India.<sup>110</sup>

If differences in the British press about the best way to rule India predated the events of 1857, the uprising did nothing to forge a consensus on the matter. If anything, it further polarised the field, as various groups took the opportunity to influence the new direction of British rule in India.

Although British interpretations of the uprising had sought to direct culpability away from British actions, the insurrection had exposed flaws in the current system of government, and the EIC inevitably suffered much of the blame. As early as July 1857, *The Times* asserted that the insurrection should 'awaken the attention at home to the vast interests at stake, and to the very anomalous character of the Government of India',<sup>111</sup> an argument that it revisited as the uprising dragged on, declaring in November 1857 that:

It must be established in practice, as it is proclaimed in theory, that the time is come when India shall be governed for its own good, and not for the advantage of a small fraction of a small class of Englishmen. . . . After a long and troubled infancy, India has been weaned, and is now handed over to the Imperial Government.<sup>112</sup>

By December, the *Illustrated London News* was suggesting that it was no longer a question of whether the EIC charter would be renewed, but how the Queen's government should be organised.<sup>113</sup> This was the obvious conclusion of the correlation between EIC mismanagement and the revolt. Constructing the EIC as a flawed ruler of India allowed the 'cause' of the uprising to be removed, while British rule continued under a new order of government.

In addition to debates about the form and purpose of empire, the uprising also provoked discussions about the nature of the Indian character. Chakravarty argues that for the British it proved 'the impossibility of assimilating and acculturating subject peoples',<sup>114</sup> while Metcalf believes that after 1857, ideas of Indian difference came to dominate imperial ideology.<sup>115</sup> Belief in the essentially pacifistic nature of Hinduism was undermined by the image of 'the mild Hindoo, who would up all by imbruing his perfidious villain hands in British blood'.<sup>116</sup> Some used this essential 'Indian difference' to argue that Indians should be kept at a distance, not entrusted with key positions of responsibility.<sup>117</sup> 'No dependence is to be placed on the loyalty of either Mussulmans or Hindus,' the *Missionary Herald* declared, 'The Government ought to be convinced that the only truly loyal section of the community are the Europeans, the Eurasians, and the native Christians, from among whom the various grades of office should be filled.'<sup>118</sup> Such attitudes, while common, were not, however, universally subscribed to. The idea that Hindus had been duped into participating in the uprising by perfidious Muslims confirmed the missionary opinion that their efforts were best directed towards the Hindus:

The Mohammedans, indeed, have exhibited both sympathy with the rebels and a malignant hatred of the English. But this they have always been ready to evince, and the difficulty of missionary labour amongst them will be no greater after the pacification of the country than it was before. The Hindus have been quiet spectators of the rebellion, or passive sufferers of the violence of armed men, or of the bands of depredators which these events have called forth. In very numerous cases they have actively interfered for the safety of the refugees, and conducted them to places of security.<sup>119</sup>

Some evangelicals, noting the potential for increased missionary activity in the wake of the uprising, defended the idea of Hindu redeemability, arguing that they were potentially similar to Europeans, and thus ripe for conversion. Rev J. George Wrench commented that

The Hindoo is very nearly, if not quite, equal in mental endowments, and in delicacy of feeling, to ourselves. Indeed he is much more nearly of kin to us than we suppose. He is much more nearly related to us than many an intelligent and partly civilized race. . . . We and the Hindoos are nearly allied in race.<sup>120</sup>

*Blackwood's* even declared that Hinduism was essentially similar to Christianity<sup>121</sup> and compared acts of ascetic penance to British 'circus acts', observing that

[w]e Britons do not understand how this can be; but quite as little do the quiescent Hindoos understand how reasonable beings can have a passion for running, leaping, cricketing, fox-hunting, and other violent and fatiguing pursuits, which would be worse torture to the Hindoo than an occasional turn on the swinging-hooks!<sup>122</sup>

Ideas about Indian difference were not, perhaps, so firmly decided as Chakravarty and Metcalf suggest.

## Conclusion

The British press represented a variety of opinions and interpretations of 1857, reporting the views of missionary groups and military representatives alike. Their coverage sought to build narrative structures through which the uprising could be interpreted without fundamentally undermining the ideological basis of British rule, to contain the event and make it non-threatening. As the uprising progressed, however, a more fragmented narrative emerged, that splintered off in various directions and incorporated the views of various interested parties. They quickly moved beyond the narrowly defined official construction of a 'military mutiny', as popular history-in-the-making represented 'the rebellion of 1857–58 as an "Indian revolt", providing "a myth, a history and heroes, of the cultural or ethnic kind"<sup>123</sup>. Their interpretations often clashed with official versions of events; the negative and dehumanised portrayal of Indians, for example, was at variance with the 'enunciation of the territorial principle and of plurality whereby all subjects of the Crown were entitled to equality of respect and treatment, whatever their creed or race',<sup>124</sup> expressed in Queen Victoria's proclamation. The construction of events in the public imagination displayed the fractures between different factions and the lack of a single, coherent 'imperial ideology'.<sup>125</sup>

The events of 1857 represented a threat to British power that had to be put down in order to maintain Britain's international status. To lose their Indian empire would be to 'lose power, prestige, and character—to descend in the rank of nations, and take a position more in accordance with our size on the map of Europe than with the greatness of our past glory and present ambition'.<sup>126</sup> As Bhadra argues, the British had to restore their honour in visible ways<sup>127</sup> to negate the humiliation caused by its loss. Their main concern, as Chakravarty claims, was the threat signified by a dark, subject people's rebellion against

Britain's supposedly all-powerful world position.<sup>128</sup> This necessitated the reassertion of authority in a variety of ways,<sup>129</sup> including the violent punishment of the Indian population. The uprising was written in the British press as part of a wider narrative of British greatness, replete with revered heroes and rascally villains. After the recent 'disgrace' of the Crimean war, by which 'the prestige of England was somewhat lessened',<sup>130</sup> the British could not allow themselves to be humiliated within their own empire. Rather, the uprising had to be ideologically structured in order to allow the British to emerge stronger than ever, proving that 'England still is, and still deserves to be, the paramount empire of the globe'.<sup>131</sup> While press coverage of the uprising reflected divergent views about the purpose of empire, the overriding theme was the preservation of British prestige. Instead of a measured debate over the causes of unrest in India, the main concern of the press was to deny that it was a reflection of British weakness and to assert a strong identity at a time of uncertainty in the global balance of powers. This was the hidden narrative underlying coverage of 1857 and informing the assumptions used in structuring it.

## Notes and References

1. Charles Ball, *The History of the Indian Mutiny: Giving a Detailed Account of the Sepoy Insurrection in India; and a Concise History of the Great Military Events which have tended to consolidate British Empire in Hindoostan*, vol. I (London: London Printing and Publishing Company, 1858); George Dodd, *The History of the Indian Revolt And of the Expeditions to Persia, China, and Japan, 1856–8* (London: W. And R. Chambers, 1859); John William Kaye, *A History of the Sepoy War in India 1857–8*, vol. I (London: W.H. Allen, 1864); *Accounts and Papers (Commons) (5) Vol. XVIII* (1859) (hereafter APC).
2. V.D. Sarkar, 'The Indian War of Independence' in Ainslie T. Embree, ed., *1857 in India: Mutiny or War of Independence?* (Boston: Heath, 1963).
3. Gautam Chakravarty, *The Indian Mutiny and the British Imagination* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), p. 20.
4. The main publications used include *The Times*, *The Illustrated London News* (hereafter ILN), *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* (hereafter BEM), *The Lady's Newspaper and Pictorial Times* (hereafter LNPT), *The Ladies' Own Journal and Miscellany* (hereafter LOJM), *The Christian Lady's Magazine* (hereafter CLM), *The Baptist Magazine* (hereafter BM) and *The Missionary Herald* (hereafter MH), with coverage carried between July 1857 and early 1858 as the main focus.
5. The ILN was one of the best selling weekly pictorial newspapers of the period, costing 6d and circulated mainly among the middle and upper classes. It avoided the sensationalism of the radical Sunday press, but did take a progressive line on social issues and reforms.
6. The LNPT was a weekly women's periodical, costing 6d and advertising itself as containing: news of the week 'carefully revised', needlework patterns, pictures and description of the latest Paris fashions, reviews of books, theatre and music and 'occasional articles by well known Authoresses on subjects connected with the position and influence of women'. From an advertisement in John Dennis, *A Handbook of Dorking* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1855).
7. Chakravarty, *The Indian Mutiny*, p. 33.

8. LNPT, 18 July 1857.
9. There was considerable debate within the press and in the ranks of the British army over the extent to which the Bengal army had been tainted, with some arguing that the majority of the sepoys remained loyal, while others decried the officers' refusal to acknowledge disaffection among their own men. See, for example, 'Letter from Cawnpore' (31 May 1857) in *The Times*, 5 September 1857; MH, October 1857, p. 648; BEM, November 1857, p. 606.
10. As one officer at Cawnpore put it, 'There are a number of rascals in the city anxious for a row, that they may murder and plunder at their ease. . . . But among our men I believe we are perfectly safe'. Letter from Cawnpore, *The Times*, 5 September 1857.
11. Tribals were widely blamed for any signs of unrest outside of the army, although their actions were not considered to be political statements, but rather the senseless deeds of 'tribes by nature predatory, who before our rule subsisted on plunder and rapine ... and ... long for a return of the days of misrule'. APC, p. 7.
12. For more on supposed Muslim culpability see below.
13. LNPT, 5 December 1857.
14. LNPT, 5 December 1857.
15. Rev. Charles Stovel, *India: Its Crimes and Claims—A Lecture* (London, 1857), p. 21.
16. ILN, 24 July 1857, p. 92.
17. Ranajit Guha, cited in Daniel J. Rycroft, *Representing Rebellion: Visual Aspects of Counter-insurgency in Colonial India* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2006), p. 2.
18. Rycroft, *Representing Rebellion*, p. 2.
19. 'The sons of England stand aghast as for the first time they open their eyes upon the Hindoo world. . . . Has time stood still here? Or are there indeed nations with whom existence has been stagnation for two thousand years, and which, like earth's poles, remain for ever stationary while all else whirls onward in the march of Time?' BEM, December 1857, p. 743.
20. BEM, December, 1857, p. 644.
21. *The Times*, 19 December 1857.
22. 'Nowhere have all the phases of conquest been so thoroughly illustrated as in that vast tract which we call India. It has been the great stage on which the great drama has been acted in all its successive scenes and acts'. BEM, December, 1857, p. 644.
23. BEM, August 1857, p. 245.
24. See, for example, LOJM, 31 October 1857.
25. LOJM, 23 January 1858.
26. BM, February 1858, p. 87.
27. BEM, October 1857, p. 489.
28. LNPT, 8 August 1857.
29. Chakravarty, *The Indian Mutiny*, p. 23.
30. APC, p. 3.
31. APC, p. 3.
32. APC.
33. BEM, November, 1857, p. 637.
34. Baptist Wriothsley Noel, *England and India: An Essay on the Duty of Englishmen Towards the Hindoos* (London: J. Nisbet, 1859), p. 443.
35. Gyanendra Pandey, 'A View of the Observable: a Positivist "Understanding" of Agrarian Society and Political Protest in Colonial India', *Journal of Peasant Studies*, vol. 7, no. 3 (1980).
36. BM, November 1857, p. 700.
37. MH, September 1857, p. 580.
38. MH, August 1857, p. 512.
39. Fulwar William Fowle, *A Thank-Offering for the Quelling of Mutiny and Rebellion in India; and for the Preservation of Dear Children, in that Land of Horrors and Heroes* (Salisbury, 1857), p. 7.

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40. Chakravarty, *The Indian Mutiny*, p. 30.
41. BEM, September 1857, p. 88.
42. Extract from *The Economist* in LOJM, 1 August 1857.
43. BEM, September 1857, p. 374.
44. LOJM, 27 September 1857.
45. Peter Robb, 'On the Rebellion of 1857: A Brief History of an Idea', *Economic and Political Weekly*, 12 May 2007, p. 1699.
46. MH, November 1857, p. 717.
47. BEM, September 1857, p. 380.
48. MH, October 1857, p. 658. This interpretation was not limited to the religious press, but can be found in a number of secular publications, for example, BEM, January 1858, p. 96.
49. ILN, 18 July 1857, p. 49.
50. 'The instigators of this insurrectionary movement turned out to be no other than the ex-king of Oude and the present king of Delhi'. LNPT, 8 August 1857.
51. See, for example, BEM, January 1858, p. 138.
52. Alex Padamsee, *Representations of Indian Muslims in British Colonial Discourse* (Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), p. 49.
53. Padamsee, *Representations of Indian Muslims*, p. 58.
54. ILN, 4 July 1857, p. 1.
55. 'Two or three things, however, seem pretty clear—there has been a criminal neglect on the part of our Indian authorities of warnings as to the state of our Bengal army—our whole staff of Europeans, both civil and military, has been injuriously underhanded, the immense accessions of territory recently made having been accompanied by no adequate corresponding increase of European officials.' BM, August 1857, p. 507.
56. LOJM, 28 November 1857.
57. Speech by J.H. Stocqueler, in LNPT, 15 August 1857.
58. 'To the gross mismanagement of our Indian empire, and the manifest injustice of which the East India Company has been so frequently guilty, may be mainly attributed the deplorable state of affairs which now exists.' ILN in LOJM, 3 October 1857.
59. 'It is said, however, that the alleged outrage, and the generally dissatisfied or distrustful condition of the troops, are but a part and consequence of a deterioration that has taken place of late in the officering of the native regiments, the men of experience having been withdrawn to other and semi-civil employments, and too much having been entrusted to young men ignorant of their profession and of India...' Extract from *The Scotsman* in LOJM, 4 July 1857.
60. In *The Times*, 'The Governor-General of India and the Directors of the East India Company', *The Times*, 18 May 1858, p. 12.
61. India Office Papers, 'Mutiny in the Punjab, in 1857' (14 April 1859).
62. India Office Papers, 'Mutiny in the Punjab, in 1857' (14 April 1859).
63. Letter from General Neill, in Wriothsley Noel, *England and India*, p. 67.
64. 'Some seventy or eighty Sepoys, belonging to a regiment which had previously mutinied, were tried at Benares or Cawnpore, by court-martial. There was no proof that they had murdered their officers, and the court, influenced by the Hon. John P. Grant, carrying out the spirit of the Governor-General's order acquitted the men; but another tribunal awaited them. The 78<sup>th</sup> Highlanders, on learning that they were acquitted, immediately issued forth and bayoneted every man of them, swearing that if the Government did not know how, or were afraid, to take revenge on the murderers of innocent women and children, they knew how to avenge the deaths of their countrymen and countrywomen.' 'Letter from Calcutta', 18 September 1857, in LOJM, 7 November 1857.
65. ILN, 19 September 1857, p. 285.
66. Alfred Bowen Evans, *India: Two Discourses* (London: Enfield, 1857), p. 31.

67. 'Letter from a Lieutenant of the Bengal Engineers at Delhi', 7 July 1857, in *The Times*, 22 September 1857.
68. 'Letter from Dinapore', 13 July 1857, in *The Times*, 25 September 1857.
69. *Delhi Gazette Extra*, 13 June 1857, in LOJM, 8 August 1857. When the British retook Delhi, they killed large numbers of its inhabitants. All the city people found within the walls when our troops entered were bayoneted on the spot, and the number was considerable, as you may suppose when I tell you that in some houses forty and fifty persons were hiding. LNPT, 21 November 1857.
70. LNPT, 21 November 1857.
71. *The Times*, in LOJM, 31 October 1857.
72. LNPT, 14 November 1857.
73. Bernard Cohn, 'Representing Authority in Victorian India', in Hobsbawm and Ranger, eds, *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge, 1983); R. Mukherjee, "'Satan Let Loose Upon the Earth": The Kanpur Massacres in the Revolt of 1857' in *Past and Present*, vol. 128 (1990).
74. Chakravarty, *The Indian Mutiny*, p. 39.
75. Chakravarty, *The Indian Mutiny*, p. 4.
76. Rycroft, *Representing Rebellion*, p. v.
77. Guha in Rycroft, *Representing Rebellion*, p. 3.
78. Chakravarty, *The Indian Mutiny*, p. 38.
79. 'Letter from Delhi', 15 June 1857, in LNPT, 29 August 1857.
80. 'Letter from an Englishwoman at Murree', 27 June 1857, in *The Times*, 10 September 1857.
81. Mukherjee, 'Satan Let Loose Upon the Earth'.
82. *The Times*, 31 August 1857.
83. Gautam Bhadra, 'Four Rebels of 1857', in Ranajit Guha and Gayatri C. Spivak, eds, *Selected Subaltern Studies* (New York, 1988).
84. Jenny Sharpe, *Allegories of Empire: The Figure of Woman in the Colonial Text* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993).
85. *The Press*, in LOJM, 24 October 1857.
86. BEM, October 1857, p. 505.
87. Sara Suleri, *The Rhetoric of English India* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), p. 76.
88. LNPT, 12 December 1857.
89. BEM, October 1857, p. 505.
90. LNPT, 19 August 1857.
91. LNPT, 28 November 1857.
92. Bhadra, 'Four Rebels of 1857'.
93. *Carnarvon Herald*, in *The Times*, 7 April 1858.
94. BEM in LNPT, 14 November 1857.
95. *Bengal Hurkaru*, 5 August 1857, in *The Times*, 21 September 1857.
96. Sharpe 'The Unspeakable Limits of Rape', p. 235.
97. Extract from the proceedings of the Quarterly General Court of the East India Company, in *The Times*, 25 March 1858.
98. Extract from the proceedings of the Quarterly General Court of the East India Company, in *The Times*, 25 March 1858.
99. Chakravarty, *The Indian Mutiny*, p. 45.
100. BEM, December 1857, p. 643.
101. Hall couples 1857 in India with the Morant Bay rebellion in Jamaica in 1865 in terms of its impact on attitudes to other races. Catherine Hall, *Civilising Subjects: Metropole and Colony in the English Imagination 1830–1867* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002), p. 284.
102. Wriothsley Noel, *England and India*, p. 39.
103. ILN, 22 August 1857, p. 185.

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104. *The Times*, 29 December 1857.
105. LOJM, 4 July 1857.
106. Wriothesley Noel, *England and India*, p. 25.
107. Wriothesley Noel, *England and India*, p. 10.
108. BM, January 1858, p. 43.
109. LOJM, 31 November 1857.
110. ILN, 4 July 1857, p. 1.
111. *The Times*, 13 July 1857.
112. *The Times*, 8 November 1858.
113. ILN, 12 December 1857, p. 578.
114. Chakravarty, *The Indian Mutiny*, p. 4.
115. Thomas R. Metcalf, *Ideologies of the Raj* (Cambridge: CUP, 1997).
116. 'Letter from Delhi', 25 June 1857, in LNPT, 5 September 1857.
117. See, for example, Speech by J.H. Stocqueler, in LNPT, 15 August 1857.
118. MH, October 1857, p. 658.
119. MH, September, 1857, p. 579.
120. Rev. J. George Wrench, *Thanksgiving to Almighty God, For the Constant and Signal Successes Obtained by the Troops of her Majesty, and by the Whole of the Forces Serving in India* (London, 1859), p. 6.
121. For example, the argument was made that idols were not nearly so revered as was generally believed:

Sometimes temporary idols are made by the worshippers themselves. A Brahmin, after squeezing a lump of the Ganges mud in his hands into something like an image, will set it up on the bank, offering it rice, fruit, flowers, and oil ... and then, after a little pause, he will throw it away.... Such practices serve to illustrate the fact that, with a large portion of the Hindoos, idols are no more regarded as actual gods than is the crucifix in Roman Catholic countries,—sometimes less so.

BEM, December 1857, p. 749.
122. BEM, December, 1857, p. 750.
123. Robb, 'On the Rebellion of 1857', p. 1701.
124. Robb, 'On the Rebellion of 1857', p. 1701.
125. Metcalf, *Ideologies of the Raj*.
126. ILN, 4 July 1857, p. 1.
127. Bhadra, 'Four Rebels of 1857'.
128. Chakravarty, *The Indian Mutiny*.
129. Bhadra, 'Four Rebels of 1857'.
130. ILN, 26 September 1857.
131. ILN, 26 September 1857.