

Across the Colonial Divide: Friendship in the British Empire, 1875-1940

by

You-Sun Crystal Chung

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy
(History and Women's Studies)
in the University of Michigan
2014

Doctoral Committee:

Associate Professor Kali A. K. Israel, Chair
Professor Adela Pinch
Professor Helmut Puff
Associate Professor Damon Salesa, University of Auckland

© You-Sun Crystal Chung
2014

To my parents,
Hyui Kyung Choi and Sye Kyun Chung,
My brother June Won Fred Chung,
And the memory of my grandmother
Junghwa Kim

Acknowledgements

First, I would like to thank my committee Kali Israel, Adela Pinch, Damon Salesa, and especially Helmut Puff, for his generosity and insight since the inception of this project. Leslie Pincus also offered valuable encouragement when it was most keenly felt. This dissertation would not have been possible without the everyday support provided by Lorna Altstetter, Diana Denney, Aimee Germain, and especially Kathleen King.

I have been fortunate throughout the process to be sustained by the friendship of those from home as well as those those I met at Michigan. My thanks to those who have demonstrated for me the strength of old ties: Jinok Baek, Yongran Byun Bang Sunghoon, Jeeyun Cho, Kyungeun Cho, Hae mi Choi, Hyewon Choi, Soonyoung Choi, Woojin Choi, Sue Young Chung, Yoonie Chung, YoonYoung Hwang, Jiah Hyun, Won Sun Hyun, Hailey Jang, Claire Kim, Kim Daeyoung, Max Kepler, Eun Hyung Kim, Hyunjoo Kim, Hye Young Kim, Jiwon Kang, Kim Jeongyeon, Jungeun Kim, Minju Kim, Minseung Kim, Nayeon Kim, Soojeong Kim, Woojae Kim, Bora Lee, Dae Jun Lee, Haeyeon Lee, Philip W. Lee, Seuyeun Lee, Woo Mi Lee, Angela Ng, Minjeong Oh, James L. Park, Jong Min Park, Jungwon Park, Hayoung Rhee, Jinhee Rhew, Shin Jieun, Ji-Hye Shin, JiYoung Son, Pacharee Sudhinaraset, and Song Wook.

Michigan has been no less forthcoming in the friendship I have found: Meg Ahern, Mandy Davis, Jacqueline Doremus, Elizabeth Ela, Sherry Funches, Molly

Hatcher, Ann Hernandez, Susan Hwang, Olivera Jokić, Kumiko Kobayashi, Jaymin Kim, Sang Woo Kim, Suzi Linsley, Jeffrey Lloyd, Diana Mankowski, Elspeth Martini, Nilanjana Majumdar, Mercedes Mejia, Carrick Rogers, Sarah McDermott Thompson, Navaneetha Mokkal-Maruthur, Patrick Parker, Thida Sam, and Jamie Small. I owe special thanks to my writing group friends, who have been invaluable in these final stages: Rebecca Grapevine, Jeremy Ledger, Yan Long, Emily Merchant, and Lenny Ureña Valerio. Hyunchul Park has been an unfailing source of support throughout. Finally, I would like to thank my ever patient parents and brother as well as my extended family.

Table of Contents

Dedication.....	ii
Acknowledgements.....	iii
Abstract.....	v
Introduction.....	1
Chapter One	
The Solicitor and the Detective Novelist: Conan Doyle and the Curious Case of George Edalji.....	27
Chapter Two	
“The One Romantic Incident in My Life:” The Mathematician and the Clerk.....	108
Chapter Three	
The Poet and His Critic: Rabindranath Tagore and Edward John Thompson.....	201
Epilogue.....	243
Bibliography.....	251

Abstract

This dissertation explores how “colonial friendship” in the form of collaborations and affinities forged across colonial lines of power and culture within the British Empire signified publicly and privately. Examining three cases in which British men aligned themselves with men of South Asian backgrounds in a period spanning from the late nineteenth to mid-twentieth century brings into focus a kaleidoscope of meanings—ethical, affective, and professional—marshaled under the conceptual umbrella of friendship.

Colonial friendships clearly resonated in the public sphere because those involved were designated differently with regard to the nation and Empire. I explore how individuals understood themselves as “friends” in the context of racial and cultural differences as they played out in such realms as public opinion, the academy, and cosmopolitan circuits of cultural exchange. These relationships were informed by exhortatory notions of guardianship as well as egalitarian aspirations and reflected multi-layered asymmetries—most prominently of race, class, and educational background among others. As such, they serve as a springboard for the central question of this dissertation: what meanings were generated by these friendships and how were they used?

This question and a consideration of contexts of public, colonial, and national contestations motivate three case studies. Chapter 1 uses Arthur Conan Doyle’s 1907

public campaign to exonerate the biracial George Edalji as a lens through which to explore the inclusionary and exclusionary impulses of empire-building. Chapter 2 considers the affective dimensions of the mathematical collaboration of Srinivasa Ramanujan and G. H. Hardy to interrogate the disparity of expressions of feeling between the former's reticence and the latter's volubility. Chapter 3 examines as a window into the limits of cosmopolitan thought in a period of ascendant nationalism the relations between poet and Nobel Laureate Rabindranath Tagore and Edward John Thompson, who started his career as a missionary before becoming a writer on the subject of India.

People from various walks of the colonial order invested in elective affinities with those of divergent national, cultural, or racial affiliations, motivated by the perceived advantages of bridging those gaps. On one hand, material exigency often animated the experience of colonial subjection. Aligning oneself with those in more powerful positions might yield such practical advantages such as professional advancement. On the other, for the British, the empire fostered a sense of self invested in enacting liberal universal visions of the world through amical associations such as those examined here. The asymmetries particular to each case, however, resist schematization, as evidenced by the multiple ways in which friendship could be used to both justify and challenge the British imperial project. I argue that friendship served as a representative mode of colonial relationality in the British Empire. Both an alternative and complement to liberal paternalism, friendship as practiced in the domain of Empire highlighted the multivalence of the imperial project.

Introduction

In 1936, at the Harvard Tercentenary Conference of Arts and Sciences, G. H. Hardy, prominent mathematician and professor at Cambridge, delivered two lectures on Srinivasa Ramanujan. Sixteen years had passed since the mathematical genius, formerly a low-level clerk in Madras, India, fell ill and met his untimely death. But he remained omnipresent in Hardy's consciousness. As a participant in the symposium on mathematics and the physical sciences, Hardy contributed a paper on a topic of his choice. He chose Ramanujan as his subject—the man himself as much his work as a mathematician. For Hardy, the two were intertwined. In fact, Hardy's first lecture bears the title of "The Indian mathematician Ramanujan," referring solely to the man.¹ The conference was intended as "a major international scholarly event."² In principle, it promoted the pursuit of common truths in the face of interwar political conflict. It was one of many efforts through which those who looked toward universalist visions of a world hoped to combat the divisions that had recently exacted a heavy price.

Hardy's lecture, however, highlighted the difficulties of realizing such a vision. He told the story of "a poor and solitary Hindu pitting his brains against

¹ By way of comparison, his second lecture is entitled "Ramanujan and the theory of prime numbers," in which case Hardy more directly addresses the substance of Ramanujan's work.

² Clark A. Elliott, "The Tercentenary of Harvard University in 1936: The Scientific Dimension," *Osiris*, 2nd Series, Vol. 14, Commemorative Practices in Science: Historical Perspectives on the Politics of Collective Memory (1999), 159.

the accumulated wisdom of Europe.”³ On one hand, Hardy signaled Ramanujan’s contribution to the conference’s global academic project by choosing Ramanujan as the subject of his lecture. On the other, he characterized the process of Ramanujan’s work in combative—rather than cooperative—terms. Hardy’s construction of Ramanujan’s achievement as a struggle against Europe gestured to the amplified challenges that colonial disparities posed for those disadvantaged by them—such as the former clerk from Madras—to make themselves understood across divisions of race, power, and culture. This was true even for Ramanujan, whom the European math world eventually acknowledged as a genius. Indeed, in 1918, five years into his collaboration with Hardy, Ramanujan achieved Royal Society membership, foreshadowing a legacy that extended decades after death as his work continued to fuel mathematical research into the present. And while the ultimate recognition afforded by this ongoing relevance came much later, Hardy’s designation of Ramanujan as a “genius” was contemporaneous.

Nevertheless, Ramanujan encountered substantial hurdles—in the ostensibly objective discipline of mathematics, no less—making the truth of his mathematical aptitude known across the divide that separated colonizer from colonized. Hardy and his cosmopolitan peers at the conference assumed the truth they sought to be universally recognizable. Whatever divisions the conference aspired to bridge, its participants shared in large part a Eurocentric frame of reference to serve as the basis for a collective pursuit of truth. Ramanujan’s case, however, suggested that the latter might take alternative forms shaped by global—

³ G. H. Hardy, *Ramanujan: Twelve Lectures on Subjects Suggested by His Life and Work* (Providence, R.I.: American Mathematical Society Chelsea Publishing, 1999), 10.

more specifically, colonial, in this case—differentials of culture and power. Such forms might be so foreign as to elude easy appraisal.

The universalism espoused by ascendant liberal thought in Britain not infrequently conflated the Eurocentric and the universal. In the realm of international politics, those who subscribed to this viewpoint put forward domestic political practice as a model for emulation.⁴ This casting of Eurocentric models as universal could easily transfer to other areas of international exchange—such as mathematics. Ramanujan’s mathematical talent was not as legible as those who benefited from a European education.

The global regimes of knowledge production vested with the power of appraisal were informed by contemporary British liberal internationalism, whose ultimate aim was a peaceful international society of nations or states developing in more inclusive directions.⁵ Casper Sylvest has examined the “diverse yet broadly coherent” attitude toward international affairs that reflected a pervasive liberal orientation towards peace and order and an insistence on the applicability of public morality and rationality in an international sphere as well as the domestic.⁶ Liberal internationalist ideology constituted the eventual endpoint of a “universal but gradualist liberalism” that sought to realize liberal values of progress, order, and justice beyond domestic borders in the sphere of international relations.⁷ And while the esoteric enterprise of pure mathematics seems at best tangential to matters of global war and peace, Hardy—whose approach to his

⁴ Sylvest, *British Liberal Internationalism*, 49.

⁵ Casper Sylvest, *British Liberal Internationalism, 1880-1930 Making Progress?* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2009), 49.

⁶ Sylvest, *British Liberal Internationalism*, 26.

work was aesthetic to the point that he deplored the utilitarianism of applied mathematics—articulated its value in terms of its absolute uselessness for the pursuit of war.⁸ In other words, Hardy was sufficiently immersed in the ideals of liberal internationalism so as to conceive of his mathematical research as in some way contributory to global peace. The liberal project as reworked in the international domain provided some measure of motivation for Hardy’s vision of global mathematical cooperation.

Hardy’s actual experience with the latter, however, remained largely confined to Europe. But communication across colonial difference posed a greater challenge. In the face of difficulties on both sides—demonstrated by Ramanujan’s struggle for recognition and Hardy’s campaign for that recognition—Hardy strove to achieve in his lecture a fair assessment of Ramanujan and his work. In part, what stood in the way was some degree of mutual incomprehensibility that Hardy asserted was unavoidable in cross-cultural interactions. “Ramanujan was an Indian,” Hardy observed, “and I suppose that it is always a little difficult for an Englishman and an Indian to understand one another properly.”⁹ Even as Hardy characterized the “difficulties in judging Ramanujan” as “formidable,” his understated nod to such inevitability downplayed this general tendency towards miscommunication in colonial exchanges.¹⁰ Instead, Hardy identified the crux of the problem as specific to the nature of his own relationship with Ramanujan:

⁷ Sylvest, *British Liberal Internationalism*, 49.

⁸ G. H. Hardy, *A Mathematician’s Apology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992).

⁹ Hardy, *Ramanujan*, 1.

¹⁰ Hardy, *Ramanujan*, 1.

“The real difficulty for me is that Ramanujan was, in a way, my discovery.”¹¹

What Hardy posited as the greater—“real”—difficulty was his own emotional investment in Ramanujan. “I owe more to him than to anyone else in the world with one exception,” he continued, “and my association with him is the one romantic incident in my life.”¹²

In effect, Hardy all but dismissed the asymmetries of power, location, and access to resources that shaped the divergence of perspective that might hinder mutual understanding. What he instead foregrounded as the primary handicap to his professional judgment was the personal meaning that Ramanujan held for him. For Hardy, Ramanujan signified in turn discovery, creditor, and romance. Additionally, Hardy referred to him as “a treasure” as well as a subject in which Hardy considered himself “still the first authority.”¹³ It is this plethora of significations that lends itself to the application of friendship as an analytic lens. The multiple facets of their association as he assessed them were united by a common theme of significance; aligning himself with Ramanujan was important to Hardy. And he took as much care in delineating his relationship with Ramanujan he did in judging the latter’s reputation as a mathematician. “I have to form myself, as I have never really formed before,” Hardy described the objective of his lecture, “some sort of reasoned estimate of the most romantic figure in the recent history of mathematics.”¹⁴ Hardy’s aspirations toward precision in this task impelled him to cast about for terms less fluid than that of “friend,” even as

¹¹ Hardy, *Ramanujan*, 1.

¹² Hardy, *Ramanujan*, 2.

¹³ Hardy, *Ramanujan*, 1, 2.

¹⁴ Hardy, *Ramanujan*, 1.

the latter serves as a prism through which to consider the possibilities of axes of affinity beyond family and romantic attraction.

Despite Hardy's painstaking distinction between the general problem of translation across cultures and Hardy's perception of his own closeness to Ramanujan as clouding his judgment, these two difficulties were connected. "The difficulty for me then," Hardy concluded, "is not that I do not know enough about him, but that I know and feel too much and that I simply cannot be impartial."¹⁵ The excess of feeling to which Hardy referred was tied to his perception of Ramanujan as a romantic figure. And the strength of the romance plot of heterosexual desire is such that this tends to elicit contemporary bemusement. In a recent fictional account of the episode, novelist David Leavitt highlights Hardy's use of the term "romantic." By way of snippets of inner monologue attributed to Hardy, Leavitt renders the scene of the lecture as one in which he ascribes to Hardy the intent to provoke his audience through its use: "Did that ruffle some feathers?"¹⁶ Leavitt's characterization of Hardy depicts him as "hop[ing] so." The assumption, however, that the use of affective language between men was ill-received—indeed, that the public declaration of such would result in feathers ruffled—bespeaks contemporary preconceptions about the past more than anything else.

Hardy gestured to Ramanujan's romantic appeal across both public and personal contexts. As such, this need not signal a personal romantic interest in Ramanujan on Hardy's part. Rather, the designation of Ramanujan as romantic

¹⁵ Hardy, *Ramanujan*, 2.

¹⁶ David Leavitt, *The Indian Clerk: A Novel* (New York: Bloomsbury, 2007), 5.

“figure” and “incident” are reminiscent of the terms of romance as generic narrative form.¹⁷ Literary critic Northrop Frye has discussed romance as a “generic plot,” whose distinctive structure centers on the development of an idealized hero in which adventure and the quest are crucial narrative devices.¹⁸ Accordingly, Ramanujan was such a compelling figure for Hardy because he embodied a radical difference that rendered his story an adventure for Hardy.

At the same time, potent egalitarian ideals of classical friendship, heralded by Renaissance humanists and still generative of much contemporary scholarly notice, imbue a multi-layered notion of friendship with associations of equality and sameness.¹⁹ The imprint of these ideals is evident in Hardy’s insistence on his indebtedness to Ramanujan. Cast in the role of mentor and advocate by his position, Hardy appeared to anticipate and counterbalance such perceptions by underscoring Ramanujan’s particular strengths as a mathematician. As much as possible, Hardy emphasized an equivalence in their relationship, if not a literal sameness. Moreover, Hardy explicitly rejected the image of Ramanujan as “a wonder from the East, or an inspired idiot, or a psychological freak,” asserting that Ramanujan was essentially “a rational human being who happened to be a great mathematician”—like Hardy himself.²⁰ After all, the extraordinary turn of events that brought Ramanujan into Hardy’s everyday was enabled by the one crucial thing he had in common with Hardy—his

¹⁷ C. P. Snow alludes to some of the intense relationships of Hardy’s life separately from his discussion of Hardy’s two important collaborations—with Ramanujan and Littlewood—making it unlikely that Hardy was professing romantic feelings (as defined in its narrowest sense) for Ramanujan in his lecture.

¹⁸ Northrop Frye, *The Secular Scripture: A Study of the Structure of Romance, The Charles Eliot Norton Lectures 1974-1975* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1976), 162.

¹⁹ Michelle Miller, “Material Friendship: Service and Amity in Early Modern French Literature” (Ph.D. diss., University of Michigan, 2009), 4.

mathematical acumen. The mirror-image vision of friendship applied to the obsessive commitment both demonstrated with regard to their work.

Ramanujan retained such a hold on Hardy's imagination, however, because he was *not* a product of the "accumulated wisdom of Europe" as was Hardy.²¹ It was the juxtaposition of similarity and difference in Ramanujan that served to confirm for Hardy his beliefs about the universality of mathematical objectivity. The origins of Ramanujan's mathematical brilliance were a secondary matter; it was the fact that mattered to Hardy. That brilliance, however, as he experienced it in the particularities of Ramanujan's strengths and weaknesses—as opposed to some abstract notion of genius—was unmistakably conditioned by the limited access to educational resources determined by the latter's subject position. Ramanujan's death also contributed to his further capturing Hardy's imagination by way of the absence the latter had to fill.

Thus motivated, this tableau of an elderly Hardy ruminating on the long-dead Ramanujan is noteworthy by virtue of its exceptionality. Their friendship was hardly representative of colonial relations in general. Yet despite its particularities—or rather, because of them—it serves as a springboard for productive questions about the nature of colonial relationships that registered as friendship to those who engaged in them. The central question of this dissertation is that of what meanings such friendships hold; this in turn raises more specific questions about the particular texture of such ties. How was race important—or not—for those who came face to face with it? How can everyday intimacy be

²⁰ Hardy, *Ramanujan*, 5.

²¹ Hardy, *Ramanujan*, 10.

reconciled with hierarchies of racial superiority and inferiority? What—if any—implications did these affiliations hold for the colonial enterprise as a whole?

This dissertation explores how “colonial friendships” in the form of collaborations and affinities forged across colonial lines of power and culture within the British Empire signified publicly and privately. In a period spanning from the late nineteenth century to the interwar years—1875 and 1940 bookend the span of relations covered in the following chapters—it examines the texture of collaborations and affinities forged between British men and men of South Asian backgrounds whose lives were profoundly affected by an empire whose subjects moved about with increasing ease. The colonial administration established a transportation infrastructure necessary for a global imperial system, a program begun with the construction of a railway in India in the mid-nineteenth century.²² By 1870, the opening of the Suez Canal sped up the Indo-British sea voyage so that a letter that formerly took a year to arrive in the 1830s might only take a month.²³ The two economies became increasingly intertwined, with India supplying crucial raw materials and becoming the primary export market for British goods by 1913.²⁴ Furthermore, India held a central position in the British Empire, providing such logistical support as indentured labor while also serving as a symbol of national pride.²⁵

Through the varied lenses of a widely publicized animal maiming case, a mathematical collaboration, and a project of literary cosmopolitanism, the following case studies address the question of “what dialogue is possible across boundaries of race,

²² Barbara Daly Metcalf and Thomas R. Metcalf, *A Concise History of Modern India* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 97.

²³ Metcalf and Metcalf, *A Concise History*, 99.

²⁴ Metcalf and Metcalf, *A Concise History*, 125.

nation, [...] culture,” and education.²⁶ Over the course of its existence, the British Empire brought people together along multiple vectors of colonial power, across both spatial and cultural distances. By the latter half of the nineteenth century, the Indian Uprising of 1857 marked a watershed moment in Indo-British relations as it precipitated the transition of colonial rule by the East India Company to that of the crown. The event cast a long shadow as British attitudes against India and Indians hardened in the following decades.

Meanwhile, increasing numbers of Indian visitors of a wide range of socioeconomic backgrounds took advantage of improved travel between India and Britain, and they became more visible across social, cultural, political and institutional contexts in the early twentieth century. Accordingly, state scrutiny of this population mounted as Britain and its colonies faced the outbreak of the First World War and its aftermath. In spite of considerable support for the war in India, with 1.27 million Indian soldiers in combat, Indians found that the claims to imperial citizenship they made through military service unsuccessful. Meanwhile, the concomitant movement for decolonization in India continued to grow until its culmination in independence in 1947. It is against this historical backdrop that I situate my case studies.

By examining the stories that the friends in the following chapters told as well as the stories that were told about them—in personal letters as well as in more public venues such as newspaper articles and academic lectures—this dissertation will consider the ways in which these were dialogues shaped by colonial power relations. It follows the paper trail surrounding these personal associations to excavate a sense of what they meant to those who participated in them as well as those who looked on.

²⁵ Metcalf and Metcalf, *A Concise History*, 126-131.

The difficulty of conducting research in the domain of the personal, emotional, and amical lies in the problems of accessing interpersonal interactions. The extent to which the substance of the latter can be gleaned is circumscribed by what is available in the sources. Letters between those whose relations come into focus as friendship provide its most immediate traces. Records of such direct interaction come to mind as the most obvious archive of friendship. But as suggested by the way that a friendship could extend beyond one friend's death through the reflections of the other friend, such variegated practices of friendship throw light on a less apparent archive.

Colonial friendships clearly resonated in the public sphere because those involved as friends were designated differently with regard to the nation and empire. I explore how individuals understood themselves as "friends" in the context of racial and cultural difference as it played out in such realms as public opinion, the academy, and cosmopolitan circuits of cultural exchange. These relationships were informed by exhortatory notions of guardianship as well as egalitarian aspirations and reflected multi-layered asymmetries—most prominently of race and class. People from various walks of the colonial order invested in elective affinities with those of divergent national, cultural, or racial affiliations, motivated by the perceived advantages of bridging those gaps. On one hand, material exigency often animated the experience of colonial subjection. Aligning oneself with those in more powerful positions might yield such practical advantages such as professional advancement. On the other, for the British, the empire fostered a sense of self invested in enacting liberal universal visions of the world through amical associations such as those examined here.

²⁶ Saul Dubow and Jacqueline Rose, preface to *Black Hamlet*, by Wulf Sachs (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996), xi.

The asymmetries particular to each case, however, resist schematization, as demonstrated by the multiple ways in which friendship could be used to both justify and challenge the British imperial project. Friendship signified a more open-ended choice—“voluntary and something to be achieved”—that set it apart from family and romantic attachment, whose pursuit tended toward more structured social expectations.²⁷ As such, I argue that friendship served as a representative mode of colonial relationality in the British Empire. The tension that seems to inhere in a construct of colonial friendship stems from the apparent contradiction between the hierarchy inherent in colonialism and the egalitarian ideals of friendship.

Paternalism and its language of familial hierarchy have thus offered a more familiar vocabulary of colonial relationality. I contend, however, that greater attention to the layers of historical meanings of friendship, combined with an examination of its practices in colonial contexts, demonstrates its accommodation of the asymmetries of power and access in colonial relations. At the same time, the particular attraction friendship held for various historical actors lay in the realm of possibility it offered beyond the paternalist model of linear development. Appealing to such values as individual progress and moral betterment, friendship too served as a variation on a larger theme of liberal relationality. Ultimately, my dissertation will show that colonial friendships as understood by these individuals in this period of the British Empire was an important resource for managing difference in a colonial social sphere. Both an alternative and complement to liberal paternalism, friendship as practiced in the domain of Empire highlighted the multivalence of the imperial project, wherein romance ranged from the registers of the homoerotic to the moral. In the case of the latter, however,

²⁷ Robert R. Bell, *Worlds of Friendship* (Beverly Hills: Sage Publications, 1981), 10.

inhabiting the role of moral crusader ran the risk of verging into the realm of moralizing. The claims that might be made via the bonds of asymmetrical friendship—as in the case of treaties of friendship between colonial powers and their colonies—demonstrate that friendship was not inherently liberating. This dissertation takes seriously both the range of possibility that friendship offered as well as the binds that it might open oneself up to. The individual stories of friendship in the following chapters thus both reflect and work upon the larger narrative of imperial friendship in this period.

Friendship in the Past

One objective of this dissertation is to bring into focus a broader range of social and “friendly” interactions beyond the colonial intimacies of the domestic sphere and sexual encounters. The full spectrum of colonial interactions included the most intimate of relations, and research on the latter provides much needed insight into how colonial and racial domination were facilitated by hegemonic ideas about gender and sexuality. Mrinalini Sinha has examined the construction of colonial masculinity and effeminacy in late nineteenth-century India and its implication in the political, economic, and administrative imperatives of colonial rule.²⁸ Yet in its focus on miscegenation and the policing of male-female relationships, much previous research has deployed a largely heteronormative framework in its analysis.²⁹ Studies of relations between men have acted as a partial corrective to this tendency, but many have remained closely tied to the

²⁸ Mrinalini Sinha, *Colonial Masculinity: The “Manly Englishman” and the “Effeminate Bengali” in the Late Nineteenth Century*, Studies in Imperialism (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1995).

²⁹ Stoler gestures to both “sexual and affective intimacies,” asserting that her focus is not solely on the management of sexuality but also includes a larger project of the making of the private.

singular analytic lens of the history of sexuality in their concentration on homosexuality and the realm of the homoerotic.³⁰

By taking friendship as its primary lens of analysis, we can better understand the nuanced motivations people brought to the everyday interactions precipitated by the colonial situation. Much in the way that the study of gender in its early stages tended to generate a disproportionate number of studies of women, affect and intimacy also tend to register predominantly in sexual relationships and familial contexts.³¹ As such, they become susceptible to being bundled with sexuality in a way that forestalls a deeper analysis. It is only by disentangling these threads that the specificity of the varied investments people had in a whole range of interactions can be uncovered. Accordingly, I will explore how the collaborative efforts of metropolitan agents and colonized subjects both reflected as well as problematized colonial power relations in the British Empire. It thus pushes beyond the schematizing impulse that informs questions of whether such relationships held subversive anti-colonial potential or merely served as enactments of imperial power. Instead, it elucidates a kaleidoscope of meanings—ethical, affective, and professional—that I marshal under the conceptual umbrella of friendship.

In recent years, a rich and expanding literature has illuminated hitherto less explored facets of friendship. In orienting my inquiry around an excavation of the multiple and overlapping motivations people brought to the relations they forged with others, I build on insights gleaned from Alan Bray's thought-

³⁰ See Heike Ingeborg Schmidt, "Colonial Intimacy: The Rechenberg Scandal and Homosexuality in German East Africa." *Journal of the History of Sexuality*, 17. 1 (January 2008) 25-59; A. R. H. Copley, *A Spiritual Bloomsbury: Hinduism and Homosexuality in the Lives and Writings of Edward Carpenter, E.M. Forster, and Christopher Isherwood* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2006).

³¹ See Robert Aldrich, *Colonialism and Homosexuality*. (London: Routledge, 2003); Stephanie Newell, *The Forger's Tale: the Search for Odeziaku* (Ohio University Press, 2006); Richard Phillips, *Sex, politics and empire: a postcolonial geography*. (Manchester University Press, 2006).

provoking work on male friendship spanning the early modern and modern periods.³² Bray has persuasively argued for the reconsideration of the modern dismissal of friendship as “essentially private,” conceptualized as a completely self-referential relationship with no bearing on any other aspect of the participating parties’ lives beyond itself.³³ In early modern England, friendship signified as an objective relation not unlike kinship in the public sphere; as such, it was useful. That use value, however, coexisted with an idealistic rhetoric of friendship. Rather than concluding that the latter thus constituted a cynical ploy, Bray contends that utility need not cancel out affect; the error lies in the eye of the modern beholder who discounts one in the face of the other. The ideal construct of “pure” friendship, untainted by the exigencies of the world, was an “enabling rhetoric,” allowing friends to negotiate the difficulties inherent in managing mutual expectations and possible disappointment.³⁴

Michelle Miller’s examination of unequal friendships in Renaissance literature prompts a similar reexamination, challenging the assumption that the egalitarian model of friendship is the only viable one.³⁵ Miller argues that notions of amical self-sameness, virtue, and disinterest have come to preside as a unitary Western heritage of friendship to the point of obscuring a parallel tradition that saw the value of non-equal bonds. According to Miller, such ties were prized in their own right for the range of experience in difference they offered. Difference was not only something that was always in need of being overcome; it could at

³² Alan Bray, *The Friend*. (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2003).

³³ Bray, *The Friend*, 2.

³⁴ Bray, *The Friend*, 276.

times serve as or be viewed as a resource and hold positive value. In considering the colonial situation as fundamentally one of managing difference in which the association of people of categories officially distinguished by such differences, this dissertation aims to illuminate the workings of colonial friendship by situating it against the past from which it emerged. By examining the ways that colonial friendships challenge present-day assumptions of friendship, it shows that they constitute part of a long tradition of public, non-equal friendship.

Medieval and early modern systems of patronage and their vertical friendship, however, accrued additional layers of meaning by the late eighteenth century.³⁶ Markets gave rise to more contractual relationships, and notions of fraternity emerged from the French Revolution. Evangelical religious groups subscribed to the idea of Christian brotherhood grounded in common salvation.³⁷ The Quakers offer a striking example in which the title of “Friend” was called upon to stand in for all bonds of mutual obligation and support.³⁸ And while historical actors drew upon these various layers in their strategic use of friendship, the accessibility of different layers varied upon situation.

Methodological Considerations

Another goal of this dissertation is to grapple with the methodological issues of exploring friendship as a versatile mode of forging what the subjects of this dissertation viewed as meaningful in the British colonial context. Two of my cases fall within the

³⁵ Michelle Miller, “Material Friendship: Service and Amity in Early Modern French Literature” (Ph.D. diss., University of Michigan, 2009).

³⁶ Naomi Tadmor, ‘ “Family” and “friend” in Pamela: a case study in the history of the family in 18th century England,’ *Social History*, 14, no. 3 (1989).

³⁷ See Davidoff and Hall, *Family Fortunes*, Part I.

³⁸ Leonore Davidoff, Megan Doolittle, Janet Fink, and Katherine Holden, *The Family Story: Blood, Contract and Intimacy, 1830– 1960* (London: Longman, 1999), 82.

broad framework of patron-client relations between a British metropolitan figure and a subaltern subject, while the third offers a counterpoint as the older and more established Indian figure of the dyad acted as mentor. Terms more reflective of the hierarchies of the relationship—such as “patron”—existed. This sense, however, that “friend” was an inaccurate designation is a product of present-day connotations of friendship as casual. The apparent vagueness of the term functions in a way similar to the rhetoric that resonated so powerfully in the world Bray depicts. To some extent, “friendship” offered a decorous screen of goodwill for the less lofty details of the transactional component.

A central methodological problem of this dissertation lies in the versatility of the term “friend.” For instance, it can be used to indicate in directly opposite directions in terms of emotional investment. On one hand, the phrase “just friends” is often used to dismiss any imputed romantic involvement, which the wording implies to be something “more” than friendship. On the other, such occasions when a friend jokingly objected to being referred to as a “colleague,” gesturing to an affective weight assumed to be absent from the latter. A colleague could also be a friend but need not be. And in this case, between the two, “friend” was deemed the more meaningful designation. The term is alternately used to gesture in the direction of casual acquaintanceship *and* to refute it.

The protean quality of friendship becomes most evident in comparison to the family as a mode of relationality. Michel Foucault has lamented a world where at the ideological level legitimate interpersonal relations are impoverished to state-sanctioned conjugal kinship, offering gay culture as an innovative alternative: “a culture that invents ways of relating types of existence, types of values, types of exchanges between individuals which are really new and are neither the same as, nor superimposed on,

existing cultural forms.”³⁹ In other words, Foucault suggests that the friendship of gay culture potentially gestures to a flexibility of definition and the realm of possibility it offers. While the meaning of family varies by cultural context, as a unit of biological reproduction, it is inescapably defined by heterosexual sex. As Göran Therborn puts it, “[a] family is always an outcome of sexual relations past or current: no sex, no family.”⁴⁰ The narrative of heterosexual desire is embedded in the ideological construct of the family. And yet the relational flux of such terms is evident in the construction of “brotherly love” in the early twentieth century. While Walt Whitman’s usage was homoerotic, Leo Tolstoy deployed it in opposition to sexual passion.⁴¹

Family defined by material markers has been more readily identified and studied than friendship. Most people are born into a family that determines the material contours of people’s lives in concrete and quantifiable ways. Accordingly, it has been considered “the domain of demographers, sociologists, and psychologists,” most often studied in “its measurable dimensions by means of the facts revealed by census and survey,” inspiring historians to apply similar methods to the past.”⁴² Conversely, sociologists note that the definition of friendship “varies across individuals” due to its voluntary nature and relative freedom from institutional constraints.⁴³ As such, it lacks a predetermined form with recognizable “measurable dimensions.”

³⁹ Michel Foucault, “The Social Triumph of the Sexual Will” *Ethics: Subjectivity and Truth*. Ed. Paul Rabinow (New York: The Free Press, 1997) Vol. 1 of *Essential Works of Foucault 1954-1984*. 3 vols. 159-160.

⁴⁰ Göran Therborn, *Between Sex and Power: Family in the World, 1900-2000* (London: Routledge, 2004), 1.

⁴¹ Bryan S. Turner, ed., *War and Peace: Essays on Religion and Violence* (London; New York: Anthem Press, 2013), 199.

⁴² John R. Gillis, *A World of Their Own Making: Myth, Ritual, and the Quest for Family Values* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1996), xvii.

⁴³ Rebecca G. Adams, Rosemary Blieszner, and Brian De Vries, “Definitions of Friendship in the Third Age: Age, Gender, and Study Location Effects,” *Journal of Aging Studies* 14, no. 1 (March 2000), 117.

The difficulty of defining the parameters of friendship has contributed to a disparity between the wealth of research on the conjugal biological family as opposed to that on friendship.⁴⁴ From an interdisciplinary viewpoint, recent empirical studies suggesting that friendship exerts a strong influence on psychological well-being and overall health have led researchers to begin redressing that imbalance.⁴⁵ Much of this research has concentrated on the intense relationships of women. But in the realm of popular culture, the term “bromance,” used to refer to close, non-sexual—yet affective—friendships between men, has come into its own as well in the past decade, making it into the dictionary with no shortage of cinematic evidence to prove its cultural currency. These signs indicate a contemporary shift in the direction of a greater awareness of friendship as a relation of equal significance to the family. The turn to the familiar trope of romance to invoke male friendship as “bromance” signals how friendship remains at a narrative disadvantage to the ubiquitous courtship plot. At the same time, it demonstrates how friendship is a realm of possibility as noted by Foucault.

In its organization of labor, family, sexuality, sex, and gender, heterosexual desire as the “basis of social order” has also served as the primary narrative propulsion of the stories through which society makes sense of the relational lives of its members.⁴⁶ Troy Gordon has noted the narrative conundrum that cross-sex friendships pose for a heteronormative culture that instinctively reaches for the lens of the romance plot through

⁴⁴ Tara Parker-Pope, “What Are Friends For? A Longer Life,” *The New York Times*, April 21, 2009.

⁴⁵ C. H. Kroenke, “Social Networks, Social Support, and Survival After Breast Cancer Diagnosis,” *Journal of Clinical Oncology* 24, no. 7 (February 6, 2006): 1105–1111; Lynne C. Giles et al., “Effect of Social Networks on 10 Year Survival in Very Old Australians: The Australian Longitudinal Study of Aging,” *Journal of Epidemiology and Community Health* 59, no. 7 (July 1, 2005): 574–579; K. Orth-Gomér, A. Rosengren, and L. Wilhelmsen, “Lack of Social Support and Incidence of Coronary Heart Disease in Middle-Aged Swedish Men,” *Psychosomatic Medicine* 55, no. 1 (January 1, 1993): 37–43.

⁴⁶ Troy P. Gordon, “Uncommon Companions: Telling the Story of a Modernist Cross-Sex Friendship” (PhD diss., University of Michigan, 2001), 4.

which to view any relationship between members of the opposite sex.⁴⁷ He argues that the overwhelming strength of the cultural plot of romance exerted such ideological force as to call into question the very possibility of cross-sex friendships.⁴⁸

At the same time, if the possibility of cross-sex friendship is threatened by the omnipresence of the romance plot, same-sex friendship faces its own challenges of cultural legibility in its lack of a “prepackaged story.”⁴⁹ One way to impart meaning was by way of idioms of interpersonal affiliation borrowed from one context and imported into another. Terms of family and friendship give and take cues from each other in different contexts, resulting in widely varying implications. Martha Vicinus has observed how the familial metaphor “in the idealized language of maternal love” could strategically be used by Victorian women as “an appropriate and highly regarded vocabulary to describe same-sex love.”⁵⁰ At the same time, the potential drawback was that such familial metaphors risked “tightly b[inding them] into roles each found false to her true feelings.”⁵¹ As the primary unit of interpersonal affiliation in which most people are socialized, the language of family effectively conveyed the significance of any given relation. It was, however, a less effective—and potentially problematic—medium through which to articulate same-sex desire. Indeed, Vicinus shows that the following generation of Modernist lesbians adopted an alternate metaphor of a web of friends and lovers.⁵²

The permeability of the language of affiliation gestures to the fluidity and possibilities of

⁴⁷ Gordon, “Uncommon Companions,” 4.

⁴⁸ Gordon, “Uncommon Companions,” 3.

⁴⁹ Vicinus, *Intimate Friends*, 38.

⁵⁰ Martha Vicinus, *Intimate Friends: Women Who Loved Women, 1778-1928* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004), 113.

⁵¹ Vicinus, *Intimate Friends*, 44.

⁵² Vicinus, *Intimate Friends*, 187.

exchange between modes of friendship and family that have historically enabled people to strategically shift between the two when articulating the terms of their affinity.

Friendship as Survival and Social Responsibility

Similarly, the possibilities of a narrative of friendship emerge when its continuity with family as a primary mode of social integration is pushed to its limits. Published in 1905, Frances Hodgson Burnett's *A Little Princess* offers a view of the range of meaning that was shouldered by friendship as an affective and ethical mode of relating to others. First serialized in 1888 and then revised and expanded after successfully running as a three-act stage play in London and then New York, the novel serves as an allegory of friendship by considering the narrative consequences that befall the protagonist, the young Sara Crewe just arrived from Bombay, after she is dropped off by her father at a London boarding school to receive a proper metropolitan education. Because Sara is a child—eleven at the time of her father's death—the question is posed—quite starkly—of what happens when one is left in the world bereft of those who are able and willing—or obligated—to ensure her welfare as family. In other words, it considers what happens when one is left to rely on friendship.

Sara, the daughter of the wealthy Captain Ralph Crewe, who is stationed in India, is sent to school in London, where she resides as its star pupil before she is relegated to servitude when her father dies, apparently ruined. Friendship serves as the primary motivation of the plot as her father's death by jungle fever is precipitated by the business troubles that leave Sara destitute: "Diamond mines [...] and dear friends—and ruin."⁵³ Ralph Crewe's investment in his friend's diamond mines, however, is eventually revealed

a success. It is that friend's commitment to the friendship beyond Crewe's death that drives the remainder of the plot in the form of his quest to find his friend's daughter—Sara—and restore to her the fortune previously thought lost.

The versatility of friendship becomes evident as the term “friend” refers to a wide array of friendly presences in Sara's life, ranging from her father, her friends at school, the scullery maid she befriends, a doll, as well as the rat who frequents the attic room she comes to occupy. In all of those relations, with the exception of her father, Sara is superior by virtue of age, class, precocity, or merely by way of being the dispenser of bread crumbs rather than the beneficiary in the case of the rat. Friendship thus encompasses all manner of hierarchies within itself. At the same time, a central sense of the concept suggests a relation of guardianship. Upon news of Ralph Crewe's death, Miss Minchin, the heartless headmistress, reflects on the loss of her “show pupil, her show patron,” leaving her only “a friendless, beggared little girl.”⁵⁴ The only “friend” Sara has lost is her father, but that loss is pivotal to the extent that it recasts her situation as “friendless.” Sara still has friends, but her father was the only one with the power to act as a guardian in the face of the vagaries of fortune. This quality extends beyond material matters; Miss Minchin begrudgingly provides Sara with room and board to exploit her as a drudge of all capacities, but she is not Sara's “friend.”

The novel privileges Sara's capacity to act as such a friend to the best of her abilities despite the hardships imposed by her situation. A key moment of friendship as an ethics of social responsibility is marked when Sara gives her loaf of bread to a beggar girl despite her own extreme hunger. Friendship was grounded in a moral imperative to

⁵³ Frances Hodgson Burnett, *A Little Princess* (New York: Aladdin, 2010), 94.

⁵⁴ Burnett, *A Little Princess*, 94, 98.

recognize a common humanity. As Sara observes to Miss Minchin, scullery maids are also little girls not unlike the students of the school. The democratic implications of such observations, however, are tempered by the friendship's capacity to accommodate hierarchies. Becky, the scullery maid, leaves Miss Minchin's employ with Sara—but only to wait on the latter in her new home. Hierarchical friendship offers protection within existing social structures rather than their radical restructuring. On one hand, the novel closes on the restoration of personal friendship as Sara finds in Mr. Carrington, her father's friend, a new guardian. "There never were such friends," the narrator relates, "as these two became."⁵⁵ On the other, its final scene is Sara's return to the bakery to arrange for the charitable dispensation of bread to hungry children.

And as much as India serves as a symbol of Sara's ability to connect across all manner of differences, the colonies are essentially relegated to the peripheries of the plot, primarily a distant space from which to extract the diamonds that enable metropolitan largesse. This is of a piece with the appropriative aspect of friendship that one glimpses in Sara's designation of Mr. Carrington as the "Indian gentleman" based on her observation of the accouterments of his former colonial residence, which include Oriental carpets, a monkey, and the handler of said monkey—an Indian manservant. It is by way of the latter, Ram Dass, who takes note of Sara's command of Hindustani and the ease with which she interacts with his monkey, that Carrington becomes aware of Sara in the first place. The plan to transform Sara's bare attic room into a more comfortable space in her absence also originates with Ram Dass, who is then charged with its execution in his frail employer's stead. And yet, it is Carrington who registers definitively as Sara's friend, the "Indian gentleman."

⁵⁵ Burnett, *A Little Princess*, 306.

In the end, an individual ethics of friendship was less oriented towards political change than imparting a sense of social responsibility in relations of all contexts. While the reality inevitably diverged from idealistic rhetoric, the versatility of friendship as a discourse enabled its deployment with a view towards both personal and larger community interests. The specifics of context informed the respective cases in important ways. A campaign for justice and mathematical collaboration, for instance, resulted in widely differing textures. What remained constant, however, in the public orientation of these colonial friendships was the moral imperative to goodwill.

Chapter Outline

This dissertation is presented in three cases, which offer a range of configurations of affinity. Each chapter analyzes a separate case. Collectively, they serve as parallels and counterpoints to one another, highlighting the multivalence of colonial friendship. Chapter One examines the public alliance between George Edalji and Sir Arthur Conan Doyle in the form of the latter's 1907 campaign to exonerate the former, situating it in the broader canvas of inclusionary and exclusionary impulses that accompanied the project of empire-building. It demonstrates that the respective motivations for pursuing the association were informed by the advantages they perceived in its enabling them to respectively lay claim to a place in the nation. For Edalji, this meant combating allegations of criminality by presenting himself as unthreatening to the national community, while Conan Doyle aspired to serve justice and act in a guiding capacity with regard to the ethical course of the British Empire.

Chapter Two looks at the collaboration between Srinivasa Ramanujan and G. H. Hardy, considering how it was initiated in 1913 by a letter from Ramanujan to Hardy and brought to fruition when Hardy made arrangements for him to pursue mathematical research at Cambridge. On one hand, it situates Hardy's continued commemoration of Ramanujan after the latter's death in the world of public school friendship and intellectual community. On the other, Chapter Two interrogates the meaning that the metropolitan center of research held for Ramanujan that encompassed—but was irreducible to—material success. My analysis shows that the disparity of affective expression regarding the friendship requires explanation both in terms of Hardy's volubility as well as Ramanujan's relative silence on the subject. The implications of the material hardships Ramanujan faced in England are no more self-evident than the universalist worldview of Hardy that was grounded in mathematics.

Finally, Chapter Three examines the difficulties that arose between poet and Nobel Laureate Rabindranath Tagore and Edward John Thompson, who started his career as a missionary before becoming an academic and writer on the subject of India. After their first meeting in 1913, the association extended for nearly three decades, allowing for a much greater scope for potential disagreements. In principle, the two found common cause in the value they placed on active engagement across borders of nation, culture, and race. An analytic framework of plural cosmopolitanisms, however, highlights the divergences in their respective visions of universal humanism. An analysis of emblematic moments in their friendship—especially Tagore's displeasure upon the 1926

publication of Thompson's book on his writing—demonstrates the limits of cosmopolitan thought in a period of ascendant nationalism.

Chapter One
The Solicitor and the Detective Novelist:
Conan Doyle and the Curious Case of George Edalji

Introduction

“In order to enable the reader to understand the peculiar circumstances which led up to my arrest and conviction,” George Ernest Thompson Edalji wrote in February of 1907, “I must make reference to events which happened over eighteen years ago.”⁵⁶ Assuming the role of historian, he recognized his current situation to be the culmination of past events. Edalji had recently been released after three years of penal servitude for a series of animal maimings—an atypical career development for any respectable middle-class Birmingham solicitor. Edalji and his supporters asserted that his release partway through his sentence merely served to further corroborate the wrongfulness of his conviction. Eighteen years before marked the starting point of the anonymous letters and hoaxes that brought his family and, more specifically, Edalji himself to the attention of the police. Looking to that point in the past, Edalji suggested that his current situation was not a spontaneous anomaly but had developed from his particular history with the local Staffordshire police.

In turn, that history was part of a larger pattern of friendship and hostility that alternately shaped the experience of racial others in the metropole. From the beginning, Edalji’s biography had been atypical for the rural Staffordshire milieu he inhabited. He was the eldest son of Shapurji Edalji, a Bombay-born Parsi convert to Christianity, and

Charlotte *née* Stoneham, the daughter of a local family of Anglican clergymen. On one hand, his very existence in Great Wyrley stemmed from the willingness of some to extend the friendship of family to those that still others considered colonial interlopers. On the other, the scale of the harassment that Edalji's family faced and its escalation into trouble with the police serious enough to result in Edalji's incarceration indicated a forceful counterpoint to such tolerance. Nevertheless, Edalji did not lack supporters. Most notably, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, the detective novelist and one of the leading publicists of his time, spearheaded a vocal campaign for Edalji's exoneration. Due to the absence of a judicial appeals process, Edalji's only hope for redress lay in the court of public opinion.

My central question, then, is about the meanings generated by friendship and the uses to which it was put. More specifically, this chapter situates the public friendship of Edalji and Conan Doyle within the variegated landscape of inclusion and exclusion faced by those whose place in the nation was up for contestation. What did it mean for Edalji and Conan Doyle to publicly present as friends? How did they deploy that friendship in service of goals both concrete and abstract?

I address these questions through an examination of their respective preoccupations and circumstances. In order to make the case for his innocence, Edalji needed to supplant the suggestive allusions his opponents made in asserting his guilt. To this end, Edalji initiated a public friendship with Conan Doyle in a strategic bid to reframe his racial difference in an alternate narrative of a miscarriage of justice. For Edalji, an alliance with the famous detective novelist might bolster his credentials of respectable middle-class masculinity and reinforce the case for his innocence. For Conan

⁵⁶ My Own Story. *Pearson's Weekly*, February 7, 1907, HO 144/990.

Doyle, championing Edalji offered the opportunity to safeguard his vision of the British Empire as a force for good.

In other words, aligning themselves with each other was a way for them to respectively craft a public persona in relation to the nation as it served their purposes. Edalji's motivations were externally imposed by the exigencies of survival as a racial other in England, while Conan Doyle's quest for justice was inspired by an internal sense of what the British Empire meant to him. Their association was both instrumental and personal, invested with meanings drawn from a more public context than the self-sufficient attachment that friendship in the present day has come to denote.

A Story of Inclusion and Exclusion

A full picture of the history of Edalji's misadventure must account for the impulses of inclusion as well as exclusion that coexisted in Britain's colonial encounters. As evidenced most conspicuously by Conan Doyle's campaign for Edalji's pardon, support for Edalji was substantial if not triumphant. And the genesis of the public friendship of Edalji and Conan Doyle lay in the competing tendencies that shaped the reception the Edalji family received as they proceeded to carve out a place for themselves in their rural English community. The origins of Edalji's predicament as well as the subsequent contestation over his innocence can thus be traced back even further than Edalji suggested.

Reverend Edalji became the vicar of St. Mark's Church, Great Wyrley in 1875 when his wife's uncle retired, recommending him in his place—a generous wedding

gift.⁵⁷ It was a comfortable, if less than lavish position virtually guaranteed for life.⁵⁸

The South Staffordshire parish was primarily a mining and agricultural area. Wyrley, as George Edalji would later introduce it to a national readership, was “a populous village, six miles distant from Walsall, and a mile and a half from Cannock.”⁵⁹ The residents were mostly farmers, small shopkeepers, miners, and agricultural laborers.

In 1876, George was the first of three children to be born. He was followed first by a brother, Horace, and then a sister, Maud. Starting in 1888, the family became the target of several campaigns of anonymous letters and harassment on a scale that made the region notorious. Over the next twenty years, on four different occasions over periods ranging from months to years—the first in 1888-1889 and subsequently in 1892-1895, 1903, and 1907—hoax letters were both sent to the family as well as in their name to others.

The letters were a motley assortment, ranging from innocuous annoyances—missives of insignificant content whose anonymity appeared to be to no discernible purpose—to crudely worded threats. Some of the letters went beyond gesturing to potential material consequences to actually precipitating them. Orders placed in the Edaljis’ name for an assortment of goods—wines, books, furniture among others—resulted in deliveries that needed to be sent back.⁶⁰ As the state apparatus intervened in

⁵⁷ Appointment as a parish priest in the Church of England gave the incumbent a “living” derived from the income raised by the parish through legally mandated tithes. Although Reverend John Compson, the uncle in question who recommended Shapurji Edalji for the position technically did not possess the power to appoint Edalji himself, Charlotte Edalji noted that it was “by his express wish the Patron of the living appointed Mr. Edalji Vicar in his place.” Charlotte Edalji to A. Akers-Douglas, 7 January 1904. HO 144/984, no. 48, The National Archives, Kew.

⁵⁸ D. Michael Risinger, “Boxes in Boxes: Julian Barnes, Conan Doyle, Sherlock Holmes and the Edalji Case,” *International Commentary on Evidence*, 4 no. 2 Article 3, 4.

⁵⁹ Edalji Protests His Innocence. *The Umpire*, [date unknown], 1906, HO 986, no. 163, 14 December 1906, The National Archives, Kew.

⁶⁰ S. Edalji. “A Strange Hoax.” *Times* [London, England] 16 Aug. 1895: 12.

the disturbances, George Edalji and his family eventually found themselves pitted against an increasingly hostile police force. The latter had come to view the Edalji family as the target—rather than the victim—of its investigation. At one point in 1892, the police suspected Edalji of writing at least some of the letters to his family.⁶¹

In 1903, a third round of anonymous letters accompanied a series of animal maimings. The “Great Wyrley Outrages,” as the string of nocturnal attacks on neighborhood horses, cows, and sheep became known, began with the slaughter of a colt in February and continued over the course of four months, resulting in the death or injury of three horses, three cows, and a sheep. The letters only began to circulate in the summer, the first of which was postmarked June 30. They alleged that a gang consisting of local passengers who regularly traveled by train to Walsall and Birmingham—George Edalji’s daily commute—was responsible. A few of these passengers, including Edalji, were mentioned by name. No evidence, however, definitively linked the letters to the attacks.

Undeterred, the police concluded that Edalji, whom they had suspected of writing some of the anonymous letters in the 1890s, was a likely suspect for this recent spate of letters. Furthermore, according to this logic, his involvement in the letters somehow implicated him in the animal attacks. Edalji’s retrospective 1907 account of events occurring decades before the Great Wyrley Outrages thus retraced how far back into the past this reasoning extended. Accordingly, the police arrested Edalji in response to the killing of a pony on August 17, 1903.

⁶¹ Gordon Weaver traces the origins of police predisposition towards Edalji’s guilt to the appointment of Captain George Anson to the position of chief constable of South Staffordshire in 1889 in *Conan Doyle and the Parson’s Son: the George Edalji Case*, (Cambridge: Vanguard Books, 2006), 33-49.

The trial took place in October, and Edalji was convicted on entirely circumstantial evidence, much of which was open to dispute. For instance, the provenance of the horse hairs that found their way onto Edalji's coat remained a point of contention between the police and the Edalji family, and the razor pronounced by the police as the weapon was rusty and deemed incompatible with the wounds it allegedly inflicted. And some of what the prosecution included in their expansive definition of "circumstantial" evidence—such as the letters—should have been inadmissible.⁶² Edalji was not on trial for writing anonymous letters, and the connection between the writer and the maimer was speculative. He was sentenced to seven years of penal servitude.

At the time, the British judicial system lacked a criminal appeals process, and the only recourse for Edalji lay in a pardon from the Home Office. His fate was contingent on how much pressure his advocates could bring to bear on the latter. The weaknesses of the case against Edalji were such that it generated immediate local reaction, and a petition soon garnered the support of prominent figures such as R. D. Yelverton, former Chief Justice of the Bahamas and established figure in legal reform circles. For the next three years, Edalji relied on his family and friends to agitate on his behalf that there had been a miscarriage of justice. Finally, on October 19, 1906, without explanation, Edalji was released. As an ex-convict, however, he had been struck from the Roll of Solicitors. Barred from legal practice, Edalji's livelihood was at stake without a free pardon. In December, as he continued to petition for one, Edalji wrote to Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, effectively recruiting the writer of Sherlock Holmes fame to his cause.

⁶² For an extensive analysis of the evidence and the respective cases made by the prosecution and defense, see Weaver, *Conan Doyle*, 139-62. Weaver blames Sir Reginald Hardy, who chaired the trial, and his lack of legal experience for giving such free reign to the prosecution.

In January of 1907, Conan Doyle traveled to Great Wyrley to conduct a personal investigation, whose findings he then published that month in the *Daily Telegraph*.⁶³ The ensuing media onslaught, which also triggered another slew of anonymous letters, pressured Herbert Gladstone, the Home Secretary, to appoint a Committee of Enquiry the following month. Recommending a free pardon but refusing compensation, the Committee's April report only served to frustrate Edalji and his advocates. A few years earlier in a case of mistaken identity in 1904, Adolf Beck, who had been wrongfully convicted, received a free pardon and the sizable sum of £5,000 in compensation—raised from £2,000 due to public outcry. In light of this precedent, the Home Office's refusal to award Edalji any monetary redress undercut the weight of the free pardon. Indeed, the government's official position maintained that Edalji held some responsibility for the anonymous letters.⁶⁴ Edalji, however, had never been convicted for writing the letters in the first place; even as it admitted to a wrongful conviction in the case of the animal maimings, the government ruled Edalji ineligible for restitution due to what amounted to unproven and irrelevant suspicions.

This less familiar vision of a multiracial, multicultural British past has given rise to iterations of the story that exemplify the popular currency of this aspect. Barnes's novel *Arthur and George* plays up this unfamiliarity by only gradually revealing that one of his two eponymous protagonists, whose perspective appears gives every indication of being as English as can be, is also partially of Indian descent. The surprise elicited by this rhetorical strategy prompts readers to consider their assumptions about national identity and the British past.

⁶³ *Daily Telegraph*, 11-26 January, 1907, HO 144/988, The National Archives, Kew.

⁶⁴ Report of the Committee of Enquiry. HO 144/986, no. 201, The National Archives, Kew.

On the heels of Barnes's fictional account, two new popular histories shift the focus to the perspective of Edalji and his family. Gordon Weaver's study offers a detailed review of the case that takes into account the broader dynamics of the community, while Roger Oldfield's contribution more specifically traces the history of the various Edalji family members before and after the Great Wyrley Outrages.⁶⁵ Both extend the purview of their inquiry beyond the story told by Conan Doyle. Instead of merely remarking on the unexpected presence of the Edalji family in Great Wyrley, they attempt to historically situate that presence and recover a greater sense of the Edaljis as agents.

Part of Conan Doyle's legacy was the extent to which Edalji appeared as the passive half of the partnership. Conan Doyle's later misrepresentation—to what extent this stemmed from intent or a failure of memory is unclear—of how he came to be involved in the case played a crucial role in this characterization. Published in 1924, almost twenty years after the fact, Conan Doyle's memoir reframed the encounter in terms of his discovery:

It was late in 1906 that I chanced to pick up an obscure paper called "The Umpire," and my eye caught an article which was a statement of his case, made by himself. As I read, the unmistakable accent of truth forced itself upon my attention and I realized that I was in the presence of an appalling tragedy, and that I was called upon to do what I could to set it right.⁶⁶

While happening upon the article was cast as a matter of chance, Conan Doyle's immediate recognition of "an appalling tragedy" suggested his own moral perspicacity.

At the same time, in a limited way, he gestured to the external pressure exerted by "the unmistakable accent of truth" which "forced itself upon [his] attention." In fact, his

⁶⁵ Gordon Weaver, *Conan Doyle and the Parson's Son: the George Edalji Case* (Cambridge: Vanguard, 2006); Roger Oldfield, *Outrage: The Edalji Five and the Shadow of Sherlock Holmes* (Cambridge: Vanguard, 2010).

⁶⁶ Arthur Conan Doyle, *Memories and Adventures*, (Boston: Little, Brown, and Co., 1924), 216.

choice of phrase accorded with the more literal way in which Edalji himself actually “forced” the matter upon Conan Doyle’s attention. A more contemporaneous source had originally chronicled Edalji as approaching and recruiting Conan Doyle to his cause. In a January 14, 1907 *Daily Telegraph* interview, the novelist himself had related the story of being sent cuttings of articles on the case written by Edalji. Over the course of the interview, Conan Doyle narrated the experience of reading the cuttings “very languidly at first” until “some statement [Edalji] made struck [him]” and he “became really interested.”⁶⁷ In this version, Edalji drew him into the story. What is striking about the discrepancy between this and Conan Doyle’s retrospective account is the way in which Edalji’s agency was subtly erased, the focus shifted to Conan Doyle’s authoritative insight.⁶⁸

Similarly, Conan Doyle positioned himself in relation to the Edalji family as a whole in the mode of heroic paternalism:

What aroused my indignation and gave me the driving force to carry the thing through was the utter helplessness of this forlorn little group of people, the coloured clergyman in his strange position, the brave blue-eyed grey-haired wife, the young daughter, baited by brutal boors and having the police, who should have been their natural protectors, adopting from the beginning a harsh tone towards them and accusing them, beyond all sense and reason, of being the cause of their own troubles.⁶⁹

⁶⁷ Arthur Conan Doyle, *The True Crime Files of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle*, (New York : Berkley Prime Crime, 2001), 75.

⁶⁸ Scholarship on Conan Doyle has tended to reproduce the story as told in his memoir. Both Martin Booth and Daniel Stashower give similar accounts of Doyle coming across the *Umpire* article by chance in their biographies of Conan Doyle, as do Lellenberg et al. in their edited collection of Doyle’s letters. Booth, however, does note that Edalji contacted Conan Doyle. But according to Booth, it was Alfred Wood, Doyle’s secretary, who actually opened the correspondence and set it aside as something that might interest his employer when he was in better spirits, as Conan Doyle was still in mourning for his late wife at the moment. As such, Booth too characterizes Doyle discovering the case independently, although he had “unknowingly already been approached by Edalji” by way of Wood. The one exception is Weaver, who relates how Edalji approached Doyle because he was a fan of the Sherlock Holmes stories. Martin Booth, *The Doctor and the Detective: A Biography of Arthur Conan Doyle* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1997), 263; Stashower, *Teller of Tales*, 254; Arthur Conan Doyle, *Arthur Conan Doyle: A Life in Letters* (New York: Penguin Press, 2007), 538. Weaver, 230.

⁶⁹ Doyle, *Memories and Adventures*, 218.

Recent iterations have gone a long way in redressing this imbalance⁷⁰ and revising Conan Doyle's imperial narrative of discovery. Edalji and his family have been restored as actors rather than mere dependents in their story.

The contrast that Conan Doyle drew between himself and the "brutal boors," however, has continued to be invoked in relatively simplistic terms of racism.⁷¹ No doubt, racism was involved. But to state that Conan Doyle was not racist or that he was less racist than his opponents does not constitute a sufficient historical explanation. Nor can Edalji's strategy be understood as a simple appeal to fame and influence.

The more variegated landscape of interracial and intercultural relations in the British metropole of recent historiography has suggested a spectrum of encounters that exceeds a dichotomy of racist or not. Edalji's extended family was evidence of this, although hegemonic racial hierarchies inevitably made themselves felt. The resulting problem for Edalji was one of public opinion and his perceived national belonging. His strategic turn to Conan Doyle was informed by the latter's public persona as man of letters, advocate of worthy causes, and expert in criminal investigation. Conan Doyle's particular talents and expertise suggested him as a fitting choice given the prevalence of sensation and detective fiction as a framing device for the hostilities the Edaljis

⁷⁰ Barnes has dramatized the discrepancy between the Edaljis' resourcefulness and Conan Doyle's later portrayal. "Utter helplessness?" Barnes channels the reaction of an incredulous George. "You would not think from this that Father had published his own analysis of the case before Sir Arthur had even appeared on the scene," the fictional Edalji muses as he examines the passage in question from Conan Doyle's memoir, "or that Mother and Maud were constantly writing letters, rallying support and obtaining testimonials." Barnes, *Arthur and George*, 363. In 1905, Reverend Edalji had published *A Miscarriage of Justice: The Case of George Edalji* in defense of his son's innocence. Barnes astutely flags the false note Conan Doyle's memoir strikes here, yet his own fictional characterization of Charlotte Edalji, who is rarely given voice in the novel, gives no sense of the resourcefulness he alludes to in this passage.

⁷¹ Even Weaver, notwithstanding the complex picture he has drawn of community tensions, reverts to the uncomplicated conclusion that "racism was the root cause of the Edalji[s'] difficulties." By aligning his own argument in the present with that of Conan Doyle's charges of racism against the Staffordshire police,

experienced. This was only possible though, because public friendship existed as a culturally legible resource through which Edalji could appeal to Conan Doyle. In effect, this chapter explores this story as one of public friendship as both strategy and an important component of one's public persona in the context of the British Empire.

From Family to Friendship

The George Edalji case demonstrates how on-the-ground interactions across divisions of race and power in the British Empire could be widely divergent, animated by contradictory impulses of hostility and goodwill. Alongside the xenophobic excesses of the anonymous letters and the more tempered bias of the police chimed in voices like that of Charlotte Edalji. George Edalji's mother confidently condemned "this same prejudice against any but those of entirely English birth" as the wrong-headed reason behind her son's implication in the Great Wyrley Outrages.⁷²

Despite ultimately disappointing aspects of the outcome for supporters of Edalji's campaign, neither side of the issue overwhelmed its opponent to the point of drowning out dissenting voices. On the one hand, the family's ongoing conflict with subsets of society, including the police, precipitated a criminal case against Edalji as those groups showed themselves to be vocal and demonstrative in their hostility. On the other hand, the case registered so forcefully in the public consciousness by virtue of the strength of support for Edalji.

Weaver implicitly equates Conan Doyle's anti-racist position to that of his own. Weaver, *Conan Doyle*, 24, 18.

⁷² Charlotte Edalji to A. Akers-Douglas, 7 January 1904. HO 144/984, no. 48, The National Archives, Kew.

The bedrock of that support consisted of his family, with his parents and sister writing letters and collecting signatures. And it was through the ties of friendship wrought by family that the Edaljis had managed to establish themselves in Great Wyrley in the first place. “We have been here now for more than 28 years,” Charlotte Edalji declared.⁷³ Not only had she married Shapurji Edalji, but her family had made such provisions that envisioned their long-term settlement in England. Within the context of kinship, marriage was a relation that allowed for some measure of individual choice even if its scope was subject to constraints such as familial expectations. To the extent that Charlotte Stoneham, as a woman in late nineteenth-century England, could be said to have a choice, her allegiance to Shapurji Edalji was voluntary. And as evidenced by her uncle’s endowment of a parish living, their union was fully legitimated by the English side of the family.

In 1874, the Stonehams had viewed a future in England as plausible for the Edaljis. “There seemed then every hope of a happy and useful life for them both,” her brother wrote in retrospect thirty years later as he thanked a local politician for his involvement in Yelverton’s campaign.⁷⁴ He revisited the origins of the Edaljis’ current troubles, namely, the Stonehams’ first association with Shapurji Edalji: “When we first became acquainted with Mr. Edalji he was in orders in the English Church, and had been for about 5 years, and my Father himself a clergyman had such very good testimonials of him from the many people who had known him, several clergymen.” In reaffirming his assurance of the good character of the senior Edalji, Stoneham referred back to a community of like-minded individuals. The picture that emerges was peopled by “[o]ur

⁷³ Ibid.

friends” who “felt as we did that Parsees are of a very old and cultivated race” with “many good qualities,” as opposed to “people who have, hardly any sense of religion in them,” from whom his sister and brother-in-law “have had much to endure.”

Coming from a family of clergymen, Stoneham identified religion as the linchpin of people’s attitudes. “Friends” of the family were able to recognize the Parsis for the “old and cultivated race” they were. The irreligious, however, lacking the discernment to differentiate between the finer shades of alterity—for the implication was that there existed races, neither very old nor cultivated, and consequently lacking the good qualities attributed to the Parsis—were blind to the greater affinities that aligned the Edaljis with the respectable English classes. Stoneham averred his brother-in-law was “such a fond Father and so anxious that [his children] should get on well with their studies,” much like any other good English father. And “no woman on earth could have been more careful than [his] sister in the bringing up of her children.” This picture of English domesticity constituted a resolute denial of the allegations of the irregular state of the Edalji household aired in both various anonymous letters as well as during Edalji’s trial.

Stoneham’s missive suggested that the response to racial others in the metropole was not monolithic. But it belabored its defense of the Edaljis to the point that it also attested to the strength of mainstream prejudice. “My Father and Mother gave their full consent to the marriage,” he continued in a postscript, unable to let the matter rest. His concluding insistence that his parents “were deeply attached to [his] sister” spoke volumes about the assumptions Stoneham attempted to preempt.

⁷⁴ M. S. Stoneham to J. B. Stone, 27 Jan 1904, J. B. Stone Collection, p. 165 in Birmingham Library Archives.

Depending on the eye of the beholder, Charlotte's unconventional marriage potentially called into question the very fact of her parents' attachment to her. Neither their consent nor their affection was taken for granted. Stoneham was unapologetic in his censure of those who harassed his extended family, but his preemptive statements show him anticipating particular kinds of calumny to which the Edaljis had become accustomed. It was not so much that he expected such questions from Stone—already party to Yelverton's campaign and on the Edaljis' side—to whom this letter was addressed. Rather, Stoneham seemed to feel obliged to dispel the negative rumors that beset the Edaljis; in his experience, they were pervasive, and he could not let them stand unchallenged to potentially persuade an important supporter of his nephew's.

Unlike Stoneham, for Conan Doyle, the question was not articulated in terms of religion. But he too subscribed to a similarly binary vision of the English population, although his mode of differentiating himself from the inhabitants of a "rude and unrefined parish" such as Great Wyrley was by assuming the role of enlightened imperial subject.⁷⁵ Like Stoneham, however, Conan Doyle's conception of his prescience as uncommon led him to take negative reactions to Edalji's unusual appearance as inevitable.

From the present-day perspective, this position dovetails with the standard post-war narrative of popular racism put forward by the Conservative government of the 1950s. Historians have observed that the political conflicts of the period gave rise to a view of British society as insular, unworldly, and consequently hostile to racial others.⁷⁶ According to this view, public opinion forced the government to restrict the initially

⁷⁵ Doyle, *True Crime Files*, 46.

expansive nationality policy allowing the free entry of all British subjects to the United Kingdom. Historian Kathleen Paul has noted that this explanation was widely reproduced in both contemporary accounts and subsequent historiographical interpretation.⁷⁷ The similarity of Conan Doyle's logic suggests that the notion of popular racism as inevitable was a persistent trope in the elite imagination even though it was no foregone conclusion.

At the same time, a persistent pattern of harassment set the Edaljis apart from the rest of their community. Its final culmination in George Edalji's arrest and conviction aligned with the broader logic of racial hierarchy informing a state-sanctioned "rule of colonial difference."⁷⁸ The latter made a clear distinction between white subjects in the metropole, who were capable of self-government, and subjects of different races in the colonies, who were not.⁷⁹ This official policy of differentiation had no direct bearing on the Edaljis' situation. But it served as the backdrop against which others might question whether they belonged where they were—as even Conan Doyle did. And the latter process manifested itself in myriad material ramifications that worked against their integration into the social fabric of Great Wyrley even before George Edalji faced formal criminal charges.

⁷⁶ Laura Tabili, *Global Migrants, Local Culture: Natives and Newcomers in Provincial England, 1841-1939* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 2.

⁷⁷ Kathleen Paul, *Whitewashing Britain: Race and Citizenship in the Postwar Era*, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1997), 131-2. The language in these historiographical accounts replicates the sense that official action merely acceded to pre-existing public opinion. Kenneth O. Morgan describes the Cabinet attitude toward "coloured immigration" in terms of "extraordinary complacency" before Macmillan "felt compelled" to act in 1962, in *The People's Peace* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), 202-4. Similarly, Dilip Hiro contends that the administration followed "a laissez-faire policy [...] regarding coloured immigration until popular anxiety forced its hand in 1961," in *Black British, White British: A History of Race Relations in Britain* (London: Paladin, 1992), 207.

⁷⁸ David Scott, "Colonial Governmentality," *Social Text*, xliii (1995).

⁷⁹ A range of views existed on whether colonial subjects of a different race had the capacity to eventually govern themselves and how long a preparatory period was necessary. Over the course of the nineteenth century, however, the pessimistic perspective increasingly gained traction. Catherine Hall, *Civilising Subjects: Metropole and Colony in the English Imagination, 1830-1867*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002).

Nevertheless, the liberal ideals of the day led to the inclusion of new groups in all domains of social interaction even as many continued to be excluded in both the metropole and the colonies. The concept of liberalism has multiple associations. Historians have treated it alternately as a set of ideas, an economics and politics, and a mode of government.⁸⁰ Amidst these varying approaches, Simon Gunn and James Vernon Conan have identified as a common theme an understanding of liberalism as “maximizing what was described as the freedom of certain individuals [...] by ensuring their natural rights of religious, political, economic, and cultural expression and representation.”⁸¹ Even as it served to justify the unfreedom of those deemed incompetent to wield such liberty, liberalism also contained a universalizing impulse that insisted on its potential blanket applicability.

Nicholas Owen has suggested that the application of the rule of colonial difference in the metropolitan center posed a challenge in that “a crude racial differentiation of citizens and subjects [...] was deemed incompatible with certain aspects of liberal imperialism as it was practised at the metropole.”⁸² As will be discussed further in this chapter, the legal category of “citizen” per se did not exist until 1948. But Owen’s use of the term gestures to the ostensibly substantive—rather than superficial—distinction being made between the two categories of subjects with regard to perceptions of their respective capacity for self-discipline. In India, the perceived absence of a sufficiently developed civil society circumscribed the potential for a liberal mode of rule;

⁸⁰ For an overview of the four main approaches to liberalism in existing literature, see Simon Gunn and James Vernon, “Introduction,” in *The Peculiarities of Liberal Modernity in Imperial Britain*, eds. Simon Gunn and James Vernon (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011), 7-10.

⁸¹ Gunn and Vernon, “Introduction,” in Gunn and Vernon, *Peculiarities*, 9.

⁸² Nicholas Owen, “The Soft Heart of the British Empire: Indian Radicals in Edwardian London” *Past and Present* 220, (August 2013), 143.

illiberal modes of governmentality increasingly unacceptable in the metropole persisted, a catastrophic example of which was the Jallianwala Bagh massacre of 1919.⁸³

This approach could not be replicated in Britain. But according the same rights and responsibilities to all imperial subjects across the board within the space of the metropole was a radical proposition. Among the various solutions put forward, a middle ground was attempted by defining colonial difference in terms of behavior and conduct—the substantive emphasis of a liberal worldview.⁸⁴ On one hand, this demonstrates that racial differentiation was subject to certain checks imposed by liberal norms. On the other, behavior could just as well stand in for racial identity for those who were inclined to use the terms teleologically.

Consequently, both sides articulated their position in terms of Edalji's behavior and demeanor. The stories circulated about Edalji and his family by their ill-wishers and the police drew on compelling threads of imperial discourse that linked race, criminality, and moral depravity. In response, Edalji's supporters attempted to discount these stories as the product of baseless prejudice. While the friendship of family had provided a foothold for the Edaljis in Great Wyrley, it was insufficient to quell those stories and their ramifications. Family members' testimonies of Edalji's conduct, the argument made by officialdom went, could not help but be biased by personal affections and interests.

Consequently, Edalji turned to friends beyond the family. Friendship deployed in this public form jostles against dominant present-day conceptions of the term. Historian Alan Bray has delineated a pre-modern tradition of friendship that signified in the public sphere in a way that is unfamiliar to modern understandings of the concept of friendship

⁸³ Gyan Prakash, "The Colonial Genealogy of Society," in *The Social in Question: New Bearings in History and the Social Sciences*, ed. Patrick Joyce (London: Routledge, 2002).

as a personal, non-public tie [or something more], which mostly elide this earlier history: “Friendship is now certainly a comforting relation and a good one perhaps, but understood to be essentially private—‘just’ friends.”⁸⁵ As a point of comparison, while familial relations may be located in the private sphere, they are accorded public recognition. For instance, motherhood is without question assumed to be an important primary interpersonal relation. Historian Anna Davin has noted how being a mother signified as a public identity in the British Empire at the beginning of the twentieth century.⁸⁶ Given the national and imperial interests at stake in the bearing and rearing of the next generation of healthy workers and soldiers, how mothers comported themselves became relevant to “a national problem of public health and of politics.”⁸⁷ As the groundwork of formal structures of society, family was understood to have material consequences for the rest of society. In the context of the state’s imperial ambitions of the period, the mainly moral concerns of an earlier era gave way to an understanding of parenting as a national duty.⁸⁸ Family has thus been understood to have both a public and historical context.

In contrast, friendship in the present day tends to be considered a matter of personal affinity between two individuals with little bearing on any public context beyond. Bray has argued that this idea of friendship as cordoned off from the world of public affairs with only itself as an end is of relatively recent provenance. According to this latter-day rendition of the concept, a friendship that took as its *raison d’être* an explicit purpose outside of itself—such as Edalji’s vindication in this case—is considered

⁸⁴ Owen, “Soft Heart,” 146.

⁸⁵ Alan Bray, *The Friend* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003), 2.

⁸⁶ Anna Davin, “Imperialism and Motherhood” *History Workshop Journal* 5, (Spring 1978), 9-65.

⁸⁷ Davin, 12.

less than genuine and perhaps even unworthy of the name.⁸⁹ But a longer history of friendship traces its origins to older notions of patronage and guardianship that overlap with the history of the family.⁹⁰ When Edalji aligned himself with figures like Yelverton and—most conspicuously—Conan Doyle, these allegiances signified publicly.⁹¹

Friendship as Strategy

In the absence of institutional procedures by which to procure justice, Edalji's alternative lay in recruiting such friends. And the efforts of his advocates were understood through the language of friendship. Accordingly, the standard introductory blurb to each weekly installment of Edalji's story in *Pearson's Weekly* framed the narrative as such: "Many of George Edalji's friends used every effort to arrive at the truth, and chief amongst these was Mr. R. D. Yelverton."⁹² Given the fact that Yelverton had never met Edalji prior to volunteering himself to the latter's cause after Edalji's trial, the term "friend" gestured to an association exceeding personal liking or affection.

⁸⁸ Davin, 13.

⁸⁹ For a transatlantic perspective, see Richard White's discussion of friendship as the primary organizing principle for homosocial relationships of business and public life in the nineteenth-century U.S. development of the transcontinental railroads. White argues that the public arenas of finance and politics in the late nineteenth century revolved around networks of friends, family, and information. Rather than registering as out of place, the language of friendship dominated the public sphere. As White puts it: "'Friend' was, perhaps, the key word in Gilded Age governance and business." White, however, reflects modern notions about friendship in his description of how friendship was utilized by "key figures of the Gilded Age networks of finance, government, journalism, and business [who] had stumbled like so many vampires on a cultural form (friendship), drained it of its lifeblood (affection), and left it so that it still walked, talked, and served their purposes in the world." The implication is that these friendships were merely form, hollowed of content. White, *Railroaded: The Transcontinentals and the Making of Modern America* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2011), chapter 3.

⁹⁰ Bray, *The Friend*, 4.

⁹¹ For a discussion of the distinction between modern friendship and the friendship of what he terms "traditional society" in England, see Bray, *The Friend*, 2-12.

⁹² It also helpfully noted that "[t]he correct way to pronounce Mr. Edalji's name is Ee—dl—gee, with the accent on the first syllable" (original emphasis). My Own Story. *Pearson's Weekly*, February 7, 1907, HO 144/990.

The idea of family also included a critical affective dimension, but the objective nature of familial obligations as it was socially constructed suggested an ethics extending beyond affective bonds. Friendship in this case similarly implied an ethical commitment to Edalji based on how deserving his cause was. And unlike family, which acted as society's primary unit of property transmission, friends could better present their support as disinterested.⁹³

Friendship was articulated through a language of ideals, in which the crux of the friendship lay in Conan Doyle's belief in Edalji's innocence and his altruistic determination to "us[e] his powerful pen on the young man's behalf." Michelle Miller has noted that the classical ideals of egalitarian, virtuous union revived in the Renaissance have dominated conceptions of a Western heritage of friendship.⁹⁴ Specifically, she identifies self-sameness, virtue, and disinterest as those ideals that early modern writers emphasized to the point of obscuring a complementary tradition of unequal friendships. The strength of this discourse is evidenced by how it still inflected an alliance that diverged from the classical template.

After all, the invocation of Conan Doyle's "powerful pen" being wielded on Edalji's "behalf" clearly marked the power dynamics of their association; this was not a mirror-image friendship styled after classical models. Yet the goal of these alliances—framed as "the truth"—appealed to ideals of virtue and disinterest. Shapurji Edalji also

⁹³ While the friendship of Edalji's supporters does not immediately resemble sworn brotherhood in the early modern period, Bray's discussion of the latter illuminates aspects of its utility as an alternative mode of association to family. Bray suggests that the strength of diverse forms of voluntary kinship running the gamut from sworn brotherhood to betrothal lay in the distinctive obligations associated with each. In other words, the usefulness of sworn brotherhood, which did not involve the transfer of property, resided in such limits; ritual brotherhood was able to play a practical role distinct from other forms of kinship in that it "did not *extend* the family, as a betrothal or marriage did: it rather befriended it." Bray, *The Friend*, 112.

⁹⁴ Michelle Miller, "Material Friendship: Service and Amity in Early Modern French Literature" (Ph.D. diss., University of Michigan, 2009).

petitioned for his son's free pardon "in the interest of justice, liberty and humanity."⁹⁵

But in impressing upon a potential supporter the urgency of the situation, he reverted back to the language of material interest: "I spent some hundreds of pounds for [my son's] education, but now he is ruined for life." In contrast, Conan Doyle was free from such apparent conflicts of interest. To the end of marshaling public opinion, his qualifications as a well-known author and talented publicist were useful. But it was through the position of the discerning and disinterested friend that his efforts were most effectively channeled.

The high-minded rhetoric need not be suspected as merely a cover for ulterior plans of self-advancement. But both idealistic and pragmatic motivations co-existed for a public figure like Conan Doyle. First as a doctor and then as an author, Conan Doyle had cultivated a public presence as part of his professional practice. Prohibited from advertising, doctors found other avenues of self-promotion that shaded into civic participation. Conan Doyle, described by literary critic Douglas Kerr as "a lifelong compulsive joiner of societies and clubs and teams and committees, in a compulsively associative age," had as a matter of course taken to writing to local papers and speaking at political meetings as well as engaging in an assortment of sports and cultural and scientific activities.⁹⁶ Kerr has included these and those public engagements Conan Doyle took on as a writer in the construction of his "practice as a man of letters."⁹⁷

⁹⁵ Shapurji Edalji to Sir Henry Campbell Bannerman, M.P., 15 December 1905. HO 144/986, no. 142, The National Archives, Kew.

⁹⁶ The following offers a sampling of the associations of which Conan Doyle was a member, albeit not all at once: the Allah-Akbarries (cricket team); the Amateur Field Sports Association; the Athenaeum; the Authors' Club; the Beckenham Golf Club; the Boys' Empire League; the British College of Psychic Science; the Congo Reform Association; the Conservative and Unionist Party; the Divorce Law Reform Association; the Freemasons; the Idlers Club; the International Spiritualist Congress. Douglas Kerr, *Conan Doyle: Writing, Profession, and Practice* (Oxford: University of Oxford Press, 2013), 6.

⁹⁷ Kerr, *Conan Doyle*, 2.

And when he became a famous author, Conan Doyle moved on from the local to the national level in his public persona. Publicity took on a different valence once it became less a necessary condition of livelihood and more an available resource. For the unestablished writer, publicity could lead to sales. Conan Doyle, however, was already earning approximately £1,500 from his writing in 1891, which was five times more than his income as a doctor the previous year.⁹⁸ Thereafter, fame also provided him with a platform from which to forward his views on public issues ranging from divorce reform to abuses of labor in the Belgian Congo.

It was different, and yet the same. Maintaining a public presence continued to serve an instrumental purpose; an author of Conan Doyle's stature might expect income from book and periodical publication on both sides of the Atlantic as well as translations, work adapted for the theater, and potentially lucrative lecture tours.⁹⁹ At the same time, Conan Doyle's public persona reflected a sense of self that extended beyond the material necessities of life.

Conan Doyle's public persona drew on contemporary ideals of masculinity that were inflected by concerns of nation and empire. Historians have chronicled the shift at the end of the nineteenth century from older models of manliness based on self-restraint and morality to the new ascendance of a more aggressive masculinity.¹⁰⁰ Literary critic

⁹⁸ For further details regarding Conan Doyle's earnings as a writer, see Arthur Conan Doyle, *The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes* (1892), ed. Richard Lancelyn Green (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), xiii-xiv.

⁹⁹ See Philip Waller, *Writers, Readers, and Reputations: Literary Life in Britain 1870-1918* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 575-614.

¹⁰⁰ For accounts of this transformation in a range of different contexts on both sides of the Atlantic, see J.A. Mangan and James Walvin, eds. *Manliness and Morality: Middle-Class Masculinity in Britain and America, 1800-1940*. (Manchester: Manchester UP, 1987.) John Tosh shifts this earlier focus on traditional all-male institutional settings such as school, club, and association to argue that domesticity formed an integral part of contemporary masculine ideals in *A Man's Place: Masculinity and the Middle-Class Home in Victorian England*. (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1999). See also Gail Bederman's discussion

Diana Barsham has contextualized Conan Doyle's career in terms of the period's anxieties about manliness, noting such tensions in his work as the dialectical oppositions embodied by Sherlock Holmes, who alternated between decadent withdrawal and decisive action. And Barsham characterizes Conan Doyle's own evolution from a "propagandist for British manhood," endorsing such episodes of imperial aggression as the Boer War, to a staunch evangelist of spiritualism as a "re-imagining of masculinity."¹⁰¹

In the process, Conan Doyle engaged disparate strands informing the period's debates around masculinity in his self-presentation. He combined two such threads in his sense of self as both a gentleman and "a stark fighter," the two interwoven in that his "pugnacious" tendencies were never aimed at those weaker than himself but rather in their defense.¹⁰² Conan Doyle opened his autobiography by setting the stage in these terms. He charted a family history that began with his genteel grandfather John Doyle, a political caricaturist of repute prominently positioned in the London world of art—"a gentleman, drawing gentlemen for gentlemen."¹⁰³ This was juxtaposed against his childhood as a "rough boy" in the impecunious circumstances of his early years.¹⁰⁴

Despite his family's financially straitened situation, Conan Doyle depicted himself in a position of agency. What Conan Doyle emphasized in the retelling of the following episode was his younger self's guardianship of the doubly dispossessed—those

of how concerns about race and civilization informed masculine ideologies in *Manliness and Civilization: A Cultural History of Gender and Race in the United States, 1880-1917*. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996).

¹⁰¹ Diana Barsham, *Arthur Conan Doyle and the Meaning of Masculinity* (Aldershot and Brookfield, VT: Ashgate, 2000), 14; 242.

¹⁰² Doyle, *Memories and Adventures*, 12.

¹⁰³ Doyle, *Memories and Adventures*, 7

¹⁰⁴ For a brief family history of Conan Doyle, see Stashower, *Teller of Tales*, 20-22; Doyle, *Memories and Adventures*, 11.

lacking athletic prowess as well as financial means.¹⁰⁵ He intimated that battle lines were drawn between the neighborhood haves and have-nots, but his focus was not on a sense of community amongst the less privileged. In his role as one of the “two champions” who fought it out, class warfare as waged by Conan Doyle was not collective. Ultimately, he saw himself as their protector rather than one of their number.

This was the story of Conan Doyle’s life—“a series of hard-fought crusades,” as his biographer Daniel Stashower has put it.¹⁰⁶ Among these can be counted his involvement in the cases of George Edalji and Oscar Slater, both victims of a miscarriage of justice brought to Conan Doyle’s attention in quick succession. Slater, a German national of Jewish descent, was accused of murder and sentenced to execution largely on circumstantial evidence; a petition resulted in this being commuted to life imprisonment.¹⁰⁷ Both Edalji and Slater provided Conan Doyle with a cause to champion.

In both cases, what was at stake was Conan Doyle’s commitment to a vision of moral empire that took its cues from the contemporary liberal ethos. Doyle considered the Edalji case “a blot upon the record of English Justice.”¹⁰⁸ Using the same language to refer to Slater’s case as “a dreadful blot upon the administration of justice in Scotland,” he voiced his conviction that “such judicial crimes” would inevitably precipitate “[s]omehow—somewhere [...] a national punishment in return.”¹⁰⁹ Both were national affairs worthy of his attention.

¹⁰⁵ Doyle, *Memories and Adventures*, 12.

¹⁰⁶ Stashower, *Teller of Tales*, 4.

¹⁰⁷ For an account of Conan Doyle’s initial involvement in the Slater case, see Stashower, *Teller of Tales*, 262-4. For Conan Doyle’s account, see Doyle, *Memories and Adventures*, 223.

¹⁰⁸ Doyle, *Memories and Adventures*, 219.

¹⁰⁹ Doyle, *Memories and Adventures*, 223.

Of the two, however, it was only Edalji whose person with whom Conan Doyle aligned himself as well as the cause. As important as it was to recognize the common import of both cases, the ability to make distinctions between someone like Edalji and someone like Slater was also a sign of discernment. In many ways, Edalji appealed to Conan Doyle as a public professional not unlike himself, if not on quite the same scale. In the *Umpire* article that Edalji most likely sent Conan Doyle in late 1906, his introduction included his professional qualifications. Edalji detailed prizes and honors—“[a]fter obtaining a number of valuable prizes from the Birmingham Law Society and several other sources, [he] passed [his] final examination with second class honours, became the Birmingham Law Society’s bronze medalist for 1898”—as well as mentioning his single publication, “one of Effingham Wilson’s series of popular legal handbooks, entitled, “Railway Law for the Man in the Train.”¹¹⁰

Conan Doyle drew a telling contrast between Edalji and Slater. “In one respect the Oscar Slater case was not so serious as the Edalji one,” he wrote, “because Slater was not a very desirable member of society.”¹¹¹ Unlike Edalji, who was “a blameless youth,” Slater “had never, so far as is known, been in trouble as a criminal, but he was a gambler and adventurer of uncertain morals and dubious ways—a German Jew by extraction, living under an alias.”¹¹² Conan Doyle demonstrated his commitment to justice by advocating for Slater’s cause regardless of his less than favorable evaluation of Slater as a person. At the same time, being able to distinguish whose associations to avoid was also

¹¹⁰ Edalji Protests His Innocence. *The Umpire*, [date unknown], 1906, HO 986, no. 163, 14 December 1906, The National Archives, Kew.

¹¹¹ Doyle, *Memories and Adventures*, 222-223.

¹¹² Doyle, *Memories and Adventures*, 223.

a sign of character; one of the charges that the letters had made against Edalji was that he consorted with a “gang” of inappropriate persons.

For Conan Doyle, Slater remained a cause that demanded his advocacy. Separate from a matter of personal liking, Slater was not someone whom Conan Doyle saw as fit company. Slater signified something about Conan Doyle’s sense of justice in that Conan Doyle demonstrated himself to be as tireless in his advocacy for someone he did not care to associate with. Conversely, however tangentially, Conan Doyle incorporated Edalji into the constellation of associations that were central to the conception of his public self. Edalji was not only a cause but also a person whom Conan Doyle was particularly gratified to invite to his wedding reception.

The gesture was compelling because its striking juxtaposition of the unlikely pair combined human interest with symbolic implications on a national level. Not only did Conan Doyle work to publicize Edalji’s story, his allegiance with Edalji itself constituted a public statement. Legally, they were indistinguishable as British imperial subjects. As a matter of perception, however, race set them apart in the eyes of many. From this view, Conan Doyle and Edalji occupied opposite ends of a spectrum of belonging in relation to the nation. In addition to Conan Doyle’s celebrity, this striking dissimilarity imbued their association with meaning in the public sphere.

On the occasion of Conan Doyle’s second nuptials in late 1907, the public resonance of Edalji’s case demonstrated itself to have traveled as far as across the Atlantic thanks to Conan Doyle’s efforts earlier that year. Conan Doyle was enough of a public figure that even being “married quietly” merited reportage abroad in the U.S.¹¹³

¹¹³ Special Cable to The New York Times, “Sir Conan Doyle Married Quietly,” *New York Times* (1857-1922), Sep. 19, 1907. <http://search.proquest.com/docview/96768474?accountid=14667>

His association with Edalji was considered a detail critical enough to effectively sketching his public persona that Edalji's presence at the reception deserved mention as one of the three article headings.¹¹⁴

Although the article mentioned that “[m]ost of England’s literary celebrities were present” at that same reception by way of further situating Conan Doyle in his social milieu, Edalji remained the only one singled out by name. In effect, the article chose to pan over the collective of luminaries as a generalized signifier of Conan Doyle’s celebrity status to zoom in on the more targeted meaning that Edalji’s presence appeared to promise. That Edalji was “unjustly condemned” and that “the creator of Sherlock Holmes so ably championed” his cause suggested a more precise sense of Conan Doyle’s public self.

In his memoir, Conan Doyle himself limited mention of the event to this single detail. “He came to my wedding reception,” he wrote of Edalji, “and there was no guest whom I was prouder to see.”¹¹⁵ Given both the public and private resonance of the event, the question of whom to invite involved choices about the self, one presented to the world through association with others. That Edalji—neither family nor peer—was present at what was both a very personal and public moment for Conan Doyle registered as a point of interest for its possible significance for the famous author’s public persona. And Conan Doyle confirmed that significance.

An association with Edalji enabled Conan Doyle to fashion himself as a prescient imperial subject. In effect, it comprised a crucial component of what literary critic

¹¹⁴ The other two—that the “Name of Church Where Ceremony Took Place Had Been Kept Secret” and that “Many English Literary Celebrities Also Attend[ed] It—Lady Doyle a Very Handsome Woman”—were points of interest that had a broader relevance for the event in question.

¹¹⁵ Doyle, *Memories and Adventures*, 219.

Stephen Greenblatt has termed “self-fashioning.” Greenblatt has argued that this deliberate crafting of the self as a mode of inhabiting the world is multi-faceted, potentially bringing together such processes as “the creation of literary characters, the shaping of one’s own identity, the experience of being molded by forces outside one’s control, the attempt to fashion other selves.”¹¹⁶ A range of resources existed from which people could draw upon in the construction of both private and public selves.

For Conan Doyle, friendship provided a useful cultural script for defining himself in relation to Edalji in the context of the British Empire. Edward Said’s framework of Orientalism and its contention that the colonizer’s sense of self depended on a “flexible *positional* superiority” in relation to the colonized other as its foil has provided a primary analytic through which colonial selves have been considered.¹¹⁷ And Conan Doyle’s paternalistic representation of Edalji as victim can be characterized as such. Edalji, however, technically did not qualify as colonized. Rather, Conan Doyle considered him and his family in need of protection because he assumed that they would inevitably be met by prejudice.

And this paternalism was of a piece with Conan Doyle’s general attitude towards colonized populations. The imperial project was essentially positive for Conan Doyle. In Conan Doyle’s estimation, the British Empire was “a service provided to others, and a great theatre for heroic British deeds” as Kerr has put it.¹¹⁸ The problem lay in the execution.

A negative example of the worst order were the abuses perpetrated by King Leopold of the Belgians. Conan Doyle became involved with the Congo Reform

¹¹⁶ Stephen Greenblatt, *Renaissance Self-Fashioning* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980), 3.

¹¹⁷ Edward Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Vintage Books, 1978), 7 (original emphasis).

Association not long after the Edalji case, churning out *The Crime of the Congo*, an indictment of Belgian rule in Congo, in the space of mere weeks in 1909. His approach was characteristic in its implicit belief in the triumph of universally recognizable virtue—even in the sphere of nation-states. It was an anthropomorphic approach, treating states as entities with consciences and morals.

The implication was that Britain could admonish others into behaving on the basis of its moral authority: “A firm word, a stern act at that time in the presence of this flagrant breach of international agreement would have saved all Central Africa from the horror which has come upon it.”¹¹⁹ From Conan Doyle’s perspective, nations also fell into categories of those capable of doing the rescuing and those in need of rescue. His own prerogative as a self-styled rescuer and crusader thus resonated with the imperial rhetoric of paternalism in which the agency of those being rescued was effectively erased.

These populations, less equipped to fend for themselves, were in need of protection, which the British with their singular commitment to justice and public duty could not help but provide. This process involved the British being pitted against such forces as what Conan Doyle viewed to be an unethical imperial power in the case of the Congo Reform Association episode and more often than not, nature. Of the mission of the British Raj, Conan Doyle wrote:

All over the world war exists between Nature and the British Raj. Nature sends smallpox. The Raj sends vaccine. Nature sends the flood. The Raj sends the dam. Nature sends the famine. The Raj supplies the food. Nature sends the bellicose spirit of tribal warfare. The Raj, in the person of the Police Inspector, suppresses it. [...] It is the greatest force for good in this world.¹²⁰

¹¹⁸ Kerr, *Conan Doyle*, 193.

¹¹⁹ Arthur Conan Doyle, *The Crime of the Congo*, (New York: Doubleday, Page and Co., 1909) 11. The “breach of international agreement” referred to here is the 1885 Congress of Berlin.

¹²⁰ Arthur Conan Doyle, *Our African Winter* (London: John Murray, 1929), 249-50.

In his reference to “the bellicose spirit of tribal warfare,” the native population was reduced to nature—on par with smallpox and famine. Divested of agency, they were instead cast as the motivation for action on the part of the Raj.

Kerr has noted that Conan Doyle showed little interest in the government and economic life of the “Oriental” empire—so categorized in opposition to the white empire comprised of the settler colonies.¹²¹ In part, this may have reflected his view of colonized peoples primarily as the beneficiaries of British intervention. Conan Doyle’s writings thus tend to invoke the moral reasoning for British imperial action to the exclusion of any consideration of the structural inequalities of colonial governance and economics that colonized populations faced as a result of that action.

Foremost, empire was a wider stage of action for the British. As Kerr remarks, “When Conan Doyle himself wrote of (and travelled) the British Empire, it was first as a military responsibility and next as a network of white settlement.”¹²² Even the civilizing activities of the Raj—administering vaccines and building dams—were portrayed in terms of a “war” between nature and the Raj. Colonized populations merely provided the grounds for British action. The basis for Conan Doyle’s cosmopolitan sensibility thus lay in the white settler colonies. Conan Doyle was well-traveled within that sphere, whereas his experience of the rest of the empire remained limited.¹²³ The collaborative

¹²¹ Kerr, *Conan Doyle*, 189.

¹²² Kerr, *Conan Doyle*, 162.

¹²³ Conan Doyle had traveled along the West African coast as a ship’s doctor in 1881 and visited Egypt in 1895.

potential in this permutation of empire lay in the global propagation of British values through its cultural continuities and shared language.¹²⁴

Through his association with Edalji, Conan Doyle could pursue these two avenues of imperial agency simultaneously. On one hand, he assumed the role of protector to Edalji from what he described as parochial prejudice. On the other, Edalji had demonstrated himself fully conversant in the cultural capacities that drew Conan Doyle to the vision of a like-minded global collective comprised of Britain, the white dominions, and the U.S. In styling himself as a friend to Edalji, Conan Doyle evinced a commitment to the universality of the liberal vision of empire. It was a limited vision in that the colonized populations did not register on his radar in the first place. But Edalji had mustered the qualifications to merit inclusion in Conan Doyle's eyes.

Both Edalji and Conan Doyle were imperial subjects. The term, however, opened itself up to a slippage in meaning that encompasses opposite ends of the spectrum of agency. On one hand, "imperial subject" referred to someone who was subject to imperial rule. On the other, it can be understood in terms of one's capacity to act as an agent vis-à-vis the British Empire. To the extent that everyone was positioned as the subject—an interior consciousness—of their life even as the form it took was subject to external forces, the two senses of the term were simultaneously applicable. In other words, the British Empire imposed constraints on people's lives while also enabling some to project themselves onto the broader canvas of an imperial world.

While both were subjects of the British Crown, race played a critical role in whether their experience of empire registered more as subjection or active subjecthood.

¹²⁴ For a discussion of the distinction Conan Doyle made between the two British empires—the white and the Oriental—see Kerr, *Conan Doyle*, 187-92.

Edalji's racial difference had effectively gained him the experience of maximal subjection—prison. As a Scotsman of Irish descent born into a Catholic family but agnostic, Conan Doyle was, in Kerr's words, "a divided man with a divided provenance."¹²⁵ And yet he had been embraced by the British reading public to emerge as a national public figure. Conan Doyle was secure in his Britishness and his sense of unity in the imperial project. His focus was on the universality of British values, the substance of which he could discern despite the appearance of difference, as in Edalji's case. In fact, Kerr has observed that Conan Doyle's writings presented the dominions as proof of the "great theme of his version of the story of the nation and its empire—an essential oneness, a unity only strengthened [...] by its manifest diversity."¹²⁶ Granted, that diversity was circumscribed to the extent that this vision maintained an implicit distinction between the Oriental and white contingents of the empire. Nonetheless, Edalji was a testament to the integrative properties of empire. The problem in this case was that those less perspicacious might be misled by such superficialities as skin color. The injustices they might commit as a result could tarnish the reputation of the empire as a whole.

Conan Doyle was committed to a vision of the British Empire as the most just system in the world. When it failed to measure up to this ideal, it fell to the discerning imperial subject—himself—to rescue the wrongfully persecuted client and set the empire

¹²⁵ Kerr, *Conan Doyle*, 198. Kerr contends that Conan Doyle's Irishness remained "something of an unresolved question." His position on Irish Home Rule evolved over time, only arriving at one of support probably in 1913 after he struck up a friendship with Roger Casement. Kerr, *Conan Doyle*, 188; Andrew Lycett, *Arthur Conan Doyle: The Man Who Created Sherlock Holmes* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 2007), 340-1. On Conan Doyle's Irishness, see Owen Dudley Edwards, *The Quest for Sherlock Holmes: A Biographical Study of Arthur Conan Doyle* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1984). For an extended argument about the central role of Irish nationalism in determining Conan Doyle's relationship with British imperialism, see Catherine Wynne, *The Colonial Conan Doyle: British Imperialism, Irish Nationalism, and the Gothic* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 2002).

back on its rightful course. At the same time, even as he devoted himself to Edalji's cause, he mused pessimistically: "The experiment will not, I hope, be repeated, for though the vicar was an amiable and devoted man, the appearance of a coloured clergyman with a half-caste son in a rude, unrefined parish was bound to cause some regrettable situation."¹²⁷ Posing the Edalji family's stay in Great Wyrley as experimental, despite their having lived there for decades, he implied that it might be best if those perceived as outsiders stayed away from the English hinterlands.¹²⁸

This fatalistic pronouncement was the closest Conan Doyle came to echoing the mainstream shift away from liberal idealism and its interventionist mode of imperialist policy towards an emphasis instead on profound "cultural" differences between races as identified by scholars of British imperial thought.¹²⁹ Conan Doyle's assumption of a widespread British intolerance of difference focused on British potential for wrongdoing. Yet the implication that peaceful coexistence was impossible—or at least improbable—remained the same.

This sense that the limitations of empire and its moral fragility were located in its inability to do right by its colonial subjects harked back to eighteenth-century reformist responses to imperial injustice.¹³⁰ By situating himself in this lineage and a minority

¹²⁶ Kerr, *Conan Doyle*, 198.

¹²⁷ Doyle, *Memories and Adventures* 216.

¹²⁸ For a counterpoint to this perspective in the history of inclusion and integration in provincial English communities with global economic ties, see Laura Tabili, *Global Migrants, Local Cultures: Natives and Newcomers in Provincial England, 1841-1939* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011).

¹²⁹ Karuna Mantena has identified this shift as the ascendance of "late" imperial thought, referring to the timeframe 1857-1914. Mantena, *Alibis of Empire: Henry Maine and the Ends of Liberal Imperialism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010), 2.

¹³⁰ Nicholas Dirks has noted "the constitutive character of scandal for empire, and the constitutive character of empire for England." He argues that the scandal surrounding the excesses of the East India Company in the eighteenth century and the crises it occasioned was fundamental to the process of normalizing empire; the imperial narrative that emerged displaced the scandals of Europeans onto the supposedly barbarous colonized population, thereby justifying British rule. Dirks, *The Scandal of Empire: India and the Creation of Imperial Britain* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2006), 31-32. Dirks's

position as the moral conscience of empire, however, Conan Doyle naturalized hostile responses, portraying them as something to be expected in large swaths of the population. Even as he offered his friendship to Edalji and his family to combat those who “accus[ed] them, beyond all sense and reason, of being the cause of their own troubles,” Conan Doyle’s own position similarly problematized their presence.¹³¹ In effect, despite his dedication to seeing Edalji vindicated, it was Edalji’s very existence in the imperial center that came into question.

Edalji’s Strategic Use of Friendship

Edalji, however, fully intended to continue his existence in the nation that was the only home he had ever known. Being barred from the practice of law posed a problem to that end though. He thus applied himself diligently to the less than straightforward process of acquiring a free pardon from the Home Office, which would restore him to his profession. Edalji’s appeal to Conan Doyle was part of that process.

The following section situates Edalji’s invocation of his friendship with Conan Doyle in the context of the hostilities it was meant to counteract. Conan Doyle’s motivations have received sustained attention because he had nothing to gain materially from the association.¹³² Conversely, because Edalji’s appeal to Conan Doyle ultimately had material implications, his choice to do so has tended to be treated as self-evident. This section instead takes into account how that choice was informed by specific features

premise that empire served as the foundation for European modernity exemplifies the approach of the “new imperial history” in its insistence that colonial matters were integral to British history, rather than peripheral.

¹³¹ Doyle, *Memories and Adventures*, 218.

¹³² The standard biographical narrative that the Edalji case served to motivate Conan Doyle out of the depression he fell into after the death of his first wife mirrors his own autobiographical account. Doyle, *Memories and Adventures*, 215.

of the case. It examines the government's position and traces continuities back to the premise of the anonymous letters that the Edaljis were hiding something. In response, Edalji's counter-narrative invoked Conan Doyle's authority as an expert in crime detection to suggest police bias as the more prosaic solution of the alleged mystery.

First, Edalji's problem had unfolded over the years through the accretion of stories circulated by the anonymous letters in which the generic lens of sensation fiction served as a readily available framework. In addition, Edalji's strategy was shaped by the exigencies of working within a judicial system that lacked a Criminal Court of Appeal. Namely, there was no forum for those who claimed to have been wrongly convicted, nor did any exist in which to question the severity of sentences. Essentially, he was at the mercy of the Home Office, which could—but was under no obligation to—intervene through its pardoning power.¹³³ As such, Edalji's only chance lay in a public campaign that generated enough pressure to warrant a response from the Home Office.

At the most basic level, an association with Conan Doyle was useful for the publicity he provided. By invoking a public friendship with the detective novelist, however, Edalji also attempted to revise the central narrative. In other words, by making the dominant narrative that of the admirable Sir Arthur's quest for justice, he portrayed the police investigation as a biased vendetta fueled by personal and unprofessional prejudices.

The Question of Truth

¹³³ W. R. Cornish and G. de N. Clark, *Law and Society in England 1750-1950* (London: Sweet & Maxwell, 1989), 609.

At the level of sheer practicality, Conan Doyle's friendship put pressure on the government to respond; indeed, he was the conduit through which Herbert Gladstone, the Secretary of State, "as the result of communications between Sir Conan Doyle and the Home Office [...] had promised a full inquiry into all the circumstances attendant on Mr. Edalji's conviction, on the lines of inquiry held into the Beck case."¹³⁴ Ever since Edalji's release in October of 1906, the Home Office had kept tabs on press coverage of the Edalji case independent from the articles that Edalji himself started writing and sending their way.¹³⁵ But the scope of the actual inquiry fell short of the extensive review received by the Adolf Beck case. Instead of a public inquiry, the Committee was charged with the more limited capacity of examining only the material in possession of the Home Office and "advising" the Home Secretary on the case.¹³⁶

The government yielded to public opinion to a point in establishing the Committee. But it stipulated that the conduct of all the officials who played a part in Edalji's conviction was not in question even as the conviction itself became increasingly indefensible in the light of public scrutiny.¹³⁷ Accordingly, the Committee arrived at the seemingly inconsistent recommendation that Edalji be issued a free pardon while receiving no compensation.

It was an incoherent position that bypassed the law in favor of an associative logic in which Edalji's supposed culpability for the letters tainted his innocence, rendering him ineligible for compensation. The Committee thus conflated a question of legality with

¹³⁴ The Edalji Inquiry Fiasco. *Truth*, March 6, 1907, HO 986, no.181, The National Archives, Kew.

¹³⁵ *Daily Chronicle* article on release of Edalji, 20 October, HO 986, no. 158, The National Archives, Kew; Edalji Protests His Innocence. *The Umpire*, [date unknown], 1906, HO 986, no. 163, The National Archives, Kew.

¹³⁶ The Edalji Inquiry. *The Police Review and Parade Gossip*, March 8, 1907, HO 986, no.181, The National Archives, Kew.

one of morality. Unable to deny that the prosecution's evidence had been insufficient for a conviction, it could not help but issue a free pardon. In theory, English common law held that defendants were innocent until proven guilty. Accordingly, the burden of proof should have lain with the prosecution from the start. But the uniform application of this principle had yet to be established.¹³⁸ In this case, the Committee effectively placed the burden on Edalji and his supporters to prove his innocence. The Committee's conclusion qualified the fact of Edalji's legal innocence by suggesting that he fell short of an extralegal standard of blamelessness.

The half-hearted nature of Edalji's acquittal indicated a reluctance to relinquish the most convenient explanation for the disturbances in Great Wyrley: that the problem lay with Edalji himself. Even as the Committee allowed that he was not liable for the crimes with which he was formally charged, it held Edalji accountable for essentially being suspicious. In this respect, their position converged with the anonymous letter-writers.

In their disparate ways, both intimated that there was more to Edalji and his family than met the eye. In legal terms, the Committee could not rationalize Edalji's conviction. But by upholding lingering suspicions and thus muddying the discourse around the legal fact of his pardon, it hinted at a darker truth. The years-long campaign of anonymous harassment similarly assumed that the smooth surface of his family's middle-

¹³⁷ Herbert Gladstone to Sir Oliver Lodge, 12 March 1907. HO 986, no. 182a, The National Archives, Kew.

¹³⁸ W. R. Cornish and G de N. Clark, *Law and Society in England: 1750-1950* (London: Sweet & Maxwell, 1989), 623. As late as 1934, in the case of claims that a defendant charged with murder lacked the necessary malice aforethought (due to accident, self-defense, drunkenness or provocation), the court ruled that the burden of proof lay with the defense rather than the prosecution. The Court of Criminal Appeal upheld the decision, and it was only through a statement made by the House of Lords that it was finally confirmed unequivocally that the prosecution bore the burden on issues of malice aforethought in murder, as it did in other crimes.

class domesticity merely served as a front for some terrible hidden truth—a trope of contemporary sensation novels.

What was at stake was the question of truth—rather than the law—which was articulated through the generic conventions of sensation and detective fiction. The case of George Edalji was structured as a narrative driven by a search for the truth of the crime at its center. Edalji’s recruitment of Conan Doyle—a well-known detective novelist—evidenced such an understanding on his part, which was shared by others. And it further invited a reading of the case as detective story, especially since the nascent field of crime detection drew on the genre in its conception. Given the dominance of this framework, the recruitment of Conan Doyle can be understood in terms of his apparent skill as a consummate storyteller and his professional qualifications as a crime solving consultant of sorts. It was a ploy to garner public support for an alternative story about Edalji’s innocence—a version of the truth that suggested he posed no threat to the community and further, the nation.

Detective Fiction as Interpretive Framework

Literary critics have noted that the central problem of personal identity in detective fiction—the question of who propels the plot towards the resolution of the mystery—resonates with broader questions of national identity, suggesting that the genre emerged in tandem with “specific national needs and interests.”¹³⁹ “[A] designated figure of social authority—the literary detective—gains the power to discover ‘the truth,’” literary critic Ronald Thomas argues, “by acquiring the right to tell someone else’s story

¹³⁹ Ronald R. Thomas, “The Fingerprint of the Foreigner: Colonizing the Criminal Body in 1890s Detective Fiction and Criminal Anthropology,” *English Literary History*, 61 (Autumn, 1994), 656.

against his or her will.”¹⁴⁰ The conundrum posed to some by the presence of the Edaljis in the rural West Midlands prompted an avid contestation over truth in the form of the anonymous letter incidents. Attempting to lay claim to that right, the letter-writers assumed and purported to reveal a hidden truth about the Edalji family. The subsequent contestation over Edalji’s identity as either wily criminal or wronged innocent as framed by his trial and its aftermath reinforced the sense that Edalji embodied an incomprehensibility from which the truth of his character could be extracted by the prescient observer.

In a bid to establish his sense of the truth as authoritative, Conan Doyle attempted to bring to bear on the Edalji case the interpretive lens of his detective fiction. In response to the Home Office’s unsatisfactory ruling, he responded in yet another series of articles in May. These were based on a case he was building against an alternative suspect to present to the Home Office in July. Conan Doyle thus sought to impose the neat resolution of a detective story on the episode. He would simply prove Edalji innocent by catching the real perpetrator of the Great Wyrley Outrages.

Reality, however, defied Conan Doyle’s attempts to wrest a satisfying narrative solution from the structural problem the Edaljis posed for the British nation. The pragmatic and logistical considerations involved in investigating a crime that had occurred four years before made a crisp conclusion impossible. Indeed, the Home Office immediately dismissed the case Conan Doyle proposed. Conan Doyle’s recourse to the framework of detective fiction narrowed the larger issue of the Edaljis’ commensurability with the nation and its vision of national belonging into the factual question of George

¹⁴⁰ Thomas, 656.

Edalji's innocence. In this respect, the terms of his inquiry echoed those of the Committee decision he so vehemently rejected.

Edalji's Narrative of Persecution

In his own attempt to take control of the matter, Edalji insisted that the accoutrements of middle-class English respectability in which he was steeped belied no sinister secrets. Instead, Edalji questioned the motivations of the police. As a counterpoint to his public friendship with Conan Doyle—which in fact had little to do with personal liking—he depicted the police as driven by personal aversion. In a departure from present-day conceptions of friendship in which personal attachment is paramount, whether Conan Doyle and Edalji enjoyed each other's company was tangential to their association. In fact, Edalji suggested that Conan Doyle was the more credible judge of character because he lacked a personal history with Edalji, unlike the Staffordshire police.

Recounting his story in early 1907, in the wake of the redoubled attention thanks to Conan Doyle, Edalji started some eighteen years earlier to frame that personal history as a more coherent narrative of police bias. Adducing past events with an eye to showing the ill will borne against him by the police, he sought to explain his current predicament as the result. "Whether you're guilty or not," Edalji reported one constable telling him mid-interview in the most recent animal maiming investigations, "it serves you well to be suspected, when you have such odd-looking things about your place."¹⁴¹ The constable was referring to a small trowel in a sheath and a tin collecting box for plants, both of which belonged Edalji's sister Maud, who considered herself an amateur botanist.

According to Edalji, these had been mistaken by the police as respectively, a “dagger” and “an infernal machine,” potential implements for the slashing of livestock.¹⁴² The anecdote portrayed the police as incompetent, a primary theme in Edalji’s narrative.

For the police, the contention voiced by the constable that the Edaljis were somehow culpable for their own hardships—that they deserved to be suspected—was a recurring refrain. In 1892, the police accused George Edalji of writing the poison pen letters that plagued his family. Lacking proof, they had never pursued prosecution, but Edalji argued that the police held a long-standing bias against him. It was this bias, he maintained, that prompted the Staffordshire police to investigate and ultimately convict him of the 1903 animal maimings. Accordingly, the subtitle to the Edalji’s series in *Pearson’s Weekly* read: “The Narrative of Eighteen Years’ Persecution.”

The Edalji Family Problem

Conan Doyle’s friendship was significant in its conception as a counterweight to the long-running unfriendliness that eventually led to Edalji’s arrest and conviction. The Edalji family’s problem—or the Edalji family as a problem, which was the view that the authorities eventually settled upon—entered the public record in 1888 when a series of anonymous letters took them as its primary target. Others received letters as well. But none bore the brunt of the perpetrators’ malicious pranks to the same extent. In particular, the letter series of 1892-1895 frequently involved extra-epistolary ramifications, with people and objects being sent to the vicarage.

¹⁴¹ My Own Story. *Pearson’s Weekly*, February 21, 1907, HO 144/990, The National Archives, Kew.

¹⁴² My Own Story. *Pearson’s Weekly*, February 21, 1907, HO 144/990, The National Archives, Kew.

“To go fully into the endless hoaxes and forgeries which made Wyrley notorious from 1892-5 would occupy a dozen pages or more,” Edalji wrote in his retrospective account.¹⁴³ The magnitude as well as the attention to detail suggested considerable investments of time, thought, and energy expended in a project whose sole purpose appeared to be the harassment of the Edaljis. Finding that police intervention brought no relief, Shapurji Edalji took matters into his own hands as best he could. Even before the Great Wyrley Outrages impelled them to take to their pens with renewed vigor, the Edaljis had demonstrated a willingness to engage as members of civil society in whatever modes of self-advocacy they found available. Accordingly, in 1895, Shapurji Edalji had issued his own public notice in *The Times* in an attempt to warn potential victims of letters sent in his name and possibly stem the tide of everyday disruptions:

[The letter-writer] has forged my signature, and his handwriting and style of composition are such as to make one believe that his communication must be genuine. Clergymen are asked to come and take funerals for me, or visit some person who it is alleged is dying. Detectives are asked to call here, when they would be commissioned by me to take some secret and delicate business . . . Tradesmen of almost every description are asked to send to my house wines, spirits, medicines, books, furniture, clothes, musical instruments, and a host of other things.¹⁴⁴

The prankster(s) took the pains to recreate a writing voice plausible as the Reverend Edalji in an array of scenarios, “imposing on undertakers, chimney-sweepers, and brass bands.” The targets of these letters written in Shapurji Edalji’s name extended beyond their immediate neighbors to far-flung Scotland and Ireland. And unlike the first series of letters in 1888-9, which were all posted from within the district of South Staffordshire, this time the Edaljis received letters from locations beyond its bounds.

¹⁴³ My Own Story. *Pearson’s Weekly*, February 7, 1907, HO 144/990.

The Letters

The first set of letters began innocuously enough in the summer of 1888 with a request that Reverend Edalji subscribe to a local paper, the *Evening Star*. Upon inquiry, the paper's office confirmed that it had not sent the letters. This continued for months until a sudden escalation to threats to "shoot [Shapurji Edalji] dead."¹⁴⁵ Then a window at the vicarage was broken, as additional missives threatened to break more; further graffiti on the property ensued—"MOST OF THE EDALJIS ARE WICKED" on an outhouse wall—and the letters could no longer be dismissed as harmless.¹⁴⁶

The letters were all the more shocking because at this point the Edaljis had been settled in Great Wyrley for over a decade. The contrast between what had been an uneventful existence and the outlandish accusations contained in the letters was evocative of the generic structure of sensation fiction, which was the precursor to the popular detective novels of Conan Doyle. Literary critic Patrick Brantlinger has observed that "many [sensation novels] imply by their very structures that domestic tranquility conceals heinous desires and deeds."¹⁴⁷ Thematically, the letters repeatedly intimated that there was something sinister underlying the surface of the Edalji household. In addition, by their very existence, the letters belied the everyday functionality of the social relations maintained by the inhabitants of the Great Wyrley vicarage.

¹⁴⁴ S. Edalji. "A Strange Hoax." *Times* [London, England] 16 Aug. 1895: 12.

¹⁴⁵ My Own Story. *Pearson's Weekly*, February 7, 1907, HO 144/990.

¹⁴⁶ The narrative of events in this section has been drawn from Gordon Weaver, *Conan Doyle and the Parson's Son: the George Edalji Case*, (Cambridge: Vanguard Books, 2006). At this point, the police became involved, and the matter was resolved with the arrest of Elizabeth Foster, who was employed as the Edaljis' general servant. She was bound over to keep the peace for six months, but her guilt was never determined.

¹⁴⁷ Patrick Brantlinger, "What is 'Sensational' About the 'Sensation Novel'?" *Nineteenth-Century Fiction* 37 (June 1982), 3. See also Matthew Sweet's discussion of the sensation novel and its defamiliarization of the domestic sphere. Sweet, "Introduction," in *The Woman in White*, by Wilkie Collins (London: Penguin, 1999), xiii-xiv.

The second series starting in 1892 evidenced both a quantitative and qualitative shift, as the letters proceeded to build upon precedent. This time, rather than a duration of months, over a period of three years, hundreds of letters descended upon the vicarage. Edalji recounted the consensus at the time: “This series of letters (unlike the 1888 lot) were believed by those competent to judge to be the work of an educated person who apparently made no attempt to disguise his handwriting, and who was evidently either a lunatic or suffering from some religious mania.”¹⁴⁸ If this expert opinion was to be believed and these letters were written by someone other than the perpetrator of 1888, at least one more person harbored enough hostility for such an elaborate project. Whether the second set had any connection to the earlier letters, what remained constant—indeed, amplified—was the aggressive intent to disrupt the Edaljis’ lives.

Lens of Sensation Fiction

That intent manifested itself in a bifurcated structure that mirrored the sensation fiction from which the letters seemed to draw their inspiration. On the one hand, the letters addressed to the Edaljis often exhibited floridly worded rants heavy in religious overtones that called into question the mental stability of the letter-writer, giving rise to speculations regarding possible lunacy or “religious mania.” On the other hand, the letter-writer demonstrated the practical wherewithal to convincingly engage in fraudulent correspondence on Shapurji Edalji’s behalf.

In fact, the sham advertisements placed in various newspapers were written in what passed successfully as the voice of a country vicar. “So cleverly did the writer do his work,” Edalji noted, “that he not only imposed on practically all the London and

¹⁴⁸ My Own Story. *Pearson’s Weekly*, February 7, 1907, HO 144/990.

provincial papers (including the Times, Daily News, Daily Chronicle, Morning Post, Standard, etc.), but actually duped many of them several times.”¹⁴⁹ Furthermore, the letter-writer’s crafting of suggestive details resonated with the contemporary rise of the sensation novel and detective mysteries.

A typical sample of the letter-writer’s exploits came in the form of an advertisement that positioned his father as an intermediary for a young woman in search of an eligible bachelor:

Young lady (24), handsome, agreeable, and thoroughly domesticated, with freehold property yielding 600 or so net profits per annum and 2040 in bank, is desirous of meeting with young gentleman, view early matrimony.¹⁵⁰ - Address, in first instance, in strictest confidence, stating age, occupation, means, etc., to Rev. S. Edalji, Gt. Wyrley, nr. Wednesbury. N.B.—No agent need intervene.¹⁵¹

While it revealed only the barest outlines of a possible plot, the advertisement’s conjuring of a young woman of considerable means on the verge of marriage hinted at many a hapless fictional heroine inspired by such notorious cases as that of Caroline Norton.¹⁵² The catastrophe of a misstep into the wrong marriage had thereafter been revisited in countless fictional renditions. The ad drew the enigmatic picture of a young woman with a sizable fortune apparently at the mercy of a clergyman whose surname the majority of the population could not be relied upon to pronounce. Its implied preoccupation with the possibility of a defenseless young woman under the thrall of man whose race rendered

¹⁴⁹ Ibid.

¹⁵⁰ An income of £600 in 1892 is the equivalent of £388,800 in the present, according to the calculations of economists Lawrence H. Officer and Samuel H. Williamson. See their website measuringworth.com.

¹⁵¹ My Own Story. *Pearson’s Weekly*, February 7, 1907, HO 144/990.

¹⁵² Caroline Elizabeth Sarah Norton was a well-known British society beauty and author, who left her abusive husband in 1836. Divorce remained prohibitively expensive and cumbersome although it became more accessible with the passing of the Matrimonial Causes Act in 1857, for which Norton became an avid advocate. Unable to obtain a divorce, Norton had found herself without any means to support herself, her earnings as an author confiscated by her husband. Married women only assumed legal rights to the entirety

him suspect in the eyes of the letter-writer hinted at anxieties at the conjunction of race and gender.

Another specimen of the letter-writer's virtuosity persuaded the Lincolnshire gentleman to whom it was addressed to come calling at the vicarage:

A woman, who refuses to give her name, was found in my garden yesterday week in a dying condition. She has only this morning recovered consciousness, and keeps on asking for you by name the whole time. From what I can gather, she has wronged you in some way and desires to make amends. She had on her 55 in bank-notes, 11s. 6 1/2d. in cash, part of a P.O. Savings book, name and number gone, and a pocket-handkerchief marked simply "S." She is tall, aged about sixty-two, has black hair, the front teeth projecting. Doctor says the only thing is to get you over. I promised I would write and you would come on Tuesday. This seemed to pacify her, and she is now gone to sleep. Could you manage to get here on Monday evening about six? I should be most happy to accommodate you with a bed. Kindly address in reply to this to Walsall P.O. to be called for, so as I can get it on Monday. Letters do not get here till very late.— Believe me, yours sincerely, S. EDALJI.¹⁵³

The particulars of the letter held all the promise of the mystery in such wildly successful sensation novels like Wilkie Collins's *The Woman in White*, generally regarded as the first of its genre.¹⁵⁴ The letter brimming with apparent clues was reminiscent of that novel's epistolary form whereby the different characters propelled the narrative forward by way of their testimonies. Serialized in 1859 and published in book form in 1860, Collins's novel hinged on the central conceit of mistaken identity, which the letter echoed in highlighting the unknowability of the mysterious woman's identity. Its colorful Italian villain Count Fosco offered a portrait of evil that meshed with unease about foreign masculinity.

of their property regardless of source or time of acquisition with the passing of the Married Women's Property Act of 1882, which was a more complete version of the 1870 Act.

¹⁵³ My Own Story. *Pearson's Weekly*, February 7, 1907, HO 144/990.

¹⁵⁴ Matthew Sweet, "Introduction," in *The Woman in White*, by Wilkie Collins (London: Penguin, 1999), xiii.

The popularity of the genre can be read as a measure of its accessibility as an interpretive lens. Sensation fiction brought about record book sales unprecedented in their numbers; for Collins's contemporary Mary Elizabeth Braddon, the commercial success of *Lady Audley's Secret*, published in 1862, ensured financial independence for the rest of her life.¹⁵⁵ *The Woman in White* inspired "songs, dances in the form of a waltz and the 'Fosco Galop,' and even a perfume."¹⁵⁶ Within the first several months of its publication in book form, Collins's novel was already in its eighth edition. The general reading public were familiar with the key conventions of the sensation novel, whose widespread appeal secured it an afterlife that literary critics have located in various forms of popular culture, the most representative being modern mystery, detective, and suspense fiction.¹⁵⁷

The sensation novel was defined in part by content; dark plots employed combinations of theft, adultery, insanity, mistaken identity, kidnapping, and murder among all manner of sinister proceedings. These were set against a bourgeois, domestic backdrop rather than the Italian castles that dotted the foreign landscape of its precursor, the Gothic novel. Accordingly, the scene in the letter with the mysterious woman, willfully nameless, dying, and guilt-ridden due to a past wrong of such enormity that it loomed all-consuming over her imminent last breath, was staged in the vicar's garden. The details of her person read as both prosaic and darkly significant. The specificity of the cash in her possession, the P.O. Savings book devoid of name and number, and the single initial on her handkerchief individually meant nothing. But the accretion of such flourishes gestured to the existence of a roadmap to the truth behind the mystery.

¹⁵⁵ For a discussion of the connection between the rise of sensation fiction and the development of contemporary consumer culture, see Sweet, "Introduction," in *The Woman in White*, xiv-xvi.

¹⁵⁶ Melisa Klimaszewski, *Brief Lives: Wilkie Collins* (London: Hesperus, 2011), 71.

While the letter-writer assumed the guise of the cool-headed author methodically crafting fictional webs around the Edaljis in these instances, other letters instead appeared to embody the chaotic forces of madness depicted in sensation novels. In his retelling, Edalji provided excerpts from the less coherent class of letters addressed specifically to his father; the caveat that his selections were limited to the least offensive specimens “as most of the missives [were] unfit for publication” indicated the marked difference in tone from the previous examples, written as they were specifically for publication.¹⁵⁸ In contrast to the workaday prose employed in the advertisements, these letters tended towards more verbose language and religious references.

Again, the subject matter frequently gestured to the dark peripheries of society. “In case the course we now propose adopting acts upon your nerves and temper to too great an extent” one asserted, “pray rest assured that we have already communicated with the authorities at a certain lunatic asylum not a hundred miles distant from your thrice-accursed house, and thither you will be forcibly removed in case you give way to any strong expressions of opinion, or enter too warmly into any debate.”¹⁵⁹ The letter-writer proposed to drive Shapurji Edalji mad; given the panoply of harassments endured by the Edalji household, the intent was plausible if somewhat literal. Madness in Shapurji’s case though was defined at the low threshold of “any strong expressions of opinion.” Strong opinions were deemed unacceptable in racial others; indeed, the letter-writer regarded it as tantamount to madness. Any degree of assertiveness was perceived as a threat,

¹⁵⁷ Patrick Brantlinger, “What is ‘Sensational’ About the ‘Sensation Novel’?” *Nineteenth-Century Fiction* 37 (June 1982), 1.

¹⁵⁸ My Own Story. *Pearson’s Weekly*, February 7, 1907, HO 144/990.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid.

especially after the 1857 Indian Rebellion and its long-lasting hold on the British imagination.¹⁶⁰

As if to anticipate potential discomfort on the part of his readers when he related these past grievances, Edalji framed his own assertions so as to avoid alienating his audience. Like his parents, he did not shy away from making his case to those who may—or may not—have been inclined to listen. “As I see it is considered impossible to hold a public inquiry into my case with the aid of counsel,” he wrote in March of 1907 to the Home Office Undersecretary of State, “I respectfully pray, that in justice to myself, my own account of the case, now appearing in ‘Pearson’s Weekly,’ may be considered.¹⁶¹” Unabashed by the Home Office’s unresponsiveness, Edalji persisted in sending them his account while Conan Doyle ran a concurrent campaign.

At the same time, Edalji imposed a rehabilitative framework on the apparently irrational hostility of the letters by associating them with a socially acceptable form of discord:

There was a general election in the summer of that year, and the first of this lot of letters [the second series of 1892] came to hand two days after my father had lent his schoolroom for, and presided at, a Liberal political meeting in support of Sir John Swinburne. Most people connect this set of letters with that meeting, and I may add that the only occasions when any local feeling was aroused against my father were during election contests.¹⁶²

Much as he had denied experiencing any prejudice in the community, Edalji preemptively deflected the conversation away from the fraught topic by offering a legitimate rationale for conflict. None of the letters, however, mentioned politics, tending

¹⁶⁰ For a discussion of how British and Indian constructions of masculinity emerged in concert from changing colonial contexts, see Mrinalini Sinha, *Colonial Masculinity: The “Manly Englishman” and the “Effeminate” Bengali in the Late Nineteenth Century* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1995).

¹⁶¹ George Edalji to Undersecretary of State, 2 March 1907. HO 144/990, The National Archives, Kew.

more towards brimstone than ballot boxes. At the same time, Edalji attempted to further separate the letter-writers out from the rest of society by positioning them—rather than anyone in his own family, as the letters proposed—as belonging in “a lunatic asylum” more so than “a convict prison.”¹⁶³

Similarly, he invoked Conan Doyle or other supporters for more pointed criticisms directed towards the police. In 1895, Shapurji Edalji had heard rumors that the Chief Constable of Staffordshire, Captain George Anson, claimed to know the identity of the letter-writer and had written to Anson to inquire. The latter had responded vaguely:

I did not tell Mr. Perry that I knew the name of the offender, though I told him I had my suspicions. I prefer to keep my suspicions to myself until I am able to prove them, and I trust to obtain a dose of penal servitude for the offender, as although great care has apparently been taken to avoid anything which would constitute any serious offence in law, the person who writes the letters has over-reached himself in two or three instances in such a manner as to render him liable to the most serious punishment.¹⁶⁴

Submitting for the reader’s inspection an excerpt from that letter written by his primary accuser, Edalji limited his own commentary to observations.

While the intent of the latter was clear, Edalji refrained from explicit accusations. There having been no significant progress in the investigation in the two and a half years that had since elapsed, Edalji marveled that Anson “had at last got some ‘suspicions’ as to the offender’s identity.” The thrust of his point was that “although the annoyances had continued uninterruptedly for three years, he [Anson] was still unable to prove anything at all!” Edalji did not refrain from implying police incompetence. And he readily inferred from the veiled manner in which Anson invoked his suspicions that “[i]t is probable Captain Anson’s ‘suspicions’ were [...] directed to myself.”

¹⁶² My Own Story. *Pearson’s Weekly*, February 7, 1907, HO 144/990.

¹⁶³ My Own Story. *Pearson’s Weekly*, February 14, 1907, HO 144/990.

Rather than argue himself that the police were biased, however, Edalji turned to Conan Doyle: “In reference to this letter, I cannot do better than quote Sir A. Conan Doyle’s comments.” And Sir Arthur obligingly pronounced the letter “rather sinister” before offering a reading that explicated its vague suggestiveness as veiled references to Edalji:

[The letter] follows after eighteen months upon the previous one in which he [Anson] accuses George Edalji by name. The letter was drawn from him by the father’s complaint of gossip in the neighbourhood, and the allusion to the skill of the offender in keeping within the law has special meaning, in view of the fact that young Edalji was already a law student. [...] No doubt, the chief constable honestly meant every word he said, and thought that he had excellent reasons for his conclusions [of Edalji’s guilt]; but the point is that if the Staffordshire police took this attitude towards young Edalji in 1895, what chance of impartiality had he in 1903, when a culprit was wanted for an entirely new set of crimes?¹⁶⁵

While Conan Doyle softened his indictment of Anson by allowing for the sincerity of his belief “that he had excellent reasons for his conclusions,” he maintained that the extensive history Edalji had with the local police could not but help influence their 1903 investigation. By ventriloquizing Conan Doyle, Edalji avoided accusing Anson himself.

Instead, he limited himself to drawing the reader’s attention to such “very striking” points as the passage of time during which the “suspicions” of the police yielded no results. The task of drawing conclusions from such points was delegated to Conan Doyle, who supplied the emphatic statements: “It is evident that their [the Staffordshire police’s] minds were steeped in prejudice against him [Edalji], and that they were in the mood to view his actions in the darkest light.”¹⁶⁶ Instead of making his own statements, Edalji chose to defer to Britain’s leading expert on crime detection.

¹⁶⁴ My Own Story. *Pearson’s Weekly*, February 14, 1907, HO 144/990.

¹⁶⁵ My Own Story. *Pearson’s Weekly*, February 14, 1907, HO 144/990.

¹⁶⁶ My Own Story. *Pearson’s Weekly*, February 14, 1907, HO 144/990.

Conan Doyle lent Edalji the authority of expertise. Edalji's decision to approach a writer of detective stories regarding his case appears unorthodox—even fanciful—from a present-day perspective. Well into the second half of the nineteenth century, however, the police were more likely to inspire the suspicion of the general public rather than their trust; the Commissioner of Police noted in the Annual Report for 1869 that the professional police force was viewed as something that was “in fact, entirely foreign to the habits of the nation.”¹⁶⁷ Due to their association with the *ancien régime* in France, professional police officers had historically been viewed as agents of the state's increasing invasion of privacy.¹⁶⁸

The modern police force as a public institution remained a relatively new development, and its professional ideals were still nascent from the late Victorian into the Edwardian era.¹⁶⁹ The template for standard police procedure was still in the makings, and Conan Doyle played a crucial role in shaping it. Detective fiction provided models for a field that was in the process of defining itself. Early criminologists explicitly attributed inspiration for their theories to such fictional characters as Sherlock Holmes or

¹⁶⁷ John Fitzgerald Moylan, *Scotland Yard and the Metropolitan Police* (G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1929), 19. More specifically, it was associated with a vision of prying French officials. Cornish and Clark, 588.

¹⁶⁸ Due to the great concern for the prevention of political tainting, the police were even initially prohibited from voting at Parliamentary elections. Professional police were commonly suspected of espionage at political meetings. Consequently, until 1869, unless they had obtained express permission, London police were required to remain in uniform when appearing in public even if they were off duty. Britain's monumental “Bloody Sunday,” in which 2,000 police officers took part in the disruption of a workers' demonstration in Trafalgar Square on November 13, 1887, was still part of the recent past at the turn of the century and did little to improve the police's public image. While 400 troops had also been present, neither the infantry nor cavalry were ordered to either open fire or draw their swords; rather, the majority of those injured—including women and children—had been beaten by the police. See Moylan.

¹⁶⁹ Cornish and Clark note the difficulty of estimating “how inadequate the essentially amateur scheme of policing was becoming in the later eighteenth century.” Under the parish constable system, prosecution was undertaken by the victims themselves or other private individuals who could be induced to take an interest in the matter. Cornish and Clark, 552-553.

August Dupin.¹⁷⁰ As such, for Edalji—as well as a number of his contemporaries who had the same idea—consulting the creator of Sherlock Holmes on a criminal investigation was a viable option.¹⁷¹

The genre of detective fiction—related to and successor of the sensation novel—emerged in tandem with the establishment of the police and the expansion of the British Empire that overdetermined the trials and tribulations of Edalji and his family. Published in 1868, Wilkie Collins's *The Moonstone*, widely regarded as the first English-language specimen of the detective novel, captured many of the elements that informed the Edaljis' reception into their Midland farming and mining community in the wake of their arrival in 1875.¹⁷² Considered one of Collins's representative works alongside *The Woman in White*, it was a hugely popular commercial success that increased the circulation of *All the Year Round*, the monthly periodical launched by Charles Dickens, beyond even the numbers generated by Dickens's *Great Expectations*.¹⁷³

At the thematic level, an obvious parallel can be drawn between the Edaljis' situation and the plots of *The Moonstone* and *The Woman in White*; all hinge on the

¹⁷⁰ The pathbreaking French forensic scientist Edmond Locard went so far as to instruct colleagues and students to study such works of fiction as Conan Doyle's *A Study in Scarlet* and "The Sign of the Four" in order to understand the basis of the principles he was recommending in his development of "a new police science." See Ronald R. Thomas, *Detective Fiction and the Rise of Forensic Science*, Cambridge studies in nineteenth-century literature and culture; 26; (Cambridge [England]; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 5.

¹⁷¹ The Edalji case was one among a number of cases referred to Conan Doyle over the course of his career. Biographer Stashower relates how Doyle communicated with Scotland Yard after reading a report of a young bride found dead in her bathtub and noticing parallels to an earlier drowning, brought to the attention of the police the possibility of a serial killer (who was later dubbed "The Bluebeard of the Bath."). This is adduced as an example of the writer's extensive knowledge of crime and the general public's perception of Conan Doyle as an expert on the subject. The two major cases in which Doyle's intervention proved crucial and which he is best known for are the Edalji and Slater cases. Stashower, *Teller of Tales*.

¹⁷² Deirdre David, *The Cambridge Companion to the Victorian Novel* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2001), 179.

¹⁷³ *The Woman in White* boosted weekly sales of the magazine from thirty-eight and a half thousand to as much as three hundred thousand. *The Moonstone* has never been out of print since its serialization in 1868. Klimaszewski, 70.

havoc that ensued when what were portrayed as foreign elements intruded upon the quiet English countryside. In *The Moonstone*, the Indian diamond, which Collins made clear was ill-begotten through colonial conquest, drew further forces from abroad when it was bequeathed to Rachel Verinder on her eighteenth birthday. In accordance with generic conventions of course, the truth of the crime at the center of the novel—the theft of the titular jewel—was revealed to negate the suspicions most conspicuously voiced at the outset of the narrative. Whatever else they had done, the itinerant Indian jugglers were not in fact responsible for the initial disappearance of the Moonstone from Rachel's bedroom.

Nonetheless, the novel's resolution also confirmed the validity of those suspicions; from the start, the Indians, later unmasked as Brahmins who serve as the Moonstone's guardians, had planned to steal the Moonstone. Someone else had merely beaten them to it. Peace and order were restored only when the Indians recovered the diamond and spirited it back to its shrine in India.

Literary critics have characterized the detective novel as a story of reestablishing the status quo.¹⁷⁴ In *The Moonstone*, the status quo was not recovered; the Moonstone was not restored to the victim of the theft of personal property. The diamond was returned not to Rachel Verinder but restored instead to the Indians. In a sense, the narrative rectified the more fundamental crime of colonialism. As a result, an uneasy peace was recovered by rooting out the problematic point of contact between the two

¹⁷⁴ Joseph A. Kestner notes, "Critics of detective fiction have recognized as one of its functions the provision of a sense of order, control, and stability for the culture of this period." "'Real' Men: Construction of Masculinity in the Sherlock Holmes Narratives." *Studies in the Literary Imagination* 29 (Spring 1996): 73-88. Christopher Clausen observes that the focus on redressing individual crimes limits the scope for change in detective fiction: "The solution of individual crimes [...] restores the social balance that each crime had upset. It never brings that balance into question." "Sherlock Holmes, Order, and the Late-Victorian Mind." *Georgia Review* 38 (Spring 1984): 115.

conflicting cultures. As such, the conclusion remained deeply pessimistic about intercultural and interracial encounters.¹⁷⁵

Conan Doyle's assessment of Edalji's case followed a similar trajectory. At the level of form, literary critic D. A. Miller has argued that *The Moonstone* functions as a text that masks its discourse of power as a discourse of "how things are."¹⁷⁶ The plot seemingly circumscribed the professional functions of detection and punishment to the purview of the police, only to reinscribe them onto everyday life; for instance, the routine surveillance inherent in maintaining a laundry inventory played a key part in unraveling of the mystery. In an analogous move, the novel forewent establishing an authoritative narrative. Instead, it assumed the form of a collection of subjective narratives—but only to highlight a monological truth.¹⁷⁷ The novel refrained from spelling out that truth, presenting readers with a sequence of testimonies that they are then asked to evaluate. Notwithstanding this apparent light-handedness of approach, the testimonies bore the traces of each narrator's character, clearly signaling the respective trustworthiness of each. Ultimately, despite the range of perspectives provided, there was only one truth that readers could conceivably reach. By assuming the guise of a reality innocent in its sheer positivity, the novel performed a disavowal of power to claim even greater credence for its narrative authority; it purported to merely present a pre-existing truth rather than actively participate in its creation.

¹⁷⁵ For more on the anxiety that empire was something that resisted understanding or containment, see Patrick Brantlinger, *Rule of Darkness: British Literature and Imperialism 1830-1914* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1988), 227-54.

¹⁷⁶ D. A. Miller, "From Roman Policier to Roman-Police: Wilkie Collins's 'The Moonstone,'" *NOVEL: A Forum on Fiction* 13, no. 2 (Winter, 1980): 170.

¹⁷⁷ Miller, "From Roman Policier," 165-169.

The case against Edalji employed a similar sleight of hand when it failed to acknowledge that the anonymous letter incidents and Edalji's implication in the animal maimings happened in the context of a colonial order of power. Racial difference alone is an insufficient explanation for what happened to Edalji. By neglecting to take it into account, however, the prosecution naturalized the connection they drew between their suspicions of Edalji's involvement in the letters and their subsequent conclusion that he was also behind the attacks. In other words, they presented themselves as merely addressing the fact of Edalji's emergence as the common factor the anonymous letter incidents and animal maimings. It was the anonymous letter incidents that had marked Edalji as conspicuous and subsequently suspicious. By eliding the workings of colonial power in that process, the police recast the narrative into one in which Edalji somehow implicated himself.

British Nationality, Subjecthood, and Citizenship

Much of the impetus for the events that transpired originated in perceptions of Edalji as foreign. From a legal perspective, however, he was not. Historically, British nationality incorporated both the principles of *jus soli*, right of the soil, and *jus sanguinis*, right of blood. In other words, both those born on British soil regardless of parentage and those born abroad to British parents were entitled to British nationality. The whole family fell within the broad classification of subjects to the same crown. The three children—George, Horace, and Maud—qualified as natural-born subjects. Their father, Shapurji Edalji, born in British India, was categorized as a non-European natural-born British

subject.¹⁷⁸ While this constituted a category distinct from that which applied to his children, it allowed Charlotte Edalji to retain her own subjecthood, which would not have been the case should she have married an alien of foreign nationality.

Their marriage took place just two years after the 1870 Naturalization Act, which for the first time dictated that British women who married foreign nationals lost their subject status. This gives a sense of the context from which speculation might arise that the Stonehams did not care overmuch for the daughter they married off to an apparently—if not technically—foreign man. Until 1933, this loss of legal status was applicable even in cases where the woman did not acquire her husband's nationality, leaving her effectively stateless. Tabili has noted that by 1922, out of the 139,000 alien women living in Britain, approximately 30,000—more than 20 percent—had formerly been natural-born subjects who forfeited their nationality through marriage.¹⁷⁹ The impression of the Reverend as foreign suggested how precariously close someone like Charlotte Edalji came to being disowned by the nation itself in the minds of her neighbors if not in actual fact.

British citizenship in the present-day sense was codified only after the Second World War with the British Nationality Act of 1948.¹⁸⁰ In an earlier stage of the British Empire, slavery is the most prominent example of a legal category apart from that of imperial subject. In the late nineteenth century, however, all individuals of the Indian subcontinent under the protection of the British Crown answered to the status of subject

¹⁷⁸ Daniel Gorman, "Wider and Wider Still?: Racial Politics, Intra-Imperial Immigration and the Absence of an Imperial Citizenship in the British Empire" *Journal of Colonialism and Colonial History* 3, no. 3 (2002) 4.

¹⁷⁹ Laura Tabili, "Outsiders in the Land of Their Birth: Exogamy, Citizenship, and Identity in War and Peace" *Journal of British Studies* 44 (October 2005): 796.

¹⁸⁰ Tabili, "Outsiders," 802.

and were formally equal subjects.¹⁸¹ Of those subjects, however, only a select minority of enfranchised individuals exercised the civic rights and privileges of citizenship. The official language of subjecthood gestured to a personal relationship between the subject and sovereign, in which fealty to the crown was recompensed by the protection of the state. Everyone was a subject, but only some subjects could act as citizens.

The project of “clarify[ing] the relationship between the potentially politically active ‘citizen’ and the ‘subject’ with legally defined rights and obligations within the nation” offers a useful way to think about different modes of national belonging.¹⁸² The blanket legal status of subject belied the substantive differences in people’s capacities to act as agents via the nation. Daniel Gorman notes how the “unofficial, rhetorical, and localized nature of citizenship gave rise to great discrepancies amongst imperial subjects in rights, benefits, and duties.”¹⁸³ Such discrepancies set apart metropolitan subjects from colonial subjects, but distinctions also existed within the latter category, most notably along demarcations of race. For example, greater access to self-government in the white settlement colonies as opposed to the dependent colonies threw into sharp relief the imperial governments’ differential treatment of those who were nominally equal subjects. While all were subject to the rule of the state, only a subset of subjects had any say in determining the course of that rule. Indeed, Gorman shows that in the late Victorian and Edwardian periods the concept of “imperial citizenship” was theorized primarily with the white settler colonies in mind.¹⁸⁴

¹⁸¹ Catherine Hall, Keith McClelland, and Jane Rendall, *Defining the Victorian Nation: Class, Race, Gender and the British Reform Act of 1867* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 60.

¹⁸² Hall, McClelland, and Rendall, *Defining*, 57.

¹⁸³ Gorman, “Wider,” 4.

¹⁸⁴ Daniel Gorman. *Imperial Citizenship: Empire and the Question of Belonging* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2006).

Historians have thus argued that the democratizing forces in the nineteenth century that forwarded claims for a more inclusive citizenry were tempered by proposals and legislation that reinscribed difference within and between the categories of class, race, and gender.¹⁸⁵ The joint enterprises of building the British nation and its empire “entailed processes of marginalization, exclusion, surveillance, and silencing along multiple social axes: not only origin or race, but also gender, sexuality, and class.”¹⁸⁶ Determining the validity of claims of national belonging and evaluating whose voices merited attention oftentimes involved mirror processes of excluding and silencing others.

Historian Thomas Holt has demonstrated how classical liberalism, for all its advocacy of universal human rights, was predicated on the assumption of a “basic, human desire for material self-improvement.”¹⁸⁷ Because the British considered this the sign of a functional society, its perceived absence in the Jamaican peasantry, who chose to maximize their autonomy rather than income after the 1834 abolition of slavery, registered as pathological in the eyes of the imperial government.¹⁸⁸ In other words, black Jamaican peasants seemed to lack what the contemporary liberalist ethos posited as a fundamental human quality and prerequisite to citizenship. For the British, the implication was that they were lazy and less than human, fit only to be ruled as subjects and excluded from the body politic.

Conferring political agency was one way of legitimizing one’s position within the nation, but national belonging could be gauged in other ways. In the present,

¹⁸⁵ See Catherine Hall, Keith McClelland, and Jane Rendall, *Defining the Victorian Nation: Class, Race, Gender and the British Reform Act of 1867* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000); Thomas Metcalf, *Ideologies of the Raj* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997); Andrew Sartori, “The British Empire and Its Liberal Mission,” *Journal of Modern History* 78, no. 3 (2006): 623-42.

¹⁸⁶ Tabili, *Outsiders*, 799.

¹⁸⁷ Thomas C. Holt. *The Problem of Freedom: Race, Labor, and Politics in Jamaica and Britain, 1832-1938* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992), 183.

nationality and citizenship typically go hand in hand, but this was less true historically. Throughout the nineteenth century, Britain did not generally deport or significantly penalize resident aliens, and entrance to Britain remained virtually unrestricted until 1905.¹⁸⁹ In fact, foreign nationals could take on substantive duties of citizenship such as serving on local councils until 1894 and on juries until 1919.¹⁹⁰ And between 1824 and 1905 Britain deported no aliens, even as it deported tens of thousands of Irish subjects before and after the potato famine.¹⁹¹

The United Kingdom has emerged as an intriguing case for scholars of citizenship due to the way its more recent debates take place within the boundaries of formal citizenship, rather than between citizens and aliens as is more commonly the case.¹⁹² After the Second World War, an initially expansive policy of formal nationality allowing all British subjects free entry into the United Kingdom increasingly contracted to restrict the immigration of people of color from the former colonies. Kathleen Paul has argued that formal citizenship ultimately mattered less than an informal national identity constructed around the key signifier of race.¹⁹³ Some aliens—namely, those of European descent—were considered to be more amenable to the acquisition of Britishness than those who were already formal citizens but signified as racial others. The category of “British citizen” initially included many who struggled to secure acceptance in the nation. Rather than their formal status ensuring their assimilation, their perceived outsider status reshaped the category by fueling its legislative narrowing. While Paul’s analysis concerns

¹⁸⁸ Ibid., 168.

¹⁸⁹ Andreas Fahrmeir, *Citizens and Aliens: Foreigners and the Law in Britain and the German States, 1789-1870* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2000), 131.

¹⁹⁰ Tabili, “Outsiders,” 802.

¹⁹¹ Fahrmeir, *Citizens*, 212-213.

¹⁹² Kathleen Paul, *Whitewashing Britain: Race and Citizenship in the Postwar Era* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1997), xv.

a much later timeframe, it finds a precursor in the spectrum of belonging that constituted the informal identities of British subjecthood.

Perceptions of Foreignness: Sexual Deviance and Criminality

For the purposes of the everyday parish life in Great Wyrley, the Edaljis' official subject status would have been less relevant than community members' perception of them. Tabili has shown that the loss of their British nationality did little to deter hundreds of women from wedding foreign nationals in the cosmopolitan port of South Shields, where the local economy depended on migrant labor.¹⁹⁴ After all, their British nationality had held little import for their everyday lives. The perils of alien nationality were only thrown into sharp relief at the outbreak of war in 1914 when men designated as "enemy aliens" became subject to internment and deportation, while their British-born wives and children underwent restrictive surveillance.

Born and bred in England, George Edalji still found his race highlighted by those commenting on his case in a way that marked him as foreign. His father, hailing from India, was unlikely to have been viewed differently. Indeed, in a letter to the Home Office, Captain Anson, Chief Constable of Staffordshire asked "how this 'Hindoo,' who could only talk with a foreign accent, came to be a clergyman of the Church of England and in charge of an important working class parish."¹⁹⁵ Anson clearly viewed the Edaljis as out of place in the Great Wyrley vicarage. There was nothing, however, that he could do; like him, the Edaljis were British subjects.

¹⁹³ Paul, *Whitewashing*, xii.

¹⁹⁴ Tabili, *Outsiders*, 802.

¹⁹⁵ Anson to Home Office, 30/31 Dec. 1906, Home Office File 989, Part 2. The National Archives, Kew.

There was nothing to be done—except for some, perhaps to write anonymous letters. Although the letters defy any interpretation of their intent in their lack of discernible direction and frequent incoherence, they can be viewed as an informal attempt to police the boundaries of the nation in terms of the way they harped on a sense of the Edaljis’ difference. In his survey of anonymous letters, historian Gordon Weaver notes “sexual crudity” as a recurring theme.¹⁹⁶ A letter from 1895 referred to the Reverend Edalji as an “infernal blackman,” accusing him of starving, beating, and torturing every girl who had been employed at the vicarage as well as predicting his imminent arrest for “vile...gross immorality with persons using Vaseline in the same way as did Oscar Wilde and Taylor.”(Unattached Footnote)¹⁹⁷

The letter-writer thus demonstrated a familiarity with contemporary preoccupations with sexual deviance, which found occasion for liberal application in addressing the Edaljis in particular. That year—1895—Wilde and his young lover were charged with “gross indecency,” as it was termed by the 1885 Labouchere Amendment. The rise of popular journalism in the vein of W. T. Stead’s campaign against child prostitution with its judicious mix of investigative exposé and sensationalist melodrama had laid the groundwork for the widespread coverage of such scandals.¹⁹⁸ The emergent mass market of working- and lower-middle-class readers was in the process of establishing the newspaper as a fixture of British popular culture.¹⁹⁹ Come the twentieth century, the British read more newspapers per capita than any other nation—almost twice

¹⁹⁶ Weaver, 56.

¹⁹⁷ 17 August 1895 Home Office 127, File 985. The National Archives, Kew.

¹⁹⁸ For an analysis of Stead’s 1885 campaign and its reflection of late-Victorian ideas of gender, class, and sexuality, see Judith Walkowitz, *City of Dreadful Delight: Narratives of Sexual Danger in Late Victorian London* (London: Virago, 1992).

¹⁹⁹ Martin Conboy, *The Press and Popular Culture* (London: Sage, 2003), chapters 4-5.

as many as those in the U.S. in the mid-1950s.²⁰⁰ Newspapers came to play a key role in setting the agenda for public and private discussion, as Edalji and Conan Doyle were counting on when they published their accounts in the popular press.²⁰¹

Published in the *Pall Mall Gazette*, Stead's controversial series "The Maiden Tribute of Modern Babylon" was in fact instrumental in the passage of the Criminal Law Amendment Act of 1885, of which the Labouchere Amendment was part. Crime and court reporting were indispensable to the popular press's editorial formula. As Lucy Bland has observed, court coverage in the popular press transformed criminal trials into "mass cultural spectacles" in which the "boundaries of morality and normality were defined and redefined."²⁰² For newspapers, court reporting offered an effective strategy for legitimizing overt discussions of sex. Moreover, the nationwide purity movement, launched by the Salvation Army that year, had made such discussions increasingly acceptable—even necessary in the combat of immorality.²⁰³ The discourse it enabled, while ostensibly intended to incite moral outrage and thereby promote action, frequently drew on lurid sexual imagery and a xenophobic rhetoric of foreign decadence.²⁰⁴

As a professed aesthete, Wilde provided the perfect target for those who saw his philosophy of pleasure as the manifestation of corrupting foreign morals. The French had long been a popular foil for representations of wholesome English morality, and Wilde in fact left immediately for France upon release from his two-year sentence. On the surface,

²⁰⁰ Francis Williams, *Dangerous Estate: The Anatomy of Newspapers* (London: Longmans, Green, 1958), 1-2.

²⁰¹ On the role of the press in British culture, see Adrian Bingham, *Family Newspapers? Sex, Private Life, and the British Popular Press, 1918-1978* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 15-28.

²⁰² Lucy Bland, "The Trials and Tribulations of Edith Thompson: The Capital Crime of Sexual Incitement in 1920s England," *Journal of British Studies*, 47 (July, 2008), 626, 628.

²⁰³ Frank Mort, *Dangerous Sexualities: Medico-moral Politics in England Since 1830*, 2nd ed. (London: Routledge, 2000), 81.

²⁰⁴ Mort, *Dangerous Sexualities*, 89.

the strait-laced Reverend Edalji likely had little in common with the flamboyant Wilde. But both men could be perceived as foreign in their own way and thus at odds with the normative English ideal of masculinity. That the letter-writer made the association attests to how intimately race and sexual deviance were associated in the popular imagination.

Coverage of the Wilde trial had attuned the readership to the significance of details that might seem innocuous at first glance but could be read as clues of Wilde's deviant sexuality to the trained eye. By virtue of its form, cross-examination attempted to make its points by way of suggestion. For example, the opposing counsel's examination of Wilde on his dealings with younger men highlighted the fact that Wilde had given one of the men money. That Wilde "bec[a]me friendly" on the "first occasion you saw them" was also underscored, as was the class difference between Wilde—a gentleman—and the two of the men in question, "one [...] a gentleman's valet and the other a gentleman's groom."²⁰⁵

According to an associative logic whereby the most trivial anomalies could be interpreted as darkly significant, the "extraordinary arrangement"—as Mr. Disturnal of the prosecution put it—of Shapurji and George Edalji sharing a bedroom was revisited ad nauseum over the course of the case.²⁰⁶ The issue became relevant because Edalji's alibi asserted that the Reverend was a light sleeper and that his son would have been unable to rise in the middle of the night without waking his father. Given the active conversation

²⁰⁵ *The Standard* (London, England), Friday, April 05, 1895; pg. 6; Issue 22077. Apart from the seemingly mandatory mention of Edalji's kindness to animals included in statutory declarations made in his support—understandably so, given the nature of the crime in question—and the assurance of his being "well conducted," the fact that Edalji he was not one to "consort with persons below him in station" was another explicit point to be repeated. It may have been a nod to the working-class connotations of the crime of animal maiming and thus meant to intimate that Edalji could not have been part of larger gang of perpetrators. It could also be read as a more general refutation of impropriety, even if not necessarily of a sexual order as in the case of Wilde. HO 144/984/112737, no.46, The National Archives, Kew.

²⁰⁶ Doyle, *True Crime Files*, 165.

prompted by Conan Doyle's exposition of evidence, and the *Daily Telegraph* proceeded to capitalize on the attention by publishing a two-part story on the trial starting January 21, 1907.²⁰⁷ Combining trial transcript and reportage, the article included an account of Edalji's cross-examination.

Disturnal's questioning of Edalji on the vicarage sleeping arrangements progressed by way of slippery innuendo:

Prisoner was asked if he could explain why it was his father and he occupied the same bed-room. He replied that fifteen or twenty years ago his brother was taken ill, and his mother had to sleep in the same room to nurse him. Ever since that time Edalji and his father had slept in the same bedroom.

Mr. Disturnal asked why that arrangement was continued up to the present time.

Edalji replied that it suited him all right. His brother had now left home, but was often at the vicarage. The bed-room was a large apartment. He and his father occupied different beds. He denied that his father only recently began to occupy the same bed-room, and said the bed-room was locked overnight because it was the custom.

Mr. Disturnal: What! With two men in the room!

Witness: All the doors are locked at night. We have occupied the same room for twenty years.²⁰⁸

That a grown man and his father shared a bedroom in a middle-class household constituted enough of a transgression in the private sphere to merit public discussion. As in the Wilde case, where seemingly small social improprieties had been read as signs of the underlying enormity of "gross indecency," the prosecution implied that this departure from social norms signified something sinister. Disturnal raised questions and feigned astonishment at answers that he implied were insufficient. Popular imagination could be left to do the rest.

²⁰⁷ For a sampling of responses on both sides, see Weaver, 237-244.

²⁰⁸ Doyle, *True Crime Files*, 165.

Nothing explicit was alleged. Mr. Disturnal merely expressed surprise that a bedroom need be locked “with two men in the room.” Edalji apparently felt compelled to justify the arrangement, stating that the shared room “was a large apartment” and further establish that father and son “occupied different beds.” The burden of explanation fell to him, although it was unclear what exactly needed to be explained. The article further reported that Disturnal returned to the issue of “the father sleeping in the same bedroom as his grown-up son” in his final statement for the prosecution and “argued that piecing all the links of evidence together the jury must come to the conclusion that Edalji had some connection with the crime.”²⁰⁹ The prosecution considered the sleeping arrangement as “evidence.” Furthermore, the hopelessly vague association between “extraordinary” sleeping arrangements and the broad assertion that Edalji thus had some unspecified connection to incidents of animal maimings was deemed a plausible argument.

Criminology and Sexology

Historian Neil Davie has noted how the idea that physical deformity could be read as evidence of criminal propensities was central to the development of British criminology in the nineteenth century.²¹⁰ Its origins can be traced back to the pseudo-sciences of physiognomy and phrenology in the 1820s and 1830s. While criminal behavior per se was not the focus of their inquiry, their widespread influence—compounded by the dissemination of illustrations in popular magazines—popularized images of the stereotypical criminal. The notion that certain individuals could be

²⁰⁹ Doyle, *True Crime Files*, 165.

identified as predisposed to commit crimes persisted even as physiognomy and phrenology increasingly lost scientific currency.

What became “an enduring feature of British criminological discourse” from the 1860s into the early twentieth century was its “search for a distinctive criminal-type—for a set of physical and mental traits believed to be common to all criminals, or at least to certain kinds of criminals.”²¹¹ This emphasis on “types” of people, originating in considerations of physical bodies, shaded easily into contemporary thought on race. Scientific criminology evolved in conversation with mid- and late-Victorian anthropological research on racial “types.”

On a related note, it resonated with the period’s eugenic concerns, informed as it was by debates surrounding the notion of “degeneration,” which posited that certain groups of people were regressing to a more evolutionally primitive state—“degenerating” and weakening—in successive generations.²¹² Cesare Lombroso’s influential formulation of the atavistic criminal type similarly conjured visions of savagery that were open to racialization. Lombroso’s Italian school of criminal anthropology prompted the international congresses and debates of the 1880s that first launched criminological science into the broader public consciousness.²¹³ British criminology largely remained separate from the continental debates, and many viewed Lombrosian ideas with skepticism.²¹⁴ The development of the field in Britain has been characterized as a

²¹⁰ See Neil Davie, *Tracing the Criminal: The Rise of Scientific Criminology in Britain, 1860-1918* (Oxford: Bardwell Press, 2005), chapter 1.

²¹¹ Davie, *Tracing*, 23.

²¹² For a discussion of the degeneracy debate, see Davie, *Tracing*, chapter 2.

²¹³ Garland, “British Criminology,” 132.

²¹⁴ On the multivalence of British reception of Lombroso’s “Born Criminal-Type,” see Davie, *Tracing*, chapter 3. For more on continental perspectives, see Peter Becker, *Criminals And Their Scientists: the History of Criminology In International Perspective* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006).

process of “a fundamentally *practical* character.”²¹⁵ The medico-psychiatric establishment—the prison doctors who engaged in the practical application of scientific criminology—was unimpressed in its reception of Havelock Ellis’s popular 1890 study of criminal anthropology, *The Criminal* which garnered a wide lay readership.²¹⁶

Havelock Ellis, a staunch supporter of eugenics policies and widely considered “the most important individual in the British history of sexual medicine,” exemplified how these interrelated threads of thought converged in one person.²¹⁷ Sexology, another nascent discipline of the late nineteenth century, also emerged from “beginnings [...] related to and perhaps even dependent on a pervasive climate of eugenicist and antimiscegenation sentiment and legislation.”²¹⁸ The eugenicist goal of improving the genetic makeup of the human population lent itself to the justification of eradicating those factors perceived as detrimental to that goal—such as miscegenation, for instance. Eugenics proved as—if not more—focused on this negatively defined mission of elimination and exclusion as it was on promoting strategies for the improvement of the human stock.²¹⁹

An analogous preoccupation with pathology characterized the field of sexology. Most sexologists were physicians. Accordingly, their focus tended to be “in the definition, identification, treatment of the pathological aspects of human sexuality, as

²¹⁵ Davie, *Tracing*, 16 (original emphasis).

²¹⁶ David Garland, “British Criminology Before 1935” *The British Journal of Criminology* 28, no. 2 (1988) 135.

²¹⁷ John Bancroft, “A History of Sexual Medicine in the United Kingdom” *Journal of Sexual Medicine* 2, (2005), 570.

²¹⁸ Siobhan Somerville, “Scientific Racism and the Emergence of the Homosexual Body” *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 5 (October 1994), 258.

²¹⁹ In Britain, eugenics was distinct from maternalism, which was interested in better practices in nutrition and hygiene. In Germany, however, the ascendance of a Lamarckian model included them within the purview of the eugenics movement. For more, see Paul Weindling, *Health, Race and German Politics between National Unification and Nazism, 1870-1945* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989).

defined by late-nineteenth-century legal codes.”²²⁰ That Ellis felt compelled to train as a physician to pursue his research was a testament to the legitimating power of science.²²¹ Subsequently, he worked primarily as a writer and social reformer on issues of human sexuality. His first book, however, was a study of criminal anthropology inspired by Lombroso.

Despite strenuous objections posed by some outspoken British critics, a literate public snapped it up through three editions and several print runs.²²² David Garland has suggested that in part Lombroso’s delineation of different human types such as “the insane” or “the criminal” resonated with readers because “[t]o some extent [it] was effectively the redescription in scientific language of distinctions which were already established in cultural terms.”²²³ Culturally familiar tropes were reinvigorated by the authority of science.²²⁴

For example, historian Sander Gilman has noted “a clear association of the Jew with sexual crimes” in fin-de-siècle medical literature.²²⁵ He traces the widespread representation of “Jack the Ripper” as an Eastern European Jew to a long-held association in the West of the image of the Eastern Jew with the image of the “mutilated, diseased, different appearance of the genitalia.”²²⁶ Criminal madness as manifested by

²²⁰ Sander L. Gilman, “Sigmund Freud and the Sexologists: A Second Reading,” in *Sexual Knowledge, Sexual Science: The History of Attitudes to Sexuality*, ed. Roy Porter and Mikuláš Teich (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 323. As Gilman notes, within this focus, attitudes might cover a wide range from “radical reinterpreters of sexual pathology”—such as Ellis—to the more conservative positions held by Albert Moll.

²²¹ Ellis never had a regular medical practice.

²²² Garland, “British Criminology,” 136.

²²³ Garland, “British Criminology,” 132.

²²⁴ For an account of the particular cross-germination between sexology and contemporary literature, which was mined for early terms and concepts and treated as case studies on par with empirical observation, see Anna Katharina Schaffner, *Modernism and Perversion: Sexual Deviance in Sexology and Literature, 1850-1930* (Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012).

²²⁵ Gilman, “Sigmund Freud,” 323.

²²⁶ Gilman, “Sigmund Freud,” 325.

Jack the Ripper was inscribed on the body—as was race and ethnicity—marking not only the face but also the genitalia.²²⁷ Gilman maintains that “the image of the Jew as sexual criminal in the medical and forensic debates of the fin-de-siècle rests on the special, sexualized nature of the Jew,” situating race as the key analytic.²²⁸ Men of colonized populations were also frequently sexualized and portrayed as dangerous to white women.²²⁹ The image of Shapurji Edalji allegedly abusing servant girls as invoked in the letters drew on this extensive cultural logic.

Drawing attention to the inherent tension in British criminology between a concurrent emphasis on the criminal-type and a healthy skepticism about genetic determinism, Davie has suggested that the concept of the habitual offender offered some measure of reconciliation between the two positions.²³⁰ The idea that a separate category of habitual criminals enabled the coexistence of a mainstream view that emphasized individual moral responsibility and persistent hereditary perspectives. Unlike the majority of criminals, who were open to rehabilitation, this minority of repeat offenders were considered chronic criminals. Despite the small proportion they comprised of the general

²²⁷ Gilman, “Sigmund Freud,” 326.

²²⁸ Gilman, “Sigmund Freud,” 326. Within the larger category of the Jew, Gilman suggests that finer distinctions existed. The medical establishment held that the incidence of criminal insanity was higher in Eastern Jews than those in the West. *Ibid.*, 325.

²²⁹ The notion that Indian men were effeminate and oversexed constituted an important part of British perceptions of them as insufficiently masculine. For a discussion of the Ilbert Bill controversy and British concerns about Indian judges potentially sitting over cases involving white women, see Sinha, *Colonial Masculinity*, chapter 1. Similarly, Janaki Nair notes “the moral threat to racial order posed by the appearance (and representation) of the sexualized white woman in the colonies before an indiscriminate ‘native’ eye” in “‘Imperial Reason’, National Honour and New Patriarchal Compacts in Early Twentieth-Century India.” *History Workshop Journal* 66 (2008): 208.

²³⁰ For more on how mainstream criminology and the eugenics movement intersected in the concept of the habitual criminal, see Davie, *Tracing*, chapter 5.

criminal population, they signified a disproportionate threat in the public imagination.²³¹ Unless duly contained, the nation might be overrun by criminals.

Even as researchers disproved the correlation between criminal behavior and physical stigmata such as weight or left-handedness, race and sexuality had a long history as much more culturally loaded categories rooted in the body. A wealth of associations lent themselves to the construction of Edalji as suspect to those who felt so inclined. The argument for Edalji's guilt was based not on race as skin color, but rather on the alleged behavior that marked Edalji as a type—the habitual offender. The prosecution's case leaned heavily on matters that at first blush seem irrelevant to the crime of animal maiming: the letters and the Edalji household's sleeping arrangements. Both counts essentially served as placeholders for Edalji's racial difference. They were key to depicting Edalji as someone different and dangerous while disavowing the racial dimensions of the case.

The specter of the Whitechapel murders of 1888, which served as a common frame of reference for both letter-writer(s) and the general public, implied an inherent racial component.²³² When a letter warned of further nighttime attacks at the height of what had become a months-long ordeal by July of 1903, it took the form of the redoubled

²³¹ Habitual offenders were viewed as dangerous enough to constitute an exception to the rule, and charges of homosexual behavior were subject to particular scrutiny. As Cornish and Clark note, it eventually became practice to exclude evidence of the accused's previous criminal record and conduct on other occasions to avoid predisposing the jury to the inference of guilt. An exception qualified this practice, however, in that when the line of defense was one of accident or misapprehension or some other intimation of a one-time wayward occurrence, the accused's record could be shown to exhibit a particular pattern or "system" in the past. The tendency, they argue, was to extend the exception so much so as to "downgrade the rule, and nowhere more than in charges of alleged homosexual activity." Cornish and Clark, *Law and Society*, 621.

²³² For a study of the coverage on "Jack the Ripper," see L. P. Curtis, Jr., *Jack the Ripper and the London Press* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001).

threat “to do twenty wenches like the horses before next March.”²³³ Animal maiming had given way to suggestive images of gendered murder. The week before, another letter had assumed a more political lens, attributing the maimings, the 1888 Jack the Ripper murders, and the 1882 Phoenix Park assassinations to Irish Fenians.²³⁴

The patchwork nature of the letters as discursive artifacts inspired by the maimings suggested a free-for-all in which all manner of associations were dredged up. The connection between the maimings and the letters remained speculative. As such, the seriousness of the threat was difficult to gauge. But it was hardly reassuring in light of the body count of past months, even if these bodies were livestock rather than people—so far.

As a member of the professional middle-class, George Edalji did not fit the criminal profile for animal maiming. Like arson, which could serve as a cheap and effective means of vengeance for those of limited means, animal maiming offered an outlet for personal animus as well as social protest.²³⁵ Arson was much feared for its potential to do widespread damage as well as for the stark political tensions it laid bare when the sympathies of laborers appeared to be more with the arsonist than the propertied classes it targeted.²³⁶ Animal maiming had a similar history of social protest, although its incidence waned after 1850. In the latter decades of the nineteenth century, it figured regularly in the tallying of agrarian crime in the context of the Land War in rural Ireland,

²³³ Weaver, *Conan Doyle*, 86. For a detailed breakdown of the letters sent over the course of five weeks starting on June 30 and ceasing a couple of weeks before the maiming of August 17-18, see Weaver, *Conan Doyle*, 83-96. Weaver notes that at least some were very likely written by different people.

²³⁴ Weaver, *Conan Doyle*, 84.

²³⁵ David Taylor, *Crime, Policing and Punishment in England, 1750-1914* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1998), 37.

²³⁶ Certain crimes against property such as arson and machine breaking aroused fear and concern in excess of their actual occurrence, which was never large in number. Taylor, 35.

where attacks on animals were part of a long tradition of peasant resistance.²³⁷ Many such violent crimes against property were prefaced by threatening letters, which was a crime itself punishable by death until 1823.²³⁸ None of this background would suggest Edalji to be an obvious suspect.

While its destructive nature made arson a crime second only to murder, animal mutilation could be interpreted as “symbolic murder.”²³⁹ The animal could stand in for its owner, who might well be the actual object of animosity. Arson held the potential for more material damage, but animal maiming could resonate on an especially personal level; the damaged animal served as graphic evidence of the bodily harm the perpetrator wished upon its owner. It was thus also viewed as a highly objectionable crime that caused concern disproportionate to its incidence.

Animal maiming occurred on a much smaller scale than even arson; eleven incidents in little over a year within a single village as in the case of the “Great Wyrley Outrages” was highly unusual.²⁴⁰ As such, to claim as Edalji did that “if the years 1892-5 had been astonishing ones for the neighbourhood,” with its ongoing parade of enigmatic letters and both people and goods from afar, “the years 1903-4 were destined to place

²³⁷ Jordan notes a wave of cattle houghing as early as 1710, contemporaneously attributed to rent raises and evictions, which he found to be in accordance with recent research. Donald E. Jordan, *Land and Popular Politics in Ireland: County Mayo from the Plantation to the Land War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 39.

²³⁸ Taylor, *Tracing*, 38.

²³⁹ Taylor, *Tracing*, 37.

²⁴⁰ As a point of comparison, the number of animal maiming cases brought to court was little more than one-tenth that of fires in the counties of Norfolk and Suffolk between 1815 and 1870, during which there was a total of close to 2000 recorded fires. The number of incidents reached double figures only in three years, 1828, 1834, and 1849, remained roughly constant from the 1820s to the 1840s, and declined after 1850. Taylor, 36-37.

them very far in the background for developments of so sensational a nature as probably no English village has ever before experienced” was not mere hyperbole.²⁴¹

The September incident was a rude awakening to those who sought peace of mind in the August arrest of George Edalji as the end of the outrages. In addition to the doubts it threw on how capably the police were handling the case, the scene of the crime posed a disturbing spectacle that was disseminated through extensive press coverage in addition to its direct consumption by masses of spectators. Newspaper reports went into the “sickening description” of the carcass in great detail:

From a frightful gash nearly two feet long in the horse’s abdomen part of the entrails were protruding, while other portions of the animal lay scattered about the field in all directions. The stomach and liver had been detached, and were found, the one organ on a tuft of grass some hundreds of yards from the horse, and the other on another tuft some distance beyond. A thick semi-circular line of blood-smearred turf, littered with torn portions of entrails, suggested the awful death agonies of the animal.²⁴²

Apart from such graphic press coverage, crowds showed up to bear witness in person. According to the paper, “[h]undreds of people flocked to the scene of the night’s ghastly work, many driving from the neighbouring town of Cannock,” and the heterogeneous crowds that “the police kept at bay at the gate included well-dressed ladies in their carriages and hordes of cyclists of both sexes.” The curiosity aroused by the sensational scene neither knew distinctions between modes of transportation nor had any compunction about gendered proprieties.

Short of murder, animal maiming came closest in approximating its visceral shock. By definition, it precluded the loss of human life—unlike arson, for instance—but

²⁴¹ My Own Story. *Pearson’s Weekly*, February 28, 1907, HO 144/990.

²⁴² Edalji included this excerpt from the September 23, 1903 edition of the *Midland Evening News*. My Own Story. *Pearson’s Weekly*, February 28, 1907, HO 144/990. The National Archives, Kew.

the bloody carnage left in its wake brought to mind the intimate mechanics of murder. It was enough to “create a reign of terror in the district and an almost unparalleled sensation throughout the country,” as Edalji put it.²⁴³ Edalji himself explicitly referred to the analogy to Whitechapel four years after the fact, remarking that “these atrocities bear a striking resemblance, the only difference being that animals were substituted for women” and that the perpetrator “was believed to be a maniac.”²⁴⁴ The power of that image was reconfirmed in the detail Edalji added that “with such ferocity did he do his ghastly work that in several instances almost the whole of the victims’ internal organs were deposited on the ground.”²⁴⁵

In the face of such senseless violence, the impulse to draw a line marking the boundaries of society so as to locate crime on its outside was understandable. One way that the prosecution chose to do so was by insinuating that something was off kilter in the Edalji home—a familiar accusation from various letters. The family was a critical site where questions of sex and race converged, and nowhere did it do so quite as conspicuously in Great Wyrley as the Edalji household. The peculiarity of domestic arrangements was deemed suggestive if not straightforward in its significance.

In response, Conan Doyle attempted to reframe its meaning in a way that foregrounded the Edaljis as a family like any other. “I may add at this point,” he ventured circumspectly, “some surprise has been expressed that the vicar should sleep in the same room as his son with the door locked.”²⁴⁶ Maintaining his own distance from the surprise even as he acknowledged it, he explained that the daughter’s fragile health had required

²⁴³ My Own Story. *Pearson’s Weekly*, February 14, 1907, HO 144/990. The National Archives, Kew.

²⁴⁴ My Own Story. *Pearson’s Weekly*, February 14, 1907, HO 144/990. The National Archives, Kew.

²⁴⁵ My Own Story. *Pearson’s Weekly*, February 14, 1907, HO 144/990. The National Archives, Kew.

²⁴⁶ Doyle, *True Crime Files*, 47.

her mother's presence throughout the night and that the family could not afford more than the one maid they employed. Conan Doyle presented the situation as one determined by familial affections and household budget concerns, which were universal issues.

Contesting the "absurd emphasis" placed by the police on the locked door, he wrote, "I can only suppose that the innuendo is that the vicar locked the door to keep his son from roving."²⁴⁷ The implications of Edalji needing to be restrained by force resonated with ideas about colonial populations lacking the capacity for self-rule. Because the prosecution made the argument only by way of innuendo, Conan Doyle was compelled to both articulate and then refute it. "Do we not all know that it is the commonest thing for nervous people to lock their doors whether alone or not," he entreated the reader.²⁴⁸ In a community where people now thought twice about venturing out after dark, however, the image of a predatory miscreant on the prowl was likely more compelling to paranoid imaginations than the unremarkable routine of a crotchety old parson locking up at night.

Despite its tangential relevance for the matter of animal maiming, the issue of sleeping arrangements also served as a site of heated contestation behind the scenes. In an inverse image of the friendship between Edalji and Conan Doyle that served as the public face of the campaign, the hostility between Conan Doyle and Anson, the Chief Constable of Staffordshire became intensely personal as the two took it upon themselves to act as representatives for their respective positions. Edalji arguably had the most to lose. But Conan Doyle was invested in what he perceived to be his role as champion of the weak, and Anson's professional reputation was potentially open to national criticism.

²⁴⁷ Doyle, *True Crime Files*, 47.

²⁴⁸ Doyle, *True Crime Files*, 47.

The two had started out on cordial terms when Conan Doyle mounted his investigation in late 1906. Anson had been open to the latter's requests for documents and information.²⁴⁹ The eventual breakdown in their relations was precipitated over the course of their correspondence by Conan Doyle's professed understanding of what Anson meant when he stated that the "father had his son to sleep in his room for many years with the door locked."²⁵⁰ Anson had not bothered to explicate how this was significant, merely adding that the "reason had not been given."

It was a sign of the strength of suggestive discourses surrounding the Edaljis that Conan Doyle, who styled himself as their defender, immediately interpreted Anson's meaning in the most outlandish way possible. Not long after the exchange, in a January 15 meeting with Home Office officials, Conan Doyle aired his concerns about the Chief Constable's shocking accusations, as he understood them, incestuous relations between father and son. Ernley Blackwell, Legal Undersecretary, present at the meeting with Herbert Gladstone, Home Secretary, and Mackenzie Chalmers, Undersecretary of State, later recounted: "he told us [...] that Captain Anson had accused Mr. Edalji of being guilty of sodomitical practices with his son George."²⁵¹ Blackwell explained that Conan Doyle had "placed an altogether unwarrantable construction on a perfectly legitimate suggestion [...] that Mr. Edalji locked the door [...] in order that his son might not go out at night." Blackwell took Conan Doyle's statement to be a strategic understanding intended to paint his opponents in the worst light possible.

²⁴⁹ George Anson to Arthur Conan Doyle, 22 December 1906. HO 989 Part 2. The National Archives, Kew.

²⁵⁰ George Anson to Arthur Conan Doyle, 25 December 1906, quoted in Ernley Blackwell to Arthur Conan Doyle, 27 March 1907. HO 989 Part 1. The National Archives, Kew.

²⁵¹ Ernley Blackwell to Secretary of State, 3 February 1911. HO 144/987 no. 314. The National Archives, Kew.

After all, despite the insidious ways that racism had weighted the odds against Edalji in his trial, liberal metropolitan standards of propriety appeared to draw the line at accusations of incestuous sodomy. It was perfectly acceptable, Blackwell implied, to accuse Reverend Edalji of forcibly restraining his son from wandering out to gut livestock in the dead of night. But to suggest what Conan Doyle did was unthinkable. “I have always been convinced,” Blackwell wrote, “that Sir A. C. Doyle allowed himself to place what he must have known was a wrong construction upon Captain Anson’s expression in order to further his own objects, and to injure Captain Anson in the eyes of the Secretary of State.”²⁵² While to suggest the one was “perfectly legitimate,” to do so the other could “injure” one’s reputation.

What was at stake was again a question of identity—in this case, that of the rational and competent investigator upholding the truth in the face of irrational opposition. The extreme umbrage Anson took indicated that despite their working at cross purposes, both Anson and Conan Doyle laid claim to that same role. The point-by-point dissections of Conan Doyle’s investigative reports—the latter agitated for a reopening of the case again in 1910—that Anson sent to the Home Office demonstrated that he was also a man on a mission, albeit a different one from Conan Doyle. Each thought the other misled by irrational preconceptions. Conan Doyle accused Anson of racism; Anson dismissed Conan Doyle as naive.

Still, distinct boundaries marked the outer limits of acceptable discourse in the public sphere proper. And the accusation of having breached those boundaries was a charge severe enough that—absent any further provocation—Anson reinitiated

²⁵² Ernley Blackwell to Secretary of State, 3 February 1911. HO 144/987 no. 314. The National Archives, Kew.

correspondence with Conan Doyle three years later in late 1910, simply to reiterate his indignation. It dissolved into such incivility that Conan Doyle felt the need to report it to the new Home Secretary, Winston Churchill, with whom he was on friendly terms.

Despite the policing of these boundaries, however, the undisciplined discourse of the letters managed to gain wide currency. Anson and those who shared his view resolved this problem by displacing that responsibility onto Edalji himself, suspecting him as they did of writing the letters himself. Conan Doyle's extraordinary conjectures can be read as more a sign of what he thought of Anson rather than anything having to do with Edalji. And yet the climate of rampant suggestion enabled unthinkable associations to become thinkable.²⁵³

Conclusion

In the end, Edalji's strategic association with Conan Doyle had mixed results. Edalji was restored to the Solicitors' Roll in 1907, and the Criminal Appeal Act established the Court of Criminal Appeal that same year. But the government rejected Edalji's claim to compensation. While the language of ideals made up a central part of the campaign, the specter of financial hardship had played an equally important part. And friendship enabled more decorous modes of pressing the latter; Conan Doyle took charge

²⁵³ Despite the sense of boundaries Anson's outrage suggests, the potency of those vague images persisted into the recent past. As late as 1985, modern commentators addressed these circumstances in much the same vein as the prosecution at the turn of the century. "Domestic economy was the given reason for such a [bizarre sleeping arrangement]," write the Whittington-Egans, "redolent, indeed, of the custom of some far-flung Samoan island—and local gossip had a heyday in its enjoyable elaboration." In fact, the Whittington-Egans go so far as to suggest that "[t]here are those [...] who bear the seeds of their own victimization within them, and one would not have been surprised to learn that the Edalji family harboured a poltergeist infestation." Whittington-Egan, Richard and Molly. ed. *The Story of Mr. George Edalji* (London: Grey House Books, 1985), 13.

of the *Daily Telegraph* subscription to assist with Edalji's legal fees.²⁵⁴ In his memoir, Conan Doyle articulated the injustice sustained by Edalji in material terms, the latter having "never been able to get one shilling of compensation for the wrong done."²⁵⁵ In addition, to the extent that the refusal of compensation implied lingering suspicions about Edalji's character, it was more than a matter of money.

In part, one of the strengths of Edalji's strategy may have also acted as a limitation. The appeal of Conan Doyle playing the role of Sherlock Holmes notwithstanding, the application of the detective story as interpretive device raised expectations for a neat resolution to a crime against all odds in a reality in which the necessary evidence had long been swept away. The burden of proof fell on Conan Doyle, while the Home Office might merely suggest.

In a last attempt to revive the case and vindicate his protégé, Conan Doyle found himself in Edalji's position from four years before as he wrote a letter of appeal. In October of 1910, Conan Doyle wrote to Churchill to angle for a reconsideration of the Edalji case. "It seems perhaps hardly fair," he wrote, "to take advantage of a private friendship in order to direct your attention to a public matter, and yet I have a feeling that it is the best course I can pursue."²⁵⁶ At this point, this was the only course left to pursue. His circumspect attitude gestured to the complexities of pressing friendship to such purposes. In characterizing this friendship as private, he gestured to overlapping worlds of private and public friendship. The sense that the private boundaries of friendship needed to be maintained coexisted with the practice of putting those ties to work for

²⁵⁴ This ran to "some £300." As a point of comparison, the government had awarded Adolf Beck £5,000. Doyle, *Memories and Adventures*, 219.

²⁵⁵ Doyle, *Memories and Adventures*, 219.

²⁵⁶ Arthur Conan Doyle to Winston Churchill HO 144/987 no. 313. The National Archives, Kew.

public ends. In the end, Churchill responded that there was nothing he could do. But Conan Doyle could rest assured he had exhausted his options, much as Edalji himself had done so four years earlier.

Edalji attended Conan Doyle's wedding reception in 1907, a detail which gave the latter great satisfaction—"pride," even.²⁵⁷ If Conan Doyle had failed to secure official vindication, he had at least made his own support clear in what was both a personal and public milestone in his life, which he further reinscribed in his memoir. Edalji returned to the practice of law that year, but in London rather than Birmingham. While his parents and Maud continued to reside in Great Wyrley, George Edalji returned only once upon his father's death in 1918.

²⁵⁷ Doyle, *Memories and Adventures*, 219.

Chapter Two

“The One Romantic Incident in My Life”: The Mathematician and the Clerk

“I owe more to him than to anyone else in the world with one exception, and my association with him is the one romantic incident in my life.”

—G. H. Hardy, Ramanujan.

On January 16, 1913, one Srinivasa Ramanujan, a Class III, Grade IV accounting clerk in Madras (now Chennai) wrote a letter of appeal to Godfrey Harold Hardy, an eminent mathematician, Fellow of the Royal Society, and lecturer at Trinity College in Cambridge, England. “Dear Sir,” he began, “I beg to introduce myself to you as a clerk in the Accounts Department of the Port Trust Office at Madras on a salary of only £20 per annum.”²⁵⁸ With this epistolary moment started what was to become, in the words of mathematicians Bruce C. Berndt and Robert A. Rankin, “one of the most famous letters in the history of mathematics.”²⁵⁹

This chapter considers the question of friendship and emotion through the unlikely medium of mathematics. The association between S. Ramanujan and G. H. Hardy was a colonial friendship that managed intimacy and power imbalances through the specialized prism of mathematics and its singular significance for both individuals. The first note of deferential supplication on Ramanujan’s part quoted above reflected the hierarchies within which he and Hardy were embedded. Hardy and Ramanujan were separated by the literal and symbolic distances between imperial metropole and colony,

²⁵⁸ Ramanujan to Hardy, Madras, 16 January 1913, in Srinivasa Ramanujan, *Ramanujan: Letters and Commentary*, ed. Bruce C. Berndt and Robert A. Rankin, *History of Mathematics* v. 9 (Providence, R.I.: American Mathematical Society, 1995), 21.

²⁵⁹ Bruce C. Berndt and Robert A. Rankin, preface to *Ramanujan: Letters and Commentary*, ed. Bruce C. Berndt and Robert A. Rankin (Providence: American Mathematical Society, 1995), ix.

esteemed scholar and lowly clerk, as well as the gap in material living conditions between the two, as suggested by Ramanujan's meager salary. On the one hand, Ramanujan and Hardy were friends, united by a shared passion for math. On the other, they were divided by a gulf of difference in terms of power, privilege, and education. From the outset, the colonial structures set the tone of subaltern clientship. And from the outside, the use value of the association to both sides seemed clearly defined. Ramanujan was in need of the material support that Hardy could marshal, while Hardy could claim Ramanujan as the genius he "discovered." The specter of colonial exploitation lurks in the parallels one can draw between the extraction of resources and labor from the colonies to the metropole and Ramanujan's situation.

Friendship in Mathematics

The above analogy, however, is complicated by the fact that mathematics meant infinitely more to both Ramanujan and Hardy than a means to eke out a livelihood. It did in fact serve that purpose; part of what motivated Ramanujan to seek out Hardy was material necessity. And Hardy ended up with seven papers to show for? as the product of his work with Ramanujan. For both, the association was useful. At the same time, however, that usefulness was grounded in a more fundamental idealism. Ramanujan sought out Hardy and traveled to the other side of the world because he could not reconcile mathematical preoccupation with the pursuit of gainful employment. And Hardy considered mathematics an aesthetic pursuit whose practical application was irrelevant as far as he was concerned. To the extent that mathematics was a self-sufficient

undertaking for both, their association also had no end beyond itself—an idealized vision/maybe better: version of friendship.

And even as Ramanujan appealed for material patronage in the baldest of terms, he also drew on a language of friendship that gestured beyond the mere material. “I have found a friend in you,” he wrote, “who views my labours sympathetically.”²⁶⁰

Mathematics was the labor whereby Ramanujan hoped to “preserve my brains”—perhaps “get a scholarship either from the University or from the Government.”²⁶¹ But in the meanwhile, Ramanujan found in Hardy’s sympathetic response “encouragement to me to proceed with my onward course.”²⁶² After his initially promising academic career stalled eight years before when Ramanujan failed out of university, no one had been able to offer him the affirmation that Hardy could. Of late, he had secured other friends, whose interest in mathematics had led them to help Ramanujan—supplementing his income and procuring him his accounting job. But even the most well-meaning were unqualified to really understand Ramanujan’s mathematics. For Ramanujan, Hardy’s sympathy was unprecedented. It was based on a more complete comprehension of Ramanujan’s driving passion than anything he had experienced up to that point. In “a backwater like Madras,” as another interested party put it, Ramanujan did not easily come across someone with the mathematical qualifications sported by Hardy.²⁶³

Friendship for Hardy

²⁶⁰ Ramanujan to Hardy, Madras Port Trust Office Accounts Department, 27 February 1913, in Ramanujan, *Ramanujan*, 53.

²⁶¹ Ramanujan to Hardy, Madras Port Trust Office Accounts Department, 27 February 1913, in Ramanujan, *Ramanujan*, 54.

²⁶² Ramanujan to Hardy, Madras Port Trust Office Accounts Department, 27 February 1913, in Ramanujan, *Ramanujan*, 53.

²⁶³ Sir Francis Spring to C.B. Cottrell, 5 February 1914, in Ramanujan, *Ramanujan*, 99.

The same, however, could be said for Hardy; ensconced as he was in Trinity College, Cambridge, at the apex of British mathematical research, Hardy had never seen quite the like of Ramanujan. Hardy himself was generally considered “the leading English pure mathematician of his time.”²⁶⁴ He was elected a Fellow of Trinity in 1900 and named an M.A. in 1903—the highest academic degree offered by English universities at the time. In 1906, he became a lecturer at Trinity, giving six hours of lectures weekly. But his was primarily a research position. And research he did—at such a rate that he was elected to membership in the Royal Society in 1910 at the age of thirty-three. Hardy was surrounded by mathematical talent, of which he himself was a prime example.

Later in life, Hardy dismissed as insignificant his early work that predated collaborations with Ramanujan and J. E. Littlewood. “I wrote a great deal during the next ten years,” he wrote, “but very little of any importance; there are not more than four or five papers which I can still remember with some satisfaction.”²⁶⁵ But this was more a sign of Hardy’s fastidiousness in judgment than anything else. While less representative of his whole career, from this early period, Hardy’s *A Course of Pure Mathematics* was deemed a transformative force in university teaching.²⁶⁶

For Ramanujan, the level of mathematical rapport he found in Hardy was a novelty. In Hardy’s case, however, by the time Ramanujan wrote to him, he had already embarked in 1911 on what would become an unparalleled mathematical partnership with

²⁶⁴ Berndt and Rankin, eds., *Ramanujan*, 33.

²⁶⁵ G. H. Hardy, *A Mathematician’s Apology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 147.

²⁶⁶ Berndt and Rankin, eds., *Ramanujan*, 32.

Littlewood, spanning thirty-five years and resulting in almost a hundred joint papers.²⁶⁷

Indeed, in summing up his career, Hardy classed the two together:

The real crises of my career came ten or twelve years later, in 1911, when I began my long collaboration with Littlewood, and in 1913, when I discovered Ramanujan. All my best work since then has been bound up with theirs, and it is obvious that my association with them was the decisive event of my life. I still say to myself when I am depressed, and find myself forced to listen to pompous and tiresome people, ‘Well, I have done one thing you could never have done, and that is to have collaborated with both Littlewood and Ramanujan on something like equal terms.’²⁶⁸

Hardy’s sense of self as a mathematician was synonymous with that of being a collaborator. He valued the work he did with Littlewood and Ramanujan over most anything he had done alone; he went so far as to pronounce these working relationships as “the decisive event of my life.” In effect, therefore, the two occupied an equivalent position of importance in Hardy’s life. Accordingly, the terms he used to describe their place in his life converged. On one hand, Hardy “collaborated with both Littlewood and Ramanujan on something like equal terms.” By locating the essence of his self-worth as a mathematician in these collaborations, Hardy implied that the mathematical powers of these two younger men may in some respects have exceeded his own. A close friend noted how this statement was “at the same time so proud and so humble.”²⁶⁹ It balanced the high esteem in which he held his friends’ abilities with his pride at having held his own amidst them.

On the other hand, however, the language that Hardy used to describe his relationship with either individual imperceptibly shifted from one to the other. Hardy “collaborated” with both, yet he “discovered” Ramanujan. And unlike Littlewood,

²⁶⁷ Berndt and Rankin, eds., *Ramanujan*, 32.

²⁶⁸ Hardy, *Mathematician's Apology*, 147.

Ramanujan continued to address Hardy as “Mr. Hardy” in their correspondence even after years of daily interaction at Trinity.²⁷⁰ This may signify little beyond a tendency on Ramanujan’s part towards formality in his use of the English language and a cultural difference in the role of seniority in age in determining terms of address.²⁷¹ After all, Hardy was ten years his senior, and Ramanujan consistently addressed his elders as “Sir” in letters. But he also referred to Littlewood, who was only two years older, as “Mr. Littlewood.” In and of themselves, these may appear to be superficial details. Nonetheless, they constituted the social hierarchical texture of these parallel associations.

Moreover, such variances indicated crucial differences in Hardy’s respective relations with the two main collaborators of his life. All Hardy’s major work was “bound up” in these two collaborations, but the bulk of it was done in the one with Littlewood.²⁷² “The mathematical life in England in the first half of this [the twentieth] century,” mathematician Béla Bollobás writes, “was dominated by two giants, Hardy and Littlewood.”²⁷³ Their collaboration was such that one became synonymous with the other; the eminent German number theorist Edmund Landau went so far as to pronounce “mathematician Hardy-Littlewood” as “the best in the world, with Littlewood the more original genius and Hardy the better journalist.”²⁷⁴ Indeed, this partnership outlasted Hardy’s collaboration with Ramanujan by some thirty years. But despite his untimely

²⁶⁹ Snow, C. P., foreword to *A Mathematician’s Apology*, by G. H. Hardy (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 12.

²⁷⁰ In his letters to Hardy before the two had met, Ramanujan uniformly addresses him as merely “Sir.” Littlewood merely addressed him as “Hardy.”

²⁷¹ On at least one occasion, Ramanujan addressed a friend similar in age in such formal terms. Ramanujan to R. Krishna Rao, Suez, 30 March 1914, in Ramanujan, *Ramanujan*, 106. In subsequent letters to the same friend, however, he reverted to addressing him by name as he did in letters to other friends. The formal address thus does not appear to have been universal.

²⁷² Snow, foreword to *A Mathematician’s Apology*, 28.

²⁷³ Béla Bollobás, foreword to *Littlewood’s Miscellany*, by John E. Littlewood (Cambridge [Cambridgeshire]; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 1.

death in 1920, the latter remained present in Hardy's life as Hardy continued to engage with Ramanujan's work and legacy over the years.

In part, the nature of the work Ramanujan left behind and its ongoing relevance for the mathematics community contributed to this. Due to the idiosyncrasies of his self-taught mathematical methods, oftentimes Ramanujan's work presented results without the necessary proofs. The task of reverse engineering a cogent account of how those results were obtained remained a work in progress. The mathematical discoveries contained in the four letters Ramanujan wrote to Hardy from India prior to his journey to England in and of themselves gave rise to significant research spanning from the decade after their publication in 1927 into the present.²⁷⁵ Mathematicians have valued Ramanujan for the important questions that have arisen from his work as well as his remarkable results.²⁷⁶ A prime example is the field of probabilistic number theory, an active area of contemporary research and the product of another mathematical collaboration between Mark Kac and Paul Erdős, which took its inspiration from a joint paper published by Hardy and Ramanujan in 1917.²⁷⁷

²⁷⁴ Béla Bollobás, foreword to *Littlewood's Miscellany*, 2.

²⁷⁵ Bruce C. Berndt and Robert Alexander Rankin, preface to *Ramanujan: Essays and Surveys*, ed. Bruce C. Berndt and Robert Alexander Rankin (American Mathematical Soc., 2001), ix. For instance, the "mock theta functions" that Ramanujan wrote about in the last letter he wrote to Hardy before his death remained a mystery resistant to the efforts of many mathematicians for over eighty-five years since Ramanujan first noted their existence. Only in 2007, through mathematical techniques developed well after Ramanujan's death did mathematicians Ken Ono and Kathrin Bringmann finally construct an explanatory framework that show what mock theta functions are, and how to derive them. Paroma Basu, "UW Scientists Unlock Major Number Theory Puzzle" University of Wisconsin-Madison News, February 26, 2007, <http://www.news.wisc.edu/13497>.

²⁷⁶ Krishnaswami Alladi, *Ramanujan's Place in the World of Mathematics: Essays Providing a Comparative Study* (India: Springer India, 2013).

²⁷⁷ Alladi, *Ramanujan's Place*, 40. Erdős was a leading expert in number theory, one of Ramanujan's specialties, and the most prolific mathematician of the twentieth century, having written over a thousand papers, many of which were joint papers. For further discussion of the influence of Ramanujan's work on Erdős, see Alladi, *Ramanujan's Place*, 37-44.

Between Littlewood and Ramanujan constituting as they did an “event”—the “crises” of Hardy’s life and career, which were virtually synonymous—Hardy was rescued from what might otherwise have stretched out into a monotony of seemingly mediocre work. But the trajectory of Littlewood’s career left little to Hardy’s imagination in its proximity to Hardy’s own course. John Edensor Littlewood came from a background of middle-class professionals, and he attended St. Paul’s School—an equivalent of Hardy’s choice of Winchester—before matriculating at Trinity College.²⁷⁸ After a stint as a lecturer at the University of Manchester, he returned as a Fellow of Trinity in 1910.

Ramanujan, on the other hand, afforded Hardy with what “was the most singular experience of his life: what did modern mathematics look like to someone who had the deepest insight, but who had literally never heard of most of it?”²⁷⁹ While Hardy’s encounter with both Littlewood and Ramanujan marked a turning point in his life, it was the sheer difference of Ramanujan’s perspective that expanded the scope of Hardy’s experience. Unlike Hardy and Littlewood, Ramanujan was not the beneficiary of the best mathematical education to be had in Britain. Ancient India had a rich mathematical tradition from which the decimal system was eventually disseminated worldwide; in the post-Newtonian era, however, European mathematical research had outstripped that on the subcontinent.²⁸⁰ That Ramanujan, who lacked formal training grounded in recent developments, demonstrated such mathematical prescience supported Hardy’s belief that mathematics was a field uniquely characterized by cross-cultural universality.

²⁷⁸ For a biographical overview of Littlewood’s life, see Béla Bollobás, foreword to *Littlewood’s Miscellany*. For a detailed account of Littlewood’s education, see John E. Littlewood, *Littlewood’s Miscellany*, ed. Béla Bollobás, (Cambridge [Cambridgeshire]; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 80-93.

²⁷⁹ Snow, foreword to *A Mathematician’s Apology*, 36.

²⁸⁰ Alladi, *Ramanujan’s Place*, 3.

Ramanujan posed an ongoing puzzle for Hardy. Littlewood remained alive and well for the duration of Hardy's life, and there was no occasion for Hardy to attempt a summation of his career the way he felt compelled to do so for Ramanujan. Moreover, Littlewood's methods were Hardy's own; both had been trained with the same emphasis on rigorous proofs. Not only did this render their work familiar to the eye trained in modern mathematical methods, but it also delineated the processes by which they arrived at their conclusions for the reader. Conversely, Ramanujan's mathematical work—especially his earlier work in India—assumed an evocative aspect in that its unconventional expressions were attended by a need for explanation. “All his results,” Hardy wrote, “new or old, right or wrong, had been arrived at by a process of mingled argument, intuition, and induction, of which he was entirely unable to give any coherent account.”²⁸¹ Even before his death, Ramanujan had found it difficult to articulate the genesis of his results; in this respect, his death merely deepened that muddiness of method.

The corresponding question this posed as to Ramanujan's status as a mathematician was one that Hardy pondered for years. “The difficulties in judging Ramanujan,” Hardy mused, “are obvious and formidable enough.”²⁸² How did one judge the flawed yet spectacular achievements of a mathematical talent with no recognizable training in the field? What did one make of the strange detours even the most brilliant of mathematical minds, when largely isolated in its development, might take into the rediscovery of what had long been established as given knowledge or downright error? Did these irregularities testify to the greatness of Ramanujan as a mathematician

²⁸¹ Hardy, *Collected Papers*, 714.

²⁸² Hardy, *Ramanujan*, 1.

persevering in spite of hardship—or did they merely signify a counterproductive diversion of his potential? The term “judgment” perhaps gives an impression of harshness seemingly out of place among friends. Given how Ramanujan underwent a battery of judgments just to confirm his mathematical prowess as authentic, this posthumous scrutiny lends itself to a similar reading. But in Hardy’s worldview, organized as it was around mathematics as creative work, judgment was a primary mode of engagement with the world. Indeed, he was not averse to training its unflinching gaze on himself.

In *A Mathematician’s Apology*, an elegiac meditation Hardy wrote on what it meant to be a mathematician, it was ultimately this impulse from which his conclusion emerged. Assessing his life as a whole, Hardy reckoned it to have been “reasonably comfortable and happy.”²⁸³ “But solicitors and stockbrokers and bookmakers often lead comfortable and happy lives,” he added, “and it is very difficult to see how the world is richer for their existence.”²⁸⁴ Instead of happiness, Hardy articulated his *raison d’être* in terms of value:

The case for my life, then [...] is this: that I have added something to knowledge, and helped others to add more; and that these somethings have a value which differs in degree only, and not in kind, from that of the creations of the great mathematicians, or of any of the other artists, great or small, who have left some kind of memorial behind them.²⁸⁵

Value as thus described by Hardy was distinct from utility, which he abhorred. “No discovery of mine,” he wrote, “has made, or is likely to make, directly or indirectly, for good or ill, the least difference to the amenity of the world.”²⁸⁶ Rather, value inhered in the creation of knowledge for its own sake, an undertaking Hardy viewed as akin to art.

²⁸³ Hardy, *Mathematician’s Apology*, 150.

²⁸⁴ Hardy, *Mathematician’s Apology*, 150.

²⁸⁵ Hardy, *Mathematician’s Apology*, 151.

²⁸⁶ Hardy, *Mathematician’s Apology*, 150.

Value defined as such and elevated to the driving principle of his life served to incline Hardy towards a framework of judgment in his approach to the world.

Hardy was forever evaluating, ranking, and classing, both in work and play. Those realms easily converged as in the postcard a friend received from Hardy: “Bradman is a whole class above any batsman who has ever lived: if Archimedes, Newton and Gauss remain in the Hobbs class, I have to admit the possibility of a class above them, which I find difficult to imagine.”²⁸⁷ In this case, cricket, Hardy’s other ruling interest, prompted in him the same kind of compulsion towards precise judgment to which he aspired in his work. And the latter was never quite separable from other aspects of Hardy’s life.

Indeed, his exacting sense of judgment was no less applicable to himself as well as his friends, as observed by the friend to whom the postcard had been addressed, novelist and chemist C. P. Snow: “At his best, he said, he was for a short time the fifth best pure mathematician in the world.”²⁸⁸ Hardy classed Littlewood as a more powerful mathematician than himself, while pronouncing Ramanujan to be in possession of the kind of natural genius—“though not to the extent, and nothing like so effectively”—that was the domain of the greatest mathematicians.²⁸⁹ Those who knew Hardy were more inclined to suspect that he sold himself short in these comparisons than to worry that he might fail to do justice to the objects of his judgment. “People sometimes thought he was under-rating himself,” Snow wrote, “when he spoke of these friends.”²⁹⁰

²⁸⁷ Hardy is referring to Donald Bradman and Jack Hobbs, both preeminent cricket batsmen. Snow, foreword to *A Mathematician’s Apology*, 28.

²⁸⁸ Snow, foreword to *A Mathematician’s Apology*, 12.

²⁸⁹ Snow, foreword to *A Mathematician’s Apology*, 12.

²⁹⁰ Snow, foreword to *A Mathematician’s Apology*, 12.

Collaborator, protégé, colleague—these were the more specific terms of relationality that structured Hardy’s world of/at? Cambridge, but they sometimes converged in this more general and amorphous designation of “friend.” In this extension of the homosocial public school sphere, friendship emerged as the dominant rubric of affective attachment. Historians have observed that the development of public schools over the course of the Victorian period was informed by the phenomenon in which “a whole section of British society began, as a matter of regular custom, to send away its sons to school,” resulting in the elevation of school as the central socializing force.²⁹¹ For a specific class of British boys, familial life in the home was thus superseded by the public context of school life in which friendship was the primary rubric around which social relations were organized. Both as an ideal as well as a growing source of unease, friendship dominated the interpersonal landscape of public school culture. In the first half of the Victorian period, schoolboy friendships benefited from a “presumption of innocence.”²⁹² Homosocial expressions of love were characteristic of this earlier period in which schoolboys did not shy away from the use of the term “love” with regard to their masters, nor undergraduates for their tutors.²⁹³ The practice of older boys vying to “court” younger ones caused no alarm unless detectable sexual acts came to the attention of school authorities.²⁹⁴

²⁹¹ John Raymond de Symons Honey, *Tom Brown’s Universe: The Development of the Victorian Public School* (London: Millington, 1977), xi.

²⁹² Honey, *Tom Brown’s Universe*, 189.

²⁹³ Honey, *Tom Brown’s Universe*, 191-192. For examples of idealized representations of friendship in school contexts—between schoolboys as well as masters and boys—in sermons, novels, letters, and diaries, see Honey, *Tom Brown’s Universe*, 186-188.

²⁹⁴ Honey, *Tom Brown’s Universe*, 187.

By the 1880s, however, the public concern for “morality” in the schools gave rise to a climate of suspicion surrounding school friendships.²⁹⁵ By the end of the century, this led to attempts to circumscribe friendships so as to preempt the “immorality” that associations defined by some significant element of difference were viewed as encouraging.²⁹⁶ Extended congress between boys of different ages or in different houses came to be viewed as suspect to the point that in some schools the mere act of such boys talking was considered inappropriate by 1900.²⁹⁷ Poet Robert Graves, who attended Charterhouse towards the end of the first and into the second decade of that century, summed up the proscriptions as such that “no friendship might exist between boys of different houses or ages (though related, or next-door neighbours at home), beyond a formal acquaintance at work or organized games like cricket and football.”²⁹⁸ Those who flouted these conventions—even by way of what for all intents was an inoffensive game of tennis or squash-rackets—“would never hear the end of it.”²⁹⁹

Friendship, which at first glance would appear to be the mainstay of school relations, was policed and delimited in ways that led some to frame their school experience in terms of its scarcity. Graves quantified his experience—somewhat facetiously—as that of “at least two really decent masters in the school, among the forty or fifty, and ten really decent fellows among the five or six hundred.”³⁰⁰ It was not until the latter part of his second year at Charterhouse that he struck up a friendship with “the

²⁹⁵ Honey, *Tom Brown's Universe*, 178.

²⁹⁶ Honey, *Tom Brown's Universe*, 183.

²⁹⁷ By 1900, scholars associating with those more than one form senior or junior to themselves was treated as an offense punishable by caning at Clifton, Westminster, Harrow, Eton, Charterhouse, and Rugby. Honey, *Tom Brown's Universe*, 183.

²⁹⁸ Robert Graves, *Goodbye to All That* (London: Cassell, 1957), 37.

²⁹⁹ Graves, *Goodbye*, 37.

³⁰⁰ Graves, *Goodbye*, 33.

first Carthusian to whom I had been able to talk humanly.”³⁰¹ The emphasis on athleticism, whose corollary was a pervasive anti-intellectualism, further compounded the difficulty for those invested in their schoolwork of finding others receptive to their interests. A contemporary of Hardy’s, who attended St. Paul’s in the 1890s, recounted how his knack for games smoothed his tenure there: “I was never bullied and, unlike many of my future friends, was never actively miserable at school.”³⁰² Even so, he was sixteen before he met “anyone among my companions or teachers who showed any sympathy with the [intellectual] side of my life which I had sedulously concealed.”³⁰³ And while Trinity College, peopled as it was in large part by graduates of these public schools, reflected many aspects of that culture, it was an institution of higher learning where undergraduates had greater freedom to pursue other interests and friendships.

Friendship was a contested terrain of ideas, encompassing a range of meanings both complementary and conflicting. As demonstrated by the widespread concern over unequal friendships, an egalitarian ethos did not necessarily define friendship, although the negative connotations that beset those relations may have contributed to an idealized rhetoric of equal friendship. And despite the anxiety over this category of associations, it has been argued that idealized friendships at school served to disincline involved parties from sexual contact rather than the opposite.³⁰⁴ “The [sexual] intimacy that frequently took place,” Graves reported, “was very seldom between an elder boy and the object of his affection—that would have spoiled the romantic illusion—but almost always between boys of the same age who were not in love, and used each other as convenient sex-

³⁰¹ Graves, *Goodbye*, 37.

³⁰² Leonard Woolf, *Sowing, an Autobiography of the Years 1880 to 1904* (San Diego: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1975), 90.

³⁰³ Woolf, *Sowing*, 90.

instruments.”³⁰⁵ Framed in such terms, physical intimacy in this case was painted as a mere convenience in contrast to a romantic love that was defined as inherently non-erotic. Commonalities and differences served as the nuances of any given friendship, but the concept covered hierarchical relations as well as those more evenly matched. Instead, the implication here was that friendship—as an attachment distinct from simple acquaintanceship—entailed an investment of self in the association that exceeded its usefulness.

And while equality was not a necessary precondition for friendship, a sense of “something like equal terms,” as Hardy put it, was important to his conception of himself as it was refracted through Littlewood and Ramanujan, both of whom Hardy held in high esteem as mathematicians. The nebulous phrasing underscores how even Hardy and Littlewood had their comparative strengths. “Hardy was, perhaps, more stylish, a man of intellectual panache, interested in beautiful patterns” mathematician Béla Bollobás writes, “but Littlewood was imaginative and amazingly powerful, enjoying the challenge of a very difficult problem.”³⁰⁶ But these were distinctions that could easily be converted into terms of equivalence.

In contrast, Ramanujan’s weaknesses were much more pronounced in part by the striking juxtaposition with his exceptional gift of “profound and invincible originality,” as Hardy put it.³⁰⁷ “The limitations of his knowledge were as startling as its profundity,” Hardy wrote.³⁰⁸ Unlike Littlewood, Ramanujan needed Hardy to act as spokesperson

³⁰⁴ Honey, *Tom Brown’s Universe*, 190.

³⁰⁵ Graves, *Goodbye*, 35.

³⁰⁶ Béla Bollobás, foreword to *Littlewood’s Miscellany*, 8.

³⁰⁷ G. H. Hardy, “Notice,” in *Collected Papers of Srinivasa Ramanujan*, by Srinivasa Ramanujan (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1927), xxxvi,

³⁰⁸ Hardy, “Notice” in *Collected Papers*, xxx.

with regard to the authenticity of his mathematical prowess—at least in the beginning—and in navigating an unfamiliar academic world. This particular model of complementarity sets Hardy and Ramanujan up to be viewed as patron-client relations.

Except that Hardy expressly emphasized equivalence over any construction of patronage that might be projected onto their association. Besides the part of spokesperson, Hardy also assumed that of teacher. Regardless of his strengths, Ramanujan had to be taught modern mathematics. “It was impossible,” Hardy wrote, “to allow him to go through life supposing that all the zeroes of the Zeta-function were real.”³⁰⁹ The dilemma posed by the task this entailed was a result of the fact of Ramanujan’s genius residing uppermost in Hardy’s consciousness. “Hardy did not forget that he was in the presence of genius,” Snow recounted, “but genius that was, even in mathematics, almost untrained.”³¹⁰ Despite the latter caveat, Hardy still found it “impossible to ask such a man to submit to systematic instruction.”³¹¹ Hardy was as circumspect as to the possibility of inhibiting Ramanujan as Ramanujan was about potentially inconveniencing his professors. “I was afraid too,” Hardy wrote, “that, if I insisted unduly on matters which Ramanujan found irksome, I might destroy his confidence or break the spell of his inspiration.”³¹² And ultimately, he insisted that he learned more from Ramanujan than the other way around.³¹³

In what has become Hardy’s definitive assessment of Ramanujan, he positioned himself as the beneficiary of their association rather than as a benefactor of any kind. “I owe more to him than to anyone else in the world with one exception,” Hardy stated,

³⁰⁹ Hardy, “Notice” in *Collected Papers*, xxx.

³¹⁰ Snow, foreword to *A Mathematician’s Apology*, 35.

³¹¹ Hardy, “Notice” in *Collected Papers*, xxx.

³¹² Hardy, “Notice” in *Collected Papers*, xxx.

“and my association with him is the one romantic incident in my life.”³¹⁴ In autumn of 1936, as one of a bevy of international scholars invited to the Harvard Tercentenary Conference of Arts and Sciences to receive honorary degrees, Hardy delivered two lectures in front of a full audience in New Lecture Hall. Sixteen years had passed since Ramanujan’s death, but he was still very much on Hardy’s mind.³¹⁵

At first glance, this performance of affect seems incongruous in a mathematics lecture. And Hardy’s tribute to Ramanujan in the form of this oft-quoted statement of indebtedness was in some ways uncharacteristic of Hardy. “In the sixteen years we knew each other,” Snow wrote, “he didn’t say anything more demonstrative than that [I’m usually glad to see you]: except on his deathbed, when he told me that he looked forward to my visits.”³¹⁶ Death might draw out expressions of emotion Hardy otherwise kept under wraps, and Ramanujan’s death similarly enabled him to voice such sentiments.

Despite its declarative tone, however, the statement’s enigmatic reference to “one exception” and its language of romance prompts questions for the reader in the present that neither Hardy nor his contemporaries fully addressed.³¹⁷ The benefit of hindsight colors Hardy’s statement by way of Littlewood’s later classification of Hardy as “a non-practicing homosexual.”³¹⁸ And Snow wrote that while Hardy’s undemonstrative manner

³¹³ Hardy, “Notice” in *Collected Papers*, xxx.

³¹⁴ Hardy, *Ramanujan*, 2.

³¹⁵ Hardy had already given two public lectures on “the life and scientific work of Srinivasa Ramanujan” in May of the same year in Cambridge, from which the Harvard lectures most likely developed. In the following year, Hardy gave a course of twenty-four lectures on ‘Mathematical problems connected with the work of Ramanujan.’ Additionally, he expanded the Harvard lectures into the book *Ramanujan: Twelve Lectures on Subjects Suggested by His Life and Work* (Providence, R.I.: AMS Chelsea Pub., 1999). G. H. Hardy, *Collected Papers of G. H. Hardy*, ed. London Mathematical Society, vol. 7, 7 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1966), 630.

³¹⁶ Snow, foreword to *A Mathematician’s Apology*, 26.

³¹⁷ Both Snow—in his foreword to Hardy’s *A Mathematician’s Apology*—and Titchmarsh in his obituary notice quote the statement without elaboration.

³¹⁸ Kanigel, *Man who Knew Infinity*, 139.

applied to “most of his close friends,” there existed another order of friendships, “scattered through his life, two or three other relationships, different in kind”:

These were intense affections, absorbing, non-physical but exalted. The one I knew about was for a young man whose nature was as spiritually as delicate as his own. I believe, though I only picked this up from chance remarks, that the same was true of the others. To many people of my generation, such relationships would seem either unsatisfactory or impossible. They were neither the one nor the other; and, unless one takes them for granted, one doesn't begin to understand the temperament of men like Hardy (they are rare, but not as rare as white rhinoceroses), nor the Cambridge society of his time.³¹⁹

This Cambridge society Snow gestured to was profoundly homosocial. Until 1882, college fellows were prohibited from marriage, and most remained bachelors even after the prohibition was lifted.³²⁰ And while the 1895 Oscar Wilde trial served as a cautionary tale of the recent past, there was greater scope for the romantic friendships that were subject to regulation in public school. Leonard Woolf, later a member of the Bloomsbury Group who knew Hardy at Trinity, wrote of Hardy and R. K. Gaye—a classics scholar—companionably sharing a double suite of rooms as fellows. “Gaye and Hardy were inseparable,” Woolf recalled, “they were never seen apart and rarely talked to other people.”³²¹

Hardy's cryptic allusion to the “one exception” to whom he owed even more than to Ramanujan, has served as a blank that lends itself to speculation informed by this aspect of Hardy's personal history.³²² But Ramanujan's background was in a way much more structured by heteronormative family. It was only after marriage, arranged by his family in 1909, that Ramanujan charged with the symbolic responsibility of acting as

³¹⁹ Snow, foreword to *A Mathematician's Apology*, 26.

³²⁰ Kanigel, *Man who Knew Infinity*, 142.

³²¹ Woolf, *Sowing*, 110. Woolf relates that Gaye committed suicide some years later.

household head roused himself from open-ended mathematical efforts to the more focused object of procuring regular employment, which eventually led him to Hardy.³²³ College life at Trinity—including its scope for friendship—was a qualitatively different experience for Ramanujan, whose repertoire of relationality would not have included this particular mode of friendship.

The significance of Hardy's statement about Ramanujan needs to be approached from an understanding of the central place of mathematics in Hardy's life. From a definition of mathematics as work in the sense of a need-based activity, Ramanujan and Hardy were collaborators in work—merely co-workers. But Hardy conceived of mathematics as “a creative subject.”³²⁴ Mathematics was the language of their friendship and the substance of their affinity, which more closely resembled that of two artists.

And it was Hardy's ruling passion to the extent that considerations of comfort and happiness came second to that of the possibility of creative work. One who has lost the power or desire to engage in the latter, Hardy opined, “does not matter a great deal anyway, and it would be silly to bother about him.”³²⁵ Such, Snow confirmed, was Hardy's attitude towards his personal life outside mathematics. “Mathematics was his justification,” he wrote.³²⁶ For Hardy, mathematics was indivisible from his personal life. The weight he thus accorded to Ramanujan's contribution to his life need not involve further justification.

³²² For example, David Leavitt creates a fictionalized ulterior homosexual life for Hardy in *The Indian Clerk: A Novel* (New York: Bloomsbury, 2007).

³²³ In reality, his wife Janaki was only about ten years old at the time of their marriage and would not join Ramanujan until three years later when she reached puberty.

³²⁴ Hardy, *Mathematician's Apology*, 143.

³²⁵ Hardy, *Mathematician's Apology*, 143.

³²⁶ Snow, foreword to *A Mathematician's Apology*, 27.

Unlike the mysterious ellipsis to which Hardy’s mention of the “one exception” amounted, Ramanujan was a subject upon which Hardy waxed voluble. Perhaps the exception referred to Littlewood, with whom Hardy maintained a collaboration that was quantitatively and longitudinally the most representative in his life and that was what Snow identified as a topic of secrecy for Hardy—“quite uncharacteristic of him in matters which to most would seem more intimate.”³²⁷ Alternately, he might have meant one of that separate order of friendships Snow depicted. It is even possible to imagine his sister, of whom Titchmarsh wrote in Hardy’s obituary in similar terms of indebtedness, in the role: “He owed much to his sister, who provided him throughout his life with the unobtrusive support which such a man [as Hardy] needs.”³²⁸ After all, by virtue of her gender, Gertrude Hardy, whom Snow painted as “a charming intelligent woman who had never married and who had spent much of her life looking after him,” could never be part of Hardy’s primary sphere of existence at Cambridge.³²⁹ But in the end, she was the one reading to Hardy on his deathbed a chapter of Cambridge university cricket history every evening in the last week of his life.

Affective Volubility and Reticence

³²⁷ Snow, foreword to *A Mathematician’s Apology*, 30. Snow contrasted this explicitly with Hardy’s openness about his collaboration with Ramanujan: “About his discovery of Ramanujan, he showed no secrecy at all.” Hardy’s relationship with Littlewood also bore little resemblance to the “intense affections” to which Snow alluded and Woolf’s example of Gaye illustrates; Hardy and Littlewood preferred to communicate through writing rather than in person even though they lived perhaps a five minutes’ walk away from each other. Béla Bollobás, foreword to *Littlewood’s Miscellany*, 10. While Littlewood, like Hardy, remained a bachelor throughout his life, he had a long-term relationship with a married woman, with whose family he shared a house in Cornwall, where he spent his summers. He had a daughter from that relationship, whom he referred to as his “niece” until his seventies. Bollobás recounts how Littlewood finally came to speak of her as “my daughter,” only to be “most depressed that nobody had blinked an eyelid!” Béla Bollobás, foreword to *Littlewood’s Miscellany*, 18.

³²⁸ E. C. Titchmarsh, “Godfrey Harold Hardy,” in *Collected Papers of G.H. Hardy*, Vol. 1, by G. H. Hardy (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1979), 8.

³²⁹ Snow, foreword to *A Mathematician’s Apology*, 57.

Whatever might have been the truth of that veiled qualification to the preeminence of Ramanujan's influence on Hardy, it was still the latter that prompted Hardy to affective volubility. In contrast, Ramanujan left behind much less in the way of comparable traces of subjectivity. This imbalance may suggest a reading of Ramanujan's investment in his association with Hardy as simply material; he found it difficult to make ends meet and thus needed a patron. Such an interpretation, however, implies an economic reductionism. Instead, I contend that while material concerns doubtless informed Ramanujan's sense of his relationship with Hardy, the conditions that structured his lack of affective expression merit as much attention as those that shaped Hardy's volubility. As evidenced by the "unobtrusive" but ultimately crucial nature of Gertrude Hardy's presence in Hardy's life, the lack of occasion for Hardy to talk about her belied the key part she played in her own way in facilitating his work.

Launched into a sometimes convergent but distinct sphere of friendship built up by Indians in England that existed alongside Hardy's Cambridge, Ramanujan's life there was in some ways fundamentally structured around the absence of family. Contemporaries—both Indian and English—commented extensively on the great pains he took to maintain a vegetarian diet in line with his religious beliefs as a Brahmin. The everyday labor involved in his material subsistence—namely, the preparation of food—served as another reminder of family and home, where his mother and wife would have catered to these needs, much in the way that Hardy's were taken care of by the college domestic staff. At the same time, Ramanujan was reported to be taciturn on the subject of family. A friend from home at Cambridge recalled that he rarely talked about his family, barring the occasional reference to his mother from which he inferred Ramanujan's great

affection for her.³³⁰ And it was his silence that signaled to Hardy the seriousness of the familial discord that apparently led Ramanujan to halt correspondence with home upon the heels of his first falling ill in 1917.³³¹

Combined with the physical discomfort of illness, emotional distress seems to have caused Ramanujan to lapse into silence in this instance. The fact of Ramanujan's death—and the finality of the silence it entailed—further underscores the central place of the body whose absence elicited Hardy's commemoration for years on. Ramanujan too left behind traces of his engagement with a network of compatriots for whom a sense of affinity might be sharpened in the case of a mutual separation from home. But his non-mathematical correspondence dealt primarily with practicalities that foregrounded his bodily subjectivity. For Ramanujan, affect frequently registered as deprivation and discomfort.

Romance and Genius

Ramanujan's absence as manifested in his death, however, made him all the more present in the writings of colleagues, teachers, and friends, both English and Indian. Ramanujan served as a prism of sorts through which fragments of his life were refracted in sometimes contradictory ways. For instance, the two biographical pieces published in Ramanujan's *Collected Papers* put forward diametrically opposed interpretations of Ramanujan's religious views. In the first, Ramanujan's former teacher and an early

³³⁰ S. R. Ranganathan, *Ramanujan: The Man and the Mathematician*, Great Thinkers of India Series 1 (Bombay: Asia Publishing House, 1967), 77. The friend in question, K. Ananda Rao, also noted that Ramanujan "never mentioned to me even once about his brothers."

³³¹ Hardy to S. M. Subramanian, Trinity College, Cambridge, 20 September 1917, in Ramanujan, *Ramanujan*, 146. Hardy never discovered the specifics of this family dispute, and its substance remains unknown.

supporter in Ramanujan's initial search for employment—both Indian—depicted him as devoutly religious; in the other, Hardy maintained that Ramanujan's religion was “a matter of observance and not of intellectual conviction.”³³² Different people made both public and personal claims on Ramanujan's legacy to different ends.

A common thread running through the panoply of accounts was the romance associated with genius. “Genius” was a term commonly bandied about in the rarefied intellectual circles of Cambridge. It was not infrequently used in reference to both Hardy and Littlewood; their commonality as geniuses has been credited as one of the reasons for the success of their partnership.³³³ Even as Snow qualified that Hardy “wasn't a great genius, as Einstein and Rutherford were,” he continued to invoke Einstein as a comparative frame of reference as he memorialized Hardy in his posthumous foreword to Hardy's *A Mathematician's Apology*.³³⁴ Hardy himself rejected the term as applicable to himself.³³⁵ In contrast, he used the term freely with regard to Ramanujan and was singularly dedicated to securing it the public acknowledgment he thought it deserved. Upon hearing of Ramanujan's death, Hardy immediately set about finding a means of commemoration befitting Ramanujan's “most extraordinary genius, of whom even Trinity may justly be proud.”³³⁶ “There should be some permanent memorial of so remarkable a genius,” he wrote in another letter.³³⁷

Hardy's efforts resulted in the publication of Ramanujan's *Collected Papers*; in a prefatory note, Hardy explicitly located its appeal to an audience in the “singular quality

³³² Hardy, “Notice,” in *Collected Papers of Srinivasa Ramanujan*, xxxi.

³³³ Béla Bollobás, foreword to *Littlewood's Miscellany*, 8.

³³⁴ Snow, foreword to *A Mathematician's Apology*, 12.

³³⁵ Snow, foreword to *A Mathematician's Apology*, 12.

³³⁶ Hardy to Sir J. J. Thomson, May 1920, in Ramanujan, *Ramanujan*, 242. The beginning of this letter is missing.

³³⁷ Hardy to Francis Dewsbury, New College, Oxford, 26 May 1920, in Ramanujan, *Ramanujan*, 243.

of Ramanujan's work, and the romance which surrounds his career."³³⁸ The two were inextricably connected. It was the work that propelled the romantic narrative of Ramanujan's career. For Hardy, himself a supremely competent mathematician, a certain level of skill was merely the stuff of everyday. Romance in the sense of a distance from the everyday was an implication of Ramanujan's genius. Hardy, eminently qualified to judge, deemed Ramanujan's work exceptional to the point of meriting that designation. Moreover, his work itself was at times characterized by a mysterious quality. Of Ramanujan's paper on partitions, written in collaboration with Hardy, Littlewood wrote: "The story of the theorem is a romantic one."³³⁹ In this case, Ramanujan's critical contribution was essentially a conjecture that "much more was true than had been established."³⁴⁰ In other words, Ramanujan's intervention offered insight that could not have been arrived at inductively through numerical examples; the only explanation for Ramanujan's conclusion was "a single stroke of insight."³⁴¹

The aura of romance was invoked by his compatriots as well and was not limited to those who could follow the intricacies of his mathematical work. For Indians, the genius of a countryman assumed an added significance against the backdrop of colonial subjection. "To my generation," wrote one such contemporary, "the romance of the find of Ramanujan and his being enabled to proceed to Cambridge for advanced studies in Mathematics were well known from the newspapers."³⁴² The romance here—as a story of adventure—would appear to take Ramanujan as its hero in his pursuit of academic

³³⁸ Hardy, preface to *Collected Papers of Srinivasa Ramanujan*, ix.

³³⁹ Littlewood, *Littlewood's Miscellany*, 98.

³⁴⁰ Littlewood, *Littlewood's Miscellany*, 98. Littlewood provides the technical details in his account in 98-99.

³⁴¹ Littlewood, *Littlewood's Miscellany*, 99.

³⁴² Ranganathan, *Ramanujan*, 78.

heights not easily accessed by those from the colonial peripheries. From the Indian perspective, Ramanujan's story was that of Indian talent receiving its due in the metropole.

At the same time, the analogy of discovery made its way into the language employed by Ramanujan's compatriots as well. Friendship marshaled in the interests of genius took on an aspect of public stewardship; as such, it offered everyone a chance to play the role of hero in whatever part—large or small—they might have had in the vindication of Ramanujan's genius. A narrative of friendship reflected positively all around, credit accruing to both those presumably worthy of friendship as well as those magnanimously offering theirs. "This is a story of human virtue," Snow declared.³⁴³ Despite the tragedy of a premature death, Ramanujan's was also a story of genius that gained full public recognition in his lifetime, lending itself to such sanguine characterizations. Snow intimated that all it took was the inaugural moment "once people had started behaving well" they continued to do so, he underscored the fact that "England gave Ramanujan such honours as were possible."³⁴⁴ Here Snow attributed to Hardy the inaugural moment that "people [...] started behaving well," which in turn initiated the chain reaction that Snow interpreted as a national capacity to do justice to genius.

Implicit in this formulation, however, was the acknowledgment that before Hardy's intervention, people in fact had not behaved well. Had Ramanujan's fate been

³⁴³ Snow, foreword to *A Mathematician's Apology*, 36.

³⁴⁴ Snow, foreword to *A Mathematician's Apology*, 36-37. The honors referred to here are Ramanujan's election to Fellowships of the Royal Society and of Trinity College. Ann Stoler argues that the dominant interpretive framework of colonial studies positing the rule of reason as the foundation of colonial regimes obscures the colonial state's comparable preoccupation with matters of sentiment in "Affective States," in *A Companion to the Anthropology of Politics*, ed. David Nugent and Joan Vincent (John Wiley & Sons, 2008), 4-8. Snow's statement highlighted the moral and affective capacities of the English, even as they were premised on intellectual recognition. While the individual recognition accorded to Ramanujan had

left to the other English mathematicians to whom he had written, he in all likelihood may have been consigned to obscurity. The association between Ramanujan and Hardy struck Snow as “a strangely touching one” because it stood out against the greater proportion of colonial interactions, more commonly characterized by the scope for people to behave badly.³⁴⁵ Snow came to Cambridge long after Ramanujan had left, so his assessment was based on Hardy’s account of the friendship. The commemorative tone and attendant emotion of the latter aligned with conventions of friendship that Snow himself shared with Hardy as part of the same Cambridge milieu. Snow’s own foreword to Hardy’s text, appended twenty years after the latter’s death, evidenced a similar impulse towards the kind of protracted memorialization that Ramanujan prompted in Hardy. In terms reminiscent of Hardy’s own assessment of Ramanujan, Snow referred to Hardy as “intellectually the most valuable friendship of my life.”³⁴⁶ Snow’s friendship with Hardy, however, took for granted the groundwork of basic shared assumptions borne of a common membership in the specific social and cultural institution that was Cambridge.

Conversely, Hardy and Ramanujan faced the fundamental obstacle to mutual understanding posed by cultural difference on the national level. “Ramanujan was an Indian,” Hardy later wrote, “and I suppose that it is always a little difficult for an Englishman and an Indian to understand one another properly.”³⁴⁷ While Hardy and Snow started off with some assurance of a common frame of understanding—along with a healthy enthusiasm for cricket—Hardy and Ramanujan began their association with an additional gap to bridge. Juxtaposed against that distance, the evident emotion in Hardy’s

little bearing on colonial policy, Snow’s framing of it in these terms suggests their broader discursive currency.

³⁴⁵ Snow, foreword to *A Mathematician’s Apology*, 35.

³⁴⁶ Snow, foreword to *A Mathematician’s Apology*, 12.

account further resonated with Snow's own investment in his friendship with Hardy. What Snow left unaddressed, however, was the apparent disparity between Hardy's articulation of affect and nothing comparable on the part of Ramanujan. While a host of factors contributed to this imbalance, recent considerations of colonial structures of feeling offer a window into the larger emotional landscape against which it was situated.

Colonial Structures of Feeling

Historian Ann Laura Stoler has noted in the context of the Dutch East Indies the tension that arose between “inclusionary impulses and exclusionary practice” in European attempts to manage colonial relations.³⁴⁸ Even as colonial projects were justified through liberal discourses of universal humanism and inclusion, they also engaged in apparently contradictory practices of exclusion. The cognitive dissonance that would seem to arise from such a disconnect, however, did little to dampen the colonial enterprise as a whole. As amply documented by the field of colonial studies, colonial regimes were not in fact exemplars of the rule of reason. While colonial authority made use of claims to an ostensibly superior rationality to shore itself up, Stoler suggests that its apparent inconsistencies were not wholly a product of failing to live up to those claims.³⁴⁹ Rather, she has posited that competing claims about appropriate affect—the

³⁴⁷ Hardy, *Ramanujan*, 1.

³⁴⁸ Ann Laura Stoler, “Sexual Affronts and Racial Frontiers: European Identities and the Cultural Politics of Exclusion in Colonial Southeast Asia,” in *Tensions of Empire: Colonial Cultures in a Bourgeois World*, ed. Frederick Cooper and Ann Laura Stoler (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1997), 198. For an argument that posits liberalism as inherently exclusionary, see Uday Singh Mehta, *Liberalism and Empire: A Study in Nineteenth-Century British Liberal Thought* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999).

³⁴⁹ Ann Laura Stoler, “Affective States,” in *A Companion to the Anthropology of Politics*, ed. David Nugget and Joan Vincent (John Wiley & Sons, 2008), 4.

proportionate “distribution of sentiment” into suitable outlets —were equally critical in shaping imperial technologies of rule.³⁵⁰

Work on the affective dimensions of empire has centered on sexuality, conjugality, and the biological family as related sites in which official intervention was concentrated.³⁵¹ Public concern in these areas stemmed from the potential intensity of emotion involved as well as anxieties about the proximity of racialized bodies in domestic spaces.³⁵² This research contends that sex, with its particular capacity for emotional and physical intimacy as well as coercion, served as a “dense transfer point of power.”³⁵³ Much of this work has thus focused on the regulation of sexual relationships in colonial settings and how attitudes towards them were determined by normative ideas about race, gender, class, and sexuality.

Inevitably, sex was bound up in considerations of family. While anxiety figured prominently in the colonial topography of affect, concern over interracial encounters coexisted with tolerance and even encouragement under the right circumstances.³⁵⁴

³⁵⁰ Stoler, “Affective States,” 5.

³⁵¹ Early influential examples include Sylvia Van Kirk, *“Many Tender Ties”: Women in Fur-Trade Society in Western Canada, 1670-1870* (Winnipeg, Man: Watson & Dwyer, 1980); Jennifer S. H. Brown, *Strangers in Blood: Fur Trade Company Families in Indian Country* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1980); and Margaret Jolly and Martha Macintyre, eds., *Family and Gender in the Pacific: Domestic Contradictions and the Colonial Impact* (Cambridge ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1989). More recently, see Ann Laura Stoler, *Carnal Knowledge and Imperial Power: Race and the Intimate in Colonial Rule* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002); Durba Ghosh, *Sex and the Family in Colonial India: The Making of Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006).

³⁵² Stoler, “Affective States,” 5.

³⁵³ Ann Laura Stoler, *Race and the Education of Desire: Foucault’s History of Sexuality and the Colonial Order of Things* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1995), 3.

³⁵⁴ These anxieties had as much to do with maintaining class and gender distinctions amongst Europeans as it did with the question of racial difference, as demonstrated in Anne McClintock, *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender, and Sexuality in the Colonial Contest* (New York: Routledge, 1995). Philippa Levine’s work on the regulation of prostitution in four British colonies shows that the British government considered interracial sex necessary to maintain the morale of British soldiers even as the problem of venereal disease threatening to undermine the military enterprise as a whole was viewed as emanating from native sex workers in *Prostitution, Race, and Politics: Policing Venereal Disease in the British Empire* (New York: Routledge, 2003). Damon Ieremia Salesa further argues that “racial amalgamation,” as opposed to segregation, was seen as a viable strategy of colonialism. While there was much debate and no consensus,

Conceptualizing family in the context of empire could alternately fan anxieties about racial distinctions even as it might bridge the latter by bringing together members of what were ostensibly disparate groups into an intimate space. Broadly defined, family was constituted by shifting configurations of “blood, contract, and intimacy.”³⁵⁵ On one hand, family peopled the networks of patronage and economic strategy underpinning the logistical operation of the empire. On the other, it served as a metaphor and organizing principle for new relations wrought through imperial processes.

For instance, Stoler has observed how Dutch colonials framed through the lens of family and sentimentality their interactions with the Indonesian women and men they employed as domestic labor; in contrast, she notes an apparent lack of affect on the part of the latter.³⁵⁶ While the Dutch sentimentalized the workings of colonial power by recasting household help as part of the family, Stoler found the former Indonesian servants she interviewed to be “dismissive rather than degraded, disdainful rather than defiant.”³⁵⁷ In their accounts, the focus on the tedium of the work—the sweeping, the dusting, the material upkeep of colonial domesticity—countered the rose-tinted visions of colonial family touted by nostalgic European memoirs. At the same time, Stoler underscores the limited nature of their negative emotional engagement with the colonial structures of their employment. Her interviewees were more matter-of-fact than strident in their implicit rebuttal of their employers’ sentimental projections. The washerwoman tasked with extra cleaning and ironing offered no fond memories of her employers to

racial intermingling served as a “cornerstone of the colonial management of races,” rarely punished or legislated against. Salesa, *Racial Crossings: Race, Intermarriage, and the Victorian British Empire* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 13.

³⁵⁵ Leonore Davidoff, Megan Doolittle, Janet Fink, and Katherine Holden, *The Family Story: Blood, Contract and Intimacy, 1830–1960* (London: Longman, 1999).

³⁵⁶ Stoler, *Carnal Knowledge*, 202.

³⁵⁷ Stoler, *Carnal Knowledge*, 202.

soften her account of the burden they imposed, but neither did she necessarily invest her workplace with the symbolic weight of resistance.

Stoler's work thus gestures to inner lives more variegated than the narrow scope dictated by narratives of subaltern defiance. On a related note, historians of slavery have cautioned that the impulse towards a historical recovery of slaves' capacity to act as agents of their own destinies has lent itself to a tendency to confuse categories of humanity, agency, and resistance.³⁵⁸ While it was important to counterbalance narratives of victimization in an earlier historical moment, focusing on the question of agency presumes universal a liberal notion of selfhood emphasizing independence and choice.³⁵⁹ "And out of this misleading entanglement of the categories of 'humanity' and (liberal) 'agency,' Walter Johnson writes, "has emerged a strange syllogism in which the bare fact (as opposed to the self-conscious assertion) of enslaved 'humanity' has come to be seen as 'resistance' to slavery."³⁶⁰ In other words, the attempt to recover the human dimensions of slaves' lives within the dehumanizing circumstances of slavery gave rise to compensatory readings of resistance. Any recognizably human aspect of slaves' lives could thus be folded into an abstract concept of resistance. But this formulation, Johnson argues, "paradoxically reduces even the most intimate actions of human beings to (resistant) features of the system that enslaved them."³⁶¹ Despite liberatory intentions,

³⁵⁸ Walter Johnson, "On Agency," *Journal of Social History* 37, no. 1 (2003): 115.

³⁵⁹ An example of this narrative can be found in Stanley M. Elkins, *Slavery: A Problem in American Institutional and Intellectual Life* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1959). Elkins argued that slavery was an institution so total in its domination that slaves were cut off from the cultural resources of their African past to the point of adopting a degraded understanding of themselves as conceived of by their masters. For a discussion of the changing stakes of framing scholarship as historical redress in the emergence of the New Social History, see Johnson, "On Agency," 119-121. For a more extended account of the contemporary moment in the history of academic knowledge production and politics, see George Lipsitz, *American Studies in a Moment of Danger* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2001).

³⁶⁰ Johnson, "On Agency," 115.

³⁶¹ Johnson, "On Agency," 116.

this interpretive lens ends up framing all aspects of slaves' lives as reactive. In doing so, it further entrenches slavery as the center of analysis. Johnson's point has to do with slavery as a specific historical condition of choicelessness in its most extreme form. But colonialism was also a comprehensive system that constrained some people's choices in the interests of others who were beneficiaries of that system. As such, human lives conducted in the shadow of colonial rule were not unlike the condition of enslaved humanity in the potential to be "at once thoroughly determined and insistently transcendent."³⁶² Colonialism too acted as a pervasive force on colonized lives, conditioning the most basic circumstances of people's lives. But both Johnson and Stoler argue that subaltern lives were constrained by but not reducible to these systems of subjugation.

On the affective front, this suggests that neither resistance nor material necessity provide easy explanations for the less voluble subaltern perspective. Ramanujan's case differed from that of the Indonesian domestics in that mathematics was more than merely a means of economic survival, although it was also that. For Stoler's interviewees, domestic service was strictly a paying job. Material hardship need not divest a life of emotion. But feeling could also be a limited resource that those focused on the problem of survival may well choose to conserve. Rather than assume that material necessity preempted feeling performance, it is possible to imagine that a lack of investment in work that contributed little to a sense of self was accompanied by minimal investment in the interpersonal relationships it entailed. Ramanujan, however, was deeply invested in his mathematical work with Hardy. Ramanujan did not match Hardy in the latter's affect-laden expressions of friendship. But to read this as indicating a primarily material

³⁶² Johnson, "On Agency," 116.

understanding of the association on Ramanujan's part amounts to economic reductionism. As much as Hardy's performance of feeling can only be understood as the highly calibrated phenomenon it was through an examination of the Cambridge culture of homosocial friendship, Ramanujan's relative reserve similarly needs to be considered in light of the conditions that structured it.

The history of feeling, which has recently emerged as a burgeoning field, offers a framework for addressing this disparity.³⁶³ While the initial call for the historical study of emotions came in 1941 from Lucien Febvre, it was not until history as a discipline experienced a shift in the second half of the twentieth century that it become more receptive to the analysis of emotions as something other than irrational.³⁶⁴ The rise of cultural history and its willingness to take on postmodern perspectives allayed previous concerns that emotions were too subjective to allow for proper historical inquiry. Even as many critics/historians? refer to this moment as an "affective turn," the problem of defining a realm of subjective experience distinct from more cognition-driven categories such as reasoning and knowledge still remains a challenge.³⁶⁵ The terms "affect,"

³⁶³ See Frank Biess, Alon Confino, Ute Frevert, Uffa Jensen, Lyndal Roper and Daniela Saxer, "Forum: 'History of Emotions,'" *German History*, 28/1: 67–80. See also Jan Plamper, "The History of Emotions: An Interview with William Reddy, Barbara Rosenwein, and Peter Stearns," *History and Theory*, 49 (May, 2010): 237–65, 237.

³⁶⁴ See Lucien Febvre, "Sensibility and History: How to Reconstitute the Emotional Life of the Past", in *A New Kind of History: From the Writings of Febvre*, ed. Peter Burke, trans. K. Folca (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1973), 12–26. Barbara Rosenwein, however, argues that Febvre's interest was distinct from current work on emotion and that it can be more accurately characterized as an injunction towards a "moral history" to "explain fascism and reveal the principles on which a more rational order could be constructed." According to Rosenwein, throughout the middle of the century into the 1960s, the dominant view was that emotions were irrational. See Barbara H. Rosenwein, "Worrying about Emotions in History," *The American Historical Review* 107, no. 3 (June 1, 2002): 821–845, 823.

³⁶⁵ A key issue has been how much to take into account work in other disciplines such as the social and life sciences. See Willemijn Ruberg, "Interdisciplinarity and the History of Emotions," *Cultural and Social History* 6, no. 4 (December 1, 2009): 508.

“feeling,” and “emotion” denote the different shadings of this realm, and I use them to gesture to those nuances rather than interchangeably.³⁶⁶

A critical component of colonialism was the material ramifications it brought to bear on colonized bodies. Any consideration of affect in a colonial context thus needs to locate body and mind in a single analytical field. Historian Monique Scheer has noted that amidst the difficulties of pinpointing and defining the concept, it has generally been agreed that “emotions are something people experience *and* something they do.”³⁶⁷ A conception of emotions as practices situates them in the context of “bodily dispositions conditioned by a social context.”³⁶⁸ Hardy and Ramanujan can be understood as affective beings whose repertoire was shaped by their respective trajectories through the different social institutions that made up their personal histories. This formulation posits that emotion is not merely a reaction to stimuli but a state that people cultivate, whether by avoiding negative feelings or promoting positive ones.³⁶⁹ The expression and performance of emotions signifying friendship was mediated by limits and allowances that were structured by one’s conditioning as a socially embedded body. At the most basic level, Hardy could reflect on his association with Ramanujan because he continued to exist as a bodily presence in the world after Ramanujan’s death. Furthermore, the

³⁶⁶ My use of the terms is broadly based on how they are respectively defined by the Oxford English Dictionary. The definitions in themselves can encompass divergent facets of meaning. “Affect” is defined both in terms of an inner subjective experience as well as its outward display. “Emotion” includes a definitional component that highlights its derivation “from one’s circumstances, mood, or relationship to others,” suggesting an emphasis on cognitive aspects, even as the following discussion rejects a dichotomy of body and mind.

³⁶⁷ Monique Scheer, “Are Emotions a Kind of Practice (And Is That What Makes Them Have a History?) A Bourdieuan Approach to Understanding Emotion,” *History and Theory* 51, no. 2 (May 1, 2012): 195.

³⁶⁸ Scheer, “Are Emotions a Kind of Practice,” 193. For a discussion of the cognitivist approach that largely preceded this development and its appeal for historians as well as the problems it poses, see 195-199.

³⁶⁹ Scheer, “Are Emotions a Kind of Practice,” 206.

realm of academia presented him with concrete opportunities such as that of lecturing on Ramanujan, and Hardy had been socialized over the course of a lifetime to inhabit and present a self both reflective and expressive as demonstrated by his Harvard lecture. While the fact of Ramanujan's death underscores the central place of the body whose absence elicited Hardy's commemoration, even in life, Ramanujan had been habituated as a self whose voice in the historical record differed greatly from Hardy.

A Life in Brief

On December 22, 1887, Srinivasa Ramanujan was born in the South Indian town of Kumbakonam to a silk shop clerk and his wife. Located two hundred miles south of the city of Madras, Kumbakonam was a sizable town of more than fifty thousand, sixth largest in the Madras Presidency and home to such amenities as “a seventy-two-bed hospital, four police stations, two lower secondary English schools, three conducting classes in Tamil, a high school of excellent reputation, and a college.”³⁷⁰ While Ramanujan's family was not comfortably off, they were positioned to envision a future in which they were.

Ramanujan inhabited a social world very much structured by the constant threat of poverty, which coexisted with an atmosphere encouraging scholastic achievement as a means of upward mobility. Kumbakonam was a stronghold of Brahminism as practiced by the highest Hindu caste, which comprised four percent of the South Indian

³⁷⁰ Kanigel, *Man who Knew Infinity*, 16. The following biographical sketch of Ramanujan's life draws mainly on the most complete account of Ramanujan's life by Robert Kanigel, supplemented by commentary provided by Berndt and Rankin in Srinivasa Ramanujan, *Ramanujan: Letters and Commentary*, ed. Bruce C. Berndt and Robert A. Rankin, *History of Mathematics* v. 9 (Providence, R.I.: American Mathematical Society, 1995), 1-3.

population.³⁷¹ Brahmins traditionally acted in priestly and learned capacities, serving as temple priests, astrologers, and pundits specializing in sacred law. Reflecting this predisposition, Kumbakonam's high literacy rate—one in five adult males could read and write—was higher than anywhere else in South India except for Madras and possibly Tanjore, the district seat.³⁷² The proximity of the Cauvery River made the surrounding cropland some of the richest in India, less tethered to the yearly variations in the monsoon, which dictated the fate of much of the rest of India.³⁷³ While two-thirds of the population worked as agricultural laborers, the Cauvery freed the town to some extent from the vagaries of the weather.³⁷⁴ That relative freedom gave rise to crafts such as metalwork and silk saris, the latter of which provided Ramanujan's father with a living in his capacity as a shop clerk.

That living consisted of a monthly income of approximately twenty rupees, which put Ramanujan's household on a rung above those of agricultural workers, who made four or five annas—roughly a quarter rupee—per day.³⁷⁵ They subsisted precariously on the outskirts of the middle class, supplementing this income by taking in boarders and Ramanujan's mother singing at the temple. And yet most of Ramanujan's friends were from better-off families with their sights set on positions as lawyers, engineers, and government officials.³⁷⁶ These were aspirations shaped by British India's demands for professional personnel.

³⁷¹ Kanigel, *Man who Knew Infinity*, 20.

³⁷² Kanigel, *Man who Knew Infinity*, 24.

³⁷³ Kanigel, *Man who Knew Infinity*, 10.

³⁷⁴ Kanigel, *Man who Knew Infinity*, 16.

³⁷⁵ A rupee bought about twenty-five pounds of rice. Kanigel, *Man who Knew Infinity*, 55.

³⁷⁶ Kanigel, *Man who Knew Infinity*, 24.

And early on, Ramanujan excelled in school to the extent that these goals appeared attainable. He demonstrated a particular knack in mathematics and won various prizes and scholarships. In 1897, not quite ten years old, Ramanujan scored first in the district on his primary examinations—in English, Tamil, arithmetic, and geography—before enrolling the following year in the English-language high school, Town High.³⁷⁷ In 1904, he entered Government College with a scholarship.³⁷⁸ While Ramanujan had previously demonstrated proficiency in all his subjects, he developed a myopic focus on mathematics in this period; failing in English composition, he lost his scholarship.³⁷⁹ Apparently distressed by this state of affairs, Ramanujan ran away by rail to Vizagapatnam, 700 miles away from home, without informing his parents. He had returned by the following year to enroll this time in Pachaiyappa's College, Madras, to prepare for the First Arts examination, which would enable him to matriculate at the University of Madras.³⁸⁰ Ultimately, Ramanujan failed the F. A. exam twice and ended his academic career without a degree.³⁸¹

This disqualified him from professionally pursuing a career in mathematics. But Ramanujan's belief in his own capabilities sustained him in self-driven research in his now famed notebooks, living hand to mouth, supplemented by the odd tutoring job here and there. He had no steady job. In 1909, his mother arranged his marriage to S. Janaki

³⁷⁷ Kanigel, *Man who Knew Infinity*, 25.

³⁷⁸ Kanigel, *Man who Knew Infinity*, 45.

³⁷⁹ Tuition was thirty-two rupees per term—as much as his father made in a month and a half. Kanigel, *Man who Knew Infinity*, 47.

³⁸⁰ A First Arts (F. A.) degree was the equivalent of a present-day associate degree in terms of the length of study involved, but the odds of obtaining one were so much slimmer in colonial India that it was a highly coveted qualification. Of a population of forty-three million, the annual number who earned an F. A. degree in the early twentieth century was barely a thousand. Kanigel, *Man who Knew Infinity*, 53.

³⁸¹ In India at the time, a college degree was more than a qualification for a good job; as hard as they were to come by, they virtually guaranteed you one. For an explanation of the university system and the statistics that drove up the value placed on these degrees, see Kanigel 52-55.

Ammal, but she would not come to live with him until she reached puberty three years later. But what was thus initially a symbolic assumption of the role of household head prompted him to seek regular employment. Appealing to those who shared his interests, Ramanujan gained the support of mathematically minded friends and eventually found work as a clerk in the accounts section of the Madras Port Trust.

Meanwhile, Ramanujan continued to press for the recognition of his mathematical work as did his friends as his work gained traction in Madras mathematical circles. His work was submitted for evaluation to up the chain of British Indian officialdom, and mathematical experts in the metropole were called upon for consultation. In the end, however, it was G. H. Hardy, to whom Ramanujan himself had written in early 1913, whose positive response publicly confirmed Ramanujan's genius and enabled Ramanujan to pursue mathematics full-time.

Hardy immediately set out to bring Ramanujan to Cambridge, but his initial efforts were apparently discouraged by Ramanujan's religious scruples. Strict Brahmin orthodoxy dictated that crossing the ocean from India to England made one outcaste.³⁸² A year passed before Ramanujan determined to set out for Cambridge. Through a concerted effort initiated by Hardy and supported by Ramanujan's well-wishers in India, scholarships of £250 a year from the University of Madras and £60 a year from Trinity College were secured to support him in Cambridge as well as his family back home. Ramanujan set sail for England on March 17, 1914.

Ramanujan experienced three years of productive collaboration with Hardy before falling ill in 1917, after which he spent much of his remaining time in England in nursing

homes. In 1918, Ramanujan became the second Indian to be elected as a Fellow of the Royal Society.³⁸³ That fall, he was the first Indian Fellow of Trinity College. In failing health, Ramanujan returned to India in March of 1919. He died the following year on April 26, 1920.

The nature of the archive Ramanujan left behind poses particular challenges to the historian interested in his subjectivity due to its specialized nature—namely, the centrality of mathematics. Ramanujan barely had enough time to do the math for which he braved a journey to England, much less write about it before his premature death. While Ramanujan engaged in the everyday writing practice of corresponding with friends and family during his time at Cambridge, most of those letters have been lost.³⁸⁴ Moreover, the archive replicates a privileging of the mathematical lens in Ramanujan’s case because there was little of inherent interest in his prose writing.³⁸⁵ Hardy, despite his protestation that he lacked “linguistic and artistic ability,” possessed enough of a literary flair that *A Mathematician’s Apology* on its publication reportedly drew the

³⁸² This was a minority opinion, but Ramanujan’s adherence to religious dietary restrictions was also noted by contemporaries as particularly strict. Kanigel discusses in detail the process that informed Ramanujan’s ultimate decision to travel to England in *Man who Knew Infinity*, 184-185.

³⁸³ Sources not infrequently make the erroneous claim that he was the first. Even Hardy made this mistake in *Ramanujan*, 6. That particular distinction belongs to Ardaseer Cursetjee (1808-1877), an eminent marine engineer in Bombay responsible for introducing gas to the city. His election occurred in 1841.

³⁸⁴ For a collection of all extant letters written by Ramanujan, see Berndt and Rankin, eds., *Ramanujan* in which “as many letters to, from, and about Ramanujan as has been possible” have been compiled. These include his correspondence with Hardy predating his departure from India as well as that from the period 1917-1919 when Ramanujan was confined to various nursing homes away from Cambridge. Upon his return to India, Ramanujan wrote Hardy only once. Some of the correspondence between the two has also been lost.

³⁸⁵ Kanigel has observed that Ramanujan’s letters and the occasions that he employed words instead of symbols for explanation in his mathematics notebook show him to be competent in the functional use of English. Kanigel asserts that what he terms Ramanujan’s “first academic debacle”—the loss of his scholarship at Kumbakonam’s Government College—is more an indicator of Ramanujan’s myopic focus on mathematics to the detriment of his performance in other subjects rather than any exceptional difficulties with English composition. Ramanujan’s failing the latter precipitated his eventual departure from the school. Kanigel, *Man who Knew Infinity*, 47. Of Ramanujan’s letters, however, he has also noted that “outside their mathematical content, [they] are barren of grace or subtlety.” Kanigel, *Man who Knew Infinity*, 3.

approbation of Graham Greene, who classed it alongside Henry James's notebooks as the best account of what it was like to be a creative artist.³⁸⁶

Ramanujan, however, was not an introspective writer, and the constraints imposed by the English language may have further limited the scope of his expression. But to pursue higher mathematics as a profession—even in India—required the use of English.³⁸⁷ Ramanujan's native Tamil was a major Indian language in its own right, with almost twenty million speakers.³⁸⁸ English, however, was the official language of British India, serving as the medium of government. It also functioned as a lingua franca for Indians, who spoke over a dozen distinct languages. Admittedly, this applied only to a narrow segment of the most educated in Indian society.³⁸⁹ But this was the slice of the population that comprised Indian higher education—including the field of mathematics. Advanced academic work was more often than not conducted in English as a result of policies implemented in 1835.³⁹⁰ In fact, Ramanujan published his first paper in 1911 in the English-language *Journal of the Indian Mathematical Society*.

In a rare instance of explicit epistolary emotion, Ramanujan wrote in March of 1918 to thank Hardy on the occasion of his election as a Fellow of the Royal Society:

³⁸⁶ Hardy, *A Mathematician's Apology*, 90; Snow, foreword to *A Mathematician's Apology*, 13. Hardy's main body of work includes well over 300 mathematical papers as well as twelve books, the last of which he finished just before his death in 1947. But he also wrote book reviews and obituary notices for colleagues, which were pieces anchored in a mathematical context but distinct from mathematical practice. For a list of these books, see Hardy, *Collected Papers of G.H. Hardy*, Vol. 7, 871; for a list of papers, see 878-896.

³⁸⁷ The 1813 East India Company charter made the company responsible for education and encouraged missionary activity. It marked a shift away from the "Orientalist" perspective, characterized by the accommodation of indigenous culture, to the rise of the 'Anglicist' viewpoint, which entailed the use of the English language as the medium for education. Debates continued but culminated in Macaulay's Anglicist Minute of 1835, which was confirmed in 1841 and 1854.

³⁸⁸ Kanigel, *Man who Knew Infinity*, 25.

³⁸⁹ Even among relatively well-educated Tamil Brahmin men, in 1911, only about 11 percent were literate in English. While Ramanujan's parents were literate in their native Tamil, neither knew English. Kanigel, *Man who Knew Infinity*, 24-25.

³⁹⁰ Fritz Blackwell, *India: A Global Studies Handbook* (Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO, 2004), 92.

“My words are not adequate to express my thanks to you.”³⁹¹ Hardy had telegraphed him of the good news. Ramanujan “not [having] even dream[ed] of the possibility,” at first misread “Fellow Philosophical Society”—three times, in fact—instead of Royal Society.³⁹² He wrote how he was thus “very much puzzled why you sent a telegram from Piccadilly for that” until he realized his mistake.³⁹³

Hardy had sent off the news in haste because this affirmation of Ramanujan’s worth—a public confirmation from the preeminent scientific body in Britain of the endorsement he had first sought from Hardy—came not a moment too soon. It had been a bad year for Ramanujan. The spring of 1917 marked the beginning of his long illness, and he first went into a Nursing Home in Cambridge in early summer before sojourns in a string of sanatoria at Wells, at Matlock, and in London. He was never out of bed for any length of time again until he finally showed some improvement in fall of 1918.³⁹⁴ In October of 1917, he had good reason to expect election as a Fellow of Trinity College.³⁹⁵ But he had been passed over. So it happened that in January or February of 1918, Ramanujan jumped onto the tracks in front of an oncoming train.³⁹⁶ Luckily, a guard had seen him in time to stop the train, and Ramanujan survived although he ended up with some deep scars to show from the experience.

Ramanujan had demonstrated this kind of impulsiveness before, when he ran away from home after losing his scholarship at Government College rather than speaking

³⁹¹ Ramanujan to Hardy, Matlock House, Matlock, [1918], in Ramanujan, *Ramanujan*, 154. The letter is undated but was written not long after the list of candidates was drawn up on February 21 and read at a Royal Society Meeting on February 28. The election itself took place on May 2, 1918.

³⁹² Ibid. Ramanujan had also recently been elected to the Cambridge Philosophical Society.

³⁹³ Ibid.

³⁹⁴ Robert Alexander Rankin, “Ramanujan As a Patient,” in *Ramanujan: Essays and Surveys*, ed. Bruce C. Berndt and Robert Alexander Rankin (American Mathematical Society, 2001), 41.

³⁹⁵ Kanigel, *Man who Knew Infinity*, 290.

³⁹⁶ Kanigel, *Man who Knew Infinity*, 294.

to anyone about it. And Hardy only learned elliptically of Ramanujan's recent family conflict—serious enough for him to have stopped writing home for over a year—after prodding him on the absence of letters.³⁹⁷ Words did not always come easily to Ramanujan. It was perhaps fitting that he couched his gratitude towards Hardy in terms that highlighted the difficulty of articulating his emotions.

Election to the Royal Society signified acceptance at the highest levels into the British scientific community; this marked the pinnacle of the legitimation Ramanujan sought in England. Even in India, Ramanujan had a coterie of mathematically minded well-wishers. He wrote to one of them, C. N. Ganapathy Iyer, after his first few months at Trinity:

I think that I am really fortunate in having made the friendship of such nice gentlemen as Messrs Hardy and Littlewood. They are the greatest of English pure mathematicians, and at the same time the most rigorous. Mr Neville also is a very nice gentleman and I am very sorry that our fields in Mathematics are very different and far away from each other and so have no chance of meeting him as often as with these.³⁹⁸

The recipient of the letter himself would have similarly qualified as just such a “nice gentleman.” Ganapathy Iyer had regularly met with Ramanujan for evening discussions of mathematics on the beach while the latter was at the Madras Port Trust. And as Ramanujan mentioned in the same letter, Ganapathy Iyer was the link through which Ramanujan first came into contact with the work of Hardy and Littlewood. “You must remember,” Ramanujan reminded him, “that the ‘Orders of Infinity’ which I found in

³⁹⁷ Ramanujan resumed correspondence with his family around the time of his suicide attempt, writing to them for the first time in more than a year on February 11, 1918. Kanigel, *Man who Knew Infinity*, 294.

³⁹⁸ Ramanujan to C. N. Ganapathy Iyer, 17 December 1914, in Ramanujan, *Ramanujan*, 120-121. Ganapathy Iyer had received his B.A. and M.A. degrees from Presidency College in Madras and was appointed Lecturer in Mathematics there in 1910, later to become Professor of Mathematics. When Ramanujan was at the Madras Port Trust, he met with Ganapathy Iyer on a regular basis on the beach in the evenings to discuss mathematics.

your room introduced me to Messrs Hardy and Littlewood.”³⁹⁹ And Ramanujan continued to engage his erstwhile mathematical interlocutor on the subject of their shared interest when he proceeded to relate to him some of the most recent research of these two figures whom he had previously only come into contact via text.⁴⁰⁰ Ramanujan was eager to share the plenitude of cutting-edge mathematical stimulation to which he now had access.

What set the Hardy and Littlewood apart from those who labored to the best of their abilities in their corner at the margins of a largely European world of mathematics—as Ganapathy Iyer had—was that these were “the greatest of English pure mathematicians,” uniquely qualified to facilitate Ramanujan’s research on a substantive level. Their work was plugged directly into the forefront of mathematics—at this point mainly a European discipline.

As his ruling passion, mathematics had so far dictated Ramanujan’s life to the point of rendering him unemployable before offering him this second chance; as such, it informed his interpersonal relations as well. But in England, it determined them to a greater extent. For example, Ramanujan here conveyed his regret that the difference in their respective areas of mathematical specialization did not allow for more interaction with Neville. Eric Harold Neville was another Fellow at Trinity, roughly Ramanujan’s contemporary in age, whom Ganapathy Iyer would most likely remember from the series of lectures the former gave in January of 1914 in Madras.

Neville had traveled there as Hardy’s intermediary, and he played a critical part in finally getting Ramanujan to England. Until that point, Ramanujan’s contact with Hardy

³⁹⁹ Ramanujan to C. N. Ganapathy Iyer, 17 December 1914, in Ramanujan, *Ramanujan*, 121.

⁴⁰⁰ Ramanujan to C. N. Ganapathy Iyer, 17 December 1914, in Ramanujan, *Ramanujan*, 121-122.

and the world of Cambridge which the latter represented had been mediated entirely through the less than ideal vehicle of overseas mail. Ramanujan experienced its vagaries on a more regular basis once he was at Trinity; letters occasionally disappeared, and long-distance communication introduced complications and ambiguities. The temporary estrangement of Ramanujan from his family that so concerned Hardy offers a possible case in point.⁴⁰¹ Neville was Ramanujan's first tangible human contact with Cambridge.

And Neville apparently made an impression favorable enough that Ramanujan set aside his reservations and took the final plunge to England. In early 1914, thanks to Hardy, Ramanujan was the most comfortably situated he had ever been since his fall from academic grace years before. He was now in possession of a research scholarship for the duration of two years from the University of Madras, which paid £60 annually—three times his former income at the Port Trust—and required only that he submit a quarterly progress report.⁴⁰² Ramanujan could pursue mathematics to his heart's content and support his family in the process without sacrificing the comforts of home.

The crux of Ramanujan's problem had been that despite people generally recognizing that his mathematical skills were probably exceptional, he had reached a level too advanced for easy assessment. Much of Ramanujan's work was in the field of number theory, which deals in numbers and their properties or patterns among them.⁴⁰³ But the field of mathematics was already specialized to the point that mathematicians whose expertise did not overlap had difficulty gauging its merit. Distinguishing genius

⁴⁰¹ In this letter, Ramanujan referred to what appears to have been the disappearance of his previous letter to Ganapathy Iyer: "It is a great mystery to me how my pamphlets reached you without my letter." Ramanujan to C. N. Ganapathy Iyer, 17 December 1914, in Ramanujan, *Ramanujan*, 120. In another example, Berndt and Rankin note the discrepancy between Hardy's statement in his letter of 26 March 1913 that he had written three letters to Ramanujan and Ramanujan's account of having received only two. The date and contents of the missing letter remain unconfirmed. Berndt and Rankin, eds., *Ramanujan*, 86.

⁴⁰² Ramanujan to Hardy, 17 April 1913, in Ramanujan, *Ramanujan*, 81.

from a potential pretender or a minor oddity was not easy. Many suspected Ramanujan's genius. His friends believed in it. But no one was quite qualified to confirm it—until Hardy.

Judging Genius

From the beginning, the institutional, educational, and economic inequalities between metropole and colony had determined the broad contours of Ramanujan's existence. His former aspirations for a better life through academic achievement had channeled those options available to him by/in? British India. The trajectory of Ramanujan's career turned out to be more convoluted than originally planned when he dropped out of the running for professional routes available to holders of a college-level degree. His alternative was to draw on non-institutional networks of affinity—of mathematics, of friends of family, of the family of friends. At the same time, his quest for “influence” circled back to those same institutions of British India. In 1910, Ramanujan sought out V. Ramaswami Aiyar, who combined an interest in mathematics with a midlevel government position as Deputy Collector in the Madras Civil Service.⁴⁰⁴ He had established the Indian Mathematical Society with twenty founding members a few years back in 1907, which suggested him to Ramanujan as a possible patron. V. R. Aiyar considered it a waste to consign Ramanujan to the kind of municipal clerical post that the latter had come to request from him.⁴⁰⁵ Instead, he sent Ramanujan with a letter of

⁴⁰³ Kanigel, *Man who Knew Infinity*, 6.

⁴⁰⁴ His name can also be spelled as “Ramaswamy Iyer.” Ranganathan, *Ramanujan*, 23. Aiyar, alternately spelled Iyer, was the caste name of Brahmins who worshipped Siva and was common in South India. Kanigel, *Man who Knew Infinity*, 77.

⁴⁰⁵ P. V. Seshu Aiyar and R. Ramachandra Rao, “Notice,” in *Collected Papers of Srinivasa Ramanujan*, by Srinivasa Ramanujan (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1927), xiii.

recommendation to P. V. Seshu Aiyar, formerly one of Ramanujan's professors at Government College, who was now at Presidency College in Madras.⁴⁰⁶ In turn, Aiyar produced further leads and notes of introduction.

Eventually, this process led Ramanujan later that year to Dewan Bahadur Raghunatha Ramachandra Rao, Collector at Nellore, a local district headquarters located roughly 100 miles north of Madras.⁴⁰⁷ Another founding member of the Indian Mathematical Society, he saw enough promise in Ramanujan to provide him with a monthly stipend of twenty-five rupees so that he might stay in Madras, where he might have a better chance at perhaps trying for a scholarship, rather than returning to Kumbakonam.⁴⁰⁸ To that end, Ramanujan started publishing in the recently founded *Journal of the Indian Mathematical Society* and laid the groundwork of establishing a place for himself in the nascent mathematical community of India.⁴⁰⁹ Later, Ramanujan would correspond from Cambridge with Ramachandra Rao's nephew, R. Krishna Rao. And he would return the favor Ramachandra Rao had done him to the best of his ability by offering advice for another nephew—K. Ananda Rau—who started a course of study in mathematics in Cambridge in the fall subsequent to Ramanujan's own arrival.⁴¹⁰

In 1912, now five years out of college and eager to be self-supporting, Ramanujan took up work as a clerk in the Madras Port Trust Office for the modest pay of thirty

⁴⁰⁶ The British government established two Presidency Colleges—one respectively in Madras and in Calcutta (now Kolkata)—in the nineteenth century. Now run by the Indian government, they have consistently ranked among the best institutions of tertiary education in India. Seshu Aiyar's move to Presidency College was thus a step up from his former position. Berndt and Rankin, eds., *Ramanujan*, 7.

⁴⁰⁷ The title Dewan signifies the financial minister of an Indian state; more generally, it can refer to any official with considerable financial responsibilities. Bahadur is an honorific title for officers and officials. Berndt and Rankin, eds., *Ramanujan*, 106. Being named "Dewan Bahadur" was something to the effect of being knighted. Kanigel, *Man who Knew Infinity*, 78.

⁴⁰⁸ Kanigel, *Man who Knew Infinity*, 82.

⁴⁰⁹ Seshu Aiyar and Ramachandra Rao, "Notice," in *Collected Papers of Srinivasa Ramanujan*, xiv.

⁴¹⁰ Ramanujan to R. Krishna Rao, 7 August 1914, in Ramanujan, *Ramanujan*, 111.

rupees a month.⁴¹¹ He had gained a foothold in the institutional framework of British India, however lowly. And as Ramanujan continued to appeal for recognition, and his friends passed that appeal onto higher and higher levels, the prerogative of judgment fell to the metropole and its agents. Hardy later commented on the limited help Ramanujan's Indian friends were able to offer him: "It is significant that, though Indians could befriend him, it was only the English who could get anything effective done."⁴¹² What is obscured in Hardy's framing is that those Indians were answerable to British superiors. The resources at the disposal of the latter were those of the British Empire and far superior. The highest levels of official British India as a matter of course turned to the metropole for final judgment. "Metropolitan England had symbolic value," historian Shompa Lahiri has noted, "it was the fount of all standards, power, justice, art, taste, culture and career advancement, as well as the seat of imperial government."⁴¹³ From the vantage point of Madras, it was the center of mathematical knowledge.

And well it might be, because despite Hardy's contention, it was not until Hardy became involved that "anything effective" could be done. Before Hardy's intervention, no one had the combination of expertise and authority necessary to do so. Ramanujan's direct superior, S. Narayana Iyer, another member of the Mathematical Society, was a staunch supporter although he frequently found himself struggling to keep up with Ramanujan in mathematical discussions.⁴¹⁴ He lobbied his own superior, Sir Francis Spring, chief engineer in charge of the Port Trust. Meanwhile, Ramachandra Rao also

⁴¹¹ Seshu Aiyar and Ramachandra Rao, "Notice," in *Collected Papers of Srinivasa Ramanujan*, xiv.

⁴¹² Hardy, *Ramanujan*, 6.

⁴¹³ Shompa Lahiri, *Indians in Britain: Anglo-Indian Encounters, Race and Identity, 1880-1930* (London; Portland, OR: Frank Cass, 2000), 35.

⁴¹⁴ Kanigel, *Man who Knew Infinity*, 98.

rallied his connections, and a chain of attempts to authenticate Ramanujan's work was set into motion.

When the best mathematical expertise in India was found unequal to the task of assessing Ramanujan's abilities, British India turned to the metropole. "I am writing to one of the leading mathematical professors at home about him and sending copies of some of Ramanujan's papers and results," C. L. T. Griffith, a professor at the Madras College of Engineering wrote.⁴¹⁵ He reported that the resident mathematics professor had told him that "very few people could follow or criticize the work."⁴¹⁶

On one occasion, Ramanujan was sent to J. F. Graham, Officiating Accountant-General in the Indian Civil Service, for validation purposes.⁴¹⁷ Graham's assessment of Ramanujan exemplified the cautious ambivalence Ramanujan so frequently encountered in this process:

He seems to have done a great deal of work in one particular branch of calculus and from the way he has done it he must have considerable mathematical aptitude. He has read no mathematics at all except calculus apparently, and it is possible his brains are akin to those of the calculating boy! [...] Whether he has the stuff of great mathematicians or not I do not know. He gave me the impression of having brains.⁴¹⁸

Graham vacillated between pronouncing Ramanujan's mathematical aptitude as "considerable" and then, raising doubts as to whether it might amount to little more than that of the idiot savant "calculating boy" in the very next sentence. Omnipresent was the suspicion of the latter.

⁴¹⁵ C. L. T. Griffith to Sir Francis Spring, 12 November 1912, in Ramanujan, *Ramanujan*, 12-13.

⁴¹⁶ C. L. T. Griffith to Sir Francis Spring, 12 November 1912, in Ramanujan, *Ramanujan*, 13.

⁴¹⁷ Graham himself held an M.A. in mathematics and mathematical physics from Trinity College in Dublin. Berndt and Rankin, eds., *Ramanujan*, 15.

⁴¹⁸ J. F. Graham to C. L. T. Griffith, 27 November 1912, in Ramanujan, *Ramanujan*, 14.

Even if Ramanujan was not a fraud, intent on deceiving them, British authorities were wary of taking on the responsibility of pronouncing him a genius—better to commit only to such safe platitudes as that of “the impression of having brains.” At the same time, a strain of condescension persisted that culminated in Graham’s final verdict. “His original work is an interesting development of work already done,” he reported to Griffith, “but interesting only to the purist.”⁴¹⁹ Later, in his first letter to Ramanujan, Hardy would categorize the results Ramanujan had sent him into three classes, depending on their varying importance.⁴²⁰ In contrast, Graham’s one-dimensional assessment suggests that he was incapable of a fine-grained evaluation of Ramanujan’s strengths and weaknesses. And yet he persisted in making this dismissive statement, couching his own limitations in terms of professed indifference.

The question, as Kanigel has put it, was that of a precise assessment of Ramanujan’s exceptionality: “Was Ramanujan a minor oddity who could be safely dismissed, or a prodigy demanding nurture and guidance?”⁴²¹ The answer—or rather, non-answer—that Graham offered at the close of his letter was to become a commonplace. “I am not the best qualified to judge,” he demurred.⁴²² Middlemast’s opinion would be of value. And in this way, Ramanujan was passed from one “expert” to the next.

A tension existed between a fear of ridicule and that of possibly passing over legitimate genius. “No one,” art critic René Ricard has argued, “wants to be part of a

⁴¹⁹ J. F. Graham to C. L. T. Griffith, 27 November 1912, in Ramanujan, *Ramanujan*, 14.

⁴²⁰ Hardy to Ramanujan, 8 February 1913, in Ramanujan, *Ramanujan*, 46.

⁴²¹ Kanigel, *Man who Knew Infinity*, 103.

⁴²² J. F. Graham to C. L. T. Griffith, 27 November 1912, in Ramanujan, *Ramanujan*, 14.

generation that ignores another van Gogh.”⁴²³ This was no less true in the world of early twentieth-century mathematics. Griffith’s vacillation within the space of a single letter is illustrative. Describing Ramanujan as “a most remarkable mathematician,” Griffith asked that he be “kept happily employed until something can be done to make use of his extraordinary gifts.”⁴²⁴ Despite the self-assured tone of this opening, Griffith proceeded to hedge his bets. “If there is any real genius in him,” he continued, “he will have to be provided with money for books and with leisure, but until I hear from home, I don’t feel sure that it is worth while spending much time or money on him.”⁴²⁵ In one and the same letter, Griffith went from calling Ramanujan “remarkable” and “extraordinary” to casting doubt on whether he was worth anyone’s time or money.

Key to Ramanujan’s fate was what one might “hear from home”—England. Griffith proposed to “[write] to one of the leading mathematical professors at home,” M.J.M. Hill of University College, London.⁴²⁶ In his reply, Hill pointed out some of the mistakes in Ramanujan’s results and referred Ramanujan to a particular book—“Bromwich’s Theory of Infinite Series”—and went so far as to specify Chapter XI as the section Ramanujan should read.⁴²⁷ Given the pains he took to provide the publication information (“Macmillan and Co., who have branches in Calcutta and Bombay”) as well as its price (“15/- net”) so that the book might more easily be procured for Ramanujan, Hill appears to have intended his advice as encouragement. Indeed, he wrote as much:

Many illustrious mathematicians of earlier days stumbled over these difficulties, so it is not surprising that Mr. Ramanujan, working by himself, has obtained erroneous results. I hope he will not be discouraged.

⁴²³ René Ricard, “The Radiant Child,” *Artforum* 20 (December 1981), 35-43.

⁴²⁴ C. L. T. Griffith to Sir Francis Spring, 12 November 1912, in Ramanujan, *Ramanujan*, 12.

⁴²⁵ C. L. T. Griffith to Sir Francis Spring, 12 November 1912, in Ramanujan, *Ramanujan*, 13.

⁴²⁶ C. L. T. Griffith to Sir Francis Spring, 12 November 1912, in Ramanujan, *Ramanujan*, 13.

⁴²⁷ M. J. M. Hill to C. L. T. Griffith, 7 December 1912, in Ramanujan, *Ramanujan*, 18.

If this book could be obtained for him, and he would work at it from the beginning, it would be much better for him than for those who are interested in him to spend money on printing his papers at the present time.⁴²⁸

At the same time, Hill's underscoring of "from the beginning" highlighted how far behind Ramanujan was compared to those who had access to current research and methods. Moreover, Hill appeared to impute to Ramanujan an overeagerness to publish. Instead of Ramanujan thus reaching beyond his intellectual means, Hill implied, it would better serve him to read systematically through this book. Hill's response was in fact the opposite of Hardy's inclination, who—despite the profound gaps in Ramanujan's knowledge—had found it "impossible to ask such a man to submit to systematic instruction."⁴²⁹ And ultimately, Hill's encouragement amounted to suggesting that Ramanujan read a book.

Meanwhile, in addition to those correspondences struck up by the widening web of Ramanujan's mathematical contacts, Ramanujan himself wrote to three well-known Cambridge mathematicians: H. F. Baker, E. W. Hobson, and G. H. Hardy. Nothing came of the letters Ramanujan sent out to the first two, but the third—Hardy—responded immediately and favorably. And it was not mere book recommendations that Hardy had in mind. Bertrand Russell's account illustrated how emphatically positive Hardy's response was compared to the rest. He related how he had "found Hardy, and Littlewood in a state of wild excitement, because they believe they have discovered a second Newton, a Hindu clerk in Madras on £20 a year."⁴³⁰ Not only did Hardy apparently "[think] quite wonderful" the results Ramanujan related, but he had also already written

⁴²⁸ M. J. M. Hill to C. L. T. Griffith, 7 December 1912, in Ramanujan, *Ramanujan*, 18, original emphasis.

⁴²⁹ Hardy, "Notice" in *Collected Papers*, xxx.

⁴³⁰ Bertrand Russell to Lady Ottoline Morrell, 2 February 1913, in Ramanujan, *Ramanujan*, 44.

to the Indian Office and “hope[d] to get the man here at once.”⁴³¹ Within a month after receiving Ramanujan’s first letter, Hardy was already making plans to bring him to Cambridge.

Even as these plans foundered for a year on Ramanujan’s initial refusal due to religious concerns about overseas travel, Hardy’s response effectively resolved Ramanujan’s long-time problem. Namely, hitherto in Ramanujan’s life, rules could not be circumvented despite the general sense that Ramanujan’s mathematical prowess was special. But now Ramanujan had been confirmed exceptional by the best of British mathematics, and Ramanujan consequently qualified as an exception. According to University of Madras rules, he was ineligible for a scholarship, which required a degree. With Hardy’s stamp of approval, however, Ramanujan was awarded a “special scholarship,” for which the “Regulations of the University do not at present provide.”⁴³² From then on out, the countenance of Hardy’s recognition sanctioned Ramanujan as an exception those rules that had formerly plagued him.

Ramanujan now had everything to which he had formerly aspired—mainly, the “leisure” to pursue mathematics. When Neville arrived in Madras and met with him, however, Ramanujan experienced first-hand the promise of access to the latest in mathematical research as embodied by Neville. For all Ramanujan as genius embodied romance to those around him, he himself is reported to have framed it in the less glamorous terms of diligence. A friend related an anecdote from Ramanujan’s Kumbakonam days when he had brought up the issue of genius. In response, Ramanujan allegedly directed the friend’s attention to his elbow, dirtied from wiping out calculations

⁴³¹ Bertrand Russell to Lady Ottoline Morrell, 2 February 1913, in Ramanujan, *Ramanujan*, 44.

⁴³² Francis Dewsbury to the Educational Department, 5 April 1913, in Ramanujan, *Ramanujan*, 78.

on his slate every few minutes: “My elbow has become rough and black in making a genius of me!”⁴³³ The anecdote treads the well-worn narrative grooves that characterize the genre of genius origin stories. But it highlights how that which others proclaimed his “genius” was the stuff of Ramanujan’s everyday. Instead, it was perhaps the intellectual riches of Cambridge, a glimpse of which Neville offered, that held out something like the promise of romance for Ramanujan.

While the “mainstream of colonialism” lay in British expansion into India, the nineteenth century had seen an increase in Indians heading to the imperial center to improve their lot in life.⁴³⁴ “Especially from the 1830s,” historian Michael Fisher observes, “growing numbers of [Indian] men decided that visiting Britain would enhance their careers, further their education, or obtain them profits, titles, or justice.”⁴³⁵ In a sense, Ramanujan sought all of these things. Both material and intellectual factors came into play when those in the colony aspired to the venerable educational institutions in Britain. On a practical level, a successful stint at Cambridge could provide Ramanujan with the credentials necessary for a permanent university post rather than his current “special” scholarship of two years.

Lahiri has noted, however, that in many cases intellectual considerations figured as prominently as career advancement in the motivation that informed an Indian student’s decision to study in Britain.⁴³⁶ The imperial center held out for some in the peripheries a romantic vision of intellectual fulfillment in hallowed halls of learning. Much as Britons sought out adventure in the colonies, a countervailing stream of Indians aspired to an

⁴³³ Ranganathan, *Ramanujan*, 25.

⁴³⁴ Michael Fisher, *Counterflows to Colonialism: Indian Travellers and Settlers in Britain, 1600-1857* (Delhi: Permanent Black: Distributed by Orient Longman, 2004), 1.

⁴³⁵ Fisher, *Counterflows*, 339.

educational experience that was something more than their own brutally careerist educational system in which the “university” was foremost an examining body.⁴³⁷ And in the wake of Ramanujan’s association with Cambridge, he became part of the romance for those who followed. A fellow Indian student, arriving on the heels of Ramanujan, reminisced how “it was a thrill to me to discover on reaching Cambridge in July 1915 that I was going to be a contemporary of Ramanujan at this famous seat of learning.”⁴³⁸

In reality, however, the majority of Indian students found their expectations for “free comradeship with Englishmen” in intellectual discourse sorely disappointed.⁴³⁹ In having Hardy as a tireless supporter and mentor, Ramanujan could count himself an exception. Hardy met with him almost every day, offering Ramanujan all the intellectual fulfillment he might require.⁴⁴⁰ Furthermore, Hardy went out of his way to secure for Ramanujan the accolades he felt the latter deserved. Writing to J. J. Thomson, the President of the Royal Society at the time, regarding Ramanujan’s candidacy in early 1918 in the midst of Ramanujan’s illness, Hardy urged: “It would make him [Ramanujan] feel that he was a success, and that it was worth while going on trying.”⁴⁴¹ Ramanujan’s ill health added an urgency, but Hardy’s basic position was that “there is [no] question of the strength of his [Ramanujan’s] claim.”⁴⁴² Not only did Hardy steadfastly believe in Ramanujan’s worth as a mathematician, but he cared that Ramanujan himself feel successful. Whatever ambitions impelled Ramanujan to Cambridge, he could scarcely

⁴³⁶ Lahiri, *Indians*, 32.

⁴³⁷ Kanigel, *Man who Knew Infinity*, 52.

⁴³⁸ Ranganathan, *Ramanujan*, 78.

⁴³⁹ Lahiri, *Indians*, 75.

⁴⁴⁰ Hardy, *Ramanujan*, 2.

⁴⁴¹ Hardy to J. J. Thomson, [before 21 February 1918], in Ramanujan, *Ramanujan*, 153.

⁴⁴² Hardy to J. J. Thomson, [before 21 February 1918], in Ramanujan, *Ramanujan*, 152. Hardy’s sense of urgency may have been compounded by Ramanujan’s suicide attempt, which occurred roughly around this time, but this letter is undated, making it difficult to say for sure.

have imagined them to take the form of a double achievement of Fellowships of the Royal Society and Trinity College. None of this would have been possible, however, without Hardy. Granted, it was the strength of Ramanujan's work that recruited Hardy, and as such, Ramanujan was ultimately responsible for his own success.

But Hardy was the one who strategized against opposition to Ramanujan's election in Trinity by putting Ramanujan up for election to the Royal Society earlier than originally intended in anticipation of resistance.⁴⁴³ "R. V. Laurence had been saying," Littlewood later wrote, "that he wasn't going to have a black man as Fellow."⁴⁴⁴ According to Littlewood, the plan had been to override such opposition on the grounds that "[y]ou can't reject an F.R.S."⁴⁴⁵ In an ideal world, Ramanujan's work in and of itself would have been sufficient. Reality, however, necessitated Hardy's conversance with the institutional ropes of the British academy and some well-organized political maneuvering. Ramanujan's was an academic Cinderella story in which Hardy played the role of fairy godmother; he was integral to the essence of Ramanujan's life of the mind at Cambridge as well as the visible fruits of that labor. That Cinderella analogy, however, extended into another crucial aspect of Ramanujan's reality at Trinity—in this case, one in which Hardy could be of no help.

"To preserve my brains I want food"

For Ramanujan, intellectual concerns were sometimes expressed in the most literal terms of survival. In his second letter to Hardy, he wrote:

⁴⁴³ On the other hand, Hardy realized that his unpopularity as a pacifist was part of the negative reaction against Ramanujan, who was clearly associated with him.

⁴⁴⁴ Littlewood, *Littlewood's Miscellany*, 136.

⁴⁴⁵ Littlewood, *Littlewood's Miscellany*, 136.

So what I now want at this stage is for eminent professors like you to recognize that there is some worth in me. I am already a half starving man. To preserve my brains I want food and this is now my first consideration.⁴⁴⁶

Here Ramanujan bluntly drew the connection between his bodily survival and Hardy's recognition of his worth as a mathematician. Mathematics had become all-consuming to the point that it interfered with Ramanujan being able to provide for himself and his family. It was in order to "preserve [his] brains"—necessary for mathematics—that Ramanujan brought up the question of his need of "food." All he felt himself suited for was mathematics, but the structures of support available for scholarly endeavors in colonial India were such that someone like Ramanujan easily fell through the cracks. He barely made ends meet, and the question of food was of the first order.

Ironically, food became Ramanujan's primary problem in England. The first of his surviving letters back to India, dated roughly two months after his arrival, opens with an apology to his friend for the delay in commencing correspondence.⁴⁴⁷ "Till now I did not feel comfortable," Ramanujan explained, "and I would often think why I had come here."⁴⁴⁸ And the reason for this profound questioning of his decision, he revealed, was "due to the difficulty of getting proper food."⁴⁴⁹ At this point, Ramanujan "determined to cook one or two things myself and have written to my native place to send some necessary things for it."⁴⁵⁰ Ramanujan's subsequent correspondence is peppered with references to this issue of procuring appropriate food. As a Brahmin, he was a strict

⁴⁴⁶ Ramanujan to Hardy, Madras Port Trust Office Accounts Department, 27 February 1913, in Ramanujan, *Ramanujan*, 54.

⁴⁴⁷ Ramanujan to R. Krishna Rao, Trinity College, 11 June 1914, in Ramanujan, *Ramanujan*, 109. R. Krishna Rao was the nephew of Ramanujan's benefactor R. Ramachandra Rao.

⁴⁴⁸ Ramanujan to R. Krishna Rao, Trinity College, 11 June 1914, in Ramanujan, *Ramanujan*, 109.

⁴⁴⁹ Ramanujan to R. Krishna Rao, Trinity College, 11 June 1914, in Ramanujan, *Ramanujan*, 109.

⁴⁵⁰ Ramanujan to R. Krishna Rao, Trinity College, 11 June 1914, in Ramanujan, *Ramanujan*, 109.

vegetarian, and the Madrasi palate was characterized by a distinct preference for spicy foods.⁴⁵¹ By all accounts, Ramanujan was a picky eater.⁴⁵²

In war-time England, where food was rationed and Indian edibles hard to come by outside London, this posed a real challenge.

Even as Cambridge promised to free Ramanujan from the protracted cycle of seeking employment which had previously dominated his life, it reduced him to a hitherto unfamiliar Cinderella-type domestic drudgery in his ongoing quest for acceptable food. “I am living within the college premises and am cooking my food myself,” Ramanujan updated his friend in another two months’ time, “though it takes so much of my time.”⁴⁵³ In a subsequent letter, Ramanujan went into further detail about his dietary situation, recruiting his friend to his cause:

As for my food I have no other go but to cook myself. There is no place very near this college where I can get vegetarian food and I can’t go out of the college. I am getting some of the Indian things here. I will be very much obliged if you can send me some tamarind (seeds being removed) and good cocoanut oil by postal parcel through the cheapest route. Cocoanut oil is the best as it will be solid owing to cold and won’t be spoiled. I can use lemons instead of tamarind if they are sour; but unfortunately the lemons here are not sour like our lemons and moreover they are not properly lemons at all but they are sweet Narthangaai. I can receive the things only in proper order if you send me by postal parcel, otherwise it will be very difficult for me to go to London harbour to receive the things. I beg to be excused for the trouble.⁴⁵⁴

⁴⁵¹ Rankin, “Ramanujan As a Patient,” 44.

⁴⁵² Within the range of vegetarianism that Indians engaged in, the strictness of Ramanujan’s adherence was a point that repeatedly came up in his contemporaries’ remembrances. Another Cambridge classmate, C. D. Deshmukh, former Finance Minister of the Indian government, related how Ramanujan’s lack of faith in vegetarian food from the college kitchen induced him to cook his own food. He related an anecdote in which Ramanujan had consumed at a lodging house in London some ovaltine, which he had been assured was vegetarian, only to learn from the tin that it contained some powdered egg; according to the landlady, Ramanujan had been so upset that he had packed immediately and left for Liverpool station. Ranganathan, *Ramanujan*, 78-79.

⁴⁵³ Ramanujan to R. Krishna Rao, Trinity College, 7 August 1914, in Ramanujan, *Ramanujan*, 109.

⁴⁵⁴ Ramanujan to R. Krishna Rao, Trinity College, 13 November 1914, in Ramanujan, *Ramanujan*, 112, original emphasis. Narthangaai refers to a tangy citrus fruit similar to grapefruit, dried in the sun and salted, then stored in jars and used as a pickle for rice with yogurt.

Ramanujan's solicitously specific directions attest to the amount of time and thought he put into the enterprise of feeding himself. In Trinity, Ramanujan never dined in hall; he refused to eat food prepared by the college kitchens because even ostensibly vegetarian fare might not meet his own exacting standards.⁴⁵⁵ Such fastidiousness—as implied by Ramanujan's objections here to substituting Narthangaai for tamarind—led him to resort to a restricted diet when need be rather than compromise his dietary principles. By January the following year, Ramanujan was writing to another friend that “[n]ow as well as in future I am not in need of anything as I have gained a perfect control over my taste and can live on mere rice with a little salt and lemon juice for an indefinite time.”⁴⁵⁶

Given the extremity of this strategy, an alternative might have been the boarding houses that catered to Indian students and that Ramanujan himself recommended to those preparing to come to Cambridge. Not only was it cheaper, but there were lodgings where “excellent vegetarian food” available, as in the case of a friend from Pachaiyappa's College.⁴⁵⁷ As a Scholar, however, Ramanujan was expected to live in the College.⁴⁵⁸ Besides, “it will be inconvenient for the professors and myself if I stay outside the college,” he explained.⁴⁵⁹ In Cambridge, Ramanujan's mobility was limited compared to that in India in which a familiarity with and easy access to railways had allowed him, even at seventeen, to flee hundreds of miles away from home. Indeed, he admonished his friend strenuously to send food items from home by parcel so as to avoid what he

⁴⁵⁵ Rankin, “Ramanujan As a Patient,” 45.

⁴⁵⁶ Ramanujan to S. M. Subramanian, Trinity College, 7 January 1915, in Ramanujan, *Ramanujan*, 125.

⁴⁵⁷ Ramanujan to E. Vinayaka Row, Trinity College, 11 June 1914, in Ramanujan, *Ramanujan*, 114. Ramanujan here notes that expenses at the lodging houses were paid weekly, unlike the college.

⁴⁵⁸ Berndt and Rankin, eds., *Ramanujan*, 115.

⁴⁵⁹ Ramanujan to R. Krishna Rao, Trinity College, 11 June 1914, in Ramanujan, *Ramanujan*, 109.

intimated was an arduous trip to London harbor. Staying in College was in some ways convenient for Ramanujan, if less than ideal for his state of nutrition.

Furthermore, the possible inconvenience for professors tipped the scales in favor of College residence. In many ways, Ramanujan was an exception to the rules at Trinity. He was admitted as a Research Student in June of 1914. As a rule, Research Students were required to have graduated from a university.⁴⁶⁰ In exceptional cases—as for Ramanujan—they could be admitted on the basis of evidence of equivalent qualifications. Ramanujan’s admission had been obtained largely through Hardy’s evaluation of his work. Even if Hardy did not think of Ramanujan as an object of patronage—a subaltern client—Ramanujan may have felt to some degree beholden to Hardy. And separate from any potential self-consciousness about his colonial status, Ramanujan had arrived as a guest at Trinity. He had found his hosts—“Mr. Hardy, Mr. Neville and others here”—“very unassuming, kind and obliging.”⁴⁶¹ Ramanujan may have felt inclined to be obliging in his own way, even if it was inconvenient for him. “He had no duties and could do as he pleased,” Hardy later wrote of Ramanujan, “he wished indeed to qualify for a Cambridge degree as a research student, but this was a formality.”⁴⁶² His past failures to do so in India caused Ramanujan to insist on earning a degree, although it was not required of him. Similarly, while in theory he may have had no set duties, as evidenced by the issue of housing, Ramanujan did not necessarily “do as he pleased.”

Cambridge provided Ramanujan with resources unavailable to him in Madras and enabled a fulfillment of his mathematical potential impossible at home. But even as it allowed Ramanujan to immerse himself in mathematics, Cambridge also restricted him to

⁴⁶⁰ Berndt and Rankin, eds., *Ramanujan*, 137.

⁴⁶¹ Ramanujan to R. Krishna Rao, Trinity College, 11 June 1914, in Ramanujan, *Ramanujan*, 109.

mathematics. Life at Trinity for Ramanujan was structured more exclusively around mathematics than it was for even the most dedicated of Fellows—such as Hardy. In Madras, his wife now a part of his household, which also included at least his mother and his maternal grandmother, Ramanujan had his family to curb such impulses as that which found him subsisting on “rice with a little salt and lemon juice.” Not only did his wife and mother provide the domestic labor that Ramanujan himself now struggled with, but they would also have reminded him of the rhythms of life outside mathematics.

Hardy took part in those rhythms. Once a Fellow, Hardy’s daily routine did not vary throughout his life, beginning with a perusal of *The Times* over breakfast—cricket scores first—then unless he had a lecture, his own math from about nine to one before lunch in hall.⁴⁶³ He played tennis or walked to Fenner’s Cricket Ground to watch games in the summer and strolled back to his rooms in the late afternoon. Hardy’s day closed with another meal in hall, where he enjoyed a glass of wine. Apart from the math and possibly the walking, none of these were activities in which Ramanujan would partake. A college friend described Ramanujan as “fair and plumpy,” noting he had no recollection of “his taking to games worth mentioning.”⁴⁶⁴ Ramanujan was decidedly sedentary. He played no games and never dined in hall. Even though Ramanujan liked Neville, there was no context in which their paths might cross except mathematics. And mathematically “far away” as their specializations were, as Ramanujan put it, there was little occasion for them to meet.

For Hardy, life at Trinity provided everything—including mathematics. For Ramanujan, there was not much else. His letters dealt mainly in math and food. He

⁴⁶² Hardy, “Notice,” xxx.

⁴⁶³ Snow, foreword to *A Mathematician’s Apology*, 31.

dutifully reported to friends on the progress of his work—attending lectures, have written two articles, “Mr. Hardy is going to London today to read a paper on one of my results before the London Math. Society.”⁴⁶⁵ In his first summer in Cambridge, the college closed in mid-June, leaving “nobody here except Prof. Hardy as the examinations are all over and all have gone outside” and Ramanujan with “nothing to write to you at present.”⁴⁶⁶ In November, he again apologized for there being “nothing to write to you.”⁴⁶⁷ “Hereafter I may tell you something about my progress,” he continued, “as the professors here are somewhat reviving their lost interest in Mathematics.” For Ramanujan, “something” invariably circled back to mathematics.

And that was the priority for Ramanujan. But his relative isolation in comparison to those of his Indian friends congregated at boarding houses provisioned with vegetarian food had consequences beyond that of convenience and economy. Ramanujan’s access to the company of those who faced similar challenges adrift in a foreign culture was more limited than it might otherwise have been. Ramanujan left behind no explicit articulations of that experience, but compatriots such as the nationalist politician Mohandas Gandhi provided ample testimony. Despite his extensive involvement in political circles in the Indian student community, Gandhi still wrote of his deep sense of alienation: “Everything was strange—the people, their ways, and even their dwellings.”⁴⁶⁸ “I was a complete novice in the matter of English etiquette,” he continued, “and continually had to be on my guard.”⁴⁶⁹

⁴⁶⁴ Ranganathan, *Ramanujan*, 72.

⁴⁶⁵ Ramanujan to R. Krishna Rao, Trinity College, 11 June 1914, in Ramanujan, *Ramanujan*, 109.

⁴⁶⁶ Ramanujan to R. Krishna Rao, Trinity College, 7 August 1914, in Ramanujan, *Ramanujan*, 111.

⁴⁶⁷ Ramanujan to R. Krishna Rao, Trinity College, 13 November 1914, in Ramanujan, *Ramanujan*, 112.

⁴⁶⁸ Mohandas K. Gandhi, *Autobiography: The Story of My Experiments with Truth* (Public Affairs Press, 1948. Reprint. New York: Dover, 1983), 40.

⁴⁶⁹ Gandhi, *Autobiography*, 40.

For Ramanujan, the mere maintenance of a bodily presence in this new space required an ongoing vigilance as it pertained to his vegetarianism. And everything was strange. Prasanta Chandra Mahalanobis, noted statistician and a friend of Edward John Thompson in India, traced his own friendship with Ramanujan an episode from not long after Ramanujan arrived in Cambridge. Characterizing its genesis as having “c[o]me about in a somewhat strange way,” Mahalanobis related going to see Ramanujan in his room in Trinity to find the latter “sitting very near the fire.”⁴⁷⁰ Upon inquiry, Ramanujan told Mahalanobis that he was so cold that he slept in an overcoat and shawl. Mahalanobis discovered that not knowing to turn back the blankets and get under them, Ramanujan had been sleeping under only the linen cover. So Mahalanobis showed him how. “He was extremely touched,” Mahalanobis recounted, “I believe this was the reason why he was so kind to me.”⁴⁷¹ Flashes of such sympathetic feeling dot the remembrances of Ramanujan’s contemporaries but are less evident in Ramanujan’s own letters. This is partly an issue of genre; the former are commemorative reminiscences, whereas the latter remain testaments of the everyday. And on an everyday basis, affect for Ramanujan registered predominantly as bodily discomfort.

Recent approaches to the history of emotion offer a framework in which feeling is understood as practices that emanate from bodies conditioned in socially and historically specific ways.⁴⁷² This view works against the dilemma posed by conceptualizing

⁴⁷⁰ Ranganathan, *Ramanujan*, 81.

⁴⁷¹ Ranganathan, *Ramanujan*, 81.

⁴⁷² The value of practice theory in the historical study of emotions has been forwarded in, among others, Monique Scheer, “Are Emotions a Kind of Practice (And Is That What Makes Them Have a History?) A Bourdieuan Approach to Understanding Emotion,” *History and Theory* 51, no. 2 (May 1, 2012): 193-220; William M. Reddy, *The Navigation of Feeling: A Framework for the History of Emotions* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001); Gesa Stedman, *Stemming the Torrent: Expression and Control in the Victorian Discourses on Emotion, 1830-1872* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2002); Eva Illouz, *Cold Intimacies: The Making of Emotional Capitalism* (Cambridge, UK; Malden, MA: Polity Press, 2007).

experience and expression as a dichotomy in which the former is essentially inaccessible, while the latter is viewed as an imperfect reflection subject to external norms or “discourse.” In this framing, “real” emotions inhere in a transhistorical body, and historical study must limit itself to the external half of the phenomenon.⁴⁷³ What it elides is the extent to which a sense of interior self depended on the foundation of maintaining a bodily presence in the world. This was effortless for Hardy, who had been socialized early on to college life. For Ramanujan, however, even the most mundane routine—such as getting into bed—potentially posed a serious challenge. Compounded later by his failing health, Ramanujan’s affective life was dominated by more basic issues of physical wellness. Responding to Hardy’s telegram informing him of his election as a Trinity Fellow, Ramanujan segued seamlessly from “heartfelt thanks” to the discussion of a delayed tooth extraction and its possible connection to “feverish attacks” and “rheumatic pain.”⁴⁷⁴

It is in part the seemingly superficial nature of these exchanges—apart from the mathematics—that leads Kanigel to conclude that the friendship was never intimate.⁴⁷⁵ As evidence, he puts forward Hardy’s apparent ignorance with regard to the personal side of Ramanujan’s life.⁴⁷⁶ If Hardy and Ramanujan were truly intimate, Kanigel suggests, Ramanujan would have confided in Hardy much earlier about his family troubles in 1917. And Hardy would have known better than to insist in his obituary of Ramanujan—against all other accounts—that the latter’s religious beliefs were a mere matter of ritual

⁴⁷³ Representative of this view is Peter Stearns and Carol Z. Stearns, “Emotionology: Clarifying the History of Emotions and Emotional Standards,” *American Historical Review* 90 (1985), 813-836.

⁴⁷⁴ Ramanujan to Hardy, Fitzroy House, 16 Fitzroy Square, London, 11 October 1918, in Ramanujan, *Ramanujan*, 192.

⁴⁷⁵ Kanigel, *Man who Knew Infinity*, 144.

⁴⁷⁶ Kanigel, *Man who Knew Infinity*, 275-279.

observance. According to Kanigel, because “Hardy never really *knew* Ramanujan” that he “could be no real buffer against the profound loneliness Ramanujan felt in England.”⁴⁷⁷ Kanigel in no way holds Hardy responsible for Ramanujan’s suicide attempt. And yet the implication remains that had Hardy been able to more effectively alleviate Ramanujan’s isolation, Ramanujan may not have been brought down to the depths that impelled him to leap onto those railway tracks in early 1918.

First, this line of reasoning assumes that people who commit suicide are unremittingly depressed, thereby downplaying how impulsiveness plays a large role in many cases.⁴⁷⁸ Furthermore, it defines intimacy universally and transhistorically. Historian Barbara Rosenwein has suggested that emotions can be understood as norms within an emotional community.⁴⁷⁹ A willingness to share personal details may be one standard of intimacy, but designating it as a golden standard belies the range of norms for different cultural and historical communities.

It also fails to take seriously the extent to which mathematics comprised the substance of affinity between Hardy and Ramanujan. “I have managed to find a way of summing the ‘partition series,’” Hardy wrote to Ramanujan in 1918 during one of Ramanujan’s spells away from Trinity due to illness.⁴⁸⁰ “I wish you were better and back here,” he continued, “there would be some splendid problems to work at.”⁴⁸¹ This was

⁴⁷⁷ Kanigel, *Man who Knew Infinity*, 289.

⁴⁷⁸ R. V. G. Clarke, *Suicide: Closing the Exits* (New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 2013), xi. For a review of the abundant evidence that suggests many suicidal acts are impulsive, see David Lester, “Suicide and Opportunity: Implications for the Rationality of Suicide,” in *The Reasoning Criminologist: Essays in Honour of Ronald V. Clarke*, by R. V. G. Clarke, Nick Tilley, and Graham Farrell (New York, NY: Routledge, 2012), 160–171.

⁴⁷⁹ Barbara H. Rosenwein, “Thinking Historically about Medieval Emotions,” *History Compass* 8, no. 8 (August 4, 2010): 831–833.

⁴⁸⁰ Hardy to Ramanujan, Trinity College, Cambridge, 6 February 1918, in Ramanujan, *Ramanujan*, 151.

⁴⁸¹ Hardy to Ramanujan, Trinity College, Cambridge, 6 February 1918, in Ramanujan, *Ramanujan*, 151.

effusive for the normally undemonstrative Hardy.⁴⁸² But if there was anything that could inspire intensity in Hardy—apart from the particular friendships to which Snow alluded—it was mathematics. Here, Hardy’s enthusiasm is evident, and his wish for Ramanujan’s company is palpable. He worried about Ramanujan’s health, but he could not refrain from adding that Ramanujan still “might be able to think about these things a little: they are very exciting.”⁴⁸³ Mahalanobis later recorded a story he heard from his mathematics tutor—a Mr. Arthur Berry—from not long after Ramanujan’s arrival at Cambridge that conveys a similar sense of irrepressible eagerness on Ramanujan’s part. Inquiring whether Mahalanobis had met his “wonderful countryman” yet, Berry told him of a class during which he had worked out some formulae on the blackboard.⁴⁸⁴ Finding Ramanujan “beaming and [...] greatly excited,” Berry prompted Ramanujan as to whether he wanted to say something.⁴⁸⁵ Unable to contain himself, Ramanujan walked up to the blackboard to jot down results that Berry had yet to prove.

Such traces of excitement are harder to find in Ramanujan’s own writing. Ill as he was, the extra-mathematical commentary in Ramanujan’s later letters to Hardy was less ebullient. Instead, it demonstrated a level of comfort that had developed over the four years he had been in England. Ramanujan now complained to Hardy:

In the beginning I was told that I could not possibly have any except the welcome fire I had for an hour or two when I entered this place. After a fortnight of stay they told me that they received a letter from you about one and promised me fire on those days in which I do some serious mathematical work. That day hasn’t come yet and I am left in this

⁴⁸² Snow, foreword to *A Mathematician’s Apology*, 26.

⁴⁸³ Hardy to Ramanujan, Trinity College, Cambridge, 6 February 1918, in Ramanujan, *Ramanujan*, 151. Kanigel too notes the tension between what appeared to be Hardy’s zeal for the work and his awareness that he should not be encouraging Ramanujan. Kanigel, *Man who Knew Infinity*, 254-256.

⁴⁸⁴ Ranganathan, *Ramanujan*, 80.

⁴⁸⁵ Ranganathan, *Ramanujan*, 80.

dreadfully cold open room. Even if I do any serious mathematics in future I am not going to ask them for fire on that day.

The bath rooms are nice and warm. I shall go to the bath room with pen and paper every day for about an hour or so and send you two or three papers very soon.⁴⁸⁶

The promise of fire premised on mathematical work is troubling, evocative as it is of the specter of colonial exploitation.⁴⁸⁷ But the conspiratorial tone of Ramanujan's plan to take to the baths suggests that he understood the condition as originating from the facility staff rather than Hardy. As usual, Hardy had apparently tried to play the role of advocate, although the lack of results seem to indicate he had little say in the matter. In this formulation, Ramanujan and Hardy were co-conspirators; the plot was for Ramanujan to do math in as warm an environment as possible in the face of the hospital personnel's refusal to furnish the latter with a fire. At the same time, Ramanujan's insistence on working in the bathroom suggested a compulsion to work that Hardy may have unintentionally exacerbated.

As such, Hardy may not have been the most healthy influence on Ramanujan. But much as Ramanujan's impulsive leap onto the tracks could not be tied to a single motivating factor, there was no easy fix to the amalgamation of circumstances that contributed to Ramanujan's low spirits. The war made obtaining vegetarian fare increasingly difficult, and Ramanujan was ill, isolated and uncomfortable in a series of hospitals and sanatoriums. He had recently been rejected for a Trinity Fellowship. Would the impact of all this have been alleviated if Hardy and Ramanujan's interactions fell

⁴⁸⁶ Ramanujan to Hardy, Matlock, [undated], in Ramanujan, *Ramanujan*, 175.

⁴⁸⁷ Kanigel's point that Hardy's eagerness for the mathematical work—even when Ramanujan was unwell and despite his concern for his friend's health—probably did not help matters when it came to Ramanujan's tendency to neglect his health is well taken. After all, as Kanigel notes, even without Hardy's prompting, "Ramanujan, sick and in the hospital, was apologizing to Hardy for having failed to do more mathematics!" Kanigel, *Man who Knew Infinity*, 255.

more in line with present-day Western conceptions of intimacy—if they discussed family and introspective topics that rarely came up in Ramanujan’s personal letters?

To suggest so posits the issue as one of general loneliness. The larger problem for Ramanujan, however, was that Cambridge could not provide the same ideally supportive environment that it did for Hardy. Ramanujan had different needs—some of them basic matters of bodily survival. College life as it was structured at Trinity provided Hardy with the freedom of a range of interests and activities, while Ramanujan was restricted to mathematics. This problem of structure could not be solved by Hardy somehow acting as everything for Ramanujan.

In the kaleidoscopic collection of images excavated from contemporaries at Cambridge after his death, however, happier snippets emerge. In part, these may have been informed by hagiographical impulses. By the time of his death, Ramanujan was already well-known in India for his mathematical achievements. But it was apparently important to his classmates to underscore his personable traits.⁴⁸⁸ K. Ananda Rao, a beneficiary of Ramanujan’s advisory missives, recalled seeing Ramanujan often while he was at Cambridge.⁴⁸⁹ Further, he made note of Ramanujan’s popularity with Indian students and how “he had also many English friends with whom he moved freely.”⁴⁹⁰

The personal picture Mahalanobis drew was more fine-grained, depicting Ramanujan as

⁴⁸⁸ The following anecdotes are contributions to what was conceived as a popular biography that “largely concerns itself with the human aspect” of Ramanujan’s life. Ranganathan, *Ramanujan*, 83. As a junior member of the Department of Mathematics, Ranganathan had prepared a draft of the biographical account by P. V. Seshu Aiyar and R. Ramachandra Rao published in Ramanujan’s *Collected Papers*.

⁴⁸⁹ Ranganathan, *Ramanujan*, 76.

⁴⁹⁰ Ranganathan, *Ramanujan*, 77. Specific accounts of the latter, however, are infrequent. Mahalanobis recounted one of the few stories that involved an Englishman identified by name—“Mr. Arthur Berry, Tutor in Mathematics of King’s College”—rather than the English in abstract; Berry had told Mahalanobis of a class he attended with “your wonderful countryman, Ramanujan” in Ranganathan, *Ramanujan*, 80.

“shy and quiet” but of “dignified bearing” and “pleasant manners.”⁴⁹¹ Mahalanobis reported him to be not much of a talker, preferring to listen; but in smaller groups, Ramanujan might enthusiastically expound on philosophical questions and other subjects of interest, which included psychic research among other things.⁴⁹² Mahalanobis was privy to this side of Ramanujan on their long walks on Sunday mornings.⁴⁹³ And while the war in many ways signified deprivation, one contemporary of Ramanujan pointed out a social compensation. Due to the greatly reduced number of students at Cambridge, it was much easier for those in different colleges to get to know one another; this was even more the case for Indian students.⁴⁹⁴ The same friend told of Sunday meals that Ramanujan cooked himself—“quite delicious”—at which the host regaled those gathered with mathematical puzzles, taking precautions that these were not beyond the grasp of non-mathematical friends.⁴⁹⁵

These vignettes exist in tension with those that hint at the hardships and unfamiliarity of life away from home. A friend recalled that he often saw Ramanujan at tea parties and social gatherings, at which Ramanujan, “of course, rigidly adhered to his vegetarian habits.”⁴⁹⁶ The statement encapsulates how these opposing elements of experience coexisted. Even when Ramanujan partook in social life in the college, an undercurrent of vigilance ran through it. And then there were those times of isolation for which no witnesses existed. A fleeting observation located Ramanujan during vacations mostly in a Cambridge even emptier than the wartime “ghost of its normal self” it was

⁴⁹¹ Ranganathan, *Ramanujan*, 83.

⁴⁹² Ranganathan, *Ramanujan*, 83, 77.

⁴⁹³ Ranganathan, *Ramanujan*, 81.

⁴⁹⁴ Ranganathan, *Ramanujan*, 78.

⁴⁹⁵ Ranganathan, *Ramanujan*, 78-79.

⁴⁹⁶ Ranganathan, *Ramanujan*, 78.

noted to be during term in those years.⁴⁹⁷ And the flip side of weekend meals with friends was the rest of the week during which it was easy to imagine Ramanujan as some did “cooking vegetables rather miserably in a frying pan in his own room” when he was not disciplining himself to survive on little more than plain rice.⁴⁹⁸ Ramanujan’s experience in England spanned such disparate points as the heights of intellectual gratification, the closeness particular to an expatriate community, and the loneliness that persisted despite moments of relief. After the onset of his illness, however, Ramanujan spent most of his time in the even greater isolation of a series of medical institutions. And thus the balance of his experience may have tipped irrevocably downwards.

Hardy’s sanguine assessment that Ramanujan, upon his arrival in Cambridge, was “now, for the first time in his life, in a really comfortable position” and thus able to “devote himself to his researches without anxiety” reflected Hardy’s blinkered view of Ramanujan’s life in England.⁴⁹⁹ Focusing exclusively on the economic necessity that had threatened Ramanujan’s commitment to mathematics, Hardy glossed over the new complications that life away from home posed for Ramanujan. In part, this was because Hardy himself could not conceive of any other home than that of the college.

“A Fellowship of Trinity”

The world of Cambridge into which Hardy drew Ramanujan not only served as an all-inclusive support system but also provided the foundation from which his mathematical endeavors had first developed as a creative pursuit. On the most basic level,

⁴⁹⁷ Ranganathan, *Ramanujan*, 76, 78.

⁴⁹⁸ Snow, foreword to *A Mathematician’s Apology*, 35. A friend noted that Ramanujan’s room had electricity and a gas stove. Ranganathan, *Ramanujan*, 76.

⁴⁹⁹ Hardy, *Collected Papers*, 714.

college life took care of material infrastructure of life that posed such a challenge to Ramanujan. For Hardy, it also provided a larger intellectual community of friendship, the shape of which was both informed by and defined against a broader public school culture. Hardy harbored no fondness for his Winchester years immediately preceding Cambridge. But he acknowledged the value of the rigorous schooling. And the experience of the tension between an emphasis on community in public schools and the divisions underlying it—testimonies of which littered contemporary accounts of public school life—no doubt informed Hardy’s approach to community and its inevitable frictions. A key example of the latter lay in the strains that the first World War imposed on collegiality as evidenced in the controversy around Ramanujan’s Trinity Fellowship election. Cambridge was not devoid of such divisions. But Hardy’s background enabled him to weather these and set up a world that still managed to be ideally supportive of his creative passion for math.

Unlike Ramanujan, Hardy’s mathematical pursuits in Trinity were structured by a consummate professionalism and a more densely woven social web. “I owed my friendship with Hardy,” Snow wrote, “to having wasted a disproportionate amount of my youth on cricket.”⁵⁰⁰ But what Snow here referred to in the shorthand of cricket gestured to an entire world of meanings, assumptions, and conventions that he and Hardy shared, while Ramanujan did not. Hardy’s immersion in this world was such that it limited his ability to imagine beyond its bounds. The partial picture he painted of Ramanujan’s situation was a product of that bias. While Ramanujan’s economic destitution in India was something Hardy could fathom, the hardships inherent in college life for Ramanujan were obscured by the fact that Hardy’s interactions with Ramanujan were primarily

mathematical—the one aspect of the latter’s life in Trinity that thrived. It was not that Hardy’s own experience of Trinity was uniformly positive; his decision to leave for Oxford in 1919 was partly influenced by wartime internal hostilities. But between his mathematical passion and professional priorities, Hardy merely relocated within the larger sphere of Oxbridge.⁵⁰¹ And in 1931, Hardy returned to Trinity, where he could stay in college until the very end.⁵⁰²

Hardy attributed Trinity with the inception of his vocational identity. While Hardy wrote that he never imagined himself as anything but a mathematician, he chronicled the evolution of that identification through distinct stages of development.⁵⁰³ “I do not remember having felt, as a boy,” Hardy wrote, “any *passion* for mathematics.”⁵⁰⁴ At its inception, it had appealed to Hardy’s competitive side more than anything else. Mathematics registered primarily as “examinations and scholarships.”⁵⁰⁵ “I wanted to beat other boys,” he recounted, “and this seemed to be the way in which I could do so most decisively.”

Hardy pinpointed the moment that these modest ambitions “took a sharper turn,” as he put it, after the reading of a novel at the age of fifteen. He intimated that *A Fellow of Trinity* written by one “Alan St. Aubyn” left much to be desired as a work of art. But its depiction of Cambridge college life—superficial though it was—gave him a concrete goal: “In particular, the final scene in Combination Room fascinated me

⁵⁰⁰ Snow, foreword to *A Mathematician’s Apology*, 11-12.

⁵⁰¹ Snow explained Hardy’s subsequent return to Cambridge in 1931 as primarily a professional decision: “Cambridge was still the centre of English mathematics, and the senior mathematical chair there was the correct place for a professional.” Snow, foreword to *A Mathematician’s Apology*, 43.

⁵⁰² Conversely, if he had stayed at New College in Oxford, Hardy would have been compelled to leave his rooms upon retirement from his professorship in accordance with the age limit. Snow, foreword to *A Mathematician’s Apology*, 43.

⁵⁰³ Hardy, *Apology*, 84.

⁵⁰⁴ Hardy, *Apology*, 84.

completely, and from that time, until I obtained one, mathematics meant to me primarily a Fellowship of Trinity.”⁵⁰⁶ Until then, Hardy had merely acted upon his competitive impulses. The fictional scene in which the protagonist, newly a Fellow, is welcomed with walnuts and wine into their number “by the grave, scholarly old Fellows who sat around the great horseshoe table” offered Hardy a vision of where those impulses might take him—namely, that table at Trinity College.⁵⁰⁷ It impressed upon the adolescent Hardy’s imagination the promise of “all that the walnuts and the wine round that horseshoe table represented of scholarly and philosophical learning and culture.”⁵⁰⁸

That promise was one in which prestige, aesthetic as well as intellectual stimulation, and congenial companionship were intertwined. And mathematics was Hardy’s key to that privileged space. Hardy’s decision to attend Trinity, which boasted the most esteemed mathematical tradition of any Cambridge or Oxford college, reflected the competitive drive that was the basis of his professionalism.⁵⁰⁹ For a graduate of Winchester, New College, Oxford, was the more conventional choice. Both shared the same founder, William of Wykeham, who had envisioned the two as a single institution, with Winchester supplying students to New College.⁵¹⁰ That Hardy had foregone the more typical path was a testament to his commitment to mathematical excellence. At the same time, the walnuts and wine around the horseshoe table gestured to something more than the gratification of competitive impulses—a mode of relationality extending beyond

⁵⁰⁵ Hardy, *Apology*, 84.

⁵⁰⁶ Hardy notes that Alan St. Aubyn was the pseudonym of Mrs. Frances Marshall. Hardy, *Apology*, 86.

⁵⁰⁷ Alan St. Aubyn, *A Fellow of Trinity* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1898), 291.

⁵⁰⁸ Snow notes, however, that while Hardy was partial to a glass of wine, “he found he did not really enjoy lingering in the combination room over port and walnuts.” C. P. Snow, foreword to *A Mathematician’s Apology*, by G. H. Hardy (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 32-33.

⁵⁰⁹ Kanigel, *Man who Knew Infinity*, 128.

⁵¹⁰ Winchester College, *Winchester: Its History, Buildings and People* (Winchester: P. & G. Wells, 1921), 147.

that of “beat[ing] other boys.” Hardy’s projection of himself into that collegial space suggested aspirations to an intellectual life in which sociability played a central role.

Conversely, the value of Winchester inhered only in his schoolwork. “He disliked the school,” his friend C. P. Snow wrote, “except for its classes.”⁵¹¹ Winchester had a reputation for being harsh.⁵¹² Snow characterized it as “a pretty rough place,” where beatings occurred regularly.⁵¹³ Tradition ruled supreme, and despite reforms, the older boys in the school continued to wield considerable power over the younger ones.⁵¹⁴ In his autobiography, poet Robert Graves—of a slightly younger generation than Hardy—recounted how a fellow alumnus “remarked to me recently: ‘The moral tone of the school has improved out of all recognition since those days.’”⁵¹⁵ “But so it always will have,” Graves added.⁵¹⁶ “No doubt about a century ago the rule of the prefects was oppressive and cruel,” one commentator wrote in 1900.⁵¹⁷ Even as the latter pronounced this “no longer the case,” in the following decade, Graves wrote of the abuses he suffered at the hands of older students. This included “physical acts of spite, like throwing ink over my school-books, hiding my games-clothes, attacking me suddenly from behind corners, pouring water over my bed at night.”⁵¹⁸ Graves also recounted the mental torment of how his aggressor “continually forc[ed] his bawdy humour on my prudishness, and invit[ed] everybody to laugh at my disgust,” driving him “near a

⁵¹¹ Snow, foreword to *A Mathematician’s Apology*, 17.

⁵¹² Robert Townsend Warner, *Winchester* (G. Bell and sons, 1900), 6.

⁵¹³ Snow, foreword to *A Mathematician’s Apology*, 17.

⁵¹⁴ Kanigel, *Man who Knew Infinity*, 121.

⁵¹⁵ Robert Graves, *Goodbye to All That* (London: Cassell, 1957), 33.

⁵¹⁶ Graves, *Goodbye*, 33.

⁵¹⁷ Robert Townsend Warner, *Winchester* (G. Bell and sons, 1900), 6.

⁵¹⁸ Graves, *Goodbye*, 35.

nervous breakdown.”⁵¹⁹ The scope for misery encompassed both the physical and psychological.

While Hardy did not expound at length on his own experiences at Winchester, what traces of that period of his life that can be discerned were negative. Fellow mathematician and Hardy’s obituarist E. C. Titchmarsh made note that Hardy was “never enamoured of public school life.”⁵²⁰ He listed mutton among Hardy’s “hates”—“a relic of his Winchester days, when they had by statute to eat it five days a week.”⁵²¹ Hardy’s aversion to those days was in this respect physically ingrained. Even barring the extreme hostilities that Graves endured, “the Spartan life in ‘College’ at that time” Titchmarsh wrote, “was a great hardship.”⁵²² Indeed, Hardy became so ill one winter that he nearly died.⁵²³

A continuity of themes emerges from these mediated fragments of Hardy’s time at Winchester and the retrospective accounts of contemporaries like Woolf, who described his own public school matriculation in terms of “plunging with a shiver into a much larger and tougher world than I had known hitherto.”⁵²⁴ Like Hardy, Graves and Woolf, the latter of whom knew Hardy at Trinity College, were also scholarship students at public schools. Both described a world that cohered around a privileged class of masculinity, giving rise to a culture that extended into graduates’ professional lives. The points of contact in their memories suggested a common public school culture.

⁵¹⁹ Graves, *Goodbye*, 35.

⁵²⁰ E. C. Titchmarsh, “Godfrey Harold Hardy,” in *Collected Papers of G.H. Hardy*, Vol. 1, by G. H. Hardy (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1979), 2.

⁵²¹ Titchmarsh, “Godfrey Harold Hardy,” 6.

⁵²² Titchmarsh, “Godfrey Harold Hardy,” 2.

⁵²³ Snow, foreword to *A Mathematician’s Apology*, 17.

⁵²⁴ Leonard Woolf, *Sowing, an Autobiography of the Years 1880 to 1904*, A Harvest Book ; HB 319 (San Diego: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1975), 71.

A defining characteristic of the latter was the sense that school life was a challenge intended to make students stronger—all “hard knocks and character-training.”⁵²⁵ This privileging of toughness was bound up with notions of tradition and Englishness. Whether inclined to view this negatively or positively, commentators claimed for their respective institution a representativeness on the basis of these attributes. A handbook on Winchester, aimed at among others parents of potential future students, noted the “marked extent to which the principle of publicity and life in common has been carried [at Winchester], even more than at other public schools.”⁵²⁶ The author referred here to the way that life at Winchester was dominated by public spaces; instead of the separate bedrooms and studies that characterized “private house life,” Winchester boarding-houses continued to take their cues from a public life in common.⁵²⁷ “A life constantly spent in common becomes intolerable to the weak, and impossible for study, unless combined with a strong system of discipline” he continued, “and such discipline has, as a rule, been well maintained at Winchester by the prefects, who were originally instituted in College by the Founder.”⁵²⁸ In one deft stroke, the need to fortify the weak was marshaled in support of the system of prefect discipline dictated by tradition.

School life in this vein was thus defined in opposition to private domesticity. Relating the story of a boy who appeared to his schoolmates impervious in the wake of losing both parents to cholera in India, Graves explained:

But he had not seen his parents for two years; and preparatory schoolboys live in a world completely dissociated from home life. They have a different vocabulary, a different moral system, even different voices. On their return to school from the holidays the change-over from home-self to

⁵²⁵ Graves, *Goodbye*, 33.

⁵²⁶ Warner, *Winchester*, 5.

⁵²⁷ Warner, *Winchester*, 5.

⁵²⁸ Warner, *Winchester*, 5.

school-self is almost instantaneous, whereas the reverse process takes a fortnight at least. [...] School life becomes the reality, and home life the illusion.⁵²⁹

School was a separate world that became students' primary mode of existence. In this respect, Hardy's early education at Cranleigh School had been different. Not only was the latter's student body of more modest origins—sons of tradesmen and farmers rather than the gentry, at least during Hardy's time there—his father was its assistant master, and his family lived in the neighborhood; the separation of school and home did not occur for Hardy until he left for Winchester in 1890.⁵³⁰ Once there, however, the break involved a process of socialization tantamount to learning a new language; Winchester's "notions," as the school dialect was known, included its own slant on grammar as well as an extensive body of jargon used not only by the boys but also the masters in official capacities.⁵³¹

As much as it marked a departure from family life, public school as an institution existed on a continuum that Graves traced from preparatory school to university:

I discussed my feelings with Nevill Barbour, then Head of the School. First, we agreed that there were perhaps even more typical public schools than Charterhouse in existence, but that we preferred not to believe it. Next, that no possible remedy could be found because tradition was so strong that to break it, one would have to dismiss the whole school and staff, and start all over again. [...] Finally, that our only regret at leaving the place was that for the last year we had been in a position, as members of the Sixth Form, to do more or less what we pleased. Now we were both going on to St. John's College, Oxford, which promised to be merely a more boisterous repetition of Charterhouse. [...] There would be no peace probably until we reached our third year, when we should be back again in the same sort of position as now, and in the same sort of position as in our last year at our preparatory school.⁵³²

⁵²⁹ Graves, *Goodbye*, 18.

⁵³⁰ Kanigel, *Man who Knew Infinity*, 113.

⁵³¹ Warner, *Winchester*, 188.

⁵³² Graves, *Goodbye*, 32.

Indeed, Graves's interlocutor went on to note that university was not the end of it: "We'll get our degrees, and then have to start as new boys again in some dreadful profession."⁵³³

For the privileged class that attended these schools, the system stretched on beyond the school years, apparently ongoing and ubiquitous.

And beyond the scope of individual lives, the public school as a site of cultural imagining impinged on the British public consciousness out of proportion to the minuscule percentage of the population that were educated at the affiliated institutions.⁵³⁴

The term "public school" as it pertained to a narrow class of exclusive fee-paying school in Britain had no intrinsic legal definition.⁵³⁵ Instead of concrete legal criteria dictating inclusion in the category, the term was applied in accordance with an implicit sense of equivalence shared by the schools in question.

This emerged from a mutual recognition of status and a shared system of values, sometimes portrayed as representative. For instance, one commentator claimed that public schools were "characteristically English institutions" as he ascribed the primacy of tradition as a governing principle at Winchester as an expression of that most prominent

⁵³³ Graves, *Goodbye*, 32.

⁵³⁴ Geoffrey Walford, *Life in Public Schools* (London: Methuen, 1986), 4. The Headmasters' Conference, originally convened in the wake of the 1861 Clarendon Commission, became the forum through which schools attained public school status by way of their headmasters' election to the Conference. In 1984, 221 schools in membership consisted of 142,500 students, which represented roughly 3.4 percent of the relevant age range in Great Britain. Walford further argues that those schools that align with what most people think of as public schools are an even smaller fraction of that group. For further discussion on the use of the term, see Walford, *Life*, 6-11.

⁵³⁵ Walford, *Life*, 6. The 1861 Clarendon Commission served to mark Charterhouse, Eton, Harrow, Merchant Taylors', Rugby, St. Paul's, Shrewsbury, Westminster, and Winchester as "Great or Public Schools." Honey argues that the use of the term with regard to additional schools depended on a recognition of equivalence from schools within the group—via the Headmasters' Conference—more than anything else in John Raymond de Symons Honey, *Tom Brown's Universe: The Development of the Victorian Public School* (London: Millington, 1977). Walford notes the contemporary shift away from the use of the term on the part of the schools themselves as they have attempted to redefine themselves as "part of a much wider and open independent sector." Walford, *Life*, 5.

of “typically English traits.”⁵³⁶ Both Graves and Woolf commented on the climate of “philistinism,” as Woolf termed it, that dominated the public school system. Indeed, Woolf argued that it had national consequences:

England for considerably more than 100 years has been the most philistine of all European countries. This I suspect, is largely due to the public schools, which during the period gradually established a dominating influence on public life and imposed upon the whole nation their prejudices, habits, morals, and standards of value. The public school was the nursery of British philistinism. To work, to use the mind, to be a “swot,” as it was called in my school days, was to become an untouchable (except for the purposes of bullying) in the hierarchy of the public school caste system.⁵³⁷

Woolf’s claim for the outsize influence of public school culture was based on the strong association of these schools with the ruling classes; while many of the schools were originally endowed to educate poor scholars, by Hardy’s time, they catered primarily to a wealthy elite.

Graves and Woolf—like Hardy—were “scholars,” or scholarship students. Graves detailed the plight of the scholar:

Everyone despised school-work; the scholars were not concentrated in a single dormitory house as at Winchester or Eton, but divided among ten, and known as ‘pro’s’. Unless good at games, and able to pretend that they hated work even more than the non-scholars, and ready whenever called on to help these with their work, they always had a bad time.⁵³⁸

Graves found his unpopularity further compounded because he was not exceptionally good at games and that he lacked the pocket money with which to treat his contemporaries. At Winchester, Hardy lived with the rest of the seventy scholars in the College, apart from the 350 commoners, who were divided among nine houses of roughly

⁵³⁶ Warner, *Winchester*, 7.

⁵³⁷ Leonard Woolf, *Sowing, an Autobiography of the Years 1880 to 1904*, A Harvest Book ; HB 319 (San Diego: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1975), 87-88.

⁵³⁸ Graves, *Goodbye*, 33.

forty each.⁵³⁹ These living arrangements may have provided more of a buffer for him than had been available to Graves from negative interactions with commoners. But Hardy too was part of a minority demographic of scholars. In 1900, scholars paid £21 a year, and a scholarship was worth almost £100 annually.⁵⁴⁰ Commoners, who made up the majority of Winchester students, came from backgrounds that could afford tuition exceeding £100. Hardy did not; the sum was equivalent to the yearly income of Cranleigh School's second master, and as assistant master, Hardy's father had made even less.⁵⁴¹

Public school scholarships were valuable, and they were awarded on the basis of academic merit. And yet, numerous accounts note a climate in which intellectual pursuits were disparaged. Written from a commoner's perspective, a retrospective account roughly contemporaneous to Hardy's time at Winchester articulated the resentment towards scholars, or "college men":

[The small commoner] usually dislikes seeing small college men excel him up to books, and is apt to despise learning; seeing his house prefects very often stupid worthy fellows, he sees that position in the school is to be attained by athletics as well as diligence, and prefers the former course. He considers himself at a great disadvantage as against the small college man, who always has a college prefect as his tutor, whereas he has to go without.⁵⁴²

The narrator characterized this "general outlook on life of the small commoner" as "peculiar and not very extensive."⁵⁴³ While this acknowledgment suggests a later self-

⁵³⁹ Warner, *Winchester*, 3. The number of scholars remained consistently at the original seventy, while the number of commoners fluctuated greatly over the course of Winchester's history. William of Wykeham outlined in his statutes that "sons of people of station and influence, and especially friendly to the College, but so that they be no burden to the College" be admitted to live in the College. Due to limited space, the number of these commoners was restricted to ten, but no limit was set on the number living out of College. And in 1412, eight years after Wykeham's death, commoners had already outnumbered scholars. For further discussion of the significance of the presence of commoners, see Warner, *Winchester*, 18-19.

⁵⁴⁰ Warner, *Winchester*, 101.

⁵⁴¹ Kanigel, *Man who Knew Infinity*, 118.

⁵⁴² Warner, *Winchester*, 184-185.

⁵⁴³ Warner, *Winchester*, 184.

awareness, he recounted his attitude at the time as one of “despis[ing] learning.” As far as his past self as a small commoner was concerned, academic diligence registered only as a means through which one might jockey for “position in the school,” and even as such, athletics were preferable. Hardy’s own early take on mathematics from those years shared a similar competitive spirit, if not the anti-intellectualism.

Even as public schools ostensibly existed as a space of education, Graves listed the boys’ chief interests as “games and romantic friendships.”⁵⁴⁴ These were pursued in a world rigidly structured by status and tradition. Even those who maintained that bullying was on the wane acknowledged that hierarchies were enforced as vigorously as ever: “distinctions, instead of being violently settled by fist and foot, are now based on a silent but powerful system of school caste and a rigid code of privileges, gradated according to seniority, and plentifully leavened by athletic hero worship.”⁵⁴⁵ The language of caste gestured to a world in which divisions figured as critically as friendships. Hardy’s primary response had been competition.

But Trinity, despite its continuities with that world, diverged enough from it that Hardy might further develop the strengths inculcated in him by that training even as he distanced himself from those aversions it had engendered. Hardy’s undergraduate years at Trinity provided the foundation upon which he developed an aptitude for the “original work” entailed by a Fellowship.⁵⁴⁶ From early on, Hardy demonstrated a charmed progress through academic milestones. He won scholarships to Winchester and then

⁵⁴⁴ Graves, *Goodbye*, 33.

⁵⁴⁵ Warner, *Winchester*, 196.

⁵⁴⁶ Hardy, *Apology*, 146.

Trinity, both prestigious schools with strong mathematical traditions.⁵⁴⁷ Hardy, however, experienced his own discontents with the educational system. At Trinity, his distaste for the uninspiring Tripos, the examinations that mathematical candidates at Cambridge took to qualify for degrees, drove him to briefly consider trading in mathematics for history.⁵⁴⁸ Preparation for the Tripos demanded efficient drilling to the end of solving problems quickly; Hardy viewed this as something of an entirely different order from what he regarded to be “real” mathematics.

Yet Hardy persevered. And it was at Trinity, on the recommendation of a certain Professor Augustus Edward Hough Love, that he came into contact with the French mathematician Camille Jordan’s *Cours d’analyse de l’Ecole Polytechnique*. “I shall never forget,” Hardy recalled, “the astonishment with which I read that remarkable work, the first inspiration for so many mathematicians of my generation, and learnt for the first time as I read it what mathematics really meant.” What Jordan represented was the rise of a school of mathematics that took seemingly obvious mathematical concepts and attempted to parse them into provable theorems.⁵⁴⁹ For instance, mathematicians defined “continuous functions” as relationships between variables expressed as a seamless continuum, absent any abrupt breaks or lurches. Continental mathematicians had begun to interrogate such concepts, which had hitherto been understood in such intuitive terms

⁵⁴⁷ The reputation of Cambridge as a center for mathematical research can be traced to the 1663 foundation of the Lucassian Professorship of Mathematics. Isaac Newton was the second holder of this chair for over thirty years. Berndt and Rankin, eds., *Ramanujan*, 7.

⁵⁴⁸ Snow recounts: “He never went near Winchester after he had left it.” Snow, foreword to *A Mathematician’s Apology*, 17. For an explanation of the mathematical Tripos system and a brief history, see Kanigel, *Man who Knew Infinity*, 128-133. In 1910, Hardy’s efforts to reform the Tripos led to the abolishment of the Order of Merit, which eased the worst of the pressures that led to students narrowly focusing on their ranking to the detriment of a broader mathematical education. Kanigel, *Man who Knew Infinity*, 155.

⁵⁴⁹ This brief overview of the mathematical work of analysts is indebted to Kanigel’s more complete discussion. For further examples, see Kanigel, *Man who Knew Infinity*, 134-135.

rather than concrete ones. “Analysts,” as these mathematicians were known, pressed for more precise definitions, raising such questions as what was it, exactly, that constituted a function? And what did it mean that it was continuous?

The influence of Jordan’s work was key to Hardy’s development as an analyst. Hardy described the essential jolt of newfound insight in terms of an “astonishment” not unlike that later inspired by the unlikely genius of an obscure clerk in India. Littlewood’s posthumous review of Ramanujan’s *Collected Papers* framed Ramanujan’s contributions in similar terms bridging knowledge and affect. “There is hardly a field of formulae,” Littlewood wrote, “that he has not enriched, and in which he has not revealed unsuspected possibilities.”⁵⁵⁰ Ramanujan’s wide-ranging work surprised readers with possibilities they had scarcely imagined. “The moral seems to be,” he concluded, “that we never expect enough; the reader at any rate experiences perpetual shocks of delighted surprise.”⁵⁵¹ Formulated as such, mathematics offered a pleasurable affective experience for the initiated.

For Hardy, this was folded into the totality of the intellectual and affective life in college. Despite the self-contained aspects of the latter, however, Hardy’s awareness of a sphere of mathematics that stretched beyond national boundaries dated back to his early encounter with Jordan’s work. Influences from abroad were thus critical to Hardy’s early professional development. And they informed the part that he played in changing the landscape of English mathematics. Standards of mathematical rigor in England lagged behind the European continent in those years, and Hardy set out to rectify the situation in

⁵⁵⁰ Littlewood, *Littlewood’s Miscellany*, 96.

⁵⁵¹ Littlewood, *Littlewood’s Miscellany*, 96.

his 1908 book *A Course of Pure Mathematics*.⁵⁵² Intended as an introduction to elementary analysis for undergraduates, it gave rise to a new class of English analysts.

And much as Hardy was open to mathematical influences from the continent, he welcomed evidence of the cross-cultural purchase of mathematics from further abroad. For Hardy, mathematics signified a politics diametrically opposed to the war that increasingly impinged on even the ivory tower of Trinity. Hardy was known to detest politicians as a class, and political activity in its narrowest sense did not appeal to him.⁵⁵³ But his well-defined abhorrence of “war, cruelty of all kinds, concentration camps and other emanations of totalitarian governments” indicated a larger—if somewhat vague—political sensibility.⁵⁵⁴ Snow described the latter as an unorganized radicalism, grounded in Hardy’s aversion to those he called the “large bottomed,” epitomized by the “confident, booming, imperialist bourgeois English.”⁵⁵⁵ These aversions were connected. War signified for Hardy the very worst of humanity, and he held the nation’s politicians responsible. Hardy categorized the latter—along with “most bishops, headmasters, judges”—as the large bottomed.⁵⁵⁶

Hardy’s championing of Ramanujan was of a piece with his impulse to align himself against these large bottomed and their capacity to do harm in the world. The distinction that Hardy claimed for what he called “real” mathematics—mathematics as creative art, separate from the trivial order of math that was useful rather than beautiful—

⁵⁵² Titchmarsh, “Godfrey Harold Hardy,” 3.

⁵⁵³ Titchmarsh, “Godfrey Harold Hardy,” 6.

⁵⁵⁴ Titchmarsh, “Godfrey Harold Hardy,” 6.

⁵⁵⁵ Snow, foreword to *A Mathematician’s Apology*, 42.

⁵⁵⁶ Snow noted that he made a single exception for Lloyd George. As a sign of his own allegiances, Hardy served as the President of the Association of Scientific Workers from 1924 to 1926. Snow, foreword to *A Mathematician’s Apology*, 42.

was its uselessness in war.⁵⁵⁷ Wartime breached the integrity of college life as it did everything else. On a personal level, collaboration with Ramanujan lifted some of the darkness of the first World War for Hardy; his close friends were away at war, with Littlewood off doing ballistics in the Royal Artillery.⁵⁵⁸ Furthermore, in the face of the human costs exacted by settling differences through warfare, Hardy was predisposed to turn to mathematics as a realm in which common ground might be found in reason. At the same time, part of Hardy's objection to the war also lay in his "strong feeling for Germany" as a dominant educating force of the nineteenth century.⁵⁵⁹ In representing for Hardy the potential universality of mathematical standards, Ramanujan gave rise to a similarly affective investment. "When the world is mad," Hardy wrote, "a mathematician may find in mathematics an incomparable anodyne."⁵⁶⁰ Hardy's commitment to maintaining mathematics as a sphere inviolable by such madness was both intellectually and affectively motivated. And his emphasis on the equivalence between Ramanujan and himself as mathematicians was borne of a sense that a world structured in accordance with a mathematical worldview was one eminently preferable to the reality. While there was limited opportunity for Hardy to bring this to bear on the world beyond Cambridge, his championing of an unknown mathematical talent from Madras offered such an outlet for years to come.

Meritocracy of Math

⁵⁵⁷ Hardy, *Apology*, 140.

⁵⁵⁸ Snow, foreword to *A Mathematician's Apology*, 38.

⁵⁵⁹ Snow, foreword to *A Mathematician's Apology*, 38.

⁵⁶⁰ Hardy, *Apology*, 143.

Working from a worldview that posited a clear-cut meritocracy of mathematics, Hardy viewed himself and Ramanujan as roughly equals. The larger collective pursuit of mathematical knowledge transcended national boundaries. Despite objections raised in light of escalating British-German hostilities before the first World War, Hardy made a point of publishing an article in a Swedish mathematical journal alongside German mathematicians. Hardy's views of mathematics as a universal language of sorts informed his own objections to Ramanujan's talents being viewed as in any way qualitatively different due to his Indian origins:

The last thing which I want you to do is to throw up your hands and exclaim "here is something unintelligible, some mysterious manifestation of the immemorial wisdom of the East!" I do not believe in the immemorial wisdom of the East, and the picture which I want to present to you is that of a man who had his peculiarities like other distinguished men, but a man in whose society one could take pleasure, with whom one could drink tea and discuss politics or mathematics; the picture in short, not of a wonder from the East, or an inspired idiot, or a psychological freak, but of a rational human being who happened to be a great mathematician.⁵⁶¹

Much in the vein of his fastidious atheism—Hardy refused to enter the chapel for even administrative formalities, requiring a special dispensation from the administration—he objected strenuously to any mystification of Ramanujan's mathematical skills.⁵⁶²

Ramanujan was not a "wonder" or an "idiot" or a "freak."

Similarly, Hardy was committed to a vision of mathematics as an art governed by universally recognizable standards—more so than any other field of work. As such, he viewed the field as one in which the assessment of merit was transparent and whose history was less politically motivated than most. "No other subject has such clear-cut or unanimously accepted standards," he argued, "and the men who are remembered are

⁵⁶¹ Hardy, *Ramanujan*, 5.

⁵⁶² Snow, foreword to *A Mathematician's Apology*, 20.

almost always the men who merit it.”⁵⁶³ Central to Hardy’s conception of such standards was the question of beauty:

The mathematician’s patterns, like the painter’s or the poet’s, must be *beautiful*; the ideas, like the colours or the words, must fit together in a harmonious way. Beauty is the first test: there is no permanent place in the world for ugly mathematics. [...] It may be very hard to define mathematical beauty, but that is just as true of beauty of any kind—we may not know quite what we mean by a beautiful poem, but that does not prevent us from recognizing one when we read it.⁵⁶⁴

Hardy made it clear that he was “interested in mathematics only as a creative art,” comparing the “mathematician’s patterns” to that of “the painter’s or the poet’s.”⁵⁶⁵ Like any other practitioner of the fine arts, he rejected justifications of mathematical work that rested on practicality. “If useful knowledge,” Hardy wrote, referring to the kind of mathematics that might aid the engineer or physicist, “is, as we agreed provisionally to say, knowledge which is likely, now or in the comparatively near future, to contribute to the material comfort of mankind, so that mere intellectual satisfaction is irrelevant, then the great bulk of higher mathematics is useless.”⁵⁶⁶ While “useful” knowledge was dependent on context, beautiful mathematics was universal and permanent.

In effect, Hardy conceptualized mathematics as a field of creative art that was both less culturally determined and more resistant to political cooption. Its standards were “unanimous” in the sense that even having never met and being from different sides of the globe, Ramanujan and Hardy could still establish a mathematical rapport. And despite the controversy surrounding Ramanujan’s election as a Fellow of Trinity, Ramanujan persevered; Hardy would no doubt count Ramanujan amongst those who merited the

⁵⁶³ Hardy, *Mathematician’s Apology*, 22.

⁵⁶⁴ Hardy, *Mathematician’s Apology*, 25. original emphasis.

⁵⁶⁵ Hardy, *Mathematician’s Apology*, 55.

⁵⁶⁶ Hardy, *Mathematician’s Apology*, 75.

place in history he was accorded. Furthermore, Hardy insisted that the aesthetic element in mathematics was more generally recognizable to even a lay audience. “Most people have some appreciation of mathematics,” he argued, “just as most people can enjoy a pleasant tune.”⁵⁶⁷ Chess served as an example of the mass popular appeal of mathematics. Hardy’s theoretical musings in some ways suggested that the field of mathematics was one whose existence was governed by a transparent universality that in many ways set it on a plane separate from the rest of society. At the same time, Hardy argued that “most people” could still appreciate that universality. Committed as he was to this ideal, Hardy may have overstated his case.

Despite Hardy’s protestations of universality, a lay audience would never be able to appreciate the aesthetic merits of Ramanujan’s work in the way Hardy could. While it remains beyond the scope of this analysis to parse through Ramanujan’s highly specialized theorems, the thrust of Hardy’s argument becomes evident in the following formula, which Hardy selected as representative of Ramanujan’s work:

$$p(4) + p(9)x + p(14)x^2 + \dots = 5 \frac{[(1-x^5)(1-x^{10})(1-x^{15}) \dots]^5}{[(1-x)(1-x^2)(1-x^3) \dots]^6},$$

where $p(n)$ is the number of partitions of n .⁵⁶⁸

Littlewood described the preceding example as “one of supreme beauty.”⁵⁶⁹ And even in the eye of the beholder unschooled in higher mathematics and powerless to follow the proofs supporting this particular theorem, the aesthetics are apparent.

⁵⁶⁷ Hardy, *Mathematician’s Apology*, 26.

⁵⁶⁸ Quoted in Littlewood, 95. John E. Littlewood, *Littlewood’s Miscellany*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986). In number theory, a “partition” is a way to write a positive integer as a sum of other positive integers. For instance, 4 can be partitioned in the following ways: 1+3, 2+2, 1+1+2, 1+1+1+1, and 4. The partition function, $p(n)$, gives the number of different ways to partition a number. Accordingly, $p(4) = 5$

⁵⁶⁹ Littlewood, *Littlewood’s Miscellany*, 95.

Nonetheless, Hardy's privileging of mathematical universals belies the hiccups in communication inevitable even for mathematical kindred spirits when they came from such widely diverging backgrounds. The problem of proof posed the greatest hurdle to mutual understanding in the initial correspondence between Ramanujan and Hardy. Ramanujan set little store on mathematical proofs in their traditional sense. Having more or less self-schooled himself with Carr's book, which was essentially a compilation of 5,000 or so equations more or less presented without painstaking proofs, Ramanujan employed the same mode of presentation in his own work. "Any student of [Ramanujan's] notebooks," Hardy observed, "can see that Ramanujan's ideal of presentation had been copied from Carr's."⁵⁷⁰ This ideal having been established early on, Littlewood surmised that "the clear-cut idea of what is meant by a proof, nowadays so familiar as to be taken for granted, [Ramanujan] perhaps did not possess at all; if a significant piece of reasoning occurred somewhere, and the total mixture of evidence and intuition gave him certainty, he looked no further."⁵⁷¹ Ramanujan worked in a way that fell short of Hardy's standards for rigor. As evidenced by the equation above, however, the results that Ramanujan produced often demonstrated an intricacy that could hardly be made up wholesale; quite often, Ramanujan would deliver the most striking results without a shred of proof—and ultimately be right.

Hardy, conversely, was known to be a stickler for proof.⁵⁷² The need for proof emerges as the recurring theme of his response to Ramanujan's first letter. "But I want

⁵⁷⁰ Hardy, *Ramanujan*, 3.

⁵⁷¹ Littlewood, 88.

⁵⁷² Indeed, Russell was wont to relate how Hardy had once told him "that if he could find a proof that I [Russell] was going to die in five minutes he would of course be sorry to lose me, but the sorrow would be quite outweighed by pleasure in the proof." Apparently, Russell was of the same mind: "I entirely sympathised with him and was not at all offended." Quoted in Hoffman, 85.

particularly to see your proofs of your assertions here,” he wrote.⁵⁷³ The next sentence reads: “You will understand that, in this theory, everything depends on rigorous exactitude of proof.”⁵⁷⁴ “Of course,” Hardy again reiterated later in the letter, “in all these questions everything depends on absolute rigour.”⁵⁷⁵ Later, in Ramanujan’s obituary, Hardy recalled how difficult it had been to belatedly instill in Ramanujan the basics of a mathematical education the latter had never had. Besides the tendency to omit proof, Ramanujan’s early isolation from the mathematical community at large lent a decidedly idiosyncratic turn to the expression of his ideas. “You always state your results in such particular forms,” Hardy wrote in the same letter, “that it is difficult to be sure about this.”⁵⁷⁶ Ramanujan’s mathematics took forms that were particular to the point of peculiarity because in a sense, he had been doing mathematics in a vacuum. He had books, but there had been no one who could understand him so well—mathematically—as Hardy. For Ramanujan, Hardy was his first interactive experience outside that isolation of a larger world of mathematics.

Conclusion

During Ramanujan’s time at Cambridge, Hardy may have been a more central figure in Ramanujan’s life than vice versa.⁵⁷⁷ But after Ramanujan’s death Hardy had the rest of his life to rediscover the former’s genius. In 1936, Hardy delivered two lectures on Ramanujan at Harvard. “I have set myself a task in these lectures which is genuinely

⁵⁷³ Berndt and Rankin, 47.

⁵⁷⁴ Berndt and Rankin, 47, original emphasis.

⁵⁷⁵ Berndt and Rankin, 49.

⁵⁷⁶ Berndt and Rankin, 48.

⁵⁷⁷ Kanigel argues a similar point: “As closely as the two men often worked, Ramanujan was, inevitably, less the beacon of Hardy’s life than Hardy was of Ramanujan’s.” But he seems to suggest that the

difficult,” Hardy wrote, “and which, if I were determined to begin by making every excuse for failure, I might represent as almost impossible.”⁵⁷⁸ Sixteen years had passed since Ramanujan’s death. At this point, he had long since been hailed as one of the greatest mathematical geniuses of the twentieth history. Meanwhile, Hardy had ample time to dwell on Ramanujan’s place in the field of mathematics as well as in his own life. Yet he posited the task as ongoing and difficult.

Initially, Hardy located that difficulty in more apparent and objective obstacles, such as issues of cultural difference and Ramanujan’s unconventional education; Ramanujan being an Indian and essentially self-taught, the difference in their backgrounds hampered mutual understanding. Furthermore, Hardy went on to argue that the difficulties posed by the unique trajectory of Ramanujan’s unlikely career, “full of paradoxes and contradictions,” made it impossible—not only for himself—but for anyone “[to say] with any confidence, even now, just how great a mathematician [Ramanujan] was and still less how great a mathematician he might have been.”⁵⁷⁹ Ramanujan posed difficulties of judgment for anyone because in some ways Ramanujan was so different from everyone, Hardy intimated.

The particular challenge that Hardy himself faced, however, stemmed from his understanding “that Ramanujan was, in a way, my discovery.”⁵⁸⁰ Although he immediately drew a distinction between discovery and invention, demurring that “like other great men,” Ramanujan invented himself, Hardy was emotionally invested in his

imbalance itself was the problem, rather than the lack of diversification in Ramanujan’s situation that led the latter to more narrowly focus on mathematics. Kanigel, 277-278.

⁵⁷⁸ Hardy, *Ramanujan*, 1.

⁵⁷⁹ Hardy, *Ramanujan*, 1.

⁵⁸⁰ Hardy, *Ramanujan*, 1.

part in bringing Ramanujan to public attention.⁵⁸¹ “I can still remember with satisfaction,” he reminisced, “that I could recognise what a treasure I had found.”⁵⁸² Much as Ramanujan in the flesh lifted Hardy’s mood in the darkness of the war, Hardy continued to derive emotional affirmation from his memories. And he articulated his own difficulty in the language of affect. “I have to form myself,” he wrote, “and to try to help you to form, some sort of reasoned estimate of the most romantic figure in the recent history of mathematics.” The central dilemma of Hardy’s position was embedded in this formulation juxtaposing the “reasoned” against the “romantic.” In some respects, Hardy presented himself as the single most qualified individual in terms of his knowledge of Ramanujan:

And I suppose that I still know more of Ramanujan than any one else, and am still the first authority on this particular subject. There are other people in England, Professor Watson in particular, and Professor Mordell, who know parts of his work very much better than I do, but neither Watson nor Mordell knew Ramanujan himself as I did. I saw him and talked with him almost every day for several years, and above all I actually collaborated with him.⁵⁸³

Hardy struck an almost possessive note in asserting the authority of his knowledge, which initially appeared to be in the realm of “reason.” At the same time, he distinguished between knowledge of Ramanujan’s work and that of his actual person. While others—such as Watson and Mordell—may have been more familiar with certain aspects of Ramanujan’s mathematical work, Hardy implied that a holistic assessment of Ramanujan himself hinged on intimate knowledge of the order he himself acquired from regular face-to-face interaction “almost every day for several years.”

⁵⁸¹ Hardy, *Ramanujan*, 1.

⁵⁸² Hardy, *Ramanujan*, 1.

⁵⁸³ Hardy, *Ramanujan*, 1-2.

In the end, Hardy again turned to the medium of mathematical research. But his highlighting collaboration with Ramanujan as the essence of their relationship and the privileged source of his knowledge maintained a distinction from knowledge of the work itself. It was not that collaboration entailed the most comprehensive grasp of a collaborator's work. Rather, Hardy suggested something particular to the nature of collaborative work and the relationships emerging from it that exceeded the content of the work itself. But it also introduced the additional problem of feeling.

Hardy returned to the subject of feeling—surprising in the context of a mathematical lecture—repeatedly. Feeling was central to his evaluation of Ramanujan and his work as both the source of his authority as well as of his difficulties. In fact, Hardy revisited his initial assessment in Ramanujan's obituary notice to address a conclusion that he now—sixteen years later—deemed “ridiculous sentimentalism”—a gross inaccuracy borne of an excess of feeling.⁵⁸⁴ While Hardy in large part reaffirmed his original appraisal, he took issue with his past self's contention that had Ramanujan had access to a formal mathematical education earlier in life he would probably have been a greater mathematician but that “he would have been less Ramanujan, and more of a European professor, and the loss might have been greater than the gain.”⁵⁸⁵ This one sentence Hardy found “indefensible.”⁵⁸⁶

On one hand, it was Ramanujan's difference—his Indianness and his exceptional mathematical insight inextricably bound together—that imbued him with the romance crucial to eliciting such feeling from Hardy. On the other, a more dispassionate reappraisal led Hardy to conclude that too much feeling had clouded his judgment;

⁵⁸⁴ Hardy, *Ramanujan*, 7.

⁵⁸⁵ Hardy, “Srinivasa Ramanujan,” xxxvi.

perhaps the “European professor” was a suitable model for emulation after all. What formerly served as shorthand for the prosaic opposite of the romance embodied by Ramanujan now registered as access to education. Previously, Hardy had considered Ramanujan approximating a European professor a loss of the distinctiveness of his friend; now, in his reconsideration, he viewed it purely in terms of the augmentation of Ramanujan’s mathematical capacities. And this slippage of meaning was located within the designation “European.”

Judgment, knowledge, and feeling were intertwined, all against a backdrop of British Empire that overdetermined the uneven way that nationality emerged as a loaded signifier. Hardy was a professed pacifist who had serious reservations about the nationalist impulses he witnessed during wartime. The ubiquity of nationalism, however, was such that it emerged as a layer of signification through which he assigned merit despite those reservations. However pointed his critique of nation may have been, Hardy still credited the English as the only ones who could “get anything effective done” for Ramanujan.⁵⁸⁷ And yet he showed no sign of recognition that the English had any part in the “inefficient and inelastic educational system” whose effect on Ramanujan he deplored.⁵⁸⁸ It was not that Hardy’s sense of nation was self-serving; rather, it manifested unevenly as it picked up on dominant narratives of nation despite Hardy’s aspirations to a mathematically informed internationalism.

“The difficulty for me then,” Hardy observed, “is not that I do not know enough about him, but that I know and feel too much and that I simply cannot be impartial.”⁵⁸⁹

⁵⁸⁶ Hardy, *Ramanujan*, 7.

⁵⁸⁷ Hardy, *Ramanujan*, 6.

⁵⁸⁸ Hardy, *Ramanujan*, 7.

⁵⁸⁹ Hardy, *Ramanujan*, 2.

In effect, Hardy was overwhelmed by the knowledge and feeling acquired in his own imperial romance.⁵⁹⁰ Literary critics have noted that romance as a genre is fluid to the point of being difficult to define.⁵⁹¹ Northrop Frye has defined it as a “generic plot” rather than a genre, characterized by a narrative propelled through the development of the hero by way of adventure and quest.⁵⁹² Its imperial variation offered a versatile framework that encompassed many forms of exploration—of both the external world as well as various interiors.⁵⁹³ For Hardy, Ramanujan served as the conduit to the wider world promised by imperial romance. The resulting combination of knowledge and feeling both served as the basis for Hardy’s judgment even as it impaired it, mirroring the frequent ambivalence towards expansionist policies evidenced in its literary permutations.⁵⁹⁴ But much as Hardy opened the door for Ramanujan into a wider world of mathematics, Ramanujan showed Hardy expanses he could never have imagined on his own. And as such, Ramanujan continued to mean the world to Hardy even after the world had ceased to exist for Ramanujan.

⁵⁹⁰ In its literary sense, the term refers to fiction published in Britain between the 1880s and 1920s, whose plot centered on adventure in colonial settings. For an overview of the genre and its conventions, see Susan Jones, “Into the Twentieth Century: Imperial Romance from Haggard to Buchan,” in *A Companion to Romance: From Classical to Contemporary*, ed. Corinne J. Saunders (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2004), 406-411.

⁵⁹¹ Corinne J. Saunders, “Introduction,” in *A Companion to Romance: From Classical to Contemporary*, ed. Corinne J. Saunders (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2004), 2.

⁵⁹² Northrop Frye, *Anatomy of Criticism: Four Essays* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1957), 137.

⁵⁹³ Jones includes the sensation novel, the detective or spy story, science fiction, and the Gothic novel as examples. Jones, “Imperial Romance,” 408.

⁵⁹⁴ Jones, “Imperial Romance,” 407.

Chapter Three
The Poet and His Critic:
Rabindranath Tagore and Edward John Thompson

“As Thompson sat with the poet in the sephali grove, he was playing at the game of equality in the universal republic of letters, and Tagore met him halfway.”

—E. P. Thompson, “Alien Homage.”

It was October of 1913 when the young English missionary set out on bicycle to make the trek from rural Bankura in West Bengal, where he taught at the Wesleyan college, to Santiniketan, not 50 miles east. Santiniketan was a small town, a little over 100 miles to the south of the urban center of Calcutta. What drew him there was the experimental school run by one of Bengal’s literary luminaries. He had been introduced to the latter’s poetry by a mutual friend. As an aspiring poet himself, he was impressed by the work and hoped to meet the famous poet in person. More so than the distance itself, the obstacle lay in the fact that neither direct road nor rail connected Bankura and Santiniketan. The missionary waded multiple rivers, cycled over 30 miles, and pushed his bike over vast expanses of sand—“[the Damodar River’s] sands must be well over a mile in length”—a feat that nearly lost him his bike and shoes on a later reprise of this adventure, to finally arrive at two in the morning.⁵⁹⁵ To his consternation, he found the school in recess; the poet and founder of the institution was away in Calcutta.

It was a testament to his perseverance that he quickly regrouped, this time heading to Calcutta to finally catch up with his elusive would-be host two days later. That perseverance was borne of loneliness as well as an increasing sense of his own

incompatibility with that of his professional situation—both recurring themes in his letters to friends back home. In them, he wrote of his isolation in Bankura among colleagues who did not share his passion for poetry. His collegial relations thus fell short of his expectations for intellectual community and on occasion verged into acrimony. His supervisors considered him to be a competent teacher, but the colonial exigencies of his students' lives rendered their educational interests in large part careerist and uninspired. While teaching the college's honors class offered some gratification, he expressed frustration with regard to the British Indian educational system as a whole. He wrote letters to allay his isolation, maintaining a steady correspondence with a network of friends, with whom he conversed on literary matters in lieu of the formal education his family's financial situation had made impossible. They discussed one another's work and offered support and counsel for his professional development.

For the foreseeable future, however, the missionary was stationed in India. And he was determined to utilize his time there towards intellectual and professional advancement. Now twenty-seven, he began to voice a sense of urgency regarding his career. One of his main correspondents—and primary mentor in literary pursuits—urged him to write about India.⁵⁹⁵ Taking an interest in local Bengali literature, he cast about for sympathetic interlocutors. In this process, he happened upon one of the leading lights of the Bengali cultural scene, a poet, writer, thinker, and musician who also took up painting later in life. More than twenty years his senior, the latter was not only well

⁵⁹⁵ E. P. Thompson, *“Alien Homage”: Edward Thompson and Rabindranath Tagore* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 1.

⁵⁹⁶ This was William Canton, with whom Edward John Thompson struck up a correspondence as a result of reading the former's work. Uma Das Gupta, ed., *A Difficult Friendship: Letters of Edward Thompson and Rabindranath Tagore, 1913-1940* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2003), 74. For an account of their first meeting, see Mary Lago, *India's Prisoner: A Biography of Edward John Thompson, 1886-1946* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2001), 35.

established in his own right but also the scion of a family that had first risen to prominence in the region in the sixteenth century. The brief meeting in Calcutta between the poet—Rabindranath Tagore—and the missionary—Edward John Thompson—served as a prelude to an association that spanned nearly three decades.

This chapter examines that friendship through the lens of cosmopolitan engagement in an age of ascendant nationalism. Tracing the key moments of its development from inception through difficulty, I explores the cultural—and sometimes literal—work shouldered by this friendship. In a geopolitical climate dominated by the First World War, Tagore and Thompson found common cause in their commitment to cosmopolitan approaches to global relations. Both subscribed to a liberal humanist worldview of international cooperation that they sought to enact at the individual level in part through the purposeful forging of international connections. Despite the fundamental commonality of a commitment to such liberal values as freedom and progress, Thompson's initially professed active disinterest in politics most crucially set his perspective apart from that of Tagore, for whom Indian independence was a central goal.

That was only one of the asymmetries of their association, which both animated and hindered their relations. These were collectively brought to bear on its colonial contours, resulting in a palimpsest of rapport, resentment, and reconciliation. Mostly, the association was propelled forward by Thompson, whose subsequent writing career hinged largely on India—and Tagore. Born in 1861 and twenty-five years Thompson's senior, Tagore was in his fifties and a cultural force in his own right in Bengal after winning the Nobel Prize in 1913. He came from an affluent, aristocratic family also

known for their intellectual and cultural accomplishments.⁵⁹⁷ In contrast, Thompson hailed from humble origins; his father was a missionary in South India whose poor health caused the family to eventually return to England. He died when Thompson was eight, and the latter was compelled to leave school at sixteen to help support his family. The youthful poetic ambitions Thompson harbored were thus subordinated to the financial exigencies and familial expectations that led to his ordination in 1910, upon which he volunteered for foreign service. Shortly thereafter, he found himself teaching English literature at Bankura Wesleyan College.

In discussing “countenance”—the “appearance of friendship in the public eye that was itself a kind of currency”—Alan Bray has shown how written artifacts such as letters of friendship and literary manuscripts were put to use in the public lives of the elite men who wrote them despite—or because of—the expressions of intimacy contained therein.⁵⁹⁸ While Bray’s discussion is about early modern England, for Tagore and Thompson, the personal and professional were similarly intertwined in circles that cohered around the cultivation of aesthetic and intellectual pursuits. Thompson’s extended study of Tagore’s work *Rabindranath Tagore: Poet and Dramatist*, published in 1926, functioned as such a document, for instance, adducing the author’s own conversations with Tagore to bolster its credibility as Thompson worked to establish

⁵⁹⁷ Its members played a crucial role in the cultural, religious, and literary movement referred to as the “Bengal Renaissance” across generations. Tagore’s grandfather was a landowner, businessman, and entrepreneur whose wealth was such that he was commonly—and erroneously (he was not in fact a prince)—referred to as “Prince” Dwarkanath Tagore. He did not consider race an insurmountable barrier between himself and his British peers and traveled to London twice in the pre-1857 period, where he was known for his wealth and social connections, which on one occasion had him dining with Queen Victoria at Buckingham Palace. In terms of finances, however, Rabindranath Tagore commanded only a limited income until his father’s death in 1905, and the insecurity of his personal financial situation was such that he was forced to sell his wife’s ornaments on occasion in order to meet the expenses of the school at Santiniketan. Sabyasachi Bhattacharya, *Rabindranath Tagore: An Interpretation* (New Delhi: Viking, Penguin Books India, 2011), 87.

himself as an expert on Bengali literature. It also served as his thesis for a doctorate at London University. This chapter benefits from insights from historians Uma Das Gupta and E. P. Thompson, Thompson's son, who have both considered the difficulties of the association at length.⁵⁹⁹ Das Gupta offers a long view of the gradual escalation of tensions that precipitated the 1926 falling out, while E. P. Thompson offers a qualified defense of the process of his father's writing if not the product. It also builds on more recent attention to Tagore's writings in English and his take on the role of global public intellectual.⁶⁰⁰

The expansion of its empire afforded the British increased personal and professional opportunities in far-flung locales. Some settled permanently in the colonies, while others passed through in their travels, writing up their experiences upon their return and thus informing the geographical imaginations of those who never ventured abroad.⁶⁰¹ Still others embarked on what David Lambert and Alan Lester have termed "imperial careers," which involved extended periods spent in the colonies and more sustained and interactive contact with the local infrastructures of colonial life.⁶⁰² While Thompson did not "career across" the empire from colony to colony as some did—he returned to a position teaching Bengali at Oxford in 1923—his thirteen years in India served as a springboard for his academic and journalistic career back in England.

⁵⁹⁸ Alan Bray, *The Friend* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003), 54.

⁵⁹⁹ Uma Das Gupta, ed., *A Difficult Friendship: Letters of Edward Thompson and Rabindranath Tagore, 1913-1940* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2003).

⁶⁰⁰ Sejal V. Sutaria, "Friendship, Danger, and Difference in Anglo-India: Hybrid Hauntings in the Postcolonial Nation State" (PhD diss., University of Michigan, 2005); Michael Collins, *Empire, Nationalism and the Postcolonial World: Rabindranath Tagore's Writings on History, Politics and Society* (New York: Routledge, 2012).

⁶⁰¹ Felix Driver, *Geography Militant: Cultures of Exploration in the Age of Empire* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1999); Daniel Wright Clayton, *Islands of Truth: The Imperial Fashioning of Vancouver Island* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2000).

First, this chapter examines the beginnings of the association as it was set into motion by the meanings—both public and private—Thompson attributed to it as a colonial friendship. Next, it situates Tagore as a global figure and his cosmopolitan vision in a diffuse network of internationally minded individuals who espoused an ethical approach to global relations in a period of clashing nationalisms. While Tagore has maintained his stature as a cultural icon and contemporary thinker in India and Bangladesh, scholars of his work have noted that interest in the West declined precipitously not long after he received the Nobel Prize in 1913. Through the lens of plural cosmopolitanisms, I consider the aspirations and difficulties that informed Thompson’s Tagore studies as attempts at cosmopolitan connection. Finally, Tagore’s orientation towards Pan-Asianism and his correspondence with Noguchi offers a counterpoint to his relations with Thompson and another stage in his quest for an alternate category to the nation.

Beginnings: “I loved him long before the evening was done”

Thompson’s subsequent—this time, successful—trip to Santiniketan was as propitiously timed as his first attempt was not. By a stroke of remarkable chance, it coincided with news of Tagore’s Nobel Prize in literature. The potential for a symbolic reading of the episode was not lost upon Thompson, as evidenced in his account, written up mere days afterward. Additionally, E. P. Thompson has characterized the tenor of Indo-British relations in that moment as one of a “climate of liberalization.”⁶⁰³ A

⁶⁰² David Lambert and Alan Lester, “Introduction: Imperial Spaces, Imperial Subjects,” in *Colonial Lives across the British Empire: Imperial Careering in the Long Nineteenth Century*, ed. David Lambert and Alan Lester (Cambridge, UK ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006).

⁶⁰³ E. P. Thompson, “*Alien Homage*,” 71.

discourse of the Indianization of public institutions was ascendant as Indian beneficiaries of higher education in Britain returned to assume more positions in the areas of government, law, and education. Tagore's family background has been described as "a world in itself combining values of the past and the present in creative ways."⁶⁰⁴ Tagore's syncretic approach to both old and new cultural influences was of a piece with this world. His father, Debendranath Tagore, was a scholar and leader of the Brahmo Samaj, a Hindu reformist movement at the intellectual and spiritual vanguard of nineteenth-century Bengal.⁶⁰⁵ The Brahmo Samaj aimed to modernize Bengal through religious and social reform—an approach at odds with the Hindu-centered nationalism that privileged Hindu orthodoxy as essentially Indian.⁶⁰⁶ Tagore's views on engagement with the Western world evolved in the context of this reformist tradition that sought to integrate western influences into Indian culture to its benefit.

The new imperial history has demonstrated the usefulness of a unified field of analysis in which the histories of the British metropole and its colonies are brought together. What happened in the peripheries could have repercussions extending back to the imperial center, as research whose focus ranges from the economic to the cultural has demonstrated.⁶⁰⁷ The centrifugal motivation of colonialism and its corresponding power dynamics, however, tended to cast in a reactive light developments that emanated from

⁶⁰⁴ Uma Das Gupta, *Rabindranath Tagore: A Biography* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2004), 2.

⁶⁰⁵ See Michael Collins, *Empire, Nationalism and the Postcolonial World: Rabindranath Tagore's Writings on History, Politics and Society* (London: Routledge, 2012), 26-34. Collins gives an overview of nineteenth-century Bengali thought as it pertained to Tagore's development as a thinker in the form of Rammohun Roy, an early pioneer in India's intercourse with the West, and Debendranath Tagore, who in many ways followed in Rammohun's footsteps.

⁶⁰⁶ Krishna Kripalini, *Modern India: Rammohun Roy to Rabindranath Tagore* (Poona: University of Poona, 1965), 32.

⁶⁰⁷ John Gallagher and Ronald Robinson, "The Imperialism of Free Trade," *The Economic History Review*, Second series, Vol. VI, no. 1 (1953); Catherine Hall, *White, Male and Middle-Class: Explorations in Feminism and History* (New York: Routledge, 1992).

the colonies. “Inevitably,” Uma Das Gupta observes, “because of the colonial situation, the representatives of British culture dominated the [British Indian cultural] interaction.”⁶⁰⁸ Not only did the British make up the majority of the mobile population traveling between Britain and India, they occupied a position of power which gave them an advantage in determining the terms of interaction.⁶⁰⁹

The establishment of English literature as an academic subject in Bengal was an example of the cultural hegemony that . In sharp contrast, before Tagore’s Nobel Prize, consciousness of Indian poetry in the West was virtually non-existent. English literature was a staple of the curriculum even in rural outposts such as Bankura, where Thompson taught the subject. In Calcutta, it was first taught in the 1820s. As a university discipline, English Literature emerged in the colonies as a degree-yielding subject at the University of Calcutta in the 1880s, well before the same became true for Oxford or Cambridge. Indeed, literary scholar Amit Chaudhuri has traced “the incursion of English and European literary texts into Bengal” to the preceding century.⁶¹⁰ Gauri Viswanathan has argued that this literary curriculum was introduced as a screen for colonial economic exploitation rather than as an end in and of itself.⁶¹¹ While she rightly gestures to the material ramifications of the institutionalization of cultural hegemony, this argument leaves unaddressed the question of how those such as Tagore drew upon English literature as a resource. Tagore detested formal education, eluding in his youth all attempts to set him on a degree-yielding path. But he was well-read in English literature,

⁶⁰⁸ Uma Das Gupta, *Rabindranath Tagore: A Biography* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2004), 6.

⁶⁰⁹ Michael Herbert Fisher, *Counterflows to Colonialism: Indian Travellers and Settlers in Britain, 1600-1857* (Delhi: Permanent Black, 2004), 1.

⁶¹⁰ Amit Chaudhuri, preface to *The Essential Tagore* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2011), xxii.

⁶¹¹ Gauri Viswanathan, *Masks of Conquest: Literary Study and British Rule in India* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1989).

which before the launching of his international career served as a primary means of what knowledge he might glean of Britain by way of such indirect avenues. His appreciation of it was evidenced in gestures such as the composition of a poem on the occasion of the [Shakespeare Society of England's celebration of] Shakespeare's tercentenary.⁶¹²

Tagore took seriously the call to intercultural exchange to which the milieu in which he developed as a thinker predisposed him. In fact, he interpreted what he deemed the British failure to rise to that occasion—the relative dearth of scholars “who have studied Indian literature and philosophy with any amount of sympathetic insight or thoroughness” in comparison to Germany or France—as yet another sign of the detrimental influence of the British colonial domination of India.⁶¹³ “Englishmen can never truly understand India,” Tagore alleged in his 1916 lecture tour of Japan, “because their minds are not disinterested with regard to that country.”⁶¹⁴ In other words, Tagore asserted that colonial—and nationalist—interests especially impeded the meaningful dialogue of cultures.

On a personal note, however, Thompson's visit came on the heels of Tagore's warm reception in England in 1912. He traveled there for the first time since his teens, both to seek medical treatment and at the recommendation of the painter William Rothenstein, who had expressed interest in Tagore's writing and offered his hospitality should Tagore visit London.⁶¹⁵ Juxtaposed against the recent unpleasantness Tagore faced from fellow Bengalis when his novel *Gora* provoked controversy and police

⁶¹² Sabyasachi Bhattacharya, *Rabindranath Tagore: An Interpretation* (New Delhi: Viking, Penguin Books India, 2011), 275.

⁶¹³ Rabindranath Tagore, *The English Writings of Rabindranath Tagore*, ed. Mohit Kumar Ray (New Delhi: Atlantic Publishers & Distributors, 2007), 495.

⁶¹⁴ Tagore, *English Writings*, 495.

⁶¹⁵ Krishna Dutta and Andrew Robinson, *Rabindranath Tagore: The Myriad-Minded Man* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1996), 160.

surveillance of his school, the chance to pursue sympathetic contacts abroad offered an appealing alternative.⁶¹⁶

The episode as retold by Thompson suggests the motivations and aspirations that informed his lifelong involvement in the pursuit of Indo-British cooperation despite the difficulties it entailed. Long before Thompson imagined writing his Tagore studies—indeed only after meeting Tagore a second time—he had already written up a document in the literary convention of the “familiar letter” that Bray has discussed. Thompson’s sense of the public implications of bridging borders of national identification shaped his choice of the form in which he chose to memorialize the intimacy of the experience. Much in the way that the association between Tagore and Thompson signified both publicly and privately for the latter, the written artifact spanned the public and private when Thompson circulated it amongst friends.⁶¹⁷ The commemorative narrative both told a story of friendship and enacted it in a gesture of what Bray has termed “an intimacy that [...] potentially has its spectators.”⁶¹⁸

In addition to drawing his friends into the experience as witnesses, Thompson wrote the account on November 17—only two days after his visit. It was not written retrospectively after the fact of Tagore becoming a significant presence in Thompson’s life. Rather, Thompson projected his future hopes for the association onto a single charmed day with Tagore. As a contemporaneous record, the account can either be read as Thompson’s almost immediate recognition of the encounter as meaningful—regardless of whether that prediction was realized OR Between the remarkable

⁶¹⁶ Dutta and Robinson, *Rabindranath Tagore*, 159.

⁶¹⁷ It was technically a private account; only decades after Thompson’s death was an abbreviated version first published in the *London Review of Books*, 22 May 1986.

⁶¹⁸ Bray, *Friend*, 51.

coincidence of his bearing witness to news of Tagore's Nobel Prize and the promise of intellectual community, Thompson's idealized account belied the arduous days-long process of his first attempt to meet Tagore and instead looked optimistically to a future based on one exceptionally auspicious day.

On the one hand, Thompson drew on the conventions of literary friendship in depicting aspects of his visit to that of a world apart insulated from outside intrusions. The opening scene in a garden was reminiscent of the pastoral landscape of Elizabethan verse Bray has noted as a literary convention for their depiction of friendship grounded in a shared love of letters.⁶¹⁹ "Rabi"—Thompson already referred to Tagore by this nickname—"was in his favourite seat, under thick bushes."⁶²⁰ Tagore took him into the grove, and they sat with a small table between them upon which rested manuscripts—new translations of Tagore's poetry. Unlike their first conversation in Calcutta, a mere twenty minutes impeded upon by the presence of "2 secretaries, v. ordinary-looking babus, in the room all the time," whom Thompson dubbed "a nuisance," it was just the two of them and the poetry.⁶²¹

On the other, the outside world eventually intruded conspicuously in the news of the Nobel Prize that served as the centerpiece of Thompson's narrative. As an instance of the ostensible recognition on the part of the West of the merit of Eastern culture, however, it facilitated the symbolic meaning with which Thompson imbued it. Amidst the excitement, Thompson marveled at the "honour of being the first Englishman to congratulate [Tagore]." "I would not have swapped being the one outsider there on this

⁶¹⁹ Bray, *Friend*, 44.

⁶²⁰ Thompson Papers, Ms.Eng.c. 5329, folio 43.

⁶²¹ Lago, *India's Prisoner*, 87.

night of madness for anything,” he wrote.⁶²² Thompson thus articulated the significance of his presence at that moment in terms of his outsider status. In doing so, he highlighted the role he played as an English representative of sorts. Thompson’s awareness of the less than amicable nature of the colonial relationship between their respective communities lent itself to thus positioning himself as the exception and thereby —by extension— perhaps exceptional.

As a *littérateur* and missionary, Thompson came from a background that brought together cosmopolitan humanism and a “Christian universalism.”⁶²³ Through this universalist lens, Tagore represented for Thompson the apex of Indian culture to which he hoped to introduce the English-speaking world. He foregrounded his Englishness because it was in that capacity that his presence on the scene personalized and reinforced the signification of the Nobel Prize as Western recognition of Eastern culture. This added a layer of meaning to the tableau otherwise absent had the onlookers been comprised solely of Santiniketan residents. Of the latter, Thompson noted how the students “didn’t know what the Nobel prize was, but they understood that the gurudev they adored had done something wonderful, as indeed he was always doing.”⁶²⁴ The implication was that Thompson, who was not only cognizant of what the Nobel Prize was but projected much onto what Tagore’s win might signify for East-West relations, could contribute a perspective more discerning than the appealing—but uninformed—adulation by which he was surrounded. In addition to articulating the symbolic significance of his subject

⁶²² Thompson Papers, Ms.Eng.c. 5329, folio 47.

⁶²³ Catherine Hall, *Civilising Subjects: Metropole and Colony in the English Imagination, 1830-1867* (Cambridge: Polity, 2002).

⁶²⁴ Thompson Papers, Ms.Eng.c. 5329, folio 48.

position in terms of nationality, Thompson thus gestured to what he might contribute substantively by way of his judgment—which by virtue of his national affiliation later informed Tagore’s negative reaction to Thompson’s books.

On that day, however, Thompson found his judgment in demand and acceded with enthusiasm. Upon Tagore’s invitation, Thompson took to the English translations the poet proffered and in the space of a day “I found I had made about 300 pencillings in nearly 150 poems.”⁶²⁵ Thompson detailed the literary turn of their conversation as it turned from W. B. Yeats’s introductory essay to *Gitanjali*, Tagore’s Nobel Prize-winning collection of poems—which Thompson pronounced “misleading and ill-informed”—to quoting favorite passages from Milton.⁶²⁶ Thompson showed himself to be opinionated, and he did not hesitate to share those opinions. Furthermore, he did not limit his judgment to the realm of the literary.

Michael Collins has characterized the “liberal politics of friendship” with regard to India as it was embodied by Thompson and C. F. Andrews, an Anglican priest who became friendly with Tagore early on, as divergent interpretations of a Christian idea of atonement.⁶²⁷ Unlike Andrews, who assimilated himself to Indian culture—assuming a beard and robes—and became convinced of the superiority of the East, Thompson’s approach was a critical engagement with Indians that was premised on the integrity of identity.⁶²⁸ In the excitement of the Nobel news, as the denizens of Santiniketan—“masters, boys, servants”—touched Tagore’s feet in homage, Thompson reflected in his

⁶²⁵ Thompson Papers, Ms.Eng.c. 5329, folio 49.

⁶²⁶ Thompson Papers, Ms.Eng.c. 5329, folio 46.

⁶²⁷ Michael Collins, *Empire, Nationalism and the Postcolonial World: Rabindranath Tagore’s Writings on History, Politics and Society* (New York: Routledge, 2012), 19.

⁶²⁸ Collins, *Empire*, 132.

account that “I cd. have done it myself almost.⁶²⁹” Collins identified this stopping short of immersion as what set Thompson apart from Andrews. “I am an Englishman,” Thompson continued, anticipating some of his later critiques of Andrews—the two had not yet met at this point—“and have a stern contempt for the fools who pretend they are easterners.”⁶³⁰

One of the ways that Thompson articulated this specific subject position with regard to the nation was through the negative identification of those “fools” and others whose positions he viewed critically. Over the course of his first sustained conversation with Tagore, a number of such compatriots who had crossed over to the Indian side came up. Invariably, Thompson conveyed his disapproval. For instance, Thompson recorded that he mentioned in conversation Sister Nivedita—Margaret Noble, an Irishwoman who went by that name after coming to India in 1898 as a disciple of the philosopher Swami Vivekananda. For the most part, Thompson recorded himself as acting as interlocutor to Tagore, and the account centers on the insights Tagore offers. At the same time, Thompson’s questions implied his perspective. Of Sister Nivedita, he asked: “Wasn’t she responsible for a lot of the bloodshed in Bengal?”⁶³¹ Of “Anna Bhai”—theosophist Annie Besant—Thompson went so far as to state that “[s]he’s never done any good, I think.”⁶³² And each time, he presented himself aligned with Tagore’s perspective or vice versa. Thompson admitted that the alterations he made to Tagore’s “hypercritical.”⁶³³ But his account demonstrates that this tendency permeated his general outlook.

⁶²⁹ Thompson Papers, Ms.Eng.c. 5329, folio 48.

⁶³⁰ Thompson Papers, Ms.Eng.c. 5329, folio 48.

⁶³¹ Thompson Papers, Ms.Eng.c. 5329, folio 43.

⁶³² Thompson Papers, Ms.Eng.c. 5329, folio 44.

⁶³³ Thompson Papers, Ms.Eng.c. 5329, folio 44.

Thompson's sense of Tagore's fundamental agreement on those matters most important to him—literature and Indo-British relations—cast a rose-hued tint over the account as a whole. At the same time, this suggested one of the fault lines present from the outset. At Santiniketan, Tagore had “always agreed” to the corrections Thompson penciled on his manuscript.⁶³⁴ This impression of spontaneous agreement was soon belied by Tagore's change of heart. After sending Thompson home on November 15 with manuscripts and a request for corrections on the English translations therein, Tagore withdrew that invitation in a letter written mere days later. “While you were minutely going over my ms.,” he confessed, “your very kindness embarrassed me and prevented me from being frank with you—which was foolish on my part and absurdly oriental—and for which I have been feeling ashamed ever since.”⁶³⁵ What Tagore then proceeded to lay out as his frank position amounted to a polite dismissal:

The Gitanjali poems are intimately personal to me and the pleasure I have of polishing their English version is of a different nature from that of an author revising his works for publication. Every line of these should be as closely my own as possible though I must labour under the disadvantage of not being born to your language. In such a case I have to be guided by my instinct, allowing it to work almost unconsciously without being hindered by more than casual suggestions from outside [...] I must go on with my work unaided till I have done what is in my power to do.⁶³⁶

This became a pattern in their subsequent relations, in which Tagore then—not two months later—proposed discussing with Thompson the translation of his short stories.⁶³⁷

⁶³⁴ Thompson Papers, Ms.Eng.c. 5329, folio 44.

⁶³⁵ Rabindranath Tagore to Edward J. Thompson, Santiniketan, 18-20 November 1913. Thompson Papers, Ms.Eng.c. 5318, folio 4.

⁶³⁶ Rabindranath Tagore to Edward J. Thompson, Santiniketan, 18-20 November 1913. Thompson Papers, Ms.Eng.c. 5318, folios 4-5.

⁶³⁷ Rabindranath Tagore to Edward J. Thompson, Patisahr, 13 January 1914. Thompson Papers, Ms.Eng.c. 5318, folios 18-19. E. P. Thompson has chronicled in some detail the exchanges through which the subsequent debacle developed in “*Alien Homage*,” 16-24. For an account of the whole episode, see Mary Lago, *Imperfect Encounter*, Chapter IV.

Tagore by turn encouraged Thompson, thanking the latter for suggestions on his manuscripts—“I think I shall accept all of them with a few exceptions”—only to put him off again as he did when he announced to Thompson that “I have made up my mind to ask him [C. F. Andrews] to work with me in translating my stories, thus to add to the income of my school.”⁶³⁸ This dragged on for eight years. And contrary to Tagore’s previous reassurance regarding his intent to formally credit his translators, Thompson’s efforts were ultimately published without attribution after alterations—which he largely considered to be for the worse—made by either the publisher, Macmillans, or C. F. Andrews.⁶³⁹

While Thompson took the Nobel Prize news as a propitious sign, the prize became a source of Tagore’s ambivalence regarding his role as a public intellectual. The Nobel Prize was a double-edged sword for Tagore. On one hand, it provided him with an international platform as he traveled all over the world on speaking tours. On the other, he frequently professed his distaste for the distractions it posed to his needs as a writer. “I get troubled here [in Santiniketan] by all sorts of people who have no right to come,” Thompson recorded Tagore as complaining; the implication was that Thompson was not one of those people⁶⁴⁰—at the time.

Later developments suggested that Thompson’s sense of spontaneous accord with Tagore was a product of the brevity of that encounter at Santiniketan. Thompson referred

⁶³⁸ Rabindranath Tagore to Edward J. Thompson, Jorasanko, 1 January 1914. Thompson Papers, Ms.Eng.c. 5318, folio 16; Rabindranath Tagore to Edward J. Thompson, Shilida, 24 February 1914. Thompson Papers, Ms.Eng.c. 5318, folios 33-34. Thompson could not afford to do the translations without a fee, and Tagore at the time was intent on raising funds for Santiniketan.

⁶³⁹ E. P. Thompson has suggested the possibility that his father excluded from his major study of Tagore a section on the short stories--despite having initially drafted one--because a critical account could not avoid “the distasteful questions of the quality of the translations, the role of C. F. Andrews, and, possibly, the poet’s [Tagore’s] own complicity.” “*Alien Homage*,” 24.

⁶⁴⁰ Thompson Papers, Ms.Eng.c. 5329, folio 63.

to his experience at Santiniketan as “one of [his] most intimate experiences”—unreservedly and without qualification. “It is no exaggeration to say that I loved him long before the evening was done,” he wrote.⁶⁴¹ These are strong words for an association that at this point had been in existence for less than two months and amounted to two meetings, the first of which had lasted a mere twenty minutes. Not that intimacy and love need be quantitatively determined. Thompson described the Santiniketan visit as qualitatively distinct from the everyday drudgery of teaching high school at Bankura. After participating in a game of cricket with some of the boys, Thompson acceded to requests that he address them “on the big treeless plain behind, in the moonlight.”⁶⁴² Away from the formal classrooms of Bankura and the pressures of a rigid educational system focused narrowly on test scores, Thompson could interact with these students on what felt to him to be a more intimate level. “I felt more at home than I had yet done in India,” he reflected, “and we became great friends.”⁶⁴³ Rather than what in the quantitative terms of time spent amounted to Thompson’s actual home in India—Bankura—it was the first impressions at Santiniketan that imparted to him the subjective feeling of finally being at home among “great friends.” The short duration of the visit may have heightened Thompson’s sense of intimacy rather than detracting from it. Love could be inspired by first sight, but friendship developed over an extended period during which the frictions of lived interactions had ample opportunity to emerge. Thompson’s love stemmed from a certainty of Tagore’s greatness. Friendship as engagement, however, was the means by which Thompson’s perspective of India evolved. It was because he continued to engage with Tagore and his other friends in India that the

⁶⁴¹ Thompson Papers, Ms.Eng.c. 5329, folio 63.

⁶⁴² Thompson Papers, Ms.Eng.c. 5329, folio 63.

collision of their respective viewpoints eventually led him to better appreciate the political dimensions of his assessments of Indian culture.

Love, Friendship, and the Republic of Letters

Thompson's profession of love need to be situated within a discursive tradition that posited a special relationship between Britain and India. Historian Thomas Trautmann has critiqued Edward's Said's analysis of colonial relations for the bluntness of its categories. Working in the vein of Bernard S. Cohn and his colonial sociology of India, Trautmann focuses on the particular contribution made by Orientalists—more specifically, the British Sanskritists—to the production of knowledge on India. Cohn's work previously demonstrated that current-day knowledge of India is a product of the colonial situation that was shaped by multiple groups—Orientalists, missionaries, officials—with a range of agendas. Of these, Trautmann focuses on the British Sanskritists in particular for their influence on how the concept of race was understood in relation to India. They supplied the foundation for British ethnologies of India via their particular interpretation of the Indo-European or Aryan concept. As Trautmann points out, the idea of an Aryan people, “the human substrate of the family of languages called Indo-European,” maintained a general consistency in its intrinsic form as opposed to its external application to the opposite ends of inclusion or exclusion.⁶⁴⁴

While the concept functioned primarily as an exclusive one on the European continent, from the British perspective on India, the Aryan idea was called upon to mark the kinship between the two nations. The term “Orientalism” is now burdened with the weight of accounting for “any European pronouncement about the Orient that is made

⁶⁴³ Thompson Papers, Ms.Eng.c. 5329, folio 58.

⁶⁴⁴ Thomas R. Trautmann, *Aryans and British India* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), 5.

with a show of authority”—what Trautmann calls the “Saidian expansionary redefinition of Orientalism.”⁶⁴⁵ In its original historical context, however, the term was used by contemporaries to signify a specific field of study in which scholars who knew Asian languages took the Orient as their subject and this inclusive variation of the Aryan idea as a guiding principle. The imperialist project comprised a range of colonial types, who espoused different views of Indo-British relations; among these, Orientalists subscribed to a vision of British rule that worked through some form of “love”—which Trautmann paints broadly as variously definable in terms “of solidarity, of ‘firm attachment,’ loyalty, or friendship.”⁶⁴⁶

Love—or friendship—functioned as political rhetoric in this strain of thought. In larger discussions about Indian policy, the Orientalist position maintained the need to inculcate in Indians a love for the British regime. Trautmann points out how this was distinct from promoting concrete relations of love or friendship between actual Indian and British individuals. The politics of love were grounded less in fact and more in the realm of representation. In other words, British Orientalists theorized their approach to Indian policy as one that promoted affection between ruler and ruled.

Trautmann differentiates between historical Orientalism and the Saidian expansionary definition of Orientalism. His intervention lies in an excavation of a particular thread of thought in colonial governance and its significance from the undifferentiated jumble of views that the term Orientalism in its current-day sense has come to designate. The latter has come to include all European representations of the Orient, authored either by Orientalists in the strict technical sense of the term or others.

⁶⁴⁵ Trautmann, *Aryans and British India*, 20.

⁶⁴⁶ Trautmann, *Aryans and British India*, 15.

This is problematic because some of those others stood on the opposite side of the debate in their anti-Orientalist rejection of the politics of love. Orientalism as understood through Said conflates positions that are not only different but go so far as to be diametrically opposed. The anti-Orientalist rejectionism that increasingly came to dominate Indian policy over the course of the nineteenth century and beyond was simultaneously informed by and hostile to the contemporary Orientalism produced by Orientalists. Trautmann's formulation of the love story as a salient narrative device is relevant to a discussion of Thompson in that the latter serves as a window into the praxis of friendship, a counterpoint to the Orientalists' rhetoric of friendship.

For Thompson, letters constituted the basis of that praxis. E. P. Thompson's use of the term "republic of letters" reflects the concept's simultaneous "historical specificity and ideal universality" as noted by historian Dena Goodman.⁶⁴⁷ The historical Republic of Letters refers to the intellectual community that emerged in seventeenth-century Europe in which "private persons learned to use their reason publicly" in a spirit of reciprocal exchange based on a model of friendship distinct from the primary institutions of the early modern social world: the absolutist state, corporative society, and the family.⁶⁴⁸ At the same time, Goodman has observed that while the concept only came into common usage at the end of that century, once established, it gave rise to its own far-reaching history beyond its origins in the Enlightenment to ancient Greece and Rome. It has also projected itself forward as a critical position "at odds with the dominant culture and [questioning] its hegemony" as Goodman traces it "in the forms in which it still

⁶⁴⁷ Dena Goodman, *The Republic of Letters: A Cultural History of the French Enlightenment* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1994), 16.

⁶⁴⁸ Goodman, *Republic*, 15.

exists.”⁶⁴⁹ The term gestures to how Thompson’s enthusiasm for Tagore and Bengali literature was borne of a critique of mainstream British indifference to Indian culture. For Thompson, Tagore’s Nobel Prize validated his vision of an egalitarian republic of letters in which literary merit reigned supreme. Tagore’s position on the colonized side of the divide, however, made him ambivalent about what he might achieve through his “European” reputation.

Cosmopolitan Networks

That reputation emerged at the intersection of the British liberal internationalism of the period and multiple axes of cosmopolitan identification. Cosmopolitanism has emerged in tandem with increasingly transnational approaches as a way of thinking beyond dominant national frameworks in the writing of history. While it has constituted a significant area of research in philosophy, social theory, sociology, and cultural studies for over a decade, historians’ rediscovery of the theme has been more recent.⁶⁵⁰ The interdisciplinary conversation has been driven by the twofold motivation to “understand cosmopolitanism in the past and present as both an idea with its own intellectual history and social, political, or cultural practice.”⁶⁵¹ As an idea, cosmopolitanism has developed in step with its politically more successful counterpart, nationalism. In light of the heated nationalist conflicts of recent history, scholars have marshaled the concept to consider

⁶⁴⁹ Goodman, *Republic*, 2.

⁶⁵⁰ Glenda Sluga and Julia Horne, “Cosmopolitanism: Its Past and Practices,” *Journal of World History* 21, no. 3 (2010): 369. Sluga and Horne distinguish contemporary interest in historically situating cultural and political forms of cosmopolitanism from older histories such as Friedrich Meinecke’s *Cosmopolitanism and the National State* (1907), which drew a teleological narrative of the inevitable ascendance of nations over cosmopolitan states.

⁶⁵¹ Sluga and Horne, “Cosmopolitanism,” 370.

alternative modes of relating to others across borders.⁶⁵² The notion of the cosmopolitan as someone “whose allegiance is to the worldwide community of human beings” is an ideal that those seeking to counter the exclusionary impulses of nationalism trace back to classical ideas of “world citizenship” and to Immanuel Kant’s vision of cosmopolitanism as a form of ethical world politics.⁶⁵³

The disjunct between ideals of solidarity encompassing all of humanity and the apparent limits of their applicability in the real world, however, have led scholars to reconsider how to use the concept. In the past, for proponents of nationalism, cosmopolitanism served as a foil for the earnest political engagement borne of nationalist attachments. Its critics have argued that the absence at the transnational level of feeling or action comparable to nationalist sentiment and its elevation of nation as something worth dying for—“the most universally legitimate value in the political life of our time,” as Benedict Anderson puts it—indicates the shortcomings of cosmopolitanism as a call to action.⁶⁵⁴ From this perspective, the bare fact of common humanity proves unequal to marshaling adequate solidarity.⁶⁵⁵ On a related note, not only has cosmopolitanism been found wanting in its potential to inspire sufficient attachment, it has been criticized on the grounds that “to pass outside the borders of one’s nation, whether by physical travel or merely by thoughts and feelings entertained while one stays at home, is to wallow in a

⁶⁵² For a discussion of the timeliness of this interest in relation to the contemporary state of the debate on multiculturalism in the U.S. and the resurgence of nationalism after the Cold War, see Bruce Robbins, “Introduction Part I: Actually Existing Cosmopolitanism,” in *Cosmopolitics: Thinking and Feeling beyond the Nation*, ed. Pheng Cheah and Bruce Robbins (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1998), 12–14.

⁶⁵³ Martha C. Nussbaum, “Patriotism and Cosmopolitanism,” in *The Cosmopolitanism Reader*, ed. Garrett Wallace Brown and David Held (Cambridge, UK: Polity, 2010), 155. See also Martha C. Nussbaum, “Kant and Cosmopolitanism,” in *Perpetual Peace: Essays on Kant’s Cosmopolitan Ideal*, ed. James Bohman and Matthias Lutz-Bachmann (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1997).

⁶⁵⁴ Benedict R. O’G Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, rev. ed. (London: Verso, 1991), 3.

privileged and irresponsible detachment.”⁶⁵⁶ Understood as detachment from location and consequently from political action, cosmopolitanism was unfavorably contrasted against nationalism as a form of spectatorship. Frantz Fanon has written disparagingly of “the profoundly cosmopolitan mold that [the national middle class’s] mind is set in.”⁶⁵⁷ Central as the nation-state has been to the development of politics as a concept, interests unaligned with that of the nation tend not to immediately register as political. One way to articulate the more limited plurality of cosmopolitanisms as they exist in the world has been to consider them “a reality of (re)attachment, multiple attachment, or attachment at a distance,” as Bruce Robbins puts it.⁶⁵⁸ In a world of multiple cosmopolitanisms, the visions of Tagore and Thompson diverged in crucial ways. Thompson considered himself in a position to “serve” Tagore and India, while Tagore was in no position to reciprocate in kind, given the Indo-British colonial relationship. Instead, he looked out to a wider world as evidenced by his Pan-Asian orientation.⁶⁵⁹

While Tagore himself rejected the term “cosmopolitanism,” his privileging of “creative dialogue with the cultural elite of the colonial power” as a mode of resistance is in line with its broad definition as an orientation towards universal humanity.⁶⁶⁰ Tagore’s notion of resistance thus existed in tension with Gandhi’s non-cooperation movement, which argued for the rejection of the British. Tagore’s engagement with like-minded interlocutors hailing from afar began gradually even before the Nobel Prize set

⁶⁵⁵ See Richard Rorty, “Solidarity or Objectivity?,” in *Post-Analytic Philosophy*, ed. John Rajchman and Cornel West (New York: Columbia University Press, 1985), 3-19.

⁶⁵⁶ Robbins, “Introduction Part I,” 4.

⁶⁵⁷ Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth* (New York: Grove Press, 1963), 149.

⁶⁵⁸ Bruce Robbins, “Introduction Part I: Actually Existing Cosmopolitanism,” in *Cosmopolitics: Thinking and Feeling beyond the Nation*, ed. Pheng Cheah and Bruce Robbins, Cultural Politics 14 (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1998), 3.

⁶⁵⁹ E. J. Thompson, General Correspondence. Ms.Eng.c. 5302 folio 136

⁶⁶⁰ Collins, *Empire*, 20-21.

Tagore on his international career. In 1911, he came into contact with Okakura Tenshin through the networks of international artists that his nephews—both painters.⁶⁶¹ Okakura was a Japanese scholar and cultural bureaucrat, who played a pivotal role in the contemporary development of Japanese aesthetics. He and Tagore became close, and Okakura's vision of a singular Asian civilization informed Tagore's own burgeoning view of Indian culture in that context. Okakura died in 1913 but before doing so had requested that Tagore visit the Far East, which inspired the latter's 1916 tour of Japan. Personal friendship gave rise to the imagining of civilizational affinities. And friendship was again extended beyond death by way of the traces that continued to signify for the living friend.

In a world where national conflicts led up to the First World War and its aftermath, a diffuse global network through which cosmopolitan sympathies could be channeled emerged. These affinities were not necessarily political in any organized sense of the word; while Okakura's ideas were used to justify Japanese aggression in the East, he articulated them in the first place as a theory of aesthetics.⁶⁶² There were political implications—as evidenced by such applications of Okakura's ideas. An ethics of friendship by which such affinities could be projected onto certain global figures prompted Hardy to display a large photograph of Lenin in his private rooms.⁶⁶³ Similarly, his two-year stint as President of the Association of Scientific Workers was intended to “show his allegiances,” meaning his ...⁶⁶⁴ His open display of Lenin in a way was not unlike his posthumous commemoration of Ramanujan. Similarly, Jane Addams,

⁶⁶¹ Dutta and Robinson, *Rabindranath Tagore*, 159.

⁶⁶² Brij Tankha, *Okakura Tenshin and Pan-Asianism Shadows of the Past* (Folkestone: Global Oriental, 2009).

⁶⁶³ Snow, “Foreword,” 41.

the American social reformer and peace activist, not only had a picture of the Russian writer Leo Tolstoy in her office, but she traveled to Russia to see him in person.

Tagore began to signify as such a global personality after winning the Nobel Prize. When he first set out in 1912 to launch his poetry in England, his works were little known outside Bengal.⁶⁶⁵ He then went on a tour in the U.S., where he had begun to make a name for himself. As demand increased after he won the prize, Tagore's foreign lecture tours continued until his last visit to Sri Lanka in 1934, at which point his health prevented him from traveling extensively. His poetry was translated not only into English but also Spanish, Chinese, Japanese, and Russian among other languages; he was in fact Germany's first best-seller.⁶⁶⁶ Literary critic Amit Chaudhuri has gone so far as to argue that Tagore was the world's "first international literary celebrity."⁶⁶⁷

Before Tagore, however, there had been Leo Tolstoy, another famous writer, who inspired a movement grounded in an ethics of friendship. Tolstoy's admirers formed a pacifist movement broadly based on a universal affinity for humankind. Increasingly concerned by the suffering he saw caused by poverty and violence, Tolstoy espoused adherence to ethical commitments as a solution. Tolstoy first became known in Russia in the 1850s for his military tales and autobiographical fiction before he became known throughout Europe by the 1880s after the publication of various shorter works as well as his two great novels, *War and Peace* and *Anna Karenina*.⁶⁶⁸ Translations of his work were widespread, although it was not until later in the 1880s that he reached British and

⁶⁶⁴ Snow, "Foreword," 42.

⁶⁶⁵ Alam and Chakravarty 9

⁶⁶⁶ Chaudhuri discusses the global reach of Tagore's poetry in terms of the English Gitanjali as an early example of the capitalist phenomenon of book fetishization. Chaudhuri, preface, xx.

⁶⁶⁷ Amit Chaudhuri, "Preface," in *The Essential Tagore: Rabindranath Tagore*, by Rabindranath Tagore, ed. Fakrul Alam and Radha Chakravarty (London: Belknap, 2011), xx.

⁶⁶⁸ Cracraft, *Two Shining Souls*, 8.

American readers via French editions. In the English-speaking world, notable advocates such as literary critics Matthew Arnold and William Dean Howells published admiring essays that introduced him to larger audiences.⁶⁶⁹ For the period of almost thirty years preceding his death in 1910, Tolstoy concentrated his efforts into a proliferation of writing on the related subjects of religion and politics, with an emphasis on the former.⁶⁷⁰

Tolstoy stopped short of detailing a positive program for change, but he put forward a code of ethics from which his followers drew the implication that political change might come from the accretion of individuals striving for moral perfection. In Tolstoy's loosely defined vision of moral society, brotherly love constituted the basis for what amounted to "a primitive, anarchistic, agrarian society [...] unaggressive and vegetarian, hard-working, with no division of labour (every man providing for himself), no money, no commerce, and presumably with little intercourse with other people at all."⁶⁷¹ It was a highly improbable picture, but Gandhi's South African experiment in commune living took its inspiration from Tolstoy. Tagore and Tolstoy never met; indeed, Tolstoy died in 1910 and had never read any of Tagore's work. But in 1935, Tagore received a letter from one of the latter's sons, Count Michael Tolstoy, which misidentified him as "my father's friend."⁶⁷² Separate from whether they had met, they existed on the same public plane of contemporary cosmopolitan affinities in the minds of those looking beyond the nation for solidarity.

It was in such a capacity that Thompson viewed Tagore's potential for facilitating connections across borders. Despite Thompson's personal difficulties with Tagore,

⁶⁶⁹ Cracraft, *Two Shining Souls*, 9-10.

⁶⁷⁰ Anthony Briggs, *Leo Tolstoy* (London: Hesperus, 2009), 82.

⁶⁷¹ Anthony Briggs, *Leo Tolstoy* (London: Hesperus, 2009), 82.

⁶⁷² Dutta and Robinson, *Rabindranath Tagore*, 33.

however, he continued to espouse Tagore's work as an exemplary conduit for Indo-British relations of a mutually beneficial nature. And the one advantage Thompson gained from his involvement in the years-long translation work was that it brought him into contact with the coterie of aesthetically-minded intellectuals who gathered around Tagore. In 1914, Thompson met and struck up a friendship with Brajendranath Seal, the neo-Hegelian philosopher and critic, who came to replace Tagore as a mentor figure over the course of Thompson's travails regarding the translation of Tagore's short stories. Seal too was part of Tagore's circle, although in this case, the circumstances of their chance meeting did not in fact involve the poet.⁶⁷³ But as one of the earliest critics to take note of Tagore's work, Seal offered Thompson a sounding board for the latter's understanding and appreciation of the poet's writing.

Tagore figured as an important part of Thompson's association with Seal as well as in the case of his friendship with Prasanta Mahalanobis, who after a successful stint at Cambridge—where he had also crossed paths with none other than Srinivasa Ramanujan—went on to later become India's preeminent statistician. When Thompson first met him in 1916, Mahalanobis was a young colleague of Seal's at Presidency College in Calcutta, seven years Thompson's junior. He was closely aligned with Tagore, serving as co-secretary of the Visva-Bharati Society, charged with raising funds for the university Tagore established at Santiniketan. Mahalanobis also boasted extensive knowledge of Tagore's body of writing. Instead of Tagore, whose availability to field Thompson's inquiries was limited, Mahalanobis served as Thompson's primary consultant as Thompson drafted his studies on Tagore.

⁶⁷³ Thompson commented to a correspondent "how different are my relations with these 2 great Indians," concluding that "Rabi [Tagore] is the greater writer, Sil the greater mind & greater man."

The books offended many Bengali readers at the time of its publication. Indeed, Thompson's friendship with Seal foundered after the 1921 publication of the first book. In light of the fact that Thompson dedicated the book to Seal, this turn of affairs would appear to have come as a surprise to Thompson. Tagore's own response was diplomatic if less than enthusiastic: "I am sure you have tried to be fair in your estimate of my works."⁶⁷⁴ In the case of the longer second book, however, Tagore launched a scathing repudiation that set the tone for subsequent critiques. Pronouncing it "one of the most absurd books that I have ever read dealing with a poet's life and writings," he faulted Thompson's "imperfect" grasp of Bengali and training as a missionary for what he perceived to be Thompson's misrepresentation of his work.⁶⁷⁵ More recently, the books drew further criticism as a later generation of translators and critics in the West set out to recover Tagore's work and reputation outside India and Bangladesh. Accordingly, Thompson's work has been characterized as the flawed product of an outlook "limited by his missionary and British Imperial background."⁶⁷⁶ This aligns with Tagore's indictment of the book in which Thompson's missionary background served as a shorthand explanation for what Tagore took to be as the author's "want of respect" for his subject.⁶⁷⁷

E. P. Thompson writes against the charges that his father approached Tagore's work in an attitude of superiority borne of playing the part of metropolitan judge to

⁶⁷⁴ Rabindranath Tagore to Edward J. Thompson, Santiniketan, 20 September 1921. Thompson Papers, Ms.Eng.c. 5318, folio 120.

⁶⁷⁵ Rabindranath Tagore to William Rothenstein, 20 April 1927, in Mary Lago, ed., *Imperfect Encounter: Letters of William Rothenstein and Rabindranath Tagore, 1911-1941* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1972), 320.

⁶⁷⁶ Rabindranath Tagore, *Selected Poems*, trans. William Radice, Penguin Modern Classics (New York: Penguin Books, 1985), 8.

culture in the colonies. His account of his father's writing process reveals the underlying anxieties that were subsumed in the confident tone of the final product. He shows that Edward Thompson relied heavily on Mahalanobis in his writing process, writing to him once or twice a week with questions or drafts.⁶⁷⁷ In fact, the tone of authoritative evaluation commonly criticized as "over-self-confidence and dogmatic manner" belied an uncertainty about his fitness for the task.⁶⁷⁸ At one point in 1920, Edward Thompson urged Mahalanobis to take it up in his stead: "I am very strongly of opinion that you shd. do the Rabine bk. for wh. the West is waiting."⁶⁷⁹ E. P. Thompson thus points out the collaborative impulse in his father's turn to "authentic primary input from Bengali culture."⁶⁸⁰ In effect, he refutes the notion that the missteps in the books reflected an uncritical reiteration of imperial hegemony. Edward Thompson made a concerted effort to incorporate Bengali perspectives and went so far as to suggest that the task at hand would be better served by someone like Mahalanobis.

Nevertheless, E. P. Thompson concurs with the consensus that "both books are flawed."⁶⁸¹ Separate from any assessment of the literary component of the studies, which he readily admits himself unqualified to evaluate, E. P. Thompson considers the books in light of their status as artifacts shaped at "the interface of two cultures," bearing the traces of "the actualities of that difficult exchange."⁶⁸² Setting aside the substance of Edward Thompson's evaluative judgments of Tagore's writing, E. P. Thompson has noted how

⁶⁷⁷ Rabindranath Tagore to William Rothenstein, 20 April 1927, in Mary Lago, ed., *Imperfect Encounter: Letters of William Rothenstein and Rabindranath Tagore, 1911-1941* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1972), 320.

⁶⁷⁸ Thompson, "Alien Homage," 57.

⁶⁷⁹ Thompson, "Alien Homage," 41.

⁶⁸⁰ Edward J. Thompson to Prasanta Mahalanobis, 6 November 1920. Thompson Papers, Ms.Eng.c. 5302, folio 106, original emphasis.

⁶⁸¹ Thompson, "Alien Homage," 60.

⁶⁸² Thompson, "Alien Homage," 39.

his father's conflation of standards of English literature with universal standards and the sometimes "tactless" confidence with which he applied them in the books provoked Tagore's irritation.⁶⁸⁴ In other words, E. P. Thompson's judgment of the books' flaws rests on the failure of communication they signified. In direct opposition with Edward Thompson's view to promote cosmopolitan connection, the books alienated—among others—Tagore and Seal. In the case of the latter, the miscommunication was such that Thompson had gone so far as to dedicate his first book to Seal without an inkling of the displeasure it would cause him.

As an exercise in cosmopolitanism, their fundamental intent was to connect the British and Indian peoples. Separate from questions of substance such as the problem of attempting a comprehensive evaluation of the oeuvre of a writer still very much adding to it. Thompson aspired to act as a mediator in this process, but doing so required him to write with a British audience in mind. This was an audience that had virtually no awareness of Indian literature—much less its further delimited subset, Bengali literature. In assuming the voice of the authoritative guide, Thompson made definitive statements, proclaiming "Gitali—Songs—the second book [...] a much less valuable assemblage."⁶⁸⁵ Oftentimes, he juxtaposed evaluation with appreciation. "[Tagore] is feeling his way," Thompson wrote of a young Tagore, "and has no sureness of touch in metre, no firm control of cadence."⁶⁸⁶ Thompson's conclusion is complimentary: "But already there is no mistaking the master of language, the magician who can call up cloud after cloud of

⁶⁸³ Thompson, "Alien Homage," 106.

⁶⁸⁴ Thompson, "Alien Homage," 39. For an account that considers the value of Thompson's evaluative criticism, see Harish Trivedi's Introduction in Edward John Thompson, *Rabindranath Tagore: Poet and Dramatist* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1991).

⁶⁸⁵ Edward John Thompson, *Rabindranath Tagore: Poet and Dramatist* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1991), 237.

⁶⁸⁶ Edward John Thompson, *Rabindranath Tagore*, 36.

rich imagery.”⁶⁸⁷ Overall, he was more admiring than critical, but the latter statements were delivered in a tone that irked Tagore.

“I tried to serve him [Tagore], & you—the Bengalis,” Thompson wrote irritably in a 1922 letter to Prasanta Mahalanobis, a friend and member of Tagore’s circle—a statistician by vocation but well-versed enough in Tagore’s work to serve as a generous source for Thompson in the writing of his two books on Tagore. Referring to the unfavorable Bengali reception of his first Tagore book, Thompson continued:

I did not expect garlands; but you have, most of you, thrown big stones. If I continue, till I have finished the bigger book, it is not because I any longer think you folk are anything but hard taskmasters, who do not understand service, but because I care about truth. Therefor [*sic*] I shall finish, in spite of everything. When I have said my say, the stones can come. But no one hereafter will be able to write of Tagore, without taking into account what I have said.⁶⁸⁸

Part of the problem was that the multiple axes of cosmopolitan identification put Thompson in the position of writing for an English audience and bearing the brunt of critique from a Bengali audience.

Tagore in the East

That the vexed nature of Indo-British power relations influenced Tagore’s relations with Thompson was predictable. But geopolitical configurations whose bearing on the Indian situation were less straightforward were brought to bear on Tagore’s vision of a unified Asia. For instance, in 1938, Tagore engaged in a public correspondence with the Japanese poet Yone Noguchi on the issue of Japan’s military interventions in China, which would later become known as the Second Sino-Japanese War. Published in the

⁶⁸⁷ Edward John Thompson, *Rabindranath Tagore*, 36.

⁶⁸⁸ E. J. Thompson, General Correspondence. Ms.Eng.c. 5302 folio 136.

Visva-Bharati Quarterly, which was founded by Tagore in 1923, it enacted an exchange of ideas for the public readership. On a smaller scale, it shared the communicative motivation of Tagore's international lecture tours. The geopolitical dynamics in this case were less self-evident than the power differential between India and Britain that served as the obtrusive subtext of Tagore's friendship with Thompson. Nevertheless, they provided both the basis for Tagore's international connections even as they complicated them.

Tagore's cosmopolitan outlook fundamentally predisposed him to reach out with his ideas to elicit responses from those all over the world, but the brutality of the First World War further sharpened his critical view of the shortcomings of the West. In 1924, when Tagore made his first trip to China and a second to Japan on his sixth foreign tour, he was all the more favorably disposed to these potential Eastern allies and their alternative perspectives. Unlike the Indo-British relationship, no official ties bound India to either, and they were positioned only obliquely in relation to India vis-a-vis global colonial entanglements. Tagore regarded both with a sense of Asian solidarity. But the fact of the conflict between the two as well as Tagore's position on nationalism and the West affected his reception in both countries.

Even in China, whose position aligned with India in its subjection to the colonial ambitions of the more powerful, Tagore received mixed responses. On one hand, he was welcomed by large crowds in Beijing and other cities.⁶⁸⁹ His having been awarded the Nobel Prize as well as his message of Eastern civilizational values appealed to a population demoralized by recent colonial incursions. As early as 1915, two years after Tagore's win, Chen Duxiu, one of the founders of the Communist Party of China, had

translated the prize-winning anthology, *Gitanjali*, into Chinese. On the other hand, Tagore faced significant opposition to his ideas, especially from students energized by the May Fourth Movement and its embrace of Chinese nationalism.

Tagore's interest in China took as its primary lens the sense of a long-lost history of cross-cultural contact between two ancient civilizations. "My friends," he addressed his audience, "I have come to ask you to re-open the channel of communion which I hope is still there; for though overgrown with weeds of oblivion its lines can still be traced."⁶⁸⁹ His was a frame of reference that looked back through "weeds of oblivion" into the past at a moment when increasingly politicized Chinese youth were preoccupied with the question of modernity. To them, Tagore's emphasis on Eastern thought sounded suspiciously like the traditionalism of an older generation. After all, Japan had apparently Westernized to great effect, vying for a place among colonial aggressors. At the very least, the fortification of a nation-state seemed a plausible strategy to avoid victimization. Those who held this view accused Tagore of being a reactionary for his adamant stand against nationalism.

In 1916, Tagore had already argued against compensatory nationalism as a solution to the aggressive expansion of established nationalist states in a lecture he gave in the U.S.:

I know what your advice will be. You will say, form yourselves into a nation, and resist this encroachment of the Nation. But is this the true advice? that of a man to a man? Why should this be a necessity? I could well believe you, if you had said, Be more good, more just, more true in your relation to man, control your greed, make your life wholesome in its simplicity and let your consciousness of the divine in humanity be more perfect in its expression. But must you say that it is not the soul, but the machine, which is of the utmost value to ourselves, and that man's salvation depends upon his disciplining himself into a perfection of dead

⁶⁸⁹ For a discussion of the various factors that informed Tagore's reception on the occasion of his 1924 visit to China, see Wei Liming, "Historical Significance of Tagore's 1924 China Visit" in *Tagore and China*.

⁶⁹⁰ Rabindranath Tagore, "Talks in China" in *The English Writings of Rabindranath Tagore*, Vol. 4, 597.

rhythm of wheels and counterwheels? That machine must be pitted against machine, and nation against nation, in an endless bullfight of politics?⁶⁹¹

Tagore channeled the voice of Western wisdom counseling emulation as the only way to combat the external impositions of global nationalist powers; Tagore disagreed. As Tagore scholars have pointed out, this rejection of nationalism as the only solution did not necessarily signify a reactionary impulse as some of his contemporary critics alleged. Rather, Tagore asserted the possibility for an alternative modernity.

That vision of society, however, as intimated in the alternate advice he imagined—to “[b]e more good, more just, more true in your relation to man [*sic*], control your greed,” etc.—was grounded more in individual ethics rather than political objectives. Tagore argued that the currently ascendant ideology of nationalism privileged the “machine” that he saw the nation to be over the soul of the individual. In turning away from the “endless bullfight of politics” that a world populated by nations in which souls were bent to national priorities—“disciplin[ed] into a perfection of dead rhythm of wheels and counterwheels”—Tagore endeavored to preserve the integrity of the individual soul from the mechanical pursuit of power. “Man in his fullness is not powerful,” he observed, “but perfect.” Tagore thus articulated the relationship between power and the soul as one of inverse proportions: “Therefore, to turn him into mere power, you have to curtail his soul as much as possible.”⁶⁹²

The tension between priorities of the soul and the world informed Tagore’s lifelong vacillation between wanting to only write poetry and wanting to also be useful to the larger cause of his people. As Thompson discovered, these contradictory impulses led Tagore to retreat without warning to the solitude of his family’s estates, only to then

⁶⁹¹ “Nationalism in the West” in *The Essential Tagore*, 175.

embark on yet another foreign lecturing tour. No matter how urgent the acquisition of power might seem to combating colonial oppression, Tagore maintained that power procured through such stunting of the soul compounded rather than solved the problem. “When we are fully human,” he asserted, “we cannot fly at one another’s throats; our instincts of social life, our traditions of moral ideals stand in the way.”⁶⁹³ The ongoing war had much of Europe “fly[ing] at one another’s throats,” and Tagore did not find the destructive display of nations vying for power to inspire emulation. At the same time, to those impatient to throw off the shackles of colonial rule, the nation-state as a political goal had a concrete appeal that Tagore’s metaphysical discussion of humanity and power lacked.

Tagore, however, rejected a nationalist solution because he understood India’s problem—as well as that of the rest of the world—as social:

Our real problem in India is not political. It is social. This is a condition not only prevailing in India, but among all nations. I do not believe in an exclusive political interest. Politics in the West have dominated Western ideals, and we in India are trying to imitate you. We have to remember that in Europe, where peoples had their racial unity from the beginning, and where natural resources were insufficient for the inhabitants, the civilization has naturally taken the character of political and commercial aggressiveness.⁶⁹⁴

Tagore engaged in his own reductive account of the West when he pronounced the various European peoples as racially unified “from the beginning.” In contrast, the “race problem” central to India made attempting to imitate the political trajectory of the West impossible.

Although Tagore did not live to see the Indian nation as an actual political entity come into existence in 1947, he had already rejected a nationalist global order, which he

⁶⁹² “Nationalism in the West” in *The Essential Tagore*, 177.

⁶⁹³ “Nationalism in the West” in *The Essential Tagore*, 177.

considered unequal to addressing the problems of an increasingly interconnected world. “The whole world,” he argued, “is becoming one country through scientific facility.”⁶⁹⁵ In fact, Tagore saw India as a stand-in for what the larger world had become in its increasing approximation of a unit bounded enough so as to register as one country. The racial fractures of the old India had thus been transposed onto this smaller world: “What India has been, the whole world is now.” Tagore argued that Europe’s historical propensity towards “political and commercial aggressiveness” had continued “in the present age [in] the same spirit” as the West “organize[d] and exploit[ed] the whole world,” resulting in a situation that replicated the racial divisions of India.⁶⁹⁶

In effect, Tagore rejected India’s relegation to the colonial periphery and instead placed it at the center of his cosmopolitan project of harmonious global relations. He asserted that to the extent that India had worked to mediate those divisions— “acknowledg[ing] the real differences between [races] where these exist, and yet seek[ing] for some basis of unity”—“we shall have helped to solve the world problem as well.”⁶⁹⁷ The problem plaguing India and the world as a whole were one and the same. The locus of political power became such a problem because of the difficulty people had in transcending national boundaries, which Tagore argued had become artificial— “imaginary lines of tradition divested of the qualities of real obstacles.”⁶⁹⁸ In other words, the political problem was secondary because so long as “the moral culture of brotherhood was limited by geographical boundaries” and people were unable to recognize unity across factional divisions, the threat of global conflict escalating to “a

⁶⁹⁴ “Nationalism in India” in *The English Writings of Rabindranath Tagore*, Vol. 4, 491.

⁶⁹⁵ “Nationalism in India” in *The English Writings of Rabindranath Tagore*, Vol. 4, 492.

⁶⁹⁶ “Nationalism in India” in *The English Writings of Rabindranath Tagore*, Vol. 4, 491.

⁶⁹⁷ “Nationalism in India” in *The English Writings of Rabindranath Tagore*, Vol. 4, 492.

conflagration of suicide” remained, regardless of who commanded the greater measure of power.⁶⁹⁹

Tagore was aware that his admonitions could come across as the naive musings of a poet. He recounted the counsel he had offered to an emerging nation that had taken the lesson of Western emulation to heart—Japan:

I am just coming from my visit to Japan, where I exhorted this young nation to take its stand upon the higher ideals of humanity and never to follow the West in its acceptance of the organized selfishness of Nationalism as its religion, never to gloat upon the febleness of its neighbors, never to be unscrupulous in its behavior to the weak, where it can be gloriously mean with impunity, while turning its right cheek of brighter humanity for the kiss of admiration to those who have the power to deal it a blow. Some of the newspapers praised my utterances for their poetical qualities while adding with a leer that it was the poetry of a defeated people.⁷⁰⁰

The response to his appeal to the “higher ideals of humanity” had been backhanded compliments regarding the “poetical qualities” of his language and a dismissal of its substance based on the fact of India’s subjected status. Even as the Nobel Prize in literature had opened the way for Tagore to lecture abroad, he found that his ideas could be dismissed as poetic—and therefore impractical—ideals. And a “defeated people” without their own nation-state may well console themselves with high-minded poetry.

Tagore, however, aspired to articulate the poet’s perspective as relevant to the contemporary geopolitical situation. In 1938, as Japan continued to pursue those avenues of power that had already concerned Tagore two decades before, Tagore took up those issues in a public exchange of letters with the poet Yone Noguchi. While Noguchi has largely been forgotten in the West, he had spent a decade abroad—mostly in the U.S. but also in England—writing poetry and drawing attention from the likes of Willa Cather,

⁶⁹⁸ “Nationalism in India” in *The English Writings of Rabindranath Tagore*, Vol. 4, 493.

⁶⁹⁹ “Nationalism in India” in *The English Writings of Rabindranath Tagore*, Vol. 4, 493, 494.

Ezra Pound and W. B. Yeats before returning to Japan in 1904.⁷⁰¹ Tagore met Noguchi in 1916 on his first visit to Japan, when he gave that first lecture critiquing Japanese nationalism. In turn, Noguchi was invited by Indian universities to visit in 1935. Theirs was a less regular interaction than Thompson had managed to establish through his proximity and early persistence, but the connection was sufficiently durable as to warrant a reception for Noguchi at Santiniketan at which Tagore publicly addressed his fellow poet:

My friend, when I first paid my visit to your beautiful land I was nearing sixty, and was unaccustomed to the severe trial of public reception. The welcome which was accorded to me in Japan was extravagant in its lavishness [...] I took it humbly, knowing that a great deal of it went to the recognition of my country with which Japan has her ancient bond of spiritual fellowship, a living bond of love and reverence. [...] In the meanwhile visitors came from your country to our Ashram, some of whom were students, some teachers, some merchants. At last the poet has come, the poet who is the true messenger of the spirit of his people representing the culture which is national, but above all universal, and of all time.⁷⁰²

Tagore, who continued to characterize public reception as a “severe trial” despite the public nature of the lecturing he voluntarily undertook, found an alternative way to engage with the world through his friends. Unlike the large-scale lectures, within the scope of an individual correspondence, Tagore might pursue a line of argument beyond the flippant dismissal of a faceless newspaper commentator. In that sense, friends such as Thompson and Noguchi—poet friends—were whom Tagore regarded as ideal interlocutors in their capacity to represent both the essence of the national and universal in their respective cultures without falling into the narrow trap of “Nationalism.” Tagore understood his reception by the Japanese people as an indicator of the relationship

⁷⁰⁰ “Nationalism in the West” in *The Essential Tagore*, 178.

⁷⁰¹ *Selected English Writings of Yone Noguchi*, 14-17.

⁷⁰² *Selected English Writings of Yone Noguchi*, 206.

between the two countries—“a living bond of love and reverence”—and he similarly envisioned his conversation with Noguchi as informing those relations of goodwill.

Over the course of the correspondence, however, Tagore discovered that poets were no more immune to nationalist sentiment than anyone else. In fact, his first letter began with that realization. “I am profoundly surprised by the letter that you have written to me,” Tagore opened in his response to Noguchi, “neither its temper nor its contents harmonise with the spirit of Japan which I learnt to admire in your writings and came to love through my personal contacts with you.”⁷⁰³ Rejecting the West’s assumption of superiority over the East, Tagore constructed his own generalized portrait of the West as spiritually deficient. It was his response to Western caricatures of the East. For Tagore, “Westernization” signified “the rapacious Imperialism which some of the Nations of Europe were cultivating” in contrast to “the great heritages of culture and good neighbourliness that went to the making of Asiatic and other civilisations.”⁷⁰⁴ In formulating the East/West divide as such, Tagore ended up overstating Eastern unity. The latter no more ensured convergent worldviews than the affinity Tagore felt for Noguchi’s poetry or Japanese culture at large [no comparatives without a referent].

In seeking out global contacts, Tagore had in mind a taxonomy of types based on the main axes of nationality and cultural relevance. In the context of colonial India, the dichotomy between colonizer and colonized registered most visibly. On a global scale, the divide between East and West preoccupied Tagore due to the sense that his work was grievously misunderstood by Western critics.⁷⁰⁵ He tended to construct the West as the materialistic and aggressive counterpart of a spiritual East, although his biographers

⁷⁰³ *Poet to Poet*, 6.

⁷⁰⁴ *Poet to Poet*, 7.

Dutta and Robinson have observed that he was frequently “vague, inconsistent, and contradictory” in such characterizations.⁷⁰⁶

But when he came to fill out the East-West concept with specific ideas, he was often vague, inconsistent and contradictory. This was a symbolic West, however, separate from the reality of actual individuals. “In the West,” he wrote to Noguchi, “even in the critical days of war-madness, there is never any dearth of great spirits who can raise their voice above the din of battle, and defy their own war-mongers in the name of humanity.”⁷⁰⁷ Sometimes Tagore appeared contradictory because his statements were made with a particular audience in mind. “Asia will not be westernised,” he continued, “if she can learn from such men.” In effect, he advised Noguchi to look to the West for examples of how to avoid Westernization.

Both Noguchi and Tagore positioned themselves against the West even though their own stances were diametrically opposed. In doing so, they each sought to lay claim to the mantle of genuine Asian identity. The valence of war for each marked a sharp divide in their respective worldviews. On one hand, Tagore’s rejection of war was absolute. On the other, Noguchi characterized the Sino-Japanese conflict as “the war of ‘Asia for Asia.’” Even as he acknowledged westernization as a phenomenon with potentially detrimental consequences, Noguchi denied that the dispute with China was any such thing. “But if you take the present war in China for the criminal outcome of Japan’s surrender to the West, you are wrong,” he wrote to Tagore, “because, not being a slaughtering madness, it is, I believe, the inevitable means, terrible it is though, for establishing a new great world

⁷⁰⁵ Dutta and Robinson, 246.

⁷⁰⁶ Dutta and Robinson, 246.

⁷⁰⁷ *Poet to Poet*, 8.

in the Asiatic continent, where the ‘principle of live-and-let-live’ has to be realized.”⁷⁰⁸

At this point, it was still only a year into a war that would last for a total of eight years, and Noguchi could not have known that it would end in casualties estimated upwards of 20 million. Even so, the crude objective of war was to rack up enough casualties to weaken and thereby force the opponent into submission; Noguchi’s contradictory characterization of such as the “inevitable means” by which to realize a principle of “live-and-let-live” was striking.

Noguchi and Tagore embedded their conversation in a network of international interlocutors, and the West served as both a sounding board and foil. Noguchi had spent a decade living in the U.S. in his twenties, becoming involved in literary circles there via the Western poet Joaquin Miller.⁷⁰⁹ As an aspiring poet in English, he had gone so far as to spend three years in Miller’s mountain hut in Oakland to concentrate on his writing. Even after his return to Japan in 1904, as a professor of English, Noguchi maintained an interest in East-West literary relations. In short, he was not one to summarily dismiss Western influence. At the same time, he also used the fact that he was in conversation with the West as a way to differentiate his own outlook:

I received the other day a letter from my western friend, denouncing the world that went to Hell. I replied him, saying: “Oh my friend, you should cover your ears, when a war bugle rings too wild. [...] Be patient, my friend, for a war is only spasmodic matter that cannot last long, but will adjust one’s condition better in the end. You are a coward if you are afraid of it. Nothing worthy will be done unless you pass through a severe trial. And the peace that follows after a war is most important.”⁷¹⁰

⁷⁰⁸ *Poet to Poet*, 1.

⁷⁰⁹ For a biographical sketch, see Yoshinobu Hakutani’s Introduction in *Selected English Writings of Yone Noguchi*.

⁷¹⁰ *Poet to Poet*, 2-3.

Noguchi implicitly critiqued the “slaughtering madness” of the First World War when he defined the current armed conflict with China in opposition to that designation. Yet this time he invoked a “western friend” to admonish that war was a necessary evil, which “adjust[s] one’s condition better in the end.” In this case, Noguchi’s western friend risked being labeled a coward because Noguchi viewed this particular war necessary.

Ultimately, Tagore and Noguchi arrived at a conclusion of mutual frustration, no less at an impasse than Tagore and Thompson once were.

“I hope we are friends,” Tagore wrote, “and you will not misunderstand me.”⁷¹¹

This was Tagore’s opening injunction in his first letter to Thompson after the latter visited Santiniketan, preceding the withdrawal of his request for Thompson’s translation help. What it offered in lieu of that prospect of collaboration was not entirely clear. And there was much misunderstanding to come. But as the Indian nationalist movement surged ahead, and the interwar years foreshadowed another World War, Tagore and Thompson, both out of sync with nationalism of the times, remained friends.

⁷¹¹ Rabindranath Tagore to Edward J. Thompson, Santiniketan, 18-20 November 1913. Thompson Papers, Ms.Eng.c. 5318, folio 4.

Epilogue

From 1875 when the Edalji family settled in Great Wyrley until 1940 when Tagore and Thompson exchanged what would become their final letters to each other before Tagore's death the following year, the British Empire underwent significant changes. The colonial state became more disciplined and bureaucratic, even as its hold on its colonial possessions continued to fray in the face of mounting demands for self-rule from the colonies. At the outset of the period examined here, Conan Doyle confidently exhorted the moral empire to intervene on behalf of a just global order. By 1955, Dame Margery Perham, Oxford don and writer on African affairs, defensively objected to a "new word [...] come to the surface in international affairs" as a term of abuse: "colonialism."⁷¹²

While the trajectory of the preceding chapters do not chart a neat narrative of change over time, these different friendships between individuals serve as a prism into their times and the way that the workings of the broader structures of colonialism were channeled through diverse practices of friendship. They serve as windows into divergent spaces across the imperial expanse ranging from a small English mining town to the cloistered fraternity of Cambridge and finally the spaces that Thompson carved out for Indo-British exchange in Bengal even as Tagore set his sights beyond Indian borders. Conan Doyle's public campaign for Edalji gestures to an older mode of association-building as the general public bearing witness to the former's enactment of friendship

stood invited to join. The mathematical and affective bonds between Hardy and Ramanujan examined in the following chapter signal a turn to the more personal as it was enabled by the homosocial sphere of Cambridge, which served both as a space of possibility for Ramanujan as well as one of racialization. And the way that tensions between Tagore and Thompson that were heightened by the agitation for Indian independence underscore how these individual relations were informed by and reflected back on the larger structures at play when a colonial power offered its friendship to a colonized state. The disagreements that bubbled to the surface were partly due to Tagore's relatively privileged class position. In contrast, the difficulties Edalji and Ramanujan experienced with regard to the exclusionary aspects of empire found expression in other ways. Their relations of friendship remained highly structured and contained. At the same time, the turbulence that characterized the exchange between Tagore and Thompson also indicated the broader climate leading to decolonization and a revision of the terms of friendship—a process that found the next step of its development in Africa.

“Our E. African woman student, Florence Wamala, has been admitted to the Education Department at Oxford next year,” Phyllis Graham wrote in the summer of 1948 to Perham.⁷¹³ The use of the collective “our” is suggestive of the pride that permeates the rest of her letter. It could, however, also read as possessive and proprietary, signaling the appropriative undercurrents of colonial friendship. As a faculty member of the Institute of Education at the Makerere College in Kampala, Uganda, with an interest in the higher education of women, Graham had a particular investment in exceptional

⁷¹² Mss. Perham 347/4, no. 10, Bodleian Library of Commonwealth and African Studies at Rhodes House.

female students. Perham was an Oxford academic considered to be one of Britain's foremost authorities on Africa in the twentieth century. Over the course of a career spanning half a century, she not only worked with graduate students from the colonies but also assumed the role of a vocal commentator on African affairs. India had attained its independence the year before in 1947, but Britain now turned its attention to decolonizing impulses in Africa.

The relative absence of women from the kinds of spaces and relationships that have guided this dissertation precludes any sustained attention to the gendered institutionalization of power that privileges men over women. Due to the prominence of masculinity as a rubric through which professional identity as an axis of affiliation is explored in these cases, women hover at the margins of the narrative. Although Edalji's mother and sister demonstrated themselves to have been active agents in his campaign for acquittal, their labor is assumed as a matter of course. The absence of Ramanujan's mother and wife from his life at Cambridge was central to his hardships, partly due to the affective support they signified but also as a deprivation of Ramanujan's patriarchal privilege; his struggles in England in large part involved the preparation of food. Women's centrality becomes apparent only in their absence. Perham's prominence in African affairs in the post-war period, however, suggests that gender did not necessarily diminish the versatility of friendship as a mode of relating to the colonial world.

Historian David Killingray has noted the long history of African students traveling to Britain for higher education. As early as the sixteenth century, European traders recognized the need for a few Africans with enough formal education to serve the

⁷¹³ Phyllis Graham to Margery Perham, 7 July 1948. Mss. Perham 24/3, no. 1, Bodleian Library of Commonwealth and African Studies at Rhodes House.

interests of commerce on the west coast by acting as mediators.⁷¹⁴ By mid-eighteenth century, West African chiefs and traders had begun to see the value of formal instruction in literacy and numeracy and charged European trading partners with the education of their children in Britain. Starting in 1942, as colonial governments prepared for post-war development, increasing numbers of African students sought an education in Britain. By 1947, the African student body in Britain was reportedly up to 2,000.⁷¹⁵ The number of students from all the British territories combined soared over 10,000 in 1955.⁷¹⁶

The greater part of those numbers consisted of men, making Wamala a meaningful departure from that history. By virtue of her gender, she would have found the number of compatriots with whom she could freely associate to be limited in the United Kingdom. Making recommendations regarding the freedom of her protégé in a subsequent letter, Graham noted: “She is a most mature & responsible young woman (of 30), & can be relied upon absolutely in every way.”⁷¹⁷ Nonetheless, she alluded to the potential risks posed by a social scene defined by the disproportionate number of men in the expatriate community: “I only hope none of the African men students will make any difficulties for her, in their delight at meeting someone from their own country.”⁷¹⁸ As an unmarried young woman, despite all her maturity of character and not inconsiderable age, Wamala was thus charged to Perham’s guardianship.

At the outset, their relationship appears to be most aptly framed in terms of conventional patron-client relations, albeit removed from the official apparatus of

⁷¹⁴ David Killingray, “Africans in the United Kingdom: An Introduction” in *Africans in Britain*, 33.

⁷¹⁵ Killingray, “Africans,” 34.

⁷¹⁶ Political and Economic Planning, *Colonial Students in Britain: A Report* (London, 1955), 1.

⁷¹⁷ Phyllis Graham to Margery Perham, 7 August 1948. Mss. Perham 24/3, no. 3, Bodleian Library of Commonwealth and African Studies at Rhodes House.

⁷¹⁸ Phyllis Graham to Margery Perham, 7 August 1948. Mss. Perham 24/3, no. 3, Bodleian Library of Commonwealth and African Studies at Rhodes House.

colonial power by way of their gender. Literature based on the recognition of the role that European women were accorded as travelers, missionaries, nurses, teachers, as well as wives and companions, who were responsible for sustaining the cultural and moral values of empire, has been a mainstay of the field of gender and colonialism since its outset.⁷¹⁹ The expansion of the British global influence offered increased professional opportunities to middle-class British women, who might lay claim to authority as agents of empire by way of professing to speak for women of the working classes or the colonies.⁷²⁰ And in light of the scholarship that examines this tradition and its explication of the complex relationship between feminism and imperialism, this is the paradigm that remains most readily available through which to read this relationship.

In her self-identification with the Colonial Administrative Service, however, Perham sidestepped this tradition. Historians Alison Smith and Mary Bull note her reputation as “probably the best known figure in the study of British colonial administration in Africa from the 1930s until its ending in the 1960s.”⁷²¹ Professionally, Perham had established herself in the largely male world of colonial administration. Given that the British Colonial Service was remarkable for the masculinity of its character as an institution even against the broader backdrop of a society that was fundamentally structured around male privilege, it is noteworthy that for many years it was a woman who was probably better known to that institution’s members—especially

⁷¹⁹ Margaret Strobel and Nupur Chaudhuri, eds., *Western Women and Imperialism: Complicity and Resistance* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1991).

⁷²⁰ Helen Callaway, *Gender, Culture and Empire: European Women in Colonial Nigeria* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1987); Margaret Strobel, *European Women and the Second British Empire* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1991); Vron Ware, *Beyond the Pale: White Women, Racism and History* (London, 1992); Timothy P. Foley, ed., *Gender and Colonialism* (Galway, 1995); Clare Midgley, ed., *Gender and Imperialism* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1998).

⁷²¹ Alison Smith and Mary Bull, “Introduction” in Alison Smith and Mary Bull, eds., *Margery Perham and British rule in Africa* (Routledge, 1991), 1.

in Africa—than most colonial governors. Relatively uninterested in African women, she flourished in a field where women rarely gained access to the circles to which she was introduced by—as it were—a friend, Lord Frederick Lugard, colonial administrator and one of the key architects of indirect rule in Africa.

The friendship between Wamala and Perham complicates preconceptions about ready-made scripts for intercolonial interactions such as that of feminist tutelage. Such framing is culturally compelling, as evidenced when Graham wrote, “I feel great things might come out of the association in this way of the first E. African woman (& she is the first in every way) & yourself—great things for Africa.”⁷²² No doubt, Perham and Wamala had some sense of this themselves. And while Perham may have been less invested in explicitly feminist motivations, she was deeply committed to the betterment of Africa as a moral obligation of the British Empire and viewed all her interactions with Africans in this context. As Wamala’s initially allotted two years in England drew to a close, their relationship had developed to the point that Perham assumed the responsibility of acting as her official guardian in relation to the Colonial Office and advocated for extending Wamala’s stay in the country for another year. “She is developing so rapidly,” Perham wrote, “and shows every sign of being a most remarkable character with great potentialities for service in East Africa that we think the extra time could well be justified.”⁷²³ Her reasoning framed it in those same terms of national improvement. Implicit in her statement was the assurance that she herself would be instrumental in realizing Wamala’s “great potentialities.”

⁷²² Phyllis Graham to Margery Perham, 7 August 1948. Mss. Perham 24/3, no. 3, Bodleian Library of Commonwealth and African Studies at Rhodes House.

⁷²³ Margery Perham to [?], 21 November 1949. Mss. Perham 24/3, no. 17, Bodleian Library of Commonwealth and African Studies at Rhodes House.

And due to the unique situation of Wamala having shared her home in Oxford, Perham also had the occasion to reflect explicitly on her personal characteristics as well as her potential for public service:

I cannot say how highly I think of Florence; my sister and I love having her in the house. She is so unselfish and courteous. She is very intelligent, very idealistic yet strong and mature in character. She is also a most cheerful and amusing person to have in one's home, and I believe that if all goes well she may be a great influence one day in East Africa. But you need not fear that we are turning her head; she is much too modest and too deeply aware of the size of the problems she will have to face in Uganda.⁷²⁴

Perham's commendation of Wamala's personal attributes is glowing. But it existed in tension with how she related to another entity she regarded herself a friend to—namely, the African continent. In the same breath that she prophesied her protégé's future influence as well as the modesty and sagacity that would aid Wamala in the wielding of such, Perham underscored her consciousness of Africa as a problem. Perham's primary attachment was to Africa, the object of an early romantic fascination borne of childhood adventure stories; while her friendship with Wamala was sincere, it was her larger commitment to Africa as a project and problem that imbued it with particular significance. Reporting back to Graham on the cusp of the third year she had endeavored to secure for Wamala, Perham observed, "It has been a great experience for me to have an African who has become so complete a friend."⁷²⁵

Africa registered as both romance and problem for Perham, and her friendships with Africans retained an instrumental aspect even in the case of Wamala, whose interactions with Perham were not of an official capacity. This was because many of the

⁷²⁴ Margery Perham to [?], 21 November 1949. Mss. Perham 24/3, no. 17, Bodleian Library of Commonwealth and African Studies at Rhodes House.

students—“young men,” as specified by one report—frequently returned home to influential public and professional positions.⁷²⁶ And yet, Perham also suggested that the affective experience of ideal friendship with someone from the continent contributed to her ability to work on its behalf. Perham’s engagement thus signifies a continued tradition of the intertwining of rational and affective motivations in the British Empire’s engagement with its colonies as observed in the personal relations considered in the preceding chapters, which offer a glimpse into these logics as they pertained more generally.

Similarly, as much as it regarded its responsibility towards the colonies in terms of such criteria as “political, economic, and social development,” the Political and Economic Planning Group charged with the inquiry “began with a general feeling of anxiety about the problems met by colonial students” in Britain and “a fear that difficulties which the students encountered might influence adversely the good relations between Britain and the colonial peoples.”⁷²⁷ And as it became increasingly clear that “good relations” could not be maintained within a colonial framework, the disparate strands of goodwill, paternalism, and anxiety marshaled under the rubric of colonial friendship gave way to a postcolonial future for which Perham was unprepared. What constituted “good relations” between Britain and its colonial populations had been dramatically reconfigured. In effect, the terms of friendship and its uses had changed.

⁷²⁵ Margery Perham to Phyllis Graham, 31 August 1950. Mss. Perham 24/3, no. 25, Bodleian Library of Commonwealth and African Studies at Rhodes House.

⁷²⁶ Political and Economic Planning, *Colonial Students in Britain: A Report* (London, 1955), 4.

⁷²⁷ Political and Economic Planning, *Colonial Students in Britain: A Report* (London, 1955), 3-4.

Bibliography

Primary Sources

Archival Sources

The National Archives, Public Records Office, Kew

- 17 August 1895. HO 127/985.
Charlotte Edalji to A. Akers-Douglas. 7 January 1904. HO 144/984, no. 48.
Report of the Committee of Enquiry. HO 144/986, no. 201.
Shapurji Edalji to Sir Henry Campbell Bannerman, M.P. 15 December 1905. HO 144/986, no. 142.
George Anson to Arthur Conan Doyle. 22 December 1906. HO 989, part 2.
George Anson to Arthur Conan Doyle, 25 December 1906
Anson to Home Office. 30/31 December 1906. HO 989, part 2.
George Edalji to Undersecretary of State. 2 March 1907. HO 144/990.
Herbert Gladstone to Sir Oliver Lodge. 12 March 1907. HO 986, no. 182a.
Ernley Blackwell to Arthur Conan Doyle. 27 March 1907. HO 989, part 1.
Ernley Blackwell to Secretary of State. 3 February 1911. HO 144/987, no. 314.
Arthur Conan Doyle to Winston Churchill HO 144/987 no. 313
HO 144/984/112737, no. 46.
HO 144/986
HO 144/988

Birmingham Library Archives

Letter of M.S. Stoneham to J.B. Stone. 27 January 1904. J.B. Stone Collection.

Bodleian Library of Commonwealth and African Studies at Rhodes House

- Phyllis Graham to Margery Perham, 7 August 1948. Mss. Perham 24/3, no. 3.
Margery Perham to [?], 21 November 1949. Mss. Perham 24/3, no. 17.
Margery Perham to Phyllis Graham, 31 August 1950. Mss. Perham 24/3, no. 25.

Newspapers and Periodicals

- Daily Chronicle* (1906)
Daily Telegraph (1907)
New York Times (1907)
Pearson's Weekly (1904-1907)
The Police Review and Gossip (1907)
The Standard (1895)
The Umpire (1906)

Times (1895)
Truth (1907)

Published Manuscripts

- Aiyar, P. V. Seshu, and R. Ramachandra Rao. "Notice." In *Collected Papers of Srinivasa Ramanujan*, by Srinivasa Ramanujan, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1927.
- Doyle, Arthur Conan. *The Crime of the Congo*. New York: Doubleday, Page and Co., 1909.
- _____. *Memories and Adventures*. Boston: Little, Brown, and Co., 1924.
- _____. *Our African Winter*. London: John Murray, 1929.
- Edalji, Rev. S. *A Miscarriage of Justice: The Case of George Edalji*. London: United Press Association, 1905.
- Hardy, G.H. "Notice." In *Collected Papers of Srinivasa Ramanujan*, by Srinivasa Ramanujan. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1927.
- Moylan, John Fitzgerald. *Scotland Yard and the Metropolitan Police*. London and New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons Ltd., 1929.
- Ramanujan, Srinivasa. *Collected Papers of Srinivasa Ramanujan*. Edited by G. H. Hardy, P. V. Seshu Aiyar, and B. M. Wilson. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1927.
- Seshu Aiyar, P. V., and R. Ramachandra Rao. "Notice." In *Collected Papers of Srinivasa Ramanujan*, by Srinivasa Ramanujan. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1927.
- Winchester College. *Winchester: Its History, Buildings and People*. Winchester: P. & G. Wells, 1921. <http://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/007706585>.

Secondary Sources

- Adams, Rebecca G. "Comments on Relationship Research in a New Millennium." *Relationship Research News* 2, no. 2 (Spring 2004): 8.
- Adams, Rebecca G., Rosemary Blieszner, and Brian De Vries. "Definitions of Friendship in the Third Age: Age, Gender, and Study Location Effects." *Journal of Aging Studies* 14, no. 1 (March 2000): 117–133.
- Adi, Hakim. *West Africans in Britain, 1900-1960: Nationalism, Pan-Africanism, and Communism*. London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1998.
- Alladi, Krishnaswami. *Ramanujan's Place in the World of Mathematics: Essays Providing a Comparative Study*. India: Springer India, 2013.
- Anderson, Benedict R. O'G. *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. Revised edition. London: Verso, 1991.
- Bancroft, John. "A History of Sexual Medicine in the United Kingdom." *Journal of Sexual Medicine* 2, no. 4 (2005): 569-568. doi: 10.1111/j.1743-6109.2005.00071.x.
- Barnes, Julian. *Arthur & George*. London: Jonathan Cape, 2005.

- Barsham, Diana. *Arthur Conan Doyle and the Meaning of Masculinity*. Aldershot and Brookfield, V.T.: Ashgate, 2000.
- Basu, Paroma. "UW Scientists Unlock Major Number Theory Puzzle." *University of Wisconsin-Madison News*, February 26, 2007. <http://http://www.news.wisc.edu/13497>.
- Becker, Peter. *Criminals and their Scientists: The History of Criminology in International Perspective*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006.
- Bedernman, Gail. *Manliness and Civilization: A Cultural History of Gender and Race in the United States, 1880-1917*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996.
- Behlmer, George K. *Friends of the Family: The English Home and Its Guardians, 1850-1940*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998.
- Berndt, Bruce C., and Robert A. Rankin "Preface." In *Ramanujan: Letters and Commentary*, edited by Bruce C. Berndt and Robert A. Rankin, ix–xii. Providence, R.I.: American Mathematical Society, 1995.
- Berndt, Bruce C., and Robert Alexander Rankin, eds. *Ramanujan: Essays and Surveys*. American Mathematical Society, 2001.
- Berg, Temma. *The Lives and Letters of an Eighteenth-century Circle of Acquaintances*. Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006.
- Bhattacharya, Sabyasachi. *Rabindranath Tagore: An Interpretation*. New Delhi: Viking, Penguin Books India, 2011.
- Biess, Frank et al. "Forum: 'History of Emotions.'" *German History* 28, no. 1 (March 2010): 67–80. doi: 10.1093/gerhis/ghp108.
- Bingham, Adrian. *Family Newspapers? Sex, Private Life, and the British Popular Press, 1918-1978*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009.
- Blackwell, Fritz. *India: A Global Studies Handbook*. Global Studies. Santa Barbara, Calif: ABC-CLIO, 2004.
- Bland, Lucy. "The Trials and Tribulations of Edith Thompson: The Capital Crime of Sexual Incitement in 1920s England." *Journal of British Studies*, 47, no. 3 (July, 2008): 624-648.
- Bohman, James, and Matthias Lutz-Bachmann, eds. *Perpetual Peace: Essays on Kant's Cosmopolitan Ideal*. Studies in Contemporary German Social Thought. Cambridge: MIT Press, 1997.
- Bollobás, Béla. "Foreword." In *Littlewood's Miscellany*, by John E. Littlewood. Miscellany. Cambridge [Cambridgeshire] and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1986.
- Booth, Martin. *The Doctor and the Detective: A Biography of Arthur Conan Doyle*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1997.
- Brantlinger, Patrick. "What is 'Sensational' About the 'Sensation Novel'?" *Nineteenth-Century Fiction* 37, no. 1 (June 1982): 1-28. doi: 10.2307/3044667.
- _____. *Rule of Darkness: British Literature and Imperialism 1830-1914*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1988.
- Bray, Alan. *The Friend*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003.
- Breckenridge, Carol Appadurai, Sheldon Pollock, Homi K. Bhabha, and Dipesh Chakrabarty, eds. *Cosmopolitanism*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2002.
- Brown, Garrett Wallace, and David Held, eds. *The Cosmopolitanism Reader*. Cambridge, UK ; Malden, MA: Polity, 2010.

- Brown, Jennifer S. H. *Strangers in Blood: Fur Trade Company Families in Indian Country*. Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1980.
- Buettner, Elizabeth. *Empire Families: Britons and Late Imperial India*. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2004.
- Burnett, Frances Hodgson, and Nancy Bond. *A Little Princess*. New York: Aladdin, 2010.
- Burton, Antoinette. "Who Needs the Nation? Interrogating 'British' History." *Journal of Historical Sociology* 10, no. 3 (September 1997): 227-248.
- _____. *At the Heart of the Empire: Indians and the Colonial Encounter in Late-Victorian Britain*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998.
- _____. *After the Imperial Turn: Thinking with and through the Nation*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2003.
- Callaway, Helen. *Gender, Culture, and Empire: European Women in Colonial Nigeria*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1987.
- Cannadine, David. *Ornamentalism: How the British Saw Their Empire*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2001.
- Capp, Bernard Stuart. *When Gossips Meet: Women, Family and Neighbourhood in Early Modern England*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003.
- Chakrabarty, Dipesh. *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000.
- Cheah, Pheng, and Bruce Robbins, eds. *Cosmopolitics: Thinking and Feeling beyond the Nation*. Cultural Politics 14. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1998.
- Clarke, R. V. G. *Suicide: Closing the Exits*. New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 2013.
- Clausen, Christopher. "Sherlock Holmes, Order, and the Late-Victorian Mind." *Georgia Review* 38, no. 1 (Spring 1984): 104-123.
- Clayton, Daniel Wright. *Islands of Truth: The Imperial Fashioning of Vancouver Island*. Vancouver: UBC Press, 2000.
- Colley, Linda. "Britishness and Otherness: An Argument." *Journal of British Studies* 31, no. 4, Britishness and Europeanness: Who are the British Anyway? (October 1992): 309-329.
- Collins, Michael. *Empire, Nationalism and the Postcolonial World: Rabindranath Tagore's Writings on History, Politics and Society*. Routledge/Edinburgh South Asian Studies Series 4. Abingdon, Oxon ; New York: Routledge, 2012.
- Collins, Wilkie. *The Woman in White*. London: Penguin, 1999.
- Conboy, Martin. *The Press and Popular Culture*. London: Sage, 2003.
- Cooper, Frederick, and Ann Laura Stoler. *Tensions of Empire: Colonial Cultures in a Bourgeois World*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997.
- Cornish, W. R., and G. de N. Clark. *Law and Society in England 1750-1950*. London: Sweet & Maxwell, 1989.
- Curtis, L. P., Jr. *Jack the Ripper and the London Press*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001.
- Das Gupta, Uma, ed. *A Difficult Friendship: Letters of Edward Thompson and Rabindranath Tagore, 1913-1940*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2003.
- _____. *Rabindranath Tagore: A Biography*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2004.
- Davidoff, Leonore, Megan Doolittle, Janet Fink, and Katherine Holden. *The Family*

- Story: Blood, Contract, and Intimacy, 1830-1960*. Women and Men in History. London: Longman, 1999.
- Davie, Neil. *Tracing the Criminal: The Rise of Scientific Criminology in Britain, 1860-1918*. Oxford: Bardwell Press, 2005.
- Davin, Anna. "Imperialism and Motherhood." *History Workshop Journal* 5, no. 1 (Spring 1978): 9-66. doi: 10.1093/hwj/5.1.9.
- David, Deirdre. *The Cambridge Companion to the Victorian Novel*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001.
- Dellamora, Richard. *Friendship's Bonds: Democracy and the Novel in Victorian England*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004.
- Derrida, Jacques. *Politics of Friendship*. Translated by George Collins. London: Verso, 1997.
- Dirks, Nicholas. *The Scandal of Empire: India and the Creation of Imperial Britain*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2006.
- Dowling, Linda C. *Hellenism and Homosexuality in Victorian Oxford*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1994.
- Doyle, Arthur Conan. *The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes*. 1892. Edited by Richard Lancelyn Green. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993.
- Doyle, Arthur Conan. *The True Crime Files of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle*. Edited by Stephen Hines. New York: Berkeley Prime Crime, 2001.
- Doyle, Arthur Conan. *Arthur Conan Doyle: A Life in Letters*. Edited by Jon Lellenberg et al. New York: Penguin Press, 2007.
- Driver, Felix. *Geography Militant: Cultures of Exploration in the Age of Empire*. Oxford: Blackwell, 1999.
- Dutta, Krishna, and Andrew Robinson. *Rabindranath Tagore: The Myriad-Minded Man*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1996.
- Edwards, Dudley. *The Quest for Sherlock Holmes: A Biographical Study of Arthur Conan Doyle*. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1984.
- Elkins, Stanley M. *Slavery: A Problem in American Institutional and Intellectual Life*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1959.
- Fahrmeir, Andreas. *Citizens and Aliens: Foreigners and the Law in Britain and the German States, 1789-1870*. New York: Berghahn Books, 2000.
- Febvre, Lucien. *A New Kind of History: From the Writings of Febvre*. Edited by Peter Burke. Translated by K. Folca. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1973.
- Fisher, Michael Herbert. *Counterflows to Colonialism: Indian Travellers and Settlers in Britain, 1600-1857*. Delhi: Permanent Black, Distributed by Orient Longman, 2004.
- _____. *A South-Asian History of Britain: Four Centuries of Peoples from the Indian Sub-Continent*. Westport, Conn: Greenwood World Pub, 2007.
- Frye, Northrop. *Anatomy of Criticism; Four Essays*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1957.
- _____. *The Secular Scripture: A Study of the Structure of Romance*. The Charles Eliot Norton Lectures 1974-1975. Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1976.
- Gandhi, Leela. *Affective Communities: Anticolonial Thought, Fin-De-Siècle Radicalism, and the Politics of Friendship*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2006.
- Gandhi, Mohandas K. *Autobiography: The Story of My Experiments with Truth*. New

- York: Dover, 1983 [1948].
- Garland, David. "British Criminology before 1935." *The British Journal of Criminology* 28, no. 2 (Spring 1988): 1-17.
- Gikandi, Simon. *Maps of Englishness: Writing Identity in the Culture of Colonialism*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1996.
- Giles, Lynne C., Gary F. V. Glonek, Mary A. Luszcz, and Gary R. Andrews. "Effect of Social Networks on 10 Year Survival in Very Old Australians: The Australian Longitudinal Study of Aging." *Journal of Epidemiology and Community Health* 59, no. 7 (July 1, 2005): 574-579. doi:10.1136/jech.2004.025429.
- Gilman, Sander L. "Sigmund Freud and the Sexologists: A Second Reading." In *Sexual Knowledge, Sexual Science: The History of Attitudes to Sexuality*, edited by Roy Porter and Mikuláš Teich, 323-349. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994.
- Ghosh, Durba. *Sex and the Family in Colonial India: The Making of Empire*. Cambridge Studies in Indian History and Society 13. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006.
- Glenda Sluga, and Julia Horne. "Cosmopolitanism: Its Pasts and Practices." *Journal of World History* 21, no. 3 (2010): 369-374. doi:10.1353/jwh.2010.0006.
- Gordon, Troy P. "Uncommon Companions: Telling the Story of a Modernist Cross-Sex Friendship." Ph.D. diss., University of Michigan, 2001.
- Gorman, Daniel. "Wider and Wider Still?: Racial Politics, Intra-Imperial Immigration and the Absence of an Imperial Citizenship in the British Empire." *Journal of Colonialism and Colonial History* 3, no. 3 (2002). Accessed December 17, 2013. http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/journal_of_colonialism_and_colonial_history/v003/3.gorman.html.
- _____. *Imperial Citizenship: Empire and the Question of Belonging*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2006.
- Graves, Robert. *Goodbye to All That*. London: Cassell, 1957. [http://hdl.handle.net/2027/\[u\]: mdp.39015008187141](http://hdl.handle.net/2027/[u]: mdp.39015008187141).
- Greenblatt, Stephen. *Renaissance Self-Fashioning*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980.
- Gunn, Simon, and James Vernon, eds. *The Peculiarities of Liberal Modernity in Imperial Britain*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011.
- Hall, Catherine. "British Cultural Identities and the Legacy of Empire." In *British Cultural Studies: Geography, Nationality, and Identity*, edited by David Morley and Kevin Robins, 27-40. New York: Oxford University Press, 2001.
- _____. *Civilising Subjects: Metropole and Colony in the English Imagination, 1830-1867*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002.
- Hall, Catherine, Keith McClelland, and Jane Rendall. *Defining the Victorian Nation: Class, Race, Gender and the British Reform Act of 1867*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000.
- Hardy, G. H. *Collected Papers of G. H. Hardy*. Edited by London Mathematical Society. Vol. 7. 7 vols. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1966.
- _____. *A Mathematician's Apology*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992.
- _____. *Ramanujan: Twelve Lectures on Subjects Suggested by His Life and Work*. Providence, RI: AMS Chelsea Pub., 1999.

- Hiro, Dilip. *Black British, White British: A History of Race Relations in Britain*. London: Paladin, 1992.
- Holt, Thomas C. *The Problem of Freedom: Race, Labor, and Politics in Jamaica and Britain, 1832-1938*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992.
- Honey, John Raymond de Symons. *Tom Brown's Universe: The Development of the Victorian Public School*. London: Millington, 1977.
- Illouz, Eva. *Cold Intimacies: The Making of Emotional Capitalism*. Cambridge, UK; Malden, M.A.: Polity Press, 2007.
- Jalland, Pat. *Women, Marriage, and Politics, 1860-1914*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1987.
- Johnson, Walter. "On Agency." *Journal of Social History* 37, no. 1 (2003): 113–124. doi:10.1353/jsh.2003.0143.
- Jolly, Margaret, and Martha Macintyre, eds. *Family and Gender in the Pacific: Domestic Contradictions and the Colonial Impact*. Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1989.
- Jones, Susan. "Into the Twentieth Century: Imperial Romance from Haggard to Buchan." In *A Companion to Romance: From Classical to Contemporary*, edited by Corinne J. Saunders, 406–423. Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2004.
- Jordan, Donald E. *Land and Popular Politics in Ireland: County Mayo from the Plantation to the Land War*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994.
- Kanigel, Robert. *The Man Who Knew Infinity: A Life of the Genius Ramanujan*. New York: C. Scribner's, 1991.
- Kerr, Douglas. *Conan Doyle: Writing, Profession, and Practice*. Oxford: University of Oxford Press, 2013.
- Kestner, Joseph A. "'Real' Men: Construction of Masculinity in the Sherlock Holmes Narratives." *Studies in the Literary Imagination* 29, no. 1 (Spring 1996): 73-88.
- Klimaszewski, Melissa. *Brief Lives: Wilkie Collins*. London: Hesperus, 2011.
- Kroenke, C. H. "Social Networks, Social Support, and Survival After Breast Cancer Diagnosis." *Journal of Clinical Oncology* 24, no. 7 (February 6, 2006): 1105–1111. doi:10.1200/JCO.2005.04.2846.
- Lago, Mary, ed. *Imperfect Encounter: Letters of William Rothenstein and Rabindranath Tagore, 1911-1941*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1972.
- _____. *India's Prisoner: A Biography of Edward John Thompson, 1886-1946*. Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2001.
- Lahiri, Shompa. *Indians in Britain: Anglo-Indian Encounters, Race and Identity, 1880-1930*. London; Portland, OR: Frank Cass, 2000.
- Lambert, David, and Alan Lester, eds. *Colonial Lives across the British Empire: Imperial Careerings in the Long Nineteenth Century*. Cambridge, UK ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006.
- _____. "Introduction: Imperial Spaces, Imperial Subjects." In *Colonial Lives across the British Empire: Imperial Careerings in the Long Nineteenth Century*, edited by David Lambert and Alan Lester. Cambridge, UK ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006.
- Leavitt, David. *The Indian Clerk: A Novel*. New York: Bloomsbury, 2007.
- Lester, David. "Suicide and Opportunity: Implications for the Rationality of Suicide." In *The Reasoning Criminologist: Essays in Honour of Ronald V. Clarke*, by R. V. G

- Clarke, Nick Tilley, and Graham Farrell, 160–171. New York: Routledge, 2012.
- Levine, Philippa. *Prostitution, Race, and Politics: Policing Venereal Disease in the British Empire*. New York: Routledge, 2003.
- Lipsitz, George. *American Studies in a Moment of Danger*. Critical American Studies Series. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2001.
- Littlewood, John E. *Littlewood's Miscellany*. Edited by Béla Bollobás. Cambridge [Cambridgeshire] and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1986.
- Lycett, Andrew. *Arthur Conan Doyle: The Man Who Created Sherlock Holmes*. London: Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 2007.
- Mangan, J.A., and James Walvin, eds. *Manliness and Morality: Middle-Class Masculinity in Britain and America, 1800-1940*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1987.
- Mantena, Karuna. *Alibis of Empire: Henry Maine and the Ends of Liberal Imperialism*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010.
- McClintock, Anne. *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender, and Sexuality in the Colonial Contest*. New York: Routledge, 1995.
- Mehta, Uday Singh. *Liberalism and Empire: A Study in Nineteenth-Century British Liberal Thought*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999.
- Metcalf, Thomas. *Ideologies of the Raj*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997.
- Midgley, Clare, ed. *Gender and Imperialism*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1998.
- Mignolo, Walter. *Local Histories/Global Designs: Coloniality, Subaltern Knowledges, and Border Thinking*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000.
- Miller, D.A. "From Roman Policier to Roman-Police: Wilkie Collins's 'The Moonstone.'" *NOVEL: A Forum on Fiction* 13, no. 2 (Winter, 1980): 153-170.
- Miller, Michele. "Material Friendship: Service and Amity in Early Modern French Literature." Ph.D. diss., University of Michigan, 2009.
- Morgan, David. "Cultural Work and Friendship Work: The Case of 'Bloomsbury.'" *Media, Culture & Society* 4, no. 1 (January 1, 1982): 19–32. doi:10.1177/016344378200400103.
- Morgan, Kenneth O. *The People's Peace*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990.
- Mort, Frank. *Dangerous Sexualities: Medico-moral Politics in England Since 1830*. 2nd ed. London: Routledge, 2000.
- Nair, Janaki. "'Imperial Reason,' National Honour and New Patriarchal Compacts in Early Twentieth-Century India." *History Workshop Journal* 66 (Autumn 2008): 208-226.
- Nussbaum, Martha C. "Kant and Cosmopolitanism." In *Perpetual Peace: Essays on Kant's Cosmopolitan Ideal*, edited by James Bohman and Matthias Lutz-Bachmann. Studies in Contemporary German Social Thought. Cambridge: MIT Press, 1997.
- _____. "Patriotism and Cosmopolitanism." In *The Cosmopolitanism Reader*, edited by Garrett Wallace Brown and David Held, 155–162. Cambridge: Polity, 2010.
- Oldfield, Roger. *Outrage: The Edalji Five and the Shadow of Sherlock Holmes*. Cambridge: Vanguard, 2010.
- Orth-Gomér, K., A. Rosengren, and L. Wilhelmsen. "Lack of Social Support and Incidence of Coronary Heart Disease in Middle-Aged Swedish Men."

- Psychosomatic Medicine* 55, no. 1 (January 1, 1993): 37–43.
- Owen, Nicholas. “The Soft Heart of the British Empire: Indian Radicals in Edwardian London.” *Past and Present* 220, no. 1 (August 2013): 143-184. doi: 10.1093/pastj/gtt006.
- Parker-Pope, Tara. “What Are Friends For? A Longer Life.” *The New York Times*, April 21, 2009, sec. Health. <http://www.nytimes.com/2009/04/21/health/21well.html>.
- Paul, Kathleen. *Whitewashing Britain: Race and Citizenship in the Postwar Era*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1997.
- Pedersen, Susan. "National Bodies, Unspeakable Acts: The Sexual Politics of Colonial Policy-Making," in *Journal of Modern History* 63, no. 4 (December 1991): 647-680.
- Plamper, Jan. “The History of Emotions: An Interview with William Reddy, Barbara Rosenwein, and Peter Stearns.” *History and Theory*, 49, no. 2 (May, 2010): 237–265.
- Political and Economic Planning. *Colonial Students in Britain: A Report*. London, 1955.
- Prakash, Gyan. “The Colonial Genealogy of Society.” In *The Social in Question: New Bearings in History and the Social Sciences*, edited by Patrick Joyce, 81-96. London: Routledge, 2002.
- “Raiders of the Lost Notebook « 2006 « Articles « LASNews Magazine « Alumni & Friends « College of Liberal Arts & Sciences « University of Illinois.” Accessed December 18, 2013. <http://www.las.illinois.edu/alumni/magazine/articles/2006/lostnotebook/>.
- Ramanujan, Srinivasa. *Ramanujan: Letters and Commentary*. Edited by Bruce C. Berndt and Robert A. Rankin. History of Mathematics v. 9. Providence, RI: American Mathematical Society, 1995.
- Ranganathan, S. R. *Ramanujan: The Man and the Mathematician*. Great Thinkers of India Series 1. Bombay: Asia Publishing House, 1967.
- Rankin, Robert Alexander. “Ramanujan As a Patient.” In *Ramanujan: Essays and Surveys*, edited by Bruce C. Berndt and Robert Alexander Rankin, 41–64. [Providence, RI]: American Mathematical Society, 2001.
- Rappaport, Erika. “‘The Bombay Debt’: Letter Writing, Domestic Economies and Family Conflict in Colonial India.” *Gender and History* 16, no. 2 (2004): 233-260.
- Reddy, William M. *The Navigation of Feeling: A Framework for the History of Emotions*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001.
- Ricard, René. “The Radiant Child.” *Artforum* 20 (December 1981): 35-43.
- Risinger, D. Michael. “Boxes in Boxes: Julian Barnes, Conan Doyle, Sherlock Holmes and the Edalji Case.” *International Commentary on Evidence* 4, no. 2, article 3 (2006): 1-90. doi:10.2202/1554-4567.1044.
- Robbins, Bruce. “Introduction Part I: Actually Existing Cosmopolitanism.” In *Cosmopolitics: Thinking and Feeling beyond the Nation*, edited by Pheng Cheah and Bruce Robbins, 1–19. Cultural Politics 14. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1998.
- Robbins, Keith. *Nineteenth-Century Britain: Integration and Diversity*. Oxford: Clarendon, 1988.
- Rorty, Richard. “Solidarity or Objectivity?” In *Post-Analytic Philosophy*, edited by John Rajchman and Cornel West, 3–19. New York: Columbia University Press, 1985.

- Rosenwein, Barbara H. "Thinking Historically about Medieval Emotions." *History Compass* 8, no. 8 (August 4, 2010): 828 – 842. doi:10.1111/j.1478-0542.2010.00702.x.
- _____. "Worrying about Emotions in History." *The American Historical Review* 107, no. 3 (June 1, 2002): 821–845. doi:10.1086/587011.
- Ruberg, Willemijn. "Interdisciplinarity and the History of Emotions." *Cultural and Social History* 6, no. 4 (December 1, 2009): 507–516. doi:10.2752/147800409X467631.
- Schaffner, Anna Katharina. *Modernism and Perversion: Sexual Deviance in Sexology and Literature, 1850-1930*. Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012.
- Said, Edward. *Orientalism*. New York: Vintage Books, 1978.
- Salesa, Damon Ieremia. *Racial Crossings: Race, Intermarriage, and the Victorian British Empire*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011.
- Sartori, Andrew. "The British Empire and Its Liberal Mission." *Journal of Modern History* 78, no. 3 (September 2006): 623-42. doi: 10.1086/509148.
- Saunders, Corinne J., ed. *A Companion to Romance: From Classical to Contemporary*. Blackwell Companions to Literature and Culture 27. Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2004.
- Sedgwick, Eve Kosofsky. *Between Men: English Literature and Male Homosocial Desire*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1985.
- Schaffner, Anna Katharina. *Modernism and Perversion: Sexual Deviance in Sexology and Literature, 1850-1930*. Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012.
- Scheer, Monique. "Are Emotions a Kind of Practice (And Is That What Makes Them Have a History?) A Bourdieuan Approach to Understanding Emotion." *History and Theory* 51, no. 2 (May 1, 2012): 193 – 220. doi:10.1111/j.1468-2303.2012.00621.x.
- Scott, David. "Colonial Governmentality." *Social Text* xliii, no. 43 (Autumn 1995): 191-220.
- Scott, Joan Wallach, ed. *Feminism and History*. Oxford Readings in Feminism. Oxford ; New York: Oxford University Press, 1996.
- Sinha, Mrinalini. *Colonial Masculinity: The "Manly Englishman" and the "Effeminate" Bengali in the Late Nineteenth Century*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1995.
- Smith-Rosenberg, Carroll. "The Female World of Love and Ritual: Relations between Women in Nineteenth-Century America." In *Feminism and History*, edited by Joan Wallach Scott, 366–397. Oxford Readings in Feminism. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996.
- Snow, C. P. "Foreward." In *A Mathematician's Apology*, by G. H. Hardy. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992.
- Somerville, Siobhan. "Scientific Racism and the Emergence of the Homosexual Body." *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 5, no. 2 (October 1994): 243-266.
- St. Aubyn, Alan. *A Fellow of Trinity*. London: Chatto & Windus, 1898. <http://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/012189465>.
- Stashower, Daniel. *Teller of Tales: The Life of Arthur Conan Doyle*. New York: Holt,

- 1999.
- Stearns, Peter, and Carol Z. Stearns. "Emotionology: Clarifying the History of Emotions and Emotional Standards." *American Historical Review* 90, no. 4 (October 1985): 813-836.
- Steedman, Carolyn. *Landscape for a Good Woman: A Story of Two Lives*. New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1987.
- Stedman, Gesa. *Stemming the Torrent: Expression and Control in the Victorian Discourses on Emotion, 1830-1872*. Aldershot: Ashgate, 2002.
- Stoler, Ann. "Affective States." In *A Companion to the Anthropology of Politics*, edited by David Nugent and Joan Vincent, 4–20. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing Ltd., 2008.
- Stoler, Ann Laura. *Carnal Knowledge and Imperial Power: Race and the Intimate in Colonial Rule*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002.
- _____. *Race and the Education of Desire: Foucault's History of Sexuality and the Colonial Order of Things*. Durham: Duke University Press, 1995.
- _____. "Sexual Affronts and Racial Frontiers: European Identities and the Cultural Politics of Exclusion in Colonial Southeast Asia." In *Tensions of Empire: Colonial Cultures in a Bourgeois World*, edited by Frederick Cooper and Ann Laura Stoler, 198–237. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997.
- Strobel, Margaret. *European Women and the Second British Empire*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1991.
- Sutaria, Sejal V. "Friendship, Danger, and Difference in Anglo-India: Hybrid Hauntings in the Postcolonial Nation State." Ph.D. diss., University of Michigan, 2005.
- Tabili, Laura. "Outsiders in the Land of Their Birth: Exogamy, Citizenship, and Identity in War and Peace." *Journal of British Studies* 44, no. 4 (October 2005): 796-815. doi: 10.1086/431942.
- _____. *Global Migrants, Local Culture: Natives and Newcomers in Provincial England, 1841-1939*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011.
- Tagore, Rabindranath. *The English Writings of Rabindranath Tagore*. Edited by Mohit Kumar Ray. New Delhi: Atlantic Publishers & Distributors, 2007.
- _____. *The essential Tagore: Rabindranath Tagore*. Edited by Fakrul Alam and Radha Chakravarty. Cambridge, Mass.; London: Belknap, 2011.
- Tagore, Rabindranath, and William Radice. *Selected Poems*. London, England; New York, N.Y., USA: Penguin Books, 1994.
- Taylor, David. *Crime, Policing and Punishment in England, 1750-1914*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1998.
- Thomas, Ronald R. "The Fingerprint of the Foreigner: Colonizing the Criminal Body in 1890s Detective Fiction and Criminal Anthropology." *English Literary History* 61, no. 3 (Autumn, 1994): 655-683. doi: 10.1353/elh.1994.0028.
- _____. *Detective Fiction and the Rise of Forensic Science*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999.
- Thompson, Edward John. *Rabindranath Tagore: Poet and Dramatist*. Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1991.
- _____. "Tagore Learns of the Nobel Prize." In *"Alien Homage": Edward Thompson and Rabindranath Tagore*, by E. P. Thompson. New York: Oxford University Press, 1993.

- _____. *A Difficult Friendship: Letters of Edward Thompson and Rabindranath Tagore, 1913-1940*. Edited by Uma Das Gupta. New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2003.
- Thompson, E. P. *“Alien Homage”: Edward Thompson and Rabindranath Tagore*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1993.
- Titchmarsh, E. C. “Godfrey Harold Hardy.” In *Collected Papers of G.H. Hardy*, by G. H. Hardy, 1-12. Vol. 1. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1966.
- Tosh, John. *A Man’s Place: Masculinity and the Middle-Class Home in Victorian England*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999.
- Trautmann, Thomas R. *Aryans and British India*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997.
- “UW Scientists Unlock Major Number Theory Puzzle (Feb. 26, 2007).” Accessed December 5, 2013. <http://www.news.wisc.edu/13497>.
- Van Kirk, Sylvia. *“Many Tender Ties”: Women in Fur-Trade Society in Western Canada, 1670-1870*. Winnipeg, Man: Watson & Dwyer, 1980.
- Vicinus, Martha. *Intimate Friends: Women Who Loved Women, 1778-1928*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004.
- Viswanathan, Gauri. *Masks of Conquest: Literary Study and British Rule in India*. The Social Foundations of Aesthetic Forms Series. New York: Columbia University Press, 1989.
- Walford, Geoffrey. *Life in Public Schools*. London: Methuen, 1986.
- Walkowitz, Judith. *City of Dreadful Delight: Narratives of Sexual Danger in Late Victorian London*. London: Virago, 1992.
- Waller, Philip. *Writers, Readers, and Reputations: Literary Life in Britain 1870-1918*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006.
- Ware, Vron. *Beyond the Pale: White Women, Racism and History*. London: Verso, 1992.
- Warner, Robert Townsend. *Winchester*. G. Bell and sons, 1900.
http://books.google.com/books?id=jgHYgkP-9sYC&printsec=frontcover&source=gbs_ViewAPI#v=onepage&q&f=false.
- Weaver, Gordon. *Conan Doyle and the Parson’s Son: the George Edalji Case*. Cambridge: Vanguard Books, 2006.
- Weindling, Paul. *Health, Race and German Politics between National Unification and Nazism, 1870-1945*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989.
- White, Richard. *Railroaded: The Transcontinentals and the Making of Modern America*. New York: W. W. Norton, 2011.
- Whittington-Egan, Richard and Molly, eds. *The Story of Mr. George Edalji*. London: Grey House Books, 1985.
- Williams, Francis. *Dangerous Estate: The Anatomy of Newspapers*. London: Longmans, Green, 1958.
- Woolf, Leonard. *Sowing, an Autobiography of the Years 1880 to 1904*. San Diego: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1975.
- Wynne, Catherine. *The Colonial Conan Doyle: British Imperialism, Irish Nationalism, and the Gothic*. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2002.