COMPETING COLONIAL DISCOURSES ON INDIA: REPRESENTING THE INDIAN 'MUTINY' (1857–58) IN FRENCH- AND ENGLISH-LANGUAGE TEXTS

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ABSTRACT

The Indian uprisings of 1857–58 represent one of the most significant challenges to colonial rule in the history of British colonialism. They serve both to destabilize the image of colonial domination and to highlight the inherent violence of Britain's overseas administration. As such, they have formed an important reference point within postcolonial thinking, particularly among Anglophone scholars. The focus of this analysis is not, however, on the much studied representations of the uprisings in British and Indian writing. Instead, it considers the ways in which these events were depicted by that 'other' European power in India, the French, as an instance in which to imagine India beyond Britain's control.

The subject of an Indian-led revolt presented itself as an opportunity for French writing to triumph vicariously over its old colonial rival and compensate (at least rhetorically) for France's 'loss' of India to the *frère ennemi* in the late-eighteenth century. By 1857, such a victory was all that France could hope for, the Treaty of Paris of 1814 having definitively reduced the French presence on the subcontinent to five trading posts scattered around the periphery of British India (including Pondichéry, Chandernagor, Karikal, Yanaon and Mahé). Yet if competition for Indian territory had long since expired, this reading of the Indian uprisings, as an otherwise exclusively British and Indian narrative, reveals the ongoing desire to rival the British through a competing and specifically French colonial discourse on India.

The presence of this rival discourse is examined in a selection of French-language texts, including newspapers, eye-witness accounts, novels, plays, histories, travelogues, political pamphlets and a song (1857–1984). By exploring these counter-narratives, this thesis challenges the East–West binarism that has formed the staple of postcolonial analysis from Said's *Orientalism* (1978) onwards. In its place, it posits the need to recognize the inherent instability of the European self through a more 'conflictual model' of European colonialism (Teltscher, 1995), while re-examining French writing on India through a methodological engagement with 'France's politically subordinate status' (Marsh, 2007).

In short, French-language representations of 1857–58 are shown to have less to say about the uprisings *per se* than about French colonial identity and its troubled image as 'political second-best' to the British (Said, 1978). Although the subject of anti-colonial revolt is employed as a context in which to produce a positive vision of French colonialism that opposes British India, the final analysis reveals the anxiety at the heart of French colonial discourse. Ultimately, the rhetoric of France's 'civilizing mission' is destabilized by its will to appropriate Indian resistance history for the sole purpose of allaying the memories of marginalization and loss, and by its inability to eschew its own histories of colonial violence.

1   HISTORY, THEORY AND CORPUS: A CONTEXTUALIZATION OF FRENCH-LANGUAGE NARRATIVES OF THE INDIAN UPRISINGS

1.1   Introduction

> 'France amie, ô terre adorée! Ouvre ton âme à nos douleurs!
>
> Et que ta redoutable épée change en paix toutes les fureurs.
>
> Que ton génie en tout sublime, qui jamais ne fut arrêté,
>
> Nous aide à sortir de l'abîme en nous donnant la liberté!'[1]
>
> (Nana-Saïb in Frédéric Billot's *Le Réveil de l'Inde ou chant du Mharatte*, 1860)

The Indian uprisings of 1857–58 against British rule occurred at the height of British colonial power, only six years after the ostentatious celebrations of empire at the Great Exhibition of 1851.[2] Initially considered by many Britons as little more than a 'military mutiny', the revolts quickly transcended their military base to incorporate a broad cross-section of Indian society, from peasants to land-owning *zemindars*, and from minor rajahs to the Mughal emperor, Bahadur Shah II.[3] As the revolts expanded across the northern provinces of India, they came to represent the most significant challenge that Britain had ever faced from a 'subject race'. Although they were eventually and brutally suppressed by the military, they have remained a highly significant event within colonial history, one that marked a major turning point in Britain's colonization of India by bringing the East India Company to an end, and one that has since been remembered by Indian nationalist historians as India's first 'War of Independence'.[4]

As a pivotal moment that saw Indians from politically, socially and religiously diverse backgrounds defying colonial rule, it has inevitably drawn the attention of key postcolonial theorists, including Bhabha, Suleri and Young.[5] Collectively, they have asserted

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[1] Frédéric Billot, *Étrennes aux braves Bretons. Le Réveil de l'Inde ou chant du Mharatte, dédié à Nana-Saïb. Scène lyrico-dramatique* (Arles-sur-Rhône: Dumas et Dayre, 1860), p. 7.

[2] While acknowledging that guerrilla campaigns continued into 1859, the year 1858 is used throughout this thesis as a descriptive end point in accordance with their official closure marked by the Queen's Proclamation of 1 November 1858. A general description of the Great Exhibition and its domestication of India can be found in Grace Moore, *Dickens and Empire: Discourses of Class, Race and Colonialism in the Works of Charles Dickens* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004), pp. 96–103.

[3] A glossary of terms can be found on pp. 182–83.

[4] Vinayak Damodar Savarkar, *The Indian War of Independence, 1857* (Bombay: Phoenix, 1947; first publ. London: [n. pub.], 1909). Like Savarkar, the Swatantrata Sangram Sanghralaya Museum based at the Red Fort in New Delhi depicts the uprisings as a major event in a teleological trajectory that led to Indian independence in 1947.

[5] Homi K. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (London: Routledge, 1994), pp. 198–211; Sara Suleri, *The Rhetoric of English India* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992); Robert J.C. Young,

the importance of the uprisings as a moment in which to develop and explore postcolonial theories. However, while influenced by these theoretical frameworks, the focus of this thesis moves away from the much studied British and Indian perspectives of the uprisings. Instead, it considers the ways in which these events were depicted by that 'other' European power in India, the French, as an instance in which to imagine an India beyond British control.[6]

By the time of the uprisings in 1857, France had long since relinquished any hopes of ousting the British from India. Following the Treaty of Paris of 30 May 1814, France was left with only a marginal foothold on the subcontinent, henceforth represented by its five enclaves scattered around the fringes of British Indian territory: Pondichéry, Chandernagor, Karikal, Yanaon and Mahé.[7] These *comptoirs* were never seriously threatened by the mid-nineteenth-century revolts. Only the briefest of journalistic flurries occurred over the question of permitting troops to be stationed in French-Indian territory, an action that would have contravened the terms of the Treaty of Paris.[8] Although these events had little to do with France, they formed nonetheless a specific source of inspiration for French writing on India from 1857 onwards. Indeed, news that Britain's greatest overseas possession was under threat and, more importantly, was being threatened by its own colonized people, presented itself as an expedient opportunity for French writers to redress a century of French decline under British ascendancy and to imagine France's rise in the wake of Britain's failure. Even after 1858, when the uprisings had been definitively quashed by the British military, the revolts remained a leitmotif in French writing on India, used politically to challenge British dominance by reminding them of the perils of hubris and of the fragility lying behind their imperial image.

Viewing what has traditionally been seen as a British and Indian narrative through French-language representations might be a specialized subject matter, but its motive lies in the fact that, following Marsh, it presents an interesting anomaly within, and challenge to,

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Colonial Desire: Hybridity in Theory, Culture and Race (London: Routledge, 2000; first publ. New York: Routledge, 1995), p. 92 and p. 119. Following Forsdick and Murphy, the term 'postcolonial' is used throughout this thesis 'to refer to a contemporary assessment of the culture and history of empire from the moment of conquest', whereas 'post-colonial' is used 'to refer to that which comes chronologically after colonialism'; Charles Forsdick and David Murphy, 'Introduction: The Case for Francophone Postcolonial Studies', in *Francophone Postcolonial Studies: A Critical Introduction* (London: Arnold, 2003), pp. 1–14 (p. 5). For an overview of the application of postcolonial theory to this thesis, see Section 1.3.1.

[6] While this thesis acknowledges the existence of other colonial powers in India, namely Portugal and Holland, it limits itself to an examination of predominantly French as well as British and Indian responses to the uprisings.

[7] Jacques Weber, *Pondichéry et les comptoirs de l'Inde après Dupleix: La démocratie au pays des castes* (Paris: Denoël, 1996), p. 15.

[8] Louis Bellet, 'Les Comptoirs français de l'Inde', *La Patrie*, 30 September 1857, p. 1; V. Paulin, 'Histoire de la semaine', *L'Illustration, journal universel*, 30 (10 October 1857), 226.

Anglophone and Francophone postcolonial studies.[9] In the first instance, Anglophone postcolonialism has provided the theoretical basis for the majority of work completed on French colonial representations of India to date, most of which focuses exclusively on fictional works. Using a binary structure between the East and the West, it identifies India as an exoticized space created for a European audience and populated by a cast of familiar Indian stereotypes and figures, such as the *Brahman*, the *sati*, the *bayadère* and the *Thug*.[10] While this kind of analysis remains useful in a broad sense, it often overlooks, or does not sufficiently address, the ongoing presence of the French in India. In doing so, it ignores both the effects of marginalization on French-language representations of India and the presence of a specifically French colonial discourse that rivals its British counterpart. To quote from Marsh, 'French-language writing on India cannot be examined and appreciated fully without engaging methodologically with France's politically subordinate status in India.'[11] In other words, more than just an exoticist discourse marked by a Manichean division between the French colonizer and its eastern 'other', French writing on India also needs to be analysed for its representations of the 'other' colonizer, the British.[12]

In the second instance, the field of Francophone postcolonial studies has perhaps been less inclined to engage with French colonialism in India because, unlike the better studied examples of North Africa and the French Antilles, it is not circumscribed by calls to acknowledge its exploitative colonial practices.[13] This is not to suggest that human rights abuses did not occur in the Indian *comptoirs* — indeed, the exportation of indentured labourers through Pondichéry and Karikal began under British legislation in 1853 and was terminated in 1888 as a direct result of the mistreatment of Indian labourers by French

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[9] Kate Marsh, *Fictions of 1947: Representations of Indian Decolonization 1919–1962* (Oxford: Lang, 2007).

[10] See, in particular, *L'Inde et l'imaginaire*, ed. by Catherine Weinberger-Thomas (Paris: Éditions de l'École des Hautes Études en Science Sociales, 1988); *Rêver l'Asie: Exotisme et littérature coloniale aux Indes, en Indochine et en Insulinde*, ed. by Denys Lombard, Catherine Champion and Henri Chambert-Loir (Paris: Éditions de l'École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales, 1993); Christian Petr, *L'Inde des romans* (Paris: Kailash, 1995); Srilata Ravi, *L'Inde romancée: L'Inde dans le genre romanesque français depuis 1947* (New York: Lang, 1997); Jackie Assayag, *L'Inde fabuleuse: Le charme discret de l'exotisme français (XVIIe–XXe siècles)* (Paris: Kimé, 1999). Biès's extensive exploration into the influence of India on French literary production is not, however, influenced by postcolonial thinking; Jean Biès, *Littérature française et pensée hindoue: Des origines à 1950* (Paris: Klincksieck, 1992; first publ. 1974).

[11] Marsh, *Fictions of 1947*, p. 13.

[12] Marsh, *Fictions of 1947*, p. 13.

[13] Bancel, Blanchard and Lemaire's co-edited collection of essays engages directly with the need to acknowledge France's colonial past, particularly within the context of current integration and immigration concerns, and in response to the attempted implementation of the 2005 law that called for schools syllabuses to recognize 'le rôle positif de la présence française outre-mer, notamment en Afrique du Nord'. The proposed 2005 law is quoted in Olivier Le Cour Grandmaison, 'Sur la réhabilitation du passé colonial de la France', in *La Fracture coloniale: La société française au prisme de l'héritage colonial*, ed. by Pascal Blanchard, Nicholas Bancel and Sandrine Lemaire (Paris: La Découverte, 2006; first publ. 2005), pp. 125–32 (p. 125).

handlers.[14] Rather, it is to point out that this oversight may stem from the unique position of the French on the subcontinent, being a *de facto* colonial authority, yet one that was subsumed under British rule. Because of this unique position, depictions of India stand at a crossroads between reality and fantasy. On the one hand, they refer to, and are underpinned by, a real colonial presence. On the other hand, they function within a fantastical discourse that idealizes French colonialism by imagining what an *Inde française* might have been, but never was.[15] The positive image of France that emerges is all the more compelling for being set within, and contrasted to, the reality of a British India caught in the midst of a violent colonial crisis.

In applying Marsh's analytical framework to an examination of French representations of 1857–58, this thesis will demonstrate that, although dreams of a French Indian empire were quashed, the French continued to compete with Britain over the cultural space of 'India', seeking, if not territorial domination, then a compensatory epistemological occupation.[16] It will show how the imagined space of India is co-opted into a discursive battle against the British and is used as a site in which to create a particular vision of French colonialism. The following study is concerned, therefore, with a Franco-British rivalry that is conducted not on the physical landscape of the subcontinent, but within the French colonial imagination and its narratives of empire. Centrally, it argues that the permanently reduced presence of the French in India post-1814 did not simply inspire nostalgic and exoticist images, but rather that marginalization was repeatedly mobilized as a position from which to speak out against the dominant and rival British colonizer. Despite French losses, the idea of *Inde* could, therefore, be made to function as a useful political and polemical tool, enabling French writers to create an idealized vision of French colonialism in contrast with the

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[14] David Northrup, 'Indentured Indians in the French Antilles. Les immigrants indiens engagés aux Antilles Françaises', *Revue française d'histoire d'outre-mer*, 326–327 (2000), 245–71 (p. 247 and p. 259). Tinker additionally suggests that an unregulated trade of indentured labourers through Pondichéry and Karikal was in operation throughout the 1840s and 1850s, with some 37,694 coolies thought to have reached Réunion by 1856; Hugh Tinker, *A New System of Slavery: The Export of Indian Labour Overseas, 1830–1920*, 2nd edn (London: Hansib, 1993; first publ. London: Oxford University Press, 1974), p. 95.

[15] Marsh, *Fictions of 1947*, p. 213.

[16] The idea of colonialism as a form of epistemological occupation occurs in both Said's and Cohn's analyses. Said states that what the French and British 'shared' (or competed over) 'was not only land or profit or rule; it was the kind of intellectual power' that Said names 'Orientalism'; Edward W. Said, *Orientalism* (London: Penguin, 2003; first publ. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1978), p. 41. Cohn argues that the British 'unknowingly and unwittingly invaded and conquered not only a territory but an epistemological space as well'; Bernard S. Cohn, *Colonialism and its Forms of Knowledge: The British in India* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1996), p. 4. This same argument can be applied to France's colonization of India, as Marsh notes in her work on Indian decolonization: 'French-language narratives of India's liberation from colonial dominance by the *frère ennemi* reveal that "India" remained an important site for epistemological occupation throughout the twentieth century', an argument that can be applied equally to French-language narratives of the Indian uprisings; Marsh, *Fictions of 1947*, p. 215.

rapaciousness of the British, while galvanizing French imperial expansion into other overseas territories, notably North Africa and Indochina.[17]

1.2   Historical Contextualization

1.2.1   The French in India

Although the French presence on the Indian subcontinent has been largely overshadowed by the grand narrative of British colonialism, France's involvement in India endured for nearly three hundred years. Following initial attempts to gain a foothold on the subcontinent in 1666, with the establishment of a settlement in Surat, the French continued to have a political footing in India until 1962, when the *Assemblée nationale* formally validated the Treaty of Cession.[18] What became an important rivalry between France and Britain for India began even earlier, in 1664, with Colbert's establishment of the *Compagnie française des Indes orientales* under Louis XIV's reign.[19] Colbert envisaged that the *Compagnie* would open up a 'route glorieuse' for French trade that would match, if not surpass, the existing Dutch and British East India Companies, which had been extant since 1596 and 1600, respectively.[20]

For nearly one hundred years, Colbert's desire to produce a competitive trading company appeared to be coming to fruition. Following the granting of settlement rights to the French in Pondichéry in 1673 and the establishment of four other trading posts at Chandernagor (1688), Mahé (1721), Yanaon (1731) and Karikal (1739), France's political influence succeeded in extending along the Coromandel coast and into the Carnatic and Deccan regions, reaching its zenith under Dupleix's governorship of Pondichéry (1742–54).[21] By offering military protection to Indian princes in exchange for land and taxation rights, Dupleix was able to become the effective power behind several important thrones in

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[17] Although France's colonization of Algeria can be dated from 1830, interest in this North African country began much earlier with Napoleon Bonaparte's plans to invade Algiers in 1802; Marc Ferro, *Histoire des colonisations: Des conquêtes aux indépendances, XIIIe–XXe siècle* (Paris: Seuil, 1994), p. 96. Similarly, interest in establishing a base in South-East Asia, as a result of Britain's acquisition of Hong Kong in 1842, began long before France actually succeeded in establishing a colonial presence in Indochina in 1860; Nicola Cooper, *France in Indochina: Colonial Encounters* (Oxford: Berg, 2001), p. 12.

[18] Assayag, p. 11; Marsh, *Fictions of 1947*, p. 37.

[19] Ferro notes that, although the colonial rivalry between France and Britain can be dated from the seventeenth century onwards, its development took shape over several centuries of international conflict and alliance. Thus, 'Du XVIIe siècle à la chute de Napoléon, on assiste plutôt à la construction de cette rivalité'; Ferro, p. 87.

[20] Colbert is cited in Assayag, pp. 9–10 and p. 17.

[21] Ferro, p. 89.

southern India, while avoiding any of the responsibilities of government.[22] These actions were not, however, endorsed by the Versailles court (then under Louis XV) and Dupleix was recalled to France in 1754 for having squandered the financial investments of the court on what it perceived to be a worthless enterprise.[23] In contrast, Dupleix's adversary, Robert Clive, benefitted from the support of his government and was rewarded with a promotion to colonel, an endorsement that would later be repaid with his victory over Shuja-ud-Daula at the Battle of Plassey (1757) that marked the beginning of British rule in India.[24] That India fell under British rather than French rule is connected, therefore, with domestic politics. Dupleix's potential to have become, as Wolpert claims, '*de facto* emperor of India' was curtailed by a monarch who lacked any interest in 'Eastern politics'.[25]

In retrospect, Dupleix's impeachment can be seen as sounding the death knell for French expansion on the subcontinent, a blow that was succeeded by the Treaty of Paris of 1763 that ended the Seven Years War and also saw Canada being ceded to the British.[26] Despite these losses, Franco-British rivalry in India would continue long into the eighteenth century.[27] Battles were waged over Pondichéry, which was lost to the British in 1761 and returned to France in the Treaty of Paris of 1763, before being taken again in 1778 and 1793, and then definitively restored to France in the Treaty of Paris of 1814.[28]

As well as fighting to maintain its *comptoirs*, France was also able to impact on Indian affairs by supporting militarily Indian rulers against the British. Although by 1761, few rulers remained with the military and financial weight to curb Britain's growing influence — the Mughal empire having been dismantled after a century of internal politicking and dynastic warfare, and the Marathan threat having been quelled after their defeat at Delhi at the hands of the Afghan invader, Shah Abdali[29] — an important challenge arrived from the south in the shape of the Mysorean leaders, Haidar Ali and Tipu Sultan.[30] It was with these innovative Indian leaders that France would form a long-lasting alliance, which manifested itself on two notable occasions.[31] First, French troops assisted Haidar Ali and Tipu Sultan in defeating the British at Pollilur (1780) and Bednur (1783) during the Second Mysore War (1780–84). Second, news that Napoleon Bonaparte had invaded Egypt,

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[22] Ferro, p. 89. Stanley A. Wolpert, *A New History of India*, 7th edn (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004; first publ. 1977), p. 177.

[23] Wolpert, p. 178.

[24] Maya Jasanoff, *Edge of Empire: Conquest and Collecting in the East, 1750–1850* (London: Harper Perennial, 2006), p. 27.

[25] Wolpert, p. 177.

[26] Ferro, p. 89.

[27] Jasanoff, p. 27.

[28] Jacques Weber, 'Avant-propos', *Revue française d'histoire d'outre-mer*, 290 (1991), 5–8 (p. 6).

[29] Wolpert, p. 184.

[30] Kate Teltscher, *India Inscribed: European and British Writing on India, 1600–1800* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), pp. 229–58.

[31] For more information on the special relationship between Mysore and the French, see Jasanoff, pp. 149–76.

combined with the interception of a letter sent from Bonaparte to Tipu Sultan promising French troops, confirmed Wellesley's suspicions of French intrigue and led to the pre-emptive storming of Seringapatam in 1799 and to the much-celebrated fall of Tipu Sultan.[32]

The demise of Tipu Sultan signalled the end of French hopes in India, a conclusion that was consolidated fifteen years later under the treaties of Paris that terminated the Napoleonic Wars in 1814 and 1815. In those treaties, the five *comptoirs* — Pondichéry, Chandernagor, Karikal, Yanaon and Mahé — might have been definitively returned to France, but their power was henceforth subsumed under a British authority that forbade the retention of military troops and demanded an annuity of 1 million francs.[33] The persistent yet peripheral presence of those scattered trading posts after 1815 can be seen as representative of this period of relative decline for France, one that begun with the loss of India and Canada at the end of the Seven Years War and would be exacerbated by the socio-political turmoil of the French Revolution of 1789 and the independence of France's most profitable Caribbean island, Saint-Domingue, in 1804. The year 1815 thus marks a shift away from a territorial rivalry between France and Britain, towards a discursive rivalry that was played out, not on Indian soil, but within a culture of French writing on India fuelled by the memories of Franco-British warfare.[34]

As Assayag, Champion, Ravi and Marsh have all noted, India continued to function as an important cultural reference point in French writing despite France's defeat. Throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, it remained a source of inspiration for romantic, fantastical and exoticist literary creation for many authors and travel writers, of which Édouard de Warren, Frédéric Billot, Félix Maynard, Alfred Assolant, W. Darville, Louis Rousselet, Jules Verne, Jean Richepin, Marius Bernard, Pierre Loti, H. Gaultier de Saint-Amand, Jacqueline Marenis and, most recently, Michel de Grèce form the primary material of this thesis.[35] Indeed, it was precisely through these forms of artistic expression

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[32] Jasanoff, pp. 163–65.

[33] Weber, 'Avant-propos', pp. 6–7.

[34] Ferro notes that while 'les anciennes rivalités coloniales n'avaient plus de réalités immédiates, [...] elles étaient encore vivantes dans les mémoires'; Ferro, p. 95.

[35] Édouard de Warren, *L'Inde anglaise: Avant et après l'insurrection de 1857*, 2 vols (Paris: Kailash, 1994; first publ. 1857); Frédéric Billot, *L'Inde, l'Angleterre et la France* (Dentu: Paris, 1857); Félix Maynard, *De Delhi à Cawnpore: Journal d'une dame anglaise, pages de l'insurrection hindoue* (Paris: Michel Lévy Frères, 1858; repr. [n.p.]: Elibron Classics, 2005); Alfred Assolant, *Aventures merveilleuses mais authentiques du Capitaine Corcoran* (Paris: Union Générale d'Éditions, 1975; first publ. 1867); W. Darville, *L'Inde contemporaine: Chasses aux tigres. L'Indoustan. Nuits de Delhi et révolte de cipayes* (Limoges: Ardant, [1874]); Louis Rousselet, *Le Charmeur de serpents* (Paris: Hachette, 1925; first publ. 1875); Jules Verne, *La Maison à vapeur: Voyage à travers l'Inde septentrionale* (Paris: Hachette, 1979; first publ. 1880); Jean Richepin, 'Nana-Sahib: Drame en vers, en sept tableaux', in *Théâtre en vers*, 4 vols (Paris: Flammarion, 1919-1924), I, 27–129; Marius Bernard, 'Nana-Sahib: Histoire de la Révolte de l'Inde (1857)', in *Au delà de l'Atlantique*, 2 vols (Paris: Boulanger, 1895), II, pp. 1–87; Pierre Loti, *L'Inde (sans les Anglais)* (Paris: Kailash, 1998; first publ. 1903); H. Gaultier de Saint-Amand, *Nana-Sahib: Épisodes sanglants de l'insurrection des cipayes en 1857* (Paris: Librarie du Temple, 1909); Jacqueline Marenis, *La Révolte sans âme* (Paris:

that the French public, particularly during the nineteenth century, received a particular idea of India, one that rendered it synonymous with an exotic and fantastical 'elsewhere'.[36]

But although France's political presence on the subcontinent may have been largely forgotten (at least until the Third Republic), the *comptoirs* continued to play an important role, one that was, as Weber writes, 'hors de proportion avec leurs dimensions "lilliputiennes"'.[37] Weber's reference here is to their economic significance during the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries as industrial and commercial centres that exported indigo-dyed cotton to West Africa, sesame and indigo to France and some thirty thousand Indian coolies to Réunion, Guadeloupe, Martinique and Guiana.[38] This same discrepancy between size and role can also be detected in representations of the trading posts in French culture, which ascribes to them a disproportionate sense of nostalgia and loss. Whether clearly stated or not, the memory of this past defeat had a significant part to play in France's desire for colonial expansion elsewhere, notably into North Africa and Indochina.[39] French-language representations of the Indian uprisings are thus to be located at the point where nostalgia intersects with a desire to compensate for having lost India to the British.

1.2.2   The Indian uprisings, 1857–58

Whereas the nostalgic and exoticist idea of a lost India, or what Claude Farrère would later term *l'Inde perdue* (1935), distanced it from the everyday reality of nineteenth-century French culture and politics, the subcontinent was becoming an increasingly significant political possession for the British.[40] Domesticated by its official 'unveiling' during the Great Exhibition of 1851, India gave few Britons reason to suspect that, six years later, those 'docile' Indians that had formed the mainstay of the Crystal Palace displays would now be leading a campaign against the British.[41] The rebellion of Indian 'subjects' was shocking because, within the metanarrative of colonial domination, previous acts of resistance had

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Grasset, 1946); Michel de Grèce, *La Femme sacrée* (Paris: Orban, 1984). An extensive analysis on the influence of India on French literary production can be found in Biès's, *Littérature française et pensée hindoue*. A more general introduction to French-language writing on India can be found in Catherine Champion, 'L'image de l'Inde dans la fiction populaire française aux XIXᵉ et XXᵉ siècles', in *Rêver l'Asie: Exotisme et littérature coloniale aux Indes, en Indochine et en Insulinde*, ed. by Denys Lombard, Catherine Champion and Henri Chambert-Loir (Paris: Éditions de l'École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales, 1993), pp. 43–68.
[36] This is Pasolini's phrase and is quoted in Chris Bongie, *Exotic Memories: Literature, Colonialism and the Fin de Siècle* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1991), p. 3.
[37] Weber, 'Avant-propos', p. 6.
[38] Weber, 'Avant-propos', p. 7.
[39] This argument is explored further in Section 5.6.
[40] Claude Farrère, *L'Inde perdue* (Paris: Kailash, 1998; first publ. Flammarion, 1935).
[41] Moore, pp. 4–5.

been forgotten.[42] This ignorance was not, however, shared by all, and particularly not by those with a more concrete experience of India. Sir Charles Napier, a British general and commander-in-chief, had warned that a 'mutiny' among Indian *sepoys* was impending.[43] Missionaries based in Bengal had reported on the increasingly impoverished condition of the Bengali people (following the implementation of the Perpetual Settlement and Zemindari System in 1792) and had called for immediate governmental reform.[44] But irrespective of whether or not these events were viewed as extraordinary or predictable, the uprisings propelled India into the heart of public life, making what had once seemed an abstract and peripheral concern 'both grimly real and relevant'.[45]

The official date given to their commencement is 10 May 1857, which marks the moment when three hundred Indian soldiers decided to leave for Delhi to request that the puppet emperor, Bahadur Shah II, reclaim the Mughal throne and join their fight against the British colonizer.[46] The catalyst for this event occurred several days earlier and fifty miles outside of Delhi in the cantonment of Meerut, where eighty-five *sowars* refused to use the newly issued rifle cartridges. For several months, rumours had been spreading throughout the Indian army that these cartridges were encased in a fat made from beef and pork tallow, a concoction abhorrent to both Hindu and Muslim soldiers. The *sowars* were just one of many regiments that had already refused to use cartridges. Unlike the others, however, the British authorities at Meerut did not stop at having the soldiers stripped of their uniforms, but additionally had them publicly shackled and sentenced to life-imprisonment.[47] This otherwise discrete act of insubordination quickly came to represent an important moment of rupture. As a public display of resistance against the British, it was met with an excessive punitive response delivered by a ruling power that clearly felt itself threatened and wished to assert its authority.

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[42] The Swatantrata Sangram Sanghralaya Museum (New Delhi) lists a series of pre-1857 rebellions stretching from 1763 to 1849, from the 'Sanyasi revolution' (1763–1800) to the 'Second Punjab War' (1848–49).

[43] Napier's calls for military reform were published eight years prior to the uprisings, on 27 November 1849. In 1857, his warnings were frequently cited as having presaged the revolts. See, for example, Disraeli's speech delivered to Parliament on 27 July 1857; Benjamin Disraeli, 'Parliamentary Intelligence, House of Commons, July 27: "The State of India"', *The Times*, 28 July 1857, pp. 5–8 (p. 5).

[44] Like Napier's warnings, the opposition cited the Bengali missionary reports in Parliament in 1857 as evidence of the neglectful attitude of the government towards its Indian subjects: 'Parliamentary Report: "Administration of Bengal"', *The Times*, 12 June 1857, pp. 7–8.

[45] Francis G. Hutchins, *The Illusion of Permanence: British Imperialism in India* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1967), p. 85.

[46] This date was celebrated in 2007 as marking the hundred and fiftieth anniversary of the uprisings in India; 'Indians Mark Revolt Anniversary', 11 May 2007, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/south_asia/6645457.stm> [accessed 11 May 2007].

[47] Andrew Ward, *Our Bones are Scattered: The Cawnpore Massacres and the Indian Mutiny of 1857* (London: Murray, 2004; first publ. London: Murray, 1996), p. 106.

Shackling and imprisonment did not have the desired effect. Rather than acting as a deterrent, 'that dull dead beat of iron upon the fetters of others' became, as Flora Annie Steel depicted in her novel, *On the Face of the Waters* (1897), 'the surest call to battle'.[48] The following day, the remaining *sepoys* stationed at Meerut mutinied, before freeing their comrades and heading to Delhi to demand the assistance of Bahadur Shah II.[49]

It was under this reluctant figurehead of a past Mughal glory that the Indian people would unite in direct contravention of the divide and rule policies of the British.[50] In taking this step, a military mutiny was transformed into a popular revolt against British rule, which, at its peak, extended across the Presidency of Bengal, from the Punjab in the west to Calcutta in the east, and south into the Deccan peninsula. More than just a 'military mutiny', as many Anglo-centric narratives have mistakenly named it, but less than a national revolution, the uprisings included peasant uprisings, regional and national *coups d'états*, and a protracted guerrilla campaign that lasted well into 1859.

To focus restrictively on Meerut and the cartridges as the root cause of these events is, however, to repeat the mistakes of Anglo-centric histories and overlook the broader context in which the uprisings arose.[51] The greased cartridges were only the last in a long line of grievances held by the military against British rule (such as the General Service Enlistment Act), which were rumoured to be part of an evangelical drive to convert the troops through enforced defilement.[52] In an atmosphere of increasing distrust and burgeoning unrest, rumours were quickly disseminated, fuelled by suggestions that the British had mixed bone meal into the army's flour supplies and by the mysterious circulation of *chapatis* from one village to the next, acting as indecipherable messages that were interpreted by the British as evidence of a widespread conspiracy.[53]

That these unsubstantiated reports were so readily absorbed and repeated suggests much about the mood of many Indians who were deservedly suspicious of British underhandedness, especially since the introduction of the 'Doctrine of Lapse'. Invoked under

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[48] Flora Annie Steel, *On the Face of the Waters* (London: Heinemann, 1897), p. 158. Wolpert similarly writes, 'Those hammer blows of British discipline proved to be Meerut's battle cry of rebellion'; Wolpert, p. 232.

[49] Wolpert, p. 232.

[50] Mukherjee writes of the desire of the insurgents to legitimize their actions by 'appealing to a leader, a king', the natural choice for which was the 'familiar' figure of the Mughal emperor; Rudrangshu Mukherjee, 'Satan Let Loose upon Earth: The Kanpur Massacres in India in the Revolt of 1857', *Past and Present*, 128 (1990), 92–116 (p. 104).

[51] Kaye's influential history, *A History of the Sepoy War in India, 1857–1858*, for example, states that it was the introduction of the cartridges that instigated the ensuing 'storm'; John William Kaye, *A History of the Sepoy War in India, 1857–1858*, 2 vols ([n.p.]: Elibron Classics, 2005–06; first publ. London: Allen, 1874–75), I, 488.

[52] The General Service Enlistment Act stipulated that all military personnel were liable to travel overseas, meaning permanent pollution and caste exile for Hindu soldiers; Wolpert, pp. 230–31.

[53] Ranajit Guha, *Elementary Aspects of Peasant Insurgency in Colonial India* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1999), pp. 239–42. For more on the *chapatis*, see Bhabha, pp. 198–211.

Dalhousie governorship (1848–56), this law enabled the British to renege on treaties established since Warren Hastings's time (1772–85) and to annex land that legally belonged to India's ruling elite.[54] Not only had this stripped the Indian people of their rulers, but, once under British rule, it had subjected them to the injustices of the British taxation system and its fixed price revenue demands.[55]

This was most keenly felt in the region of Oudh (modern-day Uttar Pradesh), where the uprisings would become almost universal in scale.[56] Despite having remained loyal to British rule since Hastings's governorship,[57] Oudh had just been annexed to the Presidency of Bengal, Dalhousie having described it covetously as "'a cherry which will drop into our mouths some day'".[58] Its annexation was permitted thanks to a legal clause that allowed the British to occupy any land whose ruler had died without a genetic heir. In eight short years, this precedent permitted the East India Company to acquire direct control of Satara (1848), Jaitpur (1849), Sambalpur (1849), Baghat (1850), Udaipur (1852), Jhansi (1853), Nagpur (1854), Poona (1854) and finally Oudh (1856). It is no coincidence that some of the fiercest sites of popular resistance and warfare also occurred in these same provinces, notably in Oudh where the infamous sieges of Cawnpore and Lucknow took place.[59]

From May to November 1857, it was the battles waged at Delhi, Lucknow and Cawnpore that would form the focal points of interest for the British and French presses. Noteworthy for their violence and heroism on both sides, it was also these three sites of conflict that would provide the setting for the numerous 'mutiny' narratives produced after the uprisings. Delhi remained, nominally at least, in the hands of the emperor until 20 September 1857 when the British retook the Red Fort under Nicholson's command, a victory that was significant more for its rhetorical than strategic importance.[60] At Lucknow, the

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[54] Wolpert, pp. 224–25.

[55] Rudrangshu Mukherjee, *Awadh in Revolt, 1857–1858: A Study of Popular Resistance* (London: Anthem, 2002), pp. 59–63.

[56] The majority of Indian soldiers in the Bengal Army had been recruited from the region of Oudh and came predominantly from the small landowner class, meaning that they were affected directly by the sudden imposition of British taxation systems following Oudh's annexation; Irfan Habib, 'The Coming of 1857', *Social Scientist*, 26 (1998), 6–15 (p. 7).

[57] In 1774, Hastings assisted the *nawab-vazir* of Oudh, Shuja-ud-Daula, in defeating the Rohilla Afghans, a policy that simultaneously allowed the East India Company to fortify its most important buffer state and commenced a long period of mutual respect between Oudh and Company rule; Wolpert, pp. 190–91.

[58] Dalhousie is quoted in Mukherjee, *Awadh in Revolt*, p. 32. He desired Oudh for its lucrative cotton and indigo plantations.

[59] While acknowledging that the spelling of many of these Indian place names has now been adjusted to rid them of their Anglicized pronunciation (Oudh is now Awadh, Poona is now Pune, and Cawnpore is now Kanpur), the conventional orthography used during British colonial occupation is maintained here to avoid confusion.

[60] As Marx noted in a series of articles published in the *New York Daily Tribune*, the British were mistaken in seeing Delhi as the centre of the revolts; K. Marx and F. Engels, *The First Indian War of Independence, 1857–1859* (Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1960), p. 63, p. 65 and p. 101.

Residency was transformed into a British fort, housing over 1,700 European and Indian soldiers and 1,300 civilians (including women and children). The siege that begun on 30 September 1857 with the arrival of 7,000 Indian soldiers was ended on 19 November 1857 with the arrival of a Highland rescue force led by Colin Campbell.

It was the events at Cawnpore, however, that would be remembered as the most notorious episode of the uprisings. On 15 July 1857, a group of captive European women and children being held in a *bibighar* by the dispossessed Rajah of Bithur, Nana Sahib, were massacred and their bodies discarded into a well. It was this event more than any other that inspired and was used as the rationale behind the excessively violent backlash of the British military. The *bibighar* massacre became a trope that, among British writers, was made to stand for the Indian uprisings as a whole and, as such, it is here that this thesis begins.

By July, Nana Sahib's name had already been connected with two other incidents involving the killing of European civilians.[61] First, on 12 June 1857, his men were reported as having executed a group of European fugitives fleeing from the revolts at Fatehgarh.[62] Second, on 27 June 1857, Nana Sahib was thought to have reneged on a written agreement promising Major General Hugh Wheeler's besieged garrison at Cawnpore a safe passage to Allahabad. Wheeler had agreed to Nana Sahib's terms after defending his barracks for two weeks with only limited food and medical supplies and a growing number of military and civilian casualties. As the evacuees left the entrenchment and arrived at the Satichaura ghat to board the boats, Nana Sahib's troops were accused by the British of having opened fire on the unarmed crowd.[63] All those who were not killed were captured and returned to Nana Sahib's headquarters, including the one-hundred-and-eighty women and children who were later transferred to the *bibighar*.

Although these two incidents shocked the British and British Indian public, it was the third and final massacre involving the remaining female and child prisoners that was named the 'crowning atrocity' of the uprisings.[64] On 15 July 1857, with news that a detachment of General Havelock's force was fast approaching to attack Cawnpore, a group of *sepoys* and local residents, supposedly acting under Nana Sahib's orders, entered the *bibighar* and killed the prisoners.[65] The aftermath of the massacre and the disposed bodies of the victims were discovered a few days later by Havelock's Highlanders, commencing a period of unbridled revenge against the Indian populace.[66]

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[61] Nana Sahib was held responsible for all three massacres, although this has since been questioned by Pratul Chandra Gupta, *Nana Sahib and the Rising at Cawnpore* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1963), pp. 69–72 and pp. 116–18 and Mukherjee, 'Satan Let Loose upon Earth', p. 103 and 114–15.
[62] Ward, pp. 207–27.
[63] Ward, pp. 311–32.
[64] *The Times*, 17 September 1857, p. 8. For a full quotation, see Section 2.1, p. 30.
[65] Ward, pp. 404–30.
[66] For more information on the revenge of the British military, see Section 2.2.1, pp. 32–36.

The retaking of Cawnpore (17 July 1857), Delhi (20 September 1857) and finally Lucknow (21 March 1858) did not, however, bring the uprisings to an end. Neither did the wholesale punishment of Indian villages, whose corpses lined the road between Allahabad and Cawnpore, nor the arrest and execution and key figures, such as Tatya Tope and Bahadur Shah II.[67] Instead, the revolts continued throughout 1858, gaining new leaders, such as the Rani of Jhansi, Lakshmi Bai, who fought against Hugh Rose in the battle for Gwalior in June 1858.[68] Despite bringing the uprisings officially to a close, with the Queen's Proclamation of 1 November 1858, the fighting continued, now transformed into guerrilla warfare that persisted well into 1859.

Even once the fighting itself had stopped, the effect of these events would continue to be felt at a material, ideological and psychological level. Materially, the uprisings brought an end to the East India Company, hereafter subsumed under the Crown, meaning that India, once the preserve of an elite few, was now a more integral part of the British nation.[69] Ideologically, they put a stop to the reformist zeal of British colonial policies, which had attempted to stamp out certain practices, such as *sati*, child marriage and *Thugi*, and heralded the beginning of a more 'conservative' era.[70] Psychologically, they were an unsettling reminder of the ease with which Britain could lose India and of the fragility of its ruling position, resulting in a government that was 'dominated by a fear that the Mutiny should ever happen again'.[71] Henceforth, as MacMillan notes, the 'Mutiny was always close to the surface in the consciousness of the British in India' and it was precisely this weakness that French writers would exploit in their representations of 1857–58.[72]

1.3   Theoretical Framework, Corpus and Periodization

1.3.1   Theoretical framework

At its most basic level, this thesis deals with colonial discourse analysis. Following the work of previous colonial and postcolonial theorizing, it draws from Foucault's concept of discourse, meaning that its analysis is concerned less with the life of the author, the genre and the academic merit of a given text than with the ways in which a text is constructed

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[67] Wolpert, pp. 235–36; Ward, pp. 433–57.
[68] Christopher Hibbert, *The Great Mutiny: India 1857* (London: Allen Lane, 1978), pp. 377–88.
[69] As Hutchins states, India was 'annexed' to the British public 'because of the popular interest which now followed India's reconquest'; Hutchins, p. 86.
[70] Hutchins, p. 83.
[71] Hugh Tinker, '1857 and 1957: The Mutiny and Modern India', *International Affairs (Royal Institute of International Affairs, 1944–)*, 34 (1958), 57–65 (p. 63).
[72] Margaret MacMillan, *Women of the Raj* (London: Thames & Hudson, 1988), p. 11.

within a discourse.[73] In this case, it refers to a discourse that emerged synergistically with the material reality of European colonialism and imperialism. The retrospective identification of a specifically colonial or imperial narrative is, of course, a broader interpretation of Said's argument that knowledge produced in the 'West' about the 'Orient', or what he terms 'Orientalism', can be interpreted through a Foucauldian reading.[74] For Said, 'Orientalism' is the discursive field through which 'European culture was able to manage — and even produce — the Orient politically, sociologically, militarily, ideologically, scientifically, and imaginatively during the post-Enlightenment period'.[75] Although this argumentation, along with Said's over-privileging of western hegemony over the 'East', has been the subject of extensive criticism and debate, what remains useful is the way in which, to quote from Clifford,

> Said permits us to see the functioning of a more complex dialectic by means of which a modern [European] culture continuously constitutes itself through its ideological constructs of the exotic. Seen in this way 'the West' itself becomes a play of projections, doublings, idealizations, and rejections of a complex, shifting otherness. 'The Orient' always plays the role of origin or alter ego.[76]

That the 'West' can be seen as constructing itself dialectically (as well as analogously[77]) to an imagined eastern 'other' (in this case India) underpins the following exploration into English- and French-language representations of the Indian uprisings. Thus, on the one hand, it draws from Saidian arguments by arguing, as JanMohamed postulates, that colonialist literature is inextricably bound to the Manichean allegory and that this dichotomy tells us less about the racialized 'other' than about western cultures and their

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[73] For a succinct definition of the idea of colonial discourse, as derived from Foucault's concept of discursive practices, see Cooper, pp. 5–6. As Foucault writes, 'les marges d'un livre ne sont jamais nettes ni rigoureusement tranchées: par-delà le titre, les premières lignes et le point final, [...] il est pris dans un système de renvois à d'autres livres, d'autres textes, d'autres phrases: nœud dans un réseau. [...] Dès qu'on l'interroge, elle [l'unité d'un livre] perd son évidence; elle ne s'indique elle-même, elle ne se construit qu'à partir d'un champ complexe de discours': Michel Foucault, *L'Archéologie du savoir* (Paris: Gallimard, 1969), p. 36.

[74] McLeod notes, however, that Said does not adopt Foucault unproblematically, but challenges his 'Eurocentric enquiries into knowledge and power'; John McLeod, 'Contesting Contexts: Francophone Thought and Anglophone Postcolonialism', in *Francophone Postcolonial Studies: A Critical Introduction*, ed. by Charles Forsdick and David Murphy (London: Arnold, 2003), pp. 192–201 (p. 193).

[75] Said, *Orientalism*, p. 3.

[76] James Clifford, *The Predicament of Culture: Twentieth-Century Ethnography, Literature and Art* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1988), p. 272.

[77] David Cannadine, *Ornamentalism: How the British saw their Empire* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), p. xix.

desire to project an image of superiority over the eastern 'other'.[78] But, on the other hand, this analysis does not support some of the more generalizing conclusions that are implied by Said's work, namely that a dominant pan-European 'self' emerges from being set 'against the Orient as a sort of surrogate and even underground self'.[79] Rather, following Teltscher's reading of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century British India, it demonstrates the multifarious, contradictory and unstable nature of identity formation and how these identities are imbued with ambivalence, anxiety and, most importantly, intra-European rivalry.[80]

Along with colonial discourse analysis, these three points (ambivalence, anxiety and intra-European rivalry) form key concepts and models within this thesis and, as such, warrant further explication. Bhabha's notion of ambivalence, as an underlying feature of colonial discourse, is connected to his idea of colonial 'mimicry', meaning the desire of the colonizer to produce a 'reformed, recognizable Other', but also one that remains '*a subject of a difference that is almost the same, but not quite*'.[81] For Bhabha, this duality discloses 'the ambivalence of colonial discourse' and, in doing so, 'disrupts its authority'.[82] As such, the colonized 'other' is not simply the passive recipient of an external power, but has the ability to challenge actively colonial authority. While included, the perspectives of colonized Indians do not, however, form the central focus of this analysis. Nonetheless, the idea that a postcolonial reading can reveal the lack of hegemony within colonial discourse or, as Suleri writes, 'the dynamic of powerlessness at the heart of the imperial configuration', is useful for examining colonial discourse within both British and French narratives of the uprisings.[83] In the first instance, Anglo-centric writing can be seen as a direct response to the challenge that an Indian-led revolt presented to the grand narrative of British domination, one that attempts to manage 'cultural anxiety' and 'resume discursive control' by recounting tales of heroism and victory, while inadvertently displaying the very fear and brutality that it wishes to conceal.[84] In the second instance, Gallo-centric writing can be seen as benefitting from an ideal opportunity to write against the metanarrative of British colonial dominance by positing a contrary and preferable French colonial discourse. Yet, behind this rhetoric lies an incessant preoccupation with political marginalization and emasculation in India, along with

[78] Abdul R. JanMohamed, 'The Economy of Manichean Allegory: The Function of Racial Difference in Colonialist Literature', in *"Race", Writing, and Difference*, ed. by Henry Louis Gates Jr. (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1986), pp. 78–106 (p. 84).
[79] Said, *Orientalism*, p. 3. As Moore-Gilbert, Stanton and Maley write, 'To see Europe and the West as self-evident and self-contained entities is to repeat the imperialist and colonialist mythologies that one is supposed to be deconstructing'; Bart Moore-Gilbert, Gareth Stanton and Willy Maley, 'Introduction', in *Postcolonial Criticism*, ed. by Bart Moore-Gilbert, Gareth Stanton and Willy Maley (Essex: Longman, 1997), pp. 1–72 (p. 5).
[80] Teltscher, *India Inscribed*, p. 2 and p. 6.
[81] Bhabha, p. 86.
[82] Bhabha, p. 88.
[83] Suleri, p. 3.
[84] Moore, p. 142.

a desire for cultural ascendancy over the *frère ennemi*. Thus, as Suleri states, India is transformed into 'a tropological repository from which colonial and postcolonial imaginations have drawn — and continue to draw — their most basic figures for the anxiety of empire'.[85]

Further, although these predominantly Anglophone postcolonial models may be applied successfully to an examination of a French colonial discourse, it is also important to acknowledge the differences that existed between French and British colonial practices and ideologies, which (irrespective of their mutually exploitative natures) were often positioned in opposition to each other discursively. Whereas French colonialism was based, rhetorically at least, on Enlightenment egalitarianism and assimilation, British colonialism was based alternatively 'on an assumption of difference and of inequality'.[86] The result, as Young states, is a need to question the extent to which 'we [can] assume that colonial discourse acts identically not only across all space but also throughout time'.[87] Given that the focus here is on texts produced in the French *métropole*, there is a need to bear in mind these differences and, following Forsdick and Murphy, to acknowledge that France and its colonies have a very specific colonial history, one that does not 'seem to correspond directly to any equivalent history in the Anglophone world, and which must consequently be more carefully analysed in order to escape the worst generalizing tendencies of postcolonial theory'.[88]

While this outlines some of the broader issues with transposing Anglophone postcolonial paradigms onto analyses of French colonial texts, the challenge of examining French-language representations of India brings to light a more specific limitation, especially where binaries are concerned. As mentioned above, the binary structure of colonized–colonizer and its problematization is a hallmark of postcolonial theory.[89] Although it may be usefully adopted to examine colonial narratives, it remains restrictive in exploring representations of France's engagement with India. In the first instance, a binary model does not allow for the fact that the French were a marginal colonial presence on the subcontinent, or, to borrow Marsh's phrase, were a 'subaltern' colonizer, meaning that they were both subordinate to the British, while acting as the 'dominant' colonizer within their own Indian enclaves (and within their other colonies outside of India).[90] In the second instance, a binary model does not permit French colonialism in India to be read through a history and discourse of Anglo-French rivalry.

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[85] Suleri, pp. 4–5.
[86] Young, p. 164.
[87] *Ibid.*
[88] Forsdick and Murphy, 'Introduction: The Case for Francophone Postcolonial Studies', p. 6.
[89] See footnote 79.
[90] Marsh, *Fictions of 1947*, p. 13.

These two interconnected points — France as a 'subaltern' colonizer and Anglo-French rivalry — are of central importance to the theoretical framework of this thesis and require further explanation. First, the term 'subaltern', taken from Gramsci in reference to a European proletariat, is one that has been adopted into postcolonial theory, most notably by Spivak who uses it to refer to subordinate and/or marginalized groups in Indian society.[91] However, an important schism arises between Spivak's use of this term and its usage here, which serves to highlight the inherent limitations of binary models. Spivak argues that the 'female [Indian] subaltern' has been doubly marginalized both economically and sexually, before reaching the conclusion that 'There is no space from which the sexed subaltern subject can speak.'[92] This supposition means that she converges with Said's problematic conception of the colonized as the 'silent interlocutor' of the dominant order.[93] Bhabha challenges this idea by foregrounding the ability of marginalized or silenced voices to challenge the dominant narrative from within, or what he terms the '"right" to signify from the periphery of authorized power'.[94] Yet neither Spivak's nor Bhabha's arguments are appropriate for examining French-language representations of India since the French 'subaltern' colonizer, although marginalized, is neither silent nor silenced and remains part of that 'authorized power'.

An alternative analytical model is, therefore, required, one that is supplied by Marsh, who argues that, when considering French texts on India, there is a need to engage methodologically with 'a triangular model composed of the colonized (India), the "subaltern" colonizer (France), and the dominant colonizer (Britain)'.[95] In other words, there is a need to recognize that French-language writing on India is structured around the existence of an 'other' colonizer, the British. Not only does this challenge the commonly accepted East–West binary between colonizer and colonized, but, as will be demonstrated throughout this thesis, it has profound implications on how French, British and Indian peoples are represented in French metropolitan writing on India and the uprisings.

Second, unlike Said, whose work has been criticized for its construction of a hegemonic trans-European identity via the 'Orient' or exoticized 'other', this thesis follows Teltscher in foregrounding the importance of rival discourses between European powers by analysing competing accounts of India produced in predominantly French- but also English-

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[91] Moore-Gilbert, Stanton and Maley, p. 28.
[92] Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, 'Can the Subaltern Speak?', in *Colonial Discourse and Post-Colonial Theory: A Reader*, ed. by Patrick Williams and Laura Chrisman (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), pp. 66–111 (p. 103).
[93] Moore-Gilbert, Stanton and Maley, p. 29.
[94] Bhabha, p. 2.
[95] Marsh, *Fictions of 1947*, p. 13.

language texts.[96] It does not, however, replace one essentialist dichotomy between the European 'self' and the Indian 'other' with an equally simplistic trichotomy between France, India and Britain. The subject matter of anti-colonial revolt itself precludes such an outcome since it shifts the focus away from the putative hegemony of British colonial power and onto its inherent volatility and ability to be challenged by the colonized 'other' and the 'other' (French) colonizer. Moreover, in shifting the focus away from an analysis of the dominant colonial power, the British, and onto a rival and subordinated colonizer, the French, it questions how the politically marginalized French 'self' is reactive and shifting, defining itself opportunistically and inconsistently in opposition to both the British and Indian 'other'. As such the multifarious French perspectives shown throughout this thesis can be seen as part of a 'counter-hegemonic voice', to borrow Porter's phrase, meaning one that emerges 'within the dominant hegemonic formation' as an alternative and competing narrative to British Indian colonialism.[97]

The result of this approach is a direct challenge to what Prendergast terms '*master representations*', referring, on the one hand, to the discourse of British colonial dominance that underpins its victory narratives and, on the other, the discourse of a rival French 'civilizing mission' that presents itself as a superior and moral alternative to British colonialism.[98] The ambivalence, anxiety and rivalry of these discourses are examined through a series of tropes and stereotypes that recur across a range of stylistically, politically and chronologically diverse English- and French-language texts.[99] Yet, more than simply exploring the processes that construct and 'fix' a stereotype as a cultural norm, this thesis considers how figures that have become 'fixed' within British colonial discourse are deconstructed by French writers in order to posit a rival Gallo-centric ideology. Through this comparative approach, it will be demonstrated that the idea of India, far from being a stable entity within a pan-European discourse, is a malleable trope that is open to appropriation by French writers and in which a competing French colonial identity can be constructed despite territorial loss.

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[96] In contrast with Said, Teltscher posits a 'much more conflictual model, one constructed from contending discourses' in order to chart 'the emergence of a much less stable sense of European self; an identity that is shifting, various, and responsive to the demands of domestic politics and religious affiliation'; Teltscher, *India Inscribed*, p. 6.

[97] Dennis Porter, '*Orientalism* and its Problems', in *Colonial Discourse and Post-Colonial Theory: A Reader*, ed. by Patrick Williams and Laura Chrisman (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), pp. 150–61 (p. 153).

[98] Christopher Prendergast, *The Triangle of Representation* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000), p. 13.

[99] As Bhabha notes, the stereotype or trope is the 'major discursive strategy' of colonial discourse and is 'something that must be anxiously repeated' in order to provide it with the sense of 'fixity' that it otherwise lacks; Bhabha, p. 66.

1.3.2 Corpus and periodization

Unlike British literature on 1857–58, an exploration into French-language narratives of the Indian revolts is a limited field. However, during the latter half of 1857, when the uprisings were at their height, they generated a significant level of interest among the French public, appearing in all the most widely circulated national newspapers of the time, including *Le Siècle* (moderate republican), *Le Constitutionnel* (Bonapartist/imperialist), *La Patrie* (imperialist), *La Presse* (Bonapartist/progressive), *Le Moniteur universel: Journal officiel de l'Empire français* (imperialist), *La Revue des deux mondes* (Orleanist), *Le Journal des débats politiques et littéraires* (Orleanist), *L'Union: Quotidienne, France, écho français* (Bonapartist/legitimist), *L'Univers: Union catholique* (Catholic), *Le Charivari* (satirical) and *L'Illustration: Journal universel* (illustrated press).[100] In addition to these newspaper articles, a further thirteen texts concerned exclusively with the uprisings were published in France between 1857 and 1984, including three adventure novels (Assolant's *Aventures merveilleuses mais authentiques du Capitaine Corcoran*, 1867; Rousselet's *Le Charmeur de serpents*, 1875; Verne's *La Maison à vapeur*, 1880), two romance fictions (Bernard's 'Nana-Sahib: Histoire de la Révolte de l'Inde, 1857', 1895; Marenis's *La Révolte sans âme*, 1946), an erotic fiction (Gaultier de Saint-Amand's *Nana-Sahib: Épisodes sanglants de l'insurrection des cipayes en 1857*, 1909), a historical novel (Grèce, *La Femme sacrée*, 1984), two fictional eye-witness accounts (Maynard, *De Delhi à Cawnpore: Journal d'une dame anglaise, pages de l'insurrection hindoue*, 1857; Darville's *L'Inde contemporaine: Chasses aux tigres. L'Indoustan. Nuits de Delhi et révolte de cipayes*, 1874), a piece of political propaganda (Billot, *L'Inde, l'Angleterre et la France*, 1857), a travelogue (Warren, *L'Inde anglaise: Avant et après l'insurrection de 1857*, 1857), a *drame en vers* (Richepin, 'Nana-Sahib: Drame en vers en sept tableaux', 1883) and even a song (Billot, *Le Réveil de l'Inde, ou chant du Mharatte, dédié à Nana-Saïb*, 1860).[101]

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[100] The newspapers are listed here in order of their circulation figures in July 1858, with *Le Siècle* having the highest number of subscribers at 36,886 and *Le Charivari* having the lowest number at 2,090; *Histoire générale de la presse française*, ed. by Claude Bellanger and others, 5 vols (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1969–75), II, 259. No statistics for *L'Illustration: Journal universel* are listed.

[101] This statistic excludes those texts that refer to the uprisings, but are not exclusively devoted to this subject matter, such as Louis Rousselet's travelogue, *L'Inde des rajahs* (1875), which includes a short section on the Cawnpore massacres, or Farrère's history, *L'Inde perdue* (1935), which mentions the uprisings in passing; Louis Rousselet, *L'Inde des rajahs: Voyage dans l'Inde centrale et dans les présidences de Bombay et de Bengale* (Paris: Hachette, 1875), pp. 675–79; Farrère, pp. 208–09. In addition to these two texts, this thesis refers to three other primary texts. First, Verne's two interconnected adventure fictions, *Vingt mille lieues sous les mers* and *L'Ile mystérieuse*, which allude to the uprisings obliquely through the character of Nemo, an Indian revolutionary leader; Jules Verne, *Vingt mille lieues sous les mers* (Paris: Hachette, 1977; first publ. 1870); Jules Verne, *L'Ile mystérieuse* (Paris: Hachette, 1977; first publ. 1874). Second, Ridel and Arleston's *bande dessinée*,

As a corpus, these narratives have, until now, remained an entirely unexplored field of analysis. Only Verne's *La Maison à vapeur* has attracted any significant attention, while Assolant's *Capitaine Corcoran* and Grèce's *La Femme sacrée* have formed minor points of interest within a select number of academic texts.[102] In each case, however, the presence of the French in India and/or the existence of a competing colonial discourse are entirely overlooked. Those that examine Verne's adventure novel, for example, have tended to focus on the prevalence of certain character types (such as the figure of the engineer, Banks), or on the discourse of scientific knowledge (represented by 'la maison à vapeur'), or on the exoticization of the Indian landscape in which the novel is set.[103] Even those that do acknowledge the presence of a counter-narrative in Verne's fiction, for example by noting its ambiguous stance on British colonialism, do not then consider what this has to say about French colonialism.[104]

In contrast, the quantity of British writing on the uprisings and the academic interest that they have generated is vast, with the number of novels alone running into the hundreds.[105] Since French representations of these events inevitably refer to, and are influenced by, many of these British accounts, a few key texts, selected from different genres and periods, have been chosen to sketch out the context against which French (counter-)narratives have emerged. These include articles published in *The Times* (predominantly from 1857–58), Dickens's and Collins's co-authored novella, 'The Perils of Certain English Passengers' (1857), Boucicault's melodrama, *Jessie Brown; or, the Relief at Lucknow* (first performed at Drury Lane Theatre in 1862), Kaye's general history, *A History of the Sepoy*

Tandori: Le réveil de l'éléphant bleu, which although not based on the uprisings nonetheless refers to Verne's fictional account of Nana Sahib in *La Maison à vapeur*; Curd Ridel and Scotch Arleston, *Tandori: Le réveil de l'éléphant bleu* (Brussels: Lombard, 1993).

[102] Petr, pp. 13–26; Ravi, *L'Inde romancée*, pp. 89–90; Srilata Ravi, 'Marketing Devi: Indian Women in French Imagination', *Alif: Journal of Comparative Poetics*, 19 (1999), 131–50 (p. 140); Martyn Cornick, 'Distorting Mirrors: Problems of French–British Perception in the *Fin-de-siècle*', in *Problems in French History*, ed. by Martyn Cornick and Ceri Crossley (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2000), pp. 125–48 (p. 133).

[103] Jean-Yves Tadié, *Le Roman d'aventures* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1982), p. 96; Clarisse Herrenschmidt, 'La forêt d'acclimatation. Inde et imaginaire chez Jules Verne', in *L'Inde et l'imaginaire*, ed. by Catherine Weinberger-Thomas (Paris: Éditions de l'École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales, 1988), pp. 125–132 (p. 128); Frédéric Landy, 'L'Inde de Jules Verne: Une lecture de *La Maison à vapeur*', *Géographies et cultures*, 15 (1995), 45–68; Timothy Unwin, 'The Fiction of Science, or the Science of Fiction', in *Jules Verne: Narratives of Modernity*, ed. by Edmund J. Smyth (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2000), pp. 46–59 (p. 48); Timothy Unwin, *Jules Verne: Journeys in Writing* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2005), p. 41.

[104] Timothy A. Unwin, *Jules Verne: Le Tour du monde en quatre-vingts jours* (Glasgow: Glasgow University Press, 1992), p. 23; Landy, p. 58; Jean Chesneaux, *Jules Verne: Un regard sur le monde: Nouvelles lectures politiques* (Paris: Bayard, 2001), pp. 172–73; Herrenschmidt, pp. 130–31. To date, Mukhopadyay's thesis has provided the most postcolonial reading of *La Maison*, but does not consider how French marginalization affects Verne's representations of British, Indian and French characters; Indra Narayan Mukhopadhyay, 'Imperial Ellipses: France, India, and the Critical Imagination' (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of California, CA, 2008).

[105] Moore, p. 141.

War in India, 1857–1858 (1864–76), Trevelyan's history relating to the Cawnpore massacres, *Cawnpore* (1865), Taylor's fiction, *Seeta* (1881), Steel's fiction, *On the Face of the Waters* (1897) and Tytler's journal, *An Englishwoman in India: The Memoirs of Harriet Tytler, 1828–1858* (written between 1903 and 1906).[106]

A significantly less common point of reference for French-language representations of the uprisings, but one that presents an interesting point of comparison, is those texts produced by Indian authors, of which four well-known, yet divergent, examples have been included. First, Savarkar's highly nationalistic narrative, *The Indian War of Independence, 1857* (1909), has been chosen not only because it was the first history of the uprisings to have been written from a specifically Indian perspective (leading to its immediate banishment by the British government), but also because it draws parallels between the French Revolution and the Indian uprisings.[107] Second, Nehru's *The Discovery of India* (1946) is briefly referred to because, unlike Savarkar, it denies that the uprisings represented a moment of national cohesion, noting instead that it was a moment of transcultural unification born out of a common hatred for British rule.[108] Third, Sen's history, *Eighteen Fifty-Seven* (1957), commissioned by the Government of India to commemorate the centenary of the uprisings, offers an example of a post-colonial text that remains heavily influenced by its British source materials.[109] Finally, Malgonkar's fiction, *The Devil's Wind: Nana Saheb's Story, A Novel* (1972), demonstrates how Indian post-colonial culture counter-narrates Anglo-centric depictions of the revolts by producing, in this case, a sympathetic portrayal of the insurgent leader, Nana Sahib.[110]

It is against these two broadly oppositional but interdependent points that this thesis plots French-language depictions of 1857–58. Taking a synchronic approach that additionally acknowledges the historical contingency of each text, it identifies the primary tropes and motifs (outlined below) that emerge from French accounts produced both at the

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[106] While acknowledging the existence of many other newspapers in 1857, *The Times* forms the primary reference point since it remained the most widely circulated newspaper at the time, selling 'four times as many copies as the three other "senior" London dailies put together'; Richard D. Altick, *The English Common Reader: A Social History of the Mass Reading Public, 1800–1900* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1957), p. 355. Charles Dickens and Wilkie Collins, 'The Perils of Certain English Passengers', *Household Words*, 16 (12 December 1857), 1–36; Dion Boucicault, 'Jessie Brown; or, The Relief at Lucknow', in *Plays by Dion Boucicault*, ed. by Peter Thomson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), pp. 101–32; G. O. Trevelyan, *Cawnpore* (Brentwood: Empire Book Association, 1986; first publ. London: [n. pub.], 1865); Meadows Taylor, *Seeta* (New Delhi: Asian Educational Services, 1989; first publ. 1881); Harriet Tytler, *An Englishwoman in India: The Memoirs of Harriet Tytler, 1828–1858*, ed. by Anthony Sattin (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986).

[107] Sarvarkar, p. 2 and p. 7. Savarkar is used by Grèce in *La Femme sacrée* (1984).

[108] Jawaharlal Nehru, *The Discovery of India*, 4th edn (London: Meridian, 1956; first publ. 1946).

[109] Surendra Nath Sen, *Eighteen Fifty-Seven*, 3rd edn (New Delhi: Publications Division, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India, 1995; first publ. 1957).

[110] Manohar Malgonkar, *The Devil's Wind: Nana Saheb's Story, A Novel* (New Delhi: Penguin, 1988; first publ. Hamilton, 1972).

time of the uprisings and long after their conclusion. Within each theme, it considers how French texts write against and subvert Anglo-centric representations, producing in contrast a specifically France-centred discourse on India.

1.4   Thesis Overview

Using the primary texts listed above, the following chapters are concerned, in a narrow sense, with comparing the key figures that recur in French and British representations of the Indian uprisings, but, in a broader sense, with the formulation of a specifically French colonial discourse on India. To summarize, the first three chapters focus on a specific trope, figure or *énoncé* that recurs in both British and French writing on 1857–58, including the *bibighar* massacre, Nana Sahib and the nomenclature used for labelling the uprisings.[111] Each is used to explore the existence of a Gallo-centric discourse on India that is developed in opposition to its British rival. As such, these tropes, figures or *énoncés* can each be seen as contested 'sites', meaning that the semantic and mythological significance that they have acquired in British colonial discourse has been repeatedly challenged by French counter-narratives. The final chapter draws together the main ideas identified in the three preceding sections by positioning the uprisings and India, more broadly, as an important *point de repère* in French colonial discourse.

Chapter Two provides a contextual background to this thesis by examining how French writing defines the British 'other' (and, by proxy, itself) through the violence of its material and epistemic response to the *bibighar* massacre. It considers, first, how this pivotal event and its female victims are made to function in British writing, synecdochically, as representative of the horror of the uprisings as a whole and, figuratively, as a way of justifying the brutal revenge committed by British-led troops against the Indian populace. Through a postcolonial reading, it identifies an underlying anxiety for the durability of colonial rule and a fear of the colonized 'other' running throughout Britain's heroic accounts of 1857–58. A re-reading of this metanarrative through French-language narratives of the *bibighar* massacre reveals a tendency to counter-narrate British imperial myths by uncovering and playing on their embedded anxiety. In opposition to the figure of the courageous and avenging Highlander, French-language narratives posit the image of an irrational, hysterical and excessively violent British colonizer whose actions have not only led to revolt but also deserve to be judged, a task to which France, acting as the moral mouthpiece of Europe, is willingly appointed.

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[111] Foucault defines the *énoncé* as a key idea or concept or the most basic unit of discourse ('l'unité élémentaire du discours'), but notes that it is not one that can be reduced to itself ('isolé en lui-même'); Foucault, p. 111. As such, its meaning is arbitrary and only acquired through its construction within a particular context; Foucault, p. 117.

Having examined how negative portrayals of the British colonial 'other' enable the French voice to position itself as morally superior, Chapter Three considers how French writing on 1857–58 ventriloquizes the figure of the Indian 'other', in this case Nana Sahib, to speak out against British colonialism. In particular, it focuses on how Nana Sahib is a malleable trope, demonized, on the one hand, as a target for British aggression, and celebrated, on the other, as a heroic revolutionary who fought against tyranny. Whereas he could be employed predominantly by British writers to rationalize military violence by insisting on the need to defend against such 'monsters', he could also be proffered by French writers as a symbol of the nefarious effects that British colonialism had had on its colonized 'subjects'. But regardless of whether French narratives depicted him as a 'monster' or as a revolutionary hero, this analysis shows how the figure of 'Nana Sahib' was used, both during and after 1857, as a political and rhetorical tool with which to rebuke the dominant colonizer.

This exploration into the ways in which French-language writing ventriloquizes the Indian 'other' prepares the ground for Chapter Four, which looks at how the uprisings as a whole become a subject through which to voice the Gallo-centric fantasy of India's 'freedom'. It engages with the rhetorical effects that different and competing nomenclatures have had on the way that the uprisings are remembered historically by comparing the titles given to these events in British, Indian and French texts. Broadly speaking, it notes the tendency within Anglo-centric narratives to use terms that attempt to limit the political and psychological impact of the uprisings, such as 'mutiny', contrary to the desire to enhance their potency in Indian and French narratives, where terms such as 'revolution' are frequently deployed. The discovery that British and Indian national histories have remembered 1857–58 either as a 'mutiny' to be quashed or as the first step towards independence, respectively, is perhaps unsurprising. However, the use of the politically weighty locution, 'révolution', in nineteenth-century French-language texts is more unexpected since it refers to the actions of a 'subject race'. Centrally then, this chapter asks how and why certain terms are being used in French metropolitan narratives, arguing that they enable such texts to challenge British discourse and fantasize an India freed from British rule, without ever fully subscribing to the idea of Indian freedom.

The final chapter brings together the prevailing themes identified in the previous sections and places the uprisings within the broader context of a French colonial discourse. In particular, it considers the rhetorical possibilities that an anti-colonial revolt opened up for French writing both to discredit British colonialism and imagine an end to the hegemony of the *frère ennemi*, while questioning the effect that these polemics had on the idea of French imperialism. Widely considered at the time as marking the end of Britain's global domination, and repeatedly cited afterwards as proof of its corruption, the uprisings, it argues, were used to compensate for the loss of an imagined *Inde française*. More than

simply *Schadenfreude*, references to 1857–58 permitted French writing to position French colonialism as a panacea to British wrongs, holding forth North Africa and Indochina (depending on the time of writing) as the demonstrable proof of the success of their supposedly superior ideology. However, the idealized image of France's overseas exploits (or the *grand récit* of a French 'civilizing mission') is challenged by the less attractive realities of colonial occupation in, for example, Algeria, and by the histories of defeat at the hands of the British. Thus, of central importance it considers how the revolts allowed French texts to eschew the inherent violence of colonialism and re-envisage past defeats by lending credence to the fantasy that an India under French rule would never have caused its people to revolt.

In short, this thesis argues for the importance of 'India' for studying and exploring the French colonial imagination, particularly during the latter-half of the nineteenth century. It shows how the subcontinent remained a contested 'site', used in metropolitan writing post-1815 to sanitize and reinvigorate the French imperial project beyond Indian borders. It demonstrates that French marginalization, represented by the politically insignificant *comptoirs*, is precisely what enables French writing to see itself as speaking from a privileged position and to graft metropolitan interests onto those of a colonized people in their fight against the dominant colonizer. The image of a specifically French brand of colonialism, which emerges from representations of the *bibighar* massacre, Nana Sahib and even in the nomenclature adopted for the uprisings, is used to reveal the extent to which an anti-British revolt could be deployed to promote France over its *frère ennemi*. The uprisings thus offer a discrete moment in which to explore the development of a French colonial identity that is constructed in opposition not only to the colonized Indian, but also the British colonizer.

2 COLONIAL VIOLENCE AND TALES OF REVENGE: REPRESENTING BRITISH COLONIALISM IN ENGLISH- AND FRENCH-LANGUAGE NARRATIVES OF THE CAWNPORE MASSACRES

2.1 Introduction

On 16 September 1857, reports in the British press confirmed that two hundred European men, women and children being held captive at a *bibighar* in Cawnpore had been executed on 15 July at the behest of Nana Sahib, the dispossessed Rajah of Bithur.[112] This news followed two other reported atrocities that had been linked to Nana Sahib in British reports, namely the execution of the Fatehgarh fugitives (12 June 1857) and the betrayal of Wheeler's garrison at the Satichaura ghat (27 June 1857).[113] However, it was the third and final massacre of the female and child prisoners being held in the *bibighar* that British writers would remember as the 'crowning atrocity' of the uprisings. As *The Times* wrote in September 1857,

> We cannot help giving it precedence, for, whatever the issue of this Rebellion, [...] the Massacre of Cawnpore [referring to 15 July 1857] and the name of NENA SAHIB [*sic*] will hold rank among the foulest crimes and the greatest enemies of the human race to the end of the world. It is the crowning atrocity — for it can hardly be surpassed — of native India.[114]

Just as this quotation anticipated, the story of the *bibighar* would quickly acquire a privileged place within the archives of British colonialism, analogous in its horror to that other 'founding myth of empire', the Black Hole of Calcutta.[115]

This key episode within the Indian uprisings forms the focus of the following chapter, which compares English- and French-language representations of the *bibighar* massacre and the ensuing retaliations led by British troops against the Indian populace. Building on recent analysis into the fictional representations of Cawnpore produced by Anglophone scholars, notably by Brantlinger (1988), Suleri (1992), Sharpe (1993) and Moore (2004), it considers how an idiom of revenge is constructed around the figure of the

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[112] 'The Mutinies in India', *The Times*, 16 September 1857, p. 6. Of these prisoners, three were grown men, seventy-three were women and one-hundred-and-twenty-four were children; Ward, p. 408. For more information on Nana Sahib's claims to the *Peshwa* throne, see Section 3.1, p. 69.

[113] More details on these events are provided in the, Section 1.2.2, pp. 17–18.

[114] *The Times*, 17 September 1857, p. 8.

[115] This thesis employs the term 'myth' in the same way as Teltscher, who uses it to refer to the way that the Black Hole of Calcutta was narrated by men such as Holwell and Macaulay, and not to suggest that its occurrence was fictional; Kate Teltscher, 'The Fearful Name of the Black Hole: Fashioning an Imperial Myth', in *Writing India, 1757–1990: The Literature of British India*, ed. by Bart Moore-Gilbert (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1996), pp. 30–51 (p. 31).

female victim in a broad range of nineteenth-century British texts. These sources include contemporaneous newspaper articles (taken predominantly from *The Times*, 1857–58), histories (Russell, *My Indian Mutiny Diary*, 1860; Trevelyan, *Cawnpore*, 1865), fictions (Dickens and Collins, 'The Perils of Certain English Passengers', 1857; Steel, *On the Face of the Waters*, 1897), eyewitness accounts (from *The Times* reports, 1857–58), letters (published in *The Times*, 1857–58) and a melodrama (Boucicault, *Jessie Brown; or, the Relief at Lucknow*, first performed in Britain in 1862). Collectively, these sources demonstrate the extent to which the *bibighar* victim was utilized in British writing to justify the acts of colonial violence committed against the Indian populace during the uprisings and, more broadly, to avoid acknowledging colonialism as an inherently violent practice. It argues that the female victim of the *bibighar* operates, to borrow Suleri's phrasing, as a basic figure 'for the anxiety of empire' that concomitantly reveals the 'psychic disempowerment' lying at the heart of Britain's tales of overseas heroism.[116]

This critical examination only acts, however, as a backdrop to the main focus of this chapter and introduces one of the central concerns of this thesis: the mobilization of the uprisings in French writing as a tool with which to denounce the *frère ennemi*. In this case, it examines how that most sacred of British imperial tropes, the *bibighar* victim, is challenged in the French *métropole* as a way of attacking British colonialism. A range of nineteenth- and twentieth-century French-language representations of Cawnpore, including newspapers published during the uprisings (1857–58) and three different fictions (Verne, *La Maison à vapeur*, 1880; Gaultier de Saint-Amand, *Nana-Sahib: Épisodes sanglants de l'insurrection des cipayes en 1857*, 1909; Marenis, *La Révolte sans âme*, 1946), are used to consider how this allegorical figure is adopted by French writing and employed to contest the idea of British heroism. After considering the predominantly negative response of the metropolitan press to British-led colonial violence justified in the name of Cawnpore, this analysis examines how journalistic and fictional writing continued to highlight and exploit what it defined pejoratively as the hysterical and irrational response of the British government, military and literary community to colonial insurgency. Finally, it analyses a series of subversive representations of Cawnpore and its female victims that, together, demonstrate the processes by which French writing challenges the myths of British imperialism through counter-narration.

2.2   'Narratives of Anxiety': Discourses of Revenge in British Writing on 1857–58

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[116] Suleri, pp. 4–5.

2.2.1 Justifying revenge in 1857–58: Constructing the 'myth' of the *bibighar* massacre and British narratives of heroism

The 'myth' of Cawnpore emerged from a sensationalist British press that immersed itself in the gory details of 'unspeakable' atrocities reputedly committed against innocent white prisoners by Indian insurgents.[117] Reported rumours, pictures and written narratives further consolidated the memory of Cawnpore through repeated tropes, such as the images of the blood-soaked prison walls and the well filled with discarded white bodies that came to stand for Indian 'savagery'.[118] The walls themselves were transformed into a memorial site that was made to speak for the deceased, as the war correspondent, William Howard Russell, noted controversially in his *Diary* (1860):

> the writing [...] on the walls of the slaughter-house [the *bibighar*] [...] did not exist when Havelock entered the place, and therefore was not the work of any of the poor victims. It has excited many men to fury — the cry has gone all over India. [...] God knows the horrors and atrocity of the pitiless slaughter needed no aggravation.[119]

As such, the 'myth' of the *bibighar* massacre operated as a synecdoche for the revolts as a whole ('the cry has gone all over India') by epitomizing the horror of Indian rebellion for a Victorian public versed in the discourse of British colonial dominance.

It was these images that became the major discursive strategies by which the bloody retribution demanded by the press and carried out by British (and British-led) soldiers upon the Indian populace was justified during the uprisings, and by which the memory of British colonial violence continued to be exculpated after the event.[120] The following section will analyse precisely how British representations of Cawnpore, produced in 1857, rationalized

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[117] Following Spurr's work into non-fictional writing, this analysis maintains that 'journalism and other forms of nonfiction, despite conventional expectation, depend on the use of myth, symbol, metaphor, and other rhetorical procedures more often associated with fiction and poetry' and that these procedures form part of 'a mythic imagination, [that] the nineteenth century elevated [...] to the level of scientific truth'; David Spurr, *The Rhetoric of Empire: Colonial Discourse in Journalism, Travel Writing, and Imperial Administration* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1993), pp. 2–3 and pp. 80–81.

[118] Jenny Sharpe, *Allegories of Empire: The Figure of Woman in the Colonial Text* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1993), p. 62. For more information on the emotive effects of the well, see Patrick Brantlinger, *Rule of Darkness: British Literature and Imperialism, 1830–1914* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1988), pp. 199–224. For an examination of the propaganda surrounding the *bibighar* walls, the well and the permanent memorial placed at the wellhead in 1863, see Stephen Heathorn, 'Angel of Empire: The Cawnpore Memorial Well as a British Site of Imperial Remembrance', *Journal of Colonialism and Colonial History*, 8 (2007), 1–33.

[119] Russell, p. 35. See also Hibbert, *The Great Mutiny*, pp. 211–12.

[120] Sharpe, pp. 77–79.

and sanitized acts of colonial violence through the overdetermined site of the *bibighar*.[121] Simultaneously, it will demonstrate how these narratives remain troubled by colonial disempowerment and the unavoidable conspicuousness of the brutality that they wished to obscure.

In 1857, the 'scene' imagined to have taken place in the *bibighar* provided the violent campaigns being carried out against the Indian populace — by men such as Sir Henry Havelock and his movable column of 78th Highlanders and Colonel James Neill's 'execution parties'[122] — with a persuasive rationale.[123] Within the context of Cawnpore, Neill's merciless declarations, exhorting his troops to punish the Indian insurgents, could be made to seem reasonable, at least to a mid-nineteenth-century British audience caught in the middle of a colonial war:

> Whenever a rebel is caught he is immediately tried, and unless he can prove a defence he is sentenced to be hanged at once; but the chief rebels or ring leaders I make first clean up a certain portion of the pool of blood, still two inches deep, in the shed where the fearful murder and mutilation of women and children took place.[124]

By connecting these punitive rituals to the emotive site of the *bibighar*, Neill was able to justify and even legalize his actions (through an exceptional 'strange law'), his defence composed within a logic of revenge where punishment and death were supposed to compensate for the suffering that had been experienced by British women and children.[125]

The kind of violent action carried out by British officers, such as Neill, was endorsed and encouraged by the domestic press, which celebrated such 'heroic' avenging expeditions and objected when the Government attempted to curtail martial law. The bloody images that had become associated with the name of Cawnpore were petitioned as a reason against any

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[121] The word *bibighar*, meaning the living quarters where British officers would house their concubines, becomes overdetermined through its adoption as a name for massacre. Departing from its original sense (concubinage), it was translated as the 'Slaughter in the House of the Ladies', despite the fact that almost twice as many children as women died there; Heathorn, p. 8.

[122] Ward, p. 343 and pp. 386–404.

[123] The term 'scene', with reference to the *bibighar* massacre, is adapted from Freud's conception of a primary traumatic 'scene' in patients suffering from hysteria. This is not to suggest, to borrow Vrettos's phrasing, that British Victorian culture can be 'diagnosed as collectively hysterical'; Athena Vrettos, *Somatic Fictions: Imagining Illness in Victorian Culture* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1995), p. 11. Rather, it is to posit that, as a narrative within colonial history, the *bibighar* massacre possessed 'the necessary *traumatic force*' or was a suitable '*determinant*' to produce an excessive response among Britons because it '*justifiably produced a high amount of disgust*'; Sigmund Freud, *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud (1893–1899): Early Psycho-Analytic Publications*, trans. by James Strachey and others, 24 vols (London: Vintage, 2001; first publ. London: Hogarth Press, 1962), III, pp. 193–94.

[124] 'The Indian Mutinies', *The Times*, 28 September 1857, p. 8.

[125] Neill legalized these punishments by issuing a 'strange law' (25 July 1857) through which the symbolic act of cleaning the *bibighar* floor was made obligatory prior to an insurgent's execution; Ward, p. 456.

form of merciful behaviour. An editorialist for *The Times*, for example, responded with indignation at the idea of the government sending non-military personnel into the affected regions armed with the power to curb the wrath of the Generals: 'And what was the place chosen for the first display of imbecile mercy? It was Cawnpore, where the streets are still red with the blood of our slaughtered women and children.'[126] Neill was celebrated as the agent who was carrying out this reasonable call for British vengeance: 'General Neill had taken 150 prisoners from among the fiends who a few weeks before had tied English women down in the public ways to violate them, and had chopped little children into bits in an orgie [*sic*] of bloodthirstiness.'[127] The hyperbolic horror of these images led this editorialist to call for others to follow Neill's example: 'Every tree and gable-end in the place should have its burden in the shape of a mutineer's carcass.'[128] As Russell would later bear witness, while travelling along the same trunk road by which Neill and Renaud had previously marched, this scene was repeatedly enacted. The trees, Russell reported, 'had been hung with natives' bodies', a sight that led him to conclude that 'I fear our claws were indiscriminating'.[129] As these quotations imply, an idiom of revenge quickly coalesced around the *bibighar* and Cawnpore, giving free reign to the expression of physical and verbal aggression against Indian peoples, which was only rarely challenged by British writers such as Russell.

What continued to reinvigorate and sensationalize the story of the *bibighar* was the inference that its female victims had been physically humiliated and most likely raped prior to their execution.[130] Numerous texts, from military 'eyewitness' accounts to popular theatrical productions, have helped to formulate this version, or collective memory, of Cawnpore, each of which further imbued the female victim with a fetishistic quality.[131] According to William Pietz,

fetishism often arises from a crisis that 'brings together and fixes into a singularly resonant, unified intensity an unrepeatable event (permanent in memory), a particular object and a

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[126] *The Times*, 29 October 1857, p. 8.
[127] *Ibid.*
[128] *Ibid.*
[129] Russell, p. 28.
[130] Although Blunt writes that contemporaneous investigations into the violation of British women disproved these allegations, rape (as Sharpe and Macmillan also note) remained an *idée reçue* of British representations of 1857–58; Alison Blunt, 'Embodying War: British Women and Domestic Defilement in the Indian "Mutiny", 1857–58', *Journal of Historical Geography*, 26 (2000), 403–28 (p. 413); Sharpe, p. 2; MacMillan, pp. 102–03. The figure of the raped female is not, however, confined solely to British imperial narratives, but is a trope that also occurs in reverse in Indian literature, with reference to the violation of Indian women by British men; Pamela Lothspeich, 'Unspeakable Outrages and Unbearable Defilements: Rape Narratives in the Literature of Colonial India', *Postcolonial Text*, 3 (2007), 1–19 (pp. 5–6).
[131] The term collective memory refers here to a memory that has become fixed through textual and visual repetition, and, as such, is one to which writers and artists continuously attach themselves and through which they visualize the past.

localized space'. Paradoxically, this crisis moment, because of its 'degradation from any recognizable value code', becomes 'a moment of infinite value'.[132]

Within this analytical framework, the rape and massacre of women and children by Indian men equates to the unrepeatable event; the 'localized space' is the *bibighar*; and the 'particular object' is the fragmented figure or body of the 'raped' woman.[133]

It is precisely this process of fetishization that can be seen in the letter written in 1857 by a soldier from Havelock's movable columns:

> Portions of their dresses, collars, children's socks, and ladies' round hats lay about, saturated with their blood; and in the sword-cuts on the wooden pillars [...] long dark hair was carried by the edge of the weapon, and there hung their tresses — a most painful sight![134]

In this account, the scattered objects are associated with the female body — torn dresses, fallen hats, pieces of hair — and are permeated with the *suggestion* of violation. These fragments form the fetishistic objects that acted (literally) as talismans for revenge during the uprisings, and have, since that time, served metaphorically to sanitize the memory of British violence through a displacement of reference.[135] Indeed, as Sharpe notes, it was the very suggestiveness of accounts such as this that appealed the imagination of British readers, inviting them 'to visualize the unspeakable acts that could only be disclosed in fragments'.[136] The effect of this ellipsis was to enable nineteenth-century texts to retain their sense of Victorian propriety towards the female body, whilst simultaneously shrouding the female figure in a seductive mysticism. As the soldier's letter demonstrates, rape was spoken of allegorically through the everyday objects that he found in the *bibighar*, which were then transformed into signifiers: 'I picked up a mutilated Prayer Book. It has lost the cover, but on the flyleaf is written, "For dearest Mama, from her affectionate Tom".'[137] The description of this coverless and disfigured prayer book echoes the descriptions of the naked and violated

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[132] Pietz is cited in Anne McClintock, 'Imperial Leather: Race, Cross-Dressing and the Cult of Domesticity', in *Feminist Postcolonial Theory: A Reader*, ed. by Reina Lewis and Sara Mills (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2003), pp. 635–66 (p. 646). See also Emily Apter, 'Introduction', in *Fetishism as Cultural Discourse*, ed. by Emily Apter and William Pietz (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1993), pp. 1–9 (p. 3).

[133] Paul Scott's *The Jewel in the Crown* also implies the fetishistic function of the name *bibighar*, with the rape of Daphne Manners taking place at a *bibighar* to which 'The Europeans seldom went, except to look and sneer and be reminded of that other Bibighar in Cawnpore'; Paul Scott, *The Jewel in the Crown* (London: Panther, 1980; first publ. Heinemann, 1966), p. 146.

[134] 'The Indian Mutinies: The Cawnpore Massacres', *The Times*, 30 September 1857, p. 6.

[135] Using Major Charles North's *Journal of an English Officer in India*, Ward describes how the soldiers searched for 'relics' among the bloody refuse of the *bibighar* and took mementos to remind them of their vow to avenge the massacre; Ward, pp. 436–39.

[136] Sharpe, p. 62.

[137] 'The Indian Mutinies: The Cawnpore Massacres', *The Times*, 30 September 1857, p. 6.

women whose bodies bore 'upon them marks of the most indecent and inhuman treatment it is possible to conceive'.[138] The result of articulating the uprisings through such images of violence against women is, as Sharpe argues, to make resistance to British rule look like 'an uncivilized eruption that must be contained', with 'the brutalized bodies of defenseless English women serv[ing] as a metonym for a government that sees itself as the violated object of rebellion'.[139] In other words, the allegory of rape was used to manage the trauma caused by the uprisings, while justifying the excessive physical response of the British military. The figure of the raped female 'other' can thus be seen as a site on which the brutality of British colonial violence was displaced and transformed into an act of heroism.

This same process of displacement and sanitization can be seen not only in journalistic writing, but also in other fictional genres. Boucicault's melodrama, *Jessie Brown; or, the Relief at Lucknow* (1858), for example, celebrates the Highlanders as heroes by remembering their timely arrival at Lucknow as having prevented the women inside the residency from being raped and then killed by *sepoy* aggressors; in other words, by imagining them as having saved the female captives from suffering the same fate as the women at Cawnpore.[140] In the final climatic act, as the exhausted and outnumbered Britons prepare for an imminent invasion of *sepoys*, one of the women exhorts her fellow countrymen to 'recollect Cawnpore! These children will be hacked to pieces before our eyes — ourselves [the women] reserved for worse than death, and then mutilated, tortured, butchered in cold blood.'[141] Rather than suffering this unmentionable fate, she demands that Randal, a Scottish soldier, kill the women and 'preserve us'.[142] Just as the soldiers are preparing to carry out this request — 'to free your countrywomen from the clutches of the demons'[143] —, Jessie Brown, the eponymous heroine, hears the distant sound of the Highlanders' bagpipes: 'Hark — hark — dinna ye hear it? [...] Ay! I'm no dreamin', it's the slogan of the Highlanders! we're saved — we're saved!'[144] In such fictional accounts, the Highlanders symbolize the positive masculinity and heroism of British colonialism; a symbol that is reinforced by the oppositional role of the female 'other' as a threatened object of

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[138] *Ibid.*

[139] Sharpe, p. 7.

[140] The first performance of Boucicault's play in Britain was not until 16 September 1862 at the Drury Lane Theatre, although it had previously been shown at Wallack's Theatre in New York on 22 February 1858. It was promoted in *The Times* as 'Mr Boucicault's long-promised military spectacle' and was lauded for being a 'most distinguished success', attracting 'an audience that crammed the house to the ceiling vociferating applause'; 'Drury-Lane Theatre', *The Times*, 16 September 1862, p. 10. For more information on the staging of the uprisings in London's theatres during 1857–58, see Heidi J. Holder, 'Melodrama, Realism and Empire on the British stage', in *Acts of Supremacy: The British Empire and the Stage, 1790–1930*, ed. by J. S. Bratton (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1991), pp. 129–49 (p. 137).

[141] *Jessie Brown*, III. 130.

[142] *Ibid.*

[143] *Ibid.*

[144] *Jessie Brown*, III. 131.

sexual assault that needs rescuing from Indian aggression.[145] Boucicault's staging of the victory of a few British soldiers over a large scale Indian attack at Lucknow thus offers a way, as Bratton points out, 'for the anti-militarist British to repudiate all the guilt and opprobrium of war', thereby countering 'the obvious [...] fact that the British were the interlopers and therefore naturally the aggressors' by 'reversing the roles in dramatic terms'.[146] Unable to engage with the possibility that the uprisings resulted from the act of colonialism itself, British texts thus shifted the blame onto the Indian 'other' through the reductive narrative of Cawnpore.

Inevitably, however, such a displacement inadvertently reveals the very thought process or idea that it wishes to disguise. Arguably, it is both 'the dynamic of powerlessness at the heart of the imperial configuration', identified by Suleri, and the inherent barbarism of colonialism itself that these narratives desire (explicitly or implicitly) to circumnavigate, but only do so with limited effect.[147] By focusing on this sublevel of 'psychic disempowerment' embedded within Anglo-centred representations of colonialism, the very narratives that aim to uphold 'the master-myth' demarcating 'imperial power and disempowered culture' come undone, revealing instead 'narratives of anxiety [...] in which aggression functions as a symptom of terror rather than of possession'.[148]

Such a reading is possible not only in narratives of the uprisings, but throughout representations of British colonialism in India. In this sense, Cawnpore can be positioned within a series of traumatic scenes running throughout colonial history, such as the 'Black Hole of Calcutta' infamously narrated by J. Z. Holwell.[149] As Teltscher's analysis of Holwell's letter reveals, the horror of this account 'resides in the sense of British helplessness' represented by the British prisoners who, in contrast to the rational narrator,

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[145] The story of Wheeler's daughter can be seen as a counter-narrative to these tales of female victimhood, since she was rumoured to have killed her attacker before throwing herself into a well. As Sharpe argues, however, even in this account 'what is at stake is a woman's moral strength. [...] Miss Wheeler is remembered for her courage and patriotism, but above all else her chastity. [...] Miss Wheeler has no option other than to take her own life, even though she has already assumed the masculine role of punishing the sepoys'; Sharpe, p. 71.

[146] J. S. Bratton, 'British Heroism and the Structure of Melodrama', in *Acts of Supremacy: The British Empire and the Stage, 1790–1930*, ed. by J. S. Bratton (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1991), pp. 18–61 (p. 26).

[147] Suleri, p. 3.

[148] Suleri, p. 3 and p. 6.

[149] J. Z. Holwell, 'A genuine narrative of the deplorable deaths of the English gentlemen and others who were suffocated in the Black Hole in Fort William, at Calcutta, in the kingdom of Bengal, in the night succeeding 20 June, 1756, in a letter to a friend by J. Z. Holwell, Esq.', in *Indian Record Series: Bengal in 1756–1757. A Selection of Public and Private Papers Dealing with the Affairs of the British in Bengal during the Reign of Siraj-Uddaula*, ed. by S. C. Hill, 3 vols (New York: AMS Press, 1968; first publ. London: Murray, 1905), III, pp. 131–54. The Black Hole was often recalled in representations of the uprisings. For example, in Tytler's eye-witness account, a Mr Wagentreiber (the editor of the *Delhi Sketch Book*) describes a group of British refugees who have taken shelter in the Flag Staff Tower as 'a Black Hole in miniature'; Tytler, p. 208. Trevelyan also wrote that Nana Sahib and Azimullah planned to 'renew the Black Hole of Calcutta' at Cawnpore; Trevelyan, p. 50.

became 'Unreasonable, hysterical, responding only to the demands of their bodies, [...] reduced to a state of feminised powerlessness [...] amoral, anarchic, uncivilised'.[150] What mitigates this hysteria is the way in which Holwell presents himself through 'signs of civility, combined with the self-mocking tone and wry perspectival distance, [which] indicate that the narrator will emerge unscathed and uncontaminated from his ordeal'.[151] Moreover, the revenge that is subsequently enacted against Shuja-ud-Daula's army in the Battle of Plassey (1757), leading to the establishment of the British empire, adequately compensates for the loss of British lives.[152] The same desire to assert rationalism and display fortitude exists in narratives of 1857–58, which can also be seen as a response to an embedded fear of colonial powerlessness; one that existed, as the tale of the Black Hole implies, 'at the very start of the narrative of colonial power in India'.[153]

This is evident in Charles Dickens and Wilkie Collins's co-authored adventure novella, *The Perils of Certain English Passengers*, written specifically for the 1857 Christmas edition of Dickens's weekly journal, *Household Words*.[154] In a quintessential act of displacement, Dickens transported the uprisings temporally and spatially to an imaginary British colonial island in the West Indies in 1744. As he outlined in his personal correspondence, his intention in writing *Perils* was to 'commemorate the foremost of the great English qualities shewn in India, without laying the scene there, or making any vulgar association with real events or calamities'; in other words, to memorialize the heroism of the British in the face of adversity without referring directly to those recent sites of trauma (particularly Cawnpore), which were perhaps too fresh in British minds to be trivialized by adventure fiction.[155]

Perils focuses on British heroism by telling a soothing tale of a triumphant colonial conquest and, as such, represents a characteristic response to the reports of *sepoy* atrocities epitomized by Cawnpore. The English 'hero', Gill Davis, is set in opposition to the Indian 'demon', Christian George King, who is characterized as deceitful and demonic, thus legitimizing the desire of the English protagonist for his death. From their first meeting, Davis reacts to King with an instinctive prejudice expressed by his desire to 'kick' King

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[150] Teltscher, 'Black Hole', p. 35.
[151] Teltscher, 'Black Hole', p. 36. For more on 'survival literature', see Mary Louise Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* (London: Routledge, 1992), p. 87. Pratt notes that, although this genre often involved 'taboo configurations of intercultural contact' (such as 'Europeans enslaved by non-Europeans'), the 'context of survival literature was "safe" for transgressive plots, since the very existence of a text presupposed the imperially correct outcome: the survivor survived, and sought reintegration into the home society'; Pratt, p. 87.
[152] Teltscher, 'Black Hole', p. 38.
[153] Teltscher, 'Black Hole', p. 41.
[154] For more on the adventure novel and colonial discourse, see Martin Green, *Dreams of Adventure, Deeds of Empire* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1980), p. 3.
[155] Charles Dickens, 'To the hon. Mrs Richard Watson (7 December 1857)', in *The Letters of Charles Dickens*, ed. by Madeline House, Graham Storey and Kathleen Tillotson, 8 vols (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1965–2002), VIII, 487.

'without exactly knowing why, except that it was the right thing to do'.[156] To a Victorian readership in the midst of war with India, such impulses may well have been considered perfectly reasonable, particularly since it is King who subsequently betrays the colonizers to the 'pirates' that represent the Indian insurgents. Following King's duplicitous actions, Davis's latent prejudice becomes manifest as he recommends that King be put 'out of the world'; a desire that, within the logic of revenge, can be viewed as entirely justifiable, at least at a surface level.[157] This desire is played out as the text moves inexorably towards its denouement with the triumphant lynching of King, supposedly denoting the victory of the colonizers over its colonized people.

However, a simplistic binary reading of *Perils* does not account for the problematic similarities that Peters (1998) and Nayder (1992) have shown to exist between King and Davis.[158] Both characters are victims of British society — King is oppressed by colonialism and Davis is excluded from the middle and upper classes of British society by his orphan upbringing and his illiteracy, which make both a threat to the established order as either an anti-colonial or an antiestablishment rebel, respectively.[159] Their relationship is further complicated by Davis's jealousy of King's privileged position as a favoured servant–slave among the middle- and upper-class colonial community. He laments, 'If ever a man, Sambo or no Sambo, was trustful and trusted, to what may be called quite an infantine and sweetly beautiful extent, surely [...] it was [...] Christian George King.'[160] Later that night, King appears in one of Davis's dreams: 'He stuck in my sleep, cornerwise, and I couldn't get him out. He was always flitting about me, dancing round me, and peeping in over my hammock, though I woke and dozed off again fifty times.'[161] This dream suggests the presence of several repressed thought processes at once. It not only acts as a presage to King's betrayal — Davis's latent and instinctive suspicion of King is woven into the dream narrative and contrasts directly with the trust of the colonizers —, but it also acknowledges the existence of the disavowed social equivalence, or mimicry, that exists between Davis and King.[162]

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[156] Dickens, 'Perils', p. 2.

[157] Dickens, 'Perils', p. 10.

[158] Laura Peters, 'Perilous Adventures: Dickens and Popular Orphan Adventure Narratives', *The Dickensian*, 94 (1998), 172–83 (pp. 177–78); Lillian Nayder, 'Class Consciousness and the Indian Mutiny in Dickens's "The Perils of Certain English Passengers"', in *Studies in English Literature, 1500–1900*, 32 (1992), 689–705 (p. 697–98).

[159] Davis clings firmly to a non-nationalistic stance that is only slightly moderated when he is chided for confessing, 'England is not much to me, [...] except as a name'; Dickens, 'Perils', p. 32. According to Nayder, Davis's anger towards British institutions is eventually transferred onto the 'savage', King, enabling Davis 'to abandon his feelings of class hatred and to recognize his "real" enemy — his racial "inferiors" rather than his social superiors'; Nayder, p. 697.

[160] Dickens, 'Perils', p. 6.

[161] *Ibid.*

[162] Peters states that 'the class structure embedded within the narrative means that Gill *shares* the marginal status, albeit unequally and with some discomfort, with Christian George King. This discomfort manifests itself in his haunting by Christian George King'; Peters, p. 178.

More importantly, however, Davis is troubled by the reversal that occurs to his imagined racial superiority. In this dream sequence, it is the 'native', King, who is empowered by returning or resisting the gaze of the colonizer.[163] His waking response to King's actual betrayal is a desire to kill King and, in doing so, to re-establish his dominant position and to negate his sense of powerlessness.

Hence, in spite of its attempt to celebrate British (or English) heroism and victory, what underpins this narrative is a fear of the insurgent colonized 'other'. King is first shot by Davis's superior, Captain Carton, and is then lynched in order to be 'left hanging to the tree, all alone, with the red sun making a kind of a dead sunset on his black face'.[164] As this quotation suggests, King's double execution is used symbolically to denote the victory of the colonizers and to warn against any future attempts to betray British rule.[165] Yet, for all its 'heroic' rhetoric, the image of a post-mortem hanging shifts the site of intended savagery from King and onto the British colonizer, with Dickens's narrative echoing the horrifying acts of racial revenge being written about and enacted by Britons at that time.[166] Further, King's death scene exposes its own anxiety, marked as it is by the fear of the colonizer towards the Indian 'other'; a fear that lends itself to the desire to destroy, rather than to 'civilize', the colonized 'subject'. Thus, although the demise of the enemy was likely to be a popular ending in 1857, the textual ambiguities highlighted here ultimately challenge its ability to act as a successful allegory of British heroism and victory.

2.2.2   Representing revenge after 1858: Displacement, reinforcement and memorialization

Although many British narratives written after 1858 distanced themselves from the disproportionate violence of the British military response during the uprisings, they remain characterized by a desire to memorialize those British acts as heroic and, as such, can be analysed for their displacements of reference. As mentioned earlier, Russell's *Diary* is

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[163] Bhabha's work on mimicry and ambivalence provides a useful analytical model for reading this scene, since King, as a colonial subject who is accepted within, yet marginalized by, colonial society, epitomizes what Bhabha describes as 'the [colonizer's] desire for a reformed, recognizable Other, *as a subject of a difference that is almost the same, but not quite [sic]*'; Bhabha, p. 86.
[164] Dickens, 'Perils', p. 35.
[165] As JanMohamed writes, colonial literature often pits 'civilized societies against the barbaric aberrations of an Other, and they always end with the elimination of the threat posed by the Other and the legitimation of the values of the good, civilized society'; JanMohamed, p. 91.
[166] It also inadvertently recalls the lynching of slaves in America that had previously outraged Dickens in his visit to the 'New World' in 1842. For a discussion on Dickens's visit to the 'New World', see Arthur A. Adrian, 'Dickens on American Slavery: A Carlylean Slant', *PMLA*, 67 (1952), 315–29 (p. 318). However, while *Perils* may be an explicitly racist text, Moore suggests that Dickens's *A Tale of Two Cities* (1859) 'constituted a revision of the overt racism of the 1857 allegory [...] by sympathetically aligning [... the Indian rebels] with both the French third estate of 1789, and the English working classes'; Moore, p. 5.

something of an anomaly among nineteenth-century accounts with its criticism of the British response and frank admission that 'the peculiar aggravation of the Cawnpore massacres was this, that the deed was done by a subject race — by black men who dared to shed the blood of their masters, and that of poor helpless ladies and children'.[167] More common was to remember British fury as an instinctual but temporary madness brought about by the horror of Cawnpore or, to quote from Sharpe, as 'a lapse in British authority that permitted the abuse of power'.[168] Both G. O. Trevelyan's history, *Cawnpore* (1865), and Flora Annie Steel's fiction, *On the Face of the Waters* (1897), for example, rationalize the fleeting state of insanity experienced by British soldiers as an irrepressible response to the killing of British women. Trevelyan's narrator speaks of 'the blindness of terror and rage, and vengeance seeking in the dark for a victim and a pretext', one that was provided by Cawnpore.[169] Likewise, Steel's narrative depicts the enragement of Mainwaring, a subaltern soldier, who strikes out at an Indian crowd following the news of Alice Gissing's death: 'The yell that he was mad, possessed, rang hideously as men tumbled over each other in their hurry to escape, in their hurry to have at this wild beast, this devil, this horror! And they were right. He was possessed.'[170] Although Mainwaring's derangement is presented as transient, and therefore both excusable and finite, a further act of displacement occurs by writing the subaltern soldier as the victim of hysteria, thereby shifting the blame away from his more 'civilized' superior officers.[171]

In both Trevelyan's and Steel's texts, military excess is ultimately excused by the memory of Cawnpore. Trevelyan writes that 'there was a spectacle to be witnessed which might excuse much'; a statement that refers indirectly to the *bibighar* massacre.[172] Steel's fiction privileges the massacre as being the root of British strength and victory and, in doing so, transforms the temporary state of hysteria experienced by the soldiers into a heroic 'survival narrative', much like Holwell's account of the Black Hole written a century and a half earlier. In *On the Face of the Waters*, the threat that was thought to be posed to all British women and children by Indian insurgents following the *bibighar* is depicted as

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[167] Russell, p. 29. Russell's disapproval of British violence did not result in sympathy for the colonized Indians. Rather, he criticized the British who (unlike the Indians) should have behaved with more circumspection.

[168] Sharpe, p. 79.

[169] Trevelyan, p. 54.

[170] Steel, p. 233.

[171] Harriet Tytler's eyewitness account similarly blames 'Tommie Aitkins', or the foot soldier, for the excessive acts of colonial violence committed during the uprisings, such as the lynching of 'a poor little man (a Mohammedan baker)', who was killed for having committed no greater crime than being late 'with his bread for the men's breakfast'; Tytler, p. 144. Clearly distressed by the unreasonableness of this violence — 'I can't understand how such a cruel deed was allowed, for they in turn should have been hanged' —, Tytler willingly lays the responsibility on a less 'civilized' class than her own, thereby distancing herself and her class from such events; Tytler, p. 144.

[172] Trevelyan, p. 171.

causing the men 'to think with a sort of mad fury'.[173] Yet, it is also Cawnpore that provides the flagging soldiers stationed on the ridge at Delhi with a sense of determination. It is in the name of the *bibighar* that '"the force will die at its post"', says one of the British generals, before the narrator adds, 'There was no talk of retirement now! [...T]he thousands [...] waiting for this tyranny to pass, were not to be deserted. The fight would go on. The fight for law and order.[174] The subsequent triumph of the British over the insurgents at Delhi transforms the 'transgressive plot' of Cawnpore into a victory narrative and thus comes to represent 'The strength of the real Master!'[175]

The ability of this allegory to exculpate British violence is reinforced not only within the literature produced by metropolitan authors, but also by the iconography of the memorial sites dedicated to these events in India. These two representative forms work symbiotically. Just as the various sites commemorating the deaths of 'Christians' at Cawnpore, such as Carlo Marochetti's statue, the 'Angel of the Resurrection' (situated in the Cawnpore Memorial Gardens and opened in 1863[176]), are linked inextricably to the Anglo-centric accounts produced in journalistic, epistolary, eyewitness, historical and fictional accounts, so these texts refer to, and articulate the meaning of, those memorial sites. Trevelyan's history, for example, describes Marochetti's 'Angel' as an emotive locus — 'it is beside that little shrine [...] that none [...] can speak with unaltered voice, and gaze with undimmed eye. For that is the very place itself where the act was accomplished, not yet transformed by votive stone and marble'[177] —, before transforming his own narrative into a memorial for the dead:

the dire agony of Cawnpore needs not to be figured in marble, or cut into granite, or cast of bronze. There is no fear lest we should forget the story of our people. The whole place is their tomb, and the name thereof is their epitaph.[178]

Like the memorial to which it refers, Trevelyan's history offers itself as a repository for memory that will ensure that this past is never forgotten.

Such memories of Cawnpore, or what Nora might term 'lieux de mémoire', suffer from an amnesia that excludes alternative, and particularly Indian, perspectives.[179] However,

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[173] Steel, p. 287.
[174] Steel, pp. 306–07.
[175] Pratt p. 87; Steel, p. 263. See also footnote 151.
[176] As Heathorn notes, 'the Cawnpore memorial well [or the Angel] was, for much of its 85 year existence, *the* iconic site of imperial remembrance in the British raj', a site which, Ward states, 'was visited more frequently than the Taj Mahal'; Heathorn, p. 2; Ward, p. 551.
[177] Trevelyan, p. 109.
[178] Trevelyan, p. 174.
[179] When read through Nora's thesis, the erection of the Angel memorial indicates 'a will to remember' and a desire 'to stop time [...] in order to capture a maximum of meaning in the fewest of signs'; Pierre Nora, 'Between Memory and History: Les Lieux de Mémoire', *Representations*, 26 (1989), 7–24 (p. 19).

like all 'lieux de mémoire', its hoped-for fixity is open to metamorphosis (indeed, such 'lieux' only exist because of their capacity for metamorphosis), being 'a site of excess closed upon itself [...], but also forever open to the full range of its possible significations'.[180] The character of Nana Sahib in Manohar Malgonkar's Indian fiction *The Devil's Wind: Nana Saheb's Story, A Novel* (1972) provides just such a new interpretation by foregrounding the amnesiac tendencies of British historiography:

> The memorial was for the British dead, the garden for the British living. The Indian dead had no memorial, nor the living Indians a garden; in fact, they were forbidden entry into the Memorial Garden, even though, of course, the gardeners and other menials were Indian.[181]

This British 'lieu' is transformed through the gaze of Malgonkar's protagonist into a commemoration of the prejudices that continue to exist in the colonial present, the gardeners perversely tending the very gardens that attest to an annulment of their place in history. It is worth noting that, following independence in 1947, the local British community decided to efface the entire memorial site, an act that Heathorn interprets as 'an attempt to control the site's meaning in perpetuity: to prevent any re-inscription of this material site of remembrance with any other meaning'.[182]

Even as late as the celebrations of the 150-year anniversary of the uprisings in May 2007, the same patterns of distortion, amnesia and displacement can be seen in British representations of the uprisings. *The Guardian*, for example, printed an article by William Dalrymple (author of the populist history, *The Last Mughal: The Fall of a Dynasty, Delhi, 1857*, 2006), entitled, 'Delhi, 1857: A Bloody Warning to Today's Imperial Occupiers.'[183] In this abridged version of *The Last Mughal*, Dalrymple drew parallels between the uprisings and 'the Islamic insurgencies the US fights today in Iraq and Afghanistan'.[184] This leads to a distorted repackaging of 1857–58 as a memorable example of the ways in which 'western intrusion in the east' fanaticizes the colonized 'other' and perpetuates radical *Islamic* violence: 'In Delhi a flag of jihad was raised in the principal mosque, and many of the resistance fighters described themselves as mujahideen or jihadis. There was even a regiment of "suicide ghazis" who vowed to fight until they met death.'[185] Although Dalrymple is not

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[180] Nora, p. 24.
[181] Malgonkar, p. 297.
[182] Heathorn, p. 33.
[183] William Dalrymple, *The Last Mughal: The Fall of a Dynasty, Delhi, 1857* (London: Bloomsbury, 2006); William Dalrymple, 'Delhi, 1857: A Bloody Warning to Today's Imperial Occupiers', *The Guardian*, 10 May 2007, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/story/0,,2076320,00.html> [accessed 10 May 2007].
[184] Dalrymple, 'Delhi, 1857'.
[185] Dalrymple, 'Delhi, 1857'. A recent BBC1 documentary, entitled *Clash of Worlds* (2007), similarly presented this viewpoint by linking the mutinies with current concerns on fundamentalist Islamicist

wrong to highlight the participation of Islamic insurgents, his excessive focus on these rebels, along with his emphasis on *jihad*, seem to be dictated less by historical accuracy than by current media obsessions with Islamic 'extremism'. His use of the term *jihad*, for example, appears deliberately provocative and is out of keeping with the language used by the press in 1857–58.[186] Moreover, Dalrymple's highly selective vision leaves little room either for Indian insurgents from other social and religious cultures, or for perceiving anti-colonial (or anti-neo-imperial) action as being motivated by anything other than religious fanaticism.[187] However, by reading the uprisings predominantly as a reaction on the part of Islamic Indians to the threat of western colonialism to their religion, Dalrymple is better able to connect this past to present-day concerns and, in doing so, to popularize his subject matter. As he summarizes,

> the lessons of 1857 are very clear. No one likes people of a different faith conquering them, or force-feeding them improving ideas at the point of a bayonet. The British in 1857 discovered what the *US and Israel* are learning now, that nothing so easily radicalises a people against them, or so undermines the moderate aspect of Islam, as aggressive western intrusion in the east. The histories of Islamic fundamentalism and western imperialism have, after all, long been closely and dangerously intertwined (emphasis added).[188]

In drawing these parallels between British colonialism in 1857 and the US and Israel now, Dalrymple is able to consign the wrongs of British imperialism to the colonial past. Thus, Dalrymple not only animates the current discourse of fear surrounding Islam by re-presenting the uprisings as a historical example of the kind of *jihadi* violence reportedly being enacted on 'western' soil today ('9/11' and '7/7'), but also deflects responsibility away from British involvement in the neo-imperialist present and onto the US and Israel.

In short, British narratives have tended to short-circuit the underlying complexity of Indian insurgency by reading, representing and remembering colonial trauma through a select group of overdetermined events or myths. These myths act as sites of displacement motivated by a desire to sanitize the memory of British revenge and bypass colonial atrocity.

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terrorism; *Clash of Worlds*, 28 October 2007, BBC2, 7pm (1 hour). In making this connection, Dalrymple and the BBC leave themselves open to projecting, to quote from Gilroy, 'contemporary dynamics backward into circumstances with which they cannot possibly be congruent'; Paul Gilroy, *Postcolonial Melancholia* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005), pp. 31–32.

[186] Although contemporary newspapers might abundantly use this term in connection with Islam, it was an uncommon locution during the uprisings, used only once in *The Times* between the first mutiny in Meerut (10 May 1857) and the Queen's Proclamation (1 November 1858), with reference to the call for 'jehad' at the Meena Musjid; 'The Indian Mutinies: Peshawur', *The Times*, 3 December 1857, p. 7.

[187] As Dalrymple explicitly states in *The Last Mughal*, his aim is to argue against those 'Marxist historians of the 1960s and 1970s' that have viewed 1857–58 'as a rising against British social and economic policies'; Darymple, *The Last Mughal*, p. 22.

[188] Dalrymple, 'Delhi, 1857'.

Reinforced and recycled in countless British accounts of 1857–58, they have emerged as hard facts. As Dalrymple's article suggests, the same narratives of anxiety that have underpinned representations of colonial trauma, such as the Black Hole in 1756 or the Cawnpore massacres in 1857, continue to feed current images of post-colonial–neo-imperial conflict and encounter, generating new myths, fetishes and obsessions that work to obscure an engagement with atrocity and fear.

2.3   Counter-Narrating the *Bibighar* Massacre in French-Language Texts

2.3.1   'Decivilizing' the British: Representations of colonial violence in the French-language press of 1857–58

In 1857, news of the Cawnpore massacres filtered quickly into the French press, their columns reiterating the horrors reported in their British and British Indian counterparts. However, as this chapter demonstrates, French-language texts did not passively reflect the images being portrayed by their beleaguered neighbours. Rather, many engaged actively with Anglo-centric representations and, in some cases, succeeded in revealing the hysteria, anxiety and mythological constructs underpinning British imperial discourse. Thus, although the reports in the French press would, at times, repeat almost verbatim the news that had appeared in the British papers, they would rarely do so without some (usually negative) comment and/or modification.

Beyond the attraction that this British colonial crisis would inevitably have had for a French journalist, the prevalence of the reporting on these events, at least in its early phase, can perhaps be better understood by placing it within the socio-political context of French newspaper production in 1857. In the aftermath of the 1848 Revolution and Louis Napoleon's *coup d'état* (1851), the leftwing press had all but disappeared and what political diversity remained was obliged to follow the dictates of the empire.[189] Indeed, the existence of an opposition press was itself a politically controlled act, designed "'to maintain an illusion of free discussion'".[190] Newspapers of differing ideological standpoints nonetheless continued to exist by ostensibly adhering to the system, while subtly voicing their opinions

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[189] As noted in *Histoire générale de la presse française*, 'La période de 1852 à 1860 est celle durant laquelle la presse a été, depuis le premier Empire, la plus asservie au pouvoir'; *Histoire générale de la presse française*, II, 249. For more information on the restrictions placed on the French press under the Second Empire and its gradual depoliticization, see *Histoire générale de la presse française*, II, 249–58; Clyde Thogmartin, *The National Daily Press of France* (Birmingham, AL: Summa Publications, 1998), pp. 59–64.

[190] Collins is quoted in Thogmartin, pp. 60–61.

either in supposedly apolitical columns or in sections devoted to the overseas news.[191] Thus, for a press whose freedom had been severely hampered, the uprisings offered an opportunity to air political beliefs, safe in the knowledge that their subject matter did not pertain directly to France and was thus less likely to come under the scrutiny of censorship.[192]

Only a minority of papers rallied to Britain's side by viewing the uprisings within a strictly Manichean framework that pitted the enlightened European against Indian barbarism.[193] This can be seen, for example, in a report produced by *La Patrie*'s Bombay-based French correspondent (who used an Anglicized *nom de plume*, 'Clayton'), which had clearly been influenced by the India-based British press.[194] Faithfully mirroring the *bibighar* narratives being produced by British journalists, Clayton wrote:

Les femmes avaient été entièrement déshabillées, puis décapitées, et jetées dans des puits, où les enfans avaient été précipités vivans.

Ces atroces massacres ont eu lieu dans la cour, [et] cette cour était inondée de sang, ainsi que les robes et autres vêtemens de femmes qui s'y trouvaient encore.[195]

Although this account appears to have been lifted directly from the *Bombay Gazette*'s report, published on the same date (15 August 1857), Clayton's article omits the vengeful hyperbole that had become the staple of British journalism.[196] Yet, as a European based in India, he was

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[191] This practice was begun by the Catholic legitimist and editorialist for *L'Univers: Union Catholique*, Louis Veuillot, who used the 'chronique littéraire' as a way of airing 'ce qui ne pourrait pas passer dans leurs articles politiques'; *Histoire générale de la presse française*, II, p. 244. As Renan noted in *Feuilles détachées*, this practice was particularly prevalent in the 'Variétés' section of the press, which was less immediately concerned with French politics and, therefore, more open to subversive commentary: 'Sous apparence de littérature, on parla de bien des choses alors défendues; on insinua les plus hauts principes de la politique libérale'; Renan is cited in *Histoire générale de la presse française*, II, 264.

[192] For example, *Le Charivari* interpreted the support of the legitimist newspaper, *La Gazette de France*, for the King of Oudh's desire to reclaim his throne (after his capture by the British) as a thinly veiled reference to Charles X; Clément Caraguel, 'La légitimité du roi d'Oude', *Le Charivari*, 23 November 1857, p. 2.

[193] In his 1857 critique of British colonialism, Frédéric Billot inveighs against the opinions of the supposedly Anglophile sections of the French press, citing *Le Constitutionnel*, *Le Siècle* and *Journal des débats* as the main culprits; Billot, *L'Inde, l'Angleterre et la France*, p. 15 and p. 102. These he named collectively as 'Anglais de l'intérieur'; Billot, *L'Inde, l'Angleterre et la France*, p. iv. Bellanger et al. also point out that, although the majority of the French press in 1857 'condamna la cruauté des méthodes anglaises dans l'Inde', Britain did have a few 'défenseurs', including *Le Siècle*, *Le Journal des débats* and *La Revue des Deux Mondes*; *Histoire générale de la presse française*, II, 276. This view is, however, overly simplistic. Many newspapers that initially favoured a British victory became progressively more Anglophobic as the uprisings unfolded.

[194] Despite his Anglicized name, 'Clayton' was clearly not British. He reports on the events from a spectatorial position, rather than a participatory one, expressed, for example, through the constant references to 'les Anglais', rather than through the collective subject pronoun 'nous'.

[195] Clayton, 'Nouvelles des Indes: Correspondance particulière de la *Patrie* (Bombay, 15 août)', *La Patrie*, 17 September 1857, p. 1.

[196] 'The courtyard in front of the Assembly-rooms [...] was swimming in blood. A large number of women and children, who had been "cruelly spared after the capitulation for a worse fate than instant

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willing to show compassion towards, and solidarity with, the British, offering in his reports a sense communion-in-suffering with 'nos malheureux concitoyens' faced with 'de nouvelles atrocités commis par ces démons de cipayes'.[197]

Likewise, those Parisian newspapers that were more inclined (at least initially) to consider British affairs favourably (such as *Le Constitutionnel*, *Le Siècle* and *Journal des débats*), often displayed sympathy for the *frère colonial*: 'Il est impossible, en effet,' wrote Cauvain for *Le Constitutionnel*, 'de lire le récit des scènes épouvantables qui désolent les possessions britanniques de l'Inde, sans éprouver pour la nation anglaise [...] une compassion mêlée de sympathie et d'estime.'[198] This sentiment was echoed by Alloury writing for the *Journal des débats*: 'Devant le spectacle de l'horreur et de barbarie [...] le seul sentiment qui nous domine est celui de la sympathie pour les victimes de ces sanglans désordres.'[199] In their mutual criminalization and demonization of the actions of the *sepoys*, these opinions can be seen as operating within the same dichotomy as the Anglo-centric accounts to which they refer.

Such expressions of sympathy in the French-language press did not, however, extend to the same demands for vengeance against the Indian populace. The spectatorial position taken by these French reports alters the emotive and sensationalist effects that characterized British journalism at that time. This is apparent in the different ways that *The Times* and *Le Constitutionnel* framed the same letter by a Cawnpore survivor, Shepherd, whose narrative would subsequently provide the primary material for many English-language accounts of 1857–58.[200] In the version printed in *The Times*, Shepherd's letter was introduced with the emotional words of his brother:

As the accompanying is the first authentic account that I have read of the horrible tragedy at Cawnpore, I send it to you for publication if you think fit, and I hope that the horrors it depicts will awaken the minds of the most mawkish to the necessity and justice of deep vengeance.[201]

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death," had been barbarously slaughtered on the previous morning — the women having been stripped naked, beheaded, and thrown into a well; the children having been hurled down alive upon their butchered mothers, whose blood yet reeked on their mangled bodies'; 'The Mutinies in India (from the *Bombay Gazette*)', *The Times*, 17 September 1857, p. 9.

[197] Clayton, 'Nouvelles des Indes: Correspondance particulière de la *Patrie* (Bombay, 30 juillet)', *La Patrie*, 31 August 1857, p. 1.

[198] Henry Cauvain, *Le Constitutionnel*, 31 August 1857, p. 1. For more on the pro-British press in France, see footnote 193.

[199] Louis Alloury, 'France, Paris, 31 août', *Journal des débats politiques et littéraires*, 1 September 1857, p. 1.

[200] A detailed analysis of Shepherd's *A Personal Narrative of the Outbreak and Massacre at Cawnpore during the Sepoy Revolt of 1857* can be found in Ward's *Our Bones are Scattered* (1996).

[201] L., 'The Indian Mutinies: The Massacre at Cawnpore', *The Times*, 19 September 1857, p. 8.

Alternatively, the prologue printed by *Le Constitutionnel* omitted this preamble and replaced it with its own, which had the effect of nuancing the emotional impact of the ensuing letter: 'Les lettres particulières adressées à leurs familles par des Anglais dans l'Inde et publiées en si grand nombre [...], ne présentent souvent qu'un exposé incomplet et une vue partielle des principaux événemens de l'insurrection.'[202] That which *The Times* framed as a harrowing and 'authentic' account to inspire revenge, *Le Constitutionnel* denounced as biased and erroneous reporting that should be viewed as little more than fictional titillation:

> Mais si ces correspondances privées ajoutent peu à la connaissance générale des faits, en revanche elles offrent pour la plupart un vif intérêt par le récit d'aventures personnelles, par la familiarité des détails, par l'émotion qu'elles trahissent chez leurs auteurs tous frais témoins de scènes horribles.[203]

Having been staged in this way, Shepherd's traumatic outpourings — 'Je suis au comble de la douleur. [...] O ma pauvre chère Polly! comment ont-ils pu te tuer? [...] Les visages de tous ceux que j'ai perdus sont devant moi'[204] — lost much of their immediacy and urgency and, as a whole, were criticized as an illustration of 'Cette idée de vengeance [qui] se retrouve au fond de toutes les lettres particulières envoyées de l'Inde'.[205] Thus, the rationale for British revenge was presented as being based on fictional constructs, such as hearsay and/or hyperbole, as opposed to hard facts. The individuality and sincerity that *The Times* privileged in its presentation of this 'survival narrative' were thus effaced by *Le Constitutionnel* due to its wider concerns with the sensationalist function of the letter.

Sensationalism was to become a common complaint issued by the French-language press against their British peers. Irrespective of their attitude towards Britain under normal circumstances, the newspapers of the *métropole* heavily criticized the brutality of the idiom of revenge published in, and the violent revenge acts encouraged by, British papers: 'Les feuilles et correspondances anglaises poursuivent leur prédictions sanguinaires', stated *Le Siècle*, before quoting from the *Morning Post*, '"On a massacré quelques femmes," dit négligemment un officier de l'armée de Delhi. "Nous avons déjà tué une masse de ces monstres, écrit un autre, et, avec la grâce de Dieu, nous massacrerons encore *des milliers*".'[206] Such a wilful disregard for Indian life, especially for Indian women, couched in the ensanguined language reportedly spoken by a British officer, provoked disapproval because it was considered to be the kind of uncivilized behaviour associated with 'barbarous'

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[202] H.-Marie Martin, 'Télégraphie privée', *Le Constitutionnel*, 22 September 1857, p. 1.
[203] *Ibid.*
[204] *Ibid.*
[205] *Ibid.*
[206] Émile de la Bédollière, 'Partie politique: Courrier', *Le Siècle*, 19 November 1857, p. 1.

Indian insurgents, not 'rational' Europeans. *Le Charivari* raised similar concerns over the bellicosity of the British press in a series of satirical articles headlined with deliberately histrionic titles, such as 'Faut-il manger du cipaye?' and 'Pas de quartier'.[207] In an article by *Le Charivari*'s Caraguel, the *Morning Advertiser*, *Morning Post* and *The Times* were criticized for using a retributive language that went as far as endorsing the reintroduction of slavery as a punishment for insurgents (slavery having long since been abolished by Britain with the Slave Trade Act of 25 March 1807 and the Slavery Abolition Act of 28 August 1833, and by France for the second time since 1848[208]). Caraguel criticized British journalists for suggesting that the *sepoys* should be disciplined by forced labour (such as laying railway tracks), execution by conflagration, or transportation to Britain to be sold as slaves.[209] In response, he wrote derisively,

> Qu'est-ce qui empêcherait de les réduire en esclavage? A la vérite la traite des noirs est défendue, mais les hindous ne sont pas noirs, ils sont jaunes [...] Nous aurions ainsi en Angleterre une population d'ilotes, à l'example de ce qui existait dans l'ancienne Sparte, et ce serait une institution toute à fait neuve et inattendue qui donnerait à l'Europe la plus haute idée de la civilisation anglaise.[210]

The parallels drawn with Sparta, as an empire built upon slavery, enable Caraguel to position Britain as a backwards civilization, while France's recent involvement in the slave trade is carefully avoided. Caraguel's accusations against Britain's willingness to revert to slavery demonstrate the extent to which slavery was no longer considered to be an acceptable part of a 'civilized' colonial rhetoric (although 'indentured labour' was much more widely accepted). Slavery was thus a discursive strategy by which to criticize the British, its appearance in the English-language press as a punishment for Indian insurgents presenting an easy target for derision and criticism in France.[211]

Even those newspapers with a traditionally more pro-British in outlook, such as *Le Constitutionnel*, expressed grave concerns over Britain's excessiveness. Despite having

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[207] Arnould Fremy, 'Faut-il manger du cipaye?', *Le Charivari*, 27 October 1857, p. 2; Arnould Fremy, 'Pas de quartier', *Le Charivari*, 8 November 1857, p. 1.

[208] In Pluviose An II, the First Republic's Convention had decreed that 'l'esclavage des Nègres dans les colonies est aboli; en conséquence, elle décrète que tous les hommes, sans distinction de couleur, domiciliés dans les colonies, sont citoyens français et jouiront de tous les droits assurés par la Constitution', cited in Henri Bangou, *A propos du cent cinquantenaire de l'abolition de l'esclavage* (Kourou, French Guiana: Ibis Rouge, 1998), p. 81. Bonaparte's decision in 1802 to reinstate slavery and renege on the abolition law of 1794 was only rectified, however, on 27 April 1848 under the hastily established Second Republic.

[209] Clément Caraguel, 'Du châtiment à infliger aux cipayes', *Le Charivari*, 21 October 1857, p. 1.

[210] *Ibid.*

[211] The associations drawn here between slavery or enslaving regimes and British colonialism, as well as France's lengthy involvement in the slave trade are explored further in Section 5.3.

initially conveyed a degree of compassion towards their European neighbours (as cited earlier), *Le Constitutionnel* now felt the need to modulate its sympathetic response:

[N]'y a-t-il pas quelque chose d'excessif dans le langage que tiennent les journaux anglais? Ignorent-ils donc qu'en pareil cas le devoir de la presse consiste bien plus à refréner les entraînemens de l'opinion publique qu'à les précipiter dans la voie de l'exagération?[212]

The negative reaction of the French press towards the aggression and irresponsibility of British journalists was such that the habitual antagonisms between opposing newspapers were momentarily put aside to berate the British press. For example, the progressive and republican *Le Siècle* and the unapologetically Catholic *L'Univers* joined forces to lambast the *Standard*'s endorsement of the massacre of eight hundred Indians, who were reported to have been killed in quick succession by hanging, shooting squad or death by cannon:

La presse [française] entière [...] s'accorde à flétrir ces lignes du *Standard*: 'La terrible boucherie de 800 hommes d'un coup par le 10ᵉ d'infanterie de sa Majesté doit produire un grand effet dans les Indes. *C'est clair et net*, et cela n'a pas besoin de commentaires. L'officier qui a ordonné cette exécution *mérite les actions de grâce de toute la nation* [...].' *L'Univers* s'associe à la réprobation unanime: 'Cette tuerie prouve que le gouvernement de l'Inde n'avait pas besoin des conseils furieux de la presse de Londres pour se livrer aux plus atroces exécutions. [...] Dans tous les cas elles ôtent à l'Angleterre le droit d'accuser les indigènes de férocité. — Barrier'.[213]

As this excerpt suggests, the uprisings offered a rare moment in which oppositional newspapers could unite in mutual distaste for the irrationality of the British and their 'conseils furieux', which rendered them no better than the 'uncivilized' enemy against which they fought.

Similarly, the 'Day of Humiliation' that took place in Britain on 7 October 1857 offered another moment of accord for Parisian journals with the Indian uprisings being appropriated across the press as a way of castigating the British. This communal day was summoned by Queen Victoria as a 'Day of Solemn Fast, Humiliation, and Prayer', in the hope that God would 'graciously bless our efforts for the restoration of lawful authority' in

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[212] Henry Cauvain, *Le Constitutionnel*, 31 August 1857, p. 1. For earlier comments on this article, see Section 2.3.1, p. 47.
[213] Emile de la Bédollière, 'Partie politique: Courrier', *Le Siècle*, 17 September 1857, p. 1. Mass executions during the uprisings were not uncommon and were usually celebrated in the British press. *The Times* was happy to endorse the words of a British officer stationed in India, who wrote of 'the deservedness of the punishments we are inflicting and shall inflict. [...N]early 80 men have been hung, and nearly 1,000 killed in the district'; 'The Indian Mutinies', 5 October 1857, *The Times*, p. 9.

India.[214] Many of the speeches initially expressed contrition for the brutality of Britain's military response. For example, Reverend B. M. Cowie, in a sermon delivered at St Paul's Cathedral, warned British soldiers not to 'stain their noble crusade against vice and cruelty' by returning one form atrocity with another.[215] However, the tone of his address soon transmuted from one of penitence into one of bellicosity as his oratory built towards the subject of Cawnpore. At the mention of this emotive site, Reverend Cowie summoned forth the image of 'the heart-torture of a mother who had lost a daughter in that chamber of blood', with Cawnpore serving as the rhetorical justification for his cries for vengeance. 'The voice of the country, of their own blood, the voice of the Sovereign of these realms, the voice of religion, the voice of Christianity, the voice of God' are rallied by the clergyman to call upon the British male 'to rise as one man to the rescue, and to stem the flood of wickedness, cruelty, rebellion, and treason'.[216]

By overlooking the aggressive rhetoric of these speeches and focusing on the initial displays of penitence, the 'Day of Humiliation' offered the French press the opportunity to endorse their arguments against the British to date. Both Emile de la Bédollière of *Le Siècle* and Alloury of *Journal des débats* wrote, with undisguised joy, of Britain's collective 'examen de conscience' through which Britain (or 'les fiers dominateurs de l'Inde'[217]) 'a reconnu que les populations de l'Hindoustan n'avaient pas toujours été gouvernées conformément aux éternelles lois de la justice'.[218] Along with 'L'Europe entière', Martin of *Le Constitutionnel* celebrated 'le spectacle que l'Angleterre offrait [...], lorsque, réunie dans ses temples, humiliée et repentante, elle s'est accusée publiquement d'avoir, par ses propres fautes, attiré sur elle la colère divine'.[219] Whereas *The Times* repeatedly rehearsed the idea that Britain was the 'instrument of vengeance of an insulted Deity', Jourdan of *Le Siècle* wrote instead that '[L'Angleterre] est châtiée, et quelles que soient nos sympathies pour cette grande nation, nous n'hésitons pas à dire qu'elle est châtiée justement'.[220] Thus, the 'Day of Humiliation' was used to upend the Anglo-centric narrative of a God-sanctioned revenge, or what Reverend Cowie called its 'just retribution', and to imply that it was the Indian insurgent who was the divine tool of vengeance against the British.[221] Britain's justification for its retaliation in India was thus undermined in the French press, which, writing from a moral vantage point, focused instead on the 'uncivilized' behaviour of the British colonizer.

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[214] 'Day of Humiliation', *The Times*, 28 September 1857, p. 4.
[215] 'The Day of Humiliation', *The Times*, 8 October 1857, p. 5.
[216] *Ibid.*
[217] L. Alloury, 'France, Paris, 8 octobre', *Journal des débats politiques et littéraires*, 9 October 1857, p. 1.
[218] Emile de la Bédollière, 'Partie politique: Courrier', *Le Siècle*, 10 October 1857, p. 1.
[219] H.-Marie Martin, *Le Constitionnel*, 13 October 1857, p. 1.
[220] 'The Mutinies in India', *The Times*, 17 September 1857, p. 9; Louis Jourdan, 'L'insurrection de l'Inde', *Le Siècle*, 11 September 1857, pp. 1–2 (p. 2).
[221] 'The Day of Humiliation', *The Times*, 8 October 1857, p. 5.

2.3.2 Effeminizing the British: Representations of colonial fear and irrationality in the French-language press of 1857–58

As well as 'decivilizing' the rhetoric of Britain's revenge, French journalism would also debilitate Anglo-centric writing by focusing on its underlying fear, irrationality and hysteria, being the negative typologies usually associated with femaleness, but now applied to the behaviour of the British male. *Le Charivari*, for example, printed a cartoon of a British soldier that ridiculed the extent to which English-language reporting had exaggerated Indian ferocity in order to enhance its own masculinity.[222] The soldier is forced to choose between death by a Bengal tiger or by a *sepoy*. He opts for the tiger and rationalizes his choice by stating that: 'Entre deux maux, mieux vaut choisir le moindre.'[223] This satire operates on the risible concept that British colonizers were living in fear of their own colonial 'subjects' and, hence, on what, to a mid-nineteenth-century French audience, was the unimaginable idea of Indian aggressiveness. That Indians were being depicted across the Channel as a serious threat at all suggested the extent to which the British were in a weakened state.

Similarly, the kilted Highlanders, who acted as the iconic image of British masculinity in contrast with the Indian *sepoy*, were held up for ridicule in the French press.[224] The same uniforms that stood for military masculinity in Britain, despite being an 'inversion of normative British dress codes',[225] were seen as a source of derision in France. For example, J. March, the India-based French correspondent for *La Patrie*, translated a proclamation supposedly issued by Nana Sahib that warned his men 'de ne pas se laisser approcher par "les hommes en jupons" (les highlanders), "car, dit-il, il est facile à voir, d'après leur costume, qu'ils ont été envoyés spécialement pour venger les assassinats des femmes et des enfans à Cawnpore"'.[226] The word 'jupons' associates the Highland kilt with a woman's petticoat and is both a derogatory term for 'femmes' and a satirical norm in French

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[222] Cham., 'Croquis par Cham', *Le Charivari*, 29 November 1857, p. 3.

[223] *Ibid.*

[224] McNeil's article considers the dual function of representations of the Highlanders in British accounts of 1857–58. On the one hand, the Highlanders 'functioned as a metonymic sign of British fighting prowess' in 'opposition to the inhuman values embodied in figures of Indian "mutineers"'; Kenneth McNeil, '"Petticoated Devils": Scottish Highland Soldiers in British Accounts of the Indian Rebellion', *Prose Studies*, 23 (2000), 77–94 (p. 78). On the other hand, because of their 'wild masculinity', they were 'portrayed as avengers not because their character is sharply antithetical to that of the barbaric native, but because it in fact *replicates* native character'; McNeil, p. 86.

[225] McNeil, p. 80.

[226] March, 'Nouvelles des Indes: Correspondance particulière de la *Patrie*', *La Patrie*, 10 December 1857, pp. 1–2 (p. 2).

writing.[227] As such, its use in *La Patrie* has several effects. In the first instance, the *idée reçue* of Indian effeminateness is turned upside down and transferred onto General Havelock's famously ferocious Highlanders, who are now presented as cross-dressing soldiers. In the second instance, the India 'other' remains essentially feminized by Nana Sahib's advice to flee rather than confront this feminized, and hence weakened, band of men. The phrase, 'ne pas se laisser approcher', suggests that the men need to defend their chastity against the rapaciousness of the Highlanders, whose garments denote their intention to act on behalf of, and avenge, the violated and murdered women.[228] Thus, by appropriating Nana Sahib's words and mobilizing the satirical norm of the petticoated Highlanders, this French-language account manages simultaneously to denigrate British heroism and maintain the stereotype of Indian effeteness, while speaking from a rational and detached vantage point.

Other French-language newspapers devoted their attention to the irrational excessiveness of the British military response. *Le Consitutionnel*'s Cauvain, for example, wrote:

> des massacres en masse, qui métamorphoseraient de vaillans soldats en bourreaux, ne sont pas dignes d'un peuple civilisé. Un grand pays, quand il a l'épée à la main, doit ressembler à un brave qui affronte le péril et qui le surmonte à force d'énergie, et non à un poltron qui est cruel parce qu'il déraisonne.[229]

The verb 'déraisonner' implies a loss of control, which, along with 'poltron', employs the kind of vocabulary typically used to describe the figure of the effeminate Indian despot.[230] *La Presse* explicitly paired British atrocities with those of the *sepoys*. As Bonneau wrote, 'Des actes d'atroce vengeance ont été commis par les insurgés; les Anglais ont usé de représailles; ils n'écorchent pas leurs prisonniers, comme font les cipayes, mais ils les

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[227] For example, in Eugène Jouve's *Guerre d'Orient* (1855), the kilt is described as an object that 'frise souvent le ridicule', leading Jouve to conclude that, 'Jamais je n'ai mieux compris la profonde sagesse masculine du pantalon, qu'en voyant tant de genoux cagneux, poilus, et circonflexes'; Eugène Jouve, *Guerre d'Orient: Voyage à la suite des armées alliées en Turquie, en Valachie et en Crimée* (Paris: Delhomme, 1855), p. 10.

[228] Trevelyan also recalled the mistake made by Nana Sahib and his troops with regards to the Highlanders' gender: 'When the mutineers first caught sight of the Highland costume, they cried with joy that the men of England had been exhausted, and that the Company had been reduced to call out the women'; Trevelyan, p. 14. This idea appeared in several other accounts, such as the *Narrative of the Indian Revolt from its Outbreak to the Capture of Lucknow by Sir Colin Campbell* (1858) and James Cromb's *The Highland Brigade* (1896); McNeil, p. 82. However, the potentially damaging association with femininity was immediately adjusted by reasserting the masculinity of the soldiers — the mutineers, wrote Trevelyan, 'soon had reason to repent their mistake, and thenceforward adopted a theory more consistent with the fact, for they held that the petticoats were designed to remind their wearers that they had been sent to India to exact vengeance for the murder of the English ladies'; Trevelyan, p. 14.

[229] Henry Cauvain, 'Paris, 24 octobre', *Le Constitutionnel*, 25 October 1857, p. 1.

[230] For more on oriental despotism, see Ronald Inden, *Imagining India* (London: Hurst, 2000; first publ. Oxford: Blackwell, 1990), pp. 51–54.

entassent devant la gueule des canons et tirent sur eux à mitraille.'[231] In drawing equations between the behaviour of British and Indian soldiers, this article collapses the traditional binaries between the rational British colonizer and the irrational Indian colonized 'other'. Instead, both are defined as excessive through a counterbalancing French perspective that posits itself as the voice of morality and reason. As these different examples suggest, the context of British colonial crisis enabled a rationalized and masculinized French identity to be constructed in contrast with the emasculated image of British colonialism. This served to undermine Britain's dominant status in India and Europe, while also maintaining the denigrating stereotypes of Indianness.

2.3.3 British anxiety and irrationality in French-language fiction: Jules Verne's *La Maison à vapeur* (1880)

The practice of highlighting the irrational and excessive nature of British vengeance, often by drawing what to a nineteenth-century audience would have been considered pejorative parallels between British and Indian behaviour, was not just a feature of French journalism during the uprisings, but can also be found in other genres and later narratives, such as Jules Verne's adventure novel, *La Maison à vapeur* (1880).[232] Verne's fiction is set ten years after the commencement of the uprisings, in 1867. Over the course of this decade, the post-traumatic fear of the British colonizers that further uprisings should arise (and, hence, their fear of the Indian 'other') is shown to have become deep-rooted, as has a reciprocal hatred between the colonizers and colonized peoples. The antithetical characters of Colonel Edward Munro and Nana Sahib personify this state of mutual loathing and suspicion, with each character despising the other for personal reasons that stand for the anathemas of their respective nations — whereas Munro holds Nana Sahib responsible for the death of his wife as one of the victims of the *bibighar* massacre, Nana Sahib blames Munro for the death of his good friend and insurgent leader, the Rani of Jhansi, and despises Munro as a representative of the colonizing race:

Nana Sahib sur le cadavre de lady Munro, à Cawnpore, le colonel sur le cadavre de la Rani, à Gwalior, c'étaient là deux hommes en qui se résumaient la révolte et la répression, deux ennemis dont la haine aurait des effets terribles, s'ils se retrouvaient jamais face à face![233]

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[231] Alexandre Bonneau, 'La Révolution dans l'Inde', *La Presse*, 31 August 1857, p. 1.
[232] See also Section 2.3.4 for an analysis of Marenis's *La Révolte sans âme* and Gaultier de Saint-Amand's *Nana-Sahib: Épisodes sanglants de l'insurrection des cipayes en 1857*.
[233] Verne, *La Maison*, p. 46.

As opposed to British narratives, which tended to privilege the Briton over the Indian, *La Maison* places Munro and Nana Sahib on an equal footing by legitimizing their mutual hatred. This equivalence is evident in their comparably gruesome back histories, with Munro's ancestral past being almost as unsavoury as that of Nana Sahib's. The Colonel is said to be the grandson of Hector Munro, a historical character who is accredited in *La Maison* with having invented the practice of executing *sepoys* by tying them to the end of cannons.[234] This same form of execution was widely practised on insurgents during the uprisings and was intended to act as a memorable exhibition of colonial power.[235] In *La Maison*, however, this power binary is reversed by having Nana Sahib tie Munro to the end of the 'célèbre canon de bronze de Bhilsa' as a way of reminding the Colonel of his cruel colonial heritage.[236] With Munro tethered, Nana Sahib provides the following lecture:

> 'c'est un de tes ancêtres, c'est Hector Munro, qui a osé appliquer pour la première fois cet épouvantable supplice, dont les tiens ont fait un si terrible usage pendant la guerre de 1857! C'est lui qui a donné l'ordre d'attacher vivants, à la bouche de ses canons, des Indous, nos parents, nos frères...' [...].
>
> 'Représailles pour représailles! [...] Munro, tu périras comme tant des nôtres ont péri!'[237]

This scene has important implications at both a symbolic and a historical level. Symbolically, it inverts the Anglo-centric discourse of a justified revenge by establishing an equivocal relationship between the Indian and the Englishman — just as Nana Sahib is the epitome of evil for the British, so Munro represents the cruelty of the British colonizers for the Indians. Historically, the references to Major Hector Munro bring to mind a period of prolonged warfare in India between the French, the British and the Mysore kingdom under the rulers of Haider Ali and his son, Tipu Sultan. Hector took part in both the first (1767–69) and the second (1780–84) of the Mysore Wars, and is famous for having defeated Shuja-ud-Daula of Oudh in 1763 and the French at Pondichéry in 1778. The Second Mysore War,

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[234] Although the real Hector Munro did not invent this method of execution, he was famous for having utilized it to kill twenty-four *sepoys* who had mutinied under his command; Hermione de Almeida and George H. Gilpin, *Indian Renaissance: British Romantic Art and the Prospect of India* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2005), p. 36. This event is recalled in Verne's fiction: 'Le major Munro réprima la révolte avec une impitoyable énergie, — et n'hésita pas à faire attacher, le même jour, vingt-huit rebelles à la bouche des canons, — supplice épouvantable, souvent renouvelé pendant l'insurrection de 1857, et dont l'aïeul du colonel fut peut-être le terrible inventeur'; Verne, *La Maison*, p. 21.

[235] For example, Dickens's weekly journal, *Household Words*, printed an eyewitness account that defended the practice of these executions as a suitably horrifying punishment for those men who 'had planned the destruction of every European — man, woman, and child'; 'Blown Away!', *Household Words*, 17 (27 March 1858), 348–50 (p. 350). *La Maison* also mentions these executions, but notably the entire chapter detailing these and other acts of British-led revenge has been removed from the English-language translation by Arco Publications (1959); Verne, *La Maison*, p. 39.

[236] Verne, *La Maison*, p. 403.

[237] Verne, *La Maison*, p. 410.

however, saw an alliance being formed between the French and the leaders of Mysore. This resulted in Tipu Sultan defeating Hector Munro after the British had attempted to dismantle Haider Ali's kingdom and had murdered four hundred Indian women in the process.[238] Thus, lying beneath the surface of *La Maison*'s narrative are connections that recall the viciousness of the British retaliations to the uprisings in 1857–58, as well as a catalogue of other atrocities committed against the Indian populace throughout their colonial reign. Moreover, the association made between the fictional protagonist, Colonel Munro, and his historical ancestor bring to mind, albeit indirectly, Tipu Sultan's French-assisted victory over the British. As such, it plays subtly on the fear of the colonizers towards a repeated Indian military victory aided by an external and rival colonial power.[239]

Such allusions to the anxiety of the British run throughout Verne's fiction. This anxiety is depicted allegorically by the mode of transportation used by the colonizers, or *le géant d'acier*: a mechanized steam elephant, designed by the engineer, Banks, to tow exact replicas their British-built Calcutta bungalows.[240] Although this vehicle can be seen as another example of what Roland Barthes posited as Verne's predilection for enclosure, *le géant* also emphasizes the desire of the British for protection and separation from an India that, post-1858, threatens their security and stability.[241] Moreover, its opulence highlights the wish to project a certain image of the British 'master', while simultaneously revealing the inescapable fact that the British were a minority in India.[242] For example, when *le géant* is surrounded by a throng of Indian pilgrims (who, in a familiar depiction of Indian fanaticism

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[238] An eyewitness account by John Charles Sheen described 'the slaughter' of the Indian populace as '"indiscriminate and wanton... all the inhabitants were put to death and their bodies thrown into tanks in the fort. Even the women were not spared... Four hundred beautiful women, all bleeding with wounds, from the bayonet, and either dead or expiring in each other's arms, while the common soldiers, casting off all obedience to their officers, were stripping them of their jewels and committing every outrage on their bodies"'; Sheen's letter is cited in de Almeida and Gilpin, pp. 36–37.

[239] British fears of a French invasion into India via the gateway of Afghanistan can be dated from the Napoleonic Wars; Linda Colley, *Captives: Britain, Empire and the World, 1600–1850* (London: Pimlico, 2003; first publ. London: Cape, 2002), p. 348. As well as the French, the British were also concerned about Russian invaders using Afghanistan as a staging post to enter India. Subsequent attempts to protect this region between 1828 and 1907 became known as the 'Great Game'; Edward Ingram, *The Beginning of the Great Game in Asia, 1828–1834* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1979), p. 13. During the uprisings, both the French and the Russians were suspected of intrigue, and particularly the Russians following Azimullah's trip to Russia during the Crimean War in 1855; Ward, pp. 48–49; Sen, p. 123.

[240] As Tadié points out, 'Au cœur de ses romans, Verne [...] place un grand objet fantasme [...]; souvent, cet objet est habitable, et c'est le vieux rêve d'emporter avec soi sa maison'; Tadié, p. 94.

[241] 'Verne ne cherchait nullement à élargir le monde selon des voies romantiques d'évasion ou des plans mystiques d'infini: il cherchait sans cesse à le rétracter, à le peuple, à le réduire à un espace connu et clos'; Roland Barthes, *Mythologies* (Paris: Éditions de Seuil, 1957), pp. 80–81.

[242] Colley provides a useful investigation into Britain's self-conscious smallness and its resultant desire to project and maintain the illusion of greatness; Colley, *Captives*, pp. 4–12 and pp. 367–79.

and gullibility, have mistaken the vehicle for a god), Banks, the engineer, and Colonel Munro — those otherwise highly masculine typologies[243] — respond with distinct caution:

'notre Géant d'Acier a produit son effet habituel! s'écria le capitaine Hod. [... Ils] sont venus l'admirer!

Pourvu qu'ils s'en tiennent à l'admiration! répondit l'ingénieur, en secouant la tête.

Que crains-tu donc, Banks? demanda le colonel Munro.

Eh! je crains... que ces fanatiques ne barrent le passage et ne gênent notre marche!

En tout cas, sois prudent! Avec de tels dévots, on ne saurait trop prendre de précautions.

En effet', répondit Banks.[244]

Beneath the elliptical pause after 'je crains...' and Banks's unconvincing self-correction, which is then reciprocated by Munro's words of warning ('sois prudent!'), lies a tacit fear of being embroiled in the same kind of Indian-led attacks on Europeans that had occurred in 1857–58. Even though Munro's team manage to avert physical contact with the 'fanatiques' on this occasion (by scalding the Indians with steam jets[245]), the protection offered by *le géant*, like the image of British power, is revealed as nothing more than superficial. As the narrative progresses towards the inexorable meeting between Munro and Nana Sahib, so *le géant*'s defensive outer layers are gradually broken down until, finally, its human passengers are moving unprotected and on foot towards their enemy.

While the inevitability of this meeting drives the plot, which is itself propelled by Munro's and Nana Sahib's mutual avenging missions, it is clear that, in the case of Munro, the desire for revenge has become pathological. From the outset, Munro is presented as neurotic and agoraphobic: 'Munro, désespéré, n'eut alors qu'une pensée, une seule, retrouver Nana Sahib [...] et assouvir, avec sa vengeance, une sorte de soif de justicier qui le dévorait.'[246] Unable to find Nana Sahib following the massacre in 1857, Munro is depicted as having retreated into his isolated Calcutta bungalow for ten years: 'Là, ne lisant ni livres ni journaux, qui auraient pu lui rappeler la sanglante époque de l'insurrection, ne quittant jamais sa demeure, le colonel vécut en homme dont la vie est sans but. Cependant, la pensée de sa femme ne le quittait pas.'[247] The memory that he retains of the kind of death his wife must have suffered is constructed from the eye-witness accounts of the British officers who

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[243] Sarah Capitanio, '"L'Ici-bas" and "l'Au-delà"... but Not as they Knew it. Realism, Utopianism and Science Fiction in the Novels of Jules Verne', in *Jules Verne: Narratives of Modernity*, ed. by Edmund J. Smyth (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2000), pp. 60–77 (p. 64).

[244] Verne, *La Maison*, p. 99.

[245] 'Il ouvrit aussitôt le robinet des purgeurs des cylindres, et d'intenses jets de vapeur fusèrent au ras du sol [...]. "Hurrah! hurrah! hurrah! s'écria le capitaine Hod! Cinglez-les, ami Banks, cinglez-les!"'; Verne, *La Maison*, p. 102.

[246] Verne, *La Maison*, p. 22.

[247] Verne, *La Maison*, pp. 22–24.

first entered the *bibighar* after the killings had taken place.[248] These visions sustain the purpose of his life, which manifests itself in an obsessive reclusiveness and an unrelenting desire for revenge. It is only because *le géant* provides an exact replica of his bungalow, enabling him to take ('emporter') 'son chez-soi et tous les souvenirs qui le composent', and because the voyage around the Northern Provinces of India offers him the chance to find and kill Nana Sahib that Munro agrees to accompany the others.[249]

Ironically, Munro's wife is not dead, but continues to exist physically, metaphysically and metaphorically. Physically and metaphysically, she has become known as 'la flamme errante' who wanders through the mountains, fed, respected and worshipped by the same 'savages' or 'Gounds' who are once again conspiring, along with Nana Sahib, to overthrow British rule.[250] She is considered to be suffering from amnesia, as one of the 'Gounds' explains to Balao Rao, Nana Sahib's brother:

> 'Cette femme n'a pas sa raison. Sa tête ne lui appartient plus; ses yeux ne regardent pas ce qu'ils voient; ses oreilles n'écoutent pas ce qu'elles entendent; sa langue ne sait plus prononcer une parole! Elle est ce que serait une aveugle, une sourde, une muette, pour toutes les choses du dehors. C'est une folle, et, une folle, c'est une morte qui continue à vivre! [...] Ce n'est qu'une statue vivante.'[251]

As well as the typical utilization of a female figure as a repository for madness is the point that she serves figuratively as a monument to Munro's obsession with revenge.[252] Although, as an individual character, there is nothing unusual in the Colonel's desire to avenge his wife's death, arguably he must also be viewed as representative of a broader British obsession with revenge. This is suggested in the parallels between his wife ('une statue vivante') and that other statue, the incongruously named 'l'Ange de la Pitié' (referring to Carlo Marochetti's 'Angel of the Resurrection').[253] Just like the silent statue that presides over the Cawnpore well, 'la flamme errante' is not a symbol of grief or pity, but has become unwittingly a fetishistic and destructive emblem that symbolizes a relentless desire for retribution. Thus, while Munro's wife is 'une morte', she nonetheless 'continue à vivre'

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[248] Verne, *La Maison*, pp. 136–38.
[249] Verne, *La Maison*, p. 27.
[250] Verne, *La Maison*, p. 209. It is these same cultural groups that support Nana Sahib in his plans for a new uprising: 'Ces Bhîls barbares, ces Kounds nomades, ces Gounds, aussi peu civilisés que les naturels des îles du Pacifique, le Nana les trouva prêts à se lever, prêts à le suivre'; Verne, *La Maison*, p. 212.
[251] Verne, *La Maison*, pp. 209–10.
[252] For more information on the feminization of hysteria, see Vrettos, p. 92; Spivak, p. 92.
[253] Verne, *La Maison*, p. 136.

through the ongoing racial hatred that men, such as the colonel, have for the Indian populace.[254]

The synonymy between 'la flamme errante' and 'l'Ange de la Pitié' is made explicit during a detour to Cawnpore, where Munro is seen to prostrate himself before the Angel.[255] It is not compassion, consolation or catharsis that he feels, but rather a feeling of hatred, which demonstrates that, as signifiers, 'la flamme errante' and 'l'Ange de la Pitié' are at odds with what they have come to signify. This scene does not celebrate the memory of his love for his wife, but rather his desire for revenge. There is a deliberate echo between the Gounds' worship of 'la flamme errante' as a site of insanity — 'Les fous, pour ces Gounds, comme pour toutes les populations sauvages, sont des êtres sacrés que protège un superstitieux respect'[256] — and the insanity of Munro's (and hence the Britons') worship of this 'lieu de mémoire'.[257]

Yet despite being presented as an amnesiac or blank page on which a narrative of revenge is written, her silent actions are capable of suggesting disapproval for a life spent in pursuit of vengeance. As she looks over the dead body of Nana Sahib's brother and co-conspirator, Balao Rao, the narrative reads:

> On eût dit qu'après n'avoir vécu que pour la vengeance, la haine survivait en lui.
> La folle s'agenouilla, posa ses deux mains sur ce corps [...] Elle le regarda longuement, puis,
> se relevant et secouant la tête, elle descendit lentement le lit du Nazzur.[258]

The caring touch, the prolonged look, followed by the negative movement of her head all suggest her despair at a life wasted on vengeance. A similar judgement of Munro can be read in one of the final scenes of the novel when 'la Flamme Errante' appears before her husband as he awaits his death at the hands of Nana Sahib. Tied to the end of a cannon, he calls out to her, but she does not recognize him: 'Il se crut fou à son tour! [...] Lady Munro ne répondit rien. Elle ne le reconnaissait pas. Elle ne semblait même pas l'entendre', and instead 'elle recula d'un pas'.[259] Although Lady Munro's mental state clearly indicates the trauma she has undergone at the hands of Nana Sahib, significantly Munro is incapable of reviving his wife from her amnesia. Rather than being instinctively drawn towards him, she recoils ('recula') and tries to flee, before nearly killing him by lighting the cannon with her flame. Combined, these two scenes suggest an implicit disapproval of hatred and revenge.

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[254] Verne, *La Maison*, p. 209.
[255] Verne, *La Maison*, pp. 136–38.
[256] Verne, *La Maison*, p. 209.
[257] For more on Nora and 'lieux de mémoire', see Section 2.2.4, pp. 42–43.
[258] Verne, *La Maison*, p. 222.
[259] Verne, *La Maison*, p. 420 and p. 422.

Her gradual reversion to sanity and her reunification with Munro provide the British with a 'happy ending'. Despite this conclusion, however, *La Maison* can be interpreted additionally as a fiction that subverts and inverts the 'heroism' of British narratives.[260] Reading between the lines, it recalls that the Indian uprisings in 1857–58, as well as future insurrections, are a response to the existence of British colonialism, whose rapaciousness is epitomized by the acts of vengeance that were carried out in the name of Cawnpore. It offers a subtle, but nonetheless unmistakable, criticism of the denaturing effects of hatred and revenge, written as a form of neurosis afflicting the British colonizer.

2.3.4 Demythologization and disfigurement: Representations of the *bibighar* victim in French-language fictions

To conclude this chapter on colonial violence and mythological narratives of revenge, two further French-language fictions will be analysed: Jacqueline Marenis's *La Révolte sans âme* (1946) and Gaultier de Saint-Amand's *Nana-Sahib: Épisodes sanglants de l'insurrection des cipayes en 1857* (1909). Both texts engage critically with Anglo-centric accounts of 1857–59 by presenting subversive counter-narratives of the female Cawnpore victim.

In the first case, Marenis's *La Révolte*, like Verne's *La Maison*, reflects upon the effect that the 'myth' of the Cawnpore victim had on the British military and public. It foregrounds the processes by which the idea of the female victim achieves this mythological status, before undermining its omnipotence by presenting it as a case of mistaken identity. The woman who comes to symbolize the Cawnpore victim is a provocative character named Inès. Aside from her gender and physical appeal, Inès is the antithesis of British images of the female martyr. She is an Indian-born Portuguese-Welsh woman, who is described as being 'férocement égoïste', and is neither killed nor discarded into the Cawnpore well following the *bibighar* massacre, but remains as the only surviving witness.[261] The sacred myth that she herself creates following this massacre is the opposite of her true diabolic nature. She betrays both her husband, the hero of the story, Michael Fabert O'Linden, by having an affair with one of Nana Sahib's men ('un trafiquant qui fait le commerce clandestin de l'opium'[262]) and the European community by deciding to defect to Nana

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[260] This victory is delayed, rather than immediate — it takes a month for Lady Munro to recover: 'Peu à peu lady Munro revint à la raison. Ce charmant esprit se reprit à penser. De ce qu'avait été la Flamme Errante, il ne resta plus rien, pas même le souvenir'; Verne, *La Maison*, p. 438. For a further discussion on the ambivalent ending of *La Maison*, refer to Section 4.5, pp. 131–32.
[261] Marenis, p. 108.
[262] Marenis, p. 124.

Sahib's camp at the onset of the uprisings. Despite these unattractive characteristics, it is Inès's narrative that the British troops mistakenly adopt as their motive for revenge.

Echoing the Highlanders' accounts published in the English-language press, the killings in the *bibighar* are recounted indirectly through a fragmented aftermath: 'des débris de robe, une longue tresse, un soulier, une poupée décapitée, une montre cassée, pêle-mêle sur le plancher où les pieds des hommes s'engluaient dans une vase rougeâtre'.[263] It is these objects that are transformed into 'étranges reliques' that adorn the avenging British troops.[264] Yet in opposition to the celebrations of the British military in Anglo-centric accounts, *La Révolte sans âme* offers a damning criticism of their retaliatory actions:

> Ces hommes ne discutaient pas, ne pardonnaient pas; tous, avant d'être juges, se faisaient exécuteurs. Depuis que, dans la "Slaughter House", ils avaient recueilli les souvenirs des victimes, ces débris, ces lambeaux, ils s'étaient chargés d'une dette; ils avaient, sans rien savoir d'elle [Inès], sans l'avoir jamais connue, une femme à venger.[265]

It is the image of the innocent and victimized Inès that each soldier envisages through his sanctified and portable 'relique'. The rationale for this revenge is constantly negated by the fact that Inès has consciously created this fictitious alter ego by proclaiming falsely that her husband (Michael) abandoned her to Nana Sahib:

> Elle se proclamait victime de Michael Fabert tout autant que de Nana-Sahib, et elle avait dû le laisser entendre à ceux qui, en arrivant au Bibi Garh [*sic*], l'avaient recueillie. Comme l'avait dit Michael, en pareille circonstance le mensonge devenait nocif, destructeur. Et Inès, en mentant, se cantonnait toujours dans sa "vérité" à elle, vérité travestie, faussée, déformée.[266]

Thus, rather than endorsing the myth, Marenis's fiction foregrounds its apocryphal and compelling nature, along with the violence that it inspires: 'Les hommes, fascinés, y retournaient [to the "Slaughter House"] sans cesse et en revenaient, écumants, criant vengeance, demandant la mort des cipayes prisonniers.'[267] Like the French press in 1857–58 and Verne's *La Maison à vapeur*, it is the excessive response to the massacre that is highlighted through adjectives such as 'écumants' and adverbs such as 'sans cesse', with Cawnpore being fetishized as 'un lieu de pèlerinage, une sorte de chapelle expiatoire'.[268]

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[263] Marenis, p. 252. For more information on the imagery in this scene, see 2.2.1, pp. 35–36.
[264] Marenis, p. 275.
[265] *Ibid.*
[266] Marenis, p. 257.
[267] Marenis, p. 265.
[268] *Ibid.*

It is the new recruit, Selden, who represents the archetypal agent of revenge, a young and gullible soldier who operates under the influence of men such as Havelock ('l'ange exterminateur') and the sadistically methodical Neill.[269] Holding his 'sinistre talisman' or 'cette natte couleur de chanvre poussiéreux' that represents 'Inès défigurée', Selden is primed to kill:[270] "'J'ai eu mon cipaye: un officier!'", he cries, 'Pour lui, la vie d'un cipaye payait, en partie, celle d'Inès.'[271] The gratuitousness of Selden's retaliation is conveyed through Michael's disapproving and moralizing gaze: 'Michael regarda la longue tresse décolorée, pendant à la selle comme un serpent mort.'[272] Seen through Michael's eyes, Selden's relic becomes directly associated with the quintessential Judeo-Christian symbol of diabolism, the snake, and is rendered synonymous with the acts of revenge that it has inspired. Thus, by criticizing the fetishism that surrounds the Cawnpore victim, Marenis's *La Révolte* is able to subvert the Anglo-centric image of Cawnpore — 'le Cawnpore anglais', as the narrator terms it[273] — and instead to accentuate the inescapable violence of this colonial war.

In the second case, Gaultier de Saint-Amand's erotic fiction, *Nana-Sahib*, can also be interpreted as a counter-narrative to 'le Cawnpore anglais', which, like Marenis's *La Révolte*, demythologizes the trope of the female *bibighar* victim. On the surface, this text, like Verne's *La Maison*, functions within the confines of an East–West binarism. In his preface, the author claims to be producing 'une étude de haute portée philosophique et morale, montrant toute la différence de la mentalité asiatique avec celle des peuples de l'Europe'.[274] This Asiatic mentality is depicted reductively through the figure of Nana Sahib, who, in contrast with his white female victims, is typecast as a depraved and lascivious 'oriental' — he is 'sensuel et voluptueux au suprême degré [...s'adonnant] à tous les raffinements de la débauche orientale et de la luxure hindoue', such as the 'danses des bayadères qui servaient de prétexte à des orgies sans nom'.[275]

Set in 1857, the plot pivots around Nana Sahib's dual plan to reclaim the *Peshwa* throne and exact a fitting revenge against his British oppressors. Rather than directly

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[269] Marenis, p. 251. Neill 'était méthodique dans la répression; rien ne lui échappait: son intérêt allait aux coupables comme aux simples suspects'; Marenis, p. 266.

[270] Marenis, p. 276.

[271] Marenis, pp. 278–79.

[272] Marenis, p. 279.

[273] Marenis, p. 271.

[274] Gaultier de Saint-Amand, p. vi. Gaultier de Saint-Amand's motives for writing this fictional exploration into the 'oriental' character were driven by contemporary concerns with French Indochina, namely the growth of anti-French nationalism in Vietnam and the inspirational role played by Japan's defeat of Russia in 1905. For more information on the rise of Vietnamese nationalism under French colonial rule, see J. Chesneaux, 'Stages in the Development of the Vietnam National Movement 1862-1940', *Past and Present*, 7 (1955), 63–75; J. Kim Munholland, 'The French Response to the Vietnamese Nationalist Movement, 1905-14', *The Journal of Modern History*, 47 (1975), 655–75.

[275] Gaultier de Saint-Amand, p. 45.

attacking the male colonizer, Nana Sahib enacts his vengeance indirectly through a group of British female captives:

> Combinant ses passions sensuelles avec sa haine de l'Angleterre, Nana-Sahib en était arrivé à formuler un double souhait que le soulèvement des cipayes allait lui permettre d'espérer réaliser: d'une part, la restauration à son profit du trône des Peschwar; de l'autre, et surtout, un sérail peuplé de belles Anglaises, réduites en l'esclavage le plus humiliant.
> [...] Il méditait [...] de les posséder de force dans l'abjection et les larmes, de jouir de leurs prières et de leurs supplications pour leur imposer ensuite les hontes les plus grandes qu'il pourrait trouver.[276]

As such, this novel represents a controversial departure from the legendary tale of the Cawnpore massacre. It is inscribed within a tradition of, to borrow Ravi's phrase, 'exotic consumer erotica' that utilizes an Oriental backdrop — the *harem* — as its stage setting.[277] However, the female 'other' is not, in this case, the exoticized Indian *bayadère* or concubine, but rather a group of 'chaste' British women. Although the idea of creating an erotic fiction, featuring British females from the *bibighar* massacre, must have been considered somewhat distasteful, this text is not simply about titillation. As the above quotation demonstrates, Nana Sahib plans to repay the rapaciousness of the British empire by raping its female 'subjects' who stands in lieu of that oppressive force. Thus, this narrative reconnects the figure of the raped woman, represented most memorably by the *bibighar* victim, to British atrocity. In other words, it cuts through the rhetorical layering and processes of displacement found within those British narratives that prefer to represent the uprisings 'as a barbaric attack on innocent white women'.[278]

So graphic are these fictional scenes of violence that they border on being a burlesque of the sensationalist English-language narratives to which they refer. In one of the opening scenes, for example, a British woman is not only dragged into a mosque and burnt alive, but her Indian torturers 'arrachaient la peau du visage, en formaient une sorte de masque hideux et l'un d'eux avait l'effroyable courage de s'affubler de la dépouille sanglante'.[279] Apart from upholding traditional concepts of female weakness, the abundance of such grotesque depictions of physical and sexual violence work to demythologize and (literally) disfigure the saintly image of the female victim that formed the staple of British 'mutiny' texts.

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[276] Gaultier de Saint-Amand, p. 46.
[277] Ravi, 'Marketing Devi', p. 140.
[278] Sharpe, p. 2.
[279] Gaultier de Saint-Amand, p. 30.

As suggested throughout this chapter, this 'myth' depends on certain prerequisites, such as femaleness, whiteness, purity, physical attractiveness and passivity, as well as rape and the ultimate demise of the victim, which served collectively to justify retaliatory violence. As the following analysis shows, it is by methodically counteracting the various ingredients that construct this unassailable image of the female victim that Nana Sahib's revenge functions in Gaultier de Saint-Amand's fiction.

From the outset, Nana Sahib warns against the dangers of making martyrs out of British women. He objects, for example, to a decision made by a group of *sepoys* to burn their captives alive on the grounds that the women would be perceived to have died honourably, like Hindu '*suttys*'.[280] His warnings are ignored and the women die with dignity: 'La mère eut une malédiction tragique, les bras levés comme pour appeler sur ces tourmenteurs la colère divine, puis son visage redevint impassible et [...] les lèvres murmurant une dernière prière, elle regarda fixement les insurgés.'[281] The stoic and defiant posture assumed by the British *sati* 'exaspéra la foule', instead of quenching its thirst for revenge.[282]

Alternatively, in his own acts of punishment, performed upon a group of handpicked female captives, Nana Sahib is careful to ensure that his victims are thoroughly humiliated and dehumanized, and, most importantly, that they remain alive to tell the tale. This result is achieved through the technique of flagellation depicted in a series of graphic sadomasochistic scenes involving partial or full nudity, provocative posturing, whips and restraints, each of which culminates in the selected virgin being raped by either Nana Sahib or one of his friends. The aim of this repetitive ritual is summarized by Nana Sahib as follows: "'Les fouets [...] laisseront aux femmes la marque ineffaçable de la domination hindoue, et, lorsqu'elles seront revenues dans leurs îles brumeuses, les étrangères resteront un témoignage vivant de la victoire de l'Inde opprimée".'[283] Thus, unlike the *sepoys* in the episode mentioned above, Nana Sahib pre-empts the creation of the mythological female victim by using the female captive as the literal whipping boy for colonial oppression. The result, as will be shown, is the deformation of the sacrosanct *bibighar* victim, which is now inscribed with the memory of British weakness and the marks of its own atrocities.

The processes of disfigurement and demythologization occur in several interconnected ways. First, the graphic scenes of sexual violence voice that which was 'unspeakable' in British narratives of Cawnpore. As argued earlier, the fragments, such as the tresses of hair carried about by soldiers as talismans, were meant to symbolize synecdochically a (beautiful) female worth avenging and sacrificing one's life for, and were

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[280] Gaultier de Saint-Amand, p. 55.
[281] Gaultier de Saint-Amand, pp. 55–56.
[282] Gaultier de Saint-Amand, p. 56.
[283] Gaultier de Saint-Amand, p. 242.

fetishistic precisely because their incompleteness and suggestiveness allowed the beholder to indulge in fantasy. Gaultier de Saint-Amand's *Nana-Sahib*, in a departure from the dictates of Victorian propriety, uses explicit sexual descriptions and, in doing so, removes the mythical qualities of the Cawnpore figure in order to arrive at a new meaning — British colonial atrocity.

Secondly, in contrast to the myth of innocence and chastity, Nana Sahib equates the British female victim with prostitution since it is her image that is used to solicit revenge. He warns his men that 'au jour où les colonnes de secours apparaîtront, les perfides Anglaises exciteront de leurs charmes leurs compatriotes à vous massacrer jusqu'au dernier. Il faut, au contraire, écraser l'orgueil de l'étranger.'[284] Notably, the Indian leader is ventriloquized to voice a specifically French sounding stereotype for the British, 'les perfides Anglaises', immediately reminding the reader that this is a text written by a French author.[285] Nana Sahib's predications later come to fruition as the British soldiers who arrive in Cawnpore on an avenging mission are said to be driven by a desire to rescue three sisters, Florence, May and Irène, who have, unknowingly, become part of their military fantasy of revenge. As Nana Sahib states, '"Il paraît que leurs charmes [the sisters] avaient enflammé d'amour nombre de jeunes officiers, et depuis que l'on sait que je les tiens en mon pouvoir, chaque Anglais brûle de venir à leur secours".'[286] These 'charmes', he suggests, only exist as figments of the imagination for the British avengers, just as the Cawnpore victim existed as a fantastical trope within British narratives of revenge.

Thirdly, it is Nana Sahib's task to accentuate the disparity between this fantastical image and its disfigured reality. Hence, each of his female captives undergoes a systematic process of violation in which her position shifts from one of defending her chastity (her 'pudeur') to total compliance. The character of Ellen, for example, initially attempts to protect herself from being raped: 'Tout son être se révoltait dans une suprême défense contre l'ignominie dont on la menaçait.'[287] As time progresses, however, she becomes so submissive that she '"a livré son corps à trois amants à la fois"' rather than suffering the pain of being whipped.[288]

Such a systematic denaturing of the female body through corporal punishment is a way of castigating the British for their own rapaciousness. What makes this meaning incontrovertibly clear is that Nana Sahib first learned the art of flagellation from a British officer:

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[284] Gaultier de Saint-Amand, p. 87.
[285] Cornick writes that 'the myth of "Perfidious Albion" accumulated a large corpus of stock phrases and historical parallels, including that of likening republican France to early Rome in its struggle with treacherous Carthage'; Cornick, p. 127.
[286] Gaultier de Saint-Amand, pp. 276–77.
[287] Gaultier de Saint-Amand, p. 97.
[288] Gaultier de Saint-Amand, p. 236.

Un soir donc, un jeune officier [...] raconta à ses camarades amusés qu'il fréquentait à Londres une maison suspecte où il s'adonnait à la flagellation. Il raconta, avec force détails, les scènes dont il avait été témoin ou acteur, et souleva un tonnerre d'applaudissements en narrant comment il avait, à l'aide d'une cravache, littéralement mis en sang une malheureuse négresse.[289]

It is the power relation within this sadomasochistic master–slave scene that Nana Sahib wishes to reverse. He disingenuously befriends the officer who informs him of all the secrets of 'la flagellation féminine', while Nana Sahib 'suivait ses leçons avec des frémissements de colère sourde'.[290] His internalized anger against this brutality is later assuaged by performing this same scene in his own *harem*, but this time with white women (rather than 'une malheureuse négresse'). Having reduced the captives to the status of prostitutes, Nana Sahib thanks the British officer for his insight: "'Il me faut rendre justice à l'officier anglais qui m'a enseigné les mystères de la flagellation [...]. Sans ses conseils précieux, je n'aurais jamais songé à obtenir pareille obéissance de mes fières captives.'"[291] Moreover, Nana Sahib's decision to employ the same weapons of torture used by the British against disobedient *sepoys* further turns British atrocity against itself: 'les Anglaises seront flagellées avec l'instrument terrible dont leurs compatriotes se servent pour punir les désertions', being the 'chat à neuf queues'.[292] In his adoption of British methods and weapons, Nana Sahib quite literally inscribes colonial atrocity into the flesh of the female captives.[293]

Finally, having vividly described the sexual degradation of the captives and their enforced but ultimate compliance, the last process of deformation begins with the destruction of aesthetic appeal. In contrast to British narratives, the end result of this punitive ritual is not to produce a female martyr, but rather a living reminder of British wrongs, one that has been so humiliated that it can no longer function as a mythical figure to justify revenge. The disfigurement of the women once Nana Sahib's sadistic ritual is complete removes all their feminine allure, their ugliness, in turn, mirroring that of British colonialism. Before returning the women to their countrymen, who have imagined them as beautiful victims in order to fetishize their own avenging mission, Nana Sahib plans his final revenge in which the

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[289] Gaultier de Saint-Amand, p. 47.
[290] Gaultier de Saint-Amand, p. 48.
[291] Gaultier de Saint-Amand, p. 236 and p. 237.
[292] Gaultier de Saint-Amand, p. 129. One of Nana Sahib's friends, Hurry-Sing, reports that the British use this weapon to punish their *sepoys*: 'J'ai eu un de mes cipayes qui a subi cette flagellation. Il me disait que le chat à neuf queues produisait des souffrances intolérables'; Gaultier de Saint-Amand, p. 129.
[293] As Mukherjee notes with regards to the physical punishments enacted by the British upon Indian insurgents during the uprisings, British rule 'visibly manifested itself by marking the body of the Indian'; Mukherjee, 'Satan Let Loose upon Earth', p. 94.

remaining three sisters are to be taught 'l'art des soixante-quatre voluptés'.[294] Following this final exhibition of torture and rape, the closing words of the novel, uttered by Nana Sahib, entirely reverse the idea of the heroic narrative:

> 'Que ces filles aillent maintenant vivre au milieu des leurs, impures, souillées, traînant jusqu'au tombeau la honte d'avoir été fouettées comme les plus viles esclaves. Et quand nos descendants libéreront l'Inde du joug de l'étranger, ils sauront, comme leur ancêtre Nana-Sahib, humilier dans la pudeur de ses femmes, l'orgueilleuse et perfide Albion!'[295]

Beyond its verbalization of the 'unspeakable' and its tendency to transform the sacramental into sexual titillation, this conclusion denies its British characters any kind of satisfactory end (through, for example, a compensatory vengeance carried out by British soldiers). As such, it not only inverts Anglo-centric accounts, but survival narratives more generally, which, as Pratt postulates, are premised on the 'imperially correct outcome', meaning that the survivor has both survived and has 'sought reintegration into the home society'.[296] Although Nana Sahib's captives live to tell the tale, they are so physically disfigured and psychologically damaged that reintegration would be impossible. The result is that they are also incapable of being used to glorify and 'civilize' British revenge.

Ultimately, however, this is not a narrative about India's revenge against the colonial oppressor. Rather, by ending with the final words, 'perfide Albion!', Gaultier de Saint-Amand's fiction mobilizes a well-established French stereotype of British rapacity and reveals the real avenger to be the 'other' colonizer: France. Nana Sahib, or the Indian 'other', has simply been employed as a figure through which to act out a fantastical punishment against the British in lieu of the French, while playing on British anxiety by anticipating a future time 'quand nos descendants libéreront l'Inde' from the oppression of British rule.[297]

In short, this chapter has shown how the key discursive strategies in British colonial discourse, such as Cawnpore and its female victims, can be challenged by French-language writing. By engaging critically with the rhetoric of revenge and the myths that work to justify British violence, these French counter-narratives are able to focus on the less palatable material that such figures attempt to disguise. As the narrator from Marenis's fiction states, 'autour de Cawnpore, naissait la légende. Dans un demi-mystère, chaque version, reflet d'une vérité personnelle, donnait une couleur différente aux événements. Comment écrirait-on l'histoire si, en un jour, la fiction se mariait à la réalité?'[298] In Anglo-

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[294] Gaultier de Saint-Amand, p. 280.
[295] Gaultier de Saint-Amand, p. 299.
[296] Pratt, p. 87.
[297] Gaultier de Saint-Amand, p. 299
[298] Marenis, pp. 264–65.

centric writing, these multiple truths were pushed aside repeatedly in favour of a monolithic myth. Thus, what is significant about Marenis's and other French-language texts, such as Verne's *La Maison à vapeur* and Gaultier de Saint-Amand's *Nana-Sahib*, is their deliberate emphasis on the fantastical structures underpinning British historiography and fictional writing. While producing a damning criticism of the British in India, however, this critique is less about anti-colonialism *per se*, than a question of being against *British* colonialism. Ultimately, these texts are driven by their own Gallo-centric agendas, which, couched within the universalist rhetoric of the Enlightenment, aim to present the French voice as a moral, rational and distinctly male corrective to British wrongs.

3   THE 'MONSTER' AND THE 'REVOLUTIONARY': REPRESENTING THE INDIAN 'OTHER' IN ENGLISH- AND FRENCH-LANGUAGE NARRATIVES OF NANA SAHIB

3.1   Introduction

Like the trope of the Cawnpore victim, the figure of Nana Sahib offers another example in which to explore the mythological narratives that have worked to create a particular idea of the British empire during a moment of colonial crisis. More importantly, however, it provides a second theme in which to analyse the processes by which French writing instrumentalizes and subverts Britain's imperial myths, using them as political tools within its counter-narratives of British colonialism. Consequently, this chapter shifts away from examining the discourse of revenge constructed around the *bibighar* and towards a consideration of the man who became, both implicitly and explicitly, the focal point for that revenge.

Nana Sahib, the dispossessed ruler of Bithur and claimant to the *Peshwa* throne, was one of many Indian rulers who, by 1857, had had their hereditary rights abrogated by a new British administrative policy, entitled the 'Doctrine of Lapse', which permitted the British to seize lands belonging to any Indian ruler without a genetic heir.[299] As the adopted son of the exiled *Peshwa* (Baji Rao II), Nana Sahib's estate had been directly affected by the imposition of this new legal mandate.[300] After the *Peshwa's* death in 1851, the British administration had refused to recognize his inheritance rights, neither acknowledging his title nor honouring his pension claims. Undefeated, he appealed first to the British Commissioner in India and then sent his official confident, Azimullah, to London to petition the Court of Directors, British Parliament and Queen Victoria.[301] Although Nana Sahib and Azimullah successfully canvassed support among the elite societies of Oudh and London's Belgravia, respectively, their pleas failed to find any truly influential sympathizers.[302] Were it not for the interest generated in Nana Sahib by the series of massacres that became connected with his name (at Fatehgarh, 12 June 1857; of Wheeler's garrison, 27 June 1857; and in the *bibighar*, 15 July 1857), undoubtedly, his particular history of dispossession would have been forgotten, like so many other similar

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[299] For more on the 'Doctrine of Lapse', see Section 1.2.2, pp. 15–16.

[300] In 1818, Baji Rao II was exiled to Bithur on the outskirts of Cawnpore after resisting Mountstuart Elphinstone's attempts to reduce his power as the *Peshwa* in Poona; Wolpert, p. 203.

[301] For further information on Azimullah's trip to London, see Hibbert, *The Great Mutiny*, p. 173; Ward, pp. 40–48.

[302] Ward, p. 46 and p. 52. Azimullah was reputed to have charmed a number of women during his sojourn in London (1854). Following the occupation of Nana Sahib's palace at Bithur by British troops, General Fred Roberts discovered love letters from British women to Azimullah, which he later published as *Letters written during the Indian Mutiny* (1923); Roberts is cited in Gupta, p. 26; Sen, p. 122.

cases.[303] But, as argued in the previous chapter, the belief that he had ordered the killing of women and children at the *bibighar* inspired a more impassioned reaction among the British populace than any other event both during and after the Indian uprisings, ensuring Nana Sahib's rise from obscurity to infamy not only in Britain, but across the western world.[304]

It is the British imperial 'myth' of Nana Sahib that forms the focus of the following chapter, which analyses the multiple and contradictory configurations of this insurgent leader across a range of texts produced in Britain and France from 1857 onwards, including *The Times* (1857–58), Boucicault's melodrama, *Jessie Brown; or, the Relief of Lucknow* (1858), Trevelyan's popular history, *Cawnpore* (1865), Maynard's fictional eye-witness account, *De Delhi à Cawnpore: Journal d'une dame anglaise, pages de l'insurrection hindoue* (1857), Richepin's *drame en vers*, 'Nana-Sahib: Drame en vers en sept tableaux' (1883), and Grèce's historical novel, *La Femme sacrée* (1984).[305] Through these narratives, it considers how Nana Sahib is abstracted from his historical context and manipulated for particular national and political ends. In doing so, it reveals a conflicting schema of representations operating on both sides of the Channel that have defined Nana Sahib as everything from a treacherous monster to a romantic and heroic revolutionary. These contrary portrayals demonstrate the extent to which he has been opportunistically employed, on the one hand, to justify British revenge and suggest the need for a British colonial presence in India (predominantly in British writing), and, on the other, to symbolize the negative effects of British colonialism on their colonized 'subjects' (predominantly in French writing).

In order to conduct this comparative analysis, this chapter initially considers how Nana Sahib was mobilized in British writing as a symbol of fear, which could also function as a

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[303] Further details concerning these events can be found in Section 1.2.2, pp. 17–18.

[304] Aside from the detailed exploration of the French response to the uprisings presented in this thesis, the breadth of other European responses has also been explored preliminarily in a conference held at the University of Delhi: 'European Responses to the 1857 Rebellion in India', Department of Germanic and Romance Studies, University of Delhi, 30–31 October 2007. Karl Marx's and Frederick Engels's series of articles published in the *New York Daily Tribune* offers a notable example of the interest that these events generated in America; Marx and Engels, *The First Indian War of Independence, 1857–1859*. According to the Institute of Marxism–Leninism, Marx and Engels, as political economists, viewed the uprisings as 'part and parcel of the general anti-colonial liberation struggle of oppressed nations unfolding in the eighteen-fifties nearly in all Asia'; Institute of Marxism–Leninism of the C. C., C. P. S. U., 'Introduction', in K. Marx and F. Engels, *The First Indian War of Independence, 1857–1859* (Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1960), p. 8.

[305] For more information on the *drame en vers*, see Section 3.3.2, p. 94. Although published in 1984, Grèce's *La Femme sacrée* can be placed within the tradition of the historical novel in the sense that Lukács defined it. It takes as its subject matter the Indian uprisings, placing them as the starting point of a teleological trajectory that led to Indian independence in 1947. Subject to this critical moment in history, Lakshmi Bai is presented as the flawed central protagonist, whose actions play a pivotal role in the progression of this history. For more on the origins of the historical novel, see Georg Lukács, *The Historical Novel*, trans. by Hannah and Stanley Mitchell (London: Merlin Press, 1962), pp. 19–63.

synecdoche for the uprisings as a whole, while reflecting on the anxiety that underpins such accounts. It then analyses the ways in which French metropolitan writing has challenged and subverted the norms and plot structures endemic to Anglo-centric narratives. Taking examples from a broad political spectrum of mid-nineteenth-century French-language newspapers, it examines how the metropolitan press both maintained and subverted the idea of Nana Sahib's supposed treachery and monstrosity, before examining how this character was rehabilitated as a heroic and revolutionary figure in Maynard's, Richepin's and Grèce's counter-narratives of the uprisings. The parallels and comparisons that are drawn between these different texts echo the findings of Chapter Two by revealing the extent to which metropolitan representations of Nana Sahib are underpinned by a competing French colonial discourse on India. It shows how this controversial figure is made to function as a powerful and subversive narrative device to speak out against British Indian rule, thereby silencing Indian voices under a specifically Gallo-centric agenda.

3.2   Treachery and Monstrosity: Presenting Nana Sahib to the British Public

Nana Sahib was to become one of the most visible and memorable symbols of the Indian revolts for British writers. He functioned as a representative type that could be made to stand for the Indian insurgency as a whole, his image standing at a crossroads between history or horrifying fact and myth or fairytale horror. As an exploration of his multiple forms reveals, the idea of Nana Sahib is inherently ambivalent. Aside from factual discrepancies (he was thought to be Hindu by some and Muslim by others), he is marked by authoritarian anxiety, being defined as a national traitor and as a focal point for British revenge, but one who ultimately succeeded in evading capture and punishment.

First and foremost, Nana Sahib acted as an important symbol of revolt. If, as Jenny Sharpe has pointed out, 'the brutalized bodies of defenseless English women serve as a metonym for a government that sees itself as the violated object of rebellion,' then Nana Sahib operated as a synecdoche for Indian insurgency.[306] In other words, British writing often employed Nana Sahib as a signifier for all Indian rebels, who, by racial and religious association, were deemed capable of committing equivalent acts of violence. As such, Nana Sahib's name became a byword for mass insurgency, his demonic characterization often serving as justification for the suppression of the Indian populace and for the need for continued colonial rule at a time when

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[306] Sharpe, p. 7.

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the authority of the British was under threat. For example, 'The type of the revolt is Nena Sahib [*sic*]', wrote an editorialist in *The Times*:

> He is the true barbaric ideal. It is he and his predecessors in the line of treachery who have kept Asia down since the beginning of the world, and made her the property and prey of any stronger race. Yet in a sense this man is Young Asia, and we see what we are to expect from communicating European arts and accomplishments to Hindoos without our religion and manly character. [...] This is the sort of man, not the wretched old puppet at Delhi [Bahadur Shah II], not the imbecile King of Oude [*sic*], who would step into the place of Queen Victoria, should the Mutiny ever come to anything.[307]

In this quotation, widespread rebellion against British rule is reduced to one man, Nana Sahib. He is used as a trope that stands for all the negative aspects of being Asian and particularly Hindu, while the figure of the effeminate Hindu is typecast as a prototype for the Indian populace as a whole.[308] Required to embody multiple and incongruous ideas at once, Nana Sahib is thereby overdetermined, being representative of an older, despotic order that is responsible for stifling Indian development, and of a 'Young Asia' that is congenitally unable to develop due to its inherent socio-racial defects (notably, a lack of Christian morality and masculine strength). 'Civilization', it is suggested, will prevail over this representative type, who serves as a warning sign for what India would become without British guidance: 'India has learnt something from us; it knows the blessings of peace, order, and law; and it knows what it would be to fall into the hands of such men as Nena Sahib [*sic*].'[309] Thus, while mobilizing Nana Sahib as a trope of fear that rationalizes British-led colonial violence, *The Times* simultaneously manages that fear rhetorically by reducing the uprisings to the efforts of one Hindu man against an unstoppable European power.

    This difficult balancing act between instrumentalizing a symbol of terror and ensuring that the terror it inspires can be controlled renders the 'myth' of Nana Sahib fundamentally ambivalent. This is most obvious where confusions over Nana Sahib's cultural heritage are concerned. Labelled as either a Hindu or a Muslim, with all the attendant stereotypes that such designations encompass, he is marked by the colonial fear of being overturned by the colonized

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[307] *The Times*, 1 September 1857, p. 6.
[308] In nineteenth-century Indologist discourse, Hinduism was often seen as equivalent to India as a whole or, as Inden explains, as symbolic of the Indian mind; Inden, pp. 85–130. The ease with which India could be conquered (evoked in the above quotation that appeared in *The Times*) is directly related to the essentializing of the subcontinent as a feminized Hindu space; Inden, p. 88.
[309] *The Times*, 1 September 1857, p. 6.

'other'. Undoubtedly, the blurring of cultural typologies extends from the difficulty that some nineteenth-century writers would have had in conceptualizing Hindus as aggressive challengers to colonial power. In nineteenth-century Indological discourse, Hindus and Hinduism were typically equated with stereotypes of femininity (disorder, irrationality, seductiveness, amorphousness and extremeness) in contrast with European masculinity (order, rationality, dispassion, positivism and equanimity).[310] Indeed, the uprisings were not even considered to be a serious threat until the Mughal emperor, Bahadur Shah II, reclaimed his title and officially appended Muslim to Hindu interests. The tone of reports in *The Times* shifted in response from being broadly dismissive — 'The affair will blow over', wrote a British officer, 'It is the opinion of the ablest officers in the service that the Sepoy army [referring specifically to the Hindus] is hopelessly effete'[311] — to one of sudden concern — 'This mutiny has assumed a very serious character', wrote an editorialist, 'The moment has arrived for action — sharp, stern, and decisive. An Imperial interest is at stake — nothing less than our dominion in British India.'[312]

However, Nana Sahib was not just a Hindu, but a Marathan Hindu, meaning that his ancestors, like the Islamic Mughals, had a history of defying the British.[313] Consequently, he automatically represented a more immediate threat to colonial authority. What emerged was a confused conflation between the image of the effete Hindu Rajah and the aggressive and despotic Islamic leader, the timeless enemy of the Christian soldier.[314] For instance, in the British melodrama, *Jessie Brown; or, the Relief of Lucknow* (1858), Nana Sahib is associated with a specifically Islamic culture, indicated by his use of Turkish words, such as *giaours*, and his celebration of 'the feast of Mohammedah'.[315] These same ambiguities were echoed across the Channel in France, for example, in an article that appeared in *Le Siècle* by Bernard:

Nous verrons [...] avec regret le triomphe de Nana-Saïb et de ses musulmans, parce qu'au lieu d'ouvrir l'Inde à la civilisation européenne [...], ce triomphe ne pourrait que replonger dans leur

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[310] Inden, pp. 85–130. See also footnote 308.

[311] 'India and China: Calcutta, 21 April', *The Times*, 1 June 1857, p. 7.

[312] *The Times*, 27 June 1857, p. 9.

[313] For more information on the late-eighteenth- and early-nineteenth-century wars between the Marathas and the British, see Wolpert, pp. 183–84, pp. 191–93 and pp. 200–04; Ward, pp. 27–33.

[314] As Sharpe points out, 'The British regarded the Hindu male to be cruel, yet physically weak, duplicitous rather than savage. In the absence of a stereotype for the "savage Hindoo," the "blood-thirsty Musselman" was often identified as the perpetrator of the worst crimes'; Sharpe, p. 59.

[315] As Thomson comments, 'there is room for doubt about whether Nana Sahib would have used this Turkish term of abuse for non-Moslems in general, and for Christians in particular. Boucicault was clearly not sure that Nana Sahib was a Hindu'; *Jessie Brown*, 1. 1. 108.

barbarie vingt fois séculaire [...] sous le joug musulman les populations des bords du Gange et de l'Indus.[316]

In both cases, Nana Sahib is clearly defined as a potential threat to British rule (and by proxy to a European 'civilizing mission') by imagining him not as a Hindu but as Muslim, a confusion that stems from the conceptualization of India as a land of passive Hindus ruled by a succession of stronger external powers, such as the Mughals.[317]

Yet, it was precisely because he was able to bridge two religious cultures, which had not only been imagined by the British as discordant, but upon whose continuing disunion the future of British rule was constructed, that the Rajah of Bithur represented such a threat. As Disraeli commented in the Houses of Parliament,

> Our empire in India was, indeed, founded upon the old principle of *divide et impera*, but that principle was put into action by us not with any Machiavellian devices, but by merely taking advantage of the natural and [...] spontaneous circumstances of the country in which we were acting a part.[318]

According to Disraeli's polemic, the current crisis in India had been caused by Palmerston's government acting in the same way as former 'Mahommedan' and 'Mahratta' powers, leading to a dangerous union of common causes between otherwise antagonistic socio-religious groups.[319] In Nana Sahib's case, his ability to straddle and even transcend these traditionally opposed cultural divisions was seen, therefore, as a genuine menace to British hegemony.

Nana Sahib manipulated this idea to ample effect in his official proclamations that spoke across religious divides, extolling India as a whole 'to rejoice at the thought that the Christians have been sent to hell, and both the Hindoo and Mahomedan religions have been confirmed'.[320] This union was symbolized by the dual flags reported as standing outside his tent at Cawnpore (one bearing the sign of Islam and the other bearing the Hindu sign of Hanuman), as well as his well-publicized collaboration with high-profile Muslims, such as the Bahadur Shah II and his

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[316] T.-N. Bernard, 'L'Inde et les partis du passé', *Le Siècle*, 3 October 1857, p. 2.
[317] India was viewed among many nineteenth-century European Indologists as having been continually conquered by 'outsiders beginning with Aryans and ending with the British', while 'its ancient civilization had survived into the present more or less unchanged'; Inden, p. 55.
[318] 'House of Commons (Monday, 27 July): The State of India', *The Times*, 28 July 1857, pp. 5–9 (p. 6).
[319] *Ibid.*
[320] 'Nana Sahib's Proclamations', *The Times*, 29 October 1857, p. 12.

confident, Azimullah.[321] Indeed, the newly appointed Mughal emperor publicly acknowledged Nana Sahib's decisive role in the uprisings in one of the first proclamations to be issued from Delhi, which claimed that 'it is the intention of Cawnpore to root out this seed of the Devil', the 'Devil' being, of course, the British.[322] Nana Sahib's vision was even reported to extend beyond India's plight and out to other nations that had similarly suffered under British oppression, such as Ireland, to whom he wrote with words of encouragement: 'a portion of the English empire [...] has risen against her, and is avenging [...] the slaughtered millions of her children, whose blood has been poured out as a river since England first set foot on her soil'.[323] Using the example of Indian resistance, Nana Sahib encouraged the Irish similarly to 'keep alive the faith in God's justice! the faith in Ireland's liberty! and England's downfall!'[324] Thus, unlike other prominent Indian leaders, labelled by *The Times* as 'the wretched old puppet at Delhi' or 'the imbecile King of Oude [*sic*]', Nana Sahib represented an important and real challenge to Britain's supposedly unshakable authority over (Hindu) India.[325]

Since Nana Sahib constituted a serious threat to British rule, he also presented a prime target on which the metropolitan press could concentrate their vitriol and justify Britain's military revenge. Moreover, he could be used to manage the broader question of colonial crisis by effectively reducing the threat to one man. To this end, the despatches in the British and British Indian presses, which followed reports of his supposed involvement in the deaths of European colonizers, qualified his name with a variety of derogatory epithets. He was named as that 'arch fiend', 'that treacherous and cowardly assassin', 'that unhung miscreant' and as 'that now famous monster'.[326] Circumscribed by such terms, Nana Sahib was transformed into the number one enemy and traitor of the state,[327] as well as a fairytale monster, akin in horror to

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[321] Hibbert, *The Great Mutiny*, p. 186; Gupta, p. 81. As Ward notes, however, Nana Sahib's relationship with the Muslim community was fraught with problems, many of which were mitigated through his Muslim confident, Azimullah; Ward, p. 246-50.

[322] 'The Mutinies in India', *The Times*, 31 August 1857, pp. 5-6 (p. 5).

[323] 'Ireland: From our own correspondent (Dublin)', *The Times*, 30 September 1857, p. 9.

[324] *Ibid.* Other examples of Nana Sahib's proclamations can be found in: 'The Indian Mutinies', *The Times*, 22 September 1857, p. 10; *The Times*, 29 October 1857, p. 8.

[325] *The Times*, 1 September 1857, p. 6.

[326] 'The Mutinies in India (From the *Bombay Telegraph*)', *The Times*, 17 September 1857, p. 9; *The Times*, 3 September 1857, p. 6; 'The Sufferers by the Mutiny in India: Meeting at Bath', *The Times*, 11 September 1857, p. 10; *The Times*, 19 December 1857, p. 5.

[327] As Guha's work on peasant insurgencies in India observes, British officials often conflated the act of rebellion (being open and public) with criminality and conspiracy (being closed and secret), despite their derivation from 'two very different codes of violence'; Guha, p. 79.

those other demonic tropes that had come to stand for (Hindu) India, such as the goddess Kâli and/or criminal groups, such as the *Thugs* and the *Dacoits*.[328]

In the first instance, the idea of Nana Sahib as a conspirator and traitor stemmed from the common belief (among Britons) that he had styled himself falsely as a friend of the British and as an ardent Anglophile. As an editorialist for *The Times* wrote, 'this miscreant, [...] lived in the most friendly intimacy with the British officers who were soon to become his victims' during 'the hour of treason'.[329] Narratives produced after 1858 further corroborated the link between Nana Sahib and treachery. For example, in Boucicault's melodrama, *Jessie Brown*, the themes of treachery, conspiracy and criminality are underscored by associating Nana Sahib's plot with the notorious historical conspirator, Guy Fawkes. Nana Sahib is described as a 'Traitor!' who has betrayed the 'flag of truce' and his spy, Achmet, is labelled as 'a Hindoo Guy Fawkes, matches and lanterns, all complete'.[330]

Similarly, Trevelyan's historical account of Cawnpore describes the court of Bithur as a 'nest' of anti-British intrigue, carefully hidden behind an Anglophile frontispiece.[331] In this text, Nana Sahib's collection of European objects and his habit of inviting Europeans to his palace for dinner were seen as part of his conspiratorial and criminal intent to dupe the British in order to regain possession of Bithur — 'never for an instant [did he] forget the grudge which he bore our nation. While his face was all smiles, in his heart of hearts he brooded over the judgement of the Company, and the wrong of his despised claim.'[332] Not only does the narrator deny Nana Sahib's 'despised' claim any rightful basis, but the dispossessed Rajah is also linked into a network of conspiracy plots rumoured to have been hatched between Indian rulers and external powers to overturn British rule.[333] The narrator imagines him 'discussing with a circle of comrades the probability of the Emperor of the Russians joining with Brigadier Napoleon and the King of Roum [*sic*] in a scheme for destroying the power of the East Indian Company.'[334] Irrespective of the shifting alliances between these different countries prior to, and during, the uprisings,

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[328] The *Thugs* and the *Dacoits* were considered to be a religious sect that committed murder as a sacrifice to the goddess Kâli, 'une déesse "ivre de sacrifices"'; Martine van Woerkens-Todorov, 'Trois barbares en Asie: Une énième histoire de Thugs', in *L'Inde et l'imaginaire*, ed. by Catherine Weinberger-Thomas (Paris: Éditions de l'École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales, 1988), pp. 257–79 (p. 263). Like Nana Sahib, the *Thugs* and the *Dacoits* 'échappent à toute catégorisation tranchée' since it is both 'musulmans et hindous qui assassinent au nom de Kālī'; van Woerkens-Todorov, p. 260.

[329] *The Times*, 31 August 1857, p. 7.

[330] *Jessie Brown*, II. 123–24.

[331] Trevelyan, p. 29.

[332] Trevelyan, p. 33.

[333] For more on the threat of external powers to British India and particularly France and Russia, see footnote 239.

[334] Trevelyan, p. 8.

Trevelyan allies Nana Sahib to Britain's traditional rivals, notably France and Russia, as well as with that supposed hotbed of criminality and terrorism, Italy.[335] Thus, Nana Sahib is inscribed into a complex and international web of intrigue and colonial rivalry, which concomitantly reveals an underlying fear that the colonized 'other' could collaborate with external powers and overturn British rule.

In the second instance, characterizing Nana Sahib as a fairytale monster had the effect of mythologizing *per contra* British colonialism as the heroic avenger of British women and children, and as the rightful ruler of India. For example, in several Christmas pantomimes performed in December 1857, Nana Sahib featured as the quintessential villain and was dispatched with accordingly. His caricatural appearance in the pantomime, *William II and ye Fayre Maid of Harrow; or Harlequin Fiction, Fact and Fancy* by Nelson Lee, performed at the City of London Theatre, elicited the following response from one reporter:

> Passing events in India received their share of notice, and the bitterest enemy of the veritable Nana Sahib need wish him no more terrible end than that which subjects his representative at the City of London Theatre to the punishment of being shot from the cannon's mouth and blown into a thousand pieces, to the great satisfaction of the delighted spectators.[336]

The fictional world of burlesque theatre thus provided Britons with a cathartic space in which to purge their feelings of anger towards the Indian populace by imagining the demise of this representative type and, through it, the victory of the British.

Likewise, his appearance as a waxwork at Madame Tussaud's in 1857 placed him in opposition to the figure of Sir Henry Havelock (or 'the avenger of blood') and was reported to have drawn great crowds, Nana Sahib being 'the only man perhaps for whose death the whole

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[335] Although the Crimean war (1854–55) lends credence to Trevelyan's suspicion of Russian intrigue, it also saw France, for the first time since the Dutch wars of 1674, fighting alongside the British. For more information on this period, including alliances and hostilities between Britain, France, Italy and Russia, see Robert and Isabelle Tombs, *That Sweet Enemy: The French and the British from the Sun King to the Present* (London: Pimlico, 2007; first publ. Heinemann, 2006), pp. 356–65. The discovery of a plot led by the Italian, Mazzini, to assassinate Louis Napoleon during the uprisings undoubtedly lent more credence to the stereotype of Italy as a breeding ground for terrorists; *The Times*, 11 September 1857, p. 6.

[336] 'The Christmas Pantomimes and Entertainments: City of London Theatre', *The Times*, 28 December 1857, p. 10. Similarly, during the performance of a pantomime, entitled *Harlequin Prince Love-the-Day and Queen Busy Bec, or Little Red Riding Hood and the Elfin Wolf* (at the Victoria Theatre), it was reported that 'One incident remains to be noticed, and that was the shout of execration which a passing allusion to the name of Nana Sahib produced from the audience. So spontaneous and characteristic was this ebullition of popular feeling that one could have wished no higher retribution for this arch ruffian than that he should have been given over, had the thing been possible, to the fury of the crowd from whom it emanated'; 'The Christmas Pantomimes and Entertainments: The Victoria', *The Times*, 28 December 1857, p. 10.

mass of Englishmen throughout the world thirst with a deadly longing'.[337] Yet, the opposing figure of Havelock could only hold out the promise of such a conclusion eventually coming to fruition, without actually confirming its occurrence.

Although the act of capturing and executing well-known leaders was a way for British authorities (and authoritarian texts) to display control over the rebellion and imagine an end to organized revolt, in reality, this desire would be perpetually held in abeyance by the ongoing failure of the British military to capture their foremost villain, Nana Sahib.[338] In lieu of this definitive end, writers at the time offered alternative conclusions to their 'mutiny' narratives. As discussed in Chapter Two, Dickens's novella, *The Perils of Certain English Passengers* (1857), upholds the fantasy that the threat of further revolt had been destroyed by killing its representative insurgent, Christian George King, twice (by first shooting and then lynching him).[339] In Boucicault's play, a victorious ending is narrated by having Nana Sahib's plot to kill the British prisoners fail. This is signalled by Achmet's demise at the end of Act II, which is then followed by the arrival of the heroic Highlanders in Act III.[340] True to its historical context, however, the Rajah himself remains alive, his 'ending' coinciding with that of Achmet's as he slips silently and inexplicably out of the play. In his unexplained disappearance there is a tacit acknowledgement that the British military has been unable to capture its most formidable enemy and, thereby, to bring a satisfactory end to insurgency.

Thus, the mythologization of Nana Sahib as a fairytale monster resides partly in the fact that he was never captured, despite huge efforts by the British army to bring him to trial, with reports of sightings still being issued as late as 1900.[341] Unlike fairytales, however, the story of Nana Sahib is not abstracted from 'reality', but refers directly to a key historical event. As such, reality intersects with fantasy so that events that appear to belong to the non-real are made all the more horrifying by being grounded in the 'real'. The narrator in Trevelyan's historical account

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[337] 'The Christmas Pantomimes and Entertainments: Madame Tussaud's', *The Times*, 28 December 1857, pp. 10–11 (p. 10).
[338] For example, following the recapture of Delhi and Lucknow, the importance of capturing the remaining rebel leaders, notably Nana Sahib, Lakshmi Bai and Tatya Tope, became intrinsically linked with a desire to tie up all the loose ends, thereby quashing fears of further disturbances: 'All that remains is a set of isolated bands, ravaging the country without purpose, system, or hope of success', declared an editorialist for *The Times*, 'To rout and exterminate this ruffian rabble must be the work of the troops who have by this time poured into the country, but who will have found the main strength of the mutineers destroyed before they arrived'; *The Times*, 12 November 1857, p. 6.
[339] See Section 2.2.1, p. 40.
[340] For more on the arrival of the Highlanders in *Jessie Brown*, see Section 2.2.1, pp. 36–37.
[341] Decoy Nana Sahibs were tried and hung numerous times before another potential candidate would be found in either India or Nepal. The last sighting occurred forty-two years after Nana Sahib had escaped from the British in 1858. This was reported in a letter sent to *The Times*, which claimed that Nana Sahib had 'by chance, [been] discovered by an old loyal pensioned subahdar of our former Indian army'; A. Vickers, 'The Nana Sahib', *The Times*, 9 September 1955, p. 3.

of Cawnpore alludes to this intersection when he writes that 'Those fictitious tales of vice and atrocity [...] too often find a parallel in the realities of a great oriental household', and that Nana Sahib's story

> would more fitly be told in the wild and mysterious rhythms of the old Greek drama than in sober English prose; for in truth that story finds no parallel, save in the ghastly tales which hang like a mist of blood round the accursed house of Pelops.[342]

Trevelyan's choice of Pelops — killed by his father, Tantalus, and fed to the gods for dinner — echoes rhetorically with the kind of horror stories being reported in the British and British Indian press during the uprisings.[343] Just as the gods took their revenge against Tantalus in that mythical tale, so the British 'gods' must take theirs against Nana Sahib and the Indian insurgents in a reality that all too often seemed tinged by the fantastic.

Myth-making is thus a powerful rhetorical tool that exculpates British violence and reshapes the unfamiliar ('passive' Indians revolting against 'powerful' Britons) into a more recognizable scenario, enabling English-language texts to imagine a British victory and tame their fear of defeat by framing 'reality' within a Manichean structure in which 'good' triumphs over 'evil'.[344] Yet, despite the attempt to circumscribe Nana Sahib within such a limited representational framework, he remained an inherently ambivalent and troubling figure, who not only stood at the intersection between history and fiction, but whose legendary status would always reside in the detail that he was never captured, thus denying the British press and public their symbolic finale.

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[342] Trevelyan, p. 29 and p. 33. 'India' as a site of fantasy is, of course, an *idée reçue* of colonial discourse analysis, which shows how this geographical space is used as a backdrop to Euro-centric tales of adventure and romance. For more information, see Green, *Dreams of Adventure*; Nigel Leask, *British Romantic Writers and the East: Anxieties of Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992); Said, *Orientalism*; Edward W. Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (London: Vintage, 1994; first publ. Chatto & Windus, 1993); Ravi, *L'Inde romancée*; Assayag, *L'Inde fabuleuse*; Lombard, Champion and Chambert-Loir, *Rêver l'Asie*; Weinberger-Thomas, *L'Inde et l'imaginaire*.

[343] For example, an article appeared in the *Bombay Telegraph* in which it was reported that, 'Children have been compelled to eat the quivering flesh of their murdered parents, after which they were literally *torn asunder* by the laughing fiends who surrounded them.' It concluded, 'If ever a nation was made the instrument of vengeance of an insulted Deity, that nation is England; and we trust that she will strike and spare not'; 'The Mutinies in India (from the *Bombay Telegraph*)', *The Times*, 17 September 1857, p. 9.

[344] As Brantlinger writes, 'At Cawnpore the world splits apart: the well becomes a widening chasm dividing the forces of absolute righteousness from the demonic armies of the night'; Brantlinger, p. 204.

3.3 'The Enemy of my Enemy is my Friend': *Schadenfreude*, Counter-Narration and Rehabilitation

3.3.1 Counter-narratives of Nana Sahib: Demonism and treachery

As Bonneau noted in an article published in *La Presse* in 1857, contrasting versions of Nana Sahib had evolved on opposite sides of the Channel: 'Nana-Sâhib, ce génie de l'enfer, cet abominable mécréant, cette furie incarnée, comme on le nomme de l'autre côté de la Manche, est lui-même un chef maharatte, le dernier héritier des peychouas.'[345] Not exempt from playing his own part in this process, Bonneau distanced himself from the excessive language of the British press by humanizing 'ce génie de l'enfer' and reminding his readers that Nana Sahib was, after all, a Marathan leader and heir to the *Peshwa* throne whose right to inherit this title had been quashed 'sous la main brutale de lord Dalhousie'.[346] In a cartoon of Nana Sahib scrutinizing his varying portrayals in the Parisian and London newspapers, *Le Charivari* pointed to a similar disparity between British and French interpretations of the events in India. The caption read 'Nena-Saeb lisant les journaux de Paris et de Londres afin de savoir ce qu'on pense de lui en Europe.'[347] By highlighting the different character portraits being generated on opposite sides of the Channel, *Le Charivari* drew attention to the ability of texts (and especially the press) to manipulate images for political ends. Where Nana Sahib was concerned, there were plenty of agendas to which he could be put to use, especially where criticizing British policies in India was concerned.[348]

Defined as the number one 'enemy' of the British, Nana Sahib was a provocative political tool in the hands of many French writers, who were undoubtedly motivated by a sense of *Schadenfreude*. As the ensuing examples demonstrate, his demonic image was either upheld only to be used as an unflattering example of the effects of British colonialism on their 'subjects' (in Section 3.3.1), or rehabilitated as a romantic and/or revolutionary hero who courageously

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[345] Alexandre Bonneau, '[...] Mahrattes', *La Presse*, 8 October 1857, pp. 1–2 (p. 1).
[346] *Ibid.*
[347] *Le Charivari*, 23 November 1857, p. 3.
[348] Indian authors have also provided contrasting images of Nana Sahib to those found in British narratives. The national historian, Savarkar, for example, lauds him as a great national hero, 'who fought for liberty and for his country', and describes him and the Rani of Jhansi as 'two bright pearls in the necklace of Mother India'; Savarkar, pp. 25–26. Similarly, Malgonkar's fiction, *The Devil's Wind: Nana Saheb's Story, A Novel* (1972), presents Nana Sahib in a sympathetic light and engages directly with his transformation into a '"monster of ferocity"' within British historiography and fiction; Malgonkar, p. 253. As Nana Sahib states, the British 'needed villainy of the requisite magnitude to serve as a backdrop for heroism. How hollow would Havelock's victories have seemed if I, Nana Saheb [*sic*], had not been their principal objective!'; Malgonkar, p. 253.

fought against colonial tyranny (in Section 3.3.2). Both cases will be discussed in turn to show how this controversial figure was employed to convey a distinctly Franco-centric and anti-British discourse, whether that meant maintaining, counter-narrating or rehabilitating his image in the eyes of the French reading public.

As discussed in Chapter Two, with the exception of a few French correspondents based in India, it was predominantly from the coverage provided in the British and British Indian presses that French newspapers drew their knowledge of these overseas events.[349] Inevitably, British reports influenced those that appeared in France and, as such, perceptions of Nana Sahib as a 'fiend', 'traitor', 'miscreant' and 'monster' travelled across the Channel, pitting the 'civilized' European against the 'savage' Indian, at least superficially. This trend would continue in later nineteenth- and twentieth-century texts. Rousselet's *Le Charmeur de serpents* (1875), Verne's *La Maison à vapeur* (1880), Bernard's 'Nana-Sahib: Histoire de la Révolte de l'Inde (1857)' (1895), Gaultier de Saint-Amand's *Nana-Sahib: Épisodes sanglants de l'insurrection des cipayes en 1857* (1909) and Marenis's *La Révolte sans âme* (1946) all present the Rajah of Bithur in a negative light, either by associating him directly with the massacres at Cawnpore (and, therefore, with barbaric acts against white Europeans) or by affiliating him with the criminal underworld of the *Thugs* and the *Dacoits*.

While such depictions of the Indian 'other' can be analysed using an East–West Saidian binary, such a method remains overly simplistic and, hence, problematic where French-language representations of India (and, arguably, any colony or colonized space with a history of intra-European rivalry) is concerned. When considering how French-language texts imagine Nana Sahib, there is an additional need to take into account the histories of colonial rivalry that underpin such representations and the extent to which they reveal a competing colonial discourse. Consequently, even though the images produced of Nana Sahib may not leave the confines of an orientalist discourse, each of the French-language texts discussed here manipulate that binary to their own advantage. In other words, they place themselves within a 'flexible *positional* superiority' that puts them in a 'whole series of possible relationships', but not just with the colonized 'other' (or the 'Orient'), as Said claims, but also with the 'other' colonizer 'without ever losing [...] the relative upper hand'.[350]

For example, the Parisian press (re-)asserted and then inverted the idea of Nana Sahib's treachery and/or duplicity by implying that it was the British, not Nana Sahib, who had betrayed

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[349] See Section 2.3.1, pp. 45–47.
[350] Said, *Orientalism*, p. 7.

Europe's 'civilizing mission'.[351] Thus, although journalists on both sides of the Channel structured Nana Sahib within the same broad Manichean framework and believed that he had deceived the British by convincingly mimicking an 'English gentleman', this idea was also open to subversion. Several French newspapers implied that the superficiality of Nana Sahib's European appearance additionally signified the failure of the British to 'civilize' the Indian in a profound and lasting way. The 'gentleman' who was able to change his 'peau' at will and reveal, as Texier wrote for *Le Siècle*, 'l'Hindou [...] dans toute sa férocité' was, therefore, a powerful rhetorical tool in the hands of many French writers.[352] In this article, Texier emptied out the rhetoric of Britain's duty to 'civilize' its Indian 'subjects' by stating,

> Elle en a fait des gentlemen à l'extérieur, mais elle n'a pas encore traversé leur épiderme. Les Nana-Saïbs se ganteront juste; chausseront des bottes vernies et porteront même au besoin des pantalons à sous-pieds; mais s'ils se font Européens par la forme, il est à craindre qu'ils ne restent encore longtemps Hindous par le fond.[353]

Inherent within this excerpt is a dual criticism that was repeated in many French newspapers of that time: the first being that the British were incapable of genuinely 'civilizing' their colonized 'subjects' (as signified here by Nana Sahib's exterior appearance); and, the second being that the 'Hindou' was congenitally uncivilizable. The article concluded by advising Britain that it ought to try harder to govern ('s'efforcer de gouverner') 'avec plus de justice et de modération que par le passé'.[354] *L'Univers*'s Chantrel provided a similar illustration:

> Voilà un Hindou dont on a fait un parfait gentleman; il est instruit, poli, élégant; il parle l'anglais avec la plus grande pureté, il adopte les usages européens, et voici qu'il est l'un des chefs les plus féroces et les plus dangereux de l'insurrection.[355]

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[351] Of course, as Schmidt has argued, the concept of treachery and, specifically, perfidiousness in relation to the British was already well ingrained into the French national psyche, particularly after 1789, when 'it meant simply to condemn England as the enemy of Europe who stirred up wars and revolutions, and made profit out of her trade in human blood'; H. D. Schmidt, 'The Idea and Slogan of "Perfidious Albion"', *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 14 (1953), 604-16 (p. 610).

[352] 'L'insurrection éclate, le gentleman change de peau et l'Hindou reparait dans toute sa férocité. Il viole les femmes auprès desquelles il se montrait galant la veille; il éventre les enfans, les coupe en morceaux, et égorge froidement ses amis les officiers britanniques, après leur avoir les promis la vie sauve'; Edmond Texier, 'Chronique hebdomadaire', *Le Siècle*, 13 September 1857, p. 2.

[353] *Ibid.*

[354] *Ibid.*

[355] J. Chantrel, *L'Univers: Union Catholique*, 6 September 1857, p. 1.

This vision of the 'savage' Indian dressed in western garb, as a kind of Aesopian wolf in sheep's clothing, was so common in French-language newspapers that *Le Charivari* used it as the basis of a caricature: 'Avant l'insurrection Nena-Sahib vivait dans la société anglaise de l'Inde où il tenait naturellement le haut du pavé, grâce à ses talens extraordinaires.'[356] He is described as 'le dandy séduisant et irrésistible des salons. Patience; attendez un instant et prenez la peine d'écouter. Entendez-vous ce piano aux accens suaves et magiques? Vous croyez peut-être que c'est Listz ou Thalberg [...]; c'est Nena-Sahib.'[357] While this article parodies the Anglophobic Parisian press for reconfiguring Nana Sahib as a hero who warrants their support, the parody works precisely because *Le Charivari* is employing a satirical norm that assumes its reader will imagine Nana Sahib to be 'uncivilized'. Conversely, *Le Charivari* could also use a more stereotypical image of Nana Sahib as a 'savage' to draw a deliberately insulting parallel between his reportedly barbaric acts and the bellicose language of the *Morning Post*: 'on ne sait pas qui est plus sauvage de Nena-Sahib [*sic*] ou du [*Morning*] *Post*'.[358]

In drawing these uncomplimentary equivalences between the British and their colonial 'subjects', the French-language press could directly attack their British rivals. What they refuted was the duplicitous nature of the discourse of British colonial benevolence and strength by highlighting instead its inherent barbarism and fragility. The collapse of this rhetorical artifice signalled by the uprisings was depicted by Grantpré in *Le Constitutionnel*, who described British colonialism in India as a 'mirage, qui dans les affaires humaines prend le nom de prestige'.[359] Although this 'mirage' had once allowed control over India to be maintained by a 'petit nombre d'Européens placés en face de ces multitudes', the Indian people had finally perceived its illusionary quality. Grantpré utilizes the image of Hindu idolatry to depict this shift in Indian consciousness: 'aux coups terribles qu'elles [the Indian population] s'efforcent de porter à l'idole devant laquelle, il y a quelques mois encore, elles se courbaient si humblement, l'Angleterre peut mesurer l'étendue du péril et la grandeur de l'effort nécessaire pour le conjurer.'[360] Writing from a Judeo-Christian point of view, British colonialism is equated to a false god and the Indian populace is imagined to have been kept in a state of fanaticism from which (implicitly) they must be liberated. While the Indians are envisaged as a progressive force that has succeeded in dismantling the 'heathen' deity that represents British colonialism, the British are thus characterized, in terms of an Orientalist discourse, by their backwardness.

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[356] Clément Caraguel, 'Un gentleman accompli', *Le Charivari*, 9 October 1857, pp. 1–2 (pp. 1–2).

[357] Clément Caraguel, 'Un gentleman accompli', *Le Charivari*, 9 October 1857, pp. 1–2 (p. 2).

[358] Clément Caraguel, 'La cage de fer du Morning-Post', *Le Charivari*, 3 October 1857, p. 1.

[359] L. de Grantpré, 'Paris, 30 septembre', *Le Constitutionnel*, 1 October 1857, p. 1.

[360] *Ibid.*

Laurentie of *L'Union* also remarked on 'la facilité avec laquelle se dissout cet empire de la force', concluding that, 'Elle n'était donc qu'une apparence, cette organisation si glorieuse et si vantée!'[361] The mutinies are used here to signal an end to what had been nothing more than a confidence trick:

> On disait que l'Angleterre possédait le génie de la colonisation à un degré inconnu des autres peuples, *surtout de la France*; et il nous faillait croire que sa présence chez les nations barbares était le commencement et la condition de la civilisation universelle. D'où vient donc qu'au signal d'indépendance et de révolte, les peuples régis et maîtrisés [...] par cette puissance de génie, n'offrent que des amas de bêtes fauves qu'aucune discipline morale n'aurait effleurés, dont aucun exemple d'humanité n'aurait pénétré la conscience et le cœur? (emphasis added).[362]

In this quotation, the Indian revolts become a point of reference through which to rebuke the often scathing attitude of the British press towards France's lack of colonial ambition and its comparatively few colonial possessions. In response, Britain is castigated for its persistent inability to transform the 'bêtes fauves' that (for Laurentie) represent the Indian populace. As such, 'India' and the uprisings are co-opted into a war of words between French and British colonialisms, providing Laurentie with the space to argue against his British rivals and in the name of 'discipline morale', 'humanité' and a European civilizing force based on Christian morality, as opposed to Britain's 'système d'avarice'.[363]

The kind of moralizing tone adopted by *Le Constitutionnel*'s Grantpré and *L'Union*'s Laurentie when discussing the faults of the British can be discerned in many French-language newspapers that, rather than blaming the 'barbaric' Indian, considered the British to have brought revolt upon themselves. 'Si les Hindous sont restés barbares et se conduisent en barbares', wrote Veuillot for *L'Univers*, 'à qui la faute?'[364] The answer is, of course, 'l'Angleterre': 'Ces flèches qui la percent aujourd'hui, voilà plus d'un siècle qu'elle les aiguise; ces trahisons dont elle se plaint, elle en a donné l'exemple', specifically through the exploitation of 'tous les princes et tous les peuples de l'Inde'.[365] This was not, according to Veuillot, what a (Catholic) God had intended when he placed India under British tutelage. The result, as another journalist from *L'Univers* wrote, was that 'Le système suivi par l'Angleterre peut produire des

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[361] Laurentie, *L'Union: Quotidienne, France, écho français*, 8 September 1857, p. 1.
[362] *Ibid.*
[363] *Ibid.*
[364] Louis Veuillot, 'France: De la révolution des Indes (1ᵉ article)', *L'Univers: Union Catholique*, 9 September 1857, p. 1.
[365] *Ibid.*

Nana-Sahib, pas autre chose [...] Ce n'est pas ce qu'on entend aujourd'hui par la civilisation qui *civilise* véritablement.'[366] Rather, 'la civilisation qui *civilise* véritablement' is (Catholic) France since only Catholicism, according to Chantrel, 'pourra changer le cœur de ces populations ulcérées, et les attacher à la nation'.[367] Thus, Chantrel's polemic directly inverts British discourse by suggesting that it is no longer Nana Sahib who is to blame, but rather the colonial system that has produced him.[368] In presenting Nana Sahib as a product of this false 'civilizing' system, the British could be directly implicated in the cause and effect logic that had led to the Cawnpore massacres. Although these examples of French journalism clearly operate within a colonial discourse on race, as this analysis shows, they were also able to manipulate its dichotomies in order to incriminate British colonialism for having placed capitalist concerns above those of Enlightenment-based humanitarianism and Christianity. In this criticism lies a counter-narrative that implicitly promotes French over British colonial practices.

To take a later example, Verne's *La Maison à vapeur* (1880) similarly reasserts and then inverts the idea of Nana Sahib's treachery. Initially, it presents him as a leader of a band of *Dacoits*, being an established stereotype in French and British writing for savagery and treachery, before utilizing this association to destabilize the myth of British victory and dominance. Echoing many narratives, Nana Sahib is positioned within a network of exotic and monstrous tropes that informs how a nineteenth-century western audience might have imagined 'India'.[369] He is depicted as plotting a new uprising from his headquarters in the mountainous caves that were once home to the notorious *Thugs*:

> Dans ce pays [...] vit un peuple de Boundélas, fourbe et cruel, chez lequel tous les criminels, politiques ou autres, cherchent volontiers et trouvent facilement refuge; [...] là, sont nés les célèbres étrangleurs Thugs, si longtemps l'épouvante de l'Inde, fanatiques assassins [...]; là, pullulent encore ces terribles Dacoits, secte d'empoisonneurs qui marchent sur les traces des Thugs; là, enfin, s'était déjà réfugié Nana Sahib lui-même.[370]

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[366] J. Chantrel, *L'Univers: Union Catholique*, 6 September 1857, p. 1.
[367] *Ibid.*
[368] Marx made a similar point in an article written for the *New York Daily Tribune* on 4 September 1857: 'However infamous the conduct of the sepoys, it is only the reflex, in a concentrated form, of England's own conduct in India'; Marx, p. 91.
[369] Public figures, such as Sleeman, and popular fictions, such as Meadows Taylor's *Confessions of a Thug* (1839) and René de Pont-Jest's *Le Procès des Thugs* (1877), had acquainted both the British and French (reading) public with the cult of *Thugi*. For more on 'le thème de la monstruosité' in French writing on India, see Ravi, *L'Inde romancée*, p. 8.
[370] Verne, *La Maison*, pp. 203–04.

That Verne sought to connect his Nana Sahib with these supposedly depraved 'cults' is unsurprising given that they offered an expedient way of characterizing him accorded to the expected stereotypes. Similar associations were made in British accounts between the *sepoys* and this supposedly demonic underworld, a correlation that served to undermine genuine Indian grievances by imagining the colonized 'other' as a criminal.[371] As an editorialist for *The Times* wrote:

> For all this century we have been engaged in the most incessant and laborious attempts to extinguish Dacoitee, Thuggee [*sic*], professional poisoning, and other systems and classes of crime. The mutiny has of course released all these mischievous elements, which have immediately, and by a species of necessity, followed their natural instinct. [...] All this has broken out, and the saying of 'Hell let loose' does not mean more.[372]

The alliance made between the uprisings and these notorious criminal groups permits the editorialist, at one and the same time, to demonize the revolts as a whole and to justify an immediate suppression of the Indian populace. Implicitly, it mobilizes the memory of 'successful' previous campaigns that had been carried out by the British government against those undesirable elements of Indian society in order to reassert the surety of victory in 1857.[373]

However, Verne was writing forty years after the *Thugs* had supposedly been eradicated from India (in 1841) and his novel is set ten years after the uprisings, in 1867. What is significant about *La Maison* is not then the somewhat predictable links between the outlawed practice of *Thugi* and Nana Sahib. Rather, it is Verne's use of a ten-year time interval during which Nana Sahib (whose death was still unconfirmed) is now seen to be politically active, whereas the *Thugs*, who had supposedly been dispersed, have metamorphosed into a new criminal group, now called the *Dacoits*. These outlaws operate under Nana Sahib's control — 'Les Thugs, de sanglante mémoire, dont l'Indoustan *semble délivré*, ont laissé cependant des successeurs dignes d'eux. Ce sont les Dacoits, sortes de Thugs transformés' (emphasis added).[374] The doubt suggested by the speculative phrase 'semble délivré' is a subtle insinuation that the

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[371] As van Woerkens-Todorov points out (although not with reference to Verne's text), the *Thugs* and *Dacoits* were perceived by European writers as the antithesis of Christian faith, their historical encounter with the West being 'la preuve d'une indéniable victoire des forces du bien contre les forces du mal, du droit contre l'iniquité'; van Woerkens-Todorov, p. 263.
[372] *The Times*, 24 September 1857, p. 6.
[373] Under Lord William Bentinck's drive to eradicate 'uncivilized' Hindu customs, Colonel Sleeman headed a campaign to eliminate the cult of *Thugi* from India, which he claimed had been successfully completed in 1841; van Woerkens-Todorov, p. 259.
[374] Verne, *La Maison*, p. 395.

British had not eliminated these criminal circles, but had merely caused them to retreat and regroup. Hence, Nana Sahib and the *Dacoits*, standing for the broader threat of Indian unrest, reside in an area that lies persistently outside the reaches of the authoritative arm of British colonialism. This unknown (and unknowable) threat, along with the implicit suggestion that the colonizers had failed to quash seditious and lawless elements of society, undermines the control that Britain was supposed to have over pre- and post-mutiny India. Consequently, while subscribing to Euro-centric Indian stereotypes, Verne's text additionally plays on the colonizers' fear of another revolt and carefully destabilizes the image of a pacified India post-1858.

3.3.2 Rehabilitating Nana Sahib: The romantic revolutionary

While these examples have indicated a dual tendency to assert and then subvert negative representations of Nana Sahib, the following sources reveal how French-language writing has also produced contrary and heroic images of the Rajah of Bithur that directly oppose the monstrous and demonic representations formed in Anglo-centric texts. As *Le Charivari* noted, with some degree of perspicacity, 'le mot d'ordre de l'anglophobie est de vanter beaucoup Nena-Sahib, d'en faire peu à peu une grande figure de patriote cuivré, un homme supérieur', a comment that alluded to the process by which Nana Sahib was reconfigured among the more Anglophobic branches of the metropolitan press as a character worthy of France's support.[375] This same discursive strategy can be seen not only in French-language writing produced during the uprisings, but also in texts that were published long after 1858, as examples taken from three different sources highlight. First, Félix Maynard's *De Delhi à Cawnpore: Journal d'une dame anglaise* (1858) is a fictional testimony by a survivor of the *bibighar* massacre, Mme Hornsteet, in which Nana Sahib is presented as the saviour of the Cawnpore victim. Secondly, Jean Richepin's play, *Nana-Sahib: Drame en vers en sept tableaux* (1883), in which Nana Sahib plays the role of a romantic hero. Finally, Michel de Grèce's historical fiction, *La Femme sacrée* (1984), in which Nana Sahib is reconstructed as a celebrated revolutionary who stands against British tyranny.

In the first case, the story of Mme Hornsteet's flight from Cawnpore was first mentioned by Texier in the 'Chronique hebdomadaire' section of *Le Siècle* and was presented as a genuine eye-witness account to the *bibighar* massacre.[376] A full transcription was initially published in

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[375] Clément Caraguel, 'La proclamation de Nena-Sahib', *Le Charivari*, 26 September 1857, pp. 1–2 (p. 1).
[376] Edmond Texier, 'Chronique hebdomadaire', *Le Siècle*, 1 November 1857, p. 2.

seven instalments in *La Presse* (between 22 November and 3 December 1857), before being produced as a book in 1858.[377] According to its author, Maynard, the account was transcribed from a verbal dictation given by Mme Hornsteet. Maynard thus operates as the extradiegetic narrator who remains external to the main story, listening, evaluating, recording and transcribing Hornsteet's journey 'pour ainsi dire sous sa dictée'.[378] The tale recounts her fatal decision to flee Delhi with her husband, son and daughter in order to seek refuge with the British at Cawnpore. En route, her husband is killed and, once at Cawnpore, the family is caught up in the *bibighar* massacre, where Hornsteet is raped and her son and daughter are subsequently killed before her eyes. Only she manages to escape, before returning to Southampton in Britain and immediately moving to France to stay with her husband's relatives.[379]

When news of this story first came to light, *Le Siècle*'s Texier noted that Mme Hornsteet's narrative was a significant departure from the 'official' versions published in the British press.[380] Importantly, her report suggested that the stories of Nana Sahib had been severely exaggerated:

S'il faut s'en rapporter à l'opinion de cette dame, qui a été, malheureusement pour elle, trop bien placée pour n'avoir pas vu comment les choses se sont passées, Nena-Saïb [*sic*] ne serait pas la bête féroce qui nous a été dépeinte par les journaux anglais. [...D]ébordé par des soldats altérés de vengeance, il aurait subi le sort de presque tous les chefs placés à la tête de barbares; il aurait vu ses ordres méprisés par une soldatesque en délire, et lui-même, à l'heure qu'il est, ne serait plus que l'esclave de ses propres troupes.[381]

By referring to this supposedly factual account, Nana Sahib is transformed into a victim of *sepoy* provocation and aggression, rather than being seen as the main culprit of the massacres.[382] Indeed, the mentioning of Hornsteet's narrative in the 'Chronique hebdomadaire' section of *Le Siècle* implies that this story was taken to be real, irrespective of the problematic logistics of

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[377] Félix Maynard, 'Variétés: De Delhi à Cawnpore: Journal d'une dame anglaise', *La Presse*, 22 November 1857, pp. 2–3; 23 November 1857, pp. 2–3; 24 November 1857, pp. 2–3; 30 November 1857, p. 3; 1 December 1857, pp. 2–3; 2 December 1857, pp. 2–3; 3 December 1857, pp. 2–3.
[378] Maynard, p. 2.
[379] Maynard, p. 1.
[380] '[L]e récit qu'elle fait de toutes les scènes auxquelles elle a été mêlée diffère un peu des relations du *Times*, du *Morning Chronicle* et des autres feuilles anglaises'; Edmond Texier, 'Chronique hebdomadaire', *Le Siècle*, 1 November 1857, p. 2.
[381] Edmond Texier, 'Chronique hebdomadaire', *Le Siècle*, 1 November 1857, p. 2.
[382] For alternative accounts of Nana Sahib's alleged part in the Cawnpore massacres, see Gupta, pp. 69–72 and pp. 116–18; Mukherjee, 'Satan Let Loose upon Earth', p. 103 and 114–15; Sen, pp. 132–34, pp. 144–46 and pp. 155–56.

such a voyage taking place within the given timeframe.[383] Texier privileges Hornsteet's narrative as a genuine corrective to the hysterical Anglo-centric representations of the massacre: 'les mémoires de cette dame [...] montrèront *sous son vrai jour* cette effroyable catastrophe [the *bibighar* massacre], dont on n'a eu jusqu'à ce jour que des récits tronqués ou exagérés' (emphasis added).[384] Imbued with a special status, Maynard's 'eye witness' is in an unassailable position that can be exploited rhetorically. Thus, Hornsteet, as literary creation, is a highly provocative character — despite and because of being a 'Cawnpore victim', she is a powerful figure through which to challenge the official versions of Nana Sahib and Cawnpore.

Notably, the name of this survivor does not appear in any contemporaneous or later British accounts of these events, unlike, for example, Lieutenant Mowbray Thomson, a commissioned officer of the British Indian Army, whose survival tale is repeatedly cited in the bibliographies of 'mutiny' histories.[385] Hornsteet's story was probably neglected by British histories, not because of its lack of verisimilitude — the merest rumours were given the status of fact throughout the uprisings[386] —, but rather because it did not correspond with the fixed idea of Nana Sahib, nor was it, strictly speaking, an account produced by a British woman. Despite its deceptive title, *Journal d'une dame anglaise*, the main protagonist explicitly states that English is not her national designation, but provides no further elucidation. This biographical detail is shown to mitigate her response to the uprisings:

> Je ne suis pas Anglaise de naissance, je ne le suis devenue que par mariage, aussi aurais-je sacrifié volontiers tous les drapeaux et toutes les gloires de ma patrie adoptive, [...] tous les trésors de la compagnie des Indes, pour sauver la vie de mon mari et celle de mes enfants! Les femmes

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[383] A similar journey was made during the uprisings by Reverend Hay, an American missionary stationed in Allahabad, who took eighty six days to travel from Allahabad to Calcutta (by steamboat) and from Calcutta to Southampton via Egypt; 'A Missionary's account of the Indian Outbreak', *The Times*, 16 September 1857, p. 4. A period of one hundred and five days elapses between Mme Hornsteet's approximate date of departure from Cawnpore (sometime after 15 July 1857) to the printing of her story in *Le Siècle* (1 November 1857). Moreover, her journey started nearly two hundred kilometres further away than Reverend Hay's, necessitating an additional overland journey from Cawnpore to Allahabad (after which she, like Hay, took the steamboat from Calcutta to Southampton via Suez) and from Southampton to Paris.

[384] Edmond Texier, 'Chronique hebdomadaire', *Le Siècle*, 1 November 1857, p. 2.

[385] Mowbray Thomson escaped from the second massacre at the Satichaura ghat (27 June 1857) and published his story subsequently as *The Story of Cawnpore* (1859). During the uprisings, *The Times* made no reference to Mme Hornsteet despite high levels of interest in locating possible survivors. Moreover, one of the most extensive recent accounts of the Cawnpore massacres, Ward's *Our Bones are Scattered* (1996), makes no mention of a Mrs Hornsteet.

[386] Guha, pp. 251–77; Sharpe, pp. 61–69; Bhabha, pp. 198–211.

comprendront mon égoïsme d'épouse et de mère! Peter, lui, au contraire, mon mari [...] ne pensait encore qu'à sauvegarder le prestige de la puissance anglaise.387

Although the idea of a woman who places familial duty (a traditionally feminized domain) above that of patriotism (a traditionally masculinized domain) is entrenched within a phallo-centric discourse, within the context of the uprisings her priorities can be seen as an inversion of contemporaneous English-language narratives, which celebrated a masculinized form of female heroism in response to national danger. For example, in a letter to Henry Morley, Dickens wrote that his novella, *The Perils of Certain English Passengers* (1857), was inspired by a desire 'to shadow out [...] the bravery of our ladies in India'.[388] Similarly, Boucicault's play, *Jessie Brown*, celebrates the heroic patriotism of its eponymous heroine, who appeals to her male compatriots to show courage by 'bleed[ing] for the auld braes [hills] of Scotland' rather than submitting to Nana Sahib.[389] Quite apart from Mme Hornsteet's stock femininity, however, it is her explicitly stated non-Britishness that interrupts the potential for her to subscribe to British nationalistic rhetoric.[390] Notably, the only time that she employs a national determinant is when she is seeking her own death — 'Tuez-moi, je suis Anglaise! Tuez-moi comme vous avez tué mes enfants!'[391] — and thereby clearly identifies the British, rather than the European, as the target of *sepoy* aggression.

By speaking from the alternative viewpoint offered by this eye witness, Maynard's text is able both to criticize British colonialism and challenge its imperial myths. In the first instance, Mme Hornsteet's integrity is placed in direct contrast with that of her English husband, Peter, an indigo farmer. Whereas he wishes to shake 'une fois encore et rudement le *golden-tree* (l'arbre aux roupies)' before leaving India, she is attuned to the detrimental effects that this kind of capitalist enterprise has on colonizer–colonized relations: 'je lui faisais remarquer que nous avions beaucoup d'ennemis parmi les *ryots* [...] les ennemis naturels du planteur d'indigo'.[392]

In the second instance, Mme Hornsteet's account could also be employed to contradict the version of events being published in contemporaneous British newspapers. For example, reports in *The Times* pertaining to the massacre at the Satichaura ghat (27 June 1857) claimed

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[387] Maynard, pp. 35–36.
[388] Dickens, 'To Henry Morley (18 October 1857)', in *The Letters of Charles Dickens*, VIII, 468–469.
[389] *Jessie Brown*, I. 3. 115.
[390] As Gould has argued, the uprisings provided 'an opportunity for metropolitan consolidation' by forging 'a greater British identity in the face of an imperial crisis, uniting the people of England and Scotland against the mutinous hordes of India'; Marty Russell Gould, 'Role Britannia: Theatricality and Empire in the Victorian Period' (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Iowa, 2005), p. 196.
[391] Maynard, p. 250.
[392] Maynard, pp. 6–7.

that Nana Sahib had ordered his *sepoys* to open fire on Wheeler's evacuees just as they reached their boats: 'No sooner had they [the 'famished garrison'] got into their boats [...] than Nena Sahib opened a fire upon them from the banks, and shot down every man, woman, and child within his reach.'[393] In contrast, Mme Hornsteet describes this event as an unfortunate misunderstanding with dire consequences:

> pendant que nos bateaux quittaient le rivage du Gange, un petit dépôt de poudre [...] prit feu on ne sait comment, et quelques fusils chargés qui se trouvaient là éclatèrent dans l'incendie. Les Hindous, terrifiés par cette explosion, s'imaginèrent entendre la canonnade d'Havelock, et supposèrent que quelques soldats de Weheler [*sic*], restés exprès en arrière dans les retranchements, profitaient du voisinage de l'armée anglaise pour violer la capitulation. De là l'ordre envoyé aux batteries de la rive gauche de foudroyer la flotille partant pour Allahabad; de là l'exaspération des cipayes et de la populace, de là le massacre que le Nana fit cesser dès qu'il eut reconnu la nature de cette fausse alerte.[394]

She summarizes, 'nous avons été victimes d'une méprise et non d'un parjure'; a phrase that could, in many ways, underwrite this entire narrative with its implicit suggestion that Anglo-centric depictions of the uprisings and of Nana Sahib's pivotal and treacherous role within them were both biased and erroneous.[395]

Most controversial is the alternative account of the *bibighar* massacre, which not only vindicates Nana Sahib from any direct involvement in the proceedings, but additionally implies that the captives themselves were partially to blame for their demise. Mme Hornsteet describes how the captured women, especially 'des veuves d'officiers ou d'employés supérieurs', persistently maintained contact with the outside world despite warnings to desist. She writes of her feelings of mistrust and foreboding as the exchanges continue: 'Le manége [*sic*] de ces dames m'inquiétait. Je révoquais en doute l'exactitude des rapports et de leurs espions, d'après lesquels l'armée anglaise ne cessait de remporter des victoires.'[396] In contrast, her credulous British compatriots eagerly digest the propaganda and (like Jessie Brown) await for 'le chant des cornemuses highlandaises' that will signify their salvation.[397] Importantly, it is the discovery of

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[393] *The Times*, 31 August 1857, p. 7. See also, 'The Massacre at Cawnpore', *The Times*, 31 August 1857, p. 5. Trevelyan would later describe this moment as 'the memorable treachery of Cawnpore'; Trevelyan, pp. 108–09.

[394] Maynard, p. 291.

[395] Maynard, p. 290.

[396] Maynard, pp. 292–93.

[397] Maynard, p. 293. *Jessie Brown*, III. 131. For more on this scene in Boucicault's play, see Section 2.2.1, pp. 36–37.

this illegal correspondence, which is directly attributed to the defeat of the rebels at Kullempore, that incites the Indian soldiers and civilians to take action against the prisoners. While Nana Sahib holds a council of war to decide their fate, the people take the decision into their own hands and enter the *bibighar*:

> On délibérait encore sur notre sort au conseil de guerre, et la populace, impatientée, prononçait déjà notre arrêt de mort! Les correspondances de nos compagnes avaient été interceptées; on [la populace] leur attribuait les causes du désastre de Kullempore; nous devions donc être sacrifiées; nous le comprenions; nous regardions avec terreur la porte qui cédait peu à peu sous les efforts de la multitude.[398]

In this paragraph, the persistence of the captives in seeking external intelligence is explicitly linked to their ensuing deaths; a suggestion that would have been highly contentious given the quasi-religious regard with which the Cawnpore victim was held by many Britons at that time.

Finally, Mme Hornsteet's account provides a significantly different 'Nana Sahib' from the monster created by the British press and consolidated in subsequent British texts. In *De Delhi à Cawnpore*, Nana Sahib is projected as a gallant hero who saves Mme Hornsteet and her children during the massacre at the Satichaura ghat:

> Oui, je l'affirme, pas un être n'aurait échappé à la mort, sans l'intervention du plus puissant des chefs de la révolte, de Nana-Saïb. Suivi d'un brillant état-major, il arriva au galop au milieu de l'arène, et un signe de sa main suffit pour faire rentrer les sabres dans leur fourreau et les poignards dans leur gaîne. [...P]resque aussitôt je me relevai en bénissant la Providence.[399]

This heroic and commanding saviour is entirely incongruent with the image created by British newspapers at the time of writing. Rather than repulsion, Hornsteet feels indebted to the benevolent Rajah: 'j'avouerai que j'éprouve pour lui un sentiment de reconnaissance plutôt que de le mépriser, de le haïr et de le maudire; n'est-ce pas à lui seul que nous avons dû la vie ce jour-là, ma fille, mon fils, et moi?'[400] The phrase 'plutôt que de le mépriser...' is clearly directed against those, particularly the British, who had perceived Nana Sahib in a negative light. Speaking through this female eye witness and, as such, from a position of authority, Maynard's

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[398] Maynard, p. 296.

[399] Maynard, p. 289. The Indian national historian, Sen, would later write a similar account of the Satichaura ghat: 'It cannot be gainsaid that the lives of the women and children, who escaped sepoy bullets and sabres that morning, were saved by Nana, and it was due to his orders that the massacre was stopped'; Sen, p. 145.

[400] Maynard, p. 290.

text is, therefore, able to counter the fixity of English-language representations by exculpating Nana Sahib from any active involvement in the massacres and by rehabilitating him as the saviour of the Cawnpore victim.

Twenty-six years later, Richepin's *drame en vers*, *Nana-Sahib* would similarly glorify its eponymous protagonist, creating, as Sutton has pointed out, a 'conventional Romantic hero' who is 'motivated solely by patriotic considerations', while remaining 'above all a lover' to Djamma, the daughter of the Rajah of Bithur, Tippo-Raï.[401] Although by the time this play was first performed (20 September 1883 at the Porte Saint-Martin Theatre in Paris) a quarter of a century had passed since the *bibighar* massacre, the subject of Nana Sahib still had the potential to rouse strong feelings in Britain. *The Times* responded to Richepin's portrayal unenthusiastically by accusing the playwright of having endowed his hero with 'patriotic virtues, intended to captivate the sympathies of the [French] audience' and by protesting that 'the hideous instigator of the Cawnpore massacres' had been invested 'with the slightest touch of romance which could mark him out as being anything better than a ruffian'.[402] Further, it criticized the dramatization of this recent history for its potential to humanize Nana Sahib and destabilize the stock image of Nana Sahib as a demonic and treacherous villain (created by 'authentic history'): 'the ignorant among the spectators are more likely to have formed their opinions from a stirring play than from scraps of authentic history coming to them at second hand'.[403] Of course, no such censure was levelled against those dramatists, such as Boucicault, who had also put the uprisings on stage, but had done so in order to celebrate British heroism.[404]

The Times need not have worried about the ability of Richepin's play to politicize its audience. It was not received well by its critics in France, less due to its subject matter than its artistic poverty. Writing for *Les Annales politiques et littéraires*, Brisson was scathing in his criticism, describing *Nana-Sahib* as having 'aucun art, nulle gradation, nulle succession de sentiment' and leading him to question whether the author was 'mal disposé' when he wrote

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[401] Howard Sutton, *The Life and Work of Jean Richepin* (Geneva: Droz, 1961), p. 165.

[402] *The Times*, 28 December 1883, p. 7.

[403] *Ibid.*

[404] *The Times* praised Boucicault's four-act drama, *Jessie Brown; or, the Relief of Lucknow*, when it first performed at the Drury Lane Theatre in London on 15 September 1862. The reviewer commented, 'It is not too much to say that the good fortune of this piece is fully deserved. [...] The picture of extreme distress [inside the Lucknow residency] is so well composed [...] that the sympathies of the audience are secured for the whole mass of sufferers, and they are relieved as well as Lucknow when an overpowering force drives the rebels from the stage. The final struggle is capitally managed, and the curtain descends on a most impressive tableau, while the orchestra plays "God save the Queen"'; 'Drury-Lane Theatre', *The Times*, 16 September 1862, p. 10.

it.[405] It was also slated by Ganderax in the *Revue des deux mondes* and Bornier in *La Nouvelle Revue* for having conflated several genres: 'une pantomime militaire, et puis un opéra, et puis une féerie', wrote Ganderax; 'S'il veut continuer à écrire pour le théâtre, qu'il considère avant tout ceci: c'est que le théâtre et la poésie sont choses absolument différentes et presque contraires', wrote Bornier.[406] Bornier predicted that its limited popularity (it ran for thirty five performances and closed on 26 January 1884, only one month after its opening night) was likely to be fuelled only by rumours of 'La magnificence des décors, des costumes, de la mise en scène, et surtout le nom de Mme Sarah Bernhardt', not to mention the titillation generated by seeing the celebrity couple, Richepin and Bernhardt, playing the role of lovers on stage as Nana Sahib and Djamma.[407]

More interesting than the artistic merit of this piece is, however, Richepin's romantic portrayal of Nana Sahib and his use of the *drame en vers* as a vehicle for presenting a struggle against colonial dominance. As Sutton posits, Richepin's interest in Nana Sahib may well have had its roots in his broader interests in anti-western movements and proletarian struggles.[408] As a politically engaged form of theatre, the *drame en vers* offered a suitable framework for repackaging Nana Sahib as a historical hero who had attempted to emancipate his kingdom from British colonial rule.[409]

Yet, the uprisings only act as a backdrop to the central drama, being the romantic liaison between Djamma and Nana Sahib. This relationship is threatened by Çimrou, a half-*Brahman* half-pariah, who bribes Djamma's father, Tippo-Raï, by offering him the key to Shiva's treasure in exchange for her hand in marriage. The first four acts follow the transformation of Nana Sahib from being an unpopular Indian ruler who is considered (erroneously) to be in league with the British, to his apotheosis as a figure of Indian liberation who is worshipped by his 'subjects' as the Hindu deity, Shiva. In a speech delivered to his people, Nana Sahib aligns himself with the

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[405] Adolphe Brisson, 'Causerie théatrale', *Les Annales politiques et littéraires*, 30 December 1883, pp. 422–23 (p. 422).

[406] Louis Ganderax, 'Revue dramatique', *Revue des deux mondes*, 15 January 1884, pp. 453–64 (p. 463); Henri de Bornier, 'Revue du theatre: Drame et comédies', *La Nouvelle Revue*, 1 January 1884, pp. 187–99 (p. 198).

[407] Henri de Bornier, 'Revue du theatre: Drame et comédies', *La Nouvelle Revue*, 1 January 1884, pp. 187–99 (p. 198). Jean Marais, who was supposed to play the lead role of Nana Sahib, pulled out at the last minute and was replaced by Richepin; Sutton, p. 65.

[408] Sutton argues that Richepin saw in Nana Sahib the same 'incarnation of the fierce independence and the hatred of Occidental civilization which he admired in the Turanians, so often celebrated in his early writings'; Sutton, p. 163.

[409] The *drame en vers* was produced under the Third Republic and was used to treat 'exalted themes in rhetorical verses against a pseudo-historical background'; Sutton, p. 152. It had evolved from the eighteenth century *drame* created by Diderot, which was used by the *philosophes* as a vehicle for 'social and moral progress'; *The New Oxford Companion to Literature in French*, ed. by Peter France (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995), p. 256.

crowd by describing the pain caused by their mutual subjugation under British rule: 'Je baisais cette main qui nous fourgeait des chaînes.'[410] Employing the rhetoric of slavery and emancipation, he implores them to find the strength to break their chains by drawing on their hatred for the colonizers. This is depicted metaphorically as 'Ce palais de ma haine' built from the blood of his 'subjects': 'vos deuils en ont sculpté la porte'.[411] Through this oration, Nana Sahib intends to inspire an uprising that will destroy the colonizer, 'Comme un dieu réveillé qui marche dans son temple', and will offer his people the chance to exact a necessary revenge:[412]

Ils ont soif de vengeance, et j'aurais des remords
De ne point leur verser cette ivresse sauvage
Pour y cuver l'oubli de leur long esclavage.[413]

Thus, rather than telling the story of a brutal massacre, Richepin's play speaks of the revenge of the Indian people for their enslavement at the hands of the British. The climatic scene at the end of Act III, halfway through the play, depicts this moment. The stage directions read, 'Fusillade par les soldats et la foule. Les Anglais, femmes, enfants, blessés, tombent en poussant des cris. Une jeune fille debout, et fière, et quelques hommes, entonnent l'air du "God save the Queen".'[414] While this violence does not endear Nana Sahib or the baying Indian crowd to the spectator, the spectacle is softened by the lack of empathy generated by the script towards the British captives who collectively represent the pitiless rulers of India.

The last three acts are set in the post-mutiny period, during which time a less bellicose and more romantic side of Nana Sahib's character is developed. Returning from exile and marked as a wanted man following the invasion of British troops, he re-enters Cawnpore in disguise as a 'pariah' in order to rescue Djamma. In his absence, her father, Tippo-Raï, has not only agreed to trade her virginity to Çimrou for Shiva's treasure, but has also treacherously sold his people to the British in order to assure the continuation of his pension.[415] Djamma laments the exiled Nana Sahib, remembering him as a courageous leader who, she predicts, will return to fight once more:

Tu n'es pas mort! Parmi les chants de la trompette,

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[410] *Nana-Sahib*, II. 3. 57.
[411] *Ibid.*
[412] *Ibid.*
[413] *Nana-Sahib*, II. 3. 59.
[414] *Nana-Sahib*, III. 11. 75.
[415] *Nana-Sahib*, V. 5. 101–02.

Les cris, les coups de feu, le galop des chevaux,

Tu reviendras encor [sic] pour des combats nouveaux;

Et l'on verra du bout de ta lame brandie

Le sang pleuvoir, ainsi que dans un incendie

Des flammèches de feu s'éparpillent au vent.

Je le sens, je le sais, tu dois être vivant.[416]

In these monologues, the sympathy of the spectator is intentionally drawn towards the plight of the lovers and away from the British and their Indian allies (namely Tippo-Raï).

The play reaches its dramatic denouement in the caves where Shiva's treasure is buried and, like Aladdin's cave, is protected from entrance and exit by a password that only Çimrou knows. The final act opens with an outraged Djamma being led by her father into the caves to be handed over to Çimrou.[417] The timely arrival of Nana Sahib prevents the exchange (and the implied rape) from taking place, leading to a duel between the two rivals.[418] Çimrou is mortally wounded and refuses to relinquish the password, entrapping all three protagonists underground. Unlike the traitor, Tippo-Raï, and in opposition to Anglo-centric accounts, Nana Sahib's character is shown to be irreproachable in his refusal to trade Djamma for his freedom. Instead, the couple decide to sacrifice themselves through the honourable act of self-immolation that serves ultimately to protect Djamma's virginity. But more than just presenting Nana Sahib as a romantic hero, this final act of devotion celebrates him as a symbol of anti-colonial resistance in opposition to those less scrupulous Indian rulers (such as Tippo-Raï) who had collaborated with the British colonizer. By inverting Anglo-centric depictions of Nana Sahib as a traitor and a monster, and by recasting him as a figure of integrity and chivalry who contrasts with the treachery of the British, Nana-Sahib is able to gain a moral victory over the frère ennemi, which undoubtedly explains the outraged response of The Times in 1884.

A similar process of rehabilitating and exploiting Nana Sahib rhetorically can be found in Grèce's late-twentieth-century fiction, La Femme sacrée. This historical novel presents itself as a counter-narrative to the authoritative British accounts of 1857–58 by characterizing Nana Sahib as one of several revolutionary Indian leaders to have emerged from the uprisings. In this case, the focus is not on the Cawnpore massacres, but on the biography of Lakshmi Bai, the Rani

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[416] Nana-Sahib, V. 5. 102.

[417] 'Ainsi deux trafiquants disputant d'un marché', she cries, 'Et l'object du trafic, c'est mon cœur arraché!'; Nana-Sahib, VII. 1. 121.

[418] In response to Djamma's protestations, Çimrou states, 'Ah! ce farouche orgueil comme un fard te décore. Vivante ou morte, soit! Je t'aurai', and the stage directions read that 'Il se rue sur elle'; Nana-Sahib, VII. 1. 122.

of Jhansi, who, in 1858, led a series of assaults against the British: 'La plupart des historiens anglais en ont fait une femme ambitieuse et sans scrupules, assoiffée de pouvoir et de vengeance', writes Grèce in the postface, 'La vérité est tout autre comme le raconte ce livre.'[419] Presented as a historical fiction that is 'rigoureusement authentique', this text takes a contraposition to British accounts by writing from the perspective of an Indian woman who is also a leader of the revolts.[420] Viewed through Lakshmi's eyes (although directed through the omnipotent narrator), the uprisings are transformed from being an impromptu moment of colonial crisis into a historical turning point in the development of Indian nationalism. This is indicated by the prolific use of terms, such as 'la révolution', 'les patriotes', 'la liberté', 'l'esprit de résistance' and 'victoire morale', in lieu of what the British narratives preferred to term a 'mutiny' led by 'monsters' such as Nana Sahib.[421] Consequently, like Maynard's and Richepin's 'Nana Sahibs', Grèce's text reconfigures his character and role within the uprisings. As will be shown, by presenting him as the childhood friend of Lakshmi Bai, Nana Sahib ('ce grand frère') is first humanized and then absolved from any link to the *bibighar* massacre, before emerging as an anti-British revolutionary leader, or as 'le chef dont nous [les Indiens] avons tant besoin', to be celebrated alongside other key figures, such as the Rani, Azimullah and Tatya Tope.[422]

In the first instance, rather than portraying Nana Sahib as a two-dimensional demonic monster, *La Femme sacrée* adds a humanistic dimension to his biography, such as his devotion to Lakshmi, his love for Husseinee Hanum, his renowned generosity, his bonhomie and the respect that he inspires among his peers.[423] Under this more flattering light, his character is not only transformed from that produced by British representations, but he is also re-presented as a victim of Britain's aggressive annexation policies, his hereditary rights having been disregarded by Dalhousie.[424] Despite writing over a century and a quarter after these events, Grèce's text offers a strikingly similar negative portrayal of British colonialism to that of the French press in

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[419] Grèce, p. 475.

[420] *Ibid.*

[421] It is worth noting that, in using these terms, Grèce was clearly influenced by his source materials. He based his portrayal of Lakshmi Bai on Savarkar's highly nationalistic Indian history, *The Indian War of Independence, 1857* (1909) in which (as mentioned earlier) the Rani is presented, along with Nana Sahib, as a great national hero. For more information, see footnote 348. For an in-depth analysis on the use of the term 'révolution' in French-language representations of 1857–58, see Sections 4.4 and 4.5.

[422] Grèce, p. 162 and p. 170. Like Lakshmi Bai, Tatya Tope was also a childhood friend of Nana Sahib's. During the uprisings, he led Nana Sahib's troops and was viewed, along with Lakshmi Bai and Nana Sahib, as one of Britain's most important enemy targets, the British having accused him of ordering 'the stragglers and the wounded' to be killed during the Satichaura ghat massacre; Ward, p. 327.

[423] Grèce, pp. 161–70.

[424] One of Lakshmi's advisors, Kashmiri Mull, reminds her 'comment il [Dalhousie] a agi avec ton ami d'enfance, Nana Sahib. Lui aussi était le fils adoptif du vieux rajah de Bithur, et à la mort de ce dernier [...] Dalhousie refusa de reconnaître l'adoption et annexa l'Etat. Crois-moi, Reine, Jansi n'est qu'une étape dans sa détermination de joindre aux territoires anglais le plus d'Etats princiers possible'; Grèce, p. 51.

1857–58: the East India Company is described as 'cette puissance lointaine, mystérieuse et pourtant bien présente qui, depuis un siècle et demi, grignotait l'Inde, Etat par Etat, à coup de guerre et de diktat'; Dalhousie is considered to be worse than the *Thugs* since he 'a mis la corde au cou de tout un peuple'; and the British, in general, are labelled 'vautours' scavenging among the remains of India's princely states.[425] Revolution is, therefore, an affirmative act against a pervasive colonial power, one that will prevent India from being entirely reduced to slavery: 'L'Inde, Reine, n'est pas seulement humiliée. Elle est réduite en esclavage', says a jeweller sent by Nana Sahib to convince Lakshmi to join their movement,

> Les annexions d'Etats [...] ne sont qu'un début. Les Anglais ont l'intention de s'emparer de tous les Etats princiers, avec ou sans prétexte. Ils veulent écraser sous leurs bottes nos traditions, notre religion, notre liberté. Ils n'ont qu'un but, réduire l'Inde entière en esclavage. Seule la révolte nous épargnera cette mort lente.[426]

Via this spokesperson, the Rajah of Bithur is revealed to be a principled revolutionary leader whose aim is no less than the restoration of India's freedom after a long period of enslavement. As he later explains to Lakshmi in person: 'Mon père a été humilié lorsque les Anglais l'ont déposé. J'ai été humiliée lorsque les Anglais ont refusé de reconnaître mon adoption et m'ont détrôné. Toi, tu as été humilié lorsqu'ils t'ont dépossédée. L'Inde entière a été humiliée. C'est assez.'[427] For Nana Sahib, now is the time, not for 'rancœur', but 'les révolutions'.[428] Hence, his mission is not motivated by a selfish desire for vengeance for a private offence at the hands of the British government — or being 'animated by personal pique', as one British officer claimed in 1857[429] —, but by a deep-rooted concern for India's humiliation at the hands of an external colonizer.

All the same, like Maynard's eye-witness account and Richepin's *drame*, Grèce's novel cannot avoid engaging with the question of Nana Sahib's involvement in the Cawnpore massacres. This problem is resolved by canalizing it through Lakshmi. Based on hearsay, her initial reaction to the massacre of Wheeler's garrison is one of disapproval and shock: 'La rani avait été ulcérée à l'idée que Nana Sahib ait trahi sa parole et fait exécuter des hommes qui s'étaient rendus à lui.'[430] Similarly, she is appalled by the news that the women and children

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[425] Grèce, p. 13, p. 57 and p. 75.
[426] Grèce, p. 96.
[427] Grèce, p. 169.
[428] *Ibid.*
[429] 'The Indian Mutinies: Benares, 22 July', *The Times*, 19 September 1857, p. 8.
[430] Grèce, p. 250.

imprisoned in the *bibighar* had been killed at Nana Sahib's behest.[431] Yet in both instances, these versions of events, being the dominant narratives of British imperialism, are denounced through an alternative perspective. In the first case, Naransin, her prime minister, informs her that the responsibility lay with a group of 'cipayes fanatiques' who had opened fire on Wheeler's depleted garrison.[432] Far from playing an active role in this massacre, Nana Sahib is reported as having 'réussi à sauver deux ou trois cents femmes et enfants qu'il avait fait enfermer dans un palais de Cawnpore pour mettre à l'abri';[433] an image that resonates with those found in Mme Hornsteet's and Richepin's accounts. In the second case, Tatya Tope explains to Lakshmi that although Nana Sahib had rejected outright the idea of killing the prisoners stationed in the *bibighar*, his orders had been disobeyed by Husseinee Hanum, who had commanded five men to kill the women and children.[434] The 'official' version of this most controversial of massacres is further nuanced by placing it within the wider context of British atrocity. As Tatya Tope states, 'Tu te lamentes sur deux cents femmes et enfants anglais massacrés, et tu ne pleures pas sur les milliers et les milliers de nos frères qui meurent quotidiennement à Cawnpore de la main des Anglais?', adding, by way of example, 'les exécutions sommaires, les fusillades, les pendaisons sans discrimination de sexe ni d'âge'.[435] In this way, Grèce's fiction foregrounds how the figure of Nana Sahib was demonized and mobilized to justify unprecedented acts of cruelty against the Indian populace and, just like Marenis's *La Révolte sans âme*, it reveals how that justification was based on a falsification of the facts:

> Après avoir pris la ville, certains Anglais ont rajouté sur les murs de la maison Bibigarh [*sic*] des inscriptions touchantes, soi-disant rédigées par les femmes et les enfants à leur dernière heure, afin d'exciter encore plus la fureur meurtrière de leurs compatriotes. Ils ont fait du massacre de Bibigarh [*sic*] une excuse qui leur permet d'exercer leurs représailles sans retenue.[436]

In this scene, the British are caught in the act of creating and enhancing their own myth, which has a real and violent effect upon those Indians that the British military chose to punish in the place of Nana Sahib.[437] It is against this unwanted and damaging colonial presence that revolutionaries such as Nana Sahib, Lakshmi and Tatya Tope stand: 'Je me bats pour libérer

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[431] Grèce, p. 272.
[432] Grèce, p. 250.
[433] *Ibid.*
[434] Grèce, p. 273.
[435] Grèce, p. 272.
[436] Grèce, p. 274.
[437] As mentioned earlier, Russell also notes the falsifying of evidence on the *bibighar* walls in his *Diary*. For more information, see Section 2.2.1, p. 32.

notre pays, pour l'empêcher de retomber sous les griffes anglaises', says Tatya Tope.[438] Like Maynard and Richepin, it is by writing against the prevailing discourse of the 'barbaric' Indian insurgent by transforming the Indian 'other' into a heroic agent of an anti-British movement that the wrongs of British colonialism can be exhibited. Tacitly, it is also also through these revolutionary characters that the French voice can gain a victory over its old colonial rival.

To summarize, irrespective of whether or not Nana Sahib was the perpetrator of the Cawnpore massacres, examples taken from British and French writing demonstrate the extent to which his representational forms reflect and contrast with each other, revealing the implicit ambiguity of colonial discourse, as well as the underlying competition between French and British colonialism discourses. It is, therefore, his use as a polemical tool that has been of interest here. He is employed, on the one hand, to justify British aggression against the Indian populace and continued colonial rule, but, on the other, as a provocative and malleable trope that could be made to stand for a corrupt colonial system and to voice a counter-discourse against France's foremost rival, the British. As such, the figure of 'Nana Sahib', like the *bibighar* massacre and its female victims, can be seen as another *mythe* or énoncé whose constructs are laid bare and challenged by French writing. As will be argued in the remaining chapters of this thesis, it is in lieu of a viable French alternative that Indian leaders, such as Nana Sahib, and the anti-colonial uprisings, more broadly, are adopted as agents to convey and perform the Franco-centric fantasy of India's 'freedom' from British rule.

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[438] Grèce, p. 274.

4.1   Introduction

The controversy surrounding the naming of the Indian uprisings has a long history to which the plethora of contrasting terminologies attests. As Mukherjee postulates, the deliberations surrounding the different titles that could be attached to this historical moment — such as 'mutiny, war of independence, feudal uprising' — have produced little more than a 'sterile debate on nomenclature' and 'a kind of "mental cramp"' that threatens to overshadow the more important issues at hand, namely the popular roots of the insurgency.[439] Clearly, the restrictive term, 'Indian Mutiny', being the common vernacular within British colonial historiography, fails to capture the idea that numerous Indian-led demonstrations took place against British rule, not only among military personnel, but also across all levels of Indian society, from the peasants who farmed the land to the dispossessed landed classes. Likewise, the more expansive terms that have been used in Indian historiography, such as Savarkar's *The Indian War of Independence, 1857* (1909), artificially impose a nationalist teleology upon these events, ascribing to them an embryonic role within the history of the Indian nation.

While acknowledging the extensive debates that have been engendered by the broadly oppositional titles used in British and Indian texts, the focus of this chapter is, alternatively, on a third point of comparison: the nomenclatures used within French-language writing of the nineteenth century. Having considered how the French voice defines the British 'other' through its violent excesses (in Chapter Two) and how the Indian 'other' is mobilized as a figure through which to speak out against the *frère ennemi* (in Chapter Three), this chapter now questions how the uprisings as a whole are used as a subject through which to voice the Gallo-centric fantasy of India's freedom. Through a selection of French texts (including French newspapers, 1857–58; Warren's *L'Inde anglaise: Avant et après l'insurrection de 1857*, 1857; Darville's *L'Inde contemporaine: Chasse aux tigres, L'Indoustan, Nuits de Delhi et Révolte de Cipayes*, 1874; and Verne's *Vingt mille lieues sous les mers*, 1870; *L'Île mystérieuse*, 1874; and *La Maison à vapeur*, 1880), it questions how metropolitan writing from 1857 onwards has engaged in the process of naming these events by consciously or subconsciously employing what can be seen as counter-descriptive terms to the so-called 'mutiny', notably 'insurrection' and 'révolution'. In doing so, it compares the Anglo-centric victory narratives (and, to a lesser extent, Indian nationalist discourse)

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[439] Mukherjee, *Awadh in Revolt*, p. xviii.

with those French narratives that have tended to exacerbate the potential for Britain to lose India on the one hand, while denying the possibility for Indian self-rule on the other.

In order to explore these ideas, this chapter begins by identifying a tendency in British literature to write, what are termed here, 'closed narratives', meaning narratives that attempt to limit and manage the impact of 'subject' revolt by using a particular nomenclature, notably 'mutiny'. This reductive language is used as a point of comparison for French metropolitan writing and its opposite proclivity towards, what are termed here, 'open-ended narratives', meaning narratives that either exacerbate the threat of the uprisings to British rule or refuse to subscribe to the idea that the uprisings were definitively quashed by the British.

In order to draw these comparisons, it begins by contrasting British and French journalistic representations of two 'endpoints', or key moments that were celebrated in the British press as significant victories over the Indian rebellion: the capture of Delhi on 20 September 1857 and Queen Victoria's proclamation delivered on 1 November 1858. Secondly, it identifies a tendency within the French press and contemporaneous authors to use more 'expansive' terms than their British equivalents, such as 'insurrection', 'révolution' and 'révolte nationale', thereby inflating the threat that anti-colonial action presented to the future of British rule in India. Finally, it examines how and why late-nineteenth-century French fictions continued to remember the uprisings as a revolutionary movement even after British rule had been reinstated.

By juxtaposing British and French texts, this chapter argues that the specific terms used in the French *métropole* acted as a counterpoint to British narratives of closure. Centrally, it examines the rhetorical effects that naming (particularly 'révolution') has on French representations of British 'victory' and the traditional endings of the 'mutiny', and seeks to expose the colonial and national discourses that underpin such terminological choices. In short, it explores the appropriation of Indian anti-colonial action within French writing as a way of challenging British colonial dominance through specific terminologies, enabling such texts to produce the fantasy of an India freed from British rule, without ever fully subscribing to the idea of Indian freedom.

4.2   'A Military Mutiny': Reductive Nomenclatures in British Texts

It is now generally recognized, at least within academic circles, that the terms used to name 1857–58 are imprinted with national and/or colonial discourses and cannot, therefore, be

used neutrally or objectively.[440] In an attempt to circumnavigate contentious locutions, paratexts (especially prefaces and footnotes) have provided textual spaces in which to rationalize personal choices. Ward, for example, uses the preface to his historical account of the Cawnpore massacres to recount an anecdote that attempts to mitigate his frequent employment of the word 'mutiny':

> Though the Mutiny, even the Great Mutiny, is an inadequate name for what transpired in the Upper Provinces of India in 1857–58, it seems to have outlasted everything else that has been applied to it. [...] But whether in India, the United Kingdom, or the United States, whenever I sit down with historians to talk about 1857, no matter how fastidious we try to be, by the end of the evening we are all talking about the Mutiny.[441]

Despite an avowed preference for the term, '1857 Uprising', this historian confesses to the ineluctable hold that the word 'mutiny' has over his imagination and, in doing so, grants himself permission to use this Anglo-centric appellation.[442] However, in opting for this term, Ward overlooks the various alternatives put forward by other British and Indian authors that are listed in his extensive bibliography. These alternatives include such titles as Henry Mead's *The Sepoy Revolt: Its Causes and Consequences* (1857), Alexander Duff's *The Indian Rebellion* (1858), John William Kaye's *A History of the Sepoy War in India: 1857– 1858* (1875) and *A History of the Great Revolt* (1880), Vinayak Damodar Savarkar's *The Indian War of Independence, 1857* (1909), Asoka Mehta's *1857: The Great Rebellion* (1946), Syed Moinul Haq's *The Great Revolution of 1857* (1968), Moti Lal Bhargava's *Architects of Indian Freedom Struggle* (1981) and Rudrangshu Mukherjee's *Awadh in Revolt 1857-1858: A Study of Popular Resistance* (2002).[443] As this brief list suggests, the insistence on the term 'mutiny' has continued to defy the alternative titles offered by both British historians, such as 'rebellion' and 'revolt', and by Indian academics, such as 'Indian Freedom Struggle', 'Great Revolution' and 'Indian War of Independence'.[444] Of all these

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[440] This circumspection does not necessarily translate to non-academic genres, such as the popular media. In headlines celebrating the one-hundred-fiftieth anniversary of the uprisings in 2007, the British press repeatedly and unproblematically used the term 'mutiny': 'Causes of the Indian Mutiny', *The Telegraph*, 8 May 2007, <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/main.jhtml?xml=/news/2007/05/08/ windia108.xml> [accessed 22 April 2008]; 'Recollections of the Indian Mutiny', *The Times*, 18 August 2007, <http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/life_and_style/court_and_social/article2279867.ece> [accessed 22 April 2008]; Beth Hale and Amrit Dhillon, 'Death Threats and a Hotel Siege for the Britons Trapped in the Indian Mutiny 2007', *Daily Mail*, 26 September 2007, <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/pages/live/articles/news/worldnews.html?in_article_id=483873&in_pag e_id=1811> [accessed 22 April 2008].
[441] Ward, p. xvii.
[442] Ward states that 'For my part I would prefer to call it the 1857 Uprising', although the title of his book clearly labels his account as 'Indian Mutiny of 1857'; Ward, p. xvii.
[443] Ward, pp. 555–70.
[444] This is not to suggest that all Indian writers produce overtly nationalistic accounts of these events. Despite being commissioned by the Indian government to celebrate the centenary of the uprisings,

texts, Savarkar's nationalistic history, *The Indian War of Independence, 1857*, represents the most noteworthy challenge to the reductive nomenclature of British historiography, being the first narrative of the uprisings produced by an Indian author specifically for Indians. As Savarkar states, it sets out to clear the 'shadows obscured by the blurred presentation of partial and prejudiced historians' (namely, the British) from what he terms India's 'Revolutionary War'.[445]

To find that Indian historians have utilized 1857–58 as a prelude to national independence in 1947 is, however, as unremarkable as discovering that British historians have remembered the 'mutiny' as, to quote from Tinker, 'a temporary setback to the process of building up British rule in India'.[446] Notwithstanding this banality, reductive terms, and in particular 'mutiny', have had the collective effect of limiting what was a widespread and complex anti-British (or anti-colonial) movement to little more than a year-long disturbance, 'Great' or otherwise, among Indian Army ranks within British historical writing. Thus, while the continued (albeit nuanced) use of 'mutiny' may be unsurprising, its ubiquity remains important at a semiotic level since it directly affects the way that the past is remembered. This effect can be understood better by considering the etymology of 'mutiny', alongside the negative use of other popular locutions, such as 'rebellion' and 'revolt', in the British press of 1857–58.

In *Webster's* mid-nineteenth-century dictionary (1864), 'mutiny' was defined as an 'Insurrection against constituted authority, particularly military or naval authority; open and violent resistance to the authority of officers; concerted revolt against the rules of discipline; hence, generally, forcible resistance to rightful authority on the part of subordinates.'[447] The *OED* today provides a similar description of 'mutiny' as 'a rebellion of a substantial number of soldiers, sailors, prisoners, etc., against those in authority', or 'Open revolt against constituted authority' by those normally subjected 'to strict discipline, such as soldiers or sailors', or 'behaviour which flouts or shows disregard for discipline.' Although *Webster's* is more emphatic, both definitions assign a negative role to the mutineers, whose actions are considered to be enacted against a rightfully constituted authority and are deemed, as such,

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Sen's history, *Eighteen Fifty-Seven* (1957), for example, draws heavily and often uncritically from its British sources, producing a distinctly pro-British account. As noted by Mukherjee, 'Sen did not link the revolt to the colonial domination and exploitation of India', but rather 'saw British rule as the agent of a social revolution'; Rudrangshu Mukherjee, 'Introduction', in Surendra Nath Sen, *Eighteen Fifty-Seven*, 3rd edn (New Delhi: Publications Division, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India, 1995; first publ. 1957), pp. iii–xi (p. v).

[445] Savarkar, pp. 3–4.

[446] Tinker, '1857 and 1957', p. 57. Nehru, however, denied the uprisings this interpretation and considered that true nationalism would not come until much later, when the people of India were fighting for the freedom of their country and not for 'a lost cause, the feudal order'; Nehru, *The Discovery of India*, p. 325.

[447] Noah Webster, *Dr Webster's Complete Dictionary of the English Language*, rev. by Chauncey A. Goodrich and Noah Porter (London: Bell & Daldy, 1864), p. 871.

to be unlawful. Consequently, its use with regards to 1857–58 not only defines the act of mutiny as a crime that violates the laws of British governance, but also persistently forces readers to imagine the uprisings within a specifically military frame of reference, thereby writing out the involvement of other social groups in these events. As such, 'mutiny' is a useful term that renders unlawful the act of anti-colonial resistance and limits its influence upon society to military personnel only.[448]

By using this term and its attendant meanings, *The Times* in 1857–58 was able to refute the potential for insurgent action to be considered coordinated and national, presenting it instead as lacking in ideology, disorganized and *ad hoc*:

> Had this revolt [...] sprung from the people [...] there would have been [...] a strong *primâ facie* ground that we had been maltreating them [...]. But the motive of a military mutiny is ambition. [...] [I]t is also satisfactory to find this out, because a military mutiny is a decidedly manageable thing [...] a thing we can put down.[449]

With almost explicit self-consciousness, this article reveals its attempts to limit the psychological impact of a general uprising specifically by using the word 'mutiny', since this (rather than a revolt of the people) was 'a decidedly manageable thing'.[450] This example demonstrates a clear desire to narrativize these events in a specific way — a 'mutiny' in the above example anticipates the quick reestablishment of the legal *status quo* following a period of unwanted disruption. Hence, its widespread use with regards to the Indian uprisings makes the assumption that the 'legitimate' authority, Britain, will eventually and inevitably triumph over the 'unlawful' insurgents.

When terms other than 'mutiny' were used, they were often nuanced or qualified to abstract any positive notions that could be gleaned from them. For example, 'rebellion' was also a popular locution for these events. Like 'mutiny', it was used to refer to an act of treachery against an established authority, being defined by *Webster's* as the 'open and avowed renunciation of the authority of the government to which one owes allegiance' or 'the taking of arms traitorously to resist the authority of lawful government'.[451] When compared with a 'mutiny', however, a 'rebellion' meant a movement involving a much broader section of society, while additionally suggesting a much greater organizational structure.[452] Although keen to emphasize conspiracy among insurgents and Indian leaders at

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[448] As discussed in Section 3.2, pp. 75–77, the terms used to describe Nana Sahib connote a similar sense of lawlessness and anti-authoritarianism.

[449] *The Times*, 3 August 1857, p. 8.

[450] *Ibid.*

[451] Webster, p. 1094.

[452] The *OED* describes 'rebellion' as an 'Organized armed resistance to the ruler or government of one's country; insurrection, revolt'. As Guha writes, a rebellion is 'open and public' in character and

one level, the idea of viewing the uprisings as a coordinated effort on the part of Indian people to overturn colonial rule was something that British authorities and newspapers were keen to downplay during 1857–58. Thus, when *The Times*'s editorial columns used this term, they tended to qualify it by emphasizing, for example, disorganization. The insurgents are described as 'not in overt rebellion', but in a 'state of anarchy' and 'dispersed over the country with arms in their hands', or as 'without leaders, without heart, without organization, and generally without an object'.[453]

Similarly, the positive connotations that could be associated with a 'revolt', being another commonly used term to describe the uprisings, were negated by qualifying the noun.[454] Despite its similarity to 'mutiny' and 'rebellion', in the sense that it means to renounce allegiance to a ruler, a 'revolt' does not enforce the rightfulness of the leadership that is being repudiated and, as such, has the ability to connote a sense of injustice on the part of the person or persons revolting.[455] Thus, in 1857–58, 'revolt' was often tempered in *The Times* with other adjectives or descriptive phrases, such as 'a senseless Revolt', 'a purely military revolt', 'A revolt exploding with [...] murderous violence, extending over a greater portion of the Army', 'a sudden cloud of revolt' and, worst of all, by comparing the revolt to Nana Sahib: 'The type of the revolt is Nena Sahib [*sic*].'[456] These qualifiers expunged any positive meaning that could be deduced from this term by circumscribing it within a limited and negative boundary: the revolt is only military, not general; it is thoughtless, not idealized; it is malicious, not rightful.

It was precisely against these often repeated ideas that Indian authors, such as Savarkar, would later write by claiming instead that uprisings were an organized countrywide effort driven by 'the forces of the Revolution' to overthrow British rule.[457] In contrast, the strategic use of reductive terms, such as 'military mutiny' and, to a lesser extent, 'revolt' or 'rebellion', enabled Britons throughout 1857–58 to imagine a swift end to what

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differentiates itself 'from the typically individualistic or small-group operation of crime. A rebellion (to borrow Lefebvre's term for the peasant revolts in France in 1789) is indeed a "collective enterprise"'; Guha, p. 115.

[453] *The Times*, 20 July 1857, p. 8. Although leaders did emerge from the uprisings, their power was often downplayed, the Mughal emperor, for example, being generally considered as nothing more than a 'puppet'; *The Times*, 1 September 1857, p. 6.

[454] A revolt was defined by *Webster's* as 'a renunciation of allegiance and subjection to one's prince or government'; Webster, p. 1155.

[455] Since the seventeenth century, 'revolt' has been used to refer to 'An act [...] on the part of an individual; a movement of strong protest against, or refusal to submit to, some condition, practice, etc' (*OED*).

[456] *The Times*, 30 June 1857, p. 9; *The Times*, 1 July 1857, p. 9; *The Times*, 20 July 1857, p. 8; *The Times*, 1 August 1857, p. 9; *The Times*, 1 September 1857, p. 6.

[457] Savarkar repeatedly emphasized the organized nature of the uprisings by the pan-Indian 'forces of the Revolution'; Savarkar, p. 71. He viewed 1857–58, not as an *ad hoc* and impromptu mutiny, but as a carefully planned operation that, through Hindu and Muslim unification, would free India and result in the formation of 'the United States of India [...] under the Indian rulers and princes'; Savarkar, p. 76.

threatened to become a national movement. Hence, *The Times*'s insistence on the term 'military mutiny' and its negative employment of other descriptive terms can be seen as a kind of Barthesian *mythe* that ushered in or signified a particular message, in this case that the disturbances would quickly be brought to a close and that Britain's 'rightful' dominance would be re-established once Delhi had been recaptured.[458]

By repeatedly placing the uprisings within this limited nomenclature, *The Times* sketched out a heroic victory narrative from which few nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century British writers would deviate. As one editorialist mused in 1857,

> Who shall say whether, before we are much older, we shall not be looking back with wonder at the coolness and confidence with which the nation received the news of the great Indian Mutiny of 1857? [...] We will not talk of the loss of Empire, because the power of this country to reconquer any tract from Asiatic soldiery is incontestable.[459]

The confidence of this kind of journalistic rhetoric was, of course, constantly undermined by the escalation of the revolts across India and the continuing difficulties of quashing sedition well into 1859. Despite this, the idea of the uprisings as a protracted and widespread campaign has constantly been denied by the persistent use of key terms that have steadfastly refused to reflect what was a real challenge to the British empire and/or to connect it with a desire for independence.[460] It is through these appellations that the censorious impact of these events on British colonial discourse and on the memory of the British in India is thus reduced. In short, the strategic use of the reductive phrase, 'military mutiny', has played a key role in a polemical word game that endeavours to manage crisis through language.

4.3 Open-Ended Narratives in Metropolitan Writing of 1857–58: Challenging Britain's Victory Tales

Throughout the uprisings, the dissimulative language used by the British press did not go unnoticed across the Channel. *L'Univers* highlighted the evasive and ambiguous nature of English-language reports: 'Les événements de l'Inde produisent en Angleterre une sensation plus grande que les journaux ne veulent l'avouer.'[461] *Le Siècle* noted a similar tendency by

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[458] Under the heading 'Le mythe est une parole', Barthes wrote 'le mythe est un système de communication, c'est un message. On voit par là que le mythe ne saurait être un objet, un concept, ou une idée; c'est un mode de signification, c'est une forme'; Barthes, p. 193.

[459] *The Times*, 21 July 1857, p. 9.

[460] See, for example, Tinker, '1857 and 1957', p. 57.

[461] Barrier, *L'Univers: Union Catholique*, 2 July 1857, pp. 1–2 (p. 1).

foregrounding the overly optimistic representations of anti-colonial rebellion generated by the London press:

> les journaux de Londres font de patriotiques efforts pour soutenir l'esprit public; cependant le commentaire dont ils accompagnent les nouvelles *laisse percer* une légitime inquiétude, non pas sur l'issue définitive de cette lutte, mais sur les épreuves qui peuvent être encore réservées à l'Angleterre avant d'en voir la fin (emphasis added).[462]

The vaguely admiring and sympathetic tone of this second quotation, indicated by the approving phrase 'patriotiques efforts', can perhaps be accounted for by the fact that *Le Siècle* was more pro-British than many of its contemporaries, such as *L'Univers*.[463] Irrespective of their political affiliations, however, these examples indicate a tendency among French journalists to question the rhetoric of the British press. Thus, although Said claims that the idea of an 'eastern' threat to 'western' colonialism was beyond the imaginative scope of any nineteenth-century British or French national, the extracts above both suggest that when it came to presenting the colonial crises of the *frère ennemi*, the situation was altogether different.[464]

More than simply exposing the anxiety underpinning British reports towards the outcome of the revolts, the French press also adopted a more expansive language to their British counterparts. Whereas *The Times* persistently used the term 'military mutiny' to manage and contain the way that the uprisings were represented to their readers, from the outset many French-language newspapers stressed the possibility of the revolts becoming a more general phenomenon that threatened to kindle a spirit of nationalism among India's disparate populations. This is evident even in those newspapers that (initially at least) supported the British within the broad parameters of standing behind the 'civilized' European over the 'barbaric' eastern 'other'. For example, Boniface's article, written for *Le Constitutionnel* in July 1857, expressed support for the British in India: '[L'insurrection] sera réprimée, nous l'espérons sincèrement pour l'honneur et le triomphe de notre civilisation que la Grande-Bretagne représente contre le fanatisme hindou.'[465] However, this encouragement was tempered with the pessimism of the preceding comments: 'D'un moment à l'autre,

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[462] Emile de la Bédollière, 'Partie politique: Courrier', *Le Siècle*, 21 September 1857, p. 1.
[463] For more information on those sections of the French press that supported the British (at least initially), see footnote 193.
[464] In his preface to *Culture and Imperialism*, Said imagines how a British or a French person might have felt about their respective colonies in India and North Africa, and concludes that 'Above all, your sense of power scarcely imagined that those "natives" who appeared either as subservient or sullenly uncooperative were ever going to be capable of finally making you give up India or Algeria. Or of saying anything that might perhaps contradict, challenge, or otherwise disrupt the prevailing discourse'; Said, *Culture and Imperialism*, p. xxiv.
[465] L. Boniface, 'Paris, 23 juillet', *Le Constitutionnel*, 24 July 1857, p. 1.

l'insurrection pouvait devenir générale, gagner les garnisons demeurées fidèles, se communiquer aux populations'; 'Aujourd'hui l'insurrection est presque générale, et le prestige anglais se trouve gravement atteint'; 'Grave péril dans le présent, embarras presque insurmontable pour l'avenir, voilà ce qui résulte de l'insurrection'; and:

> l'insurrection est dans toute sa force, et l'Angleterre n'a qu'une poignée d'hommes pour y tenir tête. [...] Voilà le faible rempart [40,000 European soldiers versus 150 'millions d'âmes'] que l'Angleterre doit opposer à toute une armée en révolte, et bientôt peut-être à toute une population que le moindre accident peut d'un jour à l'autre entraîner dans les rangs des insurgés.[466]

The threatening message of this article contrasts directly with the editorial line taken by *The Times* only three days earlier, in which the 'natives' were depicted as 'indisposed to any sympathy with the mutineers' and the 'mutiny' was presented as having resulted in 'discomfiture and defeat already' and 'likely to re-establish British power on a new basis'.[467]

The expansiveness in the French press in opposition to the foreclosure of *The Times* is especially noticeable in the way that key British victories were reported on opposite sides of the Channel, particularly during the recapture of Delhi on 20 September 1857 and Queen Victoria's Proclamation delivered on 1 November 1858. As this section will now demonstrate, on both occasions, the French press refused to accept the bombastry of their European neighbours and directly questioned Britain's presumption that it had triumphed definitively over the Indian insurgents.

The official British version of events claimed that the recapture of Delhi was a great national victory and a triumph of bravery against all numerical odds. Even those texts that later attempted to present a more circumspect view of the uprisings, such as Flora Annie Steel's *On the Face of the Waters* (1897), with its criticism of British racism and its attempt to acknowledge Indian perspectives, remain guided by a desire to celebrate the British soldiers that took part in the siege of Delhi, notably 'Nikalseyn' (General Nicholson).[468] Naturally, the British press in 1857 hailed their overseas protagonists, with *The Times*, for example, marking this as an occasion in which to celebrate the end of the disturbances: 'The

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[466] *Ibid.*

[467] *The Times*, 20 July 1857, p. 8.

[468] As Lothspeich points out, Steel considered her novel 'to be an unbiased and accurate account of the 1857 rebellion' despite the fact that she 'draws on contemporary stereotypes of Indian men (especially Muslim men of rank) as decadent and depraved, as well as sensational, largely unsubstantiated rumors about the rape of white women'; Lothspeich, p. 3. 'Nikalseyn' is celebrated throughout the final section of the novel, which is aptly entitled 'There Arose a Man' in honour of his successful charge against the insurgents at Delhi. He is described as having 'the Great Gift. He could take a man's heart out and look at it, and put it back sounder than it had been in years. He could put his own heart into a whole camp and make it believe it was its own'; Steel, p. 359.

first act of the great Drama of Retribution [...] has therefore closed, and before the second begins the spectators have time to meditate on the plot of the piece and the actors who have assisted in its development.'[469] In this quotation, the uprisings become part of a theatrical performance — the allegory being 'the great Drama of Retribution' — in which national heroes play the role of historical characters performing an inevitable and rightful ('retributive') victory in the name of the empire. On this metaphorical 'stage', India is reduced to an entertaining spectacle for the readers of *The Times* in which good predictably triumphs over evil.

In 1857, this narrative ending was played out on the real stages of London's theatres in the dramatization of the battle of Delhi. For example, the playbill of W. Cooke's *The Storming and Capture of Delhi*, shown at Astley's from 23 November 1857, promised to feature rebels being blown from the end of canons by way of signalling this conclusive victory. Yet, as Gould notes, the play 'stops short at the threshold of horror, leaving to the imagination the full realization of scenes too disturbing to show'.[470] In doing so, it 'commemorates a key moment in the history of the Mutiny, celebrates military ardor without the stains of blood or violence, champions will and virtue over action, and refrains from prematurely giving closure to a war still raging half a world away'.[471] In other words, by expunging scenes of violence from the stage set, *The Storming and Capture of Delhi* was able to leave the illusion of victory and heroism intact, since graphic depictions of this violence would have all too obviously revealed the innate horror of the punishments being carried out by the British military.

This same desire to gloss over the mass executions of Indian insurgents and civilians and bring the uprisings to a definitive conclusion can be seen in *The Times*, which justified punishment as a necessary step towards a bright future for Indo-British relations,

> We conclude therefore that the neck of the mutiny is now broken, its head crushed, and that nothing remains but feeble, dislocated, writhing fragments. In the end what escapes our arms will be absorbed into the mass of the people, and, befriended by time and returning prosperity, may so escape the retribution due to its crimes.[472]

As the image of the headless or leaderless rebels suggests, the fall of Delhi was celebrated as 'a deathblow', with Bahadur Shah II condemned as 'the mock King who had ruled in

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[469] 'The Fall of Delhi', *The Times*, 27 October 1857, p. 8. *The Times* added the caveat that 'we are not to suppose that the difficulties of the war are over', noting among the elements that remained to be quelled those mutineers who had been dispersed from Delhi and who were likely to join other insurgent groups, notably 'Nena Sahib and the insurgents of Oude'.
[470] Gould, 'Role Britannia', p. 211.
[471] Gould, 'Role Britannia', pp. 211–12.
[472] 'The Fall of Delhi', *The Times*, 27 October 1857, p. 8.

trembling state'.[473] It was this triumph that gave rise to a renewed confidence in British authority — 'we may hear with indifference of the sporadic outbreaks of the mutineers'[474] — and was seen to reaffirm the future of the British empire in India.

These self-assured reports were troubled, however, by the reaction of the press across Europe:

> Since the tide of success in India has been turned against the mutineers, notwithstanding their numbers, by the unconquerable fortitude of our isolated countrymen, the journals of certain European States have exchanged their forebodings of disaster for deprecations of vengeance, and, instead of forecasting the ruin of England, have employed themselves in denouncing the spirit of revenge which they assume to be rampant in British hearts.[475]

The 'European States' to which this article refers are not explicitly named, but, given the rivalry between the French and British presses throughout the uprisings, it would be difficult to imagine that France was not included within this grouping. With the exception of the *Journal des débats*, which considered the recapture of Delhi to be a victory for European 'civilization', the French press highlighted the violence and dishonour of Britain's revenge missions, as well as the ongoing presence of sedition outside the walls of Delhi and the enormous effort still required to bring India back under British control.[476] It was by emphasizing these points that French journals collectively challenged Britain's heroic denouement, as the ensuing examples show.

For many Parisian newspapers, the celebratory proclamations being issued across the Channel were overshadowed by the atrocities being committed by the military both at the time of Delhi's recapture and in the months that followed. As well as the public execution of *sepoys*, these atrocities included the wholesale destruction and pillage of the capital, acts that were encouraged and endorsed by the British national press both at home and in India. *La Patrie* described the bloody aftermath in the following terms:

> Les Anglais se répandirent alors dans la ville [de Delhi] pour la piller. Des quartiers entiers avaient été détruits par le bombardement et n'offraient qu'un amas de ruines. La population avait fui: un petit nombre d'habitans s'étaient hasardés à demeurer dans leurs maisons: mal

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[473] *The Times*, 28 October 1857, p. 6.
[474] *Ibid.*
[475] *The Times*, 26 October 1857, p. 6.
[476] An example of the support for this victory can be found in the broadly pro-British *Journal des débats* in which Raymond wrote, 'La nouvelle de la prise de Delhi a produit en Angleterre une sensation facile à comprendre. [...] Ces démonstrations d'enthousiasme n'ont rien d'exagéré ni de puéril; car, ainsi que nous l'avons dit, toute l'importance des dernières nouvelles est dans la prise de Delhi. A cet égard, l'appréciation des journaux anglais se rencontre avec la nôtre'; Xavier Raymond, *Journal des débats politiques et littéraires*, 1 November 1857, p. 1.

leur en prit, car tous ceux dans l'habitation desquels fut trouvé le moindre objet de provenance européenne, furent considérés comme les complices des cipayes, et passés au fil de l'épée. Il paraît que des exécutions sanglantes furent commises de sangfroid, et que le sang coula à flots. Nous ne voulons pas insister sur ces détails, espérant encore qu'ils seront démentis. Il est à souhaiter, pour l'honneur du nom anglais, pour l'honneur de la civilisation toute entière, qu'une si belle victoire n'aura pas été souillée par d'inutiles cruautés; et que si des excès ont été commis, ils sont uniquement imputables aux auxiliaires indigènes des Anglais, aux Afghans et aux Ghoorkas.[477]

The moralizing tone that can be detected in phrases, such as 'pour l'honneur du nom anglais, pour l'honneur de la civilisation toute entière', is nuanced by *La Patrie*'s willingness to transfer the guilt for these acts of revenge onto the Afghan and Ghurkha soldiers in order to save the image of the 'civilized' Briton. Despite these concessions, however, *La Patrie*'s disapproval remains clear.

Other newspapers expressed their concerns with far more potency. *La Presse*, for instance, equated British behaviour directly with that benchmark of atrocity, Nana Sahib: 'l'armée anglaise a exécuté tout le monde, et les Anglais n'ont plus le droit de condamner Nana-Saïb [*sic*]'.[478] Indeed, the violence was such that it threatened to ostracize Britain from the privileged commune of European 'civilization', or so *Le Constitutionnel*'s Martin claimed:

Nos voisins se plaignaient dernièrement de n'être pas aimés en Europe. Nous croyons devoir leur déclarer en toute franchise que des actes comme ceux dont nous venons de parler, ne sont point de nature à leur concilier en France de nouvelles sympathies. Nous ne sommes disposés à nous réjouir de leurs succès dans l'Inde [Delhi] qu'autant qu'ils y observeront les lois de l'humanité et y soutiendront l'honneur de la civilisation européenne.[479]

In this example, there is a familiar concern with Britain upholding the face of European civilization in its overseas exploits. The French voice speaks a quasi-parental warning and places itself as the watchdog over this European family, rejecting Britain as a wayward child whose acts of atrocity are lamentable. Hence, the violent victory of Delhi was used as a reference point for French newspapers in 1857–58 to position themselves as a voice of morality, speaking on behalf of Europe.[480]

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[477] Cucheval-Clarigny, 'Les derniers événemens de l'Inde', *La Patrie*, 20 November 1857, pp. 1–2 (p. 1).

[478] A. Nefftzer, 'Bulletin du jour', *La Presse*, 15 November 1857, p. 1.

[479] H.-Marie Martin, 'Paris, 16 novembre', *Le Constitutionnel*, 17 November 1857, p. 1.

[480] This same admonitory tone can also be found in later texts, such as Darville's fictional travelogue, *L'Inde contemporaine* (1874), and Grèce's historical fiction, *La Femme sacrée* (1984), which include damning indictments of Britain's punitive techniques following Delhi; Darville, p. 303; Grèce, p. 276.

Yet French newspapers did not simply find fault with these acts of revenge, but additionally challenged the idea that the so-called mutinies could really be considered as over simply because Delhi had been recaptured. The aggressive behaviour of the British was considered by some to have commenced a cycle of revenge that would forestall the end of the uprisings and encourage further anti-colonial action. As *Le Siècle* warned,

> Il nous semble donc que le *Times* s'aventure en disant que la grande insurrection de l'Inde est terminée [...]. [L]es dépêches signalent de nouveaux troubles dans la partie méridionale du Mahratta, le royaume d'Oude [*sic*] est loin d'être pacifié, et l'exécution de plusieurs membres de la famille royale de Delhi va probablement ranimer l'irritation des insurgés.[481]

Whereas *The Times* commended Captain Hodson's controversial decision to execute Bahadur Shah II's two sons as a reasonable part of the victory celebrations, Bédollière considered that the spirit of revolt in India would be kept alive by the memory of this irrational and brutal act.[482]

La Presse's Bonneau similarly challenged the conclusiveness of Britain's victory by suggesting that it had been eclipsed by the escape of Bahadur Shah II, who was likely to go on to organize future revolts under his imperial banner:

> La prise de Delhi [...] pourrait donc n'avoir pas, à beaucoup près, toute la portée qu'on se plaisait à lui attribuer. On peut se réjouir sans doute, d'avoir enlevé au Grand-Mogol sa capitale; mais l'effet moral de ce succès se trouve considérablement amoindri par la fuite de l'empereur, qui portera partout où il voudra organiser une nouvelle résistance, le principe religieux et monarchique, autour duquel sont groupés ouvertement ou en secret vingt-trois millions de musulmans répandus dans l'Inde.[483]

In contrast with *The Times*'s depiction of Bahadur Shah II as that 'wretched old puppet at Delhi', Bonneau presented the Mughal emperor as a powerful sign capable of operating beyond the physical walls of Delhi (thus, rendering their destruction inconsequential) and able to rally some twenty three million Indian Muslims to his cause.[484] Additionally, those *sepoys* who had escaped from Delhi were now thought likely to join Nana Sahib in his

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[481] Emile de la Bédollière, 'Partie politique: Courrier', *Le Siècle*, 27 December 1857, p. 1.
[482] 'The victory has come at last — won by almost superhuman endurance, by heroism never surpassed, by energy, activity, and skill which reflect honour on all engaged, both soldiers and civilians. It may now, indeed, be said that the Indian mutiny is at an end. [...] The unhappy old man whom the rebels placed on the throne of Delhi surrendered to a detachment of cavalry commanded by Captain Hodson. His two sons and the grandson were also captured, and very properly shot at once'; *The Times*, 12 November 1857, p. 6.
[483] Alexandre Bonneau, *La Presse*, 30 October 1857, p. 1.
[484] *The Times*, 1 September 1857, p. 6.

campaign against the Lucknow residency: 'ils pourraient contribuer puissamment à assurer le succès de l'insurrection en se joignant à l'armée de Nana Sahib, et la possession de Lacknau [...], foyer principal de la révolte, ne leur permettrait guère de regretter Delhi'.[485] Indeed, Nana Sahib's constant evasion could be used to great effect to destabilize the imagining of a complete victory since the very idea of his continued existence carried with it both the memory of (unpunished) past revolts and the potential for future uprisings.[486] Thus, for Bonneau, the capital of India had become the reductive focal point of the uprisings for the British, a fantasy that he deliberately exploded by broadening the focus out towards the ongoing siege at Lucknow and by drawing attention to other areas that were still in revolt against British colonialism, even those beyond Indian borders: 'Aujourd'hui, l'insurrection règne [...] depuis l'Indus jusqu'à la Chine, et il est fort à craindre que, par le Sindh, elle ne réagisse sur les tribus barbares des Beloutchis et sur les Afghans.'[487] Thus, at a time when the British were celebrating their single victory in Delhi as marking a significant turning point in bringing the disturbances to an end, Bonneau recalled that 'c'est précisément au mois d'octobre que les armées hindoues commencent à entrer campagne'.[488]

The pessimism of these articles would, to some extent, be born out by the subsequent delays and setbacks in bringing a decisive end to the uprisings. It would be another year before the British could officially ratify their continuing rule over India, an occasion that was marked by Queen Victoria's Proclamation that declared that the East India Company's rule was to be substituted by that of the Crown.[489] This 'shuffling of titles and faces — and more often titles than faces', as Hutchins describes it, was packaged as a fresh

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[485] Alexandre Bonneau, *La Presse*, 30 October 1857, p. 1.
[486] 'Depuis quelque temps, nous n'avons pas de nouvelles du fameux Nana-Sahib', wrote March for *La Patrie*, 'On dit qu'il a disparu pour échapper à la vengeance des Anglais; mais il est plus probable qu'il est en train d'organiser quelque coup nouveau contre eux [the British]'; March, 'Nouvelles des Indes: Correspondance particulière de la *Patrie*', *La Patrie*, 10 December 1857, pp. 1–2 (p. 2). This same fear resurfaced in July 1858. Paulin of *L'Illustration* reported that 'un traité offensif et défensif a été conclu entre Nena-Saïb, Bahadour Khan, la ranée d'Ihansi [*sic*] et la reine d'Oude; que des confédérés disposent de forces considérables, et que leur résistance est appuyée par des gouvernements indigènes organisés à dessein, et qui fonctionnent regulièrement'; V. Paulin, 'Histoire de la semaine', *L'Illustration, journal universel*, 32 (24 July 1858), 49–50 (p. 50). But as 1858 drew to a close, the idea of renewed revolt largely dissipated: 'L'Inde est sur la voie d'une pacification [...]. Les taloukdars et zémindars se soumettent; la confiance renaît dans les populations; les bandes de guérillas se dispersent. Cependant quelques pessimistes s'imaginent que Tantia Topee va soulever les Mahrattes, parmi lesquels il cherchera un asile. Cette complication n'est pas à craindre. Nous ne sommes plus au temps de Sindiah et d'Holkar. La tribu par excellence a depuis longtemps perdu son énergie, et personne ne songe à relever le trône vermoulu des Peischwas'; Emile de la Bédollière, 'Partie politique', *Le Siècle*, 18 December 1858, p. 1.
[487] Alexandre Bonneau, *La Presse*, 30 October 1857, p. 1.
[488] *Ibid.*
[489] 'India: The Proclamation of the Queen', *The Times*, 6 December 1858, p. 7.

start for Indo–British relations that aimed to assign the uprisings to a forgotten past.[490] The Bombay correspondent for *The Times* eulogized the Proclamation as,

> one of the greatest documents, the weightiest instruments that has ever appeared in this country [...]. It conveys, with a solemnity worthy the greatness of the occasion, the principles on which the future policy of England in India is based. [...] It declares, once for all, that England is sovereign mistress throughout the length and breadth of these lands.[491]

The scenes of delight with which the news was greeted by India were depicted with confidence by the correspondent: 'Queen Victoria's name was everywhere — as "Queen of India, Empress of Hindostan." There were "Farewells to the East India Company," new hopes for the future of India emblazoned on more than one edifice.'[492] The only detraction from this self-congratulatory ceremony was 'that the emblem of English sovereignty was found to have been hung upside down', which caused 'a pang in the breast of the superstitious'.[493] This anecdote, quickly dismissed as an insignificant detail, nonetheless implies the substantial psychological damage that had been caused by having lived through an uprising at the hands of their colonial 'subjects'.

Some of the subsequent English-language accounts of these events can be viewed as an attempt to heal this damage by promoting the idea that a reformed British empire would emerge from this transferral of power and replace the old draconian systems exemplified by Lord Dalhousie's administration. Meadows Taylor's 'mutiny' fiction, *Seeta* (1881), for example, presents the main protagonist, Cyril Brandon, as the idealized embodiment of this new colonial policy, a man whose actions represent a blueprint for future success following the suppression of the uprisings. 'I do not mean to put forward Cyril Brandon as perfection', states the narrator, somewhat disingenuously, before lauding him as one who,

> while seeing many serious faults in native character, [...] was able to recognize many sterling qualities; as one whose good will and practical unostentatious benevolence, attracted and secured the love of those he governed. [...]
>
> And I wish him to be distinguished from those who, having no sympathy with the people they rule over, are haughty or supercilious, uncourteous in address and demeanour.[494]

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[490] Hutchins, p. 87. Hutchins states that 'The abolition of the East India Company and the establishment of the Crown rule were the assurance the nation required that India did indeed now "belong" to the nation, and not just to a handful of Englishmen'; Hutchins, p. 86. Hence, 'the Mutiny's greatest direct effect was in rousing popular support in England for British rule of India, which was expressed in the demand for Crown rule'; Hutchins, p. 86.

[491] 'India: The Proclamation of the Queen', *The Times*, 6 December 1858, p. 7.

[492] *Ibid.*

[493] *Ibid.*

[494] Taylor, p. 418.

The ideology of a paternalistic colonial rule evident in this quotation finds its practical manifestation in the central relationship formed between Seeta (the eponymous character) and Brandon.[495] In opposition to the rupture represented by the revolts, their romantic liaison acts as an allegory for an idealized Anglo–Indian colonial union, with Brandon playing the part of educator to Seeta's devoted student, a relationship that, as Spivak might argue, charges Brandon (as a white man) with the task of 'saving brown women from brown men'.[496] Their union is celebrated as forming a state of 'Elysium' for pupil and teacher alike.[497] The story ends on a positive note with the Proclamation signifying the emergence of a glorious new empire led by liberals such as Brandon: 'The Company was, indeed, dead: but the Queen of England and her Government lived; and the first publication of its official existence, and determination to rule justly and mercifully, was accepted from high to low with a reverential confidence.'[498]

In 1858, when news of the Proclamation reached France, many branches of the Parisian press refused to accept that it had so thoroughly convinced the Indian population of the righteousness of British rule. Playing on the concern of British officials to mark a definitive end to the revolts, *Le Constitutionnel*, for example, suggested instead that the instatement of Crown rule was not enough to quell future rebellion and that, in contrast with British reports, the Proclamation had not been well received on the subcontinent:

L'honorable Compagnie n'a point emporté avec elle toutes les antipathies, toutes les haines soulevées pendant son règne contre la domination anglaise. Enfin l'amnistie par laquelle le nouveau régime a été inauguré n'a pas produit des effets tellement prompts que l'on puisse regarder comme terminée cette guerre qui dure depuis près de deux ans.[499]

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[495] The paternalism of this text can be seen as typical of nineteenth-century British colonial literature. See, for example, Catherine Champion, 'Introduction à la littérature anglo-indienne', in Denys Lombard, Catherine Champion and Henri Chambert-Loir, *Rêver l'Asie: Exotisme et littérature coloniale aux Indes, en Indochine et en Insulinde* (Paris: Éditions de l'École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales, 1993), pp. 21–41 (p. 34).
[496] Spivak, p. 93.
[497] 'Elysium' is the title given to chapter XXI; Taylor, pp. 152–61. The relationship between Brandon and Seeta is not permitted to develop into a lifetime commitment since Seeta dies, enabling Brandon to find a more suitable (meaning white) lifelong partner, Grace Mostyn. As Champion notes, the usurping of the Indian woman for a British one was a standard feature of nineteenth-century colonial literature: 'La majorité des romans [anglais] prend pour sujet l'échec d'une relation amoureuse entre un Anglais et une Indienne [...]. L'issue ne fait pas de doute: la jeune fille indienne sera abandonnée, ou mourra dans le second cas'; Champion, 'Introduction à la littérature anglo-indienne', p. 35. In Seeta'a case, she sacrifices her life for that of Brandon's in a chapter appropriately titled, 'Faithful unto death'; Taylor, pp. 368–78. Symbolically, her death acts as an exemplar of loyalty and devotion to be emulated by all colonial subjects, while functioning in direct opposition to the idea of the faithless *sepoy*.
[498] Taylor, p. 425.
[499] H.-Marie Martin, 'Paris, 29 décembre', *Le Consitutionnel*, 30 December 1858, p. 1.

Rather than signalling an end, this official pronouncement, it reported, had been greeted with 'des rires d'incrédulité dans les rangs des rebelles'.[500] The only way that Britain could hope to prevent further insurgencies (a threat that is represented by incredulous laughter among the rebel ranks) was to win the hearts and the minds of their colonial 'subjects' through 'la conquête morale'.[501] A similar threat can be found in reports by *Le Siècle*, which moralized, 'Alors commencera une œuvre grande et laborieuse: celle de réaliser les promesses contenues dans la proclamation royale', 'Puisse-t-elle [l'Inde] n'être pas déçue!', the implication being that should Britain fail to uphold its promises, then further revolts were likely to ensue.[502] This judgement can be found even in one of Britain's staunchest supporters throughout the crisis, *Journal des débats*, which questioned just how efficacious Britain's new policies ('la substitution du gouvernement direct de la reine à celui de la Compagnie') would be in quelling India's desire for independence:

> La crise militaire a passé, voilà tout; maintenant les difficultés du gouvernement commencent, et ce sont peut-être les plus considérables. Quoique vaincue, l'insurrection des cipayes n'aura pas moins produit *une révolution* dont les conséquences sont presque impossible à estimer et se feront sentir non seulement dans l'Inde, mais dans tout le système du gouvernement anglais (emphasis added).[503]

Rather than bringing these events to a neat closure, Raymond leaves a question mark hanging over the future of the British in India by implying that 'la crise militaire' was just the beginning of something much bigger, 'une révolution', whose end was not yet in sight. In short, just as French reporting on the recapture of Delhi refused to allow the final page of these events to be written, so these French journalists refused to endorse Britain's rhetoric of colonial renewal, thereby challenging the sense of closure with which their British counterparts had endowed two key moments within the uprisings.

4.4   Counter-Narrating a 'Military Mutiny' in the French Press of 1857–58: 'Insurrection', 'Révolution', 'Libération' and 'Nationalisme'

By considering the uprisings as more serious than the British wanted to admit and imagining scenarios that would greatly challenge, if not overturn, British Indian rule, many French-language newspapers refused to accept the simplistic version of events narrated by their

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[500] *Ibid.*

[501] *Ibid.*

[502] Emile de la Bédollière, 'Partie politique', *Le Siècle*, 7 December 1858, p. 1; Emile de la Bédollière, 'Partie politique', *Le Siècle*, 8 December 1858, p. 1.

[503] Xavier Raymond, *Journal des débats politiques et littéraires*, 6 November 1858, pp. 1–2 (p. 2).

European neighbours. In this counter-discourse, nomenclature played a fundamental role that was evident not only in the way that Parisian newspapers presented the uprisings, but also in the terms that they chose to use and avoid. For example, Wailly, writing for *Illustration*, rejected the term 'rébellion', claiming that it was too reductive: 'Il importe de ne pas *rapetisser* la question. Ce n'est pas une rébellion, c'est une guerre de race à race, ou tout au moins de nationalité à civilisation' (emphasis added).[504] Having explicitly denied that the events in India could be termed a rebellion, Wailly then called for an expression that captured more aptly what was happening on the subcontinent, as opposed to one that reduced ('rapetisser') its significance.[505] As the following section demonstrates, French writing in 1857–58 found several alternative descriptors for labelling the Indian uprisings that worked precisely against the desire of Anglo-centric texts to restrict their socio-political impact, namely 'insurrection' and 'révolution'.

Unlike 'mutinerie', the label 'insurrection' was a particularly popular choice among French journalists and perhaps accounts for its appearance in the titles of contemporaneous books, such as Édouard de Warren's *L'Inde anglaise: Avant et après l'insurrection de 1857* (1857) and Félix Maynard's *De Delhi à Cawnpore: Journal d'une dame anglaise, pages de l'insurrection hindoue* (1857). In contrast, *The Times* categorically denied this appellation. In July 1857, it stated that, 'It is not an insurrection; it is a mutiny. It is a rising not of people, but of soldiers'.[506] Similarly, in August 1857, it claimed that

> Had this been the case of a popular insurrection — had it been the rising of a people maddened by centuries of oppression, as in the days of the first French Revolution — there would have been less to be said. Nothing of the sort, however, was the case here.[507]

This quip at the French Revolution has a historical precedent, which could explain *The Times*'s reluctance to use this nomenclature. Stemming from the verb 's'insurger', the *Dictionnaire historique de la langue française* states that 'insurgent' (being the agent of insurrection) came from English and was originally employed to refer to 'colons américains

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[504] Léon de Wailly, 'L'Inde: La Carte', *L'Illustration, journal universel*, 30 (17 October 1857), p. 263 and p. 266 (p. 263).
[505] As discussed earlier, rebellion (in English) carries a sense of being public and organized in nature (see Section 4.2, pp. 105–06). According to the *Le Dictionnaire de l'Académie française* (1835, 1878), 'rébellion' conveys the same negative connotations as its English correlative, being 'résistance ouverte aux ordres de l'autorité *légitime*' (emphasis added); Académie Française, *Le Dictionnaire de l'Académie française*, 6th and 7th edns (Paris: Firman Didot, 1835 and 1878) [on CD-ROM]. Both languages connect the term with legal or civil disobedience, which suggests that such an action lacks a sense of moral purpose, being outside of the law. For example, in French, it has been used since the seventeenth century to mean, 'l'infraction commise contre l'autorité publique consistant en une attaque ou en une résistance active contre un agent de la force publique'; *Dictionnaire historique de la langue française* (Paris: Dictionnaire le Robert, 1992), p. 1727.
[506] *The Times*, 3 July 1857, p. 9.
[507] *The Times*, 3 August 1857, p. 8.

qui ont pris parti contre l'Angleterre pendant la guerre de l'Indépendance'.[508] It subsequently gained popularity in France during the Revolution of 1789. Arguably, its usage with reference to the crisis in India may have triggered unwanted connections with those other major historical events that had brought an end to both Britain's rule over its thirteen American colonies (a serious blow to British pride and national identity[509]) and the French monarchy.

In addition, the noun 'insurrection' in both English and French has many positive connotations that the British press was undoubtedly keen to downplay. In contrast with the restrictive and negative connotations associated with 'mutiny', *Webster's* and the *OED* emphasize the openness of the term 'insurrection', being an 'open and active opposition of a number of persons to the execution of the law in a city or state' and 'The action of rising in arms or open resistance against established authority or governmental restraint' (*OED*).[510] The *Dictionnaire historique de la langue française* equates it to the idea of '"se dresser", specialement pour attaquer, et figurément "monter, devenir plus puissant"'.[511] As such, it carries the idea of becoming more powerful by physically engaging in active protest against an authority: 'S'insurger contre les abus de l'Administration.'[512] Unlike 'mutiny', therefore, an insurrection is specifically directed against the government of a country — 'Soulèvement contre le gouvernement' — and contains within it (especially in the nineteenth century) a sense of popular injustice: 'Ceux qui emploient ce mot y attachent ordinairement une idée de droit et de justice.'[513]

Broadly speaking, the discernable opposition between keywords, such as 'mutiny' and 'insurrection', can be seen as analogous to the particular attitudes of British and French newspapers towards these events.[514] Journals such as *The Times* constantly attempted to reduce the events in India to a manageable problem contrary to many French-language newspapers that emphasized instead their expanding and potentially national nature. 'Il ne s'agissait d'abord que d'une mutinerie', wrote Cucheval-Clarigny for *La Patrie*, 'ce n'était qu'un mouvement local sans ramifications étendues dans le reste de l'armée. Puis on a confessé que ce mouvement avait les proportions d'une insurrection militaire', before

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[508] *Dictionnaire historique de la langue française*, p. 1036.

[509] Linda Colley, *Britons: Forging the Nation 1707–1837* (London: Pimlico, 1994; first publ. Yale University Press, 1992), p. 141; Eliga H. Gould, *The Persistence of Empire: British Political Culture in the Age of the American Revolution* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2000), pp. 181–214.

[510] Webster, p. 702.

[511] *Dictionnaire historique de la langue française*, p. 1036.

[512] *Larousse de la langue française*, ed. by Jean Dubois (Paris: Larousse, 2002; first publ, Paris: Larousse, 1979), p. 968.

[513] *Le Dictionnaire de l'Académie française*, 6th and 7th edns.

[514] There were, of course, plenty of exceptions. The British historian, Kaye, for example, saw the raising of the 'rebel standard' in Delhi retrospectively as an important turning point in which 'the mutiny of a few regiments [...] was beginning to stimulate a national rebellion' Kaye, I, 596. See also Disraeli's comments in footnote 526.

concluding that the revolts were far more widespread than the British wished to believe: 'De toutes les forces indigènes qui combattaient sous les drapeaux de la Compagnie [...], il n'y a plus à faire cause commune avec les Anglais qu'un régiment de cavalerie recruté parmi les Goorkas [...], c'est-à-dire en dehors de l'Inde.'[515] In these quotations, *La Patrie* mocked the reluctance of the British press to acknowledge the changing character of the uprisings and presented a picture of a friendless and depleted British army battling against, or so it intimated, a national Indian effort. In short, whereas the language of the British press was often emphatic in its repeated assertions that victory would soon belong to Britain, the language of the French press was often ambivalent, allowing the reader, not without some relish, to imagine the difficulties that Britain would face and the possibility that it could lose its most important colonial possession.

This is particularly evident in the numerous articles and texts that employed the term 'révolution'. Arguably, this complex and historically weighty locution is more capable than any other of signifying an important political, social and historical event that threatens to overturn the established regime. To illustrate the prevalence of this term, examples have been taken from a selection of different texts produced in 1857–58, including a letter from a French resident written to *Le Constitutionnel*, a newspaper article and a political exposé. In the first instance, a French resident living in Calcutta wrote to *Le Constitutionnel* insisting that the term 'révolution' portrayed the situation with more accuracy than the reductive and deceptive nomenclatures of official and journalistic British discourse:

> Le gouvernement [Britannique] a voulu d'abord se persuader que ce n'était là qu'une rébellion accidentelle, qui se bornerait aux deux ou trois régimens où elle avait éclaté. [...] La prétendue *mutinerie*, pour parler le langage adopté par la presse anglaise [in India], est, en réalité, une révolution fomentée dans toute l'Inde par les rois détrônés et par les princes musulmans dépossédés.[516]

'Révolution' is employed here not only as a corrective to the self-deception and fabrications of the British press and government, but also to foreground the authoritarian abuses that had incited the wrath of the population instigated by its dispossessed kings. By questioning the provenance of 'cette révolution', the letter writer categorically denies that it could be attributed, as many British newspapers had claimed, 'aux cartouches graissées', and lists instead multiple grievances, including annexation, the treatment of women, the dismissal of princely inheritance rights, the falling prestige of European settlers, the favouring of certain

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[515] Cucheval-Clarigny, 'L'insurrection de l'Inde', *La Patrie*, 15 September 1857, p. 1.
[516] H.-Marie Martin, 'Paris, 11 septembre', *Le Constitutionnel*, 12 September 1857, pp. 1–2 (p. 1).

Hindu elites, the wanton absorption of money by the Company and 'une fausse application de ce que le gouvernement se complaît à appeler philantropie [*sic*]'.[517]

A similar discourse of blame runs through the second example, in which *La Patrie's* Bonneau spoke of India's widespread discontent with British rule in an article provocatively entitled 'La Révolution dans l'Inde':

> Les causes premières des révolutions sont toujours obscures parce qu'elles sont multiples comme les souffrances, les besoins et les tendances des populations. [...] Le secret [des événemens qui se passent dans l'Inde] en est caché dans chacune des années d'un passé qui date déjà de plus d'un siècle.[518]

Apart from clearly demarcating British governance as the main source of Indian frustration, what is significant is that Bonneau automatically imagined these events within a revolutionary narrative that had a justifiable and identifiable source in the abuse of power, not unlike the French Revolution.

Finally, and like the Calcutta resident, Billot's political exposé, *L'Inde, l'Angleterre et la France* (1857), emphatically named the uprisings 'une révolution nationale' as a way of negating the British term 'mutinerie militaire':

> L'intérêt britannique pouvait, dans les premiers jours, chercher à donner le change sur le caractère des événements accomplis dans son empire indien, pour en amoindrir l'effet aux yeux de l'Europe et présenter comme une mutinerie militaire le mouvement opéré par la race hindoue; mais il n'est plus permis de s'y méprendre. L'insurrection est nationale! c'est une révolution: c'est un peuple humilié qui se réveille; c'est le plus écrasant des jougs qu'on secoue; c'est la tyrannie la plus immorale et la plus honteuse, qu'on veut renverser; c'est un peuple qui revendique son autonomie, son indépendance et sa liberté! Qui oserait y trouver à redire?[519]

The term 'révolution' is used here to transform Britain into the foremost enemy of the world. In contrast, the insurgents are the agents of a revolution against the global tyranny of British hegemony, who are to be lauded as a symbol of hope for the oppressed nations of the world (a group in which Billot includes France). Not only is this term politically expedient, enabling the text to denounce the *frère ennemi* as an enslaving regime, but, like the French resident in Calcutta, it could also be used to highlight the limitations of the word 'mutiny', as used in British representations. Taken from different textual sources and authored by French

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[517] *Ibid.*
[518] Alexandre Bonneau, 'La Révolution dans l'Inde', *La Presse*, 31 August 1857, p. 1.
[519] Billot, *L'Inde, l'Angleterre et la France*, p. 1.

speakers both in the *métropole* and in India, these three examples suggest just how widespread the idea of the Indian uprisings as a revolutionary movement was among French writers in the mid-nineteenth century.

To understand why these texts employed the term 'révolution' with respect to the actions of a 'subject' race is, in part, to understand the significance that had been attached to it by 1857 following three consecutive revolutions in France. In *L'Ancien Régime et la Révolution* (1856), Tocqueville argued that, although the French Revolution had ultimately failed to bring about true political freedom in France, it remained a powerful symbol of a (predominantly) republican ideology, captured within that infamous axiom, *liberté, égalité, fraternité*, whose memory 'les hommes conserveront éternellement'.[520] As such, 1789 had acquired a particular historical significance that, while specific to the history of the French nation, was also extolled as a universal phenomenon, rendering France 'une patrie intellectuelle commune dont les hommes de toutes les nations ont pu devenir citoyens'.[521] For Tocqueville, these late-eighteenth-century events constituted a defining moment that had laid the basis for other national consciousnesses.[522] Given the prevalence of the idea of the French Revolution as a touchstone against which all future 'revolutions' were to be judged, it is perhaps not surprising to find French writers in 1857 using this term to describe the uprisings, occurring as they did midway through a century of revolutionary movements.

What is more unexpected is that these same writers were able to conceive of these events as a revolution at all. By using this term, they subscribe, intentionally or not, to a narrative plot in which the figure of the once 'passive' Indian, as stereotyped by Euro-centric representations, has not only become politicized and ready to act against British oppression, but is also looking to build a nation in the post-revolutionary European mould. Nonetheless, this shift from passivity to activity can be seen, for example, in an article by *L'Univers*'s

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[520] Alexis de Tocqueville, *L'Ancien Régime et la Révolution*, ed. by J.-P. Mayer ([Paris]: Gallimard, 1952; first publ. 1856), p. 48. Tocqueville argued that, although the French Revolution attempted to break with the past, ultimately it resulted in a revolving back to a former order and, in doing so, opened France up to the autocracy of Bonapartism and the continuities of centralism; Tocqueville, *L'Ancien Régime*, pp. 43–44. For more information on Tocqueville's arguments against centralization, as well as the debates surrounding centralization and decentralization under the Second Empire, see Larry Siedentop, *Tocqueville* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), pp. 113–37; Sudhir Hazareesingh, *From Subject to Citizen: The Second Empire and the Emergence of Modern French Democracy* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1998). See also Hazareesingh for a discussion on the 'fierce disputes over the ideological heritage of the Revolution' during the Second Empire; Hazareesingh, *From Subject to Citizen*, p. 24.

[521] Tocqueville, *L'Ancien Régime*, p. 68.

[522] The *grand récit* of the French Revolution was a reference point for Indian historians and politicians. For example, Savarkar drew parallels between the Indian uprisings and the French Revolution and Nehru turned to 1789 as a source of inspiration for political and social change while writing from his prison cell in 1932; Sarvarkar, p. 2 and p. 7; Jawaharlal Nehru, *Glimpses of World History: Being Further Letters to his Daughter, Written in Prison, and Containing a Rambling Account of History for Young People*, 4th edn (London: Drummond, 1949; first publ. 1934), pp. 377–78.

Barrier: 'On peut juger, par ce qui se passe aujourd'hui, du changement qui s'est opéré dans les esprits, et combien les cipayes sont éloignés de cette soumission et de cette résignation passive qui les caractérisait autrefois.'[523] However, to a mid-nineteenth-century French audience, the idea of a politically active Indian nation would have been highly problematic. The mere suggestion that India was capable of revolution or that its insurgents were able to form an organized and unified front invited mockery by *Le Charivari*: 'Ce sont eux [les journaux] qui commencent à vous parler très sérieusement du patriotisme indien, de la nationalité indienne, des droits politiques et sociaux que ces populations opprimées ont cru devoir revendiquer les armes à la main.'[524] The article continued by satirizing the language of such newspapers, which are caricatured as crying with revolutionary gusto, 'Vivent ces braves, ces dignes Indiens! A bas ces traîtres d'Anglais! Puissent les Anglais être exterminés dans l'Inde jusqu'aux derniers, puisse la révolte des cipayes triompher sur tous les points!'[525] Of course, this mockery works because the idea of India having the capacity to overthrow European rule and create a country governed by Indians was laughable to the French readership of this period. Rarely, if at all, did these texts suggest that the subcontinent could or even should be independent from some form of external leadership.

To comprehend why terms such as 'révolution' and 'national' were used requires an understanding of the extent to which French and British national and colonial discourses operate in competition with each other.[526] Rather than taking these terms at face value, it is more likely that they were employed because, at a rhetorical and historical level, they were powerful signs capable, at one and the same time, of connoting the idea of Indian cohesion and, with it, an end to British global hegemony. For example, although Laurentie writing for *L'Union*, framed the events in India as a revolution — 'Il n'y a plus guère à raisonner sur les événemens de l'Inde; il faut se borner à les suivre comme on suit une révolution dont la marche est formidable, et dont le terme est inconnu' —, he was in no way complimentary about the idea of revolution where Indians (or what Laurentie terms an 'amas de bêtes fauves') were concerned.[527] Nevertheless, the term 'révolution' served to accentuate the ease

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[523] Barrier, *L'Univers: Union Catholique*, 2 July 1857, pp. 1–2 (p. 1).
[524] Arnould Fremy, 'Les journaux indiens', *Le Charivari*, 6 August 1857, p. 1.
[525] *Ibid.*
[526] Its worth noting that debates over whether the events in India were a national movement or a military campaign were also ongoing in Britain. These found their most famous expression in Disraeli's polemical address delivered to Parliament on 28 July 1857. Controversially for the time, he concluded that this was a 'national revolt', not because he harboured any pro-Indian sentiments, but rather because this was an expedient way of criticizing the inadequacy of his political rival's (Lord Palmerston's) response to the uprisings and regaining popularity within his own party: 'Looking upon this as a national revolt, I cannot arrive at the belief that the measures announced by the Government, merely military measures, are adequate to the occasion'; Benjamin Disraeli, 'Parliamentary Intelligence, House of Commons, 27 July: "The State of India"', *The Times*, 28 July 1857, pp. 5–8 (p. 6). See also Christopher Hibbert, *Disraeli and his World* (London: Thames & Hudson, 1978), p. 79.
[527] Laurentie, 'France, Paris, 7 septembre', *L'Union: Quotidienne, France, écho français*, 8 September 1857, p. 1.

with which the British empire was dissolving ('se dissout'), just as the association of Indians with 'bêtes fauves' supported Laurentie's argument that Britain had failed to civilize its colonial 'subjects'.[528] Hence, 'La révolution indienne' could be presented as 'la plus effrayante leçon qui pût être donnée à la politique de l'Angleterre', while phrases, such as 'dont le terme est inconnu', refused to subscribe to British narratives of closure.[529]

Even those writers, such as Édouard de Warren, who insisted that the events in India had no national basis, nonetheless implied that Indian liberation from colonial rule and nationhood was a future probability.[530] Rather than subscribing to the idea that a British victory would mark categorically the end of the uprisings, Warren considered instead their ongoing effects post-defeat:

> Elle [l'insurrection] laissera d'abord les ruines faites, moins par elle-même que par la vengeance anglaise, et puis des haines impérissables qui seront le premier germe d'un sentiment *public*, le premier ciment d'une nationalité commune; nationalité qui n'existait point encore, mais qui commencera à se former du jour où [...] l'Inde [...sera courbée] sous le même joug impitoyable [meaning the British]. Chaque État subsidiaire ou protégé qui disparaîtra fournira une pierre dans la construction du nouvel édifice; mais, avant que cet édifice soit assez grand pour écraser les Anglais, il faudra des années, peut-être un siècle, peut-être plus encore.[531]

Warren's prognosis for British rule was bleak and uncannily accurate. It was precisely the abject wretchedness of complete dispossession under colonization that would finally engender a spirit of communality and a common desire for liberation within an increasingly politicized country.[532]

4.5 Representing the Uprisings Post-1858: Ventriloquizing Indian Revolutionaries and the Spirit of Revolution

[528] See also Section 3.3.1, p. 84.

[529] Laurentie, 'France, Paris, 7 septembre', *L'Union: Quotidienne, France, écho français*, 8 September 1857, p. 1.

[530] Warren concurred with the *Journal des débats*'s Xavier Raymond in denying that the uprisings could be considered 'un mouvement national': 'Il faudrait pour cela qu'il y eût une seule nation, une partie commune, des traditions, des idées, des intérêts communs. Or la masse des populations qui s'agitent dans l'Inde, comme le dit très-bien M. Xavier Raymond, ne peut pas s'appeler une nation dans le sens où nous sommes habitués à comprendre ce mot'; Warren, II, 271; Xavier Raymond, *Journal des débats politiques et littéraires*, 26 August 1857, p. 1.

[531] Warren, II, 274.

[532] Wolpert, pp. 247–48.

While the examples listed above were published before the uprisings had ended and could only speculate on their outcome, the expansive ideas that they contain did not expire once 'peace' had ostensibly been restored to India. Writing in France post-1858 would continue to present the uprisings as a revolution and/or an independence movement, albeit one that was not ultimately successful. It has continued, therefore, to produce open-ended counter-narratives to the foreclosure and reductionism of Anglo-centric accounts, the latest example being Grèce's historical novel, *La Femme sacrée* (1984) and its biographical account of a heroic revolutionary leader, Lakshmi Bai.[533] The rest of this chapter however, focuses on four earlier texts that were published under the Third Republic, including Darville's fictional travelogue, *L'Inde contemporaine* (1874), and Jules Verne's three adventure novels, *Vingt mille lieues sous les mers* (1870), *L'Île mystérieuse* (1874) and *La Maison à vapeur* (1880). Each of these texts utilizes the uprisings to assert India's desire for independence, while simultaneously denying Indians the possibility of self-rule. By speaking through, or what shall be termed ventriloquizing, the figure of the Indian revolutionary, they are able to speak out against British colonialism and, in doing so, reveal the underlying presence of a tacit French voice and a specifically Gallo-centric agenda.

To begin with, Darville's *L'Inde contemporaine*, which features a first-person narrative by a revolutionary leader named Thimour, begins by pointing out the perpetual fragility of British rule:

> La domination anglaise ne peut pas être enracinée dans le sol: jetons un coup d'œil sur ce vaste pays que les Anglais nomment leur empire de l'Inde. Nous voyons partout le sol assujéti au gouvernement anglais, mais aussi partout les restes des familles princières des anciens possesseurs.[534]

The permanence of British colonial rule is destabilized from the outset by referring to the ongoing memory of a time when India governed itself (or, in fact, was governed by the Mughals). It is within the memories of this former glory that the narrative locates India's hope for independence:

> peuvent-elles [les familles princières des anciens possesseurs] avoir oublié le passé, et si elles ont courbé la tête sous la force, la corruption et des ruses infâmes, se peut-il qu'elles n'accepteraient pas un appui qui leur laisserait espérer le retour à leur puissance première? Non; plusieurs révoltes ont prouvé que le gros de la nation n'accepte point les Anglais. Notre récit (*Nuits de Delhi*) prouvera que la révolte avait pénétré dans toutes les couches de la

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[533] For more on Grèce's Lakshmi Bai, see Section 3.3.2, p. 97 and Section 5.5, pp. 163–66.
[534] Darville, p. 219.

population, qu'elle était assez formidable pour se défaire entièrement des Anglais, mais qu'il n'y eut point d'accord, et qu'un chef capable manqua au soulèvement.[535]

The memories of this lost 'freedom', combined with a history of anti-British revolt, hold out the promise of India's independence from British colonialism, but only if a true leader can be found. In this way, the uprisings are endowed with the same kind of historical significance as 1789. Just as the French Revolution forms a founding myth for republicanism in its conceptualization of the nation, being, to quote from Hazareesingh, 'the source of promises that were yet to be fulfilled', so 1857–58 forms a point of reference that will eventually inspire India's liberation.[536] Thus, by writing the uprisings as a revolution, Darville's narrative is necessarily open-ended, since revolution is, by its very nature, a progressive process, which reaches out towards a future perfection that is perpetually held in abeyance.

The promise of Indian liberation weaves throughout the narrative told by the Indian revolutionary, Thimour. In this account, Thimour recounts his heroic attempts to organize mass insurgency against the British who have reduced India to 'un bazar où se vendent des esclaves'.[537] Although Thimour is connected ancestrally to the Mughal emperor, he is also a descendent of Hindu *Thugi* chiefs from whom he has inherited his current position as their leader.[538] Like Verne's depiction of Nana Sahib in *La Maison* (as discussed in Chapter Three), Darville has subverted this negative stereotype and used it to counter the discourse of British dominance.[539] In this case, Thimour's *Thugi* heritage gains him the respect of his fellow Indians and allows him to travel unhindered across India preaching the message of emancipation.[540]

Yet the connection between Darville's Indian hero and *Thugi* evidently remained problematic at a moral level, since Thimour is repeatedly compelled to mitigate this heritage

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[535] Darville, pp. 219–20.

[536] Hazareesingh, *From Subject to Citizen*, p. 243.

[537] Darville, p. 238.

[538] This connection places Thimour within a specific literary tradition, found in both French and British representations of the uprisings, of pairing Indian rebels with outlawed societies, such as the *Thugs* and *Dacoits*. For example, both Meadows Taylor and Jules Verne aligned their Indian insurgent characters with these two 'cults'. Taylor's 'merciless' Azráel Pandé is described as 'the prince of Dacoity leaders' and Verne's Nana Sahib is presented as working in collaboration with the *Dacoits*; Taylor, p. 5; Verne, *La Maison*, p. 204. For more information on the *Thugs* and the *Dacoits*, see footnotes 328 and 371.

[539] See Section 3.3.1, pp. 85–87.

[540] For example, Thimour is able to save himself during a confrontation with British officers because of his connection with the *Thugs*: 'Le mouvement que j'avais fait pour dégager mon poignard avait écarté l'écharpe qui me tombait des épaules, et mis en évidence le signe de chef des Thugs. Les cipayes déposèrent leurs armes [...], croisèrent les mains au-dessus de la tête, et la baissèrent respectueusement'; Darville, p. 257. Subsequently, the *sepoys* refuse to obey the orders of their British officers, preferring instead to heed Thimour's words: 'Pas de violences, m'écriai-je; mettons les insolents envahisseurs à la raison, mais ne les maltraitons pas'; Darville, p. 257.

and present it as a necessary evil in his fight for freedom. In these moments, the moralizing tone of the French voice is clearly audible:

> Ainsi, me dis-je à moi-même, cette riche terre de l'Inde est livrée à des sociétés de brigands, et à des oppresseurs qui ne savent pas les détruire. J'éprouvai un sentiment de honte, en songeant que je me trouvais le chef peut-être de la plus puissante de ces associations [the *Thugs*], mais il fallait atteindre à un but; il fallait de toutes ces mauvaises passions faire un faisceau, et l'employer à la liberation de l'Inde.[541]

By invoking this traditionally negative stereotype, the reader is presented with a deplorable picture of a land that is divided between the ignorance and fanaticism of criminal cults and the ineffectuality of an oppressive British government that is unable to quash criminality or 'civilize' its 'subjects'. In response, it is Thimour's aim to unite India's chiefs and princes in order to deliver ('délivrer') 'l'Inde de l'oppression des étrangers'.[542] If this can be achieved through 'une révolte sérieuse', Thimour will be able to glimpse at a future, one that 'permettrait d'espérer la réhabilitation de l'Inde'.[543]

Echoing the introduction to the narrative quoted above, the motivation for this freedom is shown to be based on the memory of past glory that Thimour attempts to reawaken in those that he meets, such as the emperor's sons:

> Tous n'ont pas oublié les grandeurs de leurs pères; tous ne sont pas tombés dans une mollesse énervante; et vienne le jour de la lutte, ils se réveilleront au souvenir du passé. Vous, [...] vous trouveriez-vous incapables de résister aux cris de la patrie renaissante?[544]

Terms like 'la patrie renaissante' and references to an almost forgotten historical past feed into the seductive idea of revolution and of a cohesive nation. As Thimour leaves this meeting with the princes, he comments, 'Nous nous séparâmes, eux [the princes] rêvant un passé évanoui, et moi persuadé que j'avais fait un grand pas en faveur de la *révolution* que je voyais sur le point d'éclater' (emphasis added).[545] Within this vision is contained both the seventeenth-century concept of revolution, as a 'revolving back to some pre-established point' or 'preordained order', and its more modern permutation, as a radical change in human politics that breaks with the past.[546] In the first instance, the appeal to the Mughal Empire's former glory can be seen as a return to the familiarity of the past. But in the second

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[541] Darville, p. 261.
[542] Darville, p. 263.
[543] Darville, p. 265.
[544] Darville, p. 266. See p. 125 for Darville's introduction; Darville, p. 219.
[545] *Ibid.*
[546] Hannah Arendt, *On Revolution* (London: Penguin, 1990; first publ. Viking, 1963), pp. 42–43.

instance, the union of Hindu and Muslim peoples — a union that is also encapsulated within Thimour's dual heritage — implies something much more revolutionary than a nostalgic return to this nebulous past. Thimour calls for a common movement against oppression that is underpinned by the distinctly French republican-sounding ideologies of liberation and secularism.[547]

Ultimately, Thimour fails to inspire India's freedom because he is unable to channel the inherent 'savagery' of his compatriots, especially the *Thugs*, towards these 'nobler' revolutionary goals. Instead, the *Thugs* remain guided by the desire 'de détruire et de piller', which Thimour finally chooses to reject in return for a solitary existence.[548] Yet, in the final analysis, the behaviour of the Indian insurgents is excused as inevitable, while that of the British is condemned as deplorable:

> Certes, les révoltés avaient commis des cruautés épouvantables: mais ils combattaient pour *la liberté de leur pays* [...].
>
> Les Anglais n'avaient à défendre que leur oppression, et, nation civilisée, ils ne devaient pas se comporter en barbares avec la férocité qu'ils montrèrent (emphasis added).[549]

Thus, while ostensibly promoting the idea of liberation, Darville's text ventriloquizes the figure of the Indian revolutionary in order to voice the impossibility of Indian self-rule and, in doing so, suggests the need for intervention and governance from an alternative (European) source. Tacitly, this ushers in the nostalgic fantasy of France's lost empire outlined in the text's introduction:

> Les années se sont écoulées, et cependant les Indiens n'ont oublié ni le nom de l'héroïque Dupleix, ni celui de son lieutenant de Bussy [...] et ces souvenirs prouvent que si la France eût soutenu Dupleix et son lieutenant, l'Inde, au lieu d'être aujourd'hui anglaise, serait française, et plus florissante, plus heureuse que sous le gouvernement plus qu'oppressif de la Compagnie anglaise.
>
> L'Anglais ne peut s'assimiler aucune nation; il faut qu'il domine brutalement, qu'il tire jusqu'à la dernière goutte de sang des veines de l'opprimé, sans souci de l'humanité, écrasant et avilissant des populations soumises, et d'un peuple que la France eût appelé à la résurrection, en faire non des esclaves, mais des brutes à figure humaine et tremblant devant la cravache d'un Anglais.[550]

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[547] Hazareesingh lists five key points that make up the French 'republican tradition', including democracy, secular education, social homogeneity (represented by the *bourgeoisie*), citizenship (as opposed to race or ethnicity) and social justice; Sudhir Hazareesingh, *Political Traditions in Modern France* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), pp. 81–89.
[548] Darville, p. 301.
[549] Darville, p. 303.
[550] Darville, p. vii.

Speaking on behalf of the Indian populace and in the rhetoric of the Third Republic (as indicated by the oblique reference to assimilationist policies), the implication is that, had France ruled over India, no need for revolt would ever have arisen, and it is this fantasy that is tacitly expressed within Thimour's narrative of a failed Indian revolution.[551] Thus, Darville's text achieves several outcomes at once. First, it counter-narrates the closure of Anglo-centric narratives by relating through its Indian protagonist an unquenchable desire for liberation against the British oppressor. Secondly, it upholds the stereotype of Indian fanaticism symbolized by the figure of the depraved *Thugi* devotee, through which the possibility of Indian self-rule is denied. Finally, it ushers in the fantasy that a French India, while no longer a real possibility, would never have roused a desire for revolution and liberation since it would already have been 'free'.

Representations of India's desire for liberation from the British also recur in three of Jules Verne's adventure novels, beginning with *Vingt mille lieues sous les mers* and continued in *L'Île mystérieuse* and *La Maison à vapeur*.[552] More than simply narrating the Indian uprisings through the eyes of an Indian insurgent, like Darville's travelogue, these fictions focus on how the memory of colonial violence (epitomized by 1857–58) continues to fan the flames of revolt among Indian people post-1858. *La Maison*, as noted in the earlier chapters, is set in 1867, while *Vingt mille lieues sous les mers* and *L'Île mystérieuse* begin their narratives in 1868 and 1865, respectively. Each of these texts mobilizes the figure of the vengeful Indian revolutionary leader. Directed from his underwater *Nautilus*, Capitaine Nemo in *Vingt mille lieues sous les mers* and *L'Île mystérieuse* seeks retribution by engaging in a clandestine war against the British and by secretly financing the efforts of oppressed nations to achieve independence.[553] Nana Sahib in *La Maison* also wishes to avenge himself by organizing a second uprising against the British in India in 1867.[554] As such, these three

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[551] Deming Lewis provides a useful description of the French colonial policy of assimilation (or 'incorporation within the body politic of the mother country') and points to the way in which it was contrasted with the British idea of 'autonomy' (or 'colonial self-government'); Martin Deming Lewis, 'One Hundred Million Frenchmen: The "Assimilation" Theory in French Colonial Policy', *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 4 (1962), 129–53 (p. 131). He notes that throughout the nineteenth century 'assimilative measures became associated with republican governments', notably the Third Republic under which Darville's text was produced, and 'their abolition with the overthrow of these governments'; Deming Lewis, p. 135.

[552] An analysis of these three texts can also be found in Mukhopadhyay, pp. 136–89. Whereas Mukhopadhyay examines the deferred revelation of Nemo's identity in *Vingt mille lieues sous les mers* until *L'Île mystérieuse*, the focus of this chapter is on Verne's open-ended narration of the uprisings.

[553] Nemo oversees the sinking of a frigate at the end of *Vingt mille lieues sous les mers*, the nationality of which is revealed in *L'Île mystérieuse* to have been British; Verne, *Vingt mille lieues sous les mers*, pp. 458–60. In *L'Île mystérieuse*, it is revealed that Nemo supports monetarily those nations that are fighting for freedom; Verne, *L'Île mystérieuse*, p. 470.

[554] For more information on Nana Sahib and his involvement in organizing a second uprising, see Section 3.3.1, p. 85.

texts collectively foreground the ongoing presence of seditious movements among 'subject' peoples and, hence, the continuous threat that they present to British rule.

Where the first two texts are concerned, the reader is obliged to wait until the end of the second, *L'Ile mystérieuse*, to make a connection between Nemo and the Indian uprisings.[555] On his deathbed in the final chapter of *L'Ile mystérieuse*, Nemo reveals his identity to be that of an Indian leader, the Prince Dakkar, who did not merely participate in the revolts, but is acclaimed as being their very heart and soul — '[il] en fut l'âme'.[556] It is through this revelation that a rationale is finally provided for Nemo's decision to reject the 'civilized' world — a word that he uses pejoratively and ironically to refer to Britain's global hegemony — and to seek independence in the solitude of the *Nautilus*'s interminable underwater voyages (as recounted in *Vingt mille lieues sous les mers*).[557] The reader discovers that this resolution is directly connected to the violent acts committed by the British during the uprisings, which led to the murder of his wife and children. Yet, unlike Verne's characterization of Nana Sahib, whose desire for revenge is depicted in a negative (if justifiable) sense, Nemo's character is far more ambiguous. As professeur Aronnax, the French narrator of *Vingt mille lieues sous les mers*, observes, on the one hand, Nemo acts as 'le champion des peuples opprimés, le libérateur des races esclaves', but, on the other, he possesses 'ce cœur farouche' and an occasionally cruel 'esprit de vengeance', leading Aronnax to postulate that, 'Son formidable appareil servait non seulement ses instincts de liberté, mais peut-être aussi les intérêts de je ne sais quelles terribles représailles.'[558] This duality can be noted in the fact that Nemo does not simply seek vengeance for the lives of his family, but also for the crimes committed against the colonized races of the world. The quasi-messianic mission to which he appoints himself in *Vingt mille lieues sous les mers* — '"Je suis le droit, je suis la justice! [...] Je suis l'opprimé, et voilà l'oppresseur!"', meaning the British to whom he has lost '"tout ce que j'ai aimé, chéri, vénéré, patrie, femme, enfants, mon père, ma mère"'[559] — is further substantiated by his deification in *L'Ile mystérieuse*. The castaways describe him as 'le "génie de l'île"', 'l'être puissant', 'ce bienfaiteur' and 'presque un dieu'.[560] As such, his controversial decision to sink a British frigate at the end of

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[555] Verne, *L'Ile mystérieuse*, pp. 466–73.

[556] Verne, *L'Ile mystérieuse*, p. 469.

[557] Nemo explains the rationale for his self-imposed exile under the sea as follows: '"La mer n'appartient pas aux despotes. A sa surface, ils peuvent encore exercer des droits iniques, s'y battre, s'y dévorer, y transporter toutes les horreurs terrestres. Mais à trente pieds au-dessous de son niveau, leur pouvoir cesse, leur influence s'éteint, leur puissance disparaît! Ah! monsieur, vivez, vivez au sein des mers! Là seulement est l'indépendance! Là je ne reconnais pas de maîtres! Là je suis libre!"'; Verne, *Vingt mille lieues sous les mers*, p. 88.

[558] Verne, *Vingt mille lieues sous les mers*, p. 311, p. 470 and pp. 225–26.

[559] Verne, *Vingt mille lieues sous les mers*, p. 455.

[560] At the end of the novel, the castaways discover that it is Nemo who has secretly helped them to survive: 'Il [Nemo] était donc là celui qu'ils [the castaways] appelaient le "génie de l'île", l'être puissant dont l'intervention, en tant de circonstances, avait été si efficace, ce bienfaiteur auquel ils

Vingt mille lieues sous les mers is mitigated by the fact that he is the agent who metes out punishment on behalf of all 'subject' races against British tyranny. Thus, Nemo and his elusive *Nautilus* can be seen as an allegory for the subliminal (or submerged) threat to British rule that resides in the murky waters of British colonial discourse *post-bellum*, a threat that is rendered all the more menacing for its lack of finality: Nemo is able to go where he pleases and to do what he wishes without risk of capture.

This lack of finality recurs again in Verne's *La Maison*, which denies the British characters a 'satisfactory' ending by refusing to kill definitively Nana Sahib and, with his demise, the threat of revolt. Instead, *La Maison* hints that the uprisings have signalled the end, rather than the beginning, for British colonialism in India.[561] Reiterating the fact that Nana Sahib was never captured by the British, but remained a spectre of revolt in the post-'mutiny' years, his end in Verne's fiction remains unconfirmed. Indeed, his death is seen to be is irrelevant since the ideology that he embodied as an anti-colonial force supersedes his physical being. As the omniscient narrator states,

> puisqu'il n'y avait aucune preuve certaine de la mort de Nana Sahib, la légende allait reprendre ses droits; c'est que, dans l'esprit des populations de l'Inde centrale, l'insaisissable nabab passerait toujours pour vivant, en attendant que l'on fît un dieu immortel de l'ancien chef des Cipayes.[562]

The subtlety of this passage was clearly overlooked by the Samson Low English-language translation, which renamed *La Maison* as *The End of Nana Sahib: The Steam House*.[563] The Arco English-language translation similarly disregarded its underlying meaning by translating this passage as follows: 'There being no certain proof of the death of Nana Sahib, a legend sprung up amongst the population of Central India. To them their unseen Nabob was still living: they regarded him as an immortal being.'[564] This translation is a symbolic and narrative distortion of the more explicit French version and alters the significance of Verne's story by dismissing Nana Sahib's legacy as little more than Indian totemism (another god in the Hindu pantheon) and by expunging the reference to his leadership skills. In the original French, it is clear that the legend of Nana Sahib already existed prior to his

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devaient une si large part de reconnaissance! Devant les yeux, ils n'avaient qu'un homme, là où Pencroff et Nab croyaient trouver presque un dieu'; Verne, *L'Ile mystérieuse*, p. 466.

[561] As Herrenschmidt has argued, 'ce qui capte la prodigieuse imagination de Jules Verne, c'est l'avenir politique de la péninsule. *La Maison à Vapeur* donne à voir l'Inde en marche dans l'Histoire'; Herrenschmidt, p. 132.

[562] Verne, *La Maison*, p. 437.

[563] Alternative titles given to the English-language editions of *La Maison* can be seen by accessing the following URL: <http://www.julesverne.ca/vernebooks/jvbksteam.html> [accessed 1 March 2007].

[564] Jules Verne, *The Steam House (Part II): Tigers and Traitors*, trans. by I. O. Evans (London: Arco Publications, 1959), p. 175.

now uncertain death. Since there is no physical proof to confirm this conclusion, the French text suggests that this myth will live on indefinitely among the population of central India to inspire further uprisings. Thus, what appears to be a victory for the British symbolized by Munro's escape rings hollow in the French-language version since the uncertainty that surrounds Nana Sahib allows legend, and with it the hope of independence, to continue to flourish. What this suggests is that the legacy of Nana Sahib, the 'dieu immortel de l'ancien chef des Cipayes', could not simply be erased (anymore than the underlying threat of further revolt) by narrating the uprisings as a British victory.[565] In *La Maison*, the British community's circular return to Calcutta to the place where the journey started is nothing more than a continuation of their sequestered post-'mutiny' life. They remain surrounded by a hostile and burgeoning Indian nation that anticipates the reincarnation of another 'Nana Sahib' to lead a (this time) national revolution against this fragile group of colonizers.

In short, this comparative analysis of naming the events of 1857–58 in English- and French-language texts foregrounds the effects of nomenclature on representations of the past. It highlights the desire, inherent within many nineteenth-century British texts, to contain and manage these events through key terms and qualifiers that expunge any positive connotations from the act of anti-colonial rising, reframing them as a negative moment to be quashed, assigned to the past and remembered as a British victory. Simultaneously, it shows how competing French voices have challenged such foreclosure by utilizing contrasting terms, such as 'insurrection' and 'révolution', that refuse to subscribe to Anglo-centric accounts and, in doing so, usher in the Gallo-centric fantasy of Britain's collapse. In this discursive battle between colonial competitors, India's 'révolution nationale' is co-opted into French writing as a platform from which to voice a rival discourse. Thus, although there is some contiguity between the nomenclatures used in French and Indian nationalist writing, ultimately the similarity is only cosmetic. The French texts examined here are less concerned with India's independence than with destabilizing British hegemony during a moment of weakness by implicitly and explicitly envisaging a time beyond British governance.

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[565] Verne, *La Maison*, p. 437.

5 MYTHOLOGIES OF FRENCH COLONIALISM: COMPENSATING FOR *L'INDE PERDUE* IN FRENCH-LANGUAGE NARRATIVES OF THE INDIAN UPRISINGS

5.1 Introduction

It was the circumstances of anti-colonial uprising against British rule that allowed French writers to consider what an India, or even a world, freed from British domination could be like. Writing in the midst of revolt, Billot envisaged Britain retreating into itself post-1857, a vision that he outlined in a chapter entitled, 'L'Inde perdue, quel sera l'avenir politique et social de l'Angleterre?' (taken from his political text, *L'Inde, l'Angleterre et la France*, 1857).[566] This withdrawal following the loss of India ('L'Inde perdue') would, he argued, encourage Britain to cultivate a degree of circumspection that it had hitherto lacked, meaning that it would naturally be more inclined to ally itself with its European neighbours, rather than seeing them as the collective enemy:

> Dès ce moment, l'Angleterre rentre en elle-même, vit de sa vie propre [...] Moins arrogante [...], mais non redoutée, on ne la verrait plus provoquer, bouleverser, jeter à tout propos l'insulte et l'outrage au front de l'Europe; elle sentirait que, pour qu'on soit juste envers elle, il faudrait qu'elle le fût envers les autres.[567]

Once reduced and having lost the privileges that global hegemony had permitted thus far, Britain, Billot imagined, would be forced to share its power equally with France: 'Les villes de Londres et de Paris seront sœurs; et l'Angleterre et la France suffiront au maintien de l'équilibre du monde.[568] This, in turn, would usher in a new era: 'L'ère du droit commun s'est levée. Que l'Angleterre s'incline devant lui, ou le droit commun la tuera!'[569] Thus, for this writer, the uprisings marked a potentially vital shift in the balance of global power, which France could use to its political and economic advantage by repositioning itself as a more significant global leader.

However, Billot's optimistic vision of a British 'l'Inde perdue' refers indirectly to a rather different history, namely France's earlier military losses on the subcontinent, which Claude Farrère, writing nearly eighty years after the uprisings, would consider in his historical work, entitled *L'Inde perdue* (1935). Unlike Billot, Farrère did not question whether Britain could retain India, but rather whether an India under French leadership would have produced such a violent popular backlash. The answer, inevitably, was negative:

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[566] Billot, *L'Inde, l'Angleterre et la France*, pp. 111–20.
[567] Billot, *L'Inde, l'Angleterre et la France*, p. 117.
[568] Billot, *L'Inde, l'Angleterre et la France*, p. 119.
[569] Billot, *L'Inde, l'Angleterre et la France*, p. 120.

'Je mets en fait que jamais l'insurrection de 1857 ne se fût déployée comme elle fit, si l'Inde eût alors été française: nous avons vécu toujours plus près de nos sujets, soit Africains, soit Asiatiques, que les Anglais des leurs.'[570] By holding the Indian revolts up as an example of flawed colonial management, Farrère was able to promote instead the comparative greatness of France's imperial expansion.

It is at the intersection between the broad themes found in these two texts — loss and nostalgia, on the one hand, and a sense of French renewal, on the other — that the final chapter of this thesis takes place. Drawing from the preceding analyses of competing French and British representations of 1857–58, it contextualizes what Farrère coined as 'l'Inde perdue' by questioning how the Indian uprisings function as a *point de repère* within French colonial discourse and its late-nineteenth-century drive for imperial expansion. It takes examples from a wide range of texts, including French newspaper reports (1857–58), a political exposé (Billot, *L'Inde, l'Angleterre et la France*, 1857), two adventure novels (Assolant, *Aventures merveilleuses mais authentiques du Capitaine Corcoran*, 1867; Rousselet, *Le Charmeur de serpents*, 1875), a romance fiction (Marenis, *La Révolte sans âme*, 1946), a historical novel (Grèce, *La Femme sacrée*, 1984), and a song (Billot, *Le Réveil de l'Inde ou chant du Mharatte*, 1860).

Taking a synchronic approach to this broad chronology of texts, it identifies several key tropes and themes within French writing on 1857–58. First, it considers nostalgia by examining how the French Indian *comptoirs* functioned as 'lieux de mémoire' for French territorial losses, while simultaneously operating as utopic colonial sites that contrasted directly with British India in 1857–58. Secondly, it considers the hypocrisy that underpins these idealized images of French colonialism (and French colonial discourse more generally) by recalling the post-abolition debates that were ongoing between France and Britain throughout 1857 over the continued involvement of French traders in the 'slave trade'. Thirdly, it examines how India and the uprisings are employed as narrative contexts in which to create a particular fantasy of French colonialism that occludes, yet remains troubled by, France's own histories of territorial loss and colonial atrocity. It focuses on two recurring tropes: France as India's *libérateur*; and France as India's preferred colonial ruler. Finally, the analysis moves beyond India by exploring how the subject of a British colonial crisis could be used as a moment in which to imagine a French revival. This renaissance is played out, not in the nostalgic imaginary of India, but within the colonial 'reality' of *Afrique* or *Indochine française*.[571] As will be argued, it is the imaginative summoning of these quasi-

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[570] Farrère, pp. 208–09.
[571] The idea of *Afrique française* can be traced back to the invasion of Algiers in 1830. For example, the *Revue Encyclopédique* used the term 'la France africaine' in January 1831; Yves Bénot, 'Une préhistoire de l'expédition d'Alger', in *Rétablissement de l'esclavage dans les colonies françaises 1802: Ruptures et continuités de la politique française (1800–1830) aux origines d'Haïti*, ed. by Yves

continental territories that compensates, in part, for the memories of colonial loss exemplified by the Treaty of Paris in 1763.[572] Centrally, then, this final chapter investigates how France's imperial expansion is transformed and reinvigorated when viewed through the prism of an Indian-led rebellion and, thus, how the fantastical image of *Inde* operates as a site in which to sanitize the French imperial project beyond Indian borders.

5.2   The *Comptoirs*: Amnesia, Nostalgia and Revival

Despite French losses, the idea of India continued to function as an important *point de repère* in the French colonial imagination, acting as a source of inspiration for exoticist literary creation.[573] In contrast with the widely-accepted view of India as an exotic 'elsewhere' there was a comparative lack of accepted 'knowledge', or even interest in, the geopolitical reality of the French *comptoirs*, at least until the Third Republic.[574] For example, the *Exposition Universelle* held in Paris in 1855 referred to India, but without any specific reference to the trading posts, preferring to present the subcontinent through more familiar and stereotypical figurations described by Théophile Gautier in *L'Orient* (published in 1877).[575] In Gautier's account, religion formed the mainstay of the Indian exhibits, including such Hindu iconography as a statue of Dourga that was 'passablement effroyable' and 'des figurines de

Bénot and Marcel Dorigny (Paris: Maisonneuve & Larose, 2003), pp. 537–45 (p. 545). This term was used again in 1857 by Billot, who (as is discussed in Section 5.6, p. 174) placed 'l'Afrique française' in opposition to 'L'Inde anglaise'; Billot, *L'Inde, l'Angleterre et la France*, p. 61. The term *Indochine française* (replacing the hyphenated *Indo-Chine*) was officially recognized in 1887. For more information on this nomenclature, see Cooper, p. 43.

[572] Bénot notes that the conquest of Algeria was motivated by a desire to avenge the Treaty of Paris (1763); Bénot, p. 540. This 'Date maudite', writes Le Cour Grandmaison, was viewed by many nineteenth-century French writers as representative of a 'humiliation nationale réputée avoir ouvert une longue période de décadence'; Olivier Le Cour Grandmaison, *Coloniser. Exterminer. Sur la guerre et l'État colonial* (Paris: Fayard, 2005), pp. 10–11. Similarly, Edwards 'locates France's fascination for Angkor in another, more nebulous detritus: the ruins of French rule in India. [...] Angkor is both a site of memory and a staging ground for fantasies of what *l'Inde* could have become under French rule'; Penny Edwards, 'Taj Angkor: Enshrining *l'Inde* in *le Cambodge*', in *France and "Indochina": Cultural Representations*, ed. by Kathryn Robson and Jennifer Yee (Lanham, MD; Oxford: Lexington Books, 2005), pp. 13–27 (p. 13).

[573] See also Section 1.2.1, pp. 12–13.

[574] For more information on the *comptoirs* under the Third Republic, see Jacques Weber, '1816–1914: One Century of Colonization', in *The French in India: From Diamond Traders to Sanskrit Scholars*, ed. by Rose Vincent, trans. by Latika Padgaonkar (Bombay: Popular Prakashan, 1990), pp. 141–45.

[575] Théophile Gautier, *L'Orient*, 2 vols (Paris: Charpentier, 1902; first publ. 1877), II. Extensive research into representations of the *comptoirs* in these nineteenth-century colonial and universal exhibitions has yet to be conducted. Some information can be found in Catherine Servan-Schreiber, 'L'Inde et Ceylan dans les expositions coloniales et universelles (1851–1931)', in *Zoo humains, XIX* et XX* siècles*, ed. by Nicolas Bancel, Pascal Blanchard, Gilles Boëtsch et al. (Paris: La Découverte, 2002), pp. 159–68. Dale's forthcoming thesis will include a chapter addressing this lacuna: Kathryn Dale, 'French-Language Representations of Indian Cultures in the Context of France's Cinderella Colonies in British India between 1870 and 1940' (forthcoming doctoral thesis, University of Liverpool).

terre cuite colorée, représentant [...] la procession du char de Jaggernath, sous les roues duquel se précipitent et se font écraser les pèlerins fanatiques'.[576] That the French press felt the need to remind their readership of the existence of the *comptoirs* during the 1857-58 uprisings thus suggests the extent to which they had been publicly forgotten, eclipsed by that all-consuming idea of British India so triumphantly displayed in the Great Exhibition of 1851. In contrast, Bellet, writing for *La Patrie*, asked 'Quelles sont d'abord, — tristes et insignifians débris de la puissance française dans l'Indoustan, — les possessions que nous avons dans l'Inde?'[577] He listed their names, their locations and their demographic details, which amounted to '188 milles carrés' and 'une population de 200,000 habitans', concluding that 'Tel est le bilan exact de nos possessions dans l'Inde.'[578] In Bellet's summary, an air of shame hangs over the subject of the *comptoirs* — those 'tristes et insignifians débris de la puissance française' — with their tendency to recall French losses. Indeed, their persistent, yet marginalized, presence can be seen as a synecdoche that stands for an entire period of decline, evoking nostalgia for an era in which France's influence had once presided over much of Europe.

By placing the subject of India under the spotlight of the media for such a prolonged period, the revolts offered a conduit for recalling those histories of French loss, not only on the subcontinent, but also throughout the colonized world. The legitimist press, *L'Union*, for example, initially used 'cette crise violente de l'Inde' as a platform on which to celebrate the golden age of French overseas expansion under Louis XIV, before depicting France's gradual decline:

> Bientôt Chandernagor était perdu (1757); nos comptoirs de Surate ruinés; en Afrique comme
> en Asie la ruine était rapide, l'île de Gorée s'était rendue aux Anglais; en Amérique, même
> désastres: Québec, tout le Canada, un littoral de quinze cent lieues étaient enlevés à la France;
> la Guadeloupe et la Martinique lui échappaient; enfin tout le système colonial de Louis XIV
> était par terre: admirable époque de réaction contre la gloire passé! c'était le règne du parti
> *libre-penseur.*[579]

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[576] Gautier, p. 10. For more on Indian religious stereotypes within French colonial discourse, see Dhanavadee Underwood, 'Victime ou déesse sexualisée: La représentation de la femme indienne à l'époque coloniale de 1744 à 1930, étude des œuvres littéraires de langue française' (unpublished doctorial thesis, University of Liverpool, 2004). For an introduction to the rivalry between the Parisian *Exposition Universelle* of 1855 and London's Great Exhibition of 1851, see Frank Anderson Trapp, 'The Universal Exhibition of 1855', *The Burlington Magazine*, 107 (1965), 300–05 (p. 300).
[577] Louis Bellet, 'Les Comptoirs français de l'Inde', *La Patrie*, 30 September 1857, p. 1.
[578] *Ibid.*
[579] Laurentie, 'France, Paris, 18 août', *L'Union: Quotidienne, France, écho français*, 19 August 1857, pp. 1–2 (p. 1).

While it is unsurprising to find the legitimist press transferring the responsibility for colonial ruin away from the Bourbon monarchy and towards external philosophical and political influences (in this case, onto the 'libre-penseur'[580]), what is more important, within the framework of this thesis, is the association *L'Union* made between the *comptoirs* and French retrogression.

Throughout nineteenth-century literature, similar patterns of nostalgia and melancholia can be discerned whenever the *comptoirs* are mentioned. In Verne's *La Maison à vapeur*, Chandernagor symbolizes France's decline, as well as its ongoing subordination to the British:

> Cette ville, abritée par le drapeau tricolore et qui n'a pas le droit d'entretenir plus de quinze soldats pour sa garde personnelle, cette ancienne rivale de Calcutta pendant les luttes du XVIIIe siècle, est aujourd'hui bien déchue, sans industrie, sans commerce, ses bazars abandonnés, son fort vide.[581]

Likewise, the narrator in Pierre Loti's *L'Inde (sans les Anglais)* (1903) describes Pondichéry as 'notre vieille petite colonie languissante' and connects it with feelings of sorrow and regret: 'Oh! la mélancolie d'arriver là, dans cette vieille ville lointaine et charmante, où sommeille [...] tout un passé français!'[582] Like Verne's Chandernagor, Pondichéry is depicted as marooned within the surrounding seas of a hostile British India: 'Vieille petite ville qui dure par tradition, qui vit parce qu'elle a vécu, systématiquement isolée du reste de l'Inde par nos hostiles voisins, et n'ayant [...] ni port, ni rade où nos bateaux puissent s'abriter.'[583] These lackadaisical images along with the general air of despondency that seems to pervade representations of the *comptoirs* perhaps explain why they have so often been overlooked within French historiography.[584]

When 'remembered', however, the *comptoirs* are often overdetermined, first, because they are burdened with the memories of a colonial rivalry that resulted in France ceding its primary position to the *frère ennemi* and, second, because they suggest the loss of something much greater than their sum parts. In other words, they act not only as repositories for the nostalgic memories of France's former greatness, but also as counterpoints to the

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[580] As Hazareehsingh writes, the legitimists associated freethinking with the idea of Protestant individualism, and Protestant individualism with Jacobin doctrines on popular sovereignty, which collectively threatened the legitimists' belief in the hereditary principle; Hazareesingh, *From Subject to Citizen*, pp. 105–06.

[581] Verne, *La Maison*, p. 81.

[582] Loti, p. 136.

[583] Loti, p. 137.

[584] Marsh writes that 'The history of the French colonial presence upon the Indian subcontinent [...] remains largely ignored within academic circles and unknown among the French public'; Marsh, *Fictions of 1947*, pp. 13–14.

bloated presence of a British India that might have belonged to the French. Billot, for example, eulogized Dupleix by remembering how 'Il se promit de donner l'Inde à la France.'[585] His accolade was then followed by the obligatory regret for the failure of the French monarchy (under Louis XV) to assist Dupleix in bringing this promise to fruition, having instead negotiated with Britain: 'Les Anglais, par ce traité, cédaient quelques bourgades, la France cédait un empire.'[586] The dispossession of France's strategic strongholds positioned along the Coromandel coast, Carnatic region and Deccan peninsula is thus eclipsed by the fantasy that it was an entire empire, akin to the geopolitical reality of British India in 1857, that was lost at that moment.[587] This loss is felt all the more keenly because of the ongoing existence of those comparatively diminutive French-Indian trading posts.

Yet, the idea of the *comptoirs* did not simply produce feelings of regret and resentment towards the errors of the French monarchy, but could also be used as a counterpoint to British India, inspiring, in the process, a sense of French pride. While Warren, for example, criticized France for its failure to realize Pondichéry's potential, the enclave itself motivated his sense of national hauteur:

> Elle est unique parmi les villes de l'Inde, par son heureuse union de l'Europe et de l'Asie. C'est une ville de France enchâssée dans les couleurs magiques, la riche végétation de l'Orient. [...] Nulle part le cocotier n'est si beau, le palmier éventail ne se penche avec plus de grâce; nulle part les rizières ne sont si fraîches, la population indigène plus dense, plus active, plus heureuse.[588]

As Ravi has noted (although not with reference to Warren), French-language representations of this *comptoir* tend to valorize the 'image "française" de Pondichéry' over the Indian side of the town.[589] While this is also true of Warren's depiction, what is more important is the way that Pondichéry is positioned as contradistinct to British India: 'chaque fois que j'ai visité Pondichéry, mon cœur s'est gonflé de joie et tendresse. Encore aujourd'hui, ce petit coin du monde est pour moi une oasis dans le desert'.[590] The term 'oasis' complements his other descriptive terms for this enclave, such as 'petit paradis' or 'ce petit Eldorado', and contrasts directly with that other India that lay outside its paradisiacal boundaries.[591]

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[585] Billot, *L'Inde, l'Angleterre et la France*, p. 27.
[586] Billot, *L'Inde, l'Angleterre et la France*, p. 39.
[587] A map of France's political influence in India from 1700–61, based mainly in the south-eastern provinces (or modern-day Tamil Nadu, Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh), can be found in Ferro, p. 90.
[588] Warren, I, 35.
[589] Ravi, *L'Inde romancée*, p. 43.
[590] Warren, I, 35.
[591] Warren, I, 35–36.

Throughout the reporting on the Indian uprisings, the *comptoirs* were made to function in a similarly antithetical fashion. Mirroring their marginalized status (as well as their distance from the hotbeds of insurgent action), actual references to the French trading posts were sparse.[592] As mentioned in Chapter One, Section 1.1, the Parisian press only briefly contemplated the need for troops to be moved into French-Indian territory.[593] More commonly, the *comptoirs* were mobilized as peace havens that contrasted with the surrounding chaos of revolt. The Calcutta-based French correspondent for *La Patrie*, for example, considered that there was little chance of insurgency in Pondichéry, not just because the residents were far from the centres of the rebellion, but also because 'ils n'ont aucune raison de se plaindre'.[594] *Le Moniteur officiel des établissements français de l'Inde*, a newspaper published in Pondichéry, boasted of the peaceful way in which '*moharrem*' — a period usually noted for its 'surexcitation' and 'troubles' — had been celebrated there, speaking of the 'excellent esprit qui anime notre population'.[595] Similarly, *La Presse* insisted that the French enclaves 'jouissaient de la plus profonde tranquillité' and wrote that 'la population indigène continuait à montrer des dispositions favorables pour l'administration française, et un grand nombre de familles indiennes avaient signé des adresses aux autorités pour protester de leur dévoûment'.[596] Collectively, these examples suggest that, despite and because of their marginalized status, the *comptoirs* could be employed as effective rhetorical instruments within a competing French colonial discourse. Presented as sanctuaries from the storm of revolt, they could be used to showcase French colonialism as a preferable alternative to that of the British.

As will be demonstrated in the remaining pages of this thesis, the kind of nostalgic retrospection usually expressed with regards to India and the *comptoirs* is given a more positive, forward-looking direction when set within the context of the uprisings. If France's loss had been Britain's gain in the eighteenth and early-nineteenth centuries, perhaps, as Billot would argue in 1857, Britain's potential to lose India could now be used to France's advantage: 'Quand l'Angleterre descend, la France monte et, avec elle, les libertés du

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[592] Research conducted at the Bibliothèque Nationale de France revealed that only six newspaper articles published between 1857 and 1858 discussed the *comptoirs* within the context of the uprisings. In addition to the four articles cited in this section, these include: 'Télégraphe privée', *Le Constitutionnel*, 4 September 1857, p. 1; Jules Duval, *Journal des débats politiques et littéraires*, 9 March 1858, p. 1.

[593] Louis Bellet, 'Les Comptoirs français de l'Inde', *La Patrie*, 30 September 1857, p. 1; V. Paulin, 'Histoire de la semaine', *L'Illustration, journal universel*, 30 (10 October 1857), 226.

[594] J. March, 'Nouvelles des Indes: Correspondance particulière de la *Patrie* (Calcutta, 8 août)', *La Patrie*, 22 September 1857, p. 1.

[595] *Le Moniteur officiel des établissements français de l'Inde* is cited in 'Faits divers', *Moniteur universel: Journal officiel de l'Empire français*, 17 October 1857, pp. 1139–40 (p. 1139).

[596] Alfred Darimon, 'Bulletin du Jour', *La Presse*, 18 September 1857, p. 1.

monde.'[597] Offering a vivid example of the nefarious effects of British colonialism, French writing could capitalize on the uprisings as a way of imagining a French revival, one that would materialize from a competitive drive for colonial expansion. The revolts, it shows, have repeatedly enabled French texts to renegotiate their relationship with France's histories of defeat and avoid engaging with French colonial violence by lending credence to the fantasy that, as writers such as Darville and Farrère would later suggest, had India been French, an insurrection of the kind Britain was facing, or had faced, would never have taken place.[598]

5.3 The Hypocrisy of French Colonial Discourse: Defining the British as 'Enslavers'

Although an idealized image of French colonialism could be projected through the *comptoirs*, by 1857, France was neither innocent of committing its own atrocities (notably in the French Antilles and Algeria), nor free from experiencing its own anti-colonial revolts as a result (the most memorable being the Haitian Revolution of 1791–1804, although uprisings also occurred in the *comptoirs* from the 1830s onwards).[599] The moralizing tone adopted by many French texts towards the British can be seen, therefore, as duplicitous. Colonial discourse and imperialism are, however, inherently double-tongued. As Bongie points out, 'To speak of modern imperialism is, from the outset, to speak in oxymorons' since imperialism was 'incompatible with the process of democratization that took hold of most of Europe during the nineteenth century'.[600] In other words, despite the revolutionary developments in political democracy and liberalism in the metropolitan centres, European

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[597] This is an anonymous quotation that appears as an epigraph to Billot's text; Billot, *L'Inde, l'Angleterre et la France*, p. 1.

[598] For Darville, see Section 4.5, pp. 128–29; Darville, p. vii. For Farrère, see Section 5.1, pp. 133–34; Farrère, pp. 208–09.

[599] A useful selection of articles on the Haitian Revolution (including both its disputed connection to Enlightenment thinking and representations of Toussaint Louverture) can be found in Charles Forsdick, 'Situating Haiti: On Some Early Nineteenth-Century Representations of Toussaint Louverture', *International Journal of Francophone Studies*, 10 (2007), 17–34; Nick Nesbitt, 'The Idea of 1804', *Yale French Studies*, 107 (2005), 6–38; Marcel Dorigny, 'Aux orgines: L'indépendance d'Haïti et son occultation', in *La Fracture coloniale: La société française au prisme de l'héritage colonial*, ed. by Pascal Blanchard, Nicholas Bancel and Sandrine Lemaire (Paris: La Découverte, 2006), pp. 47–57. For more information on the *comptoirs*, see Weber's chapters on the growth of anti-French nationalism in the French trading posts from the 1830s onwards and the rise of the Indian politician, Chanemougam, in Pondichéry during the Second Empire; Jacques Weber, 'Chanemougam, le roi de l'Inde française: Les fondements sociaux et politiques d'un pouvoir absolu sous la IIIe République', *Revue française d'histoire d'outre-mer*, 290 (1991), 59–87; Weber, '1816–1914: One Century of Colonization', pp. 143–44.

[600] Bongie, p. 33.

countries simultaneously practised a form of 'enlightened despotism' abroad among what they considered to be the 'unenlightened' masses.[601]

As well as being a feature of the colonial narrative in general, double-talk is also a politically expedient tool. By apportioning blame to an 'other' colonial power (particularly the British), attention could be deflected away from the atrocities being committed by the *métropole*. This works both ways. During the Indian revolts, for example, an article appeared in *The Times* outlining a recent trial in which a French officer, Captain Doineau (head of the Arab Bureau of Tlemçen), was accused of unlawfully assassinating Mohammed ben Abdallah (the *Agha* of Beni-Snous) on 12 September 1856.[602] The ensuing legal proceedings uncovered a plethora of unsavoury details concerning French Algerian military policies. *The Times* reported that Doineau had

> exercised an authority transcending in its rigour and its despotism even the recognized severities of martial law. Summary executions were spoken of as notorious transactions, and in certain districts of the colony the military administrators pronounced their decrees, even in matters of life and death, without so much as the form of trial.[603]

The article concluded with the grandiloquent statement that 'in no British dependency have the abuses of colonial rule ever been pushed to such a length as this'.[604] Published in September 1857 and, hence, at a time when Indian civilians and soldiers were being summarily executed without trial, the hypocrisy at the heart of this proclamation is clearly discernable.[605] This act of French atrocity nonetheless presented an opportune moment in which to direct attention away from the revolts, while acting as an effective riposte to the negative press being produced across the Channel.

In the opposite case, when juxtaposed with the reprehensible acts of British colonialism, the French too could avoid confronting their own history of, and continued involvement in, colonial violence. This process of displacement is particularly evident

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[601] See, for example, 'Travail sur l'Algérie' (1841), in which Tocqueville departed from his domestic liberalism and refused to condemn France for its use of the same forms of colonial oppression that he had criticized in other nations (notably, the exploitation of Native Americans by white settlers). Where Algeria was concerned, he actively supported (along with the bellicose General Bugeaud) the military use of *razzia*, crop burning and silo emptying, as well as the taking of unarmed men, women and children for use as political leverage; Alexis de Tocqueville, 'Travail sur l'Algérie, octobre 1841', in *Tocqueville: Œuvres*, ed. by André Jardin ([Paris]: Gallimard, 1991), pp. 689–759 (pp. 704–08). For more information on the incongruity between Tocqueville's domestic and colonial standpoints, see Melvin Richter, 'Tocqueville on Algeria', *The Review of Politics*, 25 (1963), 362–98; Cheryl B. Welch, 'Colonial Violence and the Rhetoric of Evasion: Tocqueville on Algeria', *Political Theory*, 31 (2003), 235–64; Le Cour Grandmaison, *Coloniser, Exterminer*, pp. 137–99.

[602] *The Times*, 4 September 1857, p. 6. Herbert Ingram Priestley, *France Overseas: A Study of Modern Imperialism* (London: Cass, 1966), p. 82.

[603] *The Times*, 4 September 1857, p. 6.

[604] *Ibid.*

[605] See also Section 2.2.1, p. 33.

whenever the locutions 'esclave' or 'esclavage' (and their synonyms) were mobilized to characterize British systems. A common analogy was to equate British colonialism to the slave-based society of the Roman Empire.[606] As the editor of *L'Univers*, Veuillot, stated, although such system may have been admissible in the past, such tyranny in modern-day empire building was no longer viable since, 'cette condition [d'esclavage] n'est plus celle des nations chrétiennes.'[607] By referring to the antiquated example of the Roman Empire, rather than to the contemporary history of the European slavery, Veuillot carefully eschewed France's rather belated exit from the slave trade in 1848 for the second time in French legal history.[608]

Moreover, the use of such terms is rendered highly specious when it is recalled that, prior to and throughout the uprisings, cross-Channel debates were ongoing over what Britain saw as France's persistent involvement in the African 'slave trade' despite the 1848 Act. Trading had continued because abolition had led to a sharp decline in sugar production resulting from a sudden shortage in manpower.[609] The difficulties in sourcing a competitive labour force were frequently discussed in the French press during the uprisings. For many journalists, 'le rachat', or the repurchasing of slaves as hired labour for French-owned plantations in the West Indies, was a viable solution that meant capitalizing on Africa's slave industry. This practice was viewed negatively by British officials, despite well-publicized evidence of their own human rights abuses involving the transportation of Indian labourers to Mauritius.[610] In July 1857, Palmerston reported that a French company had been involved in the sale of 1200 'freed' Africans to Martinique, which, despite being called 'le rachat', and hence being legal, equated in all-but-name to 'la traite'.[611] Similarly, the British Foreign secretary considered that it was,

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[606] See footnote 285. For example, Billot wrote of British-ruled India that 'Il n'y a que des maîtres et des esclaves! — Le romain qui engraissait ses murènes avec les lambeaux de chair humaine était moins barbare'; Billot, *L'Inde, l'Angleterre et la France*, p. 54.

[607] Louis Veuillot, 'France: De la révolution des Indes (1ᵉ article)', *L'Univers: Union Catholique*, 9 September 1857, p. 1.

[608] See footnote 208. For more information on the second abolition, see Seymour Drescher, 'British Way, French Way: Opinion Building and Revolution in the Second French Slave Emancipation', *The American Historical Review*, 96 (1991), 709–34; Lawrence C. Jennings, 'French Policy towards Trading with African and Brazilian Slave Merchants, 1840–1853', *The Journal of African History*, 17 (1976), 515–28 (p. 525 and p. 527); Bangou, p. 39 and p. 46; Catherine A. Reinhardt, *Claims to Memory: Beyond Slavery and Emancipation in the French Caribbean* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2006), pp. 1–2.

[609] Tinker, *A New System of Slavery*, p. 95.

[610] For example, Tinker writes of 'the shameful neglect of ship-loads of Indians abandoned to their fate on Gabriel Island off the north coast of Mauritius', leading to the suspension of emigration to Mauritius between 24 October 1856 and 27 April 1857; Tinker, *A New System of Slavery*, pp. 90–91.

[611] 'Parlement d'Angleterre: Chambre des Communes', *Le Siècle*, 13 July 1857, p. 1. For a selection of divergent opinions on the extent to which slavery and indentured labour can be seen as synonymous, see Tinker's *A New System of Slavery*, which (as the title suggests) presents indentured labour as a repackaging of the old slavery systems, contrary to Emmer's and Northrup's articles, which reject this contiguity; Pieter C. Emmer, 'Mythe et réalité: La migration des Indiens dans la

'beyond doubt [...] that the Slave Trade is now practically carried on under the French flag' and that 'in reality these emigrants are slaves bought at so much per head, and brought by violence of every kind to the coast to be sold to the French purchaser', who could not be considered 'as free labourers in the just sense of that term'.[612]

For the French government, it was difficult, as Northrup notes, to 'disspell [*sic*] the impression, in the eyes of contemporary British officials [...] that they were in fact continuing the banned Atlantic slave trade in a new guise'.[613] What now defined 'slavery' had become open to interpretation, 'the distinction between "licit" and "illicit" [...being] as difficult to make as ever'.[614]

The ambivalence of these terms runs throughout newspaper articles published in this period. On the one hand, journalists, such *Le Constitutionnel*'s Langlé, could accuse Britain of treating its Indian 'subjects' as slaves: 'Nul ne [...] connaissait [les Anglais] que par ses rigueurs, ses punitions, et ses impôts. Il avait été maître; il n'avait eu que des esclaves. Il ne trouve plus que des révoltés.'[615] On the other hand, the same newspaper, only one month later, could harangue those 'philantropes anglais', meaning the British government, for criticizing France's continuing involvement in the 'slave trade', or what Dubois preferred to call 'le rachat', 'l'émigration', or the 'libération' of Africans.[616] In response, Dubois presented the repurchasing of slaves as an act of humanity performed in the name of liberty. He structured his argument in terms of France's moral and national imperatives towards the enslaved 'other' by instrumentalizing neologisms, such as 'le rachat' and redefining old terms, such as 'l'émigration' within his polemic:

[L'émigration], telle que nous la pratiquons, est basée sur l'affranchissement immédiat de l'Africain racheté, et, à la suite de cette libération, le noir émancipé est transporté dans des

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Caraïbe de 1839 à 1917', *Revue française d'histoire d'outre-mer*, 336–337 (2002), 111–29; Northrup, p. 247. Ravi foregrounds yet another viewpoint by showing how Mauritian national literature celebrates the figure of the Indian 'coolie' (or indentured labourer), not as a slave, but as an important agent in Mauritian national history; Srilata Ravi, *Rainbow Colors: Literary Ethnotopographies of Mauritius* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2007), p. 19.

[612] The British Foreign Secretary is cited in Northrup, p. 248. After 1808, Britain insisted repeatedly that both France and Holland halt all involvement in slavery; an insistence that, as both Bangou and Tombs and Tombs have argued, was not motivated by any concern for migrating slaves, but extended from a desire to quash its rival competitors by limiting the size of their workforces; Bangou, p. 53; Tombs and Tombs, p. 269.

[613] Northrup, p. 248.

[614] Jennings, p. 526.

[615] Aylic Langlé, 'L'Inde et les Cadets d'Angleterre', *Le Constitutionnel*, 26 November 1857, pp. 1–2 (p. 1).

[616] P. Dubois, 'Paris, 26 décembre', *Le Constitutionnel*, 29 December 1857, p. 1.

pays délivrés depuis long-temps de l'esclavage, où il prend place au sein d'une société libre.

Ainsi, d'un misérable Africain l'émigration fait un citoyen libre, un ouvrier indépendant.[617]

Apart from highlighting the elusive nature of such terminologies, especially within political and journalistic writing, this example also suggests that French journalists, such as Dubois, drew clear distinctions between French and British colonial systems (here of indentured labour), as the phrase 'telle que nous la pratiquons' reveals. Dubois, like many of his contemporaries and successors, clearly thought of the French as liberators rather than enslavers, demonstrating that a newspaper could unproblematically support Indian liberation from what they termed British slavery while extolling the virtues of French companies in supplying repurchased slaves to French-owned West Indian plantations.

French-language representations of the Indian uprisings are marked by just such a refusal to engage with the role played by the *métropole* in colonial violence. Instead, the uprisings were used as an opportunity to put into sharp relief the negative aspects of British colonialism, which could then be used as a foil to France's supposedly more enlightened mission.[618] To this end, timeworn stereotypes of, and prejudices against, the British were recycled.[619] They were seen not just as enslavers, but also usurpers who had seized the Mughal Empire, but without reforming any of its corrupt systems: 'les Anglais n'eurent qu'à se substituer aux Musulmans, et l'oppression, devenue plus savante et mieux régularisée, n'en fut que plus onéreuse et plus funeste pour les populations,' wrote Barrier for *L'Univers*.[620] They lacked any sense of a moral, ideological and/or Christian agenda, being driven instead by a selfish and retrograde desire for economic gain: 'C'est dans le mercantilisme pur que se résume toute la politique de l'Angleterre', wrote Billot.[621] Their avaricious desire for economic exploitation was linked directly to their Protestant faith, which was viewed by many French writers as a corrupt deviation from the altruism of

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[617] *Ibid.*

[618] As Cornick points out, national identities can be 'defined not only in terms of a nation's *intrinsic* characteristics', but also 'relative to the *extrinsic* characteristics of rival nations', meaning that 'the opposition between France and Britain was a fundamental one'; Cornick, pp. 129–30.

[619] Many of these stereotypes can be traced back to the French Revolution of 1789 and the Napoleonic Wars, for example, the styling of Britain as 'Carthage' to France's 'Rome' in response to 'Britain's colonial and commercial dominance', which Napoleon attempted to undermine through the Continental System; Tombs and Tombs, p. 227 and pp. 268–74.

[620] Barrier, 'France, Paris, 8 juillet', *L'Univers: Union Catholique*, 9 July 1857, p. 1. This opinion was echoed by Warren, II, 143 and Billot, *L'Inde, l'Angleterre et la France*, pp. 18–19. For more on the long genealogy of this argument, see Teltscher, *India Inscribed*, pp. 164–65; Kate Marsh, *India in the French Imagination: Peripheral Voices, 1754–1815* (London: Pickering & Chatto, 2009), pp. 121–22 and p. 132.

[621] Billot, *L'Inde, l'Angleterre et la France*, p. 78. Mercantilism might be a term traditionally associated with seventeenth- and eighteenth-century European expeditions, but it was also an enduring stereotype used by French writers to define the British character and was repeatedly rehearsed during the Indian uprisings. Variations on this theme ran throughout writing of this period, with writers, such as Warren, describing the British as 'ces rois marchands' and 'le vampire fabuleux' that had exhausted ['épuiser'] 'tous les trésors de l'Inde'; Warren, I, 244; Warren, II, 141 and 137.

Catholicism: 'Le missionaire Anglican', wrote the Catholic legitimist, Laurentie, was nothing more than 'un officier de la Compagnie des Indes [...] qui a pour l'objet unique l'asservissement des populations et plus particulièrement la levée des tributs'; whereas the goals of 'le missionnaire catholique' were oriented towards more spiritual ends, to enlighten (éclairer) 'des âmes déchues, et en les arrachant à la barbarie de les rattacher au ciel'.[622]

The result was that the British and their colonial ideologies were seen to be at odds with the idea of Europe's 'civilizing mission'. As *Le Siècle*'s Bédollière posited, they had forgotten 'la mission morale qu'elle avait à remplir à l'égard de la population Hindoue', being 'plus occupée d'exploiter l'Inde que de la civiliser, plus sensible au plaisir de régner sur les deux tiers de l'espèce humaine [...] qu'à l'honneur de les initier aux lumières et aux bienfaits de la civilisation européenne'.[623] In their anxiety to seek financial rewards, the British were considered to have abused their role as *tutelle* over their colonized peoples, a privilege that France would have respected (Bédollière implies) had it been in Britain's position.[624] Thus, although colonization was generally viewed as an imperative act to be conducted by European countries — 'L'Angleterre a eu raison de conquérir l'Inde; la civilisation a toujours raison de mettre en demeure la barbarie', stated *La Presse*[625] —, this was only the case if the colonial power in question adhered to the moral agenda set by France, this being the modern (as opposed to the old mercantile) way. Anyone who fell short of these standards threatened the wider rhetoric of European colonialism: 'prenons garde de ne jamais déroger à la sainteté de notre drapeau,' warned *La Presse*, 'Une vaste action expansive et civilisatrice ne peut procéder que d'un principe superieur qui la vivifie et la domine.'[626] In these examples, it is the French voice that sets the moral guidelines for this 'vaste action' and claims to ensure that such standards are maintained on behalf of Europe.

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[622] Max Weber would later link the origins of modern-day capitalism with ascetic forms of Protestantism. However, he also claimed that English, Dutch, and American Puritans were characterized, not by a hedonistic quest for capital gain, but rather by a desire to demarcate themselves as one of God's chosen few (as outlined by Calvin) through economic gain: 'the acquisition of money, and more and more money, takes place here simultaneously with the strictest avoidance of all spontaneous enjoyment of it'; Max Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, 3rd edn, trans. by Stephen Kalberg (Oxford: Blackwell, 2002), p. 17. Laurentie, *L'Union: Quotidienne, France, écho français*, 29 October 1857, pp. 1-2 (p. 1).

[623] Émile de la Bédollière, 'Partie politique', *Le Siècle*, 3 October 1857, p. 1. See also Louis Jourdan, 'L'esclavage', *Le Siècle*, 16 and 17 August 1857, p. 1.

[624] For more information on infantilism in colonial discourse (as suggested by the idea of the *tutelle*), see Vergès's introduction to the 'colonial family romance' in which the 'Mère-Patrie' (France) acts as the surrogate parent to its colonized 'children' in Françoise Vergès, *Monsters and Revolutionaries: Colonial Family Romance and Métissage* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1999), pp. 3–8. Derived from the romantic idea of the family that developed during the French Revolution, colonized peoples may have been viewed ostensibly as brothers (in the spirit of *fraternité*), but, Vergès notes, they were only ever to be considered as 'little brothers' (*frères cadets*); Vergès, p. 5.

[625] C. H. Edmond, 'Variétés: *Les Anglais et l'Inde*, par M. Valbezen (2ᵉ article)', *La Presse*, 1 September 1857, p. 3.

[626] *Ibid.*

In short, the uprisings allowed these French journalists to put forward an image of France as Europe's moral watchdog in spite of the hypocrisy that lay at the heart of their axiomatic statements. As French colonialism expanded under the Second Empire and Third Republic into North Africa and Indochina, metropolitan writing on 1857–58 would continue to produce romanticized depictions of a specifically French colonial ideology set in contrast with British India, as will now be explored by considering two key fantasies that recur in French writing on the uprisings: the French colonizer as India's *libérateur*; and the idea of France as India's preferred colonizer.

5.4 Fantasizing France as India's *Libérateur*

5.4.1 Speculative fantasies: Freeing India from British rule in 1857–58

Arising from the intersection between France's nostalgia for India's 'loss' and Britain's potential to lose India during the uprisings was the fantasy that India needed to, and could be, liberated from the tyranny of British rule. Although the uprisings were frequently termed a 'révolution' (as discussed in Chapter Four, Section 4.4), the reality of Indian self-liberation and, hence, self-rule, was repeatedly disavowed and replaced with the suggestion that 'infantile' India needed external help.[627] This thought provided French writers and journalists with a pretext to hark back to the eighteenth century and to recall past occasions when France had purportedly tried to 'liberate' India from the British, such as Napoleon Bonaparte's promise to 'deliver' the Mysore Kingdom and its leader, Tipu Sultan, from the 'Iron yoke of England'.[628] Beyond nostalgic recollection, however, it revived the idea that France could, once again, play the role of the heroic *libérateur*. As will be shown, this seductive notion was something that some French writers considered to be a realistic possibility during the uprisings and that later, when the idea of intervention was no longer

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[627] For more on infantilism in colonial discourse, see footnote 624.

[628] *L'Univers*'s Barrier, for example, wrote, 'Si quelques régiments de cette armée [Napoleon's army] avaient pu pénétrer auprès de Tipo-Saëb [...] jamais la puissance anglaise n'aurait pu acquérir la prépondérance dont elle est si fière'; Barrier, 'France, Paris, 8 juillet', *L'Univers: Union Catholique*, 9 July 1857, p. 1. Following the invasion of Egypt (1798), Bonaparte wrote to Tipu Sultan (in January 1799) promising to deliver French troops: 'You have already been informed of my arrival on the borders of the Red Sea with an innumerable and Invincible Army, full of the desire of delivering you from the Iron yoke of England'; Jasanoff, p. 163. For more information on this letter, as well as Bonaparte's relationship with Tipu and France's collaboration with Indian rulers during the eighteenth-century Mysore Wars, see Jasanoff, pp. 149–76; Colley, *Captives*, p. 297.

feasible, provided a stimulus for fictional writing, such as Alfred Assolant's *Aventures merveilleuses mais authentiques du Capitaine Corcoran* (1867).[629]

As Chapter Two demonstrated, the uprisings were employed by French writers as a good example by which to condemn the violence of British Indian rule. Yet, beyond merely voicing moral invectives, calls were also issued for something substantive to be done about the situation. Britain, wrote Girard for *Le Siècle*, needed to change 'sa politique et sa manière d'agir à l'égard de ses sujets de l'Inde' or it would risk inviting others to 'liberate' India instead:

> Si ce n'est pas de l'intérieur que lui viendra le danger, il lui viendra du dehors; déjà elle croit apercevoir la main d'un peuple d'Europe dans cette grave insurrection. Si jamais ce peuple parvenait dans l'Inde par la haute Asie, ainsi que l'avait fait Alexandre, la domination anglaise courrait de grands risques, car il serait reçu comme un libérateur par ces populations opprimées.[630]

Girard's mentioning of 'la haute Asie' and his reference to Alexander the Great play on the historical volatility of India to invasion via Afghanistan, a fear that had often resurfaced among Britons, particularly during the Napoleonic Wars with the threat of French invasion, and then throughout the nineteenth century towards Russia.[631] Billot's views were more extreme and direct, but followed along similar lines: 'Par les excès sans nom qui viennent, à jamais, de déshonorer [...] le nom anglais, l'Europe chrétienne et civilisée ne peut pas ne pas intervenir. Le droit, la justice, la morale, l'humanité lui en font le plus sacré des devoirs.'[632] Billot called for a worldwide coalition to be mobilized against this common enemy:

> Ce n'est pas la France seule qui doit intervenir, c'est l'Europe et l'Asie tout entière, non pour donner à l'Inde des maîtres nouveaux et une couleur nouvelle à l'oppression, mais pour secourir et affranchir. [...] C'est la croisade la plus solennelle et la plus sainte.[633]

The use of the term 'croisade' assigns Britain to the role of the heathen or infidel that needs to be crushed or converted, not by Christian crusaders, but by their modern equivalents — 'la

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[629] See also the analysis of Billot's polemical song, *Le Réveil de l'Inde ou chant du Mharatte*, in Section 5.6, pp. 172–73. The most recent example is Curd Ridel's *bande-dessinée* adaptation of Verne's *La Maison à vapeur*, entitled *Tandori: Le réveil de l'éléphant bleu*, in which 'Monsieur Vernes' is assisted by his 'bon Surcouf' in rescuing the fictional Indian state of 'Shasheshuur' from a British attack.

[630] J. Girard, 'L'Inde ancienne et l'Inde actuelle: Comparées sous leurs rapports les plus importans', *Le Siècle*, 24 August 1857, p. 2.

[631] See footnote 239.

[632] Billot, *L'Inde, l'Angleterre et la France*, p. 130.

[633] Billot, *L'Inde, l'Angleterre et la France*, pp. 130–31.

fédération des peuples', an imagined community of enlightened French-led nations assigned with the task of spreading the message of French republicanism to the world.[634]

As L'Univers recognized, however, the possibility of France itself liberating India from the yoke of the British was not a realistic one: 'la France n'est pas assez ambitieuse pour tenter une semblable aventure', wrote Barrier.[635] Yet, that did not stop such newspapers from wishing it were otherwise or from encouraging other countries to invade on France's behalf. This desire captured the imagination of the metropolitan press to such an extent that Le Charivari exploited it as a source of satire by mocking, in particular, the bellicose desires of La Gazette de France.[636] In one such article, it envisaged La Gazette's editor, M. Lourdoueix, mobilizing Britain's traditional enemy, the Russians, in an attack that would (once again) take advantage of the unstable frontier between Afghanistan and the Punjab.[637] Should the Russians refuse, then M. Lourdoueix is depicted as volunteering himself for a military mission to save India:

> Si personne ne veut faire le bon coup en question, La Gazette est bien décidée à risquer elle-même l'aventure. [...] M. Lourdoueix, le dernier des paladins de notre âge, se mettrait à leur tête pour aller rejoindre Nena-Sahib, cet autre paladin, et conquérir l'Inde. [...] Car ce qu'il importe au fond, c'est d'écraser l'Angleterre, de la ruiner, de la pulvériser, de l'anéantir, parce qu'elle est hérétique quoique chrétienne.[638]

The word 'paladin' is apt, demonstrating how the uprisings were used to wage an anti-British crusade that, in the case of La Gazette, was against colonialism based on Protestantism rather than Catholicism. In this case, Le Charivari's parody is constructed from the paradox that La Gazette would even go as far as to support the 'infidel', Nana Sahib, or France's own enemy following the Crimean War, the Russians, in its desire to destroy Protestant Britain.[639]

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[634] Billot, L'Inde, l'Angleterre et la France, p. 132. For Billot, 'la fédération des peuples' was an ideal to which all humanity should aspire: 'c'est la liberté dans tous ces développements nécessaires, c'est l'égalité dans l'activité, c'est la paix, mère de la fraternité qu'on cherche où elle n'est pas et que notre époque doit produire'; Billot, L'Inde, l'Angleterre et la France, p. 133.

[635] Barrier, 'France, Paris, 8 juillet', L'Univers: Union Catholique, 9 July 1857, p. 1.

[636] Examples include: Clément Caraguel, 'Un bon coup à faire', Le Charivari, 22 September 1857, p. 1; Arnould Fremy, 'Les missionnaires et la question de l'Inde', Le Charivari, 11 October 1857, p. 1; Taxile Delord, 'Lettres indiennes', Le Charivari, 15 November 1857, pp. 1–2; Clément Caraguel, 'La légitimité du roi d'Oude', Le Charivari, 23 November 1857, p. 2; Clément Caraguel, 'Les jupons des Highlanders', Le Charivari, 16 December 1857, p. 1.

[637] Clément Caraguel, 'Un bon coup à faire', Le Charivari, 22 September 1857, p. 1. This is an oblique reference to the 'Great Game'; see footnote 239.

[638] Clément Caraguel, 'Un bon coup à faire', Le Charivari, 22 September 1857, p. 1.

[639] This idea can be found in later examples of French writing on India, for example in Paul d'Ivoi's Docteur Mystère (1899). As Champion notes, 'A défaut de posséder l'Inde, la livrer aux Russes est encore le meilleur moyen de faire la nique aux Anglais'; Catherine Champion, 'L'Inde éblouie ou le rêve d'une colonie: le roman exotique au service de la mission civilisatrice', in Denys Lombard, Catherine Champion and Henri Chambert-Loir, Rêver l'Asie: Exotisme et littérature coloniale aux

In 1857, however, a surrogate triumph was perhaps all that France could hope for. In the likely event that Louis Napoleon would decide against assisting India should its leaders request French aid, the only remaining possibility for French intervention would be if Britain were to appeal to the French emperor for military reinforcements. *L'Univers* momentarily allowed itself to indulge in the fantasy of this alternative scenario: 'Si l'Angleterre demandait recours à la France, nous imaginerions difficilement que la France refusât. Cependant, quel peut-être le prix d'un tel secours?', asked Veuillot.[640] Rejecting the idea of a pecuniary reward, he imagined that,

> la France se réserve quelques stations, quelques avantages pour son commerce et pour sa marine; qu'elle reprenne même l'Île Maurice, qui est française et où la domination est haïe, cela va tout seul; mais ce sont comparativement au service à rendre, d'insignifiants indemnités![641]

Veuillot's reference to Mauritius reveals his underlying economic motivations. At the time of writing, Mauritius was in the midst of a major economic boom based on its sugar production, necessitating the importation of many thousands of Indian 'coolies' contracted under the post-abolition indentured labour system.[642] Although these 'human resources' were open to British planters, the Indian government had restricted French plantation owners in Réunion, Martinique, Guadeloupe and French Guiana from accessing this same labour pool, an embargo that was not lifted until 1860.[643] For Veuillot, the uprisings were viewed, therefore, as an opportunity in which to compensate for France's past losses and renegotiate its ongoing subordination to British law at a political, territorial and ideological level.

Even if France had no direct involvement in India's 'liberation', writers of that period could thus still delight in imagining the collateral advantages that France might accrue from Britain's potential downfall. For the most part, Britain's loss was equated to France's economic gain through the promise of increased trading opportunities with India: "'Si le

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Indes, en Indochine et en Insulinde (Paris: Éditions de l'École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales, 1993), pp. 219–38 (p. 232).

[640] Louis Veuillot, *L'Univers: Union Catholique*, 14 September 1857, p. 1.

[641] *Ibid.*

[642] Despite emigration to Mauritius being suspended by the British government of India between 24 October 1856 and 27 April 1857 due to reports of human rights abuses, the island received 12,635 and 12,725 indentured labours in 1856 and 1857, respectively. This figure more than doubled in 1858, with the arrival of 29,946 Indians; Tinker, *A New System of Slavery*, p. 95. As Tinker notes, the uprisings may well have boosted the number of Indian workers that were willing to emigrate due to the sudden loss of land and livelihood resulting from the political upheaval; Tinker, *A New System of Slavery*, p. 97.

[643] Tinker, *A New System of Slavery*, p. 99. The result of this embargo was that an illegal system of emigration to supply labour to the French sugar colonies was run through Pondichéry and Karaikal, with as many as 37,694 Indian labourers reported to be residing in Réunion by 1856; Tinker, *A New System of Slavery*, p. 95.

monopole britannique [...] trouvait son terme dans ce vaste marché de 300 millions d'âmes, *ce serait au profit de l'industrie et du commerce de toutes les nations*, qui entreraient en concurrence dans les conditions d'une parfaite égalité'", wrote Coquille for *La Gazette*.[644] *Le Siècle*, however, denied this vision as little more than quixotic daydreaming by reminding its readers that the East India Company had already lost its trade monopoly on 4 May 1848, which had led to significant increases in trade between France and India.[645]

But irrespective of whether France could have profited in terms of trade, territorial acquisition or political influence, there remained much to be gained at a rhetorical level. The idea of Britain's downfall was compelling since, as a negative example, it provided the tools with which to support an existing discourse that celebrated France as the vanguard of political *liberté* by positing France as a source of inspiration for the oppressed masses to rise up against tyranny. Billot espoused such a postulate when he wrote,

> Nous n'avons oublié que 'TOUS LES PEUPLES QUI SOUFFRENT ONT LES REGARDS TOURNES VERS L'OCCIDENT!' et que la France, dans le sublime rôle que la Providence lui a donné, ne se montre que pour affranchir et assurer, dans la grande fédération humaine qui se prépare, leur vie propre aux nations qu'on opprime; à elle d'ouvrir les voies qui doivent conduire à cette universelle fraternité des peuples dont Dieu lui a donné la mission de préparer les véritables liens.[646]

Constructed out of the ashes of the Indian revolts, Billot's future vision saw France leading the world into freedom; an ambitious picture that he framed within the universalist language of the Enlightenment. Yet, as he developed his putatively egalitarian thesis, his argument became increasingly Franco-centric:

> Je veux que le souffle chrétien pénètre l'Orient, que les vraies lumières de la civilisation l'éclaire, et que ces immenses contrées, abruties par l'esclavage, soient rendues à leur autonomie pour former, dans la chaîne des peuples, l'anneau qui doit les unir à la grande fédération dont les éléments, sous l'influence de la France, s'élaborent au sein de l'humanité.[647]

According to Billot's pamphleteering, this radical socio-political transformation must operate under the aegis of the French nation in a kind of proto-associationist model.[648]

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[644] Coquille is cited in T.-N. Bernard, 'L'Inde et les partis du passé', *Le Siècle*, 3 October 1857, p. 2. See also Laurentie, *L'Union: Quotidienne, France, écho français*, 12 August 1857, p. 1.

[645] T.-N. Bernard, 'L'Inde et les partis du passé', *Le Siècle*, 3 October 1857, p. 2.

[646] Billot, *L'Inde, l'Angleterre et la France*, p. 14. See also footnote 634.

[647] Billot, *L'Inde, l'Angleterre et la France*, p. 102.

[648] The idea of 'association' (as opposed to 'assimilation') was most fully expounded by Jules Harmand in *Domination et Colonisation* (1910). He described it as the "'scrupulous respect for the manners, customs, and religion of the natives", replacing simple exploitation and expropriation of the

France is thus revered as the guiding light under which the colonized world would be led to freedom; an idea that could be potently argued within the context of an Indian-led rebellion against British tyranny.

5.4.2   The French *libérateur*: Fictionalizing Indian emancipation from British rule after 1858

The conceptualization of French colonialism as an emancipating force recurred long after the uprisings had reached their conclusion, of which Assolant's adventure novel, *Aventures merveilleuses mais authentiques du Capitaine Corcoran* (1867), provides one noteworthy example.[649] Through the fantastical adventures of the eponymous hero, Capitaine Corcoran, this novel celebrates French imperial conquest against the *mise-en-scène* of Indian rebellion, with Corcoran assigned to play the role of India's saviour, rescuing the land and its people from British slavery. But as will be shown, the euphemistic layering of this text is undone by its exegesis, which reveals an underlying will to dominate and speak for the colonized 'other', and thereby triumph over the *frère ennemi*.

The adventure begins with Corcoran being commissioned by the *Académie des Sciences de Lyon* to travel to India and find the *Gouroukaramtâ*, a fictional theological text, described as the 'premier livre sacré des Indous, antérieur même aux Védas'.[650] This mission, as Petr points out, echoes that of Anquetil-Duperron's real expedition to find the sacred *Veda* and *Zoroastre* scriptures.[651] This subplot complements the territorial battle waged between Corcoran's Indian army and the British over the fictional land of Bhagavapour by representing a more abstract form of intra-European rivalry for the possession of 'oriental' knowledge.[652] Once Corcoran has located and forcibly taken the *Gouroukaramtâ*, this rivalry is displayed through the different responses of European newspapers to France's victory. Whereas the French newspapers celebrate Corcoran's success as 'cette glorieuse expédition', their British counterparts respond by declaring 'unanimement que ce Corcoran était un misérable aventurier, bandit de profession, qu'il avait dérobé le précieux manuscrit du Gouroukaramtâ à un voyageur anglais [...] et qu'il avait fait alliance avec Nana-Sahib pour assassiner tous les Anglais de l'Inde'.[653] While this is a comical depiction of Franco-British animosity, the *Gouroukaramtâ*, as a fiction within a

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native by a policy of "mutual assistance"' in order 'to make European domination work more smoothly and productively, reducing the need for force to a minimum'; Deming Lewis, p. 147.

[649] See also footnote 629.

[650] Assolant, p. 13.

[651] Petr, p. 16.

[652] Said, *Orientalism*, p. 41. See also footnote 16.

[653] Assolant, pp. 236–37.

fiction, also serves to lay bare France's ongoing desire to occupy India epistemologically in lieu of having any kind of political influence on the subcontinent.[654]

This was not always the case, as the allusion to an imagined alliance between Nana Sahib and Corcoran in the above quotation suggests. This recalls, albeit indirectly, the historical coalitions between France and India against the British, evoking a past time when France had had the opportunity to occupy India, not just through knowledge, but through political influence and territorial colonization. This link is further substantiated by connecting the Breton Capitaine ancestrally to one of the greatest heroes of France's eighteenth-century overseas conquests, the Breton *corsaire* who fought against the British in India, Robert Surcouf.[655] This ancestry is used to enhance Corcoran's Anglophobia, justifying, as Cornick postulates, 'his atavistic outlook towards the British and his willingness to help the Indian rebels'.[656] Indeed, the historical animosity towards the British among *corsaires*, and notably Surcouf, was such that running illegal slave ships was seen as a way of defying the British who were enforcing the 1815 slave trade ban on the high seas.[657]

However, this text is not one that simply invokes nostalgia for past 'greatness' (as well as a link to illicit slave trading) through its central protagonist. Rather, the uprisings perform an instrumental role in furnishing this narrative with a plausible historical context in which to promote the seductive image of the French colonizer as a *libérateur*. In other words, although nostalgia underpins *Capitaine Corcoran*, this is counterbalanced by mythologizing the French as better rulers than the British through a contemporary tale of French-led Indian emancipation. Imagining a successful victory over the *frère ennemi* during a moment of British colonial instability thus assuages, in part, the memories of French defeat inevitably recalled by the historical references that lie within Corcoran's characterization.

In the true adventure mode, as defined by Tadié, history is not then the subject of this text, but rather 'un décor [...] toujours à l'arrière-plan, [reproduit] par quelques détails suggérés'.[658] Factual details, such as the first mutiny in Meerut (10 May 1857), simply provide a tenable setting for Corcoran's fictional arrival in the imaginary Marathan kingdom

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[654] See also footnote 16.

[655] In a deliberately tenuous link, which adds an element of self-parody to the heroic discourse of the narrative, Corcoran states that the father of Surcouf 'était le propre neveu du beau-frère de mon bisaïeul'; Assolant, p. 29. For more information on the history of Breton *corsaires* and India, see Annette Frémont, 'Adventures of some Frenchmen in India in the XVIIth Century', in *The French in India: From Diamond Traders to Sanskrit Scholars*, ed. by Rose Vincent, trans. by Latika Padgaonkar (Bombay: Popular Prakashan, 1990), pp. 1–21 (pp. 1–3).

[656] Cornick, p. 133.

[657] As Miller notes, 'slave trading, for many in France, appeared as a form of insurgency and resistance to the hegemony of perfidious Albion'; Christopher L. Miller, *The French Atlantic Triangle: Literature and Culture of the Slave Trade* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2008), p. 199.

[658] Tadié, p. 18.

of Bhagavapour flying 'le drapeau tricolore' that comes to signify his message of freedom.[659] His timely landing and subsequent actions prevent the British from annexing this kingly state and, as a result, he is greeted with an outpouring of gratitude from the Maharajah of Bhagavapour, Holkar, and his 'subjects', who collectively eulogize Corcoran as their saviour — 'vous venez de sauver ma vie et mon trône', cries Holkar, while his daughter, Sita, immediately pledges her life to Corcoran, 'je vous dois la vie et l'honneur. Je ne l'oublierai jamais'.[660] In return for his help, the dying Rajah entrusts Corcoran with his land and people, and willingly agrees to the marriage between the Capitaine and Sita. Their union celebrates France as a heroic masculine colonizer, while anthropomorphizing India as a voiceless woman in need of rescuing from the iniquitous British colonizer who, in turn, serves as the antithesis of the philanthropic French liberator.[661]

Under Corcoran's new leadership, Bhagavapour begins its revolutionary trajectory towards the birth of a new Marathan 'nation'. In his coronation speech, Corcoran celebrates his accession to the *Peshwa* throne, somewhat paradoxically, with an outpouring of republican rhetoric. He addresses his 'subjects' as 'Représentants de la glorieuse nation Mahratte' and preaches that 'Tous les hommes naissent égaux et libres', before ordering them to '[faire] les lois suivant la justice, et [respecter] la liberté', all of which needs to be defended 'contre les Anglais.'[662] By placing Corcoran as the leader of this new nation, in other words, by making him the new *Peshwa*, he succeeds where Nana Sahib, the *de facto* dispossessed ruler of the Marathan people, was seen to have failed. Hence, Indian history is appropriated and transformed into a tale about a victory for French republicanism. Echoing the newspaper articles produced during the uprisings, what *Capitaine Corcoran* suggests is that India needs to be rescued from British enslavement by an external, rather than internal, leader.

It is through a discourse of slavery and emancipation that the republican message of *liberté* is preached explicitly in opposition to British and Indian forms of government, and implicitly as contradistinct to Louis Napoleon's oppressive political regime at the time of publication.[663] Under Corcoran's six-year reign, slaves, who had formed part of the despotic

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[659] The choice of the Marathas as the ethnic group with which to link Corcoran may be rooted in the fact that, historically, they represented one of the greatest threats to British rule in India (at least until 1818) and that the French had, at various points, been their allies against the British. For more on the Marathas, see Wolpert, pp. 183–84, pp. 191–93 and pp. 200–04.

[660] Assolant, p. 66 and p. 67.

[661] For more information on the use of 'le personnage féminin indien' in French-language narratives, see Ravi, *L'Inde romancée*, p. 84.

[662] Assolant, pp. 222–23.

[663] Assolant's anti-Bonapartist and pro-republican political views were expressed in his work as a journalist for the republican press during the Second Empire. While at the *Courrier de dimanche*, his 'prises de position Républicaines attirent sur le [...] journal, en août 1864, les foudres de l'Empire', for which he was suspended for two months; Francis Lacassin, 'Alfred Assolant', in Alfred Assolant, *Aventures merveilleuses mais authentiques du Capitaine Corcoran* (Paris: Union Générale d'Éditions,

social landscape of Holkar's kingdom, are transformed into 'Citoyens libres du pays mahratte', while additionally being liberated from the threat of British annexation.[664] It is through the figure of the previously enslaved Indian 'other' that the policies of Holkar and then the British are denounced in order to promote, in contrast, French republicanism. In an exchange with Corcoran, the slave-turned-servant, Sougriva, first condemns the late Holkar as a stereotypical Indian despot: 'il faisait venir des esclaves des cinq parties du monde [...] et il faisait empaler quiconque avait essayé de lui dire la vérité'.[665] This prelude then allows Corcoran to conclude, 'Parbleu! [...] il faut avouer que si tous les princes de ton pays ressemblaient au pauvre Holkar [...], vous avez bien tort de les regretter et de combattre les Anglais qui vous en débarrassent'.[666] This coercive statement finally prompts Sougriva to reply, 'Je ne suis pas de votre avis [...] car les Anglais, mentent, trompent, trahissent, oppriment, pillent et tuent aussi bien que nos propres princes.'[667] Voiced through Sougriva, the impotence of ordinary Indian people is implied, ushering in a need for French-led intervention and political reform, which is fulfilled by Corcoran's leadership. It is the 'liberated' Sougriva who speaks on behalf of the Indian people when he deifies Corcoran as their saviour: 'Plus je vous entends, dit Sougriva, plus je crois que vous êtes la onzième incarnation de Wichnou, tant vos discours sont pleins de sens et de raison.'[668] France, as represented by Corcoran, thus becomes the altar at which the oppressed come to pray for assistance against tyranny, just as Billot, ten years earlier, had put France forward as the country to which 'tous les peuples qui souffrent' turn for inspiration against British dominance.[669]

However, these ideologically infused aphorisms are constantly debilitated by the overtly imperialist agenda of the narrative and, hence, its double-tongued discourse. In the first instance, despite the republican rhetoric that runs throughout the text, Corcoran wishes to realize Napoleon Bonaparte's original plans to conquer India.[670] Corcoran intends to

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1975; first publ. 1867), pp. 7–8 (p. 7). For more information on Louis Napoleon's oppressive regime, particularly where freedom of speech was concerned, see Section 2.3.1, pp. 45–46.

[664] Assolant, p. 419 and p. 420.

[665] Assolant, p. 204.

[666] Assolant, p. 205.

[667] *Ibid.*

[668] Assolant, p. 210.

[669] Billot, *L'Inde, l'Angleterre et la France*, p. 14. See also Section 5.4.1, p. 150. This fantasy finds its echo in the suggestion that Corcoran is akin to Rama from the Sanskrit epic poem, the *Ramayana*. This acts as a text within a text and provides the fiction with 'un modèle d'action' — both texts recount the kidnapping of Sita, whether by Ravana and the demons in the *Ramayana* and by their modern-day equivalents, the British, in *Capitaine Corcoran*; Petr, p. 17.

[670] For more information on Napoleon Bonaparte's desire to conquer India, see footnote 628. Although Assolant was a supporter of republicanism, the promotion of the Napoleonic legend alongside republican values in *Capitaine Corcoran* is not as incongruous as it might first appear to be. As Hazareesingh notes (although not with reference to Assolant), relationships between Bonapartists and republicans may well have been 'marked by a profoundly adversarial relationship' during the second half of the nineteenth century, but that did not mean that their views and ideas could not

execute these plans, which he has inherited from his predecessor, Holkar (the plans having previously been passed along an illustrious line from Tipu Sultan, to 'père Holkar', to Holkar, before reaching Corcoran).[671] But, in order to do so, he requires an army equivalent in size to that of Napoleon's.[672] Thus, in the second instance, Corcoran decides to manipulate the religious beliefs of his 'subjects' — those stereotypically gullible Hindus who willingly worship him as a Hindu deity — in order to recruit his army:

J'ai l'Inde [...]. Songe que je suis aux yeux de ces pauvres gens, la onzième incarnation de Vichnou. Depuis deux ans, des milliers de brahmines et de fakirs de toute espèce annoncent sous main aux Indous que Vichnou lui-même s'est incarné pour les délivrer. On fait sur moi des légendes.[673]

Rather than being the republican hero that the text clearly sets out to create, Corcoran is revealed to be no better than what Indologists, such as James Mill, had defined as oriental despots, being rulers that employed a degenerate form of classical Hinduism as a tool with which to fanaticize and instil fear into their 'subjects' as a mechanism for control.[674]

In the third and final instance, the act of rewriting the revolts as a Gallo-centric narrative that celebrates French *liberté* is performed to the detriment of Indian freedom and agency. By appropriating and ventriloquizing what was, in reality, an Indian-led war against the British, Assolant's text simultaneously enslaves Indian voices by silencing their histories under the rhetoric of French national and colonial propaganda. Moreover, by marketing French overseas expansion as an agent of emancipation contrary to the British enslavers, this fiction glosses over France's contemporaneous involvement in slavery under its new guise, indentured labour, with tens of thousands of Indians being moved through Pondichéry, Karikal and Calcutta and shipped to the French Antilles precisely at the time that Assolant was writing.[675]

Ultimately, Corcoran abdicates after signing a peace treaty with the British ensuring Bhagavapour's independence. Along with his Indian wife and son, Rama, he moves to a utopian island, leaving behind a 'nation' based on republican ideals. '"Vous avez conquis la liberté"', preaches Corcoran in his farewell speech to his 'subjects', '"apprenez à la défendre. J'abdique en vos mains, et, dès aujourd'hui, je proclame la République fédérale

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converge, for example, where 'the pursuit of "grandeur" abroad' was concerned; Sudhir Hazareesingh, *The Legend of Napoleon* (London: Granta, 2004), p. 13.

[671] Assolant, pp. 325–32.

[672] Assolant, p. 332.

[673] *Ibid.*

[674] For more on Mill and despotism, see Inden, pp. 166–67. For more on despotism in general, see Franco Venturi, 'Oriental Despotism', *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 24 (1963), 133–42.

[675] Northrup writes that 78,483 indentured Indian labourers left for the French Caribbean between 1853 and 1888; Northrup, p. 267.

des Etats-Unis mahrattes".'[676] This independence does not mean that Corcoran cuts all ties with his former kingdom or that the idea of *Inde française* is forgotten. Indeed, the last paragraph of the novel reads:

> P.S. On prétend [...] que Corcoran n'a pas perdu de vue son ancien projet de délivrer l'Hindoustan de la domination anglaise. On m'a même communiqué tout récemment de nombreux détails sur les intelligences qu'il entretient avec les brahmines des diverses parties de la Péninsule, depuis l'Himalaya jusqu'au cap Comorin [...]. Au reste, qui vivra verra.[677]

As this quotation indicates, the dream of French involvement in India has a future life, albeit one that is presented as an afterthought (a 'P.S.'), that is continually nourished by remembering instances of British colonial crisis, such as the uprisings.

In the final analysis, the utopian republic of Bhagavapour might only be a fantasy, but it functions as an important counter-factual memorial to an Indo–French alliance that contrasts with the antagonisms between the British and their colonized 'subjects'.[678] Ironically, however, Corcoran's republic (as well as his secret island) also recalls those scattered French trading posts marooned in, or positioned on the outskirts of, British India.[679] But likewise, it is from those tenuous footholds that the ongoing fantasy of a French-colonized India 'liberated' from the British is sustained. Although this image is 'short-circuited' because, to borrow Bongie's phrasing, it is underpinned by an 'always already' fantastical image of the past that remains eternally beyond reach, paradoxically, it is because of the 'promise that it holds out' to the reader that it is able to reinvigorate the desire for future colonial expansion through which previous losses will be compensated.[680] Thus, even if the idea of French rule in India was unrealisable, it still remained useful since it enabled an idealized future vision of French colonialism to be created within the exotic imaginary of India. The uprisings, therefore, offer a context in which Britain's subjugation of India can be pitted against the imagined philanthropy of French colonial models based, in Assolant's case, on a republican discourse of emancipation and *liberté*.

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[676] Assolant, p. 447.

[677] Assolant, p. 448.

[678] Bhagavapour also operates politically as an ideal republican state that runs counter to the autocracy of the Second Empire under which Assolant was writing.

[679] Corcoran's island is situated near to Quarterquem's island, which he describes as being 'à moitié chemin entre l'Australie et la Californie, à deux cents lieues environ au sud-est des îles Sandwich'; Assolant, p. 297.

[680] As Bongie argues with regards to the 'exoticist project', 'exoticism necessarily presumes that, at some point in the future, what has been lost will be attained "elsewhere", in a realm of ad-venture [*sic*] that bypasses the [...] contemporary present'; Bongie, p. 15. Because the past cannot be recovered, a vicious cycle emerges from the attempts to structure the future through constant references to the past. The effect of drawing together 'the future and the past' means that 'the exoticist project is, from its very beginnings, short-circuited: it can never keep its promise. And therein [...] lies the promise that it holds out to us'; Bongie, p. 15.

5.5 Fantasizing France as the Preferable Colonizer: An Alternative Vision to British India

When juxtaposed with the negative example of the British in India, French-language texts could not only promote the French as *libérateurs*, but could also suggest that there existed among Indian people a distinct preference for French over British rulers by narrating a 'special' relationship between the *métropole* and the subcontinent. The following section analyses the recurring trope of the preferable French colonizer within three fictions of 1857–58, taken from a chronologically broad range: Louis Rousselet's adventure novel, *Le Charmeur de serpents* (1875), Jacqueline Marenis's romance novel, *La Révolte sans âme* (1946) and Michel de Grèce's historical novel, *La Femme sacrée* (1984). Through these texts, it explores the tendency of French writing to create central protagonists who are able to 'go-between' or bridge the worlds of the colonizer and colonized 'other', forging positive relationships with the Indian community that contrast directly with the hostility between Britons and their 'subjects'. In each case, however, it considers how this rhetoric is destabilized by a latent desire to 'colonize' India (through, for example, sexual domination) and, thus, to silence the Indian voice under a specifically French agenda.

The desire to narrate a conquest of the heart rather than of the mind is a notion that permeates many French-language representations of 1857–58. As Assayag has noted, the claims to a gentler form of overseas conquest espoused by French colonial discourse is what supposedly differentiated it from the British:

> Alors que les instruments de Sa Très gracieuse Majesté étaient principalement concernés par les exigences matérielles de l'hégémonie impériale — les Britanniques cherchaient d'abord à se faire respecter —, la vision politique de la France consista essentiellement à développer une stratégie d'influence culturelle — les Français sous les tropiques voulaient en plus être aimés! Ils voulaient faire *La conquête des cœurs*.[681]

This rhetorical demarcation can be seen in the first text to be analysed here: Rousselet's *Le Charmeur de serpents*. Set in 1857, it tells the story of André Bourquien's journey to rescue his sister from Nana Sahib assisted by his faithful Indian companion and snake charmer, Mali. Published under the Third Republic, this fiction uses the uprisings as a context in which to advocate the benevolence of French colonial ideologies and to depict the resultant affection that arises between the colonizer (represented by André) and the colonized 'other'

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[681] Assayag, p. 27.

(represented by Mali).[682] Although ostensibly it supports the continuation of British colonial power, preferring some form of European rule over Indian independence, beneath this united European front lies an alternative perspective that mobilizes French marginalization as a position from which to criticize the divisive impact of British hegemony in India. The narrative might conclude with André pledging his allegiance to the British Army to avenge his sister's kidnapping,[683] but ultimately the text is driven by a desire to promote French over British colonialism. In contrast with British authoritarianism, an alternative colonial vision is produced, one that positions France as *la mère patrie*, or surrogate parent to its colonized 'children', within, what Vergès terms, the 'colonial family romance'.[684]

André and his family personify this ideal. They are held up as a paradigm of an integrationist–assimilationist model that, in direct contrast with the idea of the disloyal Indian *sepoy* (foot soldier) or rebellious colonial 'subject', inspires loyalty and cohesion between the colonizer and colonized 'other'.[685] That André is a descendent of three generations of Indian and French intermarriage is not just a superfluous detail.[686] Rather, his metissage is presented as a colonial paradigm that unites, through miscegenation, the best of France and India, and, in doing so, idealizes Indo-French unification: 'Sa figure bronzée, au profil d'aigle, éclairée par de superbes yeux bleus, semblait réunir toutes les beautés des deux types hindou et français'.[687] Although both cultures appear to be given equal weight, beneath this egalitarian veneer runs a discourse of sexual possession and, hence, colonization of the female 'other' standing in lieu of India as a territorial site.[688] This desire to dominate

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[682] In British writing, Meadows Taylor's *Seeta* (1881) and Flora Annie Steel's *On the Face of the Waters* (1897) similarly celebrate the affection that arises between the colonized male and the female colonized 'other'. See, for example, the analysis of Brandon and Seeta's relationship in Section 4.3, p. 116.

[683] '"Laissez-moi vous suivre"', André asks the British lieutenant, Algernon, '"confiez-moi une arme et vous verrez si je suis digne de combattre pour ma patrie adoptive"'; Rousselet, *Le Charmeur de serpents*, p. 310.

[684] Vergès, p. 4.

[685] At the time that Rousselet was writing, the French government of the Third Republic was implementing assimilationist policies in Pondichéry; Weber, '1816–1914: One Century of Colonization', pp. 143–44. For more information on the idea of assimilation during the Third Republic, see Deming Lewis, pp. 134–37.

[686] André's great-grandfather, général Bourquien, was 'un Parisien' who 'faisait partie de cette brillante pléiade d'aventuriers français qui [...] voyant la France abandonner le bel empire indien conquis par Dupleix, entrèrent au service des princes hindous pour continuer la lutte contre les Anglais'; Rousselet, *Le Charmeur de serpents*, p. 14. Général Bourquien and his son were both married to Indian women, the first selected from the royal family of Holkar and second from a family of *Brahmans*. Although général Bourquien's grandson and André's father, Armand, is, therefore, 'plus Hindou qu'Européen', Andre's mother is French; Rousselet, *Le Charmeur de serpents*, p. 14. This ancestry, along with André's Parisian education, reinstates the French side of the family line and prevents André and his sister, Berthe, from becoming too 'Indianized' and, thus, racially distinct from the French audience for whom the book was written.

[687] Rousselet, *Le Charmeur de serpents*, p. 16.

[688] For more information on the Indian female 'other', see Ravi, *L'Inde romancée*, p. 84; Spivak, pp. 90–104. Although André's male ancestors all married Indian women, his mother is French,

India is made all the more evident by devaluing André's Indian heritage when compared with his 'superior' French characteristics. The reader is thus reassured that their specifically French-named hero has previously spent a period in Paris learning how to be 'un homme civilisé', who considers France as 'la première civilisation du monde', thus preventing him from being 'un sauvage'.[689]

Educated in Paris and thoroughly Frenchified, André is both a site of colonial fantasy and a repository for nostalgia. His idealized metissage, which paradoxically also works to negate his Indian roots, can be interpreted as referring to the idea of what a French-dominated India could have been, but never was. Yet, more than just nostalgia, it is precisely because he is marginalized racially that he possesses the power to move between the schismatic worlds of the colonizer and colonized 'other' (a kind of precursor to Rudyard Kipling's Kim[690]) in direct contrast with the separatism that characterizes British–Indian relations. For example, with his father presumed dead and his sister missing, André is disguised as a snake charmer: 'Bien complet était en effet le déguisement d'André; nul n'aurait reconnu dans le sauvage demi-nu, à la peau hâlée par le soleil, l'élégant lycéen de Paris.'[691] This costume enables him to travel unhindered across a country that is in the midst of a colonial war, before reverting seamlessly back to his European form.[692] His performance as a snake charmer is so convincing that he is venerated by the Indian audience as a reincarnation of the Hindu god, Krishna: 'l'enthousiasme de la foule fut indescriptible; de tous côtés retentirent les cris de "ouah! ouah! chavach! chavach! C'est un avatar! c'est Krichna lui-même!".'[693] Thus, André does not simply move between two putatively oppositional worlds, but is transformed into a site of worship for the colonized 'other', just like Capitaine Corcoran, who is worshipped by his 'subjects' as 'la onzième incarnation de Wichnou'.[694] Since André functions as an ambassador for France's 'civilizing mission', the adulating audience are seen inadvertently to prostrate themselves before *la mère patrie*, thereby fetishizing France as an object of the colonized 'other's' desire.

While this connection between India and France is circuitous, a more direct link can be found in the pivotal friendship that develops between André and the elderly Indian snake

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representing something of a counter-narrative to the discourse of sexual domination by the white colonizer.

[689] "'Rappelle-toi, mon bel André,' says his French mother, 'que tu es un sauvage, et que, pour être digne du nom que tu portes, il faut que tu deviennes un homme civilisé'"; Rousselet, *Le Charmeur de serpents*, p. 17.

[690] Rudyard Kipling, *Kim* (London: Penguin, 1994; first publ. 1901). JanMohamed considers *Kim*'s racial ambiguity and chameleonic qualities, noting that while Kim is the perfect embodiment of Kipling's 'syncretic desires', moving easily between self and 'other', ultimately, his racial identity as a white male prevails; JanMohamed, pp. 96–100.

[691] Rousselet, *Le Charmeur de serpents*, pp. 153–54.

[692] Rousselet, *Le Charmeur de serpents*, pp. 192–93.

[693] Rousselet, *Le Charmeur de serpents*, p. 113.

[694] Assolant, p. 210, p. 211, p. 236, p. 306, p. 332, p. 337, p. 351 and p. 442.

charmer, Mali. Their union is cemented at the beginning of the tale when André and his sister, Berthe, rescue 'le vieux Mali' from being attacked by a crocodile, an event that is used to open up the theme of the French protagonist's ability to bridge the socio-racial schisms of colonized society. The narrator states,

> C'était certes un spectacle touchant de voir ce mendiant misérable escorté ainsi par ces deux enfants; mais pour qui connaît les mœurs de l'Inde et qui sait quel immense abîme sépare les diverses castes de ce pays, ce spectacle était sublime, car ceux qui entouraient ainsi de soins le vieux charmeur, représentant d'une tribu méprisée, étaient des Sahibs, c'est-à-dire des seigneurs, les maîtres tout-puissants du pays.[695]

In this scene, the figure of the French colonizer, here represented by André and Berthe, is presented as being exceptional compared with other European 'Sahibs'. Indeed, the uniqueness of the French protagonist, or the '*Je*-personnage français', to borrow Ravi's term, that stands in opposition to the British crowd is a common feature of French-language representations of India.[696] But more than individualism, it is their ability to transcend cultural divisions that characterizes them within the colonial imagination as a preferable colonizer who is able to build a 'special' relationship with the colonized 'other'. André and Berthe reach out to the abandoned Mali and in doing so heal, both metaphorically and physically, the 'immense abîme' between two culturally disparate worlds. In contrast, 'les Anglais', states André, '"nous aliènent les indigènes. Au lieu de fraterniser avec eux comme faisaient les anciens conquérants français de l'Inde, ils élèvent barrière sur barrière pour s'en séparer, sans réfléchir qu'au premier danger la barrière ne les garantira pas et ne fera que les gêner".'[697] Thus, it is the segregationist attitude of the British colonizer that has caused their 'subjects' to rise up against them, an event that would not have occurred, André implies, had the French been in power.

This idea is made explicit in an orchestrated conversation between André and Mali in which French colonialism emerges as superior to British leadership. Their exchange considers the violence of the uprisings and questions where the blame for this can be placed. '"Quels sont les coupables? [...] ces malheureux [Indiens] ne sont-ils pas excusables?",' asks Mali. He vindicates the behaviour of his Indian compatriots as the understandable result of colonial domination under rulers who '"nous ont tout enlevé [...]; ils ont considéré notre bien comme à eux"'.[698] André counters by exempting France from Mali's broad condemnation of European-led colonization:

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[695] Rousselet, *Le Charmeur de serpents*, p. 26.
[696] Ravi, *L'Inde romancée*, pp. 70–71.
[697] Rousselet, *Le Charmeur de serpents*, p. 40.
[698] Rousselet, *Le Charmeur de serpents*, p. 288.

'il faut avouer que c'est à nous autres Européens que remonte la source de tous ces épouvantables malheurs. Une chose pourtant me console, c'est que les Français, mes ancêtres, un moment les maîtres de l'Inde, avaient su adoucir leur conquête au point de se faire aimer de leurs sujets.'[699]

The ever-loyal Mali immediately acquiesces: '"C'est vrai, [...] les Français ont été pour nous non pas des maîtres, mais des frères, et leur souvenir nous est toujours resté cher. L'Inde entière pleure encore leur départ".'[700] As such, Mali is made to voice the fantasy that India and its peoples would rather have been governed by France, a nostalgic vision that, at one and the same time, mitigates France's history of colonial loss and fuels the rhetoric of the *mission civilisatrice*.

The same idealization of the French colonizer can be found in Jacqueline Marenis's *La Révolte sans âme*, which was published on the brink of Indian independence, but set amid the acute racial tensions of 1857–58.[701] Like Rousselet's *Le Charmeur de serpents*, it offers a further example of a 'special' relationship between France and India, represented in this case by a French woman (born in India to European parents of a lower economic class[702]), Stéphanie de Romez, and an Indian insurgent, Mohan Das.

As a French woman, Stéphanie's peripheral racial positioning is, arguably, what enables her to step outside of the enforced divisions of colonial war and maintain her relationship with Das. Her marginalization from a dominant British society is accentuated by pairing her with another 'outsider': an Irishman named Michael Fabert O'Linden. They are thus additionally conjoined by their attachment to societies that are threatened by British colonialism. Moreover, although Michael is of Irish descent, he (like Stéphanie) is connected ancestrally to France: 'Les Fabert O'Linden avaient un aïeul français mais n'en restaient pas moins irlandais avec intransigeance.'[703] These mutual links to France (and Ireland) may, at first glance, seem arbitrary, but they serve to reinforce their differentiation from the British, enabling Stéphanie, in particular, to negotiate the racial divisions of colonial society. This privilege, however, also threatens to ostracize her from her peers: 'A Cawnpore, la "société" se demandait s'il fallait la traiter en femme sérieuse ou en petite fille indiscrète, sauvage,

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[699] Rousselet, *Le Charmeur de serpents*, p. 289.
[700] *Ibid.*
[701] See also Section 2.3.4, pp. 60–62.
[702] Stéphanie was 'Née d'une fille de commodore élevée dans la présidence de Madras et d'un hobereau français originaire de la Vaucluse, qui avait vainement cherché fortune à Pondichéry'; Marenis, p. 16.
[703] Marenis, p. 41. Michael O'Linden's heritage recalls that of Lally-Tolendal, who was commissioned by Louis XV to fight the British in India; Voltaire, *Fragments sur l'Inde, sur le général Lalli et sur le comte de Morangiés* ([n. p.]: [n. pub.], 1773), p. 28. For more information on Lally-Tolendal, see Marsh, *India in the French Imagination*, pp. 78–80.

sans retenue, parlant de n'importe quoi à n'importe qui.'[704] In this quotation, Stéphanie's association with Indian people, sardonically described as 'n'importe qui', comes under the scrutiny of faceless public opinion. In contrast to this anonymous group, Stéphanie represents a lone voice — 'Dans une foule aveugle et sourde, elle n'était qu'une entité'[705] — that opposes the ignorance of the British 'crowd'.

As the uprisings unfold, Stéphanie is able to maintain her friendship with Das, thereby transcending the socio-racial divisions of colonial conflict. Within this seemingly egalitarian framework, there is, however, a strong sense of social hierarchy and racial discrimination. For example, their capacity to have a relationship in the first place stems from their common social status, Stéphanie being part of the colonial elite (despite her inferior class) and Das being 'issu non du peuple déshérité mais de la caste brahmane'.[706] This clear statement of Das's ancestral credentials reflects a tendency in Euro-centric writing to map caste onto class, meaning that only the upper castes, notably the *Brahmans*, are sufficiently elevated within the social hierarchy to form friendships and/or relationships with Europeans.[707] This elitist discourse is evident when Stéphanie and Das accidentally meet: 'Il y avait entre eux une sorte d'amitié tacite, sans familiarité. Dénuée de préjugés à l'égard des indigènes, Stéphanie estimait particulièrement ce garçon de vingt-neuf ans, intelligent, racé, issu d'une vieille et pure noblesse d'Aoude.'[708] Although Stéphanie might be presented as being unprejudiced, the insistence on Das's nobility simultaneously implies that it is only because she acknowledges his heritage that their friendship can exist at all. Moreover, while Stéphanie might be more open towards communicating with Indian society than her British peers, she still retains a sense of distance that falls short of achieving a genuine interaction: 'elle manifestait hardiment sa tendresse pour *le petit peuple hindou*' (emphasis added).[709] Just as the Indian Mali is presented as calling out for aid from André in Rousselet's *Le Charmeur de serpents*, so *La Révolte* operates within a similar discourse of colonial benevolence and paternalism that transcends, in this case, Stéphanie's gender and undermines the egalitarian message of the narrative.[710]

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[704] Marenis, p. 16.

[705] Marenis, p. 25.

[706] Marenis, p. 16.

[707] Both Petr and Ravi have noted this trend in French representations of India, citing Alfred Assolant's *Aventures merveilleuses mais authentiques du Capitaine Corcoran* and Grèce's *La Femme sacrée* as examples in which the European male protagonists either marry or have a relationship with elite female members of Indian society; Petr, p. 10; Ravi, *L'Inde romancée*, p. 84. Although their relationship remains entirely platonic, Marenis's depiction of a friendship between a French female and an Indian male remains, nonetheless, something of an exception.

[708] Marenis, p. 36.

[709] Marenis, p. 16.

[710] While women were complicit in the colonial system, it should be noted that they 'experienced the cleavages of racial dominance and internal social distinctions very differently than men precisely because of their ambiguous positions, as both subordinates in colonial hierarchies and as active agents of imperial culture in their own right'; Ann L. Stoler, 'Making Empire Respectable: The Politics of

Running alongside this paradoxical desire to promote racial equality while subscribing to the paternalism of colonial discourse is the theme of Stéphanie's and Das's friendship and its ability to survive the challenge presented by the uprisings. As colonizer–colonized relations deteriorate in synchrony with the progression of the revolts, Stéphanie and Das meet again: Stéphanie 'surprit, dans les yeux de Mohun Das, une vive lumière. Il [Das] avait espéré, non pas une absolution impossible, mais cette sorte de divination, cette recherche d'une âme au delà des haines viles, du jeu sanguinaire opposant deux partis.'[711] In this scene, it is Das who looks (up) to Stéphanie for reassurance and it is her empowered gaze that enables them to move beyond the segregation imposed on them by colonial warfare. This moment can be read as a counter-narrative to many Anglo-centric accounts of the uprisings in that *La Révolte* does not celebrate the heroic acts of British soldiers and civilians in quashing Indian rebellion, but commemorates instead a 'special' relationship that continues to exist between a French woman and an Indian soldier in the face of adversity.[712] Even once Das has been killed by an enraged British soldier, their symbolic union finds its echo in the romance that finally develops between Stéphanie and Michael Fabert O'Linden: 'Stéphanie touchait le visage de Michael, ses mains; elle lui parlait français, hindoustani, cherchant une langue plus intime, un moyen d'expression nouveau.'[713] This merging of the French and Hindi languages can be read as a romanticization of the union between France and India. Set against the brutal narrative of colonial revolt, this linguistic alliance, along with Stéphanie's and Das's friendship, offer an alternative vision to the harsh realities of British rule, one that might have realized Stéphanie's colonial fantasy of 'l'harmonie, l'union et même l'amour' between colonizer and colonized 'other'.[714]

The positive images of the French colonizer that emerge in Rousselet's and Marenis's portrayals of British colonial crisis reoccur as late as 1984 in Grèce's *La Femme sacrée*. The inclusion of this chronologically late text suggests just how entrenched the idea of French colonialism as a preferable alternative to British colonialism was, and perhaps remains, in the French (post-)colonial imagination. As mentioned in Chapter Three, it takes as its subject matter the Indian uprisings, placing them as the starting point on a teleological trajectory that led to Indian independence in 1947.[715] The heroine of the narrative is Lakshmi Bai, the Rani of Jhansi, who plays a pivotal role in the inexorable march of Indian national history in her battles against the British to return the subcontinent to its Indian rulers.

Race and Sexual Morality in 20th-Century Colonial Cultures', *American Ethnologist*, 16 (1989), 634–60 (p. 634).
[711] Marenis, p. 221.
[712] See the analysis of the killing of Das by the British soldier, Selden, in Section 2.3.4, p. 62.
[713] Marenis, p. 298.
[714] Marenis, p. 31.
[715] See also footnote 305.

Yet working contrapuntally with Grèce's Indo-centric discourse is an alternative and less obvious narrative line. Like the previous two texts analysed in this section, *La Femme sacrée* appropriates the Indian uprisings as a way of privileging the French over the British colonial voice, in this case by narrating the development of a 'special' relationship between Lakshmi and an unusually liberal colonizer, Roger Giffard. The addition of this fictitious romance into an otherwise 'historical' fiction enables a counterfactual narrative to be introduced that implicitly celebrates the French voice through Roger's attitude towards both his lover and India more generally. Although he is introduced initially as 'un Anglais' (and is not, therefore, a French protagonist *per se*), the narrative provides him with an ancestral connection to France in the same way that Rousselet's and Marenis's texts insert additional and seemingly ornamental details that unite their central protagonists to *l'Hexagone*.[716] In Roger's case, he is linked back to Normandy: 'Roger Giffard [...] descendait d'une fort ancienne famille, d'origine normande'.[717] This tie is all the more conspicuous for its superfluity, but it also opens up the possibility for reading him as a spokesperson for a French colonial vision. In other words, the inclusion of this otherwise trivial hereditary detail suggests an irrepressible desire to link France (even as late as 1984 and however tenuously) with the particular brand of idealized colonialism that Roger represents.

This can be seen in Roger's wish to understand India, a detail that sets him apart from the disinterestedness and hermetism of the typical British colonizer. As he explains to his superior, Alexandre Skeene, 'J'ai choisi une petite ville parce que je voudrais apprendre à connaître l'Inde en profondeur. Et ce n'est pas dans les grands centres où se sont regroupés nos compatriotes [the British] que j'y réussirai,' to which the narrator comments, 'Un Anglais venu en Inde pour apprendre à la connaître, c'était exceptionnel.'[718] While Roger's desire to understand the colonized 'other' places him within the tradition of what Pratt defines as the 'seeing-man' whose 'imperial eyes passively look out and possess', it is also that desire which differentiates Roger from other Britons.[719] He speaks for a distinctly French-sounding *mission civilisatrice* that seeks, through cultural awareness, to practise an integrationist–associationalist model: 'Sales ou pas, puisque nous sommes chez eux', he says, 'il me semble que nous devons les fréquenter afin de les comprendre', a comment that is greeted with a sniff of disapproval by his British female interlocutor, Mrs Phipps.[720]

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[716] Grèce, p. 66.
[717] Grèce, p. 68. The surname Giffard is Norman in origin. In Holt's exploration into what he terms 'the French colonisation of England' following 'William of Normandy's victory at Hastings in 1066', he mentions Giffard as being one of the few surnames that made the crossing from France to Britain; J. C. Holt, *Colonial England, 1066–1215* (London: Hambledon Press, 1997), p. 1 and p. 117.
[718] Grèce, p. 70.
[719] Pratt, p. 7.
[720] Grèce, p. 109.

Roger's gradual absorption in Indian culture works in tandem with his deepening involvement with Lakshmi and arouses the suspicion of his British peers: 'Depuis quelque temps, il [Roger] sentait que ses hôtes [britanniques] le considéraient avec suspicion. Son amour grandissant pour l'Inde en était responsable.'[721] This increasing passion for India moves in parallel with his love for Lakshmi, but also reveals the exoticist and competing colonial discourse underpinning the idea of their relationship. Like many other female Indian protagonists in French-language representations of India, Lakshmi comes to personify the geographical space of India.[722] For example, when she tries to persuade Roger to leave India due to the planned revolts against the British, he refuses by offering the following rationale: 'Il est trop tard. Je ne peux plus me détacher de ton pays. [...] L'Inde est devenue mon pays. Elle est belle et malheureuse, forte et douce, mystérieuse et sensuelle. Comme toi, Lakshmi.'[723] India is thus anthropomorphized into a female body and a capricious princess, a sexualized object to be studied under a phallocentric western gaze that desires to possess 'her' both sexually and epistemologically. But more than simple exoticism, their relationship presents a colonial ideal that works in opposition to the British. Indeed, this idea belongs to a much longer tradition in French-language writing on India of narrating, as Petr points out (although not with reference to *La Femme sacrée*), a 'lien amoureux entre une princesse indienne et un Français' that represents 'l'idéal d'une colonisation "douce" [...] qui fait contraste avec la politique "barbare" des Britanniques'.[724] That these same tropes and themes reappear in this late-twentieth-century text suggests an ingrained fantasy within the French (post-)colonial imagination, as well as an enduring will to occupy the cultural space of India.[725]

Significantly, it is Roger's death, occurring midway through the narrative, that finally impels Lakshmi to join the revolutionary forces against British tyranny:[726] 'Je hais les Anglais. Ce sont eux qui ont tué Roger [...] Si les Anglais n'avaient pas été si ignorants, si aveugles, si stupides, Roger serait encore en vie. [...] Je les haïrai jusqu'à ma mort.'[727] Roger's actual death is then re-enacted metaphorically when Kiraun, his former concubine and later faithful servant, is similarly killed during a British attack:

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[721] Grèce, p. 108.
[722] Ravi, following Nandy, writes that the colonial imagination often defines the Orient as a female space in which women are represented as little more than 'exotic consumer erotica' sold in the potent branding of Indian females as both sacred and violent; Ravi, 'Marketing Devi', p. 140; Ashis Nandy, *The Intimate Enemy: Loss and Recovery of Self under Colonialism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988; first publ. 1983), p. 54.
[723] Grèce, p. 140.
[724] Petr, p. 10.
[725] See also footnote 16.
[726] The term 'révolution' is used throughout the novel to name the uprisings and is complemented with associated terms, such as 'révolutionnaires' and 'patriotes', with the Rani becoming 'l'héroïne de la révolution' or 'l'héroïne dont toute l'Inde parle! Le flambeau de la révolution' that will lead India to freedom; Grèce, p. 311 and p. 399.
[727] Grèce, p. 243.

Kiraun disparue, c'était encore un lien avec le souvenir de Roger que Lakshmi perdait. Il lui semblait que Roger avait été tué une seconde fois, et cette fois par les Anglais. Sa haine contre eux, décuplée, renforça encore sa détermination de ne leur céder en aucun cas.[728]

Thus, running through what appears to be a distinctly Indian nationalist celebration of one of its greatest heroines is a rather more France-centred undercurrent. Under cover of commemorating Lakshmi as a symbol of freedom from British rule, this fiction subtly introduces the 'French' colonial voice by nostalgically imagining that the death of a man who represents that voice could have inspired Lakshmi's revolutionary battle against the British.

As each of the above examples indicates, a desire exists in French writing on India to distinguish their colonizers from the rest of colonial society by presenting characters who speak for a particular brand of French colonialism that works in opposition to the hegemony of British rule. The potentially negative undertones associated with French marginalization on the subcontinent and the memories of loss to which the *comptoirs* attest are thereby assuaged by rendering marginalization a privileged position from which to speak. The protagonists considered here are endowed with an outsider's perspective that permits them to engage critically with British rule at a time when that rule was being challenged by Indian people. Against this historical backdrop, their ability to remain within, yet operate outside, of the colonial elite is rendered all the more effective by allowing them to forge 'special' relationships with the colonized 'other', which, in turn, represents a rhetorical triumph over the *frère ennemi*.

5.6   Forging a New Imperial Vision from 1857–58: Beyond India

Collectively, the examples cited throughout this chapter reveal the processes by which the memory of *Inde perdue* is offset either by the potential for Britain to lose India during the uprisings or by referring to 1857–58 after the event as a historical cautionary tale. The question of India in the French imagination should not be viewed, however, as a hermetically sealed whole, but needs to be placed within the wider context of the French empire in the late-nineteenth century, including its past losses, its contemporaneous possessions and its prospective visions. Indeed, the positive image of French colonialism that emerges from representations of this British colonial crisis is not simply underpinned by nostalgia and loss,

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[728] Grèce, p. 341. Lakshmi, too, is killed by the British, in this case, by a soldier called Roderick, who, ironically, is avenging the death of his old friend, Roger; Grèce, p. 463.

but is also driven by a will to colonize beyond the exotic, fantastical and nostalgic limits of 'India'. In 1857, it was Algeria and its promise of an *Afrique française*, as well as the trading possibilities opened up by the idea of Lesseps's Suez Canal, which formed the focus of imperialist visions, particularly in the wake of abolition;[729] whereas the late-nineteenth century saw France's imperial gaze returning to Asia and fixing upon Indochina.[730] This final section analyses the practice of viewing these other colonial possessions, particularly Algeria, through the optic of the Indian uprisings, before considering how 1857–58 was made to function as both an analeptic tool that revived a positive vision of French colonialism and as a filter through which the atrocities and controversies of France's expansionist drive could be sanitized.

The historian and politician, Alexis de Tocqueville, offers a historical precedent in his uncompleted essay, 'Dans l'Inde', which employed British India as a lens through which to (re)view France's colonial situation.[731] In a letter to Buloz (2 October 1840), he wrote that,

'Ce sujet [la grandeur des Anglais dans l'Inde], qui a été intéressant dans tous les temps, l'est prodigieusement maintenant que toutes les grandes affaires européennes ont leur nœud en Afrique. Il l'est particulièrement pour nous depuis que nous avons la colonie d'Alger.'[732]

Tocqueville's interest in the links between Britain's global ascension and its colonization of India stemmed from a fundamental preoccupation with France's related decline.[733] He believed that this situation could be rectified through a competitive colonial operation, particularly in North Africa. Hence, in his dissertation, 'Travail sur l'Algérie', he promoted overseas expansion as an essential ingredient in rebuilding France's lost national prestige.[734] For this reason, he wrote, 'Je ne crois pas que la France puisse songer sérieusement à quitter l'Algérie. L'abandon qu'elle en ferait serait aux yeux du monde l'annonce certaine de sa

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[729] As Miller discusses, 'slave-trade abolitionism and the colonization of Africa were twins born from the same egg'; Miller, p. 201.

[730] As has been argued by various academics, France lacked a coherent colonial policy until around 1880 and, even then, it was not driven by the French government, but rather by *le parti colonial*, which garnered support for an overseas empire by appealing to French nationalism through public and governmental Anglophobia; C. M. Andrew, 'The French Colonialist Movement during the Third Republic: The Unofficial Mind of Imperialism', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 26 (1976), 143–66 (p. 152). For Algeria, see Bénot, p. 544. For Indochina, see Cooper, pp. 11–12.

[731] Alexis de Tocqueville, 'Dans l'Inde: Ébauches d'un ouvrage sur l'Inde', in *Tocqueville: Œuvres*, ed. by André Jardin ([Paris]: Gallimard, 1991), pp. 955–1080.

[732] Voltaire's letter is cited in André Jardin, 'Dans l'Inde: Notice', in *Tocqueville: Œuvres*, ed. by André Jardin ([Paris]: Gallimard, 1991), pp. 1555–62 (p. 1555).

[733] For more information on the rationale and aims underpinning Tocqueville's analysis of British India, see Jardin, pp. 1555–62.

[734] This same argument would be echoed by Prévost-Paradol in 1865, who wrote with envy of Britain's Indian (and global) empire in contrast to France's meagre overseas possessions; A. Prévost-Paradol, *La France nouvelle et pages choisies* (Paris: Garnier, 1981; first publ. 1868), p. 127. Like Tocqueville, he urged France to expand beyond its European borders and particularly into Algeria, believing that Algerian colonization would restore 'la grandeur française'; Prévost-Paradol, p. 153.

décadence', fearing that if France were to withdraw, it 'paraîtrait aux yeux du monde plier sous sa propre impuissance'.[735] The omnipotent 'yeux du monde' referred to Europe within whose imagined hierarchical structure of power France had slipped to 'second rang'.[736] Algeria presented itself as an opportunity for France to reconstruct its depleted identity and to bolster its influence among the European ranks.[737] In other words, France needed its own version of *Inde anglaise*, but not one that had been plundered by 'la soif des richesses menant à la tyrannie ou à des entreprises iniques',[738] but rather one that was built upon more philanthropic ideals, such as the spreading of 'nos arts' and 'nos idées'.[739]

The same ambition to rebuild French prestige through colonial expansion pervades representations of 1857–58, particularly in the French-language press of that time. The suggestion that Britain would sacrifice some its paramountcy, having been publicly humiliated by its own colonial 'subjects', went hand-in-hand with the alluring promise that the moment had arrived for a French revival, not in India, but elsewhere in other existing or potential colonies. In other words, by defining British colonialism as an obsolete institution, the ground on which to erect a future for France was prepared. For example, *Le Siècle*'s Girard wrote that 'on voit qu'à la longue toute domination qui n'est pas fondée sur la justice et qui s'exerce sur des pays éloignés de la mère-patrie est sujette à être renversée'.[740] Pre-empting Indian independence by ninety years, Britain's era of domination was consigned to the past, remembered as nothing more than a cautionary tale for future colonial powers, whose negative example 'pourra servir d'enseignement aux peuples et aux gouvernemens qui font des conquêtes ou des établissemens du même genre'.[741] The Indian uprisings, therefore, allowed contemporaneous French writing to imagine that Britain's hubris would lead to its inevitable fall and that the uprisings would eventually sound Britain's long-awaited death knell.

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[735] Tocqueville, 'Travail sur l'Algérie', p. 691.

[736] *Ibid.*

[737] The idea that Algeria could help to revive French prestige in Europe was already well established by 1857. As Le Cour Grandmaison notes, the importance given to the conquest of Algiers in 1830 can only be understood within the context of France's desire to reconstruct its lost empire and rival Britain once again; Le Cour Grandmaison, *Coloniser, Exterminer*, pp. 11–12. After 1857 and throughout the nineteenth century, the acquisition of overseas territories would often be considered as a way to recover national prestige, particularly following moments of defeat, such as France's defeat in Prussia (1870); Andrew, p. 148.

[738] Tocqueville, 'Dans l'Inde', p. 1005.

[739] Tocqueville, 'Travail sur l'Algérie', p. 693. Despite his often trenchant criticism of British colonialism, Tocqueville did admire some aspects of Indian governance, such as Pitt's Reform Bill (1784), which he saw as a blueprint for French policies in Algeria; Tocqueville, 'Dans l'Inde', pp. 979–80.

[740] J. Girard, 'L'Inde ancienne et l'Inde actuelle: Comparées sous leurs rapports les plus importans', *Le Siècle*, 24 August 1857, p. 2.

[741] *Ibid.* See also Laurentie's description of British colonialism as an aging and retrogressive power; Laurentie, *L'Union: Quotidienne, France, écho français*, 29 October 1857, pp. 1–2 (p. 1).

Against the seductive image of British collapse, Parisian journalists could imagine that now was the time to exact revenge for the loss of India: 'ce nom seul de l'Inde fait vibrer notre patriotisme', wrote *L'Union*'s Henry de Riancey, 'Il nous rappelle tant de gloire si cruellement expiée, tant de génie et de bravoure si peu récompensés, tant de malheurs et d'injures non encore vengés!'[742] What would emerge was a new world order, initiated by France, which would succeed where Britain had failed: 'que la civilisation et le christianisme aient leur œuvre à accomplir là où le protestantisme et la force ont échoué'.[743] Similarly, for Billot, France's emerging system of power would be the inverse of the old and quintessentially British regime. It would be based, not on 'l'inégalité', 'la restriction', 'la conquête' or 'la suprémacie des mers', but rather on 'l'égalité', 'la liberté', 'l'universel affranchissement' and 'les libres et volontaires relations du commerce'.[744] For Laurentie, these important shifts in global hierarchy demanded an immediate response, which he framed as a moral imperative:

> La domination matérielle finit dans l'Inde; une puissance morale doit se montrer; et si par malheur l'Europe moderne ne comprenait pas qu'elle a une mission très haute à remplir à la place de cette mission des marchands anglais, [...] c'est que cette civilisation dont nous sommes fiers n'est qu'un vain mot, expression d'un égoïsme ingénieux à se satisfaire par le raffinement de tous les arts, mais incapable de sauver le monde par de grands élans, ou de le dominer par de grands exemples.[745]

Laurentie called for action, not words, for France to stand up and lead Europe in its dutiful mission to civilize the world, thereby remedying the ills of British domination with a fresh moral agenda.

As the earlier examples taken from Tocqueville demonstrate, it was often Algeria that was demarcated as the location in which to pursue this venture. The idea of Algeria as a colonial utopia went hand in hand with the belief that France could revolutionize the colonized 'other' while simultaneously reviving itself.[746] '[L']Algérie,' wrote Pasquet for *Le Siècle* in 1857, 'peut devenir le canal par lequel la révolution française s'infiltrera dans la société musulmane pour la dissoudre et la reconstituer. [...] révolutionner, régénérer

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[742] Henry de Riancey, 'France, Paris, 23 octobre', *L'Union: Quotidienne, France, écho français*, 24 October 1857, p. 1.

[743] *Ibid.*

[744] Billot based his arguments on those of the French economist, Frédéric Bastiat; Billot, *L'Inde, l'Angleterre et la France*, pp. 119–20.

[745] Laurentie, *L'Union: Quotidienne, France, écho français*, 25 August 1857, p. 1.

[746] The idea of Algeria as a utopia was repeatedly invoked. For example, the politician, Léonce de Lavigny, saw this North African country as a place in which to export political and social reform, producing, to quote from Amoss, 'a prototype of the perfect society that would nourish France's own utopian dreams'; Benjamin McRae Amoss, 'The Revolution of 1848 and Algeria', *The French Review*, 75 (2002), 744–54 (p. 745).

l'Algérie, c'est révolutionner, c'est régénérer l'Orient'.[747] Pasquet's vision did not stop at Algeria, however, but extended out towards the 'Orient' as a whole, absorbing in its path Turkey, Asia, Morocco and Tunisia. Algeria was merely the first step in this master plan, 'une machine de guerre' for France's imagined global revolution propelled by its own 'immortels cahiers de 1789'.[748] Under French guidance, he anticipated that Algeria would become 'comme autrefois Alexandrie, le centre de la civilisation et des lumières de l'Orient fécondées par le génie occidental' and, in particular, by revolutionary France.[749] Acting as a cynosure, Pasquet imagined that it would be capable of turning,

les regards des musulmans [...] de Constantinople pour se fixer sur les libres rivages de l'Algérie; — que si la Mecque continue d'être pour le mahométisme la capitale religieuse, Alger devienne la capitale de l'intelligence, c'est-à-dire le foyer de la rédemption par la science, la liberté et la justice![750]

Algeria is thus transformed into a modern Mecca, displacing Islam with a redemptive European rationalism and converting the Islamic world to the 'religion' of French republicanism.

The metaphorical use of the word 'canal' in Pasquet's rhetoric also recalls another site of Anglo-French colonial rivalry that was ongoing at the time of writing: the coterminous debates over the construction of the Suez Canal. Palmerston's decision to block Ferdinand de Lesseps's project was widely criticized in the French press and was viewed as evidence of British parochialism, bigotry, paranoia, greed and hypocrisy.[751] The short-sightedness of the British premier was underlined by linking the canal to the war in India, noting that this waterway would have provided a more strategic route for transporting British troops to India (rather than Cape Horn).[752] Underlying these recriminations were questions concerning not only who, out of Britain and France, would ultimately prevail in Egypt, but also who, by proxy, would control the African market, thus paving the way for what would become known as the 'Scramble for Africa'. Already in 1857, the canal did not simply

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[747] E. André Pasquet, 'Les conseils généraux de l'Algérie: Session de 1858', Le Siècle, 2 December 1858, p. 2.
[748] Ibid.
[749] Ibid.
[750] Ibid.
[751] A. Husson, 'Percement de l'Isthme de Suez: Rapport de la Commission Internationale', Le Siècle, 3 July 1857, p. 2; P. Dubois, 'Paris, 30 juin', Le Constitutionnel, 1 July 1857, p. 1; Alexandre Bonneau, 'Le Canal de Suez et l'Angleterre', La Presse, 3 August 1857, p. 3; J. Burat, 'Paris, 30 juillet', Le Constitutionnel, 31 July 1857, p. 1.
[752] Dubois postulated that the Suez Canal would halve the journey of troops travelling from Britain to India and would significantly reduce the overall costs; Paul Dubois, 'Paris, 7 août', Le Constitutionnel, 8 August 1857, p. 1. Similar arguments can also be found in P. Dubois, 'Paris, 14 décembre', Le Constitutionnel, 15 December 1857, p. 1; Cucheval-Clarigny, 'L'Isthme de Suez et l'insurrection des Indes', La Patrie, 14 December 1857, pp. 1–2.

represent a method of transportation, but a route to new economic opportunities for European exploitation. 'L'Angleterre possède les Indes; elle est prépondérante en Chine', wrote Dubois for *Le Constitutionnel*,

> son commerce y prendra, par l'ouverture de l'isthme, une extension plus grande. À nous, l'Afrique surtout offre un vaste champ d'exploitation. Maîtres de l'Algérie et du Sénégal, nous étendrons notre influence, déjà dominante au nord et à l'ouest, sur les marchés de la côte orientale.[753]

Others were less willing to share the financial rewards with their European rivals, such as Bonneau, who spoke eagerly of the potential damage that the Suez Canal could do to British interests in Cape Horn, before noting that 'La cause qui ferait décheoir les colonies africaines de l'Angleterre hâterait au contraire la prospérité de notre Algérie.'[754]

The idea that France could realize its goal of usurping British dominance through its possession of Algeria and the Suez Canal and, from there, Africa could be further substantiated by juxtaposing the vision of *Algérie française* with the negative example of *Inde anglaise*. 'Que l'on compare ses travaux dans l'Inde, depuis un siècle, à ceux que nous avons accomplis depuis vingt ans en Algérie', wrote Veuillot for *L'Univers*, a statement that was supported with a list of optimistic and industrious-sounding projects: 'La Mitidja assainie, le Sahara fertilisé, des villes, des villages, des ports créés là où nous avions trouvé le désert.'[755] Conversely, Britain was seen to have done little to improve the lives of its Indian peoples, a point that was proven by the onset of 'subject' revolt. By referring to the events in India, France could set itself up as an example to emulate: 'L'Angleterre peut voir aujourd'hui, par le bon exemple que nous lui donnons en Algérie, combien elle a fait fausse route', wrote *Le Siècle*'s Jordan.

As such, the uprisings could be used to answer back to the accusations of the British media that France was 'inhabile à la colonisation'.[756] In response, Jourdan claimed that France has 'une habileté que nous estimons plus haut', meaning that its colonial mission was founded upon 'les notions de justice et de droit parmi les peuples soumis à sa domination' and a sense of respect for religious difference, coupled with a gentle paternalism that, without undue imposition, familiarized the colonized 'other' with 'nos idées et nos mœurs'.[757] It was because the British administration had not adhered to such standards and

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[753] P. Dubois, 'Paris, 22 septembre', *Le Constitutionnel*, 23 September 1857, p. 1.
[754] Alexandre Bonneau, 'Le Canal de Suez et l'Angleterre', *La Presse*, 3 August 1857, p. 3.
[755] Eugène Veuillot, 'France, Paris, 4 novembre', *L'Univers: Union Catholique*, 5 November 1857, p. 1.
[756] Louis Jourdan, 'L'insurrection de l'Inde', *Le Siècle*, 11 September 1857, pp. 1–2 (p. 1).
[757] *Ibid.*

had remained insensitive to cultural alterity (exemplified by the enforced use of the greased cartridges) that it was now being punished.[758]

Likewise, the memory of the negative press that Algeria's acquisition had attracted in Britain ('On se rappelle les violentes attaques dont notre système gouvernemental en Algérie a été l'objet de la part de la presse anglaise', wrote Cohen in *La Patrie*[759]) could also be turned on its head in the light of Britain's own crisis, since the dominant colonizer had been forced to put in place precisely those French Algerian policies that they had so vocally criticized previously, notably 'la centralisation du pouvoir entre les mains du gouvernement britannique; l'établissement d'une armée permanente, composée exclusivement de soldats anglais'[760] What these examples suggest is that by viewing French colonialism through the optic of British India, and particularly through anti-colonial action, the contemporaneous reality and the unsettling memories of French colonialism, including its histories of violence and/or loss, could be occluded and/or retrospectively revised.

This is particularly evident in a polemical song written by Billot, entitled *Le Réveil de l'Inde ou chant du Mharatte* (1860), in which the memory of Bugeaud's involvement in numerous atrocities against Algerian tribes (during the 1840s) was eschewed and reworked by placing Algeria within the context of the Indian uprisings. Set in the midst of the uprisings, the eponymous hero, Nana Sahib, is made to cry out to France for succour against the British aggressor:

> France amie, ô terre adorée! Ouvre ton âme à nos douleurs!
> Et que ta redoutable épée change en paix toutes les fureurs.
> Que ton génie en tout sublime, qui jamais ne fut arrêté,
> Nous aide à sortir de l'abîme en nous donnant la liberté![761]

Significantly, Nana Sahib's calls are answered by the arrival of a battalion of French-colonized Algerians, or 'Zouaves', whose appearance on stage is prefigured by their singing of a military song dedicated to maréchal Bugeaud, entitled '*Casquette à Bugeaud*'.[762] In this act of ventriloquism, both Nana Sahib and the Algerian soldiers function as Billot's mouthpiece in order to fetishize France as their mutual liberator. The celebration of the bellicose Bugeaud shows how the uprisings were appropriated as a narrative setting in which to suggest that, for France, the very act of colonization was one that paradoxically liberated the non-European 'other'. In this case, the example is the 'Zouaves', who, having been

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[758] See Section 2.3.1, pp. 50–51.
[759] J. Cohen, 'L'Inde et l'Algérie', *La Patrie*, 12 August 1857, p. 1.
[760] *Ibid.*
[761] Billot, *Le Réveil de l'Inde ou chante du Mharatte*, p. 7.
[762] *Ibid.*

'liberated' by Bugeaud, can now free their Indian brothers. The less palatable memories of France's Algerian invasion are thereby circumnavigated when placed beside British India in 1857–58.

Even where the Haitian Revolution (1791–1804) was concerned, with all its attendant negativity, the uprisings could be made to serve a revisionist function. As Dorigny notes, Haiti is something of a '"trou de mémoire"' in French colonial historiography, first and foremost because, unlike the earlier loss of Canada in 1763, 'la perte de Saint-Domingue par une défaite face à une insurrection d'esclaves transformée en guerre de libération était inacceptable, car elle transgressait un dogme jusqu'alors unanimement admis, celui de la supériorité des Blancs sur les autres peuples'.[763] Arguably (and without wishing to overstate the point), the interest generated by the uprisings in France may have been due, in part, to the fact that France, too, had undergone a popular revolt led by non-European (and specifically non-white) people, which had resulted in it losing its most lucrative sugar colony.[764] Explicit parallels were occasionally drawn between these two critical moments in the histories of French and British colonialisms. For example, while writing in 1857, Billot's political discussion on the uprisings turned to France's equivalent experience in the French Antilles. Although he blamed 'des orgies politiques du gouvernement de l'époque' for the loss of Saint Domingue,[765] by placing it side-by-side with the violent events unfolding in India, Billot could palliate France's defeat, re-envisaging it as a triumph for metropolitan republicanism:

> La France était assez forte pour reconquérir cette colonie importante; elle ne l'a pas fait. Conséquente dans sa conduite politique, elle a subi l'indépendance qu'elle avait elle-même proclamée en respectant la liberté d'autrui dans ses plus barbares manifestations. — A notre place, il est probable que l'Angleterre aurait dit de Saint-Domingue ce qu'elle a publié de Delhi, où, *si elle le peut*, elle n'entend pas laisser pierre sur pierre. Mais nous ne sommes pas Anglais.[766]

What is immediately striking is Billot's amnesia concerning French military action in Haiti, notably the failure of Leclerc's expedition to recapture Saint Domingue under the First

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[763] Dorigny, p. 49. For more information on the occultation of the Haitian Revolution, see Forsdick, 'Situating Haiti', pp. 20–22.

[764] For more on the importance of Saint Domingue, see David Aliano, 'Revisiting Saint Domingue: Toussaint L'Ouverture and the Haitian Revolution in the French Colonial Debates of the Late Nineteenth Century (1870–1900)', *French Colonial History*, 9 (2008), 15–36 (p. 15).

[765] Billot did not state explicitly whether the 'orgies politiques' referred to the First Republic or to Napoleon Bonaparte's Consulate, although his political leanings towards a republican–federalist view suggest that it was the latter; Billot, *L'Inde, l'Angleterre et la France*, p. 58.

[766] Billot, *L'Inde, l'Angleterre et la France*, p. 58.

Empire.[767] Instead, the reader is left with the impression that France simply ceded its 'perle des Antilles' in the spirit of republican philanthropy. The contemporary example of India serves as a more pressing case of impotence and atrocity enabling Billot to mitigate the shameful memories of Haitian independence. When compared with British India, the loss of Saint Domingue could thus be repackaged as an act of benevolence inspired by France's own revolutionary doctrines.

Unable to expunge this past completely, however — 'Laissons de côté ce souvenir passé, époque de vertige et d'erreur' — Billot moves swiftly on to the colonial present: 'Arrivons à des temps nouveaux, où l'esprit français sera mieux jugé sous le rapport de ses vues civilisatrices, comme sous le rapport de ses vues de colonisation. Parlons de l'Afrique.'[768] This shift to Africa represented a turning away from the disappointments of the past and towards the promise of France's colonial future. Under Billot's pan-African gaze, Algeria is projected unproblematically onto the larger geographical space of Africa. In the wake of the uprisings, an entire continent could now be envisaged under French rule as a counterpoint to British India: 'N'est-ce pas pitoyable, quand on songe que, dans moins de dix ans, en Afrique nous en avons fait trois fois autant [que l'Angleterre]! L'Afrique française n'a que 7 ou 8 millions d'habitants, et l'Inde anglaise en possède 200 millions!'[769]

In a reversal of roles, it was now Britain that ought to envy France and its colonial systems. As Cohen argued for *La Patrie*,

Les hommes d'Etat de l'Angleterre feront bien de consulter cette œuvre remarquable [in Algeria] à plus d'un titre; ils y apprendront comment on maintient l'ordre et l'autorité dans une grande colonie, comment on rend impuissantes les haines nationales, en aimant, en protégeant les races vaincues, en étant pour elles juste, tolérant, sympathique, mais toujours ferme et prêt à la répression.[770]

Thus, what the uprisings signified for many French journalists and writers in 1857–58, and what they would continue to signify long after their conclusion, was that this was a potential turning point for France. No longer would France look to Britain as an admirable example of colonial success, but Britain would henceforth refer to France as the leading light of a fresh and morally-grounded colonial mission exemplified by its administration of Algeria.[771] The

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[767] The amnesia of Billot's text is typical of French representations of Haiti. Dorigny writes that the news of Leclerc's unsuccessful expedition was kept deliberately quiet back in the *métropole* where the Consulate was busy concerning itself with creating 'l'image d'un Bonaparte invaincu et pacificateur de l'Europe ralliée aux idéaux de la Révolution'; Dorigny, p. 50.

[768] Billot, *L'Inde, l'Angleterre et la France*, p. 58.

[769] Billot, *L'Inde, l'Angleterre et la France*, pp. 60–61.

[770] J. Cohen, 'L'Inde et l'Algérie', *La Patrie*, 12 August 1857, p. 1.

[771] *Le Constitutionnel* similarly claimed that this shift in power could already be discerned. Preoccupied with their fear of losing India, 'les journaux de Londres' had begun, it claimed,

promise that the French press held out to their public suggested that France was truly on the threshold of a new era, leading writers, such as Billot, to assert that 'La France peut se passer de l'Inde et grandir sans elle' since 'Les portes de l'Indo-Chine [...] viennent, par des accords récents, de s'ouvrir à notre commerce, qui y trouvera [...] tout ce que l'on rencontre dans les colonies anglaises.'[772] These alternative continental-sized colonies were seen as compensation for the loss of the subcontinent and were forecast to become competitive equivalents to *l'Inde anglaise*.

In short, the idea that Britain's hegemony had momentarily floundered has been a *point de repère* in French colonial discourse for over one hundred and fifty years since their occurrence, serving to keep alive the fantasy that, had India been under French rule, the uprisings would never have occurred. Within this cycle, the Indian uprisings repeatedly offered a real moment in which France could simultaneously revive its animosity for the *frère ennemi* and revise its nostalgia for French colonial losses by producing positive images of France's 'civilizing mission'. As has been demonstrated, this vision is not only incompatible with France's actual history of colonial violence, but also remains troubled by the ongoing reality of France's subaltern status to the British, not just in India, but throughout the world. However, when visualized through, or juxtaposed with, the events of 1857–58, the French colonialist project, or its *mission civilisatrice*, could be viewed as a panacea for the problems of British India, one that could now be disseminated throughout the French empire.

'naturellement à jeter sur les colonies des autres puissances européennes un regard d'envie', in particular, Algeria: 'et voici dans quels termes élogieux le *Morning-Post* s'exprime sur l'Algérie, qu'il essaie de comparer aux Indes'; *Le Constitutionnel*, 31 August 1857, p. 1. In fact, this preamble was somewhat misleading — the subsequent translation of the *Morning Post*'s article on Algeria was rather less of a eulogy to France's colonizing prowess than *Le Constitutionnel* allowed itself to imagine, the *Post* having disdainfully described Algeria as a colony that 'les Français regardent comme leur empire des Indes en miniature'. The *Post* did state, however, that the suppression of the Kabyle tribes was a sign that '"l'ère militaire de la domination française en Algérie est terminée. L'ère de progrès a commencé"'.

[772] Billot, *L'Inde, l'Angleterre et la France*, p. 105. See also Farrère, p. 53.

6 CONCLUSIONS: FRANCE, INDIA, BRITAIN AND THE IDEALIZATION OF FRENCH COLONIALISM

'France amie, ô terre adorée! Ouvre ton âme à nos douleurs!', cries Nana Sahib in Billot's polemical song, *Le Réveil de l'Inde ou chant du Mharatte* (1860), 'Que ton génie en tout sublime, qui jamais ne fut arrêté, nous aide à sortir de l'abîme en nous donnant la liberté!'[773] In this stanza, the iconic image of 'France the liberator' has been inserted into a history that has little to do with the French nation. Under the guise of writing a song dedicated to the Marathas's fight against the British in 1857–58, an alternative Gallo-centric agenda emerges. In this fantasy, the subject of the uprisings and the controversial figure of Nana Sahib are merely instruments used to denigrate France's foremost rival, the British, while propagandizing the *métropole* as the desired leader of colonized people.

The interjection of a competing French discourse on India within the history of the Indian uprisings signals a return to the starting point of this thesis, namely a departure from viewing 1857–58 within an East–West dichotomy. As Marsh points out throughout her monograph, *Fictions of 1947*, French-language representations of India need to be examined within the context of 'France's politically subordinate status in India'.[774] The analysis of these narratives requires, not a binary model in which the West is pitted against the East, but a triangular model in which France ('the "subaltern" colonizer') is placed in a complex and shifting relationship with both the dominant colonizer, Britain, and the colonized 'other', India.[775] As such, the special case of the French in India not only challenges the grand narrative of British colonial dominance of the subcontinent by recalling the presence of an 'other' colonizer, but also issues a broader warning against analysing colonial discourse indiscriminately through a binary model.[776]

Importantly, however, unlike the history of Indian colonization and decolonization more generally, the uprisings of 1857–58 cannot be considered as anything other than a British and Indian narrative (the French *comptoirs* having remained entirely external to the crisis and French politics having played no role in the outcome of the revolts). Centrally, therefore, this thesis has asked why the subject of an Indian-led revolt against the dominant colonizer should have generated such a strong journalistic and literary response in an otherwise politically disinterested France. It finds that the texts dedicated to this period have far less to say about this particular moment, or about the British or Indian 'other' *per se*, than about the troubled image of French colonialism within the French colonial imagination,

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[773] Billot, *Le Réveil de l'Inde ou chante du Mharatte*, p. 7.
[774] Marsh, *Fictions of 1947*, p. 13.
[775] *Ibid.*
[776] Forsdick and Murphy, 'Introduction: The Case for Francophone Postcolonial Studies', p. 6, which is cited in Section 1.3.1, p. 21.

particularly during the late-nineteenth century, as 'a political second-best to Britain's presence'.[777]

Four interconnected patterns have emerged from this exploration, each of which reveals the use made of 'India' (and particularly of British India caught in the midst of a colonial crisis) as a narrative space in which to create an idealized vision of French colonialism that attempts to negate its histories of marginalization and violence. First, it maintains the importance of reading French representations of the subcontinent through a triangular model in which France is placed in a dialectical relationship with both the British and Indian 'other'. Second, it reveals how the act of juxtaposing French and British colonialisms (and their representatives) enables France to be promoted over the British as the bearer of a more ideologically- and morally-grounded colonial philosophy and, thus, as a preferable colonial ruler. Third, it demonstrates the practice of utilizing the figure of the Indian 'other' as a space through which to voice and explore Gallo-centric concerns and fantasies. Finally, it asserts the importance of India within the French imagination as fictionalized locus in which to sanitize the idea of French colonial exploitation.

In the first instance, although the French texts examined here have been interpreted using a triangular (rather than a binary) methodology, this interpretation does not yield a simplistic reading of three stable and contrary identities. Rather, it shows, on the one hand, the prevalence of key stereotypes operating across time and genre, while, on the other hand, the political and historical contingency underpinning the idea of France, India and Britain within any given text. The figure of the British colonizer is ambiguously located between its presentation as a much-needed agent of control over an 'uncivilized' subcontinent and as a despotic and self-serving tyrant. Likewise, the image of the Indian 'other', while often placed in cultural opposition to the French 'self', oscillates between its presentation as the justified agent of anti-colonial action (particularly in Anglophobic writing) and its denigration as a member of a 'barbaric' and 'uncivilized' race that is incapable of self-rule.

Whether the British or Indian 'other' is presented in a positive or negative light, as a stereotype or as a counter-stereotype, it inevitably functions as a foil to the more positive and diverse images of the French 'self'. For example, at one level, Rousselet's *Le Charmeur de serpents* can be seen as operating within an East–West dichotomy in its support of British rule over an 'barbarous' country led by men such as Nana Sahib. At another level, however, the uprisings are seen as the result of Britain's unjust exploitation of its colonized 'subjects', allowing an alternative vision of a peaceful India under French republican rule to be worked into the narrative. These kind of ambiguities, which are to be found within individual texts and across the corpus as a whole, not only suggest the absence of a monolithic idea of India

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[777] Said, *Orientalism*, p. 169.

and the uprisings, but also the extent to which the subcontinent is a contested space within French colonial discourse. More often than not, the figures of the British colonizer and colonized Indian simply operate as malleable tropes in which France's own preoccupations and ideals can be explored. Thus, if consistency is to be found at all, it is in the privileged position ascribed to the French voice as it comments upon British Indian society. It was the special status of the French in India, being at once 'insiders' and 'outsiders', colonizers and 'colonized', that allows the texts examined here to endow this voice with the ability to speak on behalf of both the European colonizer and the colonized 'other', and in each case to position itself as morally superior.

In the second instance, French-language representations of the Indian uprisings can be used to demonstrate how a competing colonial discourse is constructed in opposition to its British rival. This was the case because the revolts marked a historical instance in which the British had been challenged at their very core by a 'subject' race. As such, they also presented an opportunity for many French writers to criticize British colonialism and to graft longstanding grievances against the *frère ennemi* onto those of the Indian populace. The violent response of the British military and English-language press provided the perfect stratagem for showcasing British colonialism at its very worst. Moreover, the uprisings could be used to destabilize the grand narrative of British dominance by highlighting an underlying fear among Britons towards their colonial 'subjects' and the potential for British rule to be overthrown.

For these combined reasons, the revolts could be exploited as a fictionalized space in which to imagine counter-narratives to the *grand récit* of British dominance. Prior to their official conclusion in 1858, they allowed writers to envisage India freed from British rule and Britain reduced to a secondary colonial power. Long after 1858, they permitted French writing to suggest that had India been under French rule, the revolts would never have occurred. Arguably, it was the incomplete nature of France's loss of India (or rather 'l'empire de Dupleix') that allowed this fantasy of French colonialism to emerge. The remaining *comptoirs*, despite their political debilitation, and because of their juxtaposition with British India, could be made to function as colonial utopias in which to suggest what an India under French rule might have been like. These imaginings could be all the more potently expressed when placed within the context of India's revolt against the British.

The figure of the French colonizer scattered throughout the texts analysed here reflects the marginalized status of the *comptoirs*. Like the trading posts, the French protagonist is often placed on the periphery of British Indian society, yet it is this positioning that enables them to promote French colonialism as a socio-cultural ideal. Privileged with an outsider's perspective, while retaining a degree of insider knowledge, they are depicted as being able to transcend the worlds of the dominant colonizer and colonized 'other', forging

'special' relationships with the Indian 'other' in direct opposition to the antipathy that defined British–Indian relations.

The uprisings were thus instrumentalized as a polemical tool within the long history of Franco-British rivalry, in this case to compensate, at least rhetorically, for past losses on the subcontinent. As Said, Assayag and Marsh have all similarly concluded, this suggests that, although the battle for territorial control of India ended definitely with the Treaty of Paris of 1814, France continued to compete with Britain, seeking to occupy 'India' epistemologically, in this case through a rival colonial discourse.[778] India, as 'a space in the imagination to be occupied', to borrow Marsh's phrasing, has been explored here not simply as a setting in which to stage exotic adventures or to rehearse nostalgic memories of France's glorious past, but as a site in which a superior image of the *métropole* and its colonial mission could be created.[779]

In the third instance, the texts studied here have shown how the figure of the Indian 'other' as an agent of anti-colonial revolt is adopted into French writing as a trope for expressing Gallo-centric views and fantasies. The act of speaking through, or ventriloquizing, the Indian 'other' occurs most obviously in those texts that use this figure as a mouthpiece through which to channel their anti-British views or simply to challenge the confident rhetoric of British colonial victory and domination. Through this process of displacement, negative comments on the British Indian administration or French counter-narratives of Anglo-centric accounts are issued through a seemingly Indian source, while the author of the criticism or subversion remains hidden. Nana Sahib in Verne's *La Maison à vapeur*, for example, is depicted as a monster, but his narrative still serves as a vehicle for criticizing British colonial violence, while his uncertain demise works against the idea of a British victory.[780] Moreover, Indian protagonists can be made to endorse and suggest a preference for French over British colonialism, or to extol the virtues of a French protagonist over his or her British counterpart. This is perhaps most obvious in those fictional accounts where France is imagined as India's liberator, notably in Assolant's *Aventures merveilleuses mais authentiques du Capitaine Corcoran*, where Sougriva celebrates Corcoran's new republican leadership and worships him as a Hindu deity.[781]

As well as mobilizing the figure of the Indian insurgent, the uprisings as a whole could also be employed to propagandize French colonialism, irrespective of the genre and political ideology of a given text. This can clearly be seen in the volume and diversity of newspaper reporting produced in 1857–58. During 1857, when the potential for an Indian

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[778] Said, *Orientalism*, p. 41; Assayag, pp. 10–13; Marsh, *Fictions of 1947*, p. 215. See also footnote 16.
[779] Marsh, *Fictions of 1947*, p. 212.
[780] See Section 3.3.1, pp. 85–87.
[781] See Section 5.4.2, p. 154.

victory was still held in abeyance, the uprisings were repeatedly presented as a revolution in the French mould, being a provocative equation that exploited Britain's anxiety for the future of its most important colonial possession. Post-1858, the suggestion that India had attempted a French-style revolution, albeit one that had 'failed' to overturn the ruling power, could still be used to celebrate the universality of those core French values, *liberté, égalité, fraternité*.[782] However, the effect of using an anti-colonial movement in this opportunistic way is to silence the voice of the colonized 'other' beneath a self-interested agenda that is geared towards triumphing rhetorically over the *frère ennemi*.

In the fourth instance, the texts studied here suggest the importance of India as a transformative space in which to renegotiate the memories of France's past territorial defeats overseas, not just in India, but also in Canada and Haiti, and to sanitize the violence of French colonialism in, for example, Algeria. India should not, therefore, be studied in isolation, but should be placed within the wider context of France's losses under the *Ancien Régime*, as well as its desire to compete with British India through the acquisition of Africa and Indochina.

As such, the narratives that have formed the primary material of this analysis are less concerned with the Indian uprisings, than with the use that could be made of 'India' as a literary space in which to promote a sanitized image of France and its colonial exploits.[783] No longer encumbered by its own histories of atrocity, controversy and defeat, French colonialism could be presented as a paradigm of success, which operated not only within the exotic imaginary of fictional writing on India, but also extended beyond nostalgic representations and out into the colonial reality of the French empire. The vision of the *métropole* as the exporter and disseminator of a colonial ideology based on the revolutionary precepts of *liberté, égalité, fraternité* is, of course, France's own *grand récit*. Indeed, this metanarrative can still be seen in operation today. In 2005, for example, French *députés* from across the political spectrum expressed a will to project a certain image of France's colonial past through a proposed school syllabus that would emphasize only the positive role of the French overseas, especially in North Africa.[784]

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[782] Interestingly, Marsh also notes that Indian decolonization was presented in French writing 'as a retarded French Revolution'; Marsh, *Fictions of 1947*, p. 210.

[783] Marsh similarly concludes that 'the trope of "India" is employed not as a means of imposing and maintaining colonial power, but rhetorically to challenge another colonizer: the *frère ennemi*, Britain'; Marsh, *Fictions of 1947*, p. 213.

[784] For more details on this controversial mandate, see footnote 13. For more information on the response it evoked among French *députés*, see Le Cour Grandmaison, 'Sur la réhabilitation du passé colonial de la France', pp. 125–32. For an introduction to the widespread refusal within French culture to engage with its colonial past (a refusul that continues under Sarkozy's government and his 'campaign promise to *end* the era of "repentance"'; Miller, p. 390), see Nicholas Bancel, Pascal Blanchard and Sandrine Lemaire, 'Introduction: La fracture coloniale: Une crise française', in *La Fracture coloniale: La société française au prisme de l'héritage colonial*, ed. by Pascal Blanchard, Nicholas Bancel and Sandrine Lemaire (Paris: La Découverte, 2006; first publ. 2005), pp. 9–31.

The celebration of France that prevails throughout this reading of the Indian uprisings is, however, beset by two destabilizing counter-narratives. The first concerns amnesia, or the will to conceal the incongruence between colonial discourse and the material practices of colonial occupation; and the second concerns French colonial marginalization, or a preoccupation with being placed in an inferior position to the *frère ennemi*, not only in India but also globally, as a result of past territorial losses. In the first instance, the belief in France's 'civilizing mission' leads to a refusal to acknowledge France's own acts of colonial violence. The inability to engage critically with the exploitative nature of colonial occupation negates the often trenchant criticism of the British and uncovers the same patterns of hypocrisy that unhinge 'heroic' Anglo-centric accounts of the uprisings. In the second instance, far from producing a hegemonic and stable image of France's 'civilizing mission', French colonial discourse is shown to be underpinned by a fixation with marginalization and defeat. The anxiety that French writing observes in Anglo-centric accounts of 1857–58, with regards to its self-image and future stability, is thus inadvertently reflected back to France. In the very act of projecting France as a desirable alternative to the British lies the suggestion that French writing on India is deeply concerned with the image of France as a less powerful colonizer.

The Indian uprisings, being one of the most significant events in the history of British colonialism, continue therefore to offer a compelling topic in which to theorize colonial history and develop postcolonial thinking. They have been used here to examine the will to create a particular vision of French colonialism, against which the figures of the British colonizer and Indian 'other' are mobilized as complex and shifting markers of difference. As an inherently anti-British movement, they have provided French writing with a useful framework in which to place its competing images of the *métropole*, perhaps explaining why they remained a source of inspiration well into the twentieth century. Ultimately, however, this analysis has shown the extent to which rivalry, anxiety, fear and violence underpin these representations of colonial crisis. As such, it foregrounds the importance of questioning the metanarratives that shape the colonial past, a questioning that needs equally to be applied to France and Britain as they now come to terms with their imperial histories and acknowledge the ongoing effects of colonialism in today's 'post'-colonial society.

Agha:	A title of respect used in Muslim countries (especially under the Ottoman Empire) to refer to a person in a senior military position, such as a commander or chief officer, or as a title of distinction.[785]
Bayadère:	A dancing girl, especially one serving in a Hindu temple, linked in colonial discourse to the idea of sexual freedom.
Bibighar:	The living quarters where British officers housed their concubines; the name of the location in which a group of Europeans were massacred on 15 July 1857 at Cawnpore.
Brahman or *Brahmin:*	A member of the highest or priestly caste in the Hindu caste system.
Chapati:	A small cake of unleavened bread, generally made of coarse wheaten meal, flattened with the hand, and baked on a griddle.
Dacoit:	A member of a gang of armed robbers in India considered (along with the *Thugs*) as part of a religious sect that murdered their victims and offered them as sacrifices to the Hindu goddess, Kāli.
Muharram or *moharrem:*	The first month of the year in the Muslim calendar; an annual festival in the month of *Muharram*, commemorating the deaths of the grandsons of Muhammad.
Nawab-vazir:	In South Asia, a Muslim official who acted as a deputy ruler or viceroy of a province or district under the Mughal empire, such as governor of Oudh during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries; any governor of a town or district, or person of high status.
Peshwa:	A chief minister of the Marathan princes (based in Poona) from *circa* 1600–1818. In 1818, the title was annulled by British authorities after the last *Peshwa*, Baji Rao II, was dethroned and exiled to Bithur.
Razzia:	A hostile or aggressive incursion, foray or raid, usually for the purposes of conquest, plunder and the capture of slaves, especially in North Africa.
Ryot:	A peasant or tenant farmer in India.
Sati or *suttee:*	A Hindu widow who immolates herself on the funeral pile with her husband's body.

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[785] All the following definitions have been created by combining the descriptions found in the *OED* and *Collins English Dictionary*.

Sepoy:	An Indian soldier in the service of the British army.
Sowar:	A native horseman or mounted orderly, policeman, etc.; a native trooper, especially one belonging to the irregular cavalry.
Thug ('cult' of *Thugi* or *Thuggee*):	A member of an organization of robbers and assassins in India who typically strangled their victims and offered them as a sacrifice to the Hindu goddess, Kâli.
Zemindar:	Formerly, a collector of the revenue from land held by a number of cultivators; subsequently, an Indian who held land for which he paid revenue direct to the British government.
Zouave:	An Algerian soldier predominantly from the Kabyle tribe who formed part of a light infantry corps within the French army.

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