

Memsahibs and their Servants in Nineteenth-century India^[1]

NUPUR CHAUDHURI
Kansas State University, USA

ABSTRACT From the beginning of the nineteenth century, British memsahibs, the wives of officials, military officers, missionaries, and merchants, consistently expounded an image of Indians to the female reading public in Britain through their letters and diaries to female relatives, and through published autobiographies, advice manuals, articles, and advice columns in women's periodicals. Since servants were the group of Indians with whom memsahibs had the most contact, their relationship with domestics shaped British women's attitudes towards the Indian in general. The servants' dark skin and their religious, social, and linguistic differences contributed to the negative attitudes of the memsahibs towards them. The Indian rebellion of 1857 and the emergence of social Darwinism further heightened memsahibs' beliefs that Indians were subhuman savages. Earlier generations of memsahibs influenced the later generations through their derogatory comments about Indian domestics. Furthermore, by writing about their Indian servants, memsahibs identified themselves as active participants in Britain's imperial venture in India.

Since the early decades of the nineteenth century, India has captured the literary imagination of the British, with many fictional characters either coming from or going to India.[2] Fiction created an image, however inaccurate it might be, of the Indians and India in the minds of a substantial segment of the reading public in Britain. In this article, I propose that, in addition to fiction writers, British women – especially the wives of British officials, military officers, missionaries, and merchants, or memsahibs – created an image of an Indian servant class which they, their friends, and families generalised to all Indians. Because of the influence of the letters and diaries that their female relatives sent back from India beginning in the nineteenth century, many British women were formulating their own opinions about the Indians long before the emerging dominance of later British imperial cultures or of Social Darwinism. By the 1820s memsahibs had begun publishing their private letters and their autobiographies. From the 1850s onwards, others produced advice manuals and wrote articles and

advice columns for women's periodicals, especially in the *Englishwoman's Domestic Journal (EDM)* and the *Queen*.

Samuel Orchard Beeton published both these journals, and his wife Isabella was a major force in editing *EDM*. Begun in 1852, *EDM* cost only two pence instead of the usual one shilling for a monthly; by 1860 it had a circulation of 50,000.[3] The *Queen* sought a "wide and wealthy" readership, and reputedly Queen Victoria and her daughters contributed to it.[4] Often, the women authors in these journals did not provide their full names, and literary scholars postulate that many women writers avoided publicity by using their initials, pseudonyms, or by writing anonymously.[5] Numerous memsahibs would follow these practices and in their articles would identify themselves thus. Their writing graphically described the Indian landscape surrounding their homes, their daily domestic routine, and their social activities.

During the nineteenth century servants were the only group of Indians with whom memsahibs had substantial contact. Domestic workers were an indispensable part of everyday life for most British families in India, and in many cases, the memsahibs' children developed fond attachments to these servants.[6] Because of their varied experiences with and heavy reliance on them, memsahibs wrote at great length about their Indian servants in their correspondence with their mothers, sisters, and female cousins, as well as in their published works. These sources collectively constructed and disseminated images of Indians for British female readers. Since the Indian servants were the main links between memsahibs' India and Indians' India, it seems inevitable that memsahibs' relationship with their domestics would shape their attitude towards the Indians in general.

Throughout the nineteenth century memsahibs arrived in India with assumptions about how many domestics to employ, what to expect in the way of service from them, and how to deal with them – all based at least to some extent on instructions from manuals intended for families in Britain. In India, only the very wealthy kept a large number of domestics. A family with an annual income of £1000 to £1500 could afford to employ 5 to 6 servants, but lower-middle and middle-middle class families were able to maintain no more than three servants in Britain.[7] The majority of the memsahibs who came to India were of middle to lower-middle class background.[8] After their arrival, memsahibs were astonished to discover that in India British families, irrespective of their income, kept a large number of servants.

In 1806, Mrs Sherwood (following the common practice of not providing her full name) wrote that while she and her husband lived in Fort William, Calcutta, they had 15 servants.[9] In 1839 Emma Walter, of Dusa Cantonment in Bombay Presidency, recorded in her journal that they had only the servants they required and yet they had 19 servants.[10] When Anglo-Indians spent the hot season from March to October in the plains, they needed more servants to pull *punkahs*, or fans. (Here I am using

'Anglo-Indian' in its nineteenth-century sense of a Briton in India, and not in the late twentieth-century usage of one having mixed British-Indian parentage). In 1871, E. C. P. Hull, author of *The Europeans in India*, wrote that a childless British married couple in Madras usually had 23 servants, but the same size couple in Calcutta would have employed about 25 to 27 servants, or in Bombay would have hired 16 domestics. This list of servants for Bombay did not include *punkahwalas* or *punkahmen* to pull *punkahs* (fans), essential servants for the homes in Calcutta and Madras.[11] Hull did not explain why *punkahmen* were not listed for Bombay.

Modern conveniences probably were one reason for the decline in the number of servants in British households by the early twentieth century. In the 1870s both A.U. and Maria Hay Mitchell recorded that filtered water was supplied to both Indian and British sections of Calcutta.[12] As modern water systems provided running water in large cities, *bhisties* or water carriers became redundant. With the introduction of electricity which occurred in the British sector of Delhi before the end of the nineteenth century, memsahibs possibly had less need to employ *masalchis* who lighted lamps and candles and *punkahmen*. [13] Thus while Emma Walter had thought 19 servants indispensable in 1839, another memsahib from Bombay reported in *Queen* that she required only five in 1896.[14] However, although the number of servants deemed essential in an Anglo-Indian household decreased over the decades, British families in India usually employed more servants than did comparable middle or upper-middle class families in the metropole.

But then how did memsahibs justify having this relatively large staff of domestics? Higher income was not a factor. They claimed that the religious and social practices of the indigenous population forced them to hire numerous servants. Because of their religious commitment, Muslim servants did not touch pork, often refused to serve wine, and were unwilling to remove dirty dishes from the table or wash them. Arguing that the caste system among the Hindus multiplied the number of servants, one memsahib asserted in 1878, that "The number of servants required for only two people must strike those not well acquainted with Indian habits and customs as absurd ... A married subaltern requires almost as many servants as married colonel. A certain staff of domestic is usual. ... Here caste asserts its power".[15] To have a cook willing to touch different sorts of meat and to serve wine, Anglo-Indian families often hired Goanese Catholics (descendants of the Portuguese and Indians) or lower caste Hindus.[16] The hiring of numerous servants with varied religious backgrounds was alien to British wives whose parents employed from one to three Christian servants back home. Furthermore, the religious and social customs of both the Hindus and Muslims confused them, and they felt that India was a conglomerate of different cultures without a stable center.[17]

In Britain a housewife assumed that a servant's normal duty began at 7 a.m. or earlier and usually lasted until 10 p.m. or later.[18] In India the situation was different. Each domestic job was specialized and a particular person would perform it, the task perhaps requiring only a few hours. Following the completion of their particular task, servants would rest. Consequently, memsahibs believed that servants were not working hard, and they concluded that Indian servants were lazy. Mary Irvine Wimberley noted in her diary on 14 March 1826 that her servants "sleep half the day".[19]

Because of their evangelical commitment, missionary wives had problems accepting people from different religions. With their monotheistic religious background, memsahibs found it difficult to accept the polytheistic beliefs of the Hindus and found it easier to accept the monotheism of the Muslims. However, memsahibs had to have extended experience in India before they began to distinguish between the Hindus and the Muslims instead of calling all indigenous people 'native'.

During the first half of the century, a number of memsahibs felt rather patronizingly that Hindus were superstitious and that British children left in their care would learn superstitious beliefs from these servants. Julia Thomas Maitland clearly described this fear when she wrote on 9 January 1839, "If my child were to stay long in the country, it would be worthwhile to send for an English nurse, but as it is, I hope to bring her home before it becomes of any consequence and meanwhile I keep her as much as possible with me", so that the child would not learn native languages and "all sorts of mischief with them and grow like Hindus".[20]

To avoid dealing with Indian servants, some memsahibs chose Indian Christian domestics, and many memsahibs especially preferred Christian *ayahs*. [21] But Christian servants also posed problems. Being descendants of the Portuguese settlers and Indians, a substantial number of the Christian servants were Roman Catholics instead of members of the Church of England or Scotland or of Protestant evangelical sects. On 3 November 1809, while travelling through Bombay, Maria Graham described Roman Catholic Portuguese servants as dirty black men who eat pork and wear breeches.[22] Based on the activities of her Roman Catholic Goanese *ayah* and cook, Mrs Guthrie concluded that Christian servants were a most unprincipled set of people, for they were hypocrites who professed any religion to serve a purpose.[23] In 1864, one former memsahib who had lived in India for seven years advised India-bound memsahibs, "As much as possible, secure for your servants a set of unmitigated heathens. Converts are usually arrant humbugs".[24]

It is also possible that many memsahibs held such a discriminatory view toward Indian Christians for fear that the common ground of religion might set the masters and servants on similar footing instead of emphasizing the class and social difference between them. That sentiment seems to motivate the author of *The Englishwoman in India*, who wrote, "I have

resolved never to engage another knowing him to be ‘master’s caste’.”[25] Memsahibs’ reactions to their Indian Christian servants were not unique. In her *Distant Companions: servants and employers in Zambia, 1900-1985*, Karen Tranberg Hansen has shown that British settlers and travellers in Africa at the turn of the present century felt that African Christian servants were less respectful of their white employers.[26]

But the problem was not merely the number of servants to be supervised or their spiritual darkness; it was their physical darkness. Although some memsahibs brought their maids from Britain, the servants they employed had to come primarily from the dark-skinned indigenous population. For many, the direct contact with a dark-skinned person occurred for the first time after their arrival in Calcutta, Bombay, Madras, or Ceylon since very few British women had any direct contact with dark-skinned persons at home. Using examples from *Othello* and *The Tempest*, scholars have illuminated British culture’s long heritage of negative sentiments towards dark-skinned persons. The ultimate negative symbol is the devil – black, hairy, horned, and hooved.[27] Claudia Knapman has further argued that negative attitudes towards dark-skinned persons were not limited to particular social or intellectual classes.[28] In popular British magazines some memsahibs labelled dark-skinned Indians ‘niggers’.[29] Thus, nineteenth-century British women were socialized to attribute a negative connotation to darker skin and found the new experience of employing dark-skinned domestics unsettling. The varied responses of memsahibs towards their domestics reveal the extent and the depth of anti-Indian sentiments held by Anglo-Indian wives.

Memsahibs also confronted the unfamiliar situation of dealing with male domestics. During the nineteenth century in Britain, the proportion of men in domestic service slowly declined as new jobs were created in factories, offices, and schools. Since the wages for male servants were higher than for females, only very rich families employed men in specific roles as footmen and butlers, as most Britons felt that men servants for indoors were a luxury not many people could afford. Furthermore, as Davidoff and Hall argue, middle-class women in Britain found it difficult to deal with adult male servants because they lacked the aura of ‘born lady’ to counteract stereotypes of female inferiority.[30] However, in India, all servants except the *ayahs* were men. The majority of the Indian servants employed by memsahibs were landless laborers from the outlying areas of Bengal, Madras, and Bombay Presidencies attracted to work for the British families by the higher wages they paid. Since domestic jobs were perceived in Britain as women’s work, in the eyes of the memsahibs these Indian male domestics were placed in the domestic sphere that belonged to women. The inability of these indigenous men to extricate themselves from menial household work marked them as inferior to British male servants and placed them on a level with British female servants.

In nineteenth-century Britain, many middle-class families believed that the poor, the 'Great Unwashed', smelled bad.[31] The authors of British household manuals depicted domestics in Britain as criminals who stole and carried diseases to the employers' homes.[32] Memsahibs maintained similar feelings towards their dark-skinned Indian servants. In memsahibs' minds 'dirty' and 'immoral' became synonymous as we see in Emily Short Wonnacott's letter of 18 April 1870 to her mother: "You would never like India I am sure, and the natives are such a strange lot of people, dirty in the extreme and possessed of almost every bad quality". Wonnacott used 'dirty' in relationship to cleanliness. Florence Marryat wrote about the Indian sector of Madras as "Black Town [Madras], where all the smells live".[33] Ascribing offensive smells and filthiness to a nation is a usual way to separate a colonized nation from the colonizer.[34] By referring to Indians as unclean, memsahibs emphasized their 'otherness' or inferiority.

Nineteenth-century household manuals repeatedly warned housewives in Britain that hired domestic help, who came from the lower classes, often took bribes from the tradesmen and falsified the account books. Memsahibs believed that, like their counterparts in Britain, Indian servants also took bribes and cheated their employers. In both Britain and India, these attitudes remained unchanged throughout much of the nineteenth century. Martha Conceles Syms wrote from Madras to her mother in 1806, "If you my dearest mother could but know what wretches these black servants are you would nearly pity one that is plagued with them, they, I nearly believe, think it a merit to cheat you and they will do it, in spite of every precaution".[35] In her diary entry of 14 March 1826, Mary Irvine Wimberley wrote that her servants "cheat, lie and steal". The idea of Indian servants' taking *dostoor*, or bribes, in their dealings with tradesmen on behalf of their mistresses also surfaced in the accounts of the memsahibs. One memsahib wrote in 1873, "On every article purchased in their several departments your servants have a right to levy a percentage for their own advantage. We hear something of such practices in England, but India is the country to see them in perfection".[36]

During the nineteenth century most memsahibs in India could barely speak or understand Hindi or any Indian language so they often miscommunicated with and misunderstood their servants. The linguistic barriers between British women and Indian servants contributed to the intolerance by memsahibs of the habits of the indigenous domestics and their perceived image of servants as lacking in intelligence. Emma Walter wrote in her journal on 28 November 1839 that she found her servants very attentive but slow and sometimes extremely dull in comprehension. Prescriptive literature written by memsahibs also painted Indian servants in similar derogatory terms.[37] In an advice manual of 1864, one memsahib claimed "Where it is possible to cheat, they [Indian servants] will generally do so. A friend of mine firmly believes a native never speaks the truth except

by accident ... one of the most disagreeable feelings in India is that of constant suspicion indeed of the native characters".[38] Another former memsahib aired similarly unfavorable remarks about Indian servants: "They may tell you stories, 'tis their nature to, and is not the heinous crime in their eyes that it is in yours".[39]

In nineteenth-century Britain, women were advised to regard the annoying acts of servants as they would those of children.[40] British women could justify enforcing their personal rule over the servants through the disciplinary practices utilized by parents with children. In Victorian Britain they ranged from the giving or withholding of food to praise or verbal abuse. In India, British families did not provide food for their servants, so memsahibs could not withhold food as punishment. Although the beating of servants became illegal in Britain in 1860, [41] most scholars agree that families generally did not use physical violence against their domestics in Britain during the nineteenth century.[42] In sharp contrast the beating of servants in India was mentioned and commented upon frequently. In her diary for 3 June 1827 Mary Wimberley noted the flogging her carriage-driver received. In January 1859, Minnie Wood wrote to her mother from Rawalpindi that she could not find a decent *ayah* because her last *ayah* left and went around telling people that Minnie had flogged her.[43] Whether Minnie was guilty or not, the making of such a charge and the presumed hope that it would sound plausible suggest that flogging may not have been an uncommon practice among memsahibs. Flora Annie Steel, novelist and author of *The Complete Indian Housekeeper and Cook*, whipped one of her servants for mistreating her mule.[44] Not all memsahibs used physical violence against their Indian servants, but some tacitly approved these acts by others, either family members or friends. In 1882, one memsahib wrote to her husband, "I told Dr. and Mrs. Dallas about the man disappearing just when he had to go with you because you had been angry with him in the morning, but of course I did not say you had struck him".[45]

Some memsahibs commented negatively upon the apparently prevalent practice of beating servants. One former memsahib, advising her readers against using physical force, reasoned in a manual:

I am often told ... that the better a native is treated the more ungrateful he is; but I can not divest myself of the idea that he is - if a very bad specimen of the 'man and brother' - at all events, a fellow creature, and I really can not persuade myself or others that it does well to treat him like a brute.[46]

In 1882, another former memsahib also expressed the same sentiment when she wrote: "If they are treated like dogs, cuffed here and kicked there, very naturally they will render you grudging service, will lie, cheat, steal, and circumvent, and think it fair play".[47] The argument against corporal punishment shows both that some memsahibs disapproved of it and that it

occurred often enough to be a subject that needed to be addressed in advice manuals and articles.

Writing about the domestic sphere gave women entry to the public sphere. Assuming the roles of experts in dealing with their servants whom they saw as superstitious, unintelligent, dirty, lazy, and dishonest, memsahibs created an identity for themselves as specialists on household management in India. Since memsahibs had the most contact with their indigenous servants, they generalised this image for the entire Indian population. By positioning the Indians negatively in relation to the British, they contributed to the imperial discourse.[48]

Although works of memsahibs like *The Letters of Eliza Fay* had been available to the public since 1817, from the late 1860s there is an increase in the number of publications by memsahibs and to some extent in the hostility with which they described Indians. The Indian rebellion of 1857 directly and indirectly accounts for this change. During the rebellion British men, women, and children were massacred as were Indians. Obviously, outrage at the massacre of the British provoked a change of attitude in writers and created a market for personal narratives of domestic 'heroism' in the Empire. Once the rebels were crushed, the administration of India was transferred from the East India Company to the Crown, and more British wives came to India with their husbands and wrote about their experiences. By publishing their private writings for the female reading public, they identified themselves, as one ex-memsahib wrote, as part of the "Great Empire".[49]

But 1857 was a watershed year not only for administrative changes. This rebellion further strained relationships between British women and Indian domestics. In their letters to their family members, especially to their mothers, many memsahibs often indicated that people back home would not like India because of the indigenous servants. On 1 March 1857, Minnie Wood wrote to her mother, "You, I am sure, would never stand them [servants]".[50] Emily Short Wonnacott expressed similar sentiments, as noted earlier, when on 18 April 1870, she wrote to her mother, "You would never like India". What these women implied was that by maintaining a domestic life in a hostile environment, they, like their husbands, participated in Britain's imperial venture.

In their advice manuals memsahibs reiterated the physical, moral, sexual, and intellectual inferiority of the Indian servant, and from the 1850s onward, wider political and scientific discourse on 'race' fuelled the feelings of British supremacy and the legitimacy of imperialism. Speaking to his parliamentary colleagues in 1849, Disraeli claimed that "Race implies difference and difference implies superiority, and superiority leads to predominance".[51] By the end of the 1850s, discussions over 'scientific' grounds of racism and the Indian rebellion of 1857, an event memsahibs described as the Sepoy Mutiny, made racist comments increasingly

acceptable.[52] Events in the public sphere colored perceptions in the domestic sphere.

Memsahibs became increasingly hostile in their criticism of their servants. Emily Short Wonnacott wrote to her mother from Poona on 15 August 1869:

No one must expect to find it an easy matter to manage a number of native servants, who will have different castes, not one of whom have anything in common with their employers; whose ideas of honesty, cleanliness and truthfulness are not merely vague, but do not exist. Their delinquencies must be taken philosophically.

Emily Short Wonnacott wrote again to her mother on 27 July 1870, about her *ayah* [nurse]: “The native women are as a rule very immoral, but then religion encourages them in that, for I have read that the Hindoo religion is nothing else but obscenity from first to last”. During the post-Mutiny period Hindus were routinely characterized as ‘heathens’. One memsahib asserted, “It is a painful thing to any Christian heart to be surrounded in one’s very home by heathens and Mahometans, especially when one is unable to speak to them of the faith that makes us to differ”.[53]

When the sepoys, who were perceived as subservient, mutinied in 1857, the British were shocked for many reasons. The Sepoys’ slaughter of British women and children in Cawnpore horrified the British community, but what astounded them the most was that the Sepoys did not act like the submissive, docile, and unreliable creatures that many Anglo-Indians had perceived them to be.[54] The British could not accept that such inferior people could attack British men’s possessions – their women or their empire.[55] Memsahibs and most of the British community viewed the Indian rebellion as mutiny and as acts of Indian savages. Their mistrust of their domestics increased, and they became more negative in their general opinion of Indian servants. Brantlinger observes that Victorian accounts of the Mutiny show an absolute polarization of good and evil, innocence and guilt, justice and injustice, moral restraint and sexual depravity, civilization and barbarism.[56] Letters and various other accounts of memsahibs regarding their servants reflected to some degree the behavioral extremities described by Brantlinger. After the rebellion of Indian troops in Jhelum, Minnie Wood wrote to her mother that the “Mahomedans” were the cause of all their miseries in India, and their servants were mostly Muslims. She continued, “I who have been so short a time here, now begin to see the creatures one has to deal with. I think they are a nasty, stinking, dirty race and nothing more can be said of them”.[57]

The Indian rebellion also popularized the term ‘niggers’.[58] Social Darwinism, used as a taxonomy of the human race, was applied to the situations in India where the indigenous people were often cast as ‘nigs’ or ‘niggers’. The atmosphere of racial prejudice was strong enough to prompt E.J., a former memsahib, to advise her readers, “Treat your servants as

fellow creatures, not as ‘nigs’ – a term too often applied, and very incorrectly to the Indian native; look after them, show that, though of a different race and colour, you do not for that senselessly despise them, but have sympathy with them for them”.[59] When the Governor of Madras invited Indians to a reception, Florence Marryat, author of *Gup*, wrote, “The gentleman who by way of propitiating the natives, issued invitations to a lot of niggers (I know they are not really ‘nigger’ but I liked to call them so) to attend”.[60]

Social Darwinism also promoted a hierarchical racial order which emphasized Anglo-Saxon racial superiority. This hierarchical racial structure was unknowingly or knowingly defended by a British woman when she wrote in *The Young Ladies Journal* of 1861:

As a general rule, the humblest of Europeans in India employ natives still humbler to do their bidding ... They [the servants] are a great nuisance at first. He [British master] does not know one from the other, so much alike do they look. But as a shepherd makes the individual acquaintance of his flock by degrees, so does the English master gradually recognize the native in his pay.[51]

In the 1860s and 1870s, memsahibs for the first time referred to the Indians as ‘monkeys’ reflecting the influence of Social Darwinism into their discourse. Mrs Guthrie described her *ayah* as “very small, and very black, and as she sat in her low chair, or on the ground, with her skinny arms round the fair child, she looked exactly like a monkey wrapped up in white muslin”.[62] Another memsahib wrote that a great majority of Indian merchants “have arms, legs, and body bare, and squat upon their shopboards or their doorsteps in attitudes strongly reminding one of the monkey tribes”.[63] By presenting the Indians as subhuman, memsahibs not only justified their claims to rule but also echoed the basic tenets of Social Darwinism.[64]

The hierarchical class system was the dominant influence on the relationship between mistress and domestics in India as it was in Britain. However, religion, race, and gender issues all added special complications to the power structure in India. In Britain, memsahibs had held domestics in low esteem, but this perception of servants was in general further lowered in India because of the skin color of the indigenous population. Religious, social, cultural, and linguistic differences between the memsahibs and their Indian domestics further contributed to the memsahibs’ highly negative attitude towards their indigenous servants. Because the servants were of other religions, memsahibs described them as morally inferior. Furthermore, as male domestics were performing women’s jobs, memsahibs perceived them as effeminate. These were, then, the images of the Indian domestics memsahibs constructed for their female relatives and readers even before 1857. Consequently, the Indian Mutiny and Social Darwinism further heightened memsahibs’ beliefs that the Indians were not just morally

inferior, but that they were subhuman savages. In their private letters and published writings memsahibs projected that image to their readers.

During the last three decades of the nineteenth century, the number of domestics employed by the memsahibs declined. With the decrease in the number of servants should have come less diversity in the composition of the indigenous domestics, which in turn should have lowered the number of different sources of irritation for memsahibs in their dealings with the domestics. Then one might expect to find less hostile representation of the Indian domestics in memsahibs' private and public writings during the later years. But that did not happen. Rather, the intensity of anti-Indian feelings remained strong, even if it did not increase. How did the memsahibs' feelings of dislike persist despite their having less contact with the domestics during the later years? The body of literature with derogatory comments about Indian domestics written by earlier generations of memsahibs was available to the women of these later years. Some of these India-bound women of later generations were socialized to expect the worst of Indian servants. Amalgamating these expectations with their own experiences, these memsahibs perpetuated the venomous cycle of anti-Indian feelings through their various writings.

Notes

- [1] In the preliminary stage of writing, discussions with Penny Kanner, Frances Richardson Keller, and Philippa Levine were helpful. I am particularly grateful for the advice and suggestions made by Antoinette Burton and Barbara Ramusack. I also thank Florence Snyder for reading several versions of this paper.
- [2] P. Brantlinger (1990) *Rule of Darkness: British literature and imperialism: 1830-1914* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press).
- [3] C. White (1970) *Women's Magazine, 1693-1968*, p. 44 (London: Michael Joseph); For more information on the EDM, see S. Freeman (1977) *Isabella and Sam: the story of Mrs Beeton* (New York: Conrad, McCann & Groghegan); H. M. Hyde (1951) *Mr. and Mrs. Beeton* (London: George Harrap); N. Spain (1956) *The Beeton Story* (London: Ward)
- [4] C. C. Watkins (1982) Edward William Cox and the ride of class journalism, *Victorian Periodicals Review*, 15, p. 91.
- [5] N. Miller (1980) Women's autobiography in France: for a dialectics of identification, in S. McConnell-Ginet (Ed.) *Women and Language in Literature and Society*, p. 266 (New York: Praeger); S. Mills (1991) *Discourses of Difference: an analysis of women's travel writings and colonialism*, p. 41 (London: Routledge).
- [6] See N. Chaudhuri (1988) Memsahibs and motherhood in nineteenth century colonial India, *Victorian Studies*, 31, pp. 517-532.
- [7] J. H. Walsh (1857) *A Manual of Domestic Economy Suited to Families Spending from £100 to £1000 a Year*, p. 219 (London: Routledge); Eliza

- Warren (1864) *How I Managed My House on Two Hundred Pounds*, p. 55 (London: Houlston & Wright); Eliza Warren (1866) *Comfort for Small Income*, pp. 9-13 (London: The Ladies Treasury); P. Branca (1975) *Silent Sisterhood: middle class women in the Victorian home*, p. 54 (London: Croom Helm).
- [8] F. G. Hutchins (1967) *The Illusion of Permanence: British imperialism in India*, pp. 101-118 (Princeton: Princeton University Press).
- [9] S. Kelly (Ed.) (1854) *The Life of Mrs. Sherwood*, p. 295 (London: Darton).
- [10] Indian Journal of Emma Walter (1830-1850), entry of 28 November 1839, MSS. Eur. B265/1, Oriental and India Office Collections (henceforth cited as OIOC), London. Since all the journal entries of Emma Walter are taken from this folio, further citations of this journal will only include the dates of the journal entry in the text.
- [11] E. C. P. Hull (1871) *The European in India* (London), pp. 116-118.
- [12] A.U. (1873) *Overland, Inland and Upland: a lady's notes of personal observation and adventure*, p. 66 (London: Seeley, Jackson & Halliday); M. H. Mitchell (1876) *In India: sketches of Indian life and travel from letters and journals*, p. 39 (London: T. Nelson).
- [13] A. King (1976) *Colonial Urban Development: culture, social power and environment*, p. 218 (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul); M. MacMillan (1988) *Women of the Raj*, p. 78 (London: Thames & Hudson).
- [14] 'Life in Bombay' (1896), *Queen*, 15 February.
- [15] E. J. (1878) Life in India, *Queen*, 2 February.
- [16] Cf. Mrs Guthrie (1877) *My Year in an Indian Fort*, Vol. 1, p. 247 (London: Hurst & Blackett).
- [17] J. Bristow (1991) *Empire Boys: adventures in a man's world*, p. 202 (London: Harper Collins).
- [18] Anonymous (1866) *Home Difficulties or Whose Fault Is It?: a few words on the servant question*, p. 15 (London: Griffith & Farrar); M. Ebery & B. Preston (1876) *Domestic Service in Late Victorian and Edwardian Britain, 1871-1914*, p. 89 (Reading, England: University of Reading, Reading Geographical Papers).
- [19] Diary of Mary Irvine Wimberley, Photo/Eur/72/1, OIOC. Since all of Mary Irvine Wimberley's diary entries are taken from the above mentioned folio, further citations of Wimberley's diary will only include dates in the text. See also A.U. (1873) *Overland, Inland and Upland*, pp. 66-67.
- [20] Mrs J. T. Maitland (1843) *Letters from Madras, during the years, 1836-1839*, p. 236 (London: John Murray).
- [21] See Emily Short Wonnacott to her mother, 5 August 1869, Wonnacott Collection, MSS Eur C376/2, OIOC. Since all of Emily Short Wonnacott's letters were taken from this folio, further citations of her letters will only include the dates in the text; G.E.H.M. (1878) Indian Servants, *Queen*, 20 April.
- [22] M. Graham (1814) *Letters on India with Etchings and a Map*, p. 30 (London: Longman)
- [23] Mrs Guthrie, *My Years in an Indian Fort*, pp. 252-254.

- [24] Lady Resident (1864) *The Englishwoman in India* (London), pp. 54-55.
- [25] *Ibid.*, pp. 54-55.
- [26] K. T. Hansen (1989) *Distant Companions: servants and employers in Zambia, 1900-1985*, p. 38 (Ithaca: Cornell University Press).
- [27] See P. Mason (1962) *Prospero's Magic: some thoughts on class and race* (London: Oxford University Press); J. Walvin (1973) *Black and White: the Negro and English society, 1555-1945* (London: Allen Lane Penguin); C. Knapman (1986) *White Women in Fiji: 1835-1930: the ruin of empire?* (Sydney: Allen & Unwin); M. Ferguson (1992) *Subject to Others: British women writers and colonial slavery, 1670-1834* (London: Routledge). I thank Antoinette Burton for bringing Ferguson's book to my attention.
- [28] Knapman, *White Women in Fiji*, p. 116.
- [29] F. Marryat or Mrs Ross Church (1867) Gup, *Temple Bar: London magazine for town and country readers*, 19, March, pp. 178, 180; E. J. (1878) Indian servants, *Queen*, 2 February.
- [30] L. Davidoff & C. Hall (1987) *Family Fortunes: men and women of the English middle class*, p. 393 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press); L. Davidoff & R. Hawthorn (1976) *A Day in the Life of a Victorian Domestic Servant*, p. 75 (London: George Allen & Unwin).
- [31] L. Davidoff (1976) The rationalization of housework, in D. Barker & S. Allen (Eds) *Dependence and Exploitation in Work and Marriage*, p. 129 (London: Longman)
- [32] Anonymous (1859) *Domestic Servants, As They Are and As They Ought To Be: a few friendly hints to employers*, p. 14 (Brighton: Simpson); Mrs Maxwell (1859) *The Lady's Guide to Epistolary Correspondence*, pp. 32-34 (Glasgow: W. R. M'Phun). Also see B. Frankel (1976) Genteel family, high Victorian conceptions of domesticity and good behavior, unpublished PhD dissertation, University of Wisconsin, pp. 232-262.
- [33] Marryat, Gup, p. 180; AU, pp. 51, 55.
- [34] M. Douglas (1966) *Purity and Danger: an analysis of concepts of pollution and taboo*, p. 2 (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul); Sara Mills, *Discourses of Differences*, p. 90.
- [35] Martha Conceles Syms to her parents, 8 April 1806, Ms. Eng. misc. b.30. Bodleian Library.
- [36] A. U., *Overland, Inland and Upland*, p. 65.
- [37] For example, see G.E.H.M. (1878) Indian servants, *Queen*, 20 April.
- [38] *The Englishwoman in India*, pp. 58-61.
- [39] E.J. (1878) Indian servants, *Queen*, 2 February.
- [40] See Mrs Motherly (1859) *The Servants' Behavior Book: or hints or manners or dress*, p. 25 (London: Bell & Daldy).
- [41] Davidoff & Hawthorn, *A Day in the Life of a Victorian Domestic Servant*, p. 84.

- [42] See J. A. Banks (1954) *Prosperity and Parenthood* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul); T. M. McBride (1976) *The Domestic Revolution: the modernization of household service in England and France, 1820-1920* (New York: Homes & Meier); Ebery & Preston, *Domestic Service in Late Victorian and Edwardian Britain*.
- [43] Minnie Wood's letters are in the series MSS. Eur. B210/A and B210/B. This letter is from MSS. Eur. B210/B. Some of her letters have been published in Jana Vansittart (Ed.) (1874) *From Minnie with Love: the letters of a Victorian lady, 1849-1861* (London: P. Davis). This letter is cited on pp. 155-157.
- [44] V. Powell (1981) *Flora Annie Steel: novelist of India*, p. 39 (London: Heinemann).
- [45] Florence Marshman Bailey to her husband Frederick Bailey, 13 January 1882, MSS Eur F157/37, OIOC.
- [46] *The Englishwoman in India*, pp. 57-58.
- [47] Anglo-Indian (1882) *Indian Outfits and Establishments* (London), p. 46.
- [48] Mills, pp. 87-92.
- [49] 'Anglo-Indian Life', *Queen* (1901), 5 January.
- [50] Minnie Wood to her mother, MSS Eur B210/A.
- [51] Quoted in J. Walvin (1984) *Passage to Britain*, p. 40 (Harmondsworth: Penguin).
- [52] C. Hall (1992) *White, Male and Middle Class: explorations in feminism and history*, p. 275 (Cambridge: Polity Press).
- [53] AU., *Overland, Inland and Upland*, p. 78.
- [54] The author of *A Lady's Diary of the Siege of Lucknow* (London: John Murray, 1858) often described Indian sepoy to be unreliable.
- [55] J. M. Mickelson (1978) British women in India, 1757-1857, unpublished PhD dissertation, University of Michigan, p. 358.
- [56] Brantlinger, *Rule of Darkness*, p. 200.
- [57] Minnie Wood to her mother, 22 July 1857, B210/A.
- [58] Hall, *White, Male and Middle Class*, p. 275.
- [59] *Queen*, (1878) 2 February.
- [60] Marryat, Gup, p. 180; see also p. 178.
- [61] 'Indian servants' (1861) *The Young Ladies Journal*, 21 December.
- [62] Mrs Guthrie, *My Year in an Indian Fort*, p. 244.
- [63] AU., *Overland, Inland and Upland*, p. 44.
- [64] Some memsahibs like Mrs Steel knew about Social Darwinism. For more information on this see, N. L. Paxton (1992) English women's auto biography under the Raj, in S. Smith & J. Watson (Eds) *De/colonizing the Subject: the politics of gender in women's autobiography*, p. 402 (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press).