

ENGLAND RE-ORIENTED

What does the love between British imperialists and their Asian male partners reveal about orientalism's social origins? To answer this question, Humberto Garcia focuses on westward-bound Central and South Asian travel writers who have long been forgotten or dismissed by scholars. This bias has obscured how Joseph Emin, Sake Dean Mahomet, Shaykh I'tesamuddin, Abu Talib Khan, Abul Hassan Khan, Yusuf Khan Kambalposh, and Lutfullah Khan found in their conviviality with Englishwomen and men a strategy for inhabiting a critical agency that appropriated various media to make Europe commensurate with Asia. Drama, dance, masquerades, visual art, museum exhibits, music, postal letters, and newsprint inspired these genteel men to recalibrate Persianate ways of behaving and knowing. Their cosmopolitanisms offer a unique window on an enchanted third space between empires in which Europe was peripheral to Islamic Indo-Eurasia. Encrypted in their mediated homosocial intimacies is a queer history of orientalist mimic men under the spell of a powerful Persian manhood.

HUMBERTO GARCIA is Associate Professor and Vincent Hillyer Chair of Literature at the University of California, Merced. He is the author of *Islam and the English Enlightenment, 1670–1840* (2012).

Critical Perspectives on Empire

Editors

Professor Catherine Hall
University College London

Professor Mrinalini Sinha
University of Michigan

Professor Kathleen Wilson
State University of New York, Stony Brook

Critical Perspectives on Empire is a major series of ambitious, cross-disciplinary works in the emerging field of critical imperial studies. Books in the series explore the connections, exchanges and mediations at the heart of national and global histories, the contributions of local as well as metropolitan knowledge, and the flows of people, ideas and identities facilitated by colonial contact. To that end, the series not only offers a space for outstanding scholars working at the intersection of several disciplines to bring to wider attention the impact of their work; it also takes a leading role in reconfiguring contemporary historical and critical knowledge, of the past and of ourselves.

A full list of titles published in the series can be found at:
www.cambridge.org/cpempire

ENGLAND RE-ORIENTED

How Central and South Asian Travelers Imagined
the West, 1750–1857

HUMBERTO GARCIA

University of California, Merced



CAMBRIDGE
UNIVERSITY PRESS

Cambridge University Press & Assessment
 978-1-108-79725-2 — England Re-Oriented
 Humberto Garcia
 Frontmatter
[More Information](#)



CAMBRIDGE
UNIVERSITY PRESS

Shaftesbury Road, Cambridge CB2 8EA, United Kingdom

One Liberty Plaza, 20th Floor, New York, NY 10006, USA

477 Williamstown Road, Port Melbourne, VIC 3207, Australia

314–321, 3rd Floor, Plot 3, Splendor Forum, Jasola District Centre, New Delhi – 110025, India

103 Penang Road, #05–06/07, Visioncrest Commercial, Singapore 238467

Cambridge University Press is part of Cambridge University Press & Assessment,
 a department of the University of Cambridge.

We share the University's mission to contribute to society through the pursuit of
 education, learning and research at the highest international levels of excellence.

www.cambridge.org

Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9781108797252

DOI: 10.1017/9781108862486

© Humberto Garcia 2020

This publication is in copyright. Subject to statutory exception and to the provisions
 of relevant collective licensing agreements, no reproduction of any part may take
 place without the written permission of Cambridge University Press & Assessment.

First published 2020

First paperback edition 2022

A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication data

Names: Garcia, Humberto, 1978- author. | Cambridge University Press, issuing body.

Title: England re-oriented : how Central and South Asian travelers imagined the West, 1750-1857 /
 Humberto Garcia, University of California, Merced.

Description: First edition. | New York : Cambridge University Press, 2020. |

Series: Critical perspectives on empire | Includes bibliographical references and index.

Identifiers: LCCN 2020012551 | ISBN 9781108495646 (Hardcover) |

ISBN 9781108797252 (Paperback) | ISBN 9781108862486 (ePub)

Subjects: LCSH: Orientalism—Great Britain—History. | Masculinity—Great Britain—History. |

Sex role—Great Britain—History. | Travelers' writings—History and criticism. |

Travel writers—Asia, Central. | Travel writers—South Asia. | Asians—Great Britain. |

Great Britain—Description and travel.

Classification: LCC DS61.85 .G37 2020 | DDC 942.07/3—dc23

LC record available at <https://lcn.loc.gov/2020012551>

ISBN 978-1-108-49564-6 Hardback

ISBN 978-1-108-79725-2 Paperback

Cambridge University Press & Assessment has no responsibility for the persistence
 or accuracy of URLs for external or third-party internet websites referred to in this
 publication and does not guarantee that any content on such websites is, or will
 remain, accurate or appropriate.

Cambridge University Press & Assessment
978-1-108-79725-2 — England Re-Oriented
Humberto Garcia
Frontmatter
[More Information](#)

To my wife, Shimy

Love is a stranger with a strange language,
like an Arab in Persia. I have brought a story;
it is strange, like the one who tells it.

Jalal al-Din Rumi

CONTENTS

<i>List of Figures</i>	viii
<i>Acknowledgments</i>	ix
<i>Note on Transliteration</i>	xi
Introduction: Why Re-Orient?	1
1 The British Raj’s Mimic Men: Historicizing Genteel Masculinities across Empires	14
2 A Bluestocking Romance: Contesting British Military Masculinity in Joseph Emin’s Letters and Memoir	38
3 The Theater of Imperial Sovereignty: Entertaining Diplomatic Failure in Mirza Shaykh I’tesamuddin’s London Travels	78
4 Loving Strangers in Ireland: Indo-Celtic Masculinities in the Travels of Dean Mahomet and Mirza Abu Talib Khan	123
5 Heavenly Bodies in Motion: Performing Sexual Revolution in Mirza Abu Talib Khan’s Theatrical Metropolis	170
6 Dreaming with Fairyland: Virtual Magic in Yusuf Khan Kambalposh’s Travels to Victorian London	212
7 The Making of a Mohamedan Gentleman: Lutfullah Khan, the Indian Mutiny, and Victorian Newsprint	254
Epilogue: Mirza Abul Hassan Khan, James Morier, and the Queering of <i>Hajji Baba</i>	294
<i>Appendix A: Mirza Abu Talib Khan’s “Treatise on Ethics”</i>	316
<i>Appendix B: Excerpts from Mirza Abu Talib Khan’s Diwan-i Talib</i>	322
<i>Appendix C: Letter by Moonshee Lutfullah</i>	329
<i>Select Bibliography</i>	332
<i>Index</i>	337

FIGURES

- 2.1 Portrait of Joseph Emin by Arthur Pond. 48
- 2.2 Frontispiece image of Elizabeth Montagu as Anne Boleyn. 65
- 3.1 *Shah 'Alam conveying the grant of the Diwani to Lord Clive, August 1765*, by Benjamin West. 82
- 3.2 *Robert Clive and Mir Jafar after the Battle of Plassey, 1757*, by Francis Hayman. 103
- 4.1 "Dean Mahomet, an East Indian," *The Travels*. Engraved by J. Finley. 131
- 4.2 "Sake Dean Mahomed. Shampooing Surgeon." Brighton, by Thomas Mann Baynes. 133
- 4.3 *Portrait of Mirza Abu Talib Khan* (1801?), by unidentified engraver after a painting by James Northcote, R.A. 154
- 4.4 Abu Talib's diagram of European theaters. 165
- 5.1 "Aboo Talib Khan," engraved by William Ridley after Samuel Drummond. 176
- 5.2 "Georgiana Duchess of Devonshire," engraver unknown. 177
- 5.3 "A Dancing Woman, of Lueknow, Exhibiting Before an European Family," by Charles D'Oyly. 179
- 5.4 "The Proscenium of the English Opera House . . . with Walker's Exhibition of the *Eidouranian*," by Edward Francis Burney. 207
- 6.1 *Queen Victoria's Procession to the Guildhall, 9 November 1837*, by James Henry Nixon. 224
- 6.2 "Bird's Eye View from the Stair-case & the Upper Part of the Pavilion, in the Colosseum, Regent's Park." *Graphic Illustrations of the Colosseum, Regent's Park*. 236
- 6.3 "South Side of the Grounds Surrounding the Colosseum." *Graphic Illustrations of the Colosseum, Regent's Park*. 237
- 6.4 "Euseph Khan, Soobadar, A Pathan, Native of Hydrabad, Dekhun," by Colesworthy Grant. 250
- 7.1 "Our Moonshee," by George Francklin Atkinson. 272
- 8.1 Mirza Abdul Hassan Khan Ilci ("His Excellency the Persian Ambassador"), by Richard Dighton. 303
- 8.2 "Monstrosities of 1819," by George Cruikshank. 305

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Writing this book has been a long disorienting journey. In 2011, I aspired to reframe the social history of British imperialism between 1750 and 1857 from the perspective of westward-bound Central and South Asian travel writers who have received scant attention in eighteenth-century studies. My hope was that such a provincializing approach would yield a prehistory of modern occidentalism as a counterweight to the orientalism that was in formation circa 1800, as argued by the late Edward Said. Little did I then foresee that these travelers' marginalized writings had the potential to reposition Britain's imperial history as marginal to the Persian-speaking world in greater Indo-Eurasia, and that the metropolitan encounter with the so-called Orient in this period was the impetus for the re-gendering and re-sexing of an English and Irish national body receptive to Persian, Arabian, and Indic influences. Only after I reoriented myself toward Persian and South Asian studies, beyond my disciplinary home in British eighteenth-century and Romantic literature and culture, did I discover that there was no occidentalism to write about. And what I thought was a dominating orientalist discourse turned out to be a by-product of an insecure queer orientation implicit in the strong friendships between British male imperialists and the Asian male partners who wielded masculine authority over them. My thesis crystallized in June 2019 as I, like my featured travelers, visited London for the first time and was awestruck by its touristic, theatrical, and artistic wonders. Against the backdrop of mounting tensions between the United States, United Kingdom, and Islamic Republic of Iran during that summer and against the "Londonistan" decried by Islamophobes, the hospitable English cosmopolis described in this book took form.

This broad historical perspective is brought to bear on the conceptual vocabulary that I deploy loosely and interchangeably. In this book, "English," "British," "Irish," "Indian," "Armenian," "Hindustani," "Iranian," "Persian," "European," and "Asian" are fungible referents – kept in scare quotes – for imagined communities in transit rather than closed containers for a definable nation, ethnicity, or geography that did not yet exist. My occasional preference for non-standard English spellings of Persian and Arabic terms is faithful to the semantic fluidity of that time. These choices reflect the twofold intellectual challenge involved in writing this anomalous book: first, how to connect histories of empire and gender by working across siloed disciplines in the humanities that still operate under the shadow of the nation-state paradigm, and, second,

how to conceptualize these connections without possessing proficiency in Persian, Arabic, and Urdu. Even as seasoned scholars warned me about the perils of dabbling in other disciplines as a non-specialist and even in moments of self-doubt, I persevered in completing this book under the conviction that specialists in these languages would never do so. These academic and linguistic hurdles were great indeed, but my gratitude for the people who helped me to overcome these hurdles is greater.

I thank Kathleen Wilson, Mrinalini Sinha, and Catherine Hall, the editors who found a home for this book in their interdisciplinary Cambridge series. The press's executive publisher, Michael Watson, was also helpful in overseeing the book's publication. The generosity of my colleagues at the University of California, Merced is commendable. Susan D. Amussen, Jayson Beaster-Jones, and Katherine Steele Brokaw were unwavering in their support from the moment I first arrived at this new institution in 2015, especially when I temporarily lost my bearings while writing the book. Sholeh A. Quinn was patient in answering my persistent questions about Persian terms and in directing me to crucial resources. I am forever indebted to her. Library staff at my home institution also proved indispensable in my archival research, as were staff at the Huntington and British Libraries. Equally important was the support of former Vanderbilt University colleagues, especially Jonathan Lamb, Bridget Orr, and Jay Clayton. They commented on chapter drafts in addition to providing wholesome advice. I also thank Daniel O'Quinn, Robert Markley, Michael H. Fisher, Mana Kia, Bernadette Andrea, Misty G. Anderson, Nile Green, Donna Landry, and Maryam Ala Amjadi for their guidance. Waqar A. Khan, the founder of the Bangladesh Forum for Heritage Studies, was extremely generous in sharing his unpublished essay on the Swinton family. I am grateful to the press readers who helped turn the manuscript into a readable monograph. And I could not have written it without Ehsan Siahpoush and Amin Azad Sadr. They translated into English the Persian texts cited herein and those in Appendices A and B, which have been reproduced with the kind permission of the University of California. Though I consider all of these folks as my virtual travel companions, any errors in translation and conception are my own.

Funding for completing this book was generously provided by the University of California, Merced, its Center for the Humanities (in the form of a subvention grant), and a ten-month fellowship from the National Endowment for the Humanities in 2015–2016. Material in Chapter 5 was republished with the kind permission of Duke University Press (© 2004) and appeared in an earlier version as "A Stranger's Love for Ireland: Indo-Irish Xenophilia in *The Travels of Mirza Abu Taleb Khan* (1810, 1814)," originally published in *Common Knowledge* 23, no. 2 (2017): 232–53. Some sections in Chapter 2 appeared as "Re-Orienting the Bluestockings: Chivalric Romance, Manliness, and Empire in Joseph Emin's Letters" in *Huntington Library Quarterly* 81, no. 2 (2018): 227–55.

Finally, I thank my parents and my wife, Shimy, for their emotional support.

NOTE ON transliteration

For Persian, Arabic, and Urdu words, I have followed the transliteration system of the *International Journal of Middle East Studies* with few exceptions. To make the book accessible to non-specialists, diacritic marks have been preserved in-text only for *ʿayn* and *hamza*, marked as a single opening quotation mark and a single closing quotation mark, respectively. To facilitate research, diacritic marks are fully transliterated for the applicable names and titles listed in Appendices A and B. For historical accuracy, non-technical terms in Persian, Arabic, and Urdu are spelled in English according to eighteenth- and nineteenth-century British usages.