

**MUGHALS AND MERCENARIES: GLOBALIZATION AS
DELIBERATIVE RHETORICS OF RISK AND PRECARIETY IN THE
ENGLISH EAST INDIA COMPANY**

by

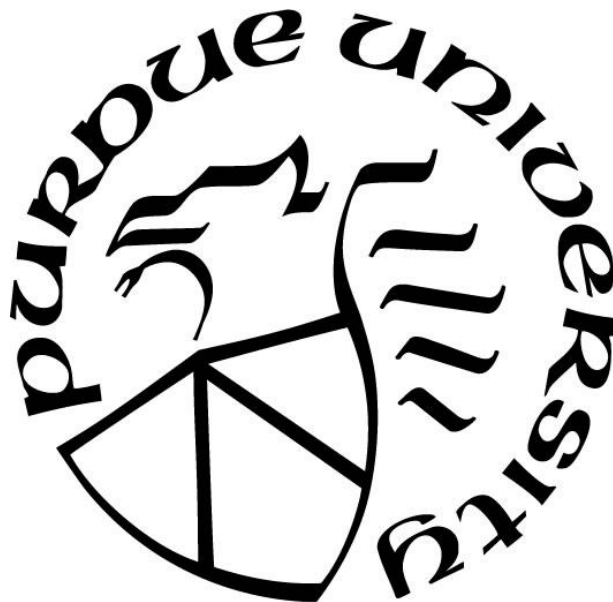
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Dedicated to my family:

To Varsha Sirohi. Thank you for making India my home, mama.

To Rajendra Singh Sirohi. Thank you for making America my home too, papa.

To my grandparents, Mahavir Singh Chaudhary & Nirmala Devi, Padam Singh Sirohi & Shastri Sirohi. Thank you for sharing your own personal stories about living under the British Raj in its final years. You showed me that history is never as far away from us as we think.

Dedicated also to my great-grandfather, Subedar Major, Honourable Captain Shri Vijay Singh Sirohi, of the 8th Cavalry of the British Indian Army. Awardee of the Order of British India in 1935. Dedicated also to my great-great grandfather, Lakhpatt Singh Sirohi, and to his uncles, brothers, sons, and nephews who also served in the English East India Company Sepoy Army. Your names are written in half, or entirely lost, in the archives of the British Library. Here, in full, they are recorded forever for posterity in acknowledgment of your bravery and service in two World Wars. Never again will it be hard to find you.

To the mothers of my grandmothers, and theirs before them:

Thank you for the lives you built.

*As a woman who can now stand on her own two feet,
I hope I am your wildest hopes and dreams come true.*

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ABSTRACT

Rhetorics of globalization are best understood through the concept of risk. This dissertation traces the history of contemporary globalization back to the encounters of the English East India Company (EIC) from the seventeenth through eighteenth centuries with foreign trading cultures through primary journals, records, and guidebooks. I also contrast the EIC approach with the *sulh-i-kull* approach of the Mughal Empire. I conclude that the EIC cultivated risk to override ethical considerations of the Other, invent the private sphere, and lay the bedrock of contemporary capitalism.

INTRODUCTION

A “Rebranded” Rhetoric of Globalization

The past few decades have brought enormous changes to the global world in technology, political transformation, and culture. While globalized commerce has had its benefits, it has also been a driver for human rights crises, climate change, human rights crises, and the loss of democratic structures. Many of these developments occur outside the public eye, beyond oversight, and shrouded in opaque economic terms. The International Monetary Fund, for example, has been forcing small democratic nations such as Madagascar into taking predatory loans, which forced them to pass austerity measures. In turn, these smaller countries - nearly all of whom were only just emerging out of centuries of colonialism - now have to rely on the more powerful (colonizing) nations that comprise the IMG for their financial, agricultural, and technological needs. Another example: plastic companies secretly form the largest donors supporting plastic recycling initiatives - if consumers believe that plastic recycling is perfectly ecological, it gives them moral permission to continue buying products wrapped and shipped in single-use plastic. This has caused plastic use - and subsequently oil use and its concomitant harms to the environment - to *dramatically increase*. Recycling is a major cause of climate change, in other words, because it enables the key perpetrators to continue profiting from the extraction of fossil fuels. And yet, to the civic-minded, appeals to recycle are steeped in a moral imperative to protect the planet.

Such hidden cause and effect relationships are everywhere - and because of this hidden world, public deliberation on these issues that seek to educate the public, push forward progressive legislation, or hold powerful institutions accountable are only taking place with *half* the information it needs to hold appropriately informed argumentation and imagine effective strategies for intervention. For example, the U.S. military last year spent next to nothing on their marketing budget - yet recruitment increased dramatically. This is because the U.S. military-industrial complex spent a great deal of effort undermining legislation for *reducing student loan debt*. Why? What relationship is there between military recruitment and student debt? Turns out, soaring college debt pushes increasing numbers of high school and college-age students to joining ROTC to cover expenses. But public sphere discussions of debt focus more on changes

to higher education and legislation that can curb or forgive debt; strategies don't focus on reducing military influence over matters of education and deauthorizing them as valid interlocutors on the matter. Without those strategies, the problem of student debt will persist.

This shadow realm of tectonic relationships between large, complex parts of our world are obscure only to the civic subject - but are clear to corporate and sovereign elites who have made it their business to data mine every facet of life in order to optimize profit and power. Even the most informed of among us may only come across realizations or insights like this through extensive study, investigative journalism, or even hacking. Subsequently, our only access to this world is haphazard, inconsistent, and fraught with difficulty in translating obscure jargon (such as "stock buybacks" or "arbitrage pricing theory") into public legibility. Facts from this heavily guarded "private sphere" arrive onto the scene of public consciousness by rare "insider" academics like David Graeber or investigative journalists who, being party to the obscure world of commercial elites, can articulate and critique the intricacies of the global finance world such as IMF predatory loan practices. Or, we hear from whistleblowers setting loose damaging memos and emails, or from watch dogs who actively work to break past seemingly impenetrable barriers erected by institutions to shield their accounts, legal entanglements, and other destructive activities.

It's clear from some of these examples that the *way* institutions, such as major multinational corporations, make decisions - how they *deliberate* - moves far away from the modes of public morality and deliberation that we as public citizens engage in; it's surprising, for example to think that student loan debt and military recruitment are in fact related. This is because we don't see or discuss these two facets of our economy in conjunction or mutually generative - we root these two in different *topoi*. We don't realize that recycling initiatives actually accelerate our use of plastic and trees, instead of building sustainable living. Our deliberations in the public sphere are certainly multiple, complex, attuned to different moralities, dispersed across spatial and technological domains, and distinctively multicultural - at its best. But even at their best, public deliberations on topics of importance, such as rights protection or climate change, operate in informatic conditions within a market society that limit our ability to make fully informed judgements. We tilt at windmills idealistically because the information we need to fully understand the problem is hidden behind inaccessible languages, disciplines, private sphere, or technological barriers like firewalls.

However, this same idealism is then turned against us by those self-same corporate institutions (and governments, for that matter), essentially positioning public appeals for socialist policies or calls for humanitarianism as “naive,” thus dismissing our legitimacy on the grounds that our public morality isn’t “practical”. In other words, through the private public split limiting our capacities to deliberate and improve democratic institutions and processes, we are unable to make effective arguments that legitimize the public morality with which we develop them; Once rendered ineffective, public and moral voices are more easily dismissed by policymakers, corporate moguls, and other insiders in the world of power and money. The problem, therefore, is one of *deliberation*, specifically *who* gets to deliberate, with *what information*, and to *what purpose or goal*, the goal of course being a decision that completes that moment of deliberation.

Decisioning from the perspective of the elites who run the shadow world, “the public” as well as “the government” are naive outsiders, unworthy interlocutors, whose arguments about, say, socialism or racial justice or nuclear de-armament, are not rooted in *pragmatism* like private (data driven, experiential, and technical) knowledge is. From the perspectives of people like Mark Zuckerberg, Mitch McConnell, or even Vladimir Putin, partial knowledge as well as naive public *morality* run counter to their motives, agendas that seek to consolidate - not redistribute - power. The public sphere, at least ideally, assigns different interlocutors, methods, and goals in its discussions - ones that could directly threaten to disrupt corporate and elite activity.

This “pragmatism” in capitalist discourse and economic theory in the past century develop still further discursive and ideological formations, specifically the notion of “the market,” one that authorizes and governs economic activity as well as political deliberation. Apart from some other well-studied oppressions - biopolitics, simulacrum in aesthetics and philosophy, subalternity, colonialism - the discourse of “the market” serves as the main bulwark and defense against oversight that might limit “free” corporate activity; if “the market” works as it should without, and without intervention, then “bad” capitalist activity will eventually weed itself out.

Capitalism has given us much. But I still say this with urgency: capitalism, and the powerful globalized institutions it gave birth to, is also at the root of nearly every major cultural, political, social, and economic oppression we live under today. Capitalism is the implicit yet somehow invisible motivation lurking in the backdrop of all political debates, giving power to certain agendas and deauthorizing productive possibilities and persons working on behalf of the

public good. It has formed the impetus of most wars of the past two centuries, and it constitutes the main reason why countries today are held ransom against any attempt to address climate change. And yet, surprisingly, our field does not yet have a thriving, urgent, and *broad* discussion about how corporate (and globalized) rhetoric affects, undermines, defines, produces, or in numerous ways impacts everyday life, particularly in our work to improve democratic processes and address institutionalized oppression.

It's also older than we know. Through the colonialism of the eighteenth, nineteenth, and early twentieth centuries, capitalism marked certain bodies as unequal to others in a naked attempt at consolidating power - but it was a process begun during the Age of Exploration and through the activity of sixteenth century East India Companies. In following the breadcrumbs of corporate rhetoric back through history, I came to realize that capitalist forms of deliberative rhetoric precede neoliberalism, liberalism, even both Industrial Revolutions. I arrived, at last, at the English East India Company. They set the precedent from which capitalism's deliberations emerge. The English East India Company (shortened here to EIC) laid the groundwork for the rhetoric of contemporary globalization, specifically global capitalism. Analyzing the company's early rhetorical practices becomes a project in mapping capitalist rhetoric's origin story.

Deliberation, particularly nonideal deliberation that is delinked from the goals of democratic formation and civic public participation, is the primary rhetorical method through which corporate elites come to interpret, grasp, and engage their environment. Otherness as both risk and opportunity for exploitation come into focus under their gaze. Risk is intentionally cultivated because profit is *only* possible with risk. When deliberation is at the root of the activities of corporations driving the world's most urgent problems, that is where we must begin.

This project seeks to jumpstart bold conversations on the role of corporate deliberative rhetoric in rhetorical theory. I seek to alert scholars concerned about democracy, rights, colonialism, and climate change about a group of rhetors whose activities are murky, suspect, and thoroughly self-interested - and deeply consequential to our ongoing work to fight oppression. By shifting our focus to this (deliberately) murky and hidden private sphere, and specifically through rhetoric, we become capable of making connections between, key persons, spaces, institutional contexts, texts, speech acts, and histories that the private sphere actively tries to mask or "rebrand". Building these connections can shift strategies of public deliberation onto more appropriate targets, causes, and effects. This shift in focus breaks us onto new horizons and

possibilities for preemptively or concurrently coming to grips with economic rhetoric - and enables us to find ways to disrupt its inevitable harms.

Given that deliberative rhetoric concerning risk and reward comprises the primary activity of corporate rhetoric, this project looks at the deliberative practices of early European capitalism to help recontextualize our discussions of contemporary economic rhetoric, and encourage new questions about rhetoric and power, economics and governance, and the role of non-Western global rhetorics, and the use of new theoretical methodologies.

Deliberation From Uncertainty

We can thank Aristotle for the way we think about deliberation and rhetoric. Namely, in saying that an orator deliberates in political debate because he when “is concerned with the future: it is about things to be done hereafter that he advises, for or against,” we have come to regard deliberation first as a process specific to agoras in the *polis*, or in public sphere spaces in deliberative democracies. It’s from Aristotle too that we look to deliberation as a process through which uncertainty is deliberated. when deliberating the future, we compare events that are “contingent,” which are events that are *probable*, which may or may not happen. These outcomes materialize through certain courses of action, some are more desirable than others. Dilip Gaonkar summarizes that “the contingent is the unproblematic scene of uncertainty of rhetoric” (151).

In other words, everything from conversations between spouses on raising children or where to go on vacation, to board room meetings of corporations developing future investment plans and big data companies brainstorming new algorithms - all of these are valid forms of deliberation because they are processes of discourse that facilitate decisioning. But because Western theory from the beginning - from Aristotle - has conceived of deliberation namely in terms of direct discussions of human rights, justice, legitimate government/democracy, and public sphere theory, we have missed an opportunity to identify the *extremely* consequential discussions that take place in the private sphere that bear serious implications for our attempt at forming more fair and just democratic societies. What we call the public sphere is a heterogeneous assemblage, always fluid, and never a given: never just there. it's enacted. and its enaction takes place against operations of deliberation, dealings, and other forms of power that

seek to remain unpublic--that is, private. Where there is uncertainty, and the need for a decision to be made, we have deliberation.

This dissertation argues in part that the East India Company deliberately forged “public” and “private” divisions, particularly through the work of their agents at sea, in physical distance from the public spheres of London or Agra could regulate their behavior. They then actively deepened that divide in order to protect their interests and activities from public scrutiny and morality. Chapter One covers the rhetorical work of Robert Clive during the Bengal Bubble of 1762 and the ensuing economic crisis to point out how private and public spheres were tools of corporate power, used to authorize certain corporate elites as *legitimate* deliberative interlocutors in all discussions pertaining to business and commerce while simultaneously deauthorizing all persons who could hold these elites accountable for malfeasance. The deauthorizing of a literate and vocal public, Parliament, and even the monarchy became the “public sphere,” and in the centuries since, the public sphere has struggled to hold the “private sphere” accountable for what are rightfully considered matters of public importance but are shielded from public view.

Risk as the Rhetorical Project of Deliberation

When Queen Elizabeth I signed the charter for the formation of the EIC on midnight precisely of December 31st, 1599 (some list it as 1600), she has not only given a monopoly over trading rights to India, but she also set loose political, economic, social, and cultural forces that would press the world under colonial rule and give birth to a new world age defined by capitalism. And in this world, risks were abundant. Aside from the regular commercial risks of mutiny, disease, piracy, and weather, the cultural, political, and economic landscapes of the Asiatic worlds were almost completely unknown to them.

Furthermore, England’s weak position among global affairs, as well as their ignorance of the landscape of Indian Ocean politics, made the risk of unwittingly causing offense so high, the idea of starting a trade relationship with any of these nations constituted a kind of chutzpah on the part of the EIC. This doesn’t mean they were unaware of the risks - far from it: risk formed a cornerstone of any rhetorical strategy when negotiating with key audiences to advance their agendas. Even in the initial proposal to form the company given to Elizabeth I by the original EIC investors, nearly three quarters of it consists of a list of countries with whom the EIC promised *not* to pursue trade, and with whom they will do their absolute best not to antagonize or

provoke for fear. Thus, it was an intense sense of competition with Portugal, Spain, and France (as well as their sense of existential fear of war and conquest from these nations) that pushed them to seek wealth and power for England in the East in *spite* of the high risk.

Profit was so precarious but desperate a goal, in fact, that managing risk became the *real* business of the company. Armed to the teeth, with nearly double the value of insurance, and captained by (relatively expendable) individuals who had proved both the most risk averse and yet also the most profit hungry of traders, EIC expeditions were navigating a world where every interaction with persons and environment threatened mutiny, disease, storms, piracy, captivity, was laden with risk. A great deal of time was spent, both in writing and in the verbal debates in Parliament, among the Governors' General, across immense cultural and power differentials at port cities first summoning and shaping the nature of the risk at hand (implicitly and explicitly), orienting action and rhetoric around them, and yet also charting a path to profit.

Precarity, as an existential sense of being-at-risk, was instrumental in forging English geopolitical and commercial action in the final decades of the seventeenth century. Rhetorics of precarity created the validating ground that made claims toward reducing threats to England's global position and internal economic growth, namely in the form of published exploration and colonization narratives by knights and merchants. Rhetorics of precarity are thus a foundational aspect of globalization because they effectively secure economic agendas by disclosing risk (and reward) on global scales. Disclosing risk includes producing or intensifying risk, in ways calculated to create conditions for new advantage.

A major claim of this project, then, is that risk is not something simply to be minimized or avoided; rather, risk constituted the primary onto-epistemological project under formation through the deliberative rhetoric. More specifically, I argue that an expanded investigation of deliberation through risk and reward reveal how deeply colonial the English were in their implicit persuasive practices, rhetorical or otherwise. They constructed and appealed to universal norms in order to evacuate the need for recognition and reciprocity in deliberation, which worked implicitly to undermine the "justness" and humanity of their opponents (Mughal, Persian, and Ottoman Empires included) and villainize anyone who posed barriers to profit. Through a nearly pathological commitment to the (as then nascent) discourse that the pursuit of commerce *alone* authorizes all tactics undertaken to gain profit, the EIC self-fashioned an ethos as "legitimate" and law-abiding merchants while in practice still fully steeped in violent

privateering and piratical methods. Finally, in spaces outside of institutional oversight that could enforce an ethical code limiting privateering strategies of trade, the EIC developed rhetorical tools that intentionally deepened the public-private sphere division by masking their true activities, thus streamlining discursive as well as economic systems to consolidate power for themselves as a new elite. Today, those who inherited their legacies are called “capitalists.” We still live among the terrains and structures of risk-management, colonialism, and market-thinking they began building in the early seventeenth century. To begin tracing just how we got here, we must start with an understanding of *risk* and precarity under globalization.

Methodology

This project was built on archival work across various spaces, collections, historical time periods, and genres of writing. But primarily, this research would have been impossible without the East India Company archives located in the British Library, along with the Library’s attendant army of archivists, library scientists, transcribers, and reading room staff. The EIC archives, located in their Asian/Asian American Reading Room serve as the basis of the texts used in the Chapters 1-3. The archival work provides the basis of my inquiry for analyzing the original texts guided me into a broader, deeper understanding of EIC events, contexts, and key persons. From the insights I gained during the month spent in London from July 21st - August 19th in 2019, I could more effectively use published anthologies such as the *Letters of the East India Company Servants*, or the impressive collection of captain’s journals published by The Hakluyt Society. As such, citations in these chapters will instead refer to the transcribed, edited, and published versions of those same archives for direct quotations. I chose to cite the published works because ultimately, they provided a clearer grammatical and syntactical rendering of the primary original versions. Where a direct archival source is used, the citation will reflect the style established by The British Library; where a secondary transcribed version is used, the published text is cited.

I will add, however, that the archives still had a significant impact on this project. Even if I relied on their direct content less than expected, I developed a clear sense of the EIC’s corporate identity: their economic strategies, their attitudes toward knowledge, the ports/commodities they found fascinating, the ones they struggled with, the maps they drew, and the trade letters passed between monarchs combined sketched a detailed profile of an

organization built on violence, blind and desperate opportunism, and corruption. Because I emerged with a deeply revised understanding of the EIC that felt more complete, I was able to re-chart my dissertation and develop the chapters focusing on more strategic moments in EIC history.

The historical texts in Chapter One, Two, and Four are primary sources that are housed in a broad range of archives; as such, these sources were linked not by archival source or location, but by the discursive landscape they shared. For example, Horace Walpole's collected letters are discussed in the same chapter as Adam Smith's *Wealth of Nations* and Robert Clive's 1772 Speech to Parliament because they exemplify clear strands of interwoven discourse on the issue of English imperialism and the EIC. However, these three texts' primary sources are housed in very different archives; the relations among them were discovered primarily through careful historical tracing done by scholars like Tillman Nechtman and Richmond Barbour. The use of primary historical sources in Chapters One, Two, and Four could be considered more closely linked to discourse analysis or case study than strictly archival work. These primary sources were found using content and subject based searches on EEBO (Early English Books Online).

Furthermore, although the chapters are organized around central figures in the history of the EIC and the Mughal Empire - Hakluyt, Clive, Middleton, and Chandar Bhan - they do so as a scaffolding technique. The chapters aren't limiting history to only its brighter luminaries, but rather use these figures as anchor points that are nonetheless supported by broader and deeper webs of discourse. When analyzing the work of Richard Hakluyt, for example, it's also necessary to root his work as a geographer and editor within discourses of science in Elizabethan England, the rising status of the merchant, and within genres of cosmography and travel writing. It is important to resist writing history simply as a series of effects wrought by powerful European men, and the chapters operate not as case studies of *individuals*, but as deep explorations on how risk generates deliberation as a globalization rhetoric. This risk is bound up in the agendas, writings, and transformations of multiple individuals and institutions. This dissertation works to make this broader case study approach - and not the "grand figures of history" approach - the central organizing feature of each chapter.

This brings me to the final and perhaps most crucial part of my methodology, which was to focus on points of intense crisis as a way of illuminating vast, shifting landscapes that were the contexts of globalization rhetoric. This methodology emerged through my work in the archives,

initially as a management technique, simply a way to select particular actors/moments for the case studies. As I began to work with the archives, I realized that risk in fact *instantiates* writing: Under globalization, invisible networks of values, hierarchies, relations, knowledges, cultures, and institutions come under threat through transformation. Suddenly, previously silent participants like Lady Mary Coke or Horace Walpole emerge from the woodwork to come to the defense of - or in challenge to - both emergent and ancient structures upholding their world. Heated discussion ensues in such places as correspondences, Parliamentary debates, publications of all sorts, and in jurisprudence. Moments of intense risk become lighthouses that render visible the *full* rhetorical ecologies within which discourse operates, including those things which lurk beneath the surface of everyday assumptions. An equivalent metaphor is used by Jane Bennet at the outset of *Vibrant Matter: A Political Ecology of Things*, where she points out that until an electrical grid failed, we were unaware of just how deeply important the wiring and base structures were to the way our lives are built (p. 20); similarly, moments of crisis produce the kind of documentation necessary to deeply evaluate social, cultural, epistemological, and political infrastructures of rhetoric.

CHAPTER ONE
THE RANSOM OF THE PUBLIC SPHERE BY THE “NABOBS” OF THE
PRIVATE SPHERE: PRECARIOUS DELIBERATIONS ON IMPERIAL
MORALITY AND THE LATE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY ENGLISH EAST
INDIA COMPANY

“Corporations have neither bodies to be punished, nor souls to be damned.”
-Edward Thurlow, 1st Baron Thurlow, Lord Chancellor of Great Britain from 1778-1792

“We must indeed become Nabobs ourselves in Face if not in Name, and perhaps totally without disguise... We must go forward, for to retract is impossible ... if riches and stability are the objects of the Company, then this is the method, the only method, we now have for attaining and securing them.”
-Lord Robert Clive

Part I: Mapping Rhetorical Landscapes

Lord Robert Clive walked out of Whitehall on the 30th of March, 1772 after giving one of history’s most infamous and eloquent speeches, and headed home in his carriage not knowing if Parliament would strip him of his peerage, his wealth, and his Company. Despite the precarity of his circumstances that night, he had reason to hope; Parliamentarians had cheered him with “Hear hear! Hear hear!” as he walked out, so roused by his speech that calls for dissolving the English East India Company for its crimes in England and India that had been growing for nearly twenty years now all but vanished from the chamber that night.

On the surface, the debates were about Clive’s prolific atrocities and corruption during his tenure as the English East India Company’s Governor of Fort William in Bengal from 1755-1760.¹ He is known as one of the most ruthless men in history, who warred with the Mughal empire and won the Battle of Plassey in 1757, establishing the EIC as a territorial sovereign administrator. Ironically, he had been sent to India to address abuses of power in the Company. Instead, the Company grew rapacious under his unabated greed, operating like a glorified mafia.

¹ Born and raised in Shropshire, Clive came from a family that served the monarchy as lawyers or accountants since the time of Henry VII. Even as a child, his famed ruthlessness was evident. He ran a protection racket at the age of twelve, threatening to break the windows of local shop owners unless they paid him money. His youth was spent as a bully, kicked out from school after school, until his father enlisted him into the EIC as many fathers did back then with wayward sons. He found his wind here; he moved up the ranks to become the Governor of the Company’s headquarters in India in Bengal in 1755. See Lenman and Lawson, *Robert Clive, the “Black Jagir, and British Politics*, for more biographical information.

They pursued extortion, tax evasion, price gouging, embezzlement, kidnapping and ransom, torture in search of trade secrets and subsequent riches. Their activities didn't go unnoticed. Siraj ud-Daula, the Mughal Nawab of Bengal and the region's governor, had long lost his patience with the EIC abusing the trade privileges that were repeatedly granted under fair terms. When they began fortifying and arming their headquarters in direct violation of their trade agreement, he allied with the French East India Company and attacked EIC headquarters at Fort William on June 20th, 1756. He successfully eliminated the fort's defenses, and imprisoned nearly 150 EIC soldiers and factors into what is today infamously called "the Black Hole of Calcutta," a prison in Fort William with no windows or ventilation.

The next morning, only 23 of the prisoners were still alive; the rest died from heat exhaustion (Chatterjee 53-54). The event was, in modern comparisons, much like Pearl Harbor or 9/11. Clive was sent by the Company to retake the fort; instead of reclaiming lost territory, he instead felt empowered to use any and all means to avenge his comrades. Before the confrontation with Siraj Ud-Daulah at the battlefield of Palashi (Anglicized to "Plassey"), Clive bribed Mir Jafar, the head of Siraj Ud-Daulah's army and his brother, to turn against him; Jafar would betray Siraj to the EIC in the Battle of Plassey in 1757 and the EIC would claim a shocking victory against the Mughal Empire.

After years of being a puppet ruler to the EIC after Plassey, Siraj Ud-Daulah would be executed after losing the Battle of Buxar in 1764 in his final attempt to win back his sovereignty. Mir Jafar was installed as a puppet ruler, but he would die in 1765 a year later. Clive's response to the news in a letter to the EIC chairman crystallizes Clive's truer ambitions, ones he would protest or deny loudly in public upon scrutiny:

We have at last arrived at that critical Conjunction, which I have long foreseen...I mean that Conjunction which renders it necessary for us to determine whether we can, or shall, take the whole [Mughal Empire] to ourselves. Mir Jafar is dead...Shuja Dowla is beat out of his dominions; we are in possession of them, and it is scarce hyperbole to say that the whole Empire is in our hands... Can it be doubted that a large Army of Europeans would effectually preserve to us the Sovereignty...not only by keeping in awe the ambition of any Country Prince, but by rending us so truly formidable, that no French, Dutch, or other Enemy could ever dare to molest us?"²

² British Library, OIOC, BL G/37/4/I; See also Barnett, *North India Between Empires*, p. 74 and Dalrymple, *The Anarchy*, p. 206

Important to point out here that Clive, despite vocal and solemn protestation when he testified to Parliament in 1772, always had plans of transforming the EIC into a sovereign power. By his own admission, to a Company governor no less, Clive pursued the creation of an empire in full contempt of its illegality as per the EIC charter, and with all the craven greed and ambition of a despot.

The Black Hole of Calcutta was simply an excuse for Clive, and the victories at Plassey and Buxar were only the beginning. The victories forced Mughal Emperor Shah Alam to grant Clive *territorial* control of the three wealthiest provinces of the Mughal Empire, which today comprise Bengal and Bangladesh. Control was granted in the form of the *jagir* and the *Diwani*. Terrifyingly, the *jagir* meant Clive now had the power to set and collect taxes within the territories of Bengal, and the *Diwani* expanded those powers to include all economic management of the region. Trade agreements, tariffs, coinage, etc. were all under his power to control. Clive effectively secured full sovereign control as well. He now dictated policy measures to deliberately enrich the EIC and eliminate competition from both European competitors and local Indian merchants in the trade for salt, betel nut, textiles, and tobacco. The British conquest of India had begun.³ Partha Chatterjee poignantly remarked that “the mythical history of the British Empire in the East begins in a black hole” (17).

This historical background is key to understanding how globalization rhetoric was from the very beginning bound up within structures of risk and precarity as much as it was in the pursuit of economic gain. While Clive looted Bengal, the *Diwani* set in motion economic, political, and existential crises back home in *England*. Upon the news that an entity with no legitimate ruling authority had suddenly taken territorial control of a foreign nation under the English banner, the English public and Parliament were thrown into turmoil as they began to grapple with the implications of a sovereign corporate state. Economically, news of the *Diwani* spurred speculative investing in Company stocks by London’s elite merchants and several

³ Clive proceeded to transform the Company from a corporation into a sovereign imperial power, but one that operated despotically. He hand-selected a few loyal EIC servants called the “Select Committee” whose job was to invent ways to bypass attempts by the Governors General London to control the Company, as well as bully, silence, and silo all EIC employees in India into falling in line with Clive’s edicts. He also inaugurated a mafia-like army of (essentially) racketeers called the Office of Inquisition, whose job it was to bully, extort, imprison, kidnap, and ransom local Indian, Mughal, and European merchants or nobles into agreeing to the EIC’s abusive tariffs, providing the locations of guarded treasuries for looting, or giving up trade secrets. Clive, through some extraordinary feats of insider trading, embezzlement, an illicit diamond trade, and counterfeit gold coin operations, acquired nearly £180,000 by 1760, which he would nurture into £234,000 at the time of his death. This amounts to around £23 million today. See P.J. Marshall’s *The Making and Unmaking of Empires: Britain, India, a*

European banks⁴. Between 1756 and 1767, EIC stocks could be sold for over 200 pounds a share. Investors were lured like moths to flame by Clive's fabulous promises of riches amounting to 4 million pounds from the *Diwani*. Like the Internet and housing bubbles in recent memory, the stage was set for a precipitous economic collapse when those stocks could not pay out.

But more important to our understanding of globalization rhetoric is the impact news of the Company's atrocities had on the English public sphere, where it's largely aristocratic and Parliamentary participants would be forced to revise their definition of British Imperialism in heated deliberations. Publications sent by travelers and whistleblowers about the EIC's abuses of power would take root in the burgeoning print culture of late eighteenth century England, whipping the English public sphere into a frenzy of resentment and fear about the Company, their role in building the British Empire, and ancient hierarchies of power the EIC threatened to upend. On a deeper level, Parliament calling Clive to eventually testify for his behavior was nothing short of a bid to change the course of British imperialism and bring it back home to the perceived moral center crafted by English landed gentry and London civic society.

I argue that calls from the English public sphere at this time for a more legitimate sovereign body - Parliament - to dissolve or regulate the Company form a crucial moment of transformation in the genealogy of globalization rhetoric. Specifically, an uneven relationship formed between economic decisions and public mandates because the EIC manipulated precarity-induced deliberations regarding its own future. In the following sections, I sketch out the landscape of the English public sphere's response to Clive's activities to show how the EIC's *counter* response created what I call "coercive deliberation," a form of globalization rhetoric that eventually became what we call the *private sphere* today. The EIC rhetorically "colonized" and manipulated public discourse to protect private agendas; those agendas were specifically global in nature, which is why discussing coercive deliberation is extremely salient to our understanding of globalization rhetoric. The next section maps out how deliberation unfolded in the English public sphere as an alarmed landed gentry and Parliament examine exposed vulnerabilities in the rationales that justified British Imperial power.

⁴ It's well known among historians that Clive himself directly encouraged the speculation, telling associates in London to buy twice as much stock as they normally would in the EIC. Insider trading wasn't illegal in this time, but it was still regarded as a form of corruption. The crisis wasn't merely limited to reckless investment, but in the ethos of fair trade.

Nabobs and the Colonization of England

The *Diwani* and *jagir* enabled Clive and other EIC servants to launch an unmitigated campaign of asset-stripping. Clive's taxes and control of Bengali rice, salt, and textile trades regularly turned out millionaire after millionaire among the EIC. But in 1770, a drought hit Bengal, leaving farmers devastated; however, instead of easing tax burdens or providing relief, across nearly every provinciality the EIC continued enforcing, even increasing, taxes, to the point where they *created* the worst famine the subcontinent had seen in centuries. Contemporary historians to the time like Ghulam Husain as well as historians today unanimously agree that the EIC's management of the drought exemplified corporate greed and mismanagement beyond the pale.⁵

The Bengal famine became the canary in the gold mine for the English back home, and whistleblowers were key to sounding the alarm. Anger and fear came in waves at each new issue of *Gentleman's Magazine* or *London Post* - our modern NPR or Morning Brew - beginning in 1758 through the 1780's as they published gut-wrenching accounts of what was really happening in Bengal. EIC employee John Debrit wrote an influential letter to *Gentlemen's Magazine* describing his daily life under the Bengal Famine:

By this time, we were already greatly affected at Calcutta, many thousands falling daily in the streets and fields...I have counted from my bed chamber window in the morning forty dead bodies, laying within twenty yards of the wall, besides many hundreds laying in the agonies of death for want, bending double, with their stomachs quite close contracted to their backbones...the poor creatures with their arms extended, have cried out, 'Baba! Baba! My father! My father! This affliction comes from the hands of your countrymen, and I am come here to die, if it pleases God, in your presence. I cannot move, do what you will with me.'" In the month of June, our condition was still worse, with only three seers of rice to be had in the bazaars, and that very bad, which, when bought must be carried home secretly, to avoid being plundered by the famished multitudes on the road. Once could not pass the streets without seeing multitudes in their last agonies, crying out as you passed, 'My God! My God! Have mercy on me, I am starving,' ...At this time we could not touch fish, the river was too full of carcasses, and of those who did eat it, many died suddenly...After I had dined, perhaps there were 100 poor at the door waiting for the remains, which I have often sent amongst them cut up into little pieces; so that as many as could might partake of it; and after one has sucked

⁵ There is a large body of work on the Bengal Famine of 1770. The most authoritative and respected text is by Rajat Dutta, *Society, Economy and the Market: Commercialisation in Rural Bengal, c1760-1800*. For accounts of the famine written by observers of this time, see Ghulam Husain's *Seir Mutaqherin*.

the bones quite dry, and throwing them away, I have seen another take them up, sand and all among them, and another do the same, and then a third, and so on.⁶

During the famine nearly a third of the Bengali population perished, around 6 million people.⁷ By EIC accounts, this number was meaningless compared to the record profits reported to the Governors General in 1770 and 1771; tax revenue in fact *increased* because of the heightened violence of tax enforcement. Farmers could have a hand cut off or see their families kidnapped and held ransom unless they paid Clive's taxes. The EIC's hand in the severity of the famine alerted the English public to the horrid *actualities* of running a global empire, uprooting the idealistic imaginaries they had built on Enlightenment rationales about how the British Empire could export its "civilized" values of liberty and democracy to more "corrupt" corners of the world like India. Instead of the moral rewards and affirmation that imperialists looked for in their activities in the colonies, they received letters like Debrit's. Britain now had to face a deeply disturbing notion that imperialism was neither benevolent nor progressive.

This problem extended past the borders of Bengal. Books and pamphlets churned out increasingly vivid and shocking accounts of the famine and the EIC until India became "part of the daily newspaper diet" of London; amid these publications was the voice of Horace Walpole - 4th Earl of Orford, famed man of letters, and Whig politician (Marshall 199). In his vocal letters to Horace Mann, he articulates a fear that had been steadily growing on the minds of most Whig and anti-EIC Parliamentarians. If the EIC can usurp the sovereign power of the mighty Mughal Empire, what might they do to Parliament? Proof that they would behave in England as they did in India lay, for Walpole, in the ways their obscene spending in England was causing similar (if much less severe) income inequality:

Here was Lord Clive's diamond house; this is Leadenhall Street, and this broken column was part of the palace of a company of merchants who were sovereigns of Bengal! They starved millions in India by monopolies and plunder, and almost

⁶ Debrit's letter is published in full by William Dalrymple in *The Anarchy*, p. 221-222

⁷ The English didn't learn their lesson from this disastrous - and easily averted - human rights crisis. The Mughal Empire had a system in place during their four centuries of rule for responding to drought, plague, and famine. They would essentially imprison the populace in a makeshift camp during the crisis, keep them isolated if sick, and then provide for their every need in food, shelter, water, medicine. Through this form of government relief, over the centuries, the Mughal empire only experienced four major famines of any consequence. The British Empire would experience 120 famines of varying severities during their occupation of India. Florence Nightingale herself pointed out the man-made nature of Indian famines under British rule, and scholars credit these repeated famines as part of the reason for the creation of extreme and cyclical poverty in India. of its citizens for the sake of the public good, but the English never relinquished their insistence on the former, even as they would loudly proclaim the latter as proof of their own superior civilization. See Vallée's (2006), *Florence Nightingale on Health in India*

raised a famine at home by the luxury occasioned by their opulence, and by that opulence raising the prices of everything, till the poor could not purchase bread!⁸

As overspending on basic goods to support the new lavish lifestyles of EIC millionaires raised prices to exorbitant levels, keen Parliamentary observers feared the EIC's wealth from the *Diwani* was beginning to "[upset] the gains made by the Magna Carta, the Bill of Rights, and the Acts of Settlement," a fear that had even further basis in fact. EIC servants were regularly *buying* instead of inheriting the estates needed to qualify them to become part of the House of Lords; there were over thirty EIC employees serving in Parliament at one point (Nechtman 106). *The Gentleman's Magazine* wrote in 1786 that "the EIC providentially brings home every year a sufficient number of a new sort of gentlemen, with new customs, manners, and principles, who fill the offices of the old country gentlemen" (750-751). These new customs and manners weren't merely the ill-manners of self-made men, but as their work in India demonstrated, they held morality, legality, and respect for legitimate authority in contempt. Parliament was right to fear them on both economic and political grounds.

To add to this growing invasion of Parliament and the abrogation of basic rights, the social fabric of the upper crust was beginning to lose its threads. The most public proof of EIC despotism was in the excessive wealth these millionaires brought back to England. Speculation⁹ in EIC stock was partially fueled by the increasingly eye-popping displays of Indian diamonds that newly minted EIC millionaires paraded out at public soirees and in their warehouses on Leadenhall Street in London. Clive gifted the Queen such an extravagant set of diamonds, socialite Lady Mary Coke reported that at a royal birthday party in 1769,

The queen's diamonds seem to have surprised everybody...Many of them we have all seen, but she has so many additional ones & of so extraordinary a size that the Princess Amelia said (in which the Lady's [sic] agreed) that the description sounded like a Fairy Tale; She wore some of those in her hair that the Nabob sent the King as a present. (cited by Nechtman 162)

They were so heavy, in fact, that even the Queen remarked several times that "the weight of them was a great fatigue" (Nechtman 162). Even as EIC wealth expanded income inequality and spurred reckless investment, it glittered as a material inducement to continue securing British

⁸ Horace Walpole to Horace Mann, 9 April 1772, in *Horace Walpole, The Yale Edition of Horace Walpole's Correspondence*, ed. W.S. Lewis et al., 48 vols. (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1937-83), XXII, p. 400.

⁹ Dame Lucy Sutherland remarked that India stock was transformed from a "sober security comparable to the funds into a gambling venture," speculation grew so reckless. See P. J. Marshall, *Problems of Empire: Britain and India 1757-1813* (London, 1968), p. 30

Imperialism instead of divesting from it - just not the EIC way. Investors continued pouring money into the EIC, hoping to obtain glittering diamonds for themselves.

Even as investors desired EIC wealth, this class of nouveau riche still came to be called, derisively called “nabobs,” a mangled English version of the Persian word *nawab*. In Mughal administrative structures, *nawabs* were high-ranking viceroys.¹⁰ Contemporary historian Thomas Macaulay bemoaned that EIC “nabobs”

had sprung from obscurity. ... they acquired great wealth ... they exhibited it insolently ... they spent it extravagantly." They lived with the "awkwardness and some of the pomposity of upstarts... their lives outshone those of dukes ... their coaches were finer than that of the Lord Mayor ... the examples of their large and ill-governed households corrupted half the servants of the country... but, in spite of the stud and the crowd of menials, of the plate and the Dresden china, of the venison and Burgandy, [they] were still low men." (229-231)

Nearly all of his contemporaries in the literati agreed with his assessment of nabobs, and viewed “Clive [as] their most prominent and conspicuous exemplar, in particular” (Dalrymple 224).

Regular publications like Macaulay’s *A History of Hindustan* both articulated and amplified in the English public sphere fears that these dilettantes were remaking Britain into a despotic nation of “low men.”¹¹ This turbulent context emerging from globalization’s propensity to depositing threats at the doorstep of political security illuminates how precarity, or the existential sense of being at risk, is the ongoing spark for public sphere deliberation. It’s thus that the English East India Company’s activity at this time is indelible to our understanding of rhetoric *due to* globalization and the rhetorical habits which *emerged from* globalization. Clive’s

¹⁰ While often wealthy, and certainly powerful, *nawabs* were not profit-seeking social climbers like EIC “nabobs”. They were deputies given important political responsibilities in the Mughal Empire; Unlike the EIC, if *nawabs* behaved corruptly, or failed to perform their duties, their superiors wouldn’t hesitate to punish them. However, under the colonizing and mercenary gaze of the EIC, *nawabs* were simply persons synonymous with enormous power and wealth; in their own correspondences, EIC servants called themselves “nabobs,” marking a desire to conquer and become more powerful than their enemy *nawabs*. To the English back home, the EIC’s use of this foreign term to describe their ill-gotten gains epitomized all the reasons their growing presence in England was so offensive.

¹¹ This can be seen most visibly in Samuel Foote’s play *The Nabob*. In this long-running satire performed at the famous Haymarket Theater in London, Clive is very obviously caricatured in the form of a character named “Lord Vulture,” who exploits even the poor by recruiting them out of London for his India-based army; in the play, young English men of all the lower classes would find their way to India under the promise of riches, only to die there at the hands of Muslim heathens while protecting a Company of ill-repute. And the main character is a nabob named “Sir Matthew Mite” who comically tries to buy his way into upper English society, with “mite” of course suggesting that he is simply an insect among bigger men. Fears extended also to the way the EIC’s notorious habits of bribery were undermining the monarchy. Most famously, the political cartoons and etchings of James Gillray depicted the Queen and her courtiers bowing obsequiously to enthroned nabobs, or Parliamentarians accepting diamond bribes. See Nechtman’s work in *Nabobs*.

usurpation of the *diwani* produced near universal disclaim and uproar in England because it exposed raw questions about the relationship between corporate activity vital to realizing imperial visions, Parliamentary oversight over commerce, and the moral constituency of British Imperialism.

Parliament would get its chance to take action against the EIC in an obvious public mandate to do so. Inevitably, a corporate praxis and culture built on corruption, violence and exploitation would turn the Company's own servants against them. William Bolts was a disgraced former employee of the EIC sent back to London from India because his crimes shocked even Clive and the Select Committee members. Bolts decided, in bitterness, to take revenge on Clive by setting himself up as the ultimate whistleblower. His *Considerations on India Affairs* published in 1772 is a tell-all, insider exposé regarded as "by far the most influential and damaging of the many tracts against the EIC to be published," because it revealed in excruciating detail the myriad lies, smokescreens, and corruption of EIC servants, particularly Clive, for the past two decades; there was no longer the possibility of equivocating or dismissing claims of malfeasance, no matter how much the EIC would protest (Dalrymple 200). The stage was set for Parliamentary intervention; they only needed a spark to light the powder keg, one that would give Parliament the ammunition it needed to legally override the Crown's charter, render any EIC bribery political suicide, and formally bring the project of English economic expansion under the full, more *just* control of a democratic and legitimate Parliament.

This moment of Parliamentary intervention bore implications for public sphere deliberation because it was borne from a set of contradictory Enlightenment discourses. Specifically, "liberty" was a concept coming under formation during this phase of English Enlightenment, regarded as an inalienable right that legitimated the power of sovereign states, and directed them to protect the political rights of its subjects. For imperialists, the British political system was a fount of liberty, a kind of romanticized new Roman empire, a conduit through which those liberties flooded to the rest of the world. It's a well-heeled critique that British colonialism used this argument to justify its empire¹². However, the American Revolution, Seven Years War, and the constant violence of the East India Company in India had

¹² See Partha Chatterjee *The Black Hole of Empire* and Ranajit Guha's *The Small voice of History* as entry points into postcolonial studies' long and thorough examinations of so called European "Enlightenment" early colonial time immediately following the Battle of Plassey. Postcolonial studies as a whole, however, would take to task the false notion that colonization was civilizing and just, and ensured "freedom."

begun to make it abundantly clear that these arguments faced material contradictions. Clearly, the British commitment to the liberty and political rights of its citizens is most obviously breached and abrogated in colonial settings. Growing voices arguing against English involvement in the West Africa slave trade at this time further contributed to a rising angst among the English at home “that Britain was shifting away from a progressive historical narrative in which liberty was grown at home and shipped out across an empire of the seas to other shores, towards a narrative in which conquest, repression, dominion, and raw imperial power mattered more than any absolute sense of governmental contractualism” (Nechtman 94, *Nabobs*). Clive symbolized for Britons like Horace Walpole, Adam Smith, and Edmund Burke the evil imperial morality they wished to banish from their rose-colored narrative of benevolent empire. His trial was nothing short of a bid among these competing agendas to define English imperial power through moralities of liberty instead of conquest.

The EIC was supposed to bring English “freedom,” specifically corrupt parts of the world like India - not become the epitome of corruption itself. English Enlightenment positioned the English as paragons of virtue, constructed in tandem and against the self-evident inferiority of Others such as Indians, Native Americans, and Africans. Through a nexus of comparisons that “juxtaposed Britain with India, liberty with despotism, prudence with luxury, productivity with indolence, and civic-mindedness with self-interest, and Enlightenment with superstition,” Britain viewed India by the late eighteenth century as “a degraded place” needed to be “fettered to British imperial power” if they hoped to evolve from their inferior status (Nechtman 58-59).

Instead, in the decades leading up to this moment, the EIC created a theater of violent conquest, bribery, extortion, insider trading, hoarding, malfeasance, and speculation in India - they acted in all the ways that the English *accused Others of doing*. Nechtmann’s careful study of the impact of nabob culture on imperial arguments of the day articulates how precarious the EIC’s corruption had rendered the *discursive* underpinnings of the imperial project:

Nabobs exposed the potential dangers of the teleologies inherent in the very fibers of Britain’s imperial [and domestic] order. The nabob was a fallen Briton... [who had] tasted the forbidden fruit in South Asia’s Edenic garden. That a single Briton could be seduced by South Asia proved that Britons writ large could be as well, and the return of what seemed to be a horde of Britons-turned-nabobs from South Asia in the last half of the eighteenth century threatened that Britain itself could be seduced by the luxury and opulence that nabobs imported into the metropolitan world with them and transplanted into the soil of the British nation. (Nechtman 91)

The imperial project was not only built through trade connections to the East/West Indies and the American colonies. It was also built on a seemingly unshakeable belief running like a tightly woven thread through every social, cultural, and intellectual layer of their world that the English had “evolved” away from uncivil times towards an empire rooted in scientific, technological, and political progress over and above “savage” peoples outside Europe. This is why the upper crust of England had long imagined a steady and legitimate growth into an imperial power were rudely awoken to the problems of globalization in their expanding colonial reach across the Americas and Asia through their clashes with nabobs. The aristocracy and landed gentry represented the very model of English intelligence, civilization, and superiority on which imperialism was justified. Nechtman concludes by saying that “Nabobs...threatened to eradicate the normative standards in Britain that had justified imperial difference in the first place. They exposed the philosophical failure of the imagined India that had emerged in the minds of eighteenth century [Britons]...and they destabilized any confidence that the stadial theory of conjectural history moved only in a rational and progressive direction” (91). Nabobs proved that imperial expansion wasn’t progress, but *regression* into the very morass of uncivilized life England believed it had evolved away from. England had invested its identity, intellectual capital, actual capital, and into the imperial project. That Clive and the EIC - dilettantes whose power was granted by the Crown in the first place - could ruin that investment in literal and ideological ways posed an existential level of threat. They were not going to let the EIC take away their version of empire (ironically) in the Company’s quest for territorial and economic expansion in Indian. It was a prospect that was nothing short of terrifying.

These undesirable implications sparked a sense of existential precarity that fits Ulrich Beck’s sketch of how deliberation takes place in a risk society. The EIC threatened English social fabric and national identity, reasoning of the British imperialism, and the legitimacy and power of Parliament as a democratic institution. The failure to rein in the EIC by Parliament would mean that democratic institutions, only just being born, would be powerless from the *start* as long as there were those wealthy enough to undermine its supervisory power; it would mean that Britain had no right to expand into colonies, and that the English were despots in craven pursuit of power instead of greater gentility and “democracy.” In short, the English were afraid the EIC *would colonize them in their very own country*. That they would apply the same behavior against the English as they did against Indians. And because it was becoming increasingly clear

that the EIC could not be trusted to reform or regulate itself at this point, nothing short of the dissolution of the company, or its replacement with Parliamentary instead of private rule, could be the solution. Deliberations against the EIC had reached points of extreme in both its sense of stakes and its desired outcome. A sense of existential risk - of precarity - came from no less than the possibility of total social and political despotism.

Part II: Public Spheres and Imperial Deliberation

The debates of the late eighteenth century about the EIC thus form a critical moment in the history of rhetoric and globalization. At the site of this public sphere, between 1757 and 1770, the key rhetorical shift to occur was a deepening of private and public divides through material wealth and the geographic “third space” away from English publics made possible by the EIC’s global expansion. This deepening was intentional, designed to give more power to EIC merchants who could now view themselves occupying a much more significant role in England than they had been allowed. Moreover, English publics were aware of this loss of power. The subsequent catastrophic fall of the EIC after the Great Bengal Famine of 1770 which caused the past decades’ speculative spending to burst created the most terrifying economic crisis that Great Britain had faced in recent memory.¹³ This presented yet another dilemma to the English at home who, at this point, (almost) wanted nothing more to do with India and the EIC. However, after years of resentment and antipathy toward the EIC’s model of imperial expansion, they now suddenly had to accept that if they dissolved the EIC, the imperial project would be forever halted and England herself may fold under severe economic depression. Subsequently, Robert Clive’s speech to Parliament on March 30th, 1772 gave the EIC history’s first corporate bailout.

Public sphere theory posits that collective deliberation on issues of civic importance is a key part of democracy and indelible to exercising one’s capacity to control the decision-making of sovereign representatives. In traditional public sphere scholarship, this capacity forms a central premise for the exercise and protection of “freedom” and “rights.” This area of public sphere theory is referred to as the study of “deliberative democracy.” Deliberative democracy theory is interested in how public sphere debate *legitimizes* democratic governments, in turn ensuring a “free” (instead of despotic) sovereign state; this is not merely public sphere debate in

¹³ It does not help that civil unrest leading to the American Revolutionary War had begun brewing. England’s loss there meant deep debts and an economic recession *right* before the collapse of the EIC. Poor timing indeed.

terms of, say, activism or civic engagement where the key actors are not always governments. Deliberative democracy theory focuses on questions of *state*, specifically democracies where the will of the people is (ideally) expressed through informed public discussion leading (ideally) to sound policy decisions made by a government listening to that discussion. I reference deliberation and public spheres as perceived mechanisms that legitimate democratic states by mandating policy outcomes as expressions of public morality. Discussing deliberation in this light narrows our focus from simply broadly discussing the public sphere to more specifically assessing its function within political systems and its relationship to public will.

Because of this promise of democracy behind civic-minded, informed public sphere deliberation, scholars have been strongly invested in protecting the path from deliberation to ideal outcomes like rights protection or humanitarian policies. Perceived barriers on that path include everything from issues of reciprocity (Iris Marion Young) and trust (Robert Asen) to the dominance of discourse over “deliberative acts,” (Arabella Lyon) or affect and demagoguery (Manuel Castells) to Eurocentric reasoning on global issues (Rasha Diab). But nearly all scholarship assumes *a priori* to deliberation that its interlocutors *also* believe that deliberation can lead to ideal political outcomes. To be fair, that is often true. Many participants enter into these arenas with a shared motivation to have their voices heard, and to make an impact on the final decision. Consider the spectrum of agendas identified earlier in the EIC question of the late seventeenth century, even when participants disagreed. For example, Adam Smith and Edmund Burke, who both had front-row seats in London to the rising resentment toward the EIC, took widely opposite positions on the issue. Smith advocated dissolving the Company to enable “free” trade to India, accessible to any interested merchant, as well as wresting India way from EIC control and returning it to Mughal sovereignty.¹⁴ But Burke, while acknowledging the

¹⁴ Scholars studying the early intellectual and legal thought on English imperialism and colonization note that it wasn't until the late eighteenth century - after this particular crisis, in fact - that the English began to view the violent oppression of Indians (in India) as necessary, even righteous. There was a strong belief that the sovereign authority of other nations - if they demonstrated “civilized” infrastructures such as an education system, an army, and a centralized government - should not be violated. This right to *others'* sovereignty was actively juxtaposed to the societies of the indigenous tribes they found in North America, whom they regarded as “pure savages,” or “simple,” whose sovereignty did not exist to be violated in the first place. This is why many of the arguments in the public sphere at this time (such as Adam Smith's *Wealth of Nations*) seemed to advocate *on behalf of* Indians in India, a fact that Eurocentric histories since then have actively forgotten or covered up. It's in large part to the EIC Bailout that England reversed its support of Mughal sovereignty, since the EIC proved that violence, oppression, and a disrespect for authority were going to be indelible parts of British Imperialism, and retreat from India meant economic devastation for the English economy back home. This is where the narrative that England could bring “freedom” through “colonization,” even through violence, began to be treated as a coherent argument, without

Company's actions were corrupt, believed that if Parliament instead of a private Governors General ran the company, British Imperialism could stay the course *and* respect the autonomy and rights of Indians.¹⁵ But both *Wealth of Nations* and *The Nabobs of Arcot* assume a kind of faith in the public sphere, that participation in it could mobilize support for their position, and that this support would in turn change minds enough to impact the policies set forth by Parliament with regards to the EIC. Rhetoric is regarded as an important and useful tool by them.

But what about participants who abhor rhetoric, despite its promise of transformation and political power? What about participants - powerful, meaningful ones - who limit their own engagement in the public sphere as well as delegitimize and neutralize the engagement of others to *stop* policy decisions or transformations from taking place? Public sphere scholarship has yet to seriously consider actors who fall outside of "state" and "citizen" binaries, even when discussing decidedly more amorphous deliberative arenas such as universal human rights where global contexts question firm notions of "state" and "citizen" at all. In the case of the EIC, even as pressure built for nearly two decades to regulate the EIC, servants and supporters of the Company undermined regulatory efforts in backdoor deals and in their own propaganda publication *The East India Examiner*, which was little more than glorified advertising for stock investment. When it did come time to participate in public debate, it came in the form of Robert Clive being forcibly summoned to Parliament in 1770 to explain himself and his role in the economic catastrophe he had generated. Rather than contrition and explanation, Clive's arguments did quick work in deauthorizing, derisively, all of Parliament, the English public, even the EIC's Board of Governors as legitimate participants in the affairs of the Company. He quickly shifted focus away from EIC activities, and even ennobled them while shaming everyone else for their ignorance of the Company's heroism; far from dissolving the Company as his trial threatened, Parliament gave them history's first bailout. This is a testament to how effective the *avoidance* of rhetoric can be in impacting ongoing and engaged public rhetoric.

Despite what many theorists hope for, the reality is that public deliberation is often non-ideal, coercive, driven not toward normative and self-evidently "good" goals, but murky and

contradiction or hypocrisy; the argument permitted the English to continue believing in a benevolent empire in their imaginaries while sanctioning violence in practice. See James Fitzmaurice, *Sovereignty, Property, and Empire, 1500-2000*, Chapters 3 & 4, p. 59-124.

¹⁵ Edmund Burke is famous not only for his philosophical work, but also for his dogged efforts to impeach Warren Hastings, the Parliament-appointed Governor of Calcutta after the East India Company Act of 1773, for embezzlement, bribery, and corruption. See P.J. Marshall, *The Impeachment of Warren Hastings* (1965)

potentially oppressive agendas because of entities like the EIC. It would be more accurate to view deliberation, even in its legitimating function in democracies, as a rhetorical activity in which differentially powered interlocutors across public *and* private spaces pursue agendas by vying for supremacy in high-stakes public deliberations. This expanded definition places morality and public will in context, acknowledging how distinct actors emerge from and construct their own ethical paradigms, cultural identities, and political investments that shape their relationship to - and support of - deliberation. In this scenario, intended outcomes - decisions, judgments, policies - of even the most well-reasoned and well considered deliberations can be oppressive *and* legitimate.

This is not to say that all deliberation is doomed, that it will fail to achieve democratic process or address oppression. Rather, I urge us to consider that deliberation can be undertaken by actors who claim just as much legitimacy as voices in public debate as “citizens,” but without the same moral paradigms, political goals, or investments in the benefits of rhetoric. The participation of these “undemocratic” actors must urgently come under scrutiny because their actions condition the participation of those selfsame “citizens” and “states” whom deliberative democracy scholars view as more important interlocutors. These debates were ostensibly about how the EIC tried to imagine England’s future as a legitimate imperial power and the EIC’s respectable role in it. On a deeper level, they were about determining the legitimacy of the participants backing various agendas in the discussion, since the advent of an entity like the EIC called into question the seemingly safe assumption that Parliament - the people’s voice - was at the helm of British Imperialism. It is my larger argument that in this contestation emerges the private sphere, or the space from which private actors can secure their legitimacy as interlocutors in a juxtaposed “public sphere” when necessary, but also escape censure from that public sphere at all times.

To be sure, there were always uneven relations of power among interlocutors; it’s not as if Parliamentarians had not pursued corrupt practices in bribery and backdoor deals that took place outside of public knowledge and oversight. However, the EIC was not simply a corrupt participant in this debate. What renders the EIC more distinctive was not their complete disavowal of Parliament as a legitimate authority on any issue related to economics, their insistence on abject lies and obfuscation as acceptable arguments, or even in their outsized amount of wealth and power. It was their relationship to the very *idea* of public deliberation

itself. Namely, they held public sphere debate - indeed, all rhetorical activity - in contempt. They did so *systematically*, in an organized way, and with permanent repercussions that extend beyond any instances of Parliamentary evasion from public scrutiny.

Everyone from Horace Walpole, who was an earl, to the playwright Samuel Foote to the public political cartoons displayed on shop windows of everyday Englishmen - all them clearly held shared assumptions about the importance of public debate in the first place, about the threat posed by corruption to the proper functioning of institutions. But the EIC viewed these values as dangerous to their ambitions. Fair debate worked against their interests - rhetoric meant *risk* to them, specifically the risk of interference in their pursuit of profit.

It's understandable then, that entities like the EIC would sneer at public deliberation, and treat it derisively. Rhetoric threatened to upend its power structures. It invited people to question authority, address wrongdoing. Rhetoric would slow down the ruthless efficiency of Clive's pseudo military sovereign Company in India - his position would hardly be secure without cronies who would follow his commands without debate or question. The death of rhetoric was necessary in order to uphold the one rule of private sphere activity: unequivocally make profit for oneself and those in charge.

Craig Rood refers to this paradox within rhetoric as "rhetorical closure," which is "communication that attempts to stop further communication" by casting "character judgments" on the "interlocutor and audience in order to force assent and delegitimize dissent" (xx). Notably, Rood generates his insights by analyzing one of the world's most infamous supporters of absolutely unfettered capitalism, Ayn Rand. I regard rhetorical closure as descriptive of the larger moves made by the EIC towards the English public sphere, moves that collectively I term coercive deliberation in which deliberation is pursued with the intent to undermine and disempower the participation of the other interlocutors, as opposed to adopting *some* shared ground and proceeding to engage with arguments from there. Coercive deliberation is particularly pernicious because it refuses to invest in an idea of a government that is a more legitimate authority than private entities, and it disavows the legitimacy of any other participants in a debate they view as threatening to their interests; The EIC gave globalization rhetoric *anti-deliberative* democracy. Today, we call this the "private sphere".

Focusing on idealized deliberation renders invisible myriad forms of accepted and intentionally coercive deliberation that takes place under democratic governments because of the

way certain actors do or don't accept public debate at all. It's the argument of this chapter that private sphere deliberation is mobilized by its participants as a last-resort, legitimate form of deliberation to prevent "public sphere" deliberation, all this in an effort to reduce its capacity to exert oversight over the private sphere. Private sphere actors do so by strategically inventing and controlling divisions between public debate and private economic activity while seeking to reap the benefits of both.¹⁶ I show how EIC's development of the private sphere creates a protected space from which private actors - merchants, capitalists, etc. - work outside the reach of public actors to turn policy decisions, civic arguments, and public perception to their own benefit.

The reason for including non-ideal, public *and* private deliberation as part of the history of globalization is two-fold. First, during the origin of the public sphere where Habermas locates it in late eighteenth century England, globalization fueled forms of deliberation that became the playbook used by a growing private sector to evade government regulation, undermine public arguments calling out their abuses of power, and maintain strategic boundaries and sites of engagement between the public and private sphere. The English East India company is primarily responsible for, and the originary culprit of, such non-ideal deliberation; they deepened and manipulated private and public divisions from within a "third space" outside public or governmental control, and in doing so, created an uneven arrangement of power that *continues* to govern the relationship between public arguments and private agendas today. The East India Company's power, thus protected from oversight, pushed globalization to new heights of colonialism. Coercive deliberation, and the work of the EIC, are two strands of a braided narrative that tell the origin story of modern globalization rhetoric.

Eventually, the scripts of British imperialism that at first denied such violence had now incorporated it into the argumentative fabric. What was in fact contradictory and convoluted reasoning emerging from this recalibration was presented as coherent, self-evident, universal, and now *unequivocal*; in ceding to Clive's interpretation of violence, imperialism began to enact Rood's sense of "rhetorical closure" to tie up contradictions and loose ends in its own reasoning. Those contradictions, the "telos" referred to by Appadurai and other postmodern scholars,

¹⁶ There is strong precedent already for this line of thinking. Garsten and Anderson both point out that in fact, even the most "ideal" forms, public sphere deliberation is functional oppression, a way for sovereign powers to exert their power through demanding moral and intellectual consensus. In its very tectonic structure, and as imagined by those in power, public sphere deliberation demands conformity and subjugation to authority - it does not serve as a way for a civic public to exercise authority over the sovereign state.

became the base code for the role of economic entities under imperialism; while on the surface, the world disavows the colonial age, scripts within contemporary capitalism continue to carry forward and replicate the same argumentative moves Clive and his supporters made at this time: First, violence in the pursuit of peace is necessary. Second, if an uncivilized people are sitting on valuable resources, then more “civilized” nations have a right to dislocate, war against, and oppress those peoples in pursuit of those resources. Resource extraction and asset-stripping are the *only* and most *necessary* ways that governments can prop up their economies. And finally, questioning corporate behavior is tantamount to oppression because it limits the “freedom” of the everyday man, and even constitutes a form of disloyalty and treason because corporations, not governments, work more effectively to advance the public good by creating wealth and commodities. This freedom and public good can only be protected if ignorant publics stay out of the Company’s *private affairs*.

Of course, what these arguments really justify is a rigged economic structure that secures power at the top of its hierarchies and inures them from criticism. Clive took the public morality driving arguments against the EIC and placed them within the realm of ignorant and naive fantasy, rendering that morality invalid, easily dismissible, and therefore powerless. In sowing a terrain in which even the grounding assumptions of public morality - that governments are the legitimate regulators of corporations, that freedom is guaranteed by sovereign oversight through elected officials, that the public good isn’t best achieved through corporate actors - is found to be illegitimate, they effectively delegitimize the public as interlocutors *in their own debates* when they threaten the interests of the private sphere. The English were right to fear that the EIC would colonize England like they did India; but they focused on material and political consequences. Rhetorically and deliberately, the English public sphere *was* colonized.

Conclusion

Contemporary historian Macauley wrote that the Company looked on Bengal “merely as a Buccaneer would look on a galleon,” and I would add that the Company looked at the nascent public sphere of eighteenth-century England the same way. Just as those galleons were steeped in risk to life and limb from the Company’s perspective, so did the public sphere of England; and yet, the conquering of both risks posed significant rewards. Robert Clive worked at the intersection of both types of colonization. They were right to fear that the Company would treat

the English at home the way they did Indians in India; however, where their fear was in the material harms, less attention was paid to the conceptual and deliberate harms to the public capacity for oversight over that same company. In a sense, the Company *did* colonize English civic discourse to establish - and strategically percolate - the boundaries of public and private life in their own favor.

Clive was duplicity incarnate. Not only did he abjectly lie, but he also rotated his arguments on precise binaries, keeling accusations around until they were turned on his accusers while donning on himself the ethos and motivations his accusers believed were on their side. In today's popular idiom, we might call this form of reasoning "gaslighting" or "projecting," where abusers force victims to question their own interpretation of reality. Specifically, when victims try to address or point out mistreatment, abusers turn the accusations around on the victim. Consider the many ways in which Trump called Clinton a liar in the 2016 election despite his endless falsehoods. This is why some people regarded Robert Clive's death as a kind of karmic rebalancing for the wrongs he committed. Clive would commit suicide by cutting his own throat in the bathroom of the lavish Powis Palace he had bought and made his home, having long suffered from what today we would call depression. Famed essayist and logograph Samuel Johnson wrote that Clive "had acquired his fortune by such crimes that his consciousness of them impelled him to cut his own throat" (qtd. in Boswell 45)

In our current scholarship on public and private spheres, we know now that the distinctions made by Habermas between public and private spheres was a false one, and that no such boundaries in practice exist. Our understanding of this should make obvious, then, the paradox inherent in Clive's reasoning. He asks the English public to believe in a notion of public and private spheres, even where none exist. While it's not yet been directly stated in our scholarship, it's clear these public and private dynamics are indelible to the Enlightenment-driven reshuffling of the global order involving not only the dramatic shift of the EIC from a trading company to a territorial power, but also the growth of British Imperialism. It's also possible to see the nuances of what I am calling "deliberately coercive deliberation". Coercive deliberation functions on performative and implicit contradictions, specific and mutually producing dualisms, to amplify the capacity of entities in the private sphere to deposit inauthentic claims in the public sphere about "free" enterprise that achieve the public good more effectively than enterprise restrained by government oversight; Simultaneously, while this

smokescreen deauthorizes those whom they perceive to be part of the “public” from participating in their “private affairs,” they boost the authority of private entities to undermine both the public good they claim to achieve as well as pursue a despotic “all means necessary” approach to profit, creating endemic autocratic policies of plotting, corruption, and violence both within the company and towards a growing category of “Others” around the world.

Coercive deliberation is a rubber stamp, a form of legitimizing illegitimate activities, of building conceptual and sociopolitical walls by seeding durable fictions into the public sphere and protecting one’s own interests and rights through the direct destabilizing and violations of the rights and interests of others. In other words, when English wealth was redefined in the contexts of unchecked violence and corruption of the EIC in a waning Mughal Empire, it signaled the slow demise of effective public deliberation before it could even develop. In separating itself from the intended outcomes of public rhetoric, it weakened the power of authentic attempts at reciprocity, at participating in a shared political body, at legitimately considering multiple possible futures instead of a preauthorized outcome or evincing a genuine commitment to the public good.

It *also* altered the way English Enlightenment envisioned the national path to becoming an imperial power; it was not supposed to happen this way, through a genocide and a corrupt company, but through a (still racial) form of “legitimate administration”. Finally, it’s a moment consequential to our understandings of the relationship between rhetoric and globalization: the perceived risks to economic and cultural security posed by globalization amplifies affective public sphere activity, activity which corporate actors quickly take advantage of through (cleverly disguised) rhetoric of their own. Far from legitimating the public sphere through this supposed mutual engagement and discourse, the public discourses of those like Robert Clive serve to deepen the distance between their own activities and the potential of oversight from government - the direct audience of all the public outrage. This in turn freshly enables corporate control over *how* and *where* globalization takes place, which subsequently (forces) publics to accept, helplessly, the rhetoric that multinational corporations of enormous wealth are “too big to fail.” Rhetoric, as understood through public-private discourse, is indelible to the formation of these paths to power.

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CHAPTER TWO

RICHARD HAKLUYT, PRECARITY, AND THE RISE OF THE NEW MERCHANT CLASS

“We live in capitalism. Its power seems inescapable. So did the divine right of kings.”
-Ursula K. Le Guin

“It’s a strange story because we are used to thinking of the Enlightenment as the dawn of a unique phase of human optimism, borne on assumptions that the advance of science and human knowledge would inevitably make life wiser, safer, and better for everyone... Yet it does seem strange that capitalism feels the constant need to imagine, or to actually manufacture, the means of its own imminent extinction.”
-David Graeber, *Debt: The First 5,000 Years*

It seems impossible to imagine a time when enormously powerful multinational corporations weren't at the forefront of globalization, building our imaginaries of the future by bringing into view the possibility of human life on Mars or driverless cars. In doing so, multinationals have achieved an importance to daily life that enables them to assert the idea, as Clive did, that they are “too big to fail,” and they often use threats of global scale and fearmongering to bend state power to their will. For example, fossil fuel companies make public arguments about the threat of immediate “global economic collapse” should governments replace fossil fuels with renewable energy. In the same breath, companies like ExxonMobil also argue the other extreme by promising extraordinary economic growth and profit for nations that allow for *more* corporate freedom, such as opening the Arctic to oil drilling. Then they enforce these public frights and delights - these risks and rewards - through backdoor political deals revolving around campaign financing. This rhetorical move is why subsidies for fossil fuel companies globally amounts to a staggering 5.3 trillion dollars - 16% of the global GDP, despite growing public alarm about rising temperatures.

Multinationals like fossil fuel companies rely on polemical argumentation, in other words, that depends on the use of extremes. On the one hand, if governments limit the power of corporations, then companies claim we can trigger global economic collapse. On the other hand, if governments don't pursue greater fossil fuel development (even at the risk of climate change), they are choosing not to meet basic energy needs - a public good - that fossil fuels provide. In either case, companies present two catastrophic scenarios, the only solution to which is to expand

the power of companies to do as they wish. Caught by a rhetoric that forces one to choose between extremes, governments continue to confer on multinationals extraordinary levels of power on the pretext that they serve the public good, despite the fact that in many ways, they never do. How did corporations come to define our sense of pragmatic action and public good?

It makes sense, then, that an examination of rhetorics of globalization should begin uncovering how multinational corporations first came to have indispensable roles in modern life. This question of their rise to power is especially interesting when one considers how for most of human history people did not view commercial figures as *leaders*, but *subjects* living under true sovereign rule through theocratic or monarchic governance; merchants were like any other peasant, albeit with money. Today, modern merchants - corporations - play key public and cultural roles in mapping our collective futures, articulating definitions of the public good, fostering economic growth, embodying national identity, forming key players in the projects of empire - or growing indelible to the infrastructures of daily life. But this role as public agents of change was one that had to be imagined, constructed, disseminated, made visible, argued for, then maintained with care.

In other words, *rhetoric* was a primary means through which merchants came to power. Commercial figures first gained public and political importance during the Age of Exploration, and most acutely in England. In Western history, the seventeenth century is considered the bridge between the Early Modern and Modern periods, lasting from the sixteenth through the eighteenth centuries until the first Industrial Revolution. This period also saw radically intensified and increased number of engagements among cultures that previously had limited encounters; the English began receiving actual instead of fictional reports of Chinese, Islamic, and African cultures, transforming the English imagination of what exactly constituted the “global.” Foreign goods and commodities like pepper and porcelain entered the West through the EIC, further polarizing anti-global attitudes while expanding the desire among the upper class for “status symbols” like Persian carpets and Mughal cotton. It also opened new markets and generated upward mobility for a somewhat sidelined merchant class who had not previously held a significant role in the English national imaginary.

I argue that rhetorics of risk and reward mark late Tudor England’s relationship with the new globalism of the Age of Exploration, rhetorics that gave merchants an unprecedented political relevance and visibility that has been reproduced and maintained throughout history to

the present day. Specifically, textual production, at its peak here in the time of Shakespeare and English empiricism, worked to bring previously ignored merchant knowledge into well-worn national imaginaries rooted in Arthurian or Crusader narratives. Merchants were the ones on the front lines of exploration, taking on dangerous and risky trade expeditions to the newly “discovered” lands of the East and West Indies as well as exploring similarly risky overland routes to Russia and the Levant in a desperate bid to recover the English broadcloth market. These texts elevated these merchants by recognizing how their practice generated hands-on expertise, which involved cultural competency, navigational knowledge, and the development of tight internal structures guided by structured bookkeeping and accounting techniques.¹⁷ Once merchant knowledge moved from the niche world of trade into public consideration, intellectuals behind theories of English economic expansion like Richard Hakluyt could now begin to chart viable paths to prosperous empire. In short, an epistemological revolution spurred by European Age of Exploration brought merchants into early English imaginaries of empire and globalization.

The move was unlike the advance of any other kind of social group in the otherwise unchanging English social landscape. A previously reviled social group known for usury, piracy, and monopoly, merchants became almost celebrated figures practically overnight between the years 1580 and 1620 because they alone understood the practical demands and knowledges of global trade required for countries like England to *in fact* build an empire to rival those of Spain and Portugal. And this transformation of previously ignored merchant experiences into forms of viable empirical knowledge enabled the grounds for still further knowledge and actions. Many thinkers in the rich literary landscape of the late Elizabethan and early Jacobean era contributed to this unprecedented rebranding of merchant roles and narratives; but none were more influential than Richard Hakluyt.

Richard Hakluyt (1553-1616) was an influential geographer and economic strategist who extensively collected, translated, and edited original accounts of “explorer literature,” and was perhaps the most vocal public supporter of English colonization of North America. The detailed journals, records, maps, ledgers, and accounts of explorers such as Bartholomae Dias, Vasco de

¹⁷ As the previous chapter illuminates, this move to highlight the practicality of merchant knowledge would come to haunt the corridors of Parliament a hundred and fifty years later when Clive uses this form of pragmatism to undermine Parliamentary authority.

Gama, Sir Walter Raleigh and Columbus all found their way into Richard Hakluyt's voluminous collection, *The Principal Navigations, Voyages, Traffiques & Discoveries of the English Nation*, in addition to hundreds upon hundreds of merchant accounts of voyages. Beyond editing and widely disseminating this text among an eager merchant class, Hakluyt also pontificated on these works by offering visions of how further explorations could build on these expeditions.

Hakluyt scholars note that he "exerted a continuous influence upon the future development of British navigation, overseas commerce, and colonial ventures, especially in the North Atlantic," and was "well connected at court, enjoying the patronage of two secretaries of state, Sir Francis Walsingham and Sir Robert Cecil," despite the fact that most of those early ventures were failures, "and that some of his particular advice, such as the idea of selling English woollen cloth in Japan, was misconceived, his imperial vision succeeded through its transformative capacity to inspire new efforts." (Joan-Pau Rubies 58; Payne 42) In other words, he was England's near official propagandist for expansion, and was intent on using an emergent literate merchant class eager to explore new markets in exotic lands alongside his connections to the Crown to advance the dream of a militant Protestant empire.

Thus, I argue that this significant epistemological transformation is driven by a still deeper rhetorical form, what I have been describing so far as *precarity*. Precarity emerges as the key conceptual framing that rendered the rebranding effort of merchant identities successful. As the example of fossil fuel rhetoric demonstrates, risk and reward create a sense of immediate, large scale urgency that are addressed by undertaking actions that resolve risk and pursue reward; the polemic arrangement of these extremes against each other generate exigence and seemingly unquestionable political leverage and legitimacy. In a world that had nearly always been ruled by the religious aristocracy, only *precarity*, or an ongoing but intensified attunement toward threats, could have convinced a nation that a reviled social group was as important to the efforts of undermining Spain as their hero, Sir Walter Raleigh. Just as threats of economic collapse and foreign powers motivate governments to confer power on multinationals today, so did the presencing of those same threats allow merchants to gain sovereign abilities. From this brokering of political and economic discourse emerges the English East India Company, an organized merchant-run multinational joint-stock company uniquely endowed with sovereign powers to create its own courts, claim land abroad in the name of the English Crown, and raise its own armies.

In fact, I would wager that if we unearthed the bones of contemporary globalization from the crusts of the earth, they would form the shape of the English East India Company (EIC). First founded on December 31st, 1600 at the end of Queen Elizabeth I's reign, the EIC was a semi-sovereign merchant company established to officially pursue trade with what is now South Asia, China, Malaysia, Indonesia, Java, and Japan. Indeed, leading EIC scholar Emily Erikson firmly summarizes collective agreement within EIC scholarship when she states that “[by] stimulating commercial development around the world, expanding markets, and catalyzing the British industrial revolution, the transformation of overseas trade was a crucial step in the development of modern capitalism. In short, before the invention of steamships, the East India Company (EIC) laid down the commercial ties that served as a template for the modern world-trade system” (196).

This template can be observed in the literatures of the aristocracy and merchant classes in the decades leading up to the formation of the EIC, the most consequential of which was Richard Hakluyt's *The Principal Navigations, Voyages, and Discoveries*. This text, like many others of its kind at the time, performed important rhetorical moves that would come to cement the institutional formations of both English sovereignty and the EIC: 1.) It contested given meanings and interpretations of the role of commerce and the state to imagine new hybrid identities for both merchants and aristocrats. 2.) It interpreted the cultures explorers encountered against a backdrop of governing discourses and knowledges regarding culture, rights, and trade. 3.) It packaged and advanced recognizably Early Modern scientific and statistical discourses that strove for accuracy in mapping geographies, “risks” of profit or loss, and national economic growth, and 4.) In doing so, it contributed to a new discursive regime that relied on rhetorics that fore-fronted political and economic precarity, cementing it into the foundation of economic decision-making praxis. The next section fleshes out more fully the epistemological landscape of Early Modern humanist empiricism from which Hakluyt will come to establish an arrangement of power between commercial and political identity for centuries to come.

Transformations in merchant ethos happen in part because Hakluyt so persuasively elevates merchant roles in English expansion; the way they are elevated is through a kind of double encomium, where he would both praise their efforts yet also directly address the sheer difficulty in even attempting global ventures. Finally, this process also takes place because merchant empiricism in their writing is seen as more reliable than previous genres of travel

literature, a reliability that only becomes visible to publics that had previously ignored merchants in their role in English nationhood. Hakluyt is the key actor responsible in making empiricism visible to these to larger publics, who then invested in merchant efforts in droves, believing them to be more reliable in producing returns. Risk is mitigated in favor of reward on multiple fronts.

This transformation was no small feat. Privateering, rather than trade, aligned more closely with Renaissance narratives of brave knights and nobles extending the power of their sovereigns in battle against age old enemies like the Saracens, capturing territory, then settling it in the name of the Crown. Sovereign power and knowledge of other worlds came primarily from crusade-like endeavors. Merchants, on the other hand, had faced long-standing negative associations of usury, Judaism, and even traitorousness; many of them were known to lose crew members during trading expeditions to Muslim “Turks” through voluntary conversion, since wealth and quality of life were both available in high quantities in the Ottoman empire than England. And while merchants could be wealthy, and hold long-standing friendships with the aristocracy, they did not play an important or valued role under notions of sovereignty that defined sixteenth century political and economic theory. The surest proof of this lay in publishing practices; texts like Sir Walter Raleigh’s wildly fabricated treatise on the possibility of a city made of gold - the text that gave use the legend of El Dorado - was widely published and read, whereas while “English merchants and sailors discovered the *true* intricacies of the eastern trade...publishers apparently saw little opportunity for profit in reporting the events of these voyages” (Payne 42). Aristocrats were far more exciting reads than descriptions of goods and their evaluations. Hakluyt had his work cut out for him.

Why were merchant writings - and in turn their knowledge, values, and socialites - unprintable and unreadable? In what sense could a trip made by a merchant to, say, the extraordinarily opulent city of Istanbul with views of Hagia Sophia be different from a mission by Raleigh in his search for El Dorado? The difference is again part of the very different socialities the two groups occupied, and the nature of the writings they produced. Part and parcel of the unpopularity of merchants in public imaginations was the fact that their writing was considered “uninterested,” to borrow Mary Poovey’s term (33). Before Hakluyt, surprising as this may be, “the idea of a maritime empire did not immediately seize the imagination of the English people, nor did it arise spontaneously. It had to be propagated” (Andrews 6). Helgerson furthers by noting that “while the older, negative stereotype of the merchant as a greedy usurer

waned in the last decades of the sixteenth century, no more favorable image emerged – or rather none that would serve to distinguish merchants from the aristocratic leaders of society” (146). In short, the writings of a well-disliked group of people would not be available for public purchase or perusal on the famed collection of booksellers and printers who inhabited the churchyard precincts of St. Paul’s Cathedral at the heart of London on the Thames.

We might call merchant writings today “data-driven,” or even ethnographic. Poovey even suggests that their numerical system of double-entry bookkeeping constituted a form of wealth representation that, through its empiricism, purported to be a self-justifying and non-interpretive but was in fact highly rhetorical, and would form the basis of the “modern fact”. Merchants could offer valuable empirical evidence and practiced knowledge for building actual trade empires; but they were hardly exciting figureheads to lead England into its new identity as a global leader in expansion. To be sure, this was not “empiricism” in any customary sense. Early Modern London was a cosmopolitan center for intellectual life, and the first stage of the Scientific Revolution was underway. Nonetheless, the empiricism of merchant writing was not counted among accepted empirical projects - merchant writing did not seek to identify nature and how it worked, it didn’t seek to invent new devices, etc. Unsurprisingly, this divide between an emergent merchant empiricism and developing science becomes visible in large part because intellectual pursuits were pursued and patronized by the aristocracy.

Why did England need persuading to colonize and pursue trade? Here too we see the way risk and reward generate systemic problems that turn sparked the need for rhetorical wrangling among multiple stakeholders. When Hakluyt presented his grand thesis, “Discourse on Western Planting,” he sought to encourage the Queen to accept his views on how England should proceed in colonizing North America. But while “Elizabeth probably read the ‘Discourse’ attentively but, from what we know, she never fully accepted the thrust of the argument. At a time when tension with Spain was reaching its zenith, and the possibility of a Spanish invasion was more than just a rumour, Elizabeth harboured serious doubts that a direct confrontation with the Iberians in North America would be the best option for her country,” and so no further action was taken (Hull 240).

Hakluyt could understand her fear all too well; in 1580, England did not control any territory outside the British Isles, unlike the Iberians who controlled nearly half of the world’s territory by papal donation, and who exercised brutal control over all maritime routes from

Brazil around Africa to the Spice Islands of Indonesia and Java. Helgerson points out that “the one established and moderately successful long-distance trading connection, the relationship with Russia, was already in decline, as Hakluyt points out” in *Navigations* (256). Where maritime histories of Europe, such as the one written by Camoes for Portugal, were written out a sense of strength, “Hakluyt is driven by the fear of national exclusion and shame. Camoes can afford to worry about the distortion of values that has resulted from rapid expansion; Hakluyt is preoccupied with the sheer need to expand,” and would often “be embarrassed by the questions from his continental acquaintances about English inactivity at sea” even after the second volume of *Navigations* came out twelve years after the first (256-7). England was vulnerable because of the expansionary drives of the Iberians that generated fabulous wealth for them; according to Hakluyt, England was vulnerable because it would not risk further provocation by *emulating* those same expansionary drives.

Hakluyt wouldn't give up on the project of English expansion, despite Elizabeth's lukewarm response to his enthusiasm. He would approach framing his next attempt - in *The Principall Navigations* - by drawing on stronger, more persuasive intellectual currents of his time, namely English empiricism. It's a move that in part answers the question of why merchant knowledge became visible to Hakluyt in the first place – and almost instinctively valuable to enthusiastic readers upon publication of *Navigations* – when merchant writings had gone unnoticed as legitimate forms of knowledge for so long. The culture of English empiricism in London, specifically, and not Renaissance empiricism in the form of natural philosophy, was uniquely structured to render merchant experiences and expertise as valuable to those in power.

Advocates of early Modern English Empiricism viewed science as an exciting avenue to experiment with new inventions and make discoveries; yet in particular, the English literati saw the pursuits of science as a response to tangible human problems. In other words, English experimentation in science was *practical*, driven toward resolving issues as opposed to simply building knowledge for its own sake, or for other more abstract agendas. For example, the particular focus on alchemical science, or attempts to turn metals into gold, is perhaps perversely the clearest example of this English pragmatism in science. Where privateers sought gold through conflict, and merchants through transaction, alchemists offered a third and less risky solution. These efforts were often combined – there was the famed case of Sir Martin Frobisher bringing back a rock from Virginia in 1577 that gleamed gold when thrown into fire.

“Elizabethan gold” swiftly became the public obsession of Londonites that year, if the wave of potential investors for further expeditions were any indication. The buzz became so high, Elizabeth herself called to court the famed Venetian alchemist Giovanni Battista Agnello to assess the rock and offer advice on whether to approve Frobisher’s petition to make further trips to acquire more “gold” from Virginia. We now know that this “gold” was of course coal, which burns in bright shades of yellow and red when placed in fire.

This fascination with alchemy and this rock was an expression of the sense of precarity felt by the English as much as it was the obvious excitement of treasure; if alchemists could find a way to simply *produce* gold, then England could solve its foreign policy dilemma without hardly any risk to life and limb at all. The Royal Treasury could generate quantities of gold to rival Spanish treasure without sacrificing national heroes to conflict and maritime danger. Beyond alchemy, Elizabeth would spend over a million pounds between 1565 and 1580 on enormous technological projects ranging from ship building, alchemy, agricultural innovation, exploration, and medicine. Elizabeth confirms this when she wrote about her investments in scientific and technological endeavors that "all good sciences and wise and learned inventions [are] tending to the benefit of the commonwealth of our said Realm and Dominions and serving for the defense thereof" (qtd. by Harkness 143). Notable here is her emphasis on science as a public good and form of *defense*, and Harkness points out that references to defense “almost surely referred to the larger geopolitical threat posed by Spain” (145). More interesting still is that despite this visage of rampant spending on all kinds of fantastical ventures, she rejected funding for projects that advanced knowledge, but not in ways deemed *useful*. John Dee’s proposal to patron literature on natural philosophy and spirituality were rejected, among other abstract initiatives. It was clear that royal gold was to be spent on practical, material sciences that could build England’s military, commercial, and technological prowess against Spain and Portugal – not extend the abstract musings of philosophers and spiritualists.

Empiricism therefore, functioned as a *validating* rhetoric that provided a justificatory terrain to “practical” actions because empiricism, like the study of alchemy, made claims to produce comfortingly reliable knowledge and “useful” achievements that could solve problems. Such an empiricism was not focused on just explaining the natural world, like Renaissance humanism did, but also focused on *addressing threats*, from small inconveniences like timekeeping (solved through striated candles, then pocket watches) to existential and national

precarities like invasion from Spanish forces. Practicality itself is a concept that comes preterritorialized with “threat” through its opposite, impracticality, or a course of reasoning and action that incurs hardship. Practicality is a cold-blooded pragmatics of immediate or concrete goals, mostly hinged on achieving less precarious, more secure existence. English empiricism explicitly construed English national strength as its object while simultaneously reproducing and effacing English global precarity as the problem being addressed. Investment in empirical methods and beliefs, therefore, was an investment in *security* as a way of responding to *precarity* - of using reward to resolve risk. Practical knowledge would, in such an epistemological environment, be seen as very valuable.

More importantly, the appeal of practicality in English empiricism drove changes in the qualitative and narrative texts that had been mainstays in nation-building ideologies; these too were taking on empirical qualities, fore-fronting “usable” and “reliable” knowledge in the form of numeric information and experiential reporting, both of which root their veracity in claiming to be faithful accounts of material reality. I refer here specifically to the genre of *cosmography*, the main textual category out of which Hakluyt was working. As an active member of the London literati who kept company with leading intellectuals like John Dee, Hakluyt was well read on the latest experiments in science as well as geopolitics. His special interest, of course, was in colonization, English agricultural expansion, and exploration narratives. But having absorbed the risk-oriented grounding of English empiricism, he approached his work on narratives through the tenets of *practicality* and usability, reproducing the attunement to precarity in this intellectual investment.

This move to push cosmography into the domains of practical empiricism was part of a larger shift from perceiving travel narratives as a form of entertainment to referring to them as usable guides and roadmaps for prospective explorers. Joan-Pau Rubies thoroughly outlines the rise of empiricism in travel writing:

[T]he Renaissance genre of cosmography, or description of the world, functioned in partnership with travel writing. To a large extent Renaissance cosmography amounted to the integration of new accounts of observations in distant lands into a system of knowledge initially dominated by classical sources. Writers like Sebastian Münster, André Thevet, Giovanni Botero or Pierre d’Avity initiated the process by which new empirical information became authoritative, increasingly at the expense of classical sources, so that, eventually, modern accounts almost entirely eclipsed the ancient record. By the time of the great cosmographies of the late seventeenth century...the authority that mattered most was that of modern

travellers (often men of humble rank) whose writings had been so usefully collected by editors like Ramusio, Hakluyt, and Theodor de Bry.” (59)

Hakluyt would take this process a step further. He would antagonistically attack cosmography for its confusions and fabrications, boldly accusing an ancient textual genre of untruthfulness, disorganization, and opacity. He declares in the preface to the reader in *Navigations*:

I am not ignorant of Ptolomies assertion, that Peregrinationis historia, and not those wearie volumes bearing the titles of universall Cosmographie which some men that I could name have published as their owne, beyng in deed most untruly and unprofitable ramassed and hurled together, is that which must bring us to the certayne and full discoverie of the world. (*Navigations* 4, v. I)

His indictment of cosmography demonstrates an already ongoing investment in a concept of a “real” and “factual” world that cannot be adequately rendered by cosmographers who package the experiences of travelers into preexisting narratives in the cosmographers own voice. These cosmographies become, in Hakluyt’s own strong words above, “remassed and hurled together” and thus confuse the main goal of travel narratives - the “certayne and full discoverie of the world” (*Navigations*, 5). Hakluyt’s investment in a practical value to empirical knowledge is clear here.

He would solve this problem of representing reality by eliminating his own authorial voice in favor of a new authority - that of the travelers themselves. Small writes that “in cosmographies, the geographer’s scholarship and research gave authority to the text,” but in Hakluyt’s eyes, “the most authoritative geographical works were those of eyewitnesses. Autoptic narratives presumably gave a more accurate, if incomplete account of a world of expanding horizons.” (87-88) Those travelers, however, were not found principally among the adventurous aristocratic class; or at least, reliable and truthful travel writing did not emerge from the aristocratic class, a fact that Hakluyt knew all too well when he worked alongside Sir Robert Cecil to edit out the dramatic exaggerations and falsehoods in Sir Walter Raleigh’s reports of Guinea. Having come from a merchant family of skippers, Hakluyt knew that reliable representations of the world were produced by merchants, who had made it the focus of their livelihood to venture to and document different corners of the world. It’s a unique problem, since to this point, readers were not interested in merchant writing. Hakluyt would not only have to reject the cosmographical vision - he would also need to rebrand merchants and make them appealing if he hoped to empiricize exploration literature.

Here again, an attunement to risk and reward sparks rhetorical approaches. Hakluyt was fully aware of the way conquistadors and knights like Sir Walter Raleigh positioned themselves as crusaders against worthy foes yet guided by virtuous comportment in battle. A fact well discussed among Hakluyt scholars, they note that details of the risks they took in their narratives emplaces these knights squarely within Christian sacrifice narratives, particularly along templates of the noble Crusader knight, or an Arthurian Lancelot on the hunt for the treasure of the Holy Grail¹⁸. Consider briefly the example of the infamous capture of the largest ship England had ever seen, the Portuguese carrack *Madre de Deus*. Its capture is one of the narratives in the *Navigations*, and Hakluyt honors the status of knighthood in first a play-by-play description of the five day chase and battle around the Azore islands, which is followed by a lengthy description of the chivalry of the expedition in first medically treating then releasing the remaining Portuguese sailors who surrendered in battle. It's clear in the figure of the lead knight, Sir John Burrough, who "moved with singular commiseration of [the Portuguese's] misery, sent them his own surgeons, denying them no possible help or relieve" (*Navigations 114, v. VII*). These details of chivalry do not exist in any of the *three* other accounts of the capture of the *Madre de Deus*, indicating an editorial choice by Hakluyt to ensure that his powerful aristocratic patrons would be well represented in the narratives and identities within which they were dutifully ensconced.

What is more interesting, then, is the section which immediately follows this explanation. In true merchant fashion, Hakluyt includes the detailed, numeric and descriptive evaluation given by the merchants who assessed the carrack and its contents when it was brought to dock at Leadenhall, the heart of merchant London. The following is simply a small section of that formal assessment, one that Hakluyt labels in the margin as "A briefe catalogue of ye sundry rich commodities of ye Madre de Dios":

[T]he principall wares after the jewels...consisted of spices, drugges, silks, calicos, quilts, carpets and colours, &c. The spices were pepper, cloves, maces, nutmegs, cinamon, greene ginger: the drugs were benjamim, frankincense, galingale, mirabolans, aloes zocotrina, camphire: the silks, damasks, taffatas, sarcenets, altobassos, that is, counterfeit cloth of gold, unwrought China silke, sleaved silk, curled cypress...There were also canopies, and course diaper-towels, quilts of course sarcenet, carpets like those of Turkey...elephants teeth, porcellan

¹⁸ See Helgerson, Fuller, Carey, Borge, Day, and others in the edited collection, *Richard Hakluyt and Travel Writing in Early Modern Europe*.

vessels of China, coco-nuts, hides, eben-wood as blacke as jet, bedsteads of the same, cloth of the rindes of trees very strange for the matter... (*Navigations*, 116-117, v. VII)

...And so on for nearly several more pages. The list of items is enthralling. Though they may simply be a list of objects, their strange names and global associations and tactile qualities (“blacke as jet,” or “trees very strange”) evoke all kinds of fantasies and images. Now that Hakluyt has used the merchant’s inventory of the goods to captivate his audience, he seamlessly moves into a description of the ship itself, written by another merchant, a shipbuilder he explicitly named as M. Robert Adams. Hakluyt insists that Adams “omitted nothing in the description, which either his arte could demonstrate, or any mans judgement thinke woorthy the memory” (*Navigations* 117, v. VII). Hakluyt explicitly states that he includes this information because knowing the “bignesse, heighth, length, bredth, and other dimensions of so huge a vessell might by the exact rules of Geometricall observations be truly taken, both for present knowlege and derivations also of the same unto posterity,” fore fronting both the need to build and know of such ships for the future and also *praising* and *naming* the merchant responsible for this knowledge in the same breath as he might name Sir John Burrough as the lead knight on the expedition. The positioning of these merchant descriptions of the carrack in immediate proximity with the tale of taking of the ship is no accident. Hakluyt is deliberating capitalizing on the sense of wonder and excitement generated for the audience in the first half of the narrative to encourage them to read further and experience the ship and its riches in the second half. Not only has Hakluyt used factual data to tell the story of the grandeur of these Portuguese spoils, he also cunningly wraps into it the role of the merchant class in enabling us to mimic the potential to create that kind of trade for England. Merchants can be as captivating as knights.

In other words, he positions “uninterested” knowledge as *narrative* knowledge; he used data to advance the story. It’s an editorial move that would characterize many of the narratives that feature both knights and merchants. Fuller emphasizes that that “something powerful and powerfully disruptive goes on in Hakluyt’s text as a result of his larger project of demonstrating and encouraging English expansion...His intention was to describe the world and to show England active in it,” but instead, he “incidentally undertook the task of praising merchants” (187). Cosmography was no longer about rooting English travel into classical narratives; Hakluyt established that cosmography would be a balancing act between the risks and rewards of the

aristocracy and the merchant class alike - both play important *practical* roles in the national project of acquiring more treasure.

What does it mean that Hakluyt chose to rewrite an ancient genre by packaging practical knowledge of travel and trade into the fabric of daring English narratives of chivalry, sacrifice, and treasure? Including them in the *Navigations* invariably altered the picture:

Seen through the eyes of merchants, the world emerged as a vast network of markets offering unlimited commodities and vent, and England itself emerged as the aggressive commercial entity required from the first by Hakluyt's strategic thinking... Whichever way he puts it, mercantile activity assumes a prominence that can hardly help but upset the usual assessment of the relative importance of various social groups within the English polity... If England's 'wealth and honor,' as the tirelessly repeated formula has it, depend above all on overseas trade, then it follows that merchants are exceptionally important Englishmen, perhaps no less important than their traditional superiors, the landowning gentry and aristocracy. (Helgerson 167)

Helgerson - and the field of rhetoric broadly - discusses the importance of writing in strengthening or even inciting shifts in political power. For example, *The Faerie Queene* "stood for neo-feudal dispersal of power from the crown to the aristocratic champions like Leicester, Sidney, and Essex" (154). When Helgerson examines Hakluyt, he more specifically suggests that as a "prose epic, *Navigations* worked to envision a new dispersal of power - that from the aristocracy to the humble merchant" (34). The change of status was not simply a group of (rich) merchants suddenly becoming more powerful. Daniel Defert notes that through Hakluyt, "Europe... becomes conscious of itself as the guiding principle of a planetary process, no longer simply a region of the world" (45). It's important that the *Navigations* opened up that deliberative and imaginative space in which England could articulate the foundational principles that will guide its empirical visions. Spanish conquistadors approached colonization with a near unstoppable greed, wiping out entire indigenous populations and stripping entire regions of gold deposits before carnivourously moving on, for example. England kept risk in mind at nearly all times, choosing to endorse privateering and furthermore agrarian colonization over aggressively violent colonization, at least in this time period.¹⁹ The matter of English expansion therefore was in fact nothing short of an existential question of ethos: what guiding principles and values

¹⁹ We see here the seeds of early English ethical underpinnings for their colonial projects. These seeds would grow into the ethics of British Imperialism described in the previous chapter, where England would bring civilization and democracy to savage parts of the world (peacefully), unlike the Spanish.

would England adopt as it moved from being a backwater region of the world to being one of the it's influential nations?

Turns out, the practical and business-like values of merchants seemed highly appealing from this perspective, not only for their seeming ethical superiority over the Spanish model but for their perceived empiricism. Before Hakluyt, mercantile writing was referred to as “uninterested” writing - almost too empirical in its commitment to literal descriptions, numeric accounting, and dry legalities to be interesting to outside readership. Poovey and other intellectual historians confirm that “merchants themselves in these years lacked a conceptual vocabulary that would have permitted them to assign special value to their own activities,” which indicates that merchants didn't view their writing as conceptually linked to larger narratives, such as the Arthurian legends and chivalry that motivated explorers (Helgerson 168). But under the lenses of growing English empiricism, suddenly merchant descriptions of the complex exchange systems of foreign nations, their sense of maritime geography, and their capacity for bringing wealth to England were incredibly valuable.

Hakluyt capitalized on this connection by bridging merchant literalism and the promise of empiricist pragmatism; he saw in their accounts of trade a chance to apply their knowledge to the problem of English national power. For this reason, despite the greater appeal of stories in circulation at the time of knights searching for El Dorado or the Fountain of Youth, “the greater part of the first two volumes [of *Navigations*] are given over to the activities of merchants, their agents, and their ‘servants’. Furthermore, the voices we hear in all three volumes are often those of the merchants themselves, for their reports are among the most frequent documents in Hakluyt's collection. They are thus doubly brought into prominence, both as author and as actors” (Helgerson 170). Merchant knowledge was in this way tied to merchant identity. The editorial choice of Hakluyt to avoid the interference of his own voice with merchants, in real life and in Hakluyt's compendium, “spend far more of their time acting specifically as merchants: finding out likely trade routes, analyzing markets, securing charters, and commercial privileges, ordering and carrying goods, mastering foreign systems of coinage, weight, and measure, setting up ‘standing houses,’ hiring factors and other employees, and engaging in actual trade. In no body of writings published in England in the sixteenth century were merchants and their doings presented more fully or more favorably...than in Hakluyt's three volumes of *Navigations*...” (Rabb 87). Through this rich but complicated rhetorical landscape of English national precarity,

practical empiricism, new genre formations, and merchant writing, a key social shift occurs, one with long-reaching repercussions.

Conclusion

Adjustments to social structure are an indelible part of shifts in power and control. Mercantile bodies were now endowed with the mantle of sovereign power – they were no longer simple subjects, but entities that could in turn *subject* others and participate in the life of the Crown. Once merchants acquired this semi-aristocratic importance in Hakluyt’s work, they began receiving *actual* sovereign powers. The best and most influential example of this is the EIC charter granting the company the right to make settlements, form courts, pursue diplomatic relations, all in the name of crown and country - and not simply in the name of the Company. Narratives of English expansion not only mask the reluctance and risk against which attempts at colonization took place; they also gloss over the polysemous and often contradictory discourses during this time that resisted self-evident justifications for colonization. It wasn’t enough for the rewards of colonization to outweigh the risks. Specifically, merchant classes held the resources, knowledge, pragmatism, and global networks needed to *in fact* build English economic expansion. Rather than aristocrats leading the charge with single-mission privateering missions, or largely failed and wildly unrealistic colonization ventures like Roanoke, economic thinkers like Hakluyt understood that the right personnel and the right knowledges of navigation, geography, diplomacy, and international currencies were necessary to develop the kinds of sustainable cash flows that build Spain and Portugal into to be on board.

This new merchant subjectivity can be materially measured, and is not simply a conclusion of theoretical and textual arguments. Once Hakluyt published the *Navigations*, not only does mercantile writing fill in the contours and opportunities of the world in ways more explicit, detailed, and enabling, it catapults Hakluyt to fame and opens up realms of new investment into merchant enterprises from everyone from the aristocratic class to soldiers to even “humble grocers” (Payne 202). Where merchant accounts were never worth publishing before, *The Principal Navigations* was given a second edition, and famed English globe-maker Edward Molyneux was commissioned to make an updated map for the second edition that reflected the acquisitions of knowledge collected in *Navigations*. The second volume comes out within a decade, and Hakluyt becomes an official governor for several companies, a shareholder in the

Virginia and East India Companies, and the royal consultant and historian for nearly every English *and* merchant voyage exploring unknown or underexplored possibilities, and the official historian of the EIC. Hakluyt was even known to stalk the shipyards of Deptford to catch explorers and merchants as they arrived to interview them and acquire their journals and rutters. Every company for which he worked was required to have their personnel submit their journals to him for addition into the *Navigations*, which everyone regarded unanimously as a great honor. Its popularity exceeded the private sphere; Shakespeare consulted it to add verisimilitude to his descriptions of the island in *The Tempest*, for example.

This new merchant ethos would achieve governmental officialdom in the establishment of the EIC. Merchants, with renewed confidence that endeavor to the East could now actually succeed, met to decide on how best to convince the queen to grant a royal charter for trade to the East. This unprecedented move reflected the new social order Hakluyt helped create. The EIC, like the other freshly established companies, would consult Hakluyt at this meeting, and at subsequent ones as well. He participated in two consultation sessions, and would come to frequent the company of Sir Thomas Smythe, the first governor of the EIC, to continue lending his ethos and expertise. He would be asked by the East India Company to submit a survey of Eastern Commerce and in 1601 was duly paid 10 pounds for his advice. The proposal to the company would reflect the core of his rhetorical approach – forefront precarity and offer responses to it. The EIC proposal provided to the Queen simply with a list of places that the Spanish had not yet achieved trade, and promised only to trade there.

Given their status as more sound decision-makers, guided by a practicality not achieved by the Queen's more adventurous aristocrats like Sir Walter Raleigh, their ethos was believed. After years of denials, the queen gave a royal charter to the Company, complete with new privileges unaccustomed to merchant life. The birth of the EIC was in fact the consequence of primordial discourses – of English empiricism, of Spanish threat, of merchant invisibility, of aristocratic adventure - that were fused together as a legitimating force through rhetorics of precarity. It's new role as the harbinger of greater futures through global trade is one that it refused to let go - and thus which remains with us today. Like gold coins of forgotten, sunken treasures, the fears and thrills of a nation at risk were baubles glistening in the currents of popular and intellectual imagination. They had always been there, at times circulating, at times buried. Under the new keen and focused gaze of Early Modern English empiricism, merchant

writings were plucked from the dredges of these publics by agents of the Crown like Hakluyt, then treasured and maintained through recurring rhetorics of risk and reward.

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CHAPTER THREE

THE CAPTIVITY NARRATIVE OF SIR HENRY MIDDLETON: THE ENGLISH EAST INDIA COMPANY AND THE PRODUCTION OF RISK

The largest ship built in England to date, the *Trades Increase*, set sail from London in December 1610 after a raucous christening party thrown by King James. Built specifically for the East India Company's growing expeditions to the East Indies, its hold could carry 72,000 tons and its crew was helmed by seasoned former privateers turned EIC captains, first mate Nicholas Downton and expedition leader Sir Henry Middleton. Accompanied by the gunships the *Darling* and the *Peppercorn*, the *Trades Increase* expedition was the sixth voyage of the EIC. Its eighteen-month voyage to the Indian Ocean was propelled by a mission to expand nascent trade with the Spice Islands and then open a new trade route with Mocha, a crucial port city in modern day Yemen that served as the hub of trade at the geographic axis linking West African, Ottoman, Safavid, and Mughal Empires. It set sail under fair weather carrying the ambitions of an England desperate for sources of income to protect it from the aggressions of the Catholic French, Portuguese, and Spanish.

But less than three years later, most of the original crew would be dead from typhoid, warfare, or abduction. Middleton will die of typhoid himself at Bantam. The ship will lay beached, in ruins, battered by storms and riddled with Portuguese cannon fire. The remaining crew will ultimately set the *Trades Increase* on fire, blaming it on the natives, and then set for home on a friendly Dutch ship. Only ten men of the original four hundred crewmembers would return to London in 1614 (Barbour 167, *Loss*).

This sixth voyage of the EIC to the Indian Ocean was ill-fated not only in the face of material dangers from competitor Companies or challenging tropical climates; the grounding assumptions and discourses fueling the confidence of King James and the Company Governors came under serious fire as well. EIC servants believed that the extreme political importance of trade was self-evident and universal, and therefore shared by all nations. And unlike overland trade, the sea was seen as a "free" place where no nation had the authority to regulate its use. Finally, this "freedom" needed to be protected by violence as an obvious, immediate, and acceptable solution to fight barriers against trade. Specifically, Europeans had grown accustomed

to using violence at sea to gain control of goods or shipping routes. These assumptions governed EIC actions more than any legal system - English or otherwise.

This entanglement among a normative definition of trade, the notion of freedom, and the use of violence would come to be enshrined in a legal principle called *Mare Liberum*, a Dutch treatise on international law written in 1609 by Dutch jurist and philosopher Hugo Grotius. *Mare Liberum* translates into “The Freedom of the Sea,” and in it, Grotius makes a key argument - specifically on behalf of East India Companies, in fact - that would become the call of the wild for capitalists everywhere. This “freedom of the sea,” that essentially regarded the Dutch (and then English) merchants as autonomous sovereigns who, by virtue of merely being at sea in pursuit of trade, could exercise autonomous power and authority with the *a priori* legitimacy - divine right - of actual sovereigns. In other words, all was fair in trade and war - and the two were barely distinguishable in the bitter fights of the European EIC’s in the Indian Ocean to benefit from the region’s wealth. If Europeans couldn’t trade, unfettered by any single nation’s legal or moral force, then all means of accessing trade (such as violence) was justified.

Middleton will discover to his extreme dismay that these assumptions were far from assured truths. The expedition would arrive at the port city of Mocha, in modern day Yemen, only to be captured for not having the requisite trading pass issued by the Sultan of the Ottoman Empire. He would spend over a year in captivity in the provincial capital city of Sana’a trying to bribe and negotiate his own release and those of his men. The episode should have served as a lesson to Middleton that, despite the economic and political assumptions about freedom articulated in the *Mare Liberum*, the Indian Ocean operated in ways decidedly unfree. In fact, this trading world was bound up in plural definitions and laws regarding fair trade that mutually conditioned the courses of action any traders could take. This world had its own histories, boundaries, and practices - trade was hardly “universal” in nature, but differentiated and culturally specific. But even as the EIC begrudgingly, and only partially, came to understand this fact, they persisted in finding ways to avoid acknowledging the legitimacy and actuality of these rules and practices. It’s clear from the archival sources that EIC servants were deeply invested in justifying their actions in ways that preserved the foundational narrative that since the sea was “free,” their actions there couldn’t be considered illegal, ensuring the continued and unfettered use of violence at worst, and evasion of Ottoman and Mughal trade laws and tariffs at best.

It's in these rationales for the use of violence that constitute the lion's share of deliberation and rhetoric at sea by EIC servants. This form of rhetoric was a desperate, contradictory process where, on the one hand, the EIC stubbornly refused to revise their assumptions about how "free" the sea really was, and instead chose to elaborate and magnify perceived threats to double down on those assumptions. By elevating the level of risk posed by the Ottomans, Mughals, and Portuguese, EIC servants constructed a world that placed them in a constant state of emergency, justifying limitless violence (whether truly warranted or not). For the EIC, this constant state of emergency also eroded the legitimacy of Ottoman, Mughal, and Portuguese governance of trade in the Indian Ocean. As such, by invoking *risk* as the grounding rationale for all their decisions, as documented in their reports and correspondence, the EIC centralized and preserved risk as a key weapon in their rhetorical toolbox. The following section defines the landscape of perceived risks the EIC navigated.

It's the argument of this chapter that in globalization rhetoric, deliberation doesn't only emerge from contexts of risk and uncertainty; it also *produces* a discourse of risk to legitimate still further actions, specifically ones that in more institutional contexts would be considered illegal. Contra institutional oversight, this form of deliberation is undertaken by economic actors to erode protests, challenges, or counterarguments that would in turn justify punitive measures or intervention. Correspondences reveal that EIC captains like Middleton took repeated note of *risks* truly was to English life; indeed, risk and threat formed the central focus of almost all correspondences at sea. Specifically, this reifying of risk enabled EIC servants to protect their assumptions about the "freedom of the sea," to challenge the regulatory authority of Indian Ocean trading nations, and to retroactively undermine protestation from their London Governors about the EIC's use of *violence*. In direct contrast to the way risk sparked deliberation during Robert Clive's trial, here instead we see deliberation invoking risk. This chapter focuses on the correspondences of Middleton's expedition that show how EIC servants constructed a world of danger that implicitly marked risk as a legitimating terrain in which violent and mercenary economic decisions norms found stable rhetorical ground that forestalled criticism of their actions. The next section briefly elaborates what is meant by a discourse of risk before unpacking key sections of Middleton's and Downton's journals.

Rhetoric and Risk Formation

Risk in the sense I explore here is a discursive formation; the reality of risk drives the decisions of early capitalism through the English East India Company, but at the same time, risk is also nurtured and developed in anticipatory fashion to legitimate future action. Risk, thus, is both a reality of early EIC trade, and something they cultivated for various purposes and advantages. This was nowhere more true than for actions that violated institutional authority and ethics, such as piracy, private trade, and the breaches of contract. In doing so, EIC expedition leaders formed the precontext for the praxis of risk-management, a backbone of current globalization. This pre-context is the early activities of the East India Company. This enables us to connect deliberation with discursive formations. Risk is discursive formation that, under deliberation, gets crafted into a legitimizing mechanism for the motives, means, and goals of capitalism.

Therefore, assumptions that “risk reduction” is a key priority of globalization are inaccurate. Arjun Appadurai calls risk the “ghost of the capitalist machine,” where “contemporary financialization of capitalism - has risk at its very heart” (238). Contrary to the “produced and prolonged runaway growth of risk instruments” where “the machinery of measuring, modeling, managing, predicting, commoditizing, and exploiting risk...[became] the central diacritic of modern capitalism,” capitalism thrives *because* of risk, not *in spite* of it. The East India Company, by invoking risk as the rationale for breaking charter and justifying violence, mirrors the way Appadurai describes the behavior of the wealthy elite of globalization. He writes that

When we look at the extraordinary incomes, extravagant lifestyles and swashbuckling heroics of the major bankers, hedge fund managers, arbitrageurs, swappers, insurers, and their imitative juniors...we are not in the presence of sober risk management but of individuals who have chosen to define - without any models or methods or measurements to guide them - the space of financial uncertainty as such. (238)

By choosing to define spaces of uncertainty not as places where risk must be carefully assessed, these bankers and managers instead choose to see it as a space for profit where *increasing* risk to accrue greater profit is the goal. Furthermore, Appadurai reveals something in this passage that is very crucial to understand about globalization’s relationship with risk: nurturing and expanding risk occurs in *practice*, but the spaces in which they are nurtured are *described* as their opposite,

as risk-averse spaces. These spaces are defined as profitable by those who show cavalier - swashbuckling - attitudes toward rules designed to reduce and regulate risk; but Appadurai notes that these same bankers and managers' roles are presented to the world as the caretakers of "sober risk management" of global flows of wealth. He concludes "that a set of attitudes, dispositions, and intuitions, in short, an ethos (or what we might call an imaginary) about uncertainty is certainly discernible" (239).

By remaining deliberately ignorant of and inflexible toward the trade laws of the Indian Ocean, by invoking risk ex post-facto their actions, the East India Company deliberately (so to speak) nurtured risk. They secure its place in the deliberative process of their decision-making; the reduction of risk would prove disastrous, as all legitimacy for their lawlessness would evaporate; Middleton would have been clapped in irons the moment he arrived back to England, if he had survived the journey. Ironically, risk is a safeguard for opportunist capitalism - and the EIC laid its ground. The next section outlines the specific types of risk at play during these early expeditions of the Company.

Risk of the Other: The Indian Ocean Trading World

Key to our understanding of early globalization rhetorics was the risk posed by the *foreignness* of the well-developed trading world of the Indian Ocean to the EIC. Being unexpectedly thrown into hostile encounters with the dominant Portuguese and Dutch powers hardly helped the EIC as it tried to enter a number of the bewilderingly multicultural seaside ports controlled by the Ottoman and the Mughal Empires. This rich but fraught world was as full of cultural contact zones as it was with treasure-laden frigates, junks, pinnaces, and ships. These contact zones were primarily located in the port cities where these ships berthed, and where the EIC verbally (and militarily) engaged with Abyssinians, Ottomans, Banians, Guzeratis, Moors, Armenians, Safavids, Dutch, Portuguese, Chinese, Japanese, and Aceh Sultanate traders (Pearson).

In other words, their context not only presented them with the threat of armed trading conflicts; it set them the steeper obstacle of coming to grips with the institutional norms and "rules of engagement" that relied on a respect for trade rules instead of the cavalier guerilla tactics of Elizabethan privateering from which EIC merchants were bred and trained. In other

words, deliberative rhetoric took place under conditions of intense, constant risk on multiple corporal, political, economic *and* discursive fronts.

So contrary to Middleton's view that the sea was a "free" place without the reach of institutional governance, the trading world of the Indian Ocean world was far from being lawless. In fact, until Europeans arrived, it was largely peaceful, operating on established norms and cultures of trade hundreds of years old. The Indian Ocean was richly embroidered with heavily trafficked routes linking East Africa with the Ottoman-controlled Red Sea to the Mughal Empire and Aceh Sultanate of Malaysia. These routes were ancient; Ancient Greek maps even link the Greeks with trade on the Coromandel Coast in South India. Merchants from these areas were deeply entangled in a cross-cultural web of relations and differences, even while centered around a shared profit motive. Conflict and competition operated within norms that worked to stabilize across steep cultural differences.

Thus, when I say deeply entangled, I refer specifically to the very *different* notions of trade practiced by these various trade cultures. Despite the EIC's assumption that the right to trade was universal and self-evident, and that its customs were shared by all, Middleton and others quickly discovered that a definition of trade and the rules that constituted "fairness," were different from port to port, even trader to trader. It's important to mention here also that that violence at sea didn't dominate Indian Ocean trade until the arrival of the Portuguese in the sixteenth century. Michael N. Pearson notes that "early Europeans fitted into a very broad and diverse complex of people living around and sailing across the ocean. There was contact certainly, both hostile and peaceful, but until the power dimension changed in the later eighteenth century this did not become an impact, let alone dominance" (Pearson 113). European violence was only one of many attitudes about the conduct of trade in Middleton's time, despite the universality of violence described in Western histories of Indian Ocean trade during European expansion.

Those "other" attitudes of Ottoman and Mughal traders specifically didn't politicize trade to nearly the same extent as the EIC. A deeply surprising fact considering the thousands of miles of shoreline controlled by both empires, neither the Ottoman nor Mughal Empire had navies; in contrast, the competition for increased and improved man-o-wars among English, Spanish, Portuguese, and Dutch navies practically defined relations among them for centuries. The Ottomans and Mughals instead used their ironclad control of their *landed* territories to regulate

trade; the Mughals would regularly attack the ships of offending nations at ports, often dispelling them entirely if they broke trade rules, and also imprisoning any diplomats, merchants, or agents from the offending nation (whether they were directly linked to the offenders or not). This method spanned the entire region of the Indian Ocean; the Dutch never attempted malfeasant activities against the Japanese, for example, because the Japanese would mobilize practical armies to violently annihilate entire crews at even the slightest infraction of trade laws. Trade at sea was supposed to remain peaceful, and had been so for many centuries before the East India Companies began arriving in the sixteenth century.

Moreover, trading ports had strict regulations within themselves. The Mughal Empire for example, viewed trade as an important part of their economy, but its regulation was left to the command of governors as well as what might be considered merchant guilds. Powerful merchants of a port would gather to make collective decisions about freight-sharing,²⁰ complaints (often against the Portuguese and English), and sharing news, etc. Customs agents at each port operated on a clear series of rules that formed part of the orderly and formidably strict Mughal administrative structure; In Europe, wealth from trade could earn you knighthoods, whereas Indian Ocean merchants occupied a specific subcaste in Mughal and Ottoman empires that limited the extent to which they could experience upward mobility. Motivation to pursue profit for personal advancement was therefore not a significant part of Mughal economic contexts; rather, profit was pursued as a way to acquire luxury items, enable pilgrimage to Mecca, and secure an income and inheritance for future generations.²¹ It was not unlike the lives of the merchant classes of Europe before they were elevated to the status of the nobility.²²

In other words, maritime trade was pursued not as an issue of national or patriotic importance, but simply as a form of making a living undertaken through generations of trading families of particular castes. These Mughal culture and administrative structures demonstrate a relationship to and definition of maritime trade that stands in stark contrast to the risk-induced view of trade taken by Europeans; in Europe, trade was so important as a solution to economic

²⁰ Unlike the European system, where ships were usually bought and controlled by one merchant or nobleman, ships themselves at this time in port cities like Surat and Dhabol were jointly bought and managed by multiple merchants at once. They would all of them load cargo and travel in groups to ports like Mocha. Not only does this indicate a more collaborate approach to trade, but also suggests that quantity alone wasn't a priority for Indian merchants,

²¹ I haven't really found articles that talk about this; this is an observation I'm making independently, something I've observed in my comparisons across cultures of attitudes regarding trade.

²² This fact is explored and established in Chapter One of this dissertation.

depression as to become an *inalienable right*; clearly, for the Mughal Empire trade was a necessary, but not penultimate aspect of successful rulership.

It's important to understand this cultural context of trade. Different relationships to trade transform our understanding of the *intensity* and contexts - the risks - within which trade decisions were made as the EIC entered the fray. These relationships script the urgency and importance of certain exigencies in trade contexts. For Europeans, the "right to trade" authorized an "any means necessary" approach, which included violence. When in doubt - or in fear - plunder was the surest way of securing immediate reward. While Pearson notes that trade for Turkish, Ottoman, Mughal, Japanese, and Chinese Empires could be both violent and peaceful, violence was never a systematic approach bordering on sanctified political philosophy for them; only in extreme circumstances was trade worth fighting and dying for and was often the consequence of individual disagreements rather than profit motive. (*Indian Ocean*) In other words, what was or wasn't considered a valid trade decision differed among traders of different nations. Deliberations behind those trade decisions subsequently also differed among traders, and were rooted in the culturally specific economic priorities, values, and paradigms of their respective nations.

Downton's Narrative of Middleton's Captivity

Middleton's capture offers a rare moment when the EIC's definition of free trade clashed with the existing institutional structures, trade norms, and cultures of the Indian Ocean, remarkable enough that it was thoroughly recorded into the EIC archives. During Middleton's abduction, it's possible to see evidence of EIC reasoning in correspondence and journals which are typically absent in other instances of clash because the EIC would simply resort to violence to resolve their problems. In the case of Middleton's abduction, however, the expedition couldn't simply attack Mocha out of fear that the governor of the port, the Regib Agha, would execute Middleton and the other captive crew members (nearly fifty others). So when violence *wasn't* the solution, and the right to trade came under direct challenge, the ships' captains and key personnel aboard the *Peppercorn* and *Darling* began to deliberate in a furious exchange of correspondence. They would reassert and argue for their right to trade as righteous merchants, reaffirm belief in the pure evil and despotism of the Ottoman Empire, and imagine grounds from which the trade rules of *other* merchants could be delegitimized and therefore disregarded. In these high-risk

circumstances, they had to come to the defense of their long-standing assumptions about “free” trade. Their defense came in the form of risk itself.

This brings us more directly to the question of *what* was being deliberated by EIC factors at sea, far away from the talks (and oversight) of the crusty London elite of merchants and aristocrats who funded and commissioned these voyages in the first place. The extensive daily correspondence of EIC factors details discussions of departure and arrival strategies, geographic navigation that anticipated Dutch or Portuguese interference, concerns about which gifts should go to certain port authorities and why, whether to pursue piratical attacks, and other minutiae. But under the surface of these seemingly mundane conversations were violent, urgent undercurrents shaped by an overwhelmingly powerful mandate to make profit (both for oneself and the company), a desperate need to understand “the markets” of this “new” world, and a raw desire to survive the journey with life and limb intact. In the following analysis of documents surrounding the infamous incident of Middleton’s abduction in Mocha (introduced at the beginning of this chapter), I will demonstrate how deliberations at sea reveal the conflicting claims, identities and arguments deployed by the EIC to adjust their strategies in attunement with their constantly shifting political and economic environment. In assessing their claims to justice and principles of fair trade, a clearer portrait of their *true* motivations driving their action emerges, one that has little connection to the solemn English Protestant morality they so vehemently defend. Accepting that in commerce where the goal is profit, claims made to a morality of just trade and legitimate identity function as stand-ins and cover stories rooted in risk, an understanding of deliberative rhetoric in high stakes globalized commerce emerges.

More precisely, I focus on the report of Middleton’s captivity as given in Nicholas Downton’s official letter to the EIC board of governors. One of the key challenges as a researcher in looking through the research and primary archival documents is how to separate fact from fiction, obfuscation from clarity, and sincerity from agenda in Downton’s account of events. Downton’s summative explanation for why the expedition explicitly broke their commission and engaged in extensive conflict with a number of merchants serves as a microcosm of the kinds of rationales and conclusions that most EIC servants relied on, ones that I see reflected everywhere in the archives of these expeditions.²³ Rather than cite all of those

²³ The following is an excerpt from Nicholas Downton’s report back to the EIC, which is a separate type of document from correspondence that occurs in real time,” and from journals, which are first person perspectives

other letters, which could go on *ad nauseum*, I focus on Downton's report as a representative example.

Risk as *Ex Post Facto* Deliberation

The rationalizations and reasoning behind EIC actions took place *after* the decisions were already taken, and then were noted down in the correspondences. There don't exist records of conversations *before* decisions are made - events and reasoning are reported after they occur. I conclude, therefore, that EIC decisions-making rhetorics at sea were conducted *ex post facto*, or after the fact and with hindsight.

This is significant because conducting reasoning *ex post facto* constitutes a self-empowering epistemological stance through which the EIC maneuvers themselves out of the reach of rhetorical/ethical accountability. Whereas "future" oriented deliberation asks rhetors to imagine their ethos, responsibilities, and futurities, and weigh them against risks, conducting one's reasoning after the fact permits for instinctive and brutish opportunism, freeing them from the constraints of having to acknowledge uncomfortable realities or truths (e.g.: requisite trading passes). If they don't have to position themselves among competing interests and interrogate them before making decisions, then they can simply centralize their own agenda and act under its edicts - reasoning to fit their agenda can come afterwards.

The *ex post facto* position is permitted *any* argumentative move because it has the benefit of a more complete informational perspective. The consequences of decisions have already panned out; one can choose to include or not include certain details about incidents. Where if before a decision, an interlocutor chose to record his/her decision beforehand, a certain outcome would be expected as a result, and the audience would hold the interlocutor accountable to the plan/course of action laid out. *Ex post facto*, the interlocutor knows the decisions and consequences made (but hasn't recorded it), and can now choose to package all the information

intended for personal recollection, analysis, and record. Reports, while still written in the traditional epistolary form of the time, seems specifically focused on explaining why certain actions were taken. As such, they form perhaps the most crucial type of document out of all the archival materials for understanding deliberation. While we only see the final decisions and their rationales, it's possible to develop a portrait of the assumptions, paradigms, and predispositions of the EIC that shaped their interpretations of events and experiences at sea, and constructed credibility for their choices.

into a narrative that absolves them of any responsibility (especially if they didn't follow through with "correct" or ethical decisions).

This notion of *ex post facto* reasoning is something postcolonial studies has reflected on. Ranajit Guha²⁴ may have been speaking about the Eurocentric erasure of the EIC's brutality after the Battle of Plassey, but his observations about the significance of violence reframed as law *ex post facto* could easily be applied to the project underway in the journals of Middleton and Downton:

Warren Hastings...characterized 'the sword which gave us the dominion of Bengal' as a 'natural charter'...Statements such as these registered all to explicitly the buccaneer's faith in his sword. He relied on the sword to earth through the constitution of a well-established Asian monarchy and to deal with a fiscal grant of three large and fertile provinces as a mere 'appearance'. It was not the Mughal emperor but brute force that, he believed, 'gave' the victors 'the dominion of Bengal' - a gift which owed little to the political arrangements and issued directly from the belief that man's violence against fellow human beings was 'natural'...However, a closer look should make it clear that here was more to all this than a simple-minded brutality striving for mystical effect. For a buccaneer's sword requires no right or charter to justify it. It takes its stand on an instant of quintessential aggression, that is, on an absolute present, and has little use for futurity, *ex post facto*. By contrast, a charter always looks ahead and derives its validity from the entitlement it confers on its beneficiaries for rights to be enjoyed in time to come. The conquistador must, therefore, move forward from the *Augenblick* of his flashing sword to history, from instantaneous violence to law, before he can even begin to talk of charters and rights. And the moment he does so he ceases to be conqueror and sets himself up as ruler, although the habits of thought and speech may still continue to designate him by the terms of the erstwhile project. (374-375)

Guha here is speaking of the epistemological and political framing of mere piracy as "valid" sovereignty, as developed by European historians. What it proves, more importantly, is that the move from instantaneous violence to international law came not in the form of *Mare Liberum*, but much earlier in the form of *ex post facto* reasoning that recast narratives of impulsive, greed-driven, "buccaneering" violence into entitled ownership. Guha rightfully points out that this transformation of violence renders the conqueror into a ruler. When we realize that this transformation rotates on the warrant that risk justifies violence, then it begs the question: What investment or incentive did the EIC truly have to *reduce* risk? None whatsoever. Risk makes kings out of capitalists.

²⁴ Father of the Subaltern Studies Group of postcolonial scholars, its other famous member being Gayatri Spivak.

How does this construction of risk happen? Both implicitly and explicitly. Implicitly, risk is made visible through a listing of harms and grievances - the material markers of risk turning into actual consequences. The following passage from Downton's report is simply a litany of wrongs:

And if it be thought meet to grant it fit we recover our losses from such as have wronged us, which are three several nations, and in three sorts; as first the Turks began in hateful treason, continued it by murder, robberies and other cruelties; the Moors first by shew of welcome and kind usage, invited our merchants to bring them variety of goods, which being brought, the King withdrew his firman, or allowance, and the merchants refused to buy our goods... The Portugals open hostility as well formerly as at present, both robbed us of our goods, spoiled and took prisoners our people, and continually lay in wait for our farther destruction, in another king's country; now being demanded, from which of the said nations we should soonest wish to recover our losses. (*Letters*, 160)

It's not merely a list of complaints drawn up - nation by nation - in order to vent. It is building a narrative of risk and loss that places the blame squarely on the actions and inherent evil of such groups as the "Portugals" and the "Turks". This in turn sets up the warrant for the argumentative move Downton makes afterward. I quote at length to fully capture the tone:

Wherefore, in my opinion, our best way is to lie in the way of the Red Sea, where you shall not only be in possibility to meet with ships of Surat and Cambaya, with divers others, the subjects of the great Mogul, but also men of Diu subject to the Portugals, which both the one and the other will be no small disturbance to the Turks at Mocha, though none of their own goods lie therein, yet in regard of the custom they shall lose thereby it will greatly pinch and vex them. And whereas it may be though a great scandal to our nation over all India, amongst those which are Musselmen, yet when they shall know how many others as of Dabul, Malabar, and other places no way harming us, shall also without harm pass by us, with pretence or promise to leave Moha our enemies and go up to Jedda, which have not wronged us, whereby they will see that we only endeavor to recover our loss on them which have wronged us, not on any which have done us no harm, which course will not only appease the rumour which may be raised, but also inform the Moguls and others which have abused us that our nation is not to be so coarsely used,...and that they can do us no wrong but that we will again right ourselves on their ships and goods, whereby we shall force them more to honour and better respect our nation, and will be glad if anything can procure the same to give us trade to have our friendship: for it appears by the hand the Portugals bear over them that they should not only be threatened but also pinched; for they being a proud braggart people longer than they be kept in awe (as it were with a whip) they will insult over and despise all others, but to them which they know can do them harm, they will be ready to kiss their shoe. And if God permit we take more from them than will heal the Company of their loss, and they return them the overplus in other goods, they shall not only win their love, but also gain the

reputation to be just men. That this is my opinion and set down in the zeal of my heart, so with my hand I also confirm the same. Written bout the Peppercorn the 26th of February, 1611. (*Letters, 161-162*)

To translate, briefly: Downton is proposing attacking other ships in order to “recover losses” (i.e. plunder to meet profit motive). He reflects that though the Portuguese are the worst offenders, their laws can hold the English accountable once they get back home. Instead, he proposes (after the deed had already been done, of course) that the expedition attack Turk and Mogul ships, which are more vulnerable and whose laws he feels more comfortable ignoring. In what can only be called brazen chutzpah, he even suggests that even though attacking Mughal ships will “confirm rumours” that the English are pirates and cause “great scandal,” he thinks that that attacks would “inform the Moguls and others which have abused us that our nation is not to be so coarsely used,...and that they can do us no wrong but that we will again right ourselves on their ships and goods, whereby we shall force them more to honour and better respect our nation, and will be **glad** if anything can procure the same to give us trade to have our friendship” (emphasis added) (*Letters 163*). In other words, he essentially states that unless they buy English goods, the English will have no option but to attack. Moreover, he believes that the Mughals will understand this point of view, and would open trade up to them (instead of punishing them) by viewing them with *more* honor and respect than before.

One may as well be reading some Early Modern version of doublespeak. It’s difficult to understand just how convoluted this reasoning is. He essentially frames violence as reward, and as a path to “friendship,” and while acknowledging that plunder is illegal and could spread international outrage, he simultaneously justifies it under the banner of risk, loss, and reward. Furthermore, the language is softened into terms like “recovering losses,” instead of plunder. The cavalier attitude about lives, legality, and peace found here is reflected on what in fact took place. What Downton’s report doesn’t state is how Middleton attacked 14 Indian ships coming to Mocha, then held the port of Mocha hostage, then forced his own countrymen, Captain John Saris’ expedition that had arrived later with a legitimate trading pass too, to agree to abusive trade terms. He sold useless English goods at four times their worth *and* took ransom money from both the Regib Agha at Mocha and the Indian ships being blockaded.

The outsized and imbalance reaction to Middleton’s (legal, justified) captivity proves the EIC’s relationship to risk was simply to see it as an excuse to unleash their true desires, and to resort to tactics that these former privateers were far more comfortable with. Downton’s

grievances are linked to violent action throughout his notes; in fact, in the over one hundred expeditions I studied in the seventeenth century, this argumentative move is a defining characteristic of reports back to the EIC. Such consistency suggests that - even as it varied from expedition to expedition, even as the EIC gained more trade footholds and secured trust with Indian Ocean trade groups - risk was always discursively centered in *ex post facto* reasoning.

Conclusion

The work of understanding and defining “fair” markets and a legitimate role within them was new to the EIC. More specifically, the EIC were tasked with, practically overnight, transforming from hardened privateers into law abiding merchants. Hardened privateers like Sir Henry Middleton, Sir James Lancaster, the Earl of Cumberland, and truly most of the agents of the EIC now had to respect not only foreign trade rules (of Islamic and Catholic nations to boot), but also the specifically worded commissions handed to them by King James and their Board of Governors themselves that were designed to curtail malfeasance and prevent diplomatic incidents whose repercussions could make their way back to the shores of the Channel and the Mediterranean. EIC captains waded into murky waters in those first decades of the trade, as such; Tasked with establishing ports using sometimes fabricated, always partial, and certainly and almost entirely fantastical knowledge of the political geographies, linguistic diversity, etc, in a way they were bound to fail in the beginning. But the true Herculean task was to become honorable men who could respect the Islamic empires and Catholic nations active in Asiatic trade, peoples whom they had spent lifetimes hating and fighting.

That is all to say that the EIC servants, once they entered the highly decentralized and deregulated geographies of the seas, expeditions leaders were judge, jury, and executioner of their own actions. It was in this space of construction - where they had every incentive to break the rules and very little incentive to respect them - that the possibility to chart one’s own path to power and profit would prove seductive. Islamophobia, personal agendas, and an almost reflexive reliance on violence would undermine even the more sincere attempts at deliberations rooted in the morality of their official mandates to trade fairly and peaceably. Instead, deliberation would increasingly bend toward tactics perceived as more effective than rhetorical negotiation and gift-giving: malfeasance and violence. Risk was mapped through grievance and direct accounts of violence and was repeatedly centered as the warrant for that malfeasance and

violence. This kind of reasoning occurred *ex post facto* when the narrative could be rescripted to absolve the EIC of blame, and also position them as rightful conquerors. Deliberation can *produce* risk, as much as deliberation is induced by it.

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CONCLUSION

India, beginning with the Mughals and continuing through to Indian Independence in 1947, was the stomping ground and laboratory within which *mercenary* capitalist discourses were conceived and implemented to the point where market economies (and their attendant impacts on public sphere discourse, narratives of “freedom” as the pursuit of personal profit, and the purpose of labor) became the new normal. It is this base DNA for globalization that still runs active in contemporary economics. And since it was first imagined against Mughal administrative fairness within piratical oceanic trade culture by the EIC, globalization can be regarded as an ongoing form of recursive colonization, one whose aggression still lingers covertly and overtly. It’s a kind of colonization that still exerts power today over our systems of commerce and over our rhetorical and governmental capacities to challenge the economic abuses under which we suffer as a result. Our best proof of such claims lies in the rhetorics of the English East India Company.

This dissertation has made the argument that contemporary globalization is built on rhetorics of risk, primarily through deliberation. Risk is commonly believed to be an undesirable quality, something to minimize in order to prevent harm. But as Appadurai and Guha have pointed out, risk was one side of a coin; its other half was reward. The EIC needed to develop a relationship to risk if they were going to acquire the riches of the East; this relationship came in the form of exploitation, to no one’s surprise.

This relationship of risk-mining produced a rhetoric that sought to shift deep currents of power running through political, social, and cultural structures in favor of an emergent mercantilist-capitalist agenda. Essentially, where the rules didn’t fit with their profit-driven agenda, the EIC twisted both public reasoning (Clive) and records of private reasoning (Middleton and Downton) to rescript either the rules or their own ethical burdens within those rules. Guha succinctly points out how this form of justifying and legitimating conquest saw the EIC shift their self-perception from pirates to sovereigns. Deliberation, when understood through actual practices of risk undertaken by economic actors, becomes a non-ideal, undemocratic, and coercive rhetoric sold to us as legitimate reasoning.

This dissertation expands on these ideas of globalized rhetorics of risk by next looking at the Mughal Empire, then in control of India when the EIC first made contact in 1610. The

Mughal Empire controlled 25% of the global GDP in the seventeenth century, with over two dozen peaceful trading partnerships; by being global in peaceful ways The next section offers a vision of what such a future exploration would explore.

Mughal Globalization Rhetorics of *Sulh-i-Kull*

We know that, in world history, multiple iterations of globalization occurred - and multiple moments of “modernity” were achieved by Other cultures around the world. The Mughal Empire achieved its own version of modernity and cosmopolitanism. In the case of the Mughal Empire, it’s clear that their version of modernity depended on cooperation, and a streamlined and consistent governance invested in reconciliation and fairness. But part of what constituted early colonialism - and thus the bedrock of contemporary capitalism - was the construction of monstrosity of all Islamic societies, one which directly contributed to the English sense of precarity. In EIC imaginaries, the “Turks,” as they called all Muslims, were tyrannical despots in the habit of arbitrarily abducting innocent Christians, terrorizing their own people, pursuing hedonism in their practice of having multiple wives, smoking opium, and lavishing their world with jewels and wealth in abundance. This grotesque image was reinforced no matter how the English were treated by Mughal officials. If they were allowed to trade, it was because of Mughal greed for English silver. If they were prevented, it was due to Mughal tyranny (and not because of EIC wrong-doing). If Robert Clive stole the *jagir* of Bengals, it was to save its people from despotic and corrupt Mughals. If the EIC sold all their goods but at a loss in profit, it was because of “abusive” laws stacked against them, not because English broadcloth held no value in the hot climes of India. These racist precursors to colonialist thought fueled an English economic rhetoric that argued that ALL actions in pursuit of *commerce* were completely justified given the precarious relationship between English national survival and trade; unabated (and unregulated) freedom to pursue wealth meant that the EIC felt justified to treat the Mughals and all other nations with any level of brutality, piracy, and corruption that they liked, especially given the inherent unfairness and enmity of the Mughals (or Ottomans, or Persians).

It’s an ironic attitude, since England in this time did not have “economists” or theorists or analysts measuring the wealth of a nation, but more simplistic and despotic methods themselves. Instead, in England wealth was measured almost primarily through the amount of *bullion* a monarch owned. Bullion is the mercantile word for cash - silver or copper coinage, specifically.

The more bullion the monarch had, the wealthier the nation was. This was because royal wealth accounted for England's ability to defend itself against France, Spain, and Portugal. National wealth was not measured by the looted treasures of English merchants, nor the poverty of its beggars, but by the coffers of the King. The Ottoman, Safavid, and Mughal empires had sophisticated mathematics laid into law and run by armies of administrators who calculated the value of goods, rates of tariffs, and total imperial wealth, and poverty was an active agenda item the empires sought to address when and where they could.

Important to note, then, that texts of Mughal administration that document this process of economic administration demonstrate a confident *anticipatory* stance towards uncertainty and risk, particularly the risks posed by "Other" cultures such as Europeans. In fact, they redefine risk more in terms of impacts to wealth and stable administration, rather than through lenses of cultural and religious difference like Middleton and Downton. Mughal rhetorical strategies also lead them to replace open conflict and violence with adjudication, reciprocity, and reconciliation wherever possible, what second Mughal Emperor Akbar and his court historian Abu Faizal would term, "*sulh-i-kull*" (peace for all), an extension of the Islamic juridical term "*sulh*," or merely "peace." This is a form of institutional rhetoric grounded Mughal cultural, political, and economic philosophy both explicitly in written histories as well as implicitly in practice. *Sulh-i-kull* suggests that globalized commerce need not have arrived in the form of armed trading pirates who built a colonial empire that, instead of enriching the colonies it conquered and assimilating into their cultures, stole money and resources to shift them into the West and rescript history to assume European dominance. Wealth - wildly successful wealth - could be harnessed through an attitude of *peace and cosmopolitanism*.

In other words, the EIC notion that risk *inevitably* leads to the kind of intense, affectively compressed rationalization in favor of violence is false. The same risks of profit loss existed for Mughal and Indian traders as much as it did for the English. Yet, Mughal trade didn't exhibit an almost normative, consistent predilection for violence as a go-to-means of securing profit (or even demonstrate that profit was necessarily the main goal of any economic endeavor). The definition of "risk" that won out - that came to define global commerce today - wasn't the *best* one, contrary to the arguments put forth by capitalists against, say, socialism. This form of commerce was simply the one which concerned itself with morality the least, and wedded itself

to violence the most and, by a series of ideal conditions managed to gain supremacy in colonization.

The process was a kind of pre-coloniality begun by the early EIC. Though not powerful enough to constitute oppression on a wide scale, EIC pre-coloniality specifically emerges when they first began grappling with the Mughal trade landscape. The EIC interpreted the Mughal philosophy of *sulh-i kull* as a profound weakness that could be ruthlessly exploited; peace itself was a form of *risk* to them, since it denied them the right to violence, so they projected that same positionality onto the Mughals. Robert Clive in the 1750's began the project of eliminating *sulh-i kull* as well as other Mughal strategies of risk management (especially if those other strategies treated Others with tolerance and acceptance) through the process of colonialism. Colonialism is the practice of economic, political, cultural, and social domination of one group over another, and historically refers mainly to European expansionism over North America, South America, Africa, and Asia, justified through Eurocentric political and legal thought. It is characterized by racism, Judeo-Christian supremacy and paradigms, and violence against Others. Colonialism, and not the validation acquired through "Social Darwinist" arguments about the victors of history, was fundamental to why the EIC, and not the Mughal Empire, laid the foundations of contemporary globalization.

The Mughal Empire was founded in 1526 by Babur (1483-1530 AD) who inherited a small kingdom in Central Asia, the Mughal Empire had humble beginnings. North India was ruled at the time by Aghan tribes. Babur temporarily expelled them, and his son Humayun would first suffer a defeat after which they returned in full force²⁵ after a brief exile after a first failed attempt) finally routed them out for good. It's *his* son, Akbar the Great, who is of special importance to the the Mughal development of what I argue is a characteristic deliberative modality called "*sulh-i kull*". The sophistication and effectiveness of the Mughal administrative structure is thanks almost entirely to Akbar the Great (1542-1605 AD), son of Humayun and grandson of Babur, the first Mughal Emperor. Akbar radically transformed the Mughal attitude about expansion, which was much the same as most nations: conquer and grow powerful. But Akbar conquered - and then adopted India as his own country and peoples, assimilating as its

²⁵ This is significant to mention, because the Mughals under Humayun, and then the early years of Akbar (who began his reign at the tender age of 13) relied on the administrative and Persianate infrastructures of these Afghan tribes to establish a smooth transition to power.

ruler and even taking on a Hindu wife. He became thoroughly domesticated, and in the impressively long five decades of his reign, he brought India to the height of its pre-English modernity. Some historians even believe that if the empire had managed to hold on to power for even a short while longer (50-100 years), the Industrial Revolution would likely have happened in the Mughal Empire - not England.

Even the Europeans of the seventeenth century believed in Akbar as one of the greatest rulers of history, in his own time. Europeans, as non-traders, came to the Mughal Empire to seek knowledge as well as to travel and document culture. They spent time at the imperial court, which was an embarrassment of riches in all senses of the term, and would interact with poets, philosophers, religious thinkers, musicians, artisans, diplomats, and holy men of every stripe and culture and nation. There is a memorable example of Emperor Jahangir becoming thoroughly engrossed with a turkey that had been brought to him by the Spanish, from North America. Having seen nothing like it, he commissioned no fewer than 12 paintings of that turkey to record for historical purposes in his vast archive of nature-based paintings. Historian Rahul Supra points out how European travel narratives he has uncovered demonstrate the way Europeans in fact learned about cosmopolitanism *from* the Mughals, among other forms of cross-intellectual exchange and dialogue. The later rescripting of history to suggest that it was Europe who brought the world into peaceful cosmopolitanism is, according to Supra, using the Mughal playbook of branding globalization, even today.

This didn't mean that the Mughals weren't violent. They never stopped their militaristic expansion from the Central Asian steppes in the early 1500's to the end of the reign of Aurangzeb (Shah Jahan's son), who expanded the Mughal empire to nearly reach Sri Lanka. However, as Subrahmanyam and others point out, they had a notion of warfare at odds with their negative stereotypes as warmongering and bloodthirsty expansionists among Hindu-nationalist Indian historians. Each war ended with diplomatic treatise in which the losing party would in fact *benefit*, or at the least, not be forced to perform their inferiority. Treaties created the elite and complex hierarchies the Mughals are known for. New positions *in the empire* for the defeated leaders would be developed, and preservation instead of destruction of local culture, religion, and language instituted. Losing kingdoms *also* received economic reimbursement from the court for damages incurred during battles. Receiving a form of government welfare, defeated kingdoms would be given relief for rebuilding. In this way, all *nine* provinces of the empire would in fact

experience significant economic, political, aesthetic, and cultural development. The Mughals intended conquered dominions to thrive on their own basis, under their own rulers - not be exploited without balance or limits for the wealth inherent in these kingdoms.²⁶

This system of peacefully reconciling with conquered territories and with comparatively high religious and cultural tolerance, even acceptance and celebration, was unprecedented since the Roman Empire. As such, the Mughal Empire is considered by credible historians one of the most successfully integrative and balanced empires in history since AD, even with cross comparison to the English (Kinra 45). Subrahmanyam compared the Mughal ruling strategy with the governments of Europe at the time *and* its neighboring competitor empires of the Ottomans and Safavids. He points specifically to the way the Mughals avoided rebellion, relied on fair dealings instead of arbitrary punishments (both unlike the Ottomans) and embraced multiculturalism, unlike the reluctance towards it of the Safavids (89). Scholars also agree that this success, and its longevity, was due in large part due to the immensely sophisticated, streamlined, and endlessly epistolary administrative structure that organized the nine immense provinces of the empire, each with their own intricate systems of management, taxation, trade rules, and political structures.

Significant to us, Mughal contexts of writing - including its literary element - were as much an expression of empire as they were sites of crucial political and economic imagination and enactment. And yes - I mean that literary culture didn't occupy a separate sphere from more serious politics. Kinra convincingly argues how the intellectual culture itself functioned through massive volumes of epistolary documents, daily poetic production and performance, as well as diplomatic and quotidian correspondence couched in original couplets by the writers. Of these myriad genres are also bookkeeping genres and the related guidebooks. These genres exceed Western distinctions between prose and poetry, narrative and exposition, and florid versus plain language. Multiple worlds which we keep separate not only coexist in each type of genre, they

²⁶ Consider the story of Rana Sangha of the Mewars; They were Rajputs, a famously courageous and militant caste that dominated Rajasthan, who held off the Mughals for nearly 90 years. When they were finally defeated in the early years of Shah Jahan's reign (Akbar's grandson and the builder of the Taj Mahal), their leader was returned to the Mewars safely, given a position in the complex Mughal system of administrative hierarchies, a secure place at the imperial court, and tens of thousands of rupees for rebuilding Mewar lands. Scholars Ashin Das Gupta, Muzaffar Alam, and Sanjay Subrahmanyam are good places to start for learning more about the Mughals' model of reconciliation after conquest.

engage in utterly different rhetorical lives, webs of relations, and imaginaries of power. Rajiv Kinra explains further:

The traces of such networks are also a potent reminder that everyday social, cultural, and political life in Mughal North India, even among relative elites, did not begin and end with whatever was going on in the imperial court. The peccadilloes of emperors and the royal family notwithstanding, there was still an empire to be run, and the bulk of that administrative work was performed by career ministers (*wazīrs*), agents (*wakīls*), provincial notables, magistrates, secretaries, and other officials whose everyday habitus and working relationships tended to be marked by a confident pluralism and the widespread accommodation of cultural diversity in the areas they administered...[Many], if not most, of these nobles and career civil servants had careers that spanned the reigns of multiple emperors, lending a measure of continuity to Mughal governance even through periods of crisis and transition at the top. Indeed, without the acceptance of such values among a broad swath of nobles and other sub-imperial officials out in the provinces, the ideology of *sulh-i kull* propagated from the rarefied atmosphere of the imperial court would likely have amounted to little more than an idealistic desideratum, even in the halcyon days of Akbar's reign. (25)

A separate dissertation on its own could be written about these myriad specialized and original genres - from the Western perspective - that was produced in this administrative culture of officials like *munshis* and *mansabdars*. Future research will want to conduct a survey of these genres, specifically zeroing in on the administrative writings and rhetorical life of port cities that were the sites of cultural contact with the East India Company.

Looking at port cities takes us away, assuredly, from the glittering world of the imperial court that William Hawkins lived in for three years, fruitlessly trying to gain trading privileges for the crucial port city of Surat. But I agree with Kinra that, given the *specific* political entanglements of Mughal courtly culture, and the understated importance of the literate class in interpreting and enacting Mughal administrative, political, and economic values, the true heart of Mughal culture lay with its literate class and its legal and cultural enforcers. So while Shireen Moosvi and Van Santen, and Subrahmanyam, K. N. Chaudhuri, have conducted important historical recovery work in building a numerically/empirically rooted political and economic analysis of Mughal wealth, in-depth constructivist, discursive/cultural analyses of the Mughal economy are lacking. Critical discursive and theoretical approaches enables us to understand how economic dynamics are emergent from webs and transformations of relationships, rooted to historical events, driven by epistemological, historical, and material conditions, and transformed

by key participants in economic activity, such as farmers, merchants, or officials such as *shahbundars*, who protected customs houses.

This approach also allows us to perceive the role of rhetoric into both bringing economic activity into being as well as being itself enacted across different spheres of culture, geography, and power in the Indian Ocean trading world. Just as English economics were not predominantly developed by its thinkers, such as Hugo Grotius, but its *practitioners* in the form of the East India Companies, so it goes that in the Mughal Empire, *munshis* and other mid-level administrators, accountants, *vakils* (lawyers/representatives) were the dominant class through which the Mughal economic philosophy was developed. Given the intense negotiation, contestation of tariffs or grievances that took place among EIC merchants and port authorities, documents about the port cities - and their literate class - makes an ideal place to find economic rhetorical deliberation from the Mughal perspective.

A next step is to begin rhetorical inquiry into Mughal Accounting. Starting with them is especially important because the English EIC's first encounter with any Mughal empire denizens were with the customs house officials, its protective militia, major local merchants, and their attendant *vakils* and accountants, as well as any number of merchants from other cultures and nations both overland from the Silk Road or overseas from across the Indian Ocean world. These form the core sites of interaction, and it's through these encounters that a clear picture of how deliberative styles - and the linked contrast in values, identity, notions fairness and reciprocity - emerged.

Ashin Das Gupta has done significant work in building a cultural picture of this trading world, and I would rely heavily on his work. However, his conclusions are drawn from several centuries, not simply the seventeenth, and he includes interactions with the Portuguese and Dutch; while both European groups were key adversaries and highly influential on the English attempts at trade, their power would decline. The English EIC led to the British Raj, giving us our current iteration of globalization. As such, this project seeks to focus on English interactions with the Mughals. I understand the scarcity in research, however; since the English were not important enough players among the dozens of peoples active in this trade region, very few seventeenth century texts in Mughal India mention them. Documentation of their encounters come primarily from (haphazard, narrowly focused) European records themselves, especially of the EIC.

Still, Das Gupta will be helpful for this future work, alongside the records of the Indian History Congress, which is a consortium of scholars who, among other projects, is working to translate the primary archival manuscripts of the Mughal Empire. Records exist of *munshis* and their work, including handbooks. They can be compared to English versions of *munshi* activity at the port city of Surat. Choosing Surat as the port city of focus for an exploration of Mughal economic rhetoric is strategic. Surat would be essential in converting the Islamo-Persianate Mughals from a nascent regional power from Central Asia into an Indian empire of such wealth and power, the very name “Mughal” would become the English byword for a powerful and controlling personage - a *mogul*. The northwest Indian port city of Surat held enormous value as the portal to the whole of trade to and from the Red Sea (Middle Eastern), Africa, and Europe. Akbar prioritized its capture early on in his ambitious military campaign to expand and integrate the Empire. Once revenue was flowing in from Surat and Calcutta, the Mughals could become the region’s trade hegemon linked to trade routes as far as Italy and England to the West, and Japan and China to the East. Only the Ottoman, Safavid (Persian), and Habsburg empires could rival the Mughals. Shireen Moosvi calculated that at their zenith in the seventeenth century, the Mughal Empire controlled anywhere from 25% to 37% of the *global* GDP. Middleton knew, therefore, that he had to make it to Surat. It was the next stop after his year-long captivity with the Ottomans.

Final Thoughts

Ultimately, I would seek to argue that rhetorics of “globalization without capitalism” understood through their *sulh-i kull* approach of deliberation and adjudication, defined the Mughal Empire and offers a strong counterpoint to the EIC narrative of commerce that established contemporary globalization. The Mughals’ integrative, cosmopolitan, and (relatively) tolerant perspective on cultural difference, indigenous knowledges, and diplomatic relations was an approach which enabled them to control so much wealth at the height of their power in the seventeenth century. In other words, they demonstrate economic rhetorics of *security and confidence*, trusting even in their enemies, in opposition to the rhetorics of precarity in the EIC approach. The EIC approach, rooted in the teleology of Grotius’ *Mare Liberum*, are rhetorics of fear, gain, and precarity.

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