BRITISH PERIODICAL REPRESENTATIONS OF CHINA: 1793-1830

A Thesis

Presented to

The Faculty of the Department

of History

University of Houston

In Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for the Degree of

Master of the Arts

By

Logan P. Collins

May, 2014

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Abstract

British periodicals played a vital role in building and shaping an image of China in the minds of their British middle class readership between the years 1793-1830. This period of time is significant in that it encompasses a number of critical events in the history of British and Chinese relations to include the 1793 and 1816 embassies to China as well as the waning years of the East India Company's monopoly of the China trade. This period also encompasses the years during which the first major British studies and first-hand accounts of China were published. Periodicals continuously transmitted, filtered, interpreted, and ultimately judged this new work on China at home in Britain and therefore presented an image of China to the British public equal in importance to, but frequently different than, that contained within original studies and first-hand accounts. In sum, the editors and writers of British periodicals from 1793 to 1830 played a formative, though often overlooked, role in defining British perceptions of China.

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INTRODUCTION

The writers and editors of late eighteenth and early nineteenth century British periodical journals actively participated in constructing and shaping a new image of China in the minds of the literate British public. This study will examine British periodical journal articles about China between the years 1793 and 1830. This period of time is significant because it encompasses the 1793 and 1816 embassies to China, as well as the years between 1810 and 1825 during which the first substantial British studies of Chinese language, literature, and culture occurred. This period of time also encompasses the waning years of the East India Company's monopoly of the China trade, during which the pros and cons of a free trade with China were hotly debated both in the pages of periodical journals and in the halls of Great Britain's political centers. Throughout this time period, periodical journals offered readers a steady stream of extracts, reviews, and critical analyses purporting to highlight new accounts and new information on China.

The journals provided the British public with a selective presentation of travel accounts, translations, and other literature generated by a host of China experts from the period. These experts, defined by first-hand knowledge gained from an active experience of the Far East, were the founders and ultimate well-spring of these new perceptions of China. However, the work of the China experts was not transcribed word-for-word in the British periodical journals. Rather, it was continuously transmitted, filtered, interpreted, and ultimately judged by a host of editors and reviewers at home in England. I argue that the image of China presented in the pages of periodicals was equal in importance to that presented in the original works of the China experts themselves. I further argue that the images of China exhibited by periodical journals in their articles and those composed by

the China experts in their original works were often quite different and, at times, conflicting. I conclude that the editors and writers of periodical journals played a key role in the creation of an image of China in the minds of British readers between the years 1793 and 1830.

This study relies heavily on the recent work of Peter Kitson, who, in his 2013 book *Forging Romantic China*, conducted an in-depth investigation into the individuals whose work provided the basis for a new British perception of China between the years 1760 and 1840. Kitson labeled the body of knowledge responsible for this new image as "Romantic Sinology." This image differed significantly from previous images of China derived from the written accounts of foreign Jesuit missionaries and the image of China formed through the acquisition and possession of Chinese commercial goods at home in Britain. Romantic Sinology offered a new image of China because its sources of knowledge were the writings and experiences of Britons involved in embassies, commercial activities, and missionary work who had direct contact with China, its language, and its native literature.[1] This study is linked to Kitson's work because it explores the effect of periodical journals on the image of China presented by Romantic Sinology. More specifically, it discusses the ways that periodical reviewers, writers, and editors transmitted and altered these new images of China through the use of their journals.

Unlike Kitson's work, the analysis in this study is confined to journal articles produced between the years 1793 and 1830. It begins with 1793 because that was the

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[1] Peter Kitson, *Forging Romantic China: Sino-British Cultural Exchange, 1760-1840* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 13.

year of the first official British embassy to the Qing government in China. It was this first-hand encounter of China that served as a catalyst for the production of the new knowledge encompassed by the term Romantic Sinology. This study ends with the year 1830 because the decade of 1820 to 1830 was the last decade before the abolition of the East India Company's monopoly of the China trade in 1833. This event opened China to a new wave of commerce and eventually led to a military confrontation between China and Britain less than a decade later. This conflict, the First Opium War, and the decade preceding it have received considerable attention from historians. In contrast, prior to Kitson's recently published *Forging Romantic China*, the years 1790 to 1830 had received relatively little attention from historians as far as the cultural aspects of British and Chinese relations. The years 1793 to 1830 encompass some of the key events affecting those early relations, namely the 1793 and 1816 British embassies to China. This time period also contains the primary years in which Kitson's Romantic Sinologists began to publish their new studies of China, a time period I demarcate as roughly 1805 to 1825.

The image of China that appeared in the pages of British periodicals during this time period is important because periodicals and the information they contained reached a much larger share of the British public than the collected volumes and books that contained the original work of Kitson's Romantic Sinologists. Between 1800 and 1827, British publishers turned out an average of 588 books a year, whereas by the end of the eighteenth century, the collective annual circulation of the major monthly reviews and

magazines was already well over 3000.[2] Additionally, periodical journals were far cheaper than books, such that even the most prestigious literary journals sold for only half the price of a book of a comparable size and quality.[3] The difference in cost was heightened between the years 1800 and 1827, a period of time that saw the cost of an average book increase between 20% and 40%.[4] For reasons of volume and cost, British readers were as likely (if not more) to be exposed to a new image of China in the pages of periodical journals as they were to encounter the same information in book form.

This study examined close to 400 articles on China from sixty-nine different journals. This number does not represent every journal article relating to China during the forty year period in question. It is, however, a representative sample for the four decades between 1793 and 1830.[5] The break-down of articles used in this study is as follows:

1793 to 1800 – 87 articles,

1801 to 1810 – 70 articles,

1811 to 1820 – 103 articles, and

1821 to 1830 – 103 articles.[6]

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[2] John O. Hayden, "Introduction," in *British Literary Magazines Vol. II: The Romantic Age, 1789-1836*, ed. Alvin Sullivan (West Port: Greenwood Press, 1983), xvi.
[3] Hayden, "Introduction," xvi
[4] Hayden, "Introduction," xvi.
[5] I make this claim because this sampling includes articles from the majority of popular journals from this time and does not overly rely on any one publication.
[6] These numbers do not take into account long-running abstractions. *The Weekly Entertainer* published an incredibly lengthy abstraction of George Staunton's account of the Earl of Macartney's embassy to China in 1793 that ran in every edition of that particular publication from 2 October 1797 until 11 June the following year. Their inclusion would push these numbers even higher.

The ebb and flow of scholarly work on China largely dictated the pace and density of journal reporting on the same. This reporting therefore often occurred at irregular intervals and usually reached its greatest extent either when new works on China were published or when a significant event occurred, such as the Macartney or Amherst embassies, which heightened interest in the Far East. The considerable extent of reporting on China at these key times, though often separated by several years, indicates that a substantial interest in China existed throughout the years 1793 to 1830.

For the purposes of examination, I have separated these journal articles into two broad categories: review articles and abstracted or transcribed articles. The former appeared primarily in review journals such as *The Quarterly Review* or *The Edinburgh Review* and featured writer commentary on various literary works and issues of the day as well as selections from the work being reviewed. Review articles are significant in that they represent British editors responding to and critiquing new work on China at the time it was being produced. Abstracted and transcribed articles, on the other hand, usually appeared in journals or magazines geared more towards entertainment and information rather than critical examination, though even these journals, especially early in the period considered, saw themselves as "performing a higher role than mere entertainment."[7] *The Weekly Entertainer* and *Scots Magazine* are good examples of these types of journals. The articles they contained are significant because they offer direct samplings of the new work on China produced at the time and are emblematic of a deliberate process of selection on the part of journal editors.

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[7] Hayden, "Introduction," xx.

It is important to note that the periodical readership alluded to in this study was not composed of the entirety of the British population. Periodicals could only exhibit information on China for those individuals who could afford the time and money to purchase, read, and understand them. Each of the journals considered in this study are similar in that their readerships were solidly middle class. Great Britain's population almost doubled between the middle of the eighteenth century and the beginning of the nineteenth century, such that the first census taken of England, Scotland, and Wales in 1801 totaled 10.5 million people.[8] This increase, combined with advances in printing technology, led to a rapid expansion of the reading public between the years 1790 and 1800. However, widespread illiteracy and the high cost of books and other printed materials ensured that much of this expansion in readership took place among the ranks of the new commercial and industrial middle class.[9] Even the much cheaper weekly journals that began to appear in the 1820s, such as the 1823, twopence an issue *Mirror of Literature, Amusement and Instruction*, entertained an audience made up mostly of the upper and middle classes of British society.[10]

This entrepreneurial middle class was also politically and intellectually active. As a body, it clashed with the older established orders in advocating for political reform and demanded freedom of trade and the abolition of government sponsored systems of protection and monopoly.[11] The middle class also possessed a scientific and literary

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[8] Hayden, "Introduction," xvi.
[9] Hayden, "Introduction," xvi.
[10] Patricia Anderson, *The Printed Image and the Transformation of Popular Culture: 1790-1860* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991), 46.
[11] Harold Perkin, *The Origins of Modern Society*, 2nd ed. (London: Routledge, 2002), 228-229. See also Paul Langford, *A Polite and Commercial People: England 1727-1783* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989) and Kathleen Wilson, *The Sense of the People: Politics, Culture and Imperialism in England, 1715-1785* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995).

culture that emphasized the enhancement of personal worth through the acquisition of knowledge.[12] These attributes made China of particular interest to the middle class. The empirical studies of China published throughout the period 1793 to 1820 offered the middle class a new glimpse of a relatively unknown part of the world. These studies and, more importantly, their periodical derivatives also offered images of China authored by members of the middle class themselves. Knowledge about China was also important to the middle class because of its commercial aspects. This particular aspect of China became an especially important topic to the middle class later in the period. As the 1833 expiration date of the East India Company's monopoly of the China trade approached, it generated a considerable level of debate throughout Great Britain. The Company's monopoly represented one of the very commercial practices abhorred by middle class businessmen, and members of the middle class played no small part in the campaign for its abolition.

This study is divided into three chapters. The first chapter focuses on the historiography of the British-Chinese relationship. It will show how historians progressed from diplomatic and commercial studies of China to, in more recent years, the study of China's effects on a steadily modernizing Britain in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. It will further show that except for Peter Kitson's recent book, the period between 1790 and 1830 has not yet received sufficient scholarly attention as far as British perceptions of China. It will conclude that Kitson's Romantic Sinologists and the image of China they created account for the foundation of new British perceptions of

[12] R.J. Morris, *Class, Sect and Party: The Making of the British Middle Class, Leeds 1820-1850* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1990),228, 231. See also Jack Morrell, *Science, Culture and Politics in Britain, 1750-1870* (Hampshire: Variorum, 1997)

China formed during this time period. However, even Kitson's work does not fully explain how those perceptions were forged in Britain and the role that journal articles played in the formation of such perceptions.

The second chapter of this study looks at the ways in which non-review journal articles imparted information on China and transmitted the new knowledge of China created in the decades after the 1793 Macartney embassy. It will show how abstracted journal articles began the period by exhibiting relatively complete reproductions of the new knowledge of China, but gradually distorted these original images as the decades after the first diplomatic contact with China progressed and their novelty began to diminish. Chapter two will conclude that for much of the period from 1793 to 1830, non-review journal articles promoted an image of China drawn from small samples of new work that focused on the sensational and the curious, rather than the rational, scientific, and complete information contained in the original work produced by China experts.

Chapter three of this study examines the role that opinion and review journal articles played in the filtering and judging of new work on China during the relevant time period. It will show how the opinions, commentaries, and additional information offered by journal reviewers influenced the progress of new China scholarship. It will also demonstrate how after 1805, review journals increasingly viewed the future of China scholarship as dependent upon the efforts of the East India Company to promote the study of Chinese language and literature. Chapter three will further show how some reviewers, through their mastery of Chinese subjects, styled themselves as China experts in their own right who were therefore capable of generating original images of China all their own. In the wake of the Amherst embassy, these images took on a decidedly

commercial aspect featuring the knowledge produced by China experts married to the personal knowledge and opinions of journal reviewers. Chapter three will conclude that, by the end of the period considered and for reasons all their own, some periodical journals assumed the right and responsibility to educate their readers on China independent of the new work produced by China experts.

The overall aim of this study is to highlight the role played by the writers and editors of late eighteenth and early nineteenth century British periodical journals in constructing and shaping a new image of China in the minds of the literate British public between the years 1793 and 1830. During this time period, periodical journals presented the British public with a cheaper and more widely available alternative to the original works authored by those with first-hand knowledge of China. However, the periodical journals in many cases presented a skewed second-hand version of those original works by China experts. Thus, by the time it reached the British public via periodical journals, the original work had been filtered, interpreted, and ultimately judged by a host of British editors and reviewers. Analyzing the modified version of the original work that ultimately made the pages of the periodical journal, accompanied by the inherent biases of the editor and reviewer, is of primary importance when studying British perceptions of China during this time period. In sum, the editors and writers of periodical journals from 1793 to 1830 played a formative, though often overlooked, role as it relates to changing British perceptions of China.

CHAPTER 1

Between the years 1793 and 1830, British periodicals played an essential role in the propagation of a new image of China in the minds of middle-class readers. However, periodical articles about China written during this period have not received the discrete attention they deserve. Similarly, historians have somewhat neglected to investigate the years 1790 to 1830 as a key period in which an Anglophone knowledge of China was manufactured and transmitted back to the British home islands. Peter Kitson, in his 2013 book *Forging Romantic China*, addresses both of these deficiencies. He convincingly demonstrates how a group of specific British individuals with first-hand knowledge of China created a distinct image of that country which influenced the modernization of Britain in the early nineteenth century. Though he makes use of periodical articles from the relevant time period of 1793 to 1830 to support his claims, Kitson does not consider them as an essential element in the construction and transfer of this new image of China.

This chapter will document the course of historical scholarship of the British-Chinese relationship in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. First, it will discuss how twentieth century historians of British and Chinese relations examined the diplomatic, commercial, and military interactions between the two peoples. The works of numerous historians fall into this relatively broad category. Several of the works examined herein are relevant to this study because they describe the diplomatic and commercial interactions of Britain and China during the period 1793 to 1830. Other examples of these works are notable in that they contain early historical characterizations of the British-Chinese relationship that provoked a strong response from later cultural historians of the same topic. Following a review of these diplomatic and commercial

histories of the British-Chinese relationship, this chapter will examine the responses to such histories from later cultural historians. In doing so, it will detail the progress of the last two decades of historical study on British and Chinese cultural interaction in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. World systems and Post-colonial historians of the 1960s and 1970s paved the way for later histories of the seventeenth and eighteenth century British-Chinese cultural exchange that are the intellectual forbears of Kitson's *Forging Romantic China* and of this study of British periodicals between the years 1790 to 1830. This chapter will conclude with a brief discussion of other historians who have written about British representations of China in early nineteenth century print media. By surveying the scholarship completed to date on British-Chinese relationships during the relevant time period, this chapter will highlight the fact that there exists ample room for further historical inquiry in this field.

I. Diplomatic and Commercial Histories of Britain and China

Histories written between 1910 and 1940, framed around the superior British position in China at the beginning of the twentieth century, emphasized the British side of the eighteenth and early nineteenth century Anglo-Chinese relationship and often portrayed the Chinese as backwards, stagnant, and passive. These early studies consigned themselves to analyzing the diplomatic and commercial interactions of the two countries and only rarely discussed any sort of cultural exchange between Britain and China. Historians instead emphasized the stark differences between the two cultures and characterized the military conflicts between Britain and China in the nineteenth century as the inevitable outcome of a clash of opposing cultures.

Histories centering around the first of these conflicts, the 1839 to 1842 First Opium War (or First Anglo-Chinese War depending on the historian), were written throughout the twentieth century. Because many of these histories cover the years 1793 to 1830 in their analyses of British and Chinese affairs prior to the war, they must be considered by any study seeking to analyze domestic British perceptions of China during the same time period. A survey of the literature covering the First Opium War written in the years before and especially after 1940 will demonstrate the changes in the field of diplomatic and economic history of Britain and China up to the modern day. It will also show that although these histories share a common time frame with this study of British periodical representations of China, they do not cover the same analytical ground.

The law professor James Eames provided one of the first modern historical studies of the Anglo-Chinese relationship in his 1909 book *The English in China*. His work is a general history detailing the interactions between British merchants, diplomats, and military men from the 1600s until the Opium Wars. Though he does not directly address domestic British attitudes towards China during this time period, Eames's descriptions of the Chinese in the early years of British and Chinese interaction betray the contemporary biases of the author. For instance, after providing an excerpt from the 1637 sea journal of Captain John Weddell, one of the first Englishmen to journey to China, Eames describes the Chinese toward the English as two-faced and "absolutely devoid of foresight."[1] He argues that Weddell's past descriptions of Chinese conduct give "as perfect an impression of the Chinese of to-day as it is meant to give of those

[1] James Eames, *The English in China* (1974; reprint, London: Curzon Press, 1909), 22.

who . . . put off Captain Weddell with fair words and promises intended to be broken as soon as the cause of fear which inspired them had been removed."[2]

Eames filled his work with unflattering descriptions of the Chinese both in the past and in the present. He also describes Chinese interactions with the British through time in a negative and prejudiced fashion. Though not particularly helpful in reconstructing the specific feelings and attitudes of the 18th and 19th century British population towards China, Eames nevertheless provides a starting point from which to consider the topic. Eames's account is also unique in that it addresses the history of the Sino-British relationship during the final years of the Qing dynasty at a time when the British Empire was at its zenith. Given this fact, Eames's one-sided treatment of the Chinese is not surprising and, as we shall see, hardly an aberration from other period historical treatments of China.

Earl H. Pritchard introduced some of the next major texts dealing with the 17th and 18th century interactions between Britain and China in 1929 and again in 1936. These two books, *Anglo-Chinese Relations during the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries* and *The Crucial Years of Early Anglo-Chinese Relations, 1750-1800*, cover much of the same ground. Pritchard's descriptions of the Chinese are less odious than the descriptions of Eames, but he still portrays the Chinese as the lesser half of the Anglo-Chinese relationship. He describes Chinese culture as "backward and passive"[3] and

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[2] Eames, *The English in China*, 22.
[3] Earl Pritchard, *Anglo-Chinese Relations During the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries* (1970; reprint, New York: Octagon Books, 1929), 17.

contrasts the "super civilized, self-esteeming civilization, ruled by bigoted and self-satisfied mandarins" of China with the "virile, and self-confident" people of the West.[4]

Pritchard's work is largely geared towards describing the conditions and events that led to the first Opium War in 1839. He contends that the difference in mentality between Britain and China, specifically with regards to trade, presaged an inevitable conflict between the two peoples and was indicative of a true clash of cultures.[5] Pritchard's characterization of the 1839 military conflict between Britain and China as inevitable was seconded by other historians of the period. For example, the Harvard trained Chinese historian P.C. Kuo cited differences in government and attitudes towards trade as leading to an unavoidable confrontation in his 1935 book *A Critical Study of the First Anglo-Chinese War with Documents*.[6] Kuo's book was one of the first to focus specifically on the First Opium War.

Pritchard and Kuo also commented upon aspects of the economic exchange between Britain and China during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Kuo's analysis centered upon the early nineteenth century conditions of the China trade. Predominantly technical and descriptive in its substance, Kuo's work described the conditions of the British trade in Canton and the systems by which it was conducted. Pritchard's analysis, meanwhile, focused on the late eighteenth century. He characterizes the British-Chinese economic exchange as largely one-sided, with the West borrowing

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[4] Earl Pritchard, *The Crucial Years of Early Anglo-Chinese Relations, 1750-1800* (1970, reprint, New York: Octagon Books, 1936), 107

[5] Pritchard, *Anglo Chinese Relations*, 14, 40; *Crucial Years*, 111

[6] P.C. Kuo, *A Critical Study of the First Anglo-Chinese War with Documents* (Shanghai: Commercial Press, 1935), 194.

the most from the Chinese.[7] Trade with China established Chinese products, tea foremost among them, as fixtures of popular culture in the West, and Britain in particular, by the late 1700s. Pritchard acknowledged this cultural exchange, and noted that the Chinese "were having important influences upon the customs, manners and literatures of Europe" at this point in time.[8] However, he does little to expand on these statements and does not address British attitudes towards this exchange of cultures.

Michael Greenberg's 1951 book *British Trade and the Opening of China 1800-42* was the first in-depth economic and commercial analysis of the forty years leading up to the First Opium War. His book shed light on the conditions of the last forty years of the East India Company's China trade and reevaluated the origins of the 1839 to 1842 military conflict between the British and Chinese. Instead of a "clash of cultures," Greenberg saw the war as a conflict waged against the restrictive nature of Chinese trade practices in order to open additional commercial markets to British goods and British capitalist exploitation.[9] Though he touches upon British domestic attitudes towards China in his analysis of the efforts of British manufacturers to expand the China trade, he does not address the topic directly.

Despite Greenberg's identification of an alternate source for the conflict between Britain and China in the 1950s, Pritchard's clash of civilizations thesis remained popular throughout the 1960s and into the 1970s. For example, Cold War historian Evan Luard, writing about Britain and China almost thirty years after Pritchard, practically repeats the

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[7] Pritchard, *Anglo Chinese Relations*, 190.
[8] Pritchard, *Anglo Chinese Relations*, 190.
[9] Michael Greenberg, *British Trade and the Opening of China, 1800-42* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1951), ix, 212.

arguments of Pritchard's culture clash, though he stops short of claiming that conflict between Britain and China was an inevitable outcome of their interaction.[10] Luard's 1962 book *Britain and China* only touches upon the history of China and Britain prior to the rise of Communist China, his main subject. Still, his work shows how a dominant historical characterization of British and Chinese interaction remained basically unchanged from the 1930s into the 1960s and 70s. Given this fact, it is not surprising that the works written by both Eames and Pritchard were republished as late as 1974.

Though this idea of a culture clash remained a long-lasting feature of the historiography of nineteenth century Britain and China, the histories of British and Chinese relations experienced a major change in terms of their sources and focus after 1950. The 1949 creation of the People's Republic of China caused historians to reassess the one-sided nature of previous histories of the British-Chinese relationship and led to studies of The First Opium War from a Chinese perspective using Chinese sources. Arthur Waley's 1958 *The Opium War through Chinese Eyes*, Hsin-Pao Chang's 1964 *Commissioner Lin and the Opium War,* and James Polachek's 1992 *The Inner Opium War* are examples of this new line of scholarship. China-focused histories of this type also benefitted from the work of scholars in China who compiled and released additional Chinese sources from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries along with histories of their own throughout the second half of the twentieth century. The majority of these studies, written by scholars in the West and in the East, placed the British trade in opium at the center of their narratives and argued that British efforts to force open Chinese markets and expand an immoral trade in narcotics caused the war to break out between the two

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[10] Evan Luard, *Britain and* China (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1962), 11-15.

countries. As they overwhelmingly focused on events in China, these new China-centered studies rarely addressed domestic British attitudes towards China and are therefore not summarized in depth for the purposes of this study.

Diplomatic and economic historians of Britain and China continued to focus on the origins of the First Opium War in the new millennium. Glenn Melancon's 2003 book *Britain's China Policy and the Opium Crisis* espoused the idea that the British had gone to war against the Chinese in order to preserve national honor.[11] Harry Gelber's 2004 book *Opium, Soldiers, and Evangelicals* agreed with Melancon's conclusion, but also addressed the development of the post-war historiography in the West.[12] Recent historians have also revisited the idea that China and Britain clashed on a cultural level. For example, Wang Gungwu, in his 2003 book *Anglo Chinese Encounters Since 1800* began his work on the subject by stating that the key to understanding the story between the two countries was acknowledging that "on the most serious matters pertaining to their deeply felt values, both the British and the Chinese people remained far apart."[13] Wang's thesis confirms that the question of a culture clash and inevitable conflict between Britain and China is by no means resolved or universal within the field. Melancon's book examined British attitudes towards China, especially those within parliament and the British cabinet, in the decade just prior to the Opium War, and he even made use of some print media in his analysis.[14] Gelber also discussed British perceptions of China in the

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[11] Glenn Melancon, *Britain's China Policy and the Opium Crisis: Balancing Drugs, Violence, and National Honor*, *1833-1840* (Hampshire, England: Ashgate, 2003), 139.
[12] Harry Gelber, *Opium, Soldiers, and Evangelicals: Britain's 1840-42 War with China and its Aftermath* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), x from introduction.
[13] Wang Gungwu, *Anglo-Chinese Encounters Since 1800: War, Trade, Science, and Governance* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 4.
[14] Melancon points out the relative lack of historical study of the British Press's reaction to the Opium war, and its potential to offer new insights into the conflict. Melancon, *Britain's China Policy*, 135.

years after the first Opium War, but neglects to conduct a similar analysis of the years before it. However, both of these historians were far more interested in and focused on British attitudes towards the First Opium War itself, and not China alone.

The above survey of diplomatic and economic histories of eighteenth and nineteenth century British and Chinese relations does not purport to cover all of the twentieth century literature from this field. Rather, this historiography is included for purposes of identifying broad trends seen over time within the field of study of British-Chinese relations during the relevant time period. Other than Kitson's recent work, the histories produced to date lack a direct and thorough examination of British perceptions of China during the relevant time period of 1793 to 1830. While not without their limitations these studies provided early characterizations of China, often negative, which served as a catalyst for additional study on the topic from a less Eurocentric perspective with more emphasis on the cultural histories between the two peoples.

II. Cultural Histories of Britain and China

Turning attention away from diplomatic and economic histories and instead focusing on the cultural history between Britain and China during the period of 1793 to 1830 reveals a catalogue of emotions and perceptions in English literature regarding China and Chinese subjects. As the amount of literature on this topic expanded, the work of several historians helped to change the course and focus of the study. The ideas explored by revisionist scholars like Andre Gunder Frank, Kenneth Pomeranz, and Edward Said questioned the Eurocentric bias of previous studies of China. Their work forced later authors to reinterpret the British attitudes towards China found in seventeenth

and eighteenth century English literature. These later historians' cultural histories of Britain and China, when viewed as a whole, document a general chronological shift in British perceptions of China from the extremely positive in the seventeenth century to an increasingly negative view of China in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. That the general British view of China changed from the seventeenth to the nineteenth century is beyond question – the how and the why of this change is what has occupied the majority of new scholarship. These studies of seventeenth and eighteenth century British attitudes are a vital prerequisite to any study of the same attitudes in the nineteenth century and must be addressed.

The move away from looking at the relationship of China and Britain from solely a British perspective, evidenced by the China-centered histories mentioned in the previous section of this chapter, was part of a larger departure from historical Euro-centrism that took place in the 1970s. The work of world systems theorists like Andre Gunder-Frank, and later Kenneth Pomeranz, placed European histories in a global context. Their work argued that prior to the nineteenth century, the East, and China specifically, dominated global markets that largely excluded Europe. Even as late as 1820, China's economy far-outpaced all the economies of Europe combined, including that of Great Britain.[15] These world systems studies are economic histories, but are included in this part of the chapter because of the profound effect these studies had on later cultural historians of the British and Chinese relationship. Historians of pre-nineteenth century Britain and China could no longer assume a perpetual state of British superiority with regards to relations between the two countries.

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[15] Peter Kitson, *Forging Romantic China*, 18.

The post-colonial studies of Edward Said in the 1970s also had a profound impact on cultural histories of China and Britain. Said's 1978 book *Orientalism* redefined the way Western scholars examined past and present images of the East. Said defined Orientalism in a number of ways, but in a historical context, he defined it as "a Western style for dominating, restructuring, and having authority over the Orient."[16] Said argued that Western views of the East were based on a constructed reality rather than fact, one that envisioned the Orient as a monolithic "other," diametrically opposed to the West. He further argued that this created knowledge validated Western culture as inherently superior to the cultures of the East and justified Western exploitation of the same. His work caused historians to question much of the assumed history of the East written up to that time. Though Said primarily based his analysis on Western perceptions of the Middle East, his conclusions ensured that historians of the non-Western world, including China, would have to contend with his ideas in all future studies.

A group of Chinese historians conducted one of the first major studies on the topic of pre-Victorian English literature in an edited volume entitled *The Vision of China in English Literature of the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries* published in 1998. The collected essays in this work are largely in-depth surveys of English literature about and related to China. The authors of these essays devote much of their time to commenting on the accuracy (or lack thereof) of the writing of each individual Englishman studied and their positive or negative representations of China. The analysis offered in this volume is insightful, but incomplete. For example, Zhongshu Qian identifies the hostile turn in English literature's characterizations of China in his essay on

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[16] Edward Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Pantheon, 1978), 3.

authors of the eighteenth century and identifies this change with a corresponding upswing in the consumption of Chinese goods.[17] He also notes how much of the negative writing was derived from the work of other, mainly French Jesuit authors.[18] He does not offer an explanation for this, other than to hint that the negative turn in the portrayal of China in literature may be a reaction to the consumption of Chinese goods typical of this period in England.[19] The significance of *The Vision of China in English Literature* is that it predates by only a few years an enormous surge in work from Western historians on the same topic.

Robert Markley applies a new perspective to English perceptions of China and the rest of the Far East in his 2006 study on English literature titled *The Far East and the English Imagination, 1600-1730*. Markley exposes the assumptions of earlier historians that China and the Far East were seen as technologically inferior, economically backward, and politically conservative by Europeans in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries as inherently false.[20] He instead posits that the relative superiority of Chinese government and culture to that of England, well up until the mid-1700s, forced English writers to confront "the discourse of European empire [as] an ideological construct – part self-conscious propaganda, part wish fulfillment, and part econometric extrapolation to sustain fantasies of commercial prosperity, not imperial conquest."[21] He demonstrates this phenomena through an analysis of seventeenth and eighteenth century essays and

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[17] Zhongshu Qian, "China in the English Literature of the Eighteenth Century," in *The Vision of China in English Literature of the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries*, ed. Adrian Hsia (Hong Kong: Chinese University Press, 1998), 117-118.
[18] Zhongshu Qian, "China in English Literature," 118.
[19] Zhongshu Qian, "China in English Literature," 159. "If this is a reaction against the popularity of the Chinese taste in the English social life of the time, it is surely one with a vengeance."
[20] Robert Markley, *The Far East and the English Imagination, 1600-1730* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 1.
[21] Markley, *The Far East*, 9.

literature, from Milton to Defoe, which portray underlying feelings of English inferiority and subordination to a world system dominated by an economically, culturally, and politically powerful China.

Though Markley rightly moves the discussion of British perceptions of China back to its proper place in time, his conclusions as to the reason for the hostility of eighteenth century British authors' to China are not universally accepted. G.A. Starr disputes Markley's conclusion that these authors, Daniel Defoe in particular, felt threatened by a superior China in an article titled "Defoe and China." Starr instead argues that Defoe's harsh treatment of China was based upon his deeply felt convictions regarding religion, government, and trade rather than a need to compensate for an underlying fear of a superior China.[22] Starr states that Defoe used China as a "monitory example of various principles and practices he deplore[d]," and that his true hostility was directed less at China and more at the political abuses of the absolutist governments of continental Europe and the self-interested mercantile ventures of the East India Company.[23] According to Starr, Defoe saw China not necessarily as a source of fear itself, but as a medium through which he could express his fears and concerns about issues much closer to home.

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[22] G.A. Starr, "Defoe and China," *Eighteenth Century Studies* 43 (2010), 436. This same argument was made to account for Defoe's poor opinion of China in an earlier essay by Shouyi Chen in the above mentioned volume *The vision of China in English Literature of the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries*. Chen, however, sees Defoe's opinion of China as predetermined based upon his strongly held beliefs and convictions, not because of his use of China as a literary whipping boy for absolutist government and self-interested commercialism. Shouyi Chen, "Daniel Defoe, China's Severe Critic," in *The Vision of China in English Literature from of the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries*, ed. Adrian Hsia (Hong Kong: Chinese University Press, 1998) 241-243.

[23] Starr, "Defoe and China," 436.

Many other historians have documented this use of China as an imaginary space for addressing domestic issues in the writing of other seventeenth and eighteenth century British authors. Focusing on the period of Western admiration for China, Rachel Ramsey demonstrates how British essayists expressed positive perceptions of China as early as the seventeenth century. Her 2001 analysis of John Webb's *An Historical Essay* focuses on the ways in which Webb and other authors of his time considered the Chinese system of merit-based advancement as an enviable mechanism for government placement.[24] In his 2003 paper "Concealing the Bounds: Imagining the British Nation Through China," Robert Batchelor also notes British essayists' emphasis on the positive aspects of China's government bureaucracy. Batchelor discusses how early eighteenth century British oppositionist patriots sought in China's merit-based nobility a means to "repair broken traditions" and revitalize an upper class wandering from its ordained mission as counselors to the nation's rulers.[25] Both works demonstrate how individuals in Britain used images of China to advocate for change at home. While they are informative as individual case studies, they do not necessarily represent a general trend in British attitudes towards China.

These positive views of China would generally not outlast the eighteenth century. By the late 1700s, what had been feelings of open admiration and, in some cases, a desire for emulation had largely changed. Historians have offered numerous explanations for this change. Some have analyzed the negative shift in British attitudes towards China through patterns of consumption and economics – in essence, the very commercial

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[24] Rachel Ramsey, "China and the Idea of Order in John Webb's *An Historical Essay*," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 62, no. 3, (July 2001): 483-503.
[25] Robert Batchelor, "Concealing the Bounds: Imagining the British Nation Through China," in *The Global Eighteenth Century*, ed. Felicity Nussbaum (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2003), 82.

conditions mentioned by Pritchard much earlier in the historiography. Kristin Bayer's 2012 article "Contagious Consumption" describes the economic basis for the shift in British opinions of China. Britain's consumption of Chinese tea and inability to introduce a product desired in China led to a considerable trade imbalance by the beginning of the 19th century. Bayer argues that this trade imbalance gave rise to a fear of tea among some Britons, and a correspondingly negative turn in British views of the tea's source. One expression of this fear, she notes, was a British characterization of the Chinese as "effeminate tea sippers," and editorialized warnings to the public of the emasculating effects of Chinese tea on the male British population.[26]

In an earlier article written in 1995, Beth Kowaleski-Wallace also analyzes the tea habits of eighteenth century Britain, noting fears very similar to those discussed by Bayer. Tea's effeminizing effects on British men and the threat tea consumption posed to the British economy are both mentioned, as well as an additional fear as to tea's effects on England's military capabilities.[27] The larger focus of Kowaleski-Wallace's article, however, is on tea consumption's effects on British women. She describes a phenomenon by which tea drinking is assigned opposing effects for women. Tea is said to both facilitate and disrupt female domesticity – the tea table is in one instance appropriate for women and in another the source of a destructive female power.[28] Kowaleski-Wallace notes that both characterizations ascribe a de facto power to women that is either positive or negative depending on the class of the women in question. The

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[26] Kristin Bayer, "Contagious Consumption: Commodity Debates over the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Century China Trade," *International Journal of Asia Pacific Studies* 8 (2012): 84.

[27] Beth Kowaleski-Wallace, "Tea, Gender, and Domesticity in Eighteenth-Century Britain," *Studies in Eighteenth Century* Culture 23 (1994), 135-136. Kowaleski-Lewis mentions one author who questions why Britain "as a wise, active, and warlike nation" would desire to imitate "some of the most effeminate people on the face of the whole earth" (the Chinese).

[28] Kowaleski-Wallace, "Tea, Gender, and Domesticity," 140-141.

upper class woman's power can be controlled, while the lower-class woman's power is a threat to male domination.[29] Kowaleski-Wallace provides an example of how a Chinese product, tea, became a critical medium for defining notions of gender and class in eighteenth century Britain. Like Bayer, she draws a direct connection between the feminine habit of tea consumption and the female gendering of Chinese products and, by extension, China as a whole.

The equation of things Chinese to things feminine was not confined to tea drinking. David Porter documents a similar comparison in a 2002 article examining the British consumption of other Chinese goods such as porcelain and furniture. He describes the derision many English classicists heaped upon the fashion of chinoiserie, which became popular during the late eighteenth century due to its "exaggerated concern with superficial prettiness."[30] Porter goes on to assert the direct association made between the accumulation and consumption of Chinese goods and the "untutored female eye."[31]

Porter expands upon his treatment of Chinese goods in eighteenth century Britain in his 2010 book, *The Chinese Taste in Imperial England.* In this work, he explores the role that Chinese goods and the consumer culture they produced in eighteenth century Britain helped to shape English modernity. Like Markley, his argument counters the prevailing story of the British fascination with Chinese goods and reestablishes the primacy of China in the eighteenth century world. Porter also identifies British feelings

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[29] Kowaleski-Wallace, "Tea, Gender, and Domesticity," 141-142.
[30] David Porter, "Monstrous Beauty: Eighteenth-Century Fashion and the Aesthetics of the Chinese Taste," *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 35 (2002): 403.
[31] Porter, "Monstrous Beauty," 407.

of discomfort and anxiety generated by Britain's place in the world and the British fascination with and dismissive attitude towards Chinese material goods. He sees Chinese imports as a catalyst for the hostile shift in British attitudes towards China in the early 19th century in that they "provided a material and visual context through which the vast, even overwhelming power and history of the Chinese empire could be re-imagined as fragile, superficial, and faintly absurd."[32]

In addition to adding fuel to the revisionist fire of eighteenth century British perceptions of China, Porter takes great pains to show how the British absorption of Chinese goods into the domestic mainstream transformed constructs of gender, nation, and desire.[33] He pays particular attention to the relationship between consumption of Chinese goods and emerging patterns of female commercial agency in British society, revisiting the content of much of his earlier work. The buying and selling of Chinaware, which came to be largely a female activity, afforded women a "disturbingly public role" in defining British culture, fashion, and taste.[34] The association of women with the commercial trade in Chinese goods in Britain caused China, its products, people, and the country itself, to be increasingly associated with the female gender. In a separate article written several years prior, Porter makes an explicit connection between the feminization and trivialization of Chinese goods and culture to the growth of "the patronizing and imperious attitude toward China" that typified Britain at the beginning of the nineteenth

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[32] David Porter, *The Chinese Taste* in Eighteenth-Century England (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 7.
[33] Porter, *The Chinese Taste*, 6.
[34] Porter, *The Chinese Taste*, 34.

century.[35] Porter's direct link between the gendering of China and negative British perceptions of the Chinese says as much about eighteenth and nineteenth century British culture as it does about that culture's perceptions of China.

The separate aspects of the British-Chinese relationship, commerce, culture, and Orientalism, are combined in one of the latest studies in the field. Chi-Ming Yang examines China as an exemplar of both virtue and vice in a 2011 book titled *Performing China*. At the same time, she provides a slightly altered picture of China and Britain in the 18th century by questioning the "linear trajectory of de-idealization" of China described by recent scholars and discussed above.[36] While she doesn't dispute the existence of such a trend, she notes that an attitude of strong ambivalence coexisted with positive descriptions of China in this period. Yang sees China's role as that of an exemplar of Eastern culture, in both its positive and negative forms, and therefore a mediator between West and East. China's example, she says, was of particular importance to the mercantile culture of eighteenth century Britain because of its status as both a politically and economically preeminent empire and as an objectified, desirable import commodity.[37]

Yang also broadens the discussion on China with regards to Orientalism. She differentiates the Orientalism of Said, characterized by a nineteenth-century discourse of backwardness, sensuality, and despotism, from an "early modern Orientalism," characterized by the element of idealization discussed above, that applies much more to

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[35] David Porter, "A Peculiar but Uninteresting Nation: China and the Discourse of Commerce in Eighteenth-Century England," *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 33 (2000): 184.
[36] Chi-ming Yang, *Performing China*: *Virtue, Commerce, and Orientalism in Eighteenth-Century England, 1660-1760* (Baltimore, Johns Hopkins University Press, 2011), 25.
[37] Yang, *Performing China*, 31.

British perceptions of China.[38] It is the construction of early modern Orientalism that provides the theoretical framework of her book.

The product of all this discussion and analysis makes it difficult to deny the fact that China played an active role in the shaping of the lives and minds of the English (and later British) of the seventeenth, eighteenth, and nineteenth centuries. To some seventeenth and eighteenth century English authors, China was an imagined construct, by turns both ideal and sinister, but always capable of serving as a medium for the expression and transmission of ideas much closer to the British metropole. To others, China was an objectified commodity impacting the formation of a new commercial British identity. The consumption of Chinese goods effeminized, empowered, and destroyed, all the while crafting in the minds of its consumers certain notions about the place of origin of these goods.

The cultural and literal histories crafted by Markley, Porter, and Yang have gone a long way towards developing ideas about the Anglo-Chinese cultural exchange in the eighteenth century. However, they do not touch upon the period of British-Chinese relations from the late eighteenth century into the first half of the nineteenth century. Their studies, along with those of the other historians mentioned above, documented the forces and influences that played upon the minds of British authors and readers and their ideas of China on the eve of the period 1793 to 1830. As such, their work was a necessary precursor to similar studies of this later period. Described by one historian as a "crucial watershed in which many modern British attitudes to China were established and

[38] Yang, *Performing* China, 25.

explored," this period just prior to the First Opium War and the opening of China has received very little attention from cultural historians until just recently.[39]

III. Kitson's *Forging Romantic China* and China in Print Media

Peter Kitson's 2013 book *Forging Romantic China* expands upon the field of study defined by the works of Markley, Porter, and Yang. These three historians primarily concerned themselves with the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. Kitson's study addresses a later period in the Anglo-Chinese relationship, looking at what he labels as the "Romantic Sinology" of a period from 1760-1840. The concept of Romantic Sinology is key to his study, and he argues that it comprised "a distinct body or form of Oriental scholarship, differentiated from early modern Jesuit writing on China . . . 'manufactured' from the writings of a diverse assortment of British China experts."[40] These oriental scholars, or "China experts" as Kitson labels them, produced a body of literary work, commentaries, and dramatic and visual art that emphasized an "objective study of China based on first-hand encounter . . . conducted according to empirical and scientific assumptions."[41] The work of Kitson's Romantic Sinologists partially grew out of and responded to eighteenth century England's China of the imagination, perceived, as it was, through the superficial malaise of its commercial goods. Their emphasis on an empirical method for studying China was likely also a reaction to the history of seventeenth and eighteenth century Jesuit representations of the Chinese empire. They

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[39] Kitson, *Forging Romantic China,* 2.
[40] Kitson, *Forging Romantic China,* 13.
[41] Kitson, *Forging Romantic China*, 14. Kitson's study looks at most, if not all of the widely acknowledged China scholars of the period. Among these are Joshua Marshman, Thomas Percy, Robert Morrison, George Staunton, and John Francis Davis.

produced an image of China both knowable and substantial, but in an arrested state of development, "capable of being understood and controlled."[42]

Kitson's emphasis on individual nineteenth century British Chinese experts as crucial to the forging of a modernizing Britain's perceptions of China assumes that each individual was acknowledged as a China expert at the time of their work. He also states that his study is less concerned with how factually accurate the work of his experts was with regards to Qing China (he admits that in many cases they were not).[43] Kitson is far more interested in whether these experts were perceived to be accurate at the time they were producing work on China. This distinction is crucial, because it acknowledges the possibility that other self-proclaimed or self-representing "China experts," perhaps individuals with less established credentials than those considered by Kitson, participated in the forging of a Romantic Sinology.

It is within this grey area of China expertise that the writers for late eighteenth and early nineteenth-century British periodicals operated. Not only did these often unnamed and rarely credentialed individuals provide the British public with choice extracts and compilations of the work of the Romantic Sinologists studied by Kitson, but they often took it upon themselves to critique these same experts in a sometimes scholastic, but oftentimes polemic, fashion. Did these purveyors of journalistic opinion boast the same level of publicly acknowledged scholarly eminence as the George Stauntons and Robert Morrisons of the early nineteenth century? The answer is certainly not. However, they nevertheless represent an important medium through which the work

[42] Kitson, *Forging Romantic China,* 15.
[43] Kitson, *Forging Romantic China*, 13

of Kitson's experts was transmitted to the British public, and are therefore worthy of a scholarly attention all their own.

Other than Kitson's recent work, late eighteenth and early nineteenth century British periodicals (and print media in general) have not been explored, in depth and in their own right, as a means through which British perceptions of China were constructed and negotiated. However, some historians have conducted studies related to British views of China using these sources.

Howard Mackey's 1975 article "The Mandarins and their Tea-Kettles: The Rev. Sydney Smith's Opinions on China" compares and contrasts the early nineteenth century articles relating to China of two different periodical journals, the *Edinburgh Review* and the *Quarterly Review*. Mackey's analysis centers mostly on the rival political affiliation of the two publications and their corresponding coverage of Chinese topics and the positive or negative nature of their opinions on China. He finds that the opinions of the Tory *Quarterly Review* were far more sympathetic to China, while the writers of the Whig *Edinburgh Review* were generally concerned more with promoting their "liberal or *laissez-faire* principles which were almost totally irrelevant to the situation [in China]."[44] Mackey also notes how, even in the 40-year span of time he considers, the articles of both publications take on a gradually more negative tone with regards to Chinese culture, politics, and the conduct of trade with British merchants in the Far East.

Mackey's final conclusions deal much more with his original topic of inquiry, the opinions of the Reverend Sydney Smith, than they do with the journals' general opinions

[44] Howard Mackey, "The Mandarins and their Tea-Kettles: The Rev. Sydney Smith's Opinions on China," *Asia Quarterly* 3 (1975): 258.

on China. He concludes that the Reverend's opinions on China changed leading up to the start of the First Opium War partially because he read the politically charged opinions of the writers of the *Edinburgh Review*.[45] The greater implication of his work is the demonstration of how journalistic representations of China, at least in the case of the *Quarterly Review* and the *Edinburgh Review*, depended largely upon the political affiliation of the publications in question. Contrary to what one might expect, it was the liberal *Edinburgh Review* that heaped condemnation upon the Chinese and clamored for armed intervention to rectify what they saw as a violation of free-trade principles. Mackey attributes a far more balanced and informed opinion of China to the Tory *Quarterly Review*, whose writers only reluctantly conceded in 1840 that war was necessary to redress Imperial China's "outrageous" acts against Britain's subjects and national honor.[46]

Shijie Guan uses newspaper articles from Chartist publications of the 1830s and 1840s instead of periodical journals in his 1987 article "Chartism and the First Opium War." He also finds a correlation between journalistic representation of China among British publications and their overt political affiliation. The majority of his article addresses the responses of the Chartist movement to the political and economic situation leading up to and during the First Opium War. It therefore considers Chartist perceptions of China focused through the medium of a war that the Chartists vehemently opposed and at a time when the British government actively suppressed the domestic actions of the

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[45] Mackey, "Mandarins and their Tea-Kettles," 266-267. Mackey, who also wrote an entire book about the Reverend Sydney Smith (see Howard Mackey, *Wit and Whiggery: Reverand Syndey Smith, 1771-1845*. Washington, D.C., University Press of America, 1979.) is very honest about the fact that Smith was liberal in his political leanings to begin with and likely would have found his opinions aligned with those of the *Edinburgh Review* regardless of its overt political leanings. Smith was, after all, the journal's founders.

[46] Mackey, "Mandarins and their Tea-Kettles," 265.

Chartist movement.[47] Thus, it is not surprising that Guan finds ample evidence for Chartist sympathy for the Chinese, respect for the Chinese government, and a kinship with the unequal struggle waged between Chinese and British forces during the war.[48]

Like Mackey, Guan draws direct parallels between the domestic political agenda of reporting newspapers and their characterizations of things Chinese. Guan attributes the Chartist's vehement opposition to the opium trade in China to a similar opposition to widespread opiate use in Britain.[49] He also makes explicit connections between the pro-Opium War stance of middle-class manufacturer's, particularly those in Manchester, and the Chartists de facto opposition to the war. Guan's ultimate conclusion was that the Chartist's opinion of the First Opium War and their opposition to it reflected their experiences of class struggle at home, their distrust of the state, and their dislike of middle-class free-trade arguments.

Though both Mackey and Guan analyze the image of China in British print media during the early nineteenth century, both studies suffer from some key flaws. Mackey's article only considers two different publications, each possessing an overt political agenda. Exploring each journal's expressed perceptions of China over time is clearly not the main purpose of his study. Guan, as mentioned above, only looks at Chartist newspapers in the years just before, during, and just after the Opium War. With such a limited field of view he thus finds ample evidence of a kinship felt by the Chartists in Britain for the Chinese affected by British trade and the eventual war. Admittedly, Guan's study is only concerned with this timeframe and more interested in the Chartist's

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[47] Shijie Guan, "Chartism and the First Opium War," *History Workshop Journal* 24, no. 1 (1987), 23.
[48] Guan, "Chartism and the First Opium War," 19-20, 25
[49] Guan, "Chartism and the First Opium War," 20.

thoughts on the war in China rather than China itself. However, it could only benefit from an analysis covering a greater period of time.

In addition, both studies lack the benefit of the last decade of scholarship on the British – Chinese relationship. Though they admittedly focus on a period of time that follows the chronological scope of the works of Markley, Porter, and Yang, both Guan and Markey fail to address the varied meanings formed by representations of China in eighteenth-century English society. In the end, both studies beg the question: what else did British print media have to say about China in the four to five decades prior to the First Opium War? What meanings were the reviewers, polemicists, and pundits of the world of periodical journals helping to forge in the early nineteenth century?

As with the historiography of diplomatic and economic histories, this survey of literature on the cultural history of eighteenth and nineteenth century British and Chinese relations does not purport to cover all existing literature, and is included herein for the purposes of identifying a broad trend seen over time within the field of study of British-Chinese relations during the relevant time period. Cultural historians to date have only begun to examine British images and perceptions of China in the early nineteenth century. Furthermore, none of these studies has examined the impact that periodicals may have had on domestic British perceptions of China during the relevant time period of 1793 to 1830. A thorough analysis of late eighteenth and early nineteenth century British periodical journal's representations of China is therefore called for. It is to that end that this study will now turn.

CHAPTER 2

The image of China relayed by the editors of non-review journals through the abstracted articles of their magazines changed drastically between the years 1793 and 1830. These editors began the period offering largely complete and accurate transcriptions of new scholarly work on China in the pages of their journals. They also promoted some accounts and images of China over others, usually tending to highlight those that featured rational or scientific observations rather than simple narratives. Over time, however, non-review journal editors shifted the focus of their articles and began to emphasize the sensational aspects of scholarly work likely to peak public interest, rather than the original works in their entirety. Because these articles featured little commentary from the journal editors and writers themselves, readers were unaware of the incomplete images of China they received through this particular periodical medium. The result of this process was the creation of an image of China in non-review periodicals significantly altered from that of the original China scholars.

I. Non-Review Journal Articles and Their Availability to the Public

British journals transmitted information about China to their readerships in a variety of ways. The simplest format consisted of short news reports carried from China by returning merchant shipping vessels. These reports were usually combined with reports from other parts of the world and published under the heading of "foreign intelligence." These sorts of compact news articles were regular fixtures in most weekly and monthly publications. Though capable of informing the public of current events in China to a small extent, these short news pieces rarely had much to say other than to

report on trade and the most recent actions of the East India Company and their Chinese counterparts in Canton.[1]

Journals also exhibited knowledge about China through short anecdotal accounts and descriptions of a variety of Chinese subjects including culture, literature, and politics. These often took the form of short excerpts from larger scholarly studies of China, and, on rare occasions, were the work of the writers and editors of the journal themselves. Individual observations from letters or personal diaries also found their way into these types of short accounts. The purpose of these types of articles was to entertain readers as much as it was to educate them, and on many occasions failed to even identify the original source for the information they contained. These kinds of anecdotal articles were also often shared between publications, such that articles appearing in one journal often found their way into the pages of numerous others (sometimes months and even years apart). Despite their somewhat dubious nature, these kinds of articles are included in the overall analysis of this study. This is because their inclusion in periodical publications was a conscious decision on the part of the journal's editors and staff. When the editors of *The Weekly Entertainer* included a morality tale about a Chinese emperor from the 3rd century BC in their 22 February 1790 edition, they did so for a reason.[2] A journal's inclusion of "foreign intelligence" on China, mentioned earlier, was formulaic and standard and therefore different entirely from the anecdotal articles described above. It is for this reason that I believe the latter is worthy of more careful consideration than the former.

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[1] I have largely excluded these short snippets of information from my analysis, though they undoubtedly contributed on some level to general perceptions of China.

[2] *Weekly Entertainer* 15, February 22, 1790, 169-172.

A third and common form of periodical writing on China came in the form of articles containing in whole or in part direct samplings and complete transcriptions of published scholarly works. I differentiate these types of articles from the anecdotal accounts mentioned above because of their length, usually four or more pages, and in that they clearly identified the name and author of the work from which the information contained in the article was derived. Journal editors were usually selective in their use of these types of direct quotations from books and translations, as few of them wished to fill entire editions with lengthy and sometimes ponderous studies, travel accounts, or literary translations about China.[3] This selectivity on the part of the editors of these journals, coupled with their willingness to feature direct transcriptions of scholarly works, are a crucial component of the effort to construct a new idea of China during this period. In essence, journal editors used their publications to transmit a new body of knowledge concerning China to their British middle-class readership in the form of exposés of new Chinese scholarship. The editors also shaped that knowledge through a deliberate selection (or omission) of individual parts and pieces of individual scholarly works.

These non-review articles, the anecdotal and the partially or wholly transcribed, made up a significant portion of the body of articles considered by this study. Of the 363 journal articles examined, roughly 218 were of these two types, or approximately 60%.[4] This shows that most periodicals relied wholly on outside sources for the bulk of their information on China. The remaining third of journal articles considered in this study

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[3] This was not always the case however. *The Weekly Entertainer* published an incredibly lengthy abstraction of George Staunton's account of the Earl of Macartney's embassy to China in 1793 that ran in every edition of that particular publication from 2 October 1797 until 11 June the following year.
[4] This number does not take into account long-running abstractions like the one mentioned in the previous foot-note. Their inclusion would push this number even higher.

come in the form of critical reviews of scholarly works. Though they too relied on outside sources as the basis for their reporting, I will examine these articles separately in Chapter 3 of this study. These articles contain the journal writers and editors critical responses to work being produced on China rather than a simple exposition of that work.

Non-review articles on China were also much more prevalent at the beginning of the period of time than at the end. Non-review journals filled their pages with extracts from the expansive and thorough travel accounts published in the years after the 1793 Macartney embassy. The rich descriptions and observations of China contained in these articles must have made them easy sells, despite their often being presented in a rational and scientifically derived format. By 1810, English scholars of China began to produce more sophisticated and nuanced work. Though this work continued to stimulate a significant amount of periodical criticism in journal reviews, its less descriptive, more analytic nature did not lend itself easily to a short anecdotal format. Nor did it prove as easily engrossing for the public as the narrative accounts of China from the previous decades. As a result, the number of non-review journal articles exhibiting cutting-edge studies on Chinese subjects dwindled over time. By the decade 1821 to 1830, non-review journal articles on China had almost entirely changed to reporting the sensational instead of the scientific, and the curious instead of the rational. These articles still contributed to an image of China in the minds of their readers, but not necessarily the same image of China being disputed by scholars and their review critics in the pages of the more discerning journals.

II. 1793-1800: The First Years After Macartney

The Macartney embassy, dispatched from England in 1793, sought to establish regular relations with the Qing government in China and improve the situation of trade for the British East India Company in the southern Chinese port of Canton. At that time, Canton was the only port open to most foreign trade and the sole avenue through which the Company's commercial monopoly functioned. Through the Macartney embassy, the British hoped to not only establish a permanent diplomatic residence in the Qing capital at Peking, but also to expand British trade to at least one if not many more Chinese ports. Lord Macartney and his embassy spent almost three years journeying to and from China. Though they were able to procure an audience with the Qing emperor, the British achieved neither a permanent ambassador in China, nor additional access to Chinese markets for the East India Company's trade. However, the embassy left China with a wealth of new information that profoundly affected future British studies of China.

The first major period of periodical exhibition of China occurred in the wake of the Macartney embassy in the years during which narratives of the embassy began to appear. The first account of the embassy was published in early 1795, though discussion of the embassy had already been featured in several publications as soon as the initial reports of the embassy began to arrive back in England in July and August of 1794.[5] The wave of interest and subsequent periodical reporting on China, covering information about and relating to the embassy, lasted well into the next century.

[5] *Gentleman's Magazine* 64, July 1794, 658 and *Edinburgh Magazine*, August 1794, 124.

The two most popular accounts of the embassy published in the 1790s were Aeneas Anderson's *A Narrative of the British Embassy to China* in 1795 and George Staunton's *An Authentic Account of an Embassy from the King of Great-Britain to the Emperor of China* in 1797. Anderson, who had served on the embassy as Lord Macartney's personal servant, published his account only months after the embassy's return to England and thus capitalized on the British public's excitement about the embassy and interest in China. His work, though heavily criticized for its lack of sophistication (a theme explored more fully in the following chapter of this work), was nevertheless commercially successful and by 1796 was already in its third edition.[6] Staunton, personal secretary to Lord Macartney and ambassador plenipotentiary to the embassy, prepared the embassy's official account and had access to various papers and personal reflections of the embassy's personnel. Staunton, unlike Anderson, was a man of letters, a peer, and a fellow of London's Royal Society.[7] It is through him that the British public was first exposed to a scientifically and empirically examined China. Despite the difference between the works of Anderson and Staunton, both accounts received considerable attention from a variety of British journals.

Two specific sections of Anderson's work received particular attention in the journals of the day. The first was Anderson's description of the progress of the embassy to the Chinese capital of Pekin.[8] This particular passage is rich with descriptions of the city and its people, with particular attention paid to describing the capital's architecture

[6] *Gentleman's Magazine*, 65, February 1796, 145.
[7] *The British Critic* 10, September 1797, 222.
[8] *Universal Magazine* 96, April 1795, 276-282. *Edinburgh Magazine* 6, May/June 1795, 373-376, p.411-413. *Scots Magazine* 57, May 1795, 284-288. *Weekly Entertainer* 25, May 25 1795, 411-414. All of these articles feature the same exact transcription from Anderson's work, so I will therefore cite only one for any direct references to the text.

and street commerce, as well as the author's encounter with a group of Chinese women. The description of the women in Pekin is worth noting, as the author, who remarked upon the considerable number of the women in the crowded streets of the capitol, questioned the truthfulness of previous accounts of Chinese women being hidden from the view of foreigners.[9] The second piece transcribed from Anderson's *Narrative* that appeared in several journals also pointed out inconsistencies in previous accounts of China. Under the title "New and Curious Particulars of the Customs and Manners of the Chinese," this short account is more explicit in refuting previous accounts of Chinese women's lack of freedom as well as accounts of Chinese slaves.[10] In both cases, the previous accounts refuted were those of Jesuit missionaries from earlier in the eighteenth century. The content of both of these abridged sections of Anderson's work leaves the impression that they were chosen for publication for entertainment purposes, but also to demonstrate to readers that the narratives of the Macartney embassy offered a new and perhaps more truthful image of China than the Jesuit accounts that preceded them. This theme would be further emphasized by the selections of George Staunton's *Authentic Account* that appeared in the pages of the same journals only a few years later.

The journal transcriptions from Staunton's account of the embassy were significantly different in nature and more substantial from those gleaned from the work of Anderson. The parts of Staunton's work that appeared in journal abstracts were analytical, rather than purely narrative. They presented a thorough examination of the country and its people as well as a look at its institutions. Instead of simple descriptions

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[9] *Universal Magazine* 96, April 1795, 281.

[10] *Universal Magazine* 96, May 1795, 323-324. Also *Weekly Entertainer* 25, June 22, 1795, 488-494., *Edinburgh Magazine* 6, July 1795, 10-14., *Walker's Hibernian Magazine*, September 1795, 223-227.

of Chinese cities and people, readers received instruction on the Chinese language, religion, government, and industry.[11] Some journals also took pains to publish excerpts that explained the reasoning for the embassy in Staunton's own words, while others opted to condense his observations into multiple factoids of the more interesting parts of his account.[12] Other periodicals went beyond mere abstractions and exhibited significant portions of the entire work over a period of months.[13] This is not to say that the pieces of Staunton's work that appeared before the public in journals did not also include descriptions similar to those featured in the pieces of Anderson. The narrative sections of his *Authentic Account* also received attention from the periodical press. However, the simple narratives of the embassy's journey through China were not the portions of his work emphasized in abstraction. For this reason, and because Staunton's work was featured in considerably more journal articles, it is obvious which account was more critically acclaimed and accepted by the editors of the British periodical scene.

Staunton's abstracted work also implanted in the minds of the British public several other images of China that would have a long-standing impact on the future perception of the country and its people. For example, Staunton's work was one of the first to describe the Chinese as possessing a "horror of innovation," a disdain for the operation and refinement of mechanics, and a gross ignorance of medicine.[14] He was also the first to suggest that the practice of child abandonment or exposure at birth was

[11] *New Annual Register*, January 1797, 66-83, 114-120 and *Edinburgh Magazine*, December 1797, 445-448
[12] *Universal Magazine* 101, September 1797, 202-206 and *Edinburgh Magazine*, December 1797, 448-451.
[13] The *Weekly Entertainer* 30 - 31 published 36 separate abstracts of Staunton's Account between October 1797 and June 1799
[14] *Edinburgh Magazine,* December 1797, 451.

widely practiced throughout China.[15] This oft-repeated indictment of the Chinese remained a subject of British concern, especially among the missionary community, for decades and became a frequently highlighted feature of later China scholarship and periodical articles.[16]

Staunton's description of the embassy's reception by the Chinese court and intercourse with the Chinese emperor also received an abridged treatment in journal articles. Through these accounts, the soon to be infamous practice of the kow-tow, a ceremony of ritual prostration to the Chinese emperor, was first described to the British public.[17] Though Macartney managed to avoid having to perform the kow-tow in the presence of the emperor, the entire incident left an indelible impression on the minds of the British and was frequently referenced in later scholarly works and journal articles. Despite the sinister connotations this ceremony assumed in the decades following this first embassy to China, an abstracted version of Staunton's work in *The Edinburgh Magazine* hardly mentions the encounter at all other than to describe it as "the servile ceremony of prostration" and a difficulty encountered during the course of the embassy, but easily overcome.[18]

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[15] *New Annual Register*, January 1797, 74-75.

[16] Staunton's accounts of Chinese infanticide likely impacted the views and opinions of British population theorists of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries as well. Thomas Malthus's *An Essay on the Principle of Population*, published only a year after Staunton's *Authentic Account*, featured China extensively. He remarked that China was a likely example of a country in which population had outgrown its means of subsistence, pointing to the Chinese practice of infanticide (which he contends is permissible under the law) as evidence. Athough he does not specifically cite Staunton, it is likely that his information came, at least partially, from Staunton's account of the embassy. Thomas Malthus, *An Essay on the Principle of Population*. (London: J. Johnson, 1798), 41.

[17] *Edinburgh Magazine*, May 1798, 345. In this article the kow-tow is simply referred to as the "servile ceremony of prostration." The full imperial kow-tow required that the individual performing it kneel three times before the emperor, each time touching his forehead to the ground nine times. Peter Kitson, *Forging Romantic China* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 154.

[18] *Edinburgh Magazine*, May 1798, 345.

Journals from the final years of the 1790s also featured transcribed accounts from an embassy the Dutch East India Company undertook to the Chinese court in 1794. A narrative account of this embassy was published in 1798. Like Anderson's account of the Macartney embassy, the first account of the Dutch mission was drawn from the pages of a personal journal consisting of the reflections and recollections of Andre Everard Van Braam. Van Braam was the second in command of the embassy, and was thus uniquely situated to capture its particulars. The publication of his journal drew some critical reviews from British journals and parts of it were featured in abstract form on a few occasions.

Like the journal abstracts of Anderson, those of Van Braam consisted of simple narrative descriptions. However, the descriptions from Van Braam's journal tended to only feature either the poor treatment of the Dutch by the Chinese or curious points of Chinese culture noted by Van Braam during his travels. For example, a two-part article published in the November issue of *The Monthly Epitome* described the lack of Chinese preparation for the Dutch mission. Its members were forced to lodge in a stable prior to their audience with the emperor and were then subjected to a breakfast "rather fitting for the meal of a dog than the repast of a man."[19] Another article featured some brief comments from Van Braam on Chinese architecture, but was mostly devoted to his descriptions of Chinese games and public amusements.[20] A third article commented briefly on Van Braam's observation of the Chinese's superior knowledge of agriculture, but then immediately moved on to his observations of Chinese skill at "diving under water for the recovery of treasures at the bottom" of the ocean and the excellence of a

[19] *Monthly Epitome* 2, November 1798, 414-415.
[20] *Monthly Magazine* 8, September 1799, 594-595.

Chinese play.[21] These articles emphasized the trivial over the insightful. Missing from the periodical treatment of the account of the Dutch embassy was the analytical exhibition of China featured in journal articles covering the account of George Staunton.

Reviews and extracts of work related to embassies made up the bulk of periodical writing on China in the period of 1790 to 1800, but these were not the only articles to be written on the subject. Several short articles addressed subjects of a cultural and commercial nature. For example, the December 1798 issue of *The Scots Magazine* featured an article on the history of the tea trade and noted that though the commercial objectives of the Macartney embassy had not been achieved, "the English shall reap essential benefits from their trade" with the Chinese empire.[22] Another article titled "Chinese Dogs" appeared as a short anecdote in the pages of the June 1800 issue of the *Universal Magazine* describing the Chinese as scavengers willing to "eat any animal, even if they have died of sickness, such as dead horses and dogs that they see floating down the canals."[23] This same article of only two paragraphs described the practice of Chinese infanticide as "common in the streets of Pekin and Canton."[24] Journal editors did not wish to exhibit the rational discourse of ambassadors or the descriptive travel accounts of personal servants and foreigners in all of their journal articles about China – they also wished to attract readers. The commercial and the fantastic had a place (albeit a somewhat smaller one) in the periodical dialogue on China during the last decade of the eighteenth century.

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[21] *Weekly Entertainer* 34, Dec 2, 1799, 455-456.
[22] *Scots Magazine* 60, December 1798, 883.
[23] *Universal Magazine* 107, July 1800, 54.
[24] *Universal Magazine* 107, July 1800, 54.

Non-review journal editors in the years 1793 to 1800 prominently featured the knowledge of China generated by the first accounts of the Macartney embassy. Their decisions as to how they represented these accounts in the pages of their journals indicate a deliberate effort on their parts to influence the image of China created by this new information. Journal editors promoted the scientific and rational analysis of George Staunton over the more narrative styles of Anderson and Van Braam. They also chose to highlight instances in these new accounts that questioned the veracity of Jesuit scholarship on China from earlier in the century. The journal editors, however, were not above sensationalizing the more controversial or curious aspects of all three accounts in order to attract readers and sell magazines. In sum, the image of China that appeared in the pages of non-review journals during this first decade after the Macartney embassy was relatively similar to the image that appeared in the accounts of the embassy itself, but showed signs of a willingness to manipulate that image to attract customers.

III. **1800-1810: An Increasingly Negative Image of China**

The first decade of the nineteenth century saw a slight decrease in the number of periodical articles containing information on China. This decade was a relatively quiet one in terms of Anglo-Chinese relations, and the war raging across the European continent throughout the decade likely overshadowed most concerns not originating from across the English Channel. However, the relative lack of interesting news from China did not prevent the appearance of scholarly work on the subject. The third and final account of the Macartney embassy, published in 1804 under the title of *Travels in China*, enjoyed considerable success despite its coming on the heels of what was considered the definitive work by Staunton. Periodical abstractions and reviews of *Travels in China*

dominated journal output on China during this decade, accounting for almost half of the total articles surveyed.

Travels in China was the work of John Barrow, a man who served as the comptroller to the Macartney embassy and as a personal tutor to the son of George Staunton. As an official member of the embassy, he too had a unique opportunity to observe and record the mission's progress through China and interactions with the Qing court and the Chinese people. Though he lacked the educated refinement of Staunton, Barrow possessed an acute knowledge of the applied sciences, mathematics, and astronomy.[25] A self-made man, his personal experiences and technological know-how enabled him to make observations on the state of China similar to those made by Staunton in his *An Authentic Account*.

Several journals published portions of Barrow's *Travels* in abstract form. These articles touched upon many of the topics previously exhibited from the work of Staunton and the journal of Von Braam, but in each case, the language used by Barrow and repeated in the journal articles of his transcribed work was extremely negative. Where Van Braam's account described a Chinese fondness for games akin to chess and dominos, Barrow's account emphasized the widespread popularity of games of chance and betting.[26] In his account, Barrow makes the wry observation that these games were so popular that some unlucky Chinese were "accused even of frequently staking their wives and children on the hazard of a die."[27] In describing the public amusements of the Chinese, Van Braam's account remarks that "in general the pieces performed are very

[25] Kitson, *Forging Romantic China*, 193.
[26] *Monthly Magazine* 8, September 1799, 594-595; *New Annual Register*, January 1804, 80.
[27] *New Annual Register*, January 1804, 80.

tedious, and accompanied with music extremely piercing and noisy."[28] Barrow describes the same amusements as "very puerile, or so gross and vulgar, that the tricks and the puppet-shows which are occasionally exhibited in a common fair of one of the country towns of England, may be considered as comparatively polished, interesting, and rational."[29]

This same extremely negative characterization extended to abstracted portions of Barrow's account that discussed topics explored in the articles covering Staunton's account. For example, Staunton's descriptions of infanticide were considerably less damning than those of Barrow. Though Staunton described the exposure of children as a "cruel sacrifice," he places the practice in context by pointing out what he believed to be the Chinese conception that "life only becomes truly precious, and inattention to it criminal, after it has continued long enough to be endowed with a mind and sentiment."[30] The transcribed description from Barrow's work, by contrast, commented upon the practice of infanticide as indicative of the "incompassionate character of the Chinese" and conjectured that it was "tolerated by custom and encouraged by the government."[31]

The excerpts from Barrow's account detailed additional negative aspects of Chinese society and government. They describe the Chinese practice of corporal punishment as frequent, humiliating, and often unjustified – an observation that Barrow notes contradicted earlier Jesuit accounts of the same practice.[32] Journal articles featuring portions of Barrow's account also expounded upon "the unfeeling and hard-

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[28] *Monthly Magazine* 8, September 1799, 595.
[29] *New Annual Register,* January 1804, 89.
[30] *New Annual* Register, January 1797, 74-75.
[31] *New Annual Register*, January 1804, 84.
[32] *New Annual Register,* January 1804, 81.

hearted disposition which exists between persons of equal condition" in China and the antipathy of Chinese towards fellow individuals injured in accidents.[33] These same accounts mentioned a law that dissuaded doctors from treating the near-fatal illnesses and injuries of their patients because "if any one of the patients died under [their] hands, he would inevitably be tried for murder."[34] These are but a few samples of the highly critical nature of Barrow's writing on China.

Despite its negative undertones, Barrow's account also critically examined China's sciences and arts. Barrow's in-depth treatment of these subjects was similar in approach to the portions of George Staunton's *An Authentic Account*, though once again Barrow's analysis was considerably more judgmental. These articles on Barrow's work described the Chinese use of steam, smelting iron, glass manufacture, the manufacture of silks, printing, and elementary use of mechanical force.[35] Despite the sophistication of some of these manufacturing processes, Barrow seemed far more willing to emphasize the relatively primitive nature of Chinese applied sciences than he was to praise the superiority of their silk or the exquisite beauty of their cut ivory fans.[36] Barrow's characterization of Chinese art in these same articles was even less complimentary than his discussion of their progress in the sciences, but he nevertheless analyzed the former at length. This analysis covered Chinese music, painting, architecture, and public works.[37] Barrow's account of China's public works projects was uncharacteristically enthusiastic. In particular, Barrow described the Chinese Grand Canal, an inland waterway extending

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[33] *Weekly Entertainer* 45, January 1805, 24.
[34] *Weekly Entertainer* 45, January 1805, 25.
[35] *New Annual Register*, January 1804, 204-210.
[36] His praise for the latter was given only grudgingly and not without an attempt at trivializing these ivory objects by pointing out their relatively low price in the markets of Canton. *New Annual Registry* January 1804, 207-208.
[37] *New Annual Register*, January 1804, 210-215.

far into the interior of the country, as a monument "of such extent and magnitude as to stand unrivalled in the history of the world."[38] Still, even this example of superior mechanical knowledge and technical skill could not escape some form of critical treatment. Barrow could not help but remark that "the conception of such an undertaking and the manner in which it is executed imply a degree of science and ingenuity beyond what I suspect we should now find in [China]."[39]

The periodical excerpts from Barrow's *Travels in China* complemented earlier articles featuring the work of George Staunton and showed considerably more insight and scholarship than those of Anderson. However, the clear bias shown by the author towards China, readily apparent in contrast to the more balanced official account of the embassy composed by Staunton, drew criticism from a number of journal reviews (a fact more fully explored in the next chapter of this work). Despite the censure it received from some corners, Barrow's negative image of China proved influential and was not truly erased or fully contradicted for decades into the future. Additionally, Barrow continued to impact the discourse on China for the next several decades as a contributing writer for the *Quarterly Review*.

Barrow's *Travels in China* was not the only text on China featured in periodical form between 1801 and 1810. Articles on commercial subjects featured detailed instructions on how to trade with the Chinese and descriptions of China's commercial products.[40] Other journals featured descriptions (and contradictions to those descriptions) of the Chinese method of producing soy sauce and accounts of a

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[38] *New Annual Register*, January 1804, 213.
[39] *New Annual Register*, January 1804, 214.
[40] *New Annual Register,* January 1802, 187-190 and *Tradesman* 3, 17, 429-432.

particularly expeditious method for the propagation of fruit trees.[41] These more practical expositions of information on China appeared periodically throughout the decade.

Accounts of China prior to the Macartney embassy also reemerged from time to time in the pages of some of the more obscure journals. For example, the May 1803 issue of *The Scot's Magazine* randomly featured a brief translation from Abbe Jean-Baptiste Grosier's 1788 book *A General Description of China*.[42] This is especially curious, as the Abbe's account of China (though, admittedly, not this particular excerpt from that work) was emblematic of the Jesuitical treatment of China, which the new accounts produced by the members of the Macartney embassy sought to replace. The excerpts of Grosier's work that appeared in the 1808 and 1809 issues of *Irish Catholic Magazine*, however, are less odd, given the religious and anti-English leanings of that particular publication. These accounts relating to the Chinese education system and Chinese funeral rites were likely chosen specifically to offer an alternate view of China to that found in Barrow's *Travels.*[43]

Between the years 1800 and 1810, periodical journal editors continued to publish articles about China that purported to analyze the country rationally and scientifically. In reality, Barrow's account of China was exceedingly prejudiced and offered little of the even-handed observation of George Staunton's far more politic *An Authentic Account*. The literary reviews of *Travels in China* recognized this fact and criticized Barrow for his inability to approach his subject impartially, but no such indictment appeared in the abstracted articles mentioned above. Barrow's vitriolic descriptions of Chinese customs,

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[41] *Tradesman* 2, March 1809, 193-196, 197-200 and *Athenaeum* 4, October 1808, 356-357.
[42] *Scot's Magazine* 65, May 1803, 233-234.
[43] *Irish Catholic Magazine*, January 1808, 29-32; November 1808, 543-546;

industry, and society no doubt appealed on some level to the middle-class readership of British periodical magazines and therefore to the editors of those magazines as well. They were interesting in their commentary, sensational in their descriptions, and surreptitiously intimated that British society and industry were superior to those of Qing China. While Barrow's account of China was not the only information on China published by non-review journals during this decade, it was influential enough to have a long-lasting effect on the minds of the middle-class readers of non-review journal articles.

IV. **1810-1820: The Influence of Translations**

Between the second half of the year 1810 and the year 1820, British scholarship on China entered a new phase of sophistication quite different from that of the previous two decades. The seeds planted by the academic enquiries of the Macartney embassy began to bear fruit. In this decade, a new generation of China experts familiar not only with the works of the past but also the Chinese language and, to a certain extent, the Chinese themselves, began to publish new studies related to China. Unlike the travel narratives and analytical studies of China's culture, government, and institutions, these new works delved into the essential literature of China itself: its laws, philosophical texts, language, and popular arts.

This new style of presenting China to British audiences reverberated into the realm of the periodical journal. However, the old style of articles on China, typified by abstractions taken from the pages of travel narratives and first-hand accounts, continued to appear in the pages of some periodicals. This became especially evident when a new set of travel narratives and first-hand accounts appeared in the latter years of the decade

following the completion of the second British embassy to China under Lord Amherst. These narrative accounts appeared in the pages of non-review periodicals alongside articles of the new style. However, the overall number of articles appearing in the form of complete abstracts or transcriptions of other works, so popular at the turn of the century, diminished considerably after 1810. The articles of this type that remained still reported information about China. In addition to portraying the new works of translation emerging from Canton and information derived from the Amherst embassy, these articles continued to present information on Chinese curiosities and subjects of interest. In short, the periodical landscape of information on China became more complex in the decade between 1811 and 1820.

The architects of this new image of China came from two different but predictable sources. The first source was the apparatus of the East India Company in Canton that produced George Thomas Staunton (not to be confused with his father, the George Staunton who authored the official account of the Macartney embassy) and, somewhat later, John Francis Davis. By the beginning of the nineteenth-century, the East India Company had been operating in China for over a century, and Company officers represented the sole British entity licensed to trade with the Chinese. In all of that time, the Company had never made an effort to instruct its employees in the Chinese language. This was partially due to the fact that the Chinese in Canton were forbidden from instructing foreigners in their tongue, but also stemmed from a general belief that Chinese, especially in its written form, was too difficult to learn. Commercial intercourse with the Chinese did not require a knowledge of their language, thus East India Company

employees remained ignorant. This situation changed drastically in the decades following the Macartney embassy.

George Staunton gained an affinity for the Chinese language while acting as a page to his father during the Macartney embassy. Later, he was employed by the East India Company as one of its representatives in Canton, eventually rising to the position of president of the Company's Select Committee in 1816.[44] His work *Ta Tsing Leu Lee*, published in 1810, was an English translation of the fundamental laws and penal code of China, which proved to be a landmark work in the new China studies. John Francis Davis was hired as an employee of the East India Company in Canton in 1813 and mastered the Chinese language in time enough to serve as an interpreter on the Amherst embassy in 1816.[45] His 1817 translation of a Chinese play entitled *Laou-Seng-Urh, or an Heir in his Old Age* placed the world of Chinese drama into a format readily accessible to English readers. Davis sought to rescue the Chinese drama from the dismissive criticisms of earlier writers (especially chroniclers of the Macartney embassy) and achieve a deeper understanding of the character and sentiments of the Chinese people.

The missionary societies of Britain, who took an interest in spreading the gospel to China in the early nineteenth century, proved to be another source of future China experts. The first British missionary to enter China was Robert Morrison, and he quickly became a leader among British scholars in the study of the Chinese language and Chinese literature.[46] Some years after his arrival in Canton, he too became an employee of the East India Company and was responsible for the founding of its Chinese language school

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[44] Kitson, *Forging Romantic China*, 99.
[45] Kitson, *Forging Romantic China,* 106-107.
[46] Kitson, *Forging Romantic China*, 80.

that produced further China scholars, such as the John Francis Davis.[47] Between 1811 and 1820, Morrison published numerous works on China, mostly consisting of collections of translations. Many of these works reappeared in various forms in the pages of a number of periodical journals throughout the decade.

George Thomas Staunton's 1810 book on the fundamental laws and penal code of China was the first English translation of a major Chinese work to appear before the British public. Abstractions from its lengthy detailing of crimes and punishments in China appeared in review journals shortly thereafter and in non-review journals on a few occasions. Two 1810 editions of *The Scot's Magazine* listed several of the crimes and punishments under Chinese law found in Staunton's work. These included the lending of wives or daughters on hire, marriage with absconded females, possession and concealment of prohibited books and instruments, conjurors and fortune-tellers prohibited from prophesying in public, high-treason, and gaming, to name a few.[48] Another journal published only a small abstract on punishments associated with the preparation of food and medicines for the Chinese Emperor.[49] The crimes and punishments that these journals chose to put before the public are similar in their scandalous nature or seeming absurdity. The selections chosen also highlighted crimes that featured some of the more severe or gruesome punishments depicted in the overall law code (such as slow and painful execution for the perpetrator, summary beheading for all the perpetrators male relations over the age of sixteen, and enslavement for all other first degree relations in the

[47] Kitson, *Forging Romantic China*, 81.
[48] *Scot's Magazine*, September and October 1810, 660-663, 746-749.
[49] *La Belle Assemblae*, February 1811, 48.

case of the crime of high-treason).[50] Staunton's work received a much better representation in review journals, but these examples of its contents, unaccompanied by any mediating commentary, likely made a strong impression on the minds of readers as to the nature of Chinese concepts of justice.

Robert Morrison's translations of Chinese literary works, newspapers, and imperial edicts appeared frequently in the pages of journals throughout the decade 1811 to 1820 and, occasionally, appeared in an abstracted form as well. The first of these translations to be featured in a British periodical of this type was his book *Horae Sinicae* in 1812. The extracts from Morrison's book that appeared in journal form briefly described the texts used to instruct Chinese students and a short synopsis of the Chinese education system.[51] The article on *Horae Sinicae* also included concise excerpts from the actual translation itself. These excerpts consisted of samplings of moral lessons on the importance of study used to educate children and a number of examples of "Epistolary Correspondence" between friends.[52] The purpose of this seemingly obscure group of extracts was to provide readers with a sense of the value system instilled in Chinese from a young age. In the case of the examples of correspondence, the article's editor wished to show a genuine illustration of "the national taste and manners" of the Chinese from their own pens.[53]

Of far more practical use to British journals were Morrison's translations of Chinese newspaper articles and imperial edicts. These filtered back to Britain throughout

[50] *Scot's Magazine*, October 1810, 747.
[51] *New Review* 1, March 1813, 299.
[52] *New Review* 1, March 1813, 299-300.
[53] *New Review* 1, March 1813, 299.

the early part of the decade and were eventually collected and published in the form of the 1815 work *Translations from the Original Chinese: with Notes*.[54] Excerpts from these reports appeared in periodicals from December of 1814 until the end of the following year.[55] The reports themselves were sensational in nature, detailing a Chinese rebellion, an attempt on the emperor's life, the ultimate defeat of the rebellion, and the subsequent trial and punishment of the rebels. These exciting details no doubt contributed to such stories being popular features in the pages of periodicals. Morrison's translations of the emperor's edicts and Chinese news bulletins, through which the details of the rebellion were told, were included throughout the texts of these articles. They served as authentic examples of the character of the Chinese emperor and provided a glimpse at the inner workings of the Imperial court and Chinese judicial system. Viewed through the dual lens of translation and periodical editing and commentary, these examples were imperfect, but doubtless furthered the construction of a body of knowledge about China in the minds of the British readers.

John Francis Davis's translation of the Chinese play *Laou-Seng-Urh, or an Heir in his Old Age* first received periodical appraisal in January 1817. Though it became the subject of several reviews, it seldom appeared in an abstracted form. An 1817 article in *The New Annual Register* did, however, transcribe a significant portion of the preface to Davis's work and an example of one if its dramatic scenes.[56] The preface to the article written by Davis provided a brief synopsis of the history of English exposure to Chinese

[54] *Quarterly Review* 13, July 1815, 408. Morrison is identified as the translator of these reports on page 410.

[55] See *Literary Panorama* 1, December 1814 384-389; *Examiner,* January 1, 1815, 3; *European Magazine* 67, January 1815, 80-81; *Literary Panorama* 3, October 1815, 89-97; *Literary Panorama* 3, November 1815, 327-330.

[56] *New Annual Register*, January 1817, 230-244.

drama. It then explained how the negative reactions typical of those historic encounters – entirely visual in nature – may have been overhasty and unfair. The crux of Davis's argument rested upon his belief that a lack of knowledge of the Chinese language rendered Europeans incapable of adequately judging Chinese drama. As Davis explained, the English observers of Chinese drama were capable of observing and commenting on the absurdity of scenes being acted out in front of them, "but the dialogue of the regular drama, being utterly unintelligible, cease[d] to create any interest."[57] The preface went on to describe the plot of the play as well as its fluidity of progress, natural expression of sentiment, and similarity to Greek drama.[58] The article also featured an excerpt of the play itself.

The form for this article seems strange, and the vast majority of the other journal articles discussing the works of G.S. Staunton, Morrison, and Davis appeared in critical review journals rather than magazine abstracts. However, Davis's transcribed preface did an admirable job of pointing out the fallacies of previous descriptions of the Chinese drama, and was likely included by the editor of the *New Annual Register* to do just that. It also identified that a deeper understanding of China required an understanding of the Chinese language.

Another major event that steered the progress of British knowledge of China during the decade 1811 to 1820 was the Amherst embassy of 1816 to 1817. This second British embassy to China was also dispatched in the hope of achieving more fair and equitable (in the minds of the British) trade practices for the East India Company in

[57] *New Annual Register*, January 1817, 234.
[58] *New Annual Register*, January 1817, 236-238.

Canton. The East India Company's commercial relationship with the Chinese had changed very little in the twenty-three years since the first embassy under Lord Macartney. However, thanks to the Company's efforts to teach its functionaries the Chinese language over the previous few years, the Amherst embassy embarked on its diplomatic mission with several members fully capable of conversing in both the spoken and written language of the Qing government (G.S. Staunton, Morrison, and Davis were all attached to the embassy as translators or representatives of the East India Company) and this embassy was fully expected to achieve much greater success than the previous embassy due to this advantage.[59] Unfortunately, that expectation was not realized. A series of political missteps on both sides, coupled with Amherst's refusal to perform the kow-tow ceremony for the emperor and his representatives, led to the embassy being dismissed from Peking without even having seen the emperor. Though the failure of the Amherst embassy did not have an immediate impact on the Company's commercial activities in Canton, it was debated in the pages of critical review journals.[60]

The Amherst embassy produced two new narratives of a similar type to those of the first embassy under Macartney. The first, entitled *Journal of the Proceedings of the Late Embassy to China* was authored by Henry Ellis, who had been appointed secretary and second in command of the embassy. The second was written by the embassy's chief medical officer and naturalist Clarke Abel and published roughly a year after Ellis's *Journal* under the title *Narrative of a Journey in the Interior of China*. Both accounts

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[59] No member of the Macartney embassy was capable of speaking Chinese. The British had been forced to recruit two young Chinese from a Catholic university in Naples to act as interpreters. Unfortunately, neither of these individuals spoke English, so conversations between Macartney and his Qing hosts were conducted through the use of three separate languages. English to Latin, Latin to Chinese, and back again. James Eames, *The English in China* (1974; reprint, London: Curzon Press, 1909), 119, 150.

[60] Aspects of this debate are examined in the next chapter of this work.

received critical attention in the pages of the review journals, but a more muted attention from those of a less analytical bent. This is somewhat odd considering that these same journals published articles expressing their belief that the history of the embassy would be particularly interesting.[61]

The January 1818 issue of *The Monthly Magazine* published one of the few articles about Ellis's account of the embassy to appear in a non-review journal. The pieces of the account chosen to feature in this article were decidedly different from those of Barrow and Staunton in that little space was given up to observations of a scientific or cultural nature. Instead, the transcribed portions of Ellis's account focused almost entirely on the reasons for the embassy, its progress through China, and its ultimate failure. The article highlighted the discussions between Amherst and the Chinese representatives of the emperor over the requirement that Lord Amherst perform the ceremony of the kow-tow (ko-tou in Ellis's words).[62] The article concludes with a copy of the final public notice released by the Chinese authorities in the aftermath of the embassy's termination. This edict placed the blame for the embassy's failure squarely on Amherst's refusal to "perform the prostration and genuflexion required by the laws of good manners of the country."[63] In addition to highlighting the haughtiness of the Chinese, the goal of the editor in choosing his selections for the article must have been to portray the members of the embassy as ultimately responsible for their own failure.[64]

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[61] See *Weekly Entertainer* 57, June 16, 1817, 462-463 and *Examiner*, June 1, 1817, 343-344.

[62] *Monthly Magazine* 44, October 1818, 603-606. It was Amherst's ultimate refusal to perform the ceremony that led to the embassy's dismissal.

[63] *Monthly Magazine* 44, October 1818, 615.

[64] A sentiment easily confirmed by an editor's note affixed to the portion of the article in which Ellis expresses the opinion on Amherst's refusal to perform the ceremony of the kow-tow by saying "neither public duty, nor personal honour, would have allowed Lord Amherst to act otherwise than he did." The

Abel's account of the Amherst embassy received only anecdotal treatment in the pages of entertainment journals. The September 14, 1818 issue of *The Weekly Entertainer* had abstracted portions from Abel's *Narrative of a Journey* that could have easily appeared twenty years earlier. The first part of the article contained Abel's description of an encounter with several Chinese women, complete with a description of their complexions and dress.[65] Abel's description of the eating habits of the Chinese lower classes, and his judgments thereof, comprised the remainder of the article. Abel's disgust upon seeing some Chinese workers eagerly seize "the vilest offals that could be rejected from a slaughter house" reflected the same disdain exhibited in the article "Chinese Dogs" mentioned earlier in this work.[66] Likewise, Abel's encounter with the Chinese women could have as easily been lifted from the pages of Aeneas Anderson's *Narrative of the British Embassy*. This may be a clue as to why *The Weekly Entertainer* and journals like it allowed fewer accounts of the Amherst embassy to appear in their 1817 and 1818 editions. The "narrative" image of China was already well established by this time and only accounts of the sensational or curious were still worth reporting.

This theme becomes more evident when the miscellaneous articles on China during this period are taken into account. In 1811, several publications devoted space to articles on the rebellious activities of Chinese secret societies, drawing parallels between these groups and the Jacobin societies of Europe.[67] A few months later, similarly sensational reports of Chinese pirate activity and its suppression made the rounds of some

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note expresses the editors complete difference of opinion and thoughts that "The ceremony should have been complied with, or the embassador should not have been sent. The refusal to attend the emperor was, at least, very ungracious. Lord Amherst's personal feelings were out of the question." *Monthly Magazine* 44, October 1818, 607.

[65] *Weekly Entertainer* 58, September 14, 1818, 727.

[66] *Weekly Entertainer 58,* September 14, 1818, 728.

[67] *Literary Panorama* 10, July 1811, 113-114; *Scot's Magazine,* July 1811, 484-485.

non-review journals.[68] The latter reports (especially in the case of *The Tradesman*) served to inform China traders of the potential for pirate activity around the port of Canton, but no doubt also made for interesting reading. A series of articles on China from the November 1820 edition of *The Imperial Magazine* also serve to highlight this phenomenon. The first article told a short story (likely fabricated) detailing the harsh and gruesome punishments meted out to an entire village for a single couple's abusive treatment of a parent.[69] The second was a story of demonic possession in Canton and the prevalence of a Chinese belief in ghosts.[70] Again, we see the theme of reporting the sensational or curious, likely for purposes of entertaining and also attracting readers.

Over the decade 1810 to 1820, a clear shift had taken place in the practices and content of non-review journals. The new knowledge of China produced by aspiring China experts in Canton proved difficult to incorporate into the format of most non-review journal articles. Non-review journals editors also showed considerably less interest in incorporating the new accounts of the Amherst Embassy into their publications. The articles on China crafted from the new productions out of Canton and the new narratives of the Amherst embassy that did appear in non-review magazines were overwhelmingly chosen for their ability to capture the interest readers. The impact of this shift is that the original image of China intended to be imparted to readers by these works was usually, but not always, discarded in favor of a more sensational or captivating one. This trend continued into the next decade.

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[68] *Tradesman* 7, July 1811, 24-31; *Literary Panorama* 10, August 1811, 325-326; *Literary Panorama* 11, March 1812 497-499
[69] *Imperial Magazine* 2, November 1820, 918-919.
[70] *Imperial Magazine* 2, November 1820, 919-921.

V. 1821-1830: A New Spin on Existing Information

By the beginning of 1821, non-review periodical articles had largely ceased to transmit the new knowledge of China contained in the works of Staunton, Davis, and their colleagues. Instead, these publications began to rehash and reprint old knowledge of China for a new audience. The images of China these journal articles conveyed to their readers were chosen based upon their ability to educate as well as entertain.

The articles on China published in *The Mirror*, a weekly periodical begun in 1822, are typical of this new type of reporting. Usually short and descriptive, these articles provided snapshots of Chinese life and other information of cultural interest. *The Mirror* printed six different articles on China in the year 1823. These articles covered a range of subjects from mundane descriptions of Chinese insects to more engrossing topics such as a description of the "Cangue," a penal device similar to a pillory prescribed for lesser violations of Chinese law.[71] Some of the descriptions contained in these articles were clearly borrowed from earlier works. The January 11, 1823 issue of *The Mirror*, for example, featured an article on Chinese Barbers in Peking and described them thus: "They carry with them stool, basin, towel, pot, and fire, and when any person calls to them, they run up to him, and placing their stool in a convenient place in the street, they shave the head, clean the ears, put the eyebrows in order, and brush the shoulders, all for the value of little more than a halfpenny."[72] Aeneas Anderson similarly described these

[71] *The Mirror* 1, April 5, 1823, 364-365 and 2, June 14, 1823, 57.
[72] *The Mirror* 1, January 11, 1823, 174-175.

barbers in his account from 1795, as "running about the streets in great plenty, with every instrument known in this country for shaving the head and cleaning the ears."[73]

The Mirror's articles never presented a monolithic image of China. At times, they illustrated what no doubt seemed the less savory side of Chinese culture. An 1823 article titled "Liberty of the Press in China" described an instance of a Chinese scholar losing his head for contradicting certain passages in a sacred dictionary.[74] They also paid the occasional compliment to the Chinese in the form of articles that identified instances of Chinese scientific or cultural superiority. For example, an article from the July 12, 1823 issue described the Chinese use of chain bridges eighteen centuries before their use in Britain.[75] *The Mirror* also introduced its readers to visual images of China, publishing half and full page pictures of items of interest, such as the Cangue in action, the vaunted Porcelain Tower of Nanking, and a riverside image of Canton.[76]

However, not all journals of this type used the same methodology as *The Mirror*. Some journals continued their practice of abstraction and transcription, though these pieces were derived from a different source. These new sources were usually compiled, not original works, created from the collected observations of the numerous accounts of the previous decades. Though these compilations possessed a more complete set of information than any one source from which their information was drawn, they also suffered from the biases inherent in those works. One example of this, from the August 18, 1823 issue of *The Weekly Entertainer* (and reprinted in the pages of other journals)

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[73] *Scot's Magazine* 57, May 1795, 287.
[74] *The Mirror* 2, July 19, 1823, 136.
[75] *The Mirror* 2, July 12, 1823, 113.
[76] *The Mirror* 2, June 14, 1823, 57; 3, January 31, 1824, 65; 1, March 22, 1823, 321.

was an article titled "Present State of the Military of China" pulled from the pages of an encyclopedia-like work identified as Ackermann's *World in Miniature*.[77] The article alluded to the separate observations of the Chinese military found in the accounts of the Macartney and Van Braam embassies, but mentioned Barrow and his account by name. The author did this in order to relate the "ludicrous" picture Barrow provided of Chinese soldiers "more busy with their fans than their matchlocks" with uniforms "designed for theatrical characters rather than soldiers."[78] The remainder of the article was filled with disparaging references similar to this one, though not directly attributed to Barrow. Though somewhat less moderate in its opinion of the Chinese, this article, and the journal in which it appeared, provided roughly the same kind of image of China as the articles found in *The Mirror*: old information recycled and re-presented as instructional and entertaining.

The non-review journal articles of the decade 1821 to 1830 appear meagre compared to those of the previous decades of this study. This is not indicative of the overall level of journal output relating to China during this time period. This decade was an extremely formative one in terms of the relationship between Britain and China, both politically and economically. Beginning in the middle of the decade, an active lobby formed against the renewal of the East India Company's monopoly of the tea trade and the trade to China. This lobby's opinions rapidly invaded the pages of British journals as well as the meeting halls of British manufacturing cities and Parliament. This dispute between free-trade and the continuation of the Company's special status in the Far East began to color the periodical discourse on China as the decade progressed. Waged in the

[77] *Weekly Entertainer* 8, August 18, 1823, 102-103.
[78] *Weekly Entertainer* 8, August 18, 1823, 102.

arena of critical opinion, this discourse displaced articles related to China of a less sectarian nature.

VI. The Impact of Non-Review Journals

The preceding survey of non-review journal articles between the years 1793 and 1830 shows how the editors of these journals had the ability to shape the image of China ultimately portrayed to their readers. These articles, defined by their presentation of information relating to China, abstracted or transcribed from other scholarly works, represented the efforts of journal writers and editors to shape an image of China based upon a system of inclusion and exclusion.

In the years 1793 to 1800, non-review journals exhibited select pieces of information from the travel narratives of the Macartney embassy. These articles pointed out the contradictions between previous accounts of China and the first-hand descriptions provided by members of the embassy. They also provided examples of a new, analytic approach to studying China's government, culture, and institutions, freed from the semi-mystical and utopian underpinnings of previous Jesuit scholarship. These accounts, and the journal articles highlighting them, provided a base of knowledge upon which future scholars could build and expand.

Subsequently, the years 1801 to 1810 witnessed a new account of the Macartney embassy, similarly filtered and transmitted in the pages of periodicals in abstracted form. This new account introduced a more negative characterization of China largely absent from previous accounts of the same objects and events. This new narrative emphasized

the backwardness of China and the innate superiority of the West, concepts that had far-reaching consequences in terms of the shaping of future images of China.

The scholarly study of China then changed drastically in the decade 1810 to 1820. New approaches to the study of China focused upon exposing and studying the cultural underpinnings of Chinese society, to include its laws, its philosophical works, and its popular literature. The new scholars responsible for these studies pinned their credentials on their first-hand knowledge of China and mastery of the Chinese written and spoken language. Their work was also transmitted back to England through the pages of non-review journals, but to a lesser extent than previous narrative accounts. It was in this period that critical review journals assumed full control of cutting-edge periodical exhibitions of China. The less discerning non-review journals remained, but they ceased to substantially contribute to this new, more sophisticated dialogue on China.

Between the years 1821 and 1830, non-review journals began to consolidate and re-release older images of China to a new audience. Decoupled from the discourse on China being mediated in the pages of periodical reviews, these journals presented China to their audiences in the form of easily consumed entertainment and education.

Thus, at the beginning of the time period examined, the editors portrayed images of China consistent with the opinions offered in the original works cited within the journal. However, over the time period studied herein, the image of China conveyed in the pages of these journals progressively strayed from a strict recitation of that contained in the new studies produced in Canton and the new narratives of the Amherst embassy, and with it, changed the image of China presented to the British readership. With a focus

on attracting and entertaining readers, the end of the era studied saw a shift in the substance of material presented to the British public which likely resulted in a similar shift in the domestic British attitudes of those readers.

Having established a picture of the role played by popular non-review journals in the construction and negotiation of a new image of China, this study will now turn to the role played by the critics of this new image – the writers and editors of critical review journals. Behind the desks of their offices in England and Scotland, these men sat in judgment of the work created by individuals experiencing China first-hand. Some of them had similar experiences of China, some did not. The writers and editors of late eighteenth and early nineteenth century British review journals moderated the construction of a new image of China through the critical appraisal, synthesis, and acceptance or rejection of individual scholarly work. In doing so, they established themselves as a special brand of China experts.

CHAPTER 3

Critical reviews of scholarly work on China in late eighteenth and early nineteenth century British periodicals helped shape an image of that country in the minds of an urban middle-class readership. Throughout the years 1793 to 1830, periodical reviewers constantly challenged the first-hand knowledge created by new China scholars and directed the course of their studies by identifying information deficiencies, proposing solutions, and by critically judging their products. Through this process, some reviewers achieved an expert status of their own and asserted this status frequently and effectively. Ultimately, the discourse on China featured in the pages of periodical reviews comprised a separate body of knowledge that incorporated both domestic ideas and opinions (often conflicting though they were) as well as the new knowledge of overseas China scholars. Furthermore, it was this altered body of knowledge that most middle-class British readers were exposed to in the pages of periodicals throughout this time period.

The periodical reviews considered in this chapter are different from the journal articles considered in the preceding chapter in that they feature the comments, opinions, and critical analyses of writers addressing the work of others. These articles exhibit the thoughts and impressions of men responding to a range of different accounts, both new and old. They therefore represent, in some cases, a synthesis of all the various types of knowledge on China available at the time. They also represent the individual prejudices and intellectual baggage of numerous educated men, most of whom had little or no first-hand knowledge of China. Like the articles discussed in the previous chapter, and perhaps to an even greater extent, periodical review articles were tied to the publication of new scholarly work on China.

I. The Critical Response to the Macartney Embassy

The wave of critical responses to the narratives of China produced in the two decades following the Macartney embassy are the first examples of editorial writing and scholarly review that impacted the construction of a new image of China between the years 1793 and 1830. The analyses and critiques of the work of Aeneas Anderson and George Staunton between the years 1795 and 1798 prepared the way for more thorough and opinionated rejoinders to all three accounts of the embassy, which would come after 1804,the year that John Barrow published the third and final account of the Macartney mission. Although individual reviewers varied in their assessments of each work, each review shared common features. For example, most (if not all) reviewers applauded the information on China gained through honest observation, but placed greater importance on knowledge gained by first-hand experience and on knowledge of a scientific or analytic nature. Similarly, most reviews put greater stock in information on China gathered by educated and experienced individuals. They also stressed that this new knowledge must replace (or at least expand upon) the previous idealized narratives of Catholic missionaries. In addition to defining the acceptable form and ultimate purpose of this new information on China, journal reviewers identified deficiencies in existing information, subsequently introducing and advocating for a course of action that would rectify these shortcomings. In so doing, some of these journal reviewers assumed the guise of China experts themselves and established their own credentials to judge future scholarship.

Aeneas Anderson's 1795 book, *A Narrative of the British Embassy to China*, garnered a considerable amount of critical attention upon its publication. As the first account of the embassy to be published, it achieved commercial success and was well received by the public. However, Anderson's book received a less glowing endorsement in the pages of periodical book reviews. Individual reviewer responses varied, but even those who wrote about the book in favorable terms commented that readers should not expect "any great display of learning, profundity of observation, or minuteness of inquiry" from Anderson's narrative.[1] Other reviews were less kind and accused Anderson's work of being filled with absurdities and gross mistakes, the recognition and exposure of which did not require a visit to China.[2] The tendency of reviewers to dismiss or reject Anderson's account resulted largely from the fact that he was a domestic servant to Lord Macartney, whose "taste was not formed on the fine models of antiquity" – a mere "baggage-man to the embassy."[3]

Despite their lackluster reviews of Anderson's *A Narrative*, the exposure to these new first-hand accounts of China enabled reviewers to begin forming an idea of what kind of information these accounts should provide. For example, in his May 1795 review of *A Narrative*, the reviewer from *The London Review* stated his opinion that the information obtained by the Macartney embassy "gave every reasonable hope to the philosopher as well as the politician, to the enthusiast of nature as well as the lover of art, that the veil which had been so long held up between China and Europe would be

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[1] *Analytical Review* 21, April 1795, 364.
[2] *British Critic* 5, May 1795, 507.
[3] *English Review* 26, August 1795, 87.

removed."[4] Another reviewer was more direct in stating what kind of information should be provided, noting that the public (and the reviewer) expected the information gained by the Macartney embassy to appraise them of "the laws, religion, customs, and manners" of China, as well as "the state of the arts, sciences, and literature" of that country.[5] In a different review, that author pointed out that Anderson was not an educated man and thus, was insufficiently skilled in the arts and sciences sufficient to qualify him to receive or impart "knowledge of the more important kinds."[6] Simple observations were interesting and helpful to an extent, but the underlying message of the reviewers portrayed to the readership, whether stated directly or indirectly, was that a thorough knowledge of China had to include information on its arts, sciences, government, and institutions. Reviewers argued that only through an analysis of these facets of Chinese civilization could Westerners hope to ascertain its level of progress and accurately judge its national character.

In dealing with Anderson's work, periodical reviewers also expressed their doubts about the accuracy of previous accounts of China and their hope that the new information acquired by the Macartney embassy would set those doubts to rest. For example, a writer for *The Analytical Review* pointed out the "various and contradictory" nature of previous accounts of China as particularly problematic and requiring resolution.[7] Similarly, the author of the previously referenced *London Review* article identified Jesuit and missionary accounts of China as particularly suspect.[8] He also blamed these same

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[4] *European Magazine and London Review* 27, May 1795, 318.
[5] *Analytical Review* 21, April 1795, 362.
[6] *Monthly Review* 17, May 1795, 72.
[7] *Analytical Review* 21, April 1795, 363.
[8] *European Magazine and London Review* 27, May 1795, 318.

Catholic missionaries for having, through their "imprudent conduct," increased the jealousy of the Chinese against Western incursion into the cities and interior parts of China.[9] Though this reviewer was clearly biased against Catholic missionaries, remarks like his became more common as the additional accounts of the Macartney embassy were published. These short comments attached to the reviews of Anderson's work were the first indications of reviewer incredulity and skepticism towards old accounts of China brought about by these new studies.

George Staunton's 1797 book, *An Authentic Account of an Embassy from the King of Great-Britain to the Emperor of China*, recorded the official narrative of Macartney's embassy and was well-received by both the public and the critical press. Staunton's access to the counsel and writings of all of the major members of the embassy "versed in the most useful branches of natural and nautical knowledge," did much to enhance his book's reputation as both authentic and filled with important information.[10] Staunton himself was also recognized as a trustworthy author, honest in his observations and analysis, and very capable of reporting accurately on the government, language, learning, and the character of the Chinese.[11] In these ways, *An Authentic Account* was a work that satisfied many of the analytical categories found wanting in Anderson's *Narrative*. It was also written by a gentleman of good breeding and education, equipped with the knowledge and insight needed to produce the right kind of information on China. Even so, it was not without shortcomings in the minds of some reviewers.

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[9] *European Magazine and London Review* 27, May 1795, 318.
[10] *Monthly Review* 24, September 1797, 67.
[11] *Monthly Review* 24, September 1797, 67.

Despite its favorable reception, Staunton's work was not universally acclaimed in every review. For example, the writer for *The London Review* implied that Staunton was guilty of "the discussion of topics which have been long ago sufficiently explained."[12] He said this, of course, after having reviewed Staunton's book through twenty-seven separate pages and five different issues of *The London Review* over the course of seven months.[13] This being the case, clearly not all of the information in Staunton's was of an old and well-trod variety given the extensive coverage that it received. Similarly, Staunton's reviewer in *The British Critic* expressed the opinion that *An Authentic Account* had very little to add to the general stock of knowledge on China, but that what little it did contribute was important and worthy of consideration.[14] Interestingly, he does not attribute this sameness of information to any fault of Staunton's reporting, but rather attributes it to "the sameness of character which pervades every thing that belongs to China, render[ing], of necessity, every fresh visit of the country only a repetition of the former."[15] *The British Critic's* reviewer may have held this opinion because he, unlike some reviewers, placed great stock in prior missionary accounts of China and saw Staunton's new information as corroborating, not replacing those accounts.[16]

Staunton's *An Authentic Account* was far less critical of Catholic missionaries than those accounts that preceded (and followed) it. As the reviewer from the *British Critic* noted, Staunton paid "a just tribute of admiration" to the labors, poverty, and sincerity of the missionaries with whom he interacted during the Macartney embassy's

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[12] *European Magazine and London Review* 33, August 1798, 257.

[13] See *European Magazine and London Review* 32, October 1797, 246-252; November 1797, 325-328; December 1797, 392-399; and 33, January 1798, 33-37; April 1798, 256-258.

[14] *British Critic* 10, October 1797, 362.

[15] *British Critic* 10, October 1797, 362-363.

[16] *British Critic* 10, September 1797, 232.

journey through China.[17] Staunton's opinion of the missionaries may explain why the reviewers of his work rarely mentioned any doubts they had as to the truthfulness of previous accounts of China. However, it is important to note that none of the other periodical reviews analyzed during the course of this study described these missionaries as being responsible for "the only medium of information, by which we can know any thing of the interior of China," nor did any periodical review argue that the removal of these missionaries from China would cause "all our knowledge of the most singular nation which has ever inhabited the globe" to become stationary.[18] These opinions, based on the other articles analyzed from the same period, were unique to this reviewer from *The British Critic*. In the coming years, positive descriptions of the Catholic missionaries in China became less common in the pages of British periodicals.

John Barrow's *Travels in China*, published seven years after Staunton's *An Authentic Account*, was the third and final major work of the Macartney embassy. Unlike the accounts of Staunton and Anderson, Barrow intended *Travels in China* to be more than just a retelling of the events of the embassy itself. Instead, he sought to discuss and evaluate the Chinese national character in all its varied forms, divested of what he saw as the exaggerations and embellishments of previous missionary writers. Unlike the other accounts of the embassy, Barrow's narrative possessed a negative bias towards China and previous missionary accounts. Barrow's account was the most important of the three narratives of the Macartney embassy because it stimulated a varied and conflicted, but still constructive, body of criticism from the periodical press.

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[17] *British Critic* 10, September 1797, 232-233.
[18] *British Critic* 10, September, 1797, 233.

Initial criticisms of Barrow's work centered upon his judgments of the Chinese. For example, an article from *The Eclectic Review* labeled Barrow an anti-foreign "Red-Hot Englishman" who lacked the impartiality necessary to judge Chinese culture and character.[19] The author believed that the Chinese refusal to treat with the Macartney embassy had essentially condemned them in Barrow's eyes. From that moment on, says the author, Barrow "could see scarcely anything wise, or great, or good, in the whole empire."[20] The author also expanded Barrow's anti-foreign attitude to include other Europeans, thereby accounting for his dismissive treatment of previous missionary accounts of China.

Other critical publications viewed Barrow's judgments of China as premature as well as prejudiced. For example, the reviewer of *Travels in China* from *The Monthly Review* believed that the present accumulation of knowledge on China was not great enough to justify Barrow's observations, negative or otherwise.[21] The author also expressed the opinion that many of Barrow's assertions, especially those concerned with subjects he did not or could not have personally observed, were based "on hearsay, or vague or presumptive evidence . . . tinctured with European prejudices."[22] The sentiments of this article and the previous article from *The Eclectic Review* are striking in their moderate treatment of China, particularly when considered in direct response to Barrow's negative judgments of China. As such, they are a testament to the lingering influence of the moderate accounts of China that preceded Barrow's work.

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[19] *Eclectic Review* 1, April 1805, 245.
[20] *Eclectic Review* 1, April 1805, 246.
[21] *Monthly Review* 47, August 1805, 338.
[22] *Monthly Review* 47, August, 1805, 339.

Like *The Monthly Review* article mentioned above, the review of Barrow's work that appeared in the January 1805 issue of *The Edinburgh Review* asserted that it was still too early in the field of British scholarship on China "to form any just estimate of the Chinese."[23] The author instead argued that to form a suitable notion of the Chinese character and genius required an unrestricted intercourse with China, knowledge of the Chinese language, and a thorough acquaintance with Chinese individuals in different conditions of life.[24] One might extrapolate from this argument that the author condemned Barrow's indictment of the Chinese as having stemmed from a judgment of them made in haste and without sufficient facts. Surprisingly, however, this was not the case. Instead, the reviewer noted that he had always considered the Chinese as "a mean and semi-barbarous race" and took issue only with the few good qualities that Barrow attributed to them in his work.[25] Thus, not all reviews of *Travels in China* criticized Barrow for his biased views. Some upheld or even applauded those same views while still pointing out the various flaws in his account.

Other reviews of *Travels in China* expressed a general frustration not only with Barrow, but with all the accounts of the Macartney embassy. The following excerpt from an article on Barrow's work in *The Critical Review* captured this sentiment:

> What indeed could be expected, if the notes and reflections of every person in this embassy were ransacked from the beginning to the end? – Every one knew before this embassy was sent from England, that China was subject to a monarch, and that its government was administered by men selected from every province by an examination of candidates for office; that there was neither nobility nor

[23] *Edinburgh Review* 5, January 1805, 260.
[24] *Edinburgh Review* 5, January 1805, 260.
[25] *Edinburgh Review* 5, January 1805, 262.

> established religion; that the common people were idolaters, and that at certain times it was custom of all ranks to pay religious reverence to their deceased ancestors; that the mandarins were supposed to be atheists (and to their real sentiments we have no clue in this work); that the country was governed by written laws, and that they were well acquainted with printing; that the bamboo was an instrument of punishment very general in its application; that the kingdom was extremely populous; that the canal was covered with boats; that manufactures of various kinds were carried on to a very great extent; and that, if the people did not possess much of the talent of invention, they surpassed every other nation in the powers of imitation.[26]

Barrow's attempted investigation into the Chinese character forced the reviewers of periodical journals to consider and evaluate the general body of information on China gained from the Macartney embassy as well as previous accounts to determine whether to accept or reject Barrow's judgments on the subject. On one hand, the new information provided by the Macartney embassy cast permanent doubt on the veracity of previous images of China. At the same time, this knowledge gained from the Macartney embassy lacked the quality of unrestricted inquiry deemed necessary to make conclusive judgments like those in Barrow's *Travels in China*. The result of this evaluation was the realization among reviewers and others interested in China of a frustrating deficiency in "real" knowledge, as illustrated by the above quotation. This realization was significant because it galvanized critics in Britain to cajole the nation's assumed China experts, the East India Company, to rectify this deficiency.

The authors of periodical reviews actively responded to this realization by recommending courses of action to address the perceived deficiency in knowledge. The majority of these proposals centered on acquiring an understanding of the Chinese

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[26] *Critical Review* 5, May 1805, 3-5.

language. Indeed, Barrow himself made such a proposal at the end of *Travels in China*.[27] Expanding on this, one reviewer of Barrow's work from *The Critical Review* suggested that British university students could spend two years in Canton to learn the Chinese language, thereby ascertaining the present state of literature and science in China and learning "what helps, if any, are to be derived from that quarter of the world towards a more perfect knowledge of the earth and its inhabitants in the times of remote antiquity."[28] Even the outspoken author of *The Edinburgh Review* article mentioned above admitted that an actual Chinese legal document, faithfully translated, "would give us a much more satisfactory idea of the character and situation of the [Chinese] people, than all the volumes which European genius can compose upon the subject."[29] The staff of *The Edinburgh Review* further clarified their position on the status of British knowledge of China in a later review of a French account of the Van Braam embassy published in 1808. In this article, the author bemoaned the fact that the study of the Chinese language and of Chinese literature had not been pursued more vigorously by the members of the East India Company in Canton.[30] The reviewer also argued that valuable information and "the ability to ascertain beyond controversy every point in the state of China which it would interest us to know" was contained in innumerable Chinese books, easily obtained and requiring only willing and able English translators.[31] A separate article from *The Quarterly Review* (also a review of the same French account of the Dutch mission of 1794) argued for much the same course of action. In this article, the author proposed that the East India Company require all of its employees in China to

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[27] *Anti-Jacobin Review* 20, February 1805, 141.
[28] *Critical Review* 5, June 1805, 145.
[29] *Edinburgh Review* 5, January 1805, 283.
[30] *Edinburgh Review* 14, July 1809, 412.
[31] *Edinburgh Review* 14, July 1809, 412-413.

learn Chinese in order to advance within the company hierarchy.[32] This way, he opined, "we should learn something more of the Chinese than the stale stories of the roguery of the common people and the rapacity of the mandarins."[33]

By the close of the first decade of the nineteenth century, the information on China gained through the experience of the Macartney embassy and the publications produced by its members could no longer satisfy the critical eyes of Britain's review journals. They deemed the body of knowledge constituted by these works as deficient and needful of redress. In so doing, journal reviewers advocated that the organization ostensibly responsible for British interests in China, the East India Company, immediately address the situation by embarking upon a program to educate its officers in the Chinese language. The East India Company was a fitting outlet for their frustrations, as any knowledge of China gained through either experience, written accounts, or critical analysis would be used to improve the commercial situation of the Company in Canton. It was in this respect more than any other that an improved knowledge of China was significant to early nineteenth century critics and members of the British middle class. John Barrow, writing in *The Quarterly Review*, spoke for a substantial number of his colleagues when he stated that "we have heard enough of what Europeans say of the Chinese; we could now wish to hear what the Chinese have to say of themselves."[34]

II. New Approaches, New Knowledge

In 1810, less than a year after Barrow requested "to hear what the Chinese have to say of themselves," George Thomas Staunton, the son of the author of *An Authentic*

[32] *Quarterly Review* 2, November 1809, 270-271.
[33] *Quarterly Review* 2, November 1809, 271.
[34] *Quarterly Review* 2, November 1809, 272.

Account, published the first major English translation of a Chinese literary work. The younger Staunton's *Ta Tsing Leu Lee* was the first of many English translations of Chinese literature, both philosophical and popular, and studies of the Chinese spoken and written language. The critical response to Staunton's initial work was considerable and his work was reviewed in seven different journals. However, critical examination of subsequent Chinese studies declined significantly in the years after Staunton's 1810 publication. Periodical review journals did not renew their interest in China again until the publication of the accounts of the Amherst embassy in 1817.

In contrast to the overall decline of critical examination of Chinese studies, one review journal in particular, *The Quarterly Review*, maintained an interest in Chinese subjects in the years between the publication of G.T. Staunton's first work and those of the Amherst embassy. This is likely due to the fact that John Barrow, the erstwhile author of the controversial *Travels in China*, became *The Quarterly Review's* main contributor on articles relating to China starting with its first issue in 1809. Barrow authored six separate articles reviewing China-focused material during this time period, and thus had a significant impact on the overall critical response to the studies of China after 1810.[35] Barrow, more than any other single reviewer or journal, established himself as an expert on China through his many and varied critiques of new scholarship.

The critical responses to G.T. Staunton's *Ta Tsing Leu Lee* revealed a considerable shift in reviewers' opinions not only of China, but of previous missionary

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[35] Though Barrow is not overtly associated with these articles in the actual issues of *The Quarterly Review* itself, research over the last fifty years has credibly established his authorship of each of *The Quarterly Review's* articles on China for May and November 1810, May 1811, July 1814, April and July 1815, and January 1817. See Volume and Numbers associated with the preceding dates, "Quarterly Review Index," last modified February 2005, http://www.rc.umd.edu/reference/qr/index/index.html.

accounts of the Chinese. As late as the 1805 reviews of Barrow's *Travels in China*, many reviewers defended both China's people and government and the European missionaries in China against attacks they deemed prejudiced. However, few, if any, kind words can be found for either of these two groups in the reviews of *Ta Tsing Leu Lee*. Instead, the reviewer of *Ta Tsing Leu Lee* for *The Critical Review* referred to the previous missionary accounts of China as "the imposture under which [Englishmen] had labored" prior to the revelations of the Macartney embassy, and described the Chinese as "a much more unimprovable race than any of the South-Sea savages."[36] Similarly, *The British Critic's* reviewer accused missionaries of "palliating the vices and exaggerating the virtues" of the Chinese in works filled with "absurdities and many erroneous statements."[37]

Negative sentiments like those detailed above likely motivated G.T. Staunton to preface his translation with a statement to the effect that both Chinese and Europeans had misjudged each other due to various prejudices and misinformation, but in reality neither was to any great degree morally or physically superior to the other.[38] Expanding on this theme of unjustified prejudice, one of the goals of Staunton's work was to remove such prejudice by exposing the Chinese national character through his translation of their fundamental laws and penal code. Many reviewers agreed that an exhibition of the Chinese legal code offered a rare insight into the manners and customs of that society.[39] Unfortunately, the complex and all-encompassing nature of the Chinese legal system revealed by Staunton seemed only to confirm in the minds of many reviewers their

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[36] *Critical Review* 21, December 1810, 341

[37] *British Critic* 36, September 1810, 211.

[38] *Edinburgh Review* 16, August 1810, 479.

[39] *Monthly Review* 64, February 1811, 114; *Anti-Jacobin Review* 39, July 1811, 226.

images of China's "wretched state of society" and as such, did not necessarily help to further Staunton's goal.[40]

G.T. Staunton's *Ta Tsing Leu Lee*, and the critical response it elicited, revealed that investigations into China's vast array of literary works and a thorough knowledge of the Chinese language could considerably enhance the British understanding of China. Work like Staunton's, usually appearing in Britain from overseas, also provided an opportunity for some periodical reviewers to carve out a niche for themselves as China experts in their own right. This is particularly true of John Barrow's articles in *The Quarterly Review*. Barrow's review of *Ta Tsing Leu Lee* consisted of two parts. Barrow dedicated the first portion of his article to praising G.T. Staunton's efforts in translation while admonishing English scholars and the East India Company in particular for its failure to promote the study of the Chinese language in a more deliberate manner.[41] Barrow followed these comments with a sixteen page treatise on the finer points of the Chinese written language, its difficulties and rudimentary theory, and the current state of the Western study of Chinese literature.[42] By doing this, Barrow demonstrated his own knowledge of Chinese subjects while simultaneously advocating for their further study. The portion of his article actually dedicated to reviewing Staunton's work is equally

[40] *Edinburgh Review* 16, August 1810, 482.
[41] *Quarterly Review* 3, May 1810, 275-276.
[42] *Quarterly Review* 3, May 1810, 278-294.

thorough, though decidedly less assertive.[43] Barrow followed this pattern of equal parts instruction and review in the majority of his articles written between 1810 and 1817.[44]

In addition to imparting his own knowledge of China, Barrow attempted to steer the course of scholarly inquiry into Chinese subjects through his reviews. In a November 1810 review of a translation of an imperial Chinese poem titled "Choral Song of Harmony for the first Part of Spring," Barrow remarked that he believed the translation's author had not "exercised much judgment in the choice of a subject for the employment of his talents; or that the result of his labours [would] prove eminently useful to the general cause of literature."[45] He followed these comments with several pages of explanation as to the difference between written and oral Chinese poetry and the latter's application in recitation and Chinese music at the end of which he again advises the author to "by all means abandon Chinese poetry" as a topic for translation.[46] Barrow ended the review only after establishing his superior knowledge of the article's subject matter and thoroughly discrediting the author's attempt at entering the scholarly discussion on China. Admittedly, the translator of "A Choral Song of Harmony for the Spring" was an easy target for Barrow because he was not a recognized expert on China like G.T. Staunton or, later, Robert Morrison and John Francis Davis. However, Barrow treated the work of some these gentlemen in his reviews in the same way, doing his best to steer their study of Chinese subjects.

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[43] Barrow admits that his command of the Chinese language pales in comparison to that of Staunton, though he nevertheless endeavors to spot-check Staunton's translations at the end of his review "With a manuscript Chinese dictionary in one hand, and the Leu Lee in the other," ostensibly for the benefit of his readers. *Quarterly Review* 3, 6, May 1810, 317-319.

[44] Barrow's reviews of literary work related to China in the April and July 1815 issues of *The Quarterly Review* are other good examples of this style of review.

[45] *Quarterly Review* 4, November 1810, 361.

[46] *Quarterly Review* 4, November 1810, 368.

Barrow's reviews of the early works of J. Marshman and Robert Morrison further illustrate this aspect of his critical writing. J. Marshman was a British missionary who traveled to Serampore, India in 1799 to support the first Baptist mission to that country.[47] While in Serampore, he acquired several Indian languages with the goal of translating the bible for distribution to the natives, which he completed in 1806.[48] After this accomplishment, Marshman turned his efforts to Chinese and, though never having set foot in China, quickly established himself as a leader in the field of Chinese language studies. His efforts to this effect led to his publishing *A Dissertation on the Characters and Sounds of the Chinese Language* in 1809, a work that Barrow then reviewed in the May 1811 issue of *The Quarterly Review*. Barrow's first review of Marshman's work was actually quite positive, though he did point out several small errors, such as Marshman's defective classification of Chinese characters based upon the objects they were meant to represent as well as Marshman's use of the dialect of Canton for his pronunciation guide rather than the more official Mandarin dialect.[49] Barrow believed that China scholarship devoted to the study of the Chinese language was perfectly acceptable and therefore supported it wholeheartedly.

Marshman's other study of China published in 1809 was an extensive translation titled the *The Works of Confucious*. Barrow reviewed this second work in a July 1814 issue of *The Quarterly Review*, along with a publication mentioned in the previous chapter, *Horae Sinicae* (elements of which were also translations of Confucious), one of the first published translations of Robert Morrison. Aside from briefly praising the recent

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[47] Peter Kitson, *Forging Romantic China* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 60.
[48] Kitson, *Forging Romantic China*, 60.
[49] *Quarterly Review* 5, May 1811, 378, 402-403.

efforts of the East India Company to promote the study of Chinese in England, India, and Canton, Barrow said nothing good about the works he reviewed.[50] Instead, Barrow castigated Marshman (and Morrison, though less directly) for his "injudicious choice of a subject" and speculated that his translation of Confucious, instead of encouraging others to study the Chinese language (Marshman's stated goal in translating the work), would "convey to the world a most wretched idea of the attainments of this celebrated sage."[51] Barrow took exception not only to Marshman's choice of subject, but to the actual maxims of Confucious as well. According to Barrow, when translated from Chinese into English by Marshman, the maxims of Confucious appeared "mean and meagre" and "absolutely disgusting from their nakedness."[52] At the conclusion of his article, Barrow turned Marshman's translation of Confucious into a general indictment of the Chinese, echoing his work of ten years prior:

> If, however, Mr. Marshman has labored to little purpose as a translator, he has, without expressly intending it, conferred on us a benefit of a higher nature. His work is indeed the best of satires on that foolish or malignant admiration which has so long labored to persuade the western world, that their literature and religion are but childishness in comparison of the wisdom and illumination of the great Confucious, and that the antiquity of the divine records is but of a late date, when contrasted with the countless ages of the authentic history of China. [53]

This concluding passage is included in full in order to illustrate Barrow's efforts to tear down a previous image of China in the minds of Western readers while at the same time

[50] *Quarterly Review* 11, July 1814, 334.
[51] *Quarterly Review* 11, July 1814, 337.
[52] *Quarterly Review* 11, July 1814, 337.
[53] *Quarterly Review* 11, July 1814, 346

steering the construction of a new image through his approval or disapproval of new translations and studies.

It is difficult to tell whether other periodical reviewers generally shared Barrow's harsh opinions of Marshman and Morrison's translations of Confucius, as few journals chose to review *The Works of Confucious* and *Horae Sinicae*. In a review of Marshman's *Works of Confucious* in an October 1812 issue of *The Literary Panorama*, the reviewer mentioned that he would "be happy to receive from the worthy and learned translator the continuations of his labors on the works of Confucious" and complimented the religious spirit of Confucious's writings throughout the review.[54] Similarly, an August 1812 review of Morrison's *Horae Sinicae* stated that "we cannot say that, if the pieces in this volume are to be taken as a standard of the general moral and intellectual character of the Chinese, they exhibit an unfavourable specimen of their proficiency in a moral or intellectual point of view."[55] Both of these examples exhibited views opposite those expressed by Barrow in his reviews. However, a May 1813 *Monthly Review* article on *Horae Sinicae* was uncannily similar to Barrow's article in its assessment of Morrison's specimens of translated Chinese literature. At the beginning of this article, the reviewer observed that the state of Chinese knowledge and literature had been at a low degree of advancement for many years and that the specimens of literature translated by Morrison fully confirmed and illustrated that fact.[56] Unlike Barrow, the reviewer did compliment Morrison's efforts, but labeled the majority of his translations as "useless for any purpose

[54] *Literary Panorama* 12, October 1812, 605.
[55] *Critical Review* 2, August 1812, 221.
[56] *Monthly Review* 71, May 1813, 108-109.

but that of shewing the *literary character* of the people who can admire them."[57] The tentative conclusion that can be drawn from these examples is that Barrow's opinion on Chinese philosophical works and the efforts to translate them were not necessarily shared by his fellow periodical critics, but neither were they vehemently opposed. Barrow's articles also stand out as more thoughtful and well-constructed than these examples of reviews covering the same material. Clearly, not all periodical journal reviewers aspired to achieve the same "expert" mastery of new Chinese studies as Barrow.

Those reviewers of new work on China whose articles achieved more than a simple synopsis and critique of the material often had to approach their subjects through a different form of expertise. A reviewer for *The British Review* provides an example of this in a February 1816 article reviewing another Marshman publication, his 1816 work *Elements of Chinese Grammar*. The reviewer began the article, like so many others before him, by rejoicing in the fact that Englishmen, and in this case Protestant missionaries, had supplanted the learning of the Jesuits in the study of the Chinese language.[58] The author then established his ability to speak on the subject critically by discussing the history of language and the development of writing for a full eight pages prior to addressing Marshman's work. The reviewer's writing from this point on was rather benign, offering few insights other than to highlight those which Marshman himself provided throughout his work. Largely missing from this article were the outside references to Chinese scholarship and philology (and blatant anti-foreign prejudices) characteristic of Barrow's articles. Reviewers other than Barrow attempted to style themselves as experts when dealing with Chinese subjects, but rarely succeeded.

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[57] *Monthly Review* 71, May 1813, 109 (emphasis in original).
[58] *British Review* 7, February 1816, 76-77.

One of the last pieces of new China scholarship published prior to the accounts of the Amherst embassy was John Francis Davis's 1817 translation of a Chinese play titled *Laou-sing-urh*, or *An Heir in his Old Age*. *Laou-sing-urh* was the first translation of a classic Chinese drama, which sought to disprove the impression created in the wake of the Macartney embassy that Chinese performance art was "gross and vulgar."[59] Davis's work received some critical attention in periodical reviews and probably would have received more if the first account of the Amherst embassy had not been published less than a year after *Laou-sing-urh's* release.

The reviews of this drama are surprising in their conclusions. John Barrow examined Davis's work in a January 1817 article in *The Quarterly Review*. Barrow opined that a more intimate knowledge of Chinese *belles lettres*, or popular national literature:

> would seem precisely to be that which was most wanting to enable us to form a true estimate of the national character - it is that [branch of knowledge] which, of all others, appears best calculated to shew us how [the Chinese] acted and thought under the ordinary occurrences of life; and how far the fine moral sentiments, which Confucious uttered . . . are carried into practice in real life.[60]

Unexpectedly, Davis's translation of *Laou-sing-urh* seemed to improve Barrow's personal perception of the Chinese. He described the play as "wanting neither in sentiment, passion, nor character," very similar to the dramas of Ancient Greece in its style and lyrical composition, and a "true picture of Chinese manners and Chinese feelings, and, as such . . . a valuable acquisition to our stock of knowledge, as far as

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[59] *New Annual Register*, January 1804, 89.
[60] *Quarterly Review* 16, January 1817, 398.

regards this extraordinary nation."[61] This is a shocking assessment when considering that the author is a man who, thirteen years earlier, heaped derision on the Chinese dramas he had witnessed as a member of the Macartney embassy.

Barrow's was not the only review to extol the virtues of Davis's translated play. An article in the December 1817 issue of *La Belle Assemblae* also complimented *Laou-sing-urh* as showing wonderful ingenuity and as exhibiting strong features of passion, sentiment and character.[62] Of course, Davis's drama also had its detractors, as shown by a May 1819 article in *The Monthly Review* that mockingly referred to an example of stilted dialogue from the play as indicative of the "human manners and human feelings" described in the Chinese drama.[63] However, it is important to note that *The Monthly Review*'s article on *Laou-sing-urh* appeared after the accounts of the Amherst embassy were published and therefore may have reflected some bitterness on the part of the author towards the Chinese as a result of that diplomatic failure.

Between G.T. Staunton's *Ta Tsing Leu Lee* and Davis's *Laou-sing-urh*, the critical treatment of the new scholarship on China in review journals progressed a great deal. Reviewers' opinions of the Chinese were more negative when compared to those exhibited in the responses to the Macartney embassy, but some reviewers, John Barrow especially, succeeded in establishing themselves as experts on Chinese topics. Barrow's articles over this seven year period also represented some of the first serious attempts of a journal contributor to synthesize personal opinions and impressions with the new knowledge produced by China scholars to form and then project an image of China

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[61] *Quarterly Review* 16, January 1817, 402, 405-407.
[62] *La Belle Assemblae*, December 1817, 341.
[63] *Monthly Review* 89, May 1819, 32.

distinct from that of the scholars' alone. Though overall critical interest in Chinese subjects declined in the years after 1810, periodical reviews kept pace with the accumulation of new knowledge and the construction of a new image of China. The ignominy of the Amherst embassy revived widespread critical interest in China and paved the way for a decade of discussions about China crucial to the future of British-China relations.

III. The Impact of the Amherst Embassy

The Amherst embassy of 1816 to 1817 and the written accounts produced by its members engendered substantial critical interest in the pages of periodical reviews. This was not because the published narratives of the embassy, such as Henry Ellis's 1817 *Journal of the Proceedings of the Late Embassy to China* or Clarke Abel's 1818 *Narrative of a Journey in the Interior of China*, had new and striking things to say about China. On the contrary, the majority of the reviews of these two books noted how relatively little their accounts of China added to a British knowledge of things Chinese. However, the events that caused the embassy's ultimate failure, the question of the kow-tow chief among them, engendered a great deal of critical discussion that reinforced an image of China as contemptuous of foreigners and respectful only of resistance to submission.

The critical discourse given to the embassy was also applied to the general state of British affairs in China and the potential need to alter British circumstances in the trading port of Canton. It was on these subjects that journal reviewers began to truly fashion and expound upon a modified image of China of their own creation.

> We cannot say that we opened this account of the late unsuccessful embassy to China, with much expectation, either in the way of entertainment or instruction. Not that we look upon China to be a country, respecting which, our Curiosity has been satiated, but we have already before us, the accounts of one Embassy, and we did not think it very probably, that the details of a second, undertaken under pretty nearly the same circumstances, would add much to the information detailed in the former. Human nature seems to be almost as little subject to variation in the East as the face of nature itself; and a description of Oriental customs and manners will keep for a very considerable time.[64]

This quotation from *The British Critic*'s December 1817 review of Henry Ellis's *Journal of the Proceedings of the Late Embassy to China* captured the general sentiment of most reviewers addressing the new knowledge contained in Ellis's work. Even the few journals that reviewed Ellis's work favorably noted that his new account of China possessed only a small portion of original information.[65] In order to assess the narrative qualities of Ellis, some reviews resurrected the standards used to judge the fitness of the men of the Macartney embassy to describe China over two decades earlier. For example, the reviewer for *The British Review*'s article on Ellis's work may as well have been describing the work of Aeneas Anderson when he observed that Ellis possessed no knowledge of the natural sciences that would otherwise qualify him to make astute and worthwhile observations.[66]

Lacking new observations and information on China to impart to readers or critique, the majority of the reviews of Ellis's work instead focused on the political aspects of the embassy. The failure of the Amherst embassy, and the circumstances surrounding that failure, were the topics which received the most attention. Ellis

[64] *British Critic* 8, December 1817, 589.
[65] *Anti-Jacobin Review* 53, December 1817, 335-336.
[66] *British Review* 11, February 1818, 162.

expressed at several points in his account his belief that Amherst should have performed all the ceremonies of obeisance required by the Chinese, an aspect of *Journal of the Proceedings* hotly debated in the pages of review journals. The reviewer for *The British Review* expressed his surprise at Ellis's stance on the matter and commented that he (Ellis) need only look at the example of the Dutch embassy in 1794 to see the "expediency of refusing most peremptorily to Ko-tou."[67] This same reviewer later opined that the Chinese respected nations based upon their ability to stand firm on principle, such that to yield to their demands would only invite "every species of contumely and studied indignity."[68] Another reviewer commented that the ceremony of the kow-tow was meant to communicate Chinese supremacy or a submission to Chinese power and that Lord Amherst's performance of such a ceremony would have damaged the interests of the East India Company in Canton.[69] *The Quarterly Review*'s article said much the same thing. The reviewer (Barrow again) stated that the performance of the kow-tow – an act of "homage and inferiority" – "would have ensured the local authorities of Canton against all future resistance to oppression, and rendered remonstrance completely nugatory."[70] He further observed that certain 'English Gentlemen' back in

[67] *British Review* 11, February 1818, 148. The Dutch embassy of 1794, discussed briefly in the previous chapter, submitted to every requested ceremony of the Chinese and had little to no success in their diplomatic mission. Their "humiliation" was made famous in Barrow's *Travels in China*. The following excerpts from *Travels in China* (transcribed in the *British Review* article here cited) highlight Barrow's "example of the Dutch embassy." – "At Pekin they were required to humiliate themselves at least thirty different times, at each of which they were obliged, on their knees, to knock their heads nine times against the ground, which M. Van Braam in his journal, very coolly calls performing the salute of honour 'faire le salut d'honneur.' And they were finally dismissed with a few paltry pieces of silk, without having been allowed to open their lips on any kind of business" *British Review* 11, February 1818, 149-150.
[68] *British Review* 11, February 1818, 148.
[69] *British Lady's Magazine* 1, November 1817, 300.
[70] *Quarterly Review* 17, July 1817, 478.

Britain who argued otherwise could not distinguish between "*ceremony* and *submission*."[71]

There were several 'English Gentlemen' who disagreed with Barrow and the other journal reviewers cited above regarding the kow-tow. For example, the reviewer for the *Anti-Jacobin Review* commented that the kow-tow was merely a ceremonial aspect of the Chinese court with a long history of use and no more humiliating than a "kissing of the hand, or foot genuflexions," or any other ceremony common to the court etiquette of Europe.[72] The article reviewing *Journal of the Proceedings* for *The Edinburgh Review* dismissed the entire affair by noting that every member of the embassy not in some way affiliated with the East India Company had thought that performing the ceremony was acceptable if insisted upon by the Chinese (including Lord Amherst himself).[73] The reviewer's unspoken accusation was that the East India Company's representatives attached to the embassy had caused its failure.[74]

These examples of reviewer commentary reveal that the East India Company and its status in China played a much more visible role in the Amherst Embassy than it had in the first embassy under Lord Macartney. The Macartney embassy had also expected the Company trade in Canton to benefit from its intercourse with the Qing government. However, concerns for the Company were not prominent in the minds of British readers

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[71] *Quarterly Review* 17, July 1817, 476.
[72] *Anti-Jacobin Review* 53, 341-342.
[73] *Edinburgh Review* 29, 438.
[74] Both George S. Staunton and John Francis Davis had accompanied the Amherst embassy as translators and representatives for the East India Company's interests during negotiations with the Chinese. Staunton, when consulted as to the efficacy of performing the kow-tow, told Lord Amherst, according to Ellis, "in very distinct terms, his opinion of the injurious effects upon the Company's interests, at Canton, likely to arise from the performance of the ceremony." Because the embassy had been undertaken for the purposes of securing a better situation for the Company's trade in the first place, Amherst listened to Staunton's opinion and resisted having to perform the ceremony. *British Review* 11, 147.

and reviewers in 1795 and 1797, or at least they did not appear so, judging by the periodical literature produced at that time. It was only after Barrow's 1805 *Travels in China* that reviewers began to call upon the East India Company to engage itself in efforts to gain a more intimate knowledge of China. By 1817, East India Company concerns were clearly on the minds of the periodical reviewers. The commercial aspects of the Company in China were now part and parcel of the image of that country they projected in their articles. This image was not inherited from the work of China scholars, but created from knowledge of those scholars married to the commercial awareness of journal critics. This phenomenon was especially apparent in the review article from *The Edinburgh Review* mentioned above.

Most of *The Edinburgh Review*'s article on *Journal of the Proceedings* was not devoted to Ellis's work, but to a discussion of the relative merits of the East India Company. The reviewer prefaced his attack on the Company's privileges in Canton with the following statement:

> China is so vast a country . . . that a commercial intercourse with her, ought, to the utmost extent, to be encouraged and protected. For this purpose, we conceive all candid people will admit, that all cause of jealous and distrust ought to be removed from the minds of the Chinese: And the whole history of our connexion with that country most clearly evinces, that all the dangers to which our trade has been exposed, all the disgusts we have received, and all the insults we have endured, have arisen from the absurd mixture of political and diplomatic authority with the system of our commercial agency.[75]

In other words, the East India Company and its monopoly were the source of all of Britain's trading difficulties with the Chinese. The reviewer went on to extol the virtues

[75] *Edinburgh Review* 29, February 1818, 438-439.

of free trade for both the British nation and for the Chinese, confident that "had a free trade prevailed with China for the last half century, we think it extremely likely that we should by this time have had an extensive commerce with . . . many other of the ports of China."[76]

The article quoted above highlights a new liberal economic component to the British perception of China that came about in the years following the East India Company act of 1813.[77] It was not based on any first-hand encounter of China, but instead grew out of the ideas and values associated with the militant promotion of free-trade by some groups in England. These ideas and values were frequently invoked in the pages of British periodicals over the next decade and became an established part of journal reporting on China.

IV. A Commercialized China

In the aftermath of the failed Amherst embassy, the production of knowledge on China continued much the same way as it had previously. Translations of China's popular and philosophical literature and the study of its language remained the primary focus of scholarly inquiry. These new studies continued to appear in the pages of critical review journals where they were analyzed, commented upon, and judged. However, as the decade between 1820 and 1830 progressed, a new commercially-focused dialogue on China appeared in the pages of British periodicals both new and old. This dialogue steered the British conversation on China away from the abstract concerns of Chinese

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[76] *Edinburgh Review* 29, February 1818, 449.

[77] This act of Parliament lifted the East India Company's monopoly of trade to India but maintained the Company's monopoly of the China trade. The new free-trade to India encouraged merchants to advocate for the same in China.

culture and character and towards the immediate concerns of Chinese trade. Free-trade advocates fashioned their own image of China which was then both promoted and critiqued in the pages of review journals.

Periodical reviews featured the China scholarship of various missionaries after the Amherst embassy and into the 1820s. These studies continued to focus on translations of Chinese philosophical texts and the study and promotion of the Chinese language itself. For example, a November 1819 article in *The Edinburgh Monthly Review* covered the missionary William Milne's translation of *The Sacred Edict*, a collection of moral maxims of past Chinese emperors. Much like reviewers earlier in the decade, the *Edinburgh Monthly*'s reviewer applauded the Chinese studies of Protestant missionaries and their undoing of the "extravagant and untrue" accounts of their earlier Catholic brethren.[78] Overall, however, the reviewer assessed the maxims translated by Milne as of a "very low scale, both of morals and religion" and "a sorry substitute for that 'wisdom which is from above.'"[79] He based this assessment on a comparison between what he labeled as the selfish, temporally interested maxims of the Chinese emperors and a standard Christian philosophy that stressed the "influence of a higher than mortal authority" and the "preparation for a higher than mortal existence."[80] Considering the author of the work being reviewed, a Protestant missionary, the reviewer's comments are not surprising and hint at the underlying motivation behind the missionary translation of Chinese philosophical. These comments from the *Edinburgh Monthly*'s reviewer, especially compared to some of the comments featured in earlier sections of this chapter,

[78] *Edinburgh Monthly Review* 2, November 1819, 550-551.
[79] *Edinburgh Monthly Review* 2, November 1819, 555.
[80] *Edinburgh Monthly Review* 2, November 1819, 556.

again highlight the varied and often contradictory nature of the critical treatment of Chinese philosophical works in periodicals made available to the British readership.

However, periodical reviews of missionary work from this time were not all critical of the Chinese. Articles featuring information about Robert Morrison's 1825 *Chinese Miscellany* devoted themselves to highlighting the author's desire to promote the study of the Chinese language. Though relatively short and uncontroversial, both pieces thank Morrison for his efforts in instructing the public on the basics of Chinese writing and express hope for the increased study of the subject matter.[81]

The members of the East India Company establishment at Canton also continued to churn out new translations of Chinese literature in the first half of the 1820s. G.S. Staunton's 1821 book *Narrative of the Chinese Embassy to the Khan of the Tourgouth Tartars* received the most critical attention of any of the new studies published during this decade. This work was of particular interest to English readers and critics because it described a Chinese embassy's interactions with Russia in the late eighteenth century.[82] Aside from its novelty, *Narrative of the Chinese Embassy* interested readers and reviewers because it afforded for the first time "some key to the policy which guides [China] in its external relations."[83]

Staunton also sought to redeem the Chinese from the harsh literal characterizations of the previous ten years, a sentiment that was embraced by some reviewers. For example, the review from *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* in May 1821 noted that Staunton's translation enabled readers to "form juster notions than have

[81] *Gentleman's Magazine*, November 1825, 443; *Oriental Herald* 6, 21, September 1825, 589.
[82] *British Critic* 15, April 1821, 418.
[83] *British Critic* 15, April 1821, 418.

hitherto been entertained of a nation which appears to have been alike misrepresented by the indiscretion, prejudice, and ignorance of friends and foes."[84] The reviewer from *The British Critic* also commented that "the self same cause which induced the disciples of Voltaire to extol this singular people far above their real merits, has, in more recent days, induced later writers proportionably to undervalue them."[85] Even while acknowledging that the British perception of China had, perhaps, been overly negative in recent years, reviewers still stressed the gross overestimation of the Chinese in the eighteenth century.

While some journals continued to exhibit the work produced by missionaries and East India Company employees throughout the decade of 1820 to 1830, others began to feature articles on China focused on the necessity of amending its trade relations with Britain. These periodicals reproduced information on China accumulated over the previous thirty years, but embedded a commercial agenda in their discussions. *The Oriental Herald* was the prototypical periodical of this type, and over its six year existence continuously projected an image of China that was amenable (either through diplomatic agreement or military coercion) to an expansion of its commercial relationship with Britain.

The Oriental Herald's first articles on China were general and covered many of the same topics discussed in the previous decades, but gradually revealed its anti-East India Company, pro-free-trade agenda. For example, the April 1824 *Oriental Herald* article discussing the characteristics of Chinese government concluded that the emperor's

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[84] *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* 9, May 1821, 211. Note the addition of friends in the reviewers comment. Even now, almost thirty years after the Macartney embassy, reviewers were still quick to point out the exaggerations inherent in previous scholarship on China.
[85] *British Critic* 15, April 1821, 417.

power was absolute and that its people were enslaved – not a new concept, but important for the image of China the *Herald* projected in future articles.[86] Similarly, a December 1825 article in *The Oriental Herald* exhibited a study of the Chinese language much like those of periodicals ten and twenty years earlier, but differed in its concluding comments that "while the East India Company's charter continues, the British public will make little more progress in Chinese literature than it has hitherto made."[87] The author bases this opinion on the idea that only economic incentives (i.e. a stake in the China trade) could possibly persuade individuals to undertake the study of Chinese.

By 1828, *The Oriental Herald* began to make a deliberate case for the abolition of the East India Company's monopoly of the China trade and promoted an image of China – often based on little actual fact – convenient to achieving that goal. The first of a series of 1828 articles titled "Political and Commercial Relations of Great Britain with China" blamed the East India Company for Britain's "estranged condition" in Asia and the exclusion of British commerce from every port in China except that of Canton.[88] The article then conjectured that the Chinese, "having those tastes for the luxuries of life, and the splendor of rich and expensive apparel," would welcome an increased trade with Britain.[89]

This first article also exhibited two ideas about China that were to have far-reaching consequences in the decades to come. The first was the idea that the Chinese,

[86] *Oriental Herald* 1, April 1824, 573.
[87] *Oriental Herald* 7, December 1825, 526..
[88] *Oriental Herald* 17, June 1828, 438. In reality this condition had far more to do with Chinese policy than the policy of the East India Company.
[89] *Oriental Herald* 17, June 1828, 439. This assertion, more than any other made by the writers of *The Oriental Herald* and the free-trade lobby in general, disregarded the conclusions of almost every individual who had any experience of the China trade. The Chinese disdain for most British manufactured goods was very well known at the time that *The Oriental Herald* produced these articles.

though "one degree from semi-barbarism," were capable of infinite improvement and required "only some external impulse to put many dormant powers into useful action."[90] The article's also portrayed the Qing government as vulnerable to external shock, asserting that China was "altogether unfit to repel a foreign force."[91] *The Oriental Herald* revisited this second idea in the next article of its series describing the Chinese military and how, "by negotiation or *otherwise*," British commercial relations with China could be placed on a more extensive and secure footing.[92] Noting the relative weakness of the Chinese military compared to those of Western nations, the *Herald's* writer posited that China "would be altogether unfit to withstand the invasion of an expedition from the northern or western nations, on a much smaller scale than these expeditions are usually composed" and that "an European or India-British army might march in any given direction, through China, and encounter very little or no serious opposition."[93] The article's author also noted that China's large coastline and small navy left it extremely vulnerable to the predations of any foreign navy.[94] The article concluded by advocating that a new embassy be dispatched to China, backed up by a thinly veiled demonstration of military might, to "force upon the conviction of that pusillanimous, though valuable, race of men, that, while we gave them an ample degree of weight and consideration in the scale of nations, we were determined that they should know and appreciate our own."[95]

The Oriental Herald concluded its series of articles on the China and the China trade with the following passage:

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[90] *Oriental Herald* 17, June 1828, 440.
[91] *Oriental Herald* 17, June 1828, 445.
[92] *Oriental Herald* 18, July 1828, 65 (emphasis in original).
[93] *Oriental Herald* 18, July 1828, 68.
[94] *Oriental Herald* 18, July 1828, 68.
[95] *Oriental Herald* 18, July 1828, 73.

> Independently of the commerce and manufactures of our country being encouraged and increased by a freer and more unrestrained intercourse with the Eastern nations of the world than we enjoy at present, or than we ever have any chance of enjoying while such a body as the East India Company may exist, we are satisfied that the way would be paved for a wider diffusion of that knowledge and civilization which must, sooner or later, pervade all countries. For bestowing this most important of all benefits on a population exceeding that of any other country in the world, nothing can be so useful as the extension of those principles of freedom, both in a commercial and political sense, which are the peculiar boast of our own country. This must be the first step towards the higher object. The half-civilized Asiatic must taste of some of the sweets of that temporal enjoyment which is possessed by his more civilized fellow-creatures, before his judgment can be convinced that nay creed is better than his own; and we can again repeat that the happier order of things at which all good men aim, is to be begun and attained among the nations of the East, and in China particularly, by the display of our power, by unrestricted change of our productions, and by the gradual acquirement of those civil and political rights with which we are blessed.[96]

In effect, the writers of *The Oriental Herald* constructed an image of a commercially pliant China in order to justify portions of their argument against the renewal of the East India Company's monopoly of the China trade. They accomplished this task by promoting the idea that China would be amenable to an expanded and more open trade, essentially projecting their own ideas about free-trade onto China. They further asserted that the "enslaved" populations of China might require the external catalyst of open trade to bring about the universal benefits of a more free commercial relationship with the West. Hedging their bets, these same writers depicted the Chinese as militarily vulnerable and easy targets for compulsion should they prove reluctant to embrace this new system of trade. These arguments, and the image of China they

[96] *Oriental Herald* 18, August 1828, 201-202.

projected, ran counter to significant aspects of the image of that country that had been painstakingly crafted over the previous four decades. Primary among these was the idea that the Chinese did not view external trade as a societal panacea, but as a barely tolerated concession to foreigners eager to procure the products of the Celestial Empire.

John Barrow's January 1830 review article in *The Quarterly Review* collectively titled "Trade and Intercourse with China" was emblematic of the harsh criticism aimed at free-trade arguments like those expressed in *The Oriental Herald*. It was another also example of Barrow's "expert" status on China. Barrow began by pointing out the inexperience and lack of first-hand knowledge of China characteristic of the majority of free-trade advocates. He asked that "the opinions of those who have some knowledge of the subject be listened to, instead of the wretched farrago of ignorance, falsehood, and vituperation, which has hitherto marked the progress" of the question of the East India Company's monopoly of the China trade.[97] In the body of his article, Barrow reiterated that the Chinese government's attitude towards foreign commerce had, up until that time, been unaccommodating, hostile, and essentially set against any kind of "free or friendly intercourse."[98] He further elaborated this point by calling arguments that presupposed a Chinese willingness to open commerce to any extent deemed convenient or agreeable to any foreign power as totally without any basis in fact.[99]

It is worth noting that Barrow did not defend the Chinese or depict them in a more favorable light than *The Oriental Herald* had in their articles. Like the writers of the *Herald*, he also projected in his article an image of China now indelibly linked to its

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[97] *Quarterly Review* 42, January 1830, 148.
[98] *Quarterly Review* 42, January 1830, 151.
[99] *Quarterly Review* 42, January 1830, 160.

commercial intercourse with Britain. The only aspects of the image of China held by free-trade advocates to which Barrow objected were those parts that directly contradicted the now well-established knowledge base pertaining to China: mainly, the idea that the Chinese were willing to embrace any kind of free trade. He maintained his general opinions of the Chinese as ignorant, aggressively insolent, and jealous of foreigners.[100] These sentiments were especially apparent in the conclusion to Barrow's article, in which he offered a warning as to the situation that awaited free-traders in China: "Your free-traders will find the Chinese authorities and the mandarin merchants too untractable to be coped with; they will soon experience the contempt in which this people professes to hold foreigners and foreign commerce."[101]

V. The Impact of Review Articles on British Perceptions of China

The review articles of periodical journals played a vital role in the construction of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century image of China. Recognizing that the Macartney accounts could only relate so much knowledge, reviewers turned to the East India Company, Britain's representative in China, to address the deficiency. They recommended that the Company pursue the study of the Chinese language and Chinese literature in order to "have the Chinese speak for themselves." As a new English generation of China scholars conducted these studies, periodical reviewers sat in judgment of their work. Assuming the role of critics of the new image of China produced by these scholars, some reviewers (John Barrow in particular) established themselves as

[100] *Quarterly Review* 42, January 1830 164, 168.
[101] *Quarterly Review* 42, January 1830, 168.

experts in their own right and steered the course of Chinese scholarship through their praise or condemnation.

The Amherst embassy forced periodical reviewers to come to grips with the commercial realities of Britain's association with China. This event signified the moment in which periodical reviewers began to commit themselves to promoting a distinct image of China composed of the new knowledge generated by China scholars and their own impressions and opinions of China as a commercial entity. Some journal writers took this process a step further and promoted an image of China as commercially pliable, all the while ignoring the accumulated knowledge of the previous decades. The periodical promoters of these various images of China debated the relative merits of the East India Company's monopoly throughout the end of the decade 1820-1830, just as the Company's promoters and detractors waged an ideological battle against each other in the political forums of Britain. It was these altered images of China that were presented to the British public through the pages of the periodicals, and which undoubtedly influenced the perceptions of China for those readers.

CONCLUSION

The debate over the abolition of the East India Company's monopoly of the China trade did not cease in 1830. The conversation continued for several years until, in 1833, the British government passed the China Trade Act, effectively ending the East India Company's privileged position in China. On the 22 April, 1834 the China trade was opened to all British commercial shipping and "every merchant and ship-owner who had ever seen a chest of tea immediately turned his attention to China."[1] The consequences of the decision to abolish the Company's monopoly in China are still debated, but it cannot be denied that this decision drastically accelerated the pace and scope of British commercial demands on the Chinese. It was these demands, and their ultimate repercussions, that pushed the British and Chinese towards a military confrontation only five years later.

The image of China constructed in British periodicals in the decades prior to 1833 no doubt influenced the eventual decision to do away with the East India Company's monopoly. The commercialized image of China produced by some periodicals in the 1820s indicated that a change in trade relations with the Chinese was not only possible, but was required. Even those periodicals that argued against abolishing the Company's monopoly did so not because trade under the Company was better for Britain or China, but because the Chinese were "too untractable to be coped with" by anyone else.[2] This sentiment, intended as an argument for preserving the Company's role in the China trade, likely did little to convince the average middle-class Briton that the current trade

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[1] Michael Greenberg, *British Trade and the Opening of China* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1951), 186.
[2] *Quarterly Review* 42, January 1830, 168.

relationship with China was desirable or sustainable. Furthermore, the image of China constructed in periodicals before and during the free-trade debate of the 1820s and 1830s did little to inspire sympathy for the Chinese in the minds of the British middle-class readership. These periodicals portrayed Chinese society as stagnant and backwards, ruled by a despotic government, and possessed of an illegitimate belief in its own innate superiority. Through the lens of the periodical, China appeared culturally and politically deficient (if not yet racially so, though ideas of race as a defining characteristic of civilizations were also forming at this time). This image gained a special significance when, only five years after the East India Company departed China, the British found themselves fighting a war with the Chinese. It would be wrong to say that the image of China formed in British periodicals between 1793 and 1830 contributed to that future conflict. However, when news of military action against China reached an informed middle-class British public in the early 1840s, many of them probably thought that action justified.

British periodicals played a vital role in the construction and propagation of a new image of China in the decades prior to the end of the East India Company's monopoly and war that resulted from its abolition. The years 1793 to 1830 were a critical period in the history of British and Chinese diplomatic and commercial interactions because it was during these years that the British took it upon themselves to study China and create their own understanding of its people, language, literature, and culture. The British periodical was the penultimate medium through which this new understanding of China was transmitted to a middle-class readership eager to know more of Chinese society and, ultimately, China's commercial potential. Periodical editors and reviewers impacted the

image of China they conveyed in a number of ways. Through a process of deliberate inclusion and exclusion and by combining their individual opinions with those of the original work of China scholars, British periodicals projected a distinct image of China significantly different from that produced by the new field of China studies alone. It is for this reason that periodical representations of China in late eighteenth and early nineteenth century Britain require study in their own right and are critical to a full understanding of British perceptions of China during this time.

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