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Burton's Racist Critique of Portuguese Goa

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ABSTRACT

Richard Burton (1821-1890), the iconic Victorian traveller of the nineteenth century, is famous for being a man of many parts. Burton's phenomenal wanderlust went hand in hand with myriad concurrent interests – cartographical, ethnological, and anthropological. Also, besides being an exceptional swordsman, Burton was a translator and a polyglot. Burton began his career in India as a recruit in the East India Company's Indian Army. After starting as a soldier based in Bombay and Gujarat, Burton's linguistic prowess helped him to advance to the administrative role of an assistant surveyor in Sindh. It was during his term in Sindh that Burton made a convalescence trip to Otacumund that is, present day Ooty. However, in the travel account *Goa, and the Blue Mountains: Or, Six Months of Sick Leave(1851),* that emerged from the trip, it is evident that Burton's interest in Portuguese Goa exceeds the purpose of his travel to the sanatorium. The book's focus on colonial Goa outstrips all manner of other ethnological detail, not to mention the official destination of his trip - Ooty. This paper shall interrogate Burton's interest in Goa and his reflections on Portuguese colonial policy. The paper shall analyze Burton's rigid stand within the dynamics of race theory, which this visit gave occasion to crystalize.

Richard Burton (1821-1890), the iconic Victorian traveller of the nineteenth century, is famous for being a man of many parts. Burton's phenomenal wanderlust went hand in hand with myriad concurrent interests – cartographical, ethnological, and anthropological. Also, besides being an exceptional swordsman, Burton was a translator and a polyglot. Burton began his career in India as a recruit in the East India Company's Indian Army. After starting as a soldier based in Bombay and Gujarat, Burton's linguistic prowess helped him to advance to the administrative role of an assistant surveyor in Sindh. It was during his term in Sindh that Burton made a convalescence trip to Otacumund that is, present day Ooty. However, in the travel account *Goa, and the Blue Mountains: Or, Six Months of Sick Leave(1851),* that emerged from the trip, it is evident that Burton's interest in Portuguese Goa exceeds the purpose of his travel to the sanatorium. The book's focus on colonial Goa outstrips all manner of other ethnological detail, not to mention the official destination of his trip - Ooty.

In 1847, Burton was granted sick leave which offered him the opportunity to gather more information on colonial India. Burton who was to travel to the sanatorium in Ootacamund, present day Ooty, chose deliberately to travel by a Pattimar, an Indian vessel used as a goods carrier. Kennedy in a critical introduction to a recent reprint of the book comments that it was the custom of British invalids from Western India to take a streamer directly to Calicut, today known as Kosikhode. Burton instead chose the more uncomfortable indigenous conveyance and longer route over the usual one, as it gave him the opportunity to explore more of the ports where it stopped and, most importantly, gave him access to the Portuguese colony of Goa. This paper shall interrogate Burton's interest in Goa and his reflections on Portuguese colonial policy. The paper shall analyze Burton's rigid stand within the dynamics of race theory, which this visit gave occasion to crystalize.

1. Intimations of Racial Deterioration

Before entering Goa proper, Burton is required to report to the Portuguese Captain who commands the Castello. The officer "a rhubarb-colored man, dressed in the shabby remains of a flashy uniform" is the picture of racial degeneration for Burton *(Goa, and the Blue Mountains; On Six Months of Sick Leave, 17)*. He comments on the officer's "Maharatta-like Portuguese and Portuguese-like Maharatta," which suggests, for Burton, a fall from grace of the Portuguese, who according to him had traded their racially and politically superior imperial identity for a demeaning hybridity (*Goa, and the Blue Mountains; On Six Months of Sick Leave,* 18).[i] So repelled is Burton by the sight of this shabbily dressed European that the animal imagery that is usually reserved for depictions of the indigenous people is used to describe the Portuguese Captain. He declares, after the parting handshake with the officer that his clammy palm feels uncommonly like a snake. For Burton the Portuguese officer had evidently compromised his racial underpinnings, which finds expression in his narrative in reductive animalistic imagery.

2. Burton's Orientalist Trappings

Burton early in his career (this was his first book) proves himself to be a formidable Orientalist in the making. While travelling in Goa he refers to an array of European travellers' accounts. This deference to his Western predecessors elucidates Said's claim that "Orientalism responded more to the culture that produced it than to its putative object, which was also produced by the West" *(Orientalism*, 22). Burton begins by mentioning Linschoten's account, a Frenchman who visited Goa in 1583, then he moves on to monsieur Tavernier who visited both in 1641 and 1648. Around 1673 Dellon, a visiting French physician described the horrors of the inquisition conducted by the Holy Tribunal which was established to punish converts suspected of even the slightest breaches of

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orthodox Roman Catholism. Dellon describes the Holy Tribunal prison whose conditions were so sordid that even Malabar pirates preferred suicide over living in such conditions. Clearly for both Dellon and Burton after him, the fact that even indigenous bandits were unable to withstand the Holy Tribunal prison is an indication of extremely abysmal conditions. Burton then quotes from Captain Hamilton who visited in the early 18th century and like Dellon has nothing appreciable to say about the "zealous bigots" that is, the Catholic Portuguese that inhabit the city. The last on his list of European travellers is a French missionary Rev. Cottineau de Kleguen, whose endorsement of the inquisition presents a biased view. In this delineation of his European predecessors, Burton maintains a relatively objective distance. While Burton grants the Portuguese a glorious past for its contribution to Oriental studies, he attributes the decline in the practice of translation of native texts to the loss of the former proselytizing zeal. According to Burton, confronted with native obduracy, the Portuguese missionary efforts waned and, consequently with it, Oriental studies. In contrast, Burton foresees a rich future for Britain whose Oriental interests and studies are still in full steam with no signs of abatement. This effusive outpouring of Oriental works indicates the hegemonic control of the West and its hugely successful attempt at monopolizing the encounter with the Other.

3. Inside Portuguese Goa

As Burton reaches the shore he evinces surprise at witnessing a capital that lacked tall buildings and crowded streets and comprised only of coconut trees. Burton appears to carry a certain notion that is, the British colonial model of how Goa as a colony should have dramatically developed under the supposedly benign influence of Western civilization. Further, coming from British India he has no appreciation of this European colony where there has been cultural inter-change at the expense of a distinctive European identity. The British in India had maintained a stiff distance from the subject races, physically marked by spatial segregation, in stark contrast to their Portuguese counterparts. In Goa Burton is appalled to see the Western identity compromised by several signs of a cultural hybridity. In the chapels of one of the seminaries he visits in Panjim he finds "The crucifixes appear almost shocking. They are … painted with most livid and unnatural complexions, streaked with indigo-coloured veins, and striped with streams of blood" (*Goa, and the Blue Mountains; On Six Months of Sick Leave,* 32). The grotesque depictions border on the gory and Burton chooses to describe the red colour as if it were blood. The bright colours, which he is unaccustomed to, are seen as violating a religious space which Burton associates with the European races. Burton is quick to attribute the moribund state of Goa as a colony to Portuguese policies. The loss of the power, wealth and magnificence of the Portuguese colonial counterparts in Goa, Burton attributes to multiple causes:

But the introduction of the Jesuits, the Holy Tribunal, and its fatal offspring, religious persecution; pestilence, and wars with European and native powers, disturbances arising from an unsettled home government, and above all things, the slow but sure workings of the short-sighted policy of the Portuguese in intermarrying and identifying themselves with Hindoos of the lowest castes, made her fall as rapid as her rise was sudden and prodigious(*Goa, and the Blue Mountains; On Six Months of Sick Leave,* 45).

Kennedy points out how Burton, in his repugnance at the mongrel race he beheld in Goa, was not alone in attributing to the practice of inter-mixing the decline of the Portuguese Empire. Moreover Burton's reflection on the decline of their colonial counterparts had immediate relevance with regard to the moulding of immediate British policy. Burton's observations came at a time when the British parliamentary select committee was busy debating the viability of permanent settler colonies in British India. It becomes clear how the racist ethnographic detail provided by Burton is used as a ruse to offer policy-making suggestions. The distaste Burton harbours for the Goanese mongrel race was mirrored in his aesthetic sensibilities being assaulted by the influence of indigenous artwork in the churches. After describing the frescoes as most grotesque, Burton declares that like the paintings is the sculpture which presents a series of cherubim, angels, and saints, whose very aspect makes one shudder and think of Frankenstein. By invoking the literary construct Frankenstein, not only is Burton evoking the surreal nature of the monstrous shock he is subjected to, but also, implicit in the analogy is the suggestion that the Portuguese are as responsible for the monstrosities that Burton witnesses as was Mary Shelley's scientist for his Faustian conviction that he could match God's creativity. Taking the analogy further, it indicates that at a subconscious level, Burton equates the co-mingling of what he perceives to be disparate cultures, and more crucially races, as a tampering with nature which will necessarily have hideous consequences. But as is characteristic with Burton, after such a sweeping dismissal of the interiors of the Cathedral he concedes that "in spite of these disenchanting details, a feeling not unallied to awe creeps over one when wandering down the aisles." Yet the 'awe' Burton mentions is far from an unalloyed emotion, transitory as it is. Nor does the use of the term 'awe,' act as a signal for the reader to prepare for a switch to a more appreciative attitude. The spectacle of the native Christians at prayer swiftly dislodges the reverent attitude even before it takes root.

The few human beings that meet the eye, increase rather than diminish the dismal effect of the scene… their pallid countenances, and emaciated forms seem so many incarnations of the curse of desolation which hovers over the ruins of the Old Goa (*Goa, and the Blue Mountains; On Six Months of Sick Leave,* 71).

Burton's characterization of the population of Goa represents an Orientalist conflation of the categories of race and religion. Kennedy notes how race was a "signifier whose signification was open to debate, with contending parties claiming it for different purposes" (Dane Kennedy, *The Highly Civilized Man*, 48). Burton's annotations in his copy of James Prichard's Natural History of Man reveal how Burton also associated language with race. In Goa however, Burton's characterization of race is heavily inflected with the physical marker of skin colour. Further, Burton also takes recourse to the contemporary theories on race that attributed morality or the lack of it, to racial features.

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Burton's discursive strategy is to attribute racial intermixing to the decline in Portuguese's imperial sway. In doing so he was contributing to the debate on racial theory underway in Britain. Burton condemns Albuquerque's fatal measure as an instance of attempting to convert abstract well-meaning though ill-considered theory into experience. For Burton, there is no doubt that far from the successful "amalgamation of the races in the persons of their descendants, experience and stern facts condemn the measure as a most delusive and treacherous political day dream" (*Goa, and the Blue Mountains; On Six Months of Sick Leave,* 88).

Robert Young's Colonial Desire: Hybridity in theory, Culture and Race presents a comprehensive assessment of the gamut of racial discourse present in Victorian times. The Eurocentric discourse of race was central to the narrative justifying colonialism. Young quotes Theodor Waitz(1821-1864) a German psychologist and anthropologist, who in his remarks on race expresses a rare consciousness – by nineteenth century standards - of the ideological implications of scientists' claims that human kind is separated by the difference of species. In his Introduction to Anthropology (1859) his objective observation registers the coded dominance such characterization would confer on the white race:

If there be various species of mankind, there must be a natural aristocracy among them, a dominant white species as opposed to the lower races who by their origin are destined to serve the nobility of mankind, and may be tamed, trained, and used like domestic animals, or may, according to circumstances, be fattened or used for physiological or other experiments without any compunction …(Quoted in Robert J. C. Young, *Colonial Desire: Hybridity in Theory, Culture and Race*, 6).

Broadly speaking, as Young explains, the race debate, on which hinged attitudes towards imperialism and slavery, can be seen as divided into two camps. On the one hand, were those whose voices endorsed imperialism and slavery, and promoted a theory of polygenesis, which regarded racial divisions as manifestations of varied species in human beings. These diverse species, it was argued, suffer degeneration and or infertility when subjected to cross breeding. On the other hand were the comparatively liberal voices like Prichard's whose racial thought upheld the biblically allied belief in monogenesis, and considered the amalgamation of differing races productive and sustainable. Hybrids, Mulatto, Mongrel were amongst the more commonly used terms to refer to the offspring of what were designated as either inter-species or inter-racial bonds.

Coming back to Burton and his assessment of the Portuguese policy in Goa, one finds extreme repugnance on his part for the experiment of intermixing with Indians. The Mestici, or the mixed breed as it was referred to in Portuguese Goa, despite being so common that they could be found present in different rungs of society, are revolting to Burton:

> It would be, we believe, difficult to find in Asia an uglier or more degraded looking race than that which we are now describing. The forehead low and flat, the eyes small, quick, and restless; there is a mixture of sensuality and cunning about the region of the mouth, and a development of the lower part of the face which are truly unprepossessing, not to say revolting (*Goa, and the Blue Mountains; On Six Months of Sick Leave,* 97).

Interestingly, there is nothing in the description which suggests the notional monstrosity which, no doubt is a product of Burton's racist and imperialist conviction of the desirability of the segregation of the white race from the non-white. To a neutral onlooker in today's age, more specifically someone who has no stakes in the imperial enterprise and is free from the racial prejudices that masqueraded as scientific theory in earlier times, the above description of facial features would fail to evoke revulsion. Typically, the offspring of such unions necessarily are demoted to the inferior race, the possibility of their rising to the level of the European is nowhere in the reckoning. The mestizo does not even qualify to represent an intermediate level not quite European and neither Asian. Instead the mestizo is irrevocably doomed to a disgraceful fall "with more of the vices than the virtues belonging to the two races from which they are descended" (*Goa, and the Blue Mountains; On Six Months of Sick Leave,* 100). Burton who at this point is a new voice joining the chorus of Orientalists, carries the convictions typical of a neophyte eager to establish himself in the field. His concern for European racial integrity is not limited to a narrative that censures racial intermixing for its enervating outcomes. Burton's purist conceptualization of race is such that he brands as mestizo even those Portuguese settlers whose racial distinctiveness has been compromised not by inter-racial bonding, but by the deleterious effects of the environment. While it was a commonplace in Orientalist discourse to attribute the defects of the natives to the geographical location and the climate they were subjected to, Burton's use of the term mestizo presents a radically purist notion of race. According to Burton not only are the offspring of a mixed union mongrels but also are those Portuguese families who chose to settle in India, from their unrelenting exposure to Indian climatic conditions. This alternative connotation of mestizo is apparent in the following passage:

> The white families settled in the country were formerly called Castissos to distinguish them from Reinols. In appearance there is little difference between them; the former are somewhat less robust than the latter, but both are equally pallid and sickly-looking --- they dress alike, and allow the beard and moustaches to grow … As soon as intermarriage with the older settlers takes place the descendants become Mestici --- in plain English, mongrels. The flattering term is occasionally applied to a white family which has been settled in the country for more than one generation, "for although" say the Goanese, "there is no mixture of blood, still there has been one of air or climate, which comes to the same thing" (*Goa, and the Blue Mountains; On Six Months of Sick Leave,* 88-89).

Though Burton ostensibly distances himself from the idea of mestizos bred from the influence of climate rather than inter-racial breeding by offering the rationale behind the argument in quotation marks, later in the passage he states, no longer quoting, his own unmediated thoughts on the Portuguese

children who are raised in Goa – “they presently degenerate, from the slow but sure effects of a debilitating climate, and its concomitant evils, inertness, and want of excitement”(*Goa, and the Blue Mountains; On Six Months of Sick Leave,* 89). Later still in a more categorical endorsement of climate acting as an over-determining agent of race, Burton extenuates the “peccadilloes” of members of the clergy of the Roman Catholic Church in Goa as transgressions that must occur in a warm climate.

Burton presses home the point of Albuquerque’s fatal measure not only by presenting the degeneration of the race, but by also asserting that the whole exercise of racial intermixing which was forwarded to promote bonding between the two races has been counter-productive. Instead of bridging the divide between the ruler and the ruled, Burton suggests that differences persist and are more extreme than in Anglo-India. Alluding to the insurmountability of the divide, Burton regards Albuquerque’s experiment as an absolute failure, which far from improving inter-racial relations has worsened them. This view is apparent in Burton’s comparative assessment of British India and the Portuguese colony: “No Anglo-Indian Nabob sixty years ago ever thought less of a ‘nigger’ than a Portuguese officer does now” (*Goa, and the Blue Mountains; On Six Months of Sick Leave,* 86). In a later chapter Burton returns to this topic which obsessed him to once again assert his absolute rejection of racial intermingling. Burton identifies hill-stations as the possible sites where the Portuguese mistake might be repeated in British India. Commenting on the British strategic occupation of hilly areas which serve as a reprieve for British officers from the prohibitive climate of the Indian plains, Burton warns against turning these places into settlement colonies. His contention is that the degenerating effects of the Indian climate, even in the salubrious mountains will become evident in the second generation of settlers. Burton takes recourse to scientific discourse to validate his views, though he does not mention the names of the theorists he refers to:

> Some have accounted for the mental inferiority of the mixed breed by a supposed softness or malformation of the brain, others argue that the premature depravity and excess to which they are prone, enervate their bodies, and, consequently, affect their minds (*Goa, and the Blue Mountains; On Six Months of Sick Leave,* 156-7).

Ironically, he offers what he perceives as the Indian perspective as another justification against the establishment of colonies. While discussing, what in his estimation, is a new found Indian contempt of the British, Burton regards the equation between the British and the natives to have changed from the days of Clive and Cornwallis. Burton no doubt considers these heavy handed British administrators as model ones. Although, Burton asserts that the contemporary British officers have not changed from these illustrious forbearers, he perceives a change in the Indians for whom he says “formerly they fought expecting to be defeated, now they enter the field flushed with hopes of success” (*Goa, and the Blue Mountains; On Six Months of Sick Leave,* 157). A staunch imperialist, Burton here betrays a sense of colonial anxiety, yet the new-found contempt that he perceives in the native fails to initiate any self-reflection regarding the British imperial role, or of the colonial enterprise at large. Also it is very ironical that Burton should inveigh against the forming of British colonies with the argument that it would aggravate native contempt. Either he is actually blind to native thought, which was largely disillusioned by the British because of the supercilious distance they maintained, or else he willfully ignores the ramifications of the native disillusionment if not contempt in order to uphold his exclusivist racist beliefs. ‘Ferishteh,’ a native historian whom Burton refers to by name while presenting the various historical accounts of old Goa, is one such annalist who had declared in no uncertain terms the native sense of disenchantment with rulers who unlike the Mughals before them had disdained making India their home. Dirks mentions that Alexander Dow had published a translation of Ferishtah’s chronicles into History of Hindustan with an introduction to the first volume way back in 1768, almost a century before Burton appeared on the Indian scene (Dirks, *The Scandal of Empire*, 248). Even if Burton had not read Fershiteh in the original Persian, though it is unlikely, he would be aware of Dow’s translation which offered some insight into the native contempt for the British. While this contempt for Burton appears to operate in a vacuum, Dow is more objective in his assessment. Even as he designates the Mughal rulers as despots he regards them as more respectful of locals unlike the British who are ruthless in their taxation and encroach on the privileges of the natives.

The thought of racial intermixing appears to be insufferable to Burton. Even when there appears to be perfect equality, political and social amongst whites, blacks and mongrels, in actuality the astute observer, according to Burton, will see through the sham decorum. Burton, who professes to be digging beneath the facade of social appearances unravels seething discontentment in the Portuguese. Referring to a Portuguese gentleman with whom Burton had established an intimate equation Burton asserts that “when asked which method of dealing with the natives he preferred, Albuquerque’s or that of Leadenhall Street, [he] unhesitatingly replied, ‘the latter, as it is better to keep one’s enemies out of doors.’ Once again Burton is cautious enough to suitably distance himself from such an open declaration of racial revulsion, even though he appears to be camouflaging his own thoughts. Also Burton’s trick of ventriloquizing his own ideas through one who has experiential knowledge, serves to strengthen his opinionated stand. Leadenhall Street of course, stands metonymically for the East India Company’s office, namely the Old East India House, where the courts of directors’ rooms were located.

4. Nautch Beckons

Burton is notorious for his interest in sexual matters. This interest of his found muted expression in his early works. However, Burton does indulge in the risqué (by Victorian standards) with chapters devoted to Indian nautches, as in the text understudy. With time this interest of his grew or else he was able to channelize it through the trajectory of the newly emerging discipline of anthropology. This resulted in his publishing works of erotica either self-translated or else as editor of the translations he commissioned. Such is the fame of Seroda that Burton is agreeably surprised to meet lieutenants L and T there. As it turned out, all three had read reports of the beautiful Bayaderes or dancing girls who inhabited the village. Burton, on the strength of the fame of the place, even makes an

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outrageous claim which reverses the real movement of wealth from colonies to the metropole. He is amazed at the diverse coins to be seen strung together into the necklaces that the dancing girls wear:

> An old English five-guinea-piece may be found by the side of a Portuguese St. Thomas, a French *Louis d'or*, and a Roman medal … We should be puzzled to account for how they came there, did we not know that India has from the earliest ages been the great sink for Western gold (*Goa, and the Blue Mountains; On Six Months of Sick Leave,* 126).

Even though the colonial discourse on sexuality, phantasmically constructed around places like Seroda is responsible for generating colonial desire, attributing to such women, the syphoning off of Western wealth is an outrageous claim, and supremely ironical, especially in the context of exploitative colonial practices. Burton in *Goa* is mostly unapologetic about colonial appropriation and exploitation. However, here he is uncommonly oversensitive in perceiving the West to be at the receiving end owing to the sexual attraction of the Orient. The dismissal of the retrograde Oriental and the compulsive sexual attraction to the Oriental male or female,(depending on one's sexual orientation) constitutes a fundamental dialectic that pervades Orientalist writing. According to Philip Holden the "need for and simultaneous disavowal of an Other, is constitutive not only of the colonial subject but also the heterosexual male subject in the second part of the nineteenth century" (*Imperial Desire: Dissident Sexualities and Colonial Literature,* xii).

Burton's self-contradictory representations on the effects of hybridity are apparent in his description of some of the dancing girls. Earlier in the text, in the context of colonial inter-racial relations, mongrel offspring had been characterized as irredeemably degraded. However, Burton not willing to acknowledge native attraction, conveniently attributes the beauty of the dancing girls to racial intermixing - "some of them were very fair, having manifestly had the advantage of one European progenitor" (*Goa, and the Blue Mountains; On Six Months of Sick Leave,* 124). This tribute that he pays to the offspring of inter-racial relationships is at variance with his earlier exclamations of revulsion which acted as a prelude to the justification of racial segregation.

Burton's ethnographic enquiries do not stop at Seroda where the reader is told there are no less than twenty establishments and around fifty to sixty dancing-girls. He also offers the readers a little piece self-referential history obliquely through the person of a certain Major G. The person in question had adopted Hindu manners, and later in life fell in love with a Nautch girl from Seroda. So compelling was his love for her that he fulfilled her condition of leaving his service and settling in her hometown. Burton, who visits the tomb-like structure that was erected to honour his ashes, is overcome by the "melancholy spectacle, the last resting-place of a fellow countryman in some remote nook of a foreign land, far from the dust of his fore-fathers---in a grave prepared by strangers, around which no mourners ever stood, and over which no friendly hand raised a tribute …" (*Goa, and the Blue Mountains; On Six Months of Sick Leave,* 130). Burton's insistence on the fundamental isolation of Major G sits oddly with the elaborate passage preceding the elegiac one, which establishes Major G's complete integration with the natives. Major G no doubt found the life he had chosen abundantly fulfilling, so much so that he was willing to forsake his homeland by birth for the adopted one. Despite the ontological security and belongingness that drew the Major to the native community, Burton, who before the book was published had already, not only dressed as a native, but also masqueraded as one, is unable to conceive of a fellow westerner genuinely embracing the racial Other and being accepted in a reciprocal gesture. Also noteworthy is Burton's identification with a European from a rival State involved in the colonial scramble.

5. Selective Colonial Histography

In contrast to the putative fanaticism of Tipu Sultan which Burton sneaks into the narrative in the latter part of the book, he selectively reports the Portuguese excesses in colonial Goa. He does refer to the "the tyrannical Portuguese of olden time" when Hindus were forced to have beef in a major drive towards proselytizing (*Goa, and the Blue Mountains; On Six Months of Sick Leave,* 119). Burton's narrative equates Portuguese tyranny with the forcible introduction of beef which otherwise would be sacrilegious to pious Hindus, and no doubt would be torturous but such an innocuous reference to Portuguese tyranny fails to do justice to the extent and manner of suffering inflicted on the natives. In a deliberate act of omission, Burton neglects to mention the notorious inquisition and the physical tyranny it inflicted, which was far more gruesome and violent than dietary restrictions or enforcements. True, he does mention passingly the "religious persecution" practiced by the Portuguese but only as a rationalization of its fall from imperial glory. Interestingly, the inquisition does find mention, but only indirectly through the travelogue of a fellow European the Frenchman Dellon who appears in the passage where Burton provides a catalogue of the western travellers who had chronicled Goa in the past. While discussing Dellon's account, Burton refers to the sordid conditions of incarceration where some prisoners "preferred strangling themselves with their turbans to enduring the tortures of such an earthly Hades" (*Goa, and the Blue Mountains; On Six Months of Sick Leave,* 52). This indictment of the Holy Office, however limited, surfaces only in connection with the Tribunal's treatment of a fellow European. There is much more to the horror of the Portuguese inquisition that was established in 1560 and dissolved only in 1812. Burton does mention the "triennial Auto da Fe" but without glossing the three yearly event which was reserved to burn confirmed heretics at the stake. In the introduction to his book on V. J. P. Saldanha (Makers of Indian Literature) Edwin D'Souza provides a more detailed account of the Holy Tribunal, much of which is referenced from Dellon's account, which Burton passes over:

> The crimes were of different kinds: blasphemies, impiety, sodomy, necromancy and witchcraft. For example if any of the newly converted took part in the 'superstitious assemblies' (Jewish Sabbaths) or former idolatories (Hindu gods) practiced of yore, were enough to cause a victim to burn at the stake … The inquisition did not punish only the Christians accused of having trespassed,

> but also Muslims, Hindus, and other foreigners of different religions. They were accused of practicing their religion in Portuguese lands, subject to the Portuguese Crown, where Catholicism was the law (Edwin D'Souza. *V. J. P. Saldanha (Makers of Indian Literature),* 43).

Burton glosses over the virtual decimation of Muslims that the Portuguese army carried out on the orders of Governor Albuquerque. The Portuguese conquered Goa, then part of the Bijapur Empire from the Muslim ruler Yusuf Adil Shah, with the help of Thimayya, a Hindu from Goa. In the days succeeding the conquest of Goa Albuqerque boasted in a communication to the King of Portugal: "No life was spared for any Mussulman and their mosques were filled up . . . and set on fire"(T. B. Cunha, *Goa's Freedom Struggle: Selected Writings of T. B. Cunha*, 61). Writing in the same century as Burton, H. Morse Stephens a historian wrote in 1898 "as soon as the Portuguese were in entire possession of Goa, Albuquerque directed that the Muhammadan population, men, women, and children, should be put to the sword. This cruel butchery is far more to Albuquerque's discredit than the hanging of Ruy Dias, for which the poet Camoens so strongly condemns him" (H. Morse Stephens,S *Rulers of India: Albuquerque*, 88). Burton as a comparatively fresh recruit to the imperial enterprise refrains from negative representations of even a fellow imperial country. Later in his career Burton occasionally criticized certain colonial policies in his ethnographic travel accounts, but never did these critical inputs translate into a reconsideration of Europe's self-appointed right to colonize other countries. Incidentally Burton was to become an admirer of Camoens, considered to be Portugal's greatest poet even today, and translated his life-poem the epic *The Lusiads* into English in 1880, after working on it for years.

6. Conclusion

Secure in the knowledge that he was writing for the British audience Burton provides insights into the psychological nature of British colonial control - "our empire in the East has justly been described as one of opinion, that is to say, it is founded upon the good opinion entertained of us by the natives, and the bad opinion of themselves" (*Goa, and the Blue Mountains; On Six Months of Sick Leave,* 157). This admission can be read to unwittingly challenge the racist idea of white superiority which Burton endorsed and propagated as the rationale behind colonial rule. Read against the grain, the colonial reliance on 'opinion' points towards a destabilizing of the whole edifice of the hierarchizing race theory which in turn provided the rationale behind colonialism. Such a candid admission reflects the self-assured erasure of the native as a possible reader of a text that is doubly removed from its colonial context by virtue of its not only being published in English, but also on a distant shore. This indicates a curious perception of the native as existing beyond the pale of English letters. And yet, English Literature studies had already been introduced in 1835 by the English Education Act of William Bentinck, which no doubt was a direct consequence of Macaulay's minutes that were presented the same year. Moreover, as Gauri Vishvanathan's research reveals, English had been taught in the preceding two decades, alongside Oriental Studies, though only as a language. Such an attitude reflects the ignorant confidence of the British in general which Burton shared, with regard to their control of colonial India.

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