
PART I Labour

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1 The Sexual Politics of Imperial Expansion: Eunuchs and Indirect Colonial Rule in Mid-Nineteenth-Century North India

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In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, eunuch slaves known as *khwajasarais* (literally, lord-superintendents of the house) were numbered among the political elite of the state of Awadh in north India, an autonomous state that was formerly part of the Mughal Empire. *Khwajasarais* had a legal status as slaves, but were politically significant courtiers, government officials, military commanders, intelligencers, landholders and managers of elite households as well. Indeed, a *khwajasarai* slave named Almas Ali Khan was the second most powerful figure in late-eighteenth-century Awadh, with the exception of the Awadh ruler. Almas Ali was the revenue farmer, or 'Amil', of over a third of Awadh, the commander of a military force that was larger than the Awadh ruler's and the director of extensive commercial operations. In short, he was one of the most powerful 'warrior entrepreneurs' in north India.¹ In the early nineteenth century, the Awadhi historian Faiz Bakhsh Khan described one of Almas Ali's contemporaries, Jawahir Ali Khan, as a noble who lived in a style of 'pomp and magnificence' and was surrounded by 'men of learning and art such as were not to be found near [the] Nawáb'. Jawahir Ali was reportedly 'so dignified that, when any of [the Nawab's] courtiers came to see him, he did not rise to receive them'.² Yet the mid-nineteenth century saw a steep decline in *khwajasarais*' social standing as they were impoverished by British imperial expansion into Awadh.

This article examines historical transformations in the social status and political authority of *khwajasarais*. Towards the middle of the nineteenth century, the British East India Company's interventionist policies towards Indian-ruled principalities intensified, setting the stage for Awadhi *khwajasarais* to become embroiled in the sexual politics of imperial expansion. Eunuchs, represented as politically 'corrupt' officials, were central figures in colonial criticism of Awadhi 'maladministration', which equated misgovernment with gendered and sexual disorder. In 1848, the Company pressured the Awadh ruler or Padshah, Wajid Ali Shah, to make local labour regimes conform to colonial Victorian concepts of gender, politics and work. The Company sought to

transform the meanings of *khwajasarais*' work not by abolishing eunuch slavery, but by restricting *khwajasarais* to apparently 'benign', though menial, domestic forms of slave labour. Both the Padshah and the *khwajasarais* resisted colonial interventions into *khwajasarais*' work and political influence. Yet the failure of the Padshah to remove eunuchs from positions of political power was one of the Company's primary justifications for the annexation of Awadh in 1856. Following the establishment of British colonial rule in Awadh, *khwajasarais* were transformed from slave-nobles into members of the Muslim poor of colonial Lucknow. The political and social decline of the *khwajasarais* signified the success of supposedly 'rational' colonial governance over older north Indian governmental cultures; these were replaced with an Indian administrative class overwhelmingly composed of free, high-caste Hindus.³ With colonial rule of Awadh, *khwajasarais* were demoted from their administrative functions and political authority. The *khwajasarais* were reduced to circumstances of impoverishment and political unimportance that they had not previously experienced. Thus, the history of the *khwajasarais* in mid-nineteenth-century Awadh provides a compelling window on the colonial refashioning of slavery, gender and governance in colonial India.

First, examining the Company's attempts to transform *khwajasarai* labour in Awadh deepens our knowledge of an under-studied group of Indian slaves. Not only were *khwajasarais* politically and socially significant persons, and thus important to our understanding of Indian-ruled polities, their history also serves to diversify our knowledge of the history of slavery in South Asia and in the nineteenth-century imperial world at large. A number of histories of medieval and early modern India mention the *khwajasarais* in passing.⁴ However, Indrani Chatterjee's study of slavery in Murshidabad in Bengal, which contains a section of several pages on *khwajasarais*, is the most in-depth existing study of eunuch slaves in South Asia.⁵ This article builds upon Chatterjee's work and illuminates the conditions of eunuch slave labour, *khwajasarais*' political power and the ways that they formed communities of belonging. Moreover, I examine the historical processes by which *khwajasarais* were impoverished and dispossessed of political influence under colonial rule, contributing to our knowledge of the history of Islam, slavery and modernity in South Asia.

Second, this case study of Awadh contributes to literature on indirect colonial rule in India and suggests that the politics of imperial expansion were intertwined with sexual politics to a greater extent than most historians have acknowledged.⁶ Historians such as Michael Fisher, Sylvia Vatuk, Pamela G. Price and Mytheli Sreenivas have highlighted the fact that elite domesticity, kinship and reproductive sexualities became matters of intense Company interest because colonial understandings of princely succession were defined in terms of biological kinship.⁷ In Price's words, sexuality was at issue because of a 'single-minded focus of the [colonial] state' on political titles as 'inherited property'.⁸ Yet the case study of Awadh suggests that even when princely succession was not at stake, issues of masculinity, sexuality, domesticity and kinship were at the centre of the politics of imperial expansion. Like Angma Jhala, who has examined the politics surrounding 'who Indian princes chose as wives, lovers and companions' in the 1920s, I argue that sexual politics were importantly intertwined with indirect colonial rule.⁹ Whereas Jhala focuses on 'the sexual desires and love unions' of princes, I analyse the implication of a wider range of intimate relationships in indirect rule, including kinship, discipleship, patronage and conjugality.¹⁰ Colonial arguments for

the extension of British territory rested on politics surrounding the domestic sphere, intimate ties and different ways of being masculine.

In referring to the sexual politics of imperial expansion, I aim to draw attention to contests over the meaning of *khwajasarais*' work and social networks between the Company, the Padshah, *khwajasarais* and other elites, courtiers and administrators. In so doing, this article draws on the work of scholars of sexuality and British imperial governance. In her study of the deployment of 'family' by the British and the Nawabs of the Carnatic, Sylvia Vatuk describes interactions between the British and Muslim elites as 'a two-sided process of self-interested management of meaning'.¹¹ I have found Vatuk's emphasis on the management of meaning useful in analysing the significance of the *khwajasarai* community to the Company's annexation of Awadh. In particular, the politics of indirect rule involved the labelling of Indian sociopolitical structures and diverse social relationships as sexual and/or criminal. This point also resonates with Indrani Chatterjee's recent argument that in colonial India, aspects of 'monastic governmentality' – the organisation of early modern South Asian polities through teacher-disciple structures – were labelled as forms of 'sexuality'.¹² Similarly, part of the process by which *khwajasarai* labour became the focus of rhetorical arguments for the expansion of Company territory was the categorisation of social and political practices associated with discipleship and patronage as deviant.

I first situate *khwajasarais* in structures of labour, politics and gender in early modern Awadh. Second, I examine the broader politics of indirect rule in India, highlighting the significant role of gender, family and sexuality in British interactions with princely states. Third, I turn to colonial scrutiny of *khwajasarais*' social and intimate relationships and codes of masculinity. I demonstrate that the Company's case for the annexation of Awadh – and more broadly, colonial concepts of political 'corruption' – were premised on ideals of public and private spheres, Victorian understandings of domesticity and kinship and ideologies of masculinity. Finally, this article closes by examining the impacts of colonial interventions on Awadhi *khwajasarais*. From 1848, the Padshah attempted to manipulate the meanings of colonial concepts of domesticity to his own ends in order to protect the employment of *khwajasarais*, while *khwajasarais* used networks of kinship, discipleship and patronage to continue to exert political authority. Yet British annexation in 1856 ultimately achieved the stated aim of Company interventions into eunuch labour: the impoverishment of eunuchs through their restriction to menial labour and a politically unimportant status.

The *khwajasarais* of early modern Awadh

Khwajasarais exerted political power and reproduced political constituencies in eighteenth-century Awadh through knowledge traditions of teacher-disciple lineages, practices of kinship-making and elite codes of masculinity. However, in the mid-nineteenth century these aspects of the *khwajasarai* community would be devalued and displaced by colonial politics and governance, gradually transforming *khwajasarais*' social status from nobility to impoverishment. To understand the impact of colonial modernity on *khwajasarais*, it is necessary to examine their social and political roles in Awadh. The account of *khwajasarais* in Awadh that follows in this section is in large part drawn from Muhammad Faiz Bakhsh's Persian memoir *Tarikh Farahbakhsh*

(1818). Faiz Bakhsh was an employee of Awadh's most powerful matriarch, Bahu Begam, the mother of Nawab Asaf ud-Daula (r. 1775–97). Faiz Bakhsh worked under several of Bahu Begam's *khwajasarais*, who were some of the most influential eunuchs in late-eighteenth-century Awadh.¹³

The location of Awadh in Mughal political culture illuminates the political and social significance of the *khwajasarai* community. The state of Awadh emerged out of the Mughal Empire in the early eighteenth century. By the 1720s, Awadh was 'a regional political system with considerable autonomy'.¹⁴ The Awadh rulers were known as 'Nawab-Wazir', the deputy or first minister to a sovereign.¹⁵ Reflecting the origins of the Awadh state in the Mughal Empire, Mughal cultural symbols predominated in court rituals. Yet unlike the Mughals, who were Sunni, the Nawabs were Shi'a. Broadly speaking, in Islamic political cultures, eunuchs were the keepers of social and sexual boundaries and the protectors of *harim* or inviolable spaces.¹⁶ In Mughal polities, power radiated outwards from the body of the ruler, to the household and on to the kingdom.¹⁷ As such, power was located in the 'inner', rather than the 'outer', sphere.¹⁸ To colonial commentators, this represented an inversion of the modern European concept of 'public' and 'private' spheres, which envisaged political power as being located within a masculine public sphere that was (at least ideally) separated from domesticity.¹⁹ Indrani Chatterjee argues that since the ruler's household was considered sacred and inviolable, only those who were not considered fully adult males could be permitted in the ruler's presence.²⁰ Due to their mediation of social and symbolic boundaries and permitted proximity to rulers and nobles, *khwajasarais* were employed in a number of Indian regimes.

In Awadh and other parts of India, eunuch slaves were generally of either South Asian or East African origin, and the latter were known as *habshi*.²¹ Most *khwajasarais* were emasculated in their childhood, although some eunuchs in Awadh were reputed to be 'born eunuchs'. *Khwajasarais* of South Asian origin were usually enslaved following either: capture in war or conflict; kidnapping; or sale into slavery by their families because of impoverishment or famine.²²

In Awadh, *khwajasarais* derived power from their prominence within the ruler's or noble's household. *Khwajasarais* held diverse duties inside and outside domestic contexts. Eunuch slaves amassed multiple appointments within the households of their masters or mistresses, in the management of their estates and businesses and in the government administration.²³ The pattern of *khwajasarai* employment in both the household and administration was typical of the households of rulers in Mughal-influenced polities. Servants of the Mughal Padshah (Emperor) often performed multiple functions that traversed the boundary between 'inner' and 'outer' spheres.²⁴ Although *khwajasarais* could acquire multiple and varied offices, they were thought particularly suited to several specific employments: first, *khwajasarais* were prominent as military commanders; second, the Nawab and other elites employed *khwajasarais* as negotiators and envoys; and third, *khwajasarais* were important transmitters of intelligence, even though many low-ranking *khwajasarais* were illiterate.²⁵

There was a spectrum of dependency in master-*khwajasarai* relations. Richard Eaton argues that slavery in South Asia was not 'a fixed status, but . . . a particular origin, a particular career, and a particular relationship to a ruler or politically important master'. Enslavement was a 'process' and master-slave relations could change over time.²⁶ The relationship between lower-ranking *khwajasarais* and their masters

was highly asymmetrical, whereas prominent *khwajasarais* often had a high degree of autonomy in administrative decision-making.²⁷ Yet even high-ranking *khwajasarais* were vulnerable to non-slaves' demands for obedience and often became pawns in the political manoeuvres of their masters and other non-slaves.²⁸ In order to understand *khwajasarais*' means of exerting political influence in Awadh, it is necessary to understand the significance of teacher-disciple structures in early modern South Asian governance. Indrani Chatterjee has recently argued that early modern polities were forms of 'monastic governmentality' in which 'student-disciples' submitted to the 'legal-moral and disciplinary practices' of 'teachers-governors', setting up 'a codependant [sic] series of relationships between teachers and disciples, kings and subjects'.²⁹ *Khwajasarais*' location in various forms of discipleship lineages was central to their efforts to expand their political authority.

First, relationships between *khwajasarais* and their masters were envisaged not merely as relationships of enslavement, but also of discipleship: *khwajasarais* were their masters' disciples.³⁰ Second, the *khwajasarai* community itself was structured internally by discipleship lineages between *khwajasarai* teachers (*gurus*, *pirs* or *murshids*) and disciples (*chelas* or *murids*).³¹ *Khwajasarai* discipleship lineages were knowledge traditions in which the skills and cultural competence required of *khwajasarais* were passed down from generation to generation. Senior *khwajasarais* were responsible for the disciplining and upbringing of their disciples.³² Lineages of generations of *khwajasarai gurus* and *chelas* were recognised within Awadh society.³³ Third, *khwajasarais* formed networks and household establishments of non-eunuch dependants, servants and employees who were conceptualised as disciples. *Khwajasarais*' disciples included both slaves and non-slaves, meaning *khwajasarai* slaves could be the dominant partner in relationships with free men and women.³⁴ By amassing a large network of disciples, and through the 'conspicuous consumption of followers', *khwajasarais* sought to expand their political influence.³⁵

The formation of familial relationships was crucial to *khwajasarais*' construction of community and identity and was important in the politics of Awadh. Some historians and anthropologists have described kinship relationships that are neither biological nor affinal as 'fictive kinship'.³⁶ The implication is that 'fictive kinship' is less salient and tangible than 'real' (biological or affinal) kinship. 'Fictive kinship' thus underestimates the social and political significance of kinship-making for *khwajasarais* and other Awadhis. There was a disjuncture between local Awadhi structures of family and politics – in which kinship-making was politically important and a means for building communities of belonging – and Victorian norms of kinship. Victorian domestic ideology defined biological kinship as the 'core' of the family and non-kin such as servants and other dependants as 'peripheral'.³⁷ Although Victorian ideologies of domesticity did not always match lived experience, there was nonetheless substantial difference between Awadhi and nineteenth-century British concepts of kinship.³⁸ In early modern South Asia, various kinship-making practices were central to politics. At the same time, categories of kin, slaves and servants in households were malleable and could be blurred.³⁹

Khwajasarais established formal adoptive kinship ties through socially recognised adoption ceremonies involving the *khwajasarai*, the soon-to-be kin and the *khwajasarai*'s master.⁴⁰ *Khwajasarais* often regarded the *khwajasarais* with whom they were trained and educated in childhood as their 'brothers'.⁴¹ Kinship-making also

continued into adulthood. Adult *khwajasarais* commonly adopted sons, some of whom they had originally purchased as slaves.⁴² Expedient kinship relationships could also be a political strategy to consolidate political alliances.⁴³ *Khwajasarais'* formation of families and networks of dependants was socially recognised. Yet upon their deaths, Awadhi *khwajasarais'* efforts to pass on property to their adopted kin and *chelas* were often resisted by masters. Under the principle of *wala*, Shi'a law did not categorically bar slaves from passing on property to heirs. However, Indrani Chatterjee writes that, in the case of eunuch slaves, 'the genealogical heirlessness of slave-eunuchs was obvious – and social heirship from them was disputed *among* the free heirs of a master'.⁴⁴ Nonetheless, *khwajasarais'* formation of adoptive families modified the rationale behind their employment in the Mughal Empire and other regimes: that since eunuchs could not produce heirs, they would be loyal to the ruler.⁴⁵ Kinship-making was both a strategy through which *khwajasarais* formed communities of belonging that lessened their estrangement from origins and biological kin and also was important to the assertion of political authority by *khwajasarais*.

Though historians such as Shaun Marmon and Indrani Chatterjee have emphasised gender ambiguity in their studies of eunuchs in India and elsewhere, Awadhi *khwajasarais* often performed martial codes of masculinity that were more broadly hegemonic in eighteenth-century north Indian society.⁴⁶ Rosalind O'Hanlon shows that elite north Indian men expressed a 'plain soldierly' style through public contests of martial skills, the exhibition of the 'splendour' of their physique and the adoption of an 'austerely plain' mode of dress and entertainment. At the same time, they sought to show 'competence in the knowledge and skills of the court'.⁴⁷ Faiz Bakhsh's account of the prominent eighteenth-century eunuch Jawahir Ali demonstrates a similar martial, austere and cultured masculinity. First, while displaying his wealth through his enormous household establishment, Jawahir Ali publicly repudiated displays of luxury and embodied an austere masculinity. He eschewed bodily exhibitionism, elaborate grooming routines and ornate clothing.⁴⁸ Jawahir Ali's dress suggested that he was not required to wear expensive and ornate clothing to display the wealth of his mistress, unlike lower-ranking and more dependent slaves.⁴⁹ Second, Jawahir Ali demonstrated his physical strength and challenged the masculinity of others through daily archery practice with followers and political allies, as well as through exhibitions of his excellent horsemanship.⁵⁰ Third, Jawahir Ali balanced this martial and austere masculinity with public demonstrations of courtly refinement, in particular through cultural and intellectual patronage.⁵¹ The north Indian codes of martial masculinity which elite *khwajasarais* expressed were tied to the maintenance and extension of political power. Regionally significant 'warrior entrepreneurs' like the high-ranking *khwajasarais* of Awadh needed to build extensive networks of disciples and form alliances with regional political players, for which demonstrations of manliness were required to secure loyalty.⁵² Elite *khwajasarais* ways of being masculine and their political authority were intertwined; in the nineteenth century, British colonisers would criticise eunuchs on both counts.

Family, sexuality and indirect colonial rule

From the middle of the eighteenth century, *khwajasarais* had to negotiate a new political force in Awadh: the British East India Company. After the Company defeated Awadh

at the Battle of Baksar in 1764, the British decided to turn Awadh into a friendly buffer zone to its territories in Bengal by restoring Nawab Shuja ud-Daula to the throne while significantly reducing Awadhi territory. Awadh hence came under the indirect rule of the Company.⁵³ The Awadh state was required by treaty to pay large sums to the Company for defence. Treaties also provided for duty-free Company trade in Awadh, allowed the Company strict control of Awadh's foreign policy and, from 1801, obliged the Nawab to administer the state in accordance with the advice of the Company and the welfare of the people (as construed by the British), thus providing a pretext for colonial interference in the Awadh government.⁵⁴ British Residents, the Company's political representatives in Indian-ruled states, established the Residency as a second and competing centre of political power in the Awadhi capital of Lucknow.⁵⁵ The separation of Awadh from the Mughal Empire in 1819 – and subsequent coronation of Awadh rulers as Padshah (Emperor) – would only deepen dependency on the Company.⁵⁶

In the late eighteenth century, the Company did not seek a general transformation in *khwajasarai* labour or political power, as it would in the nineteenth century. In general, the British did not attempt wide-reaching interventions into the conditions of life of the colonised until the early nineteenth century.⁵⁷ The Company only attempted to limit the influence of individual *khwajasarais* when the extent of their political authority and military resources upset the balance of power in the region. It was not their eunuch-hood that made *khwajasarais* problematic in the eyes of eighteenth-century Britons.⁵⁸ Moreover, in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, the Company explicitly acknowledged *khwajasarais*' kin as their 'family'.⁵⁹ This reflects the fact that eighteenth-century British definitions of 'family' – at least on the imperial periphery – were wider than nineteenth-century colonial attitudes would allow. British men posted to the princely states commonly cohabitated with Indian women in relationships that were characterised by asymmetrical power relationships, but facilitated 'participat[ion] in local practices, often to productive [political] ends'.⁶⁰ Late-eighteenth-century Company officials had relatively intimate knowledge of *khwajasarais* formed in the context of diplomacy, social engagements and even in their own households.⁶¹ Throughout the early nineteenth century, *khwajasarais* were not viewed as a 'problem' population in need of regulation.

However, by the mid-nineteenth century, the Company's attitudes towards the *khwajasarai* community had changed considerably. Two historical transformations are significant here. First, definitions of the family and notions of sexual respectability narrowed greatly during the early nineteenth century. From the late eighteenth century in Britain, evangelical ideology produced new middle-class definitions of the 'private' sphere of the household as a domestic and feminine domain, demarcated from the masculine 'public' sphere.⁶² Between 1800 and 1840, the Company increasingly regarded the 'hybrid' domestic arrangements of British men who cohabitated with Indian women as unacceptable.⁶³ During the early nineteenth century, the British *selectively* privileged textual religious law over diverse customary legal practices as the basis for Hindu personal law, thereby 'validating elite conceptions of sexual practices' that dovetailed in some respects with Victorian constructs of domesticity.⁶⁴ In the process, colonial law marginalised diverse domestic and kinship forms that offended Victorian sensibilities.⁶⁵

Second, the late 1840s saw an intensification of annexation as a colonial strategy. In particular, Governor-General Dalhousie used three strategies to acquire

Indian principalities: military success; the ‘Doctrine of Lapse’, which denied the right of rulers to adopt children in the absence of a biological heir, and charges of ‘maladministration’.⁶⁶ In the case of Awadh, ‘maladministration’ was the only justification offered for annexation in 1856. During the reign of the last Awadh Padshah, Wajid Ali Shah (r. 1847–56), the Company pressed for reforms such as the regulation of eunuch occupations. The failure of these programmes of bureaucratic ‘improvement’ strengthened the case for annexation, which was presented to the British Parliament in the form of the ‘Oudh Blue Book’.⁶⁷

The rhetorical arguments that the Company deployed in relation to *khwajasarai* misgovernment reflect some important broader dynamics of nineteenth-century indirect colonial rule. The silence of the Company on the enslavement of the *khwajasarais* – and its aim of confining *khwajasarais* to domestic slave labour – was symptomatic of what Indrani Chatterjee has termed ‘abolition by denial’. Chatterjee argues that the British defined household slavery as ‘benign’ because they reduced slavery to the model of plantation slavery. In India, the British did not perceive the racialised organisation of slave labour and overt forms of violence thought to characterise slavery.⁶⁸ Moreover, Radhika Singha argues that the colonisers sought to erect boundaries between the household, market and state, and thus obscured the commoditisation of persons in the elite Indian household.⁶⁹ As such, the right of masters to retain possession of household slaves was upheld by colonial courts even after the delegalisation of slavery in 1843.⁷⁰ Official interventions into slavery in the princely states generally only occurred when it was in the political interests of the colonisers.⁷¹ In the case of Awadh, the Company merely pressured the Padshah to confine *khwajasarai* labour to the domestic sphere, that ‘benign’ space of enslavement that in the colonial view was not really slavery at all. Indirectly, the Company affirmed the Padshah’s right to possess and employ slaves in its attempts to transform the *khwajasarai* community into politically insignificant household slave-drudges. Due to the ambivalence of the colonisers towards slavery in the princely states, a more effective case for annexation could be made by tying the employment of eunuch labour to a broader sexual politics that scrutinised intimate relationships, elite households, forms of embodiment and gendered behaviour in Indian-ruled states.

Eunuch labour and the sexual politics of imperial expansion

Colonial policies for the reform of indigenous administrations and the annexation of princely territories proceeded through the association of various intimate and social relationships, forms of governance and types of work with immoral or improper forms of ‘sexuality’. In their case for the ‘maladministration’ of Awadh, British officials identified unmanageable subjects who upset colonial expectations of gender and sexuality. According to the Company, the differences between colonial notions of public and private spheres and Awadhi concepts were evidence of gender and sexual disorder in Awadh. Moreover, conceptualisations of good governance were importantly premised upon codes of masculinity; consequently, failures of administration signified failures in masculinity.⁷²

During Wajid Ali Shah’s reign, sexuality pervaded Company discourses of political ‘corruption’.⁷³ British officials targeted Awadh administrators who were considered unmanly and sexually immoral. The Company particularly criticised the power of

musicians, such as the Padshah's chief singer, Kootub Ali, who was apparently the 'real Sovereign of Oude', because musicians were associated with 'debauchery' and sexual immorality.⁷⁴ In their dispatches to the Government of India, Residents in Lucknow also highlighted figures like Musif ud-Daula, a judge who was apparently 'addicted' to the 'unmanly habit' of 'unnatural passion' and used his position to procure sex.⁷⁵

However, two 'corruption' scandals involving *khwajasarais* early in Wajid Ali's reign also focused Company attention on the employment of slave-eunuchs.⁷⁶ In May 1847, the British Resident, Richmond, was outraged when Wajid Ali appointed the *khwajasarai* Haji Ali Sharif commander of a cavalry regiment.⁷⁷ According to Richmond, Haji Ali had demanded Rs. 100 from each soldier to secure a position, which the Company viewed as a 'corrupt' practice.⁷⁸ Disregarding Company protests, Wajid Ali subsequently appointed Haji Ali joint-commander of a new regiment.⁷⁹ The Company now identified eunuchs as a major cause of the mismanagement of the Awadh administration and, in November 1847, the Governor-General elicited a verbal promise from Wajid Ali that he would no longer employ eunuchs in an 'official' capacity.⁸⁰ Yet in 1848, another powerful *khwajasarai*, Dianut ud-Daula or Dianut Ali, was accused of 'corrupt' practices. Throughout 1847 and 1848, British officials in the neighbouring North-Western Provinces had repeatedly complained of the collection of illegal duties on boats traversing the Ganga by Awadh officials, which was not permitted under Article 8 of the Treaty of 1801.⁸¹ The British Resident, Richmond, discovered that the two officials who were accused of corrupt practices were Dianut's dependants and were acting under his direction.⁸² As such, the case took on a new significance for the Company as an example of the 'corruption' of eunuch officials. The British called for the expulsion of Dianut from Awadh, but the Padshah merely dismissed Dianut from this particular position, along with his dependants.⁸³

With pressure from the British Resident mounting on the issue of *khwajasarai* 'corruption', on 20 June 1848, Wajid Ali called the Resident to a meeting where he proposed a written agreement preventing eunuchs, singers and other 'inappropriate' persons from holding or interfering with government offices. Through this agreement, the British sought to limit *khwajasarais* to the impoverishment and drudgery of domestic slavery and thus undermine their political power. In contrast, this agreement was an attempt on the part of Wajid Ali to protect eunuchs' employment in the politically significant space of the royal household and court (see below). Eunuchs and singers were prohibited from employment in any branch of the army, with the exception of 'His Majesty's personal Guard'; in the police force or prisons; in the office of the Paymaster of the Army; in the law courts; in the collection of revenue; in customs and duties; in the 'Charge of Corn, Cloth or other Marts'; in the Intelligence Department or in 'Advocacy of any complaints of any sort having reference to the Government'. Any eunuch or musician, who in the opinion of the Resident, held a government office 'either directly or in the names of others' or who interfered in 'public matters' could be 'remove[d] and banishe[d] from Oudh' on the order of the Resident.⁸⁴

Eunuch labour became a focal point for the sexual politics of imperial expansion, because the prominence of eunuchs in politics and administration suggested a topsy-turvy gender order. British Residents in Awadh highlighted the blurring of boundaries between the private and the public in *khwajasarais*' mixing of 'domestic' work and 'official' state administrative roles. Due to the association of eunuchs with domestic space, nineteenth-century Britons viewed *khwajasarais* as 'menial servants' whose

proper place was in the household, not the public domain.⁸⁵ According to the Company, *khwajasarai* household servants dominated the public sphere, and like the stereotypical Muslim husband in colonial discourse, ‘secluded’ the Padshah within the *zanana* or feminine quarters, along with his wives and concubines. One Resident, William Sleeman, wrote on 26 October 1849 that Wajid Ali was ‘kept’ by ‘the Singers and Eunuchs’, and reported a few days later that the Padshah was ‘secluded and governed by men so base’ as eunuchs and musicians.⁸⁶ On another occasion, referring to the eunuchs and singers of the palace, Sleeman wrote that the ‘Mahommedan Gentlemen of Lucknow were deeply mortified to see their Sovereign closely and exclusively associated with men so base and kept by them in a kind of prison’.⁸⁷ According to Dalhousie, Wajid Ali was ‘surrounded by foolish and irresponsible advisers’, such as ‘Eunuchs, songsters and fiddlers’, and had surrendered himself ‘in the seclusion of [his] Palace, to indulgence and amusement’, thus neglecting the ‘duties’ of his ‘Royal Station’.⁸⁸

Eunuchs’ apparent ‘seclusion’ of the ruler in the harem would, not insignificantly, provide the Company with an entry-point for a close scrutiny of the intimate relationships and domestic arrangements of the Padshah. In Awadh, the household of the ruler had always been politically significant. Yet according to British commentators, Wajid Ali’s location in the *zanana* evidenced that he had not only lost his authority over his state, but also his authority within his own household. William Sleeman wrote in his journal of his tour through Awadh in 1849–50, which was subsequently published in Britain, that Wajid Ali’s ‘understanding has become so emasculated, that he is altogether unfit for the conduct of his domestic, much less his public, affairs’.⁸⁹ Sleeman even reported that Wajid Ali openly permitted the court musicians to have affairs with his wives.⁹⁰ The Padshah’s apparent failures in princely governance were thus linked to his failure to be properly masculine. J. A. Dorin, a member of the Council of the Governor General, argued in 1855 that he found in Wajid Ali no ‘Noble tastes or manly pursuits’ that might ‘warrant the British Government in continuing to him his royal dynasty’, merely ‘dissolute companions’ and ‘effeminate debaucheries’.⁹¹ *Khwajasarai* slaves were, in the colonial view, household servants who inappropriately dominated the public sphere and kept the ruler, a properly public figure, ‘secluded’ in the feminine harem. *Khwajasarais*’ occupations and social role suggested the complete transposition of public and private spheres, a scenario that implied the confusion of gender and sexual norms, as well as political ‘corruption’ and ‘maladministration’.

The Company also made a case for imperial expansion by condemning *khwajasarais*’ various discipleship and kinship relationships as sexually and criminally deviant. For instance, the British interpreted master-*khwajasarai* ties as sexually suspicious. The relationships between the Awadh ruler and the *khwajasarais* of his court were locally understood through the intertwined concepts of discipleship and enslavement, with the ruler positioned as the *guru* of his *khwajasarai chelas*. As explained above, this was typical more broadly of the intertwining of governance and discipleship structures in South Asia. However, colonial officials described the Padshah’s relationship to his *khwajasarai* disciples/slaves as romantic. In 1848, Richmond, the Resident at Lucknow, wrote, ‘The King is so infatuated regarding these men that he would sacrifice anything rather than oppose them’.⁹² Another Resident, Sleeman, reported in 1849 that ‘the king seemed to be spell bound by these singers and eunuchs and to be entirely under their influence’.⁹³ The Company thus described a relationship of discipleship and enslavement between the Awadh ruler and his *khwajasarais* as a suspicious romantic

infatuation on the part of the Padshah. British Residents never explicitly labelled Wajid Ali Shah a 'sodomite', unlike some previous Awadh rulers, but nevertheless provided extensive commentary on his 'excessive indulgence in venal pleasure'.⁹⁴ Adding to the picture of the royal household as permeated with sex, Wajid Ali Shah's relationships to his *khwajasarai chelas* were also cast as sexually suspicious. The Company's arguments for annexation thus categorised socially and politically significant discipleship relationships as forms of 'sexuality', demonstrating the extent to which sexual politics was entangled with imperial expansion.

At the same time as the *khwajasarais'* relationships of discipleship to the Padshah were interpreted as romantic and sexual, *khwajasarais'* own subordination of disciples and formation of kinship networks were dismissed as forms of criminality. *Khwajasarais'* overlapping kinship-making practices, teacher-disciple hierarchies and household establishments were, in the Company's view, both deviant social relationships and symptomatic of maladministration, highlighting the links between colonial ideologies of governance, gender and sexuality. In the mid-nineteenth century, the British labelled those persons who formed discipleship and kinship relationships with *khwajasarais* as merely their 'creatures' and argued these ties were criminal and politically 'corrupt'. For instance, in the second corruption scandal involving *khwajasarais* in the late 1840s, in which Dianut ud-Daula was accused of collecting illegal duties from boats on the Ganga near Kanpur, the British Resident, Richmond, viewed Dianut's discipleship relationships as mere conduits for nepotism and illegal activities. Richmond argued that eunuchs' appointment of their 'dependants' to administrative positions 'forms the system under which the present favourites of His Majesty carry on all sorts of illegal and oppressive acts'.⁹⁵ In October 1849 Richmond's successor as Resident, Sleeman, complained that *khwajasarais* were able to make considerable sums by placing their 'creatures' – by which he meant their non-eunuch *chelas* and kin – in the command of military regiments and siphoning off government funds for the maintenance of troops.⁹⁶ Similarly, Sleeman wrote two months later that the commandants of Awadh regiments were 'mere creatures of the singers and eunuchs'.⁹⁷ By the mid-nineteenth century, British officials in Awadh no longer described *khwajasarais'* kin as their 'families', as they had earlier in the century. Viewed through the lens of nineteenth-century colonial concepts of domesticity, *khwajasarais'* overlapping kinship and discipleship networks now appeared criminal and nepotistic. Once again, we see how certain intimate relationships implicated in *khwajasarais'* work and political strategies came under scrutiny and were labelled deviant in the Company's political arguments for the annexation of Awadh.

Furthermore, colonial critiques of *khwajasarai* masculinity reveal that colonial concepts of 'rational' administration were premised on notions of appropriate masculine behaviour. Political conversations between the Company and Indian rulers over governmental reform centrally implicated masculinity. The effeminacy of Indian men had been a theme of colonial discourse from the early period of Company rule, yet in the nineteenth century the British ordered various communities, labelled as 'races', according to their masculinity in elaborate and stratified typologies. Colonised men were characterised as inherently inferior to British men, who were perceived as the ideal of manliness. But colonised men were differentiated through a hierarchy of masculinity that distinguished 'martial tribes', such as Sikhs, Gurkhas and Pathans, from 'effeminate races', such as Bengalis.⁹⁸ However, despite the elaboration of racialised typologies

of masculinity, colonial discourses of Indian masculinity were neither coherent, nor unified, nor stable, but rather relational and shifting depending on context.⁹⁹ By the 1840s, *khwajasarais* were cast in colonial discourse as petty tyrants who had usurped Awadh sovereignty, paid no heed to the rule of law and acquired power through violent means, criminal actions and chicanery.¹⁰⁰ In some ways, *khwajasarais* were pictured as the ‘fierce’ and ‘martial’ Muslim despot, an image of violent hyper-masculinity. Yet unlike the colonial stereotype of the martial Muslim man, *khwajasarais* were viewed as asexual, rather than as hypersexual, highlighting the fact that representations of masculinity were pliable.

Company officials criticised eunuch slaves for failing on a key aspect of Victorian masculinity: the ability to control physical aggression.¹⁰¹ This code of controlled masculine violence was more evident in the metropole than in the colonies, where Wool-lacott and Kolsky have shown that more aggressive models of British manliness were acceptable.¹⁰² Nonetheless, according to Company officials, eunuchs were unmanly due to their inability to discipline their violent impulses. In 1849, William Sleeman reported to the Government of India that the ‘Singers and Eunuchs . . . and their immense retinues and the disorderly soldiers of the Regiments they command keep the town [of Lucknow] in terror’, though he cited no specific instances of violence and noted only that ‘they are insolent to every one [sic] they meet’.¹⁰³ Sleeman wrote that the ‘insolent’ actions of eunuch commanders like Feroz ud-Daula, ‘one of the most despicable and mischievous of these wretched Eunuchs . . . render[ed] life and property insecure in every part of [Wajid Ali Shah’s] dominions’.¹⁰⁴ In 1853, Sleeman informed Wajid Ali himself, ‘In regards to affairs in the city of Lucknow, your Eunuchs . . . plunder the people here . . . [and] imprison and ruin whomsoever they please’.¹⁰⁵ The language which Outram, another British Resident, used in 1855 to describe a *khwajasarai* named Ahsun ud-Daula – a military commander who was accused of religious discrimination against a Sunni lieutenant – also rehearsed the familiar association between despotism and Islam, painting Ahsun as inherently violent and a religious fanatic. ‘[T]his daring and barbarous minion’, Outram wrote, had ‘dared openly to commit a gross and brutal act of tyranny on an unoffending man . . . [a] flagrant act of oppression’.¹⁰⁶ In 1855, a member of the Council of the Governor-General advocated for annexation on the basis of *khwajasarai* cruelty and brutality, offering ‘evidence’ in the form of extracts from the Resident’s diary. Included were incidents of several affrays between the dependants of *khwajasarais* and other Awadhi political factions, as well as a case of torture apparently ordered by the eunuch Dianut ud-Daula:

The Resident transmits copy of a petition from Fureed Buksh complaining against Rajah Razzak Buksh for cutting off his hand, and the nose of his wife, and confining and subjecting his brothers and son to torture, and requests issue of orders for the punishment of the offender, *who is perpetuating these outrages with the connivance of the Eunuch Dianut*.¹⁰⁷

Although *khwajasarais* themselves were not directly involved in the violence, the Company used the Resident’s diary to paint the violence of eunuchs as indiscriminate. In representing *khwajasarais* as embodying a violent and uncontrolled form of masculinity, Company officials articulated definitions of appropriate and inappropriate forms of governance in terms of masculine behaviours.

While some of the eunuchs employed by the Padshah were *habshis* of African origin (including Feroz, mentioned above), the African-ness of such *khwajasarais* was

not emphasised in Company records. This is particularly interesting in light of Indrani Chatterjee's argument (noted above) that British officials viewed Indian slavery through the lens of Atlantic plantation slavery and, in the apparent absence of a racialised division of slave labour, argued that enslavement in India was 'benign'.¹⁰⁸ However, British commentators in Awadh did not internally differentiate the *khwajasarai* community on the basis of race. This suggests the need for further interrogation of the ways in which racial categories – and notions of 'African-ness' – refracted the colonial imagination of slavery in India. Instead of differentiating eunuchs racially, Company officials homogenised *khwajasarais* as unmanly and excessively violent regardless of ethnic origin.

In its criticism of the uncontrolled physical aggression of eunuchs, the Company extended pre-existing colonial representations of harem and court eunuchs to new ends. In eighteenth- and nineteenth-century colonial accounts of eunuchs, they exerted a tyrannical and violent rule over Indian women in the *zanana*. Writing of eunuch *zanana* attendants in the 1850s, Francis Rawdon-Hastings, the Governor-General of India, reported that 'these fellows were allowed to treat women with great harshness'.¹⁰⁹ A French traveller wrote in the 1830s that women were 'cruelly kicked about by their guardian eunuchs'.¹¹⁰ The Company's case for annexation pushed these narratives further, suggesting that eunuchs' despotic rule over the female quarters of the Indian household had been expanded to the entire city of Lucknow and the administration of Awadh.

Yet in other respects, the Company's representation of *khwajasarais* in mid-nineteenth-century Awadh diverged from earlier colonial accounts. As we have seen, according to the Company, eunuchs in Awadh were unmanly due to an uncontrolled violence that signified masculine excess, rather than effeminacy. Yet in other contexts, colonial writers represented eunuchs as effeminate in behaviour and appearance. There was not a given or straightforward connection between eunuch embodiment and particular gendered characteristics in colonial accounts; nor was there a single mode of representation of eunuchs' bodies. Alexander Burnes, writing in the 1830s, described a eunuch in the harem of the king of Peshawar 'who looked more like an old woman' than a man.¹¹¹ Similarly, in his *Journey from India to England* published in 1834, George Thomas Keppel describes a Persian eunuch noble residing in India as effeminate in appearance: 'Though not more than thirty-eight years old, he appears double that age, and his voice and features so resemble those of a female, that when wrapped up in shawls, he might easily be mistaken for an old woman'.¹¹² However, not all colonial accounts of eunuchs represented them as unmanly. Notwithstanding his portrayal of an 'effeminate' Persian eunuch, Thomas Keppel also described a eunuch whom he encountered in the Punjab in the 1820s as 'a handsome young man of about two and twenty, very lively'.¹¹³ The representation of *khwajasarais* in Awadh as embodying a violent, uncontrolled and excessive form of masculinity, rather than effeminacy, conflicted with several earlier colonial accounts. Colonial discourses of masculinity were contextual and could be put to a variety of purposes, rather than taking the form of a clearly defined typology. The contrast drawn between the effeminacy of the Awadh Padshah and the uncontrolled, hyper-masculine violence of his eunuchs was contingent upon the particular context and political strategies of indirect rule in Awadh. Foregrounding the role of *khwajasarais* in Awadh allowed the Company to equate the 'maladministration' of Awadh with the unmanly character of the Padshah and his eunuchs; to dissect the

Awadh ruler's misgovernment of his household and to represent the royal palace as a site of gender and sexual disorder.

The making of a Muslim poor: the impacts of colonial modernity on *khwajasarais*

The regulation of eunuch labour was ostensibly intended to bring Awadhi politics and labour structures into conformity with colonial norms, thus rendering concrete the nascent colonial gendered regime. The attempted prohibition of eunuchs' 'official' employment from 1848 failed as a result of the concerted efforts of both the Padshah and the *khwajasarais* to resist colonial interventions. However, the Company had anticipated the failure of the Padshah to regulate the labour of his *khwajasarais* from the beginning of regulation in 1848.¹¹⁴ It was precisely the failure of Awadhi gender and labour structures to conform to acceptable forms that legitimised direct colonial rule in 1856. Despite *khwajasarais*' attempts to subvert colonial norms of politics, work and gender, annexation in 1856 ultimately led to a loss of political patronage and employment. Consequently, *khwajasarais* were impoverished and eventually disappeared as a social role.

In the years preceding annexation, Wajid Ali resisted British attempts to reduce the power of his *khwajasarais*. To this end, Wajid Ali creatively exploited the slippage between the Awadhi conceptualisation of political power as located in the body of the ruler and, by extension, the 'inner' sphere of his household, and the British conceptualisation of the public sphere as the location of political power. Wajid Ali was thus in conversation with British colonial ideas about gender and domesticity. The Padshah manipulated the meanings of public and private spheres in his communications with the British by minimising the political importance of *khwajasarai* employment in his household. Wajid Ali portrayed the purpose of eunuch slaves as merely to provide menial service and entertain the ruler. The Padshah deployed a discourse of the domesticity and consequent political irrelevance of the 'private' sphere in order to retain eunuchs in the politically important space of the royal household. For instance, the 1848 agreement prohibiting *khwajasarai* employment in 'official' positions was an attempt on the part of Wajid Ali Shah to demarcate a sphere in which *khwajasarai* labour and political influence were protected. That Wajid Ali Shah aimed to ensure the continued presence of *khwajasarais* in his inner circle is suggested by his statement in 1848, 'it is my wish to keep these persons some of whom had been with me for a time, in my private service, only for the purposes of my amusement or for attendance on me'.¹¹⁵ To this end, Wajid Ali wished 'to prevent misunderstandings as to what might, or might not be considered Govt. offices' and edited the agreement to demarcate clearly the lines between 'public' and 'private' appointments.¹¹⁶ In June 1855, when the British Resident criticised the appointment of a *khwajasarai* to the command of one of the regiments in the Padshah's personal bodyguard, Wajid Ali downplayed the importance of these regiments. The Padshah wrote that they were 'merely to gratify the King's fancies . . . and that he constantly amused himself by issuing whatever orders he deemed necessary for the regulation of their interior economy'.¹¹⁷ Thus, Wajid Ali consciously manipulated the European ideal of the demarcation of public and private spheres to subvert colonial attempts to regulate *khwajasarai* labour in Awadh.

Khwajasarais also used a number of strategies to negotiate colonial power and limit colonial interventions, and as such maintained influence within the Awadh administration and court after 1848. Due to *khwajasarais*' continued close physical proximity to the Padshah, they were able to retain their power within the Awadh court. Into the 1850s, eunuchs formed key factions in Awadh court politics. Elites and nobles paid *khwajasarais* to exert influence in the *darbar* (court) on their behalf and eunuchs were seen as an alternative and competing locus of power to the Residency.¹¹⁸

In some cases, *khwajasarais* managed to hang on to 'official' appointments after 1848, notwithstanding British criticism. In other cases, *khwajasarais* resisted British attempts to limit their power by using their relationships with kin, *chelas* and other dependants to preserve their influence over government offices outside their formal appointments. *Khwajasarais* remained prevalent in intelligence and the military, both of which appear to have been relatively stable bases of *khwajasarai* power throughout the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Within Lucknow itself, particularly the Padshah's palaces, *khwajasarais* continued to dominate intelligence networks, notwithstanding the prohibition of their involvement in the Intelligence Department. On one occasion when Wajid Ali requested his Minister 'to let him know all that was done and said in the palace', the Minister expressed his frustration 'that the Eunuchs had charge of all the intelligence department about the palace' and only passed on intelligence to their political allies.¹¹⁹ Eunuch slaves remained prominent among Awadh military commanders following the 1848 prohibition on their 'official employment'.¹²⁰ By presiding over networks of *chelas* and dependants, *khwajasarais* were able to entrench their power in the military and acquire substantial wealth.¹²¹ In sum, *khwajasarais* deployed a variety of strategies to evade and negotiate colonial attempts to regulate their employment in Awadh. In particular, eunuchs remained the heads of networks of *chelas* and kin – including slaves, eunuchs and non-slaves – which allowed them to preside over aspects of the administration that fell outside the purview of their appointed positions.

Of course, the Padshah's inability (or unwillingness) to circumvent *khwajasarai* power was a productive failure, which the Company used to strengthen the British case for the annexation of Awadh. In late 1856, the British Resident, Outram, presented Wajid Ali with a treaty under which the Awadh ruler would relinquish his rights as sovereign in return for an annual pension. Wajid Ali took what he considered the honourable path and refused to sign the treaty, leaving Awadh for Bengal in the hope of petitioning for his restoration to the throne.¹²² The following year, in 1857, revolt broke out across north India and the Padshah was imprisoned in Fort William in Calcutta. Following the revolt, Wajid Ali established a court-in-exile at Matiya Burj, or Garden Reach, outside of Calcutta, and attracted thousands of followers. Although some *khwajasarais* found employment at Matiya Burj, for the eunuch slaves who remained in Lucknow, the establishment of colonial rule and the dismantling of the political structures to which *khwajasarais* were linked had a devastating impact.¹²³ *Khwajasarais* in Awadh experienced a loss of political patronage and income; they were transformed into an impoverished and unemployed community in colonial Lucknow.

Khwajasarais were among the 1,200 slaves who were previously dependant upon the Awadh ruler for their housing and income and were left without any form of support after 1856.¹²⁴ The colonial government assumed responsibility for the maintenance of the Padshah's dependants and slaves, but this was a responsibility exercised with

discretion. The revolt of large sections of Lucknow in 1857 necessitated the creation of a loyal group of local collaborators.¹²⁵ Thus, the new colonial government only supported those former dependants of the deposed ruler who could 'prove' their loyalty. *Khwajasarais* used petitioning, the only sanctioned form of redress, as a means to adjust to colonial rule and alleviate the detrimental impacts of the political and social transformation of Lucknow.¹²⁶ In 1865, a group of 735 *habshi* slaves of East African origin, of whom eighteen were eunuchs, petitioned the British Government for the continuation of their pensions. The petitioners claimed that 300 slaves had died from starvation since the fall of Awadh. However, because some *habshi* slaves had participated in the rebellion in 1857, the British rejected their petitions on several occasions. The African-ness of some *khwajasarais* and other slaves appears to have grown in importance after 1857. Following the revolt, a 'sense of vulnerability' to anti-imperial conspiracies became 'an intrinsic aspect of the colonial experience'.¹²⁷ The British suspected the loyalty of all *habshis*, due to the rebellion of some. Finally, in 1877, the British provided a few of the males with employment as jail wardens and watchmen, though there is no indication that *khwajasarais* received such appointments.¹²⁸ Low-ranking *khwajasarais* who were formerly housed and fed by the Padshah, but failed to obtain pensions from the British, were entirely impoverished by annexation.

Even those *khwajasarais* who owned property struggled after 1856 and used petitioning as a strategy to mitigate the impacts of colonial rule. Wajid Ali had endowed some *khwajasarais*, along with other favourites and courtiers, with prime real estate in Lucknow and rent-free land grants, or *jagirs*, in the vicinity of the city. However, since the British held a negative opinion of Wajid Ali's courtiers and his 'dissolute' women, many *jagirdars* in the Lucknow area were deprived of their estates and pensions and 'found themselves in severely straightened circumstances'.¹²⁹ The impact of colonial annexation on property-owning *khwajasarais* is evident in the repeated petitions of Nazir ud-Daula, a *khwajasarai zanana* attendant who did not perform any state administration duties, but nevertheless owned property and *jagirs* around Lucknow.¹³⁰ Nazir argued for financial support from the colonial government on the basis that 'Almighty God' had created eunuch slaves 'to receive their food and maintenance from the Royal family because with the exception of the performance of the duties of a *Khaja Surrah* they do not appear to be adapted for any other worldly use'. As such, Nazir argued, the British government was obliged to assume the responsibilities of the ruling power towards *khwajasarais*.¹³¹ Although Nazir was cleared of any 'crimes' during the 1857 rebellion, the colonial government rejected his requests for a pension 'eight or nine times', perhaps because Nazir was a *habshi* slave and therefore assumed, after 1857, to be of dubious loyalty.¹³²

Nazir's petitions paint a picture of the impacts of annexation on middle-ranked *khwajasarais* and their strategies of survival under colonial rule. Prior to annexation, Nazir had owned a 'large building' in Golaganj in Lucknow, which was worth Rs. 80,000, but this house was looted of moveable property during 1857–58 and later demolished by the British. Nazir also received a monthly pension of Rs. 500 and this source of income had ceased in 1856. In 1874, Nazir remained the *jagirdar* of two villages, 'Mustemow' and 'Gunjurea', from which he 'supported himself with difficulty'.¹³³ However, Nazir could not meet the government revenue demands on his monsoon-damaged lands, which could no longer be cultivated, and he fell into debt. Nazir wrote that he was consequently 'involved in the greatest distress and poverty'.¹³⁴

If property-owning *khwajasarais* such as Nazir experienced impoverishment following annexation, we can imagine that the impact upon low-ranking *khwajasarai* slaves in Awadh must have been devastating.

Conclusion

In the early twentieth century, the *khwajasarai* social role eventually disappeared. Partly this was due to a decline in political patronage and reduced employment opportunities with the fall of the two major Indian-ruled states in north India, Awadh and Delhi, in 1856 and 1857, respectively.¹³⁵ Moreover, changes in elite Indian family formations led to a decline in the demand for eunuch slaves among the upper strata of Indian society. In 1870 the prominent Muslim intellectual Sayyid Ahmad Khan characterised the employment of *khwajasarais* in elite Muslim homes as morally unproblematic.¹³⁶ However, Avriil Powell has shown that in the late nineteenth century, Muslim modernists like Khan increasingly responded to British criticism of ‘Islamic’ slavery by arguing there was no Quranic basis for slavery and by characterising slavery as against ‘the spirit of the times’.¹³⁷ Eunuchs did not fit modernist elite Indian redefinitions of domesticity. Between the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries the presence of *khwajasarais* in elite households declined as a mark of prestige. Colonial modernity ultimately resulted in the disappearance of *khwajasarai* slave labour in South Asia.

The case of the *khwajasarais* of Awadh demonstrates the centrality of gender and sexuality to the processes and political dynamics of imperial expansion. The Company’s case for the ‘maladministration’ of Awadh was centrally based on the scrutiny – and labelling as ‘sexual’ and ‘deviant’ – of various social networks, intimate relationships and domestic arrangements. In Awadh, eunuch labour became a focal point of the case for imperial expansion because *khwajasarais*’ work appeared to British Company officials to invert public and private spheres, which suggested a perverse gender and sexual regime. *Khwajasarai* labour also involved discipleship and kinship relationships that were classified as deviant. Colonial commentators no longer classified *khwajasarai* kin as their ‘family’, but rather as their corrupt ‘creatures’. Company officials regarded discipleship relationships – between *khwajasarais* and the Padshah, among *khwajasarais* and between *khwajasarais* and their dependants – as either sexually suspicious (on the Padshah’s part) or criminal (on the part of eunuchs). The Company argued that the *khwajasarai* community embodied a violent and despotic form of masculinity, thereby tying definitions of good governance to the performance of masculinity. Moreover, the focus on eunuch labour – and by extension, the domestic arrangements and forms of political power with which it was associated – allowed an interrogation of the intimate relationships, masculinity and sexuality of the Padshah himself. This case study suggests that the process of British imperial expansion in India was intertwined with sexual politics through which the Company – as well as Indian rulers, elites and administrators – managed the meaning of domesticity, intimacy, gender and sexuality.

The regulation of eunuch labour between 1848 and 1856 failed due to the Padshah’s appropriation and manipulation of the meanings of domestic space, as well as *khwajasarais*’ evasion and resistance of colonial interventions through the continued use of kinship and discipleship networks to maintain and extend their political influence. However, Wajid Ali’s failure to domesticate and depoliticise eunuch labour

strengthened the Company's case for the annexation of Awadh in 1856. *Khwajasarais* attempted to survive under colonial rule, particularly through petitioning the government. Yet even property-owning *khwajasarais* experienced the 'greatest distress and poverty' after colonial annexation. The story of the *khwajasarais* of Awadh demonstrates how the interlinked imperatives of imperial expansion, the formation of colonial bureaucracies and the establishment of colonial gender and sexual regimes resulted in the social and political decline of formerly powerful slaves like the *khwajasarai* community.

The experiences of the *khwajasarais* of Awadh are symptomatic of broader historical trends through which older Indian models of masculinity and strategies of governance were marginalised in the course of the nineteenth century. The decline of *khwajasarais* from a status as slave-nobles to impoverishment and unemployment highlights the significance of gender and sexuality in understanding the politics of imperial expansion. To a greater extent than historians have hitherto acknowledged, the expansion of the British colonial state in India hinged on issues of masculinity, sexuality, intimacy and domesticity. Moreover, masculinity was an important aspect of the replacement of indigenous political and administrative cultures with 'bureaucratic' forms of colonial governance. The 'high politics' of imperial diplomacy and territorial annexation were intimately intertwined with sexual politics.

Notes

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5. Indrani Chatterjee, *Gender, Slavery and Law in Colonial India* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1999), pp. 45–57.
6. I am indebted to an anonymous reviewer of my doctoral thesis for highlighting that this case study suggests that 'imperial politics were sexual politics tout court'. I am also indebted to anonymous reviewers of this article for pushing my analysis of the role of gendered and sexual politics in indirect rule.
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8. Price, 'Kin, Clan and Power', p. 217.
 9. Angma D. Jhala, 'The Malabar Hill Murder Trial of 1925: Sovereignty, Law and Sexual Politics in Colonial Princely India', *The Indian Economic and Social History Review* 46 (2009), pp. 373–400, here p. 376.
 10. Jhala, 'The Malabar Hill Murder Trial', p. 373.
 11. Vatuk, "'Family" as a Contested Concept', p. 170.
 12. Indrani Chatterjee, 'When "Sexuality" Floated Free of Histories of South Asia', *The Journal of Asian Studies* 71 (2012), pp. 945–62.
 13. Faiz Bakhsh was the personal treasurer of Jawahir Ali Khan, Bahu Begam's general agent from 1775 until 1799. Faiz Bakhsh also worked under Darab Ali Khan, the Begam's second general agent, from 1799 until her death in 1815. He wrote his memoir of Faizabad in 1818. Muhammad Faiz Bakhsh, *Memoirs of Delhi and Faizábád, Being a Translation of the Táríkh Farahbakhsh of Muhammad Faiz-Bakhsh*, tr. William Hoey, vol. 1 (Allahabad: Government Press, 1888), p. iii; Faiz Bakhsh, *Memoirs*, vol. 2, pp. 192–3, 195–6.
 14. Barnett, *North India*, p. 33.
 15. Barnett, *North India*, pp. 17, 33–5; Fisher, *Clash of Cultures*, pp. 14, 50–51, 187–99.
 16. It is important to note the presence of eunuchs in Hindu, as well as Islamic, polities in India. H. Ebden, 'A Few Notes, with Reference to "the Eunuchs", to be Found in the Large Households of the State of Rajpootana', *Indian Annals of Medical Science* 3 (1856), pp. 520–25. Shaun Marmon, *Eunuchs and Sacred Boundaries in Islamic Society* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), pp. 5–8.
 17. Lal, *Domesticity and Power*, pp. 142, 152.
 18. Chatterjee, *Gender, Slavery and Law*, pp. 36–7; Rosalind O'Hanlon, 'Kingdom, Household and Body: History, Gender and Imperial Service under Akbar', *Modern Asian Studies* 41 (2007), pp. 889–923; Rosalind O'Hanlon, 'Manliness and Imperial Service in Mughal North India', *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 42 (1999), pp. 47–93, here pp. 54–6.
 19. Chatterjee, *Gender, Slavery and Law*, p. 37.
 20. Chatterjee, *Gender, Slavery and Law*, pp. 36–45.
 21. Gavin Hambly, 'A Note on the Trade in Eunuchs in Mughal Bengal', *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 94 (1974), pp. 125–30, here pp. 125–7; Abu'l Fazl 'Allami, *A'in-I Akbari*, tr. H. Blochmann, vol. 1 (Calcutta: Asiatic Society Bengal, 1873), pp. 389–90.
 22. Faiz Bakhsh, *Memoirs*, vol. 2, pp. 46–9, 218–19.
 23. Faiz Bakhsh, *Memoirs*, vol. 2, pp. 49–50.
 24. Lal, *Domesticity and Power*, pp. 166, 194–6.
 25. Faiz Bakhsh, *Memoirs*, vol. 2, p. 7; Barnett, *North India*, pp. 130, 200–01; Faiz Bakhsh, *Memoirs*, vol. 2, pp. 25–6, 129–30, 138–9; C. A. Bayly, *Empire and Information: Intelligence Gathering and Social Communication in India, 1780–1870* (New Delhi: Cambridge University Press, 1999), p. 94; Faiz Bakhsh, *Memoirs*, vol. 1, p. iii; Faiz Bakhsh, *Memoirs*, vol. 2, pp. 48–9, 192–3.
 26. Richard M. Eaton, 'Introduction', in Indrani Chatterjee and Richard M. Eaton (eds), *Slavery and South Asian History* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2006), pp. 1–16, here p. 6.
 27. Faiz Bakhsh, *Memoirs*, vol. 2, pp. 113–14, 290–91, 304, 306.
 28. Faiz Bakhsh, *Memoirs*, vol. 2, pp. 123, 144–5, 148; Chatterjee, *Gender, Slavery and Law*, p. 52.
 29. Indrani Chatterjee, 'Monastic Governmentality, Colonial Misogyny, and Postcolonial Amnesia in South Asia', *History of the Present* 3 (2013), pp. 57–98, here p. 60.
 30. National Archives of India (hereafter NAI) FD/PP 28/12/1855 324: Extracts from the diaries of the Resident at Lucknow, Appendix to J. A. Dorin, Member, Council of the Governor-General, Minute, 11 July 1855; Chatterjee, 'Monastic Governmentality', p. 61.
 31. Faiz Bakhsh, *Memoirs*, vol. 2, p. 186.
 32. Faiz Bakhsh, *Memoirs*, vol. 2, pp. 193–6.
 33. Faiz Bakhsh, *Memoirs*, vol. 2, pp. 49–50, 268–84. Anthropologists point out that '[o]ne basic defining criterion of a master-disciple relationship . . . is that of unbroken "genealogy"'. Monika Böck and Aparna Rao, 'Introduction: Indigenous Models and Kinship Theories: An Introduction to a South Asian Perspective', in Monika Böck and Aparna Rao (eds), *Culture, Creation, and Procreation: Concepts of Kinship in South Asian Practice* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2000), pp. 18–20, here p. 20.
 34. Faiz Bakhsh, *Memoirs*, vol. 2, pp. 225–6, 229.
 35. Bayly, *Rulers, Townsmen and Bazaars*, p. 60.

36. Ashwini Tambe, 'Brothels as Families: Reflections on the History of Bombay's Kothas', *International Feminist Journal of Politics* 8 (2006), pp. 219–42, here p. 228; Helen Lambert, 'Sentiment and Substance in North Indian Forms of Relatedness', in Janet Carsten (ed.), *Cultures of Relatedness: New Approaches to the Study of Kinship* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), pp. 73–89; Helen Lambert, 'Village Bodies? Reflections on Locality, Constitution, and Affect in Rajasthani Kinship', in Böck and Rao (eds), *Culture, Creation, and Procreation*, pp. 81–100.
37. Sreenivas, *Wives, Widows and Concubines*, p. 42.
38. Claudia Nelson, *Family Ties in Victorian England* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2007), pp. 124–44.
39. Indrani Chatterjee, 'Introduction', in Chatterjee (ed.), *Unfamiliar Relations*, pp. 3–45, here pp. 13–14; Indrani Chatterjee, 'Renewed and Connected Histories: Slavery and Historiography of South Asia', in Chatterjee and Eaton (eds), *Slavery and South Asian History*, pp. 17–43, here p. 19; Indrani Chatterjee and Sumit Guha, 'Slave-Queen, Waif-Prince: Slavery and Social Capital in Eighteenth-Century India', *Indian Economic and Social History Review* 36 (1999), pp. 165–82; Sumit Guha, 'The Family Feud as Political Resource in Eighteenth-Century India', in Chatterjee (ed.), *Unfamiliar Relations*, pp. 73–94, here pp. 76–8; Fisher, 'Becoming and Making "Family"'.
40. Chatterjee also argues that formation of kinship ties was important to slaves. Indrani Chatterjee, 'A Slave's Quest for Selfhood in Eighteenth-Century Hindustan', *Indian Economic and Social History Review* 37 (2000), pp. 53–86.
41. Faiz Bakhsh, *Memoirs*, vol. 2, p. 139.
42. Faiz Bakhsh, *Memoirs*, vol. 2, pp. 306, 312–14.
43. Faiz Bakhsh, *Memoirs*, vol. 2, pp. 289, 297–8.
44. Shi'a law provided that a manumitted slave's blood relatives (regardless of proximity of the relation) had prior claims to inherit the property of the deceased former slave over the master or mistress of the slave. The relationship between the manumitted slave and the former master was referred to as *wala*. This was a unilateral relationship in which the freedman or freedwoman had continued dependency on the former master. Thus, slaves were not barred from passing on property to heirs in all circumstances under Shi'a law. Chatterjee explains, '[T]he wealth of the slave was a temporary endowment by a mistress [or master] . . . on the condition that such a capacity ended naturally with the physical death of the slave . . . [and] the material wealth . . . was transferred according to the wishes of a master or mistress. Thus one slave after another could be endowed with the same capacity, through the transfer of the office or salary, or the holding concerned. This mode of transferring, however, meant that ultimate direction, and the final fruits of such grants, came to the masters, and hence passed to their heirs'. Chatterjee suggests that in the case of eunuchs in Murshidabad, 'even if they left behind their own acquired "chelas" with the potential to act as "legal heirs", they did not try to pass on heirship to their own slaves', possibly because they took it for granted that the property was not theirs to dispose of. Chatterjee, *Gender, Slavery and Law*, pp. 140–41, 151, 169–70. However, in the case of Awadh, some *khwajasarais* did attempt to dispose of property to heirs, though it appears that most were unable to. Mrs Meer Hassan Ali, *Observations on the Mussulmauns of India*, vol. 1 (London: Parbury, Allen and Co., 1832), p. 72; C. A. Elliott, *The Chronicles of Oonao, a District in Oudh* (Allahabad: Allahabad Mission Press, 1862), p. 131. Faiz Bakhsh wrote that 'eunuchs have no heirs'. Although the *khwajasarai* Darab Ali Khan wrote a will prior to his death that provided for his dependents, the disputes over his will were ongoing several years later, highlighting the controversial nature of *khwajasarais*' attempts to pass property onto appointed heirs. Faiz Bakhsh, *Memoirs*, vol. 2, pp. 316–19.
45. Fisher, *Clash of Cultures*, p. 53.
46. Chatterjee, *Gender, Slavery and Law*, p. 45; Marmon, *Eunuchs*, pp. 5–8.
47. Rosalind O'Hanlon, 'Issues of Masculinity in North Indian History: The Bangash Nawabs of Farrukhabad', *Indian Journal of Gender Studies* 4 (1997), pp. 1–19, here pp. 7–9.
48. Faiz Bakhsh, *Memoirs*, vol. 2, p. 50.
49. Chatterjee, *Gender, Slavery and Law*, p. 130.
50. Faiz Bakhsh, *Memoirs*, vol. 2, p. 59.
51. Faiz Bakhsh, *Memoirs*, vol. 2, pp. 229–31.
52. Bayly, *Rulers, Townsmen and Bazaars*, p. 165.
53. On indirect rule, see Barbara N. Ramusack, *The Indian Princes and their States* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003); Michael Fisher, *Indirect Rule in India: Residents and the Residency System 1764–1857* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998).
54. Barnett, *North India*, pp. 49–64, 72; P. D. Reeves, 'Introduction', in P. D. Reeves (ed.), *Sleeman in Oudh: An Abridgement of W. H. Sleeman's A Journey Through the Kingdom of Oude in 1849–50* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1971), pp. 1–14, here pp. 4–9; Fisher, *Clash of Cultures*, pp. 38, 98–9.

55. Fisher, *Clash of Cultures*, pp. 106, 181–4; Reeves, ‘Introduction’, p. 7.
56. Fisher, *Clash of Cultures*, pp. 122–4, 144–5; Reeves, ‘Introduction’, pp. 6–7.
57. Radhika Singha, *A Despotism of Law: Crime and Justice in Early Colonial India* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1998), pp. 121–67; David Scott, ‘Colonial Governmentality’, *Social Text* 43 (1995), pp. 191–220, here p. 206. However, European populations were subject to greater colonial interventions in the eighteenth century. Kathleen Wilson, ‘Rethinking the Colonial State: Family, Gender, and Governmentality in Eighteenth-Century British Frontiers’, *American Historical Review* 116 (2011), pp. 1294–322.
58. This point is evident in the Company’s dealings with Almas Ali Khan. The Company sought to reduce his economic and military power (without success) because his power was ‘too great for a subject’, but not because he was a eunuch. NAI/FD/SC 08/11/1787 7: C. Cornwallis, Governor-General, India, to Resident at Lucknow, 1 October 1787; NAI/FD/SC 08/12/1777 8: N. Middleton, Resident at Lucknow, to Governor-General and Council, India, 16 November 1777.
59. NAI/FD/SC 15/08/1782 6: W. Hastings, Governor-General, India, to Resident at Lucknow, 10 August 1782; NAI/FD/SC 15/08/1782 9: Hastings to Hyder Beg, circa August 1782; NAI/FD/SC 14/10/1782 10: J. Morgan, Commander of 2nd Brigade, to Commander in Chief, 1 October 1782; NAI/FD/SC 22/11/1782 2: J. Bristow, Resident at Lucknow, to Governor-General and Council, India, 4 November 1782; NAI/FD/SPC 08/04/1789 22: Edward Otto Ives, Resident at Lucknow, to Governor-General, India, 29 March 1789; NAI/FD/SC 19/02/1785 2: J. Ironside, to Commander in Chief, 25 January 1785; Uttar Pradesh State Archives, Lucknow, (hereafter UPSA/L) FD/P/121/1: Pandit Bishun Narayan Das, Petition of Janki Parshad, Birj Nath and Murli Dhar to Governor-General, India, 29 April 1896; UPSA/L/FD/P/121/2: J.O. Miller, Secretary, NWP&O, to Secretary, Government of India, 19 June 1897; UPSA/L/FD/P/121/3: H. Daly, Deputy Secretary, Government of India, to Secretary, NWP&O, 21 July 1897; UPSA/L/PD/P/11/332A: S.F. Bayley, Assistant Secretary, Government of India, to Secretary, NWP&O, 11 January 1898.
60. Durba Ghosh, *Sex and the Family in Colonial India: The Making of Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), pp. 74–6.
61. Prominent *khwajasaras* like Almas Ali dined and socialised with the British, and eunuchs temporarily lived in the house of at least one European (Louis Rousselet) in the 1860s. George Viscount Valentia, *Voyages and Travels: To India, Ceylon, the Red Sea, Abyssinia, and Egypt* (London: F. C. and J. Rivington, 1811), vol. 1, pp. 104, 107; Louis Rousselet, *India and its Native Princes: Travels in Central India and in the Presidencies of Bombay and Bengal* (1876; repr. New Delhi: Asian Educational Services, 2005), p. 118.
62. Leonore Davidoff and Catherine Hall, *Family Fortunes: Men and Women of the English Middle Class, 1780–1850* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1987); John Tosh, *Manliness and Masculinities in Nineteenth Century Britain* (Harlow: Pearson Education, 2005), pp. 129–69; Nelson, *Family Ties*; Leonore Davidoff, ‘Gender and the “Great Divide”: Public and Private in British Gender History’, *Journal of Women’s History* 15 (2003), pp. 11–27.
63. Ghosh, *Sex and the Family*. Instead of forming long-term relationships with Indian women, British men were encouraged to visit regulated Indian prostitutes. Philippa Levine, *Prostitution, Race, and Politics: Policing Venereal Disease in the British Empire* (New York: Routledge, 2003); Kenneth Ballhatchet, *Race, Sex and Class Under the Raj: Imperial Attitudes and Policies and Their Critics, 1793–1905* (London: Wiedenfield and Nicolson, 1980); Ashwini Tambe, *Codes of Misconduct: Regulating Prostitution in Late Colonial Bombay* (New Delhi: Zubaan, 2009).
64. Tambe, *Codes of Misconduct*, p. 5. See also Singha, *Despotism of Law*, p. 122.
65. Singha, *Despotism of Law*, pp. 121–67; Mytheli Sreenivas, ‘Conjugality and Capital: Gender, Families, and Property under Colonial Law in India’, *The Journal of Asian Studies* 63 (November 2004), pp. 938–42; Janaki Nair, *Women and Law in Colonial India: A Social History* (New Delhi: Kali for Women, 1996).
66. Ramusack, *The Indian Princes*, p. 81.
67. Reeves, *Sleeman in Oude*, pp. 15, 31.
68. Indrani Chatterjee, ‘Abolition by Denial: The South Asian Example’, in G. Campbell (ed.), *Abolition and Its Aftermath in Indian Ocean Africa and Asia* (New York: Routledge, 2005), pp. 137–54. For a critical appraisal of the colonial discourse of ‘benign’ slavery, see Sylvia Vatuk, ‘Bharattee’s Death: Domestic Slave-Women in Nineteenth-Century Madras’, in Chatterjee and Eaton (eds), *Slavery and South Asian History*, pp. 210–33.
69. Singha, *Despotism of Law*, p. 158.
70. Chatterjee, ‘Abolition by Denial’.
71. Chatterjee and Major have made different arguments on this point. Chatterjee argues that the British only raised the issue of slavery in their interactions with princely states when it served the political interests of

- the Company. Major argues, in contrast, that the British were concerned with the uncontrolled movement of persons across political borders, which they associated with criminality, and thus made interventions into slavery in the princely states. However, Major herself acknowledges that the capacity and willingness of the British to intervene was limited. Chatterjee, 'Abolition by Denial'; Andrea Major, 'Enslaving Spaces: Domestic Slavery and the Spatial, Ideological and Practical Limits of Colonial Control in the Nineteenth-Century Rajput and Maratha States', *Indian Economic and Social History Review* 46 (2009), pp. 315–42, here pp. 336–40.
72. On the association of Indians (rather than Britons) with 'corruption' following Warren Hastings' 1788–95 trial, see: Nicholas B. Dirks, *The Scandal of Empire: India and the Creation of Imperial Britain* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2006), pp. 5, 85, 100–01, 109–10; Thomas R. Metcalf, *Ideologies of the Raj* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), p. 24.
 73. NAI/FD/PP 28/12/1855 316: J. Outram, Resident at Lucknow, 'Appendix D: Judicial Courts at Lucknow', attachment to letter to Secretary, Government of India, 15 March 1855.
 74. NAI/FD/PP 11/12/1847 156: A. F. Richmond, Resident at Lucknow, to Secretary, Government of India, 31 May 1847; NAI/FD/PP 11/12/1847 161: A. F. Richmond, Resident at Lucknow, to Padshah of Awadh, 18 June 1847; NAI/FD/PP 11/12/1847 191: A. F. Richmond, Resident at Lucknow, to Secretary, Government of India, 4 November 1847; NAI/FD/PP 11/12/1847 200: Governor-General, India, to Padshah of Awadh, circa 1847; NAI/FD/PC 06/05/1848 81: A. F. Richmond, Resident at Lucknow, to Padshah of Awadh, 25 March 1848; NAI/FD/PC 31/03/1848 40: A. F. Richmond, Resident at Lucknow, to Secretary, Government of India, 21 March 1848; NAI/FD/PP 11/12/1847 192: A. F. Richmond, Resident at Lucknow, to Padshah of Awadh, 23 October 1874; NAI/FD/PP 11/12/1847 196: Paper from Wajid Ali Shah, Padshah of Awadh, containing answers to questions asked by A. F. Richmond, 14 July 1847. NAI/FD/PC 24/11/1849 159: Sleeman to Secretary, Government of India, 24 October 1849.
 75. NAI/FD/PP 28/12/1855 316: J. Outram, Resident at Lucknow, 'Appendix D: Judicial Courts at Lucknow', attachment to letter to Secretary, Government of India, 15 March 1855.
 76. NAI/FD/PC 15/07/1848 51–4: A. F. Richmond, Resident at Lucknow, to Secretary, Government of India, 17 June 1848.
 77. NAI/FD/PP 11/12/1847 202: A. F. Richmond, Resident at Lucknow, to Secretary, Government of India, 20 November 1847.
 78. NAI/FD/PP 11/12/1847 156: Richmond to Secretary, Government of India, 31 May 1847. A subsequent letter claimed that the amount demanded was 'about Rs. 60'. NAI/FD/PP 11/12/1847 202: Richmond to Secretary, Government of India, 20 November 1847. Haji Ali was also accused of 'using his influence for improper purpose' in attempting to secure the release of a man accused of attacking the Minister. NAI/FD/PP 11/12/1847 192: Richmond to Padshah, 23 October 1847.
 79. NAI/FD/PP 11/12/1847 200: GG to Padshah, circa 1847; NAI/FD/PC 31/03/1848 40: Richmond to Secretary, Government of India, 21 March 1848. NAI/FD/PC 31/03/1848 44: Wajid Ali Shah, Padshah of Awadh, to Resident at Lucknow, 17 July 1848; NAI/FD/PC 30/12/1848 99: Richmond to Secretary, Government of India, 24 November 1848.
 80. NAI/FD/PC 15/07/1848 51–4: Richmond to Secretary, Government of India, 17 June 1848.
 81. NAI/FD/PC 03/06/1848 48: R. Lowther, Commissioner of Allahabad, to Secretary to Government, NWP, 10 April 1848; NAI/FD/PC 15/07/1848 51–4: R. Montgomery, Magistrate of Kanpur, to Resident at Lucknow, 2 October 1847; NAI/FD/PC 15/07/1848 51–4: Richmond to Secretary, Government of India, 17 June 1848; NAI/FD/PC 15/07/1848 51–4: A. F. Richmond, Resident at Lucknow, to Magistrate of Kanpur, 28 April 1848; NAI/FD/PC 15/07/1848 51–4: R. Montgomery, Magistrate of Kanpur, to Resident at Lucknow, 9 May 1848; NAI/FD/PC 24/07/1839 46: Paton, Assistant to Resident at Lucknow, to Secretary, Government of India, 8 February 1839.
 82. NAI/FD/PC 15/07/1848 51–4: Wajid Ali Shah, Padshah of Awadh, to Resident at Lucknow, 24 May 1848; NAI/FD/PC 15/07/1848 51–4: Richmond to Secretary, Government of India, 17 June 1848.
 83. NAI/FD/PC 15/07/1848 51–4: A. F. Richmond, Resident at Lucknow, to Padshah of Awadh, 27 May 1848. NAI/FD/PC 15/07/1848 51–4: Wajid Ali Shah, Padshah of Awadh, to Resident at Lucknow, 30 May 1848.
 84. NAI/FD/PC 08/07/1848 65: Wajid Ali, 'Written Agreement', 22 June 1848.
 85. NAI/FD/PC 24/11/1849 159: W. H. Sleeman, Resident at Lucknow, to Secretary, Government of India, 24 October 1849; NAI/FD/PP 30/12/1848 99: A. F. Richmond, Resident at Lucknow, to Secretary, Government of India, 24 November 1848.
 86. Emphasis in original. NAI/FD/PC 24/11/1849 163: W. H. Sleeman, Resident at Lucknow, to Secretary, Government of India, 26 October 1849. Italics added. NAI/FD/PC 24/11/1849 164: W. H. Sleeman, Resident at Lucknow, to Secretary, Government of India, 28 October 1849. See also NAI/FD/PC 23 May

- 1850 161: W. H. Sleeman, Resident at Lucknow, to Secretary, Government of India, 6 April 1850; W. H. Sleeman, *A Journey Through the Kingdom of Oude, in 1849–1850*, 2 vols. (London: Richard Bentley, 1858), vol. 1, p. xx.
87. Italics added. NAI/FD/PC 24/11/1849 165: Sleeman to Secretary, Government of India, 30 October 1849. See also Sleeman, *Journey*, vol. 1, p. lxi.
88. Italics added. NAI/FD/PP 06/06/1856 192: Dalhousie, Governor-General, India, to Padshah of Awadh, 14 February 1857. See also, NAI/FD/PP 28/12/1855 312: Outram to Secretary, Government of India, 15 March 1855.
89. Sleeman, *Journey*, vol. 1, p. 178.
90. NAI/FD/PC 24/11/1849 163: Sleeman to Sec to GoI, 26 October 1849.
91. NAI/FD/PP 28/12/1855 323: J. A. Dorin, Member of the Council of the Governor-General, Minute, 11 July 1855.
92. NAI/FD/PC 31/03/1848 40: Richmond to Secretary, Government of India, 21 March 1848.
93. NAI/FD/PC 24/11/1849 156: Sleeman to Secretary, Government of India, 28 October 1849.
94. NAI/FD/PC 24/11/1849 165: W. H. Sleeman, Resident at Lucknow, to Secretary, Government of India, 30 October 1849.
95. NAI/FD/PC 15/07/1848 51–4: Richmond to Secretary, Government of India, 17 June 1848.
96. NAI/FD/PC 24/11/1849 165: Sleeman to Secretary, Government of India, 30 October 1849.
97. Sleeman, *Journey*, vol. 1, p. 30.
98. Mrinalini Sinha, *Colonial Masculinity: The ‘Manly Englishman’ and the ‘Effeminate Bengali’ in the Late Nineteenth Century* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1995), pp. 1, 7, 16–19; Sikata Banerjee, *Make Me a Man! Masculinity, Hinduism, and Nationalism in India* (Albany: State University of New York, 2005), pp. 21–41.
99. Sinha and Metcalf make similar arguments. Sinha, *Colonial Masculinity*, pp. 1–2; Thomas R. Metcalf, *Imperial Connections: India in the Indian Ocean Arena, 1860–1920* (Ranikhet: Permanent Black, 2007), pp. 46–67.
100. NAI/FD/PC 24/11/1849 159: Sleeman to Secretary, Government of India, 24 October 1849.
101. Martin J. Wiener, *Men of Blood: Violence, Manliness and Criminal Justice in Victorian England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004).
102. Angela Woollacott, ‘Frontier Violence and Settler Manhood’, *History Australia* 6 (2009), pp. 11.1–11.15; Elizabeth Kolsky, *Colonial Justice in British India: White Violence and the Rule of Law* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010).
103. NAI/FD/PC 24/11/1849 163: Sleeman to Sec to GoI, 26 October 1849.
104. NAI/FD/PC 24/11/1849 165: Sleeman to Sec to GoI, 30 October 1849.
105. NAI/FD/PP 18/11/1853 127: W. H. Sleeman, Resident at Lucknow, to Wajid Ali Shah, 17 August 1853.
106. NAI/FD/PC 28/12/1855 335: Appendix A to Outram to Secretary, Government of India, 21 June 1855.
107. Italics added. NAI/FD/PP 28/12/1855 324: Extract from diaries, appendix to Dorin, Minute, 11 July 1855.
108. Chatterjee notes the presence of African slaves in India but does not elaborate on how colonial slavery policies may have been contingent on racial notions of African-ness in certain contexts. Chatterjee, ‘Abolition by Denial’.
109. Francis Rawdon-Hastings, *The Private Journal of the Marquess of Hastings, K.G. Governor-General and Commander-in-Chief in India*, vol. 1 (London: Saunders and Otley, 1858), pp. 84–5.
110. Victor Jacquemont, *Letters from India; Describing a Journey in the British Dominions of India, Tibet, Lahore, and Cashmere, During the Years 1828, 1829, 1830, 1831*, 2nd edn, vol. 2 (London: Edward Churton, 1835), p. 92.
111. Alexander Burnes, *Travels into Bokhara; Being the Account of A Journey From India to Cabool, Tartary, and Persia; Also, Narrative of a Voyage on the Indus, From the Sea to Lahore . . .*, vol. 1 (London: John Murray, 1834), p. 84.
112. George Thomas Keppel, *Personal Narrative of a Journey from India to England*, vol. 1 (London: R. Bentley, 1834), pp. 4–5.
113. George Thomas Keppel, *Personal Narrative of Travels in Babylonia, Assyria, Media, and Synthia, in the Year 1824*, vol. 2 (London: Henry Colburn, 1827), p. 8.
114. NAI/FD/PC 08/07/1848 66: Secretary, Government of India, to Resident, Lucknow, 8 July 1848. Satadru Sen has noted that failures of colonial policies and projects were often ‘productive’, particularly in reinforcing racial difference. Satadru Sen, *Colonial Childhoods: The Juvenile Periphery of India 1850–1945* (London: Anthem Press, 2005), pp. 1, 10, 66–7.
115. NAI/FD/PC 08/07/1848 65: Wajid Ali Shah, Padshah of Awadh, ‘Written Agreement . . . as an assurance of His Majesty’s intention to prevent Eunuchs, Singers and other improper persons from

- holding Office under the Oude Government either directly or indirectly in the names of other parties', 22 June 1848.
116. NAI/FD/PC 08/07/1848 65: Wajid Ali, 'Written Agreement', 22 June 1848.
 117. NAI/FD/PC 28/12/1855 335: J. Outram, Resident at Lucknow, to Secretary, Government of India, 21 June 1855. See also NAI/FD/PC 28/12/1855 335: Wajid Ali Shah, Padshah of Awadh, to Resident at Lucknow, 21 June 1855.
 118. NAI/FD/PP 18/11/1853 125: W. H. Sleeman, Resident at Lucknow, to Under Secretary, Government of India, 20 October 1853.
 119. NAI/FD/PC 24/11/1849 165: Sleeman to Secretary, Government of India, 30 October 1849.
 120. NAI/FD/PC 24/11/1849 165: Sleeman to Secretary, Government of India, 30 October 1849.
 121. NAI/FD/PC 23/05/1850 161: Sleeman to Secretary, Government of India, 6 April 1850.
 122. NAI/FD/PP 06/06/1856 200: J. Outram, Resident at Lucknow, to Secretary, Government of India, 4 February 1856; Rosie Llewellyn-Jones, *Engaging Scoundrels: True Tales of Old Lucknow* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2000), pp. 126–9; Fisher, *Clash of Cultures*, pp. 236–7.
 123. NAI/FD/SP 26/06/1857 131: G.F. Edmonstone, Secretary, Government of India, Note, 15 June 1857. For a description of Matiya Burj, see Abdul Halim Sharar, *Lucknow: The Last Phase of an Oriental Culture*, tr. and ed. E. S. Harcourt and Fakhir Hussain (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2001), pp. 74–5.
 124. Rosie Llewellyn-Jones, 'The Colonial Response to African Slaves in British India – Two Contrasting Cases', *African and Asian Studies* 10 (2011), pp. 59–70, here p. 67.
 125. Oldenburg, *Colonial Lucknow*, p. 189.
 126. Oldenburg, *Colonial Lucknow*, pp. 181–260.
 127. Kim Wagner, "'Treading Upon Fires": The "Mutiny"-Motif and Colonial Anxieties in British India', *Past and Present* 218 (2013), pp. 159–97, here p. 191.
 128. Llewellyn-Jones, 'The Colonial Response', pp. 67–8.
 129. The other significant group of urban elites – the *wasqidars*, or 'guaranteed pensioners', who received interest from Awadh loans to the Company and formed a hereditary aristocracy by the nineteenth century – were able to maintain their socioeconomic status after 1856, provided they demonstrated loyalty to the new rulers. Oldenburg, *Colonial Lucknow*, pp. 200–04.
 130. British Residents did not mention Nazir as a prominent *khwajasarai* prior to annexation. UPSA/L/BR/LD 1140: Nazir ud-Daula, Petition to Chief Commissioner of Oudh, 4 January 1874.
 131. UPSA/L/BR/LD 1140: Nazir ud-Daula, Petition to Chief Commissioner of Oudh, 4 January 1874.
 132. UPSA/L/BR/LD 1140: Lucknow Board of Revenue Memorandum (signature illegible), 24 January 1874. See also UPSA/L/BR/LD 779: Nazir ud-Daula, Petition to Officiating Chief Commissioner of Oudh, 3 September 1861; UPSA/L/BR/LD 779: Secretary, Chief Commissioner of Oudh, Revenue Department Memorandum, no. 3072, 14 September 1861.
 133. UPSA/L/BR/LD 1140: Nazir ud-Daula, Petition, 4 January 1874.
 134. UPSA/L/BR/LD 1140: Nazir ud-Daula, Petition, 4 January 1874.
 135. However, *khwajasarais* may have found employment in Indian-ruled states in other parts of the subcontinent, such as Murshidabad and Hyderabad, until a later date. On slavery in Murshidabad, see Chatterjee, *Gender, Slavery and Law*.
 136. NAI/HD/JB 30/07/1870 53–4: Sayyid Ahmad Khan to John Strachey, 14 April 1870.
 137. Avril A. Powell, 'Indian Muslim Modernists and the Issue of Slavery in Islam', in Chatterjee and Eaton (eds), *Slavery and South Asian History*, pp. 262–86, here pp. 279–80.