Dreams and the Personal Experience of Colonial Servants: Towards a Structured Understanding of Colonial Anxiety

Edward Owen TEGGIN
Trinity College, Dublin, Ireland
teggine@gmail.com

Abstract
This article examines the concept of colonial anxiety, drawing attention to the inherent problem with the topic that is the lack of definition. It is argued that an interdisciplinary debate is necessary in order to more accurately define the nature of how it may be applied and understood. This study has used personal histories, viewed through the prism of dream content and Lacanian schematics, in order to argue for a more structured approach to colonial anxiety and the rehabilitation of personal histories into postcolonial discussions. This is in line with the recent growth in interest in such histories, and points to the usefulness of such research. This study uses epistolary examination to identify signifiers of anxiety in the dreams of two colonial servants: Warren Hastings, Governor-General of India (1772-85) and Alexander Hall, factor at Sumatra (1751-64). These have further been contextualised with the concept of desire to add greater depth to the discussion of colonial anxiety.

Keywords: Colonial anxiety; Colonial service; Postcolonial studies; Interdisciplinary histories; Personal histories;

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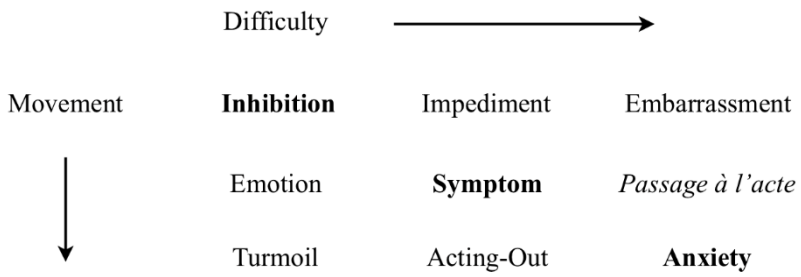
1. Introduction

The concept of colonial anxiety is one which has a prominent place in the wider historiography of colonial and imperial histories, but it is also one which can lack definition. Whilst the mutable qualities of this fascinating strand of investigation have meant that it has been possible to conduct investigations into colonial anxiety across a broad range of topics, a definition or accepted matrix for understanding the term has proven elusive. For example, it has been written elsewhere how the concept of colonial anxiety has proven to be ill-fitted to discussing epistolary sources prior to the mass proliferation of imperial governance. The broad dividing line, for the purposes of this study, having been the 1757 Battle of Plassey; in the years after Plassey, colonial governance in India underwent a dramatic shift towards a more highly structured bureaucratic apparatus. Commonly understood definitions of colonial anxiety have tied it strongly to the concept of imperial governance in the face of the vast unknown of empire, together with the fear and uncertainty accompanying colonial servants. Indeed, the suggestion has been made that the contrast between colonial and migrational anxiety may, in many instances, overlap and cause difficulty in distinguishing where one starts and the other ends (Teggin, 2020, pp. 85-6). In a category as broad as colonial anxiety, overlaps such as these are commonplace, with the potential for variation in regions such as seaside or mountain, or the population density of Europeans to natives, creating interesting strands of discussion. The most frequent is to use colonial anxiety to describe the fear of the alien, unknown or unusual. This, Axel (2002, p. 17-21) has noted, has served as a recognition of the fragility of the European presence in empire. The solution, it is proposed, is to debate the utilisation of structured approach to

colonial anxiety, as well as the construction of a series of matrices and charts with which to provide points of reference for the subject.

How then might we progress to an established system for the contextualising of colonial anxiety? It is suggested that one possible avenue to explore more fully is that of Lacanian thought surrounding anxiety and desire. Whilst it is acknowledged that psychoanalytic discourse has a dark connection to the history of scientific racism in postcolonial scholarship, the tools of analysis have the potential to be instruments of greater understanding when used objectively in postcolonial debate. Jacques Lacan's anxiety chart, seen below in *Figure 1*, is one such example. As can be seen, anxiety is located at the extremity of the chart, with various stages of locomotion and effect prior to this. This demonstrates an important point, one which is commonly overlooked in discussions of colonial anxiety. That is, that anxiety of itself is not a singular indivisible whole; there are levels of severity and progression to it, and these can interact with the individual in a myriad of ways. If the root form of anxiety is regarded as a complicated web of signifiers, why should the concept of colonial anxiety be treated any differently? There is, as mentioned above, a passive willingness in the wider scholarship to skirt around the issue and to not risk upsetting the relatively stable current understanding of colonial anxiety. This, it is argued, is a short-sighted approach. Investigations into the personal experience of colonial servants are becoming more popular among scholars, and are being presented as part of a wider effort to rehabilitate personal stories into postcolonial histories of empire. As such, it is perhaps through personal histories that the wider topic at issue might best be articulated.

Figure 1. The Anxiety Chart



Source: Lacan (2016, p. 77).

In order to more fully unpack the discussion, two primary case studies will be used in the text. These are the cases of Warren Hastings (Governor-General of India, 1772-85) and Alexander Hall (Factor at Sumatra, 1751-64). These cases have been selected due to the existence of epistolary letter collections attributed to these men which incorporate elements of the broader understanding of colonial anxiety. Further, they also discuss, and provide detailed descriptions of, an aspect which is of primary interest to this investigation: dreams. The topic of dreams has been selected as the act of recalling their details through letter-writing is an immensely powerful signifier. Whilst the individuals may have experienced potent image sequences which were significant to them, it is in the communication of their dreams that we are interested. This is linked to what Lacan holds is one of the key elements in understanding the psyche of a subject; that is, that the dichotomy of what has and has not been spoken is a core facet of analysis (Lacan, 2006, p. 206). This is a particularly important point when examining the written word as opposed speech. Whilst the subjects have chosen to relate their experiences to loved ones, we must also be wary of what may have gone unsaid in their recounting of their dream sequences. Whilst the recipient(s) of these emotionally-charged letters may not have had a greater insight into the experiences

of their loved ones due to what may or may not have been omitted, we are in a privileged position in that we have access to the wider letter collections. This, in turn, grants the ability to reconstruct the narrative surrounding the individual servant's experience in empire.

There is an inherent problem, however, in making use of a subject's reported dream(s) as primary source material. This is that whilst dreams often broach intimate details of the subject's private life, the subject may not always be willing, or indeed able, to communicate these elements. In order to make objective progress, the subject must be willing to transcend such inhibitions. This is what Freud (1997, pp. 15, 19) has referred to as the need for self-observation on the part of the subject when discussing dream content. Freud's interpretation of dreams centred on the understanding of dreams representing the fulfilment of a wish, with their motive thus being a wish (Freud, 1997, pp. 30-1). Lacan, however, discusses dreams as being firmly fixed to the notion of desire. Desire, in Lacanian terms, results from the progression of a need into a demand. It is in the process of making an individual demand that a part of the original need is left over, with this surplus residue then becoming desire (Lacan, 2016, p. 362). This represents a break from the point of having one's needs satisfied; it goes further than a need by the very act of making a demand. Whilst the desire-demand dichotomy will be returned to below, it is important here to highlight that the two are not equal. Desire uses demand as a sort of vehicle to articulate what it wants, but it remains distant and difficult to identify. It is perhaps then in the smallest of details contained in dreams that may serve to identify desire, particularly if they would seem to exceed what would be required for a need to be fulfilled.

The difficulty in assigning meaning to dreams must also be broached; there are a multitude of types of dreams we might experience and, whilst revealing, may not always be produced in an identifiable order. It is therefore the subject's reporting on their dreams, preferably with detailed context, that is essential in making sense of the issue. For example, Freud concludes in his discussion of anxious dreams that anxiety in such dreams is in fact only bolted-on to the idea or image which accompanies it, and must instead be derived from another source. The dream itself may serve as a signifier of anxiety, but to reach an understanding one must engage with the underlying condition of anxiety (Freud, 1997, pp. 68-9). This is reminiscent of Lacan's linking of demand and desire. In the dreams of Hastings and Hall which will be commented upon below, the recorded dream content will be discussed in order to search for signifiers of their desire, and indeed their anxiety. Of particular interest in this regard will be elements which could be interpreted as deriving from a specific colonial anxiety. In this way it will be argued that the strand of investigation known as colonial anxiety, through collaboration with a multidisciplinary approach, has the potential for a far greater impact in postcolonial studies, particularly when allied to the effective rehabilitation of personal histories in empire.

2. Warren Hastings and the Concept of Home

Warren Hastings is perhaps most well-known for his role as the first Governor-General of India (1772-85), as well as his subsequent impeachment in the house of lords (1787-95). It is in the context of his governorship, and his preparations for returning home to Britain, however, that this study is particularly interested in. During his years in India Hastings had experienced much in terms of the traditional understanding of colonial anxiety, which in turn may have led to signifiers of anxiety. Fear of the unknown, rebellion and personal harm would have been understandable given the complexities of early-modern migration

and the fragility of the colonial servant's existence in empire. Here, Guha's quoting of the passage, below, by the subject of his investigation into colonial anxiety, Francis Yeats-Brown, is particularly relevant. The description of a caged existence in artificial spaces of habitation, quite apart from the indigenous peoples they were there to govern, creates a particularly powerful image of uncertainty and fragility. However, the focus of the current study is not trained on conventional interpretations of colonial anxiety, broadly covered by the Yeats-Brown example linked to imperial governance. Rather, instead of viewing colonial anxiety through the lens of a threat to life or liberty in the short or medium-term, it is intended to take colonial anxiety as something deeper and more long-term. Guha (1997, p. 483) famously wrote of the inability of colonial servants to be 'at home' in empire, and this is a concept strongly tied to the current discussion of colonial anxiety.

> 'I had sometimes a sense of isolation, of being a caged white monkey in a zoo whose patrons were this incredibly numerous beige race. Riding through the densely packed bazaars of Bareilly city…passing village temples, cantering across the magical plains that stretched away to the Himalayas, I shivered at the millions and immensities and secrecies of India. I liked to finish my day at the club, in a world whose limits were known and where people answered my beck. An incandescent lamp coughed its light over shrivelled glass and dusty shrubbery; in its circle of illumination exiled heads were bent over English newspapers, their thoughts far away, but close to mine. Outside, people prayed and plotted and mated and died on a scale unimaginable and uncomfortable. We English were a caste. White overlords or white monkeys, it was all the same. The Brahmins made a circle within which they cooked their food. So did we. We were a caste: pariahs to them, princes in our own estimation.' (Guha, 1997, p. 483)

Guha's highlighting of the feelings of disconnection and of feeling lost in empire is a good place to start, as it brings to attention that there was something lacking in the colonial servant's experience of empire. Coincidentally, Lacan (2016, pp. 75-6, 138) also characterises the concept of anxiety itself as a warning signal for an apparent threat or perceived lack on the part of the subject. The question must then be of what this lack was. As suggested above, however, there were many potential lacks, including security, safety, knowledge, familiar scenery and common sociation. It must also be pointed out that each colonial servant had the ability to experience signifiers of colonial anxiety in a vastly different way, along the lines of Lacan's anxiety chart in *Figure 1*. It is for this reason that Hastings' and Halls' reported dreams have been chosen as case studies. Both of these men made use of their private correspondence to communicate details of their dream content, and both described aspects of their dreams related to a singular imagined concept: home. Being an imagined construct, elaborated through dreams and the act of writing said letters, their idea of home was not fixed in location or content, but zeroed-in on the aspects of home which they perceived, knowingly or unknowingly, they were lacking in empire. It might thus be said that the lack of a defined home in empire was the object of their colonial anxiety, much like the case of Sir Robert Cowan (Governor of Bombay, 1729-34). In Cowan's case, his residencies at Goa (1721-22) and Mocha (1724-27) exposed him to situations whereby he was one of very few Europeans, let alone Englishmen, present. Mocha, in particular, saw him exposed to dry and arid conditions, together with his alienation from the local populace who greatly outnumbered the Europeans. This also demonstrates a more geographically diverse spread of colonial anxiety (Teggin, 2020, pp. 87-8).

Hastings turned the attention of his dreams not to a specific place or object, but to a person. This was his wife, Marian. In the year before his own departure for Britain, Hastings had thought the best and safest course of action was to have sent Marian ahead of him for fear of her health in the subcontinent. This was linked to the notion of imagined locational and

climatic factors causing Europeans anxiety in empire, and thus limiting their freedom. This suggested an English vulnerability related to unfamiliar territories; this was a common occurrence for colonial servants, with Sen (2005 pp. 33-36) concluding that psychological difficulties could be brought on by extended stays in unfamiliar climates. Once again, this returns to Guha's narrative regarding Europeans feeling caged in the colonies due to the cultural disconnect and lack of wider knowledge. However, immediately after he watched her ship depart for Europe, Hastings fell into a deep melancholy lasting several weeks, which was punctuated by letters he wrote to Marian describing his anguish. Crucially for this study, several of these also included detailed descriptions of his dream content regarding Marian. It must be highlighted once again that whilst Hastings' experience of dreams was important, it was his act of choosing to communicate their details through written language that is key. Indeed, Hastings referred to his pained letters to Marian as a 'melancholy pleasure' (Hastings, 15 Jan. 1784). It is through the signifier of linguistic expression that we gain a greater insight into the object of his anxiety, and indeed the potential location of his desire.

It was on 10 January 1784 that Marian departed for Europe aboard the *Atlas.* Hastings wrote to her the day after, expressing his immediate regret for his decision, and describing his extreme sorrow. In this same letter, however, he also drew attention to a strange dream-like experience of the night just past:

> 'Yesterday as I lay upon my bed, and but half asleep, I felt a sensation like the fingers of your hand gently moving over my face and neck, and could have sworn that I heard your voice…O that I could be sure of such an illusion as often as I lay down!' (Hastings, 11 Jan. 1784)

It would seem that Hastings' anxiety for the immediate loss of Marian tied quite neatly into a dream regarding his wish to see her before him and caress him once again. Whilst on the surface this may seem like a simple case of a dream regarding a wish-fulfilment, as in the way of Freud (1997, pp. 30-1, 35-6), there was perhaps more to Hastings' dreams and his latent desire. To follow this line, attention must be given to separate dreams which Hastings reported. This would serve to firmly tie desire in to the concept of colonial anxiety. On 19 February, Hastings wrote to Marian to describe a dream which perhaps had its roots more so in the realm of an anxious dream than a wish-fulfilment:

> 'The night before last you appeared before me, and it is strange, for the first time, in my sleep. You had returned to me from sea, and looked pale and dejected with seasickness. I feel, my Marian, a degree of pain in the thought that I am now moving daily from you; and what a length of time, how filled with events that will add to the measure of it, is yet to pass before I can even begin to count off the days which remain of our separation!' (Hastings, 19 Feb. 1784)

Whilst the aim of this study is not strictly in the interpretation of dreams, it can immediately be seen from the above quote, that Hastings' great wish to see his wife again has been combined with his fear for her wellbeing on her journey to Europe. Clearly, this was neither an outright dream with a wish to fulfil nor an anxious dream. Hastings' desire, it is argued, was concealed through the manner in which Lacan (2017, p. 362) suggests that the residual effects of desire can be difficult to locate and identify. Whilst it might be argued that Hastings' desire was to see his wife again since she has featured prominently in both dreams so far, the reality was perhaps more complicated. To develop this point further, a third dream must be presented, this time from 13 August, shown below:

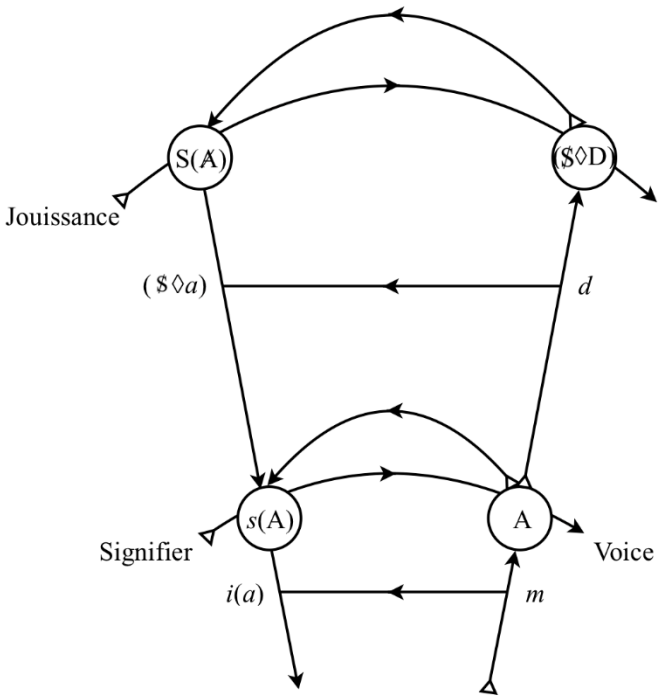
> 'It seems as if I had totally lost you or (God forgive me) that you had totally forgotten me. I see you nightly; but this is the sickness of my imagination; that you constantly appear to turn from me with indifference; nor can my reason overcome the gloom which these phantoms

> heave on my mind; for it is the effect of bodily distemper, independent of the understanding!' (Hastings, 13 Aug. 1784)

This provides us with an interesting change in the dimensions of Hastings' dream content. Whilst the previously recorded details of Marian and a seeming wish to see her once again were again described, we have now been presented with a new signifier within the dream; namely, the supposed indifference of the spectral Marian. Hastings, quite naturally, was disappointed with a negative interaction with Marian, even within the dream content. This, it is argued, points towards a greater desire buried within Hastings' psyche and dream content. Hastings clearly did not need Marian's company specifically, per se, due to the many subordinates and acquaintances around him in his official life. So too, he might easily have procured female company from a native mistress or other intimate acquaintance.

Hastings can be seen to have made a demand of himself to see and experience his wife once again, but this demand produced only a spectral version of Marian which did not align with his expectations. To demand is not to desire, according to Lacan (2017, pp. 79-80), with desire merely using demand as a vehicle for its own purposes, with the leftover elements or residue of demand becoming desire. This is seen in Lacan's famous desire graph in *Figure 2*, below, whereby the first line links desire '*d*' to the image of the other 'i(a)' in the first instance, and to the ego '*m'* through the individual's relationship to a small other '(S◊a)'. The second line, representing demand, travels through the Other in relation to desire '(A◊*d*)', referenced as 'A' in *Figure 2*. As can be seen, the Other then splits in two, with desire positioned beyond this and remaining elusive (2017, pp. 321-2). This is what is known as the residue or margin acting as desire. The remaining flow of the demand line then proceeds to the signified of the Other 's(A)'. This is because, with Lacan (2017, pp. 321-2) in mind, the Other only corresponds to demand, not desire. This may be seen in Hastings' demand of his dream content not producing what he truly desired. What then was missing? The answer, it is argued, returns to the above point made regarding the lack of a home serving as an object of anxiety in empire.

Figure 2. Lacan's 'Desire Graph', Stage 4



Source: Lacan (2017, p. 321)

The lack of a defined home structure in empire does of course return to what Guha has said about the inability of European colonial servants to be at home in empire. However, it is also linked to what Blunt (1999, pp. 421-2) wrote regarding the key role of women in constructing homely situations in the colonies. This was in turn linked to the lack of fully developed British infrastructure and technologies in the colonies. Whilst Hastings acknowledged that his private apartments felt empty and less homely once Marian had left, their prior existence was an artificial construction in the colonies (Hastings, 31 Jan. 1784). Marian had clearly succeeded in portraying a vision of home whilst in India, though it was certainly dependent on her presence. Home for Hastings was a long-term construct based back in Britain with Marian, as evidenced by his correspondence discussing a future life for them (Hastings, 21 Jan 1784, 26 Jan. 1784). This long-term vision of home back in Britain effectively nullified the possibility that any level of social development regarding facilities in the colonies would have sufficiently alleviated this specific colonial anxiety. This was not unusual, however, and aspirations of wealth to be made in India and enjoyed back in Britain were common among colonial servants. The attempted bridging of this long-term imagined concept through dreams is even more interesting in Hastings' case because he claimed to have a technique for being able to dream of Marian whenever he chose, quoted below:

> 'I have found out a method to see and converse with you whenever I sleep, if I chuse [sic] it, and I have had your company every night for three nights past; but you do not always wear the looks of kindness which I am sure you will always wear if I ever again see you in substance.' (Hastings, 23 Feb. 1784)

At first glance this could perhaps be dismissed as an outlandish claim; however, Freud has written on the potential for subjects to enter a reflective state before sleep which saves psychic energy, and in turn promotes the transformation of undesired images into desired ones. According to Freud (1997, pp. 15-7), such a process requires the subject to enter a non-critical and self-observant state before falling asleep. This is certainly reminiscent of Hastings' claims, though his assertion that he could control his dream content and focus it on Marian remains doubtful. Freud's technique was supposedly for the observation of dreams in order to more accurately report their content the next morning, not necessarily as the means for manipulating them (1997, pp. 17-8). It was entirely possible that Hastings did experience a great number of dreams featuring Marian since he allegedly focused much of his mental energies on her throughout his days, though the reported frequency of such dreams makes the claim dubious. Such a willingness to experience Marian in the dream content also points towards what is known as the specular image, marked '$i(a)$' in *Figure 2*, whereby an illusory mechanism of desire comes into play (Lacan, 2017, p. 256). The usage of Lacanian schematics, evidenced by *Figure 2*, therefore appears justified in interdisciplinary studies of history. However, we must again return to the point that it is not the dreams that were experienced which are important for this discussion, but rather the fact that they were reported by Hastings through the linguistic signifier. His very act of committing his dreams and imaginings to paper thus represents an important signifier of the colonial anxiety he experienced.

3. Alexander Hall and Imagined Concepts of Home

Hall's letters regarding his colonial anxiety and dream content differ from those of Hastings in that rather than being directed to an individual loved one, they were instead shared out among his familial network. However, within this network there were also individual nodes

to whom he delegated specific letter content. These were his mother, sister and brothers. Whilst this, in effect, represented his distilling of correspondence surrounding issues linked to colonial anxiety, much like Hastings, it also more sharply attunes the notion of colonial anxiety's expression through common channels. Once again, language and the dichotomy of the said and unsaid, in relation to separate correspondents, serves as a key signifier of colonial anxiety.

Imagined concepts of home had the potential for colonial servants to use their thoughts of the familiar as a form of escapism. This naturally involved a temporary transportation of the imagined self to a more familiar or pleasant location. There were many ways and methods through which such a design could be accomplished, but one of the more curious described by Hall and Hastings was indeed that of dreams. Ellen Filor has written of how the weakening of emotional ties over the time he was in Sumatra, combined with the death of his mother in 1756, led to a reduction in Hall's personal correspondence. Hall did, however, describe his dreams to his brother John, with Filor concluding that the spiritual link of Hall's dreams, together with the physical connection of his letters, suggested how familiar networks were maintained in empire. Through the description of his dreams, an instant connection was granted that could otherwise have taken many months to bridge with a letter. This potentially also formed a path to understanding aspects of the subconscious experience of empire for colonial servants (Filor, 2018, p. 327).

Hall's experience of empire was vastly different to that of Hastings in two ways. First, he was of a lower rank than Hastings and thus under greater pressure with regard to making a personal fortune. Second, he was stationed at the less glamorous settlement of Sumatra which lacked the amenities and opportunities of Calcutta or other major East India Company settlements. Seemingly, the most negative aspect of this for Hall was that his potential for generating wealth in the colonies to enjoy back in Europe was greatly diminished. This was an important consideration for colonial servants since they were required to sacrifice a great deal of personal freedom, and risk their health and security in order to pursue their dream of future affluence. As Jon Wilson has highlighted, many servants embarked on imperial careers in the hopes of making a great fortune with which to purchase landed estates in Europe. Many, however, did not return, and for those that did, such a creation of home was very far removed in the future (Wilson, 2010, p. 68). This ties in to the prominent eighteenth-century notion of nabobery, and also the idea that the primary motivation for entering colonial service was to provide a future home (Lawson and Phillips, 1984, pp. 226-9). Indeed, this notion carried on well into the early twentieth century, with George Orwell (2009, p. 37), through his character John Flory, expressing his understanding that Englishmen were out to make money in the colonies, and suffered the privations that went with this venture in order to secure a long-term home back in England. In the case of Orwell and Flory, however, the availability of more modern technology, infrastructure and transport did not prevent the significant onset of colonial anxiety. Again, this serves to reinforce the notion that the current long-term reading of colonial anxiety dislodged more temporary or everyday signifiers of anxiety.

If home was a far distant concept in reality, it can thus be more easily understood why Hall engaged in the more fanciful through imagined concepts of home. What were these imagined concepts of home then, and how closely are they linked to Hastings' dreams and colonial anxiety in general? Once again it is in the written word through Hall's letters to his family that the answers may be found, and we are fortunate that his surviving letters contain such vivid expressions which act as signifiers of anxiety. To begin with, Hall's dissatisfaction with his posting to Sumatra and the circumstances surrounding his discontent must be addressed.

Hall arrived at Sumatra in 1751 full of optimism and ambition for making his fortune. Hall's opinion of Sumatra appears to have initially been a good one, with him assuring his mother that:

> 'the climate here you'll no doubt think, is unspeakably hot & unhealthy, but I do assure you, it is not warmer, than I would desire, except in the middle of the day, & for healthiness, it is allowed by all here to be as good as any place in India.' (Hall, 17 Dec. 1751)

Similarly, Hall (15 Dec. 1751) also expressed a positive attitude of the Sumatran countryside by describing it as '…almost quite clear of woods & fine Champaign country for about 8 or 10 miles from the shore…'. Despite his early optimism, by January 1753 Hall was already begging his mother to lobby for him to be transferred to Bengal (Hall, 1 Jan. 1753). Hall's change in opinion of his Sumatran existence can be viewed in two ways. First, that after greater experience of Sumatra he may have come to dislike it or have felt isolated like the Francis Yeats-Brown example noted above. This would serve to suggest that the onset of colonial anxiety was not directly caused by climate or topography in this case, since Hastings still experienced difficulties in his more refined station at Calcutta. Second, that his private trading endeavours failed to meet his expectations. In terms of his living quarters and personal space, it must be commented that living at Fort Marlborough would have been a military-orientated existence which was lacking homely qualities. Whatever about the process of attempting to create a home in empire, having to do so within the confines of a military barracks was all but an impossibility. This perhaps ties in to the traditional understanding of colonial anxiety, with the analogy of the caged white monkey highlighted by Guha representative of this.

Hall's commercial life at Sumatra was also something which varied considerably. In December 1753 Hall wrote of his excitement at his posting to Natal, where he believed he would have the opportunity of making considerable returns in the gold and camphor trade (Hall, 24 Dec. 1753). It is unclear what Hall based his enthusiasm for the trade on, but it can be seen that by February 1756 his outlook had changed completely. He wrote to his brother John on 24 February:

> 'I think on the decayed state of this coast, where I assure you that there are now small hopes of a gentleman's picking up a competency. I must therefore beg of you if its possible, to get me removed to Bengal & leave you and the rest of my friends to apply for me in the best method they judge proper.' (Hall, 24 Feb. 1756)

This would all seem to suggest that Hall's experience of Sumatra was a disappointment in terms of both his personal and professional life. The question must be then; what was the object of his colonial anxiety? The answer to this is to be found in his reported dream content and imagined concepts of home.

It should be noted that Hall's reported dream content was not as extensive as that of Hastings, nor did it reproduce common images or themes. Hall's having chosen to report his dream acts as a signifier for discussion of itself. Hall's letter to his brother John on 15 October 1765 had a sombre tone, and informed him of a recent dream: 'I dreamed of the two youngsters last night & don't write to any body [sic] now, but you' (Hall, 15 Oct. 1765). This is linked to both his longing for his past home life, as well as what Filor (2018, p. 327) has described as the weakening of emotional ties through the reduction of his network of correspondence. This would appear contradictory, however, in that a weakening of emotional ties after the death of his mother in 1756 preceded the seeming spike in emotional significance of family evidenced by the letter to his brother in 1765. It may instead have been the case that the reduction of his correspondence did not in fact stem from a weakening of emotional ties, but rather represented a more insular world outlook

resulting in the strengthening of imagined emotional connections. This can be viewed through the prism of the Freudian wish contained in the dream, as well as the hidden residue of desire, split from demand, which was left unrecognised and uncommunicated. This again returns to *Figure 2*, whereby the chain of signifiers representing demand splits and leaves desire as an elusive object.

The other interesting example of Hall's connection to an imagined concept of home was his conspicuous consumption of material culture, as well as his expressions of his wanting to possess articles of it. The most notable example of this was his ordering of salmon, newspapers and powdered soup to be sent from Scotland. As Filor (2018, p. 327) has commented, such conspicuous consumption saw to the construction, particularly when it came to newspapers, of an imagined shared consumption and powerful link to the imagined home. This would suggest that the lack of artisanal products, caused by the difficulty in transport, was linked to Hall's colonial anxiety. Salmon in particular can be seen as distinctly Scottish and reminiscent of his home nation. Hall's relationship with food is not an abstract point to be inserted, however, and can also be tied in to his dream content and imagined concepts of home. In his letter to his brother William on 4 December 1755, Hall indulged in fantasy and discussed a daydream about food:

> 'Had I such a Magicians Rod as you mentiond [sic] I would make better use of it than you. You speak of making only one visit here. I would be in England three times a day viz breakfast, dinner & supper, to eat bread of which we have none on this coast.' (Hall, 4 Dec. 1755)

Although this is not strictly within the same category of dreams as described above, the description of it does constitute a linguistic signifier and can thus be linked to his conscious demand.

What does all this tell us about Hall's dreams in relation to colonial anxiety and desire though? Like Hastings, the demands made by Hall were connected to common considerations of early-modern home; namely, family and preferred elements of material culture. It has been made clear above that the demand for such things does not serve to identify the object of desire. Demand and desire are distinct, with demand being merely the vehicle used by desire. This again returns to *Figure 2* and demand's chain of signifiers. It is clear that both Hastings and Hall lacked certain aspects in their colonial experience, with such lacks tying in to their anxiety, indeed colonial anxiety, in empire. Although both men expressed their demand for objects, it is unlikely they were aware as to what their true desires were since the location of desire is elusive. Rather, through linguistic signifiers, they unknowingly hinted at it. It is argued that the concept of home, being what they were missing and were incapable of possessing in empire, was the object of their desire.

Intriguingly, for the wider subject matter in general, the variance in loci appears not to have removed the possibility for the onset of colonial anxiety. This can be demonstrated by Hastings in South Asia (1772-85), Hall in South East Asia (1751-64), and the recent study of Robert Cowan in Mocha (1724-27). Further afield, the global application of colonial anxiety is witnessed through Allina (1997) and Rich (2004) in the African experience. This is complemented by Charles Cobb and Stephanie Sapp's work (2014) which deals with colonial anxiety in the American context. All of these studies combine to reinforce the notion of a globally-orientated experience with colonial anxiety. The development of a worldwide application for colonial anxiety also raises questions regarding the chronology of such experiences. The cases and wider studies highlighted above draw attention to a vast timeframe ranging from the early eighteenth century to the early twentieth century.

Although the two primary examples in this study, Hall at Sumatra and Hastings in Bengal, serving in very different locations with varying conditions, they still experienced similar long-term desires. It is, however, clear that the problem of colonial anxiety persisted throughout the colonial and imperial period, as evidenced by the studies mentioned above, with this also questioning whether industrialisation, growth in infrastructure and improvement in amenities or transport served to alleviate symptoms of colonial anxiety. The fact that experiences of colonial anxiety persisted is indicative that if any alleviation was possible, it was not sufficient to eradicate the issue entirely. Tied to this is also the underpinning argument that colonial anxiety, like its parent anxiety, was not an indivisible whole and thus had varying levels of locomotion and severity, regardless of time or place. Colonial anxiety was a mutable force and could thus impact individuals in separate global regions and varying topographical ways through different signifiers.

4. Conclusion

It will not have gone unnoticed that this study seeks to locate and identify colonial anxiety, much like anxiety has been in Lacan's anxiety chart in *Figure 1*. Necessarily, it also follows that such a goal is seen as attainable. Although this aim has not been achieved in this brief study, it has been argued that the steps towards accomplishing it lie in the realm of increased inter-disciplinary cooperation. Lacanian schematics and a structuralist approach have been deployed to demonstrate that if anxiety can be reached by placing a structure on its stages and locomotion, and discussing it in relation to other effects, it stands to reason that an attempt may be made with colonial anxiety. Whilst the same conclusions may be reached without pursuing an inter-disciplinary approach, there may be varying discussions, terminologies and stages of development arising out of such studies. A good example of this is the comparison between this study and that of Guha's famous article 'Not at Home in Empire'. Whilst Guha arrived at the conclusion that it was indeed home that was lacking through the investigation into colonial servants' private lives, his investigation centred around the more traditional understanding of colonial anxiety. Isolation, fear of the unknown, and the feeling of being lost in the vast unknown of empire in geographical, social and religious terms contributed to this. The fact that colonial anxiety endured across a vast timeframe and can be located in diverse geographical, topographical and social regions also points to a diverse range of possibilities for future studies with regard to interdisciplinary studies of empire.

In the above study, the inherent link between anxiety and desire has been more fully brought into the discussion of colonial anxiety, specifically through the discussion of dream content. Anxiety, according to Lacan, is tied up in the concept of a defined lack of something, or perceived lack, on the part of the individual. Taking the example of home, it can easily be understood how colonial servants were all too aware that they had left their homes in Europe behind. However, as can be seen through linguistic signifiers such as those discussed above, it was not necessarily home that servants chose to focus their attention on when using their cognitive powers to demand or desire. Rather, they appear to have latched on to certain aspects of the greater whole that was home. The imagined stage of home could not, through any industrial, technological or social innovation, be exactly reproduced or used as a means of fully dispelling colonial anxiety. Instead of dreaming of a loving home in its entirety, Hastings focused on his wife who was no longer present; though this was understandable in emotional terms, the concept of home was the overarching object. This

is understandable in terms of what Lacan has written about love. Whilst individuals may love another person, they often focus on particular aspects or attributes of them as signifiers. Lacan gave the anecdote of Picasso's parakeet being in love with Picasso because the bird nibbled at his jacket. However, Lacan (1999, p. 6) designates this love as the bird being in love with what was essential to the man; namely, his clothing. Effectively, this makes individuals inescapable from the image the one who loves them sees. For example, Hastings described Marian's voice and expressions in vivid detail as being key to his understanding of his love for her (Hastings, 13 Jan. 1784). In this way, the dichotomy of what has and has not been expressed, particularly well displayed by Hastings' letters, has been a very useful method of investigation.

This study has shown the willingness to use inter-disciplinary tools in order to advance the discussion in what is a very dynamic, but poorly-defined, area of postcolonial studies. The title of this paper suggested a step towards a structured understanding of colonial anxiety, and the ramifications of this mean that debate is inevitable. However, it is important to identify instances of colonial anxiety and to lay down markers so that a comparative analysis may be conducted. Wider studies incorporating colonial anxiety globally, with varying loci and levels of industrial and social development, must be further tied into ongoing studies to enable future debate to thrive. Such a development will not be in the short-term since the concept is still too poorly understood and haphazardly applied; it will only be through objective debate with all of the stakeholders of studies into colonial anxiety that a consensus may be reached. Indeed, colonial anxiety is a concept utilised by diverse academic faculties and as such is interpreted in a myriad of ways. It is hoped, therefore, that this study will be the catalyst for a wider inter-disciplinary debate into the location and identity of colonial anxiety in the coming years.

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