William Hodges and Thomas Daniell: Picturesque Representations of “Hindoostan”

Nathaniel Fitch
SIT Study Abroad
WILLIAM HODGES AND THOMAS DANIELL:

PICTURESQUE REPRESENTATIONS OF “HINDOOSTAN”

Nathaniel Fitch

Dr. M. N. Storm

Dr. Sohini Dhar, Rabindranath Bharati University

SIT: Study Abroad

India National Identity and the Arts Program, New Delhi

Fall, 2013
# Table of Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Abstract</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acknowledgements</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Introduction</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Objectives of Research</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brief Statement of Findings</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Methodology</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Description</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What did they do?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I. William Hodges</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II. Thomas and William Daniell</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Process of the Daniells: Technology, Mediums, and Accuracy</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III. Context</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East India Company; A Brief History</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>British Anxieties and a Changing Attitude</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Picturesque Trend Background</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interpretation</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV. How Did They Represent India?</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How They Relate To The Picturesque</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table of Contents</td>
<td>Page Number</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Growth of Political Message</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluation</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contemporary India</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Representations of India by Ministry of Tourism</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclusion</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Illustrations</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glossary</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Abstract

This independent research project is a case study and investigation of William Hodges (1744-1797), Thomas Daniell (1749-1840), and his nephew William Daniell (years). Through the mediums of drawings, oil on canvas paintings, and aquatints prints, these artists created representations of colonial India during the last quarter of the eighteenth century. As such images of India were lacking before they travelled to India, investigating their work is fruitful to addressing the power, challenge, and impact of representation.

This research begins with a description of these artists, the art aesthetic and political context in which they worked. Then, the question of how they represented India will be interpreted. Finally, the question of contemporary India’s capacity to be represented through artwork will be evaluated. This will include original photographs taken at several sights previously captured by William Hodges and Thomas and William Daniell. Such research is worthwhile because India is a challenging area to represented in the time of these artists as well as today. Also, India is struggling to define itself, and by researching the way it was previously portrayed may provide insight to addressing India’s current struggle to define itself.

Acknowledgements

I would like to take this opportunity to formally recognize those individuals who have been tremendously helpful. Without their support, such research would have been impossible. I would like to thank Professor Sohini Dhar of Rabindra Bharati University for her unwavering support as my advisor for this independent study project. I would also like to thank Professor Mary Storm of S.I.T. World Learning, for not only serving as an
invaluable guide during my research, but for suggesting this that I investigate this topic in the first place.

**Introduction**

**Objectives in carrying out research**

My research had three objectives, the most general of which was to explore, challenge, and impact of representations through artwork. The first was to investigate William Hodges and Thomas and William Daniells’ artwork, lives, and the context with which they were working. The purpose of this objective was in order to understand whom these artists were and what artwork they made. My second objective was to explore the short as and long term social, political, and artistic impacts of their artwork and to determine whether or not their artwork effects or influences the way India is represented and perceived today. My final objective was to investigate whether or not it is possible to accurately and ethically represent a country as diverse and massive as India. Though the focus of this research is on representing India at the end of the eighteenth century and contemporary India, it is hoped that such investigation of representation may apply to other countries as well.

**Methodology**

Each of my objectives required extensive research from primary and secondary sources on these three artists and the historical context that enveloped them. To better understand their work, I visited some of their oil on canvas paintings in The Gallery of Modern Art in New Delhi and Victoria Memorial Hall Museum in Calcutta. As a practicum independent study project, I visited and photographed several locations that had been captured by these artists as a means of understanding the challenges they faced
as well as confronted the question of India’s ability to represented through images. These photographs were taken in New Delhi, Calcutta, Varanasi, and Agra.

**Brief Statement of Findings**

I found that these artists had a significant impact on the sociopolitical climate in which they were working. Their artwork eased much of the British anxieties of their day by showing India as an exotic and picturesque land of people in need of a just and paternal figure such as England. I also found that these representations of India carried influences into the Indian Company painting, and thus effected the way India was represented native artists as well as foreign. My research found that the picturesque aesthetic was more than a British stylistic preference: it was a means of choosing and capturing a subject, but also a way of presenting a previously unrepresented India as comprehensible to an English audience in an age of inquiry. I found a representations of India, and in particular Thomas Daniell’s aquatints in later volumes of *Oriental Scenery*, often carry an artist’s political preference, or at least the artist’s assumption of the political preference of his patrons.

**Please note…**

A detailed account of Hodges and the Daniells travels in India, along with the motivations for said travels, are located in the appendix. While such information is intriguing and may help the reader understand the lives of these three artists, this information not directly useful for understanding how these artists represented India and why these representations both in their own time as well as today. It is for this reason that such information has been omitted from the body of this essay. Also note that this research focuses on Thomas Daniell and only briefly on William Hodges, who had major
influence on the Daniells journey in India. The attitude that the Daniells surpassed, even overshadowed, Hodges in terms of quantity and quality of their artwork (particularly their of aquatints) has led to wider discussion, analysis, and impact of the Daniells. For these reasons, this independent study will focus on Thomas Daniell.

**Description**

**I. William Hodges**

William Hodges (1744-1797) was trained at William Shipley’s School in London before learning the fundamentals of classical landscape painting through a seven-year apprenticeship with leading landscape painter\(^1\) Richard Wilson\(^2\) (1714-1782).\(^3\) Hodges then served as an official draughtsman on Captain James Cook’s second voyage,\(^4\) a three-year journey to the South Pacific from 1772-75.\(^5\) William Hodges received permission from the Directors of the East India Company in 1779 and embarked for India aboard the *Earl of Oxford* that same year. He reached Madras the following February 1780, and thus he became the first British professional landscape artist to travel to India.\(^6\) Although his three years in India were repeatedly thwarted by illness and outbreaks of war, he managed to travel to Calcutta, Madras, Agra, Lucknow, and Benares, among others [For a more detailed account of Hodges travels in India appendix 1].

---

2. Richard Wilson Background had studied the work of Claude Lorrain heavily. Hodges apprenticeship with such an acclaimed painter put him in a trajectory of prominent English painters by his contemporaries.
5. The Artificial Empire, pp. 5
6. from picturesque India book, pp. 63
produce roughly 200 on-site freehand drawings. Predominantly of British controlled forts, and Hindi and Mughal architectural sites, these were composed in the picturesque style that he had been trained in.

During his time in India from February 1780 until 26 November 1783, Hodges spent his days busily sketching subjects of interest, which were predominantly architectural views. Though war thwarted much of his planned tours, he was able to travel throughout producing on site sketches which would be used to create engravings and oil on canvas paintings, most of which were produced once returned to England.

**Hodges’ *Select Views in India***

In the year 1786, he showed eight Indian landscape paintings at the Royal Academy and was accepted as an Associate Member. The following year, he displayed ‘*A View of part of the City of Benares in the East Indies*’ (1787) as his diploma work and became a full Academician. Hodges began selecting amongst his collection of field sketches from India for his two-volume series *Select Views in India* (1795-8). The series was dedicated to the East India Company. Each volume was comprised of twenty-four aquatints in monochrome sepia, with more costly hand-colored plates also available. The first volume was issued on 20 May 1785 and the second was issued 27 April 1788. Hodges engraved each of the copperplates himself, though he may have had an assistant.

---


8 Hodges also produced oil on canvas paintings while in India. Many of these were for his patrons, the most notable being Governor-general Warren Hastings. Hastings was his main patron in India. The two often travelled together and the Governor-general even arranged a stipend for Hodges from the Company. *Ibid*, pp.


for other sections of production. In *Select Views in India*, a letterpress accompanied each plate and provided information on his subjects. Along with his 1787 publication *A Dissertation on the Prototypes of Architecture: Hindoo, Moorish, and Gothic*, which was the “first attempt by an English author to produce an extended theoretical account or rationale of Indian architecture and its relation to traditions in Europe,”¹¹ the letterpress indicated his knowledge on the topic of Indian architecture. His aquatint series and dissertation on Indian architectural drew interest from the British public, including architects and fellow picturesque engravers Thomas and William Daniell.

**II. Thomas and William Daniell**

Thomas Daniell (1749-1840) was born in Surrey, England,¹² and began his artistic career with two successive apprenticeships to coachbuilders, the second of which was with Charles Catton, a coachbuilder to George III and a founding member of the Royal Academy as a landscape paintings (Catton also displayed work there).¹³ Thomas developed his technique as a student of the Royal Academy from 1773 until 1783 and applied for permission to work in India as an engraver. William Daniell was approved to travel to India as his uncle’s assistant weeks later. Inspired by “…better prospects of artistic fortunes as well as an opportunity to gratify the current taste for picturesque landscape,”¹⁴ and the success of William Hodges, Thomas and his nephew William applied for permission to travel to India as an engraver and assistant, respectively, and were approved the Directors of the East India Company in 1784.

---

¹¹ *The Artificial Empire*, pp. 8
¹⁴ *ibid*, pp. 13.
Thomas and William were in India from early 1786 until September 1793. In nine years, the Daniells were able to traverse an unprecedented portion of the subcontinent. The Daniells made three major excursions, North from Calcutta to Srinagar, South to Madras, and West to Bombay [For a detailed account of Thomas and William Daniell’s travels in India, see appendix 3]. It is here they met James Wales (1747-1795), a portrait-painter and architectural draughtsman.

Once they had returned back to England in 1793, Thomas and William began selecting views for their first volume of *Oriental Scenery* from 1,400 sketches they had produced in India.\(^{15}\)

**Process of the Daniells: Technology, Mediums, and Accuracy**

Author Jagmohan Mahajan, in his 1983 publication *Picturesque India: Sketches and Travels of Thomas and William Daniell*, gives a rudimentary account of the Daniells daily process.

Their method was to make quick pencil outlines, with or without the aid of the camera obscura, of any scenes or monuments which caught their fancy. Some of these drawings were given a thin wash of a basic colour, and these then formed part of the vast stock of drawings which were subsequently worked up into full water-colours, oil paintings or aquatints.\(^{16}\)

Indeed the camera obscura would prove an important aspect of the accuracy attributed to their work by their contemporaries. A precursor to early cameras, the camera obscura was a box containing minutely focused-lenses and a series of mirrors that refracted light onto a platform for sketching. Thomas Daniell mounted the camera obscura atop of one of their two drawing tables, which was mounted with sketch paper.

---


The box was closed on three sides, with a curtain on the fourth for the artist to go under, thus blocking out all light but for the projected image that the camera obscura was directed at. This tool allowed Thomas to carefully “frame a scene with the necessary foreground, middle ground, and background that would make it appropriately ‘picturesque’.”\(^{17}\)

A perambulator, a large wheel trundled by a handle that recorded mileage, was another tool used by the Daniells to provide a keen sense of accuracy in their sketches. The use of a perambulator between allows an artist to determine the exact distance to he is from his subjects. this tool “helped establish a sense of accurate perspective and verifiable prospect- and of the tangibility of land – to their drawings.”\(^{18}\) Other materials carried by the Daniells during their travels in India included large quantities of drawing-paper, paints, brushes, and two drawing tables.\(^{19}\) Now that the technology utilized by the Thomas and William Daniell while in India, aquatints and their significance in relationship to these two artists may be explored.

In 1775, England was introduced to the art of aquatinting by Paul Sandby and his views of the English countryside. That the Daniells chose to make aquatints instead of other forms of engraving (such as etching or lithography) is partially responsible for the perception of accuracy and recognition amongst their contemporaries. This medium [detailed description located in appendix #3] allowed the artist to produce prints that displayed variation of tones, the only type of engraving at the time that had such capacity.

**Daniell’s Oriental Scenery**


\(^{18}\)Mildred Archer and W.G. Archer, *Indian Paintings for the British*, pp. 11

Oriental Scenery would eventually become a six-volume series of twenty-four views each. Their aquatints were issued in seven parts, each of which were comprised of twenty-four views with the exception of Antiquities of India, which was published in two parts of twelve views each. The first and second volumes were published on 1 March 1795 and August 1797, respectively, under the title Oriental Scenery. The first half of Antiquities of India was published on 17 October 1799 and was predominantly of architectural subjects. The third series of Oriental Scenery was published in 1801. James Wales’s drawings were the used for the Daniells’ 1803 publication, Hindoo Excavations. Views of Hindoostan, which was made from stock drawings produced during the Daniells’ 1789 expedition to Garhwal, was published in 1807. The final twelve views of Antiquities of India were published in 1808. The Daniells published A Picturesque Voyage to India by Way of China in 1810 as a quarto volume containing fifty coloured aquatints in a reduced price.\(^{20}\) The East India Company, whom the first series was dedicated to, ordered thirty sets of Oriental Scenery. Another order, this time eighteen sets, were requested from abroad at the cost of £2,000 and another set was purchased by the Royal Academy by unanimous vote. An arrangement was made with Miller, the bookseller, for Thomas to allow them to print twenty-five complete sets for £1,200.\(^{21}\)

So far, who these artists were and what artwork they produced has been investigated. Now our focus will shift to what made their representations of India significant in their own time. To understand this importance, we must investigate the social, political, and the art aesthetic context with which these artists existed. It is for this reason that we shall now discuss the history of the picturesque trend and the East India

---


\(^{21}\) ibid, pp. 92
Company, as well as British anxieties about their presence in India during the late 19th and early 20th century.

III. Context

East India Company; A Brief History

On New Year’s Eve 1600, a collection of 220 English merchants who had incorporated themselves into the ‘Governor and Company of Merchants of London trading with the East Indies.’ Later referred to as the East India Company, these men were granted monopoly privileges on all trade in the East Indies by Queen Elizabeth I. Their first ships arrived in the subcontinent at the port of Surat eight years later. The English merchants began to surpass their Portuguese counterparts who had been in India since Vasco da Gama reached Calicut on 20 May 1498. The East India Company’s fortunes improved after Sir Thomas Roe, an emissary of King James I, gained for the Company the right to establish a factory at Surat in 1615 from Nur-ud-din Mohammad Jahangir (1569-1627), the fourth Mughal Emperor. Trading posts spread throughout the east and west coasts, and English communities grew in the three presidencies towns of Calcutta, Bombay, and Madras. Company rule essentially began following Major-General Robert Clive’s (1725-1774) victory over Siraj-ud-daulah, the Nawab of Bengal, at the Battle of Plassey in 1757. Within several years, the Company gained the right to collect revenues on behalf of the Mughal Emperors. The Regulating Act of 1773 gave the British government greater control over the operations of the Company, though direct control by the British Crown did not begin until the Government of India Act 1858.  

British Anxieties

By the second half of the eighteenth century, the East India Company’s image, particularly to the British, was of critical importance. Warren Hastings was on trial from 1788 until he was acquitted in 1795.\(^{23}\) Accused had ruled India despotically, notably in his military aggression towards Maharaja Nadajumar (1705-1775), the Nawab of Benares. Among those who cried out for his removal, perhaps no voice was as loud as that of Edmund Burke. The head of a three-year Select Committee of parliamentary inquiry into the affairs of the East India Company claimed that the In his revision of *The Wealth of Nations* (1776), Adam Smith referred to the attitude of Company rule in India, stating “No other sovereigns ever were, or, from the nature of things, ever could be, so perfectly indifferent about the happiness or misery of their subjects.” Cartographer James Rennell (1742-1830) recognized the contradiction of British rule in India, claiming, “…there can be inducement to increase a national income for the purpose of finally enriching another nation.”

Although the naval presence in this area was strong, the Company avoided enlisting large numbers of British soldiers. With the knowledge that, back in London, the public was “fearful of a [British] standing army,”\(^{24}\) the Directors of the East India Company chose instead to hire *sepoys*. Hastings and his successors\(^{25}\) were anxious to avoid social upheaval, attempted to accommodate religious and caste sensibilities in these


\(^{25}\)ibid, pp. 6
armies. Company attempted to pay for this increasingly expensive army by taxing local nawabs and local rulers, promising to protect said rulers for their compliance. The Indian army expanded from 100,000 men in 1789 to 155,000 during the Napoleonic wars (1803-1815). This war fueled British nationalism and, consequently. Imperialism during the first quarter of the nineteenth century as the Company was gradually replaced by the British government While defending the completion of the new Government House in Calcutta, Lord Valentia (1770-1844) communicated the growing British imperial sentiment when he claimed: “We merit the reproach which our great rivals the French have ever cast upon us, of being alone influenced by a sordid mercantile spirit. In short, I wish India to be ruled from a palace, not from a counting-house.”

Understanding the political climate is no less vital to understanding the artistic context in which these artists created their representations of India. As mentioned earlier, William Hodges training was Richard Wilson, a praised picturesque landscape artists. As such, Hodges place in the picturesque made him a part of this impressive lineage. Thomas Daniell displayed paintings at the Royal Academy before leaving India, but financial stability in particular until in India for several years (during there first two years in India, the Daniells submitted bills for cleaning and rehanging works of paintings in homes of wealthy Englishmen living in Calcutta). That Hodges and the Daniells created artwork so highly regarded at the time partially explains the positive receptions of their work in their own time.

Picturesque Trend Background

Accurately describing the picturesque mandates an explanation of origins, theorists, practitioners, and purpose this trend.

The Picturesque trend originated from the fusion of two separate seventeenth century styles of oil painting. The first came from French born artists Claude Lorraine (1600-82), and Gaspar Dughet (1615-75), and their idealized classical landscapes of the Roman Campagna. These paintings were made in-studio and often used sketches that had been drawn in nature. The subjects included biblical episodes and scenes from classical literature and mythology. Richard Wilson (1713-82) and Giovanni Antonio Canal (1679-1768) are credited with bringing this style of oil painting to Britain.

The second was the topographical view, developed primarily by Flemish and Dutch artists who worked in England. Artists of this style utilized survey instruments. The introduction of linear perspective, as well as the use of “light, shade, and atmospheric effects” that could “enhance the illusion of distance thus creating a greater sense of realism.” Although theoretical inquiry of the picturesque only began to reach an audience during the second half of the eighteenth century, their writing impacted architects, professional and amateur artists, and English tourists alike until the end of the nineteenth century.

Theorists

29 Richard Wilson based his technique and style Lorraine’s work throughout his career.
30 Also known as Gaspar Poussin
31 The amount of detail in these sketches varied from preliminary to highly detailed depending on the artist.
32 Barbara D. Metcalf and Thomas R. Metcalf, A Concise History of India. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 132
33 Ibid., pp. 133
34 Ibid., pp. 133
35 And, in William Gilpin’s case, his artwork as well
The writing of Edmund Burke (1729-97) and William Gilpin (1724-1804) were important venues of analysis of picturesque concepts. In his 1757 publication, *Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and the Beautiful*, Burke considered the ‘Beautiful’ to be synonymous with smooth, polished, delicate, and suggested that it instilled a sense of happiness or pleasure. William Gilpin disagreed with Burke, arguing that ‘Roughness forms the most essential point of difference between the beautiful and the picturesque…in the outline and bark of a tree, as in the rude summit and craggy sides of a mountain…Nature is most defective in composition and must be a little assisted.’ Gilpin believed that a ‘picture imagination,’ which was cultivated by a study of prints, would be a worthwhile accompaniment to travel. Artists who worked in the picturesque style of viewing, sketching, and painting are also responsible for the cultivation and popularity of this trend.

**Practitioners**

Hodges and the Daniells were certainly not the only artists working within the picturesque movement. From 1769 till 1820, roughly sixty professional artists worked in India. These artists are frequently divided into three categories based on their mediums. Of these, the first category was comprised of portrait and large-scale historical painters who were well established before leaving England. Tilly Kettle (1735-1786), Johann Zoffany (1733-1810), and Arthur Devis (1712-1787). The second group of professional artists of the picturesque movement who worked in India during this period were artists

---

38 *Ibid*, 145
such as John Smart (1740-1811), Ozias Humphry (1742-1810), and George Chinnery (1774-1852) who created portrait miniatures on ivory. Watercolor drawings, “intended either as ends in themselves or as studies for subsequent engravings, aquatints, or lithographs,”³⁹ were the final category among professional artists of this movement. Noteworthy practitioners included William Hodges, Thomas and William Daniell, James Wales, and Baltasar Solvyn (1760-1824).⁴⁰ With the social, political, and art aesthetic context in which William Hodges and the Daniells has been described, the question of how these artists represented India (and how they were received by their contemporaries) will be explored.

**Interpretation**

**IV. How Did They Represent India?**

With the help of William Daniell’s assistance, Thomas composed 1,400 sketches, 144 aquatints, and hundreds of oil on canvas painting, a small portion of which have yet to be traced.⁴¹ As such, attempting to understand how these two artists represented India is a difficult challenge. To being, the affects of the picturesque on these representations will be discussed.

**How the Picturesque Affected the Daniells’ Representations**

The Picturesque made exotic India more readily comprehensible to an English audience:

“…Imperial art, especially in India, consistently softened, regularized, and beautified the natural landscape. Consequently, a potentially dangerous curiosity

³⁴⁰ *ibid*, pp.10
about colonial people and places, one that might involve violence, conflict, and oppression, has been diverted into the quest for aesthetic novelty."42

Thomas and William Daniells portrayed India as a comprehensible, intriguing, and peaceful land by means of the picturesque, an English aesthetic which, in practice, tended to subdue the “exotic” elements of their subjects. The picturesque aesthetic guided the Daniells both in their determinations of which subjects to depict, and in their illustrations thereof. Many of the subjects, which they captured first through on the spot drawings, were architectural views of forts, Hindu temples, and Mughal ruins. The Daniells choose to represent India first and foremost through this trend, and, by utilizing an inherently English style of painting (although many of the artist that led to the picturesque trend, this style in considered English origin), represented India as a land not of war, a growing sepoys army, or increasingly East India Company rule, but as a picturesque, beautiful, intriguing, and comprehensible land.

As suggested by Gilpin, picturesque compositions may well include architectural ruins, overgrown vegetation, rugged cliffs, waterways, undulating hills, winding pathways. With a darkened foreground, lighter middle ground, a spotlit focal point, and a pale background, often including out-of-focus hills or mountains, were employed to draw the viewer into and through the entire composition.43

The picturesque trend also served as a means of choosing a subject.44 Artists working in India were affected by conflicts throughout their time in the subcontinent. Certainly it was not the portrait artist to capture the ‘real India,’ a subcontinent that, in some areas, was witnessing political unrest, famine, and military conflict. That the

43 William Gilpin, 1792
44 times are changed pp. 190
Daniells claimed their artwork was accurate is clear, though they never showed these aspects of India. That is not to say that the Daniells were unaware of the growing political presence in India. They were often taken in by English officials and even local nawabs, and traveled with Company soldiers, most notably to Delhi. The Daniells understood their audience well. Their views of the newly constructed buildings of Calcutta were planned with the correct assumption that English expats in this city would buy their work, showing off their growing city to friends and family back in England. So too did the Daniells understand the growing interest in the political climate in India, and thus their later publications of *Oriental Scenery* displayed a growing political message.

**Growth of Political Message**

The Daniells picturesque representations of India adapted to the growing English nationalism and, in turn, imperialism in India. Analyzing the first twelve aquatints printed by the Daniells provides valuable insight on how they represented India, and, more specifically, the growth of their English imperialist message in their artwork. Then, later volumes of aquatints published by Thomas and William will be explored. By combining specific analysis of the first twelve prints of *Views of Calcutta* as well as later volumes that would be collectively referred to as *Oriental Scenery*, the challenge of understanding how the Daniells’ represented India is addressed directly.

The technique, skill, and daily routine that the Daniells’ employed throughout their time in India was remarkably consistent. Their choice of subject matter and, in particular, political overtones in their work did however change over time. In the twelve views of the first volume of *Views of Calcutta* (1791-8), the Daniells’ work seems to be increasingly in favor of British dominance over India subjects. Of these twelve, the first
three “show the commercial and social center of the city.” Such subjects include the trading port and Old Fort William (Calcutta, plate 1), the Writers’ Building and Old Court House on Clive Street (Calcutta, plate 2), and Tank Square including the Swedish Mission Church, completed in 1770 (Calcutta, plate 3). These scenes convey a sense of vibrant street life, and more significantly, a “seemingly idyllic interracial culture in which residents high and low, English and Indian, traders and fashionable ladies…mix freely…and move about the city.” The next four engravings contrast English and Indian Calcutta. The fourth engraving shows a chaotic and crowded scene at Chitpore Road bazaar (Calcutta, plate 4) contrasts with the newly construct Old Court House (Calcutta, plate 5), Indian men and women washing themselves in ghats amidst large English trading ships (Calcutta, plate 6), and Chouringee Road, where Palladian style palaces constructed by the English that line one side, and while the “other – completely Indian – side of the road is still undeveloped and rural…” (Calcutta, plate 8). The ninth engraving shows an Indian pilgrim amongst English residences.

It is the subjects of the final three engravings of the first volume of Views of Calcutta that the Daniells choose to “carry notably strong political overtones.” No longer depicting the streets of Calcutta as a place of playful yet peaceful coexistence. The Council House and Old Government House, “the buildings that most represented the political dominance of Bengal by the East India Company,” are depicted in the tenth and eleventh plates, respectively, as well as the newly completed St John’s Church, which

---

46 ibid, pp. 184
47 ibid, pp. 186
“suggests British cultural residency and religious occupation.”48 It is not only the subjects, but when the timing that Thomas choose to sketch these sites. Outside the Council House, the viewer finds the tents and encampments of Cornwallis’ expanding Grand Army (Calcutta, plate 10). The Old Government House, the center of civil administration in this capital, is depicted by the Daniells’ on a “special day of formal viceregal celebration when Cornwallis is host to a formal reception,” thus continuing the trend of British political and military dominance of the previous engraving (Calcutta, plate 11). The Daniells captured St John’s Church on a Sunday morning, and the parishioners, arriving in palanquins and carriages, may be in larger numbers to commemorate the consecration of the church on 2 June 1787 (Calcutta, 12).

…We can see his artistic perspective of the city change with the political times. His initial fascination with images of the vibrant and multicultural life of the streets soon gave way to a focus on public buildings of colonial rule and settled administration – and English (and Indian) Calcutta became British Calcutta in his (and his viewers) purview.49

In the first series of prints, Oriental Scenery: Twenty-Four Views in Hindoostan, the only one to a British presence in India is the Daniell’s party and relaxed British officers. The second series of Oriental Scenery was not so politically subdued. Half the series was comprised of views of presidency towns. These images, which also included company buildings and large Union Jacks “provided a reminder that Parliament had centralized British authority here.”50 The Daniells understood the British public’s growing interest in conflicts with Tipu Sultan, and thus in the third series of Oriental

48 Thomas Daniell and the Picturesque Possession of India, pp. 187
49 Thomas Daniell and the Picturesque Possession of India, pp. 187
Scenery (1801-1803) they included four prints of hill forts (Jagdeo, Rayakottai, Verapadrug, and Hosur) in the Brahahal Hills.

In their fourth series, Twenty-Four Landscapes: Views in Hindoostan (1804), the Daniells wrote that they “intended to convey, by examples selected from different parts of Hindoostan, a general idea of the landscape scenery of that extensive empire.” In addition, this series included Trichinopoly, site of Clive’s victory over the French.

That Thomas and William Daniells’ representations of India became more politically blunt over time is clear. Although they had been in India during a time of war and British anxiety towards their presence in the subcontinent, the beginning of the nineteenth century English nationalism transition into a more accepting view of imperialism. The Daniells early aquatint representations showed Calcutta to be a place of coexistence between the English, India, rich and poor. As the Daniells’ audience became more accepting of British presence in India, so too did the Daniells work become increasingly more political.

Initially, the significance of these artists’ representations were significant because no such depictions of India had existed before and because they were perceived by their viewers as accurate.

**Perceived Accuracy**

In 1813 Samuel Prout (1783-1852) referring to Thomas and William’s plates of Oriental Scenery claimed ‘we can sit and securely traverse the extensive regions of the East without quitting the elbow chair, and contemplate with delight the magnificence of

---

51 ibid, pp. 199
art in the Hindoo temples, as united with the stupendous grandeur of nature.'\textsuperscript{52} Prout’s high praise of their work suggests the capacity of these aquatints to transport the viewer to this exotic and picturesque land. It was not enough that their views were of high aesthetic quality, but that they were “faithful records.”\textsuperscript{53} Another commented on the Daniells’ their faithful delineations, claiming that in \textit{Oriental Scenery}, ‘the East was as clearly reflected as the moon in a lake.’\textsuperscript{54} In 1954, Thomas Sutton, the first to give a complete account of the Daniells time in India, noted:

“The execution of these drawings is indeed masterly; there is every reason to confide in the fidelity of the representations; and the effect produced by this rich and splendid display of oriental scenery is truly striking. In looking at it, one may almost feel the warmth of an Indian sky, the water seems to be in actual motion and the animals, tree and plants are studies for the naturalist.”\textsuperscript{55}

Thus, the Daniells and their representations were not only highly regarded by their contemporaries, but had lasting influences on a number of fields relating to Orientalism and the study of the East.

\textbf{Evaluating India’s Capacity To Be Represented}

The previous sections explored the representations and effects of William Hodges and Thomas and William Daniell. But how is India currently being represented through artwork? Who are the artists and viewers of contemporary representations of India? Can modern India be represented accurately and ethically through photography, and if so, how do these images relate from the artwork of Hodges and the Daniells? It is these questions that will now be investigated.

\textsuperscript{52} Pauline Rohatgi and Graham Parlett, \textit{Indian Life and Landscapes by Western Painters: Paintings and Drawings from the Victoria and Albert Museum} (London: Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Vastu Sangrahalaya in association with Victoria and Albert Museum, 2008) pp. 45
\textsuperscript{53} Maurice Shellim, \textit{India and the Daniells}. London Incheape & Co., 1979, pp. 15
\textsuperscript{54} Thomas Sutton, \textit{The Daniells: Artists and Travellers}. London Bodley Head, 1954, pp. 92
\textsuperscript{55} \textit{ibid}, pp. 92
Contemporary India

Independent for roughly sixty years, India is the world’s largest democracy with 1.2 billion people. It sustains six major religions, including the world’s third largest population of Muslims, and more than 1,600 language groups. It has been, and continues to be represented through all artistic mediums, and it is not exempt from the prevalence of images in today’s increasingly interconnected, digital, and globalized world. The Internet and particular digital photography, has had an impact on the representations of modern India. In discussing the photography’s ability for icon building, Srivatsan addresses pervasion in images in contemporary society, claiming that…

Everyday photographs…circulate in different media, penetrating the social structure with tremendous energy. They communicate many different messages in diverse dimensions. Most obviously and at an overt level, they communicate the message they are invoked to support (advertisement, news, science, etc.). At another level, they act as evidence, posing as copies of a real scene which was 'snapped up' at an opportune moment by an alert eye.

With an increased ease to create and view photographs, their function as “images of truth” and as representations have been diminished. Even the most rudimentary of Thomas Daniell’s sketches mandated a dialogue between the artist and his subject, whereas anybody may now produce and upload representations of India with a push of a button. To avoid such unintentional representations, the representations of India as produced by India’s Ministry of Tourism will now be investigated.

Representations of India by Ministry of Tourism

---


In an effort to improve tourism in India, “Incredible India” was officially branded by Amitabh Kant in 2002 while serving as the Joint Secretary under the Union Ministry of Tourism. This ministry also hired Ogilvy and Mather, and Indian marketing and advertising firm. The Ministry added an official YouTube campaign in 2007 and a TV campaign in 2010. While the goal of this campaign is to increase tourism in India, it is nonetheless useful to investigate how the Ministry, part of the Indian government, chooses to represent India. On the Incredible India website, a photograph montage begins to play: it shows the Taj Mahal at Agra, a tiger mid-roar, camels in a desert, Buddhist monks donned in saffron robes, a tea plantation in Kerala, a skier, and Mysore Palace to name a few. Other official Incredible India photographs include a woman in a sari balancing a clay pot atop her head, a woman in modern exercise clothes in a yoga pose in front of a mountain range, the Himalayas, and more images of tigers and the Taj Mahal. These representations convey India as a place of cultural and spiritual richness, and, to some extent, may involve orientalist notions of “exoticism, spirituality, and timelessness.” It is these generalizations that I attempt to avoid in my own photographic representations of India.

My photographs

As mentioned in the abstract, this research includes an attempt to represent India through digital photography. Each of the nine photographs were taken at sites previously captured by Thomas and William Daniell. These images are presented exclusively in

---

59 Reproducing-Resisting Race and Gender Difference: Examining India’s Online Tourism Campaign from a Transnational Feminist Perspective Author(s): Vrushali Patil Source: Signs, Vol. 37, No. 1 (Autumn 2011), pp. 185-210
60 http://tourism.gov.in/TourismDivision/AboutDivision.aspx?Name=Overseas%20Promotion
61 Reproducing-Resisting Race and Gender Difference: Examining India’s Online Tourism Campaign from a Transnational Feminist Perspective Author(s): Vrushali Patil Source: Signs, Vol. 37, No. 1 (Autumn 2011), pp. 185-210
black and white, and were chosen based on my attempt to ethically and accurately represent India. I have tried to make the individuals in my photographs indistinguishable because I never requested permission for my photographs.

**Conclusion**

My independent study projected was, in general, successful in fulfilling the objectives outlined in my introduction. Using the D.I.E. format helped the structure and flow of my paper, and it was a continuous reminder to make my paper predominantly description and facts. I was less successful in addressing the question of my interpretation section of conveying how Thomas Daniell represented India.

The main outcomes of my study were a deeper understanding of the powers of representation, the significance of the picturesque style, and an understanding of the impact of Thomas Daniell’s artwork. This ISP could lead to several topics for future research. The most interesting on a personal level would be to explore the European or Western concept of the Mythical East, and thus investigate how this subcontinent has been represented, and how far back it is possible to trace these origins. Also, future research could be conducted on comparing the earliest representations of the West by Eastern artists, scholars, etc.

**Appendix**

#1: William Hodges Travels in India

William Hodges was the first British professional landscape artist to travel to India and reached Madras in February 1780. After reaching Calcutta by boat from Madras, Hodges made three tours in India. The first was from Calcutta to Bhagalpur, Monghyr, Rajamahal and back to Calcutta from mid-April to mid-May of 1781. Hodges accompanied his main patron and Governor-general Warren Hastings to Benares from 25 June 1781 until 15 May 1782 as his second tour. His final tour was his most ambitious.

---

62 from picturesque India book, pp. 63
From 10 January until 24 September of 1783, Hodges journeyed to Agra, Lucknow, Bhagalpur, and returned to Calcutta via Gwailor. Hodges boarded the Worcester 26 November 1783 and reached Downs, England in June 1784. William Hodges had spent three years in India, most of which was spent in the north.

**Why Hodges went to India**

The lack of appreciation for landscape paintings in official art circles and academies, the loss of his wife, his association with Francis Swain Ward (1734-1805), who had recently displayed his paintings of India at the Society of Artists, all impacted his decision to board *Earl of Oxford* headed for India in 1779 after receiving permission from the East India Company’s Directors.

**#2: Daniells’ Travels in India**

On 7 April 1785, Thomas Daniell (1749-1840) and his nephew William (1769-1837) boarded the Atlas from Gravesend, England and arrived in Calcutta early in 1786 and began sketching various government buildings and street scenes throughout the city.

The Daniells made four major excursions after arriving in Calcutta. After the twelve views of Calcutta were completed, they journeyed north up the Hooghly River by boat on 29 August 1788. This first excursion ended after they reached Srinagar, the first Europeans to do so, on 27 April 1789.

Their second trip was the return from Srinagar to Calcutta from May 1789 till November 1791. On 5 January 1792 Calcutta Gazette announced that a lottery of the Daniells’ work would be held on the upcoming 1 March at Old Harmon Tavern. The lottery, which sold 150 oils, must have been a success, and they began preparations for their next their third excursion.

On 10 March 1792, the artists departed Calcutta for the final time by boarding the Hastings, a pilot sloop, headed south for Madras. On April 9, they set off in palanquins with a crew of forty-eight and formed a loop around southern India. This path included, Bangalore, Trichinopoly, Madura (Madurai), Ramesvaram, Tanjore, and Mahabalipuram before returning to Madras in November 1792. The end of their third journey was followed by a second lottery. Of the sixty-six oils listed in the Madras lottery, only nine depicted South Indian subjects, with the remaining oils, and some sketches, remnants of the first lottery in Calcutta.

From Calcutta they travelled to Bombay and were introduced to Scottish painter James Wales (1747-1795), who had been in Bombay and exploring the near by caves since 1791. He led the Daniells’ to the cave and temple sites of Elephanta, Kanheri, and Salsette. The three artists explored and sketches these area from March until May when the Daniells’ left for Muscat. Their original plan to return to by land over Europe was thwarted by the news of the war with France. On 28 July 1793, Thomas and William returned Bombay, then sailed to Canton by September, and reached Whampoa by 20

---

64 In a letter to fellow artist Ozias Humphry, Thomas proclaimed ‘The Lord be praised, at length I have completed my twelve views of Calcutta…’ on 7 November 1788. [Mildred Archer, *Early Views of India: The Picturesque Journeys of Thomas and William Daniell 1786-1794* (London: Thames and Hudson Ltd, 1980), pp. 65.]


66 *ibid*, pp. 24
January 1794. At Whampoa, they joined Lord McCartney’s embassy and reached Spithead, England by September 1794.

#3: The Process of Aquatinting

“A highly polished cooper-plate is coated with wax, which is then held in the smoke of a taper until the surface, having melted gently, is an even golden brown. Upon this the original subject is then drawn or traced in reverse, the pencil lines showing clearly against the now hardened wax. The highest lights are now ‘stopped out’ with an acid-resisting substance and the plate placed in a box containing thousands of tiny particles of powdered resin. Upon the turning of a handle, a current of air is created causing the particles to rise and then settle like dust upon the waxed surface of the plate. This is now placed in a bath of acid, which bites into the plate where the dust has disturbed, however slightly, the wax. The plate is then removed, thoroughly rinsed, and the parts judged to have been sufficiently bitten are ‘stopped out.’ The process is repeated, the bitings become successively deeper, until the strongest darks are reached. The wax is then removed and the copperplate is seen to be pitted everywhere by minute holes, except where ‘stopping out’ has been employed. The resultant print consists not of lines of varying depth or thickness, as in etching or a copper-plate engraving, but of tones.”67

Illustrations
Illustrations of 18th Century India

Old Court House and Writers Building
Plate 2

67 Thomas Sutton, *The Daniells: Artists and Travellers* (London, 1954); quoted *ibid* from an Archer book. I found this is Clive Dewey’s Jstor article Figures in Landscape
East side of Tank Square and the Old Mission Church, Calcutta 1786. Colored etching with aquatint; 40.5 x 53 cm.
Plate 3

Court House, Calcutta 1787. Colored etching with aquatint; 40.5 x 53 cm.
Plate 5
Old Fort Ghat adjoining old Fort William. Colored etching with aquatint 40 x 55 cm
Plate 6

Houses on Chowringhee Road, looking north, Calcutta, 1787. Colored etching with aquatint; 40.5 x 53 cm.
Plate 7

Views of Calcutta #9; Old Court House Street from the north, Calcutta, 1788. Colored etching with aquatint; 40.5 x 53 cm
Plate 10
Untitled: South Indian Hindu Temple
Black and white digital photograph.
More Than a Tourist Trap.
Black and white digital photograph.
Patterns
Black and white digital photograph.
Seaside Temple, Mamallapuram
Black and white digital photograph.
New Delhi Rooftop
Black and white digital photograph.
Picturesque Taj Mahal at Sunrise.
Black and white digital photograph.

A. Non-English terms

**Palanquin**: Large covered box for transporting passengers. Horizontal beams attached to the frame allow four or six bearers.

**Sepoy**: Indian soldier serving under generally British or European command.

**Zamindar**: Indian landowner who lease his land to tenants and farmers.

B. English terms
Aquatint: Print created by etching a cooper plate. Along with materials nitric acid, resin, and varnish, and the artist may produces prints similar to appearance to watercolor paintings by displaying differences in tone.

Linear perspective: A type depiction in which the artist in which all drawn or imagined points lead to the same place as each other.

Oil on canvas: The product of applying oil paints to a stretched (and conventionally bleached) and mounted on a wooden frame, canvas utilizing a variety of techniques to produce an original work.

Bibliography

Primary Sources


Secondary Sources


