SHANGRI LA’S MUGHAL GARDEN: WOMEN, LANDSCAPE, AND THE COLONIAL IMAGINARY

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ABSTRACT
This paper questions the contention that women could only conceive of gardens through the domestic and examines the contribution of Euro-American women to Mughal garden history and to garden design in British India. The travels of American heiress, philanthropist, and collector of Islamic arts Doris Duke are at the center of this analysis. Shangri La, the home Duke built in Honolulu, Hawai‘i, is a fusion of American Modern and Islamic styles. Along with English-style gardens and a Chinese moon garden, Shangri La’s landscape includes a Mughal garden, which is said to have Lahore’s seventeenth-century Mughal Shalamar Bagh as one of its inspirations. This paper traces connections between Duke’s visits to Mughal and colonial gardens in British India and Shangri La’s landscape, and explores the intimate connection between gardens and female identity. The essay also examines the ways in which gardens could become, for European women, potential spaces of transgression from Victorian patriarchy.

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In reviewing Constance Mary Villiers-Stuart’s *Gardens of the Great Mughals*, Richard Temple, a British colonial administrator, makes some condescending remarks about British women in India and then proceeds to acknowledge a “close association between gardens, domestic space, and women’s perception of them in India.” Further revealing the prejudice against female scholars and writers of the time, an uninformed reviewer for *The Bookman* attributed the text to “Mr. Villiers-Stuart.” Authored by a woman in 1913, *Gardens of the Great Mughals* is in fact the earliest full-length secondary source on Mughal gardens. Architectural and garden historian James Wescoat notes that in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, although Indian botany was studied systematically, Mughal gardens did not receive scholarly attention until the publication of Villiers-Stuart’s text. Given the presumed preference for “scientific” botanical study over “aesthetic” garden design at the time, it is not surprising that Temple demeaned the efforts of a female scholar and stated, patronizingly, that women’s perceptions of gardens come only from their knowledge of domestic space. Thus, Temple conceptualized gardens as a female domain and therefore not of much significance. Conversely, Wescoat states that women’s leadership in contributing to Mughal garden history specifically, and to garden design more generally, has yet to be adequately acknowledged and studied.

This essay questions Temple’s contention that women’s contribution to garden design and garden history was not of great significance because it was accessed through the domestic, and it attempts to fill the gap in Mughal garden history that Wescoat notes. I examine selected contributions of European women to garden design in British India and explore the close relationships these women developed with the natural landscape in the colony. A case study will be the work and travels of American heiress, philanthropist, and collector of Islamic arts Doris Duke (1912–93), who built a home in Honolulu, Hawai‘i, in 1937–38. Called Shangri La, the home was designed by the architectural firm Wyeth & King and fused American Modern design with Islamic architectural styles. The landscape on Duke’s property also includes a Mughal garden (see title figure), which is said to have Lahore’s seventeenth-century Mughal Shalamar Bagh as one of its inspirations (fig. 1). While Doris Duke’s interest in Islamic arts has been paramount when examining her collection and home, the colonial socio-cultural milieu of which her

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3 Ibid., 18.
4 Ibid., 16.
5 It is important to note here that the “domestic” was seen as an inferior space by Richard Temple and others but was not inherently so.
7 “Miss Doris Duke and Her House in Hawai‘i,” *Vogue* (November 1966): 34.

travels were also part has not been studied. And, while the Mughal Garden at Shangri La has received some mention, it has not been examined in conjunction with the rest of the landscape on the property, which also includes English lawns, a Chinese moon garden, and two small gardens focused around pools of water, both of which feature small waterfalls with koi, plants, and rocks (figs. 2–3). In fact, the rock, water, and koi landscape, located at the northern edge of the property, near the Playhouse, was initially conceived as a garden of succulent plants. It remained as such until October 1946 when it was redesigned by landscape architect Richard Tongg. Both the dry-climate succulents and the rock and water garden design emulating a Japanese style garden stress Doris Duke’s attempt at a landscape that looked outwards to global styles of design and planting.

Fig. 1: Shalamar Bagh, Lahore. View of pavilion, chadar, and water pool, second of three terraces, seventeenth century. (Photo: Aditi Chandra.)

Fig. 2: Shangri La. Doris Duke Foundation for Islamic Art, Honolulu, Hawai‘i. (Photo: David Franzen, 2006.)

I suggest that Shangri La’s Mughal Garden should not be studied in isolation. This essay will trace connections between Duke’s visits to Mughal gardens and monuments and to colonial gardens in British India with the design of Shangri La’s landscape as a whole. I will also explore the intimate links between gardens and female identity in colonial India and examine the ways in which the garden could become, for European women, a potential space of transgression from Victorian patriarchy. Studies on Doris Duke, Shangri La, and Duke’s Islamic art collection have thus far focused only on influences from the Islamic world. However, by examining Shangri La’s landscape, I will situate both Doris Duke and her travels in the context of her attraction to Islamic design as well as within the socio-cultural milieu of colonialism and its specific landscaping project, which was particularly suited to empire building and palpably visible during Duke’s travels to British India in the mid-1930s and later.

Located at the dramatic southern edge of O‘ahu, facing the Pacific Ocean and with Diamond Head crater towering behind, Shangri La rises above a high wall of lava rock and ocean surf and boasts a mixed landscape that alludes to a variety of global landscaping traditions. Botanical gardens created by British colonialists, with their diversity of plants, became a “global referencing system”—a veritable outdoor museum with plants and trees cataloged with scientific names, places of origin, and dates of planting and acquisition. While Shangri La’s landscape did not constitute a museum-like botanical garden, Duke’s choice to imitate diverse garden traditions from around the world, such as a Mughal garden, English lawns, a Chinese moon garden, and rock gardens with ponds, signals an interest in creating a “global referencing system” showcasing her travels to Europe, North Africa, the Middle East, British India, China,

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and Japan. The focus of this essay will be Duke’s honeymoon travels with her husband, James Cromwell, to British India and her encounter with Mughal and English gardens.

Landscape is both a “living presence and a memory,” writes art historian D. Fairchild Ruggles, and a “palimpsest of the real place and the collected, remembered images of it, and thus a merger of the past and present.” Linking travel and memory to landscape, she continues, “the closest we can come to revisiting the past is to revisit the place where a past experience occurred. Thus place plays an important role in memory.” Travel, landscape, and memory are intimately connected. Travel exposes us to new landscapes and our desire to remember those past experiences of travel, if we cannot revisit the places to which we travel, can be satisfied only by recreating them. Highlighting these connections among travel, place, and memory, Doris Duke wrote in a 1947 *Town & Country* article: “the idea of building a Near Eastern house in Honolulu may seem fantastic to many. But precisely at that time, I fell in love with Hawaii and decided I could never live anywhere else, a Mogul-inspired bedroom and bathroom was being completed for me in India, so there was nothing to do but to have it shipped to Hawaii and build a house around it.” Both Hawai’i and Mughal sites in British India were spaces from Duke’s travels that she did not want to let go of, and, in order to experience them again, she chose to remain in one of the places (Hawai’i) and recreate the other (Mughal India).

![Fig. 4: “Babur Supervising the Laying Out of the Garden of Fidelity,” ca. 1590. Nanha (artist), IM.276A-1913, IM.276-1913. (© Victoria & Albert Museum, London.)](image)

Much like Babur, the founder of the Mughal dynasty and the first creator of Mughal gardens on the subcontinent, Doris Duke developed a Mughal garden that was a result of her travels. In his memoirs, the Baburnama, Babur famously describes the Indian landscape quite unfavorably: “The cities and provinces of Hindustan are all unpleasant . . . . The gardens have no walls, and most places are flat as boards . . . and there was little running water.”13 Accustomed to the mountainous and lush environs of his home city, Samarkand, which was surrounded by char-bagh14 (four-part) gardens created by his ancestor, Timur, Babur developed a visceral dislike for the “foreign” landscape of north India. In an attempt to transform this perceived ugliness, to bring order to the newly conquered lands, and to alleviate his longing for his Central Asian homeland, Babur created char-baghs in northern India (fig. 4). The Indo-Persian char-bagh is a garden divided in parts by multiples of four and laid out with symmetrically intersecting walkways and waterways. Flowing water in channels, said to symbolize the rivers of Quranic paradise, forms a significant aspect of the char-bagh. The visual and auditory potential of water was harnessed by having it cascade through terraces and by letting it flow over ridged marble or sandstone surfaces called chadars (see fig. 1). The chadars created ripple-like sounds akin to those made by flowing rivers as well as water pools that were surrounded by walls, with niches to hold lamp lights called chinikhana (see fig. 9).

For the Mughals, who traced their ancestry to the Turkic Timurids of Iran and to the Mongols, nomadic peoples of the Central Asian steppes, the importance of the outdoors was not lost. In the late thirteenth and the fourteenth centuries, when nomadic Turco-Mongol and urban ruling traditions intersected in the Iranian and Central Asian regions, gardens dotted with pavilions and tents emerged as sites of political and social performance and residence. The garden was much more than a place of leisure for the Mughals; it was also a site for royal ceremonies, courtly rituals, and social functions. For the Mughals, gardens represented an unmistakable continuity between their grand Timurid and Mongol past and their present as rulers of newly conquered lands, where their authority had to be established. It is no surprise, then, that the sixteenth-century painting Princes of the House of Timur—begun during the reign of the second Mughal emperor, Humayun (Babur’s son)—which shows the ruler enjoying a garden party, was most likely modified by Jahangir, the fourth Mughal ruler, who expanded it into a complex genealogical study with the addition of Akbar (his father) and Shah Jahan (his son) (fig. 5). Four Mughal emperors—who were not adults at the same time—found themselves seated together in a garden pavilion, highlighting the continued importance of the garden as a political metaphor. Given that it is a large (3.5 x 3.5 feet) painting on cotton, it could have been used to decorate a tent in an outdoor setting, where it would have highlighted the political and socio-cultural importance of the outdoor garden setting for the Mughals. The char-bagh, a highly structured geometrical landscaping scheme, became a powerful metaphor for the organization and domestication of a conquered landscape. Babur was a singular sixteenth-century monarch who can be characterized as

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14 Also called chahar-bagh. Chahar is the number four in Persian, and Char is the number four in Urdu/Hindi.
an inveterate traveler and, indeed, a sightseer. His longing for the landscape of his Central Asian home, and his efforts to create ordered char-bagh in his new home in north India, highlight the close affinity that travelers have with the landscapes they leave behind and the new ones they encounter on their journeys.

When the British, who had a long tradition of garden design, encountered the Mughal char-bagh, it was transformed into a leisure spot and became a picnic destination. By the mid-nineteenth century, when colonialism had taken root in India, the picturesque English garden—rolling green lawns dotted with historic structures and water bodies—was the reigning garden type in England. However, the British often appropriated various forms of Mughal visual culture in order to situate themselves as legitimate successors to the Mughals. For example, a 1931 painting by Marjorie Shoosmith—created in the style of a Mughal book illustration and published in the Indian State Railway magazine’s special Delhi issue (presented in connection with the inauguration of New Delhi as the new capital city of British India)—depicts the architects and planners of the new capital, Edwin Lutyens and Herbert Baker, as well as other British and Indian administrators, all dressed as Mughal-era courtiers, presenting maps and models of New Delhi to the Viceroy Lord Irwin (in office 1926–31) and Lady Irwin.
The painting recalls depictions of gifts being presented to Mughal emperors. Completing Mughal visual symbolism in the exterior as well as the interior of the scene, the painting’s background is the Mughal *char-bagh* in which the ceremonies are taking place (fig. 6).

![Fig. 6: “New Delhi Completed,” depicting Viceroy Lord Irwin as a Mughal emperor receiving models of New Delhi from his “courtiers” Edwin Lutyens and Herbert Baker (architects) and Alexander Rouse (chief engineer). Marjorie Shoosmith. (© The British Library Board, [P2981.])](image)

While appropriating Mughal symbols was certainly desirable to the British, English visual forms were also recreated to make this new land familiar to the colonialists. The design of English gardens in British India—characterized by public *maidans*, bungalow lawns, botanical gardens, and picturesque landscapes around historical structures—was linked to both nostalgia for a particular type of English landscape and a desire to create space for the performance of certain activities that promoted the sustenance of empire. These forms of landscaping—which made possible military parades, outings for British children with Indian *ayahs*, garden parties, summer

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15 All of the people represented in the painting by Marjorie Shoosmith were in some way related to the building of New Delhi. The personal papers of Alexander Rouse, held by the British Library, include a page identifying these individuals. Lady Irwin is seated inside the building behind Lord Irwin and can be seen within the window.

16 “Maidan” is an open public space, typically on a lawn that is used for public gatherings and leisure.

17 “Ayah” is a word that is typically used by Europeans, Anglo-Indians, and wealthy Indians to refer to an Indian nanny or nursemaid.
getaways, landscape sketching, the writing of travel diaries, and the codification of India through its flora—were deemed necessary for the continuation of British life in India. Some Englishwomen in the colonies—as garden designers, botanists, and painters and writers of landscapes, such as Lady Charlotte Canning, Marianne North, and Emily Metcalfe (later Bayley)—played a significant role in the creation of landscapes for the empire but also questioned and subverted some of these forms. Doris Duke followed in their footsteps by creating a landscape that closely emulated colonial design elements but also did not mindlessly copy Islamic or colonial forms but recreated a careful amalgam of them. Certainly, Duke’s upper-class American milieu, her ability to travel freely, and her involvement in the twentieth-century art world and the world of collecting separate her from these British women. However, the link between them is significant because of the patriarchal structures all of them faced, their common love of the landscape and gardens, and their access to diverse garden traditions through travel.

Much like the experience of traveling, it was the fear of the unknown, mingled with a desire to experience the “exotic,” that greeted British colonialists in the Indian subcontinent. Tourist space, it has been suggested, is intimately linked to colonial space, and tourism, much like colonialism, is strongly influenced by a desire to experience “Otherness.” While tourists experience an overwhelming desire to experience the different, they also attempt to make the unfamiliar familiar. For example, the “hill station” emerged as a home away from home for the British in India, who would escape the heat of the summer by traveling to towns in the hills. The hill station, or a town in the hills, was a nineteenth-century invention that transformed mountains into tamed hill towns with churches, military cantonments, bungalows, and cottages.

In order to make colonialism viable in this alien land, the landscape had to be domesticated. This was accomplished through the use of a particular British picturesque aesthetic. Members of the eighteenth-century intellectual, landowning British aristocracy, such as Uvedale Price and Richard Payne Knight, were among those who defined the exact nature of the picturesque. This definition more often than not included undulating green landscapes—appropriately punctuated by groups of haphazardly placed trees and shrubs—the view of which usually culminated in an old ruin or historical structure on a low hilltop or near a body of water. Landscapes of such description were often found surrounding British manor houses. This act of defining the picturesque could only be undertaken by those who were viewers of the landscape—that is, the wealthy and middle-class travelers or the landowning aristocrats, not by the peasants, who were not creators of the picturesque, but rather were part of it. The picturesque was not a vague notion of beauty but was defined by rules that linked a landscape’s physical characteristics with different emotional reactions in the viewer. James Buchanan Duke, Doris Duke’s father, had in his collection a series of Euro-American paintings reflecting this picturesque

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20 Uvedale Price, *An Essay on the Picturesque, as Compared with the Sublime and the Beautiful; and on the Use of Studying Pictures, for the Purpose of Improving Real Landscape* (London: J. Robson, 1794); and Richard Payne Knight, *The Landscape, a Didactic Poem, in three books, addressed to Uvedale Price* (London: W. Bulmer, 1794).
aesthetic, and we can be fairly certain that Doris Duke was aware of and knew how to appreciate such picturesque landscapes, which she must have encountered daily in her formative years (fig. 7).

![Fig. 7: “[British Views,]” ca. 1759. Luke Sullivan. Formerly in the collection of James Buchanan Duke.](image)

Shangri La’s Mughal Garden came to exist as a result of Doris Duke’s travels in the Middle East and British India, her love of the landscape, and an interest in European garden design—an inclination that she likely also inherited from her father, who in 1893 established Duke Farms along a picturesque stretch of the Raritan river in New Jersey. Today, Duke Farms is a working and teaching agricultural landscape, but it began as a picturesque farming landscape with lakes, bridges, carriage drives, English lawns, and a Japanese garden. The property also included a Conservatory, which is now known as the Orchid Range. The building was commenced in 1900 and was patterned after London’s Kew Gardens, a botanical garden that was a significant part of the British colonial enterprise. It was in these idyllic environs that Doris Duke spent her childhood and developed a bond with her father, creating memories which she cherished later in life. In 1958, Doris Duke with the Horticultural Society of New York began to transform the Conservatory and the other greenhouses into a “Garden of Nations” consisting of a series of display gardens referencing garden design traditions and flora from around the world. These consisted of Italian, French, English, eighteenth-century Georgian, American Desert, and tropical gardens along with a Chinese, Japanese, and an Indo-Persian (Mughal) garden. The walkway, parterres, and the chinikhana (or niches where lamp lights could be placed) of the Indo-Persian garden bears a striking similarity to Shangri La’s Mughal Garden (fig. 8). Opened to the public in 1964, these display gardens were dismantled in May 2008 by the current Duke Farms management, who cited the fact that

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“the day of display gardens is past.” This seems to be an attempt to remove the present-day environmental mission of Duke Farms from its origins in the colonial milieu of the late nineteenth and mid-twentieth centuries, which sought to recreate museum-like replicas of global garden traditions. Doris Duke followed in the colonial horticultural tradition of bringing plants from diverse parts of the world back home and added to that by recreating garden spaces that she encountered in her travels to Europe, the Middle East, and South Asia. These mini gardens were akin to artworks in a museum—that is, not necessarily found together in situ but placed together for the purposes of display. In the case of the Indo-Persian display garden, elements specific to that type of garden such as water channels, chinikhana, and parterres mingled with English roses, creepers, and patches of green lawn.


It is with this background in mind that we must examine Shangri La’s landscape. Although it was not until the early 1960s that the present char-bagh form of the Mughal Garden came to be, the garden began its life with Mughal features in the late 1930s, when it was called the Allée. Elements that are typically found in Mughal char-baghs, and to which Doris Duke was exposed during her 1935 travels to British India—for example, the chinikhana with a water feature, that is, a long channel with lotus-head fountains and a lotus-shaped scalloped pool at the end, were already present in the first avatar of the garden. Despite these basic Mughal features, the Allée, with its green lawn and trees on

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both sides of the water channel, as well as its birdcage-shaped pavilion, was also fairly close in conception to an English lawn, with appropriate water features and “historic” forms, such as the chinikhana and the lotus pool, mingling with the English lawns (fig. 9).

![Fig. 9: Allée (later Mughal Garden), Shangri La. View from the lotus pool toward the chinikhana, ca. 1938–41. (Shangri La Historical Archives, Doris Duke Foundation for Islamic Art, Honolulu, Hawai‘i.)(image)](image)

It was only after 1961–62, when Doris Duke procured the walkway patterns of the seventeenth-century Mughal Shalamar Bagh in Lahore from the superintendent of archaeology in then-West Pakistan that the current brick walkways and parterres were designed (fig. 10). While a team of landscape architects worked on the site when it was designed as an Allée, we do not find the continuation of their services when the site was fully transformed into the Mughal Garden. Instead, we find quick hand drawings of the proposed walkways and the parterres, which were most likely created either by John Gomez, the caretaker of Shangri La under the guidance of Doris Duke, or by Duke herself and handed over to the landscape contractor (fig. 11). The absence of a professional designer reveals that Doris Duke herself was, in all likelihood, involved in the process of bringing the Mughal Garden to completion.

25 Drawing of Shalamar Bagh’s brick pattern, 1962, Shangri La Historical Archives, Doris Duke Foundation for Islamic Art, Honolulu, Hawai‘i (hereafter SLHA).
26 Letter from Honolulu-based landscape architect Richard C. Tongg to James Cromwell, March 1, 1937, SLHA. This file also includes letters dated 1937–38 from Wailupe, O‘ahu–based landscape architect Richard Oliver Thompson to the architect Marion Sims Wyeth.
27 Rough sketch of Shangri La’s Mughal Garden walkway on the back of an envelope, possibly by caretaker John Gomez under Doris Duke’s direction, or after examining the documents from the Archaeological Department, Lahore, SLHA. This conjecture has been made after discussions with Deborah Pope, Carol Khewhok, and Dawn Sueoka.
Fig. 10: Drawing of brick patterns used in Shalamar Bagh walkways, Lahore, obtained from the superintendent of archaeology, West Pakistan Circle, 1962. (Shangri La Historical Archives, Doris Duke Foundation for Islamic Art, Honolulu, Hawai‘i.)

Fig. 11: Rough sketch of walkways, Mughal Garden, Shangri La, possibly drawn by caretaker John Gomez following a discussion with Doris Duke, ca. 1960s. (Shangri La Historical Archives, Doris Duke Foundation for Islamic Art, Honolulu, Hawai‘i.)
We know that Duke was aware of the various types of parterres in Mughal char-baghs, as her personal library contained the 1913 text Gardens of the Great Mughals by Constance Mary Villiers-Stuart, which included elaborate drawings and paintings by the author. One illustration highlights the differences between the curved Shalamar Bagh parterres and the sharp edges of the Taj Mahal parterres (fig. 12).28 This fairly slight difference seems to have been important to Duke, and in a 1966 article in Vogue she mentioned Shalamar Bagh, Lahore, rather than any other Mughal garden, as the inspiration for the parterres used at Shangri La—possibly the result of her receiving the brick and walkway patterns from Lahore’s archaeology department in 1962. Although Duke was completely besotted by the Taj Mahal, leading to its influence in her bedroom suite,29 it was Shalamar Bagh, a must-see on every tourist itinerary to Lahore,30 to which

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28 Villers-Stuart, Gardens of the Great Mughals, 139.
29 Letter from James Cromwell (sent from Calcutta) to his mother Eva Stotesbury, April 1935, Doris Duke Papers on the Shangri La Residence, Doris Duke Charitable Foundation Historical Archives, David M. Rubenstein Rare Book & Manuscript Library, Duke University (hereafter DDPSL).
she specifically returned in the 1960s. Her later insistence on Shalamar Bagh as the inspiration for her Mughal Garden, despite this influence being only a post-1960s phenomenon, could be related to the preeminence given to Shalamar Bagh in tourist guidebooks from the late nineteenth century, which mention that the gardens, in which the British had constructed a guesthouse, were a perfect getaway for honeymooners. Additionally, we know that Duke visited Lahore as part of her honeymoon travels in 1935 as well as in 1961 and 1964. It is likely that she visited Shalamar Bagh, as it was a favored tourist site in Lahore. Clearly, Duke played a personal role in the final design of Shangri La’s Mughal Garden in the 1960s, and she was savvy enough, both as a lover of Mughal design and as a traveler, to know that, while the Taj Mahal was a tomb situated in a char-bagh, Shalamar Bagh was a Mughal char-bagh proper, and that it was the latter from which she should draw her inspiration. Her participation in the Mughal Garden’s design suggests that she was not only a collector of arts but also a keen observer of the landscapes that she encountered in her travels.

I would also like to suggest that it was not only Mughal gardens that Duke encountered on her honeymoon travels in British India. Staying at the fashionable Cecil Hotel, Delhi, favored by European tourists, and as a guest of the Viceroy and Lady Willingdon (in office 1931–36) and of General Sir Philip and Lady Chetwode and family in Delhi, she would have had access to colonial bungalows and their English-style gardens and learned about British landscaping efforts around Islamic structures. For example, the Taj Mahal’s Mughal gardens, a site that Duke loved, had been tamed by the restoration efforts of Viceroy Lord Curzon (in office 1889–1905), which replaced fruit orchards with ordered green lawns and flower planting. The picturesque view was more significant for Curzon’s projects at the Taj than maintaining the fruit and flower orchards that Mughal gardens, as working landscapes, typically included. Similarly, at the Qutb mosque complex in Delhi, between the 1820s and the 1920s, the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) constructed a semicircular carriageway like those typically found in English manor homes, two guesthouses with verandas that looked directly into the mosque, hillocks and mounds for viewing, and green lawns—all to create appropriate picturesque views and to make the site comfortable for elite visitors (fig. 13).

Lahore: Reminiscences of a Resident, with additional accounts by T. H. Thornton, Secretary, Punjab Government, and J. Lockwood Kipling. The 1924 publisher is not mentioned in the 2006 reprint.

Goulding, Old Lahore, 17–19.

32 See photograph of the sixteenth-century Mughal Lahore Fort (also called Shahi Qila, or Royal Fort), Lahore, British India (now Pakistan), 1935, PH.DD0067s, Doris Duke Photograph Collection, Doris Duke Charitable Foundation Historical Archives, David M. Rubenstein Rare Book & Manuscript Library, Duke University (hereafter DDCFHA). For travels to Lahore, Pakistan, see immigration stamps in Doris Duke’s 1960 Passport, pages 6–7, DDCFHA.

33 See photograph of Doris Duke and James Cromwell with the Chetwodes, outside Cecil Hotel, Delhi, 1935, PH.DD0067c, DDCFHA.

34 Herbert, Flora’s Empire, 205–6.


36 Aditi Chandra, “On Becoming a Monument: Landscaping, Views, and Tourists at Delhi’s Qutb Complex,” On the Becoming and Unbecoming of Monuments: Archaeology, Tourism, and Delhi’s Islamic Architecture (1828–1963) (Ph.D. diss., University of Minnesota, 2011), 16–70. The hillocks were created in the late nineteenth century but were flattened by the 1920s in order to provide a clear view to the Qutb mosque from a newly constructed guesthouse.
site became picturesque for tourists, the effort also resulted in the eviction of farmers from nearby lands and forced locals to take the longer route around the monument rather than the shorter route through it.

Fig. 13: Twelfth- to fourteenth-century Qutb mosque complex, Delhi, view of semicircular carriageway, lawns, trees, and Qutb minar. (Photo: Aditi Chandra.)

In 1935, twenty-five years after these landscaping works were completed, Doris Duke and James Cromwell visited the Qutb complex with the Chetwodes, with whom they had taken sightseeing tours of Delhi. In one photograph, Duke is seen participating in the popular touristic activity of wrapping one’s arms around the fourth-century iron pillar inside the Qutb mosque (fig. 14). Legend has it that if one can get his or her arms around the pillar, one’s wishes will be fulfilled—just tales, of course, to attract tourists. Duke’s engagement with this practice reveals that her time in Delhi was enmeshed with popular touristic activities, making her part of the clientele for whom these English landscapes were created around historic sites.37

37 Lady Willingdon was instrumental in creating an English-style park around the fifteenth-century tombs of the pre-Mughal Lodi dynasty in Delhi. Now called Lodi gardens, it was originally named Willingdon Park and was used by Europeans (and perhaps by wealthy Indians) for picnics.
Additionally, in 1931, a few years before Doris Duke’s visit, New Delhi had been formally inaugurated as the capital of British India, and a large part of the central vista containing the government buildings had been constructed and landscaped.38 Designed by Edwin Lutyens and Herbert Baker (as the lead architects), the Viceregal Lodge (today, Rashtrapati Bhavan, the home and offices of the president of India), has a Mughal garden, but one that is fused with several English elements, such as tennis courts, pergolas with rose creepers, neat green lawns, and a sunken garden with symmetrical flower beds (fig. 15). Doris Duke and James Cromwell walked in these very English Mughal gardens, as their honeymoon photographs reveal (fig. 16). It is no coincidence that Gertrude Jekyll, the primary designer of the English cottage garden in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, worked with Edwin Lutyens.39 They collaborated on at least seventy gardens in England; in addition to serving as his mentor, she had an important influence on his aesthetic, especially in the area of landscaping, and shaped the English influence in this Mughal garden.

38 The buildings and gardens of the Viceroy’s residence were designed starting in 1912, in the years after Delhi was announced as the new capital of British India.
Fig. 15: Map of Mughal gardens, Government House (Viceroy’s House, today Rashtrapati Bhavan: offices and residence of the President of India), New Delhi, 1931. Design and map by Edwin Lutyens. (Country Life magazine.)

Fig. 16: Government House and gardens, New Delhi. Photograph taken during Doris Duke and James Cromwell’s honeymoon, 1935. (Doris Duke Photograph Collection, Doris Duke Charitable Foundation Historical Archives, David M. Rubenstein Rare Book & Manuscript Library, Duke University.)
Although formally called the Mughal garden, it is most certainly a fusion of landscaping forms. The question, however, is not so much about authenticity but rather about the ways in which landscape design reveals the process through which colonial authorities tried to establish themselves as legitimate inheritors of Mughal rule in the subcontinent. While Marjorie Shoosmith’s painting does not depict the Viceroy lodge Mughal garden with all its English features, she included the very specific circular forms that were part of the boundary wall separating the tennis courts from the Mughal garden. More importantly, its inclusion in an image that commemorated the inauguration of the new capital revealed the role that landscape design played in the project of empire building (see fig. 6).

In the 1840s, twenty years after landscaping works were started in the Qutb complex, Thomas Metcalf, the political resident of the East India Company in Mughal Delhi, in an effort to create a spectacular weekend getaway, became a neighbor of the complex. Adding two floors, verandas, and landscaped lawns, Metcalf converted a sixteenth-century Mughal tomb adjacent to the Qutb area into his weekend retreat and called it Dilkhusha, or “delighter of the heart.” So fond was he of this enchanting house that it was prominently included in a sumptuously illustrated and meticulously annotated album titled *Reminiscences of Imperial Dehlie*, which he commissioned in 1844 as a gift for his daughters, Emily and Georgina (fig. 17).\(^{40}\) It was not just traditional Mughal gardens, such as Shalamar Bagh, but also landscapes such as those at the Qutb complex, Dilkhusha, and the Viceroy’s lodge that blended Mughal and Islamic forms with English design and made a lasting impact on Doris Duke.

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Emily Metcalfe’s journal reveals that she often walked from Dilkhusha to the Qutb minar and climbed its two-hundred-odd steps in order to eat mangoes and oranges in seclusion and free of Victorian social convention—because her father found the activity of eating these messy fruits unbecoming for ladies in polite company.\textsuperscript{41} For her, the Qutb was a garden ornament to view from the Dilkhusha property, a place of leisure, and, most significantly, a place of transgression, where she could break the established codes of Victorian patriarchy. The seemingly frivolous act of eating speaks volumes about the myriad kinds of actions, behaviors, and interactions that this landscaped monument could host. Although the white Englishwoman was part of the ruling gentry of English colonial society, her body, attire, and behavior were signifiers of Victorian morality and gentility. British women were restricted in their public appearances, and, when seen outdoors, they were usually riding in horse-drawn carriages or being carried in palanquins.\textsuperscript{42} While such women lived more interesting lives in India than they would have in the English countryside, and while some did have relative freedom to travel in the colonies, the patriarchal norms of Victorian society were nevertheless imposed on them.

\begin{figure}
\centering
\includegraphics[width=0.5\textwidth]{Taj_Mahal_Curzon_restoration.png}
\caption{“Taj Mahal,” ca. 1877 (before Curzon’s restoration work in 1899–1905, which turned the garden into mainly lawns). Marianne North. (Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew.)}
\end{figure}

In a context that kept women either secluded in the domestic sphere or overly exposed through public functions, the garden became a space between the interior and the exterior, a place of refuge for many white European women.\textsuperscript{43} The garden provided a setting for activities such as picnics, leisurely walks, sketching, and gathering flowers, which were considered appropriate female behavior according to Victorian propriety. However, the gardens were also a place of pleasure and rest, where women had increased

\begin{footnotesize}
\textsuperscript{41} Excerpts from Emily Metcalfe’s journal in Kaye, \textit{The Golden Calm}, 128.
\textsuperscript{43} Sara Mills, \textit{Gender and Colonial Space} (Manchester: University of Manchester, 2005), 124–28.
\end{footnotesize}
liberty to do as they pleased and opportunities to enhance their skills as garden designers, botanists, painters, and scrapbookers. The garden constituted a space of unfettered movement, away from the watchful eye of a chaperone or a male relative. Several Englishwomen, such as Marianne North and Lady Charlotte Canning, became well-known painters and garden designers.

Botanical painter and biologist Marianne North’s oil painting of the Taj Mahal presents the mausoleum from an atypical, non-touristic view, which highlights the garden rather than the marble tomb and uses the foliage as a framing device for the mausoleum (fig. 18). The bulk of Taj paintings and photographs emphasize its symmetry; North’s painting, however, reflects her deep love of the garden and her interest in horticulture. On the flip side, however, the manner in which North frames the Taj with foliage and flowers shifts the tomb from a Mughal garden setting to the picturesque landscape that the aesthetics of empire demanded.

Between 1856 and 1861, Lady Charlotte Canning designed and improved the gardens at the Governor General’s retreat at Barrackpore, on the outskirts of Calcutta. On the surface, she seems to have designed a European garden, which was comparable in design and geographical situation to well-known British manor house gardens; aspects were modeled on her parents’ garden at Highcliffe castle. However, Lady Canning’s letters to friends reveal her feelings that the garden was more English than she would have liked and that she was “quite glad” that local plants, such as bamboos, coconuts, and palms, crept in. Canning also planted a large Indian banyan tree on the premises, under which she would spend hours reading, writing, sketching, and painting. A white marble floor basin, which was taken from Agra’s sixteenth-century Mughal Red Fort, was placed at the center of a garden terrace at Barrackpore. Thus, an architectural fragment typically found in the interiors of Mughal palaces, and which often served as part of the building’s water cooling system, was placed in the exterior of an English garden.

While both North and Canning were deeply entwined within the landscaping and botanical enterprise of empire, they also had an ambivalent relationship with the demands of that project. Englishwomen, as guardians of domesticity and gentility, were one arm of the colonial project, making the domestic a significant space through which to highlight the supposed good life, social order, and civilization that the British claimed to bring to the colonies. However, it was from precisely this location that a critique of empire emerged—North complained that military barracks destroyed Mughal gardens, and Canning deemed British gardens insipid, finding solace instead with Indian flora, trees, and design. When she died following a sudden illness, a memorial photographic album dedicated to her was annotated and expanded by none other than her close friend Emily Metcalfe (later Bayley), who included a set of pressed flowers from Canning’s grave with personal annotations. Emily expressed her love for Charlotte through flowers and

44 Lady Charlotte Canning was the wife of Lord Charles Canning, the Governor General of India under the East India Company from 1856 to 1862.
47 See photograph of marble basin in the Barrackpore gardens in ibid., 129.
48 Herbert, Flora’s Empire, 244.
plants, items from the garden, which both had loved. Ephemeral objects were made permanent through this very feminine act of memorialization. These women expressed their distinct identities, revealed their individual voices, and shaped memories through their skill and engagement with the arts of gardening and scrapbooking. Returning to Emily Metcalf’s younger days, Thomas Metcalf’s injunction to her to not eat certain fruits—because doing so would present her, an English lady, as not quite properly English—is an example of Victorian societal restriction. The question is not so much about being permitted to eat certain fruits or not but rather about what kinds of behavior are considered appropriate in public. Therefore, Emily’s running off to the top of the Qutb minar to eat mangoes and oranges free of social conventions was more than a picnic; it was an act of rebellion. Most importantly, it was the historic structure and the gardens around it that provided her with a space of license, a space where she could transgress the expectations of Victorian morality and patriarchy. The landscaped monument became a special space—an elsewhere—to which she could escape. Ironically, this escape from patriarchy only became possible as the landscaped Qutb complex gradually became restricted to local inhabitants.

Doris Duke’s exposure to Mughal gardens during her travels must be understood in conjunction with the context of colonialism and empire that she encountered in British India and the touristic mode through which she saw and experienced historic sites. After all, the landscape of Shangri La not only includes a Mughal Garden but also represents an attempt at global referencing, parallel to efforts at botanical collecting—creating a microcosm of the empire for use at home and in the colonies via botanical gardens and museums.

**Fig. 19: Honeymoon scrapbook compiled by James Cromwell featuring newspaper illustration titled “And Who Is Doris Duke?” New York Journal–American May 7, 1935. (Shangri La Historical Archives, Doris Duke Foundation for Islamic Art, Honolulu, Hawai‘i. Gift of Hope Cromwell Hopkins.)**

However, a rather amusing illustration from a 1935 American newspaper, caricaturing Duke’s attempt to meet with Gandhi while traveling in British India,
contradicts this narrative (fig. 19). Although the meeting ultimately took place, international press made much of Gandhi’s initial refusals. The media was also aware that Duke and Cromwell planned to build a Taj Mahal-inspired home in Florida. This newspaper image presents Duke as a damsel in distress, framed by an Orientalized Taj Mahal and palm trees, mocking her attempts to take Mughal design to Palm Beach (see fig. 19). Significantly, Duke rejected the first very obviously Taj Mahal-esque rendition of the home by Palm Beach-based architect Maurice Fatio (fig. 20). She selected instead the more modernist articulation of the Islamic aesthetic by Marion Sims Wyeth, undermining what society and the media expected of her (see fig. 2). Ultimately, the landscape created at Shangri La was not quite fully Mughal or Islamic or fully English but rather a spatial expression that emerged out of the milieu of travel and empire in the first part of the twentieth century, when gardens were employed to domesticate “foreign” landscape. However, for Doris Duke, as for Charlotte Canning, gardens were also a form of personal expression that revealed her individual voice and enabled her to relive memories of travels, as well as a special space to which she could escape and defy societal expectations. Much like those of the European women travelers discussed earlier, Duke’s personal interest in replicating a Mughal garden (along with a mélange of other landscaping forms)—and, most importantly, her awareness of the notions of the picturesque view—must be read in the contexts of both perpetuating the colonial gaze and subverting it.

Fig. 20: Sketch for Doris Duke and James Cromwell’s home, Palm Beach, Florida, by Maurice Fatio & William A. Treanor. (Historical Society of Palm Beach County.)