

Cultural Intermediaries in a Colonial City The Parsis of Bombay c. 1860-1921

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For

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Abstract

This dissertation traces a series of cultural negotiations through which the Parsis, a community of ethnic Zoroastrians, fashioned themselves into 'modern' citizens in the setting of colonial Bombay. It examines the ways Parsis negotiated change in a number of personal spheres such as their dress, deportment, dining and domesticity as well as the ways the community managed internal groupings such as Persian Zoroastrian refugees and the Parsi poor in the landscape of Bombay. It proposes that it was this unusual, simultaneous fashioning at the levels of the personal and the broader community, that turned the series of negotiations into a project of self-fashioning. It argues that it is in these cultural and intra-communal domains of self-fashioning that we see some of the more difficult negotiations, as well as the inner tensions, that the Parsi model of modernity entailed at the different levels of Parsi society.

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Number of words including footnotes and excluding the bibliography: 75,000.

Trinity Term 2015.

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Introduction

> I believed, at the time of which I am writing, that in order to look civilized, our dress and manners had, as far as possible, to approximate to the European standard. Because, I thought, only thus could we have some influence, and without influence it would not be possible to serve the community. I therefore determined the style of dress for my wife and children. How could I like them to be known as Kathiawad Banias? The Parsis used then to be regarded as the most civilized people amongst Indians, and so, when the complete European style seemed to be unsuited, we adopted the Parsi style.
>
> -M. K. Gandhi, *The Story of My Experiments with Truth* (1927)[1]

In the later half of the 19th century, men and women from across India's elite and middle-class communities started dressing like the Parsis. Women increasingly wore saris with embroidered borders, full-sleeved bodices and petticoats. Men favoured black knee length coats that were buttoned through the middle, and trousers. Both sexes began wearing shoes and stockings. They posed for photographic portraits, often their first, in these new sartorial styles. Women from the Kapol Vania community were said to have become 'fashionable Parsees' and the Khojas moved from purdah to Parsi style.[2] Indeed it was in the image of the Parsi that the Indian population first attained a public symmetry. Traditional forms of dress and deportment, that had created a collage and cacophony of colours and postures, were replaced with the sobriety and uprightness of Parsi style. The sea of Parsis that arose at the turn of the 20th century was the mirage of modernity.

The Parsis, a community of ethnic Zoroastrians in India, were 'model moderns' in the

[1] M. K. Gandhi, *The Story of My Experiments with Truth*. Translated from the original in Gujarati by Mahadev Desai. Ahmedabad: Navajivan Press, 1927, Volume 1, p. 432.
[2] Mrs. Dosebai Cowasjee Jessawalla, *The Story of My Life*. Bombay, 1911, p. 106. Chapter 2 will describe in greater detail how various elite and middle-class communities across India starting dressing like the Parsis.

fullest sense. In the age of colonialism, they had mastered the attributes of intermediacy, urbanity, mobility and flexibility that are considered central to the condition of the 'modern' and created a brand of modernity, a distinct lifestyle, that drew from the cultures of Europe and China as well as from indigenous customs. Their brand of modernity also appeared to lay the groundwork and opened spaces in which other communities in India could test newer ways to address the world.[3] That we are most familiar with the image of the 'Parsi modern' in itself and its multiplicity, of the finished product rather than the fashioning behind it, is also indicative of the power of Parsi modernity.

This dissertation is an attempt at unpacking the powerful image of the 'Parsi modern'. It shows that the Parsis had laboured towards an image of progressiveness. Their efforts at self- fashioning extended from negotiating change in a number of personal spheres like dress, deportment, dining and domesticity to the organisation and management of internal difference at a broader community level. They developed and appropriated a number of discourses and intellectual tools to explain and legitimise the changes they were undergoing as a community. Some of the changes were challenged by the colonial state. What Parsis came to understand as their own 'modernity' was not only painstaking and hard-won; its maintenance rested on a unique bind between the self and the community.

[3] There is a substantial literature on the theme of 'modernity' see in particular C. A. Bayly, *The Birth of the Modern World, 1780-1914*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing Ltd, 2004; Dipesh Chakrabarty, *Habitations of Modernity: Essays in the Wake of Subaltern Studies*. Chicago: University of Chicago, 2002; Bruno Latour, *We Have Never Been Modern*, trans. Catherine Porter. Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1993. Saurabh Dube (ed.), *Handbook of Modernity in South Asia: Modern Makeovers*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2011; Appadurai Arjun, *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization*. Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press, 1996. Yuri Slezkine makes a powerful and provocative case for the 'modernity' of the Jews and subsidiarily the Parsis in *The Jewish Century*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004.

In many ways Parsi modernity also rested on the city. Colonial Bombay was not only the setting for the comprehensive project of Parsi self-fashioning, it was also co-opted by the community as part of their new identity. Community members based in the city began to call and configure themselves as the 'Parsees of Bombay' in the mid 19th century. They developed discourses of *othering* that were framed in terms of the relative disadvantage of residing in the lesser geographies of the 'country', the 'mofussil', the 'outstations' and even Persia, compared to their own locational advantage. The series of changes that they made in their personal practices closely aligned their inner worlds with the outer city. Bombay was more of the seat than the setting of Parsi modernity.

This dissertation is set in the period 1860 to 1921. In the 1860s, the project of the Parsi self-fashioning was underway, with the community experimenting with a number of reforms in the practices of dress, dining and domesticity. There was a strong consciousness of change amongst the Parsis that is particularly reflected through the early commentaries on the community. 1860 was also the decade when Bombay entered the most significant phase of its 'modernity', with the fortified settlement that formed the nucleus of the port city being torn down to make way for the creation of an open metropolis. To assist in the construction of the metropolis, Muncherjee Cowasjee Murzban, a Parsi engineer in the Government of Bombay's Public Works Department, relocated from Poona to Bombay in 1863. Murzban would in turn be the architect of many of the programmes and provisions for the broader project of Parsi self-fashioning, which sought to organise the community's poor in specific spatial settings, at the turn of the 20th century.

The year 1921 serves as a symbolic end point. The project of Parsi self -fashioning

was complete, with the Parsi poor housed and pregnant Parsi women increasingly removed from their homes to the modern medical space of the hospital. The Parsis' role as models for other Indians, however, had passed with the advent of Gandhian nationalism and the bodily practices it necessitated. The Prince of Wales Riots in Bombay in 1921 illustrate this change of order. The Riots had occurred over a conflict between a section of the city's population that, following Gandhi's orders, chose to boycott the public reception of the Prince of Wales in Bombay, and the section of the population that chose to join it. The Parsis, who had joined in the reception, were easily identified by their headgear and saris, and attacked. Tellingly the population that boycotted the reception were identified by their 'Gandhi *topis'*.[4] Not only had Gandhi stopped dressing like the Parsis, the Indian population had begun to emulate him.

The following sections will review the literature on Bombay's modernity and the city's communities, the literature on the Parsis, and then proceed to outline the plan of the dissertation and explain the sources used in the study.

Histories of modernity and communities in colonial Bombay

A rich and growing literature on colonial Bombay and its communities' reception of modernity has enabled situating the case of the Parsis more effectively in the setting of the city as well as alongside the other communities based in the city. Preeti Chopra, Sandip Hazareesingh and Prashant Kidambi's monographs, which have explored the ways Bombay was transformed into a 'modern' metropolis, have broadly acknowledged the city's receptivity to the structures, technologies and cultures of

[4] Sandip Hazareesingh, *The Colonial City and the Challenge of Modernity: Urban Hegemonies and Civic Contestations in Bombay (1900-1925)*. Hyderabad: Orient Longman, 2007, p. 162.

modernity such as hospitals, museums, motorcars, cinemas, societies for physical fitness and scientific inquiry.[5] The monographs offer a comprehensive review of the transformation of the city. Chopra describes the swift and unsparing makeover of the built landscape of Bombay from a fortified settlement to an open metropolis in the second half of the 19th century. Hazareesingh discusses the ways the metropolis began to operate on the technologies and artifacts of the second industrial revolution like the electrified tramway and reinforced concrete in the early decades of the 20th century. Kidambi describes the vibrant public culture of the metropolis that brought citizens from diverse social backgrounds together to share in their interests in music, debating and sport during the same period.

It is through Hazareesingh's delineation of the challenges to the system of colonial modernism that we get a sense of some of forces Parsis had to contend with. He has suggested that the challenges arose from the unequal distribution of technological amenities through the landscape of the city and not necessarily from an incompatibility with the forms or purposes of these amenities. Tellingly, the challenges were also framed through the discourses of a 'critical modernism' that drew from a vocabulary of civic democracy derived from the West and took the form of protest movements, strikes, unions and investigative journalism. B. G. Horniman, the activist editor of the *Bombay Chronicle,* played a crucial role in directing the protests and keeping the hegemonies of the urban colonial order in the public eye. Hazareesingh has argued, that it was Gandhi and his brand of 'anti-modernism' with

[5] Preeti Chopra, *A Joint Enterprise: Indian Elites and the Making of British Bombay*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2011; Sandip Hazareesingh, *The Colonial City and the Challenge of Modernity: Urban Hegemonies and Civic Contestations in Bombay (1900-1925).* Hyderabad: Orient Longman, 2007; Prashant Kidambi, *The Making of an Indian Metropolis: Colonial Governance and Public Culture in Bombay, 1890-1920*. Hampshire: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2007.

its tools of prayer, fasting and silence that thwarted, to some extent, the progress the forms of 'critical modernism' were making in the city.

Chopra, Hazareesingh and Kidambi's monographs, in many ways, compliment the story of the Parsis as told in this dissertation. All of the literature explores the processes of 'making' – the monographs deal with the making of a city into a modern metropolis, as their titles state, and the dissertation looks at the making of a community into model moderns. As mentioned earlier, both city and community entered their most significant period of change in the decade of the 1860s; the fortified settlement that formed the nucleus of the port city was demolished to make way for an open city centre in 1863-4 and the Parsis began reforming their practices of dress, dining and domesticity to engage more openly with the public, in the early 1860s. When the Parsis' new styles and image were challenged, as they often were by the colonial state, they turned to the press and the courts of law for recourse. The dissertation also proposes that it was Gandhi's programmes of mass nationalism and his aesthetic of asceticism that lead to the decline of the appeal of the Parsi's offering of modernity. Indeed, the story of city and the community was one of 'intertwined modernities' during the period of 1860 to 1920.[6]

Nile Green and Nikhil Rao's monographs, which have explored the ways in which Muslim communities and the South Indian community engaged with the entity and environment of the city, enable the case of the Parsis to be compared more effectively

[6] To use the phrase from the title of C. A. Bayly's article "Afterword: Bombay's 'intertwined modernities,' 1780-1880″ in *Trans-Colonial Modernities in South Asia,* Michael S. Dodson and Brian A. Hatcher, eds. London: Routledge, 2012, pp. 231-48. Also see Raj Chandavarkar's 'Bombay's perennial modernities' in *History, Culture and the Indian City: Essays by Rajnarayan Chandavarkar.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009, pp. pp. 12-30.

with other communities in Bombay.[7] Both monographs broadly suggest that the city elicited a sense of bewilderment and unease among the communities and that the religious/caste identities of the communities played a major part in their negotiation of the city.

Green proposed that it was largely through the religious economy of 'Bombay Islam' that Muslims in Bombay negotiated the modernity of the city. The 'customary' productions of this economy such as hagiographies, prayer books and etiquette manuals as well as shrines, festivals and fairs, created a familiar realm of enchantment through which working class Muslim migrants understood, even tackled, 'the brave new world of Bombay'.[8] The 'reformist' productions of the economy, such as schools, reform societies and associations, which were the rational and modern offerings, catered to Muslims of the middle and upper classes. These productions had been spurred into creation to counter Christian missionary activity in the city as well as to counter the competition generated between the various communities in Bombay to build their own reformist institutions. In some sense, the reformist productions enabled their consumers to meet the pressures of conversion and cosmopolitanism in the city by remaining confidently and convincingly Muslim.

In Rao's account, the suburb of Matunga, emerges as the mechanism through which upper caste migrants from South India maintained caste and managed the 'terrifying heterogeneity' of the wider city.[9] The migrants, who worked in Bombay's white-collar sector, settled in large numbers in the apartment buildings constructed in

[7] Nile Green, *Bombay Islam: The Religious Economy of the Western Indian Ocean, 1840-1915*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011; Nikhil Rao. *House, But No Garden: Apartment Living in Bombay's Suburbs, 1898-1964*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2012.
[8] Green, *Bombay Islam*, p. 2.
[9] Rao, *House, But No Garden*, p. 172.

Matunga in the 1920s and 30s and set up a variety of recreational establishments in the neighbourhood such as meeting halls, gymkhanas and messes. A sense of the boundedness of the environment and the constitutive identities can be gleaned through three spatial units delineated in Rao's work. First, the unit of the flat within the apartment building. The 'self-contained' nature of flat, i.e. with the kitchen and toilet within the dwelling, indicated the residents' ability to maintain caste as well as their new status as 'middle-class', the ability to afford 'self-contained' rather than 'shared' accommodation where the common facilities for bathing, bodily waste and cooking threatened caste codes. Second, the unit of the compound that surrounded the apartment building. A little larger than the footprint of the building itself, bounded by walls of low height and with no garden, the compound was a distinctive feature of apartment building design in Bombay.[10] It served as a liminal space between the privacy of the flat and publicness of the street, where residents could in some sense test the city as well as where the co-operative identity of the building was shaped. Third, the unit of the suburb of Matunga itself defined by both the consistency of its population and built environment as well as by the contrast with its neighbouring localities, Parel and Lalbaug to the south and Dharavi to the west, where largely the lower caste, working classes resided in chawls and slums. As a newly developed suburb, Matunga had offered an 'uncontaminated' environment that could be shaped and controlled by its first batch of residents.

Parsis offer a powerful contrast to the communities Green and Rao discuss. As the following chapters will demonstrate, Parsis were secularising a range of their religious artifacts by the mid 19th century and rather than conceiving of their homes

[10] Ibid., p. 164.

as a sanctuary from the city, they were increasingly aligning their homes with the outer world and leveling private and public spaces across Bombay.

Histories of the Parsis: areas and recent approaches

The body of literature on the Parsis has focused on the community's heavy investment in the domains of colonial law, philanthropy, theatre, social reform and early Indian nationalism. As indicated by the nature of these domains, the literature has portrayed the Parsis in formal and professional capacities, engaging in civic and public pursuits, in the settings of the court, town hall and playhouse. Jesse S. Palsetia has examined many of these domains, through the lens of identity, in his monograph on the Parsis of colonial Bombay.[11] He has argued that the overarching purpose of the Parsis engagement with these domains was to preserve and safeguard their distinct community identity during crucial moments of historical change. In some sense, Palsetia also treats the domains themselves as the moments of historical change and suggests that Parsis engaged with social reform and nationalism, for example, to prevent these movements from disrupting their identity at a personal level.

Mitra Sharafi's recent monograph, which focuses on the domain of law, has described the mechanisms through which Parsis shaped the colonial legal system towards defining the boundaries of community more narrowly. Both Palsetia and Sharafi's works, the two main monographs on the community, suggest insular ends for the Parsi projects described. Sharafi overturns the popular association of Parsis with

[11] For example 'Identity and the Law', 'Identity and Social Reform' and 'Identity and Political Nationalism' are the titles of three chapters. Jesse S. Palsetia, *The Parsis of India: Preservation of Identity in Bombay City*, (2001). Delhi: Manohar Publishers and Distributors, 2008.

anglicisation and intermediacy.[12] She uses the term 'de-Anglized the law' to describe the processes by which Parsi lobbyists replaced doctrines of English law to create a body of Parsi personal law which reflected their own models of the family and community. She notes that as Parsis rose to the upper ranks of the colonial judiciary at the turn of the 20th century, Parsi judges came to play a crucial intermediary role within the community, by presiding over intra community disputes. The judges drew on their own personal knowledge and some on an increasingly orthodox vision of Parsi identity to craft the judicial ethnography of their own community.[13] Sharafi has powerfully applied the idea of de-Anglisation to a community that has been understood as 'almost English' as well as uses the concept of the 'comprador tradition' to describe a Parsi intermediacy that was inward both because it was intra-community and often orthodox, rather than outward, inter community and cosmopolitan, as exemplified by the figure of the Parsi middleman in trade.[14]

Other areas of Parsi public life that have become familiar to us are Parsi philanthropy and Parsi theatre. The literature here has largely focused on how these practices shaped the public culture of Bombay as well as their reach beyond Bombay.[15] Parsi

[12] Mitra Sharafi, *Law and Identity in Colonial South Asia*: *Parsi Legal Culture, 1772-1947.* New York: Cambridge University Press, 2014.
[13] Ibid., p. 273.
[14] Tanya Luhrmann notes that 'The good Parsi, the esteemed and ideal Parsi, was almost English.' T. M. Luhrmann, *The Good Parsi: The Fate of a Colonial Elite in a Postcolonial Society*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1996, p. 21.
[15] For the literature on philanthropy and public culture see David Willmer, 'Parsis and Public Space in 19th Century Bombay: a Different Formulation of 'the Political' in a Non-European Context' in *Critical Horizons*, 3:2, 2002, pp. 277-298; Jesse S. Palsetia, 'Merchant Charity and Public Identity Formation in Colonial India: The Case of Jamsetjee Jejeebhoy,' *Journal of Asian and African Studies*, 40, no. 3, June 2005, pp.197–217 and 'Partner in Empire: Jamsetjee Jejeebhoy and the Public Culture of Nineteenth Century Bombay.' in *Parsis in India and the Diaspora*, pp. 83–101.
For the other literature on philanthropy see John R. Hinnells, 'The Flowering of Zoroastrian Benevolence' in *Acta Iranica*, Homages Et Opera Minora, Volume X, Papers in Honour of Professor Mary Boyce, 1985; David L. White, 'From Crisis to Community Definition: The Dynamics of Eighteenth-Century Parsi Philanthropy' in *Modern Asian Studies*,Volume 25, Issue 02, May 1991, pp. 303-320. For the literature on theatre see: Somnath Gupt, *The Parsi Theatre: Its Origins and Development*, translated and edited by Kathryn Hansen. Calcutta: Seagull Books, 2005. Kathryn

elites such as Sir Jamsetjee Jejeebhoy (first baronet) and Sir Cowasjee Jehangir donated to a range of charitable and public causes across the globe and by the 20th century the form of Parsi theatre had spread across South and South East Asia. It is only recently however that Parsi philanthropy has been approached through a more critical lens. Preeti Chopra has explained how Parsi philanthropists financed hospitals for public use in Bombay yet included within the institutional framework of the institutions, separate provisions for Parsi patients in the form of all/only Parsi wards, wings and morgues.[16] Chopra has considered these reservations as racialised formations that divided and fractured Bombay's public realm.[17] In the area of Parsi theatre, Kathryn Hansen and Rashna Nicholson have focused on the changes the form underwent as it gained new audiences across Asia and have raised the question of whether the term 'Parsi theatre' could still hold for a form that increasingly looked less Parsi as it travelled, that is as Persian mythologies, the Gujarati language and Parsi managers and actors no longer featured.[18] Anuradha Kapur has shown how the stage architecture of Parsi theatre, particularly the proscenium arch, which created an unusual sphere of spillage between the actors and audience by pushing the story towards the audience, inspired the framing techniques of early Indian photographers

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Hansen**,** 'Parsi Theatre and the City: Locations, Patrons, Audiences,' in *Sarai Reader 2002: The Cities of Everyday Life*, 2002, pp. 40-49.

[16] Preeti Chopra, *A Joint Enterprise: Indian Elites and the Making of British Bombay*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2011, see Chapter 4 'Dividing Practices in Bombay's Hospitals and Lunatic Asylums', pp. 117-158.

[17] Ibid., p. 119. John Mc Leod's recent article, which traces the minutiae of Mancherjee Bhownaggree's (the second Indian and Parsi to serve as a member of the British Parliament) attempts at commemorating his sister, Ave, in the cityscape of Bombay and eventually in London, could be placed along with the more critical scholarship on philanthropy, in part because he focuses on the failure and partial success of Bhownaggree's projects. John Mc Leod, 'Mourning, Philanthropy, and M. M. Bhownaggree's Road to Parliament' in Hinnells and Williams (eds.), *Parsis in India and the Diaspora*, pp. 136-155.

[18] Kathryn Hansen, 'Languages on Stage: Linguistic Pluralism and Community Formation in the Nineteenth-Century Parsi Theatre' in *Modern Asian Studies*, 37, 2, 2003, pp. 381–405; Rashna, Nicholson, 'In Memory/Memorium of the Madarvatan. Khushro Shirin, Yezdegard Sheriar, and the Politics of the Parsi Theatre', lecture at the K. R. Cama Oriental Institute Bombay, November 2013 and PhD dissertation with the same title as the lecture, from the Ludwig Maximilian University of Munich, Forthcoming.

and realist painters.[19]

The Parsi community's ties with Persia, an area that has primarily been studied as part of Parsi philanthropy, that is the Parsis' role in reforming and financially assisting their less fortunate co-religionists in Persia, has lately being approached through the lens of identity.[20] Dinyar Patel and Mitra Sharafi have suggested that by the early decades of the 20th century, Persia served more than as an origins narrative for the Parsis, the appeal lay in contemporary Iran. Pahlavi nationalism and modernity offered an alternative to the trajectory of Indian nationalism and late colonial modernity with which the Parsis were disenchanted.[21] Parsis increasingly identified with an ancient and contemporary Iran, rather than an ancient Iranian past and a contemporary colonial setting, as they had done in the 19th century.

The Parsis' involvement in the domains of Indian nationalism and social reform has been contextualised through their engagement in the urban politics of 19th century Bombay.[22] The literature has described how Bombay's vibrant civic and political

[19] Anuradha Kapur 'The Representation of Gods and Heroes in the Parsi Mythological Drama of the Early Twentieth Century' in *Journal of Arts & Ideas*, no. 23-24, Jan 1993, pp. 85-106 and 'Impersonation, Narration, Desire, and the Parsi Theatre' in *India's Literary History: Essays on the Nineteenth Century*, Stuart Blackburn and Vasudha Dalmia, eds. Delhi: Permanent Black, 2004, pp. 87-118

[20] For the literature on the Parsis role in reforming and financially assisting their Persian Zoroastrian co-religionists see Mary Boyce, 'Manekji Limji Hataria in Iran', in N. D. Manochehr-Homji and M. F. Kanga (eds.), *K. R. Cama Oriental Institute Golden Jubilee Volume*. Bombay: K. R. Cama Oriental Institute, 1969, pp. 19-31; Marzban Giara, Ramiyar P. Karanjia and Michael Stausberg, 'Manekji on the Religious/Ritual Practices of the Iranian Zoroasrtians: An English Translation of a Passage from his Travel Report in Gujarati (1865)' in *Zoroastrian Rituals in Context*, Michael Stausberg (ed.). Leiden: Brill, 2004, pp. 489-490; Monica M. Ringer, *Pious Citizens, Reforming Zoroastrianism in India and Iran*. New York: Syracuse University Press, 2011; Nile Green. *Bombay Islam: The Religious Economy of the West Indian Ocean, 1840–1915*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011.

[21] Sharafi, *Law and Identity in Colonial South Asia*, Chapter 7 'Pure Parsi: Libel, Race, and Group Membership', pp. 274-312; Dinyar Patel, 'The Iran League of Bombay: Parsis, Iran, and the Appeal of Iranian Nationalism, 1922-1942', (unpublished paper), Department of History, Harvard University, 2008.

[22] Jim Masselos, *Towards nationalism: group affiliations and the politics of public associations in nineteenth century western India*. Bombay: Popular Prakashan, 1974 and *Indian Nationalism: A History*. New Delhi: Sterling Publishers Private Limited, 1985; Anil Seal, *The Emergence of Indian*

sphere served as the setting and testing ground from which prominent Parsis like Dadabhai Naoroji, Pherozeshah Mehta and Behramji M. Malabari were drawn *towards* the larger projects of nationalism and social reform.[23] It has suggested that it was at the national and the international platform that their positions as leaders became undisputed, for example through Naoroji's heading the East India Association in London in the 1870s, Mehta's presidency of the Indian National Congress in 1890 and Malabari taking his campaign on raising the age of consent in India, to England in 1890. While Bombay's political sphere had been vibrant, it was also divisive, with a number of competing associations. It was constrained by the imperatives to appease the *sethia* class, on which the associations often relied for financial assistance, and the various religious communities to which the leaders belonged, for fear of losing popular support. The platforms of the national and international, to some extent, freed the leaders and their programmes of these constraints.

C. A. Bayly's recent work, which places prominent Parsis, like Naoroji, Mehta and Malabari, under the category of Indian liberals, a group of citizens invested in the pursuit of political and social liberty, also locates their liberalism in the civic and political life of 19th century Bombay.[24] Bayly's delineation of the intellectual tools

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Nationalism: Competition and Collaboration in the Later Nineteenth Century. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1968; Christine Dobbin, *Urban Leadership in Western India: Politics and Communities in Bombay City, 1840-1885*. London: Oxford University Press, 1972.
For the literature that examines the Parsi nationalists and social reforms individually see Gra´inne Goodwin, 'A trustworthy interpreter between rulers and ruled: Behramji Malabari, colonial and cultural interpreter in nineteenth-century British India' in *Social History*, Vol. 38, No. 1, 2013, pp. 1–25; Dinyar Patel, *The Grand Old Man: Dadabhai Naoroji and the Evolution of the Demand for Self-Government*, PhD thesis, Department of History, Harvard University, 2015; Dinyar Patel and S.R. Mehrotra. eds. *Dadabhai Naoroji: Selected Private Papers*, Oxford University Press, Forthcoming 2015;

[23] Italics added. The words 'towards' and 'emerging' are commonly used in the titles of the literature on nationalism and implicate the earlier fields of activity.

[24] C. A. Bayly, *Recovering Liberties: Indian Thought in the Age of Liberalism and Empire.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011 and 'Bombay's "intertwined modernities,'' 1780-1880' (Afterword) in Michael S. Dodson and Brian A. Hatcher, eds., *Trans-Colonial Modernities in South Asia.* London: Routledge, 2012, pp. 231-48.

liberals (particularly Parsis) applied, like 'statistical liberalism', the enlisting colonial census and survey methods into projects of improvement and national self-assertion, is also useful for understanding the methods of presentation of other prominent Parsis of the 19th and early 20th centuries. Khan Bahadur Muncherjee Cowasjee Murzban, the engineer, who played a key role in the creation of the new cityscape of Bombay as well as of the provisions for the Parsi poor and Cornelia Sorabji, an Oxford trained lawyer who represented *purdahnashin* or women in seclusion in the Calcutta court of wards, both displayed a statistical modernity if not a statistical liberalism in their work and speeches.[25]

What is less easy to find in the histories of the Parsis is their equally heavy if not heavier investment in the domains of the cultural, the personal and the intra-communal. We know little about the Parsis' everyday negotiations in the urban milieu of colonial Bombay, their treatment of domestic, semi-private or recreational spaces or their informal roles as cultural intermediates for their neighbouring communities, or the ways different groups of Parsis related to each other. It is also difficult to get a feel for 19th century Parsis in their personal capacity, for example through their taste in household furnishings or the peculiarities of their dress or their prejudices.

This dissertation fills the lacuna in the literature by tracking the series of cultural negotiations through which the Parsis fashioned themselves into modern citizens in the setting of colonial Bombay. It examines the ways Parsis negotiated change in a number of personal spheres such as their dress, deportment, dining and domesticity as well as the ways the community managed and accommodated Persian Zoroastrian

[25] For Sorabji see Antoinette Burton, *Dwelling in the Archive: Women Writing House, Home, and History in Late Colonial India.* New York: OUP, 2003 and for Muzban see Chapter 6 of this dissertation.

refugees and the Parsi poor in the landscape of Bombay. It proposes that it was this unusual, simultaneous fashioning at the levels of the personal and the broader community, that turned the series of negotiations into a project of self-fashioning. A number of discourses and intellectual tools were developed to explain and legitimise the changes the community was undergoing. The older practices that the Parsis were discarding in the spheres of their dress, deportment, dining and domesticity were all described and clubbed as 'Hindu customs' while the new practices being appropriated were described as the adoption of English and European lifestyles. The tools of 'statistical modernity', as described above, were used to present the provisions created for the Parsi poor, such as housing estates and hospitals, to the wider public. It is therefore in these domains of self-fashioning, which extended beyond the individual Parsi body and household to the structure of the community in the city, that we can see some of the more difficult negotiations, as well as the inner tensions, that the Parsi model of modernity entailed at the different levels of Parsi society.

Plan of the dissertation

Chapter 1 'The Shoe Question: Dress and Self-Fashioning in Colonial Bombay' looks at the Parsis' conflict with the colonial state over the question of wearing shoes in official spaces, to open up a discussion on the changes in Parsi dress in the 19th century. It describes the secularisation of the ritual garments Parsis wore and traces the transformation of Parsi male dress from flowing to fitted forms. The last section views the changes in dress alongside those in bodily deportment and household furnishings. In the Parsi context particularly, all three domains underwent significant change simultaneously. Whether it was the Parsi body in fitted clothes and

consequently somewhat restrained deportment that necessitated a new set of furnishings to support it will be debated in the chapter.

Chapter 2 ‘Women and the Parsi Domestic Sphere’ examines how a number of women focused social reforms were implemented in the realm of the Parsi domestic in the second half of the 19th and early 20th centuries. It traces the reforms in the practices of women’s confinement during postnatal and monthly menstruation, women’s dress and dining. It also attempts a detailed reading of what emerged as the main article of Parsi women’s dress - the *gara*, a silk sari with Chinese embroidery patterns. The last two sections of the chapter explore the unusual private-public sphere Manockjee Cursetjee, a judge and social reformer, established at his home, Villa Byculla in the 1860s, by setting up a girls’ school on the premises.

We move from fashioning to the finished product of the Parsi run hotel in Chapter 3 ‘Parsi Proprietors and Patriarchs: The Hotel Trade in Bombay’. The chapter seeks to understand and unpack the well-established model of the Parsi run hotel- an enterprise that provided the material comforts of an English home as well as the sense of security, respectability and moral wholesomeness, that a home setting implied. It proposes that a key competent of this model lay in the person of Parsi proprietor, who served as a benevolent patriarch over the establishment.

In Chapter 4 ‘Ameliorating and Accommodating the ‘Persian Parsees’ during The Great Famine of 1871-72’ we move to the broader project of the framing of community identity by looking at the ways more marginal entities, like the small Parsi communities settled across India as well as the Persian Zoroastrians, made their

presence felt in the Parsi fold, that was dominated by the Bombay Parsis. The chapter explores this theme by focusing on a single large-scale project- the pan-Parsi effort to provide relief to the Persian Zoroastrians afflicted by a major famine in Persia in 1871-72. The relief efforts took two forms- Parsi communities settled across India and the Empire and China pooled their resources and sent sizable aid to Persia to be distributed among the Persian Zoroastrian victims and efforts were also directed at organising the passage of groups of Persian Zoroastrian famine refugees from Persia to Bombay. Drawing on the terminology used at the time, the chapter challenges the assumption that Persian Zoroastrian migrants in Bombay were always identified as 'Iranis' and proposes a more porous identity for the period of the 19th century.

Chapter 5 'A Community in a Crisis: The Bombay Riots of 1874' which also focuses on a single event, the riots between the Parsi and Muslims communities in 1874, examines the question of community cohesion at the time of crisis. The riots brought the internal fissures within the community to the fore with the Parsi leadership implicating lower class Parsis in the incidents of violence. By comparing the riots with similar riots between the Parsis and Muslims in 1851, it suggests that class-based groupings within the community had strengthened over the second half of the 19th century. Both riots were caused by publications by Parsis on the Prophet Muhammad. The first section of the chapter describes how these publications were typical products of the plural print culture of 19th century Bombay.

Chapter 6 'New Urban Landscapes and the "Parsi poor" at the turn of the 20th Century', describes what can be called the finished project of Parsi self-fashioning- a built landscape of modern housing and hospitals for the use of the Parsi poor. It draws

on the themes raised in the previous chapters and suggests that the community ended up managing difference within its microcosm by conspicuously institutionalising it through a number of provisions for the Parsi lower classes. The reforms in the practices of postnatal confinement that were applied to Parsi women of the lower classes discussed in Chapter 2, led to the founding of the Parsee Lying-in Hospital, the first hospital for the exclusive use of the Parsis that effectively catered to the small sub-section of the pregnant poor of the community. The Hospital's setup and functioning will be discussed in the chapter. There is a tendency to read this landscape of Parsi provisions, as marking the community's inward turn and its configuration in overtly communal terms in the city. The thesis argues that the landscape marked less the loss of cosmopolitanism on the part of the Parsis and more the comprehensiveness of their project of self-fashioning that ensured no Parsi was left on the street.

Sources

A variety of print and visual sources have been used in this dissertation. Both kinds of sources have been treated in similar ways that is they have been used to create the narrative, rather than the visual sources serving to supplement the print, as is often the case in historical inquiry. It could be proposed that the interest in the cultural, bodily and spatial domains facilitated the incorporation of visual sources. However, visual sources have equally been used to construct narratives about gender, identity and class formation. To draw on an analogy from the dissertation, print and visual sources have been treated much like Parsis treated public and private spaces in the city, that is as entities that required levelling and alignment.

The print sources that have been used significantly include *The Bombay Gazette* and

The Times of India, the two main English language dailies in Bombay in the second half of the 19th century, the annual almanacs and directories of Bombay published by both the newspapers' presses, the early commentaries on the Parsis, the reports of the trials of a number of cases in which Parsis were charged with rioting, and the pamphlet literature in Gujarati on the subject of the riots. From the newspapers and annual directories, the sizable section on advertisements, that comprised the first page of the four-paged newspaper/s for example, has been used to create a narrative about important cultural spheres in the city like the arena of fashion and the world of the Parsi run hotel as well as to understand how notions such as belonging, familiarity and reputation were understood in the city. Naming practices in Bombay have also been examined largely through the advertisements.

Visual sources has been used as a broad category and include pictorial sources such as early portraits and photographs of the Parsis and the ground plans of the Peabody Estates in London (the Estates were the model for the housing for the Parsi poor);
the extant built landscape in contemporary Bombay/Mumbai such as the houses of Parsi *sethias*, the housing estates and hospitals; the extant material objects of Parsi lifestyle in such as the *gara* saris and chinaware; and the contemporary ceremonial practices of the community. The narrative about the changes in Parsi's women's dress has been created through consulting early portraits and the commentaries on the community, which often complimented each other. The argument about the ways the new dress implicated the notions of domesticity and conjugality was constructed through an examination of the embroidery patterns on the *gara* and the set of Gujarati terms used to describe the embroidered subject matter. From the extant landscape, structural embellishments, such as flooring patterns and the plaques on compound

walls, have been drawn on. My interest in these structural details has been sustained through Bombaywalla (http://bombaywalla.org/), a blog I run. The blog offers brief histories of aspects of city life through photographs of city structures. Many of the photographs used in this dissertation have been taken from the blog's archive.

1. The Shoe Question: Dress and Self-Fashioning in Colonial Bombay

Introduction

What came to be known as 'the Shoe Question' took Bombay by storm on 28 March 1862. Nusserwanjee Byramjee, a cabinetmaker, was barred from appearing before the Income Tax Commissioners at the Town Hall in Bombay till he removed his shoes of native style at the entrance of the room. Byramjee objected on the grounds that such removal was contrary to the Zoroastrian faith he followed while the colonial officials maintained that the gesture was an established and expected mark of respect. If Byramjee had, like the two other Parsis present in the room, chosen to wear shoes of western style or accompanied his traditional footwear with stockings, he would have been permitted on the premises as he was dressed.

The colonial imagination condensed, though not consistently, the complex codes of dress in India into the categories of native and western wear, demanding from the wearer bodily deportments associated with each style. The observance of 'shoe respect', as the Indian tradition of removing shoes at various thresholds came to be called, was expected particularly of native citizens who wore indigenous footwear in official settings. The colonial administration in Bombay and Calcutta had in the mid 1850s accommodated the local population's growing taste for European fashion by permitting Indians to wear western footwear in official settings (Figure 1.1).[26] But the peculiarly Parsi problem of dress remained unresolved. Community members insisted that respect was shown by keeping shoes of any kind firmly on. Four days prior to the incident in Bombay, a Parsi assessor and English judge in Surat argued in open court

[26] V.C.P Chaudhary, *Imperial Honeymoon with Indian Aristocracy*. Patna: Kashi Prasad Jayaswal Research Institute, 1980, p. 425-6.

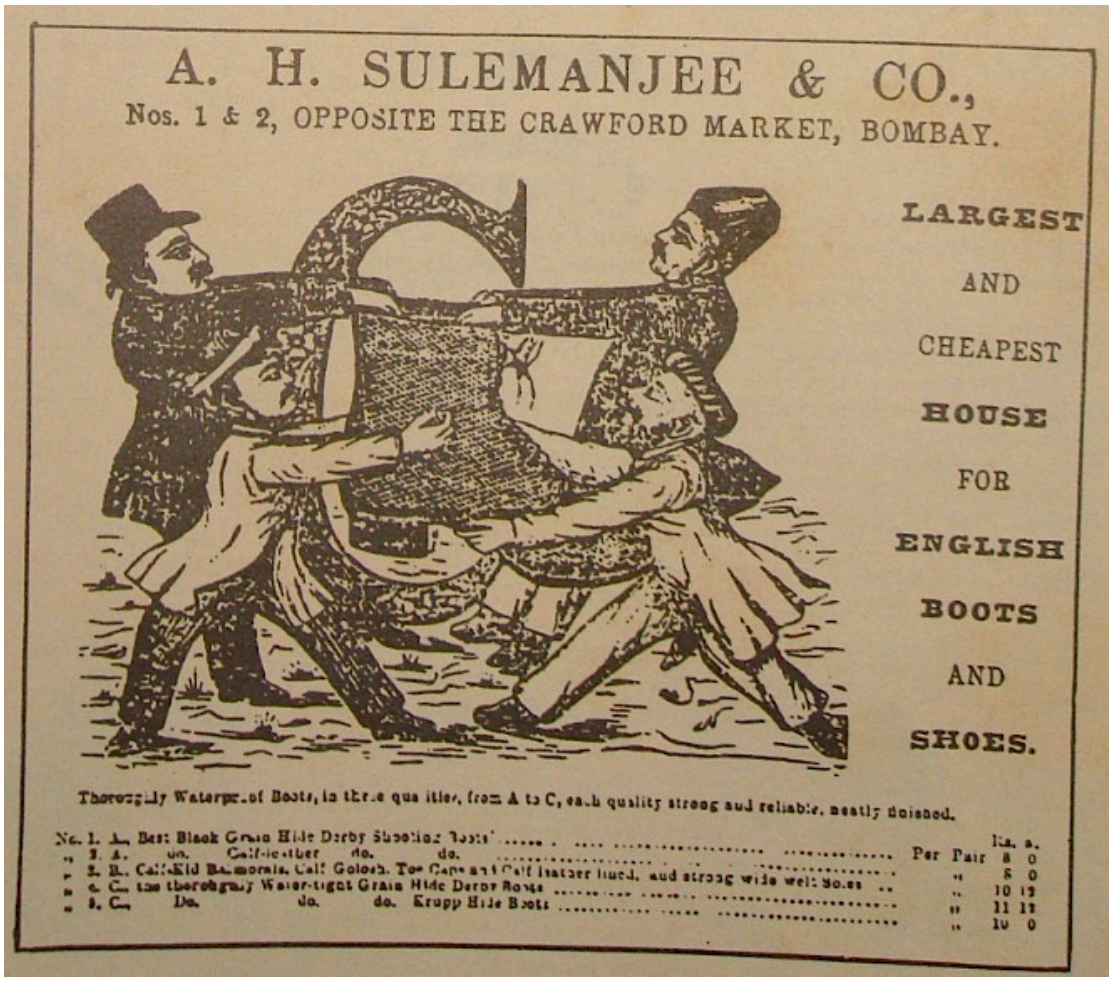


FIGURE 1.1. An advertisement for a shoe mart in *The Times of India* (6 June 1892) portraying four men from different communities trying to grab a boot. The Englishman and Parsi on the upper left and right are easily identifiable by their hats and black coats; the figures on the lower left and right most probably represent a Hindu and Muslim respectively.

(*Brand New: Advertising Through The Times of India*.)

over the permissibility of the Parsis shoes. The Parsi refused to remove his shoes and had to perform his duties as assessor standing outside the court.[27] In Bombay, Byramjee removed his shoes for the meeting at the Town Hall and then proceeded to write to the editor of the English daily *The Bombay Gazette,* narrating the incident and seeking the editor's advice on what he should do with his shoes at the second appointment with the Commissioners, scheduled for the next day.[28] The two other Parsis present at Byramjee's first meeting were the financier and philanthropist Cowasjee Jehangir, who was serving as one of the Income Tax Commissioners and Dosabhoy Framjee, an accessor and well-known author. Jehangir had begun to suffer from gout that year and his footwear was probably determined by his condition.[29]

The Parsis' insistence on wearing shoes was itself new and in some sense exaggerated. Though Zoroastrian scripture prescribed the covering of feet in everyday life, Parsis had adopted and adapted to various local, particularly Hindu practices, of the opportune removal of footwear, during their settlement in India.[30] The urgent Parsi assertions of dressed feet in the 19th century were part of a wider trend to vociferously dissociate community cultural praxis from what was termed the influence of 'Hindu custom'. Indigenous forms of bodily posture like sitting on the floor or reclining on cushions and the looser form of garments it necessitated were rejected for sitting and dining on chairs and tables in tighter European style trousers

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[27] K.N. Panikkar, 'The 'Great' Shoe question: Tradition, Legitimacy and Power in Colonial India', *Studies in History***,** vol. 14, no. 1, February 1998, pp. 23-24.
[28] *The Bombay Gazette*, 29 March 1862, p. 306 (January to July 1862 stack, Maharashtra State Archives {MSA}).
[29] R. H. Jalbhoy, *The Portrait Gallery of Western India: Embellished with 51 Life-like Portraits of the Princes, chiefs, and Nobles. From Celebrated Artists in London,- enriched with Historical, Political and Biographical accounts from the most Authentic Sources, in GUJARATI and ENGLISH*. Bombay: 1886.
[30] For a few examples from Zoroastrian scriptures, in which the issues of the usage of footwear are raised see, Rev. John Wilson, 'Memorandum on the Shoe Question as it Affects the Parsis' in *The Indian Antiquary*, January 1873, pp. 21-22.

the body could now accommodate. While the majority of lifestyle shifts were made in the name of 'western civilisation', the right to shoes, is an example of the construction of a new model of community identity that was more squarely 'Parsi' than the rest. For 'Hindu custom' gave way to a uniquely Parsi mode, of keeping shoes of any kind- native or western- on. If headgear can be considered a sartorial leveler for the native male population of 19th century India- in that all men wore turbans, a widely respected article of dress, rarely removed in public- shoes, with their differing cultural connotations offered Parsis an item of clothing they could claim their own. This chapter uses the conflict over shoes to explore the wider changes in Parsi dress over the 19th century.

Histories of dress in India

The scholarship on dress in India has predominantly approached the subject as a 'collective biography', as a history of dress over a period of time, of approximately 400 years.[31] This period spans the 17th and 18th centuries when the Mughal court had developed complex systems for the grading, storing and gifting of cloth and clothes and a number of important interactions involving cloth were held between Mughal rulers and East India Company officials, to colonial rule in the 19th century when the dressing styles of both the Indian and Anglo-Indian populations underwent significant change, to the swadeshi movement at the turn of the 20th century which promoted locally made cloth and the boycott of foreign cloth, and finally to Gandhi's use of dress and cloth in the movements of mass nationalism. As is evident, the context of

[31] C. A. Bayly, 'The origins of swadeshi (home industry): cloth and Indian society, 1700-1930' in *The social life of things: Commodities in cultural perspectives*, Arjun Appadurai ed. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986, p. 286; The examples of this literature are Bayly, Bernard S. Cohn, *Colonialism and its Forms of Knowledge: The British in India*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996; Emma Tarlo, *Clothing Matters: Dress and Identity in India*. London: Hurst, 1996.

colonialism looms large in these histories and the colonial encounter is considered the trigger for the wide-ranging changes in dress in India.

Of the historical phases covered in the scholarship, the period of the 19th century, when sections of the Indian population began adopting western dress, is particularly relevant to this chapter. Emma Tarlo has suggested that Indian men approached western dress as a 'problem', they realised its importance as a marker of civilisation, masculinity and refinement but also thought they risked losing a set of Indian identities and values if they adopted it.[32] They therefore came up with a number of solutions to the problem like using foreign fabrics in Indian styles or mixing Indian and European garments or changing the kind of clothing to suit the occasion and setting, most commonly by wearing western wear in professional settings and Indian wear in domestic ones. Tarlo locates the developments in Parsi dress within this sphere of solutions, particularly the first two ones. In some sense Tarlo, who in the introduction of her work notes that she has largely focused on the controversial moments in the changes in dress in India, has lost a set of protagonists in the Parsis by locating them in a section on the safe solutions to dress rather than along with those that upped the controversies.[33]

C. A. Bayly notes that it was precisely because of a cultural compatibility that there was that a smooth transition from Indian to western wear. He explains that English cloth succeeded in the Indian market because it met the cultural preferences of local customers.[34] The fineness of its weave resembled the textures of traditional fabrics like close-woven cotton and silks. It could be easily washed and met the standards of

[32] Tarlo, *Clothing Matters*, p. 45.
[33] Ibid., p. 1.
[34] Bayly, 'The origins of swadeshi (home industry)', p. 308.

cleanness of items of dress. Being manufactured in England it was removed from and missed many of the registers and dangers associated with artisan products, which retained the ghost of their transformative essences.[35] The consumption patterns of the Mughal court and the Mughal successor states were also compatible with European goods. Courts often incorporated elements from the cultures of former dynasties and well as from the cultures of contemporary powers with whom they wanted to establish alliances. In Bayly's work, the bulk of the scholarship is focused on precolonial societies and the role of cloth in them. Here the lens of change is not central to the analysis. When he considers the idea of change directly from precolonial to colonial forms and then from colonial to swadeshi and Gandhian forms, the transitions are presented smoothly largely because they drew from the older associations and symbolism of cloth.

Bernard S. Cohn has suggested that while increasing numbers of urban Indians chose to wear western dress, the conflict lay in their interactions with the colonial state. He describes a number of instances where the colonial state resisted or blocked their Indian employees attempts at adopting western dress and dressing styles. In the 1870s, when Bengali officials petitioned the authorities to be allowed to adopt the custom of removing their headgear in various official settings, as a token of respect in the European fashion, the authorities strongly opposed the idea on the grounds that it would make relations between the races less cordial.[36] Hindu employees were encouraged to continue wearing Mughal style official dress in the colonial office setting, rather than adopt western styles.[37] While Cohn has noted that in Bombay

[35] Ibid., p. 309
[36] Cohn, *Colonialism and its Forms of Knowledge*, p. 134-36.
[37] Ibid. p. 131.

Parsis took the lead in adopting western dress, he draws the instances of conflict over dress largely from Calcutta, in which Parsi actors do not feature.

Two articles by K.N. Panikkar and Sabyasachi Bhattacharya have focused exclusively on the Shoe Question.[38] They have used instances of conflict over shoes to address the broader question of how the colonial state made its presence felt in quotidian cultural practices. Panikkar examines the dispute between the Parsi assessor and English judge in Surat that was discussed above, which in its scope, publicity and ramifications resembles closely the conflict in Bombay that is the focus of this chapter. Bhattacharya lists a number of instances of perceived shoe respect and disrespect in 19th century India that did not erupt into full-fledged public conflicts (perhaps because they did not feature Parsi actors). Bhattacharya argues that an analysis of the architecture of colonial power is incomplete until we consider 'the most mundane actions of ordinary people, below the overarching framework we call the colonial state', of which instances of shoe respect offer numerous examples.[39] Yet almost all the examples of shoe conflict are staged in official or ceremonial settings, where the actors, on both the colonial (residents, judges, civil servants, officers) and native side (kings, ministers, assessors) cannot be considered 'ordinary'.[40]. This chapter suggests that in hands (and feet) of the Parsis, quotidian shoe conflicts became 'The Great Shoe Question'.

[38] K.N. Panikkar, 'The 'Great' Shoe question: Tradition, Legitimacy and Power in Colonial India', *Studies in History***,** vol. 14, no. 1, February 1998, pp. 21-36 and Sabyasachi Bhattacharya 'Colonial Power and Micro-Social Interactions: Nineteenth Century India', *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol. 26, No. 22/23 (June 1-8, 1991), pp. 1399-1403.
[39] Bhattacharya 'Colonial Power and Micro-Social Interactions', p. 1399.
[40] This is particularly true in the examples Bhattacharya chooses.

The Case of Nusserwanjee Byramjee

While citizens and the colonial state were pitted against each other across India in the struggle over shoes, Byramjee's negotiations reveal how localized the conflict was. His choice of consulting the editors of the English daily *The Bombay Gazette* about what he should do with his footwear at the second appointment with the Income Tax Commissioners, scheduled for the next day, indicates the confidence in the counsel and promptness of the press in Bombay. It also reflects Byramjee's resourcefulness and urbanity. Despite being unlettered in English he got the letter composed and dispatched and opted for the *Gazette* over a host of Gujarati language dailies. In the letter, Byramjee pinned the Commissioner's intolerance to his being 'fresh from the Mofussil and not acquainted with the customs of the Parsees of Bombay.'[41]

The editor of *The Bombay Gazette* advised Byramjee to keep his shoes on at the next meeting and to turn to the law if he was subjected to any indignity.[42] Byramjee followed the advice and wrote back reporting on the second meeting.

> With reference to Major Curtis, let me remark that, when I attended the Income Tax office this day, he desired me again to take my shoes off. As kindly advised by you, I decline to do so, when he called for a sepoy and threatened to oust me by force from his presence. I had to remind him that he had asked me to call upon him to show my accounts, but as he persisted on shoe-respect, and held out a threat, I was obliged to withdraw, preferring to seek justice elsewhere to acting against my religion and being subjected to an ignominy.[43]

Curtis, in turn, sued Byramjee for defamation. At the trial of among the first cases of defamation, under the new Indian Penal Code, enacted on 1 January 1862, Curtis'

[41] *The Bombay Gazette*, 29 March 1862, p. 3032. (MSA, January to July 1862 stack).
[42] Idem.
[43] *The Times of India*, 8 April 1862, p. 3. Maharashtra State Archives (MSA), Bombay.

testimony displayed a familiar bias.[44] He defended his decision to bar Byramjee's entry since the later wore 'common country shoes; such as the lower orders of the Parsees usually wear'.[45] Neither did Byramjee, in his correspondence with the *Gazette*, nor did his council, barrister R. B. Barton, during the legal proceedings raise the issue of the type of footwear; their focus remained the right to wearing shoes. In the coverage of the case in the Gujarati press, language itself offered locational and other leads. The term that was used to describe Byramjee's shoes was *gam thi jhoda* (shoes from the village), which betrayed its country origins.[46] In calling the protagonist, Nusserwanjee Byramjee Polishwalla, that is including a third referential to his name, the press assumed professional and personal affiliations before Byramjee did.[47] He signed the letters to the *Gazette* in Gujarati with his first and second name, his occupation as a cabinetmaker was neither reflected in the content or signature.

In choosing certain platforms to express themselves citizens were at the risk of those over which they had little or no control. A carefully crafted image of being at ease and equipped for the metropolis could be undone as material and symbolic markers of the mofussil came to the fore. In this heightened climate of self-fashioning citizens were susceptible to a number of forces. A number of books advised on the practices of shaping and expressing the self -how to avoid 'common blunders', correct mispronunciations and 'mind your stops'.[48] Jehangeer Merwanjee, a pleader in the

[44] The most famous case of defamation in the 1860s in Bombay was the Maharaj Libel Case, tried in the Supreme Court in January 1862. In the case Judoonathjee Brizruttonjee, a Maharaj of the Vallabhacharya sect, sued Kursandass Mooljee, the editor of the Gujarati newspaper *Satya Prakash*. For an examination of the Case and how religious communities resorted to colonial law see Amrita Shodhan, *A Question of Community: Religious Groups and Colonial Law*. Calcutta: Samya, 2001.
[45] *The Bombay Gazette*, April 10, 1862, p. 343 (MSA, January to July 1862 stack).
[46] *Parsee Prakarsh, Being a Record of Important Events in the Growth of the Parsee Community in Western India, Chronologically Arranged*. Bahmanji Behramji Patel and Rustom Barjorji Paymaster (compilers). Bombay: Bombay Parsi Punchayet, Volumes 2 (1861 to 1880), p. 32.
[47] Idem.
[48] *The Bombay Gazette*, 8 April 1862, p. 333.

Police and Small Cause Courts, wrote a short title in Gujarati, *LIBEL and SLANDER, or A Summary of the Law relating to Defamation of character* (1862), to acquaint Parsis and other Gujarati speaking populations with the legal possibilities for restoring ones reputation under Clause 499 of the new Indian Penal Code.[49] Mitra Sharafi explains that defamation suits were risky business for those who initiated them. 'If one claimed to be the target of defamation, the suit itself could draw more attention to the alleged slur than did the original statement. At the same time, initiating a defamation suit sent a powerful social signal, reflecting the purported victim's utter rejection of the statement. For some, the social value of showing outrage may have outweighed the risks of creating added publicity or losing the case. There was also the fact that many plaintiffs seemed to want a public apology more than damages or the imposition of a criminal penalty.'[50] A published or at least public apology offered a desired and relatively inexpensive out of court settlement to the suits. In what may be regarded as a meta case, that arose over the occupancy of a chair during the proceedings of the Shoe Question trial, a Parsi reporter's request for an apology from an English barrister was not met, leading to a complete settlement in court, elaborated in the following sections.

Advertising and the creation of an arena of fashion in the press

The retailing of footwear in the press was comparatively free of the classifications and constraints prevalent in the wider arena of fashion in Bombay. Shoe marts and manufactories targeted simultaneously an audience of 'gentlemen, ladies and children', attended to their customers at a single, comprehensive store, provided the appliances for the maintenance of footwear and catered to orders from clients from

[49] Ibid., 1 May 1862, p. 412 (MSA, January to July 1862 stack).
[50] Mitra Sharafi, *Law and Identity in Colonial South Asia*: *Parsi Legal Culture, 1772-1947*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2014, p. 278.

outstation areas. Their advertisements suggest the assorted and even irreverent nature of the trade. In listing the various kinds of stock available, neither was the experience towards which the boots and shoes were geared nor the kind of material used nor the occasion applied as a means of differentiation. Gender and age were regularly used for the grouping of the myriad products, though not always so. In either case, advertisements retained the miscellaneous feel of a mart. The casual listing of styles, the inclusion of the price of each kind of shoe, mentioning the names of the steamers on which the stock had newly arrived or the rush of disposing the stock on sale, put the marketing of footwear more on par with the marketing of imported commodities like books, prints and music rather than alongside the appeals of the city's milliners, hatters, tailors and dress makers. The advertisements of individual shoemakers, particularly the Chinese, who catered to the market for handmade and custom made footwear, were not featured in the daily press. Their ads could have lent a hierarchy to the marketing of shoes. The shoemakers names and shop addresses were listed in local directories under the categories of 'Boot and Shoe Makers' and 'China Shoemakers'.[51]

In the wider market of fashion, gender was the most common denominator of classification. Milliners, dressmakers and hatters, tailors appealed, through their advertisements, to a clientele of Ladies and Gentlemen respectively, urging inspection of newly imported goods or guaranteeing a superior cut and finish to a garment. While dressmakers in Bombay also sold millinery, all milliners did not necessarily double as dressmakers. Milliners were often local or European men whereas the city's dressmakers were European women who were married or widowed. Male expertise

[51] *The "Times of India" Calendar & Directory for 1862*. Bombay: Exchange Press, pp. 207-8 and *The Bombay Almanack & Directory for 1865*. Bombay: Bombay Gazette Press, pp. 486-7.

on style and fit was reserved for the apparel on the parts of a women's body that could be publicly displayed or uncovered- hair nets, bonnets and hats for the head, shoes and boots for the feet, jewellery for the ears fingers and neck. The main body itself was dressed by a European matriarchal figure. Mrs Lake and Mrs Hern's establishments, located in Byculla and Fort respectively, were frequently advertised in the press in the 1860s. Interestingly female proprietorship was always advertised as individual, as compared to the bulk of businesses in Bombay under joint male proprietorship. The absence of enterprises under joint female and/or joint male-female proprietorship raises questions about how the notions of collaboration and compatibility was conceived in business partnerships and whether the inclusion of the marital status of the proprietress (through the title of Mrs, her first name was excluded) not only made the business possible, respectable and non-threatening, but also if it implicitly factored in the support of her husband; a joint proprietorship of another kind (Figure 1.2).

Bridal and mourning were the main categories through which European women's dress was marketed. A large and disproportionate amount ad space was allotted to the listing of attire for weddings and funerals, particularly when compared to the attention paid to everyday womens' wear. Proprietresses reassured that bridal and mourning orders would receive their prompt and careful attention.[52] Balls followed a close third as an event for which dresses were specifically designed; travelling wear for 'ladies going home' or 'to the hills' was another activity-based classification.[53] By and large, dresses and millinery for everyday experiences was not specified in the advertisements; at best ladies' dress was differenced into morning and evening attire.

[52] For example *The Bombay Gazette*, 16 July and 3 December 1862, pp. 671, 1152 (MSA, July to December 1862 stack).
[53] Ibid., p. 1152.



FIGURE 1.2. An advertisement for a milliner and dressmaker in *The Times of India* (18 February 1882).

(*Brand New: Advertising Through The Times of India*.)

If we attempt to understand the lives of European women in Bombay through the listings of their dress, a rather constrained set of interests, activities and addresses emerge. Semi-public/ invitee-only events like balls and weddings dominated whereas presences in public spaces at large, like streets or the Esplanade, were mainly absent. Items that could equip women for the public sphere, like parasols, umbrellas, waterproof clothing, purses and pouches hardly featured, even for women who were travelling.

The city's tailors and outfitters shaped their retail strategies to cater to gentlemen on the go. The populations of servicemen and businessmen temporary based in Bombay were their target audience. The trade in service uniforms demanded that establishments be aware of the latest Dress Regulations as issued by the forces and the various departments of government. Leading stores like J. & W. Watson & Co. at Hummum Street, Fort, received directly from the Horse Guards plans outlining the uniforms of various regiments.[54] Some tailors accepted old regimental clothing in exchange for new travel wear possibly since staff clothing cost roughly double of regular clothing, offsetting the exchange and accommodating the cash-strapped consumer. In some senses the market of fashion in Bombay complemented and adjusted to the economies of entertainment and hospitality, on which their clients' income was often spent.

The travelling European male - 'Gentlemen proceeding to the Persian Gulf or Europe' or 'up-country'- was an important client. Watson & Co.'s services included tailoring

[54] Ibid., 26 June 1862, p. 603. (MSA, January to July 1862 stack).

'complete Suits of Warm Clothing' at a short notice of twelve hours.[55] A range of travelgear and accessories like portmanteaus, umbrellas, walking sticks, waterproof clothing were also widely advertised. American Jean Trousers and Jungle Helmets were among the examples of hardier dress, available in Bombay as early as 1855.[56] The virtual absence of lounge or home wear in the long lists of men's attire, as well as slippers in the advertisements for boots and shoes, suggests the subtler ways in which the image of the public, outdoorsy male was shaped through print.

By the mid 19th century tailors had begun to appeal to the population of native gentlemen in Bombay. As the previous sections have elaborated, native men were experimenting with and adapting western dressing styles during this period. Some tailors offered clothing for native gentlemen as well as liveries for their native male servants.[57] It appears that both the upper and lower echelons of Bombay's native male population emerged simultaneously as players in the new sphere of fashion. By the mid 1860s, visits to leading retail establishments were part of their itinerary of the native dignitaries from India's princely states who were touring Bombay. It indicates how integral the stores' presence had become to the topography of the city as well as how the wares had come to serve as a new kind of souvenir- with an individualized fit and the possibilities of portable display.

What was common to the advertisements of the shoe marts, milliners, dressmakers, hatters and tailors was the provision to cater to orders from the Mofussil. The orders were a leveller in terms of customer participation, since it was distance rather than gender that kept clients away. The orders also encouraged empirical and intimate

[55] *The Bombay Times and Journal of Commerce*, 12 December 1855, p. 603.
[56] Idem.
[57] Idem.

ways of knowing one's body- customers were asked to measure various parts of their anatomy and post the measurements, often along with a sample garment, to the concerned store in Bombay. The presence of the city came to be felt and most vividly displayed in the Mofussil largely through fashion. Retailers themselves remained in the metropolis, at best opening another branch or moving their establishment, for a season, to a neighbouring city like Poona.

What made Parsi dress possible

The participation of the Parsis as acquisitive consumers of Bombay's arena of fashion was possible because of a number of factors. Firstly, their largely materialist valuation of the items of dress, particularly ritual wear. In some sense if ritual garments could be made open to change, the investment in fashion and the project of self-fashioning could not be doubted. Over the 19th century, the *sudreh,* the sacred vest that both male and female Zoroastrians wore as their first layer of clothing, underwent significant modification. In its traditional form, the *sudreh* was stitched from white muslin and had nine seams.[58] It appears that it was made in this form for a number of centuries prior to the 19th, during the Parsis settlement in Gujarat and then Bombay. Jivanji Jamshedji Modi, a prominent scholar priest, explained the design and significance of the traditional garment in his book *The Religious Ceremonies and Customs of the Parsees* (1922):

> Again, the shirt must not be made up of one continuous piece of cloth but of two pieces sewn together on the sides, so that one piece may be on the right hand side, and the other on the left hand side, thus dividing the shirt into two parts, the front and the back part. These two parts- the front and the back-are said to be symbolic of the past and the future,

[58] Shernaz Cama and Ashdeen Z. Lilaowala 'Sacred Armour: Ritual Garments of the Parsi Zoroastrians' in *Sacred Textiles of India*, ed. Jasleen Dhamjia. Mumbai: Marg Foundation, 2014, p. 43.

> both being related with each other through the present. It has an opening for the head and reaches down to the knees.[59]

An early modification to the *sudreh* was the shortening of its length. The most striking change was that for Parsi women the *sudreh* was transformed from a standardized, unisex, ritual garment to a fashionable component of their dress. Lace and embroidered net, began to incorporated into the body of the *sudreh* or the entire *sudreh* itself began to be made of these new fabrics. The style in which women wore the *sudreh*, that is under their upper garment and over the upper part of the bottom of the sari, allowed a good portion of the garment to be displayed. Henry Moses, a medical practitioner and author, recalled a tailor making *sudrehs* by lining patterns of lace into muslin at the home of the philanthropist and community leader Sir Jamsetjee Jejeebhoy in 1840.[60] Several retail establishments across the city sold *sudrehs* and advertised their stock of fancy *sudrehs* in the Gujarati language press.[61] These establishments were owned by a cosmopolitan mix of proprietors, usually Parsi and Hindu or Muslim, suggesting that the conditions of manufacture, labelling and display did not strive towards sanctification. The *kusti*, the sacred girdle that was made of lamb's wool and worn around the *sudreh*, did not undergo any substantial change. This was perhaps because the narrow width of the two flat surfaces of the girdle left little room for innovation.

Early commentators on the community described Parsi dress primarily through the categories of class and gender, rather than through ritual grading. In the 1850s, both Henry George Briggs and Dosabhoy Framjee noted the wealthy and poor's preference

[59] Jivanji Jamshedji Modi, *The Religious Ceremonies and Customs of the Parsees*. Bombay: British India Press, 1922, p. 182.
[60] Henry Moses, *Sketches of India: with Notes on the Seasons, Scenery and Society of Bombay, Elephanta and Salsette*. London: Simpkin, Marshall & Co., 1850, p. 256.
[61] *Rast Goftar and Satya Prakash*, 19 January 1873, p. 48.

for silk clothing and ornaments. Briggs, a clerk and author, observed that 'The poorest Parsi woman never ventures out of her house without a silk sadi, the outer dress of the sex, composed of several yards…'[62] Of Parsi men's fashion, Framjee noted: 'The rich wear silk trousers, stockings, and English shoes.'[63] Religious festivities and public or private celebrations offered platforms for the display of new purchases and adornment. Even the traditional treatments of clothing that were maintained by the community, like the wearing of new dress on auspicious occasions, were largely compatible with the new market forces.

Another factor that could explain the Parsis readiness to partake of the market of fashion was an occupational openness. This was exhibited at several levels- their eagerness to partake of the professional opportunities colonial capitalism created, the ability to move away from some of the trades they practiced traditionally and a willingness to turn to other communities for a number of products and services. Briggs noted in *The Parsis; or, Modern Zerdusthians* (1852) that there were no Parsi tailors or cobblers. There were Parsi upholsterers, turban-makers and weavers.[64] He captures a demographic trend in mid 19th century Bombay. During the Parsis settlement in Gujarat community members probably made clothes and shoes. It is unlikely that ritual injunction prevented the Parsis from entering these professions or that they was influenced by the practices of higher caste Hindus and Jains, for whom the threat of ritual impurity could bar participation at the levels of occupation and consumption. Bayly notes that in the Hindu context, a tailor's use of spittle in the preparation of thread for sewing made his occupational habits and the resultant

[62] Henry George Briggs, *The Parsis or Modern Zerdusthians.* Edinburgh: Oliver & Boyd, 1852, p. 18.
[63] Dosabhoy Framjee, *The Parsees: Their History, Manners, Customs, and Religion*. London: Smith, Elder and Co., 1858. p. 68.
[64] Briggs, *The Parsis or Modern Zerdusthians,* pp. 25-26.

product unclean.[65] This partly explains the Hindu's preference for unstitched cloth. While Parsis had similar reservations about bodily liquids once they passed beyond the body's boundary, the possibilities of pollution through spittle seem to have been accommodated at a lower cost. The domestic staff of large, affluent Parsi households in Bombay included shoemakers, tailors and saddlers, who worked on the premises itself, an unlikely setup if the professions were considered unclean. Traditional work and seating arrangements at the floor level enabled craftsmen to use their feet to assist their hands in the creation of wares. Parsi women enthusiastically practiced the western hobby of wool-work as well as older traditions of embroidery, including a type of stitch called *mochi no tako* or cobbler's stitch.[66]

Identifying as a Bombay Parsi itself qualified as fashionable. The identity was loaded with implications of style, savviness, citizenship, wealth and belonging. It shaped, and was in turn shaped by a number of *other,* often older geographical entities associated with the community- the 'country', 'mofussil', the 'outstation', Persia. Parsis based in these 'lesser' geographies would increasingly be imagined as provincial, poor and unfashionable. The idea of intra-community difference, then, was an important part of identity formation, as elaborated in the following section.

Changes in Parsi dress

By adopting western footwear, Parsis were introduced to an array of styles available at shops across the city- gentlemen's, ladies' and children's boots and shoes, variously made of patent leather, elastic enamel, button cloth, canvas and geared

[65] Bayly, 'The origins of swadeshi', pp. 295-6.
[66] Thanks to Dr Shernaz Cama, the Director of the ParZor Foundation, for her clarifications on the kinds of embroidery stitches. Priya Mani, 'Methods and Stitches' in *Peonies & Pagodas: Embroidered Parsi Textiles, Tapi Collection*, Shilpa Shah and Tulsi Vatsal eds. Surat: Garden Silk Mills Ltd., 2010, pp. 162-5.

towards the experiences of shooting, riding, seafaring, hunting or simply walking. Over the second half of the 19th century shoes emerge as the article of dress over which the community displayed the greatest sartorial versatility. The bold insistence on keeping their shoes on, effectively freed from the debate (at least on the Parsi side) the problem of the kind of shoes that could be worn.

The shifts in clothing were more gradual. The traditional regular dress for Parsi men consisted of an *angrakha*, a knee-length coat tied in a bow at the throat and the waist, made of white fabric and loose pants of cotton or silk, usually of coloured fabric (Figure 1.3). Traditional formal dress comprised of the *jama* and *pichoree*, a double-breasted angle-length white outer coat and waistband, which resembled Mughal court dress. The *jama* was worn in the style that Hindus followed, that is with the flap of the coat tied on the left side of chest (Figure 1.4).[67] The *angrakha* and *jama* were worn over the *sudreh* and the *kusti* and concealed the ritual garments from view. A *pugree* or turban was always worn in public. Kaikhosro N. Kabraji, the editor of the *Rast Goftar and Satya Prakash*, recalled that 'The orthodox turban of old was a very heavy bundle, consisting of ever so many yards of cloth wrapped around the head. The weight of the turban was accounted as a measure of the dignity and respectability of the wearer.'[68] Early portraits and descriptions of Parsi male dress indicate that the type of cloth used for the turban was white muslin or coloured sprigged muslin or silk.[69]

[67] Muslims wore the *jama* with the flap of the coat tied on the left side of the chest. Cohn notes that the Rajputs appear to have taken to wearing the *jama* (sewn coat) before the advent of the Mughals. Thus what was conventionally thought of as Mughal court dress adapted major elements of Rajput dress during the time of Akbar. Cohn, *Colonialism and its Forms of Knowledge*, p. 131.
[68] K. N. Kabraji, *Fifty Years Ago. Reminiscences of Bombay. The Times of India*, 1901-02, section- The Parsee Headdress. The late Sharada Dwivedi generously shared retyped sections of this series with me. I have not been able to locate this section from the original archive.
[69] Framjee, *The Parsees*, p. 119.



FIGURE 1.3. A painting of a Parsi merchant at a bunder (dockyard) in Bombay. He is wearing traditional everyday dress- an *angrakha*, a knee- length coat tied in a bow at the throat and the waist, a loose *pichoree* (waistband), loose silk pyjamas, a turban, shoes and stockings. He is carrying a Chinese parasol. The *angrakha* was usually worn without a *pichoree*.

(*The Taj at Apollo Bunder*, p. 21.)



FIGURE 1.4. A portrait of *sethia* Sir Cowasjee Jehangir (1812-78). He is dressed in a *jama* and *pichoree*, the traditional double-breasted angle-length outer garment and waistband, a shawl, modern Parsi headgear and traditional shoes with stockings.
Jehangir served as an Income Tax Commissioner and was one of the two Parsis present at the meeting with Nusserwanjee Byramjee at the Town Hall. Jehangir wore traditional shoes with stockings at the meeting. He suffered from gout and his choice of footwear was probably restricted.

(*Across Oceans and Flowing Silks*, p. 75.)

Silk was probably used on more formal occasions and by affluent Parsi men.[70] Within the folds of these traditional garments small essentials could be tucked- the *katli*, a container in which water was carried was commonly tucked into the turban; professional tools like rulers were inserted into the *pichoree* (waistband) (Figure 1.5).[71] Among the popular accessories for Parsi men were Chinese parasols.

Over the 19th century, unstitched fabrics that could be moulded into garments by variously folding, wrapping, tucking and tying as well as stitched fabrics that allowed for adjustments, made way for more individualised styles. The sleeves of the *angrakha* which were kept much longer than the length of the arm and consequently gathered at the wrist, were now tailored to fit the arm exactly. The loose cotton or silk pants, with negotiable waistbands, gave way to tighter, trousers, that accentuated not only the shape of the leg, but also through its relative economy around the ankle, the shoes or boots of the wearer. The turban was modified to a shell of its former self. Pasteboard was used to create the frame of what was popularly called the Parsi hat, on which sprigged dark coloured cloth was mounted. No longer was worth necessarily measurable in weight, but also the malleability of unstitched cloth was forsaken for custom made headgear that was convenient to put on, remove and store. Light coloured fabrics were done away with in favour of dark colours like maroon, dark chocolate and black. The Bombay correspondent of *The Pioneer* remarked that the Parsi hat had bolstered the peculiarity of Parsi headdress while largely divesting it of

[70] In Amitav Gosh's novel *River of Smoke*, set in Canton in the early decades of the 19th century, the protagonist Bahramji Naurozji Modi, an influential Parsi merchant, wore a ceremonial turban that was over ten feet long; his regular turban was made of pure *malmal* muslin and was tied by his *khidmatgar* or valet. The Parsis in Canton were popularly called Pak-taw-gwai or White-Hat-Ghost. Amitav Gosh, *River of Smoke.* London: John Murray, 2011.
[71] Pervin Mahoney and Parinaz M. Gandhi, 'Splendor of the statue' in *Parsiana*, 7 August 2014, p. 74.



FIGURE 1.5. A portrait of the shipbuilder Jamsetjee Bomanjee Wadia (1754-1821) in complete traditional Parsi dress. A ruler is tucked into his *pichoree* (waistband).

(*Portrait of a Community*, p. 24.)

its purpose as protective gear.[72] Bemused by the community's adherence to the 'shocking bad hat', he penned the following poem:

> In your multitudinous chatter,
> In your turbulent tumult of tongue,
> Does nobody curse the mad hatter
> Who did you such wrong?
> Did he work out in dreams that creature
> Of paper and pasteboard and chintz?
> Or did Zertusht in rapt inspiration
> Give his Lincoln and Bennett some hints?[73]

It could be argued that it was the possibilities of individualization that made to measure dress like the hat offered that added to its attraction, particularly for citizens like the Parsis who were keen to articulate modern selfhood in convincing and materially substantiated ways.

By the second half of the 19th century, the modern Parsi coat, an adaption of the Victorian coat lounge coat, had replaced the *angrakha* as the regular dress of Parsi men. The change in the style of the coats is less striking than the contrast in colour. Both coats were knee-length, closely bound through the middle, with sleeves the length of the arm. White fabric was always used for the *angrakha*, the pants that accompanied it were usually coloured and the trousers subsequently worn were also white. The Parsi coat on the other hand was always made of black fabric and the trousers worn with it were either black or white. Parasols were no longer carried by Parsi men and umbrellas, in plain black, became their most recognizable accessory. The *angrakha* would be appropriated as the modern formal dress of Parsi men, worn at weddings, *navjotes* (initiations ceremonies) and funerals. The *jama* and *pichoree,*

[72] *The Bombay Gazette*, 18 July 1870, p. 3.
[73] Idem.

the traditional formal dress of the community, would become the preserve of the priestly class.

Manockjee Cursetjee (1808-1887), a judge and social reformer, pioneered the new styles of Parsi dress. Cursetjee had developed a brand of reform that involved a degree of showmanship, where he used his person and property to make bold statements about the practices he was modernising. His bold style drew the attention of the public and the press. As the next chapter will show Cursetjee reformed a number of Parsi cultural practices through these means. He was among the first to give up wearing the *jama* and *pichoree.* As a consequence, the Parsi press urged community members to not to invite Cursetjee to social gatherings.[74] On his frequent tours of Europe, Cursetjee would purchase the latest fashions and on his return to Bombay, sport them in the public sphere (Figure 1.6 & 1.7). *The Bombay Gazette* described his attire at a non-official appearance in court in November 1862, after a recent tour of Europe with his daughters.

> Mr. Manockjee looks exceedingly well after his European trip, and we were much pleased to see him attired in the most approved Europe style; he was dressed in a black surtout coat with long skirts, which we were confidentially informed was fabricated by Stulz. The unmentionables were of most approved cut by the renowned Foulger, with neck tie of truly Parisian mould and shirt collar a la Byron. There were, as usual, many Marwarries in Court who looked aghast at the return of the worthy judge.[75]

As Parsi male dress modernized – the trousers and shoes were of western style, the coat an adaption of the Victorian lounge coat- the hat appears as the main item of dress by which a Parsi man could be identified in the urban milieu of Bombay.[76] The

[74] Jesse S. Palsetia, *The Parsis of India: Preservation of Identity in Bombay City,* (2001). Delhi: Manohar Publishers and Distributors, 2008, p. 157.
[75] *The Bombay Gazette*, 3 November 1862, p. 1049. (MSA, July to December 1862 stack). In 1865 Cursetjee would tour Europe again.
[76] In *Stri Purush Tulana* (*A Comparison between Women and Men),* published in 1892 in Marathi, the





FIGURES 1.6 & 1.7. (Above) A portrait of Manockjee Cursetjee (1808-1887) in traditional Parsi dress and (below) a lithograph of Cursetjee in modern Parsi dress.
(*Portrait of a Community*, p. 24.)

hat also enabled differentiating between the Parsis and their coreligionists the Persian Zoroastrians, who had migrated from Persia to India in the 18th and 19th centuries, and who were popularly called Persian Parsees. For example at the proceedings of the Tower of Silence Case held at the Sessions Court in Bombay in July 1873, in which fifty persons, mainly Zoroastrians, were charged with unlawful assembly and rioting at the funerary estate.

> Mr. Inverarity.- Tell us what you did and saw.
> A. I saw on some rising ground inside the compound walls a number of people.
> The JUDGE.- How many?
> Witness.-I think about 50.
> Mr. Inverarity.- What were they?
> A. They appeared to be Iranee Parsees chiefly.
> The JUDGE.- How would you know an Iranee Parsee from a Bombay Parsee?
> Witness.- Generally by their dress, my Lord.
> Mr. Inverarity.- In what respect does the dress differ?
> A. The Parsees wear the long *topee* and the Iranees generally wear the turban.[77]

Chapter 4 will describe the institutional and informal mechanisms through which the differences between the Parsis and the Persian Zoroastrian communities would be maintained in Bombay.

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author Tarabai Shinde regrets how dress no longer serves to indicate the wearers' ethnic or ritual affiliations, instead the adoption of western dress has leveled all its consumers. 'But you won't recognize anything from people's clothes any more. You ask how so? If you look at men's turbans for instance, they're now just tied according to any old caste rule, or people wear hats, or just some long black or white piece of cloth put on any old way. Ten or twenty years ago, who'd have wound such tatty old strips of cloth rung their heads like that, apart from Telugu folk or people in mourning? In those days, you used to be able to tell from what people wore on their heads that this man is a Telugu, or that one has just had a death in the family. But now you see ranks of such turbans wherever you look, and half-jackets and coats, and watches with swinging chains. So how can you tell who a man is? If you look down, he has trousers on his legs, and boots and stockings. Is he a Muslim, or a Parsi, or some Sahib's cook? You'll have to go and ask him who he is, won't you?' Rosalind O'Hanlon, *A Comparison between Women and Men: Tarabai Shinde and the Critique of Gender Relations in Colonial India*, New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1994, p. 95.

[77] *The Towers of Silence Case*. Report of proceedings in the trial of Māṇekjī Dārābjī and others for rioting. Bombay: 1873, p. 8.

Dress, the body and furnishings in domestic and public spaces

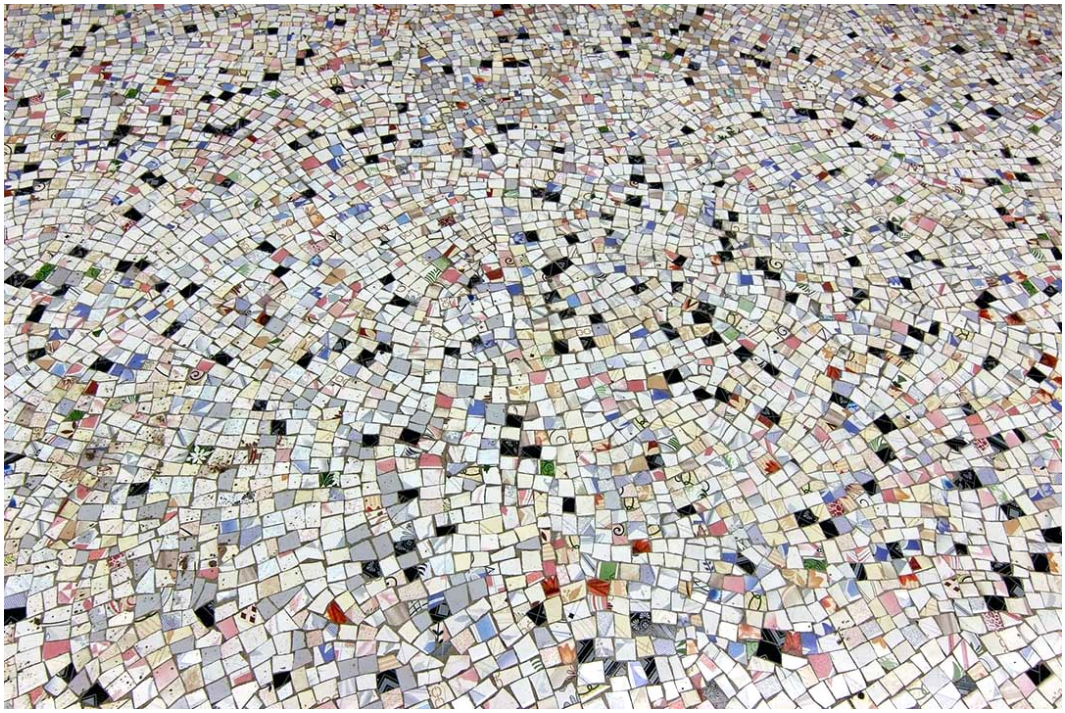
As Parsis entered and exited their homes, the rites of passage were marked by a continuum in bodily deportment and the furnished interior of the domestic rather than a disjunction between forms. A variety of western styled furniture, either imported or locally crafted, offered new receptacles for the Parsi body, attired, in the case of men, in more fitting European pants, an adaptation of the lounge coat, shoes and stockings or in the looser garments and slippers still worn informally in the household. Not only was the level of domestic activity and interaction raised several notches off the floor (on which it was earlier performed), it also became increasingly associated with particular forms of furniture. Tables were designed to facilitate each of the experiences of dining, work, playing cards, dressing and washing hands. Various kinds of chairs eased the processes of conversing, dining, rocking and reclining. By naming furniture according to the activity for which it was meant, its role was further defined and delimited. In the houses of wealthy Parsi merchant princes, the template of theme was added to the increasing complex spatial dynamic. Keen to display the commodities and cultures with which they traded, merchants had multiple drawing rooms dressed and devoted to Chinese, English, French ware respectively. How householders chose between rooms that were functionally aligned though thematically diverse is difficult to gauge, though the Parsi body was probably more mobile, compelled as it was to relocate and adjust to each domestic activity and setting.

Of the global influences on aspirational Parsi homes, the Chinese presence was the most prominent. The Parsis taste for chinoiserie extended to a wide range of domestic furniture and furnishings –folding screens, lacquer cabinets, chests, vases, bedcovers, piano shawls, fans, mats. These items were largely imported from China and sold at

shops in the Fort district. Messrs. Rustomjee Dadabhoy & Co. at Medows Street and Sorabjee Ruttonjee at Apollo Street advertised their establishments as 'China Depot' and 'China Bazar' respectively, when they received a substantial stock of imports from China in the early 1860s.[78] On a smaller scale, Chinese furniture and embroidery were also produced indigenously in Gujarat and Bombay by Chinese and local artisans trained in the craft. The lighter and more portable of these wares were typically sold door-to-door by Chinese *pheriawallas* (salesmen). Among the items ransacked in the home of a wealthy Parsi during the riots between the Muslims and Parsis in 1874 were Chinese work boxes, silk dresses and a lacquered Chinese trunk in which women's jewellery was stored.[79] Chinese wares were probably also consumed within professional spaces like Parsi run firms. In the lists of the items stocked at the China Depot and China Bazar a number of directly lent to the office setup - Writing Desks, Working Tables, Paper Cutters.[80] Mosaic tiles are a good example of a form of Chinaware that was found in several kinds of settings in the city. The tiles, which often comprised bits of broken porcelain from Chinese wares like vases and plates, were placed together to create the flooring for various premises.[81] The industrialist Jamsetji Tata, who had a considerable taste for chinoiserie, covered several floors of his residence, Esplanade House, and the Taj Mahal Palace Hotel, which he founded, with mosaic tiling (Figure 1.8 & 1.9).[82] Tata's broader aesthetic for the Taj will be discussed in Chapter 3 on Parsi run hotels in Bombay.

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[78] *The Bombay Times and Standard*, 2 May 1861, p. 4.
[79] *The Bombay Riots of 1874*, Bombay, 1874, p. 7.
[80] *The Bombay Times and Standard*, 2 May 1861, p. 4.
[81] Naresh Fernandes notes that ships returning from the east carried porcelain wares at the bottom of their holds because these items were waterproof and made good ballast. Naresh Fernandes, *City Adrift: A Short Biography of Bombay*. New Delhi: Aleph, 2013, p. 46. The wares that broke probably in the process of transportation were used as mosaic tiles.
[82] For photographs of the various kinds of mosaic tiling patterns at Esplanade House see 'Mosaic, marble & minton: A tour of the tiling at Esplanade House' on the Bombaywalla blog http://bombaywalla.org/flooring-esplanade-house-1887/. For a brief note about the mosaic tiling at the





FIGURES 1.8 & 1.9. (Above) A contemporary photograph of the mosaic tiling at Esplanade House (1887), the last residence of the industrialist Jamsetji Tata, and (below) an early photograph of a suite at the Taj Mahal Palace Hotel (1903) in which the mosaic tiling can be seen beyond the edge of the carpet.

(Bombaywalla and *The Taj at Apollo Bunder*, p. 70.)

The changes in transport in Bombay over the 19th century also enabled the continuum in bodily deportment between private and public domains. Early modes of transport like palanquins, made demands on bodily posture that were increasingly incompatible with the trends of modern dress. Western boots and shoes were cumbersome to remove or tie while entering or exiting the box like structure that reminded some European travellers of a coffin.[83] The tighter western trousers worn by men risked tearing when seated or lounging in native style in the palanquin. A posture of sleep was perhaps the most viable option given the changes in dress; inadvertently reaffirming the palanquin's resemblance to a coffin. By the mid 19th century the numbers of palanquins on the streets had dwindled and modern forms of transport like buggies, shigrams and coaches were commonly used.[84] These conveyances, designed such that passengers climbed (rather than crawled in) and were seated upright, were more compatible with modern dress.

The state was reluctant to grant its native citizenry shoes as well as chairs in official settings. E. M. Collingham has described how various guidebooks written by and for British officials in India focused on the management of Indian bodies in administrative spaces, particularly whether an individual was deserving of being offered a chair.[85] *Notes on Indian Affairs* (1837) suggested a chair could be provided for Indian landowners and respectable merchants, a bench for farmers or shopkeepers and a *setringee* (low bench) or carpet for the inferior classes. More facilitative manuals like *Instructions Regarding Intercourse between European Officials and*

Taj see Sharada Dwivedi and Charles Allen, *The Taj at Apollo Bunder: The Story of the Taj Mahal Palace Mumbai, Established 1903*. Mumbai: Pictor Publishing Pvt Ltd, 2010, p. 70.

[83] N. Benjamin, 'Palanquins in Bombay, c. 1750-1900' in *Deccan Studies*, Volume 3, Issue 2, July-December 2005, p. 72-3.

[84] Ibid., pp. 70-1.

[85] E. M. Collingham, *Imperial Bodies: The Physical Experience of the Raj, c.1800-1947*. Cambridge: Polity Press, 2001, p. 58.

Natives (1821) recommended that native officers should not be kept waiting though if the occasion arose they should be furnished with a chair.[86] These guidelines suggest how the colonial state chose to ground bodily difference between ruler and ruled largely through the denial of material objects. The display of subjugation or respect by native bodies in themselves (that is by relying only on the body's capacity to capitulate) was not as convincing as when accompanied by the lack or the loss of external markers like shoes and chairs.

Chairs offered the possibility of maintaining a posture of uprightness, prolonging the bodily language of command, a sense individual occupancy, a levelled gaze between parties, a clear disassociation of dressed feet from the other parts of the body and consequently even lesser cause to remove one's shoes, which, if seated on the ground, could soil the clothes with which they came into contact. The colonial imagination had invested the chair with the greatest symbolic value amidst the myriad forms of furniture available in India. In Henry Henderson's *The Bengalee: or, Sketches of Society and Manners in the East* (1829), the deliberation on the character of chairs is telling:

> 'In the first place, is it nothing, that a Chair is the visible sign of our civilization and superiority over the barbarous nations we have conquered? Is it not as much an outward symbol of our proud distinction from among the enslaved millions of the East, as is the black beaver adornment of the head of our countrymen, or the carefully preserved shape and fashion of our habiliments? [87]

The common vocabulary of the English language had also invested the commodity with official sanction. By 'chairing a meeting' or in 'being invited to take the chair', administrative discourse had made the chair the central artifact, on whose occupancy

[86] Idem.
[87] Henry Barkley Henderson, *The Bengalee: or, Sketches of Society and Manners in the East.* London: 1829, p. 3.

hung the fate of a meeting. Similarly linguistic appropriations of the 'head' and 'foot' had largely maintained the locational value associated with each body part.[88]

At the trial of the Shoe Question case, a conflict between a Parsi reporter and an English barrister, over the occupancy of a chair, led to the reporter suing the barrister for assault. Darashaw Dorabjee, a reporter for *The Times of India* was seated at a round table taking notes and briefing R. B. Barton on behalf of Byramjee, when John Dunbar, a barrister, approached and asked if he was engaged with the case. Dorabjee replied to the affirmative. Dunbar wanted Dorabjee to vacate the chair at what was considered the Barrister's Table. Three European gentlemen who were seated at the table were not approached. They were neither barristers, solicitors, nor connected with the press.[89] Dunbar told Dorabjee, 'Get out you'.[90] Dorabjee retorted that he would comply only if the Senior Magistrate ordered so. At the trial Dorabjee recalled:

> His Worship then told me to leave the chair, asking me to take another at the other side of the table. I got up and was about to pick up my writing materials, when Mr. Dunbar grasped me very tightly by my left arm, and saying, 'Get out you impertinent fellow,' pushed me violently off the chair, I caught hold of one of the arms of the chair, or otherwise, I should, I believe, have been thrown off my balance, I immediately applied to the Court for its protection. Mr. Dunbar took the chair in which I had been sitting, and after a few minutes left the Court.[91]

The focus on the chair in the narrative as the object of desire and conflict and its subsequent role as a support, suggests how firmly it had been entrenched in citizen's imaginings as a symbol worth battling over. When accompanied by the table, which separates, by a solid mass and safe distance, a person and a petitioner, and on whose surface the makers of professional proficiency can be displayed (calendars, time-

[88] As this footnote indicates.
[89] *The Bombay Gazette*, 1 May 1862, p. 413 (MSA, January to July 1862 stack).
[90] Idem.
[91] Idem.

pieces, files), they formed the tools for establishing the modern public man in civic spaces. In being asked to take a seat at the other side of the table (rather than an unaccompanied chair elsewhere), the Judge in some sense, acknowledged Dorabjee as a public professional, though only after recognising the professional privileges and prejudices Dunbar held. Without the surface of the table, Dorabjee's note taking would have had to rely on his body for support, cutting a figure of an aspiring though not fully achieved urban professional. The charge of assault against Dunbar was dismissed.

The wedding appears to be the first Parsi religious ceremony that included both shoes and chairs within the sacred precinct that was created for the occasion. Through the nuptials, the bride and groom remain seated on a pair of chairs while the two officiating priests stand before them. Both parties retain their footwear, even on the white cloth that was traditionally used to delimit the sacrosanct space (Figure 1.10). To the question of which came first, shoes or chairs, it is likely that the inclusion of chairs made possible the wearing of shoes. The seating arrangements of two other major Parsi ceremonies, the *navjote* (initiation) and *jashan* (thanksgiving) ceremonies, will help with understanding the order. In both ceremonies, performed to date on the ground, the participants are seated cross-legged on a piece of cloth; their shoes are removed at a distance from the cloth (Figure 1.11). It seems that as long as shoes could be in direct contact with the wearer's clothes and parts of the body (as was the case with seating cross-legged) they were kept aside. In the wedding ceremony, shoes could be accommodated since the couple was seated on chairs and the priests





FIGURE 1.10 & 1.11. (Above) A Parsi marriage ceremony with the bride and groom seated on chairs and the priests standing. All the participants and audience are wearing shoes. (Below) A *navjote* (initiation ceremony) with the priests seated on the ground and their shoes kept aside. The child being initiated and the main priest stand at certain points during the ceremony, without shoes.

(*History of the Parsis*.)

remained standing.[92] As the practice of including shoes and chairs was firmly established in the ceremony, the white cloth spread on the ground was withdrawn, possibly since its purpose as a surface on which to be seated was no longer served.

While some of the shifts in Parsi religious custom lent to such functional logic, others followed a trajectory that was less coherent. The rite of washing the newlywed's feet is one example. Traditionally, following the main marriage ceremony, the feet of the couple were washed with water. Their shoes, of native style, were temporarily and easily slipped off and placed aside. The scholar priest Jivanji Modi explained that the significance of the custom may have been 'that of washing away all past mistakes and driving away all evils and misfortunes. Most probably, it signifies a kind of welcome. In India, visitors, who come from some distance, are first given some water to wash their feet soiled by a long walk.'[93] The removal of the couple's shoes enabled another practice the playful hiding of footwear by young relatives till the wearer paid a fee for its return. With the introduction of western shoes and boots that were more difficult to remove, the footwear was left on and only the front tips of the shoes were washed with a little water.[94] The prioritizing of convenience and incoherence belies some of the more carefully considered and packaged appropriations of western material offerings to Parsi culture. Since shoes now remained firmly on through the marriage

[92] A pair of shoes were an integral part of the engagement ceremony for the Zoroastrians in Persia in the mid 19th century. The Parsi reformer Manockjee Limjee Hataria, who spent several years with the Zoroastrians in Persia, noted: '…the ladies from the boy's side put on the shoes on the girl's feet, and the ring on her finger. At that time, it is said that lady NN has put her feet into the shoes of behdin NN (co-religionist) and became his wife.' Both parties, from girl's and boy's side, including the couple, were seated opposite each other and did not make use of chairs. Marzban Giara, Ramiyar P. Karanjia and Michael Stausberg, 'Manekji on the Religious/Ritual Practices of the Iranian Zoroasrtians: An English Translation of a Passage from his Travel Report in Gujarati (1865)' in *Zoroastrian Rituals in Context*, Michael Stausberg (ed.). Leiden: Brill, 2004, pp. 489-490.
[93] Modi, *The Religious Ceremonies and Customs of the Parsees*, p. 43.
[94] Idem.

ceremony and festivities, the game of hiding and returning them was no longer possible.

Conclusion

This chapter has shown how that the main challenges to the changes in Parsi dress came from the colonial state, over the question of wearing shoes. Shoes were already an important component of Parsi modern dress by the mid 19th century, but they became the primary artifact through these challenges and the Parsis' defense, which was increasingly framed in the language of 'rights' and which used the mechanisms of the press and colonial law for redress. Using the figure of the Parsi man in dressed feet, this chapter has exemplified the argument that Parsis increasingly related to private and public spaces in the city by aligning and levelling them.

2. Women and the Parsi Domestic Sphere

Introduction

Among the pieces of furniture introduced into the Parsi household in the second half of the l9th century was the iron chair. It provided a new seat, an individualised space, in which female members could pass their monthly or 40 day post-natal period of menstrual confinement. Like the beds and baby's cots, the furniture traditionally provided in the room reserved for menstrual usage, the chair was made of iron, the material used to contain bodily states considered highly polluting in Zoroastrianism.[95] The chair offered female members a new posture, a poor recreational activity in the stark ground floor room in which they were temporarily through regularly confined. These gradual, mundane changes in the strict menstrual practices of Parsi households tellingly signify the ways in which western modernity and indigenous custom were negotiated in the Parsi domestic sphere in the second half of the 19th and early 20th centuries.

This chapter will consider how the relationship between Parsi women and domesticity changed with the challenges of modernity. It will examine the ways and pace at which three practices - women's confinement during postnatal and monthly menstruation, women's dress and dining –'modernised' in the second half of the 19th and early 20th centuries. The new ways the relationship between women and domesticity was reinforced, extended and disconnected through these changing practices will be demonstrated. It will also analyse how these changing domestic practices shaped the

[95] For descriptions of the practices of confinement and their material setting in Parsi homes in the 19th and early 20th centuries see Mrs. Dosebai Cowasjee Jessawalla, *The Story of My Life*. Bombay, 1911; Dadabhai Naoroji, *The Manners and Customs of the Parsees*. A Paper Read Before the Liverpool Philomatic Society, 13 March, 1861. London: 1862; Jivanji Jamshedji Modi, *The Religious Ceremonies and Customs of the Parsees*. Bombay: British India Press, 1922.

ways Parsi women engaged with the public sphere and public institutions, particular hospitals, at the turn of the 20th century. The role Parsi social reformers played in bringing about these changes as well the ways they presented them to a larger, often British, audience will be examined. The last two sections of the chapter will explore the unusual private-public sphere Manockjee Cursetjee, a judge and social reformer, established in his home, Villa Byculla, in the 1860s. Of particular interest is Cursetjee's promotion of the cause of female education through setting up a girls' school, the Alexandra Native Girls' English Institution, at his home in 1863 and his daughters' involvement in the Institution's administration.

Scholars have examined, often within a single work, three aspects of the relationship between women and the domestic sphere.[96] Firstly, scholars have looked at states of female domestic suffering linked to conjugality in the 19th century and prior –the exploitation of child brides; the disciplinary regimes of widowhood; and the death of the widow on the funeral pyre of her deceased husband, a highly sensory public spectacle of pain and death that was outlawed in 1829.[97] Amongst these, the subject of the surviving widow allows for the most comprehensive review of the everyday experiences of domestic suffering.[98] Secondly, scholars have demonstrated how in nationalist discourses at the turn of the 20th century, women came to represent the

[96] For the literature that encompasses the three aspects see Tanika Sarkar, *Hindu Wife, Hindu Nation: Community, Religion and Cultural Nationalism.* New Delhi, Permanent Black, 2001, Dipesh Chakrabarty, *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference*. New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2000 and Partha Chatterjee, *The Nation and its Fragments: Colonial and Postcolonial Histories*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993.
[97] Also see Swati Chattopadhyay, *Representing Calcutta: Modernity, nationalism, and the colonial uncanny.* Oxford: Routledge, 2005, Chapter 5 'Death in Public'.
[98] Dipesh Chakravarty uses the term 'domestic cruelty' to encapsulate the suffering. He titles his chapter on the plight of Bengali widows and the literary archive created around and by them 'Domestic Cruelty and the Birth of the Subject' in *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference* (2000). Swati Chattopadhyay also uses the term 'domestic cruelty' to refer to the practice of socially abandoning Hindu women and girls that had left their marital home voluntarily or involuntarily. Chattopadhyay, *Representing Calcutta*, p. 226.

sovereign and spiritual world of the home which was in opposition to the material and treacherous outer world, the domain of men. The home was imagined as an uncontaminated and unchanging space, where tradition was preserved where as in the outer world, the compromises with modernity were made. In this equation of inner/outer, nationalists located the issues of women's social reform within the inner world of the home, strategically shielding them from the forces of change in the public domain.[99] Thirdly, scholars have examined (perhaps as ways of including the voices and agency of the subjects of two previous discourses) a host of female autobiographies and the importance of the site of the domestic in the staging of the protagonists' stories. Another smaller body of scholarship has focused on the *zenana* as the primary gendered spatial configuration of the native household, one that a range of English and Indian female practitioners tried to penetrate and ameliorate.[100] This literature has largely taken the Bengali, Hindu (upper-caste) household as its historical example and archive. The Bengali experience does not hold or translate well to the Parsi setting for a number of reasons.

In many settings, Parsis consciously aligned both their outer and inner worlds with the project of modernity. Their homes were increasingly well equipped to help maintain in private their public bodily deportment and dress, as the previous chapter has demonstrated. The configuration of the *zenana* was not found in Parsi homes. The conditions of Parsi widows were significantly better placed. Marriages between young

[99] Chatterjee, *The Nation and its Fragments*, p. 121.
[100] See Janaki Nair, 'Uncovering the Zenana: Visions of Indian Womanhood in Englishwomen's Writings, 1813-1940' in *Journal of Women's History* 2 (Spring 1990), pp. 8-34, Antoinette Burton, 'Contesting the Zenana: The Mission to Make "Lady Doctors for India," 1874-1885' in *Journal of British Studies* 35 (July 1996), pp. 368-97.
Cornelia Sorabji (1866-1954), whose father was a Parsi convert to Christianity and who identified as a Christian Parsi, was one of the prominent female practitioners. As mentioned in the Introduction, Sorabji was an Oxford trained lawyer who represented *purdahnashin* or women in seclusion in the Calcutta court of wards. See Antoinette Burton, *Dwelling in the Archive: Women Writing House, Home, and History in Late Colonial India*. New York: OUP, 2003.

Parsi widows from wealthy families to Parsi men of lower income families occurred through the 19th century. With the passing of the Parsi Intestate Succession Act in 1865, the widow was entitled to half the share of the estate received by a son, in the case of intestate deaths.[101] While the body of the older widow was marked with the signs of conjugal loss -a black sari, the absence of ornament, minimal jewellery- as well as its inability to participate instrumentally in domestic festivities, it was not regularised into a regime of household labour and asceticism, in the way that middle class Hindu widows' lives were regimented.[102] Parsi social reformers criticised the practice of post-natal confinement as the primarily form of female domestic suffering in the Parsi household. They projected the 'problems' of infant marriage and widowhood onto the Hindu community.[103] Mitra Sharafi has suggested they went a step further, even reproaching the British about the backwardness of English law in terms of gender equality.[104] With the advent of nationalism, the Parsi domestic was at best being fashioned as a rational space, equipped for practical use with foreign goods and devices rather than being imagined as a spiritual one, stocked with a few essential, indigenous items.

Contemporary discourses described Parsi modernisation as a two pronged process of discarding 'Hindu customs' and adopting practices in the English/ European mode instead. 'Hindu customs' became an umbrella term under which the older Parsi

[101] When the Act was amended in 1939, the widow was entitled to the same share of the estate as received by a son. The widows of the descendants of the deceased were now also entitled to a share, which could amount to the same as what the widow of the deceased received. Mitra Sharafi, *Law and Identity in Colonial South Asia*: *Parsi Legal Culture, 1772-1947.* New York: Cambridge University Press, 2014, pp. 159-162.
[102] See Sarkar for a powerful analysis of the rigours of Hindu widowhood.
[103] Eckehard Kulke, *The Parsees in India: A Minority as Agent of Social Change.* New Delhi: Vikas Publishing House, 1974. Of the reformers Behramji Malabari was the most vociferous. Kulke tellingly introduces Malabari in his study with the following line-'The most successful and most prominent Parsee Hindu reformer was *Behramji M. Malabari* (1853-1912).'
[104] Sharafi, *Law and Identity in Colonial South Asia*, p.154.

practices being rejected were classified. If at all the Parsi domestic was being conceived of as a sheltered space, as the Bengali home was, it was being sheltered from a 'corrupting' Hindu world. In this chapter these discourses will be the lens for tracing the shifts in Parsi domesticity. Dosebai Cowasjee Jessawalla's (1832-1911), autobiography *The Story of My Life* (1911), describes the shifts from an elite woman's perspective (Figure 2.1). The 499-page autobiography, the first written by a Parsi woman, is striking in its frankness and inclusion of a number of intimate, even awkward domestic details. As we shall see social reformers Dadabhai Naoroji's and Dosabhoy Framjee's commentaries on the community document domestic change from a distanced, quasi-anthropological approach. Reformer Behramji M. Malabari's (1853-1912) work, while mainly set on the much larger stages of the national and international, does importantly offer an ideological framework for the Parsi shift from 'Hindu custom' to English trends. Malabari takes issue with the Hindu model in terms of the inner/outer, private/public dichotomy, arguing that while Hindus could lead convincingly liberal public lives, their private lives were often the antithesis.[105] This chapter will be looking at the ways in which women-focused social reform among Parsis served purposes that were very different to those of Hindu reformers concerned with women and the domestic sphere.

Confinement: from pollution to hygiene

Parsi women could spend as much as three months of a year in confinement. They were confined for the duration of their monthly menstrual cycle as well as for a 40-day period of post-natal menstruation. The space in which they were confined consisted of a stark room equipped with iron furniture on the ground floor of their

[105] Dayaram Gidumal, *The Life and Life-Work of Behramji M. Malabari*. Bombay, 1888, p. 70.



FIGURE 2.1. A photograph of Dosebai Cowasjee Jessawalla with her signature under it, featured in the opening section of her autobiography, *The Story of My Life* (1911).

(*The Story of My Life.*)

domestic accommodation. The period of post-natal confinement was usually spent at their natal homes to which they temporarily returned for 40-days or more. Monthly confinement, which could last between 3 to 9 days, was spent at the home at which they were resident. Interestingly, it was the relocation of the Parsi woman at the time of postnatal confinement, from her marital home to the natal home and back, that primarily distinguished monthly and post-natal menstruating practices among the Parsis. In other respects the conditions of both kinds of confinement were strikingly similar. The menstruating woman was treated as a polluting body and subjected to the stingencies of the room - iron furniture, old clothing and separate utensils. Persons who came in contact with her had to bathe before they could resume regular activity. Her diet were restricted and rationed. Even the body of newborn child, kept in confinement with its mothers for the first 40 days of its life, was considered impure. It was wrapped in old clothes and placed in a cot made of iron. Women underwent a ritual ablution before coming out of both monthly and post-natal confinement. They offered expiation prayers for any lapses during these periods.

In *The Story of My Life*, Dosebai Cowasjee Jessawalla recounts seven periods of post-natal confinement during the first ten years (1852-1862) of her marriage. Jessawalla experiences were shaped by domestic discord in both her natal and her marital home. Her first confinement, spent at her widowed mother Meheribai's home in 1853, ended with a disagreement. Meheribai wanted Jessawalla and her newborn granddaughter to remain at her home for a five-month period. Jessawalla left soon after the mandatory 40-days were over. Unpleasantries with members of her marital household led Jessawalla and her husband to move into a separate house in the Tardeo locality in 1855. Jessawalla remained in her new home for her third pregnancy/ postnatal

confinement onward, an uncommon practice at the time. Aided by neither mother nor mother-in-law, she largely depended on the services of domestic servants, some of who were hired for the specific period. She recounts her sixth confinement:

> We returned to our bungalow at Tardeo in August where I was confined of my sixth child, sad to say, still born, and the forty days' seclusion was spent in continual illness, my life was despaired of I only regained my health after two months of suffering.[106]

Jessawalla's prose is striking for ways in which it weaves these episodes of confinement into the general course of events as well as in its stating of the outcome of the pregnancy and the causes of failure. Four of the seven pregnancies in the first ten years of her marriage were unsuccessful. She also describes in detail episodes of illness among family members. Given her frankness and the similarities of the conditions of post-natal and monthly confinement it is surprising that the later practice does not feature in her autobiography. The absence is also noticeable in the discourses of Parsi social reformers and medical practitioners, who critiqued only the conditions of post-natal confinement in their commentaries on the community. It raises the question of which kinds of practices qualified as suffering (and suffering worth documenting) in women's writing and the discourses on reform and whether a condition was perceived more keenly, including by the subject herself, when the risk to another body was involved, in this case that of newborn child.

A rare account of a Parsi woman participating in the public sphere during her monthly menstruation is noted in the proceedings of a case in the Supreme Court of Bombay in March 1862. Dinbaee Dinshaw Muncherjee was a witness in a case in which an employee of the Lunatic Asylum in Colaba was charged with criminal breach of trust,

[106] Jessawalla, *The Story of My Life*, p. 92.

as a government servant, for stealing a large quantity of clothing from the Asylum. The employee's wife sold a few of the items of clothing (saris) to Dinbaee, who had bought them for the use of her maid. Since her the maid did not approve of them, Dinbaee in turn sold the saris to a 'Ghattee woman'.[107] Dinbaee was absent at court on the day she was required to testify, on account of her menses. A subpoena was issued and she was brought to court. At the witness-box the Parsi priest (who administered the oath for Parsi witnesses) refused to administer the oath as per the established custom since it would involve touching the hand of a menstruating woman. An altercation between the judge and priest ensued:

> Sir M. Sausse.- Tell him to swear her in the proper way or I will dismiss him.
> Swearing-priest.- I will then swear her upon her "Kustee" (sacred thread).
> Sir M. Sausse.- Tell him me must swear her immediately in the proper way, or I will at once dismiss him.
> The sacred book was accordingly put into the witness's hands, and the Parsee priest swore her by putting his own hand upon the book.[108]

Shifts in the practices of confinement were noticeable at three levels. The first lay in the meager furnishings in the room, in the customs and ceremonies performed by the menstruating women and finally in the location of the room. Along with the iron chair, mentioned in the opening of this chapter, spoons were introduced as cutlery, a small addition to the dining arrangements of the setting. Meals were provided from the main kitchen of the household, though they were separately cooked and rationed. They were distributed such that non-menstruating members did not come into contact with menstruating ones. The items (chairs and spoons) introduced into the material interior of the room for confinement, were well associated with western 'civilization'

[107] *The Times of India*, 22 March 1862, p. 3. For a detailed account of the functioning of the Lunatic Asylum at Colaba, including how articles of dress were distributed among the inmates see Preeti Chopra, *A Joint Enterprise: Indian Elites and the Making of British Bombay*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2011, pp. 120-128.
[108] *The Times of India*, 22 March 1862, p. 3.

and ‘modernity’ in the Anglo-Indian and Parsi imagination, as the previous chapter and the following section on dining demonstrate.

Secondly, some of the customs and ceremonies associated with the period of confinement were gradually done away with. By the 1860s the Gote ceremony was being discarded. Traditionally, for the first ten days after delivery, the mother’s diet was severely restricted; meat and animal produce were not permitted. On the tenth day the Gote ceremony was performed which marked that she could resume a regular diet, though perhaps still in keeping with limitations of the diets of confinement. Jessawalla recounts rejecting the custom: ‘I threw off this tyrant yoke of superstition and subsequently the whole family did the same. This “Gote” ceremony is evidently borrowed from the Hindoos, like many other customs still practiced in Parsee households.’[109] Jessawalla’s statement gives us a sense of the range of Parsi customs that were being relegated as Hindu to substantiate their discontinuance. Another custom, forsaken by the end of the 19th century, was the Patet, an atonement prayer that women engaged a priest to recite after the end of their menstruation period. Jivanji Jamshedji Modi, the prominent scholar priest, explained that the prayer was offered ‘with a hope that if any injunctions enjoined to be observed in the matter of isolation may not have been observed, the fault may be pardoned.’[110]

The third was the most conspicuous and crucial change- a shift in the location of the room for confinement from the ground floor to the upper storey/s of the domestic. The shift was meant to symbolise a sanitary transformation of the practice- from the dark, damp, ill-ventilated ground floor room to an airy, brighter room on the upper storey/s.

[109] Jessawalla, *The Story of My Life*, p. 89.
[110] Jivanji Jamshedji Modi, *The Religious Ceremonies and Customs of the Parsees*. Bombay: British India Press, 1922, p. 175.

The Parsi doctors and reformers, who had stimulated this change, saw it as something of a solution to the 'problems' of confinement and unsanitary living conditions. David Arnold observes that in the mid 19th century colonial medical discourses increasingly held Indians responsible for their own ill health and morality, citing factors like their diets, domestic spaces, religious practices and social institutions as the determinants to health rather than older explanations like the Indian climate, which absolved the individual's agency.[111] The shift in the location of the room for confinement was part of the larger Parsi response to these colonial challenges. In some sense Parsis met the colonial medical challenge as they did the colonial missionary one, by engaging in self-criticism and conspicuous action. In the later case, critiques by Christian missionaries of the principles of Zoroastrianism and contemporary Parsi religious practice were met by Parsis admitting their lack of knowledge of the scriptures, a defence of the tenets of Zoroastrianism and the introduction of religious education at Parsi schools, the translation of scriptures to accessible languages and the eradication of rituals that were not sanctioned by the scriptures.

In the homes of wealthy Parsis, inhabited by a single joint family, the shift in the location of the room for confinement was considered a solution for the periods of both monthly and post-natal menstruation. The new room on an upper storey was a suitable space where the pregnant/postnatal woman could be comfortably attended to by visiting doctors, trained midwives and domestic servants (Figure 2.2). In the multi-dwelling, multi-storey and multi-family buildings in Bombay in which the Parsi poor and middle classes resided, female tenants, who previously retired to a room on the ground floor of the building, which was exterior to their dwelling and supplied by the

[111] David Arnold, *Colonizing the Body: State Medicine and Epidemic Disease in Nineteenth Century India*. University of California Press, 1993, p. 42-3.



TARDEO ESTATE, PROPERTY AND BUNGALOW BUILT BY THE AUTHORESS.

FIGURE 2.2. The residence of Dosebai Jessawalla at Tardeo.

(*The Story of My Life*.)

landlord now shifted to a common room on one of upper storeys of the building, which probably was still supplied by the landlord. This arrangement seems to have been regarded as a satisfactory solution for the period of monthly menstruation. For the longer and riskier postnatal condition, however, it was considered an unsuitable option. Parsi doctors and reformers stressed that the overcrowding caused in the buildings as well as the inability to afford the fees of doctors on home visits made the conditions of postnatal confinement detrimental to the patient's health. The poor and middle-classes were encouraged to get admitted into the new, modern and affordable Parsee Lying-in Hospital in the Fort district (Figure 2.3). Thus the challenges traditional post-natal practices posed to ideal Parsi domesticity were resolved in-house for only a section of the community, while the rest were offered a public, institutionalized solution. Chapter 6 will describe the early years of the Hospital's functioning.

Made in China: Parsee women's dress

The trends in Parsi women's dress followed a trajectory independent of and often at odds with the trends in Parsi menswear in the later half of the 19th century. Increasingly, as inspiration and examples for men's clothing came from the West, women's fashion reflected the influences of the East- within a local context by retaining the sari as the main article of clothing as well as incorporating the wider Orient by filling the space of the sari with intricate Chinese embroidery patterns (Figure 2.4). For men, therefore, there was a shift to made-to-measure western dress with the sense of individualization it could offer its consumers. For women, on the other hand, there was a continued usage of unstitched garments that could easily be

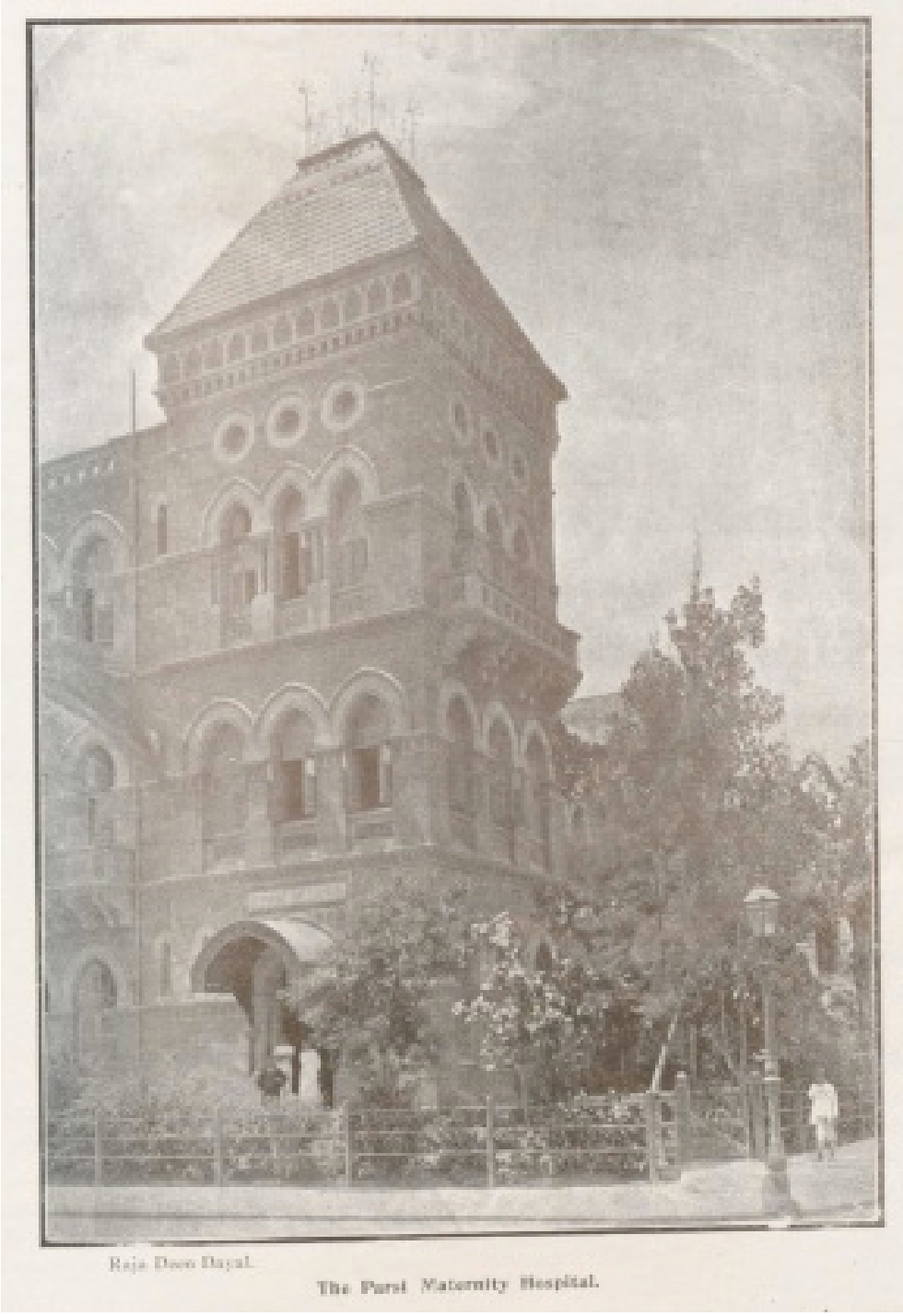


FIGURE 2.3. An early photograph of the Parsee Lying-in Hospital, which was located in the Esplanade area of the Fort district.

(*The Parsi.* Vol. 1. No. 5., May, 1905, p. 167.)



FIGURE 2.4. A Parsi couple, Nusserwanjee and Freny Dinshaw, in modern Parsi dress.

(Courtesy Veera and Jehangir Patel.)

shared, transferred and inherited. No doubt the shifts were more striking and obvious in menswear, as one kind of clothing was replaced with another – from the white *angrakha* to a version of the Victorian lounge coat in black, from loose cotton pants to fitting European trousers, from the heavy turban to the customized 'Parsi Hat', as demonstrated in the previous chapter. With womenswear, the form of the sari was retained, requiring a closer and more careful look to ascertain the novelty of the garment, which lay in the intricate embroidery work. The traditional style of draping the sari, in the *seedha pallav* (straight end-piece) style, was also maintained, that is with the end-piece gathered over the right shoulder and spread out to cover the bust of the wearer and the corner tucked away at the hip. The traditional items worn with the sari– the *ijar*, the pyjama style pantaloons worn under the sari and the *kanchri* or *choli*, the short sleeved blouse worn on the upper body, were replaced with looser, more flowing forms of the petticoat and the Victorian bodice with long sleeves.[112] As the previous chapter has shown, the *sudreh*, the ritual garment, was transformed from a standardized unisex garment made from white muslin to a fashionable component of Parsi women's dress that incorporated new fabrics like fine lace and embroidered net. Parsi women continued to wear the *sudreh* in the same style that is under the upper garment and over the upper part of the bottom of the sari, allowing a good portion of the *sudreh* to be displayed.

The sari with Chinese embroidery worn by Parsi women came to be called the *gara*. An examination of the intricate patterns of the embroidery reveal pastoral settings, an abundance of flora and fauna and a preference for motifs in pairs (of a male and female). In presenting images associated with auspiciousness, domesticity, fertility

[112] Dosabhoy Framjee, *The Parsees: Their History, Manners, Customs, And Religion*. London: Smith, Elder and Co., 1858, p. 122.

and conjugality in Chinese (and often Parsi) culture, the *gara* offered a worldview quite contrary to that of Parsi menswear, with its implications of modern selfhood and sobriety. Most striking was the varied use of colour in the clothing of both sexes- Parsi menswear, following the larger trends in western menswear, increasing favoured black and dark coloured fabrics, while the *gara* was created by embroidering (in monochromatic white thread) on silk textiles of strong colours- red, magenta, purple and black. This section and following one will attempt to understand and interpret the dressed body of the Parsi woman in a variety of settings- beside a Parsi man, in a domestic context and in the urban sphere of colonial Bombay.

While the imagery of the *gara* conveyed a sense of pastoral serenity, semantic and other markers of the garment suggest a shrewd economy of material and measurement. Priya Mani notes that the earliest *garas* were probably just five metre pieces cut from embroidered lengths of cloth readily available in the Chinese market in the 1830s and 1840s. The pieces were cut as per the specifications of Parsi merchants, who bought and carried the garment back to India, for their womenfolk to wear as saris. In fact, the Gujarati word *garo*, the singular form of *gara*, is a corruption of *galo*, meaning width or diameter.[113] The subset of Gujarati terms used to describe the kinds of *garas* were based on the extent and location of the embroidery- *kor no garo* meant embroidery on all four borders or *kors* and was the standard type of *gara*, *kor-pallav no garo* meant embroidery on the borders and the end-piece of the *gara* and *akho garo* meant embroidery over the whole or *akho gara*, including the borders (Figure 2.5, 2.6 & 2.7). Borders emerge as the defining feature

[113] Priya Mani, 'Parsi Attire: Garas, Jhablas and Ijars' in *Peonies & Pagodas: Embroidered Parsi Textiles, Tapi Collection*. Shilpa Shah and Tulsi Vatsal, eds. Surat: Garden Silk Mills Ltd., 2010, pp. 27-39.

of the *gara* and exemplify how boundaries, with their material and symbolic implications of





FIGURES 2.5 & 2.6. (Above) A portrait of a lady in a *kor no garo* (border embroidered) and (below) a photograph of a lady in a *kor-pallav no garo* (border and end-piece embroidered).

(*Peonies & Pagodas*, p. 26 and *Portrait of a Community*, p. 113.)



FIGURE 2.7. A portrait of a lady in an *akho garo* (fully embroidered *garo*).

(*Peonies & Pagodas*, p. 33.)

space and selfhood, were created on unstitched cloth, usually associated with a seamlessness of form. As the *gara* gained popularity with Parsi women and the demand for it grew, it began to be designed and produced, in workshops in China, in ways that lent to its draping as a sari in the *seedha pallav* (straight end-piece) style. The most obvious ways of economizing were by leaving unembroidered the areas that were tucked in while draping and consequently hidden from view. Even the small area at the tip of the *pallav* that was tucked at the hip was left unadorned (Figure 2.8). Since *garas* were sold by weight, the amount of embroidery was a key factor in the levels of pricing. The terms used to describe the *gara* also helped to effortlessly indicate the garment's possible value.

It is difficult to gauge how readily Parsi women adopted the *gara* when it was first introduced in the 1830-40s. The early role Parsi men played as the carriers and potential conceivers of the garment's form would have probably eased the process of acclimatising to the garment. The *gara,* itself being a sari in embroidered style, was a familiar and relatively non-threatening item of clothing. Another factor that may have helped make the early *gara* an acceptable and recognizable article was its close association with the domestic realm in China, Europe and India. The embroidery patterns as well as the kinds of material used in the *gara* were also common to a host of household linen- bedcovers, tablecloths, piano shawls, wall hangings- all made in China and exported to the West, as well to India, in smaller numbers (Figure 2.9). It is also difficult to gauge how Parsi consumers drove the designs of the *gara* after it had become a popular item of their dress. Shilpa Shah and Tulsi Vatsal explain that while

more evidence is required to determine whether the embroidery workshops in China that were patronised by Parsi clients had particular pattern books with *gara* designs or



FIGURE 2.8. A *kor-pallav no garo* with area tucked at the hip left unembroidered. (*Peonies & Pagodas*, p. 59.)



FIGURE 2.9. A piano shawl, a popular home furnishing.

(*Peonies & Pagodas*, pp. 117)

whether Parsi clients selected designs from the same generic pattern books used as sources for the other Chinese export embroideries including those that went to the West, cultural preferences are clearly reflected in the textiles produced.[114] For example, while the monochrome white embroidery on a white background was much in demand in some parts of the West, particularly for wedding gowns and table linen, Parsis evidently found this combination too tepid for their tastes, favouring stronger background colours like red and purple which highlighted the white embroidery to striking effect.[115]

The figure of the Parsi woman draped much like the furnishings in her home, would have harmonized with the domestic landscape in a novel way; her decorative aspect at once more obvious but also more ordinary, since it was multiplied on a host of inanimate objects. The embroidered imagery itself was an ode to the domestic 'ideals' of conjugal fidelity, fertility, sociability and happiness. Popular motif patterns included pairs of birds of the same size either facing each other or in the same direction, fish, phoenixes, the swirl, lotuses, chrysamthemums, peonies etc. These motifs were considered auspicious in both Chinese and Parsi cultures. The rooster, for example, the only bird of the twelve-animal Chinese zodiac, was associated with the sun and symbolized strength and masculinity. Juxtaposed with grapes, it stood for good luck and abundance.[116] In Zoroastrian mythology the rooster was the companion

[114] Shilpa Shah and Tulsi Vatsal, 'Patterning a Gara' in *Peonies & Pagodas,* pp. 106-7.
[115] Ibid. p. 107.
[116] Aban Mukherji, 'Decorative Motifs and Bird Symbolism in Parsi Embroidery' in *Peonies & Pagodas,* p. 121.

of the angel Sroasha, the destroyer of demons.[117] No doubt, the garment also served to symbolically protect the wearer, warding of evil. In marking the bounded entity of the body, the limits of the self within a surrounding space, it was perhaps less effective. A Parsi woman in a *gara* seated on her embroidered bedcover makes for a curious image of continuity.[118] Domestic 'ideals' were also reinforced through a second set of Gujarati terms that described the *gara* in terms of the subject matter of the embroidery- *chakla-chakli no garo*, (male sparrow- female sparrows), *margha-marghi no garo* (rooster-hen), *cheena-cheeni no garo* (chinamen-chinawomen) (Figure 2.10, 2.11 & 2.12). These rhythmic and easily rememberable names created by the informal pairing of the male and female subject suggest how the domestic 'ideals' of conjugality and simple 'speakerly' sociability were reinforced at the level of the discourse on the *gara*.

The subversive potential of the garment was often in silent form. The *cheena-cheeni no garo*, which portrayed a pastoral and idyllic Chinese landscape, could also challenge the 'ideals' of domesticity and conjugality. Amidst the imagery of bridges, pavilions, pagodas, ornamental fences, rickshaw pullers, palanquins, male and female figures holding fans or birdcages or offering fruit, the figures of a courtesan cheering a melancholy partner were often found (Figure 2.13).[119] The use of motif of the peacock on the *gara* was another anomaly that complicates the community's careful selection of platforms and placement, as demonstrated in the previous chapter.

[117] Idem.
[118] In *The Hidden Mother* (2013) Linda Fregni Nagler documents how Victorian mothers, eager to get babies their portraits taken, disguised themselves as part of the furniture in the photographic studio so that they could hold their babies still during the relatively long exposure time of half a minute. Mothers disguised themselves as chairs, couches, curtains, becoming part of the furniture, rather than choosing to appear in their bodily form, which would have suggested, instead, a continuity of human form from mother to child. Linda Fregni Nagler, *The Hidden Mother*. Edited by Francesco Zanot and translated by Bennett Bazalgette-Staples. London: Mack, 2013.
[119] *Peonies & Pagodas*, p.78.

Peacocks are considered inauspicious by modern-day Parsis and it is unlikely that the superstition originated in the 20th century. The peacocks association with death, they roamed the vast green estates of the Towers of Silence, may have been one of the





FIGURE 2.10 & 2.11. (Above) A *chakla-chakli no garo* (male sparrow-female sparrow *garo*) and (below) a *margha-marghi no garo* (rooster-hen *garo*).

(*Peonies & Pagodas*, pp. 83 and 176.)



FIGURE 2.12. A *cheena-cheeni no garo* (chinamen-chinawomen *garo*).

(*Peonies & Pagodas*, p. 49.)



FIGURE 2.13. A detail of a courtesan cheering a melancholy partner in a *cheena-cheeni no garo* (chinamen-chinawomen *garo*).

(*Peonies & Pagodas*, p. 162.)

reasons they were considered inauspicious. A number of explanations could be offered for the prevalence of the courtesan and peacock imagery on the *gara* - the wearers prioritised beauty over propriety and belief, they were unaware of the intricacies of the imagery, sporting the imagery was a subversive act in its own right or the 'foreignness' of *gara* make it a viable platform on which the otherwise unacceptable could be placed. It could also be argued the novelty of the *gara* was that it escaped many of the traditional registers for the *sari*. In being a modern, cosmopolitan, colourful and convenient form, it stood outside conventional classification.

The *gara* was also adopted by the wider female native population, particularly by Hindu women, in the second half of the 19th and the turn of the 20th century. The *kor no garo* style (embroidered borders usually encompassing a plain monotone fabric) was a popular choice. It made ideal everyday wear- light to carry, easy on the eye yet with suitable definition and weight at edges, incorporating fabrics of paler colours (than the bold, darker hues of the *akho garo*); it was economical and versatile- the borders were detachable or could be cut out and attached to different fabrics, giving the impression of wearing an entirely new sari; it was easy to maintain- the body fabric could be washed after detaching the borders and the borders themselves could be rolled up, stored and transported.

In the popular imagination the association of the *gara* with/as Parsi dress seems to have taken root by the mid 19th century itself. Women from various communities

sporting the *gara* would have implied the imitation/adoption of Parsi style. Dosebai Jessawalla recounts that her mother's friends, the two wives of the *sethia* Khimchund Moteechund were 'both were equally desirous of emulating Parsi dress and elegance. They adopted China or English silk sarees, as well as Parsee fashioned Lahe sarees, and enjoyed the luxury of slippers, after the manner of the Parsees, as Hindus they having formerly gone barefoot.'[120] Jessawalla and her close friend, Bai Kesarbai Kalyandas Manmohundass, she notes, were attired so similarly that Kesarbai was ridiculed by her (Hindu) community for having become a '"fashionable Parsee lady."'[121] A portrait of Kesarbai draped in a *kor no garo*, with slippers and stockings is included in Dosebai's autobiography (Figure 2.14).

Women from Bombay's Khoja community seem to have adopted Parsi dress as their public dress as they gradually did away the practice of purdah in the late 19th century.[122] Members of the prominent Tyabji family established the satorial trends – Lady Hydari (nee Tyabji) was the first to appear unveiled in public, at the home of the Parsi industrialist Jamsetjee Tata; Rahat-un-Nafs Tyabji, the wife of jurist and social reformer Badruddin Tyabji, wore a *kor no garo* when she consented to sit for a photographic portrait (Figure 2.15 & 2.16).[123] The author and barrister Faiz Tyabji, who was Rahat-un-Nafs and Badruddin's son, suggests that amongst the Muslims

[120] Jessawalla, *The Story of My Life*, p. 44. Like Jessawalla's statement on the Gote ceremony quoted in the previous section on confinement, the term 'Hindu customs' is loaded with the implications of outdatedness and crudeness. Here it seems Jessawalla is more critical of the practice of going barefoot, rather than having two wives. She recounts, neutrally or supportively, several instances of polygyny among Parsis of her grandparents and parents' generation, including among her paternal and maternal grandfathers, both of whom she remarks took second wives to bear children.
[121] Ibid., p. 106.
[122] For the ways and pace at which the Khojas did away with the practice of purdah see F. B. Tyabji, 'Social Life in 1804 & 1929 Amongst Muslims in Bombay' in *Journal of the Bombay Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society*, 6 (1930), pp. 286-300.
[123] Ibid., p. 291 and *The Parsi. The English Journal of the Parsis and a High Class Illustrated Monthly*. Vol. 1. No. 3. Bombay, March, 1905, p. 275.

there was a sense of shared traditions and camaraderie between themselves and the Parsis. Parsis had also observed purdah, though the community had renounced the



FIGURE 2.14. Bai Kesarbai Manmohundass dressed in a *kor no garo*, with slippers and stockings.

(*The Story of My Life*.)





The Late Mrs. Budrudin Tayebji.

FIGURE 2.15 & 2.16. (Above) Lady Hydari (nee Tyabji) in a *kor no garo* and (below) a photographic portrait of Rahat-un-Nafs Tyabji in Parsi dress.

(Geni.com and *The Parsi* Vol. 1. No. 3. 1905, p. 275).

practice much earlier in the 19th century and had followed and supported the Muslims attempts at discarding the tradition.[124] Tyabji noted

> The main reason for slow progress in this respect amongst Muslims is their religious associations. These were absent amongst the Parsis. But it would be wrong not to express admiration at the courage and devotion to progress displayed by the Parsi families (notably the family of Mr. Manekji Cursetji) who were the pioneers of reform in this matter. Their example and advice was a source of great encouragement to the Muslims.[125]

The inter-communal involvement over the issue of the purdah could help explain why when Muslim women appeared in the public sphere they chose to dress in Parsi style.

The most notable example of the influence of Parsi dress comes from Bengal, where the 'Bombay style' -of wearing a sari, blouse, petticoat and shoes- was adopted by Bengali women.[126] Jnanadanandini Devi, credited with popularising the style, was exposed to Parsi dress when her husband Satyendranath Tagore, the first Indian member of the civil service and older brother of Rabindranath Tagore, was posted to Bombay. On Tagore's first posting to Bombay in 1863-64, the couple stayed with Manockjee Cursetjee at Villa Byculla, while the Alexandra Native Girls' English Institution was also operating from the household. Cursetjee's daughters helped the young Jnanadanandini Devi acclimatise to the new surroundings and their sartorial style no doubt influenced her.[127] Tagore was also struck by Parsi women's fashions. In *Bombai Chitra* (1899) he recounts his early impressions of the city.

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[124] Tyabji, 'Social Life in 1804 & 1929 Amongst Muslims in Bombay' p. 291.
[125] Idem.
[126] Chitra Deb, *Women of the Tagore Household*, translated by Smita Chowdhry and Sona Roy. New Delhi: Penguin Books India, 2010, p. 38.
[127] Satyendranath Tagore, *Bombai Chitra*. Calcutta: Old Brahmo Samaj Press, 1889, and the entry on Jnanadanandini Devi on the Banglapedia website http://en.banglapedia.org/index.php?title=Devi,_Jnanadanandini, accessed on 2 December 2014.

> A particularly attractive sight are beautiful Parsi wives with a handkerchief around their head, colourful silk saris, and shoes. City-dwellers do not wear such little clothes as Bengalis… You will have heard that westerners mock Bengalis for going around naked. Calcutta and Bombay have very different attitudes on this issue. The main difference between the cities can be summed up in two words – Calcutta is traditionalist and Bombay is a city of fashion.[128]

Jnanadanandini Devi's adopted and introduced the Parsi style first to her family, society and then to the public in Calcutta, through writing about her innovations in dress and offering a set of clothes to the readers of the monthly journal *Bamabodhini Patrika*.[129]

If forms of dress equipped Parsi women for moving around outside the domestic sphere, so did their accessories. Western boots and shoes and the umbrella, emerge as the chief articles of dress that equipped Parsi women for the public sphere in 19th century Bombay (Figure 2.17). Kaikhosro N. Kabraji, the editor of the *Rast Goftar and Satya Prakash*, recalled that Parsi women were initially denied the use of the umbrella as protection against the sun or rain.

> The sight of women walking barefooted, soaked to the skin in pouring rain, was certainly not decent, but it was decreed by their lords and masters that it was better than that of a woman walking with an umbrella in her hands. On a fine day, they sometimes protected themselves from the sun by holding up their slippers over their heads. Those were the days when boots and stockings were not worn by women.[130]

Accessories like purses, handbags and watches that could have further and conspicuously facilitated women's public role, particularly as consumers in the marketplace, gained widespread currency only in the 20th century. Among the reasons

[128] Tagore, *Bombai Chitra*, pp. 334-335. Translation courtesy Tariq Ali.
[129] The Banglapedia website, http://en.banglapedia.org/index.php?title=Bamabodhini_Patrika, accessed on 2 December 2014.
[130] K. N. Kabraji, 'Fifty Years Ago, Reminiscences of mid-19th century' series in *The Times of India*, 1901-02, section- Social Reform. The late Sharada Dwivedi generously shared retyped sections of this series with me. I have not been able to locate this section from the original archive.



FIGURE 2.17. A picture of a Parsi woman in Otto Rothfeld's 'Women of India', 1908.

(*Peonies & Pagodas*, p. 173.)

that could account for the late introduction of the accessories was that much of the purchasing Parsi women engaged in and experienced was within the domestic sphere, via the services of door-to-door salesmen like the Chinese *pheriawallas*. The need to carry the accessory on the person of the purchaser was reduced since its content, like money and handkerchiefs, were stored and easily accessible within the household space. Another factor could have been that purchases in public were made in the presence of husbands or fathers, increasingly confident carriers and dispensers of what Christopher Todd Matthews calls 'the tools of public mobility'- pockets, money, watches, keys.[131]

In contrast it can be argued that the form of the sari as well as the blouse worn with it could accommodate the carrying and containment of small necessities on the person of the wearer herself. Essentials were tucked between the gathered folds of the sari at the waist or within the bounded entity of the blouse, a practice that continues to date in India. Orpa Slapak notes that women of the Bene Isreali community tucked a pouch (tied with a lace) into the waist of the sari, 'a kind of hidden pocket' in which they stored money and other valuables.[132] The layers and drapes of the sari would have allowed the pouch to remain inconspicuous, even covering the slight bulge that was created. Keys, used for the locking and unlocking of doors, cupboards, money/ jewellery safes, food safes etc, were often hung in a bunch from waist of the sari and were a conspicuous presence on the native female form. The complexities and

[131] Christopher Todd Matthews, 'Form and Deformity: The Trouble with Victorian Pockets' in *Victorian Studies*, Vol. 52, No. 4 (Summer 2010), p. 566.
[132] Orpa Slapak, *The Jews of India: A Story of Three Communities*. Jerusalem: The Israel Museum, 1995, p. 119.
Christopher Todd Matthews argues that incorporating the pocket into female clothing was a conceptual problem in Victorian Britain. 'The question of who gets pockets and how thereby becomes more than a footnote of fashion history: it becomes part of the broader history of bodies and their gendered meanings in public space.' Matthews' analysis could be extended to consider how gendered pickpocketing was as a petty criminal activity, that could effectively only target the modern, public man. Matthews, 'Form and Deformity: The Trouble with Victorian Pockets' p. 566.

intimacies of the containment of valuables on the person of the woman would have deterred the equivalent of pickpockets. The charge of theft would have included the charges of molestation and assault. One could argue that the native woman, with her conspicuous and inconspicuous accommodation of valuables had lesser need for an off-the-body container like the handbag.[133]

Dining reforms

Within the Parsi domestic sphere, the habits of dining appear to have undergone the most substantial change by the early 1860s.[134] The change was of two kinds. Firstly, the adoption of European styled crockery, cutlery and dining furniture and the inclusion of women in the dining experience, simultaneously consuming their meals with male family members. Traditionally women ate their meals after they had attended to and served the men and children.[135] The use of cutlery in turn disturbed the household's sanitary and purificatory regimes, with a reduction in washing hands before and after meals and an increase in the washing chores of the staff. On the whole, the changes made the Parsi domestic dining experience shorter, more condensed and of a companionate form.

Leading Parsis delineated the changing dining practices in their commentaries on the community. Dosabhoy Framjee noted in *The Parsees: Their History, Manners, Customs, And Religion* (1858):

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[133] Matthews explains that for the dressers of the female form in 19th century England, on the other hand, the handbag was increasingly considered as the ideal receptacle for those 'implements of women as 'social beings''. Internal pockets or pouches sown onto western dresses, threatened to create another bulge on a body already defined by them. Matthews, 'Form and Deformity: The Trouble with Victorian Pockets' p. 573.

[134] As per the descriptions in a number of commentaries on the social and domestic life of the Parsis. The changes in dining were the most prominently noted, above those of dress for example.

[135] Dadabhai Naoroji, *The Manners and Customs of the Parsees*. A Paper Read Before the Liverpool Philomatic Society, 13 March, 1861. London: 1862, pp. 7-8.

> A great improvement is now observable among the Parsees in their manner of eating. Formerly they sat on the ground at meals like the Hindoos, and took their food out of one brazen dish, on which the viands were spread in confusion. Now the table and chair, with all the accompaniments of a European dinner, are put in requisition. When large parties are given, the table is spread exactly in the English mode, instead of as formerly, when hundreds would be grouped upon the floor, each eating his dinner from a plantain leaf![136]

Speaking at the Liverpool Philomathic Society in March 1861, Dadabhai Naoroji, then Professor of Gujarati at the University of London, observed that 'The association of ladies at the domestic family dinner table is gradually becoming more general. But when, two years ago, the first attempt was made to admit ladies to the drawing and dinner room, to associate with other friends, loud clamour was raised against the "dangerous innovation."[137] Along with Manockjee Cursetjee, Naoroji had spearheaded the reforms, founding a society in 1860 in which members vowed 'not to dine without having at the same table female members of the family.'[138] Yet Naoroji did not mention his own crucial role in his talk. Instead he took a quasi-anthropological approach to the community, maintaining a consistent distance between himself and his subject matter. He showed the audience a sample of the *sudreh* and *kusti*, the sacred vest and girdle Zoroastrians are enjoined to wear, rather than display the ones he wore, which would no doubt have required some amount of sartorial adjustment.[139] His ability to comment as an outsider with access to intimate, domestic knowledge reflects the doubling inherent in the modernity of the Parsi colonial subject. It raises important questions on how self-conscious the Parsis were. Cursetjee, as the next section will elaborate, had a very different approach, wearing his liberalism on his sleeve and turning his home inside out to host and claim reformatory change.

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[136] Framjee, *The Parsees*, pp. 71-2.
[137] Naoroji, *The Manners and Customs of the Parsees*, p. 21.
[138] R. P. Masani, *Dadabhai Naoroji*. New Delhi: Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India, 1960, p. 31.
[139] Naoroji, *The Manners and Customs of the Parsees*, p. 6.

The gradual liberalization of the wider practices of inter dining in Bombay were also closely linked to domesticity. The strict codes of purity and pollution followed by the city's multifarious native communities had prevented the experience of inter dining. In the first half of the 19th century, the nearest Bombay's citizens came to partaking of edibles was through the vibrant commemorative and associational culture in the city.[140] The meetings held to organise the honoring of a range of royal, official and civic personages (both British and native) and as well as the meetings of the city's various cultural, literary, political and reform organizations, often concluded with the distribution of *pan-supari*, rosewater and nosegays, substances whose semiotics had long acquired common admissibility.[141] Since many of these gatherings were held in the homes of prominent citizen members, the domestic became the site on which the experiments with more substantial inter dining practices were subsequently performed. A number of reasons could explain why home spaces were used for civic sociability- there was a lack of independent public venues in Bombay, spaces were commonly put to multiple uses (a malleability that would decrease as the 19th century progressed) and it allowed for a display of the host's wealth, taste and standing.

The edibles served at cosmopolitan gatherings in the city followed an interesting trajectory. From *pan-supari*, the gatherings proceeded to serve flavoured liquid refreshments. Lemonade, water ices, soda water, ice creams were popularly consumed

[140] For a review of Bombay's commemorative culture see Simin Patel 'Commemorating the Consort in a Colonial City' in Miles Taylor and Charles Beem, eds. *The Man Behind the Throne, The Male Consort in History*, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014, pp. 157-162.

[141] In *Stri Purush Tulana* (*A Comparison between Women and Men)*, published in 1892 in Marathi, the author Tarabai Shinde's spirited attack on reform societies offers a glimpse into the meetings' performatory aspect, 'You hold these great meetings, you turn at them in your fancy shawls and embroidered turbans, you go through a whole ton of supari nut, cartloads of betel leaves, you hand out all sorts of garlands, you use up a tank full of rosewater, then you come home. And that's it. That's all you do. These phoney reform societies of yours have been around for thirty, thirty-five years.' Rosalind O'Hanlon, *A Comparison between Women and Men: Tarabai Shinde and the Critique of Gender Relations in Colonial India*, New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1994, p. 85.

in the 1860s, well before solid snacks made their advent. This development may in part be explained by the lead native citizens, particularly Parsis, took in importing, introducing and consuming ice in the 1830s and the construction of the first Ice House in Bombay (to store ice imported from America) at Apollo Street, Fort, in 1843. At a concert by Signora Caglie, an Italian prima donna, held at Cursetjee's residence in 1864, 'ice-creams at five annas per glass, and lemonade and soda water at two annas per bottle' were sold as refreshments in the compound of his home. [142] The employment of Parsi waiters as well as the catering services of Parsi hotel proprietors eased the participation of Parsi citizens at these gatherings. At the prize distribution ceremony of the Persian class offered by the Bombay Young Ladies' Institution in 1862, Parsi waiters served tea, enabling the Parsis in the audience to partake of the offerings.[143] Parsi hotel proprietors often supplied the staff and catering services at these gathering. Their role in easing inter-dining will be considered in detail in the next chapter.

The early occasions of inter dining among the native population of Bombay were marked by the absence of native women. It could be argued that in the distinct equation of inter dining, civic sociability and the domestic setting, the second and third factors cancelled each other out. For women, the advantage of easy access to the domestic setting was neutralised by the association of inter dining with civic sociability. Or to put it differently since early inter dining was not conceived of as a recreational activity or even at activity in itself but rather part of a 'purposeful' engagement, it was harder to accommodate the presence of the native woman into the experience. Newspapers that carried reports of native women's participation in

[142] *The Bombay Gazette,* 13 April 13, 1864, p. 2.
[143] Ibid.,11 August 1862, p. 760 (July to December 1862 stack, Maharashtra State Archives {henceforth MSA} Bombay).

associational meetings soon published erratas stating that the women had not been present.[144] Interestingly, European discourses in the mid 1860s stressed the need to include native women in cosmopolitan gatherings on the grounds of establishing true friendship and sociability between the races. Balls were the primary gatherings at which their presence was sought. Native men had, occasionally, participated in balls, their presence skewing the gender ratio. It is telling that balls, perhaps the closest cosmopolitan gatherings in the city where sociability, for its own sake was fostered were considered the occasions where the native female presence was most noticeably missed. Here as well, balls were held at the homes of prominent citizens and inter-dining was part of the wider experience of the ball through the ball-supper and/or the refreshments served. Dosabai Jessawalla notes, in her typical fondness for firsts, that at a ball held at the home of Albert Sassoon in 1871, her daughter was 'the first Parsee lady who publicly took part in dancing just a European lady'. 'Before this none of the Parsee ladies are known to have taken part in a ball, but on this occasion my daughter better known as Mrs. D. D. Cama, danced just like a European lady.'[145] Since Jessawalla's first cousins, the two younger daughters of Manockjee Cursetjee were also present at the occasion, Jessawalla could only claim for her immediate family, the innovation of first dancing at a ball.[146] In the complex web of dining (and dancing) reforms in Bombay, the domestic remained the primarily site on which they were staged.

[144] Ibid., August 1862 (MSA, July to December1862 stack).
[145] Jessawalla, *The Story of My Life*, p. 136. The Sassoon's frequent hosting of balls, an event well associated with European sociability, was part of their wider cultural strategy to configure themselves as part of the European population in Bombay and India. Abdoolla, the son of the magnate David Sassoon, had changed his name to Albert. The next chapter describes the ways in which Jewish hotel proprietors in Bombay configured themselves and their hotel establishments as European.
[146] Jessawalla, *The Story of My Life*, p. 136.

The Villa Byculla: a domestic turned inside out

By the early 1860s Manockjee Cursetjee's bungalow Villa Byculla was a centre for various semi-public activities in the city, hosting upwards of 200 guests at certain events. Concerts were held, for which tickets were subscribed for and refreshments sold on the premises, the Alexandra Native Girls' English Institution, a school founded by Cursetjee, ran its classes in a portion of the house, and a number of large private social gatherings of native elites were also hosted. Cursetjee's use of his home vividly demonstrates how he chose to engage with a burgeoning urban public and build his brand of liberalism around his personage and property. His role as something of a host and showman was a mix of the older cultures of hospitality with newer notions of access and affordability. Cursetjee's wife had died in 1849, a decade prior to Villa Byculla's transformation into a quasi-public space. This raises the question of whether Cursetjee was able to turn his domestic inside out because of the absence of the figure of the wife. Scholars have tended to treat Cursetjee and his daughters as a unit, without mentioning or questioning the role of his wife or/and why his three sons did not prominently participate in his programmes. The prominent position of his daughters in his public life and campaign for female education should be considered in the light of this absence (Figure 2.18).

Cursetjee (1808-1887) was the son of Cursetjee Manockjee Shroff, a prominent *sethia* and member of the Parsee Punchayet of Bombay. His father's home was located in the Chowpatty area and was amongst the earliest residences to be lit by gas. In 1835, owing to a sudden reverse in his father's fortunes, Cursetjee had to look to the

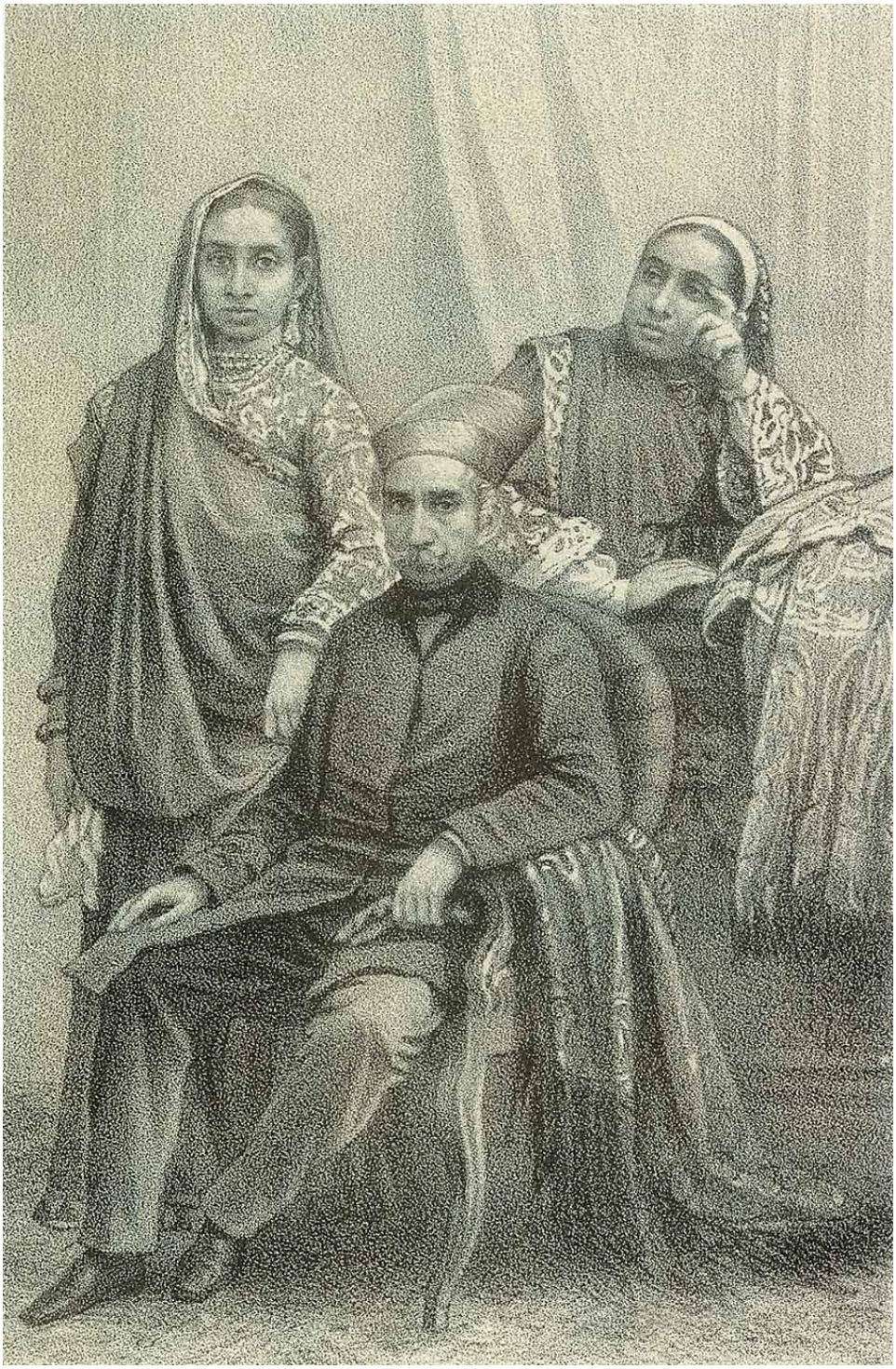


FIGURE 2.18. Manockjee Cursetjee with his daughters Serene and Amy (L-R).

(*Portrait of a Community,* inside cover.)

government for employment.[147] His first appointment was as the an uncovenanted assistant to the collector of Customs, shifting fields to law in the late 1840s and serving as a Stipendiary Commissioner of the Court of Requests and then as third judge at the Court of Small Causes in Bombay by the 1860s. It is likely though that some kind of family wealth and property did help maintain Cursetjee's lifestyle. Cursetjee's public engagement begun with a series of letters to the *Bombay Times* in 1844-45, under the pseudonym Q in the Corner, in which he brought the Parsee Punchayet's declining role into strong relief. Jesse S. Palsetia notes that Curssetjee's critique of the Parsi Punchayet 'had begun the reformist challenge to the traditionalist beliefs of the Parsis as regarded their social progress.'[148] Curtsetjee's bold sartorial choices also kept him in the public eye, as described in the previous chapter.

In comparison, liberals like Dadabbhai Naoroji and Behramji Malabari came from relatively poor families. Their formative domestic setup would be described as lower middle class as would the neighbourhoods in which they resided.[149], Malabari's biographer, Dayaram Gidumal, noted that Malabari 'was proud of his poverty'.[150] Malabari weighed his pecuniary hardships in his own writing.[151] Liberals did not conceive of their body as the instrument of social change as boldly as Cursetjee did.

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[147] Christine Dobbin, *Urban Leadership in Western India: Politics and Communities in Bombay City, 1840-1885*. London: Oxford University Press, 1972, p. 26.

[148] Jesse S. Palsetia, *The Parsis of India: Preservation of Identity in Bombay City*, (2001). Delhi: Manohar Publishers and Distributors, 2008, p. 150.
The letters were subsequently compiled and published as *The Parsee Panchayet: Its Rise, its Fall and the Causes* (1860).

[149] Naoroji's family resided in Khadak on the northern fringes of what was considered the native town in Bombay. Naoroji's biographer Rustom Masani described the residence as a 'lowly house'. Malabari was born in Baroda, Gujarat. Malabari's biographer Dayaram Gidumal notes that his biological father was a 'poor clerk' in the service of the Gaekwar of Baroda, his adoptive father who was better placed, lost his fortune a few years after Malabari's mother married him. Dinyar Patel and S.R. Mehrotra, eds. *Dadabhai Naoroji: Selected Private Papers*. Oxford University Press, Forthcoming 2015 and Gidumal, *The Life and Life-Work of Behramji M. Malabari*, Bombay, pp. I-IV.

[150] Gidumal, *The Life and Life-Work of Behramji M. Malabari*, p. LXIII.

[151] For example in his travelogue, *The Indian Eye on English Life, or, Rambles of a Pilgrim Reformer.* Bombay: Apollo Printing Works, 1895, p. 3.

Naoroji's biographer, R. P. Masani, notes that during his first stay in England Naoroji wore 'a costume of his own invention' that included a long broadcloth coat and a black velvet hat with a blue silk tassel, but chose on his subsequent stays to 'do in Rome as Romans did' and adopted English dress in England.[152] Naoroji seems to have reserved wearing Parsi dress to India, where he would have hardly stood out. In some sense, liberals needed to write about change since their presence, at least in the public sphere, did not embody it. Cursetjee's writing, on the other hand, is marked by the absence of the 'manners and customs' genre of community commentary found in the work of Dosabhoy Framjee, Naoroji and Malabari. He chose instead to correspond with a range of colonial dignitaries about his own experiments with social reform, particularly educating his three daughters, and subsequently published the correspondence as a way of dissemination. It was this well-conceived conflation of the private and the public that also extended to the domestic sphere.

The Alexandra Native Girls' English Institution

Before we turn to examine the setup of the Alexandra Native Girls' English Institution it would be helpful to briefly consider the models of educational enterprises with which Bombay's elite, both *sethias* and intelligentsia, were involved. *Sethias* founded charitable day and boarding schools for children belonging to their respective communities. Located in Bombay, its out-stations and Gujarat, these schools were not affiliated to the homes of their founders. Discourses and naming practices highlighted that these were benevolent institutions. The Juggonath Sunkersett English School's subtitle read: 'Established 17th June 1857, for the

[152] R. P. Masani, *Dadabhai Naoroji: The Grand Old Man of India*. London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1939, pp. 76-7.

Education of the Sons of Poor Hindoos'. The schools that Jamsetjee Jeejeebhoy founded in the first half of the 19th century, like the Parsi Benevolent School (1836), came under the purview of the Sir Jamsetjee Jeejeebhoy Parsee Benevolent Institution, a large charitable organisation founded in 1849 to meet the educational, medical, marital and funerary expenses of poor Parsis.[153] Jeejeebhoy had wanted Zoroastrianism to be taught at the schools, in ways similar to the teaching of Christianity at missionary schools. However since Jeejeebhoy intended the government to hold the funds of the Institution as trustee, the government opposed the exclusive teaching of an individual religion.[154] By 1862, the educational department of the Benevolent Institution ran 18 schools in Bombay and Gujarat.[155] Malabari, for example, attended one of these schools in Surat. His biographer remarked that the schoolmaster compensated for his low salary by making the students carry out his domestic and personal chores.[156]

Bombay's intelligentsia and *sethias* were also involved in the funding and management of a group of schools run by the Students' Literary and Scientific Society. The schools were divided on the lines of language and community, catering to Gujarati Hindu, Gujarati Parsis and Marathi Hindu students respectively. This division is somewhat surprising given that the Society, founded by students and academics of the Elphinstone College in 1848, encouraged the notion of an educated public, across community lines. Educated individuals, irrespective of their race or religion, could apply for membership to the Society. The Society's Library was described as 'hold(ing) out its advantage to all alike- it knows of no sectarianism-

[153] Palsetia, *The Parsis of India*, pp. 135-6.
[154] Ibid. p. 138.
[155] *The Bombay Almanack & Directory for 1862*, (The Thirteenth Annual Publication), Bombay: Bombay Gazette Press, p. 404.
[156] Gidumal, *The Life and Life-Work of Behramji M. Malabari*, p. xvi.

Christian, Hindu, Parsi, Mahomedan, Jew- all may come, without let or hindrance, to stake their thirst at the fount of knowledge.'[157] The rubric of the Society did present the schools as progressive institutions that furthered the contemporary cause of female education, rather than as benevolent institutions that worked towards ameliorating the urban disadvantaged. Manockjee Cursetjee's educational model marked a significant departure from both the models of schooling discussed above in terms of the location of the school, the profile of the students and the language of teaching.

On 1 September 1863 the Alexandra Native Girls' English Institution was opened at Villa Byculla, with Cursetjee serving as the Institution's President and his younger daughters, Amy and Serene, holding the post of 'honorary lady visitors'.[158] The Institution offered the girls and young women of Bombay's native population an English education, superintended by an English head governess, and sustained by the payment of fees. The 'rules' of the Institution were a mix and inversion of the contemporary discourses on respectability and race-- admission was restricted to 'girls of respectable families or of those who are otherwise recommended for their intellectual or moral worth'; the education to be imparted was defined as 'secular, and not religious of any kind or creed'; the Board of Directors held the right to reject the application/amount of any donor to the Institution if his/her 'moral character is known to be tainted, or who is following any disreputable profession, or is concerned in any disgraceful transaction'.[159] The rules were rigourously followed in the opening years- 10 of the 29 applications of the first batch of pupils were deemed inadmissible; in 1865 an application by a European gentlemen to send his daughters to the Institution

[157] Palsetia, *The Parsis of India*, p. 142.
[158] *Report of the Alexandra Native Girls' English Institution. Read at a Meeting held on the 10th March 1865*. Bombay, 1865, pp. 4 and 6.
[159] *Report of the Alexandra Native Girls' English Institution. From Its Commencement, September 1863 to December 1864*. Bombay, 1865.

was rejected on the grounds that Rule II specified that recipients of the education were 'native girls'.[160]

Cursetjee also hosted the affiliated activities of the Alexandra Native Girls' English Institution at Villa Byculla– the meetings of the Institution's Boards of Directors, the examinations of the pupils by eminent citizens and the prize distribution ceremonies. These ceremonies, commonly referred to as the annual exhibition, were the most important event in the calendar of the schools in Bombay. A number of elite colonial and local citizens were invited to them, usually with the governor presiding over the event. The Governor of Bombay, Sir Bartle Frere (1862-1867) and his wife Lady Frere were the chief guests at the Institution's first prize distribution ceremony, held at Villa Byculla.[161] The ceremony could be regarded as the culmination of Cursetjee's approach and activities; an orchestration in hosting reform and concentrating power around his personage and property. In April 1865 the Institution was relocated to Hornby Row in the Fort district, in temporary accommodation and from 1881 onwards in a new building specifically designed to accommodate the school, at the junction of Esplanade Road and Waudby Road, Fort. The prominent engineer Khan Bahadur Muncherjee Cowasjee Murzban constructed the building (Figure 2.19). Plans for the relocation had been included in the Institution's Memorandum, which was written by Cursetjee in Gujarati. 'Until our funds permit us to provide suitable accommodation for the school, I will with pleasure give a place for it in my own

[160] *Report of the Alexandra Native Girls' English Institution For the Year 1865*. Bombay, 1866.
[161] *Report of the Alexandra Native Girls' English Institution. Read at a Meeting held on the 10th March 1865.* Bombay, 1865, p. 3.



FIGURE 2.19. The Alexandra Native Girls' English Institution (1881), Fort, constructed by engineer Khan Bahadur Muncherjee Cowasjee Murzban.



FIGURE 2.20. A photograph with the statue of Manockjee Cursetjee's father and the Byculla Hotel to the right. The statue is popularly referred to as the Khada Parsi (standing Parsi).

bungalow, or in the adjoining premises in my compound.'[162] However it seems that the relocation was precipitated in the interest of increasing student numbers from the new neighbourhood and Cursetjee's departure to Europe. A year after the school's relocation, Cursetjee marked his presence in Byculla by commissioning a fountain with a statue of his father on the top of it, which was to be erected in the neighbourhood (Figure 2.20).

A review of the ways in which Cursetjee's daughters were included in his projects of female education offers another angle from which to analyse, even test the personal-private-public equation. Cooverbai, his eldest daughter was educated at home. She was first taught to read and write in Gujarati at a basic level and then, under the instruction of an English governess, Miss Burton, made to learn the English language, geography and needlework. In a letter dated 4 April 1850, to J. E. D. Bethune, a well-known promoter of female education in Calcutta and fellow judge, Cursetjee explained why he had limited Cooverbai education after her marriage.

> Thrown as Mrs. Jeevunjee Heerjee (for that is the name of my daughter now) must be in a family, where her position is singularly anomalous, she not having scarcely a companion within or beyond the circle of her relations and friends, to sympathize with her, or reciprocate her sentiments, in respect to female enlightenment, her extended acquirements might, as I fear, check the enjoyments of her social life. I have, therefore, been obliged, much against my wishes to put a limit to her studies.[163]

In the same letter, Cursetjee noted that Cooverbai's marriage as well as the responsibilities of raising her younger siblings after Cursetjee's wife's death in 1849, made the possibility of a role for her in his proposed educational institution

[162] The English translation is provided in the document, 'Origin and Progress of the Alexandra Native Girls' English Institution, 1867', p. 3.
[163] *Correspondence on Female Eduation between the Late Hon. J. E. D. Bethune, Culcutta, and Manockjee Cursetjee, Esq. Bombay.* Bombay, 1856, pp. 8-9.

unfeasible.[164] In the brief period between Cursetjee's wife's death and Cooverbai's own demise in 1851, Cooverbai assisted in overseeing her younger sisters' education. Her sisters, Amy and Serene, were placed in an English school run by two Irishwomen in the Byculla locality. Cursetjee notes that the difficulty of obtaining governesses at the time in Bombay had necessitated the placement.[165]

Over a decade later, when the Alexandra Native Girls' English Institution opened, Amy and Serene were elected to The Board of Honorary Lady Visitors of the Institution. Lady Frere was also among the first batch of Visitors on the Board. The profile of the post was delineated in the list of the Institution's Rules.

> The honorary lady visitors shall, as often as may be convenient to them, visit the institution, watch and superintend the working of the school or schools, examine pupils and scholars, and look to the general requirements of the institution, so as to render it effective for all its purposes, and record their opinions and suggest improvements for the good of the institution in the minute book to kept for that purpose.[166]

Cursetjee made donations on 'behalf' of 'Amy and Serene', his two sons, 'Cursetjee and Jehangeer' and from the Fund of his recently deceased son 'Herajee', to the Institution, at the time of its opening.[167] The memory of his wife and oldest daughter were not preserved through these initiatives.

The terms 'honourary' and 'on behalf of' encapsulate the ways Amy and Serene were included into the Institution. The absence of their voices- by way of the minute book or letters - in the rich archive of the early years of the Institution is another indicator of their limited role as well as of the kind of administrative news the Institution

[164] Ibid., p. 8.
[165] Idem.
[166] Ibid. p. 25.
[167] 'Origin and Progress of the Alexandra Native Girls' English Institution, 1867,' p. 2.

considered fit to print. Letters from female employees are included in the published literature. At the Institution's first prize distribution ceremony, an occasion when the Board of Honorary Lady Visitors could have had a noticeable role, Lady Frere and the other members of the Board requested Sir Bartle Frere to address the pupils and audience on their behalf.[168] It could be argued that Cursetjee's daughters' presence in the Institution was desired precisely in this partial, sampling capacity. The other roles for women within the Institution were professional, paid appointments. Senior honourary positions like the Board of Directors (of which Cursetjee was President) did not include any women members.

Amy's voice gets included in Cursetjee's broader campaign for female education in a convoluted manner. While corresponding with Lord Elphinstone, Governor of Bombay, in 1860, Cursetjee enclosed, along with his own letter, a letter he had received from his daughter, so that the Governor 'could judge the extent of her education and her own valuation of it'.[169] Amy noted in the last paragraph of the letter to her father.

> What a blessing it is to receive education! how thankful I am to God for putting such good ideas in your head to give education to your dear girls, and taking off the noxious ideas from their heads. I have nothing in my power by which to repay your kindness.[170]

Since the correspondence was compiled and published in *A Few Passing Ideas for the Benefit of India and Indians* in 1862, Amy's letter reached a wider audience.

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[168] *Report of the Alexandra Native Girls' English Institution. Read at a Meeting held on the 10th March 1865*. Bombay, 1865, p. 8.
[169] Manockjee Cursetjee, *A Few Passing Ideas for the Benefit of India and Indians*. London, 1862, p. 74.
[170] Ibid., p. 75.

It was in the public, social sphere, where Amy and Serene accompanied their father at various gatherings in the city and tours abroad, that their presence was more noticeably marked. Both the local and international press noted how they were the only women from the native/ Parsi population present at public occasions. Dressed in *kor no garos* and western shoes, well conversant in English, Amy and Serene made convincing carriers of Parsi modernity (Figure 2.21 & 2.22). [171] Their names had been anglicised from Bai Aimai and Sereenbai. The catalogues of two exhibitions on the Parsis, held in 2002 and 2013 in Bombay, offer interesting anecdotes on Serene. The name Serene was given at the behest of the English poet Alfred Lord Tennyson and she was the first Parsi woman to be presented to Queen Victoria, in 1865.[172]

Dosabai Jessawalla wrests the title of 'Being the first Indian girl to receive the benefits of English Education' for herself from Cooverbai, her cousin, and the title of 'the first to sow the seeds of education and emancipation among Indian women' for her late widowed mother Meheribai, from Cursetjee, on that grounds that while Cooverbai received her education privately at home, she was sent to a seminary run by an English mistress, Mrs Ward, in the Fort settlement in 1842.[173] Going public with education- sending Dosabai to the school every morning accompanied by her servant, dealing with the attention and criticism received in the press, challenging the threats of excommunication received from the community- had entitled Dosabai and Meheribai to the titles.[174]

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[172] *Portrait of a Community: An Exhibition of Paintings and Photographs of the Parsees*. Bombay: Chemould Publications and Arts, 2002, p. 75 and Pheroza J. Godrej and Firoza Punthakey Mistree with Sudha Seshadri eds. *Across Oceans and Flowing Silks, From Canton to Bombay 18th-20th Centuries and No Parsi is an Island*, Ranjit Hoskote and Nancy Adajania with Pheroza J Godrej. Mumbai: Spenta Multimedia, 2013, p. 262.
[173] Jessawalla, *The Story of My Life*, pp. Dedication, 34 and 496.
[174] Ibid., pp. 32-3.



FIGURES 2.21 & 2.22. (L-R) Portraits of Amy (1843-1895) and Serene (1844-1939) at the Alexandra Native Girls' English Institution, Waudby Road, Fort.

(*Portrait of a Community*, p. 75.)

Conclusion

Having traced the way a number of practices relating to Parsi women were reformed in the second half of the 19th century, it could be concluded that the new equation these reforms created between Parsi women and domesticity and between Parsi women and the public sphere, varied with each practice. The reforms in menstrual confinement kept elite women within the domestic sphere while poorer women were removed to the modern medical space of the hospital. The changes in dress, such as the wearing of shoes and the modest Victorian bodice, equipped Parsi women for the public sphere while the garment of the *gara*, the main article of their new clothing, tied them to the domestic sphere in conspicuous ways. The reforms in dining mainly resulted in the new activity of inter-dining being held in the homes of various individuals in the city. The unusual private-public sphere Manockjee Cursetjee established at Villa Byculla, in some sense, did little for his daughters' own 'modern' image. Cursetjee's brand of liberalism, on the hand, thrived in the setting. Cursetjee is the figure that stands out in this dissertation. The sobriety of the other Parsis featured in this story is most evident in the next chapter, on Parsi hotel proprietors.

3. Parsi Proprietors and Patriarchs: The Hotel Trade in Bombay

Introduction

Arriving at the Byculla Railway Station, a traveller in Bombay in the 1860s could avail of H. D. Johnson's hansom cab service and make his way to one of the city's early hotels run predominately by Parsi proprietors. Advertisements for the hotels in English language publications boasted of commodious and comfortable accommodation, a staff of numerous servants and attendants, a selection of the choicest wines, spirits and beers, culinary delights and a first class Thurston billiard table. Proprietors thanked their clientele of European gentlemen and families and urged renewed patronage. Their offerings of commercial hospitality promised not only the material comforts of an English home but also the intangible benefits of a morally wholesome, secure and respectable residential establishment. Familiarly named The Adelphi, Royal, British, English, Imperial, London, Hope Hall Family, Clarendon Family, hotels sought to recreate in the midst of the bustling urban milieu of Bombay, pockets of an orderly England presided over by a benevolent Parsi patriarch.

It is to these provisions of the domestic to the world and his wife that we turn in this chapter. What made the Parsi offering distinct was the carefully cultivated reputation of the hotel proprietor- sober in his habits, dependable in his dealings, paternal in his authority, discreet in his surveillance. The integrity of his person and personal domestic space became a commercial asset in promoting the surrogate homes he ran. For a 'Family Hotel' is hard to sell when the familial discord of its proprietors enters the public realm of the press as it did with some of the hotels and boarding houses run

by Europeans, the other significant players in the hospitality industry in Bombay. Vying for space in the archive of English newspapers, then, are the contrary texts of welcoming hotel advertisements on the one hand and court proceedings, coroner's inquests, notices, on the other, that exposed the domestic, particularly marital disharmony of some of the European proprietors. Fault partly lay in the proprietors' inability to contain the alluring promise of freedom and privacy their hotels seemed to offer, not least to their wives and partner proprietors.

The strains and successes of Parsi proprietorship of hotels in and around Bombay are the focus of this chapter. How did proprietors, despite a host of metropolitan anxieties like crime, vice, vagrancy, crowding, construction, make and maintain offerings of secure, surrogate domestic spaces? What kinds of homes did the internal worlds and geographies of these hotels resemble? And what impact did the liberal climate of the hotels- the mixed social spaces, closer contact between the sexes, liminal freedoms for female residents and the facilities of inter dining- have on the wider city and its citizens? Presiding over two kinds of domestics- a private home and a hotel- that modernised at different paces, what claims of belonging and authority did Parsi proprietors make? And finally how did their Parsi identity, particularly as a premier service community, shape and compliment their experiences of hoteliering?

Hotels have yet to be examined in the historical scholarship on colonial India. They could be considered in terms of the landscape- as sites where the separatist discourse of imperialism was staged and in comparison with similar resort/retreat settlements like clubs, gymkhanas and hill stations. They could also be understood as institutionalizing the modern mobile urban condition or as a marriage of the otherwise

antithetical commerce and domesticity.[175] The attention that has been paid, largely in popular histories, has focused on the Taj Mahal Palace Hotel in Bombay as a symbol of national enterprise. The Parsi industrialist Jamsetji Tata is believed to have begun the Taj in 1903 in retaliation for being denied admission into the European run and owned The Esplanade Hotel, in one popular account, and Pyrke's Apollo Hotel in another.[176] These anecdotes seems implausible for several reasons- John Watson's The Esplanade admitted Indian guests as early as 1871, the year of its opening and Hormusji Modi's Apollo Hotel (1887) was among the later, reputed Parsi run establishments in the city.[177] E. W. Pyrke was made a partner proprietor only in late 1904, a year after the Taj had opened, and after which the business was conducted under the modified name of Pyrke's Apollo Hotel.[178] Stories about exclusion from racially segregated spaces have given a concrete setting and helped explain several prominent figures conversion to nationalist causes. Motilal Nehru is said to have turned against British rule because he had been 'blackballed' at the Allahabad

[175] For the literature on colonial clubs see Mrinalini Sinha, 'Britishness, Clubbability, and the Colonial Public Sphere: The Genealogy of an Imperial Institution in Colonial India' in *Journal of British Studies*, Vol. 40, No. 4, At Home in the Empire (Oct., 2001), pp.489-521; Paul J. Rich, *Chains of Empire: English Public Schools, Masonic Cabalism, Historical Causality and Imperial Clubdom*. London: Regency, 1991; on hill stations see Judith T. Kenny, 'Climate, Race and Imperial Authority: The Symbolic Landscape of the British Hill Station in India' in *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, Vol. 85, No. 4 (Dec., 1995), pp. 694-714; and on colonial hotels in British Colombo and Singapore see Maurizio Peleggi, 'The Social and Material Life of Colonial Hotels: Comfort Zones as Contact Zones in British Colombo and Singapore, ca. 1870-1930' in *Journal of Social History* (2012), pp. 1–30.
Thanking the late Sharada Dwivedi, city historian and activist, who kindly shared her time and resources with me.

[176] Some of the recent books in which the story of the denial of admission is included are (for the Esplanade Hotel version) Suketu Mehta, *Maximum City: Bombay Lost and Found*. New Delhi: Penguin Books, 2006, p. 76; (for the Pyrke's Apollo Hotel version) Shashi Tharoor, *The Elephant, the Tiger and the Cellphone: Reflections on India in the Twenty-first Century*. New Delhi: Penguin Books 2007, p. 285; Amartya Sen, *The Argumentative Indian: Writings on Indian History, Culture and Identity*. New York: Picador, 2005, p. 337; Naresh Fernandes, *Taj Mahal Foxtrot: The Story of Bombay's Jazz Age*. New Delhi: Roli Books, 2012, p. 6.

[177] *The Bombay Gazette*, 25 September 1871, p. 3.

[178] In D. A. Pinder's *Visitors' Illustrated Guide to Bombay* published in 1904, the hotel is referred to only as the 'Apollo Hotel'. D. A. Pinder, *Visitors' Illustrated Guide to Bombay*. Bombay: G. Claridge & Co., 1904, p. 16.
The home Jamsetji Tata built in 1887 was called the Esplanade House and was located on the Esplanade. 'Welcome to the glorious Esplanade House' on the Bombaywalla blog, http://bombaywalla.org/interiors-esplanade-house-1887/, accessed on 29 May 2015.

Club.[179] His son, Jawaharlal Nehru debunks this story in his autobiography.[180] The incident when Gandhi was asked to vacate his seat in the first class compartment of a train in South Africa and then forced to disembark for not complying is widely considered the trigger for his political activism. Gandhi notes in his autobiography that on the night he had to spend at the railway station in Maritzburg he began to think about his duty.[181]

Sharada Dwivedi and Charles Allen's volume, *The Taj at Apollo Bunder: The Story of the Taj Mahal Palace Mumbai, Established 1903*, brought out to coincide with the reopening of the Taj's Heritage Wing in 2010 (two years after it was severely damaged in a terrorist attack), is the first to historically engage with the Hotel's relationship with nationalism. In the chapter 'The Taj and Swaraj', Dwivedi and Allen note that leading nationalists, like Sarojini Naidu and Nehru stayed at the Taj and hosted a number of political gatherings at their suites. They also indicate the Tatas' subtle cooperation in the project of nationalism, through the Taj- Naidu's long stays as well as the stays of other Indian politicians were often complimentary.[182] Through some of the Tata's other ventures their cooperation was more obvious. Both Dwivedi and Allen and Naresh Fernandes in his book on the flourishing of jazz music in Bombay, *Taj Mahal Foxtrot: The Story of Bombay's Jazz Age* (2012), focus on the celebrations at the Taj on the eve and the hour of Indian Independence. At the midnight hour, the jazz band in the Taj Ballroom began to play the Indian national anthem, *Jana Gana Mana*. JRD Tata and Vijayalakshmi Pandit, the younger sister of

[179] Sinha, 'Britishness, Clubbability, and the Colonial Public Sphere', p. 499.
[180] Idem.
[181] Mohandas K. Gandhi, An Autobiography, or, The *Story Of My Experiments With Truth.* Ahmedabad: Navjivan Trust, 1927. http://www.mkgandhi.org/autobio/chap33.htm, accessed on 29 May 2015.
[182] Sharada Dwivedi and Charles Allen, *The Taj at Apollo Bunder: The Story of the Taj Mahal Palace Mumbai, Established 1903*. Mumbai: Pictor Publishing Pvt Ltd, 2010, p. 109.

Jawaharlal Nehru, were among the crowd of elites that attended the celebrations.[183] Dwivedi and Allen's account importantly highlights the everyday and actual use Indian nationalists made of the hotel and the Taj's rightful place in the landscape of nationalism.

The timeframe for this chapter, 1860 to 1905, begins during the period when the hotel trade took off in Bombay, covers the opening of the first grand hotel, The Esplanade Hotel, in 1871, and concludes with the early years of the Taj's opening.

The practices and politics of naming

News that the single horse drawn hansom carriages were in fact 'Anything but Han'som' made its way to *The Times of India* a week after the conveyance service began in May 1862.[184] The carriage had upturned injuring the passenger, R. B. Barton, a barrister.[185] In the daily narratives of the city the maintaining, sullying and defending of reputations was common currency. As we saw earlier, the filing of defamation suits particularly by Parsis, hints not only at the Parsis famed resorting to legal measures for conflict resolution but also that the preservation of their name was worth contracted court proceedings and the fees of Barton and other council. The importance of self and public perception was also a consequence of the logic of the city. Despite Bombay hosting a constant traffic of disparate populations, the worlds encompassed by urban texts were small and familiar. Locations in the city were often enumerated as situated next to or opposite the residence or office of some known citizen rather than by giving the actual address. In W. Trevor Roper's notice for his

[183] Naresh Fernandes, *Taj Mahal Foxtrot: The Story of Bombay's Jazz Age*. New Delhi: Roli Books, 2012, p. 17.
[184] *The Times of India*, 30 May 1862, p. 3.
[185] Ibid.

lost dog, Busy, he does not mention an address to which the dog may be returned.[186] Advertisements for premises to rent, by mentioning the name of the last occupant, suggested that the establishment was secure enough to house a certain British civil officer while concurrently offering a status towards which the potential occupant could aspire. If at all we can speak of a collective memory of the city, fashioned by the domestic media, it was one oriented towards people and the places associated with them.

Parsis operated within these spheres of familiarity and services rooted in the person of the proprietor. Advertisements for their hotels partook of the culture of recommendations and testimonials through which European clientele endorsed the offerings of the native population. Often leading proprietors' names became synonymous with their hotels- Pallonjee's Hotel as The Adelphi Hotel in Byculla was called and later Watson's Hotel for The Esplanade Hotel (Figures 3.1, 3.2 & 3.3). Pallonjee Pestonjee Pochkhanawalla (1812-1876), an obituary in the Gujarati compendium *The Parsee Prakash* mentions, not only looked after his guests but also lent them money, occasionally paying for their passage to England, leaving to destiny the question of being repaid.[187] Pallonjee's prominent public profile may in part be explained by his sole proprietorship of The Adelphi Hotel (1856) as compared to almost all the other Parsi run hotels, established under joint proprietorship. The Royal Hotel (1859) on Tamarind Street, Fort, and The Hope Hall Family Hotel in Mazagon were jointly owned by Pallonjee, Dadabhoy Nusserwanjee and Manockjee Sorabjee. Both hotels were advertised as conducted by Messrs. Pallonjee Pestonjee & Co.,

[186] *The Bombay Gazette*, 8 May 1862, p. 435 (January to July 1862 stack, Maharashtra State Archives, {henceforth MSA} Bombay).
[187] *Parsee Prakarsh, Being a Record of Important Events in the Growth of the Parsee Community in Western India, Chronologically Arranged*. Bahmanji Behramji Patel and Rustom Barjorji Paymaster (compilers). Bombay: Bombay Parsi Punchayet. Volumes 2 (1861 to 1880), p. 556.



FIGURE 3.1. The Adelphi Hotel, Byculla.

(Sepoys and Griffins Blogspot)

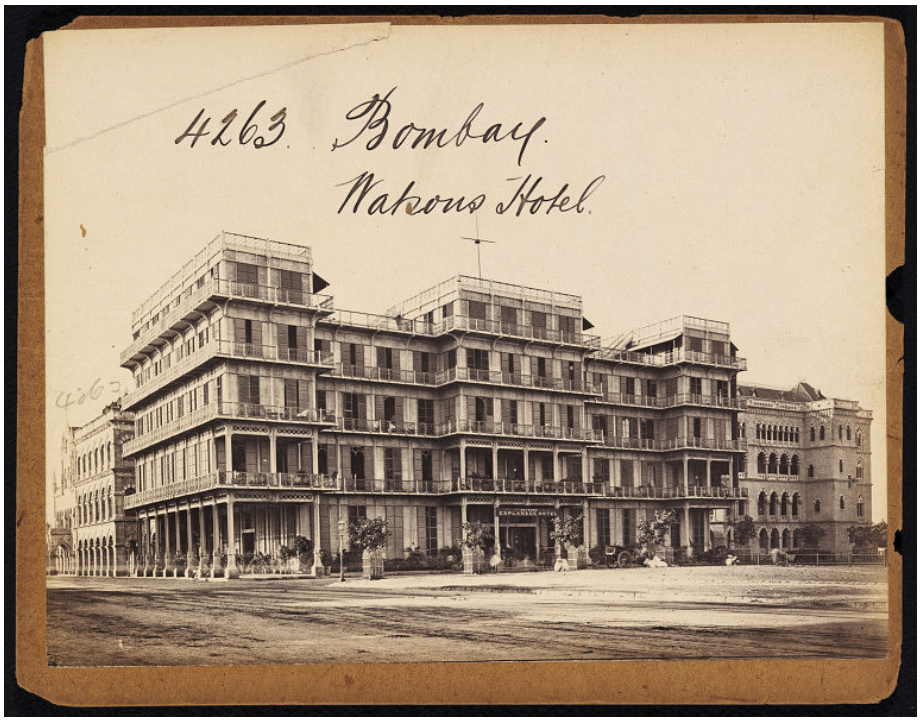




FIGURE 3.2 & 3.3. (Above) The Esplanade Hotel, Fort.
(Below) The balconies of The Esplanade Hotel were decorated with the monogram ‘W’ (for Watson) and indicate the ways the proprietor inserted his identity into the Hotel space and structure.

(Bombaywalla.)

rather than including all the proprietors' names in the company title and concluding with the name of the managing proprietor at the base of the advertisment. When Pallonjee relinquished his partnership in The Royal and The Hope Hall Family in November 1862, business was conducted under the new company name of Nusserwanjee Sorabjee & Co.[188] While the older brand provided leverage for both hotels, the pitfalls included having to create a new persona once the titular benefit was withdrawn. Nusserwanjee Sorabjee & Co.'s new advertisements soliciting clients would have had to somehow include an introduction and claimer that they were in fact always around. The practice of an 'unnamed' proprietor relinquishing the company was however more common (and less threatening) for an establishment. Cowasjee Nowrojee's leaving Framjee and Co., in 1862 did not disrupt the interface of the Clarendon Family Hotel in Byculla, which continued under the known proprietorship of Framjee Byramjee.[189]

Under umbrella company names like Jewanjee & Co., dominant proprietors could club expanding business ventures tailored to the needs of the urban condition. Jewanjee Hormusjee Guzdar's (1829-1895) hoteliering conglomerate included the Byculla Hotel, Byculla Refreshment Rooms adjoining the Hotel, The Byculla Ice House opposite the Hotel, Jewanjee's Exchange, Fort, The Chowk Hotel at the popular hill station Matheran, The Poona Hotel and eventually Bombay's second grand hotel the Great Western Hotel on Apollo Street (Figures 3.4 & 3.5). These conglomerates may be considered examples of early brand creation around the figure of a proprietor, a stage somewhere between proprietor centered marketing of a specific product and the corporatisation of advertising evident in the early 20th

[188] *The Bombay Gazette*, 20 December 1862, p. 1212 (MSA, July to December1862 stack).
[189] Ibid., 11 October 1862, p. 971.





FIGURE 3.4 & 3.5. (Above) The Byculla Hotel and (below) the Great Western Hotel, Fort. Notice the entrance to the Billiard Room on the ground floor of the Great Western.

(*The Taj at Apollo Bunder*, p. 45.)

century in Bombay, which will be discussed later in this chapter.[190] Jewanjee's careful diversification into leisure hotels in Matheran and Poona, the manufacture of ices and providing all day, quick and affordable meals at the Refreshment Rooms and the Exchange indicates ventures likely to complement rather than compete with each other. The Refreshment Rooms and Exchange, which had similar functions of servicing a population on the go (and possibly unattached to a hotel), were strategically located at the two hubs of the city, Byculla to the north and the commercial district of the Fort to the south. For the gentlemen traveler, recourse to any one of Jewanjee's ventures would offer a landscape of transferable models of hospitality.

Local geographies were often boosted through the selection of hotel names. Jevanjee's renamed the Bombay Hotel as Byculla Hotel. The compounding of the establishment name and address, would have been easy on the clientele. European proprietors followed similar trends. Names were either derived from the locality in which a hotel was situated (T. Hammond's Apollo Refreshment Rooms at Apollo Bunder, Watson's The Esplanade, built on a grassy expanse of the same name that surrounded the formerly ramparted Fort settlement, the Mazagon Hotel) or based on a region of affiliation or origin of the proprietor (Jacob Felmon's Prussian Hotel, William Dickson's Australasian Hotel, Thomas Ciars' Auckland Hotel, Hamburg Hotel, Jerusalem Hotel) or from glocal derivatives (Carolina Goldstein's Mazagon-Europe Hotel). When R. Brown took over the Jerusalem in 1871, the name was

[190] I have drawn on Douglas Haynes' useful concept of 'corporate ads' in 'Selling Masculinity: Advertisements for Sex Tonics and the Making of Modern Conjugality in Western India, 1900–1945' in *South Asia: Journal of South Asian Studies*, 35:4, pp. 787-831.

changed to The Waverly Hotel, perhaps to bolster the claim of being 'entirely European' managed and/or to attract a wider clientele than the shipmasters with whom the Jerusalem was so popular. In the cases of Mrs. Schwartz's Europe Hotel (1860), Bernard Felmon's venture, the Europe Restaurant (1870) and Carolina Goldstein's the Mazagon-Europe Hotel, a European insertion was factored into the title itself.

The claims to Europeanness by Jewish proprietors should be understood in the wider context of the strategies and identities Jews adopted to configure themselves as a legitimate population in Bombay.[191] Ashwini Tambe notes how colonial officials selectively highlighted the Jewish background of prostitutes in the city, drawing on the British ideology of Jews as foreigners and notions that Jews were 'less white'.[192] By conflating Eastern European nationality and the Jewish religion they could distance prostitution from an Anglo-Saxon moral economy.[193] If there were any doubts about the ethnic background of the proprietor of the Prussian Hotel, Jacob Felmon, the detailed reporting of the case he filed against his wife Nina, would have laid them to rest. Felmon accused Nina of adultery (with one of his partner proprietors) and produced as evidence in court their marriage certificates with the seal of the Grand Rabbi of Alexandria, which were then verified by a local Rabbi.[194] This case will be discussed in greater detail in the subsequent section on scandals on hotel premises.

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[191] For the wider literature on Jews in India see Nathan Katz, *Indian Jews: an annotated bibliography, 1665-2005*. New Delhi: Manohar Publishers & Distributors, 2013; Anil Bhatti and Johannes H. Voigt, eds. *Jewish Exile in India, 1933-1945*. New Delhi: Manohar in association with Max Müller Bhavan, 2005; Orpa Slapak, *The Jews of India: A Story of Three Communities*. Jerusalem: The Israel Museum, 1995.

[192] Ashwini Tambe, *Codes of Misconduct: Regulating Prostitution in Late Colonial Bombay*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2009, p. 57.

[193] Ibid. pp. 57-8.

[194] *The Bombay Gazette*, 14 May 1864, p. 2.

There were no surprises with the hotel names Parsi proprietors chose. A standard stock of names, that either harked back to English locales or added some imperial lustre to Indian soil or centered on a personage/ title, were at their disposal. Napier Hotel in Poona was named after Lord Napier of Magdala, Commander-in-Chief in India (1870-76) and the Ripon Hotel in Mahableshwar after George Robinson, 1st Marquess of Ripon and Viceroy of India (1880-84). Victoria Hotel (1874) and Prince of Wales Hotel (both located in Bombay) reflect the choice of more generic and obvious imperial titles. The names suggest how resolutely Parsi proprietors targeted the English traveller as well as how they chose to mark their presence in the burgeoning public spheres of Bombay, the neighbouring hill-stations and Poona.

Some establishments lived on in locations long after they had closed down. Messrs. Pestonjee Sorabjee & Co. shut The British Hotel located in the Fort district in late 1862, unceremoniously auctioning its dining and breakfast sets, linen and Thurston's slate billiard tables. The British Hotel Lane, that housed the Hotel, is called so to date, a rare example in the name changing politics of post-colonial Bombay/Mumbai (Figure 3.6). Other hotels that subsequently appeared in the Lane had to accommodate the older hoteliering presence. The address of the English Hotel run by Pestonjee Bapoojee curiously read- English Hotel, British Hotel Lane, Apollo Street.[195]

The selection of a fitting and depictive name extended to persona of the Parsi hotel proprietor himself. The malleability in the adoption of surnames among the Parsi community in the 19th century allowed significant agency in the molding of individual

[195] Ibid. 1 June 1870, p. 1.



FIGURE 3.6. A contemporary photograph of the signpost at British Hotel Lane, Fort.

(Bombaywalla.)

identity to emphasize professional or other affiliations. Older practices of taking the father's first name after one's own were complimented with a third new and adaptable category. Among the Parsi surnames that were affiliated with the interrelated hotel, hospitality and culinary trades were Pochkhanawalla (inn keepers, *pochkhana* meaning a wayside inn), Billiard-Table-wala, Bakerry (bakery), Messman, Morinas (after the Spanish owner of an ice-cream shop), Confectioner, Cakewala, Biscuitwalla, Powwalla (breadman), Chaiwala (tea seller). The original surname of Dadabhoy Ardeshir Pochkhanavala, proprietor of the Prince of Wales Hotel at Elphinstone Circle, Fort, was Goria Dalal, indicating a former business in wool trading.[196] These newer surnames helped to effortlessly and professionally locate Parsis in public settings, serving in some sense as portable personal advertisements in counterpoint to those preserved in the press.

A home without the housekeeping

Unaccompanied European gentlemen were the primary guests at the hotels in Bombay. The other significant guests were European families and groups of foreign performing artists on tour. What gave hotels an edge over setting up a temporary home in the city were their offerings of the comforts of an imperial home without the drudgery of running one. Hotels were furnished with the staples of a Victorian household- conversation half backed sofas, hanging Argand lamps, partition screens, carpets, pianofortes, teapoys, cruet pickle and egg frames, soup tureens. How similar the goods belonging to a Parsi run hotel and a British home in Bombay were, can be gauged by their listings at public auctions when either a hotel closed or when a British civilian returned to England after a duration in Bombay. Hotels combined the

[196] From Feroze Dalal's response to my letter in *Parsiana*, the semi-monthly magazine on the international Zoroastrian community, requesting information on early Parsi run hotels in Bombay, (issue 21 January 2012).

commodity and regulatory cultures of an imperial household (breakfast, tiffin and dinner meals) with the culinary diversification of a London restaurant (light French and substantial English repasts) along with aspects of Indian domesticity (a staff of servants and attendants). Some hotels charged rates on a monthly basis. The Oriental Hotel in Mazagon and Bombay Exchange Hotel and Restaurant at Church Gate Street, Fort, charged a reasonable Rs 50 and Rs 90 respectively per mensem.[197] Since visitors to the city routinely stayed for a few months, these rates would have been more suitable. They also gave a sense that the hotels specifically catered to the conditions of long-term stay and customized their rates to compete with the market for renting houses in the city, which encouraged renting for periods of six months or less.

In the setting of a hotel, domestic anxieties, particularly the supervision, surveillance and punishment of servants and the consequences thereof, remained within the domain of the proprietor. Acting as a buffer between disgruntled guests and errant servants meant pacifying the former and disciplining the latter, occasionally at the cost of the servant initiating legal proceedings against the proprietor for assault.

For guests, keen to get on with the business that occasioned their visit to Bombay, the exercising of proprietorial authority was preferable to being dragged to court themselves, as some European householders were by servants subject to their whippings. Old hands at the Fort and Mazagon Police Offices, proprietors managed their cases that ranged from the payment of pending bills for wines, the recovery of debt and the charges of their staff. Pallonjee, the popular proprietor of the Adelphi Hotel, was found guilty and fined Rs 5 for assaulting Kistoo Manoel, a waiter in his

[197] *The Times of India*, 9 April 1862, p. 1 and *The Bombay Gazette*, 24 January 1862, p. 81 (MSA, January to July 1862 stack).

employ.[198] Manoel was delayed in preparing breakfast for a party of four before they left Bombay by a morning train. One of the ladies left without being served and Manoel received seven blows and a black eye at Pallonjee's hands.[199] How episodes of muscular authority affected the reputation of Old Pallonjee, as he was fondly called by his European clientele, is difficult to gauge. The servant problem was common and uniting discourse for native and European masters and mistresses. Letters in the press asked why there was no legislation under which offending servants could be punished: '…in Bombay Masters are entirely at the mercy of their domestics… if you take the law into your own hands, the law will very soon call you to account.'[200] Pallonjee and other hotel proprietors were used to getting their hands dirty; it was unlikely that a clientele spared would find fault.

Gentlemen prefer hotels: the categories of clientele

The profile of the clientele of the hotels in Bombay remained more or less consistent in the second half of the 19th century. The unaccompanied European gentleman emerges as the primary guest, followed by European families and groups of foreign performing artists on tour. This section will consider these three categories of clientele and the ways hotels in Bombay catered to them.

Without women to grace and manage a household, gentlemen preferred staying at hotels. Foremost was the clientele of servicemen, to whom Parsi proprietors directly appealed. 'RUSTOMJEE FRAMJEE AND CO., respectfully beg to return their best

[198] *The Bombay Gazette*, 18 October 1862, p. 997 (MSA, July to December 1862 stack).
[199] Idem.
[200] Ibid., 22 February 1862, p. 182 (MSA, January to July 1862 stack). For an understanding of the dynamics between European masters and Indians servants within the space of the bungalow see William J. Glover, *Making Lahore Modern: Constructing and Imagining a Colonial City*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2013, Chapter 5, 'Anxities at Home: The Disqueiting British Bungalow', pp. 179-183.

thanks for the patronage they receive from the Military, Naval, and Civil Members of Society, and the Commanders of Ships in the Harbour' begun an ad for the Imperial Hotel, Fort, in *The Bombay Almanack & Directory for 1862*.[201] Hotels were solid options compared to some of the other accommodation available to the military in Bombay in the mid 19th century–tents that lined the grassy expanse of the Esplanade (that surrounded the Fort settlement), the barracks within the Fort, the barracks at Colaba and Salsette, houses to let in the cantonment areas, worn with mis/use. The Clarendon Family Hotel hosted luminaries like Lord Straithnairn, former Commander-in-Chief in India (1861-65) and Lord Napier, then Commander-in-Chief of Bombay (1866-70). Napier certified, 'I have found the Clarendon Hotel, comfortable and the establishment very attentive.'[202] In Poona, proprietor Dadabhay Boottee's selection of the titular Napier Hotel (1868) was a sound one. The establishment enjoyed a six-year run (1870-76) named after the contemporary Commander-in-Chief in India.[203]

The recourse to hotels by high-ranking servicemen in Bombay meant that the hierarchies of accommodation were not confined to spaces reserved for military or naval use. Like wise services catering to the needs of the forces- army saddlers, military and naval tailors, mess, army and general agents- were liberally spread across the Fort and Byculla localities. A disassociation from the lower ranks of naval and commercial shipping establishments was particularly felt by senior officers. In

[201] *The Bombay Almanack & Directory for 1862*, (The Thirteenth Annual Publication), Bombay: Bombay Gazette Press, advertisement section.
[202] *The Bombay Gazette*, 14 January 1870, p. 4.
[203] *In Memoriam, Field-Marshal Lord Napier of Magdala, G.C.B., G.C.S.I., &c., &c., Constable of the Tower.* A re-print of a few Biographical Notices. For Private Circulation Only. In Bombay, Eduljee Shapoorjee's Napier Foundry at Foras Road, Byculla, was another example of a Parsi run establishment named after Napier. *The Bombay Almanack & Directory for 1872*, Bombay: Bombay Gazette Press, advertisement section.

contemporary discourses disorderly seamen had become a pressing public order problem.[204] A set of baser economies focused on the sailor- taverns, dancing rooms, boarding houses, grog shops, brothels- all in and around the vicinity of Duncan Road. The inauguration of a new Sailors' Home at Apolllo Bunder in 1876 was a significant step towards the containing and domestication of the population of seamen. Hotels were spared such reformatory roles since their clientele sought to maintain or enhance their status. Gentlemen could remain gentlemen in a hotel. Parsi proprietors' solicitations to the gentry, nobility, gentlemen were at once respectful but also delineated the populations that were to be kept out.

A handful of European run clubs and boarding houses posed the only significant competition to hotels in Bombay. The Byculla Club (1833), with its strict policies of membership and permitting guests, seemed much more accommodating of servicemen, even inviting them to become honorary members (Figure 3.7). [205] The Club, as an article in *The Bombay Times* mentioned, spared officers arriving from the Mofussil the three options of a 'higgledy piggledy, hugger mugger, sort of existence under a canvas on the Esplanade', an 'abode in hot, uncomfortable and miasm-enveloped Barracks' in the rainy season when the tents were withdrawn, or 'the expensive hospitality our Hotel-keepers.'[206] Further the Club promised the societal setup in keeping with the status of an officer- farewell dinners for dignitaries on their departure, room for regimental bands, balls, provisions for four Thurston billiard

[204] For the wider literature on the fissures within the white population in India see Elizabeth Kolsky, *Colonial Justice in British India: White Violence and the Rule of Law*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010; Harald Fischer-Tiné, *Low and Licentious Europeans: Race, Class, and 'White subalternity' in Colonial India*. Delhi: Orient BlackSwan, 2009; and A. Tambe and H. Fischer-Tiné, eds., *The Limits of British Colonial Control in South Asia*. London: Routledge, 2009.
[205] Samuel T. Sheppard, *The Byculla Club 1833-1916, A History.* Bombay: Bennett, Coleman & Co. LTD., 1916, p. 152.
[206] Sheppard, *The Byculla Club 1833-1916.* pp. 137-38.

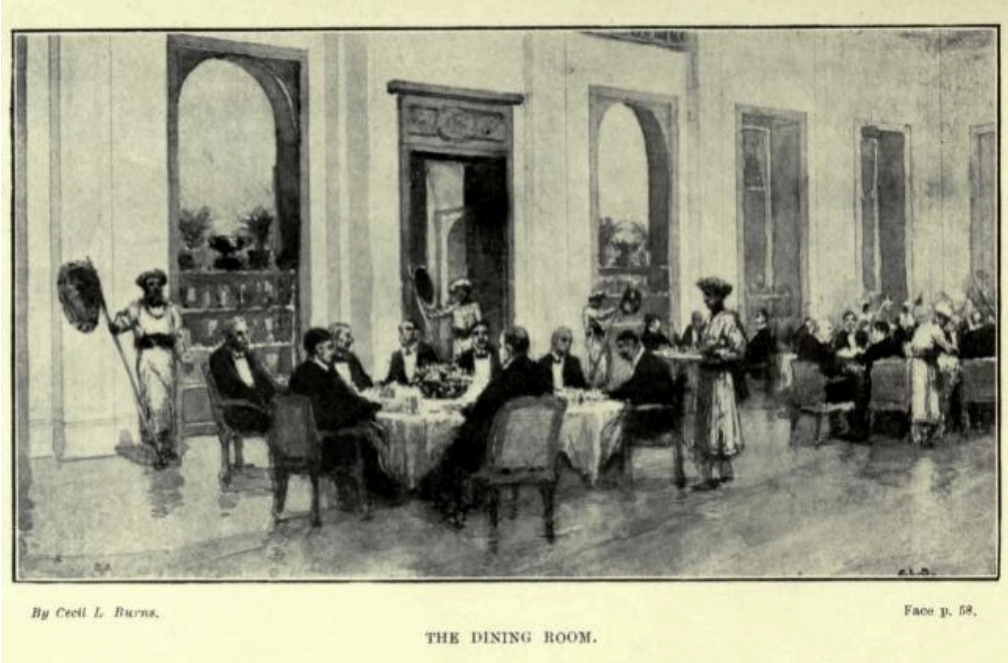


FIGURE 3.7. The Byculla Club.

tables, a host of other games and recreation including access to the Rifle Association of Western India and the possibility of having a dish at the Club named after you (Figure 3.8 & 3.9). It appears that a major drawback of the Club was its inconvenient location vis-à-vis the Byculla Railway Station and an acute awareness of a locational disadvantage, more generally. Among the most consistent proposals in the Club's 83-year history was the need to shift the establishment out of Byculla and into the Fort district.[207] Unlike the proprietors of hotels in Byculla that used their address to advantage, by emphasizing larger premises, garden facilities and proximity to 'fashionable' localities, the Club Committee's persistent preoccupation with relocating would have hardly been an incentive for potential members.[208]

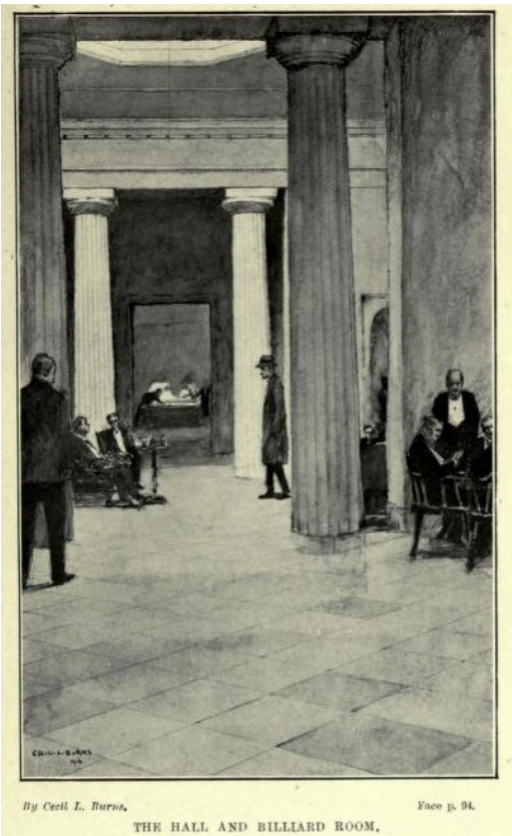
Naval officers and captains of commercial shipping companies like the Peninsular & Oriental Steam Navigation Company (P&O) and the British India Steam Navigation Company (BISN) had a choice of clubs like the Byculla or the Bombay Club (1845) at Rampart Row, hotels or company accommodation. The P&O established a long-term base in Bombay by building their own docks, wharves and repair workshops on reclaimed land, considerably extending the dock area at Mazagon on the eastern foreshore.[209] Their Officers' Club based in a bungalow, Santabraz, in Mazagon had a shorter spell. In 1863, all the Club's furniture, including a first-class, full size Thurston billiard table, was auctioned by Bennett & Co. at the Club's premises.[210] Some officials, like G. Ingle, a purser in the Indian Navy, rented bungalows from Parsi landlords in the services stronghold of Colaba. Cowasjee Nanabhoy Daver's

[207] Ibid., See Chapter III. 'Development and Removal Schemes', pp. 37-57.
[208] *The Bombay Almanack & Directory for 1862*, advertisement section.
[209] Sandip Hazareesingh, *The Colonial City and the Challenge of Modernity: Urban Hegemonies and Civic Contestations in Bombay (1900-1925).* Hyderabad: Orient Longman Private Limited, 2007, p. 18.
[210] *The Bombay Gazette*, 10 November 1863, p. 4.



By Cecil L. Burns. Face p. 58.

THE DINING ROOM.



By Cecil L. Burns. Face p. 94.

THE HALL AND BILLIARD ROOM.

FIGURE 3.8 & 3.9. (Above) The dining room at the Byculla Club and (below) the hall and billiard room at the Club.

(*The Byculla Club.*)

bungalow, available to let, was located opposite the Colaba Naval Sanitarium.[211] Yet Colaba did not emerge as a fashionable place of residence.[212] An afterthought in colonial planning, it could never really shrug off its early function as a warehouse for peoples and things. The locality housed several godowns including the Bombay Steam Navigation Company's storeroom, printing and cotton presses as well as the naval sanitarium, a sanitarium for poor Parsis and the famous Colaba Lunatic Asylum. Mr. Watson's address of No. 104 Lunatic Asylum Lane, Upper Colaba, was not one other Europeans in the city would have necessarily liked to share.[213]

The second category of clientele, European families, were served by a host of Parsi run 'family hotels' situated in the salubrious Byculla and Mazagon localities. Prime residential areas for Bombay's elite, the localities housed a host of bungalows, schools, places of worship and fashionable shops. A mainstay in the advertisements for the Clarendon Family Hotel in Nesbit Lane, Byculla, was the offering of garden facilities: 'An extensive and beautiful Garden, such as no other hotel in Bombay can boast of, surrounds the premises, the grounds in the front and rear being spacious and laid out at considerable expense and with great taste.'[214] The open expanse of a garden, offered female guests a space somewhere between the confines of the hotel and the chaos of the street. Advertisements for the Clarendon also noted that the ventilation in and views from the rooms were not obstructed by any of the buildings in the vicinity, a claim hotels in the congested Fort district could not have

[211] Ibid., 24 January 1862, p. 84 (MSA, January to July1862 stack).
[212] Colaba was one of the seven islands that came together to form Bombay. It was connected to the city in 1838 with the construction of the Colaba Causeway. Preeti Chopra, 'Free to move, forced to flee: the formation and dissolution of suburbs in colonial Bombay, 1750–1918' in *Urban History*, 39, 1 (2012).
[213] *The Bombay Gazette*, 12 December 1862, p. 1181.
[214] Ibid. 14 January 1870, p. 4.

convincingly made.[215] Colonel and Mrs Turner who remained at the Clarendon for five days found it 'very quiet and well conducted, the Proprietor (Framjee Byramjee) most obliging.'[216]

Parsi hotel proprietors made consistent and convincing assertions of catering to a family clientele, outdoing the competition from similar European run ventures. The latter's unique selling point remained the promise of an entirely European proprietorship and management, often unmindful of inconsistent ad copy or of customising hotel space to back some of the other claims their ads were making. In 1871, William Dickson extended the Australasian Hotel to include premise No. 2 (to the existing No. 3) on Forbes Street, Fort.[217] A titular rebranding as the Australasian Family Hotel shortly followed. Yet the Hotel continued to market its comfortable bedrooms, adequate supply of sea breeze (features customary to almost every hotel in the locality), its location near the bustling Bombay Gazette office and the English stock of its proprietor. The regularity with which property in Bombay was let to a host of tenants for varying purposes necessitated an adaptability of space or at least an impression of it. On the other hand, it was the onus of the new occupier to convince clients of how suitably he had fitted up the premises, furbishing the general into the particular.

Vying for patrons alongside the Australasian were the advertisements of Pallonjee Pestonjee's venture the Adelphi Family Hotel. In 1868 the Hotel was opened at the Huntley Lodge in Byculla, premises that formerly housed the Bombay Young Ladies

[215] Ibid., 1 June 1870, p. 1.
[216] Idem.
[217] Ibid., 15 March 1870, p. 1 and *The Times of India*, 11 January 1871, p. 1. No. 3 Forbes Street housed Thomas Gaynor's boarding house in the early 1860s.

Institution, an educational establishment. The advertisements assured that the new premises have been fitted up 'with great expense strictly as a FAMILY HOTEL, where Visitors or Residents will find every comfort of a home…Mr. Pallonjee trusts that his 25 years' experience…is a sufficient guarantee that his new FAMILY HOTEL will be conducted on the very best principles.'[218] The facilities of a spacious garden, carriages to transport guests at the time of arrival and departure and the carrying of the guests' luggage by the Hotel's staff of messengers, were emphasized.[219] These facilities seem to have better attended to the requirements of a female clientele and the men travelling with them.

It was in fact through the third category of clientele, groups of international artists on tour, that the idea of 'family' was implicated in the most interesting ways. These groups, of mainly actors or musicians, often comprised of members of a family (as well as unrelated professionals); they often chose to stay in family hotels in Bombay; and the marketing of their performances also corroborated the idea and unit of the family. Among the well-known guests that Rustomjee Framjee hosted at the Imperial Hotel, Fort, in 1862, were the Grattans, an English family of theatre actors. The star of the company was Emma Grattan, her father Henry served as both manager and lead actor, her bother was also an actor. The shield of a family run concern, under the watchful eye of the patriarch, allowed unmarried, young female artists to perform and tour, without serious aspersions being cast on their respectability. Press reviews of Emma Grattan's performance often included a disclaimer that the unflattering character she portrayed bore no resemblance to her own good nature.[220] Her

[218] *The Times of India*, 11 January 1871, p. 1.
[219] Manjulika Srivastava, *Brand New: Advertising Through The Times of India*. Times of India for the proprietors Bennett, Coleman & Co., 1989, p. 272.
[220] *The Bombay Gazette*, 28 May 1862, p. 504. (MSA, January to July1862 stack).

audiences at the Grant Road Theatre included a host of drunk sailors, located in the pit. When the audience got too unruly Henry Grattan would drop the curtain and refuse to proceed till order had been restored.'[221]

Tickets for the artists' performances were sold at various stores and newspaper offices in the Fort district as well as at the hotel/s in which the artists resided. For the German musicians, Herr Chas Wlhle and Herr Feri Kletzer's, Third Grand Evening Concert at the Town Hall on 8 December 1863, Dress Circle and First Class tickets were available for purchase at Herbert & Co.'s Music Rooms at Rampart Row (Fort), while Family Tickets to admit three to the Dress Circle, were available only at Hope Hall Family Hotel, Mazagon, run by Nusserwanjee Sorabjee & Co.[222] While this may be a rare example of the strict delineation for selling tickets- it does indicate how ideas of family, family hotels and the localities of Mazagaon and Byculla were closely implicated as were the notions of the individual self, public establishments and offices, and the Fort district. The system for selling tickets was probably among the reasons why artists chose staying in hotels over clubs. It is highly unlikely that clubs would have permitted local and European enthusiasts lining up at their premises to purchase tickets. At the Byculla Club membership was restricted to European gentlemen and even guests and staff from the native population were rarely permitted.[223] Further artists toured several major cities across the globe. Gaining

[221] Ibid., 29 August 1862, p. 825. (MSA, July to December1862 stack).
[222] Ibid., 2 December 1863, p. 1.
[223] See Chapter VIII. 'Strangers Within Our Gates', of Sheppard's *The Byculla Club 1833-1916*, pp. 131-147, for the policies of the Club and practices of its members regarding guests. Nusserwanjee Fardoonjee Grant was 'The only Indian and Parsi steward of the Byculla Club.' In recognition of his service of ten years, the members of the Club presented him with a gold medal in 1856. The medal, crafted in England, was sent to Surat, Grant's native city, where he chose to retire. At a durbar specially held the medal was presented to him by E. Ravenscroft, the Collector of Surat. Prior to joining the Club he had served as the *karbhari* of Mr. Grant, possibly a former Collector of Surat or Sir John Peter Grant, judge of the Supreme Court (1827-29), from whom he derived his surname. On his retirement he was appointed trustee of the Surat Parsi Panchayet. H. D. Darukhanawala, *Parsi Lustre*

access to clubs in each of their destinations would have been difficult and time-consuming.

The hotels and 'health' of the Fort

In the early 1860s, the hotels and 'health' of the Fort district were a hard sell. The century-old stone ramparts and gateways that bounded the district had come to be popularly regarded as a nuisance and a sanitary hazard that had long outlived its purpose.[224] Within the walled precinct, the density was high. Buildings were situated at close proximity to each other, hotels were housed within the existing infrastructure of two or three storied buildings, the noise from the traffic and trades in the streets and lanes in the district was constant. The boom in the export of cotton from Bombay to Britain in the early 1860s, added to the congestion in area. (The British textile industry had come to heavily rely on Indian cotton when the supplies from America were cut short due to the American Civil War {1861-65}). The local press regularly reported on the 'nuisance' the cotton trade was causing on Marine Street, Fort.[225] Deposits of cotton bales often took up half the breath of the street.[226] The uncovered urinals on the street, used by the labourers that manned the bales, were poorly

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on Indian Soil, Bombay: G. Claridge & Co., 1939, p. 323 and Sheppard, *The Byculla Club 1833-1916*, p. 152.

[224] A number of official and literary sources suggest that by the mid 19th century the ramparts were popularly considered redundant. For example see the correspondence of the Public Works Department and the Rampart Removal Committee, where the ramparts are referred to as 'condemned' and Dosebai Cowasjee Jessawalla's, autobiography *The Story of My Life* (1911), where she mentions that in 1849 her mother successfully petitioned the Government to have removed an 'obnoxious corner' of the ramparts, that impaired the 'comfort and value' of their house in the Fort. Resolution of Government, p. 4, in 1863.64 Genl. Dept. No. 261. Ramparts Bombay Removal of. and Mrs. Dosebai Cowasjee Jessawalla, *The Story of My Life*. Bombay, 1911, p. 57.

[225] The word 'nuisance' was factored into the title of the articles, for example 'The Cotton Nuisance', 'The Marine Street Nuisance' in *The Bombay Gazette*, 5 June 1862, p. 533 (MSA, January to July1862 stack) and 2 May 1864, p. 2.

[226] *The Bombay Gazette*, 29 May 1862, p. 508. (MSA, January to July1862 stack).

maintained. These urinals were situated within 20 yards of a hotel.[227] *The Bombay Gazette* directly addressed the Municipal authorities about the condition of the Street:

> The nuisance, besides being dangerous in a high degree to the health of the residents in its immediate neighbourhood- the effluvia during the hot weather being most offensive- is a public scandal to the town, and affords a spectacle which probably no other town in India presents; and, should it not be at once removed, the Municipal authorities will render themselves liable to be prosecuted by indictment at the Criminal Sessions of the High Court.[228]

Parsi proprietors circumvented the constraints of being located in the Fort by focusing the controlled space of the hotel interiors. Their advertisements drew attention to the cleanliness of the premises, sleeping apartments that were 'exposed to the sea breeze, and commanding the view of the Back Bay'[229] and dining rooms that were 'lofty, cool and agreeable'.[230] While the bungalow hotels of Byculla and Mazagon could offer open spaces and generous accommodation, apartment hotels in the Fort stressed superior ventilation and a locational advantage at the heart of the administrative and commercial district; a fair trade off for somewhat constrained living quarters.

The establishment of The Esplanade Hotel in the Fort was part of a wider state backed initiative to redesign the district as the centre of a new, open metropolis. The Fort ramparts were removed in 1863-64. On the area and environs freed by the removal a new landscape of imposing civic structures were conceptualized, as well as the first, state sanctioned grand hotel, worthy of the metropolis. In 1864 English merchant John Watson bid, at a steep Rs 110 per square yard, for the two-acre plot on which the

[227] Ibid., 2 May 1864, p. 2.
[228] Idem.
[229] Ibid. advertisement for The Royal Hotel.
[230] *The Bombay Almanack & Directory for 1862*, ad for The British Hotel.

new hotel was to be situated.[231] Opened seven years later in 1871, The Esplanade could claim to be the 'THE LARGEST, most commodious and most healthily situated HOTEL in Bombay,' boosting both its own profile and that of the once congested Fort (Figure 3.10).[232]

The symbol and structure of the ramparts, on the one hand and The Esplanade Hotel on the other, powerfully encapsulate how the city was being reimagined and rebuilt to accommodate the modern, mobile condition. The narrow gateways of the Fort- through which two country carts and subsequently conveyances could not pass abreast or cross each other and which, during periods of rioting, offered strategic points at which commuters could be blocked and attacked- had created and controlled the traffic of people and goods in Bombay.[233] The Esplanade Hotel's Minton tiled entrance and grand staircase beckoned the population of visitors to the city, offering over a hundred bedrooms, carriage pick up and drop services to stations, a steam lift, multilingual staff and doctor on call, all at prices at par with and often lower than the older hotels in the city. In the open, emerging, modern metropolis it was good to be a stranger.

Parsi proprietors were quick to acclimatize to the new trends in hoteliering inaugurated by the Esplanade, like the need for premises conceived and designed for particular use. Expressions of the malleability of city space were beginning to make

[231] Sharada Dwivedi and Rahul Mehrotra, *Bombay: The Cities Within*. Bombay: Eminence Designs Pvt LTD, p. 152.
[232] *The Bombay Gazette*, 18 February 1870, p. 1. An advertisement for The Esplanade Hotel in *The Times of India*, 5 March 1873 noted: 'The LAST YEAR in Malabar Hill District which is supposed to be the healthiest part of the Island the MORTALITY was as high as 30.18 per 1,000, whereas on the Esplanade it was only 14.81 *vide Report* 1873.'
[233] The gates were expanded in the 1840s to accommodate greater traffic. Ibid., 'Some Changes in Bombay from 1829 to 1862' series (no. 40), *The Bombay Gazette*, 28 May 1862 p. 504 (MSA July to December 1862 stack) and Jesse S. Palsetia, 'Mad Dogs and Parsis: The Bombay Dog Riots of 1832' in *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, Third Series, Vol. 11, No. 1 (Apr., 2001), p. 16.



FIGURE 3.10. A photograph of the Esplanade Hotel and the surrounding Fort district.

(*The Taj at Apollo Bunder*, p. 46.)

less convincing ad copy. Jewanjee & Co. marketed the Byculla Hotel as 'Having been built expressly for an hotel, the building possesses advantages over bungalow hotels, and has been fitted up in such a manner as to ensure the greatest comfort to Residents and Visitors.'[234] The discourse on sanitation began to feature liberally in hotel advertisements. At Jewanjee's Great Western Hotel, the second grand hotel in the city, every bedroom had an attached bathroom with a constant supply of water. The setup had 'the approval of the best scientific authorities', an advertisement explained.[235]

Subduing the scandals

Scandals made eye-catching headlines, their details racy reading. Channeling the inner voyeur in each reader, newspapers guided their audiences through hotel interiors till they reached the most private of chambers, the bedroom. There they were confronted with a liason between hotel guests. In varying degrees of undress and embrace, the suspects were discovered. Scandals on hotel premises were tricky matters for Parsi proprietors largely because the parties involved were clients, taking sides was unprofitable, a hearing before a magistrate almost always followed, the proprietor among the key witnesses rather than his usual role as defendant or prosecutor. Unlike thefts and other mishaps that usually involved personal or hotel servants, scandals unsettled the core of establishment, indicting the very gentlemen and families meant to preserve its moral order. The sobriety of the proprietor was disturbed with immodest visual and verbal details he would then have to publically corroborate at the concerned police office. The unwanted publicity and dent to the

[234] Ibid., 29 September 1870, p. 1.
[235] *The Times of India*, 25 May 1888, p. 7.

hotel's reputation were other unwelcome consequences of scandals, romantic or otherwise.

The proprietor or manager (in the case of hoteliering conglomerates) was the first port of call in the event of a mishap. Guests reported thefts, occasions of slander, assault and adultery, occasionally even midway through the proceedings. The manager of The Adelphi Hotel was summoned by Dr. Henry Francis McGrath on 23 December 1870, at 11:30 pm, to the suite of apartments occupied by his wife Gertrude and Dr. Charles G. Wiehe, a colleague in the Bombay Medical Service. 'I drew attention of the said Bomanjee Sorabjee to this state of affairs, and bid him remember them.' Sorabjee was subjected to witnessing Wiehe 'in his dressing gown and without pyjamas (night drawers). My said wife was in her night gown in the room.'[236] These awkward confrontations for the Parsi management necessitated inspection while an averted gaze would have been the etiquette. Gertrude and Wiehe's nightly trysts continued till they were chased to the Byculla Railway Station from where they hurriedly escaped to Poona.[237] A literal washing of dirty linen in public followed at the hearing at the Girgaum Police Office and its reportage in the press.

The case of European run hotels was more complicated since the domestic equilibrium was often disrupted by the proprietors and their families themselves. Hotels doubled as the residence of the proprietor and his household, raising fundamental questions about the compatibility of hotel and home spaces or more broadly of work and residential sites especially when they resemble each other so closely. Thomas Gaynor testified at the Fort Police Office on 30 April 1864, that he

[236] *The Bombay Gazette*, 30 December 1870, p. 2.
[237] Idem.

had sold the Cambridge Hotel on Forbes Street largely because of his wife Julia's perpetual presence at the establishment.[238] Julia had since relocated to Colaba while Gaynor was residing in a tent on the Esplanade. On one of her visits to the hotel Gaynor accusing her of adultery and assaulted her in the bar. Gaynor was smarting from another trial held five days earlier where he had been accused of plotting to burn down the Cambridge, which was under the new proprietorship of another Englishman, Edward Larter. He suspected his wife's hand in the fabrication of the story. Julia was willing to drop the charges of assault if she was granted a separate maintenance; Gaynor, who was in debt, was unwilling to comply.[239]

The Bombay Gazette abstained from reproducing details of a liason between Nina Felmon, the wife of one of the proprietors of the Prussian Hotel and Hernann Wienbraube, a fellow proprietor, in April 1864. 'Here followed evidence which is unfit for publication' the paper noted.[240] Jacob Felmon, Wienbraube and the third proprietor Mr Korn, Nina's brother-in-law, all lived on the Hotel's premises with their families. On the evening of 28 April 1864 Wienbraube and Nina excused themselves a few minutes apart from a common gathering in the Hotel's ice-cream room and proceeded to a bedroom upstairs. Felmon followed shortly after and forced open the door. While remonstrating with his wife he was stuck by Wienbraube.[241] Complex legal proceedings followed. The defense argued that adultery was not committed since the marriage was not valid. Nina was not present at the initial hearings despite a peremptory summons being issued. *The Bombay Gazette* pinned her absence to her

[238] Ibid., 2 May 1864, p. 2.
[239] Idem.
[240] Ibid., 30 April 1864, p. 3.
[241] Idem.

embarrassment: ‘Mrs Felmon, who, to hide her blushes, has thought proper to place herself in concealment…’[242]

Despite residing within the hotel property, the domestic dynamics of dominant Parsi proprietors and their families did not enter the archive. The lone figure of the proprietor populates urban texts as it did the common spaces of his hotel establishment. The presences of female members of his household did not extend to the semi-public arenas of the hotel, as it did with their European counterparts. Both at the Cambridge and Prussian Hotels, the wives of the proprietors assumed informal and minor managerial roles, often to the chagrin of their husbands. Parsi proprietors seemed to have maintained a stricter segregation between their private quarters and that of the hotel, controlling the flow of traffic between lodgings and the overlap of recreational spaces like the bar and dining facilities. The need for a division between the personal and professional could explain the entrepreneurial absence of Parsis in the running of boarding houses in Bombay. Lesser than a hotel and more than a private home, boarding houses blurred the boundaries between proprietorial and lodger space to degrees that would have made Parsis uncomfortable. The premises utilized were comparatively constrained, obliging greater personal interaction. In 1871, Ellen McKenny, alias Mosley, who ran a boarding house in Falkland Road, died of a bout of excessive drinking that begun in the company of a boarder John Thomas, an engine driver in the employ of the municipality.[243] That boarding houses were minor players in the hospitality industry is evinced by both the lack of advertisements and suitable addresses in either Fort or Byculla.

[242] Ibid., 14 May 1864, p. 2.
[243] Ibid., 2 March 1871, p. 3.

Familiar familial faces were those of the hotel proprietors' sons, who joined in the running of the business and eventually took over at their father's retirement or death. Hormusji Maneckji Modi's (1846-1920) son Shapoorji was a practicing doctor while Jehangir ran the Apollo Hotel, Fort, on his father's retirement.[244] In the obituaries of various proprietors in Gujarati publications, the period of retirement allowed for relaxed family engagement, a more dedicated involvement in public and community life and philanthropy, particularly in the towns and cities of Gujarat where most of the proprietors had been raised. Sorabjee Jehangirjee Chinoy (1812-1906), proprietor of the Poona Hotel (1873) and the Rugby Hotel in Matheran (1876) spent the last ten of his 94 years in peace, surrounded by four generations of his family.[245]

Marital disharmony in most Parsi middle class and upper-middle class households, the kind hotel proprietors belonged to, was kept under wraps. The image of a private, secure domestic headed by the Parsi patriarch was key to the community's self-fashioning. With the passage of the Parsi Marriage and Divorce Act of 1865 and the setting up of the Parsi Chief Matrimonial Court of Bombay, cases of domestic discord made their way to the press with regularity. Yet as Mitra Sharafi has identified, it was largely the Parsi poor and lower middle classes that resorted to the Court, particularly women whose natal families did not have to means to maintain them but who could raise the money to go to court.[246] The likelihood of a clash in the archive- a Parsi proprietor advertising his family hotel on the front page of English publication while a report on another informed of a messy separation from his wife- was implausible.

[244] *Parsee Prakarsh*, Volume 5 (1911 to 1920), of the combined Volumes 4 and 5, p. 214.
[245] Ibid., Volume 4 (1901 to 1910), of the combined Volumes 4 and 5, p. 44.
[246] Mitra Sharafi, *Colonial Parsis and Law: A Cultural History*. Government Research Fellowship Lectures 2009-2010. Bombay: K R Cama Oriental Institute, 2010 and *Law and Identity in Colonial South Asia*: *Parsi Legal Culture, 1772-1947*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2014, p. 218.

Guests could read the morning papers, at a Parsi run hotel, after their plunge or shower baths, with no cause of alarm.

Entrepreneurial expansions

By the late 1860s hotel proprietors began diversifying their businesses by introducing catering services and setting up refreshment rooms and exchanges in Bombay. These diversifications were directed at tapping the city's settled population as well as those that were temporary based in the city and not residing in a hotel. The proprietors of hotels in the neighbouring hill-stations began a new service of managing private homes in the hill-stations, in absence of their owners. We will consider these three areas of diversification in further detail in this section.

The European population in Bombay was a ready market for catering services. Europeans had long fulfilled their professional and social commitments over a meal. The Governor of Bombay met citizens over breakfast at the Town Hall, the promotion or retirement of senior officials and servicemen was usually marked with a dinner and occasions like Queen Victoria's birthday and Christmas were celebrated by treating the population of European vagrants and orphans in Bombay to a meal. European hotel proprietors cashed in on these contractual services of mobile catering. Advertisements for their hotels included a byline offering to supply wedding breakfasts, ball suppers, picnic parties. The Australasian Hotel, run by William Dickson, delivered hot tiffins in the Fort area in the 1870s.[247]

[247] *The Bombay Gazette*, 15 March 1870, p. 1.

One of the important consequences of Parsi proprietors' diversification into catering services was that it enabled Parsis to inter-dine, at least with Europeans. As the previous chapter highlighted the strict codes of purity and pollution followed by the native communities in Bombay, including the Parsis, had meant that natives could only eat food prepared and served by members of their own communities, effectively preventing the experience of inter-dining between communities. The catering services introduced by Parsi proprietors, by supplying Parsi cooks and Parsi waiters, enabled Parsi guests to partake of the dining experience in cosmopolitan settings. Pallonjee of The Adelphi Hotel catered the luncheon held for the Duke of Edinburgh at Sir Jamsetjee Jejeebhoy, the second baronet's, home in the hill station of Khandalla in 1870.[248] Pallonjee's setup would have enabled Jejeebhoy's Parsi guests to partake of the lunch; the Duke and his party of 20 members, including the Governor of Bombay, would not have been constrained by ritual proscriptions on inter dining, if they were all European.

Stand alone eateries like refreshment rooms and exchanges tapped the population of European men who were temporarily based in the city and not residing in a hotel. At these establishments they could be served a ready meal of hot-chops, steaks, oysters, a selection of wines as well as an array of new cold drinks and had the chance to catch up with the daily papers and a game of billiards. In the hill stations neighbouring Bombay like Matheran and Mahableshwar, hotel proprietors diversified their businesses to include the management of private homes on the hill station while the owners were away. By paying the salaries of the staff, supervising repairs that might be required, proprietors extended the responsibilities of running a hotel to a set of

[248] Ibid., 17 March 1870, p. 2.

homes whose occupancy was at best seasonal. Here too, in some sense, the service was aimed at the wider population of Bombay since it was often city elites that had holiday homes in the hill stations.

The proprietors' diversifications reflected the wider shifts in the delivery of services in Bombay. The residents of Malabar Hill and its vicinity were among the earliest to benefit from the home delivery of professional services ranging from the supply of meat to the tuning of musical instruments. The local manager of William Kerr's Meat Market in Nassik announced that 'At the request of several families, the Manager will, if patronized by the majority of the European residents of Malabar Hill and Breach Candy, send a horse cart around each morning for the delivery of meat at private houses.'[249] The conveniences extended to the neighbourhoods, however, should not be understood in the context of the up-market status the areas have held in the more recent past. Rather it was the relative remoteness of the localities with their steep and ill kept roads as well as the identifiable concentration of Europeans residents, the main consumers of meat as of western music that prompted the delivery of services.

A range of household and kitchen appliances, designed to expedite modern domesticity, trickled into the Bombay market. Fresh from their wins at various international exhibitions, manufacturers targeted both hotels and private homes.
Sausage machines, domestic flour mills, mills for the grinding of pepper, spices and coffee were among the machinery available in the city in the early 1860s, followed towards the end of the decade with heavier appliances like cooking ranges, heaters

[249] *The Bombay Gazette*, 10 March 1864, p. 1.

and boilers. Bakers were among the earliest to partake of the technological advancements while hotel proprietors were slower to introduce them. At The Royal Hotel, Pallonjee and his partner proprietors consulted an engineer Samuel Perkes to tackle the problem of smoke caused by the cooking apparatus in the kitchen of the Hotel. They settled against a tiffin bill, part of the fees that were due to Perkes. For the recovery of remaining amount, Perkes dragged the proprietors to court. Barrister R. B. Barton, of the Hansom Cab service fiasco, defended them.[250] Household guides were slow to introduce the benefits of modern gadgetry. Reading like manuals on managing a dated countryside existence, the genre prolonged the discourse on imperial domestic drudgery. Messrs. Nye and Co.'s Mincing Machine, for example, could have assisted in the preparation of a host of Anglo-Indian dishes elaborated in the guides – Ballachong, Croquettes of Sweetbread, Omelette aux Rognons, Rissoles of Fowl.[251],

The Taj: a hoteliering landmark

Jamsetjee Tata's selection of the titular Taj Mahal Palace Hotel marked both the shifts towards indigenous naming practices and the promise of royal luxury, a significant elevation from the 'home comforts' hotels in Bombay had sought to recreate for over half a century (Figure 3.11).[252] Both the aesthetics and amenities of the Taj reflected these aspirations – the craftsmanship of the edifice the style of the Rajput bay windows, carved Gujarati trellises, the provisions of a Turkish bath, livery stables, luxury suites. Hotel charges, however, were not heightened to authenticate the

[250] Ibid., 18 August 1862, p. 785. (MSA, July to December1862 stack).
[251] These dishes have been chosen from R. Riddell's *Indian Domestic Economy and Receipt Book*. Madras: 1860.The company also marketed a Smaller Mincer, designed for placing at a private dining table to aid 'persons who cannot masticate properly'. *The "Times of India" Calendar & Directory for 1862*. Bombay: Exchange Press, advertisement section.
[252] Proprietors of hill-station hotels, in the marketing of their establishments as romantic getaways, were among the earliest to reconfigure their offerings.



FIGURE 3.11. A photograph of the rear of the Taj Mahal Palace Hotel, which faced the sea. (*The Taj at Apollo Bunder*.)

extravagance. The Taj continued the long established discourse of offering moderately priced accommodation in Bombay. At the time of its opening in 1903, room rates on a per day basis were Rs 6 and upwards and compared favourably with the rates of smaller hotels that had as early as 1871 charged between Rs 4 to 5 per day.[253]

Sharada Dwivedi and Charles Allen's explanation that Tata envisioned the Taj as boosting the morale and landscape of a city still recovering from the visitation of a devastating bubonic plague (1896-1900), may explain why the familiar offerings of a safe haven from the chaos and danger of the street were underplayed.[254] The hotel was a symbol of the restored health and confidence of Bombay as a whole. An indigenous enterprise, the newest marker on the city skyline, the Taj welcomed advancing ships and their passengers as much to its gates as it did to the city.

Tata included a number of recreational spaces within the hotel premises, that populations otherwise unattached to it, could partake of. Restaurants located at various levels facing the harbour, a billiard room on the first floor and twelve shops located on the ground floor of the Taj were accessible to non-residents. In comparison at grand hotels like The Esplanade the public Restaurant, Refreshment Bar, Billiard Room and shops were all located on the ground floor; at the Great Western Hotel access to the Billiard Room on the ground floor was directly from the street.[255] In Tata's model visitors were encouraged to engage with the hotel as a whole. New kinds of recreational spaces and activities were promoted. Early advertisements for

[253] *The Bombay Gazette*, 14 November 1903, p. 2.
[254] Charles Allen and Sharada Dwvedi, 'One Hundred and Five Years of the Taj' in the Taj catalogue, 2008.
[255] *The Bombay Gazette*, 6 February 1871, p. 1 and *The Taj at Apollo Bunder*, p. 45.

Taj omitted to mention the provision a billiards room (the defining facility of hotels in 19th century Bombay) listing instead the facilities of a General and Ladies Drawing Room, Bar and Smoking Room and a permanent Hotel Orchestra.[256]

The advertisements of the Taj established the trend of excluding the identity of the proprietor/owner from the marketing imagery of a hotel, presenting instead the company brand and the name of the manager. This meant that the moral order of the establishment was not as closely tied to a single persona. Management was subject to change and freer of the obligations of ownership. As a more neutral space, not aiming to reproduce the wholesomeness of a home or model itself as a family hotel, there was lesser need to subdue scandals and their circulation. Jean D'Ormesson has noted that 'It does not hurt a grand hotel, for instance, to have been the scene of a scandal. …an infinitesimally small, medicinal dose of suicides and high romantic passion may come in good stead, for fascination and snobbery flourish as much on misfortune as they do on bliss, provided both assume grandiose proportions, as behooves a grand hotel.'[257] The personal servants of the guests at the Taj, who slept in the corridors outside the rooms of their employers added another dimension to the surveillance and circulation of scandals. Servants were expected to rise and salaam as masters and mistresses walked through the corridors.[258] The possibilities of being discovered were also increased since guests had to use common bathroom and lavatory facilities, which were located on each floor (rather than attached to every room).[259]

[256] *The Bombay Gazette*, 21 November 1903, p. 4.
[257] David Watkin, *Grand Hotel: The Golden Age of Palace Hotels, An Architectural and Social History*. New York: Vendome Press, 1984.
[258] Louis Bromfield, *Night in Bombay*. London: Cassell and Company Limited, 1940.
[259] *The Taj at Apollo Bunder*, p. 52.

Smaller hotels in Bombay followed the trend of an absent proprietorial presence in print while maintaining claims of a European management. One such, the Prince of Wales Hotel at Elphinstone Circle, Fort, was run by Dadabhoy Ardeshir Pochkhanavala and his partners. The establishment had its share of scandals, Pochkhanavala's grandson Feroze Dalal recalls. Pochkhanavala's brother was said to have had an affair with a European bar maid and fathered an illegitimate child Ruby Myers (1907-1983), who later became a famous actress under the stage name of Sulochana (Figures 3.12 & 3.13).[260]

Racial appropriations in the hotel trade

Parsi proprietors' careful ad copy and reassurances of the wholesomeness of their establishments, was matched with the relative economy of the advertisements of European run hotels. It would appear that the later's public recourse to race intrinsically encompassed the attributes their native counterparts had to spell out. Yet the familiar logic of colonial racial supremacy falls short. Several other proprietor-centric (and proximal) services offered by Europeans in Bombay- haircutting, dentistry, millinery, dressmaking - did not market the stock of the proprietor. In the advertisements for his outfittering establishment on Church Gate Street, not far from The Esplanade Hotel, John Watson made no mention of a European identity. Like the advertisements for Parsi run hotels, only the proprietor's name/s are mentioned, from which, no doubt, a customer could roughly gauge the extraction. Nor can the modern discourse on the Parsis part be understood in entirely pluralist terms. As community members increasingly resorted to hotel accommodation at the turn of the century there were shifts towards the communal in the ways proprietors presented themselves,

[260] Feroze Dalal's reply to my letter in *Parsiana*.

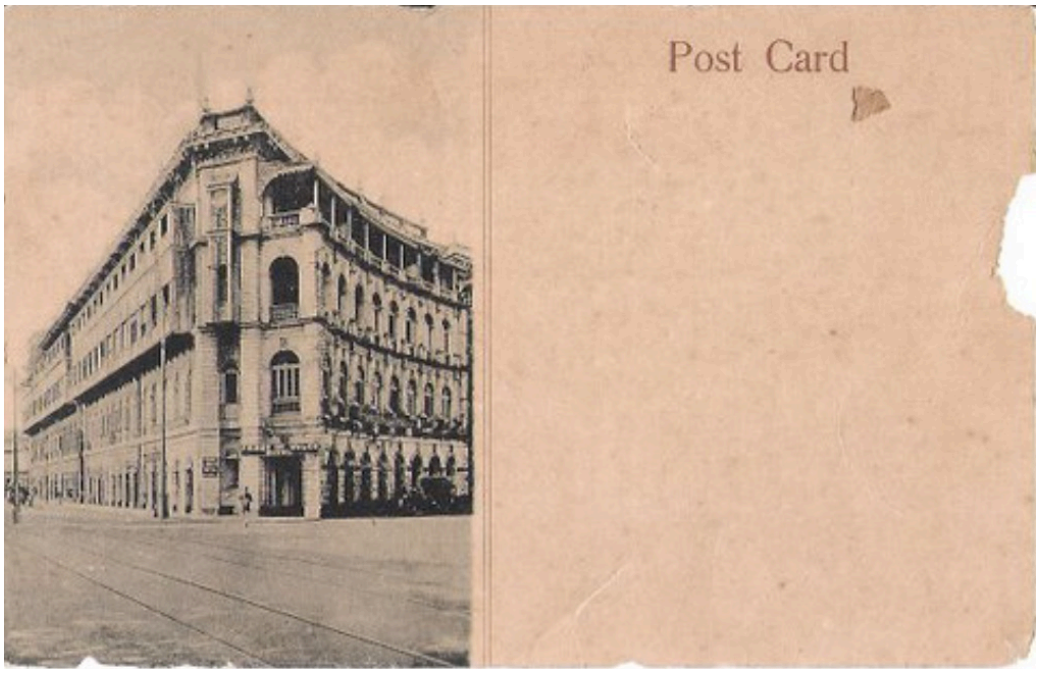




FIGURE 3.12 & 3.13. (Above) A postcard with a photograph of the Prince of Wales Hotel and (below) Dadabhoy Ardeshir Pochkhanavala, the proprietor of the Prince of Wales Hotel.

(Courtesy Feroze Dalal.)

including their bodies, into the space of the ads. Broadly, racial assertions in the marketing of hotels, both European and Parsi, were determined by the stock of the clientele- when Europeans were practically the only clients it made little business sense for Parsi proprietors to include their race, particularly when European proprietors included theirs to obvious advantage.

The hospitality trade in colonial Bombay was a competitive and leveled playing field. Early Parsi entrants into the business worked for the few, existing European owned hotels, eventually becoming partners and founding their own hotels. Later initiates trained at the burgeoning Parsi run concerns and branched out on their own. Pallonjee Pestonjee started his career at The British Hotel run by Mr. Barnes, one of the two good hotels in the Fort as per the recommendations of the *Guide to Bombay* (1854).[261] Records suggest that The British Hotel soon passed entirely under the proprietorship of Pestonjee and three other Parsis. Pestonjee relinquished his partnership in 1856 to start The Adelphi Hotel in Byculla.[262] His pluck and acumen can be gauged by his starting a new establishment, under sole proprietorship, in an area where the formidable Hope Hall Family Hotel had held sway since 1837 and his eventual stake as partner in the Hope Hall. Politician and chronicler of Bombay, Sir D. E. Wacha, attributed The Adelphi's success to the popularity of the proprietor, 'He had a charming courtesy about him and was always intent on pleasing his visitors, rich or poor, with equal impartiality.'[263] The trends of the city's hospitality industry - of proprietors rivaling, surpassing and taking over European hotels- suggests a lively trade largely unfettered by the limitations of race. Even the exclusive Byculla Club

[261] Sheppard, *The Byculla Club 1833-1916,* p. 138.
[262] *The Bombay Times and Journal of Commerce*, 20 September 1856, p. 601.
[263] Sir D. E. Wacha, *Shells from the Sands of Bombay being My Recollections and Reminiscences-1860-1875*. Bombay: The Indian Newspaper Company, Ltd., 1920, p. 293.

was not above the vagaries of the market. By the early 1860s Louis Blanchenay, the French cook and steward of the Club joined the service of Rustomjee Framjee & Co.'s Imperial Hotel in the Fort. The proprietors acknowledged their newest asset with bold inclusions of the chef's name and his specialities in the marketing of the Imperial.[264]

That the founding myth of the Taj Mahal Palace Hotel came to rely so centrally on race is surprising. Like the other myths of the hotel –of being built inversely with the entrance facing the back instead of the Arabian sea and the architect, unable to live with the folly of his masterpiece, committed suicide from the fifth floor of the Taj- years of circulation have made them urban legend. As D'Ormesson notes 'It takes a grand hotel for a legend to arise, but no hotel is grand without a legend, making a vicious circle that can be broken only by the truly great.'[265] The archive offers a more complex reading of racial appropriations in turn of the century colonial Bombay. The Taj exemplified how native ownership of a hotel did not preclude claims to a European management. Opened under the supervision of Louis Gapp, the Hotel announced its 'European Management, European Staff, Experienced French Chef at the head of the Kitchen Department'.[266] Prior to his sudden death in 1905, Gapp had laid much of the groundwork of the managerial style and was assisted by his wife.[267] Other geographic entities in the early ads for the Taj included 'The Indian Hotels Co., Ld.' the name of the company that floated the hotel, and the declaration of being 'THE NEWEST, LARGEST, and BEST APPOINTED HOTEL in the East.'[268] Such sweeping claims of continental supremacy were new; only a few proprietors had

[264] Srivastava, *Brand New: Advertising Through The Times of India*, p. 271
[265] Watkin, *Grand Hotel: The Golden Age of Palace Hotels.*
[266] *The Bombay Gazette*, 21 November 1864, p. 4.
[267] *The Times of India*, 16 August 1905, p. 8.
[268] *The Bombay Gazette*, 21 November 1864, p. 4.

located their establishments within the broader Indian setting, most focused on local one-upmanship particularly in the Fort. Framjee Byramjee's advertisements for the Clarendon Family Hotel in 1870 were among the earliest to include the recommendation certificates of famous guests as well as create a larger framework: 'The idea of "home comforts" and of the ease, free from restraint, which one enjoys at "home," has seldom been associated with Indian Hotels. The Proprietor hopes that the present Management of the Clarendon Family Hotel will remove this reproach a far as that Hotel is concerned.'[269]

Court proceedings involving the proprietors and a lodger of the Apollo Hotel indicate that business was not adversely affected in the three years since the Taj had opened in the vicinity, nor were the number of hotel staff reduced.[270] Yet proprietors' Hormusji and Jehangir Modi's decision to make E. W. Pyrke partner and a change of establishment name to Pyrke's Apollo Hotel, suggest that a rebranding with a rare and formal inclusion of the proprietor in the title was thought suitable, though in reverse of the contemporary style. A shift towards a European identity was more in keeping with the hybrid trends the Taj had set in motion. In 1905, The Indian Hotels Co., Ld. acquired W. B. Green & Co.'s four-storied Apollo Bunder Restaurant and Café, located beside the Taj (Figure 3.14). Under the former proprietorship, the Green's Restaurant and Café, as it was commonly known, was presented in terms not very different from its recent neighbour: 'The Tiffin, Dining and Billiard Rooms of India. Established in 1868. Strictly under English Management.'[271]

[269] Ibid., 1 June 1870, p. 1.
[270] *The Times of India*, 9 October 1906, p. 5.
[271] *The Bombay Gazette*, 10 November 1903, p. 1.

Afterword

The turn of the century witnessed a greater use of hotels by native populations visiting Bombay. As early as the 1870s, wealthy native travelers and their retinues had begun to opt for hotel accommodation rather than renting and maintaining one of the city's many bungalows, available for short let. Three young Bengalis, fresh from passing the Civil Service Examination in England in 1871, choose to stay at The Esplanade Hotel before their return to Calcutta.[272] Yet in the 19th century, the elite, native clientele remained a small, almost insignificant number. With the greater mobility of the middle classes, however, keen to partake of the educational and professional opportunities of big cities or experience a holiday at a hill station or seaside venue, hotels offered a novel, fashionable set-up and compared favourably with the older options of sanatoriums and *dharamshalas,* accommodation long typecast as catering to the economically disadvantaged. Why proprietors of public and semi-public recreational facilities chose to capitalize on this growing middle class market by compartmentalizing it on religious lines may occasion various explanations. One could argue that Parsi-run hotels, specifically for the use of Parsi guests, reassured potential and novice travelers, in the way claims of European management attracted a European clientele. Yet natives were not excluded from partaking of early European or Parsi hospitality and as the previous arguments have shown Parsi proprietors were a confident, successful lot. In many ways the racial trajectory suggested in this chapter is the reverse of what has been internalized in Bombay's popular history through the story of Tata being refused admission into a European run hotel and starting the Taj in retaliation. Another approach could be that the brand of proprietor of a community specific hotel differed from the older, cosmopolitan one that had

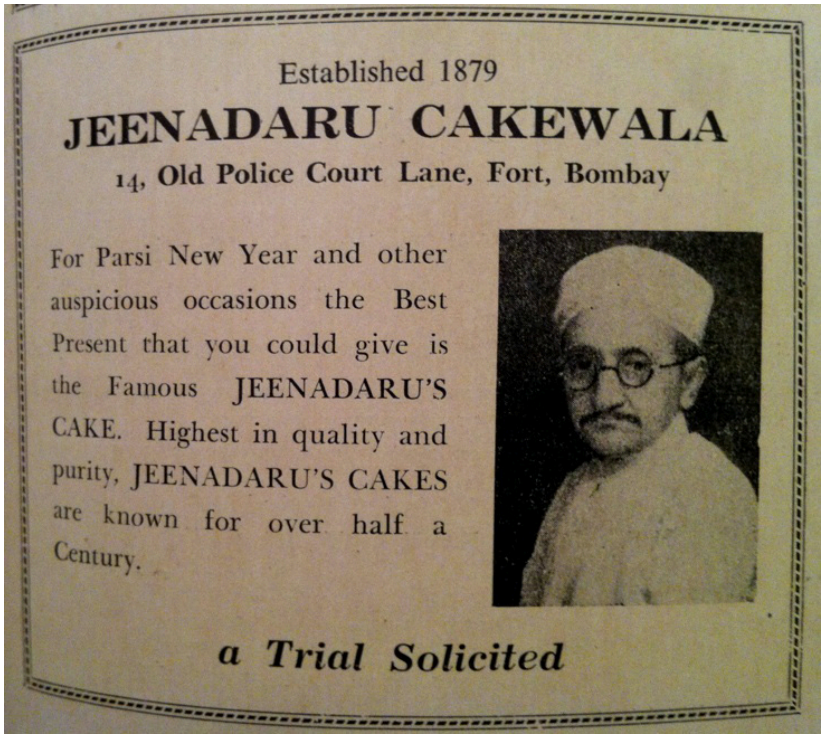
[272] Ibid., 25 September 1871, p. 3.

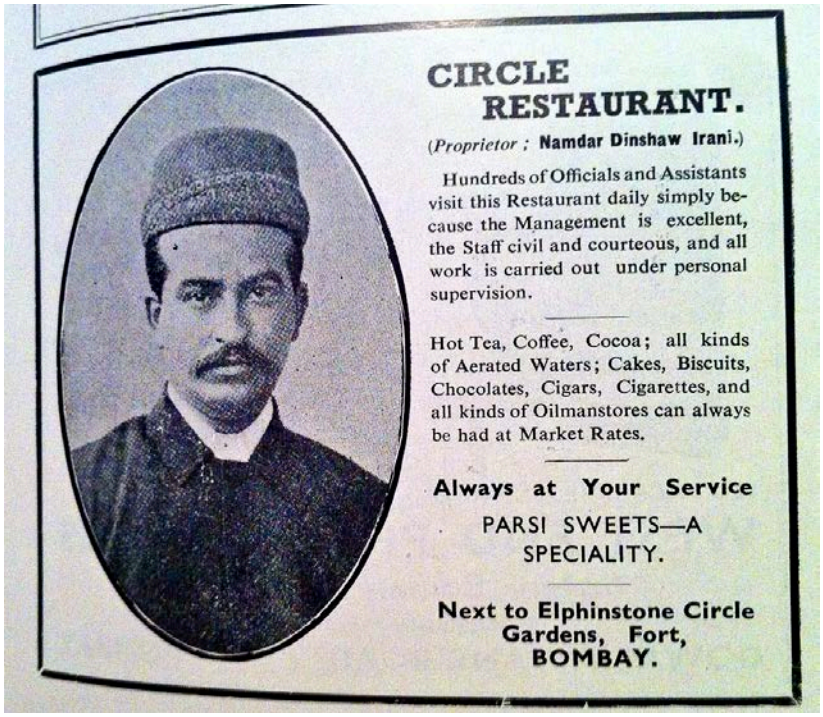
laboured towards a reputation of courteousness, service and universal appeal. Advertisements for newer community hotels, featured in Parsi publications, factored the proprietorial presence in different ways. An ad for Framji Pestonji Mogul's Cyrus Hotel (1903), located at Sleater Road, Grant Road, read:

> The hotel proprietor humbly appeals to a more generous sympathy and greater kind patronage from his worthy community in view of the fact that his business has to be restricted to the Parsi community because all his life he has firmly clung to the idea of respecting the social and religious susceptibilities of the Zoroastrians, though he is often being offered but does not accept, higher terms by the members of the sister communities.[273]

With the inclusion of pictorial and photographic images into marketing space, the body of the Parsi proprietor begins to appear in advertisements for hotels and the allied establishments of restaurants, cafes, confectionary shops and bakeries. Even racially disengaged ad copy was complimented with a photograph of the proprietor in unmistakably Parsi headgear and clothes (Figure 3.15 & Figure 3.16). The overwhelming presence of proprietors in the early decades of the 20th century offers one end of the hoteliering spectrum, the other encapsulated by the Taj that had done away with any reference to Parsi ownership or shareholdings and offered the name of a faceless Indian company and a European management instead. Traces of the breed of Parsi hotel proprietor that was the focus of this chapter remain in the city spaces they shaped. At the death of many, funds were collected to erect memorials in the vicinity of their hotels. Dadabhay Boottee of the Napier Hotel was commemorated with a bust and fountain. A street was named after him in the Poona Camp.[274] The astute naming practices had come full circle.

[273] Darukhanawala, *Parsi Lustre on Indian Soil,* p. 603.
[274] *Parsee Prakarsh*, Volume 4 (1901 to 1910), of the combined Volumes 4 and 5, p. 291.





(FIGURE 3.15 & 3.16. Advertisements in which the body of the Parsi proprietor prominently features.

(*Parsi Lustre on Indian Soil*).

4. Ameliorating and Accommodating the 'Persian Parsees' during The Great Famine of 1871-72

Introduction

The Great Famine of 1871-72 in Persia occasioned an extensive pan-Parsi effort to provide relief to the Persian Zoroastrians afflicted by the calamity. Parsi communities based in Amoy, Cannanore, Poona, Surat, Ahmedabad, sent sizeable donations to Messrs. Godrez Mehrban & Co., a mercantile firm in Bombay that was the chief organiser of the relief efforts. Through networks involving British Political Agents and military personnel in Muscat and Bushire and prominent Parsis and Zoroastrians in Persia, the funds and food provisions were distributed among the famine struck coreligionists. By July 1871 Messrs. Godrez Mehrban & Co. had received over Rs 10,000 in subscriptions and its distribution networks had reached Zoroastrians in 33 villages and the major centres of Yazd, Kerman and Tehran.[275] In comparison at this time the Board of Deputies of British Jews in London was first alerted to the condition of the famine stuck Jews in Shiraz.[276]

The flows were not all westward or one-way. Efforts were also directed towards organising the passage of groups of Persian Zoroastrian famine refugees from Bandar Abbas via Kurrachee to Bombay. The first group of 29 refugees that arrived in Bombay on 6 June 1871 had the cost of their passage defrayed by Messrs. Nicol & Co., the managers of the steamers.[277] Acts of diasporic cooperation included the Parsis of Kurrachee providing food and clothing to the refugees during the brief

[275] *The Bombay Gazette*, 7 September 1871, p. 2.
[276] David Yeroushalmi, *The Jews of Iran in the Nineteenth Century: Aspects of History, Community and Culture*. Leiden: Brill, 2009, pp. 339-43.
[277] *The Bombay Gazette*, 7 June 1871, p. 2.

stopover in the port city. In Bombay, the refugees were accommodated at an asylum for Persian Zoroastrian migrants and celebrated the Parsi New Year with new clothing and meals, sponsored by their coreligionists from Mhow.[278]

This chapter will examine the formation of Parsi identity in a broader, international setting by focusing on the relief efforts occasioned by The Great Famine of 1871-72 in Persia. Ameliorating and accommodating their co-religionists was amongst the most effective ways through which Parsis consolidated a community consciousness and the symmetry of internal networks. The flows of funds and the movement of the refugees mapped a new landscape of outposts populated with Parsis, connected and coordinating with the centre in Bombay. The cause offered the chance to shed the identity of being Parsis from the Mofussil or the Outstations, and regroup under regional affiliations and ground their authority on financial largesse. Regional cooperation in the collection of funds and the offering of short-term hospitality as well as an undercurrent of interregional competition in outdoing relief efforts emerge as the dynamic of a new community geography, one that would be revitalized in the subsequent decades by the tours of groups of Parsi sportsmen.[279]

This chapter will also examine how the identity of Persian Zoroastrians was understood in the 19th century. In the historical literature and popular imagination there is a tendency to assume that the identity of the Persian Zoroastrians was already fashioned as 'Irani', and in some sense as non-Parsi.[280] This chapter, by drawing on

[278] Ibid., 22 September 1871, p. 2.
[279] Simin Patel, *Passages and Perspectives: Travel Writing by Parsis in English*. MA Dissertation, School of Oriental and African Studies (University of London), 2008, Chapter 5 'Patronage, Performances and Parsi Cyclists'.
[280] For example John R. Hinnells lists the early donations Parsis made to Persian Zoroastrian causes under the category 'Parsi charity to Non-Parsis' and Jamsheed K. Choksy titles his overview of the

the terminology used at the time, assumes a more porous identity. Persian Zoroastrians were called 'Persian Parsees' or simply 'Parsees' in popular parlance, particularly in the contemporary press. Migrants to Bombay partook of the city's Parsi landscape of fire-temples, asylums and the Towers of Silence. They were formally organized into an Iranian Zoroastrian Anjuman as late as 1918.[281] In some ways, the questions this chapter addresses are about nomenclature. How did Persian Zoroastrians, referred to as 'Persian Parsees', come to be identified and established as 'Iranis' by the 20th century? Of interest then, is the unmaking of Persian Parsees and the making of what came to be called 'Irani' identity.

The early scholarship on the Parsis' ties with Persia has focused on the activities of the Association of Zoroastrians in Persia, an organization founded in Bombay in 1854 by a group of influential Parsis to assist their coreligionists.[282] The scholarship has focused on the key role the Association's agent Manockjee Limjee Hataria, a Parsi social reformer, played in Persia restoring and expanding the Zoroastrian religious landscape and setting up modern educational and medical institutions, as well as on the Association's successful effort in 1882 in convincing the Persian monarch to abolish the *jizya*, the poll-tax levied on religious minorities in Persia, by covering the revenue loss that would be incurred, from the Parsis' own purses. This scholarship has

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Persian Zoroastrian and Parsi visitors and settlers in Sri Lanka, 'Iranians and Indians on the Shores of Serendib (Sri Lanka)', when in it unlikely that either group defined themselves in those terms. Choksy's overview spans from the Achaemenian dynasty to Ceylonese Independence.
John R. Hinnells, ' The Flowering of Zoroastrian Benevolence: Parsi Charities in the 19th and 20th Centuries' in *Acta Iranica*, Homages Et Opera Minora, Volume X, Papers in Honour of Professor Mary Boyce, 1985, p. 282; Jamsheed K. Choksy, 'Iranians and Indians on the Shores of Serendib (Sri Lanka)' in John R. Hinnells and Alan Williams (eds.), *Parsis in India and the Diaspora*. London: Routledge, 2007, pp. 181-210.

[281] The entry on Dinshah Jijibhoy Irani on the Encyclopaedia Iranica website http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/irani-dinshah-jijibhoy, accessed on 25 March 2015.

[282] Mary Boyce, 'Manekji Limji Hataria in Iran', in N. D. Manochehr-Homji and M. F. Kanga (eds.), *K. R. Cama Oriental Institute Golden Jubilee Volume*. Bombay: K. R. Cama Oriental Institute, 1969, pp. 19-31.

tended to treat the Association's activities in laudatory terms. Nile Green offers the first critical reading of Hataria's mission, contextualising it as a product of the wave of internal reform that gripped Bombay's native communities in the wake of Christian missionary activity in the first half of the 19th century.[283] As the Parsis in Bombay developed a Zoroastrian religious reform agenda in a 'Protestant mode' to counter the accusations of the missionaries, their coreligionists in Persia were considered an ideal group on which the agenda could be implemented. The reforms included the rejection of several of the religious customs of the Persian Zoroastrians like animal sacrifice and rituals involving dancing and music. [284]

As noted in the Introduction, some of the recent scholarship has analysed the Parsis ties with Persia in the first half of the 20th century, in light of the political developments in India and Persia.[285] Dinyar Patel and Mitra Sharafi have argued that Parsis were drawn to the idea of Pahlavi nationalism and modernity as they grew disenchanted with the trajectory of Indian nationalism and late colonial modernity. Identifying with a contemporary Iranian setting was in fact a radical departure in the Parsi approach. In the second half of the 19th century and the turn of the 20th century, approximately the period covered in this thesis, it was an ancient Persian past and a contemporary colonial setting in Bombay that the Parsis drew their cultural capital from. Contemporary Persia offered little by way of inspiration.

Talinn Grigor's work, which explores the exchange of Zoroastrian architectural styles

[283] Nile Green, *Bombay Islam: The Religious Economy of the Western Indian Ocean, 1840-1915*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011, pp. 118-26.
[284] Ibid., p. 121.
[285] Dinyar Patel, 'The Iran League of Bombay: Parsis, Iran, and the Appeal of Iranian Nationalism, 1922-1942', unpublished paper, Department of History, Harvard University, 2008; Mitra Sharafi, *Law and Identity in Colonial South Asia*: *Parsi Legal Culture, 1772-1947*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2014, Chapter 7 'Pure Parsi: Libel, Race, and Group Membership', pp. 274-312.

between the landscapes of Persia and Bombay, has moved away from the dominant scholarly approach, which has focused on the flows eastward, in terms of the activities of ameliorating the Persian Zoroastrians and/or in terms of Persia as an alternative, imagined homeland for the Parsis.[286] This chapter also explores the two-way flows between the Zoroastrians in India and Persia. It will begin with a historical background of the relations between both the communities, consider the presence and position of Persian Zoroastrians migrants in Bombay in the late 18th and early 19th centuries and then proceed to examine the extensive relief efforts occasioned by the Great Famine in early 1870s, which involved the collection and distribution of aid among the Zoroastrians in Persia as well as the organization of the passage of Zoroastrian famine refugees from Persia to Bombay and their rehabilitation in the city.

A background to the relations between the Parsis and Persian Zoroastrians

The Parsi and Persian Zoroastrian communities had been in varying degrees of contact for a number of centuries prior to the 19th. From the late 15th to the mid 18th centuries, priests from both communities were engaged in a series of epistolary exchanges that were called the *Rivayats*. In these, Parsi priests raised questions and clarifications about the observance of a range of socio-religious practices, which were answered by their Persian counterparts. Both sides also described the contemporary life and condition of their communities. For example the Persian priests noted that they suffered religious persecution as well as from calamities like famines and epidemics.[287] The correspondence was carried between Gujarat and Persia by a

[286] Grigor, Talinn. 'Parsi Patronage of the Urheimat' in *Getty Research Journal*, Number 2, 2010, Getty Research Institute.
[287] Shahpurshah Hormasji Hodivala, *Studies in Parsi History*. Junagadh: Shahpurshah Hormasji Hodivala, 1920, pp. 330-1.

number of Parsi laymen. Gradually, through the connections established through the *Rivayats*, small numbers of Parsi priests were sent to Persia to learn the Pahlavi language and Persian priests travelled to Gujarat to train young priests from prominent priestly families.[288] The Parsi priests also occasionally sent gifts of money to the Persians.[289] Lay Parsis and Persian Zoroastrian also travelled between the regions for trade and to flee calamities.[290]

The tradition of the *Rivayats* demonstrates that for several centuries the Parsis in India relied on the ecclesiastical authority of the Persian Zoroastrians. In the 18th century, disagreements between the communities over various socio-religious customs led to the discontinuation of the *Rivayets*. The most crucial disagreement was over which calendar to follow. The Parsis had come to follow a calendar that differed from the one used by the Zoroastrians in Persia, by an intercalation of a month.[291] Sections of the Parsis were unwilling to shift to the Persian calendar and disregard what was considered their traditions in India. Jesse S. Palsetia has noted that the discontinuation of the *Rivayats* may have reflected the refusal on the part of the leadership of the Parsi community, mainly drawn from the laity, to accept the spiritual authority of the Persian priesthood.[292] The authority of the Parsi priesthood was also waning. As the subsequent sections will show, this was also a period when prominent Parsi merchant families were strengthening their ties with the British and moving to Bombay. In the new setting of Bombay, Parsi merchants had an early and firm hold on the leadership of the community.

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[288] Patel, *Passages and Perspectives*, Introduction.
[289] Hodivala, *Studies in Parsi History*, p. 331.
[290] Ibid., p. 333.
[291] Jesse S. Palsetia, *The Parsis of India: Preservation of Identity in Bombay City*, (2001). Delhi: Manohar Publishers and Distributors, 2008, pp. 24-5.
[292] Idem.

The position of the Persian Zoroastrian community as what Michael Stausberg calls 'a subordinate religious minority' in the Persian context seems to have deteriorated from the late 18th century onwards, when the Qajar dynasty came to power in Persia.[293] Stausberg explains that Zoroastrians were subject to pervasive and persistent discrimination on the part of the Shia-Islamic majority population. This discrimination took the form of 'ordinary' rules like the payment of the *jizya* (poll-tax) as well as 'extraordinary' acts of violation like as blackmailing, raids, abduction and murder.[294] There was also a steady small scale flow of conversions to Islam, some of which were partly enforced like when Zoroastrian girls were abducted and married off to Muslims against their will. The Zoroastrian population, which had been previously dispersed, was now concentrated in the regions of Yazd and Kerman and numbered under 10,000.[295] These conditions led several Persian Zoroastrians to flee to the western coast of India in the late 18th and first half of the 19th centuries. The refugees that fled to Bombay were often be supported by local Parsi families, as will be described in the next section.

It was probably the presence of a number of Persian Zoroastrians in Bombay and their accounts of the conditions of the Zoroastrians in Persia that led the Parsis to formally organise their assistance towards their co-religionists by founding the Association of Zoroastrians in Persia in 1854 and constructing an asylum for Persian Zoroastrian migrants in Bombay in 1853. Manockjee Limjee Hataria travelled to Persia in 1854 in his capacity as the Association's Stipendiary Agent in Persia and would spend the following decades implementing his programmes of reform (Figure 4.1).

[293] Michael Stausberg, 'From power to powerlessness: Zoroastrianism in Iranian history" in *Religious Minorities in the Middle East: Domination, Self-Empowerment, Accommodation*, Anh Nga Longva & Anne Sofie Roald, eds., Brill: Leiden, 2012, p. 176.
[294] Ibid., p. 177.
[295] Idem.



FIGURE 4.1. Manockjee Limjee Hataria (1813-1890), the Parsi reformer, who spent four decades in Persia implementing various programmes for the Persian Zoroastrian population.

(*Portrait of a Community*, p. 79.)

Traditions of accommodating Persian Zoroastrians in Bombay

The Persian Zoroastrians who fled or migrated to Bombay in the late 18th and first half of the 19th century were often supported by local Parsi families in the city. Through tracing the trajectory of one Persian Zoroastrians family and their Parsi hosts, we can get a sense of ways the migrants were accommodated in the city over this period.

Kai Khusran i Yazdyar and his family fled Kerman for Yazd and from Yazd to Bombay in 1796 to save his daughter Gulistan-Banu from being abducted by a wealthy Muslim.[296] In Bombay, the family was hosted by a local Parsi, Edulji Dorabji Lashkari, who helped Kai Khusran travel to Persia on three subsequent visits, to relocate his extended family to the city. At the age of twelve, Gulistan-Banu, popularly called Gulbai Velatan (Gulbai the foreigner) was married to Framji Bhikaji Panday, a Bombay Parsi.[297] The change in the suffix of her name from the Persian *banu* to the Gujarati *bai* indicate the shifts in identity and kinds of socialisation that occurred in the new setting (Figure 4.2). Her husband, Framji would help several Persian Zoroastrian migrants settle in Bombay. He was called 'the father of the Irani Parsis'.[298] The title captures the paternalism that would come to premise the relations between the Parsis and Persian Zoroastrians and the way myths of the father would be made in the community.

In 1834, Gulistan and Framji's eldest son, Burjorji, began a fund to assist Persian Zoroastrian fugitives in Bombay. Their third son, Merwanjee's activities mark a major shift in kind of assistance- from a largely informal system of support for the

[296] Boyce, 'Manekji Limji Hataria in Iran', p. 20.
[297] Idem.
[298] Idem.

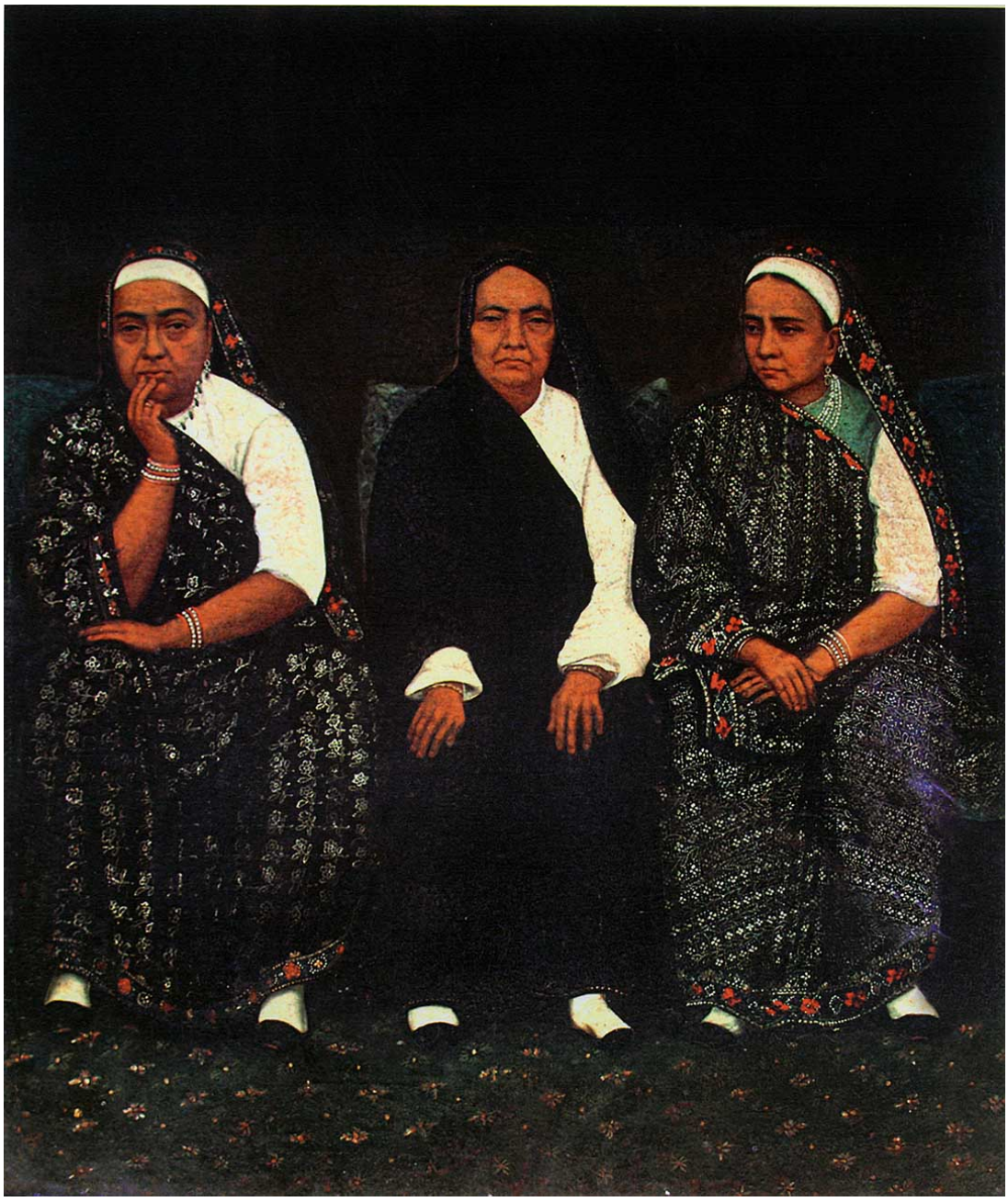


FIGURE 4.2. A portrait of Gulbai Panday (centre) and her daughters.

(*Peonies & Pagodas*, p. 28.)

migrants in Bombay to a transnational, institutionalised effort towards ameliorating the Persian Zoroastrian population based in Persia. Merwanjee was a founding member of the Association of Zoroastrians in Persia. The Association's aims, as stated in its slogan, 'Formed in 1855 by the Parsees of Bombay for ameliorating the condition of indigent Zoroastrian inhabitants of Persia', highlighted both how the founders choose to locate and identify themselves and the recipients of their aid, especially given Merwanjee's mixed lineage.[299] In Persia, the Association was referred to as the *Anjoman-e akaber-e parsian* or the Society of the Parsi nobles.[300] Hataria would spend four decades in Persia administering the funds sent from Bombay. Among the projects Merwanjee financed in Persia was the construction and restoration of structures that commemorated the legends of Khatun Banu and Hyat Banu, the daughters of Yazdgerd III (624-651 AD), the last king of the Sassanid dynasty. At the locations where the daughters were believed to have ended their lives to escape Arab captors, an assemblage area for pilgrims was constructed and a reservoir and its surrounding wall restored.[301] He also funded the marriages of a number of Zoroastrian girls in Persia.[302] Merwanjee's mother could have influenced the causes he chose to support. Merwanjee's sister, Sakarbai was married to Dinshaw Manockjee Petit, a prominent Parsi businessman, who was also a founding member of the Association of Zoroastrians in Persia. Chapter 6 will describe the Petit family's philanthropy towards the Parsi poor, at the turn of the 20th century.

[299] The Association was founded in the year 1854. *The Bombay Almanack & Directory for 1862,* The Thirteenth Annual Publication, Bombay: Bombay Gazette Press, 1862, p. 418.
[300] Giara, Karanjia and Stausberg, 'Manekji on the Religious/Ritual Practices of the Iranian Zoroastrians' in *Zoroastrian Rituals in Context*, p. 481.
[301] Dosabhoy Framjee, *The Parsees: Their History, Manners, Customs, and Religion*. London: Smith, Elder and Co., 1858, pp. 85-8.
[302] *A Parsi Mission to Iran,* An English Translation of Manekji's Travel Report (1865) on the Fravahr.org website, http://www.fravahr.org/spip.php?article61, accessed on 30 March 2015.

Cursetjee Ardesheer Dadysett, a member of a well-established Parsi mercantile family, funded an asylum for the migrants in Bombay in 1853.[303] The asylum appears to be the first institution built for the Persian Zoroastrians in Bombay. It was located in the Chowpatty area near the Tower of Silence funerary estate and an asylum for invalid and blind Parsis.[304] Both the asylums shared facilities like dining arrangements and a small library.

Persians Zoroastrians in mid-19th century Bombay

By the mid-19th century Persian Zoroastrian migrants in Bombay were engaged in a number of occupations- as tea stall and shop owners, theatre actors, planters, gardeners, florists, merchants, lawyers, domestic servants. We will consider some of these occupations. The Persian Zoroastrians carved a niche in a crowded and competitive culinary market by selling tea to the city's population from stalls and corner shops. As Chapter 3 has demonstrated Parsi and European proprietors had a strong hold over the hotel trade in the city as well as over culinary establishments like refreshment rooms and exchanges that were not attached to a hotel. Both hotels and the culinary establishments largely catered to a European clientele. They required substantial capital to set up. Muslim vendors, usually Arab or African migrants or local residents, were the dominant providers of coffee to the city's population.[305] These vendors toured localities carrying a large number of coffee cups fitted one into another, in one hand and a kettle rested on a portable stove in the other.[306] Persian Zoroastrians migrants joined and developed the culinary economy of the street, with

[303] James Mackenzie Maclean, *A Guide to Bombay: Historical, Statistical, and Descriptive*. Bombay: 1889, p. 316.
[304] Idem.
[305] S. M. Edwardes, C.V.O. with illustrations by M. V. Dhurandhar, *By-ways of Bombay*. Bombay: D. B. Taraporevala Sons & Co., 1912, pp. 118-9.
[306] Idem.

their new offering of the corner teashop. These shops soon expanded to sell provisions, aerated waters, ice creams and comestibles. They were the forerunners of the popular Irani cafes.[307]

The migrants also joined Bombay's thriving theatre industry. Persian Zoroastrians actors were promoted as lending authenticity to the productions particularly in the staging of stories from the Persian epic the S*hahnameh.* A review of the performance of Roostum and Burjor by The Persian Theatrical Club in December 1870 noted: 'The principal parts of Roostum and Burjor were taken by real Persian Parsees, and as ancient tradition ascribes them giant proportions, the gentlemen who personated them gave us some idea of their huge forms.'[308] In this instance the actors also lent credence to the title of company, The Persian Theatrical Club. Plays performed in Persian were followed by a rendition in Gujarati. A show's programme included the performance of a few songs, usually in praise of local personalities or the British monarchy and the staging of farces on local subjects or a didactic skit on the 'evils' of an immoral lifestyle, particularly alcoholism. A night's entertainment could include significant, separate acts in Persian, Gujarati and Hindustani, possibly to attract a more varied and larger audience. S. M. Edwardes, a civil servant and chronicler, noted that for middle class citizens visiting the theatre and the Irani shop were popular recreational options.

> If young, the middle-class Memon and Rangari is fond of the native theatres where he rewards Parsi histrionic talent by assiduous attention and exclamations of approval. He and his friends break their journey home by a visit to an Irani or Anglo-Indian soda-water shop, where they repeat the monotonous strain of the theatre song and assure themselves of the happiness of the moment by asking one another again and again:- "Kevi majha" (what bliss!) to which comes the reply "Ghani majha" or "sari majha" (great bliss!).[309]

[307] Simin Patel and Hashim Badani, *The Irani Cafes of Bombay*. New Delhi: Roli Books, forthcoming.
[308] *The Bombay Gazette*, 12 December 1870, p. 3.
[309] Edwardes, *By-ways of Bombay*, p. 85.

Persian Zoroastrian migrants also took up the occupations of planters, gardeners and florists. Since several Zoroastrians in Persia were agriculturalists, these occupations enabled the migrants to use the skills they honed in Persia in the new landscape of Bombay. Some migrants found employment as gardeners at the Towers of Silence, the funerary estate in the Malabar Hill locality. The migrant gardeners could also reside on the estate. For example they were allowed to sleep in the *sadgi*, a room in which mourners prayed after the corpse had been disposed in the towers. They were entitled to meals at the asylum for invalid and blind Parsis, that was adjacent to the estate.[310] These provisions suggest how Persian Zoroastrian migrants partook of the Parsi institutional landscape of Bombay as well as the ways in which Parsis configured the presence of the migrant on the wider social map of the city through these settings.

Interestingly, the position of the Persian Muslim migrants in Bombay during this period was significantly different from the Persian Zoroastrians'. By the mid 19th century, the Persian Muslims were already organized into a community called the 'Moguls'. The community had several influential members like wealthy merchants and religious and political exiles from Persia. It had a strong infrastructure of a consul, mosque, shrines and residential strongholds. As the next chapter on the riots between the Parsi and Muslim communities in the 19th century will show, the boundaries of the Mogul community were reinforced by differentiating and even distancing itself from the various other Muslim communities of Bombay particularly during the festivities of Mohurram. Green has suggested that Persian Muslim migrants also understood and seized the opportunities for advancement that the setting

[310] Sapur F. Desai, *History of the Bombay Parsi Punchayet, 1860-1960*. Bombay: Jt. Secretary Cdr. N. H. Vacha, for the Trustees of the Parsi Punchayet Funds and Properties, 1977, p. 58.

of Bombay offered. The most famous example is of the Aga Khan I, who migrated to Bombay in 1848 and utilised the city's mercantile, technological and administrative facilities to consolidate and legitimise his position as the leader of the Ismaili Shi Muslims, a community that was dispersed across India and Persia and that was fairly disconnected.[311] The Aga Khan invested some of the vast wealth he would go on to acquire in areas like horses racing. This sort of diversification into the world of sport and betting could also be viewed as emblematic of the city's culture; just as an involvement in the commercial and civic spheres were compatible so were investments in the religious and recreational marketplace. Other emerging Persian religious leaders, like those of the Bab and Bahai movements, also utilised Bombay's print and communication technologies to expand their base.[312] Overall, the position of the Persian Muslims community in Bombay, in terms of its infrastructure, wealth and aspiration, resembled the position of the Parsis in the city more than it did the Persian Zoroastrians.

Players in Parsi philanthropy

Before we turn to the famine relief efforts in the early 1870s, in which a number of new Parsi philanthropic players made their presence felt, it would first be useful to consider the position of these players in the community prior to famine as well as the kind of gifting practices they engaged in their local setting. This is particularly useful for the various regional Parsi communities that were settled across India. Some of the regions like Surat and Broach were port cities with much older histories and Parsi populations than Bombay; Cannanore, another old port city, had a small, settled Parsi population populations by the mid 19th century; Poona and Mhow were developed in

[311] Green, *Bombay Islam*, p. 155.
[312] Ibid., p. 122.

the 19th century as a colonial cantonment towns and drew a number of Parsi military contractors. Yet in relation to Bombay, these locations and populations were clubbed and considered as part of the Moffusil or the outstations, with connotations of country unsophistication and relative inaccessibility, a theme also explored in Chapter 1.

A brief focus on one regional player will give us a sense of the position of the Parsis and trajectory of Parsi philanthropy in these local settings. The case of Surat offers a long history. The Rustom Maneck family were the first prominent Parsi donors in Surat.[313] David L. White notes that the patriarch Rustom's early aid included alleviating the plight of co-religionists who had been robbed or imprisoned during the Maratha warrior Shivaji's raid in 1664, distributing land he owned in the environs of Surat to a diverse group of refugees, including a number of Parsi weavers who had fled to Surat from neighbouring Navsari and subsequently commissioning for public use a number of gardens, wells, tanks and inns.[314] By the time of Rustom's death in 1721, Surat was run by a crumbling Mughal state and was isolated from its hinterland. Shortly after his death his sons moved base to Bombay to partake of the growing opportunities of trade under the protection of East India Company rule. The focus of their charities shifted to creating a community infrastructure in the new landscape, which was specific to Parsi use. As more Parsi merchants migrated from Surat to Bombay and their fortunes were made in the course of the first half of the 19th century and the immediate religious needs of the community appeared met, their charities were directed towards their native place. Bombay's Parsis funded schools, colleges, hospitals and other projects in Surat over the course of the 19th century.

[313] David L. White, 'From Crisis to Community Definition: The Dynamics of Eighteenth-Century Parsi Philanthropy' in *Modern Asian Studies*, Volume 25, Issue 02, May 1991, p. 305.
[314] Ibid., pp. 313-4.

Surat's Parsis partook of a local, civic and associational culture that developed from the 1860s onwards. Douglas E. Haynes notes that colonial officials stationed in Surat initially urged wealthy citizens to be philanthropic. 'A few approached the problem of encouraging a philanthropic spirit among local residents with a proselytizing zeal, hoping to divert some of the money spent on religious festivals, offerings to deities, and marriage ceremonies into channels they regarded as more "productive."[315] Among the first crises that prompted the citizens of Surat into collective action and aid was the unemployment of mill works in Lancashire in 1862, a consequence of disruption of the imports of baled cotton from America to England due to the American Civil War. At a public meeting held on 10 October 1862, at a court, the Surat Lancashire Relief Fund was formed and subscribed to by a host of citizens. The secretary of the Fund, Adam R. Rogers' note on the meeting, captures the region's emerging identity: 'We, in Surat, are by no means a *large* community, nor, as doubtless you are aware Sir, a very rich one, but we can sympathize and feel for the distressed, and, of our little, give cheerfully.'[316] Both Surat and Lancashire's economy was heavily based on textiles. Parsis were one among the burgeoning philanthropic players in colonial Surat but with no clear lead, vast fortunes or titles. In the dispute over establishing the head of the native population of Surat in 1864, the *modi*, the head of the Parsi community, lost to the *nagarsheth*, the head of the Hindu and Jain Bania communities.[317] Elite Parsis supported the *nagarsheth's* candidature over the orthodox *modi's*, indicating the kinds of divisions within the community. In the following year, with the passage of the Parsi Marriage and Divorce Act of 1865 and

[315] Douglas E. Haynes, 'From Tribute to Philanthropy: The Politics of Gift Giving in a Western Indian City' in *The Journal of Asian Studies*, Vol. 46, No. 2, May 1987, p. 350.
[316] *The Bombay Gazette*, 17 October 1862, p. 992. (January to July 1862 stack, Maharashtra State Archives {henceforth MSA), Bombay.)
[317] Ibid., 12 March 1864, pp. 2-3. For an overview of Surat's population in the 18th century see Ashin Das Gupta, *Indian Merchants and the Decline of Surat, c. 1700-1750*. New Delhi: Manohar, 2004, especially the 'Introduction: Initiations and Afterthought', pp. 1-19.

the creation of the Parsi Matrimonial court in Surat, the *modi* lost his adjudicatory power in matrimonial disputes among the Parsis.[318] The famine was an uncontroversial cause around which the Parsis of Surat could unite.

An overview of the patterns of Parsi philanthropy in the various regions and the centre of Bombay indicate that in both landscapes community members' earliest donations were towards developing an infrastructure to meet their immediate religious requirements. In the case of the older regions, the funding of religious structures was followed by funding traditional public amenities like wells, tanks, and *panjrapoles* (animal shelters).[319] *Panjrapoles* were often set up for sheltering dogs who are regarded as righteous in Zoroastrianism and hold an important position in Parsi religious and social life (Figures 4.3 & 4.4). Once colonial rule was firmly established and a civic culture developed, Parsis began supporting modern philanthropical institutions like hospitals and colleges. In Surat, the markers of modern philanthropy trickled in through the second half and turn of the 19th century, standing alongside the traditional public gifts. In the newer settlements the time-period between the building of religious and civic structures was the least since both community and colonial civic culture were established at roughly the same time, occasioning an intense and concentrated period of simultaneous construction. In Bombay, where the modernisation was the most extensive, the landscape of traditional public amenities, particularly tanks and wells was sealed and erased and replaced with modern public

[318] Sharafi, *Law and Identity in Colonial South Asia*, p. 76. The *modi* supported child marriages among the Parsis and wanted the 1865 Act to not only prohibit child marriage but also punish the breach of child marriage contracts.

[319] Even in Persia, Hataria first used Parsi funds to restore and expand the Zoroastrian religious landscape- fire temples were repaired, *dokhmas* and *dharamshalas* were constructed in Yazd and Tehran. A community infrastructure of meeting halls and orphanages, was also developed. Early funds were distributed among the local population through defraying the costs of the marriage of Zoroastrian girls, providing clothing material and housing the homeless. The establishment of schools and medical institutions in modern forms were subsequent focuses. *A Parsi Mission to Iran*, on http://www.fravahr.org/spip.php?article61 accessed on 30 March 2015.





FIGURES 4.3 & 4.4. Contemporary photographs of the Bombay Panjrapole (animal shelter) which was established in 1834 in the Bhuleshwar area. (Above) The façade of the building decorated with vernacular motifs and (below) the interior of the secretary's office with portraits of Sir Jamsetjee Jejeebhoy and Amichand Shah, the Parsi and Hindu *sethias*, who funded the shelter.
(Bombaywalla.)

amenities like drinking and ornamental fountains.[320] Thus an older religious landscape and a modern philanthropic came to dominate the city.

Another important player in the famine relief efforts was the *sethia* Cowasjee Jehangir (1812-78), a skilled financier and prominent philanthropist. His family had earned the sobriquet of 'Readymoney'. Jehangir's philanthropic activities had been notoriously cosmopolitan. Over the mid-19th century he had donated to a wide range of causes in the areas of education, medicine and public amenities at local, national and international levels. Two public fountains that Jehangir gifted in the late 1860s, are striking examples of the breath and cosmopolitanism of his philanthropy. The first was an ornamental fountain surmounted with a cross in the compound of St. Thomas' Cathedral in Bombay (1868). Jehangir's patronage of the Cathedral upset orthodox Parsis, who begun calling him 'Cowasji Cross'.[321] The second, a drinking fountain at Regent's Park in London (1869) marked his presence at the heart of the imperial centre. Jehangir donated 40 fountains during his lifetime (Figure 4.5 & 4.6). These fountains, designed in European styles, were typical examples of the modern philanthropic gifts that were replacing an older landscape of public amenities in Bombay, as mentioned above. The Persian Zoroastrian cause could well have offered Jehangir the chance for big gestural giving directed at his community

The famine relief efforts and Messrs. Godrez Mehrban & Co.

We will now consider the famine relief efforts by focusing on the activities of Messrs. Godrez Mehrban & Co., the mercantile firm in Bombay that was the main organiser of the relief efforts**.** The firm was run by Godrez Mehrban and his brother Ardeshir,

[320] Preeti Chopra, *A Joint Enterprise: Indian Elites and the Making of British Bombay*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2011, pp. 6-14.
[321] Ibid., p. 63.





FIGURE 4.5 & 4.6.

Contemporary photographs of the two prominent fountains funded by Sir Cowasjee Jehangir.
(Above) The fountain in the compound of St. Thomas' Cathedral in Bombay and (below) the fountain at Regent's Park in London.

(*A Joint Enterprise*, p. 63 and Bombaywalla.)

who were Persian Zoroastrian migrants to Bombay. The brothers probably migrated to the city from Yazd sometime around the mid 19th century.[322] A number of members from their immediate family were based in Persia, and would provide crucial help in facilitating the passage of the famine refugees to Bombay.[323] Shortly after the famine begun in Persia, the Mehrbans set up a fund called Persian Famine Relief Fund, and acted in the capacity as the secretaries of the Fund.

The Mehrbans' centrality in the famine relief efforts was not uncontested. Influential Parsis dispatched funds directly to Persia and the Association for the Zoroastrians in Persia initiated their own relief fund. The Mehrbans had an advantage over the others largely because of three factors: an early start to the relief efforts, the utilization of the daily press and the management of the operations to bring the Persian Zoroastrian refugees to Bombay. The Mehrbans had a five-month headway in the collection of subscriptions. Operating as a team of two out of their mercantile establishment, they could execute their responsibilities briskly and in coherence. The Mehrbans kept *The Bombay Gazette* and *The Times of India* updated with the figures of their latest collections as well as let the newspapers serve as the first port to which readers could send donations, which were then forwarded to their custody. They were quick to correct *The Times of India* that the Parsis of Amoy had forwarded £136.10.3 to their custody, not £200, as stated in an article on 11 September 1871.[324] The offices of *The Bombay Gazette* and *The Times of India* were both located in the Fort district, at

[322] There is little information on the lives of the brothers in Bombay or about the workings of their firm outside of the famine relief effort. Their firm was not listed in the directories (and almanacs) published *by The Bombay Gazette* and *The Times of India* newspapers, around the early 1870s. This information has been pieced from an article on one of their brothers, who was based in Persia. See footnote 53.
[323] Atleast two of their brothers, Khusroo and Rasheed, were still based in Persia *The Times of India,* 11 September 1871, p. 3.
[324] *The Times of India*, 11 September 1871, p. 3.

Medows Street and Elphinstone Circle respectively, and had the advantage of having both their offices and printing presses on premises adjacent or close to each other.

The presence of their brother Khusroo Mehrban in Persia, as the on-site arm of the operations, cemented the Mehrbans' position as the chief organizers of the relief effort. The ability to co-ordinate the flow of funds westwards as well as the traffic of refugees eastward gave their programme a scope and entirety that was lacking in the operations of other the funds. Khusroo was stationed at the Persian port of Bunder Abbas during the period of famine, where he helped Persian Zoroastrian victims to embark on their journey to Bombay. The victims reached the port after long, harrowing journeys on foot and/or camel, some lasting months. They were stationed at the port for considerable periods, before the authorities allowed them to embark. The press was kept abreast of the details of the movements of the refugees from Bunder Abbas via Kurrachee to Bombay and the Mehrbans' efforts in coordinating the passage.

In Bombay, events held in aid of the Persian Famine Relief Fund raised the Fund's profile and visibility. On 3 June 1871, two significant contributions were made- the Victoria Theatrical Company held a special performance of the play *Bezun and Munizeh*, donating the profits of the event, Rs 425, to the Fund and at the meeting of the Lodge Rising Star of Western India No. 342 S.C. it was resolved to contribute Rs 300 from the charity fund of the Lodge towards famine relief.[325] Both the Company and Lodge presented their efforts in public spirited and humanitarian terms. An advertisement for the performance noted 'the Public are invited to respond to this call

[325] Ibid., 2 June 1871, p. 1, 5 June 1871, p. 3 and 16 June 1871, p. 2.

in aid of THE FAMISHED POOR.' In the year 1871, the Lodge donated to the causes of the 'poor Zoroastrians of Persia', destitute orphans in Singapore and war widows in France and Prussia.[326] The choices were explained: 'the sympathy of the Lodge was extended in the common idea of an universal and benevolent institution.'[327]

The name, Messrs. Godrez Mehrban & Co., became synonymous with the famine's cause. The name of fund, Persian Famine Relief Fund and the Mehrban brothers' role as the Fund's secretaries were less publicized in the press. Nomenclature of this sort lent to a commercial establishment a charitable face as well as brought to the relief effort a sense of business acumen and professionalisation. Sheriar Behram, a refugee in Bombay mentioned to a reporter of the *Rast Goftar and Satya Prakash*: 'I cannot sufficiently extol the labours of Messrs. Godrez Mehrban & Co., and Mr. Khosroo Eranee, for I am convinced that but for them we all would have been lost.'[328] Behram thanked the Company and Khosroo Mehrban rather than acknowledge all three brothers by their names or mention the name of the Fund itself. Khusroo Mehrban retained an individual identity in the archive.

The Association for the Zoroastrians in Persia was the other major organisation involved in the relief work. The Association initiated its own fund called 'The fund raised for relieving the Zoroastrians of Persia from the famine of 1871' at a community meeting held on 3 June 1871.[329] The Managing Committee of the Association, comprising 12 members, oversaw the management of the fund. Meetings were held at the homes or offices of Committee members or at the large community

[326] D. F. Wadia, *History of Lodge Rising Star of Western India No. 342 S.C.* Bombay: British India Press, 1912, pp. 178-9.
[327] Idem.
[328] *The Times of India*, 19 January 1872, p. 2.
[329] *The Bombay Gazette*, 5 June 1871, p. 3.

centre Albless Baug, when the entire community was invited to attend. The lack of designated premises, the unwieldy name of the fund and its large management, suggest that the pace of the Association's relief efforts could have been slowed by these factors.

Manockjee Hataria was the Association's agent in Persia during the years of the famine and for significant periods prior and after the catastrophe. During the famine, Hataria's energies were focused on distributing food provisions and funds to the dispersed Zoroastrian populations. Hataria was based in Tehran in the north, rather than in the port cities in the south from where the refugees departed to Bombay.[330] Hataria's relative lack of involvement with the migration activities may have also stemmed from his previous experience with assisting Persian Zoroastrians to settle in Bombay. In *Izhar-i siyqhat-i Iran* (1865) a travel report on his first decade in Persia, written in Gujarati, he notes that homesickness was common among the migrants and many of them had returned to Persia. Hataria suggested that Zoroastrians remain in Persia and benefit from a good education that would enable gainful employment.[331] The Mehrbans, as Persian Zoroastrian migrants in Bombay could well have been influenced by their own example, in assisting the refugees to relocate.

Regional Parsis' new role

Through their donations for famine relief, Parsi communities settled in various regions of India, the empire and China, entered as emerging players in community philanthropy. The cause provided an opportunity for the Parsi populations to be

[330] Idem.
[331] *A Parsi Mission to Iran,* on http://www.fravahr.org/spip.php?article61, accessed on 4 January 2015. For a translation of sections of the travel report that describe the ritual practices of Persian Zoroastrians see Marzban Giara, Ramiyar P. Karanjia and Michael Stausberg, 'Manekji on the Religious/Ritual Practices of the Iranian Zoroastrians' in *Zoroastrian Rituals in Context*.

considered in terms of a new and distinct regional identity. The relief efforts in Calcutta indicate the efficacy of small group over larger associational action. Calcutta's Parsi and Armenian communities were quick to collect and dispatch funds to their famine-stuck brethren in Persia. A public meeting held at the Bengal Chamber of Commerce, to address possible measures of relief, concluded with the call for another meeting to better judge 'the full extent of distress, the local means available for its amelioration, how far extraneous help is required, and whether the same should be sent in money or in kind.'[332]

The various Parsi populations' participation in famine relief marked a significant change in the direction of community philanthropy. The populations of Gujarat had, for substantial periods, been the recipients of charity from local Parsis and from the mid 18th century onwards, from those that had migrated to Bombay. The populations in the emerging settlements were in the process of developing a community-based infrastructure of *dokhmas* (funerary towers), fire-temples and *baugs* alongside a cosmopolitan one of schools, hospitals and recreational spaces. In both cases, funding was directed towards the needs of the local population. The cause of famine relief marked a flow of funds outwards and internationally, encouraging an image of regional self-sufficiency and even surplus. In channeling the funds through Bombay, the metropolis's lead in the hierarchy of Parsi strongholds was maintained. The dynamic between the centre and outposts, however, was changed.

The responses to the cause of famine relief must be understood in the context of the landscapes in which the Parsis had settled. In the cosmopolis of Bombay, various

[332] *The Bombay Gazette*, 17 July 1871, p. 3.

funds and societies competed to draw and channel funds to Persia. The notion of a public that could be petitioned to aid the 'poor' was already well established. In Bombay, it was the fine-tuning of philanthropy, the sophistication of networks and organisational skill that was on display. In the various regions, the relief efforts served a more basic function of uniting a community, building a community's confidence and fashioning an independent regional identity.

Cowasjee Jehangir and community philanthropy

Cowasjee Jehangir was the largest donor to the Persian Zoroastrian famine victims. He donated in the span of the famine years (1871-72) a total of Rs 27,475 for the aid of the Persian Zoroastrians.[333] Jehangir donated in three areas – towards covering the cost of the *jizya*, the poll-tax levied on Zoroastrians in Persia, for the cause of famine relief and for building a chawl to accommodate the growing number of Persian Zoroastrian famine refugees in Bombay. Jehangir pledged his support towards covering the *jizya* and for the famine relief when members of the Association for Zoroastrians in Persia visited him at his residence on 3 June 1871. Later in the day, the Association launched their fund at a community meeting at Albless Baug. It is unlikely that Jehangir attended the meeting. His condition of gout had become more severe in the decade after 1862, the year he began to suffer from it.[334] As noted in Chapter 1, Jehangir initially had to restrict his choice of footwear on account of the condition. By the 1870s, the condition severely restricted his mobility and led to a

[333] Calculated from a list of Jehangir's charitable donations compiled in *The Times of India* at his death in 1878. *The Times of India*, 20 July 1878, p. 2.
[334] R. H. Jalbhoy, *The Portrait Gallery of Western India: Embellished with 51 Life-like Portraits of the Princes, chiefs, and Nobles. From Celebrated Artists in London,- enriched with Historical, Political and Biographical accounts from the most Authentic Sources, in GUJARATI and ENGLISH*. Bombay: 1886.

wide audience of possible beneficiaries to wait on him at his residence.[335] In the proceedings of the meeting Jehangir's name was listed as the first subscriber.[336] Thirdly, Jehangir financed the construction of a chawl located adjacent to the asylum at which the Persian Zoroastrians refugees were accommodated on their arrival in Bombay. The spatial configurations of this asylum complex will be considered in detail in the next section.

Jehangir's role as the chief donor was brought into strong relief by the relatively muted role the philanthropist Sir Jamsetjee Jejeebhoy (second baronet), the leader of the Parsi community, played in the famine efforts. The presiding baronet officiated over community meetings and events. His continuing role as the chief or at least a major philanthropist bolstered the legitimacy of his post. At the meeting at Albless Baug, Jejeebhoy and his brother Byramjee were unable to attend. They both sent letters regretting their absence, which were read by the chair of the meeting.[337] Jejeebhoy donated Rs 500 towards the famine relief and another brother Rustomjee donated Rs 125.[338] These were relatively low amounts among the principal subscribers. Their names were not listed among the subscribers in the proceedings of the meeting published in press. Interestingly, their sister Pirojbai's donation of Rs 1,050 was among the highest among the subscribers and was acknowledged.[339] Women conventionally pledged funds that would compliment rather than rival the donations of the male members of the same family. Pirojbai's donation, which surpassed her brothers' combined donation, was a rare and bold gesture. It is unlikely

[335] The social reformer Behramji M. Malabari remarked that 'even from his sick bed he (Jehangir) could bully a hundred so-called merchants into action.' Behramji M. Malabari, *Gujarat and the Gujaratis: Pictures of the Men and Manners taken from Life*, (Second Edition) Bombay: 1884, p. 168.
[336] *The Bombay Gazette*, 5 June 1871, p. 3.
[337] Idem.
[338] Ibid., 9 June 1871, p. 2.
[339] *The Bombay Gazette*, 5 June 1871, p. 3.

that Pirojbai was present at the meeting. Jehangir's donation of Rs 1,500 was the highest among the subscribers. Jehangir's total donation of Rs 27,475 to the Persian Zoroastrian famine victims was his largest donation to a Parsi/community cause.[340]

In October 1871, a month after the foundation of the chawl for the Persian Zoroastrians refugees was laid, a meeting was held to celebrate Jehangir's charitable contributions reaching the sum of Rs. 1,500,000 in 25 years.[341] In 1872, Jehangir was conferred a knighthood. It would take another generation for a baronetcy to be bestowed on the Jehangirs, giving the Jejeebhoy's a lead of fifty years in acquiring the title. A baronetcy in the first generation itself indicated the awesomeness of early philanthropic contributions. It possibly also dulled the prospects of large-scale philanthropic activity by subsequent generations of the family. Descendants were required to wait, to inherit the title at the death of their father, rather than actively work towards acquiring it. John Hinnells has observed that the second baronet of the Jejeebhoy family appeared to be more interested in socialising with upper-class British gentry with whom he identified, and with ordering numerous horses, buggies, cigars and large stocks of alcohol, than with community or social affairs.[342] By the early 20th century, the authority of the Jejeebhoys had declined considerably while the status of the Jehangirs (Readymoneys), as well as families like the Adenwallas and Khareghats, continued to grow within the community. [343]

[340] Calculated from a list of Jehangir's charitable donations compiled by *The Times of India* at his death in 1878. *The Times of India*, 20 July 1878, p. 2.
[341] Hinnells, 'The Flowering of Zoroastrian Benevolence', p. 299.
[342] Ibid., 'Changing Perceptions of Authority Among Parsis in British India' in *Parsis in India and the Diaspora*, pp. 113-114.
[343] Idem.

Accommodating the famine refugees

This section will map the spaces the Persian Zoroastrian famine refugees were accommodated in, en route to Bombay and in the city. At Bunder Abbas, the refugees were stationed at the shore for over a month, before they could board the steamer. In Kurrachee, the first port of call, they were accommodated in the garden of the complex that housed the local Parsi Punchayet. A number of Kurrachee Parsis as well as the crew of the S.S. India (on which the refugees had journeyed) visited the refugees at the complex with supplies of food and clothing.[344] On their arrival in Bombay, the refugees were accommodated at the asylum for Persian Zoroastrian migrants. It is likely that the refugees walked a short distance for their meals, from the foot of the hill to its top where the asylum for invalid Parsis was located.

Some refugees stayed in the asylum despite having immediate family based in Bombay. Khosro, an eighty eight year old refugee from Tapto, a region near Yazd, his wife and two younger sons stayed in asylum even though his eldest son had long been a resident of Bombay. His second son remained in Persia to look after the family property.[345] A female refugee who was about twenty years old joined the asylum subsequent to landing in Bombay. She had been married at a young age to a Persian Muslim and had made the journey to Bombay with her husband. Her father had been forced to convert from Zoroastrianism to Islam. It appears that the girl and her husband utilized her Zoroastrian lineage to enable the passage to Bombay and were ready to be converted to Zoroastrianism. On their arrival in Bombay the husband chose to join the Mogul community of the city. He demanded his wife accompany him and asked the police for assistance, which was turned down. The girl refused to

[344] *The Times of India*, 9 June 1871, p. 2.
[345] Ibid., 19 January 1872, p. 2.

join him and came to the asylum instead.[346] This incident suggests the resourcefulness of the female refugee as well as substantiates the point that the programmes for the rehabilitation of the refugees were well publicised.

The constraints of space in the asylum caused by the increasing refugee population prompted Cowasjee Jehangir to fund the construction of a chawl in the vicinity. In total, the original and new structure for the Persian Zoroastrians could accommodate approximately 200 inmates.[347] While women and children were allowed to stay as long as they chose, male migrants could avail of the accommodation only until they found employment in the city.[348]

It is worth considering why the older practices of accommodating Persian Zoroastrian migrants in Bombay that were described earlier, were not followed in the case of the famine refugees. One reason could be that the institutionalization of the assistance to Persian Zoroastrians in the mid 19th century, with the formation of the Association of Zoroastrians in Persia in 1854 and a corresponding shift of focus on aiding Persian Zoroastrians within the landscape of Persia itself as well as the construction of the asylum for Persian Zoroastrian migrants in Bombay in 1853, had made Parsis less engaged with assisting migrants by offering their own residential resources. A second reason could have been that the accounts of the impoverished state and physical strains of the refugees that were circulated by the press (including for the purpose of raising funds), lent to the image of the refugee as a liability, unlikely to enhance any household. A third reason could have been that the relatively larger numbers/groups in which they arrived, would have required several Parsi families to volunteer to host

[346] Idem.
[347] The approximate figure of 200 is compiled from Maclean's *A Guide to Bombay*, p. 316.
[348] Maclean, *A Guide to Bombay*, p. 316.

them and greater coordination between the community and the relief organisations. The patterns of previous migration suggest that the migrants came in smaller numbers, as individuals or families escaping political conflict, personal threat or natural calamities. Accommodating the refugees first in the asylum and subsequently in a chawl, both built specifically for their use, thwarted the possibilities of socialisation and appropriation that would have occurred if residing with a Parsi family.

Another option, within the emerging institutionalized urban setting, that was not utilized, was accommodating the refugees in one of the sanatoriums in Bombay built for Parsi use. The sanatoriums in Colaba and Charni Road would have been an obvious option. They were donated by Merwanjee Framjee Panday, a founding member of the Association, whose mother was a well-known Persian migrant to Bombay. In the rung of emerging community specific institutions, sanatoriums, conceived of as retreats for recovering from illnesses, ranked higher than asylums, which connoted states of perpetual invalidity.

Occupational avenues for the famine refugees

Questions about the avenues of employment for the famine refugees in Bombay were raised in the English and Gujarati press. A limited set of job opportunities were proposed for the refugees- as domestic servants, as soldiers and as agriculturists. These options prioritized the physical hardiness of the Persian Zoroastrians as well the qualities of honesty and loyalty, traits they were believed to share with their Parsi coreligionists.[349] It was suggested that as domestic servants, the refugees would help

[349] *The Times of India*, 19 June 1871, p. 3.

ease the 'servant problem' in Bombay. As Chapter 3 highlighted, the shortage and unreliability of servants was a common and uniting discourse among the native and European populations in the city. A letter written under the pseudonym A Parsee to *The Bombay Gazette* noted

> The want of male servants and female servants is increasing day after day, and to what amount of imposition and baseness we are subjected by these classes, which have become so odious, every Parsee employer knows to his cost. Let some large number of needy Persians be sent for and permitted to place themselves in active competition with these classes as soon as they become fit for it, and our annoyance and anxieties as regards them will commence ceasing.[350]

The letter indicates how Parsis in Bombay had positioned the refugees within the class spectrum, even prior to their arrival in the city. By the 1860s, almost a decade after the institutionalisation of the assistance to the Persian Zoroastrians, the association of poverty with Persian Zoroastrian migrants was well established. Some Parsis chose to pose and represent themselves as Persian Zoroastrian migrants when they tricked wealthy Parsis of their money.[351]

The Anglo-Gujarati weekly *Rast Goftar and Satya Prakash* suggested that the famine refugees could join the Indian army: '…a company of them in the British will not prove to be unserviceable, and the Parsees have undoubtedly proved their loyalty to the British Crown.'[352] Among the Parsis, military service was not popular.[353] In the censuses of 1872 and 1881, one Parsis is listed in the Military and Marine/ Defence section of the table of occupations, in both years.[354] Dosabhoy Framjee, the well-

[350] *The Bombay Gazette*, 3 June 1871, p. 3.
[351] Ibid., 17 June 1862, p. 572 (MSA, January to July 1862 stack).
[352] *The Times of India*, 19 June 1871, p. 3.
[353] Framjee, *The Parsees*, p. 153.
[354] *Census of the City of Bombay, Taken 21st February 1872*. Bombay: 1873, p. 141-2 and *Census of the City and Island of Bombay*, Taken on the 17th of February 1881 by T. S. Wier. Bombay: 1883, p. 178-9.

known Parsi commentator, attributed the unpopularity to the low salaries sepoys received. He noted: 'The native (Hindu or Mahomedan) soldiers are paid seven rupees or fourteen shillings a month, inclusive of rations, while a Parsi, in the lowest employment that he can enter upon- namely, that of a cook or domestic servant- earns nearly double the sum which is paid to the sepoy.'[355] Framjee's observation sums up the occupations shortlisted for the migrants- low pay in the army or better pay in the 'lowest employment' of a servant.

The third and most ambitious proposal was that the Parsi community buy the territory of Pondicherry from the French Republic and farm out the land to the refugees.[356] Proposals of this kind, to establish a colony on territory bought by the community from the government, were sporadically raised over the second half of the 19th century and recommended community members as settlers of the new territory. These could be called proposals of 'Parsi colonisation', to use the terminology of the time. Chapter 6 will show that at the turn of the 20th century the concept of Parsi colonisation and the Parsi colony would begin to be used to describe a new landscape in Bombay itself, of modern housing for the Parsi poor.

It is worth considering why none of the occupations closely associated with the Persian Zoroastrians in Bombay by the 1870s, such as the culinary trade and the theatre, were considered for the famine refugees in the proposals and debates put forth in the press. One reason could be that the approach to the occupational habilitation of the refugees was in keeping with the approaches to their relief, migration to and accommodation in Bombay. The approaches took an increasingly institutionalised

[355] Framjee, *The Parsees,* p. 153. Framjee titled the section in which he discussed the low participation of the Parsis in military service 'Why Parsees are Not Soldiers.'
[356] *The Bombay Gazette*, 12 June 1871, p. 2.

form with the refugees regarded and treated as a collective. The options of enlisting them as a company in the Indian Army or settling them in a new colony were both bulk solutions. The trajectory of Persian Zoroastrian famine refugees, then, from Persia to Bombay, remained an imagined collective. The theatre could have been excluded as an immediate occupational avenue because of the obstacles of language and literacy the migrants would have faced in the industry. Actors would have required a multilingual fluency for the varied skits that comprised a single production as well as for the ability to improvise and interact with the audience.

The residential and occupational avenues made available to the migrants by the Parsis, mirrored community charitable practices towards the Parsi lower middle classes and poor. It was the migrants' initial and inevitable recourse to a landscape of asylums and chawls that positioned them, unfavorably, on a wider social map.

Conclusion

This chapter has explored how the relief mechanisms occasioned by The Great Famine of 1871-72 helped forge Parsi identity and the idea of community. Not only did various pockets of Parsis dispersed across India, the empire and China, emerge as significant players in community philanthropy and establish a more equal footing with the Bombay Parsis, even Persian Zoroastrians were considered part of a pan or greater Parsi community. The events of the early 1870s, then, offer a new way of understanding and approaching Persian Zoroastrian identity, which has largely been understood as the Parsis most recognisable other. By drawing on the terminology used at the time to define communities as well as by tracing the spaces in which the refugees were accommodated, this chapter suggests that Persian Zoroastrians were

considered part of the Parsi fold for over three-quarters of the 19th century. Their identity as 'Persian Parsees' or the 'Parsees of Persia' was comparable to the Parsis of Mhow, the Parsis of Surat, the Parsis of Cannanore etc, in its relation to the majoritarian Bombay Parsi identity. But while the famine relief efforts were an opportunity for regional communities to fashion their independent identity, with a new relationship with the centre, for the Persian Zoroastrians, the migration to Bombay resulted in being subsumed into the lower orders of the Parsi community. The next chapter, on the riots between the Parsi and Muslim communities in 1874, will look at the ways class based divisions within the Parsis had become more pronounced in the second half of the 19th century. It was perhaps the association of 'Persian Parsees' with 'poor Parsis' that spurred the migrants to more actively adopt the identity of 'Iranis'.

5. A Community in a Crisis: The Bombay Riots of 1874

Introduction

On Sunday 12 March 1874 a meeting of the Parsi residents of Bombay was held at Allbless Baug, the main congregational centre for the community in the city. 8,000 attendees packed the Baug to capacity and spilled over onto the street. The meeting had been called to endorse a memorial addressed to the Marquis of Salisbury, the Secretary of State for India. The memorial read

> That your Memorialists have felt themselves constrained to adopt the usual course of addressing a direct appeal to your Lordship in Council, both in order to obtain redress for cruel wrongs suffered by the Parsees of Bombay during the recent Mahomedan Riots and security against the recurrence of such outrages, and also to vindicate the Parsee Community before Her Majesty's Government and the people of England from unjust reproaches cast upon them by the Government of Bombay.[357]

The riots between the Parsi and Muslim communities in 1874 were caused by a Parsi author R. H. Jalbhoy's portrayal of the Prophet Muhammad in his book *The Renowned Prophets and Nations* (1873) in Gujarati. Members of the city's various Muslim communities were offended by the portrayal of the prophet and riots broke out between the Muslims and Parsis for 3 days in February 1874. The riots were the severest communal conflict the city had witnessed leaving 7 dead, over 50 seriously injured and property amounting to approximately Rs 32,000 destroyed and stolen.[358] They were contemporarily referred to as The Bombay Riots of 1874, in the press and as the Mahomedan Riots by the Parsis. In recent scholarly and popular literature they have been called the Parsi-Muslim Riots of 1874.

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[357] Sapur F. Desai, *History of the Bombay Parsi Punchayet (1860-1960).* Bombay: Parsi Punchayet Funds and Properties, 1977, p. 265, Appendix E.

[358] These figures have been calculated from *The Bombay Riots of February 1874*. Re-printed from the Times of India. Bombay: The Times of India Printing Works, 1874 and *Mr Souter's Report on the Riots*. Bombay, 1874.

This chapter, by tracing the trajectory of the riots, will examine how the Parsi community dealt with the crisis. The riots tested two aspects that were crucial to the community's public image- the community's relations with the colonial state and the sense of cohesion within the community. As the previous chapters have demonstrated, Parsis were a relatively law abiding though litigious community. Individual Parsis came into conflict with the state, over quotidian cultural practices for example, but the overall relationship with was one of cooperation and collaboration. Difference within the community, like the Persian Zoroastrian refugees or lower class and poor Parsis, was managed through a growing infrastructure of institutions that specially catered to these groups. The riots unsettled these parameters, with the community blaming the state, particularly the city police, for inadequate protection during the riots and with the community leadership unable to control their community members' participation in the violence.

The riots in 1874 were foreshadowed by riots between the Parsi and Muslim communities in 1851. In 1851, the riots were caused by a portrait of the Prophet Muhammad in a Gujarati bi-weekly newspaper, *Chitra Dnyan Durpun* (The Illustrated Mirror of Knowledge), that was edited by a Parsi.[359] The city's Muslims were offended by the quality of the lithographic portrait. After a meeting held among the Muslims they began attacking Parsis and Parsi property.[360] Both the riots in 1851 and 1874 were strikingly similar. They had been instigated by publications by Parsis on the Prophet Mohammad, they occurred just before the Mohurrum festival was due to take place, an awareness that the Mohurrum festival was approaching had an important impact on the state's response to the riots as well as on intensity of the

[359] A Parsee, *The Mahomedan Riots of Bombay in the year 1851*. Bombay: Bombay Summachar Press, 1856, pp. 2-5.
[360] Idem.

violence and lastly in the aftermath of the riots the leaders of the Parsi and Muslim communities jointly performed gestures of reconciliation publicly in the city. Where the riots differed was in the areas of scale, how Parsis grouped themselves in relation to the violence and in the position of the Parsi leadership within the community. In 1851, there were small skirmishes spread out over a few weeks, in which one victim died and under 20 persons were severely injured. The built landscape of Bombay largely determined the internal grouping- Parsis that lived outside the Fort settlement considered themselves the most vulnerable to attack whereas those within the settlement had a greater sense of security. Broadly, the community was grouped into those that lived 'without' and those that lived 'within' 'the Fort walls of Bombay'.[361] Sir Jamsetjee Jejeebhoy, 1st Baronet's, leadership of the community was undisputed. In 1874, the rioting was more concentrated and severer, as discussed above. The Fort settlement had been demolished in the mid-1860s and the built environment no longer served as a way of internal categorisation. The Parsis were grouped more firmly in terms of class. Elite Parsis implicated lower class Parsis in the incidents of violence.[362] And as the previous chapter has demonstrated, the hold the Jejeebhoy family had on community leadership was weakening.

In the scholarly literature on Bombay and on the Parsis, the riots in 1874 have been located in a number of ways. They have been clubbed with the riots of 1851. Prashant Kidambi has considered both riots as small-scale localised disturbances, which were of limited political consequence.[363] Jesse S. Palsetia has observed the riots in 1851

[361] Ibid., pp. 69-71.
[362] *The Bombay Riots of February 1874*, p. 22.
[363] Prashant Kidambi, *The Making of an Indian Metropolis: Colonial Governance and Public Culture in Bombay, 1890-1920*. Hampshire: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2007, p. 117.
The riots have also been recently written about in the print and digital media in India. See A. G. Noorani, 'Story of two riots' in *Frontline*, 1 November 2013, http://www.frontline.in/the-nation/story-

marked that beginning of a period of tension in the modern history of the Parsi and Muslim communities.[364] The riots of 1874 are then contextualized in this setting. Jim Masselos has noted that the riots of 1874 stood out in their scale from the other incidents of violence in the period from 1870 to 1874 in Bombay.[365] While the riots were a major conflagration with numerous internal events, the other incidents of violence, in which crowds engaged, were characterised by a narrow territorial base (of individual localities and their social world and power structures) and by a disjunction from the Imperial presence.[366]

In this scholarship, the riots of 1874 have been briefly discussed often to contrast or corroborate the nature of other riots in Bombay like the scale of the communal conflict in the 1890s or the patterns of Parsi riots through the 19th century or the operational base of local disturbances. This chapter offers the first detailed examination of the riots of 1874. It will locate the riots and tensions within the Parsis and the Muslims within the setting of a plural and largely deregulated print culture in Bombay, in which Jalbhoy's book, mainly a translation of various western commentaries on the prophets, could be easily published (Figure 5.1). It will draw on

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of-two-riots/article5233190.ece and Mridula Chari, 'How an accidentally distorted drawing of the Prophet led to a riot in 19th-century Mumbai' in Scroll.in, 16 January 2015, http://scroll.in/article/700501/How-an-accidentally-distorted-drawing-of-the-Prophet-led-to-a-riot-in-19th-century-Mumbai (accessed on 9 April 2015). Noorani mentions that it was the leaders of both communities that helped restore the peace.

[364] Jesse S. Palsetia, *The Parsis of India: Preservation of Identity in Bombay City*, (2001). Delhi: Manohar Publishers and Distributors, 2008, p. 118.
Andrew Magnusson's recent doctoral research uses an account of the riots in 1851 to exemplify the challenges of writing about Muslim-Zoroastrian relations whether in colonial India or early Islamic Iran. He notes that 'The historian must contend with Orientalist assumptions and polemical historiographies, extremely partisan sources on one side, and a dearth of sources on the other.' Magnusson's research focuses on the relations between the two communities in early Islamic Iran. Andrew David Magnusson. *Muslim-Zoroastrian Relations and Religious Violence in Early Islamic Discourse, 600-1100 C.E.* PhD dissertation, University of California, Santa Barbara, 2014.

[365] Jim Masselos, *The City in Action, Bombay Struggles for Power,* New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2007, p. 96.

[366] Ibid. Masselos includes as part of the other incidents of violence, the Tower of Silence Riot in 1873, in which Parsis and Persian Zoroastrians were participants. The Tower of Silence Riot was referred to in Chapter 1 and will be considered in greater detail in this chapter.



FIGURE 5.1. A portrait of the author R. H. Jalbhoy.

(*The Portrait Gallery of Western India.)*

the rich archive of popular literature in English and Gujarati produced in the wake of the riots such as accounts and histories of the riots, compilations of newspaper articles on the riots and the trial proceedings and pamphlets containing a number of folk songs composed about the riots.

A plural print culture

Bombay's print culture was largely shaped by three factors in early decades of the 19th century - the activities of missionary societies, the colonial state's activities of publishing and its policies on the press and Parsi *sethias* investment in publishing and the press. We will consider each of these three factors in detail and then give a sense of the climate of the print culture in the second half of the 19th century.

Missionary societies were among the first organizations in Bombay that were able to produce printed material in large numbers and at low costs at the presses they ran. They were also the organisations that were mainly responsible for introducing and regularising inter-religious debate and antagonisms into print. For example, an American missionary society, the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions' (1812) press, The American Mission Press, started out in 1861 by printing Christian tracts in Marathi and soon expanded its operations to printing in Gujarati, Persian, Hindustani as well as to cater to the printing orders of other missionary societies in Bombay.[367] The Press printed the works of Reverend John Wilson of the Scottish Missionary Society, arguably the most influential and controversial missionary in Bombay in the 19th century. Wilson had begun his tenure in Bombay preaching to the lower castes and classes of the Marathi population but was eager to

[367] Anant Kakba Priolkar, *The Printing Press in India, its Beginnings and Early Development, Being a Quatercentenary Commemoration Study of the Advent of Printing in India (in 1556).* Bombay: Marathi Samshodhana Mandala, 1958, pp. 81-87.

expand his reach to the other populations in the city.[368] His approach involved a combination of refuting the religions of the local populations and the advocation of Christianity. The title of one of his publications on the Parsis gives a sense of his approach: *The Parsi Religion: As contained in the Zand Avasta, and Propounded and Defended by the Zoroastrians of India and Persia, Unfolded, Refuted and Contrasted with Christianity* (1844). Nile Green has noted that Wilson published a whole series of tracts in the languages of Bombay's Muslims attacking the 'licentiousness and imposture' of Muhammad.[369] The *Oriental Christian Spectator*, the monthly magazine Wilson started in 1830, was another avenue through which inter-religious differences were debated on a regular basis.

The colonial state's programmes of translating and printing books as well as the state's policies of a free press also shaped the plural print culture of Bombay. The educational societies set up by the state in the early decades of the 19th century engaged in translating and printing large quantities of literature for the native population. In the 1820s, the Bombay Education Society, headed by Mountstuart Elphinstone, the Governor of Bombay, translated and printed a wide range of western educational literature such as Aesop's Fables, scholastic grammar and arithmetic manuals etc. (into Marathi, Gujarati, Hindustani and Persian) as well as a smaller range of literature from the regional languages such as children's tales translated from Bengali to Marathi.[370] The societies were designed to promote secular and scientific knowledge among the native population and the large-scale translation and printing actives were justified in the interest of creating an educated public. With the passing

[368] George Smith, *The Life of John Wilson, D.D., F.R.S., for Fifty Years Philanthropist and Scholar in the East*. London: John Murray, 1879.
[369] Nile Green, *Bombay Islam: The Religious Economy of the West Indian Ocean, 1840–1915*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011, p. 28.
[370] Priolkar, *The Printing Press in India*, p. 94-6.

of the Act XI of 1835, that unified laws regarding the liberty of the press in India, Bombay's nascent press began operating more freely. A number of newspapers, run by Parsis, began to acquire a distinct voice. Criticism of the government could be harsh in the press especially during crises like riots where the official response was considered unsatisfactory. Tellingly, till the 1860s in the courts in Bombay most cases for libel were nonsuited or discouraged.[371]

The Parsis, and particularly the Parsi *sethias*, early interest and investment in publishing and the press was another factor that shaped Bombay's print culture. A Parsi printer, Rustam Caresajee, printed the *Calendar for the year of Our Lord 1780*, the first substantive book printed in Bombay.[372] Fardunji Marzaban began the first Gujarati press in 1812 and the first Gujarati newspaper, *Bombay Samachar,* in 1822.[373] *Sethias* sensed the new possibilities of print. Jamsetjee Jejeebhoy and the landed cultivator Framji Kavasji Banaji were among the first proprietors of the *Bombay Times*, Manockjee Cursetjee of the *Bombay Gazette*. As Christine Dobbin has noted, 'Parsi shareholders- mainly the leading shetias- exercised an important influence on the English-language papers, at least until the sixties, when all-India news and opinions came to dominate their pages.'[374] The *sethias* influence over the Gujarati press and publishing was even stronger. The newspaper the *Jame-e-Jamshed*

[371] In 1849 the Sonar *sethia* Jagannath Shankarsett sued the proprietors of the *Gentleman's Gazette* for libel. The plaintiff was nonsuited. S. M. Edwardes, *The Gazetteer of Bombay City and Island* (1909) Volume 3, p. 143) New Delhi: Cosmo Publications, 2001. When in 1859 Captain T. A. Cowper, Revenue Commissioner for Alienation, Bombay, wanted to sue the *Bombay Times* for libel, the government while sympathetic feared that the proceeding would only make the paper more popular. Merrill Tilghman Boyce. *British Policy and the Evolution of the Vernacular Press in India, 1835-1878*. Delhi: Chanakya Publications, 1988, p. 64. The first major libel case in Bombay was the Maharaj Libel Case of 1862.
[372] Priolkar, *The Printing Press in India*.
[373] Ibid.
[374] Christine Dobbin, *Urban Leadership in Western India: Politics and Communities in Bombay City, 1840-1885*. London: Oxford University Press, 1972, p. 23.

was quite openly an organ of the *sethia* dominated Parsi Punchayet. Jejeebhoy gifted the first editor of the *Jame* a house and made him the secretary of the Punchayet.

The Gujarati press' dependence on elite capital can be gauged by the story of the founder of the newspaper *Chitra Dnyan Durpun* (1850). The *Chitra* was begun by Cowasjee Sorabjee Patel, partly as a platform to continue a long-standing debate on the Zoroastrian calendar with Nowrojee Furdoonjee, the editor of the *Jame.* Translations of extracts of Western scientific works formed the bulk of the subject matter though the attacks on Nowrojee and others associated with the *Jame* were frequent. The attacks caused the financiers to withdraw their support of the paper. Patel was replaced with another editor who focused on the biographies and portraits of eminent individuals. One such portrait of the Prophet Mohammed, suggesting that he was one eyed, caused the riots between the Muslims and Parsis in 1851.

In the publishing of Gujarati books, *sethia* support was crucial not only in the immediate financing but also in the subsequent bulk purchasing and dissemination of the publication. Parsi authors usually dedicated their books to their patrons, in a public display of gratitude. Henry Briggs, an early commentator on the Parsis, pointed to this practice in the preface to *The Parsis or Modern Zerdusthians: A Sketch* (1852):

> As pertinent to the subject I might have dedicated this volume to one of the Parsi community- to the venerable Sir Jemshedji Jijibhai,- or to the worthy Shet Kauvasji Jehangir, (and "none worthier than he,")- or to the highly respected Shet Framji Nasarvanji,- but that I had determined not to lose the opportunity to notice a name that to me must ever be associated with obligations.[375]

[375] Henry George Briggs, *The Parsis or Modern Zerdusthians.* Edinburgh: Oliver & Boyd, 1852, p. viii-ix. Briggs dedicated the book to Arthur St John Richardson, Oriental Translator to the Government of Bombay.

In the world of vernacular commercial publishing all kinds of religious texts throve. Authors attempting histories of Islam drew largely on the works of British and occasionally American orientalists; those exploring Zoroastrian theology had a host of European scholars to choose from. Both the editor of the *Chitra* and Jalbhoy relied on the British scholar Simon Ockley's work *The Life of Mohammed* (1757), among others resources. Not only did these authors have few misgivings about indiscriminate literary borrowing, they would often leave their sources unacknowledged and revert to them when their work needed exoneration. The full title of the book itself suggests a patchwork of sources- *The Renowned Prophets and Nations, comprising the Lives of Zoroaster, Moses, Christ, and Mahomet, and Abridged History of the Ancient Aryans, the old Parsees, and Complete History of the Jews, the Christians, and the Mahomedans, together with an Account of the Creation of the World from the earliest period to the present time* (1873).

Images circulated slower than the printed word, at least till the last quarter of the 19th century. In Bombay, the initial rudimentary lithographic printing equipment, the valuing of the aesthetic rather than educative potential of the pictorial, the missionary distaste for Indian idol/image worship, photography's cliquish early practitioners of professional and administrative elite and circulation cultures like gifting that had yet to include images within its fold all meant that the age of picture production and circulation had a later start. However a nascent culture of consuming images had begun in the press with papers like the *Chitra* and more popularly the satirical cartoons of the *Parsee Punch* magazine.[376] Illustrated versions of the Iranian epic the *Shahnama* were available in Bombay as early as 1849, drop curtains of Parsi theatre

[376] 'Book review: Wit and Wisdom: Pickings from the Parsee Punch' in Fravahr.org http://www.fravahr.org/spip.php?article553 (accessed on 9 April 2015).

companies were decorated with images of Zoroaster and pictures of Iranian kings and heroes adorned some of the homes marauded in the riots of 1874. A frequent theme of photographic albums that were available for purchase in Bombay the capturing of ruins- whether of buildings damaged during conflicts in 18th c Mysore or the Mutiny of 1857, or the views of the ravaged neighbourhoods during the riots of 1874.

When presses specializing in image production begun in the 1870s, mythological images, particularly of Hindu gods and goddesses, did a brisk trade. These images were often inspired by various mythological dramas that drew large urban audiences. Performed by theatre companies that partook of the innovations of stage technology, dramas portrayed Hindu gods with a penchant with the miraculous- sparkling swords, disappearing acts, severed heads. Audiences stood up in reverence to these holy offerings. Coloured lithographic prints of gods and heroes, eagerly purchased by the middle classes, allowed further proximity, even possession of the divine. From its hesitating beginnings in the missionary recourse to print, urban public consumption of religion had found more acceptable and entertaining avenues. As for image productions shaky start with *Chitra's* portrait of the Prophet, prints outnumbered books by the thousands in volume and circulation.

The course of the riots

This section will trace the course of riots over the three main days of rioting 13th 14th and 15th February 1874.[377] The rioting began on Friday 13th when groups of Muslims who were returning from their prayers at the Jama Musjid mosque coalesced with groups of members of the Sidi and Memon (Muslim) communities at the Abdul

[377] The narrative has largely been recreated from the testimonies at the trail of the rioters. *The Trial of the Bombay Rioters of 1874*. Re-printed from the Bombay Gazette. Bombay: 1874 and

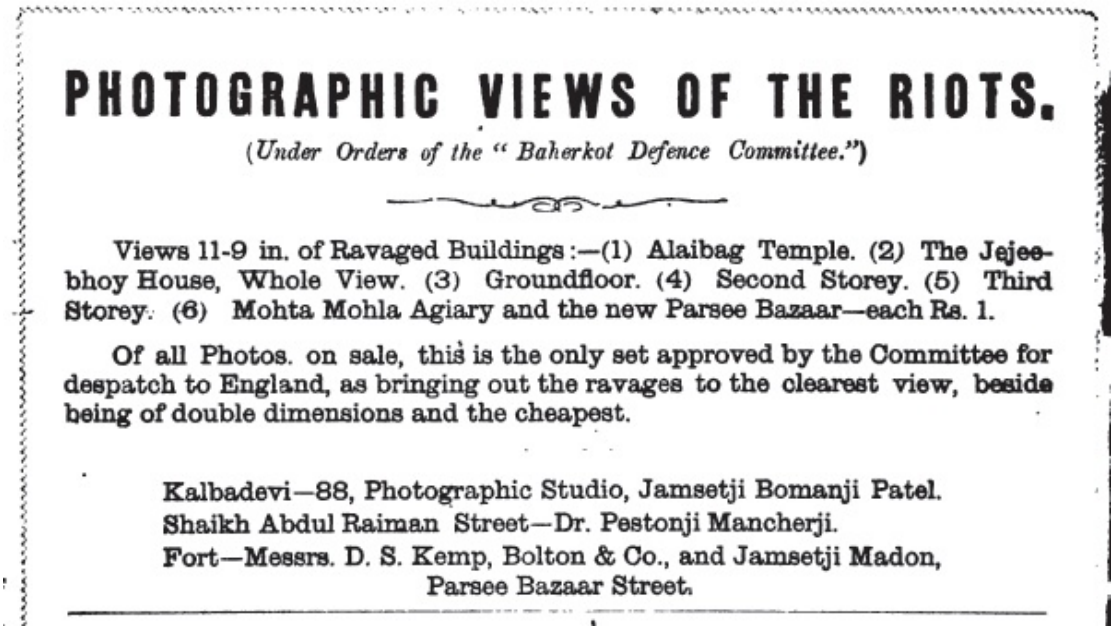
Rehman Street and began destroying the property of the Parsis in the locality. The locality, popularly referred to as the Batlivala Mohalla, had a large Parsi population and most of the property belonged to the Jejeebhoy family.[378] A community centre, built by Sir Jamsetjee Jejeebhoy in 1838, which comprised of a fire temple, feasting area and godown, was an early target. The priest on the premises hid in a bathing area as the mob desecrated the inner sanctum of the temple and extinguished the sacred fire. Situated opposite the community centre, the three-storey house of Jejeebhoy Dhunjeebhoy, a wealthy relative of the family, was ransacked and robbed. Dhunjeebhoy and four other members of the household managed to escape down a ladder into a neighbouring compound. In a Gujarati *lavani* composition on the riots, the poet Leheri recounts:

> Opposite Jijibhai, and Dhanjibhai Batliwala
> House of Sir Jamshedji, and Baronet Kitabwala
> Entered rogues shouting religious slogans [379]

The dispensary of a Parsi doctor, located on the ground floor of the doctor's house, was broken into and the drugs and furniture destroyed. The doctor, Pestonjee Muncherjee, and his family hid on the fourth storey of the house. (Figure 5.1).

In the Bhendy Bazaar locality, a fire temple was also desecrated and the sacred fire extinguished. Stray Parsis encountered on the streets were assaulted and robbed. At Ardesir Dady Street, a number of Hindu sweepers joined in the violence. Dosibai, a Parsi lady, was struck while standing at the steps of her veranda. A stable, sherbet

[378] The surname Batliwala refers to Jejeebhoy's father-in-law's trade in bottles.
[379] Amritalala Narayanadasa Laheri, 'Chumoterana Dinni Duper'. Bombay: 1874. Translation by Mr. Upendra Dave. Another sobriquet for Jejeebhoy was Kitabwala, which indicates an involvement with books. In this case, rather than a profession, it probably refers to Jejeebhoy's financial support of several publications and translation funds.



PHOTOGRAPHIC VIEWS OF THE RIOTS.

(*Under Orders of the "Baherkot Defence Committee."*)

Views 11-9 in. of Ravaged Buildings:—(1) Alaibag Temple. (2) The Jejeebhoy House, Whole View. (3) Groundfloor. (4) Second Storey. (5) Third Storey. (6) Mohta Mohla Agiary and the new Parsee Bazaar—each Rs. 1.

Of all Photos. on sale, this is the only set approved by the Committee for despatch to England, as bringing out the ravages to the clearest view, beside being of double dimensions and the cheapest.

Kalbadevi—88, Photographic Studio, Jamsetji Bomanji Patel.
Shaikh Abdul Raiman Street—Dr. Pestonji Mancherji.
Fort—Messrs. D. S. Kemp, Bolton & Co., and Jamsetji Madon, Parsee Bazaar Street.

FIGURE 5.2. An advertisement for photographs of the properties affected by the riots. Interestingly, the second location at which the photographs were being sold was the dispensary of a Parsi doctor. The dispensary was badly damaged in the riots.

(*The Bombay Riots of February 1874.*)

shop and 11 liquor shops were wrecked. A Hindu goldsmith's shop was looted. The riots were suppressed by 2 pm, half an hour after the Commissioner of Police, Frank Souter, accompanied by mounted police and the Deputy Commissioner of Police, Alfred Edginton, made their way to the affected areas from their office in Mazagon. 91 people were apprehended and appeared before the Senior Magistrate the next day. Souter rescued Dhunjeebhoy and his household members from a godown in a neighbour's compound in which they were hiding.

On Saturday 14th there were fewer skirmishes which were scattered through the native town. Groups of Parsis armed with sticks targeted Muslims on the streets. Runjan Peer Mahomed, a coachman on his way to deliver a gift from his Parsi master to a priest at Mody Street was attacked. Muslim rioters damaged the façade of the Parsi managed London Hotel and Victoria Theatre at Grant Road. A group of prominent Parsi citizens, comprising of the barristers Pherozeshah Mehta and Cursetjee M. Cursetjee, the son of Manockjee Cursetjee, and the businessman Jamsetji Tata, who were under the impression that the riots had been quelled on the first day itself, decided to visit the localities that were affected by the riots. The group was in turn caught in the skirmishes. Mehta recollected their experience:

> We had not advanced about twenty yards, before our *buggy* was surrounded by the rioters hooting and yelling at us, as if the very sight of a Parsee was a sort of red flag to them, and we were assailed with a perfect storm of missiles, amongst which stones and broken bricks were the most conspicuous. Trying to push on as if unmindful of this somewhat warm reception, we had not proceeded a few yards more, before the greeting became so hot that we were compelled to bring out a gun and two revolvers which we had taken care to provide ourselves with before starting. The effect was electric; like the veriest dastards that they really were, the sight of the fire-arms sent them flying in all directions, clearly proving to us that only a bold front and a firm hand were required to quell this beggarly rabble and scum of the Mohammedan population.[380]

[380] J. R. B. Jeejeebhoy, ed. *Some Unpublished & Later Speeches and Writings of the Hon. Sir Pherozeshah Mehta*. Bombay: J. R. B. Jeejeebhoy, 191, p. 6.

Despite most shops, establishments and schools in the affected areas being closed, the city's civic engagements continued. The Governor of Bombay, Sir Phillip Wodehouse, made his way from his home in the Parel locality to the Town Hall in the Fort district to preside over a meeting for famine relief measures for Bengal. After the meeting, a Parsi delegation, headed by Jejeebhoy, proceeded to Parel hoping to convince the Governor of the dangers the community faced. Wodehouse, while regretting Friday's outbreak, explained that the situation was not severe enough to summon the military.

Sunday 15th witnessed the severest of the three days of rioting when participants of a Muslim funeral processions clashed with Parsis near the Sonapur burial ground in the Dhobi Talao locality. Two unusually large funeral processions, one of a Sidi, the other of a 'Bombay Mussulman' made their way, with some police escort, through a number of neighbourhoods to reach the burial ground.[381] According to the testimonies of the Police, the Sidis, settled at the southern end of the burial ground, were peacefully disposed as they waited for the grave to be dug. Trouble started when Parsis, positioned in an adjacent lane, threw stones over the boundary walls into the grounds. Provoked, both parties clashed at Breach Candy Road. In the Parsi accounts, it was asserted that self-defense prompted the Parsis presence in the lane. The preceding two days of violence, insufficient police protection and rumours that the funeral processions were a guise (the bier filled with sticks rather than a body) to further attack Parsi homes and a fire temple in the locality, had caused them to appear in large numbers, armed with sticks. In these accounts, the Sidis were accused of

[381] *The Trial of the Bombay Rioters of 1874*. Bombay 1874, pp. 26-7.

initiating the stone throwing. 34 Muslim rioters were caught as they tried to escape the scene of the disturbance.

Souter considered the riot at Sonapore sufficient cause to mobilize the military and call for cavalry piquets to patrol the city at night. Over 500 soldiers left by train for Bombay from their cantonment in Poona. Stationed at four military posts in the city, the troops were commanded by European officers and Justices of Peace. They were to stay in the city till the ten-day Mohurrum festival, beginning 18 February, was over. These infrequent displays of military might in Bombay, reassured and awed the populace that gathered at the tents erected at in the Esplanade district to have a closer look at the troops. A Gujarati song by Ramasankara Gaurisankara celebrated: 'Visible everywhere are well-equipped sentries, the soldiers are English, bugles are played.' [382]

Performances re-establishing colonial control over urban space begun on Monday 16th with the funeral procession of 80 year old carpenter, Hajee Ahmed, a victim of the Sonapur riot. Charting the same route to the burial ground as taken the day before, the procession offered the state a second chance for a successful display of authority. As an article in The Bombay Gazette noted: 'The mourners round the bier leaped and cried and beat their heads; the police marched quietly on; the military's fixed bayonets glittered as they moved.[383]

[382] Ramasankara Gaurisankara, 'Dargahi Dango'. Bombay,1874. Translation by Mr. Upendra Dave.
[383] *The Bombay Riots of 1874*. Bombay: The "Bombay Gazette" Steam Press, 1874, p. 25.

On Monday 16th, the Government House Ball at Parel proceeded as scheduled and on Tuesday 17th the Governor announced to the audience at the annual convocation at the Bombay University, the banning of the Mohurrum processions that year.

Misreading Mohurrum

An unusual combination of funeral and festivity, the Mohurrum festival in Bombay was a persistent public order problem. The city's many Islams offered as many and often contradictory ways of commemorating the martyrdom of Husain at the battle of Karbala. Broadly, Shia practices of collective displays of mourning were matched with the revelry of the predominantly Konkani Sunni style of processions that wandered through the city streets carrying models of Husain's tomb called *tabuts* or *tazias*. The festivities included dressing up as tigers, bears and groups of five or six forming a cloth elephant. Hindu children dressed as fakirs went from door to door collecting alms. S. M. Edwardes, the well-known civil servant and chronicler, observed how Persian 'sentimentality', African 'desire for noise and brawling' and 'the spirit worship of pure Hinduism' all combined to render 'the Bombay Mohurrum more lively and more varied than any Mahomedan celebration in Cairo, Damascus or Constantinople.'[384]

Both intra-communal competition and conflict, and the *tolis*, bands of largely lower class Sunnis that paraded the *tabuts*, posed threats to public order. In 1836, violent clashes and loss of lives made the authorities prohibit the Zoolzunnah or Horse Procession from touring the streets. A ritual peculiar to the city's Persian or Mogul community, it rivaled Sunni *tabut* displays. Thus Shia preference for reserved practice

[384] Edwardes, *By-Ways of Bombay*, p. 24.

may have been inherent but also externally reinforced. Participating in the public revelry of the *tabut* processions came to signify crudeness and underclass for elite Muslims and much of the Shia population. In the aftermath of the riots between the Parsis and Muslims in 1851, the Persian Consul issued a notice warning to the Mogul community against walking 'about in the street in company with the Taboots', carrying clubs or weapons etc. Recommended instead was visiting places 'where the eulogiums are recited and where the mourning is observed'. This caused, the Sunni cazee to caution his brethren from quarreling with the Parsis. 'Moreover should any Parsee behave improperly by showing enmity, making use of improper language, or throwing stones, then information should be instantly given to the Police'.[385] Inter-communal antagonisms resulted in a decline of Parsi participation at the annual *urs*, the death anniversary festivities held at the shrines of Muslim saints mainly in the Mahim locality.[386]

A testament to the city's long and troubled history with Mohurrum is Commissioner Souter's reception of the riots of 1874. It is Souter's reading or misreading the threat to public order as the approaching Mohurrum festival rather than the existing tensions between the Muslims and Parsis that makes the case of 1874 interesting. While the bulk of the rioting occurred on 13, 14 and 15 February, Mohurrum began on the 18 February. Souter's confidence in the pre-riot precautions he took such as placating the delegations of Muslims he met who were aggrieved by Jalbhoy's publication, seizing from the author 85 copies of the book, stationing his detective force at the meeting of leading Muslims held at the Konkani *sethia* Mahomed Ibrahim Muckba's home in

[385] A Parsee, *The Mahomedan Riots of Bombay in the year 1851*. Bombay: Bombay Summachar Press, 1856, p.
[386] Murali Ranganathan, ed. and translator, *Govind Narayan's Mumbai: An Urban Biography from 1863*. London: Anthem Press, 2009, p. 281.

Byculla on the day prior to the disturbance and at the Jami Mosque on the 13th itself-gave him no reason to anticipate a violent outbreak. In Souter's subsequent report to the Judicial Department he explained: 'Under ordinary circumstances I should probably have taken little notice of the matter, but seeing that the Mohurrum was so close at hand, and well-knowing the excitement which prevails during the festival amongst all classes of the Mahomedan community, I deemed it advisable to exercise my influence in checking, as far as possible, a spread of ill-feeling between the Mahomedans and Parsees.'[387] Two years prior, under Souter's commissionership, a Muhurram disturbance in the city had left sixty persons seriously injured.[388]

Souter's measures could lend to Sandria Freitag's argument that inter communal conflict grew out of competition within the same religious community.[389] His inability to tackle the communal threat on its own terms suggests the improbability of the event and the colonial state's reliance on community leaders to gauge the pulse of the populace. That the Muslim leaders at Muckba's bungalow were satisfied with the suppression of the book and wished to eradicate the temporary ill feeling towards the Parsis was assurance enough that peace would prevail. Likewise, curtailing the Sidi population was surmised more difficult since they lacked leadership.[390]

In the Parsi accounts as well as in the press, Souter was granted less professional leeway. In the days leading to the disturbances, newspapers like the *Bombay Gazette* and *Bombay Samachar* had warned of a likelihood of a Muslim attack on the Parsis. Eight Parsi residents of the Dhobi Talao area visited the Mazagon Police Office on

[387] *Mr Souter's Report on the Riots*, p. 1.
[388] Edwardes, *The Bombay City Police*, p. 68.
[389] Sandria B. Freitag, *Collective Action and Comuunity: Public Arenas and the Emergence of Communalism in North India*. Berkeley; Oxford : University of California Press, 1989.
[390] *The Bombay Riots of February 1874.* Re-printed from the Times of India. Bombay, 1874. p.10.

the 11 February, hoping to alert Souter of the impending danger. They met the Deputy Commissioner Edginton instead who assured them that the scheduled meeting at the Muslim leader Mucka's home would ease the tension.[391] Jalbhoy, having learnt that some Muslims had ascertained the location of his home in Dhobi Talao, informed Edginton on the 12th of Febraury of his plan to leave Bombay. 'Mr. Edginton approved of the course proposed, and said, moreover, that it would be better if I were away until Mohurrum was over.'[392] On the 13th morning, sensing trouble, a Parsi priest dismissed the Parsi girls school he ran at Kandawala Street, earlier than usual. Two hours later, a Bohra man came cautioning the Parsis of the street of the outbreaks nearby.

These rumours and premonitions in the press seem to have been ignored by the colonial authorities. This is surprising, given how during and after the riots, especially at the court proceedings, the state considered newspapers substantial urban texts. Even vernacular reports were considered worthy gaugers of the general climate. Governor Wodehouse read translations of inflammatory Gujarati journalism to an audience of Parsi leaders, remarking that till the Parsi press cools down, peace was unlikely. At the trial of the Sonapur rioters, Superintendent Mills explained that he 'had read nearly everything about the riots that appeared in the *Bombay Gazette*.'[393] Justice Lyttelton Bayley opened the proceedings at the High Court by 'correcting an error which has crept into two of this morning's daily papers.' He clarified that he never intended to close the court to visit the Jama Masjid, as had been suggested. He meant to meet an acquaintance at the Adelphi Hotel at Byculla, only after the court

[391] Ibid, Appendix D.
[392] Ibid, p 28.
[393] *The Trial of the Bombay Rioters of 1874*. Bombay 1874, p. 26.

had risen.[394] The year before, Bayley along with another High Court Judge J. Green and Dr Duncan Mackenzie of the Sir J. J. Hospital had attended the *kissa* readings at a Khoja Jamat Khana during Muhurrum.

Among the reasons put forth for Souter's attitude was his dislike of the Parsi community, particularly after the Tower of Silence Riot in April 1873, the previous year. The Riot was the culmination of a dispute over the ownership of a piece of land adjacent to the Towers (where Parsi corpses were exposed to vultures according to traditional Zoroastrian death rites). On the one hand, a tenant of the Parsi Punchayet claimed possession of the land, on the other a builder, keen to develop the property. A horde of mainly Parsis and Persian Zoroadstrians attacked the builder's employees, tore down two newly erected structures and escaped into the Towers of Silence grounds for shelter. Parsi accounts criticized Souter for the police security he offered the builder prior to the riot, the force's entry into a sacred room on the funerary grounds to arrest the rioters and the parading of the handcuffed prisoners from Malabar Hill to the police station at Mazagon. At the trial at the Sessions Court before Justice Green, the barristers Pherezoshah Mehta and Thomas Anstey among others, defended the prisoners, all of who were acquitted. The *Bombay Samachar* reported of the celebrations that followed: 'The town wore a holiday aspect, and houses and offices were illuminated with lamps. *Jasans* or religious dinner-parties, were held in the evening in every locality- and thus was inaugurated the celebration of the triumph of justice and right over might.'[395] This victory, it was popularly believed, had left Souter sour and eager for revenge.

[394] *The Bombay Riots of February 1874*. Re-printed from the Times of India. Bombay, 1874, p. 28.
[395] *The Tower of Silence Case*, Bombay, 1873

Parsi relations with Souter and Anstey, an Irish lawyer and sometime judge of the Bombay High Court, offer interesting and extreme examples of how native and colonial interactions were as much about personalities as they were about politics. Both riots were reduced to Souter's villainy. To compound matters on the first day of rioting in 1874, a government gazette announced Souter's appointment as a Fellow of the University of Bombay. A year later he was knighted. What the trials of the 1874 rioters lacked was Anstey's spirited defence of the Parsi accused. Anstey died in 1873, shortly after the hearing of the Tower of the Silence Case. The community commemorated his death with eulogies and erecting a tombstone at the cemetery in Sewri where he was buried.[396] What made Anstey a favourite with the Parsis was his fiery oratory and squabbles with witnesses and even judges, extracts of which were reproduced in community histories. That he lost significant cases involving Parsis, like the De Ga Conspiracy Case of 1873, or that Bombay's solicitors had once boycotted him or that his severity as a judge had prompted a petition to remove him from the bench, did not dampen the community's sentiment towards him.

Souter's death in 1888 occasioned Parsi responses in keeping with those for their some time colonial adversaries. At a memorial meeting in Bombay, the magnate Sir

[396] Part of the inscription read: 'THIS MEMORIAL IS RAISED/BY THE PARSI COMMUNITY OF BOMBAY/TO MARK THEIR SENSE OF GRATITUDE FOR HIS ZEALOUS SERVICES/ IN THEIR CAUSE IN THE TOWERS OF SILENCE CASE OF 1873'. Desai, *History of the Bombay Parsi Punchayet*, p. 59- 60.
A Gujarati eulogy 'Chrisholm Anstey-nun Mot' (1876) by Rustam Irani recounted:
whenever talk of the deceased is started, there is a light wave of sadness
as if arrows have been let loose signaling sadness, from the mouths of Iranians
is sung and will be sung amongst Parsis
sadness of Anstey with great love
(Translation by Upendra Dave)
'Anstey-nun Mrityu' (1873) is another example. These were sung at Parsi weddings and other occasions. See P. B. Vachha, *Famous Judges, Lawyers and Cases of Bombay: A Judicial History of Bombay during the British Period*. Bombay: N. M. Tripathi, 1962, pp. 128-131 for details on Anstey's tumultuous career.

Dinshaw Petit moved a resolution of condolence.[397] As with the passing of the Scottish Missionary Rev John Wilson, whose attempts at converting Parsis had caused an uproar in 1839, old wounds seem to have healed and past skirmishes fondly remembered.

'No Parsi Solidier?'

At the heart of the community's response to the riots of 1874 was a deep and divided outlook on violence. Community leaders relied entirely on the police and the governor for protection, emphasizing their peaceful and law-abiding dispositions. Wodehouse's proposal that the community 'ought to learn the lesson of defending themselves from the rioters, and not to depend wholly on Government, but form themselves into what they call in England special constables' was not taken up.[398] An organized defence in the form of a civil guard or volunteer force never materialized. On the other hand, the Parsis directly affected by the riots has to defend their lives and property, particularly on the second and third days. Assaults on unsuspecting Muslims were also carried out. A week later groups of Parsis and Persian Zoroastians attacked a group of - Sidis that had made their way to the Fort area, after working at the harbour. A repeated refrain to the police was that Parsis intended to defend themselves, since state support had been delayed and dismal.

Under the rubric of self-defence, Parsi leaders justified, half-heartedly, these assaults, distancing themselves from the violence yet maintaining their mantle as community guardians. A disassociation of the kind between Muslim elite and the masses was not possible for the Parsis, given the strong sense of community and the leaders

[397] Edwardes, *The Bombay City Police*, p. 77.
[398] Dinshah Ardeshir Taleyarkhan, *The riots of 1874, their true history and philosophy*. Bombay: Vining & Co., 1874, p. 10.

dependence on the lower classes for the legitimation of their positions. Nevertheless occasions like the riots did highlight the internal fault lines and fissures. In a petition to the Governor Jejeebhoy and 27 other signatories, regretted that 'in a few instances, violent assaults have been made by some of the lower class of Parsees upon Mahomedans, but these are solitary cases, and were chiefly provoked by self-defence…'[399] Pamphlets in Gujarati distributed in the native town and Fort locality advised 'Take care that you do not incur the blame of renewing the disturbance. Take care that instead of those who have assailed you from all the four sides you do not compel others to call you rioters.'[400] For the brief periods of rioting, Parsi reputation hung precariously on the lower and middle classes ability to abstain. The community was likely to loose European support if unprovoked outbreaks continued. The *Bombay Gazette,* an ardent supporter of the Parsis during the riots, a change from their stance in the Tower of Silence Case the year before, warned that 'European sympathy, which they entirely possessed in consequence of the Mahomedan riot on the 13th, would pass away from them, and they would thereby injure their cause.'[401]

Leaders made little attempt to reconcile these instances of assault with community histories or the social milieu of Bombay. Both city and community, it seems, were erasing and overlooking the signs of their shared martial beginnings. In 1692, Rustomjee Dorabjee helped the English defend the island of Bombay during an attack by the Sidis of Janjira who served under the Mughal emperor Aurangzeb. Rustom Gendral, as he was fondly called, successfully organized and headed a militia of 25,000, composed largely of Koli fishermen. He was rewarded with the heredity title

[399] *The Bombay Riots of February 1874.* Re-printed from the Times of India. Bombay, 1874. p. 22.
[400] Ibid. p. 12.
[401] *The Bombay Riots of 1874*. Bombay: The "Bombay Gazette" Steam Press, 1874. p. 20. Interestingly Anstey was among the well-known contributors to the *Gazette*. 148

of Patell and appointed arbiter of disputes among the Kolis, in addition to his existing heredity duties of revenue collection.[402] Portuguese records note that in 1738, Dadaji Jacinga raised a force of 48 Parsis to aid the Portuguese against attacks by the Marathas in Bassein. The force defended the fort of Nossa Senhora des Remedios do Dandrim. An official remarked '…the Parsees were always prompt in all occasions when the enemy made an assault in those villages fighting in many of these without even the prospect of being assisted by soldiers…'[403] While Dorabjee and Jacinga's feats find mention in community and city histories, the perception of Parsi masculinity that survived in the popular imagination was quite different. A Marathi ballad sung into the 20th c by the Kolis and other Marathi speaking communities, construes less flatteringly the relations between the Parsi, British and the Koli.

> Seaman Koli of simple mould
> Hath in his house great store of gold-
> Lo! At the order of Topiwala
> Koli is peer of Batliwala [404]

Batliwala, here used as a generic for a Parsi millionaire, liaisons between a landed, naïve Koli Patel and an English Governor (Topiwala) such that the Koli agrees to give away a portion of his property in exchange of being allowed to roof his house with metallic tiles.

For the early Parsi leaders martial and commercial identities were compatible even mutually reinforced. Both Dorabjee and Jacinga were compradors. They held

[402] Ranganathan pp. 71, 312.
[403] Desai, *History of the Bombay Parsi Punchayet*, pp. 202-3. Ruttonji Patel of Nargol, Gujarat, gave the Portuguese records to Jivanji Modi, scholar and secretary of the Parsi Punchayet in 1901. At Modi's request, John Godinho translated them into English. See Modi (1905) 2004: 24.
[404] Edwardes, *By-Ways of Bombay*.

lucrative contracts to supply shipping vessels and military provisions to the East India Company and the Portuguese respectively. While Parsis did not form the bulk of the troops that defended the island of Bombay in the first tumultuous century of Company rule, theirs was not a disdain for bodily proficiency. Members of the Koli and Bhandari community among the native population and the Portuguese, English and French among the Europeans, were mainly recruited to obstruct the Dutch, Sidi and Maratha incursions. In the 1750s and 177s Bombay's citizens, particularly the Vanis and Brahmins, paid the authorities generous fees for exemption from compulsory conscription in the army.[405] This cautions against assuming that demilitarisation in Bombay was solely a colonial impetus or that societies and spaces demilitarized simultaneously. Work on a moat around the Fort and the Camp Maidan, a level open space along the western fringe of the Fort (to provide a clear line of fire), begun in the 1743 and 1753, respectively.[406]

With external threats eliminated and the profits of a booming cotton commodity trade, the imperial presence was on firmer footing in 19th century Bombay. Under the governorship Sir Bartle Frere (1862-1867), the Fort settlement was demolished, the ramparts removed and the moat filled in. As Sandip Hazareesingh has noted, 'The Fort was now redesigned as an urban centre to illustrate Bombay's modernity as an open maritime city connected to increasingly global transportation and trade networks.'[407] Public displays of punishment such as flogging, pelting, caging, hanging were discontinued or relocated to other parts of the city. Elite practices of bodily vitality like hunting with hounds had to be moved northward to Salsette since

[405] Ranganathan, *Govind Narayan's Mumbai*, pp. 110-111.
[406] Ibid p. 102 and http://www.worldlingo.com/ma/enwiki/en/Fort_(Mumbai_precinct)
[407] Sandip Hazareesingh, *The Colonial City and the Challenge of Modernity: Urban Hegemonies and Civic Contestations in Bombay (1900-1925)*. Hyderabad: Orient Longman, 2007, p. 21.

the once grassy areas of Malabar Hill and Breach Candy were developing as residential enclaves. In 1811, a hunt's itinerary included entertainment at the home of the Parsi shipbuilders, the Wadia's, in Parel: 'the party will then proceed to Lowjee Castle, where various Hindustani gymnastics, pigeon-shooting, tumbling, juggling, etc will be exhibited till 4, when a dinner in the real English style will be served up for the same number as at breakfast.'[408] Even engaging in duels, of which the Parsis partook, were less frequent in the city.

Over the century, familiar signs of upper class physical culture were replaced with newer models, offering subtler skills. In the tradition of the Great Game, Charles Forjett, the Commissioner of Police from 1855 to 1864, resorted to disguise and aknowledge of local languages to uncover plots against the state and local conspiracies. He established the detective branch of the Bombay city police. This force of largely Muslim inspectors continued Forjett's legacy of espionage, though less exotically. Souter succeeded as Commissioner with what Prashant Kidambi describes as a conventional modern policing mandate of order maintenance rather than crime prevention.[409] While colonial cultures of the body remained examples for the Parsis, a vociferous dissociation with many indigenous cultural practices meant a shrinking pool of models for them. Urban entertainment was likewise purged of the physical feats of Hindustani gymnastics and nautch girls. An evening of western music, theatre or rides and strolls at the Back Bay reclamation emerged as the favoured leisurely practices.

[408] S. M. Edwardes, *The Gazetteer of Bombay City and Island*, Volume 3. New Delhi: Cosmo Publications, 2001. p. 224.
[409] Kidambi, *The Making of an Indian Metropolis*, p. 116.

A common conception was that the tradition Zoroastrian veneration of fire had prevented Parsis from taking firearms and consequently joining the forces. But their ready assistance in quenching fires, participation in rifle matches and a surge in demand for revolvers after the riots of 1874 warrants other explanations. The well known Parsi commentator Dosabhoy Framjee had explained the absence of Parsis in the army to the low salaries sepoys received, as elaborated in the last chapter. During the riots in 1874 Mehta had stated about the community 'the old spark is not quite extinct among them.'[410]

Other Gujarati communities such as the Bhatias also felt the need to articulate and reconcile their mercantile and once military cultures, part of a larger trend of literary assertions by the various communities of Bombay. Histories tracing 'origins', genealogies and migration patterns offered communities new ways of legitimation in a cosmopolitan and competitive urban milieu. Edward Simpson has observed that colonial caste iconography depicted 'a Bhatiya warrior forsaking horse, sword and land in favour of ship, cane and trade.'[411] Oral and textual myths dated the beginnings of this transition for the Bhatias to the seventeenth century when the caste embraced Hindu devotional movements like the Pushti Marga. More contemporarily, this passage from warrior to merchant has been used to explain the perceived high rates of lunacy, effeminacy and homosexuality among the Bhatiyas.[412] This reading has clear parallels with Tanya Lurhmann's study of post-colonial Parsis. She has suggested that with the Parsis suffering from the withdrawal of the Raj, community discourse took to

[410] Jeejeebhoy, ed. *Some Unpublished and Later Speeches and Writings of the Hon. Sir Pherozeshah Mehta*, p. 7.
[411] Edward Simpson, 'Why Bhatiyas are not "Banias" and why this matters: Economic success and religious worldview among a mercantile community of western India,' in Lachaier, Pierre and Clémentin-Ojha, Catherine, (eds.), *Divine richesses: religion et économie en monde marchand indien.* Paris: École français d'Extrême-Orient, 2008, pp. 91-111.
[412] Ibid.

a new self-criticism that targeted young men as impotent, gay and Mama's boys. This, she contrasts with the thoroughness with which Parsis adopted hyper-masculinized British ideals in the colonial climate, implying that with the models went the masculinity.[413] Lurhmann neglects three factors in her analysis: the class underpinnings of models of Parsi masculinity, that British cultures of physicality were appropriated not exemplars and that community 'health' was not gauged, at least by its leaders through the lower and middle classes.

Though largely confined to the middle and lower classes, displays of Parsi masculinity acclimatized to the modes of bodily vitality that the colonial and national setting afforded. As frequenting *talimkhanas* or traditional gymnasiums fell into disrepute, Parsis drew from the acrobatics performed by touring European circuses in the 1850s and set up modern gymnastic academies. Hotbeds of local gangs, community and *moholla* centric *talimkhanas,* were denounced by the city's elite and particularly the magistrates who tried their errant members. In K. N. Kabraji's series *Reminiscences of Fifty Years Ago* (1901), the author recollects 'a notorious band of athletic ruffians in Bazar Gate Street, consisting chiefly of Parsis'; part of a citywide nexus of crime that the Commissioner Forgett had curtailed.[414] Modern gymnasiums, on the other hand, following European style techniques, were acceptable repositories for the shaping of boys into men. These gymnasiums belonged to the wider associational culture of the city and were administered through the mechanisms of presidents, meetings, annual reports and accounts. At the 12th annual general meeting of the gymnasium the Kasratsala-sthapaka Mandali in 1871, Dadabhai Naoroji

[413] T. M. Lurhmann, 'The Good Parsi: The Postcolonial 'Feminization' of Colonial Elite' in Man, New Series, Vol. 29, No. 2 (Jun., 1994), pp. 333-357.
[414] K. N. Kabraji, 'Fifty Years Ago, Reminiscences of mid-19th century' series in *The Times of India*, 1901-02, section- Social Reform. The late Sharada Dwivedi generously shared retyped sections of this series with me. I have not been able to locate this section from the original archive.

awarded books to the gymnasium's star pupils.[415] The combining of physical and academic pursuit suggest some of the subduing and civilizing strategies employed by the newer gymnasiums. Elite support was also forthcoming since the gymnasiums were considered extensions of the educational institutions they long patronized. The majority of gymnasts were school-going boys. The Kasratsala's correspondence includes letters from the president Mervanji Bhownugree to patron Sir Cowasjee Jehangir congratulating him on being made Companion of the Most Exalted Order of the Star of India. In 1891, the gymnasium was renamed Dinshaw Manockjee Petit Gymnastic Institution, after a donation from the then wealthiest of Parsi businessmen.

Gymnasiums won community and colonial favour as disciplinary centers for the youth. Fixed schedules and exercises, the marking of attendance, a system of prizes, all sought to inculcate in students a sense of order. However the role of gymnasiums in the lives of men met with less enthusiasm. A preferable medium of sociability and physical exercise was sport, cricket, tennis and football in particular. The games encouraged a physical and mental fitness and the values of courage, moral fibre and teamwork as compared to the bodily vitilisation of the gymnasium going.

Conclusion

This chapter has shown how the riots between the Parsi and the Muslim communities in 1874, as well as those in 1851, were caused by the products of a largely deregulated and plural print culture in Bombay. While in 1851, Parsis internally grouped themselves during the crisis in terms of factors like the built environment , in 1874 the groupings that arose within the community were largely in terms of class.

[415] *Kasratsala-sthapaka Mandali, or the Parsi Gymnasium Club. Report of the proceedings of the 11th and 12th annual meetings.* Bombay: 1871.

Elite Paris could more openly disassociate with lower class Parsis who were implicated and involved in the violence.

6. New Urban Landscapes and the 'Parsi poor' at the turn of the 20th Century

Introduction

At the turn of the 20th century a number of urban formations appeared in Bombay that located the Parsi presence in the city in new and more overtly communal ways. These formations- housing projects, colony complexes, hospitals- were bold assertions of urban ethnic identities. Built in modern design, bolstered by the discourses on public health, sanitation, science and social reform, and meant exclusively for the use of the members of the Parsi community, the structures were a striking combination of the modern, urban and communal, as will be discussed below. In these surroundings, the body of the Parsi was subject to new forms and forces of surveillance, examination and control by the Parsi management of these institutions and by the wider Parsi public. It was also confronted with a host of Parsi bodies in states similar or imagined as similar to its own. Such concentrations of Parsis in structures specifically built to accommodate them had several consequences. They changed the way the community claimed spaces in the city, they redrew the boundaries between Bombay's various communities and crucially within the Parsi community itself.

It would be tempting to contextualise these formations as consequences of the last decade of 19th century when Bombay was debilitated by the bubonic plague. A number of scholars have shown how the plague (1896-1900) was the immediate impetus for an overhaul of the city's infrastructure from what the colonial authorities considered a state of 'sanitary disorder' to one of planned sanitary rejuvenation and

suburbanisation.[416] The emerging Parsi landscape however, despite its proximity to the urban renewal schemes occasioned by the plague, was rooted in the specific history of the community- the philanthropic trends, internal divisions and notions of gender and poverty. The architect of the landscape, Khan Bahadur Muncherjee Cowasjee Murzban, stressed that the projects were conceived well before the plague hit Bombay, yet still had all the hallmarks of post-plague urban planning in the city.[417] The speeches he made at the founding and opening ceremonies of the projects were replete with figures of the dimensions and costs of the housing landscape and demographic data on the Parsis and clearly displayed the sensibility of a 'statistical modernity' discussed in the Introduction to this thesis. Murzban (1839-1917) was a leading engineer employed in the Government of Bombay's Public Works Department (PWD) and had played a key role in the transformation of Bombay's city centre from a fortified settlement to a modern metropolis (Figure 6.1). His projects for the Parsis had been inspired by the model of the Peabody estates in London, an ambitious housing project for London's poor, funded by the American philanthropist George Peabody.[418] Murzban set up the Garib Zarthoshtina Rehethan Fund (Poor Zoroastrians Building Fund) in 1886, through which he raised the funds for the housing projects. A few leading Parsi philanthropists like the Petit and Albless families as well as a number of emerging and aspiring Parsi donors were the main subscribers to the Fund.

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[416] Prashant Kidambi, *The Making of an Indian Metropolis: Colonial Governance and Public Culture in Bombay, 1890-1920*. Hampshire: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2007, p. 71. For the recent literature on the transformation of the city's infrastructure in the wake of the plague see Kidambi; Nikhil Rao, *House, But No Garden: Apartment Living in Bombay's Suburbs, 1898-1964*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2012; Preeti Chopra, 'Free to move, forced to flee: the formation and dissolution of suburbs in colonial Bombay, 1750–1918' in *Urban History*, Volume 39, Issue 1, February 2012, pp. 83-107 and Aditya Sarkar, 'The Tie That Snapped: Bubonic Plague and Mill Labour in Bombay, 1896–1898' in *ISHR*, 2014, pp. 1-34.

[417] *The Times of India*, 22 March 1900, p. 3.

[418] The second section of this chapter, 'A Model from London', contextualises the category of the 'poor' in the discourses around the Peabody housing scheme.



FIGURE 6.1. Khan Bahadur Muncherjee Cowasjee Murzban (1839-1917).

(*The Parsi.* Vol. 1. No. 1., January 1905, p. 5.)

Nor can the term ‘communal’ adequately describe the formations. Though they were meant exclusively for the use of the members of the Parsi community, this chapter suggests that the purpose was not so much to segregate the Parsis from older forms of cosmopolitan or informal community-based living in Bombay as much as it was to house in these premises the Parsi poor, thus containing and clearly demarcating one section of the community from the rest. The chapter draws and expands on the questions raised in Chapters 4 and 5, on how the community managed difference within its microcosm. By the turn of the 20th century, the most conspicuous way in which difference was managed was by spatially institutionalizing it at the centre and developing suburbs of colonial Bombay.

This chapter first examines the model of the Peabody Estates in London, which inspired Murzban, and then proceeds to analyse the urban landscapes Murzban conceptualized and constructed in Bombay. It maps the emerging landscape of modern Parsi spaces in the city, explores the internal geographies of the structures and examines the discourses that developed around them. Using various sources- newspapers, biographies, journals as well as drawing from the extant built landscape itself, particularly the plaques, signage and busts still found on the premises, the chapter examines how the landscape was conceptualized and constructed at the turn of the 19th century, with the cooperation of the colonial state. It considers the social meaning with which it was invested and the ways it was populated.

Recent scholarship on Bombay has focused on the ways urban spaces and community identities shaped each other on an ongoing basis. It has moved away from the earlier approaches to the city, which primarily explored the tensions that resulted from

multifarious communities living in close proximity to each other during periods of high activity like festivals, processions and riots.[419] In some sense, the recent scholarship offers a less charged landscape, in the early years of its formation and with communities in the routine of everyday negotiation, even cooperation. Preeti Chopra's work, by showing how Bombay's public medical institutions were divided along communal lines at the stage of their foundation, sets up the public landscape as inherently fractured.[420] The city's leading philanthropists who funded the institutions had included in the covenants of the institutions, the provision for spaces designated for the exclusive use of members belonging to the concerned philanthropist's community. Parsi philanthropists endowed separate morgues, wards and wings for Parsis within the public medical institutions that bore their names. Chopra proceeds to explore the kinds of interactions that occurred along and across communal and caste lines between patients in these settings. On the one hand, members of different communities and castes were brought together in the setting of the cosmopolitan section of these hospitals, while on the other, members of a specific community were segregated in units in which they interacted with their own kind.

Nikhil Rao has traced how the urban identity of the 'South Indian' was fashioned in the space of the apartment buildings in the suburb of Matunga in the early decades of the 20th century. Not only did the newly built form of the multiroom flat in a multistorey, mutlifamily apartment building become a crucial indicator of South

[419] Jim Masselos, *The City in Action: Bombay Struggles for Power*, New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2007; Kidambi, *The Making of an Indian Metropolis.* The title 'The City in Action' sums up the earlier scholarly approaches to the city, whether looking at the nature of inter community interaction or the nature of civic engagement.

[420] Preeti Chopra, *A Joint Enterprise: Indian Elites and the Making of British Bombay*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2011, Chapter 4 'Dividing Practices in Bombay's Hospital and Lunatic Asylums', pp. 117-158.

Indian identity and status, the self-contained nature of the flat with the toilet within the dwelling and in proximity to the kitchen, meant that its upper caste inhabitants had to negotiate the codes of ritual purity and pollution in new ways. Of particular relevance to this chapter is Rao's argument of how upper caste, middle class South Indian identity in Matunga was formed in opposition to the lower caste, labouring Tamils housed in the informal settlements in Dharavi across the railway tracks. The labourers had first been housed in Matunga itself, as they laid the foundations for the apartment buildings in the early 1920s. A decade later their presence was considered a blight on the middle class neighbourhood and they were made to settle in areas that would soon be termed slums.[421] Crucial, then, to the construction of the urban identities of both the South Indian and Parsi was the othering of the lower classes in the spaces of the chawl, poor-house and slum.

What is of interest for this chapter, is the progression from funding Parsi spaces within larger public institutions in Bombay to funding stand alone, full scale structures for the exclusive use of the community in the city; the step from endowing a ward for Parsis to endowing a whole hospital for their use. Chopra's defining contribution is her delineation of Murzban as the architect of both the public and subsequent Parsi urban landscape. For her, both landscapes were divisive; the second possibly an extension of the first.[422] While she considers the inter-communal fissures these provisions created, this chapter traces the intra-communal consequences of such spatial divisions. The following sections will consider structures of Murzban's

[421] Rao, *House, But No Garden,* p. 187. Annawadi, a slum near the international airport which was established by Tamil labourers in the early 1990s, is the setting of Katherine Boo's gripping non-fictional account *Behind the Beautiful Forevers: Life, Death and Hope in a Mumbai Slum*, London: Portobello, 2012.

[422] Chopra, *A Joint Enterprise*, Chapter 3 'The Biography of an Unknown Native Engineer', pp. 73-115 and Chapter 4 'Dividing Practices in Bombay's Hospitals and Lunatic Asylums', pp. 117-158.

making from the second landscape, the housing projects at Falkland Road and Tardeo and the Parsee Lying-in Hospital in the Fort, with an emphasis on the discourses and ceremonials associated with the structures founding.

A model from London

Sir Cowasjee Jehangir (1812-78) was called 'The Peabody of the East', in acknowledgment of his vast and varied philanthropical activities, discussed in the previous chapter, that were comparable to George Peabody's (1795-1869) transatlantic philanthropical practices (Figure 6.2 & 6.3). Yet the title could well have belonged to Murzban, who brought to the landscape of Bombay, the model of housing that was synonymous with the American philanthropist. Murzban had been inspired by the ambitious housing project for London's labouring classes, funded by Peabody and executed by the trustees of the Peabody Donation Fund. By 1889, the year the first foundations stone were laid for Murzban's housing scheme in Bombay, 18 Peabody estates, comprising of 212 residential blocks, that housed 20,374 inhabitants, had been constructed across London.[423] Murzban had corresponded with the Peabody Donation Fund during the stages of formulating his scheme and possibly after as well, indicating a substantial degree of engagement with the Peabody model. While the correspondence between Murzban and the Fund is not part of the Peabody papers held at the London Metropolitan Archives, the available records of the Peabody Estates at the Archives- rent books, registers, ground plans, trust literature, statistical surveys- enable us to draw parallels between the housing landscapes in Bombay and London

[423] Arthur Newsholme, *The Vital Statics of Peabody Buildings and Other Artisans' and Labourers' Block Dwellings*, London: Royal Statistical Society, 1891, p. 20.





FIGURES 6.2 & 6.3.

(Above) A sketch of philanthropist George Peabody (1795-1869) and (below) a statue of Sir Cowasjee Jehangir (1812-78) at the Old College building at Edinburgh University.
The plaque under the statue reads: 'Sir Cowasji Jehangir, Kt. CSI, The Peabody of the East'.

(London Metropolitan Archives and *Awful Ends - The British Museum Book of Epitaphs*, courtesy Peabody, London.)

and locate the main areas of appropriation and divergence.[424]

The trustees of the Peabody Donation Fund looked to populate the Peabody estates with what John Nelson Tarn describes as the 'stable tenant' who was respectable in his/her poverty, could hold a steady job, was eager to improve and unlikely to abuse the premises s/he rented.[425]. In a statement published by the Trustees in 1865, three years after the formation of the Fund, they explained how the founding principles had constrained them to restrict their focus on 'that section of the labouring poor who occupy a position above the pauper.'[426] Peabody's conditions that the recipients were within the description 'of "the poor" of London; combined with moral character, and good conduct as a member of society' and that the form his funds take be self-perpetuating and supporting, in that it generate income, meant that the very poor were excluded on the grounds of unstable or no employment and the unlikelihood of meeting the weekly rent.[427] Policies of the estates, like the prohibition of subletting and overcrowding, which, if permitted, could have supplemented household economies, also worked against accommodating the very poor. A record of habitual drunkenness or a conviction before a legal tribunal were common reasons for refusing some of the earliest applicants for the housing, on the grounds that the applicant did

[424] The Peabody organisation in London also does not hold the letters of correspondence. I have been unable to locate them so far. Many thanks to Christine Wagg, Legal Assistant at Peabody, London, for her detailed reply to my query on the links between Murzban and the Fund, drawing my attention to Sir Cowasjee Jehangir being styled as 'The Peabody of the East' and sending me the photograph of the statue of Jehangir at The University of Edinburgh. Ms Wagg and her colleagues were aware that housing in India had been inspired by the Peabody Estates and logically assumed that Jehangir had played a pivotal role in the construction. They had not heard of Murzban.
[425] John Nelson Tarn, 'The Peabody Donation Fund: The Role of a Housing Society in the Nineteenth Century' in *Victorian Studies*, Vol. 10, No. 1 (Sep., 1966) pp. 12, 15.
[426] *Mr Peabody's Gift to the Poor of London*, Statement of the Trustees. London, 1865, p. 5.
[427] Ibid., p. 2.

not fulfill the conditions of 'moral character, and good conduct as a member of society' as specified in Peabody's principles (Figure 6.4). [428]

The dominant occupations of the tenants of the Peabody Estates in the late 1880s early 1890s were labourers, porters, needle-women, charwomen, carmen, police constables, warehouse labourers, printers, packers, servants and tailors (listed in order of prominence).[429] Candidates were often accepted as tenants on the recommendations received by their employers. Charwomen worked on a part-time basis at various households and probably had the advantage of choosing/avoiding an employer to recommend them. Female tenants that accounted for a sizeable number of the total tenants, often lived alone or with their children (and without a husband). For example Mrs Searles, a charwoman aged 40, moved into the Chelsea Estate in May 1889, with her sons Edward, 10, and William, 5.[430] Her weekly wages were 15 shillings, of which 3 shillings and 2 dimes were spent on rent for the new two-room accommodation with shared facilities.[431] Since rent was calculated and collected in advance and on a weekly basis, fluctuations in employment and a loss of wages were more easily reflected and the pace at which tenants were asked to vacate the premises was quicker.

The presence of high numbers of single male tenants and single female tenants, the provision of single room dwellings, the sharing of the facilities of the kitchen, lavatories and laundry, across the Estates, suggests that the working class family,

[428] Ibid., p. 12.
[429] Newsholme, *The Vital Statics of Peabody Buildings*, p. 22. I have listed the occupations (12 out of 115) that had over a 100 tenants as per Newsholme's findings.
[430] *Peabody Buildings, Chelsea*. (Weekly rent book.) 1880 March-1889 April, p. 50. London Metropolitan Archives, henceforth LMA, Acc/3445/PT/07/25.
[431] Idem.

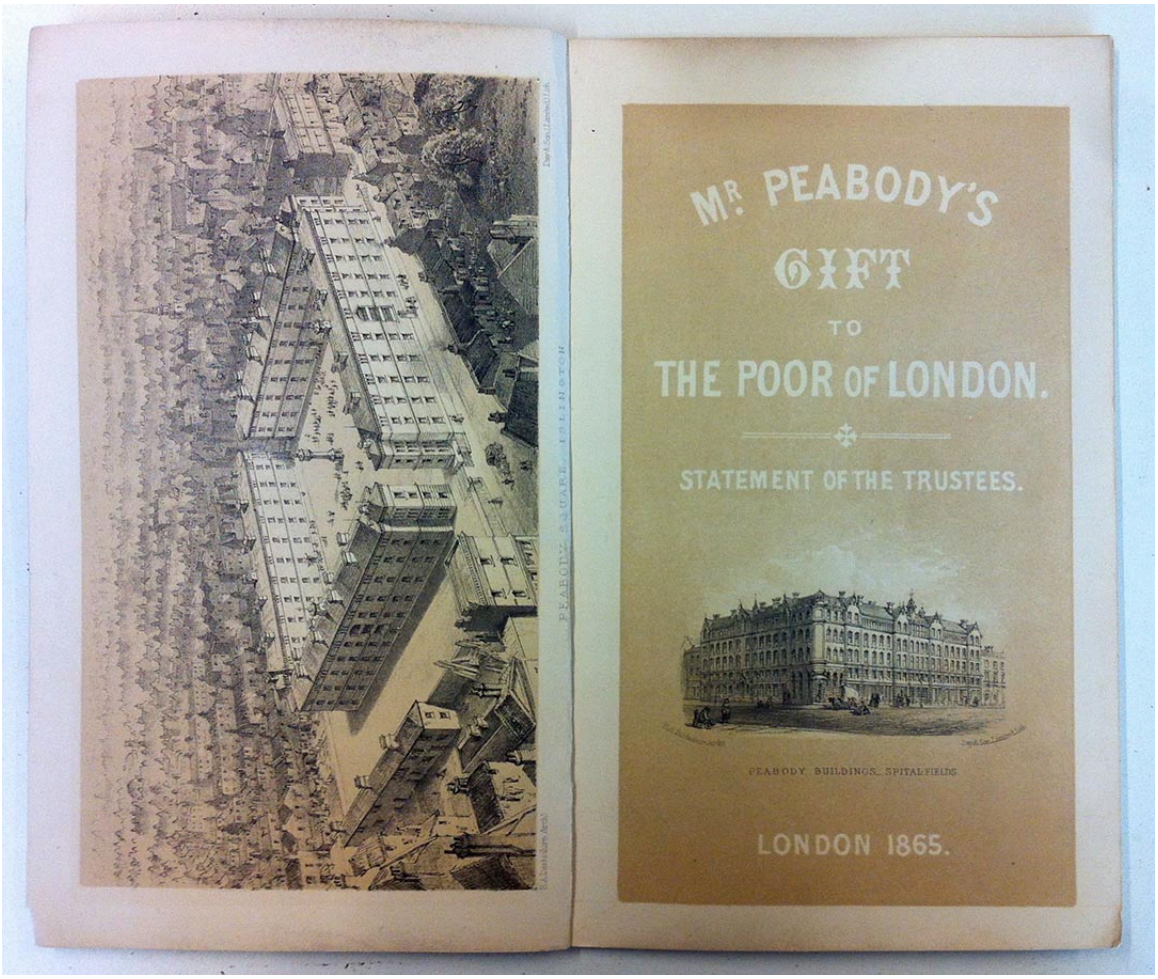


FIGURE 6.4. The inside cover of the pamphlet of the Statement of the Trustees of the Peabody Donation Fund.

(*Mr. Peabody Gift to the Poor of London*, London Metropolitan Archives.)

especially one inhabiting a self-contained home, was not accorded a primacy in the Peabody model. Interventions in design, like leaving the walls unplastered, prohibiting the use of pictures or hangings that required nails to fix them to walls, as well as the disallowing of wallpaper, a staple decorative component in working class dwellings in late Victorian Britain, all hindered in creating a 'homely' feel on the Estates. An early review of the Estates in the *Telegraph* noted:

> the style …seems to be a cross between the reformatory and workhouse style. The passages are cold, dark, and gloomy. Everything about the buildings…has been made as dull-looking and heavy as it could be…The rooms are not by any means attractive, are not even comfortable, appearance. They seemed to us to be small, and as the tenants say 'pokey'. The walls are not papered, but are merely of common brick, with a white colouring.[432]

Discourses highlighted that rigorous sanitary codes had determined the built form of the Estates- keeping facilities communal allowed drainage to be placed where it could be easily controlled and inspected so as to minimise the possibilities of epidemic diseases; unplastered walls and the absence of wallpaper were believed to reduce the risk of vermin.[433] At each Estate, a resident superintendent was responsible for the day-to-day supervision of the shared facilities, recording cases of infectious diseases among the residents and reporting cases of resident misconduct to the Fund. Residents were required to sweep common spaces (passages and steps) every morning before 10 am, and took turns to clean the laundry windows and the shared sinks and closets.[434] The shared facilities that necessitated public presences and served as a means of

[432] Tarn, 'The Peabody Donation Fund', p. 14. The condition of the walls was frequently commented on in reviews of the Estates in the British press. An article in *The Times* on 11 December 1868, noted 'We object, also, to the present walls. They look cold and feel cold, and if dirty they cannot be washed without disfigurement and much absorption of moisture. They should either be papered or coated with some waterproof coating - such as varnish or Peacock and Buchan's paint- so that the covering might be renewed or cleaned whenever necessary.' Tarn, p. 21.
[433] Ibid., 'The Peabody Donation Fund', pp. 12-3.
[434] The Peabody website http://www.peabody.org.uk/about-us/our-story/our-history/peabody-through-the-ages accessed on 18 May 2015.

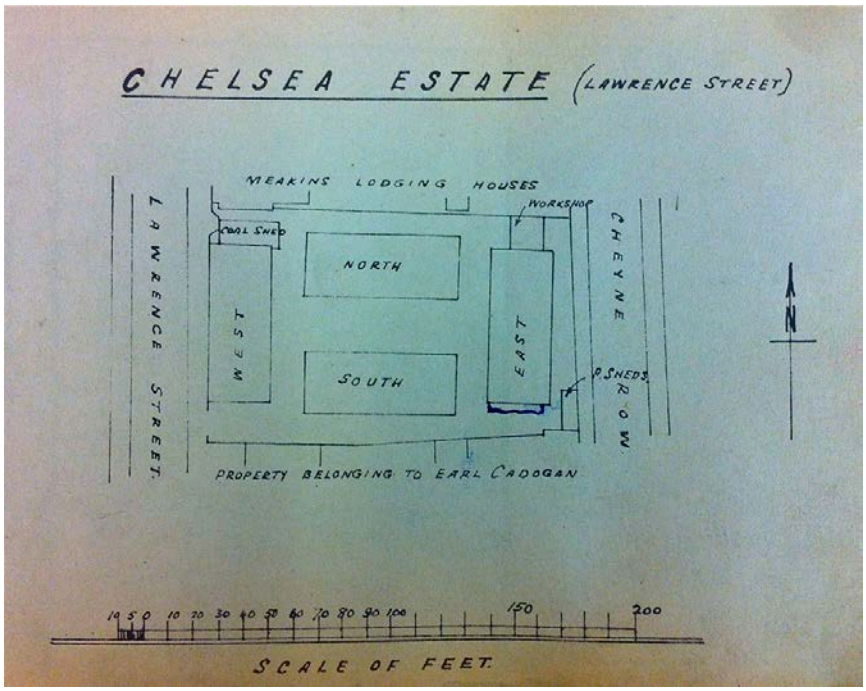
surveillance, the imposition of disciplinary regimes, the role of the superintendent in determining the moral order of the premises, all detracted from creating the conditions of interiority that were integral to modern domesticity.

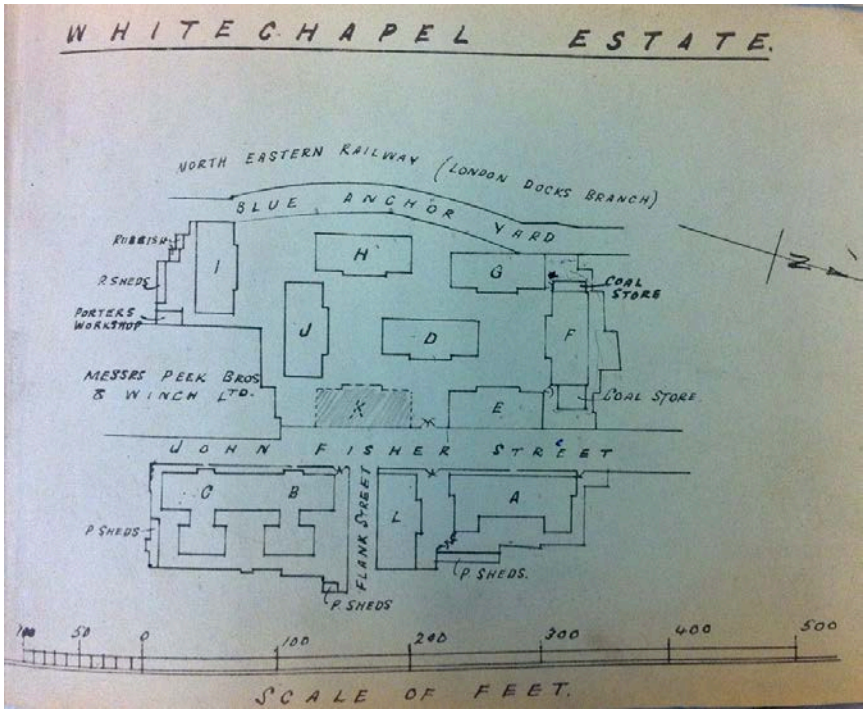
Peabody's donation of £150,000 in 1862, (which had risen to £500,000 by 1873) ensured a firm financial footing for the Peabody Donation Fund, allowed various sites to be purchased simultaneously and/or in quick succession and to be planned and designed as a whole. The sites acquired were spread across London - Westminster, Whitechapel, Islington, Orchard Street, Pimlico etc- areas that were integrated into the urban fabric and infrastructure of the city. The first Peabody Estate was built on a site of 13,682 square feet purchased in 1863 in Spitalfields, near the Eastern Counties Railway terminus.[435] Two important precedents were created here- the partnership established between celebrated architect Henry Darbishire and contractor Thomas Cubitt continued for the next 20 years, and the form of the 'associated dwelling' i.e. accommodation with shared kitchen, lavatories and laundry facilities for the residents, was established and maintained till the turn of the 20th century.[436] Other schemes adopted in the first Estate, which opened in 1864, like designating the ground floor of the building for use as shops, were not implemented in subsequent Estates. At Spitalfields, the shops, nine in total, fronted Commercial Street, fittingly. Shops allowed for an engagement between the Estate and urban public as well as created an atmosphere of activity, livening the severe and foreboding facades of the Estates, as they were described in contemporary accounts.

[435] *Mr Peabody's Gift*, p. 8.
[436] Idib., pp. 12-13

Within the site, the basic design template was the arrangement, usually in the form of a rectangle, of detached residential blocks around an open space that was used as a children's playground. For example, at the Islington site, on which the second Peabody estate was constructed in 1865, the plot of land was of irregular shape. The basic template was achieved by constructing a main square formed by four detached, five-storey blocks arranged around a central open space, another four blocks lined in a row to the north of plot and one block to the north eastern side. The sites at Shadwell (1866) and Chelsea (1870) were, on the other hand, of rectangular shape and lent to the construction of four blocks facing each other (Figure 6.5). At Bermondsey, the long strip of land acquired between East Lane, the Rope Walk Factory property and Marine Street, resulted in the construction of six blocks in a row, without the incorporation of a main square, in 1875. The majority of the sites were self-contained with streets and roads marking the outer boundaries of the plot. Conversely it could be argued that since the sites were chosen from within the urban fabric of the city, streets and roads had determined the dimensions of the plot of land in the first place. For Estates like Whitechapel (1881) and Whitecross Street (1883), grouped under the second phase of the Trust's building activities, streets and roads served as existing grids in the stages of planning the Estates and subsequently as the internal arterial routes that connected one section of the vast Estate to the other (Figure 6.6).[437] The sites for these Estates, acquired from the Metropolitan Board of Works slum clearance schemes, were larger though fragmented (with the existing infrastructure of roads and streets) in comparison to the 'self-contained' plots acquired for the first group.

[437] This grouping is found in Tarn's article as well as on the website of the Peabody organisation.





FIGURES 6.5 & 6.6. (Above) The plan of the Peabody Estates at Chelsea (1870), which had a self-contained design, that is with streets and roads marking the outer boundaries of the plot and (below) the plan of the Estates at Whitechapel (1881) where streets and roads served as the internal arterial routes within the large Estate.

(*Peabody Buildings. Ground Plans.* London Metropolitan Archives.)

The housing landscape

Murzban, in his capacity as the founder and secretary of the Garib Zarthoshtina Rehethan Fund, oversaw the construction of 34 residential buildings for the use of the Parsis at the turn of the 20th century.[438] The period of construction spanned from 31 March 1889, when the foundation stones for the first two buildings were laid in Falkland Road, till 1917 when Murzban died and a recent boom for land had shifted the focus to housing the Parsi middle classes.[439] The somewhat piecemeal nature of the landscape- a couple of buildings were built regularly every or every other year during the period- resulted from the way the projects were funded. A number of leading and emerging Parsi donors endowed individual buildings on a plot of land. These were one-time endowments; the rents residents paid were used to meet the costs of maintaining the buildings. When a plot was fully built up, the next plot was acquired and gradually built upon. This was a measured approach to building and occupation. The first plot of land at Falkland Road was donated by the philanthropist Framjee Dinshaw Petit and subsequent plots leased from the Bombay Improvement Trust.

Within the space of the plot, facilities for the Parsi residents, like a school, dispensary, common hall and reading room were also built. These facilities were funded by leading Parsi philanthropists. Framjee's father, the patriarch Sir Dinshaw Petit, funded a school, the Bai Ruttonbai Panday School (1898), in memory of his daughter, at the Falkland Road plot. The previous chapter described Dinshaw's philanthropy towards

[438] Muzban Muncherji Murzban, *Leaves from the Life of Khan Bahadur Muncherji Cowasji Murzban, C.I.E.* Member of the Institute of Civil Engineers: Fellow of the Royal Institute of British Architects. With an Introduction containing a life-sketch of Fardunji Murzbanji, Founder of Gujarati Printing Press and of Gujarati Journalism in India. Bombay: 1915, pp. 118-127.

[439] The Parsi Central Association Cooperative Housing Society (PCACHS) purchased several plots for housing the Parsi middle classes during the boom years of 1916-1922. See Rao's *House, But No Garden* for details on the PCACHS' operations, p. 108.

the Persian Zoroastrian cause in which he was in some sense personally invested, since his wife came from a family of Persian Zoroastrian refugees to Bombay. Dinshaw's daughter had married into her mother's family. Another well-established philanthropic family, the Albless family, endowed a dispensary at the plot at Tardeo. At the dispensary, medical aid and medicine were given free of cost to the residents.[440] The running of the Panday School was sustained, at least partially, by charging school fees.

In Murzban's view it was the educational, medical and recreational provisions available on the plots that made the site 'self-contained'.[441] His observations are important for understanding how early architects conceived notions of containment and boundedness as well as the kinds of meanings with which the housing landscape was invested at the turn of the 20th century. There is a tendency to assume that modern housing for Parsi use always took the form of the gated colony. This chapter suggests that the social and spatial logic of early community housing was quite different. It is unlikely that the plots were bounded by a compound wall. Photographs of the housing at Tardeo and the Parsee Lying-in Hospital published in the early 19th century reveal that low fencing existed around the plot and structure (Figure 6.7).[442] The compound wall for the Hospital was constructed in 1927, 27 years after its opening (Figure 6.8 & 6.9).[443]

[440] *The Times of India*, 3 April 1911, p. 5.
[441] In a speech given by Murzban at the opening ceremony of a building at Gilder Street, Tardeo in 1911. *The Times of India*, 3 April 1911, p. 5.
[442] Murzban, *Leaves from the Life of Khan Bahadur Muncherji Cowasji Murzban*, p. I07 and *The Parsi.* Vol. 1. No. 5. Bombay, May 1905, p. 167.
[443] From the marble plaque found on the compound wall, near the main gate of the Hospital.
The concept of a compound wall that enclosed a multistory structure without a surrounding garden seems to have taken root only in the 1920s. In some sense, the façades and porticos of multistory structures had, through the 19th century, acted as sufficient boundaries in themselves. See Rao's *House, But No Garden* for the role played by the compound in apartment buildings in Bombay, pp. 164-170.



[Page 106.

SOME OF THE CHEAP-RENTAL RESIDENTIAL QUARTERS FOR PARSIS: (in Tardeo, Bombay).

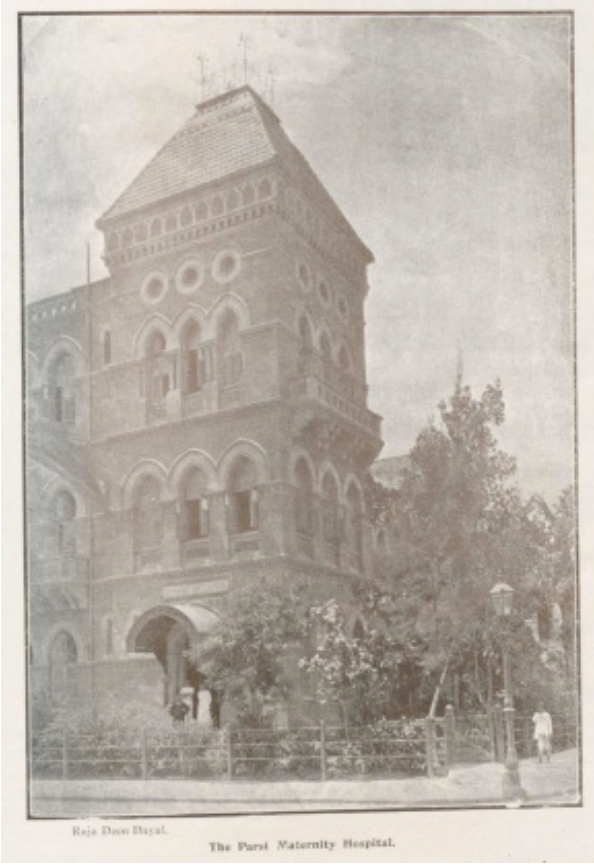
[Designed by M. C. Murzban.]

જરથોસ્તીઓ માટેનાં, તારદેવવાળાં, કેટલાંએક સસ્તાં ભાડાંનાં મકાનોનો એક મોહોલ્લો.

[Times Press.

FIGURE 6.7. The housing at the plot in Tardeo, with low fencing marking the boundary of the plot.

(*Leaves from the Life of Khan Bahadur Muncherji Cowasji Murzban*, p. I07.)





FIGURES 6.8 & 6.9. (Above) An early photograph of The Parsee Lying-in Hospital with low fencing and (below) a contemporary photograph of the Hospital with the compound wall, built in 1927.

(*The Parsi.* Vol. 1. No. 5., May 1905, p. 167 and Bombaywalla.)

A review of the terms used in the press and publications to describe the housing suggest that an number of descriptors were interchangeably used- the larger space was described as a 'plot', 'site', 'ground'; the buildings were variously called 'tenements', 'quarters', 'poor houses', 'chawls'; collectively the buildings were referred to as 'Cheap Rental Parsi Residential Quarters', 'Model Dwellings for Poor Parsis', 'Cheap Residences for Poor Parsees'.[444] The term 'colony' to describe the housing appears in the English language dailies in the early 20th century and was initially accompanied with the words small or little, within quotation marks, suggesting that the term was being tested in the public sphere.[445]

At the Falkland Road plot, the earliest buildings were one-storey structures comprising, on the ground floor, of a common room, around which two rooms were built on each side, with bath and cookrooms in the rear.[446] Each building could accommodate four families, who shared the space of the common room as something of a living room. It is unclear what the upper storey of the structure was used for, though the possibility of adding storeys in the future (when funds were available) was factored into the design.[447] The later buildings at the Falkland Road plot and the buildings on the subsequent plots were either one-storey or multi-storey structures in which the dwellings were designed as self-contained units -with a living room, retiring room/s, a cookroom and bathroom- for the use of an individual Parsi family.

[444] For the three, collective names of the buildings- Murzban, *Leaves from the Life of Khan Bahadur Muncherji Cowasji Murzban,* p. 118-119, *The Parsi. The English Journal of the Parsis and a High Class Illustrated Monthly.* Vol. 1. No. 1. Bombay, April 1905, p. 153 and *The Times of India*, 11 March 1895, p. 3.
[445] *The Times of India*, 26 February 1903, p. 3 and 9 September 1908, the term 'small colony' is used without quotation marks.
[446] *The Times of India*, 30 March 1889, p. 5.
[447] Idem.

The novelty of the dwellings seems to lie in their self-contained form, rather than the format of multi-room dwellings or multistorey buildings. Contemporary observers noted how single tenement accommodation was uncommon among the Parsis compared to the other native communities of the city.[448]

A brief focus on the Bai Ruttonbai Panday School (1898) located at the plot at Falkland Road and subsequently at Tardeo will help us understand the models of modernity present in the landscape. The School was divided into primary, middle and high school sections and run by a headmistress. It offered co-education to pupils till the age of 12, after which the male pupils had to join another school. The students mainly comprised residents from the plot, though Parsi children from outside were also accepted. Physical education was stressed. Classes in first-aid and nursing were introduced in addition to subjects like plain and fancy needle-work, laundry work, music and drawing, that were well associated with female education and etiquette.[449] Religious instruction was part of the curriculum. Annual prize distribution ceremonies, government inspections and examinations were held that put to test the School's standing (Figures 6.10 & 6.11). The staff comprised both male and female teachers. Phiroze Batlivalla taught music to the students at the School as well as to 'the poor helpless children belonging to the school for the blind'[450]. The majority, though not all of the staff were Parsi. Co-education, the mixing of the sexes in public and professional spheres, young unmarried women holding prominent posts in

[448] Sir Walter Hughes, Chairman of the Bombay Port Trust, at the annual prize distribution ceremony at the Bai Ruttonbai Panday School in 1901, *The Times of India*, 20 April 1909, p. 8.
[449] Preeti Chopra has approached and analysed Murzban's housing landscape through its contemporary setting in Gilder Street, Tardeo, Mumbai. She has assumed its current form was its original one and read the landscape backwards. In her work the Tardeo settlement is considered the main site and assigned the dates of 1889-1915. No mention is made of the first plot at Falkland Road to which the date of 1889 belongs. The Panday School did not begin as an all girls' school nor was Girls' included in the tile of the school. Chopra, *A Joint Enterprise*, pp. 102-115.
[450] *The Times of India*, 26 February 1903, p. 3.



Raja Deen Dayal. The Panday School Girls at Musical Drill.



Bourne and Shepherd. Gathering at the Prize Distribution of the Bai Ruttanbai Panday School.

FIGURE 6.10 & 6.11. (Above) The students of the Bai Ruttonbai Panday School during a musical drill and (below) the audience at a prize distribution ceremony at the School in 1905.

(*The Parsi* Vol. 1. No. 1., April 1905, p. 155.)

institutions, the colloquial clubbing of the urban disadvantaged, were all markers of Parsi modernity. In an article published in the 'Ladies' Page' of *The Parsi. The English Journal of the Parsis and a High Class Illustrated Monthly*, the female correspondent's review of a prize distribution ceremony at the School is based on her own sense of modernity.

> There were three things which did not please me. In the first place the programme was mostly in Gujarati, which does not delight the heart of the modern educated Parsi women, and which was not excusable in a school which boasts of an English head mistress. In the next place, the little very little English part of it, was not satisfactory- the pronunciation of the girls being faulty, and in the last place the children were not dressed properly. I know these are children of the poor and I don't complain that they were not dressed in rich frocks. I complain of the want of propriety and of uniformity in the dress of the girls.[451]

The founding and opening ceremonies

The annual or biennial construction of residential buildings between 1899 and 1916 meant that the ceremonies surrounding their founding and opening were performed at regular intervals. These ceremonies were inspired by the traditions of philanthropic culture in Bombay where the establishment of public institutions like museums, hospitals and schools were marked by a ceremony to lay the foundation stone and another to open the building. Murzban had not only overseen the construction of many of these public institutions as a senior engineer with Public Works Department (PWD), he had also built a reputation as the main organiser of public events like the ceremonies as well as exhibitions, fetes and fairs. While in the case of the public institutions, it was only Bombay's leading philanthropists that were at the helm of the ceremonies, on account of having funded the structures, with the landscape of residential buildings, emerging philanthropists as well as groups of Parsi subscribers could claim public events to which they were central.

[451] *The Parsi.* Vol. 1. No. 1. Bombay, April 1905, p. 153.

The expectations from each founding and opening ceremony remained high, as did the turnout. Colonial dignitaries were invited to preside over the ceremonies, though a few functions were all-Parsi events where the proceedings were held in Gujarati. The rituals involved in the ceremonies of laying of a foundation stone and the opening of the building were a mix of Parsi customs, like marking the first stone with vermillion pigment and breaking a coconut over it, and more recognisably secular praxis, like opening the door to the building with a set of keys and declaring the building open. While Parsi high priests were among the attendees at the functions, the public rituals did not take a liturgical form. Gujarati songs were performed rather than Zoroastrian prayer. It was largely through singing these songs that the residents of the buildings participated in the ceremonies. The female students of the Bai Ruttonbai Panday School, who both resided and studied in the plot in Falkland Road, were regularly featured singing on stage. The residents' participation was more obviously performative, the songs in Gujarati before the speeches in English. It is unlikely that residents were included as invitees, who were seated under a marquee or *mandap* facing the stage. An engagement between residents and guests occurred when the dignitaries were taken to survey the structures on the plot. Murzban's referring to the residents as 'inmates' accentuated the boundedness of the plot as well as the notion that the residents were passive recipients of the generosity of their social superiors.

Murzban was the only constant speaker at the ceremonies since the Parsi philanthropist funding the project and the British dignitary/ies presiding over the ceremony, were different on each occasion. Murzban's speeches began with a broad historical context of the Parsis migrating to Bombay, their contribution to the city, the close and enduring ties between the English and the Parsi and the somewhat dire

current state of the city and community.[452] He explained that the increase in the population of Bombay, including among the Parsis, the difficulties of acquiring housing, the rising rents and calculating landlords had all necessitated the building of sanitary accommodation at affordable rents for community members. His speeches capture the complexities of the early discourses on communal difference in Bombay; the ways communal difference was filtered through the prism of class.

> Even now with the keen competition of the several sections of the native community, the Parsees, it need hardly be observed, held their own in the several walks of life; but the fact was that if they remained apathetic and inattentive to the growing requirements and wants of their community, there was every danger of their lagging behind, in the race of life…As was observed in all parts of the world, with the increase of population there has been an increase of poverty among the Parsees…
> It would be needless to describe the condition of the houses generally occupied by the poor, which were, as a rule, situated in low-lying, crowded, ill-ventilated, and filthy localities, where all sorts of diseases raged rampant, gradually destroying like the canker-worm the physique of the working class, who might be called the backbone of their community. (Hear, hear.)[453]

For Murzban, it was the Parsi poor who could not cope with the competition and crowding in Bombay. In this, his speech at the first foundation stone laying ceremony in 1889, he locates the Parsi poor within a trajectory of the world's working classes, suggesting that their urban condition was inevitable and absolving the poor of any agency over it. Murzban's speech was followed by philanthropist Framjee Dinshaw Petit's more rousing talk, in which, the ability to compete remained with wealthy Parsis.

> Ladies and gentlemen, if I am sure, of one thing more than another, it is this: that once the building of the two blocks of houses, of which we are presently going to lay the foundation-stone, is an accomplished fact, some of our wealthy co-religionists will vie with each other in contributing large sums of money towards the funds-(cheers),- so as to enable the committee to build many more such houses in different parts of town. (Cheers.)[454]

[452] *The Times of India*, 1 April 1889, p. 3 and 3 November 1891.
[453] Idem.
[454] Idem.

Petit had donated the first plot of land situated at Falkland Road, near the Bombay, Baroda & Central India Railway (B. B. & C.I.) level crossing. The subsequent two plots, at Tardeo and Agripada, were leased from the Bombay Improvement Trust (BIT), which was formed a decade later in 1898, in the wake of the plague in Bombay. Thus, subsequent to Petit's donation of the plot of land measuring 1,100 square yards, Parsi donors vied in a somewhat narrower, more levelled field of funding the construction of individual buildings and common facilities on the plot.

The category of the poor

The category of the poor, in the context of community housing, comprised Parsi artisan and working class families and widows. The occupations of the householders included fitters, mechanics, clerks, carpenters, domestic servants. These occupations fell under 'Class II.-Domestic, Class V.- Industrial and Class VI.- Indefinite' of the *Census of the City and Island of Bombay* in 1881.[455] The monthly payment of rent (ranging from 8 annas to 12 Rs as per the size of the accommodation), as well as the ability to pay the school fees (of 4 annas, if a child was enrolled at the Panday School), would have necessitated a steady income on the part of the householder. That the householders were usefully employed or benevolently unemployed (in the case of widows), was stressed in the speeches at the various ceremonies. At the Tardeo plot widows were segregated in two chawl structures, the Allbless Widows' Chawl, funded by the Allbless family, and the Karani Widows' Chawl. The chawls were custom-made to their conjugal condition. They were accommodated in single rooms and charged 8 annas per mensem in rent, the lowest rent on the plot.[456] Colloquially, the term 'the widow' had come to represent an occupation/class in herself; 'widows'

[455] *Census of the City and Island of Bombay*, Taken on the 17th of February 1881 by T. S. Wier. Bombay: 1883.
[456] *The Times of India*, 22 March 1900, p. 3.

were listed along with fitters, mechanics, clerks etc as the professions of the householders on the plot.[457] Investing 'widows' with the social meaning of occupational activity was one of the few, feeble ways through which discourses appropriated their presence into the landscape of the plot. On the whole, the widows' individual status, accentuated by the single rooms in which she lived, was in stark contrast to the Parsi working class family life, the multi-room dwellings on the plot were designed to facilitate. Nomenclature furthered the contrast:- while the structure that housed widows were named 'Chawl(s)', the structures housing families were named 'Building(s)' (Figures 6.12 & 6.13).

Poor was the overarching index used to describe the resident population while working class was a more accurate indicator. By naming the fund that oversaw the housing scheme the Garib Zarthoshtina Rehethan Fund (Poor Zoroastrians Building Fund), Murzban seems to have set the tone for subsequent articulations. The difficulties Murzban had previously faced in raising funds for some of his more ambitious housing projects may have motivated him to include the term *Garib* (poor) directly in title of the Fund itself, in the hope of drawing donors more easily. Murzban may have been motivated by the Peabody Donation Fund that considered the working class poor as the target tenants for numerous residential estates in London. He had corresponded with the Fund and could well have visited/viewed the estates during his travels in England in 1874. Tarn notes that **'**Peabody himself had told the Trustees (12 Mar. 1862) that the Fund must be used for the benefit of the "poor" of London so long as they also possessed the virtues of moral character and good conduct. Clearly to high Victorian society this excluded the very poor, and it was neither Peabody's nor

[457] Idem.





FIGURES 6.12 & 6.13. Contemporary photographs of the Allbless Widows' Chawl (above) and Paowalla Building (below) at the plot at Tardeo

(Bombaywalla.)

the Trustees' intention to build charitable institutions or to house the pauper who would not work. They set out to house the artisans, that rather nebulous group of nineteenth-century workers whose chief characteristic, at least to the eyes of authority, seems to have been their respectability and industry…'[458]

For Parsi leaders in late 19th century Bombay it was a matter of boastful pride that the Parsi poor comprised 'respectable' working classes, rather than beggars, prostitutes and manual labourers, occupations considered 'low and "unclean'" in official and everyday discourses.[459] These demographics marked the success of a period of intense community self-fashioning during the 1860s and 1870s, when through a variety of institutional controls, the number of Parsi prostitutes and beggars in Bombay was contained. In the second volume of his book *History of the Parsis: Including their Manners, Customs, Religion and Present Position* (1884), Dosabhai Framji, the well-known Parsi commentator, could boast about the census of 1881: 'Lastly, there were 6,618 male and 2,966 female mendicants in the city of Bombay; but of these only five male and one female were Parsis. We are still more proud to be able to record that not a single Parsi female returned herself as living on the wages of shame.'[460] The census in 1864, listed 44 Parsi prostitutes (4-1 % of the Parsi population) in the city while the census of 1872 listed none. The community was spurred into constraining its female population in 1870, when the Contagious Diseases Act (CDA) was enforced in Bombay. The Act required prostitutes in the city

[458] Tarn, 'The Peabody Donation Fund' p. 15.
[459] As listed in the Bombay census of 1864, Eckehard Kulke, *The Parsees in India: A Minority as Agent of Social Change*, New Delhi: Vikas Publishing House Pvt Ltd, 1974, p. 54.
[460] Dosabhai Framji Karaka, *History of the Parsis Including their Manners, Customs, Religion, and Present Position*. London: MacMillan And Co., 1884, p. 99. The author went by the name of Dosabhoy Framjee when he published the first volume called *The Parsees: Their History, Manners, Customs, And Religion* in 1858. By the time of the publication of the second volume in 1884 he used the name Dosabhai Framji Karaka.

to register with the police with details of their caste, residence, age etc; pinning down a community members' participation in the profession.[461] Parsi leaders responded swiftly and drew up a proposal for excommunicating Parsi prostitutes and their offspring.[462]

As Chapter 4 highlighted, the Parsi infirm, destitute and refugee populations were accommodated in a number of sanatoriums and asylums located in leafy or/and seaside locales across the city. At the asylum in Chowpatty, endowed by Cursetjee Furdoonjee Parekh, inmates were given a small stipend from the Parsee Punchayet and were prohibited from begging on the premises or in public, demonstrating how Parsi institutions controlled the occupational avenues open to their inhabitants.[463]

It is unlikely that Murzban's housing targeted the Parsi unemployed. Initiatives in early decades of the 20th century dealt directly with the problem of unemployment within the community. The Parsi Bekari Fund provided unemployed Parsi men and women, sums to start small trades or small-scale machinery or placements in public firms and factories.[464] Here too, the idea of employment was integral to discourses of the Fund- Parsis had been rendered unemployed by the closing of a number of mills, rather than being perennial unemployed and were being offered opportunities for reemployment. An advertisement for the Parsi Bekari Fund noted: 'The object of the Fund is to make the unemployed earn their bread by the sweat of their brow and not

[461] Ashwini Tambe, *Codes of Misconduct: Regulating Prostitution in Late Colonial Bombay*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2009, p. 32. See Chapter 2 'A Failed Experiment? The Contagious Diseases Acts in Bombay' for a detailed account of the enforcement of the act, pp. 26-51.
[462] *The Bombay Gazette*, 20 August 1870, p. 2.
[463] *The Times of India*, 11 August 1902, p. 9 and James Mackenzie Maclean. *A Guide to Bombay: Historical, Statistical, and Descriptive*. Bombay: 1889, p. 316.
[464] H. D. Darukhanawala, *Parsi Lustre on Indian Soil*, Bombay: G. Claridge & Co., 1939, p. 626.

by begging.'[465] Tellingly, the term *bekari* (uselessness) was used to signify the state of unemployment, rather than *berojgari* (unemployment) which did not carry a moral connotation and was used in the title of some of the other funds.

Like the decennial census, the statistical and ethnographic analysis that the plague epidemic occasioned at the turn of the century, bolstered community and colonial discourses on the 'success' of the housing scheme. In fact the plague (1896-1900) was considered the first major test to which the housing was subjected. In his speeches Murzban compared the average total mortality among Parsis across the city (33 per 1000) with the Parsis residing in the housing plots (an estimated 20 per 1000), during 1897, 1898 and 1899, the critical years of the epidemic.[466] His speeches clearly displayed a 'statistical modernity', to adapt C. A. Bayly's phrase. As discussed in the Introduction, Bayly has delineated the sensibility of a 'statistical liberalism' among Bombay's public men like Dadabhai Naoroji and Furdoonjee Nowrozjee, who enlisted colonial census and survey methods into projects of improvement and national self-assertion.[467] Murzban while applying many of the same intellectual tools as these men used them towards projects with more insular ends that would be difficult to categorise as liberal.

Murzban's speeches resembled more closely the discourses of the Bombay Improvement Trust (BIT) and its rhetoric of paternal governance.[468] The BIT was the apex state institution that dealt with the problems of infrastructure in the city and was

[465] Idem.
[466] *The Times of India*, 22 March 1900, p. 3.
[467] C. A. Bayly, "Afterword: Bombay's 'intertwined modernities,' 1780-1880″ in Michael S. Dodson and Brian A. Hatcher, eds., *Trans-Colonial Modernities in South Asia.* London: Routledge, 2012, pp. 231-48.
[468] Kidambi, *The Making of an Indian Metropolis*, p. 78.

set up in 1898 as direct consequence of the plague. Those involved with the BIT and Parsi housing vividly compared the overcrowded, ill-ventilated quarters of the poor with the new hygienic, ventilated homes being constructed under their respective auspices. As architects of new landscapes, the BIT and Murzban engaged in rhetorical exaggerations and leaps in the categorization of the older landscape they were replacing and/or offering relief from.[469] To legitimate the acquisition of a number of villages in the north of the city, BIT officials (mis)classified these thinly populated areas in agrarian use as 'slums', in need of a modern makeover. Murzban considered the multistorey, multiroom dwellings occupied by the Parsi lower classes in the heart of the city as slums and offered instead new accommodation in developing areas:

> The poor members of our community were, and a great many of them still are, living in narrow lanes and dark alleys, in scanty, ill-ventilated, ill-lighted and badly-drained quarters. We, therefore realized the necessity of removing them from their slums and providing them with suitable dwellings in healthy quarters…[470]

What is noteworthy is Murzban's internalization and ease with the discourses on sanitation and squalor, a whole decade before the outbreak of the plague and the formation of the BIT. The impetus and model for his housing scheme came from London rather than Bombay, another nod to his urbanity. Murzban's close association with the colonial elite in professional (as an engineer in the PWD) and informal capacities (as something of an event manager of exhibitions, fetes etc), his early training under a number of Europeans in Poona who acted as mentors, his travels across Europe in 1874, would have made him conversant with colonial tropes and codes. The *Advocate of India* offered a short profile of Murzban on 7 October 1891, in the lead up to his appointment as executive engineer at the PWD:

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[469] Rao, *House, But No Garden*, p. 28.
[470] *The Times of India*, 22 March 1900, p. 3.

> He possesses the confidence of all his European superiors, and wherever his services have been used, whether amongst Europeans with European superiors, official or non-official, or amongst natives of all classes, his honesty, independence, professional ability, and urbanity have been freely acknowledged, and he stands to-day high in the estimation of the Government he has faithfully served for a long series of years.[471]

As the previous chapters have shown Parsis were at the forefront of appropriating and articulating a number of urban discourses, particularly in the English language and in the press. Chapter 3 noted how advertisements of hotels run by Parsi proprietors liberally listed the sanitary features with which the accommodation was fitted and confirmed the 'health' of the locality in which the hotel was based. The following section on The Parsee Lying-in Hospital will reengage with the theme explored in Chapter 2, on how Parsi medical practitioners pitched a maternity hospital to the Parsi poor on the grounds of sanitation.

Murzban was commemorated in substantial ways in the housing landscapes in Bombay. The plots at Tardeo and Agripada were named 'Murzban Colony.'[472] It is unlikely that the names was given in Murzban's lifetime (1839-1917). In his biography *Leaves from the Life of Khan Bahadur Muncherji Cowasji Murzban*, written by his son and published in 1915, the housing is referred to as Cheap Rental Parsi Residential Quarters.[473] A marble bust of Murzban was unveiled at the plot at Tardeo in 1936, by which time the complex was called Murzban Colony.[474] The inscription on the pedestal tellingly describes Murzban as the 'originator of the idea of colonization among Parsees and Indians'.[475] During his lifetime, one of buildings at

[471] Murzban, *Leaves from the Life of Khan Bahadur Muncherji Cowasji Murzban*, p. 76.
[472] The housing at Agripada is popularly called Lal Chimney (red chimney) or Lal Chimney Compound. Parinaz M. Gandhi, 'Recognition for Restoration', *Parsiana*, May 7, 2014, pp. 28-30. The name was probably either derived from the mills in the locality or from the design of the Wadia Building on the plot, which has three vertical tower like structures with compact roofs with red tiles.
[473] Murzban, *Leaves from the Life of Khan Bahadur Muncherji Cowasji Murzban*, pp. 118-119.
[474] *The Times of India*, 10 October 1936, p. 5.
[475] Chopra, *A Joint Enterprise*, p. 109.

the plot at Tardeo, funded by public subscription, was named after Murzban and more substantially an area in Andheri, located in the Thana Collectorate to the north of Bombay, which Murzban had developed was officially called 'Murzbanabad', after a public appeal was made to the Collector of Thana.

Now that both Peabody and Parsi housing models and landscapes have been described we can locate the main areas of appropriation and divergence between them. In both schemes being 'poor' was the primary ground for candidature as tenants. In Murzban's scheme, tenants had to be Parsi and poor. The previous section has shown how resolutely the community fashioned the Parsi poor to comprise wholly of 'respectable' working classes; being Parsi had come to signify being respectable. In the Peabody Estates, respectability was codified into a criterion for candidature and the modes of discipline and punishment like being made to vacate the accommodation, ensured that conduct was maintained on the premises. In both landscapes steady employment was closely linked with the notion of respectability, the actualities of acquiring a dwelling and meeting the monthly or weekly rent. While in the discourses on Parsi housing, an increase in population, overcrowding and competition for Bombay's limited housing resources were sited as the conditions that had spurred Murzban's scheme, in the discourses of the Peabody Donation Fund, London's rapidly developing infrastructural projects had prompted the Trustees to concentrate on offering new accommodation for the populations displaced by these developments. The substantial numbers of female tenants stand out in the Peabody estates, as does the tenant widow in Murzban's housing.

The Parsee Lying-in Hospital

The Parsee Lying-in Hospital (1895), the first permanent hospital for the exclusive use of Parsis, catered to only a small sub-section of the community. Expectant mothers, comprised approximately 2% of the Parsi population at the turn of the 20th century.[476] The profile of possible patients was further narrowed to comprise the pregnant poor of the community. Chapter 2 has described how the reforms in the practice of postnatal menstrual confinement among the Parsis had encouraged the Parsi poor to avail of the Hospital, since their domestic setups were considered too crowded and unsanitary for adequate care, whereas for the elite of the community an in-house solution was found since a room on the upper storeys of their homes was considered well-ventilated and accessible for the care of the patient. At the opening ceremony of the Hospital on 11 January 1895, Dr Temulji Nariman, honorary secretary and chief physician of the Hospital noted: 'I would strongly recommend those who can afford and who have commodious and airy rooms free from sewer contamination at their disposal, not to take advantage of this institution, but reserve it for the poor and lower middle classes who are at the mercies of the landlords, and who are compelled to resort to the atmosphere of the contaminated ground floors, whether willing or not.'[477] The fee structure was determined keeping the pecuniary conditions of the patients in mind- the third class of patients received free treatment, the second were charged Rs 1.80 per day and the first Rs 3 per day. In addition there

[476] The approximate percentage has been calculated from the figures of the number of births in the community in the years 1897 and 1898 (as listed in the discourses on the Hospital) and the population of the community, as listed in the census of 1881. *The Times of India*, 11 December 1899, p. 3 and *Census of the City and Island of Bombay*, Taken on the 17th of February 1881 by T. S. Wier. Bombay: 1883.

[477] *The Times of India*, 12 January 1895, p. 5.

was an entrance fee of Rs 5, which was refunded when the patient was discharged .[478] It is unclear what the differences were in the care offered to the 3 classes of patients or whether there was no difference and the fee structure reflected the patients' family income and ability to pay. Facilities commonly associated with higher medical fees, like single rooms and individual attendants for patients, were not available at the Hospital. What is evident is that in space of the Hospital the practices pertaining to pregnancy among the Parsis were fundamentally overturned. Parsi women, who were traditionally treated by midwives and made to stay in confinement for a 40-day period, were now treated by a Parsi medical staff of both sexes in a space shared with other Parsi women in bodily states similar to their own (Figure 6.14 &15).

The Hospital was located at the Esplanade, an emerging and unlikely area for a concentration of institutions for female medical care. Originally a grassy expanse that had surrounded the fortified settlement of the city, the Esplanade had been developed as part of the city centre, after the Fort walls had been destroyed in the mid 1860s. While mainly housing administrative and commercial institutions, by the turn of the 20th century, the Esplanade was dotted with three hospitals for women, all of which were designed by Murzban. The Bomanjee Edaljee Allbless Obstetric Hospital (1890) and the Pestanjee Hormusjee Cama Hospital for Women and Children (1896) were designed by Murzban in his official capacity as executive engineer in Public Works Department (PWD) while The Parsee Lying-in Hospital was designed in his individual capacity, with Fakirjee Dinshaw serving as the contractor. Both the Allbless and Cama Hospitals had facilities for maternity cases and a staff of female doctors; in addition the Allbless Hospital had a separate ward and morgue for Parsi

[478] Ibid., 11 December 1899, p. 3.

(female) patients. By the turn of the 20th century, Parsi women had three hospitals to choose from within the precinct of the Esplanade itself.



Raja Deen Dayal.

One of the Wards.



Raja Deen Dayal.

Another Ward.

FIGURES 6.14 & 6.15. Early photographs of the Parsee Lying-in Hospital in use by the prominent photographer Raja Deen Dayal.

(*The Parsi.* Vol. 1. No. 5., May 1905, pp. 170-1.)

Mridula Ramanna observes how closely the notion of child bearing was associated with questions of women's health in colonial Bombay. 'Discussions at medical societies on the few occasions when the question of women's health was taken up focused on this subject and invariably criticized Indian obstetric practices.'[479] Phthisis was the second concern in matters of women's health and was linked to the long working hours in textile mills.[480] Of the total of the 5 hospitals for women's health in Bombay at the turn of the 20th century, the term Obstetric was included in the title of 3, and Women and Children in the other 2.[481]

The majority of the initial patients at The Parsee Lying-in Hospital came from the Fort district itself (of which the Esplanade was considered a part) and the neighbouring Dhobi Talao area.[482] Approximately 1,750 patients had been treated in the first 4 years.[483] The willingness on the part of the Parsis to partake of the medical facilities can be explained by a number of factors. The growing landscape of hospitals and dispensaries for women's health, all the hospitals were funded and named after leading Parsi philanthropists, would have familiarised the community with the institution. Importantly, for a period of 10 years prior to the opening of The Parsee Lying-in Hospital in 1895, Dr. Nariman ran the Parsee Maternity Asylum, a

[479] Mridula Ramanna, *Western Medicine and Public Health in Colonial Bombay, 1845-1895*. London: Sangam Books Limited, 2002, pp. 198-199.
[480] Ibid., p. 201.
[481] Sir Dinshaw Manekji Petit Hospital for Women and Children (1892) and the Bai Motlibai Manekji Naoroji Wadia Obstetric Hospital (1892), were both located at Byculla.
[482] *The Times of India*, 11 December 1899, p. 3.
[483] Idem.

temporary maternity hospital for the use of community members. The shortage of space at the Asylum, the high demand for the facilities and unsuitably of the small building on Queen's Road in which it was housed, led to The Parsee Lying-in Hospital being constructed on a spacious plot of land at the Esplanade, bought from the government. Thus Dr. Nariman's name was already well associated with maternal care among the Parsis; the Parsee Lying-in Hospital was a new institution with a familiar chief physician and managing committee The Hospital came to be popularly called Temuljinu Suvarvakhana (Temulji's lying-house) (Figure 6.16 & 6.17).[484] Another factor that could explain the community's ready partaking of the Hospital's facilities was that the domestic practices pertaining to pregnancy among the Parsis, had come under severe criticism in the discourses of social reform and sanitation. The 40-day postnatal period, during which Parsi women were confined in a room on the ground floor of their residences, was considered the main reason for the high rates of puerperal fever and cases of maternal and infant mortality among the community.[485] These criticisms were also the most serious challenges, from within the community, to the idea of the Parsi home and Parsi domesticity. Kaikhosro N. Kabraji, editor of the *Rast Goftar and Satya Prakash*, noted how the community had been quicker to change their attitude towards a western medical education, by enrolling in large numbers at the Grant Medical College, than they had been to change their domestic practices pertaining to maternal care:

> I wish I could say the same of the barbarous custom of consigning women, at a most critical period of their lives to dark, damp, and noisome rooms on the ground floor of the house for forty days together. If there is no close room available in which to shut them out

[484] TheParsiFamily.com's Facebook page, from the comments on the post on the Hospital, on 8 October 2014. https://www.facebook.com/groups/theparsifamily/ accessed on 9 December 2014.
[485] *The Times of India*, 12 January 1895, p. 5.

> so long from heaven's light and air, then a huge curtain, often made up of old rags, is put up, forming a dark and dismal enclosure for the unfortunate woman.[486]

The second criticism of the traditional practices of pregnancy was the role of the native midwife. Unschooled in western medicinal training, native midwives were considered detrimental to the mother's and child's health. The problem of unskilled midwifery was a uniting discourse for reformers across Bombay's various native communities, unlike the problem of post-natal seclusion, which appeared to be most acute among the Parsis. The following description in *The Times of India* of Dr. Nariman's speech in which he denounces native midwives reflects the scope and wide relevance of the issue: '…he spoke loudly in denunciation of the ignorance and worse of the Indian midwife, asserting that while "infant marriage, enforced widowhood, and the Age of Consent Bill caused commotion in the native community, the evils arising in connection with these questions were as nothing compared to the wholesale murders that have been perpetrated in their midst by ignorant midwives, though no one had uttered a word about them."'[487]

In the early years of the opening of The Parsee Lying-in Hospital, patients brought their own clothing and linen for the duration of their stay, which lasted for forty days.[488] At full capacity 35 Parsi women in pregnant or postnatal states were accommodated in their respective beds in proximity to each other. This setting signals an extraordinary shift in the treatment of Parsi bodies. Postnatal Parsi bodies, traditionally confined to dark, stark spaces and considered polluting were in the new setting of the hospital distributed in open, sanitised spaces and treated as medical

[486] Ibid, 21 December 1901, p. 9. From the series 'Fifty Years Ago. Reminiscences of Old Bombay' by Kaikhosro N. Kabraji. The section in which Kabraji details postnatal practices among the Parsis was titled 'Some Barbarous Customs'.
[487] *The Times of India*, January 1895.
[488] Ibid. 11 December 1899, p. 3.

subjects. In addition to the supervisory eye of the medical staff, there was the unobstructed, curious, sympathetic perhaps even competitive eye of fellow Parsi female patients. The novelty of seeing and being seen by bodies in states similar to ones own, a sense of a shared bodily experience of labour could have been mixed with the sense of competition to be able to produce a living child and survive child birth oneself. In the traditional domestic postnatal setting, darkness and seclusion hid the mother of a stillborn child. The 40-day confinement served as a period of mourning and recovery. In the new open setting of the hospital, the instances of success and failure were in full view of the patients and their visitors.

Soon after its opening, the Parsi public began making use of the Hospital in intrusive ways. Mitra Sharafi has noted that some Parsis, in unsuccessful marriages, having got a tip off about their wife or husband having conceived a child with another partner, would go to the Hospital to confront their wife or husband's mistress with her newborn infant. They would send a photographer to the Hospital to take a photo of the mother and infant as well as get a hold of the birth register entry, which were then used as evidence in the cases filed at the Parsi Chief Matrimonial Court (PCMC).[489] The presence of public, in this investigative capacity, adds another dimension to the notions of the openness, visibility and accessibility of the institution. Like the Hospital, the PCMC was also overwhelming used by poor and working class Parsis, as discussed in Chapter 3. Elite Parsi couples in marital conflict typically avoided divorce because of property related issues and the publicity the court case would

[489] Mitra Sharafi, *Law and Identity in Colonial South Asia*: *Parsi Legal Culture, 1772-1947*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2014, pp. 60, 70 and 228.

cause, and usually settled for an informal separation.[490] It was the poor that took the intimacies of domesticity public.

The novelty in the configuration of bodies at The Parsee Lying-in Hospital was both in the visibility of postnatal Parsi women as well as in the presence of an all male, Parsi, senior medical staff. The senior posts at the Hospital- chief physician, honorary physician, consulting physician, consulting surgeon and house surgeon- were all filled by Parsi male doctors.[491] This was in contrast to the professional appointments at the other women's hospitals in Bombay, where a female medical staff at both senior and junior levels was a perquisite for the running of the institutions.[492] Social reformers and the philanthropists who endowed the Hospitals believed that the presence of female doctors would encourage the admission of women from Bombay's native population.[493] Large sections of the city's various native communities opposed the unsupervised interaction between male doctors and the bodies of female patients, as a stay in a hospital implied. For the Parsis, the mixing of the sexes in professional and public institutions, as seen in the systems of co-education and administration at the Bai Ruttonbai Panday School, was an important marker of their modernity. At The Parsee Lying-in Hospital, female staff held the posts of matrons, nurses, midwives and assistant midwives, positions clearly associated with and reserved for women. A three-year training programme for a diploma in assistant midwifery was offered in-house. In his speech at the opening ceremony of the Hospital, Dr. Nariman urged Parsi women who 'have not necessarily to occupy this institution', to enroll in their

[490] Ibid. p. 219.
[491] *The Times of India*, 11 December 1899, p. 3.
[492] Ramanna, *Western Medicine*, pp. 184-86.
[493] Idem. Ramana credits Edith Pechy, MD, senior medical officer at Cama Hospital, with bringing the women's hospitals in Bombay to working order. Early female medical staff had to petition the government for and work at establishing their right to equal salaries, employment contracts and house visit fees, as their male colleagues in the city.

capacity as students/trainees, furthering the causes of female education and employment.[494] His speech underlies both the assumptions of the kind (and class) of Parsis that would and would not partake of the Hospital facilities as well as the professional levels at which the participation of female medical staff was encouraged.

Conclusion

This chapter has shown how the early landscape of Parsi housing complexes and hospitals in Bombay was meant for the use of the Parsi poor. Like Chapter 4, that questioned the commonly held view that Persian Zoroastrians were always identifiedas 'Iranis', this chapter has also questioned a widespread assumption, that Parsi housing complexes were primarily communal and gated formations that separated the community from older forms of cosmopolitan living in the city. Like Chapter 4, it also introduced a figure that played the role of a philanthropic intermediary. Both the Mehrbans and Murzban managed community projects of an unprecedented scale that required high levels of coordination between various sections of the community. Both their projects would have tremendous consequences for the ways in which Parsis and Iranis would configure themselves in the setting of Bombay and globally in the 20th century.

[494] *The Times of India*, 12 January 1895, p. 5.

Conclusion

In the present scholarly milieu of skepticism of the project of modernity, of rebuttals of the 'modernisation theory' and the wide scale influences of post-modern approaches to colonial society, the suggestions advanced in this thesis about Parsi modernity may seem to be perhaps obvious and familiar. Yet in many respects historians continue to look at the Parsis as a community for whom modernity was unproblematic precisely because they were so successful at negotiating the external challenges that colonial modernity implied for them. What this dissertation has tried to do is go beyond the external challenges of law, social reform and nationalism, to look at the internal ones of dress, class and co-religionists. It is here that we see some of the real paradoxes and contradictions that colonial modernity imposed on those who experienced it. The implications for colonial histories are that the real challenges of modernity were in the more intimate realms of the cultural and the material.

As Gandhian nationalism took root in Bombay in the 1920s, the external and internal

challenges Parsis negotiated became increasingly intertwined. Gandhi conflated the political and personal to new degrees as he made a set of bodily practices the main tools of political protest. It was largely through wearing hand-spun cloth and caps and the activities of fasting, praying and spinning that Indians participated in his early campaigns of mass nationalism. By the time of Gandhi's third major campaign in Bombay, the campaign to boycott the public reception of the Prince of Wales in the city in November 1921, the associations between these bodily practices, particularly dress, and the cause of nationalism, had become entrenched.[495] In the riots that occurred immediately after the event, between the Gandhian campaigners and sections of the city's population, including Parsis, who participated in welcoming the Prince of Wales, dress was arguably the decisive element. Not only did both groups identify each other by their 'Gandhi topis' and assorted (non-Gandhian) hats, the manner of attack also usually began with removing the adversary's headgear and occasionally stripping the adversary of his outer wear.[496] In the reports of the riots in the English press, the campaigners are identified only by their clothes, indicating that the associations of dress and the Gandhian campaign had been internalised, while the other participants were described through the conventional communal categories of Parsis, Christians and Europeans and occasionally as those wearing European clothes. Dress had come to mark political affiliations so closely that nationalism now had to be negotiated in the daily lives of the Parsis.

The activities of reconciliation that followed the Prince of Wales Riot were similar in

[495] I have drawn on Sandip Hazareesingh's chronology of the early campaigns Gandhi was involved in, in Bombay and considered the anti-Rowlatt movement in 1919 his first major campaign, the Khilafat movement in 1919-20, the second and the campaign to boycott the reception of the Prince of Wales in 1921, the third. Sandip Hazareesingh, *The Colonial City and the Challenge of Modernity: Urban Hegemonies and Civic Contestations in Bombay (1900-1925)*. Hyderabad: Orient Longman, 2007, pp. 124-166.

[496] For example, *The Times of India*, 15 December 1921, p. 12 and 17 December 1921, p. 11.

some respects to those carried out in the aftermath of the Parsi-Muslim Riots of 1851 and 1874, as discussed in Chapter 5. A meeting was held at a Parsi's bungalow and attended by the leaders of various communities, Gandhi and his leading campaigners and the citizens who opposed Gandhi's campaign, who were described as the prominent 'anti-non-co-operators'.[497] It was proposed that members of various communities should jointly ride in motorcars through the affected areas to restore confidence among the people. In the aftermath of the Riots of 1851 and 1874, bungalows and buggies had been utilised. The significant change in 1921 was in the Parsi representative's stand at the meeting. The representative, Homi Mody, a former civic leader and businessman, noted that

> The Parsis had found themselves unable to adopt to any considerable extent the programme which Mr. Gandhi had laid before the country…One thing he wished particularly to impress upon the audience was that, so far as independence of character was concerned, there was no community which could beat the Parsis. By independence of character he meant the capacity to express one's opinion without fear or favour and without being led away by the passions of the moment.[498]

Mody stressed the uniqueness of the Parsis rather than the old ties of business and friendship that had bound the city's various communities. He spoke of the Parsis as unit, rather than distinguish between or relegate the violence to various classes of the community, as was the case in 1874. Mody's stand encapsulates the new ways through which Parsis tried to configure themselves both in the city and wider nation as well as vis-a-vis other business communities and the project of nationalism. Another, anticipated, change that the reconciliatory activities in 1921 brought to the fore was that the leadership of Parsis had entirely passed out of the hands of the Jejeebhoy family. Spokespersons for the community were increasingly drawn from a

[497] Ibid., 23 November 1921.
[498] Ibid.

range of professional and business elite, while the Adenwallas, the last notable family of the *sethia* class, assumed the mantle of community leadership and guided the dealings with Gandhi during this period.

Perhaps because the majority of Parsis were unwilling to comply with the programmes of mass nationalism, the negotiations that a small section of the community, invested in nationalism, made with Gandhian bodily practices, have not been explored in popular and scholarly histories. Nor have the everyday acts of *non-cooperation* on the part of the majority of Parsis and their ramifications, in ordinary and less charged environments, been considered.

The next popularly known cultural negotiations Parsis embarked on were in the 1930s, with the coming of the Jazz Age and the Art Deco movement to Bombay. Naresh Fernandes begins *Taj Mahal Foxtrot: The Story of Bombay's Jazz Age* (2012) with an anecdote of the sartorial substitutions Dosoo Karaka, a Parsi student on holiday in Bombay from Oxford, made to participate in an evening of jazz music and dance at the ballroom at the Taj.[499] A recent body of work on the Art Deco movement in Bombay by well-known historians, architectural institutions and journalists has shown how attracted and invested the Parsis were in this new and complete style that included building design, furniture, furnishings and jewellery.[500] In comparison, for the South Indian migrants in Nikhil Rao's work, the Art Deco style of their suburban housing apartments in Bombay seems to have played no role in their negotiations of late colonial modernity in the city.

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[499] Naresh Fernandes, *Taj Mahal Foxtrot: The Story of Bombay's Jazz Age*. New Delhi: Roli Books, 2012, p. 1.

[500] Gyan Prakash, *Mumbai Fables*. New Delhi: Harper Collins Publishers India, 2012, pp. 75-116; *Deco on the Oval: A Portfolio of Facades and Details*. Mumbai: Sir Jamshedjee Jeejeebhoy College of Architecture and Urban Design Research Institute, 2015; Sidharth Bhatia, 'The Making of Marine Drive', *The Indian Quarterly*, 2014 http://indianquarterly.com/the-making-of-marine-drive/.

Acknowledgements

My greatest debt is to my supervisor, Professor Polly O'Hanlon. It would be difficult to list or thank her for the innumerable ways she has guided and assisted me during the last five a half years, but I would like to mention a few. I would like to thank her for her help in conceptualising the broad arguments of the dissertation as well as its structure. I am indebted to her for reading several drafts of each chapter and offering detailed feedback as well as the hour-long phone conversations she had with me when I was in America, going over each of the revisions suggested. I hope I have completed my apprenticeship having acquired even a fraction of her scholarship, strength and style.

I am very grateful to financial assistance I have received for the DPhil programme from the Clarendon Fund Scholarship, the Hilla Ginwala Scholarship and the Beit Fund, Oxford.

I would like to thank Dr Faisal Devji, Professor Judith Brown and Dr Maria Misra for examining my Transfer of Status and Confirmation of Status processes during the DPhil.

I would like to record my gratitude to the following libraries and research institutions and particularly thank their staff: the Social Science Library in Oxford, the British Library in London, the Maharashtra State Archives in Bombay, the Undergraduate Library at the University of Illinois at Urbana Champaign, the London Metropolitan Archives and the K. R. Cama Oriental Institute in Bombay. I am grateful to several members of staff at Balliol College, the Examination Schools and the Oriental Institute at the University of Oxford: Glynis Price, Mark Hughes, Mark Howe, Pauline Talbot, Keeley Mortimer, Jo Aldhouse, James Tibbert and Katherine Croft.

I owe a great debt to the professors who taught me at the Masters level at JNU and SOAS: Professors Ravi Ahuja, Makarand Paranjape, GJV Prasad and Saugata Bhaduri.

I would like to thank the group of scholars working on the Parsis for their support and assistance: Mitra Sharafi, Dan Sheffield, Dinyar Patel and Rashna Nicholson.

I would like to thank Nile Green and Christine Wagg for generously sharing their research and resources with me and Mr. Upendra Dave and Murzban Giara for assisting with the translations of the Gujarati sources.

A special thanks to Nihalf Majeed for his help with applying for PhD programmes, moving into Oxford and the tools of this dissertation- MacBook Pro, Incase laptop cover and Louis Vuitton Neverfull tote.

I would like to thank a number of people in Bombay: the late Sharada Dwivedi, city historian and activist, who generously shared her time and resources with me, Team Bombaywalla – Sitanshu Shukla, Dj Murty, Hashim Badani and Hersh Acharya, Naresh Fernandes, for his brand of modernity, Roshan Wadia for teaching me about design, Manda Sayyed, for her interest in my studies, Sharda Sharma, Arjun Yadav and. I owe a special thank you to the staff at the *Parsiana* office, particularly Nivedita Potdar, Sunil Sakhare and Jasmine Driver for their assistance with scanning the photos used in the dissertation, designing the cover and other help.

Special thanks to a number of people in London: Prashant Kidambi for his guidance, support and wonderful company; the Dishoom team - Shamil Thakrar, Kavi Thakrar and Sara Stark- for letting me join them in creating Bombay's Irani cafes in London and sustaining me in more ways than one; Vishnu Shankar; Layli Uddin, Erica Wald, Will Clegg, Joppan George and Rob Upton for their company at the British Library.

I would like to thank my friends in Oxford who made the three years I spent in the city very special: Sumudu Watagala, Sara Dutta, Arghya Sengupta, Shiv Swaminathan, Vidhu Shekhar Singh, Amit Kumar, Anish Vanaik,
Anisha Sharma, Manav Bhushan, Dhvani Mehta, Rakesh Sharma, Dan Beary, Gabor Toth, Adam Nahum, Kunchok Dolma, Hem Borker, Aparna Kapadia, Sumeet Mhaskar, Jamie Alexander Macleod, Fay Niker and Zuber.

A special thanks to the friends I made in Urbana Champaign: Rod Wilson, Jen OConnor, Radhika Govindrajan, Jayadev Athreya, Behrooz Ghamari, Zain Ali, Ikuko Asaka, Marc Hertzman and Michelle.

I would especially like to thank my family: Makki N. Dinshaw, for the candle lit vegetarian dinners on the varenda at Adenwalla Baug, Gool Parbhu, who followed few of the rules of confinement, Jamshed Patel, Homi and Roshan Patel and family, for letting me stay in their apartment in Bayswater and making me feel at home in England, Adi, Freny and Hirji Jehangir, for the triannual packages from Bettys in Yorkshire, Fortnum & Mason in London and the Imperial Torte in Vienna; who embody Cowasjee Jehangir's gifting practices in the age of the internet.

I owe a great debt to Firdaus Gandavia for painstakingly proofing the final draft of the dissertation as well as for his support and company in Oxford during the final month of writing up.

I would like to thank Sundip Biswas for his friendship, hospitality and kindness over the last eight years. He has made my stay in England a wonderful experience.

I would like to thank Tariq Ali, with whom there has been a gradual liberlisation in the practices of inter dining, from *chai* at five at British Library, to *mamlet* at Chalk Farm and jambalaya at Anderson and Colorado.

And finally, I would like to thank my parents, Veera and Jehangir Patel, to whom this dissertation is dedicated. We've turned out all right at the end.

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