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Unpacking the *Punch*: A Genealogical Account of *Punch* Cartoons in Nineteenth-Century India

Introduction

At the end of the eighteenth century, the attitude of the British government towards the notion of 'freedom of press' can be described as fractious, at best. Britain's well-established tradition of political pamphleteering came under legal and extra-legal scrutiny as a reaction against the French Revolution. Any signs of revolutionary activism or moderate forms of association which informed the political debates about reform and revolution were brought under strict regulation. The access to print was restricted largely because it was being described as the "most malignant and formidable enemy of the constitution" (Hewitt 150). The radical mobilization of the masses by successive journalists and caricaturists who believed in a public sphere of free discourse and debate was eyed with suspicion by the conservatives who harbored fears about constitutional authority, free press and open elections (Woloch 5). Under the 1799 Seditious Societies Act, all presses were coerced to compulsorily register to institute legal liabilities for content and advertisements deemed blasphemous, seditious, or obscene. Further, the Blasphemous and Seditious Libels Act and the Newspaper Stamp Duties Act (1819) enacted to contain the proliferation of radical journals like William Cobbett's *Twopenny Trash* (1812-17) and Thomas Wooler's *Black Dwarf* (1817-24) limited the circulation of periodicals and broadened the scope of press prosecution (see Hewitt 150).

Beyond the legal pressures due to which proprietors and editors like Daniel Lovell were sent to Newgate prison for more than four years and William Hone faced trial for his religious parodies, this reflected a social consciousness in which the polarized view of society as a whole was found embedded, a society constituted by "the respectable and the dangerous, the civilized and the savage" (Woloch 10). The categories of dangerous and savage were deployed against the popular masses who lacked the space for leisure and privacy in their lives and therefore could not respond to the need for critical reflection: as Godwin asserted, "political speculation had to be undertaken by a 'few favoured minds', for only 'studious

and reflecting' men could 'see' into 'future events', and so conceive a new vision of society" (Denney 62). The art of caricaturing reached its "Golden Age" in such a milieu along with verbal and visual expressions at an "intensely combative and dialectical [pace], spilling from the courtroom to the press and back again" (Gilmartin 115). Not only James Gillray's pencil (founder of the *Punch* periodical in 1841) traced the excesses of the British attitude towards press, prosecution and policing of the public sphere, his *Punch* cartoons presented a spirited defense of the freedom of expression as well. The circulation of penny periodicals and cheap caricatures and flow of information in the early half of nineteenth century is, ironically, based on the repressive mechanisms which failed to repress them. Even the notion of 'public opinion' which was coined by de Rulhière in the mid-eighteenth century gained new impetus in the transcultural flows of ideas between Britain and its colonies when more than one language and culture got involved with the visual medium. This ironic stance coupled with the social modalities of censorship, regulation of press and the public sphere maintained the space from which newer forms of reading and artistic expressions could emerge. In the period after the Reform Bill of 1832, caricatures, through their willful exaggeration, satirical punches and physiognomic distortions (most notably through *Punch*) generated an adequate impression of the visual culture which brought to the fore the sense of ultimate inadequacy of the imperial accounts.

Since cartoons contain more dynamic glimpses of the colonial attitudes and that of the Indian figure than the written word, this paper will offer a genealogical account of *Punch* cartoons in India with an emphasis on their cultural representativeness, literary mimeticism, subversive potential and functioning as a form of anti-colonialist resistance in visual medium. This genealogical account of cartoons and caricatures, insofar as it will also give a history of the British rule in nineteenth-century India, seeks to highlight the political impact that such literary and pictorial forms generated in relation to the colonial views, positions, and practices. Further, it aims to problematize the ambivalent spaces that the traditional historical accounts based on the binary approaches of the colonizer and the colonized, the Europe and the Other, the center and the periphery, the vocal and the silent leave behind. These binaries have often worked as an extrapolated version of the polarized views which informed the social consciousness and class fabric of European society at the time. With this view, this chapter will provide a detailed analysis and unpack the culturally specific character of *Punch* to mobilize it as a geographical and anti-colonial referent against

the British empire. The ephemeral nature of the vernacular cartoons and a lack of well-maintained archival sources[1], however, present significant challenges in analyzing the complete print runs of *Punch* cartoons in India and so the images under consideration have been particularly chosen to articulate the most visible colonial anxieties and characterization of Indian subjects as cross-cultural inscriptions of the British rule in nineteenth-century India. The next section of my chapter explores the political implications of the *Punch* cartoons in India.

Punch and the Politics of Image and Text

British *Punch* magazine (1841-1992), similar to its French and German counterparts like *Le Charivari* (1832-1937), *Kladderadatsch* (1848-1944), *Die Fliegende Blätter* (1845-1944), and *Simplicissimus* (1896–1944 and 1954–1967) not only disseminated the discourse about "European imperialism in terms of visibility and enduring influence" but also acted as the popular visual medium through which the colonial apparatus in terms of military and political power and, as Rita Khanduri argues, its claims of civilizational mission could be understood and critiqued (Scully and Varnava 3; Khanduri 3).

The study of *Punch* cartoons printed in India has been a relatively recent phenomena to analyze the print culture traditions, the emergence of public spheres and nationalist debates taking place in nineteenth-century India. The aim of this part of my chapter is to show how these cartoons offer the most visible imprint of Anglo-Asian 'cultural contract' through their humorous illustrations and many-layered meanings and often exhibit a transcultural and transhistorical life of their own. Indian historians of visual culture like Partha Mitter and Mushirul Hasan, through their curatorial and pedagogical frameworks, have explored the rich world of Indian

1 With regard to the archiving issue in India and particularly in the context of cartoons, Indian political cartoonist E.P. Unny writes, "Indian cartoon study has a wieldy bibliography, the whole of which can be scribbled into a chit no larger than the pocket cartoon" (Unny no pag.). In his interview, Indian historian A. R. Venkatachalapathy argues that cartoons drawn by a child are often discarded as mere scribblings and this attitude determines the larger culture in India where "no real documentation" takes place which is unlike the major newspapers in the West where historians or former journalists are hired to produce histories (Arunram no pag.).

Punch and their visual iconographies to situate the structural and material conditions of India's multiple modernities.

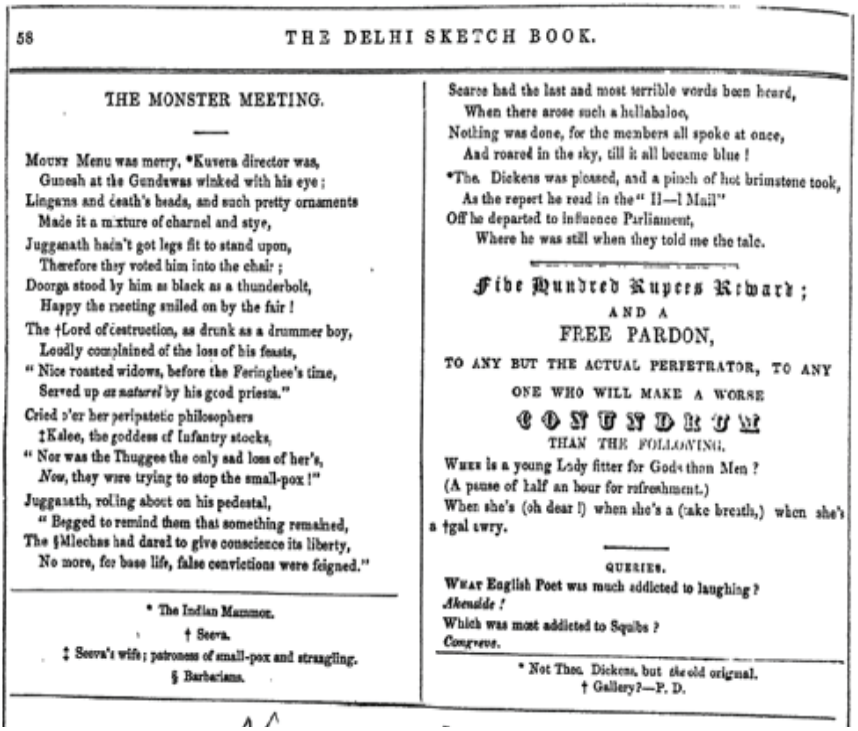
Such a nuanced configuration of historical patterns and public opinions move firmly away from the Western and non-Western historiographies inspired by Edward Said's view about the Western techniques of representation which "excluded, displaced, made supererogatory any such *real* thing as 'the Orient'" (Said 21). Cartoons are a unique medium which function at both representative and operative levels in attaining the communicative goal between the image, the text, and the reader. Cartoons contain what Roland Barthes referred to as "the third meaning" according to which the image-text grid "outplays meaning—subverts not the content but the whole practice of meaning" (Barthes 328). For Barthes, the comic strip with its combination of drawing and story occupies the region which, similar to the filmic, goes well beyond the pure representative function and presents a rare practice (as opposed to the majority practice of determining signification) where an obtuse meaning emerges as a "luxury, an expenditure with no exchange" transcending "today's politics" and belonging "*already* to tomorrow's" (ibid.). *Punch* cartoons, then, are not to be read as "passive reflectors of reality" but rather as "the actual shapers—may be even realisers—of nineteenth-century popular thought" (Scully and Varnava 5; Browne 509). By inserting a "life" into this rare practice the "social system and the collective understandings on which it rests" can be glanced (Kopytoff 217).

Mitter analyzes the transcultural phenomenon that the *Punch* cartoons embody "during the high tide of imperialism, which represents the first great phase of globalisation" (Mitter, "Punch and Indian" 47). In taking up the story of Punch's dissemination across the Indian subcontinent, Mitter sketches a multi-scalar account of colonial India which not only looks back at the British empire but also overcomes the binary relation between the colonizer and the colonized for the reason that *Punch* cartoons emerge as the "third space" which combine and crystallize the original duality of the traditional historical accounts. Perhaps this explains the attractiveness of the Punch format and the many "cousin" models it led to in different parts of the world (Harder 4, 6).

Envisioning *Punch* through these familial (Indian) Punches which employed numerous intertextual references offer a new way to examine the colonizer-colonized relationship and re-contextualize the nineteenth-century debates about the colonial and the native cultures. The translingual and transcultural features of *Punch* in India can actively serve the means

to provide a "nativist" perspective by offering an experiential dimension of the "vast ideological machinery" which constituted and interpellated Indian subjects (Slemon 37). As the next part of my chapter shows, *The Delhi Sketch Book* graphically preserved the many instances in which the two cultures came in contact and reacted with each other, time after time in a combative way.

The Delhi Sketch Book



58 THE DELHI SKETCH BOOK.

THE MONSTER MEETING.

Mount Menu was merry, *Kuvera director was,
Ganesh at the Gundewas winked with his eye;
Linguns and death's heads, and such pretty ornaments
Made it a mixture of charnel and stye,
Jugganath hadn't got legs fit to stand upon,
Therefore they voted him into the chair;
Doorga stood by him as black as a thunderbolt,
Happy the meeting smiled on by the fair!
The †Lord of destruction, as drunk as a drummer boy,
Loudly complained of the loss of his feasts,
"Nice roasted widows, before the Feringhee's time,
Served up *au naturel* by his good priests."
Cried o'er her peripatetic philosophers
‡Kalee, the goddess of Infantry stocks,
"Nor was the Thuggee the only sad loss of her's,
Now, they were trying to stop the small-pox!"
Jugganath, roling about on his pedestal,
"Begged to remind them that something remained,
The §Mlechas had dared to give conscience its liberty,
No more, for base life, false convictions were feigned."

* The Indian Mammon.
† Seeva.
‡ Seeva's wife; patroness of small-pox and strangling.
§ Barbarians.

Scarce had the last and most terrible words been heard,
When there arose such a hullabaloo,
Nothing was done, for the members all spoke at once,
And roared in the sky, till it all became blue!
*The Dickens was pleased, and a pinch of hot brimstone took,
As the report he read in the "Il—l Mail"
Off he departed to influence Parliament,
Where he was still when they told me the tale.

Five Hundred Rupees Reward;
AND A
FREE PARDON,
TO ANY BUT THE ACTUAL PERPETRATOR, TO ANY ONE WHO WILL MAKE A WORSE
CONUNDRUM
THAN THE FOLLOWING.

When is a young Lady fitter for Gods than Men?
(A pause of half an hour for refreshment.)
When she's (oh dear!) when she's a (take breath,) when she's a †gal awry.

QUERIES.

What English Poet was much addicted to laughing?
Akenside!
Which was most addicted to Squibs?
Congreve.

* Not Thos. Dickens, but the old original.
† Gallery?—P. D.

Fig. 1: "The Monster Meeting" and "Conundrum." *Delhi Sketch Book*, vol. IV (1853), p. 58.

One of the earliest progenies of the British *Punch: Or, the London Charivari* (first appeared on 17 July 1841), the *Delhi Sketch Book* (1850-57; launched by the newspaper *The Englishman*) followed the colonial model to disseminate the major scientific, philosophical, engineering and medical developments to the masses along with general amusement about "British social

life, as private jokes to be shared among its English readers" (Mitter, *Art and Nationalism* 140). *Delhi Sketch Book* contained diverse content, social commentaries, topical subjects of discussion, political speeches, humorous poems, jokes, puns and most notably, the visual images of the native figure through a set of physiognomic features drawn in a particular way and enhanced mannerisms to easily identify the parodied Indian.

The expatriate population in India which would frequently send visual and print entries for publication poked fun not only at the native inhabitants but feminine sensibility as well through misogynistic jokes (see Figure 1) within, what Vic Gatrell calls, "dangerous mixture of a primal male humour" (Gatrell 433). The big reward of five hundred rupees to participate in the explicit misogyny exemplified through these printed words provide us an access to its readers. It offers clues to the social attitudes, morality and imperial policies when compared to the visual depiction of the general postman of India (see Figure 2) carrying a big jute bag with a caption, "ONLY ONE ANNA FOR ALL INDIA" (one anna is 1/16th of a rupee for a population of roughly 240 million people in the 1850s) (*Delhi Sketch Book* 1853, 61).

This image with its ludicrous exaggeration fits well with Susan Bayly's argument in her article, "The Evolution of Colonial Cultures: Nineteenth-Century Asia," that the "[i]mperial officials were reluctant spenders, ever fearful that tampering with native laws, faiths, or learned traditions might undermine their fragile authority over large, and often turbulent subject populations" (Bayly 450). However, the native laws provided enough fodder for the poetic and literary pursuits which appeared in the periodical. One such poem titled "The Monster Meeting" abounds with references to the *Sati pratha* ("Nice roasted widows, before the firanghee's time"), Indian goddesses ("Kalee, the goddess of Infantry

stocks") and terms like "mlechha"[2] and "thugee"[3] to designate the linguistic, cultural, physical and caste separations that the colonial gaze preserved between the high-caste Hindus and their regional counterparts, the "native gentleman" and the lower-caste and peripheral peasant groups. In his article, "The Imperial Spectator of Sati, 1757-84" (2008), Norbert Schürer argues that the British commentators adopted "a unique stance toward sati, namely that of the sentimental impartial spectator" and the late eighteenth century and mid-nineteenth century accounts merely followed the sentimental gaze till the practice of *Sati* was officially abolished in 1829 (Schürer 20).

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2 The word *mleccha*, derived from the Sanskrit language, has its roots to the word *vāc* meaning speech. The word *mleccha* denote a person who is unfamiliar or lacks grasp over the common speech in a particular milieu. It is related to the concept of barbarian with the arrival of the Indo-Aryan speakers in the early northern India who deemed the non-Sanskrit speaking indigenous people as barbarians. Further, the word *mleccha* suggests a cultural affair as opposed to a linguistic one. There are several readings on the etymology of *mleccha* in the Sumerian, Pāli, Budhist, proto-Tibetan and Kukish traditions. However, the adjectival use of *mleccha* as impure and uncivilized to connote identity and culture—*mleccha-deśa* (country), *mleccha-bhāṣā* (language), *mleccha-nivāha* (horde), *mleccha-bhojana* (food), *mleccha-vāc* (speech)—became prevalent from the second half of the first millennium B.C. For further reference, see Romila Thapar's essay, "The Image of the Barbarian in Early India."

3 In her article, "Discovering India, Imagining *Thuggee*," Parama Roy examines the performative use of the word 'thug' as constructed in the colonial discourse on 'thuggee' (both as praxis and identity) and presents the figure of the thug as negotiating multiple and competing identities which, in turn, resists the totalizing epistemologies of colonialism that reduces the native to an easily recognizable and knowable subject. She says that the thugs were narrativized in nineteenth and twentieth-century colonial representations as "a cult of professional stranglers who preyed on travellers—though never on Englishmen—as an act of worship to the goddess Kali […] hereditary killers drawn from all regions, religions, classes, and castes, united by their devotion to Kali" (Roy 124). Roy identifies two contested readings of thugs/thuggee that emerge: one that defines the thuggee system as a quasi-religious fraternity which existed outside the realm of political and economic rationality, and the other which defines thugs as part of the indigenous society and supported by zamindars (landowners), Indian princes, law enforcement officials, merchants, and even ordinary farmers. The term 'thuggee' included "all kinds of organized and corporate criminal activity (including poisoning and the kidnapping of children) that was understood to be hereditary and/or itinerant" and the thug became a subject position that was criminalized (Roy 125). The discursive construction of thuggee as hereditary criminality was complicated by the fact that professional thugs maintained the appearance of responsible and civic-minded citizens which made it difficult for the British to establish it as a "pervasive yet eccentric form of lawlessness" (Roy 127).

Fig. 2: "The New General Postman for India." *Delhi Sketch Book*, vol. IV (1853), p. 61.

The attitude of British officials in India towards *Sati* represented the larger European ideological discourse against women which treated widow burning (in the colony) and witch burning (at home) as separate instances to keep the dichotomy between the colonizer and the colonized intact. The indiscriminate use of 'monstrous and marvelous' imagery to depict Indian gods and goddesses further foregrounds the cultural and ideological investment that the Western imagination maintained in structuring the perception of difference. Although the British administration professed that the policies informed by the idea of difference (in terms of purity, race, and caste) were "based on the pronouncements of Hindu pundits

and to be upholding the Hindu tradition against corrupt Brahmins," the imperial mindset behind these claims was always at-work in appeasing the Indian masses and keeping a check on any move which could undermine the British interests (Schürer 20). Even the terms like *mlechha* and *thugee* and their association with the word, barbarian (as the glossary in Figure 1 indicates) demonstrates most clearly the imperial imperatives and instrumentalizations of the native beliefs and cultural patterns to emphasize speech, cultural and political differentiation amongst Indians belonging to different castes and, importantly, between the natives and the British.

The *Delhi Sketch Book* soon emerged as the interstitial site encompassing information, criticism and glimpses of British domestic life, a comic forum where both the home and the world became subjects of discussion offering a sense of familiarity and belongingness to its mainly British and Anglo-Indian readers. Through the "interplay of text and image in its square double-columned page format and layout" we get to hear the conversations and varied voices from inside the bedroom and the daily hardships (or the "INDIAN LUXURIES") out on the street (see Figures 3 and 4; Mitter, "Punch and Indian Cartoons" 48).

Figure 3 offers a glimpse of the domestic space filled with tranquility suggesting that the British rule over India by 1850s (even before the Indian subcontinent was brought under the Crown rule) had already become an established fact. The presence of Englishwomen brought along the Victorian ideas of domesticity and gentility "remote from Indians in the midst of India" into the fabricated English life in Delhi (Hutchins 103). The sparsely filled room still manages to reflect the automatically endowed privileges which the Englishmen garnered by choosing a career as an administrative or military official in the colony. The aura of large income and elevated social status to turn into, what Francis Hutchins calls, "instant aristocrats" served as inspiration for many British Indian officials who felt, as Sir James Fitzjames Stephen observed, "undervalued and snubbed in English society" (Hutchins 108). These 'instant aristocrats' immersed themselves into the pretense of English aristocracy and ensured that "[n]o Collector's wife will wear an article of Indian manufacture […] and all her furniture, even to her carpets, must be of English make" (Hutchins 108). The caption, "STRIKING RESEMBLANCE BETWEEN BABY AND DOG LAUGHTER," exemplify the distinctively middle-class and metropolitan background since ordinary soldiers and lower-class or "other miscellaneous poorer Europeans – are more or less excluded from visual representation at this time" (De Silva 135).

Fig. 3: "Striking resemblance between baby and dog language." *Delhi Sketch Book*, vol. IV (1853), p. 57.

Besides the apparent familial ideology which underscores the sexual division of labor as the Englishwoman holding the baby is counterposed to the Englishman dotting over the pet dog, the image depicts the new trend of pet-keeping practices as it passed from the aristocratic circles in the preceding centuries to the new bourgeoisie of the Victorian times. Keridiana Chez, in her fascinating book *Victorian Dogs, Victorian Men: Affect and Animals in Nineteenth Century Literature and Culture* (2017), argues that "[t]o redress the apparent crisis of affective inadequacy, the dog was appropriated away from its historical usage as a beast of burden to become a beloved companion. The pet […] became a necessary relation for the emotional health of the bourgeoisie" (Chez 3). The emotional needs of the Victorian men were supplanted by pet-keeping which added an affective dimension to the deeply stratified family structures. At one level, print capitalism brought back the nostalgia of the countryside and the sentimental attitudes towards nature and nonhuman creatures as op-

posed to living amongst the "ebb and flow" of Delhi streets. This could also partly inform the urge to live in a hill station like Shimla during the summer when Delhi would get engulfed by unbearable heat. As Hutchins states, "the custom of resorting to the hills for the hot months grew steadily with the progress of the century" so much so that "[a]t the outbreak of the Indian Mutiny [of 1857], for instance, the Commander-in-Chief was at Simla" (Hutchins 108).

Fig. 4: "Indian Luxuries." *Delhi Sketch Book*, vol. IV (1853), no pag.

At another level, the image when read with the caption portray the language of scientific endeavor as was common to the British *Punch* which often dealt with topics about "animal behaviour and development, zoology, astronomy, analytical and industrial chemistry, natural history, electricity" (Noakes 107). In fact, the first page of the *Delhi Sketch Book*, volume 5 (dated January 1, 1854) begins with an assemblage of lithographic image (with the native drawn with obsequious expressions and folded hands while standing on a locomotive) and printed report by the Chief Engineer, the "statistics I hold in my hand" about the train journeys which began in April 1853 (see Figure 5). Introduction of railways to the Indi-

an subcontinent was deemed necessary by the Governor-General, Lord Dalhousie who "stressed the political, military and economic benefits accruing to Britain, to the Anglo-Indian connection, and to the colonial regime" (Hurd and Kerr 9). However, the earlier proposals to set up railways almost ten years before in 1844 were rejected due to the British investors' demand for a guarantee of an annual dividend from the East India Company based on the profits from the proposed railway enterprise in the Indian subcontinent. It was further stipulated that the annual dividend would be deemed mandatory even in the absence of profit margins and had to be "extracted from the people of India via the revenues of GOI" – the British administration in India (Hurd and Kerr 8).

THE

DELHI SKETCH BOOK.

VOL. V.] JANUARY 1, 1854. [NO. I.

To Correspondents.

THE WAY WE RIDE AT BARRACKPORE resolved. It will be discovered—with a look.

SUBSCRIBER. We dislike personalities when those exercised on are not public property.

EARLY PUNCH. Much too heady for us.

EXTENSION OF THE GREAT DELHI AND LUNAR RAILWAY.

SPEECH OF THE CHIEF ENGINEER.

1st JANUARY, 1854.

MY LORD MARQUIS, LADIES, AND GENTLEMEN.

IT is one of the four proudest moments of my life when I thus arise to return thanks for the honour you have now, for the fourth annual period, conferred upon me. When, in 1850, our enterprize was first set on foot, the moon was, to the Indian public, comparatively a *terra incognita*. Individual lunatics might indeed be found mooning about the country, veritable exiles, whose melancholy state of mind, while it clearly indicated their proper sphere, afforded anything but encouragement to society at large to visit that obscure and ill-represented locality. But the hour came, and the man. We started. A reference to the statistics I hold in my hand will suffice to give a faint idea of what we have performed.

Trains have run every month, making a total of forty-five trips. Each train has carried on an average five hundred passengers, which number is now however on the increase. We have exported to the moon forty-eight stale quotations (mostly booked by the respected firm of Knap and Gruntical) ninety-seven anecdotes of Sheridan, and one hundred and fifteen and a half of miscellaneous heavy goods, including worn-out jokes, puns, and shrilles.

During the same period our "down" traffic has been of the same encouraging character. Nineteen thousand of dry jokes, conundrums, and quips have been thrown

Fig. 5: *Delhi Sketch Book*, vol. V (1 January, 1854), no pag.

Along with the proposals for railways meant to address the transportational needs, the 1840s saw William Brooke O'Shaughnessy's experiments with the transmission of telegraphic signals over the Hooghly River in Calcutta. Lord Dalhousie favored O'Shaughnessy's enthusiasm about setting up the telegraph services in India and wrote to the Court of Directors in India Office secretariat, London to establish an experimental line (27 miles long) between Alipore and Diamond Harbour. In his letter dated August 21, 1850, pertaining to the matter of electric telegraphs, Lord Dalhousie wrote, "I regard this […] as of such infinite moment in India that I recommend the sanction of Government to whatever sum may be necessary […] to enable those charged with it to carry on their labours with rapidity and the fullest efficiency" (Gorman 584). O'Shaughnessy succeeded in his attempts when the electric telegraphy was made available for use by the general public on December 1, 1851 and was immediately assigned with the task of covering principal cities of India from Calcutta to Agra and from Bombay to Madras, essentially connecting the port cities with the northwesterly regions of Delhi and stretching further north to Punjab (Figure 6, and its caption, represent this geographical manifestation of telegraphic signals in the form of electric spider spreading its web all over the subcontinent).

The entire grid became functional by early 1855 and revolutionized the field of journalism with its efficient and speedy dissemination of news. However, quite ironically, its first major and decisive application emerged on May 10, 1857 when Indian sepoys (mainly Brahmins, Rajputs and Muslims) rebelled against their officers in Meerut (the immediate cause for the rebellion was the cartridges for the new Lee-Enfield rifle which were greased with cow and pig fat and had to be bitten from the end to load the gun powder in the rifle riling Hindu and Muslim's religious sentiments although a larger discontent against the British regime was already simmering due to the exploitative land and tax reforms), reached Delhi the next day and, throughout the summer of 1857, massacred and killed British officers and civilian hostages in Cawnpore (Kanpur). The news of the rebellion by the sepoys against the British officers all over the country was relayed through telegraph and a war correspondent of the London *Times* described the events in such details:

> Never since its discovery has the electric telegraph played so important a role. In this war, for the first time, a telegraph wire has been carried along under fire and through the midst of a hostile country […] At one time his men were chased for miles by the enemy's cavalry […] and they and their wires were cut

> to pieces. Again, their electric batteries are smashed by the fire of a gun, or their cart knocked to pieces by a round shot; but still they work on, creep over arid plains, cross watercourses, span rivers, and pierce jungles, till one after another the rude poles raise aloft their slender burden, and the quick needle vibrates with its silent tongue amid the thunder of the artillery. (qtd. in Gorman 598)

When the chief commissioner of Punjab and later the Governor-General of India, Sir John Lawrence declared (after the mutiny was crushed) that "[t]he telegraph saved India," the imperial hue behind the role that the telegraph played in uniting the British administration and tightening of control over the Indian masses cannot escape notice (Gorman 599). As the dependency and world-systems theories by Andre Gunter Frank and Immanuel Wallerstein have recently shown, capitalist tendencies since the sixteenth century dictated the colonial policies at a global level to transform the colonies into corporate lineages and modernizing tools like railways, telegraph, shipbuilding, and railroads mainly served the British interests and expansion to the other markets in south-east Asia (tea and opium trade with China is one notable example). As Eric Wolf argues in *Europe and the People Without History*, "[u]nder English domination, India became a key foundation of the emerging worldwide capitalist edifice" (261). This economic model is a further manifestation of the binary discourse of the core (London, the metropole) and the periphery (India, the dependent satellite or colony) which the hybrid space offered by the *Punch* cartoons in India serve to reveal.

The *Delhi Sketch Book* ended its print run with the Mutiny of 1857.[4] The caricaturing intent especially pertaining to the portrayals of the British officials was toned down when its successor, The *Indian Punch*, entered the print markets of Delhi and until it ended in 1862 (Mitter, *Art and Nationalism* 144). As an obverse effect, the aesthetic and the moral standards (which were imitative of Gillray and Thomas Rowlandson's satirical styles and loaded with the Italian connotations of Carracci brothers about the use of distorted proportions in describing the visual objects) which were deployed to represent Indians with their exaggerated oddities to generate

4 British *Punch* very distinctly captured the British responses to the Mutiny of 1857 and there exists extensive research on this topic (two most notable examples are Graeme Harper's edited work *Comedy, Fantasy and Colonialism* and Charles Graves' *Mr. Punch's History of the Great War* which appeared in 2002 and 2015). However, a deeper analysis of the Mutiny and their visual representations lie beyond the scope of this article since the focus is more so on the *Punch* cartoons printed in India in nineteenth-century either in English or vernacular languages.

a comic effect for its readers seem to have been marked by a categorical shift. The stylistic change in the tone and the tenor was informed by the historical, literary, and eye-witness accounts of the British officials' massacre (and equally fierce suppression of the rebellion by the British administration) during the Mutiny of 1857.

Fig. 6: "The Electric Spider: Spreading his web over India to catch all the news as it flies." *Delhi Sketch Book*, vol. V (1854), no pag.

Caricatures about Indians now began to reflect the larger changes in the British attitude towards the native population by moving a step further from ridiculing their physical and cultural differences to standardizing them. Beyond the idea of general amusement, the understanding that

caricature can 'unmask' the character became more pronounced to essentially conceptualize the Indian character which could then be trained or reformed to control the possibilities of any further indigenous rebellions. Through their visual representations and 'punches,' both the Englishman and the Indian marshalled the ironic underpinning of the image and the text against each other which entailed an authorial judgement based on their cultural situatedness.

The story of *Punch* in India embodies this confrontation in vivid details. It depicts the oppositions and attractions of the cultural patterns which shaped the colonial encounters in nineteenth-century India. In providing the historical accounts of these cultural engagements, *Punch* cartoons in India also signify the plurality of artistic expressions which emanated from the original *Punch* and that cannot be curtailed by the political prisms and moral strictures of the contemporary times. The earlier convergences between the British *Punch* and the *Delhi Sketch Book* gave way to the regional, linguistic, and cultural divergences in the *Indian Charivari* and the *Parsee Punch* which will now be discussed in greater detail.

The Indian Charivari

On 17th October 1872, a small piece of news appeared, barely noticeable and without any title, in *South Wales Daily News* stating that "an Indian Punch—the *Indian Charivari*—is announced for Calcutta" which would be "owned and edited by Colonel Percy Wyndham" and contain illustrations from "artists of acknowledged ability" with the aim to "laugh at and with our small world around us, and we hope they will return us the compliment" ("South Wales Daily News" 1872). The *Indian Charivari*, however, went well beyond the stated aim to reinforce the British anxieties, in the aftermath of the Mutiny of 1857, about their disproportionate presence in an alien land filled with people characterized by "sexual aggressiveness, constitutional deceitfulness, and incapacity for maturity and leadership" (Hutchins 78). Recent scholarship on imperial histories has turned its attention on the gendered portrayals of war in spatial terms especially the Mutiny of 1857 since the weakening of the "paternal authority" (as it manifested in the form of a rebellion within the army) gave the unrestrained native, "half devil and half child" (to use Rudyard Kipling's phrase), the "licence whose object and victim is the flesh of the European female" (Chakravarty 39). As *Bengal Hurkaru*, the leading English-owned

newspaper of the time, reported "this is not a mere local outbreak, it is a great crisis, a crisis unprecedented in the history of British India […] It is now a question of empire" (Blunt, "Embodying War" 405-6).

The crisis of the British empire was haunted by what post-colonial thinkers like Franz Fanon have argued, the sexual discourse about "the figure of a white woman raped by a dark man" (Paxton 6). As Alex Tickell, in his essay "Cawnpore, Kipling and Charivari: 1857 and the politics of commemoration" (2009), has persuasively shown the survivors' accounts from Cawnpore massacre appeared as a direct libidinal assault on the perceived British masculinity which underscored the imperial narrative: "stalwart, bearded men, stern soldiers of the ranks […] have been seen coming out of that house perfectly unmanned, utterly unable to repress their emotions' stated one witness, 'From them there will be no mercy for these villainous assassins'" (Tickell 2). Thus, the military insubordination by the natives was re-enacted in the British imagination through "the obsessive repetition of the figures of rape and mutilation" although the official and judicial reports failed to corroborate such popular accounts with conclusive evidence of rape (Chakravarty 39-40). Here, it can be argued that the Mutiny of 1857 was considered instrumental by many British and Anglo-Indian writers in India to perpetuate rape narratives about English women and their literary and cultural narratives sharpened the focus on the presence of the British women in India. At a symbolic level, the graphic artists too presented their views about both the colonizer and the colonized in gendered terms which had far-reaching implications for the ways in which the political and royal figures appeared in the regional magazines particularly in the *Indian Charivari*.

The *Indian Charivari* employed the visual performativities inherent in the word *charivari* to articulate the sexual subtext of colonial encounters in India, which Charles Philipon used as a means of political protest in his Parisian newspaper, *Le Charivari*, and appeared as the subtitle, the *London Charivari*, to the British Punch magazine. During the Middle Ages and till sixteenth century, *charivari* denoted "a noisy, masked demonstration to humiliate some wrongdoer in the community" whereas Philipon, in nineteenth century, made use of the verbal and visual form to expose the hypocrisy of the last King of France, Louis-Philippe, when he declared in 1831 that "We shall seek to hold a middle way, equally distant from the abuses of royal power and the excesses of popular power" (Davis 97; Jobling 232). The thread which connects the two usages of the word, as the *Indian Charivari* depicts, is public humiliation or a "mock-trial […] against

those who transgressed sexual or marital norms" (Tickell 6). Through jokes, sexual innuendos, moral commentaries and visual illustrations, the *Indian Charivari* served as, what Jane Goodall calls, a "wake-up call [...] against anything that breached their codes of practice" especially after the Mutiny of 1857 which revealed the imperial crisis in terms of honor and prestige (Goodall 5). One of the distinctive features of the *Indian Charivari*, laced with the motifs of honor and dishonor, is its focus on the clothes to represent the native rural folk, the Anglo-Indians and the more exalted figures. In "Cloth, Clothes and Colonialism: India in the Nineteenth Century" (1996), Bernard Cohn narrates the shock British women felt when they first arrived in India and saw scantily-clad natives in *dhotis*, which James Johnson, a Royal Navy surgeon on a trip to Diamond Harbour in Calcutta, described as "a small narrow piece of cloth (*doty*), passed between the thighs, and fastened before and behind to a piece of stout packthread, that encircles the waist" (Cohn 151). However, unlike a Hindu, the Indian Muslim in nineteenth century wore tailored clothes and would be distinguished from a noble figure on the basis of the headgear, *fez*. According to Margaret Pernau, *fez* served as an Ottoman symbol and rallied non-Arab Sunni Muslims living in British and French colonies to pledge their allegiance to the Ottoman sultan who declared himself as the "universal Caliph" (Pernau 264). The real triumph of wearing *fez* in India lay in maintaining an effective visualization of difference (in terms of religious identity and manners of dressing) from the Hindus and the British who similarly wore turban and hat which "demarcated the boundary between the ruler and the ruled" (Pernau 262).

The front cover of the *Indian Charivari* (see Figure 7) depicts the entangled histories of headgear and clothing to represent the native and maintain the religious and cultural differences; the visual rhetoric particularly functioned against any such entanglements or attempts to hybridize the social discourse and parodied those who broke the hierarchy of appearances consolidated and achieved by the imperial conquest of India. Here, Mr. Punch, the editorial persona of the *Indian Charivari* and other *Punch* magazines, appears in the center with all the familiar depictions of India as a land of snakes and elephants tied to the enduring feudal conditions and hereditary power structures which now seem to have been replaced by the "enlightened" rule of the British Raj. Mr. Punch's frank enjoyment of *hookah*, the spectacular background and the dancing "dusky maidens" in blouses (*choli*) cast him in the role of an Indian juggler (*Jaduwallah*) who is about to employ the stagecraft to create grand illusions. For the

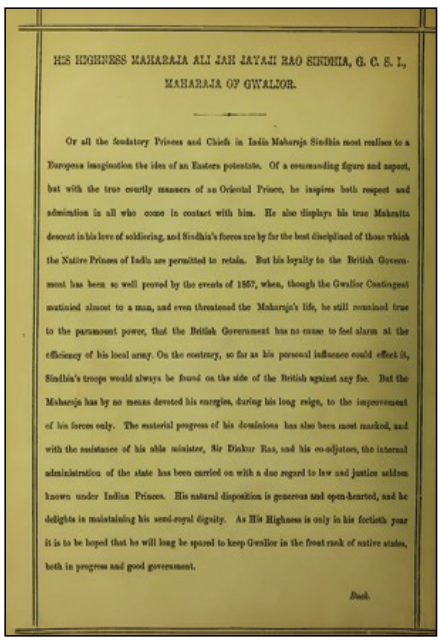
members of royalty and expatriate readers, the front cover also invokes the twin reactions of fascination and apprehension about the *nautch* performances which "worked as a form of cultural interaction between Indian rulers and the British East India Company officials" (Howard 2). The front cover then performs as an interstitial space where the cultures interact and provide material to the offended moralists to reinforce the existing power-relations by scapegoating those who transgressed the sexual boundaries under the allure of magic, exoticism, or unfettered attire of the native women. The *Indian Charivari* thus serve as a historical narrative of how the colonizer visually confronted the colonized subject.

Fig. 7: The *Indian Charivari* (17 October, 1872), printed in: Partha Mitter, *Art and Nationalism in Colonial India 1850-1922: Occidental Orientations*, Cambridge University Press, 1994, p. 140.

The idiosyncrasies of the native figure, the social customs and code of dressing provided a way to express moments of historical contiguities and colonial romance with India. At the same time, these moments were exploited and configured with colonial anxieties to sketch more aggressive and masculine forms of the British rule. For instance, the *nautch* performance which flourished in the late eighteenth century as a means of entertainment for the Indian princes was perceived by the British officials as a symbol of India's unchanging feudal tendencies and political despotism. As Grace Howard argues, the representations of *nautch* girls in the nineteenth century "perpetuated the belief of British men 'saving' Indian women as a way to justify the continuation of colonialism in the subcontinent" (Howard 3). However, the colonial discourse about the Indian princes was marked by a certain degree of ambivalence as well. As Caroline Keen states, after the Mutiny of 1857 which left the British government with a large amount of debt, "[e]conomically a policy of detente with loyal princes and landlords made good sense" (Keen 16).

A special "Charivari album" appeared in 1875 to cater to those royal figures who had shown dedication to the British rule and forms of governance. In return, Lord Canning who succeeded Lord Dalhousie after the Mutiny of 1857 rewarded the princely rulers by abolishing the principle of annexation and assured that "every Chief above the rank of *Jagheerdar*, who now governs his own territory […] that on failure of natural heirs his adoption of a successor […] will be recognised" (Keen 17). When, in August 1858, newspapers like *Hindu Patriot* demanded a further assurance about not interfering into the princely states of "Native Rajas," Lord Canning asserted that the British government would intervene to deter "the opportunities now available for gross misrule" (Keen 18). Nonetheless, the profiles of native princes which appeared in the special album of the *Indian Charivari* were prefaced with a subtle flattery (see Figures 8 and 9) as "a recognition of princely aid in the Indian Mutiny, and [later on], in 1909 a policy of *laissez-faire* was adopted in an attempt to secure the loyalty of the princes in the face of emerging Indian nationalism" (Keen ix). The special album marks a change from the crude caricaturist patterns of the previous decades to a more benign form of humor. Moreover, it covertly perpetuates the political hegemony that the British administration maintained over the subcontinent – "forces […] which the Native Princes of India are *permitted* to maintain" (my emphasis) – and strengthens the cultural differences by re-enacting the binaries between the colonizer and the colonized ("Maharaja Sindhia most realises to a

European imagination the idea of an Eastern potentate," *Indian Charivari* 1875, no pag.).



HIS HIGHNESS MAHARAJA ALI JAH JAYAJI RAO SINDHIA, G. C. S. I.,
MAHARAJA OF GWALIOR.

Of all the feudatory Princes and Chiefs in India Maharaja Sindhia most realises to a European imagination the idea of an Eastern potentate. Of a commanding figure and aspect, but with the true courtly manners of an Oriental Prince, he inspires both respect and admiration in all who come in contact with him. He also displays his true Mahratta descent in his love of soldiering, and Sindhia's forces are by far the best disciplined of those which the Native Princes of India are permitted to retain. But his loyalty to the British Government has been so well proved by the events of 1857, when, though the Gwalior Contingent mutinied almost to a man, and even threatened the Maharaja's life, he still remained true to the paramount power, that the British Government has no cause to feel alarm at the efficiency of his local army. On the contrary, so far as his personal influence could effect it, Sindhia's troops would always be found on the side of the British against any foe. But the Maharaja has by no means devoted his energies, during his long reign, to the improvement of his forces only. The material progress of his dominions has also been most marked, and with the assistance of his able minister, Sir Dinkur Rao, and his co-adjutors, the internal administration of the state has been carried on with a due regard to law and justice seldom known under Indian Princes. His natural disposition is generous and open-hearted, and he delights in maintaining his semi-royal dignity. As His Highness is only in his fortieth year it is to be hoped that he will long be spared to keep Gwalior in the front rank of native states, both in progress and good government.

Buck.

Fig. 8 and 9: "His Highness Maharaja Ali Jah Jayaji Rao Sindhia, G. C. S. I., Maharaja of Gwalior" and "The Gwalior Chief." The *Indian Charivari* (1875), no pag.

Still the urge to ridicule publicly and chastise British officials whose engagement with the native land seem to breach the prevalent social order, like Mr. S. S. Hogg, who took too much interest in the municipal matters of Calcutta (see Figure 10) convey the satirical potential that the magazine retained. The caption, "MISDIRECTED ENERGY," which accompanies the illustration of Mr. Hogg holding a broom and wearing the headgear generally worn by the natives, the red *safa*, seem to suggest a stiff resistance to the zones where different cultural systems could converge.

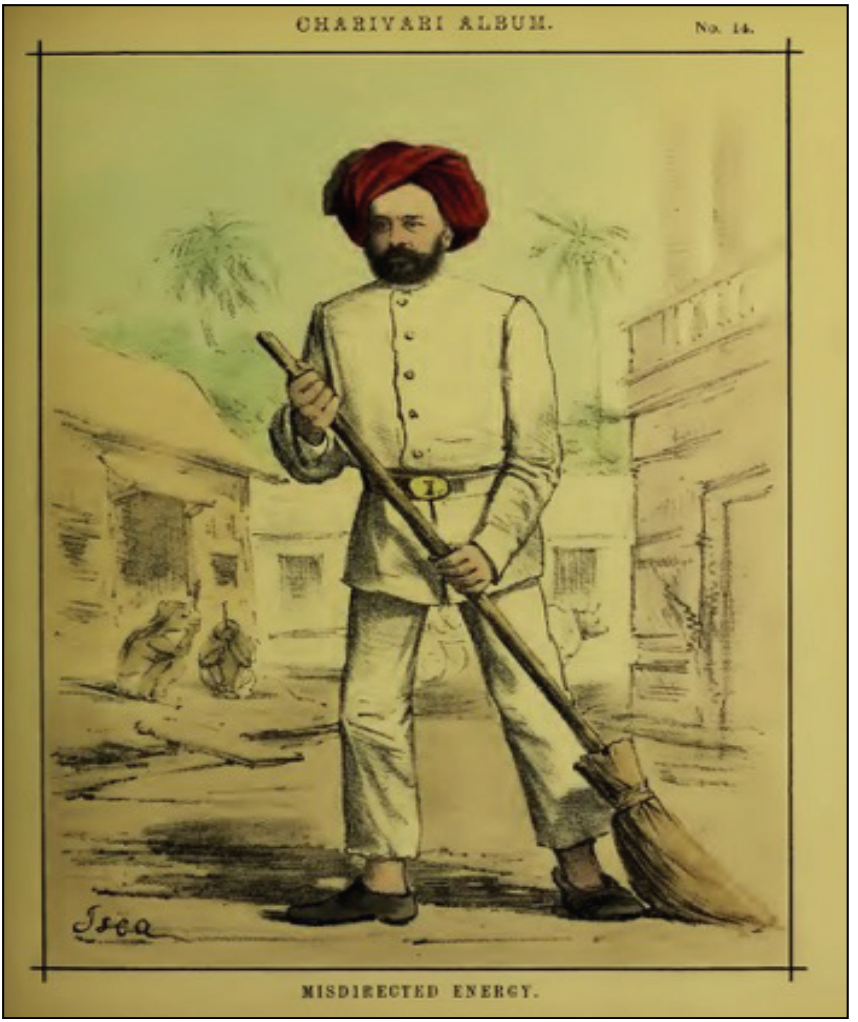


Fig. 10: "Misdirected Energy." The *Indian Charivari* (1875), no pag.

And yet such cultural assimilations took place, personified in the figure of Bengali *Baboo* (see Figure 11 below), which incited a more menacing response. The financial calculus after the Mutiny of 1857 heralded a change from the East India Company's standpoint of 'Oriental difference' to a reformist zeal towards the natives in the Indian subcontinent. The "Era of Reform" to modernize India had already begun with William Bentinck becoming the Governor-General of India in 1827. Conservative adminis-

trators before Bentinck like Lord Cornwallis (1786-1793) and Lord Wellesley (1798-1805) had clearly mapped out a policy to exclude Indians from getting employment in the government offices and the ultimate validation to maintain such views, which often displayed racial undertones, came from the Mutiny of 1857. Lord Wellesley's plan to expand the British dominions within the subcontinent found further boost under Lord Hastings' rule (1813-1823) when the entire Central India came under the British rule with the defeat of the Maharattas in the Maharatta war (1816-18) and proved to be the watershed moment when "the British dominion *in* India became the British dominion *of* India" (Mitra 15). This conservative view about governing India was opposed by the emerging Liberals, both at home and in the subcontinent, who argued for political, social, and religious reforms and the spread of western education. The effects of these opposing ideologies coupled with the financial pressures that the Company faced after the Mutiny of 1857 created a need to draw on the indigenous resources, skills and power-relations based on caste and regional equations. The result was the emergence of Company's close cultural contacts with the "scribal gentries" (the high-caste Brahmins) and "martial communities" (the Rajputs and the *Bhumihars*) who filled positions to represent the bureaucracy and armed forces within the Indian subcontinent (Washbrook, "India, 1818-1869" 413-4). The *Indian Charivari* lampooned the figure of Bengali *Baboo* who represented the new and rising urban middle class (*shikshita madhyabitta*) in Bengal trained in western education and ways of dressing.

The British denigration of this new social group, which frequently appeared in the form of pungent visual statements and racialized caricatures in the *Indian Charivari*, was informed by the counter-hegemonic networks it sought to create through a mix of their literary creations, high-caste status, and tenured-government jobs. The articulate middle class in Bengal pursued a distinct cultural identity which was perceived by the Anglo-Indian commentators as attempts to transcend the colonial hegemonic patterns in the subcontinent. And so, the outline of the *Baboo*, as depicted in the figure, accentuates the cultural and racial differences and project a "mock serenade" to punish the social group for discursively articulating the shifting positions between the two cultures in nineteenth-century India. The articulation of exclusive feminine traits as opposed to the Victorian ideal of dominant masculinity in the visual representations of the Bengali *Baboo* serve as another instance to suggest the hardening of racial attitude towards the natives which began with Cornwallis' rule

Fig. 11: "The young Bengalee Baboo of the future." The *Indian Charivari* (1873), printed in: Sutapa Dutta, "Packing a Punch at the Bengali Babu," *Journal of South Asian Studies*, 2021, p. 13.

in the previous century and had culminated with the Mutiny of 1857. In "Ethnicity and Racialism in Colonial Indian Society" (1982), D. A. Washbrook argues that beneath the taxonomy of martial races which enjoyed the patronage of Raj, the "criminal tribes of South India" who were strictly surveilled for their deviant tendencies and the non-martial

races typified by the Bengali *Baboo* who was caricatured for his constitutional feebleness, servile demeanor and use of pompous rhetoric lay a steady explanation provided by the racial theories since "the vagrancy laws, which permitted the deportation of whites whose deviant behaviour undermined 'the mystique' of their race, and […] resistance of the Indian Civil Service to power-sharing with Indians lest the 'English' character of the administration be diluted" remained in place till the second half of the nineteenth century (Washbrook, "Ethnicity and Racialism" 156-7).[5] Such racial and gendered enunciations appear in the *Parsee Punch* as well with a twist that the native commentators strike back at the British Empire by employing the similar gestures which exemplify the cultural differences. As the next part of my chapter shows, after the *Indian Charivari*, the *Parsee Punch*, and other vernacular magazines which emerged between 1870s and the beginning of twentieth century, attempted to promulgate a resistance in literary and political terms and revealed further contradictions of the colonial discourse which till now determined how the colonized subject was visually represented.

The Parsee Punch

Despite sharing the literary and causal links with the British *Punch* and other Anglo-Indian magazines in nineteenth-century India, the *Parsee* Punch offers a space to resist and reinterpret the colonial stereotypes which functioned as institutionalized expressions of the British empire. The *Parsee Punch* and other vernacular magazines complicate the understanding that the cultural contours mapped by the British imperial project were linear, static, and clearly defined. The literary and visual hierarchies are appropriated by the native commentators to establish patterns of collaboration as well as contestation with the colonial narratives. Printed and published by Apyakhtiar Press at Elphinstone Circle in Bombay, the *Parsee Punch* began in July 1854 and maintained its circulation till 1878 when its name was changed to the *Hindi Punch*. As the *Hindi Punch*, the vernacular magazine voiced many concerns that resonated with the Indian nationalist movement and popular consciousness until its publication ended in 1930.

5 For a detailed account on the vagrancy laws, refer to Aravind Ganachari's article, "'White Man's Embarrassment' European Vagrancy in 19th Century Bombay."

The *Parsee Punch* appeared with English and Gujarati letterpress which accompanied each illustration; a feature that distinguishes it from both the *Delhi Sketch Book* and the *Indian Charivari* which mostly used neologisms or anglicized versions of the native words. With an annual subscription fee of Rs. 6, the *Parsee Punch* began the pursuit of exploring the British attitude towards India and government's reform measures through mockery, humorous cartoons, direct criticism, and satirical methods. Although issues pertaining to colonial expansion through "conflicts in the Far East, sub-Saharan Africa, Egypt, South Africa (Boer War)" were frequently featured, the *Parsee Punch* really took it off by presenting various aspects of Parsi life and the predominant political and social conditions in Bombay (Hasan 19).

In Figure 12, Sohrab and his routine on the day of *Pateti*, the Parsi New Year, from early morning till 2 a.m. at night is humorously portrayed to convey the varied images and representations of the Parsi community in public discourses. The term *Pateti* is derived from the Avestan word, *Paitita*, mentioned in the sacred texts of Zoroastrianism which signifies the day of repentance for the sins committed in the previous year. On this particular day, the Zoroaster wakes up early, spends most of his morning personal grooming and wears new clothes to visit the fire-temple. Sohrab's insolent gestures (as depicted through the visual frames and accompanying captions, "The devil of a hajaam has not cut them right," "bhoo-bhoooo! Ah, walk away, you braying ass" and "The beggar nuisance") imply ridicule for the religious day and the idea of purifying oneself is inverted with each frame thrusting Sohrab deeper into the vices of life (Hasan 29). The Parsi stereotypes like "[a] Parsi loses no time in breaking his word" or that "a bankrupt Parsi starts a liquor shop and celebrates the day of Zoroaster by drinking brandy" acquainted the public to a biased version of their customs, ways of living and religious practices (Hasan 28). The social dimension of such cultural stereotypes (and Parsis' purity laws) kept the Parsi community relatively insulated from the epistemological models that the British employed to understand and control the natives. It resulted in a safe distance from which the Parsis could take advantage of the educational, financial, philanthropic, and professional opportunities which emerged from the evangelical insistence and reform measures instituted by the British officials. Unlike the Hindu and Muslim communities, the Parsis benefited immensely in their dealings with the British administration. At the time of their settlement in Bombay, the Parsis adopted the Hindu vernacular (Gujarati language) but

their preference for the westernized ways of thinking, English language, and manners of dressing facilitated a close relation with the British while remaining situated amongst the natives.

Fig. 12: "How our Sohrab enjoyed his Pateti." The *Parsee Punch* (1884), printed in: Mushirul Hasan, *Wit and Wisdom: Pickings from the Parsee Punch*, Niyogi, 2012, p. 29.

As a literary vehicle of the native elite, the *Parsee Punch* chronicled the introduction of English education in nineteenth-century India. The university education at that time followed the Elphinstone model (after

Mountstuart Elphinstone, the Governor of Bombay, became the President of Bombay Native Education Society in 1822) of a pyramidical scheme to recruit an elite class of the natives. The hierarchical structure placed English at the top (to impart European education that laid special emphasis on science) with knowledge skills gained from the erstwhile *Peshwas*[6] in Poona and vernacular at the middle and lower tiers of the pyramid (Ahmad 391-392). However, the question of women's education remained peripheral for the most part of nineteenth century. As Partha Chatterjee notes in "Colonialism, nationalism, and colonized women: the contest of India," the colonial administrators took on a paternalistic role in order to protect Indian women from the "'degenerate and barbaric' social customs of the Indian people," and Sir James Fergusson, who became Governor of Bombay in March 1880, followed it wherever he could (Chatterjee 622). In another illustration (see Figure 13), the city of Poona (Pune) is personified as Miss Poona-bai and shown in an intimate embrace with Fergusson, and the letterpress reads, "A LOVING PAIR" (Hasan 95). The immediate context of the illustration is the land concession which Fergusson provided to establish a high school for the native girls at Poona (ibid.). The figure deliberately hinges on a sexual representation to suggest layers of morally ambiguity behind Fergusson's reforms, especially when seen in light of his differences from Lord Ripon's (the Governor-General of India; 1880-1884) liberal policies to minimize British interference in the native states. Fergusson resisted Ripon's idea to allow natives to the Indian Civil Service due to his distrust of the educated Indians. Both Fergusson and Ripon worked in furtherance of the imperial rule over the subcontinent, but their approach differed in terms of their dealings with the changing aspirations of the educated class in nineteenth-century India. For instance, Fergusson considered Poona Sarvojanik Sabha formed by the educated class of natives (the Deccan Brahmins) as fully opposed in spirit to the policies of the government, a disloyal spirit "barely concealed beneath specious professions of patriotism" (Gupta 239).

6 The term *Peshwa* denotes the chief minister of the Maratha Empire in the eighteenth and nineteenth-century India.

Figure 13. "A loving pair." The *Parsee Punch* (1884). Source: Mushirul Hasan, *Wit and Wisdom: Pickings from the Parsee Punch* (New Delhi: Niyogi, 2012), 95.

While it is not difficult to discern a racial pattern underlying Fergusson's thought in keeping the role of education limited to administrative purposes (unlike Ripon who laid stress on the political determination), the figure depicting Fergusson with Poona-bai enacts cultural anxieties seeped in gender relations from both ends: For the colonizer, Poona-bai represented the tension between a form of domination which is based on maintaining racial and cultural differences and incorporating educational reforms which tend to erase them. Moreover, she is perceived as a living embodiment of India whose sensual gaze "the good British man must resist" lest "its voluptuousness […] release[s] the passion of the stilted English body" (Luhrmann 6). The threat, in terms of dismantling of racial hierarchies, that the native women projected meant a need to 'domesticate' the empire (see Figure 14).

Fig.14: "Honours for the Viceroy-Timely Advice." *The Parsee Punch* (1884), printed in: Mushirul Hasan, *Wit and Wisdom: Picking from the Parsee Punch*, Niyogi, 2012, p. 139.

The imperial home for the colonists in India which housed either the British wife or mother fostered "appropriate gender roles, national virtues and imperial rule" (Blunt, "Imperial Geographies" 422). The household manuals, like Flora Annie Steel's *The Complete Indian Housekeeper and Cook* (1888), written by British and Anglo-Indian women ensured that the domestic space remained free of a native woman's presence. Even elderly native women (the *ayahs*) hired to look after young children were generally rejected in the imperial households due to the fear that they could appropriate the mother's role and teach the native language to the Anglo-Indian child creating an "oppositional site within the very heart of Anglo-Indian domesticity" (Sen 5). Individualized and regionally placeable to suggest a pan-India type, the image of Poona-bai represented a fantasized impression of oriental womanhood which colonizers like Fergusson attempted to retrieve, by means of reforms, from the dominant patriarchal discourses of the natives.

For the colonized subject, Poona-bai in Fergusson's embrace showed the gendered politics behind the missionary, legal and reform projects which mainly sought to protect the Indian women from the everyday barbarity of religious doctrines, social customs and "darker races" (Hutchins 69). Conservatives, reformists, and nationalists alike had placed the Hindu woman[7] within the binary position of, as Chatterjee argued, the material (represented in Western, outer and masculine terms) and the spiritual sphere (represented in Eastern, inner and feminine terms) where the latter was fashioned as constituting 'Indianness'. The spiritual sphere accorded the place where the mythic and historical tangents of what Harriet Martineau in her book *British Rule in India: A Historical Sketch* (1857) characterized as, "'Hindoostan proper,' signifying the geographic space stretching from the Himalayas to the Vindhya Mountains in one direction 'and from the Burramppoter *[sic]* to the Indus in the other'" converged (Ray 58-9). For the natives, the figure of Hindu woman embodied and heightened visibility of the spiritual essence which was considered "superior to the West" and a counterfoil to the values represented by the British modernity (Chatterjee 623). Educational and missionary reforms conveyed a real danger in the form of religious conversions as the case of Maharashtrian upper-caste woman Pandita Ramabai reflects who was baptized in 1883 and felt relieved in "having found a 'religion which gave privileges equally to men and women; and where there was no distinction of caste, colour or sex in it'" (Anagol-McGinn 19). In this way, the *Parsee Punch* staged and articulated the ideological pulls and pressures which determined the ways the colonizer and the colonized looked at each other. At the same time, the *Parsee Punch* and other vernacular magazines can be seen as visual and verbal instances of microcultural flows which pose significant challenges for the ways in which the British empire and its colonies have traditionally been constituted. Since determining the exact opinions and feelings of a social group or class during a given period remains a difficult task in most historical situations, it is remarkable to see how *Punch* cartoons are able to capture the dialectical spirit of nineteenth-century India by being subversive and supportive of the British empire in the same frame.

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7 In her work, *En-Gendering India: Woman and Nation in Colonial and Postcolonial Narratives*, Sangeeta Ray explains how the Hindu woman essentially functioned as "a descriptive counterpoint to an emerging/emergent British India" in nineteenth-century India and rendered women from other communities as peripheral "for the staging of a temporal development of British ascension in India" (Ray 52).

Conclusion

While Ian Haywood in his recent work, *The Rise of Victorian Caricatures* (2020), adopts an inverted approach to the British *Punch* by focusing on the lesser-known caricatures and satirical images of the 1830s and early 1840s whose markets and methods were appropriated by the most enduring and iconic periodical, my methodology has been to explore the geographical verticals which emanated from the *Punch* to map the extent to which the imperial power shaped and produced the idea of India and 'Indianness' through visual registers. The colonial state reproduced the native figure as being dangerous and savage (especially after the mutiny of 1857), terms which were reserved for the popular masses, "people whose burgeoning numbers and seeming rootlessness, moral laxity and presumed laxity caused a social panic in the big cities of nineteenth-century Europe" (Woloch 10). Through this chapter, I have shown that *Punch* cartoons reveal an alternate history which pose problems for the mutually constitutive relationship that the British administration in India and elsewhere maintained between knowledge-production and colonial expansion. The many progenies of *Punch* (*Delhi Sketch Book*, *The Indian Charivari*, *The Oudh Punch*, *The Delhi Punch*, *The Punjab Punch*, *The Indian Punch*, *Parsee Punch* and *Hindu Punch*) which inserted 'visuality' into the cultural and political practices of nineteenth-century India depict sites of interactions and intersections from which Indians were viewed and parodied by the British and Indian cartoonists.

At the same time, these cartoons and their divergent evaluations of the British *Raj* provide an insightful commentary to analyze the relationship between the colonial administrators, the native elites, and the marginalized groups. In tracing these visual encounters which flourished within the spaces of the vernacular, this chapter intends to broaden the scope of Comics Studies in India and assert difference from the authorized accounts of colonial history, a step which responds to nineteenth-century Indian novelist and journalist Bankimchandra Chattopadhyay's famous assertion that "we must have our own history"[8] in the context of Bengalis' suffering and exploitative, everyday colonial practices under the British rule.

8 Bankimchandra Chattopadhyay, *Bankim Rachanabali*, vol. 2 (Calcutta: Sahitya Samsad, 1956), 337.

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