PREETI CHOPRA

Refiguring the Colonial City

Recovering the Role of Local Inhabitants in the Construction of Colonial Bombay, 1854–1918

To understand the major role local inhabitants play in making a colonial city, we must learn to recognize the many ways that they presented themselves and also acknowledge the processes by which their contributions were obscured. This article takes up this general challenge by focusing on colonial Bombay from 1854 to 1918. It shows that what was at stake was not only the varied processes of building, including obviously Western stylistic influences on local architecture, but that the colonial government had the power to selectively read the cultural landscapes created by local inhabitants, rendering the landscapes of the latter as potentially inconsequential. Although other factors and players were important in shaping the city, in this article I will look at vernacular architecture and urbanism to focus on the role of the local inhabitants in the construction of colonial Bombay.[1]

Colonial Bombay was the product of the fragmentation of two modes of urbanism: the colonial and the local. In this article I will first highlight the impact of the colonial government's selective reading of the local landscape by focusing on the neighborhood of the Memon community. I then argue that, in contrast to the architectural regularity seen in colonial buildings, the coherence of "native urbanism" lay in the specific activity that took place in the space and in the community that dominated it. Following this, I suggest that the process of transculturation might be useful in helping us understand the Western influences on local architecture. I conclude by showing that only by taking vernacular architecture and urbanism into consideration can we refigure the colonial city, allowing us to see that it was not simply the product of the colonial regime but the result of varied processes of making and imagining the city.

Selective Reading of Local Cultural Landscapes

The British Crown acquired Bombay in 1661 as part of the matrimonial and military alliance concluded between Britain and Portugal. However, Bombay's real transformation took place after 1668 when it was transferred to the East India Company for an annual rental fee of ten pounds, as Charles II found it too expensive to govern. Under the East India Company these islands off of the west coast of India were joined together and expanded by dams and reclamations over the following centuries to form the Island of Bombay. The growth of the Presidencies of Calcutta, Bombay, and Madras in India were a result of the East India Company's well-defined strategy of developing land bases to facilitate trade. In the case of the East India Company, the broad outlines of this policy were to use naval power in the Indian Ocean and on the coasts of India itself, combined with the building of fortified bases as well as enclaves in English factory ports. This strategy was based on the calculation that the land-based Mughal regimes did not have an effective way of repulsing a sea attack. By 1709, the Company had permanent factories at the Gulf of Gombroon and Basra, major settlements in the Presidencies of Bombay, Calcutta, and Madras, and another large base at Bantam or Java to oversee the spice trade.[2]

While the island of Bombay had been under British control since 1661, Bombay's urban development began with the construction of

Figure 1.

Plan of the City of Bombay, 1909. The destruction of the fort walls after 1862 opened up an arena for the construction of substantial public buildings fronting the Esplanade. The native town grew up to the north of the Esplanade after 1803. From *The Gazetteer of Bombay City and Island*, 3 vols., compiled by S. M. Edwardes (Bombay: Times Press, 1909), 2: frontispiece.

the Fort from 1715 to 1743. The Fort formed the nucleus of colonial settlement well after the fort walls were torn down after 1862 (Figure 1). The British and Indians viewed Bombay in different ways. These alternate readings of the city had great consequences, as the colonial government had the power to read and render local cultural landscapes as inconsequential, as we shall see in the case study of the quarter of the Memon community.

The British viewed the city in terms of color and settlement pattern. In their eyes the Indians lived in what the British called the "native town" or "black town," characterized by its high population density and intricate network of streets. The Europeans lived in the "European quarter" or beyond the bazaars in spacious, low-density suburbs. In contrast, the complex mapping of

the city by Indians included religious buildings, water tanks, statues, markets, and other localities inhabited by Bombay's diverse populations. British accounts, including memoirs and travel guides, reveal a city seen through the eyes of an elite who rarely left their carriages to explore. On the other hand, accounts from native newspapers reveal several locations important to the local citizenry, many away from the main road and some only approachable on foot. These alternate mappings of the city's divisions show us the very different ways in which people interpret, imagine, and experience the city.

The plan of the city of Bombay from 1909 shows the city's major administrative divisions, while the plan of Chakla is a detailed plan of one of these major subdivisions (Figures 1 and 2). These divisions did not always record the city

CHAKLA SECTION

PLAN SHOWING CIRCLES & BLOCKS FOR THE CENSUS OF 1901

SCALE 400 FEET TO 1INCH

— NOTE —

CIRCLES ARE BOUNDED BY GREEN COLOR
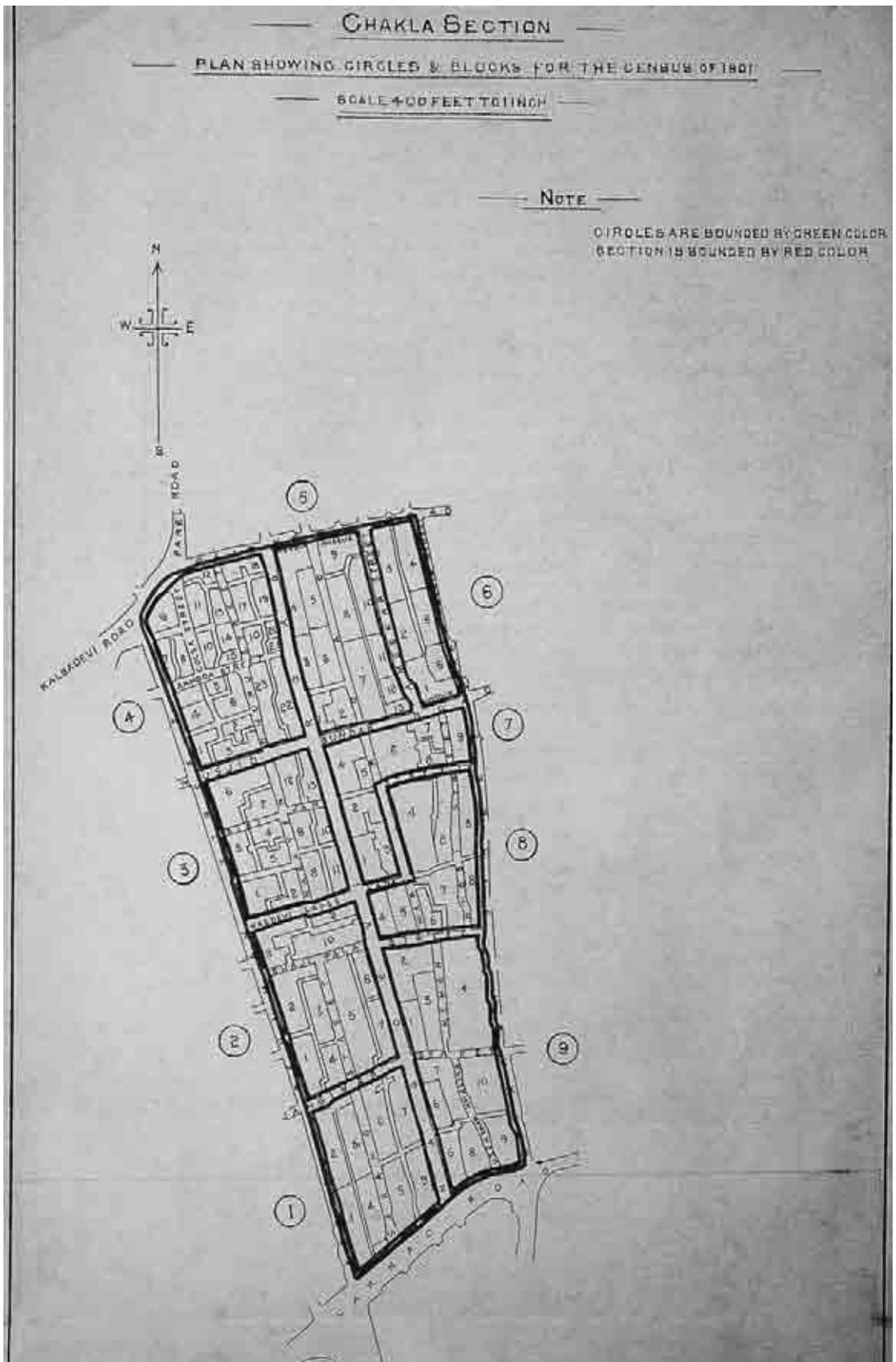SECTION IS BOUNDED BY RED COLOR

Figure 2.
Plan of Chakla section, 1901. Though not marked in the 1909 plan of the city of Bombay, this long narrow section lies between Mandvi and Market sections and south of the Umarkhadi section. Memonwada straddled the northern portion of Chakla section and the southern part of the Umarkhadi section. The new one-hundred-foot-wide road was to be constructed from Crawford Market, which fronted Carnac Road, the southern boundary of Chakla section. From S. M Edwardes, *Census of India—1901,* vol. 11, Bombay (Town & Island), pt. 5, *Report* (Bombay: Times of India Press, 1901), facing 77.

divisions of the local population.[3] If the boundaries of a local quarter did not exist in official maps they were vulnerable to change by the colonial government, as they lacked official recognition. This is illustrated in the example of the "City of Bombay Improvement Trust Scheme No. XXX-VII: Sandhurst Road to Crawford Market Road Street Scheme" involving the construction of a one-hundred-foot-wide road between these two points on the eastern side of the city. The Bombay Improvement Trust was created to improve the sanitation of the city after the bubonic plague first struck Bombay in 1896.

In 1911, a delegation of Memons, a Sunni Muslim community, visited James Orr, president of the Improvement Trust, and asked him to reconsider the scheme. One-sixth of this scheme lay in the Memon quarter, known as Memonwada. *Wad,* in Marathi, means a hedge, an enclosure, a ward, or a quarter.[4] Memonwada is mentioned in official publications but cannot be precisely located in maps of the colonial government even though civil servants did know its location. As Gayatri Spivak has noted, "*measuring* silences" in the data in colonial records is important to do.[5] What is left out of colonial records is as important as what they contain because the silences remind us of unrecorded voices and community boundaries, which have been ignored because they do not officially exist. While the exact boundaries of Memonwada were not clear to the colonial regime, in 1911 the Memons requested the government to ensure that the area occupied by them would not be disturbed by the activities of the Trust or any other body. The area was bounded on the east by Don Tad Street, on the west by Abdul Rehman Street, on the north by Chunam Kiln Street, and on the south by Masjid Road.[6] The locality lay approximately within Chakla and Umarkhadi sections (Figures 1 and 2).

It is important to see here that an immigrant community constructs its own quarter in the city, which is at least partially imagined into being. Without physical structures such as walls and gates, they nevertheless construct the boundaries of their quarter, and this construction is no less real without official recognition. For the Memons, who migrated to Bombay from the western region of Gujarat, Memonwada was the hereditary or ancestral home of their community in Bombay. There are many different ways of marking and constructing boundaries, and a boundary's particular meaning may be specific to a particular culture. Patricia Seed points out that for the English boundaries and boundary markers, such as hedges and fences, were "significant markers of ownership."[7] Had Memonwada had a wall or another form of boundary marker, it likely would have been represented in official maps, and the colonial government probably would have negotiated with the Memons before announcing the scheme.

In the improvement trust scheme we see a collision between the colonial regime's desire to shape the city in a certain way and the local Memon community's desire to keep their hereditary home intact. In this case the acquisition of property would result in the breakup of some *jamaats* (assemblies of the community), interfering in a custom that required members of a *jamaat* to live close to each other.[8] S. M. Edwardes, the police commisioner, gave a detailed account of the Memon community and their locality in 1911. He observed that the three important elements of the Memon community were the *jamatkhana* (a space where the community assembled), the mosque, and the family-house occupied in the joint-family system by parents and sons and their families (Figure 3). Living amidst these institutions and working here and at the docks close by, it was possible for Memons to attend to daily activities of work and family life as well as those of communal life. Proximity of living quarters enabled all members of the community to be able to fulfill these commitments.[9]

The separate communal quarter of the Memons and the spatial qualities of this quarter allowed Memon women to move freely within its boundaries. Memon women who were *pardanishin*—that is, veiled—were central to and also required to attend many social ceremonies of the community. Not only was the wearing of a veil strictly followed but even a "heavily veiled" Memon woman would not go in front of the verandah of a house where a group of men—Memon or other—were sitting. The narrow lanes and the communal area of Memonwada, which few members of the general population

Figure 3.
View of Haji Karim Muhummad Suleiman Cutch Memon Jamatkhana, Kambekar Road (built circa 1930). This is the *jamatkhana* (space where the community assembled) of the Cutchi Memon community whose ancestors came to Bombay from the region of Cutch in the contemporary state of Gujarat in western India. Photograph by author.

Figure 4.
View of Elphinstone Circle (now Horniman Circle), Fort section, 1864–1873. This was one of the first major urban-design schemes in Bombay. The arcade on the lower level would become a typical feature of buildings along some of the major arteries surrounding the Fort sections. Courtesy of the Dr. Bhau Daji Lad Sangrahalaya.

visited, allowed women of the Memon community to leave their houses and visit their friends and neighbors on a daily basis. Edwardes points out that "it is no exaggeration to say that if the Memons lived in any other quarter than their own or in a quarter built upon western principles, the women of the middle and lower-middle classes, who cannot afford closed carriages and other such conveniences and luxuries, would probably hardly ever stir out of their houses."[10] Even though the Memon quarter had no walls, it can be considered to be a veiled space whose very urban fabric with its narrow lanes allowed veiled Memon women to walk freely within its boundaries in their everyday life, free from the gaze of Memon men and strangers. The proposed wide road would not just rupture communal life but would expose Memon women to the gaze of men. Not surprisingly, Edwardes made the case to the government that the proposed road scheme had caused "considerable resentment among the Memons, through the heart of whose hereditary home (in Bombay) the road is to run."[11]

British civil servants, who administered and governed the city through institutions such as the municipal corporation, and the police had a more complex picture of the city than most European observers. However, despite their insights into local complexities, they could

choose to selectively read the cultural landscapes created by local inhabitants and dismiss these realities in favor of their own plans. Even though Edwardes was deeply sympathetic to the hardship this road would cause to the Memon community, he declared himself "strongly in favour" of the road scheme, which he considered to be necessary for the progress and development of the city.[12]

In a speech, Orr admitted that it was only after the scheme was publicized that he became aware of the number of Memons who would be affected because of their "peculiar social customs." On further investigation he found that while approximately ten thousand Memons lived in the Memon quarter, *only* about a quarter of this population would be displaced. Orr concluded that, from the sanitary improvement of their quarter and acquisition of adjacent land for those displaced, "much good may come out of the evil" for the Memons.[13]

From an early period the Trust was criticized for paying more attention to ventilation schemes such as street schemes than to improvement projects for dealing with unsanitary areas such as Memonwada. The colonial government's and the Memon community's disagreement over the road scheme arose from a fundamentally different understanding of what gave the city structure and coherence. For the colonial regime, it was uniform urban facades that gave an area coherence, whereas for the Memons, it was the intertwined community institutions of their daily life that gave structure to their neighborhood. Underlying these disparate ways of reading the city were two different modes of construing the city and one's place in it. The colonial regime viewed the city from outside. It was responsible for the city as a whole, of which Memonwada was only a part. To make the city legible and functional, new transportation corridors had to intersect the city in the most direct manner. To Memons, Memonwada was the center of their world in the city, the neighborhood where they had built their homes and institutions. They viewed the city from inside, from Memonwada, the part that gave the whole worth. They saw no value in a distant gaze that overlooked the importance of their ancestral home.

Alternative Structures of Consistency, Regularity, and Coherence

In order to contextualize the contribution of the local inhabitants of the city to its urbanism and highlight the very real limits of this contribution, I will summarize the urban policies of the colonial regime, for whom external appearances were of utmost importance. From the 1860s, the colonial government was able to control large parcels of land, where it erected buildings that were stylistically similar to each other, such as the Elphinstone Circle, or had a common architectural feature, such as an arcade, allowing them to create a recognizable and coherent "colonial" Bombay. Axes punctuated by fountains, statues, or buildings helped to link various areas with each other and provide a legible visual structure, particularly around the Fort area (Figure 4). Large-scale planning of the city only happened after the plague, when the colonial government paid attention to the reorganization of the city by opening up congested areas of the city through street schemes, residential estate planning, and in the suburban expansion of the city.

The government is the only entity that can look at the city as a complex unit and plan for it at that large scale, so the contributions of local inhabitants are more fragmented and dispersed in space.[14] The contribution of local inhabitants to Bombay's urbanization can be seen by examining the naming and formation of neighborhoods in the city.

Many of the street and neighborhood names in Bombay can be derived from the names of communities that first inhabited them or with a particular activity associated with them. Bhavnagar Street got its name because its residents were Memons from Bhavnagar in Kathiawar.[15] This became part of the larger neighborhood of Memonwada. Bhangwadi was originally a *wadi,* or garden, that got its name because it was a good place to drink an intoxicating beverage called *bhang.* Many shops were opened here by Gujarati brahmans for making and selling the drink (Figure 5).[16] Bhangwadi was also spatially different from Memonwada, which was an imagined bounded quarter that contained many streets, while Bhangwadi was a garden.

Figure 5.
View of Bhangwadi, Kalbadevi Road, circa early twentieth century. The facade of this building, with its Gothic arches, is interrupted by the insertion of a one-story-tall carved elephant hovering above the entrance. Photograph by author.

In contrast to the architectural regularity seen in colonial buildings, the consistency in "native urbanism" lay in the specific activity that took place in the space and in the community that dominated it. This is not to deny regularity in native-dominated areas but to argue that it was not a priority. Khotachiwadi in the Girgaum section, for example, has small double-storied houses with delicate wooden balconies and occasional external staircases typical of localities dominated by East Indian Christians (Figure 6). However, each house varies from the other. It was not that the idea of architectural uniformity at an urban scale was completely foreign to South Asia. The Indian city of Jaipur in the northwestern region of Rajasthan, built by its ruler Sawai Jai Singh after 1727, stipulated that all the city's monuments be painted pink.[17] Strict uniformity is usually imposed when a neighborhood or city is designed by the singular vision of an individual, such as Jai Singh, and not when there are multiple actors.

Bhavnagar Street and Bhangwadi exemplify two different ways in which the local population contributed to Bombay's form: the street might form an independent quarter or combine with many streets to form part of a larger division or quarter such as a *moholla* or *wada,* and what I call the compound. Some streets, founded by a particular community, stood as independent quarters, whereas others, such as Bhavnagar Street, formed part of the larger community geography, as a unit of the Memonwada quarter. In contrast, Bhangwadi was a garden, and such large compounds formed a prominent part of the city's urban fabric.

Many wealthy citizens owned large parcels of land in the city and in contrast to the more group- or community-directed patterns of urban development of Memonwada, for example, one might look at the ordering of large compounds as a contribution to the city's urban form at a more individual or individual-family level. Until 1884, Second Bhatwadi, for example, was known as Ganesh Ramji's Wadi, since Ganesh Ramji, head surveyor of the Collector of Bombay, owned most of the houses in it.[18] Some of Bombay's wealthy citizens built their own wadis that had within them houses, *chawls* (multiroom tenement buildings), shops, and a mosque or a temple dedicated to a favored deity and endowed by wealthy individuals in the city.[19]

The development of compounds cut across community lines: Hindus, Muslims, Parsis, and

Jews developed compounds. The compound of the Magen David Synagogue was developed by the Sassoon family and came to include a synagogue, a hospice for travelers, a ritual bath, a Talmud Torah, and a school.[20] In contrast, the colonial government developed few such compounds, with their mix of secular and sacred activities. Instead they developed compounds such as the vast Jamshetji Jeejebhoy Hospital complex, which supported only medical activities.

Many native compounds had a prominent gate facing the street, but, in contrast to colonial public buildings, their focus was directed away from the street and in on themselves. Architectural consistency was occasionally seen, as in the Parsi institution Allbless Bagh, which was one of the most important public spaces for Parsis, but was not privileged (Figure 7). The colonial regime was interested in the creation of a beautiful Bombay, a city to be admired for its grand buildings set in spacious, landscaped settings and street schemes that acted as screens for old Bombay. In contrast, the local population produced residential and institutional complexes that looked inward and reflected the social, cultural, and economic realities of the specific place and people.

The local fabric also revealed local economies. Madhav Bagh, the great Hindu religious and public space, consisted of a variety of buildings in various architectural styles arranged around two spaces. Madhav Bagh, or the garden of Madhav, was created in 1874 by Nurrotumdas and Vurjeevandass Madhavdass in memory of their late father Madhavdass Runchordass.[21] But the reach of Madhav Bagh extended beyond its compound. A *chawl* built next door was part of the property of the Lakshumi Narayan temple in Madhav Bagh, and the rent from the *chawl* building helped to support it.[22] Across the road from Madhav Bagh, though set back from it, was the Shett Mooljibhoy Madhowdas Dharamshala, built by the same family for Hindu travelers in 1879. There was no attempt to visually link Madhav Bagh to the neighboring *chawl* and the traveler's rest house built across the road from it. The practice of using the rent from a building such as a *chawl* or shops to maintain a community charitable or religious institution was common in Bombay. This should be seen as part of the process by which natives

altered the urban fabric. Similar practices exist in other parts of the world. *Waqf* property, for example, was common throughout the Islamic world. In her study of Cairo's history, the sociologist Janet Abu-Lughod wrote about the institution of *waqf,* which was like an endowment, usually in the form of property, used to support a religious or charitable institution.[23] In Bombay there was *waqf* property left by charitable Muslims as well as similar endowments left by Hindus. In contrast, colonial institutions were supported by taxes and did not require shops or *chawls* to generate revenue.

Figure 6.
View of Khotachiwadi, Girgaum section, late nineteenth to early twentieth centuries. This locality, with its small, airy, single- and double-storied houses is typical of areas inhabited by the East Indian community. Photograph by author.

Figure 7.
View of Allbless Bagh, Charni Road, 1868. This was constructed by the wealthy Allbless family for holding functions for the Parsi community, including marriages. Photograph by author.

Each community landscape consisted of a variety of spaces, which could include neighborhoods, large multiinstitutional compounds, burial sites, and in a few cases a building prominently located on Hornby Road that fronted the Fort. For example, the Jamshetji Jeejebhoy Benevolent Institution, which came to house the Parsi Panchayat, the community's governing body, resembled a Renaissance palazzo and had the requisite arcade on the first floor.[24] While the varied community spaces might seem fragmented and dispersed in space, they were not necessarily so for the community. Hereditary homes in the city, such as Memonwada and Israel moholla of the Memon and Bene Israel communities, respectively, helped anchor communities to their history, while new institutions encouraged community settlement or acted as the public interface between the community and the colonial regime. In Bombay, the local population created community quarters as well as compounds. These compounds were residential and institutional complexes that looked inward and reflected the social, cultural, and economic realities of the specific place and people. At the same time, some individual buildings in these quarters and compounds drew upon the architectural language of colonial buildings.

Hybrid Architecture of the Colonial Regime and the Local Population

By the second half of the nineteenth century, the influence of colonial architecture was seen in buildings constructed by natives. There are several structures that show this influence and I want to look at two buildings and one gate that combine colonial architecture with Indic details and motifs. There is no information on who designed these structures, but, given that they were nongovernmental structures located in what was considered the native town, one can speculate that they were designed by Indians. However, even if they were not designed by Indians, they would produce a sense of unease. The first structure I want to turn to was located on Kalbadevi Road, a prominent artery for Europeans, tourists, and Indians and an entrance to the native town. Bhangwadi, built in the early twentieth century, uses Gothic arches derived from the British colonial architecture of Bombay (Figure 5). Here, the local influence makes itself felt in the insertion of a massive elephant with a palanquin into the building's facade above an arched entranceway.

The second structure, Hira Bagh, a Jain *dharamshala* or rest house built in 1905 at C. P. Tank Circle, in the vicinity of Madhav Bagh, has arcades of rounded arches running along both levels of its facade displaying Corinthian-inspired capitals (Figure 8). Hira Bagh is striking in the way it curves the corner in a manner reminiscent of the Old Oriental Bank Building, an older colonial building in the Fort area that straddles its triangular site at the junction of roads formerly known as Rampart Row and Medows Street (Figure 9). The arched panels on the second floor of Hira Bagh are carved in floral patterns, festoons, and the corner panel contains an image of animals drinking out of a trough.

The third structure is the gate of Krishna Bagh, which was founded around 1886. Krishna Bagh is located close to Hira Bagh on a road leading off of the C. P. Tank Circle. The gate of Krishna Bagh also borrows its frame from colonial architecture, but in this case it is overwhelmed by Hindu sculptural detail (Figure 10). It consists of a prominent central, arched entrance topped by a pediment in the Gothic style, which is flanked on either side by pointed arches, and has columns that have Corinthian-inspired capitals. The triangular pediment with its Gothic ornamental crocket that ends in a crop on the finial was typical of many of the city's Gothic buildings, such as the Sailors' Home and the David Sassoons' Mechanics Institute. The inner side of the pediment has rounded arches that spring from trefoils that frame two maned lions holding up a clock with their paws. Within this Gothic-inspired frame, all the details are filled in by Hindu images or local details. The spandrels over the central arch have figures almost flying upwards, while closer to the ground mustached and turbaned guards affixed to the columns act as *dvarapalas* (door guardians). Sculptural figures, such as a woman, and Krishna playing his flute, are located on the upper levels of the column. Sculptured medallions include figures, in one case a joyous dancing couple and the other, two women churning curds. Sitting astride the balustrade on top are scantily dressed, bearded Hindu ascetics with coiled, matted locks. The designer used Gothic architecture only to create a backdrop for sculptural decoration derived from Hindu themes.

After one's initial shock, there is much to enjoy in the exuberance of this gate, an enjoyment that is only heightened by the unfamiliar contrast of the Gothic frame and Hindu ornament.

Are the designers of these buildings simply copying or mimicking Bombay's colonial architecture? Recent scholarship that draws on the idea of transculturation offers us a way of interpreting these buildings. Fernando Ortiz, the Cuban public intellectual, coined the term transculturation to suggest that cultural change involves the loss of a culture as well as the creation of a new culture. Cultural encounters thus result in both the destruction of cultures as well as the creation of something new out of this union.[25] Mary Louis Pratt points out that "ethnographers have used this term [transculturation] to describe how subordinated or marginal groups select and invent from materials transmitted to them by a dominant or metropolitan culture."[26] British colonial rule in South Asia resulted in cultural loss as well as new creations that were a result of the encounter between the British and Indians. Pratt is careful to highlight the power differential between dominant and marginal groups, and that marginal groups are selective and imaginative in their translations of received materials. One can understand the Western influences on these three structures to be the product of the process of transculturation. While the deployment of Hindu or local motifs varies in each case, the builders of these structures chose styles derived from colonial architecture for the facade of the buildings or gate without necessarily compromising on the internal arrangement of the spaces. Hira Bagh might have Corinthian capitals, but for its internal arrangements it follows the traditional path with a courtyard and well rather than a large hall. In other words, the spatial and stylistic elements of "native urbanism" show a process of transculturation at work. Certain kinds of spaces, such as courtyards, and structures, such as wells, were only to be given up reluctantly, as they fulfilled certain needs. In this traditional community institution of a *dharmashala,* the rooms open into or overlook the courtyard, thereby shielding the activities of its residents from the gaze of outsiders. On the other hand, stylistic elements for the treatment

Figure 8.

View of Hira Bagh, C. P. Tank Circle, 1905. This *dharamshala* or rest house was constructed for the use of the Jain community. While the facade draws on Western influences, it is organized around a courtyard, a planning device traditional to South Asia, among other places. Photograph by author.

Figure 9.

View of Old Oriental Bank Building located at the junction of Medow Street and Rampart Row (now Nagindas Master Road and M. G. Road), Fort, built circa mid-nineteenth century. Hira Baug straddles its corner triangular site in a manner similar to this building. Courtesy of the Dr. Bhau Daji Lad Sangrahalaya.

of facades were more readily embraced. While gothic or rounded arches dominate the facade in Hira Bagh, they act as frames or as a backdrop for the sculpture in the case of Bhangwadi and the gate of Krishna Bagh. Nor do these structures draw on Western themes for their sculpture. Instead, Indic elephants, cows, religious figures, and other themes adorn the building facades.

The exuberance of detail on the gate of Krishna Bagh and the bold interruption by the elephant of Bhangwadi's facade seem to indicate that local builders were not in awe of colonial architecture but rather had domesticated it by molding it to their own architectural and aesthetic needs.

The British use of Indian architectural elements in their architecture has been seen as a demonstration of their knowledge and mastery over India's past. After the uprising of 1857, the British turned to the idea of refashioning themselves as indigenous rulers who were heir to the Mughal empire. Following the precedent set by Muslim rulers who adapted the indigenous art of the countries they conquered, the British sought to create the Indo-Saracenic style, an incorporation of Indic forms into British building. However, in Bombay the Indo-Saracenic style never flourished.[27] Instead, after 1862 when Sir Bartle Frere became the governor of Bombay and initiated a major period of construction of public buildings in Bombay, it was the Gothic Revival architectural style that was widely adopted. Significantly, most of the major public buildings being erected in England in the second half of the nineteenth century were Gothic Revival. The immense building

activity in Bombay in the second half of the nineteenth century resulted in many Gothic-style edifices, leaving the colonial architectural historian Philip Davies to note, "As a result, paradoxically, Britain's finest heritage of High Victorian Gothic architecture lies in Bombay."[28]

In England, Gothic architecture was being actively promoted by John Ruskin, who extolled the virtues of Gothic architecture as a product of craftsmen rather than the machine, and as a representation of the architecture of medieval England, a period that he and other critics of the industrial era, such as A. W. Pugin, romanticized. This still raises the question of why Bombay was remade into a medieval English city. While architects of the Public Works Department would be able to access the writings of Ruskin and Pugin, and influential journals such as the *Ecclesiologist* and the *Builder* certainly promoted Gothic architecture, there appear to be other reasons behind Bombay's enthusiastic adoption of Gothic architecture. Ian Baucom argues that, in the years following the revolt of 1857, Frere and other government officials with him elected to spend large amounts of money in building projects in Bombay because they believed, with Ruskin, "that the

Figure 11.
View of Victoria Terminus (now Chhatrapati Shivaji Terminus), Esplanade section, built 1878–1887. Designed by F. W. Stevens and incorporating Indic details, this is the most famous of Bombay's High Gothic Victorian architecture. Photograph by author.

identity of the empire's subjects was to a significant degree a product of the objects and structures which they beheld and inhabited. Ruskin had spent years informing England that there was a direct relationship between the arrangements of space and the contours of the personality."[29] If Indo-Saracenic architecture aimed to remake the British as indigenous rulers, Bombay's Victorian Gothic sought to shape personality so that the English remained English in India and Indians were remade as English.

Baucom has observed that Bombay's colonial architecture where the Victorian Gothic style is combined with Indic details simultaneously reminded the British of their colonial knowledge and yet produced unease, as it symbolized hybrid identities and "a space in which the colonial state reveals its capacity to collect and exhibit alterity."[30] The best example of this is the grand Victoria Terminus in Bombay. The building, designed by F. W. Stevens, was based on Gilbert Scott's St. Pancras Station in London and used Indic details that came from the students of the Bombay School of Art, under the supervision of John Griffiths, who taught decorative painting there, while the architectural decoration was carved by native craftsmen (Figure 11).[31] Baucom observes,

On final inspection, the terminus seems to be at once the factory of Englishness that John Ruskin, T. Roger Smith, and Governor Frere intended it to be, *and* to be a monument to the imperial production of hybrid identities, *and* to be a space in which the colonial state reveals its capacity to collect and exhibit alterity. The same object produces all of these readings—not in sequence, but simultaneously. Our dilemma, as readers, lies in attending to that *simultaneity.* [original emphasis][32]

Baucom's sensitive analysis of the space of the Victoria terminus shows how it simultaneously produces a number of impressions, reminding the English of England and of India, and that they themselves were also the hybrid products of this cultural encounter.

The British were uncomfortable with the Indian use of European architectural elements, which displayed a certain degree of knowledge, mimicry, hybridity, inventiveness, and playfulness. If the English that ruled over India could not escape their hybrid identities produced by the lifestyle adopted by them in India, the colonial regime actively tried to produce hybrid Indian subjects. Macaulay's Minute (1835) articulated the aim to create through missionary education

"a class of interpreters between us and the millions whom we govern—a class of persons Indian in blood and colour, but English in tastes, in opinions, in morals and in intellect"—or, as Homi Bhabha notes, "mimic men." Homi Bhabha, the literary theorist, defines colonial mimicry as "the desire for a reformed, recognizable Other, as *a subject of difference that is almost the same, but not quite.* Which is to say, that the discourse of mimicry is constructed around an *ambivalence;* in order to be effective, mimicry must continually produce its slippage, its excess, its difference."[33] Both Krishna Bagh and Bhangwadi mimic colonial forms, but the excess of Indian imagery in the case of the former and the excessively large elephant on the facade in the case of the latter signal the difference that these are structures designed by Indians and/or influenced by their Indian client. But what about Hira Bagh and other buildings in the native town that at first glance seem to be similar to the hybrid forms produced by the British? I would argue that perhaps more disturbing to the British was the possibility that one might not always be able to distinguish between their hybrid products and those of the Indians.

Conclusion

In this paper I have contrasted the local contributions to the making of colonial Bombay to the methods of the colonial government. Each group sought to create meaningful and legible spaces for themselves. However, these interventions did not take place in the two distinct arenas of "white town" and "black town." Instead, both interventions were fragmented in space, one melding into the other, just as a real mapping of the city's European population in space would show that "white town" was an illusion. "White town" could only be constituted as a contiguous realm through movement, desire, and imagination. Colonial urban interventions acted to punctuate or envelop parts of the city with facades that hid or fronted the inner city. One entered through the gates and lanes between these facades only to be transported into a different world, where buildings sometimes mimicked fragments of colonial architectural styles. Even the Fort consisted of an exterior architectural screen, which fronted roads

suitable for wheeled transport: carriages and, later, cars. Most of the Fort belonged to the world of the walking city (Figure 12). Far from being unique, the wheeled city and the walking city were intertwined in many other locations.

Parallels can be drawn between Bombay and the Haussmanization of Paris, where boulevards lined with elegant buildings housing the bourgeoisie pierced the city. Behind these, many working-class *quartiers* persisted.[34] In Paris the boulevards helped to divide classes, but in Bombay the foreign minority who controlled the city

Figure 12.
View of entrance to Borah Bazar Street, Fort from W. H. Marg. The narrow Borah Bazar Street belongs to the world of the walking city, while W. H. Marg in the foreground represents the wheeled city. Photograph by author.

(but not its commerce) attempted to screen *not* class but the activities and the lifestyles of Bombay's diverse religious, linguistic, and ethnic communities—rich and poor—from the eyes of the elite white minority and their visitors.

Carolyn Dean and Dana Liebsohn remind us that far for being pure, most cultures are a product of diverse influences from others, a result of trade, travel, and conquest. While most differences lose their visibility over time as they are absorbed into a culture, others continue to "disclose signs of their disparate origins," for which more recently the term "hybrid" has been applied.[35] In the case of the urban form of colonial Bombay, it is necessary to apply the term "hybrid" not only to remind us of its mixed origins but more importantly to signal the discomfort evoked by these forms. The unease produced was important in unsettling colonial claims to mastery and dominance over this landscape.

Refiguring the colonial city requires us to recognize that the power of the urban experience in Bombay lies in the very fragmentation of two modes of urbanism: the colonial and the local. Neither completely dominates one realm; neither completely exists without the other. Instead, one frames or melds inseparably into the next, producing something new, a hybrid child of this mixed union.

NOTES

1. In this article, I will not be considering the partnership, which I call the "joint enterprise," between the British colonial government and native philanthropists that resulted in the construction of many public buildings in colonial Bombay. For discussion of this "joint enterprise," see my "The City and Its Fragments: Colonial Bombay, 1854–1918" (PhD diss., University of California, Berkeley, 2003), 42–99.

2. Philip Lawson, *The East India Company: A History* (New York: Longman Group, 1993), 45–46.

3. For a discussion of the naming of Bombay's city divisions, see Preeti Chopra, "La Ville Imaginee: Nommer Les Divisions De Bombay Coloniale (1800–1918)," in *Divisions de la ville,* ed. Christian Topalov, Collection "Les Mots de la ville" (Paris: Éditions de la Maison des sciences de l'hommes, 2002), 125–56.

4. Samuel T. Sheppard, *Bombay Place-Names and Street-Names: An Excursion into the By-Ways of the History of Bombay City* (Bombay: The Times Press, 1917), 12n.

5. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, "Can the Subaltern Speak?" in *Colonial Discourse and Post-Colonial Theory: A Reader*, ed. Patrick Williams and Laura Chrisman, 66–111 (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), 92.

6. Letter from H. Sulleman Abdool Wahed, Mohomedmia Khandwani et al., members of the committee appointed at a meeting of the Memons of Bombay held on June 20, 1911, forwarding a copy of the resolution passed at the meeting, dated June 21, 1911, to the Commissioner of Police, Maharashtra State Archives (hereafter cited as MSA), General Department (hereafter cited as GD), 1912, vol. 45, comp. no. 531, pt. 1: 65. The Maharashtra State Archives are located at the Government of Maharashtra Secretariat Record Office, Elphinstone College Building, Bombay.

7. Patricia Seed, *Ceremonies of Possession in Europe's Conquest of the New World 1492–1640* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 19.

8. James P. Orr to Sir George Clerk, June, 22, 1911, and interview with Memons regarding Scheme 37, June, 19, 1911, MSA, GD, 1912, vol. 45, compilation no. 531 pt. 1: 31–33, 35–37.

9. Letter from S. M. Edwardes, Commissioner of Police, Bombay, to the Secretary to Government, General Department, no. 6180/6 of 1911, July 1, 1911, MSA, GD, 1912, vol. 45, comp. no. 531, pt. 1: 5–63.

10. Ibid., 60.

11. S. M. Edwardes to L. Robertson, July 3, 1911, MSA, GD, 1912, vol. 45, compilation no. 531 pt. 1: 47–51.

12. Ibid., 48.

13. "Mr. Orr's Speech in the Bombay Corporation Debate on 16 and 20 November," in *Selections from the Bombay Corporation's Proceedings and Debate on the*

City of Bombay Improvement Trust's Sandhurst Road to Crawford Market Street Scheme (Bombay: Times Press, 1911), 1 and 50.

14. Although this is still the case, this idea of the government's central role in city planning is currently under threat from neoliberal planning ideology. I am grateful to one of this journal's anonymous reviewers for drawing my attention to this point. For more on the spaces of neoliberalization, see David Harvey, *Spaces of Neoliberalization: Towards a Theory of Uneven Geographical Development* (Wiesbaden, Germany: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2005).

15. Sheppard, *Bombay Place-Names,* 34–35.

16. Ibid., 32–33.

17. G. H. R. Tillotson, *The Rajput Palaces: The Development of an Architectural Style, 1450–1750* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1987), 168–69.

18. Sheppard, *Bombay Place-Names,* 34.

19. Rajnarayan Chandavarkar, *The Origins of Industrial Capitalism in India: Business Strategies and the Working Classes in Bombay, 1900–1940* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 175.

20. The Talmud Torah is an institution in which Jewish youth received instruction in their traditions.

21. Plaque at Madhav Bagh, author's field research notes, 1998–99.

22. K. Raghunathji, *The Hindu Temples of Bombay* (Bombay: Fort Printing Press, 1900), description no. 97, Lakshumi Narayan's Temple: pages 5–7 of that sequence or pages 167–69 of handwritten numbering sequence.

23. Janet Abu-Lughod, *Cairo: 1001 Years of the City Victorious* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1971), 76–79.

24. Other examples include the Badri Mahal of the Dawoodi Bohras and the Anjuman-i-Islam, also located on what was called Hornby Road.

25. See Fernando Ortiz, *Cuban Counterpoint: Tobacco and Sugar,* trans. Harriet de Onis, introduction by Bronislaw Malinowski, prologue by Herminio Portel Vilà, with a new introduction by Fernando Coronil (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1995).

26. Mary Louise Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* (London: Routledge, 1992), 6.

27. See Thomas R. Metcalf, *An Imperial Vision: Indian Architecture and Britain's Raj* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1989).

28. Philip Davies, *Splendours of the Raj: British Architecture in India, 1660–1947* (Harmondsworth, UK: Penguin, 1985), 156–57.

29. Ian Baucom, *Out of Place: Englishness, Empire, and the Locations of Identity* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1999), 74–79.

30. Ibid., 85.

31. Ibid., 83–85; James Mackenzie Maclean, *A Guide to Bombay: Historical, Statistical, and Descriptive,* 31st ed. (Bombay: Bombay Gazette Steam Press, 1906), 237–41; Partha Mitter, *Art and Nationalism in Colonial India, 1850–1922* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 39, 42, and 60–61.

32. Baucom, *Out of Place,* 85.

33. The quote from Macaulay's Minute is taken from Homi Bhabha, "Of Mimicry and Man: The Ambivalence of Colonial Discourse," *October* 28 (Spring 1984): 125–33.

34. T. J. Clark, *The Painting of Modern Life: Paris in the Art of Manet and His Followers* (New York: Knopf, 1984), 52–53; Donald J. Olsen, *The City as a Work of Art: London, Paris, Vienna* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1986), 146–47. For a description of housing conditions in Paris, particularly after the urban changes of Haussmann, see Norma Evenson, *Paris: A Century of Change, 1878–1978* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1979), 199–207.

35. Carolyn Dean and Dana Liebsohn, "Hybridity and Its Discontents: Considering Visual Culture in Colonial Spanish America," *Colonial Latin American Review* 12, no. 1 (2003): 5–35 at 5. I am grateful to Stella E. Nair for this reference.