



Mobile Identities of the Global Parsi in *With Cyclists Around the World*

Taniya Neogi

Abstract

This paper aims to study the travel account written by three Parsi men- Adi B. Hakim, Lal P. Bapasola and Rustom B. Bhumgara on an unprecedented bicycle trip around the world in 1923, covering 44000 miles in four and a half years. The paper will examine the multiple locations of identity of the Parsi traveller and how it is variously configured in their transcontinental journey. The study will also aim to investigate the unique aspects of the travel narrative, locating it in the corpus of Indian travel writing. Another aspect of scrutiny would be the significance of the bicycle as a means of travel, a colonial cultural icon appropriated by the colonial elite into a means of nationalist propaganda. The paper would also explore the bifocal lens through which the colonial subject scrutinizes and interprets the European landscape, thereby reversing the orientalist gaze and unsettling imperial power relations.

Keywords: Travel, Parsi, Mobility, Identity, Post-colonial

Introduction

The ideological foundation of European imperialism lies on the fashioning of the white male as the discoverer, tamer and civilizer of barbaric lands and people. The “colonial mobility regime” (Nayar 10) which propagated the idea of the European male as the agential traveller to dangerous lands, encountering uncivilized natives has been a recurrent thematic impetus of European travel narratives. Recent scholarship on Indian/Non-European travel writing which traces the journeys of imperial subjects to the West dismantles the power-politics surrounding the traveller-

travellee¹ equation. The colonial subject becomes the mobile see-er, recorder and interpreter of the imperial centre. These accounts, written mainly by privileged members of the colonial elite community, mostly men, help to recover peripheral histories, untapped repercussions of the colonial structures and unsettle the power-relations informing the identity fashioning of the colonial subject. These travellers, coached in colonial pedagogy, arrived on these 'foreign shores' adequately informed about its history, culture and customs. By enumerating or rationalizing the scenes they beheld in reality, the colonized subject domesticates the space of the colonizer, which he had hitherto only vicariously imagined. The accounts reveal the plurality of the selfhood of the Indian traveller who is simultaneously an enchanted imperial subject, marveling at the capitalist glories of the empire, a cosmopolitan intellectual tutored in the discourse of rationality, a critical observer and a subaltern subject entity with embryonic nationalist consciousness. Pramod K Nayar uses the term "antinomies" (16) to qualify the complexity-fraught identity of the colonial traveller, asserting that "antinomies constitute the self-fashioning of the traveller, rather than contradictions. Both the imperial-subject self and the nationalist-cosmopolitan self coexist within him" (16). He further adds that the antinomic self is a form of "transculturation" (16), transforming him from a peripheral citizen-subject of the Empire to a "citizen of the world" (Gupta 66), a transnational cosmopolitan. The cosmopolitan imperial traveller thus explores and extends the boundaries of the empire, bridging the gap between the "empirical and the imperial" (Smethurst 7). It is in the light of this theoretical framework that the paper will examine *With Cyclists Around the World* -- the travel account of the astonishing global tour of three Parsi men

on a bicycle in 1923. The account is a valuable cultural text, even though it has not attracted much research attention. It records the presence of Indian subjects in Europe and England, during the inter-war years, witnessing the Empire during its twilight period. It also records through their travel, the experiences of an imperial subject from India in countries such as Persia, China, Japan, French, Indo-China, where the legitimacy of the British Empire stood on tenuous grounds in the post-Edwardian era. The paper will explore how the travel account documents “the plurality of selves” (Gupta 67) of the Indian travellers as they make their transcontinental journey on bicycles.

Adi B. Hakim, Lal P. Bapasola, Rustom B. Bhumgara, Keki D. Pochkhanawalla, Gustad D. Hathiram and Nariman B. Kapadia, six Parsi young men, members of the Bombay Weightlifting Club, who had organized a “hearty send-off” (Hakim et al. ch. 1) to celebrate the commencement of their cycling trip around the world. However, midway through the trip the group split due to differences in opinion and continued with their trip in two separate groups of three. The travel account being studied here is the record of the adventures of Adi B. Hakim, Lal P. Bapasola and Rustom B. Bhumgara. It is not clear as to who wrote the account, or if it was a combination of all three of them, but the text functions as if it is supposed to be the unified, undifferentiated narrative of all three of them. The travel account is a singular cultural text for multiple reasons. It was a first bicycle trip taken by six men from India covering 44000 miles in four years and five months. They made their arduous journey through the desserts of Persia, Mesopotamia, Syria and Sinai to Europe, America, Korea, China and Japan. While bicycle touring had become popular in Europe in the late

nineteenth and early twentieth century, it was mainly recreational countryside or cross-country trip that had gained prominence. Continental trips were fairly common as well, but rarely were trips made across the world, by Europeans to the colonies on bicycle² or vice-versa. The Indian travellers to England or Europe, mainly belonged to the privileged section of the colonial society who could afford to pay for their journey made on steamships. Large number of Indian travellers in foreign shores, however belonged to the section of lascars, sailors, soldiers, servants, labourers whose journeys are undocumented and whose presence in the West unacknowledged by normative history. Thus, cultural texts documenting the mobile Indian subject record the experiences of people who travelled to England or Europe or America for education or leisure or native reform appeals. The corpus of Parsi colonial travel writing included accounts of Ardaseer Cursetjee, Hirjeebhoy Merwanjee, Jehangir Nowrojee, Cornelia Sorabjee, to name a few, who travelled to Britain to improve their education or the likes of Behramji Malabari who went to London to appeal for reform in the child-marriage laws of his country. Most of these trips were made to the imperial capital London, in the nineteenth century, considered to be the heydays of the Empire. *With Cyclists Around the World* records the presence of the Indian alien on the war-ravaged streets of Europe on a bicycle, giving them a first-hand glimpse of her dilapidated economy. While most other Parsi travel accounts assert the importance of England for individual or communal improvement, underlining a common motive of their trip, *With Cyclists Around the World* proclaims a rather surprising aim of their astounding adventure--sportsmanship, nationalist pride and propaganda:

Young as we were, we were fired by an intense desire to carry the name of our country – Mother India – to the far-flung corners of the earth, where India is yet a mere geographical name. *In the realm of sport, as others do in the realms of politics and finance, we wanted our country to hold a premier place:* (emphasis added) to be a link of no small importance in the international comity of sporting nations of the world. We wanted to know the world more intimately and to acquaint the world with India and Indians. It was a small effort on our part towards a colossal mission; but we decided to contribute our mite. (Hakim et al. ‘Preface’)

Such explicit avowal of nationalist agenda is unique in Indian travel writing, specially from the Parsi community that is known for its strong anglophile quality. While the nationalist consciousness might suggest a nascent anti-colonial impulse, the markers of British colonial values and semiotic structures that the Parsi community had actively appropriated lie just below the surface. The emphasis on how they wanted India to hold a ‘premier place’ in the ‘realm of sports’ rather than politics or even finance, their membership of Bombay Weightlifting Club, modeled on the masculine club culture of the British elite, is an attestation of the importance given by the Parsi community to the cultivation of athleticism and sportsmanship, that the travellers share. As Pelsetia points out,

The opening of Parsi sport centres or gymkhanas, and the games Parsi men partook of reflected the cultivation of gentlemanly taste in sports...Parsis had taken taken to sports such as swimming, boxing, wrestling...and by the twentieth century were active in setting records in tennis and racket sports, and

popular new sports such as cycling, roller skating, motor sports and aeronautics. (153)

The Parsi community in the colonial period tried to fashion its identity by distinguishing itself from other Indian communities, who were deemed as effeminate³ by cultivating an athletic competence. Dosabhai Framjee Karaka's in his two- volume *History of the Parsis* (1880) talks at length of the superiority of the Persian race, for their virility, progressiveness and "superior manliness" (Luhrmann 118). H.D. Darukhanawala in his "encyclopedic paean to Parsi athleticism" (Luhrmann 118) entitled *Parsis and Sport* (1935) gives a detailed graphic account of the "unsurpassed feats" (Luhrmann 118) of burly wrestlers, cyclists, cricketers, swimmers etc. As T.M. Luhrmann explicates,

The sports chosen are English-inspired; the dress is English inspired; the manliness itself has an English public school-boy feel; the book is an extraordinary testimony to the *impact of colonialism on colonial elites* (emphasis added). (119)

By adopting British cultural tastes and values, the Parsis forged for themselves the eminent position of the colonial elite as opposed to the other India communities. For instance, in Bengal, "the bicycle acquired the added kudos of being health-promoting, not just for the individual, but also for the race" (Arnold and DeWald 983) to counter the European representation of Bengali men as effeminate. However, it is significant to note here that the athletic act of cycling around the world, interestingly is undertaken to facilitate a masculine representation of national identity, rather than a particular racial or communal identity. It becomes a matter of "patriotic importance", "a means of countering, on however modest a scale, European

representations” (983) and “helped promote a self-image of energy and independence” (983). A similar sentiment is expressed in the travel account,

Young as we were, we were fired by an intense desire to carry the name of our country – Mother India – to the far-flung corners of the earth, where India is yet a mere geographical name...if our adventure instills in them a sense of legitimate pride that Mother India lacks no sons capable of holding their own against the nationals of other countries. (Hakim et al. ‘Preface’)

The bicycle becomes an agent of nationalist propaganda and an artifact of technological modernity (Arnold and DeWald 972) from a colonial cultural icon. This echoes closely the transition of the idea of cricket, from being the sports of the English masters, and a channel for colonial subject to signify “the community’s Britishness” (Kidambi 25), “embodying the distinctively British virtues” (25) of masculine vigour, to a space where nationalist subjectivity and team-spirit could be built. The potential of the cycling adventure as an inspiration for future nation-building can be seen in the following lines from the text:

The youth of today is the statesman of tomorrow...In future India will need people of character, who are bold, energetic, pushing, careless of convention, capable of planning enterprises with ingenuity and executing them with ability. The lads of today need an ideal...if our adventure instills in them a sense of legitimate pride that Mother India lacks no sons capable of holding their own against the nationals of other countries, it is our firm conviction we have not

undertaken this world tour in vain. (Hakim et al. 'Preface')

The cycle, like the cricket pitch, gradually transforms from a talisman of colonial loyalty to a crucible where the idea of nation, of Mother India, is forged. Through sports, the forces of empire, ironically functions as a catalyst for nationalist camaraderie and team spirit as Patrick F. McDevitt argues in the context of Irish nationalism and Gaelic team sports. Participation in sporting activities entailed "collision of bodies" (McDevitt 201) which created a spirit of comradeship, an image of "manliness" (201), which gradually transformed into a symbolic marker of self-reliance and nationalistic camaraderie.

The birth of nationalist identity is a natural consequence of the ideas of modernity and cosmopolitanism, which the colonized subject internalises as a result of his western education. Helen Carr comments on how the very process of colonization which depended on "firm racial hierarchies" (73) precipitated its dissolution. The "vast expansion of territorial colonialism" (73) set in motion the beginning of globalization, transculturation and heterogeneity, markers of modernity that proved to be disruptive for the imperial regime in the long run. The bicycle embodies within itself multiple significations ascribed to it in the early decades of twentieth century. The bicycle is at once an icon of modernity as it is a symbol of masculine athleticism, a signifier of the Empire and its ideological foundation. By aspiring to acquire the skill to ride the bicycle, the colonial subject establishes his parity with the British man, and in turn appropriates a colonial artifact that to transform it into an "icon and instrument of the accessibly modern" (Arnold and DeWald 973). Colonialism acts as "a conduit for technological modernity" (972) and empowers the Indian

subject with the single-most distinctive marker of modernity- mobility. The act of travelling the world on a bicycle, “to know the world more intimately” (Hakim et al. ‘Preface’) is a symbolic gesture of independence whereby the colonial traveller asserts his desire to independently scrutinize Europe and the world. The first-hand encounter with the western world also breaks down the hierarchical equation between the centre and periphery of the Empire, because the subject-citizen has the agency to see and read, criticize and empathize with the imperial centre and its inhabitants. The act of travel transforms a colonial subject into a “citizen of the world” (Gupta 66) aiding an “engagement in, and with, cosmopolitanism” (Johnson 80). It develops “a new form of sharing and understanding that sustains the underlying rationale of becoming transnational (Gupta 66). Such a cosmopolitan, “spirit of international brotherhood” (Hakim et al. ‘Preface’) seems to have informed the motivational force of the enterprise of Bumgara, Bapasole and Hakim:

We may, with legitimate pride, maintain, we wanted to contribute our tiny, ever so tiny share to the cause of international goodwill. International goodwill – a potent factor this promises to be in the generations to come! Human welfare will depend increasingly upon cultivation of this factor than of any other for years to come...If there were more intermingling amongst nations of the world, if there were more intimate interchange of views and cultivation of that spirit international brotherhood, *we would have less of wars* (emphasis added) and God’s world would be a place certainly worth living in. (Hakim et al. ‘Preface’)

The desire for international amity and ‘less of wars’ is notable in the context of the inter-war years during

which this trip was undertaken. This pacifist stance of the Indian traveller underlines his cosmopolitanism that undercuts the propagandist narrative of Britain and the Allied powers regarding the Great War. World War I which was propagated as the heroic and noble 'war to end all wars', is described by the author as "civilized nations" hurling themselves "against one other in insane fury", on their visit to the war-torn landscape of Belgium (Hakim et al., ch.14). The sarcasm evident in the 'civilized' and 'insane' points at the ability to see through the vacuous grand narratives of war and valour and underlines a worldview that is modern and independent of imperial conditioning. The author comments,

In the course of our tour through this battlefield of Europe, we could perceive behind the outward prosperity of her principal cities, a general poverty of the masses... The World War paralysed her commerce, trade and industry, and ruined her cities. The finances of the country were disorganized. Her currency had depreciated enormously (Hakim et al., ch. 13)

There is a consistent indictment of the war-mongering nations of Europe, accompanied by a pitiful gaze directed at the general poverty of the masses and "desperate plight" of the "weaker sex" who are compelled "to eke out a living through self-exploitation and debasement" which underlines an inversion of the imperial gaze as well as conventions of European travel narratives (ch. 13). The cyclists talk about the disillusionment they suffer while visiting several European cities like Austria, Belgium and Italy. The "departed prosperity" of these cities is evident in their bad roads, "houses awful and the people dirty" (ch. 11). They document the presence of "little urchins" who "ran about streets as if they were

nobody's children" with "blots and patches of grease, dirt, soot, mud and everything", giving out a stench that was "unbearable" (ch. 8). This is a marked departure from earlier Indian travel narratives to the west, which for most part records an enamoured picturesque of the European metropolis. The critical survey of the modern wasteland of Europe by an imperial subject is important as the subject is involved in creating knowledge about Europe by the act of first hand witnessing as opposed to being a passive recipient of European epistemological representations.

Interestingly, critical commentary about the West exists side-by side with awe and fascination towards the modern engineering marvels and dazzling, consumerist exhibitionism of metropolitan cities such as Berlin, London, New York. The imperial subject walking the streets of London, mesmerized by the whirligig of the metropolis is an archetypal figure in Indian travel narratives to the west and underlines his aspirational impulse. On their visit to Berlin they are awe-struck by the "industrialised modernity" (Nayar 36) of the city:

Berlin is essentially modern...The one place here you find antique objects is the museum. Outside it is all modern, new and young...Huge factories which build powerful locomotives for railways the world over, with their most up-to-date machinery add to the bustle and noise of the city. The chimneys of factories for manufacturing arms, machinery, scientific instruments, furniture, cloth, cinematograph films and a hundred other things, constantly send for the dark smoke... Berlin does things on gigantic scale. A spirit of restlessness or feverish activity characteristic of all intensively industrialized centres dominates this metropolis. (Hakim et al., ch. 12)

Similarly the cyclists are bewildered by the “panorama of mighty London” and its “rich profusion and abundance” of humanity (Hakim et al., ch. 15).

The deeper we penetrated into the city the merrier the whirligig grew. Where heart of London beats, we see crowds at work and crowds at play, crowds in mood and crowds in humour, crowds bustling and crowds loafing, display of wealth and display of poverty, display of the brilliance side by side with display of drabness. Wherever we turned our gaze we saw men, women and children. A stream of humanity pours into her streets from dawn till the small hours of the next morning. (ch. 15)

In New York, the cyclists are amazed at the feverish pace of its inhabitants:

What a different world from ours New York is! ...You may love New York at first sight, or you may hate her. But the more you see of her the more she fascinates you. You soon become part and parcel in life of New York and sure what a life at high pitch New York leads! Everyone seems to be in frantic haste, feverish activities are in evidence everywhere; you are swept away in the whirligig of the street scenery; the unceasing honks of the automobiles... the trolley cars rumble away over your head like fury...a perennial stream moves to and fro...the crash, the bustle, the hurry as if everyone of the multitude is chased by a friend, if not possessed by one. (ch. 16)

The fascination of the western metropolis highlights the “global-cosmopolitan aspiration” (Nayar 244) of the Indian traveller who is “tutored in the grammar of European aesthetics” (244) and discourse of civilization

and modernity and is therefore appreciative of the “feat of engineering, a veritable triumph of man over nature” (Hakim et al. ch. 16) at display.

However, the enchantment of Europe and its architectural and engineering marvels co-exist with an alertness to the less palatable or marginalized aspects of European/American culture and society. The travellers’ awestruck experience of the London metropolis is accompanied by a testimony of the multicultural society that the imperial centre has transformed into. They give testimony to the proliferation of non-white subjects of the empire on the streets of the Empire’s capital.

*Here West is mingled with the East, falsifying
Kipling’s prophecy ‘East is East and West is West,
And never the twain shall meet* (emphasis added). There is the Englishman who is all silk and starch; the factory operative all black and grease; the Chinaman with his peering almond eyes; the Japanese with his high cheek bones; the Lascr with his weather - beaten face; the Arab in long robes; the Hindu Westernized but Easterner; the Persian beautiful and white; the African with curly hair and white teeth. (Hakim et al., ch. 15)

Bearing witness to the “mass of humanity” (ch. 15) of all shades “white and black and yellow and the shades in between” (ch. 15) in London ‘falsifies’ the colonial representation of homogeneously ‘white’ London. It recovers the presence of “intractable foreign at the heart of London” (Nayar 93) and their transnational trajectory precipitated through the operations of the Empire. As Antoinette Burton comments, “they question the legitimacy of a national history that views the nonwhite populations of the late twentieth century as fallout from the

disintegration of empire rather than as the predictable outcome of centuries of imperial power and engagement” (28). It also serves to achieve the aims that Julie Codell aptly points out, “see Britain and Europe firsthand, judge what their colonizers told them, discover what colonizers did not say, and transmit information to other Indians.”(174) Rudyard Kipling, as a representative of Britain’s regime of cultural imperialism is debunked, as are certain other hegemonic representations of the West.

For instance, during their travel to New York, they witness and sometimes suffer the bane of blatant racism and thereby question the validity of the constitutional values on which the American society prides it is built on. The “colour prejudice” is described as “silly and totally unjustifiable prejudice” and the author finds it “difficult to divine why this should have persisted in a continent which stands before the world as cradle for liberty and equality of opportunities, irrespective of the colour of skin an individual possesses” (Hakim et al., ch. 16). The grand idea of the Great American Dream is also called to question, in the light of stringent and often humiliating Immigration Laws.

The Great Republic throwing wide open her hospitable doors to the downtrodden and needy of all nationalities *is a platitude which is no longer true* (emphasis added). Whatever may have been the attitude of America towards immigrants in the past, the reception United States now extends to them is cold. The immigrant is at best tolerated and viewed with suspicion. (ch. 16)

By recording the “disruptive figures of labour and the poor” (Nayar 76) and discriminated, the land of dreams is “subalternized through the attention to the ill-fitting”

(76). A similar racist encounter experienced by them in London is also mentioned, albeit briefly,

No doubt, often we found some of the Englishmen too haughty to condescend to talk to us. Dark skin, tanned by exposure to the sun, was the only reason so far as we could trace. (Hakim et al., ch. 15)

But there is a difference between the lengthy exposition of racism in America and a brief mention of it in London, followed by an account of how they felt compensated for the incivility by their many “female admirers” who were “very inquisitive to know everything about us”(ch. 15). The absence of strong criticism of racist encounters in London, points to the complex and antinomic relation of the Parsi travellers with the British crown. It manifests the conflicting claims of a cosmopolitan traveller, a germinating nationalist and a loyal colonial subject simultaneously located in the identity of the Parsi traveller. The cosmopolitan traveller, tutored in Enlightenment ideas of freedom and equality, frowns at the ‘silliness’ of racial prejudices existing in civilized societies, while the loyal colonial subject, who has embodied the superior valence ascribed to the imperial centre, is inclined to ignore the racist rebuff for the validation acquired through the admiration of the unattainable Englishwoman. Admiration for the mercantile and industrial success of Britain, and the “panorama of mighty London”, which according to the cyclists “is no longer a city, but a province”, is an attestation of the vestiges of anglophilism, that formed a crucial aspect of colonial Parsi identity (ch. 15).

Loyalty towards the British and their values, does not however diminish the Parsi obeisance towards their glorious Persian ancestry. In the nineteenth century, the

fertile period of British-Parsi collaborative relationship, the tendency seen in cultural texts and community perspective was to align the masculine and enterprising Persian race with that of the British. The idea was to see in the athletic Parsis, “the unalloyed martial qualities of their Persian ancestors” (Kidambi 25). However in this text, one can see a distinctive proclivity to ascribe superior worth to their Persian roots than the race of their present rulers.

It was in Persia that seeds of a mighty and unparalleled civilization in the history of humanity were sown... while yet the Briton was a caveman, clad in the fur and leaves; while yet Europe was covered with forests and its domestic economy was bartering a wife for a mule or hides. (Hakim et al., ch. 5)

Such instances of distancing from the ‘Briton’ and slighting the history British race by a Parsi man in the twentieth century is a marker of changing times for the Empire and the cosmopolitan consciousness of its subjects. Cosmopolitanism arms the imperial subject to arrive at a critical judgement of European civilization, culture and history through rational scrutiny. Elsewhere, the travellers point at the faulty standard of evaluation of the West employed to judge ancient civilization like that of China.

China, how very misunderstood this one country is! How far remote the Westerners are from even a faint comprehension of the silent mental revolution that has transformed China into a new state!...There is cruel misrepresentation of Chinese everywhere...we go through the country with coloured spectacles judging an ancient oriental civilization by a standard set up by the modern Western one. (ch. 22)

By questioning the Western orientalist lens, used to represent the civilization of China, the travellers make an implicit criticism of the overarching Eurocentric representation of the Orient, including India. Such instances abound in the travel narrative, making it an important cultural text as it documents fissures in the identity of the travelling colonial subject from an elite community. He is simultaneously negotiating the tensions between the imperial-subject identity, consolidated by being member of the loyal colonial-elite community of the Parsis, a global traveller tutored in the imperial lexicon, which enables him to locate the gaps in western grand narratives, a descendant of glorious Persian ancestors, proud of their insularity, and an embryonic nationalist consciousness of being an Indian. It is the “plurality of selves” (Gupta 67) that marks the “the cosmopolitanization of the Indian and colonial subject” (Nayar 11). As Julie Codell points out, “such cosmopolitan travellers were hybrids... they negotiated conventions of travel literature in resistance to and in compliance with generic expectations, creating hybrids” (11). The text underlines the multiple ways in which the identity of the imperial traveller is transformed and configured and how imperial power relations are restructured and mediated by the mobile colonial subject in the course of their travel. The colonial subject is able to “read critically social inequalities or brutal histories of England and Europe” (Nayar 16), underlining the cosmopolitan aspect of his selfhood. The cosmopolitanism of the Indian traveller provides a divergent version of Europe’s chequered history unraveled by the eyes of the imperial subject. At the same time, the travel narrative is not without the traces of enchantment of the colonial subject, while in Europe, which is one of the typical conventions of Indian travel

narrative, highlighting a crucial aspect of Parsi identity. The travel account pedals through the hybrid nodes of identity of the Parsi traveller(s) and their hybrid modes of engagement with the empire during the course of their journey.

End Notes:

1. Pramod K. Nayar coins the binary traveller-travellee (Nayar 10), where 'travellee' signifies the "object of the travel" (10). The Westerner travels to the 'travellee', the native to record and interpret.
2. After being introduced in the nineteenth century, cycling became an effective and affordable means of transportation and recreation. Cross-country tours became popular, while inter-continental tours were rare like that of Annie Londonderry in 1894 around the world, riding a "men's Stirling" (Zheutlinch. 3). Before 1914, the bicycle represented an elite European commodity in the colonies, used by officials in superior administrative ranks. However, by 1920 motorcar was preferred to bicycles by European administrators to preserve "a greater social distance between colonizer and colonized" (Arnold and DeWald 981). In India, among the native middle class population, the bicycle became an "icon and instrument of modernity" (982) promoting and image of self-reliance and masculine vigour.
3. Mrinalini Sinha's *Colonial Masculinity: The Manly Englishman and the Effeminate Bengali in the Late Nineteenth Century* (1995) locates central role of the gendered representations of the native Bengali man by the colonizers in the imperial political culture of nineteenth century India.

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