An Eternal 'Child' Turned Ally: Princely Minors and the Paternalistic British Raj at work in Hyderabad (1857-1884)

By

SADAF BANDEALI

THESIS

Submitted in partial satisfaction of the requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

in

History

in the

OFFICE OF GRADUATE STUDIES

of the

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

DAVIS

Approved:

Chair's Name, Chair (or Co-Chair)
Ian Campbell

Member's Name
Sudipta Sen

Member's Name
Ali Anooshahr

Committee in Charge

2023

After the 1857 rebellion against British rule in India, British imperialists altered their mode of engagement with the princely states of India—from overt aggression exercised under the policy of "indirect rule" to restrained paternalism preached through a policy of "non-interference". This paper seeks to illustrate how and why the goals of British imperialism evolved in the latter half of the 19th century. I undertake a case study of the largest princely state of India—Hyderabad—to illustrate that the Raj's principle imperial agenda after 1857 was to domesticate and assimilate princely states within the colonial body politic. This was realized by rearticulating the tenets of 'proper education' for princely minors and selectively appropriating indigenous ritual idioms. In Hyderabad, I center the figure of the 'princely minor' Mehboob Ali Khan, the sixth Nizam of Hyderabad, whose minority from 1869-1884 became an opportune time for the British to reform and discipline him to mold him into an amenable ally. Leaving the policy of territorial conquest behind, after 1857, I argue that British imperialism had begun to envision novel ideological sites of colonialism.

Key words: imperialism, paternalism, Hyderabad, princely minority, education, rituals

I. Introduction

For a brief few hours after the fifth Nizam of Hyderabad, Afzal-ud-Daula's death on February 26th, 1869, Hyderabad was teeming with excitement and rumors that the British would occupy the city. The speculation was not unfounded because the heir-apparent to the Asaf Jah dynasty of Hyderabad was only a toddler of two years and eight months and the British were infamous for assuming power in cases of princely minority. However, the revolt of 1857 against British rule had affected a complete overhaul of colonial policy and the British now preferred to rule fully indirectly to avoid native indignance. On the same night as his father's death, drum beats in the bazaars altered the city that the toddler was to be the sixth Nizam of Hyderabad. Four days later, borne in the hands of a royal nurse, Mehboob Ali Khan arrived at his accession *durbar* (court). The British Resident, Charles Burslem Saunders on behalf of the Paramount Government (that is, the British Raj) held his tiny hands and escorted him to the *musnad* or the throne. He then picked up the toddler Nizam and placed him on the *musnad,* congratulated the boy on his appointment, and expressed his hope for a lasting friendship between the princely state of Hyderabad and the Raj. The toddler Nizam, completely oblivious of the responsibility he had assumed and unable to handle the clamor and commotion of the court, started weeping. His Regent, Salar Jung I, who had served as Prime Minister during his father's as well as grandfather's reigns, promptly took command of the *durbar* and thanked the Resident on the child's behalf.[1] Mehboob, however, was not the first child to be enthroned to the seat of a native principality and rule under the custodianship of native regents or the Raj.

[1] Events of the time were reported in "The Installation of a Young Prince", *Times of India*, March 6th, 1869; *Times of India,* March 6th, 1869; *Bombay Gazette*, March 6th, 1869, *Englishman*, March 1869, in *Hyderabad Affairs*, "Occurrences At the Palace", Vol 3 [hereafter *HA*], compiled by Moulvie Syed Mehdi Ali (Bombay: Times of India Press, 1883), pp. 6-9.

But his minority, from 1869 to 1884, is illustrative of the evolving terms of British custodianship of princely minors in the aftermath of 1857.

From Mehboob Ali Khan's accession in 1869 till his formal installation as the sixth Nizam of Hyderabad in 1884, the British Raj made a concerted effort to redefine norms of colonial engagement with the princely state in a post-1857 world. Taking the princely state of Hyderabad as an illustrative case, I will argue that the Raj's principle imperial agenda after 1857 was to domesticate and assimilate princely states within the colonial body politic. This was realized by rearticulating the tenets of 'proper education' for princely minors and by selectively appropriating indigenous ritual idioms.[2]

The revolt of 1857 was a moment of reckoning for the British in India. At first, the abruptness of the sepoy mutiny caught the British off guard. To see the regional princely authorities of North India—the supposed colonial allies—assume natural leadership during the revolt was an added act of betrayal. In the aftermath of the mutiny, the death and destruction of British property and lives shook the British and led to a revision of imperial strategy. Thus, a heavy-handed approach towards princely states that was characteristic of Dalhousie's pre-revolt policy was replaced with a conciliatory treatment, under the aegis of the rebranded British Crown rule after 1858. The pre-revolt policy of annexation of princely states in the name of bad governance and corruption or lack of a 'natural' heir was deemed excessive in the post-1857 world.[3] The Indian princes, no longer perceived as the passive "interpreter" class of Thomas Macaulay's conception—"Indian in blood and colour, but English in tastes, in

[2] Ritual idioms are customs and practices that convey symbolic meaning. I have borrowed the term from Bernard Cohn, "Representing Authority in Victorian India", in *The Invention of Traditions*, eds. Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012).

[3] For an overview of the regional spread of the mutiny and the policy changes it affected see Ian Copland, *The British Raj and the Indian Princes: Paramountcy in Western India, 1857-1930* (New Delhi: Orient Longman, 1982), pp. 88-98. And Thomas R. Metcalf, *The Aftermath of Revolt: India 1857-1970* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1964), Chapter II, IV.

opinions, in morals and in intellect"[4]—who could serve as liaisons between the British and the millions of colonized Indians, were now branded as loyal feudatories. While the 'culprits'—the last Mughal Emperor Bahadur Shah Zafar, the Maratha Peshwa Nana Saheb, the infamous Queen of Jhansi, and Begum Hazarat Mahal of Awadh—lost their titular authority and were exiled out of their provinces, those like the Sindhias of Gwalior, the Holkars of Indore, and the Nizams of Hyderabad, who aided the British in containing the rebellion were hailed as friends of the Empire.[5] On November 8th 1858, Queen Victoria proclaimed that her government would uphold the "rights, dignity, and honour of native princes" and assured them that the British had no interest in the "extension of [their] current territorial possessions". To the indigenous princes and people of India, she also preached a policy of "non-interference" in regard to the "ancient rights, usages and customs of India".[6]

This promise of 'non-interference' was perceived as a corrective to the excesses of indirect rule before the revolt. In the late 18th century, the East India Company had conceived indirect rule as a strategy to retain revenue collection power over princely territories that they did not directly control.[7] Formulated and formalized through a series of treaties and proclamations, military alliances, and political agents (Residents), the Company assumed a position of paramountcy vis-á-vis the subsidiary princely states.[8] But through the course of the late 18th and 19th centuries, leading up to the revolt, indirect rule had evolved to become a highly interventionist policy. The most infamous manifestation of this policy was the Doctrine of

[4] Thomas Babington Macaulay, *Speeches by Lord Macaulay, with His Minute on Indian Education*, ed. G.M. Young (London: Oxford University Press, 1979), pp. 345-361.
[5] Metcalf, *The Aftermath of Revolt*, pp. 219-220.
[6] "Proclamation by the Queen in Council to the Princes, Chiefs and people of India (published by the Governor-General at Allahabad, November 1st 1858)", British Library, accessed on May 11th, 2022. https://www.bl.uk/collection-items/proclamation-by-the-queen-in-council-to-the-princes-chiefs-and-people-of-india
[7] Sudipta Sen, "Unfinished Conquest: Residual Sovereignty and the Legal Foundations of the British Empire in India", *Law, Culture and the Humanities* 9, no. 2, 2012, pp. 231-232.
[8] Barbara N. Ramusack, *The Indian Princes and their States* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), pp. 50-55.

Lapse, which dictated that princely principalities with a lack of natural heir would have their territories lapsed to the British. On the pretext of this clause, Dalhousie's government annexed seven native territories in a matter of seven years and eventually even took over Awadh on the grounds of misgovernance in 1856. As a result, other princely states became deeply suspicious of British interests that spilled beyond the formal boundaries of indirect rule.[9] Thus, after 1857, to placate and reassure the native aristocracy, Raj's official imperial strategy shifted from overt aggression to restrained paternalism.

Nevertheless, this paternalism ensured a lasting, albeit subdued, interposition of British authority in princely states. Historians of the Indian Empire have sought to assess the extent of interference or intervention that the princely states encountered under this new imperial policy. Thomas Metcalf believes that the princely states were not permitted to be completely free of British interference even in matters of internal administration. Even after complete annexation as a policy was abandoned, the British had no intention to forgo their status as paramount rulers who had the legal right to intervene in cases of power abuses or misrule by princely rulers. He nevertheless believes the post-mutiny decades to be a golden age for the princes of India. According to him, the British deemed the support of princely states integral to the administrative structure of the Empire and tried as much to not antagonize the princes or their local customs.[10] Similarly, Barbara Ramusack also contends that while British involvement in native territories restrained princely autonomy, Indian princes nonetheless remained in charge of internal governance and were cultural masters and patrons of their territories.[11] However, Caroline Keen opposes this view that the post-mutiny British-princely relationship was only mildly interventionist, with the princes still retaining control over some aspects of traditional

[9] Metcalf, *The Aftermath of Revolt*, pp. 32-33.
[10] Ibid, pp. 226-227, 235-236.
[11] Ramusack, *The Indian Princes and their States*, p. 2.

rituals and governance. Instead, she argues that British ideological interventions through notions of 'westernization', 'civilizational upliftment', and 'good governance' eroded native control over their traditional governance models.[12] Notwithstanding their differences on the question of degree and nature of intervention, there seems to be a historiographical consensus that after 1857, colonial policy towards princely states underwent a decisive change.

Although concerned with the topic of intervention, my paper moves beyond answering the question of degree. Instead, I focus on questions of diachronic change: Why did the British continue to interfere in princely polities? Had the motivations for intervention changed? What were these *new* aims? How were these aims achieved? As the case of Hyderabad will illustrate, in the latter half of the 19th century, the goal of British imperial policy was to manufacture reformed colonial polities amenable to British modes of governance. The most fruitful way to achieve this goal was to reform and discipline minor princes (Mehboob Ali Khan in the case of Hyderabad) through English education and redefine appropriate ritualistic expressions of authority at the opportune moment of their minority. The colonial educational practice came with a subtext of reformation—a change deemed necessary for a minor prince to help him shed his conservative and old-fashioned roots to metamorphose into a modern, disciplined, and obedient colonial prince. With the rhetoric of 'indirect rule' and 'non-intervention' officially in place after 1857, the British felt compelled to assert their paramountcy and the princely state's subordination during political struggles at princely courts. In Hyderabad, the British contested native authority by rescripting indigenous ritual idioms to undermine some traditions and selectively appropriate others. Ultimately, the goal of Raj's imperial policy was to

[12] Caroline, Keen, *Princely India and the British: Political Development and the Operation of Empire* (New York and London: I.B. Tauris, 2012), preface.

construct a "recognizable Other"[13] who could be comfortably incorporated into the colonial polity, but never permitted to transcend colonial racial hierarchies.

This essay is structured chronologically to follow the British-Hyderabadi relationship from Mehboob Ali Khan's minority till his formal accession to the throne. I focus on the brief fifteen years of Mehboob's minority for two reasons. First, during this time the Raj wanted to partake in the semiotic language of indigenous kinship to establish their position as the supreme authority in India after 1857. The British were actively attempting to emulate symbolic notions of indigenous authority as well as carve out new imperial traditions. While new honorary systems such as The Imperial Order of the Crown of India and hierarchized gun salutes were devised for princely feudatories, indigenous ritual practices such as the gifting of *khil'at* (robes of honor) and removing of shoes in the presence of rulers, also came to be viewed as colonial imperatives. Second, this was also when the British Government through its Residents engaged in a political and cultural tussle over 'rightful upbringing' and 'proper education' of the Nizam with his domestic and traditional guardians. The colonial experiment with princely education was not unique to the minor Nizam of Hyderabad but was in line with the larger imperial desire to discipline and control young minds of the Empire—be it native, English, or Anglo-Indian. As Dane Kennedy has shown in his analysis of the "nurseries of the ruling class", the growing number of educational institutes such as boarding schools for English children in the hills stations were meant to achieve racial segregation for British children during their impressionable years. Away from the danger of intermixing with natives or Anglo-Indian children in the plains, up in the mountains, 'pure-bred' English children could be schooled in

[13] This "recognizable Other" satisfies the colonial desire of creating "*a subject of difference, that is almost the same, but not quite*". See Homi Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (London and New York: Routledge, 2004), p. 86 for a theoretical discussion on the idea of colonial mimicry.

the moral ideologies and practices of the Raj.[14] Satadru Sen's work on princely educational institutions that emerged in the latter half of the 19th century also sheds light on this concerted effort to mold native aristocratic children into adults congenial to the colonial regime. The notion of childhood—princely one in the present case—became a politically and socially disputed idea, where contradictory discourses depicted aristocratic children both incapable of outgrowing their childhood as well as in need of colonial education.[15] To overcome this contradiction and validate the colonial experiment with princely education, the British deployed a new mode of educational ideology. Mapped on the opposite ends in this colonial discourse, English education was seen as progressive, disciplined, and masculine, while traditional child-rearing and education practices were dismissed as decadent, cosseted, and effeminate.

This essay elucidates the two fields of colonial appropriation in Hyderabad—indigenous symbols of authority and princely education—to detail the evolving ideologies of British imperialism after 1857. Leaving the policy of territorial conquest behind, after 1857, British imperialism had begun to envision novel sites of colonialism.

II. The Great Shoe Controversy

Mehboob's very first encounter with British authorities posited an opportunity for the latter to reassert and reorganize indigenous traditions that were deemed inappropriate to English notions of respectability. On his visit to Mehboob to offer condolences for his father's death, the Resident, C.B Saunders did not remove his shoes and sat on a chair. By keeping his shoes on and not sitting on the ground, Saunders was in breach of the court customs of Hyderabad.

[14] Dane Kennedy, *The Magic Mountains: Hill Stations and the British Raj* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1996), pp. 130-45.
[15] Satadru Sen, *Colonial Childhoods: The Juvenile Periphery of India 1850-1945* (London: Anthem Press, 2005), pp. 145,185.

The editor of The Times of India applauded Saunders for bringing an end to "a humiliating and objectionable practice of former years" and hoped that this incident would set a precedent for British-Hyderabadi interaction in the future.[16] Lord Mayo, the newly appointed Governor-General also commended Saunders' judgment and courage to undo this centuries-old degrading practice that required the British to unshod and sit on the ground in the presence of the Nizam.[17]

But this practice was not unique to the Hyderabadi court, several indigenous courts necessitated anyone entering the presence of a ruler to unshod. Bernard Cohn links the roots of this practice to the dual Hindu notions of purity and impurity, with the head associated with power and knowledge and the feet relegated to the source of all things impure and debased. Removing footwear before entering the space of a superior and sitting cross-legged to avoid pointing one's feet at them, thus, symbolized reverence towards the authority.[18] The officials of the East India Company and subsequently the Residents had complied with this requirement for over a century. But as the 19th century progressed and the British consolidated their position as paramount powers vis-á-vis the native rulers, to the British mind, this practice conveyed their symbolic subordination, which was incommensurate with their increasingly unchallenged authority.

This assertion of British authority through a politics of footwear was however not an isolated event in the Hyderabadi court. An order of the Governor-General in Council from 1854 was reconfirmed in 1868, precipitating a debate all over the Indian Empire about the appropriate form of footwear respectability. The order prohibited the wearing of shoes by 'natives' in official and semi-official spaces where they appeared before the servants of the

[16] *Times of India*, March 6th, 1869, in *HA*, p. 6.
[17] Bharati Ray, *Hyderabad and British Paramountcy: 1858-1883* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), pp. 59-60.
[18] Bernard Cohn, *Colonialism and Its Forms of Knowledge: The British in India* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1996), pp. 160-161

British government.[19] Relying on a retributive logic, the British—as the indispensable authority in India—deemed it only natural to have the natives abide by a practice that they had been made to follow when they were placed in a nominally subordinate position.

In the case of Hyderabad, the politics of footwear became inverted as the Resident broke the code of appropriate respectability by not removing his shoes and sitting on a chair at an opportune moment to redefine normative behavior for future British-Hyderabadi interaction. For Saunders as well as the British Government, the practice of removing shoes was incommensurate with their position as the paramount rulers of India. In a setting of a princely state, unlike in directly-ruled parts of British India, the British could not have dictated a sweeping footwear policy change. So instead, the Resident chose to assert British paramountcy not as much for the eyes of the toddler Nizam, but for the edification of the Hyderabadi administration and elites, foreshadowing the political contestation that would take place during Mehboob Ali Khan's minority.

III. The Paternalistic British Empire and the Princely 'Child'

Discussions about the governance of the state as well as the proper upbringing of the toddler Nizam ensued almost immediately after Afzal-ud-Daula's death. Mir Turab Ali Khan, Salar Jung I and Rafiuddin Khan, Amir-i-Kabir II[20] were appointed co-regents during Mehboob's minority; and Mehboob's grandmother Dilawar-u-Nisa Begum was responsible for his domestic rearing. The Resident, as a representative of the paramount government, assumed a formally distant, but controlling position as an overseer of the administration of the state. Saunders assured the Government of India that all the stakeholders understood that the British

[19] K.N. Pannikar, "The 'Great' Shoe Question: Tradition, Legitimacy, and Power in Colonial India", *Studies in History* 14, vol. 1, 1998, pp. 23, 28.
[20] Amir-i-Kabir was the title given to the nobles of the Paigah family, who intermarried with the Nizam's family. They were the prime nobility in Hyderabad, second only to the Asaf Jah dynasty.

sanction of this arrangement during the Nizam's minority was contingent on their right to be actively associated with the Nizam's education and with the larger workings of his administration.[21] The British might have abandoned the policy of territorial annexation, but this did not mean that they would forgo their right as paramount rulers to intervene in the workings of a princely state, especially during a ruler's minority. After 1857, British intervention changed sites and tempered its objectives. In Hyderabad, a critical tool of control was raising and educating the minor prince by vying for control over the terms and mode of his education.

By the 1870s, British officials such as E. C. Bayley from the Foreign Department and Governor-General Mayo had already begun to conceive of princely education as a colonial imperative. Elite institutions like two of the four Chief's Colleges, Rajkumar College in Rajkot and Mayo College in Ajmer were working models of British administered institutions for the princely elite. The aim of colonial education, as Satadru Sen quite perceptively explains, was to reconceive aristocratic childhood along English lines to create "loyal and subordinate allies",[22] to in turn fashion a "reassuring and pleasing colonial order".[23] British urgency and interest in the education of the young Nizam of Hyderabad need to be studied as part of this larger colonial ambition. A few months into the former Nizam's passing, discussions about the racial background and role of a tutor were already underway. The British wanted to appoint an English gentleman as superintendent of education whose duty would be to choose other subordinate teachers to give the Nizam a European liberal education. The co-regents however wanted the Nizam's tutor to be a Muslim scholar, who would appoint other tutors except the one teaching English. The English tutor's role would then be contained to teaching the subject,

[21] Vasant Kumar Bawa, *The Nizam between Mughals and British: Hyderabad Under Salar Jang I*, (New Delhi: S. Chand & Company, 1986), pp. 52-54.
[22] Sen, *Colonial Childhoods*, p. 144.
[23] Ibid, p. 143.

rather than being the sole governing authority on the Nizam's education. Unsurprisingly, the Government of India rejected this scheme.[24] Simply put, this was a contest and question of future authority, with the Hyderabadi elite trying to retain influence over their heir and the British aiming to create a minor prince who could be trained to become an agreeable ally.

However, this initial contest over the choice of the tutor had to be postponed because the Nizam was still a toddler. But his traditional Muslim upbringing and education were on course. Mehboob was the fourth son born to Afzal-ud-Daula to have lived beyond infancy.[25] Allegedly, his father did not even lay eyes on him on the counsel of a Muslim ascetic, lest he cast an evil eye on his heir.[26] Although past his infancy, Mehboob was still a child who needed to be sheltered within the *zenana* (women's quarters) from disease and death. A traditional Muslim life-cycle ceremony called *Bi'sim'illah* (In the name of God) marks the beginning of a boy child's religious education. The celebration is accompanied by feasting, music, and dancing, as the boy is taught the opening words of the *Qur'an*.[27] Customary to hold this ceremony at four years, four months, four days, and four hours of a child's life,[28] Mehboob's was held eight months late when he was a few weeks from his fifth birthday.[29] His *khatna* (male circumcision) was performed in 1874 when he turned nine,[30] customarily scheduled after a Muslim boy has finished reading the whole *Qur'an.*[31] While it is unclear if and when Mehboob finished reading

[24] Ray, *Hyderabad and British Paramountcy*, pp. 66-67.
[25] *Englishman*, September 25th, 1861; *Englishman*, October 24th, 1861, in *HA*, p. 3.
[26] *Times of India*, March 12th 1869, in *HA*, p. 8.
[27] David Lelyveld, *Aligarh's First Generation: Muslim Solidarity and English Education in Northern India, 1875-1900* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1975), p. 50.
[28] Ibid.
[29] Mehboob's *Bi'sim'illa* ceremony was held on July 24th, 1871. See Server-ul-Mulk-Bahadur, *My Life: Being the Autobiography of Nawab Server-ul-Mulk-Bahadur*, trans. Nawab Jiwan Yar Jung Bahadur (London: Arthur H. Stockwell, 1932), p. 121.
[30] Sources do not clearly mention Mehboob's circumcision ceremony, but I have inferred this from a news report that claimed that "[Mehboob] was carried outside the city on the previous Friday week and deposited within the precincts of a shrine of notorious sanctity, where he was subjected to the customary religious rites from his birth to death". See *Times of India*, August 8th, 1874, in *HA*, p. 11.
[31] Lelyveld, *Aligarh's First Generation*, p. 50.

the *Qur'an*, this ceremony nonetheless marked his transition from childhood into boyhood. This coming of age was also commemorated with Mehboob's first formal and conscious encounter with the British authority in Hyderabad. A grand *durbar* was arranged for the occasion at the British Residency, where Mehboob arrived on an elephant.[32]

Indifferent to cultural timelines, the British had decided to reopen the question of the Nizam's education a year earlier in 1873. Salar Jung I was asked to propose a definitive plan for the Nizam's education under the superintendence of an English governor. While agreeing to the British demand for an English governor, the Minister remained adamant to retain the right to appoint this governor and not accept anyone chosen by the Government of India.[33] He appointed Captain John Clerk, the eldest son of George Clerk, the former Governor of Bombay as the Superintendent of Education in early 1875. But John Clerk had to leave his job in a matter of months when his wife tragically died in Hyderabad in April 1875. His younger brother, Claude Clerk then assumed this role in November 1876 when the Nizam was ten-years-old and was to retain his position till Mehboob's formal accession to the throne in 1884.[34]

British insistence on the requirement of an English superintendent was not simply based on their belief in English racial and civilizational superiority. More importantly, the British strongly believed that princely minors were juvenile and naive, in need of British paternalism to conduct their affairs.[35] The ideological project of colonialism had labeled the colony a primitive site, forcing its inhabitants into a state of eternal childishness. Based on a circular logic, the colonial enterprise was deemed necessary because colonialism itself had blurred the boundaries between native adulthood/maturity and childhood/naivety, thus relegating the

[32] *Times of India*, August 8th, 1874, in *HA*, pp. 11-16.
[33] Ray, *Hyderabad and British Paramountcy*, p. 70.
[34] Server-ul-Mulk, *My Life*, p. 122.
[35] Sen, *Colonial Childhoods*, pp. 113-114.

whole colonial population in need of 'adult' colonial supervision. All native childhoods were however not similarly constituted. Ashis Nandy's subtle distinction between *childlike* and *childish* Indian—the former being an "innocent, ignorant but willing to learn, masculine, loyal and, thus, 'corrigible'"[36] subject and the latter being an "ignorant but unwilling to learn, ungrateful, sinful, savage…thus, 'incorrigible'" subject[37]—is particularly valuable to comprehend colonial motivations for princely education. In this hierarchy of childhoods, elite children then inhabited a liminal position—not alike the wholly depraved native Indian child nor yet a fully formed elite *childlike* adult. In this state of plasticity, the princely child could be reformed and transformed along English lines with the means of a proper English education.

The tenets of colonial English education required disciplinary boundaries, sexual propriety through the practice of heteronormativity and appropriate masculinity, and modern and rational thinking. This ideological syllabus was meant to overcome supposed princely deficiencies—racial and martial inadequacies, sexual perversions (polyamorous harems and effeminacy), and political ineptitude (exemplified by frivolous expenditure). While these shortcomings were perceived as inherent attributes of the princes, they were intentional creations of the Raj. Propelled by ideas about biology, race, and gender, after-1857, the British had come to organize the Indian colony in a discursive field of classifications. While the Indian society came to be mapped across caste, racial, and tribal lines, the distinction between martial versus non-martial races, devised for recruitment in the army—with the martial races typified by the Sikhs and Gurkhas and non-martial with the Bengalis and some princely nobility—is of primary importance to this analysis.[38] The former were associated with 'manly' characteristics and the

[36] Ashis Nandy, *Intimate Enemy: Loss and Recovery of Self Under Colonialism,* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), p. 16.
[37] Ibid.
[38] For a detailed analysis of the enumerative drive of the Raj after 1857 see Thomas Metcalf, "The Ordering of Difference", in *Caste in Modern India: A Reader*, eds. Sumit Sarkar and Tanika Sarkar (New Delhi: Permanent Black, 2014), pp. 92-101. For an analysis of army recruitment along martial

latter with 'effeminacy'.[39] The princely elite—with their proclivity for 'oriental vices' (the usual: wine, women, fine clothes, and jewels) and interest in homosexual frolics[40] —were believed to be susceptible to a life of effeminacy. Thus, the moral education of princes took on heightened importance in the post-1857 context as the Raj strove to create modern, disciplined, and masculine allies. But this educational project was not free of prejudices—it was replete with oppositional gendered constructs of the Raj's own making. The English discourse on the need for princely education had a deeply gendered underpinning, formulated in opposition to the 'dogmatic' religious and 'feminized' *zenana* teaching practices. Similarly, in Hyderabad, the aim of Mehboob's English education and upbringing was conceived in opposition to the *mahallat* (the word for women's quarters in Hyderabad) and their traditional and effeminate modes of child-rearing.

IV. Weaning a Prince

"Having reached the mature age of nine years, the young nizam was emancipated…from the 'monstrous regimen of women' within the walls of the harem",[41] The Times of India reported after the Nizam's circumcision ceremony in 1874. This description of the *mahallat* as a caged enclosure that the young Nizam needed to be freed from, was a familiar rhetoric used for most princely *zenana* since the time of the Mughals. The early orientalist discourse conjured

and non-martial lines after 1857 see Thomas R. Metcalf, *The New Cambridge History of India: Ideologies of the Raj*, Vol. 4 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), pp. 125-128.

[39] See Mrinalini Sinha, *Colonial Masculinity: The 'Manly Englishman' and the 'Effeminate Bengali' in Late Nineteenth Century* (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 1995), p. 8. On the representation of indigenous rulers as 'effete' versus some 'martial' races as 'manly' in colonial literature see Indrani Sen, "'Cruel, Oriental Despots': Representation in nineteenth-century British colonial fiction, 1858-1900", in *India's Princely States: People, Princes, and Colonialism*, eds. Waltraud Ernst and Biswamoy Pati (London and New York: Routledge, 2007), p. 33. Also see Sen, *Colonial Childhoods*, p. 151, for a discussion on the innate effeteness of princely minors.

[40] On the raising fear of homosexuality in princely minors see Kenneth Ballhatchet, *Race, Sex, and Class under the Raj: Imperial Attitudes and Policies and their Critics, 1793-1905* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1980), p. 120.

[41] *Times of India*, August 8th, 1874, in *HA*, p. 11.

a narrative of the Mughal *zenana* as a pleasure house of the Emperor, where the womenfolk lived in deprived, isolated, and mysterious conditions.[42] This image of the *zenana* as a place where women were secluded and caged became a timeless and monolithic trope that got mapped onto most princely *zenanas* in the subsequent centuries. This physical segregation of women into separate spaces that were inaccessible to most men except the ruler and his immediate family, turned the *zenana* and its residents into subjects of colonial intrigue. Its unknowability and impregnability created a singular perception of the *zenana* as a place of literal and metaphorical darkness, shut away to and from the outside world.[43]

Thus, one of the main goals of English education for the princely elite was to extract a minor prince from the clutches of the *zenana*, which the British had no access to or control over. One of the primary contentions with the *zenana* raising a young prince was the lack of disciplinary boundaries. In colonial discourse, Indian mothers and the *zenana* were perpetually at fault and ultimately incapable of raising their sons. According to the British, Indian mothers would either tyrannize their sons to turn them into timid, unmanly adults or mollycoddle them to the extent that they had no discipline or routine in their lives.[44]

Hyderabadi *mahallat* was similarly accused of both over-indulging the Nizam as well as zealously guarding him, thus risking turning him into a permanent reticent. Political convenience dictated which of these accusations would be leveled at what time. So when Salar Jung used the *zenana*'s disapproval to not send the nine-year-old Nizam to Calcutta or Bombay to represent his subordinate princely state in front of the paramount government's heir apparent

[42] Ruby Lal, *Domesticity and Power in the Early Mughal World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), p. 1-3. Lal undertakes a historiographical analysis of the orientalist discourse in her book's introduction.
[43] Janaki Nair, "Uncovering the Zenana: Visions of Indian Womanhood in Englishwomen's Writing, 1813-1940", *Journal of Women's History* 2, no. 1, 1990, p. 11.
[44] Lelyveld, *Aligarh's First Generation,* pp. 48-49.

(The Prince of Wales) in 1875,[45] questions were raised about the Nizam's closeted upbringing. The Bombay Gazette dismissively foretold the Nizam's future—"[a]n effeminate and sickly youth, brought up in the harem and jealously secluded from participation in that active life which teaches knowledge of the world, and is therefore the best school for kings and statesmen, can be no fit ruler for the State of Hyderabad".[46] But when the British painter, Valentine (Val) Prinsep visited Hyderabad in the December of 1877, he framed the Nizam's progress under the tutelage of Claude Clerk (the Superintendent of Nizam's Education) in opposition to the traditional *zenana* upbringing that the Nizam had been receiving. Naturally, Prinsep was parroting what he must have heard in his less than two-week stay at the British Residency in Hyderabad. True to popular British perceptions, he deemed the *zenana* and their traditional modes of child-rearing as an impediment to the Nizam's wellbeing and his education. He accused the women of "petting" and "spoiling" the Nizam as he was left undisciplined, to tyrannize hundreds of women in the *zenana*. He dissected Mehboob's routine to provide his readers with a before and after snapshot of the young Nizam's life. He writes that before Claude Clerk's arrival (read: British intervention), Mehboob was a "very weakly specimen of scrofulous childhood… [who was] fed on sweetmeats and unwholesome things, and of course permitted to eat whatever he wanted".[47] But under Clerk's aegis, the *zenana*'s evil influence had been removed and now "the Nizam always has a good wholesome meal every morning with his tutor".[48]

[45] Ray, *Hyderabad and British Paramountcy*, pp. 69-72. By 'using' the *zenana* I mean that Salar Jung would often use *zenana'*s conservatism as an excuse when he wanted to object to British demands. Here I am relying on Ray's analysis of this incident where she argues that not sending the young Nizam to meet the Prince of Wales was an assertion of Hyderabad's political agency.
[46] *Bombay Gazette*, October 26th, 1875, in *HA*, p. 21.
[47] Valentine C. Prinsep, *Imperial India: An Artist's Journal*, 2nd Edition (London: Chapman and Hall, 1879), p. 312.
[48] Ibid.

That these observations were prejudiced against *zenana* child-rearing is evident as Prinsep espouses an identical narrative of growth for Mehboob's contemporary—the minor adopted prince of Mysore Chamarajendra Wodeyar X—whose court he stayed at before visiting Hyderabad. From being a "sickly, mealy-faced youth", Chamarajendra too was transformed into a "bronzed, healthy" boy under English care.[49] Like in Hyderabad, Caroline Keen has illustrated that even in Mysore, the English tutor Colonel G. Mallerson urged Lord Mayo in 1869 to remove the prince from the wretched and claustrophobic atmosphere of the *zenana*. The tutor argued that the *zenana* women pampered the prince, tolerated all his whims, and pre-empted all his wishes.[50] The product of such an upbringing was an unmanly, effete child who would grow up to become an incapable and ineffective leader.

English education proposed a corrective pathway to overcome this doomed future. English edification was not simply aimed at imparting language skills but was meant to act as a gateway into the world of enlightened Europeanness—reflected in modes of dining, dressing, sporting, and reading. Thus, English education offered a comprehensive overhaul of indigenous and traditional notions of child-rearing. For Mehboob, this physical schooling consisted of altering dietary and sartorial habits, a modified routine to build physical and mental character through sports, and an ideological lesson in heteronormative behavior. Mehboob's education at this time constituted a mix of traditional Muslim learnings in Arabic, Persian, and Urdu (which replaced Persian as the official language of the state under Mehboob's reign)[51], arithmetic, and calligraphy, as well as English language training.[52] Under the watchful supervision of Claude Clerk, Mehboob was to acquire language training in English, inculcate European etiquettes,

[49] Ibid, p. 302.
[50] Keen, *Princely India and the British*, pp.50-51. For a general discussion of the minor prince of Mysore Chamarajendra see Aya Ikegame, "*Princely India Re-imagined: A Historical Anthropology of Mysore from 1799 to the Present*" (London and New York: Routledge, 2013), pp. 55-59.
[51] Kavita Saraswathi Dalta, *The Language of Secular Islam: Urdu Nationalism and Colonial India* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2013), p. 11.
[52] Server-ul-Mulk, *My Life*, pp. 133-34, 152.

and indulge in masculine sports such as horse-riding, lawn tennis, and cricket.[53] The inclusion of English sports, especially cricket, in the fabric of princely education was meant to develop convenient traits of patience, obedience to rules, and cooperation amongst the native elites.[54] Most importantly, English education was meant to inculcate a regime of colonial governmentality that implicitly furthered the ideas of appropriate gendered practice and princely subordination.

Thus, English education did not propose a simple pedagogical alteration to indigenous education and rearing practices but was intended to refashion the indigenous body of the minor prince. The body has harbored a special significance in Islamic thought. Azfar Moin has illustrated its centrality in being the ritual hub of sacred kingship for Mughal rulers,[55] a tradition from which the Asaf Jah[56] claim their legacy. For the British to attempt to change the constitution of this body through a different educational practice than what was customary, was to put up an epistemological challenge to indigenous forms of authority. Simply put, the British desired to teach an indigenous prince how to be a king under colonial rule.

***

The British project of princely education was incomplete without ridding Indian nobility of their decadent sexual mores. So the polyamorous *zenana* remained a particularly dangerous place with its potential to hinder a prince's weaning process. This was especially a concern once a minor prince reached adolescence, as Mehboob did in 1882. Almost sixteenth, the

[53] Server-ul-Mulk, *My Life*, p. 131. Also see Prinsep, *Imperial India*, p. 312.
[54] Satadru Sen, "The Politics of Deracination: Empire, Education and Elite Children in Colonial India", *Studies in History* 19, no. 1, 2003, pp. 22-23. Also see Lelyveld, *Aligarh's First Generation,* pp. 257-261 for a discussion on the discourse of sporting competition as a way to build character for young native men.
[55] A. Azfar Moin, *The Millennial Sovereign: Sacred Kingship and Sainthood in Islam* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2012), p. 16.
[56] To remind the reader, this was the name of the dynasty from which the Nizams were descended.

Nizam was to wed a girl whose future living arrangements were called into question by the British administrators. The Resident, W.B. Jones proposed to Salar Jung that the Nizam's bride should reside in Purani Haveli, the Nizam's official residence, but that no women except those who were allowed to attend to her should have access to this palace. As Keen argues, the rationale behind such a proposition was to regulate the adolescent Nizam's access to multiple sexual partners in the *zenana* and more importantly, to encourage a monogamous relationship with only his legal wife.[57] Naturally, Mehboob's regent, Salar Jung was completely against such an innovation which was at odds with age-old *zenana* customs. In the eyes of the British officials, the polyamorous *mahallat* and its multitude of women were the epitome of princely sexual excess. This ultimate 'house of pleasure' was an impediment to English education and a young prince, who was under the tutelage of the British had to be steered away from this traditional vice and transformed into a monogamous ruler, in line with Victorian notions of ideal domesticity.

To add to the womanizing, there were also accusations of wining. In 1881, fourteen-year-old Mehboob's "penchant for the wine-cup"[58] was causally linked to his deteriorating health, which in turn was connected to his free access to the *zenana*. For the British, the *zenana* came to embody much more than simple dogmatism; it was a place that had the potential to risk the 'progress' that English education had helped make in Mehboob's life. The English press were quick to mockingly question, "[if] the Nizam of Hyderabad [was] about to be added to the list of our educational failures? Are the wine-cup and the *zenana* to be the ruin of our Mahomedan ward…"?[59] To arrest this failure, the British officials in Hyderabad decided that the Nizam

[57] Keen, *Princely India and the British*, pp. 102-104.
[58] "The Pleasant Perils of Princely Minorities", *Pioneer*, September 27th, 1881, in *HA*, p. 36.
[59] Ibid.

needed more than just an ideological weaning, he had to be literally extracted from the *zenana*. This extraction, however, proved more contentious than what the British might have liked.

The dispute about Mehboob's living arrangement embroiled not just the British officials but also the Hyderabadi elite, including the English and native tutors, as well as the *mahallat* in a political tussle to gain access and control over the young Nizam. A brief account of the different factions vying for power in Hyderabad goes as follows: from 1853, Salar Jung I, Mehboob's regent had wielded unilateral power in Hyderabadi politics and administration. He had brought men not native to Hyderabad (non-*Mulkis*) from North India to modernize the state administration. These men, however, were not cultural elites and were systematically blocked from accessing cultural power within the state. The *Mulkis* or native Hyderabadis remained custodians of culture and retained their symbolic position within the court.[60] During Mehboob's minority, two factions had emerged—non-*Mulkis* headed by Salar Jung I and *Mulkis* represented by Amir-i-Kabir (the Paigah family hereditary title).[61]

After the former co-regent Amir-i-Kabir II Rafiuddin died in 1877, his half-brother Rashiduddin Khan was appointed Amir-i-Kabir III and co-regent by the British Government. Rashiduddin was Salar Jung's prime adversary, accused of bribing the British Resident and attempting to murder Salar Jung.[62] Salar Jung wanted to be the sole regent to the Nizam but the British Government appointed Rashiduddin to keep the former's power in check.[63] This long-standing rivalry between the two co-regents created cliques within the Hyderabadi court—with some nobles and tutors aligning with either Salar Jung or Amir-i-Kabir's factions. Thus vying

[60] Karen Leonard, "Hyderabad: The Mulki-Non-Mulki Conflict", in *People, Princes and Paramount Power: Society and Politics in the Indian Princely States*, ed. Robin Jeffrey (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1978), pp. 67-73.
[61] To remind the reader, the Paigah family was the second most important noble family after the Nizams. The title Amir-i-Kabir was a hereditary title reserved for members of this family.
[62] Edwin Hirschmann, *Robert Knight: Reforming Editor in Victorian India* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), pp. 155-57.
[63] Ray, *Hyderabad and British Paramountcy*, pp. 84-86.

for physical closeness to the Nizam became a dominant motivation for different blocs. In a bid to undermine Salar Jung, Moulvi Masi-uz-Zaman Khan, Mehboob's *Mulki* Quranic tutor alleged that the adolescent Nizam had a 'disease'. He blamed Salar Jung for Mehboob's condition because the latter had allowed the Nizam to stay in the *mahallat*, leaving him unsupervised with the women. As it turned out, Mehboob had no 'disease' and he was simply weak and thin.[64] But by inciting a connection between Nizam's supposed 'disease' and his living arrangement, the Quranic tutor had made an astute move. He echoed the familiar colonial discourse of *zenana* as a pathological space to nudge the British administration to get involved, which helped him undermine his non-*Mulki* Hyderabadi adversaries.

Again, the rhetoric of disease and degeneration was not uniquely representative of the Hyderabadi *mahallat*. This was part of a growing colonial medical discourse in the latter part of the 19th century that Maneesha Lal argues, reduced the *zenana* to a dark, damp, and crowded space that lacked sunlight or fresh air. This inadequacy solidified the perception of *zenana* as a breeding ground for diseases.[65] British feminist and missionary salvationist gaze was directed onto the *zenana* women who were believed to be in urgent need of colonial medical and educational assistance.[66] If the *zenana* was deemed unfit for the women in this colonial discourse, it was completely unsuitable for a royal prince. With growing concerns about the medical and psychological perils of residing inside the *zenana*, the British Resident shifted the Nizam out of Purani Haveli (where the *zenana*) into Mahtab Mahal, almost about 2 miles from

[64] Server-ul-Mulk, *My Life*, pp. 160-61.
[65] Maneesha Lal, "Purdah as Pathology: Gender and the Circulation of Medical Knowledge in Late Colonial India", in *Reproductive Health in India: History, Politics, Controversies, Orient*, ed. Sarah Hodges (New Delhi: Longman, 2006), pp. 95-99.
[66] Antoinette Burton, "Contesting the Zenana: The Mission to Make "Lady Doctors for India," 1874-1885", *Journal of British Studies* 35, no. 3, 1996. Burton has argued that British women used the trope of the fallen Indian women to further their project of entering the medical profession.

the Haveli. He was moved there full time and only occasionally permitted to visit the *mahallat*.[67]

However, the ladies of the *mahallat* protested against the accusation that it was the Nizam's living condition that made him 'sick'. While they briefly complied with the order to let the Nizam stay away from Purani Haveli, they unequivocally dismissed a renewed proposal by Salar Jung to move the Nizam to the British Residency. The leading ladies of the *zenana*, Nizam's grandmother, Dilawar-u-Nisa Begam and his mother, Wadid-u-Nisa Begam (who managed the Nizam's *zenana*) allied with Amir-i-Kabir's faction (*Mulki*), as they feared that Salar Jung (non-*Mulki* faction) and the British were simply trying to keep the Nizam away from his supporters and usurp power away from him.[68] Keeping the question of the British Government's or Salar Jung's motivations aside, the more important point to note here is that the *zenana* women were important stakeholders in raising the minor Nizam.

It is important to remember that colonial prejudices against the *zenana* were not simply sourced from British cultural ambivalence of Indian courtly life, but were also guided by elite women's tangible position in courtly politics. While the royal women remained hidden behind the 'impermeable' walls of the *zenana*, they were nonetheless active and relevant players in political struggles, especially in situations of a prince's minority. In Hyderabad too, the leading ladies of the *mahallat* not only ensured that the British Residency plan was scrapped but also that the Nizam was back at Purani Haveli. They were central players in this debate; with the Quranic tutor and Amir-i-Kabir III vying for their support against Salar Jung I. They accepted presents and gratuities offered to them by the former group and allied with them in this case

[67] Server-ul-Mulk, *My Life*, p. 161.
[68] Ibid, p. 162.

because it ensured that the Nizam lived within their proximity and that they in turn continued to have a say in his raising.[69]

The *zenana*'s relevant position within courtly politics during and even after a prince's minority meant that the project of English education was in perpetual danger of failing. Here, colonial medical, missionary, feminist, and political discourses joined hands and came to each other's rescue. Together, they furthered the notion of depravity and degeneracy of domestic households to rationalize their demands to access and intervene in the *zenana.*

V. The Native Response to English Education

The introduction of English education for princes raised cultural anxieties about the dangers of racial crossing—not only in the minds of colonial but also native elites. Unsurprisingly, the British never promised political or racial parity with colonial education, merely a chance to become English enough to partake in the colonial hierarchy as cultural elites and allies to further the colonial project.[70] The Hyderabadi elites however remained equivocal about the effects of English education on their minor prince. There were concerns that English education would result in the loss of cultural and religious identity. This view is best exemplified by one of Nizam's tutors, Mirza Beg Khan, Nawab Server-Ul-Mulk Bahadur's defense of his pupil.

> There is no doubt that up to this time His Highness [Mehboob] said his prayers five times a day. He also used to learn swimming daily…But he took his meals at the table only during the periods set apart for his English education. At all other times, neither in his speech nor in the matter of dress, had he in the slightest degree a linking for English habits or etiquette"… He wore a gold embroidered Samarkand cap, and an Angrakha of the old Deccani style, or sherwani but at durbars he put on a "daster" with the "Toora" (gold brocade placed on the forefront of the headgear as a sign of royalty, according to the old usage.[71]

[69] Ibid, pp. 162-63.
[70] Sen, "The Politics of Deracination", p. 25.
[71] Server-ul-Mulk, *My Life*, p. 166.

Khan's emphasis on the fulfillment of religious duties and the continued practice of old customs and traditions reveals the anxieties that arose with the introduction of English education. The fear of severed ties with indigenous history and culture was palpable and this assertion of a temporal unity with the past can certainly be read as an act of psychological resistance to colonial impositions. However, it is important to note that the Hyderabadi elites were not wholly opposed to English education. They recognized the value of this education in elite sociability with their colonial counterparts. Sayyid Hussain Bilgrami is one such example.

Bilgrami, an English educated North Indian Muslim (non-*Mulki*) and Salar Jung I's secretary,[72] proposed a model for native princely education that amalgamated English language training with indigenous modes of learning. According to Bilgrami, Indian princes should be brought up as Indians and not as Europeans or worse as pseudo-Europeans. The ideal education for an Indian prince entailed a deep understanding of the history, people, and economies of the land that they would govern, and an immaculate command over their mother tongue. Both traditional 'manly' sports such as riding and shooting and English sports should be part of their physical training so they would develop an appropriate masculine physique. An ideal tutor would be an Indian who could teach the prince about his religious and cultural duties. Interestingly, Bilgrami too advocated an upbringing free of women and wine, deeming an English governess or even better an English couple a more appropriate caretaker than the *zenana* women.[73] He argued that the English governess should be:

> …a well-bread lady belonging to the better classes and of spotless reputation, known to be able to look after children. It should be the lady's duty to take care of the child, teach him to be cleanly in mind and body, to see that he has his

[72] He briefly taught Mehboob Arabic and was commissioned to teach him English too, but the latter plan fell through owing to British disapproval. He nonetheless remained a key official in Hyderabad for the next fifty years, where he took up important posts as the Education Secretary as well as the Director of Public Infrastructure, and advisor to successive Salar Jungs.

[73] *Addresses, Poems and Other Writings of Nawwab Imadul-Mulk Bahadur (Syed Hussain Bilgrami)* (Hyderabad: Government Central Press, 1925), pp. 51-53.

> proper food at proper time, nurse him carefully when in bad health, insist on his attending to his religious studies, and scrupulously abstain from imparting to him doctrines of her own religion.[74]

In this complex interplay of racial, colonial, and gender hierarchies, the minor prince was being discursively placed to emulate notions of English/colonial masculinity whilst his traditional guardians—the women of the zenana—were made to inhabit a superfluous position in this order. Bilgrami's disapproval of zenana upbringing and a marked affinity to notions of colonial masculinity is a derivative of the native response to colonial emasculation. Native elite men, as Mrinalini Sinha argues for the middle-class men of Bengal, had come to imbibe colonial notions of native effeminacy and lost masculinity.[75] Being a graduate of La Martiniere and Presidency College in Calcutta, Bengal,[76] Bilgrami's acceptance of English education—if not wholly, then at the very least its gendered promise of elevated masculinity fulfilled through sports and character training—needs to be situated within this elite discourse of self-perceived emasculation. English education then brought with it the possibility of a resurrected native masculinity—that had been deranged by centuries of decadence and ongoing political powerlessness.

VI. Rescripting Rituals and Inaugurating the Nizam

On February 8th, 1883, Salar Jung I, Mehboob's regent died of a suspected cholera infection. Mehboob was sixteen at the time. They had just returned from a tour of his dominions, an educational trip for him to learn about the governance of the places he was to rule.[77] But Salar Jung's unexpected demise escalated Mehboob's ascent to the throne. Lord Ripon was invited to Hyderabad to enthrone seventeen-year Mehboob, becoming the first

[74] Ibid, p. 52.
[75] Sinha, *Colonial Masculinity*, pp. 5-7.
[76] Part of directly-ruled British India. See Gail Minault, *Secluded Scholars: Women's Education and Muslim Social Reforms in Colonial India* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1998), pp. 201-202.
[77] Server-ul-Mulk, *My Life*, p. 224.

Governor-General to ever step foot in the Nizam's dominion. Just as the Resident's refusal to unshod in his first meeting with Mehboob redefined norms of respectable engagement between the paramount power and the princely state of Hyderabad, the Governor-General's tour of Hyderabad and the inauguration *durbar* posited an opportune setting to rescript traditional ritual idioms and assert colonial ones.

On the 2nd of February 1884, Ripon arrived in Hyderabad, where the Nizam received him at the station. The previous day, the interim regent, and a candidate for Mehboob's *diwan*[78] Raja Narendra Bahadur, the Peshkar[79] received a displeased letter from the Resident, John Cordery, demanding that the Nizam should have traveled to the frontier of his state to receive the Governor-General. But now that the time for that had passed, the Governor-General had forgone this error on the princely state's part and wished (one can say demanded) that four high ranking Hyderabadi noblemen should proceed to the frontier to receive him and accord him and the paramount power the dignified welcome they deserved. And so, the Peshkar and Laik Ali Khan, Salar Jung's eldest son and a rival candidate for Mehboob's *diwan* went to Raichur to receive the Governor-General. They did the *mizaj pursi* ceremony, where the host receives the guest and asks about their well-being and their journey.[80] Decades later, Francis Aylmer Maxwell, a high-ranking official of the British army traveling with Governor-General Lord Hardinge on an official visit to Kashmir in the 1910s, quips about the redundancy of *mizaj pursi* ceremony. To him, it was unnecessary to have an additional ceremony and meet the same people who moments ago escorted the Governor-General and his entourage to their residence.[81] While finding many traditional ceremonies redundant and simply ritualistic, the British had

[78] In modern parlance, this would equate to the position of Finance Minister.
[79] Peshkar was an honorific title given to the deputy of the *diwan*. Raja Narendra Bahadur descends from the well-known Maharaja Chandu Lal, who was Peshkar from 1806 to1832, and the de-facto *Diwan* from 1832 to 1843.
[80] Server-ul-Mulk, *My Life*, pp. 213-214.
[81] Frank Maxell, *A Memoir and some Letters* (London: John Murry, 1921), p. 116.

also come to realize the symbolic significance of these ceremonies in communicating hierarchical power in the eyes of the indigenous rulers. Therefore, when appropriate native ceremonies to accord respect to the Governor-General were missing during Mehboob's inauguration, the Resident deemed it imperative to inform the ruling elite of this symbolic blunder.

Mehboob Ali Khan was inaugurated and placed on the *musnad* (the throne) as the sixth Nizam of Hyderabad on the 5th of February 1884. The *durbar* was held at the Chowmahalla Palace. The *musnad* was represented by a dais, on which two identical chairs were placed, one for the Governor-General and the other for the Nizam.[82] A *durbar* was a political spectacle. A Mughal *durbar*, on which all subsequent offshoot Mughal states of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries modeled their *durbars*, was highly hierarchized. A typical example of this was the hierarchized layout of the court, officials closest to the Mughal Emperor and those who had a higher ranking in the court stood closer to him and those furthest in position and rank stood farthest away.[83] In post-Mughal British India, Mughal cultural legacy lingered on. The British were acutely aware of this constructed hierarchal vision that was the native *durbar*. It is for this reason that during the Imperial Assemblage of 1877, which ceremonially marked the Queen as the Empress of India, native princes were seated along a semi-circular grandstand, to evade the question of hierarchy among the princely states.[84] Even during Mehboob's inauguration, a meticulous seating arrangement was drawn to reflect current political positionalities. The native and English parties were placed on either side of the dais, equidistant to it. The Nizam and his principal nobles were on the right side of the dais and the British were

[82] "Latest Telegram: The Hyderabad Festivities", *The Times of India*, February 1st, 1884, ProQuest Historical Newspapers.
[83] Bamber Gascoigne, *The Great Moghuls* (New Delhi: B.I. Publications, 1971), p. 144.
[84] Cohn, "Representing Authority in Victorian India", pp. 198-99.

seated on the left. But within each side, one's position and rank within the government dictated their seating arrangement.[85]

While the British ensured ceremonial parity between the princely state of Hyderabad and the Raj by creating the equidistant seating arrangement, they nonetheless also indicated their paramount status by appropriating indigenous rituals and by incorporating newly invented colonial traditions into the political theatrics of the *durbar*. During the inauguration *durbar*, the Nizam and the Governor-General arrived together and sat on identical chairs on either side of the dais.[86] On behalf of the Empress of India, Ripon then took the Nizam by hand to the throne and invested him with full powers. The newly minted Nizam received a 21-gun salute, the highest a native prince could receive, but still markedly less than the Governor General's, who received a 31-gun salute, reserved only for members of the British royalty or the Viceroyalty of India. After that, Ripon presented the Nizam with a *khil'at* (ceremonial robes of honor) which consisted of a sword set with diamonds and other precious stones. Ripon also presented *khil'ats* to some Hyderabadi nobles.[87] In Perso-Mughal traditions, *khil'ats* have been used as a mode of investiture to convey a hierarchical relationship between the giver and the receiver, with the giver incorporating the receiver in their service. The acceptance of these ceremonial objects is also a recognition of one's subordinate position.[88] As Cohn has shown, in the early days of the Company rule, the British perceived indigenous gift-giving practices such as *khil'ats* as mere transactional commodities, emptying them of their cultural and ritualistic significance. The gifts that the Company officials received were simply assessed

[85] "The Hyderabad Festivities", *The Times of India*, February 1st, 1884.
[86] Wilfrid Scawen Blunt, *Indian Under Ripon: A Private Diary* (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1909), pp. 181-182.
[87] "Latest Telegram: The Hyderabad Festivities The Installation of the Nizam", *The Times of India*, February 6st, 1884, ProQuest Historical Newspapers.
[88] Gail Minault, "The Emperor's Old Clothes: Robing and Sovereignty in Late Mughal and Early British India", in *Robes of Honour: Khil'at in Pre-Colonial and Colonial India*, ed. Stewart Gordan (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2003), p. 127.

according to their monetary value and were often recycled and re-gifted to other princely nobility.[89] But when the Raj assumed paramount responsibilities after 1857, they were keen to speak the semiotic language of indigenous elites to convey their symbolic as well as political superiority. Thus, a British Governor-General conferring *khil'at* to the Nizam and the Hyderabadi nobility in the Nizam's dominion was an important political statement—one that marked the Raj as the paramount authority and the princely state of Hyderabad as its loyal subordinate feudatory.

VII. An Eternal Child

Ceremonially, the installation marked the end of British paternalism in the Nizam's upbringing. However, his education was far from over. While the primary aim of English education was to impart masculine, heteronormative, and disciplinary values, its ultimate goal was to usher a prince onto a path of good governance. The open-ended accusation of "misgovernance" that was so readily utilized before 1857 to annex princely territories, could no longer be the modus operandi of indirect British rule in princely states. Thus, the onus of good governance fell on the princes; and a prince after having acquired an English education was deemed an ideal candidate to carry out this reformatory agenda within his dominion. This drive for 'good governance' was however not a harmless push towards modern reforms but was loaded with oppositional discourse about the backwardness and traditionalism of princely states. As Manu Bhagavan has illustrated, the British saw themselves as bearers of modernity and the push towards good governance was embedded in claims of their civilizational and racial

[89] Cohn, *Colonialism and Its Forms of Knowledge*, pp. 117-118.

superiority.[90] Ripon's *durbar* speech for the Nizam and his nobility echoed the colonial expectation of 'good governance':

> I have a few words of practical advice to offer to you. Look at your finances. Discorded finances are the ruin of the States. It is so everywhere: it is very specially so in India. Carelessness and extravagance in financial matters mean, first, heavy taxation, and then gradual impoverishment and ruin of the people, and then loans with increasing interest and final bankruptcy…The single object of the British Government in regard to this or any other native State is, that it should be prosperous and well governed. So far as we can aid you to promote that end, you may ever command our help. The maintenance of the native States in India is a cardinal point of English policy in these days, and the existence of these States is in my judgement of the greatest advantage to English interests.[91]

Although valuable for a new ruler, this 'practical' advice carries colonial reiterations of the corrupt Eastern ruler, overindulging in personal frolics at the expense of his people. The reference to India as a haven for financially poor-minded rulers is parallelly an assertion of British administrative and educational prowess, as the model to be emulated. The parting words of edification for the Nizam were equally as paternalistic as his English education had been. Even after the formal handover of power, the British had ensured that a native prince remained an eternal child, permanently in need of adult (colonial) assistance and supervision—thus, validating the continuing necessity of the British Indian Empire.

VIII. Conclusion

Under the new imperial regime of the Raj, the project of disciplining, grooming, and reforming princely minors took on a novel urgency. As the case of Hyderabad has showcased, while English education promised to redeem native princes from their allegedly effeminate, undisciplined, and degraded futures, it was not purposed to create native replicas of colonial

[90] Manu Bhagavan, *Sovereign Spheres: Princes, Education and Empire in Colonial India* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2003), pp. 3, 5.
[91] "The Installation of the Nizam", *The Times of India*, February 6st, 1884.

rulers. On the contrary, the indigenous princes were "authorized versions of otherness",[92] who were to embody English values but never become categorically English. As Homi Bhabha's theory of colonial mimicry illustrates, the native mimic is a "figure of doubling", representing the ambivalent colonial desire to both civilize and teach natives of the English ways as well as a reminder to keep the distance and difference between the colonizer and the colonized intact.[93] The colonial project of princely education precipitated similar ambivalences. While English education approved the mimicry of the British and their ways, native princes raised anxieties with their potential to unsettle colonial racial hierarchies. Hence, to counter the danger of the Other disrupting the racial order, the imperial strategy had to double down on its discursive assault. First, English educational practice was premised to create amenable princely minors, who would grow up to become complying allies and further colonial regimes of power by willingly accepting their subordination. This drive for English education of princely minors was also accompanied by a push toward indigenous ritual appropriation during their minority. For instance, by refusing to unshod and conferring *khil'at* on the Nizam, the British aimed to subvert the hierarchical order embedded in the expression of native ritual idioms and supplant themselves on top of that order.

While this essay has focused on and demonstrated the uniquely interventionist and paternalistic turn of imperial policy towards the princely state of Hyderabad after 1857, it has also touched upon the ambivalent reception of colonial educational interventions among Mehboob's traditional guardians. In doing so, a telling observation has come to the fore: while Mehboob's traditional guardians were not unequivocally receptive to the impositions of English education, they were also not completely opposed to it. I would argue that this

[92] Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*. See his famous chapter "Of Mimicry and Man: The Ambivalence of Colonial Discourse", p. 88.
[93] Ibid, pp. 87-88.

ambivalence is guided by an acceptance of the political realities of the time. With an increasingly unchallenged position of the Raj as the supreme authority in India after 1857, rather than an overt resistance to English educational or cultural interventions, manoeuvring British demands and playing the political game (as the Hyderabadi *mahallat* and Arabic tutor did) turned out to be a judicious choice. Thus, the British imperial policy had achieved its primary objectives—political insubordination of princely elites of India and their assimilation into the colonial racial hierarchy as agreeable allies.