

ST. MIRA'S COLLEGE FOR GIRLS, PUNE
(AUTONOMOUS-AFFILIATED TO SAVITRIBAI PHULE PUNE UNIVERSITY)

Name of Faculty: Dr. Snober Sataravala

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Title of Project: HOW WILL THE PARSIS BE REMEMBERED? Oral Histories, Myths, Narratives and Representations

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Abstract:

When a community is rendered voiceless, not due to disempowerment but due to extinction, one of the major sources used to resurrect its past reality is material evidences. This project tries to understand how the Parsi community will be remembered when there are no more living Parsis to speak for it. Parsis are Indian Zoroastrians who have evolved their own idiosyncratic culture which has made them both loved and respected but also the butt of fond and gentle ridicule. The introduction lays down theories of memory, the politics of remembering and representation along with the importance of oral histories and myths followed by the general outline of the project, the research methodology and scope of the project.

Chapter 1: "The Storytellers" deals with interviews conducted across the country and focus group discussions of students, academics and Parsis in prominent metropolitan cities like Kolkata, Delhi and Pune. In addition, interviews of Parsis in Gujarat as well as priests are included in this section .

Chapter 2: "The Textual Constructors" studies textual narratives exploring four paradigms of the queer, the fool, the entrepreneur/ drug dealer and the antichrist with the concern that the Parsis may be reconstructed to feed the appetite for the sensational and exotic. In particular, it examines the poems and stories about the Magi and the title of Friedrich Nietzsche's book Thus Spoke Zarathustra.

Chapter 3: "The Visual Manipulators" is concerned with cinematic representation and explores the Parsi stereotype and its trajectory in both cinema in English as well as Bollywood.

The concern of this research is to preserve the integrity and memory of the Parsis but inadvertently it is also concerned with that of all minorities
