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Editor's Note

*The king reflected and said, 'Is this not Babylon the great, which I myself have built as a royal residence by the might of my power and for the glory of my majesty?'*¹

Cities, big and small; modern and ancient; grand and modest, have offered themselves discursively as sites of intense intellectual and creative engagement. Be it Babylon or Nineveh; Athens or Sparta; London or New York; Kolkata or Dublin, the cities across the world have always served as deeply antinomial places with their fashionable neighbourhoods and gentrified locations cohabiting with impoverished ghettos and dark underbellies. As unqualified spaces, cities are also, to use an oxymoronic expression, constantly changing - worked upon by dynamic forces; altered, made, erased and remade. In F. Scott Fitzgerald's 1930 short story, 'Babylon Revisited', Charlie Wales' life and destiny are inextricably linked with the city of Paris where he found and lost his happiness just as the king Nebuchadnezzar found and lost his in Babylon. In the mythic time, the two cities fuse to form a vortex of happiness and loss. In his *Tableaux Parisiens* (1861), Baudelaire earmarked this paradoxical nature of urban living to give modernist literature the gift of a haunting vision of a city.

The eight essays in the seventh volume collectively negotiate with cities; with their heterogeneity and anomalies. Like the urban spaces this issue seeks to discuss, the essays have not been arranged in any particular order but form a crisscross of images and arguments to represent the palimpsestic existence in and of cities. Amrita Chakrabarti's essay on Radclyffe Hall's *The Well of Loneliness*, and Djuna Barnes' *Nightwood* explores the various ramifications of the queer culture in the Paris of interwar period and how the city became simultaneously a liberating factor and a victimising force. Dwelling

on the capitalist function and consumption pattern, Chakraborti interrogates the image of Paris as a genuine sanctuary for the 'inverts'. Aparna Singh's paper draws attention to a relatively new genre of writing—the post 9/11 literature with special focus on Mohsin Hamid's *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* and H. M. Naqvi's *Home Boy*. Alienation, distrust and mistrust, confusion and anxiety, Singh argues, have created a new 'Urban Other' who needs to plot his memories and identity on the map of a familiar-turned hostile metropolis. This 'othering' is also an undercurrent in Debanjan Mitra's paper on Kashmir and the tenuous relationship Kashmiri Muslims as well as Kashmiri Pandits share with their homeland. As opposed to the cities so far discussed, Mitra's paper shifts the lens to urban settlements in the volatile border region of Kashmir where the concept of home becomes an ever elusive one. Psychologically unhinged by the traumatic events in their homeland, the netizens of Kashmir devise strategies such as silence to deal with their pain and suffering. Imagination and creativity become conduits for them to reconnect with their homes.

Breaking the formal boundaries of literature, Diksha Dhar's paper conflates city locales with cyberspace to create a discourse of the city as a performative arena for enactment of conflicts. Using the contentious and much debated issue of cow slaughter and lynching, Dhar juxtaposes the Dadri lynching case with the retaliation that followed, especially in Kolkata, to arrive at an understanding of how the city becomes a playfield for dissent and resistance. The city, usually, perceived as a *centre* of diverse human activities is also home to the immigrants and the marginalised and presents itself as a space that accommodates what is central as well as what is peripheral. This argument has been put forward by Janki Singh in her study of the Nepali short stories where Kathmandu becomes the home to migrants. New ways of seeing are developed as the outsiders offer trenchant criticisms of the existing structures of society and politics. Thus, it is the city in flux that has been dealt with in this paper.

Of all the figures inextricably associated with the city, the two

which stand out in the modernist literature the most are the flâneur and the detective. Somdatta Bhattacharya attempts a study of the post liberalization Bangalore/Bengaluru as evoked in Anita Nair's Borei Gowda series, with special emphasis on the last two novels of the series—*A Cut-Like Wound* and *Chain of Custody*. Bhattacharya traces the evolution of detective and crime fiction in literature and situates Nair's series within a long tradition of urban crime fiction. The police cum detective cum flâneur figure in these novels traverses the labyrinthine underbelly of Bangalore to delve into the corrupt and criminal structures present in it. It is the variegated nature of the city that makes it such a rich material for any kind of study. There is a constant see-sawing between order and disorder, law and lawlessness, permission and prohibition. Swati Chatterjee's paper scrutinises the home of the middle class Bengali household in the colonial period to discuss the various kinds of prohibition placed on the society. Using precepts of sensorial history, Chatterjee's essay focuses on the figure of the domestic help and tabooed food items to convey the deeply problematic relationship the city has with societal norms and regulations. In the last paper, Sreeradha Seth has brought the limelight back to a landmark modernist text—James Joyce's *Dubliners*. In *Dubliners*, the city not only provides a background but also assumes a strong individual identity—a sordid and decadent place that thwarts the romantic and transcendental aspirations of its people and pulls them down. Seth has used the binary of stagnancy and disruption to understand the strange apathy, embitterment and frustration that punctuate the lives and fates of the people living in Dublin.

The essays in this volume serve as an assemblage of various discourses, concepts and images associated with the city. Literature, sociology, history, architecture offer rich contexts for the constellation of essays in this issue and justify the broad theme, 'The Vision of the City in Modernist Literature'. Far from being an exhaustive study on the concept of the city in modernist literature, the primary aim of this issue is to rekindle a discussion on the city vis a vis emergent

disciplines like City Studies, Urban History and Urban Sociology. The tip of the iceberg has been touched and the promise of a submerged colossal structure remains!

Subhasree Basu
December 2019

NOTE

1 Daniel, 4:30

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Never at Home in the City: Economic and
Romantic Exchanges in Radclyffe Hall's
The Well of Loneliness, and Djuna Barnes' *Nightwood*

AMRITA CHAKRABORTI

In this paper I would like to discuss two famous Modernist lesbian novels—Radclyffe Hall's *The Well of Loneliness* (1928) and Djuna Barnes' *Nightwood* (1936). As is well known, both novels use interwar Paris as a setting for the depiction of same-sex love. I would like to explore the patterns of consumption that queer characters engage in, and the economic prerogatives they enjoy or are denied, in the context of the city and the homes they build in the city. Through this analysis, I will attempt to trace the power dynamics between queer individuals and the capitalist market, as well as within relationships of romantic love between women.

Feminist theorists have frequently pointed out the paradoxical nature of how urban spaces treat people who do not fit the norm of the heterosexual male citizen.¹ As Gillian Rose writes, in contrast to the 'feeling of spatial freedom which only white heterosexual men usually enjoy,' 'sexual attacks warn women everyday that their bodies are not meant to be in certain spaces, and racist and homophobic violence delimits the spaces of black, lesbian and gay communities.'² On the other hand, as Elizabeth Wilson has pointed out, the city also offers women the chance for independence, *flânerie*, same-sex bonding and a chance to explore one's sexuality without the threat of familial or community-based policing.

Paris of the inter-war years, the setting of both these novels, would have been an especially paradoxical city for women or queer individuals. As scholars such as Shari Benstock and Elizabeth Wilson have shown,

Paris in the 1920s and 30s gave shelter to queer subcultures (that both Hall and Barnes would have known well), and allowed women to live life on their own terms in a way which would have been inconceivable in other places, or earlier times, especially for expatriate women artists from England or America.³ As Martha Vicinus has put it:

‘But for literary English and American lesbians, Paris symbolized sexual freedom. It was already known for its lesbian subculture, thanks not only to Sand’s reputation but also to the poetry and fiction of such notable male writers as Balzac, Gautier, Baudelaire, Louys, Zola, Maupassant, and Daudet. In Paris the passing woman was embodied in the cross-dressed Marquise de Belbeuf, Colette’s lover, or in Radclyffe Hall... The Sapphic parties of Marie Antoinette were revived in Barney’s famous entertainments. The militant respectability of Rosa Bonheur was transformed into the militant demand for recognition, best embodied in Hall’s decision to write a book defending the “true invert.”’⁴

Yet this was also a city which carried the memories, and lived with the realities of a state-sponsored patriarchy. Benstock points out in *Women of the Left Bank: Paris 1900-1940*, that a legal ban on women cross-dressing in public had been strictly enforced during Lepine’s prefectship of the Paris police (1900-1913), and on 3rd January 1903 a riot nearly broke out in the Moulin Rouge when Collette and the Marquise de Belbeuf enacted a love-scene. The women were nearly arrested, and forced to stop openly living together.⁵

The contradictory nature of the shelter queer individuals found in Paris is amply illustrated in both novels. As the ‘women of the left bank’ well knew, Paris was the only place where Nora Flood could fulfil Robin Vote’s ‘wish for a home,’ rather than America, or the cities in Europe that they travelled through.⁶ Paris allowed people like Dr. Matthew O’Connor, who were vulnerable to being destroyed for

being 'a horrid sideshow'⁷ (especially in the 30s, the decade of the rapid growth of fascism),⁸ to survive and express their individuality. It provides Robin Vote the space for *flânerie* that gives her a break from her dominating partners, whether from church to church, or from drinking place to drinking place.

At the same time the city is intolerant and hostile to those who dare to question the 'moral and political order' to use Lefebvre's phrase, to which it subscribes.⁹ *Nightwood* establishes the persecution of the marginalized as a salient feature of urban life, as the Doctor's tale of the rape of Mademoiselle Basquette, or the description of the persecution of Guido Volkbein's Jewish ancestors in Early Modern Rome illustrate.¹⁰ Moreover, the roles of persecutor and persecuted are clearly fluid—if Mademoiselle Basquette is assaulted for her gender, the ladies of Rome who watched the Jews being made to run for 'the amusement of the Christian populace,' 'sitting upon spines too refined for rest,' shared in the cruel laughter of the male citizens, their erect posture signifying their sharing of phallic prerogatives to power.¹¹

The world of *Nightwood* shows us that Paris in the 1920s has clearly inherited this tradition of cruelty. While Robin is in the midst of a drunken spat with Nora, a policeman, who ought to be the agent of law and order, takes her, 'by her wrist, one hand on her behind.'¹² This action mimics the putting on of handcuffs on a criminal's wrist, an exhibition of the state's power—since Robin's being 'drunk and disorderly' in public would make her a criminal in the eyes of the state, a body in need of discipline,—even as the policeman himself engages in sexual assault. Nora testifies to the fact that passersby regularly 'put hands on' Robin when she is drunk.¹³ It is probably no accident that even the canny and courageous Doctor restricts his everyday existence to one square of the city, and the lanes running off it, building a safe space within which he leads a picaresque, impoverished life, cross-dressing only within the confines of his tiny and sordid bedroom.

In *The Well of Loneliness*, similarly, Paris at once shelters and exposes Stephen Gordon, the 'invert.' Stephen learns to love Paris,

even if the text takes pains to establish that Stephen's 'true roots' are in her ancestral estate in the English countryside. Indeed, discovering Paris seems to function as a queer rite of initiation. Jonathan Brockett, an invert himself, shows Stephen and her governess Miss Puddleton around the city, queering French history by hinting at narratives of same-sex desire between Madame de Lamballe and Marie Antoinette,¹⁴ while Stephen in turn, shows Paris to her lover Mary Llewellyn. People on the streets of post-war Paris accept, or at least tolerate, Stephen and Mary:

'A few people might stare at the tall, scarred woman in her well-tailored clothes and black slouch hat. They would stare first at her and then at her companion: *'Mais regardez moi ça! Elle est belle, la petite; comme c'est rigolo!'* There would be a few smiles, but on the whole they should attract little notice—*Ils en ont vu bien d'autres*—it was post-war Paris.'¹⁵

Paris, in the novel, is home to various queer communities, from Valerie Seymour's artistic salon, (modelled on the famous Natalie Barney's Sapphic circle)¹⁶ to the queer bars that Stephen finds so vile and alienating.

At the same time, as the passage quoted above shows, the city dwellers do criticize and ridicule queer individuals. If the toffs in Bond Street in London had remarked, 'Look at that! What is it!' at the spectacle of Stephen looking at women's jewellery, in Paris, Stephen and Mary are unable to dance at the famous mainstream bars and restaurants.¹⁷

In my view, the paradoxical nature of the city's relationship to marginalized populations is poignantly captured in these texts if we look at the patterns of consumption that the characters engage in. *The Well of Loneliness* dwells extensively on the pleasures of shopping. The description of Stephen's solitary *flânerie* significantly involves detailed descriptions of the various shops she passes by, and dwells on the complex pleasures of buying certain goods in certain settings, such as

the buying of cheap stationery in bulk, from a wholesale shop.¹⁸

Coming from 'the leisure class', Stephen inherits a complex class position with regard to conspicuous consumption. On the one hand, shopping has been seen as a quintessentially genteel feminine activity since the advent of the department store in the late nineteenth century.¹⁹ On the other hand, to follow Thorstein Veblen's hypothesis, women's conspicuous consumption and leisure are normatively vicarious consumption undertaken on behalf of their husbands, although 'gentleman of leisure' also lives under social pressure to be a connoisseur of commodities.²⁰ Stephen's father and mother seem to follow this schema, her father forcing her mother to wear appropriately fashionable motoring clothes, even though she dislikes them.²¹ Stephen begins adult life by emulating her father, visiting the same exclusive jeweller's shop in London that her father had visited years ago as a young dandy, being recognized instantly as her father's child by the jeweller, and buying for her lover Angela a ring 'as pure,' as the engagement ring her father gave her mother.²²

Indeed spending money on buying luxuries is a way of showing her love for her partners. Her unhappy relationship with Angela Crossby, while living in her hometown in the English countryside is marked by her inability to buy plenty of presents for Angela, lest Angela's husband find out the nature of their relationship:

'For the impulse to give that is common to all lovers, was in her attaining enormous proportions, so that she visualized Angela decked in diadems worthy of Cleopatra; so that she sat and stared at her bank book with eyes that grew angry when they lit on her balance. What was the good of plenty of money if it could not be spent on the person one loved?'²³

However, in Paris, Stephen can freely buy things for Mary from the shops of the city, whether it be meals at the Laperouse, with its history of being visited by Proust, or a new car:

‘Very splendid it seemed to her now to have money, because of what money could do for Mary; in the shops they must sometimes behave like two children, having endless things dragged out for inspection.’²⁴

Stephen enjoys shopping for herself too, as the passage on her impulsive buying of stationery shows. She purchases expensive commodities and services in order to give herself satisfaction and make herself attractive to her lovers. When trying to woo Angela Crosby away from a male rival she not only buys ‘a gold bag with a clasp set in diamonds’ for Angela, but spends lavishly on herself as well—buying clothes from London, a ‘rakish red car,’ gloves, stockings, a sapphire scarf pin, an umbrella, pyjamas of crepe de Chine, a man’s dressing gown of brocade, toilet water, soap, and cuticle cream, and having her nails manicured.²⁵

Judith Halberstam has pointed out that Stephen uses her clothes to creatively express her sexuality: ‘Stephen literally redresses the wrongs of her embodiment by taking on male clothing, meticulously tailored and fashioned to fit her masculine spirit.’²⁶ To show the invert thus seems to me to effectively queer the dominant notion of the woman consumer prevalent in the early twentieth century—that of a heterosexual woman committed to her role in the patriarchal family, whose vanity to present herself as attractive according to the standards of hetero-patriarchy could be exploited by the capitalist.²⁷

The categorization of shopping as a feminine pursuit is further problematized by the depiction of Stephen and Mary’s *flaner*ie down shopping arcades in the early days of their relationship. Mary, the ‘normal’ woman looks into shop windows not to seek commodities she would desire for herself but to adorn Stephen, the ‘masculine’ partner, at which ‘...Stephen might laugh and pretend to be bored, though she secretly nurtured a weakness for Sulka’s.’²⁸ Thus, love of dress can no longer be neatly categorized as feminine since the masculine invert has a weakness for Sulka’s even if she performs masculine indifference.

Moreover, for in both *Nightwood* and *The Well of Loneliness* the lovers

use what the commerce of the city can offer them to build a home of their own, homes that subvert heterosexual domesticity (though the nature and extent of this subversion are questionable, as I will try to argue in the course of this paper).

For one, the Parisian marketplace offers them houses that they can turn into homes, houses whose physical presences become support systems as well as 'the museum of [the lovers'] encounter.'²⁹ Stephen knows at once that she is going to live in the house of Rue Jacob as soon as she sets foot in it,³⁰ and if Stephen works hard on designing the house, and buying furnishings from both small towns in the French countryside as well as from Paris, Mary brings flowers and birds to the house. Mary's purchases are significant because she buys sick birds from 'the terrible bird shops along the river,' with Stephen's encouragement, ('Go and buy up all the animal shops in Paris') and probably with Stephen's money as well.³¹ We are told though some ailing birds die, the number of birds keep growing. These birds seem to demonstrate a love that makes Stephen and Mary's generously share their space with other living things. If the dead birds would seem to suggest that grief and mourning are an integral part of same-sex love, as Stephen and Mary's meeting amidst the destruction of the First World War illustrates, the growing collection bright birds would suggest a the 'growing family' of a young couple, a motif made explicit when Mary brings home their pet dog, David: 'And so it had suddenly come to pass that they who had been two, were now three.'³² The queer family is able to mimic and subvert the heterosexual model of a procreative marriage in order to provide a home to the lives they rescue from an exploitative marketplace.

In *Nightwood* too, we see the queer couple buying things to build a home on their own terms. Their apartment on the Rue du Cherche-Midi begins as a testament to mutuality, chosen by Robin and bought by Nora. Nora and Robin do up their home with decorations that flout cannons of domestic taste, but are meaningful to them because they are memories of their travels together:

‘In the passage of their lives together every object in the garden, every item in the house, every word they spoke, attested to their mutual love, the combining of their humours. There were circus chairs, wooden horses bought from a ring of an old merry-go-round, venetian chandeliers from the Flea Fair, stage-drops from Munich, cherubim from Vienna, ecclesiastical hangings from Rome, a spinet from England, and a miscellaneous collection of music boxes from many countries; such was the museum of their encounter...’³³

If, as Jeanette Winterson says, ‘there is great dignity in Nora’s love for Robin, written without cliché or compromise in the full-blown archetypal language of romance,’³⁴ Barnes seems to locate the high-point of this romance in the short paragraph quoted above, in the material objects in the house which ‘attested to their mutual love, the combining of their humours.’

Also, as Mary Wilson points out, the decorations are ‘objects created not for long-term use but for a performance of permanence, whose meanings change with each passing show.’³⁵ The decoration of the house thus would seem to signify Robin’s challenge to heteronormative monogamy, just as her room in the Hotel Recamier threatens bourgeois domesticity by juxtaposing its staple artificial simulacra of nature, (potted plants, cut flowers and birdcages) with the wildness and bestiality associated with her presence.³⁶

This challenge is carried on by the Doctor’s position as a consumer of products normatively marketed for the performance of ‘natural’ femininity in his impoverished garret home—‘...some twenty perfume bottles, almost empty, pomades, creams, rouges, powder boxes and puffs...laces, ribands, stockings, ladies’ underclothing and an abdominal brace...’³⁷ Moreover, the doctor’s room refuses to conform to the norm that feminine consumption should conform to a desire to ‘beautify,’ one’s surroundings as well as oneself: ‘A swill-pail stood at the head of the bed, brimming with abominations.’³⁸

But if certain characters manage to gain a degree of subversive power in the urban marketplace, what of those who fail to acquire this power? Both novels, especially *Nightwood* narrate tales of people who fail to manipulate the marketplace in their favour.

In *The Well of Loneliness*, another same-sex couple, Jamie and Barbara, come to Paris hoping that they will manage to survive and succeed in Paris, eke out an impoverished existence in a garret with hardly enough to eat, until Barbara dies of lung disease and Jamie kills herself the night after.

If Nora and Stephen, with American and English incomes are welcome in inter-war Paris of the weak franc, and money is no barrier in the way of securing a home, several characters from *Nightwood* are unable to successfully fashion households of their own. The doctor's dream of home, in which he is a conventionally beautiful woman, and where he can 'boil some good man's potatoes and toss up a child for him every nine months by the calendar' is an impossible one.³⁹ His reflection that he 'has to be brave, no matter what, to keep the mascara from running away,'⁴⁰ reveals both his courage and his vulnerability. Guido Volbein's setting up of a home for his wife Hedvig, in Inner City Vienna, where he can cast himself in the role of a Christian Viennese aristocrat, takes him back to his ancestral trades of 'money changing,' and thus to the very life and identity he wished to escape from.⁴¹

Moreover, if Nora and Stephen can use their purchasing power to do cement their romantic relationships, others in *Nightwood* do not have this power. This is most explicit in the portrayal of the character the authorial voice is clearly hostile to, Jenny Petherbridge. Although Jenny is wealthy, with 'the collective income four dead husbands could afford,'⁴² the text frequently calls her a 'squatter,' or a thief, one who lives on property belonging to others, thus denying her the privilege of private property, a privilege Barnes does not problematize for other characters in the novel. As Mary Wilson points out, Jenny is cast into a 'consumerist bourgeoisie identity.'⁴³ The things she has gathered from other people, out of deference to the tastes of others, threaten to

obscure Jenny herself, in the course of the long description of Jenny's belongings with which the chapter 'the squatter' begins. Her need to spend her money on the fashions others set down is brought to its most ludicrous in the Doctor's gossip that Jenny has bought 'eighty two plaster virgins... because Robin had a good one.'⁴⁴

Moreover, Jenny could perhaps be seen as the 'double' of Nora's patterns of consumption. She is cast as the villain for having been 'a dealer in second-hand and therefore incalculable emotions,'⁴⁵ appropriating Nora's love for Robin. But as Nora painfully finds out through the course of the novel (and as many scholars and critics have explored since) her own emotions partake of previous discourses of power, of motherhood, and of romantic love, and are thus 'second-hand' themselves. This is mirrored in the fact that, as Mary Wilson points out, the objects in Jenny's house, such as the left hand glove of Eleanora Duse, are often theatrical mementoes, and thus closely related to the things from circuses and fun fairs in Nora's apartment.⁴⁶ Jenny thus could be seen to function as Nora's abject and ludicrous shadow, blindly conforming to the valuations of others in a manner, yet uncannily similar to what should have been a uniquely new romance, Nora and Robin's.

Moreover, both texts show up that no matter how much cache individuals have, communities frequently bleakly fail to escape the mechanisms of the market. Perhaps close textual reading allows us to see the two texts in dialogue with each other. In the first chapter *Nightwood* speculates on the relationship between Jews and Christians in terms of an exchange of commodities: 'The Christian traffic in retribution has made the Jew's history a commodity; it is the medium through which he receives, at the necessary moment, the serum of his own past that he may offer it again as his blood.'⁴⁷ If Christian 'traffic' is the medium through which the Jew can access his past in *Nightwood*, in my view, *The Well of Loneliness* shows the heterosexual marketplace as the medium through which the invert and other queer individuals can access a communal existence that has been commodified

and made available only through destructive economic transactions, in the bar scenes.

Hall's descriptions of the bars of Paris where inverts and their lovers congregate are dominated by distaste for the pervasive decadence that Stephen sees everywhere. 'Alec's,' for example, is described as 'that meeting place of the most miserable . . . [t]hat merciless drug dealing, death dealing haunt . . .'⁴⁸ One wonders why Hall should have chosen to depict the Parisian queer bar scene thus, especially since, as Judith Halberstam has pointed out, that she and her partner Una Troubridge 'frequented lesbian bars, which were not the vile places she describes in the novel but provided a lively base for a rather flourishing community.'⁴⁹ One wonders whether, given Hall's personal politics, what is distasteful to Stephen is a lifestyle which threatens her wealthy, upper-class existence, and the ideals of 'normal' decorum that she sticks to. On the other hand, perhaps Hall wishes to engage in urban social realism, pointing out the real economic and emotional costs that queer subcultures collectively pay from refusing to conform.⁵⁰

Parisian nightlife in the novel is clearly mediated by the marketplace. These bars are not only sites of socialization but are also the sites of commerce, the gains of which go to heterosexual capitalists, the owners of the bars. Thus, Pujol, the owner of the Ideal bar, who is 'himself the most aggressively normal of men,' forcing his wife to bear the brunt of his sexual urges 'collects' inverts, keeping an annotated catalogue of his queer customers, in order to have tales to tell his straight friends and customers when they visit his bar. At another bar, the Le Narcisse, both family and romance are mediated by economic relations as the text suggests that 'the family group' around the owner of the bar are actually engaged in sex work, and a woman who distributes roses to queer couples is 'a vendeuse,' making it clear that the bar is made a safe space for queer folk in order to gain profits. The commercialization of a hospitable space for the capitalist's benefit is made most explicit in the description of Alec, the owner of a bar where male inverts congregate: 'Alec the tempter, the vendor of dreams, the dispenser of

illusions whiter than snow; Alec, who sold little packets of cocaine for large bundles of notes . . .’ The dreams Alec dispenses are surely not only cocaine-induced dreams but also the dream of being able to assume an identity rendered invisible in the rest of the city.⁵¹

At the same time, damning the queer bars and cafe of Paris surely lead us into another trap—it makes us damn the politics of those who chose to use these bars for socializing and exploring their sexuality. This becomes particularly important if we consider the fact that as queer women, Robin Vote, or Mary Llewellyn, are doubly marginalized on the Parisian drinking scene.

The woman as the consumer of alcohol is a deeply transgressive feature in literature, even in the literature of Modernism. Indeed, any form of consumption of food and drink (or refusal of it) carries a transgressive potential when performed by a woman, as feminist scholars have demonstrated, even more so when it takes place in a public milieu.⁵² Moreover, as James Nicholls has pointed out, the literature of High Modernism shows that the bars and cafes of Montparnasse were deeply gendered spaces. In the context of his study of the writings of Joyce, Hemingway, and Rhys, Nicholls points out how Modernist writing contains ancient anxieties about the ‘perverse’ effects of women’s consumption of alcohol such as the production of ‘damaged’ offspring (which could be significant in the light of the fact that Robin’s son Guido is ‘mentally deficient.’)⁵³ Moreover, instead of being a place for camaraderie, the bar is a judgmental and exclusionary space for women: ‘If a woman seen drinking with a man is all too often assumed to be either wife or predator, then the woman drinking alone is assumed to be either desperately lonely or a prostitute.’⁵⁴

It is interesting that both novels show alcohol performing its stereotypical role as ‘home-breaker’ within the context of a relationship of love between women. Stephen manipulates Mary into leaving her for the heterosexual Martin Hallam, in order to ‘save’ her from falling into the dissipation of Parisian drinking scene. And of course, Nora and Robin fall apart over the issue of Robin’s compulsive wanderings from

home, searching for drink and amorous adventures in the bars and cafes of Montparnasse. *Nightwood* dwells at length on Nora's suffering over Robin's casually cruel and sometimes abusive behaviour, her loneliness in her absence, and her attempts to keep Robin safe from the dangers of her wanderings.

But surely, Stephen and Nora's distaste and fear of the drinking scene are problematic in their own right. These bars with the promise of a release from sobriety, monogamy, and the pains of an invisibilized existence surely have the potential for becoming heterotopic sites that radically question heteropatriarchy. As Berlant and Warner point out, urban spaces which support a sexually permissive culture, such as the locales of sex commerce, are the backbone of visible and politically active 'queer counterpublics':

'Not all who use the thousands who migrate or make pilgrimages to Christopher Street use the porn shops, but all benefit from the fact that some do. . . . It develops a dense, publicly accessible sexual culture. . . . No group is more dependent on this kind of pattern in urban space than queers. If we could not concentrate a publicly accessible culture somewhere we would always be outnumbered and overwhelmed. . . . Respectable gays like to think that they owe nothing to the sexual subculture they think of as sleazy. But their success, their way of living, their political rights, and their very identities would never have been possible but for the existence of the queer public sexual culture they now despise. Extinguish it and almost all *out* gay or queer culture will wither on the vine.'⁵⁵

The wealthy and respectable Stephen and Valerie Seymour's desire to opt out of the 'sleazy' Parisian nightlife, and socialize at home reflects their class privileges—the privilege of owning private property.⁵⁶

Even in *Nightwood*, where the text refuses to look away from the fact that the bars of Montparnasse offer little permanent consolation

to Robin Vote, the text also records Robin's individual challenge to a patriarchy that would keep her 'safely' at home. According to me, a large part of the threat that Robin offers to patriarchy is that she assumes the prerogatives of consuming freely, in a culture where she ought to be the consumed. She is introduced in the novel, framed by the gaze of Felix, as a passive 'picture,' as one who makes us feel 'that we could eat her, she who is eaten death returning, for only then do we put our face close to the blood on the lips of our forefathers.'⁵⁷ Robin thus ought to be an object to be consumed in order to enable a homosocial bonding between men and their 'forefathers,' but instead she fashions herself as a voracious consumer of sexual pleasures and alcohol, one who cruelly preys on others, rather than be eaten up herself, seeking momentary pleasure in the consumption of alcohol ('Ah, I feel so pure and gay!'),⁵⁸ only to wake up 'the morning after' to voraciously eat eggs—her own portion as well as Nora's.⁵⁹

If Robin were to conform to what Nora wishes her to do, she would be rendered 'safe,' not only for the benefit of Nora's peace of mind, but also in the eyes of patriarchy. Instead of letting this happen, Robin confronts Nora, when Nora tries to keep someone from feeling up a drunk Robin, saying 'You are a devil! You make everything dirty!'⁶⁰ She goes on to take money from Nora and give it to another woman to spend on drink and 'happiness,' as she herself does:

'She stumbled and I [i.e. Nora] held her, and she said, seeing a poor wretched beggar of a whore, 'Give her some money, all of it!' She threw the francs into the street and bent down over the filthy baggage and began stroking her hair, gray with the dust of years, saying, 'They are all God-forsaken, and you most of all, because they don't want you to have your happiness. They don't want you to drink. Well, here, drink! I give you money and permission! These women—they are all like her,' she said with fury. 'They are all good—they want to save us!' She sat down beside her.'⁶¹

It is hard to make a general point about Robin's behaviour, because that would mean justifying abusive relationships or saying sexual harassment on the street is not a real concern. At the same time, it is important to recognize Robin's critique of Nora's desire to keep her safe- by keeping her safe Nora would only safeguard the 'dirty' values of patriarchy, which equate chastity and continence with being a 'good woman.' Diabolical though she is, Robin refuses to be co-opted into being a 'good woman' and instead snatches money to give to the 'beggar of a whore,' to be a transgressive eater and drinker as she is.

The workings of patriarchal discourses within Robin and Nora's relationship bring me to my final point about how the space of the home located in an expatriate city is no easy 'refuge' in either novel, and the power dynamic between lovers is inflected by the economic prerogative of actually owning the house, rather than staying in it.

Fredric Jameson, in his essay 'Is Space Political?' makes the point that the home is a site for the workings of power, rather than a refuge from the conflict ridden world outside:

'... the right to repression runs deep, and the privilege of escaping from the polis and from politics in general is supremely acted out in this separation of private life from work or public space. That it may be symbolic only of the privileges of the head of the household might be deduced from the rather different dynamic of privacy within the apartment or dwelling space itself. There, sexuality and power, or control, seem to be the not so symbolic stakes: who has a right to close his door, and upon what, is a question that goes hand in hand with the other one about the right to determine the use of the television set (or the living room).'⁶²

Jameson's analysis would seem to be restricted to the heterosexual family, but if we consider *The Well of Loneliness* and *Nightwood* carefully, we notice that the lesbian 'households' in each novel do actually have

a 'head.' Nora and Stephen are the buyers of these houses, they hold the prerogative of being the more powerful members of the family with control over the other member, in the eyes of a capitalist society and as I will try to point out, they do attempt to make use of their prerogatives, exposing disturbing aspects of their 'love' in the process.

Readers of the *The Well of Loneliness* cannot fail to notice the way in which the lesbian relationship celebrated in the novel relentlessly mimes a heterosexual marriage with well defined male and female roles. Contemplating what she can offer Mary, Stephen imagines the relationship in terms where she subtly gives Mary weaker filial relationships, 'child' and 'beloved.' Judith Halberstam has explained Stephen's role play, including her giving up of Mary, in terms of an economy of giving and taking, which is reflected in Radclyffe Hall's own relationships:

'What it does signify, however, is an elaborate system of desire in which mutuality is not a principle and in which giving on the part of the lover does not signify her own depletion or her beloved's inadequacy, or her own morbidity and her beloved's desperation.'⁶³

However, one cannot overlook the fact that the feminine 'home-maker' is repeatedly left at the mercy of the masculine provider. This becomes painfully clear in if we consider the relationship between Jamie and Barbara. The feminine partner in this couple, Barbara, is responsible for the household chores in their impoverished garret-apartment, while Jamie studies music and composes. Hall presents their eventual deaths as tragedy, but, I feel, overlooks Jamie's culpability in Barbara's death. Performing conventional masculine behaviour, Jamie cannot be bothered to co-operate with the ailing Barbara's task of keeping out the dust that damages her lungs from the flat. Moreover, her proud refusal, in her capacity as the earning member, of any financial assistance for treating Barbara's sickness, effectively causes Barbara's death.

As in *Nightwood*, crises erupt over the issue of mobility—when Mary goes out on a visit to Barbara, Stephen's behaviour to Mary turns ugly, even abusive: 'You've no right to go off without letting me know where you're going—I've told you before I won't have it!'⁶⁴ But if Mary has no right to 'go off' on her own, she does not have any right to stay in the house either, if Stephen the owner of the house has decided she needs to go, as Stephen does at the end of the novel, manipulating her into thinking she has had an affair, so that Mary feels compelled to walk out, without any resources of her own. Stephen thus effectively manages things so that Mary will have to take shelter with the first person who offers her shelter, and positions Martin Hallam, the person whom she has decided is the right person to 'save' Mary.

In *Nightwood*, on the one hand, if Nora and Robin's home begins as a space of love and mutuality, the 'museum of their encounter,' slowly acquires the deathliness of the museum, as Nora tries to take Robin out of harm's way towards death ('In Nora's heart lay the fossil of Robin, intaglio of her identity, and about it for its maintenance ran Nora's blood.')⁶⁵ Like Jenny's house which is like a place 'kept exactly as it was when'—Nora moves about her own apartment, wanting to keep it fixed in the past because 'if she disarranged anything Robin might become confused—might lose the scent of home.' Moreover, as Mary Wilson writes in *Nightwood*, 'home is never just a private, personal space, but a worldly position.' In my view, Nora decisively uses her 'worldly position' to exert her power over Robin. If Robin's choosing the house, and Nora's buying it suggests mutuality, the text equally seems to suggest that Nora chooses to take possession of a passive Robin, albeit with Robin's consent:

'Robin told only a little of her life, but she kept repeating in one way or another her wish for a home, as if she were afraid she would be lost again, as if she were aware, without conscious knowledge, that she belonged to Nora, and that if Nora did not make it permanent by her own strength, she would forget.'⁶⁶

The counterpart to this gesture would be Nora's returning from Jenny's to tell Robin that 'It is over.'⁶⁷ Reader's often re-construct the plot of the novel to think 'Robin left Nora for Jenny,' but the text actually makes clear that it is Nora who finally says 'it is over,' and thus leaves Robin, like Mary in *The Well of Loneliness*, to walk out into the city, to seek refuge wherever she can, once the person who has the economic prerogative of owning the house she lives in has decided to reject her.

Where then do women like Mary, Barbara, or Robin go, and what is their version of the machinations in the city and the homes of their lovers? Perhaps, finally what we are left is the curse the Doctor has overheard:

'Look for the girls also in the toilets at night, and you will find them kneeling in that great secret confessional crying between tongues, the terrible excommunication: 'May you be damned to hell! May you die standing upright! May you be damned upward! May this be damned, terrible and damned spot! May it wither into the grin of the dead, may this draw back, low riding mouth in an empty snarl of the groin! May this be your torment, may this be your damnation! God damned me before you, and after me you shall be damned, kneeling and standing away till we vanish! For what do you know of me, man's meat? I'm an angel on all fours, with a child's feet behind me, seeking my people that have never been made, going down face foremost, drinking the waters of night at the water hole of the damned, and I go into the waters, up to my heart, the terrible waters! What do you know of me? May you pass from me, damned girl! Damned and betraying!'⁶⁸

In the public toilets, a place that is at once a private, intimate refuge, and a public, civic space, the 'I' that calls out sees herself as a bestial, angelic, and infantile presence like Robin. Her curse calls down

damnation upon a phallic, patriarchal world whose 'upright' values systematically limit and impoverish her, including in her curse the 'damned girl' who would be an instrument of this patriarchy and force her to live by these values.

NOTES

- 1 The texts I have consulted are: Elizabeth Wilson, *The Sphinx in the City: Urban Life, the Control of Disorder, and Women* (London: Virago, 1991); Doreen Massey, *Space, Place, and Gender* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1994); Gillian Rose, "Women and Everyday Spaces" and Elizabeth Grosz, "Bodies-Cities," in *Feminist Theory and the Body: A Reader*, edited by Janet Price and Margaret Shildrick (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1999), 359-370; 381-388.
- 2 Rose, 362.
- 3 Shari Benstock, *Women of the Left Bank: Paris 1900-1940*, (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1986); Wilson, 47-64.
- 4 Martha Vicinus, "'They Wonder to Which Sex I Belong': The Historical Roots of the Modern Lesbian identity," *Feminist Studies* 18, no. 3, The Lesbian Issue (Autumn 1992): 487. Accessed 8 December 2019, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/3178078>.
- 5 Benstock 48-49.
- 6 Djuna Barnes, *Nightwood*, Preface by Jeanette Winterson, Introduction by T.S. Eliot (New York: New Directions, 2006), 40.
- 7 T.S. Eliot, "Introduction" to *Nightwood*, by Djuna Barnes (New York: New Directions, 2006), 11.
- 8 Benstock, 424; Jane Marcus, "Laughing at Leviticus: *Nightwood* as Woman's Circus Epic," *Cultural Critique*, no. 13, The Construction of Gender and Modes of Social Division (Autumn, 1989): 143-190. Accessed 8 December 2019, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/1354272>.
- 9 Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, translated by Donald Nicholson-Smith (Oxford: Blackwell, 1991), 317.
- 10 Barnes, 24, 14.
- 11 Mairead Hanrahan, "Djuna Barnes' *Nightwood* and the Cruci-Fiction of the

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- 13 Ibid.
- 14 Radclyffe Hall, *The Well of Loneliness* (1928; Project Gutenberg, 2006), Book 3, Chapter 31. Accessed 8 December 2019, <http://gutenberg.net.au/ebooks06/0609021.txt>.
- 15 Hall, Book 5, Chapter 2.
- 16 That Valerie Seymour is a thinly veiled portrait of Natalie Barney is often noted by scholars. The most comprehensive comparative study I have been able to consult is Amy Wells-Lyn, “The Intertextual, Sexually Coded Rue Jacob: A Geocritical Approach to Djuna Barnes, Natalie Barney, and Radclyffe Hall,” *South Central Review* 22, no 3 (Fall 2005): 78-112. Accessed 8 December 2019, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/40039995>.
- 17 Hall, Book 2, Chapter 21; Hall, Book 5, Chapter 53.
- 18 Hall, Book 3, Chapter 33.
- 19 Rachel Bowlby, *Just Looking: Consumer Culture* in Dreiser, Gissing, and Zola (New York: Methuen, 1985); Anne Friedberg, “Les Flaneurs du Mal(l): Cinema and the Postmodern Condition,” *PMLA* 106, no 3 (May 1991): 419–431. Accessed 8 December 2019, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/462776>.
- 20 Thorstein Veblen, “Conspicuous Leisure” and “Conspicuous Consumption”, in *The Theory of the Leisure Class* (1899; New York: Penguin, 1994), 35-101.
- 21 Hall, Book 1, Chapter 7.
- 22 Hall, Book 2, Chapter 21.
- 23 Hall, Book 2, Chapter 21.
- 24 Hall, Book 5, Chapter 40; Hall, Book 5, Chapter 41.
- 25 Hall, Book 2, Chapter 24.
- 26 Judith Halberstam, *Female Masculinity*, (Durham: Duke University Press, 1998), 106.
- 27 Bowlby, “Commerce and Femininity,” 18-34. Bowlby points out that even though the owners of the great departmental stores of the late nineteenth century might have conceived of women thus, the terrain in fact was far more ambiguous even for heterosexual women.
- 28 Hall, Book 5, Chapter 40.
- 29 Barnes, 14 and 40.

- 30 Hall, Book 3, Chapter 32.
- 31 Hall, Book 5, Chapter 41.
- 32 Hall, Book 5, Chapter 41.
- 33 Barnes, 40.
- 34 Jeanette Winterson, "Preface" to *Nightwood*, by Djuna Barnes (New York: New Directions, 2006), 6.
- 35 Mary Wilson, "No Place Like Home: *Nightwood's* Unhoused Fiction," *Studies in the Novel* 43, no. 4 (Winter 2011): 437. Accessed 8 December 2019, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/41319886>.
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- 37 Barnes, 53.
- 38 Ibid.
- 39 Wilson, "No Place Like Home," 440.
- 40 Barnes, 58.
- 41 Barnes, 15.
- 42 Barnes, 47.
- 43 Wilson, "No Place Like Home," 440.
- 44 Barnes, 75.
- 45 Barnes, 47.
- 46 Wilson, "No Place Like Home," 440.
- 47 Barnes, 18.
- 48 Hall, Book 5, Chapter 48.
- 49 Halberstam, 96.
- 50 Wells-Lynn, 89.
- 51 Hall, Book 5, Chapter 48.
- 52 Helena Michie, "Ladylike Anorexia: Hunger, Sexuality and Etiquette" in *The Flesh Made Word: Female Figures and Women's Bodies*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987), 12-30; Lisa Angelella "Alimentary Modernism" (PhD. Thesis, University of Iowa, 2009). Accessed on 8 December 2019, <https://ir.uiowa.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?referer=https://www.google.com/&httpsredir=1&article=1410&context=etd>; James Nicholls, "Drink, Modernity, and Modernism: Representations of Drinking and Intoxication in James Joyce, Ernest Hemingway, and Jean

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- 53 Nicholls, "A New Kind of Drunkenness: Alcohol and Modernity in Hogarth's *Beer Street and Gin Lane*," 25-51 and Nicholls, "Drink, Modernity and Modernism," 277.
- 54 Nicholls, "Drink, Gender and the Production of Literature: Jean Rhys' Early Fiction," 257-292; Nicholls, 269.
- 55 Lauren Berlant and Michael Warner, from Sex in Public, in *The Norton Anthology of Theory and Criticism* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2010), 2612-2613.
- 56 Benstock points out that the ban on cross-dressing in public systematically discriminated against working class lesbians, since upper class lesbians could afford to socialize extensively at home, and travel by private conveyances (Benstock, 48).
- 57 Barnes, 30-31.
- 58 Barnes, 86.
- 59 Barnes, 83.
- 60 Ibid.
- 61 Ibid.
- 62 Fredric Jameson, "Is Space Political?" in *Rethinking Architecture: A Reader in Cultural Theory*, edited by Neil Leach (London: Routledge, 1997), 251.
- 63 Halberstam, 106.
- 64 Hall, Book 5, Chapter .48.
- 65 Barnes, 40.
- 66 Ibid.
- 67 Barnes, 82.
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Cityscapes Transformed: Post 9/11 Novels

APARNA SINGH

The post-9/11 novel is pre-eminently a city novel and as such it is organized, written and to be read through the urban space. It is not only inscribed in the city but it also creates new spaces within the urban context and reallocates meanings within the city space. The analysed novels not only reflect the post-9/11 city, but they also create, produce, celebrate and write it. All of these texts classify as “historiographic metafiction” in Linda Hutcheon’s terms; they are both “intensely self-reflexive and yet paradoxically also lay claim to historical events and personages.”¹

Characters in the chosen novels are strongly attached to the cities they live in. The parameter of this emotional, social and cultural attachment becomes clear to many of them only after the fall of the twin towers. The confusion they come to experience is expressed in different ways but in most cases it is set around the individually tailored process of reclaiming the given urban space after the attacks. Some of the characters start walking excessively, with or without a plan, according to the same pattern (e.g., Chuck in Naqvi’s *Home Boy*) following a differently planned route every time (Oskar in Foer’s *Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close* or Lilian in DeLillo’s *Falling Man*) or getting lost in the city (Chuck in Naqvi’s novel). During their city escapades, the characters come across personal memories strongly linked to the urban space (Changez in Hamid’s *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*) or the history of the city which reveals itself to them in places they visit (Julius in Cole’s *Open City*). Some of them feel excluded, “othered,” discriminated against and as a consequence decide to leave the city and country (Chuck in *Home Boy*, Changez in *The Reluctant*

Fundamentalist, Chanu in Ali's *Brick Lane*: all of these characters are Muslim and feel "othered" on this very basis). The very city that seemed a haven of limitless opportunities—in sync with the spirit of a global citizenship—transforms into an alienating fearful space for many, which this paper primarily focuses on through a study of Hamid's *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* and Naqvi's *Home Boy*.

9/11

Ken Booth and Tim Dunne ponderously examine the amplified historicity of some specific dates and specific months. 9/11 universally came to define a world historical crisis. The signposts of world affairs in the twentieth century seemed to be fixed in particular places: Sarajevo, Munich, Suez, Cuba, Vietnam and the rest. In the case of the attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon it is as if everyone instantly understood that the meanings of these 'events' were global, beyond locality, an out-of-geography experience. September 11 was a place everyone shared, because there was a sense that what we were witnessing, literally, was a collision of worlds. The suffocating smoke and debris from the collapse of the Twin Towers not only show the material destruction that follows when worlds collide, but also symbolize the difficulty of understanding colliding thought-worlds; characterized by different beliefs about what is reality, what constitutes reliable knowledge and how we should behave.²

9/11 AND THE METROPOLIS

This paper focuses on literary representations of the metropolises, New York and London, in novels written after 9/11 whose plots refer to the events of that day. It places these texts within the context of the genre of the city novel, rooted in and deriving from the urban and industrial developments of modernity. In these novels fictional characters are positioned in a real life cosmos, the streets of which can be marked on

a map of the “real” city in question. The city in many of these texts is given a personality and can become the primary focus, itself the main character.³ It focuses on the way 9/11 is perceived and “dealt with” in spatial terms, i.e., on how the event and its repercussions become inscribed into the urban reality that then has to be made walkable, live-able and readable again.

In some of the texts the metropolis is looked at from outside and in retrospective (Mohsin Hamid's *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*) and in others its perception is shaped by visiting other places and returning with new insights and additional, richer urban knowledge (Brussels in Teju Cole's *Open City*). Urban individuals and city dwellers in post-9/11 city novels change the city through the way they live, through their movements and actions, just like the metropolis co-shaped by other individuals, and observers becomes an inseparable part of their lives.

The specific relation between a literary protagonist and the injured, scared and defenceless city is marked by reciprocity. This also involves contact between individuals connected by the fact of living in and hence sharing the same urban space. In 1903 Georg Simmel wrote about the nature and characteristics of the “typical metropolitan resident.” He characterized this specific urban being as one whose “relationships and concerns . . . are so manifold and complex that, especially as a result of the agglomeration of so many persons with such differentiated interests, their relationships and activities intertwine with one another into a many-membered organism.”⁴ This powerful metaphor of seeing cities as organic structures features prominently in post-9/11 fiction and has a long history of representation. How does an urban organism act and react in case of a major social crisis? Established and seemingly secure links, relations of power and hierarchy in such an urban body when it is being exposed to and attacked by the virus of fear and paranoia do not seem to function any more. The city in the analysed novels is often anthropomorphized, referred to as a living creature that can feel and become an object of emotional importance and attachment. Perceiving the city as a body also involves, as Antje Dallmann points

out, the motif and tendency of seeing processes taking place within it as evolutionary or even “natural”.⁵ These processes include the changing character of particular areas, the general social and urban development, spreading out of city limits.

The multidimensional frame of spatial interventions, i.e., walking, strolling, moving through the city and writing it, all in the context of 9/11 in this paper is aimed at spatial and symbolic remapping of the post-9/11 reality. “In a powerful recent work, ‘On Cosmopolitanism’, Jacques Derrida envisages the city as a novel political form that operates outside of the logic of nations and national boundaries, and has as its *raison d’être* the Kantian ethic of ‘hospitality’ towards the persecuted and the displaced.”⁶ Novels written by H.M. Naqvi, (*Home Boy*) and Mohsin Hamid (*The Reluctant Fundamentalist*) explore the transforming dynamics of the city post-9/11. The fall of the Twin Towers redefines the city for them in myriad ways. The city which had once been a familiar haven mutates into an unfamiliar and hostile space, surprisingly elusive. They cannot live outside of representation since urban space requires a dialogue—it is mobile and alive; it becomes “filled with politics and ideology”⁷ and cannot be experienced without mediation as the city is itself a “text that is partly composed of literary and artistic tropes.”⁸ The Kantian ethic of ‘hospitality’ is majorly recast in this altered socio-politico-cultural space after 9/11. There is hence a strong relation of interdependence between an individual and the city which influences the construction and identification of the “self.” As Eveline Kilian puts it, “The self can be changed in its encounter with the city, just like the city is reshaped and reorganized in the mind during each excursion.”⁹

PUBLIC/PRIVATE

New post-9/11 life cartographies emerged as they began to attach emotions, memories and feelings to a specific place/city and transform it into their unique personal space. New York and London after 9/11

become ultimate stages for storytelling; they are filled with stories told by different voices that are all rooted, inspired by and centred on one of the cities. Hence these cities can be “read” as literary texts especially as novels with their plurality of perspectives and possible multiple narrators. It also construes the new urban Other whose presence emerged after 9/11 and effected social changes in the metropolitan and literary environment.¹⁰

Home is no longer associated with separateness from the world outside or with privacy; characters of the modern urban novel often perceive the city as their home and feel most comfortable when immersed in it. Post 9/11 the border between private and public blurs and “home” itself becomes a subject of redefinition; it is “no longer a haven, no longer clearly demarcated”¹¹ and in the urban reality of home everybody is always exposed to the sight of a stranger; in other words, in a city everybody is somebody else’s stranger.

Multiculturalism, and the presence of new “otherness” as well as a redefinition of public and private space characterize the postmodern metropolis and require new cultural responses and approaches. 9/11 led to a certain reconstruction of this postmodern otherness and again requires a redefinition of urban spaces and notions.¹²

REMAPPING

Remapping in the post-9/11 context is always a very personal process and involves reclaiming memories attached to places. It is also connected to storytelling which is an important feature of the therapeutic character of the process. After the Twin Towers fell, the city lost an important orientation and reference point. Before 9/11 the towers were visible from Lower and Midtown Manhattan and marked the geographic direction when looked at from a distance. The suddenly altered urban space made people feel disoriented; they lost their reference point and so, metaphorically, did the city. These complex processes are reflected in fiction which features many disoriented characters, geographically

and emotionally. Together with the general spatial and symbolic disorientation, the sense and meaning of “home” had been lost, as Judith Greenberg points out: “The attacks freshly complicated those terms—‘home’ and ‘New York’—and proved anew that they signify not just location but also a relation to identity” and hence location (also the exact one within the city) produced a sense of vulnerability.¹³ The farther away from downtown, the more distance in perceiving what happened was possible. As Thomas Pynchon puts it in *Bleeding Edge*, “the farther uptown, the more second hand the moment”¹⁴ and the more controlled the narrative of the attacks. This applies on a different scale to the whole country: the more geographical distance from ground zero, the less “troubled the sense of home”¹⁵ and hence the possibility of emotional remoteness.

THE CITY AND THE OTHER

Mohsin Hamid’s *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* and H.M. Naqvi’s *Home Boy* belong to the category defined by Birgit Däwes as “ethnic responses”,¹⁶ many of which have gone largely unnoticed and been excluded from the post-9/11 literary canon. They present non-Caucasian American, non-Western, Muslim perspectives on the September 11 attacks. Both of the texts are strongly linked to New York City. The novels often use non-Western spatial and intertextual references and as such contribute an important perspective on perceiving, understanding, remapping and inhabiting the multicultural post-9/11 Western metropolis. Their experience of displacement gives these characters new insights to the city which post-9/11 fiction provides space for. According to Golimowska, “Both novels feature plots focused on the time in New York between arrival and departure—the experience of urban space is therefore limited by time, which in both cases is linked to the events of September 11. This triggers the need of storytelling, the need to preserve the memory of a space within a given time.”¹⁷

She further elucidates how both Hamid's and Naqvi's novels feature other places and use the spatial dimension to address post-9/11 "othering" and the East-West dichotomy. In *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* Hamid divides the tension between New York and Lahore, and in *Home Boy* Karachi constitutes the "other" place. These cities serve as synecdoches for the societies and cultures they are placed within and thereby relate to different levels of the dichotomous reality. The cities in *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* provide unique lenses through which the political, social and cultural dynamics in the post-9/11 world are seen and addressed. New York and Lahore form a transnational axis in which the story is set and through which the narrator controls the narrative. Changez talks to his silent listener about his family and his hometown Lahore, using transnational references to make the spatial dimensions and meanings understandable for the American:

Our situation is, perhaps, not so different from that of the old European aristocracy in the nineteenth century, confronted by the ascendance of the bourgeoisie. Except, of course, that we are part of a broader malaise afflicting not only the formerly rich but much of the formerly middle-class as well: a growing inability to purchase what we previously could.¹⁸

Lahore and New York—cities which represent two binary poles in the post-9/11 discourse of dichotomies, have, in Changez's description, a lot in common. This elevates them to an urban meta-level, beyond the notion of countries and nations. Both have parts that are walkable, i.e., pedestrian-friendly and those "degrading man on foot"—parts that favour people in cars. Changez refers in this context to "urban democracy" of places in the first category in which everybody can become a part of the crowd, and its lack in older parts of Lahore. Knowing both New York and Lahore gives him the potential not only to compare, but also to see each place through the lens of the other. Visiting New York for the first time, Changez realizes he had been

familiar with the metropolis even before his arrival. He has known it through cultural, mostly filmic representations.¹⁹

Seventy-Seventh Street, in the heart of the Upper East Side. This area—with its charming bistros, exclusive shops and attractive women in short skirts walking tiny dogs—felt surprisingly familiar, although I have never been there before; I realized later that I owed my sense of familiarity to the many films that have used it as a setting.²⁰

Fictional, filmic or artistic depictions of New York not only reflect the city but also create its primary image, make it what it is, and preserve the memory of buildings, streets, squares, parks and other urban places which in reality keep changing. Changez is conscious of the unique character of the different urban spaces that surround him and lives the metropolitan life of a “successful urban dweller”.²¹ When the outdoor area of the Lahore restaurant empties, he reflects on the power of emptiness in big cities designed for the presence of crowds. Solitude in this context is literarily out of place, and becomes a disturbing factor: “The fact that we are all but alone despite being in the heart of a city.”²² The city does not only have a heart but it also has lungs with which it breathes. In Changez’s story, New York becomes a beautiful body, pulsing with life and energy. It was one of those glorious late-July afternoons in New York when a stiff wind off the Atlantic makes the trees swell and the clouds race across the sky. You know them well? Yes, precisely: the humidity vanishes as the city fills its lungs with cooler, briny air.²³

Chuck in *Home Boy* sees New York’s wounds through the lens of his immigrant existence and the radically changing fearful attitude of his American co-urbanites. After 9/11 Chuck loses his job on Wall Street and after weeks of loneliness and depression he decides, like Chanu, the Bangladeshi character in Monica Ali’s *Brick Lane*, to become a taxi driver. Enrolling in the Taxi Drivers Academy marks a beginning of a process of becoming a professional urban dweller, a certified city cartographer, a map connoisseur and a crucial and visible urban presence.

AM(ERICA)

It is a city of possibility filled with “magical vibrancy and sense of excitement.”²⁴ Changez’s perspective on New York evolves from a fascinated stranger to a New Yorker who, eventually, feeling betrayed and used, chooses to abandon the city. This progression is visible in the retrospective narrative. When Erica shows Changez parts of Manhattan, he refers to New York as Erica’s city.²⁵ Erica lives in a fancy apartment on the Upper East Side, and her spacious bedroom is, according to Changez, “the socioeconomic equivalent of a spacious bedroom in a prestigious house in Gulberg” where he grew up.²⁶ When they lose contact, New York becomes Changez’s only faithful companion. When he cannot sleep at nights it is the city that enters through his windows and joins him in his loneliness and sudden detachment.²⁷ When things fall apart with Erica, Changez seeks comfort in the city. During his walking hours he revisits the places attached to the memory of Erica, in order to be closer to her. The city has the extraordinary ability to preserve moments and memories when they are attached to particular places. These moments become a part of the city and shape the way it is perceived and understood by the narrator. As these emotionally loaded spaces vanish or are replaced with others, the memories too disappear.

I wandered about the city revisiting places she [Erica] had taken me to, whether because I thought I might see her or because I thought I might see something of us, I am not now certain. A few of these places—such as the gallery in Chelsea we had visited on the night of our first date—I proved unable to find; they had vanished as though they had never existed. Others, like the spot in Central Park where we had gone on our picnic, were easy to locate but seemed to have altered. Perhaps this was the effect of a change in season; perhaps also it was in the city’s nature to be inconstant.²⁸

After 9/11 the city becomes a stage on which Changez manifests his feeling of otherness and displacement. He attempts provocation in order to generate a reaction, when in fact he is depressed and desperate. New York absorbs his anger. His walking is an aggressive movement that represents his rage against the outside world.

[S]ometimes I would find myself walking the streets, flaunting my beard as a provocation, craving conflict with anyone foolhardy enough to antagonize me. Affronts were everywhere; the rhetoric emerging from your country at that moment of history—not just from the government, but from the media and supposedly critical journalists as well—provided a ready and constant fuel for my anger.²⁹

The process of finding new ways in the city without Erica and without the admiration for Underwood Samson is difficult. Wandering in search for traces of her in the city, Changez recalls “diving” into his New York life in the significant September of 2001, shortly after the attacks of 9/11. He and Erica walk through the streets of Manhattan on a warm sunny day and notice a firefly, lost between the monstrous skyscrapers, overwhelmed and disoriented:

[A] tiny greenish glow visible up close but overwhelmed by the city’s luminance when viewed from even a modest distance. We watched as it crossed Fourteenth Street, headed south. . . . “Do you think he made it?” she [Erica] asked me. “I have no idea,” I said, “but I hope so.”³⁰

This tiny creature symbolizes the vulnerability of man surrounded by architectonic constructions he himself created. Especially in the light of 9/11 these buildings come to overwhelm and threaten. When “locked” in a skyscraper and dependent on technology, individual freedom of movement and decision-making become limited.

Throughout the novel *Changez* reflects on the nature of extremely tall buildings and construes them not only as a potential threat but also as aesthetic objects, artistic achievements. Skyscrapers reflect the sun, influence the wind and hence interfere with nature to become a part of the landscape. They evoke emotions and contribute to the city's extraordinariness:

Think of the expressive beauty of the Empire State Building, illuminated green for St. Patrick's Day, or pale blue on the evening of Frank Sinatra's death. Surely, New York by night must be one of the greatest sights in the world.³¹

THE AMERICAN DREAM

With ruthlessness inscribed into its rules and tasks, Underwood Samson represents authority, superiority, and certain ignorance towards its clients and indirectly towards foreign countries whose economies it rates. Underwood Samson's employees are evaluated like the companies they rate, through highly competitive comparisons in the result of which individuals become exchangeable and replaceable. The entire mechanism is driven by money and the only person who softens it in this novel is Jim, *Changez's* supervisor and mentor who employs him. Jim likes *Changez* and claims to understand him because he believes to see in him a reflection of his young self: "I never let on that I felt like I didn't belong to this world. Just like you."³² Jim is the exemplary personification of the American Dream in this novel; he is *The Great Gatsby* figure, faithful to his dreams. Jim has managed to work his way up the career ladder, thus proving, to others but most importantly to himself, that the transition from rags to riches is indeed possible in America. He talks openly about his poor background and shows off his wealth by inviting his team to a summer party at his house in the Hamptons. In the city he lives in a fancy apartment in Tribeca. *Changez* is struck by the attention paid to design and art, and a "not

insignificant number of male nudes”.³³ Jim laughs at the question of whether he is married or has children. When at a bar in Manila he sits with his arm around the back of Changez’s chair, it makes Changez feel literally like being taken “under his wing”.³⁴

The novel suggests a homoerotic element in the relationship between those two men. Their acquaintance is inscribed in the hierarchy of the company but clearly extends beyond the strictly professional. Jim—the patronizing mentor who calls Changez “a kid” when assigning him to a new project—recognizes himself in the young Pakistani and is at the same time intrigued and moved by his “otherness,” which stands out in Underwood Samson’s homogenous working environment. Changez shares his observations about Jim with the white, male American stranger in Lahore without comment, as if he was gradually revealing the insights of the acquaintance and there was more to come.

THE EAST AND THE WEST

The relationship between the young, ambitious Pakistani Princeton graduate and his American mentor can be construed as a metaphor for the illusory and never fully graspable love affair between the East and the West according to Golimowska. She further states: “It is marked by disappointments on both sides. Jim certainly is, next to Erica, the other figure who emotionally chains Changez to America. At the same time Jim ‘belongs’ to Underwood Samson and disappears from Changez’s life after he stops working for the company. Sacrificing a part of the self’s autonomy to the wild and ruthless capitalism embodied by Underwood Samson is requisite for the acquaintance. It cannot exist outside of the professional constellation of the mentor-protégée, which, on a global scale reflects the power relations inscribed in international (inter)dependencies.”³⁵

In the globalized everyday environment of Underwood Samson its employees even look alike; they conform to the same dress code

and have the same haircuts. After 9/11, when Changez returns from his visit in Lahore with a beard, it is considered a pointed political statement. The company employs only one other non-white analyst and from the beginning there is mutual understanding and sympathy between this character and Changez. They share a legacy of being the “colonized subjects” and they talk about cricket, a game that becomes a metonymy for their childhoods or is simply used as a metaphor in their everyday New York vocabulary. This brings these two characters close to Naqvi’s Chuck, who also refers to cricket when recalling his childhood in Karachi. Once Wainwright asks Changez while they share a cab downtown:

“Hey man, do you get cricket?” I asked him what he meant.
 “My dad’s nuts about it. He’s from Barbados. West Indies versus Pakistan . . . best damn test match I ever saw.” “That must have been in the eighties,” I said. “Neither team is quite so good now.”³⁶

Changez also uses a cricket metaphor to refer to his boss’s open, friendly, and honest attitude, which for him seems to equal a confession, something far too intimate for a strictly professional conversation: “The confession that implicates its audience is—as we say in cricket—a devilishly difficult ball to play. Reject it and you slight the confessor; accept it and you admit your own guilt.”³⁷ The postcolonial context is critical as Changez alludes to it as to an aspect that America and Pakistan have in common—the only reference made on a national and not a city level: “Like Pakistan, America is, after all, a former British colony, and it stands to reason, therefore, that an Anglicized accent may in your country continue to be associated with wealth and power, just as it is in mine.”³⁸ Chuck, the main character of HM Naqvi’s *Home Boy*, recalls playing cricket as a boy in Karachi. In Chuck’s memory, his father’s death is marked by moving into a new apartment and by the end of the cricket games in the garden. Symbolically, the absence of

cricket marks the end of careless childhood linked in Chuck's memory to an end of a space (the house and the garden).

THE QUESTION OF IDENTITY

The question of identity, linked to the city rather than to the country or a nation, contributes to the importance of the urban space in this novel. "I was, in four and a half years, never an American; I was immediately a New Yorker," claims Changez.³⁹ When after 9/11 the city is "invaded" by American flags, it strikes him as inappropriate—for Changez, being a New Yorker is very different from being an American. The city embodies for him values and phenomena that until 9/11 stayed on a post-national level. Its cosmopolitan character is unique and hence it cannot stand for or represent the entire country or nation.

Flying back to the U.S. shortly after 9/11 he is exposed to discrimination and humiliation by security controls at the airport. The New York he returns to is a different place with different social coding and norms. He observes radical changes in American democracy and questions its foundations: "Pakistani cabdrivers were being beaten to within an inch of their lives; the FBI was raiding mosques, shops, and even people's houses; Muslim men were disappearing perhaps into shadowy detention centers for questioning or worse."⁴⁰ Changez is shocked by the mental state of the metropolis:

Living in New York was suddenly like living in a film about the Second World War; I, a foreigner, found myself staring out at a set that ought to be viewed not in Technicolor but in grainy black and white. What your fellow countrymen longed for was unclear to me—a time of unquestioned dominance? of safety? of moral certainty? I did not know—but that they were scrambling to don the costumes of another era was apparent. I felt treacherous for wondering whether that era was fictitious,

and whether—if it could indeed be animated—it contained a part written for someone like me.⁴¹

New York City becomes a strange and foreign place, dangerous and unfriendly, moody and aggressive. A “final catalyst” for Changez arrives as his encounter with Juan Bautista, a publisher whose Chilean company, based in Valparaiso, is being consulted by Underwood Samson.⁴² Indirectly but forcibly, he compares Changez to the medieval janissaries in the Ottoman Empire who, taken from their families at a very young age, were schooled to fight against their own societies and nations. Changez, devoted to the US, his “adopted empire”⁴³ and disappointed by its radical shift after 9/11 feels like a modern janissary and his pride at being employed by Underwood Samson is rapidly replaced by embarrassment.

Space and place in both novels (*The Reluctant Fundamentalist* and *Home Boy*) are attached to ideology and politics. According to Golimowska,

The cities are irreplaceable and unmovable, whereas characters claiming to carry parts of the cities in themselves can transport them and mediate between the ideologies and world-views. 9/11 changes the perception of space and the lens through which the characters are viewed and judged. In both novels the impact of 9/11 stretches much further than New York City or the US. Both Changez and Chuck are constantly in between of the cosmoses. 9/11 makes them abandon New York City, a change that creates a sense of displacement and presents a severe identity problem. The city remains emotionally close but at the same time is geographically and symbolically as remote as ever. It cannot be revisited without becoming a new space, incompatible with the memory of it. This discrepancy results in incompleteness, a missing cultural context, a broken link.⁴⁴

Both novels use cities to address the multifaceted post-9/11 dichotomy

on different levels. The city acts as the key to understanding the complexity of the scope of that dichotomy and its consequences. The ambiguity of the Other is also addressed through place, as the process of “othering” is location-sensitive. In both novels the cities change with political tensions and post-9/11 sentiments. They reflect shifts in the lives of singular characters and as such cannot be revisited; in both novels they turn into memories and seismographs of moods, both individually and collectively. These different memories of places also deserve different names, as according to Italo Calvino:

For those who pass it without entering, the city is one thing; it is another for those who are trapped by it and never leave. There is the city where you arrive for the first time; and there is another city which you leave never to return. Each deserves a different name.⁴⁵

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The Home Treasured:
Finding Kashmiri Life and Desires in *Kash*

DEBANJAN MITRA

April is the cruellest month, breeding
Lilacs out of the dead land, mixing
Memory and desire, stirring
Dull roots with spring rain.
Winter kept us warm, covering
Earth in forgetful snow, feeding
A little life with dried tubers.
What are the roots that clutch, what branches grow
Out of this stony rubbish? Son of man,
You cannot say, or guess, for you know only
A heap of broken images, where the sun beats,
And the dead tree gives no shelter, the cricket no relief,
And the dry stone no sound of water. Only
There is shadow under this red rock,
(Come in under the shadow of this red rock),...¹
He who was living is now dead
We who were living are now dying
With a little patience...
...Shall I at least set my lands in order?
...These fragments I have shored against my ruins²

In his famed 1819 poem, “Ode on a Grecian Urn” John Keats optimistically assigns high value to the aesthetics of beauty and its closeness with poetic truth that redirects the poetic mind to an advanced zone of consciousness:

“Beauty is truth, truth beauty,—that is all
Ye know on earth, and all ye need to know.”³

Yet beauty and truth may not always inhabit together on a level plane; the contradictory nature and relationship of beauty and truth especially become manifest when we talk of social and existential issues. From a sociological perspective, beauty is often associated with a certain idea of taste, polish and superficial outlook that may conceal many dark underbellies of a society. This diabolical nature of beauty and truth characterises the developmental urban social system of any modern state.

In the Indian context, the state of Kashmir, famed for its pristine natural beauty, offers itself as a spatial text to be read where beauty and truth intertwine on very ambiguous terms. The land has been a battleground of political conflict between the states of India and Pakistan since 1947 when the Britishers divided the larger Indian state into India and Pakistan; and Kashmir’s princely ruler Hari Singh signed the Instrument of Accession with the Indian republic without considering public consent. Thus this paradisaical land widely acclaimed for its natural beauty, has given rise to several narratives of anonymity, dislocation, longing for belonging, pain, terror, violence and transcendence. For instance, writing about his Kashmiri roots, Saadat Hasan Manto iterates the conflicts and ambiguities of Kashmiri life in his inimitable humorous manner::

‘This isn’t hell; it is heaven.’
 ‘Gar Firdaus bar-rooh-e zameen-ast
 Hameen asto hameen asto hameen ast’
 If there is paradise anywhere on earth
 It is here, it is here, it is here’
 ... ‘That means we shall certainly take Kashmir.’
 ‘Sure.’
 ‘The UNO shall decide.’

‘Decide what?’

‘Our fate.’

‘God used to take such decisions earlier.’

‘Now earthly “gods” decide the fates of earthly paradises.’

... We are the rightful claimants of paradise.’⁴

This brief dialogue between two commoners introduces well the high notes of tension, repression and alarm that characterise the life of a Kashmiri. The initial reference to UNO in Manto has a vital significance in the current Indian context: it points out how the concerns of the land are often decided by political institutions that are not situated in Kashmir; it also foregrounds the high political tension that dominate the everyday life of this valley. Talking as late as 2017, Subhamoy Das ascertains that the very territorial location of Kashmir has made it a bone of contention between the modern states of India, Pakistan and China:

Kashmir, a 222,236 sq. km region in the northwestern Indian subcontinent, is surrounded by China in the northeast, the Indian states of Himachal Pradesh and Punjab in the south, by Pakistan in the west, and by Afghanistan in the northwest. The region has been dubbed “disputed territory” between India and Pakistan since the partition of India in 1947. The southern and southeastern parts of the region make up the Indian state of Jammu and Kashmir, while the northern and western parts are controlled by Pakistan. A border, called the Line of Control (agreed to in 1972) divides the two parts. The eastern area of Kashmir, comprising the northeastern part of the region (Aksai Chin) has been under the control of China since 1962. The predominant religion in the Jammu area is Hinduism in the east and Islam in the west. Islam is also the main religion in the Kashmir valley and in the Pakistan-controlled parts.⁵

As Manto knew well, the interests of commoners and governing states would not always be in consonance with each other. The dweller resident might have a perspective distinctively different from the political views and assertive expletives of earthly gods who decide the fate of an earthly paradise. Interestingly, this difference of perspective forms a major chunk of experience in all Kashmiri writers who have been forced to leave their motherland for a diverse number of reasons but still carry a vast trove of love and patriotism in their hearts for their endangered motherland. Manto's witty conversation also hints at the complex nature of relationship that a Kashmiri author subject shares with his Indian identity. The issue of nationality and patriotism in effect raise very pertinent questions about the civic life of cities like Jammu and Srinagar that are controlled by strict military codes of security. The presence of the militia restrains civic freedom and liberties of the valley for the sake of national security and this distances them from the commoners who reside in the valley. The sternness of the state policies has led to many writers becoming refugees whose spatial distance from their city space sprout forth complex narratives of security, belonging and nostalgia for the motherland. Complexities like these make us question the politics of representation inherent in Kashmiri narratives. How transcendental do these narratives become? What visions of belonging and expectation do these tales pass on to their readers? Thinking about the rights that define urban living and the role of global capitalism in constructing city life, David Harvey caution us that actors like criminal activities, migrant status and violence shape the current city life:

... [I]deals of urban identity, citizenship and belonging, already threatened by the spreading malaise of the neoliberal ethic, become much harder to sustain. The privatization of redistribution through criminal activity threatens individual security at every turn, prompting popular demands for police suppression. Even the idea that the city might function as a collective body politic,

a site within and from which progressive social movements might emanate, appears increasingly implausible. Yet there are in fact all manner of urban social movements in evidence seeking to overcome the isolations and to re-shape the city in a different social image to that given by the powers of developers backed by finance, corporate capital, and an increasingly entrepreneurially minded local state apparatus.

But surplus absorption through urban transformation has an even darker aspect. It has entailed repeated bouts of urban restructuring through “creative destruction.” This nearly always has a class dimension since it is usually the poor, the underprivileged and those marginalized from political power that suffer first and foremost from this process. Violence is required to achieve the new urban world on the wreckage of the old.⁶

Harvey’s musings on the issues of marginalization and civic rights foregrounds the fact that violence and repressive policies of the state become major factors in determining the contours of city life in Kashmiri cities. The passage also highlights the major thematic issues intertwined with urbanity that shape the Kashmiri tales that are read in this study: migration, security and belonging, the role of criminal machinery and state repression. Yet as this study shall attempt to demonstrate, the Kashmiri tales also strive to transcend the stern and depressing realities of Kashmiri life like death and violence by frequently shifting focus on dreams, imagination, idyllic transcendence, hope and idealism.

The conflict ridden and violent atmosphere of Kashmir in independent India raises a pertinent question as one tries to study the concept of home in these narratives: how have current Kashmiri writers responded to the daily violence that characterise the lifestyle of the valley? Since most of the original Kashmiris either live outside the state or are forced into exile out of it, how have they recreated

the experiences of their motherland in their writings? And finally, can we find elements of transcendence in these tales of violence? The current article reads a selective range of stories from *Kash*, a Bengali compilation of modern Kashmiri stories to explore these questions through analyses of the notion of home and belonging. The study also tries to see these texts go beyond the paradigms of repression, violence and apathetic negligence to articulate their dreams of freedom and the longing for roots and stability.

Arvind Gigoo's story 'Rain' is a study of the distressed Kashmiri psyche that has been trapped and victimised by violence. In the story, a Kashmiri engages in a dialogue with another as they pass through the Jawahar Tunnel which connects Jammu and Srinagar. The conversation, however, becomes strained as both are hesitant to talk about current affairs and indulge in memories of being survivors since 1990. In fact, to them, the present seems to be an everlasting regime of violence and repression which only invokes feelings of fear, trauma, psychosis, insecurity and suspicion in them. As the text progresses, it becomes apparent that to both, past memories are the only means of survival and their existence is sustained through the knowledge that they are survivors. The idea of urban space as a sphere of development and liberation is subtly interred and interrogated in the story as the two disembodied voices engage themselves in a chat:

'What have you left behind?

'My past'

'Where do you live?'

'In the caves of memory. I will never come out of it. Never ever...'

'Everyone seems to say the same. Can you say when this feeling became a widely shared feeling among everyone?'

'During the rains'

'The refugees are akin to water, they flow on and flow everlastingly...they have no clear destination in their front...'

their homeland remains in their back...in their memory...in the rains...'⁷

Notably tones of fear, scepticism and anonymity haunt these lines. The author very consciously gives a counter-narrative of urbanity where the experiences of belonging and territoriality seem to blur along the lines of insecurity and terror. We are also unsure if the text deals with the testimonials of a single survivor or treats the nuanced conversation of two personas to represent the collective angst and pain of all the denizens of Kashmir.

Gigoo's stress on retrogression, trauma and anonymity equally hint towards the larger themes of vulnerability, betrayal and obsessive disorders that haunt the commoners of Kashmir as their lives are continuously subject to governmental surveillance, forced manipulation and willful neglect. The author very acutely cancels out the specifications of time, individuality and space to suggest the horrific and all-pervasive nature of violence that continuously plague the daily life of a Kashmiri. Interestingly, the two specifications of the story are two objective referents, which act as conceptual metaphors that transform the tale into a nuanced text. The first referent is rain: rain seems to be both a metaphor of existence and of social repression that destabilise normal living. The other specification is the year 1990 when 1200 Kashmiris died in the Jawahar Tunnel: and this citation, in effect, seems to be only detail that keeps on haunting the speaker/s of the text. The crisis of existence and rootedness inherent in Gigoo's Kashmiri fiction can be explored in a more detailed fashion if one recalls here the notion of Agambenian "bare life" that present a deep psychological and socio-political link between sovereignty and subjectivity through the notions of birth, identity and citizenship. Note, for example, how Agamben connects these three major players birth, identity and citizenship into a single thread to define urbanity:

It is not possible to understand the "national" and biopolitical

development and vocation of the modern state in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries if one forgets that what lies at its basis is not man as a free and conscious political subject but, above all, man's bare life, the simple birth that as such is, in the passage from subject to citizen, invested with the principle of sovereignty. The fiction implicit here is that birth immediately becomes nation such that there can be no interval of separation [scarto] between the two terms. Rights are attributed to man (or originate in him) solely to the extent that man is the immediately vanishing ground (who must never come to light as such) of the citizen.⁸

The bareness of life that Agamben explores in the context of modern state becomes very pronounced in all the tales of Kashmir. The high incidence of violence in Kashmir due to the presence of the Indian security forces makes both the land and its citizens insecure and suspicious towards the Indian state as a welfare state. The civic needs of the Indian state in fact seem to overpower the daily needs of the Kashmiri people whose civic freedom become contested, restrained and negotiated by the larger territorial conflicts between the states of India, Pakistan and China for the territory of Kashmir.

Home—a free and peaceful abode devoid of trouble seems to be a recurrent theme in Veena Pandit Kaul's short tale 'Where is my Sky?' It details the story of the poor couple Vushan and Basanti who toil hard to build their own house in 1989. However, as the days pass the city becomes more unsafe and gory for Vushan and his family. Finally, after living in the house for a span of eight fear-torn years, Basanti convinces Vushan to sell off their home to procure money to send their children to safer zones. In the wager that follows, Vushan ends up selling both his house and his lands due to the callousness of his lawyer. The selling of all lands appears to Vushan as an uprooting of his own traces from his motherland and he becomes both paralysed and depressed. As Vushan dies, he continually mutters: "I have lost

my home. Where is my Sky?"⁹ Kaul seems to suggest gloomily that in Kashmir both trust and stability seem to be lacking from the lives of common men and they cannot evade their uprooted status even if they toil and create a home for themselves as the homeland itself is vulnerable and endangered. Kaul's treatment of rootedness and home-obsessed death remind us how Arvind Gigoo switches between life and death in his story 'Rain' and suggest that life and death may seem more intertwined in Kashmir as the civic needs of life in the valley is inseparably connected with the urge to survive odds. The anxieties and crises featuring in Arvind Gigoo's writings about the all-pervasive presence of death in the valley is, however, dealt by the younger generation of Kashmiri writers in a different manner. For instance, Ujma Falak's story "A Story of Three Words" portray the artistic fervour of the imaginative Kashmiri mind through the use of subtle imagery, symbols and metaphors. It foregrounds rebelliously the desire of transcendence, security and liberation that ignite the hearts of the rebellious and young Kashmiris. Though Falak talks about the daily occurrences of bloodshed and death that characterise Kashmiri life, it is her layered romanticised narration that transmutes these horrors into beautiful artistic images of redness. In her tale, she hints at how Kashmiri people live a life of darkness and insecurity devoid of sleep and dreams, drenched in blood and death:

Time divorced of recollection and specificity is a common practice among them. We have learnt to keep our half-torn dreams around the corner of our eyes where they seem to reside forever... colours inhere here as couples whose tastes rarely match... and among us only one colour seems to overshadow our lives along with our window-panes: the all-consuming tides of redness permeates all of our stories.¹⁰

Falak's incisive symbolism shows how death defines the everydayness of Kashmiri city life and still she contests the goriness of death

with the gift of her imagination. Thus, in Falak's vision, death does not become a mere reference that is the end of life's cycle; rather it becomes a bathetic reminder of how "safe" daily living in Kashmir is always threatened by the presence of the death drive. In fact, death and existential crisis emerge as major themes that recur in the daily urbanity captured in *Kash*.

Death-obsession, similarly, predominates in Shahnawaz Bashir's story "News of Death" that intriguingly reminds us of both Katherine Mansfield's "The Fly" and James Joyce's "Araby". Like Mansfield's boss in 'The Fly', Abdul Rashid Malik is a bossy editor figure who has become obsessed with the news of death: his obsession effectively shows the terror psychosis and paranoia that death has instilled in the literary minds that muse or write on Kashmir. Akin to the curious adolescent quester in 'Araby', the author introduces a fictional mirror image of himself of the same name, Bashir. This second fictional figure, in effect, tries to counterbalance the egotistical obsessions of Malik who continuously feels anxious as he fails to procure a direct news bite on the occurrence, death. The treatment of death in the story, firstly, lightens the idea of death as both an uncrossed border reality that separates Kashmiri cities from that any other Indian city; and secondly, it mocks the daily instances of death as a grotesque celebration of life that destabilises the idea of secure living. Note for example, the following section where Malik feels internally tormented as he finds no bites on death:

He minutely explored the weekly for the special news that ignited him...still he found no news on or about death. His despair increased as none of the pieces talked or even referred to death... [he despaired, Alas!] there is in fact, no article devoted to death, today. By Allah! No one died! How does this even be real? He remembered that a few months back, the media personnel did forget to print news on death, and it seems the case even today. He doubted highly if these concerns were professionals at

the very least. He mused, is it true that no one died on previous week? Malik's heart sank and he mused bewilderingly: 'How did this happen, no death tolls, how?????'¹¹

The character Malik's suspicion about the authenticity of the printed reports and the cautious calculative nature of the media world poses deep questions about the sanctity and security of urban and literary life in Kashmir. The high incidences of death and the reflexive nature of the tale simultaneously show how civic amenities like security, media, literacy, etc become contested domains in Kashmiri cities. Thus, superficially crafted fictional appropriation seems to give testimonial evidence of death and lack of normalcy where physical evidences are lacking. Another story that questions the Indian metanarrative of progress and welfare schemes is Adarsh Ajit's "Cancer". The story depicts the plight and trauma of a retired engineer Kanwal who develops Tuberculosis and is later revealed as a cancer patient. The story, however, stages Kanwal's story against his dream for a stable home in his motherland, Kashmir as Kanwal is a refugee Kashmiri Brahmin. The story ends with Kanwal's death but the rifts, beliefs, struggles and infections that ail the Kashmiris' search for a stable and secure home linger on. Kanwal's belief in the possibility of a stable home, though, an evasive and idyllic one, seems to be a survival strategy that can positively counter the traumas of Kashmiri lives. The final line depicts profoundly the narrow-minded individualism and self-interest that characterise the Kashmiri refugees against the idyllic assertions and willpower that the author celebrates in his protagonist Kanwal: "As they were standing in the cremation ground, before the infected corpse of Kanwal, everybody minutely examined their own body parts—they diagnosed if any infectious glands were detected: on their throat, neck or any other body parts."¹² As one reads the story, the inanimate corpse of Kanwal and its ideals seem to be more firm and influential ideologically than all the animated bodies that surround the former: thus, Kanwal's corpse is transmuted by Ajit into the status of a relic.

In contrast, the mass of the living bodies, bereft of vision and vitality, appears lifeless and vacuous. The tone of isolation and insecurity that characterise the lines quoted above, therefore, become a replacement for the romanticized sense of belonging that inheres deep within refugee hearts. Like invisible cancerous cells, the dream of homecoming and rootedness seem the only assertion that transform Kanwal into an anti-hero who transcends the tough reality of restraints through his death and becomes an icon for the traumatized author while others reject him as a deceased and infecting corpse.

In all the tales compiled in Kash, Kashmiri life exhibits a quest for emancipation and a hustle-free cultural identity that harks back to the pre-modern times that predate the birth of modern nation state. Interestingly, in these tales, death and transformation become the only means available to the Kashmiri subject—who is suspicious both to the sociological idea of modernity and to the political identity of the nation state—to assert his selfhood and lost identity against the technologically advanced republic of India, with a well-defined system of governance. These selective tales compiled together in Kash gives one glimpses into the creative flame that dwells in Kashmir, co-existing with horror, trouble, trauma and vulnerability. Though the occurrences of violence seem to be unstoppable in Kashmir even today, fictions that relate to Kashmir seem to reverberate a strong ray of hope in the human potential of dream, transcendence and fictional appropriation in the face of violence and terror. The imaginative vitality of these stories rekindles the hope that the quest of Kashmir for a peaceful, free and secure home devoid of violence and horror shall be realised someday.

NOTES

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- 2 Eliot, 66, 69.

- 3 John Keats, "Ode on a Grecian Urn," in *The Complete Poems*, edited by John Barnard (London: Penguin Books, 2006), 950.
- 4 Saadat Hasan Manto, "Sliver and Silvereens," in *Naked Voices: Stories and Sketches*, by Saadat Hasan Manto, translated by Rakhshanda Jalil (New Delhi: Roli Books, 2008), 140–41.
- 5 Subhamoy Das, *Understanding the Kashmir Conflict* (n.d.), accessed 30 April 2019, <https://www.thoughtco.com/history-of-the-kashmir-conflict-1770394>.
- 6 David Harvey, "The Right to the City," in *The City Reader*, edited by Richard T. LeGates and Frederic Stout (Oxford and New York: Routledge, 2016), 276.
- 7 Arvind Gigoo, "Rain," in *Kash*, edited by Adway Chowdhuri and Abhishek Jha, translated by Abhishek Jha (Howrah: Boibhashik Prokashoni, 2018), 16. My translation.
- 8 Giorgio Agamben, "Biopolitics and the Rights of Man," in *Biopolitics: A Reader*, edited by Timothy Campbell and Adam Sitze (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2013), 154.
- 9 Veena Pandit Kaul, "Where Is My Sky?" in *Kash*, edited by Adway Chowdhuri and Abhishek Jha, translated by Arvind Gigoo (Howrah: Boibhashik Prokashoni, 2018), 102.
- 10 Ujma Falak, "A Story of Three Words," in *Kash*, edited by Adway Chowdhuri and Abhishek Jha, translated by Ananya Singha (Howrah: Boibhashik Prokashoni, 2018), 19. My translation.
- 11 Shahnawaz Bashir, "News of Death," in *Kash*, edited by Adway Chowdhuri and Abhishek Jha, translated by Adway Chowdhuri (Howrah: Boibhashik Prokashoni, 2018), 145–46. My translation.
- 12 Adarsh Ajit, "Cancer," in *Kash*, edited by Adway Chowdhuri and Abhishek Jha, tr. Srijata Gupta (Howrah: Boibhashik Prokashoni, 2018), 114. My translation.

Where do Minority Pasts Lie in the Modern City? Exploring Articulations of Conflict in Urban Spaces

DIKSHA DHAR

On September 28, 2015, a Muslim man in Dadri, Uttar Pradesh was lynched to death by a mob of Hindu fanatics under the suspicion that he had consumed beef. In India, beef has grown as an indicator of hard-line Hindu forces since colonial times, and has consequently been at the core of innumerable communal tension. Earlier in the year, the Maharashtra Animal Preservation Act (MAPA) of 1976 was amended with stricter guidelines to prohibit and criminalize the possession and consumption of beef. Since Independence, the Animal Preservation Act has been applied variedly by different states. In light of the new amendments to the MAPA and the mob lynching in Dadri, a nationwide beef ban seems to be imminent.

With the news of the lynching in Dadri broadcasted across various news outlets and social media across the country, there is a belated recognition of what such legislation may imply. This suspicion around cow meat throws light on the status of everyday objects that inhabit the social present. With the presence of objects now, not limited referentially by economic value alone, the historical present appears checkered with *other* conventions and pasts. In this case, the minority cultural pasts of Muslims and Dalits, perhaps incongruous to the present landscape of the nation, become known. Dalits across the country consume beef. Beef is also a part of the staple diet in the North Eastern states of India. For Kerala and Tamil Nadu too, this is a common food. However the endorsement of a beef ban by the hardline Hindu register implicates that beef is consumed exclusively by Muslims. Therefore the current dominant ideology views the community as a possible threat to the present nationhood.

For NGOs, human rights activists, Dalits and Minority Rights

organizations, public and academic intellectuals, writers, metropolitan youth, and some film actors, the event at Dadri was a growing sign of religious intolerance in India. They came out expressing their rage at the event through protests and posts on social networking sites.¹ There was no denying the fact that this act of religious intolerance was symptomatic of a communal discord, older than the nation itself. The response as secular beings however, was a much more difficult position to articulate. While some saw the lynching as a violation of personal and individual rights, others saw it as an act of violence that merely went out of control. After all, according to the early reports of the event, the victim, Md. Akhlaq had consumed beef—this is a punishable offence according to the Animal Preservation Act which has been already implemented in a few states of India.

The nature and articulation of the event therefore varied among different publics. The multitude of voices can be roughly categorized under two groups—the first was manifest among secular civil society intellectuals and left leaning groups, who glossed over the cultural implications of beef and mob lynching, and focused more on general manifestations of conflict. Under the banner, ‘ones right to one’s food,’ the *death* of an *individual* caused in response to the *private* act of *eating* becomes the ground for defining intolerance. Built on notions of the public and private lives of nationhood, an act of violence that resulted in the disruption of the *public space* in response to a *private act* of eating becomes highly condemnable.

The second voice comprised of religious groups for whom the cultural implications of beef were definite and perhaps the only thing that mattered. A brief look into the history of the Animal Preservation Bill in India shows how cow preservation has been a prolonged subject of debate since Independence.² There was a strong bid to include a provision to ban cow slaughter in the Fundamental Rights in India. It was later included as the 48th Directive Principle under the counsel of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, then Chairman of the Drafting Committee of the Constitution. Both Jawaharlal Nehru and Gandhi opposed a

call for a nationwide ban on cow slaughter stating that they opposed laws that were derived from religion. Nehru once threatened to resign from office during a vote for the nationwide ban.³ On the other hand, Gandhi said, “I have been long pledged to serve the cow but how can my religion also be the religion of the rest of the Indians? It will mean coercion against those Indians who are not Hindus.”⁴

Yet, the ban on cow slaughter, which we see tempered by communal flavour from the onset, has always been demanded as a right of all the citizens of India. Figure 2 shows a pamphlet, from 1893, protesting against cow slaughter. A meat eater is shown as a demon with a sword, with a man telling him, “Don’t kill the cow. It is a life source for all.”⁵ The pamphlet was interpreted by Muslims as representing the Hindu attitude against them during the British Raj. However, the attitude has continued till the present. “For myself, I cannot understand why, in a Hindu majority country like India, where rightly or wrongly, there is such a strong feeling about cow-slaughter, there cannot be a legal ban,” opined Jay Prakash Narayan, member of the Janata Party.⁶ According to the hard-line Hindu forces, an affinity towards consuming beef endangered their religious worldview that simultaneously dominated their conception of national space. The lynchings had assumed themselves in the role of protectors of a religious-national order, from which they deemed adulterations such as acts of beef eating to be severely reprimanded.

The incapacities of both the voices to articulate and represent the event, becomes evident soon. A few days after the lynching in Dadri, Kolkata based NGO, *Bhasha O Chetana Samiti* (Language and Awareness Forum) called for a protest on the streets of Kolkata. To express solidarity to beefeaters across the nation, the *Samiti* invited people to consume beef on the streets of the city. Other people who had till then supported the opposition to the beef ban sat up in vexation. They still expressed their solidarity to the cause but severely criticized the method *Bhasha O Chetana Samiti* chose in doing so.

“*Eta natok hoche* (This is all drama)”, was a general vibe around

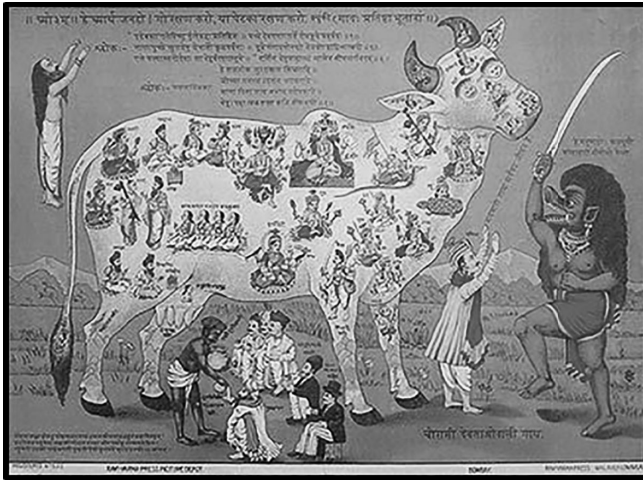


Figure 1.1: Pamphlet against Cow Slaughter in India from 1893/77

the event. “For those who called in the media today and ate beef at Rajabazaar to prove that they are secular; now, I request them to eat pork at the same place and to eat beef at Kalighat. Then we’ll see,” challenged Subir Paul on Facebook.⁸ Rajabazaar and Kalighat refer to two places in Kolkata. While Rajabazaar is an area dominated by Muslims, Kalighat gathers its significance from its landmark Kali temple for the Hindus. Both of them work as signifiers of religious public in the above statement. Another commented, “Yes, I support the call for democratic rights but this performance in the name of secularism is just to ensure a Muslim voter bank.”⁹ This post and comment stands indicative of the dominant voice on Facebook. We realize that even for secular groups that barely acknowledged the cultural implications of beef; the symbolic act of consuming beef causes panic. Hard-line Hindu forces in trying to regulate the appearance of beef in the public domain end up acknowledging its presence as a threat.

The *Bhasha O Chetana Samiti’s* protest was accused of making the city prone to communal violence. For civil society intellectuals, it had been easy until then to relegate the primitive act of mob lynching

caused by the age-old controversial category of beef as a national anomaly. After all, the lynching had occurred outside the physical boundary of the city, in the small towns and villages. Such spaces were still inhabited by traditional habits and conventions. Their publics then suffered incapacity to understand and abide by the modern and democratic ways of the world. The city space was modern and beyond the primitive entrapments of religion and thus deemed secular. The rightful citizen inhabited the city where they were educated in the ways of modern public sphere and hence did not fall into the trap of such primitive modes of violence.

However, when the *Bhasha O Chetana Samiti* conducted the beef-eating spectacle on the streets of Kolkata, it misfired. Despite being a symbolic act, the actions of the *Samiti* met with a lot of criticism. In expressing their solidarity to beef eaters they set in motion a chain of events whose reference was predefined and could not be undone with fresh intentions. Under 'ones right to one's food', beef eaters were put on the same pedestal as mutton or chicken eaters, which squarely undercut the implications of beef eating as something against the nation. This took the secular society by surprise since it shifted the focus of the conflict at Dadri from the mode of conflict to the object that triggered it, namely beef. In providing beef with the same visibility as poultry and other meat, the *Bhasha O Chetana Samiti's* protest unknowingly revealed that beef, after all could never been seen as merely a food product within the national discourse. Even without the assertion of minority publics, the cultural referent of beef does not go un-invoked. Other publics sweep in, to recognize its cultural implications and networks with minority publics and its consequent threat at their religious order and coerce it back to invisibility.

In Dadri, the public was disturbed by the personal choice of a Muslim man consuming beef in the confines of his private space. The larger disruption of the public domain occurs with the instinctual response to the act of lynching. According to the mob, the consumption of beef though personal, is referential of a particular

community's habits, and thus has to be criticized. As opposed to this, in Kolkata, a symbolic act of consuming beef by a group of people on the crossroads of the city is indicted to be a threat to communal harmony. In both cases, disruption seems to be connected to ideas of adulteration of the religio-national domain. The responses to both the events pit spaces such as Dadri and Kolkata, despite their differences, on the same planes. Both these acts one, private and mundane, the other, symbolic and public, pose equivalent threats of disruption in the national space. The event at Kolkata now appears, not just as a response to the event at Dadri, but also an extension of it.

Perhaps the only difference between the geographical sites of the city and town revolve around the forms of reprimand they receive. In Dadri, on the one hand, a mob of Hindu fanatics assembled physically and assumed authority to lynch a Muslim man to death in order to tame what they perceived as an attempt at adulteration of their space. In Kolkata, on the other hand, a group of people mobilized themselves through social media, to criticize *Bhasha O Chetana Samiti's* symbolic act of consuming beef at the crossroads of the city. In these instances, secularism appears as a matter of regulating private acts and objects in the public domain, both physical and virtual, rather than trying to comprehend why they might be a threat to the present understanding of national consciousness.

The workings of the national public sphere to demarcate and delimit articulation and meaning in the everyday is substantiated by another instance. On the 150th birth anniversary of Swami Vivekananda, Kolkata saw a huge state sponsored celebration. Popular Bengali actor Dev played the role of the Hindu monk, Swami Vivekananda. The Salt Lake stadium was decked up to host a two-hour event that included a performance choreographed by the Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee herself.¹⁰ This event too received the same response "eta natok hochche." Only this time the tone was that of resentment on the lack of sophistication of the event. Actor Dev, popular for his street side roles, was ridiculed for having tried to socially escalate up the

monk's shoes through the performance. The mockery emerged from the fact that this was perceived as tradition being dragged down to the popular and thus culturally low. However, nowhere was this natok (theatricality) resented on religious lines. While the act of beef eating on the streets of the city was seen as a publicity stunt for garnering Muslim votes and a threat to communal harmony, the celebration of Hindu monk, received a backlash for being, what people claimed, an improper depiction of the Hindu monk himself.

Objects like beef, places like Rajabazaar and Kalighat, actions like beef consumption and lynching, and people such as Vivekananda, all seem to occupy multiple registers of visibility in the everyday. Metonymic to a stratified past, visibility becomes an important vector for unravelling their (the past) work in the historical present. A study of all forms of visual display, assertion in the case of state sponsored celebrations of Swami Vivekananda and denial in case of communal violence suggested by mob lynching, becomes imperative. This throws light on religious, political, and economic networks as they weave in the everyday social fabric of the nation. While the referents range from spaces, people, actions and things, their nature is not always limited to the material domain alone. A visual corpus manifests itself at work, since these objects primarily defined by the nature of their visuality in the public domain and likewise carry within them a certain currency and capital, garnered through everyday usage and exchange.

Reiteration and contexts of reiteration play a significant role in the assigning of referents and timelines they inhabit. Due to the post-colonial context, the visual corpus is both historical and performative in nature. The historical nature of the visual corpus warrants a dual presence in the public sphere. The historical nature of the visual corpus and its limitations become evident in the discussions of Partha Chatterjee and MSS Pandian around the conceptualization of national space during the struggle for Independence. Both Chatterjee and Pandian are concerned with the ideological sieve that the emergent nationalism formulated to share political agency around social issues

of the time.

In his article, *The Nationalist Resolution of the Women's Question*, Partha Chatterjee suspects the sudden disappearance of women's issues from public debate towards the close of the nineteenth century as a possible compromise struck within the nationalist ideology.¹¹ The emergent politics of nationalism of the time, "[glorified] India's past and tended to defend everything traditional."¹² The national elites were suspicious of the penetration of western ideals of modernism in matters of their everyday rituals and lifestyle. The creation of a national identity by limiting the purview of the West and asserting certain aspects of the private as the non-negotiable domain of the nation was then deemed fit for political survival. To accommodate the two contrary states of affairs, a spatial divide was attempted in the new national identity, the 'material' and the 'spiritual,' which manifested also as the 'inner' and 'outer' or the 'home' and the 'world' domain of the national space.

The 'material' sphere encompassed the domain of the science, technology, rational forms of economic organization and modern methods of statecraft where the superiority of the West had to be acknowledged to climb up the global ladder. Women's issues found themselves pushed into the 'spiritual' domain since these were considered to be at the core of national culture. With this rationalization at work, the new identity of the nation orchestrated the qualities of the west while retaining the distinctive identity in the 'spiritual' sphere. MSS Pandian accepts Chatterjee's formulation but extends it to show that this compromise, on which a postcolonial nation's image is made, is in conflict with the subaltern issues and concerns within the subcontinent. If Chatterjee concentrates on the colonial conditions that resulted in such a spatial divide in the nation, Pandian's argument centres around the implications of the split on the numerous subaltern publics residing in the nation.¹³

In relegating the religious sphere to the spiritual and inner domain of nation, a dual purpose is achieved. Not only is religion barred from public debate, it is also upheld as the inner essence of national

identity. First, subsumed as tradition, the religious sphere is no longer in discussion with modern methods of enquiry. Second, any attempt to do so is taken as an attempt to hurt the inner sanctum and consequently, the national sentiments of the people. Evidently, the dominant religious identity asserts itself as national identity. Wielded by national identity, the new public domain then not only silences subaltern issues but also subsumes subaltern conflict in symptomatic violence and aberration in the public sphere as well. This also estranges the religious conflict from its immediate context and appropriates it among subaltern groups such as linguistic, religious, caste and gender minorities, as anomalies of violence within the national territory.

A recognition of material referents then become imperative to the understanding of various networks carpeted under the national public sphere. If we go back to our discussion of the Dadri and Kolkata incidents, the emergence of a third group of people unable to fit in either registers of articulation and representation helps our present context. Comprised of a number of minority rights and people's organizations recognized the implications of beef as a threat to Hinduism and the nation. It becomes significant, to throw light on how the criminalization of certain habits, by law and religious fanaticism, abated the nature of violence implicated in mob lynching at Dadri. While the secular register censors the cultural implication of beef as irrelevant to the discourse, the hard-line Hindu register appropriates Hinduism as a national identity. The reference of beef within the food cultures of Dalits and Muslims across the country is completely disposed of.

The mechanisms of censorship and appropriation of the minority register becomes clear through limits in articulation. A few days after the present protest, *Bhasha O Chetana Samiti* held a food festival where people were invited to consume pork/beef/chicken/vegetarian food as an assertion of one's right to food he/she chooses. The aspect of food representing centuries of traditions and *vis-a-vis* other marginal publics at the periphery stepped into the background to make way for liberal democratic values of individual choice. It

is nevertheless necessary to note, that a moment of retrospection (and retrieval) was possible among a certain stratum of public. The ambit of a food festival (arguably another kind of performance) also regulates the nature of public space. Not only is the public regulated and thus limited to urban educated elite (who are perceived to have had a sophisticated, sensitive and similar critical retrospection and thus modern reception of the beef ban), the food festival banner also legitimizes a certain privileged freedom of expression. What happens to everyday acts of expression? What becomes important then is to regulate one's choice according to the norms of the place as opposed to the references that they represent. There was no such form of retrieval possible for Md. Akhlaq. The Muslim man had no time to reveal his intentions of the entire act. He had to be immediately lynched. Some publics have a possibility of rearticulating their actions while others are not provided the language or the space.

The articulation of the third register undergoes subsumption and censorship and is rendered invisible in the modern public sphere. To throw light on the various networks carpeted under the modern public sphere, I borrow from J. L. Austin's concept of performatives.¹⁴ In his lectures, *How to do Things with Words*, Austin defines performatives as utterances which do not just describe a given reality but are also operative as actions of the speaker themselves. While the constative nature of language refers to *describing* what the real entails, a performative refers to *actions* that operate through linguistic devices.

Austin's well-known example talks of the common marriage vow, 'I do declare thee man and wife.' The nature of the utterance is performative as it does not describe anything that is happening around, but is indicative of an action that is ensured by language itself. Since performatives are shaped and sustained through conventions of everyday, they become a significant help in mapping social rituals at work in the quotidian present. Further, performatives are also dynamic in nature and thus help towards a synchronic study of the visual corpus as they gather or lose currency through time. For the

present study, performative utterances help approach the gap between articulation and experience when they record rituals in the everyday that are not accounted for in the public domain of the nation.

Performatives look like statements and would be classified as statements, and yet cannot be defined in terms of the dichotomy between true or false. The intention of a statement, therefore, cannot be verified within the domain of language communication and its mechanism. A statement might linguistically represent a particular idea but can be read to imply something completely different. Intention and meaning do not necessarily need to be the same thing. Austin showed that communication is possible irrespective of evidentiary truth. In addition to the necessity for communication to happen, is the intentionality of the subject. This increases the rift between truth and falsity as verifiable objects in everyday language. Following on Austin, John Searle opines that the smallest unit in language communication is not the token of the symbol or word or sentence, but the production of the token in the performance of the speech act that constitutes the basic unit of linguistic. Meanings are then produced neither by positivist statements that are verifiable in nature nor by the mere usage of words, but rather by how these come to occupy meaning in the first place through acts that loom in the grand narrative of society itself.

Rituals, conventions, and performances become significant to the usage of the visual corpus, since they throw light on rituals that have been naturalized as everyday actions. They parade around the everyday as *normal* actions till they encounter contexts where their temporal disparity becomes highlighted. For example, the existence of beef in India is not as paradoxical as the hard-line Hindu groups would want to publicize. India is the second largest exporter of beef and the commodity has always been available for consumption at high-end hotels of the country. However, religious referent of beef is highlighted only when it is pitted in an alien environment: such as in a Hindu dominated neighborhood where Md. Akhlaq stayed and thus was seen as a threat, or at Rajabazaar, the Muslim neighbourhood

where it was assumed safe to plan such a protest. The context of performance really defines the referents at play.

It has been seen that the 'consumption' of beef and 'lynching' signify adulteration and communal violence respectively. Apart from the lynching in Dadri, we have seen how the symbolic act at Kolkata and the Vivekananda celebrations have been accused of being mere performances. Both of them are deemed fake but for separate reasons. The *Bhasha O Chetana Samiti's* act is said to pander blatantly to Muslim votes. In addition, the actor Dev's performance as Vivekananda is ridiculed since the actor famous for his roadside roles is not seen fit to fill into the monk's imaginary shoes. Even in the first event at Dadri, the act of mob lynching can be read as a performance. It stages itself in the public sphere and flaunts violence in the everyday to citizens as spectators. The three acts show different forms of performance in the everyday, whose imitation deals with the accuracy of their performance. Some acts are deemed fake because the visual corpus seems illicit, as in the case of *Bhasha o Chetana Samiti*. The 'truest' act, of course, becomes the mob lynching itself, which is so true a performance that it dissolves into the everyday an act of instinct without any intention. It is only recognized by the implications of what follows and thus need, in this context to be silenced.

The multiple levels of articulation in the public sphere at work are revealed through an operative visual corpus. This visual corpus is deictic to the context they work in. Further, their operation is manifested visually through the implications they cause in the public sphere. Knowledge of the visual corpus is seen among all registers of the public sphere though its recognition is only acknowledged variedly. Since this is formed historically through various socio-political contexts, a familiarity of the corpus often occupies and sets into motion a bunch of commonly shared practices and beliefs.

A visual corpus makes apparent a ritualistic domain that opens up within the national public sphere. A stricter code of conduct and

adherence to its referent are demanded of the visual corpus. When the adherence is not met, as in the case of Dadri, the result is a disruption of the public domain. The scope of the visual corpus is not geographically limited. Its awareness stretches across the physical reaches of the geographical territory and beyond. The visual corpus also reveals multiple registers of publics at work. A linguistic corpus is limited by print media which, controlled by the hegemonic devices, are saturated by them. Whereas the visual corpus pans through a larger demographic, who put it to use through their actions in the everyday.

The restriction of visibility of certain cultural references in the public sphere causes larger inaccuracies since they concern themselves only with the proper and improper mode of representation. As a postcolonial nation, this is further problematic since unlike the west, the post-colonial condition has warranted a dual existence of referential pasts in the nation. The relegation of religious affairs to the private domain does not help either, as both the religious and the national have structures to coexist within larger social networks. Issues such as communal violence and tension cannot be understood unless these social networks are taken into consideration. In light of these observations, a re-evaluation of the public sphere becomes significant. The historical present seems to be chartered by different registers of circulation and representation. With certain aspects confined to the 'private' domain of the nation, articulations are limited by the secular modern and thus difficult to locate in networks within the national sphere. A contrastive study of the mob lynching in Dadri, the *Bhasha O Chetana Samiti's* protest in Kolkata, and the state sponsored celebration of Vivekananda's birthday reveal that everyday networks overlap with the political and the social domain of the nation. Thus, these public performances are perceived either as assertion of nationalism or possible threat to it. A regulation of these meanings is at work within the public sphere of the nation, granting hyper-visibility to some and invisibility to others.

NOTES

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Swimming in the “Cold Ashtray”¹:
Reading Tales of Migration to “the city of Nepal”²

JANKI SINGH

“Those who come
come with hearts full of fire,
with flames on their lips, but those who live here
live with hands full of ash
and eyes full of smoke.
Those who leave take with them
a bundle of extinguished beliefs,
the stub-ends of their dreams.
Such is this Valley of Four Passes
it’s a cold ashtray,
this Valley of Four Passes.”³

Nepali literature is relatively more recent than other literatures of the regions of Nepal, for instance Newari literature which is not less than five hundred years old. The oldest specimen of written Nepali is generally traced back to the thirteenth century royal edicts of western Nepal. These along with royal biographies and translations from Sanskrit into Nepali are regarded as early written documents in the Nepali language. Though these documents possess a historical value, their literary merit is very little. The most notable poet of Nepali literature, Bhanubhakta Acharya (1814-1868) is regarded as the founder-poet (‘adi-kavi’) of Nepali literature. As the first poet to shake off the influence of sophisticated Indian literatures, Bhanubhakta’s *Ramayana* was shorn of heavily sanskritised language. However, the credit for the popularity of Bhanubhakta’s *Ramayana* goes to another great writer of Nepali literature, Motiram Bhatta (1866-1896). Concerned about the

development of Nepali literature, Bhatta would hold discussions with his contemporaries in Benaras and Kathmandu. The ideas and themes of Nepali nationalism were conceptualised by thinkers and writers in Benares and Darjeeling. Since the eighteenth century there was a small Nepali quarter in Benares. In the 1880s, the movement for Hindi led by Harishchandra Bharatendu influenced Benares-based Nepalis to produce a literature of their own. In Darjeeling, the upper caste Nepalis (Bahuns) were present in smaller numbers, “but their language became the lingua franca, owned and passionately fought for by Darjeeling Nepalis.”⁴ Bhatta’s poems broke away from the conventional devotional verse of the times and instead fostered an interest in ‘ghazals’ and ‘shringar’ poetry. He encouraged publishing projects. However, printing presses in Nepal were few, resulting in unstandardized spelling and grammar and a readership comprising an educated elite.

It was only in 1901, when Deva Shamsher Rana established *Gorkhapatra* (Gorkha Paper), that a forum for the publication of literary works was found. In fact, *Gorkhapatra* is credited with publishing the first prototypes of the modern Nepali short story and starting a trend towards social realism which finds its fruition in *Sharada*.⁵ Chandra Shamsher Rana went on to establish *Gorkha Bhasha Prakashini Samiti* (Gorkha Language Publication Committee) in 1913. However, the committee started to censor literary works; books published in Nepal without the approval of the committee were levied heavy fines. This led to a sense of resentment against the committee and the strict Rana regime. Periodicals like the *Gorkhali* (1915) and *Gorkha Sansar* (1926) were significant in their contribution to the development of the Nepali short story. *Gorkha Sansar*, published from Dehradun, was an important forum for writers who could not publish in Nepal due to the strict censorship of the Rana regime.⁶ In the 1930s, intellectuals who intended to escape censorship sought to publish their works in Benaras and Darjeeling in India. In 1934, came a turning point in Nepali publishing, which propelled its literature toward ‘modernity’—the publication of *Sharada*, the first literary journal of Kathmandu.

“Naso” by Guruprasad Mainali published in *Sharada* in 1935 is regarded as the first modern short story. *Sharada* was a ‘compromise’ or middle ground between the censorious attitudes of the regime and the impatience felt by the intellectuals of the time. In 1938, *Nepali Sahitya Sammelan* (Darjeeling) published an anthology of short stories titled *Katha Kusum (Story Flower)* where contributions were made by major Nepali writers from across the border. *Katha Kusum* published works by all writers considered ‘modern’—Lekhnath Paudyal, Balkrishna Sama, L.P. Devkota and B.P. Koirala, to name a few. It was in this decade that Nepali short story focussed upon issues relating to caste, gender, internal migration and the urban-rural divide. These ‘modern’ short stories were set in contemporary contexts and were realistic in representation. There was a rapid departure from the didactic tone and fantastical elements of earlier writings. Consequently, the strict Rana regime decided to ban such modern and progressive writers and their works in Nepal, leading to a surge in publishing in Dehradun, India.

While critics state the establishment of *Sharada* as heralding the modern era in Nepali literature, others believe the socio-political implications of Nepal opening its doors to the world in the 1950s as a watershed event. World literature and philosophy entered the hitherto insular kingdom and brought about new trends in literature and criticism. Psychological analysis (based on Freudian principles) became a new element in modern short stories. However, in the 1960s, the literary atmosphere changed when King Mahendra revoked the Constitution and the brief period of parliamentary democracy in Nepal came to an abrupt end.

Several literary movements including *Ralpa* (a nonce term), *Aswikrit Jamat* (‘Unaccepted Generation’), *Amlekh* (liberated poets) Movement and *Boot Polish Group* gathered force. However, the most prominent modern literary movement was *Tesro Ayam (the Third Dimension)* which is regarded as spearheading the *Navayug* (‘new era’) of Nepali literature. The term ‘dimensional’ was taken as a synonym of ‘new’ literature. Indra Bahadur Rai’s⁷ deep insight gave birth to the *Tesro Ayam* writings.

Rai preferred the term ‘writings’ to ‘movement’ to describe ‘Tesro Ayam’. The main objective was to analyse the three dimensions of a subject and present it in a holistic manner. Iswar Ballabh’s poetry was born out of this objective. He started the newspaper *Phulpat Patkar*, in which Bairagi Kainla’s poems were published.⁸ Indra Bahadur Rai, defined the writing thus, “Contemporary literature should aim to raise the totality of a man. A man is not only an eye, an ear or a mind. He is an aggregate of all senses, heart and brain, so each and every sentence that we are going to write should hold, should set up his totality. To do so, our each and every writing should be proficient to bring the third dimension in itself.”⁹ Rai’s “Maina’s Mother is Just Like Us” (Hami Jastai Mainaki Ama) is regarded as a classic specimen of third dimensional writing, with a focus on the life of vegetable seller in the Darjeeling market, referred to as “Mainaki Ama”. Her life is presented in an achronological fashion, through the goings on of a regular market day. As a customer rejects yellowing leafy greens, we catch glimpses of her migration from ‘muluk’ (Nepal), where there was very little to support her, to ‘muglan’ (India), from where she desires to go nowhere else. As a ‘pravasi’ (foreigner) she recalls her home and fields with little intention to return since the memories of being on an empty stomach and braving poverty in the ‘muluk’ also crowds her mind.¹⁰ All she desired was a view of the heavenly Himalayas to call her own. “Wherever we will go we will take this land with us, wrapped up in little bundles.”¹¹ With the passage of time, her insignificant presence is further endangered by the rapidly urbanised capitalistic society and her dilemma at migration is highlighted by all the onlookers and passersby at the market who keep asking her, “Why then did you come here?”¹² The fear of natural calamities like landslides, add to her insecurities and further emphasize her vulnerable position in society, where everyday she covers her spot in the market, unsure whether she will find it safe the next morning. The presentation of the dilemma of the migrant in ‘pravas’, the nostalgia for the homeland mixed with the insecurity of the present, the pathos felt by a long-term migrant reaching the

winter of her life and its burden of insecurities have been given an added dimension by the holistic approach of third dimensional writing.

The modern short story in Nepali literature uses satire to attack the traditions and conventions of society and in doing so, casts an unflinching eye upon the socio-political issues crippling the freedom of an individual in Nepal. The themes of casteist attitudes, corruption, city life, the status of women and the perception of national identity are prominent in the writings of the modern era in Nepali literature. A glimpse of a few representative writers and their works will shed light on the battle waged by modern Nepali writers in their struggle to challenge outmoded traditions inherent in the social fabric of Nepali life and customs.

Parashu Pradhan's short story "A Relationship" ("Sambandha") portrays the predicament of the urban poor of Kathmandu. The characters Gyancha, a street sweeper and a madwoman represent the grim side of life in the city. "Gyancha had held out his arms and begged for a mother's embrace, a father's affection. But all he was given was a sweeping brush, and now after all these long years he still went on accepting it. In summer and winter he wandered aimlessly through the city..."¹³ The story revolves around the ambiguous but tender relationship shared by Gyancha and Ganga, an abandoned woman. Everyone called her "crazy Kanchi"¹⁴ with a glass dot on her forehead and her dirty, tangled hair.¹⁵ Pradhan gives a subtle impression of affection felt by Gyancha for the widow. "Trust had bloomed between them. Gyancha touched its flower and vowed, 'Truly I love you, crazy woman, why do you always elude me.'"¹⁶ The story takes an unexpected turn when he discovers her lifeless body lying on the street with no one willing to take responsibility for her cremation.

Despite having "banknotes in his belt"¹⁷ Gyancha does not volunteer to do the last rites for Ganga lying "as cold as the dawn".¹⁸ Intimidated by the interrogations of the policeman, "Hey, were you something to her? You over there, the one sitting quiet! Is she your wife?",¹⁹ he breaks into a sweat and suddenly loses his voice. As the bearers

pick up Ganga’s body, Gyancha recalls a request she had once made by way of a question, “If I died, would you light my pyre for me? I need a man to do that, not a husband. . . . who drinks all night, then beats me black and blue”.²⁰ He failed to grant her only wish, fearing he may be sacked by his employer and heckled by the policeman if he dared to establish a “sambandh” with the crazy woman, “now as cold as a stone”.²¹ He realises “Ganga’s was just one more anonymous death. . . he was nothing.”²² As an abstraction over death, Pradhan’s short story portrays characters from the poorest of the poor, the ‘streetizens’ so to speak.

And then the historians will write,

“At that time in Nepal
 There were two kinds of men:
 One rested on newspaper headlines,
 He was important news,
 The other wrapped himself in them to keep warm,
 Surviving the winter. . . .”²³

In Manu Brajaki’s short story “A Small Fish Squats by the Dhobi Khola”, the plight of a petty official (“small fish”) is presented by Brajaki. Caught accepting bribes, he was transferred from a rural area to the city (migration as punishment), where finding a decent lodging had become nearly impossible, given his meagre income. The corrupt “big fish” escaped unscathed, owing to their position. The story revolved around the “ugly iron Aligarh padlock”²⁴ and the pitiable condition of the official denied access to a lavatory by his landlady (“Bajai Ama”) indicates the life of helpless migrants to the city. Upon the denial of a basic tenant right, “[h]e stared at the locked lavatory [since eight in the morning], deep in thought.”²⁵ He would have to clear his bowels at a small washerman’s stream (‘dhobi khola’) on most days.

The urban centre of Kathmandu valley, the “historic heart of the whole country”,²⁶ is the backdrop to these stories of alienation. Both

Pradhan and Brajaki are unapologetic in their realistic representation of the casteist attitudes and exploitative rent rules for rural migrants in urban centres.

The journey from rural areas to the promised land is portrayed by renowned modern writer Bishweshwar Prasad Koirala's "Madhestira" ("To the Lowlands"). It sketches the journey taken by four unemployed and homeless men, Gore, Budho, Bhote and Dhane, accompanied by a young widow towards the lowlands in search of menial jobs and security. Budho explains, "[W]e are all homeless. There is no prospect of work here anymore. We're off to look for work somewhere else... you say there is work in the lowlands, let's go there then! There we can eat our fill".²⁷ The young widow leaves home upon being harrassed by her brother-in-law. She has some food on her, so the men let her accompany them, like the Goddess Annapurna she gives them 'chiura' (parched rice) and sugar keeping their stomachs from being empty. Budho, the old man, laments that his weak old bones do not allow him to till fields and carry luggage any more, but his pangs of hunger force him to move from one place to another in search of work.

The people of my country
 Have cancelled their meals, and are struggling: look!
 No smoke comes from their chimneys²⁸

The widow had taken a fancy towards one of the men, Gore. To him, she had expressed the dream she had packed in her bags and bundles, "[i]n the lowlands, I will grow some crops. I wish to set up a home there. But what's a home without a man! So I thought—why don't you and I set up house together?".²⁹ In a bid to attract Gore, the widow told him that she had some jewellery and a little money in her bag. The next morning, she was rewarded by Gore, who left the group and ran away with her money and jewels. Penniless and truly alone, she trailed behind the three men.

Insignificant bodies with an indomitable thirst,
 Unseeing eyes watching the endless road
 They rush with the swiftness of clouds,
 Carrying with them, their limited means.³⁰

When they finally reached the top of a hill, their eyes gleaming with excitement, “[t]here, I see the lowlands! There lies our salvation! There we will get to eat our fill!”³¹ Their eyes shone with wonder, their parched throats croaked with joy, they smiled from ear to ear, unable to contain their excitement. But the widow only gazed with joyless eyes. The lowlands held no promise for her anymore.³²

“There have been continual waves of migration into and along the Himalayas, and this is likely to have been so even in prehistoric times. Within historic times the dominant trend has been for migration to be in a north-west to south-east direction along the Himalayan foothills.”³³ *The Population Monograph of Nepal 2014* states that historically Nepal has witnessed three distinct waves of internal migration. “The first wave of internal migration occurred during the unification of Nepal by King Prithivi Narayan Shah and his successors.”³⁴ It continued until the early eighteenth century. The strict Rana regime encouraged migration within Nepal with an intention of expanding the state’s tax base, while controlling movement of people in and out of the country.³⁵ The rulers had laid down rules for compulsory services called ‘Jhara’ labour. Youth employed as such labourers were required to leave their villages to provide services in distant communities to construct temples, palaces, bridges and to supply military goods. This form of forced and unpaid labour was one of the reasons for internal migration of adult populations of the time.³⁶

The *Monograph* states that the second wave of internal migration emerged in the mid-50s when the State sponsored a resettlement programme of hill people to Tarai. “The main objective of the resettlement programme was land colonisation of Tarai and increased

agricultural production. Launched by Rapti Valley Development Project (RVDP) and Nepal Resettlement Company (NRC), the resettlement programme continued until the late 80s.³⁷ The third wave of internal migration emerged when the country was undergoing various socio-economic transformations. “With the advent of democracy in 1951, the country embarked upon planned economic development of the country. This required increasing investment in various sectors of the economy, such as expansion of roads and transport, development of agriculture, health, education, and industrial development. . . people from less developed areas started migrating to more developed areas, where there was better infrastructure and economic opportunities. Internal migration in Nepal is considered to be a survival strategy of mountain and hill people to cope with the hardships of their lives, arising from low agricultural productivity, lack of employment and poor infrastructural development.”³⁸

Parashu Pradhan portrays such a story of rural-to-urban migration by a tourist guide. It is not uncommon to find guides as narrators and characters in the writings of the 1950s and 60s, for this was the decade when Nepal saw a tourism boom. From being an insular Hindu kingdom in the Himalayas, it was transformed into a hub of tourism and hospitality. To make the most of this nascent industry, young men from the villages migrated to the city of Kathmandu and its neighbouring areas. In their search for prospects they left behind their families, their homesteads, their fields, carrying only the memories they held dear. Parashu Pradhan’s “The Telegram on the Table” (“Tebalmathiko Tyas Akashvani”) sketches the predicament of such a migrant to the city. Krishna is a guide who spends all day “relating the entire history of the country to tourists and answering their multicoloured questions”³⁹ and “smiling at strange faces as if he knew them well”.⁴⁰ The reader’s curiosity is aroused in the opening sentence, “Once more he read the telegram that lay on the table”.⁴¹ The telegram had been lying on the table for weeks, it contents unable to elicit a response from Krishna. However, it is only in the penultimate paragraph of the short story that

the content of the telegram is mentioned in a single sentence, “Your wife died yesterday.”⁴² As a young village boy, Krishna had dreamed of winning people over by speaking in English. After his move to the city to become a tourist guide, he imagined “Judiths and Jennies amazed by his words”⁴³ and his carefully culled stories of Nepalese mythology and religion. Someday he wished to follow a foreign lady across the seas, she eager to host him and be his guide. “But then there was the telegram, which he would rather not have received”.⁴⁴ Perhaps, the reader rereads the text to glean clues to gauge the cold distance and indifference shown by Krishna to his deceased wife. The text yields that his wife reminds him of the life before his urban migration to Kathmandu, she reminds him of the failure of the “seedling dream” he had packed along with his clothes upon leaving home, a dream which never really saw fruition. His struggle for the last ten years in the city and the little impact he made all came rushing with the words on the paper.

When he looks at his face,
 Primordial, unwashed,
 In a mirror on a table,
 A man has to say to himself—
 A dream should last the whole night long.⁴⁵

Like him, his friends had also come from his village to the city and became “trapped in some menial job”.⁴⁶ He lived in dingy lodgings, paying a high rent, but always worried if he slept too long, there’d be no water for the day. Like Manu Brajaki’s small fish, he lives in a house he is ashamed of and cannot bring “Miss Pande from the travel service home for dinner”.⁴⁷ The telegram on the table brings back memories of the distant hills he calls home, the home he wanted to visit every ‘dasain’ (Dussehra), join his family in the dancing and merrymaking⁴⁸ in an attempt to forget the emptiness of the city. But that never came to be. The emptiness of the city had seeped into his very being. It had

wired him in a way that “no current ran along [the wires]. Nothing ever touched him.”⁴⁹ The story ends with the reiteration of the contents of the telegram, “Your wife died yesterday, it said. Your wife died; your wife died...for weeks he had slept there within sight of that message, but tonight for some reason his mind was filled with desired and unwanted connections, thoughts of the present and the past, all of them in discord...having lived alone for so long in the city, had he become like a stone?”⁵⁰

Another tourist guide is portrayed in Shankar Lamichhane’s short story “The Half-closed Eyes of the Buddha and the Slowly Setting Sun (‘Ardhamudit Nayan ra Dubna Lageko Gham’) published in 1968. We see an interesting interpretation of the symbolic eyes of the Buddha as perceived by a tourist and challenged by the unnamed native guide. In and around Kathmandu, on the Buddhist ‘stupas’ (reliquaries) are painted a pair of enigmatic eyes, which looks over the city, its residents and catches the attention of the tourists. Lamichhane’s take on the perception of Nepal as an idyllic Shangri—la becomes interesting since it was in the 1950s that Nepal opened its doors to the world and a boom in tourism gave the Himalayan kingdom opportunities to connect with the West as well as generate revenue. The glossy travel guides highlighting the glamorous side of Kathmandu city is contrasted with the guide’s version of the eyes of the Buddha. The story opens with the foreign tourist exclaiming, “Oh guide! You will never know the thrill we Westerners feel when we first set foot upon the soil of your country! No, you will never understand it!”⁵¹ They come seeking “its green fields, its mud houses painted red, yellow and white. The air saturated with the fragrance of rich soil and the snow of the Himalayas. Peace descending silently upon the valley.”⁵²

With his myopic view, the tourist passes a judgement saying that the native does not appreciate the embrace of the blue hills and instead finds it confining. The mode of narration is interesting since the first half of the story is a monologue by the tourist presenting his views regarding Nepal, its life and culture. What follows is an answer to

the lopsided, incomplete perception of the tourist, who during his short stay, passes a judgement upon the locals believing his Western education has given him a perspective upon things and people. With great confidence he says, “My friend, I know your history. Before coming to your country, I have spent several years in our libraries, reading books on your history and culture. . . you may guide me through the present city, but I can walk you down its ancient roads. . . One cannot totally grasp its beauty by reading books alone, one has to come here to soak in its atmosphere. . . Let us drink to your great country, and to mine. Cheers! . . . Another peg to the beautiful Nepalese smile”.⁵³ After having proclaimed himself an authority on Nepalese folklore by mentioning the names of Bodhisattva Manjushri⁵⁴ and Princess Bhrikuti,⁵⁵ the tourist waxes eloquent on the eyes which greet him in Nepal. They are everywhere—on carved latticed windows, door panels, ‘stupas’, the Himalayas. He states, “To quench my thirst for the half-closed eyes of the Buddha let us go tomorrow to a ‘stupa’ in a quiet place to watch their hypnotic gaze”.⁵⁶

As instructed the previous day, the guide does his job saying “Come, my guest, today I will show you the eyes you desire to see”⁵⁷ and goes on to show him “the pulse of reality”.⁵⁸ This opens the next section of the story, where the guide speaks and the tourist listens. The technique is very effective for it gives a perspective to the perceptions held by the tourist after he has spoken his part, uninterrupted. The guide discloses that he will not take the tourist up Chobar Hill to see the cleft made by Manjushri’s sword while draining the lake to create Kathmandu valley, a place frequented by regular tourists. He will also not take him to see the various shrines and reliquaries, he has read about, seen pictures of in glossy tourist guides and preached to the guide. Instead the guide plans to take the tourist to the house of a Nepalese farmer’s family, who sweat and toil in the fields “to pay off the proceeds to someone in the city”.⁵⁹ Neither do they enjoy the luxury of a warm hearth as depicted in books, nor do they have the leisure of telling tales of Bodhisattva Manjushri and Princess Bhrikuti. He then shows

him the child of the house, attacked by polio, his body lying useless and his eyes having the uninterested gaze of the “half-closed eyes of the Buddha”. “Only his eyes are alive in his inactive body. We know he is living only through his gaze. Mostly his gaze is without expression, it is listless, yet it is alive. My guest, this is the ‘samyak’ gaze you wanted to see.⁶⁰ The young boy’s sister is an active, mischievous girl and his eyes follow her movements. Watching his sister, the boy wishes to be active, mischievous, playing around the house, crawling on the grass, bruising knees, tasting new foods, breaking things around the house, being scolded by the mother, learning new words and using them. The story evokes questions of representation of a culture, a nation and its peoples through the interpretations of the eyes of the Buddha as perceived by the tourist and by the native guide. In doing so, the story is path-breaking in bringing to the fore the native’s voice and agency by a crippling social comment on the lived experiences of the villagers, unlike the glamour of the city as portrayed in *Finally* the boss decides to do a lottery and pick the ten poorest families. But they decide to give Rs 400 instead of the stipulated amount of Rs 500, make them sign they received Rs 500, and keep the excess as their travel allowance. Upon shuffling the lottery tickets, the boss sneezes and the tickets fall on the ground. The mad scramble for the paper chits shows the desperation of the villagers to receive aid, however insignificant it may be. “[T]he villagers began to push and shove one another and descended upon the tickets. For a while, none of them even managed to pick one up, they were trying too hard to prevent each other, and they were too afraid of ending up with nothing.”⁶¹

The boss watched this scramble for lottery tickets with great amusement, betraying a cold indifference to the plight of the rural poor. Upon having executed his corrupt plan, he got on his horse and trotted back to the city. The narrator and Ram Prasad, despite being the boss’ accomplices, felt uneasy about what had passed. They stood near the dried up pool, lighted dimly by the setting sun and saw figures resembling human beings, “[t]heir legs, their arms, even their faces were

muddy, and the mud could not dry because they were sweating. They didn't appear to have found any fish for a long time.”⁶²

“When I pause for a few days
to look at these squares steeped in hunger,
these streets like withered flowers,
I think my country's history is a lie.”⁶³

“The Fire” still smouldered inside them, the burning sensation of hunger, of lying on string cots while gazing at the sky and remembering the roof that once was, the fire in the belly of the nursing mother whose “baby caught hold of a nipple and sucked, let go of it and cried, then suddenly found it and began to suck again, but his mother seemed oblivious to him”.⁶⁴ Gautum's prose feels the pulse of poverty throbbing in the rural areas of the country, where welfare schemes are implemented on paper, with little regard to the effect it has on the poor. In this regard, the report presented by Sri Arjun Narasingha KC, Minister for Urban Development of Nepal at the Habitat-III (2016) held in Equador is worthy to take note of.⁶⁵ The major challenges in implementing the New Urban Agenda included the issues hindering progress since the advent of the modern era. Poverty ranked first, followed by lack of investment and weak technical capacity. The basic infrastructural services are yet to be widely available to the masses. Even in 2016, the concerns highlighted by the modern writers since the middle of the twentieth century hold true.

The Himalayan Times had published a report on December 25, 2017 discussing the said report and concluding that “Although various policies, programmes and projects are being formulated and implemented, the population growth rate fueled mainly by rural-to-urban migration will remain high in major cities and towns for a foreseeable future, warns a recent national report ‘Inclusive Cities: Resilient Communities’ published by the Ministry of Urban Development.”⁶⁶

The Ministry of Urban Development of Nepal recognises that, “On [the] one hand, technical and financial resource constraints will limit [the] capacity of emerging towns in keeping pace with rapid growth management needs. On the other hand, small towns will have to work towards retaining the existing population and promoting urbanisation.”⁶⁷

The report also acknowledges that,

“labor and employment policies, and operational plans and programmes so far implemented for the utilisation of the youths have not been adequate to address the problems of youths both in the rural and urban areas. This is mainly due to the lack of job-oriented vocational education and skill development training, business-related security, and foreign employment promotion.”⁶⁸

Sri Narasingha had delivered a statement mentioning that “*Inclusive Cities: Resilient Communities*” was the slogan of the New Urban Agenda. He stated,

“[t]he least developed and landlocked countries like Nepal need to undergo a paradigm shift with a new type of competence geared towards scaling-up investments for sustainable and resilient settlements... Like most of the developing countries, Nepal is urbanizing rapidly with nearly half of the population living in urban and semi-urban concentrations. As most of them remain deprived of basic infrastructure services including safe drinking water, health, and education, we are implementing newer plans, policies and strategies in collaboration with local authorities and other stakeholders for improving quality of life.”⁶⁹

One is reminded of Minbahadur Bisht’s lines from “Thus a Nation

Pretends to Live” (“Yasari Euta Rashtra Banchne Bahana Garcha”)

Respected visitor,

This is Kathmandu Valley.

Here there are three cities:

Kathmandu, Lalitpur, Bhaktapur.

Please cover your nose with a handkerchief,

No sewage system is possible,

the building of toilets has not been feasible.

Our next five-year plan has a clean city campaign:

Could you make a donation?⁷⁰

While, several translations have been sourced from the edition of Michael J. Hutt’s *Himalayan Voices: An Introduction to Modern Nepali Literature* (Motilal Banarasidass Publishers Private Limited: Delhi, 1993, 2007), others are the author’s translations from the original texts.

NOTES

- 1 “Cold Ashtray” (“Chiso Aishtre”) by Bhupi Sherchan, transl. Michael J. Hutt, ed., *Himalayan Voices: An Introduction to Modern Nepali Literature* (Delhi: Motilal Banarasidass Publishers Private Limited, 2007), 131.
- 2 *Muna and Madan (Muna-Madan)* by Lakshmiprasad Devkota, transl. Hutt, *Himalayan Voices*, 49.
- 3 B. Sherchan, “Cold Ashtray” transl. Hutt, *Himalayan Voices*, 131.
- 4 David N. Gellner and Sondra L. Hausner, *Global Nepalis: Religion, Culture, and Community in a New and Diaspora* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2018), 6.
- 5 Hutt, *Himalayan Voices*, 174.
- 6 Hutt, *Himalayan Voices*, 174.
- 7 I. B. Rai’s stories are published in *Bipana Katipaya* (1960) and *Kathasta* (1971). His novel *Aja Ramita Cha* (1964) is a much-read work of Nepali literature. The other two contributors to *Tesro Ayam*, Bairagi Kainla and Iswar Ballabh have several works to their credit. Kainla’s collection of poems

Ful-Pat-Patjhar (1960) was edited by Ballabh. His two poems famous for dimensionalist style are “Mateko Mancheko Bhashan: Madhyaratpachiko Sadaksita” and “Hat Bharne Manis”. His poems are collected in *Bairagi Kainlako Kavitaru* (1974). The third of the trio, Iswar Ballabh’s works are collected in *Agoka Phulharu Hun, Agoka Phulharu Hoinan* (1972), *Samantara* (1981) and *Kasmai Devaya* (1985).

- 8 Taranath Sharma, *Nepali Sahityako Itihas* (Kathmandu: Vidyarthi Pustak Bhandar, 1973), 165, own translation.
- 9 Chandra Sharma, ed., *Vartaharuma Sri Indra Bahadur Rai* (Darjeeling: New (India) Publication, 2016), 165.
- 10 T. B. Subba et al., *Indian Nepalis: Issues and Perspectives* (Concept Publishing Company: New Delhi, 2009), 34.
- 11 Hutt, *Himalayan Voices*, 263.
- 12 Ibid.
- 13 Ibid., 287-88.
- 14 Ibid., 287.
- 15 Ibid.
- 16 Hutt, *Himalayan Voices*, 287.
- 17 Ibid., 289.
- 18 Ibid., 287.
- 19 Ibid., 289.
- 20 Ibid., 288.
- 21 Ibid., 287.
- 22 Ibid., 289.
- 23 B. Sherchan “A Poem”, transl. Hutt, *Himalayan Voices*, 130.
- 24 Hutt, *Himalayan Voices*, 298.
- 25 Ibid.
- 26 L. Dudley Stamp, *Asia: A Regional and Economic Geography*. (New Delhi: B.I. Publications, 1986), 363.
- 27 Bhairav Aryal, ed., *Sajha Katha*. (Lalitpur: Sajha Prakashan, 2011), 79, own translation.
- 28 Shreshtha, “No Smoke from the Chimneys”, transl. Hutt, *Himalayan Voices*, 61.
- 29 Aryal, *Sajha Katha*, 80, own translation.
- 30 Kedar Man “Vyathit”, Chudamani Bandhu, ed., *Sajha Kavita* (Lalitpur: Sajha Prakashan, 2011)122, own translation.

- 31 Aryal, *Sajha Katha*, 81, own translation.
- 32 Ibid.
- 33 Gellner, *Global Nepalis*, 2.
- 34 *Population Monograph of Nepal 2014*. (Vol 1 , Population Dynamics, Government of Nepal. National Planning Commission Secretariat. Central Bureau of Statistics. Kathmandu, Nepal 2014. <https://nepal.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/pub-pdf/PopulationMonograph2014Volume1.pdf>, 241.
- 35 Gellner, *Global Nepalis*, 5.
- 36 *Monograph*, 241.
- 37 *Monograph*, 242.
- 38 Ibid.
- 39 Hutt, *Himalayan Voices*, 284.
- 40 Ibid., 285.
- 41 Hutt, 284.
- 42 Ibid., 286.
- 43 Ibid., 285.
- 44 Ibid.
- 45 Bairagi Kainla, “The Corpse of a Dream”, transl. Hutt, *Himalayan Voices*, 103.
- 46 Hutt, *Himalayan Voices*, 285.
- 47 Ibid., 286.
- 48 The singing of ‘deusure’ or songs sung for the “lamp lit for the gods” (Khemraj Nepal, *Nepali Lok Sahityako Ruprekha*, (New Delhi: Sahitya Akademi, 2003), 71) hold a special place in the rituals surrounding Dussehra and Diwali, known as Tihar in Nepal and Darjeeling. The song “Jhilimili jhilimili deusure” refers to the hills lighting up during the festive season and is a much-loved song sung at home and in communities during this time.
- 49 Hutt, *Himalayan Voices*, 286.
- 50 Ibid.
- 51 Aryal, *Sajha Katha*, 125, own translation.
- 52 Ibid., own translation.
- 53 Aryal, *Sajha Katha*, 126-127, own translation.
- 54 According to a popular legend, Manjushri had come from the north to see a flame manifested on the surface of the lake above Swayambhu Hill. He drained the lake so it could be inhabited by people and the valley after being drained became the Kathmandu Valley.

- 55 The daughter of Nepalese king Amshuvarman and one of the wives of Tibetan king Songsten Gampo. She was responsible for the spread of Buddhism in Tibet. (Trilok Chandra Majupuria and Rohit Kumar (Majupuria), *Religions in Nepal*. (Kathmandu: Modern Printing Press, 2004), 21).
- 56 Aryal, *Sajha Katha*, 127, own translation.
- 57 Ibid., own translation.
- 58 Ibid., own translation.
- 59 Aryal, *Sajha Katha*, 127, own translation.
- 60 Ibid., 128, own translation.
- 61 Ibid., 296.
- 62 Ibid., 296-297.
- 63 B.Sherchan, "I Think My Country's History is a Lie", transl. Hutt, *Himalayan Voices*, 124.
- 64 Ibid., 293.
- 65 "Statement delivered by the Hon. Mr. Arjun Narasingha KC, Minister for Urban Development of Nepal", at the Habitat-III in Quito, *Ecuador* (17-20 October 2016, <http://habitat3.org/wp-content/uploads/Statement-of-Nepal-in-English.pdf>).
- 66 "Rural-to-urban migration to remain high", *The Himalayan Times* (December 25, 2017 4:45 am. <https://thehimalayantimes.com/kathmandu/rural-urban-migration-remain-high/> Accessed on December 15, 2018), n.p.
- 67 "Rural-to-urban migration to remain high", n.pag.
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- 69 "Statement", 2.
- 70 Hutt, *Himalayan Voices*, 157.

Cityscape as Crime-cape: Reading the 'Urban' in Anita Nair's Police Procedurals

SOMDATTA BHATTACHARYA

Jack M Bickham, in his book *Setting*, discusses how “an evocative physical description of setting can transport the reader into the story’s universe.”¹ Setting often functions as a mirror of the psychological states of characters and at other times reinforces the structure of the story by linking the different phases of the story. Again, in the case of the genre of mystery and detection, scholars have definitively recognized the significant function that setting plays. Setting is what often binds crucial elements of plot, characterization and point of view in crime fiction. Gillian Mary Hanson, in *City and Shore: The Function of Setting in the British Mystery*, elaborates on the merits of “city” and “shore” as settings of works of mystery. She posits that in such settings, often the space “speaks for the character and mood.”² Though country homes and closed, small rural-scapes have been exploited as the setting of memorable works, “...quite distinct in their topographical features, the settings of city and seashore in the mystery do share thematic aspects such as alienation and the carnivalesque.”³ Whereas alienation can play out in the interactions strangers have with established communities when they have suddenly and newly arrived, Bakhtin’s idea of the “carnavalesque” forges new mode of interrelationships among individuals, which in turn reveal hidden or dormant aspects of human nature. In city settings, Hanson believes, the carnivalesque can “represent a powerful theme of evil and moral decay, a distortion of truth and human values.”⁴ This is why crime fiction and the city have always been deeply entwined, necessarily because of the scope for anonymity and individualism that a city provides to its citizens, outside the safety nets of community existence, conditions often leading to crime and criminality.

In the late 1940s and early 1950s, a kind of crime story appeared which was different from the English mystery stories, set in country houses, with a closed circle of suspects. In this new form, “the mystery is solved by regular police detectives, usually working in teams and using ordinary police routines.”⁵ George N. Dove defines the term ‘procedural’ as referring to methods that are “followed by policemen in real life”, and the detective in such a story “does those things ordinarily expected of policemen, like using informants, tailing suspects, and availing himself of the resources of the police laboratory.”⁶ Though historically police detectives have played minor roles in Poe’s Dupin stories or Conan Doyle’s Sherlock Holmes stories, police procedural as a genre provides a centrality to these detectives working within the establishment. The conventions of such fiction demand that even though there might be a principal protagonist in the form of a policeman, he will be assisted by a team for interviews, interrogations and forensic evidence collection and analysis. Away from the superior geniuses of the classic school with exceptional powers of observation and deduction as well the gun-wielding, rule-breaking private eyes of the hard-boiled tradition, these detectives are modelled on real-life policemen. One cannot deny necessary semantic connections between the police procedural and the noir/hard-boiled fiction, despite crucial syntactical differences between the forms. Both these forms derive an ancestry from the social realist tradition and draw linkages between the socio-political clime and acts of corruption and oppression. In police procedurals, as Hillary Waugh believes, the genre is denied the advantage of having an “attractive superman hero” because the nature of the policeman’s job and his adherence to strict legal methods necessitate a human protagonist.⁷ The crimes are most often unspectacular, and a lot of fictional time is spent in writing painstaking reports to be submitted to superior officials. As is the case with any other subgenre of crime fiction, police procedurals have an intimate relationship with the setting of the stories. Representing the routine, mundane realities of policemen’s lives, the characters of this genre have to crisscross the

space the story is set in for the purposes of the investigation. The policeman and his team visit and revisit the scene of crime as well as homes of witnesses, all the while providing a social commentary on the milieu explored. Again, as Hanson claimed for crime fiction in general, police procedurals are seen especially to engage with the urban space, right from the examples of early practitioners like Ed McBain and the husband-wife team of Maj Sjowall and Per Wahloo. These procedural writers can be seen to have performed the role of urban literary cartographers, creating authentic representations of rapidly changing real cities. Even McBain's "imaginary city" is reminiscent of New York, evoking a familiar environment for the readers:

Anyone desiring a useable map of McBain's City can, however, devise one by following three simple steps. First, draw an outline map of New York City. Second, rotate this map 90 degrees clockwise, so that north becomes east, east becomes south, and so on around the compass. Then, label all the political and geographical features with new names: Isola (the borough of the City in which the 87th Precinct is located) is Manhattan, Riverhead is the Bronx, Majesta is Queens, Calm's Point is Brooklyn, and Bethtown is Staten Island.⁸

I also refer here to two more recent global practitioners of the genre and the significance and impact of locations in their works: Henning Mankell and Ian Rankin. The popularity of Mankell's police procedural series featuring detective Kurt Wallander, as well as its filmic and television adaptations have given rise to a vast interest in the locale: the south Swedish town of Ystad. Many of the novels in the series revolve around the change in the civic life of Ystad as the ethnic makeup of Sweden (and Ystad) change with immigrants moving in. The crumbling of the Swedish welfare state and its attendant unemployment, coupled with racist and neo-Nazi ideology give rise to certain crimes such as in *Faceless Killers* (1991). Zizek argues that it is precisely in

a post-globalization world that Mankell's Skåne landscape with "its windy rain, oppressive grey clouds and mist, dark winter days"⁹ works, revealing thus chinks in the social fabric of protectionist state. On the other hand, Gill Plain, in her analysis of Rebus' Edinburgh in Lucy Andrew and Catherine Phelps' volume *Crime Fiction in the City: Capital Crimes* (2013) notices how

as Edinburgh evolves in reality, there is a change, too, in the way that the city is mapped within Rankin's work. There is notable transition from the Edinburgh of *Knots and Crosses* (1987), the first Rebus novel—vaguely mapped, steeped in literary allusion and preoccupied with the city's mythic past—to the representation of the city in the novel *The Naming of the Dead* (2006), with its cartographical precision, engagement with popular culture and grounding in present reality.¹⁰

Malcah Effron argues how Rankin's allusions to real architecture and real streets only underscore what Kevin Lynch in his seminal *The Image of the City* (1960) discusses about roadways being the urban spatial element that people orient themselves by, and describe urban geographical reality with.¹¹

Much as how the once impoverished and unremarkable Sweden (Ystad) has grown to be the model Western welfare state, giving in to the relentless force of globalization and industrialization, the Indian city of Bangalore/Bengaluru also saw unprecedented development with the IT boom that was ushered in with India's liberal economic policies of the 1990s. Along with these changes came increased immigration/migration in both these places, affecting the ethnic/regional makeup of the society and everyday cultural practices. Popular culture has engaged with these drastic changes in a variety of ways. Like many of Mankell's Wallander novels, Anita Nair's Borei Gowda novels locate themselves at the spatio-temporal point of this turmoil. The Gowda novels in turns both flirt with the nostalgic view of the past, a quiet,

green Bangalore and deal with the moral dilemma and the fear that are on the rise with the current city as a space marked by closely bounded duality and opposition, where the global capital city's shiny public façade is juxtaposed with the dark underside of seamy emotions and intentions.

Anita Nair is the bestselling author of novels like *The Better Man* (1999) and *Ladies' Coupé* (2001). The Borei Gowda series, at present, has two books published by Harper Collins: *A Cut-Like Wound* (2012) and *Chain of Custody* (2016). Gowda, in Nair's words, is almost "50 years old, a little over six feet tall, a basketball player whose once muscular frame is soft in the middle, blurred at the edges, with grey hair cut regulation short and a pleasant face made interesting by a cleft in the chin."¹² He rides a 500-cc Royal Enfield Bullet, is wary of rules and hierarchy within the police, has an alcohol problem, has a twenty-year-old son, a doctor-wife and a rekindled romance with his college sweetheart. A lonely, brooding male protagonist, battling against both crime and the police establishment, is an oft used feature of the genre. So is creating evocative portraits of the spaces the stories are set in: in this case Bangalore. Gowda lives in an area of north Bangalore that reflects his own mindscape:

His house was the only one on that road. On either side and opposite were empty plots. ... At first the developer had kept the plots spruced up for customer visits. But when the recession happened and people were laid off, the bottom fell out of the real estate market and the developer stopped bothering about cutting the grass and trimming the casuarinas that lined the roads. Weeds took over. Shrubs grew and trees spread their branches, ... Some days it occurred to Gowda that he lived in the middle of a forest.¹³

Kempe Gowda's 16th century fortress town gave way to the colonial Bangalore of Cubbon Park and Mayo Hall, but it was towards the

end of the twentieth century that Bangalore, and later Bengaluru, developed into a snazzy Urban Agglomeration Area. However, Greenview Residency where the Gowdas lived, was tucked into “the wastelands of north Bangalore”, and to Gowda’s wife, the area oft seemed as distant from ‘civilization’ as “Outer Mongolia” (Nair 2012, 42). As a punishment for not agreeing with the ‘system’, Gowda is transferred from one outpost to another. During the narrative time of the two novels, he is posted at a police station on the outskirts of the Neelagubbi village. The “green-washed building with its small poky rooms and rented furniture was Gowda’s fiefdom”.¹⁴ Both personally and professionally, Borei Gowda is located at the fringes of the city, underscoring his “outsider” position, keenly observant however of the intertwined city and crime.

The story of *A Cut-Like Wound* takes place over a period of thirty eight days, starting with the first day of Ramzan when a male prostitute is murdered and ending on St Mary’s Day. Inspector Borei Gowda can recognise patterns of a serial killer’s workings but has to trace and retrace the killer’s movements in the city to apprehend him/her. The Bangalore in the novel is a far cry from the Bangalore of chrome and glass malls and cosmopolitan chutzpah. *A Cut-Like Wound* opens late in the night in the Shivaji Nagar bus stand area “simmering with activity”. On the first night of Ramzan, a “certain excitement resonated through the alleys and lanes.”¹⁵ In that “shadowed underbelly of the city” thousand “fragrances and desires” of whores, eunuchs, urchins, beggars, tourists and regulars echoed. Locating the novel in Shivaji Nagar, a potpourri neighbourhood where government offices rub shoulders with retail areas on Commercial Street, St Mary’s Basilica is a neighbour of Sultan Shah Masjid and a seat of the Army Cantonment is an interesting choice given how the novel delves into themes of urban anomie and anonymity. The crimes are committed by a gender-fluid person who struggles to carve an individual identity in a place dominated by his/her city administrator brother. He/she embraces the invisibility the urban chaos of Shivaji Nagar offers to hunt and

prey on unsuspecting men. The inescapable irony inherent in the fact that the serial murderer is part of the household of a city corporator indicates the possibilities a city can extend as an authentic 'setting' for crime fiction, where the apparatuses of the state often overlap with a criminal underbelly. Though the driver of Michael Hunt's cab tells him, "Bangalore is a very high-tech city. Have you heard of Infosys? We have big IT companies—Wipro, Dell, IBM... and Kingfisher beer!",¹⁶ the readers are taken beyond the shiny facades of a global city, and pulled into the vortex of the seamier side. The emphasis here is on the unstable assemblage that a third world city is, where sections of the population have been left behind in the march to progress and where the hunger for power leads a different class into crime. When Borei Gowda prowls his way through this city on his 500 cc Bullet, it floods him with power, and strength, making him "unrestrained and not afraid to go forth".¹⁷ An author such as Raymond Chandler believes crime has its source in the structures of oppression prevalent in a capitalist, racist, patriarchal society, and one can easily see the similarities between Nair and Chandler in the socio-political economy of the cities they create, cities where these structures of oppression cannot be neatly dismantled. Chandler's noir city of Los Angeles is a dark place of intertwined corruption, crime and violence. Much like Nair, Chandler presents the economic geography of contrasts and differences and the dissolution of easy class distinctions through crime. Nair, being true to the genre of detective fiction/police procedurals, presents easily identifiable oppositions between senseless violence and methodical police work play out in her novels. Corporator Ravi Kumar, Jackie Kumar, the Station Muthu gang are on the one side of this opposition while Stanley, Gowda, Santosh are on the other. And then there are the slippages, such as the interactions between the Corporator and the PWD clerk Shivappa or the slum board officer Ramachandra that depict the interlaced fabric of the city. Like in *Chain of Custody*, which opens in Shangri La, an improbably named urban enclave of the ultra-rich of Bangalore, often Chandler's novels open in such spaces

of plenty. Chandler's detective Marlowe, while investigating, describes the similar neighbourhood of Idle Valley as "a perfect place to live. Perfect. Nice people with nice homes, nice cars, nice horses, nice dogs, possibly even nice children."¹⁸

It is a truism that Indian cities are transforming. The economic reforms of 1991 and the emphasis on urban India since, has seen Indian urbanization assuming an often alarming pace. With globalization, came the movement of ideas, technologies and goods, and also needless to say, of people. The setting of Bangalore thematizes the issue of migration and the change of an old order. Corporator Ravi and his brother Ramesh are from Tamil Nadu. Their father had brought them and the rest of the family to Bangalore in search of a better livelihood. Michael Hunt is an Anglo Indian from Bangalore who is settled in Melbourne but has come to Bangalore to sell off his aunt's house in Whitefield. Osagie and Adesuwa are from Nigeria. Mohan is from Kannur, Kerala, and revels in the anonymity the city offers him. Nair convincingly presents a universe of migrants from all around the globe in her novel, thus emphasizing how Indian megalopolises such as Bangalore have more settlers than natives. Such explosive growth is accompanied with multiple problems—crumbling infrastructure, soaring real estate prices, rampant corruption and chaotic traffic jams. The migrant individual is lost in all this, without the supporting compass of social and political institutions. The spatial strategies used in the novel to depict Bangalore, voice both a contemporary cultural discourse about the abandonment of individuals by these institutions and the responses of those individuals against this abandonment. Sanjay, who has come to Bangalore from Tumkur, thinks, "There's only fifty kilometers between here and there but it could very well be another planet."¹⁹ SI Santosh was from a small town and the Bangalore traffic exasperated him:

What was this city, he asked himself for the hundredth time, that spawned such ignominy in the sixty seconds it took a light to

change? ... In the little town where he had grown up, there had been life at the street corners. But nothing like this. There too were flower sellers and fruit vendors, beggars with maimed limbs and dead eyes, but this was something else. The desperation of a child turning cartwheels for money rather than for the sheer fun of it; the wretchedness of the salesmen whose ties flapped in the breeze with a certain hopelessness; the rage of the eunuchs who, without a single word spoken, demanded that the city pay for who and what they had become. ... The truth was SI Santosh wanted to lay his head in his amma's lap and howl.²⁰

According to Raymond Williams, it is during the nineteenth century that the city emerges as a mysterious community, a "crowd of strangers", no longer "knowable".²¹ An individual, especially one from small town or the rural hinterlands, finds himself/herself as lonely and isolated. The Romantic poets lamented how industrialization robbed individuals of the comforts and familiarities of the everyday, much like SI Santosh who feels nostalgic about the amniotic warmth of his home (town) in Bangalore.

The urban, the modern and the criminal, all coalesce in Walter Benjamin's work on the *flâneur* (the bourgeois city stroller and observer).²² Benjamin's work on Poe and the detective story is seminal, and while elaborating on the figure of the *flâneur*, he discusses the modern experience in great detail.²³ Gowda engages in the act of *flânerie*, taking Santosh along with him, attempting to negotiate thus the feelings of unease and non-belonging they have in the unknowable city. In their pursuit of a serial killer who uses a ligature coated with finely powdered glass to slit the throats of his/her victims, these two men take to the city streets. Like Holmes, whose sense of ennui would be cured by chasing criminals, Gowda's lost self-esteem leads to an easy confidence in pursuit of criminals. And while Santosh is new to the city, without much knowledge of its lanes, nooks and corners, Gowda is a seasoned peripatetic policeman. In an attempt to read the city/crime, he

peers at a map and as a *flâneur* guides the readers through the maze of the inscrutable space. Coupling the findings of the post-mortem reports on the stomach contents of the victims with a knowledge of city traffic and roadways, he can calculate the probable neighbourhoods the victims must have eaten at. However, he goes beyond being a *flâneur*, since crime fiction/police procedurals have to end in a definite manner, with the mystery solved and the criminal apprehended. To be able to arrive at such a closure, the (police) detective has to look for clues, which he/she can then arrange in a logical order to understand the impenetrable crime and the city. Gowda acts as an urban ethnographer/fieldworker, to systematize the many contradictions inherent in the city's fabric. As the fissures under the glamorous city façade are ultimately laid bare, the police detective also realizes that "guilt might be impersonal, and therefore collective and social."²⁴ Since these novels show how crimes are produced by conditions that rise from capitalist social institutions, a wrench is thrown into the vision of police procedural as a genre, the vision of faith in law and legality against crime and criminality.

The plot of *Chain of Custody* (2016) revolves around two disparate events: on the one hand the disappearance of the daughter of Shanthi, the domestic help at Gowda's house, and on the other, the murder of a high-profile lawyer, Dr Sanjay Rathore. Both cases are investigated by Gowda and his team, and the two cases represent how the city—constructed as a closed space of dualities—is a richly textured crime-scape. With the expansion of Bangalore, and the airport at Devanahalli, "big developers discovered that the possibilities were immense even in villages like Neelgubbi"²⁵ where Gowda's police station is located. And while cyclists in spandex suits and helmets filled the lanes and bylanes of Neelgubbi on weekends, a hitherto unseen sight in the neighbourhood, sugarcane fields and cauliflower patches juxtaposed construction sites and rubbish dumps. These changes are far from superficial. In Nair, we see once again the potential for vicious and violent crime in these sorts of new conurbations. Rural communities with their established systems of hierarchy and popular tradition that members could hark

back to provided social control. With the breakdown of all this, we see a city in which public order, moral order, health, sanitation and even sanity are precarious:

From a quiet outpost, Neelgubbi station had become an important one and the number of complaints that had filled the station diary pages often made Gowda think that this must be the crime hub of the city. Gambling, betting, bootlegging, and drug dealing, dacoity, rape, murder, burglary, prostitution, and illegal possession of firearms... whatever happened, Neelgubbi?²⁶

The IT boom with its consequent demands and supplies is seen as the definitive moment of change for the city of Bangalore and its hinterlands:

The great sense of contentment evaporated as he drove past Manyata Tech Park. With the advent of tech parks, the rural districts of Bangalore had slowly become satellite towns. High-rise buildings, a gated community, an international school, restaurants, spas, a liquor store and a multiplex, so that techies didn't have to travel into town to spend their hefty pay cheques.²⁷

With such drastic and often unmonitored change, rose the possibility of running dubious and illegal businesses. At the core of *Chain of Custody* is the modern-day global problem of human trafficking. Unlike in *A Cut-Like Wound* where the crimes were committed by an individual social misfit, the pattern here has changed to organized crime. And in the Bangalore of this novel, the politicians, the lawyers, the developers, the petty criminals, the street vendors, rickshaw pullers and daily wage labourers are all part of a big nexus, each serving the other's needs. The underbelly of the city is presented in the novel as an intricate network of people, with invisible connections with the "respectable" legitimate city. Crime and criminality is no longer only

the poor people's province, but cuts across classes. Into this strange new world of rapidly "developing" Bangalore, too various and too challenging to be contained by law and policing, everyday more and more people come in, from the hinterlands and other Indian states. Some of these migrations are voluntary, while for others it is forced. Tina was abducted in Maharashtra and brought into Bangalore. The only first person narrator of the novel, Krishna was sold for money by his own father. This is a telling narration of India's development story. While the cities are assuming megalopolitan proportions, agrarian economy is dying a slow and painful death. Drove of farmers and farm-hands migrate to cities every day, to escape starvation and the vicissitudes of nature. The man who bought Krishna told his mother, "You can plant the fields with half the money and the rest will keep you and your family going till the crops are ready to be sold. I'll bring him back once the season is up."²⁸ Underscoring how narratives of severely unequal economic prosperity have a parallel in the evolving crime-scapes of the city, Bangalore is presented here as a post-globalized city which has rapidly evolved from a sleepy South Indian town. It is now a dense mass of buildings, ranging from the urban sprawl to the high-rises, a safe haven as well as a site of exploitation for migrants, and a space of urban anomie and anonymity. The godown building where trafficked girls are detained, has an unassuming look about it and is the "perfect cover".²⁹ Krishna is now a recruiter, working to lure migrant minors into illegal operations. He finds Jogan, Barun and Ikshu in a crowded general compartment of 18463 Prashanthi Express. The boys were from the village of Satpada in Odisha:

The boys clutched a plastic bag each. It probably held all their possessions: a few worn-out clothes and worthless gewgaws that each would fight viciously to keep. Their feet were bare and only a little dirtier than their faces. But there was something resolute about their expressions...³⁰

A story that began with the search for Nandita, who went missing from St Mary's Basilica at Shivaji Nagar, shifts focus on different young girls such as Moina, Sanya and Tina who come from different backgrounds. Such girls are lured with false promises or kidnapped and brought into a hole in the wall in the city. Any traces of rebellion in them is systematically destroyed and merciless violence breaks their spirit, till they become "a khanki. A slut. A whore",³¹ ready to be served to customers. Once the story reaches its denouement, we see discrete events happening at different places in the city at different times, coming together. Much like the end of *A Cut-Like Wound*, it only expresses the kaleidoscopic nature of third world urban realities, and how resolutions in such settings are only temporary and contingent. It is the interrelation between the rich and the poor and also people like Krishna, awkwardly in the middle, and the interweaving of such disparate threads that create the patchwork dynamic of the crime city of Bangalore, located firmly within the nexus of global capital, surveillance and crime.

Contemporary life is characterized by the dissolution of social and political institutions, which no longer can guarantee personal welfare. In such a scenario, we do not anymore see heroic protagonists of earlier crime genres, confident of dispensing justice. And even though the genre of the procedural is structurally a more politically conservative sub-genre than the noir, and has belief in state imposed law and order righting wrongs, we meet here Borei Gowda, a reluctant hero. He is portrayed as often helpless, tortured by ethical predicaments, since in the process of the criminal investigation, he is expected to provide answers to social problems that exceed his scope:

It had been easy enough to find the words, to sound as if he meant it, especially after he had seen the group of transgenders cowering at the back of the room. So afraid to come forward and be among the rest of the invitees. So certain that ridicule would be meted out to them if they did. So wanting to belong,

but so definite that they would not be allowed to. Gowda had felt outraged to see the trepidation in their eyes and how they shrunk within themselves.³²

The fact that he is a cog in the disciplinary practices of the state machinery, and has to operate within specified rules (as opposed to the rogue private eye), makes him more powerless. Once he understands how the police (ACP Vidyaprasad) and the criminal (Corporator) are interrelated, he can only take out his impotent rage by tampering with the ACP's car.

Ultimately, Bangalore in the two Gowda novels is a divided city, with the marginalized of the city ravaged by geographies of global capitalism. The chaos is connected with the many identities and subjectivities the city has thrown up since the economic liberalization has opened it up to unprecedented transactions. As a setting of a police procedural series, I have argued how the city in Gowda novels offers a critique of capitalist spatialization of power. In a space of anonymity and trauma, for Borei Gowda the detective, it is also a space of adventure and insights that lead to the resolution of mysteries. He painstakingly pieces together a causal chain of the crimes in each of the novels, and wanders through the city, striving to make the city ultimately knowable. And it is in his failure as an individual to control urban decay and disorder that we understand the limits of the hero and the genre.

NOTES

- 1 Jack M. Bickham, *Setting How to Create and Sustain a Sharp Sense of Time and Place in Your Fiction* (Cincinnati, OH: Writer's Digest Book, 1994), 1.
- 2 Gillian Mary Hanson. *City and Shore: The Function of Setting in the British Mystery* (Jefferson, NC): McFarland & Company, 2004), 4.
- 3 *Ibid.*, 5.
- 4 *Ibid.*, 5.
- 5 George N. Dove, *The Police Procedural* (Bowling Green, OH: Bowling Green

- University Popular Press, 1982), 1.
- 6 Dove, 2.
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Genealogies of the Intimate: The Sensate Home of the Middle-Class

SWATI CHATTERJEE

During the nineteenth-century, Calcutta witnessed an unprecedented churning of the urban cauldron and some of the apparently innocuous masalas were certain indispensable characters and hitherto un-experienced commodities. Unimpeded by the imperialist nationalist discourses, that predominated the century, the exigencies of daily urban living led to imperceptible shifts in the social codes of living. It is in this vein that, the paper argues, urbanity experienced by the relevant embodied subjects had a catalytic bearing in reformatting their sensorial registers. The paper, delving into the riches of the contemporary repositories, gleans out the persons who were unavoidable in the colonial urban backdrop and were quite crucial in smudging the boundaries between the inner and the outer world of the *bhadralok*, namely: the housemaid and the cook. Then the gaze is turned on the staggered entries of frowned upon food in the middle-class households which was aided partially by the aforesaid onslaught and dictated by the newly realised rules of comfort and health. The paper concludes with the advent of the cleansing and disinfecting products in the *fin de siècle*. This, again, is an instance of embracing the outer unfamiliar (odours) amongst the familiar (traditional households). Through such histories, the paper seeks to convene a story of the interiorization and invention of new social norms in the urban *mise en scène* by the embodied individual.

The aggregation of the middle-class homesteads in the burgeoning colonial city was not merely a story of geographical relocations of households from the neighbouring areas to Calcutta, or an improvement of architectural structures of brick and mortar but at the heart of it lay the re-alignment of the domestic space of the middle-class household

in terms of the sensorial that had gone into a tailspin negotiating the whirlpool of the colonial milieu. It found anchorage by rendering, in terms of tactile, gustatory and olfactory, a new mesh of the household that held it together and brought to the fore a new set of expectations from the fundamental unit of 'home' all the while scripting a palimpsest of the sensate. The paper tries to historicise this transfiguration in the context of the new-found advantage of anonymity in the urban scenario that went hand in glove with the logic of comfort, pleasure and hygiene, that together informed the middle—class' notion of the new sacred home or the *grihamandir*.

THE DOMESTIC HELP

It was the 1820s. Few pockets of the city were teeming with prostitutes. These women rented out rooms in the same tenements where they prostituted themselves at nights. The tenants were mainly immigrants sans their womenfolk and such arrangements were very much agreeable to these newcomers as nowhere else in Calcutta were rooms available at such affordable rates. Often such women in their old age worked- in all probability through the reference of such acquaintances—as maids in bhadrakok households.¹ Given the backstory of such women, they were considered as potential threats. Not surprisingly, the world of fiction resonated with such distrust and presented how these maids, flower girls, milk maids or the barber's wives who had entered the household for apparently above-board services turned out to be the perpetrators in luring the bhadrakok women out of their houses.

The flower girls, the barber's wife, the milkmaid, neri or a woman who chanted prayers from door to door and often acted as an aid in the kitchen and the maidservant, these five specific types of women were dubbed as messengers by Bhabanicharan Bandyopadhyay, a popular author, in one of his literary works of the early nineteenth century.² And he warns his readers to be wary of these figures who had unrestricted access to the inner domain. That such women—who had easy access to

the houses of the *bhadralok*—could be approached by nefarious men wanting to liaise with the women inmates was common knowledge and they were often portrayed as cohorts in a number of farces of the day. For example, Nimchand, a drunken character tries to coax one of the servants to become his *aide de champ* to bring out the woman he desired.³ Another literary work of 1856 titled *Bidhabābihāha nātak* shows how a widow named Sulochana could meet her lover due to the instrumental role played by barber's wife which then resulted in her unwanted pregnancy and eventual suicide.⁴

In spite of the potential threat, the *bhadralok* families could not do away with the servants. In 1873, an article in Education Gazette underlines how servants were common in Bengali household.⁵ Shib Chunder Bose, who authored a manual (1873) propagating the idea of the Hindoo family as an insulated domain, could not also be oblivious to the fact that the *jhee*, or the maid-servants were drawn from the dregs of the society, and their (mis-)conduct sometimes led to unhappy consequences in the family.⁶ Such potent was the fear that in a leading women's periodical of late nineteenth century, *Mahila*, women were advised to protect themselves against the characterless maids who had in them to tempt the housewives into bringing disgrace for the family.⁷ Nevertheless, the unrestricted access to the *zenana* of the middle-class household, by such domestic helps, disrupted the compartmentalized understanding of the inner and outer domains.⁸

The effort to maintain the 'purity of the kitchen', the 'inner sanctum' of the house of the Bengali middle class householder, thrown in the cross-caste milieu of the metropolis, revealed the inner tensions in the most explicit way. The tension was inherent in the very figure of the 'Brahmin cook'. It was very important that this 'outsider' to the house would bear the essential qualities of the 'cultural agent' whose entry would not violate the sanctity of the kitchen. So ideally the cook, who was given free access to the kitchen, a space that was sought to be hermetically sealed off from the outside world, had to be from the 'appropriate' caste but that his true caste was always a matter of doubt

was known to all as far back as the beginning of the nineteenth century. Bhabanicharan Bandhyopadhy underlined this anomaly in his sketch of urban living in Calcutta:

“Any indifferent outsider calling himself a Brahmin could enter the inner space (antahpur) of the house as a Brahmin cook... and the food cooked by him is eaten by all.”⁹

Yet despite such awareness, the fact that the Brahmin cook was sought after in the middle class Hindu cosmos of nineteenth century Calcutta, indicated the acceptance of even a hypocritical stance to display their abidance to the food proscriptive strictures and also to a certain extent to flaunt their newly acquired social status. Both Rammohan Roy and Dwarakanath Tagore, known for their disregard of Hindu caste scruples, had Brahmin cooks throughout their sojourns abroad.¹⁰ This evinced the importance attached to this figure in maintenance of the caste hierarchy of the Bengali bhadrakok household. Yet there was a constant doubt about the trustworthiness of this figure who threatened to overturn and demolish the purity of the sanctum.

The neonate metropolis with its lure of the novelties and a space to re-position oneself in social pecking order provided the necessary context for the rising demands of the Brahmin cooks. S N Mukherjee convincingly argues that bhadrakok was not a caste category but a composition from different castes who had risen in the economic ladder.¹¹ In all probability such a new class to increase their status employed such Brahmin cooks.

Also, it was noticed, from the eighteen thirties, that the exposure of the bhadrakoks to food hitherto not allowed in the house, e.g. preparations of meat, meant a new role for the Brahmin cooks, as their masters compelled them to cook such ‘prohibited’ dishes. This meant that the rest of the family more often than not laced a lurking suspicion on the purity of the other food dishes prepared by them in such households. One of the earliest remedies to this botheration was

to be found in the premises of the Tagore house. Dwarkanath and his younger brother, under the influence of Rammohan Roy, had overcome their inhibitions and learnt to relish both meat and alcohol in their house. Nevertheless, they could not do away with Brahmin cooks. So a compromise was worked out whereby these Brahmins still cooked such dishes for them within the compound but at a distance from the house and the earthen pots used to cook the same were thrown out of the compound after being used.¹² That such dictates of new taste of the masters were often concealed by such brahmin cooks to the public at large, so as not to lose their recruitment potential, revealed yet another threat that had to be tackled in the household. For example, Ramtanu Lahiri, one of the first avant-garde of the first generation of Hindoo College narrated that even though he was compelled to keep a Brahmin cook for his wife (who invariably did not allow any cook from another caste), he often had the same cook prepare the meat dishes which he had grown a fondness for.¹³ He was aware of the predicament of the cook who had to prevaricate to maintain a facade of caste purity. In fact he had to cope with a series of cooks quitting who refused to work at his place around 1852. But by the 1870s the cooks had adapted themselves to the changing tastes and merely concealed information about cooking the proscribed eatables.¹⁴

Affluent Bengali households could not do without the presence of such cooks, a marker of their status as well as a means to satiate their new found appetites. Hence by 1885 the presence of employed cooks was more or less a regular feature in affluent households which earned them the scorn from the conservative sections.¹⁵ Already in the eighteen seventies in his *Statistical Account of Bengal*, W.W. Hunter had made a detailed survey of the nature of jobs in the different districts in Bengal and he found that in the area around Calcutta, the number of cooks was as high as five thousand one hundred and fifty-two.¹⁶ This often led to accommodative stances within the household in the *quotidien*. In Calcutta, it was a known fact (from aspersions cast by contemporary literary works) by the sixties that many Hindu

households employed Muslim cooks. In spite of the frequent adverse fallouts as in the instance of Kailasbasini Devi, wife of Ramtanu Lahiri who has been ostracized by the society for keeping a Muslim cook and other Muslim servants,¹⁷ the 'bhadralkos' at large persisted with staff of different castes and they interacted and ate together.¹⁸ In the Tagore house, the Brahmin cooks cooked the rice and pulses while the meat dishes were prepared by the lower-caste cooks.¹⁹

Women's periodicals, manuals, recipe books repeatedly counselled women of the household to take charge of cooking. A cursory glance at the leading periodicals of the day reveals the repeated implorations to bhadralko woman to maintain the purity of the *antahpur*, by her cooking for her family. Her figure in the house of the upper caste middle class householder, thereby gained increasing prominence—her body was portrayed to be the last bulwark of gastronomic tradition in more than one capacity. Mahesh Chandra Deb quipped that the only ambition which women should harbour was "to attain the fame of a 'good cook'" and one who achieved it was regarded as a woman of no ordinary accomplishments!²⁰ In this capacity of the cook, she was required, more than the male counterpart, to abide by the logic of the food proscription and maintain the caste rank of the family. Yet ironically, by the 1880s, when such discourses in the periodicals reached their climax, reference to employed cooks in Bengali households was becoming more and more frequent and ubiquitous in nature. For example, Bipradas Mukhopadhyay (1842-1914) attests in *Pāk Pranali*, a comprehensive recipe book, the decreasing interest of cooking in women.²¹ Mahendranath Datta lamented that in the age of Brahmin cooks the uniqueness of food lent by the distinctive cooking style of each woman had disappeared for ever.²²

However one noticeable shift was that such employees were mostly women.²³ Stating about the domestic servants in the family mesh of later nineteenth century, Shib Chunder Bose speaks of the figure of the cook;

“The cook may be either male or female. In most families preference is shown for female cooks. Whether descendant from a Brahmin or Kāyastha family, she goes by the general name of *bāmun didi* (Brahmin sister), so named so that the members of the other families might unsuspectingly eat out of her hands.”²⁴

Always doubts persisted of his/her caste, still such a figure inch by inch gained access to the household. Therefore the periodicals changed their tone before the turn of the century and advice was doled as to how to supervise them instead of preventing them from entering the kitchen. For example, Pragyasundari debi (1870-1950) testified that by the end of the century most women had left the kitchen and left it to the cooks and other maids who paid scant regard to hygiene and cleanliness. In fact she emphasised that rather than dispensing away with them, care should be taken to supervise their health and character. Cleanliness was a priority and in this respect the widows should be considered as ideal according to her.²⁵

Thus the caste of the employed cook; male or female, was always a matter of suspicion, throughout the century, compelling a compromise of the caste scruples of the upper-castes residents of the city whose abidance meant not partaking food made by the other castes. Axioms like modern women don't know how to cook²⁶ or a cook and two to three maids are a must in the houses of educated wives as they are busy with other things, especially needle work and novels²⁷ reveal how such employed figures of the household were sought for rather than shunned.

Further, by the latter half of the century, escalating the scarcity was the fact of the steady increase in the number of the Bengali *bhadraloks*, often foreign returned, with proclivities for the occidental cuisine. This meant a surge of demand for cooks not shying away from serving their masters overtly with such dishes. As this surge could not be accommodated by the available supply of Brahmin cooks willing to comply openly with such food dictates, Muslim and other lower caste

(Hari) cooks had their ingress to the erstwhile protected domain of the kitchen in such households.²⁸

So when the nationalist paradigm was devising a new role for bhadralok woman as the sole symbol of the home/family (often as the cook, apparently inviolate due to her seclusion from the outside realm), regarded as one of the last bastions to be free of alien intrusion, the doors to the inner domain were more and more left ajar to the intrusion of the indispensable domestic help in the kitchen; the much polemical figure of the outside cook. The scruples of touch and taste were undoubtedly being destabilised through such figures. The conscious efforts of all the forces who made it their intent to thwart the entry of the outsider in the kitchen were laid waste in front of the logics of status, comforts and other newly tasted pleasures of urban culture and gradually the cook, albeit a threatening figure, became a necessary cog of the entire apparatus of the city life.

THE DELECTABLE DELICACIES

Along with the figures of intrusion, quite a few gourmets gradually found their place in the regular food habits of the Bengali household. In this section, the undeniable liaison between touch, smell and taste through such entries is underlined. By the end of the eighteenth century, in the rising urban hub of Calcutta, it was predominantly through food that the everyday exclusiveness of “the caste” were performed, defended and policed. The relevant shastric injunctions invoked in this period revolved around as to what should be avoided as food by the caste-Hindus, from whom they should not accept the food and with whom they cannot have their food. Taste and touch were inextricably related to the caste society. The enticement and the accessibility of new delectable, on the one hand, and the shifting rationale of the bhadralok living made the upper-caste household ever more susceptible to what was regarded as ‘*akhādya*’, ‘*kukhādya*’ and ‘*mlecchader khābār*’.

The earliest instances of consumption of new food items can be traced to the rise of the *bābu*, the *nouveau riche* of contemporary Calcutta, whose apparent imitations of European social values was a matter of much ridicule in the literary works of the time—be it at the garden houses or at the prostitute quarters, their consumption of the prohibited food was often invoked.²⁹ But soon the *bhadralok* too, who lived with his family in the city, had to deal with the constant risk of ingress of the household in terms of ready eats like bread and biscuits from the Muslim and European establishments, and staples like onion, garlic and chicken.

A number of reasons brought about this change in nineteenth century Calcutta; the influx of people to the city, the rise of the educational institutions, association with Europeans and the evolution of clerkdom, the increasing reference to medical science, rise of boarding houses, and cultural associations, collectively infused a new lifestyle among the people.

The Derozians, the first alumni of the Hindoo College were known for their open defiance of the Hindu conventions in matters of food and drink.³⁰ Even the retreat of the figure of the bold Derozian could not prevent the inroad of such food items into the household. Understandingly, the contemporary periodicals warned their readers against those students of Hindoo College and other missionary schools, who surreptitiously indulged in proscribed food outside and then unashamedly went back home and had regular meals with their family members. So it was not unnatural that these journals continued to portray the dilemma of the parents of such students trapped between their beliefs that western education benefited their sons and their apprehensions that their family might lose their caste status in the bargain.³¹ But city life, by the third decade of the century, could not be imagined without these new food items as seen in the poems of Ishwar Chandra Gupta portraying contemporary city life.³² Be it Peary Chand Mitra,³³ Bholanath Mukhopadhyay,³⁴ Tekchand Thakur Junior³⁵ or other authors, they reiterated continuously the hypocrisy of the

so-called orthodox Hindus who tried to preserve their jātidharma by refusing to proclaim overtly their habit of consuming the proscribed food while enjoying the very same in the privacy of the dining rooms of the Wilson's hotel, their 'baithakkhana' or any other place in between which provided the desired purdah.

Rajnarayan Basu, a leading author and intellectual of those times, narrates an incident of his youth. Without divulging to anybody, his father used to stash *kebabs*, *pulao* and other proscribed delicacies in a tin box commonly meant for important documents.³⁶ The other household members, including Rajanarayan Basu, never envisaged that the tin box could contain anything but such papers. So only when his father asked him to share a meal and the actual contents of the tin were revealed to him, he could fathom the extent of his father's ploy to dissuade him from his uncontrolled bohemian life. Peary Chand Mitra had the proscribed food in private but refrained from partaking it in public.³⁷ The underlying factor that provided this spirit of adventurism to break the shackles of inhibition was the shroud of anonymity the city provided to its dwellers. Indeed colonial Calcutta chronicled the diversity of people's continuous readjustment to become a cohesive part of the newly tasted urban life. *Anachār* emerged in an all-new avatar when contemporary literary works³⁸ and journals³⁹ gave a vivid picture of the threat posed by the England returned bhadrakok, who was considered 'fallen', by the very same society of which he was, not too long ago, a part of. This was because they were increasingly refusing not only to go through acts of expiation and amends, which offered a way back into the folds of the caste Hindu society, but also many among them desired and believed that their wives would adopt the English social values along with them.

Bread and biscuits, the talismans of the 1830s Derozians' uprising became everyday household necessities by the second half of the century. *Pākrajeshwar* (one of the first recipe books whose popularity is attested by the sale in three editions between 1831 and 1881) was also the first book with a reference of *firngee roti* or bread.⁴⁰ Even the

Brahmos embraced biscuit and sherry as part of their initiation ritual.⁴¹ The fact that by the late 1860's and 1870's of the century, bread and biscuits had become an accepted form of diet for the Bengali household in the city was perceivably through the influence of the Brahmos.⁴² As recounted in one of the literary works of the day, even the gods were amazed, during their visit to Calcutta in 1871, at the sight of packed boats disgorging their load of clerks at the pier, and the clerks then gorging on bread and biscuits bought from Muslim sellers rushing onto them. And a few even tucked them away in their pockets for consumption at a later time.⁴³ Recipe books by the eighties of the century, meant for the household were recommending toast-water and other preparations of bread, by then a regular item fitting well in the household grocery.⁴⁴

The first lot of biscuits, often clubbed with bread as proscribed items in the hierarchy of food to be avoided, was procured from the brāhmin shops, but by the latter half of the century, such a selectiveness was largely abandoned. By the 1880s, biscuits too became a part of daily life of the household; so much so that for a number of recipes of chops and cutlets, its use as an ingredient appeared without any footnote of its proscription by the author.⁴⁵ Also by this time breads and biscuits bought from outside, from brāhmin makers or not, was a daily ingredient so much so that the author of a recipe book warned readers that the ones bought from the roadside was susceptible to adulteration. But the author attested that a type of bread sold at Wilson' hotel was very good for the patients.⁴⁶ Such recommendations can be counted as additional validations, apart from the affordability of bread that led to its featuring a part of the everyday diet of the bhadralok family.

Such was the popularity that by the latter half of the nineteenth century biscuits and essences were made available in abundance by Huntley and Palmer.⁴⁷ Not to miss out on the still staunch section of the prospective consumers, Swadeshi enterprises highlighted their Hindu identity by putting out advertisements like the one in 1906 by Swadeshi Biscuits of V S Brothers which proclaimed

“Hindu Biscuits Pure, wholesome, Fresh and Tasteful
Thin Arrowroot, People’s Mixed, Maharaja, Tiffin,
Gem, Milk etc.”⁴⁸

Such advertisements not only provide evidence of an initiative to leverage one’s national identity but that by then a market, for such products, with a healthy demand had emerged. In fact, biscuits and bread had formed indispensable constituents of the daily diet of the middle-class *bhadralok* of the society. In fact by 1900, bread was treated as a staple food just like rice or pulses, fit for the consumption of children.⁴⁹

Chops and cutlets too also found their place in the kitchen of the *bhadralok* whose preparation entailed the use of biscuit crumbs, by then as already seen, an essential item on the kitchen shelf.⁵⁰ Around 1860s meat chops with Worcester sauce had entered a few houses where friends met to spend time together in the evening.⁵¹ By 1868, women were expected to know how to cook the cutlet or Fowl curry as it was served at Great Eastern.⁵² In fact, undeterred by the stiff resistance and vitriolic tirades, the triumvirate of onion, garlic and meat soon tore down the puritanical defenses to rubble and filled every nook and corner of the *bhadralok* household with their singular aroma. In fact, these were the most prominent battering rams to breach the sanctum of the Bengali household.

Most of the arguments against onion, garlic and meat proposed the climatic and constitutional sensibleness as the merits for adherence to the diet in cadence with one’s constitution, climate and traditional practices. This was the principal rationale sought to keep these at bay from the household.⁵³ In such a discourse, the physicians of the day could not keep themselves aloof from what primarily was under their purview. In fact their recommendations of it were pivotal to the entry of chicken in the household. Thus it is not aberrant to find such debates also being published in the medical journals that circulated on an increasing scale in Bengal from 1860s onwards. Here, the question

of the weakness of the Bengali man as a consequence of the diet he follows was constantly raised and remedial recommendations were regularly put forward. The significance of the doctors prescribing meat to rejuvenate the convalescing patient had a remarkable contribution to the gradual adaptation of meat in the dietary habits of the Bengali bhadralok. Concurrently, recipe books that celebrated meat dishes found its acceptance amongst the city inhabitants.⁵⁴

Steadily the new concepts of *'sukhādyo'*, *'sushāstyā'*, *'parimitāhār'* and *'shorir rakha'* projected the new dietary consciousness of the middle class Bengali. Contemporary manuals played an important role, along with the western doctors, in bringing about the entry of the proscribed chicken in the Bengali household. In *Sasthya Sahay* Kaviraaj Girishchandra Sen Kaviratna stressed the nutritious quality of the chicken broth (mangsher shush): *"a curry of chicken prepared with the mildest of spice in health, is nourishing to the body and thoroughly digestible..."* The same argument was seen in Vipradas Mukhopadhyay's book wherein he argued that in the changing times, it was no longer possible to think of a simplistic definition of *pathya* defined in terms of a diet in barley and so incorporation of the 'imported biomedical understandings of the sick man's diet' (e.g. chicken broth) was a necessity.⁵⁵ Many articles in the medical journals criticized the Bengali diet of rice and pulses with no or very less amount of meat, as nutritiously inadequate and the major cause of the lack of strength of the Bengalis. They time and again urged to improve the same with the inclusion of adequate quantities of meat and other proteins. In fact some of them carried advice as to how to model the diet of the school going youth according to the norms followed in England to develop the physique of the indigenous youth.⁵⁶

The putative opposition of the bivariate of the elderly generation and women of the household to foreign food were also often liberal in the daily scenario. The scene of mothers/wives, smelling out the stench (of onion or alcohol) on their sons/husbands, on their return to the home featured in many literary works and autobiographies. Rajnarayan

Basu too narrated how his mother was irked when he returned in his college days with such stench in his mouth.⁵⁷ But it was not that such repeat offenders were ostracised and so it may be inferred that soon such households were familiar with these tell-tale odours which still had kept such eatables and drinkables at bay. For example, Nilmani Chakrabarti, a leading member of the Brahmo Samaj in the 1880s recounted how his family continued to eat with him in the kitchen in spite of the fact that he had cast away the sacred thread.⁵⁸

The elderly generation also found through the medical prescriptions, a rationale to lower their resistance and allow food to enter the household. Sarada Sundari Devi, in her *Atmakatha* narrated how she tried to make her son Keshab Chandra Sen eat the chicken broth (māngser shush) following the prescription of the doctor⁵⁹ Bipin Chandra Pal, the radical nationalist was severely admonished by his father for having lemonade when he was a kid. However later on, his father made Pal drink lemonade when the latter had diarrhoea as an antidote. When asked, Pal's father said that as a medicine it was like food that had been blessed by God.⁶⁰

From the latter half of the century domestic manuals and periodicals delved deeper into the Hindu dietary discourse and in it meat, onion and garlic were becoming common enough to be discussed with their pros and cons in mind.⁶¹ With more fervour than ever before, in the last decade of the century, one of the most ardent defenders of indigenous gastronomic practices, Bhudev Mukhopadhyay defended the logic of proscription in the domain of food in terms of '*deshachar*' (traditions of the nation). In his *Achar Prabandha* he recommended the meticulous observance of shastric injunctions in every minute detail, even if they appeared to be superstitious because; "ritually prescribed conduct was like codes of decent behaviour in civilized society-not necessarily rational."⁶²

The profusion of such frequent and varied visits to the discourse of diet, be it in the journals, medical or non-medical, in the manuals of healthy living only but reinforces the fact that meat and its

accompaniments like garlic and onion had already found a place of favour and desire in the eating habits of the bhadralok and advices of Bhudev Mukhopadhyay and Sasadhar Tarkachuramani were imperceptibly receding to the background.⁶³ While narrating the life of Kissory Chand Mitra (1822-1873) Manmathanath Ghosh remarked that European food and alcohol was consumed daily by the class of educated Bengalis.⁶⁴ The fact that a contemporary sketch of Calcutta as early as in the sixties could comfortably place in the daily scene of the Calcutta streets, the butchers of Chitpore who passed along the road carrying large chunks of mutton on their shoulders only reiterates the acceptance of the erstwhile proscribed food items in the regular diet of the Hindoo Bengali.⁶⁵

By the 1880s recipe books had started proclaiming that meat was better than sweets, for a healthy body.⁶⁶ In fact direct from the kaviraji prescriptions of the new genre, Bipradas Mukhopadhyay prescribed chicken stew for the patients.⁶⁷ Onions too were simultaneously praised for its nutritive value. That the only reason Hindus, the above author surmised, stayed away from it was because of its strong pungent smell. But he attested its increasing popularity and how meat dishes were unimaginable without onions. Along with onions, garlic too found its way through commendations of its beneficial effects on the human body.⁶⁸ The baby-steps that were taken by onion into the kitchen were noticed by *Pakrajeshwar* which warned that its usage was not for all but depended on individual preference. In fact the absence of onions in the meat recipes of this book was quite clear.⁶⁹ But with *Banjan Ratnakar*, the ubiquitous presence of onions and garlic was marked.⁷⁰

By then a complete metamorphosis of the olfactory and the taste receptors of the bengali bhadralok had occurred and he must have craved for the distinct aroma of onion and garlic in the traditional *nirāmişh* fare. Hence, Pragyasundari Debi, one of the popular authors of Bengali recipes shared the secret of how the smell of onion can be brought in dishes without its use by soaking asafoetida in ginger juice.⁷¹ The salivating attraction of onions was such that, certain

necessary culinary skills were imparted by the recipe books, to preserve it. For example for the method of cooking *mughlai khichuri*, Bipradas Mukhopadhyay warns that the utensil where it is being cooked should be covered so that the aroma of the food does not dissipate till such time it is consumed. He stresses that though the above can be cooked without onions but it would fail to entice the gourmands.⁷² In fact it was noted in 1897 that women had also began consuming meat with the men folk.⁷³

Therefore, it is evident that while the nationalist discourse was sparing no effort to resurrect the idealistic and utopian idea of perfect and pure diet, in the everyday life of average bhadrak, his diet was a marked departure from such lofty puritanical scorn redrawing the new sensibilities of the household. And while the public dialogues was rife with the pros and cons of meat, onion and garlic, the middle-class bhadrak was unobtrusively visiting his nearby butchers to carry back home a supply of animal protein to be prepared in his premises as per the recipes of the latest culinary publications. Lost, were the not too distant cries of exhalation of the triumph of overcoming the caste inhibitions of the Derozians buying bread and biscuits from Muslim shops, amidst the chaotic din of economic pragmatisms of the city.

THE DISINFECTING WHIFF

At the turn of the century, cleansers and disinfectants were yet another class of products emanating “new odours” that entered the household on the promise to keep the house clean and fresh in the fast paced over crowded city. There was a certain awareness noticed in the latter half of the century, to maintain a degree of hygiene in one’s house. Medical journals had underlined its importance in numerous articles, often authored by doctors be it from homeopathy, allopath or ayurveda branches. In 1888, a medical journal propagated the benefits of keeping the rooms free of dirt and advised its readers to limit the amount of furniture in the bedroom so that they do not impede upon the free

circulation of air.⁷⁴ Also, that the beds should be kept away from the walls as the circulation of air is in the least there. Doors and windows should be left wide open for proper ventilation, ran the prescription. Even mothers, unlike the out-of-date disgusting ‘native’ habit, should not sleep in the same bed with her child as her sweaty bodily exhalations would affect the child’s health.⁷⁵ In 1898 Svasthya too elaborated the medical essence of well-ventilating the houses and went to the extent of defining an ideal housewife as one who was aware of the proper ways of keeping the rooms airy and fresh!⁷⁶ One journal went as far as to opine that the reason for the well-being of the scavengers (who cleaned and carried away the filth of the houses) was that they slept in open air and so the body managed to get abundant oxygen to keep them healthy and fit.⁷⁷

These prevailing discourses on the ways to improve the living habit, in fact, paved the way for an emollient entry of the disinfectants into the bhadrlok households. Cleanliness, neatness and tidy residences became a byword and eradicating all dirt and unwanted pollutants that cast their shadows on a healthy household became almost an obsession for the bhadrloks of the later years. This preoccupation soon began having a significant bearing on the planning of the new residences too. Consequently, well-ventilated tidied household of the bhadrlok was sought to be canonized by such writers like Bhudev Mukhopadhyay who summarised;

“the master and his wife should summon the servant and give him proper instructions to clean the room which was not swept properly and whose bed sheets and pillows have remained unkept, should be properly tidied as per the given time-slot.”⁷⁸

Overcrowding, congestion due to increasing traffic, rise of industrial units and epidemic such as plagues, all contributed to this newfound notion of cleanliness. Tidiness, neatness and proper ventilation became the new *mantra* of all household manuals and periodicals and in

such a background, purifying the house, with the newly available disinfectants were accepted in open arms.

By the latter half of the century, Calcutta was won over by the practicality of the mass produced chemical disinfectants like phenyl and carbolic acid. The deodorisers, the use of bleaching powder and later carbolic acid and phenyl, the colonial products, earlier used only in hospitals gained a growing entry as indispensable products to keep the household clean.⁷⁹ Plagues epidemics in Calcutta, more than anything, undeniably altered the notion of purity from its traditional understanding. It was a far cry from the early nineteenth century when housewives, under the strict supervision of their mothers-in-laws cleaned the house themselves (without the help of the housemaids) with water.⁸⁰ Cow dung or other till then the tried-and-true substances were more and more discarded on back the growing awareness to more modern cleansers.

A new benchmark for the city housewives was by now the cognizant use of disinfectants to ensure the health of the family. And contemporary journals guided them to put them to effective use. Cleanliness of the house was the new logic of survival that insulated the house from the outside unclean environment. In fact, methods to sanitize the households, contaminated with the patients' clothing, residing in them, was well laid out, in which the abundant use of carbolic acid was prescribed.⁸¹ Vernacular periodicals facilitated the spread of awareness regarding the utility of phenyl, carbolic lotion and chloride of lime (bleaching powder) in the households.⁸²

The state too played an active role in promoting the usage of such disinfectants in domestic scenario. Contemporary periodicals reveal that during the outbreaks of plague epidemics, patients often refused to go to the state hospitals.⁸³ In such a scenario, the government decision of not to implement 'forcible segregation' in Bengal as it had implemented in Bombay, resulted, in upper-classes setting up hospital facilities in their homes during such crises. If a plague affected victim refused to be treated in the caste hospitals (the temporary ones built

to treat the patients), he or she was to be treated in isolation in his house and the government sent free medical attendants and medicine. Later the entire place was 'disinfected' free of cost.⁸⁴ Such incidences had also a positive impact on the overall acceptability of these items.

The trepidation of having their near ones die hospitals or on their way in plague coaches (coaches arranged to take the plague patients from the home to the hospital for prevention of the spread of the epidemic in town) was a major stumbling block in effecting appropriate quarantine. There was a strong belief by then that the plague coaches emanated such a foul odor that the patients die the very moment they enter such gurneys.⁸⁵ To work a way around it, by the end of the nineteenth century it was postulated that the nitrate of lead and the chloride of lead could come handy in treating the plague victims in the house instead. In lieu of such congested and infected spaces of the hospitals, households evolved as 'safe' havens which were holy and hygienic *à la fois*, symbolised by the new sacred; the phenyl. The admittance of quick lime, carbolic acid and per chloride of mercury lotion in the households was also fostered by the municipal authorities.⁸⁶ Behind it lay a new play between the sanitised and the sacred: home as temple. Disinfectants became so reliable that late nineteenth-century house-holder sought to use it as a remedy for all insalubrity.⁸⁷ Before the turn of the century such disinfectants became readily available in the doctors' chambers and markets.⁸⁸ It would be pertinent to remember that the standard phrase of the domestic manuals for the households; the "*grihamandir*" (temple-house) now entwined the holy with the hygienic. The sanitarians' obsession with disinfectants came *sans doute* from concerns with epidemics such as the plague. But such products also gave the Calcuttans the capacity to cordon off the house from its disease prone surroundings. This contemporary mentality ensured that the presence of 'new smells' in the household was there to stay. Before the turn of the century, vernacular periodicals prescribed carbolic acid (best sold by Calvert) for floors along with carbolic powder, chloride of lime and sulphuric acid gas as well as terebene soap and eucalyptus

to keep the inner sanctum free of germs and dirt.⁸⁹ These, likewise became regular items in the shopping list of the middle-class households and their presence assured the purity of the house and thereby the creation of a homely space as a refuge and escape the myriad strange odours of the city.

A watershed was reached with P. C Roy's swadeshi enterprise Bengal Chemical & Pharmaceutical Works (1901) dedicating an entire Division for "cosmetics and home products" such as hair oils, disinfectants, moth repellents and other products that by then had carved their niche.⁹⁰ The *raison d'être* behind a professional entrepreneur like P. C Roy to earmark such considerable portion of his resources and energy was these products had a substantial demand riding the crest of the newfound sensibilities of the dwellers of the young city. In the Swadeshi period these same disinfectants were locally produced with the help of the western scientific know-how and used as propaganda against the anti-colonial movement. In such a context the discourse of hygiene could coexist with (relaxed, but not displaced) caste norms. But the paradox lay in the usage of industrially produced secular goods as sensorial markers of privacy and intimacy!

To conclude, focusing on the undercurrents of everyday that invigorated the rules of pleasure, comfort and health, the paper sought to narrate the history of the unmissable entrants from realms beyond the ken of the Bengali middle-class household (in the context of the colonial urban) that assailed, tweaked and irreversibly reconstructed the sensory give-and-take in terms of taste, smell and touch between the home and the world.

NOTES

- 1 Sibnath Shastri, *Ramtanu Lahiri o Tathkalin Bangsamaj* (Calcutta: New Age Publishers, 2007), 29.
- 2 Bhabanicharan Bandyopadhyay, *Dutibilas* (Calcutta, Anglo Inidan Press, 1860).

- 3 Kshetra Gupta, Sadabar Ekadasi, in *Dinabandhu Rachanavali* (Calcutta: Sishu Sahitya Samsad, 1967), 145.
- 4 Sharmistha Sen, *Bānglā Sāhitye Bidhobā Citran 1856-1902* (Calcutta: Pustak Bipani, 2007), 97. To cite another example of a maid acting as a messenger was Hara, the milkmaid in; Hardik Bishwas, *Beshyasakti Nibarttak Natak*, in *Prahasane Kalikaler Bangamahila 1860-1909* (Calcutta: Carcapad: 2011).
- 5 Swapan Basu, *Adhunatan Dampatya*, *Educational Gazette*, 20 May 1873, in *Sanbad Samayikpatre Unish Sataker Bangali Samaj*, Vol. 2 (Calcutta: Paschimbanga Bangla Academy, 2003), 99.
- 6 Shib Chunder Bose, *The Hindoos as They Are: A description of the Manners, Customs, and Inner Life of Hindoo Society in Bengal* (London: Thacker Spink & Co., 1883), 15. This is the second edition of his book published in a span of two years. His intention was to draw a picture of the domestic and social economy of the Hindus.
- 7 Pradip Basu, *Paribarik Prabandha: Bangali Paribarer Sandharva Bichar* (Calcutta: Gangchil, 2012), 71.
- 8 Partha Chatterjee has shown how marking out the unanimous inner spiritually unpolluted space was crucial for the nationalists who had lost their identity in the outer colonial world and how in such an urge attempts were made to shape an ideal woman in the middle-class *bhadramahilā* and an ideal family out of the home of a middle-class householder. See Partha Chatterjee, *Nation and its Fragments: Colonial and Post-Colonial History* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1995).
- 9 Bhabanicharan Bandhopadhyay, *Kalikata Kamalalay (1823) in Bhabanicharan Bandhopadhayer Rachanasamagra* (Calcutta: Nabapatra Prakashan, 1987), 9.
- 10 Pragyasundari Debi, *Āmish o Nirāmish Āhar* (Calcutta: Ananda, 2008), Preface.
- 11 S.N. Mukherjee, *Calcutta: Essays in Urban History*, (Calcutta: Subarnarekha, 1993), 97.
- 12 Krishna Kripalani, *Dwarkanath Tagore: A Forgotten Pioneer: A Life*, (New Delhi: National Book Trust, 1981), 51.
- 13 Sibnath Shastri, *Ramtanu Lahiri O Tathkalin Bangasamaj*, 126.
- 14 *Ibid.*, 127.
- 15 Swapan Basu, “Stree Sikhya o Stree Sadhinata” in *Sambad Samayikpatre Unish Sataker Bangali Samaj*, Vol. 2, (Calcutta: Paschimbanga Bangla Academy,

- 2003), 344, 343-350; Bipradas Mukhopadhyay, *Pak Pranali* (Calcutta: Ananda, 2007), 28.
- 16 Utsa Ray, *Culture of Food in Colonial Bengal* (PhD dissertation, Pennsylvania State University, 2009).
- 17 Manmathanath Ghose, *Kissory Chand Mitra* (Calcutta: Parul, 2010), 158.
- 18 Kshetra Gupta, *Buro Sāliker Ghāre Ro in Madhusudan Rachanavali* (Calcutta: Sahitya Samsad, 1965), 259.
- 19 Pragyasundar Debi, *Āmish o Nirāmish Āhar*, Vol. 2 (Calcutta: Ananda Publishers, 1995), 58.
- 20 Taken from the paper of Mahesh Chandra Deb, January 1839, Before The Society for Acquisition of General Knowledge, reprinted in Amiya Sen, *Social and Religious Reform* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2003), 140.
- 21 Bipradas Mukhopadhyay, *Pak Pranali*, 27.
- 22 Utsa Ray, *Culture of Food in Colonial Bengal*, 102.
- 23 Swapan Basu, “Bangamahilar Bartaman Abastā,” *Dipika*, Vol. 1, 1294 (1887) in *Sanbad Samayikpatre Unish Sataker Bangali Samaj*, Vol. 2, 123.
- 24 Shib Chunder Bose, *The Hindoos As They Are*, 14.
- 25 Pragyasundari Debi, *Āmish o Nirāmish Āhar*, Vol. 1, 57f.
- 26 Swapan Basu (ed.), *Dipika* (1887), *Sambad-Samayikpatre Unish Sataker Bangali Samaj*, Vol. 2, 125.
- 27 *Ibid.*, *Samaj Dipika* (1885), 346.
- 28 Rathindranath Roy, *Kalki-Avatar*, in *Dwijendra Rachanavali*, Vol. 1, (Calcutta: Sahitya Samsad, 1964), 368.
- 29 Bhabanicharan Bandhyopadhyay, *Nababāu Bilās* (1825), in *Bhabanicharan Bandhyopadhyayer Rachanasamagra* (Calcutta: Nabapatra Prakasan, 1987).
- 30 Rajnarayan Basu, *Sekal ar Ekal*, (Calcutta: Bangiya Sahitya Parishad, 1874). 37-38.
- 31 For example, in the news of *Samachar Darpan*, 8 September 1832, taken from Brajendranath Bandhopadhyay, *Sambadpatre Sekaler Katha*, Vol. 2, 1830-1840 (Calcutta: Bangiya Sahitya Parishad, 1939), 17. See Jogesh Chandra Bagal, *Unabingsha Satabdir Bangla* (Calcutta: Ranjan Publishing House, September 1963), 178.
- 32 Ishwar Gupta, *Borodin*, published in *Sambad Pravakar*, December 1850; Benoy Ghosh, *Samayik Patre Banglar Samajchitra*, Vol. 1, 1840-1905 (Calcutta: Bengal Publishers Pvt. Ltd, 1962), 415-418; Ishwar Gupta, *Anachar, Chobi O Chona*, (Calcutta: Kahini, 1954), 28.

- 33 Peary Chand Mitra, *Mod Khaoya Boro Dai, Jaat Thakar Ki Upay*, in *Dusprapya Sahitya Sangraha*, Vol. 3, edited by Kanchan Basu (Calcutta: Reflect Publication, 2004).
- 34 Bholanath Mukhopadhyay, *Apanar Mukh Apani Dekho*, in *Dusprapya Sahitya Sangraha*, Vol. 2, edited by Kanchan Basu (Calcutta: Reflect Publication, 2002).
- 35 Tekchand Thakur Junior, *Kalikatar Nukochuri*, in *Dusprapya Sahitya Sangraha*, Vol. 1, edited by Kanchan Basu (Calcutta: Reflect Publication, 2002).
- 36 Rajnarayan Basu, *Atmacharit* (Calcutta: Bangiya Sahitya Parishad, 1974), 42.
- 37 *Ibid.*, 136.
- 38 D. L. Roy, *Samaj Bibhrat o Kalki Avatar* (1895), from *Dwijendra Rachana Samagraha* (Calcutta: Shakkharata Prokashan, 1973) or D L Roy, *Ekgbare* (1889), from *Dwijendra Rachana Samagraha*, (Calcutta: Shakkharata Prokashan, 1973).
- 39 *Somprakash*, 21 *Ashar*, 1288 *Bangabda*, in Benoy Ghosh, *Samayik Patre Banglar Samajchitra*, Vol. 4, 1840-1905 (Calcutta: Bengal Publishers Pvt. Ltd, 1966), 301-303.
- 40 Sripantha, *Pakrajeshwar o Ratnakar* (Calcutta: Subarnarekha, 2004), 64.
- 41 Rajnarayan Basu, *Rajnarayan Basur Atmacharit: An Autobiography of Rajnarayan Basu* (Calcutta: Chirayata Prakashan, 2006), 12, 44.
- 42 Bipin Chandra Pal, *Memories of my Life and Times: In the Days of My Youth 1857-1884* (Calcutta Modern Book Academy, 1932), 196-197.
- 43 Durgacharan Ray, *Debganer Marte Agaman* (Calcutta: Dey's Publishing, 2009), 269.
- 44 Bipradas Mukhopadhyay, *Pak Pranali*, 286.
- 45 *Ibid.*, 200.
- 46 *Ibid.*, 2, 290.
- 47 Utsa Ray, *Culture of Food in Colonial Bengal*, 138.
- 48 Iqbal Bhuiyan, Advertisements, in *Selections from The Mussalman*, 1906-1908 (Calcutta: Papyrus, 1994), 204.
- 49 Pragyasundari Debi, *Amish o Niramish Ahar*, Vol. 1 (Calcutta: Ananda, 2008), 450.
- 50 *Ibid.*, 180, 187.
- 51 Manmathanath Ghose, "Swadeshbrati Sir Ashutosh Choudhuri," in *Sekaler Kriti Bangali* (Calcutta: Parul, 2014), 279.

- 52 Sripantha, *Pakrajeshwar o Ratnakar*, 63.
- 53 Rajnarayan Basu, *Sekal r Ekal* (Calcutta: Bangiya Sahitya Parishad, 1874), 43-47.
- 54 Notably, *Pākrajeshwar*, which was first published in 1831 by Bishweswar Tarkalankar and later edited by Gourisankar Tarkabhagis in 1854 under the auspices of the Burdwan Raj, was followed (four years later) by *Bānjan Ratnākār* (1858), both replete with meat dishes. Sripantha, *Pakrajeshwar o Ratnakar* (Calcutta: Subarnarekha, 2004), 12, 15.
- 55 Vipradas Mukhopadhyay, *Pathya Randhan*, (Maniktala Street Pak Pranali Office, Calcutta, 1899).
- 56 To cite an instance see *Shasthya*, Agrahayan, 1307 Bangabda (1900) in Pradip Basu, *Samayiki: Purono Samayik Patrer Prabanda Sankalan*, Vol.1: Bigyan O Samaj 1850-1901 (Calcutta: Ananda Publishers, 1998), 142.
- 57 Rajnarayan Basu, *Atmacharit*. See Gautam Niyogi (ed.), *Saradsundari Debi, Atmakatha* (Calcutta: Ababhash, 2010), 47.
- 58 Nilmani Chakrabarti, *Atmajibansmriti* (Calcutta: Sadharan Brahmasamaj, 1975), 37.
- 59 Gautam Niyogi (ed.) *Saradsundari Debi, Atmakatha*, 44.
- 60 Bipinchandra Pal. *Sattar Batsar: Atmajibani* (Calcutta: 2005), 57–61.
- 61 *Chikitshak o Samalochak, Bhadra-Poush 1302* (1895) in Pradip Basu, *Samayiki: Purono Samayik Patrer Prabanda Sankalan*, Vol. 1: Bigyan O Samaj 1850-1901 (Calcutta: Ananda Publishers, 1998); *Ibid.*, 109. *Chikitsa Sammilani Baishak, 1292 Bangabda* (1885) in *Ibid.*, 81; *Chikitsā Sammilani, 1292 Bangabda*, (1885), in *Ibid.*, 154-155. See *Chikitsa Sammilani 1292 Bangabda* (1885) in *Ibid.*, 137, 141; *Shasthya, Shrabana, 1306, Bangabda* (1899) in *Ibid.*, 334.
- 62 Mansawita Sanyal and Ranjan Bandhyopadhyay, *Achar Prabandha* (Essay on Correct Conduct), 1898, *Bhudev Mukhopādhyāy Prabandha Samagra* (Calcutta: Mitra and Ghosh, 1968).
- 63 Sasadhar Tarkachuramani, *Dharma Bakhya* (Calcutta: title page missing, 1910) 302, 382, 394.
- 64 Manmathanath Ghose, *Karambir Kissory Chand Mitra* (Calcutta: Parul: 2010), 119.
- 65 *The Observant Owl: Hootum's Vignettes of Nineteenth-Century Calcutta*, translated by Swarup Roy, Kaliprasanna Sinha's *Hootum Pyachar Naksha* (Calcutta: Black Kite: 2007), 11.

- 66 Bipradas Mukhopadhyay, *Pak Pranali*, 35.
- 67 *Ibid.*, 276, 297.
- 68 *Ibid.*, 44.
- 69 Sripantha, *Pakrajeshwar o Ratnakar*, 11, 23.
- 70 *Ibid.*, 102.
- 71 Pragyasundari Debi, *Āmish o Nirāmish Āhar*, 460. Also, recipe books contained a number of meat recipes to cater to different tastes. See Vols. 2, 17, 33, 36, and 45.
- 72 Bipradas Mukhopadhyay, *Pak Pranali*, 114.
- 73 Anonymous, *Mangsho Randhan o Bakshan*, in *Mabilā* 3, no. 5 (1897): 100-110.
- 74 “Svasthya bijnan,” *Chikitsā Sammilani* 2, no. 1, Baishakh 1292 (1885): 8.
- 75 *Ibid.*, 10
- 76 D. D. Gupta, *Svasthya* 2, no. 4, 1305 (1898): 145–151.
- 77 *Svasthya* 4, no. 2 (1900): 34.
- 78 Mansawita Sanyal and Ranjan.Bandhyopadhyay, “Pāribārik prabandha” in *Bhudev Mukhopādhāy Prabandha Samagra*, 86.
- 79 Purnima Debi, *Thakurbarir Gaganthakur* (Calcutta: Punascha, 2009), 51.
- 80 Gautam Niyogi (ed.), *Saradsundari Debi, Ātmakathā*.
- 81 “Bubonic Plague er Chikitsā”, *Bishāk Darpan*, March 1897, 363.
- 82 “Kalikātāi Plague,” *Svasthya* 2, no. 1, Baishakh 1305 (1898): 13, 18.
- 83 “Plague Haite Sikhyā”, *Svasthya* 2, no. 2, Jaishtha 1305 (1898): 43.
- 84 Srilata Chatterjee, *Plague and Politics in Bengal, Proceedings of the Indian History Congress*, Vol. 66 (2005–06), 1197f.
- 85 “Plaguer Pradurbhābe Kalikātār Atit o Bartamān Obosthā,” *Svasthya* 2, no. 4, Sraban 1305 (1898): 81.
- 86 “Plague Nibāran Bishyai Government er Cheshtā,” *Svasthya* 4, no. 1, Baishakh 1307 (1900): 14f.
- 87 “Sankramak Pirā,” *Svasthya* 2, no. 12, Chaitra 1305 (1898): 273.
- 88 “Kalikātāi Plague,” *Svasthya* 2, no. 1, Baishakh 1305 (1898): 15; “Plague Bij Nāsh,” *Svasthya* 2, no. 12, Chaitra 1305 (1899), 285.
- 89 “Plague Bij Nāsh,” *Svasthya* 2, no. 12, Chaitra 1305 (1899): 286f.
- 90 Bengal Chemicals (n.d.). Accessed 13 July 2019, <http://bengalchemicals.co.in/our-founder-history/>; *P C Ray: Life and Experiences of a Bengali Chemist* (Calcutta: Chukerbutty and Chatterjee, 1935).

The Stagnation – Disruption Dichotomy in Dubliners

SREERADHA SETH

“Gazing up into the darkness, I saw myself as a creature driven and derided by vanity; and my eyes burned with anguish and anger.”¹

The concluding line from ‘Araby’, the third story in *Dubliners* sums up the feelings of most of the protagonists of the different stories in the collection. In this story, Joyce depicts the unimaginative, conventional, narrow minded existence of the Dubliners and how the protagonist desperately tries to escape from it. He depicts it with unsparing realism with an abundance of descriptive phrases such as “the waste room littered with old papers”, “the dark odorous stables”, “the dark dripping gardens”, and “the few straggling bushes in the garden”.² Joyce symbolically indicates the stagnated existence of Dubliners where the protagonist is compelled to take refuge in his reveries for a better existence amidst the stifling surroundings. The impression of this stagnation is further intensified by the details like the ‘musty’ air and the ‘brown’ unpainted facades of the houses in the locality. The turning point which provides a disruption amidst this stagnation is the boy’s decision to go to the oriental fair called ‘Araby’ to buy a token of love for Mangan’s sister whom he is infatuated with. His definition of ideal love is ruptured when he receives a rude shock upon witnessing the shameless flirtation of a female shop assistant with two men. Like the other protagonists, he is confronted with a disturbing self-revelatory epiphany that his imaginative superiority over the crestfallen Dubliners is eventually fruitless. This ultimately transforms him from an idealistic state of innocence to the complexity of adult experience.

Disruption in the lives of the characters in the first story 'The Sisters' occurs due to the death of Father Flynn, with whom the boy protagonist shares a very ambiguous relationship. The boy was somewhat irritated that his regular routine has been disrupted because of Father Flynn's death which is evident in the lines "Had he not been dead I would have gone into the little dark room behind the shop to find him sitting in his armchair by the fire, nearly smothered in his greatcoat. Perhaps my aunt would have given me a packet of High Toast for him and this present would have roused him from his stupefied doze."³ Even the Father's sister seems to be sad at the disruption of her daily routine, "I won't be bringing him his cup of beef tea..."⁴

What is disturbing in the narrative is the boy's recollection of the paralyzed father. He states that his musings about Christmas were disrupted by father Flynn's image who began to confess to him in a murmuring voice and the boy was vexed when he smiled continually and his lips were moist with spittle. The boy even admits feeling uncomfortable about him even though he paints their relationship as nothing but spiritual. The character of the invalid malevolent father Flynn becomes further questionable when old Cotter says it is unhealthy for young boys to mingle with such fathers. The stagnation in the story is shattered by his death as the narrator observes that he felt a strange sense of freedom after he passed away. Father Flynn's paralysis runs as a crucial part of the story, it was destabilized by his deteriorating condition, epitomized by his laughing frenzy in a confessional box. This image is not only disturbing but is perhaps symbolic of the disturbing chaos his surrounding was in. Moreover, the priest's dropping of the chalice and his inability to grasp the same in his coffin indicates a disruption in the rituals of religion. Even death is followed by unnatural reaction from the protagonist. While kneeling down before the coffin, the boy was expected to pray, but he was distracted by a strange reverie of the old priest smiling inside his coffin. Even when the boy saw the corpse lying "solemn

and copious”,⁵ the gravity of the situation escaped him for he was distracted by the heavy odour of the flowers in the room.

The presence of father Flynn lingers throughout the story, tinting the narrator’s experience of death and shows how it interrupts normal human activities and their psyche. It has not only affected the young narrator’s spirit but of other characters as well such as the maid who washed him. She makes a disturbing observation “No one would think he’d make such a beautiful corpse”.⁶

The narrative acts as an amorphous space as Joyce uses several aborted sentences in the story, similar to Mansfield’s short story ‘The Fly’ as much is left to the reader’s imagination. Even the story ends with an unfinished sentence. The narrator while trying to interpret Old Cotter says that, “I puzzled my head to extract meaning from his unfinished sentences.”⁷ These incomplete sentences act as a disruption to the normal flow of the narrative as one can discern the presence of subterranean currents in the story.

Readers encounter another questionable figure like father Flynn in ‘An Encounter’ who disrupts the otherwise unadventurous life of the two young boys, Mahony and the young protagonist. The disruption in the normal routine life is indicated in the very opening of the story as the narrator observes, “Everyone was incredulous when it was reported that he had a vocation for the priesthood”.⁸ Here he refers to Joe Dillion, a friend of the protagonist who had introduced the boys to several games and has been a consistent winner. Reading regular school syllabi was a form of paralysis and to relieve this tedium, they wanted to play a real life adventure games.

The undercurrent of religious conflict in the city is highlighted when the narrator and Mahony were attacked by two poor boys in North Dublin who thought that they were Protestants. This highlights the rigid Catholicism prevalent in Ireland as Joyce has also mentioned the presence of catholic schools in Dublin several times in the collection. Joyce gives a vivid description of the bustling city life, away from the stagnation of school life through the narrator’s description of workers,

drivers and laborers working near the river who “shouted” (Joyce, p.11) at their “immobility” (Joyce, p.11). Here Joyce gives a rare view of the city as an un-stagnated space where immobility is discouraged. When the boys had sat hopelessly on the bank as their friends did not arrive for the adventurous game, their chat was disrupted by the old man. In the course of the conversation, he soon came out as an opportunistic man who tried to engage young boys in perverse conversations. He asked personal questions about having romantic companions and to gain the better of the curiosity of the young boys, he told them that he had books that young boys like them could not read. A disruption in the narrative takes place when the man began an inappropriate conversation with the narrator about whipping young boys when Mahony escaped (using the alibi of a cat) upon seeing the old man masturbating. He soon changed his opinions and uncannily began to talk about torturing young boys for having romantic interest in girls. His fixation with whipping made it sound like a sadomasochistic sexual act which made the narrator very uncomfortable. Although his speech was monotonous, it was quite disturbing with its sexual innuendos. Even though the boy tried to escape the monotony of school life, he was ultimately paralyzed because of his excruciatingly disturbing afternoon with a perverted old man. Thus it highlights the stagnation-disruption dichotomy by showing that when the boy tried to escape routine and hence stagnation, he is paralyzed by a fearful experience.

‘Eveline’, the fourth story in the collection illustrates how the daily routine bogs one down and thwarts the scope for experiencing a better life. The disruption in the daily routine is caused by an epiphany but the impact of the realization is short lived. Initially Joyce symbolically indicates a disruption through Eveline’s eyes when she ponders on how a field by her house, where she used to play, was brought by a man in Belfast who built “bright brick houses with shining roof”.⁹ Joyce indicates how urbanization has disrupted a space meant for sportive activities of children. However, this is deceptive because the readers soon realize how fond she is of routine and yet

yearns to escape from it. Brooding about the past, she realizes she has to leave the “familiar objects” with which she never “dreamt of being divided”¹⁰ for a better prospect with her lover Frank in Buenos Aires. She is also held back by her promise to her mother to keep the home together. Thus she is drawn into a conflict between these two lives. She realizes the drawbacks of this routinely life for her father was a drunkard and an abusive man. Moreover, her brothers were not there to protect her. But the readers can anticipate that she would perhaps not choose the adventurous life over a routine-mundane one because she reasons with herself and finds it not to be wholly “undesirable” with its monotonous activities like running the household, working in a shop and looking after her siblings.

Joyce provides a sharp contrast between the two men and shows Eveline holds much better prospects with Frank. He was a sailor who treated her with respect while her father, like the old man from the ‘An Encounter’ forbids her from having an affair. This makes her think that she must leave with Frank and which is evident in her exasperated exclamation, “Escape! She must escape!”¹¹

Her conflict leaves her indecisive as she prays to God to show her the rightful path. Her return from the brink of leaving with Frank suggests a paralysis as she stands the threat of repeating her mother’s life. However, the story is also open to interpretation as to how she would build her life without Frank. Although her reliance on routine overrides her impulses, her return suggests that there would be certain permanent changes in her life, just as the boy’s return from Araby suggests a transition from an idealistic state of innocence to experience. Thus Joyce shows the conflict between the pitfall of holding onto the past and the disruption in domestic life caused by the possibility of a new life away from Dublin.

‘Two Gallants’ the sixth story in *Dubliners* portrays the paralysis in low life of Dublin and the disruption in political functioning of the Irish government symbolically. The title is ironic because the two main characters, Lenehan and Corley are nothing but cheaters who live

by the unpleasant practice of duping maids into stealing from their employers. Joyce depicts stagnation in the low life of Dublin and how desperately people made money. Since they were cheaters themselves, they worried about betrayal as Lenehan initially suspects that Corley has cheated him out of the profits. This constant worry about betrayal resulting in disruption of the mundane low life symbolically allude to the disruption in the political life of Ireland where Parnell and all his loyal followers were abandoned by the Irish government and many voters when the news of his affair was leaked by the press. The chaos in Lenehan's life is linked to the political context and shows Ireland's condition as he taps to the notes of a harpist outside a wealthy Anglo-Protestant gentleman's club and then has a meagre feast of peas and ginger, reflecting the color of the Irish flag. Thus his economically ravished tumultuous life indicates the disruption in the political order of Ireland and the chaos it has sunk into.

'After the Race' in contrast, suggests paralysis in the Irish national movement. The protagonist, Jimmy's father was once a fervent supporter of the Irish independence but now runs a profitable business by making contracts with police who uphold the British law. He also acts against national interest by sending his son to England and encouraging investments in French business ventures. Thus, when Jimmy attempts to talk about such politically debatable issues at a dinner table, his voice is silenced, suggesting how the national fervor has subdued. Like the political movement, his posh life has also come to a halt. He leads a seemingly whimsical life because of his affluent father. Jimmy participates in posh car races and through this, Joyce provides a vivid contrast with the poverty stricken areas of Dublin through which the cars went. At the end of a card game he appears not as a dashing popular bachelor, but as a clueless fool with his pocket empty after losing. Like other protagonists in the collection, he has an epiphanic moment of revelation where he recognizes the truth about the situation but does nothing to change it.

'The Boarding House' depicts how one's preoccupation with routine

and order can cause disruption in the lives of others to an extent that their reputation is at stake. Unlike other female characters like Eveline, Mrs. Mooney is decisive, for she brought back order in her life by setting up a boarding house, after her husband ruined her butcher business. Ironically, Mrs. Mooney or “the madam”¹² as she was called ruined her daughter’s life by trying to control her in the manner a “cleaver deals with meat”.¹³ This brings out her ruthless nature and her determination to deal with emotional matters objectively to such an extent that it became cruel. Mr. Doran was complacent with a casual affair with Polly but Mrs. Money wreaked chaos in his life by forcing him to marry Polly against both their wishes. Marrying her seemed like a lifelong burden for he couldn’t imagine what his friends would think of her as his wife as she had an ill-reputed father and had an uncouth, unpolished way of speaking. His victimization by Mrs. Mooney resulted in his years of hard work and good reputation being destroyed for marrying a girl beneath him. He relented out of fear of criticism from his priest, his employer. Polly too, was against this forced marriage as she frantically pleaded to him, “What am I to do?”¹⁴ and even thought about putting an end to her life. But the last part of the narrative showed a change in her mind when her face was free of perturbation as she slept comfortably on Mrs. Doran’s pillow, reminiscing about their time together. Unlike Eveline, she lost her indecisiveness and became determined to get married.

The boarding house acts as a microcosm for the city of Dublin where everyone, according to Joyce, “knows everyone else’s business”.¹⁵ Maintenance of order at the macro level comes at the cost of disruption of order at the individual level as Mr. Doran’s life and reputation are destroyed for marrying Polly.

Joyce depicts Dublin as a quagmire in ‘A Little Cloud’ through the experiences of the protagonist Little Chandler who thought that one “could do nothing in Dublin”¹⁶ and whose soul revolted against the “dull inelegance of Chapel Street”¹⁷ just like the protagonist of *Araby* who wanted to escape the sordid and depressing neighbourhood

of Dublin. His friend Gallahar provides a stark contrast to “dear dirty Dublin”¹⁸ by talking about the gaiety and the excitement of life in Paris. Gallahar is a pragmatic man working for a newspaper and even has a patronizing attitude towards his friend who daydreams about writing verses and getting published and it’s quite similar to the boss’ patronizing attitude towards helpless Woodfield in Mansfield’s short story ‘The Fly’ as both have been compared to babies. Gallahar symbolically represents Paris through his life of excitement, his busy press activities and his inclination towards flings rather than settling for a stable married life. Little Chandler yearns for an adventurous life like his friend which is evident in his getting irritated and feeling trapped upon seeing his wife’s photograph at home. But his child’s sobbing acts as an epiphanic moment for him as he feels shameful, perhaps for desiring to leave everything behind in pursuit of a career as a writer. Like Eveline, he returns to his mundane routine life, perhaps with a changed attitude towards his routine life.

Disruption in the monotonous life takes an explicitly violent form in ‘Counterparts’, where the root of the protagonist’s violent behavior lies in his circular repetition of routine. Even his job is that of a copier. He envisions release from it by drinking in public houses but it begets only further routine and it becomes a vicious cycle as he becomes torturous like his boss, taking his frustration out on his son and his wife. His boss also indicates routine behavior through his repetition of phrases like “do you hear me now”¹⁹ “you impertinent ruffian” and “do you take me for a fool”²⁰ while scolding the protagonist Farrington for his rebellious attitude. Farrington’s discontent mounts as he loses to a much younger boy in an arm-wrestling match and then later pawns his watch for money. His discontent reaches his climax when he beats his son and Joyce shows that the desperate servitude of his son doesn’t stop him, signaling that spirituality doesn’t protect anyone. It indicates a moral and spiritual abyss the city has fallen into. Through the character of Farrington, Joyce indicates a typical frustrated Dubliner who being exasperated

with their stagnated life takes their anger out on their family as he feels trapped in a vicious cycle.

Maria in 'Clay' is another character who like Mrs. Mooney is obsessed with routine as a slight disruption caused by the loss of plum cake on the tram overwhelms her. Her reputation as a veritable peacemaker attests to her placid lifestyle. She fastidiously supervises everything at the charity she works for and perhaps pays great attention to trivial details to avoid the greater pain of monotony. Similarly, Joe to cover up his mysterious tearful reaction to Maria's song asks his wife to find an ordinary household object. Maria's fateful selection of clay which symbolizes early death at the Halloween game suggests the paralytic stagnant life she leads, somewhat similar to father Flynn in the sisters. She fails to recognize the tedious routine of her days suggested by the repetition of the song she sings for everyone. Maria's selection of a prayer book after the clay perhaps symbolically suggests that she will be further drawn into the vicious cycle of routine in the cloistered life of a convent.

'A Painful Case' illustrates the case of Mr. James Duffy who cannot tolerate unpredictability and therefore brings an end to his affair with Mrs. Sinico, the only disruption in his life, resulting in the painful death of the latter. Joyce gives his contemporary view of Dublin in the very opening sentence:

"Mr. James Duffy lived in Chapelizod because he wished to live as far as possible from the city of which he was a citizen because he found all the other suburbs of Dublin mean, modern and pretentious."²¹

Mr. Duffy abhorred anything which betokened physical or mental disorder, suggesting his obsession with order and routine. He himself is symbolic of Dublin as Joyce writes that his face carried the "brown" tint of Dublin, suggestive of dirt, putridity and stagnation. The description of his "dry black hair" and "tawny moustache"²² that did

not cover his mouth is reminiscent of the “straggling bushes”²³ in ‘Araby’—an expression that Joyce uses to indicate the un-amiable and uncompromising nature of the city. Joyce portrays the detached and unemotional nature of city life by stating that Mr. Duffy was not only friendless, but “escorted”²⁴ his relatives to the cemetery when they died. This subtle sarcastic comment is directed at Dublin which had stagnated to a point that it lacks both emotion and life. Although Mr. Duffy was fond of routine, Joyce depicts his frustration with his adventureless life through his daydreaming about robbing a bank, an act which was too far-fetched to be materialized.

Disruption to his routinely life comes when he begins an intimate affair with Mrs. Sinico, whose companionship was like a “warm soil”²⁵ to him. It wore away the rigidity in his character and emotionalized his life. However, amidst this warmth, he heard an impersonal voice in himself talking about the “incurable loneliness”²⁶ of his soul. This suggests the emotional void in the life of most Dubliners which Joyce considered to be beyond recuperation. This was perhaps because of the rigid mindset of the citizens who were not open to alternate sexuality and platonic companionship as suggested by Mr. Duffy’s observation:

Love between man and man is impossible because there must be no sexual intercourse and friendship between man and woman is impossible because there must be sexual intercourse.²⁷

Although Mr. Duffy withdrew from the affair, his complacency was shaken upon learning about Mrs. Sinico’s death. The newspaper even reported how her marriage had degenerated because of her drinking habits. Mr. Duffy reacted with both shock and disgust at her dramatic demise. He realized that his obsession with order and rectitude has prevented him from living his life fully which is evident in his comparing himself to a “worm”,²⁸ leading a listless mechanical life. Like an average hopeless Dubliner complacent with their stagnation, Mr. Duffy too bitterly accepts his feeling of being unwanted and his loneliness.

'Ivy Day in the Committee Room' grieves the indolent state of Irish politics and people's inability to have steady faith in a political party. The men in the story dwell much on the political past of their country but does nothing constructive to commemorate this special day. Ivy day honors Parnell's death and takes its name from the loyal Dubliners who at Parnell's funeral wore the ivy growing by his grave in their lapels. Both O'Connor and Hynes wear ivy but they involve themselves in petty politics. The men in the committee room are paralyzed in a cycle of inactivity. The arrival of father Keon who is unattached to any church suggests the widespread distrust that exist in any belief system, be it spiritual or political. The story, set in the wake of the Irish political collapse suggests uncertainty in the fate of the political life of the Irish.

Hynes' poetic recitation stirs the men into quite reflection on their unremarkable contribution in politics. Thus the story not only highlights the mourning over Parnell's death but the political paralysis and lack of firm political opinion in general

Another figure like Mrs. Mooney appears in 'A Mother' whose obsession with routine ultimately destroys her daughter's musical career. Mrs. Kearney has initially sent her daughter to a convent to learn French and music just like she did. Her daughter's musical career ultimately comes to an end when she became aggravated by the lax attitude of men who arranged a prestigious concert taking her help and was late in making payments to her daughter. When the organizers offered half the money and promised to pay the other half soon, she whisked her daughter away. Her daughter had to pay the price for her mother's fastidiousness and uncompromising nature as her career got ruined.

Disruption in 'Grace' occurs with the fall of Mr. Kernan which can be symbolically equated to the fall of man. However this ultimately does not bring any significant change in his life, for his friends try to have his faith in Catholic Church by giving exaggerated, inaccurate details of church history. He ultimately stays away from lighting the candle which seems pointless to him. The story concludes with father

Purdon's assurance that even the fallen man can be saved but he uses economical language of accounting to communicate his thoughts to the congregation of businessmen. None of the men in the story comes to terms with themselves, suggesting a paralysis. Searching for grace or redemption becomes another repetitive cycle for these Dubliners.

Disruption comes in Gabriel Conroy's life in 'The Dead' at the annual dance party held by the Morkan sisters. He encounters Miss Ivors who challenges his assumed air of superiority. Gabriel even provokes a defensive statement from the overworked servant Lily when he asks her if she has a romantic companion. The discomfort provokes him to leave the situation quickly after giving Lily a holiday tip. The encounter shows that like his aunts, he cannot tolerate "back answers" (Joyce, p.127). During the dance he is confronted by a barrage of questions about his nonexistent nationalist sympathies which he could not answer properly. He disrupts the conversation by blurting out that he is sick of his own country, to the utter surprise of Miss. Ivors and himself.

Disruption in his own relationship comes when he learns that Greta, his wife, was transfixed by the song sung by Mr. Bartell D'Arcy. Gabriel is preoccupied with his wife's mysterious mood and recalls their courtship. Greta's confession—thinking about her first love brings to surface the truth that her former lover sung it to her in her youth in Galway. Michael Furey died waiting for her outside her window in the cold. Gabriel's desire to gain control over her reveals that his attraction is not rooted in love but his desire to control Greta. His realization that Michael Furey had died young but had led a passionate life contrasted with his own stagnated life saddens him and keeps him awake.

Gabriel realizes that he is a shadow of Michael Furey. Though his speech at dinner insisted on the division between the past of the dead and the present of the living, he realizes how the memories of the dead can destabilize the lives of the living and in this case, the relationship with his wife.

Like the horse that circles around the mill, as Gabriel cited in

one anecdote, everyone settled into an expected routine in the party, suggesting a state of paralysis.

Joyce depicts the city of Dublin as an amorphous space, where characters from ordinary walks of life are ultimately transformed because of a disruption in their stagnated tedious lives. This disruption is caused by bitter self-revelatory epiphanies often accompanied by a sense of hopelessness and frustration. It is perhaps this stagnation-disturbance dichotomy that ennobles and validates the quest of the protagonists for a better existence, even if they fail to do so.

NOTES

- 1 James Joyce, *Dubliners* (Ware, Hertfordshire: Wordsworth Editions Limited, 1993), 21.
- 2 Ibid, 17.
- 3 Ibid., 3.
- 4 Ibid., 6.
- 5 Ibid, 4.
- 6 Ibid., 5
- 7 Ibid., 2.
- 8 Ibid., 9.
- 9 Ibid, 23
- 10 Ibid
- 11 Ibid., 26.
- 12 Ibid, 43.
- 13 Ibid, 44.
- 14 Ibid, 47.
- 15 Ibid, 46.
- 16 Ibid, 51.
- 17 Ibid.
- 18 Ibid, 52.
- 19 Ibid, 61.
- 20 Ibid, 64.
- 21 Ibid., 77.
- 22 Ibid.

23 Ibid, 17.

24 Ibid, 77

25 Ibid, 79.

26 Ibid, 80.

27 Ibid., 80.

28 Ibid, 84.

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