

# INDIAN JOURNAL OF SOCIAL ENQUIRY

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**Role of E- Resources in Teaching and Learning: An Overview**

*Satyaprakash Singh*

# Nationalism and Folklore: Swadeshi Movement and Trivedi's *Bangalakshmir Bratakatha*

Debosmita Paul Lahiri

## Abstract

The Swadeshi Movement of Bengal (1905-1908) came up to protest against the division of the Presidency of Fort William into two separate provinces. Its leaders attempted to popularise its ideologies amongst the masses by including ethno-cultural motifs. Religious festivals like Durga Puja and Kali Puja were celebrated by the Swadeshi leaders with the motive of spreading anti-colonial sentiments amongst the people and forging a nation. Urban writers experimented with the folk forms to propagate Swadeshi ideologies. Ramendrasundar Trivedi (1864-1919) wrote *Bangalakshmir Bratakatha* (1905) in the *bratakatha* (ritual tales) form and was an allegory of the nation of the Bengalis as visualised by the Swadeshis. Trivedi's aim was to preach the ideals of the Swadeshi movement among the women, the spiritual core of the nation in the making. However, the principles proposed in the *Bratakatha* reflect an image of a nation which is against the idea of pan-Indian nationalism propagated by the Swadeshis. Trivedi, rather, propagates sub-nationalist ideology. Based on the above made observations, the proposed paper aims to study the use of folklore to represent the ideology of the urban/political. The paper also attempts to study the formulation of nationalism/ sub-nationalism in Trivedi's work.

**Keywords:** Bengal history, Bengali literature, Folklore, Nationalism, Nation, Partition, Swadeshi Movement

The division of the Bengal Division of the Presidency of Fort William in 1905 to create two separate provinces started a period which is of great significance in the history of Indian nationalism. The colonial decision to partition the Bengal

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## Colonial Modernity and Native Identity: A Case Study through Sikh Journals (1900-20)

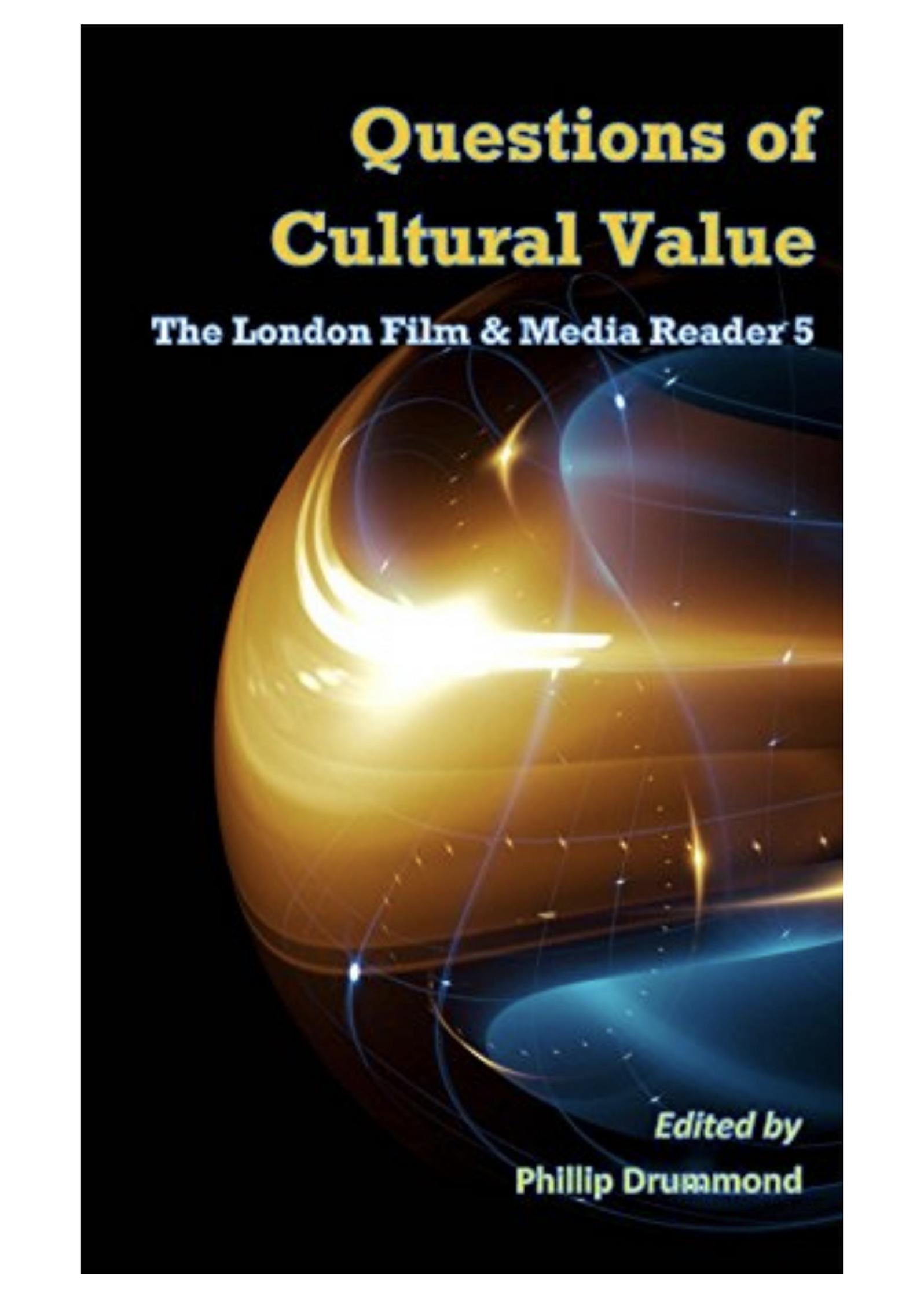
Guntasha Tulsi

### Abstract

This paper will explore the consolidation of colonial modernisation in the Punjab of the late nineteenth century. This will basically be in regard to projects of a similar nature carried in the entire Indian sub-continent. It will then look at fascinating responses in indigenous identity formation as an outcome of the Singh Sabha Movement of 1873, one of the most significant modernising influences on the colonised Punjab. By looking at the examples of various Sikh journals and their coverage of Sikh education and identity related issues during the years between 1900 to 1920, this paper will conclude to observe as to how there was a simultaneous process of influence and subversion on the part of members of native communities to modernising measures introduced by the colonial administration. From a post-colonial viewpoint and that of social enquiry, this is fascinating, as it is not a routine exercise to consult such lesser known sources, while exploring the colonial-native encounter in one of the most significant periods of Indian history.

**Keywords:** Colonial Modernity, Native Identity, Sikh community, Subversion, Sikh Newspapers

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The background of the cover is a dark, abstract digital composition. It features several glowing, semi-transparent spheres in shades of orange, yellow, and blue. These spheres are interconnected by thin, glowing lines, creating a network-like structure. A bright, horizontal light flare or lens flare effect is visible in the center-left area, adding to the dynamic and futuristic feel of the design.

# Questions of Cultural Value

**The London Film & Media Reader 5**

*Edited by*  
**Phillip Drummond**

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# **The London Film & Media Reader 5**

## *Questions of Cultural Value*

30 Essays from FILM AND MEDIA 2016  
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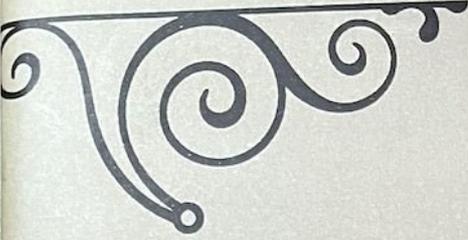
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# Re-storying the Indigenous and the Popular Imaginary



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## Bringing the *Haat* to the City: The Socio-Cultural and Commercial Dynamics of Dilli Haat

Mona Sinha & Manjari Chaturvedi

Dilli Haat (established 1994), a crafts village in the heart of South Delhi, has acquired an iconic status as a socio-cultural space in the metropolis in the twenty-one years of its existence. It has been immensely popular with the urban middle classes not just as a market place for authentic traditional crafts but also as a place of leisure with family and friends. For an outstation visitor, a trip to Dilli Haat is mandatorily fitted into the itinerary whether it is to purchase unique and artistic household items, or to pick up trinkets or even to get *mehndi* (henna) patterns on palms and hair-braiding done. For the foreign visitor, Dilli Haat is a one-stop place (recommended strongly as 'Top Choice' by *The Lonely Planet*), which showcases the diversity of non-urban India and offers it in the form of a capsule. At the same time, it also offers an immense range of traditional Indian products and souvenirs for family and friends back home. Dilli Haat has always had something for everyone, snugly fitting the size of each pocket. What makes the experiment of Dilli Haat unique is the curious amalgamation of the vibrant country fair with urban sensibilities as aptly phrased by its founder, Jaya Jaitly, in an

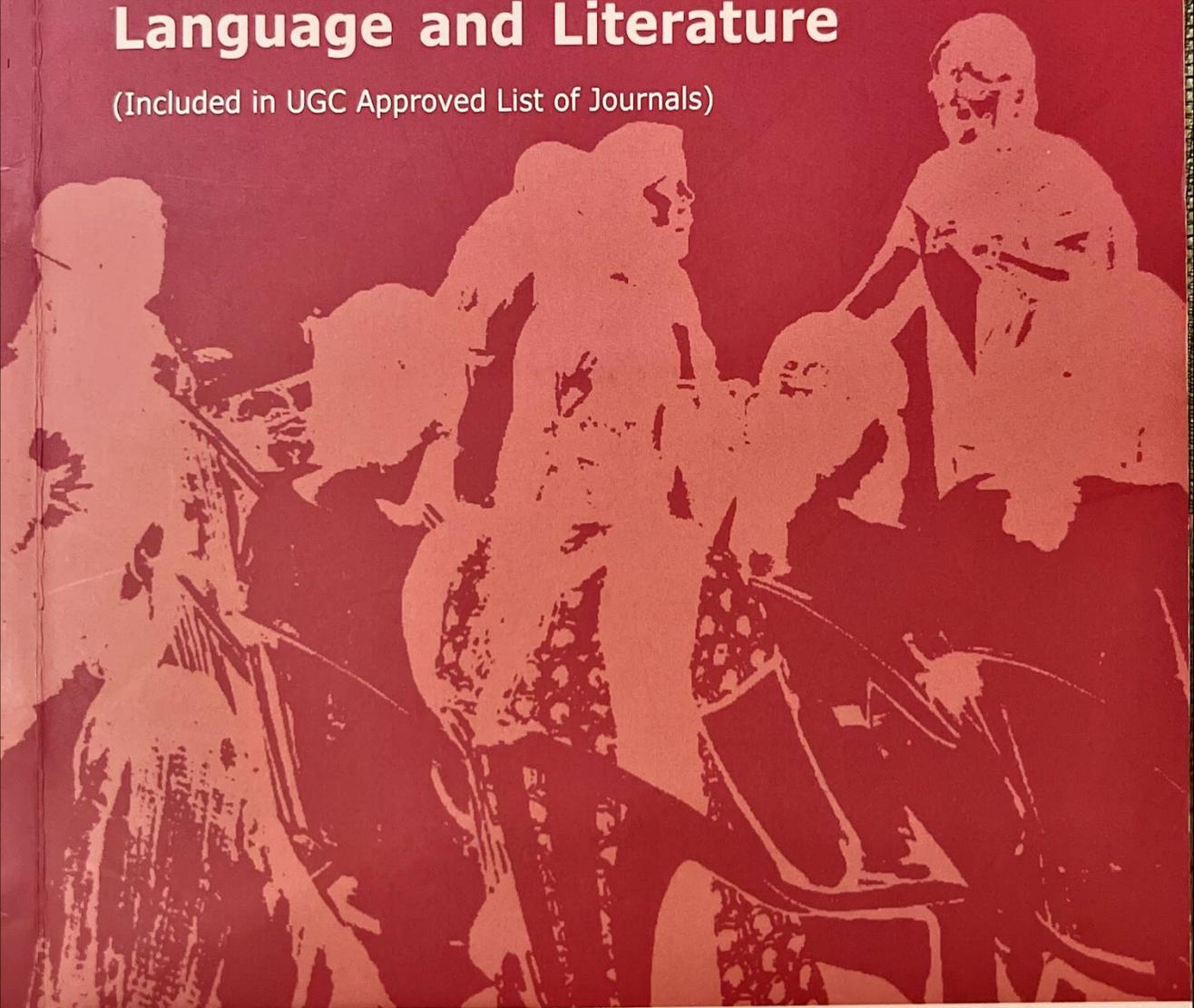
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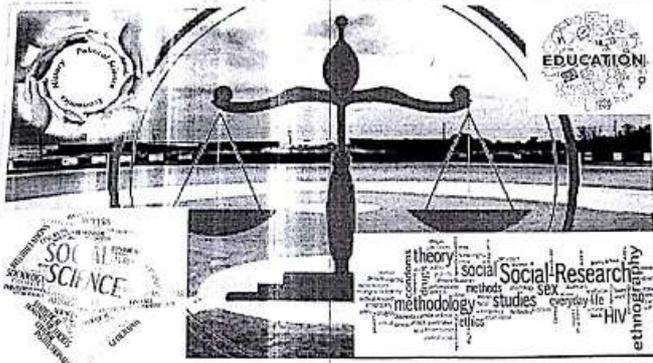
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**ABSTRACT**

Millennial Delhi has been writing itself fervently. This paper focuses on the Delhi based novels being written from around the turn of the twentieth century and attempts to explore the probable reasons behind the veritable boom in the twenty first century. The objective of the study is not just to see how these novels document Delhi but also to co-relate the version of urbanity available in Delhi to the writers' subjectivity, positionality, and spatiality. From campus goes to new migrants, old citizenry, foreigners, diplomats, the colony wallahs, "centrally located", peri-urban society dwellers- all share in an uncanny compulsion to write the city. The narratives are meandering, seeking, groping, hiding, finding, and ultimately unfinished like the city as Delhi becomes an active participant in the form, structure, language and thematics of the novel. The paper presents a survey of the millennial Delhi novel where the experiential city and the hyper-real city converge in journeys that negotiate more than anything else the urban dilemma of propinquity vs. distance, community vs. reclusivity, citizen vigilante vs. blasé stranger, development vs. deprivation, civicism vs. alienation, aspiration vs. corruption and many such visual and existential polarities splattered all over the urban landscape.

**Keywords:** Delhi novel, campus novel, detective fiction, crime fiction, memoirs, postmodern Delhi, global city

**INTRODUCTION**

Millennial Delhi has been writing itself fervently. It is evident from a boom in the books writing the city in several different ways at the turn of the century. The Delhi oeuvre has been swelling and growing not only numerically, but also in terms of voices, patterns, locations, genres that now are inscribed in it. This paper focuses on the Delhi based novels and attempts to explore the probable reasons behind the boom in the twenty first century. In surveying the novels, the idea is not just to see how these novels document Delhi as a city but also to see how the version of urbanity available in Delhi is interpreted through the writers' subjectivity, positionality, and spatiality to become an active participant in the form, structure, language and thematics of the novel. Millennial Delhi finds it hard to remain impervious to the very dense yet disparate; bursting at the seams; eye-ful, mouthful, and fistful maelstrom they encounter at every moment and turn in the city. From campus goes to new migrants, old citizenry, foreigners, diplomats, the colony wallahs, society dwellers, "centrally located", peri-urban self-styled back-to-nature havens- all share in this uncanny compulsion to write and thus exorcise the demon of the hydra-headed city. Many a times their narratives are cast in the image of the city itself, and are meandering, seeking, groping, hiding

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**KHUSHWANT SINGH'S DELHI A NOVEL: RECOLLECTING AND RECLAIMING THE CITY**

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**ABSTRACT**



A city has a past which is preserved in its geography, traditions and memories. Individual memory plays a significant part in putting together a montage of the city's culture which is less rationalised and standardised in comparison to history. Memory remembers a lot of city and city excites a lot of memory in cultural production produced by denizens of protean contemporary cities. Memory Studies is an interdisciplinary branch of knowledge, under the ambit of which the paper proposes to examine the relationship between city and memory with reference to Khushwant Singh's *Delhi a Novel*. Khushwant Singh's *Delhi a novel* is a cultural biography of the city mobilizing many significant tropes of the mnemonics of this phoenix of a city. The novel inaugurates the era of literature produced by individuals who have lived a major part of their life in Delhi or New Delhi and who now respond to the city from 'home-town' perspective where the narrative of self-doubles up as narratives of the city. As it goes all the way down to almost the first recorded period of Delhi history, the attempt is to compensate for manifold loss through reconstructing a mediated space of memory and identity.

**Keywords:** Cultural biography, Individual Memory, Delhi City, Khushwant Singh, *Delhi a Novel*.

A city has a past and that past is preserved in its geography and history. But it is also preserved in its traditions and memories. The culture of the city is a cumulative product of chronicling continuities and discontinuities with reference to all of these. Without this, the composite way of life of a people cannot be meaningfully foregrounded. Individual memory plays a significant part in putting together a montage of the city's culture which is less rationalised and standardised in comparison to history. Memory remembers a lot of city and city excites a lot of memory in cultural production by denizens of protean contemporary cities. This complex interplay between individual memory and

cultural memory of the city is visible in biographies, memoirs, novels, photographs and other documents engendered by city-zens. In these documents, cultural memory intersects with individual memory, giving rise to interesting sites of identity formation. Cities identities are often dependent on canonical tropes like conventional history, tourism literature, state economy, maps and iconic images. However, when the city gets documented through the experiences of individuals, experiential memory plays a significant part in putting together an alternative montage of the city's culture which is more topical and empirical in comparison to canonical tropes. City-zens are also seen to grapple

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### EXPATRIATE NARRATIVES OF THE CITY OF DELHI

#### Abstract

The city's expatriate population has been steadily on the rise in India. There are several narratives that are born out of foreign presence in global cities, and Delhi is no different. While we derive a sense of expatriate life and times in Delhi cumulatively from a clutch of sources like forums of shared experience and information and blogs, interviews, articles, and reports etc., expatriates in Delhi have also found the urge and the ethos to write longer narratives. This paper examines some of the best known examples of expatriate novels located in Delhi with the objective of placing Delhi on the map of important urban-global narrative trajectories traced by the expatriate novel. The above inquiry suggests that Delhi is an important world capital on crisscrossing loci of rapid and incessant global flux. It has dazzled and enticed the global jet-setters in equal measures. The expatriate's gaze is the Lacanian gaze where the gazed object does not remain mute or inanimate but speaks back to the gaze in a reciprocal relationship. As the expatriate feels objectified and marooned in an alien city she also gazes back at the city as a resistive tool to manage her objectified otherness. It is a rewarding project to study the Delhi based expatriate writing of William Dalrymple, S. Miller, Dave Prager, Rana Dasgupta and Raza Rumi as it is rich with voices, strategies, issues and images that are resonant and iridescent with meaning for not only expatriates and transnationals but also for every resident, settler, writer and thinker associated with Delhi.

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**POST – INDEPENDENCE DELHI NARRATIVES  
 AND CIVICISM IN THE CITY**

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**ABSTRACT**

*Cities have always been the amphitheatre of opportunity and action, attracting hordes to their magnetism and grandeur. Urbanism (study of the city specific way of life), for this reason, has been a subject of much debate and writing. Writing the City has forced itself as an urgent and significant assignment for scholars and inhabitants of cities. The personal and cultural worth of all these narratives cannot be underestimated. The double endeavor of engaging with self as well as the city which Khushwant Singh attempts with eponymous transparency in Delhi a novel is duplicated by many of his contemporaries in the cultural production of the '70s. If we sample through some of the collections anthologizing lived experiences or scholarly researches on Delhi of period immediately after Independence, it will be evident that there are recurrent themes that spell both pride and prejudice of its natives. These narratives reflect the complex relationship and equally fraught choices of city-zens' living in the city. This paper examines the nostalgia and civicism (attachment with the city leading to the choice of continuing to live in the city) reflected in post-independence Delhi narratives. Further research on city narratives has the valuable potential of understanding and building enabling equations between Indian cities and their diverse residents.*

**Keywords:** Delhi, culture, narratives, novels, civicism, post-independence.

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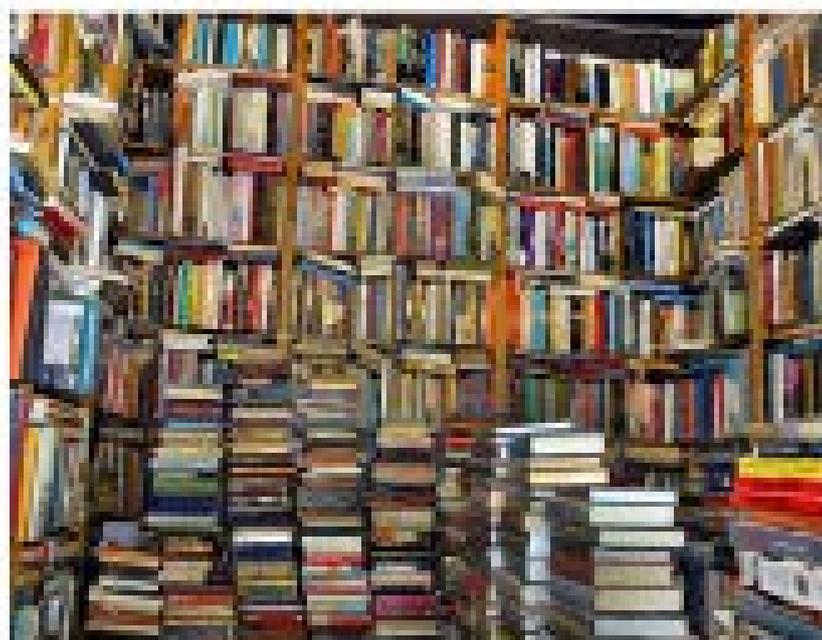
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## Indraprastha in Literature

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### ABSTRACT

The story of Delhi goes back in time to the Indus Valley civilization. The city of Indraprastha is a glorious presence in legends, folklore and epics. It has also inspired other later date literary explorations and expressions. Since Indraprastha exists in an indeterminate space between myth and reality, little wonder then that, it has been recreated time and again in the imaginative space. The description of the „city“ of Indraprastha in Mahabharata gets implicated of necessity in the same debates which surround the epic itself today, that is, the reiteration of the existence of the city also simultaneously negates the urban, architectural, material and visual culture imbued in the descriptions of the city. The paper examines these literary retellings featuring Indraprastha. Chitra Bannerjee Divakaruni's *Palace of Illusions* reclaims of the fluid space of Indraprastha from a feminist perspective, Dalrymple relocates Indraprastha in his *City of Djinn*s to where he thinks it belongs- to the sites of culture and Trisha Das uses the journey from Indraprastha to heaven and back to New Delhi as a journey of self discovery.

Keywords: Delhi, Indraprastha, Mahabharata, Novel, Delhi culture, urban culture

### INDRAPRASTHA IN LITERATURE

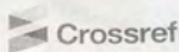
The story of Delhi goes back in time to the Indus Valley civilization. Traces of post-urban stage of Harappan culture dating between 1900 B.C. to 1200 B.C, largely chalcolithic in nature, have been discovered on the banks of the Yamuna stretching from present day Mandoli and Sambhaoli villages and from Gharonda Nimka to Narela. (Babu, 2006) Around 1500 B.C, Aryans entered the Indian subcontinent from Central Asia (Early or Rigvedic phase from 1500 B.C-1000 B.C.). The later Vedic period from 1500 B.C. to 1000 B.C. is documented in texts like Samveda, Yajurveda and Atharvaveda and the use of Painted Grey Ware (PWG) is common to the peoples of this period residing in the Ganga-Yamuna Doab. (Sharma, 2001, p.8, 9) The Bharatas and the Purus combined to form the Kuru clan who, alongwith the Paanchaals of Middle Doab, are known to have established control in the Upper and the Middle Doab including Delhi, later heading east by 600 B.C. The Purana Qila in Delhi is thought to hold many secrets of these centuries. Finely made Painted Grey Ware and large baked bricks, dug up at the Purana Qila, link it to other sites of the later Vedic age. As A K Narain summarizes in his essay „Proto-History of Delhi and its Environs“:

...its protohistoric beginnings are found in the first millennium B.C.; and it covers a much larger area than what now forms only the southern part of older Delhi. Memories of this earlier time and space context are preserved not only in the epics and the Puranas and in the tales of the Buddhist Jatakas, but also in oral traditions about the place names surviving to this day- although the facts in detail may still lie buried underground and traditions yet remain to be substantiated. (Narain, 1986, p.5)

Based on oral traditions and written compilations, the following chart of dynasties having ruled in and around Delhi has been drawn up, though its historicity is debatable:



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## DELHI: A CITY WITHOUT NATIVES

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Self attested  
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### ABSTRACT

The City of Delhi attracts certain stereotypes. Delhi is a "city without natives" or a "city no one loves" is oft-heard and oft-quoted from among them. This paper contends that such labels need to be scrutinized and transcended as these are grievously misleading. Serious studies of the city of late have tried to dispel such stereotypes in order to bring out the distinguishing urban ethos and character that forms a part of the residents' experience and consciousness. Delhi is without doubt a part of ecumenopolis in the sense that the plethora of challenges and resources city-zens' need to deal and deploy here are no different from cities of similar complexity. The enterprise of examining and comprehending this complexity is of critical importance not only for enhancing the lived relationship of the city with its global residents but also to blow out official and touristy smokescreens with illuminating perspectives of those who daily deal with the city. This paper puts together narratives of many migrants who articulate the hurdles crossed or not crossed in the process of settling in the city. Theory from Urban Studies and Memory Studies and work on 'Indianness' and on migrants in Delhi demography valuably enrich this project. The paper posits that in modern cities like Delhi, the word 'native' is not associated with the place of origin but the place of volition, that is, living in Delhi is not a dead albatross but an active civicist choice.

**Keywords:** Delhi, natives, stereotypes, narratives, novels, post-independence.

**INTRODUCTION:**

The City of Delhi attracts certain stereotypes. Serious studies of the city of late have tried to dispel these to bring out the distinguishing urban ethos and character that forms a part of the residents' experiential consciousness. Veronique Dupont, Emma Tarlo and Denis Vidal in their anthology *Human Urban Experience: Roman Destinies*, demonstrate how Delhi has several old chestnuts that turn up over and over again: fragmentation, discontinuity, transit camp stop-go capital, hall of mirrors- reflecting the image of its colonial builders, conventional views of buildings and localities and discussions on impact of Hindu, Islamic and British impact on Delhi (Dupont, Tarlo, & Vidal, 2000). Challenging these many shibboleths and the hackneyed tropes of "apocalypse now" and "lost glories" in Delhi narratives (Sengupta, 2001), new studies now attempt to show that "the reality of India's vast capital is at once more diverse, more anarchic and at times more intriguing than semi-mythical Delhi of tourist book imagination" (Dupont et al., 2000, p. 15). The enterprise is of great importance not only for enhancing the lived relationship of the city with its global residents but also to free inhabitants" (Dupont et al., 2000, p. 16). To supplant the controlling government discourse with a competing one of those who use the city and thus must have what Henry Lefebvre (2002) famously calls a "right to the city" illuminating as well as empowering exercise for everyone who deals with the city.

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**LITERATURE REVIEW:**

Though attempting to break several myths, Dupont et al allow to go unquestioned a cliché that comes up with reference to Delhi- that Delhi is an "unloved city" (Dupont et al., 2000, p. 15). The term is titled 'The Alchemy of an Unloved City' to the above-mentioned anthology celebrates the passion that Mumbai and Calcutta elicit from their dedicated defendants. In comparison, Dupont et al state, that "no such love or affection is found amongst the inhabitants of Delhi who are usually either indifferent or actively dislike the city in which they live" (Dupont et al., 2000, p. 16). Except William Dalrymple, Khushwant Singh and a handful of others, nobody has cared to feel or express anything about Delhi. They claim. Though rightly and rewardingly commissioning new standpoints through new speakers, new locations, new visuals, and new economies to reinterpret Delhi sociology as "relationship between people and place played out in different parts of the city at different moments in time", a revisionist anthology like this assumes that living in Delhi is a burden and compulsion for everyone alike (Dupont et al., 2000, p. 15). Residents have neither will nor apparatus to apply strategies of home-making and place-making and will forever remain perpetual outsiders in the city. The theme of "city without natives" occurs over and over again in the cultural discourse of the city of Delhi after independence and partition (Nambisan, 2001). Khushwant Singh locates the phenomenon in the arrival of the partition displaced migrants, the families of which gradually struck root in Delhi. Anupreeta Das in an essay titled 'The First City' evaluates this phenomenon in the context of industrialising Delhi in the decades after independence, she writes that this class of aspirants installed a cultural rubric where "upward mobility was a direct function of money, entrepreneurial skills and political power" (Das, 2011, p. 10). She further writes, "They grouped into nativities- Bengalis, Biharis, Bangladeshis, South Indians, Northeasterners, Kashmiris and Panjabis- or sought refuge in professional identities. They were Delhiites because geography and the pursuit of common goals made them so and not because the city offered them a unifying identity. Delhi belonged to everyone who lived in it, but no one belonged to Delhi. (Das, 2011, p. 12) The only unifying thread was the tendency to exploit advantages and resources offered by the city. When the city was stretched thin to meet the burgeoning demands, greedy expectation started "cursing the city with undelivered promises" (Das, 2011, p. 13). The parasitic population refused to forgive the city for not meeting their needs. In the imagination based rhetoric of the new Delhiites, the ideal city ... is clean and uncluttered. Housing is orderly and adequate. Vehicular and industrial pollution does not suffocate the city's green lung. Neighbours are more than just familiar strangers while conversations between people are courteous. The Delhi police is efficient and you always. There is no shortfall of electricity and water. Streets are empty of garbage and begging children. In the ideal city of imagination, those with bureaucratic and political power do not misuse it for personal gain and transparency replaces games of intrigue. And in the final image of this slide show, the insecurity brought by isolation- by people having to fend for themselves all the time- is effaced by the growth of a cosmopolitan identity. (Das, 2011, p. 13)

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**TEXT TO SCREEN, JOURNEY OF KHWAJA AHMAD ABBAS**

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**Dr. Subodh Kumar Upadhyay**

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Maharaja Agrasen College

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**ABSTRACT**

Khwaja Ahmad Abbas was a journalist and writer, activist and filmmaker, scenarist, scriptwriter, thinker, and philosopher all rolled into one, a man whose pen inked not merely words but rather a vision of human awakening. Last week saw the release of a book celebrating the life and work of a man who eluded all labels, a book fittingly as eclectic as the subject himself. Published by the Khwaja Ahmad Abbas Memorial Trust (KAAMT) in association with Tulika Books, Bread Beauty Revolution — Khwaja Ahmad Abbas (1914-1987), is edited by filmmaker Iffat Fatima and chairperson of KAAMT, Syeda Saiyidain Hameed. Together they have attempted to capture the spirit of a ‘committed social reformer’, whose sole mission in life was to communicate his unstinting ideal of a more humane world.

**KEY WORDS:** Adaption, Nationalism, Socialist

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Adaption is a form of criticism and recreation as well as translation .A film adaptation is the transfer of a written work, in whole or in part , to a feature film. This paper endeavors to study Khwaja Ahmad Abbas as a novelist to film-maker. His text and films upheld his ideas of Secularism, Socialism and Nationalism. He explored extensively subject like Discrimination, Exploitation, Rape, Acid attacks and other atrocities meted out to women in our society and dreamt of their ‘empowerment’ in the time when even the world was not coined, just as he made meaningful ‘Art film’ much before the concept was born K.A. Abbas’s adaptations in films are Naya Sansar(1941),Neecha Nagar, Anhonee, Munna, Saat Hindustani (Amitabh Bachchan’s debut film),Do Boond Paani. Achanak (1973),based on a story K.A.Abbas. Khwaja Ahmad abbas focused the taste of Indian youth in his writings and films .This is seen in his post- independence novels. Some of his novels like ‘Bobby’, Boy Meets a Girl, Four Friends and Mera Naam Joker have been made films .Apart from this, he wrote best of Raj Kapoor’s films , Awaara, Shri 420, Mera Naam joker, and Henna.He got Nargis Dutt award for the best feature film on National Integration: Saat Hindustani in 1970 and Do Boond paani, in 1972.

Abbas’s ideas and beliefs form an integral part of his socialistic vision expressed comprehensively and competently in his writings and films .The content and the tonality of Abbas’s texts are drawn from his real life experiences and vision seems from Indian villages, Gaun life style, Bombay, Delhi, the circus, The film-studios etc. are depicted in his writings and adaptations in a very convincing manner . These are the basic facts experiences .His characters are mobilized by stress and strains of the perspires of the social milieu. His characters are images from the real life with their hopes, notions, fears and hatreds. They appear to be most natural and true to life.

Naya sansar (“New World) is a 1940 Hindi film on radical journalism, directed by reporter turned director, N.R Acharya and written by a journalist himself, Khwaja Ahmad Abbas,who started his career with this film. He used his journalistic background to create a story about the rising radicalism in Indian society and journalism. The story addressed the conflict between a dynamic young reporter and his cautions, yet

idealistic, editor of the fictional progressive newspaper, 'Sansar'. The story line revolved around the editor, Premchand (Mubarak), who is in love with a beautiful orphan named Asha (Renuka Devi), whom his family has raised from an infant. Soon after Asha starts working for a paper, she falls in love with Sansar's star reporter and dedicated radical – journalist, Puran (Ashok Kumar). Asha, however, still feels indebted to Premchand's family.

When Premchand starts to hedge on his radicalism by dealing with the evil Dhaniram, Puran quits, and starts his own newspaper, "Naya Sansar". Premchand quickly sees the error of his ways, and not only returns to the paper's previous left – wing stance, but also condones the marriage of Asha and Puran.

The film adaptation of Anhonee deals with the story of two sisters – Monini and Roop- both played by Nargis- the legal one raised by a courtesan and the illegal child. As time passes by, Roop falls in love with Rajkumar Saxena (played by Raj Kapoor), an advocate- who is a tenant- comes to pay the house rent to her father, but instead meets Roop. Soon they involve in a deeper romantic relationship, and Roop convinces her father of their marriage.

As the family plan to organize a party to formally announce the wedding, Rajkumar runs into Mohini, Roop's twin sister and comes to know that Mohini is the real daughter. Unable to bear this, Mohini gets into an unpleasant situation, and gets angry over Rajkumar. In the meanwhile, Roop comes to know about the truth, and tries to save Mohini by deciding to swap the position of both of them. During this the marriage happens where Rajkumar unknowingly weds Mohini. When Roop's father comes to know about the reality he dies.

Abbas Sahab, as he was fondly called, played several roles in his life. Yet, he was refreshingly self-deprecating of his own abilities. At the book launch, actress Shabana Azmi, who fondly referred to him as Abbas Chacha, chose to read an excerpt from the book which clearly showed this side of him: "Maybe I'm a non-writer, an unredeemed journalist and columnist masquerading as a writer of fiction."

If anything, the truth would seem quite the opposite, for his writings were unsparing about the harsh realities of an 'emerging' India. The book's editors refer to him as a 'Prophet Tiresias of modern India', an apt comparison with the mythical, blind Greek seer, who is said to have mediated the realms between the divine and the human.

In many ways, he embodied the legacy of his great-grandfather, Maulana Khwaja Altaf Hussain Hali, hailed as one of Urdu literature's most significant writers and an influential social reformer. Abbas's life seemed to be modelled along the lines of Hali's famous couplet, "Farishte se behtar hain insaan banna/Magar ismein lagti hai mehnat zyaada (It is better to be a human being rather than an angel/But it requires greater effort). The task of "resurrecting" such a man's work required great effort, for although Abbas was highly prolific, with 74 books, 40 films (of which 23 were his own screenplays), 89 short stories and 3000 articles to his credit, very little of this material remains today. The editors managed to unearth about half a dozen books from private collections; they located a few scholars of Abbas's works who gave them some leads; and they traced some of his Urdu writings anthologised by the Haryana Urdu Academy. The state of many of the films that he had produced under the banner of Naya Sansar was even worse, as the editors discovered while attempting to organise his centenary celebrations last year.

At the event Syeda Hameed shared the questions that had arisen in her mind when she initiated the project of reviving the legacy of Abbas – questions about his relevance in our times: As she mulled over his writings and discovered the "many-facetedness" and the "many-splendidness" of K.A. Abbas, who happened to be her uncle, the answer came to her in the words of John Keats, "And then I felt like some watcher of the skies/When a new planet swims into his ken." The relevance of a man whose pen touched upon every social

issue the people of this country faced post-Independence, many of which we are still grappling with, became crystal clear.

Just a few examples of the films made under his 'Naya Sansar' banner show his wide-ranging concerns: Dharti Ke Lal(1945) about the Great Bengal famine, Rahi (1953) depicting the exploitation of tea workers, Shehar Aur Sapna (1964) on the travails of urbanisation, Do Boond Pani (1971) on a scarce resource such as water in arid regions, among others.

Similarly, his short stories, such as Sardarji, Panchi, Pinjra aur Udaan, Aasman Mehel and Bholi, just to name a few, explored the themes of communalism, suppression of dissent, caste prejudices, and gender discrimination. His restless soul was always intent on expressing his desire for a more egalitarian India.

While speaking about her journey of discovering Abbas' work, Iffat Fatima said one of the most commendable qualities of Abbas Sahab was his self-reflexivity – the fact that his critical lens was as unsparing of himself as it was of others. He was unafraid to express his opinions even if it meant challenging the actions of an individual of the stature of Jawaharlal Nehru, a man Abbas Sahab greatly admired and considered a friend. Fatima first discovered K.A. Abbas through his book, I Am Not an Island: An Experiment in Autobiography (1977), which fascinated her. "He had almost a Sufi idea of transformation. Just as Sufis aspire for personal transformation, he aspired for social transformation. He was engaged with everything that was happening around him, moment to moment, and I think that is what motivated me to edit this book with Dr. Hameed," she said.

This sensitivity to things around him was what made Abbas's work so immediate, visceral and path-breaking. Actor Atul Tiwari, emcee for the evening, enumerated his various pioneering achievements – he started one of the first regular weekly student magazines called Aligarh Opinion while studying at Aligarh Muslim University; he was closely associated with two of India's most significant cultural movements, the Progressive Writers' Association and the Indian Peoples' Theatre Association (IPTA), and his debut film Dharti Ke Lal, produced by IPTA, was India's first 'crowd-sourced' film; he is considered to be one the pioneers of Indian parallel or neo-realistic cinema – the film Neecha Nagar (1946), scripted by him and Hayatullah Ansari, became the first Indian film to win the Grand Prix at the Cannes Film Festival the same year; his film Munna (1954) is cited as the first Indian film without any song and dance routine; his column 'Last Page', holds the distinction of being one of the longest-running columns in the history of Indian journalism (it began in 1935 in the Bombay Chronicle, and moved to Blitz after the Chronicle's closure, where it continued until his death in 1987); and the list goes on.

While Indian cinema owes a lot to Abbas' gaze and labours, one of the most significant gifts he left behind for the creative community at large was made possible by a case that he fought in the Supreme Court challenging the censorship of his film Char Shehar Ek Kahani (1968) on the grounds that pre-censorship of cinema was a violation of Article 19 (1)(a) guaranteeing freedom of speech and expression.

The case, K.A. Abbas vs. Union of India, 1971, which marked the first instance of a film being viewed inside the Supreme Court, resulted in a landmark judgement which – while acknowledging the power of the cinematic medium – stated that the depiction of a social ill in itself could not be the basis of the censor's snip; how the subject was treated should be the criterion. The precedent set by the judgment continues to be used in the fight against censorship to this day.

Today though, most people will remember K.A. Abbas as the man who launched the career of Amitabh Bachchan in his film Saat Hindustani (1969). And it was Amitabh Bachchan's presence at the book launch which proved to be the main attraction and point of discussion, something that the actor himself politely

expressed his discomfort about. His poignant tribute brought the spotlight firmly back on to his ‘Mamujaan’, someone he also referred to as a ‘farishta’ (angel).

He vividly described the atmosphere during the making of Saat Hindustani with the entire crew sleeping in the same space: “Many times I saw him working on the floor next to me with a lantern, writing the dialogues for the next day’s shoot...His entire thinking was of equality. I do not know what the exact meaning of communism is, I do not know what the exact meaning of socialism is but I would like to read to you his last page for the Blitz in which he has written his will. I think that this aptly describes what K.A. Abbas was and what he stood for.”

In this will Abbas Sahab shares his credo with his readers: “I’m still an agnostic, that is, I don’t know about religion. I believe in one God. I may be a Muslim but I believe that all religion believes in one divinity. I think the whole of humanity is one and believes in one god who has no shape or form; therefore I am inclined to believe that nature is God.” He goes on to express his desire for an all-religious meeting to celebrate, not mourn, his life and requests to be buried along with the pages of his columns.

In a luminous short film made by Fatima, screened at the beginning of the book launch, Abbas jokes that if someone were to ask him what he had done, he would reply, “Jhak maara (idled my time away)!” However, the opening song of classical musician Rene Singh encapsulated the essence of Abbas’ work, his ideas and his life: “Itni aasaan nahin ae dost mohabbat meri/tu ne samjhi hi nahi kya hai haqeeqat meri (Dear friend, my love is not that easy/you haven’t really understood its true meaning).

As the spirit of Abbas’ work in Bread Beauty Revolution bears out, speaking truth to all forms of power is not easy, but it is imperative nonetheless. It also serves as a timely reminder to us that love — whether for a person, country or ideology — is not about conformity and intolerance but rather about creative engagement, playful dialogue, and respect for difference.

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**KHWAJA AHMAD ABBAS AS LEGEND MANIN INDIAN SOCIETY**

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**ABSTRACT**

Great grandson of the great Urdu poet and social reformer Khwaja Altaf Husain 'Hali' poet laureate from the historic town of Panipat, Haryana, Abbas was born in 1914. He indicates the year of his birth and relationship with the poet in his usual pithy and humorous style thus in his autobiography: "I was born in 1914. My great ancestor was so disgusted by the looks of his of his new-born descendant that he died shortly afterwards." On his father's insistence Ahmad Abbas agreed to take the law degree on one condition: he would not pursue a career in law under any circumstances.

**KEY WORDS:** Realism, Social Man, Man of human life

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He lives on in the minds and hearts of millions of people all over the world who have perused and relished his newspaper columns, read his books, seen his feature and documentary films, exulted at his film dialogues and marveled at his skill of film script and dialogue writing and his dramas.

Great grandson of the great Urdu poet and social reformer Khwaja Altaf Husain 'Hali' poet laureate from the historic town of Panipat, Haryana, Abbas was born in 1914. He indicates the year of his birth and relationship with the poet in his usual pithy and humorous style thus in his autobiography: "I was born in 1914. My great ancestor was so disgusted by the looks of his of his new-born descendant that he died shortly afterwards."

On his father's insistence Ahmad Abbas agreed to take the law degree on one condition: he would not pursue a career in law under any circumstances. He wanted to be a journalist. He began his professional life as a wielder of the pen in 1935 as an unpaid apprentice in Abdullah Brelvi's "Bombay Chronicle". Recalls Abbas, "My father gave me Rs. 500.00 ('that is all you will get' the father told his only son) and my mother gave me a packet of 'sattu' to overcome the pangs of hunger during the struggling days in Bombay. "When both were finished I 'threatened' my editor Abdullah Brelvi that I am returning to Panipat," he used to recall. "For what?" Brelvi Sahib asked. "To practice law because I cannot write on an empty stomach," came the reply. Immediately Abbas was appointed reporter and sub-editor on a 'princely' pay of Rs. 75.00 per month. Zamir Niazi, the chronicler of the press in Pakistan and its well known journalist (besides author of several books on the freedom of the press) describes K.A. Abbas as his "guru" at whose feet he learned the art of journalism and craft of protest against dominance and injustices in society.

In a career spanning over half a century Khwaja Sahib emerged on the Indian and global scene as a communicator of great repute. As journalist, film maker, short story writer, novelist, social and political commentator he was listened to with respect and attention by the masses. Abbas however chose to describe himself as an "omnibus personality." But that was something of a disadvantage, according to him. He once wrote, "The novelists look down upon me as a short story writer, while short-story writers condemn me as nothing more than a scribe. All of them would contemptuously say that I am no more than a stupid film-maker.

In August 1942 Abbas started writing his monumental novel 'Inquilab' in English but seven years later he had only completed 13 chapters of the book. When he finally completed the novel there was a struggle with the publishers who wanted the length to be reduced. In 1954 the book was translated and published in the former Soviet Union with a print-run of 90,000. A year later a German edition hit the book stalls there. Only thereafter a publisher in Bombay agreed to publish it in English after pruning it down by 150 pages and paid

Abbas Rs. 800 as royalty for the book. In 1976 a Hindi edition was published and a year later Abbas published the Urdu edition himself.

In 1982 Abbas wrote “The world is my village” which, according to him, is the sequel to Inqilab. In the Preface to Inqilab he writes, “Is it an autobiographical novel? This question has been asked of me several times...But as I have said before, I hope I will not be called a ba\*#\*d though I did study in Aligarh like Anwar, the central character, and spent my youthful years at the University. But beyond that Anwar has his own life and loves, adventures and misadventures. He is in search of his identity whereas I have an identity of my own”.

KAA’s short stories like those of his contemporaries were not without their fair share of controversies. Both “Ababeel” and “Ek Insaan ki Maut” caused a hue and cry not only the first time they were published, but every time they appeared in magazines. The latter, also published under the title “Sardar ji,” had the Sikhs up in arms and even dragged Abbas to the Allahabad High Court. Sarojini Naidu, Governor of United provinces (now Uttar Pradesh) called Abbas to her house and ordered him to read the story aloud to her. As he finished reading it he saw Sarojini Naidu wiping her tears with the pallu of her saree. After regaining composure she told the writer, “The story is very touching, but you are a fool! Is this the time (1948) to write such stories?” Abbas’ stories and dramas like his newspaper columns mirrored the lives and problems of the common man. The readers waited anxiously every Thursday all over the country, at newspaper stalls and railway stations, for Abbas’ “Last Page” first in Bombay Chronicle and later in the Blitz to know how Abbas interpreted a certain event in the country and the world. Some people tried to label Abbas as a communist or a socialist, but no label could apply to him because he nursed no hatred or jealousy with fellow humans which is a pre-condition for an ‘ism’ to succeed. Unlike most people, including his leftist contemporaries and friends Abbas had no lust for worldly possessions or honours. Neither did he nurse any ambitions. Just once admitted that he was a Nehruvian but hastened to add that Nehru was a politician and had to make compromises in life, while KAA had no such compunctions.

The trilogy of Indira Gandhi biographies (The Return of the Red Rose, That Woman: Her Seven Years in Power, Indira Gandhi: The Last Post) as well as biographies of Nikita Khrushchev and Yuri Gagarin and his autobiography “I am not an island” besides other novels written by him have been translated in a large number of Indian and European languages and command a wide readership all over the world. His short stories have been included in anthologies with those of Sadat Hasan Manto, Krishan Chander, Ismat Chughtai, Ahmed Nasim Qasmi, Rajinder Singh Bedi all of whom were his close and personal friends.

In 1973, in association with the Blitz National Forum, Abbas organized a grand 60th. Birthday celebrations in honour of Krishan Chander with the staging of the birthday boy’s play and presented a purse of Rs. 60,000 to the celebrated short-story writer. But the next year when Krishan wanted to do the same for Abbas and despite keeping the event under wraps the preparation leaked and KAA ordered him not to proceed as “I am active, alive and kicking”, much to the disappointment of all involved in the arrangement. As a film-maker the younger generation would recognize K.A.Abbas as the one who discovered superstar Amitabh Bachhan. His real talent manifested itself in the thirteen outstanding films he produced, which were praised worldwide for their thematic and artistic sophistication. Karlovy Vary or Berlin, Moscow or Santa Barbara in USA, Abbas won accolades everywhere his films were entered as entries. The journey from journalism to films carries an interesting tale. As film critic of the newspaper, he wrote critical reviews of films. Where he appreciated a film, like some of Shantaram’s he would devote an entire page to his review.

Film makers whose films did not find favour with the honest and straightforward critic would chide him that it is easy to criticize a creative effort but difficult to create one. That is when Abbas wrote the first film script, Naya Sansar, about an honest journalist who would not, proverbially speaking, sell his pen to the highest bidder or indeed at any price. The film starring Ashok Kumar was a runaway success and that is why when Abbas formed his own film company he named it Naya Sansar (New World). He wrote scripts of many more films, including most of films made by Raj Kapoor. He once described Raj Kapoor as the only film director “who was inspired not by a technically perfect screenplay but by a literary

scenario written like a novel with all characters and situations described in depth.” Abbas was a skilful and experienced ‘technician’ in this field. RK films biggest commercial success “Bobby” and biggest commercial flop “Mera Naam Joker” were created by Abbas fascicle pen. MNJ of course received critical acclaim from the discerning viewers.

If “Anhonee”, the first film produced by Abbas’ company Naya Sansar, was also the first film in India to feature a double role, Munna was the first film without songs. Abbas’ Dharti ke Lal produced in 1945 about the great Bengal famine preceded Satyajit Ray’s first epoch film ‘Pather Panchali’ by more than a decade. Dharti ke Lal is kept in the French Film Archives among the 100 best feature films made anywhere in the world. Pardesi was the first Indian film to be co-produced with a foreign film company (Mosfilms). When his films made money he shared his good fortune with his crew but when they bombed at the box office he took all the financial losses upon himself. He once confided that he took decades to meet the losses of Dharti ke Lal. When the viewers showed discontent over the fact that Munna had no songs Abbas sat outside at the box-office window to return the ticket money to whosoever wished to get the money returned. At end of the screening no one came to ask for refund and the ‘little’ film made (reasonably) ‘big’ money. When Shehar Aur Sapna won the President’s Gold Medal and a cash award Abbas shared the glory and the cash with his technicians and artists who had stood by him when he ran out of money during the making of the film. As Abbas went up to the podium to receive the Gold Medal from the President the other twelve ‘partners’ attired in spotlessly white dress stood up in the hall to share in the glory. Some years later the gold in the medal was given away in the marriage of a long-time domestic servant. He followed his principles with a single-mindedness that was unparalleled. (He believed that denial of worldly comforts, honours and recognition for him personally at the hands of an ungrateful society was a small price to pay for his high principles). He never owned a house, rarely a car or a hefty bank balance. Even at advanced age and physical discomfort he would travel by public bus or a train and only seldom take a taxi only if he was in a hurry to attend a meeting or a gathering he was supposed to address. He created a great impact on the audience in a speech spiced with pungent humour and a wealth of information collected through years of wide reading, deep probing and incisive writing. He inspired many a youth to adopt a meaningful life, but was impatient with the frequent question of aspiring film actors, “How can I be the next Amitabh Bachchan?”

Khawaja Sahib had an amazing stamina for work. He would get up early in the morning and after a brisk early morning walk or a short workout in the house he would pore over the news, books, and magazines or to complete his unfinished writing of the previous day. He once confided in his nephew and namesake that he had become a writing machine to churn out articles after articles only to be able to make enough money to pay the salaries of his typist-cum-secretary and ‘katib’ who reproduced his Urdu scripts to make them readable. Abbas was quite satisfied scribbling on the reverse of numerous cyclostyled newsletters received by him from foreign missions, film trade journals and others. There was no better recycling of paper because the junk was then converted into a journalistic and literary masterpiece. He enjoyed writing through the noise and din of children playing, the radio and television blaring because nothing diverted his concentration. “It motivates me as my mind wrestles with the disturbance of the society and strengthen my determination to fight it!”

Abbas was a large-hearted person and a humanist. He was generous to a fault and extended all kind of support to people in distress and need – moral, material; indeed whatever he owned. His house was always open as refuge for struggling youth. Recalls Snehlata Pradhan, an actor of yesteryears and a close friend of Abbas and his wife: “Whenever I visited Bombay I was a house guest with the Abbases. Each time I found a large number of his friends and companions staying in his modest flat on Shivaji Park and enjoying his hospitality. Dev Anand, Balraj Sahni, Prem Dhawan and many more were all there after perhaps a hectic day at the theatre or the studio.” A relative Captain Wasiq Hasan then a young navy officer recalls that when he asked ‘uncle’ Abbas where his car had gone he told him very reluctantly, “My friend Manmohan Sabir had to pay off a large debt. Since I did not have the money I gave him my car to sell and repay the loan.”

It was an unusual Will that Abbas left for posterity. "If you wish to meet me after I am gone just pick up one of the seventy odd books I wrote or view the films I have produced or written the script for. If you are not allergic to yellowing news-print then go to library and read any of the hundreds of thousands of columns I have written. I WILL BE THERE with you."

Third edition of the Lucknow Literature Carnival came to a close on Sunday amid an array of interactive sessions with writers, authors, poets and people from the theatre and music.

In a conversation with Atul Tiwari, Syeda Hameed, the author of 'The Last Page--Bread Beauty Revolution--Khwaja Ahmad Abbas' threw light on the secular progressive vision of the eminent writer and film director. Reading out his last piece, 'The Last Will and Testament of Khwaja Ahmad Abbas', Syeda Hameed said it was the writer's last wish his funeral pass by a Gandhi statue and his shroud bear 'The Last Pages' and 'Azaad Kalam'. He also said that if a meeting is held in his memory it should have representatives of all religious communities

The session 'Shiva to Ikshvaku' was the most popular event of the carnival. The new heartthrob of Indian literature in English, Amish Tripathi, in conversation with Surabhi Modi ferried the audience across the mythological journey of his books and talked about the beauty of India's cosmopolitan culture.

APJ Kalam Advantage India was a discussion about Ka lam's last piece of writing co authored by Srijan Pal Singh.

The cultural event ended with music and dance. Satya Saran took the audience through the musical journey of Jagjit Singh's soulful melodies, while 'From Kotha to Gramophone' was a beautiful ballet documenting the life of courtesans like Zohra Bai Ambalewali, Zareena Begum and Gauhar Jaan and a glimpse into the life of the unforgettable, Begum Akhtar.

#### Session on Meera's 'Hang Woman'

The session with Malayalam writer K R Meera, Ministhy S, Ambar Chatterjee, Piush Antony moderated by Roop Rekha Verma talked about the book 'Hang Woman' written by Meera. It talked about the protagonist, Chetna Grddha Mullick and her metamorphosis from a 22-year-old year to India's first woman executioner.

#### Shakespeare in a phiran

The session with scriptwriter Basharat Peer of 'Haider' fame revolved around how the conditions of Kashmir were intertwined within the film. Peer said that everything shown in the movie had been true except for actress Tabu's character turning into a suicide bomber.

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