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More English than English History, Memory and the Aggregate of *The Remains...*

Dr. Anupama Jaidev
Asstt. Professor of English
Maharaja Agrasen College
Vasundhara Enclave
Delhi (India)

What exactly are the memories of a nation? Where are they kept? How are they shaped and controlled?

Kazuo Ishiguro

In an early interview post *The Remains of the Day*, Ishiguro talks of the inherent irony about a young Japanese looking writer with a Japanese name writing a super-English, a "more English than English" novel. The "more English than English" is an interesting claim. It is obviously a claim by someone whose Englishness is not natural, but acquired. In this case a cultural outsider, writing about a bygone generation. *The Remains of the Day* illustrates how contexts, cultures and histories are not by definition domains of interrogation for those who *always already* belong; how they can be learnt, inhabited and comprehended; and most importantly, how fiction can effectively create an artifice of a "more English than English" Englishness even if it is borne of a sensibility other than English.

Apart from his stated position as the cultural outsider, Ishiguro claims a position of alterity vis-à-vis what he calls the mythic tradition of the quintessential Englishness of a bygone era in *The Remains of the Day*. His creation is as credible and as rich in detail as Fowles' *The French Lieutenant's Woman*, but unlike the latter he does not consciously unravel his pastiche in terms of direct interventions. The ironies in this case, are unraveled through implied inferences rather than direct statements.

The Remains of the Day locates itself in the late 1940s and it unfolds as a first-person account of the reminiscences of Mr. Stevens, former butler to the influential Lord Darlington, whom he serves for over thirty years. He is currently retained in his position by the new owner of Darlington estate, the American millionaire Mr. Farraday. Stevens lives his life ensconced in the environs of the Darlington estate through the two most tumultuous decades in English history, the period between the two world wars and after. Conversations influencing England's foreign policy, especially in terms of its appeasement of Germany in wake of the Versailles treaty take place well within his earshot while he serves his master and the latter's guests. He focusses on his work, and considers the gentlemen's conversations a distraction he cannot afford. He lives the prime of his life, serving an order of authority, witnessing momentous decisions and a dramatic change of guard. He ostensibly, refuses to even attempt making any sense of it for himself. All that goes on around him is displaced by an obsession for staff plans, impeccably polished silver and

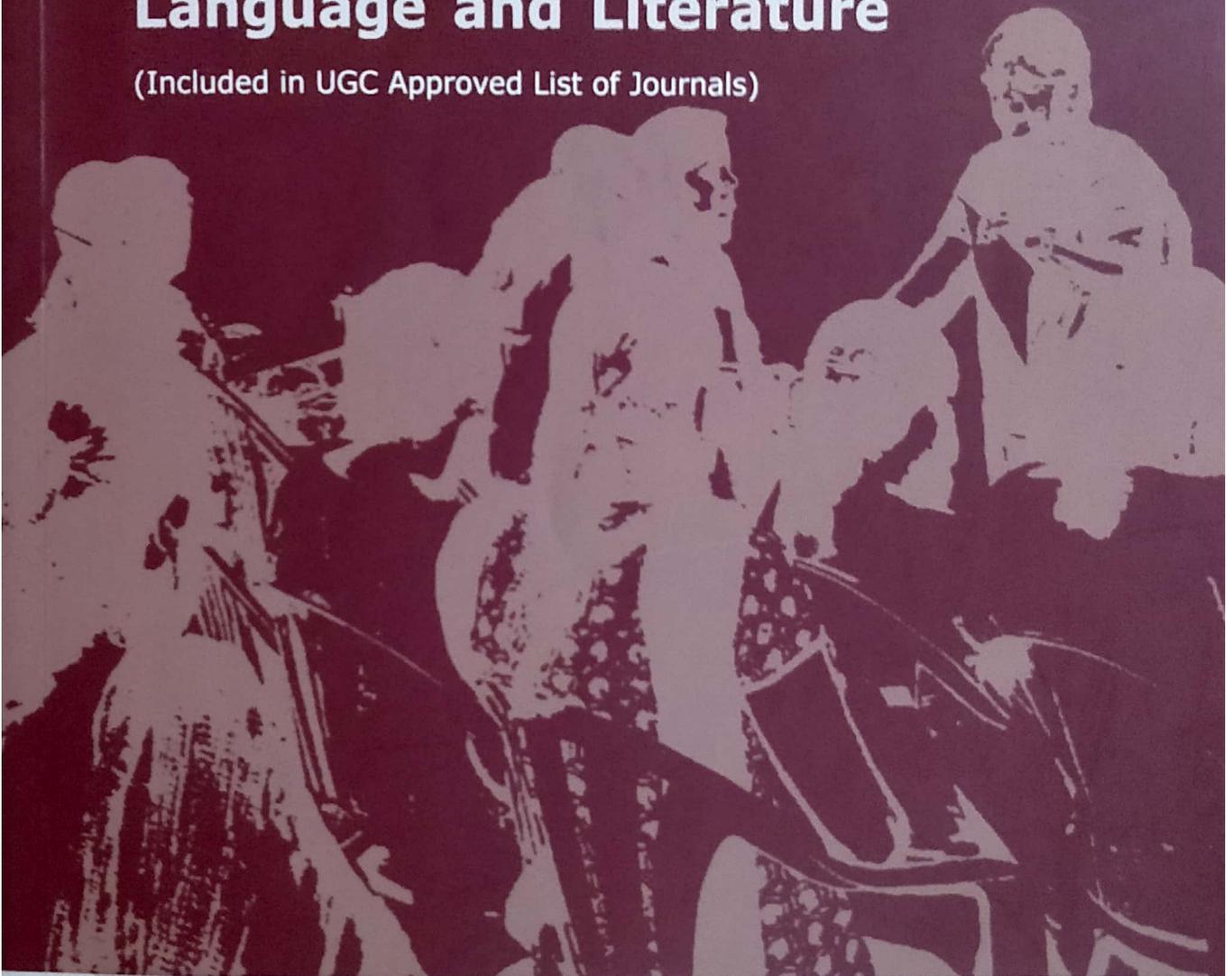
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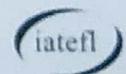
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his translations of other eminent poets left everyone spell bound.

The success of the event was evident as the students were full of exuberance even at the end of the day. The event concluded with a vote of thanks by Dr. Ved Mitra Shukla, Teacher-in-Charge of the Department of English.

Neha Gaur is Assistant Professor in the Department of English, Rajdhani College, University of Delhi. She writes poetry in both Hindi and English.

n.gaur510@gmail.com

A Report on the Annual Lecture Series at Maharaja Agrasen College, University of Delhi

Charu Arya

Professor Savita Singh's lecture titled, "Ecofeminism: Battling Environment Degradation" was part of a series of lectures organized annually by the Department of English at Maharaja Agrasen College since 2010. This event was held on 15 September 2017, in collaboration with FORTELL and SPHEEHA (Society for the Preservation of Healthy Environment, Ecology and Heritage of Agra). The Annual Lecture Series is a much-awaited department activity as it gives both students and faculty members the opportunity to benefit from the best minds in emerging fields of research.

The event opened with a short introduction by student coordinator Abhinav Anand, followed by a brief background of the Annual Lecture Series by Dr Gitanjali Chawla, Teacher-in-charge. The series had been graced earlier in the years 2010-2016 by Professor Jonathan Gil, Professor Madhavi Menon, Mr. Tabish Khair, Ms. Sukrita Paul Kumar, Professor Amritjit Singh, Professor Harish Trivedi, Professor R.W. Desai and Dr. Anjana Neira Dev. Dr. Prem Kumari Srivastava, Coordinator, formally welcomed the guest speaker, Professor Savita Singh, a renowned professor at the School of Gender and Development in IGNOU. Professor Singh has published extensively and has several books to her credit.

Professor Savita Singh traced the trajectory of historical and contemporary feminist issues in her talk on "Ecofeminism: Battling Environment Degradation". She introduced the young audience first to the concepts of ecology and feminism, and then drew connections between them. She talked about Vandana Shiva's book

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**Role of Folk Songs for Peaceful Living Among the Zeme Tribes of
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**Locating Women in the Patriarchal Society Through the lens of
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**Augmenting Pedagogical Practices Through Innovative
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**The Status and Role of English Language in Contemporary Times:
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Development Administration: A Conceptual Understanding

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The Nation and its Women: Representation of Women in Bangla Plays of the Partition Era

Debosmita Paul Lahiri

Abstract

The Partition of Bengal in 1905 sowed the seeds of anti-colonial nationalism in India. The ensuing anti-Partition movement went on to become the precursor of the Indian National Movement. The movement, as a result, established the codes on which the creation of the 'imagined political community' was attempted. Nevertheless, this process of 'making of the nation' by the anti-Partition nationalist movement faced resistance from sections of the Bengali society. Bangla literature also responded to the conflict visible in the political world as it depicted multilayered response to the Partition, the anti-Partition movement and the model of Indian nationalism posited by the varied sections. This paper attempts to trace and thereby understand the varied responses to the anti-Partition movement through the depiction of women in the Bangla historical plays written during the Partition era (1905-1911).

Keywords: *Nation, Gender, Bengal, Anti-colonial, Partition*

The period between 1905 (the year of the declaration of the Bengal division of the Presidency of Fort William) and 1911 (the year of its annulment) stands out as not only one of the most significant phases in the history of Bengal but of the Indian subcontinent. The decision of the colonial government to divide the Bengal Province on September 1, 1905 (annulled in 1911) directly impacted the socio-political history of the Indian subcontinent. On the one hand, it gave a boost to the Indian National Movement by causing a surge of anti-colonial sentiments and on the other hand, it irreparably fragmented Indian society along communal lines, resulting in the Partition of the subcontinent in 1947.

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The Camera and I (Eye): Mediated Imaging of the Self in *Connected Hum Tum*

MONA SINHA
Maharaja Agrasen College, Delhi, India

ABSTRACT

Connected Hum Tum (CHT) was an Indian television reality show series, telecast on Zee TV between June 3, 2013 and August 30, 2013. What made this show unique and experimental was that it presented six real life women from Mumbai, hailing from different backgrounds, all given a video camera to record their daily lives over a period of several months.

While the control of the camera empowered the six women to frame their own narratives, paradoxically, it also allowed the viewer to perceive alternate realities, just as in a dramatic monologue. The monologue, in this case, happened to be accompanied with moving images. So, the pertinent question that arises here is that does the control of the camera remain a mere illusion and hence, does the camera have a mind of its own as it reveals the intimacies in the lives of these women? It also raises questions regarding how these women view themselves and want to be viewed as; whether they are trapped within the Prufrockian dilemma of the split self, or rather, how do they negotiate with the multiplicity of identities within the self. What makes an analysis of CHT even more interesting is the dual framing of the lives of these women; one, recorded and documented by themselves, and the other, through those selections of their recordings chosen to be presented by the makers of the show.

Like most television shows in India, and especially reality shows, CHT is essentially of the urban middle class and for the urban middle class viewer. The paper proposes to examine the uniqueness of the show in imaging and imagining the urban

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September 2018

Locating Women in the Patriarchal Society Through the lens of Feminist Theory and Criticism

Nabanita Deka

Abstract

Literature being a microcosm of society is a very powerful and empowering tool. It reflects the socio-political conditions and the existing relations of power in the society. However, it also has power to change the dynamics and destabilize the existing status quo. Literature in this context then, is not only a great tool to educate the masses but also a propagandist tool. Literature through its mesmerising use of language can either make or break a society and this is where literary theory comes in. This paper seeks to examine the role of literary theory in probing, critiquing, unmasking and subverting the constitutive relations between power and forms of discourses. Using feminist theory, the paper seeks to strip patriarchy of its hypocrisy and highlight the marginalised position of women in society so as to critique the so-called 'normative' patriarchal society by examining Sadat Hasan Manto's short story 'Open it' and Eunice De Souza's poem 'Marriages are made'. The role of education in uplifting women from the shackles of patriarchy plays an important role in subverting the power structures. In light of this, the paper will examine the importance of including texts written by women in literary curriculum and most importantly, how language can be used by women to defy the power structures to resist patriarchy and liberate themselves.

Keywords: *Literature, Language, Literary theory, Feminist theory, Gender, Women and education, Partition studies*

Literature is a microcosm of society. It reflects the socio-political conditions and the existing relations of power in the society. The beauty of literature is that it can use language in peculiar ways. The eighteenth century England, just recovering from a bloody civil war, used literature to unite the raw middle

classes with a common culture. If the "masses" (barricades) (masses, it also. This paper seeks to unmasking a of discourses hypocrisy and critique the s Manto's short story "made". The paper plays an important role in literary curriculum to defy the po

Synthesis:

Literature, a intimate relationship powerful use of Language is and constrained beliefs that carries forward hegemony. To understand knowledge in defines the structure and Feminism, a power structure Case in point Shakespearean man, 'modern European/V what a bla

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WRITING WITH A PURPOSE: ANNUAL LECTURE AT MAC

Department of English, Maharaja Agrasen College organized the 4th Annual Lecture on "Writing with a Purpose" by Dr. Anjana Naira Dev, Associate Professor of English at Gauhati University of Delhi on 27 November 2016. Drawing upon her immense and eminent experience as a teacher of English Literature, English Language Teaching and author of widely prescribed text books on Academic Writing and Creative Writing, she designed her presentation around the objective of redefining what these two activities (academic writing and creative writing) mean, comprise and require.

During the presentation interactive through relevant examples and questions, Dr. Dev emphasized the need for the oft-employed pre-writing strategy of "brainstorming" by drawing attention to some of the questions that we need to ask before beginning on a draft for academic writing. The students jotted down the very usable and doable tips she shared throughout the presentation copiously and enthusiastically. Strategies for effective academic writing, for example, were mnemonically conveyed through the 4 Cs: coherence, cohesion and citation. By talking about the different modes of writing like expository writing, argumentative essay, descriptive article, she highlighted the purpose and feature of each. She had the students riveted as she formalised writing into a structured attempt by explaining the techniques of crafting a good beginning, a thesis statement, inner linkages, paragraphs, and a convincing conclusion. As good writing evolves through successively improved drafts, she explained how a critical mind-set of strict revision and detachment should to be employed at the editorial stage of writing.

As she progressed to creative writing, the audience noticed a change in the content as the sombre slides of the academic writing session transformed into colourful vibes in the creative writing section. She dwelt at length on the elusive definition of creative writing to make as lucid as one possibly could the complex idea of "creativity". She took the audience through the highly invigorating as well as challenging business of creative writing through its constituent elements of character, setting, plot, conflict and theme. For the budding writers among the people for whom the project of writing was too demanding, the lecture provided both motivation and advice. Her valuable tip of "journaling" or collecting experiences and thoughts on a daily basis found many takers as it promised to provide fodder and energy to overcome the proverbial "writer's block". The presentation also alerted the students to the wide domain of plagiarism by shedding light on the need to make relevant and correct citations wherever required.

The lecture was received with great applause and appreciation by both the faculty and the students of B.A.(Hons.) English, B.A. (Programme) and the student community at large. Writing as a Generic Elective paper, Creative Writing as a Skill Enhancement course and Fluency in English as a text book for B. A. (Programme) focusing on Writing have greatly benefitted by the lecture. As writing comprises both academic expression and enhancement, the talk was an enabling and empowering experience for the students. The purpose of co-scholastic activities is to augment classroom learning with allied approaches and practices, and this lecture significantly served that purpose. Learning is a highly technical task involving specialised and expert pedagogy. It was a matter of great satisfaction to see students responding to Dr. Dev with a wide gamut of questions. These ranged from the personal challenges they faced while writing to the political nature of writing, the impact of technology and the much debated areas of intellectual debt. The lecture was a great success, and we hope that through this annual feature we bring our students face to face with more such teachers, thinkers and writers.

Dr. Anjana Naira Dev is Associate Professor in the Department of English, Maharaja Agrasen College, University of Delhi. She has been awarded doctorate degree for her work on "A Feminist Perspective". She continues her interest in urban studies and memory studies through her academic publications and research projects.

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THE DILLI WAY OF LIFE: FOUR NOVELS

Sangeeta Mittal

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University of Delhi, Delhi, India

ABSTRACT

'Culture' has figured centrally in all discourses arising in and from this space in all senses of the term as Shahjahanabad (alternatively referred to as 'Dilli' and post-independence, 'Old Delhi') has boasted of a heady "way of life", refined material and non-material culture and iconic artistic accomplishments. Nazir Ahmad's *Mirat-ul Uroos (The Bride's Mirror)* is credited to be the first proto-novel to emanate from Shahjahanabad. Ahmed Ali's *Twilight in Delhi* is a much cited and acclaimed work that immerses us into a somewhat later date Shahjahanabad. While Krishna Sobti's *Dil-o-danish (The Heart has its Reasons)*, recaptures this unique way of life, Anita Desai's *In Custody* chronicles its demise (Desai, 1984). Through a study of these texts, it is possible to foreground both the cultural practices embedded in them as well as the material conditions which have produced them. On the other hand, the study also examines how living in Shahjahanabad has catalysed in various periods of its history the act and quality of writing and how the conditions of living in the city in general and Delhi in particular shape the narrative and characters. Offering valuable insight into the rise and fall of this culture, the four novels narrate Shahjahanabad as the hybrid city between existence and extinction, identity and hegemony and belonging and alienation. The present study combines inputs from literary studies, cultural studies, urban studies and memory studies to compile an imaginative and cognitive audit of the give and take between the city and the city-zen.

Keywords: *Shahjahanabad, Delhi novel, Delhi culture, Nazir Ahmad, Ahmed Ali, Krishna Sobti, Anita Desai*

I. INTRODUCTION

Shahjahanabad has been a contested site culturally, historically and geographically. Not surprising, therefore, that the literary expressions engaging with this disputed space have had to work their way through many negotiations and contradictions. 'Culture' has figured centrally in all discourses arising in and from this space in all senses of the term as Shahjahanabad (alternatively referred to as 'Dilli' and post-independence, 'Old Delhi') has boasted of a heady "way of life", refined material and non-material culture and iconic artistic accomplishments. Nazir Ahmad's *Mirat-ul Uroos* (between 1868 and 1869, Arabic for *The Bride's Mirror*, translated into English by G.E. Ward in 1903) is credited to be the first proto-novel to emanate from Shahjahanabad. Ahmed Ali's *Twilight in Delhi* is a much cited and acclaimed work that immerses us into a somewhat later date Shahjahanabad (Ali, 1940). While Krishna Sobti's *Dil-o-danish* (1993), translated in English as *The Heart Has Its Reasons* (2005), recaptures this unique way of life, Anita Desai's *In Custody* chronicles its demise (Desai, 1984). Through a study of these texts, it is possible to

foreground both the cultural practices embedded in them as well as the material conditions which have produced them. Literary analysis is a rewarding technique in cultural sociology as both underscore the impact of urban ethos on human behavior and relationships. Literature, as well as sociology, focuses on groups to which individuals belong in order to unravel human behavior in society. While the biggest group is society itself, there are smaller groups as well and city and culture figure significantly among them. The novels examined in this paper illustrate how the matrix of urbanism and culture shape and influence the lives of city-zens. The four texts mentioned above figure seminally in the literary discourse on Delhi culture. Through these texts, a cultural sociology scholar can begin to observe how living in Shahjahanabad catalyses the act and quality of writing as well as colors the lives of the characters. The conditions of living in the city in general and Shahjahanabad in particular shape the narrative which partly or wholly, explicitly or implicitly, constitutes an imaginative and cognitive document on the give and take between the city and the city-zen. It examines how the rules of the game of culture in Delhi have been revisited and revised time and again to stand as they do when these writers undertake to write Shahjahanabad (Berkowitch, 1998). However, each intervention in this game, whether literary or otherwise, adds to the direction and dimension of the game and hence, each text matters not only as an individual move but also as a serial link in the chain. Culture and culture of a city is the uninterrupted story of each move, game, sets, series, and so on and so forth in totality- a story which commences in literary terms with the four texts examined here.

II. COLONIZATION: EARLY EFFECTS

Nazir Ahmad Dehlavi's *Mirat* is a widely discussed book in the context of Urdu literature and also the early Indian novels. In the context of Delhi, it is the earliest example of ethos in Shahjahanabad as well as a glimpse into the interiors of the homes and minds of both the male and female native population. This is a Shahjahanabad which is well incorporated into the colonization project, without quite realizing it. The city space, the domestic space, the educational space, the linguistic space and the literary space are all challenged by the invisible hegemonic intervention- visible retrospectively in the ambiguity of 'progress' and 'preservation' in the native response to all the sweeping changes around it. Ahmad's contemporary biographer, Sir Abdul Qadir, in his *The New School of Urdu Literature*, underscores the chief contribution of *Mirat* as:

Maulvi Nazir ahmad's great service to Urdu knowing India is his supplying it with books specially adapted for female education and it may safely be said that its chief feature of his subsequent writings is that each one of them may be placed in the hands of a girl of tender years by the most scrupulous and conscientious of fathers. (Qadir, 1898, p.55)

Qadir as well as Ahmad are unaware of the invisible and insidious impacts of colonization and how the British contact has already stamped the creator and the creation in an indelible manner- the imprints of which are manifest in the text in various ways. The paper focuses on this picture of Shahjahanabad from the point of

view of the incipient cultural subjectivity of the space and its residents in the early dawn of colonization.

Nazir Ahmad Dehlavi (1830-1912) also known as "Diptee" (Deputy) Nazir Ahmad, was an Urdu scholar and writer, and a social and religious reformer. Ahmad hailed from a family of maulavis and muftis of Bijnor (Uttar Pradesh) and Delhi. His father was a teacher in a small town near Bijnore who trained him in Persian and Arabic. In 1842, Ahmad was enrolled to study at the Aurangabadi Mosque under the tutelage of Abd ul-Khaliq in Delhi. In 1846, Ahmad joined the Delhi College. He was a disciple in its Urdu section because of his father's injunction that "he would rather see me die than learn English" (Pritchett, 1903, p. 205). He was engaged in studies till 1853. During this period he also got married to Abd ul-Khaliq's granddaughter. After a brief stint as a teacher of Arabic, he joined the British colonial administration in 1854. He was appointed deputy inspector of schools in the Department of Public Instruction in Kanpur in 1856 and Allahabad in 1857. He took the valuable advice of a friend to learn English which he did in 1859-60. He translated the Income Tax Law and the Indian Penal Code into Urdu in 1860-61. For these contributions, he was posted as deputy collector in the North-West Provinces (thus the title "diptee"). In 1877, Ahmad proceeded on an administrative assignment to the princely state of Hyderabad but in 1884, political feuds forced him to quit and return to Delhi. He remained in Delhi till the time of his death from stroke in 1912.

Nazir Ahmad writes *Mirat* as he says for the edification and instruction of his daughters. He explains:

I began writing books at a time when my own children were of an age to start their schooling. I had my own experience of learning and teaching, and as an employee in the Education Department had also had the occasion to supervise teaching. I knew in every detail all the defects of educational methods and of the books in use. "Once you have seen the fly in your drink, you cannot swallow it"- and so I began to write books on my own account and to teach from them. This was the motive which first impelled me to write. (Ahmad, 1992, p.118)

Mirat is a claimant to the distinction of being the first novel in Urdu. While there are other works which contend to the same title, as F B Pritchett says, "*The Bride's Mirror* may or may not have been the first Urdu novel, but it certainly was the first Urdu bestseller" (Pritchett, 1903, p. 204). It certainly was the first literary success of Ahmad. A notice by the Northern Provinces Lieutenant Governor no. 791 A dated August 20, 1868, announced a cash prize for any book which

... shall subserve some useful purpose, ... that it shall be written in one of the current dialects, Oordoo or Hindee, and there shall be excellence both in the style and treatment. ... Books suitable for the women of India will be especially acceptable, and well rewarded. (Pritchett, 1903, p. 205)

Mirat won a cash prize of Rs.1000 in 1870 in addition to a watch for its author from the Lieutenant Governor and a recommendation for inclusion in school curricula.

After its release in 1869, within twenty years, it went into continuous reprints with over 1,00,000 copies to date and was also translated into Bengali, Brajhasha, Kashmiri, Punjabi, and Gujarati. A sequel followed in the form of *Binat-ul-Nash* (*The Daughters of the Bier*, a name for the constellation Ursa Major). *Taubat-un-Nasuh* (*The Repentance of Nasuh*) was written in 1873-74, *Fasaana-e-Mubtalaa* in 1885, *Ibn'ul Waqt* in 1888, *Ayyamah* in 1891 and *Ruya-e Sadiqah* in 1892.

In 1903, translated into English by G. E. Ward as *The Bride's Mirror*, its subtitle reads 'A Tale of Life in Delhi a Hundred Years ago'. Explaining the need for this translation, he writes,

It makes no claim to literary merit; but since so little is known in England about the social and domestic life of our Indian fellow subjects, an authentic picture of one phase of it by a distinguished Muhammadan gentleman may perhaps be not devoid of interest to the British public in general. (Ward, 1903, Translator's Note)

It is interesting to note that exactly hundred years ago from the year of the translation, an event occurred which was of equal significance to the British as well as the natives of Delhi. It propelled the city and its people towards their appointed destiny- the occupation of Delhi by the British after their victory over the Marathas in 1803. Nazir Ahmad's own purpose behind writing this book was to teach his own daughters in particular and the "secluded sex" (Ahmad, 1869, 1903, p.1) in general some valuable lessons of life. While he writes *Mirat* from this reformist perspective, the translation is made from an imperialist perspective. It affords a glimpse into the *mohallas*, *havelis* and *zenanas* of the Dilli which the British had neither desire nor ardour to penetrate physically. Legend has it that *Mirat* was "discovered" accidentally by Matthew Kempson, Director of Public Instruction, through Ahmad's son. Unlike later books like *Binat ul-nash* and *Tauba ul--nasuh*, it is believed that at least this text was meant entirely for family consumption and private circulation. Whether it was written with an eye on government appreciation and recognition or not, yet it is very clear from Ahmad's statement that it was written under the influence of his British employers and their policies. Shaista Bano Suhrawardy looks at *Mirat* as a "realist" text which describes "Indian life as yet untouched (or unaltered for it had already come into touch) by contact with the West" (Suhrawardy, 1945, p.42). The distinction which she draws between "untouched" and "unaltered" is significant. We have already seen how *Mirat* embodies a critique of prevalent teaching-learning methods originating in the British government education department. On close examination, it is possible to see how it also bears the consequences of the British contact in many more ways as well. Hence, the ideas and images presented in the text are very much "altered" by the British contact, whether self consciously as stated by Ahmad, or hegemonically, without him being quite being aware of the colonialist intervention. The latter is truer for Ahmad's generation, as the colonized is far too innocent at this juncture in history to sense the cultural teeth or bite of political domination.

Mirat voices the need for women's education passionately in the 'Introduction'. The purposes served by acquiring education as cited by Ahmad range

from safeguarding personal modesty and interests and tiding over adversity if there be to being self reliant and useful in the house. Regretting the non-existence of serious urge and apparatus to impart education to women in his country, he attempts to fill in this void by writing a moral parable for empowering women to transact the business of their lives efficiently and commendably. In the 'Introduction' to this work, Ahmad voices the conviction that if women gain knowledge, then it will not only alleviate their own suffering and inconsequence but will also be in the best interest of family, community and society (Ahmad, 1869/ 1903, p.1-17). There seems little doubt that women are meant for housekeeping, so the extent and content of education is also specified accordingly. To learn to be an efficient housekeeper is a must by learning to manage accounts, to cook, to offer gracious hospitality to guests and to be an expert in cutting and stitching of clothes. Although women do not have the compulsion to earn livelihoods or distinguish themselves in the intellectual world, yet learning to read and write is a big advantage as these skills make them worldly wise. Another very compelling reason for getting educated stressed by Ahmad is that women are treated shabbily by men due to their own laziness and if they emerge out of this inertia, then they will emerge out of their disrepute. They will also emerge out of seclusion for while they cannot physically transgress the *purdah*, mentally they can, through books and leaning. And finally, women's education can transform the way they can physically and morally nurture their children.

While there is a passionate plea for women's education, yet in this society generally the idea is that it cannot overflow the measure of the role prescribed for women in society. As Gail Minault writes, "... women were the chief agents of cultural continuity. In an age when the men were forsaking their culture for the loaves and fishes of the British Raj, it was more than ever necessary for the women to be anchored in their own religion and culture" (Minault, 1986, 2002, p.181). The Deobandi School, with its Islamic revivalism, produced Maulana Ashraf Ali Thanawi's *Bihishti Zevar* (Heavenly Ornaments) to school them in the "true" practices of Islam. Thanawi was not interested in plight of women as such but Muslim women in particular and advocated that Islam is the only acceptable route to impart upliftment to women's lives. Thanawi proscribes *Mirat* for several reasons. It is radical in its outlook as it equates Islam with other religions, he felt such writings "weaken faith". Apart from clerical disapproval and these paradoxes inherent in the issue of women's education, there is also the risk of women outperforming men- just as Asghari emerges to be the most shrewd, diplomatic, officious, self dependent, reputed and rich member of the entire clan. This radicalism can be attributed to the imprint of western modernization that has sneaked into Ahmad's world view. Ahmad's received westernization and colonized subjectivity juxtapose religious against secular, traditional against modern, scriptural against practical and piety against success. The guidelines of conduct Ahmad proposes for men and women also carry an imprint of the west. He readily empathises with the British agenda of imparting education to women. He speaks almost in despair of the *purdah* system which severely restricts the potential of women. Asghari tells her pupils how she found women without *purdah* of the village where her family had sought shelter during the 1857 uprising to be no less dignified and respectable. She makes a strong case for the equality of women by

convincing her astonished pupils that a woman can also be “king” and do everything which her male counterpart would. The robust and noble nature of English women is valorised by Asghari. The narrative veers towards the western construct of family life where the difference makes for a mutually complimentary equilibrium (Ahmad, 1869, 1903, p. 62).

Pritchett makes a very interesting point that her larger than life role goes unnoticed and unchallenged by the family and the community which is so enamoured by the “energy, organisation, diplomatic skills and managerial prowess” of this paragon of good qualities that she gets away with all her meddlesomeness. Pritchett concludes that

What her story really demonstrates is that in practice, smart, shrewd people (including women) can manipulate less capable people (including men) to great advantage. What Asghari’s story shows is that nothing succeeds like success. (Pritchett, 1903, p. 215)

Isn’t the story of Asghari another version of the success story of the British in India and elsewhere? This serves a quid pro quo for the phenomenon of the language and its ideology permeating tangibly into the psyche of the learner. Belonging to the Macaulayan class of interpreters, Nazir Ahmad overwrites the Islamic narrative with western correctives. Writes Naim:

These novels of Nadhir Ahmad are just the right kind of success stories that the Muslims of India needed to hear in the trying years after the failure of the mutiny and the dissolution of the symbols of their temporal power. Separating the world of God from the world of Caesar ... these novels were precisely the kind of adab that both the rulers and the ruled seemed to have desired at that particular time in history. (Naim, 1984, p.306)

While writing his tale, Ahmad adopts quite a few devices in order to make it eligible for favourable British consideration. First and foremost, it is written in a straightforward fictional form. The setting is naturalist like the European novel. The language is credible and accessible with quite a bit of the story unfolding through the dialogue mode. One immediately noticeable quality of this work is its robust narration and colloquial diction of the *begamati zubaan*- the Urdu spoken in the *zenanas* of houses to great effect (Minault, 1986, 2002). The authorial omniscient voice of the *daastaan* narrator takes a backseat and there emerge a multiplicity of voices speaking in character and verisimilitude. The Fort Williams College had already popularised the no-frills Urdu. This Urdu, though derided by purists at Delhi and Lucknow, became the preferred medium by the British, the periodicals, the printing and publication houses in Lucknow like the Naval Kishore Press, the emerging literate middle class readers and the social reformists like Sir Syed Ahmad Khan. One feature where Ahmad deviates from the realist European novel is in the outspoken didacticism of *Mirat*. This is done with one eye on the notice and another on the general trait of the British superiors. Moral agenda is frontal and pivotal in *Mirat* because just as the British administrators had no qualms in preaching to the native



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Delhi's Journey Part 3

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Abstract : Journey of any city is a very fascinating one to scholars of urban studies as well as dwellers, visitors, policy makers and managers of cities. Delhi has an extremely rich past dating back to pre-historic times and charting epochs like the Gupta period, Rajput phase, the Sultanate, Lodhis, Mughals, British and finally, capital of Independent India. This paper is third part of a series in which the first part presented a birds' eye view of the urban character of Delhi from the prehistoric times to 1638: the founding of Shahjahanabad and the second continued the story till the Twilight of the Mughals. The next phase of Delhi history has been covered in a previously published paper by the author- 'Delhi during Pax Britannica'. The third part of this series in this paper encapsulates the impact and aftermath of the 1857 uprising on the city of Delhi, including the three darbars and the announcement of shifting of the imperial capital from Calcutta to Delhi in the last one in 1911. The objective of this series is to contextualize many monuments, travel writings, novels, memoirs, films, myths, stories, stereotypes present in/ on Delhi to a continuity as well as complexity of urban and cultural tradition. As thinkers and users of cities, it is imperative that we appreciate the ethos we inherit, consume, represent and create. Using a variety of sources from history, sociology, cultural and urban studies, the paper puts together diverse dimensions of this ancient city and imperial capital from the perspective of underscoring that urbanity has always been a matter of intersecting spaces, lives, powers and intentions.

IndexTerms: *Delhi history, Delhi culture, 1857 uprising, Delhi darbars, Imperial capital*

I. INTRODUCTION

Delhi has had a long and layered history up to the period of Pax Britannica or British Peace. The period of Pax Britannica extends from the turn of the eighteenth century to the middle of the nineteenth century. It inaugurated the British innings in the city leaving an indelible mark Delhi's political, cultural and urban history (Mittal, 2013). It was on the near idyllic setting of the British peace that the terror of the 1857 uprising landed. The British maintained throughout that 1857 was nothing more than a "sepoys mutiny", which was "wholly unpatriotic and selfish... with no native leadership and popular support" ("Talmiz Khaldun, 2007, p. 3). Later attempts at more objective analysis have had to stumble against the availability of only British records as the undercover pre-rebellion activities erased all records. Whether the "revolt" was instantaneous or organized, therefore, remains a matter of conjecture. "Talmiz Khaldun" (pseudonym of Satinder Singh, journalist and scholar) resolves the issue through a middling statement which most likely comes closest to truth that "the rebels had built up an organization in the pre-rebellion days. It is, also, equally evident that the organization was still in an embryonic stage at the time of the outbreak of the rebellion" ("Talmiz Khaldun, 2007, p. 33). The revolt, however, did cut across regions, religions and classes and can be seen today as the product of discontent of Indians with British economic, political, administrative and racial policies. It was evident to the poverty stricken artisans and cultivators, job denied middle classes, dispossessed landowners, annexed principalities who felt decimated and humiliated by the self serving British that this regime was exploitative and apathetic. Generally, the pattern of the revolt was that of near simultaneous eruptions in the barracks and the city, with government treasuries, records, courts and prisons assaulted for settling scores with the British and their beneficiaries. The revolt which began on May 10, 1857 in Meerut spread like wildfire engulfing East Punjab, Delhi, Oudh, Rohilkhand, Kanpur, Benaras, Jhansi, Bundelkhand, Central India, Arrah and Patna in Bihar. Despite a wide sweep and shared grievances of many segments of the society, the revolt was eventually suppressed due to the antipathy of many regions like West Punjab, Presidency towns and Bengal and chunks of the Indian populace like the rulers, taluqdars, money lenders, traders, officers and other western educated Indians. Also, the revolt hinged on the hostility towards a foreign power but lacked the concrete of a nationalist or reformist agenda. Each participating faction had common generality but different specificity. The pronouncement of Bahadur Shah as emperor motivated many principalities to join hands but repelled an equal number as they perceived personal threat in it. The command at Delhi tried to overcome the feudal nature of the rebellion by constituting new organizational structures like a democratic court of administrators in Delhi and other nerve centres. These raw methods were insignificant in the face of an economically, politically, militarily and intellectually seasoned opponent like the British.

Delhi lay very much in the eye of the storm as the enraged Meerut soldiers proceeded towards it reaching here in the morning of May 11, 1857 proclaiming Bahadur Shah as the emperor of India. This act of vesting authority in an old man of eighty two years who spent time in literary pursuits was a piece of inspired thinking or a momentary decision is debated from varying standpoints. On the one hand, historians of the revolt consider that it pitched the revolt not just at military level but at a far more popular level, while on the other, the act is seen as a desperate and unpremeditated recourse as it raised dissension in Hindu and Sikh allies (Joshi, 2007; Bhattacharya, 2007). When the Meerut soldiers arrived in Delhi rampaging on the bridge of boats on the Yamuna, first visible to Bahadur Shah through his *jarokha* of his *baithak*, he as well as the entire city was taken by surprise. The soldiers entered from the Daryaganj gate where the local infantry- the 38th regiment stationed outside



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Delhi's Journey Part 2

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Abstract— Journey of any city is a very fascinating one to scholars of urban studies as well as dwellers, visitors, policy makers and managers of cities. Delhi has an extremely rich past dating back to pre-historic times and charting epochs like the Gupta period, Rajput phase, the Sultanate, Lodhis, Mughals, British and finally, capital of Independent India. This paper presents a birds' eye view of the urban character of Delhi from the founding of Shahjahanabad in 1638 to British occupation of Delhi in 1803. The objective of the paper is to contextualize many monuments, travel writings, novels, memoirs, films, myths, stories, stereotypes present in/ on Delhi to a continuity as well as complexity of urban and cultural tradition. As thinkers and users of cities, it is imperative that we appreciate the ethos we inherit, consume, represent and create. Using a variety of sources from history, sociology, cultural and urban studies, the paper puts together diverse dimensions of this ancient city and imperial capital from the perspective of underscoring that urbanity has always been a matter of intersecting spaces, lives, powers and intentions. This electronic document is a "live" template. The various components of your paper [title, text, heads, etc.] are already defined on the style sheet, as illustrated by the portions given in this document.

Index Terms— Delhi history, Delhi Culture, Shahjahanabad, Mughal Delhi, Urban Development

I. SHAHJAHANABAD: URBAN CHARACTER

The immediate reason for Shah Jahan's desire to return to Delhi is said to be the inability to build a royal ceremonial processional pathway in the crowded and haphazard Agra. Often called the engineer king, Shah Jahan was a passionate and knowledgeable builder. It is said that where Akbar built in sand stone, Shah Jahan built in marble. After the death of Mumtaz Mahal, emotionally distraught and spatially thwarted in Agra, he ordered a fresh site to be located for Shahjahanabad. Delhi proved to be ideally suited for the purpose with a more hospitable climate, abundance of water and availability of building material from the ruins nearby. The imprint of his sophisticated personal taste as well as the display of opulence by an empire at the height of its power constituted the allied objectives which determined the scope and shape of this new capital. On 29 April, 1639, at an auspicious time pronounced by the astrologers, Ghairat Khan, the *Subahadar* of Delhi, entrusted Ustad Hamid and Ustad Ahmad, the two most renowned builders, the work of constructing the capital. As Samuel V Noe surmises, the desire and design of Shah Jahan's capital was most likely inspired by reports of Shah Abbas's excellent capital at Isfahan: "With the Persian orientation of the Mughal court in general and Shah Jahan in particular, Isfahan must have provided a provocative challenge" (Noe, 1986, p. 237). Despite pre-existing impediments like two rocky hillocks on the otherwise flat plains, the meandering river, the ruins of two previous cities, Salimgarh fortress in the vicinity and network of much used long-distance highways, the architects were able to achieve a near perfect symmetry in keeping with Persian formalism. Stephen P Blake highlights another influence which could have been in play in the drawing up of Shahjahanabad's plan:

The plan of Shahjahanabad appears to have been based on a design from the ancient Hindu texts on architecture. These texts, the *vastu sastras* (rules for architecture), were part of a larger body of Sanskrit texts called the *silpa sastras* (rules for manual arts) The *Manasara*, a *vastu sastra* dating c. A.D. 400-600 listed a semi-elliptical design called *karmuka* (bow) as one of the shapes a settlement might take. Such a plan was especially appropriate for a site fronting a river or sea-shore." (Blake, 1986, 2002, p. 71)

In Hindu towns based on *Karmuka* plan, the most sacred spot was the juncture where two perpendicular streets intersected and there stood a temple dedicated to Shiva or Vishnu, but in Islamic Shahjahanabad this spot was occupied by the Palace Fortress, the Qila Mubarak as it was then called, or the Red Fort, as it is now called. Islamic city, as expounded in some detail by Thomas Krafft is a formal stereotype with a centrally located Friday mosque, the bazaar around it, distinct socio-economic differentiations from centre to periphery, irregular street pattern a city wall and citadel, intra urban quarters, blind alleys as its typical components. Writes Krafft,

Unlike other cities of the Islamic world, the bazaars of the Islamic Indian cities do not have any differentiations. On the contrary, retailing, manufacturing and living form a close symbiosis....Bazaars are by no means spatially extended complexes, but are characterised by linear patterns, thus excluding and preventing the development of central-peripheral gradients (Ehlers-Krafft, 1993, p. 22)

Shedding light on another quintessential feature of the city, Jamal Malik writes that, "The builders of Shahjahanabad created the architectonic expression of what has often been called the "patrimonial system" in its climax" (Malik, 1993). However, as Narayani Gupta explains, Shahjahanabad can be seen pre-eminently a Mughal city in form "but its lifestyle was delineated largely by its inhabitants. The immigration, by individuals and communities, over many centuries gave it its unique feel and flavor." (Gupta, 1993, p. 31)

II. SHAHJAHANABAD: URBAN GEOGRAPHY

Shahjahanabad-the walled city- was enclosed within a stone wall 27 feet high, 12 feet thick and 3.8 miles long. Built between 1651-8, it had 27 towers and numerous gates. Major entryways in the city comprised of the Kashmiri Gate, Mori Gate, Kabuli Gate, Lahori Gate, Ajmeri Gate, Turkomani Gate and Akbarabadi Gate. The River front side presented access to the river through Raj Ghat, Qila Ghat and Nigambodh Ghat. Along with these major inlets, there were many smaller ones too located near important mansions, markets or mosques. The most important public thoroughfare, road or boulevard of the city, the Chandni Chowk, extended from Lahori Gate to Fatehpuri Masjid with a central canal (Nahar-i-bihisht), tree lined roads and similarly built shops in Urdu bazaar, Ashrafi bazaar and Fatehpuri bazaar. Coffee houses, gardens, hammams and serais also dotted this street. Another bazaar sprawled out from the Akbarabadi gate which over time became famous as Faiz Bazar while Khas Bazar was located on the street connecting the Palace Fort to the Jama Masjid. Along long secondary roads, special bazaars in association with *karkhanas* located in the vicinity developed. The mohallas had local bazaars. The Palace Fort and the Jama Masjid, in fact, formed the twin foci of the city. The Fort, built in red sandstone largely obtained from the neighbourhood of Fatehpur Sikri, was octagonal in shape with a perimeter of nearly two miles with dimensions of 3,100 feet X 1,650 feet. Its axes were aligned with cardinal points of the compass. A moat, 75 feet wide and 30 feet deep, protected the Fort on the landward side. The Fort was divided into two rectangles- the river facing one was the hub of much of the domestic and official activity. The southern half of this rectangle housed the *harim* (women's mansions) to which access was limited to sons and husbands. The *Imtiaz* or *Mumtaz Mahal*, later called the *Rang Mahal*, was the largest building which was the venue for routine and recreational activity of residents of the Fort and to which Shah Jahan retired after his daily schedule in the *Diwan-i-aam*. Adjoining this space were the *Aramgah* or *Khwabgah* (place for sleeping) and the emperor's *s'jharokha* (balcony) in the *Mussaman Burj* (Octagonal Tower) facing the riverside underneath which petitioners and subjects would gather for the daily darshan. The northern half contained the more public buildings of the court. The *Diwan-i-aam* (Hall of Public Audience) was a large open pavilion of forty pillars divided into two parts, one for princes, distinguished *amirs*, ambassadors and dignitaries



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DELHI'S JOURNEY PART 1

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Abstract—*Journey of any city is a very fascinating one to scholars of urban studies as well as dwellers, visitors, policy makers and managers of cities. Delhi has an extremely rich past dating back to pre-historic times and charting epochs like the Gupta period, Rajput phase, the Sultanate, Lodhis, Mughals, British and finally, capital of Independent India. This paper presents a birds' eye view of the urban character of Delhi from the prehistoric times to 1638: the founding of Shahjahanabad. The objective of the paper is to contextualize many monuments, travel writings, novels, memoirs, films, myths, stories, stereotypes present in/ on Delhi to a continuity as well as complexity of urban and cultural tradition. As thinkers and users of cities, it is imperative that we appreciate the ethos we inherit, consume, represent and create. Using a variety of sources from history, sociology, cultural and urban studies, the paper puts together diverse dimensions of this ancient city and imperial capital from the perspective of underscoring that urbanity has always been a matter of intersecting spaces, lives, powers and intentions.*

Index Terms: Delhi history, Delhi Culture, Indraprastha, Medieval Delhi, Urban Development

I. EMERGENCE OF A CITY: THE URBAN PHENOMENON

The rise of the city has always been an interesting phenomenon. Over time, definitions about the nature and origin of city have come into existence. As J S Grewal summarises,

The town has emerged in history with two characteristics: first, a high density population concentrated within a limited space and secondly, a predominantly non-agricultural, particularly non-cultivating nature of its population. This men-space ratio and occupational heterogeneity, with their consequential relationships, have formed the primary basis for differentiation between the city and the village. (Grewal, 1991, p.1)

As Lewis Mumford elaborates in his *Culture of Cities*:

The city is the form and symbol of an integrated social relationship; it is the seat of the temple, the market, the hall of justice, the academy of learning. Here in the city, the goods of civilization are multiplied and manifolded; here is where the human experience is transformed into visible signs, symbols, patterns of conduct, systems of order. (Mumford, 1938, p.3)

Thus, the city has served as an "index value, indicating, measuring and summarizing the civilization" (Meadows, 1976, p. 16). In the Indian context, R S Sharma establishes that "early historic urbanism reached its peak in this country between 200 B.C. and about 300 A.D. Whether in North India, the Deccan, parts of South India, or in Western India, we have the same phenomenon" (Sharma, 1991, p. 13). He accounts for this spurt in urbanism to flourishing trade and commerce owing to sophisticated monetization. However, the graph declined 300 A.D. onwards which can be attributed to decline in overseas trade and also rising anarchy in social orders. The upside of this abatement was that the urban material got relocated in neighbouring areas resulting in a spreading out of urban structures in the form of *qasbas* (township of the smallest size). In the thirteenth and fourteenth century, the next urban revolution occurred, this time under Turkish rulers, which not only changed the face of the city with Islamic architecture and infrastructure but also the space of the city which now was no longer the exclusive preserve of the higher castes and classes but were open to craftsmen and labourers from all classes who possessed the skills for satisfying the tastes and needs of the ruling classes (Mohammad Habib, 1974). Whether the urban revival can be squarely pinned down to the arrival of the Turks in India or predates them from the eleventh century onwards is a moot question but Satish Chandra warns us to not equate urban revival with just political happenings and trade and industry but also with agriculture and culture (Chandra, 2012). Hence, if agricultural yields were adequate, the towns were able to survive on their own steam irrespective of upheavals in politics or commerce. Following the Eurocentric trajectory in charting the course of an Indian city is ineffective in the Indian context. Explains Grewal,

The study of Urban History becomes the study of the expansion and contraction of urban centres in dialectical relationship with the economic system, the political apparatus and the societal network. Discarding all Eurocentric definitions of the city, we may grasp the role of cities in our civilization by concentrating on the functions of urban centres as products of the prevailing forms of technology and social institutions. (Grewal, 1991, p. 77-78)

II. THE SAGA OF DELHI

The saga of Delhi contains great names, monumental architecture, conquests and displacements to encapsulate a fascinating tale of urban development, political and strategic manoeuvres, migrations leading to multi-cultural ethos culminating into its emergence today as a capital not only of the largest democracy of the world but also of an economically ascendant global power. As R E Frykenberg, the editor of the exhaustive anthology on Delhi- *Delhi through the Ages*-writes,

The symbol which Delhi has represented down through the ages is the symbol of empire; and therewith, it remains today the symbol of pan-Indian nationalization and unification. (Frykenberg, 1986, p. xii) H.K.Kaul, in his introduction to *Historic Delhi* writes that

The story of Delhi is not only one of massacres and memorials: it is also the story of its kings, its inhabitants, their manners, ideas, creations and lives. Above all, it is the story of city of cities. (Kaul, 1985, p. xvii)

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 1000 B.C. to 600 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

POSTMODERN DELHI: A VIEW THROUGH SOME NOVELS

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ABSTRACT

Postmodern Delhi has been writing itself voluminously. This paper presents a survey of the Delhi novel- a genre that saw a boom coinciding with economic liberalization of the 1980s and is brimming with more and more literature in the global postmodern ethos of today. The paper explores objectives, tropes, themes, voices and locations inscribed in this city based cultural production. The study is not just recommends must-read postmodern Delhi novels, but also examines the writers' postmodern subjectivity that coalesces and collides with Delhi urbanity and spatiality. The narratives that so emerge are winding, groping, finding, hiding, and ultimately inconclusive, like the city itself. Postmodern Delhi, thus, becomes an active agent in shaping the structure and thematics of these novels. Straddling the urban schisms of proximity vs. remoteness, belongingness vs. loneliness, community living vs. blasé anonymity, affluence vs. poverty, center vs. periphery, civicism vs. alienation, opportunity vs. monopoly and many such structural and existential dichotomies splintered all over the urban landscape, writings by campus goers, new migrants, old Delhiwallah gentry, expats, gated communities- all attempts to vanquish the hydra-headed monster of the maximum city.

KEYWORDS: *Postmodern Delhi, Delhi Novel, Delhi Culture, Global City, Campus Novel*

INTRODUCTION

What is postmodern Delhi? Postmodern Delhi is a global city. A 'global city' plays a significant role in global affairs in socioeconomic terms. The term 'global city' was used by sociologist Saskia Sassen in her work *The Global City: New York, London, Tokyo* (Sassen, 1991) who preferred the over earlier used terms like 'world city' or 'informational city'. The term represents chiefly the contemporary spatial-economic order from where globalization is created and enacted through global systems of finance and commerce. 'Global city' status is determined today by many surveys (for example, GaWC, AT Kearney, Chicago Council) that attempt to classify and rank cities. Standard characteristics which primarily make cities compete for these rankings comprise of the presence of a variety of international financial services, especially in finance, insurance, real estate, banking, accountancy, and marketing and headquarters of several multinational corporations. Using relational data, Jon Beaverstock, Richard G. Smith and Peter J. Taylor made the first attempt in 1998 to define, categorize and rank global cities while working at the Loughborough University (United Kingdom). They established the Globalization and World Cities Research Network (GaWC) which published a roster of world cities in the *GaWC Research Bulletin* 5 ranking cities on the basis of their connectivity through four "advanced producer services": accountancy, advertising, banking/finance, and law. The GaWC inventory identifies three levels of global cities and several sub-ranks as given below:

- Alpha++ cities (like London and New York) are more influential in the global economy than all other cities.
- Alpha+ cities support Alpha++ cities by providing advanced services.
- Alpha and Alpha- cities serve as major economic bridges in the world economy.
- Beta, gamma and sufficiency level cities are cities that link moderate, small and subsistence level economic regions respectively.

GaWC has issued latest rankings in 2016. New Delhi ranks of Alpha- in this roster. In 2008, the American journal *Foreign Policy*, in conjunction with the Chicago-based consulting firm A.T. Kearney and the Chicago Council on Global Affairs (CCGA) index examines the city's performance on the parameters of business volume, human resource, information technology, culture, and politics. Here Delhi has spiraled down from ranking 41 in 2008 to ranking 61 in 2016. Mike Hales, a partner at AT Kearney and one of the authors of the Global Cities report observes about New Delhi:

New Delhi would do well to continue to focus on improving information exchange through increasing access to the internet for its citizens and continue to improve in news agencies and Google presence. In the political engagement, the city ranks at number 10, rising from number 35 in 2008. This is a testament to the capital city's internationalization. New Delhi excels in think tanks and embassies and consulates...

Veronique Dupont in 'Dream of Delhi as a Global City' (2011), explains the term global city is inadequately applied to South East Asian or post-colonial cities are "cities in transition", and globalization is a 'work in progress' Shaw (2007). "Cities in. Thus, the term "globalizing city" used by Marcuse and Van Kempen (2000) and Sandhu and Sandhu (2007) is more valid for a city like Delhi. (Dupont, 2011, p. 535) This is because Delhi might not conform to Friedmann and Sassen's theorization, but does display widespread effects of globalization. Dupont writes,

Delhi is not a hub of international finance, yet, since the 1990s, it has displayed its ability to interact with other global cities. Like other large Indian metropolises, it provides the global market with some direct investment opportunities and outsourced services. Hence, some scholars argue that Delhi could be considered a new type of global city, fitted into a network of complex flows, mobilizing information and communication technologies, and increasingly using the internet. (Dupont, 2011: 541)

A pursuit of 'global city' framework ideas has today become mandatory for city planners and managers resulting in inequitable development of global outreach sectors and infrastructural investment chiefly for the aspirational middle classes and trans-national population. Thus, urban skyline of skyscrapers, shopping malls, business centers, gated communities, and superhighways emerges to announce the arrival of modernity. This spectacular urbanity in Delhi can be seen in places like Gurgaon and NOIDA with their mushrooming of expensive residential complexes with foreign sounding names, complete with upmarket commercial, recreational, health and educational facilities. Huge swanky airport, flagship metro projects, Games and festivals, starred hotels, entertainment parks and even temples (Akshardham)- all fit together to construct the 'global city'. Needless to say, it gives rise to what has been called "socio-spatial disorder". (Banerjee-Guha, 2002) Vishnu Prasad (2013) builds an interesting comparison between the fate of Istanbul and the fate of Delhi. Delhi as well as Istanbul generates contentious and polarizing claims on the city. In attempting to make Delhi and Istanbul global cities; the state ends up pushing the ordinary citizens, the immigrants, "the quasi-visible proletariat who lubricate the city's burgeoning service sector" to the invisible ill-equipped margins in the city. As they imitate the concept

of the global city, cities like Delhi and Istanbul simultaneously deprive even basic amenities to a majority of their inhabitants. Postmodern cities are complex not just in terms of being global cities, but complexity has entered all walks of city life. City life is a summation of all the processes of the third urban revolution, unprecedented formal intricacy, diverse lifestyles and belief systems and hectic political activity.

METHODOLOGY

Delhi's tryst with postmodernity commences post liberalization in the 1980s. The visual and demographic character of the city underwent a rapid change. The geographical unit of the city transformed the conurbation called the National Capital Territory of Delhi (NCTD) covering 1483 sq. kilometers. The urban spilled into the peripheral towns (e.g NOIDA and Ghaziabad in Uttar Pradesh and Faridabad, Gurgaon, Bhiwani, Rewari, Bahadurgarh in Haryana) necessitating the establishment of the National Capital Region (NCR) Planning Board in 1996. In 1991, the Union Territory of Delhi attained the status of a quasi-state. In 1996, NCTD further expanded to National Capital Region (NCR). In 2018, NCR's population has crossed the 27 million mark. The postmodern, the neo-liberal and the globe are responsible for the pluralism and hybridity of what Soja called the post-metropolis in Delhi. This character is visible in the language and literature being produced in/on Delhi. Language and culture become offshoots of socio-linguistic and socio-cultural intermingling of mobile resources engendering a boundary-defying, critical and alternative discourse that questions the very idea of a dominant culture and a unique canon. (Rubdy, Rani and Lubna Alsgoff, 2014) This character is manifest in the plurality of genres, linguistic variety, locations, identities and intersections embedded in the contemporary literature in/ on Delhi. The quality and volume of literature on/ in Delhi has been steadily burgeoning over the years. Though 'Delhi novel' is not an established genre like the 'Bombay novel' is, yet if one examines and explores the many cultural micro-narratives speaking through the many Delhis that cohabit one geographical space, a case can certainly be built for a serious coinage and usage of this term and genre. Narayani Gupta wonders, "Where is the 'south Indian' who will write a story set in the India Coffee House, where is the Jamia, DU or JNU novel?" (Gupta, 2008) Dalrymple is also perplexed by the fact that "... Delhi has been at the center of India's history for at least 1,000 years (closer to 4,000 if you believe the stories about Indraprastha), it's amazing that there isn't a whole library of fine literature--academic and non-academic--about the city." (Dalrymple, 2008). Keeping in view the postmodern complexity and plurality of the city of Delhi, and the proliferation of narratives on the one hand and dearth of enough and defining material on the other, the paper attempts to profile some genres that constitute and articulate the essence and experience of postmodern Delhi.

SURVEY AND DISCUSSIONS

The Campus Novel

Postmodern Delhi is writing a lot of 'the campus novel'. The three campuses which are especially profusely written from Delhi are Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Delhi, Delhi University (DU) and Jawahar Lal Nehru University (JNU). The IIT (D) has had serial chroniclers like Chetan Bhagat (*Fives Point Someone*, 2004), Amitabh Bagchi (*Above Average*, 2007), and Tushar Raheja (*Anything For You Ma'am: the love story of an IITian*, 2006). Neeraj Chibba's *Zero Percentile: Missed IIT, Kissed Russia* (2009), Suman Hossain's *A Guy Thing...A Magical Love Story of an IITian* (2008), Saamil Shrivastava's *A Roller Coaster Ride - When An IITian Met a Bitsian Girl* (2010) and S V Divaakar's *The Winner's Price: Life Beyond the Campus* (2012) also make for very interesting reading. The other two campuses have not exploited so much the immense commercial potential of campus life. However, the institutions are slowly but surely

warming up to telling their tales. Sachin Garg's *A Sunny Shady Life* (2009) has Sunny Singh- DCE (Delhi College of Engineering) student as its protagonist. Rita Joshi's *The Awakening- A Novella in Verse* (1993) views the academic life in India from a lecturer's point of view. Anuradha Marwah Roy's novel *The Higher Education of Geetika Mehendiratta* (1993) catalogs the trials and tribulations of young aspirants in the academia. Manju Kapoor's *Home* (2006) takes us through Daulat Ram College as she charts the course of her female protagonist Nisha's life. *JNU: Sunthing Of A Mocktale* by Soma Das (200 is the quintessential JNU novel penned by its alumni. In the same series is Avijit Ghosh's *Up Campus Down Campus* (2016). **The two books cast a look at JNU politics and culture. A huge success among the alumni, students and admission seekers, the novels together seem to take the University as a microcosm of the country and its future.**

Stephania

Delhi University has been the bedrock of a literary Renaissance of sorts producing what has christened the Stephanian School of Literature. Amitav Ghosh, Rukun Advani, Mukul Kesavan and Shashi Tharoor are some famous exponents. Leela Gandhi dubs the Stephanian School of Literature (or SSL) as "nothing more than an interesting accident". (Gandhi, 1997) It is impossible, however, not to concede that the elite, diasporic, witty, cosmopolitan, and privileged ex-Stephanian has been the torchbearer in Indian writing in English. The Stephanian repertoire represents the middle class politics and culture of dominant forms and emergent nation. Tharoor associates elitism, Anglophilia and depreciation with this cultural production. (Tharoor, 2005, p. 220) To these, one should also add masculinity. (Bose, 2000) Tharoor accepts that Stephania inspired him greatly, imparting faith in "all-inclusive, multanimous, free-thinkingcultures". (Tharoor, 2005: 223):

Whether or not there is an SSL, there is certainly a spirit that can be called Stephenian: after all, I spent three years living in and celebrating it. Stephania was both an ethos and a condition to which we aspired. (Tharoor, 2005: 220)

Thus, with the emergence of Delhi as a bustling educational hub hosting students from not just India but all over the world, it has started being documented voluminously from the campuses. Life on campus is a very impressionable phase in a person's bildungsroman or kunstlerroman. Therefore, these narratives pulsate with the raw poignancy of youth and the dreams of future city dwellers. The cut-throat competitive city and society, deeply etched divides and rivalries, highly idealized and romanticized academia, the trans-national and trans-cultural roller coaster of unbridled diversity, the humor and satire of College encounters are all the stuff that memories, careers and personalities are made of. It is a time characterized by locations, dislocation and relocations- the city forms an important part of all of these.

New Locations

The changing "schizoid" character of Delhi has been noted by scholars of Development Studies like Dr. Sanjay Kumar. (Kumar, 2013: 117) Traditional values clash against global forces and cultures "overlap, merge, interact and assimilate". Accordingly, he feels that "The city of Delhi needs a new definition" (Kumar, 2013, p. 117). The age-old twin-city has stretched to three cities in one: 'the central city', "trans-Yamuna" and the peripheries. These new pockets of settlements begin to speak in literature of/ from this city. Amitabha Bagchi's *Above Average* (2007) is the first novel that encapsulates the new middle class constellation of group housing societies of Indraprastha Extension and Mayur Vihar. The novel maps a new urban ethos, all the while debunking notions of centrality and elitism in Delhi.

Interested in tracing two phenomena in particular, viz. “How the middle class views itself, and how the internal lives of people are affected by the landscapes they inhabit”, Bagchi also heralds new landmarks in the narrative imagination of Delhi (Bagchi, 2011). Describing the “clouds of dust”, “stray dogs”, “small dark children in torn vests and colored shorts”, “pawn shop”, “a patch of dust” meant to have been a park, “foreign liquor shop”, “evening hawkers” and “large open drain which marks the western boundary of Mayur Vihar phase 1”, Bagchi brings to life the evolution of “Trans-Yamuna”. Bagchi writes,

Several waves of people were to spill out of Delhi to what is called the Trans-Yamuna by those who live west of the river and East Delhi by those who live east of it. The first wave was the ‘resettled’ slum dwellers of Delhi, housed in the riot-prone warren called Trilok Puri. The second was of people certified to be part of the ‘middle income group’ by the Delhi Development Authority. This certification was accompanied by the privilege of inhabiting one of hundreds of dirty yellow concrete boxes that the DDA collectively named Mayur Vihar. The third wave was the Society dwellers. (Bagchi, 2007: 32)

Arindam Chatterjee, the protagonist, like Bagchi, washes up on the Yamuna flood plains riding the third wave. As such, the Co-operative Group Housing Society (CGHS) bylaws are designed to create islands of homogeneity fostering neo-identities. Two other localities figure in this new conglomeration of habitats- Mandawali and Preet Vihar. The former is dominated by the cattle herders and milk sellers (also feared later as bandit brigands) living of your in the villages of East Delhi. The latter is the new baroque world of the affluent “kothis” and mansions. Trans-Yamuna or East Delhi, thus, becomes a melting pot of urban and demographic shifts best understood as “peri-urbanization: the formation of ‘mixed spaces’, midway between urban centers and rural spaces, transitional spaces subject to multiple transformations—physical, morphological, socio-demographic, cultural, economic and functional” (Dupont, 2005, p. 10) While the “mixed spaces” are locked in almost a primordial kind of conflict as if the natives sought revenge on the conquistadors for dispossessing them, they also bring about democratization in human relationships of a type not conceivable in bureaucratic conclaves.

Old locations: New Interiority

Along with new localities around the literary block, but old ones also don millennial hats of postmodernity. Navtej Sarna’s *We Weren’t Lovers Like That* (2003) looks at Delhi through the moody inferiority of its protagonist. Sarna did his schooling from Delhi’s Frank Anthony Public School and Dehradun’s St. Joseph’s School. He earned a graduate degree in commerce from Sri Ram College of Commerce, joined the Law Faculty for LL.B. Degree, followed by a diploma in journalism to eventually build a career in the Indian Foreign Service in 1980. Sarna lived largely in Delhi, but started to feel like an alien in the city. “But today I feel a sense of loss for Delhi that was a few decades ago,” he says. (Sarna, n.d.) In *We Weren’t Lovers Like That*, as Aftab turns forty, his fifteen years old marriage falls apart. The lanes and by-lanes of Delhi are steeped in his many moments and metaphors. Connaught Place, the iconic hotspot and the centerpiece of the Capital, is represented through the eyes of Aftab clouded with misery and rejection. The inner and outer struggle gets inextricably tied to each other. About Connaught Place, Aftab says, “generally speaking, a lousy place. It is one of the lousiest places in Delhi; in fact, it is the lousy centre of what has become, for the most part, a lousy city” (Sarna, 2003: 22). This is a Delhi embroiled in the postmodern where micro-narratives of self penetrate the dogmatic meta-narratives to bring out idiosyncratic alterity of places.

Sarnath Banerjee's graphic novel *Corridor* also looks at Connaught Place inside out. Sarnath Banerjee was born in Calcutta in 1972. Having studied the image and communication at Goldsmiths College, University of London, he now lives and works in Delhi, India. The Kafkaesque narrative of *Corridor* meanders into New as well as Old through four oddball characters—Jehangir Rangoonwala, Brighu, Digital Dutta and Shinto. Note to an exhibition showcasing Banerjee's work describes *Corridor* as a “journey through fragile post-colonial spaces in the metropolises New Delhi and Calcutta that are almost unknown in the West.” The novel can be seen as a postmodern take on “fragmented realities in the cities of the subcontinent; (to bring) the past and the present in relation, in order to examine stereotypes, myths and morality in post-colonial India.”

(Retrieved from http://universes-in-universe.org/eng/nafas/articles/2005/time_and_space/photos/banerjee_1) Reminiscing about Delhi, Banerjee says, “There was this feeling of stumbling about in the city, waiting for things to happen, like the characters in the book *Corridor*....So there existed a very colorful world. You just had to step outside and there were stories waiting for you in each and every corner.” (Retrieved from <http://kyoorius.com/2014/01/story-boxes-sarnath-banerjee/#sthash.jaqnUU5t.dpuf>) Most of his characters and stories emanate from these known, yet unknown, corners.

Margins and Peripheries

Jet City Woman (2007) by Ankush Saikia follows “the circuit of desire, drugs, violence, and greed that exists at the fringes of Delhi” and “casts light on the lives that have so far been peripheral to the grand narrative of this city—students from northeast India, Tibet and Afghan refugees, Anglo-Indians”. (Saikia, 2007) A tumultuous love story of a young student from Shillong and mysterious Naina, it unearths the ugly face of urban Delhi pockmarked with hazy careers and dreams. The dotcom bubble, the BPO industry, the retail and hospitality segments, sell pipe dreams to the girls and boys of the northeast who throng the city. The “mercurial Naina” embodies the city itself. She is inscrutable and unshakeable like the city itself. The *Jet City Woman*, Naina, is the unattainable object of the protagonist's desire. Like Naina leaves him frustrated and dejected, similarly the small town girls and boys live on the edge of a precipice in this city. The almost racial divide, they experience within one's own country is exacerbated by the inherent schisms of a megacity like Delhi. Delhi, thus, is a significant character in the book that problematizes centrality by verbalizing the periphery. Sushmita Bose's *Single in The city* (2010) tells the tale of career women living on their own in Delhi facing multiple challenges of being small town working women in Delhi. ‘Single in the City’ works for The Hindustan Times. Hailing from Kolkata, she writes about the daily vagaries of adapting to the protean city. Delhi's Bengali haven, Chittranjan Park, is her choice of residence. Like Chang Town and PG accommodations in North campus, Delhi University forms a northeast cultural oasis, Chittaranjan Park is the same buffer for the Bengali settler. Though the book records the many pitfalls dogging the path of a single woman migrant professional, yet it also celebrates the emancipated autonomy available in the big city. Thus, the big city is an uncharted adventure offering escape, discovery, success, and identity.

Crime Fiction and Noir

Postmodern Delhi has also proved to be an apt setting for crime and detective fiction. British-origin writer Tarquin Hall, residing in New Delhi for the last few years and married to an Indian, has been writing his delightful Vish Puri series- *The Case of The Missing Servant* (2009, 2010), *The Case of the Man Who Died Laughing* (2012) and *The Case of The Deadly Butter Chicken* (2013). The series has Vish Puri sleuthing out of Khan Market. Hall forwards an interesting

theory regarding the popularity of Delhi as the chosen backdrop of Indian crime and detective fiction. Hall explains that, “I never planned to write detective fiction. My main interest was in writing about modern India and I decided that a private investigator would be a good way to describe it”. Zac O’Yeah, writing on detective fiction for Mint Lounge, also reiterates the social purpose of crime novels, which otherwise tend to be bracketed as pulp fiction:

Crime novels are like therapy; crime novels tell you something about how to survive in the big bad city with its everyday threats and traps. There are cultural aspects that make India different; a certain complexity in society, the family system in India is tighter, stronger. Detectives have to think more of their personal honor than a typical western private eye, who lives outside the system as a loner. An Indian detective is more connected to his or her clan and the larger social concerns of family life. Then, there is non-violence, a strong tradition, and a belief in karma: a detective cannot just shoot anybody just like that, or he or she might be reborn as a cockroach in his/her next life. (Sudan, December 8, 2014)

Thus, as Delhi potboiler simmers with the many contradictions and conflicts of India, crime fiction from its innards has begun to find global readability. As the genre becomes increasingly cosmopolitan, the city, stories strike a chord across milieus and nations. *Delhi Noir* (2009), an anthology of crime fiction edited by Hirsh Sawhney, manages to tread dark and seedy paths otherwise avoided in literature. In the process, it throws up an “alternative” facet of a city which seeks its rightful place in the overall picture. Writes the publishers’ blurb, “This is India uncut, the one you’re missing out on because mainstream publishing houses and glossy magazines can’t stomach it. It offers bone-chilling, mesmerizing take on the country’s chaotic capital, a city where opulence and poverty are constantly clashing, where old-world values and the information age wage a constant battle. Few books can alter one’s perception about the state of a society, but this does, while delivering noir that’s first-class in any light.” Thus, Delhi, on account of its whirlwind expansion, like Los Angeles, San Francisco, New York, Chicago, spreads out its own version of labyrinths of exist and nihilistic crises in film and fiction noir.

Memoirs and Travelogues

Postmodern Delhi figures extensively in memoirs of both natives and visitors. Malvika Singh documents Delhi right after the independence and its subsequent evolution in her *Perpetual City* (2013). At 12, her journalist parents, Raj and Romesh Thapar, relocated from Bombay to Delhi in the 1950s. They founded the literary journal *Seminar* in 1959. Singh, married Tejbir Singh, the nephew of Khushwant Singh. She paints a vivid picture of how life in the ’50s and ’60s was a lively gala of enjoying monuments, the Connaught Place, Old Delhi kuchas, musical soirees, and culinary fare. Talking about her need to write a memoir in a newspaper magazine article, she says there is no other way of writing the intimate ties with a city except through one’s empirical knowledge of it. In the second part of the memoir, titled ‘Changing City’, she recollects how political and bureaucratic corruption corrodes Delhi’s peace and charm. The reason she chooses the epithet “perpetual city” for postmodern Delhi is because she thinks that the city possesses a boundless zest and “keeps on adding value” despite all adversity. It “has grown into a very exciting city at all levels: culture, literature, journalism, art, fashion.” (Singh, December 6, 2013) Rana Dasgupta’s *Capital: A Portrait of Twenty-First century Delhi* (2014) on the other hand, digs at the brooding soul of the outwardly energetic city. While Malvika Singh’s memoir is a fond and indulgent recollection of the insider in the city, Rana Dasgupta swims against the tide as he negotiates his way into an insular city. Dasgupta arrives in Delhi from the United Kingdom in the year 2000 when the country is upbeat with anticipation of economic change. The economic boom, however, also brings in its wake conflict and violence.

The inexorable blows of savage capitalism, deal a fresh wound to the traumatised psyche of this ravaged city. There is a propaganda to see Delhi as an “emerging” city with equitable and consistent growth patterns, but the Dasgupta’s book draws attention to the morbid din and divide within this growth saga. Dasgupta, therefore, sees postmodern Delhi’s dreams quicken and evaporate at the same time.

While Rana Dasgupta links the ferocity of partition with dystopia in the city, Raza Rumi returns to India from Pakistan to alleviate that dystopia which he thinks in most South Asian cities. Most South Asian cities have witnessed violence and have been victims of narrow nationalist ideologies. In Raza Rumi’s *Delhi by Heart*, travel is not simply geographical but a travel across a schizophrenic divide of belonging and betrayal. As he meets Indians in ideologically neutral institutions of higher studies, UN missions, and Asian Development Bank, he undergoes a healing process of “unlearning” India. He is convinced that tolerant approaches like Sufism can provide emotional and psychological panacea in troubled South Asian cities. He rids himself of the indoctrination of treating India as the ‘enemy other’. He loves the Indian capital because it has been home to admirable personalities, Sufi philosophy, Urdu language and syncretic culture. Thus, Rumi’s *Delhi By Heart*, finds immense therapeutic and allaying potential in the cultural heritage of Delhi- a heritage which is precious and cannot be surrendered to fundamentalist agenda.

Expatriate Writing

Dalrymple’s *City of Djinnns* is the most celebrated novel in the category of expatriate writing. It engages with the city of Delhi at the level of managing ‘otherness’, speaking to the trans-national populace dwelling in foreign cities, coming to terms with processes of settling down, accumulating eclectic cultural experience, immersing in the experience of finding the city and documenting its stories and histories. Dalrymple notes that the world of nationalism, socialism and non-alignment in the post-independence Delhi stands replaced by capitalism, liberalization and globalization in postmodern Delhi. Standing at the cusp of modernity and postmodernity, he is riddled with some irreconcilable contradictions- first, the general meek and mild Delhiwalla is capable of gruesome acts of apathy and brutality. The city regarded as the most cultured city also has the history of rising bigoted mob violence. He grapples with another conundrum with respect to the arrival and departure of the British from India. Dalrymple takes to “ameliorating the British presence in India, and does so by constructing a particular (neo-benign) representation of the Raj” (Dorgelo, n.d.) and by glossing over their Econo-political and hegemonic domination in India. Cracking these riddles, finding telling narratives and excavating clues hidden in the depth of Delhi history constitute Dalrymple’s quest in the city of djinnns making him a cultural tourist, historian, expatriate and ex-imperialist all at the same time. Thus, the dawn of postmodern Delhi scripts a unique struggle in *City of Djinnns* with demons of the city and the demons of the self.

Sam Miller is a link in the expatriate chain traversing and writing Delhi with the osmotic fluidity of the outsider across city, self and ‘other’. He peregrinates in Delhi on foot like a true blue flâneur. A graduate in History from Cambridge and post-graduate in Politics from School of Oriental and African Studies, he first worked as a journalist in Delhi in 1990s. Writing *Delhi: Adventures in a Megacity* in 2008, Miller says he feels “vacillating attraction and repulsion for this monstrous, addictive city”. (Miller, 2008, p.4) Roaming the city like “a man possessed” (Miller, 2008, p. 4), he decides to walk in the city because ambulation is the exclusive prerogative of the homo sapiens. Delhi streets are a nightmare, all the more for a ‘foreigner’, but a huge chunk of the business of life is transacted in Delhi in the streets. The

kaleidoscopic experience available at pedestrian level is indispensable for any connoisseur of the city. Says Miller in a newspaper interview to Shailaja Bajpayi:

I have gone to insalubrious places and wondered what stories I would get out of them. My expectations were challenged. When we go there, we should not think the poorest of the poor are hopeless. Often they have more interesting things to tell.

Following the drift of contemporary expatriate writing, this flâneur feels the crackling hybridity stoked by the winds of capitalism and globalization. Explains Miller

... I walk the streets in a route which I describe in the book, trying to explore what has happened to this extraordinary city and the most important thing is that, in many ways, it had become a world city. (Miller, January 28, 2009)

Miller, thus, does not engage as much with Delhi's past as Dalrymple does. He charts the route of its present and future. Miller emerges to be the quintessential flâneur as he puts his otherness out there to such an extent that he defeats the "bahurupiya shahr" (multi-faceted city) in its own game by showing the city its own 'other' face. The objective of the Miller's peripatetic journey is to overcome "otherness" that an expatriate feels in a new city, but with the adventurism of the flâneur and the immersion of a journalist, he shows a mirror to the city of Delhi that reflects not its storied splendor but the "other" face of urban squalor.

CONCLUSIONS

The above inquiry suggests that postmodern Delhi's journey commencing with economic liberalization of the 1980s and standing today in a flurry of global flux has bewildered and churned the Indian as well as the expatriate jet-setter in equal measures. The act of reading and writing postmodern Delhi is inextricably linked to the sense of "otherness" arising out of inbuilt hierarchies and binaries of societies. To deal with this "otherness", postmodern Delhi has been writing itself voluminously. As is evident from the Delhi novel boom at the turn of the century, the oeuvre has been swelling not only numerically, but also the tropes, locations, voices, genres inscribed in it have also multiplied. These novels document the unique urbanity palpable in Delhi as interacted through the writers' shifting subjectivity and psycho-geographic spatiality. More than the writer's location, it is their dislocation that becomes an active participant in the thematics and form of the postmodern Delhi novel. Denizens of postmodern Delhi cannot remain impervious to the very disparate and diverse; competitive and congested; visual, aural and the verbally overloaded environment they run into at every twist and turn in the city. Campus goers, new migrants, Old Delhiwallah gentry, expats, diplomats, colonywallahs, housing society dwellers, "centrally located", peri-urban ultra-luxury havens- all seek to vanquish the hydra-headed monster of the maximum city. The narratives take the mold of the city itself – winding, groping, finding hiding, and ultimately inconclusive. Thus, in the postmodern Delhi novel, the empirical and the prosthetic memory converges in odysseys that straddle urban fissures of proximity vs. remoteness, belongingness vs. loneliness, community living vs. blasé anonymity, affluence vs. poverty, centre vs. periphery, civicism vs. alienation, opportunity vs. monopoly and many such structural and existential dichotomies splintered all over the urban landscape.

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DELHI IN AHMED ALI'S TWILIGHT IN DELHI

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ABSTRACT

Ahmed Ali's Twilight in Delhi occupies a very significant place in writings and readings on Delhi as it takes us into the lanes and homes in Shahjahanabad along with a few other notable works like Nazeer Ahmad's Mirat-ul-Uroos and Krishna Sobti's Dil-o Danish. Twilight sets out to accomplish the political objective of making an impassioned plea for revitalising the crushed native self, the literary sensibility and sensitivity of the writer does not let the novel dwindle to mere propaganda and jingoism but takes it into the unchartered territories of comprehending and narrativising the native self. Touching upon minutiae of Shahjahanabad at all levels, it traverses the Muslim cultural matrix of tradition and modernity, stasis and reform, resistance and alienation and nation and community. The modernist pen of Ali writing in English for the British is at the same time delving into spaces of tortured subjectivity, identity, politics, urbanity and creativity of the Muslim community at the cusp of India's independence. The paper explores the lenses through which Ahmed Ali gazes at these spaces. The paper also underlines the importance of reading Twilight in conjunction with the two books mentioned above to not only catch a glimpse of the culture of Shahjahanabad but also the impact of colonization on representational practices of that culture.

KEYWORDS: Ahmed Ali, Shahjahanabad, Delhi Novel, Delhi Culture, Muslim Narratives

There has been a renewed interest in *Twilight in Delhi* in the centenary year of its author Ahmed Ali (1910- 1994) in 2010. A volume titled *the two sided canvas: perspectives on Ahmed Ali* to "fill in the gaps in scholarship" was brought out under the stewardship of Mehr Afsan Faruqi (Faruqi, 2013) Sahitya Akademi also commemorated the writer's work in a three day seminar under Prof. Harish Trivedi's guidance. "What is Ahmed Ali doing?" in *Twilight in Delhi* is an oft asked and variously answered question. His contemporary and compatriot Muhammad Hasan Askari observed that there was a non-literary and a literary purpose behind the novel. The non-literary comprised of writing a "guide" to Delhi for Englishmen: "I can, as a result, repeat without fear that the book has been written for Englishmen who are unfamiliar with life in Delhi and the author wishes to acquaint them with this way of living" (Askari, 1949, 2013, p. 14). The novel's uneasy relationship with Delhi has also been noted in terms of its singular focus on a particular version of the past as well as modernity, a particular religious community, a particular class of that religious community and literariness that overshadows progressive politics. The novel, however, occupies a very significant place in writings and readings on Delhi irrespective of the centenary issue or the commemorative seminar as it takes us into the lanes and homes in Shahjahanabad along with a few other notable works like Nazeer Ahmad's *Mirat-ul-Uroos* (1869, Translated from Urdu into English by G E Ward in 1903 as *The Bride's Mirror*) and Krishna Sobti's *Dil-o Danish* (1993, Translated into English from Hindi by Reema Anand and Meenakshi