Contextualising Migration: Perspectives from Literature, Culture and Translation

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Acknowledgement

It gives us immense pleasure to present this book to the readers out there! For the past one and half years, every one of us went through challenging times due to the pandemic (COVID-19). The book - its editors, contributors and publishers were no exception to this and the publication of the book, in fact, was affected massively due to the outbreak. However, with the sustained faith in each other everything that needed for seeing this book to be published was taken care of confidently.

The idea of this book revolves around one of the most contentious issues in contemporary times today – is 'Migration.' It primarily brings to the fore a group of students, research scholars and academicians who trace the phenomenon of migration through engaged studies involving literature, culture and translation. One of the important aspects of this book is that its contributors (the students and research scholars) put an additional effort and rewrote their essays after presenting them during the three-day national conference on 'Migration' at GITAM (Deemed to be University), Hyderabad campus in January 2020. In addition, the invited speakers (academicians) who shared their academic expertise on the theme of Migration during the conference also agreed to make their contributions in the form of essays/articles for publication purposes further. Our efforts towards making this conference a success leading to the publication of this volume could not have been possible without academic collaboration as well as the generous financial support provided by the CIIL (Central Institute of Indian Languages), Mysuru. We are grateful to all of them for their cordial support and encouragement.

We are grateful to Prof. E. V. Ramakrishnan and Prof. Maya Pandit (Retd.), who not only accepted our invitation during the conference but also contributed immensely to the making of this volume. We are equally grateful to Prof. Shivarama

Acknowledgement

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Message

Migrants, refugees and displaced populations are often metaphorically portrayed as pawns on the chessboard of humanity. Migration, whether it is voluntary or involuntary, throws open new dynamics and has a profound impact on both emigrants and immigrants. However, contextualizing it in literature, culture and translation is fascinating indeed. Migration entails a host of phenomena including poverty, crime, insecurity, persecution, violence, war, partition, discrimination, existential threat etc. These issues have received attention in research, however, a lot more remains unexplored empirically and theoretically. It can only be understood in the light of well-evidenced reality propelled by the actual driving forces of migration. This interdisciplinary volume titled *Contextualising Migration: Perspectives from Literature, Culture and Translation* explores these aspects of migration through the interconnecting lens of translation, literature and culture and presents vivid explanations in a wide range of contexts. Most of the writings have rightly observed the issues like who migrate, why, when and where. The migrants, refugees and displaced populations have received ample attention in the Indian and international context in multicultural settings. These issues are substantiated in the context of displacement, nationalism, transnationalism, post-colonial identity, and migrant's & refugee's identity across the borders. The diasporic experiences of migrants and refugees are explained as depicted through literature in English and literature in translation. The contours of translation and Translation Studies have also been discussed from the standpoint of diaspora literature.

The authors have presented interesting findings and scholarly discussions in various chapters of this book. I am highly impressed with them and congratulate the contributors for the same. I would also like to congratulate the National Translation Mission (NTM) and GITAM University, Hyderabad on compiling and bringing out this book. I am sure the readers will enjoy its vast array of contexts and the wonderful explanations offered by it. Best wishes

Prof. Shailendra Mohan,
Director, CIIL

Contents

Migration and Cultural Identity: An Introduction

Sayantan Mondal

The present volume was conceptualised at the conference organised in January 2020 titled "Contextualising Migration: Perspectives from Literature, Culture and Translation" on the occasion of the annual conference of the School of Humanities and Social Sciences at GITAM, Hyderabad. The conference was set to address and bring together the fresh interventions and nuances that were emerging in India as well as worldwide centring on the plight of human as well as citizens' rights in the wake of the Rohingya crisis in Myanmar (Azeem 2016; Imtiaz 2009) and citizenship debate and institutionalising of Citizenship Amendment Act in India (Bushan 2021; Subramanian 2021). Translation became a point of entry into this debate as the issue of migration and identity escalated into a pertinent matter within the national borders as it used to be of the international borders. Rising demands for a singularity of cultural identity started challenging the multicultural, multi-ethnic democracies like India whose cultural fabric is mosaicked with numerous languages and ways of life. A long history of close contact and frequent exchanges among vernaculars found themselves under particular attention. Such attention to cultural life, such creation and extensions of cultural borders into a political one were not too unfamiliar in the Indian subcontinent. National prerogatives as started getting defined by the rising demand for the cultural singularity following the majoritarian standard also appeared as a direct deduction from colonial epistemology or even that of European modernity (Deshpande 2011; Venkatesh 2018). Histories of colonial institutionalising of religion into communities and its terrible outcomes in the form 'Partition' seemed repeating themselves once again though in a different

form. Terms such as outsider, illegal refugee started making an appearance once again in everyday discourse.

Conceptualised at such a historical juncture, the aim of this volume is to contextualise these emergent tendencies within the long histories of migration motivated by a renewed understanding of translated ideas and identities in the present order of world affairs. The volume also aims to trace the literary metamorphosis under the influence of the emerging transnational, transmedial world of literary exchange that has documented the complex negotiation of loss and recovery and methods of searching for one's identity on one hand and on the other, made literature increasingly difficult to be tied down to one nation, one language. Consequently, the volume is divided into three interconnected sections. The first two sections are dedicated to account the challenges thrown by the latest discourse and dynamics of migration and to document the theoretical as well as literary responses provided to such developments. These sections also attempt to bring out the significant role of translation in the life of immigrant communities. The final section is designed to substantiate the understanding of the emerging fictional and non-fictional worlds further by looking comparatively into the recent literary output coming from the diaspora and discussing its shifts and extensions with respect to the early writings.

Wars, calamities, weather, partition, employment and eviction – there are many reasons for migration and it has been studied from such points of view. While these factors force people to migrate leaving their homes behind, there is hardly any respite from the trauma of departure, of rootlessness (Ragnoli 2019). It becomes part of peoples' memory, part of their corporeality and part of their survival and resistance which eventually gets registered in folk tales, performances and different literary forms. This translation of experience into tangible forms,

stories and songs, is a complex one as this apparent literary process is often closely dictated by the socio-political contours of migration. Migration, by bringing people in contact with a new culture, language and community, creates a volatile contact zone between the migrating and the host community. The host community often gets gripped by the fear of adulteration of their culture and compromise in their employment. The present world order provides us with many examples to inspect such fears closely and examine their validity and origin.

The inflow of migrants from the 'middle-eastern' countries to different parts of Europe has given birth to similar fears and anxieties among the European communities. When French President Emmanuel Macron, speaking to Europe 1 during the United Nations annual general meet in 2019, stated that "France cannot host everyone if it wants to host people well", he was voicing this same anxiety. France is not alone in bringing the discourse of being selective in the context of migration. We have heard similar concerns and slogans during Brexit campaigns. Interestingly, such discourses are not too uncommon in the Indian subcontinent as well. The brutal attacks on workers belonging to Uttar Pradesh and Bihar in 2008 in Maharashtra are not a distant memory. Similar incidents of attacks on migrant workers and vitriolic references often find their ways into electoral campaigns in India.

It has been noted on many occasions by experts of the global economy as well as multinational organisations such as the United Nations and the International Monetary Fund that the increase of national or provincial workforce due to migration plays a crucial role in strengthening the respective economy which contradicts all election or other politically motivated claims regarding migration. Besides, migration has also helped in addressing and resolving global labour market imbalances

resulting in the revision of migration policy in European countries and the US. May 2014 edition of Migration Policy Debates suggests that due to such policy changes Europe and US have received a 70% and 47% boost respectively to their workforce between 2004 and 2014. The scope of this volume allows us to closely investigate the other claims against migration that is cultural adulteration.

The domain of customs revolving around culinary habits, literary practices and religious festivities dominating ways of life and giving it a particular distinguishable identity has been broadly referred to as culture or national culture. However, such a domain, historically speaking, has perennially remained in a state of making, of becoming. Histories of colonisation, state annexation and reformation can account for such a transient state of becoming a culture for most modern nation-states. For which languages such as English, French and Spanish could become an integral part of Asian, African or South American cultures; for which it is not only the native American or indigenous Australian or Maori traditions that define the respective cultural identity of US, Australia or New Zealand respectively. Therefore, to assume cultural identity is a rigid one-dimensional entity and gets adulterated with the inflow of new elements is to create an ahistorical myth and to push under the carpet the question of power. This volume identifies the significance of this cultural impediment in global migration and attempts to understand the construction of a discourse of cultural adulteration through migrant culture from the vantage point of power and cultural status quo. It aims to bring to attention the need for a novel understanding of cultural identity in the present global order of things. By showing that, the present order has made it possible for an Indian immigrant to settle in the US or 'middle-east', write about the host nation and aspire to be accepted within the fold of literature, this volume points out demands for new

categories of literature beyond diaspora literature and charts out the need for reexamination of existing notions of culture-specific to nation-states. The world, in this volume, therefore, appears to be a contact zone of diverse languages and customs and this global order demands reception and acknowledgement of ideas such as mobile texts and transnational writers. This volume aspires to suggest not only possible new categories in literature and cultural identity but also a reexamination of mechanisms through which ideas such as national culture and national identity proliferate homogeneous equations of citizenship involving one land, one language and one identity.

Essays in section one of this volume attempt to address this specific need and theoretical possibilities in pursuit of an interdisciplinary understanding of the phenomenon of migration. Professor E. V. Ramakrishnan, by tracing looming influences of colonial epistemology in our treatment of migration, shows how the negotiation between the self and the society becomes a multidimensional platform where impulses to surrender to the nostalgia for home, adapting to the new surroundings and political ambience play their part with allusions to nation, nationality, globalisation and memory. By drawing readers' attention to the 'inner exile' of the migrated self, Prof. Ramakrishnan suggests the need to take stock of migration as an everyday process that renders the self unsettled forever and thereby questions the validity of political categories of the nation.

Prof. Maya Pandit's paper extends this argument on the lucidity of identity further by drawing examples of the lives of Mumbai dance bar girls. The ability which enables these women to translate between their village specific lifestyle and the profession demanded routines, prompts Professor Pandit to invite our readers for a relook at the ideas of memory, nostalgia and the local-global dichotomy commonly associated

with migration. Professor Shivarama Padikkal and Professor V B Tharekeswar's papers add to this discussion by pointing out how the act of translation itself is a migratory phenomenon and is getting shaped by the changing contours of people's mobility. By showing the interconnectedness of translation and Migration, and how these fields have been influencing each other in recent times, these papers offer theoretical roots that perhaps can enable one to trace the process of loss and recovery involved invariably with migration and translations.

In the first section of essays of this volume, migration, therefore, is deliberated as a phenomenon as well as a struggle playing out across the borders of language and socio-political landscape. The following section aims to build on that deliberation by tracing how migration and its expressions and documentations play out across the borders of readership, style and genres. A number of media are referred to in this section as songs, poetry as well as social practices which bear witness to this struggle and preserve the imprints of diverse factors such as multiplicity of linguistic and socio-political culture.

Essays on the Chinese and the Bhojpuri immigrants in Bengal look into the bureaucratic as well as emotional histories of the process as reflected in songs, folklores, census reports and emerging practices within the migrant communities. Tracing individual and political anxieties of the migrants, both these papers attempt to translate designs of negotiations by migrant communities which so far mostly remained confined within the bounds of vernacular literatures. Simultaneously, they bring out significant case studies which may familiarise the readers with the everyday struggle of language as well cultural politics that immigrants are subjected to. The paper on Miyah poetry amplifies the migrant community's voice which finds itself judged, stereotyped and accused of exercising, carrying forth its cultural heritage in a land inhabited for almost half a

century by them and traces how the morass of postcolonial political strategies is locked into a symbiotic relationship with such tendencies.

The final section attempts to capture the emergence of newer literary expressions and styles and codes of language as symptomatic of literary preservation of diversity experienced at the contact zones between the host and migrant community. Papers in this section, focus on the recent fictional writings and point out the emerging ideas, trends and concerns in diaspora literature and aim to substantiate the theoretical concerns outlined in the first section of this volume. For example, the fluidity of the idea of the nation finds its echo in the discussion of the emergent 'petrofiction'. Fictions such as Benyamin's *Jasmine Days* and *Goat Days* written in Malayalam, depicting the stories of protagonists caught up in Arab spring and lost in the Gulf respectively which became popular through their English translation remind us of the complex flux from which such literary texts evolved. These literatures compel us to contemplate - Where does this kind of writing belong to - are they native to Kerala or the Middle East?

Human mobility, in these examples, plays upon borders of nation, language and identity and keeps turning them porous. Deconstructing the structures at play that stigmatise and often marginalise migrants, these papers draw readers' attention to the power dynamics between the host and migrant community which controls and enacts the episodes of hopes, of integration and negation. Concerns emerging with long-settled migrants, issues evolving with the second and third-generation migrant population such as growing up as children in diaspora, succumbing to family expectations as well as the fate of women under anxious and cautious patriarchal customs are also taken up by these papers to show the evolving nature of migrants' concern and ambitions in the host land. Drawing our

attention to these aspects, these papers aim to push the boundaries of discourse on migration and literature beyond the themes of acculturation and assimilation and also attempt to suggest with analysis new ways of deliberation and investigation.

As we witness a global increase in migration, as more and more nation-states in Asia, America and Europe reel with the influx of migrants, we also notice the scope of new debates on migration, on possibilities and challenges for inclusive growth and development. These debates though will remain centred around local resistance against migrants finding a refuge, around the processes of dehumanisation migrants undergo as well as the cultural differences but are also bound to concentrate on the new nuances such processes of resistance and dehumanisation involve. This volume has sought to delve into the emerging global reaction to migration and ask - why exactly migrant culture and literature can be portrayed as threatening to the host culture? Does it challenge the given canon and if so, in what ways? What constitutes the fear of the migrants? How do migrants respond to such marginalisation? What role does translation play in accommodating migration?

Papers in this volume have attempted to address these questions, engage with them and find probable answers and directions which need further research and attention. The significance of understanding internal migration and provincial rivalries in analysing issues related to recent global migration; retracing the histories of cross-cultural exchanges and taking into account the emerging transnational and transmedial genres of literature are some of these core areas and directions. This endeavour will be satisfactory if such directions are found to be worthy of pursuit in further investigations and the aims of this volume manage to find their echoes in future scholarship on this field by the readers, and researchers.

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An Elsewhere Space: Self and Society in Times of Transnationalism

E. V. RAMAKRISHNAN

Abstract

The paper argues that migration is a defining feature of modernity by examining the after-effects of colonialism and imperialism in Asian, African and South-American countries. The exclusivist policies of imperial administrations resulted in the othering and alienating of native communities in all of these continents. It is important to retrieve the voices of the victims of traumatic experiences of imperial excesses, as demonstrated by authors such as John Breman and Yoshiaki Yoshimi. It is also important to distinguish between migration, diaspora and transnationalism from the perspective of the colonised people. The relations between nation, nation-state and migrant communities have been complicated by the economic and political aspects of globalisation. Through a discussion of some representative films and novels, it is argued that 'national' and 'transnational' are mutually constitutive. Transnational is a dynamic concept poised for major changes in the contemporary world as new power equations emerge between world powers.

Keywords: Migration, Modernity, Diaspora, Trans-nationalism, Globalisation, Cultural Mobility.

Migration has to be seen as one of the primary conditions of modernity. One may identify two major waves of modernity that began in Europe. Between 1492 and 1650, in the 16th and 17th centuries, the Spanish and Portuguese monarchies expanded their power into the continent of South America. This resulted in colonization of entire countries and cultures and assimilation of entire populations with the resultant erasure of indigenous languages and cultures. Beginning with

1650, another wave of conquest was initiated by countries such as England, France, the Netherlands and Germany shaping a new definition of modernity which was exclusivist in its claims.

The exclusion practised by European colonialism resulted in the creation of three excluded categories, namely, the Savage Other, the Black Other and the Oriental Other (Ommen 2005:2). Ommen says: "The habitat of the Savage Other was the New World, the Americas and Australia, that of the Black Other was Africa, the Dark Continent and the Oriental Other was located in Asia" (2). In the period of decolonization, the process of othering has been subjected to close historical examination. Inter-disciplinary subjects, such as Diaspora Studies, attempt to recover the forgotten histories of the excluded by documenting events and ideas that led to the erasure of cultural differences in colonial times. The uncivilized other which was constituted by the discourse of modernity permeates the epistemologies inherited by the post-colonial nations.

To illustrate how the new awareness about forgotten struggles is being brought back into the memory of the living present, one may recall an event of 2016. On 18th May 2016, the Canadian Prime Minister, Justin Trudeau offered a full apology before the House of Commons for the *Komagata Maru* incident. What was the incident which occasioned such an apology? *Komagata Maru* was the name of a ship in which 376 Indians (of which 340 were Sikhs), had set out from Hong Kong to immigrate to Canada. When they reached the Canadian coast, British Columbia refused to let the passengers disembark. We have to remember that, the British Empire extended to this part of the world as well, in the early part of the twentieth century. All attempts by Indians in Canada to offer help to them failed at the stiff opposition of the Canadian

government. The ship was forced to return to Calcutta where the British imperial police attempted to arrest the leaders. In the violence that followed, 19 passengers were killed and Gurdit Singh, the Hong Kong-based businessman, who had led the group, went into hiding. What makes the incident a dark chapter in racist violence against immigration is the fact that the British Columbian government used all its powers to deny the refugees the right to enter the country. Commenting on the apology tendered by the Canadian Prime Minister, Shiv Viswanathan comments that, "memory becomes critical here because it is the memory that keeps scars alive, and memory often waits like a phantom limb more real than the event itself" (Shiv Viswanathan 2016).

Large-scale displacements of populations initiated by the European imperial powers set in motion the economic and political consolidations of their power through coercive institutions which have survived into the postcolonial era. The boundaries shaped by these institutions were both internal and external; both across the land as well as language and culture. While it is easy to identify the presence of imperial vestiges in the postcolonial polity, their subliminal manifestations may remain intractable. With the introduction of English in India, a certain boundary came into existence in the very epistemological structures it set in motion. Amit Chaudhari has argued that at the core of modernity in India is the figure of the "inner exile", a cosmopolitan who was not at-home in his own home (Chaudhuri 2009:96-99). The deep self-division that tormented writers like Tagore in India suggests that they were questioning monolithic modernity which was linear, rational and naturalist. They could see that the question of the secular-modern as interpreted by Europe was exclusivist and essentialist. The forced migration of people affected by famine, religious persecution and political oppression is a process that has continued unabated over many centuries, across continents.

The questions that agitate some of the largest democracies in the world now, whether it is the U.S with reference to Mexicans, Germany and France with reference to refugees from the Gulf nations or India with reference to religious minorities from the neighbouring countries, have a history that goes back to the beginning of European modernity in the seventeenth century. The issues have become more urgent because globalization has accelerated the scale and pace of the change rendering the nation-state a category that is besieged from within and without. The nation-state as an institution that embodies modernity at its most complex stage of evolution is increasingly at odds with the impulses let loose by migrations of the last two centuries. The fault lines that mark the individual identities of expatriates in the modern nations and the manner in which nation-states lose their legitimacy faced with conflicting demands of postcolonial nations have transformed the transnational and diasporic literature of the last few decades.

The figure of the 'inner exile' mentioned above was at odds with the hegemonic hold of nation and nation-state in matters of culture and human imagination in the twentieth century. Nationalism acquires theological connotations when it exhausts all the possibilities of identity for a human being in a globalized world. Stephen Greenblatt remarks in his book, *Cultural Mobility: A Manifesto*:

> We need to understand colonization, exile, emigration, wandering, contamination, and unintended consequences, along with the fierce compulsions of greed, longing, and restlessness, for it is these disruptive forces that principally shape the history and diffusion of identity and language, and not a rooted sense of cultural legitimacy (2010:2).

Nationalism in its official version was complicit with colonialist epistemology. The global circulation of the population from the sixteenth century to the end of the nineteenth century exceeded 60 million people. The magnitude of displacement that accompanied the imperial conquest of the countries from the Third World has not been studied in detail. It is the movements of the Europeans to the rest of the world and the forced eviction of the black population to the New World that have received attention in critical studies of diaspora. But there have been large displacements within Asia, resulting in the traumatic experiences of millions of people. In his book, *Taming the Coolie Beast: Plantation Society and the Colonial Order in Southeast Asia,* John Breman shows how the Dutch colonial powers subjected the "coolies" hired to work on tobacco plantations in Sumatra to tortures of the worst kind. These "coolies" were indentured labourers brought from a number of Asian countries ranging from India to Cambodia, with the promise of high wages and comfortable living conditions. But they were reduced to slaves, once they landed on these plantations. Today, the descendants of these indentured labourers are still a part of many of these former colonies. Though their ancestors came to these countries in the early 19th century, they are a minority within many minorities, living on the margins as disenfranchised people. A large number of Korean women were used as sex slaves by the Japanese army during the Second World War (Yoshim 2000). There are forgotten histories within Asia which are yet to be recovered from oblivion.

The basic outlines of diasporic imaginary as defined by the West emphasize issues of homeland, memory, travel, nostalgia, divided identity and epiphanies of self-discovery and quest for relationships as can be seen in fictional representations from many postcolonial societies. The works of Hanif Kureishi, Jhumpa Lahiri, J.M.Coetzee, V.S.Naipaul, and Salman Rushdie

enact encounters of various kinds that point to the permanent state of disquiet that marks the exile's relation with his/her own self. However, the poignancy with which J.M. Coetzee and Tony Morrison capture the affective economy of the displaced on the margins of the first world has contributed to a widening of the very idea of diaspora with greater possibilities of empathy towards victims of imperial history. For instance, in the novel, *A Mercy* by Tony Morrison, we have an account of a Native American tracing the collective past of his people. Such collective voices have the power to expand our sense of history and see the Asian or Latin American experience as part of larger world history.

The contribution of the Humanities has been crucial in explicating the entanglements of nostalgia, memory and desire in the constitution of socio-political identities of migrant communities that constitute diasporas. Beyond the surface reality of political and social tensions are collective memories of shared sufferings and imagined anxieties about social marginalization and cultural isolation. The literature on migration and diaspora is a rich resource of contemporary culture which has implications beyond their immediate contexts for creating a new lexicon of contemporary cultural criticism. Beyond written words, it also involves the study of music, theatre, films, photographs, family histories, travel narratives, orality, story-telling traditions, letters, diaries and chronicles preserved by travellers, food, belief systems, rituals, clothes, paintings, sculptures and architecture and many other cultural artefacts in their moments of intersections with space and time. Paul Gilroy's *Black Atlantic* and James Clifford's *Routes: Travel and Translation in the Late Twentieth Century* are path-breaking in the perspectives they offer towards rethinking some of the primary categories related to migration and diaspora studies.

How is 'transnational' as a category different from the diaspora? While a core ethnic identity defines a diasporic formation, a transnational community transcends such emotional categories and relies on larger professional or class interests. South Asian diaspora is transnational as it transcends national boundaries. But it splinters into several diaspora communities when it comes to relating to their homelands. South Asian diaspora has been termed as a 'complex diaspora' as it defies many of the norms associated with diasporas of the world. While South Asians share histories of colonialism and memories of resistance and subscribe to the commonality of perceptions in music, poetry, popular cinema, cuisine, fashion and even sports, they hold divergent loyalties, affiliations and commitments in their self-narratives of origin, ethnicity, religion and nationhood. Pnina Werbner comments:

> The South Asian diaspora, seen as a regional diaspora of cultural consumptions, in no way determines either political loyalties and commitments or more focused exilic yearnings for a lost homeland. It is quite possible for people from a single cultural region to be locked in bitter national or religious conflicts as they are in South Asia (2004:903).

The internally differentiated South Asian diaspora cannot be understood in terms or categories produced in the globalized West. There are transnational narratives which also demonstrate the translational dimension of contemporary cultures in the making.

The terms 'migration', 'diaspora' and 'transnationalism' share certain common elements but also differ substantially in their orientations. Not all migrations result in the formation of diasporas. The myth of a homeland is central to the idea of a diaspora. The formation of an elite group among the migrants marks a stage of critical reflection on questions of their

existence and relations to the host and home countries. This is the point where a society of migrants sees themselves as part of a larger community called diaspora. As Ato Quayson and Girish Daswani in their Introduction to the Blackwell Companion to Diaspora and Transnational Studies, observe, "Diaspora space is inhabited not only by those who have migrated and their descendants but, equally by those who are constructed and represented as indigenous" (Quayson:iv).

While 'migration' is a term that implies the movement of people, 'transnationalism' signifies global markets, the movement of multinational capital, technology, cultural artefacts and media. I will briefly mention Mira Nair's *Mississippi Masala* to suggest the nature of border-crossings the Indian trans-national community has had to negotiate. In this film, with an international cast, Jay and Kinna, along with their daughter, Mina, are forced to flee Uganda after Idi Amin takes over the country. After a brief stay in England, they relocate to Mississippi where Jay joins the motel business of his relatives. He yearns to return to Kampala which he thinks is his home. Meanwhile, Mina has found local friends and is soon in love with Demetrius (Denzel Washington) who is a self-employed African American carpet cleaner. Her family and the Indian community as a whole are outraged by this inter-racial romantic relationship. Despite the fact that Jay has been exposed to racism in Uganda, he cannot accept an American black into his family. Mina and Demetrius run away from the city. Jay visits Kampala in connection with a court case and is horrified to see that the city has changed beyond his imagination. He can no longer identify with the new city. He returns to Mississippi as someone who has no place to call his own.

Indian migration to Africa happened during the colonial period. Mahatma Gandhi went to South Africa in 1893 as a

lawyer to defend an Indian businessman, on contract. The Hindi novel, *Pehla Girmitya* (translated as 'Girmitya Saga') by Giriraj Kishore traces Gandhi's transformation from a contracted lawyer to a political thinker, leader of the masses and prophet of Ahimsa who rewrote the history of India. I use the term, "Elsewhere Space" in the title to suggest how our national histories are interwoven with many other histories that happened elsewhere. When Salman Rushdie said, "we are translated men" he was hinting at the transformative potential of transnational cultural encounters.

Migration studies and Diaspora Studies differ in their perception of the dynamics of nations and nation-states. Often the destiny of migrants is identified with the host country, the nation of their settlement. Their cultural and psychological relations to the host country and the problem of citizenship become the focus of the thematics of Migration Studies. In Diaspora Studies, nation and society are seen as separate entities since it is essentially a transnational category. The nation-state is seen merely as one agent in a set of global power centres. Migration studies often see the nation-state as a horizon that cannot be transcended. However, in Diaspora studies, circuits and circulations between multiple societies and communities make it possible to go beyond the boundaries of the nation-states.

However, we need to conceptualize migration in a transnational framework since migrants do not 'leave behind' their homelands. They are bound by several ties of longing and belonging with the past and present. Terms such as "circuits", "networks", "social fields", and "social spaces" have been used to study how the migrant diasporas are embedded in socio-political and cultural processes. It has been pointed out that diasporas are "resolutely multilocal and polycentric, in that what happens to kin communities in other areas of dispersion

as well as in the homeland constantly matter to them" (Khachig Tololyan 2007:651). The current tensions in many parts of the world, including India, regarding policies and laws concerning refugees and citizenship, implicate indigenous communities as well, as they have ancestral rights to the places of their habitations. The demands for the inclusion of the migrant communities in the host country are often met with stiff resistance.

Diaspora studies now recognises that issues of political rights also intersect with questions of race, gender, class, sexuality, and ethnicity. In some of the recent Malayalam novels which are available in English translation, like Benyamin's *Jasmin Days* and *Al Arabian Novel Factory*, we come across migrant communities caught in the political turmoil of fast-evolving global politics.

The idea of translation is central to both migration and modernity. In fact, in many Indian languages, the novel emerges through and in translation. The first Gujarati novel *Hindustan Madhyenu Ek Zunpadu* published in 1862 was the translation of an English novel, *The Indian Cottage,* which was the translation of a French novel, *La Chaimiere Indienne,* originally published in 1791. The French author, Henri Jacques Bernardin De St. Pierre (1737-1814) never visited India but had knowledge about its caste structure, philosophical system, topography and flora and fauna. Sohrabshah Dadabahi Munsafana, who translated *The English Cottage* into Gujarati, was a member of the Parsi community, who are part of one of the earliest diaspora communities who sought asylum in India due to religious persecution.

The first novel in Malayalam, *Ghatakavadham,* was the translation of a novel written by Mrs. Collins in English, titled, *The Slayer Slain.* Mrs. Collins modelled her novel closely on *Uncle Tom's Cabin,* which was about the emancipation of the

blacks in America. Hence, we need to reimagine the contact zones within a transnational circuit of culture to recover the translational dimensions implicit in the transnational.

Recent critical approaches caution us to be wary of the liberating potential of transnationalism as it can deepen and sustain differences, both economic and social. Paul Jay speaks of the university's complicity with the forces of global capital, in a context where uncritical euphoria about diversity and hybridity may conceal from view deeper fissures underneath. Now, there is a greater realization that transnationalism does not transcend the idea of the nation, as 'national' and 'transnational' are mutually constitutive. "As a relational concept, transnationalism encompasses entities that operate on a local level, as well as within a national, regional or supranational context" (4).

The literature available on transnationalism suggests that it is essentially a modernist construct located between nationalism and post-nationalism. Detailed investigations undertaken by thinkers like Jonardon Ganeri and Sanjay Subrahmanyam on the transnational traffic of ideas in early modern South Asia between India and Europe have reinvented the very idea of modernity and its relation to migration. We need to recognize that transnational linguistic areas are constituted by the inherent fluidity of language which enables it to cross boundaries. 'Nomadism' has been identified as a feature of contemporary literatures of the world, as seen in the works of the Argentinian writer Andres Neuman and the Congolese writer Alain Mabanckou (Amaury Dehoux 2019:28). Languages, even as they remain fluid, partake of dialectic between the 'local' and the 'global', subsuming multiple horizons of experience. An author like Kazuo Ishiguro, for instance, cannot be understood in terms of a single nation, and

this is why we need a literary theory that takes into account the fluidity of language as a condition of the present-day world.

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The complexity of Migration and Redefining the Contours of Translation Studies: Some Suggestions

MAYA PANDIT

Abstract

This paper explores the relationship between migration and translation to discursively understand both migration and translation. Both are twilight beings, metaphors of mobility and flux and are instances of dislocation. If migration involves dislocation from their own lands, translations represent the original text in a different context. Migrant people and translators both try to be what they are not; they are considered to be the "Other" and their journeys involve toils, travails, exertions and struggles. The context of globalization and unification of the world, the ideas about development and progress of a particular kind have resulted into dislocation of people and the urge to communicate to people about the displaced worlds results into translation activity. In the process both have to constantly negotiate with hegemonic power relations and both destabilize the political and cultural hierarchies in the communities which they enter. In this process the questions of "voice', levels of translatability, fluency, communicability become important. General translation theory needs to address these issues in the context of globalization. These issues about how ideologies operate in both migration and translation have been contextualized in terms of the discussion of three cases involving migration: of the "dance-bar" girls from marginalized and nomadic communities who had been forced to migrate to Mumbai for survival, the autobiographies of Palestinian women who had to migrate to the USA and Europe seeking safety from Israel and a tribal community in Western Maharashtra forcefully re-located in a so-called "civilized" land. It is argued that translators have a political role to play in bringing these

unheard voices to the attention of the world. This will have important consequences for translation theory.

Keywords: Migration, Translation, Diaspora, Hegemony of Power Relations and Ideologies, Third Spaces, Assimilation, Tasks of Translation Theory.

Introduction

Exploring the relationship between migration and translation becomes an attempt to understand both migration and translation discursively. Salman Rushdie called migrated people as "translated beings". In fact, they have to constantly examine themselves and translate themselves for the others in the position of the "Civilizational Other". Both are metaphors of mobility and flux. Both represent complex processes of intercultural contact and communication.

Migration causes multiple dislocations. Boundaries between the familiar and unfamiliar in the old and new habitats run deep under the veneer of familiarity. It is probably a continuous process of re-negotiating multiple identities for communities displaced from their original geopolitical locations, constantly pressed upon to move towards a state of becoming something that they are not. Whatever they try to do in order to negotiate their difficult paths from a position in limbo, their self-articulations are essentially testimonies to their toils, travails, exertions and struggles. There is a constant struggle going on between the global and local cultures and systems. Can we remain deeply local in an environment of more complexes, multi-layered, globalized environments that we are getting more and more exposed to? And are we forgetting, on the other hand, the tremendous transformation that is being brought about by the dominant global processes of reorganization in the distant local world? Distances are not purely in terms of miles, they are governed by power of habits and mental maps, cultural patterns and hegemonic ideologies

and practices that govern us. Habits and norms of the migrated communities may be quite different from those of the communities to which they try to migrate. How do we meet this challenge between the local interests and the global domination?

Some Examples

Examples abound both at the local and international levels of how the lives especially of the downtrodden and oppressed get shaped at diverse local locations. Let me discuss two examples of migration and narratives emerging from the local and one from the international contexts.

A) Bar Dancers in Mumbai

The first example is of bar dancers in Mumbai, who were compelled to migrate from various displaced nomadic communities in India to Mumbai, the economic capital of India to work in dance bars which geometrically increased after the 1970s. Their oral accounts, published in daily newspapers and also collected by the SNDT University, unveil horrifying tales of displacement, deprivation, exploitation and manipulation of these young girls and their communities. They are victims of a particular model of development in India.

These girls, who worked in dance bars, belonged to either Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, Other Backward Castes , Nomadic Tribes or socially backward Muslim communities, belonging to castes such as   Bedia, Bhatu, Dhanawat, Gandharva, Chhari, Rajnat and Nat, Chilbila, Kesarvani, Bogum Vollu, Samlighar, Sansi, Kashmiri, Deredar, Jagari, Doli, and others, which are spread over many backward regions in and around major states and UTs in India such as Delhi, Agra, U.P., Bihar, Haryana, Bengal, Rajasthan, Maharashtra among others. These communities had always been on the margins of the social imaginary and devoid of

citizenship rights because of their lower status in the caste/ class hierarchies. Besides, many of them were nomadic without a permanent place of residence or address. The 'backwardness' of their regions is a result of many deeper historical processes in India's history of development and modernization. In the dynamics of social change, brought about by various developmental processes, these women and their communities straddle different worlds simultaneously in their everyday life. The pre-market, pre-modern feudal structures and values demand that their sexuality and labour be exploited as a productive resource for the upkeep of their families, and the new emergent structures of capitalist development, instead of allowing them any opportunity of either education or employment for self- development, do the same by making available new sites for cultural production, where their dance skills are exploited to cater to the growing demand of a middle class for entertainment and liquor. Since they cannot perform in their own places, they have to migrate to big cities to these new sites where their sexuality and cultural labour is exploited through the cultural services they offer by the bar owners to earn profits and the State to earn revenue. Their culture is completely different. In many communities, women have to play multiple roles. They have to be bread winners, they have alliances with men and have to produce children and look after their families which include parents, husbands, brothers-sisters, children, other men folk and old people from the community who are dependent on them. Their lives are full of conflict due to the increasing burden of poverty and policing by the State. Dancing has been the traditional occupation of many (e.g. forms like 'nautanki') but now these have become obsolete for lack of contractors, impact of television, cinema and consequent lack of public demand. When they were barred from dancing, their heart rending oral interviews (many of whom are illiterate) threw

light on how many processes/layers of exploitation operate implicitly and explicitly in their lives.

B) People Displaced through Constructions of Huge Dams

All of you must be aware of the plight of people displaced and not even settled yet in any place by the Government in case of huge dams like Koyna Nagar and Narmada. Kolhapur, the district where I come from, is known as the heartland of the green revolution, the land of many dams. Many people have been displaced from the hilly regions where rivers like the Panchganga originate. I am currently involved in the translation of a novel called *Ringaan* (Krishnat Khot 2017) which tells us the story of a tribal community, scattered all over like discarded dirt and 'settled' in places which are extremely hostile, condescending, unsympathetic and even antagonistic to them. The tribal people are hung in a huge, unfriendly, unreceptive and downright hostile limbo from where there is no escape for them. Their simple, modest and artless relationship with Nature is in complete contrast with the exploitative, manipulative and oppressive culture of the so-called civilized world marked by 'development', represented by sugar factories, cash crops, mechanized farming dominated by capital intensive investment, fertilizers, pesticides and excessive use of water. For them it spells the death of a familiar and humane world and also their alienation from Nature, society and even their own selves.

C) Migrant Writing from Palestine

My third example is of the Palestinian men and women migrating to the US or other (European) countries, trying to escape persecution by Israel. They show how the contexts have completely changed after the WW II. Jews, who had been the victims of the holocaust then, now appear to be in a completely different political role; here they are not victims but oppressors. Ghada Karmi's *In Search of Fatima*, Salma

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Salem's *The wind in my Hair,* Laila El-Haddad's *Gaza Mama*: *Polictics of Parenting in Palestine*are some of the testimonies that present the persecution of Palestinian people as seen and experienced through women's eyes. Interestingly, the history of Palestine as recounted by these migrants challenges the popular perception of Israel – Palestinian conflict created by and in the media. The anguish of exile, displacement and impossibility of return to the same old land marks these testimonies. The history of religious conflict, the confrontation of different ethnic identities, and more importantly, the changing demographic realities that these tales of migration tell us are absolutely heart rending. There are interesting parallels that one sees between the trajectories of the colonialist projects in the world and the political project of Zionism as has been pointed out by Anchalee Seanthong (2018). Generally the acts of the Paletinians are represented as acts of terrorism in the media across the world but they are actually the voice of victims, the Palestinian people, as the tormented Other. Ghada Karmi for instance is forced to migrate to the West. The alienation, uprootedness and trauma of displacement caused by being in 'exile' informs her individual gender, community and national identity. The forced departure of her family from Palestine results in a fractured, fragmented identity for her. Salem's story brings out how racism in Europe excludes and marginalizes migrant communities who have to eke out a living through the experience of a hybridized cultural entity. What constitutes 'home' for the Palestinian people? They represent a strategy of transmitting the knowledge of belonging and memory to new generations. These memoirs also create new knowledge for their future generations, which otherwise may be lost forever. (As, probably, in the case of the bar dancers and their communities because of lack of literacy and access to other means of communication!). The accounts of Palestine's

politics, elections, massacre, border controls and Israel's bombardment and blockade of Gaza gets projected in two ways. The representation of the global war on terror in media and their 'rhetoric of salvation', where the images of the Arab world and Palestinians are circulated, create false impressions and a false consciousness the world over. The memoirs tell us about the deprivation, contradictions, obstacles, negative sentiments and challenges that the Palestinian migrants encounter with the 'civilized world' at home and abroad.

 I will not even enter into the discussion of the situation of migrants coming to India from the neighbouring countries, both Muslim and non-Muslim religious identities, who are beleaguered and fragmented and are now systematically being targeted by the Citizenship Amendment Act and National Register of Citizens bill in India even before they have overcome the trauma of their displacement! But one can see how their narratives will be changed, fragmented and distorted by the official, administrative and powerful voice of the State machinery including the people who occupy the State power.

Migration and Translation

These are several similarities between migration and translation. Accounts of migrant writing give rise to something different, something new and unrecognizable, a new area of negotiation of meaning and representation, which is exactly like what happens in translation. The migrants are a "hybrid" people who occupy a liminal space, the 'third space' (as Homi Bhaba would name it), inhabiting the dark and neglected spaces, nooks and corners, the in-between spaces located between two or more colliding cultures. They have raised many challenges before the scholars of translation studies. Migration represents multiple journeys, temporary, voluntary or involuntary displacement, exile, a set of concepts with which translators are very familiar as they also work in

'twilight zones' of non-recognition. Places of origin, arrival, and destination are similarly ambiguous terms both in migration and translation. Both are marked by a strange nomadism. The concept of 'mobility' is central to both. As Polezzi argues (2006:171), there are many issues which can be raised with reference to voice, agency, politics and/of representation: "How do the images produced by travellers influence the ideological constructions of identity and difference? How did travel writing influence historical phenomena such as colonialism and empire building? Can these accounts play subversive or resistant roles, offering testimonies of and bestowing visibility on people and events that would otherwise be forgotten? Why do migrating people write the narratives? What kinds of textual traces do they leave, for whom and in which language?"

It is the notions of mobility that links translation and migration organically. Movement, transportation of goods, people and ideas, is what is central to both. Both the migrants and translators need to present the new through the 'known', the 'unfamiliar' through the 'familiar'. The distance between the migrant community's habits and the norms for social behaviour in the places they migrate to can be devastating. Both are supposed to act as reasonable and reliable conductors, mediators and witnesses but both can have the potential to cheat, deceive, confuse and betray. Another important question is: Which languages does the translator translate in? English has been the choice for post-colonial communities for many reasons. And most of the translators have 'hyphenated identities'. What does the translator do in such a scenario? What kind of a vision does s/he needs to possess?

This is exactly what Salman Rushdie argues in case of translators and writers. He assigns migrant writers with connotations of potential renewal and betrayal, which

translators also have to carry. Take for instance the Indian writers in English who have migrated to the West or the US and who belong to the diaspora!

Susan Bassnett has captured the similarities and ambiguities between translation and travel, "… The discourse of faithfulness that has so long dogged Translation Studies … is also a dominant discourse in travel writing… they are not transparent activities. They are definitely located activities with points of origin, points of departure and destinations" (1993:103, 114).

Mobility and transfer thus characterize both translation and migration. Both characterize a process of de-sacralisation which has the ability to debunk the myths of cultural superiority. The Palestinian migrant writers are a case in point.

However, several questions present themselves here. How do these processes of contact, mobility and "miscegenation" get chosen for translation? Who do the translations reach out to? Why? How are the translations received by people for whom and in whose language they are made? Is their reception always positive or are they looked down upon as inferior works that tell about the "Other"? They do tell you about people, cultures, histories which are different from your own, but are they always seen that way? Do they tell us what we miss or what is unwanted?

It is necessary to note here that both migration and translation are enmeshed in relationships of power and constant negotiation. Translation can never be an innocent act. In fact, as Polezzi says (2006:175), both are acts which have "practical and moral consequences". They destabilize the political and cultural hierarchies in the receiving communities. We need to explicate their complexity and think of them in historically and geographically located terms. There can be no universal parameters of judgment in this. As Asad says, translating is not

a matter of matching written sentences in two languages, such that the second set of sentences becomes the real meaning of the first…. In other words, it is the privileged position of someone who does not, and can afford not to, engage in a genuine dialogue (Asad 1986:155). "Sometimes a translator feels that he has to compensate for the inequality between languages and forces the original testimonies to make sense in terms of the receiving culture and language." (Asad 1986:160). The question is how does one make sense of migration and the conglomerate of meanings of migration in the translation? The prism of ideology operates on the translator too.

Another important issue in both migration and translation is the question of voice. How do we know that the voice and point of view of the translator and the voice and the points of view of the native are one and the same? This also gives rise to the question of morality of speaking for the others. Does the translator have the right to represent the migrant community and vocalize their voice? But if the subaltern cannot speak in the languages that the others understand, how do we find an alternative to translation?

The question of translatability of difference between the migrant culture, translator's culture and the receiving culture (as in the case of mine) is a complex question in the context of multilingual and multicultural audiences. I have already raised the issue of who does one translate for. 'Here' and 'there' and 'home and abroad' may have different meanings and they may not be useful to explain the diverse production and reception scenarios. The authors may have to address complex audiences. Their works may receive patronage from international publishing houses, metropolitan intellectuals, or people who have made the journey from periphery to the centre. As Polezzi argues (2006:180), translations are produced with complex rationales; they may be done because the

language of translation gives them access to a larger audience. Or it probably helps them to make a political statement. They may be done to harness the prestige that the gaze of the powerful outsider bestows on the work.

In India, translation had for a long period been a unidirectional process with our texts translated into English and especially for European consumption. But as Susan Bassnett and Harish Trivedi say (1999:13) "In our age of (the valorization of) migrancy, exile and diaspora, the word 'translation' seems to have come full circle and reverted from its figurative literary meaning of an interlingual transaction to locational disrupture." They points out the need to anchor translation firmly to historically located practice to the traffic between languages which still speaks of asymmetrical power relations between various local vernaculars and the one master-language of the post-colonial world, English. In the process of translating migration accounts in English (or any other language that is culturally very different), various impoverishments occur in translation. The cultural, semiotic and discursive regimes in English may reveal yawning gulfs opening before the translator. In such cases, what do we do as translators with the concepts of fluency and transparency and how do we expose the ideological designs underneath? Should we domesticate and assimilate the source text or allow it to reach out to different readers through detailed introductions, glosses and notes? 'How not to be complicit in the politics of domination' is an important task before the translator. As Lawrence Venuti says (1998:4), "asymmetries, inequities, relations of dominance and dependence exist in every act of translating, of putting the translated in the service of translating culture". He goes on to argue that translation is an essentially ethnocentric activity.

The minority texts and migrant experiences bear the mark of their genetic imprint: where they come from, what traditions they have, what ways of seeing they possess culturally and politically. How do translators negotiate with that? Even the notion of mother tongue may also be questioned here. Many a time, the notion that everyone has one specific mother tongue is entrenched firmly in our mind. There may be multiple mother tongues. They may be communities which are not at home in only one language (as the bar dancers demonstrate); or there may be no mother tongues but a medley of different languages at their disposal for different social functions.

But the general translation theory does not seem to address these issues. As Polezzi (2006:181) points out, "A de-centring and destabilizing move is needed with regard to our models of translation process. The binary image of translation which couples source and target texts, source and target language, source and target culture, with its 'one-size-fits-all' aspirations and rigidities is increasingly unable to offer a sound basis for the analysis of contemporary writing and publishing networks. Such models need to be re-read and revised in view of new modes of mobility and community formation….. Ultimately this is a route which should lead us to a continuing reliance of translation studies on models that assume as normative the movement of a stable, monolingual original from the source to the target language – these later to be understood as two equally fixed poles, identified with national languages. The result may be a more flexible and pervasive image of translation which encompasses a wide range of practices, from self-translation to multiple writing, from community interpreting to inter-media adaptation, without losing sight of the geographically and historically located nature of practices and of their ethical as well as social dimension."

Many of these issues, however, rarely appear to be visible in the multiple histories of translation studies in diverse cultural contexts. In fact, the general tendency has been to either ignore or push these and similar issues under the carpet. Without going into the detailed discussion of these theories, I would like to suggest that several traditional assumptions about conceptualization of translation, ST-TT pair work, translation culture/s, processes and strategies of translation, roles of translators etc., probably need to undergo some major changes. The linguistic, economic, social, cultural, political, and ideological dimensions of the phenomena of displacement and their links with translation culture, both practical and theoretical, cannot be overemphasized in the new contexts of displacement and marginalization. The oral or written texts produced by these "Others" represent the grounds where new cultural identities and experiences are formed, re-formed, and performed and contested. The channels and modes of communications also are changing. Translators have to don the role of cultural historians for international creation of knowledge and cultural histories in these changing realities. Translators may now have to work in tandem with the newly emerging concepts of multiple translated and translating subjects, carry out different functions, including being 'cultural traitors', and ask questions about the nature and function of representations and issues of politics, voice and agency.

It is interesting to note that today various disciplinary boundaries seem to be breaking down. Branches of study like sociology, politics, geography, population studies, ecology etc. in social sciences and in humanities are converging together. The various notions from these disciplines have provided us with the 'ciphers' of the contemporary world. Both migrant writing and translation studies have emerged as major areas of inquiry. Though mobility and transfer are common features of both, it is quite necessary to anchor translation to historically

located practices. It is in the light of these observations that I would like to enumerate at least some of these challenges before the field of translation studies for our young friends and scholars. As a writer, translator and poet actively engaged in the task of translating some of these texts, I submit that the discipline of translation studies take up some of the following tasks:

- identify strategies of explicit or implicit confrontation and negotiation with the new cultures that appear through the narratives
- record through various means the oral expressions of migrant communities and highlight the phenomena of cultural amnesia and preservation of cultural memory through the trauma of displacement
- define the contours of the "third spaces" that can be seen emerging from these accounts
- group together and circulate commonalities and distinctiveness of experience of migrating and displaced communities across cultures
- compile histories of disappearing cultures, their myths, traditions as alternative structures
- record the processes of reception of such literatures across diverse cultures

We can contribute to the creation of a huge data base and inaugurate new directions for the development of translation theory in the process. Let the world come closer through us, let us be the bridges of understanding and compassion. Let us give the world opportunities to understand new vistas of experience which have remained unexplored so far. Let us be political in the true sense of the term!

Thank you very much for lending me such a patient ear. I am sure that over the past few days, many of these issues have been discussed extensively. I do not claim to have given you

any great knowledge. But I treated this occasion as a point of contact to share with you some of my own preoccupations and if you have already discussed some of these issues, I am happy to have met like-minded people. If you did not agree with some of the ideas presented then I may have given you something to weigh and consider. In any case I sincerely thank the organizers for having given me this opportunity to share some of my own preoccupations with you.

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New Translation Studies

SHIVARAMA PADIKKAL

Abstract

The conceptualizations of Translation as a mode, rewriting, representation, cannibalistic re-creation, or creative recontextualization emphasize and focus upon ideology, the performative aspect of language, cultural milieu, and the power-relations involved in the process and product of Translation. This paper considers the return to Translation marked by a significant change in Translation Studies. Moving away from the 'humanist' notion that Translation is about the noble task of bridging the gap between peoples and cultures, Translation scholars today focus on the problematic of Translation rather than the "problems" of Translation (Niranjana 1992:2). This paper maps the trajectory of Translation Studies in India and argues in favour of New Translation Studies that refer to all innovative and radical Translation theories under the umbrella term.

Introduction

In recent years, translation and Translation studies have moved from the periphery to the centre. As Translation studies emerged from the shadows of literary studies, comparative literature or linguistics, it is no more a secondary or an invisible activity. The publication of journals, handbooks, anthologies, and well-researched books on Translation, of late, testifies to the increased interest and popularity of the discipline. As we know, Translation studies, in its evolution as an independent discipline, exploring newer research areas, has shed its age-old obsession of treating the original and translations in a master-slave relationship. The

conceptualizations of Translation as rewriting, a mode of representation, cannibalistic, or creative activity emphasize focus upon ideology, the performative aspect of language, cultural milieu, and the power-relations within which translations are produced.

Moreover, Translation is central to the culture and life of post-colonial societies, which were "textualized" (Niranjana 1992) by the Imperial/Orientalist discourses. It underwent various processes of colonial modernity during the colonial period decolonizing itself simultaneously. Edwin Gentzler's observations on what Translation means to South America hold good for all post-colonial nations. For them, "Translation is much more than linguistic operation; rather, it has become one of the means by which the entire continent has come to define itself (Gentzler 2008:108).

This *return to Translation* is also marked by a significant change in the field of Translation studies. Translation theorists today look beyond the traditional view of Translation as the noble task of bridging the gap between peoples and cultures. Instead of considering Translation as a transaction between two languages, a simple linguistic affair, scholars in Translation studies see it as fundamental to constitutive of culture. According to the above view, translation 'takes shape within the asymmetrical relations of power' (Niranjana 1992:2) operating in a historical context of the linguistic culture and in turn shaping that very culture. Hence, we no longer treat Translation as a given phenomenon but arrive at its differential definitions in a context. Today, the focus of translation analyses has moved from word to discourse, reaffirming Walter Benjamin's formulation that Translation represents the afterlife or survival of the original (Benjamin:23, Tr Harry Zohn:71). The questions of cultural identity, colonialism; gender; multiculturalism; cross-cultural communication;

Diaspora, nation, etc., are brought to the field of Translation. Thus, Translation Studies cuts across disciplines to become truly interdisciplinary. Translation is seen more and more as a '*performative*' nature of cultural communication. The Indian academic scenario may not be as bright as I have depicted. Nevertheless, it is very encouraging.

Translation studies in India

Quite a few Universities in India are offering courses in translation and Translation studies. While a few Universities offer courses leading to M.Phil and PhD degrees, others provide a couple of papers in Translation studies as part of English Literature, Comparative Literature, or Linguistics courses. The UGC has also started courses in Functional Hindi in several Universities with particular emphasis on Translation. Machine translation is another area of current interest in the Indian Higher Education sector. Projects on Translation are ongoing in several institutes of higher learning. MA courses in Language technology with special reference to Translation are offered in certain other places.

Moreover, there is a renewed interest in translation among policymakers. The National Translation Mission, an initiative of the Government of India, was launched in 2008 on the recommendation of the National Knowledge Commission to 'kick-start the industry of Translation.' Before that, the 11th plan working group on languages and book promotion recommended 'immediate intervention' of the Government in the area of Translation to promote "knowledge books and new discourses". It points out:

> Translation is another area that begs for the immediate intervention of the Government. It is true that Translation has been an ongoing activity, which India as a multilingual country cannot do without. Institutions like Sahitya Academy and National Book trust have also

stressed translation as a major regular activity, and it is yet to make a real headway when it comes to knowledge books and other new discourses. The National Knowledge Commission has also focused on Translation as one of the key thrust areas of the knowledge economy of India. It has been recommended by the NKC that a National Translation Mission be launched which would take up the related activity in a systematic way" (Govt. of India, MHRD, XIth Plan (2007-2012):4).

The continued focus on Translation is reflected in the National Education Policy-2021 of the Union Government of India, in its recommendation to establish the Indian Institute of Translation and Interpreting (IITI). It observes,

High-quality programmes and degrees in Translation and Interpretation, Art and Museum Administration, Archaeology, Artefact Conservation, Graphic Design, and Web Design within the higher education system will also be created (Govt. of India, MHRD, NEP 2020:54).

India will also urgently expand its translation and interpretation efforts to make high-quality learning materials and other important written and spoken material available to the public in various Indian and foreign languages. For this, an Indian Institute of Translation and Interpretation (IITI) will be established. Such an institute would provide a truly important service for the country, as well as employ numerous multilingual language and subject experts and experts in Translation and interpretation, which will help to promote all Indian languages. The IITI shall also make extensive use of technology to aid in its translation and interpretation efforts. The IITI could naturally grow with time and be housed in multiple locations, including in HEIs to facilitate collaborations with other research departments

as demand and the number of qualified candidates grows
(Govt. of India, MHRD, NEP 2020:55).

Translation Studies in India needs to be streamlined,
mainstreamed and further institutionalized. At present,
translation research in India is mainly carried out by a few
scholars from different institutions purely as individual efforts
without any institutional support. While they have published
interesting academic works that are well informed in recent
theory, the pedagogy of Translation Studies in higher
educational institutions is still a mix of old and new concepts
of Translation. Hence, we may conclude that the fundamental
and conceptual problems regarding Translation and translation
pedagogy aren't fully addressed in HEIs of India. A few
translation courses are framed within the new space created by
critiquing the humanist theory of Translation. However, in the
Government policies and institutes established by it, the
understanding and pedagogy of Translation Studies and
training primarily comprise what one may term as the
humanist discourse on Translation – one that looks at
Translation only as a linguistic activity, a transaction between
two languages. Such a theory reduces Translation to two
languages and focuses primarily on issues of fidelity and
felicity. Most translation courses in our colleges and
Universities consider issues in Translation Studies as the
question of "method" (Niranjana 1992:49) rather than
addressing the problematics of Translation. A glance at the
translation syllabi of different universities confirms Niranjana's
point. In several postgraduate-level courses in our universities,
the linguistic and politics of translation essays prescribed sit
together somewhat uneasily.

Translation Studies in India is yet to absorb the implications of
the contemporary discourse on Translation fully. It's vital to
consider various other practices under the rubric of Translation

and to revamp and theorize Translation differently, keeping in view the fact that Translation Studies is multidisciplinary that involves linguistics, literary studies, comparative literature, cultural anthropology, cultural history, philosophy, postcolonial studies, gender studies, ecology, identity studies, diasporic studies and so on. Such an endeavour will have far-reaching resonances in the pedagogical practices of the Sciences, the social sciences and the humanities.

Approaches

Several approaches to study Translation have been rapidly developed in the past few years, attempting to define Translation as a new academic field - 'at once international and interdisciplinary.' Translation issues are discussed within the new space resolved by questioning the 'humanist' assumptions about reality, language, and representation. These developments are related to the explosion of cultural studies, post-colonial studies, feminism and critical theory that have foregrounded and expanded the notion of culture in general and the notion of power/knowledge in particular. According to the new perspectives, Translation is no longer seen as a mere practice that objectively carries over or transfers meanings from one language into another but as a discourse inextricably linked to power relations. Like many other discourses, Translation too writes culture, creates subjectivities, is linked to the politics of identities, and operates within the hierarchy and inequalities of languages. The hegemonic social/cultural practices implicit within the society operate through the enterprises of the democratic state and its various discourses, including Translation. In recent years, many studies on Translation have analyzed the sight and sign of Translation in the contexts of colonialism and post-colonialism as well as concerning the women's question. Translation needs to be considered not in the realm of *language* but as a *discourse*. In

this sense, Translation is the crucial site for our understanding of culture, to account for the 'multiple forces act on it' and to know how it 'gives rise to multiple practices'. Hence, today we need to consider Translation much more seriously to understand the nuances of our culture.

In other words, Translation Studies is moving into new spaces and opening up new horizons. The books and papers published in the realm of Translation studies in recent years are exciting and thought-provoking. Our perception of the 'everyday' has been transformed radically and productively by such intellectual endeavours. The understanding that translation shapes and takes shape within culture, and that, like any other discourse, it too operates within the structures of power, has resulted in a multitude of explorations and research in Translation Studies asking new questions. Consider the question addressed in Translation Studies in recent years: the concepts of nation, modernity, colonialism, post-colonialism, globalization, gender, minority, domination, hegemony, resistance, identity, subjectivity, cities, conflict, multilingualism, ethnography, ecology, cultural difference and cultural Translation to name a few. The above questions are raised within the new interdisciplinary space of Translation Studies which was cleared by questioning the 'humanist' assumptions underlying the enterprise of Translation and the conventional analytical categories used to study it. That apart, the digital communication, speedy travel of texts across cultures and audio-visual Translation bring forth new contexts, problems and issues. Several scholars of Translation Studies have published fascinating and productive research in recent years. Today, Translation is understood in its broadest and metaphorical sense to indicate the mode of communication and production of a variety of texts and discourses across borders - the territorial borders of nations and academic disciplines. In this background today, I would like to present a few significant

texts and their theoretical concerns to demonstrate that Translation is an integral part of language studies, humanities, social sciences and even natural sciences today.

In the paper "What is a "Relevant" Translation?", Derrida observes that "the relation of the letter to the spirit, of the body of literalness to the ideal interiority of sense is also the site of the passage of translation, of this conversion that is called translation" (Derrida 2001:184; Tr. Venuti). He considers Ferdinand De Saussure's theoretical model of language in which meanings are made by negation, articulation, or "systemic play of difference." (Jixing 2013:112). According to this well-accepted notion, linguistic meanings are not inherent to a language, not apriori language. Instead, the uniqueness of signifiers in a system of signs, differences, and social conventions determine them. Derrida's treatment of meaning as *differance* rather than presence results from his critical reading of Ferdinand De Saussure, Walter Benjamin, and Ludwig Wittgenstein. According to Benjamin, it can be demonstrated that "no translation would be possible if in its ultimate essence it strove for likeness to the original. For in its afterlife - which could not be called that if it were not a transformation and a renewal of something living - the original undergoes a change" (Benjamin 1923, Tr. Harry Zohn:69-82). Hence, the question of the source text, *the* meaning, and an absolute translation doesn't arise. Texts are spaces for multiple readings, and all translations are tentative. It is now history that Derrida's explorations of the very nature and limits of language have opened up the floodgates of new research in Translation Studies.

Post-colonial Translation studies has very interestingly/ effectively used the insights of deconstruction, cultural studies, and feminism. For example, Tejaswini Niranjana distinguishes between "problems" of Translation and the "problematic" of

Translation. According to her, the humanist theories of translation "belong properly to the question of "method." (Niranjana 1992:49) But, "In the post-colonial context, the problematic of *Translation* becomes a significant sight for raising questions of representation, power, and historicity. (1) She has demonstrated that "Translation as a practice shapes, and takes shape within, the asymmetrical relations of power that operate under colonialism" (2). In recent years Translation Studies have been more and more concerned with exposing the many kinds of power relations that underwrite translations.

The gender question, translating gender and gendering translation have become prominent research areas after the "cultural turn" in Translation Studies. According to Sherry Simon (1996), "This turn in Translation Studies prepared the terrain for a fruitful encounter with feminist thought" (7).

> Translation Studies have been impelled by many of the concerns central to feminism: the distrust of traditional hierarchies and gendered roles, deep suspicion of rules defining fidelity, and the questioning of universal standards of meaning and value. Both feminism and Translation are concerned with the way "secondariness" comes to be defined and canonized; both are tools for a critical understanding of difference as it is represented in language. The most compelling questions for both fields remain: how are social, sexual and historical differences expressed in language, and how can these differences be transferred across languages? What kinds of fidelities are expected of women and translators–in relation to the more powerful terms of their respective hierarchies" (8).

Lori Chamberlain, examining the cultural politics of and struggle for "authority and the politics of originality" involved in the representation of Translation, observes that in most of the writings, "translation has been figured literally and

metaphorically in secondary terms". According to her, "the cultural elaboration of this view suggests that in the original abides what is natural, truthful, and lawful, in the copy, what is artificial, false, and treasonous" (Chamberlain 2000:319). By deconstructing the sexualization of Translation, she raises the question: "why have the two realms of translation and gender been metaphorically linked?" and argues that the "implied narrative concerns the relation between the value of production versus the value of reproduction. What proclaims itself to be an aesthetic problem is represented in terms of sex, family, and the state, and what is consistently at issue is power" (Chamberlain 2000:322). Addressing the issues of post-colonial Translation from a feminist perspective Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak opines that "the task of the feminist translator is to consider language as a clue to the workings of gendered agency" (Spivak 1993:179-80). This is crucial because "the writing of the writer writes" a differential agency. Spivak's views are significant for the history, context and politics of feminism in India. Indian woman/citizen is situated in a different history, history of feminist thought, political and cultural contexts. In the same vein, Tejaswini Niranjana suggests that "discussion of linguistic translation in post-colonial contexts would help open up larger questions of cultural and political representation" (Niranjana 1998:133). In her view, in the context of Indian feminism, Translation refers to a space in which the translator simultaneously negotiates different kinds of languages" (Niranjana 1998:133). Hence, "the situation of the feminist intellectual located in the post-colony is, therefore, one of being "in-translation." (Devika 2008:185). The post-colony Translation is a space within which the post-colonial subject/translator moves between different languages, continuously negotiating different meanings. She has to be aware of the fact that it is critical in "any rethinking of the political terrain" (Niranjana 1998:133).

Hence, in the post-colonial context, we are constantly between at least two political languages, the language of the capital and of the community. We face a political impasse as these two languages always do not mesh with each other. However, they crisscross, converge and diverge "in many different registers." Niranjana suggests that "political initiatives in the post colony" must be attentive to this fact. She seems to propose critical bilingualism that allows a movement between two or more languages. Though the post-colonial political subject is not "outside" modernity, one may understand "how the (feminist) subject of politics is being shaped by the process of moving between languages" (143). It's from such a perspective that Niranjana concludes,

> There is an important difference, then, between being translatable (the political subject of Indian left-liberal discourse) and being in-translation (the subject of critical feminism): the goal of the first sort of project is the achievement, however, deferred, of an ultimate transparency; the second kind of project strains in the other direction, accepting the need for Translation not as a process which simplifies or makes transparent, but one that draws attention to its very tentativeness (143-144).

Considering feminism in India as "in-translation" allows self-reflexivity, course-correction, tentative fixing of meanings being fully aware of its tentativeness, and listening, instead of thinking of secular modernism and the language of rights as an 'absolute horizon' (144).

The essays of Sherry Simon, Chamberlain, and Niranjana demonstrate how even the linguistic questions of Translation lead to and open up larger questions of language history, culture, and political representation. Such research is significant in the Indian context as it addresses the questions and issues concerning our society. The essays, books, and

edited volumes of Mona Baker, Barbara Godard, J. Devika, Emek Ergun**,** Henitiuk Valerie, N. Kamala**,** Levine Suzanne, Louise Von Flotow, Maria Tymoczko, Mona Baker, Olga Castro, Rita Kothari, Rukmini Bhaya Nayar, Susan Bassnett, Vanamala Viswanatha etc. among many others, deal with different aspects of gender and Translation from varied perspectives. Indian academia has to take such writings into account while institutionalizing and mainstreaming Translation Studies.

When we think of Translation and migration, representing cultures in cultural anthropology and ethnography gains significance. Talal Asad's essay "The Concept of Cultural Translation in British Social Anthropology" is one of the key texts to understand the conventional relationship between Translation and ethnography. Citing several anthropologists, he demonstrates that social anthropology and ethnography have implicitly perceived their project as something similar to Translation. As we know, Asad's essay is a sharp response to and critique of Western social anthropology that explains "other" cultures in terms of their own without being sensitive to the nuances of indigenous communities and people.

The Eurocentric nature of ethnography is indicative of the European "desire" to appropriate non-European cultures, othering them through the technologies of knowledge and objectification. Writings of Asad, James Clifford, Mary Louise Pratt, and many others demonstrate a pertinent point made by Jacques Derrida that ethnology had come about when the European culture had been "dislocated" and "forced to stop considering itself as the culture of reference." Primarily it's a European science, using the traditional concepts, and "the ethnologist accepts into his discourse the premises of ethnocentrism at the very moment he denounces them" (Derrida   1978:282).   However,   post-Saussurean

anthropologists, ethnographers, and critical theorists argue that it's not enough to provide a critique of the traditional formation of anthropology, and one needs to problematize the classical ethnographical text itself. Challenging the notion of transparency of representation, they acknowledge the constitutive role of language and consider cultural Translation as construction. For example, Claire Chambers argues that "ethnographic writing translates, selects, and fashions its subjects." Though the ethnographers live, see, experience, and record hours of conversations with their "informants", ultimately, they select only what they consider to be relevant for 'writing up' and "dissenting voices or information that is not commensurate with the ethnographer's vision may be excluded from the text" (Chambers 2006:17). She shows how ethnologists tend to produce their narratives using Western tropes. Hence, Clifford very rightly calls such narratives allegories because,

> "A recognition of allegory [in ethnography] emphasizes the fact that realistic portraits to the extent that they are 'convincing' or 'rich,' are extended metaphors, patterns of associations that point to coherent (theoretical, esthetic, moral) additional meanings. Allegory (more strongly than "interpretation") calls to mind the poetic, traditional, cosmological nature of such writing processes. Allegory draws special attention to the narrative character of cultural representations in the stories built into the representational process itself. It also breaks down the seamless quality of cultural description by adding a temporal aspect to the process of reading. One level of meaning in a text will always generate other levels. Thus, the rhetoric of presence that has prevailed in much post-romantic literature (and in much 'symbolic anthropology') is interrupted" (Clifford 1986:100).

The critical ethnographers and auto-ethnographers are committed to respect and show cultural differences in their writings. The above, relatively brief mention of issues in ethnography shows that we, in Translation Studies, need to take note of them. The conventional translation theories are insufficient to deal with such matters, and today translation theorists are committed to developing the discipline as genuinely multidisciplinary.

Homi Bhabha has proposed a very different notion of cultural Translation, which is more relevant to the theme of this conference. It deals with the movement of people and addresses the question of the immigrant individuals and groups of people migrating from the post-colonial counties to the West. How the minority cultures can live with the majority and dominant cultures that have already translated them is the central concern of Bhabha. He suggests that the minority needs to 'rewrite' the oppressive culture exposing the internal contradictions of the colonial/imperial discourse and dismantling their supposed structural cohesion. Bhabha believes that it is possible to refashion Western discourse into something relevant to migrant/minority discourses. Though Bhabha's essay primarily addresses the question of diaspora, his insights are productive to address several kinds of movements and migrations and produce counter-narratives that challenge the dominant ones. For example, the Indian linguistic communities' move to colonial modernity could be construed as a migration from the pre-modern to the modern. One may discuss various aspects of colonial modernity and the fashioning of linguistic identities and nationalisms through the lens of Translation. The advent of colonial modernity, universalization of education and new job opportunities have resulted in the migration of people, primarily to city spaces within the country. Modern cities thus have different linguistic zones, often overlapping with each other. Studying the

different linguistic regions of a city and the mutual interaction and Translation between these regions is a fascinating subject. Michael Cronin & Sherry Simon (2014) observe,

> Questions of public space – and in particular their visual aspects – have been central to debates over public engagement and belonging, but the city's audible spaces have not received the same attention. What is surprising is that language, itself an essential instrument and domain of the public, the medium through which public discussion takes place, is simply taken for granted. Despite the sensory evidence of multilingualism in today's cities, there has been little sustained discussion of language as a vehicle of urban cultural memory and identity, or as a key in the creation of meaningful spaces of contact and civic participation (Cronin & Simon 2014:119).

Sherry Simon's *Cities in Translation: Intersections of Language and Memory* (2011) is an important book that explores the plurilingual nature of the city, its linguistic divisions, creative tensions between languages, dynamics of Translation in the city, language relations and linguistic diversity of the city. This illuminating work draws attention to the importance of languages in shaping the city's historical, geographical and cultural space. Edwin Gentzler (2011) reviews, "as Translation Studies scholars move from the universal to the particular, from the global to the local, Sherry Simon's Cities in Translation furthers that trend, turning from the nation to the city as a geographic space for investigation". The representation of cities is yet another area of study. Such City studies have gathered momentum as "post-structural and postmodern epistemologies have resulted in a recasting of the questions and modes of inquiry used to study the city" (Low 1996:409).   The representation of cities is part of specific

discourses. Hence, it is productive to consider the historical, social, cultural, and symbolic production of cities through various signifying practices in literary studies and Translation Studies. According to Jenneke Rauscher (2014), the 'literary staging' of cities with specific attributes lets us investigate city discourses as representations which means translations.

Michael Cronin (2017) explores an entirely different aspect of Translation not discovered so far in Translation Studies. He considers all human and non-human communication as Translation, thus decentering the centrality of humans in Translation and other discourses. He observes that "animals other than humans have been remarkably silent" in the brief history of Translation Studies. "They have not spoken about, much less spoken to. This silence is all the more unsettling in that the earth had entered the sixth mass extinction of plants and species, in the last 500 years" (Cronin 2017:70).

Cronin asks, in this context of mass destruction of biodiversity, what does Translation Studies have to offer to move away from anthropocentrism? Towards that end, he introduces the notion of *tradosphere.* He says,

> "By tradosphere we mean the sum of all translation systems on the planet, all the ways in which information circulates between living and non-living organisms and is translated into a language or a code that can be processed or understood by the receiving entity" (Cronin 2017:71).

He argues that the above awareness is essential because, in the history of the universe, humans and non-humans are always connected. That connectedness is based on the practice of Translation.

> "Secondly, the tradosphere, like the biosphere, is in a continuous state of evolution and in a time of ecological

crisis, is susceptible to a series of risks that can threaten its very survival… In the case of tradosphere the principal danger comes from the collapse of translation systems that allow humans to interact in a viable and sustainable way with other sentient and non-sentient beings on the planet." Cronin argues for a non-anthropocentric communication or Translation (Cronin:17, 71).

Mona Baker deploys narrative theory effectively in her fascinating account of *Translation and Conflict* (2006). Translators as narrators and interpreters may contribute to the dominant stories of conflict or could contest, resist, and subvert such narratives. Their role as interpreters in conflict zones is also crucial. Drawing upon various examples from history and contemporary conflict zones, Baker demonstrates how translators construct discursive realities.

• The book *Objects of Translation* presents the material culture and a narrative of medieval Hindu-Muslim interactions through objects such as coins, dresses, monuments, paintings, and sculptures that mediate diverse modes of representation. Through them, it questions the monolithic representations of the Hindu-Muslim encounters. This book by Finbarr B. Flood opens up new vistas of Translation Studies. The cannibalistic theory of Translation deals with the tension between the authority of the original (representing the central culture of the colonizers) on the one hand and the autonomy of the Translation (representing the peripheral culture of the colonized) on the other.

Questions

Based on the above survey of Translation Studies, I wish to raise a few questions about fashioning the translation curriculum in the Indian context. Why Translation Studies? What is its relevance in the Indian context? What role

translation is expected to play today? How is Translation, in our context, linked to the question of "English" in Indian Languages? What are the *translation* problems faced by the students of human and social sciences in Higher education? What is the state of human and social science disciplines and reading material in Regional Languages of India? Can Translation be of any help in this situation? How different disciplines took shape in India during the colonial and post-independence periods? Is there any connection between fields' fashioning and the state of reading material available in regional languages? What about the earlier initiatives in translating and producing reading material in various disciplines in these languages? What are the related linguistic/vocabulary problems? How do translations read in regional languages? What is their success rate? Why/when do the translations fail or succeed? Would it be productive to look at the academic and public intellectuals' efforts to produce regional language resources in various disciplines? How can we productively use these resources in Translation Studies? How to address the questions of new areas of academic interest such as caste studies, gender studies, cultural studies, etc., concerning Translation and regional language resourcing? Would it be possible for us to think through the "translation question" to rethink human/social sciences as they are fashioned in higher education, especially in the regional language context? –Such questions have a very marginal presence in Translation Studies. We need to *return* to Translation Studies considering the above and many more questions more seriously.

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Critical Reflections on Migration and Translation in/from the Indian Context

THARAKESHWAR V.B.

Abstract

Migration as an analytical category has been fruitfully deployed in translation studies in the last couple of decades. Nevertheless, in the field of Indian Translation Studies, this has not shown up as an essential concept to be employed and explored. In this context, this present paper tries to sketch the progress so far at the global level and tries to understand the relationship between translation and migration in the Indian context or involving Indian languages in any context. This sketch is more about charting the possible explorable issues than making any decisive argument about them. This paper has three sections, the first one takes stock of the research in the area to tease out the central tenets of the field; while the second one tries to see migration with reference to Kannada historically in a broad stroke; the third and the final section tries to list out the issues for further research in the Indian context or involving Indian languages.

Keywords: Migration, Translation, Indian Languages, Kannada, History of Translation.

In the last couple of decades, migration as an analytical category has been employed in Translation Studies and has paid rich dividends. However, in the field of Indian Translation Studies, this has not shown up as an essential concept to be employed and explored. In this context, the present paper tries to sketch in a nutshell the progress so far at the global level and tries to understand the relationship between translation and migration in the Indian context or involving Indian languages in any context. This sketch is more about charting the possible explorable issues than making any decisive argument about

them. This paper has three sections. The first one takes stock of the research in the area to tease out the main tenets of the field; while the second one tries to see migration with reference to Kannada historically in a broad stroke; the third and the final section try to list out the issues for further research in the Indian context or involving Indian languages.

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The field of Sociology of Translation, which is also named social turn in Translation Studies (Hanna Sameh 2016:1-14), came into being first with the Tel-Aviv school's work, borrowing concepts from Sociology to understand the practices of translation (Toury 1980 & 1995); followed by Actor-Network theory and Bourdieu's concepts of Field, Agency, Doxa (Hanna 2016); some of the issues about the discipline of sociology also made inroads into Translation Studies (for a different perspective on the coming together of Sociology and Translation Studies, see Buzelin 2013). One such issue is migration. The concept of migration entered the field of Translation Studies in the late 1990s and early 2000s when scholars working in the field of Interpretation Studies looked at the role of interpretation in shaping migration and the identity of immigrants in Europe (House et al. 2005, mainly Mason 2005). Since then, this interaction between translation and migration has thrown up several issues for discussion and has been fruitful, as evident in the following discussion of the significant issues.

One of the major developments is that while exploring the interconnectedness of these two phenomena, one is used to understand the other. The translation is seen as the migration of texts, ideas, and meanings across space, time and place. While migration is seen as a translation of people, which is best expressed by postcolonial writers and thinkers as "migrants as translated beings". It was articulated first by Salman Rushdie

while comparing migrant authors in Europe like him to the Britain-born authors writing in English in his collection of essays *Imaginary Homelands*, where he named writers like himself being "translated men" (Rushdie 1991). At the same time, the postcolonial thinker Homi K. Bhabha's book *The Location of Culture* too brought out the centrality of the concept of translation in understanding cultural transformations and used the term cultural translation (Bhabha 1994). These two statements in the early 90s too contributed immensely to the field of Migration and Translation, giving rise to works such as translation as migration and migration as translation, where one becomes the metaphor for the other.

Another front that opened, mainly in literary studies, as a consequence of the postcolonial theory, was that of looking at the diasporic writings, where their sense of displacement, their efforts at negotiating new culture, retaining the old one, creating something new in the process, their identity crisis, their trauma were highlighted. Migration to the first world was seen as an essential condition of the colonies. Consequently, migration to other colonial countries, which were part of the empire, and the postcolonial migration to the first world were equated and analyzed despite some scholars arguing against such tendencies highlighting the myriad waves of migration, different reasons and consequences of such migration.[1] This tendency continues even today in our academics, ignoring the problems of constituting the nation-state and the accompanying problems in the "liberated" colonies and the violence that the nation-state itself has unleashed on specific communities. The "trauma" of the people, who did not migrate in the aftermath of the formation of the nation-state was

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[1] The discussions in the IACLALS conferences in late 1990s and also in its email groups, especially the warning from scholars such as Meenakshi Mukherjee and Harish Trivedi can be recalled here.

drowned in the upbeat of the "trauma" of the people who migrated to the first world countries in the academia and literary world. People who constantly lived as minorities in a nation-state did not get reflected in our "literature" or our "academic writing on literature"; partition and migration gained currency over these issues. Similarly, when the younger generation migrated to the first world, the older generation had to live in the third world countries without the emotional support of their offspring. Though now, with new technology, they can be in touch with each other on a day-to-day basis, and the migrated younger generation does financially support the older generation. It has not mitigated the trauma of living alone in their big houses or specific enclaves in Indian global-metropolitan cities.[2] The impact of the migration on the family members who did/could not migrate needs to be understood, as the subjectivities that they are increasingly occupying as a consequence and its consequences for the nation-state and the modern fabric that holds it together is yet to be analyzed.

Apart from the metaphorical usage of the terms, translation and migration, the kind of work that has happened in the field, which is more fruitful and socio-historical, is keeping these two phenomena distinct and separate. Trying to understand the interconnectedness of the two is a pivotal task. Many have explored the role the translation can play or has played in fostering the dialogue between migrants, the guests, and the

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[2] Though they may not accept it as a trauma and might claim that they are happy that their children and grandchildren are doing well in the first world countries; and may even occasionally boast of visiting these countries to take care of the new-born, grand children or even just as visitors. This has enhanced their prestige among the relatives and financially they are well-off too. As they are beneficiaries of the migration of their children, they don't complain about it; but they do complain about the larger changes that are being wrought on the nation-state and many of them have become votaries of the fundamentalist discourses that are in circulation as an opposition to the changes that the force, named as globalization, is creating.

hosts in a positive way (Vidal, Ricarda. & Perteghella, Manuela 2018; Inghilleri, Moira 2017, the first two chapters). The role translation plays in assimilating the migrants to the host culture and the dialogue necessary for that between the two is also a subject of discussion in Inghillieri, Moira 2021 too.

Siri Nergaard, while talking about the nexus between industrialization and mobility of people in the context of globalization, says that the newer generation is constantly ready to live in flux. She calls it living in translation (Nergaard 2021:146-160). Paola Gentile, while noting the impetus to migration in the context of globalization, talks about the development in interpretation (both conference interpretation and public service interpretation); this line of argument looks at the impact of migration on translation/interpretation. It also acknowledges that interpretation is thriving not only in the first world/European context but also in Arab countries and China and calls for a comparative analysis of the situation (Gentile 2021:161-175).

The role played by activists/translators/legal advisors in the context of immigration and seeking asylum is well explored through the personal narrative/experience in Fani, Aria (2020). There are studies which have looked at the issues of food and gender in the translation of refugees/immigrant narratives to argue for a feminist translation framework as part of activism in translation (Cantelli, Veruska.; and Shringarpure, Bhakti 2020). There are also issues of labourers, sex workers, and female labourers being explored in migration/globalization and translation (Chapter 3 of Inghilleri, Moira 2017:69-107). The issue of trafficking is also explored in this body of literature. The European Union, perceiving migration into Europe as a "crisis", has also commissioned studies exploring the issues related to translation and migration in the 21st century

(https://termcoord.eu/wp-content/uploads/2013/08/Mariani-PhD-Project-2017.pdf). The relationship between self-translation and immigrant literature is also explored, as the immigrant writers often have to resort to it (Gjurčinova 2013). The rise of translingualism due to migration and the problem of translation and translingualism is also addressed. As the translingual text is already in the in-between-ness, at the intersection of borders/cultures, how do we translate it into another language, as we usually understand translation as an act of crossing the border/culture, is the question that is raised here.

The Journal *Translation Studies* created a discussion forum on the topic way back in 2012, in which Loredana Polezzi posed the issues related to it (Polezzi 2012:345-368), and there were quitea several responses to it in the same issue and in the following issues, where the discussion took place on Migrants as objects and subjects of translation, translation as self-translation, bio-politics of languages to the status of Translation Studies and negative/positive models of translation. The interconnectedness between translation, migration and memory is explored in a recent publication (Radstone & Wilson, Rita 2020).

There are hardly any studies which cover migration in a premodern era. Most of the studies discussed so far focus on the modern context of migration, immigration and globalization. One such attempt is Moatti, Claudia (2006)[3] where translation and migration are discussed in the context of the Roman Empire. This article by exploring the interrelationship among translation, migration and communication (this third aspect means- a movement of written documents) calls it a movement and further argues that

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[3] Though the article was published in 2006, it was based on the talk that she delivered in 2002 at University of Southern California.

this movement "changes the role of the state as well as relations between individual and states, augments the use of writing in society, transforms identities, and gives impulse to internal and external regulations" (Moatti 2006:109). I do concur with the writer when she says that the conception of ancient societies as face-to-face societies by academics tended to ignore issues such as translation, migration and communication in them, studying ancient societies in a static way (Moatti 2006:109).

<p style="text-align:center">2</p>

In the Indian context, though we have written from the Buddhist period just before the beginning of the Christian era, they are mainly in rock edicts/inscriptions followed by copper inscriptions. Tapping the inscriptional sources to understand translation is yet to take place in a significant way in the Indian context. This section looks at the concept of migration and its relation to translation in the Kannada literary context in a sketchy way to tease out the issues for further research.

Writing in the present Kannada speaking regions dates back to the Ashokan period, with Buddhist inscriptions in Karnataka mainly on the eastern front. The Buddhist inscriptions are variously dated from the 3rd century B.C. to the 3rd Century A.D. and generally are considered the heydays of the Buddhist era in present-day Karnataka. However, there is archaeological evidence of its existence even in the latter days. The later period is considered a waning era. After the Ashokan period,, we also find the Buddhist inscriptions in other parts of Karnataka today. As many of these are in Brahmi script and the language being Pali, which was not the spoken language of the region then, it is assumed that the messengers of Buddhism and the scripters, who were instrumental in creating these rock/stone inscriptions have come from elsewhere or must have been wandering ascetics/workers who travelled along the

line of Buddhist centres. The patrons of such inscriptions might have been the local rulers/residents/wandering merchants but the workers and the scripters might have been from elsewhere, who possessed the necessary knowledge of the language and the work of sculpting (Settar 2019). Interestingly one of the scribes sent by Ashoka, who was ruling from Pataliputra, was Chapada and he hailed from Gandhara, in present-day Afghanistan (Settar 2019:1). So, wandering ascetics and skilled workers were responsible for the appearance of writing between the 3rd century B.C. to 3rd century A.D.

At the dawn of the Christian era, we find another group migrating to Karnataka, who made their mainstay at Shravanabelagola. This group was led by Chandragupta Maurya and the Jaina monk Bhdrabahu (Long 2009:59-60). Historians have different versions as to why they migrated to the South: one popular version is that there was a big famine in the north, which pushed them to the south. Even the identity of the Chandragupta Maurya is also debated quite extensively. After their entry into the south, we have evidences to suggest that the Jain monks and their monasteries were thriving in what we today call northern Karnataka. This community preserved its narratives/ theological discussions in oral form (in Prakrit) at the beginning of the first millennium. Only in the latter part of the millennium do we see textual production in Prakrit (different varieties), Sanskrit, Kannada, and Tamil. Though the migration happened at the beginning of the first millennium it doesn't give rise to translations until the first millennium. I have elsewhere argued that Shravanabelagola and other Jain monasteries became centres of multilingual production of Jaina texts in Sanskrit, Prakrit and Kannada. We find many bilingual writers who wrote both in Sanskrit and Kannada (Tharakeshwar 2006). Migration did not immediately impact the translation practices of textual production practices

(including inscriptional carvings). The migration took several centuries to get reflected in the discursive arena in bi/multilingual writers/translators. In a way, this turn is a shift from orality to writing. Sanskrit had become the language of the court and had gained ascendency as well as visibility; languages like Kannada were also creating a cosmopolitan vernacular (Pollock 1998). Scholars like Pollock credit the formation of the state and the creation of the cosmopolitan vernacular sphere as responsible for the rise of Kannada literature at the end of the first millennium. It might not have anything to do with the migration of Jaina monks at the beginning of the millennium. Because there is a time lag between the migration and the multilingual textual production/translations, which mark the beginning of written literature in Kannada.

The Vaidik traditions and the textual production in Kannada have nothing to do with each other in the first millennium, though Vaidik traditions were present after the 3rd century A.D.[4] Textual production and translation by the followers of Vaidik tradition/s began later in the second millennium. Nevertheless, Vaidik presence is felt in inscriptional discourse from the 3rd century A.D. onwards. If we consider Vyasa's *Mahabharatha* as being part of Vaidik tradition, the first translation of it into Kannada was carried out by Pampa, a Jaina poet in the 10th century, and he considered it a Loukika text (of this world, secular text) (Tharakeshwar 2005).

Nevertheless, translations in the early part of the first millennium with these spiritual/religious migrations into what

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[4] Some scholars looking at the inscriptional and also archaeological evidence suggest that the Brahmins/Vaidik followers migrated to Karnataka after 3rd century A.D., while the older scholars suggest that they were present earlier but had weakened and got revived later on in the 2nd millennium.

we today call Kannada speaking regions get reflected mainly in inscriptional literature, mainly as affairs of State and trade. During this period, Kannada, from the 4th century onwards, becomes the language of inscription following Prakrit/Pali and Sanskrit. We also find several bilingual and multilingual inscriptions, sometimes, they are translations of the same message in different languages, and sometimes different parts of the texts are in different languages. This continues well into the 18th century. This needs detailed study further.

At the turn of the second millennium, we also find other spiritual traditions making their presence felt in Karnataka such as Natha, Pashupatha, Lakulashaiva, Kalamukha, Siddha cults, etc. Recent discussions have also shown the presence of Ajivika sects in Karnataka. But the main discursive literature is available for what is called the Sharana movement in the form of the vachana literature from the 12th century onwards. Though vachanas were oral, they were also probably textualized in the 12th century though none of those texts is available; but the collections in the later centuries are identified and available. The Veerashaiva/|Sharana movement, though brief for about 20 years, is said to have attracted people from different regions such as Kashmir, Saurashtra, Maharashtra, Kerala etc. into a tiny town in present-day Bidar district of Karnataka called Kalyana. What did these people bring in with them to the movement, and how could these people compose vachanas in Kannada in such a short period, are the issues that need attention and are to be answered if material evidence is available to that end.

Later we also find Dasa Sahitya, which was Vaishnava literature in a way opposed to Vachanas (Veera) Shaiva in nature. These various spiritual practices suggest that many of these practices/traditions that entered Karnataka and tried to find a place here competed with each other. They borrowed

from each other in the process of finishing the other off/digesting it. Some of the discursive narrative strategies are similar to these traditions (Hawley 2015).[5] Despite the competition between these various sects/practices, they seem to have fashioned a language of the relationship between an individual and the god, sometimes creating a community through their shared practices. If the competition and dialogue between these practices/sects can be seen as translation; then again, the ascetic wanderers and itinerant saints make this possible. If these ascetic itinerant preachers/ singers/ performers can be conceived as migration, then we have a rich vernacular corpus for further research. Here it is not migration that we find; there might be a few of such kind too, but itinerant wandering ascetics who interact with others where they temporarily halt become the instruments of confluences, and divergences throughout some time.

During this time, we also find that both Veerashaiva and Dasa literature had more emotional connections with mainly Tamil and Telugu literature of the same *sampradaya* but also with Marathi; which we can conceptualize as translations, though there are actual translations also during this period among these south Indian major languages. If it was not textual translations, motifs, narratives with deviations/ domestication/ localization, discursive frameworks, and narrative tropes were in abundance in this period. These are mainly possible because of these itinerant saints, singers, pilgrims, and performers. We also find during this period reference to migrant communities in the service of performances; they were identified by their profession such as Bahuroopi (Multiple personas), Hagaluvesha (Day-costume) etc. Until recently, we could also

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[5] In fact Hawley explores the interconnectedness between these various traditions/sects/practices around Shaiva and Vaishnava traditions as constituting the idea of India; of course he is following many of the colonial/ nationalist scholars/ thinkers here, through their shared heritage.

find individual singers/troupes who could sing epic-length narratives in multiple languages, such as Daroji Eramma[6] , over several nights just based on their creativity/translation ability and memory. All these performative traditions, some of which are still alive, but are on the vane, need to be studied to understand the role of migration and translation in the oral/performative traditions across languages.

Another vital intervention which is not much documented here is the migration of Persian people into Deccan and the concomitant changes that it brings in. Though with the Mughal and pre–Mughal Delhi Sultanate trying to bring South India under its control, we do have the movement of military troupes and Sufis in the South, it might not have had a long-lasting impact the way the Bahmani kingdom had on Deccan from the mid 14th century. Even Persian, the language of the court during the Tughlaq period, was introduced in the Deccan plateau; the Delhi Sultanate's possession of Deccan was not permanent as the caretakers used to declare independence periodically. The Bahmani kingdom also arose similarly (Sherwani 1946) and is characterized by historians as a Persianate empire. Later in the 16th century, this Bahmani kingdom splintered into Deccan Sultanate and then was solely governed by Asafjahis from Hyderabad. Hindavi, the earlier form of Hindustani/Urdu/Hindi, was introduced to the Deccan when the capital was shifted from Delhi to Devagiri/

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[6] Eeramma, who belongs to a Burrakatha performing community, could easily narrate tens of epic length narratives in both Kannada and Telugu. She was awarded honorary doctorate from Kannada University-Hampi for being the repository of so many oral epics, some of which are recorded, transcribed and published. There are many other such performers/singers/ repositories in the border districts of what we today call as Karnataka, Andhra and Telangana. Another living performer is Shankaramma Mahadevappa from Chittapur of Gulbarga District in Karnataka, who was awarded the Rajyotsava Prashasti from Government of Karnataka.

Daulatabad by Tughalaq. It necessitated a large-scale migration of officials and the army. But the intermingling of this army language with Marathi, Telugu and Kannada, coupled with massive recruitment into the army of people from Persia, Turkey etc., created a new form of language called Deccani. With the establishment of the Bahmani kingdom, this new language got patronage and became a literary language. The Sufis also adopted this language to reach out to the people rather than using Persian. Thus, both in and outside of the court, we have Deccani as a literary language. By the 15th century, we witness texts like *Kadam Rao Padam Rao* a masnavi of 4,000 lines in Deccani written by Fakruddin Nizami in Bidar. Later in the 16th century, we have Adil Shahi II of Bijapur writing *Kitaba-a-Navras,* where the influence of Sanskritic poetic tradition could be seen in Deccani writing. There were a lot of translations/retellings from Persian into Deccani too during this period (Sharma 2020:401-420 for a fuller account of it, for mobility, migration and its impact on art/culture, see Overton ed., 2020). There was also much Persian literature written in this region during the period (see, Devare T. N. 2018, chapter 7 talks about the influence of Persian on Deccani and Marathi). Thus, this period was vibrant in terms of Persian migration and North Indian military language culture migrating to Deccan/South; its impact on the literature, apart from Deccani, of the other languages such as Marathi, Kannada and Telugu need to be studied further. Especially with regard to what we today call oral Tatvapadas which have been brought to print in 32 volumes in Kannada. A majority of them are from the region formerly ruled by Bahamanis, Adilshahis and Asafjahis and now called Hyderabad Karnataka/Kalyana Karnataka. The interaction between Sufi ideas and the Tatvapadas (which also interestingly could claim Vachana heritage and the heritage of

Swaravachanas of the Post-Basava period) is something that needs to be studied.

The fall of the Adilshahis of Bijapur was caused by the Portuguese with the help of the Vijayanagara kingdom. The phenomenon brought the Portuguese to power in Goa in the first decades of the 16th century. This is a noteworthy event as it marks the entry of the Europeans into Kannada speaking areas. Whether we should call it migration or not is a debatable issue. They brought the printing press to the region; there are reports claiming that they worked on Canarese (the name of the Kannada language given to it by them) and printed many books. But not much information is available on it. We had to wait for William Carey to arrive at Serampore near Kolkata in the late 18th and early 20th century for Kannada to get into print. Through the effort of Basel Missionaries, many old Kannada texts from Palm-leaf manuscripts were brought into print around the mid-19th century onwards.

Many of the Europeans came here to carry out missionary activities or administrative activities, but many of them lived here for a significant part of their life, though sometimes they were on the move; some of them picked up Indian languages and rendered the compositions of texts as well as translations into English of Indian language texts/oral literature. The missionaries associated with Basel Missionaries are a case in point, such as Rev. Ferdinand Kittel and Rev. Hermann Friedrich Moegling. This colonial context induced migration for missionary or administrative purposes did leave a long-lasting impact on the translation scene in the 19th century, which was carried forward by the native elites later on. The translation of biblical literature into Indian languages, translation of Indian language literature (both oral as well as from palm-leaf based texts), translation of historical sources, and anthropological documents, though well documented in

various languages and analyzed extensively from the perspective of postcolonial theory is not seen from the lens of the migration and translation (Tharakeshwar 2003). The only exception I could find is Markovits, Claude.; Pouchepadass, Jacques.; and Subrahmanyam, Sanjay (eds.), 2003. There is a discussion related to the movement of ideas, things/goods and people under the rubric of Society and Circulation between 1750 to 1950, or what they would call as Early Modern period, which is essentially the encounter between South Asian cultures and European cultures from an interdisciplinary historical perspective.

The Modern Period

As a consequence of the entry of Europeans into Kannada speaking regions and the introduction of the English system of Education, new native elite was created. This native elite was the one that spearheaded the translation of European/British literature into Kannada. As a consequence of English education and colonialism, we also see this native elite inaugurating Modern Kannada literature by translating new genres such as lyrics, novels, Short stories, drama (mainly of the drawing-room variety and historical plays, but also based on Puranic tales), sonnet, autobiography, etc. This was also the time when the educated native elite saw large-scale migration to new territories looking for new administrative/teaching jobs. The establishment of institutions of modern governance in Princely states and colonial metropolis drew this educated elite section into their fold. In Mysore, we see a large-scale migration of educated Tamils, which triggered a Mysore movement for Mysoreans at the end of the 19th century. However, soon, by the 1910s, we saw many of these migrated Tamilians switching to Kannada, and some of them went on to become prominent writers in Kannada (for example, Masti Venkatesh Iyengar). Apart from engaging in translations from English, some of

these people have also translated religious literature from their mother tongue into the language of the land of their migration.

Similarly, Hyderabad also witnessed the migration of large scale educated Kannadigas from the regions ruled by the Nizam into Hyderabad for jobs. Hyderabad was a multilingual city with Deccani as the spoken language, Urdu as the language of instructions with a sizable population speaking Kannada, Telugu, Marathi. The Kannadigas organized themselves too with Karnataka Sahitya Mandira being formed in 1936 and also undertaking the publication of books. Some of the second/third generation migrants to Hyderabad city are now translating between two languages.

Higher education itself was a cause of temporary migration during that period as people went to Madras, Bombay, and Pune for higher studies before the establishment of Mysore University in Mysore princely state. Even after the establishment of Mysore University in 1914, we see that the Kannada speaking regions adjoining these cities drew a lot of young educated people coming for higher studies. Some of these people would get absorbed, turning into permanent migrants; some would go back and become vehicles of change in their native places. The autobiographies and autobiographical jottings of many of the early modern Kannada writers document this movement and they are being a vehicle of modernity in literature. Even the much-celebrated engineer M. Visvesvaraya, went to various foreign countries as part of his work such as Russia, Japan, the United States, and Egypt, and came back to work in Mysore, and worked in various other places in colonial/princely India. His writings and works need to be looked at from the point of view of his travels abroad and within India. He was the Diwan of Princely Mysore and is remembered fondly for it. Thus, the link between fashioning modernity, anti-colonial nationalism and

also linguistic nationalism in Mysore needs to be looked at through these travels, though they may not be strictly seen as migration, within India as well as outside.[7] Though they might not have anything to do with textual translations, such travels certainly played a role in translating discourses and non-discursive elements.

If we look at the emergence of nationalist literature in Kannada there seem to be two main sources, viz., Marathi and Bengali. Marathi was the dominant language in what we today call North Karnataka/ Mumbai Karnataka. Then it was Southern Maratha which was a part of the Bombay presidency, and contiguous with and adjoining the Kannada region. We had a lot of movement during the colonial period across linguistic zones but it was a single administrative unit. It was not surprising to see translations from Marathi into Kannada in the early 20th century and even competing translations[8] from English into Kannada. Though Bengali was not a contiguous language, still from the late 19th century, we find many translations into Kannada from that language; how did this happen? Quite a number of translators learnt Bengali to translate due to the pull of the new literature in Bengali at that point in time. Though it has nothing to do with migration in a sociological sense, metaphorically, it does. How we understand these issues is the question for further research.

The vibrant translation practices between contiguous languages in India in the precolonial period underwent a sea change in the modern context. In the modern context, we hardly find that kind of interaction with the neighbouring languages. The few translators from neighbouring languages

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[7] For the discussion of Mysore Modernity see Nair, 2011 and Gowda, 2007.
[8] What I mean by competing translations here is just because a text is translated into Marathi, there is a desire to see that the text be translated into Kannada as well.

into Kannada are mainly those who hail from the border areas, the twilight zone. One can see that many of our translators from Marathi into Kannada today are located in Belgaum and adjoining districts; translators from Malayalam are in Kasaragod or Mangalore region. Because a large number of districts share a border with Telugu speaking regions. We find translators from Telugu into Kannada hailing from Raichur, Bellary, Tumkur, and Kolar districts. There are very few migrants who have newly learnt the language in contemporary times and taken up the translation in a major way. As Hindi and Urdu have become a kind of non-territorial pan Indian languages replacing Sanskrit, Prakrit, and Persian in today's context, it is interesting to see, where the translators from these languages into Kannada are hailing from or how they are initiated into translation.

Individual migration to various European countries and the United States, Australia, and Arab regions has increased in contemporary times, but we hardly find this migration giving rise to translators between those languages and Kannada. Even today, most of the translations from non-English languages of the world into Kannada happen through English translation. We have very few direct translations from non-English and non-Indian languages. Though the number of Indians learning foreign languages is increasing as the number of institutions and colleges/schools offering it is also increasing, many of these teachers themselves are Indian language speakers, but they are not visibly taking to translation in a significant way. But some of these are in interpretation and business translation, working either part-time for Government or part-time/ full time for MNCs. Some of them travel extensively into these nations/linguistic regions, but literary or cultural translations are hardly seen.

The only exception was the translation of Russian literature and discursive texts. Some of the scholars who learnt Russian were employed by publishers such as Raduga, Mir, and Progressive publishers, so we can see direct translations from Russian into Kannada. I have no data about translations from Kannada into Russian, if any, arisen from such institutional practices. Transnational migration is increasing, but its impact on translation is not visible in the Kannada Translation scenario.

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The sketchy mapping of the relationship between translation and migration in the Kannada context in the previous section calls for further research in terms of analysis that needs to be carried out and in terms of the primary data available for such analysis. It also calls for rethinking some of the conceptual terminologies that we need to employ to understand the relationship between translation and migration. Here, I try to indicate some of these issues for further discussion.

As we have seen, the word migrants is contingent on the time factor. If the Jains who came around the beginning of the Christian era into Kannada speaking regions were migrants, can we see them as migrants even after nearly 900 to 1000 years is the question that we need to ponder over. What factors influence the cessation or continuation of the status of a migrant is worth exploring in this context? Can it be measured in terms of generations? What if each generation is a migrant one? What about the families that don't reside in the same geographical location but meet regularly? What if one is not a migrant but has accepted the tenets of a spiritual /religious practice of a group which migrated hundreds of years ago? Would the popular majoritarian memory look at such people/persons still as a migrant? Is the role of memory in the measurement of assimilation/distinction, in being objective or

subjective, conditioned by several ideological and political factors?

Should we use migration as an umbrella term and/or look at the various categories such as migration, immigration, itinerant cultures, nomadic cultures, semi-nomadic cultures, seasonal migration, educational migration, travel for leisure, travel for business, and travel for work separately? Or do we need to use a more generic word as an umbrella term? The mass scale migration that we have witnessed in the west might not be identifiable here, or we do not have data about it. We have individual aspirational migrations, itinerant people, nomadic communities, seasonal migrations and semi-nomadic communities. People who are converted are also seen as migrants because they have embraced a faith migrated from elsewhere. In such a case, what generic term is appropriate to interrogate such circulation of people and its cultural impact on translation?

The inscriptional evidence related to migration, literary evidence, linguistic evidence, and pieces of evidence based on the memories of the communities themselves are not in place for us to conduct the analysis; we need to put them together in each Indian language at the language level as well as collectively to identify the region of migration/circulation/ movement. We also do not have the data about translation itself, despite our efforts in the field of the history of translation in India/Indian languages in terms of full-length studies and databases. When it comes to pre-modern/pre-colonial translation practices, we do not have a commonly accepted definition of a translation to see what construes translation or non-translation. What do we do with multi-lingual/ bi-lingual texts, with commentary literature in the same language or different languages? What do we do with oral versions in different languages, as they cannot be dated

and seen as the source text and target texts unambiguously? Similarly, in the age of digital and multimedia content production, such as OTT platforms offering sub-titles and dubbed versions of different films where the information regarding the translation practices is not in the public domain or not readily available, how do we proceed are some of the issues one has to think through in this area of research. I am assuming that some of the issues I am raising here in the context of Kannada are applicable to most of the Indian languages in general. Still, there could be a completely new set of issues related to languages of the nomadic communities, oral cultures and translation.

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Looking at the Diaspora in Miyah Poetry

SIDDIQUA FATIMA VIRJI

Abstract

This paper attempts to pick up on the elements of diaspora in the poetry written by the Miyah community, while also trying to understand their claim to be called Assamese, as their poetry has certain diasporic elements, while it simultaneously asks for inclusion. For this purpose, the poetry is looked at keeping in mind the community's history to help contextualize the voices of the community.

The themes present in Miyah poetry are reminiscent of the themes and topics commonly associated with diaspora. In its current usage, diaspora refers to "a scattered population whose origin lies in a separate geographical locale" (Ember, Ember and Skoggard 2004). This definition can include a variety of 'diasporic' groups while remaining distinctly separate from the understanding of migration, which focuses more on the movement of people rather than the dispersion of experiences and identities of people.

In the case of the Miyah community, there is no such desire to return to the homeland, but the community continues to assert its distinct identity, not as Bengalis, but as a distinct community within Assam, and with their history of migration and enduring discrimination, which exact definition of diaspora they fit into is hard to pinpoint as at different points of time the community matches different ideas of diaspora.

An analysis of some poems by prominent poets of the Miyah community, Shalim M. Hussain, Hafiz Ahmed and Khabir Ahmed endorses the claims made in this paper.

Keywords: Diaspora, Miyah Poetry, Migration

The word Miyah in Urdu means 'gentleman', but its sustained use has become an ethnic slur that in Assam is commonly associated with char chapori[1] dwelling Muslim immigrants from erstwhile Bengal or Bangladesh. This community, the Miyah community, pens down the experience of moving away, and the struggle of living in a society that views them as outsiders and would rather have them leave. The poems that are written by this community highlight the xenophobic atmosphere of the place they live in and protest against the discrimination and humiliation they are subjected. Many such immigrants, through their poetry, are reclaiming the title Miyah with pride. The oldest poem by this community, which talks of the difficulties and discrimination faced, is a poem called "Charuwar Ukti" (translated as A Charuwa's[2] Proposition) written by Maulana Bande Ali in 1939. Until 2016 when Hafiz Ahmed posted the poem "Write Down 'I am a Miyah' on his Facebook page, Miyah poetry was written mostly in the char chapori dialect (whether this is a Bengali dialect or an Assamese dialect is debated by the indigenous and char chapori communities[3]).

Since this poetry came into social media, it has also been written in and translated to English, Assamese and other languages (Hussain 2016). The Facebook page *Itamugur*, has been instrumental in compiling, archiving and sharing Miyah poetry, in its original and translated versions, translating the

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[1] Char Chapori refers to an area in Assam made up of floodplain sediments from Brahmaputra and its tributaries.

[2] Charuwa is the Assamese word that refers to the people living in char chapori regions of the Brahmaputra River.

[3] The speakers of this dialect, presently, assert that over time their language has become more Assamese than Bengali as it once used to be. The reason being, for generations their children have been educated only at the local Assamese medium schools.

poetry where translations by the author weren't already available[4].

In this paper, I attempt to look into the elements of the Diaspora in the poetry written by the Miyah community. As their poetry has certain elements of diaspora, while simultaneously asking for inclusion, I also try to understand the community's claim to be called Assamese. For this purpose, I look at this poetry keeping in mind the community's history to contextualise the voices of the community.

The themes present in Miyah poetry are reminiscent of the themes and topics commonly associated with the diaspora. In its current usage, diaspora refers to "a scattered population whose origin lies in a separate geographical locale" (Ember and Skoggard 2004). This definition can include a variety of 'diasporic' groups while remaining distinctly separate from the understanding of migration. The idea of migration focuses more on the movement of people rather than the dispersion of experiences and identities of people. While both, migration and diaspora include the crossing of borders, the former is more physical while the latter is more experiential and emotional. Agnieszka Weinar described the recent expansion of the context in which diaspora is used by claiming that, "a growing body of literature succeeded in reformulating the definition, framing diaspora as almost any population on the move and no longer referring to the specific context of their existence" (Rainer and Faist 2010:75). Shuval in his paper on *Diaspora Migration: Definitional Ambiguities and a Theoretical Paradigm* elaborates that the notion that a diaspora community desires to return to their homeland need not be present in all diasporas. He talks of how in its present metaphoric usage, the term diaspora also refers to many

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[4] All the poems I refer to in this paper can be found on the *Itamugur* facebook page.

communities of migrants that have not been exiled but may have been forced to migrate due to political crises, natural disasters, pogroms, oppressive regimes, economic instability and other similar distressing conditions. Often in such cases, the immigrant community wishes to integrate into the host land and does not have any desire to return to their homeland. What differentiates diaspora migration from other forms of migration is that such communities may hold on to certain elements of their culture, like their language or sense of heritage, and in some cases a sense of attachment to their homeland (Shuval 2000). In his paper *The Jewish Diaspora in a Comparative and Theoretical Perspective* (2005), William Safran discusses the idea of diaspora as that of minority identity with "an awareness of multilocality", attempting to preserve their collective identities. He elaborates on how transnational migration is not a prerequisite for the diaspora. Brubaker also seems to reiterate similar ideas as he suggests, "Diasporas have been seen to result from the migration of borders over people, and not simply from that of people over borders". Thus providing more insight into this idea of diaspora that does not have to cross international borders (Bodo 2010).

In the case of the Miyah community, there is no such desire to return to the homeland. The community continues to assert its distinct identity, not as Bengalis, but as a community within Assam. With the community's history of migration and enduring discrimination, which exact definition of diaspora they fit into, is hard to pinpoint as at different points of time the community matches different ideas of diaspora.

Identity

Khabir Ahmed was the first poet to use the term 'Miyah' to refer to himself in poetry. He does so in the poem "I Beg to State That" (1985), through the line "I am a settler, a hated Miyah." The term 'Miyah' has been used as an insult,

interchangeably with other terms like 'Bangladeshi' and 'illegal immigrant', both emphasising the fact that this community does not really belong in Assam. The community seems to have, in spite of this negative connotation of otherness, actively embraced 'Miyah' as their identity. This can be observed in the popular response that followed Hafiz Ahmed posting his poem "Write Down I am Miyah" on Facebook. This poem received a great deal of attention on the first day of being posted and led to a chain of poems all asserting the Miyah identity. As many as 12 poems were written in response to this within a week. One of the first poems to be written in response to this was Shalim M. Hussain's poem "Nana I Have Written." The char chapori community of Assam had at that point brought its protest online, and through poetry demanded that their 'Miyah' identity be respected, for Miyah was how they chose to be known. (Hussain16). In the poem "Don't Insult Me As a Miyah" (2017), Abdur Rahim writes,

> Don't Insult me as Miyah
> Anymore
> I am ashamed to
> Introduce myself
> As Miyah no more.

While we see the Miyah community embracing their identity with respect, we are also made aware of the way this community is perceived as the 'other' by the "indigenous Assamese" community. A lot of Miyah poetry has been composed on this otherness as well. Maulana Bande Ali starts his poem "A Charuwa's Proposition" with the lines,

> Some say Bengal is my birthplace
> And gloat in this bitter accusation.

These lines refer to how the Miyah community, according to the "some" referred to in the poem, can not belong there in

Assam, as their roots lay elsewhere. Maulana Ali resists such ideas as he goes on to explain his identity,

> I am not a charuwa, not a pamua [5]
> We have also become Asomiya

Miyah community asks the Assamese to recognize them as their own, no longer as the "settlers" or "foreigners". Another assertion of identity often found in Miyah poetry is one that goes against the tag of "neo-Assamese", an example of this would be Chan Miyah's "I Don't Know My Name Today" (2017).

> Don't call me a Bangladeshi
> I don't need your barbs
> Don't condescend with 'Neo-Assamese'
> Give me nothing
> But what I own.

These lines assert that the 'Neo-Assamese' identity isn't a compromise that the community shall accept. They ask not for charity but for a dignified human identity and recognition of their historical presence in Assam. The concept "na-Axomiya Mymensinghia", (meaning Neo-Assamese from Mymensingh), originally was proposed by Jyoti Prasad Agarwala in 1951 when the Miyah communities from the "char chaporis" began to identify themselves as Assamese.[6] This idea suggests that this community could be Assamese too, but that they could only be a different, new sort of Assamese, identified as those who came from Mymensingh (now a district in Bangladesh). What the community identifies with is an important theme in the poetry as it asserts a sense of self that refuses to be put down any more. At the same time, that identity acknowledges

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[5] Pamua in Assamese means settler.
[6] Jyoti Prasad Agarwala was a famous mid-twentieth century figure in the Assamese Public Sphere.

the differentiation. With this dual appeal, Miyah poetry makes a case for the community to be included in the Assamese identity as they are. By simultaneously identifying as Miyah and as an Assamese, it proposes that these two identities are not mutually exclusive.

Belongingness

Through their poetry, the Miyah community justifies their claim to be considered equal inhabitants of Assam. By counting generations since their resettlement during partition, they argue that their roots go deep enough into the history of Assam. By extending their roles and jobs in the Assamese society, they establish the reasons to identify as Assamese.

Some of these Miyah poems talk of the migration of the community into Assam, of how they lost their address sometime in the last century in a storm on the river (Ahmed 1985) or of how their parents had to leave their home and their countries years and years ago (Ali 1939). Both of these poems talk of the dear land they now live in and how they have become like the land. Maulana Bande Ali's poem "A Charuwa's Proposition" also points out how the Miyah community is finding its own place in Assam, revelling in its prosperity and making the land both their home and sanctuary, as they claim their identities and ask for equality.

> We have also become Asomiya
> Of Assam's land and air, of Assam's language
> We have become equal claimants.
> If Assamese dies, so do we.

He then goes on to ask why they would ever let their language die. He does this by expressing how strongly he feels for the land that he lives in and by showing us how he is making the place his and wishes to see the place make him part of it as well. Ali's poem is, especially, important in understanding the

Miyah sentiment because of the time it was written. It was written in 1939 before India even gained independence. It is a testament to the fact that even in the pre-independence period, in 1939, at least part of this community had already begun to call Assam their home, their own. It is only natural that this desire to belong to the place strengthens as time passes by, and more and more of those who migrated to the land also start seeing it as home.

Khabir Ahmed in his poem "I Beg to State That" gives us a description of the life that the char chapori people have lived over the years, through the experiences of their work. They've laboured in the paddy fields, bowing to nothing but their crop and their own sweat, as they ploughed the land and etched their devotion to it. They've flattened hills and chopped forests, they've provided the labour that built cities and monuments as their skin burnt in the sun. Hafiz Ahmed and Rezwan Hussain's poems also do the same as they write about the service jobs that the char chapori community takes up such as driving, pulling rickshaws, plumbing and washing, and continually making the lives of others easier while they continue to suffer. A lot of Miyah poetry makes references to the occupations of the Miyah community and the roles they play in the Assamese society, as if listing out their labour would help justify their claim to belong to Assam and its society. Despite this strong desire to call this land "home", their growing sentiments for it, and their labour and contributions to the land and its people, the relentless discrimination they face denies them the feeling of belonging.

Discrimination

The Miyah community, though take up the most menial jobs, carry out labouring tasks and perform various works necessary for the upkeep of the society, they are denied all the rights and not recognised as members of the society. Time and again they

are asked to leave Assam. Even after decades of having lived in that place, they are still seen as settlers and outsiders.

Shalim M. Hussain in his poem "Nana I Have Written" writes about the ignorance and illiteracy in the community. He shows how such plight is directly influenced by the disadvantages and denials the community have been subjected to. The average literacy rate in the Char regions is around 15% and 68% of the population is below the poverty line. The lack of basic amenities, and the threat of the raging river eroding a substantial amount of land every year force the people to relocate every few years (Sarma 2015).

Hafiz Ahmed's poem "Write Down I Am Miyah" demonstrates the extent of the disadvantages the Miyah community is subjected to. To begin with, they are denied their basic rights like voting.

> My mother a D voter,
> Though her parents are Indian

Their right to vote is 'disputed'[7]. On rare occasions, when they are able to prove they belong to India, their identity is declared 'dubious'. In the same poem, Hafiz Ahmed goes on to illustrate the aversion that the indigenous people have for the Miyah community. He asks if they will hate his children as they hate him. He also draws images of oppression the community has faced. Some lost their lives and those who survived are filled with rage. Khabir Ahmed's "I Beg to State That" talks of this discrimination and the persecution that followed in the lines,

On a burning night in '83
My nation stood on the black hearths of Nellie and screamed

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[7] A D voter is one whose voter status is doubtful or dubious. In the poem Ahmed uses the term 'disputed' as the matter depends on the citizenship dispute.

The clouds caught fire at Mukalmua and Rupohi, Juria,
Saya Daka, Pakhi Daka- homes of the Miyahs
Burnt like cemeteries

He refers to the Nellie massacre that took place on the 18th of February, 1983 that was aimed at the Miyah community and was meant to create fear. Entire settlements were burned and thousands[8] lost their lives or their homes. This massacre was carried out as some of the "locals" took offence of the fact that the names of the "illegal Bangladeshi immigrants"[9] were included in the electoral roll for the by-election held after the death of an MP in 1979. This caused such outrage that the election was unable to take place till 1983. The massacre took place 4 days after the election was held. An important point to note here is that nearly 30% of the population in these regions consisted of Bengali Hindus who migrated to the state during partition, but no objection was taken to their names being included. (Uddin)

In '85 a gang of gamblers auctioned me
On the floor of the Assembly.

In the above lines from the same poem, Khabir Ahmed reminds us of the Assam Accord that was proposed by the Central Government promising the removal of all Bangladeshi immigrants post-1971, in order to silence the Assam Agitation[10.] The issue with this arrangement was that it wasn't

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[8] The Nellie massacre according to official records claimed the lives of over 2,191 people from 14 villages in central Assam. Unofficial records claim that more than 10,000 lives were lost.

[9] Though most of these were the successive generations of those who migrated to India much before Partition, these people however were still considered illegal immigrants, foreigners and settlers.

[10] The Assam Agitation (1979-1985) also known as the Assam movement was led by the All Assam Students Union against illegal immigrants in the state, and their being given the right to vote.

possible to be accurate in such a task. Moreover, there were many who had migrated to Assam before 1971 but could not produce adequate documentation. Consequently, those people were also included in the list to be removed. The accord, thereby, became a threat to most of the Miyah community that had settled much before 1971 as well.

The line "I see everyone has a history of journey…" from Kazi Neel's poem "Digging a Grave" (2019) expresses the sentiment of the community well. We see the community tell us how they came to Assam many years ago, and we see them asking why even after all this time they are still seen as outsiders. At some point in the past, each community which is local had also migrated. Every community has migrated to where they are, some came first, and some afterwards. The poem makes us think H how long must one stay in a place before they are allowed to call a place their home? Diaspora communities need not exist forever; they can and do at times integrate with the locals as time passes, and as the host land becomes more important to them than the homeland. The Miyah community is seen as diaspora by those around them but through their poetry, they seem to be taking a stand for their own identity. Shalim M. Hussain, one of the forerunners of the Miyah poetry movement, in his poem "Poetry Will Belong" (2019) writes,

> Poetry will learn its aukaat
> Ma kasam, poetry will belong.

He did not write this poem specifically in the context of Miyah poetry, he says he wrote it to give voice to the idea that "sometimes one language or one set of sensibilities drawn from one culture are not sufficient to portray what the multilingual, multicultural poet wants to depict." He believes that writing poetry has helped the Miyah community as it has given them a "sense of self" through community expression.

Hussain goes on to say that "The ideas promoted through Miyah poetry inspire more poems and in due course of time a situation is created where Miyah poetry is all around us. Beyond that poetry has a very limited function. Miyah poetry belongs in the world we live in because it exists. The only thing necessary is to promote it" (Hussain 2020). Poetry is part of a solution for the community as its existence is what has given them the attention their experiences deserved.

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Identity Creation and Ideas of Belonging in Kolkata's Chinese-Indian Community

JOITA DAS

Abstract

The arrival of migrants from China and their subsequent settlement in Kolkata has shaped the complex tapestry of Kolkata's culture in significant ways. More formal, State-ascribed means of identification of the migrants from China to Kolkata, India, do not lend sufficient credence to the 'Chinese-Indian' hybrid identity (which is based on the community's cultural experiences) that draws from both the Chinese and the Indian pasts. This paper traces the history of migration and the complexities of identity creation in the Chinese (minority) community of Kolkata who began arriving in the city in the latter half of the 18th century. Further, the paper examines the hybrid nature of the Chinese-Indian identity. It explores how this dual identity of being at once Chinese and Indian emerged gradually and can be traced through the various cultural practices of the community. Following this, the paper attempts to foreground how Kolkata's Chinese community created a hyphenated Chinese-Indian identity for themselves in the city. Citizenship and various other legal documents help place this community within a larger national, legal framework, but these documents only attempt to create an Indian identity. For a community that still identifies strongly with its Chinese roots, I contend that these State-ascribed legal documents do not capture the hybrid nature of Chinese-Indian identity in its true essence. While contending, I also try to unpack how Chinese-Indian is an identity in flux and cannot be reduced to a either a wholly Chinese or fully Indian.

Introduction

Chinese migration to India can be located against the larger backdrop of the Chinese diaspora that was underway in many parts of South and Southeast Asia in the 19th century. However, this paper will examine Chinese migration to India in the 18th, 19th, and 20th centuries as a phenomenon with distinctive features, separating it from the diasporic movement of the Chinese to other parts of the world. Whereas there is considerable scholarship on the Chinese diaspora to other parts of Asia, scholarship on Chinese migration to India is particularly scarce, owing to the significantly smaller numbers of Chinese people who migrated to India compared to

A Chinese temple near Budge-Budge, Kolkata, where the first Chinese to India, arrived. The date on top is most probably the year it was built- 1718. (Photograph by Joita Das)

other parts of East and Southeast Asia. Ellen Oxfeld and Jennifer Liang have contributed significantly to the scholarship on the Chinese community of India. Whereas Oxfeld traces the community's economic history in *Blood, Sweat and Mahjong,* Lianghas looked more broadly at the kinds of jobs the overseas Chinese took up when they migrated to India in *Migration Patterns and Occupational Specializations of Kolkata Chinese.* Nevertheless, questions regarding the community's identity

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and their sense of belonging to Kolkata (earlier Calcutta), the capital of West Bengal and former capital of colonial India, have not been directly addressed in previous works. It is also important to note here that the term 'Chinese-Indian' has never been figured historically in any official state document, but it is one that the immigrant community in Kolkata has owned and used over time in identifying themselves. Thus, the hyphenated label of the Chinese-Indian is an expression created and owned by the community and is not a nominalization limited to this research. In such a context, this paper looks closely at notions of identity and belonging within the community. It complicates the idea of a 'Chinese-Indian' identity by arguing that this unique hybrid identity of being at once 'Chinese' and 'Indian' is not brought about by a national decree, or a State mandated policy like the granting of citizenship, but rather through more organic and informal practises of the community in Kolkata. Whereas citizenship of a host country could foster feelings of belonging and allow immigrant communities to lay claim to a larger national identity, such means of identification have not been influential in creating the hybrid identity that, I argue, was central to the diasporic consciousness of this community. The terms 'Indian' and 'Chinese' do not in themselves capture the essence of being 'Chinese-Indian.' Therefore, this paper tries to trace the origin of the term 'Chinese-Indian' as a more profound and dynamic response of the immigrant community to its presence in the host country through a long and protracted process of isolation and assimilation with the host country's culture. This paper critically examines identity creation and notions of belonging among Kolkata's Chinese-Indians and examines how this community created a hyphenated identity for themselves in the city.

This research combines secondary reading with ethnographic field study. It includes a visit to Kolkata's Chinatown in the

Tangra region, in the eastern part of the city and semi-structured interviews with notable members of the Chinese-Indian Association - a group of volunteers from within the Chinese community of Kolkata committed to protecting and promoting the culture and welfare of the Chinese-Indian community in the city[1]. The paper attempts to situate this ethnographical work within broader theoretical frameworks of Migration and Culture Studies.

Histories of Migration

This section introduces and explains the identities of early Chinese migrants to India. Chinese migration to India occurred in three phases (Liang 2007:397). The first wave occurred in the 18th and 19th centuries. In this phase, those who came to India were predominantly traders and skilled workers who frequently traversed the maritime routes between India and China (397). The second wave of Chinese migration occurred in the early 20th century following political turmoil in the Chinese mainland. Migrants who arrived in India in this phase were primarily men who were political refugees. They were mostly unskilled workers. The third and final phase of Chinese migration to India occurred after World War 2 (397). The migrants in this phase, too, had fled political conflict in the Chinese mainland.

The first wave comprised of Chinese migrants who came to India in the 18th and 19th centuries via well-established trade routes along the Bay of Bengal and the Indian Ocean. Therefore, the first Chinese migrants to India were traders (397). They were also mostly men who were either unmarried

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[1] These were personal interviews conducted with four members of the Chinese-Indian Association, in Kolkata, West Bengal. All interviews were conducted between June 2015 and June 2018. These were semi-structured interviews. To protect my interviewees' privacy, I will not disclose their real names in my paper.

or who had left their families behind in China to come work in Kolkata, which they imagined, in the words of the former President of the Chinese-Indian Association, to be a city "paved in gold." The Chinese viewed India as a prosperous country where they could travel to obtain lucrative jobs (398). The former President of the Chinese-Indian Association emphasized, moreover, that the rising importance of Kolkata in British India as a commercial entry point meant that the city represented wealth and prosperity in the popular imagination of Chinese migrants preparing to undertake maritime expeditions to Kolkata in the 18th and 19th centuries.

However, the former President also stated that for most Chinese sea-farers of that time, the aim was to travel to India, earn money and return with their savings to their families in China. Early Chinese migrants to Kolkata never planned to settle down in the city. The first Chinese migrants to Bengal showcased, therefore, a strong sojourner mentality. This sojourner mentality was not a feature of Chinese migration to India alone. Sunil Amrith, in *Migration and Diaspora in South Asia,* writes that a certain sojourner mentality characterized the migratory patterns and movements of many Asian communities until the mid-twentieth century (Amrith 2011:4), although it may have been especially characteristic of Chinese immigrant communities. Migrant workers planned to reside in their host countries only temporarily, intending to eventually return to China. Amrith notes that migrants continued to maintain close contact with their home country even as they sought jobs and residence in other countries (4). The former President of the Chinese-Indian Association's remarks brought home this fact of Chinese migration to Bengal in the 18th and 19th centuries, where sojourner Chinese came to India primarily as fortune-seekers seeking wealth to take back to China but never planning to marry into or settle down amongst the Indians. However, later Chinese migrants to Kolkata found

it increasingly difficult to return to China due to the Chinese Civil War and the subsequent Communist Revolution that made travel between China and India difficult in the 20th century. It was in 1946 that many Chinese migrants decided to settle down in India, permanently, some even attempting to bring their families from China to India during this time. The President of the Chinese-Indian Association also pointed out that once the Chinese began to settle down in Bengal, some of them even ended up marrying local women from Northeast India. Local women from the Northeast, like the Chinese, had Mongoloid features (Liang 2007:403). The former President added that women from the Northeast were readily accepted into the Chinese-Indian community since their racial features resembled those of their Chinese partners. The first notable Chinese migrant to have come and settled down in India was a tea-trader named Tong Atchew (Xing 2009:56). Atchew arrived in Kolkata in the late 18th century. He landed in Budge Budge, a village and riverine port just south of Kolkata. Most sources trace his arrival in the city to 1778 (Xing and Sen 2013:206). Atchew was among the first notable Chinese traders to have travelled to Kolkata in pursuit of a better life. There is an almost saint-like aura around the figure of Tong Atchew today, transforming him into a quasi-mythological figurehead. He lies buried in Atchipur (named after him), close to Budge Budge. Atchew's tomb is a pilgrimage site for Chinese-Indians today (214) who continue to pay ritual homage to him during the Lunar New Year.

The deification of historical figures is common in Confucianism. The immortalizing of Atchew in the Chinese-Indian consciousness is part of this legacy. The first month of the Lunar New Year is devoted to worshipping ancestors. In the Confucianist belief system, ancestors have significant control over the lives of the living (Xing 2009:56). Therefore, appeasement of the ancestral spirits through ritual worship is

essential at this time. Chinese-Indians regard Atchew as an awe-inspiring 'founding father' of their community (57). Atchew has become this community's collective common ancestor. He also epitomizes the prosperity achievable in a foreign land through hard work and perseverance. Therefore, Atchew's deification may be held to be a confirmation of a certain cultural continuity of the Chinese-Indians' culture, with China. Aspects of Chinese-Indian culture continue to draw from the Confucianist culture of this community's ancestral land. Asian immigrant communities are known to have continued to maintain cultural and political links with their countries of origin (Amrith 2011:2). The veneration of Atchew during the Chinese New Year, therefore, is a celebration by the Chinese-Indian people of their origin and subsequent migration to India.

The Chinese-Indians' links with mainland China and Taiwan continued in other ways, as well. Another interviewee from the Chinese-Indian Association claimed that the Pei Mei School in Tangra, set up by the Chinese-Indian community, was once supported by the Nationalist Government in Taiwan. The Taiwanese government subsidized schools for the Chinese-Indians in Kolkata (Ma and D'Souza 2020:83). My interviewee also stated that the Taiwanese Government would offer scholarships to Chinese-Indians for higher studies in Taiwan, as well. Similarly, the Chinese Communist Party was also involved in wooing the overseas Chinese community and attempted to evacuate them by ships in a dramatic move during the 1962 China-India War when many from this community were interned forcefully at Deoli, a village in the western desert state of Rajasthan (16).

All of this suggests that the Chinese governments, both Communist and Nationalist, continued to exercise political control over the overseas Chinese community in India.

Cultural and political links were not wholly severed even when migration between China and India slowed down in the latter half of the 20th century. This investment in the overseas Chinese communities was also in part to encourage remittances to mainland China and Taiwan, where both governments saw Chinese immigrant communities as potential sources of finance for their economies. Hence, both, the Kuomintang and the People's Republic of China looked to the overseas Chinese for support. However, this is not to suggest that the Chinese immigrant community's culture remained static or too firmly rooted in their country of origin through the period of their migration.

As this paper explores, the community, in its later stages, entered into a period of trial and integration, finally consolidating a hybrid identity for itself. This hybridization opened up the space through which the Chinese-Indian community could assert its identity and sense of belonging to Kolkata by drawing on both the Chinese and Indian cultures at the same time.

Chinese Tannery in (left), Gate of a Chinese tannery (middle) and leather tanning in Tangra (right) (Photographs by Joita Das)

The *Hubeinese*[2], *Cantonese*[3] and *Hakka*[4] Chinese

The Chinese-Indians in Kolkata today identify themselves as belonging to one of three major subgroups: Hakka, Cantonese or Hubeinese. Historically, the Hubeinese specialized in dentistry work. People from Hubei were adept 'teeth setters' who were traditionally itinerant. They would travel around Hubei fixing and cleaning people's teeth (Liang 2007:407). When the Hubeinese came to India in the 20th century, they set up their dentistry practises in India and catered to both, the local Indian population and other Chinese in the city. During the community's peak years in the mid-1900s, there were over 300 Chinese-owned dentistry businesses in Kolkata. However, after Indian independence, the Congress-led Indian government passed laws that mandated all doctors, dentists and clinics in the country to undergo scrutiny by the Health Department and receive proper accreditation. This was a significant setback for the Hubeinese community. Many did not have proper medical degrees since 'teeth-setting,' was a form of indigenous healthcare practice which could be carried out without formal qualifications (Biswas 2017:50).

Next, the Cantonese were among the earliest immigrants to India (Liang 2007:404). They were sea-farers and adept in shipbuilding and carpentry. They took up jobs as dockworkers in Kolkata. At first, the Cantonese only engaged in small carpentry work. Over the years as they picked up English and Hindi, they expanded their clientele, secured jobs with major companies and began specializing in interior woodwork. By the 1950s, about 20 independent Chinese carpentry businesses

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[2] The Hubeinese Chinese came from central China.
[3] The Cantonese Chinese came from provinces in southern China.
[4]The Hakka Chinese were a language community. They also came from southern China.

had been set up in the city (Biswas 2017:49). However, very few Chinese carpentry businesses exist in Kolkata today.

The majority of Chinese-Indians in Kolkata are Hakka Chinese. The Hakka came from South-eastern China, from the provinces of Guangdong, Fujian and Jiangxi (Oxfeld 1993:1). Upon arrival in the country, the Hakka took to the shoe-making and leather tanning businesses. They were mostly unskilled migrant workers and did not possess any skill in tanning or shoe-making but acquired these skills once they arrived in India and set up businesses here (Biswas 2017:50). At one point, there were over a hundred shoe shops owned by Hakka Chinese in central Kolkata, in the *Bowbazaar* area, where the city's first Chinatown emerged (50). Today, many shoe shops in *Bowbazaar* still retain their old Chinese names, but they have been turned over to Indian owners. The Chinese shoe businesses took a huge hit when local manufacturers like *Bata* and *Khadim* emerged as major players in the shoe market (50). Many abandoned shoe manufacturing and went into tanning leather in the Tangra region, in the eastern periphery of Kolkata. Increased Chinese activity in the area led to the emergence of a second Chinatown in Tangra by the 20th century. One interviewee explained how the Korean War came as a boon to the tannery owners. With the demand for boots for soldiers steadily outstripping supply, the Chinese of Kolkata were approached. What followed was a windfall for many families in the business. The Chinese almost completely monopolized leather tanning in Kolkata. The leather manufacturing business was considered a polluting profession by high-caste Hindus (Oxfeld 1993:3). Because of such caste-based prejudices that prevented the majority Hindu population of Kolkata from working with raw cowhide in the leather industry, the Chinese found it easy to invest in the tanning business and turn it into a profitable enterprise in the 20th century.

Chinatowns and the Notion of 'Othering'

Ellen Oxfeld (1993), while tracing the economic history of the Chinese-Indians of Kolkata, argues that the Chinese-Indians were a prime example of what Max Weber in the 1920s called 'pariah capitalists.' Pariah capitalists were characterized by their high degree of economic success coupled with their relatively low social status and lack of political power (12). The term itself was coined to refer to the economic activities of those communities who were not natives of the region in which they had set up successful economic practices. In theory, at least, should pariah capitalists ever threaten the economic workings of the larger host country, they could easily be deported (13). Therefore despite their strong economic power, pariah capitalists remained outsiders in the host countries in which they operated. The Chinese-Indians' strong business ethics and surprising commercial success given their relatively low political power defined their status as pariah capitalists. It should also be emphasized that even during the Chinese-Indian community's prime in the mid-1900s, and despite their flourishing carpentry, tanning and dentistry practises, they were essentially a pariah community, marginalized by the majority Hindu Bengali population of Kolkata. The former President of the Chinese-Indian Association stated that harassment on the streets and name-calling (such as *chinky*, a derogatory racial slur to refer to people who have East Asian features) were common. Chinese-Indians were subjected to continuous racial othering which again confirmed the community's pariah relationship with the majority ethnic population of Kolkata and their lack of political power even within a city where they had a noticeable entrepreneurial presence. Racial profiling of the Chinese was a common

phenomenon in Indian films of the 20th century, as well.[5] The continuous criminalizing of Chinese characters in films post the 1962 China-India war had unfortunate implications for how the Chinese-Indian community came to be viewed in Kolkata, contributing to their progressive and systematic othering in the city. Although the community had dealings with Bengali businessmen, Kolkata's Chinatowns operated almost like ethnic ghettos - exclusive spaces for the middle-class Bengali's 'Other.' By operating their tanning businesses only from Tangra, the Hakka remained segregated from the city's majority Hindu Bengali population (Xing and Sen 2013:209). The ethnic ghettoization of the Chinese community explains how the Chinese-Indians were able to maintain their 'Chineseness,' in the face of rapid urbanization and expansion of Kolkata in the 20th century. The existence of Chinatowns is ubiquitous and not restricted to the Chinese experience in India, as they are to be found wherever the Chinese have migrated. However, what makes Chinatowns in Kolkata unique is the social ostracism directed against the profession of tanning and the consequent spatial and cultural segregation of the Chinese-Indians from the majority Hindu Bengali population of the city. In this culture of enclaves (Amrith 2011:11), the Chinese-Indian community's image of themselves as distinctly Chinese was able to gain strength. Chinatowns enabled the community to retain its linguistic and cultural distinctiveness in a foreign city.

Clan networks played a dominant role as well in establishing kinship relationships among the Chinese community in

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[5] See: Kripalini, Coonoor. "Reading China in popular Hindi film- three points in time: 1946, 1964 and 2009." *Asian Cinema,* vol 23, no. 2, 2012, pp. 217-229 and Uberoi, Patricia. "China in Bollywood." *Contributions to Indian Sociology*, vol. 45, issue 3, 2011, pp. 315-342.

Kolkata. In his interview, the former President of the Chinese-Indian Association noted that in Chinese culture, clan affiliations were vital. Clan members had an obligation to support other clan members. Therefore, such clan networks guaranteed assistance and help to any Chinese immigrant in Kolkata. In the second wave of Chinese migration to India in the 20th century, which was primarily an unplanned migration, many migrants did not have any contacts in India.

They were dependent wholly on the goodwill and generosity of other Chinese members in the city for their survival in Kolkata (Liang 07:402). Strong clan associations, or *huiguans*, already existed in the subcontinent since the time of the first Chinese settlers. *Huiguans* were "associations of persons of common geographic background" (Xing 2009:56). In foreign countries, *huiguans* offered places for lodging, organized cultural and religious festivals and even doubled up as mediating bodies to settle disputes among community members (56). It was primarily because of these *huiguans* –quasi-legal, regulatory bodies - that so many Chinese migrants coming to India could secure livelihoods for themselves. Participation in *huiguans* was also vital in forging some form of a diasporic consciousness where immigrant communities were able to maintain their links to their homeland in a foreign land (Amrith 2011:79). The continued importance of clan identities emphasized the Chinese-Indian community's strong commitment to their Chinese roots and how it never completely dissipated even when the community finally settled down in Kolkata.

The Chinese Kali Temple*:* Assimilating into an 'Indian' Identity

This section looks at a site in Tangra not far from the tanneries where a temple is dedicated to the Hindu Goddess Kali. This temple is popularly known as the Chinese Kali *Mandir*

(temple), and I argue that this site is pivotal in shaping the Chinese-Indian community's sense of belonging to Kolkata. Its centrality in establishing this community's unique hybrid identity needs to be elaborated.

The Chinese-Kali Mandir in Tangra, Kolkata (Photography by Joita Das)

In the Hindu religion, Kali is the Goddess of time and death. The religious mythology of Kali associates her not only with violence and death but also with sexuality and motherly love (Doniger). She is most commonly characterized as a black deity with a red tongue (Doniger). But what could have prompted this Hindu deity's inclusion in the religious consciousness of the Chinese-Indians of Kolkata?

Anecdotal evidence of Kali's miraculous healing powers are many. One of them is that seventy years ago, there were just a couple of "*sindoor* (vermillion) smeared black stones under an old tree" at the site where the temple now stands (Pandey 2009). The place was mostly frequented by Hindu Bengalis who worshipped at these rocks. The Chinese followed suit believing that praying there would bring them good luck and fortune. Another legend claims that a ten-year-old Chinese-Indian boy from Tangra had contracted a fatal illness. When his parents had lost all hope of the boy recovering, they went to the Kali temple site, near the *sindoor* smeared rocks, and

prayed for their child to get better. Miraculously, the boy was cured (Pandey 2009).

Belief in such myths and legends surrounding the deity and her miraculous powers helped draw the Chinese-Indians to the host community of Hindu Bengalis to the extent that the temple came to symbolize a union of Chinese and Indian religious sentiments (Pandey 2009). Although a Hindu Brahmin priest conducts the Kali *puja* (worship), the Chinese have found ways to incorporate some of their own worshipping practices into the Hindu ceremony such as the lighting of special Chinese incense sticks (joss sticks) or the burning of paper to ward off evil spirits in the temple. These are both quintessential Chinese religious practises (Pandey 2009). Finally, instead of the usual sweets served at temples as *prasad* (edible offerings), in this Kali temple, the priest offers devotees chop suey and noodles - a staple in Chinese cuisine - as a religious offering (Pandey 2009).

The appropriation of the Hindu goddess Kali symbolizes a nascent stage of cultural syncretism. The particular modes of Kali worship among Chinese-Indians indicate that Kali has had a unique presence in the Chinese-Indian community's image of themselves in the city, even though Kali does not arouse the same emotions in the Chinese-Indians as they do in devout Hindus. She is not the distant guardian of death and time. On the contrary, she is a healer who can also bestow good fortune upon those who pray at her alter. The appropriation of the fearful Kali by the Chinese leads one to wonder if the Chinese-Indian community's own desire for wealth and good health had not found a natural resting place in the Hindu divinity. The Chinese-Indians may have projected onto Kali their socio-economic aspirations, fears and apprehensions in a foreign land and in the process appropriated her from the pantheon of Hindu deities. Therefore, it may be surmised that Kali was a

'wish-fulfilling' deity in the Chinese popular imagination (Xing 2009:61). Furthermore, Kali in Bengal is a mother goddess with an almost ubiquitous presence in the city. Her popular image may have hastened her acceptance by the Chinese who could adapt to her worship and give her a place in their imagination of the sacred. The interesting mix of Hindu customs with quintessential Chinese rituals showcases a unique Chinese-Indian identity, a living metaphor of the Chinese community's sense of belonging to and integration with Kolkata. The worship of *Kali* helped the Chinese community of Kolkata forge a bond with the mainstream Hindu Bengalis while simultaneously separating and distinguishing them from the latter.

However, it is essential to note that Chinese-Indians who visit this temple do not practice any form of Hinduism. Some Chinese-Indians who visit this site are Christians (Pandey 2009). Most are Buddhists (Pandey 2009). Therefore, the Chinese Kali temple in no way indicates the 'Hinduization' of the Chinese-Indian community of Kolkata. Rather, the Chinese Kali temple grants this community unique ownership of a particular sacred space within Chinatown at a special moment of the community's crafting of an 'Indian' identity for itself. The construction of worshipping sites was a way through which diasporic communities made a "symbolic claim of belonging" (Amrith 2011:83) in their host countries' lands and the Chinese Kali temple could well be illustrative of this.

Finally, the former President of the Chinese-Indian Association maintained that he was a Daoist Christian. As is widely understood and received, Daoism is not a religious category but a 'way of life,' complementing Christian and Buddhist doctrines. Educated Chinese-Indians, in identifying themselves as Daoists first and Christians or Buddhists only next, have used doctrinal Daoism to unify and forge the Chinese-Indians

together while simultaneously underscoring the 'Chineseness,' that remained constitutive of their Chinese-Indian identity. The worship of Kali and the reverence shown to Dao are interestingly two parallel undercurrents in the process of identity creation among Chinese-Indians and showcases their hybrid identity.

Politics of the Hyphen: Consolidating a 'Chinese-Indian' Identity

This section takes a closer look at the hybrid nature of the Chinese-Indian identity from the perspective of the host country's politics. Identity is the sense of recognition that a person experiences "of some common origin or shared characteristics with another person or group" (Hall 1996:2). Often, identities are consolidated and maintained through systematic exclusion. Finally, identities are always in the process of 'becoming' rather than merely 'being' (4). The Chinese-Indian identity, similarly, is an identity in flux.

The 1962 China-India War

The Chinese-Indians have had a painful history in Kolkata. During the community's prime, about fifty thousand Chinese resided in Kolkata (Xing 2009:205), but their numbers have dwindled significantly in recent years, bringing it down to a couple of thousand that remain in the entire Indian subcontinent today (205). The 1962 China-India War marked a climactic moment in the community's history and is perhaps the primary cause of so many Chinese-Indians leaving Kolkata in the latter half of the 20th century (Biswas 2017:49). This War saw the Indian government detain, intern and even deport Chinese-Indians on the mere suspicion of affiliation to Communist China (53). In *The Deoliwallahs,* Joy Ma and Dilip D'Souza note how over three thousand Chinese-Indians who lived in and around Kolkata and who had for many generations until then called India their home were rounded up, put on

trains and transported thousands of kilometres across the country to internment camps in Deoli during the War. Fear of persecution and years of discrimination led many Chinese to seek opportunities outside India post the 1962 China-India War (Liang 2007:405). Although the War remains a watershed event in the community's history, the effects of the war on the collective psyche and demography of Chinese-Indians are beyond the scope of this particular paper, which instead looks at the community's history and its subsequent cultural assimilation through the colonial and post-colonial periods.

Surprisingly, this community's persecution and internment in 1962 was almost a forgotten fact of history and only recently returned to the limelight (Griffiths 2013). Growing tensions between India and China in 2020 and ongoing protests against the Citizenship Amendment Act of 2019 foregrounded once again questions regarding citizenship and minority identities in the country. It is partly in this light that more studies need to be carried out on South Asia's ethnic minority communities, whose complicated histories of migration and stories of assimilation into the larger Indian nation-state are often neglected fields of research within Indian History.

The 1962 China-India War, however, did highlight the hybridity of the Chinese-Indian identity. The outcome of the War has been quite evident. There has been large-scale emigration of Chinese-Indians out of India in the latter half of the twentieth century following the War. If a nation-state was perceived to be the homeland for a particular majority ethnic community (Amrith 2011:118), then the persecution of the Chinese-Indians during the War reinforced this dominant ideology of that time. Although the existence of ethnic minority communities in many parts of Asia challenged this idea (117), the Chinese-Indians remained a rather politically weak minority in India. Consequently, they became the victims

of state-sponsored persecution in 1962 when questions of Indian citizenship were increasingly being defined along ethnolinguistic lines. Many who were persecuted during the 1962 China-India War had opted for Indian Citizenship under the Indian constitution. They were legally Indian citizens. But in 1962, racial and linguistic differences served to distance this community from India's majority ethnic population even when Chinese migration to India had slowed down considerably and much of the community had learnt to adapt to mainstream middle-class Bengali society.

Towards an Upwardly Mobile Identity

In my conversations with representatives of the Chinese-Indian Association, I could perceive that a generational drift was taking place in the way the Chinese community made sense of themselves in Kolkata. Older generation Chinese-Indians could speak Hakka Chinese, whereas the younger generation seemed to have been more fully assimilated into urban, middle-class Bengali culture. Two of my interviewees who identified as belonging to the younger generation of Chinese-Indians in Kolkata spoke more English than Chinese and had migrated out of Kolkata's Chinatowns and lived in the relatively more affluent and cosmopolitan Salt Lake and Park Street areas. The younger generation Chinese-Indians had taken up a variety of jobs in Kolkata and were no longer bound by the occupational specializations of their forefathers who had migrated to Kolkata from the 18th to 20th centuries. All this is illustrative of an identity that is in flux. The hyphenated identity of a Chinese-Indian is rapidly eroding only to be replaced by a more aggressive, cosmopolitan, and upwardly mobile 'Indian' identity. Nevertheless, even with increased assimilation into the majority's culture, the hybrid nature of the Chinese-Indian identity will remain intact in so far as the community's everyday cultural practices continue to be informed by its

histories of migration. These practices include annual pilgrimages to Atchew's grave, the celebration of Chinese New Year on the streets of Kolkata's Chinatowns or the worship of Kali in Tangra.

Hybridity is characteristic of immigrant communities worldwide. Homi K. Bhabha in *Cultures in Between* has expanded on the idea that immigrant subjectivities and diasporic identities always draw from both, the immigrant community's host and its home cultures. Bhabha quotes T.S. Eliot when he writes:

> "…The people [immigrants] have taken with them a part of the total culture… The culture which develops in the new soil must therefore be bafflingly alike and different from the parent culture: it will be complicated…by whatever relations are established with some native [the host country's local] race…" (Bhabha 1996:54).

Although writing in the context of colonial settler colonies and third world migration, Bhabha and his reference to Eliot sum up the argument presented in this paper. What lies at the heart of the 'Chinese-Indian' identity is also an amalgamation of a culture rooted in the social and religious moorings of an ancient Chinese civilization that overlaps with an equally ancient Indian and Hindu tradition, creating a unique identity which is neither wholly Indian nor Chinese, but one that draws from both these sets of cultural experiences and establishes itself as almost a culture 'in-between.' Furthermore, the continued importance of clan identities was made evident in the interviews with members of the Chinese-Indian Association, who all identified as being 'Hakka' or 'Cantonese' Chinese-Indians. Their accounts also showed that there are many layers to this label of 'Chinese-Indian.' The Chinese-Indian identity was not just an amalgamation of the 'Chinese' and 'Indian' cultural identities, but more specifically the

amalgamation of an 'Indian' cultural and perhaps national identity, with the particularities of the 'Hakka' Chinese and the 'Cantonese' Chinese identities, as well. Overall, this paper has tried to show that the Chinese-Indian hybrid identity emerged through this community's everyday practices in Kolkata. The Chinese-Indian identity was a synthesis of quintessential Chinese customs and practices with elements from the ethnic Indian culture, creating a hybrid identity that drew upon the Indian past, while simultaneously retaining significant features of its original oriental identity. Therefore, the term 'Chinese-Indian' encapsulates the hybrid nature of this community's cultural practices and is crucial to our understanding of this minority community's diasporic consciousness and its the mode of relating to the majority Hindu Bengali culture with which it coexisted through the 18th, 19th and 20th centuries.

Conclusion

A range of scholarship on the Chinese-Indian community shows how histories of migration continue to inform identities among diasporic communities and how immigrant communities' identities change as they interact with the host country's culture. In this paper, I have looked at the Indian identity as a rather broad and homogenous category. It will be interesting to explore the intersections between the unique Chinese-Indian cultural space and the more nuanced elements of the dominant Bengali cultural space within which the Chinese-Indians have evolved over the years. For example, can one locate a quintessential Bengali subjectivity in the Literature that this community has produced? Similarly, how do Chinese-owned restaurants in the Tangra region of Kolkata see themselves as drawing from Bengal's vast culinary scene? These could offer avenues through which research on the Chinese-Indians could be furthered.

My research in this paper on the Chinese-Indian community of Kolkata has also tried to show how the histories of nations and regions are almost always interconnected. By studying the histories of migration and mobility and by looking at immigrant communities and the transnational linkages they engendered, we can understand the inter-connectedness of the world. A study into the migratory patterns and mobility of 19th and 20th-century Asian communities, especially, shows how incredibly dynamic this part of the world was even before most countries in this region became independent nation-states (Amrith 2011:11). Overall, this research has explored a minority community in South Asia that was ignored by mainstream historians who focused instead on other larger, communities having significant impacts on the socio-political developments within the nation-states of South Asia. Moreover, this study has also provided insight, a possible point of reference, and a comparative framework to explore identity formation and modes of belonging among South Asia's other ethnic minority communities. The Jewish and Armenian communities of Kolkata, for instance, lend themselves to a similar analysis as that of the Chinese-Indian community, being more or less contemporaneous with it and most probably subjected to the same forces of nationalism and alienation that characterized Chinese-Indian community culture in Kolkata for several centuries.

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Migration as History and Culture through Bhojpuri Folksongs

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Abstract

Folk culture is one of the strongest mediums to express human sentiments and consists of a kind of literature that includes the living and lived realities of human society. Through those expressed emotions and lived realities, it preserves the history of regions, societies, religions and languages. In the same way, Bhojpuri song traditions express the living world of Bhojpuri society and culture. They are representative of people's daily experiences, their joys and their sorrows. They are essential aspects of social life and constitute existential realities as well. This paper seeks to examine those same existential realities and social life with reference to Bhojpuri folksongs, through the lenses of 'migration' an inevitable theme in Bhojpuri folklore. This theme will be critically examined in terms of its pattern of existence, its reference to the history of the region and its effect on the Bhojpuri society. Its relation with its consequences, such as a change in family structure, power-relation, the pain of separation and explicit portrayal of desires, will also be considered essential points to engage with the theme. In Bhojpuri folksongs, migration has a subtle presence because the emphasis is more on its consequences. In most cases, migration is mentioned in the beginning lines of the folksongs and the rest of the song deals with the consequences. It is vital to look at those consequences to understand the migration in Bhojpuri society as to how do these folksongs deal with the theme of migration? How has the destination been clearly contrasted with the native place? How does it affect an individual and society? How does it shape the family relationships and impacts family politics? How does it enter the political domain, and what are its contemporary

resonances? More importantly, how do these songs preserve the memories of the place left behind, in a foreign land?

Keywords: Migration, History, Memories, Culture, Tradition.

Introduction

Indian culture is primarily based on songs, narratives, storytelling, and dances. Performances (and signs and symbols) are an inextricable part. Rather than being preserved in scribal/plastic form, these various Indian cultures survive through embodied performances. These cultural performances are collective events performed in a particular context with social interactions. These are thoroughly social activities and are more than entertainment. What is exceptional about these performances is that they are performed without any script, transmittable, and involve years of training and practice. They are passed on from one generation to another as cultural memories articulated through bodily acts. Bhojpuri song culture is one of those Indian cultures that preferred speech, gesture, and embodied performances for its reflective and creative existence. Like other Indian cultures, Bhojpuri migration songs are also memory-based performances in which they preserve and transmit their belongingness, conventions, and cultural knowledge. This paper will critically engage with these songs of migration and their relationship with the society, native place and the places of migration. The paper will also investigate the historical significance of migration in Bhojpuri society. Migration as a theme will be critically examined in terms of its pattern of existence, its reference to the region's history, and its effect on the Bhojpuri society. Its relationship with the consequences, such as a change in family structure, power-relation, the pain of separation and explicit portrayal of desires, will also be considered essential points to engage with the theme. In Bhojpuri, folksongs migration has a subtle presence, and its consequences are emphasized. In most cases,

migration is mentioned in the folksongs' beginning lines and the rest of the song deals with the consequences. It is crucial to look at these consequences to understand migration in Bhojpuri society and how these folksongs deal with the theme of migration. How has the destination been contrasted with the native place? How does it affect an individual and society? How does it shape family relationships and impact family politics? More importantly, how do these songs preserve the memories of the place left behind, in a foreign land?

Definition and the Context

Migration is a natural phenomenon, widely familiar among plants, the animal kingdom, and human societies. According to N. Jayaram, the migration of human beings can be understood as a "stage preceding their settlement as communities" (Jayaram 2004:15). In fact, "even after evolution as communities, human beings have been experiencing temporary, seasonal and permanent migration" (Jayaram 2004:15). He also emphasizes that human migration does not mean a mere physical movement of people but the migrants carrying socio-cultural baggage. The baggage consists of "a predefined social identity, a set of religious beliefs and practices, a framework of norms and value governing family and kinship organization and food habits and also the language" (Jayaram 2004:16). This socio-cultural baggage allows them to retain physical and mental contact with their homeland. It also enables them to preserve the memories of their native place and gives them hope to return. Bhojpuri song tradition and performing cultures are similar socio-cultural baggage. They are companions to the migrants and to those as well who are left behind. For example:

> "*Hasihasipanwakhiauleinbeimanwa*
> *Ki apna base pardesh*
> *Kori re chunaria me dagiyalagaigailein*

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> *Maari re karejwa me thes*
> (He fed me betel leaves with a smile on his face
> And then settled in foreign
> The pure scarf is contaminated now
> And there is a pang in my heart)" (Bidesiya)

The song is from the movie Bidesiya (1963), directed by S. N. Tripathi. The movie is an adaptation of the musical play of the same name, composed by Bhikhari Thakur. This song expresses a woman's pain, but it is filmed on a group of male migrants who are singing this song during their journey. This song is helping the migrants to be conscious of what they are leaving behind. Nevertheless, it is also giving hope and reason to wait for the woman who is left behind.

In any culture, there are two kinds of symbolic acts, which are identified as verbal and embodied acts. The verbal acts are performed through words and sounds, while the embodied acts are performed through gestures and expressions such as songs and dances. Since immemorial times these two kinds of symbolic acts have been the foundations of societies/cultures in the form of songs and dances performed separately and together. The singing performances are more the appropriate example here, whether accompanied by dance performances, as they are verbal and embodied. Every culture has its song traditions performed in specific contexts with gestures and sounds that have pre-ascribed cultural meanings. Understanding those cultures is necessary to understand these performances and decode their signs and symbols. Following the same, this present paper will examine the Bhojpuri song tradition in the socio-cultural context of migration. These folksongs/ song traditions are one of the strongest mediums to express human sentiments, and they also characteristically consist of a kind of literature that includes the patterns in the amorphous area of the human mind. Through that literature

and those patterns, we perceive that the first task of any society or culture is to live, which later turns out to be history in terms of geographic economy, society, religion, morality, and language. They also express the living world of the people. They are representative of people's daily experiences, their joys, and their sorrows. They are also essential aspects of social life as they are composed according to existential realities.

Migration History of the Bhojpuri Community

Migration, along with rituals, activities, festivals, and community comprised of love stories, valour, glory, and familial relationships is the core of Bhojpuri song cultures. The presentation and preservation of history, society, and emotions of Bhojpuri culture are through these song traditions. They represent the daily experiences of people, their joys, and their sorrows through performance. They are also important aspects of social life. Cultures are chiefly based on the historical experience of their people. Those historical experiences are preserved through folk songs and performing traditions. In Bhojpuri culture, songs and performing traditions play an important role in preserving the lived realities and daily experiences of its people. Migration is one of those experiences. It is one recurrent theme in the Bhojpuri song culture. Several themes in these songs exist because of migration. In Bhojpuri songs, migration itself has a subtle presence, and the emphasis is more on its consequences. In most cases, the migration is mentioned only in the beginning lines, while the rest of the song is concerned with its consequences. It is imperative to look at those consequences to understand migration in Bhojpuri society. A good migration pattern can be noticed in the Bhojpuri-speaking region, whether it is near or far. Various Bhojpuri songs are an excellent example of this. One of those songs is:

> "Train from the East
> Ship from the West
> Took away my love
> This train is my rival
> Took away my love"   (Tiwari 2005:137).

The first line of this song refers to the railways, which came into existence after the mid-nineteenth century. Nevertheless, it could be a reference specifically to the Calcutta-Allahabad-Delhi railway line established in 1864. The second line refers to the ship, which was a medium to transport slaves and migrate to Burma (now Myanmar), Trinidad, Tobago, and other British colonies searching for livelihood. Destinations in this song are symbolized by the direction such as Purub or east and Pachhu west, where east stands for east of the Bhojpuri region (which is Calcutta and beyond), and west refers to the European colonies to which indentured labourers permanently migrated on ships. It was from the Bhojpuri region that the colonial planters took many people to work on their plantations, and the departure of these indentured labourers caused grief and sorrow, both to those who were left behind and those who left the country for foreign shores. Both the modes of transportation were means to migrate, and several references can be found to them in Bhojpuri folk literature.

Migration from the Bhojpuri linguistic community can be divided into two phases, the colonial and post-colonial phases. During the colonial period, people migrated from this area as indentured labourers, also known as Girmitiya (agreement). According to Huge Tinker (1993), indentured labour emigration demanded a contract signed by the individual labours to work on several plantations owned by the colonial government. This emigration process started in 1834 and ended in 1920. These labour emigrants were taken to British Guiana, Fiji, Trinidad, and Jamaica, the French colonies of

Guadalupe and Martinique, and the Dutch colony of Surinam. The indentured labour gave birth to a different identity of Bhojpuri migrants on the colonial plantations. Their existence was caught up between the place they left behind and could not return to and the place they adopted but could not integrate (Lal 2012:44). They tried their best to survive between the 'alienation and uprootedness'. It is important to note that Indian indentured labourers were "uprooted, the fragmented mass of humanity on the move" (Lal 2012:45). They already had left their homeland in internal migration. The experiences of these emigrants during the journey and on the voyage gave them the new cultural identity of Jahajibhai. This new identity was based on shared social and personal needs and a shared sense of servitude. It was free from the social and caste hierarchy.

Though indentured labour gave freedom from the social and economic hardship which emigrants faced in their native society, it also introduced a new system of slavery (for a short period). The Bhojpuri folksongs of migration are an attempt to fill the void that has been left by the migrants/emigrants. One of the popular Bhojpuri songs from the Batohia[1] genre, *Sunder Subhumibhaiyya Bharat ke Deswa se*, was written by Raghuveer Narayan. It portrays the image of India as a beautiful homeland, and it can be seen in the song that the singer/persona is full of regrets for leaving his/her homeland. The frequent occurrence of lines like *More pran base ganga dhar re batohia* (my heart lies with the stream of Ganges) and *More pran base sarjutir re batohia* (my heart lies at the bank of Saryu) in the song state that the heart of the persona is still in the homeland. S/he is requesting Batohia (the messenger) to send the news of that beautiful homeland. This song rightly

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[1] Batohia as a genre and its meaning has been explained in the next section.

captures the above-mentioned in-between situation of the indentured emigrants.

Apart from indentured emigration, the men from this region were also recruited into the army, which was one of the main reasons for migration in the pre-colonial and post-colonial periods. In *Bhojpuri Bhasha Aur Sahitya* (1954) Uday Narayan Tiwari highlights that in the 17th and 18th century Bhojpur and Buxar of Bihar were the main areas to recruit sepoys who served Mughal as well as British armies. Even to this date, people are recruited from this region in large numbers. Therefore, its resonance is still heard in Bhojpuri folk songs. The following song, which I have heard from my mother, aunts and grandmother singing in my childhood, supports the fact mentioned above:

> "Leave your job of serving the army and come back beloved
> I have served you food on a golden plate
> Leave your job of serving the army and enjoy this delicious food beloved" (Translation mine).

George Griersonalso mentions the role of sepoys from this region in the mutiny of 1857 in his *Linguistic Survey of India* (1903).

L.S.S. O'Malley (1924) in Bihar district Gazetteers explains that natural calamities and epidemics have also contributed to the migration process from this region, for example, the recurrent phases of the influenza epidemic in 1918 and 1921 and the most severe cholera epidemic in 1908 (O'Malley 1924:57-62). Apart from that, other natural calamities such as earthquakes and famine forced them to migrate. In the twentieth century, the Nepal-Bihar earthquake of 1934 and the famine of 1966 (though its impact was less) forced the people to migrate in large numbers. Irrespective of their caste, people have migrated from this region and took up menial jobs to

sustain themselves and their families. As O'Malley briefs, Brahmans served as priests and had their clients. Rajputs and Bhumihaars, landlords and cultivators, served as peons, policemen, and doorkeepers (O'Malley 1924:46-47). But these migrants were gainfully absorbed within the system as they were hard working. They were the source of cheap labour and accepted low wages. They adapted themselves to the harsh work conditions.

After Effect of Migration: Family Politics and Emotional Impact

In Bhojpuri folksongs, migration is primarily presented as the cause behind the changes in the human psyche and human emotions and the main reason behind changes in family structure and power plays in it. There are many reasons behind migration from this region, but it has also become central to the cultural practice. Largely, the economic condition forces people to migrate from their land and leave their families and wives behind. The wife suffers more in comparison to families and community as she must bear the loneliness in the absence of her husband, which could lead to oppression from in-laws or sexual exploitation by other men. The monthly earnings of the husband also add to her suffering and make her the victim of the power structure. If a husband earns well, his wife will be respected in the family. Otherwise, she is treated as a maid by family members. It is interesting to note that in case of oppression from in-laws, the mother-in-law and sisters-in-law are portrayed as the oppressors. The reason could be that the wife is an outsider in the family. She is related to the family because of her husband, but the mother and sisters-in-law are rightful family members. The following song sung by a group of women while working in the household can substantiate the above-mentioned argument.

"I remember my husband I cry a lot

> I remember my husband
>
> Mother and sister-in-law compel me to bake loaves
> of bread
> I throw away utensils I cry a lot
> I remember my husband
>
> Mother and sister-in-law compel me to carry water
> I throw away the pot I cry a lot
> I remember my husband
>
> Mother and sister-in-law compel me to sleep in the
> bed
> I throw away the pillow I cry a lot
> I remember my husband." (Translation mine).

Migration has also given rise to two different genres of songs, such as *Bidesia* and *Batohia*. *Bidesia* songs are addressed to the migrant who has not returned to his native place, but in batohia songs, a messenger is addressed. Songs of both genres narrate the pain of separation through complaints. In *Bidesia*(the migrant) the husband or the beloved is directly addressed but in *Batohia*(the messenger) a messenger is addressed to deliver the complaint to the beloved. Songs of these two genres have a remarkable rhyming quality that makes it easy to differentiate these songs from each other. In *Bidesia* songs, every second line ends with the word *Bidesia,* and in *Batohia* songs, it ends with the word *Batohia*. The *Batohia* in these songs can either be another migrant or a mere wanderer. A single line of these songs can offer multiple readings and can express several emotions like agony, valour, happiness, etc. All these emotions are reflections of migration as a theme presents in Bhojpuri society. For example, a *Batohia* song

> "My love has his big eyes
> Those beautiful eyes are very pure O batohia!

Lips are bright red after chewing paan
A beautiful nose is like the beak of parrot O batohia!"
(Jain 1999:169)

In this song, a woman is describing her husband's appearance to the messenger to identify her husband in a distant or foreign land. But one can also read her longing for the husband in how she describes his desirable body and laments over his absence. She shares her pain with the messenger, who is another migrant and can visit the husband during his journey. But there can another reading of this song. Though the female persona intends to convey her message to her husband, her lamentation can induce *Batohia* to think over his own decision of deserting the homeland and his family. So, directly and indirectly, this song refers to the loss of a wife and a society due to migration. Most of the time, the performers of these migration songs are women themselves who are experiencing the consequences of migration, but these are also performed by men on several occasions. There are possibilities that these male performers may be experiencing the pangs of separation from their beloveds because they have left their wives and their natives land behind.

Poverty and migration (both internal and cross border) always have a strong co-relationship. It is one of the reasons to trigger migration on a large scale which later takes the form of temporary and permanent migration. The poor economic condition of the agricultural class also caused the migration of people from this area. In one of the songs, emotional dialogue between a mother and her son has been depicted, who has turned into a wanderer. The son does not hesitate to accept that he goes from one place to another because of his poor economic condition and takes alms for his survival. It highlights the effect of poverty on an individual and his filial relationship.

"For what reason, you turned wanderer
Oh, you turned wanderer
Why you ask alms oh Ram!

For belly oh mother I ask for alms
I ask for alms
For the sake of destiny, I turned wanderer oh Ram!

Give me a piece of cloth
Just a piece of your cloth
My wandering will be fruitful oh ram!

How would I give you a piece of cloth?
Dear, a piece of cloth
My heart sinks oh Ram!" (Translation mine).

This song indirectly refers to migration. It portrays the male persona as a wanderer who lives in different places for a certain period. Therefore, his migration is temporary and permanent as he has left his native place. This song also presents the persona as *Batohia* who has returned to his native place. Communication ties between him and his mother are re-established, even though it is for a short period. His visit is to inform his mother about his inability to return as he has decided to be a fakir, and to fulfil his vow of being a fakir, he requests her for a piece of cloth. However, the mother refuses to do so as she does not want her son to desert her permanently.

Expressions of Longing

For a long, the theme of migration has been present in Bhojpuri folksongs, and it is the most recurrent one. These folksongs are closely interwoven with the life of the people, and they serve as a reservoir of memories preserving their experiences, struggles, and sufferings, constituting an oral history that an official history fails to record. These folksongs that are concerned mainly with the breakdown of human bonds

not only describe the loneliness and the pain of the separated ones or the people who are left behind but are also the expression of various social and cultural animosities existing in the society and the family. Such as, in a family where the daughter-in-law is dominated by the in-laws, or intimidated by the daughter-in-law. Intimidation from outside the family has also been seen, where an outsider intervenes in the family's affairs and tries to control their lives; shopkeepers and moneylenders are some of those outsiders. There would also be a person (an insider) who tries to seduce the lonely wife. But largely, it is a pain which becomes more visible through these folksongs. There are different categories in these folksongs dedicated to this pain of separation and emotional loss, such as *Birha*, *Poorvi*, and *Nirgun*. Badri Narayan (2005) describes the *Poorvi* as folksongs in which the pain of separation is expressed from the side of the wife, although the composers are the males (Narayan 2005:14)It would be appropriate here to look at one of the *Poorvi* songs which K.D transcribes. Upadhyaya in which a wife is replacing the husband with a parrot and through that parrot expresses her sexual desire and then further brings forth the hardship faced by the family in his absence. This song expresses above mentioned social and cultural animosities and the pain and suffering of separation.

> "My love went to eastern country O Ram!
> And left behind
> A parrot as a toy, he left behind for me
>
> I'll feed you well dear parrot in a nice bowl
> And will take you to sleep
> In my bosom dear parrot, I'll keep you and I'll make you sleep
>
> Hour by hour the night is passing
> The parrot started biting
> On the edge of my blouse, this parrot started biting

I wish to shoo away this parrot at first thought
But the next thought reminded
My beloved's gift to me, that next thought reminded

The parrot flew away and flew to Culcutta town
And sat dearly
On my husband's turban, he sat dearly

My lord removed his turban and caressed the parrot
Speak dear parrot
Of the conflict in my household, speak my dear parrot.

Your mother is working, your sister is working
And taking care
Of your left shop, they are taking care" (Upadhyay 1990:100).

The most crucial character in this song is the parrot. Firstly, it becomes the replacement of the husband, and the wife takes his care as her husband's belonging. But as the song proceeds, the wife complains about him seeking sexual advantages just as an out/insider is intended to seek in the husband's absence. This act of seeking sexual advantages by an out/insider is present in Bhojpuri society, but it is never mentioned explicitly, except through songs. There is always an outsider, or the insider close to the husband or any relative of the husband who can make such advances, and the wife is obliged to take care of him or respect him. In the next stanza, this parrot assumes the role of the messenger and flies away to Calcutta, where the husband is living right now. The wife urges him to narrate all the experiences and the sufferings of the family in his absence. The economic condition of the family is not good. His mother and his sister are working outside and are managing the family's shop as well. This has also opened them to the dangers posed by society and the economy. However, this song is composed as a constant reminder of the most

valuable member's absence in the family. It evokes a sense of loss that remains after the migration.

Reference to emotional loss, which can also be understood as the loss of soul (death) and loss of spirituality, can be seen in Bhojpuri folksongs in the context of Lord Krishana and his departure to Mathura, too. Here is an example of a Bhojpuri folksong I transcribed during my fieldwork. It engages with this theme and accounts for the emotional loss of the persona/lover because Krishna has decided to settle down in Mathura. In this song, the flute assumes the leading role and becomes the reason for jealousy. It is different from the symbol of the parrot in the previous song. The parrot symbolizes responsibility, but the flute in this song represents the affection and attention of the beloved.

"My Kanha went to Madhuban with his flute
Plays that flute only in Madhuban
That sweet sound of the flute
My heart longs for, that sweet sound of the flute

Udho baba came from Madhuban
Brought with him
A letter from my Kanha brought with him.

That letter pierces my heart
He is entangled now
He loves the other woman there, he is entangled now"
(Upadhyay 1990:113).

In this song, Krishana has been referred to as the beloved. His departure to Mathura from Vrindavan is considered a great loss by his girlfriends. Here persona lamenting over the migration of Lord Krishana; even his flute is so dear to her that she cannot bear his playing that flute in a distant land. She is even jealous of that distant forest where this flute is being played. Then she receives a messenger, Udho baba (the messenger),

who reads her a letter from Krishana. For her, this letter is a document confirming her separation from Krishana, as it reveals that Krishana is now in love with another woman and hence his return is impossible. This kind of narrative is recurrent in Bhojpuri folksongs, where Krishana is replaced by a husband or a beloved who has gone to a distant land to earn but never returns or refuses to return as he has started another family there. Therefore, in most of these folksongs, a constant fear of foreign land can be seen, equating with the mistress of the husband or the beloved. Most of these folksongs use the word mistress as a metaphor for the foreign land which prevents the husband/beloved from returning.

This pain of loss and separation resulting from migration has become an essential aspect of Bhojpuri society and has been revealed in various facets of Bhojpuri folk tradition, as Narayan notices. As mentioned earlier, new folk traditions have emerged because of migration –*Bidesia* is one of them. It was popularized by Bhikhari Thakur and is close to nautanki (musical dramas in the Bhojpuri region). In *Bidesia* performances, the migrants are called *Bidesia*, *Pardesia*, and *Batohia* (synonyms of migrant) which contain the elements of both affection and complaint about leaving behind their loved ones. Narayan (2005) briefly explains these three above-mentioned terms briefly as Bidesia are migrants whose chances of returning are significantly less as they have broken all the ties with their native place and the family (like indentured labourers). He considers *Pardesia* to be those migrants who are forced to leave their native place to earn a living and their communication ties with the family are not cut off. They are more like semi-permanent migrants, and they are the most preferred ones in the Bhojpuri folksongs. He presents *Batohia* to be in a better position who is the *Bidesia*, returned to his native place as a traveller and it is with his help that the communication ties are resumed (Narayan, 05, p: 49). It would

be appropriate here to look at another folksong of batohia genre collected by Upadhyaya for an enhanced understanding of this definition of batohia.

"Touching your feet O dear brother wanderer
Please listen to my prayers O batohiya!

How should I express my messages?
My heart is aching again and again O batohiya!

His beloved is crying and wandering madly O Rama
How can he enjoy luxuries O batohiya!

This job of my beloved should be set on fire
Your heart is very harsh O batohiya!" (Upadhyay 1990:115).

In this song, a woman is begging the batohia/messenger to deliver her message to her husband in distant land due to his job. She feels uncomfortable sharing her message with the *Batohia* as she cannot open herself completely to a stranger. Furthermore, she is complaining about how her husband can live a luxurious life by abandoning her wife, who is suffering in his absence. She, in fact, wishes that her husband should be fired from his job so that he will be forced to return. In the end, she accuses*Batohia* of being insensitive towards his family as he is also migrating. *Bidesia* and *Batohia* are not the only genres where laments and complaints about the emotional loss due to the migration of husbands or dearest family members are found. Other genres like *Nirgun*which directly accuse *Bidesia* and the *Pardesia*who never return. In *Nirgun* songs pain of separation becomes a critical portrayal but more in the spiritual context. The migration becomes a spiritual symbol in it and refers to the transition of souls from one world to another. It is the death songs that come under this category, but again largely, the wife laments over the husband's death.

"Bala yogi, Bala yogi, digs a well

> Oh, my Rama, only rope could have been managed and the whole day passed
>
> The rope is broken now, the water in the well subsided
>
> Oh, my Rama, on whose door now I'll pass my days
>
> My hands are empty, my lap is empty, no one is there for me
>
> Oh, my Rama, on whose door now I'll pass my days"
>
> (Awasthi 2002:125).

There are also some nirguns which are sung to lament over the departure of Lord Rama from Ayodhya. All these songs reflect the emotional loss of inhabitants of the Bhojpuri speaking region. On the one hand, the speaker speaks about the pain of separation from the loved one in these songs. on the other hand, it also accuses their loved one as a foreigner. This statement also holds validity for the migrants as the trauma and struggles are similar for them. But their situation is more complex as they do not only deal with the alienation and separation but sometimes also with the conflict of identity. *Nirgun* songs are the portrayal of remembering loved ones after their departure. Male performers usually perform these songs, and these are usually about females and their lamentation. These songs belong to women and largely depict the world of women. But according to these songs the world is central to men and this pain and suffering presented in different ways in these folksongs, is a result of their absence in the world of women because of their migration and the existence of foreign land which attracts them.

Searching for new native lands

Manager Pandey proposes in his Introduction to *Lokpriya Sanskriti ka Dwandatmak Samajsashtra, Sandarbh: Bidesia*, (2011) that three main reasons could be traced behind the migration in Bhojpuri speaking region. First, the incidence of

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poverty in the farmers' lives because of the feudal system and colonial oppression; second, struggles against that poverty through seasonal and permanent migration; and third, the employment opportunities provided by the colonial masters and the development of the mode of transportation to avail of those opportunities (Pandey 2011:6) These factors which were prominent earlier continue in the present too and still hold the relevance for the folk songs. Some of these migrants do not have any reason to migrate and do it out of curiosity to explore the distant land and never return. Bidesi from Bhikhari Thakur's play *Bidesiya* (2005) is a good example of this. He deceives his wife, goes to Calcutta, remarries there, and starts a new family. He is not suffering from any financial crisis but still, he chooses to migrate to explore the city's pleasures. Thakur did not create this character out of his imagination, but his acute observations of Bhojpuri society helped him bring this character to life. It has also been indicated by Arjan De Haan (2010) in his case study that leaving one's land was common in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries in the Bhojpuri region, particularly when indigo cultivation was extended. Mainly it was the "indigo deserters," small tenure holders who fled because of indebtedness and poverty. It is also necessary to mention that due to industrial growth in the second half of the nineteenth century, migration from this region was accelerated, and east of Bhojpuri areas tempted the migrants most.

"*Piya Gailen Calcuttwa E Sajani*!" (My love has gone to Calcutta, E Sajani!) is a line of a song taken from Bhikhari Thakur's musical play 'Bidesia' (2005), which is a microscopic presentation of migration and its aftermath in the Bhojpuri society. But it is important here to note that before Thakur wrote this play, the existence of migration as a theme is very much visible in Bhojpuri folksongs. He was among those who migrated from the Bhojpuri region, which helped him portray

migration very well in his plays, along with the pull and push factors of migration. For a long, largely agriculture-dependent Bhojpuri society has migrated in search of livelihood and employment, and most of them have gone to *Purubi Banijiya* (the country in the east, especially Bengal). *Purubi Banijiya* has been referred to again and again in the Bhojpuri folksongs, which are a reference to the destination and the economic condition of his native place. *Purubi Banijiya* always shares a love-hate relationship with the native place in Bhojpuri folksongs, but this relationship is more visible and practical from the perspective of young women, who are newly married, and their husbands decided to go out with the primary purpose of employment[2]. This relationship has been portrayed very explicitly in Bhojpuri folksongs with many accusations and then the realization of its necessity. However, largely the destination of migration has been considered the main pull factor and push factor behind the migration. The migration to *Purubi Banijiya* from the Bhojpuri region has existed since the Mughal period, and its attraction is so that it continues. In "The Army Indian Moghuls" (1903), William Irvine suggests that during the Mughal period, people from the Bhojpuri region were hired as servicemen, and they were called *Buxaria* or *Poorivia,* and even during British rule, their services were continuously demanded (Irvine,03, p:47). Other reasons, like the Industrial revolution, natural calamities, and social and power structures, kept this activity of leaving the native place in practice. People from this area opted almost for every occupation, which provided economic stability, but in return, it also asked for a separation from the native place and, most importantly, from their loved ones and their family. Sometimes, it also demanded a permanent break from the

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[2]It is Visible clearly in the case of Sundari and Bidesi from the play Bidesia' (2005).

previous emotional and physical bonds. In the collective memory of the Bhojpuri people, the symbol of *Purubi Banijiya* represents danger. Its occurrence in the Bhojpuri folksongs is a metaphor that represents the danger of the foreign place and the 'other woman' that prevents the return of the migrant to his native place and his family. Dhananjay Singh presents this shared concern of wives in '*Bhojpuri Pravasi Shramika ki Sanskriti Aur Bhikhari Thakur ka Sahitya*.' (2008). A woman requests her husband, "my love please don't go to the east. *Bengalins* of that place can attract you to them. They have lovely long hair and beautiful eyes. They, with their attraction and their beauty, can enslave you. Even the water of that place is so contaminated that it can affect your health badly" (Singh 2008:50).

Through Bhojpuri folksongs of migration, we can see a clear distinction between the native place and the destination. But this distinction is not clear and direct. The songs use performance, memory, and experiences as tools to convey the difference between the two places. It also helps the migrants to articulate the narration of their expectations and the reality they are living in. The performance of migration songs in the foreign/non-native land is completely based on memory, giving the performer a chance to cherish the memory of his homeland. These songs are the cultural memories articulated through embodied performances. The body becomes the quintessential medium and destination of shared and articulated memories that are preserved not with the help of surrogate bodies but with the help of their performances and transmissions. The songs of migration, which are the Bhojpuri folksongs, are the ways to communicate the feelings and experiences of the new land. Though the performances occur in big cities like Mumbai, they always address the emotions attached to the native place. These songs are always performed publically, either as staged performances where a popular celebrity/singer

is performing or as a group of migrants sitting together after their work and singing the songs. In both cases, the performance takes place to remember the native land and to create a personal/shared space in the urban/foreign setting. The indentured emigrants, too, in the Caribbean islands, carried their musical heritage with them, and they used to perform/sing together in a group after their work. But their folk genres were predominantly text-driven (Manuel 2012:115-116).

The cities or the urban places where Bhojpuris have migrated hold great significance here because it is one of the reasons for their migration from their homeland. Exploring the city spaces and their luxuries indeed attracts these migrants, but the excellent employment possibilities and prospects of a good life are the main reasons behind it. The latter reasons have always been and always will be the main cause of the migration of any community or individual. Therefore, migration should not only be seen as an adverse effect of bad economic conditions. Migration of the Bhojpuri community to metropolitan cities like Delhi, Mumbai, and Kolkata does not only give them better earnings but also gives them opportunities to establish a 'home away from home'. According to KC Hardy,

> "Bhojpuri-speaking migrants in the metropoles, often work as day-labourers – as taxi and rickshaw drivers and in the construction industry – and low-level positions in various service industries. These migrant workers repeatedly explain their desire to hear the sound of the language that they speak at home, even in the city: though most have left their families behind, often several young men from roughly the same area share a flat or at least spend time together, maintaining a Bhojpuri-speaking sphere in their lives" (Hardy 2010:235).

Bhojpuri migration songs bring the Bhojpuri migrants together as a public 'at home' in urban spaces by negotiating the differences between urban and rural.

Conclusion

Given that there are many reasons to migrate and stay back; Bhojpuris hold tight to their song cultures in their native and a foreign land. These are the living archives based on memory which bear a cultural and historical perspective. These are lithic memories that choose performances as a medium to nurture the culture. These are verbal inheritances that reject surrogate bodies and keep themselves alive through embodied enactment. These are products of actions, interactions, and relationships between an individual and the culture, which includes actions, interactions, and relationships between an individual and the culture, including patterns of behaviour, ways of speaking, and manners of bodily comportment. They mark identities, preserve histories, adorn bodies, carry forward knowledge, and tell stories. They also reflect social worldviews or ideologies and reveal hidden coherences and contradictions. Therefore, serving as cultural memories, these song cultures preserve the past of the Bhojpuri community and give shape to their present. In this way, they become a medium of communication in the community. These memories in the context of migration are presented as their after effects on the individual, the family, society, and the geography. Migration creates a gap between the native land and the migrated destination that has been attempted to fill up with longing, waiting, and lamenting through Bhojpuri song cultures. Though the financial requirements force migrants to migrate and emigrate, they also rob them of their sense of belongingness and togetherness. They sever filial ties and social relations. Furthermore, it is these songs that help the migrants to remember and cherish their belongingness to

Bhojpuri culture. These songs become the bosom companion to the left behind wives and lovers and provide solace to the grieving mothers. These songs of migration cannot and should not be considered only as a musical composition but as a cultural reservoir that preserves and nurtures, and shapes the Bhojpuri society.

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Refugee in the Land of Redemption: Serial Migration as a Theme in Contemporary Fiction about South Asia

Niveditha Kalarikkal

Abstract

Literary narratives of displacement and expatriation from the third world to the first world nations have been characteristically different from the accounts which depict diasporic experiences across the countries of the 'global south.' Feelings of homelessness and the trauma of past experiences undergone by the exiles and refugees across various South Asian countries due to political conflict, partition, ethnic cleansing, natural calamities etc. in the past few decades have been the focus of various diasporic writings from the region. Fictional narratives from the region illustrating serial migrations are fewer in number. The depiction of South Asian Atlantic experiences in a few recent fictional writings by Prajwal Parajuly and Bapsi Sidhwa is marked by the central theme of serial migration. The South Asian characters who appear in the texts that are analysed appear to be in a double bind since their origins in a different part of the world continue to mark them as cultural 'outsiders' though the 'promise of the first world' is supposed to compensate for that crisis. The dual lives of the immigrants in the first world and the synecdoche of home that marks one's painful past become central to the short stories of Sidhwa which appear in The Language of Love and in Parajuly's novel Land Where I Flee. The memories of past violence or fear of homelessness in the life of a refugee in a neighbouring third world country are shown to be giving way to moments of resilience, relief and redemption during his/her subsequent move to the first world in these works. The paper tries to delineate the representation of South Asian lived experiences in the works under discussion and how it is affected by

creating a dichotomy of the old/ transformed selves undergoing migration.

Keywords: Serial migration, South Asian-Atlantic experience, Refugee, Political conflict.

The topography of South Asia is characterised by the intersection of multiple linguistic regions and a variety of overlapping literary traditions. For example, there are well-known literary traditions of Hindustani that parted ways into Hindi and Urdu and the literature in other official languages of South Asian countries that occupied the central position in various literary discussions of the last two centuries. Similarly, there are lesser-known oratures and written literature in languages like Maithili, Pashto, and Saraikietc, which also constitute and reflect the South Asian lived experiences. Nonetheless, the expansion of an English readership in South Asian countries' metropolis has resulted in a bulk of English writings from the region with a renewed domination in the 21st century. The English language has played a central role in shaping the everyday life experiences of those South Asian writers like Agha Shahid Ali who have spent long years in the Anglophone world and those like Salman Rushdie who has settled down in these countries. English is thus the natural choice of creative expression for many writers who have grown up in South Asian cities and those with South Asian origins who have migrated to the Anglophone world later in their lives.

South Asian Migrant Experiences in English Fiction

One can trace a network of influences that brings together many South Asian migrant writers' experiences in their works of fiction and the themes of immigration adopted by them. Moreover, certain similarities can be drawn out based on narrative patterns employed in their works and techniques of vernacular experimentation adopted by these writers. While

most such intersections result from sharing the same network of literary influences, the themes and narrative patterns of these works can vary drastically depending on the nature of migrant experiences depicted in them. For example, Monica Ali's *Brick Lane* (2003) and Deepak Unnikrishnan's *Temporary People* (2016) illustrate the hardships suffered by immigrant labourers from South Asia and their feelings of displacement in Britain and UAE. Kamala Markandaya's *The Nowhere Man* (1972) and Bharati Mukherjee's *Jasmine* (1989) foreground the questions of identity and acculturation related to the lives of the South Asian diaspora in London and Iowa. Mukherjee's *Jasmine* is among the many diasporic writings from the Anglophone world that "reveals the pressure felt by an immigrant in American society- the pressure to assimilate" (Grewal 1996:99).

A considerable amount of South Asian migrant experiences in English fall under the category of South Asian Atlantic writings, where the Anglophone world partly shapes the protagonists' and writers' lives. Interestingly, in many fictional works under this category of writings, a syncretic cultural identity is often projected as the essential feature of the protagonists' subjectivity. Most of the early diasporic fiction from the Anglophone world is tinged by a yearning to return to one's roots and nostalgia for one's homeland. At the same time, there are works which focus on the lives of exiles and expatriates from South Asia which reflect "an urgent need to reconstitute their lives, usually by choosing to see themselves as part of a triumphant ideology or a restored people" (Said 1994:140-41). This paper attempts to bring together a couple of such fictional works that depict South Asian refugee lives in America, where the impossibility of a homecoming marks the protagonists' lives. These works were published for two consecutive years, and the experience of serial migration shapes the lives of South Asian protagonists in both these

works. The protagonists of these works belong to the marginal groups in their countries of origin when these South Asian nation-states start formulating the idea of their national subjects in an essentialist way."The pathos of exile" gets reflected in their"loss of contact with the solidity and satisfaction of earth" in Saidian terms (142). At the same time, escape to America gets projected as a crucial step in bringing an end to the crisis in their lives. The migration to America is often shown as a redemptive act in many refugee and exile narratives from the East. Scott Ury states that the "Jewish flight from persecution in Eastern Europe has consistently been framed, explained and justified as part of much a larger narrative of Jewish transition, emancipation and, ultimately, redemption via the adoption of Western, ostensibly liberal versions of modernity" (2018:4). A similar story of wilful migration to America, which is showcased as an act of redemption is the theme of these writings.

Refugee Selfhood and the Theme of 'Serial Migration' in Fiction

The debates about identity, questions of nationhood and citizenship often imagine the self as something which is "always located in some sense in some place and cannot be totally unhoused" (Kaplan 2002:34). Diasporic experiences involving physical displacements from home are often understood as accompanied by selfhood divided between multiple locations. The violence, oppression and tyranny of the conception of the nation which led to the forced displacement of many South Asians, who transformed into refugees in the 20th century, are the themes of many fictional works in the last two decades. This can be seen as the ramifications of nation-building, which centred around an "excessive concern about the self that implies hostility towards the others" (Nag 2001: 4754). The representation of South Asian lived experiences in

Prajwal Parajuly's novel, and Bapsi Sidhwa's short story are explored to show how the protagonists' notions of selfhood and identity transform with regard to the countries of transit and reception while undergoing a series of migrations. Can the lives of those who were forcefully evicted from their places of origin be represented in the simple dichotomies of home/new country or belonging/displacement? Does the identity of refugees shaped by a discourse of 'otherness' concerning the places of their origin influence how the notion of 'home' appears in their experiences? The paper also explores how the works mentioned above represent the disruption of a located self and depict its impact on recognising the displacement of refugees from South Asia. Besides, the paper also investigates how these construct specific images of South Asia?

Prajwal Parajuly is an Indian author of Nepali ethnicity whose works focus primarily on the life and culture of the Nepali diaspora. His 2014 novel, *Land Where I Flee* which was shortlisted for the Dylan Thomas Prize is described as a 'homecoming novel'. The second text under discussion here is the Gujarati- Pakistani- Parsi- American writer BapsiSidhwa's short story "Defend Yourself Against Me" which appears in her collection titled *The Language of Love* (2014). It is a relatively long text of that genre that tells Mr Sikander Khan's story, who lived as a child refugee with the narrator (Joy's house in Pakistan's Lahore for a couple of years). Parajuly is often referred to as a South Asian writer. Whereas, Sidhwa is considered a South Asian Atlantic writer owing to the 'hyphenated identities' that constitute her identity as an author. Despite those differences, the common point of convergence between their texts discussed here is that both represent South Asians as the central characters and their depicted experiences of migration to America are also similar. The migrant characters in these works can be identified as 'political movers' as classified by Russell King and Chaido Karamoschou since

they "are onward migrating, self-evidently, for political reasons" (146). The experiences of displacement from their 'home' countries which make them political refugees in another South Asian country precede their arrival in North America. Bhagwati's character in Parajuly's novel had to live as a Bhutanese refugee in Nepal owing to ethnic conflict and Sikander, the central character of "Defend Yourself Against Me" had to find refuge in Lahore as a victim of violence during the Indo-Pak partition riots before reaching America. Moreover, their onward migration happens with an intention "to access more open, democratic and welcoming societies and to escape political, racist and religious repression in their first destination countries" (146). The sense of eternal displacement denotes their selfhoods since their image as 'rivals' or 'enemies' of their nations of origin lingers on and defines their subsequent life situations in each country.

The South Asian characters who appear in the texts that are analysed also appear to be in a double bind since their origins in a different part of the world continue to mark them as cultural 'outsiders' though the 'promise of America' is supposed to compensate for that crisis. Ruth Maxey observes that the South Asian Atlantic immigrants in USA and UK often find themselves in a double bind since the promise of social mobility and economic security offered by the new nation runs parallel to the white supremacist- racist discourses that mark various walks of the immigrant life experiences (Maxey 20124-5). Being different from the prominent migrant experiences that are emblematically portrayed as constituting the South Asian Atlantic experiences, the protagonists of both the texts under discussion, Sikander and Bhagwati do not fall under what is referred to by Christiane Schlote as the category of "privileged diasporics" or "clubbable cosmopolitans" (396). Yet, like many other serial migrants, they also "see migration as a kind of freedom in ways that might be taken as

contradicting the difficulties they have experienced" (Ossman 2004:117).

The case of serial migrants is a departure from an unchanging conceptualisation of the self since they "do not have a stable institutional or national reference point that makes sense of their displacements"(Ossman 2004:112). The lived experiences of South Asian political refugees who migrated to the USA in the latter half of the 20th century as represented in the Anglophone fiction of the recent times show this. Despite being a short story, the shifting of localities is a characteristic feature of Sidhwa's writing which describes a constant movement between America and Pakistan. In contrast to this, Parajuly's novel doesn't provide a detailed geographical description of any space outside the Indian subcontinent other than a few instances in the beginning. Yet, from the references given in the novel about Bhagwati and her family's life and travels, one can make out the diversity of spaces that have constituted their selfhoods. Despite having multiple identities and cultural affiliations, Bhagwati and Sikander's identity as US citizens is projected as the more prominent and comparatively stable one that defines the lives of these migrants in these fictional works. This foregrounding of the 'virtues of America'which appear in the fiction of Parajuly and Sidhwa is achieved through certain character sketches and specific sequences of events in the plot.

Egalitarian America vs. the Chaotic Homeland

Parajuly's *Land Where I Flee* revolves around four siblings' homecoming to Gangtok in Sikkim for the *Chaurasi* or the 84th birthday of their grandma. The incidents that follow the get-together unravel the family secrets and tell the readers about how the lives of the grandma, her two grandsons, and two granddaughters have changed over the years. It also shows the reader how each grandchild's feelings for their siblings and the

relationship they had with their grandma have changed drastically over the years. The character Bhagwati, one among the four siblings in this novel is introduced as "a refugee who lives in America with a shiny green card that would probably never land her a job commensurate with her expectations" (Parajuly 2014:18). Being born into a family of Sikkimese – Nepalimixed ethnic heritage, she belonged nowhere. Later, her identity as a Nepali-speaking Indian married to Ram, a Nepali-speaking Bhutanese Damaai (lower caste Hindu) complicates matters further. Her ties with her family and grandma were broken since she eloped with Ram, a lower caste journalist from Bhutan and things worsened after that. The novel throws light on the notions of 'home' and 'nation' as political and cultural ideas by tracing the series of migrations that the character Bhagwati undertakes. Soon after her marriage, "she and other Nepali speaking Bhutanese were herded out of Bhutan because they weren't Bhutanese enough to be Bhutanese" (17).

The political history of Bhutan tells us that the fictional incident mentioned here refers to those policies of the Bhutanese monarchy in the 1990s "which aimed at consolidating national integrity, Drukpa culture, values, and Buddhist ideology at the expense of the cultural and ethnic identity of other groups" (Ikram 2005:105). Bhutan had a long history of migration from Nepal and India since the 19th century British colonial times. "As a result of this migratory process, Bhutan came to be composed of two major ethnic groups—Drukpas and Lhotshampas" (Ghosh 2016: 22). Bhutan had a policy of inter-ethnic assimilation till the late 1980s, after which it not only "made the citizenship laws stricter, but also tried to streamline the Bhutanese people on the lines of Drukpa cultural norms" (23). As a result of the changed citizenship laws and the favour towards the Drukpa cultural norms, Lhotshampas were forced to leave Bhutan to

find shelter in Nepal (23). In *Land Where I Flee,* the husband of Bhagwati belongs to the Nepali-speaking Dalit caste of Damaai, who had to flee from Bhutan with his family as a consequence of this. Though Bhagwati's family finds refuge in Nepal for a while, her husband's "ancestors had been gone from Nepal and been in Bhutan for too long for them to be Nepalese" (Parajuly 2014:17). The 'real Nepalese' outside the refugee camps detested them as "*saranarthis* whose desperation had attracted enough Western attention for countries like America to come to their rescue" (17-18). Bhagwati acquires new identities during her post-marriage migrations, and each of these adds a new layer to her selfhood. Her transformation from a Sikkimese-Nepali Bahun (Brahmin) to a Damaai followed by the statuses of a refugee working-class parent in Nepal, and a permanent resident in the US leaves her with a floating identity of non-belongingness to any place or any community. The sense of psychological homelessness Bhagwati holds runs through the novel, and it is also accompanied by a longing to reunite with her family in the ancestral homeland. She also understands that returning to any of the earlier locations in South Asia is impossible due to her status as an 'outcaste' in her ancestral family and her present family's status as *saranarthis* or refugees in Nepal and as ethnic outsiders in Bhutan. Sajal Nag observes that "While building homes for the self, nations have often rendered others homeless" (4754). Not only does the nation-state but also the hegemonic practices of caste, leave Bhagwati and her family homeless and stateless. Therefore, she occupies an identity marked by perpetual othering in all the locations she has lived. Hence, the impossibility of tracing a 'home' of the past that leaves the refugee with the relative security of legal citizenship in America becomes central to Parajuly's novel.

Bhagwati also goes through experiences which push her into feelings of perpetual homelessness in the US since

Americanness has been "largely associated with whiteness and racism continues to impact in multiple ways on Americans of colour" (Maxey 2012:29). Though she is portrayed as the victim of racist remarks and sexual harassment in her workplace in the US, it is hinted that a new kind of confidence sprouted in her after migrating to America. It gives her the courage to open new lines of communication with her grandma and her siblings, after a decade of elopement from her family and hometown. She is hopeful that, "Now that she was in the golden land, her grandma wouldn't question if any of her calls were motivated by financial difficulties" (Parajuly 201462). Thus, her American citizenship is projected as a solution for all the hardships accumulated in her life because of other socio-cultural affiliations in the past. A home that is lost forever, one which exists only in her memories, leads to a continued sense of displacement in Bhagwati. This results in the development of a sense of admiration for America in her mind. Thus, a desire to assimilate or re-root in a new land accompanies the sense of uprootedness. Ossman observes that, during a series of migrations, the migrant is "led to develop a kind of implicit comparative social study. Her comparisons of bureaucracies, social norms, and political systems move beyond simple contrasts of the new country's ways with those she knew at home" (113).

Bapsi Sidhwa's short story "Defend Yourself Against Me", shows the transformation of its central character Sikander from a helpless child refugee in Pakistan into an adult immigrant in the US. When Joy, an Anglican Protestant, originally from Lahore, unexpectedly meets Sikander at a social gathering at an Indian friend's house in the US, it triggers a "fierce bout of nostalgia" and a "host of ghost-memories" in her (Sidhwa 2014:214). The text throws light on the events during the Indo-Pak partition after the collapse of the British Empire and the ethnic cleansing and chaos that followed it.

There were three partitions in 1947-of British India and of the provinces of Bengal and Punjab-that created the new nation-states of India and a spatially fragmented West and East Pakistan. It engendered the most extensive recorded population transfer in history amidst horrific mass violence (Roy 2012:5).

The transition of erstwhile colonial subjects into national citizens after partition was accompanied by the drawing of national boundaries and a series of communal riots and the creation of categories like refugees, displaced persons, evacuees, infiltrators etc., which is central to the narrative of this text. The character Sikander Khan and his family are shown in the story as victims of the partition violence, and they have to flee from the post-partition Punjab on the Indian side to Pakistan since they are Muslims.

The childhood experiences of violence in India that Sikander had gone through and the following years of his painful life as a refugee in Pakistan are presented through the memories of Joy who was also a child at that point. Despite her seemingly secure life in Pakistan during the partition, she witnessed the pains of other victims around her that left the images of a tragic past about her homeland. When their Hindu neighbours fled, leaving behind their enormous bungalow, Sikander and a few others fled from India to find refuge in one of the "two gargantuan refugee camps…set up on the outskirts of Lahore," (Sidhwa 2014:215) became the new neighbours for the narrator's family. Sikhs had attacked Sikander's house in Punjab in India, his mother was raped, and everyone else in his mother's family had gotten killed. The identity of Sikander that is recollected by the narrator is that of a child who is homeless and destitute and one who is displaced and stateless. When nations try to define themselves as homogenous groups, "a search of commonalities often led to exclusivity and insularity;

it terminates cultural ex-changes and views every group outside the exclusivity as the other" (Nag, 2001, p:47-54). She meets Sikander in the liminal spaces of Lahore that is left vacant through such an act of exclusivity. His family replaces the erstwhile legal residents in young Joy's neighbourhood who fled Lahore since they no longer belonged to the newly formed nation- Pakistan, owing to their Hindu identity. Referring to the personal narratives of women in the aftermath of the Indo-Pak partition, Veena Das comments that, "fleeing to another alien space led to a division of the self and the world according to a logic that made the self radically fugitive and the world radically fragmented" (Das 1991: 65). The narrator who meets Sikander later as a transformed adult in a different country finds it difficult to identify him as the same child whom she knew years ago in Pakistan. Her observation about the adult she tries to reconnect with is as follows: "Sikander Khan moves closer to me. He is completely at ease. Acclimatized. Americanized" (Sidhwa 2014: 210). During his meeting with Joy, who knew him as a helpless refugee in her neighbourhood, Sikander surprises her with his nonchalant attitude, and she reads the lack of embarrassment on his part as resulting from the confidence gained by him through his acculturation with the American lifestyle.

Instead of the dichotomy of home/displacement, both the novel and the short story offer us a picture of America as an alternative democratic space in contrast to the impossibility of a home/nation that would readily accommodate the expelled refugees or somebody who has a queer identity. During their return to India from the USA after a long gap, Agastayain Parajuly's novel is shown to be surprised to notice that neither Bhagwati's clothes nor her bags were so different from his. It is similar to the narrator's feelings in Sidhwa's story about meeting Mr Khan in America after many years. An implicit tone of Americanophilia runs through such accounts of

comparison in Parajuly's novel, which appears in the words and deeds of the character Bhagwati and is also replicated in the characterisation of her brother. Agastaya, an America-returned doctor finds it difficult to hide his gay identity back home. Holding a mirror on Agastaya's thoughts, Parajuly writes, "That was the beauty of America- in a strange way, it brought everyone to the same level…sort of the way they, an America- returned doctor and an America- returned refugee, did right now. In America, with its jeans and T-shirt egalitarianism, everyone was uniform" (53). Refugee selfhoods, with cultural and national identities that were re-imagined multiple times, since they had to flee from their homelands to other neighbouring countries where they remained misfits, are portrayed in both the works. Neither of them tries to recognise their past selves concerning their long-lost home since the idea of a located self gets disrupted through a series of displacements and evictions. According to Maxey, the synecdoche of home in the works of many migrant South Asian writers "is used both to affirm and to call into question the status of Britain and America as sites of the permanent settlement" (29).

The novel tries to contrast the seemingly egalitarian and liberal society of the US and the hierarchal and conservative Indian society by throwing light on Agastaya's struggles. Agastaya's anxieties about hiding his queer identity from his family members are depicted as something he never had to face in the US. When Bhagwaticomplains about the diminishing Nepali skills of her American bred children during one such phone conversations, her conservative grandma leaves her in dismay by referring to their mixed and non-Brahmin lineage by responding thus, "Oh, I forget they aren't Baahuns. Caste less. Language-less- all the same!" (Parajuly 2014:63). Bhagwati's children who have been assimilated into the American monocultural identity and her grandma, who represents a

bygone generation of the elite feudal class in India, are portrayed in stark contrast to each other. Unlike her kids who are brought up in the melting pot model of cultural homogeneity, Bhagwati's grandma becomes the representative of a hierarchal world seeped in the adversity of languages and castes, where each linguistic or caste category is a strong marker that defines one's identity, exclusion or belongingness to a group.

Similarly, India and Pakistan become sites of communal riots where women's bodies are violated, and kids live with physical and mental scars of violence as is recollected through Joy and Mrs Sikander's narratives. The incidents related to the drawing of new boundaries after the partition of India and Pakistan is shown to have made deep imprints in the subconscious mind of the narrator-Joy too, in her childhood. Sidhwa depicts the thoughts of the narrator, in these words, "I have not recalled this part of my childhood in years. Certainly not since I moved to the smoothly operating country of my adoption" (Sidhwa 2014:12). Similar to Bhagwati's experiences, the recollections of her painful past in Pakistan which flashes anew in Joy's mind are contrasted with the safety and social security that she feels as an adult in the first world country where she has migrated to. The get-together at the Indian friend's house referred to as the 'Indian bric-a-brac' by the narrator also points out the 'chaotic' nature of the South Asian demeanour itself. It is gibberish in multiple South Asian tongues which makes her recall her poignant childhood days in Pakistan amidst her more sophisticated life in the US (211-12). These parallel representations of homes of the past and the present are included to validate or favour America as a nation/ home over India, Pakistan, Nepal or Bhutan which expelled or marginalised the refugees in the fictional works. While Parajuly's novel mentions the racial discrimination faced by the protagonists in America, Sidhwa's fiction is completely

silent about the hierarchies that may be at work in the new land.

The Transformation from Refugee in South Asia to American Citizen

Haimanti Roy observes that "Migration from one territorial unit to another, even if temporary', defined one's nationality; it signalled the intent of acquiring new citizenship" (4). Bhagwati's American citizenship is understood as an empowering identity in her life in contrast to the restrictions posed by the gender norms in a Sikkimese-Nepalese family, or the inferior socio-political status that was stamped on her as the wife of a Nepali Damaai in Bhutan. Acquiring US citizenship is not only an act of gaining new rights in her case. It entails her belongingness to a nation and a 'home' that she never possessed. Ketu H. Katrak observes that in the case of a migrant, "Not belonging, being an outsider, can be part of a privilege that is possible for those who can afford monetarily to go back and forth" (131). Unlike many of the privileged migrants who may feel at a loss as an 'outsider' in a new country or become overwhelmed by nostalgia for 'home', Bhagwati finds her new identity in America, a relief from her perpetual status of a refugee. In her first conversation with her grandma over the phone, Bhagwati wants to flaunt her new identity as an American citizen by emphasising that the government takes very good care of them there (Parajuly 2014: 63) and it is hinted at when Agastaya notices that "she spoke more in English than in Nepali" (52) during his first meeting with her after many years. Meena Alexander states that how one comes to terms with a language in a new land is related to one's identity, since "learning a particular language can determine one's sense of belonging or of being "unhoused" (Alexander quoted in Katrak 1996:132). Though, finding refuge in America doesn't help Bhagwati come out of the post-

marriage status of an 'outcaste' and caste continues to stand as a blockade in the re-building of her relationship with her grandma, she has acquired the confidence that she will find some job for sustenance in America with her minimal English-speaking skills. The novel also shows that her husband Ram's siblings, who had distanced themselves earlier from him, began to contact him to figure out a way for them to reach America. The narratives of refugees like Ram's family impact their relatives in Nepal since it runs in community circles similar to the migrant narratives of the Jews in America. Ury observes that "many Jews end up imagining and constituting themselves…as the victims of wanton, hate-filled violence in Eastern Europe who were saved by the particularly prescient decision to 'Go West'" (2). The novel records that their marginality derived from their identity as lower caste Hindus and as Nepali refugees from Bhutan are compelling reasons behind the Americanophilia of Ram's siblings.

> They were like others who assumed that with a quick flight to the West, your troubles stayed behind in the East: the East is poor, the West is rich; the East is a disparity, the West is equality; the East is problems, the West is the solution to these problems (Parajuly 2014:65).

In the case of Nepali refugees in Bhutan, the international law for refugees offers a 'resettlement option in a third state' that allows the refugee to "automatically acquire the permanent status of the economic migrant in that country" (Ikram 2005:115). Therefore, the refugees are often attracted to the promise of socio-economic security that is expected from an opportunity to migrate to the US. Similarly, Sikander and his mother (Ammijee), who were the victims of Sikh violence during the partition, have relegated their past life full of traumatic events after their migration to America. Their

eviction from their roots in British India and subsequent migration to Pakistan is the result of the creation of new nations which"requires constant shedding of people who do not fit the constructed identity or question the framework"(Nag 2001:4759). Their vulnerability as victims of violence in relation to the Sikhs in India and as refugees with regard to the lawful residents of Lahore has resulted in their fractured selfhoods in the past. Interestingly, they are able to restore normal lives as survivors who occupy equal grounds with both these groups of people in America where all of them interact with each other as members of the South Asian American Diaspora. Not only does this American citizenship endow them with equal rights and privileges, but it also gives them a chance to forget their painful pasts in a distant land. It is also suggested that the splendour of American life has helped Joy move on in life without being stuck in her painful childhood memories. Her inner thoughts are revealed to us as: "Too enamoured by the dazzling shopping malls and technical opulence of the USA, too frequent a visitor to Pakistan, I have not yet missed it, or given thought to the past" (Sidhwa 2014: 212).

In addition to the first-person accounts that describe the protagonists' lives as refugees in another neighbouring country in Pararjuly's and Sidhwa's fiction, the third person point of view of the political crises that made them refugees during the early part of their lives is also included in these texts. Interestingly, this is also brought about in both the texts through the presence of a character, 'a privileged migrant' in the US. The references to Bhagwati's past life are made in *Land Where I Flee* by reflecting on Agastaya's thoughts about her and Sikandar's plight as children refugees unfurls to us in the short story through the memories of the narrator Joy. The narratorial voices of privileged migrants introduced in these works are emblematic of the authors' identity in the respective

fictional works. With its splendour and projected egalitarianism, North America becomes a land of redemption and a haven for the hapless South Asian refugees while viewed through this narratorial lens. Despite such parallels, there are many features which make these texts differ from one another. Parajuly's novel doesn't give a detailed description of Bhagwati's refugee experiences in Bhutan or Nepal and also mentions the racist and sexist treatments meted out to her in her workplace. In contrast, Sidhwa's fiction delves into the details of political unrest and violence in the Indian subcontinent following the partition. It vividly portrays the plight of these political refugees through the life of Sikander. Their life in America is shown as a complete escape from these.

America and the Road to Resilience

While South Asia is portrayed as a territory marked by ethnic cleansing, persecution and communal tensions, the transformation in the lives of characters as depicted in "Defend Yourself Against Me," defines North America as the path to redemption and resilience. Bhagwati and Sikander's physical appearances in America do not fit the detailed image that helpless refugees are given in both works of fiction. Joy recollects images of the child refugee in Pakistan with his 'sun-charred little body covered with scabs and wounds' which made the narrator feel sorry for Sikander in Sidhwa's story. This had also created a repulsive reaction in her. In contrast, the blue-suited and black-booted Mr Sikander Khan, whom she meets years later in America, is a completely transformed man. The narrator, initially, was doubtful about his identity since the mark of the deep wound on his head is not visible since he is wearing a wig. As opposed to the images of an orphaned child which stays afresh in her memories, Sikander is accompanied by his wife and three sisters in salwar-kameezes, wearing

heavy gold jewellery with a few small kids running around them (Sidhwa 2014: 214-18). It is implied that though Pakistan couldn't offer much to the child refugee from India's Punjab, America could make good from his losses by gifting him with wealth, family and friendship. Like the one on his head, the wounds of his past life are also invisible to an onlooker since it is concealed from public view. Agastaya is also amazed by Bhagwati's outfit and her confident demeanour as an American when they meet each other after many years.

The presence of Joanne, the white wife of Joy's friend Vijay in the get-together, is also worth mentioning. She is depicted as an outsider who is ignorant of South Asian histories of violence and communal tensions. Hence, she is the first person who comes up with the idea that there is the possibility of marriage between Mrs Khan's widowed sister and Khushwant Singh, who is their common friend (230). While the narrator herself is unsure about this idea since she knew that members of the Sikh community were also complicit in the tragedy of Khans and other Muslim refugees s who fled to Pakistan from India, Joanne expresses her confidence that all past rivalries of South Asians will disappear in this new land. She says, "Let's give it a try, Joy. Don't you think they are too civilised to go around killing each other - at least in America?" (231). Joanne's comments about the young South Asians in America reveal her belief that America, as a 'civilising space', can redeem these members of rivalrous South Asian communities. The story underlines the impact of American life as a catalyst of resilience in the life of Sikander, when it closes with the narrator's affirmation, "Joanne is right: living in America changes people - I can see the changes in myself…yes…" (248). Maxey's observation about South Asian Atlantic writers that, "Some writers even display a kind of proselytising zeal about emigration: part of a broader justification, perhaps, for leaving the ancestral homeland in favour of the US or UK"

(28) is befitting to explain Sidhwa's illustration of America in this story, i.e. as a land of redemption and reconciliation.

Sikander's mother who followed her son to America is also shown to be finding refuge by abandoning the lands where she was raped; her family was killed, and where she lived in a state of homelessness and despair for many years. The narrator is shown to be surprised in her meetings with both these victims of violence. To her surprise, the narrator also finds in Sikander's Ammiji, just another open, acquiescent, hospitable face of a peasant woman who is happy to visit her son and greet his friends when she meets them. She can't make the connections between the 'gentle, contented, woman in home-spun clothes' whom she meets in the US and the woman who was "kidnapped, raped, and sold in India" (241). The resilience of the transformed selves she meets in a different continent, after a long interval from their meeting in Lahore, moves Joy. Sikander's calm and cheerful demeanour and his mother's narrative about how she forgave all the Sikhs during the dramatic incident in which the young Sikh guys in the story apologise for the sins done to the Khans by their ancestors in the past, surprise Joy more than anything. Overall, migration to America is shown as a fair opportunity for all of them to warrant a final escape from the trauma and pain they suffered in their home countries and as an entry to a new world of possibilities and hope.

Conclusion

Parajuly's and Sidhwa's works describe the processes by which immigrants establish and maintain social relations that link together their societies of origin and the new ones where they settle down with 'dual lives'. The refugee experiences in a neighbouring South Asian country to which the characters of these fictional works escape are the years of hardships in their lives amounting to the unpleasant memories they wish to

forget in the latter part of their lives. The theme of serial migration in these fictional works acts as a tool to compare South Asian polities and America as a politico-cultural space. In both the literary works, the fears of homelessness as an exile or refugee life appear aggravated after escaping to a neighbouring nation in the subcontinent. The refugees who elope from their home countries to escape discrimination based on ethnicity and religion are indicated to be suffering more in these neighbouring nations. Simultaneously, the second migration in the series of movements that brings them to North America is projected as giving way to moments of resilience, relief, and redemption. Unlike any privileged migrant, these refugees, who fled from their countries of origin can't think about returning to the comfort of a 'home' since it is non-existent as a physical space due to violence or political turmoil. It is also lost in the psychological sense since their identities as internal 'others' within the nation had led to their expulsion from the notion of national subjects. A series of migrations over time and the new layers of identities taken up by the refugees across different places make it impossible for them to return to any idea of a 'located self at home'. The simple binaries of a located self at home/ displaced self in an alien land are insufficient to describe the selfhoods and experiences of serial migrants for whom perpetual homelessness owing to a marginal status in each nation becomes the norm. Rather than feeling displaced in North America, they appear to find an opportunity for survival in the new land. As a result, a set of binaries are employed in these narratives to describe the experiences of serial migrants as they are felt by the protagonists: East/West, space of inter-ethnic conflict/land of refuge. The images of America as the land of modernity and redemption favourable for the survival of the refugees and marginal groups against the hierarchal and conservative societies of South Asian polities that evicted them are offered

through the comparative framework of serial migrant experiences of the protagonists.

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V. S. Naipaul: From Memory en route to Roots[1]

CHANDRIMA KARMAKAR

Abstract

V.S. Naipaul has constantly been in search of his 'home'. He never felt at 'home' in Trinidad. The anxiety over his 'home' has been elaborated on in most of his literary works. His works revolve around the uncertainty and doubt of the outsider and the exile. In Naipaul's own words, 'When I speak about being an exile or a refuge, I'm not just using a metaphor, outside the metaphor lies a deeply self-absorbed existentialist state, not a political one'. His evolving years span his native Trinidad and his assumed British 'home'. His 'roots', however, are retained in India and the Hindu religion. In Trinidad, Naipaul is an exile from India; in England, he is an exile from Trinidad. He is also not at 'home' in India because it is a country he has always known only metaphorically (see Dascalu 2007:93). One of the factors that generated his interest in India was the thought of finding a 'home'. India was the 'home' of his ancestors; it could probably be a 'home' for him too. Naipaul's inclination towards his 'ancestral home' is a common characteristic found in many a diasporic Indian (writer). Naipaul's oeuvre cannot be understood in isolation from his Indian roots. His engagement with India results in a significant part of his oeuvre; often referred to as the Indian trilogy. His interest in India was not that of a mere sojourner. The interest in his 'ancestral roots' was more deep-seated in his vivid childhood memories. His society comprised people of indentured labour ancestry. Naipaul's indentured labour lineage makes him a unique representation among diasporic

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[1]This paper is written based on a chapter from my Ph.D. thesis titled: *'Home', Roots and Memory in V.S.Naipaul's oeuvre: An Interpretive Analysis.*

Indian writers. He is probably one of those few who traversed between the 'old Indian diaspora' and the 'new Indian diaspora' with equal ease. He becomes a part of the 'old Indian diaspora' by virtue of his birth. He spends his initial childhood days in the Capildeo household. He was surrounded by people who were indentured labour migrants and their children. His experience of being a part of the plantation society helps him to understand the darker sides of being colonised. These later find their way into his writings, which are examined in this paper.

Keywords: V.S. Naipaul, Indian Diaspora, Indentured Labour, 'Home', Memory.

Introduction

> I certainly do not want to go back to Trinidad or any other island in the West Indies if I can help it. I very much want to go to India. However, there are many difficulties. I cannot be employed on the Indian side because I am British, and on the British side, I cannot be employed because I am not English. I think it is almost impossible for me to do anything worthwhile in this country, for reasons you doubtless know….
>
> – Naipaul (Letter, 14 May 1954)

Such earnestness to visit 'India' has seldom been expressed by diasporic Indian writers. This makes V. S. Naipaul[2] a unique representative among the diasporic Indian writers. He was not at ease with himself. Like most of the other diasporic Indian writers, he too had problems deciphering 'home'. However, unlike others, he was more articulate in his denial and being denied. Fawzia Mustafa in *V. S. Naipaul* elaborates,

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[2]Throughout this paper, I shall refer to V.S. Naipaul using his last name, Naipaul. Any reference to other members of the Naipaul family will be done using their full name.

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"Naipaul was more comfortable with labels such as 'rootless', an 'exile', or 'truly a man without a country or a cause'" (Mustafa 1995:8).

Naipaul had been a man constantly in search of his 'home'. He never felt at 'home' in Trinidad. His works revolve around the uncertainty and doubt of the outsider and the exile. In Naipaul's words, "When I speak about being an exile or a refuge, I am not just using a metaphor, outside the metaphor lies a deeply self-absorbed existentialist state, not a political one" (ibid:9).

His evolving years span his native Trinidad and his assumed British 'home'. His roots, however, are retained in India and the Hindu religion. In Trinidad, Naipaul was an *exile* from India; in England, he was an *exile* from Trinidad. He was also not at 'home' in India because it is a country he had always known 'only metaphorically' (Dascalu 2007:93). One of the factors that generated his interest in India was the thought of finding a 'home'. India was the 'home' of his ancestors; it could probably be a 'home' for him too. Naipaul's inclination toward his 'ancestral home' is common in most diasporic Indians (writers). In most cases, this curiosity and inclination reflect in the writer's literary output. In this context, Cudjoe states -

Whether the writer likes it or not, his language is chosen from certain historical possibilities, even though he may claim the *style* is his own. Thus the history of a mode of writing cannot be reduced to an independent, history-less activity from which the writer is free to choose or not to choose. He is implicated irrevocably and cannot arbitrarily negate or deny that bond, And in this sense, Naipaul's *ecriture*, though free and important, is an integral part of its general history and literary tradition (Cudjoe 1988:9–10).

The nostalgia associated with 'home' and the idea of an 'imaginary home' gives rise to a fragmented society, yearning for its lost roots. The diasporic Indians' persistent attempt to hold on to their past gives rise to a new generation with borrowed sensibilities. The problem arises when the new generation tries to negotiate its past with the present. The irony is that most of them remain 'homeless' in the country they grow up in and in India as well. This happens in the case of Naipaul too. The make-believe world in which he grew up was significantly different from 'existential India'[3] His inability to find a 'home' for himself leads him to trace his roots. Like many other diasporic Indians, Naipaul too tries to resolve the conflict of 'home'.

Naipaul's oeuvre cannot be understood in isolation from his Indian roots. His engagement with India results in a significant part of his oeuvre, often referred to as the Indian trilogy. His interest in 'India' was not that of a mere sojourner. The interest in his 'ancestral roots' was more deep-seated in his childhood memories. The objective of this paper is to facilitate an understanding of Naipaul's broader themes of memory, 'home', and roots that shape his literary oeuvre. It is the foundation on which Naipaul laid his works. The impetus to combine these three aspects came only when he joined the BBC. 'Home', roots and memories are three integral components in the lives of diasporic Indians. As we wade through Naipaul's vast oeuvre, we find that Naipaul pulls out characters from his memory. His memory serves as the umbilical cord between his roots and his 'home'.

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[3] Political India has undergone a change in its boundary during the last one hundred years. For people who left 'India' before Partition in 1947, especially the indentured labour migrants and their descendants, the reference point is 'the subcontinental India'; whereas for immigrants post Partition, it is the political state of India as it exists now (Jayaram 2011:3).

Naipaul was born a few years after the abolition of the indentured labour system in 1917. He was born on 17 August 1932 in colonial Trinidad. He grew up in a society inhabited by a population that had been uprooted and was 'homeless'. Naipaul's society comprised people of indentured labour ancestry. In his own words, "My background is at once exceedingly simple and exceedingly confused" (Naipaul 2001:3). It was a society of rural poverty (French 2008:xi). He describes himself and the diasporic Indians as, "we were an immigrant's Asian community on a small plantation island in the New World" (Mahanta 2004:6). It is hardly gainsaid that Naipaul had deep roots in indentured labour migration; he spent his childhood in Trinidad's plantation colony. "There were about 400,000 Indians who had come and settled in the Caribbean colonies" (Kadekar et al. 2009:113).

Discussing Naipaul's works, Michael V. Angrosino, in "V.S. Naipaul and the Colonial Image" (1975) states that the theme of Naipaul's non-fiction, historical and journalistic analyses, and his novels and stories are the concept of 'the colonial'. He elaborates that, for Naipaul, being 'colonial' did not connote 'just any oppressed' or exploited member of what is frequently called the "Third World". For Naipaul, being a colonial implied the psychological loss of identity in the context of a spatial displacement (ibid. 2).

The society of Trinidad was nothing less than a 'social laboratory' (Jayaram, 1998) despite offering its inhabitants a mundane quotidian life. Discovered by Christopher Columbus in 1492, Trinidad was first colonized by the Spaniards. The Spaniards virtually exterminated the indigenous inhabitants, the Amerindians; they later brought Negro [*sic*] slaves to the island from Africa. After being a Spanish colony from 31 July 1498, Trinidad became a British colony on 18 February 1797. It achieved its independence as late as 31 August 1962 (ibid:1–

10). Trinidad has, therefore, been a colony for more than four centuries.

Naipaul's indentured labour lineage made him a unique representation among diasporic Indian writers. He was probably one of those few who traversed between the 'old Indian diaspora' and the 'new Indian diaspora'[4] with equal ease. He became part of the 'old Indian diaspora' by virtue of his birth. He spent his initial childhood days in the Capildeo household. He was surrounded by people who were indentured labour migrants with children. His experience of being a part of the plantation society helped him understand the darker sides of being colonized. These later found their way into his writings. Like most of the 'new Indian diaspora' members, Naipaul too decided to leave Trinidad for better opportunities. The impulse to flee from circumscription and stagnation was inherited from his father, Seepersad Naipaul. Naipaul took a voluntary decision to be twice displaced. His decision made him a part of many Indians who became members of the diaspora to pursue prosperity. Naipaul's 'biographic conditions' enabled him to voice the angst of (a) diasporic who were indentured labourers, (b) diasporic out of choice, and (c) diasporas who were twice displaced.

The paper will briefly broach Naipaul's ancestral history to later elaborate upon his cartography of memories. His maternal grandfather Capildeo Maharaj arrived in Trinidad as an indentured labourer around Christmas in 1894. Dolly Zulakha

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[4] Arthur Helweg makes a distinction among the diasporic Indian community. He coined the term 'old Indian diaspora' for members of the diaspora who are indentured labour migrants or their succeeding generations. The 'new Indian diaspora' is used for Indian immigrants who left India post Partition in search of a lucrative career and a better life (see Jayaram 2011).

Hassan states, Capildeo Maharaj eventually made the journey back to India. However, he had left behind an indelible mark of India on his family. She further elaborates that the legacy of Indian village culture and tradition brought from India and implanted on the island by people like Naipaul's grandfather established a 'miniature India' (Hassan 1989:295).

In *An Area of Darkness* (1964/2002), Naipaul states that his grandfather had abandoned India. Despite the abandonment, he carried his village along with him. Never did any place or incident supersede the impact that his village had on him (2002:25). Naipaul grew up in a Brahmin household. He was surrounded by many people and household items showcasing his Indian roots. Thus he remained an 'Indian' by upbringing despite being a West Indian by birth.

Although Naipaul never lived in India, the cultural baggage of being an 'Indian' never stopped casting its shadow on him. 'India' had its omnipresence in Naipaul's life. Another significant factor that accentuated the omnipresent 'India' was his father, Seepersad Naipaul. Seepersad Naipaul too hails from an indentured lineage. His father was brought to Trinidad by his grandmother, who arrived in Trinidad in the 1870s as an indentured labourer. Seepersad had to cope with mental disturbances and find a way out of his village. He was ambitious and intelligent (traits that were passed on to his son) and wanted to escape from the likely future of an agricultural labourer. He taught himself to read and write English. Thereafter, he conceived the idea of becoming a journalist, a profession that was conventional for Whites and Blacks (Negroes) [*sic*] (ibid:18).

Unlike Naipaul, Seepersad could not escape Trinidad's geographical confinements, he did escape from his precarious living conditions by self-education and strong 'homing

desires'.[5] As mentioned earlier, most of his characteristics, especially the ardent desire to flee from stagnation and carve a niche for himself, were passed on to Naipaul. Naipaul's upbringing amidst his maternal family members deeply affected his diasporic self and later his desire to visit his ancestral roots.

In order to understand Naipaul's diasporic position, a reference to his genealogy will help in understanding the cartography of his roots.

Figure 4.1: Naipaul's Genealogy
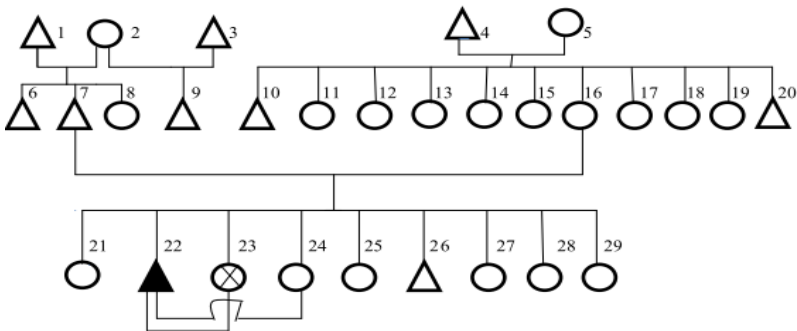
No.	Name	Relationship to Naipaul	Remarks
1	Naipaul Maharaj	Paternal grandfather	Brought to Trinidad in 1870; mother, fleeing disgrace or abandonment in the area around Ayodhya
2	Name not known	Paternal grandmother	Not much known; had family in Chandernagore; had a sister and her husband, Sookdeo Misir, who lived on El Dorado Road in Tunapuna
3	Name not known	Paternal step-grandfather	Not much known
4	Capildeo Maharaj	Maternal grandfather	Originally named Kapil, a Brahmin, from a family of hereditary pundits in a village near Gorakhpur; came to

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[5] Avtar Brah (1996, p. 03) introduces the term 'homing desire' to give more meaning and clarity on the use of 'home'.

			Trinidad on the Christmas day in 1894
5	Soogee	Maternal grandmother	Daughter of an Indian *Sirdar* (a plantation labour driver or overseer); Bengali Brahmin, Govinda
6	Rampersad	Eldest paternal uncle	Fictionalised as 'Rapooche'
7	Seepersad Naipaul	Father	Discussed in detail in the chapter
8	Prabhakaran	Paternal aunt	Not much known
9	Simbhoonath (Capo S)	Eldest maternal uncle	An attorney and politician; father of Devendranath, Sita, and Surendranath
10	Hariprasad	Paternal step-uncle	Not much known
11	Rajdayee	Maternal aunt 1	Mother of Jainarayan and Keso
12	Ramdoolarie	Maternal aunt 2	Divorced wife of Dinanath (the source of Seepersad Naipaul's 'Gurudeva' in *The Adventures of Gurudeva* (1976)
13	Dhan	Maternal aunt 3	Mother of Owad, Sattin, and Germany
14	Koontz	Maternal aunt 4	Mother of Indarjit (Boysie)
15	Ahilla	Maternal aunt 5	Mother of Phoolo, Brahmanand, and Deokunwar
16	Droapatie Capildeo	Mother	The seventh of eleven children in the family
17	Kalawatee	Maternal aunt 6	Mother of Shakhar, Baidwattee, Rabindranath, and Dayo
18	Tara	Maternal aunt 7	Not much known
19	Binmatie	Maternal aunt 8	Not much known
20	Rudranath (Capo R)	Maternal uncle	Not much known
21	Kamla	Elder sister	Travels to India to study in Benares Hindu University
22	Vidyadar Soorajprasad	Ego	Protagonist of the thesis
23	Patricia Hale	Wife	Discussed in the chapter
24	Nadira	Second wife	Pakistani by origin
25	Sati	Younger sister 1	Dies early in 1984
26	Mira	Younger sister	Not much known

		2	
27	Savi	Younger sister 3	Not much known
28	Shiva	Younger brother	Talented author of *The Fireflies* (1971) and *The Chip Chip Gatherers* (1976/1973)
29	Nalini	Younger sister 4	Not much known

Table 1.1: Genealogical Table of Naipaul's Kin Circle

Note: Prepared by Chandrima Karmakar based on scattered information in Naipaul (1999) and French (2008).

As a child, Naipaul was quite close to his father. The fondness between child Naipaul and father Seepersad is beautifully fictionalized in *A House for Mr. Biswas* published in 1961. This fondness increased with time as the father-son duo cultivated a shared interest in Literature. Years later, this fondness shared by them has again been fictionalized in Hanif Kureishi's, *The Last Word* (2014). Harry (believed to be fictionalized Patrick French) questions Mamoon (believed to be fictionalized Naipaul), "Did you love your father?" To which Mamoon replies, "Too much. I was a son rather than a man" (Kureishi 2014:35).

Both Seepersad and Naipaul's writings invoke 'India'. The setting was not India, but the characters and the lives portrayed reflected the Indian civilization. Seepersad's writings narrated stories of the 'everyday life' that he saw around him. His achievement as a writer was the use of the English language to spin out his own world narratives. He narrates in 'Standard English', but his character Gurudeva in *Gurudeva and Other Indian Tales* speaks in the local Trinidadian dialect. He narrates the tales of the Indian community in Trinidad in the 1930s and 1940s. "These tales were divorced from their origins, but they reflected coping with a confusing, changing world" (ibid:44) and he celebrated the 'Indian' life in all its

hues. In his own words, Naipaul describes his father's book as a celebration of the 'Indian' life.

Besides his inception into the life-world of diasporic Indians, Seepersad's stories also introduced Naipaul to the world of colonialism. Years later, while delivering a speech at Tulsa, Naipaul says, "The West Indians have been a colonial people twice over. They migrated from metropolitan India into another colonialism" (*The Sunday Statesman*, 3 November 1963 as cited in Hassan 1989:189). He was referring to the people who had left India as indentured labourers and settled in Trinidad. Therefore, the diasporic Indians in Trinidad bore the angst of being diasporic as well as 'colonial'.

Unlike Seepersad, Naipaul later in his life visited India in search of a 'home'. Though his visit was not altogether futile, he could not anchor himself at 'home' in India. This was, largely, because his 'imagined India' bore no resemblance to 'existential India'. Before elaborating further on this, it is important to note the factor(s) that formed his 'imagined India'. One of the significant facilitators was the memory of his early childhood and his father's stories. It, therefore, becomes necessary to navigate through Naipaul's cartography of memories.

India: Memories and Imagination

"*Look, boys, it ever strikes you that the world not real at all? It ever strikes you that we have the only mind in the world, and you are just thinking up everything else?"* Naipaul (2001/1959:37).

Naipaul's life and his creative pursuits revolve around memories. Most of Naipaul's fiction is created out of his memory. They are portrayals of childhood memories. Memories become a common thread between Seepersad and

his stories, on the one hand, and Naipaul, his 'imagined India' and his literary oeuvre, on the other.

Naipaul's writings keep moving back and forth between his memories and his lived realities. His memories, too, add meaning to his 'biographic conditions'. Memories and the colonial setup in which Naipaul grew up as a diasporic set the stage for his future as a writer.

Naipaul's writings begin in a Trinidadian setup. They gradually move to wider horizons of the Caribbean basin and South America. He returns to India, moves to Africa, and keeps writing about all his experiences. He gradually matures through fiction to the putatively greater realities of non-fictional prose and travelogues (Mustafa 1995:7). Memories of his childhood, his father's works, and his mother's family, where he spent his childhood years, became a rich quarry from which he kept extracting stories for his creative pursuits.

The larger share of Naipaul's novels speaks of the angst of being diasporic. Born in Trinidad, Naipaul (like many other diasporic Indians) could not understand the connotation of being diasporic in his childhood; he started comprehending it much later:

> They have become people without a past. Most of us can look back only to our grandfathers, after all. Beyond that is a blank. Very few of us, you know, can trace our ancestors…What has happened has happened. I think it would be foolish to see it as good or bad. What is important about it is that it has not been understood, and when things are not understood, people can flounder and become irrational. I little understood this myself, I think, this process of change. Like everyone else, I assumed that the old values and the old values with which one grew up would somehow just go on, but they don't (Naipaul 1982:4-5).

The comprehension was initially facilitated by memory and, much later, by his experience in England. Years later, in *An Area of Darkness* (1964/2002), he narrates that he had memories of women in his household dressing differently. He also recalls that their food habits were different from that of his friends. Another significant mention is that of a *Katha* (a Hindu ritual in which a divine story is narrated by a *pundit* [priest]) that his grandmother insisted on being held under a particular tree. He recalls that others on the island were quite surprised by what they were doing (Naipaul 2002:25-26). Such narrations imply that memories like these helped Naipaul understand the connotation of being diasporic. He had never been able to anchor himself physically or mentally in any place. It was much later in his life that he finally settled down in England. Whether he considered England to be his 'home' could be best answered by him.

Naipaul had always denied Trinidad, yet one cannot ignore that he was part of Trinidad's diasporic Indian community. His works are one of the best portrayals of plantation life there. So, despite his denial of Trinidad, what makes him part of that society? How does one describe Naipaul's internalization of the Indo-Trinidadian diasporic community, despite his consistent (and vehement) denial? Peter L. Berger and Thomas Luckmann in, *The Social Construction of Reality*, say:

> The individual, however, is not a member of society. He is born with a predisposition toward sociality, and he becomes a member of society. In every individual's life, therefore, there *is* a temporal sequence, in the course of which he is inducted into participation in the societal dialectic. (Berger and Luckmann 1967:129).

Naipaul's memories serve as the 'predisposition' towards the diasporic Indian society in Trinidad and 'India'.

Like his father, Naipaul too had to resort to his own experiences for his creative output. In Naipaul's case, the dependence was more on memory.[6] The journey from memories to reality took the shape of novels. In turn, these novels give us a glimpse of Naipaul's life and the 'life-world' of diasporic Indians. They also give us a glimpse of a very ancient Indian civilization, one that was carried by several indentured labourers to the islands; a legacy that was passed on to the succeeding generations; traces of an ancient civilization that gradually got creolized but existed as an 'imaginary' entity; a memory that was a substitute for the physical reality that was left behind in time. It shall not be an exaggeration to say that, as one traces Naipaul's 'life-world', one understands the diasporic 'life-world'. The significance of memory in narrating the history of times gone by is implicit in Naipaul's writings.

Memory has such a significant impact on Naipaul's life that the 'imagined India' lures Naipaul to pay a visit to his ancestral roots, 'India'. His time spent in India speaks volumes of the sense of displacement felt by diasporic Indians. It took many years for Naipaul to come to terms with 'existential India'. He never knew 'existential India' before he visited India for the first time in 1960. All through his childhood and youth, he was only familiar with 'imagined India'. Any affinity or contempt felt towards 'India' was solely based on his memory or imagination. It had nothing to do with *existential* India. The constant conflict between 'imagined India' and 'existential India' shapes Naipaul's trilogy on India, namely, *An Area of*

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[6] Memories have sociological significance. Letters and diaries are usually a storehouse of memory. Another important sociological tool, namely, oral history, taps memory. It is, therefore, not surprising that Naipaul's works gain sociological-significance of their own. The memories evoked in these novels give a glimpse of a wider phenomenon, 'The Indian Diaspora'.

Darkness (1964), *India: A Wounded Civilisation* (1977), and, *India: A Million Mutinies Now* (1990).

Conclusion

As I wind up, I would like to refer to Charles Horton Cooley's concept of 'the looking glass self'. Cooley says that an individual's consciousness of himself reflects the ideas about himself that he attributes to other minds; thus there can be no isolated selves' (Coser 1971:306). It is composed of three principles:

1. the imagination of our appearance to the other person
2. the imagination of his judgement of that appearance
3. some sort of self-feeling, such as pride or mortification (ibid.).

Adhering to the above principles, I would like to locate diasporic Indians like Naipaul in Trinidad's colonized set-up. By virtue of their appearance and their 'life-world', they knew that they differed from the others inhabiting the same geographical space. One was conscious of his social stature not just in the eyes of the Whites but also the Blacks. Memories cherished by members of the diaspora give rise to nostalgia among them. If one did not have memories about the 'home' left behind and the origin of one's roots, the angst of being in a diaspora would never be felt. Therefore this emphasizes the nuances of memories in Naipaul's life. Naipaul was led to his writings by his memory, and his writings lead us to the 'life-world' of diasporic Indians.

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Nexus of Migration in Children's Literature: Displacement, Memory and Grief in Kirsty Murray's *Bridie's Fire*

SHYAMA SASIDHARAN

Abstract

Kristy Murray is an Australian writer who writes for children with a special focus on history. She says that by intertwining history with fiction she was able to connect voices and stories that connect people across time. Bridie's fire is a historical novel based on the fact that over 4000 girls were shipped out to Australia between 1848 and 1850 as a part of an orphan scheme, most of the girls were victims of the Irish famine. This novel probes into the predicament of these new migrant children who were transported to Australia and how migration affected their lives. This paper discusses the problem of child migration and its nuances. Children's literature which is shifting to new paradigms in the 21st century is becoming more and more inclusive and representative. Orphan characters are not a new aspect of children's literature, writers often make the central character an orphan in order to give a certain degree of independence in action. But when it comes to migration, and here Murray is juxtaposing fact with fiction, the child displaced to a new country is more affected by loss of filial security and warmth. This paper discusses different aspects of child migration and how it is represented by a contemporary writer like Murray. This book is more like a 'site of memory' for descendants of these children and all other children who migrated to Australia during colonial times. The paper probes into the problem around the representation of migration, especially the migration of children to Australia during the 1840s. It looks into different aspects of displacement and how children clutch into memories that they carried off to a new country. The paper will connect displacement, memory and

grief as motifs in children's literature and how contemporary writers acknowledge history using these motifs.

Keywords: Children's Literature, Child Immigrants, Potato Famine, Grief of Migration, Displacement, Memory.

Introduction

History is generally understood, not as objective truth but from a historian's perspective. Therefore, there could be scope for revision in different nuances of political or cultural aspects narrated by historians. A historical novelist challenges mainstream history by either changing the perspective through alternative history or rendering the past from marginal positions. Consequently, sub-genres like time slips, historiographic metafiction, conspiracy fiction, and alternative histories sprouted in literature. Contemporary Australian children's historical novel is thus re-visioning its mainstream history in two ways: Firstly, making indigenous literature inclusive and diverse. Secondly, by foregrounding the subsumed history. Contemporary Australian children's writer, Kirsty Murray, writes for children with a particular focus on history. Her series *Children of the Wind* portrays child migration to Australia during the 1840s and moves up to contemporary times, where these immigrants' descendants are settled. Murray's *Children of the Wind* is an Irish-Australian saga covering 150 years of Australian history as the quartet begins from the early 1840s and moves up to present times. As readers' intended age falls approximately between 10 to 14, this historical quartet can be categorized as historical novels for young adults (Beyer 2014:174).

 Bridie's Fire is the first among the quartets and depicts Bridie, an Irish Orphan, transported to Australia as part of the Grey Orphan Scheme, supported by the government. This migration from Ireland was of 'morally pure' girls from Ireland's workhouses. The scheme ended around 1850 because

Australian society became discontented with the 'type' of girls being sent out and prejudice against Catholics also demanded a stop to the flow of migrants. The novel projects the predicament of these children in the new land and what they endured. Their displacement and consequent dissonance are compromised with memory and grief. Grief and memory act as resistance against misery and segregation. Children make their grief and memory a medium to enliven the childhood memories of their homeland. The author carefully constructs an entwined thread of displacement, memory, and grief in the historical reality of prejudice against Irish Catholic immigrants. The paper analyses the theme and motif of displacement by looking at Bridie's character and the consequent grief that Bridie undergoes. The paper further analyses how the author employs motifs like displacement, Home, memory and grief as substantiating elements to the theme of migration.

Displacement

Displacement is the relocation process where various factors place the subject into an entirely different space or place. In this sense, all migration is displacement, but not all displacement is migration. In Murray's series, there is displacement and migration, and for the children, both are equally painful. Displacement plays a major role in Bridie's life, who is the protagonist in the novel. This transports her into different spaces like the workhouse, domestic space, theatre, and goldfield make Bridie's sense of belonging vary in degrees. She feels at home only with the theatre group, and it is at that moment, that she accepts Australia as her home. Art appeals to everyone universally, and art has no boundaries or nationality, so Bridie finally accepts Australia as her home which is evident when she finally says she would rather be under this sky, with Tom (Murray:250). Her belongingness

is also evident when she says, "we're making something special in this place that's new and fine and worth fighting for" (Murray:249). Tom's presence replaces Brando's (Birdie's brother) void and makes her feel at home under the strange sky in a strange land.

Migration is the phenomenon of moving from one place to another. It includes moving from rural to urban spaces and vice-versa. Many push and pull factors have acted as a catalyst for migration throughout the history of humankind. Push and pull factors are intricate components as the migrants impact both their homeland and the host country. They become emigrants in their homeland and immigrants in the host land. In Bridie O'Connor's case, the push factor was the famine, and the pull factor was the economic stability provided by the host country. Irish potato famine wreaked havoc in Ireland from 1845 to 1849, spreading blight, killing the population, and making the citizens refugees. Many fled to America, Canada, and Australia during the hard times. The famine further increased the rivalry between England and Ireland and boosted Irish nationalism and republicanism in Ireland. In the context of famine, Bridie becomes an emigrant. She knew England's role in worsening hunger. Seamus one night talks with his friend Mick that "good butter and oats and the best Ireland has to offer is loaded onto boats bound for England" (Murray:11). Bridie and Brandon also see ships loaded with grains ready to leave for England, "grains were loaded on board ships bound for England. Everywhere she looked there were soldiers standing guard over the food supplies" (Murray:46). Bridie always wanted to settle in Ireland, in her silver and golden house as fantasized, whereas Brandon, her younger brother, cherishes going to America like their Uncle Liam. In the beginning, moving out of the country is considered an omen; it is evident when their mother sings the song of a beautiful girl's beloved gone to America and was never heard from again

(Murray: 6). The warmth of home and the feeling of familial bonding is soon shattered with the arrival of hunger. Chapter 4 begins with the desolate Ballyickeen, barren land where all the glory is gone. Bridie's father had been drowned in the sea and was washed ashore. There was nothing to pull the family back in Dunquin. Almost everyone was dead; the entire land smelled of death, misery, and hunger. So, Bridie leaves their home for Dingle where, unfortunately, she loses both, her mother and little brother Paddy on the way. Bridie and Brandon somehow end up in a workhouse in Tralee. From the workhouse, Bridie is taken to Australia as a part of the Earl Grey Orphan Scheme, where the girls are taken as domestic maids or labourers.

She is continuously displaced from her home to the workhouse to domestic Skivvy to the goldfield to the theatre group; a series of displacements within a short span of time. With each displacement, she confronts different kinds of segregation and bigotries. Far from home in Dingle, her displacement and resultant unfamiliarity do not involve landscape or fauna. However, when she migrated to Australia, even the smell felt unfamiliar to her. She says, "The new world was full of strange new smells" (Murray:110). Bridie O' Connor, who wanted to be in Ireland, sets out to the new land. She always despised the idea of migration, and this scorn is apparent when Brandon persuades her to board a ship bound to America; she says, "Those ships, you know what they call them? They call them coffin ships" (Murray:46). It is at this moment for the first time, Bridie sees the pain of leaving her homeland. Further along the quay, she saw people wailing and crying from ships with grieving relatives left behind. Bridie saw a lady crying on her knees, "it was as if death was all around them, crying out for children who were sailing to America, knowing that would be the last she'd see of them" (Murray:46). Such was the grief in bidding farewell to the homeland.

Home

Bridie's concept of home was always where her family was, she didn't feel like leaving her house when she set out to Dingle because her family was with her. Her concept of home was where she was with her brother Brandon, and their togetherness was her home because when she describes her fancy home, which is half "silver and gold" she makes it very plain that "And you and me, we'll live there together forever"(Murray: 7). Until she parts with Brandon, she never spoke about missing home or does not grieve the lost home. Before leaving for Australia, Bridie sneaks into the boys' section of the warehouse to bid farewell to her brother. Bridie somehow consoles Brandon, and she says, "I'll get to the New World and then I'll send for you" and promises that they can build their home in Australia (Murray: 72). With immense pain, Brandon wonders at what Bridie says because she was the one who always stood against migrating to America. But now she had no choice as she is forced by workhouse authority to be a part of assisted migration.

The author vividly portrays the voyage of orphan girls to Australia and their pain in departure. Unlike the ship Brandon and Bridie saw last time, there was nobody to wail for them as most of them were orphans. The emigrants had left a tie in the homeland in the form of relatives but Bridie had none, except her brother. Some girls wept as Ireland disappeared from view, but most of them were numb because the thought of home gave them a cramp in their stomach, the pain of death, hunger, and misery. The author describes their departure:

> Hundreds of girls milled about on the wharves, all in almost identical clothes. Further along the docks, some women were keening for their departing families. There was no one to keen Bridie O' Connor leaving Ireland, no one to call her name and bind her heart to the old world,

nor was there for any of the other orphan girls (Murray 2003:74).

After a few days of leaving Ireland, girls open their boxes and belongings handed over by the matron as a part of propriety. Girls took out their things for airing, and they lovingly fondled things they took with them. Margaret, an orphan, sat holding her mother's locket with tears she said, "Ah, but it's a harsh thing to be sent away from your own loved country and all your own folk"(Murray 2003:85). Soon all the girls joined her wailing, each wringing her hand. Bridie was numb; when she opened her box there were so many things inside but "she felt no connection to any of them" (ibid). She wonders at her numbness, for her things inside the box felt, "crisp and unfamiliar. There was nothing of her family, no memento from her own home, not one thing that made her soul yearn for her old life. Perhaps if they would let her keep her wooden spoon, or if she'd thought to cut a lock of Brandon's hair, then the box would stir some feeling" (ibid). Often, the concrete things or sites evoke memory and are indispensable for sustaining the memory. Bridie had no such objects to carry with her and the only thing she carried was her brother's memory. For Bridie, as discussed earlier, the concept of home and her brother Brandon are mutually inclusive, and it is this intersection where she finds her real belongingness. Throughout her journey, she tries to fill Brandon's void by filling it with Caitlin, then Gilbert, and then Tom. Her first attempt to recreate her home in Australia begins with her intimate relationship with Caitlin. Caitlin promised that they together would have a home where they can invite Brandon, but Caitlin left when her indenture got ready. When Caitlin left, Bridie felt loneliest. Caitlin's promise helped her look forward, and the thought made her happy that one day she will have a home of her own together with Caitlin and Brandon, a small home of their own in Australia. She wished to recreate a miniature Ireland in

Australia as her need to clutch to the memories was indispensable to sustain an imaginary tie with her homeland.

There was a tendency to eulogize Australia as the home for those who were ready to work hard. Unlike America or Canada, Australia was portrayed as the most exotic and challenging land. Settlers saw the bushy landscape as alien, and their despair upon settlement is evident in the works like *The Conquering Bush* when the author says, "The bush is sad, heavy, despairing……terrible for a year" (Dyson 1998:46). This exoticization was the general tendency during the 19th century. There was the genre of emigration literature written to persuade and motivate people to migrate to Australia, for instance, *The Gilpins and Their Fortunes* (1864), written by William Kingston, falls under this category (Nimon 2005). In *Bridie's Fire*, the author vividly depicts such popular tendencies during those times that reinforced the History of retold's historicity. Caitlin, a friend of Bridie, had positive hope of migrating to Australia, and it is evident when she says, "When we get to the colony, I tell you, girl, things will be good for us" (Murray 2003:77).

Memory and Grief

Memory and grief are treated as collocation, and it is the grief that stimulates memory in Bridie. Through grief, she connects herself to her homeland, so grief becomes a motif that supports the central theme- migration. Grief might be an essential facet of most displacement, especially in children who are more vulnerable to unfamiliar environments. C M Parkes (1965) states that grief is completed in four stages: numbness, yearning, searching, disorganization and despair, and reorganization (Parkes1965). It is difficult to move on to the last stage as it involves accepting what is lost. Numbness is when the subject feels that loss is not real and struggles to accept reality. Yearning is the phase in which we try to identify

the loss in other things. We replace the loss with something else, just like compensation. Despair is what follows, and we may feel like things will never improve. Parkes notes that if we do not progress through this phase, we may be consumed by anger and depression, and our lives will remain negative. Lista Williams in "Before the Five Stages were the FOUR Stages of Grief" states, Reorganization and recovery is the phase in which grief subsides to the hidden part of our brain. Grief will not go away, but its impact would be negligible compared to other stages (Williams 28 August 2013). Bridie's grieving can be analysed by these four stages of grieving as stated by C M Parkes in the process of grieving. The first stage of numbness hits her when she sails to a new land with other orphan girls on the ship. After a few days of leaving Ireland, girls open their boxes and belongings handed over by the matron as a part of propriety. Girls took out their things for airing, and they lovingly fondled things they took with them. Margaret, an orphan, sat holding her mother's locket with tears and she felt the despair of being forced away from her own country. But Bridie was numb and she couldn't cry. Yearning for her homeland approximates her yearning for her younger brother Brandon. She becomes close with Gilbert to fill the void left by Brandon. Her grief is tackled with strong identification of loss. When Gilbert leaves her, she feels broken and thus enters the despair stage where she realises that things would never be the same. Her attachment or effort to make an emotional attachment to Gilbert is a way of recreating Brandon, whom she missed. Moreover, finally, the recovery happens when she ends up in the theatre group, where art fills the void of loss.

Conclusion

Murray's work thus maps the migration of children to Australia and the consequent grief they endure. The literature on migration in Australia is a site of memory for immigrants and

their descendants. For displaced child migrants, grief was a way of retaining their memory of their homeland. When they mourn over what they lost, they are continuously in touch with their homeland's memories. Thus grief and memory are the medium through which they try to establish a link with their native place. Murray in *Children of the Wind* attempts to form a confluence of displacement, memory, and grief. The displacement of Irish children and the memory they carried to new shores are represented in the novel. Thus the novel itself becomes a 'site of memory' for Irish descendants in Australia. The history of their displacement and the memory that they carried, resonates throughout the novel. As the intended audience is children, it helps young readers to acknowledge their past. In the case of Irish-Australians, this acknowledgement from the younger generation is crucial because the Irish were depicted as 'the wild colonial boy' in people's collective minds. In addition, Murray critically analyses the various ways in which the migrants handle the crisis of displacement from their homeland through memory and grief.

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Post-Partition Migration and Transgenerational Trauma: A Study of "Folie à Deux" in Anirudh Kala's *The Unsafe Asylum: Stories of Partition and Madness*

MIR AHAMMAD ALI

Abstract

Recent exploration in the field of 'Migration Studies' tends to uncover the psychological depths of the trauma of the migrants. The act of readjustment of the dislocated refugees in an entirely new geopolitical space is never an easy and unproblematic one. Some of the involuntary migrants have to suffer bouts of panic attacks, fear psychosis, and an acute sense of dislocation which lead to pathological disorders. This new interface between 'Migration' and 'Mental Health' is a space which requires to be explored. The Partition of India left some 15 million people homeless and was undoubtedly the largest mass migration in human history. A few well-known Indian psychiatrists like Sanjeev Jain and Alok Sarin observe that the trauma in some partition victims leads to certain post-traumatic stress disorders (PTSD) and in some cases, this trauma-induced pathology can pass on to the next generation/s epigenetically. This can be termed as transgenerational/ intergenerational trauma. Anirudh Kala's very recently released monumental text, The Unsafe Asylum: Stories of Partition and Madness (2018), deals with these issues. This collection of interlinking short stories by the famous Indian psychiatrist from Ludhiana, Punjab opens up new horizons of Migration Studies where the victims are seen to be troubled by the inner psychological trauma. At times, the buried trauma haunts them many years after the actual Partition took place and as they 're-experience' the past traumatic events, they become disturbed mentally and physically. A good number of characters in this anthology like Rulda and Fattu, Iqbal Junaid Hussain's son Asif in the story "No Forgiveness Necessary",

Prakash Singh Kohli in "Belly Button", Harpreet Cheema/Firdaus in "Sits's Bus", Venky in "Partitioning Madness" suffer from trauma-induced pathological disorders. In another story "Folie à Deux", the fear psychosis of an unnamed female narrator is transferred to her three offspring, which is 'transgenerational' in nature. This paper seeks to engage in a psychoanalytic exploration of the transgenerational transmission of the trauma of the post-partition migrants. It also tries to analyse the "Folie à Deux" syndrome in the titular story and to see how the delusional disorder of a partition victim is shared by her offspring.

Keywords: Trauma-induced Pathology, Madness and Partition, Folie à Deux syndrome, Transgenerational Trauma, Posttraumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), Trauma Studies, Partition Studies.

I

"There has almost never been a society which has not experienced migration in some form or the other, and currently no such society exists."

– Levent Küey

Levent Kuey rightly pointed out that there had hardly been any society that had never faced migration in one way or the other. What Kuey wanted to suggest is that "Migration has been a collective experience for humankind throughout history."[1] Questions generally arise then how to study this human migration? Over the last few decades, there is invariably an increase in scholarship in the field of Migration Studies. The conventional approaches to Migration Studies

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[1] Levent Küey pointed out the traumatic aftereffects of migration in his essay "Trauma and Migration: The Role of Stigma" in *Trauma and Migration: Cultural Factors in the Diagnosis and Treatment of Traumatised Immigrants*.

also underwent a momentous change over time. The traditional approaches primarily sought to understand and analyse the causes, nature and flows of migration. Recent scholarship, on the other hand, tends to focus more on the 'human dimension'[2] of migration and tries to listen to the voices of affected ones from beneath which had long been silenced. How do common people suffer due to involuntary or forced migration? How do the migrants readjust themselves in a new space when they are forcibly relocated? What are the psychosocial effects of migration upon its victims? What roles does the buried memory play in their lives? Do the memories of their traumatic pasts affect their present situation? Can trauma-induced pathology be transmitted to the next generation? There are several other questions like the ones mentioned above that deserve critical attention in this regard. This paper aims to explore such issues.

Recent exploration in the field of 'Migration Studies'[3] tends to uncover the psychological depths of the trauma of the migrants. The act of readjustment of the dislocated refugees in an entirely new geopolitical space is never an easy and unproblematic one. Some of the involuntary migrants have to suffer bouts of panic attacks, fear psychosis, and an acute sense of dislocation, leading them to certain pathological disorders

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[2] Ian Talbot talked about the 'human dimension' of post-partition forced migration in his essay, "A Tale of Two Cities: The Aftermath of Partition for Lahore and Amritsar 1947-1957." *Modern Asian Studies*, vol. 41, no. 1, 2007, pp. 151–185. *JSTOR*, www.jstor.org/stable/4132347. p. 153

[3] The psychological effects of migration, especially the traumatisation of the migrants from a psychoanalytical point of view, have been discussed in greater detail in two recently published books. Interested readers may look at them. *Trauma and Migration Cultural Factors in the Diagnosis and Treatment of Traumatised Immigrants*. Ed. by Meryam Schouler-Ocak. Switzerland: Springer, 2015 and *Migration Trauma, Culture, and Finding the Psychological Home Within: Views From British Object Relations Theory* by Grace P. Conroy, London: Rowman and Littlefield, 2016.

such as madness, chronic depression, and behavioural disorders obsessive compulsion, delusion, paranoia and so on. This new interface between Migration and Mental Health, or more specifically, between Migration-induced Trauma and Literary Fiction is a space which I would like to explore in this essay. Hence, the prime focus would be on the post-partition migration that had affected millions' lives.

The Partition of India left some fifteen million people homeless and is possibly the largest mass migration in human history. The Radcliffe Line had carved a deep scar not only on the Indian Territory but also on the minds of millions. Large *kafila*s[4] of dislocated refugees began to cross the new border due to the fear of persecution. After their involuntary migration, they found themselves usually on the wrong side of the border. The territorial politics of the nation-state made them refugees which often led them to traumatic moorings. Such unprecedented, life-threatening, disturbing events evoke trauma in the victims and this continues to haunt them later in their lives. Its manifestations can be seen in the victim's psychological and behavioural disorders in their developmental years.

Some well-known Indian psychiatrists like Sanjeev Jain of NIMHANS, Bengaluru and Alok Sarin of SBISR, New Delhi, observed that the trauma experienced by the partition victims leads to certain post-traumatic stress disorders (PTSD) and in some cases, this trauma-induced pathology can pass onto the next generation/s epigenetically. This can be termed as 'transgenerational/intergenerational trauma'[5] in which different types of psychic disorders can be found in their behaviour. For

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[4] Large scale convoy or mass procession.
[5] The very idea of 'transgenerational/ intergenerational trauma' was popularised by several child trauma researchers like Byron Egeland, Inge Bretherton, and Daniel Schechter around 1990s.

example, long-term depression, disruptive thoughts, anxiety, amnesia, insomnia, hallucination and delusions, dissociative identity disorder, self-annihilation and suicidal tendency are some of the well-known symptoms of Post Traumatic State Disorders (PTSD) that have been found in some post-partition migrants. The classic example of this kind of victim, suffering from territorial anxiety is Saadat Hasan Manto's protagonist Bhisan Singh in "Toba Tek Sing."[6] In this story, Bhisan Singh is not merely a fictional lunatic but represents thousands of other lunatics of the time who suffer from post-partition stress disorders.

Alongside Manto's story, there are a few more narratives which represent this psychological aspect of migration caused by partition. Very recently, Anirudh Kala's monumental text, *The Unsafe Asylum: Stories of Partition and Madness* (2018) deals with some of the above-highlighted issues. For example, Anirudh Kala's *The Unsafe Asylum* opens up new horizons of Migration Studies where the victims are seen to be troubled by the inner psychological trauma. It can considerably be categorised as a vital specimen of 'Trauma Fiction.'[7], a relatively new genre or an interdisciplinary field of engagement with literary fictions taking both trauma studies and literary texts together. Anne Whitehead rightly points out that "Trauma fiction overlaps with and borrows from both postmodern and postcolonial fiction in its self-conscious deployment of stylistic devices as modes of reflection or critique" (Whitehead 2004:3). Thinking from this perspective, Kala's postcolonial text could be seen as a critique of the territorial politics responsible for such a large-scale human

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[6] Find the story written by Saadat Hasan Manto, pp. 9-15, in the anthology *Bitter Fruit: The Very Best of Saadat Hasan Manto*. Trans. & ed. Khalid Hasan. New Delhi: Penguin Books India, 2008. Print.

[7] Interested readers may look at Anne Whitehead. *Trauma Fiction*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2004.

migration. A good number of characters in this anthology like Rulda and Fattu, Iqbal Junaid Hussain's son Asif in the story "No Forgiveness Necessary", Prakash Singh Kohli in "Belly Button", Harpreet Cheema/Firdaus in "Sita's Bus", and Venky in "Partitioning Madness" suffer from trauma-induced pathological disorders. In another story "Folie à Deux", the fear psychosis of an unnamed female narrator is transferred to her three children, which is transgenerational in nature. Dr Kala's profession as a Ludhiana-based psychiatrist who had encountered a good number of patients-cum-victims of post-partition violence and migration helped him in shaping these stories of madness and maladies. Dr Kala's own family had to migrate from Kala Shah Kaku, a village in Sheikharpura (now in Pakistan) to Ludhiana in December 1947. In one of his interviews, Anirudh Kala mentions,

> Mental health is still not a priority in our country, so we can imagine how things would have been 70 years ago. What people went through is so painful that they fail even to describe it. They have chosen to suppress it. Numbness follows when the pain gets unbearable. People who went through this great tragedy decided to bury their feelings and fears, for it was just too painful to revisit. The impact of the partition on people's mental health is the least talked about aspect of this tragedy.[8]

The characters in this trauma fiction are representative of the millions of actual migrants who had suffered from, what Dominica LaCapra (1999) called, 'founding trauma', a unique

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[8] See the reporting "Partition of the Minds" by Divya Goyal published on December 1, 2019 published in *The Indian Express*.
https://indianexpress.com/article/lifestyle/books/partition-of-the-minds-anirudh-kala-the-unsafe-asylum-stories-of-partition-and-madness-5291163/

sort of trauma, (either situational[9] or historical[10]) "that paradoxically becomes the basis for collective and/or personal identity."[11] In recent times, several geneticists like Nathaniel Vincent Mohatt, Azure B. Thompson and Nghi D. Thai explored that this situational or historical trauma can travel to the survivors' offspring. So, I intend to examine in my paper the transgenerational transmission of trauma among the partition victims by closely analysing the text itself.

II

According to *The International Dictionary of Psychoanalysis*, trauma essentially refers to certain horrific events of "violence and suddenness" that lead the victims to an "inflow of excitation" to such an extent that it "stuns the subject" (Alain De Mijola 2005:1800). There has always been a significant debate among psychoanalysts and trauma theorists regarding the transgenerational transmission of trauma. Can trauma be transmitted to the offspring of the victims? What are the

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[9] Trauma arising out of a particular situation or phenomena, whether natural or artificially created can be termed 'Situational Trauma'. Epidemic natural disaster, catastrophic war, sexual abuse, routine violence, major accidents etc. could give birth to situational trauma.

[10] Originated with the study of Holocaust survivals, the 'Historical Trauma' refers to "the complex and collective trauma experienced over time and across generations by a group of people who share an identity, affiliation, or circumstance". (Nathaniel Vincent Mohatt, Azure B. Thompson, Nghi D. Thai, and Jacob Kraemer Tebes). This trauma can be transmitted across generations. For more information, see the article "Historical trauma as public narrative: A conceptual review of how history impacts present-day health" by Nathaniel Vincent Mohatt, Azure B. Thompson, Nghi D. Thai, and Jacob Kraemer Tebes, 2014. Published in *Social Science & Medicine*. 106: 128–136. Published online 2014 Jan 31. DOI: 10.1016/j.socscimed.2014.01.043. Weblink: https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4001826/

[11] See p. 724 of LaCapra, Dominick, 1999. "Trauma, Absence, Loss." *Critical Inquiry*, Volume 25(4), pp. 696–727. *JSTOR*, www.jstor.org/stable/1344100.

mechanisms for doing so? Or more specifically, can trauma be intergenerational or transgenerational? A small number of trauma theorists have recently explored that a certain kind of trauma is "subtle but pervasive"[12] and can be transmitted from its direct victim/s to the later generation/s of trauma survivors. This could be termed as transgenerational trauma or intergenerational trauma. Studies related to this field are relatively new. Ronald M Doctor and Frank N Shiromoto have rightly pointed out in their *The Encyclopedia of Trauma and Traumatic Stress Disorders* that "This type of trauma occurs in children of traumatised individuals, but it is usually subliminal or less obvious than trauma due to a firsthand experience." (Doctor & Shiromoto 2009:276)

Although Cathy Caruth has largely popularised the discipline of 'Trauma Studies'[13], there are several other trauma theorists who have popularised the idea of transgenerational trauma. Dr Vivian Rakoff first studied the transgenerational transmission of trauma[14] while working at the Jewish General Hospital in Montreal in the case of some Brazilian offspring of Holocaust survivors (OHS) (Braga 2012:134). Soon this approach attracted global attention and many trauma theorists tried to link it with the racial discrimination against African Americans. Further, trauma theorists continued linking this with the World War veterans, Vietnam War veterans, the Armenians survivors of Turks attacks, survivors of the Atomic

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[12] See Ronald M Doctor and Frank N Shiromoto, 2009. *The Encyclopedia of Trauma and Traumatic Stress Disorders*. New York: *Facts on File Library of Health & Living*, P. 276

[13] See the book by Cathy Caruth, 2016. *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative, and History*. Johns Hopkins University Press.

[14] For more details see Braga, L.L., Mello, M.F. & Fiks, J.P. Transgenerational transmission of trauma and resilience: a qualitative study with Brazilian offspring of Holocaust survivors. *BMC Psychiatry* 12, 134 (2012) DOI:10.1186/1471-244X-12-134

bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki by the US, and Cambodian and Iraqi victims of war, 9/11 terror survivors and so on. Later on, some child trauma theorists like Byron Egeland, Inge Bretherton, and Daniel Schechter have advanced the idea of transgenerational trauma, based on the findings and clinical observations of Selma Fraiberg.[15]

Under the umbrella of Transgenerational Trauma, one significant disorder is 'shared delusional disorder', a psychiatric syndrome generally known as 'Folie à deux'. In this type of disorder, the delusion or hallucinations caused by a certain traumatic event is transmitted to the next generation/s and somewhere the offspring 'shares' his/her post-traumatic disarray. Two French psychiatrists, Charles Lasègue and Jean-Pierre Falret first coined the term 'Folie à deux', and conceptualised it as "a relatively rare syndrome that has long since attracted much clinical attention."[16] According to The ICD-10 Classification of Mental and Behavioural Disorders[17], this syndrome is generally known as 'Induced delusional disorder'; whereas the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders 4 (DSM IV)[18] terms it as 'Shared psychotic disorder.'[11]

This is no less evident in our present discussion of the story, "Folie à Deux" by Anirudh Kala in *The Unsafe Asylum: Stories of Partition and Madness* (2018). The story rightly chronicles the trauma-induced psychopathology of an unnamed woman, a post-partition migrant, whose PTSD is transmitted epigenetically to her offspring. Her delusional disorder is

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[15] Her monumental work "Ghosts in the Nursery" is the foundational text of trans/intergenerational trauma.

[16] Arnone, Danilo et al, 2006. The Nosological Significance of Folie à Deux: A Review of the Literature. *Annals of General Psychiatry*, Vol. 5(11). DOI:10.1186/1744-859X-5-11

[17] , World Health Organization.

[18] The standard American Psychiatric Association's criteria.

somewhat shared by her children who suffer recurring panic attacks, chronic suicidal tendencies, and schizophrenic aberrations of their mother.

The story very minutely portrays a couple who had forcibly migrated from Multan, Pakistan to Patiala, Punjab in 1948. The migrant woman, later on, became a patient of Dr Kohli. The first panic attack of its kind was felt immediately after she had migrated from Multan. Such sort of complex stress disorder arising out of a particular situation can be termed as situational trauma. All the significant symptoms of paranoid schizophrenia-like auditory hallucination, paranoia, neurobiological dysfunction of the brain, and delusion could be seen in the patient. She could hear the auditory hallucination of the "whisperings of a mob" (113) of some "bearded" men from a rival community threatening to "carve her to pieces" and "amputate her breasts". In an utter sense of paranoid schizophrenia, she "ran out into the rain" to avoid her persecutors. Later on, she was taken to an exorcist, and it is with the help of certain herbs as part of his treatment, that she began to recover slowly in the next few months. This continued for the next twenty years.

Meanwhile, she had lost her husband and given birth to three children. Suddenly a second attack, though more severe followed. She suffered from a delusion that "there was another person sleeping inside her" (114). The woman then began to suspect each and everyone close to her, and she used to hear confused noises which did not exist in reality. The trauma returned in the form of delusional disorder and to her alternative reality, that not only she, but her daughters too were under the threat of sexual assault. She could see some men "threatened to rape" her daughters because "they have grown up nicely" (114). Her pathological neurosis reached its

culmination when she began to hide from her own family in an utter paranoid psychosis.

Suddenly, one night as a certain wedding procession was marching on the street nearby with firecrackers, a music band and dholwallas[19] the woman had another panic attack. She had developed a delusion that somebody was approaching to capture her and other members of the family and she started shouting that some attackers "were battering down the front door and shots were being fired" (116). One could easily guess the past traumatic events of the partition (like sexual assault) that the woman might have undergone. The fear psychosis returned to her time and again through different symbolic structures, and sometimes suicide attempts were followed. Finally, in utter desperation and a confused delusional state, she jumped over the roof of her house to death. This incident of her suicide happened to be another source of trauma for the rest of the family members. Many of the traumatic traits of the Folie imposée (the primary inducer) could be seen to have transferred to her offspring, who are the secondary receptor. This phenomenon has its explanation in the discipline of Trauma Studies. One may be reminded of Cathy Caruth's notion of trauma as a "profound crisis of history."[20] According to Caruth,

> If PTSD must be understood as a pathological symptom, then it is not so much a symptom of the unconscious, as it is a symptom of history. The traumatised, we might say, carry an impossible history within them, or they become themselves the symptom of a history that they cannot entirely possess (Caruth 1995:5).

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[19] Drummers that play the drum at specific occasions
[20] See Anne Whitehead p. 5

It is evident in the text itself that the pathological symptoms seen in the woman protagonist are not merely products of the disturbed psyche/"unconscious" instead, they are the products of the troubled history, and it is in this way, that the traumatised subject, here, the victimised woman became a symptom of a history that she cannot entirely possess. The distressing symptoms of the troubled history could be located within her and in her progeny later on.

III

The title "Folie à Deux" actually means shared delusional disorder. I shall now discuss how the mother's delusional disorder is shared by her offspring transgenerationally in the second half of the story. The story relates to a similar sort of panic attack in the character of Om (the only boy in the family) who after his mother's death unexpectedly began to behave "very strange" (117). Some schizophrenic disorders like the auditory hallucinations of hearing the horrible murmurings like her mother used to could be seen in him. His condition deteriorated drastically, and he was taken to the mental hospital by his elder sister to be investigated by Dr. Kohli.

The common symptoms that his mother had been suffering from could be traced in him and a similar sort of delusion of the bearded men with green armbands and their sickles coming to capture him could be seen in him. The auditory hallucinations of confused and chaotic murmurings that he heard were epigenetically transmitted from his mother. It could be marked out when he "plugged his ears with his fingers, and seemed baffled that this did not muffle the obscenities" (117-118), the same way his mother did. The major disorders of his mother like delusion, hallucination, and paranoia came unto him. On one of his bus trips, he found (in his alternate reality) that all the passengers inside the bus turned to be ISI agents and were planning to detain him. This repetitive compulsion

was inherited from the mother that resurfaced at a different symbolic level. Here the ISI agents represent the other for whom her mother had developed a phobia. Om believed in his 'alternate reality' that the ISI agents jeered at his "manliness" (119) and in utter delusion, he considered that his mind was being controlled by "a man named Jeevanditta who had been dead for two hundred years but worked through a proxy in Pakistan" (120). Her mother's fear of "Muslims with sickles" (120) had resurfaced as the fear of ISI in Om. Later he stayed there in the hospital for nearly a month and with heavy doses of sedative, slowly began to recover.

IV

After Om, the story takes us to Chitra, the youngest daughter of the family, who suddenly began to behave "oddly, over and above her regular fiery temper" (121). Somewhere she also began to share the similar sort of malady of her mother much like Om. Like her mother, she also suffered from obsessive-compulsive disorder and visualised an 'alternate reality'. Like her mother, Chitra began to believe that a 'Mussalman' doctor had killed her mother. We can see pretty clearly how a similar kind of traumatic disorder re-emerged at a different symbolic level. The bouts of a panic attack and depression, delusion disorder, anxiety and social withdrawal of Chitra and Om were analogues to each other that they have primarily derived from their mother. It became challenging for their elder sister to continue the family as she is the only earning member in the house and the only sane person.

Then, the story rapidly takes us to Dr. Kohli's chamber, who was busy writing an abstract of a paper for his next conference. Suddenly, the elder sister of the house came with her "hair open and dupatta trailing, sobbing, loudly" (123). Dr. Kohli was shocked by her abrupt appearance of this kind. His initial thought was that perhaps Om had committed suicide. But the

condition was much more gruesome and pathetic than he could imagine. The girl shouted at Dr. Kohli and accused him saying,

> Om and Chitra are not mentally ill, nor was my mother. There are real bearded Mussalman men out there, hundreds of them, carrying swords, shouting that they will kill us. I [the elder sister said] heard them! They can become small like Lilliputians, and crawl through the ventilators. *I saw them. You* [Dr. Kohli] *bastard! You have been pumping drugs into my brother and sister. You are on their side. You killed my mother too. You are a psycho yourself a killer* (123). [Emphases mine]

It took no time for Dr. Kohli to understand that the only remaining sane family member was also affected by the transgenerational trauma. She also, much like others, began to believe in an alternate reality. In her delusional state, she held that Dr. Prakash Kohli was responsible for the family's mishap. To her, Dr. Kohli was one of the agents or perpetrators of violence, who belonged to the other side. Therefore, the ending is very pathetic and alarming because the sickness did not spare even the elder sister who took care of her siblings after their parents' death. Her delusions of "real bearded mussalman men out there, hundreds of them, carrying swords, shouting" (123) were akin to those of her mother, Chitra and Om. She also feared that her family would be exterminated by the Mussalman men. To her, Dr. Prakash turned ultimately to be a psycho and a killer, an 'other' from the rival community. Not only that, she even accused Dr. Kohli of sexual assault. The story ends with the bitter tears of Dr. Kohli due to his long term engagement with this family. Professional detachment is indeed a must for a psychiatrist. But here, in this case, he could not maintain detachment. Dr Prakash Kohli was just wondering how the transgenerational trauma and its resultant shared delusional disorder arising out of post-partition

migration affected the entire family. The concluding remarks of Dr Kohli are worth noting:

> For a long time, I sat dazed. Then simply put my head down on the table and cried. The last time I had cried was when my father had gone out and got himself killed by a stray bullet. It was a similar blazing afternoon (123-124).

Thus, the transgenerational transmission of trauma and its associated delusional disorder gripped the entire family.

V

The psychological effects of partition-induced trauma upon the forced/involuntary migrants can be seen in the story. The text rightly captures how buried/repressed memory resurfaces in various pathological behaviours of the victims, and those symptoms can recur in their offspring. It has its own clue/explanation in the scientific discipline of 'Epigenetics'. Epigenetics actually talks about how trauma generally is transmitted via genes inter/transgenerationally. Renowned psychologist, N. Kellerman, who had worked extensively with the children of Holocaust Trauma survivors notes that trauma can be transmitted by the "parent's child-rearing behaviour.[21] Here, Kellerman wanted to suggest that through the interaction between a child (trauma receptor) and the parents (trauma inducer), the trauma and its resultant psychosis may be transferred epigenetically.[22] The traumatic disorders of an

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[21] Interested readers can look at the article by N. Kellerman, 2013. Epigenetic Transmission of Holocaust Trauma. *The Israel Journal of Psychiatry and Related Sciences*, 50(1), pp 33-39.
[22] Shannon Sullivan has done groundbreaking research in this field published in an essay called "Inheriting Racist Disparities in Health: Epigenetics and the Transgenerational Effects of White Racism." The article is published in *Critical Philosophy of Race*, vol. 1, no. 2, 2013, pp. 190–218.

individual usually disrupt cellular function. According to Kellerman, it is the traumatic environment of the inducer to which the offspring is/are exposed, and it is in this process the germ cell of the source agent could be transmitted to the epigenomes of the offspring.

A handful of other geneticists like Supratim Choudhuri, Miguel Almeida, António Miguel de Jesus, Antonio Rene and others have very recently discovered one such non-coding RNA[23], which they think, functions in the transmission of transgenerational trauma via epigenetic mechanisms. Again, a few other researchers like Rachel Yehuda and Amy Lehrner conjecture only in 2018 that the offspring's early exposure to the traumatic environment especially, at the post-natal period, actually changes the methylation patterns, particularly the glucocorticoid receptor (NR_3C_1) gene.[24]

Another way of transmitting the genes of trauma and its related delusional disorder to its later generation/s is to transfer the genes at the gestational stage of a mother's pregnancy through the uterine environment. Disturbing or chaotic stimuli enter through the uterine environment during pregnancy, and it could affect the offspring psychosomatically.[25] A similar mechanism can be traced in the offspring of partition victims whose

[23] Supratim Choudhuri, in his article "Small Noncoding RNAs: Biogenesis, Function, and Emerging Significance in Toxicology" talked about this non-coding RNAs which functions in that way of transgenerational transmission of trauma. He has published his finding in *Journal of Biochemical and Molecular Toxicology*, Vol. 24, No. 3: 195–216. (May–June 2010). DOI:10.1002/jbt.20325. PMID 20143452

[24] Rachel Yehuda and Amy Lehrner worked extensively on the survivors' traumatic traits to their offspring in the post-natal stage. See their article "Intergenerational Transmission of Trauma Effects: Putative Role of Epigenetic Mechanisms". *World Psychiatry*, 17(3). September 7, 2018.

[25] See Michael T Kinsella and Catherine Monk. (September 2009). "Impact of Maternal Stress, Depression and Anxiety on Fetal Neurobehavioral Development". *Clinical Obstetrics and Gynecology*. 2009; 52 (3): 425–440.

parents were exposed to traumatic stimuli in the past. In this story also, the same mechanism works in both cases – Chitra and Om. The entire family shared a similar sort of delusion, of the "Muslim men baying for blood and honour" and it "had been passed down through the family like a cursed heirloom" (121).

It would be unfair to take this story of the particular family in isolation or generalise this transgenerational transmission of trauma connected with every migrant family. Anirudh Kala's story primarily talks about the shared delusional disorder, one of the many pathological, post-traumatic disorders that some migrant families had suffered from. The source of the historical trauma is the partition, but the manifestations of the traumatic experiences of the migrants vary both at the individual and the collective levels. In conclusion, it can be said that under the umbrella of Partition Fiction, Anirudh Kala's story secures a distinctive place because, it rightly captures the transgenerational transmission of the trauma of the partition migrants, which is unique in the context of the Partition-induced migration. It deals with the "Folie à Deux" syndrome, an emerging area of research in Psychoanalysis and Trauma Studies. Kala's expertise in psychiatry and his real-life experiences of treating hundreds of partition migrants are powerfully reflected in the stories of *The Unsafe Asylum*. This story, "Folie à Deux" along with some other narratives like "No Forgiveness Necessary", "Belly Button", and "Sita's Bus", "Partitioning Madness", "Love during Armistice" open up a new horizon in the realm of Trauma Fiction.

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Essentialising Feminist Paradigm in South Asian Diasporic Theatre in the UK: Reading Rukhsana Ahmad's *Song for a Sanctuary*

SHRABANTI KUNDU

Abstract

The word theatre reflects the representation of certain tale/story or social, political, and cultural facts in a performative manner before the physically present audience. Moreover, considering particularly the female representation in these cultural, social, as well as political issues, we find a binary pole where female is perceived as meek and submissive and thus gets marginalised. Women's theatre from this point contradicts mainstream theatre and brings up the portrayal of women's subjectivities where they can assert their existence in the dominant social structure. In the context of diaspora, theatre by women provides a free space for articulation about living in a country different to their own for different ethnic communities hardly get exposed to the mainstream theatre. Theatre groups by migrants are a minority group and from the socio-cultural perspective, they are marginalised as well. Women in diaspora theatre embody a kind of marginality within the margin. The socio-cultural issues and conflicts faced by the migrants are incorporated in the plays by playwrights who are themselves diasporic. Many a time the plays by diaspora playwrights focus on the migration to a specific setting where he/she contemplates home. Likewise, the changing attitude towards migration and culture is also represented in the plays. Thus, the theatre by migrant groups evolves in due time according to the changing patterns of migration. The diaspora communities thus not only reflect on the ethnic conflict in the host country in their writing but also deal with the inter-community issues among themselves. Theatre by women on the same ground represents the conflicts

regarding their existence, identity, and space on foreign soil. Thus, this study undertakes the aspects of feminist theatre to analyse the text related to the representation of migration and conflict on the part of women. The issues of cultural conflict, identity, and generational problems of migrants are essentially focused here. How the theatrical representation of women concerns these problematic positions are incorporated in this study. Thus, this paper tries to reflect on women's theatre in the context of diaspora through the analysis of Rukhsana Ahmad's play Song for a Sanctuary.

Keywords: Women's Theatre, Diaspora, Culture, Conflict, Negotiation.

Introduction

The deliberation on female-centric representation has marked a long silence in theatrical purview. In the south-Asian diaspora, this finds a liminal experience as we try to locate the concerns in terms of spatial understanding. The British mainstream theatre, however, hardly acknowledges the cultural paradigm at the forefront of representing its minority diaspora population. On the other hand, feminist theatre brings up the portrayal of the subjectivity of women where they assert their existence in the dominant social structure. In diasporic space, theatre provides a free space of articulation for different ethnic communities that hardly get exposure in mainstream theatre. The socio-cultural issues and conflicts faced by the migrants are incorporated in the plays by playwrights who themselves come from diaspora communities. The diaspora communities not only reflect on the ethnic conflict in the host country but also deal with the inter-community issues among themselves. Theatre by women on the same ground represents the conflicts regarding their existence, identity, and space on foreign soil. Plays like *My Name Is…* (2014) by Sudha Bhuchar, *Sweet Cider* (2008) by Em Hussain and *Strictly Dandia* (2003) again

by Sudha Bhuchar and Kristine Landon-Smith are among the example that narrates the cross-cultural negotiations of women. The paper focuses on the theatre practice among south Asians and deliberates on the concerned text to engage with the issues put forward in it. Thus, the study carefully looks at the emergence of feminism vis-à-vis women's theatre along with the dimensions of argument that form its core objectives. It also searches the pattern of diasporic engagement to analyse the issues of cultural conflict, identity formation and the generational problems of migrants. Looking closely at Rukhsana Ahmad's play *Song for a Sanctuary*, the paper seeks to analyse the theatrical representation of women concerning the problematic positions of nation, culture and ethnicity and the entrapment that situates women devoid of their position in society.

Diaspora and Theatre: Performative Nuances of Representation

Theatre denominates an essential activity in cultural production and performativity within a particular social context. The elevation of a specific action into the mould of performance to reach the audience is one of the many concerns of theatre. Theatre largely interrogates the metanarratives around the reception and production of political, economic and social traits. Thus, it provides a separate space for an individual playwright where a free flow of dialogue can exist with its uniqueness. The main concern of this paper is to introduce theatre in regard to diasporic engagements, delineating its imaginative underpinnings of it. "Diasporic imaginary", Vijay Mishra writes, is a condition "of an impossible mourning that transforms mourning into melancholia…sometimes in intensely contradictory ways at the level of the social" (Mishra 2007:9).

The present age of globalisation challenges the idea of centralisation and introduces a necessary process of growth through the interactive exchange of goods, knowledge and culture among the nation-states. In this process, people from various parts of the world have come to associate with the creation of a contact zone of cultures, nations and religions, otherwise termed as 'diaspora space' (Brah 1996:208). A complex interconnection among the diverse discourses has evolved across the world into this process. The expansion of the term 'diaspora' has been further explained in *The Encyclopaedia of the Indian Diaspora* (2006) where phrases like 'the time factor', the 'will to survive as a minority and the 'collective memory' form the critical elements of diaspora (Lal et.al 2006:36-51). Rai and Reeves mention that:

> A Diaspora exists precisely because it remembers the 'homeland'. Without this memory… these migrants and settlers would be simply people in a new setting, into which they merge, bringing little or nothing to the new 'home' accepting in various ways and forms the mores and attitudes that already exist in their new country and society… The people of diaspora, however, do not merely settle in new countries: they recreate in their socio-economic, political, and cultural situations a version of… that homeland that they remember (Rai and Reeves 2009:1).

The argument over diaspora in the acquisition of certain space, moreover, realises human experience which not only gets represented across different genres of literature but also epitomises the performative nuances in the mediums like cinema and theatre. It only makes it compelling and tempting to engage the audience. Theatre is an audio-visual mode of representation that has a specific advantage of enactment before the audience, who gets to know the concerns of

diaspora and has a common ground of either an active or a passive experience.

The contact zones among nations put an impact on theatre studies as different elements of culture get assembled and moulded into the postcolonial theatre while the intercultural coalescence enlarges the margin. Apart from the amalgamation of different forms and techniques into the practice of theatre, the interconnection of cultural elements brings up the cultural association and difference in the theatre production. Thereupon, the homogeneous idea of culture and the singularity of its identity transcends with the rapid increase of migration. On the other hand, the cultural history and the identity travel with its people from one place to another and generate a hyphenated co-existence in the identity of the migrants. The subject of representation coming under this 'hyphen' impacts the theatrical practices by the migrant communities in the exploration of different cultural forms experienced in living between two or more cultures. This essentially is the theme getting represented in many plays written from different contact zones of culture, race and identity. For example, Rukhsana Ahmad's *Homing Bird* (2019) and *River on Fire* (2001), Sharmila Chauhan's *The Husbands* (2014) and Naylah Ahmed's *Mustafa* (2012) portray characters in tension with the racial identity of mixed parentage among others. So, the representation in the theatre of the diaspora does not merely answer, but rather explores the enactment of the human experience of 'home' and the 'other'. The mutability of cultures is also the point of discussion in the plays written by the migrant playwright.

In representation, however, the dialogue between home and host requires to look back towards the emergence of the theatre of diaspora. In various parts of the world, theatre by the migrant groups comes into existence mainly with the abolition

of colonial rule. However, some intercultural elements have a long history of being written and enacted wholeheartedly. In British literature, components of Indian history and philanthropic ideals are made known in the works like John Dryden's *Aureng-Zebe; or the Great Moghal* (1675) as it narrates the tragic fall of Aurangzeb, the great Indian Mughal Emperor and in *Mariana Starke's The Sword of Peace; or a Voyage of Love* (1789) where the main story concerns the journey of two women to India in search of their husbands. With migration, different groups of people along with a variety of cultures, languages and practices encounter each other and help establish a kind of interchange as well as the formation of a hybrid identity through their existences. In some cases, migrants started performing plays in their native languages to establish their cultural identity. Similarly, the practice of adopting a text from the native country for the foreign stage also comes into prominence. For this, the implementation of the inter-cultural techniques to represent their concerns and experiences sound most contemporary in its tone. It entails the question of space that these performances adhere to in delineating the socio-cultural difference as well as their engagements. Many of Tagore's plays found a suitable adaptation on the foreign stage in this category.

South Asian Presence and the Theatre of Migrants

The movement of South Asians beyond the sub-continent provides a more prominent definition of diaspora. South Asia mainly comprises the southern region of Asia where the core countries are India, Pakistan and Bangladesh which were ruled by the British from 1857 to 1947. Apart from these three, Nepal, Bhutan, Maldives and Afghanistan also share the historical and ethnic benevolence as being a commoner under the umbrella term South Asia. South Asia relegates to a broader range of variety in terms of language, region, culture,

religion, custom and tradition. Vijay Prashad suggests that South Asia establishes a kind of "solidarity despite their different national origins and religious commitments" (Prashad 1999:187). South Asian migrants comprise a variety of groups which "includes traders, imperial auxiliaries, 'free' migrants and long-term migrant professionals" (Rai and Reeves 2009:2). The heterogeneous nature of South Asia is marked by a diversity suggesting a complex "zone of engagement that includes diasporans with diverse social, political, economic and cultural backgrounds" (Sarwal:28). The experience of slavery, the indentured labour system and the forced dispersion of people are very different from the contemporary voluntary migration of South Asians journeying mainly for the white-collar job in the West. The transnational connection of migrants makes them negotiate religious, ethnic and cultural ties which are the markers of their identity. Brij V. Lal writes,

> Due to its varied origins, divergent patterns of migration and settlement, and different degrees of absorption or integration into the culture of their new homeland, the Indian diaspora defies easy categorisation. It is a complex confluence of many discreet cultures, languages and histories (Lal et al 2006:10).

The case of the South Asian diaspora in the United Kingdom is a group of diverse people being merged into a new identity. They are defined in a geographical attribution that is explained as an area of inquiry that investigates the cultural significance of migration.

The South Asian diaspora, as apprehended in the literary, cinematic and theatrical representation, responds as a symbol of shared belonging. People who have migrated from the South Asian region after the Indian independence, are primarily the educated professional who carried their cultural roots with them to the host nation. During the 1970s, the presence of

South Asian voice is first marked in the genre of theatre. The earlier theatrical representation in the 1950s and 1960s by the South Asians are mainly brought from their homeland, and many of them were being performed in the native language only. Apart from the Sanskrit plays in translation like *Sakuntala* and *Ratnavali,* several of Tagore's Bengali plays are also translated into English and adapted accordingly. Only in the year, 1970 with the establishment of Tara Arts, the first theatre group by the migrant community, the South Asian diaspora community found their own stage to present the diasporic sensibilities of the community. Language is the most innovative part of their productions as it presents the microcosmic view of the multicultural society. Chambers argues that the director-producer of Tara Arts, Jitender Verma, "was beginning to develop a distinctive methodology he termed Binglish, a name that captures the fractured, overlapping hybridity of modern Britain. Binglish is distinguished textually by transposition to an Indian setting, often using storytelling devices and, in performances, through costume, set, and the actors' accent, inflection, tone, gesture, and stance" (Chambers 2020:161). Using this hybrid representation, Verma introduces distinct theatre praxis. The prominent examples of Binglish in the Tara Arts production are *Mitti Ki Gadi* [The Little Clay Cart] (1984), *Tartuffe* (1990) and *Cyrano* (1995). The production also presents representation from other cultures, showcasing the pattern of dress and customs apart from the language. It features the British, Asian and Black cast to counter the prominent practice of the English stage. The plays like *Mandragora – King of India* (2004), *The Marriage of Figaro* (2006), *People's Romeo* (2010), and *A Night on the Tile* (2011) are examples of cross-cultural production. Apart from Tara Arts, there are several contemporary establishments of cross-cultural production, namely Kali Theatre, Tamasha Theatre and Manmela Theatre

that have active participation in representing South Asia on the British stage.

The emergence of the theatre production marks a crucial phrase for South Asian diaspora in the U.K. The diasporic communities started to establish their own theatre groups despite having the chance to contribute to the prominent mainstream theatres. This is as Griffin specifies the aesthetic distance that the diaspora maintains is non-negotiable where the migrant groups "bespeak the histories from which these theatres emerged, histories of colonisation, of cultural exchange, curiosity, transformation and international engagement" (Griffin 2003:1). It establishes the identity of the migrants in a foreign land which creates a better understanding of migration and the conflicts of the people of the diaspora. *Zameen* (2008) by Satinder Chohan is one such example that explores the story of a Punjabi farmer who hopes for the prosperity of his cotton fields on high-quality seeds and the 'western' pesticides. His ambitious son Dhani dreams of going to America whereas his dutiful daughter Chandni is uncertain about her fate, dwindling over whether to stay in her precious motherland or follow her lover abroad to a more prosperous life. These dilemmas only offer the motive as the play narrates the painful breakdown of a family on the verge of a rapidly changing world.

Feminist Theatre and Contemporary South Asian Experience

The script, the actors, costumes, the dialogues, lighting and the setting- all the elements of a theatre get arranged in such a way that the audience finds it convenient with the performance of a piece. The audience of a theatre consists of mostly heterosexual, middle-class citizens whose conscience is embodied in the predominant constructs of culture. With the resistance movement and the writings of feminist critics, this

mode of contingent spectatorship is challenged in every corner of representation. The theatrical practice is no exception. The feminist critics exposed the gender-specific nature of representation in theatre and radically defied the existing terms. Dolan points out that these critics denaturalised "the position of the ideal spectator as a representative of the dominant culture", which enables them to analyse every aspect of theatre "from the types of plays and performances produced to the texts that are ultimately canonised, is determined to reflect and perpetuate the ideal spectator's ideology" (Dolan 1988:1). Thus, theatre along with visual art, dance and film are the manifestations of specific ideological meanings which have inevitable materialistic consequences. The contemporary theatre, performed, narrated and directed by women is manifested by resistance to conventional discourses. Cixous in her play 'Le Portrait de Dora' (1972) describes this resistance as an emblem of women's desire to leave the symbolic order. She mentions that,

> Le Portrait de Dora was the first step for me in a long journey; it was a step that badly needed to be taken so that a woman's voice could be heard for the first time, so that she could cry out, "I'm not the one who is dumb. I am silenced by your inability to hear." (Cixous:134).

The canon of theatre studies maintained silence for a long time about theatrical productions by women that also represents women. British socialist and historicist Sheila Rowbotham questions this intentional elimination of women from socio-cultural history in the book *Hidden from History: 300 Years of Women's Oppression and the Fight Against It*. Elaine Aston, the feminist theatre critic further inquires into the marginalised position of women in theatre as she questions "why women…had been buried by man-made history" (Aston 2003:12). This critical endeavour aims at pointing out the

oppression of women in literature as well as finding the tradition of writing by women. Honor Moore, an American writer in *The New Women's Theatre: Ten Plays by Contemporary Women* talks about the difficulties of finding the past engagement of women in theatre as she realises "the lack of female tradition in playwrighting similarly to that which exists in both fiction and poetry" (Moore 1997:xiv). Moore challenges the mainstream theatre practice and the omission of women from the history of theatre both as the means of production and with creative writing attempting to locate women's tradition in the genre of theatre. The re-reading of the conventional portrayal of women, as explored by Kate Millett, is ventured by the scholars of feminist theatre through the analysis of the previous productions where women were ignored and disregarded. Elaine Aston, however, reflects that,

> Image-based methodologies have evolved into more sophisticated structuralist and semiotic lines of enquiry generated through the understanding of theatre as a sign system. Within this context, a more highly complex method of reading theatre from an image base has developed, which, in turn, has been appropriated by feminism to re-read the gender bias of the canon (Aston 2003:13).

The emergence of feminist theatre challenges the "active/male and passive/female" narrative structure (Mulvey 1989:19). Charlotte Rea, a feminist theatre critic mentions "Women's theatre groups are seeking new forms that have not been derived from the male-oriented and male-dominated theatre that now exists" (Rea 1972:77). The formation of theatre groups of women establishes the control of women over the organization as well as its content and style. These theatre groups present a non-hierarchical and liner organisation modelled on the Women Liberation Movement.

A rapid increase in the number of South Asian women playwrights in the UK was witnessed since the 1980s. These playwrights are associated with different theatre groups, radio and television channels who have either migrated with their parents or are born in Britain. The works of South Asian women playwrights bear the signature of multiple locations that affect their lives. Many play scripts are written only to be enacted by the South Asian actors and actresses. Thus, the plays written by migrant women provide acting opportunities to the women of different ethnic groups by placing them in the centre of the action. It also attracts the attention of the audience towards the social groupings of migrant people who generally do not have any representation on the British stage. Again, the play scripts by women of diaspora thematise the issues of ethnicity, race and identity. Diaspora generally deals with ethnic and cultural hybridisation by narrating their position within the dominant host culture. The play scripts narrate the double marginalisation of women both as a woman in a patriarchal society and as a migrant in a foreign country. A. S. Colombo mentions that "women in the diaspora, instead, are more concerned on the daily problems of life in common with different cultures, ethnicities and races" (Colombo 2014:369). Apart from this, the South Asian women playwrights actively engage with the historical as well as contemporary socio-political issues that have affected the community in a particular way both in Britain and in their place of origin. Gabriele Griffin notes some of the key concerns in women's theatre of the diaspora in representation. They are-

1. The contemplation of migration within a certain home setting; 2. Migration within the country one was born in– usually from country to city; 3. Migration to another country, usually the UK, and its impacts; 4. Breaking with one's community as an effect of changing values and attitudes across generations and between women and

men, a migration effect; 5. Living in peer groups outside specific ethnically and/or racially defined communities as a function of one's particular history, development, and identity, another migration effect (Griffin 2003:16-17).

Song for a Sanctuary by Rukhsana Ahmad records the "breaking with one's community as an effect of changing values and attitudes across generations and between women and men" (Ahmad:19). These disruptions are commonly unintentional on the part of the woman who decides to discard the community ties. As a result, both physical and psychological violence influence the development of the character. The play promotes "a positive space for sharing the experiences of and raising awareness for migrant women [that] has a long and continuing tradition across the UK" (Ahmad 1993:36).

Song for a Sanctuary: A Story of Abuse, Abomination and Violence

Song for a Sanctuary depicts the troubled life of a refugee who is a victim of abuse and murder in one of the women's refuge shelters in the U.K. Rukshana Ahmad brings in the element of gendered violence, cultural duality and community life in a portfolio of South Asian presence in Britain. Ahmad, a Pakistan born British playwright, novelist, short-story writer and translator, migrated to the UK, starting her career primarily as a playwright and journalist. In 1991, her first translation of Urdu protest poetry, written by women, *We Sinful Women* was published. Later in 1993, she translated Alta Fatima's novel *The One Who Did Not Ask*. Ahmad's first novel, *The Hope Chest* (1996), narrates the intertwined paths of three women Ruth, Rani and Reshma who in their journey confront the crossroads of culture. Her plays include *Song for a Sanctuary* (1991), *River on Fire* (2001), *Mistaken: Annie Besant in India*

(2007) and *Homing Bird* (2019). The play *Mistaken: Annie Besant in India* brings the Indian independence struggle to the British stage. In *River on Fire*, she addresses the conflicts faced by the British Asians. The play portrays a young British-Asian actress, Kiran, who works with an Indian film director. She plays the role of Shola, a Mogul Antigone for the film makes her re-visit her ancestral roots. Ahmad's contribution to the diaspora theatre continues with the play *Homing Bird*. It tells the story of a young Afghan refugee Saeed. Ahmad stages the refuge crises to bring the issues of identity and belonging of the migrants in a foreign society. The problem of illegal migrants and the sanctuary homes is also addressed here. Among her radio plays, *An Urnful of Ashes* (2009) took to precedence whereas adaptations like *Woman at Point Zero* by Nawal El Saadawi, *Wide Sargasso Sea* by Jean Rhys, *Midnight's Children* by Salman Rushdie, R.K. Narayan's *The Guide*, Nadeem Aslam's *Maps for Lost Lovers* and Kiran Desai's *The Inheritance of Loss* for the BBC Radio earned her fame. Ahmad's projection of women's search for identity in the plays like *River on Fire* and *Song for Sanctuary* represents the concerns of women in contemporary society. Through these plays, Ahmad questions the patriarchal social structure of both the East and West. She is regarded as a prominent name in the South Asian women's theatre for having promoted the conflicts faced by women in the contemporary scenario. She had been the co-founder of Kali Theatre Company and South Asian Diaspora Arts Archive (SADAA) and was nominated for the CRE Award for best original radio drama for her *Song for a Sanctuary*.

Ahmad's play *Song for a Sanctuary* was first performed in 1991 for Kali Theatre; later the radio version of this play was broadcasted on 18th February 1993 on BBC Radio. Ahmad herself said that "*Song for a Sanctuary* was written partly in response to the murder of an Asian woman at a refuge"

(Ahmad:204). The paper looks into the narrative detail, one that has been understood by Ahmad, the South Asian presence and the subsequent dilemmas in exercising life outside of one's own country. The play, therefore, presents the moral conflicts of the characters and the evasiveness in their actions before the audiences as well as readers of the text. The incident referred here is the murder of a young woman of South Asian descent named Balwant Kaur on 22nd October 1985. Her husband killed her in the British Asian women's shelter. The play broadly outlines the murder of Kaur who come to the shelter after eight years of several fits of abuse from her husband. Her husband, along with some other men planned to kill her at the shelter but his friends assumed his ill intentions and warned Kaur against the same. After a few days, Kaur's husband stabbed her to death in front of their children. The Southall Black Sisters, a non-profitable organisation raised their voice against the violent murder of the British-Asian women. Ahmad's play narrates the story of Balwant Kaur within a complex cross-cultural social structure.

In the play, Rajinder Basi is the counterpart of Balwant Kaur, whereas the title of the play 'Song for a Sanctuary' foreshadows the unwanted ending of Rajinder's life through its elegiac tone. This three-act play is set in Rajinder's home and at a refuge depicting the arranged marriage and the household violence in western society. Rajinder and Sonia both are a character in this play suffering from the same plight but Rajinder being a Pakistani Muslim is not allowed to expose her experience of violence and is restrained by her cultural lineage, whereas Sonia narrates her suffering to others. It is evident as Rajinder says "I don't believe in washing my dirty linen in public" (Ahmad 1993:226). The experience and expression of violence for both Sonia and Rajinder varies because of their different socio-cultural background. Cecilia Menjivar in the article 'The Intersection of Work and Gender: Central

American Immigrant Women and Employment in California' maps the variation as she writes that "differences in social location are important to discern because they often get fused with issues pertaining to gender, particularly when immigrant women are characterized as a homogeneous and unified group" (Menjivar 1999:603). Rajinder had internalised the community's projection of the concept of shame and honour. Being a woman, she transmits the cultural values of her place of origin to her children. The cultural and social structure made a significant contribution to her current situation as she maintains a sense of pride in her cultural identity. Thus, she attempts to preserve an impression of the difference between herself and the other residents of the refuge as she declares "I'd like my children to grow up with some sense of who they are. We're different" (Ahmad:220).

Women's conducts are defined under the umbrella of right and wrong, which is also a case in this play. Rajinder readily inclines to differentiate herself from Sonia, the white fellow in the refuge and from Kamala, the refuge worker. When Savita tells her mother Rajinder that Sonia is a controller of her own body and is not at all ashamed of it, Rajinder at once denies the conversation, as if it is immoral to talk about the women's sexual choices-

Savita: … She's what they call a 'hooker', a prostitute.

Rajinder: Don't you dare talk to me like that. I don't want to hear you talk, crudely, like this, even if it's true. I wouldn't believe that, even of her.

Savita: It's true; she's not ashamed of it. She says she's in charge of her own body, that's all it means. Housewives sell their bodies too, you know. Only it's to one man… they have no control over…their…bodies (Ahmad 1993:228).

Rajinder, shocked by her daughter's analysis, negates any parallel between herself and Sonia. She even denies assimilating with Kamala, who works in this refuge due to her poor economic condition. Rajinder criticises Kamala as an unmarried woman and dismisses her saying she is not able to understand her condition.

Ahmad represents the socio-cultural difference by posing two different groups of characters called Elien and Kamala, refuge workers, and Rajinder and Sonia, the client there. Gradually their similarities and differences are demonstrated to us as they somewhat embody the mirror image of one another and at the same time contradict each other. Thus, the cultural difference among these women is exposed as they speak for ethnicity, class, cultural variance and women's economic self-sufficiency. The juxtaposition of Kamala and Rajinder represents the two sides of the same coin. Both of them have a common South Asian ancestry despite their different migratory pattern. Kamala represents the identity of a person who is dynamic and adaptable to the changing circumstances. She challenges the notion of identity related to the appearance, which is not a matter of choice rather depends on the attribution. Precisely saying, Kamala dilutes the idealisation of home and her identity in the imaginary of the migrants. The conversation between Rajinder and Kamala bring forth the issues of culture, language and identity of the diasporic people-

> Kamala: This language thing, it's just that, it looks like an inadequacy and it isn't. Names are all they had left to them, in the Caribbean; to keep the languages going seemed a bit pointless in the end.
>
> Rajinder: So you're not from India?
>
> Kamala: No, not quite. They struggled to make us Indian, in some sense (Ahmad 1993:209).

Kamala disclosed that her history of migration is different from Rajinder whose ancestors once came from India, but Kamala had come from the Caribbean to Britain. Hence, her statement addresses multiple histories of migration and criticises the homogenisation of South Asian identity. On the contrary, Rajinder represents the complexities of belonging as her identity is always linked with her homeland. Thus, both of them embody the contradictory ideas of a diaspora. Shobhita Jain in her article 'Transmigrant Women's Agency and Indian Diaspora' discusses that "Women's positions within the field of conflicting relations define them not as fixed substances but as entities defined relationally. This is why women's agency is always conditioned by prevailing mediations. Situated in the processual spirality, their mediated agency is mostly enabled by its conditions to imagine/invent and thus transcreate" (Jain 2010:193). Kamala and Rajinder agree to the conflict arising from their perception of identity in the hostland and, therefore, remained pre-conditioned.

Moreover, a scene (Act I, Scene 6) that captures Rajinder's conversation with her elder sister Amrit shows that Amrit, who is well acquainted with the socio-cultural practice of their family and community, is insensitive to Rajinder's plight. Amrit interprets Rajinder's decision to leave her violent husband as an act of "western selfishness" which brings dishonour to the family:

> Amrit: But you're so wrong! … You don't make sense to me.
>
> Rajinder: I did my best …
>
> Amrit: What of the children? They will be asking, 'what'll become of them'?... you'll be sorry. I'm warning you. Your selfishness will ruin your daughters, I can tell you that. They'll learn all the self-indulgent, sick ways of the West (Ahmad:221).

This remark of Amrit points to the negation of intermixing of values in a host society in the most contingent way possible which also for Ahmed is the notion of disregard of the diaspora with a narrow mindset. Even, when Rajinder asked her what should be done about her miserable condition, Amrit without any hesitation replied that "honour is always preferable to disgrace" (Ahmad 1993:221). This scene demonstrates the ideology behind shame and honour operating in women's identity. Amrit is ready to sacrifice her sister's life to worship the false god 'honour'. Thus, because of this shame and honour, Rajinder denies discussing the physical and sexual abuse by her husband towards her and her daughter Savita. She also refuses to register the same before the authorities. Victoria Canning in *Gendered Harm and Structural Violence in the British Asylum System* notes the actuality of women's condition in an asylum saying-

> a long-running battle for those seeking asylum, with specific consequences for survivors of sexualised and domestic violence: problems which are disproportionately experienced by women… have experienced similar forms of pain infliction over periods of years at the hands of husbands and partners within domestic spheres (Canning 2017:25-35).

Rajinder explained her situation to Kamala by saying that "it doesn't mean you can't make any choices… just that… the circumstances in which you have to make them are often beyond your control. Like birth, or death" (Ahmad 1993:225). Rajinder here naturalises the life choices that are beyond her control by using the similes of life and death. As soon as Kamala tries attending to the authorities in the matter of Savita's exploitation, Rajinder refutes it shielding her daughter's 'izzat', as she says "I'd like to avoid a scandal. She's got to marry one day. But then you don't know what it is

to live within the community" (Ahmad 1993:236). Though Kamala tries to make Rajinder understand the harm of silence in the face of violence, Rajinder strictly clutches her roots of patriarchal beliefs-

> Kamala: Don't you see, it's the 'privatisation' of women's lives which keeps us from seeing domestic violence in a socio-political context?

> Rajinder: I don't need your political analysis. I have to deal with my life as I think best.

> Kamala: Your story is common enough, believe me. It's part of a pattern of how men have used women over the years (Ahmad 1993:226).

Through the projection of the two contradictory characters, the play projects the ills of a society, where the voices of women are suppressed. In the context of diaspora, the constructs of society become more defining. In this scenario, the preference for preserving the culture becomes pivotal.

Kimberlé Crenshaw, an American lawyer, indicates the dichotomy and violence faced by women in migration due to their economic dependency on their husbands in the article 'Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence against Women of Color'. She mentions-

> In most cases, the physical assault that leads women to these shelters is merely the most immediate manifestation of the subordination they experience. Many women who seek protection are unemployed or underemployed, and a good number of them are poor. Shelters serving these women cannot afford to address only the violence inflicted by the batterer; they must also confront the other multilayered and routinized forms of domination that often converge in these women's lives, hindering their ability to create alternatives to the

abusive relationships that brought them to shelters in the first place (Crenshaw 1991:1245).

Rajinder's painful plight in the play is not only because of the cultural prohibition of exhibiting her problems but also because of her socio-economic dependency on her husband. Her situation reveals no prospect of economic opportunities through employment and finding her a shelter but heightens the burden of women like Rajinder in a foreign land. Throughout the play, she did not consider financial independence as a path of liberation from her sufferings. Her husband's capability of tracking her and killing her shows the failure of the authorities. They fail to provide proper security to the battered migrant woman.

In another context, this play suggests that there is no harm in preserving the cultural values in a different place under the disguise of cultural preservation. It is wrong though to nurture the patriarchal domination in the same disguise. All the characters, represented here, are a victim of the dominant social structure. Upasana Mahanta et al. confirm this condition in the essay 'Women and Law in South Asia' where they uphold the notion of life for South Asian females-

> Lived experiences of women in South Asia often navigate the volatility of individual and group rights, honour and shame, purity and pollution, customary practices and modern citizenship rights, extreme poverty, illiteracy, health vulnerabilities, armed conflict, gender-based violence, etc. These negotiations are deeply rooted in the social realities of religion, caste, race, ethnicity, class, age, and disability (Mahanta et al 2019:150).

Rajinder, who tries to behave according to the community rules, values her husband and justifies his deeds. She even glorifies him while she is terrified of him- "I'm trying to escape from a man who's cunning, and strong, and tough as a

bull; he can see through curtains, he can hear through walls. I am really frightened of him" (Ahmad:209). The generational conflict between the first and second generations is also presented through the portrayal of Savita, Rajinder's daughter. Savita being born and brought up in England is influenced by the western culture, which is strongly denied by Rajinder.

Savita: I look cool in that, don't I ma?

Rajinder: Sorry, Savita, you'll have to change.

Savita: why? It looks fine to me.

Rajinder: I don't want any discussion, or argument about this…

Savita: That's not fair. You have to say why.

Rajinder: All right, then. The skirt's too short…they look tartish.

Savita: Talk about stereotypes, Ammah! (Ahmad 1993:227).

As Savita discloses her father's ill-treatment to her and her mother, Rajinder shuts her up by saying "that's not true… there was nothing like that. You're lying. You've no right to do this to me. Make things like this up, just to… humiliate me…" (Ahmad 1993:229). Thus, the oppression of women in a foreign land and the generational conflict are evident in this play.

The play through the articulation of individual suffering addresses a broader social concern regarding the marginal position of the migrant women. Consequently, the play accentuates the uniqueness of every character's condition and, through the catastrophic recounting this play tries to transcend that uniqueness by putting them within the larger spectrum of the necessity of support for the marginalised groups.

Conclusion

The study proposes several ideas and concepts such as theatre studies, feminist theatre and women's theatre, feminist criticism and diaspora literature as a post-colonial narrative. This study attempts to explore women's writing with representation on stage and at the same time understand how the transcultural representation of diaspora is incorporated into the women's theatre. The focus of this paper is on the methods and techniques presented by women playwrights of diaspora. This paper also analyses the impact of feminist theatre, not only talking about the feminist point of view towards the theatre but also takes language and writing in literary representation as one of the essential facts. Reflection of the female self in theatrical writing and engaging the audience/reader in it and creating a space where women can articulate their own words in her way are the main points that are discussed here. However, the enunciation of difference as well as the proclamation of diversity by the diaspora community in the context of homogenised Britain is presented in this text. The text also presents the cultural clash between the migrant and the local people as well as the generational conflict between the mother and daughter. The text also suggests that not only the communal construction of ethnic bonds but the validation of the power structure between genders is the source of oppression to women. Indeed, Ahmad's *Song for Sanctuary* shows the clash between cultures, and conflict among different diasporic experiences and more prominently projects the plight of women within the diaspora. The women characters seeking accommodation from the oppressive socio-cultural structure disrupt the binary opposition. Thus, the theatrical representation of migration and the condition of women in the women's theatre of South Asian diaspora utilises the 'third space'.

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Imprisoning the Refugee: Boochani's *No Friend but the Mountains* through Foucauldian Lens

ELIZABETH CHERIAN

Abstract

Violence need not always involve gory or bloodshed but "is constitutive of, intersubjective relations, institutions, language, logic, and subjectivity" (Rae and Ingala 2). Restriction of an individual's basic human right is a violation and violence upon his/her body. The paper titled "Imprisoning the Refugee: Boochani's No Friend but the Mountains through Foucauldian Lens" attempts to relate control of body with power through the reading of this memoir of Behrouz Boochani. Written and sent as multiple text messages from a mobile phone that the writer managed to smuggle into the refugee detention camp, the book exposes the systemic torture and inhumane treatment in such "prisons". In this paper, the Foucauldian concepts of biopower, subject, power and panopticism are used to study the refugee experience. The techniques of 'domesticating' an individual as a "subject" of a higher power through denial and restriction will be explained with reference to the work. The blatant violation of human rights by the system can be read as a project of subjugation of the human bodies. The memoir addresses the concept of kyriarchy in multiple ways. The intensity of violence upon an individual multiplies expands and grows in a system of intersectional oppression. The paper also describes how the writer resists the violence through the very act of writing and outrightly rejecting colonial discourses of terminologies. This memoir calls for international attention to the pathetic condition of the detention camps and the plight of the refugees who have migrated not by choice but out of no choice. Denying a person to flee from violence or forcing him/her to return to a place highly dangerous to live is

violence. The study also looks at how fear operates and controls the psyche and body of people.

Keywords: Refugee, Kyriarchy, Foucault, Panopticism, Power.

Behrouz Boochani's No Friend But the Mountain: Writing from Manus Prison exposes the systemic torture and inhumane treatment experienced in the Australian detention camps. This paper uses the Foucauldian framework of power, subject and Panopticism to understand the refugee experience. The study analyses how fear operates and controls the psyche and body of people. The paper looks into the injustice perpetuated by the system as a project of subjugation of the bodies. It also looks at the inhumane conditions perpetuated by the system as a project of subjugation of the bodies. This memoir calls for international attention to the pathetic condition of the detention camps and the plight of the refugees who, through a process of migration, have become subhuman. This paper shows how the 'subhuman' refugee is compared to Agamben's concept of 'life devoid value'.

The means using which the person migrates, and the methods and reasons for migration play important roles in the determination of one's connection with the structure of power. A migrant who does not have a permanent residence in a foreign country can be categorised into three groups- economic migrant, refugee and asylum seeker (humanity.org.uk/). An economic migrant is a person who has moved to a foreign land for better job opportunities, better educational purposes or improved living conditions and status. He/she has proper documents that permit his/her stay in the foreign land and has not run away from the home country for the fear of life. Returning to his/her home country does not threaten his/her life. A refugee, as defined by the United Nations, is "someone who is unable or unwilling to return to their country of origin

owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group, or political opinion" (UNHCR 1951:3); while an asylum seeker is "someone who has applied for protection as a refugee and is awaiting the determination of his or her status" (UNESCO:17). Legally speaking, a refugee has already been granted protection while an asylum seeker needs the approval of the immigration to fit into the definition of a refugee. However, both of these categories were forced to run away from their homelands to protect their lives. There are several restrictions imposed on both refugees and asylum seekers in the new country. The lack of immigration papers and other documents that grants them permission to stay makes their immigration illegal.

The Iranian-Kurdish journalist Behrouz Boochani was an asylum seeker from Iran in Australian detention camps while he wrote *No Friend but the Mountains* in 2019. He is also a human rights activist and a film-maker. Written in a blend of prose and poetry, *No Friends But the Mountains* journals his protracted boat journey from Indonesia, his detention at Manus Prison and the lives of fellow asylum seekers. It also documents his observations about the Australian immigration officials, guards and the local Papuan people. As he did not get permission to receive the Victorian Premier's Prize for non-fiction Award in person in mainland Australia, he had pre-recorded an acceptance speech for the media. He says,

> With humility, I would like to say that this award is a victory. It is a victory not only for us but for literature and art and above all, it is a victory for humanity...A victory against a system that has never recognised us as human beings. It is a victory against a system that has reduced us to numbers (Behrouz Boochani 2019).

Many first-world countries like Australia have treaties regarding their humanitarian act of receiving and integrating refugees[1]. However, the reality of refugees is pathetic. The strict immigration policies[2] have rendered survival difficult for the refugees and asylum seekers.

The very act of writing is an act of resistance - resistance against the production of 'truth' by the State and its discourse. This resistance is an effort to bring out the 'truth' from the side of the refugees and a rejection of the 'truth' imposed upon them. Foucault says, "We are subjected to the production of truth through power and we cannot exercise power except through the production of truth" (Foucault 1980:93). In order to produce/ circulate his version of 'truth' in the form of the memoir, Behrouz had to smuggle a phone into the camp and send the manuscript as text messages to the translator and editor. According to his translator, the memoir is strategised in a way that the legacy of Australia also includes "indefinite

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[1] Some of the Australian programmes for the benefit of refugees include International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights; the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights; and the Convention against Torture and the Convention on the Rights of the Child. "International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights." *humanrights.gov.au* https://humanrights.gov.au/our-work/commission-general/international-covenant-economic-social-and-cultural-rights-human-rights, Accessed on 20 March 2020.

[2] According to 1992 law, any non-citizen entering the shore without a valid visa can be detained indefinitely till a decision on his/her immigration status has been made which could be granting them a visa, releasing them to the society or deporting them to the country of origin. The UN observed that the mandatory forced removal of asylum seekers to the Manus detention centre (in Papua New Guinea) or Nauru for processing is a breach of the international standards of law as stories of suicides, violence and murders have emerged from the camps over the years. "Australia's Immigration Detention Policy and Practice" *Humanrights.gov.au*. https://humanrights.gov.au/our-work/6-australias-immigration-detention-policy-and-practice. Accessed on 3 Dec. 2019.

detention of refugees and asylum seekers deep within the nation's collective memory" (Behrouz 2018:394).

Boochani addresses the structure of norms that focuses on creating a "pure community" as a project of nationalism[3] which has a detrimental effect on non-citizens as it leads to the exclusion of other nations and people of other nations. This project of nationalism is a negative aspect of the Foucauldian idea of biopolitics. The biopolitics of modernity can be understood as a "political rationality" that focuses on the "administration of life and security of the population"[4]. Consequently, this challenges the position of the 'non-population'. The refugees (non-population) who do not constitute the 'population' according to the governmentality, are cast out, debarred from entry to the mainland and forced to suffer in refugee camps. The excerpt from the memoir reveals how the nationalistic project is used as a moral justification for torturing refugees. The work of the security forces is glorified at the expense of 'othering' the refugees: "You're an army here to protect the nation and these imprisoned refugees are the enemy. Who knows who they are or where they're from? They invaded your country by boat" (Boochani 2018:141). By placing the refugees as threats to the population, their lives are deemed not fit to live which Agamben labels as "lives devoid

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[3] **"The aim of nationalism is to create and maintain a single national identity, based on shared social characteristics of culture, ethnicity, geographic location, language, politics, religion, traditions and belief in a shared singular history". Triandafyllidou, Anna, 1998. "National Identity and the Other". *Ethnic and Racial Studies*. 21(4), pp: 593–612. DOI:10.1080/014198798329784.

[4] In the modern state, the power functions towards improving the conditions for the population, administering the body positively and ensuring security for this population. Such a power is a life-administering power (Foucault 1981, p.136). It is based on the thought: foster life and let die (p.138). Foucault, Michel, 1981. "Right of Death and Power over Life". *The History of Sexuality,* Vol.1. Penguin, pp:135-143.

value" or not worth living, drawing from the medical context to denote mentally unstable or brain dead individuals. These lives are dispensable and therefore, such individuals are placed outside of judicial protection (Agamben: 139). The process of refugee migration renders these human beings as recipients of otherness.

The 1951 Refugee Convention, also known as the Geneva Convention of 28 July 1951, is the major convention related to the status of refugees. Several countries are signatories and have agreed to the responsibilities of nations to protect individuals from persecuted countries. It is built on article 14 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) with non-refoulement as the prime principle that "prohibits States from transferring or removing individuals from their jurisdiction when the person is at risk of persecution, torture or other serious human rights violations" (UNHCR 1951:4). However, in reality, the refugees were not believed and the threat of deportation persists.

No Friend But the Mountains is a testimony to the absence of its practice. The prison system is so harsh, Boochani notices that the intention of the officials is to force "the return of the refugee prisoners to the land from which they came" (Boochani 2018: 165). This is a violation of the law as these measures promote refoulement. The UNHCR states:

> In 2001, States parties issued a Declaration reaffirming their commitment to the 1951 Convention and the 1967 Protocol, and they recognized in particular that the core principle of non-refoulement is embedded in customary international law. It provides that no one shall expel or return ("refouler") a refugee against his or her will, in any manner whatsoever, to a territory where he or she fears threats to life or freedom (UNHCR 1951:4).

Before the refugees are transported to Manus Island from Christmas Island, the Australian officials create a demonic image of the people, the culture, the history and the landscape "with naked humans, dangerous insects and murderous mosquitoes" and scary ways of life (Boochani 2018:83, 87), so as to induce fear in the minds of the refugees. Fear controls the body and the minds of the people. "We are hostages- we are being made examples to strike fear into others, to scare people so they won't come to Australia" (Boochani 2018:107). The officials hope that such a warning would push the near-death experiences that they had endured to get to the island and the reason that forced them to escape their homeland into oblivion.

In today's power structures, there is no single figure controlling others:

> Power must be analysed as something which circulates or rather as something which only functions in the form of a chain; it is never localised here or there, never in anybody's hands employed and exercised through a net-like organisation (Foucault 1980:98).

Boochani highlights such a power phenomenon in his work. He calls the power structure of the prison a kyriarchal system. Kyriarchy[5] refers to the complex system of intersectional oppression in which a person is oppressed by various factors like class, economic status, race and not just sex. This idea recognises the human tendency to take up the roles of dominant/dominated unconsciously or consciously even in the

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[5] "Kyriarchy is a theory about the nature of structural power developed in feminist biblical hermeneutics by feminist Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza in 1992 and describes multiple, interacting structures of power and domination". Osborne, Natalie, 2013. Intersectionality and Kyriarchy. *Griffith University*, Volume 14(2) pp: 130-151, https://doi.org/10.1177/1473095213516443. Accessed on 25 Dec. 2019.

absence of a stratified pyramid. Kyriarchy is a structure of oppression and privilege.

In Boochani's context, the translator of *No Friend But the Mountains* says that kyriarchy "represents the multi-structural nature of Australia's border-industrial complex - a being that orchestrates the systematic tortures inflicted in Manus Prison" (Boochani 2018:396). Apart from the superiority established by the citizen/non-citizen dichotomy, differences in race, class, gender, class, knowledge etc. are also causing discrimination. The refugee-writer does not simply blame and criticise the jailers for their torturous methods. Instead, he sympathises with the local population of Papua New Guinea who were once the "freest humans" (Boochani 2018:144). But now, since they are mere employees of the Immigration Department of Australia, they are also trapped in the system of kyriarchy. These locals are expected to follow the orders of the Australian and New Zealand officials for a meagre salary.

Even among the refugees, the ones who manage to save ration possess control over a person who relies on their extras. It is needless to say that the physically stronger ones exert power over weaker ones. For example, the former easily manages to break the queue for food and toilets as Boochani notes, "The prisoners have become wolves, a threat to everyone else" (Boochani 2018:174). Even the cook is aware of the situations where he can exploit and misuse power. He does not give food or milk that each prisoner is entitled to, even if it means to throw away spoiled food items the next day. When prisoners demand answers, all the employees play innocent. "All they can say is, 'I'm sorry, I'm just following orders. In reality, those who are apparently part of the system also have no idea what is going on" (Boochani 2018:209).

Conflicts start to rise between different groups (groups made by the authorities based on the country of origin) as each group

tried to patronise the other. The manipulating power of the kyriarchal system is to govern by turning the prisoners against each other and sowing seeds of hatred between people (Boochani 2018:125). This purposefully contrived system oppresses the refugees through multiple interlocking kinds of stigmatisation including racism and xenophobia. The oppressive forces of the kyriarchal system also function outside of the factors described in the book. "Manus prison as an ideology hinders or eliminates the opportunity to know" (Boochani 2018:362).

This lack of knowledge of the general public regarding the conditions of the refugees adds to their oppression. Since the readers constitute a portion of that public, through this book he engages in a dialogue with the outside world with the hope of making them sensitive to the refugees' plight. "The prisoners have become wolves, a threat to everyone else" (Boochani 2018:174) is indicative of how the refugees are construed as threats to society and the security of the state. Since in modernity, governmentality aims at the security of the population, rendering a category as threats and systematically eliminating the refugees by total elimination (death), incarceration or exposing them to death by depriving all rights becomes justified in the biopolitics. Foucault in "About the Concept of the Dangerous Individual" brings in the idea of a 'dangerous individual'[6] to explain the criminality of mentally

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[6] The term "dangerous being" was first introduced by Prinz in 1905 at the International Union of Penal Law in the context of criminal psychology. When a mentally unfit person commits a crime without any motive, since the act committed is linked to the very personality it constitutes, the aim of the law is not to punish, but to reduce the risk of criminality by therapeutic measures or by exclusion. "It enlarged, organized and codified the suspicion and the locating of dangerous individuals from the rare and monstrous figure of the monomaniac to the common everyday figure of the degenerate, of the pervert, of the constitutionally unbalanced, of the immature, and so on". Foucault, Michel, 2000. About the Concept of the

unfit persons. The inclusion of refugees within the state to exclude them as "dangerous individuals" beyond the law and expose them to death can be seen in Boochani's narrative. The absence of sentimentality does not indicate Boochani's ignorance of the vulnerability of the refugee. The narrative describes the various situations that keep them in a vulnerable condition. Denying the permission to use toilet and other basic necessities is also an exploitation of their vulnerability. Controlling the body manifests in several ways: from imprisoning the individual to subjecting the body to various humiliations. The writer has allotted significant narrating time to describing the dearth of proper toilets: "The floor is always in the same state: piss up to ankle" (Boochani 2018:160). The floor of these toilets is decaying concrete full of tiny crevices… accumulated grime and semen, shaved off hair (Boochani 2018:166). Despite its pathetic condition, it is also the only place a prisoner feels liberated. However, the authorities find excuses to monitor the toilets as well.

The refugee detention camp is a combination of the two types of prison systems that Foucault describes in "Panopticism". According to Foucault, there are two ways to imprison an individual. One, through confinement as in the leper's case, where he/she is in a state of seclusion from the main society so that the society remains to be a "pure community". Two, the arrest during plague where one is constantly watched over so that their actions are under surveillance (Foucault 1977:198). The emphasis on pure community is part of the negative biopolitics. The refugee explicitly reveals how one's stake in geopolitics determines the value of life. The question of 'who decides whose life is more important or worth saving' comes into play. The decision of whom to save or protect becomes a

Dangerous Individual. In Faubion, J. D (ed.), *Power*. New Press, pp. 176-200.

function of a sovereign in the excess of the biopolitics of modernity. What does not belong to the "population" has no political existence. Thus the refugee lives (non-population) can be dispensed with, by torturing them in refugee camps or deporting them to their country of origin which is a direct threat to their lives.

Being under constant surveillance guarantees ceaseless inspection or the illusion of it, which in turn promises obedience. Boochani's description of the prison gives the first impression of surveillance:

> A cage/High walls/ Wire fencing/ Electronic doors/ CCTV camera/ Surveillance cameras gazing at twenty individuals/ Men wearing oversized garments/ Men with loose-fitting clothes hanging off them (Boochani 2018:82).

Installing CCTV cameras inside toilets is a project of surveillance. "Major effect of the Panopticon is to induce in the inmate a state of conscious and permanent visibility that assures the automatic functioning of power" (Foucault 1977:201). A camp dweller says, "I feel that I am a criminal or a murderer" (Boochani 2018:86). Criminalising refugees allows the operation of torture. "What crime have I committed to justify cuffing me tightly and putting me onto an aeroplane?" (Boochani 2018:96). "Why do I have to be punished for what others might do?" (Boochani 2018:107). Through the rhetoric of fear, the kyriarchal system achieves subjugation of the prisoners. The different techniques of domestication include making people wait in long queues for long hours as illustrated in the chapter titled "Queuing as Torture"(Boochani 2018:189); cutting down on supplies; escorting them; regulating phone calls (an innocent man was denied the permission to make an urgent call to his dying father). All these enable them to create a condition of

dependency which in turn promises obedience. The only thing they could purchase is cigarettes. Pens and papers are never supplied, although there are provisions in the law.

From a helpless, meek and tense group of people, a violent and barbaric population is created by the inhumane conditions they are subjected to. Boochani writes, "...no one has the right to express the very human feeling of munificence" (Boochani 2018:184). The dehumanising experience is reflected in the language of the narration. The writer compares the prisoners greedily waiting for food with "animals" and "leeches" (Boochani 2018:195). He calls himself a "lowly fox, frail and weak, waiting to scavenge their leftovers" (Boochani 2018:196). As the days passed, the people who stood "like submissive sheep" (p. 90) have transformed into "gluttonous pack animals" (Boochani 2018:195). They live in a situation that could not function as a civilised society, instead in a crowd that functioned according to the law of the jungle and the power of biceps and muscles (Boochani 2018 ;47, 227). This system of the prison instils in the prisoners' perverse habits and sordid and barbaric behaviours. Their economic productivity is challenged since the people cannot engage in any job. Thus refugee camps perpetuate a culture of submission.

Boochani notes, "We are like puppets on a string put in motion with the flick of a finger. Every mind is caught up in a process that has become normalised. A Domesticating process." (Boochani 2018:190). The subjects' agency is subdued by the system. One of the major ways in which the body is controlled is by interfering with medical practices. The doctor by virtue of the position and knowledge assumes a superior position. The right to decide about one's body is suspended when any person is examined by the medical team, who are considered an agents of power. Thus medical knowledge is not only a privileged form of knowledge but rather a politicised

knowledge which has the implication of governance. Once they have induced the fear of malaria in the prison inmates, they distribute pills which are usually given to "cows bloated from overeating". (Boochani 2018:l55). They are frisked at least once a day and a slight suspicion leads to a detailed stop and search. Such examinations are not only mentally torturous but physically draining. He writes:

> The frisking hands of the Papus/ The imposing stares of the Australian officers/the prisoners trapped in a tunnel of tension... the body left vulnerable/the body an object to be searched/Examined by the hands of others/The body susceptible to the gaze of others (Boochani 2018:306).

Nomenclature has a special place in the novel. The refugees are renamed as "Cow", "Comedian", "Prime Minister", "The Blue-Eyed Boy" etc. not only to camouflage their original names (for security reasons) but also to suggest the lack of a stable identity in a foreign land or the irrelevance of a name when they are just a flock of "docile sheep" or "pieces of meat" (Boochani 2018:352, 152). Renaming is a political act of erasing the past ties with one's own religion, country and nationality and their willingness to be a part of the host country. The narrative shows how refugees from a position of "waiting to be helped" transform into an individual with an agency (although very little in that sense). He casts doubt on the existence of a stable, coherent self (Flax 1987:624).

Boochani, in this work, also focuses on language and its use through renaming. He renames Manus Regional Processing Centre as Manus Prison, thus removing any euphemistic trait to the detention centre. The prison is described as "soul-destroying", "enormous cage", and "hell" (Boochani 2018:111). The writer 'reveals' the real name of G4S, a group

that supervises the prisoners' activities, as Bastard's Security Company" (Boochani 2018:141). The choice of Farsi language in the manuscript sent to the translator and its translation to English bear political significance. The translator says that he was intrigued by Boochani's choice to write in Farsi, not Kurdish. "He was writing in the language of the oppressors [Farsi], even though he is a fervent advocate of Kurdish culture, language and politics. And the book was being translated into the language of his jailers and torturers [English]" (Boochani 2018:394).

The refugees, including Boochani, a journalist himself, are irritated and "frightened" when they find the journalists outside the airport. He is critical of journalists' behaviour that feeds on wars and miseries. Additionally, he wants to represent rather than be represented or become "objects of inquiry for these intrusive people " (Boochani 2018:91, 93). He also suspects a nexus between the media persons and the officials. His disdain for the Kurd interpreter in the detention camp is also evident when he expresses how insensitive her approach toward the refugee community is: "How idiotic for a person to want to show off to a bunch of poor and helpless humans by wearing those ridiculous clothes" (Boochani 2018:106). All the instances prove his desire for refugees' autonomy to re-present their reality. The inscriptions on the walls of the prison also indicate the refugees' desire to mark their memories, stories and even humble prayers like that of Nilou, a young girl who wrote "Oh God, do something, take us to a nice place. Kiss, kiss" (Boochani 2018:119). The people waiting to be resettled in hope deserve to be treated with dignity. "The feelings of weakness, of demoralisation, of inferiority" (Boochani 2018:100) add to their pain of being forcefully separated from their families and familiar places.

Boochani does not mention what led to his fleeing from Iran because the narration itself (of the risks of travelling by trucks and by boats) suggests the needlessness to reiterate the well-founded fear of persecution. Most importantly, it also demonstrates the impossibility to prove or disprove whether an asylum-seeker had genuine fears of persecution when he or she left their country. Whether or not a government should consider the people who have come to a foreign land to escape persecution or war or genocide as 'threats to the security' of a country is an ethical question to be answered. By exposing the plight of refugees and the injustices against them, it calls for international attention to the pathetic condition of the detention camps and the plight of the refugees who have migrated not by choice but for the sake of their lives. Boochani's *No Friend But the Mountains* describes the torture in detention camps and the plight of the refugees denied the opportunity to live in dignity as humans. There are several means through which the mind and body of the refugees are controlled. Biopolitics allows a condition for the subjugation of the bodies to the extent of killing life for the sake of preserving life. The State perceives the foreigner Iranian in the Australian territory as an invader without understanding the circumstances of the migration. It constructs and perpetuates the refugee as a threat so as to protect its own population.

Although Foucauldian concepts of panopticism, surveillance and dangerous individuals bring out the subjugation of the refugee bodies, the theory falls short in explaining how the subjecthood of refugees emerges in the biopolitical state. The inadequacy of Foucault's theory in the matter of refugee is because refugee is not a direct subject (in the sense of a citizen) of the sovereign or State is one of the limitations of this paper. Also, a refugee detention camp is different in objective from other institutions like schools, hospitals or

prisons. According to Foucault, institutions like schools, hospitals, prisons etc have a function of discipline and reformation to perform. The refugees function in space that is beyond at the same time within the territory of the state /sovereignty or what Agamben describes as a "state of exception",ie: "a temporary and spatial sphere in which every law is suspended" (Agamben: 37-38). However, the existence of refugee camps can be explained with the help of biopolitics, a concept dealt with by Foucault in his works. Since the refugee is indirectly (though more intensely) under the control of the host country, the position of a refugee can be well understood using Foucauldian concepts.

Through the depictions of their lives, Boochani translates their everyday experience to the literary scene so that the history and trauma of refugees are preserved. The importance of including refugee stories in refugee studies is that it exposes the blatant violations of refugee rights and human rights which manifests as physical and psychological torture in liberal democracies to the reading public. Through the narration of their individual stories, the writer's intention is not to establish the veracity of the incident but to establish individuality of the refugees and humanise the figure rendered as subhuman. The paper explored the relationship between the power structure and the individuals who are within the political borders yet legally unprotected. The geographical distance between the camps and mainland Australia metaphorically symbolised the distance between the rights of the citizen population and the refugee population. This paper attempted to look at the various ways in which the body is subjected to the control of power structures. It also explored how fear becomes a tool for domesticating and controlling the refugees. Additionally, it also looked at the various ways through which a significant

group of people's lives becomes unworthy as they constitute the "non-population".

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Migrant Identity Defined through Aspirations: Analysis of Xiaolu Guo's *20 Fragments of a Ravenous Youth*

MEGHA BALU SOLANKI

Abstract

This paper delves into the idea of the aspirations of a woman and the process of migration in the contemporary world. It takes into consideration Xiaolu Guo's novel, 20 Fragments of a Ravenous Youth. Xiaolu Guo, through her varied works, has brought to focus the lives of Chinese women who travel across spaces in search of a better life and the novel I have attempted to analyse is a portrayal of one such woman named Fenfang. This paper traces her movements from a small unknown village to Beijing and analyses it against the backdrop of Michaela Benson and Karen O'Reilly's essay, "Lifestyle Migration: Escaping to the Good Life?" It examines the instances of Fenfang's negotiations in the process of constructing her identity in the vast urban space where she has migrated to. It uses Harald Bauder's work on migrants and the production of social identities and Louise Beynon's study of rural Chinese working women and their hopes and dreams.

Based on the above-highlighted works, the aim of this paper is to explore the construction of a migrant identity that relies on escaping from the drudgery of the space they were born into and towards something that the migrant woman considers to be more fruitful. Through Guo's depiction of Fenfang's struggles to become a Beijing-er, this paper also highlights the transactions of a migrant woman with the urban space that she aspires to belong to and an undefined identity that she is left with when the metropolis denies her the same.

Keywords: Aspirations, Lifestyle Migration, Urban Spaces, Good Life, Identity.

"My youth began when I was 21. At least, that's when I decided it began. That was when I started to think that all those shiny things in life – some of them might possibly be for me" (Guo 2008:9).

Fenfang, the central character of Xiaolu Guo's novel *20 Fragments of a Ravenous Youth*, is a migrant from a remote village in China whose youth begins in Beijing – a city where she starts her quest to find the "shiny things in life". It is the idea of 'shiny things' that the paper attempts to explore. Fenfang's life in Beijing is a movement towards attaining something that she could not find in her village. Her youth begins with a decision – a decision to pursue these 'shiny things' that life supposedly has. This paper also analyses Fenfang's life in Beijing, her interactions and negotiations with spaces and people located within this urban space to map her journey searching for the 'shiny things.' It looks at the notion of 'shiny things' and explores it in relation to the aspirations that direct an individual's movements and actions and, through it, their life. It also examines how the city influences Fenfang's life, and the impact urban life has on her aspirations. Through this the paper aims to use these explorations to understand how a migrant identity is constructed through the negotiations of personal aspirations and the expectations of the city and study whether these aspirations succumb or survive in urban spaces or take a new shape.

The primary question that concerns this paper is: what constitutes 'shiny things', and is there a way to define them? To understand this, it becomes important to delve into the idea of aspirations. Dev Nathan relates aspirations to "how people want to be in the future" (Nathan 2005:36), and it is this thought of how an individual works toward shaping their future to shape themselves that helps in defining the 'shiny things' in life. Fenfang's quest for 'shiny things' represents the

quest to realize the dreams of a peasant girl who does not want to be defined by her rural background. Fenfang's story starts with a decision – a decision to begin her youth. For Fenfang, the rural life is where peasants go "straight from childhood to middle age with nothing in between" (Guo 2008:9). Time blends into nothingness – an empty routine of going to the farm and coming back home. In this context, Henri Lefebvre talks about the rural world, where life is cyclical and contains a slow rhythm (Conley:2012). The nothingness of rural life for Fenfang is the repetitive everyday that constrains her within its cyclical motions of farming. The city represents an escape from this rural space where there is no youth to speak of and towards recreating her everyday life. It represents Lefebvre's concept of a lived space – the idea that the individual is actively a part of constructing their everyday life, "of a lived experience of a space" (Schmid 2008:40). The city is the center of recreation for Fenfang. It is the first step towards the 'shiny things' – the dream of a future, of having a youth. Fenfang's resolution to move away from her village alludes to her actively constructing a future. Though Fenfang, through the course of the novel, never portrays a concrete idea of the shiny things that she wants; it suggests an aspiration to have a life not being defined by the nothingness of peasant life.

However, entering the urban space is not the end of the quest for shiny things. Fenfang's first nights in Beijing are spent in the Hutongs – "The Hutongs. . . Countless alleys packed with countless homes where countless families lived. These old-time Beijing residents thought they were the 'Citizens of the Emperor'. They didn't seem so noble to me" (Guo 2008:13). For Fenfang, the Beijing she dreams of is built of tall buildings and bright lights. It is a "brave new world" (Guo 2008:12), constructed on images of drinking cold cans of Coca-Cola and shopping – the representative pictures of urban life for a young Fenfang. The part of Beijing that she first steps foot in is not

what she dreamt of Beijing to be. It is a part that is still not touched by the forces of globalization, occupied by the citizens of the Old Emperor, where the image of drinking a can of cold Coca-Cola does not appear. In Fenfang's eyes, the space isn't noble because it doesn't fit Beijing's picture that she had imagined. Modern-day China has been looked at through globalization and the impact of market forces on its citizens. With the rapid commercialization, contemporary urban China and its urban migrant populace have been studying market values and lifestyle choices based on modern markets (Jacka 2006, Shen 2019). It is then less of a surprise that Fenfang's early thoughts of the city and her aspirations are tied to this commercial notion of modern life.

There is another point to note in Fenfang's observations of the Beijing residents – the notion of being 'Citizens of the Emperor'. The urban-rural divide is stark when it comes to the treatment of migrants within Chinese urban spaces. Yiran Zheng talks about the Beijing floaters – a migrant population who are not officially registered as Beijing citizens but come to the city "to find work, seek a better life and more opportunities for success" (Zheng 2016:108). They are a part of the metropolis providing labour, and working in the service or entertainment industries but are marginalized because they are not of the city – not born out of the families that have lived here from the time of royalty. Fenfang's words that Beijing residents did not look like nobility remain important because, in her eyes, the Hutong residents are similar to the rural residents she had left behind – they look like they follow the same cyclical, slow rhythm of life she is running away from. Though they are recognized as Beijing residents, they are stuck in the old times – the Hutongs represent the past times that are fading in the rapidly changing modern China.

The rural-urban dynamics that Fenfang is a part, influence the

construction of her identity. One of the major reasons for China's internal migration movement from its rural parts to urban cities is the lack of resources and opportunities due to its restricting policies and neglect (Pai:2012). Hsiao-Hung Pai in *Scattered Sand: The Story of China's Rural Migrants* has recorded multiple Chinese migrants who move from their villages to provide for themselves and their families as there is no little money, work or healthcare. China's rapidly growing cities then become the hub for these migrants to try their luck. But the 'Hukou system' has proven to be detrimental to migrant mobility. Hukou refers to the residential registration that each Chinese citizen has, corresponding to their place of birth. To transfer one's registration from one place to another is difficult and, in most cases, an impossible job. Many rural migrants are illegal residents who risk losing their social security by moving to cities as "*liudong renkou*" – or floating population, the ones who move to cities without any corresponding registration (Jacka:2006).

These rural migrants or floaters are often subject to marginalization due to their illegal status and their peasant background. Their migrant identities are defined through their marginalised position and not by official documents. The ones without any documentation are looked down upon and treated as criminals rather than being part of the urban space that they help to build. Fenfang's urban identity is also defined by this struggle of being recognized as a true Beijing-er. Merely occupying a space does not make her an official member of that space. For the most part, her life revolves around attaining a number that would make her an official city resident. One way to become a resident, as Fenfang believes, is by getting an education - an urban education that would make her a productive member of the urban society.

"All the money I was earning went towards my re-

education. In exchange, I gained a load of certificates and diplomas. These credentials demonstrated that I was a useful member of society and that I was modern and civilised. Ah, finally, I was something" (Guo 2008:26).

Fenfang begins her journey in the city, working as a waitress in a restaurant and then as a wage worker in a tin factory. This follows the trajectory of the migrant narratives that have been studied around Chinese internal migration. For example, Yan Hairong has carried out research on women who migrate from villages in China to cities like Beijing, working in factories and restaurants. They move away from their homes because they want to be free and independent (Hairong 2008).

This independence comes at the cost of low wages and no recognition. They are also aware of the differences between them and urban citizens who have different lifestyles. Hairong also points out a rapidly growing market economy that demands labour capital in rural migrants and attracts them through promises of freedom and better work opportunities.

In this context, Kathy Charmaz, building her argument on Johann Strauss' concept, states that humans are "viewed as active agents in their lives and their worlds rather than as passive recipients of larger social forces" (Charmaz 2006:7). Therefore, this commercial market industry also influences Fenfang's early aspirations though she is not a passive recipient of these attractions. On a different note, Masja Van Meeteren states that aspirations are "a conceptual bridge between structure and agency, fed not only by needs and wants but also by perceived possibilities and constraints" (Van Meeteren 2014:219). Fenfang's endeavour to gain education, and to become a part of society by actively contributing to it is an attempt to be accepted by the urban space. Her certifications make her modern and urban. Unlike the rural villagers, she had left behind her family to fulfil her aspirations. In this context,

she says – "Educating myself had allowed me to apply for permanent citizen status in Beijing. Now I was a person with multiple skills, all of which I was expected to dedicate to building the increasingly glorious reputation of my new home" (Guo 2008:26). Fenfang makes Beijing her new home and becomes an active agent that makes her a contributing member of society through her work.

At this point, it becomes important to draw attention to the notion of 'work'. As mentioned earlier, work opportunities are a reason for migrant movement to cities. Fenfang, too, starts like many others in the service industry but soon ends up being a part of the film industry. She begins working as a reserved artist in films and believes that after being stuck in the rut of industry's low-wage jobs, she was finally getting closer to the shiny things through films. Films and the film industry have a visible impact on many migrants in Beijing, especially the generations of floating artists that come seeking freedom to cities and express themselves through films. Jia Zhangke says:

> "We come to the city and share the opportunities provided by the city. We release our power at this time, and no more live a traditional life. This is the Generation of Floating, the generation of pursuing freedom and self. I embody all these feelings in the film" (qtd in Zheng 2016:116).

This can be applied to Fenfang as well. Fenfang, through the course of the novel, is portrayed as a reserved artist in films such as, Female Number 300, Woman Waiting at the Platform, a maid to the princess. She plays nameless, voiceless characters in commercial films that hardly have any significance. Similar to the invisibility of a low-wage worker, her multiple roles do not amount to anything. Her role is only visible to Huizi – a man she is friends with – who writes scripts for B-grade films. For Huizi, small scale artists need a

voice, but he is also aware that films on invisible voices would never sell in the industry. Yet inspired by Huizi, Fenfang starts writing her first script. In the fast-changing Beijing, Fenfang feels lost, stationary and unchanging – "Beijing was moving forwards like an express train, but my life was going nowhere. Okay, so I was getting lots of work, but it was all the same" (Guo 2008:61). The listlessness arising from being stuck is visible again. There is work available, but the excitement is lost. Fenfang's aspirations seem to have come to a standstill.

The script that Fenfang starts writing is again a movement towards adapting to circumstances and transforming what 'shiny things' come to mean for her. She writes of Hao An, a man with a "trivial life" (Guo 2008:62). Hao An stands for the empty life that Fenfang and many others share – "I started to watch nameless men and women in the street. We were alike: none of us heroes, just ordinary people – extras – drifting through messy streets in a vast, messy Beijing" (Guo 2008:61).

When the script is finished, Fenfang shows it to a film director who rejects the film, saying that it was not the kind of film people would want to see, that there was no hero or any message in the film. Fenfang accepts that the film will never be her breakthrough and starts writing a different script – a sci-fi story that emulates *The Matrix*. This script is seen as promising by an investor, but he does not buy it. It is only in *"Fragment Nineteen"* that Fenfang's script gets sold – it is Hao An's story. Fenfang's first script was bought by an underground director who makes underground films for a mere 5000 yuan. This is a significant trajectory that reflects in Fenfang's life. It is not just the script she writes but the process of showing them to others that display the same pattern of ordinary individuals who want to be the unlikely hero, trying to adapt to commercial life and the movement of being only accepted by the outliers. If Hao An's story ever gets transformed from

words to motion pictures, it is unknown, but it becomes unimportant – "I thanked him and then I thanked him again before I sank into the darkness of the stormy Beijing night" (Guo 2008:121). The darkness of Beijing swallows these stories – the ordinary people remain ordinary, Fenfang's 'shiny things' remain undefined, and her aspirations become even more of an abstract notion as she nears the end of her time in Beijing.

For the major portion of this paper, the focus has remained on Fenfang's aspirations of establishing her migrant identity concerning the urban spaces she occupies and her work. But Beijing is also a space where she forms connections with others. Zlatko Skrbiš looks at migration as a process where the migrant individual is linked to new experiences like forming new attachments, adjusting to new spaces, settlement, renewing the sense of belonging, and new beginnings and endings, all of which Skrbiš points out are strong sources of emotions (Skrbiš 2008:236). Two relationships are significant to Fenfang's Beijing identity. The first is her first boyfriend, Xiaolin, who Fenfang meets on the set of a film. They go on a date, and the next day Fenfang moves in with his family in a one-bedroom apartment occupied by seven people and two dogs. There is no romance, according to Fenfang, in her relationship with Xiaolin. They are two different individuals, and Fenfang soon realizes this:

> "But most of the time, Xiaolin was either angry or zombie-like. He was stuck in a rut. Get up, go to work, go to bed. Never any change. . . There was no oxygen left in the room; I was worn out. It was like being back with the rotten sweet potatoes. I wanted to run and run and run" (Guo 2008:20).

Even though Xiaolin is a Beijinger, he portrays the exact life that Fenfang is running away from – the monotonous rut that

leads nowhere. Fenfang's relationship with him is one of seeking comfort, where the love arises not from romance but from wanting security in a place that is not home. But this notion of comfort turns inhibiting for her. Fenfang's relationship with Xiaolin is a mix of finding new attachments and remaining tied to a skewed feeling of a past she is running from. In the end, this relationship becomes stifling, and Fenfang moves out, finding an apartment where she could live alone and away from Xiaolin.

Xiaolin and his family's move is important as it breaks the cyclical everyday monotony that follows Fenfang. It also brings back a sense of freedom for Fenfang. Louise Beynon talks about Chinese migrant women's attraction to "gaining a sense of autonomy and independence through making a "space of their own" in the city" (Beynon 2004:138), this notion is starkly visible in Fenfang's portrayal. But this is contrasted with the patriarchal societal expectations for young women to get married and settle down. Fenfang never settles down – her relationship with Xiaolin resembles the nothingness that she is running away from. She doesn't see a future with him. For a long time, though, Xiaolin hounds her, calling her at odd times, at one point breaking into her apartment and destroying her furniture.

In contrast to this, Ben, a Ph.D. student from the U.S. living in Beijing, is in a relationship with her. The time she spends with Ben is brief, but there is a sense of freedom attached to it, she thinks of running with Ben instead of running away from him – "'Maybe we should just run away,' I said, with hope. 'Why not? China is big. We could hide in any corner; we don't have to be in Beijing. Yes?" (Guo 2008:74). But it is Ben who runs away, returning to his country. The relationship ends, but Ben remains on the periphery, connected by long-distance phone calls – "a fuzzy long-distance echo" (Guo 2008:79). These

relationships can be read as a metaphor for elements of Fenfang's life itself – the stifling nothingness that threatens to sink upon her and the aspirations for 'shiny things' that she sees for a moment but disappears into a fuzzy blur on the periphery.

The 'shiny things' remain an abstract notion as Fenfang moves through her time in Beijing. Even though she works hard for a registration number, she never gets it. She longs to be recognized in the industry she works but remains an unnamed character in a movie and a script that never materializes into a film. The companionship she seeks is also something that she doesn't get in the span of the novel. The dreams contained within this idea of 'shiny things' also change through the novel's course. In the last fragment, Fenfang packs her life in Beijing in twelve boxes and gets ready to store them in a warehouse. She thinks of where she wants to go next:

> "Perhaps I would go to Yun Nan in the south and live on a mountain. I could ask the locals to teach me how to find mushrooms in the forest. Or I could go to Da Lian, the seaside town, and discover the Yellow Sea and its fishing boats. Or perhaps I could go to Mongolia, to live in a tent, look after sheep and lie in the grass looking up at the big sky" (Guo 2008:122).

These places are so far away from the urban spaces that she wanted to settle herself in. In her quest for shiny things, she moves from crowded spaces that threaten to swallow her to thinking of empty places where there are barely any people and speaking of rural life. It is almost a circular motion. It could have been a Sisyphean movement of returning to where you had started from, if not for the 'shiny things' – "I wanted to see if I could find the shiny things in life all by myself" (Guo 2008:123). Fenfang's life portrays a struggle for independence, craving for comfort yet wanting to achieve something greater.

The last lines of the novel are words that Huizi had told Fenfang, which Fenfang repeats for her 17-year-old self – "Fenfang, you must take care of your life" (Guo 2008:125).

The search for a better life, in Fenfang's case, is unending. Her identity is not defined by her past or present state but by the constant moving forward to attain something she spends her life looking for. This notion of aspirations defines the migrant identity, the endeavour to take care of one's life on one's own terms. Fenfang does not become a permanent part of the city, which she left behind in her village long ago. But her identity becomes a building process of the things she learns and the people she makes a part of her life. It is an identity that moves beyond notions of spaces and registrations and is imbibed with desires and movement. Fenfang's aspirations are about living life itself, moving beyond regular expectations, and creating something for herself. She does not find the 'shiny things' in her youth, but her pursuit of it establishes her identity.

Migrant identity, as a norm, has been understood in relation to the spaces that the migrant travels to and the work that they perform. By looking at Fenfang and the quest for 'shiny things', this paper has worked towards bringing to the forefront the idea of aspirations that fuel a migrant's movement. Lefebvre's idea of lived spaces speaks of experiences that an individual has in their interactions with the spaces they come to occupy. These lived experiences build an individual's self. Fenfang's youth speaks of her own lived experiences through which she tries to make Beijing her own city. She does not succeed at becoming an official Beijing-er. However, her experiences make her an independent woman whose dreams are not restrained by the rural monotony or the namelessness in Beijing. Her sense of self and identity becomes defined by her never-ending aspirations and her will to seek those 'shiny things'.

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The Dislocated Women: A Study Identifying and Analysing the Voices of Women in Partition Literature

PRACHI CHAUHAN

Abstract

The biggest migration British India hadwitnessed was the partition of 1947 followed by the independence from British rule. Drawing borders in the name of religion came at a cost of the most horrifying massacre seen by the Indians and the people of the newly created nation of Pakistan. The impact was shared by every person belonging to every community, caste or creed; but it is women who suffered silently in the process and whose stories were silenced and marginalised from the history. This study deals with these marginalised women who witnessed the unfortunate events of partition. Women whose senses of belonging have always been linked to the patriarch of the house did not identify with any border other than the borders of her house. Subjected to an insecure present within the borders of the household and an uncertain future with the new political and national borders drawn, they shared a bond among themselves of collective trauma and shared grief. This study analyses the stories of Saadat Hasan Manto, Ismat Chughtai, Bhisham Sahni and Amrita Pritam with a focus on the women characters living on both sides of the dividing line to bring forth their share of trauma. The study also speaks about the contradiction women faced between the concept of belonging and the concept of the nation as a religious state that was newly introduced to them. As their honour was closely linked with the honour of the family, the period of Partition saw murders of women glorified as martyrdom. But those who were abducted and later came back were branded as a disgrace. In the end, they never belonged anywhere. Amidst the chaos, they struggled to find a "country" of their

own which they found in the stories of these writers who gave them voices which were never heard otherwise.

Keywords: Partition Literature, Women, Sense of Belonging, Trauma.

Introduction

Ye daagh daagh ujala ye shab-gazida sahar
Vo intezaar tha jis ka ye voh sahar to nahin
(Faiz Ahmed Faiz, Subh-e-Azadi)

This light, smeared and spotted, this night-bitten dawn
This isn't surely the dawn we waited for so eagerly
(Translated by Baran Farooqi)

The dawn of independence brought with it the horrors of partition. In the above lines, Faiz Ahmed Faiz portrays the disillusionment that came with the independence of the Indian subcontinent from British rule. The turmoil associated with partition and the violence that followed tainted the occasion with horror. The subcontinent encountered one of the greatest migrations the world ever witnessed. The divide gave rise to communal dilemmas that came with the religious tensions, genocide, abductions, sexual violence, and forced conversions. Urvashi Butalia writes, "Never before or since have had so many people exchanged their homes and countries so quickly" (Butalia 17:3). And she describes the atrocities of this migration by quoting the number of deaths, "Estimates of the dead vary from 200,000 to two million ...about 75,000 women are thought to have been abducted and raped by men of religions different from their own (and indeed sometimes by men of their own religion)" (Butalia 17:3).

The integral question here remains, why is it still relevant to read and analyse partition narratives? This can be answered by looking at the political history of the country following the partition. The communal divide it propagated lasts till date,

and it is evident in the post-independence events, be it the Sikh riots of 1984, the demolition of Babri Masjid in 1992 and its aftermath or the present-day Delhi riots, which happened in the frenzy of the debate around the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA). The memory of partition becomes alive through these recurring events, as Urvashi Butalia mentions:

> In each of these instances, Partition stories and memories were used selectively by the aggressors: militant Hindus were mobilized using the one-sided argument that Muslims had killed Hindus at Partition, they had raped Hindu women, and so they must in turn be killed, and their women subjected to rape (Butalia 17:7).

This historical event of partition and its consequent communal violence has been represented through historical records, memoirs, testimonies etc. Literature as Jill Didur calls it "offering an alternative 'record' of the period" (Didur 2006:4) was widely read in post-independence India. The representations in historical accounts of the period can be problematised as their approach was to record statistical representation of the experience of violence and often such approach neglected the 'everyday' experience. Hence, the representations can be scrutinised for universalising the experience which is in contrast with the 'pluralising' literary narrative. Didur highlights the same:

> …early commentary on partition literature characterised it as 'documenting' rather than re-presenting the violence, and thus the interpretive function of reading and writing about the partition, the discursive construction of subjectivity, agency, nationalism, and history that are involved in its narrativization, is not considered (Didur 2006:5).

The literary representations of the everyday experience thus deconstruct and reconstruct the hegemonic narrative of

partition. This very reconstruction of the narrative also involves a gendered perspective which questions the historiography of partition. Didur notes, "A gendered understanding of the partition necessitates a shift in the scholar's attention from the public to the private, from the high political story to the local, everyday account" (Didur 2006:7). The rewriting and re-examining is thus radicalised as it has an underlying discursive dimension to it. In this context Didur further says,

> …reading and writing about literature representing women's lives involves straddling both these spheres, making visible the binary construction of the public and private implicated in nationalist discourse, patriarchal power relations, and the way in which women's bodies were singled out as privileged sites of violence at the time of partition (Didur 2006:7).

One part of the catastrophe was violence against women. The memoirs and stories around partition help trace instances of women being raped, forcefully converted, married, and their bodies mutilated and tattooed with symbols of other religions. These atrocious acts of violence can be comprehended as objectifying women as targets for physical as well as discursive violence. The image of a woman during the time of independence was identified symbolically with that of the nation. The juxtaposition of this image of a woman with that of a nation (widely propagated image of 'Bharat mata') makes her an object which needs to be protected by the 'self' and can be defiled by the 'other'. This became a part of popular nationalist discourse during the time of partition. Patriarchy became an agency in not just objectifying women but also governing their experiences in the partition narrative which makes Butalia question, "How does 'history' look when seen through the eyes of women?" (Butalia 2017:21). This could be

further understood by what Hélène Cixous defines as a "phallocentric tradition" of writing history as she explains , "It has been one with the phallocentric tradition. It is indeed that same self-admiring, self-stimulating, self-congratulatory phallocentrism" (Cixous et al. 76:879). Therefore, the literary accounts about women's experiences destabilise the totalising accounts of partition and also questions the "self-admiring" nationalist discourse.

The absence of women from the grand narratives of partition history has often been contested by writers. In this context, Butalia argues, "The men seldom spoke about women. Women almost never spoke about themselves; indeed they denied they had anything 'worthwhile' to say, a stance that was often corroborated by their men" (Butalia 2017:126). However, this silence was challenged by counter-narratives offered by prominent radical writers in their stories representing and recovering the personal experiences of trauma, disillusionment and violation of the body. These counter-narratives do not hand over a mere historical record to the readers but rather represent and politicise the local and private experiences of women in the form of radicalism against the conventional hegemonic structures of historical narratives of partition. The very idea of literary radicalism in India was also upheld by the aspect of gender and its prominent role in constructing the radical discourse. Therefore, this "regendered history" provides a vast space for the experiences of women not just articulated by the women writers but also in male writers' works. Arguing on the same lines, Priyamvada Gopal in her book, *Literary Radicalism in India* defines the "regendered history" as, "Such a history also needs to look at the ways in which male writers dealt with questions of gender, not only in their treatment of such things as 'the woman question', but in relation to their own subjectivity as men in a patriarchal context…" (Gopal 2005:11).

The paper posits that the search for women's voices can be efficiently undertaken in literary works instead of the hegemonic and patriarchal historical records. The choice of the fictional literary works has been made as they depict representations which are radicalised by the concerned writers. These representations have been analysed and studied in the works of Saadat Hasan Manto, Amrita Pritam, Jyotirmoyee Devi and Rajinder Singh Bedi. These writers were part of the Progressive Writers Association which ventured out to problematise the nationalist discourse with the dynamic process of self-critique. As part of the same process, they gave prominence to gender by politicising and radicalising it in the formation of the cultural discourse around it and thereby providing another reason behind theoretical consideration of reexaminations of their literary works. The argument in the paper highlights the underlying concept of honour associated with women. This juxtaposes the public and the private realms governed by the politics of patriarchy; the disillusionment experienced by women in terms of altered and lost identities; and lastly the trauma experienced by the women who were subjected to violence, not just physical but discursive too. These issues will be examined through the texts: Amrita Pritam's *Pinjar*, Rajinder Singh Bedi's *Lajwanti*, Saadat Hasan Manto's *The Return*, and Jyotirmoyee Devi's *The River Churning*.

Women and Honour

The metanarrative of partition has been homogenising, as discussed in the previous section, placing women in the periphery of the partition narrative, but what is important to understand is that women as a category also became discursive for the 'idea of nationalism' propagated in the upheaval. The nationalist movement created a strong image of strength to awaken the nationalist spirits and mobilise the people. The

image was of a 'mother' who was glorified as a nurturer and was used as a metaphor for the nation. This discursive image was associated with women of the nation and hence women's 'honour' was juxtaposed with the 'honour' of the nation. The patriarchal notion of honour has been woven around women's sexual purity and chastity and this very notion makes women symbolic in the nationalist movement. As a consequence of the same, women became the central site of violence during the catastrophe and describing it, Paulomi Chakraborty writes, "... how the family, the community, the nation and the state collude in fixing "woman" as a symbol of honour and therefore, as a location of violence" (Chakraborty 2014:42). Further, Butalia also argues,

> If the severing of the body of the country recalled the violation of the body of the nation-as-mother, the abduction and rape of its women, their forcible removal from the fold of their families, communities and country, represented a violation of their bodies as real — not metaphorical — mothers (Butalia 2017:188).

Butalia describing the brutality women underwent, writes, "Many were paraded naked in the streets, several had their breast cut off, their bodies were tattooed with marks of the 'other' religion; in a bid to defile the so-called 'purity' of the race, women were forced to have sex with men of the other religion, many were impregnated" (Butalia 2017:132). These acts of tremendous violence depict the idea of women being symbolic of land in terms of a nation that can be conquered or defiled by violating a woman's symbolic body.

The atrocities women had to undergo because of the association of the concept of honour were not limited to the sectarian strife preceding partition but also continued in the post-partition period. Women from almost all the communities were abducted, converted, or impregnated by their abductors.

To restore the defiled 'honour' of the communities, the recovery of these women became an integral 'duty' of the 'dominant' citizen of the patriarchal nation-state. Hence, the Central Recovery Operation was employed to recover the abducted women and Didur explains it as an operation "mounted by the Indian government in 1948 to 'recover' women 'abducted' during the migrations and restore them to their 'original' extended families and communities" (Didur 2006:44). These abductions destabilise the hegemonic patriarchal construction of the nation-state. Hence, it was crucial to 'restore' them to their 'original' domestic sphere. But the question is, what happens to the accounts of the 'everyday' experience of the abducted women? As mentioned in the previous section, the metanarrative subsides these personal experiences. There is absolute silence as far as these experiences are concerned and such silence creates a gap in the historical narrative. Hence, literary works can be used to fill the silenced accounts of abducted women and offer alternative perspectives to the state's historical archives. The idea of 'honour' in the association of women and its consequences in the accounts of abducted women is analysed using three literary works, Rajinder Singh Bedi's *Lajwanti*, Jyotirmoyee Devi's *The River Churning* and Amrita Pritam's *Pinjar*.

Rajinder Singh Bedi's short story *Lajwanti* published in 1951 in Urdu narrates the plight of a woman of the same name who was abducted during the sectarian strife and on her return; she is surprised to get a new identity assigned by her husband, Sunder Lal. Through this story, Bedi brings forth the stigma associated with abducted women and the families or communities' reluctance in 'taking them back'. As Didur mentions "…Bedi's narrative as a critique of the power relations that inflected the sociopolitical practices surrounding the Recovery Operation." (Didur 2006:57) Bedi questions the patriarchal norms about women's chastity and disrupts the

binary of private and public spaces. The eagerness to 'recover' his wife and the reluctance in 'accepting' her, politicised Sunder Lal's position, as Bedi juxtaposed his 'private' choice with that of the nation's quest to 'recover' the abducted women. Bedi tries to give a voice to a common man's response to a woman's plight in this context. He says, "We will not take these sluts, left over by the Muslims"(Bedi 2014). Sundar Lal's 'acceptance' of his wife can be scrutinised on the basis of his reluctance and his lack of interest in listening to Lajwanti's account of abduction. He silences her 'experience' during the turmoil which reinstates the politically dominant patriarchal narrative of the divide which created no room for women's accounts. It is because the voices of the 'dishonoured' women were tarnishing the political image of an 'honourable' nation or community.

Jyotirmoyee Devi's novel *The River Churning* (*Epar Ganga, Opar Ganga*) initially titled *Itihasey Stree Parva* meaning the woman chapter in history, was first published in 1967. Devi, through the initial title, critiqued the absence of the woman's chapter from history. The novel is a coming-of-age story of Sutara, who was orphaned during the partition riots in Bengal at a very young age. She was taken care of by a Muslim family who was her neighbour. They found her in an unconscious state with a bruised body. She, on returning to her extended family witnesses the reluctance in accepting her into the family. Devi has constructed a silence around the supposed sexual assault of Sutara; "She wanted to reach the mother and began to run, but stumbled and fell. Then everything went blank." (Devi 1995:8) By doing so, Devi critiqued the cultural concept of honour associated with women. Didur argues, "…by leaving the details of Sutara's supposed sexual assault unverifiable to both Sutara and her relatives, *The River Churning* critiques the patriarchal logic of a 'cultural system that dictates that rape signifies a woman's shame and the

dishonour of her male protectors'". (Didur 2006:126) When she is 'restored' to her extended family, the reluctance to rehabilitate her into the family depicts the 'modern' Hindu nationalist state's failure and testifies to the woman's status as a commodity.

Sutara on her return also becomes an object, an object that was 'defiled' and 'demeaned' and hence became a sight of spectacle for others who were in a 'chaste' and 'superior' position. "Sutara became an object of curiosity to the other family members, some of whom came out of their rooms to have a good look at her; others peered at her from within." (Devi 1995:31). Throughout the novel, Sutara has been looked down upon as a 'dishonoured' object, despite having no clarity about her supposed sexual assault. Her brother's mother-in-law disapproves of her as she considers her as 'polluted' and expresses her conservative Hindu patriarchal mindset by saying,

> Have you taken leave of your senses? She has spent so many days in a Muslim household, six long months. What is left of her caste, you tell me! It was good of you to bring her over, that is alright. But keep her away from household work as you would a low caste *hadi* or Bagdi. Look at what she is doing, polluting everything. Who knows what she has done, the kind of food she has eaten there! (Devi 1995:36).

Didur describes it as "The novel depicts how Sutara is forced to endure the scorn of her community by becoming a scapegoat whose stigmatization sustains a patriarchal view of Indian nationalism" (Didur 2006:128).

The reflections of the discursive concept of honour can also be witnessed in the novel *Pinjar* by Amrita Pritam published in 1950 in Punjabi. The protagonist of the story *Pinjar*, Pooro is abducted before her wedding as revenge for a family rivalry

between the Sahukars and the Shaikhs. Her abductor, Rashida takes her as his wife and gives her a new name, Hamida. Pooro in the initial days of her abduction tries to escape from Rashida and on returning to her father's house was asked to go back to Rashida as she is now considered impure. Her abduction has defiled the honour of her family and therefore, her father denies her rights over her house saying, "Who will marry you now? You have lost your religion and your birthright. If we dare to help you, we will be wiped out without a trace of blood left behind to tell of our fate" (Pritam 2015:22). Similar discourse is also seen when Pooro pleads Rashida to take her back, and in reply, he says, "…you have no place in that family anymore! If they let you in even once, not one of their Hindu friends and relatives will take a drop of water in their house. And you have been with me for fifteen days." (Pritam 2015:18-19). This again can be seen as politicising Pooro as a site of honour for her family and her abduction is taken as defiling the honour of the family. The works discussed above not only state the position of women during the time of partition but also analyse the politics of honour associated with women, nation and community. In doing so, the position of a woman was politicised as an object which needs to be protected by the men and if the honour was defiled, the woman was to be disowned by the family and community.

Dislocation and the Sense of Disillusionment

Another aspect of this violence against women is that it was followed by dislocation and uprooting. This created a sense of disillusionment among these women whose identities were destructed. The identities attributed to the displaced and dislocated women became a key aspect of discourse in the partition narrative**.** In the context of partition**,** patriarchy has been defining these identities for women in their association with the patriarch of the house, be it her husband, father,

brother or her abductor. Chakraborty tracing this association of women with the patriarch of the house quotes Gyanendra Pandey, "... for she 'belongs' to someone else, and therefore to his caste, nationality and religion" (Chakraborty 2014:45).

During the partition, when women were abducted, assaulted, and forcefully converted by the abductors, how did they react to this displacement? And if they were recovered, what was the disillusionment they faced? There were numerous reasons for their disillusionment, and one major reason was a disrupted sense of belonging. They were 'uprooted' forcefully and 'placed' in a new domestic sphere to which they could not relate. In most cases, they were forced to live with the abductor with whom they were unable to build a sense of belongingness. The others who were 'recovered' were not properly rehabilitated into the family and community, and were labelled as 'impure'. This created a sense of disillusionment. To end their life-long sorrows and overcome disillusionment many of these women committed suicide. The issue of disillusionment has been critically studied by examining the three texts: *Pinjar, Lajwanti* and *The River Churning*.

In Amrita Pritam's *Pinjar* Rashida after abducting Pooro takes her as his wife and gives her a new name, Hamida. The name assigned, enforces upon her a new faith and individuality. The disillusionment she faced due to her dislocation from her father's house to her husband's house was not resolved, and she was given a new identity with which she could not identify herself. Describing this disillusionment, Pritam writes,

> In her dreams, when she met her old friends and played in her parents' homes, everyone still called her Pooro. At other times she was Hamida. It was a double life; Hamida by day, Pooro by night. In reality, she was just a skeleton, without a shape or a name (Pritam 2015:25).

Further, Pritam describes her loss of identity and disconnection with her husband, Rashida by stating, "Hamida realised that she belonged to the people whose year's harvest had been reduced to ashes. How could she identify herself with one who was the perpetrator of the crime?" (Pritam 2015:83).

A similar crisis has been portrayed by Bedi in *Lajwanti*. Sunder Lal's wife Lajwanti, was abducted by a Muslim. She had spent time in the Muslim household and on her return her husband found her to be healthier than before. In this context, the abductor seems to be less brutal than her husband, yet she identifies herself solely with her husband when she says, "No…he never said anything to me. He did not beat me, but I was terrified of him. You beat me but I was never afraid of you…" (Bedi 2014). This brings the reader to a juncture where the functioning of violence against women in a patriarchal structure can be witnessed in both the private and public sphere which is explained by Chakraborty as, "... how the extraordinary violence of partition, if different in degree, is contiguous to the violence that constitutes the "everyday world" of women, perpetrated by patriarchy that structures both the familial and the national" (Chakraborty 2014:42). Hence, the violence witnessed by Lajwanti resonates with the domestic violence she underwent 'every day' from her husband. The latter has been normalised as being confined in the private space of her household and the former being defied and silenced as bringing shame to her family. Furthermore, Lajwanti has been given a new identity by her husband on her return. He no more beats her and treats her like a fragile being, calling her a "devi". The disillusionment she underwent was because of the new life given to her by her own husband on her recovery from the abductor describing the same Bedi writes, "And in the end, she could no longer recognise the Lajo she had known. She had been rehabilitated but not accepted" (Bedi 2014).

A similar account of disillusionment can be examined in Jyotirmoyee Devi's *The River Churning*. Sutara, the protagonist, is reunited with her family but she struggles and suffers from the 'sense of belonging' as her family fails to accept her. She realises she felt more affection towards her Muslim neighbours, who took care of her for six months, but still, she could not 'belong' there because of the communal differences. On the other hand, she feels disconnected from her own family and community who label her as 'polluted'. The question, where she belongs to?, becomes the reason for her disillusionment. At last, she could relate only with the orphaned girls at the hostel in Delhi, who were also victims of the riots. Devi describes this disillusionment as a state where the survivors, "…had forgotten which tradition they belonged to" (Devi 1995:52). Another aspect that becomes crucial in the disillusionment of Sutara is the lack of truth about the happenings of the night the attack on her house took place. Throughout the novel, Sutara fails to recall what happened to her on the night of the attack; likewise, she does not remember her mother and sister's fate. She assumes them to be dead. She gets to hear a snippet of the fatal night from Moinu who tells her, "You were lying half-dead. Aziz bhai and the others lifted you on their shoulders and brought you here. Fakir told us that they had beaten you so badly" (Devi 1995:17). Similarly, the silence around Lajwanti's experience in Bedi's *Lajwanti* also becomes another reason for her disillusionment. Sundar Lal could not listen to his wife's account of her abduction as it is in this very ignorance; he has managed to accept her back. She wanted to tell him everything but Sunder Lal stopped her saying, "Lets forget the past; you did not commit any sin. What is evil is the social system which refuses to give an honoured place to virtuous women like you. That doesn't harm you, it only harms the society."(Bedi 2014). Her personal account of her abduction remains only to herself and as Bedi

mentions, "Lajwanti's secret remained locked in her breast. She looked at her own body which had, since the partition, become the body of a goddess. It no longer belonged to her." (Ibid)

Didur in one of her arguments discusses the failure to rehabilitate these women and their subsequent disillusionment. She writes, "The survival and return of these women to the community cast aspersions on their virtue and honour (as it is defined by patriarchal codes) and challenges expectations concerning women's sexual passivity outside the domestic sphere of the extended family" (Didur 2006:61). Hence, patriarchy becomes an agency functioning in the process of disillusionment of these women.

Experience of Trauma

Amidst the crisis, what was universally experienced was the trauma faced by people who witnessed the partition of the sub-continent. Devi in *The River Churning* writes, "Of all this false talk, cacophony and much useless sprinkling of scented water, was reborn a divided, truncated, blood-stained Bharat." (Devi 1995:17). Women were doubly victimised in this transaction. In the layers of silence of women victims, hid the trauma they received as their share in the divide. Although the struggle for independence was fruitful, women suffered extreme violence, both physical and mental during the period. These accounts of trauma represented in various works form the 'memory' of partition narrative; memories of inhumane and disdainful actions which testify to the ugly reality of partition that made women central to the sectarian violence.

The trauma experienced by women can be witnessed in the character of Pooro (Hamida), who, on the birth of her son from her abductor and husband Rashida, could not accept him as her own. Hamida's trauma is described by Pritam as, "… this boy… this boy's father… all mankind… all men… men who

gnaw a woman's body like a dog gnawing a bone and like a dog consuming it" (Pritam 2015:35). The traumatic experience she had, with Rashida, who converted her and impregnated her without her consent, had left her with no affection for her son. She took him as "…planted inside her by force" (Pritam 2015:35). Through the act of reluctantly accepting the son as her own, Pritam brings out the magnitude of trauma experienced by Hamida. This trauma was a result of being completely denied any will over her own life, which was initially governed by her father and later by her husband who apparently was her abductor.

Although Pooro, Lajwanti and Sutara shared the partition trauma through their loss of identities, it is in the character of Sakina in Saadaat Hasan Manto's *The Return,* that one finds the utmost horrors of partition. In this work, he represents the ugly reality of partition. Sakina is the daughter of Sirajuddin, who was separated from her father on the way from Amritsar to Lahore during the riots. Sirajuddin sends a search party to rescue his daughter. The father is filled with joy on his daughter's return. He is unaware of the fact that the rescuers he sent for his daughter became her assaulters. This also brings into light the beastly spirit which took over the entire human race during those times.

As mentioned above, it was not just the men of one religious community who were assaulting the women of the other community. It is rather difficult to draw a distinction as to who were the perpetrators of the crime. Manto recreates the trauma experienced by Sakina through his intense description of the scene where Sakina starts opening her salwar and spreading her legs to be raped again on hearing the phrase "open it". It brings forth the incomprehensible state of the women who went through such traumatising violence. He further describes this as "… her hands groped for the cord which kept her

shalwar tied around her waist. With painful slowness, she unfastened it, pulled the garment down and opened her thighs" (Manto 2007:53). Although Manto has just given voice to the father, Sirajuddin, the silence of Sakina and this very act of her speaks volumes about the trauma she underwent.

Another dimension that *The Return* presents through the character of Sirajuddin is that the trauma of the victimised women is at times the trauma shared by the men associated with these women. They were their fathers, brothers, husbands, sons and lovers. Throughout the text, Manto describes the trauma Sirajuddin was facing due to the death of his wife and the disappearance of his daughter during the riots.

Towards the end of the text, on seeing his daughter undressed, Manto describes Sirajuddin as being unaware of the reality that her daughter had been raped multiple times and he writes, "'She is alive. My daughter is alive,' Sirajuddin shouted with joy" (Manto 2007:53). This reaction of Sirajuddin brings forth the intensity of his trauma caused by the atrocities his wife and daughter had to undergo.

The accounts of trauma examined in the chosen literary texts bring forth the dilemma about who was responsible for such traumatic experiences? In the story of Pooro, whether her trauma and disillusionment were caused solely by her abductor, Rashida who took her forcefully and later married her out of affection or by her parents' refusal to accept her back?, can also be scrutinised in the same extent. In both cases, it was the agency of patriarchal cultural conventions which led to the 'fate' of Pooro.

Similarly, in *The Return*, Sirajuddin, worried about the violence his daughter might undergo at the hands of the Hindu men, sends men of his community to 'rescue' her. It was the men of her own community who assaulted Sakina. The same dilemma looms here as well; the communal divide propagated

the sectarian violence central to women, but in many cases, the violence was not sectarian but rather can be described as a beastly spirit being unleashed in the riots which saw a woman's body as an object.

Conclusion

The paper has attempted to understand the partition narrative and the question of women's absence in it by problematising the meta-narrative hegemonically controlled by the patriarchal nationalist agency. These absences have been filled with the representations of the accounts of women's 'everyday experience' in the partition of the Indian subcontinent. It has attempted to analyse the women's narrative through the spaces provided to them in the texts, articulating their stories.

The analysis of and the tracing of the dislocation of women during the partition of the Indian subcontinent presents a multidimensional understanding of the lives of dislocated women. The stories analysed, unveil different facets associated with women, like honour and identity. Furthermore, the consequences of the violence against women have been analysed as disillusionment and trauma.

The paper has attempted to bring forth these narratives as articulating women's accounts during the partition and also depicts how their accounts were functioning in the patriarchal framework of the society. Despite the years gone by since its occurrence, partition still remains an integral part of the lives of the people of both the nations and continues to echo in the recurring communal tensions and inhumane atrocities in the present times; the question of violence, women, honour and identity still looms. Hence, the paper invites further re-examinations of the partition narrative, wherein the search for women's voices within the multiple layers of partition history becomes crucial.

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Reading the Sights and Sounds of Trains in the Narratives of Migration

HARSHITHA H

Abstract

With most migration across existing or freshly created borders happening via trains, the train becomes an embodiment as well as the environment for the emotional experience of migration. While the atmosphere in a train presents a heterotopia, quite like the world outside, it brings the Self of migrants in close proximity to others. Thus it results in a redefinition of the Self, during the transitionary stage, and becomes definitive in the context of migration. This paper will look at trains as not just symbols, but also as recurrent motifs and environments of cultural contact and incubation. By doing so, this paper will attempt to address the perception of time and space, as seen from the windows of a train in the context of migration. The transitory nature of the experience within a train is mirrored by the fleeting glimpses of changing landscape. Trains, especially in the context of migration, almost invariably become the site of violence, or in some case the instrument of violence as well. This paper will look into texts such as Train to Pakistan by Khushwant Singh to look into the perpetration of violence with the Train as both the instrument as well as the environment, with the partition of India and Pakistan as its context. This narrative portrays both migration and violence as a two-way street, with the train plying to and fro, multiple times throughout the text. Enrique's Journey by Sonia Nazario on the other hand portrays a train from Mexico to America, nicknamed El Tren de la Muerte, or The Train of Death. While the narrative focuses on seventeen year old Enrique and his illegal immigration to America, the train becomes the only option for him to traverse hostile territories and find his mother. Here too, the train becomes the site of violence against

migrants as they not only have to circumvent lack of food and water but also mortal peril if discovered by authorities. Thus the train becomes the factor that provides agency to migrants to cross boundaries and venture into the unknown.

Keywords: Redefinition of the Self, Cultural Hybridity, Migration and Persecution, Migration, Literature.

Introduction

Migration across man-made borders, though sometimes by foot, is facilitated by various means of transportation. Of the many kinds, trains take on a bulk of this responsibility in carrying migrants in large numbers across borders. For the same reason, trains tend to become an unavoidable part of literature that concerns itself with the movement of individuals or groups across borders and have become a strong presence in many narratives. This paper will consider three texts for analysis, namely: *Train to Pakistan* by Khushwant Singh, *Enrique's Journey,* by Sonia Nazario and *Night* by Elie Wiesel. The focus would be to look into the recurring images of trains in these texts and how they are perceived by the characters, primarily through their descriptions of the sights and sounds of these gigantic metal boxes on wheels which reach the reader through language.

Aguiar in "Railway Space in Partition Literature"*,* points out that trains are generally considered as emblems of progress but in the context of partition, it takes on a distinctive haunted quality (Aguiar 2007:76). They probably symbolize the movement of communities of people separated from their places of origin and are undergoing a change that inflicts suffering, loss and pain. However, it is not only partition that causes such movement of people, the different roles that trains play also change with the context in which this movement of people is studied, be it that of an emblem of progress or that which brings horror and dread. Hence, Aguiar's argument

could be extended to understand these varied contexts of travel, on these metal beasts that become facilitators of migration as well as sites and instruments of violence against the people aboard. The selected texts in this paper would primarily deal with migration across borders where trains act as the only means available to facilitate the crossing of borders, and so they become the pivot around which the plot is organized.

The Motif of 'Train' in *Train to Pakistan*

The invention of railways is considered a symbol of progress and a bridge in connecting people and nations. According to Walter Russell Mead's "Trains, Planes, and Automobiles", the rail networks that sprang up in Europe, North and South America, Australia, and the Indian subcontinent, and that were projected for Africa and Asia, were the wonders of their age (Mead 1995:16). They were seen by many as the very face of mankind's progress and a blessing bestowed on the colonized by the colonizer. They were magnificent objects that were marvelled at as is made evident in *Train to Pakistan* where the story is set in a little hamlet named Mano Majra which is known only due to its proximity to a railway bridge and the railway station, a symbol of western architecture connecting India to Pakistan. The text describes Mano Majra thus:

> "Mano Majra has always been known for its railway station. Since the bridge has only one track, the station has several sidings where less important trains can wait, to make way for the more important. A small colony of shopkeepers and hawkers has grown up around the station to supply travellers with food, betel leaves, cigarettes, tea, biscuits, and sweetmeats" (Singh 1988:9).

The railway infrastructure becomes an instrument that facilitates the bringing in of people and goods to Mano Majra which still lacks well-paved roads. This makes trains the centre

of the action in this reading of the narrative and the lives of the characters are aligned with the arrival and departure of trains. It is crucial to note that it is the same railway infrastructure that later becomes a site of violence, which will be discussed later in this paper. This will help in observing the changing perception of the villagers towards the railway infrastructure that was introduced for the development of the village. The other aspects like; the train timings play a major impact on the life of the residents of the village. The onomatopoeic words used to describe the arrival of the train itself have a way of implying the time of day:

> "After dark, when the countryside is steeped in silence, the whistling and puffing of engines, the banging of buffers, and the clanking of iron couplings can be heard all through the night. All this has made Mano Majra very conscious of trains. Before daybreak, the mail train rushes through on its way to Lahore, and as it approaches the bridge, the driver invariably blows two long blasts on the whistle. In an instant, all Mano Majra comes awake" (Singh 1988:9).

As often seen in real life, it is the sound of a train that hails its arrival much before its sight, and so in *Train to Pakistan*, initially, the 'rumble' of the train brings with it a sense of comfort to the villagers, as it lulls them to sleep. However, this comfort that they seek in the sounds of the train does not last long. As the narrative progresses, the trains start getting late by more than a few hours, throwing the routine of the villagers off track. Sometimes trains ceased running at all: "Goods trains had stopped running altogether, so there was no lullaby to lull them to sleep. Instead, ghost trains went past at odd hours between midnight and dawn, disturbing the dreams of Mano Majra" (Singh 1988:51). The uncertainty that the partition brings to this hamlet close to the newly created border is

mirrored in the uncertainty accompanying the sound of the train. The train's rumbling becomes a recurring motif throughout the text as it changes from a lullaby to a harbinger of bad news. As seen in the lines above, the trains that were central to the lives of characters at Mano Majra, are now referred to with ominous term such as, 'ghost trains'. The names used to refer to these trains themselves bring with them the outlook of the characters and their views of the trains.

Train as a Site of Violence and Hope in *Enrique's Journey*

In *Train to Pakistan*, while the citizens of Mano Majra refer to the train as the 'ghost train', the characters in Sonia Nazario's *Enrique's Journey* have several names for the train in the narrative. The story of a Honduran boy who undertakes a risky and arduous journey illegally into the United States to find his mother is represented on the book's cover by a picture of a boy riding on the roof of a train. This train is the only means that he and countless other migrants have to cross through a region that the migrants have nicknamed as 'the beast'. The land hailed as the beast is haunted by bandits and corrupt officials who rob, abuse and kill travellers, if caught, which forces them to board a freight train that they hope would carry them safely, guarding them against 'the beast'. This, however, is not without perils, as they must board the train secretly and dangerously as it slows down passing through a cemetery. Several travellers get injured and even lose their limbs trying to board the train. This valuable information which they gather from each other acts as a potential source for saving lives. With this information comes varied descriptions of the train itself that they await, like a saviour while lying in wait behind tombstones at the cemetery. They know the train by many names, like those who know of its potential to sever limbs, call it *El Tran Devorador*, meaning "The Train That Devours". Others call it *El Tren de la Muerte*, the "Train of Death". The

names the characters use to address the train give an insight into the train as viewed by the characters and their past experiences with this perilous journey across the border. Ironically, they try to escape the violence of the territory by climbing the train, only to be violated by the train itself or attacked on board by corrupt officials on being found. The train thus becomes both, the site of violence and an entity with the ability to cause harm to the migrants.

The violence, however, is not all that the characters see when they discuss the train amongst themselves. Being the only resort available to escape 'the beast', the train becomes a symbol of hope and faith to many. To young Enrique, the protagonist in *Enrique's Journey,* the train is the only way to reach his mother and so, he refers to the train as *El Caballo de Hierro* (the Iron Horse). Some other migrants ascribe a certain religious faith to the train by considering the journey to be a test of their will placed on their path by the divine. It is seen as what one has to brave to reach their goal, and hence the faithful refer to the train as *El Tren Peregrino* (The Pilgrim's Train). The trains become a site of violence in both the texts discussed above and this environment soon turns hostile to the migrants. The train remains the only option available to the people. They are left with no other choice, trapped within its metal boxes from which they have no escape. In *Train to Pakistan,* the peace of Mano Majra is disturbed not by the political and religious disturbances in cities like Lahore or Delhi but by the arrival of a train filled with the bodies of migrants from Pakistan. Half burnt bodies were found floating in water bodies, and the train became the subject of everyone's conversation in the village. People from Pakistan, who were displaced from their homeland and forced to migrate to a different country, leaving behind almost everything except their lives, were found in the compartments of the train. In this context, Gopika Raja in her article, "A Kaleidoscopic

Unraveling of the Socio-Cultural Dilemma in Khushwant Singh's *Train to Pakistan*", addresses this as a socio-cultural dilemma by stating it as:

> "The train in *Train to Pakistan* implies the movement of vast communities torn from their roots and areas of traditional growth to a new 'Jerusalem'. It indicates the harrowing processes of this change, the awful and ghastly experience of human beings involved in a historical, impersonal and dehumanized process" (Raja 2017:159).

Trains as 'Crisis Heterotopia'

The trains in the texts taken for study can be read as crisis heterotopia for the migrants. Foucault in *Of Other Spaces* describes a heterotopia as a place that is somehow outside of all places though we can indicate a location for them in reality. Further, several kinds of heterotopias are discussed as 'other spaces' of which, the crisis heterotopia, is described as reserved for individuals who live in a state of crisis in relation to society and to the surrounding human environment (Foucault 1986:3). The trains are a crisis heterotopia for the migrants because they are in a state of crisis with respect to the human environment in which they used to live. Though present in the physical world, the train becomes quite a distinct space from its immediate vicinity due to the distinction that we perceive between those within its compartments and those outside. Those within the train hoping to flee from danger or crisis, but the train itself become a greater threat in many cases. The travellers from Mano Majra are given barely ten minutes to pack their belongings and are forced to leave behind almost everything which was part of their lives. The leaving behind of possessions can be seen as travellers being forced to part with whatever they call their own: their belongings, their homes, and their homeland. Similarly, the

migrants in *Enrique's Journey,* get stripped of their belongings and are hurled from the freight train if they are found carrying anything of value. They are warned to prepare themselves to run fast and hide easily, at the slightest inkling of trouble. Therefore, they too are forced to carry bare essentials. The sight of such travellers is described as:

> "Some migrants climb on board with a toothbrush tucked into a pocket. A few allow themselves a small reminder of family. One father wraps his eight-year-old daughter's favourite hair band around his wrist. Others bring a small Bible with telephone numbers, pencilled in the margins, of their mothers or fathers or other relatives in the United States" (Nazario 2007:70).

While the migrants in *Enrique's Journey* willingly undertake the journey by boarding freight trains and hiding at various parts of the train to avoid detection by officials and dacoits, the ones in *Train to Pakistan* are crammed onto trains and forced to move to another country based on religion. Owing to the severe lack of space on the train, many of them travel on the roof. This condition brings the migrants in close proximity, with no consideration given to their social status. Thus, the Mullah of the mosque, the weaver's pregnant daughter Noora and the young girl Haseena who has been forced into prostitution, all share the same space on the train. What may be read as the train forcing people apart by shipping them away to a distant land, can also be read as the same train forcing people closer, too close in fact, to the point that they no longer possess what one may call 'personal space'. When the train arrives from Pakistan carrying hundreds of corpses, they too remain in close proximity irrespective of their social status, within the train compartments, even in death:

> "There were women and children huddled in a corner, their eyes dilated with horror, their mouths still open as

if their shrieks had just then become voiceless. Some of them did not have a scratch on their bodies. There were bodies crammed against the far end wall of the compartment, looking in terror at the empty windows through which must have come, shots, spears, and spikes. There were lavatories, jammed with corpses of young men who had muscled their way to comparative safety" (Singh 1988:55).

Trains and the Journey of the Holocaust in Wiesel's *Night*

The third text for analysing the role played by trains in the lives of migrants is Elie Wiesel's, *Night.* In this narrative, the train becomes a weapon used by Nazis to transport hundreds of Jews to concentration camps. About eighty people are crammed into a single cart with its windows barred and top open as they traverse through freezing and stormy weather. The environment within the train compartment and the human experience of being confined in close proximity that this text focuses on is similar to Kushwant Singh's *Train to Pakistan.*

In Weisel's *Night,* the characters spend several days and nights in these carts starving, having no idea where they are being shipped off until they arrive at the gateway to Auschwitz. The text describes the beginning of this train journey thus: "The doors clanked shut. We had fallen into the trap, up to our necks. The doors were nailed, the way back irrevocably cut off. The world had become a hermetically sealed cattle car" (Wiesel 2006:24).

Unlike the train's rumble announcing its arrival in the other two texts, the sound described in the third text is the long piercing whistle and grinding of the wheels on the rails as the characters' journey into the unknown begins. The description of the sound of the train from the very beginning echoes a feeling of uncertainty and a fear of the unknown, unlike the previous texts. After making an appearance at the beginning of

the narrative and transporting the protagonist and his Jewish companions to the camps, the train is not visible to readers until a later part in the text. Thus, in this narrative, the train marks the beginning of a very harrowing description of the holocaust experience of a young boy and his father. After spending several months at the camp, once the Nazis discover that the Russians are advancing towards them, the inhabitants of the camp are once again herded into the cattle cars of the train, which makes its reappearance at this juncture. This time, due to several months of starvation, the soldiers could fit a hundred of them into a single cart, once again emphasizing the non-consensual violation of personal space and bringing people closer against their will. Of these one hundred, which the protagonist is also a part of, only twelve exits the train cart alive at the end of the journey. This calls attention to the fact that about ninety people in each cart of the train had successfully overcome life at a Nazi labour camp only to fall prey to the perilous journey aboard a train. Though the agents who caused their trauma and loss of lives remain the same, the role of this train in inflicting such horrors raises several questions about the sites where violence occurs and its varied forms, especially in comparison to the several works that have described the holocaust experiences over the years.

Trains as Symbols in Migration

In *Enrique's Journey,* the train becomes a symbol of the journey itself that Enrique undertakes as it provides not just hopes and dreams of starting a new life and reuniting with family but also brings with it several dangers. It further brings the possibility of meeting several other migrants as young Enrique does, including other child migrants searching for family members like himself. These people exchange stories of their previous failed attempts at crossing the border on overcoming the hurdles of this journey. They recall harrowing

events they have witnessed in the hope that this would warn the others to be careful: "A seventeen-year-old girl waiting for a train was dragged out among the headstones three years ago, then raped and murdered. The year before that, a young man's forehead was beaten in with a metal tube" (Nazario 2007:223). They help each other whenever possible by giving out warnings or words of caution. The migrants perceive their fellow travellers and the facilitators of the journey such as smugglers and drivers as their own but they consider the immigration officials and dacoits as 'others' who hinder their crossing of the border. Most often these individuals brutally abuse them, thus forming their notion of oneness amongst those onboard the train, and a notion of otherness for those who hinder their journey.

The train, while in motion, becomes a place of incubation where they find others to whom they can relate. The stopping of the train in *Enrique's Journey* and *Train to Pakistan* is associated with negative feelings, often those of anxiety and threat. Not only does the stopping of the train symbolize a break in the journey, it means the arrival of a possible threat. To Enrique, it signals the possibility of an inspection. The officials search the cars for illegal immigrants and bring along trained dogs to sniff out well-hidden ones who have learned to avoid being captured by applying garlic paste over their bodies. In Khushwant Singh's text, Sundar Singh's journey to Lahore presents a different case. A decorated army hero, he was migrating with his family to claim the bounty land that the government had given him. However, when the train was stopped along the way, his fate took a turn for the worse:

"Then the train was held up at a station for four days. No one was allowed to get off. Sunder Singh's children cried for water and food. So did everyone else. Sunder Singh gave them his urine to drink. Then that dried up too. So

he pulled out his revolver and shot them all" (Singh 1988:109).

For those aboard the train to Pakistan, the train coming to a stop could also mean an attack by a violent mob. The bridge that connects Mano Majra to the border, which was initially a facilitator of economic and cultural exchange, becomes an instrument of destruction as it becomes the site where a mob decides to attack the train. The train is a source of solace for those who wish to flee a region where they are being attacked to a place of relative safety but the train also traps them and becomes the instrument of violence. The dominant image of the train in the narrative takes on a dual role - that of life and death, of locomotion and immobility, of tranquility and mayhem (Raja 2017:5). Mirroring this, it is the lawless and unruly character, Juggut Singh, who climbs the steel bridge to rescue a group of people going to Pakistan. He succeeds in saving not just the life of his lover, but all the passengers aboard the train. The closing lines of *Train to Pakistan*, "the train went over him, and went on to Pakistan", gives the reader further reminders of the unpredictability of relating events, people and in this case a mode of transport to one particular category. While the train means death to millions, to several others, it provides agency to cross boundaries and venture into the unknown.

Conclusion

Through these readings, one can note, not just the multiplicity of ways in which the train may be seen, but also the multiplicity in how language has been used to construct this difference. The sights and sounds of trains have been described in these texts only in relation to the experience of individuals who behold them, allowing the reader to state without a doubt that any feat of marvel and glory, like these powerful metal beasts, can be seen otherwise based on one's point of view and

context. The need or necessity of travel may be many, and hence the ways of seeing the traveller and the travel itself too will be many. This argument can be extended beyond just the train, which has been analysed and examined in the paper as an instrument of violence as well as a symbol of hope, to just about anything we may perceive through sights or sounds as we embark on our own journeys.

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