Delhiscapes: A Study of Multiple Representations of the City

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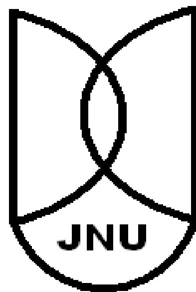
by

Rachna Sethi



Centre for English Studies
School of Language, Literature & Culture Studies
Jawaharlal Nehru University
New Delhi-110067, India

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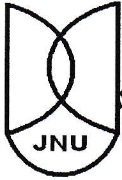

CENTRE FOR ENGLISH STUDIES
SCHOOL OF LANGUAGE, LITERATURE & CULTURE STUDIES
JAWAHARLAL NEHRU UNIVERSITY
NEW DELHI-110067, INDIA

Date: 07.07.2017

CERTIFICATE

This thesis titled **"Delhiscapes: A Study of Multiple Representations of the City"**submitted by**MsRachnaSethi,** Centre for English Studies, School of Language, Literature and Culture Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi, for the award of the degree of **Doctor of Philosophy**, is an original work and has not been submitted so far in part or in full, for any other degree or diploma of any University or Institution.

This may be placed before the examiners for evaluation for the award of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

(PROF. GJV PRASAD)
SUPERVISOR

Prof. GJV PRASAD
Centre for English Studies
School of Language, Literature & Culture Studies
Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi-110067

(PROF. UDAYA KUMAR)
CHAIRPERSON

Chairperson
Centre for English Studies
School of Language, Literature & Culture Studies
Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi-110067

Date. 07.07.2017

DECLARATION BY THE CANDIDATE

This thesis titled **"Delhiscapes: A Study of Multiple Representations of the City"**,submitted by me for the award of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, is an original work and has not been submitted so far in part or in full, for any other degree or diploma of any University or Institution.

(Rachna Sethi)
Ph.D. student
CES/SLL&CS
JNU

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This Ph.D. thesis on “Delhiscapes: A Study of Multiple Representations of the City” has been churning long enough in my mind, on laptop files and on paper. In all the years of reading, contemplation, research, reflection, writing and editing on the topic, there are couple of people and places who have had a major impact and deserve to be acknowledged.

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Apart from IIAS library, the staff at Jawaharlal Nehru University library was helpful in procuring resources, both print and online. However the longest hours were spent at Nehru

Memorial Museum and Library, it became my workspace during the study leave. It has an extremely rich collection of books on urban studies in sociology and geography, but more than that it was wonderful to work in the green oasis in the midst of the city with its peacocks beckoning one to abandon books and watch them dance (and not cry!). We formed a study group of PhD scholars who not only discussed their works but woes of writing a thesis. Prachi, Deepti, Moggallan, Yamini and Abhinav were partners in crimes, who are/were at various stages of research in different disciplines. Kuhu has been part of this journey from the beginning and has been encouraging at all times, and Suraj shares love for history and its intrigues. Two senior colleagues and friends deserve a special mention, Dr. A.L Khanna and Mr. Dilip Kumar Basu, they have been supportive to say the least. All those countless friends, colleagues, family members and neighbours who kept inquiring about submission, have played their part irritatingly well.

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INTRODUCTION

Yet it is necessary to notice that the space which today appears to form the horizon of our concerns, our theory, our systems, is not an innovation; space itself has a history in Western experience, and it is not possible to disregard the fatal intersection of time with space.

(Foucault, "Of Other Spaces" 22)

The thesis titled "Delhiscapes: A Study of Multiple Representations of the City" attempts to analyse Delhi as depicted in Indian English fiction of post-independence period. The focus of the work is on fiction based on Delhi city using the lens of spatial theories and urbanism drawn from the disciplines of sociology and geography. The introduction is divided into the following sections to outline, contextualise and locate this study: spatial theories; city and urbanisation; city in literature; Delhi- context, review and methodology; and plan of work.

Spatial Theories: Placing the Body in Space/Place debates

Before surveying and analysing the field of city cultures, one needs to be familiar with the debates around space, and how they connect with ideas of urbanity. To understand the spatial turn in humanities and social sciences which puts place and space at the centre of analysis of history and culture, one needs to examine their evolution through the disciplines of philosophy and mathematics. It is important to note that though in contemporary usage space and place are often used interchangeably, they have a long history of difference with increasing slipperiness. Traditionally space was considered abstract, boundless and empty while place referred to physical location, but these simplistic dichotomies have been reinterpreted and challenged over the years.

Space as a concept has earliest been discussed by philosophers and was later appropriated by mathematicians and scientists. Edward S. Casey's *The Fate of Place: A Philosophical History* traces the history of place *vis-à-vis* space, and the changing dynamics of their relationship from Aristotle to Irigaray, and I would like to explicate the debate by drawing upon his ideas and arguments. The problem arises from theories of creation itself that suggest a cosmic moment when no things existed before the creation of the world, this suggests that space precedes creation where chaos is the primordial place from which order emerges. Plato in *Timaeus* uses the term "Receptacle" for pre-given space, for him creation occurs in Space (chora). For Aristotle, place is conceived in finite terms of a container in *Physics*. For him, place takes precedence over infinite, void and time; it takes on a dynamic

role in the physical universe by giving active support to what it locates. Philoponous interpreted Aristotle critically in the light of Neoplatonic thoughts, he explored the idea that absolute space is not a void and is instead filled with places, that is locations between which movements of physical bodies occur.

The trajectory from Aristotelian to Cartesian thought about space is a long and complex one, and only major ideas that concern the present field of study are outlined here. The infinite universe with God's limitless power finds echoes in spatial infinity of the physical universe of the scientist-philosophers of sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, place lost its power by the end of eighteenth century to infinity of space. While Aristotle took the power of place as granted, the scientists and philosophers of seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, from Descartes to Leibniz had a disdain for specialness of place. Place was marginalized by both Newton's "absolute space" and Leibniz's competing idea of "relative space". For Newton in *Mathematical Principles of Natural Philosophy*, space is non-material, and can exist independent of material objects in it. The absolute theory of space suggests that space is prior to the existence of mind and objects. Leibniz, like Newton, agrees that the universe is infinite, but unlike him he claims that there is no void, all spaces are occupied. For him space is objective, it is a "representation" and can neither affect not be affected by the objects it contains. Motion and position are noticeable and real only in respect to objects, and not in respect to space. The conceptualization of space divides thinkers into categories of Absolutists, like Gassendi and Newton, and Relativists, like Locke and Leibniz.

Cartesian thought lays emphasis on identification of space with matter, of physical bodies possessing magnitude and shape. It is an idea of space as indefinite "extension" within which place can only be a volumetric entity. Descartes in seventeenth century tries to do justice to extremes of absolutist and relativist conception of space, that space is one vast arena versus space that consists entirely in relation between things. The quantification of place by Gassendi, Descartes, Locke and Leibniz transforms it into site. Cartographic representation witnessed creation of metrically precise maps for sites of discovery and exploitation. Place is conceptualized as position by Leibniz; and there is increasing interchangeability of phrases space and place in terms of site-specification.

The debate which had revolved around space versus place changes track with Kant introducing the body into it. For him, space is no longer situated in the physical world or mind/creation of God but in the subjectivity of the human mind. Instead of the relation

between objects, he focusses on the "position" of the objects and the "regions" in space according to which "position" is determined. Things are not oriented in and by themselves but require corporeal intervention, body then becomes the critical middle term between place and space. The notion that human body shapes and supports the particularity of place started with Kant in eighteenth century and continues onto Merleau-Ponty in twentieth century. For Merleau-Ponty, the lived body is the origin of the "spatializing" as well as "spatialized" space, and the body then has important implications for understanding of place, particularly "lived place". The place as experienced by the lived body cannot be simply positional, and space cannot be reduced to its ideational representation in the manner of Descartes and Locke. Place is not merely positionate, and has virtual dimension, the lived body not only feels but knows the places to which it is intimately attached:

> The tie, the knot, between body and place is so thickly Gordian that it cannot be neatly severed at any point. Merleau-Ponty teaches us not just that the human body is never without a place or that place is never without (its actual or virtual) body; he also shows that the lived body is itself a place (Casey *Fate* 235)

For Heidegger, "space" is not located in the human subject like Kant, this subject is not mental but spatial, hence in the world. In *Being and Time*, he introduces the concept of *dasein* whereby we cannot exist independently of the world around us and of people who inhabit it. It is only through our consciousness, actions and interactions that the physical landscape is brought into existence. The rooted memories of association give a sense of belonging which creates a kind of "essence" of a place by which "space" is transformed into "place". His idea that space is not objective, and has no steadfast essence but essentially contains references to the self is picked by other thinkers like Bachelard, Foucault, Lefebvre and Soja, who explore it in multiple ways to interpret place. The placing of body in the space/place debate changes its direction from a pure mathematical orientation to a sociological one; there is a shift in moving beyond defining place to analysis of experiences in "lived space", and this becomes the foundational basis for analysing space in literature.

Over the years the debates on space/place have shifted in concern from cosmological and metaphysical to psychical, architectural and sexual among others. The lack of single monolithic definition and foundation on which primacy of place is built suggests its inclusive power. Place makes appearances as imaginary *topoi* in Bachelard, as heterotopoi in Foucault, and in newer forms in cultural and human geograghy; the overwhelming concern with

“where” is not about cosmological space/divine places or infinite space but with places of daily life. Three thinkers merit special attention here and I will discuss their writings briefly as they figure prominently in my understanding and writing about literary spaces: Foucault, Lefebvre, and Soja.

Foucault’s Heterotopias

In Foucault’s writings, terms like “place”, “space”, “location” and “site” often run together, and heteropology is said to study “these different spaces, these other places.” In “Of Other Spaces” he argues:

> The great obsession of the nineteenth century was, as we know, history; with its themes of development and suspension…The present epoch will perhaps be above all the epoch of space. We are in the epoch of simultaneity: …we are in the epoch of juxtaposition, the epoch of the near and far, of the side-by-side, of the dispersed. (22)

He did not see space replacing time in a new hegemony but a reconstitution of a historiography that revolved around the trialectic of space/knowledge/power. He suggests that “a whole history needs to be written of *spaces*- which would at the same time be the history of *powers* (both terms are in the plural) -from the great strategies of geopolitics to the little tactics of the habitat” (Foucault, *Power* 149).

In “Of Other Spaces”, Foucault discusses utopias and heterotopias, which are linked to other spaces, yet are also in contradiction to those other sites to which they are linked. A utopia is an unreal space while heterotopia is a real space. He provides two categories and five principles to explain the concept of heterotopia in application. The categories include the heterotopia of crisis and deviation; the first refers to sacred and forbidden places, including the site of the bride's "deflowering" on the honeymoon trip. The second refers to places where people are placed when they do not conform to the norm, including rest homes, psychiatric hospitals, and prisons. His five principals are: first, all cultures constitute heterotopias; second, heterotopias can change function within a single society; third, they may take the form of contradictory sites, such as the representation of a sacred garden as a microcosm of the world in the patterns of a Persian rug; fourth, they are linked with a break in traditional time, identifying spaces that represent either a quasi-eternity, like museums, or are temporal, like fairgrounds; and fifth, heterotopias are not freely accessible, they are

entered either by compulsory means, such as jail, or their entry is based on ritual or purification, like Scandinavian saunas.

From Foucault's discussion of layers of meanings embedded in space, including contradictions and dualities, let us turn our attention to Lefebvre's Lefebvre's Marxist reading of space.

Lefebvre's Social Space

Henri Lefebvre's writings are seminal to understanding of space and some key works of his available in translation include *The Production of Space, The Urban Revolution* and *Critique of Everyday Life (3 Vols.)*, here I focus my discussion on *The Production of Space*. David Harvey in "Afterword" of the text writes that on reading Lefebvre he "came to recognise the significance of urban conditions of daily life (as opposed to narrow concentration on work-place politics) as central in the evolution of revolutionary sentiments and politics" (430). Lefebvre's *The Production of Space* accords space a centrality away and beyond the concerns of philosophy and mathematics to term it "social space". He feels it is crucial that in thinking about space to have a bridge between the theoretical (epistemological) realm and the practical one; between mental and social spaces; between the space of the philosophers and that of material objects. The fields that are of concern are first, the physical - the nature, the Cosmos; secondly, the mental, including the logical and formal abstractions; and thirdly, the social. "In other words, we are concerned with logico-epistemological space, the space of social practice, the space occupied by sensory phenomena, including products of imagination such as projects and projections, symbols and utopias" (Lefebvre, *Production* 11-12). Lefebvre articulates and stresses that "(Social) space is a (social) product" (26), and each side refers back to and reinforces the other. Social space contains social relations of production, and the conceptual triad of Spatial practice, Representations of space, and Representational space is the linking argument of his work. Spatial practice (Perceived space) embraces production and reproduction, and is concerned with locations characteristic of social formation. Representations of space (Conceived space) are tied to the relations of production and to its signs and codes; it is the conceptualized space of scientists, planners and urbanists. Representational spaces embody complex symbolisms; it is directly lived through its associated images and symbols, it is the space of the inhabitants and users, and also of artists, writers and philosophers. He suggests that the history of space be looked anew in this light as the history of representations, their genesis, and their links with the spatial practice of

the particular society to understand contemporary social practices and ideology. Space leaps from mental to social and back again, "Spatial practice regulates life- it does not create it. Space has no power 'in itself', nor does space as such determine spatial contradictions" (358).

The forces of production and their component elements (nature, labour, technology, knowledge); structures (property relations); superstructures (institutions and the state itself) interact in urban space in "producing" a city. The larger structures of society, politics and patriarchy impact the personal in use of space for everyday practices. This space is not neutral, it implies and contains social relationships. The built environment of a city is a statement of power, be it forts and palaces of emperors or phallocratic skyscrapers, or private buildings as projections of economic virility. In fact in neoliberal states, it is difficult to separate the powerful assertions of national state and capitalist forces as they together produce the space of the nation state. Space "speaks", it is inscribed with meanings and messages of power:

> Monumentality, for instance, always embodies and imposes a clearly intelligible message. It says what it wishes to say- yet is hides a good deal more: being political, military, and ultimately fascist in character, monumental buildings mask the will to power and the arbitrariness of power beneath signs and surfaces which claim to express collective will and collective thought. In the process, such signs and surfaces also manage to conjure away both possibility and time. (143)

According to Lefebvre, monumentality takes in all the aspects of spatiality: the perceived, the conceived and the lived. It constitutes a collective mirror for the society, but the balance of forces between monuments and buildings has shifted. "Buildings are to monuments as everyday life is to festival, products to works, lived experience to the merely perceived, concrete to stone, and so on" (223). Buildings have functions, forms and structures, but they do not integrate the formal, functional and structural moments of social practice. Today one is witnessing a new dialectical process where buildings and houses are being dressed up in monumental signs, first in their facades and then their interiors.

Soja picks up and builds upon the Lefebvre's triad of perceived, conceived and lived spaces, and believes that rather than dialectic opposition, creative trialectics is the core of understanding about space.

Soja's Thirdspace

Soja's *Thirdspace* threads together writings from Lefebvre, Bhabha and bell hooks to make a thesis for trialectic approach to space. He discusses the shift in late twentieth century scholarship in direction of spatiality, whereas historicality (or temporal) and sociality (or sociological) had dominated earlier writings. The complex interdependence and inseparability of the social, historical and spatial redefines the study of space, history and society, and calls for transdisciplinary thinking where spatiality should not be viewed as domain of just geographers, architects and urban planners. For Soja, the third space of these crossings is not an either/or situation:

> It is instead an efficient invitation to enter a space of extraordinary openness, a place of critical exchange where the geographical imagination can be expanded to encompass a multiplicity of perspectives that have heretofore been considered by the epistemological referees to be incompatible, uncombinable. It is a space where issues of race, class, and gender can be addressed simultaneously without privileging one over the other, where one can be Marxist and post-Marxist, materialist and idealist, structuralist and humanist, disciplined and transdisciplinary at the same time. (Soja, *Thirdspace* 5)

In this critical thinking, "thirding-as-Othering" or trialectics is a creative process which opens possibilities beyond dichotomous choices, and to this he credits Lefebvre's metaphilosophy in *The Production of Space* where thesis, antithesis and synthesis are made to appear simultaneously. He uses this method to re-describe Lefebvre's interweaving of three kinds of spaces: the perceived space of materialized Spatial Practice; the conceived space defined as Representations of space and the lived Representational Spaces/Spaces of Representations. Soja's Firstspace/Spatial Practice is located in concrete materiality of spatial forms; Secondspace/Representations of Space is conceived in ideas about space, mental or cognitive forms; and the Representational Spaces/Spaces of Representation (lived space) or Thirdspace draws upon the material and mental spaces but extends beyond them in scope and meaning.

For Soja, thirding is full of possibilities, whether it is seen in Bhabha's notion of hybridity or Foucault's trialectics of space, knowledge and power. For him, everything comes together in thirdspace: subjectivity and objectivity, the abstract and the concrete, the real and the imagined, mind and body, the disciplined and the transdisciplianary, everyday life and

unending history. It is a strategic location from which to encompass, understand, resist and to and potentially transform all spaces simultaneously. Soja explains:

> Representational space is alive: it speaks. It has an affective kernel (*noyau*) or centre: Ego, bed, bedroom, dwelling, house; or: square, church, graveyard. It embraces the loci of passion, of action, of lived situations, and this immediately implies time. Consequently it may be qualified in various ways: it may be directional, situational or relational, because it is essentially qualitative, fluid and dynamic. (Soja, *Thirdspace* 42)

The Representing-Represented-Representation triad for Soja mirrors the signifier-signified-signification model. For him the trialectics of Spatiality, Historicality and Sociality apply at all levels of knowledge formation; and he suggests that being-in-the world, Heidegger's *dasein* is being simultaneously historical, social and spatial, and this is seen aptly in the location of the body in urban space.

To explore further the question of being/body in urban space, let us look at the notion of urbanisation, especially the third urban revolution that we are witnessing.

City and Urbanisation

The city as a physical entity emerged because of factors like defence, trade, cultural exchange; and the factors have changed from pre-industrial to industrial to post-industrial city. Today we are experiencing the third urban revolution. The first one was experienced 6000 years ago in Africa (Mesopotamia), Asia (Harappa) and Americas; and the second one began in eighteenth century where industrialization led to establishment of cities, and the city was the site for new social, political and economic developments. The third urban revolution began in the last quarter of the twentieth century with its points of continuities and departures from the second one regarding economic, political and social organisation, and arguably a transition from modernism to postmodernism. It has marked a shift from manufacturing in West to new centres of production in South and a global growth of services; these factors combined with others have transformed cities including small towns, suburbs, metros and mega cities.

Unlike the first phase that was restricted to fertile plains of river basins, or the second one around industrialization, the third phase is a global phenomenon. The metros are part of a new spatial assemblage of connections between the global, the nation-state and the city. Short

in *Globalization, Modernity and the City* underlines 23 May 2007 as the demographic marker when for the first time in human history more people lived in cities than in countryside. It marks a culmination of two centuries of continued and increasing urban growth. As late as 1800 only 3 out of 100 people lived in cities; a little over 200 years later the figure was more than 50. Short sees urbanization not just as the geographical redistribution of population from rural to urban areas, but a social reorganization of space. As opposed to blood/kinship/community based rural relationships, the city is associated with diversity and migration, and hybridity is central to (re)invention of identity in the city. The city is both the site of dislocation and of harnessing individual creativity, and allows for flourishing of music, art, culture, literature, fashion, science and technology. City is full of contradictory pulls: it is a dispassionate place yet art and thinking thrives here; it sustains capitalism but is also potentially the site for counter resistance.

The contemporary city is increasingly being defined as "postmodern", "global", "networked", "hybrid" and "smart". The city is no longer merely a collection of people, but also a network of technology, wires and media. With majority of world's population living in cities today, the concerns have shifted from dichotomy of rural versus urban to urbanism as a way of life, and different kinds of urbanism. The electric wires, the broadband cables, the railway, the metro and flyovers are a parallel system to that of human relations, and the city is produced at the intersection of the two.

City has been a subject of study and research for different disciplines, primarily geography and sociology, and some of the major thinkers on city cultures include: Friederich Engels (*The Condition of the Working Class in England*) George Simmel (*The Sociology of George Simmel*), Walter Benjamin (*The Arcades Project*), *Manuel Castells* (*The Urban Question: A Marxist Approach*), Richard Sennett (*The Fall of Public Man*), Peter Saunders (*Social Theory and the Urban Question*), Sharon Zukin (*The Culture of Cities*), Edward Soja (*Thirdspace*), Judith Walkowitz (*City of Dreadful Delights*), John Urry (*Consuming Places*), Elizabeth Wilson (*The Sphinx in the City*), Henri Lefebvre (The *Production of Space*, *The Urban Revolution*) and Fran Tonkiss (*Space, the City and Social Theory*).

Historians, sociologists, urban planners, geographers and novelists have all attempted to define the city in their own way, and the city with its set of contradictions defies universal definitions. Engels exposes poverty and power relations of the city; Wirth discusses the rational and impersonal in interactions; and Simmel discusses the unprecedented

opportunities offered for the development of the intellect and for the freedom of the individual, despite blasé indifference of the city. One notices a shift in recent readings and they foreground the reader of the city rather than identifying universal features. Barthes in "Semiology and the Urban" has emphasised the indeterminacy of urban landmarks, pointing out the necessity for absent centres and empty signifiers, for "meaning" derived from urbanities themselves.

The rural-urban binaries in urban discourse have been defined anew by Tonnies who suggests a new distinction on the basis of social bonds as "community" (*Gemeinschaft*) and "society" or "association" (*Gesellschaft*). While the former suggests traditional and notions of public, the latter suggests privacy, intimacy and modern. With the modernisation of the rural and the mediazation of the city, the city is more than a physical location; Robert E. Park in "The City: Suggestions for the Investigation of Human Behavior in the Urban Environment" writes

> The city is, rather a state of mind, a body of customs and traditions, and the organized attitudes and sentiments that inhere in these customs and are transmitted with this tradition. The city is not, in other words, merely a physical mechanism and an artificial construction. It is involved in the vital processes of the people who compose it; it is a product of nature, and particularly human nature. (1)

He emphasizes that the formal organization of the city in terms of its buildings, streets, railways and so on is mere artefact, and stresses that city is the habitat of the civilized man.

And it is this habitat that Baudelaire discusses with reference to Paris, and the theme is carried forward by Benjamin. For Lefebvre too, as discussed above this urban space is a political and a social product, and not a neutral setting for social action. Social space in everyday life like home and neighbourhood are the concerns of de Certeau, where it is not an inert medium. The process of identity formation as tied to geographical or spatial locations is shaken with the notion of space as social construct, and with the concept of dynamic spaces, making way for new spatiality to capture the ways in which social and spatial are inextricably realized in one another. Jenks in "Introduction" to *Urban Culture* argues that "Analytically urban culture is the new metaphor for collective life and the new space for exploring both identity and difference" (1). In this anxiety about urban space and location, Soja's "Third Space" and Bhabha's "hybrid space" emphasize the constitution of space through social relations and material social practices. In this rethinking about space and thirding, it is

important to remind oneself that space and time are not separate entities; "Space is not static, nor time spaceless. Of course, spatiality and temporality are different from each other but neither can be conceptualized as the absence of the other" (Massey 141). Massey's "power-geometry" of urban space is integral to the production of history and thus to the possibility of politics in the city.

The changing conceptions about the city need to be explored further in literary spaces, and we need to probe the possibilities of new urbanisms in the study of city in literature.

City in Literature

The "spatial turn" in humanities has foregrounded the study of city spaces in fiction as opposed to the earlier privileging of character, theme and plot. In the modern novel, the city steps out from the background to being central to action, and most of the action takes place in spaces that fuse public and private spaces like coffee houses, theatres, museums, pubs, restaurants, hotels and shops. While writers like Kafka find this cityscape terrifying, Woolf finds it promising, and one finds the representations of the city representations oscillate between optimism and pessimism. Some of the literary critics that have engaged with the intersecting turf of city and literature are: Burton Pike (*The Image of the City in Modern Literature*), Richard Lehan (*The City in Literature: An Intellectual and Cultural History*), Edward Timms and David Kelley (*Unreal City: Urban Experience in Modern European Literature and Art.*); Mary Ann Caws (*City Images: Perspectives from Literature, Philosophy, and Film);* Leonard Luttwack (*The Role of Place in Literature*) and Hans Wirth-Nisher (*City Codes: Reading the Modern Urban Novel*).

Lehan in *The City in Literature: An Intellectual and Cultural History* offers a sweeping idea of city in literature from early novel in England to the apocalyptic cityscapes of Thomas Pynchon, and includes Daniel Defoe, Charles Dickens, Emile Zola, Joseph Conrad, James Joyce and Theodore among others in his study. He reads the European city against the decline of feudalism and the rise of empire and totalitarianism, and the American city against the phenomena of the wilderness, the frontier, and the rise of the decentered and discontinuous city that followed. He offers a study of urban life by drawing from disciplines of urban studies, architecture, economics, and philosophy. He turns to fiction to argue the case for shifts in city function (from the commercial to the industrial and the to the world city) and the cultural signs encoded in literary texts.

Hans Wirth-Nesher's *City Codes: Reading the Modern Urban Novel* foregrounds the city as a as a problematic site in discussions of the modern novel; "In *City Codes*, novelists, readers, and characters are all engaged in verbal cartography, plotting cities through language" (Wirth-Nesher 4). He argues that the city offers promise of plentitude along with inaccessibility, so the urbanite is faced with a never-ending series of partial visibilities like crowds partly observed from windows of high rises, and reconstructs the inaccessible in the imagination. The city dweller is in the process of mentally reconstructing areas that are inaccessible or illegible, through acts of imagination, and in the process the city is constantly invented and reinvented. He writes about authors importing aspects of "real" cities into fiction by drawing upon maps, street names and existing landmarks, whereby the character is placed in a "realistic" setting, and also drawing from a repertoire of urban tropes from previous literature. The self is inseparable from the cityscape, and he gives nuanced readings of places and structures like train stations, courtyards and windows in dealing with concerns of visibility, access, and blurring of public and private spaces.

Urban studies for a long time has focussed on first world cities, and in the literary domain the focus has been on the city during modernism. However thinkers like Said, Bhabha and Anthony D. King have foregrounded the postcolonial city in their theoretical formulations. They underline that modernity did not arrive in a uniform, singular manner, King in *Spaces of Global Cultures: Architecture, Urbanism, Identity* emphasizes hybridity in discussion of cities of global south; he argues for the case of "multiple modernisms" or hybrid modernity that results from the collision of colonial modernity and indigenous modernity, and frantic construction of expressways, malls and gated colonies styled and named after European cities are some of the ways in which it is manifested. Bhabha too underlines hybridity in understanding of postcolonial cultural and linguistic structures and subjects. Said's "Imaginative Geography and its Representations" in *Orientalism* places the tropes of place and space at the core of postcolonial analysis. Study of postcolonial city attempts to understand material transformations involved in colonial and postcolonial urbanization, national division, migration and globalization. Some of the recent research that has foregrounded spatiality in study of postcolonial literature, including focus on larger constructs of the nation and specific ones on cities are: Ian Baucom's *Out of Place: Englishness, Empire and the Locations of Identity*; Timothy Brennan's *Salman Rushdie and the Third World: Myths of the Nation*; Imre Szeman's *Zones of Instability: Literature, Postcolonialism, and the Nation*; Rashmi Varma's *The Postcolonial City and its Subjects:*

London, Nairobi, Bombay; Jane M. Jacobs' *Edge of Empire: Postcolonialism and the City*; Sara Upstone's *Spatial Politics in the Postcolonial Novel* and Stuti Khanna's *The Contemporary Novel and the City: Re-conceiving National and Narrative Form*.

Varma's *The Postcolonial City and its Subjects* discusses twentieth and twenty-first century literary and cultural formations of the postcolonial city through the filter of historical and contemporary debates on urbanism. Upstone in *Spatial Politics in the Postcolonial Novel* adopts a transnational and comparative approach that challenges the tendency to engage with authors in isolation or in relation to other writers from a single geographical setting. Her inclusion of a wide range of writers makes a strong case for what she terms the "postcolonial spatial imagination", independent of geography though always fully contextualised. *The Cambridge Companion to the City in Literature*, edited by Kevin R. McNamara is a useful anthology in the field which offers a comprehensive survey of the literary city, exploring the myriad imaginary cities across genres. It features essays on cities from antiquity to contemporary city covering a range of themes like rise of urban public sphere; the interplay of urban landscape and memory; colonial and postcolonial cities; and cities of economic, sexual, cultural and linguistic outsiders.

Having surveyed the fields of urbanism and study of the city in literature, let us turn attention to Delhi, the city that is the focus of this work.

Delhi: Context, Review and Methodology

As with the global urban discourse, the urban-rural dichotomy is no longer the dominant argument in discussion of city in India. For Gandhi villages were the real India, the village was viewed as spiritual and cultural home but Nehru described the village as backward intellectually and culturally. With the village being celebrated as the real, eternal and authentic India, the city was neglected in academic and intellectual inquiries for a long time. The former stood for simplicity and innocence and the latter for experience, modernity and guile. The migration from one to another was the rites of passage from innocence to experience, from traditional world view to modernity. The city with its corruption and moral depravity was posited as antithetical to provincial simplicity and naivety. But the rural has by now transformed and modernized, and its semblances are found in the slum in the city. For the first time in the 2011 census, the growth of urban population is more than that of rural; 91 million were added to the urban population as opposed to 90 million of rural (Sainath *Census*). The idea of the urban is being redefined in small towns, metros, suburbs and

megapolis. Not only are cities growing in size, but the villages are witnessing a paradigmatic shift with invasion of consumerism and increased connectivity, and are beginning to appear more like cities. The idea of the village is disappearing in contemporary literature and cinema, and academic discourse.

It is important to look at the distinctions between the city and urban, urbanisation does not merely affect the physical and economic aspects, it is a frame of mind and attitude. "Becoming urban" is not related to material forms of the city but to people inhabiting them, the city and urban are not interchangeable. Urbanization as a process is taking place in both villages and cities, the poor are "evolving within the existing city-village situation, a society, a hybrid rural-urban society with appropriate social structures and institutions which allows them to be part of both city and village" (Sen). However according to Sen the evolution of this new society is not intended by the wealthy, the emerging city of the poor is "the unintended city", the unintended result of planning and social programmes.

While rapid urbanisation and its direct-indirect impacts is recent, city formation is not a modern phenomenon in India, it can be traced back to Indus Valley civilization. Among modern cities, while Bombay was set up as a port town by the British, Delhi's history precedes colonialism. Bombay/Mumbai, Calcutta/Kolkata and Delhi are often compared when discussing modern Indian cities. While the citizens of Kolkata and Mumbai love their city and are its loyal admirers, Delhi is largely an unloved city. Kolkata is fondly spoken of as city of books, poetry, political activism and strikes. Mumbai overwhelms people with its energy and sense of immense possibilities; it is the financial capital (Delhi overtook that position in 2016), and also the city of dreams as symbolized by its film industry. In contrast to these two cities, Delhi has no defining characteristics and even its supposed stature as a city of arts and culture is said to derive from its position as the capital, and hence a result of government patronage. Delhi's history has been one of establishment and destruction of empires, and the disjointed histories have made it difficult to have a sustained and authentic sense of Delhi culture, language and architecture, and let us look at a brief history of Delhi to get a sense of its broken past.

The earliest reference of Delhi is in the epic *The Mahabharata*, and it is believed that site of Purana Qila was Indrapratha, the capital of the Pandavas. "There is no direct evidence to connect Indraprastha with Delhi, but a good deal of circumstantial probability. Indraprastha was one of the five 'pats' or 'extended places' about which the Kuru war was

fought. The sites of all the others-Panipat, Sonepat, Baghpat, and Tilpat-are known, and Delhi would make a natural and suitable site for the fifth city" (Spear 4). Then there is a long span for which barely anything is known about Delhi, and it came into prominence in eighth century when the Tomar Rajputs established themselves in the Aravali Hills. Suraj Pal Singh Tomar built the Suraj Kund and a temple dedicated to sun god that no longer exists. His descendant, Anangpal is believed to be the founder of Delhi, he built the citadel of Lal-kot, and in the twelfth century, another clan of Rajputs, the Chauhans defeated the Tomars, and Prithviraj Chauhan extended and enlarged Lal-kot and it was named Qila Rai Pithora, and this is regarded as the first of the seven cities of Delhi.

In 1192 A.D., Muhammed Shihabuddin of Ghori defeated Prithviraj Chauhan in battle, captured Delhi and left it in charge of his slave-lieutenant Qutubuddin Aibak beginning the Slave Dynasty and Muslim rule in Delhi. Qutubuddin Aibak started work on the Qutub Minar as a tower of victory, and was succeeded by his son-in-law Iltutmish and his daughter Raziya became the first and the only woman to rule over Delhi. The slave rule came to an end with the seizing of the throne by Jalaluddin Khilji, an Afghanised Turk in 1290 A.D. He was succeeded by his nephew, Alaluddin Khilji who was a ruthless and powerful king and his reign marks the peak of the Delhi Sultanate. He dealt strongly with the Mongol menace and built the city of Siri, a few kilometres to the north of Qutub. The palace was especially famous for its Qasri-Hazaar Sutoon-the Hall of a Thousand Pillars but now just derelict portions of the thriving city remain.

Allauddin did not leave any worthy successor, and after intrigues and fightings, Ghiyas-ud-din Tughlaq led a military revolt and ushered in the Tughlaq dynasty in 1321 A.D., and built a new city Tughlaqabad in a highly defensible position on the edge of rocky hills. Among the reasons for its deserted plight is the curse of saint Nizam-ad-din who after being stopped by Sultan for building tank near Humayun's Tomb pronounced that the city would be inhabited only by Gujars and jackals. His son, Muhammad bin Tughlaq abandoned Tughlaqabad and transferred the capital to Daulatabad, seven hundred miles away in the Deccan and then back to Delhi where he built his palace-citadel, Adilabad. He began to enlarge the city and the large space between Qutub and Siri was walled in and named Jahanpanah, described as the fourth city of Delhi. Muhammad bin Tughlaq was succeeded by his cousin, Feroz Shah Tughlaq who devoted a lifetime restoring Delhi to its original fame and glory. Apart from repairs of Qutub Minar, he laid out a fifth city, Ferozabad, his fortress palace is now known as Firoz Shah Kotla. The glory of the Tughlaq dynasty ended with Firoz

Shah’s death, and the advance of Timurlane in 1398 A.D., who left Mahumud Shah as vassal on the throne. Tughlaqs were succeeded by Sayyid kings, followed by the Lodhis and then the Mughals.

Spear argues, “During the period of the Mogul Empire Delhi reached the pinnacle of its glory, politically, economically and artistically. Humayun’s Tomb, the Fort and the Jama Masjid, the pomp and majesty of Aurangzeb’s court, the fifty-two bazaars and thirty-six *mandis* which supplied the city’s needs, all testify to its greatness” (24). The high point of the Mughal rule was the design of the new city of Shahjahanabad completed in 1648 A.D. While the earlier cities of Delhi have disappeared, the city of Shah Jahan which housed approximately two million inhabitants during Aurangzeb’s reign, still exists and is inhabited. The Red Fort, Jama Masjid and Chandni Chowk are among its magnificent creations. Invasions by Nadir Shah and Ahmad Shah Abdali weakened the empire and over time habitable Delhi was confined to walls of Shajahanabad, with the social life reduced to the palace; “pre-Mutiny world of Delhi, with its courtly ceremonial and poetizing kings…was more of a historical museum than a living reality” (46). The assault on the city by mutineers and the counter retaliation by the British destroyed the city materially and its spirit was broken.

The revolt of 1857 was brutal for Delhi, from 1857-60, the British were busy destroying Delhi and the whole city looked like a cantonment. In 1858, the administration of the city was placed under Punjab province. Some development started after 1860, including construction of railway line and an iron bridge over Yamuna to speed up travel between Delhi and Meerut, which by then was the cantonment base of the British. The major work done by the British pertained to railways and not for public facilities of natives. The expansion of the city had problems due to congestion and rising population within the walled city. All this while Calcutta was the capital, and the announcement at Coronation Durbar of 1911 to shift back the capital to Delhi and make a new city for it received mixed responses. New Delhi, the imperial capital was inaugurated in 1931, and has also been the national capital since independence in 1947.

The history of Delhi summarised above gives a sense about invasions, violence, intrigues and glory of the city, and it is not surprising that there is no dearth of books examining the city’s historicity. Study of Delhi’s history is incomplete without consulting Percival Spear’s *Delhi: A Historical Sketch,* R. E. Frykenberg’s *Delhi Through the Ages:*

Selected Essays in Urban History, Culture and Society and Narayani Gupta's *Delhi Between Two Empires 1803-1931: Society, Government and Urban Growth.* The city's antiquity is linked to its awe inspiring architecture which makes one feel that one is living in different eons simultaneously. Thomas R. Metcalf's *An Imperial Vision: Indian Architecture and Britain's Raj;* Robert Grant Irving's *Indian Summer: Lutyens, Baker and Imperial Delhi*; Pavan K. Varma and Sondeep Shankar's *Mansions at Dusk: The Havelis of Old Delhi* and C.S.H. Jhabvala's *Delhi: Stones and Streets* are some of the important books that help one understand the layers that go into the making of the contemporary city.

Delhi's history, including architectural history, underlines its importance as site of empires, and provides linkage with its contemporary political status as the capital. While its location made it a target of repeated assaults from the west, its geographical position is also strategic for ruling as it allows for easy communication with other parts of the country. The railways make it the natural junction for routes from east, south, south-west and north-west, and it is an important distribution centre for goods. From the mythic city of Pandavas in *The Mahabharata* to the poetic magnificence of Mughal rule to the imperial city of the British to capital of independent India, Delhi has a long history of evolution. In Malvika Singh's *Delhi: India in One City*, Pawan K. Varma wonders about the future of Delhi, "When Shahjahanbad was built, Humayun's palace citadel became Purana Qila-the Old Fort. And when New Delhi was built, Shahjahanabad became Old Delhi. Will there be a Newer Delhi, after New Delhi?" (25). The various cities of Delhi emphasize its position as a site of power over centuries, making it emerge almost like a natural capital. It has brought various architectural styles, religions, languages and cultures to the city, leading to an (uneasy) amalgamation or hybridity.

As the national capital, Delhi is more than just an administrative city, after independence, the government promoted the setting up of educational institutes and cultural organisations in the city. While the University of Delhi had been in existence since 1922, Jawaharlal Nehru University and Indian Institute of Delhi were established to foster the liberal humanism and technology respectively, and Indira Gandhi National Open University is among the largest open universities in the world. Apart from these Delhi houses Jamia Millia Islamia, Guru Gobind Singh Indraprastha University and B.R. Ambedkar University, and more private universities have come up in the suburbs of Delhi like Amity University (Noida), Shiv Nadar University (Greater Noida), O.P. Jindal Global University (Sonepat) and Ashoka University (Sonepat). Universities in Delhi are places of educational excellence that

attract students from all over the country, with many staying on for employment, the opportunities offered by the city often turns floating population into permanent citizens. Apart from setting up of educational institutes the government set out to promote Delhi as a cultural hub by setting up of the Sahitya Akademi, Sangeet Kala Kendra and National School of Drama in the 1950s. More cultural institutions have come up subsequently like India Habitat Centre, India International Centre, Akshara Theatre and Kamini Auditorium and the city thrives with theatre, dance and music performances, especially over the weekends. It is the centre of India's publishing world and hosts the country's largest book fair, and has been honoured by UNESCO as world's book capital in 2003. Yet critics of the city find it hard to concede points to the city, they argue that it gets all the attention and funding because it is the capital of the country, and its people lack the intellectual class of Kolkata or cosmopolitanism of Mumbai. The difficulty of defining Delhi culture is linked with the impossible task of defining a Dilliwalla in a city of migrants. Being the capital, it attracts people for the opportunities that it offers, and yet is "nobody's city", few people claim love for it, and even fewer imagine it anything more than an administrative and bureaucratic capital.

One is however witnessing a shift in the way the city is conceived and perceived by its administrators and citizens, and contemporary history can almost be divided into two eras, pre- and post- liberalisation, liberalisation apart from economic growth changed the built form of the city and social relations within it, generating new interest in the city. There has been a phenomenal physical expansion and explosion of the city not just to new areas like Rohini in North and Dwarka in South-West but the transformation of suburbs of Gurgaon and Noida as part of National Capital Territory (NCT) of Delhi. One notices a change in the urban spaces in subtle and not so subtle ways, right from the CCDs, Baristas and Starbucks taking over the old Coffee Houses to the zipping metro to the skyscrapers and malls redefining the skyline. One could see office workers, students and intellectuals alike at old coffee houses, with long discussions over affordable cups of coffee. The contemporary ones like Barista and Starbucks are about the desire to appear modern and cool and underline the class that can enter these places; they are redefining contemporary social relations, and notions of citizenship and entitlement.

The changing social dynamics of the aspiring world class city are finding interesting representations in new fiction and non-fiction on the city, in fact close to 100 years of construction of New Delhi new anthologies and coffee table books hit the market. The announcement of construction of New Delhi was made in 1911 but the city was inaugurated

only in 1931, but there was a sense of celebration in 2011 to mark a century of the city, it certainly marks 100 continuous years of it being a capital. One particular radio channel ran campaigns called "Happy birthday Delhi", as if blinding oneself to history before the imperial city. Some anthologies need special mention as they put together incisive essays on the Janus city, they do not gloss over the past while analysing the contemporary metropolis: Maya Dayal's *Celebrating Delhi;* Veronique Dupont, Emma Tarlo and Denis Vidal's *Delhi: Urban Space and Human Destinities,* Ranjana Sengupta's *Delhi Metropolitan: The Making of an Unlikely City*, Khushwant Singh's *City Improbable: Writings on Delhi*, and Malvika Singh and Uday Sahay's *Delhi: India in One City* and the latest Swapna Liddle's *Chandni Chowk: The Mughal City of Old Delhi* (which traces the journey of Shahjahanabad from its conception to present). These offer a range of discursive essays that are useful not only for researchers but also for the lay reader curious about the city. Among popular reads on the city, travelogues like William Dalrymple's *City of Djinns: A Year in Delhi*; Sam Miller's *Adventures in a Megacity*; Vinod Nair's *Delhi OMG!* and Elizabeth Chatterjee's *Delhi Mostly Harmless* have put Delhi afresh on people's reading lists.

In a not so distant past, if asked to name a book on Delhi, people would mention Ahmed Ali's *Twilight in Delhi* and Khushwant Singh's *Delhi*, and then draw a blank. Today one is dealing with a huge corpus of fiction and non-fiction on Delhi, and since I am engaging with a seven decade history of a growing and pulsating city, I have chosen to confine my research area in terms of genre and language of primary texts. I focus in this thesis on select Indian English fiction written on and based in Delhi city. I am aware that given the linguistic map of Delhi, it leaves out significant works in Hindi, Punjabi and Urdu, and those in translation, but I have narrowed my canvas for in-depth textual analysis rather than a historiographic survey or teleological study. I use the lens of spatiality and urbanity for a close literary analysis in this interdisciplinary study, and the intersection of theory and practice, imaginary and lived spaces defines the chapterisation and choice of texts to suit the thematic framework.

The foremost concern is to examine the notion of city and citizenship, to interrogate the idea of belongingness in a city of migrants. Chapter 1, "City and identity", thus raises questions not only about Delhi's characteristic features but that of Dilliwalla. To move from Anita Desai's *Clear Light of Day* and *In Custody* to Khushwant Singh's *Delhi: A Novel* to Anuja Chauhan's *Zoya Factor*, is tracing the changing voice in literature, from nostalgia in writings of midnight's children to forging of relations with new and mini Delhis among the

midnight's grandchildren. However articulation of identity is not a simple and singular idea, and gender is one of the axis which frames it, and chapter 2, "City and gender" explores the power and hierarchy embedded in gendered nature of urban spaces. The common concern of all the texts discussed in the chapter, Nayantara Sahgal's *A Day in Shadow*, Manju Kapur's *A Married Woman* and *Home*, and Advaita Kala's *Almost Single* is the questioning of unequitable gender spatiality, where women's movements are curtailed to domestic sphere. But power does not work merely in gendered context, in fact Delhi is synonymous with power as chapter 3, "City as capital" discusses. The sense of hierarchy and authority is embedded in the architectural plan of the city, both monumentality and social relations in the city are impacted by it. The different stages of Indian political history from waning of euphoria after independence, corruption, Naxalism, Emergency and coalition governments are analysed through Nayantara Sahgal's *This Time of Morning* and *A Situation in New Delhi*, Vishwajyoti Ghosh's *Delhi Calm* and Krishan Pratap Singh's *Delhi Durbar*. Delhi is however trying to break away from the image of being considered a historical city or an administrative capital, and chapter 4, "City as brand" is a commentary on the new ways in which the city is being conceived and presented before tourists and investors. Branding is inevitable in globalization as cities compete with each other for investment. Sagarika Ghosh's *The Gin Drinkers* and Namita Gokhale's *Priya in Incredible Indyaa* analyse a transforming "Walled to World City" where technology redefines relationship between the city and citizens. Today our "check-in" status digitally maps our movements in the city, and even interaction with government is mediated through Apps that push the case for Digital India/Delhi. One overriding concern across the chapters is the need to look beyond the dichotomies of Old Delhi/New Delhi, traditional/modern, local/global, to pave way for simultaneity of existence of binaries and moving beyond in Soja's sense of creative trialectics or King's idea of "multiple modernisms".

As outlined, the purpose of the thesis is not a chronological study of fiction on Delhi, nor is it an analysis of social-economic-political history of Delhi, which has ably been researched. My concern is to make an intervention in the field of urban studies through the discipline of literature, and the methodology draws upon theories of space/place, urbanity, forms of urbanism, urban cultures from fields of sociology and geography. Apart from drawing liberally from other disciplines in understanding the idea of the city, I also draw upon experiential reality. I was born in Delhi and have lived all my life in this city, and though I travel a fair bit, the longest I have stayed away at a stretch from this city is a month!

When I say that I belong to Delhi, people post a counter query, “Where are you from originally?”, it is assumed that in a city of migrants everyone has a native place. Both my paternal and maternal grandparents migrated to Delhi during partition, they have borne the label of “partition refugees”, my parents were born here and there is no distant or extended family on the other side of border. Can I say that I am originally from Lahore? Is that “home”? Is that a city that I can “return” to? The answer to all of the above is “no”, Delhi is the only home I know, and yes, I am a Dilliwalla, not only because there is no native place that I can go back to but also because I belong to this city and love this city. Does one have to live in a city for generations to claim it as one’s own? I think not. Having lived in Delhi for four decades (and hailing “originally” from another city, Lahore) my sensibilities are largely urban and help in unravelling the urban labyrinth of Delhi, the real city and the one in imagination, or rather the one that is formed at the intersection of the two. The “knowledge” of the city from above, the city of maps and statistics as defined by urban planners and researchers needs to be supplemented with the “view from below” of people walking in the streets. Historiographic literature on the city and theories of urbanity then enter into dialogue with lived experiences in this cross- and multi- disciplinary study of the city.

While work analysing city in literature is not new, but research till not too far back focussed on prominent western cities, the industrial city and the modernist city have received most attention. In the Indian scenario, Mumbai and Kolkata have not only drawn more love from their citizens but also produced more fiction and academic works. The works on Delhi have been more historical in nature extending to field of architectural history. This study is an attempt to fill the lacuna in research on Delhi’s literature. We are living in times of rapid urbanisation, and more people live in cities today in India and world over, new forms of urbanism are changing the definition of cities from metro to postmetropolis to expolis, no wonder these are exciting times for discipline of urban studies. I would like to study Delhi in view of urban transformations as represented through literature and to unfold new urban imaginaries in the process. Given below is an overview of the chapters encapsulating the work undertaken in this study.

Plan of the Work

Having outlined the scope of this study, here is a summarisation of arguments presented in the four chapters namely, City and identity: (Non)belongingness and Dilliwallas;

City and gender: (Un)equal spatiality at work and pleasure; City as capital: Powerpolis and politics; and City as brand: Urbanscapes of globalization.

The first chapter, "City and identity" explores questions of identity and belongingness through novels that are located in recognizable and marked cartography of the city, and invite the reader to negotiate the everyday spaces along with (fictional) characters at intersection of real and imagined spaces. The dialectical inter-relationship between the city and its citizens is explored through literary texts in light of sociological readings on the city and the perception of Delhi as an (un)loved city. Wirth in "Urbanism as a Way of Life" writes that the city has "historically been the melting-pot of races, people and customs, and a most favorable breeding ground of new biological and cultural hybrids. It has not only tolerated but rewarded individual differences" (66). Urban planning instead of being caste/class/gender neutral, only reinforces these divisions, where the pseudo-public places like malls create new spaces of "urban apartheid" (Davis 224). The exclusion and invisibilization of the economically and socially weaker class is evident in the scant regard they get in urban policy, planning, news coverage and even literature. Park describes three kinds of communities: those based on locality, i.e. mapped around places like neighbourhood; social, those based on cultural ties like clubs; and affective, based on shared identities and interests. There is generally a great deal of slippage between the three categories and the third category of affective is most interesting as it redefines the traditional notion of community and includes other and broader concerns of travel, heritage or photography, redefining the relationship between people and city in the process.

Delhi's history of invasions has led to establishment and destruction of various empire-cities that brought new languages, ethnicities, cultures, cuisines and architectural styles leading to an amalgamation that makes it difficult to define Delhi culture. Migrants to the city hardly think of it as home, even if they have willingly moved to the city for the better opportunities that it offers. The metamorphosis from a laid back bureaucratic capital to a glitzy town with malls, multiplexes and metro has redefined the iconography of the city and socio-cultural interactions within it. The spiralling expansion of the city in terms of geographical areas and varied populations makes it difficult to arrive at a singular definition of Dilliwala, and more often than not citizens are in love with their mini Delhis that connote stereotypes and prejudices like the brash West Delhi Punjabi and sophisticated South Delhi gentleman. The dynamic play of identity formation in urban space is explored through Anita

Desai's *Clear Light of Day* and *In Custody*, Khushwant Singh's *Delhi: A Novel* and Anuja Chauhan's *Zoya Factor.*

Desai's *Clear Light of Day*, located in Old Delhi juxtaposes the events of three families in 1960s with that of 1947, where the fractures in Das household and neighbourhood mirror those of the nation. The *havelis* and streets that echoed the finest verses and were the seat of Delhi *tehzeeb* lie in dilapidated state with dangling, dangerous mass of wires threatening to set afire the last spaces that recall the city's composite culture. The abandoned house of Hyder Ali in the wake of the impending Partition, symbolizes the decline of the culture that he stood for, with the mirror reflecting an empty place that once stocked a rich library, held *musharias* and political discussions. With the shift of power centre to New Delhi, Old Delhi stagnates, moving in a slow paced loop, unchanged and non-exciting in present, and has only a glorious past to refer back to. Memory is the prism used to reflect and refract on history unfolded in space, shedding light on past fragmentations, hinting at possible unfoldings beyond the partition(s) of language, family and land.

Desai's *In Custody* is a novel about decline of Urdu language, which was once the language of Mughal court but lies neglected in the very spaces where it flourished, making its speakers alienated in that landscape. The protagonist Deven visualizes the mundane Mirpore as a trap where he is forced to teach Hindi to sustain his family while Delhi symbolises the world of imagination and poetry. Deven and poet Nur are caught in a nostalgic remembering of Urdu, and their "nostalgia is rooted in the cultural memory of a premodern past that rejects the values of an evolving modern present" (Yaqin 139). Deven has high expectations from meeting with Nur but is instead confronted with a forgotten poet, whose downfall is symbolic of the decline in prestige of Urdu at various levels. There are brief interludes of poetic brilliance in this twilight world of Urdu literary scene, and these are played out in the liminal spaces of the terrace with constant infiltration of soundscapes and lightscapes of the bazaar. In spite of being confronted with dying Urdu language, there is resistance to shift away from traditional notion of language, as seen in the reluctance to use of tools of modernity (tape recorder) for the rescue of the heritage language and a refusal to admit women's voices in the male sphere of Urdu poetry. Deven, entrusted with the task of preservation of poetic art needs to realize that the binaries between art/life, reality/imagination, purity/hybridity and public/private spaces are fuzzy; and the uneasy connections between spaces, languages and identities push for allowances of diversity and hybridity.

The set of dualities broaden thematically, spatially and temporally in *Singh's Delhi: A Novel* to explore the love/hate relationship of Dilliwallas to their city. It covers the history of Delhi over several centuries, roughly from seventh to twentieth century, through multiple narrators, including prominent and not so well-known figures from history. The connecting thread of the historical narrations is violence right from Timur Lane to Mahatma Gandhi's assassination in 1948, concluding with anti-Sikh riots following the assassination of Indira Gandhi in 1984. The historical reconstructions are interlaced with the narrator's visit to monuments where those events occured; and the monumental spaces are intersected with spatial stories of ordinary people. Two sets of voices are repeated throughout, those of violent plunderers and those expressing love/pain for the city; the narrator Singh and Bhagmati are placed in lineage of other lovers of the city across centuries like Mussadi Lal (fourteenth century), Meer Taqi Meer (eighteenth century), and Bahadur Shah Zafar and Ghalib (nineteenth century). Interestingly all these lovers are situated at in-between positions, be it that of be it that of religion, profession or gender, blurring the straight and monolithic categories of identity. Bagchi discusses the author's flirting "with the possibilities that lie beyond the binary… Bhagmati the hijra, who is neither man nor woman, or, looked at another way, is freed from being either by being a bit of both" (*Outlook*). Benjamin in "A Berlin Chronicle" discusses the relationship of memory to space, for him it operates between the landmarks of the official city and the footfalls of the solitary subject, and the novel through the creative process of memory by mixes history and anecdotes, voices of kings and low castes, stories and poetry, as they unfold across monumental and everyday spaces of the city.

Delhi continues to weave its charm over characters in Chauhan's *Zoya Factor*, even as the novel traverses various cities. The protagonist Zoya Singh Solanki is extremely conscious of the tags that come with spatial coordinates of the city, and is aware that her Karol Bagh address is not hip or "cool". Living in a Punjabi dominated locality, she is unapologetic about the brashness and loudness associated with them, and is unabashedly in love with mini Delhi/Karol Bagh, "You can take a girl out of Karol Bagh but you can't take Karol Bagh out of the girl" (Chauhan 42). The area is unfolded not as a cartographer's map but as an exciting embodied place with its spatial stories. The spaces of the bazaar have "unceasing, entangled and multifaceted quality. Social life is experienced and expressed in an ever-evolving now whose prospective shape is not foreordained" (Gandhi 134). The novel makes a case for plurality and hybridity through heterogeneous usage of space, fusion food,

and khichdification of language where “English is implicated in the polyphony of India languages” (John 134).

Chapter 2, “City and gender” discusses the notion of gendered identity by underlining the frameworks of power in which they are embedded in the city. A growing body of work by scholars like Knopp and Wilson has looked into the ways in which urban spaces are gendered and sexualised. The discussion of gendered city is drawn from the demarcations made in space in terms of public and private, and has its roots in industrial cities where the term “public woman” referred to the prostitute specifically but in a broader sense to any woman out in the public (Nead *Victorian*). She is seen as disrupting the normative urban public space that is encoded and conceptualized as male while the domestic sphere is visualized as feminine (Pollock). A special kind of “public woman”, the feminist reformer questioned this gendered organization of space as she recognized the necessity of invading spaces and challenging spatial relations to resist the conceptual relations of gender (Moore).

Elizabeth Wilson discusses the deep contradictions in contemporary urban space, offering freedom on one hand and being bound by principles of regulation and planning on the other. She reads the tension between control and freedom in urban space as a conflict between masculine and feminine principles at work in the city. The city is largely projected as unsafe for women, ruling out equitable occupation of space, and leads to women’s cautious and defensive use of space. The discourse of unsafe public places is used to keep women off them, preventing women from fully partaking in pleasures of the city and scholars like Wolff, Pollock and Parsons have debated the possibility of a female *flâneur*. Gender and sexual politics is built into the layout of the city, making *flânerie* or loitering difficult for a non-normative body walking down the largely homophobic streets of the city. Inclusion is the basic premise of the LGBTQ activism that also brings up not just “rights” but “right to pleasure” to the fore, and gendering/queering spaces through social practices in the city. *Why Loiter?* argues for women’s quest for pleasure through loitering because “when framed in inclusive terms, does not divide people into aggressors and victims and is therefore non-divisive” (Phadke et al 183). Loitering demands a right to pleasure, to disrupt the spatial control, to rupture hierarchical demarcations, to be able to create alternate maps of everyday life that de Certeau refers to, or to fill the city with women *flâneurs*. It demands open access for all in an inclusive city and more so for women, that women be able to roam the city at all times without being questioned on company, purpose or dress, for the women to be able to

belong to the city unconditionally. The gendered divisions of city spaces are discussed with regard to Nayantara's Sahgal's *A Day in Shadow*, Manju Kapur's *A Married Woman* and *Home* and Advaita Kala's *Almost Single*.

A Day in Shadow is set in 1960s and is about Simit, who is trying to carve out her identity after divorce. Simrit struggles hard to locate herself since the "divorced woman" is an anomaly, a woman unchaperoned by a husband disrupts the order in public sphere, creating disquiet like the other "public woman", the prostitute in Victorian era. Undercutting the conventional conception of the home as the woman's turf, the house in this novel is projected as a reflection and extension of her husband Som's inflated ego. The lavishness and ostentation are a symbol of his position in society, and his narcissistic image is reflected in the carefully picked up huge bathroom mirrors, the house bears an imprint of Som's notions of propriety over space and people. And even as Simrit is being heralded as the "new woman" with career, these are again projections of another man about her, of Raj trying to mould a counter definition and space for her. Simrit's "liberated choice" in remarrying may subsume her once again into gendered roles and spaces, and one treads with caution in responding to this "new woman".

Kapur's *A Married Woman* interrogates the public/private demarcation of space by emphasizing the narrative of fear that is used to contain women to domestic sphere. The novel roughly tracing events in Delhi from 1970s to early 1990s, is the story of Astha, a school teacher, who is drawn into the events surrounding demolition of Babri Masjid. She quits her safe job of teaching to paint full time; the novel questions spatial divisions and gendered roles by highlighting the role of art in making an intervention in public space and by placing women protestors on street to disrupt the normative urban divisions. Lefebvre's imagines "counter-space" in alternative political projects, of reworking and recharging space with possibilities through demonstrations. Occupation of public spaces, especially by women, who are warned to be "in place" at home is then not just a political struggle of claiming legitimate rights over space but almost a joy in trespassing.

Kapur's *Home* is the story of a bania business family, Banwari Lal, who migrated to Delhi from Lahore during Partition, and is the unfolding of the family saga over three generations and five decades, with focus of the story being from 1960s to 1990s. The narrative hinges on the locations of the home and the shop, and the problematic gender roles within them. The overlapping discourses of patriarchy and economics especially place two

characters on the margins, Nisha, the granddaughter, and Vicky, the grandson from the daughter's side. For the two business women, Rupa and Nisha, their flourishing trade is posited as substitute for children and marriage respectively rather than an acknowledgement of their business acumen, in the complicated intersection of capital with patriarchy, gender subordination is further perpetuated (Raju). Marriage and the primordial function of bearing children forces Nisha to give up her business and long with that her spatial independence, and she is pushed back into the spaces of home as a daughter in law and mother. Even the grandson from the daughter's side, Vicky is never accorded equality in spaces of home and shop, and continues to exist on fringes of home and shop, underlining patriarchy's spatial politics that does not give legitimate space and voice to blood lines from the female side.

Kala's *Almost Single* depicts the uneasy life of women living independently in the metro where "blended relationships" have thrown up new choices but not clarity. It is the story of Aisha and her friends living in Delhi in the twenty first century but the focus is still a Jane Austenian hunt for eligible bachelors. The work profile, dress and lifestyles of women characters in this novel is a far cry from those depicted in the three discussed above. The protagonist is on the wrong side of twenty five, she is a working professional who stays alone in the metropolis, sans the safety anchor of a family or husband. The women attempt to subvert the spatial rules in small ways like celebrating Kurva Chauth with wine and cheese on the terrace with gay friends. The new labels among the youth overturn the gender clichés: men are PMSing; men are turning gold-diggers who quit work after marrying a rich woman: "brand name" dulhas are a coveted property; women are wearing pants in relationships; metrosexual men talk with ease about facial; and "blended relationships" make life complicated.

The third chapter, "City as capital" discusses the city as an "eternal capital", with the present New Delhi built on sedimentary rocks of Tomars' Lal Kot, Khiljis' Siri, and Mughals' Shahjahanabad among others. Construction of cities with walled boundaries, forts and citadels is clearly an attempt to demonstrate strength and to leave permanent imprints over the landscape by the rulers, but the desolate ruins of these cities narrate a contrary tale of their fallibility. New Delhi, the national capital of India, has been a site of authority since 1931, first under the British, and then of independent India since 1947.

New Delhi was designed as an imperial capital to showcase the strength of the British empire, with architectural form linked to political function. It was built in the tradition of the

Grand Manner (Kostof), architecture became an instrument in the hands of authority where a sense of grandeur was conveyed through wide boulevards and large neo-classical structures. Power was concentrated in the centre and the ones lower down the order moved away in concentric circles. The architects, Lutyens and Baker designed it like their "acropolis" where verticality was used to advantage, and British occupied offices that towered above the ordinary lives of the Indians. Indian leaders "inherited" these opulent edifices of power on gaining independence in 1947, and a process was begun to occupy and reclaim the spaces that had been inscribed onto the Indian soil by the colonizer. Along with renaming of major governmental buildings like Government House/Viceroy House as Rashtrapati Bhawan and the War Memorial as India Gate, there was a parallel process of creating new meanings through massive construction work like building of Chanakyapuri, Krishi Bhawan, Udyog Bhawan and Hotel Ashok. The political fiction on Delhi unfolds in these power corridors, as seen through Nayantara Sahgal's *This Time of Morning* and *A Situation in New Delhi*, Vishwajyoti Ghosh's *Delhi Calm* and Krishan Pratap Singh's *Delhi Durbar*.

Sahgal's *This Time of Morning* is set in Delhi of 1950s when the initial euphoria of independence had begun to wane, and the capital's spaces witness tussles between idealism and opportunism. For a city that has witnessed huge migrations due to partition, and is a stopping-place for parliamentarians, diplomats and armed forces, it does not evoke a sense of home for anyone. Rakesh, an IFS officer, is eager to claim the city as his own, and his spatial movements unfold a nostalgic sepia picture of Delhi. He is not a mere spectator or silent observer to changes sweeping through Delhi as he reflects on operations of power at different levels: built environment, individuals and the foreign ministry.

The problems that begin to sweep across the powerscapes of Delhi in *This Time of Morning* become more pronounced in Sahgal's *A Situation in New Delhi*, where the death of PM Shivraj marks the end of an era in Indian politics. While the Education Minister, Devi and the VC of Delhi University, Usman find themselves isolated and alienated in this changed atmosphere, the youth have their own restlessness, and a section turns to Naxalism. "Freedom" was the grand narrative that the older generation lived by, and the younger generation is searching for its master narrative to give form to life. Usman as VC is ignored and overruled both by the government from top who disregard his suggestions about education policies, and by students from below who violently target his office. Plans go haywire at both macro and micro levels, violence breaks out in the city, university is vacated,

and Usman resigns as VC and takes to the streets, as he feels that the cause cannot be addressed from the spaces of authority.

If idealism is waning in political spaces of Sahgal's works, it disappears completely in the absolute regime of Emergency that is represented in Ghosh's *Delhi Calm.* The first word of the novel, "conflict" throws the reader spatially and thematically into the midst of strife, where dichotomous "calm" and "panic" are juxtaposed. "Rights suspended" and "Situation peaceful" co-exist in spaces of Delhi when Emergency is imposed on 26 June, 1975. Censorship, in its various forms like gagged people, silence in offices and checks on press are forcefully depicted through visible imagery. An eerie silence has descended on the city; spaces of both formal and informal political discussion have been quashed, silence has engulfed the radio and the paanwala corner alike. The two figures of Moon and Prophet, drawn ideologically on opposite sides, are thinly disguised references to Indira Gandhi and Jayaprakash Narayan respectively. Moon misreads the overwhelming election win of 1971 as sign of invincible permanence; her rule is challenged by the Prophet's call for total revolution and the charged action in the streets and Ram Lila grounds create counter spaces of resistance. The absolute power of Emergency asserts its spatial control over spaces of everyday lives; the city's promise of freedom and opportunities seem to be replaced by the panoptic gaze of the state that monitors and controls the lives of people, especially through control over bodies of citizens through the sterilisation drive. Normalcy makes a slow return with lifting of Emergency but one is reminded that power and its overt display is a pervasive feature that percolates down from the government offices to the streets of Delhi.

K.P. *Delhi Durbar* depicts coalition politics, "Power is a commodity and the Delhi Durbar is where it is traded" (290). While the city's architectural design concentrates power in the official buildings at the centre, here it also resides in and operates from alternative addresses like farmhouses in the city's periphery. The novel is as much about politicians as the middle men who occupy liminal spaces in the power corridors. They operate from the Foucauldian heterotopic sites that subvert, twist and bend rules, in this case formulating a neo political-economics nexus. People, posts and spaces, all have become saleable commodities; as Shitij's "election" as the President of the Indian Cricket Board demonstrates or even worse the case of industrialists "buying" a President. The conjecture about an impending military coup connects the events thematically with the Emergency, the only other period that witnessed breakdown of democratic systems. While materialism has never been absent from

power positions, but the blatant brazenness is new, attaching even greater significance to the interstitial spaces of power brokers where deals are struck.

Chapter 4, “City as brand” attempts to examine the idea of the city as brand, and the redefinitions of Delhi variously by its citizens, administrators, tourists and investors. It seeks to explore the city’s changing perception from a city of antiquity to an aspiring world class city, or as a *Times of India* campaign labelled it “Walled to World city”. In creating and marketing a brand, cities seek to create themselves as centres of education, of employment opportunities, as historical and cultural places, women or LGBT friendly cities, tourism or investment friendly places. The twin threads of antiquity and modernity together weave “Brand Delhi”; the iconic Qutub Minar and India Gate are supplemented with images of metro and Akhardham in creating Delhi’s skyline.

While one point of view suggests that we are creating generic cities that erase local specificities and hues, the other suggests that local cultures are being recreated in response to globalization, and hybridization is redefining the complex relationship between identity and place. Technology is a key factor in reconfigured spaces and social experiences of the city, where instantaneity of communication obliterates geographical boundaries, a move towards liquid or media cities. Digitized world appears democratic, and attempts to erase spatial boundaries, but it creates new hierarchies, where a huge population of disenfranchised people are excluded as they do not have access to internet and the facilities promised through it. The transforming and aspiring world class city, and its incumbent problems are see through Sagarika Ghosh’s *The Gin Drinkers* and Namita Gokhale’s *Priya in Incredible Indyaa*.

Ghosh’s *The Gin Drinkers* questions the claims of Delhi as place of excellence for education and research, against the two interrelated events of choosing the Director for Mahatma Gandhi Foundation and theft of rare books from private collection of the city’s elites. The novel explores the claims for ascendency to spaces of research as the suave and sophisticated gin drinkers of yesteryears clash with the non-Oxford, the desis at the turn of millennium. Jai Prakash, calling himself the Robinhood of knowledge, justifies borrowing/stealing books from the former as their hoarding of books is symbolic of maintaining hegemony over education and knowledge structures. The desis attempt to dismantle the exclusive claims on branded education, and this is exemplified through the telephone man Hari Ram’s attempts to secure a foreign scholarship for his son. Uma, one of the privileged ones begins to feel that her family and friends are the “irrelevant Indians” from

Oxford while the others are of significance in the contemporary city. Jai Prakash's research on Nat Devi, a secret cult where only women are allowed entry, is about healing illnesses through song and dance; it is about alternative subjects and methodology of research that dispenses with jargon and hotel lobby revolutionary tactics. As Delhi's attempts to brand itself as a place for educational opportunity, clash unfolds in spaces of intellectual elitism, and the gin drinkers do not find it easy to make way for desis.

Gokhale's *Priya in Incredible Indyaa* unfolds events in Delhi roughly from 2005 to 2008, the socio-economic impact of liberalisation reforms are beginning to be felt, mobile phones and facebook are transforming lives but the technology has not completely seeped into everyday lives via smart phones and easy access to digital cameras and instant messaging of WhatsApp. The title of the novel is reminiscent of "Incredible India", the international marketing campaign by the government of India to promote tourism since 2002, and tourism is one of the major ways in which cities try to brand themselves. There are also echoes of "India Shining", a campaign popularised by NDA government in 2004 to project a feeling of economic optimism and faced criticism for focussing on the urban. In this changing urban imaginary, everything is entertainment from films to IPL to politics, and the "wannabe city" is both a character and site in this drama of urban development. The promised media city, connecting people across the world, creates new worlds of exclusion and unequitable citizenship, where the seducing malls lie at odds with the lives of squatters opposite it. The city space, both public and private, is increasingly perceived as a node in global digital network and is reorganizing professional and familial relations. The protagonist's shift from paper to blog and Facebook signals the telling of story of a changing city through new media.

CHAPTER 1

City and Identity: (Non)belongingness and Dilliwallas

> People come here [Delhi] to earn a living, to study, or were born here and so had no option. But if one had a choice, would one really choose to live here? Does this ancient city, once described as 'the mistress of every conqueror', inspire love or loyalty?
>
> (Singh, *City Improbable* xi)

The links between spatial forms, social processes and social actors of the city need to be analysed at the intersection of the real and the fictional city. Most novels on Delhi make no attempt to fictionalize the place or street names, the reader is instead invited to identify the known markers, to negotiate the city spaces along with the characters in an intersection of real and imagined spaces. As a reader and critic then one's understanding of the city as represented in texts is drawn from the literary world and the experiential reality of living in the city. Neither the city nor the social actors/characters/readers moving through them are static objects and their intrinsic changes and those with relation to each other makes the study interesting and complex. The chapter outlines the sociological theories of urbanity, discusses Delhi as an un/loved city, and explores the relationship between city and its citizens through Anita Desai's *Clear Light of Day* and *In Custody*, Khushwant Singh's *Delhi: A Novel* and Anuja Chauhan's *Zoya Factor*.

Social Relations in the City

Urban sociology links urban spaces to social groups, which may be based on commonalities/differences of race, caste, gender or class. The co-existence of classes in city is linked to its historical evolution, Wirth in "Urbanism as a Way of Life" writes that the city has

> historically been the melting-pot of races, people and customs, and a most favorable breeding ground of new biological and cultural hybrids. It has not only tolerated but rewarded individual differences. It has brought together people from the ends of the earth because they are different and thus useful to one another, rather than because they are homogeneous and like-minded. (66)

While Wirth dwells on the social aspects of evolution of the city, Burgess attempts to link it to the physical transformations in "The Growth of the City" and views the modern city as expanding outward from central business district in concentric circles. Soja in *Postmetropolis*

argues that despite the shortcomings of the Burgess model, it explains that mobility outward from the centre is an indicator of economic and cultural status. As the social population moves away from the centre, it becomes more affluent and less differentiated according to caste/ethnicity, and this is witnessed in suburban gated communities of National Capital Region. Ideally urban planning should be race/class neutral, but in practice resources are not directed on merit of social and economic need but on the social-economic profile of spaces/localities. Urban space is increasingly being segregated along economic lines and middle class consumption patterns are the driving force behind the frantic rise and spread of the city. The poor and homeless are treated as invisibles, Davis in *City of Quartz* writes that an "urban apartheid" (224) has come to separate spaces and social groups in it. He argues that the increasing privatization of the city has destroyed the public places while the pseudo-public places like the malls and cultural centres carry invisible signs warning off the underclass. The invisibilization of the economically and socially weaker class is evident in the scant regard they get in urban policy and planning, coverage in news and even attention in literature.

However it is not class alone that is of concern in the city, there is a strange indifference that comes over people when dealing with large number of people on a daily basis. Simmel in "The Metropolis and Mental Life" remarks that mutual reserve among city people is intrinsically urban. Wirth proposes that "what is distinctively modern in our civilization is signaled by the growth of cities" (58), and discusses that rational, impersonal forms of interaction in city life are typically modern. The density and social heterogeneity of the city results in frequent encounters with others but they tend to be transitory in nature rather than forming deep bonds. As cities are complex and dynamic social systems, social interactions are constantly being redefined, while there is decline of traditional forms of sociality, new contexts forms of solidarity are being formed. Park in "The City: Suggestions for the Investigation of Human Behavior in the Urban Environment" postulates that the choice is not between loneliness of urban crowd and older folk forms but on the changing nature of identity and experience in city. He defines urban communities in three ways: first, based on locality, where communities are mapped around place, e.g. neighbourhood and apartment blocks; second, social, that is ethnic communities based on cultural ties and institutional forms, e.g. clubs, associations, eating places; and third, affective, based on shared identities and interests that provide a sense of belonging, e.g. contemporary friendship networks on internet and phone that overcome spatial distances. There is a great deal of

slippage between the three categories and they tend to overlap and intersect each other. The third category is the most interesting and suggests new social interactions based on common interests like photography, travel, food, heritage and health. Facebook groups like "Delhi by Foot" (by Ramit Mitra), "Delhi Karavan" (by Asif Khan Dehlvi) and "Delhi Heritage Walks with Sohail Hashmi" share posts over internet and also meet in the real city, criss-crossing between the categories defined by Park. The events and activities undertaken by these groups cover a wide range: visits to historical monuments, food and cultural walks, Ramzan celebration, Ramlila watching, pandal hopping during Durga Puja, heritage baithak and poetry readings. The historical figure of the *flâneur*, who combined immersion with estrangement, seems to be reinvented in the form of arm chair virtual *flânerie* and group *flânerie* through such groups.

These affective communities are just one of the ways in which one is witnessing a return to communal celebrations as the traditional family and kinship systems are disappearing. The other popular mode is celebrating festivals as a clan in apartment blocks cutting across religions and castes; here one witnesses a simultaneous existence of traditional and modern methods, often a happy co-existence of the traditional rituals and the disc jockey. Wirth notes the tendency of urbanites to create "fictional kinship groups", and with the weakening of family ties the affective bonds gain prominence. These ties redefine the traditional notion of community based on common identities of caste, religion or class and the shared concerns could be travel, fitness, marathon running, photography, poetry or films. Most of these groups primarily depend on social media platforms like Facebook and Instagram to announce and advertise their upcoming events, a new kind of community is formed where social and (real and virtual) spatialities are overlaid. With the redefining and shifting concepts of community, the relationship between people and city are being negotiated in new ways.

The spaces of contemporary communities function at overlapping of real and virtual spaces, and also reflect the changing dynamics of public/private spaces in the city. The contemporary layout of cities, houses, streets and markets have destroyed the older order and instead created new forms of interaction. In the traditional *mohallas*, the neighbours kept an eye on other's houses and entry of strangers, these have been replaced by guards and CCTV cameras and the Delhi Police slogan, "Neighbourhood watch area". The temples, parks and local bazaars of the older architectural layout were about mixed usage of spaces; these have given way to pseudo-public spaces like cafes and malls where the CCTVs try to mimic the

eyes on streets. In the gated communities there is "a turning away from the street, as collective amenities-the municipal baths, the public park-are brought inside or on top of the building in the form of private gyms, swimming pools and roof gardens" (Tonkiss 91). There is an increasing turning towards private spaces of new residential blocks that offer the experience of luxury hotel stay at home.

One is witnessing an erosion of public space with increasing privatization of the city in both economic and cultural forms. Malls, built on principle of exclusion of the poor are exceedingly popular choices among the young to "hang out" with friends and for romantic dates to escape the harsh weather outside. With presence of multiplex theatres, food courts, video game parlours and luxury brands, malls attractively appeal to the bourgeoisie. The closed spaces of the mall not only insulate from the weather but also from the social diversity of the street. The sanitized environs mirror and suit the planners' methods of upholding spatial order. Social cleansing of streets is a regular feature in Delhi that attempts to blank out the disorderly presence of people and street vendors especially before visits by foreign heads of state and major sports events. Weekly street markets are generally not allowed to sell wares as cautionary security measures before Independence Day and Republic Day, clearly claims to space are not equitable and those dependent on the public spaces find it tough to sustain themselves.

Demands on space can be made only by those in a socially stable position, and even organizing a protest march depends not merely on gathering numbers in physical space but mobilization in virtual space. Gatherings in public streets and squares aim at remaking space and actively employ real and virtual spaces, and use online signature campaigns, sms and WhatsApp messages for dissemination of information. Today from general elections to protest marches, all groups aimed at garnering mass support actively employ technology for their purposes, and Anna Hazare movement against corruption in 2011 is a recent example of mass mobilization, reconceptualising the notion of protest in age of digital media. Protests and demonstrations are tactics of disobedience in the imposed order of city. But the "legitimization" of spaces of protest and containing "disorder" to specified locales of Jantar Mantar and Ram Lila Ground defeats in some ways the purpose, which is to question and disrupt the order and power contained in spaces of authority. In fact the Delhi Police placed an advertisement in several newspapers including *The Indian Express*, "Want to hold dharna/ protest. Upto 5000 persons. Welcome to Jantar Mantar" which also has the DCP's phone number displayed prominently (*Want to Hold a Protest*).

In all activities of negotiating the city, be it in carrying out everyday activities or protesting, the experiences of individuals opens multiple meanings for them. De Certeau underlines the role of people's everyday practice in making space in the city that runs parallel to or in defiance to the spatial order of planners defined by maps and schemes. This is in conjunction with Lefebvre's distinction between formal "representations of space" and "representational space" in *Production of Space* that subjects invest with meaning. The "representations of space" involves designs and plans which are linked to formal signs and codes. This is scientific or architectural treatment of space typical of what de Certeau calls the "concept of city", the modernist dream of a thoroughly rational urban environment. "Representational space" refers to

> space as directly *lived* through its associated images and symbols, and hence the space of 'inhabitants' and 'users'…This is dominated- and hence passively experienced-space which the imagination seeks to change and appropriate. It overlays physical space, making symbolic use of its objects. (Lefebvre, *Production* 39)

This dynamic and fluid space is tied to memory, connected to intimate relations, and unfolded both in the private spaces of the home and in people's relation with the city at large. People's experience and relationship with the city is not static over time, and also not always with the city in entirety but with certain regions or with specific interest groups, and these groups are being redefined from traditional community ties, and different spatial stories are being written in the process.

In creation of new spatial stories, the overwhelming sensory experiences of the contemporary city are significant. Barthes explores the stimulations that the city provides, he sees the city as an erotic space, a space of vitality and connection. He writes in "Semiology and the Urban" that spaces in the city are not tied to any single meaning, there is potentially a play of significations and exchanges in the city. For him urban spatiality is erotic in the original use of the word: space of exchange and vitality, and its erotic potential contrasts with efforts of urban planning to have designated places and timings for pleasure and leisure, be it through timings of bars/discotheques or restrictions on playing on grass in parks. The play in the city is between desire for *jouissance* and maintaining order, and this can be especially stimulating and challenging for the young who attempt to break rules of space usage. It creates possibilities of subversive usages and to find slippages in the system. The disruptions

in space can take various forms: children running and playing in non-designated areas, lovers "making out" in cars, boot of cars being used as bar, flash mobs creating a dramatic effect or graffiti attempting to rewrite meanings. All these, even if momentarily disrupt the conventional order and purpose of space, creating new significations in the process. The rewritings of space can be vandalism of historical monuments with the desire to write one's individual story in monumental space or through graffiti creating a "mobile language" (de Certeau 5) of streets and spaces. Whether graffiti is personal intervention to send across an ideological message on a wall, or an official intervention like graffiti competitions in universities or an attempt to beautify public spaces like Lodhi Art District, it points out the possibilities of writing anew the social spaces of the city, of creating ruptures in the concrete and built forms and instead highlights the fluidity of space through creativity of city's social actors.

However when it comes to exploring social spaces of Delhi *vis-à-vis* its social actors, one largely encounters an unloved city. As opposed to strong love and affiliation that Mumbai and Kolkata invoke among its inhabitants, people seem to have a love-hate relationship with the city, Delhi continues to attract people for the opportunities it offers but repels due to lack of cultured and cosmopolitan atmosphere.

Non/claims to Delhi City: Un/loved city

For a long time, with the exception of possibly last two decades, Delhi's recall value in popular imagination is as an ancient city and as the capital of India. Both these factors, in combination or in isolation can be reasons for ownership, but more often they are not. While the city's historicity is significant, there are chances of it creating an aura and mythology that leads to impediments in people's relations and interactions with a contemporary city that is rapidly transforming from the one chronicled in history books.

Delhi's broken history of invasions and plunders lends itself well to the clichéd symbol of the phoenix that rises again with resilience after destruction. Apart from its reference as the mythic city of the Pandavas, Indraprastha in *The Mahabharata*, the history of ransacks, establishment and destruction of kingdoms is pretty well documented from eleventh century onwards, and has been discussed in the "Introduction". The rulers and plunderers over the centuries brought new languages, ethnicities, cultures, cuisines and architectural styles leading to an amalgamation that makes it difficult to define Delhi culture. The amalgamation theory can be argued both ways; it adds to richness of composite culture and

language, but can also lead to dilution or destruction of a quintessential Delhi culture, if there ever was any. In this history of migrations, settling in of various races and inter-marriages problematizes the definition of a Dilliwalla or Delhite. Let us look at the period closer to time frame of the present study (i.e. 1947 to present), Shahjahanabad, the Mughal city precedes the construction of New Delhi, and bears connection with the present as unlike the earlier dynastic cities of Jahanpanah and Tuqlaqabad that lie in ruins, it is has a significant population residing there from Shah Jahan's rule to present. Chandni Chowk and the imposing Red Fort on the banks of the Yamuna were a testimony to the magnificence of the Mughal architecture. The Mughal period can be considered the golden period in Delhi history where literature and culture flourished under royal patronage, but more importantly where art connoisseurs were not limited to courts but there was appreciation of poetry in the streets as well. Persian and Urdu poetry was not the passion of the cultural elite alone but was comprehended and enjoyed by the common man, both the king and the beggar could recite couplets of the poets of the age like Zauq and Ghalib. Varma writes,

> The culture of Delhi had acquired a certain authenticity. Over a period of time, varying elements had synthesized to produce a composite life-style for its inhabitants-not laboured, not grafted-but effortlessly woven into the city's own personality. Its socio-cultural ethos, distinctive enough to give even the witticisms of the city an unmistakable Delhi flavour, was what prompted Zauq to say: '*Kaun jaye par ab Dilli ki galiyan chod kar*' ('Who then can leave the streets of Delhi'). (Varma, *Ghalib* 41)

This period with a distinct Delhi culture, and its people in love with the city received a deadly blow with the revolt of 1857, the subsequent British retaliation brutally destroyed the city, the pulsating life of streets that Ghalib had so lovingly described lay desolate and deserted. Ghalib describes the aftermath where majority of Muslims had either fled the city or had been expelled and their houses lay deserted, "Ghalib, who knows this city, who had a friend in every home and an acquaintance in every house, now dwells in loneliness with none but the voice of his pen to speak with him and none but his shadow to bear him company" (Qtd. in Russell and Islam 138).

Delhi was lost forever and the spirit of the Dilliwalla lay broken and beaten. It was a lost city since the privileged and loved place of Delhi was gone, both as a political capital (with shifting of capital to Calcutta) and as a pulsating literary-cultural centre. Delhi passed

directly under the control of the British, and the city and its ethos were completely erased. The announcement of shifting back of capital at the Coronation Durbar of 1911 and the building of a new city for it did not turn out to be a reason to cheer as New Delhi was aimed as an administrative capital to spatially showcase the grandeur of the British empire, to physically and symbolically overshadow the earlier city and its people. The initial plan to provide a linkage between Shahjahanabad and British Delhi, connecting South Block with the south side of Jama Masjid was abandoned, resplendent Shahjahanabad was reduced to being called Old Delhi, planners did not pay attention to the city that had inspired writers and it was notified as a slum. The linkages were snapped with the historical city and its people became second class citizens compared to those of New Delhi. The wide spaces of New Delhi, occupied by the highest orders of British officers in the centre and then spiralling outwards in concentric circles to lower ranks and Indians, did not encourage interaction of people with streets and markets. Both its vertical imposition and horizontal expanses were awe-inspiring and impressive, but not inviting to forge relations between city and its inhabitants; the relationship of the white imperialists who occupied the city's power centres was one of ownership with its spaces.

The severing of relationship of the city with people, beginning with 1857 and continuing with establishment of New Delhi, were fissured furthered with independence and partition in 1947 leading to major demographical shifts. The crème de layers of the two cities of Shahjahanabad and New Delhi, i.e. the Muslims and British respectively left Delhi en masse, and around 5 lakhs Hindus migrated to Delhi from the other side of the recently drawn border. In a city that for centuries had witnessed violent attacks, from Timur to Alexander, it was torn afresh with loot, killings and uprootedness, with millions living in refugee camps, of trying to rehabilitate themselves in a new city, while carrying myriad emotions of love, nostalgia and pain about the city left behind. What does a history of repeated attacks do to a city? How and when do people lay claim to a city? Is it a relationship of ownership? Does being born in a city or being able to trace generational lineage there alone justify legitimate claims for being called citizens of that city? Historically cities are sites and products of migration with population shifts from rural to urban centres, but as outlined above this is more marked in the case of Delhi. Delhi has been termed "city of migrants" and in the post independent nation, the Punjabi refuges are referred to as "original migrants". As the refugees struggle to start life anew while battling emotional and material losses, they carry mindscapes of the city left behind that complicates their relationship with the current space of occupation

in Delhi, which will not any time soon be thought of as "home". Even after independence, Delhi continues to attract migrants to the city since it is a major educational and professional centre, some of the migrants stay for short periods of time and some settle here permanently, the dilemmas of defining a "home" spatially are perpetually encountered.

Dupont et al analyse "The Alchemy of an Unloved City" where with "the exception of a few chasers of djinns, of the writer, Khushwant Singh, some descendants of long-established Delhi families and a smattering of others…hardly anyone is ready to declare a passion for Delhi" (16). It has no citizens who claim to love her, at its worst it evokes hatred and at its best indifference. This is in sharp contrast to strong love evoked by Bombay/Mumbai and Calcutta/Kolkata among its citizens. Mumbai enjoyed an upper hand as the financial capital and as the city of dreams as it houses the film industry. However Delhi has overtaken Mumbai as a metropolitan economic entity as reported by Lewis in "Delhi, Not Mumbai, India's Economic Capital", citing data released by "Oxford Economics" in 2016. Kolkata has an academically and culturally vibrant atmosphere but Delhi is viewed as merely a political and bureaucratic capital. "Delhi has somehow got stuck with an image based on stereotypes" (Dupont et al 16) where its fragmented history as a "city of cities" is emphasized. While that continues to be its defining characteristic, other factors changed the scenario, especially the 1991 budget defining government's liberalisation policies. The year turned out to be a watershed one in Delhi history, in terms of establishment and expansion of service industry and the associative economic gains. It is no longer merely a staid bureaucratic city though power is a dominant factor invoked by its citizens to define their status socially, economically and politically, and claims of knowing the political-police-judicial bigwigs is standard Delhi conversation underlining connections of the citizen subject with those in power.

Delhi's fractured history of invasions and migrations creates disconnect between city and people. The loss and pain of partition continues to be a subject of literary writings and critical discourse, with focus on the affected first and second generations. However there is hardly any critical engagement with the third generation partition "victims", I want to suggest that for the midnight's grandchildren partition is familial and national history, it is woven into the micro and macro cultural memories, the ghost of partition is part of the cultural unconscious that shapes thinking and behaviour. This generation's construction of identity *vis-à-vis* Delhi is significant in understanding the relationship between city and its citizens given the young demographic profile of the city. While belongingness to city space is not

determined by birth alone, yet being born and raised in the city and having witnessed its changes, this generation are the new makers of the city, writing fiction and making films on it. And the story they narrate is of metamorphosis from a laid back capital to that of a glitzy metropolitan where the 3 Ms- malls, multiplexes and metro (and the fourth, mobile) have redefined socio-cultural interactions. The skyline of Delhi has been transformed, the iconography of the city is no longer just the Red Fort or India Gate with historical value but the metro as the modern technological wonder. The simultaneous presence and invocation of these signifiers defines the dynamic character of the city, and the city is now increasingly depicted not just as an incidental background locale but as a pulsating character affecting and redefining relationship between city and characters.

The spiralling effect of the city expanding in terms of its geographical area and its varied populations makes it difficult to arrive at a singular definition of Dilliwala. With no unifying festival, language or culture, the question of identity is problematized. This is the city where the language known as Zaban-e-Delhi evolved, "Urdu emerged as lingua franca. Though considered unfit for poetic expression by the Persian speaking elite, Rekhta became the commonly spoken language in the city" (Hashmi 136). As the city has expanded exponentially and has extremely diverse socio-linguistic groups, the notion of Delhi language and *tehzeeb* has made way for citizens to carry notions of mini Delhis, that are based on commonalities of region, language, community and these bear the incumbent baggage of stereotypes, pride and prejudices. For example, West Delhi is seen as the loud and brash Punjabi bastion, and South Delhi as the sophisticated elite area, further even university campuses like JNU and IIT have their individual features.

Using the lens of social theories of urbanity and Delhi's social-cultural fabric, I now turn to analysis of literary texts *vis-à-vis* the theme of city and identity. Anita Desai's *Clear Light of Day* explores the transformation of relationships in Das household with partition of the nation while constantly throwing up binaries of Old Delhi/New Delhi, past/present and statis/change. Desai's *In Custody,* set in Old Delhi chronicles the decline of Urdu language and its exponents, turning them into exiles in the very spaces where the language flourished. Khushwant Singh's *Delhi: A Novel* is a magnum opus covering several centuries of history told through multiple narrators, including both well-known and little-known figures from history. Anuja Chauhan's *Zoya Factor* breaks the genre of chic-lit into which it is often slotted to raise concerns about people's identity with contemporary Delhi and their versions of mini Delhis.

Anita Desai's *Clear Light of Day:* Partition and Fractured Familial Relationships

Anita Desai's *Clear Light of Day*, located in Old Delhi, in its theme and form plays on the axis of spatiality in juxtaposing the events of three families in 1960s with that of 1947. Of the co-joined events of independence and partition in Indian history, the latter is the greater lived and experiential reality among the people of Delhi; in the novel it transforms spaces and relationships in the house, neighbourhood and the city that is filled with refuges from across the border. The effects are most acutely felt in the Das household where the fractured familial relationships mirror those of the nation. The visit of younger sister Tara, along with her diplomat husband Bakul, is the prism through which notions of time and spatial memory are raised, and allows for reflections on relationship with siblings Bim, Baba and Raja, and also on Old Delhi spaces.

The novel offers a glimpse of the heterogeneity and plurality of the Old Delhi world that is often ignored in discussing its squalor, ugliness and decadence. The dynamics of difference rather than homogeneity are presented in the Old Delhi families of Das, Misra and Ali. The anglicized Das family mimics the white colonizers in their dress and behaviour, they observe the conventions of gentility, of dressing up and driving off to Roshanara Club daily for game of cards. These patterns create a semblance of order in the midst of struggle for independence and the mother's illness. The car and the driver are the appendages and tools of mobility that help carefully construct a superficially active life ignoring the metaphors of illness that pervade people, house and the city. The bourgeois Misras make no attempt to "keep up appearances" in a stark contrast to the Das house where things run according to a schedule amidst fancy upholstery and servants in uniforms,

> They were so sure of their solid, bourgeois position that it never occurred to them to prove it or substantiate it by curtains at the windows, carpets on the floors, solid pieces of furniture placed at regular intervals, plates that match each other on the table, white uniforms for the house servants and other such appurtenances considered indispensable by Tara's parents. (Desai, *Clear* 137)

It is a place defined by unscheduled visits of relatives, string cots and mats spread out to accommodate visitors, meals prepared in unorganized fashion, and plans cancelled and changed at the last moment.

Hyder Ali, the landlord of the Das family, belonged to the genteel, propertied Muslim class, who could plan their migration in the wake of the impending partition, and shifted to

Hyderabad. Their house, a space that patronized arts, lies in neglect and ruins, symbolically pointing to the decline of the culture associated with Old Delhi Muslim families. On Bim's "ghostly tour", the dark and empty spaces of the house seem to be accusing the living of abandonment. There is no sign of life around and the mirror stares back blankly at the place that once stocked a rich library and held *musharias*. The walls that echoed political discussions and poetry sessions, and the mirror that witnessed grandeur can only reflect desolation and nothingness. Partition novels often describe the pain of leaving homes by the refugees; in this case the ownership is retained by the Ali family but it is not a place that they ever return to, its deserted environs points at many such houses mirroring tales of abandonment. Often inhabitants travelling in opposite direction during partition occupied such houses, were they "haunted" by the memories of those who were forced to flee? The Old Delhi families of the novel had been neighbours "for as long as they could remember (theirs was not a neighbourbood from which people moved – they were born and married and even died in the same houses, no one ever gave one up)" (136); the close knit, almost incestuous relationships of Old Delhi are akin with rural community life.

The areas of Old/New Delhi though located within the same city are juxtaposed almost as cities of South/North, traditional/modern or rural/urban landscape. They can be seen as Tonnies' distinction between *Gemeinschaft* and *Gesellschaft,* where *Gemeinschaft* (usually translated as "community") and *Gesellschaft* ("society" or "association") correlate largely with the difference between "traditional" and "modern"; and these differences are both temporal and spatial, with the latter corresponding to urban forms of sociality marked by weakening bonds of family, disappearance of the neighbourhood and cultural forms of clan. Old Delhi is associated with stagnation, Bim says, "Old Delhi does not change. It only decays. My students tell me it is a great cemetery, every house a tomb. Nothing but sleeping graves. Now *New* Delhi, they say is different. That is where things happen" (Desai, *Clear* 5). The shift in power centres makes Old Delhi life move at snail pace in a slow paced loop, largely unconcerned with the fast paced action of New Delhi. Change and movement belong to either the past of Old Delhi spaces or the present of New Delhi spaces, while the present of Old Delhi is represented as unmoving and static, where Godot like "nothing happens, nobody comes, nobody goes". Has time stood still in this space or has the space remained unchanged across time?

Old Delhi/New Delhi, past/present, statis/change are the binaries that run through the novel. As mentioned before 1857 and 1947 are major markers in the city's history. The

British demolished buildings near Red Fort and Jama Masjid after 1857 to clear spaces for the ruler's gaze, the move disregarded the feelings of the affected populations. The British action not only dispossessed thousands overnight, but dismantled their way of life, affecting the very soul of the city. This physical and cultural destruction was further aggravated with the construction of New Delhi that geographically and symbolically cut ties with the old power centre; it relegated the splendid capital of the Mughal empire to "Old Delhi", it became culturally bereft further with large scale migration of Muslims during partition in 1947.

Jyoti Hosagrahar in "Mansions to Margins" details that the fragmentation of the havelis paralleled the decline of the Mughal empire, and when the British moved out of the walled city to establish Civil Lines "as the European quarters of Delhi, the indigenous city was redefined as the relic of a traditional society of past glory" (38). She feels that the haveli was "a microcosm of the city in its Mughal grandeur" (42), the havelis in particular and Old Delhi in general has continued to suffer at the hands of urban planners and policy makers even after independence. Today it is a thriving whole sale market of goods including grains and fabrics not just for Delhi but North India, and yet it is a dismal residential colony. The havelis and the streets that echoed the finest verses and were the seat of Delhi *tehzeeb* today lie in dilapidated state with dangling mass of wires threatening to destroy by fire the last spaces that recall the city's composite culture. The congestion of Old Delhi is a contrast to the subterranean life of the squeaky clean metro that runs beneath it, facilitating two-way traffic between Old Delhi and New(er) Delhi(s). Group tours with focus on food and heritage walks of Shahjahanbad have renewed interest in the area with the coming of the metro, while also allowing the Old Delhiwalla to venture outwards from its labyrinth streets. The metro ride from Rajiv Chowk to Chawri Bazaar/Chandni Chowk has in some ways achieved what Lutyens initially conceptualised as connection between New Delhi and Old Delhi but had to be abandoned due to high escalating costs of the imperial capital.

Old Delhi and its disconnect with new areas is brought into focus with Tara's visit as non/transforming space, and the myriad associations of the garden are highlighted: an edenic place, a place of innocence, metaphor of undivided nation, symbol of shared idyllic past, childhood simplicity and a desire to recreate the harmony of the paradisiac world of siblings before they grew apart emotionally. For Casey, "places also keep such unbodylike entities as thoughts and memories" (*How*, 25) and memory works in and on space, certain places can

contain scars of the past and traces of future. Ranu Uniyal discusses the multiple aspects of the garden in relation to memory and time:

> The garden is not fully inside, unlike the terraced rooms, nor is it open for public viewing. It has thorns and briars, it has long hedges and is wild in its outgrowth. It opens and conceals, it explores and withdraws. If it had invoked a landscape of desire in Maya, in Bim, the garden performs a fully mediatory function between the outside world and the house with its closed doors and overgrown shrubs. It has its own modus operandi…The garden becomes a principle of mediation. It does not entrap her [Bim] nor does it leave her vulnerable at the hands of the city. (215)

The garden is not only a space to be recreated through imagination or memory, but also has a functional role in the house. Bim holds a tutorial with her students on the war between Shivaji and Aurangzeb, in her nightdress, with legs drawn up under her on a diwan in the garden/courtyard during vacations. The space and setting of the tutorial is interrupted with music from Baba's room and sound of the ice cream vendor, the neat divisions of space are debunked, and the lesson is halted to treat the girls with ice cream.

Moreover Bim's tutorial is an occasion for recalling the various eons of Delhi: Krishna playing with gopis on Yamuna, first woman queen of Delhi, Razia Sultan, Mughal emperor Aurngzeb, and partition of the country, and questions linear notions of history in space. Meanings are not simply contained in physical forms of space, but as Benjamin in "A Berlin Chronicle" reiterates they are bound in individual and cultural memory and filtered through experience. The sedimentary history of places represent layers of memory that are unfolded through the landscape of the garden, house and city.

In this sedimentary history, the turbulent events of 1947 are vividly recalled, the illnesses of family members and of the city permeated the atmosphere of the house so that it appeared diseased. It subtly refers to various partitions: home/family, neighbourhood, city's culture and language, and the nation. Kamila Shamsie opines that the novel has not been accorded its deserved place as a partition novel and handles the theme in a restrained manner "in its sidelong view; glancing allusions and attention to tiny details which echo and reverberate, rather than directness" (Qtd. in Bruschi 158). Bim witnesses the fractured and diseased city on her bus ride back from Davico's restaurant in Connaught Place:

> the massed jungle of rag-and-tin huts that had grown beneath them, housing the millions of refugees who were struggling in across the new border. Here there was no light except for the dull glow of cooking fires, blotted out by smoke and dust and twilight. They swarmed and crawled with a kind of subterranean life that made Bim feel that the city would never recover from this horror, that it would be changed irremediably, that it was already changed, no longer the city she had been born in. (Desai, *Clear* 86)

The decrepit spaces occupied by the refuges contrast sharply with the opulence of the arched doorways, red velvet curtains and waiters serving meringues and ice cream at Davicos. The horrors of partition and migration acquire tangible form for Bim, the concerns growing larger than that of the individual case of the Alis. Can refugee camps be seen as heterotopias? Heterotopic sites undo the usual order of space and the refugee camps can be read as possible cracks in the edifice of official power, disrupting and undercutting the rhetoric of political celebration from British imperialism by emphasizing the violence and homelessness in the independent nation state. The repeated references to summer of 1947 underline the importance of revisiting the roots of fissure through memory and imagination, and to attempt a resolution at least at the level of the landscape of the house and Old Delhi neighbourhood. Reconciling the past and present proves to be difficult and images of decadence abound regarding the place and people who inhabit it.

Circles of activity/inactivity in the novel mirror the spiralling circles of the city topography, the spaces of travel and speech are contrasted with those of static and silence. In Bakul's notions of decadence, hierarchical and clichéd binaries of speech/silence, West/East, rationality/irrationality, coherence/chaos are set up where the former set of values are considered superior. Bakul is depicted as constantly travelling, planning a travel or discussing his travels; and even trains Tara to lead an organized active life governed by the engagement book. However reading movement and activity as signs of progress is fraught with problematics. Actions and travels of Bakul and Bim's parents are often not progression forward or outward but cyclically repetitive, non-productive and lacking in depth or meaning. Though the travels described by Bakul are undertaken across geographical spaces using the car and plane, their repetitive loops can be compared to that of the snail in the garden that Tara compares to the eternal Sisyphus. In the trope of binaries of movement/statis, Bakul and Baba are placed at the opposing ends of the mobility spectrum. Baba, the autistic brother has been playing the same records on his HMV gramophone for decades, caught in a time warp

in terms of choice of music and the machine used to play it. As opposed to the globetrotters Bakul and Tara, statis is underlined strongly in lives of Baba and Bim, who seem to be caught in a time bubble while the world outside spins into transformations.

Bim reiterates, "And here, here nothing happens at all. Whatever happened, happened long ago-in the time of the Tughlaqs, the Khiljis, the Sultanate, the Moghuls- that lot" (5). Bakul refers to this impasse as "Old Delhi decadence", and yet refuses to engage with problematics of contemporary murky politics and corruption, and instead holds onto a romantic history and past. He skirts around topical issues of famine, drought, politics or caste issues, and would rather talk about, "The Taj Mahal-the Bhagavad Gita-Indian philosophy-music-art-the great, immortal values of ancient India…eternal India" (35). Should diplomats who are ambassadors of nation's history and culture to another country be carriers of such a frozen concept of culture? Can uncomfortable questions of present be pushed under the carpet to uphold a sanitized mythical, illusory past?

The (grandiose) past is not severed from the (decadent) present, and the creative process of memory, what Benjamin in "A Berlin Chronicle" calls the "mysterious work of remembrance-which is really the capacity for endless interpolations into what has been" (16) is a way of forming linkages and continuation between people and space. A reconciliatory attempt is made through the leitmotif of poetry and music leading to a final crescendo. While simulated copies of western music have provided the soundscape of the Das household, a musical evening at the Mishras, reminiscent of Old Delhi *mushairas* "bound them all together in a pattern, a picture as perfectly composed as a Moghul miniature of a garden scene by night" (Desai, *Clear* 180). The star lit sky extends its magic over the chaotic preparations, the pasts of Mughal and English are evoked through poetry of Iqbal and Eliot, the commotion is part of the Old Delhi ethos, the chaos slowly giving way to harmony. The binaries in this case are not seen in conflict but are part of the tapestry of the place, interlinking individuals, landscape and music. Bim wonders about cyclicity of life and recalls Eliot's lines from *Four Quartets*: '*Time the destroyer is time the preserver*' (182). Images of brokenness and fragmentation give way to search for wholeness and harmony, Bim realizes that she and Tara are quite alike with shared roots, and looks at her siblings as "parts of her, inseparable, so many aspects of her as she was of them" (165).

The repeated references linking house and Bim are significant, history connects Bim to her siblings literally and symbolically through their roots in the landscape, drawing sustenance from the same soil of past (and expanding into future), they reach out to new

experiences. Memory is the prism used to reflect and refract on history unfolding in space, shedding light on past fragmentations, hinting at possible unions beyond the partition(s) and dichtomies. *In Custody* explores some of these concerns further *vis-à-vis* partition of languages and dichotomy of reality/imagination.

Anita Desai's *In Custody*: Decline of Urdu Language

In Custody is the story of Deven, Hindi lecturer in Mirpore, and his experience of meeting the great Urdu poet Nur in Delhi and being his literary custodian. It is a narrative about the loss of Urdu language due to separations and partitions of land,

> Urdu-the language of the court in the days of royalty – now languishes in the back lanes and gutters of the city. No place for it to live in the style to which it is accustomed, no emperors and *nawabs* to act as its patrons." (Desai, *Custody* 15)

The novel depicts the dichotomous relationship between reality and imagination through the decline of Urdu language and literature in post-independence Delhi/India. Language is potentially a potent binding thread between people, and people and place, and in the novel that link is severed as Urdu, language of the Mughal court suffers in the face of lack of readers and government support, lying in exile in the very spaces where it flourished, making its speakers alienated in that landscape. The relation between people and spaces is further explored through binaries of reality/imagination, life/art, purity/hybridity played out in cities of Mirpore/Delhi.

Mirpore, unlike the big cousin Delhi proud of its antiquity, is unselfconscious about its history: "Those shacks of tin and rags, however precarious and impermanent they looked, must have existed always, repetitively and in succeeding generations, but never fundamentally changing and in that sense enduring" (12). It is depicted as non-descript and unremarkable; neither the architecture of the buildings evoke any history or mythic tales, nor does the landscape evoke beauty, romance or patriotism, and its citizens "could not be blamed for failing to understand those patriotic songs and slogans about the soil, the earth. To them, it was so palpably dust" (12). Its historical and cultural aridity is repeatedly underlined, making it a mere stopover place for people in transit. Its functional restaurant near the bus stand serving humble meals is a far cry from the foodscapes of Delhi, be it the air conditioned fine dining at Kwality restaurant in Connaught Place or the gourmet trails of Chandni Chowk. While the Mirpore restaurant is about sustenance sans fancy décor, Delhi restaurants offer a

sensory experience, it can be compared to functionality of prosaic Hindi in everyday world and the romance of poetic Urdu respectively.

Deven visualizes the mundane and prosaic Mirpore as a trap where he is forced to teach Hindi to sustain his family while Delhi symbolises the world of imagination and poetry. He shockingly realises that the leap from the cage of Mirpore to its alter ego of creativity in Delhi is not that difficult. It makes one question the invisible humdrum traps that prevented him from exploring the world of possibilities earlier: are people caught in personalities of places or are places shaped by people who inhabit them? The chaotic scale of the big city overpowers his senses and appears like a Kafkaesque labyrinth: "If it had not been for the colour and the noise, Chandni Chowk might have been a bazaar encountered in a nightmare; it was so like a maze from which he could find no exit" (31). The bazaars often served the multiple purposes of social interaction, economic activity and domestic tasks like washing, cooking and sleeping. The spectacle of the city with multifarious stuff on display in bazaar is overwhelming for Deven, and he finds it hard to reconcile the worlds of art and commerce, of Nur living at the end of a guttered lane, lodged firmly in the ordinariness of the material world, a mere shadow of his former glorious self.

Nur's decline is symbolic of the decline in prestige of Urdu at various levels that are interrelated: as language of common man in streets; as choice for literary engagement; lack of encouragement from the literary boards; the decrepit plight of literary figures; and the dismal state of publication in the language. While the decline of Urdu from its zenith during Mughal rule to present state can be traced back to imperial rule of British, the novel focuses on the privileging of Hindi over Urdu after independence. Indian history of colonial rule and subsequent independence/partition of land and languages hint at triumvirate language play between Hindu, Urdu and English. Aijaz Ahmad in *Lineages of the Present: Political Essays* describes three aspects in the breakup and redistribution of Urdu writing community after partition. First was the migration and resettlement of Muslims across the newly-drawn borders; second was the increased communalization of Urdu as a Muslim language, its implementation as a national language in Pakistan; and finally the Indian government's abandonment of Hindustani in favour of Hindi as the official language. He views the loss of Hindustani as a recognized lingua franca as a major event since it had served as a "living link between Urdu and Hindi which now became more and more distant from each other, especially in their written forms" (Ahmad 201-2) and strengthened the perception of Urdu as a Muslim language. Desai attempts an intervention in the Hindi-Urdu debate through an

English text, imitating Persian imagery and metaphor in composing couplets. Interestingly the adaptation of the novel for a film by Ismail Merchant complicated the situation further when the couplets written in English were translated into Urdu, “So, in my other life, I became an Urdu poet, a language which I do not write at all” (Guignery and Alexis). The trimviarte language play and the change in genre from fiction to film (which incorporated verses and ghazals of Faiz) resists easy and simplistic notions of power hierarchy of languages and genres.

Deven too is struggling with power play of languages and pursues Urdu merely as a hobby while teaching Hindi to sustain his family. He hopes that Nur would be able to repress the feelings of unworthiness, but his romantic perception of art and artists is eroded when the ailing Nur pessimistically asks,

> How can there be Urdu poetry when there is no Urdu language left? It is dead, finished. The defeat of the Moghuls by the British threw a noose over its head, and the defeat of the British by the Hindi-wallahs tightened it. So now you see its corpse lying here, waiting to be buried. (Desai, *Custody* 24)

While Nur is convinced that Urdu is in no position to revive its lost literary glory, Siddiqui complains that in India Urdu “is only grown to export” (102). Even as Nur laughs at Deven’s ironic situation of having shelved his Urdu artistic endeavours in favour of Hindi for corporeal survival and yet fighting for its cause, Deven’s holds onto the mental language hierarchies that are a reversal of the dominant linguistic power play. His subterranean Urdu self seeks recognition and encouragement from Murad, editor of Urdu magazine *Awaaz*, who is the contemporary commercial avatar of royal patronage. Yaqin opines that Deven, Murad and Nur are caught in a nostalgic remembering of Urdu, and their “nostalgia is rooted in the cultural memory of a premodern past that rejects the values of an evolving modern present” (139). They are caught in an atmosphere of gloom where literature has witnessed a paradigmatic shift in choice of language, medium of expression and spaces of performance, the spaces of *mushairas* are making way for film songs being played in the bazaar and movies seen in cinema halls.

There are brief interludes of poetic brilliance in this twilight world of Urdu literary scene, of Nur’s poetic career and of Chandni Chowk as a place, all of them past their prime. These oasisitic scenes are played out on the terrace, a liminal space in the structure of the house. The peripheral space of the balcony links the private space of the house with the

public one of the streets. The soundscapes and lightscapes of the bazaar encroach on the world of art through noise of traffic, music from cinema hall, greasy food leading to undignified eating and excessive drinking. "The rooftop did not really raise one above the din of the streets; it was as if they were inside a balloon, floating above but remaining enclosed" (Desai, *Custody* 46-47). This world tries to sustain itself by drawing from the world below, a floundering effort of hanging on to art is made by Nur by feeding and cultivating the company of "lafangas of the bazaar world" (50) whose concern is with freebies rather than his verses. The vomiting Nur is a symbolic nadir, it breaks the mirage of grandeur that had guided Devan only to dissolve into a nightmare. Deven "loved poetry not because it made things immediate but because it removed them to a position where they became bearable" (52); his notion of placing art imaginatively and spatially in ivory towers of beauty and grace are shaken as the material world constantly impinges on the poetic one, permeating it through ideas, sights, sounds and people, leading one back to the dichotomies of worlds of reality and imagination.

Like Nur, Siddiqui is given to nostalgic remembering of an age, time and space when Urdu enjoyed glory. These two representatives of the Urdu culture also symbolise its decadence and decline, their marginal status in the spaces they inhabit are symptomatic of the inability of co-existence of this linguistic heritage with "modernity". Siddiqui's old dilapidated villa without electricity, collapsed roof and non-functional kitchen attempts to maintain an impression of splendour and regal hospitality as he sits in a white muslin kurta with a pipe, offering rum and kebabs to Deven in the midst of ruins, "as if all were still in order, still functioning in another opulent age" (146). The grandeur of forms in the midst of material and cultural decay mirrors Nur's desperate attempts of holding on to a bygone era on his terrace in Delhi. The imagery of Deven and Siddiqui attending the performance of young singers in the midst of ruins is metaphorically decadent, "sat there on the terrace, like a pair of nawabs stranded in the backwaters of time" (147). Siddiqui wants to be relieved of the albatross of this property to undertake the reverse journey from the ancestor who came to Mirpore after his property was destroyed in Chandni Chowk in 1857. His one-man department has little power in college and he is unaware of the contemporary Delhi that struggles to uphold its linguistic and the literary traditions. Yaqin argues,

> From a different angle, this depiction reinforces the idea that Siddiqui's class can no longer be the custodians of Urdu as they have little power to make themselves heard

> at the national level. The official situation and status of their language literally makes them outsiders in their own home. (135)

The spaces of reality and imagination are constantly called into question, one man's imagination is another man's reality and yet another's nightmare.

It is significant that Urdu is perceived as endangered in the spaces of Delhi and even in the midst of its crisis there is a resistance to shift away from traditional and singular notions about language. This comes across strongly in two cases: reluctance to use of tools of modernity (tape recorder) for the rescue of the heritage language, and a refusal to admit women's voices in the male sphere of Urdu poetry. Nur blames Imtiaz Begum for having overtaken the spaces of his house, of having cleverly manipulated across the spaces of disrepute of kotha in bazaar to a respectable mehfil, snatching his jewels, verses and audience in the process. Devan is critical of her coquetry and recitation of imitated verses, and even ignores her manuscript, not acknowledging an alternative vision and space for female poetry. Desai consciously conceived the novel as a masculine world of Urdu poetry, but "I found all these women whom I had locked out were screaming and thumping on the door and demanding to come in" (Gee 9). Arasteh and Pirnajmuddin argue that Imtiaz uses the master's tool, the male dominated language of Urdu poetry to make sure that her voice is heard. In simultaneously resisting oppression and exploring her unique subjectivity, Imtiaz "'writes back' to the oppressive forces of her community; she becomes a 'mimic woman', an altered female subject and a figure capable of uttering resistance" (Arasteh and Pirnajmuddin 62). The refusal to be left out and the search for autonomous creative identity despite the accusatory reactions point to Imtiaz's puncturing of masculine-literary spaces of power. The hegemonic patriarchal-linguistic notion is reluctant to make space for variants of Urdu, be it through linguistic varieties or feminine voices.

The same reluctance is witnessed in the suggestion of recording of Nur's verses for future generations, and people continue to privilege the spaces of *musharias* over simulated copies that recording produces. Siddiqui ridicules the idea, "Truly all our poets will become singing birds to us then" (Desai, *Custody* 106) and even Nur resists the plan which he feels would reduce him to level of singing poets of cinema, "Record-like in the cinema? For songs? I am not one of those singing poets, you know, some performer at weddings and festivals" (121), critiquing the commerciality of poetry. The idea does not appear preposterous today, literary and cultural anthropologists are increasingly working towards

digitization of resources aimed at preservation of literary and cultural oral heritage, but it is approached with suspicion and scepticism by almost everybody in the novel. Fittingly with the theme of degradation, the recordings are conducted in the rented space of a run-down brothel. The place slowly becomes a replica of Nur's terrace, the outside world of commerce makes frequent and disturbing entries into that of poetry, and flashes of poetry or reminisces about Delhi's past are brief in the midst of interruptions, symbolic of mere pockets where beauty resides in the midst of ugly bawdiness. Three weeks of recordings and extraneous material is reduced to one tape that is not the most useful material but is merely disconnected threads "a bizarre pastiche" (198) that has been retrieved from numerous disastrous tapes. It is certainly not what Deven had imagined and had set out for. Yaqin argues, "The recorder itself is a symbol of modernity and functionalism, therefore it fails to record the voice of tradition or of premodern India…The failed recordings are symptomatic of the dysfunctionality of Urdu" (137).

Deven however cannot shed the responsibility that has been entrusted on him, of the double bind of being custodian of Nur's works and being in custody. In the process he has to relinquish the safety of illusory myths, to accept the sordid realities as part of art, rather than its ugly other. Devan is placed in an important interventionist role, to leap from reality to imagination, to live, experience, and record for others the imaginative world of art, "Deven now had the where withal to capture and preserve that art, that verse, for posterity. He had been allotted a role in life" (Desai, *Custody* 111-12). In undertaking this task of preservation, he needs to be conscious that the binaries between art/life, reality/imagination, purity/hybridity, public/private spaces and masculine/feminine voices are fuzzy, and these are best witnessed in liminal spaces like the terrace alluding to uneasy connections between spaces, languages and identities, and making the case for diversity and hybridity.

Urdu/Persian poetry has an important presence in Singh's *Delhi: A Novel* as well, which goes beyond the linguistic concerns in exploring Delhi's history and its various narrators spread over several centuries.

Khushwant Singh's *Delhi*: Spatial Stories of Love

Khushwant Singh's *Delhi: A Novel*, written over a twenty-five year period covers the history of Delhi over several centuries, roughly from seventh to twentieth century, through multiple narrators including prominent and not so well-known figures from history. He writes in the "Foreward", "All I wanted to do was tell my readers what I learnt about the city

roaming among its ancient ruins, its congested bazaars, its diplomatic corps and its cocktail parties. My only aim was to get them to know Delhi and love it as much as I do." It is a rare piece of admission of love and ode to a city that most people hate, and reiterates the importance of knowing a city not just through reading but by roaming and loitering.

Though the title declares it to be a novel, *Delhi* overlaps genres of fiction, history and memoir; the chapters in present titled "Bhagmati" alternate with those of past named after historical personages. The narrative voice constantly shifts between the first person narrator, Singh and major/minor figures from the past, an inter-weaving of narration of history from above and below, unfolded across the spaces of the city. Singh writes about the narratology, in "A Note from the Author": "I constructed it from records chronicled by eye-witnesses. Hence most of it is told in the first person. History provided me with the skeleton. I covered it with flesh and injected blood and lot of seminal fluid into it." The love for city is further reiterated through the epigraph from nineteenth century poet Ghalib:

> I asked my soul: What is Delhi?
> She replied: The world is the body and Delhi its life.

The connecting thread of historical narrations in the novel is violence, right from Timur Lane in fourteenth century to Mahatma Gandhi's assassination in 1948, ending with anti-Sikh riots following the killing of Indira Gandhi in 1984. Violence, intrigue and corruption seem intrinsic to setting of empires and wrestle for power in the capital city. The historical reconstructions are interlaced with the narrator's visit to monuments where those events occured, the monumental spaces are intersected with spatial stories of ordinary people. Two sets of voices are repeated throughout the text, violent plunderers and those expressing love/pain for the city. The narrator Singh and Bhagmati, as lovers of Delhi can be placed in lineage of other lovers of the city across centuries: Mussadi Lal (fourteenth century), Noor Bai, Hakeem Alvi and Meer Taqi Meer (eighteenth century), and Bahadur Shah Zafar and Ghalib (nineteenth century). Interestingly all these lovers are situated at in-between positions, be it that of religion or gender, blurring the straight and monolithic categories of identity. Bagchi in the tribute essay "The Ghosts of Khushwant Singh's *Delhi*" argues that

> the author also flirts with the possibilities that lie beyond the binary. So, there is Musaddi Lal, neither Hindu nor Muslim, who seeks refuge in Nizamuddin, and, of course, there is the backbone of the entire book, Bhagmati the hijra, who is neither

> man nor woman, or, looked at another way, is freed from being either by being a bit of both. (Bagchi, *Outlook*)

In fact the text constantly pushes against rigidities of binaries: it is a moral tale of power-hungry but is not moralistic; it gives voice to both the powerful and the subaltern; overturns the popular perceptions of personages like Nadir Shah and Aurangzeb; and confesses and evokes love for a city that is perceived as degraded. The novel problematizes polarized identities, and builds the voice of the other in the self and argues for hybridity in identity formation. In fact including the dichotomous binaries and moving beyond it in formation of the third is akin to Soja's concept of "thirding" in *Thirdspace* that allows for creative possibilities for new formations and transformations.

These possibilities are set in Delhi where Mussadi Lal in fourteenth century reacts to shifting of capital by Muhammad Tughlaq from Delhi to Daulatabad:

> This indeed is madness! Delhi by whatever name it is known-Lal Kot Mehrauli, Shahr-i-Nau or Tughlakabad-has always been the seat of emperors of Delhi. Delhiwallas would rather die than live in any other city in the world. (Singh, *Delhi* 85)

Born a Hindu, and taught in a madrasa to get a professional foothold as a scribe, Mussadi Lal compares himself to a "hijda" since his religious allegiance lies neither with Hindus nor Muslims, he attempts embracing both faiths or even rejecting them by following Sufi teachings of Nizamuddin. His love for Delhi finds echoes in Meer Taqi Meer four centuries later, who having lived in Agra, Delhi and Lucknow, claims Delhi to be his favourite. A star performer at Delhi *mushairas*, his heart weeps for the city destroyed by Nadir Shah, "Delhi is a city where dust drifts in deserted lanes; in days gone by in this very city a man could fill his lap with gold" (228) and recites poetry about the rich past of the once glorious city, "It hath been ruined and laid desolate /To that city I belong, Delhi is its name" (231). In the cultural rivalry between Delhi and Lucknow, he feels that citizens of the latter fail to comprehend the nuances and subtleties of meaning that even the common folk of Delhi could understand, and mourns the loss of the city and its literary heritage. Bahadur Shah Zafar, Mughal emperor, poet, connoisseur and patron of arts symbolised a societal and aristocratic order that died after 1857. In the glorious city of the Mughals, the following words were etched on the walls of Diwan-i-Khas: "Gar Firdaus bar roo-e-zaminast; Hameenasto, hameenasto, hameenast- If

on earth there be a place of bliss, it is this, it is this, it is this" (261). This beloved city of Zafar, Zauq and Ghalib lay deserted and ruined by the brutal action of the British.

On flipping the coin from lovers of Delhi to its plunderers, one comes across chilling tales of invaders right from Timur Lane to Nadir Shah to the British who attempted to colonise the city politically and culturally. Timur Lane raided Delhi towards the end of fourteenth century, slaying people, taking them as slaves and destroying temples and wrote: "We were informed that after our departure there was no one to bury the dead…the towns of Delhi were deserted save for crows, kites and vultures by day and owls, jackals and hyenas by night" (101). And then comes the cruel replay in Nadir Shah's account; the beauty of Chandni Chowk with its tree-lined streets and water channel in centre was mercilessly looted, amassing enough treasures that no taxes needed to be levied on Iranians for three years. He even takes away the famed Kohinoor but could not command love from Hakeem Alvi and Noor Bai, "We realized that we could take her body with us, but her heart woul remain behind in Delhi. And what is a woman's body worth if her heart not be in it!" (192). Nadir Shah finds it hard to believe that Noor Bai chose to live in a brothel in Delhi rather than in his palace in Iran. The British a century later in 1857 destroyed the city yet again: "All that was left were empty houses and corpses. And dogs, cats and rats to eat them" (301). The paradisal city described on the walls of Red Fort lay a desolate place, its culture massacred along with its people. Violence and desolation are repeated patterns in Delhi's power historiography, successive and repeated invasions destroyed not only the material life but the social-cultural fabric of the city, and the contemporary city is built on the ruins of the history described above.

The ruins, include both magnificent forts and neglected tombs, and are an inescapable part of Delhi's skyline, the past ever visible in present and creating city's memory. Benjamin in "A Berlin Chronicle" discusses the relationship of memory to space, for him it operates between the landmarks of the official city and the footfalls of the solitary subject. The past is not recollected or recorded in abstraction, but it is put together through the creative process of memory. Buildings and monuments carry not just official significance, but carry associative meanings, people and places are remembered in terms of who accompanied one on these visits. Singh too recalls the monuments at the intersection of history, personal visits and accompanying other people as a guide.

The narrator Singh is a thinly veiled reference to the author, Khushwant Singh, his father had been one of the builder-contractors of the city, he is an "inheritor" of its built heritage, has witnessed it rising from dust, and then describes his experiences as a citizen and guide. Two major periods of construction are mentioned in the book, the making of Shahjahanbad and New Delhi, through the narratives of Jaita Rangeeta and Sobha Singh respectively. Jaita Rangeeta describes the city, "Dilli began to change. Every day a new building! Every day the city wall rising higher! Every day new minarets and domes rising into the sky!" (Singh, *Delhi* 126). When the king started spending more time at Agra people feared that the magnificent Shahjahanabad would join the ranks of other deserted cities of Dilli including Mehrauli, Siri, Chirag and Tughlaqabad that were now the abode of jackals and hyenas. In fact it was famously said that whoever built a new city in Delhi would not rule it for long, while ironically the ambitions of power and consolidating it through physically imposing structures is the motive behind construction. The last of these cities to be built was New Delhi by the British and within two decades of its inauguration in 1931 as the imperial city, the British were forced to leave the city and country. Singh's father and grandfather were among the major contractors of New Delhi, Shobha Singh was the builder of South Block and War Memorial Arch (India Gate) apart from numerous other buildings including the first cinema hall in city, Regal, and was popularly referred to as "owner of half of the new city" (343).

However as empires and its rulers lie forgotten, the architects of contemporary Delhi seem to be obliterated from minds. Khushwant Singh in "My Father, the Builder" describes the new city taking shape, "in what had been a wilderness a metropolis was beginning to rise" (8). He writes that while the names of Lutyens, Baker, Teja Singh and Shobha Singh are etched in alcoves at Raisina Hill as architects, engineers and builders of New Delhi, there is not a single road named after any of them. Road names have been changed repeatedly post-independence to give prominence and homage to nationalist leaders and politicians but the decolonisation fervour seems to have erased colonial history in a skewed manner, "The Windsors, Yorks, Cannings and Hardings have been replaced by the Tilaks, Patels, Azads and Nehrus" (Singh, *Delhi* 8), pointing out the temporality of existence and fame, be it men or built land. Benjamin writes that one "who seeks to approach his own buried past must conduct himself like a man digging" (*Berlin* 26), and Singh's book does that and mixes history with personal experiences; uses poetry from different centuries to substantiate the

historical narrative; alternates voices of emperors like Aurangzeb with that of low caste Jaita Rangeeta; and adopts narrators with in-between positions of identity to unravel Delhi.

Singh feels at ill-ease with the city that seems to have changed beyond recognition, and complains to his friend that he longer cares about the city, “It is no longer the Delhi I grew up in and loved. You Punjabis who invaded us in 1947 have buggered it out of shape” (Singh, *Delhi* 379). The friend retorts that Punjabis migrated out of compulsion but contemporary “Delhi is the nation’s orphanage” (380) with thousands pouring into the city everyday. These conversations, political discussions and gossip takes place at India Coffee House, and recall the role that cafes play as sites of social exchange and encounter in the city. Habermas writes that salons, theatres, and coffee houses of eighteenth century London were spaces where opinions and connections were forged outside the formal exchanges of economic life or codes of political debate. As semi-public spheres, they allow for exchange of ideas across strict social hierarchies, giving primacy to ideas over social status. The discussion here is about Punjabis who were dispossessed of lands, fortune and homes due to violence in 1947, and this has been followed by other events of religious animosity and mistrust. 1947 and 1984 are momentous years in Delhi history that expose the ugly face of religious hatred where the “enemy” is not an outside ruler invading the land. When Shobha Singh’s loyalty to British rule is questioned and he is asked if he has forgotten Jallianwala Bagh, he replies he hasn't and retorts: “Nor have I forgotten what Indians have done to each other. I can show [you] some of their handiwork in Delhi” (Singh, *Delhi* 344). According to Bagchi,

> This, then, is the crux of the book, the argument that has been developed over a few hundred pages and several hundred years: We are answerable, each one of us, for having let our religious identities drive us to killing each other, for never having trusted one another. (Bagchi, *Outlook*)

The book ends with 1984, but we cannot forget the events after demolition of Babri Masjid in 1992 or more recently the attacks on churches in Delhi in 2015.

For the city it is important to remember this past of violence, to remind itself that neither cities nor people have singular identities, to embrace the multiplicities and acknowledge hybrid identities. Delhi does not immediately evoke love and belongingness, one needs to look beyond the loud and brash behaviour of its citizens. Singh conflates his

love for Delhi and Bhagmati, the city's gendered identiy is deliberately blurred in Singh's equating of emotion and love for the city with that for hijra, Bhagmati:

> Delhi and Bhagmati have a lot in common. Having been long misused by rough people they have learnt to conceal their seductive charms under a mask of repulsive ugliness. It is only to their lovers, among whom I count myself, that they reveal their true selves. (Singh, *Delhi* 2).

The city desires a sense of acceptance, of people cultivating a sense of love and belonging by treating it as home, and not merely as a stop-over or place of temporariness. The narrator admits that he detests living in the city and yet can't keep away from it for long, "strange paradox of my lifelong, love-hate affair with the city and the woman" (3). Bhagmati evokes similarly mixed response by acting lusty in bed but speaking eloquently like a queen, she can be crude and yet speak florid Hindustani, and is desired by all across age and sexuality. Delhi, like Bhagmati, may not enamour on first look, but is courted by all, be it for education or job prospects. Singh reiterates the similarity and juxtaposition, "As I have said before I have two passions in my life; my city Delhi and Bhagmati. They have two things in common: they are lots of fun. And they are sterile" (30). He wishes to unravel the mysteries of both, to explore the riddles of Bhagmati's bodyscape and Delhi's cityscape. The narrator wonders what a *hijda* would look like without clothes? To extend the analogy to the city, what would it look like stripped of its exteriors, imposing architecture and crude mannerisms? What is the city's real self and can it be known? The narrator describes his three acts of sex with Bhagmati as the purgatory, the seeking, and the final one of destruction of the individual self (*fan*a) and the merging of two into one. Is the narrator's love for the city strong enough to annihilate the self to become one with the city? Singh has sexual encounters with various women that he takes as guide to monuments, and explores the corporeality of both women and the city. He has sex with women of different nationalities but does not get a chance to make friends with any of them, it could be compared to fleeting encounters of invaders with Delhi, a city they raided but could not make their own.

Singh complains that he is beginning to tire of his old loves, Bhagmati and Delhi and wishes to go to London or New York, but when Bhagmati patiently attends to him and understands his mood, he relents, "I no longer want to buy myself an air ticket to go abroad to get away from Bhagmati and Delhi. I told you - once you are in their clutches there is no escape" (315). Like, Bim in *Clear Light of Day*, who is represented as one with the tapestry

of Old Delhi, neither Singh nor Bhagmati can tear themselves away from the hypnotic love of Delhi. Bhagmati feels that she will die here and says, "If only I could tear myself away from lanes and bazaars of Delhi" (Singh, *Delhi* 380).

Singh's family lineage, his avid interest in history, exploring the lanes and monuments, and romancing the city in different seasons makes him a truly fit person for the role of guide. He interweaves history of monuments with anecdotes drawn from biographies/autobiographies of kings and poets, and interlaces them with personal experiences. Driving down Delhi roads, mapping the changes over decades and chasing ghosts of emperors and subalterns in tombs and palaces, alone or in company, researching and writing about the city is a constant process of creating spatial stories of love. One could place the affective communities of self-confessed lovers and explorers of city in this lineage, groups like "Heritage Walks with Sohail Hashmi", "Delhi by Foot" and "Delhi Karavan" invite other enthusiasts to create their individual spatial stories as they explore the city as tourists/locals, solo/in group, pushing their singular/plural identities vis-à-vis Delhi.

While the expanse of Singh's *Delhi* is vast in terms of the time period it covers and the huge number of characters it weaves into the story of the city, Chauhan's *Zoya Factor* focuses on Karol Bagh, and explores the idea that as the city explodes, people's associations are with specific areas, the mini Delhis that they identify with.

Anuja Chauhan's *Zoya Factor*: Contemporary Mini Delhis

Zoya Factor traverses the cities of Delhi, Mumbai, Dhaka, Sidney, Melbourne and Gold Coast, but the central focus of the novel with regard to people's identities remains Delhi. The protagonist Zoya Singh Solanki is extremely conscious of the tags that are associated with spatial coordinates of the city and is aware that her Karol Bagh address is not hip or "cool". Zoya's attitude about her Karol Bagh identity is ambiguous, she is both proud and embarrassed of it. She feigns "casual unconcern" when announcing her residential address though conscious that "when all the snooty ad-people think Karol Bagh, they imagine a pushy wannabe in a chamkeela salwar-kameez with everything matching-matching" (Chauhan 4). She thinks Karol Bagh "sounds uncool" (182) and her classy aunt, Anita Chachi "can barely conceal her mortification at having to live in KB" (159), and would prefer the family to sell the kothi and move "South" which is associated with sophistication, class and being hip. While most people are critical of the garishness of the Punjabi dominated area, Zoya claims to love it "Because Karol Bagh has Soul" (4). In spite of being loud and brash,

the Punjabis are powerful economically, V.N. Datta writes about their “drive, patience and competitive spirit” (298) in “Punjabi Refugees and Greater Delhi”. The fortitude and hardwork of Punjabi refugees has plenty of rags to riches stories and Zoya refers to their owning fancy multiplexes and houses in posh areas like Golf Links. They lend a lively spirit to Karol Bagh which “may be a loud, expansive, *dhik-chik, dhik-chik* music-loving soul that died and became a soul because its arteries are clogged with too much high-cholestrol, ghee-laden Punjabi food, but it’s a soul nonetheless” (Chauhan 4).

Karol Bagh was set up in 1937 as a Delhi Improvement Trust scheme “to accommodate the spillovers from what was regarded by the British administrators as the increasingly congested city” (Sengupta 107). Narayani Gupta in “Delhi’s History as Reflected in its Toponymy” discusses that areas to west and north of Shahjahaanbad were laid as gardens, which survives in their names like Karol Bagh (102). Zoya’s house, “Tera Number” as she calls it (interestingly the number is considered unlucky and the novel revolves around Zoya’s luck factor) was built by her grandfather in the 1930s, and her grandmother says that Karol Bagh was a happening address back then but the Punjabis settling there post-partition “ruined the neighbourhood” (Chauhan 18). This is a strong and recurring sentiment among those living in Delhi before 1947, but the younger generation like Zoya’s is willing to look beyond the prejudices, in fact she loves the “Punjabi-ness of Karol Bagh” (18). Zoya, midnight’s grandchild, looks beyond caste/regional affiliations, as a Rajput living in a Punjabi dominated locality she occupies an insider/outsider position, she is unapologetic about her love for Punjabis. And even as she is defensive about her residential address, she is repeatedly defined as a Karol Bagh girl. Neelo remarks, “You can take a girl out of Karol Bagh but you can’t take Karol Bagh out of the girl” (42), firmly linking her identity with the area, Karol Bagh, a mini Delhi with its own distinctive features.

Places define and shape the personalities and behaviour of people inhabiting them, and even in Australia Zoya is concerned about not sounding or behaving like a prudish Karol Bagh type. The excesses of emotion of KB are aggravated by regular doses of melodramatic Hindi movies, restraint is clearly not Zoya’s strongest point and this comes across vividly in her *pataka* (crackers) obsession which is termed “unladylike and unnatural” (33). Her quirky behaviour is drawn from the spatially chaotic spaces that she inhabits. The architectural layout of her house mirrors the unplanned and haphazard growth of Delhi. The division of the two-storeyed bungalow among the three brothers had resulted in eccentric corners, kitchen in

a garage and a dining room that has to be entered through a loo. The high passions and jealousies of the family members is symbolic of the crazy energies of Delhities.

Karol Bagh night market is one such space that allows for people's different associations with a place to surface. Maps limit and colonise space by fixing its boundaries on paper, but it is the act of bodies walking through them that creates new and real stories as people negotiate the dressed up streets with loud music, "And once you cross the first red light, Ajmal Khan turns into a bright, spangled gypsy's ribbon, unrolling blithely before you in gay street carnival, with vendors selling every conceivable food and toys on carts lit with cheerily hissing hurricane lamps" (185). While Zoya carries past memories of the loved space, Nikhil is caught in the wonder and excitement of the first visit. A local's and a stranger's response to maps and spaces are different, and a familiar landscape involves mental maps of familiar landmarks like a tree, shop or petrol pump. While the main market is particularly well-known and advertised for saris and jewellery, the night market bears a carnivalesque air, with small scale sellers occupying spaces in front of the big showrooms; the spaces transformed with change of movement of the sun, lending a different vibe and energy to the same place.

Nikhil is surprised at the range of stuff being sold, from sponges to wooden spoon sets to children's shoes and frocks to digital watches to mosquito nets, catering to a wide range of clientele needs. The market description is a marked contrast to the ordered and CCTV world of the malls or even to that of big showrooms with mannequins wearing fancy clothes. Nikhil remarks, "There's so much energy in the place" (187) and Zoya adds "The KB Monday night market is my most favourite thing on the planet" (187). The place derives its attractiveness from selling local specificities, both in goods and food as opposed to standard products of global companies. In contrast to the CCD or Barista, they visit the local tikki wala who offers complimentary tea for waiting apart from the piping hot tikkis. Gandhi in "The Hermeneutics of the Bazaar" uses the metaphor of *chakkar* to describe activities of the bazaar,

> its unceasing, entangled and multifaceted quality. Social life is experienced and expressed in an ever-evolving now whose prospective shape is not foreordained. To relate is to be enmeshed with others such that reflection and navigation will incorporate plural perspectives. (134)

The multiple wares of the bazaar lead to a spectacle not just of the bazaar but a vivid theatre of diversity and energy of the streets. Jacobs in *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* argues strongly against moves to "unidiversify" the street, where new architectural forms remove social life from street, doing away with fluid use of urban space, making places dull and unsafe in the process. The ballet of streets for her lies in near-strangers negotiating space, of order beneath the apparent disorder and in little sidewalk contacts. Governmental "ordering" of space is generally a move towards controlling the heterogeneity of space, of removing vendors from streets. However there are strong counter arguments in favour of fluid and heterogeneous use of space: it makes purchasing easier for customers, is good for economy, heterogeneity lends unique characteristics to bazaars, and the eyes on street add to safety. Jacobs describes the complex order under the apparent disorder of city,

> This order is all composed of movement and change, and although it is life, not art, we may fancifully call it the art form of the city and liken it to the dance — not to a simple-minded precision dance with everyone kicking up at the same time, twirling in unison and bowing off en masse, but to an intricate ballet in which the individual dancers and ensembles all have distinctive parts which miraculously reinforce each other and compose an orderly whole. (Jacobs, *Death* 50)

Heterogeneity and improvisations are the key to space usage in the city and are extended to hybridity in food and language. The food at Zoya's home bears the stamp of fusion, Rinku Chachi indianises the pizzas, "loaded with tandoori chicken, achari paneer, Amul cheese and hara dhaniya and no Italian would ever recognize them, but they rocked" (Chauhan 93). Food, especially Chinese and Italian has changed beyond recognition in Indian restaurants, they have been appropriated beyond the point of recognizability in the form of tadka noodles, tandoori momos and paneer tikka pizza. The same goes for language with liberal inclusion of Hindi words, idioms and (mis)pronunciation drawn from colloquial speech like "kali-peeli", "dhik-chik dhik-chik", "chalu hai", "shap-per-own", "sikorty", "jale pe namak" and "patli galli-ing". The written text mimics the Hinglish of spoken language, with slipping in of Hindi words in the middle of an English sentence with no change in grammar, and the liberal prefixing/suffixing of verbs of one language to the other. Chauhan's background of having worked in advertising firm comes across in the abundant usage of advertising slogans, supplemented with those from Hindi films and indigenous phrases like "Standing-in-thee-Society", "ogling and Googling", "KLPDed", "What went of *his* father's?" and "*dhak-dhak*-ing".

Chauhan's writing does not aspire for new grand narrative about the nation, but it is certainly a new narration of the city, both in its use of language and genre crossing though it is often classified as chic lit. It reminds one of Jon Mee's ideas about masala mix of languages and cultures:

> From this point of view, English is implicated in the polyphony of Indian languages, its colonial authority relativised by entering into the complexity which it describes. Yet translations between the languages that participate in this polyphony are not likely to be an easy process of matching like to like. (330)

He further elaborates on playfulness of language in contemporary novels where there are no anxieties attached to use of English, and the writers are secure enough to experiment with language. The richness of this fusion lends language a colourful flavour that is missing in monolingual communities as Zoya realizes in Australia: "a First World country clock-full of unilingual white people, suddenly hit me…People who knew only one language…which was *weird*. Because, hello, what would they switch to if they started getting pally, or angry, or fell in love?" (Chauhan 207)

Australia is the venue of the Cricket World Cup and the unfolding of the romance between Zoya and the Indian cricket captain, Nikhil Khoda is a fusion of two popular themes: love and cricket. Bestowing the status of human charm onto Zoya robs her of free will and agency, reducing her role from an independent career woman to a talisman that needs to mark its presence at breakfast table before a cricket match. In fact the initial contract drawn up by the Board was a spatial and virtual command over her body and movements where she was to defer completely to the team and management. Even as she begins to enjoy the power, she realises that all the attention that she enjoys is "just so very fragile, dependent totally on how the boys performed. Dependent totally on Nikhil actually" (339). Not only does the man, the cricket captain dominate and command on the field, but even for the female charm to succeed, the onus is on the man to let her enjoy that status. In fact a section of western media was after her blood as they felt it tilted the balance and wanted it to be a level playing field. The bestowing of "lucky charm" status on her is mythologizing her being born at the exact time when India won the Cricket World Cup in 1983 and also a reminder of Saleem Sinai's birth in Rushdie's *The Midnight's Children*. While Saleem is born at the stroke of midnight, connecting his life with the birth of the nation in the magic realistic tale, Zoya's birth is at the moment of nation winning a crucial international tournament. The myth of birth and dressing

up as goddess for the ad shoot spatially and psychologically elevates her status which soon comes thumping back to spaces of reality in Karol Bagh, far from the romanticised and exotic locations of Australia.

Zoya had been unwittingly thrown into the male arena of cricket, the most popular, the most funded and the most watched sport in India. Neither her status as a lucky charm, nor her deification through the ludicrous agarbati advertisement accord her equality as a woman. In rejecting to be a charm, Zoya chooses to make a place for herself as an advertising executive, and not just as the captain's girlfriend or as an ambassador of the cricket board. In the process she rejects deification and a role in the grand narrative of the nation and its favourite sport. Instead she attempts to connect with Nikhil across planes of everyday in Delhi, and exploring romance in the city by puncturing designated spaces of pleasure, be it through the walk in Karol Bagh market, or sharing intimacy in the parking lot, or kissing at home with the family looking through windows. Play of meanings and unexpected delights unfold not only in the encounters between Nikhil and Zoya, but also in the instances of Zoya bursting crackers where the mundane meets the enchanted, and these spaces carry possibilities for new ways of identity with the city.

Conclusion

Fiction on Delhi city with easily identifiable road names, streets and areas invites the reader to negotiate the city at the intersection of real and imagined spaces. Wirth writes that the city has "historically been the melting-pot of races, people and customs, and a most favorable breeding ground of new biological and cultural hybrids" (66) and this is especially true of Delhi whose history over the centuries has witnessed the infusion of various architectural styles, cuisines and languages. However the history of establishment and destruction of empire cities also creates problems of defining a characteristic Delhi culture, and the capital city fails to evoke love and loyalty among the migrants who come seeking better opportunities.

The early post-independence novels carry a strong sense of nostalgia for Delhi *tehzeeb* and poetry as housed in the havelis of Shahjahanbad, and mourn the loss of the golden era that disappeared along with the Mughal rule. Desai's *Clear Light of Day* lays bare the fractures in Das family and neighbourhod with partition, and highlights the dichotomies of Old/New Delhi, statis/movement, stagnation/progress, traditional/modern that have come up with the shifting of power centre to New Delhi. Desai's *In Custody* too is located in Old

Delhi, and chronicles the decline of Urdu language and poetry, and its spaces are infiltrated with soundscapes and lightscapes of the Kafkaesque bazaar. Deven, in trying to preserve Urdu for future generations confronts the binaries between art/life, reality/imagination, purity/hybridity and public/private spaces, and needs to make allowances for diversity and hybridity in languages. Singh's magnum opus *Delhi: A Novel* is the story of Delhi spread over several centuries, and creatively mixes history and anecdotes, voices of kings and low castes, stories and poetry, monumental and everyday spaces of the city, while locating its multiple narrators at in-between positions, be it that of be it that of religion or gender, blurring the straight and monolithic categories of identity. Chauhan's *Zoya Factor* extends the idea of hybridity further, by including fusion food and polyphonic languages, and making the point that midnight's grandchildren are no longer hankering after a bygone era, and are making new relationships with the city, often with mini Delhis that they identify with.

There is a clear shift in the way the city is being conceptualized, the shift from writings of midnight's children to those by midnight's grandchildren is hard to ignore, gone is the nostalgia for a glorious past, the writings are rooted in the here and now, both in their thematic and linguistic concerns, recognizing the need for linguistic and cultural heterogeneity. If the proliferation of fiction and non-fiction on Delhi, especially in the last decade is anything to go by, it looks like Delhi is finally shedding its "unloved city" tag. While the contemporary city is one of multiplexes and malls, it still evokes the image of a historical city, and let us turn our attention to Old Delhi, which has fascinated historians and poets alike. Its glorious past is at odds with the present state of neglect, governmental policies are majorly responsible for this decay, and what was once the core of Delhi has not witnessed revival through gentrification. However some factors are making a difference: opening of Ghalib's museum in 2010, metro reaching Old Delhi, opening of metro heritage line in 2017, restoration of Dharampura haveli into a heritage hotel, and most importantly group of enthusiasts, who for heritage, food and photography throng the city, solo and in groups. They are the new lovers of the city, in line with the others narrated in Singh's novel, and spatial stories from below, as much, if not more than government policies from top forge relations between city and people.

CHAPTER 2

City and Gender: (Un)equal Spatiality at Work and Pleasure

Whether women are seen as a problem of cities, or cities as problem of
women, the relationship remains fraught with difficulty.
(Wilson, "The invisible *flâneur*" 63)

The articulation of identity in urban spaces is tied to multiple axes like gender, class and caste, and citizens are not defined by any of these singular conceptualizations but at the overlapping intersections of these. The chapter "City and Identity" focussed on the idea of city and citizenship with regard to questions of belongingness, nativism and migration, and not vis-à-vis the contingent attributes of gender or class. Articulation and politics of differences is central to identity formation and this chapter will discuss the notion of gendered identity by underlining the frameworks of power that are embedded in the city. Through repeated practices and social regulations the differences are made to appear natural or in Butler's words have the "appearance of substance" (33). While focussing on gender and sexuality, I will try and argue against pre-given, essentialist identity and instead make a case for the construction of embodied persons in urban spaces. The chapter analyses theories of gendered space and (im)possibility of female *flâneur* and explores these with relation to Nayantara Sahgal's *A Day in Shadow*, Manju Kapur's *A Married Woman* and *Home*, and Advaita Kala's *Almost Single*.

Gendered Urban Spaces

A growing body of work by scholars like Knopp and Wilson has looked into the ways in which urban spaces are gendered and sexualised. Bell and Valentine argue for destabilising categories (man, woman, heterosexual, homosexual) and push instead for fluidity of these categories. Roberts suggests that both in terms of social relations and material world, women literally live in a man-made environment as majority of planners and architects of the city are men, controlling women's occupation of spaces.

The discussion of gendered city is drawn from the demarcations made in space in terms of public and private, and has its roots in industrialisation that gave birth to the contemporary city. While the working class women moved across the city streets as part of factory workforce, the bourgeois women were privileged because of their class to occupy the private spaces of home. The term "public woman" referred to the prostitute specifically but

in a broader sense to any woman out in the public (Nead, *Victorian*). The figure of the "public woman" carries a moral censure, and suggests that she disrupts the normative urban public space that is encoded and conceptualized as male while the domestic sphere is visualized as feminine (Pollock). According to Nead in "From Alleys to Courts" the sexualised body of the "public woman" disturbs the public sphere as a space of civility and formality and the private one as that of intimacy. She is an object of desire and disquiet; she is the object of gaze of men but is also viewed as threatening to their physical and mental health. Social anxieties about the prostitute carry concerns about the place of women in the city at large, the presence of women in streets without being chaperoned by men was a source of discomfort and suspicion.

While women's presence in public life was being questioned, a special kind of "public woman", the feminist reformer questioned the gendered organization of space. Moore comments that the early feminists recognized the necessity of invading spaces and challenging spatial relations "in order to resist or combat and then to change the conceptual and social relations of gender" (83). The claims to public space, be it through the women's suffrage movement, or more recently the occupying of streets in Delhi by women following incidents of assault disrupt and question the gendered division, and "for women simply being- legitimately, independently, unaccompanied and unmolested - in the street, the public building or the workplace has something of the logic of trespass and occupation about it" (Tonkiss 101).

Enjoying freedom in the city is not easy and Wilson in *The Sphinx in the City* discusses the deep contradictions in contemporary urban space. On one hand, modern cities offer freedom, and on the other hand they are bound by principles of regulation, design and planning. The friction between these two urban currents gives the city its dynamic spark and according to Wilson the tension between order and disorder, control and freedom, can be read as a conflict between masculine and feminine principles at work in the city, "urban life is actually based on the perpetual struggle between rigid, routinised order, and pleasurable anarchy, the male-female dichotomy" (Wilson, *Sphinx* 7-8).

Women's use of space is impacted by notions of safety and danger, and it effectively rules out equitable occupation of space. The fear of sex-related crimes leads to advices regarding movement, and fear is spatialized as it is associated with safe/unsafe places. The idea of safe/unsafe places changes with the time of the day, for example subways and parks

are considered unsafe for use of women at night. Valentine argues that women's defensive use of space regarding male violence is to strategically avoid "dangerous" places at "dangerous" time, advices to women hinge on the idea that the female body's movement across the city is not "free" and their spatial stories are woven around maps of safety/danger. The discourse of unsafe public places aimed at keeping women off them has faulty reasoning as majority of crimes against women occur at the hands of known men at home rather than in public.

The fear of violence is articulated as fear of space, carrying associative tags of "good" and "bad" places, and prevents women from fully partaking in the pleasures of the city, their movements are curtailed by the supposed protection of the female body in space. With circumscribed movements, it appears de Certeau's walkers can only men be men, he writes about the transformation of place by the street walkers:

> The ordinary practitioners of the city live 'down below', below the thresholds at which visibility begins. They walk -an elementary form of this experience of the city: they are walkers, *Wandersmanner*, whose bodies follow the thicks and thins of the urban 'text' they write without being able to read it. These practitioners make use of spaces that cannot be seen; their knowledge of them is as blind as that of lovers in each other's arms. The paths that correspond in this intertwining are unrecognised poems in which each body is an element signed by many others to elude legibility (45-46).

The act of walking marks territorialization and appropriation, through it "we make sense of space through walking practices, and repeat those practices as a way of overcoming alienation" (Leach 284). Belonging and attachment to a place are built on basis of memory and intimate corporeal experiences of everyday walking. The "everyday belonging" and spatial knowledge of the city varies across the genders: taking the children to park, buying groceries and driving to work are all routine activities that have a clear gendered dimension linked to roles in public/private sphere. These activities enable ordinary inhabitants to enact their own maps of the city, subverting master plans in small ways, but women's movements are contained by gender roles and performativity in urban spaces.

Let us extend the idea further from everyday practices and the experiences of urban walkers of de Certeau to *flânerie* in city, it would give us another dimension to exploring women's partaking of pleasures, or the lack of it in urban spaces. The *flâneur* makes his first

appearance in Benjamin's writing, "The Return of the *Flâneur*" and he moves idly through the city, observing the environment and yet detached from it. "Seeing" is important in *The Arcades Project*, Benjamin observing Baudelaire observing Parisian life, where both of them are *flâneurs*. The street becomes the dwelling of the *flâneur*; his gaze combines the casual eye of the stroller with inquisitiveness of the detective, the city for him is familiar, unknown and fantastic at the same time. The urban observer or *flâneur* has largely been a male figure, and if we go back to the discussion about demarcations of public/private spheres and discomfort with the presence of women in public it is not difficult to fathom that. How can women partake of joys of idly roaming the city without justifying a purpose? Or perhaps there is a need to redefine the concept of *flâneur* and see how it has developed historically, especially its gender implications.

Scholars like Wolff and Pollock have claimed the impossibility of a female *flâneur*. Wolff in "The Invisible *Flâneuse*: Woman and the Literature of Modernity" traces the demarcation of public and private spheres to industrialisation and later to rise of suburbs. The *flâneur* as the modern hero in Benjamin recalls Sennett's *The Fall of Public Man* which charts the demise of the public man who passed his time in coffee houses, streets and theatre in eighteenth century, and later at clubs. Yet even till late nineteenth century women could not go alone to a café in Paris or restaurant in London. George Sand in 1831 dressed up as a boy to experience Paris life, "The disguise made the life of the *flâneur* available to her, as she knew very well, she could not adopt the non-existent role of a *flaneuese*. Women could not stroll alone in the city" (Wolff 9). In the sharply separated public and private spheres women make appearances only with relation to or in company of men or through non-normative ones of whore, widow or murder victim. Wolff is right in pointing out that while the coming in of department stores in 1850s and 1860s legitimised the appearance of women in public, visiting these places for shopping is not the same as purposeless strolling of a *flâneur,* and experiences of *flâneuse* is missing. Pollock too agrees that "there is no female equivalent of the quintessential masculine figure, the *flâneur*: there is not and could not be a female *flaneuese*" (71). The possibilities of freedom in streets seemed to exist only for deviant women like the prostitute or for non-conformists cross-dressers.

Parsons in *Streetwalking the Metropolis: Women, the City, and Modernity* makes a strong case for re-examining the role of *flâneur* and to question if there can be a *flâneuse* both/either as a historical figure and as a critical metaphor. She questions the rejection of Wolff and Pollock and argues that the "concept of the *flâneur* itself contains gender

ambiguities that suggest the figure to be a site for the contestation of male authority rather than the epitome of it" (Parsons 5-6). She feels that the *flâneur*'s inherent contradictions have been overlooked, and suggests a rethinking of it conceptually, as a term, figure and socio-cultural phenomenon. She argues that territorialization of modernity affected men and women differently, while the destruction of the arcades obliterated the natural habitat of the *flâneur*, it enabled women to enter the city with fresh eyes, challenging the authoritative masculine perception of urban space.

As the consuming gaze of the woman falls on the carefully arranged displays of the department stores, she is enticed and it is important to remember that "this gaze is itself controlled and dominated by the masculine institution of the store through its design, layout, and facilities, all structures to entice and guide the female gaze" (47). The female consumer does not control the spectacle, she is rather controlled by it, and gendered gaze is the keystone in addressing the needs of the *flâneur*-consumer. The private desires are transferred onto fabrics and goods in the "public" site of the store, the excitement of passion is turned into that of shopping and inverts the traditional gaze, "In a subtle role reversal, the salesmen take on the traits of the prostitute, vying for customers and trying to attract those most inclined to spend" (49). The commercial world provides women new opportunities to enter public life, of becoming urban voyeurs and consumers as shoppers. The overturning and blurring of subject/object and the repositioning of gaze takes place with shop windows enticing with their displays, with the woman consumer projecting her desire onto goods and the male salesperson attracting the female customers like a prostitute, making Parsons push the case for ambiguously gendered *flâneur*. Parsons elaborates, "The urban figure, who is made a metaphor for the modern artist, is ambiguously gendered as the *flâneur*; masculine as a bourgeois male of privacy and leisure, but feminine as passively stimulated by the city, dandiacal in dress and on the margins of the public city world" (38-39).

The association between the woman and city with the woman as consumer has undergone transformations as the places of shopping have changed from department stores to malls. Today one sees women present alone or in groups in coffee shops and malls, "Overall, women's body language in malls demonstrates a sense of belonging that is not really visible in other kinds of public places" (Phadke et al 41). These modern places of consumption woo the women with spectacle, discount offers and special prices for ladies' kitty parties. Of course class is an important angle here, as purchasing power ensures entry to these places, making shopping a respectable activity, "The performance of a 'class habitus' by women is

required to underscore their legitimacy in these spaces" (42). And woman's dress and way of conducting herself marks her belonging to this space, the confident body language and ease in these spaces displays a sense of familiarity.

The question of presence of women in public whether as shoppers or campaigners is addressed by urban literature from across disciplines. While major sociological threads have been discussed above, it is worthwhile to explore the geographical angle. Rose argues,

> Masculinist geographers [and writers] are by and large still demanding an omniscient view, a transparent city, total knowledge. Meanwhile female geographers are understanding the contemporary city not as the increasing fragmentation of a still-coherent whole, but rather in terms of a challenge to that omniscient vision and its exclusions. (28)

The contemporary city can be considered to fall into two categories: the modernist ordered city of Le Corbusier and the postmodern, informal one proposed by Jane Jacobs, "The former follows the scopic form of the telescopic panorama, the latter that of the kaleidoscopic myriad" (Parsons 8). The different kind of cities will lend to different walks, footsteps, geography and *flâneurs*. Le Corbusier epitomises Rose's "masculinist geographer", his modern city as detailed in *The City of Tomorrow* is surveyable and is created for an authoritative male inhabitant. His urban resident walks with a purpose, meandering and *flânerie* are discouraged in the city. His cities are functional, presented in forms of maps, population density and traffic movement, and pay little attention to individuals, especially not women. As opposed to this, Jacobs foregrounds the people in the streets, she emphasises the intimate rather than the detached view.

Jacob's emphasis on people suggests a *flâneur* who does not attempt to give order to the city but revels in its innate pleasures and experiences. While Jenks traces a lineage of *flânerie* from modernism to postmodernism, Parsons too finds the illusive figure of the *flâneur* useful for contemporary theory:

> Used to allude to a whole range of urban social identities from shopping mall consumer to internet surfer, it risks an overload of significance that results in meaninglessness…Is the *flâneur* bourgeiois or vagrant, authoritative or marginal, within or detached from the city crowd, masculine, feminine or androgynous? (Parsons 4)

There are no easy answers to redefining the *flâneur* in contemporary times, but only tentative hypothesis in terms of what it implies for women in urban landscape. I would like to raise further queries that problematize the issue. The traditional notion of *flâneur* has undergone a sea change, apart from surveying the city on foot it now includes driving on the highway and surfing the internet. As the city rises vertically, will the location of the *flâneur* be still in the street or atop a skyscraper? Keeping in mind the notion of Foucault's heterotopias, does the role of the *flâneur* change with special places and times, like strife, emergency or civil war? Can writing be viewed as an act of *flânerie*, of unravelling the city through interplay of meanings? Has the figure of the female *flâneur* undergone transmutations through women only travel groups like WOW (Women on Wanderlust)? While we have discussed that the body in the city is not gender neutral, what about the city, does it a gender, and does that impact its relationship with male/female subjects? Cities have often been viewed as female where her body is conquered and "domesticated" by male rulers with phallic symbols of tombs symbolising colonisation. It has also been portrayed as feminine by painters, and as a lover by writers. Gokhale in *Paro: Dreams of Passion* suggests an androgynous identity for the city and Singh's *Delhi: a Novel* views the city as a hermaphrodite/*hijra.* Can the androgynous identity of the *flâneur* be extended to the city as well?

It is important to raise these questions as city planning, design and (un)said rules of negotiating the city take heterosexuality to be the norm. In fact the public/private division of spaces and roles allude to work/domesticity distinctions of a heterosexual marriage/relationship. The spaces of the city are not neutral and gender politics is built in its layout, its implicit and explicit hierarchy is discriminating when it comes to everyday practices, and makes *flânerie* or loitering difficult for anybody outside the norm, be it single women, gays or transgenders. Even though cities offer opportunities for articulation of queer identities, yet they are homophobic and hold onto heterosexual norms. Bell et al in "All Hyped Up and No Place to Go" point out that "not all space is 'straight" (31), and city spaces are threatened not just with the presence of the prostitute in public but with expression of homosexual desire in streets.

Delhi has been witness to both support for LGBTQ community on streets and protests against homosexual portrayals in arts. Protests against Deepa Mehta's film *Fire* in 1998 for its lesbian portrayal and attack on gay painter Balbir Krishan in 2012 during his solo exhibition, "Out Here and Now" at Lalit Kala Akademy are two acts of vandalism and

violence that stand out prominently regarding city's intolerance. However the same city has seen increasing participation in Queer Pride Parade that has been an annual feature in Delhi since 2008. The decriminalisation of homosexual acts in 2009 by Delhi High Court for the first time since 1861 when Section 377 was brought in, and the overturning of it in 2014, and years in between have seen fervent LGBT activism. In fact the demands of gay movement and women's movement are beginning to converge, to ensure not just safety and equality but unconditional access to resources, the freedom of access even if it is to take risk. Wilson argues that the goal of "Take back the Night" is to reorder the city from a place where women are compelled to face "danger without pleasure, safety without stimulation, monumentality without diversity" (*Sphinx* 9) to one where inclusion rather than exclusion is the basic premise. And LGBTQ activism hinges on the inclusion principle, where not just "rights" but "right to pleasure" is brought to the fore. Queering spaces through social practices in the city like pride marches and rainbow tree in Jawaharlal Nehru University and Shiv Nadar University are small steps in this struggle. A city that invites moral policing on public display of love tends to be harsher to gay couples. Apart from the legal issue, there is a strong moral censure and lack of acceptance, and the heteronormative society might just tolerate sexual dissidence as long as it is invisible, and does not spill over to public spaces. Equitable participation in space or right to inclusive belonging raises issues of spatial dimension of belongingness, or what has been termed "spaces of citizenship" (Painter and Phiol). Spaces of inclusion and exclusion depend on intersection of various axes like gender, caste and class, and despite equal citizenship granted by constitution, in practise women, gays, religious minorities, poor and low caste are treated as lesser citizens and are outsiders to public space and spatial citizenship rights.

The demand for spatial citizenship includes not just the use of spaces for everyday activities but also to protest, to roam and to loiter. Walkowitz discusses the missing *flâneuse*, "Women are not 'at home in the city', rather they mount campaigns and develop strategies to 'claim back the night', 'refuse the gaze' and 'walk without fear'" (34). These demands are just as relevant in contemporary Delhi, where demand for greater safety jostles with claims to spaces of pleasure. The brutal rape of Nirbhaya in a public bus in December 2014 unleashed massive protests, online campaigns and fervent media reaction to the crime. The awarding of death sentence to four convicts in the case by Supreme Court in 2017 has not changed things much; six cases of sexual assault are reported on an average in Delhi everyday (Shekhar) and the unofficial figures would be higher. Every case not only brings up safety concerns, but it

reveals the attitude of society to the rape victim. Any incident of assault raises inevitable questions about what the woman was wearing, who she was with and what she was doing at that place. It places the onus on the woman to prove a worthy and respectable reason for presence in public space, only then can protection be extended to her. Not only is trying to limit women's movement on concerns of safety illogical but the concept of "respectable" woman worthy of protection is equally fraught with problems, what is needed is open access of the city to people of all genders, a spatial equality for citizens. Students from various universities of Delhi have been participating in the "Pinjara Tod" (Break the Cage) campaign since August 2015 against sexist rules in women's hostels that disallow women from staying out late. (Sharma, *Pinjara*).

Padke at el in *Why Loiter?* insist that one needs to overturn the safety argument on its head, "Instead of safety, what women would then seek is the right to take risks, placing the claim to public space in the discourse of rights rather than protectionism" (60), and pushes the case for inclusive participation. The authors however warn against taking in the increasing number of women in malls and coffee shops to women's presence in public as they are pseudo public spaces that woo middle-class women. These spaces of consumption along with gated communities are designed on principles of exclusion where the security guards and CCTV cameras provide a sense of security. The real measure of presence of women and their experience needs to be checked at "functional" places like streets, bus stops, railway stations, metro stations, markets and parks. Butler's notion of "gender performativity" is about creation of gender through everyday repetitive performances, and this includes women's gendered acceptance of spatiality. Loitering subverts performance of gender roles in space and makes possible new ways of imagining bodies in public space which is hard for the society to accept since it wants women to honour the public and private boundaries and restrictions.

Loitering suggests mapping one's own path, not a straight one of purpose but a circuitous and meandering one of pleasure. In charting new territories, ideas and boundaries of respectability and morality are questioned and stretched. The purposelessness of loitering defies rationalist principles of order, it is counterproductive to the patriarchal idea of male explorer and disrupts the homogeneity of neoliberal spaces:

> The act of loitering, in its very lack of structure, renders a space simultaneously inside and outside, public and private, recreational and commercial, producing a

> constant state of liminality or transition. The liminality (in-betweenness) of loitering is seen as an act of contamination, an act of defiling space. Loitering is a reminder of what is perceived as the lowest common denominator of the local and thus is a threat to the desired image of a global city. (Phadke et al 185)

Loitering then demands a right to pleasure, to disrupt the spatial control, to rupture hierarchical demarcations to be able to create alternate maps of everyday life that de Certeau refers to, and to people the city with women *flâneurs*. It demands open access for all in an inclusive city, and especially for women to be able to roam the city at all times without being questioned on company, purpose or dress.

Let us see how the issues discussed so far about gendered divisions of city spaces are reflected in contemporary fiction. Sahgal's *A Day in Shadow*, set in 1960s, is about a woman trying to carve out her independent identity post-divorce, and even as she is being heralded as the "new woman" with career, these are a man's counter definitions for her. One is forced to ask if she is being subsumed once again in gendered roles and spaces. Kapur's *A Married Woman* interrogates the public/private demarcation of space by emphasizing the narrative of fear that is used to contain women to domestic sphere. By focusing on women protestors and the role of art in politics it allows for women's intervention and disruption in public space. Kapur's *Home* delves further into spaces of work for women and depicts the insidious ways in which patriarchy works in collaboration with capitalism. Kala's *Almost Single* depicts the uneasy life of women living independently in the metro where "blended relationships" may bend the rules but there is still lack of clarity about women's choices regarding matrimony.

Nayantara Sahgal's *A Day in Shadow*: Projection of "New Woman"

A Day in Shadow, set in the late 1960s, is the story of Simrit, who is saddled with the most unfair divorce terms by her industrialist husband, Som. Having recently separated from Som, she is in a state of confusion spatially and emotionally, and faces standard questions like "What does your husband do?" and "Where do you live?" in Delhi party circuit aimed at slotting women in Delhi's patriarchal social-economic pecking order. The Hindu Code Bill of 1956 had overturned years of tradition in making allowance for divorce, yet a "divorced woman" is an anomaly, a woman disrupting the order in public sphere by being unchaperoned by a husband, the crucial link with private sphere, creating a disquiet like that of the other "public woman", the prostitute in Victorian era. Till recently, she had no

independent identity, and while entertaining Som's business contacts, she had failed to reflect on the political and economic nexus in Delhi's public life, treating it merely as home:

> Som's world had been commerce, never shared with her at all. And here was politics, utterly confusing. The imposing red sandstone buildings where all government debate and activity centered had been to her just buildings until Raj had started investing them with a huge and snarled personality. Delhi had been simply home, a place to bring up children, but apparently it was much more, a touchstone for whatever happened in India. Delhi could become the heart of the crisis. (Sahgal, *Day* 12)

For Som, Delhi is not simply home, it is the city where he is trying to rebuilt home and status that were lost with partition. He never describes partition as an emotional trauma but loss of material prosperity that he aims to reconstruct, and his ambition is cloaked in the mythology of reclaiming ancestral loss and prestige. Som's recollections of partition are both personal and communal in his talks with Lalli about the abandoned homes, "Lalli and he were locked together in a primitive cement much older, more enduring than marriage. Ancestral, tribal, village cement, to which she was a stranger" (26). The shared memories exclude Simrit from the bond based on recollections. Sandercock in *Towards Cosmopolis* discusses the role of memory in creating a sense of belonging to a city:

> Memory, both individual and collective, is deeply important to us. It locates us as part of something bigger than our individual existences, perhaps makes us seem less significant, sometimes gives us at least partial answers to questions like: "Who am I?' and "Why am I like I am?" Memory locates us, as part of family history, as part of a tribe or community, as part of city building and nation making. Loss of memory is basically a loss of identity. (207)

Memory can be based on everyday practices, or associated with events from childhood, building up a sense of belonging to places where those events took place. Som's memory centres around material loss and he mourns for the carpets and gold jewellery that had to be left behind; while Simrit's mind reconstructs the distraught in the streets, "In her mind's eye she saw instead the frantic street outside, the exodus of the completely disinherited trudging toward no imaginable future, with only what they carried or wore" (Sahgal, *Day* 24). The non-convergence of their reflections on spaces of the past in also reflected in Som's and Simrit's divergent views about occupation of spaces in present.

Undercutting the conventional conception of home as the woman's turf, the home is projected as a reflection and extension of Som's inflated ego. The lavishness and ostentation are a symbol of his stature in society, of having successfully regained and rebuilt the socio-economic position of pre-partition days. His narcissistic image is reflected in carefully picked up huge bathroom mirrors, the house bears an imprint of Som's notions of propriety over space and people, where both the imported artefacts and the wife are possessions to be displayed. Not concerned with the mundane management of the household, his presence at home between travels is a celebration for the children where they are rewarded with gifts and cash. Simrit finds this nouveau riche lifestyle artificial where wardrobe and friends are changed regularly to fit in with new ambitions and goals, and there are no friends to grow old with, "Nothing is allowed to gather a speck of dust or time or age. A life like brilliantly white false teeth perpetually on display" (139).

The spaces of home bear echoes of discussion and laughter with business clients, but none between the couple; while Som aims to replicate the lost economic status through material goods, the objects at house barely carry any personal memories or associations as the house is refurbished repeatedly. The private space of the home is further compartmentalised, the aesthetically done up drawing room with expensive stuff on display is a "public" room where the immaculate décor is meant to impress business clients, and is far removed in its spatial and social concerns from the "private" rooms of children, the "tumbled beds where children slept and the day's doings overflowed from shelves and cupboards onto the floor" (83). Som's concern is limited to the former where he tries to strike deals, and is not bothered with the messy mundaneness of the latter reflected in children's play, sleep or illness. The constant renovation of the house to match Som's social mobility prevents anything from being enjoyed and savoured at leisure as nothings stays for long be it magazines, furniture or friends. Bachelard in *The Poetics of Space* writes "Over-picturequeness in a house can conceal its intimacy" (12) and real houses of memory are hard to describe since that is like showing them to visitors. Som's house is over-done, ostentatious and meant for display. The space does not allow for nurturing intimate bonds, the repeated disruption of spatial texture severs links with past, making impossible an organic connection between space and people across time.

Lefebvre with reference to Bachelard discusses the qualities that the objects of a house have an almost an ontological dignity,

> From cellar to attic, from foundation to roof, it has a density at once dreamy and rational, earthly and celestial. The relationship between House and Ego, meanwhile, borders on identity. The shell, a secret and directly experienced space, for Bachelard epitomizes the virtue of human 'space'. (Lefebvre, *Production* 121)

One comes across plenty of examples of the house as reflection of owner's identity in the novel. The space of Som's house is repeatedly constructed as a masculine one; male comradeship be it between Som and Lalli, Som and Vetter, or Som and Brij, excludes women from the imaginative and real realms of companionship and sharing. The house lacks spaces for discussions, poetry and music, the bedroom is the only space that bears the stamp of Simrit's personality with personal memorabilia. The dried violets from Kashmir, sweet peas from their garden and studio pictures of children in silver frames narrate the lives that have been shared, memories of past are evoked through both the objects and photographs of kids. The room, occupied by Simrit by day acquires a sexual character and tension with the presence of the husband at night. It is to this very space that Som invites Simrit to discuss the terms of the divorce settlement. The signifiers have acquired new meanings with the passage of time, it "looked preserved, an exhibit in a museum for visitors to look at through glass" (Sahgal, *Day* 220), it has acquired a cold and impersonal air. The room with history of intimacy is used to spell out hierarchy and ruthless authority through the exploitative "Consent Terms" that are as cruel if not more than physical violence, condemning Simrit to life-long torture for slighting Som.

While Som uses the spaces of home to place the ruthless divorce terms before his wife, he exploits the opulent aesthetics of his office for "man to man talk" with his son Brij and hangs a carrot of millions before him while the albatross of taxes is hung around Simrit. Som's smart business suit, physique and manners exude confidence; the coffee-coloured carpet, silk curtains, rosewood desk, leather chairs in teak and wooden panelled walls spell money and authority, and Brij feels that "Through those glass windows three floors up from street level one could have been anywhere, not in Delhi" (68). It is a suspended, controlled and privileged world that is untouched by the sordid realities of the world outside and below, "He and his father were on top of the world, far above the workaday mass of ordinary mortals, far above anything and anyone" (70). The emphasis on verticality recalls Lefebvre's postulations about arrogant verticality of skyscrapers that "introduces a phallic or more precisely a phallocratic element into the visual realm; the purpose of display, of this need to impress, is to convey an impression of authority to each spectator" (Lefebvre, *Production* 98).

Verticality bears the spatial expression of power, the gaze from inside of high rise building to the outside below is confident about its virility based on intersections of male authority, luxurious aesthetics, economic success and social status.

Som uses this luxurious space to place before Brij the enthralling lakhs that he would inherit, along with the exclusive and expansive masculine spaces of wealth. Brij's ambitions take on a spatial turn, turning over to his father's side he could escape the crowded shared room with his sisters, go abroad for education and be a regular at *Rotisserie* for fancy meals. The home space that he seeks to escape from is a sparsely furnished apartment in Defence Colony that Simrit moved to after separating from Som. It is a far cry from Som's luxurious house and its paraphernalia of fineries, jewellery, cars and monogrammed china. Simrit's spatial organisation does not focus on huge mirrors or expensive artefacts but a sense of order, especially a place for her books, which she considers her wealth apart from children. Her writing table is her most individual corner, where the grain of her light brown wooden desk reveals the "lovely inner structure of its tree" (Sahgal, *Day* 76), underlining the process, a sense of connection with the living, and on it lies a rose creeper gifted to her by Brij. The objects of the intensely private space bear an intrinsic and organic relationship with the living, and are not concerned with creating a spatial authority, and the sharp contrast between Som's and Simrit's spaces brings out the inequality and unfairness of "Consent Terms".

The ironically titled "Consent Terms" and the lopsided socio-economic implications of taxes through the overlapping concerns of gender, economics, space and power bothers Raj. He is obsessively concerned with Simrit's tax problems and is angry at the punishment being meted out to her for breaking the internalised patriarchal rules and feels, "She could be that rarity, a woman with a profession, an independent person living her own life. She didn't need a man for identity or status" (139). Raj's easy going and approachable personality is reflected in his house that carries an air of sunny comfort, a quiet elegance and a lived in quality with newspapers lying scattered around his reclining chair. The place is inviting rather than ceremonious; the sunny open space lends itself easily to conversation about love and attraction unlike the heavily furnished artificiality of Som's house that quashes naturalness and intimacy. It is defined by few distinctive pieces, ease of conversation and humble meals and Raj says that he does not wish for the kind of fancy set-up that Simrit had. However one needs to be cautious of his construction of the "new woman" as his proposing marriage to Simrit might subsume her once again into patriarchal fold and its accompanying gender-spatial divisions. Pankaj K. Singh in "Feminism and Nayantara Sahgal's *The Day in Shadow*

and *Rich Like Us"* derides the text for its naïve ideology and lack of strong feminist position despite coinciding with the women's liberation movement in the West. He feels that admiration of Raj as a feminist and intellectual in the novel raises questions about Simrit's liberated choice who seems to submit to male superiority and dominance, simply exchanging one for another.

Raj's notions of womanhood are echoed in Ram Krishan's ideas about fuss free housekeeping, and that it should not be woman centric in absorbing and exhausting her:

> He had never wanted a wife who laboured over a hot stove producing culinary triumphs… It had taken time for her to unlearn her ways, to undo the meticulous twenty-four house-keeping that service of a husband involved, and that passed in their society for wifehood. And Ram Krishan had rejoiced at that gradual undoing. Their home, untidy and relaxed, had been welcoming. (Sahgal, *Day* 173)

Unlike the strict codes of spaces inhabited by Som, the distinctions of public/private, formality/informality dissolve in Ram Krishan's house. His untidy house with a fused front bulb and no culinary delights to welcome guests reflects the personality of its owner who does not believe in formalities of welcome, yet the shabbiness of the house exudes warmth, its laid back comfort is inviting and is lit up with Ram's sweetness.

Even as Raj and Ram Krishan are presented as educated feminists, not seeking to confine women spatially to domestic spaces and chores, there is a danger of women idolising them for their superior knowledge, and treating them as mentors instead of equal partners. Smriti's excitement about being a participant in Raj's life rather than an observer from the sidelines needs to be viewed critically. Simrit steps out of marriage and domestic spaces, and attempts to rebuild her life, these are tentative steps towards emancipation. As she ventures into the city to carve out her identity post-divorce, the placing of the "New Woman" label on her is fraught with problems as it looks like a patriarchal projection onto her. What is significant is her steps towards building organic connection with objects and spaces around, be it with micro spaces like the book shelf or writing desk or in conceiving a book on India in terms of its texture, not a historical romance but "romantic geography" emphasising the often neglected angle of spatiality. This point towards Simrit's attempt to carve a gendered identity, though she is yet to acquire the vocabulary for it.

While a working woman is considered unusual in Sahgal's world of 1960s, in Kapur's *A Married Woman* it is acceptable, since the protagonist Astha pursues the conventional and safe job of school teaching, however problems begins to crop up when she starts pushing these boundaries, physically and ideologically.

Manju Kapur's *A Married Woman*: "Out of Place" Women

The novel roughly tracing events in Delhi from 1970s to early 1990s, is the story of school teacher Astha married to a businessman, Hemant. She becomes interested in the events surrounding Babri Masjid when she is called upon to help with the script at a theatre workshop conducted by Aijaz in her school. Following Aijaz's gruesome death and demolition of Babri Masjid, she becomes active in protest movements in the communally rife atmosphere. She quits her school job to paint full time and the focus of these paintings is on the mosque and the demonstrations that she has been part of, a pictorial journey of her occupying of public spaces and her growing political consciousness.

Moore suggests that the gender function of social space is neither given nor obvious, but is enacted through embodied practices; and in that case it can be argued that social practices can also question and re-examine the gendered spaces. The enactment of social practices comes across not only in the larger divisions of city spaces into public and private but further into geographies of everyday life-the street, market, office, kitchen and bedroom; and then of micro divisions like kitchen sink, dining table and study room. Kapur's novel questions these spatial divisions and pushes for intervention in public space by placing women protestors on street to disrupt the normative urban divisions.

Even with large number of women negotiating the contemporary city daily, the discomfort about a woman in public has not completely disappeared. The public/private division of space is couched in the narrative of "fear" to contain women to their "proper place" rather than "out of place". Fear of violence seeks to limit spatial movements of women in urban space, while the city conversely also offers spatial freedom and liberty to women through walking, travelling and occupying public space. The spatialization of fear implies organizing practices around calculations of safety and danger, these geographies of violence constrain women's spatial practices, and as Tonkiss argues, "The gendering of space becomes especially evident in this geography of women's fear of male violence is manifested as a fear of *space*" (Tonkiss 95).

A Married Woman opens with the line, “Astha was brought up properly, as befits a woman, with large supplements of fear” (Kapur, *Married* 1). Safety is the overarching metaphor in the text that is used to keep women confined to spaces, socially, mentally and imaginatively. Astha drifted into study of literature, marriage and teaching at school without much application of agency. The choice of profession is decided by her husband and approved by mother and in-laws, as it is a “safe option”, and since the school is close to home, she would not have to spend much time on the road, moreover it is a “good time pass” (47). The space of the girls’ school, dominated by female teachers and young children is perceived as a non-threatening one. Both the teachers and students largely stick to the prescribed script of the syllabus and perform within that. Feminist ideas or political voices are unheard of in the staffroom, maintaining the façade of an ordered, disciplined and apolitical space.

However these spaces of civility, decorum and order are questioned during the fifteen day theatre workshop that Aijaz Akhtar Khan holds at the school during the holidays. His style of functioning overturns the school’s notions of hierarchy and spatial organization, he does not position himself as a teacher in a superior role to be addressed as “Sir” doling out lessons to be rote learned. Instead he encourages children to address him by his first name, sits in a circle in a democratic setting, and involves the inexperienced to write the script that is worked around during rehearsals. Astha is called upon to help with the script on Babri Masjid and realizes “that controversies need places, disputes need sites, not the other way around, and the Babri Masjid was one of them” (108). It is a re-thinking about space, is space conceived in abstraction and then concretised, or do ideas (controversial as they might be) and spaces exist in dialogue?

Astha’s growing political consciousness, an opinion about “public” topics is threatening to Hemant who constantly runs her down, “Please. Keep to what you know best, the home, children, teaching. All this doesn’t suit you” (116). Hemant attempts to control her expanding mentalscapes that are first fostered through research about Babri Masjid and then later through protests and art. Wilson in *The Sphinx in the City* suggests that on one hand urbanism is defined by rationalist principles of government and regulation, and on the other hand by spaces of freedom. She visualizes the struggle between rigid order and pleasurable anarchy in gendered terms, and these tensions become apparent with Astha’s growing visibility and movement in public space.

Women's occupation of public space addresses various issues: their right and freedom to be in city, to not let safety limit their spatial explorations, to participate in marches as rightful citizens, and using protest as valid and legitimate forms for demanding change. Advices of keeping to safe zones of domesticity should not be used to cordon them off public places and topics and denying them being instruments of change in the process. Astha participates in a series of protests following the gruesome death of Aijaz and his troupe in the turbulent area of Rajpur. The orchestrated act of brutality obviously takes place with the collusion of government agencies like police, and the speeches at the demonstrations underline the violence at the hands of those in power. The sites of protests and marches are primarily Red Fort, Ram Lila ground, Constitution Club, India Gate, Prime Minister House and Rashtrapati Niwas raising issues about occupying spaces of authority by ordinary citizens and re-claiming of public spaces as rights. The spaces of demonstration are centred around Lutyen's Delhi, the imperial city of grandeur constructed by the British to showcase power and superiority. Protests at architectures of power are spatial tactics to make counter claims to that space, to re-claim that they are meant for use and occupation of public. Lefebvre highlights how struggles take place not just in space but for space, an effort to remake space. He questions, "How could one aim for power without reaching for the places where power resides?" (Lefebvre, *Production* 386). Occupation of public spaces, especially by women, who are warned to be "in place" at home is then not just a political struggle of claiming legitimate rights over space but almost a joy in trespassing.

Foucault's concept of heterotopias as "counter-sites, a kind of effectively enacted utopia" (Foucault, *Spaces* 24) is open for wider engagement with how existing spaces can be altered. Tonkiss highlights the role of practice in remaking space, whereas Foucault treats alterity as a quality of space. He makes a case for protest or demonstration as a form of heterotopia, protests disrupt the spatial story of order, and "if only temporarily-make of itself and its location an 'other space'" (Tonkiss 134). This also has parallels with Lefebvre's concept of "counter-space" which is imagined in alternative political projects and oppositional strategies.

By participating in protests to the obvious displeasure of her family, Astha exercises her agency as an individual and as a woman. Hemant, sensing a convergence between political consciousness and occupying of public space, tries to warn her off both. However it is precisely the politics, the cause that makes Astha feel a sense of solidarity with other protestors as they march down streets carrying banners and raising slogans. Bonds are forged

over resistance to oppression; these communities are not the primal ones of blood, but those of common cause and experiences. Protestors, occupying roads and other commuters on roads have opposing ideologies. The latter are annoyed when their cars crawl by as their driving space is reduced, their senses are dulled to pain and suffering, their concern is only with inconveniences caused to them. Both groups are citizens of the city, seeking their legitimate right to occupy the spaces of the road. The commuters, including Hemant, support the authority's spatial organization based on regulation, while the protestors revel in the subversive undercutting of the spatial order. The theme of Astha's first painting titled "Procession" depicts a rally, "Down the road, shouting slogans, they marched, blocking traffic in a way that Astha found most satisfying" (Kapur, *Married* 143) is a pictorial representation of Wilson's concept of tension between masculine principles of order and control and feminine ones of disorder and freedom.

After the demolition of Babri Masjid, Astha and Pipee go for a demonstration at the BJP office where they court arrest and are taken to the police station. Protestors map city space in opposition to forces of domination; it is akin to Occupy movements that underline the idea of groups protesting be it through joining of hands, marching together, experiencing police brutality or courting arrests. These movements defy hierarchical organization of city space, creating moments of rupture, that though brief, open up new and alternative possibilities about spaces. The roots of the female protestor can be traced to "special" kind of public woman, the early feminist reformer or campaigner who disrupted the spatial order of things by putting herself in the "wrong" or rather the right, i.e. public place. The early feminists recognized the necessity of literally invading spaces as a mark of resistance and to change the social relations of gender (Moore 83). Astha, the woman protestor claims her presence in public space, realizing the criticality of occupying streets and subverting normative organization of space.

Hemant's attempts to confine her to private spaces of domesticity are ineffectual, his statements seek to define morally and spatially the proper and decorous place for a woman, and are couched in concerns about safety. Hemant says, "You seem to forget that your place as a decent family woman is in the home, and not on the streets" (Kapur, *Married* 172) and questions "Who will protect you? Suppose you get raped?" (249). Even her mother in law asks, "What is the need to leave your family, and roam about like a homeless woman on the streets of some strange city?" (186) Astha responds simply "To protest" (186) to which the

elderly woman suggests other "safe" methods to be exercised from the confines of the home like writing a letter to the newspaper and advises her against getting involved in politics.

However Astha has seen through the trope and trap of safety, of it being used to restrict and restrain women spatially, and of being used as a tool to instill fear of people, situations and spaces. Respectability in the case of women links her to private space even when in public space, connecting her to domestics, home and male partner. In the Indian context, these divisions were apparent even in the nationalist struggle where men were to deal with the rough world outside and the women were entrusted as carriers of cultural identity. Partha Chatterjee in "The Nationalist Resolution of the Women's Question." critiques Indian nationalism for the reformulated public-private construction, where social space gets divided into *ghar* and *bahir*, the home and the world (238). And as the woman steps out of the house and walks down the street, neither her body nor the space she moves in is gender neutral, "street, that is can be seen as 'sexed' and 'gendered'; and not just the person who uses it" (Tonkiss 94). This gendered city, comprising of unsafe and predatory spaces was a relatively unknown entity for Astha as she was driven around in a car by Hemant. The city is appropriated by her when she travels and traverses it alone, negotiating spaces not just through everyday practices of walking, but by hiring auto rickshaws and later driving her own car, and crossing hitherto unfamiliar routes, moving beyond the safe and straight route between home and school, and unfolding new ideas and paths in the process. She even dreams and paints about women travelling together, and excitingly pillion rides with Pipee on her scooter. She traverses the length of the country, from Kanyakumari to Kashmir with Pipee, "I have travelled from P.'s house to my own via the tip of the continent, a long detour" (Kapur, *Married* 265).

Astha's political consciousness travels from public to private spaces, it permeates from road into bedroom; she is unwilling to respond to demands of Hemant's body on call, desires a car for herself and demands a place to paint, making the public/private division messy. In these porous divisions, where does one place art? Is art pursued from domestic spaces a private affair? Is it supposed to be sanitised and apolitical in its aesthetics? But Astha's paintings are about volatile and "unsafe" political subjects and spaces. In her first solo exhibition, six canvases are devoted to Babri Masjid and different forms of protest, the most evocative and powerful one is of a desolate hill with a trishul and saffron.

Astha quits the "safe" job of teaching to paint full time, she realizes that her life had transformed in two years, "The detour she had taken between home and school had now become the road she travelled" (186). Protests and its representation in art are not the bylanes for her but the main highway; painting is no longer a "hobby" but a political tool; road is not a means to reach a destination but is an end in itself, the spatial tactics of "occupation". Art is her way of making a statement about women's commitment to causes and is a visualization of presence of women at sites of protest. There is a growing realization that that women instead of containing themselves to "proper place" need to locate themselves "out of place" for creating spaces of freedom.

Kapur explores further the question of (un)rightful place of women through her novel *Home*, the story of business woman Nisha. Her spatial freedom and economic growth are curtailed with marriage and motherhood, raising questions once again about limited avenues for women in the larger spatial and economic sphere.

Manju Kapur's *Home*: Intersecting Politics of Patriarchy and Capitalism

Taking cue from the title of the novel, one can analyse Kapur's *Home* as hinging on the twin pillars of home/private and its corollary the shop/public. It is the narrative of a bania business family, Banwari Lal who migrated to Delhi from Lahore during Partition, and is the unfolding of the family saga over three generations and five decades, with focus of the story being from 1960s to 1990s. The architectural restructuring of the home and the shop in these three decades is a reflection of the larger social and spatial changes transforming the neighbourhoods and markets of Delhi respectively, and one can further analyse the impact of spatial re-divisions on the dynamics of relationships in these places. In the problematic social-spatial gender divisions, the overlapping discourse of patriarchy and economics especially places two characters on the margins, Nisha, the granddaughter, and Vicky, the grandson from the daughter's side.

Banwari Lal is forced to migrate from Lahore to Delhi with his elder son Yashpal, daughter Sunita and pregnant wife during Partition. The violent event changed the demographic profile of Delhi; roughly 9.5 lakhs people inhabited Delhi in 1947, out of which 3.3 lakh Muslims left for newly created Pakistan and 5 lakh non-Muslims came to India. In 1951, 28.4% of the population was refugees, and Gyandera Pandey writes that Delhi from 1950s to 1980s was a "Partition City". He quotes a senior intellectual whose family migrated from Lahore to Delhi in 1947, "Independence is….an abstract thing, it didn't give you

anything tangible…[partition] was in a negative sense a very tangible reality ...Whenever we met, as a family - for us, it was Partition, not Independence [that counted]..." (Pandey 2261). The migration for Banwari Lal's family is not a desired one for reasons of academic enrichment or career advancement, but a forced dislodging due to communal strife at partition, it is a tale of loss and trauma.

For Banwari Lal, Lahore is the city of imagination and memories, the "home" left behind that is evoked in periods of ecstasy and crisis, every pain is a reminder and continuum of that suffering. Resettlement in Delhi is an attempt to transport and transplant the familiar space of Lahore onto the alien one of Delhi, to rebuild brick by brick his home and to regain the status that his shop enjoyed in Anarkali bazaar in Lahore. He finds it hard to accept that they have travelled to Delhi on a one way ticket that Lahore is a "lost" city that can only be accessed through dreams/nightmares. The city of memories (Lahore) and the present city of occupation (Delhi) are mirror images, refracting and reflecting on experiences.

The family resides in Karol Bagh, which had a significant Muslim presence before partition, and in its spatial organization closely approximates the old *mohallah* system which allowed for greater social and community interaction. The *angan* was central to the architecture and conceptualization of space within the home as the ccommon area for activities like washing clothes, cutting vegetables and playing of children. The pulling down of this structure and roping in of a builder to make independent floors is a commentary on the changing interpersonal relations within the family space and in neighbourhoods. The single storey structures make way for apartments or what are termed "builder floors" in Delhi's social-architectural vocabulary. The world of commerce enters the domestic space, dismantling not just the physical structure but the accompanying familial relationships. The builder sells the idea of a "palace", a "dream" with imposing exteriors, shining glass windows, a modern kitchen, marble floors and chandeliers in all rooms, and bedrooms with attached bathrooms. It is a reflection of the remodelling of Delhi/NCR on an imagined global city like Manhattan or Singapore and its accompanying aspirations and this is reflected in the fancy names of housing enclaves like Hamilton Heights, Mayfield Garden and Platina. It is important to note the observations of women on these spatial transformations, both proposed and actual. Asha has been unhappily noticing the old structure of their house compared to those around, "For ten years she had suffered on the roof, seeing neighbouring houses torn up and rebuilt to resemble miniature palaces, with stucco, reflecting glass, arches, and tiles" (Kapur, *Home* 173). The architectural designs aim at aping the western models, in the process

they end up on losing individuality and are often an odd pastiche of borrowed patterns. Sona too is taken away by the consumerist dreams that the advertisements sell, she imagines "herself a woman in a magazine ad for kitchen appliances" (172). The promised dreams are merely about cosmetic and external changes in the built environment, with no assurances, even if false, of change in the position of women in the fancy setup. The "owners" of space, especially women, are being turned into consumers and commodities in projections of a grand lifestyle, "Urbanity has been redefined as a consumption experience" (Christopherson 413). Dreams take on concrete shape, Sona, is subsumed into this dream, she is still located in the physical coordinates of the kitchen with domestic responsibilities, the aesthetic remodelling of house/kitchen does not alter the woman's position in the urban fabric, either in private or public space.

The vocabulary of aspirations spatially shifts from the city of past, Lahore to a projected global city of future, Delhi. In Delhi's questionable "global" aspirations, the everyday living place is an important marker or as Lefebvre writes, "The making of buildings goes together with making of meaning" (Lefebvre, *Production* 88). The mini units of independent floors, of bedrooms with attached bathrooms are the chief features of the new architectural design; it eliminates the *angan* as the common area or "public" space within the house, and thus dismantles the previous spatial and familial order of the joint family system. Moreover the house attempts to impress with its flashy exteriors, the glitzy private spaces try to imitate the aesthetics of hotel receptions, marking a resultant shift in familial relationships. Sona complains about her daughter in law Pooja, "She treats the home as though it were a hotel. The minute Raju is gone, out she goes, to her parents, to her friends" (Kapur, *Home* 264). Pooja's "mobility" is a partial reflection of the changing relationship of women and spaces, being freed from chores of the kitchen, she is no longer bound to domestic spaces of the home. However the shift in agency assigned or denied to women within home and city does not bear a simple equation as the situation of Nisha explicates.

Nisha, a manglik girl, is brought up confined to private spaces of home as a child, and is only sent to the safe environs of girls' school and college. Phadke et al in *Why Loiter?* discuss the notion that women need to constantly justify their presence in public spaces, education and job are the major reasons for venturing out, and the repeated pattern of Nisha's entry into public spaces and withdrawal from it demonstrates that. College education allows her to break the confined environs of Karol Bagh and explore the city. Even as Nisha's experiences of the visual palate of the city are placed before the reader, it is important to

remind oneself that her travels are not that of a solo woman *flâneur* partaking the joys of the city but is in the company of a male chaperone, her boyfriend Suresh. The pleasures of roaming the University campus, Coffee Shop, Kamla Nagar market and the shared intimacy in the morning shows at Batra hint at the enchantments that the city holds, “The city speaks to its inhabitants, we speak our city, the city where we are, simply by living in it, by wandering through it” (Barthes 168). For Barthes, the spaces of exchange and connection in the city especially have an erotic potential for the young, and yet limiting and limited for women unless accompanied by a male companion.

Nisha is pushed back to into the private space when her affair is discovered; the family’s honour rests in protecting the daughter of the house, “Now a prisoner in her home, she played the part of the king in chess. She needed to be protected, as without her there could be no game” (Kapur, *Home* 217). Moreover as a girl of marriageable age there is an added pressure to conduct herself in a particular way and surveillance over Nisha forces her to adhere to gendered expectations. She is reluctantly allowed to enter public space once again when the desired goal of marriage does not materialise for years. She begins the foray into pubic space as a teacher in a play school and happily exchanges it for the adrenalin rush of opening her own clothes line, *Nisha’s Creations*. As a business woman Nisha steps out of the *lakshman rekha* of domestic space, she travels across the length and breadth of the city for hiring masterji, buying sewing machines, fabric, laces and buttons. Her purposeful exploration of lanes of Ajmal Khan Road, Motia Khan and Sadar Bazaar is far removed from the rosy wanderings of the campus area with her boyfriend. Her father takes pride in the exponential growth of her business and knows that her business cannot be labelled “time pass” by any stretch of imagination, and yet feels “it was his duty to see that she married. Her fulfilment lay there, no matter how successful her business was” (295). Despite a flourishing business the “goal” continues to be marriage that will put the woman back in her “proper” space, privacy of home. The theories of public/private space are further complicated by the economic discourse which separates the two, the household as site of patriarchal control and the market as site of capital control. Saraswati Raju in *Gendered Geographies* discusses the complicated picture that intersection of capital with patriarchy produces. Even as more women enter paid employment, they are trained in traditional “feminine tasks” and thus market comes to the aid of patriarchy in perpetuating gender subordination. Large number of women use home as workplace and this is “sanctioned” as it supplements family income and offers women flexibility of hours, “it does not challenge the encoding of gendered regimes of

household responsibilities; and it rationalizes women's restricted mobility, most cunningly, in the name of comfort!" (Raju 12)

For the two business women in the novel, Rupa and Nisha, despite their business acumen, their work is posited as substitute for children and marriage respectively as the conventional roles of being mother and wife have been denied to them. Significantly both primarily operate from the private space of home, work consists of traditional feminine crafts like pickle making (Rupa) and stitching (Nisha), and they depend on patriarchal support and patronage both for the initial start and for continued running of business. The women's agency is continuously undermined in handling business independently. Nisha's only condition for marriage is that she be allowed to work and this is soon viewed as an unreasonable demand. Woman's primordial function of bearing children is given primacy, she is persuaded to pass on her business to her sister in law and with it her spatial independence and is pushed back into the spaces of home as a daughter in law and mother.

Patriarchy works in insidious ways, and curtails not just the economic mobility and spatiality of the granddaughter Nisha, but also deprives Vicky, the grandson from daughter's side social and spatial freedom at home and the shop. The shop run by the family is located in the unstructured spaces of a bazaar. Frank S. Fanselow in "The Bazaar Economy or How Bizarre is the Bazaar Really?" describes various features of a bazaar like shops displaying and selling a variety of unbranded wares, goods spilling over from shops to the footpaths and a place where reputation is built on interpersonal relations and personal loyalty rather than relying on advertisements. One witnesses in the novel the change in bazaars following liberalization, almost parallel to the transformations sweeping the residential colonies.

The sari shop is a family run business with hierarchy of mini spaces within the shop, where the cash counter and displaying wares to the female clients top in importance. However Vicky is accorded no role in these spaces of control, which allow for direct customer interaction and handling of money, he is instead placed in the basement along with the assistant, literally and figuratively at the bottom of the ladder. While the paternal grandsons express dissatisfaction with their shop, in terms of its old-fashioned layout and style of functioning, he is no position to complain or make suggestions. The other grandsons make constant comparisons of their "mangy" shop with new showrooms that "were now masquerading as five-star hotels, with glass doors, smartly turned-out doormen, chandeliers, and marble interiors" (Kapur, *Home* 113) and want similar transformations in their shop. The

bazaar reflects the shifts in fashion trends, from saris to suits to western clothes draped on the mannequin in the glass window, inviting the gaze of the customer into the air conditioned showroom with its glossy interiors. The plush architectural spatiality of the home discussed above allows the inmates flights of being transported to an imagined world. The redesigned shop with glass windows displaying new styles on mannequins invites the gaze from the streets, unlike the windows of home that accord privacy to inmates while offering a glimpse of the outside/public, the shop windows invite glances from the outside. The clothes carry promises of seduction, of transporting customers to a world they aspire for.

The redesigned architectural splendour of both the home and the shop is a matter of pride for "owners" of that space and is accompanied with transforming human relations within these spaces and with the world outside, and Vicky is ousted from both. Brought to maternal grandparents' house after his mother's death, he hovers spatially between home and shop. From his marginal position, he is tossed between people, while searching for a legitimate identity and space of his own. As patriarchy's victim, he is treated no better than a servant at home, and even the economically liberated spaces of the market do not easily admit the claims from the daughter's side of the family. The interstitial space of the terrace is used by him to escape from work and for dreaming about serving beautiful girls at the shop. The rooftops in old residential colonies were generally connected, used by children to play, to dry clothes and pickles, and to arrange clandestine meetings between lovers. These are spaces of escape from the surveillance of family where activities that are not normally permitted take place, where rules are broken and codes are manipulated. It is also the space of transgression where Vicky molests his six year old cousin Nisha, the innocent game of snake and ladders is replaced by those of dark secrets.

The same roof lodges his family post marriage, the life in barsati marks his conflicting position as non/member of the family. His ideas and dreams about independent places of home and business are quashed when the house is restructured. Having lived in undefined spaces and roles within the home and the shop, Vicky realizes that even though he is blood but "the blood lines from the female side can only whisper" (110). These feeble and muffled voices, without any legitimate claims in a strongly entrenched patriarchal spatial structure are knocked off even from the fringes that they have occupied. He is pushed off from the public and private spaces within the text, underlining strongly patriarchy's spatial politics that is unfair not just to daughters but even to their children.

The occupation of spaces in no way become equitable in twenty first century, but spaces and relationships are redefined with lot more women in jobs of differing natures who live independently in the metro as represented in Kala's *Almost Single*.

Advaita Kala's *Almost Single*: Living with (Un)easy Tags

Almost Single is the story of Aisha and her friends living in Delhi in the twenty first century. In a Jane Austenian style the focus of the novel right from the beginning is on marriage and looking out for eligible bachelors. In terms of job profiles, clothes and lifestyles, the women protagonists of this novel are a far cry from those depicted in the three novels discussed above. Simrit in *A Day in Shadow* is punished by unfair taxes of the divorce settlement for slighting her husband. On the other hand Anushka in *Almost Single* plans a revenge on her estranged husband for taking away the car by wrapping it in toilet paper, and later has "break up sex" with him.

The rules of sticking to "safe" job like teaching (Astha in *A Married Woman*) or working from home (Nisha in *Home*) do not exist, Aisha works as Guest Relations Manager at a five star hotel and her profile demands traversing the city at odd hours. The protagonists are on the wrong side of twenty five, they are working professionals and stay alone in the metro, sans the safety anchor of family or husband. While marriage is still remains the axis around which the novel revolves, but the agency is more in the hands of women, they create profiles to put up on marriage portal, and explore possibilities of relationships outside the traditional setup of an arranged marriage. Misha's argument for looking for matches online is that

> No, Aisha, we have to take being single into our own hands. There is a whole world of men out there and we have to reach them! This is the way to do it! We are too cosmopolitan for the local boys, we have to expand our horizons and harness the benefits of technology. (Kala 8)

No longer dependent merely on suggestions of relatives for prospective grooms, Misha actively engages technology to widen the search geographically. Her move from Bhatinda to Delhi is not driven by career goals but a desire to seek "release from the shackles of small-town living and gidda soiree" (85). The vague reference to her hometown as "up north" is an attempt to assimilate into the metropolitan life and use it as a stepping stone to hitch a NRI match.

Metro cities by their very evolution and composition are melting pots of people from diverse places, religions, castes and class. Wirth writes about possibilities of forging new identities in urban life, "substitution of secondary for primary contacts, the weakening of bonds of kinship, and the declining social significance of the family, the disappearance of the neighbourhood, and the undermining of the traditional basis of social solidarity" (Wirth 76). The family ties are peripheral to lives of these professional women living independently in metros. Aisha's mother only make forays into the novel as the voice of Mummy Bhatia over the phone for whom, "whenever something is not right with me, its because I live in the big, bad city on my own, and did not get married when I was supposed to"(Kala 98). The city as potential site for freedom is also simultaneously derided for its corrupting influence, more so for women. Even though the girls live alone and there cannot possibly be regular monitoring by the parents, yet they face the moral policing of neighbourhood women who censure their choice of clothes, odd work timings and set of friends. Misha stays in a cul de sac, where the identical homes of gated communities creates a habitus of people of similar social and economic backgrounds staying together. This unidiversification seeks to keep plurality and its associated messiness at bay, and yet it proliferates its own sense of normative codes and behaviours.

The women in the novel attempt to puncture the gendered rules of community living and city codes in their small ways. The use of terrace of cul de sac for "havan" that is basically a campfire with "liquid diet" of booze may not exorcise the past deeds but surely raises fire alarms in the block. The liminal spaces of the terrace allow for rewriting of rules of friendships, love and festivals when their gay friends Ric and Nic on Kurva Chauth night "brought a hamper with the ultimate Moet and Chandon, Boursin cheese, shepherd's pie, garlic bread, a tossed salad and brownies, not to mention linen serviettes and real silverware. Not exactly religious fare, but then, we aren't great on religion either" (119). Kurva Chauth, traditionally a Punjabi festival, observed by married women as a day-long fast for the long life of their husbands, has spread across communities and regions through its popularisation in films, and in its modern avatar carries romantic overtones as men fast along with their wives/partners. At Misha's apartment, the girls had made contributions to participate in the communal celebration of the festival, and she feels that the religious-cultural community event makes even Mrs Mukherjee tolerant who "doesn't immediately denounce us for the alcohol-swigging, wild-dancing, gay-men-loving pyromaniacs we are on most days" (112). Dressed in traditional clothes and participation in the women centric community programme

bestows the "decent" and acceptable tag on them. Clothes, deportment and company are important criteria in labelling women as "decent" and to be considered respectable in private and public spheres. But while the other women break the fast with their husbands, Aisha fondly remembers the day as "Ric and Nic laughing with their arms thrown around each other, both glowing with the kind of love and commitment that's only born out of a deep sense of understanding and acceptance of oneself" (119) pushing the case for acceptance and approval of gay relationships in the city. This image from their gathering on the roof top is important for various reasons: terrace is often depicted in literature and films for clandestine activities and secretive meeting of lovers, here it is used to represent a gay couple, not in secrecy but revelling in their love, and moreover the non-normative behaviour undercuts the traditional festival of Karva Chauth whereby wife fasts for the husband in a socially normative manner.

While the peripheral space of the terrace is associated with transgressive activities, other sites like the coffee shops, shopping malls and private parties redefine social interactions in the contemporary city. The globalised economy woos financially independent women, positing these places as safe "public places". The glass windows of coffee shop create an impression of transparency and allow for the gaze to rove both ways, inside to outside (for the customers sitting in air conditioned comfort and insulated from weather and classes to outside who are excluded) and from outside to inside (inviting the potential customers to step in). The glass of coffee shops and the lighting creates an illusion of publicness, transparency and respectability. Identical codes of design across coffee shops and malls make them familiar habitats to negotiate and are popular among women to hang around. As Phadke et al in *Why Loiter?* write, "These spaces allow them [women] to be in 'public' in particular ways that permit visibility without compromising respectability" (45). Even as they create an impression about being respectable, it is important to remind oneself that they are not really public spaces but privatized spaces that masquerade as public spaces. In fact lot of action in novel takes place in hotels, restaurants and clubs, raising questions if women's presence in public or pseudo-public spaces has redefined their relationship with the city.

Globalization may have opened new spaces for women and provided them greater mobility, but in the Indian scenario it places tough demands on women. Images in media and advertisements place an almost unrealistic pressure of adhering to a body image, of the need to be both Indian/traditional and global/modern at the same time, to be able to carry sindoor

with the mini skirt. Sexual liberation under capitalism has turned almost all women into sexual objects, and women have been collaborators in this process of making themselves objects, of viewing themselves as being viewed. Every important event revolves around visits to the salon and to the mall for shopping, the sex appeal of the woman is tied to commodity fetishism. The novel seems constantly pulled in these dichotomous demands: the traditional/modern avatar of Kurva Chauth, sexual desires/matrimonial advert, negotiating city/limited freedom. And this comes across most clearly regarding issues of relationship and marriage. In a break from stereotypical projection of men and women and the clichéd first meeting and "love at first sight", Aisha's first meeting with Karan is where she sees him naked, the man becomes an object of desire and lust in this case. Karan even jokes about it, "Actually, I love being objectified. And thinking of all the wicked ways in which you want to have your way with me" (Kala 53). Ironically this conversation is preceded and followed by placing of matrimonial ads, and newspaper advertisements seem to be stuck in the previous century and continue to promise a fair, beautiful, slim, convent educated, homely girl. In the "marriage market", women seem to carry "best before" label, and relationships are not easier either.

The new labels among the youth overturn the gender clichés: men are PMSing; men are turning gold-diggers who quit work after marrying a rich woman: "brand name" dulhas are a coveted property; women are wearing pants in relationships; metrosexual men talk with ease about facial; and "blended relationships" make life complicated. The old notions about relationships have been thrown away or redefined and the new are yet to take shape. It raises questions about basis of relationships in urban space: is it caste, religion, sexual compatibility, vegetarianism or diet? Aisha feels that if being a vegetarianism and teetotaller could have been the criteria earlier, she wants someone based "on the food group philosophy: I want a guy who does only high protein and no carbs" (162), pointing out to changing vocabulary of the young. The text does not offer easy rosy solutions; significantly the woman does not immediately grab the proposal of the Mills and Boon type of hero, but only suggests getting to know each other, even if she is inching towards being thirty. The cover of the book carries the picture of a woman wearing sari with jeans and sneakers in the city, one can read it as fragmentation or hybridity, it points to uneasy choices and co-existence of dichotomies in urban space for women, where there are no easy or utopian spatial solutions in sight.

Conclusion

This chapter has attempted to explore the relationship between city and gender, "whether women are seen as a problem of cities, or cities as problem of women, the relationship remains fraught with difficulty" (Wilson, "The invisible *flâneur*" 63). This has been analysed under the larger rubric of demarcation of space into public and private realms that is aimed at containing women to domestic sphere. In Victorian England, the "public woman", prostitute was seen as disrupting the normative urban public space that is encoded and conceptualized as male (Pollock). However a special kind of "public woman", the feminist reformer questioned this gendered organization of space as she recognized the necessity of invading spaces and challenged spatial relations to resist the conceptual relations of gender (Moore). Women need to constantly justify their presence in public, and scholars like Wolff and Pollock claim the impossibility of a female *flâneur*. The authors of *Why Loiter?* demand spatial citizenship in the city, which includes not just the use of spaces for everyday activities but also to protest, to roam and to loiter.

The unease about presence of women in space remains a concern even with the socio-economic transformations of the city. For Simrit in Sahgal's *A Day in Shadow*, Hindu Code Bill had overturned tradition in making allowance for divorce, yet she is seen as an anomaly in the patriarchal society which recognizes a woman only in relation to her husband's name and position. Astha in Kapur's *A Married Woman* quits her safe job of teaching to interrogate the public/private demarcation of space by creating counter-spaces of protest. She claims a role in political struggles not just by occupation and disruption of public spaces but also intervention through art. Nisha's in Kapur's *Home* is forced to give up her flourishing business and spatial independence when she gets married and has children. In the complicated intersection of capital with patriarchy, gender subordination is further perpetuated (Raju). Even as Aisha and her friends in Kala's *Almost Single* live independently, the focus is still on marriage albeit with recourse to online matrimonial portals. The work profile, dress and lifestyles of women protagonists have transformed in the twenty first century, and their visibility is much higher in hotels, restaurants and coffee shops but then these are "pseudo public" spaces as opposed to functional ones of the street and bus stops.

Delhi is transforming rapidly and it is not unusual to see large number of women on the roads, in the metro and in offices. And yet, it is considered a highly unsafe city for women, and with each incident of assault or rape, the onus falls on the woman to explain her presence, purpose and dress at the time of the incident. "Pinjara Tod: Break the Hostel

Locks" started as a facebook page and gained momentum across colleges and universities in Delhi against moral policing by hostels to restrict freedom of women using the usual safety argument. *"Why Loiter?"* is not just a book but an online social media campaign that encourages women to post their pictures of partaking in the pleasures of the city, of having fun on the streets and not just commuting from one point to another. These two are examples of the intersection of virtual and real spaces in raising important gender concerns, and are some of the ways in which women are fighting for spatial gender equality, an equitable gender citizenship that allows people of all genders including LGBTQ to roam the streets freely, aimlessly, and for pleasure.

CHAPTER 3

City as Capital: Powerpolis and Politics

Thus, for whatever reason and by whatever combination of factors a ruler came to power in India, no ruler could be *seen* as Ruler of India unless and until his citadel was indeed fixed at Delhi.

(Frykenberg, "The Study of Delhi" 5)

Delhi, the capital of independent India has been the site and seat of political power for over a thousand years, though with some disruptions. R.E. Frykenberg writes that Delhi is inextricably bound up with the "political energies" of Indian civilization, the "Eternal Capital" has been wooed as a beloved by rulers, it is often referred to as "city of cities" pointing to seven capital cities that had been constructed here: Indraprastha by the Pandavas, Lal Kot by the Tomars, Siri by the Khiljis, Ferozabad and Tughlaqabad by the Tughlaqs, Shahjahanabad by the Mughals and New Delhi by the Britishers. Legend has it that whoever rules over Delhi rules over India. But another legend says that whoever builds a new city would be destroyed, but this did not deter its rulers from attempting to impose their power over the landscape, they attempted to leave a permanent mark through walled boundaries, massive forts and magnificent palaces. The ruins of almost all the previous cities are visible, "still there to remind us of the power and glory which once was and is now gone" (Frykenberg, "The Study of Delhi" 1). However the monuments as symbols of ambition from various cities, from Lal Kot to Shahjahanabad, lie in various stages of ruins and neglect, chronicling the fall of empires through the eons. The city's cartography is akin to sedimentary rocks that contains several capitals and empires built one upon the other.

The chapter discusses the design of contemporary capital cities, the planning of New Delhi and analyses fiction based in these powerscapes with focus on Nayantara Sahgal's *This Time of Morning* and *A Situation in New Delhi*, Vishwajyoti Ghosh's *Delhi Calm* and Krishan Pratap Singh's *Delhi Durbar*.

Capital Cities: Design and Form

To understand Delhi as a capital city, it is important to contextualise it in view of capital cities historically. In 1900, there were about forty nation states with capital cities and within a century the number increased to more than 200 capital cities in 2000. Peter Hall categories capital cities into seven types: multi-function capitals (combine high level national

functions e.g. London, Tokyo, Moscow and Paris); global capitals (perform super-national roles in politics and/or commercial life e.g. like London and Tokyo); political capitals (created as seats of power while other functions remained in older commercial cities, e.g. Washington and Canberra); former capitals (have lost seat of government but have historic functions, e.g. St Petersburg and Rio de Janeiro); ex-imperial capitals (former imperial cities that have lost their empires though may function as national capitals, like London and Vienna); provincial capitals (special case in federal nations where cities which once functioned as de facto capitals have lost that role, but retain some functions for their surrounding territories like Toronto, Sydney and Melbourne); and super capitals (centres for international organizations, these may or may not be national capitals, like Geneva, Rome and New York). Clearly these are over-lapping categories and several cities can be classified in more than one category; for example London is global, multi-function and ex-imperial capital, and Delhi is a multi-function and political capital. Most capital cities attract other national functions like finance, higher education and media apart from the governance role but this varies across capital cities.

Hall distinguishes capitals according to the function they perform in the national and global economy and reasons for their ascendency. The urban design of cities is linked to broader pattern of political change, imperial expansion, world wars, dissolution of empires and super-national groupings have redefined the political climate and nature of capitals in the last century. While the role of some like London has transformed from imperial capital to global capital, Imperial Delhi, which was later called New Delhi, was constructed as an imperial capital but in less than two decades was the political capital of an independent nation.

Lawrence J. Vale in *Architecture, Power and National Identity* writes that the planning and design of national capitals is inseparable from the political, economic and social forces that sited them and moulded their development. Vale in “The Urban Design of Twentieth Century Capitals” discusses the Beaux-Arts inspired designs of twentieth century capital cities, where a sense of grandeur was conveyed through wide boulevards, large neo-classical structures and monuments (17). This is well expressed in designs of Edwin Lutyens and Herbert Baker for New Delhi. Lutyens drew upon his familiarity with Paris, Versailles and Rome, and both he and Baker praised the vision of Pierre Charles L’Enfant for Washington. Lutyens wanted his design for the Viceroy Palace to be the centrepiece of the plan and his differences with Baker escalated as the grading decision failed to give it the due

visual prominence. Vale points out that unlike New Delhi of Lutyen's, Washington used grand urban design in service of democracy; its socio-spatial diagram centred itself on the workplaces of democratically elected leaders, not kings or imperial rulers (19). While Washington was dedicated to highlight institutions of democratic rule and national culture, New Delhi was built as imperial capital but within sixteen years of its inauguration, India gained independence and the landscape was appropriated by the Indian government. The President took residence at Viceroy House and the Central Vista today showcases the grandeur of the Indian republic through parades and pomp rather than the hoopla of the colonial regime. New Delhi is the capital of the world's largest democracy but has also been witness to twenty month period of suspension of civil rights under Emergency as discussed in Ghosh's *Delhi Calm*, and a conjectural military coup as depicted in K.P. Singh's *Delhi Durbar*.

The grand designs of capital cities project them as sites of display, and convey elements of national culture to visitors and locals alike. They are tourist attractions, economic magnets attracting people for employment prospects and are host to diplomatic quarters. Most contemporary capital cities have a concentration of government buildings housing administrative functioning, and these monumental structures convey a sense of power and awe. While urban design has moved a long way from axial structure and Beaux Arts, but the change is less apparent in capital cities. Few modern capitals have public spaces that are like the multi-purpose streets and plazas of older cities. Shahjahanbad, the older Mughal capital had mixed land use, with close-knit winding lanes with proximity of market, houses and places of worship. In contrast, self-consciously built modern capital cities lack the intimacy of older civic centres, they are instead characterized by automobile-oriented boulevards leading to privileged hilltop constructions. Separation is encouraged, hierarchy is desired and rank is maintained in design of capitals to underline the power structures and to ensure security. Even as democratic rule is served better with clarity of urban design expression enabling a clearly comprehensible view of key monuments, capitals continue to demonstrate hierarchy and might:

> Still, the continued grandiosity of most recent capital city urban design can only be appreciated in relation to the degree of actualized democracy each particular nation-state has achieved. Grandiosity in service of tyranny offends, but grandeur in recognition of respectful democratic partnership may legitimately inspire. (Vale, *Urban* 36)

Let us remind ourselves that New Delhi was designed to showcase the might of British empire but even the democratically elected government derives a sense of power from the grand structures that it occupies, and reiterates the same to its citizens.

The dissolution of empires, the development of new federal systems, and the formation of new super-national groupings have affected the roles of capitals as seats of government. While capitals do not automatically attract economic functions now, historically the rise of empires meant that political and economic dominion grew in parallel. These centres gave rise to need for universities, theatre, art and architecture. In fact it is difficult to say if capitals attract investments and institutions of higher learning because they are capitals, or have these institutions gone into the making of these cities, is it a linear cause and effect or a symbiotic relationship? Peter Hall writes that these functions do not necessarily go together, in states with specialized political capitals, commercial centres generally lie elsewhere (10). For instance, New York dominates the commercial, financial and entertainment worlds while Washington is the capital; in Australia, Sydney and Melbourne dominate and Canberra has acquired a cultural status lately through conscious efforts. Can we say that Delhi was the political capital and Bombay was the commercial centre? While Delhi has primarily been a political capital, it has also been fostered as a cultural centre, and is at forefront in academic institutions. The liberal economic policies have heralded a new phase in the development and perception of the city post 1990s with a boom in service industry in the National Capital Region.

Apart from political factors, technology is rapidly transforming capital cities. Informational revolution and globalization favour global cities that compete to attract top-level global activities and hosting of international sporting events. Being a world class city is a two way process; cities attract capital to become one and then attract investment since they are one. Delhi is attempting hard to project itself as a world class city while it is certainly a contender, it has a long way to go. While people migrate from all over the country to Delhi for reasons like education and jobs, it also complicates issues of citizenship when the majority of population are migrants. And also when it comes to governmental responsibilities, it is a toss between blame game and earning brownie points for Central government and State government as there are some departments like the Delhi Police which are not under state control. The tag of being the political capital then is a mixed bag for Delhi, it is everyone’s city and no one’s city.

Let us look back at the construction of New Delhi as an imperial capital to trace its journey, materially and ideologically to its present status as capital of world's largest democracy. The nationalist movement sweeping Bengal after Curzon's partitioning in 1905 was a catalyst in the decision to shift the capital from Calcutta to Delhi. The Bengal split had divided the linguistically and culturally homogeneous region and created an ethno-geographical divide between Hindus and Muslims. Apart from the troubles in Bengal, the British wanted to placate the Muslims by moving to a seat of historical Pathan and Mughal dynasties (Irving 27). Moreover geographically Delhi was strategically located with railway links to Calcutta, Bombay, Agra, Punjab, Rajputana and to summer capital Shimla.

Hardinge, Viceroy from 1910-16 was instrumental in the decision about the shift of capital, and also had strong influence in selection of the site. After the announcement of the decision at Delhi Durbar of 1911, the tussle went on for a year about the site. The main contenders were the northern and southern sides of the historic Shahjahanabad. The northern site had been developed as a cantonment area, Civil Lines, it had beautiful bungalows, had symbolic significance of holding three previous Imperial Durbars, was scenic with its proximity to river and ridge. But the committee, especially Lutyens, was keen on the southern site as it provided more flexibility, room for expansion and would prove cost effective as the former would entail greater land acquisition. Hardinge insisted on Raisina Hills as it provided a sweeping panorama and could be used to connect to important historical landmarks in the south, the river in the east and the walled city in the north. Sweeping vistas, grand avenues and axes were the basic premise of the design and the plan of connecting it to Shahjanabad was abandoned because of high cost of land acquisition in Paharganj which lay between them (Irving 56). And the city lost out on the historic opportunity to integrate the New" and the "Old" Delhi physically, in the end, the axis was aligned towards the east and became the Central Vista with the capital city extending almost equally on either side.

Lutyens and Baker conceived the Raisina complex as their "acropolis", they had differences over spacing between Government House (designed by Lutyens) and the two Secretariat buildings (designed by Baker) *vis-à-vis* their respective heights and thus their visual dominance. Lutyens wanted a pure Western classical architectural style, but had to give way to Hardinge's insistence on incorporating traditional Indian features (Irving 275-77). The Council House was a later thought in line with British notions of democratic reforms providing for self-governance. Connaught Place with its two-storey buildings and colonnaded shopping arcades was conceived by architect W.H. Nicholls and was built by R.T. Russell.

The elite commercial centre was located close to Old Delhi in north and connected to Central Vista through Queensway.

Joardar in "New Delhi: Imperial Capital to Capital of the World's Largest Democracy" describes the city:

> Lutyen's New Delhi plan spread over a vast rolling plain of about 8600 hectares. The plan included sweeping grand vistas, vast open spaces, gardens and street landscaping, monumental arches, sculptures and fountains, and majestic public buildings. (186)

Its network of diagonal avenues with circular intersections resembled the other baroque influenced Washington DC. The city was also conceived as English "garden city" in terms of sparse built form, luxurious open spaces and street landscaping. In 1931, its density was 8 persons per hectare compared to 200 per hectare in Old Delhi (King 267-8). The rigid zoning for social stratification and the hierarchical order of residential space was the underlying principle of design. It was primarily occupied by elite Europeans, and disassociated with commercial and industrial activities of its larger population. To take care of its functioning, Raisina Municipal Committee was established in 1916, was later called Imperial Delhi Municipal Committee, and eventually became New Delhi Municipal Committee in 1932.

By the time the city was officially inaugurated in February 1931, it was the twilight of the empire, within sixteen years it was the capital of a free nation. The population of Delhi grew by 10% between 1931 and 1941, and at 107% between 1941 and 1951 due to influx of five lakh refugees. But despite this Lutyens' Delhi remained unruffled except for construction of new government buildings, renaming of old ones and removal of colonial symbols like statue of George V and Britannic lions. In the meanwhile, the rest of the city changed and adapted to its new roles, the biggest challenge being rehabilitation of refuges during partition. The largest refugee camp was at Kingsway and there were others, including Karol Bagh in west and Shahdara in east. More than thirty colonies were built, including Nizamuddin, Lajpat Nagar, Kalkaji and Malviya Nagar to accommodate refugees. Delhi Development Authority (DDA) was formed in 1957, and in its first two plans lamented the historic failure of Lutyens to connect New Delhi to the old city through Paharganj. As the city expanded outwards with new construction, the core of New Delhi continued to be conserved with low-density housing. With the growing metropolis, National Capital Region Planning Board (NCRPB) prepared guidelines for National Capital Region (NCR) of Delhi comprising the

National Capital Territory (NCT) of Delhi and the surrounding districts falling over the three states of Haryana, Uttar Pradesh and Rajasthan. Delhi State had been renamed National Capital Territory of Delhi under a Parliamentary Act in 1992 without any significant change in power, but with an enlarged Legislative Assembly and a Cabinet of Ministers. The "centre" initially conceptualised for the powerful elite still maintains a low density of population as compared to the rest of the city, and the debate continues about historical conservation versus redevelopment of the capital city. Committes formed by government have given contradictory recommendations, making bungalow zone an "endangered site",

> The future, especially of Lutyens's bungalow zone, has been a contentious zone. To the elite professionals- architects, urban designers and conservationists- it is the very icon of Lutyens's garden city. The high profile politicians and officials living there also have a stake in its quality of life in the heart of a populous city. (Joardar 191)

The spaces of Lutyen's city with the President's House, Prime Minister's house, Parliament, North and South blocks are the official places from where power emanates, yet the spiralling effects spread much wider, so much so that in a capital city it is difficult to slot political spaces and discussions as everything appears to carry those hues. Rhodes Murphy describes Delhi as "the only capital in the world at once so old, so big, and so exclusively devoted to administration" (229). I want to argue that power is embedded not only in the design of the city but also in the architecture of buildings, and they perpetuate hierarchical relations. The linkages between space and power are undeniable in the city be it through the architecturally overpowering monuments dotting its skyline or the politics unfolding in high offices of government or the blatant display of proximity to power on streets of Delhi.

Since Delhi is the national capital, the political history of Delhi effectively becomes the history of India, and even as this study is not a chronological political narration of Delhi/India the major markers since independence like partition, Nehru's rule, wars with Pakistan and China, Nehru's death, Indira Gandhi's ascendency, Emergency, Indira's death, liberalisation policies and coalition governments are clearly reflected in the texts discussed and often with thinly veiled references to politicians and ministers. Sahgal's *This Time of Morning* depicts the corruption that seeps into politics once the euphoria of independence has faded. The problems sweeping across the powerscape become more pronounced in Sahgal's *A Situation in New Delhi* that is set against the effects of Naxalism in university spaces. From

violence of Naxalism to autocratic rule in Ghosh's *Delhi Calm,* things become worse with the imposition of internal emergency in 1975. And from the censorship of emergency, I turn to K.P. Singh's *Delhi Durbar*, which has been compared to Jeffrey Archer's political thrillers. Singh's works are set in the post liberalisation era of coalition governments, where money and corruption rule, and the pretence of idealism has been laid to rest once and for all.

Nayantara Sahgal's *This Time of Morning*: Fading Euphoria of Independence

Sahgal belongs to the first family of Indian politics who grew up in power corridors of Delhi and chose to keep away from active politics. Even as her novels are set in power spaces of the capital, she rarely names the official buildings or the public persona inhabiting those even though they are easily recognisable. In locating the study in spaces that impose and reiterate power, one is conscious that spatial forms cannot be privileged at the expense of temporality, especially when one is dealing with events of a political capital and the events have a bearing on larger concerns of the nation.

As mentioned above Delhi had been the site of political power for over a thousand years and that was one of the reasons for choosing it for construction of imperial capital by the British. It was built in the tradition of the Grand Manner that urban historian Spiro Kostof describes as:

> an expansive pattern of sweeping vistas, its relation to topography and prior urban arrangements is arbitrary, its effects grandiloquent…Cities designed in the Grand Manner employ conventions that make power physically manifest. They do so in the structure of urban space and the full panoply of fittings that gives it substance. (Kostof 240)

Architecture became an instrument in the hands of British authority and height was central to the concept as the buildings were meant to physically and symbolically impose above the humdrum of everyday existence of Indians. There were explicit instructions that the new Government House must not be dwarfed by the Jama Masjid or the Red Fort. The architectural layout segregated populations along class and power lines, hierarchy determined the allocation of office and residential space in the new capital, and the most powerful were located at the centre of the city and the ones lower down the order moved further away in concentric circles.

The British did not rule long from these spatial contours, and a section of nationalists in the euphoria of independence felt that the capital should be moved away from Delhi to make a clean break from the imperial rule. Nagpur and Allahabad were among the names suggested, but these were not taken that seriously as political and financial resources involved would have been huge. Kudaisya in "Capitol Landscapes" writes about the debate:

> Moreover, the temptation to use and expropriate the opulent colonial edifices of power proved too strong. The capitol complex at New Delhi provided the terra firma in which the new regime, inaugurated amidst anarchy and disorder, found itself firmly anchored. Lutyen's monumental architecture provided the stage upon which the midnight rituals of independence were enacted, imparting dignity to the ceremonies and enhancing their historic importance. Delhi's new masters seized control over the visual and architectural symbols of power almost effortlessly; they had after all, rightfully inherited the Citadel. (Kudaisya 254)

With occupying the "inherited" structures of power comes the danger of emulating the principles behind them, and the novel depicts Delhi of 1950s, a city in transition from imperial capital to capital of independent India. The imperialist agenda was clearly to spatially inscribe meanings of order onto chaotic and empty landscape. Paul Carter in *The Road to Botany Bay: An Essay in Spatial History* argues that architecture and naming in imperial history is a way of constructing one's biography spatially. Independent nation seeks its spatial ownership by renaming and reclaiming the spaces that had been named and inscribed by the colonizer; the Government House/Viceroy House, Council House and Flagstaff House (residence of the Commander in Chief of the British Army) were renamed as Rashtrapati Bhawan (President's House), Sansad Bhawan and Teen Murti Bhawan respectively. A large presidential Estate (the President is the Commander-in-Chief); the Secretariat buildings-North and South Blocks form the Central Secretariat; Central Vista/Kings Way was renamed Rajpath and Queensway as Janpath; the Hexagon with the Memorial Arch and the cenotaph (with King George V's statue) was renamed India Gate. A proposal to institute the statue of Mahatma Gandhi under the canopy faced political criticism and it still stands empty. On one hand the Indian government was in the process of re-appropriation of colonial buildings and on the other hand creating new meanings and inscriptions by way of construction of Krishi Bhwan (Ministry of Agriculture Building), Udyog Bhawan (Ministry of Industry Building), Rail Bhawan (Ministry of Railways Building), Shastri Bhawan (Ministry of Education and Culture Building), Supreme Court,

Hotel Ashok and diplomatic enclave named Chanakyapuri. Rakesh on the drive from airport to home paints a sepia picture for the readers of the frantic construction activity in Delhi in the 1950s:

> The barren countryside flanking the road from Palam to the city gave way to new houses and legations. There were big embassy buildings coming up in Chanakyapuri, said the chauffeur, and a new hotel, the Ashoka. Vijay Chowk, as they drove through it, would soon be a tangle of cyclists on their work home from work, Rakesh remembered…the evening's bustle converged on Connaught Place, a dusty haze mingling with approaching twilight. (Sahgal, *Time* 2)

In the constant references to a new areas arising from barren land, construction of Peace Institute gets debated in the novel.

The Peace Institute is to be built in the memory of Gandhi and the architect Neil Berensen apart the auditorium, library, art gallery and film section wants a sculpture whose shape and texture would invoke the antithesis of peace. He has conceived the building as lacking in drama, without domes or arches for he feels that peace is a necessity and should not be dramatized. He says, "What I've tried to do here is to define peace in everyday terms. I would like this to be a place where peace of mind and wellbeing are taken for granted as soon as one enters. It won't be a monument. It will just be a building. It should project friendliness" (193). Lefebvre in discussing monumentality argues:

> Those who concern themselves chiefly with events might be inclined to establish a chronology of decisions affecting the relations between cities and their territorial dependencies, or to study the construction of monumental buildings. Others might seek to reconstitute the rise and fall of the institutions which underwrote those monuments. (Lefebvre *Production* 38)

Neil's conception of the Peace Institute in ordinariness underlines its function rather than structure, and this is in contrast to Kalyan's idea, who feels it will be the focal point of the city, "Not only because of your excellent design and elevation and prominence of the site, but the idea it represents" (*Sahgal*, Time 128). This points not just to differing ideas about peace but notions of translating ideas into stone. Can an idea or person be valorised adequately and appropriately through a structure?

Monuments are imbued with social, cultural, historical and political meanings, and these meanings are constantly evolving and shifting in nature. Pierra Nora in *Realms of Memory* writes that the process of constructing a memorial activates national self-consciousness, it is an expression of a particular ideology or political position. The meanings of symbolic sites acquire new significations with the passage of time; while they are permanent structures in space, they are actually dynamic over time. Also with time, the event or person may recede in history and the place may become commodified, with souvenir shops taking precedence over the initial concept. The memory of Gandhi as a figure and the effect of his ideology were already changing in the 1950s. While a section of people continued to idolise Gandhi, Kalyan is critical of his methods, "He emasculated us…But for Gandhi there would have been a revolution like any other-if not with guns, then with sticks and stones, teeth and nails" (Sahgal, *Time* 84), underlining his impatience with peaceful methods. By the time of Emergency in 1975, Gandhism was hardly recognisable, "Gandhism was now a Public sector Undertaking, surviving on sarkari salt and subsidies" (Ghosh 83), it had been appropriated by the state, its ideology was lost and its clones or watered down versions were perpetuated and celebrated.

New voices with differing political ideologies in the independent nation are presented through figures associated with the Foreign Service. Krishna in "Mimetic History: Narrating India Through Foreign Policy" opines that foreign policy presupposes the availability of a given spatialization of the world in terms of us and them; it reproduces a series of antinomies critical to identity itself: us/them, domestic/foreign, self/other, inside/outside. The self/other question is further complicated in the Indian scenario that has inherited certain structures and forms from the other. In the Ministry of External Affairs, "senior officers belonged to the Indian Civil Service, the body of administrators which along with the Army, the parliamentary system and the English language, the British had bequeathed to India" (Sahgal, *Time* 2). This bequeathed class includes those who had served under the British like Arjun Mitra and those like Kailas who were part of the freedom movement, in one particular instance the former sitting over the judicial enquiry of the latter; the redefined spaces have brought the two on the same side. Both are critical of Kalyan's way of functioning that sacrifices means to the end, and Kailas feels his flourish had to be reined in as "Showmanship and temperament were for prima donnas and dictators. They were dangerous portents in anyone concerned with a country's foreign policy" (22). Kalyan, raised from a famine affected street, has energies bordering on ruthlessness, unguided by ethics or sentiment.

Kalyan, has travelled a long way spatially, from streets of Patna to United States to a being a Minister whose office window overlooks the "planned precision of New Delhi and beyond it the layer upon layer of the old city. Dilli! The cry of plunderers from the north, the seat of great vanished empires, and now the heart of this young republic" (82). Kalyan, along with Dhiraj, Hari and Somanth represents the new breed of politicians who jumped onto the bandwagon of politics after independence to avail of the power that the Citadel of Delhi accords. They pride themselves on being "doers" who deliver results, without carrying baggage of ideals, integrity and morality in their haste to deliver. At the meeting for the Peace Institute, Hari tells Kalyan:

> We are under fire for our so-called harshness. But we get results…When all the old zealots like Prakash are out of the picture, the Congress will be a political party like any other. It is now, if it will face the fact. Haloes went out with the Mahatma. (116-17).

After the goal of freedom is achieved, the challenges of administration are repeatedly voiced which require a change in strategy from freedom struggle to ruling the nation with a vision.

Freedom was the seductive narrative that enthused the nationalists and the focus shifts to concerns of nationhood and democratic governance after independence. Kailas compares it to pangs of childbirth, of a new beginning, and the need to evolve an Indian model that does not sacrifice effectiveness in pursuing a humanistic approach. Even in the early Nehruvian years of government, idealism gets a tough fight from opportunism that begins to seep into spaces of politics rapidly. These binary pulls are played out in Delhi, which as the capital has attracted characters variously from Allahabad, Patna, UK and USA, and is not "home" to any of them.

The city has witnessed demographic and emotional upheavals with partition, Delhi Muslim families who could trace back their origins in the city to several generations migrated to Pakistan and the incoming refugees still remember the "homes" left behind with nostalgia. Mrs. Narang reminisces, "It seems a lifetime ago and we have begun to think of Delhi as home but it will never be like Lahore" (39). Game in "Time, space, memory, with reference to Bachelard" argues that "Space transforms time in such a way that memory is made possible" (16). Memories are rooted spatially and temporally, remembrance is association of social activities and persons at specific locations. In response to Neil's query if Delhi is her home, Rashmi replies, "It's hardly anybody's home. It's a stopping place for most people,

diplomats, members of parliament and the armed forces. Though people are beginning to build their homes now. I suppose in another twenty years or so it will develop more of a personality" (Sahgal, *Time* 24). Delhi then in early decades of Independence seems to have no claimants, neither the migrants from across the border nor those who have shifted from small towns for opportunities have a sense of identification with the city.

Spaces acquire significance from the social life of people who inhabit those spaces, and Delhi in 1950s is still in the process of establishing a symbiotic relationship with the people who live here. The city is yet to create a sense of identity among its citizens who have migrated to the capital for the benefits it accords as they have still not forged emotional ties with its spaces. For the Foreign Service officers, their shifting coordinates and constant negotiations of spaces and cultures further problematizes notions of home. Their nostalgic remembrances are different from those of diaspora as their journeys abroad are circularly repetitive in nature; the postings abroad are impermanent and are interspersed with return to India. Their non-belongingness to places finds echoes in the city that few claim to be their own. Rakesh belongs to the first batch of IFS officers, who came from provincial backgrounds and had acquired polish on the job, "They did not belong in Delhi or any one place any more. The diplomatic corps was a nationality of its own. But they never stopped planning and plotting a Delhi posting" (5). As Rakesh returns to Delhi after nearly six years abroad, he hungrily absorbs the sights and sounds of the Palam airport; the efficiency of foreign capitals is happily exchanged for chaos of Delhi/India. Even the luggage at the conveyor belt is like the mosaic of the city/country: fibre suitcases, old leather boxes and canvas bedding rolls. He is eager to reclaim his position in the city space and keen to see the changes that are taking place all around.

Born and brought up in Allahabad, Rakesh thinks of Delhi as "home", and through his spatial movements places like Chanakyapuri, Teen Murti Bhawan, Connaught Place and Lok Sabha are portrayed for the readers. As opposed to Neil's thought that their generation seemed to live at airports and hotels, Rakesh moves beyond these liminal spaces of impermanence to create personal memories with and in spaces of Delhi. His young mind does not rubbish the traditional or completely align with the new modernity, driving through Delhi he reflects that neither individuals nor cities can command his blind loyalty:

> Delhi to which he belonged and which was his home between foreign assignments, could claim his loyalty only as long as it held to this value, for loyalty could not be

> blind. Till now Delhi had held him, for it had been through the terror of Partition and emerged unembittered. With its welter of problems it had nevertheless clung to the rule of consent. (188)

Rakesh in the novel is not a mere spectator or silent observer to changes sweeping through Delhi. From his vantage point of being an insider/outsider to the city, he reflects on operations of power at different levels: built environment, individuals and the foreign ministry. He seeks to position himself in the city as a participant, to partake in the formation of the spaces, memory and identity *vis-à-vis* Delhi as capital even as Kailas returns to his home state to take up work at grassroots once again. The problems that begin to sweep across the powerscapes of Delhi in *This Time of Morning* become more pronounced in *A Situation in New Delhi*, where official citadels are being shaken both by divergent voices within the government and forces of Naxalism from outside.

Nayantara Sahgal's *A Situation in New Delhi*: Dismantling of Structures

A Situation in New Delhi delineates the events in the city following the death of Prime Minister Shivraj, who is modelled on Jawaharlal Nehru. The event marks the end of an era of idealism that shaped the nation in the early years following independence. It heralds a shift in Indian political thought to one of immediate gains rather than working on long term goals and visions. Shivraj's closest aides, his sister Devi and friends Usman and Michael find themselves isolated and alienated in this changed atmosphere. Freedom and Gandhism are not sacred ideas any longer; and the restless youth turns to Naxalism, they believe that violence is essential for destruction of unequal social structure to pave way for an equitable society. The restlessness and discontent in the social fabric is symptomatic of the need to set new goals, and the unrest is played out within the spaces of educational institutes.

Educational institutes are potent places for both perpetuation of power and for dismantling of structures. The unrest in *A Situation in New Delhi* is played out at various levels: students, Vice Chancellor and the Education Minister. Political debates and consciousness have always been part of Delhi University ethos, one of the reasons being its location in the capital. The reaction and impact of political events and policies is more pronounced due to physical proximity to decision making bodies. In the novel, the university as a space of intelligentsia seems to be losing its foothold and is projected as under attack from both government policies from top and students' demand for appeasement from below.

Usman complains that the Vice Chancellor's job is reduced to being a policeman, of maintaining law and order rather than promoting an academic atmosphere. The attack on the VC's office and the hurling of stones in reaction to Usman's suspension of students who raped a girl on campus mirrors the downslide of society in general and university in particular. Devi is appointed Education Minister as it is seen as a "soft" ministry, pointing out the disregard of education in budget allocation and lack of policies.

The novel set in late 1960s depicts a government and society that is beginning to wear off concerns of independence and nation building. "Freedom" was the grand narrative that the older generation lived by, and the younger generation is searching for its master narrative to provide a goal and direction to their lives. The lack of vision in higher education doesn't help the situation, Usman strongly believes that opening too many universities does not nurture academic excellence, "Universities can't be scattered like birdseed. It isn't possible to deal in ideas until we become selective, and we can't do that if every job requires a degree" (Sahgal, *Situation* 22), making a distinction between doling out degrees and imparting education and creating thinking minds. Usman has straddled various roles, being part of freedom movement, university professor and then Vice Chancellor, and tries hard to comprehend the mentalscape of the youth who believe that destruction is the only way to bring in change. More than the overt violence displayed through the wreckage at his office, Usman is concerned about the latent and simmering violence among the campus students. He feels that one of the reasons for unrest is the inherently undemocratic Indian temperament, "But we are nostalgic for kings, or charismatic leaders, or some shining example that stands out from the millions, republic though we might be. Five thousand years of memories and attachments don't vanish at the sound of three syllables" (22). Being seduced by charismatic leaders in a democracy is dangerous as *Delhi Calm* and *Delhi Durbar* discuss in the later part of the chapter, as they can potentially turn into despotic rulers. In fact any ideology or leadership that has no room for plural voices is dangerous, as even the activities of Naxalism depict.

Rashid, Education Minister's son is also part of the group riding high on revolution. As part of his operations, he ransacks Dr. P.K. Jaipal's house in Old Delhi, and to create maximum effect and panic he attacks the bedroom, a personal space closely tied to memories. He had been schooled in the "cult of violence" that believed,

> To build a new world the old one had to be razed to the ground. The way to do it was through the systematic creation of panic. Panic to chaos to ruin. And out of ruin

> open revolt and power. Only then could the new social order arise. Not Utopia. Just food in the stomach and a decent wage. Utopia for the poor and the downtrodden. An Indian Utopia. (64)

He pulled off the bed sheets in the bedroom, defaced the walls, broke the bottles on the dressing table, smashed the legs of a stool and the mirror hung on the wall. He infiltrates into the private most part of the house and destroys items of personal and intimate use. While Rashid notices the peculiar placement of the mirror that reflects nothing, what he misses is that there is nothing to reflect, the house is poor, has no luxuries, lacks the feminine presence and warmth of the mother. The non-reflective mirror framed in a fancy broader emphasises the presence of absence, a lack, like the house that is impoverished though located in a good neighbourhood.

The Naxalite activities in *A Situation in New Delhi* find an echo in Dilip Simeon's *Revolution Highway* where Mission College in Delhi became the site of radicalism, "Its Social Service Society functioned as a mirror that reflected the charitable light in which well-meaning students saw themselves. Now the mirror confronted them as tinted glass, causing them to see everything in a strange new aspect" (Simeon 19). For the young students, it was an exciting age, especially 1968 where worldwide events like Vietnam War, Cultural Revolution in China, Prague Spring in Czechoslovakia, anti-war protests by Parisian students and mass strike in Europe promised a revolution. The impending apocalypse seemed promising, and some comrades justified the route of violence by not just connecting it with international events but with revolutionary nationalism of India.

Rashid too tries to explain the ideology of destruction to Priya, "The main thing to remember is that there's no room for philosophy where there's hunger and terrible inequality. There's only room for surgery to remove them, and they have to be removed, like a cancer" (Sahgal, *Situation* 72). Priya seems to have a greater intuitive understanding of the cause than Rashid's espoused ideas, and confesses that the saris that she had helped him destroy in her house were those of her dead mother, and had been carefully preserved by her father for sentimental reasons. She, who sacrifices sentimentalism, asks the powerful question that when will they do his house. Why has Rashid, son of the Education Minister, brought up in privileged background, not planned to overthrow the power structures at home? For his generation, "freedom" is no longer a sacred word and they are searching for struggles to participate in, to dismantle authority but their understanding is often limited and theoretical.

The students "fascinated by grandiose image of martyrdom, arrogant and polemical in their newly adopted personae, they progressed from delusion to paranoia in varying trajectories" (Simeon 31) and are still grappling with ideas and their execution in an increasingly disillusioned world.

Like Rashid, Usman too is restless for change, except he "hankered for a village past, for another form of government, one that didn't build up and up into a formidable state apparatus. His would build down, with maximum power to the small community. How else, in India, would exhausted resources, human and natural, ever recover their strength?" (Sahgal, *Situation* 93-94) Both Rashid and Usman are looking for alternatives to established structures and seek to create alternatives, but their methodologies differ. Apparently they are on opposite sides as VC and student when the university campus becomes the site for struggle and violence, but actually both symbolise resistance to absolute control of spaces and ideology by a top down high-handed approach.

However Rashid is unable to see that like him Devi and Usman too are afflicted with dissatisfaction; independence has brought its own set of problems, and Devi and Usman are expected to function like puppets from within the spaces of system. This is a reflection of the parents of Naxalite students, while most were indignant, some compared it to their participation in freedom struggle, and could understand the disappointment as they too felt disillusioned two decades after Independence, for what it had failed to achieve. In fact Usman feels the need for a revolution too that "has to come from the ground under your feet, your own ground" (Sahgal, *Time* 131) and wants to resign and take to the university streets if the cabinet turns down his education policies. The VC taking to streets may seem a ludicrous idea but he feels that "If the educated don't take to the streets now, in the proper way, the mob will" (131). One is reminded of the Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal taking to streets and sitting on a dharna in January 2014, it started a debate about the legitimacy of a person in office resorting to counter measures of protest. Usman wants to "make Delhi the laboratory of this experiment" (131) in taking the students along, to turn from office to grassroots, to give up the privileged centre to overturn the system. Devi hopes that even Rishad, would have an "opportunity to protest in the open, not through some frightening underground adventure" (134).

In the tussle between centre and margins, one realises that Devi's and Usman's official positions lack any real power and authority. The powerlessness of the Naxalite

movement is exposed as well, Rashid can hardly overturn the lives of the quarry workers who work on the fringes and can scarcely dream of another existence. Labelled the untouchables, underprivileged and the weaker section, to Rashid they appear "scarcely human. They lived from day to day, from hand to mouth…The outskirts of Delhi or the fringe of society or the edge of history, it was all the same thing" (110). The unchanging lives of workers, the beauty and grace of Priya's dance and the wounded body of their leader, Naren all co-exist lie within the spaces of the capital. Rishad saw stark beauty inscribed in the wounds on Naren's back, standing for revolution, struggle, broken promises and collapse of movement. They are also symbolic of unfulfilled promises of revolution, the meanings that Naren and his group sought to inscribe on society and city spaces.

Rathin in *Revolution Highway* lashes out against the singular vision of the movement that is not receptive to counter arguments,

> We preach to the converted, erase the facts and are deaf to all but our own voices. We're building a society of automatons…We've joined the bandwagon. Advertising of the masses and the Party line is the opium of the cadre. (Simeon 298)

He becomes disillusioned with the party that is not receptive to differing voices and becomes as oppressive as the ruling structures that they seek to dismantle, "We're trapped in a circle. The ruling class uses the law to disguise its illegal behaviour, and the revolutionaries use illegal behaviour to overthrow the law" (302-3). The promised revolution and change of guards does not appear a reality to him.

While the youth seeks change and wants to dismantle established power, Devi too is unhappy with the downslide in Indian politics and politicians. She feels isolated and alienated from the very party under whose umbrella she had been trained in politics. Having known no other life, the thought of leaving the familiar is frightening. She feels a sense of disconnect with the new aristocracy, she wants an exit from them and the situation. Devi feels a sense of non-belonging that is both physical and metaphorical, she realises that the spaces that she inhabits and the ideology that they ascribe to are breaking all around. On the other end of the city from the cabinet meeting plans are being made for another exit, for Naren's body to be taken to the quarry to be cremated like their own, unsung and uncelebrated and unacknowledged by death.

Plans go haywire at both macro and micro levels, and Rashid loses his life in the confused and mixed signals about the bomb explosion at Rivoli. The violence spirals into the

city, the demonstration of students is broken by policemen arriving in truckloads. The police give orders to students to vacate the college, with loudspeakers blaring, "The government has taken over the university. All students will go home" "will go home" "will go home" (Sahgal *Time* 178) repeating the injunction in a loop like a struck record. Usman resigns as VC and calls for a demonstration, he feels that the youth needs to be inspired to bring about change, and wants to look at the problems at the university not in isolation, at a micro level "but an illness of the whole society and one whose remedies would reach out to many areas outside education. He would make common cause with the students and he could not do that from a position of authority" (181). One does not know what will be the fate of his plan? Will Usman manage to raise a counter revolution not just to the corruption of the government but also to the violent Naxal uprisings?

Dissatisfaction with operations of power leads to resignations of Usman and Devi, but no answers and hopes are bestowed, a world view has ended, but another one is yet to be born. The sense of a loss and disenchantment in political spaces in *A Situation in New Delhi* deteriorates further and democracy collapses in Ghosh's *Delhi Calm.*

Vishwajyoti Ghosh's *Delhi Calm*: Autocratic Rule in Capital

Ghosh's *Delhi Calm* makes a foray into the slim corpus of writing on the Emergency, the only period of suspension of democratic rights in Indian political history. Published in 2010, more than two decades after the revocation of Emergency in 1977, it self-consciously emphasizes censorship of the time and claims to be "self censored". The invocation from Harold Pinter's *Art, Truth and Politics*, "There are no hard distinctions between what is real and unreal, nor between what is true and what is false. A thing is not necessarily either true or false; it can be both true and false" highlights the blurred distinctions between truth/falsity in periods of political crisis. The first word of the novel, "conflict" throws the reader spatially and thematically into the midst of strife, where dichotomous "calm" and "panic" are juxtaposed. "Rights suspended" and "Situation peaceful" co-exist in spaces of Delhi when Emergency is imposed on 26 June 1975, projecting it as desirable and beneficial for common man. Nayar in "Postcolonial Demo-graphics: Traumatic Realism in Vishwajyoti Ghosh's *Delhi Calm*" argues that "Rather than attribute these slogans and warnings to individuals, Ghosh makes them a part of white noise surrounding everybody and sweeping in everywhere" (131). The spaces of home no longer provide a safe haven as the character looks from the window to the tense situation outside, the external political currents threaten to

permeate the domestic environs of the house. Autocratic power has a far more pervasive and powerful presence than democratic functioning.

The declaration of Emergency at midnight is an uneasy canniness reminds one of Nehru's "Tryst with Destiny" speech: "At the stroke of the midnight hour, when the world sleeps, India will awake to life and freedom." Nehru's speech heralded the end of two hundred year old colonial rule but Indira Gandhi's declaration brings to a halt less than thirty year old democracy by choking freedom, it is the only period of suspension of democratic rights in Indian political history. Censorship in various forms like gagged people, silence in offices and checks on press are forcefully depicted through visible imagery that runs high on fear and suspicion. An eerie silence descends on the city, spaces of both formal and informal political discussion are quashed, silence engulfs the radio and the paanwala corner alike. The state suppresses thinking and speaking, the cover page of the novel depicts a deserted street with messages "Do not guess" and "Do not think". Instead of thinking and articulating citizens, the government seeks to produce robotic obedience, "The nation needs your HARD WORK! Sincerity! DISCIPLINE!" and the masked saviours carry out the tasks mechanically, hiding emotions behind a constructed smiling face.

Power is the most potent quality of architectural design in capital cities and in the case of autocratic rule its fangs spread far beyond the power corridors, autocracy's spatial impact is felt far more strongly than democratic functioning. The narrator, Vibhuti Prasad (VP) is a junior writer and believed that the move to Powerpolis could help him in bringing about change through writing, and the proverbial "My pen is my ammunition" (Ghosh 7) gains significance in writing about crisis and revolution. However when political discussions are silenced, spaces lose their verve and the potent silence speaks volumes about censorship from top and within.

The two figures of Moon and Prophet, drawn ideologically on opposite sides, are thinly disguised references to Indira Gandhi and Jayaprakash Narayan respectively. Moon has inherited political genes from her freedom fighter father who went on to become the first PM of independent India. The suave and polish are part of her political dynastic inheritance, and she is quick to learn the changed rules of the game. She is no longer the pawn that her party imagined, and seeks to occupy political spaces in new ways and declares "My father was a statesman. I am a political woman. My father was a saint. I am not" (47). As leader of INC, she changes gears in making a shift from democracy for elite to those on streets, and this is

accompanied with pro-poor policies. Her biggest success is her role in creation of Bangladesh, the act alters the political-geography of the sub-continent and effectively silences her detractors. She is projected as a powerful figure with the flag of India in one hand and Bangladeshi land in the other, marking territorial intervention, conquest and control (51). She is hailed as being indispensable and invincible with slogans like "India in Moon, Moon is India!" (54) The absolute association between land and person and their interchangeability is not a symbiotic relationship that is nurtured but one of power that seeks to control, absolutely and authoritatively.

Moon, riding high on absolute majority in 1971 elections misreads the democratic mandate as sign of invincible permanence and uses it as an opportunity to groom her son. Rulers, both monarchs and democrats, seek allusive permanency in occupation of space, be it through occupying offices of power or creating structures that leave undeniable marks on the city. While problems of shortage of essential commodities, rising prices, growing unemployment and rampant corruption spread all around, the government tries to appease with catchy slogans and action programmes like "Remove poverty" and "Twenty Point Programme".

As opposed to unbridled power at the centre and PM's populist measures, a counter movement is gathering strength in small towns and villages. The citadels of the capital city are threatened and weakened by mass mobilisation at grass roots. It raises several questions: How does one negotiate the needs of city versus village in politics? How does one balance Indian and Western thoughts and philosophies, "Secretly, Baul continued to work on the magic formula. A formula for those like him, political children of Gandhi but students of Marx" (65)? If Moonalism is about populism and dynastic rule, Prophet's form of democratic socialism seeks to defy labels, "A Marxist among Gandhians, a Gandhian among Revolutionaries, a Liberal among Marxists, a socialist in the Syndicate." (67). The call for total revolution seems like a magic formula, a solution to corruption and misgoverance, a counter move from below. Jayaprakash Narayan (JP), the hero of the 1942 "Quit India Movement" mobilised the youth in Gujarat and later Bihar against the misrule of Indira Gandhi-Sanjay Gandhi. His call gripped the students who take to the streets, an occupying of street spaces as legitimate and powerful form of protest. The highlighting of mike and loudspeakers in the novel points to importance of power of speech, words are meant to rouse and raise people from complacency.

Massive rallies were being organized all over the country and the city seemed poised on radical transformation. The historic rally held at Ram Lila Grounds on 25 June 1975 witnessed swelling crowds even in sweltering heat and JP "thunderously recited a wonderfully evocative poetry by Ramdhari Singh 'Dinkar', 'Singhasan Khaali Karo Ke Janta Aati Hai" (Shukla), but the huge numbers create fear and insecurities in the government about mass uprising. Ghurye in *India Recreates Democracy* writes about the plans to derail JP's Delhi visit, "JP was to emplane for Delhi on June 22 but the Indian Airlines plane, which he was to have got off the Dum Dum airport at 10:30 a.m., cancelled the flight due to 'bad weather'" (Ghurye 219). The contrast between spatial impact of rallies of Indira and JP is significant; the former signify blatant power and disregard of rules and the latter symbolise a counter movement and structure. Indira Gandhi had been charged with election irregularities during the 1971 elections, the "Great Indian Performance that is repeated every 5 years" (Ghosh 111). The campaigns placed her on a high rostrum, using spatial elevation to advantage in the great Indian theatre. The court case found her guilty of two out of fourteen charges but riding high on arrogant power, she attempts even grander occupation and conquest of space using the official machinery to ensure swelling crowds; "All government offices were advised to send their staff to the rally, where attendance would be marked" (115). It is a theatre of the absurd of a different complexion, where one starts feeding onto one's enlarged and projected image, and the PM refuses to resign in face of court cases. The opposition parties stirred up the agitation, at the rally held at Ramlila Grounds JP talked about the grave situation, and the government aims to sabotage the movement by declaring Emergency.

While the riots of partition had torn the city of Delhi earlier, the government had made efforts to contain the violence and its perpetuators. In the case of Emergency, the state itself is the perpetuator of suppressions where ban on speech is preceded by advice to not think. The PM in her address assures "the nation of stability, progress and confidence" (19), even as structures that provide stability to the common citizens are shaken. The three primary characters, Vibhuti Prasad (VP), Parvez Alam and Vivek (Master) who have been influenced by Prophet, are caught in the uneasy authoritarian spaces of Delhi. Capital cities generally attract people as they offer educational and career opportunities, but here one is confronted with a city under duress, a Powerpolis with its murky silhouettes. Mridula Chari notes that "A repeated motif is of fractured panels that disturb the tranquillity of the novel's monochromatic sepia wash and belie the nostalgia one tends to associate with such colours" (6).

Indira Gandhi declared Emergency to save the nation from path of chaos and anarchy, but unleashed more disquieting times, her anxieties and insecurities unleashed the events that led to midnight shutting down of press offices. Sahgal in *Indira Gandhi's Emergence and Style* writes, "The essence of the Emergency was the pinnacle-power-a position above the multitude, unaccountable and unchallengeable-it sought to guarantee the Prime Minister. This was accomplished by three amendments to the Constitution and an Act of Parliament" (28). Power was cut off to Bahadur Shah Zafar Marg from where major newspapers are published on night of 25 June 1975. All newspapers were ordered to be censor-cleared by the Press Information Bureau before printing.

The spaces are redefined and realigned completely with the declaration of Emergency, and many opposition leaders including Morarji Desai and Jayaprakash Narayan were arrested. The city that had witnessed swelling crowds at Ram Lila Ground on 25 June 1975 falls into "disciplined" silence and *The Indian Express* edition two days later with blank editorial page and Tagore's poem "Let My Country Awake" on front page spoke volumes about silences imposed on democratic spaces. Silence descends on buses, offices and at the paanwalla, the quintessential Indian space of gossip and news exchange. And all this was brought about while there had been no threat assessment by the Home Ministry, there were no reports of internal disturbance from those in charge of law-and-order, there was no violence worth mentioning, and no Cabinet meeting. The declaration of emergency reduced the democracy to personal fiefdom with the stroke of President's signature around mid-night. The Emergency froze things, "In shock, not awe. Even the mosquitoes behaved themselves" (Ghosh 118). The "nothing to panic about" advisory sits oddly with sudden and unexplained arrests of people under MISA (Maintenance of Internal Security Act).

With more than 255 journalists under arrest, the obituary of Democracy is being written, "D'ocracy.D.E.M. beloved husband of T.Ruth, loving father of L.I.Bertie, brother of Faith, Hope and justice, expired on 26th June 1975" (135). The above lines in the novel are taken from a 22 words obit that came out among the classified ads in *The Times of India* on 28 June 1975, three days after the declaration of Emergency. In fact Ghosh's narrative is interspersed throughout with newspaper items, interweaving journalism and fiction. Freedom and Liberty were extinguished overnight as Fundamental Rights under Article 14 (Equality before Law), Article 21 (Protection of Life and Personal Liberty) and several clauses of Article 22 (Protection against detentions) were suspended. The Emergency after reducing the legislature and executive to impotency, targeted the courts.

The Emergency was propagated as a medicine for the disease that the country had developed, and what is shocking is the smooth and unquestioning acceptance of it; the silence descends all too soon and easily. The media during the Emergency, barring a few notable exceptions, did not add prove to be a reliable bulwark of democracy. It also faltered and crumbled like the general section of society, the censorship imposed from top was quickly internalised and few underground magazines disguised critiques as satires like VP's articles on "Livestock problems in India" about millions of calm and submissive sheep (145) or Harivansh Rai Bachchan's "Kaliyug ka chorus" about Gandhi's three monkeys who have plugged their ears, shut their eyes and gagged their mouths about the censorship and corruption around (147). When newspapers are closely monitored, underground pamphlets and tea stalls become important counter sources of information, the official diktat is "Avoid Loose Rumours" and these alternative heterotopic spaces allow people to "talk loudly, in whispers. Real news!" (217).

With suspension of rights and muffling of press, it is a nation and its subjects held to ransom by arrogant and unrestrained power of state. Civil Rights stalwart Rajni Kothari describes the period:

> It was a state off-limits, a government hijacked the whole edifice of the state, a ruling party and leader who in effect treated the state as their personal estate. It was the imposition of a highly concentrated apparatus of power on a fundamentally federal society and the turning over of this centralised apparatus for personal survival and family aggrandisement. It was one big swoop overtaking the whole country spreading a psychosis of fear and terror with the new upstarts (Sanjay and all) storming away through whatever came their way, pulling it all down and calling boo to it all. (Otd. in Mandhani)

All the democratic institutions crumbled and even the constitution was treated like private property by the government in carrying out the various amendments. As Sonali remarks sarcastically in Sahgal's *Rich Like Us*, "Madam had in good faith thought it her constitutional duty to override the constitution" (94). There was a pervasive sense of helplessness and abject fear in the socio-political arena, which left nobody untouched.

Even emotions are also to be regulated, "Today your smiling hours are 2-4 p.m. Remember to smile and remember that discipline makes a nation great!" (Ghosh 120) The control over spaces and people is absolute. Schools, places of education that can help in

perpetuation of ideas are used as instruments in creation of larger than life image of Mother Moon. The essay competitions in school do not seek to encourage fresh ideas, instead essay is dictated by the teacher where the students are to be judged on handwriting and spellings, marking a clear shift in jingoistic agenda. Strong police pickets were placed around colleges and university, Sinha in *Emergency in Perspective: Reprieve and Challenge* writes that the government "started a process of brainwashing not only through normal propaganda channels, but also by introducing political issues in the courses of study and examination papers of school children, who were expected to write in support of Mrs Gandhi and the Emergency" (51). Moreover the premises of school instead of knowledge enhancement is used for carrying out the state's agenda of sterilisation that clamps down citizen's rights over their bodies, while positing it as voluntary. The sterlisation programme is a tool of terror and the novel offers menacing images of the blade and the syringe.

Power spreads its impact to spaces of civil occupation and to common man's life. Nayar treats *Delhi Calm* as an example of what Paul Williams and James Lyons term "demo-graphics" in establishing link between graphic novel and democracy/politics, and here absolute power asserts its spatial control over spaces of everyday lives, the state and the everyday intersect uneasily, the extreme enters the everyday life of people. The situation hits the poor more starkly, for them the sterilisation programme offers "Certificate of Responsible Indian", and dalda and transistor as attractive rewards. The young prince is the master mind behind these schemes and unleashes further plans for the city, "This club would operate out of a grand lab called Delhi. That's what capitals are for. They must ever be centres of vision, energy and action. They should be beautiful, smart and progressive. Please get rid of those slums immediately!" (Ghosh 157). This notion is no different from colonial rulers who approach land as blank spaces to be inscribed with their meanings and vision. Thinking about such terrible times, Sonali in *Rich Like Us* understands what her father meant when he warned her "history would now be revised and re-written. All dictators meddle with history" (175).

The vision or the lack of it by the autocrats wants the Delhi "lab" to be turned into Paris, the ridiculous imitation idea leaves people bewildered. Bulldozers raze buildings and dwellings and a hapless woman cries out "Welcome to the city of Paris!" while the transistor doled out during the sterilisation drive uncaringly plays cricket commentary (Ghosh 194), a symbol of the government's apathy to people's problems. The government upholds the contrary view of participative citizenship: "Unconventional methods were used which caught

the imagination of the people and the results were most gratifying, people were kept informed and associated with the progress of the scheme right from the beginning" (195). Things lie strewn all around as houses are destroyed and a destitute man cries out, "I hereby swear my sterilised allegiance to this land in French" (196). The poor not only lost their homes with the bulldozing of jhuggis, but were shocked with the sterilisation drive as they had only known of castration of animals, and sterilisation humiliatingly while giving reward of radio reduced them to level of animals, "With forced sterilisation the difference between dictatorship and democracy, between servitude and freedom became tangible" (Sinha 70). The control over spaces is absolute: bodyscapes of people through castration, speech through press censorship, and cityscape through razing of houses.

The Emergency eclipsed the early years of democracy, innumerable arrests over petty issues and blatant display of power by police became the norm rather than exception. Dissent and democracy was suppressed within the Congress party as well, Emergency saw "the Parliament emasculated, made utterly ineffective and reduced to a body of yes-persons" (Chandra 160). The government attempts to project positive messages carried on photos of Moon and Prince like "Emergency brought progress to benefit the common man and woman of India" and "Today I can see a dynamic youth ready to take charge" but these messages are undercut with counteractive subtext in bubbles and the response to the above is "Be populist" and "Give a voice" respectively (177). Smell of fear pervades the Emergency, and while the lower classes recognised it well and bore the brunt of it, it was "an unknown odour for the upper and middle classes, most of whom had no perception of the midnight knock and had never considered the remote possibility of being whisked off, unknown and unsung, to some dark cell" (Laiq 189). For the middle classes, it represented an interim measure, they never expected it to last that long, nobody thought that the PM would not only cling desperately to spaces of power but also prepare for dynastic inheritance in future.

The spaces do not recover and reclaim rights immediately on uplifting of Emergency on January 18, 1977. Normalcy begins to make a slow comeback in city life, masks are taken off, telephone lines are restored and there is return to real news. However the atmosphere of unsure times does not disappear, "Slowly, let the silence in the buses convert to whispers, careful but free. Let democracy appear democratic. Let the windows of our homes open again to bring in the voices, but not shouts of protest" (228). The city had been held ransom by a family upstaging the play of democracy and exposed its shortcomings, "Democracy in India

is only a top dressing on an Indian soil which is essentially undemocratic" (233) where hierarchies of class and caste are deeply entrenched.

The nation forgets too easily the autocratic rule during Emergency, its lessons seem to have receded into the background, and a long silence hangs over it and other periods of crisis that followed, "Welcome to New Delhi. Do not talk about: 1. Emergency 2) '84 Delhi riots, 3) Babri demolition, 4) Gujarat Riots….Have a pleasant stay" (246). Against the backdrop of historical monuments, commercial advertisements and traffic, a voice calls out, "Do you know who I am?" and a retort is heard "First go and find out who I am", it underlines power and display of it in the capital city, not just in power corridors but on streets.

While *Delhi Calm* depicts the aberration of Emergency when autocratic power, disassociated from integrity takes over the city spaces, by the time Indian political history moves to coalition government in Singh's *Delhi Durbar*, the era of ethics and ideals has been put to rest and there is not even a lament about it in post-liberalisation Delhi.

Krishan Pratap Singh's *Delhi Durbar*: Coalition Politics in Post Liberalization Era

Delhi Durbar is the second novel in the trilogy titled "The Raisina Series", the first being *Young Turks* and the last one *The War Ministry*. It is thrilling novel set in the heart of Lutyens' Delhi unravelling the complex web of connections between politicians, media, businessmen and power brokers. The twist in the usual Indian drama of corruption, scandal and sleaze comes when the President (till recently the Vice President and Army Chief before that) threatens to establish military rule to usurp the power of the Prime Minister and making the Presidential Estate the controlling authority. The crisis played out between Rashtrapati Bhawan and South Block, and the ugly scenes in the Parliament brings all the players of power corridors under scanner, including the middle men. Located in architectonics of Delhi in post-liberalization era, the novel explores the changing dynamics of architecture and power, spaces and ideology, politics and economy as majoritarian governments give way to coalition partners in the Indian political system. Shrawan K. Singh in "Coalition Government in India: Emerging Trends" opines that coalition politics is a "game of selfish, opportunist, power hungry and unscrupulous politicians who had to look after nothing but their personal interests" (53).

The political transformations are narrated through the perspective of Jasjit Singh Sidhu, who returns to Delhi after his stint with the Dubai branch of a Swiss bank where Indian politicians were among his ultra-rich clients, establishing his links with Indian seat of

power, as "in a hard-to-miss historical irony, the money increasingly found its way back into India disguised as welcome foreign investment" (Singh *Durbar* viii). The circuitous routing of money parallels the serpentine functioning of politics, with middle men forming a crucial link. The middle men, the king makers, men in shadows, men handling the "dirty jobs" occupy liminal spaces in the power corridors. They are the puppeteers behind the curtain, managing things from the periphery for the smooth functioning of power at the centre. They operate from the Foucauldian heterotopic sites that subvert, twist and bend rules, in this case in formulating a neo political-economic nexus. The spaces demand a code of non-questioning secrecy and locking of one's scruples, these are spaces that are instrumental in wealth-creation and its safeguard. Holding secrets of huge wealth, makes it a position of trust but also unsafe as one can be knocked off when is one loses trust or one's value, making the custodians of wealth a more disposal commodity than money. These slippery places are defined by fifty shades of grey, and are a far cry from the black and white world of morality. Jasjit's father also inhabited the interstitial spaces, of the one between the worlds of politicians and bureaucrats; and operated in the morally ambiguous ground from under the garb of innocuous official positions.

Jasjit, seems his fitting successor and equates his services as "not dissimilar to being a whore in an expensive suit" (ix). While the society is aware of the whore's trade, it willingly turns a blind eye to her functioning as long it is in the dark shadowy hours and places. It is the public occupation of space by the sexualized body of the prostitute, the "public woman" that makes the society uncomfortable and carries a moral censure (Nead, *Alleys*). The society has a similar discomfort with the middle-men of politics, as their work lacks defined work profiles and designations. However the undefined spaces are essential for the performance of their tasks, Jasjit realizes the pitfalls of stepping out of shadows which is the rightful place for king makers. With his life under spotlight, and actions under scrutiny feeding voyeuristic consumption, he loses the essential qualifications of being a power broker.

After having spent long years in United States and Dubai, Jasjit is confronted by a Delhi that has not only transformed materially but has changed the rules of power game. The attempt and pretense of upholding Nehruvian ideals has been given up, economic liberalisation is firmly entrenched, majority governments have given way to coalition ones, dynastic rule has been redefined in politics, and the profile of politicians has undergone a sea change. The current breed of politicians, are albeit still dressed in kurta pyjama but drive swanky cars, have dollars stacked away in Swiss bank, and are located at the cusp of

corruption and criminality. After the sanitized aesthetics and organized efficiency of United States and Dubai, he is happy to be “a wheel-dealer in the capital of sleaze, corruption and hypocrisy” (Singh, *Durbar* xii). The place aspires to be a world class city though it is “a city and country that lives in many different centuries at once and those used to the certainties and niceties of modernity” (3) find it tough to face its chaos. The “Darwinian streets of Delhi where only the largest and the most brutal survived” (26) sucks in people with its promises of power, aspirations, fame and money.

As a capital, Delhi is intoxicated from the potent cocktail of power and glamour, Jasjit locates himself as the gatekeeper of the potent power spaces, while as a banker he was the guardian of money, now he is entrusted with keys to the power corridors. Ideologically a gatekeeper is always an outsider, his role is to guard the wealth inside, but Jasjit occupies a fluid insider/outsider position. When he got married to Neena, daughter of the then Army Chief Dayal, he thought it was befitting as “we all belonged to the same caste. We were marrying, in a way, within the power caste of Lutyens’ Delhi” (16) but Dayal is contemptuous of Sidhu’s Machiavellian ways. Dayal has traditionalist ideas of power, rooted in class and old money, as opposed to contemporary ones of new money and caste politics. He has an inherent superiority about blue blood, and is dismissive of Sidhu’s moneyed position, Jasjit in turn has a poor opinion of politicians from the “cow belt”, and the same crop of politicians seek to dismantle this hierarchy by introducing reservation in the army. The caste angle is shown to be messy and complicated and yet deeply seeped in contemporary Indian politics, as it is believed to open doors to exclusive spaces and positions, and yet reservation is far from inclusive in its implementation and affirmative action. Amit Prakash in “Coalition Politics in Indian Reality” discusses the parallel trends of coalition governments and rise of caste politics as allies are drawn on ethno-religious-caste identities, it is “resurgence of newly empowered social groups and realignment and reconfiguration of caste” (29).

Rather than inclusivity, Delhi underlines exclusivity in social relationships and design of the city, it was built for occupation by white British rulers, and even post-independence the most exclusive spaces of the city are occupied by those in the highest offices. In fact even membership to clubs in the city is as much an act of spatial exclusion as inclusion, and defines one’s position in political-social-economic ladder. Sanjay, PM’s political aide and member of Habitat Centre strongly feels the denial:

> Government servants and businessmen would kow-tow to him like ass-kissing supplicants when they needed their work done but making him a member of their clubs-Delhi Golf Club, Gymkhana and the India International Centre being the Capital's most exclusive triumvirate-was something they couldn't stomach. Class prejudice was alive and well among my breathen-i.e. Delhi's pompous elite. (Singh, *Durbar* 283)

Burning ambition fuels people in the political capital, not just to be members of exclusive clubs but to occupy high posts, and there is a price tag attached to everything. Shitij feels he has the "qualifications" to be the President of the Indian Cricket Board, "To get elected you need political clout and money; I have both in spades" (31). This is a clear reference to BCCI (Board of Control for Cricket in India) which holds a powerful sway as it has monopoly rights cricket by Indian team. Chandrahas Choudhury in "The Cutthroat Politics of Indian Cricket" writes that even though in absolute terms its annual profits are smaller than other corporations but "its business profile is equal to those of major Indian companies—Reliance Industries, Infosys, Tata". Moreover the sense of power makes it in some ways as irresistible as politics, and with the backing of the PM, arm twisting, muscle power, political favour and suitcases of money, the deal is struck in favour of Shitij being elected the President. Manipulations, persuasion and coercion are employed in Jasjit's first assignment in Lutyens' Delhi and his success establishes his lineage in the shadowed world of power-makers where the lines are blurring between politics and criminals.

While Jasjit's location is on the periphery, his estranged wife Neena, Vice President's daughter occupies the most exclusive address in the city, the Rastrapti Bhawan. While the VP wants to make his temporary lodging permanent by stepping up the post, his daughter Neena wants to escape the place and its "the tight security for a night and feel like a normal human being again" (43). The power structures are a double bind, making it nearly impossible for the VP's daughter to walk down the roads of Janpath like a commoner, and admits to "going crazy in this regal isolation" (42). Vice President Dayal on the other hand seeks spatial ownership over the Presidential estate and office, and not being a mere ceremonial VP whose job entails attending boring, unofficial functions. Right from making jawans chase balls during golf to the three Chiefs of Armed Forces reporting to him twice a week and surveillance equipment being installed at the Presidential estate, it is about control over space and power offices, so much so that dictatorship does not seen an impossibility.

The conjecture about an impending military coup connects the events thematically with the Emergency that has been discussed above with reference to Ghosh's *Delhi Calm*. Spatially and ideologically, both emergency and coup are associated with absolute and complete ownership of space, of silencing of dissent, of manipulation and censorship of media in projecting it as a desirable situation. A struggle over official structures of power is played out between the Rashtrapati Bhawan and South Block, and the unnamable "military coup" is heard in Delhi circles. Is it time for a new "Delhi Durbar", for a shift to military rule? The title of the novel clearly evokes the three durbars held under the British government in 1877, 1903 and 1911, and the last one is significant where the announcement was made by King George V for building of a new imperial capital, and this citadel inherited by Indian democracy is the site of conflict in the novel, and there is danger of it being turned into a military headquarter.

The cover page of the book has a watermark of the iconic Rashtrapati Bhawan with a hand holding three thousand rupee notes (which have since been discontinued after demonetization in November 2016). The material forces of liberal economy have redefined spaces of power in the capital, at times overtly and at other times covertly through parallel or unofficial structures. Mohan Patel, head of Empire Oil explains the game plan of Dayal taking over the country's highest constitutional post following the resignation of the President. Seated at Chambers Club of Taj Mansingh Hotel, again one of those exclusive places in the city, Patel surveys the unobstructed view from India Gate to Raisina Hills, and shockingly announces, "So, the other day I went for a walk and on the way home I decided to buy myself a President" (119) as the industrialists had been unhappy with the government. Jasjit is outraged, "So you bunch of rich fuckers basically bought and sold India's democracy without a moment's thought but your own bottomline? Bravo, bahut accha" (122). Economic liberalization mocks the democratic procedures by making chairs of authority saleable; the commodification of spaces of power reduces everything to financial transactions. Harsh Kapoor in "India: Big Business Taking Over Will be Undoing of Democracy" discusses "capitalist Disneyland" that India has become post liberalization and in the era of coalition governments, "crony capitalism version 2 has meant industrialists have entered parliament and dictate policy from the inside…big private players have used widespread networks of lobbyists to influence the selection of ministers in governments and the choosing of pliant bureaucrats". Kapoor's warnings about worse to come takes concrete shape in the industrialists "buying" the President.

After liberalization, the role of economics controlling politics becomes pronounced. Corruption and partisan politics are deep rooted as the politicians want to maximize on the time in power, as uncertainties loom large when multiple parties form a coalition government. Money rules blatantly in official seats of power, and the unofficial/parallel spaces provide them support. Jasjit is exposed to the PM's booty lodged in "one of the many border villages of South Delhi, where the stakeholders of power live like modern-day nobility, in sprawling houses that have nothing whatsoever to do with farming" (Singh, *Durbar* 101). It is at one such illegally constructed farmhouse on the periphery of the city that the PM held durbar with his key political figures. The place had bundles of money stacked from top to bottom, "Veritable skyscrapers of notes of all possible denominators! A shrine for the devootes of capitalism!" (103). Even the banker, dealing in millions is awe struck by the sight of the party's treasury that exudes the effect of incalculable wealth, the "musty yet exhilarating smell pervading the entire space" (104) and overwhelms the senses at all levels. The unholy nexus between politics and economics seems to acquire a material shape in the form of this display, a bond that is far from weakening or breaking as is repeatedly demonstrated.

The novel by representing spaces of power in the capital city depicts and critiques the contemporary political events; the possibilities of Presidential rule or military rule highlight the growing dissatisfaction with democratic structures and also the complacent attitude towards it:

> We Indians related authoritarian rule to countries like Pakistan, Nepal and Bangladesh; less than civilized places where true democracy had failed to take root. We believed we were much too evolved and complex a nation to fall prey to a despot; the Emergency was an aberration, we maintained, and we had learnt our lesson. Now another myth about our much vaunted democracy was on the brink. (205)

The novel offers a critical commentary on parliamentary/presidential forms of government, and how it impinges and affects the spaces that house these offices. The common public discusses the coup not as a dreaded event but a welcome move as the middle class craved the discipline and order of military rule that could steer the way to infrastructural improvements and economic boom. The same middle class did not seem to protest loudly even during the Emergency.

The PM outlines a plan to counteract the coup that is being planned at Rastrapati Bhawan by undercutting the erstwhile General, now President's strength, the army. His idea is to introduce reservation in the army and knows no party can afford to ignore the numerical strength of the backward classes. The move though largely welcomed leads to ugly scenes of violence as members on opposite sides of the debate clash, where the "classic amphitheatre design of the Lok Sabha gave, in a farcical way, a gladiatorial feel to the combat" (229), making a mockery of the spaces of parliament and exposing its guardians as goons.

While the spaces of the Parliament are demeaned, those of Rashtrapati Bhawan are redefined through the New Year bash that Jasjit organizes when the President is away, "The oldies would be barred entrance and the rest of us, young turks, would go absolutely haywire" (236). The press is divided in its views, while the younger journalists and the tabloid media praise the "grand show" (243), the more uptight editors blame Jasjit and Neera for "desecrating the Rashtrapati Bhawan" (243). It is a reappropriation of the places that have been above reproach by the young turks and for the viewing public "extensive video coverage and exclusive pictures from a star-studed bash at the Rashtrapati Bhawan was something novel and intriguing. In this new India of ours, style almost always trumped over substance" (243). It is not merely the taking over by a younger political generation but a moving away from austerity of earlier years, and willingly feeding the private lives of public persona to the voyeuristic public.

In the crisis that is played out between the PMO and the President, one witnesses how people who hold offices have changed, and none of the players come away unscathed by the events including those occupying spaces of officialdom like the Prime Minister and the President, and those occupying spaces of shadows, that is the king makers like Jasjit. In the free market, all spaces and offices are attached with price tags, entering and exiting the power corridors carries a tangible value, be it buying of Presidents or opting out of power brokers. While materialism has never been absent from power positions, but the blatant brazenness is new, attaching even greater significance to the interstitial spaces of power brokers where deals are struck. Nobody understands this better than the narrator Jasjit when he declines joining politics officially as he knows that the "real decisions are made-in the shadows. It is the shadows that provide my natural habitat" (290).

The novel depicts the impact of neoliberalism shift in economic policy since 1991 where two major trends are evident. One, the rise in the clout of the capitalist class and, two,

the rise of politics of identity and ethnicity, and the dangerous consequences of both to democratic functioning are played put in the spaces of the text.

Conclusion

Delhi is almost synonymous with power, and this relates not just to it being the national capital, but being the seat and site of powerful empires over the centuries, it has been referred to as the "eternal capital". "Seven cities of Delhi" is another label where historians count empire-cities that have been established over the centuries from Indraprastha to Lal Kot to Shajahanabad to New Delhi, though some have taken the count upto ten. Its history is then inextricably connected to empires and authority and takes a visual form in terms of its magnificent architecture which includes the towering ruins of Tughlaqabad and the decline of Mughal city, Shahjahanabad. The Mughal city was completed in 1648 A.D. and has been in occupation since then, despite the brutalities afflicted on it following the revolt of 857. The British imperial city, New Delhi is of special interest as Indian leadership continues to rule from here. It was built to showcase the strength and might of the British Empire, was inspired by the design of Washington DC but as Vale points out "Grandiosity in service of tyranny offends, but grandeur in recognition of respectful democratic partnership may legitimately inspire" (*Urban* 36). Its architecture was built on principles of hierarchy and exclusion, on gaining independence, Indian leadership "inherited" this acropolis of Lutyens and even the democratically elected government derives a sense of power from the grand structures that it occupies, and reiterates the same to its citizens.

Even though India prides itself on being the largest democracy in the world which other than the period of Emergency has not witnessed any cracks in the system, yet political history as reflected in the novels discussed above depict the minor and major fissures, where we have been close to toppling of the system. The transition from struggle for independence to administration of nation and formulating policies was not easy as Sahgal's *This Time of Morning* depicts. The euphoria of independence had begun to wane and there was a growing disillusionment and disenchantment in the late sixties and early seventies as seen in Sahagl's *A Situation in New Delhi*. The youth were searching for their grand narratives to find a role in nation building, and took recourse to breaking of existing political and social structures through the route of Naxalite violence. While Naxalism declined in the city by early seventies, what did not wane was the dissatisfaction with the corruption ridden government, and Jayprakash Narayan's call for "Total Revolution" in the mid-1970s mobilized people.

The government felt threatened and declared Emergency, and the freedom of citizens was curtailed, the overwhelming impact as depicted in Ghosh's *Delhi Calm* is of silencing of voices, right from buses to press to paanwala corner. The government tries to assert complete spatial authority, not only over city spaces but over bodyscapes of people through the sterlisation programme. K.P. Singh's *Delhi Durbar* reminds us that Emergency is not an aberration in Delhi history, it is a possibility that is ever lurking, and the reasons can include desire for absolute control through a military coup or the capitalists "buying" the highest offices and planting dummy leaders.

For a political capital and its powers to function in democracy, it needs authority to implement policies, but what is also essential is the presence of counter checks, be it through opposition, the fourth estate or citizens protesting. When these collapse, one is close to stage of Emergency, whether it is officially declared or not. Pawan K. Varma opines that "miracle of India is that the practice of democracy has flourished…in the *absence* of a democratic temperament" (*Being Indian* 55) and that needs to be imbibed and strengthened for a capital city to undertake its roles and responsibilities.

CHAPTER 4

City as Brand: Urbanscapes of Globalization

Yes, cities have always been brands, in the truest sense of the word.
Paris is romance, Milan is style, New York is energy, Washington is power, Tokyo is modernity, Lagos is corruption, Barcelona is culture, Rio is fun. (Simon 18)

Branding of cities and nations is inevitable in today's globalised world as cities compete with each other for capital, and they fail to attract investment if the branding is not positive. The focus of political and business leadership is on creation and projection of city brand to attract tourists, investment, customers and talent. The idea of Delhi too has been redefined over the years in terms of how it is conceived, perceived and received as an entity variously by its citizens, administrators, tourists and investors, and a *Times of India* campaign labelled the transformation as "From Walled to World City". While the British treated the city space as blank slate in raising an imperial capital, the neo-liberal state with the government-architect-builder nexus attempts to create awe-inspiring architectures for creation of a world class city. The chapter explores the idea of city as brand, notion of world class city and Delhi's aspirations to be one. Delhi's redefinition from a labyrinth of congested streets in Old Delhi to being a node in the global network of cities is analysed with reference to Sagarika Ghosh's *The Gin Drinkers* and Namita Gokhale's *Priya in Incredible Indyaa*.

Creating a Brand: Pressures of Globalization

In examining the city as brand some queries that need to be addressed are: Is the notion of a city fixed or is it dynamic over time? And if cities are dynamic, does the branding need to regularly reviewed and updated? Is the city merely a product or a corporation offering a range of products and services to tourists and investors? Does the city seek to brand itself only for outsiders, be it tourists or investors, or is it also targeted towards its citizens in strengthening their identity with city spaces? In branding a capital city, are we looking at it merely as any other city or as a microcosm of the nation? What role does cosmopolitanism play in branding of a global city? What is the role of digital media in the creation of a world class city?

Discussing the city as brand raises questions of consumption and it is useful to remind oneself of Urry's *Consuming Places* and his explanation of the concept through four claims:

> First, places are increasingly being restructured as centres for consumption, as providing the context within which goods and services are compared, evaluated, purchased and consumed. Second, places themselves are in a sense consumed, particularly visually. Especially important in this is the provision of various kinds of consumer services for both visitors and locals. Third, places are literally consumed; what people take to be significant about a place (industry, history, buildings, literature, environment) is over time depleted, devoured or exhausted by use. Fourth, it is possible for localities to consume one's identity so that such places become almost literally *all-consuming* places. This can be true for visitors, or for locals or for both. This can produce multiple local enthusiasms, social and political movements, preservation societies, repeat travel patterns, the pleasures of strolling around and so on. (1)

In examining the various dimensions of these four claims, one needs to conscious of the shifts that have taken place in understanding about place, especially in the last few decades. While economics has never absent from political, social and cultural aspects, its role has become more blatant. Also sweeping technological transformations on an almost daily basis are transforming everyday life in unimaginable ways.

How do cities project themselves in view of wide sweeping changes? In creating a brand, cities seek to project themselves as places of excellence and attraction, be it as centres of education, employment opportunities, historical and cultural richness, tourism and investment friendly places. When cities compete internationally for hosting of events or brand themselves in the global market, there is convergence of interests of the city and the nation, especially in the case of capital cities as they are representative in nature. Capital cities, housing administrative and diplomatic offices are part of the global political map, and are often hubs in network of capital, goods, information and people. The variety of political and administrative functions in the city attracts people of diverse ethnicities and class from within the country and outside. Capital cities enjoy some advantageous edge but their failings can have a boomerang effect and negative impressions can affect the brand value of both the city and the nation, and can divert potential foreign investment elsewhere.

Following India's independence, there was a concerted effort to establish its capital, Delhi as a place of educational and cultural excellence. While the University of Delhi had been established in 1922 before independence, Jawaharlal Nehru University and Indian

Institute of Delhi were established in 1960s to foster liberal humanism and technology respectively, and Indira Gandhi National Open University, was established in 1985, and is among the largest open universities in the country and the world. These universities are not just places of academic excellence but are geographical and ideological islands that offer idealistic and non-partisan places in the midst of the city. Apart from these Delhi houses Jamia Millia Islamia, Guru Gobind Singh Indraprastha University and B.R. Ambedkar University, and more private universities have come up in the suburbs of Delhi like Amity University (Noida), Shiv Nadar University (Greater Noida), O.P. Jindal Global University (Sonepat) and Ashoka University (Sonepat). The private universities with smart classrooms and world class infrastructure are reshaping the way we imagine campuses, and one wonders if they will add to the campus fiction genre.

Apart from universities, the early decades of independence witnessed the official machinery promoting literary and cultural activities through establishment of autonomous bodies like the Sahitya Akademi, Sangeet Kala Kendra and National School of Drama, all headquartered in Delhi. Even today theatre, dance and music programmes are regular features at LTG Auditorium, Kamini Auditorium, Shri Ram Centre, Akshara Theatre, India International Cemtre and India Habitat Centre. Also, several open air programmes are hosted at Purana Qila, Nehru Park and Central Park with free entry for everybody. Delhi has been holding the largest and oldest World Book Fair in India since 1972, it also hosts exhibitions like the Trade Fair and Auto Expo annually. Do these throbbing cultural programmes and exhibitions help in pushing the case of Delhi as a brand?

While the above mentioned events are largely at regional and national level, it is important for cities to brand themselves at the global level by holding international fairs and sports events. The bidding for these is quite competitive, Sydney and London capitalized on the idea of aboriginal art and “The World in One City” in bids for Olympics in 2000 and 2012 respectively, highlighting diversity over singularity. Delhi successfully bid for the Commonwealth Games in 2010, highlighting itself as a world class city. Ethno-cultural diversity is a key point in highlighting world class status; India as a multi-cultural, multi-religious and multilingual nation has used the slogan “Unity in diversity” to emphasise the co-existence of diversity. While “diversity” is often harped upon as a marketing strategy in meetings with world leaders and global CEOs, a section of press and intelligentsia is increasingly raising a voice against growing intolerance in recent years. The dichotomous concern with minorities are explained by Kosnick, “how can immigrant minorities be

accommodated in cosmopolitan representations of urban space that have the idea of tolerance, openness, and cultural enrichment at heart, when dominant perceptions are that particular ethnic and religious minorities constitute problem populations?” (29). Kosnick’s reference to ethnic minorities can be extended to include other minority groups of religion, caste, class and language, and one is witnessing today an inherent contradiction in highlighting the diversity for investors and being intolerant towards minorities among the citizens. Is diversity to be used as a trump card merely to invite investors and not an imbibed understanding that extends to everyday lives of the citizens of the city?

Diversity, multiculturalism and cosmopolitanism are key words used to woo the potential investors, where the latter two are often erroneously used synonymously in projecting the city as an attractive investment option. While multiculturalism and cosmopolitanism are extremely loaded and complex terms, let us turn to Kosnick’s highlighting of the key differences between the two:

> Multiculturalism seeks to ensure equal rights and recognition for minority cultures that cohabit as a result of migration, whereas cosmopolitanism looks outwards the world, acknowledging otherness as a universal condition and challenge. The multicultural city is conceptualized as the endpoint of migratory movements that produce cultural mosaics, while the cosmopolitan city appears as a node in global cultural flows, ideally structuring their intermingling in a harmonious way and benefitting from them as sources of innovation. (36)

Cosmopolitanism often flourishes in cities that are multi-culturally diverse, it requires an active engagement with different cultural perspectives. Is cosmopolitanism a necessary condition for a city being labelled as progressive?

Let us add another dimension to the progressive city idea, does it require a break with the past? Does a city need to overthrow its antiquity to acquire to a world class status? Are heritage city and world city incongruous terms? One can argue that Delhi does not need to and should not obliterate its historical legacy to reconceptualise itself as a global city. In May 2015, the government withdrew Delhi’s nomination for UNESCO world heritage city over concerns that it would have hamper "infrastructure and construction" plans in the capital. This happened merely a month before UNESCO was to review nominations from across the world. Mahesh Sharma, the cultural minister said, “Once the city comes into that heritage list, you are unable to make some construction in the city plans and land use plans, so it will

become difficult. With that view the government has taken a decision to withdraw the nomination" ("Delhi's Heritage City Dream Dashed by the Government" *Aljazeera*). Can a city and its historical, cultural and linguistic heritage be viewed as detrimental to its aspiring world city plans, shouldn't the former can be capitalised in the re-packaging of the city? Since only Lutyen's Delhi and Shahjahanabad were to be included in the tag, critics felt the move was motivated by the politician-builder nexus that would like a free hand in billion-dollar real estate deals in the heart of Delhi. In fact twin threads of antiquity and modernity are apparent in the Delhi skyline, while the Red Fort, Qutub Minar and India Gate have been iconic Delhi structures, these are now supplemented by the metro. The opening of the metro heritage line in May 2017 depends on the support of modernity to facilitate travel to historical monuments like the Red Fort. The overhead metro and the Akshardham are two distinctive landmarks of contemporary Delhi and I would like to discuss briefly their significance in the imagination of Delhi urbanity.

The metro, with its network of red, blue, green, yellow, violet lines and inter-change stations in the city plots an alternative physical and digitally coded map of the city as against names of roads and crossings. These maps are reiterated at stations and inside trains; however the metro is not merely maps and stations, the structural materiality of architecture gains importance with the presence of social players using it. The metro and the conduct of passengers in it help create a brand of the Delhi Metro and of Delhi as a modern city. When citizens offer their guests metro ride as an experience of the city, be it visuals of the city from top down or whizzing through tunnels in the underground of the city, they are playing brand ambassadors of the technological wonder and the progressive city. Travel by metro offers glimpses into everyday life of the city and also creates a different sociality inside the train. The travellers are social players of the city staring at other actors of their city on the roof tops that are rendered visible on the overhead metro route. The liminal spaces of the terraces are places where normative codes and behaviour are suspended, this is where lovers meet or employees go for a smoke, and the metro travellers voyeuristically feed on these physically distant spaces.

Apart from the visuals of the city that that the metro offers, it has brought about a change in place vocabulary in concurrence with station names. Despite the renaming of Outer Circle and Inner Circle as Indira Chowk and Rajiv Chowk respectively, they were never called that till "Rajiv Chowk" became an important metro station. Additionally the older and congested parts of the city like Chandni Chowk and Karol Bagh were re-popularised with

easy access through metro, and especially gained currency with heritage and food walks around Old Delhi. The air-conditioned spaces of metro in the underground section create a network city that is at variance with the blaring horns, cycle rickshaws, pollution and street vendors, say of Chandni Chowk and Chawri Bazaar. Sadana observes, "Who could not be impressed? The ordered space and gleaming surfaces are nothing if not a crucible of the city's modernity. The metro is a marvel, something to marvel at, for anyone who visits Delhi, but also, and especially so, for its residents" (78).

The ordered spaces create disciplined behaviour in travelling citizens, a new sociality where unlike the casual chatting in bus or trains, people seem hooked onto their phones and i-pads, barely interacting with co-passengers, creating a private soundscape. The swanky and clean trains create the sense that one is possibly in any global city,

> For some, the aspirers and admirers, it means that you can be on the metro and imagine you are anywhere in the world. And indeed, the metro can take you to new places; this new mental landscape is as significant as what the metro is forging on the ground. The idea of a "mental landscape" is associated with a spatial understanding of modernity that has long been central to the scholarship on cities and to urban ethnography. (Sadana 79)

The other contemporary wonder rewriting modernity in Delhi is the Akshardham temple near Yamuna bank. The simulations at Akshardham offer a cultural-religious "package" that Sanjay Srivastava labels as "Disney-Divinity". The high tech Hall of Values, IMAX cinema and the boat ride encapsulating 10,000 years of Indian history is about consumption of religion in consumer society. Apart from these attractions, the religious-consumers can enjoy meals at the food hall and buy DVDs, books, models of temples, Akshardham caps and Ayurvedic products among other things from the shop in the complex. Religion and devotion are cleverly packaged where tourist-devotees are "guided" to a certain perspective:

> Akshardham provides a space for building cultural identities through enhancing the capacity for multiple engagements with nationalism, technology, concrete, educational achievement, the cultures of diasporic Hinduism, modern building techniques, the management of time, the dominance of Hindu spirituality over modern technology, the beauty of flyovers, the discourse of environmentalism, global leisure industries, and, of course, 'ancient' Hindu culture. (Srivastava 209)

The spectacles and its consumption be it through "Disney-fied" boat ride or Akshardham caps, makes Akshardham a space for commodity consumption by middle-class where there are "no anxieties about consumption itself but only a concern with the 'best' way of consuming" in this "spiritual-commodity space" (210). Akshardham through its 100 acres of ostentatious display and spectacle overpowers the senses, it overturns the conventional notions of a religious-sacred space. Its visuality depends heavily on materiality and technology in construction of touristy faithscape, and is today a major icon of the city.

Both the metro and Akshardham make a case for branding of contemporary Delhi and of imagining the urban in new ways. Contrary to popular perception of branding related to globalization, Shiel in "Branding the Modernist Metropolis" writes it is not a recent phenomenon. Brands were earlier identified with place of production; this has changed with growing geographical distance between place of origin and consumption under globalization. Branding a city is related to consumption patterns and also to visual representation and cities seek to capitalize on iconic structures, Paris' Eiffel Tower, Rome's Colosseum, Agra's Taj Mahal and Delhi's Qutub Minar attract the tourists.

Branding of Delhi is problematized by the jostling of monumental space with malls and multiplexes, "Whatever the reality of city life, the branding of city implies an understanding of the nature of the city as an homogeneous entity whose identity can indeed be encapsulated and subsumed under a single 'brand' or image" (Malpas 191) but the city's heterogeneity eludes attempts to slot it. In Anholt City Brands Index 2016 Paris, London and New York are placed first, second and third respectively based on factors like city's international standing, economic opportunities and vibrancy. The city is not being discussed as a place of belonging, or as a site of political engagement, but as constituted in terms of lifestyle and image associated with it; city "ceases to be a place and becomes instead, an abstracted image, a disembodied desire, a generic 'myth'" (Malpas 195). This idea of brand is not related to citizen's interaction or engagement with the urban environment, the "image" often depends heavily on visual and narrative representations of the city. Who are the players behind this image building and does the commoditized image efface the character of the city?

The pressure of creating a city-brand is tremendous under globalization as cities fight for corporate investment. Short writes that in the twenty-first century, "almost all city governments promote growth aggressively on a scope unimaginable just a decade ago. We live in an era characterized by….'place wars'" (*Urban* 112). The massive redevelopment

projects in the cities emphasize consumption through construction of signature buildings that seek to define modernity. Dazzling urban spectacle is visually the most attractive and obvious way of marketing a place; Burj Khalifa, the world's tallest building in Dubai and Malaysia's Petronas Twin Towers make a statement of globalized modernity with tall, iconic structures. Do skyscrapers of steel and glass housing the luxury global brands and hotels make the world a flat place, with universal and homogeneous overriding all aspects of urbanity from architectural design to food to culture? Are we creating generic cities that erase local specificities and hues? There is a strong counter narrative where thinkers like Short believe that local cultures have not vanished but are being recreated in response to globalization, creating glocalization of global brands in local markets. Culture in terms of music, arts and food is associated with place, people and shared memories and identities, and is always evolving and creating hybridizations, defining anew the complex relationship between place and identity.

King in *Spaces of Global Cultures: Architecture, Urbanism, Identity* too emphasizes hybridity in discussion of cities of global south, he argues for the case of "multiple modernisms" or hybrid modernity that results from the collision of colonial modernity and indigenous modernity. The frantic construction of expressways, malls and gated colonies styled and named after European cities are some of the ways in which it is manifested. King questions the signs of a modern city and identifies five that combine social and spatial modernity; a self-consciously "world" city, a fascination with tall buildings, the work of signature architects and spectacular architecture, multiculturalism, and modern ways of living. Contemporary urbanism is the pursuit of these signs for being a global city. Spectacle, be it that of international airports, luxury hotels, business centres or shopping malls is the visual manifestation of global society, and hosting spectacular international events and its accompanying publicity ably displays the host city on the world map. Delhi underwent various preparations for international sports events, especially Asiad 1982 and Commonwealth Games 2010 and marketing of the city was integral to bidding and hosting of these events. The facelifts involved both permanent and temporary changes, carrying huge expenses. Infrastructure in Delhi received a huge boost with Asiad 1982 with construction of Indira Gandhi Indoor Stadium, Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium, Games Village and flyovers, it truly appeared an international city to its citizens. However the CWG 2010 is remembered in public memory for its over shooting the budget many times over, poor infrastructure,

corruption, bad quality of purchases, delays in preparation and more importantly in terms of questionable benefit to Delhi and its citizens for hosting the event.

Apart from the "global city" term under discussion, cities in the third phase of urbanization are witnessing changing vocabulary from metropolis to megapolis to edgeless city to media city, "Our urban utopia is not a destination but a journey, not an imagined endpoint but an unfolding reality, ceaselessly problematic and infinitely useful" (Short, *Globalization* 270). McQuire focuses on the contemporary city as a media-architecture complex, and uses the term media city to "foreground the role of media technologies in the dynamic production of contemporary urban space in Lefebvre's (1991) sense of binding affect and cognition to space" (vii). Media includes among other things photography and cinema, and McQuire is interested in its overlappings and intersections with architecture, and resultant transformation of the spatial experience.

Media is all pervasive today, and its ever changing images and characteristics problematizes the idea of a city with fixed features. We are constantly interacting with dynamic media and city, and it is nearly impossible to imagine social experience without the interface of technology, Lash writes "I operate as a man-machine interface….I cannot achieve sociality apart from my machine interface" (Qtd. in McQuire 4). Be it shopping, police helpline, ordering groceries, fashion tips, beauty parlour services or catering, everything is manged through phone apps, and the phone becomes an indispensable extension of the self. Even the Indian government is pushing citizens towards creation of "Digital India" which is a flagship programme of the Government of India with a vision to transform India into a digitally empowered society. Whole lot of functions like filing of income tax returns to applying for passport can be done online, additionally there are phone apps launched by government, like "Go Tourist", "Incredible India" "Hospital Way", "Let's Carpool", "Swachh Bharat App", "India Voter List", "mPassport Seva" and "Online RTI". Apps, skype, Face Time and "Live on facebook" are collapsing spatial differences, the "other" in terms of distance and time is disappearing, and Virilio terms it "geostrategic homogenization of the globe" (135).

The disappearance of the other is a result of and accompanied by the explosion of the core of the city, "ageographical city", Sorkin calls it "the emergence of a wholly new kind of a city, a city without a place attached to it" (xi) and Soja calls it "postmetropolis". The pervasive use of technology redefines physical dimension of space, "Face Time" seems to be

displacing real time interaction, the conjunction of media and architecture produces what has been described as "augmented reality" or "mixed reality" emphasizing the heterogeneous spatiality that McQuire calls the media city, "encompassing both the historical dimensions of the relation between media and modern urban space, and in connecting this history to the changes driven by digital convergence in the present" (21).

While the instantaneity of communication technologies collapses physical boundaries and constraints, it also minimizes conversations between people, both over the phone and in person. Automated recordings spread over long elaborate menus when calling a customer care centre makes reaching a human (voice) a tough and tedious task. In everyday lives social interactions are being rewritten, with people sitting in a restaurant engrossed in their own phones rather than people they are dining with. Restaurants offering free Wi-Fi services or even large public areas like Dilli Haat and Khan Market offering the same produces a community of citizens engrossed in their machines rather than engaging with other humans. Media, be it through billboards, live telecast of matches in restaurants, cell phone messages or email increasingly controls and shapes our associations and actions. The transformed streets, the skyscrapers and the expressway are in tune with Corbusier's notion of modernity where he felt that streets are obsolete in traditional sense; instead "The street is a traffic machine; it is in reality a factory for producing speed" (179). These streets are not designed for *flânerie,* aimless strolling happens only on mobile screens, there is a turning away from social life of streets to virtual life on screen, a shift from public to private space.

Ironically what we think of as private space has no privacy, the machines that we are hooked onto online are constantly gathering data about "everyday practises" of people, including commercial transaction, browsing history and chat history, and this data is used for aggressive online marketing. Citizens are reduced to databanks, mere digital samples without individuality who are to be decoded on the basis of their browsing history, privacy is impossible in this inescapable surveillance. While commerce is the major driving force, whereby Amazon, BookMyShow, Flipkart, airlines and hotels advertisements pop up on email and facebook page depending on our searches, the social media is also a powerful and dangerous way being used to spread news and views. Some of the major cases in recent years where social media's power has been felt greatly are: Anna Hazare's anti-corruption movement that gained momentum in 2011; Aam Admi Party's enrolling and enlisting young supporters in the party leading to a historic win in Delhi elections in 2015; spreading anti/nationalist messages following the events at JNU in 2016; and the violence fuelled by

WhatsApp rumours leading to lynching of men in Jharkhand in May 2017. The source and authenticity of the "forwarded" messages on social media is suspect yet the viral spread points out to the herd mentality that lacks critical questioning in the digital/virtual world. Is the digital self and its opinions, individually and as a group, as real or more real, than face to face interactions and debates? Are virtual spats and difference of opinions expressed from comfort of air-conditioned rooms the new face of protest, is a growing breed of self-styled "drawing room revolutionaries" on the rise?

Social interaction in real space appears to have been overtaken by digital media and social networking. In this case, one's display picture (dp) is the first point of contact in this interaction and one's existence and validation is through the gaze of the other, "I exist only so far as I am looked at all the time" (Zizek 225). The camera becomes a mean for conducting experiments in self-construction, and comments/feedback on social media like Facebook and Instagram are seen as measure of one's popularity and self-esteem, a construction of the self through the photograph. *Flânerie* is no longer aimless roaming in streets of the city but an announcement of check-ins at theatre, restaurant, railway station, airport and hotels. Photography of the self and the city, and the self, located in coordinates of the city is central to modern urban experience, a digital mapping in the city.

The plotting of coordinates in virtual space emphasizes the differences in experiences of various classes, the clash between spaces of the privileged and the poor. Mehrotra's discussion in "Negotiating the State and Kinetic Cities: The Emergent Urbanism of Mumbai" fits well the situation in Delhi, he highlights that the retreat of the state has produced a "new, bazaar like urbanism" created by those outside of the new elite, that slips in under the laws of the city. Processions, weddings, festivals, hawkers, street vendors and slum dwellers create a "kinetic city", city in motion that is continually being improvised upon. This exists simultaneously with the "static city", the "official, concrete and monumental, incorporating malls, gated communities, and architectures of commerce and power and the new highways, flyovers, airports, corporate hotels, convention centres, galleries, and museums that declare the city's imagination with the global" (214). The static city of the gated communities and malls feels threatened by the presence of the low class "kinetic" people with their disruption of space. Constant attempts to have control and surveillance over spaces is shrinking the space of the dynamic bazaars. Unlike exclusive space usage in malls, bazaar spaces are multifunctional, mixing together businesses, street vendors, and housing, where loitering, meeting friends and carrying out domestic activities is part of daily experience. According to

Buie in "Market as Mandala: The Erotic Space of Commerce", the hawkers, beggars, performers and speakers are akin to "dance of exchange" (227). As workers, beggars and cars jostle for street spaces, "Walking cannot be a seamless, uninterrupted journey but must engage with interruptions and encounters, weaving a path that is accompanied by a variegated sensual experience of space" (221). The static part of the city makes concerted efforts to control and contain these celebratory dynamic spaces where bodies, vehicles, aromas and music engage and mix.

One of the significant ways of controlling space and giving it a definite signature is through design of buildings. There is a push and movement towards aesthetic form of buildings rather than their social function. Frampton points out that twentieth century advanced building technologies have given rise to the starchitect, the self-styled aesthetic genius redefining skyline of cities. In the case of Delhi/NCR, Hafeez Contractor is famous for designing signature pieces like the DLF Gateway Tower that was built when Gurgaon first opened up as a special economic zone (SEZ). It got the nickname "Titanic" for its shape and size, but that bears no relevance to the arid urban landscape in which it is located. Contractor, one of the most successful commercial architects has openly made public statements like "Green-buildings are a joke". There is an underlying dialectical relationship between architecture and politics whereby architectural representation influences and shapes the spatial and cultural politics of the state, and the latter in turn shape the architectural representation. The rise of star-architects with emphasis on aesthetic form ignores the needs for whom the building is being built. Buildings become icons in promoting and photographing the brand of the city, from Dubai to Shanghai foreign architects/starchitects are brought in, with barely any familiarity with local spaces and cultures. The aim behind such commissioning is to build flamboyant and iconic structures that would place the city on global scale.

The construction of a city brand through building and design takes one back to the building of grand colonial cities as discussed in Chapter 1. Lefebvre argues that "ever since is its origins, the State expressed itself through the void: empty space, broad avenues, plazas of gigantic proportions open to spectacular processions" (*Production* 109). Not just building of colonial cities, but developing cities are also viewed as "blank slates" emphasizing the aesthetic-formal aspects rather than social and political questions. The state, market and architect aim to map iconic structures, ignoring that architectural space is simultaneously social space. Cities in Asia and Africa are rising vigorously, often copies of each other, where

buildings are emptied of social relevance and often divorced from local climate conditions and culture. These glitzy buildings, and the brands that they house, and the restaurants that run there are impacting the social everyday lives of people. When a university student today regularly visits the Select City Walk, Starbucks and CCD instead of Sarojini Nagar Market and Indian Coffee House, one is mapping the differences that city spaces are making in lives of the young. All these changes are a reflection of a consumerist society and the way the city is marketed. As Mohd says to Ahmed, "A country is like a company. If it doesn't make profit, it doesn't succeed" (Ahmed 142) and this posits the image of the political head as a CEO whose job is to market the city/country as a product in the competitive global market.

Let us explore further the ideas of transforming cities and upcoming "global cities" through fiction based in post-liberalization Delhi. Sagarika Ghosh's *The Gin Drinkers* depicts struggles for ascendency in spaces of higher education and research. The Oxford educated, English speaking elite class feels threatened when their exclusive spaces are encroached upon by the desis. Namita Gokhale's *Priya in Incredible Indyaa* is set against a Delhi that is transforming from a laid-back bureaucratic city to one of flyovers, speed and global capitalism. The rise of the city of skyscrapers that offers more opportunities with pervasive use of technology is democratic only in theory, in reality there is unequal access to social spaces and virtual spatialities as majority of the population lacks the means to "log on".

Sagarika Ghosh's *The Gin Drinkers*: Claim to Branded Education

One of the major ways in which cities brand themselves is by projecting themselves as places of excellence for education and research. Delhi/ NCR is home to several public and private universities like University of Delhi, Jawaharlal Nehru University, IGNOU, Guru Gobind Indraprastha University, Ambedkar University, Shiv Nadar University and Ashoka University, and research institutes like Indian Council for Historical Research (ICHR), Centre for the Study of Developing Societies (CSDS) and Nehru Memorial Museum and Library (NMML). Ideally it should be a city that spatially and imaginatively encourages intellectual interaction and stimulation, and has an egalitarian and inclusive approach to education that fosters migrations to the city, but the novel highlights the problems with such utopian ideas.

The Gin Drinkers revolves around two inter-related events: choosing the Director for the prestigious research institute, Mahatma Gandhi Foundation and the strange case of theft of rare books from people's private collections. It embroils the lives of three characters who are potential contenders for the post of Director: Madhavi Iyer from Columbia University,

Dhruv Mathur who has been the Additional Director under Pamela Sen, and Jai Prakash who runs the Shiksha Andolan. The text raises pertinent questions about institutes of research, can they be entrusted in the hands of the non-English, non-elite, non-Oxford, the desis? In Delhi "where sultans looked for treachery in court and viceroys outlawed quit-India rebels, bazaar and citadel have always existed nervous cheek by uneasy jowl" (Ghosh 1). The vast gap between classes and spaces occupied by them has not disappeared in Delhi but merely transformed over centuries, as two groups "inherited" India and its capital, Delhi on independence:

> The brown sahibs and the desis. The sahibs sipped consommé and promenaded in metropolitan gymkhanas in tailored suits. The desis traded mithais in the old quarters of smaller towns and wore the dhoti-or regional equivalents-as their badge of Indian self-respect". (9)

The novel explores the claims for ascendency as played out in spaces of Delhi, as the suave and sophisticated gin drinkers of yesteryears clash with the peripheral natives with local tastes.

These events unfold at the turn of millennium, where Dhruv and Madhavi, the "spooky turn-of-the-century people" carry a modernist nostalgia for the pre-digital city. The old world lingers through memories of black and white television, cassette players, playing dumb charades and eating hot chocolate fudge at Nirula's as the city transforms into a "network city" of flyovers and skyscrapers. It is a new cityscape arising from rubble as old colonial architecture rubs shoulders and clashes with frantic construction of new buildings of steel and glass:

> The roundabouts surrounding Raj Path, encircling statues of India's founding fathers still looked the same. But just a few minutes' walk away, in Connaught Place, the rubble of new construction loomed through a permanent haze of dust. Chrome and glass strained out of mud. In the government colonies, white or yellow-washed bungalows with their bougainvillea garlands teetered on the edges of clamorous flyovers dotted with new hoardings. Delhi was changing muddily. (31)

The residents of this city in flux include civil servants like Uma's parents who want their children to emigrate abroad for better opportunities, and Jai Prakash, a first generation university graduate. He calls himself a "dehati", a nobody and positions himself at the

opposite end from the "Ox-phord intellectuals" and club-going gin drinkers. He is the pioneer of the Skiksha Andolan that seeks to get the best of books across in far flung areas, their team plans to borrow rare books, but gets labelled as "kitab chors" in the well intentioned scheme. Jai Prakash justifies their action, "And in any case if people are hoarding and keeping others deprived, then stealing is all right, nahin?" (278), calling himself the Robinhood of knowledge. The upholders of knowledge and educational institutes have an elitist attitude, and their solution is to offer grants for basic books, "Useful basic stuff on management, career advancement, science and technology and other basic books that can help them. But why must they take our good books?" (199). They seek to maintain the class divide in the education system where the masses are to be schooled in basic texts and vocational training, without ever accessing the writings of the best thinkers and philosophers, and as Jai argues never given the opportunity to be poets or authors or researchers.

The desi-educated attempt to dismantle the exclusive claims of English speaking Babus on educational institutes, the working class aspires to have a piece of foreign funding, and to access branded education that elites have held on to. Hari Ram, the telephone man, approaches a person in parathawali gali in Chandni Chowk to secure a foreign scholarship for his son, "He has a scholarship business on the side. That paratha shop owner. Paratha bhi bechta hai, scholarship bhi deta hai" (190), equating the dichotomous commodities on offer. Uma imagines Hari Ram as controlling telephone networks in the prospective media city, akin to Haraway's chimera, "theorized and fabricated hybrids of machine and organism; in short we are cyborgs" (Haraway 150). "Telephone and electricity were the twin muses for the city's citizens" (Ghosh 121) and Hari Ram controls Castells' "informational city" (6) which is defined in terms of "the emergence of a *space of flows* which dominates the historically constructed space of place" (6), and this network tends to displace social space, to replace bricks by bytes in formulation of new spatial ensembles. The network not only redefines space-time but is an equaliser in breaking down social hierarchies, and Hari Ram wants his son to be part of the global network of education that has been the exclusive domain of those like Uma:

> She dreamt that Hari Ram was floating underground, swimming through telephone lines as a deep sea diver swims through weeds. She imagined him circling the city, the deity of the telephone, underground and perpetually awake. She dreamt that he was looming over the city like Godzilla with a pair of monster cleavers shredding every scholarship application ever filled in by the sahibs' children." (Ghosh 191)

If Hari Ram, a man in control of landline phones wields huge power in Uma's imagination, that of a man handling high speed broadband lines would be immense. Though Hari Ram has the mechanics of communication in his hands, he desires a real access to the elite world, to cross-over the social-education divide. Gilchrist, the historian refers contemptuously to the likes of him as "Paan-English" and "Chai English" (249) but Uma doesn't agree with this view and feels that her people are "The irrelevant Indians from Oxford" (256), while Jai Prakash and Mrs Khurana hold importance in the contemporary social scenario. Rajan in "After 'Midnight's Children': Some Notes on the New Indian Novel in English" comments on Uma mocking her own class,

> The writing on the wall says that they must yield to the new, and the newly relevant, Indians who are the upwardly mobile Dalit intellectuals and the vulgar entrepreneurs. Both pique and pragmatism, such a way of thinking-in terms of one's loss of relevance in and to the nation –is revealing. (204)

Uma feels that the "Irrelevant Indians" are like ghosts as they queue up for emigration and green cards, trying to "Wriggle into other people's histories. Talk into other peoples' voices" (Ghosh 256) and losing a sense of self connected to place in the process. The novel raises important questions about connections between colonialism, space and language. It also explores the idea of migration, both between rural and urban areas, and between first and the third world nations, and not always in one direction, and it is useful to take note of concepts of cosmopolitanism discussed above. In the traditional and philosophical sense, cosmopolitanism refers to political engagement beyond the local to the universal, a form of "world citizenship". But in the framework of branding of cities under globalization it refers to

> the free-floating investor or consumer who has no primary affiliation other than the optimization of investment return or lifestyle satisfaction, irrespective of where that may be achieved. The idea of branding of cities can thus be seen as tied to what is effectively a 'consumerist' form of cosmopolitanism that is some distance removed from the original sense of the term. (Malpas 192)

People's relationship with places is complex in the novel, are motives and migrations of characters in the novel driven purely by consumerist choices of selecting the best city-brand for education and employment? Do material reasons alone explain Mrs Khurana's migration from India to UK and back to India? Is Jai Prakash motivated solely by ambition in his move from village to Delhi to UK, and in that case how does one explain his going back to villages

regarding Shiksha Andolan? How does one explain the long queues of what Uma labels as "ghosts" to emigrate to Europe versus the journeys in reverse direction by Madhavi and Sam? How does one re-negotiate one's own city after having lived elsewhere as reflected in fumblings of Uma and Madhavi? How far is Sam's understanding of Delhi and what it offers mediated by Uma and Jai Prakash? What role does technology play in connecting with "imagined community" in a society with large scale emigrations?

The connection between people and places is mediated through products and technology rather than a direct exploration in a globalised world. The connection with places, homes and the associative emotions seem to increasingly depend on products, "All emotions have been coopted by industrial houses. Nostalgia, integral to the use of cellular phones. Sentiment, bound by images of coffee. The spirit of adventure, linked inexorably to fizzy drinks" (Ghosh 65). Emotions have been displaced from place to products and advertisement tag lines like Vodafone's "Where ever you go, our network follows", Nokia's "Connecting people" and Café Coffee Day's "A lot can happen over coffee" and Thumps Up's "Taste the thunder" encash on that. But what emotion does the Delhi invoke, does "Dilli dil walon ke" appeal to people of a city whose urban imaginary is produced at the intersection of Old and New Delhi? For a city that fills one with nostalgia and dreams of futurity, a walled city aspiring to be a world city, Delhi evades a homogeneous identity that can be subsumed under a single tag line or promotion campaign. The characters in *The Gin Drinkers* grapple with what India and Delhi symbolise for them, especially in the realigned spaces after liberalisation, and the changed spatiality of educational and research institutes. Pamela symbolises the old guard with its accompanying set of world view, dress and vocabulary and "never used words like 'crypto' and 'quasi' and wore tightly knotted saris with heavy walking boots" (Ghosh 102). However she wants to relinquish the past and power, like the antique city, she has witnessed powerful days but now wants to retire quietly, "She must bow out cleanly, leave him her legacy but take away her debris" (332).

The historical legacy is unmissable in the city, "She [Madhavi] liked the way history ran, casually and neglectedly in all the stones and shrubs from the fort of Siri to the Hauz Khas tank and the imitation Acropolis on Raisina Hill" (37). However legacy is not just architecture and monuments, but an equally powerful one of education and ideas as fostered by universities and research institutes. One such institute is Mahatma Gandhi Foundation, a place where "scholars, journalists, writers, film-makers, artists, dancers and playwrights could 'interface' and 'synergise'", and it "aimed at placing subcontinental popular culture on

the Millennial Map" (38). There are dangers of historical figures, ideas, institutes and clubs being appropriated by the elite, and branded and re-branded in keeping with demands of national and global research, media and market. Institutes can operate like corporations where everything from design of buildings to appointment of director to approval of projects spells their agenda.

The Foundation is located at the India Habitat Centre (IHC), one of the iconic post-independence building structures in Delhi. The nine acre IHC complex has been designed and built by Stein, Doshi and Bhalla who have created an island of architectural excellence in the busy metropolis of Delhi. The brick structure, the large courtyards, abundant greenery and the reflectors are not only pleasing to the eyes but are suitable for the Delhi weather and also provide a physical environment that facilitates synergetic relationship between individuals and institutions working there. The ecological design supports infrastructure and facilities such as conference venues, auditoria, hospitality areas, library and art galleries. The website lists that its aims include promotion of "better urban and rural settlements relevant to the Indian social, cultural, and economic context and related to the lifestyle of its people"; to inculcate awareness and sensitivity with regard to art; to "promote education, research, training and professional development on habitat and human settlement and environment related issues" (IHC).

The IHC building with the first underground parking and food court (Eatopia) in Delhi was a pioneer in architectural design in several ways. It provides an organic space where the design of the building is in sync with the people and environment for which it is built. The later signature buildings like the LIC (Life Insurance Corporation) building in Connaught Place and the DLF Gateway Tower in Gurgaon designed by Charles Correa and Hafez Contractor respectively reflect glitzy aesthetics. Such stylish buildings by starchitects tend to ignore local specificities like weather and culture in raising spectacles that push the case for branding of city. Kanna notes that "Something interesting seems to occur when predominantly Western-trained architects and experts traverse the space between cultural worlds with which they are familiar and ones with which they are not" (79), and though one cannot generalize but it often creates structures that are emptied of local and social relevance, and the state's role cannot be absolved in promoting such forms. It is useful to remind oneself of the discussion about the construction of the Peace Institute in memory of Gandhi in Sahgal's *This Time of Morning* in Chapter 3, where the architect Neil Berensen designs a building lacking in drama, without domes or arches for he feels that peace is a necessity and

should not be dramatized. He outlines his plan, "What I've tried to do here is to define peace in everyday terms…It won't be a monument. It will just be a building. It should project friendliness" (Sahgal *Time* 193) and there is detailed discussion about aligning design with purpose. In *The Gin Drinkers* Dhruv's future plans include multimedia facilities to make the Foundation more sociable and accessible, will the focus shift from interpersonal communication to technology mediated interaction?

The social and material reality is impacted not just by architecture of premier institutes but also through places of consumption like malls and markets. The spatial dynamics of traditional markets is succinctly depicted in the scene where Uma attempts to run away with Jai Prakash's paper on Nat Devi. Uma, dressed like a Nagaland tribal as part of her work at the Aladin superstore, is symbolic of the stereotypes perpetuated of places and people for the consumption of the elite Khan Market shoppers. The market complex includes old shops like dairy, bakery, boutiques and new gourmet restaurants and supermarket; its design and concept is inherently that of mixed purposes of Indian bazaar; as being "centres of social life, of communication, of political and judicial activity, of cultural and religious events and places for the exchange of news, information and gossip" (Buie 277). Uma's collision with Hari Ram in the tribal dress as she tries to manoeuvre across stalls, shoppers and prams creates a comic situation about her mistaken Adivasi identity, the sprawl that ensues is far removed from the sterile character of malls, highlighting that Brand Delhi can never be a singular image of order but always carries multiple and conflicting features that seek to define it.

The conflicting features are what the administrators have sought to contain, whether it be the creation of racialized dual cities by the British or contemporary ones by neoliberal governments. Chatterjee in *The Politics of the Governed: Reflection of Popular Politics in Most of the World* argues that the effect of state structure and relation between elite and popular assumes two forms in postcolonial states. The first is the rise in privatization of public institutions, the proliferation of gated communities and attempts to control the visual disorder of the cities. The second is the effort to steer the project of modernization via welfare practices that are not directly and completely under state control; he uses the term "political society" as opposed to civil society for the encounters between the state, elites and subalterns, and their assertion of claims. In political society the debates about urban resources revolve not around rights but around force and entitlement, where marginalized groups like swatters and vendors are compelled to secure indirect, devious means to access power.

“Political society breaks down the spatial relations that were supposed to remain inviolate within bourgeois state formation” (Chattopadhyay 89), and this becomes visible in appropriation of streets and sidewalks by street vendors and squatters. The post-colonial state’s notions of spatial order are often at odds with that of political society as it aims to contain disorder, and not just at the lowest rung and in bazaar spaces. Can one extend this analogy to research institutes which are rattled when the established hierarchy of conventional themes, traditional methodologies and vocabularies is questioned?

Jai Prakash’s research on Nat Devi, a secret cult where only women are allowed entry, is about healing illnesses through song and dance, and it has practised its ways irrespective of who rules the state or nation. The members of the cult dispense their normal duties during the day and pray to the goddess of double life at night, “And the only goddess they worshipped, was the goddess of make believe. The goddess of pretence” (Ghosh 271). The shift towards alternative systems of power, healing, and research methodology comes across in this paper, and Pamela wants Madhavi to take it further, “Go and meet people who don’t know about seminars and fame and all the other things you say you despise. Go and study them” (273). It would be a study that would require questioning and reframing of conventional methods, to rethink tools of research, to develop a language sans the usual vocabulary of “isms” and jargon, and to work at grassroots level and not be a “hotel lobby revolutionary” that she scathingly attacks Dhruv with. The Nat Devi research to be undertaken by Madhavi is among the first projects sanctioned under the directorship of Jai Prakash, and the Shiksha Andolan and the School Committee were to become the Foundation’s main philanthropic project. The two pioneering projects are in synergy, the school aiming to make books available to those who have no access to them otherwise, and the Nat Devi one inviting established scholars to step out of first world academia to undertake work at the ground level, hinting at the simultaneous top down and bottom up approach.

As the clash unfolds in and over spaces of intellectual elitism, the gin drinkers do not find it easy to give away to desis when their exclusive rights and occupation over books and research is questioned. For the elites, “Gin was liquid colonialism” (322), and having fed on staples of jam, gin and cakes, they felt emptiness when confronted with world different from that of gossip, shopping and inane social functions. Rajan opines that Ghosh’s ironic reflections record an awareness of change,

> the novel refuses to indulge in lament for the passing of this class…not only is power ceded gracefully…it is also made clear that the members of this versatile educated class can re-invent themselves as the allies of the new meritocracy and find new uses for their seemingly anachronistic English education. (205)

The gin drinkers have for long held onto their spaces of privilege and avoided chaotic intermingling be it in their residential colonies, colleges or institutes, and have fiercely guarded against the presence of the other, and the novel depicts the change in guards as social forces from below challenge the spatial exclusion.

Gokhale's *Priya in Incredible Indyaa* moves beyond the gamut of educational and research institutes, and depicts the equally elitist spaces of political circles and consumerist market forces.

Namita Gokhale's *Priya in Incredible Indyaa*: Delhi/India Shining

Gokhale's *Priya in Incredible Indyaa* unfolds events in Delhi roughly from 2005 to 2008, where the socio-economic impact of liberalisation reforms are beginning to be felt, mobile phones and facebook are transforming lives but technology has not completely seeped into everyday lives via rampant use of selfies, Facebook and WhatsApp on smart phones.

The title of the book is reminiscent of "Incredible India", the international marketing campaign launched by the government of India to promote tourism in 2002, and tourism is one of the major ways in which cities try to brand themselves. There are also echoes of "India Shining", a campaign popularised by the NDA (National Democratic Alliance) government in 2004 referring to overall feeling of economic optimism. In promoting India as poised to take off on international scale, it was aimed at both Indian and global markets, and Delhi as the capital city becomes symbolic of those aspirations spatially and ideologically. In highlighting the successes especially in urban areas, it ignored the social problems like poverty and social inequality, especially those in rural areas. The lopsided focus in this campaign on urban growth at the cost of neglecting rural India, was picked up by UPA (United Progressive Alliance) which wove its "Bharat Nirman" campaign around achievements in the rural sector in 2009. The two campaigns are significant for several reasons: the events in novel more or less coincide with these campaigns; these were front running media events used by government to highlight achievements as an exercise in image building; interests of urban versus rural is an important concern in the novel; and today the

debate of rural versus urban takes a different turn as villages are disappearing with rapid urbanisation. Also image building exercises and campaigns run by political parties, in power and in opposition, have seen manifold impact since the advent of social media.

The novel chronicles the rise of the suburb, Gurgaon as farm lands of NCR have been re-structured by government policies to be turned into Special Economic Zones (SEZ) and acres of land have been sold off at cheap rates to corporations to set up factories. As fields make way for steel and glass high rise offices and apartment blocks, the boundaries of Delhi are being pushed physically with NCR, and with overturning of rules of nature through BPOs that work through the night, 24 x 7 stores, a new city of highways and lights is on the rise, "Everywhere, new cars and new money, old potholes and tall skeletons of steel and glass. Delhi is changing so much every day, growing and cannibalizing its outskirts" (Gokhale, *Priya* 18). The peripheral suburb of Gurgaon attempts to model itself on Singapore, and posits itself as more advanced than Delhi, yet another set of rules or rather absence of rules applies here with rampant lawlessness, and as a character voices, "Dilli ki dadagiri yahin rah jayegi. Your flashing lights and sirens will get you nowhere" (21). The suburbs like Gurgaon form a part of NCR, and simultaneously appear to both pull up and pull down the value of Delhi as a brand through their functioning.

While some rules are suspended, others like networking remain unchanged in the powerpolis, "Seek out the current lot of 'useful' people, scorn the hangers-on and despise those who might need you. That's the formula of Delhi networking" (2). The Delhi power circle is a closed network, conscious of race and class, and uncomfortable with diversity, this is where the rich, elite and powerful stick together. The topic of conversations might have shifted to fad diets and Indian Premier League but purity of races and spaces are adhered to, as the elites continue to enjoy exclusive privilege of huge bungalows in the heart of imperial Delhi even as the commoners struggle for spaces elsewhere:

> Outside the calm sanctuary of our bungalow, the world is going mad. Important things, big things, are happening. Oil prices are on the rise, as are inflation and anti-government feelings. Bombs keep going off….But there is something about the heart of Delhi, the wide roads, the gracious trees, the sparkling bungalows, that makes the rest of India and its troubles seem very far away (131).

In this closed and often incestuous circuit, everybody knows everybody who matters, Suresh underlines the common blood of politics, "Blood is always thicker than water, even if we

belong to opposing political parties! Congres-BJP-BJO-LJD-what is the difference, I say? Only alphabets" (108). Priya, who has been brought up in a middle class household feels ill at ease among the top most hierarchy in the city and finds herself dizzy with social vertigo. Vertical climb in social scale is both desirable and fearful in a city that thrives on this kind of ascendency, and forgets just as easily once a person has a social fall.

All events in the city, be it weddings or official events are excuses to demonstrate one's social standing. At theme based and destination weddings organised by wedding planners, yesterday's film stars are paid to make guest appearances, cashing in on their past popularity. At one such event, Ved Anand, modelled on Dev Anand remarks that films were entertainment earlier, "But now everything is entertainment. Everything. Politics is entertainment. Cricket is entertainment. IPL is *mega* entertainment" (28). As the media spreads its wings, it pervades all spheres of life, redefining the notion of privacy, and the biggest entertainment stories are voyeuristic tales of personal lives, be it grand weddings or failed marriages.

The city and its stories that the media feeds on, is a city in the transitory phase of creating a new urban imaginary, it is a "wannabe city" enroute to arguably developing into a world city. Short in *Urban Theory: A Critical Assessment* comments, "Wannabe cities are cities of spectacle, cities of intense urban redevelopment, and cities with powerful growth rhetoric" (115). The projected promise is of a media city, a city of flyovers, metro, highways and people connected across the globe, and the process is accompanied with the usual pangs of cranes and construction activity all around. To a large extent the spaces of skyscrapers and digital networks create new worlds of exclusion and unequitable citizenship in contemporary city, even as it fuels the desire to partake in it. The aspirations of those down the social ladder have been referred to in the case of Hari Ram in *The Gin Drinkers*. In *Priya*, aspirational value is associated with English, and the servants keenly pursue Rapidex English Course as, "Without the English bhasha, no progress, no aage badhne ka proper chance. You hear of angrezi Devi? She is goddess of English language. We pray to her. She blesses have-nots to move up." (Gokhale, *Priya* 85), and Ramdhan, the Bihari help, tries to swap his Bhojpuri accented Hindi with English; English language appears as significant as the computer language of bytes in a city of networks.

While one set of have-nots attempt to transcend their lot by learning English, others continue protests against Food Bills and SEZ at Jantar Mantar and yet others in remote tribal

areas fight the system even as they are labelled Maoists and terrorists, and the government at the centre in the meanwhile continues its focus on India shining and of preparing a road map for Delhi to be a world class city. The aspirational city does not treat poverty but poor as problems where slums are ruthlessly demolished to uphold the aesthetics for upper class living. Lenin is enamoured by his visit to a mall in the city, by the piano playing the theme tune from *Dr. Zhivago*, "It seduced me, that mall, until we stepped out and I saw steel and glass reflected in the eyes of the b-beggar children outside" (89). Cohen notes that while the shopping centre/mall tries to portray itself as a focus of community space, it actually defines the society in "exclusionary socio-economic terms" (1061). The vertically growing glass towers reflect the poverty below and outside, creating new spaces of class exclusion, treating its have-nots as non-citizens. The spell binding sparkle of the malls lies at odds with the grime in the lives of squatters. In the aggressive marketing of the city and nation, the focus is on materialities and gloss, while the disenfranchised are ignored at the other end. In response to Lenin's "Donkey March for the Dispossessed", a JNU Professor in *Clarion* discusses the rural-urban divide, "the conflict between Bharat and India, and the needs and demands of two Indias" (Gokhale, *Priya* 93). Priya reflects on the strange society where the two ends of social spectrum seem to live in oblivion and ignorance of the other. The stark and the widening gap between the classes in Delhi's spaces is not the best road map to a world class city. One is forced to ask the question repeatedly: what does it mean to be a world class city, is it infrastructure, education, cosmopolitanism, highways, metro or malls?

While the unprivileged fight for basics, the upper class are creating new and alternative forms of connection, by flaunting the latest models of mobiles. The engagement ceremony of Priya's nephew in India is conducted via satellite with the bride and her family in Philadelphia visible online on the screen, with technology making latitude coordinates immaterial. With friends and family based in different parts of the world, technology aids immediacy, the definition of physical proximity and presence at family events is redefined. McQuire argues,

> In the screen window, spaces appear and disappear in screen abruptly. We can activate links between physically discontinuous sites at a moment's notice but these conjunctions are transient and inherently unstable... With live television and 'real time' networked media, the classical definition of 'the event' as a singular occurrence is brought increasingly into question. (10-11)

Technology and media through automobile, telephone, radio, cinema, television, air travel and internet seem to have erased spatial and temporal differences. Priya's son introduces her to facebook, "to join the dots with the rest of the world" (Gokhale, *Priya* 69), to be part of the global network, where geographical location and coordinates become meaningless. Human interaction is mediated through machine interface, mobile phones and internet become an extension of people, melting away the distinction between man and machine. The city space, both public and private, real and virtual, is increasingly perceived as a node in global digital network, reorganizing professional and familial relations; in this case the engagement conducted across geographical boundaries and time zones witnesses the participation of family members in the event through "screen".

The city with easy digital access is one of the things that "India Shining" or "Incredible Indyaa" projects. However Delhi has far from "arrived", it is rather a "wannabe city" that is seeking to rebrand itself anew from a bureaucratic capital to a world city of opportunities. This necessitates thinking anew relationship between the city and its citizens, do citizens need a makeover to be considered cosmopolitan, to fit into the global network? Priya thinks of Paro who figures prominently in the prequel, *Paro: Dreams of Passion* and wonders,

> She would have rebranded herself that's for sure…Paro was beautiful, always. Pooonam is merely pretty, a glam-sham construct. Unfazed by the world, our Paro had cared for nobody and nothing except herself-or perhaps not even for herself. Pooo is the very opposite, needy, seeking approval. They are completely different, I've decided. Paro had been a triumphant original; Pooonam Uma Chand a clever wannabe. (Gokhale, *Priya* 157)

The transformation of cities is extended to re-inventions and re-branding of individuals within it, is the anatomy of city transposed onto the individual or of individual onto city space? Singh in *Delhi: A Novel* juxtaposes the city and citizens in terms of sexuality and posits the idea that Delhi is a hermaphrodite like Bhagmati. Here, the comparison is in terms of creation of brands and their marketing; maintaining a brand value often requires constant efforts, like a woman seeking to project her beauty. Women follow an elaborate routine of dieting, exercising, beauty regimes and alluring clothes to maintain their attractiveness and to allure men, in response to Priya's admiration of the always beautifully turned out Paro, she confesses "It's part of being a Beautiful Woman. It's a full time occupation" (Gokhale *Paro*

62) and she constantly tries new diets and exercises to maintain her body as the brand. In fact advertisements and articles in women's magazines give the same impression, "One has to work at it, ceaselessly refurbishing and reupholstering oneself and using the exact shade of foundation, simply to remain a woman" (Gokhale, *Priya* 182). Is the city female that is to be conquered by the male rulers who construct phallic symbols of towers to mark dominance? Are the city's allurements aimed at attracting the male tourist/investor gaze? Is the city of fancy buildings like a woman with make up as Contractor, known for his stylistic buildings with a penchant for glitz describes in an interview, "I always say . . . that you definitely like a woman with lipstick, rouge, eyelashes. So if you make your building more beautiful with some appliqués, there's nothing wrong" (Brook). Are iconic buildings absolved of social relevance? What is their role in image building for cities in globalized world?

While Paris as romance and Rome as history retain their original brand value, new cities of spectacle like Dubai are being constructed. Cities like Singapore, Shanghai and Dubai literally arose from dust to dazzle with skyscrapers within decades. How have these new skylines come about, how much role do governmental policy, global investment or starchitects have in their rise? In case of high-profile individuals how much role do king-makers or numerologist/astrologers have? Nnutasha, a tarotist, offers "services in mantra, yantra and tantra, in colour therapy, divination and aura restructurings. In short, botox for the spirit!" (Gokhale, *Priya* 176) and claims that she created the brand "Pooonam". What role do urban spectacles have in creating urban seductions?

The novel operates at various levels in unravelling an urban imaginary; it can be read as a story of power circles of Delhi superimposing destiny of Delhi and incredible India. It could also possibly be analysed as the story of a wannabe city like the aspirational Pooonam, seeking to reinvent itself to suit the contemporary demands of market, unlike the self-assured Paro. Yet it offers no grand or epic narrative, "In the storyboard, the drama and heroism lie in the everyday aggravations, the small triumphs of daily life. And the happy endings-they tiptoe in so stealthily that you may already have left the multiplex by the time they show up on screen" (193) emphasizing the creation of brands at intersections of policy makers and everyday practioners. It also underlines the paradigmatic shifts in the post liberal technological city as the protagonist moves from notebook to keyboard, "Facebook is beginning to take over, and I'm thinking of starting a blog" (192). It is a story of the city being told in a new language and medium with an active interaction between people and technology, a network city on the rise.

Conclusion

The chapter has examined the idea of city as brand, and how it is received variously by its citizens, administrators, tourists and investors. The perception about Delhi is changing from a city of antiquity to an aspiring world class city, "Walled to World city". Today cities are competing on a global scale to attract investment and tourists and to host international events through which they can showcase themselves. Technology is redefining cities where the other has disappeared spatially and one is talking of "ageographical city" where latitude is immaterial as geography and physical distances are redefined. Technology deeply pervades everyday life through smart phones, whatsapp and skype, and gives rise to "media city" (McQuire) that encompasses the various dimensions of urban space and digital features.

Ghosh's *The Gin Drinkers* is located in the elite educational spaces of Delhi, where the Oxford educated class feels threatened by the rise of the desis, the newly relevant class. They too demand a share to the best of education and foreign scholarships and are not content with basic books and teaching that they have been relegated too for years. Gokhale's *Priya in Incredible Indyaa* narrates the tale of a city under transformation that is witnessing frantic construction activity all around. It is a city trying hard to reinvent itself, and the analogy is used for both urban space and people inhabiting it.

Today the iconography of the city is defined not just by the iconic Qutub Minar and India Gate, but is supplemented with images of Delhi Metro and Akhardham, a simultaneous existence of historicity and modernity. Of all the changes sweeping through material space and social space, technology is the prominent factor, we identify our physical coordinates through check-ins at airports, malls and hotels, the digital self is an extension of the social self. The government too is actively pushing for "Digital India" and the idea of a smart city or a world class city. However it is important to remind oneself that global status is not derived merely from the infrastructure of the city but is equally if not more about a cosmopolitan outlook, about co-existence and acceptance of differences of the other in everyday lives and not just a catch phrase to be used in summits and promotional events. "Brand Delhi" is far from a singular image, and not something that has been achieved, it will have to located at the intersection of the local and global, historicity and modernity, or in King's idea of "multiple modernisms" or hybrid modernity.

Conclusion

Let us admit that for all of us, *Dilli dur ast*. Let us try to get nearer to it.
(Narayani Gupta, "Delhi's History" 109)

Cities are not new to human civilization and society, however the nature of cities has transformed from ancient to modern times. The basis for establishment of cities is no longer agriculture, defence or manufacturing, and the size and nature of cities has grown exponentially as well. With rapid urbanisation the world over, more people live in cities than in villages, and availability of goods and easy access to technology are transforming villages in a way that rural-urban dichotomy discussion is losing its importance in urban discourse. The city today carries multiple terms associated with it including metro, megapolis and media city with varying degrees of differences and overlappings, all suggestive of the evolution of the city from modernity to postmodernity, which is again not a linear trajectory. This thesis studies selected fiction in Indian English writing, focussing on post- independence Delhi city as that is an important historical marker in conception of the modern nation state and its capital. It is not a historiographic, exhaustive study of fiction written on the city, but an analytical study covering major thematic concerns of the contemporary city.

It has examined the definition of the city itself and following are some of the questions that are inevitably raised: Is the city merely agglomeration of people? What is the relation between built form of the city and the social relations of people inhabiting those built spaces? Who does the city "belong" to, its administrators, citizens or investors? Can there be a city that takes into accounts views of urban planners, academicians and people alike? Is the city merely a geographical entity or an imagined community connecting people located in different parts through technology? Can we begin to talk of ageographical cities in that case, cities that are independent of physical coordinates of latitude and longitude?

The present study has addressed some of these questions and more in an attempt to analyse the spaces of Delhi city as represented in the fiction based on the city. Delhi, an ancient city, finds its earliest mention in the Indian epic, *The Mahabharata*, and from eighth century onwards its history is fairly well documented. Since it has witnessed the rise and fall of various dynasties, and establishment of city-empires accompanying these, it is a history of repeated cycle of glory and destruction. The city's literary and cultural atmosphere was considered at its zenith during the Mughal rule where connoisseurs of art were found in court and streets alike. The glory of Shahjahanbad, its poets, its people and culture was desecrated

by the revolt of 1857 and the British retaliation destroyed the spirit of that space forever, and the construction of New Delhi with its racially hierarchical occupation of space severed the link with the earlier social fabric. The city that could not recover from effects of 1857 was dealt a severer blow with independence and partition of 1947 with huge demographic shifts. With large scale migration of Muslims to newly created Pakistan and leaving of British, a certain way of life as defined by these groups vanished. For the Punjabi refuges who came in carrying scars of lost homes, lives and livelihood, promotion of arts and culture was certainly not the priority. It is said that Delhi is a city of migrants where Punjabis are the "original migrants" whereas others continue to pour in from other states in search of better educational and career opportunities. Delhi's strategic geographical location has led to it being chosen as a seat of power and also the target of repeated attacks in the past. In contemporary times it is an important railway junction connecting lines from different directions and an important goods distribution centre. The point I am trying to reiterate is that the city for various reasons has had influx of people and migrations, be it for military purposes or education, for administrative or diplomatic functioning, and this works both to its advantage and disadvantage. Its capital status, location in the fertile Indo-Gangetic plains and as important node in goods distribution gives it a privileged position in setting of business, manufacturing units, in providing links with hinterlands, hosting of international conferences and home to large number of hotels with one of the biggest international airports in the country.

Places carry associative values of historical and cultural memory, and these in turn carry notions of belongingness, love, home and allegiance. Delhi's population consists primarily of migrants, and it rarely evokes the kind of love that cities of Kolkata and Mumbai do among its residents. This unloved city is considered no one's city or responsibility, as its primary identity is seen as national capital rather than a place in its own individual right. Defining a Dilliwala is as tough as defining this city, and this thesis has explored issues of city and citizenship and the city as a capital to understand these ideas. The transformations in the way Delhi is perceived and conceived and perpetuated in popular imagination, media projections, advertisements, tourist material and art narrates the evolutionary journey of the city. To analyse the literary representations, the theories of urbanism have been borrowed liberally from the disciplines of sociology and geography. The spatial lens has been used for close reading of fiction based in and on the city, to unravel the city not just as a capital or a historical city but as an emerging world class city.

Having been the capital of two empires, Mughals and British, and more ancient cities before that, Delhi's link with historicity, heritage and politics is firmly entrenched, and is linked to its present status as capital. This lends itself to some obvious disadvantages, as the contemporary city forever carries the burden of the past glory. Delhi's political history from Pandavas to Rajputs to slave kings to Mughals to British to present parliamentary system along with the monuments that dot its skyline underline its twin and interconnected titles of "heritage city" and "eternal capital". It is not officially a "heritage city" as the government withdrew nomination from UNESCO in 2015, though considering its antiquity and having three world heritage sites, Qutub Minar, Red Fort and Humayun's Tomb, it more than deserves it. Interestingly the heritage carries its own set of lovers and indifference. Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) prepared a list of 3000 historical sites in 1920 out of which 110 were undertaken under its care. Of the 3000, only about 2000 survive today as the rest have been lost to decay and encroachment. In the meanwhile, few more have been added to the list of protected monuments, taking the tally to 120, out of which some come under the state government. There is governmental apathy towards protection, conservation and preservation of heritage monuments, and low budgetary allocation only aggravates the acute task. On top of that, there are few good archaeologists around who get transferred from one site to another, often even before a detailed report has been prepared for the previous one. Apart from the official machinery of those entrusted with the task of historical preservation, I have followed closely the activities of the (unofficial) historical lovers of the city, some personally and some online. Various groups like "Delhi Heritage Walks with Sohail Hashmi", "Delhi Karavan" and "Delhi by Foot" regularly conduct walks with interested group of people, using social media as their primary mode of information. I have placed them in the line of Delhi lovers like Ghalib, Singh and Bhagamati in Singh's *Delhi: A Novel*; they are the *flâneurs* of the contemporary metropolis where *flânerie* has metamorphosed from solitary to group activity with a person "guiding" along. Where do we place virtual explorations and communities in postmodern *flânerie*? Where does one place Mayank Austen Soofi ("The Delhi Walla") who apart from writing books and columns on Delhi narrates visual everyday stories on Facebook and Instagram?

The arguments in almost all the chapters return to the core question of whose city is it; whether it is the question of defining a Dilliwala in "City and identity" or addressing the political leadership as stakeholders and entrustors to powerscapes in "City as capital" or negotiating the gendered spaces in "City and gender" or the difficulty of defining an image of

the city in "Branding Delhi", all of them explore the dynamic relationship between city spaces and people. It is important to remember that the concerned entities are dynamic in themselves and so is their interrelationship, one needs to question the stereotypes of the city as perpetuated through history books, tourist guides and popular forms of representation. Whose city are we looking at: is it the social system of the sociologist, the chronicle of the historian, reflection of the photographer's eye or the writer's imaginative perception? The city is most likely located at the intersection of all these and more, and the issue gets further complicated when one is referring to fictional representation of a real city as opposed to imaginary ones like Narayan's Malgudi and J.K. Rowling's Hogsmeade. The urban imaginary is unravelling of these various intersecting layers where the writer, characters and readers alike are participative citizens of the city. In fact the *flâneur* is a useful trope to address this question; the writer is exploring the city, and his/her characters are moving through this urban mesh, and the reader-citizen is on an arm chair and discovering the city with them. The writer-characters-reader trio as well as the affective communities of heritage walkers/runners/photographers are *flâneurs* in the postmodern avatar, where the form has changed from walking to driving to surfing the internet.

But where is this city located, is Delhi merely the romanticised Shahajahanbad or the ruins of Tughlaqabad or Qutub? Can the touristy images and maps of Delhi provide an adequate picture of the city? How does one reconcile the city of maps and guide book with that of the everyday stories of Delhizens? In fact one needs to avoid the trap of a singular and totalizing image as the chapter "City as brand" discusses. Even the celebrated notion of "seven cities of Delhi" underlines the heterogeneity, the layers of sedimentary rocks of past that explain the city's patchwork history and architecture; its monumental architecture synonymous with its phoenix like history defines its powerful visuality. But is the city only a sum total of its picturesque monuments and ruins, and how do the ancient and the modern, the Qutub and the Akshardham clash or complement in its iconography? Apart from ancient monuments, Delhi as a modern capital has witnessed frantic building activity. The early years of construction after the independence were about architecturally creating a new urban imaginary, of the capital as epitome of Indian identity that embraces modernity, and the state acted as middleman in this, be it the construction of Ashok Hotel or district centres or university campuses like Jawaharlal Nehru University and Indian Institute of Technology or the diplomatic enclave Chankyapuri. In the neo-liberal regime the attention is on the

starchitects for creation of iconic structures that are often divorced from the historical-environmental-social fabric of the place.

The social-spatial dis/connect underlines and complicates the connection between built form and people, and of nativeness and belongingness. And it takes us rightly back to questions like: whose city, administrators or citizens; where is it located, in malls or markets; where does it find expression, in writing, graffiti or flash mobs; how is it articulated, in reality or imagination? Delhi's famous lovers like Zauq and Ghalib seem to have few descendants like Ahmed Ali and Khushwant Singh while the majority seem to lack an intimate relationship with the city spaces, and more often than not the attachment is to one's region or area, a slice of the city, a mini Delhi that people carry with them. Desai's *Clear Light of Day* reflects on effects of partition at the levels of family, neighbourhood, city and nation. It offsets the decadence of Old Delhi with the action of New Delhi, of the glorious past versus the stagnant present that the "notified slum" area represents. *In Custody* extends the debate to inter-relationship between spaces and languages, where Urdu language and literature is under threat from government apathy, and infiltration from bazaar sounds; the rooftop symbolising the last vestiges of its survival as art precariously hangs above the life of the bazaar below. Chauhan's *Zoya Factor* is about a specific area, "You can take a girl out of Karol Bagh, but you can't take Karol Bagh out of the girl" (Chauhan 42) as it discusses notions of multiple and hybrid modernities be it off food (pizza with dhania) or language, where English is implicated in the polyphony of Indian languages. While Desai uses English to bring out the nuances of Hindi-Urdu debates, Chauhan uses it to comment on colloquial language. Singh's *Delhi* broadens the scope in presenting multiple narrators over centuries; the in-betweeness of identity, be it of religion, gender or profession is the common thread connecting them. The plurality of identities is repeatedly emphasized in question of city and citizenship, even as the attention shifts from midnight's children to midnight's grandchildren.

In-betweeness or interstaliality is an interesting location to explore plurality of identities, and with regard to question of gender it hinges on slippery nature of public and private spaces. Elizabeth Wilson in "The Invisible *flâneur*" argues that "whether women are seen as a problem of cities, or cities as problem of women the relationship remains fraught with difficulty" (63) and gendered spaces tend to reiterate normative gender roles. The city hinges on promises of freedom and liberation, is controlling and regulatory for women, not just in prescriptive patriarchal boundaries or *lakshman rekha* but also in sense of literally live in a man-made environment (Roberts) as architects and planners are primarily men. Women

need to constantly justify their presence in the city and the legitimate reasons are education and job; this effectively rules out the possibility of female *flâneur* casually leaning against a pillar or standing at the paan corner. The trope of safety is used to contain their spatial movement, and women characters are seen challenging the normative spatial codes and negotiating the city against the grain.

Simrit in Sahgal's *A Day in Shadow* has no control even over domestic spaces as they are a reflection of her husband's status in society. Within the house itself, the drawing room is a public entertaining place and the only space to display personal memorabilia is the bedroom, but that too carries dynamics of gendered and sexual power relations. The codes of conduct make it difficult for Simrit to find her place in a city as a divorced woman, unchaperoned by man. The negotiation of relations and urban spaces from within the institution of marriage is equally tough as demonstrated in Kapur's *A Married Woman* where Astha realizes that it is only by placing herself "out of place" from domestic boundaries and safety concerns that she can claim freedom and expression through art. As Lefebvre argues, "How could one aim for power without reaching for the places where power resides?" (Lefebvre: 386) and this becomes doubly significant for women where for the feminist protestor invading spaces and occupying streets is a powerful statement of subverting normative spatial regulations. Nisha in *Home* is able to break the *lakshaman rekha* of domestic space on the pretext of attending college, but her partaking in the erotic potentialities of the city is only in the company of her boyfriend and not on her own. Her business is perceived as filler till she gets married, pushing her back to boundaries of home and domesticity, cutting off her spatial independence and negotiations in the urban space. The question of marriage only changes form over the decades, but does not disappear. In contrast to Simrit who has the albatross of the unfair taxes of divorce settlement, Anushka in Kala's *Almost Single* takes revenge on her estranged husband by wrapping his car in toilet paper. In *Almost Single* women's work profile is no longer limited to the safe job of teaching (Astha) or operating business out of home (Nisha); the single women staying alone in metro create matrimonial ads online to reach out to men through technology. The interstitial spaces like the terrace are being redefined as well, while it was used for molestation of Nisha in *Home*, here it gives expression to "blended relationships" where the girls celebrate a havan with their gay friends.

The everyday spaces of the terrace contrast with the monumental architecture of Delhi which is the legacy of its history as "eternal capital" from Tomars to Khiljis to Mughals to

British to present democracy. Walled boundaries, forts and citadels are clearly an attempt to demonstrate strength and to leave permanent imprints over the landscape; but the desolate ruins of these cities narrate a contrary tale of their fallibility. New Delhi was designed as an imperial capital to showcase the strength of the British empire, and its hierarchical structure segregated populations along class lines, and severed links with the Mughal city, Shahjahanbad. Indian leaders "inherited" these opulent edifices of power on gaining independence in 1947 and the power play is apparent in fiction set in these corridors. Sahgal's *This Time of Morning* is about the waning of initial euphoria of independence, and shift in focus from independence to governance. The changes become sweeping in Sahgal's *A Situation in New Delhi* that is set against the Naxalist activities in Delhi University, with plans going haywire at both macro and micro levels, and violence breaks out in the city. Things breakdown completely in Ghosh's *Delhi Calm* set against the Emergency, where dichotomous "calm" and "panic" are juxtaposed. An eerie silence has descended on the city; spaces of both formal and informal political discussion have been quashed, silence has engulfed the radio and the paanwala corner alike. The absolute power of Emergency asserts its spatial control over spaces of everyday lives; the city's promise of freedom and opportunities seem to have been replaced by the panoptic gaze of the state that monitors and controls the lives of people. The blatant and unapologetic nexus of politics and money is demonstrated in K.P. Singh's *Delhi Durbar.* People, posts and spaces, all have become saleable commodities where industrialists "buy" a President as all structures of power carry price tags.

What image does the city carry in such situations? Is the city a brand, and does the brand value transform over time? Has Delhi transformed from the Old Delhi image of dangling wires to a smart city of skyscrapers and technology? Is the shift limited only to built form or is it reflected in cosmopolitan urbanism of citizens? The dazzling urban spectacle portrayed in visual representations is accompanied with changing vocabulary of edge city/media city/smart city with danger of people being reduced to data and numbers, robbing them of individual human agency. Technology is all pervasive in this smart city, where every check-in and tagging marks individual's location in urban space; and even state-citizen contact is mediated through Apps. If the British treated the city space as blank slate in raising an imperial capital, the neo-liberal architecture also attempts to tower with its awe-inspiring aesthetics which is often at odds with the landscape, social fabric or purpose for which it is constructed. There is a need to question these world class city aspirations, to interrogate what

it involves other than exterior reality, and especially examine it against the social structure of the society. Ghosh's *The Gin Drinkers* lays bare the claims of Delhi as a city of educational opportunities by exposing the intellectual and class elitism at the heart of it, where the spaces of research and education are the fiefdom of a certain privileged class who do not let go of their control on it easily to desis. Gokhale's *Priya in Incredible Indyaa* is a turn of the century novel where technology is beginning to transform interpersonal relations. At the same time it also underlines the widening social gaps, of the reflection of slums and poor in the steel and glass of malls, of the seducing interiors that create a social apartheid. The subalterns are not just on physical fringes of this urban imagery but are also barred from equitable citizenship based on internet access.

This study has attempted to explore the literary spaces in Delhi based fiction at the intersecting nodes of social and spatial; literary and experiential; real and affective communities; public and private spaces; order and disorder; decadence and progress; in malls and bazaars and through technology and face to face interaction. The city's evolution is not a linear trajectory, it is located in both the romanticized past and postmodernity; in palatial farm houses and squatter homes; in history books and life-histories; in immersion and entanglement; and in lives of elites and subalterns. This study has attempted to uncover these transformations through selected fiction on the city and to unravel a new urban imaginary of Delhi.

I hope this study is not conclusive and instead opens up the field of urban spatiality, especially in the Indian context. Literary studies on Delhi are based around the Mughal period, mutiny and British India, there is none on literary spaces of the contemporary city. This work attempts to fill that lacuna, and hopes it is only a beginning, the field is quite fertile and there is scope and need for more work on urban spatialities in literature. Considering the linguistic map of Delhi, it can be useful for future research to look at primary texts in languages other than English, especially in Hindi, Punjabi and Urdu. It can also be fruitful to do a comparative study with literature on other Indian cities like Mumbai and Kolkata.

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